

Puketāpapa Seating Provision Assessment

enabling social connections in 2020

Background

In recent years, an increased importance has been placed on community health and wellbeing. We know that social connection directly supports wellbeing, and that provision of seating can help to provide social opportunities. Auckland Council therefore has a role to play in creating the conditions for people to gather/connect in public open spaces by increasing the availability of seating.

Urbanist Christopher Martin says the best weapon is to sit down and talk, and that we should seek to create convivial and sociable spaces, as well as enjoyable cities where everyone can come together and be human.

This will only become more relevant as communities seek to rebuild their connections and support networks following the global pandemic of 2020.

In Financial Year (FY) 19/20 the Puketāpapa Local Board funded a seating network provision assessment in their local board area, focused on public open space within the parks network.

The aim of this provision assessment was to identify where seating is currently provided across the open spaces network within Puketāpapa, and suggest possible locations for additional seating, if required. Streetscape seats including bus stops are Auckland Transport (AT) assets and not governed by the local board. However, a less comprehensive analysis has also been undertaken on these assets.

This study raised the opportunity to consider:

Supporting Aucklanders connection to parks and to people, as well as being more active, more often, by:

- Considering accessibility
- Increase in seating in areas where aged population levels are highest
- Provision of seating in conjunction with drinking fountains or walkways

Non-asset-based seating, including:

- Hang out spaces / gathering spaces
- Spaces for crowds watching sports
- Spaces for picnics and connecting with nature
- Places for large gatherings where casual sport/volleyball can be played
- Friendship Benches
- User-configuration of space

Strategic Context

Particularly relevant for this investigation is the Parks and Open Space Strategic Action Plan outcome of 'Enjoy - make safe and welcoming places', including:

- Considering Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Universal design principles to ensure parks and open spaces are accessible to everyone
- Gathering spaces that are overlooked by neighbours and passers-by
- Social spaces, in places with street frontage on two or three sides

The Auckland Design Manual also references the location of seating:

- In convenient and visible locations next to areas of activity, such as playgrounds and beside paths, to allow access for all users
- Incorporating seating into playgrounds and other elements
- In a variety of locations that offer sun and shade
- In areas where users are offered maximum comfort, bearing in mind wind and seasonal variations
- Seating should provide views of other park users and features
- Suit the habits and needs of the existing and intended park users in order to place seating in a relevant and meaningful way. Consider the social setting and traditions
- Not placed too close to bins, to avoid unpleasant rubbish odours affecting users
- Near barbeques and tables
- Co-located (cluster) to avoid clutter and promote social connection
- Connected to the circulation path where possible

In addition, picnic tables are recommended to be placed

- In convenient and visible locations to ensure use. Place them next to areas of activity, such as playgrounds, to allow access for all users
- In a variety of locations that offer both sun and shade
- In areas where users are offered maximum comfort, bearing in mind wind and seasonal variations locate picnic tables to meet habits and needs of existing and intended park users. Consider social setting and traditions
- Close to barbeques and seating
- Co-locate (cluster) to avoid clutter and promote social connection

Finally, the Open Space Provision Policy 2016 identifies guiding principles for best practice provision metrics at the acquisition and development stage, that primarily achieve social outcomes for all open space typologies.

Puketāpapa Local Board Context

Puketāpapa is a diverse local board area, with almost half of the population having been born overseas, more any other region in Auckland. In the 2013 census, 44% of residents identified as Asian (including Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Filipino and Korean communities), 16% Pacific and 6% Māori. There are also a number of African migrant communities living in the area.

Puketāpapa is also a local board facing significant growth, with the population expected to increase from 60,000 to 74,000 in the next fifteen years. This will be most pronounced at key growth areas in Wesley, Roskill South, Three Kings and Royal Oak. This growth is likely to put pressure on the network of local parks. As population density increases these parks will become more important as sites for community activity and connectedness.

Loneliness & Isolation

In the last Quality of Life Survey (2016) Puketāpapa local board residents were asked over the past 12 months how often, if ever you have felt lonely or isolated? 44% of respondents said they were sometimes lonely, considerably higher than any other local board area in Auckland.

The New Zealand Longitudinal Study of Ageing, which surveyed older people aged between 54 and 70 years found the strongest predictor of both physical and mental ill health was loneliness (Budge C, 2014).

Loneliness was also identified In FY 17/18 through an investigation to identify the open space needs and opportunities for diverse communities within the local board area. Several stakeholders talked about recent migrant, refugee and older people feeling socially isolated and lacking community connectedness.

The resulting Diversity in Parks Report and action plan (**Appendix B**) was adopted by the Puketāpapa Local Board at their November 2018 business meeting (Resolution PKTPP/2018/211). Actions to address and reduce loneliness and isolation in diverse communities included programming, and consideration for the installation of a friendship bench. This would be designed by the local community and would be a place for people to chat and connect, helping to foster connections and friendships in the local community.

Healthy Puketāpapa Action Plan 2020

The Healthy Puketāpapa Action Plan (HPAP) focusses on changes to where we live, learn, work, and play to improve health and wellbeing. The plan will deliver a mix of initiatives across Puketāpapa that target those most impacted by harm or poor health outcomes, with emphasis on the areas of the local board impacted by housing change. Actions will be developed with the communities and will integrate with council, community and agency programmes.

Feedback during the development of the plan highlighted community desire for parks and green spaces to be opportunities to connect both with other people and nature to promote wellbeing. Children who participated in the 2019 Children's Panel on Health gave a very strong message that building connections with whānau and neighbours was important to

them. This message of making connections across generations and diverse communities also came through strongly from the recent community prioritisation workshops.

Work undertaken to improve connections and reduce isolation impacts directly on three HPAP priority areas; encourage movement, less use of harmful substances and healthy homes. Additionally, the community prioritised 'Encourage Movement' and 'continue park developments to meet community need' in the top two actions for implementation.

Out & About

There is much to be learnt from this inclusive program, which provides opportunities for parts of a community that can often be excluded due to cost of transport and being put off organised sport. The focus on play and on inclusivity is something that for young and old can create the conditions for social connection.

Locations where out and about activities are planned can help to inform placement of seating or the non-asset based recommendations considered within this report, therefore enhancing the out and about programme and providing opportunities for connection in sites where there is a strong community.

Drinking Fountains

In March 2019 a drinking fountain provision gap analysis was adopted for Puketāpapa by the local board. The aim of this provision assessment was to identify where drinking fountains were currently installed across parks and open spaces and suggest possible locations for additional drinking fountains to create a robust network (**Appendix C**).

Any improvements to the drinking fountain network within Puketāpapa will result in:

- Improved access to tap water in public open spaces
- Behavioural change to reduce consumption of sugary drinks
- Better physical and oral health and reduced levels of obesity
- Less plastic waste and improved environmental health

Accessibility

By 2030, we expect more than 50% of people over the age of 65 to have at least one impairment. In the 2013 Census, the NZ Disability Survey estimated 19% of residents in the Puketāpapa Local Board area live with a disability.

Considering the large number of residents who have language or cultural differences, parents with young children, and those aged over 65, accessibility becomes a key component when planning and designing parks in the Puketāpapa area.

Staff considered a 200M buffer in all areas above 10 percent and investigated increasing seating provision where possible to 100M to enable ongoing participation within our open spaces for the elderly or impaired (**Appendix D**).

Gap analysis

Parks & Reserves

Parks Services assessed the current provision of seating across Puketāpapa, undertaking a desktop exercise. All furniture within park boundaries was included, including both picnic tables and seats (Figure 1.). Further analysis involved drawing a 200m buffer around park seats to determine level of provision and to identify any gaps in provision (Figure 2.).

Staff found that generally there is adequate provision of seating/furniture within parks. Onsite inspections revealed that seating across all sites was placed in accordance with the strategic principles outlined later in this document.

Minor gaps in provision were found within the following parks and reserves:

- Hendry Reserve
- John Moore
- Frederick St
- Bamfield Reserve
- Wesley Bay Glade
- Wattle Bay Reserve
- Halleys Rd Drainage Reserve

On closer inspection, these sites had poor topography, CPTED concerns, or poor alignment with the key principles outlined later in this document. Hence the identified gaps and why new seating/furniture for these parks is not included in the recommendations section of the document.

Road Reserves

Parks Services assessed the current asset provision across Puketāpapa, undertaking a desktop exercise as before, mapping location (Figure 1.) and provision (Figure 2.). We noted opportunities to investigate providing more seating in the Stoddard Road area zoned as business town centre.

Minor gaps in provision were found in the locations below:

- Stoddard/May/Richardson Roads
- Duke/Dominion Roads
- White Swan/Ellis/John David Roads
- Boundary/ Kimberly Hall/ Ellis/Webster Roads
- Miliken/Bremner/ Penny Roads
- Richardson, Hillsborough (Lynfield Reserve to Waikwohai Park) Roads
- Whitmore, Stamford/Rogan/ Richardson/ Oakdale/Eaton/ Hillsborough, McCullough/Mt Albert, Mt Eden/St Andrews/Buckley/Landscape/Selwyn Roads.
- Frost/Dornwell/Carr, Queenstown/BelAir, Hendry/Queenstown/Seacliffe/Bamfield, Wesley Bay Glade.

This asset group sits with AT and there are different provision criteria for where seating is provided which depends on transportation routes or town centre footprints. The key area for improvement was identified as the Stoddard Road zones, given the Mt Roskill Integrated Area Plan identifies the need to create more precincts here in the future. This information will be passed to AT for their consideration.

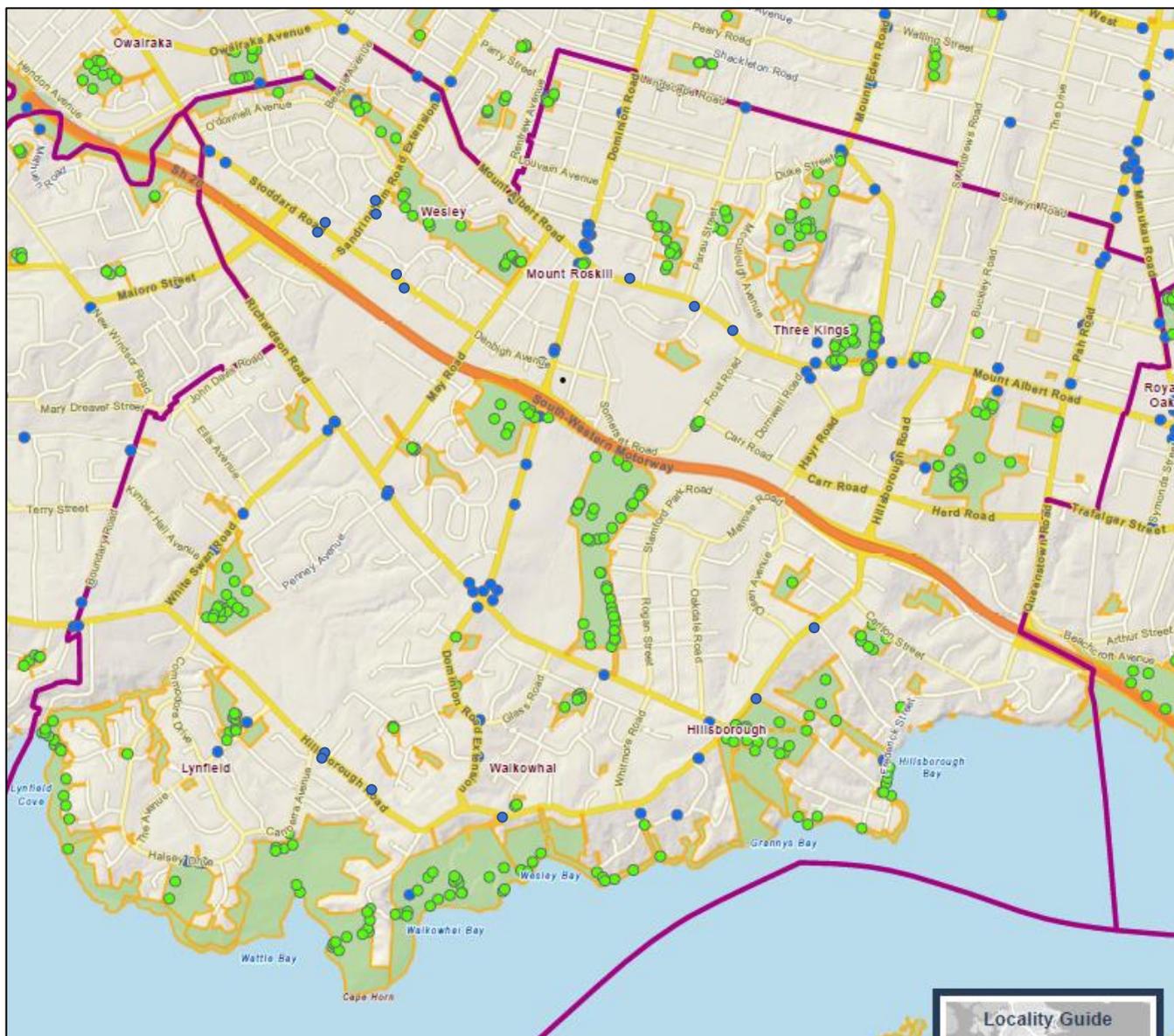


Figure 1 - Furniture Locations in the Puketāpapa Local Board area, including both within parks (green) and in streetscapes (blue). Data compiled from Auckland Council SAP system and AT My-Stop Map.

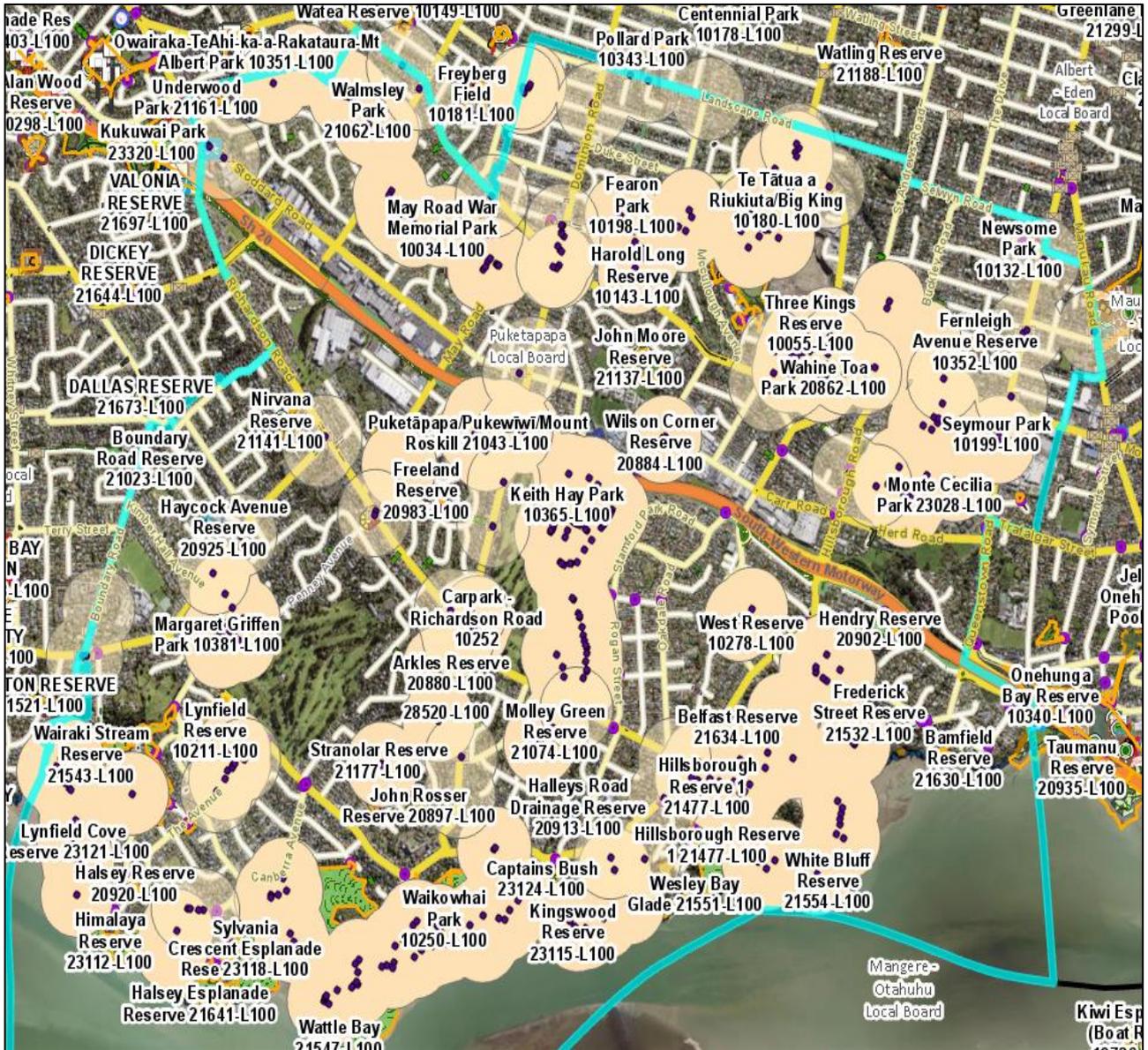


Figure 2 - Furniture Locations in the Puketāpapa Local Board area with 200m provision circles. Dark circles are for Park Furniture, lighter circles for Streetscape Furniture. Compiled from Auckland Council SAP system.

Parks Services Analysis

Parks Services staff have considered relevant literature around the provision of seating and the needs of park users and have produced a list of principles to identify appropriate provision for new furniture in Puketāpapa.

Key Principles

- Consider the habits and needs of the existing and intended park users to provide seating in a relevant and meaningful way.
- Consider the diverse communities of park users present within Puketāpapa.
- Consider Universal Design principles to ensure seating provided is accessible to everyone, with good connection to existing paths.
- Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve safety for users.
- Prioritise sites with active or planned projects as part of the community facilities work programme renewals, park service level upgrades, or those which are favoured by programmes such as Out and About.
- Prioritise parks with existing concept plans that refer to possible seating areas, given there is some existing level of community expectation.
- Prioritise locations in parks with higher usage over smaller parks as their addition will positively impact a larger number of people in these sites.
- Consider:
 - Friendship benches
 - Hang out spaces for youth
 - Gathering space under trees
 - Areas near sports fields for crowds
 - Areas near playgrounds for caregivers
 - Proximity to other infrastructure like drinking fountains and shade
 - Places for large gatherings where casual sport/volleyball can be played
 - Relocatable or temporary furniture.

Recommendations

1. Consider an increase in seating provision in conjunction with outlined principals, from a 200m > 100m buffer to support all Aucklanders being more active more often within:

- Three Kings Reserve
- Monte Cecelia Park
- Hillsborough Park and Cemetery
- Wairaki Stream Reserve
- Lynfield Cove - Waikowhai Park
- Margaret Griffen Park
- Keith Hay Park
- Walmsley/Underwood Park
- May Road War Memorial Park
- Fearon Park
- Arthur Faulkner

2. Trial friendship benches at one of the following parks and reserves. These sites have been chosen because they have the greatest alignment with Parks Services analysis provision principles and align with HPAP focus on areas impacted by housing change:

- Walmsley/Underwood Park
- May Road War Memorial Park
- Turner Reserve
- Molley Green Reserve

3. Parks Services and Community Facilities to work with Te Tupuna Maunga Authority, Healthy Puketāpapa and the Active Recreation team as well as Roskill Together and other community groups to identify non-asset-based opportunities for inclusion/activation, not currently captured within their programs.

Investigate these locations, chosen because they primarily achieve recreational or social outcomes and capture areas impacted by housing change:

- John Moore Reserve
- Walmsley/Underwood Park
- May Road War Memorial Park
- Three Kings Reserve
- Taylors Bay
- Waikowhai Park
- Wairaki Stream Reserve
- Puketāpapa & Te Tātua a Riukiuta (Tupuna Maunga Authority)
- Taumanu Reserve (Maungakiekie-Tamaki)
- Owairaka Park (Albert-Eden)
- Turner Reserve
- Molley Green
- Hillsborough Park
- Monte Cecelia Park
- Manukau Domain
- Keith Hay Park

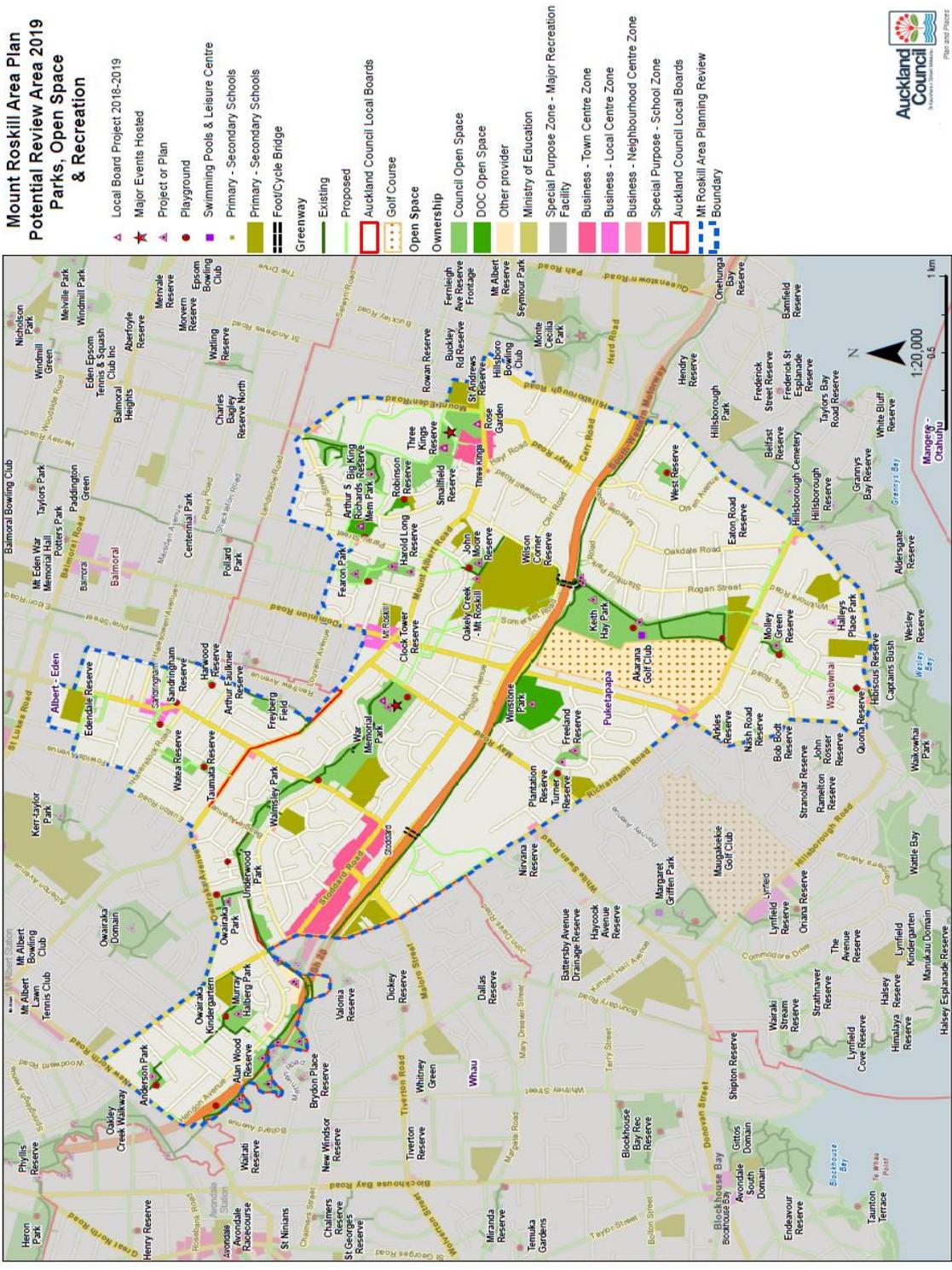
4. Parks Services and Community Facilities to work with Auckland Transport to identify opportunities to close gaps within the streetscape as identified by Parks Services and captured within the Mt Roskill Integrated Area Plan 2019. Especially on major arterials and connections to town centres, not currently captured within their programs.

- Stoddard Road
- Mt Roskill
- Three Kings

Noting: This asset group sits with AT and there are different provision criteria for where seating is provided, which depends on transportation routes or town centre footprints.

Appendix A

Mt Roskill Area Plan Zoning - Streetscape zones in shades of pink (see key)



Appendix B

Diversity in Puketāpapa Parks Study - Actions

Theme	Actions	Department	Opportunity / Programme
Health and Wellbeing	Provide improved information on walking & cycling routes in diverse languages	AT, PSR	Translation of existing fliers
	Continue to invest in the expansion and maintenance of walking and cycling routes	CF, AT	Greenways Plan implementation
	Support walking and cycling activation programmes	ACE, PSR	Bike Kitchen
	Investigate and provide sheltered areas with a solid surface to enable picnics and recreation	PSR, CF	Shade/Shelter Provision Assessment
	Investigate covering basketball courts so they can be used in all weather	PSR, CF	Shade/Shelter Provision Assessment
	Investigate and provide clustered exercise equipment within local parks	PSR, CF	
Cultural Exchange and Celebration	Partner with diverse community groups to introduce more local community festivals	ACE	
	Consider introducing a local community night market	ACE	
	Consider facilitating singing and dancing activities on local parks	ACE, PSR	Out & About Programme, RYZ ?
	Support the development of new community gardens to grow local food knowledge	ACE, PSR	
	Provide lighting and power sources where appropriate to facilitate community events and projects	PSR, CF	

Inclusion and Access	Provide guides and maps including key amenities and transport options in diverse languages	PSR	
	Provide targeted community organisations and their members a workshop on how to plan an event and make bookings on parks	ACE, PSR	
Activation of Parks	Facilitate exercise programmes in parks, especially zumba, yoga, tai chi and singing/dancing	PSR, ACE	Out & About Programme, RYZ ??
	Promote exercise programmes to diverse communities in parks with targeted comms	PSR, ACE	Out & About Programme, RYZ
	Work with sports codes and local sporting communities to ensure there is adequate provision for informal sports in local parks	PSR	
	Prioritise projects to improve CPTED practises within parks	CF	
	Provide more varied play equipment suitable for all ages from babies to teenagers	PSR, CF	
	Increase opportunities for diverse ethnic communities to be involved in ongoing volunteering work in the area	PSR	Migrant Community Volunteer Coordinator

Appendix D

Demographics map Puketāpapa – percentage of citizens over 65 years of age.

