

27 March 2022

Waipā District Council
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RE: Ahu Ake - Waipā Community Spatial Plan

As representatives of the Cambridge Racquets Club, we are making a submission for consideration in preparation of the Waipā Council's Ahu Ake Spatial plan.

Cambridge Racquets Club is an important community facility, with a rich history being established over 100 years ago. We serve around 450 - 500 regular squash and tennis members, and their wider families. We are a central connection point for many Waipā residents. The club provides a place for a broad cross section of the community to gather on a regular basis, play a sport, and join their friends in being active. It is located within the boundary of the Lake Te Koo Utu reserve in the north eastern corner, which means the club is within walking or cycling distance from most homes in Cambridge. The reserve is a popular destination for community residents seeking exercise, competition, recreation, and socialising, and serves as a connection with nature in our urban environment.

We feel that Waipā District Council could help the Cambridge Racquets Club better serve the Cambridge community through the following pathways:

- **Safer access.** The Intersection of Thornton Rd and the top of the rise on Albert St is getting busier and visibility at the intersection is very poor given the slope of the road down the hill. The entrance to the club's parking area is currently situated very close to this intersection. Increased traffic makes this entry point dangerous with more people taking risks, and a number of near misses have occurred, particularly with right turning traffic leaving the club. Along with other changes suggested below, this entrance could be moved further west along Thornton Rd to a safer position.
- **Thornton Rd Parking.** The club has 32 car parks. Sometimes it can be very busy with concurrent tennis and squash events causing parking to overflow along Thornton Rd. There is currently a hedge between the tennis courts and Thornton Rd. The Waipā council reserves management team have recently reported that this hedge is failing and is likely to be removed in the near future. This would be an opportunity to introduce additional angled parking along Thornton Rd, whilst replacing the hedge with appropriate planting and adding footpaths and a crossing to better connect pedestrians and cyclists to the reserve.

- **Additional entrance and safer parking:** At the western end of the tennis courts there is a driveway to access the Girl Guides' building. There is a gate, which is normally locked, due to issues around safety. Parents of the guides use this driveway and parking space, but it is somewhat hidden, dark at night and therefore sometimes unsafe. The area is not paved. There is an opportunity to add additional permanent parking for those using the facilities in the area (the girl guides, squash club, outdoor gym & playground), whilst allowing for an alternative entrance to the racquets club. Introducing street lighting in this area would greatly address safety concerns.
- **Better connections:** Currently, despite being on the edge of the lake reserve, there is not good access between Cambridge Racquets club, Lake Te Koo Utu, or the playground areas along Thornton road. There is no well defined footpath through the reserve east of the 'The Painting Place'. Club members' children are currently climbing over the gate to access the playground from the club. New pathways in the north east corner of the Lake Te Koo Utu reserve connecting these elements would allow CRC to serve a larger section of the community. A new path from the area behind the Girl Guides building would allow members to use the lake area and playground facilities whilst providing additional visibility of the club to the community, allowing us to serve more people recreationally.
- **More commercial flexibility.** The club is seeking ways to be more financially self-sufficient, whilst keeping the costs of participation in sport for our members and the community to a minimum. We are working on strategies to allow for alternative revenue generation in order to maintain and improve our service delivery to the community. We need to improve our facilities and aim to expand the types of groups and organisations that regularly use the club facilities, consolidating other societies and groups into one. Having a resource plan that permits us to operate services such as a cafe, or allows us to rent rooms to other service providers (such as therapists / instructors), would be a benefit to members and improve the enjoyment of the reserve and lake for many users.

More details about the Cambridge Racquets Club:

- Cambridge Racquets Club was established in 1888 as a tennis club and expanded its facilities in 1963 to also cater for squash.
- The club has 410 members, plus casual users and juniors; 4 indoor squash courts; 7 tennis courts (plus an adjacent public court to which the Waipā council provides some funding, and which the racquets club maintains); a bar; a kitchen; changing rooms; and an office for the club manager.
- The club owns its building and leases the land from the Waipā Council (current lease is to 2031).
- The club is a registered not-for-profit charity. It is operated by a paid manager, volunteer committee members, and club members. Its income is primarily from membership fees, the bar and catering, and occasional grants for some larger capital items.
- It neighbours key community facilities, including the Girl Guides building, the Cambridge Society of Arts ('The Painting Place'), an exercise equipment area -

regularly in use, the playground - popular with families, gardens, the bowling club, and the newly developed 4 Square commercial building.

- https://www.crc.org.nz/page/about_us/



The club is a family and community focussed facility. It hosts regular activities that bring together a disparate group of people from around Cambridge and its rural environs: farmers, students, families, local business people.

Current activities at club include:

- Tennis competitions that cater primarily to local cambridge residents (junior men's, women's, and mixed competitions).
- Social tennis throughout the week, including regular midweek sessions that are popular with retired people in the community.
- Tennis and squash inter-club competitions where the club hosts visiting teams from throughout the Waikato, and where our club members represent their town.
- Occasional tournaments, including hosting a fundraising event in March 2023 for Ronald McDonald house which raised over \$11,000.
- Co-Hosting national events, such as the NZ Seniors National Teams event in April 2023
- Tennis and squash coaching. Much of this is targeted at juniors and delivered by local coaches. Over the years, the club has seen its junior squash and tennis players achieve at a high level in the region and nationally. We have had club juniors graduating to win sporting scholarships to US colleges, competing at the Australian Open tennis tournament, playing professional squash, and winning Commonwealth Games gold.
- The club provides accommodation (kitchen, lounge, showers) for large groups competing in regionally significant events at Lake Karapiro (North Island High School Champs, Maadi cup, Waka Ama)
- The club hosts occasional functions: AGMs, committee meetings, club nights (quiz, movies, auctions, live TV events), some of which are for fund-raising purposes.

- The club has been recognised as Waikato Tennis Club of the Year (2018, 2020 & 2021).

Our club is considered by many of our members as their “Third place”. The space, other than home and work, where they most want to spend their time. Our vision for the future is to allow increased participation by supporting even wider community facilities and groups (not just our traditional sports) and becoming a central hive of recreational activity for the community. Support from the Waipā district Council in implementing these suggestions would allow us to continue to serve our growing Cambridge community.

Yours Sincerely,



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