

31 May 2021

Auckland Council  
Private Bag 92300  
Victoria Street West  
**AUCKLAND 1142**

To who it may concern

**THE AUCKLAND TROTting CLUB (“ATC”) – PUKEKOHE TRAINING TRACK & FUTURE INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS**

**Background**

The ATC currently owns the Franklin Park Training Centre, Station Road Pukekohe. This is a 35hectare property near to the town centre of Pukekohe and was originally purchased in 1948 for the purpose of Harness Racing horse training.

The site contains 3 tracks: No 1: Looks very similar to Alexandra Park and used for fast work. No 2: This track is inside the main track and is a fine surface, used for cantering, galloping & jogging. No 3: This track sits alongside the main track and has a sand surface and is primarily used for jogging. On these tracks there are over 220 horses worked each morning as well as over 50 casual users that come to the facilities during the month. Also on the Franklin Park site are 7 horse barn complexes with accompanying paddocks, and they accommodate approx. 100 horses. There are also laneways running to the track from privately owned properties that house a further 18 trainers with another 100 horses.

As you can see, the site is an active and critical part of the training regime for Harness horses in the North Island and a vital piece of infrastructure for the Auckland Trotting Club and our ability to operate an effective racing venue.

**Our Application for Plan Change / Re-zoning**

The ATC has been working through the options and opportunities for the Franklin Park site for some time. Put simply, the value of the land has increased, it’s proximity to the Pukekohe centre and services has become more attractive to development, and an increasing residential character is already becoming prominent in the area.

The operative AUP special purpose zoning has been 'custom built' to suit the needs of ATC and this has enabled the continued operation of the site. We have greatly appreciated this support, but we are also now recognising that our circumstances are changing and the operative AUP zoning is not appropriate for any future use of the land – or future land users. The ATC is aware that our time in Franklin is naturally, coming to an end. Already we see increasing residential interest in the area, with development options being prepared around the site, and consequential changes in the expectations of land use and community. For these reasons the ATC has sought to work with Golden Meadow for a plan change to rezone the land for uses which are, in the Club's opinion, in line with the expectations of the Councils Structure Planning for growth and which would enable future development of the site in a consistent manner, when the ATC relocates its facilities in the near future.

At it's most simple, we can see that more and more people will want to live a residential lifestyle nearer and nearer to our clearly non-residential activity. We are already aware that dust and noise from our racing activity is beginning to register as an impact on neighbours, in a way that has simply not been the case before. Additionally, as this urbanisation pressure grows we also see that our use of land becomes an increasingly less efficient and costly activity in such an environment. The ATC was always aware that this time would come, and had always held the view that when it arrived, it would seek to re-zone the land, sell at market value, and then use the proceeds to relocate a facility further out at a lower price (allowing proceeds for a build of a 'fit for purpose' facility) and once again removing our activity from a more residential environment and relocating it into a more rural one.

In fact, the Club sees this 'relocation' process as one that it would likely repeat over the very long term, again, as the cycle of urban/residential growth continues.

### **Overall Vision for the Training Centre**

The ATC is absolutely committed to a training centre, based outside the main urban limits of the wider Auckland city and able to service the needs to our main racing facility in Greenlane – Alexandra Park. We are a recognised incorporated society, governed by our constitution and ultimately, the will of our members and the future of our training facilities are a significant and certain part of their wishes. We had always planned to relocate our training activity and we are now at the point in our centre's lifecycle that we need to begin the rezoning activity. Between the time needed for this process, the time needed to sell and buy a new site, the time needed to prepare that site for training and trialling, the time needed likely to 'lease-back' the current site while these matters are attended too, we see this process taking place over 3-5 years and being subject to a substantial body of work by the Club. This is a significant and strategic undertaking designed to ensure the future of Harness Racing in the North Island.

Finally, we note that the Racing Industry itself has been subject to review and legislative change – a once in a generation activity. This review has enhanced the need for racing clubs to cooperate, share facilities and 'right-size' our footprint for the future. Our plan for the Franklin Training Centre is a critical part of our contribution to this goal, allowing us to 'right size' our training facility and to welcome other clubs into the facility over time as a means to support the wider north island racing community.

I trust that this makes clear the underlying rationale for our participation in the re-zoning discussion and the future steps the Club will take in the matter.

As always, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Croon  
**ATC President**