



**SUBMISSION BY THE HAGLEY PARK TENNIS CLUB
ON THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY
LONG-TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN FOR 2006-16**

INTRODUCTION

For those who live in Christchurch City, Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens are the back yard, playing field and garden that not everyone has the space or the money for. And for those who love tennis, the Hagley Park Tennis Club offers a unique facility with 23 grass courts and 6 hard courts. Players of varying ages, varying skill levels, different cultures and nationalities, and different economic backgrounds have a centrally located facility where they can engage in a healthy, positive activity and have an opportunity for social interaction. The only requirement is that a player pay for use of the courts¹, players do not even have to be a resident of Christchurch or a New Zealand citizen.

Lawn tennis is preferred by many lifestyle players over the artificial surfaces as it is a more pleasant environment and easier on the body. Lawn tennis allows players of different fitness and strength levels to play regularly and well into their older years.

To retain this facility in Christchurch is increasingly difficult as maintenance costs are difficult to fund, with considerable specialized labour input, as well as compliance with increasingly restrictive laws relating to weed control.

The tennis club is run entirely by volunteers. With the exception of a modest salary for the groundsman and small allowances for the junior and senior administrators, none of the committee members receive any compensation. This keeps operating expenses low.

The club is non-profit and the membership fees, court fees, any grants, or donations or funds raised go entirely to the maintenance and improvement of its facilities or the tournaments it hosts. The club has always paid its own way, and with the exception of \$500 for the support of the Annual New Zealand National Lawn Tennis Championships, it receives no other funding from the Council.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTED FROM THE COUNCIL

Though the club has successfully stayed within its budget and been able to fund its activities, repairs and maintenance with its own money, the following issues have arisen with regard to its future and ability to accommodate more members.

¹ There are membership fees or court fees for casual, occasional use.

Hagley Park Tennis Club submission continued...

The club now seeks the following assistance from the City Council.

1. Improvement of the safety, security and amenity of the area immediately around the club facilities.

The club requests that the City Council, as part of its Hagley Park and Botanic Gardens Master Plans

- a. install sufficient nighttime street lighting to ensure the safety and security of the public who use the parking lot and the access road leading out to the Riccarton Avenue entrance to the park
- b. add a footpath for the safety of pedestrians
- c. resurface the access road
- d. make arrangements to lock the gate at the Riccarton Avenue entrance later at night (around 830 pm) or allow the club's coach or other club officer to be responsible for locking the gate after all club players have left the facility.

During day light hours, the parking lot is used by a combination of visitors to the Botanic Gardens and Hagley Park, golfers, bowlers, and tennis players. It is a busy place and there is safety in numbers.

However after sunset, the tennis club is the only facility open as there are lessons and social tennis sessions. Often there are junior players participating.

Even when the tennis court lights are on, they are focused on the courts themselves and do not light the access road or the parking lot. The club installed some years ago 2 lights that help illuminate part of the access road. However, they are not sufficient to cover the entire access road much less the parking lot.

There are two other conditions that contribute to an unsafe environment. The access road is narrow and there is no footpath for pedestrians. The darkness may prevent drivers from noticing pedestrians, and the narrowness of the road leaves very little room for any pedestrians to stay out of harm's way. The poor condition of the access road surface also makes for tricky and treacherous footing in the darkness.

Junior members that participate in the sessions and take lessons sometimes catch a bus home. If they wait at the stop on Riccarton Avenue, they have to walk down the dark access road, wait at the unlit bus stop, while Riccarton Avenue itself is poorly lit and has very little traffic at that hour.

Hagley Park Tennis Club submission continued...

The club seeks the Council's support in light of its strategic direction on page 50 of the draft plan – "6. Reduce injury, crime and help people feel safer"; and community outcomes on pages 44-46:

A Safe City

Community Outcome: **Risks from hazards are managed and mitigated**
 Measure of Success: **People feel safe at all times in Christchurch**
 Measure of Progress: **Perceptions of safety**

An Attractive and Well-designed City

Community Outcome: **Our lifestyles and heritage are enhanced by our urban environment**
 Measure of Success: **Christchurch is attractive and well-maintained. We design our city to meet current needs and future challenges.**
 Measure of Progress: **Perceptions of look and feel of the city**

The club is also of the view that if the area was better lit, it might discourage use of the parking lot for anti-social behaviour or vandalism (page 124 negative effects or risks ... in relation to ... parks, open spaces and waterways), and improve the amenity of the immediate area that is shared with the bowls and croquet clubs.

2. Inclusion in the Council's list of signature sponsored events of the annual New Zealand Lawn Tennis Championships

The Hagley Park Tennis Club is the organizer of the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Championships. The club receives financial support the City Council (\$500) that goes towards promotion and marketing. Corporate sponsorship supplies the major prizes.

The club requests additional assistance from the Council to grow and promote the event because it is unique in New Zealand, the region and the world.

- a. It is the National Lawn Championship
- b. There are very few lawn tennis grass court facilities left in New Zealand or in the world. The Hagley Park Tennis Club has 23 lawn courts, the Newport Casino Tennis Club in Rhode Island U.S.A. (home of the Tennis Hall of Fame) only has 13.
- c. There are very few lawn tennis tournaments throughout the world; Wimbledon Championships being the most well known.
- d. Up and coming or lower tier professional players, and junior top level players may want other tournaments to tune up their grass court skills in preparation for tour events and Davis Cup competition.

Hagley Park Tennis Club submission continued...

- e. It is recognized that the unique challenges associated with lawn tennis are beneficial in developing junior players with a broader range of shots and more robust techniques.

In asking for the assistance of the Council, the club's goals are

- a. To preserve this unique event as it struggles for sponsorship dollars
- b. To promote it as a signature event of Christchurch City that could give it priority or preference in terms of selecting schedule dates that are attractive and convenient for players and visitors
- c. To give the event the prestige it deserves and attract more top level players
- d. To progress it in terms of attendance/visitors
- e. To grow it into a regional (Pan Pacific) event
- f. To gain fan support for the event specifically and for tennis in general from Christchurch residents
- g. To support the City Council in its strategic direction (page 50)
- 4. Help communities to meet their needs
- 5. Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
- 7. Celebrate and promote Christchurch's identity, cultures and diversity
- 8. Encourage residents to enjoy living in the city and to have fun

The club requests the following from the Council:

- a. Additional and more involved officer advice in the promotion (especially as a signature event) and growth of this event
- b. Assistance in securing corporate sponsorship
- c. Active show of support from the Mayor and other elected members

In addition to the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Championships, the club hosts other tournaments most notably the Veterans Tournament that draws participation from across Canterbury and all of the South Island, not just Christchurch City and the Interclub competitions that involves juniors as well as senior men and women.

- 3. Assistance to the club to install and connect a transformer that will provide sufficient power for lighting current and future hard courts for the winter tennis season.

In preliminary discussions with Council officers, the club was advised that any transformer had to be on club premises (for security) but would have to connect to the high power line at the Botanic Gardens bridge about 100 meters away. Such a connection would be a significant cost, but the Council offered the possibility that it might fund the difference between installation of the transformer at the bridge and installation on club premises.

Hagley Park Tennis Club submission continued...

The transformer allows the club the flexibility to light all of its 6 hard courts, and any other courts it is able to finance in the future. Currently, there is a very high demand for night playing time, especially in the winter, and with only 3 courts properly lit, it makes for crowded courts. It limits the club's attraction for members that can only play after regular business hours and therefore its ability to earn money.

But even with the offer by the Council, the club is unable to raise the amount of money required.


The club requests the Council consider whether a comprehensive solution to provide the street lighting, access road resurfacing and connection of the transformer could be incorporated into the Hagley Park or Botanic Gardens Master Plans within the next 3 financial years.

The club values the good relationship it has always had with the City Council and hopes the partnership can be furthered to the advantage of both. It plans to continue to pay its way, make a positive contribution to Hagley Park, and promote tennis, good health and physical activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the LTCCP.

Yours faithfully,

HAGLEY PARK TENNIS CLUB INCORPORATED



Lindsay V. North, Secretary

COMMUNICATION ADDRESS:-

Hagley Park Tennis Club Incorporated
P O Box 8092
Christchurch