

STEPS St Lukes Environmental Protection Society Inc
Protecting Meola Creek environs since 2005

Waititiko Meola Creek and Te Wai Ōrea/ Chamberlain Park.

Te Wai Ōrea/ Western Springs and Chamberlain Park, together with the underlying aquifer Te Tatua-a-Riukiuta and Waititiko-Waiateao Creeks form central Auckland's volcanic heartland. Both are open green space areas which are good for human health and for Albert Eden Community. This aquifer contains the largest volume of groundwater under the protection of the Auckland Council¹. Auckland is one of many cities world-wide reassessing use of public land² in an era of sustainability.

STEPS Perspective:

Open space in Albert Eden should remain as open space for future generations, not as impervious car parks and paths, concrete swimming pool or other buildings. We support changes to Chamberlain Park which open it up for recreational use by walkers, bike-riders and all Eden Albert residents while enhancing the environment. This is a great opportunity to assess requirements and future options.

- Restoration of Waititiko Meola creek, wetland, springs and aquifer is long overdue
 - Sustained enhancement over long term aquifer water quality and quantity
 - Restoration of the rock forest on the creek margin of Chamberlain Park (with STEPS help)
 - Improve ecological habitat on land and in water, including planting creek banks
- Provide public access to Waititiko Meola Creek and Chamberlain Park
 - Enable "Ki uta ki tai" - mountain to sea path from Owairaka to Te Tokaroa³
- Start restoration with an ecological assessment, and plan in partnership with local iwi.
 - identify the area's potential, also its current issues
 - include a 100 year ecological restoration future vision with 10 year action steps
 - set up a program of planting suitable native tree/ grass species on Chamberlain Park; replacing existing largely exotic and pest trees over a 20 year period
 - immediate pest weed and pest animal removal program (Urban Ark⁴ / Auckland Zoo)
- Any development should use "water sensitive design principles": green living roofs, pervious paths and surfaces, rain gardens etc as recommended for the Auckland Unitary Plan⁵ (AUP).



¹ Auckland Unitary plan
unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Images/Auckland%20Unitary%20Plan%20Operative/Chapter%20M%20Appendices/Appendix%203%20Aquifer%20water%20availabilities%20and%20levels.pdf

² <https://www.plandesignxplore.com/buildingportland/2019/5/28/golf-courses-and-green-spaces>

³ <https://www.meolacreek.org.nz/meola-waititiko-mountain-to-sea-walk/>

⁴ <https://mailchi.mp/b2eea5f355ad/news-from-urban-ark-manawa-taiao>

⁵ See cdn.ymaws.com/concretenz.org.nz/resource/resmgr/docs/masonry/m_suds_nick_vigar.pdf

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Questions about the Chamberlain Park proposal

The concept of “developing” a park in Auckland can involve car parks, man made materials and Auckland Transport (AT) impervious paths, meaning loss of permeable natural surface, green open space and water ways. We don’t support this next to Waititiko Meola Creek, nor can the creek and harbour sustain further loss of green space or permeability in Meola catchment. (See below for an outline of Meola current state.)

Additional hectares of impervious AT paths are problematic in a 49% impervious catchment. AT has choices. AUP already targets Meola to increase hard surface area up to 62.5% (an extra 2.2 sq km), creating significant additional stormwater. Impervious surfaces are not needed in our limited green spaces.

Artificial turf which ends up on the dump is a problem. If we need more artificial turf can we hear from the sports clubs who need and support it? We assume it is not needed as Albert Eden is well served region wide. We don’t understand why Albert Eden needs a quota of artificial turf at Chamberlain Park.

A concrete swimming pool in Chamberlain Park would provide yet more impervious surface.

Chamberlain Park Possibilities:

We noted that several Councillors in the debate on Chamberlain Park appeared to agree on **starting with an ecological assessment**. Members James Brown, Christine Fletcher, and Wayne Walker all appeared to us to favour this approach at the Environment and Community Committee held on 10 July 2019⁶. Surely for such a significant area, Council can pay for this to ensure the process starts in the right place.

Golfers have exclusive privileges over a very large urban area (33 Hectares) which is out of bounds to non-golfing ratepayers, sportspeople and local residents. Can the golfers demonstrate some commitment to the community Eg by voluntarily setting up pest removal? Trapping volunteers work well elsewhere with the help of Auckland Zoo and pest-free Auckland, but Chamberlain Park has very limited coverage.

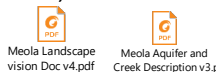
Is there a Sustainability plan for Chamberlain Park? Golf courses suit some humans but many habitat improvements can and should be made to such a large area of exotic grasses and trees sitting on Auckland’s most valuable aquifer⁷.

Waititiko Meola Creek Background

Meola Creek Current State: Meola Creek already transports half of the 2 million cubic meters of stormwater driven sewage, sediment and heavy metals reaching Waitemata Harbour every year – the most of any catchment in Auckland. AUP additional hard surface area of 2.2 sq km could create an additional 2.9 million cu m per year of extra storm water for Meola catchment, some portion of which will overflow and reach the creek to continue its overuse by AC. See Aquifer document below for more information.

Restoration: STEPS proposed to Albert Eden Local Board (AELB) and Waitemata Local Board in 2016 that they build a restoration/ management plan, especially given the high development in the catchment under AUP. The Meola money was duly funded⁸, but was soon removed and spent elsewhere. There is still no restoration strategy for Meola creek, but 2 more were created for Oakley Creek at that time. Here is STEPS

proposal for the Meola plan.



⁶ For the full 2 hour meeting see: <https://councilive.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/video/10072019-environment-and-community-committee-items-10-11> Minutes: https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2019/07/ENV_20190710_MIN_9419.PDF

⁷ <https://www.eigca.org/golf-course-sustainable-development-CPD>

⁸ *Albert-Eden Local Board Plan 2017* (p23) *Work with volunteer groups, interested agencies and other local boards to develop a joint approach to managing and protecting shared waterways and addressing stream catchment issues, specifically:* • Puketāpapa and Whau local boards for Te Auaunga / Oakley Creek • Waitematā and Puketāpapa local boards for Waititiko / Meola Creek and its underlying aquifer.)