



June 26, 2014

Mayor Brown  
Auckland Council  
Private Bag 92300  
Auckland 1142

Dear Mayor Brown,

Avondale Community Action is a resident-led Charitable Trust working towards a better future for Avondale. We are passionate advocates for our neighbourhood and strive to be well informed and engaged in decision making that affects our community. We have recently learned that an Auckland Council Property Limited (ACPL) asset purchased in 2010 by Auckland City Council (ACC) has been approved for disposal with an intention to sell for housing development. The sites are at 24-26 Racecourse Parade, Avondale and when purchased from Suburbs Rugby Football Club in 2010, ACC's purpose for acquisition was "for town centre car parking, development of the site with the adjoining Housing New Zealand block of terraced houses, retaining the site for future urban development opportunities or using the site for active recreation purposes by amalgamating with the netball court land and possibly the Avondale racetrack land"<sup>1</sup>.

Avondale Community Action understands that the Whau Local Board unanimously opposed the disposal of these sites pending consideration of the service needs for the Avondale community centre, library, open space, leisure activities and roading network through the Avondale Transformation Programme and the Whau community and recreation facility needs assessment. The decision to dispose of these sites was made at the Finance and Performance Committee meeting on 16 April 2014 where the division of votes was declared equal but ultimately went in favour of the Chairperson's vote. We write to you today with a number of concerns about what has come to pass and to outline opportunities we have identified for future action for Avondale.

#### **Avondale Community Action's concerns**

- The decision in April 2014 to dispose of these sites was made in spite of the Whau Local Board's strong and substantiated opposition to any such disposal at this time.
- Your vote as Mayor of Auckland was not cast. Based on the records of the meeting we understand that you were not present when the voting took place nor were you present for the Whau Local board presentation about why they opposed the disposal of these sites at this time.
- The Avondale community have not been treated as significant stakeholders by ACPL to date in this decision making. Residents and local organisations have not been consulted on the disposal of these sites and the reasonable concerns of the Whau Local Board, tasked as the voice for our local community, have been effectively dismissed by the Finance and Performance Committee.
- A stated reason for the disposal of these sites was a scarcity of funding available within Auckland Council for additional services on these sites. However, Avondale Community Action understand that there was millions of

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<sup>1</sup> Section 109, [http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2014/04/FIN\\_20140416\\_AGN\\_4755\\_AT\\_SUP\\_WEB.HTM](http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2014/04/FIN_20140416_AGN_4755_AT_SUP_WEB.HTM)



dollars of legacy funding committed to Avondale. We can't understand why legacy funding isn't being used by Auckland Council to retain and develop these sites for the benefit of the Avondale community.

- One of the existing buildings on these sites houses a number of community development projects. We understand that this building is to be razed. As well as being concerned for the displacement of the community providers currently operating out of this site, we are troubled by the bigger picture which looks like private development uprooting community service delivery in a community that has been historically underserved. The concern here is not about private development in and of itself but that private development appears to be privileged above and before investment in community infrastructure and service provision.
- The Whau Local Board has been in conversation with the Avondale Jockey Club, Housing New Zealand and the private owners of the currently derelict sites on the Great North Road frontage, known locally as "the old 3 Guys" to vision the best possible Avondale town centre redevelopment. This conversation has proved difficult to date given the various stakeholders' different agendas. Negotiating the regeneration of our town centre is likely to be further complicated if an additional private stakeholder were added to the mix. Delays in action to address our dilapidated town centre are becoming increasingly untenable to Avondale residents.

#### **Opportunities identified by Avondale Community Action:**

- The decision to dispose of 24-26 Racecourse Parade for private sale is revoked.
- ACPL acquires the adjacent privately owned sites of 1909-1949 and 1913-1921 and 1925 Great North Road (the old 3 Guys) and commits those sites as part of the town centre development.
- Development of community infrastructure and service provision are given precedence. This is especially urgent because of our partially condemned Community Centre on Rosebank Road which continues to house a community preschool and other invaluable community services. Avondale is at risk of losing these services altogether if (more likely, when) the remainder of the Community Centre is condemned.
- No further ACPL managed assets located in Avondale's town centre are approved for sale pending the finalisation of the Avondale town centre development plans which are supported by the Whau Local Board and occur in consultation with the community.
- The people of Avondale – parents, students, voters, renters, ratepayers, workers, retirees, children and volunteers – are engaged in decision making and we are treated as genuine stakeholders and as valued contributors to the ongoing development of our diverse and dynamic community.

We will be contacting local and national media on July 4, 2014 with the concerns outlined above. We will also circulate a public petition for the Avondale community to show their support for the opportunities we have identified. We look forward to ongoing conversations with you and with our community about the future of Avondale and welcome your response in writing and in person.

Sincerely,

Avondale Community Action