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MEDIA RELEASE

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Design concepts for a world-class Eden Park revealed

The Eden Park Trust Board today revealed a fresh and contemporary design concept for upgrading Eden Park in preparation for the Rugby World Cup in 2011 and beyond.

“Winning the rights to host the Rugby World Cup has given us a one-off opportunity to make Eden Park into the stadium it should be,” said Rob Fisher, Chair of the Eden Park Development Committee.

“This is our chance to get it right; to secure a world-class experience for the fans, to improve the Park’s effect on the local community, and to deliver long-term economic benefits for Auckland and New Zealand well past 2011 and the Cricket World Cup in 2015,” he said.

Mr Fisher said that in the lead-up to the bid for RWC 2011, there had been an extensive process to consider all options for meeting the tournament’s requirements for a 60,000 seat stadium.

“On every count, upgrading Eden Park came out on top over expanding another ground or a green-fields development.”

Mr Fisher said a green-fields development would have been very difficult to achieve in the timeframe and the cost of land purchase, for example at the Tank Farm (Wynyard Point), would have been cost-prohibitive.

“As it stands, Eden Park already possesses the ASB Stand, the West Stand and a world-class playing surface with a total replacement cost in excess of \$180 million, in addition to the main and number 2 grounds.”

“Eden Park also has the advantage of close proximity to bus and rail services, and to Auckland city’s tourist infrastructure of hotels, entertainment, bars and restaurants.”

Mr Fisher said that by international standards, Eden Park was already well-connected to public transport facilities and that in recent years, patronage had increased significantly. “The redevelopment will make the most of this connectivity and aim to achieve further public transport use by fans.”

Mr Fisher said Auckland also had the population growth to ensure the expanded stadium was financially sustainable over the long term.

Rugby fans who got wet at the All Blacks vs. Ireland test match earlier in June will be pleased to know that the number of covered seats at the stadium will increase by 15,000 to 38,000, providing under cover seating for close to two thirds of the patrons attending matches at the new Eden Park.

However, Mr Fisher said it would not be financially sustainable to put a roof on the stadium.

“We have to keep our feet on the ground. Most major rugby stadia around the world, including Sydney’s Telstra Stadium, Twickenham and Stade de France, do not have a roof. Such developments come with enormous cost, and we can’t compromise the ongoing commercial viability of the Park.”

Mr Fisher said the cost estimate for the project, at \$320m, including escalation and contingency allowances, was not directly comparable to earlier rough estimates, which put the cost at \$160m.

“The \$160m was based on a new South Stand and temporary seating for the tournament. What we are proposing is a different scheme, involving more comprehensive transport initiatives, replacement of the Eastern Terraces, an internal concourse around the ground and a permanent, long-term solution for Eden Park.

“Our decision to opt for a ‘legacy model’ instead of temporary seating or a scaled-back revamp has not been made lightly. We have been through a full commercial analysis and peer review of various design options and costs.

“A scheme based around temporary seating would not have left any benefit to the local or regional community after the Rugby World Cup, and created no ongoing economic pay-off for Auckland and New Zealand,” he said.

“It’s critical that we seize this opportunity and do a great job. This is New Zealand’s chance to shine on the world stage and to lock in the benefits of possessing an international-quality stadium.”

Mr Fisher said costs compared well on a per-seat basis with similar projects [\[Editors: see figures in attached Q&A\]](#).

It is anticipated that a mixture of private and public sector investment will fund the redevelopment.

“Unlike other major New Zealand stadia, Eden Park has not received any substantive ratepayer funding, while providing significant economic spin-offs to the Auckland region and New Zealand as a whole for many years.”

Mr Fisher said it was possible that the governance structure of the Park, which is run by a Trust Board for Auckland Cricket and Auckland Rugby, might well change. “This will depend on the final funding mix.”

John Alexander, Chief Executive of the Eden Park Trust Board said that overall, the new-look Eden Park would have less effect on the community despite accommodating more people.

“Feedback received from community representatives at public meetings earlier this year has been enormously helpful to our design development process. I would like to thank the Sandringham, Kingsland and Mt Eden communities for their input and support to date.

“Specific attention has been given to tackling issues that we acknowledge are of concern to the local community; the visual impact of the Park, improving public transport use, traffic management, noise and light spill, and containing pedestrian movements to and from games.”

The Trust Board is expecting to lodge an application for resource consent in August.

Key benefits of the design include:

- less impact on the local community despite the increased capacity
- better containment of noise and light spill
- increased accessibility to public transport and to Eden Park itself
- fans able to move around inside the ground instead of on neighbouring streets
- greatly improved facilities for fans, including more covered seating, better toilets and easier access to food and beverage facilities.

Key features of the design include:

- total capacity of 60,000 for rugby and approximately 50,000 for cricket
- a new three-tier, South Stand, replacing the old South and South West stands, with a capacity of approximately 24,000. The new South Stand will be larger than the existing stand in height, reaching approximately to the knuckle of the existing light towers
- a new East Stand, with the same three tiers as the South, to replace the Terraces. The new stand will have a far higher standard of amenity for fans and will mitigate effects – less noise and light ‘spill’ – for neighbours
- a state-of-the-art lightweight and transparent appearance to the outer shell of the new stands
- number 1 oval expanded to meet ICC specifications
- improved spectator viewing for cricket fixtures by realigning the cricket wicket to a north/south position
- retractable seats closer to the sideline providing a more intimate rugby experience
- a “front door” for Eden Park off Sandringham Road
- a transport hub, featuring a pedestrian bridge linking Eden Park with Kingsland Station and shops, and a bus and coach drop-off area
- an internal concourse that allows patrons to circulate around the ground inside the stadium, instead of on local streets
- a sports practice area and community green
- world-class facilities in the new South and East stands including food and beverage outlets, toilets and corporate areas, as well as more covered seats – up from 23,000 to approximately 38,000
- community facilities
- a park-like appearance with open green spaces and play areas
- a potential park-and-ride facility
- removal of perimeter fencing, allowing community accessibility

ENDS

For media assistance, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Images

High and low resolution images of the preferred design concept are provided on a CD inside the media kit and on request.

Captions for images

Image 1: Artist's impression of the preferred design for Eden Park.
View from the south-east corner looking towards Kingsland.

Image 2: Artist's impression of the preferred design for Eden Park.
View of the new South Stand from the south-west corner.

Image 3 & 4: Draft site plan