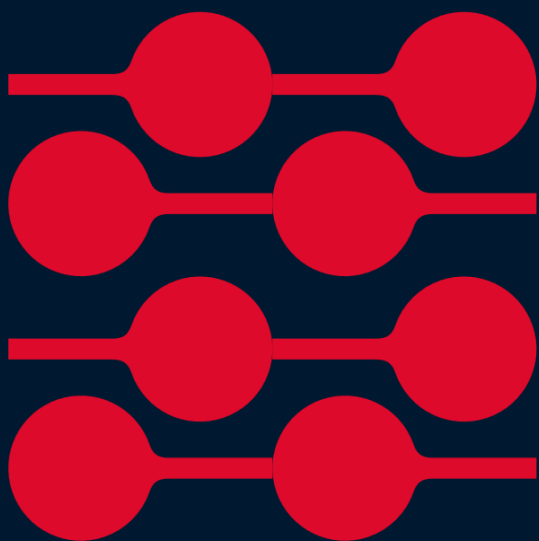


Manaaki Tāmaki Makaurau



New Zealand Case Studies

2025, Version 1.0





Collaborating with mana whenua to enhance the natural world and provide new spaces for play

Te Māra Hūpara Playground

Location: Mount Roskill, Auckland

Project description

Part of the Healthy Waters stream restoration project to revitalise Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek), Te Māra Hūpara is a traditional Māori playground in Mount Roskill. Developed through collaboration with mana whenua and local schools, the playground showcases how pūrākau (cultural narratives) can be woven into a space that enhances Te Taiao (the natural world) within budget constraints. It is composed of a scattering aro-tākaro (traditional play items) across a green space beside the restored stream.

When: Opened in July 2019.

Who: Auckland Council's Healthy Waters, in collaboration with Boffa Miskell, Fulton Hogan and KaiMatariki Trust. Kaitiaki for Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Tamaoho, Te Ākitai Waiohūa, Ngāti Te Ata, and Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei.

Costs: Less than \$150,000.

Key insights

1. Nga Aro-Tākaro play objects offer a cost-effective way to deliver environmentally sensitive play areas for tamariki that **celebrate cultural narratives**.
2. **Repurposing natural materials** excavated during the development of new open spaces helps protect the natural environment and enhance our response to climate disruption.
3. Sustained and substantive **community consultation** during the development process enriches the value of our open spaces.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Partners with local iwi to improve community buy-in, representativeness and accessibility.
- Celebrates Māori identity.



Enhance our response to climate disruption

- Minimises waste from construction materials
- Encourages nature-based mātauranga Māori sustainability practices.



Enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage

- Utilises found and recycled natural materials.
- Protects and restores indigenous tree and vegetation ecologies.
- Weaves te ao Māori through all aspects of its design.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Provides a multi-use space for exploration and play that encourages active recreation.
- Collaborates with mana whenua to foster engagement with Tāmaki Makaurau's indigenous history.



Hikeike (wooden posts) that dot the playground. Image credit: Jay Farnworth.



Local schoolchildren playing on kōpapa. Image credit: OurAuckland.

What motivated the project?

Before the construction of Te Māra Hūpara, the area around Te Auaunga was one of the most underserved areas in Tāmaki Makaurau in terms of open space. In response, Auckland Council's Healthy Waters and mana whenua collaborated to design a playspace that would meet the needs of the community while enhancing the site's ecological significance and celebrating its cultural heritage. The goal was to transform a neglected area into a space for tamariki to play in new and culturally sensitive ways.

Case study 1



1. Cultural learning and storytelling

The networks of aro-tākaro that make up Te Māra Hūpara provide a powerful tool for showcasing te ao Māori and protecting heritage through cultural storytelling and learning. Each aro-tākaro was carefully chosen in partnership with mana whenua to align with the values and histories of indigenous settlement near Te Auaunga. All aro-tākaro were built with natural materials from the site or rescued from waste from other projects. These objects bring Māori stories and cultural narratives to life with tamariki able to dart along kōpapa and jump between hikeikei much as many kaumatua and mana whenua ancestors once did. Key aro-tākaro include:

- Dozens of hikeikei (wooden posts) for children to balance, jump and run across – many of which were decorated by local schoolchildren
- Upturned swamp kauri roots that are linked together by kōpapa, networks of horizontal logs that create elevated walkways
- A totore tree for children to climb on
- Multiple connecting wera-te-paatu (stepping stone paths made from repurposed rocks).

2. Recycling and revitalising Te Taiao

Te Māra Hūpara is a leading example of how environmentally sensitive design can enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage at a low cost. It showcases:

- **Use of recycled materials:** Across the park, key construction elements were sourced from the surrounding landscape and other projects, utilising fallen trees, basalt rock, mulch and earth excavated to widen Te Auaunga, repurposed power poles, and ancient swamp kauri stumps. Minimising development costs, these resources were saved from waste and transformed into taonga for future generations to enjoy.
- **Restoring and protecting local ecology:** Considerable efforts were taken throughout the development process to save all existing native trees on the site. Notably, all kahikatea trees were transplanted with no losses. The areas next to Te Auaunga were planted with native vegetation representative of traditional stream ecology in Tāmaki Makaurau. Similarly, shrubs, sedges and rushes were planted site-wide to protect the roots of mature trees. Most of this vegetation was grown locally at the Te Whangai Trust community-led kōpapa nursery sited at Mt Roskill Intermediate.
- **Overcoming budgetary constraints:** The park's utilisation of on-site materials enabled it to be completed for less than its relatively small \$120,000 budget. Such constraints may have impeded the development of more conventional playgrounds.

3. Substantive community consultation

Te Māra Hūpara was developed through a design process that placed emphasis on gathering input from local schools, iwi and the broader community. This focus enabled the playground to deliver multiple benefits and enjoy diverse participation. It showcases:

- **Connecting with tamariki:** During the consultation process, local school children were encouraged to draw and discuss how they would like to play in nature. Among other elements, they emphasised desires to climb, jump, play pretend, and explore. These aspects were directly translated into the selection of aro-tākaro for the park. Additionally, children were also invited to decorate several aro-tākaro with traditional Māori designs.
- **Collaborating with mana whenua:** Kaitiaki from local iwi were involved in all aspects of the design process and were the initiators of the aro-tākaro selection process. This enabled the objects to respectfully speak to the heritage of Te Auaunga and its pūrākau.



Example of consultation performed with tamariki. Image credit: Boffa Miskell / Owairaka Primary School.

References

Boffa Miskell, *"Te Māra Hūpara Playground"*

Roskill Development, *"Local children engage with the Māra Hūpara playground design for Molley Green Reserve"*

Auckland Council, *"Māra Hūpara – ancient innovation in play, learning and exercise"*



School trip to Te Māra Hūpara. Image credit: Boffa Miskell.



Reimagining our city streets as spaces for tamariki to learn and play

Play Streets

Location: Across Aotearoa

Project description

Play Streets are small, community-led local gatherings enabled by temporarily restricting vehicle traffic on local streets. These initiatives enable communities to open up streets in their neighbourhood for a few hours, providing a safe space for tamariki to play and residents to interact with one another. After the successes of several pilot programmes held across Aotearoa since 2019, hosting a Play Street has since been easier through the 'Community Streets' provision in Waka Kotahi's 2023 'Reshaping Streets' regulatory framework. This provision empowers communities to apply to host a Play Street and makes it simpler for local councils to facilitate them.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Reimagines people-centred activity.
- Tailors play to our communities' differing needs.



Deliver innovative open spaces in high-density areas

- Showcases a scalable model for delivering play spaces where there is limited land availability.
- Reimagines city streets as spaces for play and connection.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Gives a clear way for residents to provide play opportunities in their communities.
- Enhances play equity in areas with limited access to playgrounds or sporting facilities.
- Requires limited funding and oversight.
- Enhances the safety and connectivity of neighbourhood recreation.



What motivated the project?

Learning from the successes of Play Streets-style projects and frameworks in the UK and Australia, Play Streets are about moving away from understanding play as something that can only happen in playgrounds or sports fields. In contrast to these equipment-based approaches where providing spaces for play is often a costly endeavour, Play Streets are about empowering children and communities to play in public spaces.

When: Held across Aotearoa since 2019, supported by regulatory changes since 2023.

Who: Collectively delivered, with community-based organisations working alongside communities, local councils, Sport NZ, Waka Kotahi and other organisations to reimagine streets.

Costs: Minimal set-up costs.

Key insights

1. **People-centred** open spaces and play areas encourage play equity, community buy-in and neighbourhood connection.
2. Providing **unstructured play opportunities** is a simple, scalable and cost-effective way to help meet the recreation needs of underserved communities.
3. Play Streets showcase our city streets' untapped potential to **connect** people, spaces and communities.



One of the first Play Streets pilots. Image credit: Sport NZ.



Play Street pilot in Tāmaki Makaurau. Image credit: Gino Demeer / Auckland Council.



Play Street pilot in Auckland. Image credit: Healthy Families Waitākere.



1. People-centred open spaces

Play Streets, and the specific provisions and toolkits that have emerged to facilitate their implementation, directly empower local communities to transform their streets into accessible, safe and playful environments. Residents lead this process, fostering a sense of ownership and investment.

- **Community-specific benefits:** By being community-planned and community-led, Play Streets can directly respond to the differing needs, requirements and cultures of our local communities. For example, after Cyclone Gabrielle some communities expressed that their tamariki felt increasingly disconnected and desperately needed more play experiences. According to one participant, a 2023 Play Street met this specific need and, for their child, “connecting with those children close to them who have had a similar experience was really valuable.”
- **Enhancing community buy-in:** Sometimes, residents can feel disconnected from the planning and implementation of recreation initiatives. This problem is especially pronounced in areas that have been historically underserved in terms of open space. By giving residents ownership over their streets and involving them across all aspects of planning and execution, Play Streets enable communities to see the benefits of creating safe, inclusive and active spaces for their children. Play Streets overwhelmingly increase community buy-in for future initiatives.

2. Simple and accessible unstructured play

Play Streets provide opportunities for tamariki to engage in creative and imaginative activities by transforming ordinary spaces into dynamic playgrounds where children can explore, socialise and play freely. This can be done by simply restricting traffic on a quiet road for a few hours. The focus of Play Streets is simplicity and accessibility, enabling communities across Aotearoa to quickly set up their own play spaces.

- **Low cost, high impact:** Setting up a Play Street only requires temporary street closures, immediate neighbourhood consent and limited materials, making it an affordable and accessible way to provide recreation opportunities. Since the introduction of Waka Kotahi’s 2023 regulatory framework, this process has been made even easier, with clear guidelines on how to apply for a Play Street, how to find resources and how to ensure safety during the events. The accessibility of Play Streets makes them an appropriate model for providing recreation opportunities where there is limited land availability.

- **Supporting healthy lifestyles:** Play Streets encourage unstructured outdoor play that fosters emotional growth, active lives and helps children build social skills through interaction with peers. These factors are key to combatting sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles in communities lacking accessible or affordable recreation opportunities. According to survey data, almost 70% of tamariki play outside more in the weeks following a Play Street.

3. Using our streets to connect

More than just providing new opportunities for recreation, Play Streets facilitate connections between neighbours, both young and old.

- **Enhancing community connections:** Feedback from neighbourhoods who have participated in Play Streets initiatives has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have emphasised a newfound sense of connection with their neighbours.
- **Strengthening resilience:** By providing opportunities for children and neighbours to interact through play, Play Streets enhance the building of social bonds and the resilience, safety and connectivity of our neighbourhoods.



Play Street pilot in Tāmaki Makaurau. Image credit: Gino Demeer / Auckland Council.

References

- Stuff, [*“Waka Kotahi initiative: Yes, children, you can play in the street”*](#).
 Sport NZ, [*“Play Streets Aotearoa Toolkit”*](#)
 Healthy Families South Auckland, [*“Neighbourhood input sought for ‘Play Streets’ initiative”*](#)
 Sport NZ, [*“Play Streets are easy – and fun!”*](#)



Play Street pilot held in Tāmaki Makaurau. Image credit: Healthy Families Waitākere.



Enhancing the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika youth through targeted engagement

Active Youth Wellness Programme

Location: Across Auckland

Project description

The Active Youth Wellness Programme was a targeted initiative to enhance the physical fitness and overall wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika youth in Auckland. Focusing on young people aged 14 to 18, the multi-faceted programme worked to increase youth participation in physical activity, recreation accessibility and promote holistic wellbeing. Originally implemented across four sites in Auckland, the programme then expanded to seven locations. At each, it delivered multiple benefits for rangatahi, supporting youth hauora and empowering leadership skills.

When: Initially delivered over a 20-week period in 2017, it then expanded into an ongoing 12-week programme.

Who: An Auckland Council-funded initiative delivered by Community Leisure Management (CLM) in partnership with CLM Community Sport. Active Youth providers included A|Fitness, Sport Spasifik Harbour Sport, LivFit Health, Ruapotaka Marae, Wiki Workz, and CLM- and Auckland Council-run pools and leisure centres across Auckland.

Costs: For example, Auckland Council funded CLM \$25,000 in 2019/20 to deliver the programme.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Partnership between multiple organisations to enable greater access and responsiveness
- Showcases Māori identity and culture as a point of difference
- Offers an expandable model for targeted fitness programmes



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Provides opportunities for multiple forms of recreation
- Fosters feelings of inclusivity and belonging through community engagement
- Leverages our existing facilities to provide new and different recreation opportunities
- Targets less physically active Aucklanders and those currently underserved in terms of recreation opportunities
- Celebrates te ao Māori and holistic conceptions of wellbeing



Key insights

1. Targeted programmes are useful to help **overcome barriers** to accessing recreation
2. Initiatives premised on mātauranga Māori and **holistic wellbeing** provide participants with multiple benefits.
3. **Organisational partnerships** can be leveraged to provide tailored programmes that respond to specific communities.



Active Youth participants. Image credit: CLM and CLM Community Sport.

What motivated the project?

The programme was initiated in response to challenges preventing many Māori and Pasifika youth in Auckland from participating in recreational activities. CLM recognised that there was a need for accessible and affordable recreation opportunities tailored to the specific needs of these rangatahi. Leveraging multiple organisational partnerships for its delivery, the programme aimed to provide much more than fitness opportunities. It sought to develop a sense of belonging, leadership and holistic wellbeing for those young people.



Active Youth participants on the North Shore. Image credit: CLM and CLM Community Sport.



1. Overcoming barriers to access

The Active Youth Wellness Programme focused on increasing physical activity levels and wellbeing for Māori and Pasifika youth. Many in these communities have expressed that they face significant barriers to accessing recreation. To overcome this, the programme offered a targeted approach focused on flexibility and engagement with rangatahi. It provided a range of free recreation opportunities that were tailored to their specific needs and what they would want to engage with.

- **Being flexible:** Young people live busy lives and often say that they do not have the time or energy to devote to fitness or wellness programmes. The programme prioritises flexibility, with fun activities, classes and workshops scheduled around participants and their needs.
- **Prioritising meaningful engagement:** It is often very challenging to keep young people interested in long-term recreation programmes. Because of this, ensuring constant engagement was key to the programme's success. The programme engaged with rangatahi across multiple levels, sharing motivational social media posts, providing regular and personalised communication, and working closely with participants' whanau. This engagement was maintained throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, where Active Youth instructors regularly caught up with rangatahi over Zoom.
- **Responding to participants:** Through consultation with rangatahi in 2017, the initiative was substantively redesigned around what they wanted to achieve and how the programme could best help them. Initially, the programme was to be run like a traditional boot camp. But, after many said this would not work for them, it was redesigned to emphasise skill development and short-term goal setting. This had a positive impact on their engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

2. Enhancing holistic wellbeing

Often, traditional fitness programmes aimed at increasing the physical activity and health of rangatahi can feel isolating and offer little outside of improving fitness levels. The Active Youth Wellness Programme, following the Te Whare Tapa Wha Māori health model, had increased feelings of connection, belonging and resilience among participants. The programme began with an individual fitness consult before moving to fitness testing, the development of a nutrition plan and diary, small group fitness sessions and multiple wellbeing and leadership activities.

- **Encouraging rangatiratanga:** Through leadership workshops and goal-setting activities, participants build self-confidence and leadership skills. This helps foster resilience, decision-making and personal growth, equipping them with skills to live healthy, active lives outside the programme.
- **Belonging and community:** Following Te Whare Tapa Wha, wellbeing is deeply connected to feelings of belonging and

community. Enhancing these feelings was a priority for the programme. Throughout the programme, participants were brought together and connected with their peers, community organisations and the local police. After the programme ended, many participants said it had given them a sense of belonging and camaraderie, incentivising their continued engagement with the programme.

- **Healthy, active futures:** Through its nutrition education, tailored fitness goal setting and support services, the programme equipped rangatahi with the tools and mindset needed for lifelong healthy, active lives.

3. Organisational partnerships

The programme was jointly delivered by multiple organisations across multiple gyms, marae and recreational facilities. Through this, it leveraged the specific expertise and resources of multiple organisations, ensuring a robust and tailored approach across Auckland. This was as a particularly important facet of the programme during its 2017 pilot implementation, where CLM and CLM Community Sport facilitated communication with local schools, communities and churches to encourage participation at specific venues tailored to what their communities wanted (including a Pasifika-run gym on the North Shore, marae in east Auckland and community gyms in central and south Auckland).



Active Youth participants in Ōtāhuhu. Image credit: CLM and CLM Community Sport.

References

- Active Youth Wellness Programme, "[*Active Youth is back for 2019!*](#)"
 Sport NZ, "[*Active Youth Wellness Programme*](#)"
 Active Youth NZ, "[*News*](#)"
 Active Youth NZ, "[*About the programme*](#)"



Participants at a Ki-o-rahi session. Image credit: CLM and CLM Community Sport.



Open spaces can deliver multiple benefits without compromising its primary purpose

Te Ara Awataha, Awataha Greenway

Location: Northcote, Auckland

Project description

Te Ara Awataha forms a 1.5km network of green, blue and grey spaces running through Northcote from Papa ki Awataha / Jessie Tonar Scout Reserve to Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve connecting the community to local destinations, schools, town centres and public transport hubs. Lowering Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve brings multiple benefits like stormwater management while still serving the community as a sports park. Daylighting the Awataha Stream restores local identity and controls stormwater flow.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Connecting open spaces, schools, town centre, and homes enables greater community access to existing green, blue and grey spaces.
- Better walking and cycling connections increase community wellbeing and neighbourhood coherence.



Enhance our response to climate disruption

- Daylighting the stream effectively manages stormwater.
- Lowering Greenslade Reserve provides a detention reservoir while still functioning as a sports park.



Enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage

- Daylighting the stream also restore the stream's mauri (life essence), improves water quality and enhances the wildlife habitat.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Provides active transport connections to key locations within the Northcote community.
- Outdoor classroom and stream measuring and monitoring stations along with a nature play trail that weaves back and forth across the stream offer an interactive journey.



What motivated the project?

The Te Ara Awataha project aims to restore Northcote's natural and cultural heritage and enhance urban resilience by daylighting the Awataha Stream and integrating innovative stormwater management. This blue-green corridor connects key areas of the neighbourhood, promoting sustainable living and recreation while addressing flooding issues.

When: To be constructed in stages over 8 years. First stage opened in 2022, final stage to be completed in coming years.

Who: Eke Panuku in collaboration with Kāinga Ora, Kaipātiki Local Board, mana whenua, Healthy Waters, Parks and Community Facilities and local stakeholders.

Costs: Estimated budget approx. \$25 million.

Key insights

1. The 1.5km **blue-green corridor** creates a network of reserves, public spaces, streets, the town centre and schools, offering a safe and healthy environment for people and wildlife.
2. **Multiple benefits** delivered through Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve being lowered to maximise stormwater capacity and provide a detention reservoir as well as being a sports park.
3. **Daylighting** the Awataha Stream restores wildlife and preserves local identity.
4. **Co-designed with mana whenua and local communities** to integrate cultural narratives and design elements and encourage **community-led restoration**, building a sense of guardianship over the place.



Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve sports park was lowered, and a wetland constructed to better manage stormwater. Image credit: Eke Panuku, Te Ara Awataha.



Shared spaces including path connecting schools, play spaces, community and homes. Image credit: Eke Panuku, Te Ara Awataha.



1. Blue-green corridor connecting green, blue and grey spaces

Te Ara Awataha is a blue-green corridor that connects people not just with their destination but with nature. It offers:

- **Enhanced public access to open spaces:** The blue-green corridor connects a range of green, blue and grey spaces including Papa ki Awataha / Jessie Tonar Scout Reserve, Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve, Northcote town centre, Kukari pocket park, Northcote Intermediate School and Onepoto Primary School.
- **Natural play:** There is an outdoor classroom and measuring and monitoring stations. Along with a play trail, which weaves back and forth across the stream and its banks, it offers an interactive journey through Northcote with immersive 'nature play' attractions to stop and enjoy along the way.
- **New walking and cycling routes:** It provides new routes connecting homes, schools and recreation spaces, promoting low-emissions travel and enhancing climate resilience.

2. Deliver multiple benefits without compromising its primary purpose

The renovation of Te Kaitaka / Greenslade Reserve sports park delivers multiple benefits:

- **Stormwater management while being a sports field for the community:** The lowered field functions as a catchment for heavy rainfall flows while retaining its primary purpose as sports park as well as shared backyard for Northcote residents.
- **Social cohesion that connects people to nature:** Te Ara Awataha provides sheltered rest areas for relaxation and socialisation. The shared path will safely connect school children and the community to local destinations, including schools, homes, play spaces and the town centre. This supports a healthy, resilient and inclusive community.

3. Daylighting the Awataha stream

Confined to an underground pipe since the 1950s, the Awataha Stream has been daylighted. This delivers multiple benefits:

- **Improved stormwater management:** Resolves long-standing stormwater issues in Northcote while creating a valued and resilient environmental asset. Redirecting the underground pipes above ground improves the stormwater network and serves as a functioning urban wetland with publicly accessible open spaces.
- **Restoring mauri (life essence) of the stream:** Since the restoration there has been an increasing variety of birds at Papa ki Awataha / Jessie Tonar Scout Reserve, including tuī, kererū, kotare and tauhou, as well as familiar introduced species. Even kākā have been spotted – a first local sighting of the native in over 30 years.

4. Co-designed with mana whenua and community-led restoration

The project team worked closely with mana whenua representatives and artists to ensure that Te Ara Awataha captures the unique cultural narratives and values of the place.

- **Celebrating unique sense of place:** Use of mana whenua artworks and integrated cultural design elements, such as Te Pātikitiki patterns in the concrete and on shelter posts, to tell the story of the ingoa and the mauri of the wai.
- **Volunteering and community involvement:** Ongoing engagement and a collaborative approach to the project were designed to encourage a sense of tiakitanga within the local community. Involving the local community, it builds a sense of ownership or guardianship of the future blue-green corridor.



Balustrade design – Pātikitiki. Image credit: Eke Panuku, Te Ara Awataha.



Community members learning about the ecology of the Awataha Stream. Image credit: Eke Panuku, Te Ara Awataha.



Daylighted Awataha Stream. Image credit: Eke Panuku, Te Ara Awataha.

References

- Eke Panuku, "[*Northcote's greenway: Te Ara Awataha*](#)"
 Kainga Ora, "[*Te Ara Awataha wins big at prestigious engineering awards*](#)"
 Eke Panuku, "[*Te Ara Awataha – the path of the Awataha*](#)"



Enhancing inclusivity and accessibility through a co-design process

Sandringham Reserve Redevelopment

Location: Sandringham Village, Auckland

Project description

Redeveloped in 2016, Sandringham Reserve is a pocket park nestled at the gateway to Sandringham Village. Along with creating a bright and welcoming recreation space, the redevelopment of the reserve showcases how the needs and preferences of our local communities can be responded to through community-led design and implementation. The park was one of the first in Auckland to be implemented using Auckland Council's Empowering Communities approach and is an example of park redevelopment that centres the local community.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Provides a high-quality recreational space that directly responds to the needs and preferences of local residents.
- Actively involves the local community in design, decision-making and implementation.



Deliver innovative open spaces in high-density areas

- Provides a high-amenity green space in an urban area through compact design.
- Transforms an underutilised space to provide play opportunities and community connection.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Utilises a community co-design process to increase responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility.
- Offers a multi-use space that provides for a diverse range of play and recreation activities.



What motivated the project?

Based on efforts by the Albert-Eden Local Board to encourage community-driven development, members of the Sandringham Village community elected to form SPiCE, a community empowerment organisation in 2015. Over the next year, SPiCE engaged with residents through surveys and workshops, leading a community co-design process on how Sandringham Reserve should be redeveloped. The result of this process was a 'Community Vision Report' that voiced the hopes, desires and needs of residents and resulted in the transformation of the park. The redevelopment was motivated by a desire for the reserve to represent and celebrate Sandringham.

When: Redevelopment project completed in 2016.

Who: Owned by Albert-Eden Local Board; community-led co-design process facilitated by SPiCE; artistic design by Edenvale Primary School and Katy Wallace.

Costs: The comprehensive redevelopment included a playground upgrade budgeted at \$70,000.

Key insights

1. **Involving** communities in decision-making processes enhances the **responsiveness** of our open spaces to their needs and preferences. This is a key aspect of Auckland Council's Empowering Communities approach.
2. **Compact pocket parks** can provide diverse recreation opportunities within our increasingly urban landscape.
3. Our unique communities require parks that **celebrate** their **unique culture** and **diversity**.



Tamariki playing on the renewed playground. Image credit: Bryan Lowe.



The renewed playground at Sandringham Reserve. Image credit: SPiCE / Evie Ashton.



1. Community-led decision making

The redevelopment of Sandringham Reserve was implemented through a direct partnership between the local community and Albert-Eden Local Board. This partnership enabled residents to play the central role in the park's transformation.

- **Community consultation:** Throughout the design process, SPiCE facilitated workshops, surveys and pop-up events on design concepts aimed at gathering feedback and insight from locals. Public voting allowed the community to directly voice their opinions on the park's design and see that voice represented in the final implementation. Students from Edendale Primary school were also invited to participate in concept ideation. This process enhanced community buy-in and the park's responsiveness to the needs of locals.
- **Shared vision:** Accompanying the redevelopment, SPiCE released a Community Vision Plan, which collated residents' interests into a clear and actionable agenda. The plan emphasised increasing park accessibility and inclusivity, with residents asking for a flat, wheelchair-friendly and welcoming green space with picnic tables and shaded areas. Through the co-design process, these hopes were then directly translated into the redevelopment, creating an inclusive park and fostering feelings of community ownership.

2. Compact design

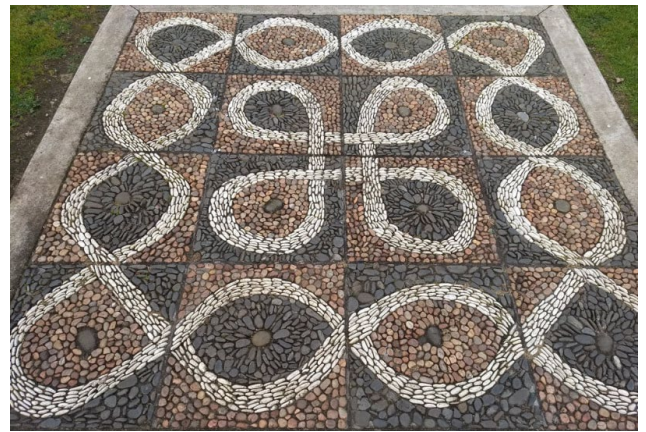
Sandringham Reserve showcases how more compact parks can be designed to enhance the increasingly urban environment. Building on vision plan's insights into what locals love about Sandringham, with many emphasising its central location and lively atmosphere, the park's layout was designed to maximise the available space and seamlessly connect to the neighbouring shopping area. It provides a model that can be replicated in the development of pocket parks in other urban areas.

- **Effective use of space:** While maintaining a sense of openness, the reserve and playground offer a diverse range of activities for locals, despite the limited footprint. It includes substantial shaded green areas, a colourful playground and a stage for local events. These features offer residents different ways to engage in recreation, increasing the park's accessibility and supporting active lives.
- **Urban connectivity:** Sited on the corner of a busy Sandringham street, the park's central location encourages high levels of visitation. This connectivity is enhanced by the playground's half-height fencing and the multiple seating elements sprinkled across the playground and green space. By connecting to the urban environment, the park is integrated within the local community, enhancing the liveability of area and encouraging residents to get outside.

3. Celebrating cultural diversity

Through the community co-design process, the identity of Sandringham Reserve was transformed to reflect what makes Sandringham unique.

- **Mosaic tiles:** The entrance to the park is marked by the 'Welcome Mat', an arrangement of mosaic tiles built by Edendale Primary School students and local artist Katy Wallace. The design of these tiles takes inspiration from traditional Indian patterns, celebrating the culture of Sandringham's many Indian and South Asian residents.
- **Picnic tables:** The park's wooden picnic tables include fibreglass covers that have been designed to mimic the appearance of a tablecloth. This playful design is continued beneath the tables, where there is a tiled concrete slab designed to appear like a household rug, with patterning inspired by Pasifika communities. Alongside their functional purpose of lowering maintenance requirements and increasing resilience, these features also celebrate Sandringham's diverse cultural makeup and heritage.



The 'Welcome Mat' mosaic. Image credit: Katy Wallace.

References

- SPiCE, *"Sandringham Community Vision Report"*
 SPiCE, *"Sandringham Reserve Redevelopment"*
 Auckland Council, *"This is the park that Sandringham built"*
 Playground Centre, *"Sandringham Reserve"*
 Habitat by Resene, *"Sandringham playground's bright new outlook"*
 Albert-Eden Local Board, *"Minutes of extraordinary meeting 10 June 2015"*



Examples of co-design ideation done at Edendale Primary School. Image credit: Edendale Primary School students.



Fostering Māori culture, wellbeing and physical activity in Tāmaki Makaurau

Iwi of Origin

Location: Takaanini, Auckland

Project description

Iwi of Origin is a one-day event that promotes health and wellbeing among urban Māori through sport and physical activity in a by Māori, with Māori, for Māori way. The event provides an occasion for whānau, marae and hapū to come together, representing their iwi in ancestral games, traditional pastimes, contemporary sports, physical activity and play. While physical activity is the vehicle of delivery, Iwi of Origin aims to create lasting connections, celebrate culture and inspire wellbeing for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. In 2024, there were 1194 kaitākaro (participants) with affiliations to 49 iwi, 334 kaimahi / coaches, managers and officials and 103 teams.

When: Began in 2007 and is ongoing (there was a short hiatus from 2019-2023 due to COVID-19 cancellations).

Who: Organised by Aktive – He Oranga Poutama ki Tāmaki Makaurau. Funding from Auckland Council, Foundation North and Sport New Zealand. Aktive primarily targets tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young people) aged 5 to 18 years. However, Iwi of Origin aims to deliver a kaupapa Māori sports initiative to whānau Māori including tamariki, rangatahi, pākeke (adults) and kaumatua (elderly).

Costs: In 2024, the total project cost was \$138,140.64. The project received \$20,000 in funding from Auckland Council's 2024/2025 Regional Events Grants Programme.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Delivers an event for Aucklanders who are less physically active and face barriers to access, with a strong focus on community
- Supports the delivery of a diverse range of play, sport and recreation opportunities
- Supports and enables communities to deliver Māori-led services
- Works with the community and mana whenua to foster a sense of belonging, and respectfully honour and celebrate mana whenua cultural heritage and identity



Key insights

1. Directly **supports healthy, active lifestyles** for Māori, both as tangata whenua and mana whenua, and as a priority group for increased physical activity.
2. Increases **participation in traditional sports** important to Māori, facilitating cultural connections and learning. This also helps to create **diverse opportunities** for play, sport and recreation.
3. Works to **honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi** through supporting the delivery of sport and recreation opportunities **by Māori for Māori**, and in **celebrating heritage** through the revitalisation of traditional Māori sports and play.

What motivated the project?

Iwi of Origin was established in 2007 with a mission to serve an urban collective of Māori living in or connected to the Tāmaki Makaurau. When the event started, health statistics painted a concerning picture of declining wellbeing among urban Māori, a motivating factor for establishing the event. Over time, it has layered health and wellbeing through movement and uplifting of mana whenua in Tāmaki Makaurau with their taha Māori (Māori identity, side, heritage).



Iwi of Origin 2023, Bruce Pulman Park. Image credit: Aktive.



1. Supporting healthy, active lives

- Since its inception, Iwi of Origin has promoted the health and wellbeing of Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau through sport and physical activity. The one-day festival of sport and kaupapa Māori games takes a by Māori, with Māori, for Māori approach to create enduring connections among Māori communities throughout Tāmaki Makaurau.

2. Increasing participation through a diverse range of play, sport and recreation opportunities

- **Low-participation:** Tamariki and rangatahi Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau are a priority group for increased physical activity, based on underactivity and historic inequities. Tailored events such as Iwi of Origin work to engage Māori from across the region in physical activity in a way that supports cultural connection and relationships.
- **Diverse range of play, sport and recreation opportunities:** The one-day festival offers an opportunity for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau to participate in a number of sports, including poitarawhiti (netball), whutupōro takiwhitu (rugby sevens), poitūkōhu (basketball), rīki (rugby league) and pā whutupōro (touch). Leaders in these codes, such as Tāmaki Makaurau Poitarawhiti, Te Hiku o Te Ika Māori Rugby, Tāmaki Makaurau Poitūkōhu, Counties Manukau Māori Rugby League and Māori Touch NZ, have been involved in the festival, supporting the vision of engaging urban Māori in active lifestyles. The festival also includes ancestral games and traditional pastimes, such as Kī-o-Rahi.

3. Celebrating Māori heritage and culture

- **Honouring and celebrating mana whenua cultural heritage and identity:** Iwi of Origin aims to bring Māori communities together from across the region. Regardless of whether participants are mana whenua of the area, or across the country, if they live in or are connected to Tāmaki Makaurau they are encouraged to participate and be active with their whānau. The festival sets the challenge for those taking part to rise as rangatira (leaders) and become champions for their own waiorātanga (health and wellbeing). The inclusion of ancestral games and traditional pastimes encourages participants to engage in their taha Māori and connect with

their whakapapa through games and sports. In 2024, a focus of the event was also the normalisation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori across the festival.

- **Māori-led services:** Iwi of Origin is the centrepiece of an initiative that results from Active partnering and working with Māori sports organisations, iwi, marae and whānau to deliver a by Māori, for Māori, as Māori, kaupapa experience. Active has established a Māori Advisory Group for Iwi of Origin. Partnering with Māori sports organisations, iwi and Māori delivery partners has enabled the establishment of an event that is culturally appropriate for Māori participants.



Iwi of Origin 2023, Bruce Pulman Park. Image credit: Active.

References

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- Active, [“Get Active Tāmaki Makaurau 2024-2028 Strategic Plan Summary”](#)
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- OurAuckland, [“Iwi of Origin 2024”](#)
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Iwi of Origin 2023, Bruce Pulman Park. Image credit: Active.



Creating connections from land to sea

The Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive Shared Path - Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai

Location: Central Auckland / Eastern Bays

Project description

Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai is a joint project between Auckland Transport and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. The project links Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive via a 7km, generally 4m-wide, shared path. It largely follows the route of the eastern rail line, from Merton Road in Glen Innes to Ōrākei Basin. Most of the path is now open to the public. Once fully open, the 7km route will enable people to walk, run or cycle from the eastern bays suburbs to the city centre.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Helps people move safely and easily across parks and streets for recreation, as well as active public transport, through the improvement to the bike and walking path network



Enhance our response to climate disruption

- Creates safe, low-emission transport options of walking and cycling



Protect and enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage

- Planting and restoration of native species to support local native wildlife, and enhance the quality of the surrounding habitat, alongside weed control



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Enhances active transport connections to key locations within the community



What motivated the project?

This project was originally a part of the “Urban Cycleways Programme”, initiated by the central government in 2014 to provide safer opportunities to cycle in Aotearoa. In Auckland, cyclist journeys and morning peak cycling counts indicated that cycling had become a transport mode of choice for an increasing number of Aucklanders. In response to this trend and to encourage more people to cycle, delivering key sections of the Auckland Cycle Network with new infrastructure and improved existing facilities became a focus. Projects in the Urban Cycleways Programme generally focused on connections to the city centre, a key destination for people cycling.

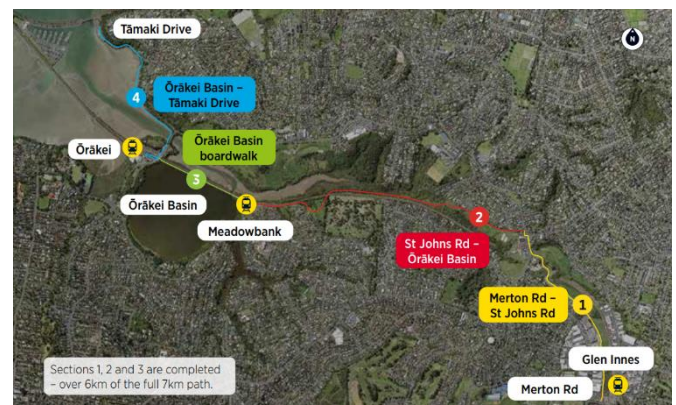
When: Project began in 2014, the final section of the build is still ongoing as of January 2025.

Who: Project led by Auckland Transport and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, with support from Auckland Council, mana whenua, and consultation with the public and a number of key stakeholders.

Costs: Approximately \$120 million (funded and delivered by NZTA and AT).

Key insights

1. **Connects Aucklanders to the coast** and provides a **community asset** enjoyed by all ages.
2. Provides **low-emission** transport options for the community and **supports healthy lifestyles**.
3. **Supports local native wildlife and enhances the surrounding habitat** through the planting and restoration of native.



Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive Shared Path route map. Image credit: Auckland Transport



Planting next to the rail overbridge into Tahapa Reserve East. Image credit: NZTA.

Case study 7



1. A community asset connecting Aucklanders to the coast

Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai gives people the option of avoiding busy roads and crossings, navigating from Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive via a 7km shared path.

→ **Connecting Aucklanders from the eastern bays suburbs to the waterfront:** The project enables the public to get from Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive in a safe and easy way. The shared path, also provides connections to several schools, better connecting them to their communities and giving children and their families the opportunity to walk or cycle to school. Once fully open, commuters will be able to walk, run or cycle safely and easily from the eastern bays suburbs to the city centre via the upgraded Tāmaki Drive path.

→ **A community asset for families and friends:** This is a very busy route in the weekends, catering to all ages and abilities (from toddlers to grandparents) for those who want to get out and about and enjoy the best of what Tāmaki Makaurau has to offer.

2. Creating low-emission, active transport options of walking and cycling

Access to this shared path provides an option for the public to forego use of personal vehicles, instead providing a safe path to enable people to walk or cycle or access train stations along the route. Giving the public the choice of sustainable transport options works to lower emissions, as well as supporting Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives.

→ **Reducing emissions and traffic congestion:** Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai provides a path for cyclists and foot-traffic alike. The mostly 4m-wide pathway makes space for both cyclists and walkers or runners, providing multiple low-emissions transport options for the public. Through this, the shared path contributes to the response of Auckland Transport and NZ Transport Waka Kotahi to climate disruption – making it easier for members of the public to choose low-emission options and reduce traffic congestion. The shared path will also connect to public transport options, making it more accessible for people to combine different types of low-emissions transport in their commute.

→ **Providing active transport networks that can support healthy lifestyles:** The 7km shared path creates an active transport network from the eastern bays suburbs to the city centre. Safe,

scenic and easy to access, the path provides a new opportunity for fitness, recreation and travel.

3. Supporting native wildlife and the surrounding habitat through planting and restoring native plants

In the development of the new shared path, vegetation that was lost in and around the construction zone has been replaced with native species to support local native wildlife and to support the quality of the surrounding natural habitats – alongside controlling weeds.

→ **Designing the path to complement its environment:** Planting and restoration became an important part of the development of Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai. Supported by Auckland Council and mana whenua, there are more than five hectares of native shrub, a total of 35,000 native plants (13,000 of which were locally sourced from the Ngāti Whatua Ōrākei iwi nursery) and approximately 368 different species of tree in the habitat surrounding the path. This includes Kohekohe, Kānuka, Tōtara, Pōhutakawa, Tītoki and Nīkau, which have been planted along the shared path. There has also been wetland restoration in the Pourewa Valley – the unique ‘green belt’ corridor and urban forest area that 700m of the path passes over, with the aim of adding 50 per cent additional canopy cover.

References

- Auckland Transport and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, [*“Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai: Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive Shared Path Communications and Engagement Report: Section 4 - Ōrākei Basin to Tāmaki Drive”*](#)
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- NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, [*“City Rides | Urban Cycleways Programme - Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive Cycleway”*](#)
- New Zealand Infrastructure Review, [*“Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai Connecting the Community”*](#)
- NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, [*“Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive Shared Path Gallery”*](#)



New rail bridge. Image credit: NZTA.



Multi-use sport and recreation facility

Ngāti Ōtara Multisport Facility

Location: Ōtara, South Auckland

Project description

The Ngāti Ōtara multi-use sport and recreation centre is a 600m² facility featuring a clubroom with a kitchen, changerooms, toilets, and laundry facilities. Developed over ten years, this centre replaces the outdated facility at Ngāti Ōtara Park, providing a modern space for the community. Five sporting clubs and over 150 teams will benefit from this facility, which is designed to adapt to the growing needs of its users.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Ensures equitable and inclusive access to recreation facilities for present and future community members
- Showcases Māori identity and culture as a point of difference
- Provides a high-quality recreation space that responds to the needs and preferences of South Auckland.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Provides multi-use and adaptable spaces and facilities that deliver a range of benefits for our communities and clubs.
- Involved working with the community and mana whenua to design spaces that celebrate Māori culture heritage and identity
- Fosters feelings of inclusivity and belonging through sport and recreation opportunities.



What motivated the project?

In 2017, Auckland Council deemed the old facility at Ngāti Ōtara Park unfit due to its poor condition and limited spaces. This restricted community access to sport and recreation opportunities, impacting the park's growing sports teams. To address this issue, a new facility was developed to meet the community's needs and accommodate the sports teams. The sport clubs at the multi-use facility will help retain the sporting talent in South Auckland and encourage young people to participate in sport and recreation activities. In addition, the facilities will also be available for the community to host events and programmes, fostering a space for connections among the locals.

When: Opened on 8 May 2021

Who: Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board in collaboration with Ōtara Scorpions Rugby League Football Club and mana whenua

Costs: \$6.4 million (excluding land).

Key insights

1. Improved the size and condition of the building to be **multi-purposeful** to meet the growing needs of the community
2. Worked with the community and mana whenua to design culturally responsive, **inclusive and welcoming** spaces that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community
3. Focused on empowering disadvantaged communities to **overcome barriers** to accessing recreation, promoting equitable opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles.



Ngāti Ōtara multi-sport facility open day. Image credit: OurAuckland.



Rugby athletes at Ngāti Ōtara multi-use facility. Image credit: Gino Demeer.



1. Multi-purpose facility for Ōtara

The facility was built to meet the growing needs of the community. Making it a multi-purpose facility offers benefits not just for active recreation users but for the wider community to access and enjoy.

- **Population growth:** The new multi-use facility at Ngāti Ōtara Park caters to Ōtara-Papatoetoe's growing population. By 2048, South Auckland's population is expected to increase by 20 percent, leading to higher demand for community spaces and facilities. In particular, the completed installation of the new sports field will boost park utilisation, increasing capacity for winter training. This growth will drive local interest and participation in sport and active recreation.
- **Diverse recreation opportunities:** The Ōtara Scorpions Rugby League Football Club is the main organisation at the park, and embraces diversity through various sports codes, including rugby league, netball, kilikiti and tag. The club also supports partnerships in healthcare services providing on-site medical care, and senior support through Pacific Homecare which offers health and wellbeing programmes for older Pacific people.
- **In-house amenities:** The facility is self-sufficient, offering a range of in-house amenities catering to the needs of athletes and the wider community. These include a new clubroom which has spaces for community meetings and workshops, a new kitchen, toilets, changing rooms, storage rooms for sport equipment and laundromat services which were added to maintain the venue and contribute to keeping membership fees affordable. The facility also includes a first aid room and an on-site café for people to relax and socialise with other members of the community.

2. Designed to be inclusive and welcoming

The redevelopment of Ngāti Ōtara multi-use sport and recreation facility was implemented through a direct partnership between Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board, Ōtara Scorpion Rugby League Football Club, council staff, mana whenua and the local iwi. This project involved a collaborative approach aimed at developing a state-of-the-art facility with multiple benefits for play, sport and recreation, as well as the community more broadly.

- **Sport and recreation:** The sporting activities available at the Ngāti Ōtara Park are diverse and inclusive. Activities cater for a range of age groups, providing opportunities for participation across the community.
- **Community hub:** Located near Ōtara town centre and Manukau Institute of Technology, the Ngāti Ōtara Park's multi-use facility is an ideal community hub, where people can connect, deliver services and build relationships.
- **Māori identity and culture:** The rooftop panel design reflects Ōtara's distinct identity and culture, specifically, the maunga inspired panels on the roof pay tribute to Māori culture and identity. In addition, the exterior design features 39 aluminium façade panels which were coordinated by a Māori artist and the local iwi. The panels depict a silhouette of a waka being paddled which represent Māori culture, giving the people of Ōtara a sense of belonging and interest to engage with the facility.

3. Overcoming barriers to access recreation

The Ōtara Scorpion Rugby League Football Club focused on increasing physical activity levels and community participation in Ōtara and the surrounding areas. These communities face significant barriers to accessing quality sport and recreation opportunities. To overcome this, the club offers low-cost membership fees for players and the community to participate in sporting activities. The programmes are tailored to the specific needs of the community with a focus on uplifting confidence and retaining the sporting talent of Ōtara.

- **Fostering a sense of belonging:** The new complex provides opportunities for people in Ōtara to participate in sport recreation and services to build an inclusive environment where locals can realise their potential and live healthy and active lifestyles.



Ngāti Ōtara multi-use facility clubroom. Image credit: Gino Demeer.



New kitchen at the Ngāti Ōtara multi-use facility. Image credit: Gino Demeer.

*"We're proud to have enabled its delivery because **providing quality sporting services in the community will help retain the sporting talent of Ōtara and the wider South Auckland area.**"*

Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board chair Apulu Reece Autagavaia

References

- OurAuckland, "[\\$6.4 million multi-sport centre opens doors in Ōtara](#)"
Sport NZ, "[Ngāti Ōtara Multisport Facility](#)"
Cassidy Construction, "[Ngāti Ōtara Multisport Facility](#)"



Te Hā Noa - Greening our backyard

Te Hā Noa, Victoria Street

Location: Victoria Street, Auckland City Centre

Project description

Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street is being transformed into a high-quality, accessible street lined with new trees and greenery delivering the vision of the Auckland City Centre Masterplan 2020. Te Hā Noa is part of the Green link: Transformational move to deliver a connected network of green parks and streets across Tāmaki Makaurau. Te Hā Noa will provide wider footpaths, new Māori artwork, seating, drinking fountains, separated cycle lanes, and two vehicle lanes to maintain access across the city centre. It will be a space where people can gather, find respite and enjoy the green scenery.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Showcase Māori identity and culture as our point of difference in the world
- Helps people move safely and easily through our streets, connecting with the City Rail Link for access to education, employment and recreation opportunities



Enhance our response to climate disruption

- Trees will provide shelter from the heat, cooling the city and improving air quality
- Trees will be planted in structural tree pits that will absorb surface water from the road, reducing stormwater runoff



Enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage

- Increased tree canopy coverage across the city to continue delivering the Urban Ngāhere (Forest) Strategy
- Reflects mana whenua cultural identity



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Improved walking and cycle path networks separated from vehicles and pedestrians allows for safe options to travel to and through the city.



What motivated the project?

Tāmaki Makaurau is changing and becoming more diverse. When the new train station opens, thousands of people will enter and exit from Victoria Street as part of their journey around the city. Te Hā Noa's transformation will enhance the city centre experience. The new layout provides for easier and accessible modes of active transport, offering various options for people to travel to and through the city. The green infrastructure network will incorporate indigenous tree canopy across the city, providing shade and cooling the environment, improving resilience to climate change. Victoria Street will have its own unique cultural identity that people who are familiar with the street can appreciate.

When: The full length of Victoria Street from Federal Street, including the new City Rail Link station entrances, to Albert Park is expected to be complete by mid-2026.

Who: Auckland Council worked in close partnership with mana whenua through the establishment of the project. When planning the works, the council also worked with Watercare, Auckland Transport and appointed JFC Ltd to construct Te Hā Noa.

Costs: \$50.5 million (covers the full delivery of Te Hā Noa between Elliott Street and Albert Park).

Key insights

1. Victoria Street will be a **healthier and more pleasant** place for people to relax, socialise and thrive
2. Planting trees in Victoria Street will provide shelter, shade and cooler temperatures, making the city more **resilient to climate disruption**
3. **Transport will be easier and more accessible.** The new City Rail Link will connect people to Victoria and Albert Parks, allowing people to enjoy the opportunities the city has to offer
4. Victoria Street will have its **own unique identity** that locals and visitors can appreciate.



Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street. Image credit: OurAuckland.



Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street. Image credit: OurAuckland.



People sitting under a Pōhutukawa tree, shaded from the sun. Image credit: OurAuckland.



1. Healthier and more pleasant city

Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street will be transformed from a multi-lane urban street into a green corridor with new native trees and planting lining the street. The new green scenery will provide multiple benefits for the environment and for people visiting, working, studying or living near the area. The transformation aligns with Auckland's City Centre Masterplan 2020. The masterplan identifies Victoria Street as the central focus of the transformational move 6: The Green Link. This aims to connect a network of green parks and streets across Tāmaki Makaurau city centre.

- **Green space:** Increasing the number of native trees and plants across the city will help deliver Auckland's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy. The strategy aims to increase canopy coverage to 30 percent across Auckland and at least 15 percent in every local board area. To deliver the strategy's aims, 20 new native trees and 900 plants will be planted along Victoria Street in the first stage of Te Hā Noa between Albert Street and Kitchener Street. This will create a space where people can sit, enjoy their surroundings and relax under native trees like pōhutukawa and tītoki.
- **Green links:** In time, the green link will extend between Waikōkō/Victoria Park and Rangīpūke/Albert Park. The design incorporates native trees and plants, seating areas, spacious footpaths, two vehicle lanes and a new bidirectional cycle lane. These changes will have a positive impact on the environment, making the city healthier and more pleasant.
- **Encouraging active modes of travel:** Wider footpaths and new bicycle lanes separated from vehicles and pedestrians will make it easier and more accessible for people to travel through the city. The changes will encourage more people living in the area to cycle or walk to work, which can improve health and keep people active.
- **A pleasant place:** Te Hā Noa will be a place of comfort and respite, where people can sit under native trees and enjoy the vibrant city. The green scenery will create a thriving outdoor space where people can relax, socialise and connect with nature.

2. Building resilience to climate disruption

Improving native tree canopy in the city contributes to heat reduction, stormwater quality and carbon reduction, increasing resilience to climate disruption.

- **Improves stormwater quality:** Increasing tree canopy coverage across the city will build resilience to climate disruption. Trees are planted in special tree pits made from free-draining materials to prevent roots from being damaged by heavy equipment or vehicles. After heavy rainfall, surface water from the road gets dispersed into the tree pits, improving stormwater quality. This will help enhance our environment and make the city more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **Cools the environment from urban heat:** The trees will provide shelter and shade, cooling the environment by absorbing urban heat. This will help build resilience against the negative effects of climate change. In addition, Victoria Street will be a better place for people choosing to walk through city centre rather than travel by car.
- **Reduces carbon emissions:** Planting more trees in Victoria Street can enhance the area while reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.

3. Easier and more accessible transport

Once the new Te Waihorotiu Station opens, thousands of people will enter and exit from Victoria Street. The new City Rail Link will make travel more accessible, connecting more people to education, employment, recreation, social and cultural opportunities.

- **The City Rail Link:** With the green link connecting streets to Victoria and Albert Park, people will be able to enjoy the opportunities that the city offers like Aotea Centre, Auckland Town Hall, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Civic Theatre, Sky Tower and many other institutions and landmarks.
- **Te Hā Noa – new green accessible spaces:** The name Te Hā Noa was gifted by mana whenua as a working title for the project. It means “to breathe” and “to take in one's surrounding” as they journey within the city. The name also encompasses the concept of the street, which will be a place where people can experience the city's unique character and pleasant atmosphere.

4. A city that enhances its own unique identity

Previously, Victoria Street comprised large expanses of asphalt pavements with a lack of amenity. Although the sky tower is a notable landmark, the street lacks distinctiveness and can easily be mistaken for any other street. Representatives of mana whenua have stated that the lack of visible Māori culture may result in loss of connection for people familiar with Victoria Street. The Auckland Plan 2050 and the City Centre Masterplan 2020 respond to the issue.

- **Designs:** As part of the new transformation, the tree pits will incorporate designs referencing the volcanic geology of Tāmaki Makaurau, developed in collaboration with mana whenua. In addition, the design will also include flowing water patterns on basalt pavers creating a unique character for Victoria Street. The project is working with mana whenua representatives, Māori artists and Auckland Council Public Arts in the development of two significant public art pieces, along with feature water fountains co-designed with mana whenua and Māori artists.



Native tree being planted in Victoria Street. Image credit: OurAuckland

References

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- OurAuckland, [*“Construction process for Te Hā Noa set to begin on 11 April”*](#)
- Our Auckland, [*“Greening of Te Hā Noa begins as 11 native trees and 900 plants arrive in Victoria Street”*](#)
- OurAuckland, [*“Te Hā Noa – one step closer”*](#)
- Auckland Council, [*“Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street linear park” Indicative Business Case 2020*](#)



Community-led path delivery to connect our open spaces

The Coastal Trail

Location: Rodney East, Auckland

Project description

The Coastal Trail is a shared path project managed by the Matakana Coast Trail Trust, a group of skilled and committed volunteers. Their vision is to create a world class recreation and commuter trail that sustainably connects Rodney East's coastal communities and regional and local parks in the presence of the ocean Te Moananui-ā-Toi (the Hauraki Gulf). From Puhoi in the south, via the Matakana Coast to Mangawhai in the north, the trail will offer walking, cycling, mountain biking and horse-riding paths for residents, as well as domestic and international visitors. The first 2.2km section in Point Wells will be completed in April 2025.

When: The first section of the shared path (2.2km) will be completed by April 2025. Additional sections will be designed and constructed subject to securing capital funding. The project may take 10 years to complete.

Who: The Matakana Coast Trail Trust, in collaboration with local business partners, with support from Auckland Council, mana whenua and local stakeholders.

Cost: The first section was delivered for \$1.16 million. The estimated budget for the wider Puhoi to Mangawhai network is around \$52 million.

How does this case study bring the strategic directions to life?

Make all of Tāmaki Makaurau our backyard

- Connects regional and local parks, schools and communities, enabling greater public access to existing green, blue and grey spaces.
- Improves walking, running and cycling connections, increasing community exercise and fitness opportunities and enhancing wellbeing.



Enhance our response to climate disruption

- Provides additional transport and connectivity options if critical transport infrastructure is damaged by climate-related weather events.



Enhance our environment, biodiversity and heritage

- Provides access across unformed legal roads, esplanade or ecological areas for conservation efforts to control weed and predator species, while ecological restoration and water quality initiatives enhance the wildlife habitat.



Support Aucklanders to live healthy, active lives

- Provides mode shift opportunities and active transport connections to key locations within the Rodney area enhancing wellbeing and reducing emissions from vehicle use.
- Provides a nature play trail, with outdoor classroom and stream measuring and monitoring stations.

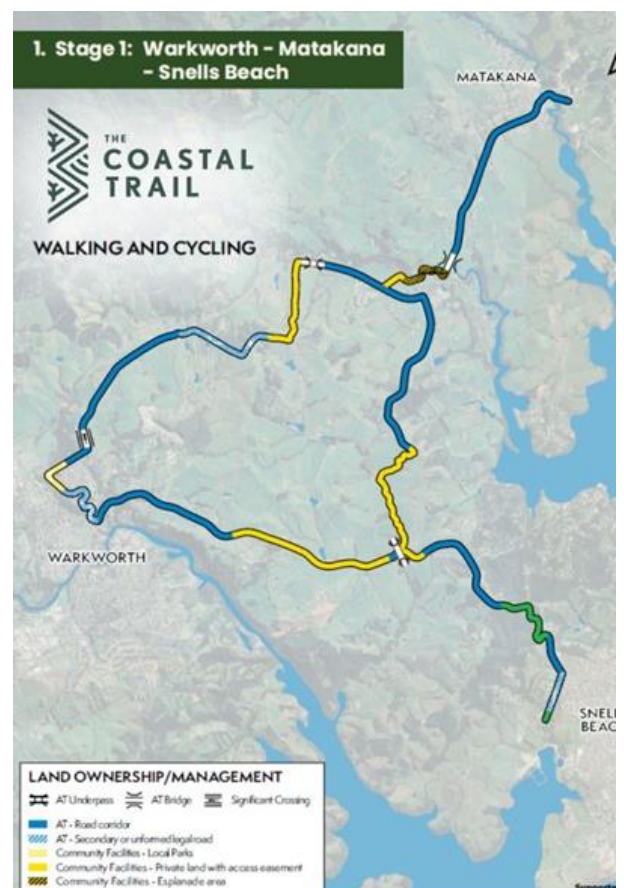


Key insights

1. A **shared path network** connecting Warkworth, Matakana and Snells Beach offers safe recreation and active transport opportunities for locals and visitors.
2. Delivers multiple **social, economic, and environmental benefits** including reduced public health care costs, increased consumer spending and job creation.
3. Community-led delivery is **cost-effective**, utilising support from local companies and private financial donations.
4. **Community-led design** and funding limitations ensures the shared paths meet the needs and expectations of the community and provide a cost-effective product which is user-friendly and practicable.

What motivated the project?

Due to under investment in walking and cycling infrastructure from central and local government, the Coastal Trail Project was established as a community-led model. It is designed to create an interconnected network of shared paths that can be hosted on roads, in recreation open spaces and ecological areas, and alongside streams and around the coast to provide recreation and safe active transport options. The first section being constructed provides a safe, separated path connecting a residential community and nearby commercial area along a previously dangerous stretch of road.



Stage 1 of the Coastal Trail connecting Warkworth, Matakana and Snells Beach. Image credit: Matakana Coast Trail Trust.

Case study 10



1. Shared path network connecting Warkworth, Matakana and Snells Beach townships

The Coastal Trail is a community path network which utilises a broad range of local government, central government and privately owned land to provide walking and cycling connectivity between Warkworth, Matakana and Snells Beach townships. It offers:

- **Enhanced public access to open spaces:** Stage 1 of the project utilises a range of public and private open spaces to provide a path away from the road corridor. These areas include DOC managed Lawries Scenic Reserve, Warkworth Showgrounds, and private land including the Matakana Estate Winery and a 4.5km path section across a private farm.
- **New walking and cycling routes:** It provides new routes connecting homes, schools and recreation spaces, promoting active recreation, low-emissions travel and enhancing climate resilience.

2. Delivers a broad range of benefits

Longer shared path connections (i.e., those longer than 4-5km) can provide extended safe walking, running and cycling opportunities, delivering a range of benefits:

- **The shared path network will generate a broad range of social, economic, and environmental benefits:** The Point Wells project has created a safe route between two destinations. The business case for Stage 1 of the project modelled a range of benefits including \$48.6 million in avoided public health costs per year (through the physical and mental health benefits of exercising on the trail meaning people are less reliant on the public health care system), \$42 million in consumer spending per year (with local, national and international cycling tourists visiting the area and spending on local goods and services) 81 jobs in the construction phase and 121 ongoing jobs.
- **Social cohesion that connects people to nature:** The Coastal Trail will safely connect school children and the community to local destinations, including schools, homes, play spaces and the town centre. This supports a healthy, resilient and inclusive community.

3. Cost effective option for delivering shared paths

A community-led delivery model, leveraging local support and maximising every dollar donated, resulted in a cheaper construction cost per metre of path than the typical market rate.

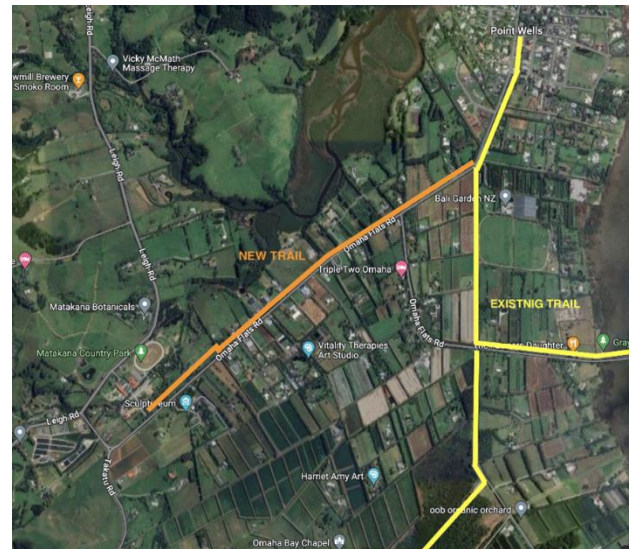
- **Community-led delivery** provides a low-cost option to develop path connections with high utility, access to natural areas normally inaccessible and generally built at below typical market rates. The community has mobilised discounted or pro-bono support from local engineering, planning and construction companies and generated significant private financial donations.

4. Community-led path design

The Matakana Coast Trail Trust worked closely with local affected landowners living along the path, the wider community, path planning specialists and Auckland Transport to ensure path design met the needs and expectations of the community and delivered a cost-effective product which is user friendly and practicable.

- **Collaboration with Auckland Transport:** The Matakana Coast Trail Trust's project team worked closely with Auckland

- Transport's Design Review Team to identify low-cost and safe engineering solutions for paths in a rural environment.
- **Volunteering and community involvement:** Ongoing community-led communications promoting the Point Wells path and broader aspirational network and fundraising and promotional events were designed to encourage a sense of tiakitanga within the local community. Involving the local community, it builds a sense of ownership or guardianship of the future blue-green corridor crossing waterways and parks to connect people and nature.



First section of the Coastal Trail connecting the Point Wells community with a local commercial complex. Image credit: Matakana Coast Trail Trust.



Point Wells path – construction Dec 2025. Image credit: Matakana Coast Trail Trust.

References

The Coastal Trail, "[The Coastal Trail](#)"

