



# Open space, sport and recreation policy framework refresh and consolidation

Background paper

March 2024





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# Executive summary

The existing policy framework primarily defines open space as green space, parks and civic spaces. Here we take a wider view of open space to better reflect the places and spaces Aucklanders use and value. These places and spaces, and the services they enable, contribute to the ora (health and wellbeing) of Auckland and Aucklanders, and to all six Auckland Plan 2050 outcomes.

This means opening up access to Tāmaki Makaurau’s extensive network of green, blue and grey open spaces to our communities for relaxation, connection, finding respite in nature, physical activity and more.

We call it: “Make space for people”, a positive legacy for future generations. Taonga tuku iho – treasures handed on – reflects the many treasures in Tāmaki Makaurau that the generations before us have gifted to us and that we can gift future generations.

We have identified the following eight opportunities and challenges the future policy framework needs to respond to:



## **Make all of Auckland our backyard**

Enable equitable access to all open spaces, whether they be green, blue or grey.

In addition to our parks network, this includes making the most of existing public assets by creating recreation opportunities along blue-green corridors, opening grey spaces to people and activities or using otherwise underutilised spaces for recreation. Connecting all those spaces will mean we can use them more in our daily lives, on our way to work or school, and for fun.



## **Deliver innovative open spaces in high-density areas**

For Aucklanders to continue to enjoy nature, socialise and be active in high-density areas will require us to think innovatively about open spaces.

In addition to better utilising streets and carparks for people-centred activities, this includes greening our streets and buildings (green walls/roofs, street trees and vegetated berms), or using rooftops for sport and recreation.



## **Enhance climate change mitigation and resilience**

Our open space network can be better planned and designed to enhance its contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.

This includes using nature-based solutions to capture and store rainfall and reducing emissions in our open space network. Greening the city will also make a difference.



## **Improve ora outcomes**

By embedding a te ao Māori lens into our new policy framework, we will take an integrated system approach to better deliver on Māori outcomes and the ora tāngata, ora whānau, ora whenua and ora wai of future generations.




This includes better integrating Māori values into planning, decision-making and delivery and working together with mana whenua, whānau Māori and partners.



## **Protect and enhance our environment and biodiversity**

Taking an ecosystem approach, we can manage our open space network in ways that increasingly benefit the environment and indigenous biodiversity, as well as Aucklanders.

In addition to protecting our existing indigenous ecosystems, species and wild places better, we could also increase indigenous

tree canopy cover, green the city and connect and interlink open spaces and habitats.		
	<b>Encourage physical activity through targeted programmes, spaces and places</b>	<p>To better support Aucklanders who are less physically active, programmes, spaces and places must be welcoming, safe and inclusive, and be able to adapt to future needs as Aucklanders increasingly favour play and informal sport and recreation over organised sport.</p> <p>This includes working with communities to design programmes, spaces and places, enabling community-led delivery and ensuring spaces and facilities are multi-use and adaptable to make our money go further.</p>
	<b>Invest to maximise benefits</b>	<p>With the increasing cost of delivering services and assets and persistent budgetary constraints, investment must be targeted.</p> <p>This includes better understanding the value our investments deliver to Aucklanders, taking an equity lens and prioritising investments to maximise benefits when and where they are needed most.</p>
	<b>Work together to secure the future</b>	<p>Our partners and stakeholders want to maximise the benefits we collectively deliver to Aucklanders. They see partnering for delivery as the key to overcoming funding, distribution, as well as design and functionality challenges.</p> <p>This includes identifying joint solutions for equitable and affordable delivery of open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities, as well as enabling community-led delivery.</p>

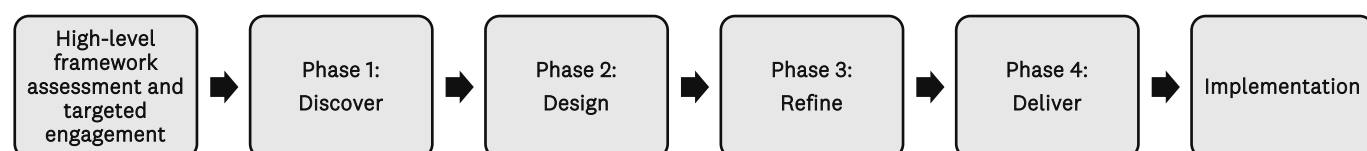
# Introduction

## Purpose of the paper

This paper provides an overview of key challenges and opportunities relating to open space, sport and recreation to inform the refresh and consolidation of the policy framework. It is based on evidence and analysis and reflects feedback from the programme’s advisory groups and council kaimahi, as well as feedback from targeted engagement.

The substantive sections of the paper are organised into what we know, why it matters and opportunities for change. Challenges and opportunities are identified throughout the paper and consolidated into the executive summary.

*Figure 1: The phases of the refresh and consolidation programme*



This paper constitutes the main output of Phase 1: Discover. Subsequent phases of work will focus on *how* the new framework can best respond to the challenges and opportunities identified in this paper.

## What the paper covers

In scope	Out of scope
An overview of the existing policy framework and the refresh and consolidation programme.	<i>How</i> the new framework could respond to the challenges and opportunities outlined in this paper.
Key challenges and opportunities that the new framework will need to respond to.	The design and contents of the new framework.

# Methodology

## Key policy questions

The refresh and consolidation programme seeks to answer a range of key policy questions relating to:

- what we know about Auckland’s open spaces and places and Aucklanders’ physical activity
- external drivers of change and new council strategic directions relevant to the framework
- how the framework should be improved to:
  - respond to external changes and council directions
  - best meet the needs of Aucklanders now and into the future

- better enable the achievement of Māori outcomes and aspirations
- better guide policy, planning and investment decisions.

## Sources and materials used in this paper

Staff reviewed a range of sources and materials in compiling this paper, including:

- the findings of the 2021 high-level assessment of the existing framework and the 2022 engagement with key stakeholders
- research on the benefits and services provided by open spaces, sport and recreation and on the range of open space typologies
- data on provision and acquisition; funding; usage, participation and demographics; barriers, expectations and needs and benefits relating to Auckland's existing open space, sport and recreation network and its users
- research on key external drivers of change that the new framework may need to respond to
- key Auckland Council strategies, policies and plans adopted since the existing framework was introduced
- research on te ao Māori frameworks and relevant feedback provided by mana whenua and mātāwaka in previous engagement.

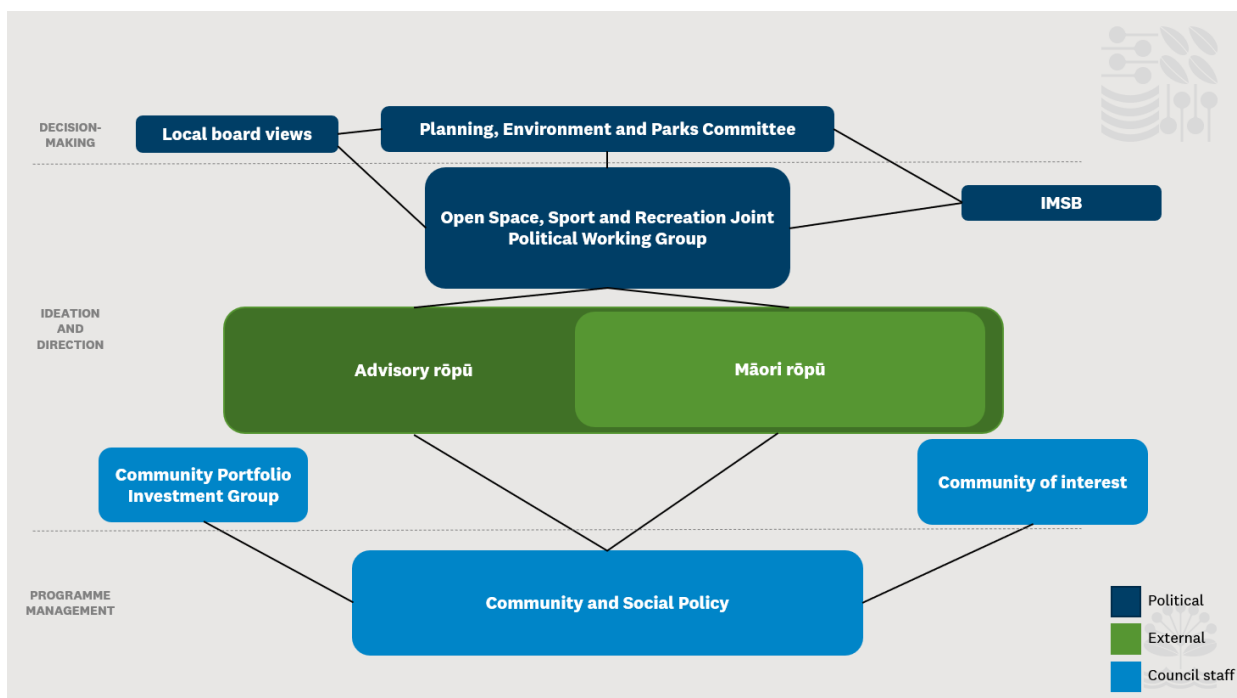
Sources of information and data are referenced throughout the paper.

## Engagement

This paper was informed by feedback from the programme's advisory groups, including relevant council kaimahi, the advisory rūpū and Māori rūpū (which includes mana whenua, mātāwaka and sector representatives) and the joint political working group (which includes Governing Body, local board and Independent Māori Statutory Board representatives). The programme's advisory structure is outlined in Figure 2 on the next page.



Figure 2: Programme advisory structure



Staff undertook targeted engagement to seek the views of mana whenua, mātāwaka, key sector stakeholders, relevant community groups, the Independent Māori Statutory Board secretariat, Auckland Council’s six demographic advisory panels, local board chairs and members and council kaimahi on the key challenges and opportunities highlighted in this paper. Their feedback is summarised in Appendix A and has been considered in the finalisation of this paper.

The views of Aucklanders will be sought once a new draft framework has been developed.

## Issues or limitations

The data presented in this paper is from existing sources. No new primary research was conducted.

Key assumptions and limitations associated with the data are:

- the data is assumed to be correct at the time of writing
- there are gaps in the availability of trend data regarding barriers to Aucklanders’ use of the open space, sport and recreation network and their needs and expectations
- the information on barriers that the council does possess largely comes from Sport New Zealand’s Active NZ survey and other one-off surveys or engagement.
- there is limited data, both in terms of availability and clarity, regarding funding and investment for open space, sport and recreation assets and services
- there are gaps in the availability of trend data regarding funding and investment.

Future phases of the refresh and consolidation programme provide opportunities to address data or information gaps, including by:

- engaging with Aucklanders to better understand barriers, expectations and needs
- developing a single monitoring and evaluation framework and performance measures.



# 1 The existing framework

## 1.1 The existing policy framework guides our investment in open space, sport and recreation

### Summary

- The existing framework guides planning, management and investment decisions in relation to open space, sport and recreation to contribute to the Auckland Plan 2050 outcomes.
- Overall, the framework is working well: it enables collaboration, has endured well over time and provides whole-of-region direction.
- Opportunities for improvement include simplification and consolidation, greater integration, addressing existing policy gaps and focusing on users rather than assets.
- The framework is being refreshed and consolidated to ensure it remains fit for purpose. A successful refresh is measured against five agreed indicators.

### 1.1.2 The existing framework is made up of five policy documents

Auckland Council's existing open space, sport and recreation policy framework has evolved over time, with new policies developed to deal with specific issues, challenges or opportunities.

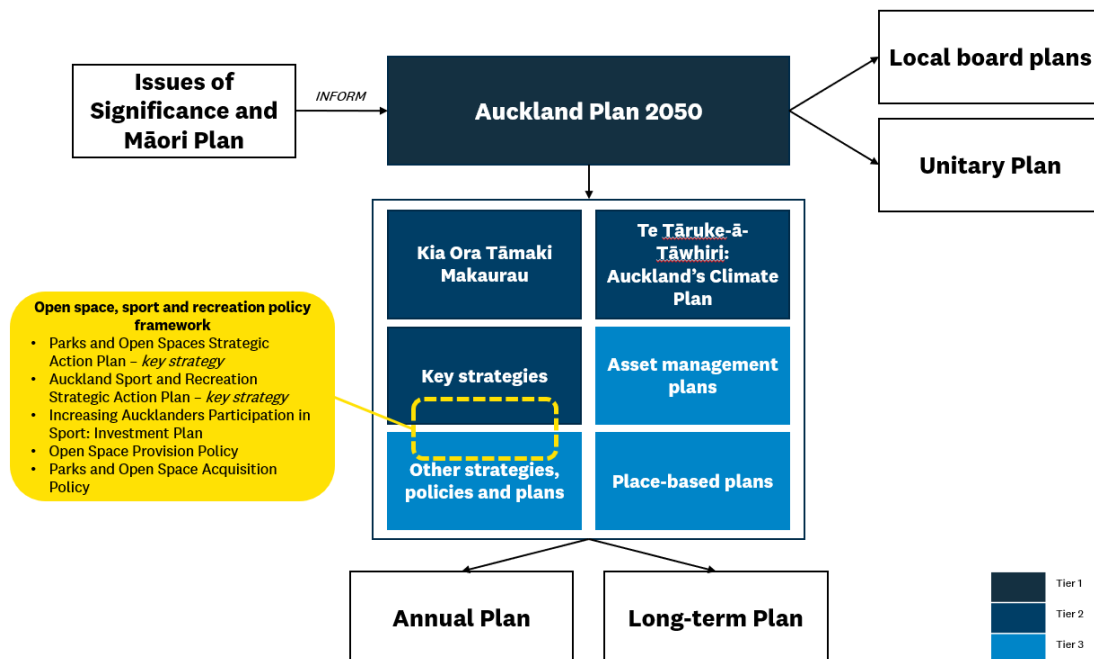
The framework guides planning, management and investment decisions in relation to open spaces and sport and recreation. It contributes to delivering the six Auckland Plan 2050 outcomes. It is comprised of:

- [Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Action Plan](#) (adopted in 2013)
- [Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy](#) (adopted in 2013)
- [Open Space Provision Policy](#) (adopted in 2016)
- [Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan 2014-2024](#) (adopted in 2014, refreshed in 2017)
- [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-39](#) (adopted in 2019).

### 1.1.3 The framework is part of a wider strategic environment

The open space, sport and recreation policy framework sits alongside other strategies, policies and plans as part of Auckland Council's wider strategic environment. The council's strategic environment has evolved since elements of the framework were adopted, with new or refreshed strategic directions expressed in the Auckland Plan 2050 (2018), Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan (2020), Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau (2021) and Ngā Hapori Momoho – Thriving Communities Strategy (2022). Relevant legislation and national policy guidance also form part of the wider strategic environment.

Figure 3: Auckland Council strategic environment



## 1.2 The existing policy framework is fit for purpose but could be improved

### 1.2.1 There are opportunities for improvement

The ten-year review of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Action Plan triggered staff to conduct a high-level assessment of the framework in 2021 and to test the findings with key stakeholders<sup>1</sup> in 2022. Together the results informed the case for a refresh and consolidation of the framework.

It was found that while the framework is working well, there are opportunities to improve it, including simplifying and consolidating it. Aspects of the existing framework that work well and opportunities for improvement are summarised below. This paper further builds on these findings. A more detailed overview can be found in Appendix B.

Aspects of the existing framework that work well include that it:

- provides a whole-of-region direction, ensuring a consistent approach and equitable investment
- has endured well over time
- enables collaboration, particularly across the sport and recreation sector.

Opportunities to improve the framework include:

- simplifying and consolidating it
- reducing complexity and busyness
- strengthening integration across the framework

<sup>1</sup> Mana whenua were also invited to engage but no iwi took up the opportunity at that time.

- aligning the framework with Māori outcomes
- addressing existing policy gaps including operational gaps (such as a disposal process for open space) and better address certain themes (such as informal sport and recreation)
- taking an outcome focus, following the lead of the Auckland Plan 2050
- establishing a clear planning framework
- building in evaluation mechanisms
- providing better support for effective decision-making
- making naming conventions clearer
- improving performance measurement and reporting
- switching the orientation from assets to users.

## 1.2.2 A refresh and consolidation has been agreed as the best way forward

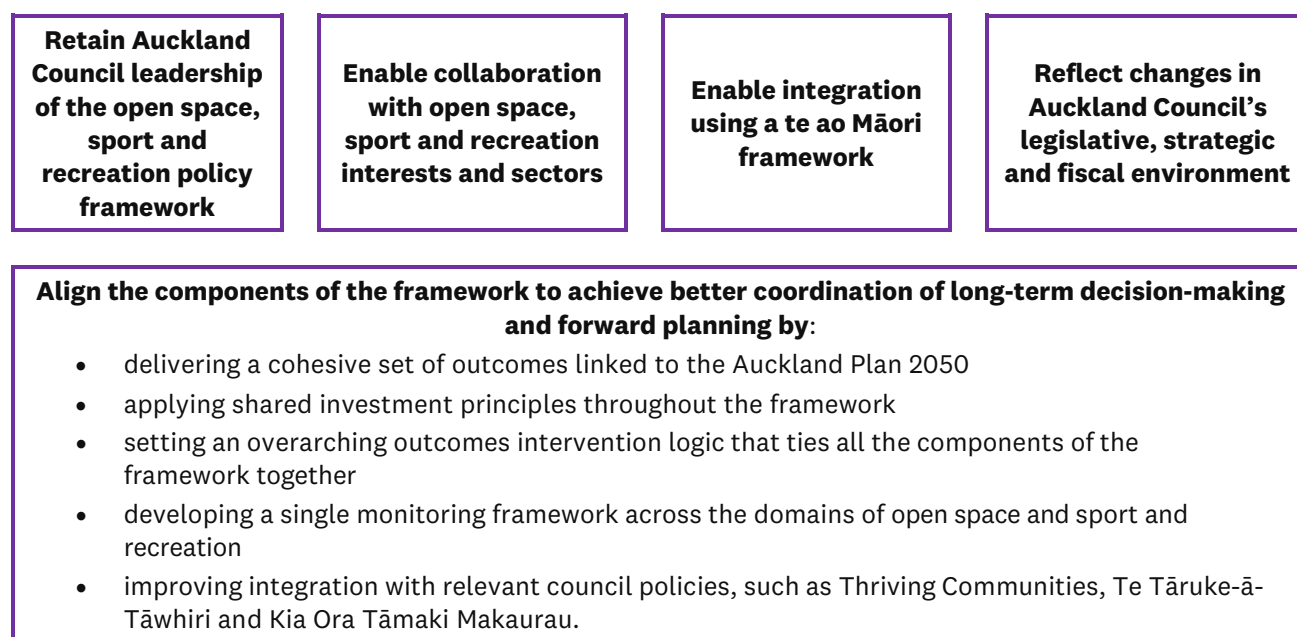
In August 2022, staff reported the above findings to the Parks, Arts, Community and Events Committee and presented three options for the framework:

1. Option One: maintain the status quo
2. Option Two: refresh the framework but do not consolidate it
3. Option Three: refresh and consolidate the framework.

Staff recommended Option Three as an effective way to simplify the framework, noting that stakeholders supported some form of consolidation. The committee approved the development of a refreshed and consolidated open space, sport and recreation policy framework [[PAC/2022/68](#)].

The committee also approved five indicators of success for the development of the new framework.

*Figure 4: Five indicators of success*



## 2 Critical contributors to Auckland's and Aucklanders' oranga

### 2.1 The multiple benefits of open spaces and physical activity

#### Summary

- Open spaces and sport and recreation are important to Auckland's and Aucklanders' oranga (health and wellbeing) and contribute to all six Auckland Plan 2050 outcomes.
- Mana whenua have special connections to open spaces and places in Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Aucklanders value and recreate in green, blue and grey open spaces, many of which overlap and connect to form Auckland's overall open space network. Some activities also require facilities.
- Open spaces and sport and recreation are essential parts of Aucklanders' quality of life and identity. They improve the daily lives of Aucklanders.
- Open spaces contribute to making Auckland a beautiful and safe place to live and to preserving our environment.

#### Opportunities



- Make all of Auckland our backyard, by expanding the scope of the new framework to explicitly cover green, blue and grey spaces and better reflecting the spaces and places Aucklanders use and value to maximise benefits to Aucklanders.
- Explore how planning and management can support better outcomes for Auckland and Aucklanders through multi-use open spaces and places, delivering multiple benefits and respecting mana whenua's kaitiakitanga of the natural environment.
- Together we can gift future generations a better, healthier and greener Auckland.

#### 2.1.1 What we know

##### Mana whenua have special connections to open spaces and places in Tāmaki Makaurau

Tangata whenua means people of the land. In Tāmaki Makaurau, tangata whenua are the iwi and hapū which have mana whenua over a particular area. Mana whenua is represented by the 19 iwi and hapū that whakapapa to rohe in Tāmaki Makaurau. Mana whenua identities stems from their ancestral relationships with their geographical territories. It reflects not just a sense of ownership but also an ongoing commitment as kaitiaki of the natural environment to the land, its water and its resources.

Te ao Māori (a Māori worldview) is based on the intimate connection between animals, people and the environment. We are dependent on the environment for wellbeing and prosperity. Integrating a te ao Māori approach will be critical to the development of a new policy framework that can provide thriving open spaces and places and enhance the mauri of the natural environment for ourselves and future generations.

## Open spaces and sport and recreation are key contributors to Tāmaki Makaurau

Open spaces and sport and recreation contribute to making Tāmaki Makaurau one of the world's most liveable cities. From the Waitematā Harbour, the west coast beaches and the tūpuna maunga, to the Waitākere Ranges, our city streets and civic squares and our many parks, open spaces are at the heart of how the city looks and feels.

Open spaces and sport and recreation contribute to Auckland's and Aucklanders' oranga, to their health and social, environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing. They provide opportunities to:

- get active, stay fit and enjoy yourself
- link the city together, helping people get to their destination
- take care of our natural environment and enhance our indigenous biodiversity
- recognise Tāmaki Makaurau's bicultural origins and celebrate its increasingly multicultural community
- support climate change mitigation and resilience
- find respite in nature, relax and escape from our busy lives
- create distinct and vibrant town centres and suburbs
- express our values, culture and heritage
- protect Auckland's outstanding natural features, landforms and landscapes
- protect Auckland's historic and cultural heritage, including sites of significance
- meet, socialise and gather as a community through competitions, events and festivals
- gain employment and volunteer
- undertake work, such as film and TV productions, activity classes and more
- attract visitors from across New Zealand and around the world
- host major events and film and TV productions.

### Contributions: facts and figures

Open spaces are a key part of a well-functioning urban environment as outlined in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development.	The Hauraki Gulf provides more than \$5 billion worth of ecosystem services, including recreation, tourism, amenity value and biodiversity health, per year. <sup>2</sup>
The sport and recreation sector contributes around \$1.76 billion to Auckland's GDP each year and employs more than 17,000 people. <sup>3</sup>	Every \$1 spent on sport and recreation generates a social return of \$2.12, making the

<sup>2</sup> NZIER. (2023). Valuing the Hauraki Gulf: An Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital Approach. Retrieved from <https://gulffournal.org.nz/2023/07/natural-capital-valuation/> [date accessed: 21 July 2023].

<sup>3</sup> Sport New Zealand. (2015). The Economic Value of Sport and Recreation to the Auckland Region. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/1661/auckland-vosr-report-2015update-final.pdf> [date accessed: 11 July 2023].




	value of the wellbeing outcomes greater than the costs of providing these opportunities. <sup>4</sup>
Auckland's screen industry contributes around \$1.5 billion per year to Auckland's GDP and employs more than 8000 people, with hundreds of applications each year for permits to film in public open spaces across the region. <sup>5</sup>	Public open spaces provide legal protection and integrated management opportunities for important areas of indigenous biodiversity and natural features, allowing for protection and recovery of Auckland's indigenous ecosystems and species.

The health and wellbeing benefits are discussed further in Section 4.5.

## 2.1.2 Why it matters

Open spaces and places and sport and recreation deliver benefits across all six Auckland Plan 2050 outcomes

*Table 1: Open spaces and sport and recreation benefits*

Māori Identity and Wellbeing 	Environmental and Cultural Heritage 	Homes and Places 
<p>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</p> <p>Mātauranga Māori</p> <p>Enhancing spiritual and cultural connections</p> <p>Sustaining and enhancing mauri</p> <p>Traditional forms of sport and play</p>	<p>Sites of significance and cultural value</p> <p>Indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems</p> <p>Cleaning and cooling the air</p> <p>Climate change mitigation and resilience</p> <p>Stormwater management</p> <p>Water supply</p> <p>Protection of outstanding natural features, landscapes and landmarks</p>	<p>Making Auckland beautiful</p> <p>Quality urban design</p> <p>Amenity value</p> <p>Adaptable to local needs</p>
Transport and Access 	Opportunity and Prosperity 	Belonging and Participation 
<p>Active modes of transport</p> <p>Equitable access to travel options</p>	<p>Economic stimulation and job creation</p> <p>Tourism and events</p> <p>Improved productivity</p>	<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Social connection</p> <p>Volunteering</p> <p>Personal development</p>

<sup>4</sup> Sport New Zealand. (October 2022). Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Recreational Physical Activity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Retrieved from [https://sportnz.org.nz/media/nhqbuato/sroi-new-zealand-summary-report-6\\_17.pdf](https://sportnz.org.nz/media/nhqbuato/sroi-new-zealand-summary-report-6_17.pdf) [date accessed: 10 August 2023].

<sup>5</sup> Data from Statistics New Zealand, Infometrics, NZIER and Screen Auckland.

## 2.1.3 Opportunities for change

Taking a wide view of open spaces and places to encompass green, blue and grey open spaces

For the purposes of this paper, open space can be defined as:

An area of land or a body of water or combination of these elements which are relatively free of buildings or other built structures, and may include green spaces, blue spaces and grey spaces.

It comprises both public open spaces (for example, parks, beaches, streets) and private open spaces (for example, residential gardens, farmland). Play, sport and recreation take place in a wide range of settings, including both open spaces and specialised facilities.

The existing framework primarily defines open space as parks, green space and civic space. It places little emphasis on blue spaces and grey spaces. There is an opportunity to take a wider view in the new framework, covering green, blue and grey open spaces, to better reflect the spaces and places Aucklanders use and value (see Table 2).

We have the opportunity to open up access to more open spaces, whether they be green spaces like parks, grey spaces like streets or blue spaces like streams. This includes opening new parks, creating recreation opportunities along blue-green corridors, opening grey spaces to people and activities or using otherwise underutilised spaces for recreation. Connecting all those spaces will mean we can use them more in our daily lives, on our way to work or school, and for fun.

**Green spaces...** are land areas that are largely covered in vegetation including parks, cemeteries and conservation land. Their main services are recreation, conservation of indigenous biodiversity, environmental protection, cultural heritage and climate resilience. They also include some sport and recreation facilities.

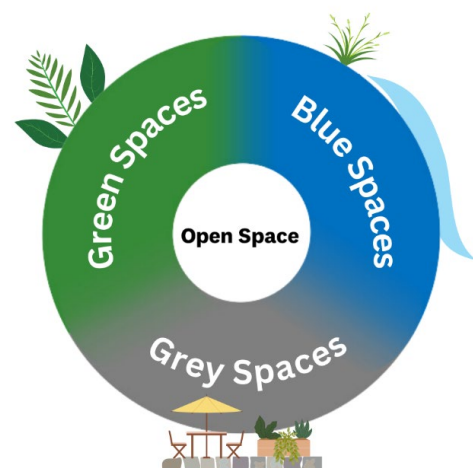
**Blue spaces are...** surface water bodies or waterways such as lakes, the sea, harbours, rivers and streams. Their main services are recreation, environmental protection and cultural heritage. They also serve an important drainage function. They include flat water and marine facilities and access infrastructure.

**Grey spaces are...** open spaces that have hard and impermeable surfaces, such as civic squares, paths, roads and open car parks. Their main services are transport, connections and recreation. Sport and leisure facilities such as pools and gyms can also be considered grey places.

**Most spaces...** have elements of each as green, blue and grey open spaces often overlap and connect. For instance, a blue body of water, such as a river, is reliant on green riparian margins for water quality.

### A proposed typology of spaces and places based on primary purpose

This section outlines a proposed typology of spaces and places, and associated open spaces and places, for Auckland. It acknowledges the wide range of green, blue and grey spaces and places, regardless of ownership and management arrangements, that deliver benefits to Aucklanders.





Spaces and places are categorised based on their primary purpose, recognising that many serve multiple functions and purposes.

The proposed typology will be refined, and provision metrics and guidelines developed, during the policy development phases of the refresh and consolidation programme.

Table 2: Proposed open spaces and places typology

Open spaces and places typology	Associated open spaces and places			
Recreation park	Pocket parks	Suburb parks	Beaches (above highwater mark) and associated public open space	
	Neighbourhood parks	Destination parks		
Organised sport and recreation park	Sports fields			
	Outdoor hard courts			
Regional park	Regional parks			
Conservation open space	Natural heritage conservation spaces	Historic heritage conservation spaces	Cultural heritage conservation spaces	
Connection, linkage and access open space	Recreational connections	Esplanade reserves and strips; riparian strips	Public roads (formed and unformed)	Blue-green corridors
	Ecological linkages			
Civic space	Civic spaces in local, town and metropolitan centres	Civic spaces in Auckland city centre		
Indoor sports and leisure facility	Indoor sport and leisure facilities			
Other open spaces and places	Tūpuna Maunga o Tāmaki Makaurau	Private green spaces	Freshwater areas: rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands	Marine areas: sea, harbours, beaches (below highwater mark)
	School and university fields and play spaces	Department of Conservation land	Stormwater management areas	

<p><b>Recreation park</b> (<i>new overarching typology that includes four current framework typologies</i>)</p> 	<p>Parks that primarily provide informal recreation and social opportunities. May secondarily include facilities for informal or organised play, sport and recreation. May also include conservation and/or environmental areas and values. For example, Onepoto Domain in Northcote.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pocket parks</li> <li>• Neighbourhood parks</li> <li>• Suburb parks</li> <li>• Destination parks</li> <li>• Beaches (above the highwater mark) and associated public open space.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organised sport and recreation park</b></p> 	<p>Open space that primarily accommodate facilities for organised sport and recreation. Often multi-use and includes bookable sports fields and/or hard courts, single and multi-use artificial turfs, club facilities and associated infrastructure. Includes golf courses.</p> <p>Organised sport facilities are accommodated within many suburb or destination parks, but this is secondary to their other functions.</p> <p>For example, McLeod Park in Te Atatū South.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports fields</li> <li>• Outdoor hard courts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional park</b></p> 	<p>Large, natural open spaces that represent many of the special natural and cultural qualities of the Auckland region and offer opportunities for relaxation, education and recreation. They provide a diversity of natural settings with limited or no development and attract visitors from across the region and beyond.</p> <p>Some regional parks are near suburban areas and have the additional role of serving the day-to-day recreational needs of local communities (for example, Long Bay Regional Park).</p> <p>Auckland's open space network includes remnants of the pre-human state of Auckland when it was covered by indigenous forest ecosystems. Many of the best remaining examples of these are protected within regional parks (for example, Ngaherehere o Kohukohunui in the Hunua Ranges Regional Park).</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional parks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conservation open space</b></p> 	<p>Land managed primarily for conservation and protection purposes, including indigenous flora and fauna, historic heritage and cultural heritage. Includes cemeteries and pā sites, as well as protected sites of significance to Māori.</p> <p>May also include spaces for low-impact recreation activities such as walking.</p> <p>Heritage and cultural sites can also be found in other open spaces, such as regional parks.</p> <p>For example, Paremoremo Scenic Reserve on the North Shore.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural heritage conservation spaces</li> <li>• Historic heritage conservation spaces</li> <li>• Cultural heritage conservation spaces.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connection, linkage and access open space</b></p>	<p>Land and/or waterways that provide linear linkages within the open space network and access to other open spaces. They provide opportunities for the movement of people, water and wildlife, and help to protect and conserve the</p>

<p>(amended current framework typology)</p> 	<p>environment and indigenous biodiversity. They include streets, walkways and ecological linkages. Could include active infrastructure and supporting amenities where appropriate.</p> <p>For example, Te Ara Awataha in Northcote.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational connections</li> <li>• Ecological linkages</li> <li>• Esplanade reserves and strips; riparian strips</li> <li>• Public roads (formed and unformed)</li> <li>• Blue-green corridors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civic space</b> (current framework typology)</p> 	<p>Civic space encompasses a network of public shared spaces including squares, plazas and lanes. They provide for meeting, socialising, play, events and exercise.</p> <p>For example, Aotea Square in the Auckland city centre</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic spaces in local, town and metropolitan centres</li> <li>• Civic spaces in Auckland city centre.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indoor sports and leisure facility</b></p> 	<p>Sports and leisure facilities include courts, aquatic facilities and multi-use facilities, providing for a wide range of sport and recreation opportunities. While not open spaces, these facilities are included in the typology as they are also important locations for sport and recreation. Provision of aquatic and leisure facilities is currently covered by the Community Facilities Network Plan.</p> <p>For example, Ellerslie Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor sports and leisure facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other open spaces and places</b></p> 	<p>Open spaces and places that include natural features, private green spaces and land not owned or managed by council. They provide a wide range of amenity, sport and recreation, conservation, biodiversity, ecosystem, culture, stormwater management, climate resilience and transport functions. They include opportunities for partnership, access, protection and more.</p> <p>For example: Waitematā Harbour.</p> <p>Associated open spaces and places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tūpuna Maunga o Tāmaki Makaurau</li> <li>• School and university fields and play spaces</li> <li>• Private green spaces</li> <li>• Department of Conservation land</li> <li>• Freshwater areas (rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands)</li> <li>• Stormwater management areas (including wet ponds, dry detention basins, and flood plains)</li> <li>• Marine areas (sea, harbours, beaches – below highwater mark).</li> </ul>

**We can explore how open spaces and places can support better outcomes through multi-use, respecting mana whenua's kaitiakitanga of the natural environment**

Most open spaces and places can provide for multiple functions including stormwater, ecological, climate change, play, sport, recreation and active transport. What distinguishes different types of open spaces is their primary function. For example, the primary function of neighbourhood and suburb parks is recreation. Stormwater reserves and corridors may help green an area and offer walking

opportunities, but their primary function is to manage stormwater. Streets, while also being considered open spaces, have the primary function of enabling the movement of people and goods.

The distinction between primary and secondary functions is important because:

- The primary function of a space or place is critical to help categorise it.
- As Auckland grows and intensifies, there is increasing pressure on land. For example, parks are under increasing pressure to accommodate built structures and stormwater devices. This can be detrimental to their conservation and recreation values.
- Legislation precludes recreation-related development contributions being spent for any other function.
- A key challenge for the new policy framework is to balance the sometimes-competing requirements on parks so their conservation and recreation values are maintained, while supporting other secondary functions to benefit Aucklanders.
- While open spaces can deliver multiple benefits, any significant loss of conservation and/or recreation values to make space for other functions will need to be compensated for so Aucklanders can continue to benefit from those spaces.

### **Imagining a better, healthier and greener future**

Taonga tuku iho – treasures handed on – reflects the many treasures in Tāmaki Makaurau that the generations before us have gifted to us. We have the opportunity to leave a positive legacy for future generations by imagining a better, healthier and greener Auckland to enhance the wellbeing of Aucklanders, while adapting to the many changes Auckland and Aucklanders face.

## 3 The state of the network

### 3.1 A network much used and valued by Aucklanders

#### Summary

- Aucklanders make extensive use of the open space network and facilities for relaxation, connection, finding respite in nature, physical activity and more.
- Most adult and young Aucklanders are physically active, particularly outdoors. The most popular activities involve play, exercise and recreation rather than organised sport.
- Participation in organised sport has recovered somewhat from COVID-19 but most people engage in more informal activities.
- Aucklanders value the open space network and sport and recreation.
- The open space network contributes to how Aucklanders move in their daily lives, to climate change resilience and to protecting our environment and biodiversity, natural features and heritage.

#### Opportunities



- Ensure the new framework can continue to deliver a valued and well-used network of open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities for Aucklanders now and in the future.

#### 3.1.1 What we know

##### Most Aucklanders are physically active

Sport New Zealand's Active NZ Survey 2022 data shows that most adults and young people in Auckland are physically active (see Figure 5 and Figure 6 on the next pages).<sup>6</sup>

The most popular physical activities are those that involve play, exercise and recreation. Aucklanders predominantly engage in physical activities at home, at school as well as outdoors; they make extensive use of the network of footpaths, walkways, parks and coastal settings.

Playing sport is another popular activity for Aucklanders. They make use of the open space network and sports facilities to engage in a range of sports, with football, basketball, tennis, golf and rugby among the most popular. Young Aucklanders have higher participation rates in sport than adults.

Inequities relating to open space and sport and recreation opportunities are discussed in Section 4.4.

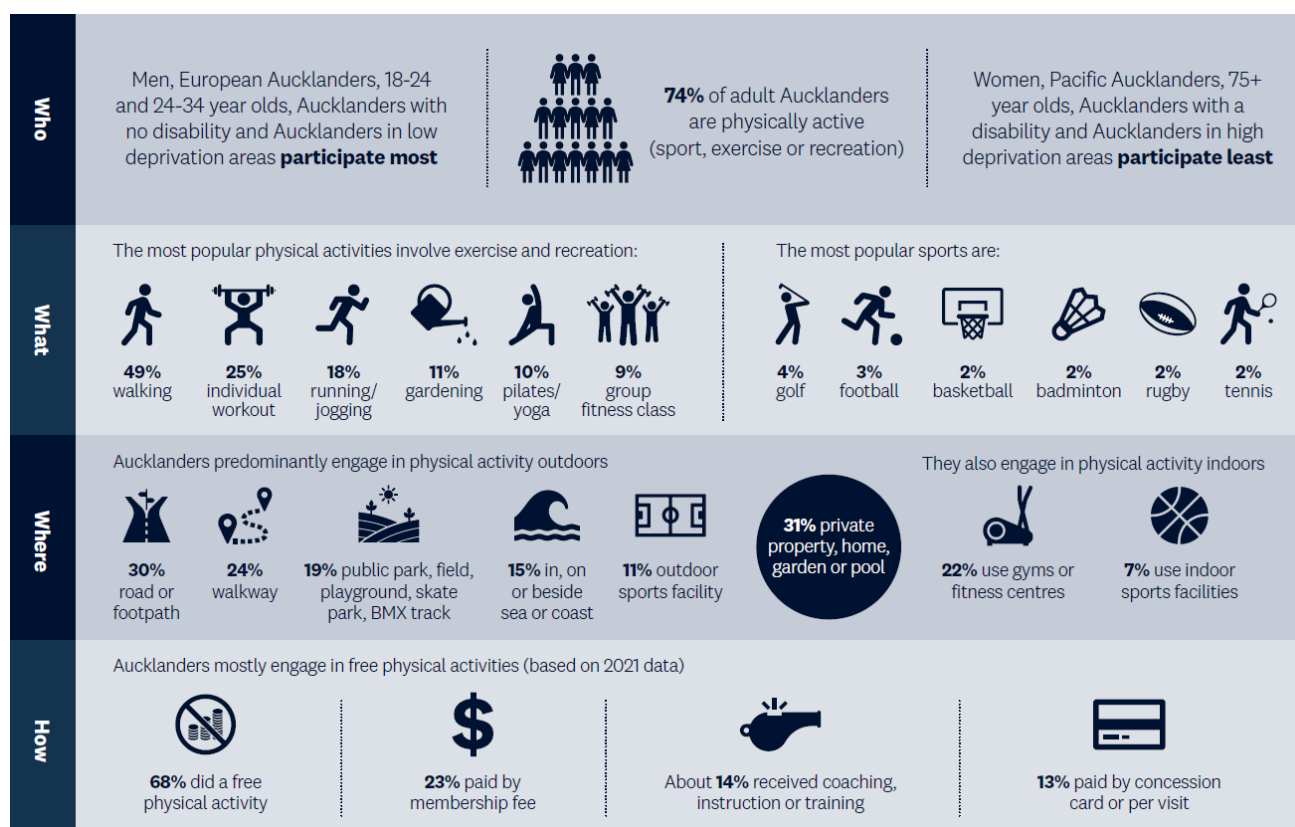
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<sup>6</sup> The background paper is mostly based on data from the 2022 survey. 2021 data has been used in some instances where questions were not repeated in the 2022 survey. This is referenced where relevant.

## Participation in organised sport has recovered somewhat from COVID-19 but most people engage in more informal activities

Participation in organised sport has showed signs of recovery after being negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Participation in some sports has recovered to pre-COVID-19 levels or has even increased further, while overall participation in competitive sport or activities has increased among adults and young people. However, school or club sports team membership continues to decline among young people, while participation in competitive sport and activities remains lower among rangatahi. More broadly, as outlined in Section 4.5, most Aucklanders prefer to only take part in non-competitive sport or activities, and this preference is increasing.

Figure 5: Adult Aucklanders' (18+ years old) participation in physical activities<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Sport New Zealand. (August 2023). Active NZ Changes in Participation: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/active-nz-changes-in-participation-2022/> [date accessed: 6 October 2023].

<sup>8</sup> Percentages based on all respondents aged 18 or over.



Figure 6: Young Aucklanders' (5-17 years old) participation in physical activities<sup>9</sup>



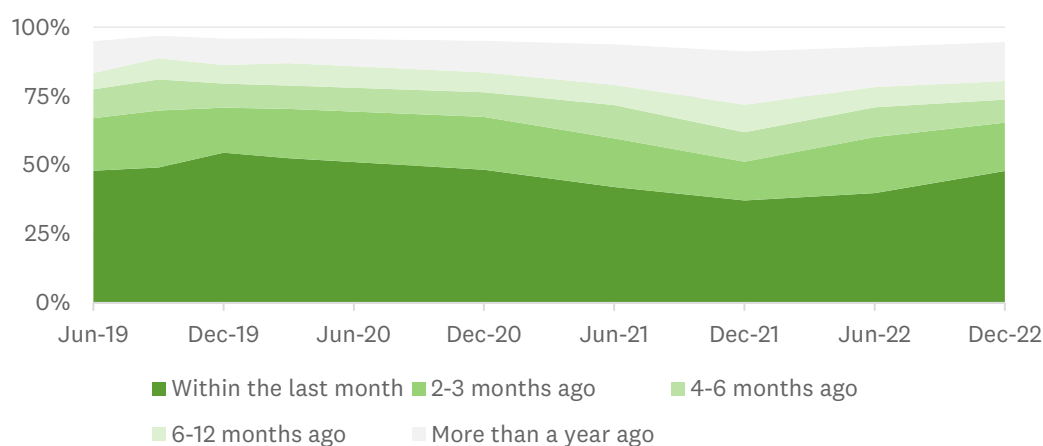
Participation rates in some physical activities could be impacted by network constraints (as noted in Section 3.3.2, investment is not always keeping up with provision guidelines).

<sup>9</sup> Percentages based on all respondents aged 5 to 17.

## Aucklanders make extensive use of the open space network

One in two Aucklanders visit a park at least once a month, based on data collected between June 2019 and December 2022 (see Figure 7). Open space is used across all demographics. Over 60 per cent of the population of all four broad ethnic groups captured in Auckland Council's data report visiting open space at least every three months.

Figure 7: Self-reported park visitation, June 2019 - December 2022



Source: Auckland Council Resident Customer Experience Report FY23

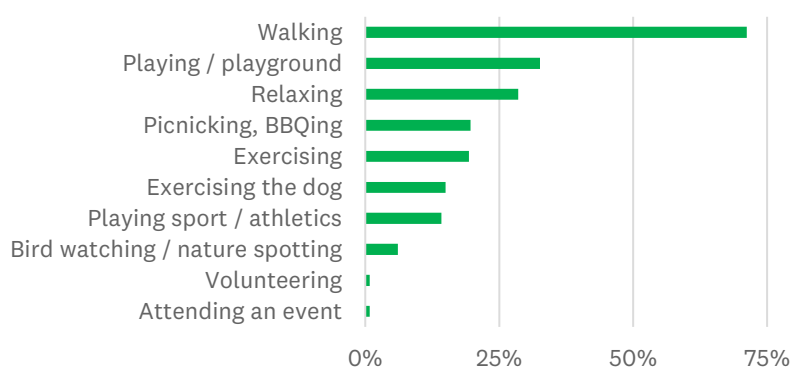
## Aucklanders use open spaces for a range of free activities

Being able to access Auckland's open spaces means Aucklanders can be physically active outdoors.

- The most popular physical activities outdoors include walking, individual workouts and jogging.
- The most popular physical activities in parks include walking, playing or using the playground and relaxing (see Figure 8). Auckland Council's Resident Customer Experience survey shows that on their most recent visit to a park, 71 per cent of Aucklanders walked, 33 per cent played and 29 per cent relaxed.

Most physical activities in open spaces are free. This is an important factor when considering equity of participation.

Figure 8: Popularity of activities on park visits



Source: Auckland Council Resident Customer Experience Report FY23

## 3.1.2 Why it matters

### Aucklanders value open spaces and sport and recreation

Parks and sports fields are universally valued by Aucklanders, whether they use them or not.<sup>10</sup> Sport and other physical activities are valued for their contribution to vibrant communities, building confidence and life skills such as teamwork and cooperation.<sup>11</sup> Open spaces also contribute to a sense of pride in our communities.<sup>12</sup> Most Aucklanders have positive perceptions of living in their local area, but those perceptions are declining.<sup>13</sup>

Aucklanders of all ages value open spaces for social participation and connection, engaging in physical activities, community-building and placemaking and connecting with and caring for nature.<sup>14</sup> Many Aucklanders also volunteer to support the sport and recreation sector and to care for the region's parks.<sup>15</sup>

In 2022, Aucklanders volunteered nearly 100,000 hours to care for our parks.

Parks are the most highly valued community service by Aucklanders, whether they use them or not.

In 2022, around three in ten Aucklanders volunteered or coached in the sport and recreation sector.

In 2022, 75% of Aucklanders said their local area is a great place to live, down from 81% in 2021.

“Everything is green, water and beaches.”  
- *I Am Auckland engagement findings*

73% of New Zealanders agree that sport and other physical activities help build vibrant and stimulating communities.

<sup>10</sup> Nexus. (July 2020). Use and non-use values of Auckland Council amenities. Retrieved from <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1892/use-and-non-use-values-of-auckland-council-amenities-july-2020-nexus-et-al.pdf> [date accessed: 24 May 2023].

<sup>11</sup> Sport New Zealand. (2017). The Value of Sport. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/1312/the-value-of-sport-main-report.pdf> [date accessed: 11 July 2023].

<sup>12</sup> One of the most common reasons Aucklanders have given for having a sense of pride in their local area is that there are plenty of open spaces. See Auckland Council. (September 2022). Auckland Plan 2050 Evidence Report Update: Belonging and Participation. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Evidence%20reports%20documents/belonging-participation-evidence-report-update.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023].

<sup>13</sup> Quality of Life Project, 2012-2022. Survey results are available at <https://www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/survey-results/>.

<sup>14</sup> Findings from community engagement on key Auckland Council strategies including Ngā Hapori Momoho: Thriving Communities (2021), Age-friendly Auckland (2020), I Am Auckland (2022) and Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039 (2019).

<sup>15</sup> Sport New Zealand. (August 2023). Active NZ Changes in Participation: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/active-nz-changes-in-participation-2022/> [date accessed: 6 October 2023]; parks volunteer data comes from the Auckland Council parks-based volunteer programmes.

### **The open space network contributes to how Aucklanders move in their daily lives**

Open spaces do not just provide opportunities for Aucklanders to engage in activities within them, but also to move through them as they go about their lives. Green spaces, such as parks, connect with grey spaces, such as streets, to form routes for pedestrians and cyclists to get around. These opportunities for active transport and active environments support improved physical activity among Aucklanders and contribute to their wellbeing, as well as helping to reduce carbon emissions.



### **Open spaces make a significant contribution to climate change resilience and to protecting our environment and biodiversity, natural features and heritage**

Open spaces are a key part of Auckland's rich and diverse natural environment. Our open spaces play an important role in protecting and managing Auckland's outstanding natural features, landforms and landscapes, as well as its historic and cultural heritage. In addition, they contribute to enhancing our environment and biodiversity (for example, improving air quality and providing habitats) and to climate change resilience (for example, reducing flood risk). Some of these contributions are discussed further in Section 4.6 (environment and biodiversity) and Section 4.7 (climate change).

### **3.1.3 Opportunities for change**

The refresh and consolidation provides an opportunity to ensure the new framework continues to deliver a valued and well-used network of open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities for Aucklanders now and in the future.

## 3.2 Auckland has an extensive and growing public open space network

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auckland has an extensive and growing network of green, blue and grey public open spaces, ranging from parks and beaches to streets and sports and leisure facilities.</li><li>• In addition to the council, the Department of Conservation, sports clubs, schools and other private landowners play an important role in providing open spaces for Aucklanders.</li><li>• While the quantity and quality of open spaces varies across the region, in general Aucklanders have good access to them.</li></ul>	
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not all publicly owned open spaces and facilities can be fully accessed by all Aucklanders.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore increasing access to and use of publicly owned open spaces and facilities for all Aucklanders.</li><li>• Enhance collaboration and partnership with other providers of open spaces and facilities to maximise benefits to Aucklanders.</li><li>• Developing existing open spaces to better meet community needs.</li><li>• Using more of the road reserve for people-centred activities.</li><li>• Providing better access to the coast and waterways.</li></ul>

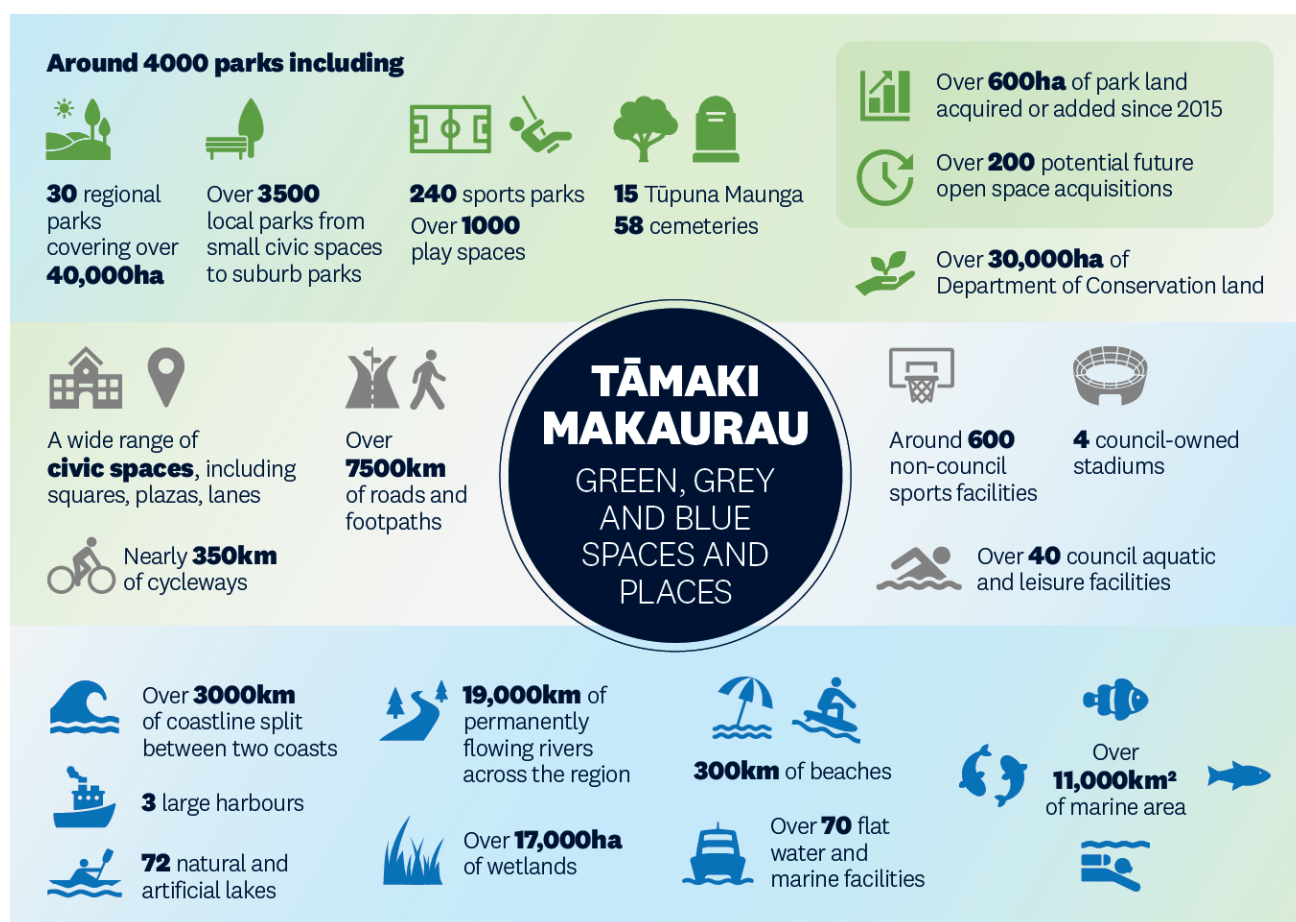
### 3.2.1 What we know

Tāmaki Makaurau has an extensive network of open spaces and places

The network ranges from parks and beaches to streets and sports and leisure facilities, providing opportunities for play, sport, recreation and more (see Figure 9 below). It includes the diverse natural settings of our regional parks, the significant cultural, geological and recreational sites that are the tūpuna maunga, sports parks with organised sport facilities, thousands of kilometres of roads and footpaths and a large marine and coastal area.

Auckland Council is not the only provider of open spaces and places in Tāmaki Makaurau. The Department of Conservation, sports clubs, schools and other private landowners also play an important role in providing open spaces and places for Aucklanders to enjoy.

Figure 9: Tāmaki Makaurau green, grey and blue spaces and places<sup>16</sup>



Further details regarding the number, location and area of open spaces in Tāmaki Makaurau are provided in Appendix C.

<sup>16</sup> The figure of 30 regional parks includes the future Te Motu a Hiaroa (Puketutu Island) Regional Park and the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

## Aucklanders have good access to public open spaces

Despite some variations across the region, in general Aucklanders have good access to open space. An average of 86 per cent of Aucklanders live within a 15-minute walk to public open space and an average of 96 per cent live within a 5km drive.<sup>17</sup>

86% of Aucklanders live within a 15-minute walk to public open space

## Auckland's sport and recreation infrastructure in numbers

Auckland Council delivers opportunities for play, sport and recreation through:

- 43 aquatic and leisure facilities
- Four stadiums (Mt Smart Stadium, Navigation Homes Stadium, North Harbour Stadium and Western Springs Stadium)
- organised sports facilities such as hard courts and playing fields located on 240 sports parks
- over 1,000 dedicated play spaces, ranging from skate parks, flying foxes and pump tracks to modular playgrounds, nature play, wheel play and water play spaces
- facility partnerships with other organisations, including partnering to develop new facilities or upgrade existing ones, activating vacant or under-utilised council property and opening up or increasing access to existing facilities owned by partners (examples include AUT Millennium, Bruce Pulman Park and Avondale College).

Around 600 sports and leisure facilities are also provided by schools and other providers across Auckland.<sup>18</sup> They cater for a wide range of sports and activities and include aquatic, athletics, cycling, bowls, cricket and kilikiti, golf, gym sports, hockey, ice codes, indoor courts, motorsport, netball, squash, tennis, turf fields and more. Schools are also key providers of sports fields. Public access to school facilities is variable and must be negotiated on an individual basis. This is not conducive to efficient use of publicly owned and funded assets.

### 3.2.2 Why it matters

As outlined in Section 2.1, open spaces and places and sport and recreation provide many benefits to Auckland and Aucklanders. In particular, the region's open spaces and places are critical to Aucklanders' participation in physical activities.

A rapidly growing population and increasing urban intensification will mean greater demand for public open spaces, while ongoing fiscal constraints and delivery challenges highlight the need for greater collaboration between providers.

### 3.2.3 Opportunities for change

#### Enhance collaboration and partnerships to increase access to and use of Auckland's open spaces

Given that Auckland Council is not the only provider of open spaces and facilities, there is an opportunity to enhance collaboration and partnership with other providers to improve provision and access and maximise benefits to Aucklanders. There is also an opportunity to explore ways to better utilise grey spaces, including streets and carparks. Examples across Auckland include enabling

<sup>17</sup> Based on Auckland Council's GIS data. It does not include access to non-council owned land (for example, it excludes Department of Conservation land and beaches).

<sup>18</sup> Based on a stocktake undertaken for the Auckland Sport Sector: Facilities Priorities Plan 2017.





communities to temporarily close streets to allow children to play as part of the Play Streets programme and making more space for people on Queen Street by widening footpaths, adding a shared scooter and bicycle pathway and installing planters and new seating. Overseas, examples include closing major streets to cars on certain days of the week in cities such as Guadalajara, Bogotá and Paris and transforming an expressway into an urban park in Paris.

### Develop existing open spaces to better meet community needs

There is an opportunity to make better use of what we already have, improving the quality of existing open spaces, including through adding features such as paths, playgrounds, trees and more, to better meet the needs of Auckland's communities. Improving signage and maintenance can also help to make existing spaces more attractive and usable to Aucklanders.

## 3.3 A complex delivery ecosystem

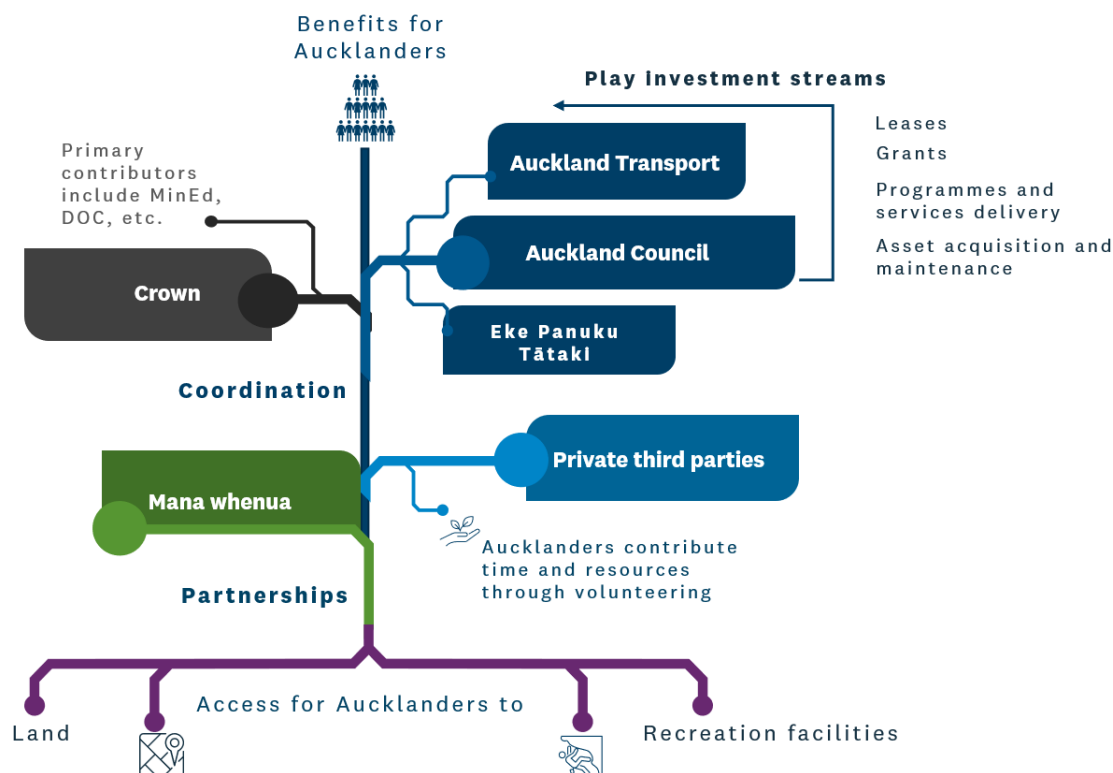
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many parties contribute to the complex delivery ecosystem for open spaces and sport and recreation. Collectively we can improve Auckland's and Aucklanders' experience.</li> <li>Suburb, neighbourhood and destination parks acquisitions are primarily funded through development contributions and regional parks acquisitions are primarily funded by rates.</li> <li>Since 2015, Auckland Council has acquired a variety of new open spaces and places including regional parks, sports parks, local parks, play spaces and sports and leisure facilities. Over 200 new open spaces have also been identified for future acquisition.</li> <li>Auckland Council is a major investor in play, sport and recreation through a range of mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council's investment in sports parks and aquatic and leisure facilities since 2015 has not kept up with adopted provision metrics.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise a wider range of delivery methods for open spaces and sport and recreation.</li> <li>Strengthen partnerships for delivery, including with mana whenua, community and relevant sectors, support community-led delivery, and prioritise investment to communities with the greatest needs to deliver for the future.</li> <li>Improve data collection and analysis to enable a clearer understanding of the complex delivery ecosystem.</li> <li>Grow our open space network where required through buy-outs of properties as part of Auckland's storm recovery and resilience work.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.1 What we know

#### Many parties provide infrastructure and services

Auckland Council is a major investor in open spaces and sport and recreation. Many other parties also contribute to land and infrastructure as well as services and programmes Aucklanders can access. Volunteers are a key component of this complex ecosystem and contribute significant resources to conservation efforts and organised sport and recreation activities. Figure 10 depicts the delivery ecosystem.

Figure 10: A conceptual map of the delivery ecosystem



#### Auckland's public open space network has been expanding and will continue to do so

Auckland's current open space network is predominantly the result of past acquisitions.<sup>19</sup> Combined with historical development patterns and geographical and topographical constraints, this has resulted in a variable quantity and quality of open space provision across Auckland.

Driven by the Open Space Provision Policy, over 600 hectares of open space have been added to the network since 2015, including:<sup>20</sup>

3 regional parks and park expansions

1 sports park

59 local parks

<sup>19</sup> The network is predominantly the result of past acquisitions by the eight legacy local government authorities that came together to form Auckland Council in November 2010. In turn, the open space networks of the legacy local authorities also comprised past acquisitions by earlier constituent local authorities.

<sup>20</sup> Local parks include civic spaces, pocket parks, neighbourhood parks, suburb parks, destination parks (except regional parks) as well as recreational and ecological connections and linkages.

Over 200 new open spaces have been identified for potential future acquisition, subject to budget availability. Together they would provide over 160 hectares of additional open spaces, including:

1 sports park	27 suburb parks	180 neighbourhood parks	4 civic spaces
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Indicative open space locations take anticipated zoning and existing open space locations into account to calculate the level of provision required. Potential locations are chosen taking a range of factors into account including the existing and future roading network, flood plains, susceptibility to erosion and/or coastal inundation, potential soil contamination and land with unsuitable topography or known to be unstable.

Further details regarding potential future acquisitions are provided in Appendix C.

### **Suburb, neighbourhood and destination parks acquisitions are primarily funded through development contributions**

Currently, development contributions are the main funding tool for growth-related infrastructure provided by Auckland Council.

Auckland Council allocates the cost of the infrastructure that services growth to developers as a levy, payable in cash. It charges this levy if the new development requires the council to provide new or upgraded infrastructure for:

- transport, footpaths, roads and intersections
- parks, park facilities and sports grounds
- drainage systems and stormwater mitigation
- community facilities.

Auckland is divided into funding areas, with developers paying a development contribution that is applicable in that funding area. Development contributions that are collected can only be spent in the funding area and for the purpose the fees were collected.

This has practical applications for how flood protection mechanisms (for example, water retention tanks and pumps) can be funded in parks. For example, development contributions collected for new or upgraded parks, park facilities and sport grounds cannot be used for stormwater purposes.

### **Auckland Council is a major investor in sport and recreation in Auckland**

Auckland Council invests in sport and recreation through:

- provision and maintenance of sports facilities:
  - this is Auckland Council's largest contribution to sport and recreation funding
  - Auckland Council owns 43 leisure and aquatic facilities
  - since 2019, Auckland Council has spent over \$333 million in operating its sports facilities network, and \$45 million in capital expenditure (mostly renewals).
- provision and maintenance of sports parks and play assets:
  - Auckland Council owns and maintains a network of 240 sports parks, many of which prioritise access for organised sports

- since 2015, Auckland Council has renewed approximately 322 play spaces at a cost of around \$21 million and developed or upgraded around 139 play spaces at a cost of around \$25 million.
- regional and local grants:
  - the Sports and Recreation Facilities Fund has provided \$29 million in capital grants to large organisations and facilities since 2019, mainly for repairs and renewals
  - through the Community Facilities Partnership programme, Auckland Council contributes 42 per cent of the total funding for code associations and 23 per cent of the total funding for sports clubs in Auckland. Grants to sports clubs averaged \$8,800, while grants to regional sports organisations and trusts averaged \$36,300 in 2018.
  - local boards also support active communities through local grants programmes.
- ground and building leases:
  - Auckland Council provides approximately 300 community leases for sports and recreation (for example, golf, tennis and equestrian clubs)
  - the majority of community leaseholders contribute less than \$10 a year towards operating costs.

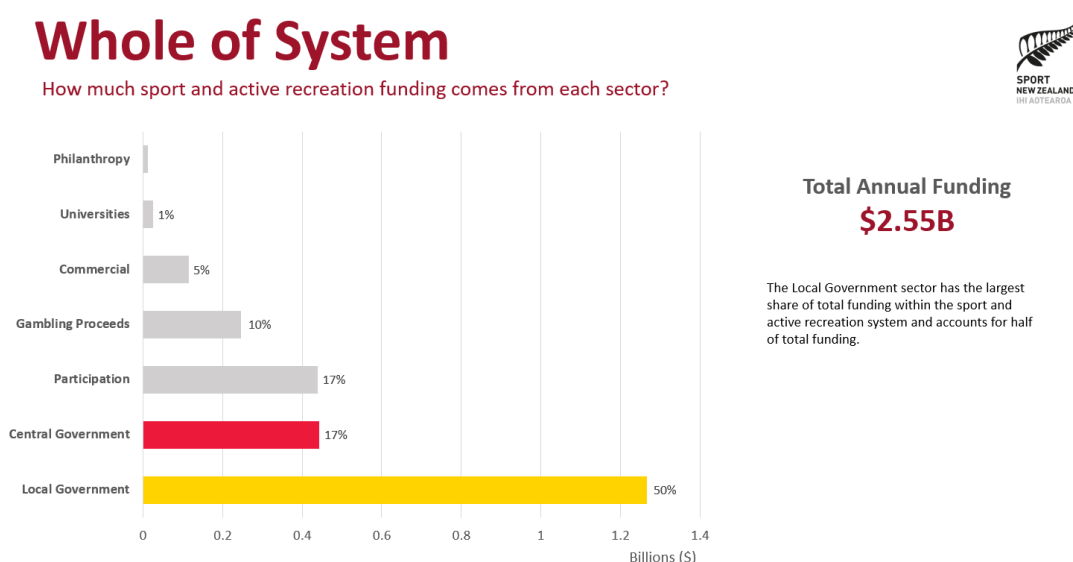
However, the overall scale of the funding is hard to quantify.

### 3.3.2 Why it matters

#### Local government is the major funder of sport and recreation

Research from Sport New Zealand shows that local government contributes half of the total funding for the sport and recreation sector (see Figure 11 below).<sup>21</sup>

Figure 11: Sport and recreation funding by sector



<sup>21</sup> Sport New Zealand. (2021). Sector Fundings Sources.

### **Investment in facilities is not keeping up with adopted provision guidelines**

The provision of aquatic and leisure facilities is guided by the Community Facilities Network Plan. Auckland's population has grown by 260,000 since the first Auckland Plan was adopted in 2012.<sup>22</sup> Yet only two new aquatic centres were brought into the network: the Albany Stadium Pool and the Ōtāhuhu Pool and Leisure Centre. This leaves gaps in provision.

Similarly, only one new sports park has been acquired since 2015.

Investment in play equipment is programmed, with 33 play space developments planned for delivery between 2024 and 2033 to meet population growth and approximately 290 play space renewals or upgrades over the next five years at a cost of \$45 million.

### **3.3.3 Opportunities for change**

#### **Utilise a wider range of delivery methods, including partnerships and community-led delivery**

Given the reliance on development contributions to fund open space acquisitions and the restrictions that come with them, there is an opportunity to utilise a wider range of delivery methods for open spaces and sport and recreation to ensure sufficient provision. At a time when many organisations are faced with significant funding and capacity issues, there are opportunities to leverage partnerships. Providing for the future will require the strengthening of partnerships for delivery, including with mana whenua, community and relevant sectors, supporting community-led delivery, and the prioritisation of investment to communities with the greatest needs. Communication will be critical to coordinating contributions across the many parties involved in delivery to avoid duplication of efforts. By working together, we can improve Auckland's and Aucklanders' ora.

In addition, improving data collection and analysis will help enable a clearer understanding of the complex delivery ecosystem.

#### **Grow our open space network where required through buy-outs as part of Auckland's storm recovery and resilience work**

Auckland Council's response to the extreme weather events in January and February 2023 creates an opportunity to better provide open spaces to Aucklanders in areas where there may be gaps in provision now or in the future.

Auckland Council is undertaking voluntary buy-outs of Category 3 properties as part of its storm recovery and resilience work. Category 3 properties are those where there is an intolerable risk to life from future flooding or landslides. In the future, some of the land on which these properties sit could be converted into open spaces. A risk assessment against potential loss of human life would be required to determine future uses (for example, a recreation park, conservation open space or connection, linkage and access open space).

Auckland Council is also expanding the blue-green network through the Making Space for Water programme, which is creating more blue-green corridors. These corridors connect and link blue elements (such as waterways) and green elements (such as parks and stormwater reserves). During storms, they can help to divert water away from private property and reduce flooding. When dry, green open spaces may be used by people, provided there is no risk of flash flooding. Co-location of parks

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<sup>22</sup> Infometrics. (2024). Regional Economic Profile: Auckland. Available at <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/auckland/Population/Growth>.


and stormwater management areas is already promoted in the council's existing Open Space Provision Policy.

The Making Space for Water programme has identified 12 sites suitable for the development of blue-green corridors.

The benefits of the blue-green network are further discussed in Section 4.7.3.

## 4 Key themes for a changing Auckland

### 4.1 The policy framework needs to reflect and adapt to change

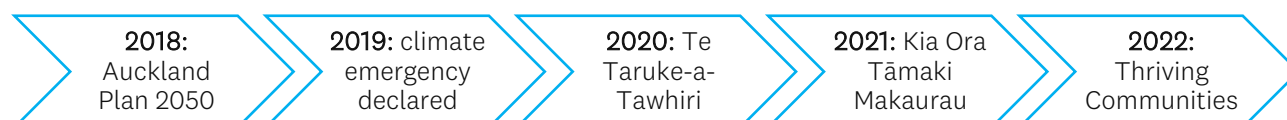
<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The first component of the existing policy framework was adopted in 2013, a decade ago.</li><li>• Auckland has changed since then and continues to change.</li><li>• The refreshed and consolidated framework needs to respond to key external drivers of change and reflect new council strategic directions.</li></ul>	
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on the drivers and directions, seven themes for a changing Auckland have been identified:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Te ao Māori</li><li>2. a growing and changing population</li><li>3. equity and inclusion</li><li>4. health and wellbeing</li><li>5. environment and biodiversity</li><li>6. climate change</li><li>7. urban intensification.</li></ol></li></ul>

#### 4.1.1 What we know

The new framework needs to respond to key external drivers of change and council directions

The world has changed since the Parks and Open Space Strategic Action Plan was adopted in 2013.

Auckland Council's strategic directions have also evolved, with key developments including:



Two scans were carried out to identify the key drivers of change relevant to open space and sport and recreation:

- a scan of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal trends at the global, national and local level
- a scan of council strategies, policies and plans.<sup>23</sup>

The resulting findings are presented in the table below. Out of those key themes below, seven have been identified as being most significant for the new policy framework: te ao Māori, a growing and changing population, equity and inclusion, health and wellbeing, environment and biodiversity, climate change and urban intensification.

*Table 3: Key themes of change relevant to the new framework*

Key themes of change		
<b>Te ao Māori</b> Council has placed an increased emphasis on better integrating Māori values into planning, decision-making and delivery. Globally, there is growing recognition and celebration of indigeneity.	<b>A growing and changing population</b> Auckland's population is growing rapidly, and the region is also ageing and becoming more ethnically diverse. This will lead to increased demand for services and facilities and changing preferences and behaviours.	<b>Equity and inclusion</b> Persistent inequities exist in Tāmaki Makaurau and Auckland Council has placed an increased emphasis on fostering and promoting equity and inclusion.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> There is a growing focus on wellbeing across government, including Auckland Council. COVID-19 and health trends are also changing the way people use and value open space.	<b>Environment and biodiversity</b> Auckland's growth is putting pressure on the environment and biodiversity. Council is increasingly focused on protecting and enhancing existing environments and biodiversity.	<b>Climate change</b> Auckland faces significant challenges from climate change and Auckland Council has declared a climate emergency. There is a growing expectation of resilient and sustainable responses to climate change.
<b>Technology</b> Technology is increasingly being utilised to manage open space and deliver sport and recreation experiences. Technology is also shaping the preferences of Aucklanders when it comes to play, sport and recreation.	<b>Urban intensification</b> Auckland is becoming a more compact city, with regulatory changes set to impact the rate of intensification. Intensification is causing a loss of private green space and increasing competition for use of public green space.	<b>Liveability and local identity</b> Council is increasingly focused on promoting liveability and local identity, providing quality infrastructure and supporting local autonomy and agency.
<b>Hybrid work</b>	<b>Trust in government</b>	<b>Financial and economic challenges</b>

<sup>23</sup> The strategies, policies and plans considered in the scan were the Auckland Plan 2050 (2018), Infrastructure Strategy (2021), Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau (2021), Ngā Hapori Momoho: Thriving Communities (2022), I Am Auckland (2013), Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland Climate Plan (2020), Toi Whītiki (2015), Age-friendly Auckland (2022), Auckland Regional Transport Plan (2021), Economic Development Action Plan (2021), Community Facilities Network Plan (2015), Auckland Water Strategy (2022), Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy (2013), Weed Management Policy (2013), Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (2018), Urban Ngahere Strategy (2019), Natural Hazard Risk Management Plan (2019), Organisational Strategy (2022), Regional Parks Management Plan (2022) and local board plans (2020).



Hybrid work environments mean some people have more time for recreational activities.	New Zealand society's decreasing trust in government affects the council's ability to deliver services.	Auckland and Aucklanders are experiencing financial and economic challenges.
<b>Community participation</b> Auckland Council is increasingly seeking to promote and enable partnerships and collaboration with communities, mana whenua and key stakeholders. Relatedly, volunteering opportunities are growing and can empower communities.	<b>Local government reform</b> New Zealand's local government reforms are reimagining the role of local councils.	<b>Changing preferences</b> Sport and recreation preferences are changing, with more focus on informal and unstructured activities.

### 4.1.2 Why it matters

A relevant and up-to-date policy framework needs to reflect and adapt to key changes in Auckland.

Two of the five indicators of success for the refresh and consolidation are that the new framework will reflect changes in Auckland Council's legislative, strategic and fiscal environment and align the components of the framework to achieve better coordination of long-term decision-making and forward planning. The latter includes delivering a cohesive set of outcomes linked to the Auckland Plan 2050 and improving integration with relevant council policies.

### 4.1.3 Opportunities for changes

Seven key themes for a changing Auckland have been identified as being most significant for the new policy framework: te ao Māori, a growing and changing population, equity and inclusion, health and wellbeing, environment and biodiversity, climate change and urban intensification.

These are explored in more detail in the following sections.

## 4.2 Te ao Māori

### Summary

- This section outlines key considerations for embedding te ao Māori throughout the new framework, one of the indicators of success for the refresh and consolidation.
- Mana whenua and mātāwaka have already contributed significant feedback on key Auckland Council policies and plans that we can build on.
- Historic, contemporary and long-term challenges impact the ability and capacity of mana whenua and mātāwaka to experience the full cultural, spiritual, social and environmental benefits open spaces and sport and recreation can provide for their wellbeing.
- Open spaces and physical activities play an important role in achieving Te tuakiri Māori me tōna oranga – a thriving Māori identity and wellbeing in Tāmaki Makaurau.

### Challenges



- Looking back: The impacts of colonisation have significantly disrupted the ability and capacity to maintain, sustain and regenerate specific whakapapa relationships with land, nature and people.
- Looking now: Contemporary challenges impact the ability and capacity for Māori communities to maintain, sustain and regenerate whānau and community wellbeing within Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Looking ahead: The ability and capacity of te taiao and te whenua to sustain and maintain whole living systems and regenerate their own mauri, while contributing to the mauri of future generations, is at risk.

### Opportunities



- Better integrate Māori values into planning, decision-making and delivery by taking an integrated system approach, acknowledging that everything is connected.
- Embed a te ao Māori lens into our new policy framework to enhance its contribution to Māori outcomes and the wider oranga of people, place and planet.
- Acknowledge and strengthen the contribution open spaces and physical activities make to the oranga of future generations.
- Work together to enhance the ability and capacity to care for, protect, activate, maintain and regenerate whakapapa relationships for people, place and planet.

## 4.2.1 What we know

“A te Ao Māori framework starts and ends with whakapapa”

To embed te ao Māori, it is helpful to look at whakatauki for guiding principles and to represent cultural values.

**Kia whakato muri te haere whakamua’ ‘I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past’**

This whakatauki represents a te ao Māori perspective where the past, present and future are viewed as one in a continuous cosmic process. The future is uncertain and only the past is known. We face the past in the present as we move into the future.



### Looking back

The ability and capacity to maintain, sustain and regenerate specific whakapapa relationships with land, nature and people has been significantly disrupted.

“Ahi kā roa (continued occupation or use) is a key component of mana whenua that has been significantly disrupted by colonialism... There is a need to recognise mana whenua autonomy as the basis of the relationship.”

Colonisation has over time harmed the ability of mana whenua to exercise, experience and establish core relationships and trace whakapapa.

Western worldviews do not align with a te ao Māori understanding of dynamic and complex ecosystem of whakapapa interconnections and interdependencies.

The significant losses of land, resources and culture experienced by Māori have been carried throughout generations, contributing to a loss of identity and key knowledge needed to thrive.

“We knew how to collect kai, how to treat our neighbours, how to work hard, how to keep ourselves busy playing sports ... The old way of doing things was about kawa and tika ... it was about action.”



### Looking now

The ability and capacity for Māori communities to maintain, sustain and regenerate whānau and community wellbeing within Tāmaki Makaurau is being challenged.

Many documents and policies, for example Te Ora ō Tāmaki Makaurau wellbeing framework, guide our work to address persistent issues for mana whenua and the growing community of mātāwaka Māori.

“We are only consulted once opportunities for constructive participation are limited.”

At the same time, the ecosystem of contributors has become more complex. The intertwined relationships of many players and increased demand for constructive partnerships challenge adequate resourcing and investment in the capacity to strengthen them.

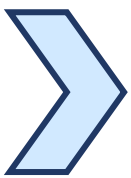
In addition, significant recent public health and environmental events have intensified the need for iwi, hapū and whānau Māori to accelerate responses that preserve culture, taonga and autonomy.

“If the land and sea is polluted, then the health of the people will be affected as will the mana of the iwi ... Climate change can undermine cultural heritage.”

“COVID has brought some hard times for our people and we still need to feed our families, what do we do? We put down a garden and we go and catch our kai.”

The scale of impacts and immense scope for action calls for new ways of working and approaches at whānau and local level.

“We have very limited capacity to engage without extra resource.”



### Looking ahead

The ability and capacity of te taiao and te whenua to sustain and maintain whole living systems and regenerate their own mauri, while contributing to the mauri of future generations, is at risk.

“As the core of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), our whakapapa provides us with identity and history, and connects us with our tūpuna and the whenua. This knowledge is incredibly important.”

Contemporary challenges pose tangible and existential threats to sources of mātauranga Māori (for example, whenua, wai, whakapapa) essential to intergenerational Māori wellbeing.

“For urban Māori a sense of place in the urban environment is complex but vital to wellbeing ... we need to have all of these things built into our spaces to help us grow and develop. Having place to belong ... a construct to belong ... to just be Māori.”

“We disagree on philosophy ... our environment is currently paying for it ... which our grandchildren will curse us for.”

Needs for change are complex, requiring systemic yet tailored and immediate responses with long-term benefits for future generations.

## 4.2.2 Why it matters

Nineteen iwi and hapū whakapapa to rohe within the current Auckland region and are mana whenua. Through ancestral links whenua and wai are of significance for tangata whenua.

“Past and present are linked to our future generations... bequeathing a future legacy...Historically and continuing into the future, the whenua and wai within our parks are of immense political, cultural, spiritual and physical significance to mana whenua and to the wider hapori.”

Many of Auckland’s open spaces and places are of significant value to mana whenua, including the tūpuna maunga and other sites and places of significance.

The Independent Māori Statutory Board has scheduled at least 18 *issues of significance* that are relevant to the domains of open space and sport and recreation.<sup>24</sup> Existing Auckland Council commitments and key levers aim to contribute to improving the cultural quality and accessibility of open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities.<sup>25</sup> For example, the Te Kete Rukuruku programme aims to ensure the names of open spaces better reflect mana whenua culture and identity. Over the next 30 years more Aucklanders will identify as Māori with diverse heritage, with the Māori population in Tāmaki Makaurau set to grow from 11.5 per cent to over 20 per cent.

Open spaces and physical activities are of intrinsic value and make a key contribution to a sense of place, identity and environmental and overall wellbeing for Māori today and in the future.

### 4.2.3 Opportunities for change

The refresh and consolidation can:

- better integrate Māori values into planning, decision-making and delivery by taking an integrated system approach, acknowledging everything is connected
- embed a te ao Māori lens into our policy framework to enhance its contribution to Māori outcomes and the wider oranga of people, place and planet
- acknowledge and strengthen the contribution open spaces and physical activities make to the oranga tāngata, oranga whānau, oranga whenua and oranga wai of future generations
- work together with mana whenua, whānau Māori and partners to enhance the ability and capacity to collectively care for, protect, activate, maintain and regenerate these whakapapa relationships for people, place and planet.



“Provision of open spaces adjacent to waterbodies, restoration of the land through native planting, allows access for customary activities that help protect the waterbody, improving the mauri of rivers ... leading to improved mauri of the bay ... safe for swimming.”

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<sup>24</sup> Independent Māori Statutory Board. (2021). The Schedule of Issues of Significance 2021-2025. Retrieved from <https://www.imsb.maori.nz/publications/the-issues-of-significance-2021/> [date accessed: 24 August 2023].

<sup>25</sup> Auckland Council. (2022). Auckland Council Group Māori Outcomes Report 2021/2022. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/kaupapa-maori/maori-outcomes/Documents/auckland-council-group-maori-outcomes-report-2021-2022.pdf> [date accessed: 24 August 2023].

## 4.3 A growing and changing population

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auckland's population is projected to increase by 648,000 to just over 2.3 million by 2048.</li><li>• The population is also becoming more ethnically diverse, and while Tāmaki Makaurau is still a youthful region the population is ageing.</li><li>• At present Aucklanders' needs and expectations relating to open space and sport and recreation are largely being met.</li></ul>	
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Population growth and social change will increase pressure on existing social and community infrastructure and drive the need for investment in additional services.</li><li>• We need to ensure we can continue to provide all Aucklanders with the opportunities they value and access to our blue, green and grey spaces now and in the future.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering more multi-use and integrated open spaces and facilities that can adapt to future needs will ensure we can continue to cater for growth and changing preferences.</li><li>• Working with communities to design spaces and facilities and enabling them to deliver programmes and services will ensure services meet the diverse needs of our communities and are welcoming and inclusive.</li></ul>

### 4.3.1 What we know

#### Tāmaki Makaurau is experiencing rapid growth and social change

The Auckland Plan 2050's evidence updates and progress reports highlight significant changes taking place in Tāmaki Makaurau.<sup>26</sup>

- Auckland's **population is growing rapidly**, projected to increase by 648,000 to just over 2.3 million by 2048.
- Tāmaki Makaurau is becoming **more ethnically diverse**, with the number of Asian people projected to rise significantly while the number of European or other (including European New Zealander) people declines.
- Auckland is **still a youthful region**, especially in the south, with the number of children and young people increasing but at a slower rate compared to general population growth.

<sup>26</sup> Auckland Council. (September 2022). Auckland Plan 2050 Evidence Report Update: Belonging and Participation. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Evidence%20reports%20documents/belonging-participation-evidence-report-update.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023]; Auckland Council. (February 2023). Auckland Plan 2050: Three Yearly Progress Report 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/threeyearlyprogressreport/auckland-plan-three-yearly-progress-report-2023.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023].

- Tāmaki Makaurau also has **an ageing population**, as the number of people aged 65 years and over may more than double by 2048 to almost a fifth of the total population.

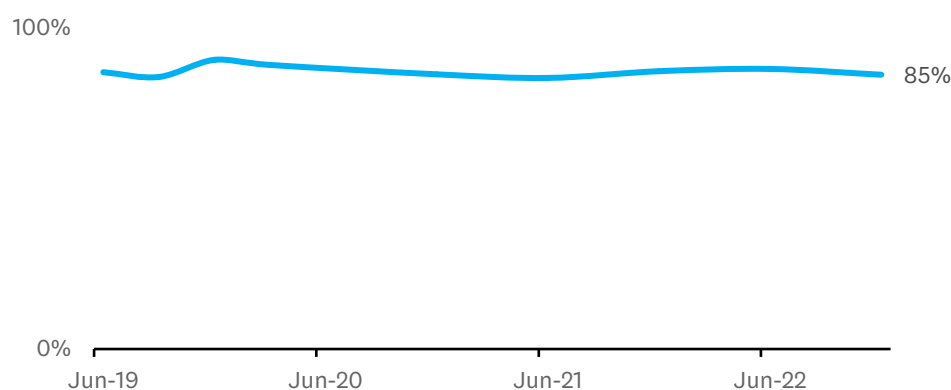
### Aucklanders' needs and expectations are largely being met at present

Aucklanders are largely satisfied with the open space network and with the sport and recreation opportunities available to them.

According to the Active NZ survey, in 2022 around three in four Aucklanders reported having access to spaces and places where they can do the physical activities they want (74 per cent of adults and 82 per cent of young people).

Consistently over 80 per cent of Aucklanders also say they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the “overall quality” of their visit to a park (see Figure 12).

*Figure 12: Proportion of Aucklanders “satisfied” and “very satisfied” with “overall quality of visit” to a park*



Source: Auckland Council Resident Customer Experience Report FY23

## 4.3.2 Why it matters

Auckland’s population growth and social changes present a range of challenges for its services and facilities.<sup>27</sup> These include:

- the challenge of maintaining social cohesion amid demographic change
- increasing pressure on existing social and community infrastructure
- an increasingly complex role for council engaging with and enabling Auckland’s communities.

In addition, demographic changes will also mean changing preferences and behaviours in relation to open spaces and sport and recreation. The new framework will need to adapt and provide the tools to ensure the population of a changing Auckland continues to be provided with the opportunities they want.

<sup>27</sup> Auckland Council. (June 2018). Auckland Plan 2050 Evidence Report: Belonging and Participation. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Evidence%20reports%20documents/evidence-report-belonging-participation.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023].



### 4.3.3 Opportunities for change

Aucklanders have highlighted improvements they would like to see

Aucklanders have suggested improvements to open spaces and places and sport and recreation opportunities, ranging from signage to traditional Māori sports (see Table 4).

There is an opportunity to deliver more multi-use and integrated spaces and facilities that can adapt as needs change. This will ensure the network can continue to cater for growth and changing preferences. Working with communities to design spaces and facilities and enabling them to deliver programmes and services will also ensure more equitable outcomes and spaces and facilities that better reflect their diverse identities and needs.


*Table 4: Improvements suggested by Aucklanders in recent engagement surveys<sup>28</sup>*

Theme	Suggested improvements
Improve accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• better access to open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities for underserved communities</li><li>• universal design standards</li><li>• visible signage and well-maintained footpaths for open spaces</li><li>• information about open spaces and sport and recreation should be accessible for target communities</li><li>• more fit-for-purpose facilities, equipment and programmes encouraging participation, particularly for Pacific communities and older people.</li></ul>
Improve safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• clean and safe bike paths and walkways, including accessible and safe journeys from public transport stops or parking to outdoor activities</li><li>• attractive, inclusive and safe outdoor spaces in all communities that are connected and accessible.</li></ul>
Involve community and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• more community participation and engagement opportunities in neighbourhood regeneration projects, including for older people and minority groups</li><li>• opportunities for the whānau to participate in sport and recreation.</li></ul>
Reflect Auckland's diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• better represent the diversity of Aucklanders in the promotion of sport and recreation and design of open spaces and facilities</li><li>• support traditional Māori sport and the use of te reo Māori.</li></ul>
Improve quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• keep open spaces clean</li><li>• provide amenities such as seating, shade, drinking fountains, good lighting and storage for sports equipment</li><li>• more gender-specific and gender-neutral public toilets.</li></ul>

<sup>28</sup> Findings from community engagement on key Auckland Council strategies including Ngā Hapori Momoho: Thriving Communities (2021), Age-friendly Auckland (2020), I Am Auckland (2022) and Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039 (2019).

Provide a range of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide multi-use facilities for sport and recreation (without compromising the identity of sports clubs that take pride in their single-purpose facilities)</li> <li>improve existing facilities.</li> </ul>
Reduce cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced-price venue hire</li> <li>free sports programmes</li> <li>free transport to sports facilities.</li> </ul>
Contribute to food sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more community gardens to deliver sustainable food sources.</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Equity and inclusion

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2013, Auckland Council has placed an increased emphasis on equity and inclusion.</li> <li>However, persistent inequities exist in Auckland, including in participation in physical activities.</li> <li>Unless inequities are addressed, vulnerable communities will continue to be impacted the most.</li> <li>Equity is an increasingly significant driver of investment in open space in leading international cities.</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some Aucklanders are more physically active than others and around half of all Aucklanders are not meeting physical activity guidelines.</li> <li>Some Aucklanders are also less likely to have good physical or mental health, enjoy the benefits of tree canopy coverage and feel positively about their local area.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build an explicit focus on equity into the new framework.</li> <li>Target interventions to communities of greatest need.</li> <li>Enable communities to deliver programmes and services for more equitable outcomes.</li> <li>Align the new framework with the Thriving Communities strategy and transformational change programmes such as Hawaiki Hou.</li> </ul>

### 4.4.1 What we know

Since 2013, Auckland Council has placed an increased emphasis on equity and inclusion. Adopted in 2022, the Ngā Hapori Momoho – Thriving Communities Strategy calls for working “together to remove

barriers, eliminate discrimination and disadvantage and provide meaningful opportunities and choices for all” to ensure a thriving Tāmaki Makaurau.<sup>29</sup>

However, persistent inequities exist in Auckland and have been exacerbated by inflation and COVID-19, with distinct patterns of socioeconomic disadvantage and need in terms of income, employment and educational achievement.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of open space and sport and recreation, inequities can be seen across a range of areas from participation in physical activity to tree canopy coverage.

### **Some Aucklanders are more physically active than others and around half of all Aucklanders are not meeting physical activity guidelines**

The Active NZ survey shows that while many Aucklanders are physically active, participation rates vary by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation and disability (see Table 5).

*Table 5: Likelihood of participation in physical activities (2022)*

	Most likely	Least likely
<b>Adults</b>	<b>Men (76%)</b>	<b>Women (72%)</b>
	<b>18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds (75%)</b>	<b>75+ year olds (68%)</b>
	<b>European Aucklanders (79%)</b>	<b>Pacific Aucklanders (63%)</b>
	<b>Aucklanders with no disability (80%)</b>	<b>Aucklanders with a disability (68%)</b>
	<b>Aucklanders in low deprivation areas (78%)</b>	<b>Aucklanders in high deprivation areas (65%)</b>
<b>Young people</b>	<b>Boys (92%)</b>	<b>Girls (89%)</b>
	<b>8-11 year olds (94%)</b>	<b>15-17 year olds (80%)</b>
	<b>European Aucklanders (92%)</b>	<b>Māori Aucklanders (86%)</b>
	<b>Aucklanders with no disability (92%)</b>	<b>Aucklanders with a disability (88%)</b>
	<b>Aucklanders in low deprivation areas (94%)</b>	<b>Aucklanders in high deprivation areas (87%)</b>

In addition, Aucklanders are not always getting enough physical activity in their lives.

Active NZ data for 2022 also shows that only 57 per cent of adult Aucklanders met the Ministry of Health physical activity guidelines of being active for 150 minutes a week or more. Only 46 per cent of young people met the guidelines of 420 minutes of activity a week or more. Again, the data points to demographic differences. Among adults, European Aucklanders, men, 18-24 and 65-74 year olds and Aucklanders without a disability are most likely to meet the guidelines, while Pacific Aucklanders, women, 75+ year olds and Aucklanders with a disability are least likely. Among young people, European Aucklanders, boys, 8-11 year olds and Aucklanders without a disability are most likely to

<sup>29</sup> Auckland Council. (2022). Ngā Hapori Momoho – Thriving Communities Strategy. Retrieved from <https://aklcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/who-we-are/SiteAssets/SitePages/Thriving-Communities-Nga-Hapori-Momoho-Action-Plan--refresh-underway-/Nga-Hapori-Momoho-Strategy-2022-2032-final.pdf?web=1> [date accessed: 24 August 2023].

<sup>30</sup> Auckland Council. (2023). Auckland Plan 2050: Three Yearly Progress Report 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/threeyearlyprogressreport/auckland-plan-three-yearly-progress-report-2023.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023].

meet the guidelines, while Asian Aucklanders, girls, 15-17 year olds and Aucklanders with a disability are least likely.

### **Time, transport, health or fitness and cost are barriers to participation**

Time, transport, health or fitness and cost were repeatedly reported as the most significant barriers to using open space and participating in sport and recreation in four recent studies.<sup>31</sup>

Aucklanders have also highlighted additional barriers when engaging on recent council strategies:

- discriminatory attitudes making children and young people feel they have to mask parts of their identities to feel safe and welcome
- systemic barriers such as inequality, poverty and exclusion
- language and accessibility barriers for some immigrants, older Aucklanders and disabled people as most information is online and in English
- lack of pathways and support for young athletes to transition to professional sport
- lack of sporting opportunities for Pacific Peoples, Māori, Asian Aucklanders and women.

The Active NZ survey also points to an emerging barrier to participation in physical activity among young people: an increasing preference for playing electronic games. In 2022, 39 per cent of young people agreed that they found electronic games more exciting to play than real life ones, up from 21 per cent in 2021.

### **There is a correlation between high deprivation and low participation and poor physical health**

Data from the 2022 Active NZ survey shows that adults and young people in low deprivation areas of Auckland are more likely to be physically active and meet the Ministry of Health's physical activity guidelines than those in high deprivation areas. For adults, 64 per cent of people in low deprivation areas met the guidelines compared with 44 per cent in high deprivation areas. For young people, 52 per cent of those in low deprivation areas met the guidelines compared with 41 per cent in high deprivation areas.

The Quality of Life survey shows that positive ratings of physical health have fallen by an average of 12 points in every local board area, with the largest reductions in Papakura and the smallest in Devonport-Takapuna. There is a noticeable correlation between local board areas with high levels of poor physical health and high levels of socioeconomic deprivation.

### **Some Aucklanders are less likely to benefit from tree canopy coverage or feel positively about their local area**

While overall tree canopy coverage in Auckland is just over 18 per cent, there is significant variation across local boards. Māngere-Ōtāhuhu has the lowest coverage at eight per cent, while Kaipātiki has

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<sup>31</sup> GravitasOPG. (2021). Recreational Tracks – User Needs Research Summary of Findings. Retrieved from [https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2021/12/PAC\\_20211202\\_AGN\\_10965\\_AT\\_EXTRA\\_files/PAC\\_20211202\\_AGN\\_10965\\_AT\\_EXTRA\\_Attachment\\_85472\\_6.PDF](https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2021/12/PAC_20211202_AGN_10965_AT_EXTRA_files/PAC_20211202_AGN_10965_AT_EXTRA_Attachment_85472_6.PDF) [date accessed: 5 July 2023]; Department of Conservation. (2020). New Zealanders in the Outdoors. Retrieved from <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/visitor-research/new-zealanders-in-the-outdoors.pdf> [date accessed: 5 July 2023]; Auckland Council. (2019). People's Panel: Sports in Auckland. Retrieved from <https://peoplespanel.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/surveys/reports/TBkJ5ZkGE0C9iwjXFqNYhQ> [date accessed: 5 July 2023]; Sport New Zealand. (August 2023). Active NZ Changes in Participation: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/active-nz-changes-in-participation-2022/> [date accessed: 6 October 2023].

the highest with 30 per cent. Auckland's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy calls for increasing the average canopy cover across Auckland to 30 per cent and for no local board to have less than 15 per cent cover.<sup>32</sup>

While most Aucklanders have positive perceptions of their local area, there is noticeable geographic variation. According to the Quality of Life survey, people in south Auckland are more likely to disagree that their local area is a great place to live and that they feel a sense of pride in the look and feel of their local area.<sup>33</sup> Positive perceptions are high across all age groups, but lowest among Aucklanders under 25 and highest among Aucklanders over 65. It is similarly high across most ethnic groups, although Māori have historically been the least likely demographic to agree that they felt a sense of pride in the way their local area looked and felt.

## **4.4.2 Why it matters**

**Unless inequities are addressed vulnerable communities will continue to be impacted the most**

The Thriving Communities strategy highlights how too many Aucklanders are unable to thrive because they cannot fully participate in society and in the activities that have meaning and value to them. This includes the ability to access and use open spaces and places and take part in physical activities. In addition, the strategy notes that as Tāmaki Makaurau grows and inequities are experienced across successive generations, the impacts will be more visible and harder to change.

**Equity is an increasingly significant driver of investment in open space in leading international cities**

As outlined in the assessment of Auckland Council's Open Space Provision Policy covered in Section 4.8, in leading international cities such as Bogotá, New York City and Seoul equity has become a significant driver of investment in open space. These cities have undertaken detailed planning and analysis to identify how to target investment to address inequities, with budgets to match.

## **4.4.3 Opportunities for change**



The refresh and consolidation provides the opportunity to ensure the new framework works for all Aucklanders by building in an explicit focus on equity. To address existing inequities, interventions should be targeted where they will make the most difference, focusing on communities of greatest need and enabling communities to deliver programmes and services for more equitable outcomes. This would mean aligning the framework with the Thriving Communities Strategy and focusing our interventions to address barriers and underlying drivers of inequity. There is also an opportunity to explore alignment with initiatives such as Sport New Zealand's Hawaiki Hou programme, which seeks to promote transformational change in how we enable New Zealanders to be active, including through greater collaboration and partnership, alternative delivery approaches and focusing on systems change.

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<sup>32</sup> Auckland Council. (2019). Auckland's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/Documents/urban-ngahere-forest-strategy.pdf> [date accessed: 8 June 2023].

<sup>33</sup> Quality of Life Project, 2012-2022. Survey results are available at <https://www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/survey-results/>.

## 4.5 Health and wellbeing

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open spaces, as well as recreation and sports facilities, deliver significant economic value to cities and their residents: for example, they generate direct income, improve our resilience to weather events, contribute to our climate change response and provide direct savings in health expenditure.</li><li>• They improve the health and wellbeing of cities and their residents, notably by enabling Aucklanders to be physically active.</li><li>• Aucklanders' changing preferences and behaviours mean that our investment and delivery approaches need to be flexible enough to cater to future needs.</li></ul>	
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aucklanders' perceived physical and mental health is declining.</li><li>• Physical inactivity creates a significant burden on our health care system and is also linked to loss of earnings, loss of productivity and premature death.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embrace a more holistic vision of physical activity and movement, one that better reflects the importance of play and informal sport and recreation, while continuing to cater for more traditional sport and recreation opportunities.</li><li>• Improve the wellbeing of Auckland and Aucklanders by collectively investing in open spaces and sport and recreation.</li></ul>

### 4.5.1 What we know

#### Open spaces improve the wellbeing of cities and their residents

Open spaces have been shown to deliver significant economic value to cities and their residents, enhancing the wellbeing of both.<sup>34</sup> For example, they generate direct income, improve our resilience to weather events, contribute to our climate change response and provide direct savings, including in relation to clean air and water, health expenditure and community cohesion.

The importance of open space for health and wellbeing is further outlined in the assessment of Auckland Council's Open Space Provision Policy covered in Section 4.8. The emerging perspective from leading international cities is that spending on open space should be seen as an investment in wellbeing rather than a cost, with the benefits far outweighing the costs.

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<sup>34</sup> The Trust for Public Land. (2010). The Economic Benefits of the Parks and Recreation System of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Retrieved from [https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ccpe\\_MecklenburgNC\\_econben.pdf](https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ccpe_MecklenburgNC_econben.pdf) [date accessed: 4 June 2023].

## Physical activity is an important contributor to Aucklanders' oranga

Aucklanders increasingly value physical activity as an essential part of their lives and for its contribution to their physical health and mental or emotional wellbeing. In Sport New Zealand's Active NZ survey 2022:

94% of Aucklanders said being physically active is very important for their physical health (89% in 2017)

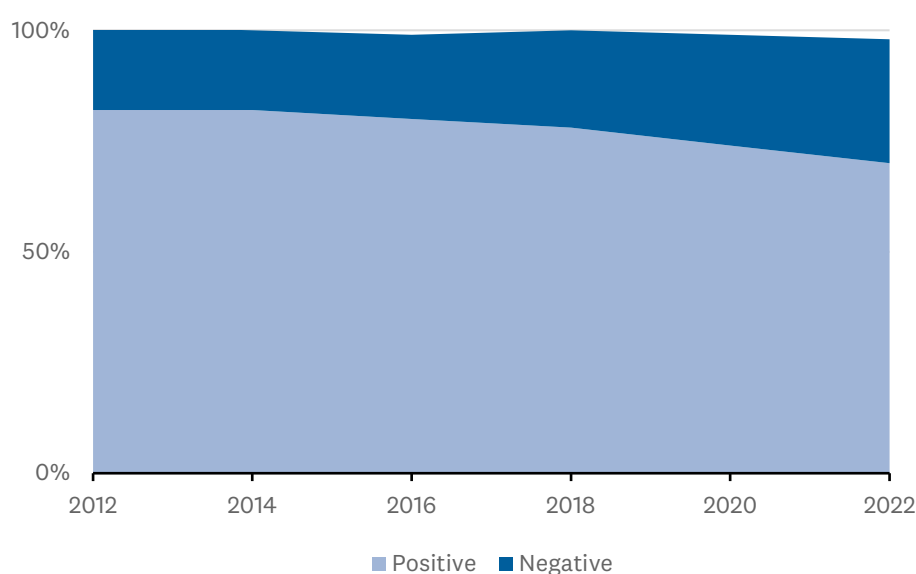
92% of Aucklanders said being physically active is very important for their mental or emotional wellbeing (85% in 2017)

81% of Aucklanders said that physical activity is an essential part of their life (75% in 2017)

## Aucklanders' perceived physical and mental health is declining

While Aucklanders are more aware of the value of physical activity for their health and wellbeing, they are also less likely to rate their physical and mental health positively. The Quality of Life Survey reports that Aucklanders' perceived physical health has declined between 2012 and 2022 (see Figure 1). In 2012, 82 per cent of Aucklanders rated their health positively, with 15 per cent responding that they had "excellent" physical health. By 2022, only 70 per cent of Aucklanders rated their physical health positively and just nine per cent considered it "excellent".

Figure 13: Rating of perceived physical health



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Data on mental health was only collected in the 2020 and 2022 Quality of Life surveys. In 2020, 73 per cent of Aucklanders rated their mental health positively. In 2022, it had fallen to 65 per cent.

## Physical inactivity is costing Auckland and Aucklanders

As outlined in Section 4.4, while many Aucklanders are physically active, they are not always getting enough physical activity in their lives.



Physical inactivity in Auckland has been shown to cost around \$400 million.<sup>35</sup> This comes from a combination of direct costs (costs to the health system) and indirect costs (the costs of loss of earnings, loss of productivity, premature death).

Physical inactivity  
in Auckland costs  
\$400 million

### Physical activity preferences are changing, with Aucklanders active in less formal ways

Most Aucklanders prefer to take part in more informal sport and recreation opportunities, and this preference is increasing. According to the Active NZ survey, adults and young people in Auckland prefer more flexible and less structured physical activities and many only participate in non-competitive sport or activities.<sup>36</sup>

In 2021, 65% of adult Aucklanders said they prefer more flexible and less structured activity (63% in 2017)

In 2022, 54% of young Aucklanders said they prefer more flexible and less structured activity (43% in 2017)

In 2021, 65% of adult Aucklanders said they participate only in non-competitive sport or activities (61% in 2017)

In 2022, 66% of young Aucklanders said they participate only in non-competitive sport or activities (64% in 2017)

## 4.5.2 Why it matters

### Our delivery approaches need to cater to changing preferences and behaviours

Preferences and behaviours are changing and so is local government and the sport and recreation sector. We are increasingly moving from a traditional view of sport and recreation to a more holistic vision of physical activity, one that better reflects the importance of play and informal sport and recreation. The importance of play – as physical activity that is naturally motivated, freely chosen and with no pre-defined outcome<sup>37</sup> – has been a growing focus for both the sport and recreation sector and Auckland Council with the recent development of play specific policies<sup>38</sup> and advocacy roles.

The changing preferences and behaviours of Aucklanders need to be reflected in the new framework and our investment and delivery approaches need to be flexible enough to cater to their current and future needs.

<sup>35</sup> New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. (February 2022). The cost of long-term conditions in New Zealand: Review of the evidence – 2021 update. Retrieved from [https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/cost\\_of\\_illness\\_lts\\_2\\_jun\\_-\\_jr.pdf](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/cost_of_illness_lts_2_jun_-_jr.pdf) [date accessed: 11 July 2023].

<sup>36</sup> Note 2021 data is used where questions were not repeated in the 2022 survey.

<sup>37</sup> Aktive, CLM Community Sport, Harbour Sport, Sport Auckland and Sport Waitākere. (April 2022). Te Whai Kori: A Regional Play Framework for Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. Retrieved from <https://aktive.org.nz/funding-services/play/> [date accessed: 1 June 2023].



<sup>38</sup> See for example, Kia Hīanga – Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa Play Plan 2022-2025 and Te Whai Kori: A Regional Play Framework for Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland.

### 4.5.3 Opportunities for change

As Auckland's population grows and changes, and Aucklanders' preferences and behaviours change, the refresh and consolidation provides an opportunity to reflect this. The new framework should embrace a more holistic vision of physical activity, reflecting and encouraging a wider range of activities that suit the changing needs of Aucklanders. While it should better reflect the importance of play and informal sport and recreation, the new framework should also continue to cater for more traditional sport and recreation opportunities.

There is also an opportunity to improve the wellbeing of Auckland and Aucklanders by collectively investing in open spaces and sport and recreation and ensuring the new framework continues to support future generations of Aucklanders. This includes exploring the role open spaces and sport and recreation opportunities could play in addressing declining perceptions of physical and mental health given that they are important contributors to health and wellbeing.

## 4.6 Environment and biodiversity

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The health of Auckland's natural environment shows some small improvements, but many challenges remain.</li><li>• The natural environment supports our health and wellbeing.</li><li>• Our open spaces are important for protecting the natural environment and indigenous biodiversity.</li></ul>	
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auckland's growth, along with associated habitat loss and other threats such as invasive pest species and diseases, is putting pressure on the environment and biodiversity, threatening indigenous species and ecosystems.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take an ecosystem approach and increasingly manage our open space network to benefit the environment and indigenous biodiversity, as well as people.</li><li>• Make use of solutions such as increasing indigenous tree canopy cover, greening the city and connecting and interlinking open spaces and habitats.</li></ul>

## 4.6.1 What we know

The health of Auckland's natural environment shows some small improvements, but challenges remain

Recent reporting on the health of Auckland's natural environment<sup>39</sup> shows that:

Hau (air)	Whenua (land)	Wai (water)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall air quality in Tāmaki Makaurau is improving.</li> <li>Greenhouse emissions are increasing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Productive rural soils are over-fertilised and compacted.</li> <li>Ongoing plant and animal pest control is necessary to protect the values of most indigenous ecosystems.</li> <li>Several forest ecosystem types are severely depleted and many of our remaining forests are small and fragmented.</li> <li>Many of the indigenous ecosystems of Tāmaki Makaurau are under threat.<sup>40</sup></li> <li>Tree canopy cover in Auckland's urban area stands at just over 18%.<sup>41</sup></li> <li>Climate change will exacerbate existing threats and pose additional challenges to indigenous species and ecosystems.<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groundwater quality has showed minor improvements.</li> <li>Stream water quality improved at more sites than it degraded at. However, streams continue to be nutrient enriched, have declining visual clarity and generally high levels of E. coli.</li> <li>The health of monitored lakes continues to decline.</li> <li>Coastal water quality is mostly improving but slowly.</li> </ul>

<sup>39</sup> This table is largely drawn from the 2020 health of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's natural environment report, with additional sources referenced. Auckland Council. (2021). The health of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's natural environment in 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/2009/the-health-of-tamaki-makaurau-auckland-s-natural-environment-in-2020.pdf> [date accessed: 8 June 2023]; The report provides a point in time synthesis of reporting on the health of Auckland's natural environment. More up to date data can be found on the Knowledge Auckland website: <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/natural-environment/>.

<sup>40</sup> Auckland Council. (2017). Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland. Retrieved from <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1399/indigenous-terrestrial-and-wetland-ecosystems-of-auckland-web-print-mar-2017.pdf> [date accessed: 5 December 2023].

<sup>41</sup> Auckland Council. (2019). Auckland's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/Documents/urban-ngahere-forest-strategy.pdf> [date accessed: 8 June 2023].

<sup>42</sup> Ministry for the Environment. (2020). National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand: Main report – Arotakenga Tūraru mō te Huringa Āhuarangi o Aotearoa: Pūrongo whakatōpū. Retrieved from <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/national-climate-change-risk-assessment-main-report.pdf> [date accessed: 12 December 2023].

## **Auckland's growth is putting pressure on the environment and biodiversity, threatening indigenous species and ecosystems**

The Auckland region, like the rest of New Zealand, is part of a terrestrial biodiversity hotspot with a diverse range of ecosystem types and associated species. However, it is widely recognised that indigenous biodiversity in the region is under threat from continued loss and fragmentation of indigenous land cover, the ongoing impact and increasing threat of invasive species and diseases, overharvesting, pollution and climate change.<sup>43</sup>

Urbanisation is a major cause of biodiversity decline as it can fragment and destroy natural habitats. As Auckland intensifies and expands, the threat to biodiversity will increase.

While there are improvements, the current health of the natural environment reflects decades of degradation. A degraded environment has also impacted Auckland's biodiversity. Over time native forest in Tāmaki Makaurau has been replaced by exotic pasture and urban development. This has meant a loss of ecosystems and the natural diversity they support. As habitats have become degraded or been removed, species have become increasingly threatened. Auckland is now home to more than 400 threatened species. Problematic weeds and pests can spread in our open spaces and impact native species and habitats unless intensively managed. Urban growth has also contributed to the degradation of Auckland's freshwater and marine environments.

### **4.6.2 Why it matters**

#### **The natural environment supports our health and wellbeing**

Tāmaki Makaurau has a rich and diverse natural environment. It supports the health and social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of Auckland and Aucklanders. It also makes the region an attractive place to live, work and play. Mana whenua are kaitiaki of the natural environment, with deep spiritual and cultural connections to Tāmaki Makaurau's land, maunga, harbours and waters through whakapapa.

Protecting and enhancing the health of our natural environment is critical to the health and wellbeing of Auckland and Aucklanders. It is also critical to the health of our network of green, grey and blue spaces and our enjoyment of them. The conservation efforts of Aucklanders can also be a form of recreation, providing physical and social benefits in addition to their contribution to the environment and biodiversity.

#### **Our open spaces are important for protecting the natural environment and indigenous biodiversity**

Green spaces, both public and private, can support and provide for biodiversity. Open spaces can help to address biodiversity decline across the region. Open spaces and reserves containing existing indigenous ecosystems provide legal protection and a foundation for increased management activities, such as animal and plant pest control under Auckland Council's Natural Environment Targeted Rate.

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<sup>43</sup> Auckland Council. (2017). Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland. Retrieved from <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1399/indigenous-terrestrial-and-wetland-ecosystems-of-auckland-web-print-mar-2017.pdf> [date accessed: 5 December 2023].

Open space land may also provide opportunities for ecological restoration planting<sup>44</sup> that can provide habitat for indigenous species and support carbon sequestration. A network of interconnected green spaces can provide safe passage for native species and help rebuild fragmented habitats. The type of open space matters though. Existing indigenous ecosystems provide significantly greater biodiversity benefits (as well as other environmental benefits such as air filtering, shading, cooling, stormwater control and water filtering) than cultivated green spaces with lawns and low shrubs.

### 4.6.3 Opportunities for change

#### Improving our open space network can benefit the environment, biodiversity and people

There is an opportunity to ensure the new framework supports improvements to our open space network to benefit not only Auckland's environment and biodiversity, but also its people. This includes drawing on te ao Māori and utilising guidance in Te Haumanu Taiao,<sup>45</sup> Auckland Council's new ecological restoration guide developed in partnership with Ngā Iwi Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau, to take an ecosystem approach to planning, decision-making and delivery, conscious of the connection between people, biodiversity and the environment. Improvements could include increasing management to protect ecosystems and species prioritised under council's Biodiversity Focus Areas programme and to address biodiversity pressures identified in the Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan 2020-2030.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, indigenous tree canopy cover can be increased in accordance with the council's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy. Other opportunities include greening the city through green infrastructure and connecting and interlinking open spaces and habitats to increase walkability, amenity value and protect native biodiversity. A healthier and more resilient natural environment will also provide more opportunities for Aucklanders to connect to nature.



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<sup>44</sup> Auckland Council. (2023). Te Haumanu Taiao: Restoring the natural environment in Tāmaki Makaurau. Retrieved from [https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz/media/dj5mav0c/tehaumanutaiao\\_a4p\\_web.pdf](https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz/media/dj5mav0c/tehaumanutaiao_a4p_web.pdf) [date accessed: 5 December 2023].

<sup>45</sup> Auckland Council. (2023). Te Haumanu Taiao: Restoring the natural environment in Tāmaki Makaurau. Retrieved from [https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz/media/dj5mav0c/tehaumanutaiao\\_a4p\\_web.pdf](https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz/media/dj5mav0c/tehaumanutaiao_a4p_web.pdf) [date accessed: 5 December 2023].

<sup>46</sup> Auckland Council. What is a biodiversity focus area? Retrieved from <https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz/discover-tamaki-makaurau/what-is-a-biodiversity-focus-area/> [date accessed: 5 December 2023]; Auckland Council. (2020). Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan 2020-2030. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/docsregionalpestmanagementstrategy/auckland-regional-pest-management-plan-2020-2030.pdf> [date accessed: 5 December 2023].

## 4.7 Climate change

<b>Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change poses significant challenges to Auckland and will continue to impact Aucklanders.</li> <li>Open spaces can play a role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience.</li> <li>Climate change will impact play, sport and recreation opportunities.</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tāmaki Makaurau is facing a climate emergency, with an urgent need to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and design our open space network to enhance its contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.</li> <li>Green the city, including through the use of green walls/roofs, street trees and vegetated berms.</li> <li>Make Auckland a ‘spongier’ region by using nature-based solutions, embracing water-sensitive design in our open spaces to manage water.</li> <li>Develop our blue-green network, delivering multiple benefits.</li> <li>Reduce carbon emissions in our open space network.</li> </ul>

### 4.7.1 What we know

#### Climate change poses significant challenges to Auckland

In June 2019, Auckland Council declared a climate emergency. This included committing to incorporating climate change considerations into work programmes and decisions. In 2020, Auckland Council adopted Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland’s Climate Plan. The plan outlines the following challenges climate change poses to Tāmaki Makaurau:<sup>47</sup>

Rising temperatures and more days over 25°C	Increasing probability of more extreme weather events	Increase in rainfall intensity and more intense flooding	More drought prone and more dry days
Terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystem decline	More threats from coastal erosion, storm surges and flooding	Increase in insect borne and water borne disease	Increased allergens

<sup>47</sup> Auckland Council. (December 2020). Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland’s Climate Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/aucklands-climate-plan/Documents/auckland-climate-plan.pdf> [date accessed: 14 June 2023].




Increased risk of forest fire	Sea level rise	Pollution accumulation	Soil and moisture decline
Reduced food security	Ocean acidification will threaten some marine species	Rise in ocean temperatures will impact ecosystems and moana kai	

While open spaces can help address the impacts of climate change, they are also vulnerable to climate change itself. Heatwaves, drought and water restrictions will affect plant health, and as vegetation dies, its ability to moderate temperatures and mitigate the urban heat island effect is reduced. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion and storm surges will also put open spaces near the sea at risk. Extreme weather events can result in flooding, land slips and fallen trees.

The storms and flooding earlier in 2023 were a devastating example of the challenges Auckland faces from climate change, which will continue to impact Aucklanders.

## 4.7.2 Why it matters

Open spaces can play a role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience

<b>Mitigate the urban heat island effect</b> 	<p>The urban heat island effect describes how urban areas are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas due to buildings, roads and other structures absorbing and re-emitting more heat. Rising temperatures due to climate change will mean even hotter urban areas.</p> <p>Open spaces can help mitigate this effect, with trees and other vegetation – including urban forests, parks, green roofs and street trees – providing shade and helping to cool the air. Large parks can even provide cooling effects well beyond their boundaries.<sup>48</sup> Our blue spaces also play a role in helping to mitigate the urban heat island effect.</p>
<b>Capture and store carbon dioxide</b> 	<p>The vegetation in our open spaces absorbs carbon dioxide and helps to offset greenhouse gas emissions. Parts of our parks network even act as carbon sinks, absorbing more carbon dioxide than they release.<sup>49</sup></p> <p>Our blue spaces also play a key role in sequestering carbon. The ocean and wetlands are important carbon sinks.</p>
<b>Support water management</b> 	<p>Urban areas have more impervious surfaces, which limits the spaces where water can be absorbed. This means more water can flow over the land more quickly and more often, which can lead to flooding, damage to infrastructure, erosion of land and redistribution of pollutants and sediment. Climate change is leading to more extreme weather events, an increase in rainfall intensity and more intense flooding.</p> <p>Our open spaces – whether a forest, a park, street trees or even a lawn – can either help absorb water before it reaches the ground or help soak up surface water, reducing the amount of runoff. They can also help to capture, filter and direct water, offsetting the impact of droughts.</p>

<sup>48</sup> Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. (March 2023). Are we building harder, hotter cities? The vital importance of urban green spaces. Retrieved from <https://pce.parliament.nz/media/tetah53z/report-are-we-building-harder-hotter-cities-the-vital-importance-of-urban-green-spaces.pdf> [date accessed: 2 June 2023].

<sup>49</sup> Auckland Council. (2023). Low Carbon Parks Summary Report.



## Climate change will impact play, recreation and sport opportunities

Climate change will not only have direct impacts on play, sport and recreation – including on when and where activities can take place and how people can participate – but also indirect impacts – including changing priorities and behaviours in response to climate change.<sup>50</sup> Possible impacts include:

- reduced ability to participate due to rising temperatures and extreme weather events
- increased injuries to participants from heat exhaustion and harder playing surfaces
- damage to playing surfaces and buildings due to extreme weather events
- challenges to the viability of outdoor sports and increased demand for indoor facilities
- increased interest in play, sport and recreation opportunities as a coping mechanism
- more migration to Tāmaki Makaurau, with immigrants bringing different play, sport and recreation preferences
- new opportunities for physical activities in winter due to rising temperatures and fewer opportunities in summer
- a reduction in the viability of hosting international sporting events due to the high carbon cost of flying
- reduced spending on play, sport and recreation by government due to a focus on responding to climate change.

### 4.7.3 Opportunities for change

**Enhance the contribution of our open space network to climate change and resilience, when funding is available**

The sponginess of a city refers to its ability to absorb rainfall. A 2022 report ranked Auckland the spongiest global city out of 10 surveyed, largely due to the high percentage of green-blue surfaces in the region.<sup>51</sup>

However, the devastating impact of the extreme weather events of early 2023 clearly demonstrates that more must be done to improve Auckland's resilience. The reduction in urban green space due to growth and intensification and the increasing probability of more extreme weather events and intense flooding due to climate change make the need for change even more pressing.

At the heart of the sponge city concept is the idea of using nature to manage the impacts of rainfall. There is an opportunity to make greater use of nature-based solutions, including water-sensitive design, to increase Auckland's sponginess and its ability to respond to climate change. Nature-based solutions can also be used to green the city, including green infrastructure such as green roofs, green

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<sup>50</sup> Sport New Zealand. (no date). Think Piece: Climate Change. Retrieved from <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/4528/futures-think-piece-climate-change.pdf> [date accessed: 14 June 2023]; Victorian State Government and Sports Environment Alliance. (2021). Future Proofing Community Sports and Recreation Facilities: A Roadmap for Climate Change Management for the Sport and Recreation Facilities Sector. Retrieved from <https://www.sportsenvironmentalliance.org/resources/guide-to-future-proof-sport-recreation> [date accessed: 14 June 2023].

<sup>51</sup> Arup. (2022). Arup Global Sponge Cities Snapshot. Retrieved from <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/global-sponge-cities-snapshot> [date accessed: 28 June 2023].

walls, rain gardens, street trees and vegetated berms. By working with nature, we can enhance our open spaces and ensure people continue to enjoy them.

Nature-based solutions including water-sensitive design	
<p><b>Nature-based solutions</b> work with and enhance the environment and can include protecting, restoring or enhancing natural habitats or incorporating natural elements into built environment projects<sup>52</sup></p>	<p>Examples of nature-based solutions and water-sensitive design that can help, and in some cases are already helping, make Auckland greener and spongier include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• green infrastructure (such as green roofs, rain gardens, green walls, street trees and permeable pavements)</li> <li>• parks and trees</li> <li>• wetlands, swales and mangroves</li> <li>• re-vegetation</li> <li>• capturing and re-using stormwater</li> <li>• reducing wasted water</li> <li>• wastewater re-use</li> <li>• at source planning decisions to minimise contaminant generation</li> <li>• blue-green networks (including stream daylighting, widening or realignment and open spaces that are designed to flood).</li> </ul> <p>Absorbing and storing more rainwater can also help make the city more resistant to drought.</p>
<p><b>Water-sensitive design</b> is an interdisciplinary approach which considers stormwater management in parallel with the ecology of a site, best practice urban design and community values<sup>53</sup></p>	

With appropriate planning and management of risks, locating open spaces in natural hazard areas could also contribute to climate change resilience, including by providing rainfall storage and stormwater attenuation.

### Develop our blue-green network to deliver multiple benefits

While parks can support stormwater functions and provide flood protection through water-sensitive design, they also need to retain their primary function of providing spaces for recreation. Some parks, such as Te Kaitaka/Greenslade Reserve in Northcote, have already been transformed to increase their ability to absorb water while remaining suitable for recreation. The reserve forms part of the wider Te Ara Awataha blue-green corridor, which provides cycling and walking connections, improved flood resilience and stream water quality and habitats for plants and wildlife. Other existing examples of blue-green corridors include Te Auaunga Oakley Creek restoration and the Puhinui Stream regeneration. They highlight how interventions to restore waterways and improve stormwater management can also provide space for people and nature.

<sup>52</sup> Auckland Council. (2020). Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/aucklands-climate-plan/natural-environment/Pages/implement-nature-based-solutions.aspx> [date accessed: 5 July 2023].

<sup>53</sup> Auckland Council. (2020). Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/environmental-plans-strategies/aucklands-climate-plan/natural-environment/Pages/implement-nature-based-solutions.aspx> [date accessed: 5 July 2023].

There is an opportunity to develop more blue-green corridors and expand the network to deliver multiple benefits to people, place and planet. As outlined in Section 3.3.3, the Making Space for Water programme has already identified areas of Tāmaki Makaurau as being suitable for blue-green corridors, where streams and open space provide space for people and nature, while also making space for water to flow through the landscape.<sup>54</sup>

### **Reduce carbon emissions in our open space network**

While parks can help tackle climate change by sequestering carbon, some of Auckland's open space network is contributing to climate change through embodied and operational carbon emissions. Results from a project assessing the carbon footprint of Auckland's parks network suggest that the network is a significant net producer of carbon emissions.<sup>55</sup> Sports parks and community parks are net carbon producers, while regional parks were found to be carbon sinks.

The findings highlight opportunities to increase efforts to reduce associated emissions, including through more sustainable alternatives to artificial turf, switching to electric machinery and reducing the frequency of mowing. Although visitor travel was not included in the calculations, there is also an opportunity to enhance sustainable public transport options to and from parks. The report also highlighted opportunities to maximise sequestration, including by retaining large areas of open space and increasing vegetation, particularly trees.

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<sup>54</sup> Auckland Council. (June 2023). Recovery Coordination Office Update to Governing Body. Retrieved from [https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2023/06/20230622\\_GB\\_AGN\\_11263.PDF](https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2023/06/20230622_GB_AGN_11263.PDF) [date accessed: 12 July 2023].

<sup>55</sup> Auckland Council. (2023). Low Carbon Parks Summary Report.

## 4.8 Urban intensification

### Summary

- Auckland is becoming a more compact city, with over 80 per cent of the growth in dwellings occurring within the existing urban area.
- Auckland Council's existing Open Space Provision Policy is under scrutiny in light of increased urban intensification.
- An independent assessment concluded that the policy is mostly consistent with contemporary leading practice but could be improved.
- Benchmarks and case studies reveal Aucklanders have good access to parks, but the functionality and capacity outcomes of our open spaces vary.

### Challenges



- More people are living closer together and Tāmaki Makaurau is losing private green space due to growth.
- The loss of backyard space is putting more pressure on public parks.
- The Open Space Provision Policy does not specifically cater for very high-density scenarios.
- Future provision of additional open space in high-density areas is constrained by the availability of land, opportunities to acquire it and the council's budget.

### Opportunities



- Ensure the Open Space Provision Policy continues to deliver good parks distribution and access and is flexible enough to reflect local network requirements.
- Improve the Open Space Provision Policy by providing stronger directions on quality measures and recreation opportunities for new parks and developing a capacity benchmark or target.
- Think innovatively about how Aucklanders can continue to enjoy nature and be active in high-density areas.
- Make use of solutions such as green walls/roofs, street trees and vegetated berms, rooftop sports fields and opening streets and car parks for recreation.

### 4.8.1 What we know

#### Auckland is becoming a more compact city

Over 80 per cent of the growth in new dwellings in Tāmaki Makaurau is occurring within the existing urban area.<sup>56</sup> Proposed changes to New Zealand's regulatory system will enable more intensive

<sup>56</sup> Auckland Council. (February 2023). Auckland Plan 2050: Three Yearly Progress Report 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/threeyearlyprogressreport/auckland-plan-three-yearly-progress-report-2023.pdf> [date accessed: 9 May 2023].

development, particularly in and around centres. Auckland Council’s Future Development Strategy also takes a compact city approach to planning for urban growth.

## 4.8.2 Why it matters

### Tāmaki Makaurau is losing private green space due to growth

A recent report from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment found that Auckland’s green space as a proportion of the urban area declined by at least 10 to 15 per cent between 1980 and 2016.<sup>57</sup>

This decline has been primarily driven by changes on private residential land. Private green space as a proportion of the urban area in Auckland fell by 20 per cent between 1980 and 2016. This was due to ongoing infill development in brownfield areas and a denser built form in large new subdivisions.

The reduction of private green space in Auckland also appears to be accelerating. In post-2016 residential developments in Auckland, lawns, gardens and vegetation account for only 20 to 30 per cent of the area of individual sections. This is around half of the existing average for the city.

Meanwhile, public green space as a proportion of the urban area has remained steady at around 10 to 15 per cent since the 1940s.

As Auckland grows and intensifies, there are two main risks for the amount and functionality of urban green space:

- infill development often results in the removal of soil and vegetation from private yards and sections.
- associated increases in population density can increase pressure on nearby public parks and reserves.

As people live more intensely, making space for them through our open space network will be critical.

### Auckland Council’s Open Space Provision Policy is under scrutiny in light of urban intensification

Auckland Council’s Open Space Provision Policy (2016) implements the Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Action Plan (2013). It informs the council’s investment, asset and acquisition activities in open space and guides spatial planning by both the council and the private sector to create a high-quality open space network that contributes to Aucklanders’ quality of life. The policy outlines strategies for the provision of open space in both existing urban areas and greenfield areas:

Existing urban areas	Greenfield areas
<p>The focus for investment is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investing in the established open space network to offer a wider range of activities for more people</li> <li>• improving linkages between open space, such as establishing greenways</li> </ul>	<p>The focus for investment is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investing in new open space when growth occurs</li> <li>• integrating open space with stormwater, transport, schools and community facilities</li> </ul>

<sup>57</sup> Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. (March 2023). Are we building harder, hotter cities? The vital importance of urban green spaces. Retrieved from <https://pce.parliament.nz/media/tetah53z/report-are-we-building-harder-hotter-cities-the-vital-importance-of-urban-green-spaces.pdf> [date accessed: 2 June 2023].

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• optimising assets through land exchange and reconfiguration</li> <li>• acquiring new open spaces as opportunities allow, particularly in large brownfield developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a resilient and multi-use open space network that can evolve with changing community needs over time</li> <li>• connecting new and existing open space networks.</li> </ul>
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With Auckland becoming a more compact city and regulatory changes set to increase the rate of intensification, an independent fit-for-purpose assessment of the policy was commissioned. It sought to better understand how well the policy delivers on its intent and its strengths and weaknesses in the context of leading international practice.

### **The assessment concluded the policy is mostly consistent with contemporary leading practice but could be improved**

The fit-for-purpose assessment looked at the overall provision of open space, a functional assessment of the open space, the number of residents the open space is expected to support, the proximity of residents and the accessibility (permeability) of the open spaces. The assessment also compared the provision policy with examples of international practice.

Aspects of the current policy that work well include that it:

Provides a strong vision and principles	Acknowledges the challenges of open space provision and the need for flexible approaches	Sets provision outcomes in terms of park typology, proximity and distribution	Articulates the importance of open space
Provides good qualitative guidance on functional outcomes	Can deliver good distribution and proximity	Recognises that there are other providers of open space	Provides some provision metrics

### **Benchmarks and case studies reveal Aucklanders have good access to parks, but functionality and capacity outcomes vary**

The assessment found that Auckland's overall supply of open space<sup>58</sup> per person compares favourably to other major international cities. However, looking at nine case studies across Auckland, five existing residential and four developing residential areas, the assessment found that the average supply of open space in these areas was well below the Auckland average.

Overall, the case study analysis focused on open space outcomes including distribution and proximity, size, permeability, capacity and functionality. The findings, summarised in Table 6, indicate that the policy is effective at guiding distribution outcomes and walkable access to parks. However, outcomes vary in terms of functionality and capacity. Some of those variations are a product of historical decisions, while others are driven by the policy.

<sup>58</sup> The assessment focused on the provision of open space for recreation in urban areas. Conservation land and open space outside of the urban area was excluded from its calculations.

Table 6: Key findings from nine case studies

Theme		Key findings
Distribution and community access	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good <b>distribution outcomes</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Walkable access</b> to parks.</li> </ul>
Functionality	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land quality outcomes vary substantially</b>, due to site-based constraints such as size, shape, tree coverage, flooding and slope.</li> <li>• <b>Permeability</b> (physical and visual access) <b>outcomes vary substantially</b>.</li> </ul>
Capacity	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capacity outcomes</b> (measured as area per capita) <b>vary significantly</b>.</li> <li>• The application of the policy in new areas <b>may not deliver equitable levels of provision</b>.</li> </ul>

### 4.8.3 Opportunities for change

Based on case studies and international practice there are opportunities to improve the policy

The review of leading practice in open space provision in major international cities highlighted key policy themes and lessons relating to equity and inclusivity, access and connectivity, quality, quantity and capacity, diversity, sustainability and wellbeing, culture and character and multi-use and climate change. Together with the findings from the case studies, these highlight a range of opportunities to improve the policy (see Table 7).

Table 7: Potential opportunities to improve the policy

Potential improvement	Description
Develop a capacity benchmark or target	<p><b>Develop an objective capacity benchmark or target</b></p> <p>Like any infrastructure, open space has limits to the number of users it can accommodate. Policy measures could involve a benchmark to enable comparison of capacity or a target to deliver additional capacity with attached funding.</p>
Ensure the delivery of quality outcomes	<p><b>Develop land quality and suitability metrics</b></p> <p>These will help ensure that any land that is acquired is functional for the intended purpose and can be developed for recreation use at a reasonable cost. Measures could include locational guidance, the percentage of an area that can exceed slope constraints or inundation limits and the amount of vegetation cover.</p>
	<p><b>Improve performance criteria to ensure fit for purpose and efficient open space</b></p> <p>Performance criteria cover the design of the open space area and are meant to make sure it can be accessed and used for the intended purpose. This could include specifying a minimum percentage of park boundary that fronts public roads or other public spaces and specifying landscape diversity.</p>
	<p><b>Develop more detailed guidance on multi-use open space</b></p> <p>While multi-use is encouraged in the current policy there is a lack of protection of recreation outcomes, with the risk that it becomes the lowest priority. Guidance could identify the recreation outcomes typically accommodated in multi-use open space, complemented by example design outcomes and explanation of how the criteria are being met.</p>

	<p><b>Improve guidance on permeability (visual and physical access)</b></p> <p>While the current policy promotes physical and visual access, there are no objective measures to ensure good outcomes. Measures that can improve permeability include increasing road frontage, providing guidance on fencing and access points and adding linkages and wayfinding.</p>
Continue delivering good distribution and access	<p><b>Develop specific guidance for high-density development areas</b></p> <p>High-density areas represent a particular challenge for open space provision with limited opportunities for more land. Guidance should provide more detail on proximity and capacity measures as well as multi-use, shared-use and adaptive-use strategies. A range of open space types beyond just traditional parks, including school land, streets, rooftops and waterways, can contribute to achieving recreation outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>Consider adopting a recreation outcomes approach to assist in defining performance measures</b></p> <p>A recreation outcomes approach involves defining the desired range of activities and experiences to be delivered by the open space network and then outlining the performance measures needed to successfully deliver them. This can help with developing shared and multi-use outcomes in existing urban areas undergoing intensification.</p>
	<p><b>Undertake a detailed review of the open space database and mapping</b></p> <p>A better database is needed to enable more effective analysis of current provision and capacity and more effective provision planning. This will allow for a more accurate assessment of the current situation as well as for identifying opportunities to reconfigure the network and address areas of under provision.</p>

The findings will help guide future policy work as part of the refresh and consolidation.

Staff will develop a range of options for improving the policy based on the recommendations above. These will be tested with the programme advisory groups and reported to the Planning, Environment and Parks Committee for decision.

### Utilise innovative open spaces in high-density areas

Acquiring new open spaces and improving existing ones remain relevant ways of providing open spaces in high-density areas.

However, the cost and difficulty of land acquisition, along with increasing constraints on operational spending, in high-density areas needs to be acknowledged. Innovative solutions will be required. This may include utilising a wider range of open space types, such as school land, rooftops, streets and carparks, to achieve desired outcomes for residents.

This could also include greening the city through the use of solutions such as green walls/roofs, streets trees and vegetated berms, and making innovative use of our green, blue and grey spaces to ensure Aucklanders can continue to have opportunities to be in nature and be active. Urban greening will help make the city more resilient to climate change while also enhancing our health and wellbeing.



## 5 Next steps

Key challenges and opportunities will guide the development of the new policy framework

The key challenges and opportunities identified in the paper will help guide the development of the refreshed and consolidated policy framework.

Aucklanders will have a chance to *have their say* on the draft new framework before finalisation.

## **Appendix A: Feedback report from targeted engagement on the draft background paper**



# **What we heard on the draft background paper**

Open space, sport and recreation policy framework refresh and consolidation

November 2023

# Mihi Acknowledgements

We asked	• Key stakeholder groups referred to us	to help us improve the draft background paper.
	• Local board chairs and members	
	• Mana whenua	
	• Tūpuna Maunga Authority	
	• Te Pae Herenga o Tāmaki regional collective	
	• Demographic advisory panels	
	• Independent Māori Statutory Board Secretariat	
	• Joint Political Working Group	
	• Programme advisory groups	
	• Auckland Council whānau staff	
	• Government agencies	

All feedback has been considered as we finalised the background paper. They will inform Auckland Council's future open space, sport and recreation policy framework.

We want to thank and acknowledge all those that have dedicated their time to provide valuable feedback and input.

# Summary of key themes

## Open spaces and play, sport, and recreation opportunities in Tāmaki Makaurau lift Aucklanders' quality of life, but there is room for improvement.

There was consensus amongst respondents that parks, open spaces, sport and recreation make significant contributions to Aucklanders' cultural, environmental, social and economic wellbeing, and make Tāmaki Makaurau a great place to live.

Some community groups reported barriers to accessing open spaces, play, sport and recreation opportunities due to:

- inequitable quality of the assets
- not feeling welcome
- space use, design and maintenance issues
- safety concerns.

Improving resilience, equity, sustainability, safety, and inclusiveness were often mentioned.

## To enable all Aucklanders to access open spaces and play, sport and recreation opportunities, we need a holistic and integrated approach to investment, planning and management.

There was consensus that the drivers of change identified in the draft background paper were highly relevant for consideration in the open space, sport, and recreation policy framework.

To improve outcomes, groups supported an approach to investment, planning and management that integrates:

- Te Ao Māori for its inherent holistic and long-term view
- green, blue, and grey spaces in the open space network
- play, sport and recreation domains with open space domains.

Groups recommended a stronger focus on biodiversity, notably as a response to urban growth and to improve climate resilience.

Other suggested drivers were technology driven change impacting on behaviour and space use, as well as communication and messaging.

The need for spaces that are inclusive, welcoming, and perceived as safe to serve our growing and diverse population was also repeatedly mentioned.

## Partnering for delivery is key to overcoming funding, distribution, as well as design and functionality challenges.

There was consensus on the significant challenges to deliver on our many objectives, specifically responding simultaneously to:

- increasing and diversifying demand

- limited funding sources
- existing inequities in service and asset provision
- multi-usability and multi-functionality needs.

There was support for our key opportunity “Working together for the future” and suggestions about partnering for delivery and community-led delivery.

### **Additional suggestions from feedback will be explored in the next steps of policy development.**

Groups commented on topics such as open space typology and had specific suggestions and options for solutions and partnerships as well as for implementation approaches. Those will be considered as we draft the new policy framework.

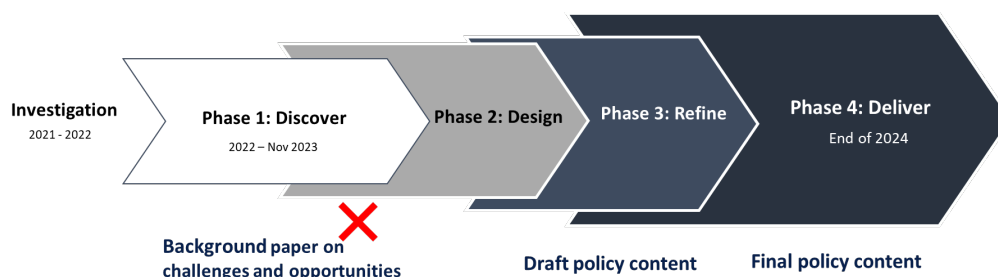
# Methodology

The focus of this engagement was to test the findings of the draft background report through the following three questions:

- What do you love about open spaces and the sport and recreation opportunities in Tāmaki Makaurau?
- How do you think Auckland will change in the future?
- What challenges and opportunities do we have and how can we get creative about solving them?

The feedback informs the finalised background paper. The revised challenges and opportunities will be consideration in the new policy framework for open space, sports and recreation in Phases 2, 3 and 4 as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Where we are now in the development process



## Engagement approach and methods:

The program applies an IAP2 based engagement plan and engagement principles as defined by the [Significance and Engagement Policy 2022](#).

Mixed and flexible methods to engage were available through three summary videos and an online engagement platform, supplemented by the draft paper. Submissions by email were also accepted. Advisory groups and panels submitted through in person workshops.

## Our outreach:

In conducting this targeted engagement, we invited partners and stakeholders to provide feedback. We also gave the opportunity to local and regional elected members to add to the list of invitees for this engagement.

Figure 2 shows who was invited to participate and who we have heard from.



Figure 2: Invited partners and key stakeholders and responses

We sought feedback through targeted engagement from <sup>59</sup>	We received the following input
Key stakeholder groups referred to us	20 groups/individuals provided feedback by email or our platform (11 were anonymous)
Local boards	As part of presentation to local board chairs forum and local board members briefing
Mana whenua	One email
Tūpuna Maunga Authority	
Te Pae Herenga o Tāmaki regional collective	
Demographic Advisory Panels	Six advisory panel workshops
Independent Māori Statutory Board Secretariat	
Joint Political Working Group	Dedicated workshop and written feedback from members
Programme Advisory groups	Through dedicated workshops with the Māori rūpū, the Advisory Rōpu, the Community of Interest and the General Managers Community Investment Portfolio Group.
Auckland Council whānau staff	Eleven teams across the council whānau including Eke Panuku and Screen Auckland
Government agencies	One agency

### Analysis and response to the feedback:

We collated, analysed and themed 40 pieces of feedback from organisations, individuals and council teams (refer Appendix 1).

We have received three types of feedback:

Feedback in response to the three engagement questions.	These were subject to a thematic analysis. High-level findings are presented in the sections below. Our actions in response to those findings are listed in Table 1 on page 13.
Suggestions for specific edits to the background paper (e.g. wording changes, points of clarity, up-dated data).	These are addressed directly in the background paper.
Feedback related to delivery / next steps	These will be considered as part of our future work programme, as explained in Table 2 on page 14.

### Limitations:

The report does not discuss every unique response provided to us. Quotes used in this report may have been abbreviated and have been anonymised.

The view of the wider public has not been sought at this stage of work. We will seek the views of the public when a draft policy is proposed.

<sup>59</sup> Also see Appendix 1

# What we heard about...

## What Aucklanders love about open spaces, sport, and recreation<sup>60</sup>

Open spaces and play, sport, and recreation opportunities in Tāmaki Makaurau lift Aucklanders' quality of life, but there is room for improvement.

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There was consensus on the significant contribution parks, open spaces, sport and recreation provision make to the unique attraction of and opportunities in Tāmaki Makaurau and Aucklanders' cultural, environmental, social and economic wellbeing.

*"We agree, the public spaces and places, including our natural environment help us to be active, connect with the te taiao and build a sense of pride and belonging in our communities."*

*"Open spaces and parks are vital to the continuing health and well-being of our people of Auckland."*

Existing diversity of spaces, proximity, cultural reflection, natural beauty, inter-generational enjoyment, physical, social and spiritual connections experienced through spaces and activities are valued and cherished.

*"I like to see parks and green spaces that are close enough to each other to create biodiversity corridors where native wildlife can thrive, so that people can travel about the city and follow streams, restored wetlands...unstructured places for unstructured play...Respect for sites of historical or cultural significance, quiet, I like sport, to run, to let dogs roam- free, to connect with nature."*

*"I love the maunga, all of them, mana whenua stories and narratives."*

*"Easy to get out and exercise, easily accessible – great for me even with only one leg, my family can access open spaces. Variety of different walkways – a positive experience from what we've seen."*

The mental health benefits from access and connections to open spaces and nature were repeatedly highlighted:

*"We hear a lot from the community that open space is crucial to mental health and wellbeing and along Sports and Rec it supports better social cohesion/sense of belonging."*

In addition, the intrinsic value of nature spaces and play was highlighted as was the economic opportunity from screen, sport events and tourism activity and the resource value for cultural activities.

*"Kids need nature play ... native biodiversity and vegetation is important for visual, cultural, and intrinsic values ... makes our city more "livable".*



*“There should be some focus on tourism ... including running of and marketing major and smaller events and high-performance sport events, open spaces are also work spaces.”*

*“They are places for rongoā.”*

While we have a good foundation to build on, feedback also highlighted that there is room for improvement in increasing equitable provision, increasing safety perception, access and inclusivity by design.

*“We have a good foundation to build on and provide more opportunities for families and neighbours to connect which builds community resilience, particularly through spaces that can be used for activities which have positive outcomes for Māori communities.”*

*“Breaking up golf courses for multiple uses, ensuring that cycleways and blue-green functional spaces have sufficient open space alongside them to accommodate passive recreation spaces, with passive security from overlooking buildings”*

*“We need to communicate how accessible a track is, stairs, construction, surface is important for wheelchairs.”*

*“Think for us it is around the safety and encouraging the rainbow community to feel safe and welcome and their diversity welcomed into these spaces.”*

*“More work needs to be done to enable Mana Whenua stories and narratives.”*

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<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 1: Table 2

## How Auckland is changing<sup>61</sup>

To enable all Aucklanders to access and benefit from open spaces and play, sport and recreation opportunities, we need to take a holistic and integrated approach to investment, planning and management.

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There was consensus on the drivers of change identified in the draft background paper and their relevance for open space, sport and recreation provision.

*“We agree with the areas outlined which are crucial to consider such as Te Ao Māori, equity and inclusion, demographic changes, urban intensification, environment and biodiversity, climate change and health and wellbeing.”*

The importance of open spaces for climate change mitigation and lifting community and environmental resilience was dominant throughout submissions.

*“Climate change is a serious problem for parks ... a need to address that through investment in the infrastructure to protect what we have.*

*“The role open space plays to contribute to heat reduction, water retention and carbon capture will increase as noted.”*

To respond to the drivers of climate change, urban growth and recreation changes, an integrated approach to investment, planning and management was supported, specifically:

te Ao Māori was acknowledged for its inherent holistic and long-term view.

*“The Māori world view holds the key to a holistic wellbeing approach.”*

widening the concept of open space to include green, blue, and grey spaces was welcomed, allowing for integration of play, sport and recreation domains and open space opportunities.

*“Support to include blue and grey spaces to look at how open spaces can be more multi-use to maximize use and value”.*

*“We need a comprehensive fit-for-purpose flexible network of quality open space. Tāmaki is fortunate to have by a large and diverse network of green, grey and blue open space. including the natural environment, make it easier for Aucklanders to be active.*

*“More informal play and gathering spaces, particularly for children and young people but also relaxing spaces for adults to just chill”.*

Submissions recommended a stronger focus on biodiversity, notably as a response to urban growth, climate resilience and leaving a legacy for future generations.

*“With the effects of our warming climate, greater rainfall, and more intense weather events it is vital that Auckland improves its biodiversity cover.”*

*“Spaces which provide some of the ecosystem services, weed control ... adequately support native biodiversity ... can create connected biodiverse ecosystems.”*

*“Investing into a permanent lake because a lot of the parks we have use to be rivers and lakes and rejuvenate natural species and healthy environment ... But what we are seeing with flooding it is all of those areas ... So thinking ahead and taking the steps now so the future generations can enjoy that.”*

Submissions also highlighted technology driven change impacting on behaviour and space use.

*“Technology is entrenched in young peoples’ lives, and we are adapting to a generation who were born into a world with advanced technology.”*

*“Getting creative about solutions on exploring technologies and how those new technologies fit into local communities. This has to do with our experiences with open spaces.”*

The need for spaces that are inclusive and welcoming and perceived as safe to serve our growing and diverse population was also repeatedly mentioned.

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<sup>61</sup> See Table 1

# What challenges and opportunities do we have and how can we get creative about solving them?<sup>62</sup>

Partnering for delivery is key to overcoming funding, distribution, as well as design and functionality challenges.

There was consensus on significant challenges for Auckland Council and its partners to deliver on its objectives given increasing and diversifying demand, constrained budgets and limited funding sources.

*“The current funding model is not supporting supply to keep up with demand and is unsustainable.”*

*“The challenge for the new framework is finding the balance between competing interests.”*

*“It is very important that there is no mixed agenda where recreation and sporting outcomes can trump environmental ones, and this should not occur.”*

Groups identified resilient places as priority for the future and highlighted that this goes beyond “making space for water”.

*“The “Making space for water” opportunity should be broadened to cover climate-resilience more generally, i.e. we should be designing and enhancing our parks and open spaces to provide multiple resilience benefits”*

*“With climate change, there is also risk of wildfires, drought”*

Appropriately enabling, balancing and mitigating multi-usability and multi-functionality needs against primary and established functions was highlighted.

*“Need to explore the risk and mitigation factors for multi-purpose spaces i.e. When blue ‘creep’ impacts green spaces. e.g. SW functions on parks.”*

*“Whilst we support multi-use spaces and facilities, they must still be functional and meet the surrounding communities and user needs. There is a potential for these to be multi-useless.”*

A complex legal and delivery framework that governs open spaces was perceived as difficult to navigate.

*“Need to explore key legislation (Reserves Act 1977, Public Works Act 1981, Local Government Act 2002 etc.) in terms of understanding land type, classification, acquisition. legislation impacts on users and activities.”*

*“Need for greater coordination of the governance of open space. Are there too many agencies?”*

*“Auckland has a unique Council structure creating complexities for decision making, collaboration and service delivery.”*

Submissions supported our key opportunity “Working together for the future” and suggested collaborative and mutually beneficial approaches such as partnering for delivery and community-led delivery.

*“Communities may want greater social license to respond to their own needs and solve their own problems. More democratic and inclusive processes to address challenges may result in more innovative solutions to meet play, active recreation and sport needs particularly where inequities exist.”*

*“Working collaboratively with other agencies to leverage urban development for more play, active recreation, and sport opportunities. Supporting this with an amended development contribution policy”*

*“Is there a way of incorporating the recovery works and budgets into what is being proposed or outlined here to be more fit for purpose and economical?”*

*“Design through a child's eyes to ensure play is considered at every opportunity. Paths, parks, trees, coastal and water access and the natural environment can be amazing play spaces for low-cost investment and doesn't always require multi-million-dollar playgrounds.”*

*“All this must be done in partnership with Mana Whenua, and the wider community.”*

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<sup>62</sup> See Table 1

## Examples of feedback for future consideration<sup>63</sup>

Additional suggestions from feedback will be explored in the next steps of policy development.

Some submissions also made specific suggestions for interventions, potential partnerships and implementation approaches that will feed into the future work programme.

Some feedback outlined:

- options for investment focus areas
  - "We would like to see a focus on young people, particularly around the ages 14 -18, and women and girls."*
  - "More focus, resource, investment and priority given to the areas that are growing, and are most in need."*
  - "More focus is needed on "green and blue ways"- all the waters from land-based drains, streams, rivers connecting to the sea."*
  - "Stronger focus is placed on accessibility to types of recreation activity and protection of biodiversity."*
- options for investment principles and priorities
  - "Regenerative principles now need to be put in place to ensure that the innovative concepts of what open space could mean are put in place. Maybe even incentives for developers?"*
  - "New more specific access minimum standards to prioritise development contributions into funding the acquisition of parks in the most needed areas."*
  - "The policies must be intergenerational and adaptable."*
  - "Council can only do part of this by providing the spaces and places across the whole region in an equitable, transparent way based on clear specific standards."*
- options for possible funding sources
  - "Exploring a range of models from aligning more with health and other social providers creating community hubs, to targeted rates, public private partnerships, school/community/Ministry of Education/sport partnerships and incentivising philanthropic giving."*
- opportunities for a greater return on investment and limiting scope
  - "If a bowling club declines how easy is it to move the buildings and greens and convert to a community garden?"*
  - "Will this address existing policy gaps including operational gaps, include 'a disposal process for open space?"*

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<sup>63</sup> See Table 2

## How we have considered feedback findings related to our three questions

Table 1 below lists the key feedback findings and how we have actioned them: whether a finding was noted or led to a change in the final background paper.

**Table 1: Overview of submission and actions in response:**

Most feedback supported the findings, for example:		Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Appreciation of the benefits of open space and parks and participation in activities for Aucklanders' overall wellbeing.</li><li>The significant importance for environmental wellbeing and resilience.</li><li>The cultural significance to mana whenua and all Māori wellbeing.</li><li>Appreciation of the unique beauty and accessibility of Auckland's diverse open spaces.</li></ul>		Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The identified drivers of change.</li><li>Te Ao Māori integration.</li><li>A green, blue, grey network view.</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The identified challenges and opportunities.</li></ul>		
Some feedback highlighted more emphasis should be given to		Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The intrinsic value of nature spaces.</li><li>The economic opportunity from screen, sport events and tourism activity.</li><li>The importance of play and simply being in nature as form of recreation.</li><li>The special significance to mana whenua.</li><li>The contribution to mental health.</li></ul>		Changed in report (see below)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Risk of biodiversity loss and role of biosecurity for climate mitigation.</li><li>Opportunities in and change driven by technology.</li><li>Understanding the position of tangata whenua.</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The need for effective partnership with mana whenua.</li><li>Key opportunities in private or third-party contributions, specifically churches, schools and volunteers.</li><li>Understanding the scope for change from this framework.</li></ul>		
Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Updated specific sections in the report to provide more emphasis as suggested.</li><li>➤ Refined open space typologies.</li><li>➤ Updated to reflect Active NZ 2022 Survey data.</li><li>➤ Updated key themes sections to reflect relevant feedback and provide greater emphasis on the importance of biodiversity for Auckland's future.</li><li>➤ Updated the challenges and opportunities:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Refined challenges and opportunities 'making space for people', 'improving Māori outcomes', 'spaces and places fit for the future', and 'innovative open spaces' to reflect the need for equity, inclusiveness and safety of spaces and places.</li><li>○ Rephrased 'making space for water' to take a wider view of climate change mitigation and resilience as 'enhancing climate change mitigation and resilience'.</li></ul></li></ul>	

- Added ‘protecting and enhancing our environment and biodiversity’ as an additional challenge and opportunity.

## How we will consider other feedback in the next phases of work

Staff considered feedback related to delivery and next steps and identified key questions that will be explored as part of the policy development phases. These are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summarise findings, continuing questions and next steps for policy development

Key question identified for the next work phase
How will the future framework enable equitable, sustainable and targeted investment in open spaces, play, sport and recreation and balance potentially competing interests through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holistic and integrated approach to investment, planning and management?</li> <li>• and delivery partnerships?</li> </ul>
Next steps that will help answer the key question and associated questions for policy development.
The future work programme will explore this question and associated questions raised through feedback in further detail by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarifying the strategic and investment remit and scope of influence of the framework.</li> <li>• developing an investment case to support prioritisation of our investment.</li> <li>• exploring measures of equitable provision.</li> <li>• investigating existing effective and efficient interventions across implementers, including divestment.</li> <li>• understanding specific partnership opportunities in a blue, green, grey network.</li> <li>• partnering with mana whenua for shared understanding on possible outcomes.</li> <li>• engaging with mataawaka and communities to explore and identify opportunities for community led local delivery.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 1

Table: Overview of partners and stakeholders we reached out to (excludes Auckland Council whānau).

Mana whenua	Key stakeholder and community groups
19 iwi organisations	Sport Auckland Tūpuna Maunga Authority Harbour Sport CLM Community Sport Counties Manukau Sport Sport Waitākere Disability Sport Auckland Halberg Foundation Te Huinga Tākaro Friends of Regional Parks Conservation Volunteers NZ Ngā Aho Toi Tangata Disabled Persons Assembly Women in Urbanism Greenhithe Ecology Network Upper Waitematā Ecology Network The Waterways Collective Urban Ark - Manawa Taiao Pest Free Kaipātiki Kaipātiki Project Save Bomb Point Action Group Urban Ark-Manawa Taiao Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Waitākere Ranges Combined Residents and Ratepayers Group
<b>Māori rūpū members</b>	
Te Ākitai Waiohūa	
Te Patukirikiri	
Ngātiwai	
Te Runanga o Ngāti Whātua	
Te Whānau o Waipareira	
Aktive (Māori partnerships)	
<b>Advisory rūpū members</b>	
Sport New Zealand	
Aktive	
Recreation Aotearoa	
Department of Conservation	
Forest and Bird	
Property Council	
Dr Timothy Welch	
Gael Surgenor	
<b>Government organisations</b>	
Ministry of Education	
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	
Kainga Ora	
<b>Te Pae Herenga o Tāmaki regional collective</b>	
(along with Te Whānau o Waipareira)	
Manukau Urban Māori Authority	
Hapai te Hauora	
Huakina Development Trust	
Manurewa Marae	
Papakura Marae	
Ruapotaka Marae	
Te Puna Hauora	

# Appendix B: 2021 assessment and 2022 engagement findings

Below are the findings of the high-level assessment of the framework in 2021 and the engagement with key stakeholders in 2022 to test those findings. They cover what works well and opportunities for improvement. Together the results informed the case for a refresh and consolidation of the framework.

*Table 8: What works well*

What works well	Description
<b>Providing whole-of-region direction</b>	The existing policy framework provides direction for the whole Auckland region, ensuring a consistency of approach and delivering equitable investment. It is also seen to have a strong mandate, both internally and externally, and is used to support decisions and ensure accountability of decision-makers.
<b>Enduring well over time</b>	<p>Some areas of the existing framework have endured well over time – for example the objectives, provision guidelines and investment priorities. The 10-year planning horizon of both the Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Action Plan and the Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan is also seen as a strength.</p> <p>In addition, the provision policy is broadly meeting community needs while the provision and acquisition policies are effective at providing guidance on the types of properties that are suitable for parks.</p>
<b>Enabling collaboration</b>	<p>Enabling collaboration is one of the strengths of the existing framework, with both the Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan and the Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan seen as having been effective in getting stakeholders working together and aligning investment in programmes. The investment benefits are beginning to flow through to the sport and recreation sector. The Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan in particular is seen as a key tool in strengthening cross-sector collaboration.</p> <p>The findings also highlighted a range of opportunities to improve collaboration by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better coordinating with other providers of open space such as the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Education</li> <li>• improving alignment between funders, codes and Auckland Council to allow for coordinated investment in priority areas</li> <li>• clearly defining stakeholder operational boundaries to reduce administrative complexity and costs.</li> <li>• using delivery and implementation mechanisms that enable collaboration.</li> </ul> <p>There are also opportunities to work with the commercial and private sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership policy has a focus on council investment in facilities owned or operated by others but less of a focus on opportunities for private and commercial investment.</li> <li>• Opportunities for these types of partnerships will require consideration of commercial use and revenue generation. Clear parameters are needed for when and how to pursue these types of partnerships.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the sport and recreation sector, partnerships are pursued on an ad-hoc basis. There is an opportunity to strengthen this and shift to a more proactive approach.</li> <li>• There are opportunities to look at non-council owned assets when it comes to the provision of open space, park or facilities networks – for example, school playgrounds and fields.</li> </ul>
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*Table 9: Opportunities for improvement*

Opportunity for improvement	Description
<b>Simplify and consolidate the framework</b>	<p>The existing policy framework is complex and could be simplified. Consolidation is an effective way to simplify the framework and make it easier to use as many of the existing components are interrelated – for example open space provision and sport and recreation.</p> <p>Simplification and consolidation also presents an opportunity to enable integrated planning and decision-making across open spaces and sport and recreation domains, and to strengthen links between facilities planning and open space network planning.</p> <p>However, feedback also highlighted a range of potential issues with consolidation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the potential for sport and recreation interests to become lost in a consolidated framework</li> <li>• the risk that the current documents’ success in providing leadership and aligning investment in the sport and recreation sector may not be replicated</li> <li>• that a consolidated framework will likely require greater collaboration and effort to develop and implement</li> <li>• the need to balance different plans to address different issues while ensuring alignment and consistency across these.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce complexity and busyness</b>	<p>The number of strategies, policies and plans in the existing framework creates some tension between the outcomes sought. Having a wide number of outcomes can also make it challenging to prioritise actions or activities, which is compounded by the absence of clear direction for making prioritisation decisions. The framework’s components could also benefit from being more action oriented and having less theory.</p>
<b>Greater integration</b>	<p>The refresh and consolidation provides the opportunity to strengthen integration across the framework. Currently, the separation of open spaces and sport and recreation domains does not facilitate integrated decision-making and consideration of co-dependent benefits from investment (for instance consideration of whether open space provision could provide a substitute for investment in sport facilities for certain types of sport and leisure activity).</p> <p>There are also limited platforms for collaboration across teams within the council to support delivery against the policy framework.</p>
<b>Address existing policy gaps</b>	<p>There are a range of policy gaps in the existing framework that could be addressed in the refresh and consolidation. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auckland Council’s climate change target is not clearly reflected in the current framework</li> <li>• lack of provision and acquisition guidelines for parks and spaces for special values (heritage/cultural).</li> <li>• gaps in how civic spaces and parks are defined – for instance cemeteries are not currently included as a park or open space typology</li> <li>• gaps in the provision policy for regional park acquisition</li> </ul>

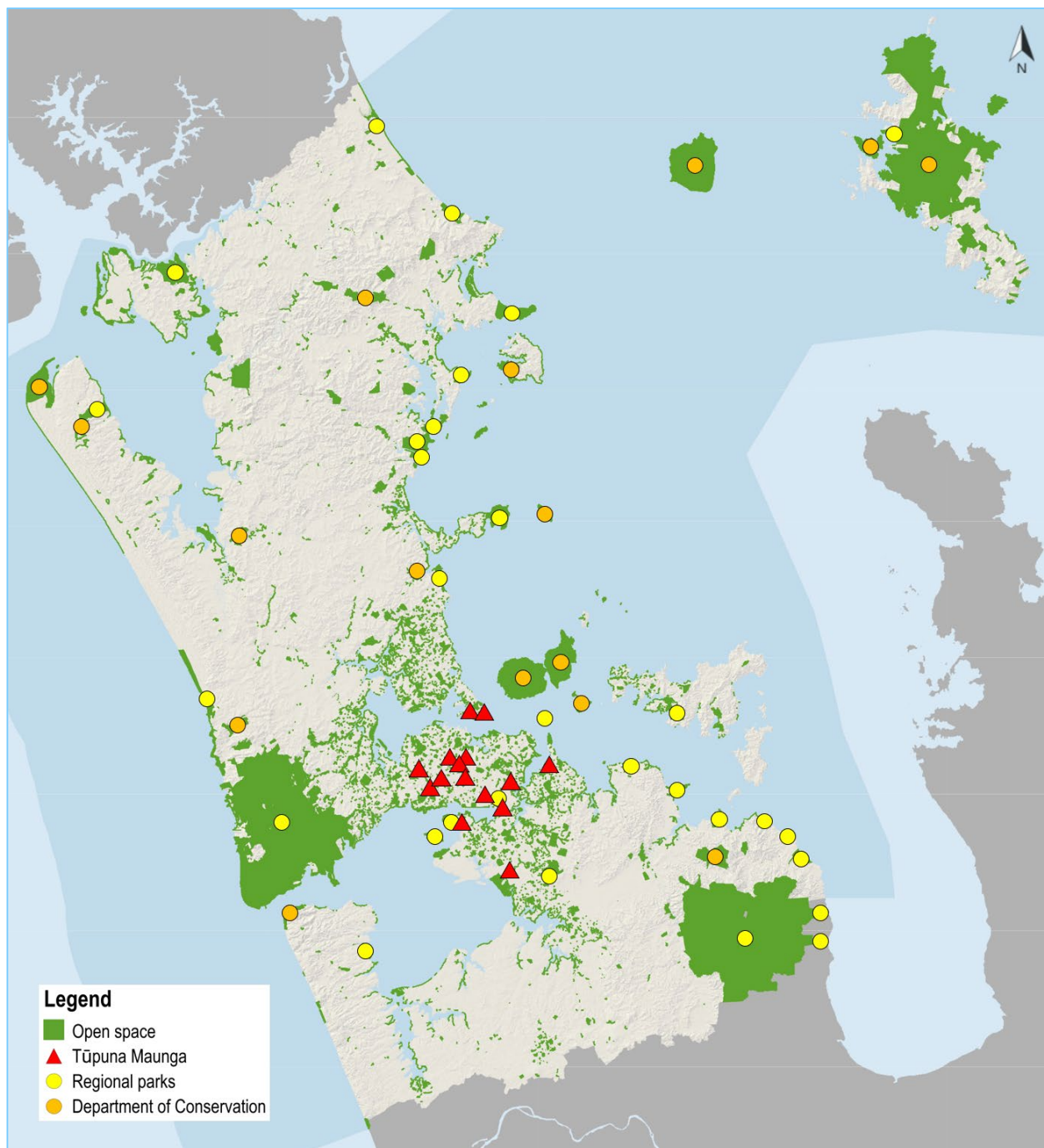
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gaps around the acquisition of land for community facilities like indoor courts and pools</li> <li>• lack of guidance regarding land with a stormwater function and how it can provide for open space recreation assets</li> <li>• clarity on where regional and local park management plans fit, given the extensive work that has been undertaken on these to meet legislative requirements</li> <li>• the provision policy metrics for pocket parks need reviewing as they do not recognise all places where pocket parks may be appropriate</li> <li>• guidance around the disposal of open space is needed</li> <li>• lack of focus on economic development</li> <li>• lack of focus on informal sport and recreation</li> <li>• lack of certainty for developers around open space locations before residential subdivisions are completed</li> <li>• lack of clear open space requirements for major events and filming</li> </ul>
<b>Take an outcomes focus</b>	There is an opportunity to take an outcomes focus to designing the new framework, following the lead of the Auckland Plan 2050, by starting with the desired outcomes and working backwards to understand what inputs are needed. Having a clearer outcomes focus can also support a clearer performance measurement and monitoring approach.
<b>Align the framework with Māori outcomes</b>	<p>There is an opportunity to do more to align the framework to Māori outcomes and to partner more effectively with Māori – for instance through co-management arrangements. The refresh and consolidation also provides an opportunity to consider approaches that draw from te ao Māori and to ensure mana whenua values and aspirations are reflected in a meaningful way.</p> <p>There are some elements of the existing framework that the refresh and consolidation should consider retaining. For example, the Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan and the Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan are centred around enabling services and improving equity for Māori and Pacific populations. They also contain good analysis around how Auckland Council gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</p>
<b>Establish a clear planning framework</b>	There is an opportunity to consider how the strategies in the existing framework are given effect to over short to medium-term planning horizons (three to five years). There is also an opportunity to align timetables more closely – for example, strategy to the Auckland Plan and policies/investment to the Long-term Plan.
<b>Build in evaluation mechanisms</b>	Evaluation mechanisms should be built into the new framework so that progress on actions can be monitored.
<b>Provide better support for effective decision-making</b>	<p>There is an opportunity for the new framework to provide better support for effective decision-making, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more support for decisions around relative priorities</li> <li>• greater transparency and agreed processes within the council to reprioritise to inform the Long-term Plan process</li> <li>• greater clarity on the range of tools available for implementation</li> <li>• greater clarity on what the responsibility of the council is, including within different parts of the council (that is, who is responsible for implementation and delivery), and what sits with communities and the private sector</li> <li>• updating the framework to reflect the Auckland Plan 2050</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing an overarching framework that ties the component strategies, policies and plans together to enable long-term decision-making and forward planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearer naming conventions</b>	The naming of strategies, policies and plans in the framework could be improved and clarified to enable clearer distinction between strategy, action planning and implementation policy.
<b>Better performance measurement and reporting</b>	There is scope for improving the current monitoring framework to ensure that actions do not become out of date or lose relevance. In addition, alignment of performance measurement and provision metrics would enable greater targeting and prioritisation. For instance, provision policy metrics for sports fields stipulate quantum of land and distance in metres but the council analyses sports field provision in terms of playing hours delivered and travel time, not distance. There is an opportunity to use a clear intervention logic to develop better performance measurement and reporting.
<b>Switching the orientation from assets to users</b>	The approach of the existing framework is heavily asset driven (for instance compared to community facilities where it is service driven) and there is an opportunity to switch the focus to users and their experience. As part of this, there is also an opportunity to make better use of customer insights data (for example, understanding the changing profile and needs and preferences of users). There needs to be clear guidance on how to do this consistently and an improvement on the information the council collects and holds to inform such an approach.

## Appendix C: Open space provision in Tāmaki Makaurau

The last comprehensive stocktake of Auckland’s open space was undertaken for the [Open Space Strategic Asset Management Plan 2015-2025](#). A current snapshot of Auckland’s open space network is presented below, based on data on council’s Central Reporting Asset Management tool, property information held on the council’s GIS and relevant council plans.

*Figure 15: Auckland’s open space network*



## Tūpuna Maunga

Table 10: A list of the Tūpuna Maunga o Tāmaki Makaurau and who owns and administers them

Tūpuna Maunga	Ownership	Administration
Matukutūruru/Wiri Mountain	Tāmaki Collective	Maunga Authority
Maungarei/Mount Wellington		
Maungauika/North Head		
Maungawhau/Mount Eden		
Ōhinerau/Mount Hobson		
Ōhūiarangi/Pigeon Mountain		
Ōtāhuhu/Mount Richmond		
Ōwairaka/Te Ahi-kā-a-Rakataura/Mount Albert		
Puketāpapa/Pukewīwi/Mount Roskill		
Rarotonga/Mount Smart		
Takarunga/Mount Victoria		
Te Kōpuke/Tītīkōpuke/Mount St John		
Te Tātua a Riukiuta/Big King		
Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill	Tāmaki Collective (except a small part of the upper northern slope which remains with the Crown)	Maunga Authority
Te Pane-o-Mataaho/Te Ara Pueru/Māngere Mountain	The Crown	

## Regional parks

Table 11: A list of Auckland's 30 regional parks showing new parks and additions to existing parks since 2015

Local board area	Current number of regional parks (CRAM)	New regional parks added to the network since 2015	Existing regional parks that have had land added to them since 2015	Area of regional park land acquired since 2015 (hectares)
Albert-Eden				
Aotea / Great Barrier	1	Glenfern Sanctuary		82.86
Devonport-Takapuna				
Franklin	10		Duder	1.93
Henderson-Massey				
Hibiscus and Bays	2			
Howick				
Kaipātiki				

Māngere-Ōtāhuhu	2	Te Motu a Hiaroa/Puketutu		187.41
Manurewa	1			
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	1		Mutukaroa/Hamlins Hill	1.23
Ōrākei				
Ōtara-Papatoetoe				
Papakura				
Puketāpapa				
Rodney	10		Mahurangi (East)	91.90
			Addition to Te Arai	153.80
Upper Harbour				
Waiheke	2	Motukorea/Browns Island		59.89
Waitākere Ranges	1		Waitākere Ranges	1.88
Waitematā				
Whau				
	30	3	5	580.90

## Sports parks

Park areas have not been provided as open spaces defined as ‘sports parks’ include organised sport facilities such as hard courts and playing fields on large parks with multiple functions.

*Table 12: Sports parks per local board area and land acquired for sports parks since 2015*

Local board area	Current number of sports parks (CRAM, 2023)	Number of new sports parks acquired since 2015	Area of sports park land acquired since 2015 (hectares)
Albert-Eden	18		
Aotea / Great Barrier	0		
Devonport-Takapuna	12		
Franklin	21		
Henderson-Massey	17		
Hibiscus and Bays	11		
Howick	14		
Kaipātiki	9		
Māngere-Ōtāhuhu	19		
Manurewa	9		
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	13		
Ōrākei	12		
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	14		
Papakura	13		



Puketāpapa	7		
Rodney	7		
Upper Harbour	12	1	10.63
		1*	7.34**
Waiheke	2		
Waitākere Ranges	7		
Waitematā	9		
Whau	14		
	240	1	17.97

\*This new sports park was created to replace 8.79ha of sports field land lost elsewhere in Upper Harbour.

\*\*As part of the mitigation package an additional 7.34ha was acquired for a total park area of 16.12ha.

## Local parks

Local parks include civic spaces, pocket parks, neighbourhood parks, suburb parks, destination parks (except regional parks) and recreational and ecological connections and linkages.

*Table 13: Local parks by local board area, approximate total area, and acquisitions since 2015*

Local board area	Current number of local parks (CRAM, 2023)	Approximate area of local parks*	Number of new local parks acquired since 2015	Area of local park land acquired since 2015 (hectares)
Albert-Eden	117	125.36	2	0.02
Aotea / Great Barrier	55	7.78	0	
Devonport-Takapuna	126	157.87	0	0.09**
Franklin	287	845.67	8	3.00
Henderson-Massey	233	422.21	2	6.34
Hibiscus and Bays	286	322.51	10	8.57
Howick	266	411.57	2	0.80
Kaipātiki	164	525.74	0	0.15**
Māngere-Ōtāhuhu	158	283.34	0	
Manurewa	144	204.95	1	0.11
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	112	241.84	0	0.03**
Ōrākei	126	223.85	1	0.23
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	118	241.36	0	
Papakura	157	211.30	16	11.92
Puketāpapa	76	165.82	0	
Rodney	310	442.72	10	3.12
Upper Harbour	231	615.28	5	1.62
Waiheke	124	262.39	0	

Waitākere Ranges	206	532.58	1	0.04
Waitematā	88	91.88	0	
Whau	141	139.64	0	
	<b>3525</b>	<b>6475.66</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>36.05</b>

\* Assessed using data extracted from the AC GIS and is likely an underestimate of the total area of local parks.

\*\* Aotea / Great Barrier has a comparatively small number of local parks, but the Department of Conservation's Aotea Conservation Park covers over 12,000 hectares of the island and provides a range of recreational opportunities and experiences.

\*\*\* Additions to existing open spaces.

## Cemeteries

*Table 14: Auckland cemeteries that are either part of the council's open space or cemeteries network*

Local board area	Active cemeteries	Inactive cemeteries	All cemeteries
Albert-Eden			0
Aotea / Great Barrier	2	1	3
Devonport-Takapuna		3	3
Franklin	9	2	11
Henderson-Massey			0
Hibiscus and Bays		2	2
Howick		2	2
Kaipātiki		2	2
Māngere-Ōtāhuhu		1	1
Manurewa			0
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki		1	1
Ōrākei			0
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	1	1	2
Papakura	1	1	2
Puketāpapa		1	1
Rodney	13	5	18
Upper Harbour	1	1	2
Waiheke	1	3	4
Waitākere Ranges	2		2
Waitematā		1	1
Whau		1	1
	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>

## Acquisitions

*Table 15: Potential new open space acquisitions within Auckland Plan 2050 development areas over the next 30 years*

Auckland Plan 2050 development area	Indicative number of sports parks	Indicative number of suburb parks	Indicative number of neighbourhood parks	Indicative number of civic spaces	Combined number of indicative future open space acquisitions	Combined area of indicative future open space acquisitions (hectares)
Wainui		3	20		23	17.60
Dairy Flat		5	24		29	24.60
Huapai		2	6		8	8.40
Kumeu		2	13		15	11.20
Riverhead			3		3	1.20
Whenuapai		3	14		17	14.60
Red Hills North			1		1	0.50
Red Hills	1		12	1	14	14.90
Hobsonville		1			1	3.00
Scott Point			1		1	0.30
Hingaia			9		9	2.70
Opaeke		1	6		7	5.40
Drury West		3	18	1	22	16.50
Drury East		2	9	1	12	6.30
Wesley (Paerata)		1	7		8	5.80
Paerata		1	6		7	5.40
Pukekohe		3	22	1	26	18.10
Kingseat			4		4	2.75
Clarks Beach			4		4	1.20
Glenbrook Beach			1		1	0.50
	1	27	180	4	212	160.95