Public Events: Library Pop Up Exhibition

21 MARCH 2024 - ONGOING

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROCESS
FOR WALTER MILDENHALL PARK

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Thank you to everyone who gave their time and insight to the Walter Mildenhall Park project.

On Thursday 21st of March, Third Studio, the Hutt City Council Urban Design team and Naenae Library set up a public exhibition pop up at Naenae Library as part of the wider community engagement for the design of Walter Mildenhall Park.

The exhibition was also used as the venue for two public events where Third Studio and Library staff connected with communities about what design elements should go in the park and why it is important to prioritise them. These events included:

- A community day as part of the Oranga Festival at Hilary Court (Saturday 23rd of March 2024)
- The Community Easter Egg Hunt (Wednesday 27th of March 2024)

The kaupapa of the event and ongoing exhibition is:

1. To understand why design elements are important to make smart design decisions

The exhibition builds on the quantitative information in the Voice of the Community Survey and Voice of Naenae report. By testing design translations (using images) and asking why certain elements are important, community aspirations can be balanced with the project's scope.

2. To encourage passive and active engagement

Some parts of the community will prefer to give their thoughts in their own time and space. Other dates for public events are also available for those who want to be actively involved.

3. To bring attention to the project and help people locate Walter Mildenhall Park

As part of this, the exhibition includes a large contextual map and posters which show the whakapapa of the project.

Oranga Festival

From 9am till 2pm on the 23rd of March 2024, Mitra from Third Studio talked to around 30 people about their aspirations for the park, including members of the public who are:

- Tamariki and Rangatahi
- Pasifika
- Māori
- Accessibility community
- LGBTQIA+ residents
- Elderly residents

Most feedback came from adults and pākehā. Community members were asked to come have a chat and contribute their feedback on a small "polaroid" printouts with design ideas derived from The Voice of the Community Survey and Voice of Naenae report were available. Sticky notes and other material was also available to draw and write on.

Insights & Conclusions: the engagement process

THIS IS A UNIQUE PROCESS THAT IS CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

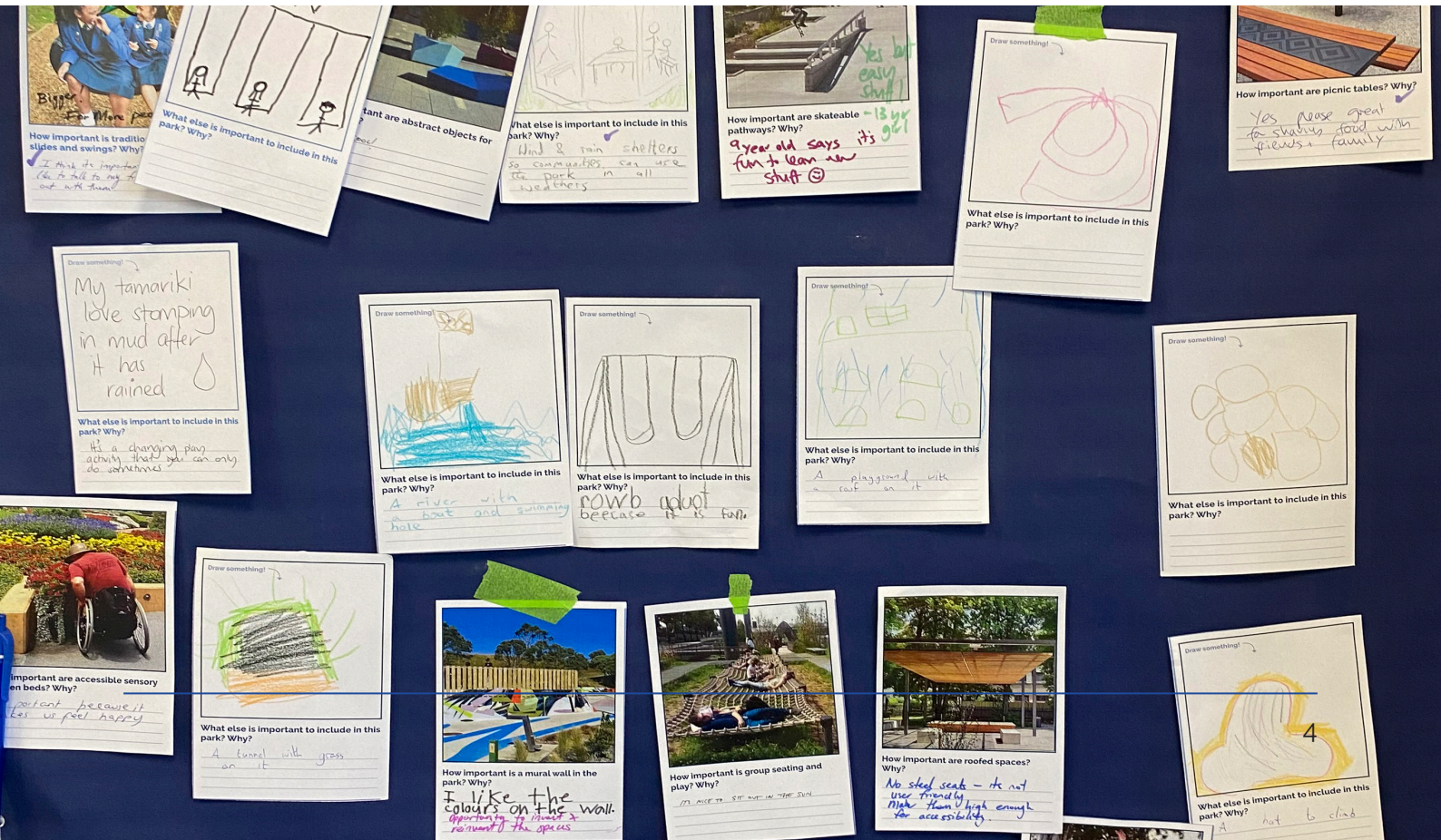
Numerous people talked about how "cool" the exhibition is and how it is more genuine than the "typical three questions" they have been asked in the past.

PEOPLE WANT TO STAY INVOLVED AND GO TO OTHER EVENTS

There was interest in contributing to the exhibition or attending future public events.

PEOPLE OPEN THEIR MINDS WHEN THERE'S SOMEONE TO TALK TO

Those who came in with strong opinions and concerns felt heard and were more open-minded after having someone to talk to in person. For example, many elderly were opposed to "a skate park" but open to smaller skate elements.

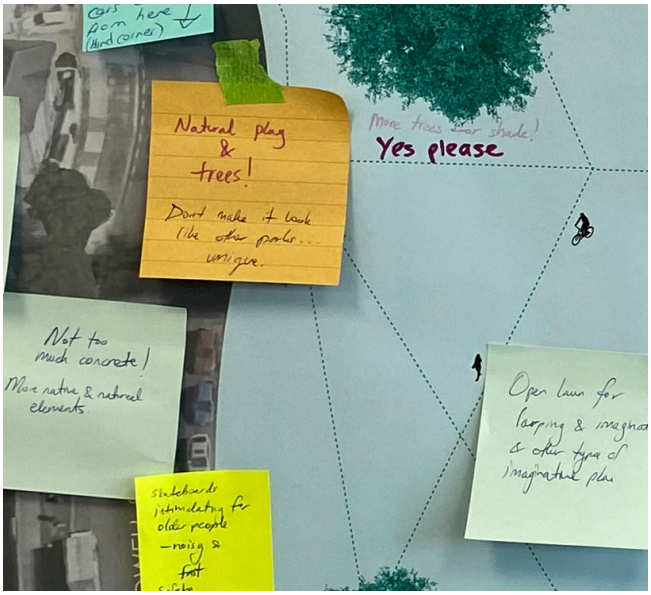


Summary of Key Themes

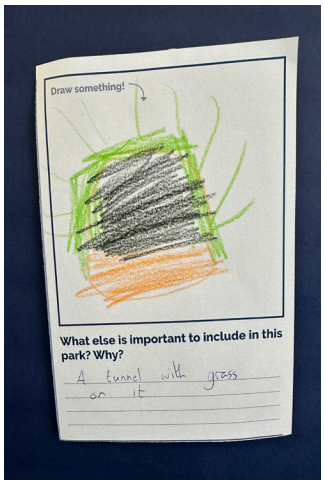
CONNECTION TO NATURE

- Green spaces and natural elements ranked highly across demographics because of wellbeing and tranquillity.
- Ground space to lounge on, shade from trees and relaxing seating are important because this park will be "some people's backyard" as the density around Naenae increases.

"The park should be a quiet, leafy space to make it tranquil and support my wellbeing"



- Open and versatile green spaces were important because of the diverse needs of the community.
- Natural play elements and simple natural materials were a priority for adults, rangatahi and tamariki. The common thread was that natural elements would better represent Naenae and not make it look like other parks - "not too much concrete" and "the opposite of Hilary Court and the pool".
- One tamariki drew a picture of "a tunnel with grass on it"

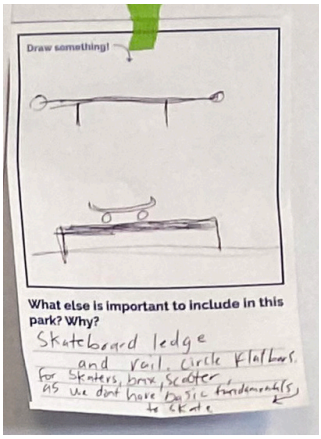


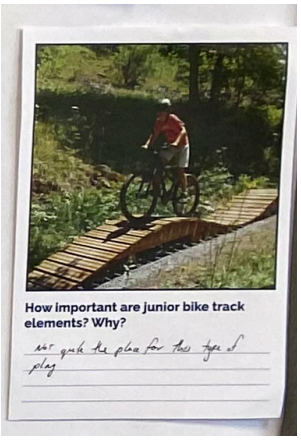
SKATING & WHEELED ACTIVITIES

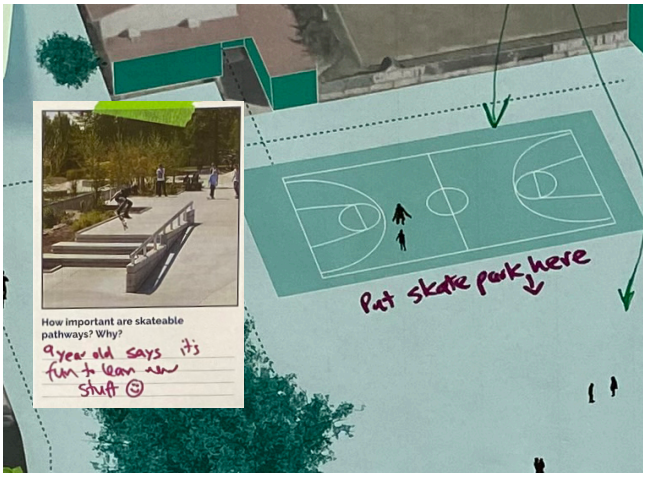
- Skating or "skate parks" were unpopular with elderly people because in other parks they find them "intimidating" and "noisy" - this was based on preconceived notions of what skating and wheeled activities in this park would be like. They were much more open to smaller skate features along thoroughfares and in designated skate areas.
- A few noted that there are "other parks around Naenae that have skating features".
- A skater gave feedback on the current skate features at the park with details

about how ledges and rails can be made better - he noted that we need to "keep it basic" and "adjust the sizing of elements so that younger people can try".

- A few people noted that the park is "not quite the space for a bike track".
- One young person drew on the layout map and noted that the skate park should be next to the basketball courts.

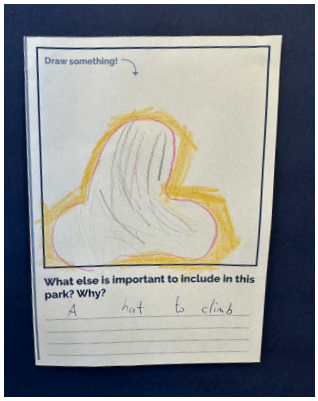


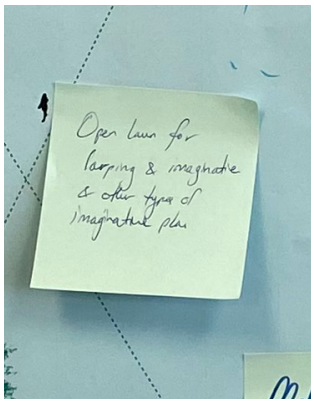




IMAGINATIVE PLAY

- Unconventional play equipment and bespoke ideas (eg. "a hat to climb") were popular with young people and adults. This was important because it encouraged creativity and to encourage play spaces that are unique to Naenae.
- Ideas such as chess boards, Dungeons and Dragons boards, maps and opportunities for larping were important because it can capture different users that might otherwise not visit the park.



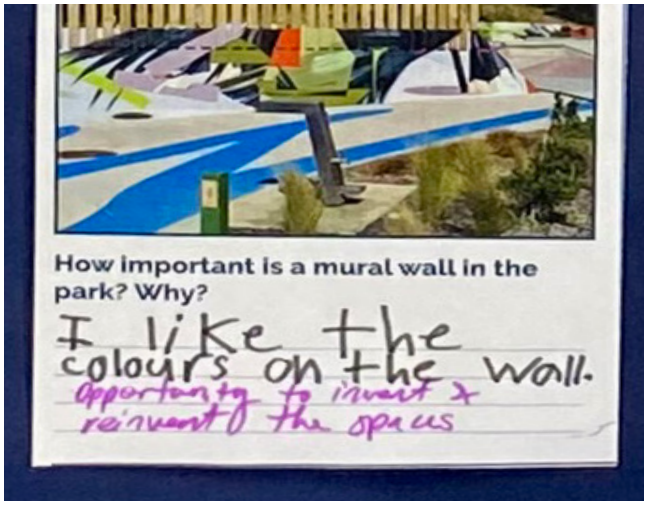


SAFETY

- Safe spaces for queer youth was mentioned in particular, with reference to good lighting, CCTV cameras and avoiding fences.
- Safety barriers for tamariki to not run onto the street were important to parents but it was noted that this does not mean a physical solid fence necessarily.

COLOUR

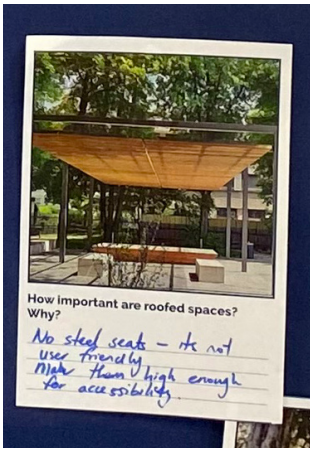
- Sculptural, fun and colourful elements came up a few times because vibrant, colourful spaces will make the park unique to Naenae.



- Mural walls and patterned elements were important because they are "opportunities to invent and re-invent the vibe of spaces".

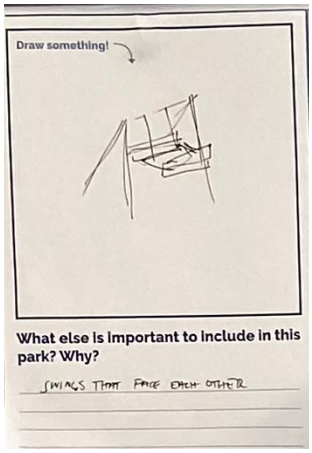
ACCESSIBILITY

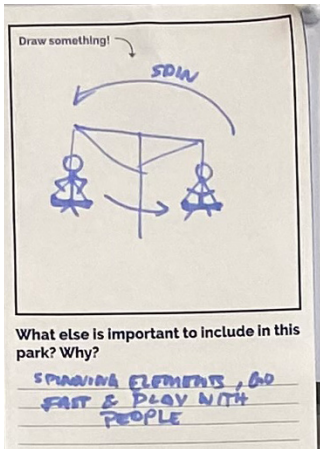
- Elderly people with accessibility needs commented on the need for different heights and materials for comfortable park seating. Variety (higher and lower seating, comfortable materials like timber, wheelchair accessible seating) was important because the community has many needs and are not serviced well by the seating in Hilary Court.
- Accessible play for people in wheelchairs was mentioned twice, with emphasis on inclusivity and ensuring everyone has an opportunity to play.
- Accessible sensory garden beds came up once because it makes the accessibility community "feel happy."

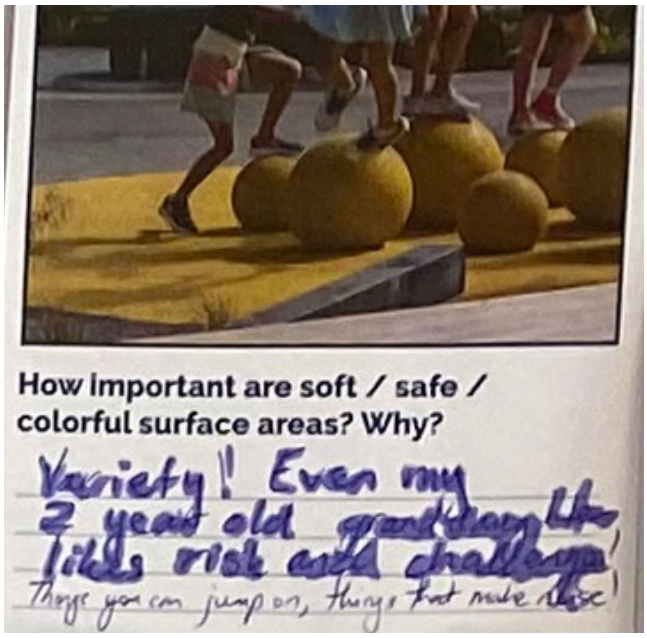


TRADITIONAL PLAY COMPONENTS

- Many people said slides and swings are important by referencing other parks and playgrounds. When asked why, the key reasons were:
  - Risk
  - Challenge
  - Speed
  - Opportunity to hang out with others.
- Swings that face each other and spider swings were mentioned because they can have multiple people on them at once and facilitate conversation.



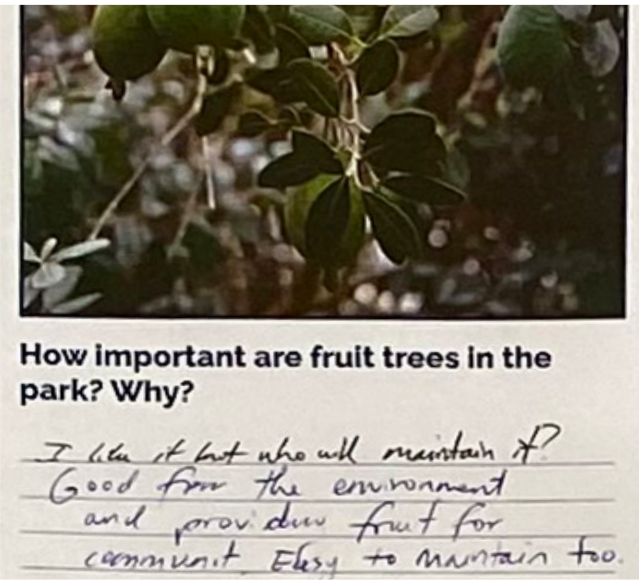


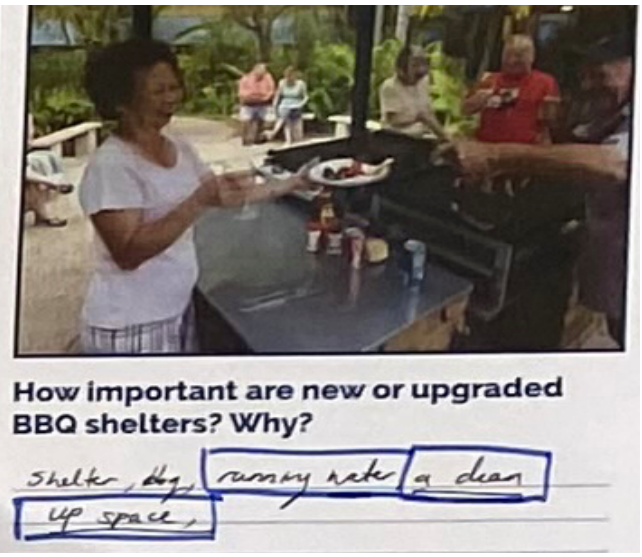


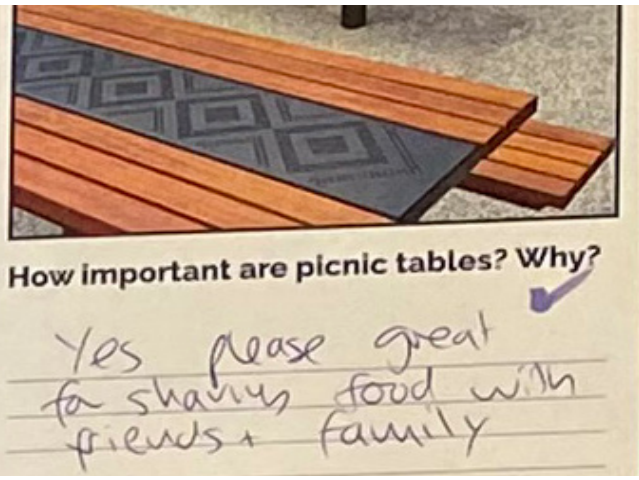
SHARING KAI

- Gardens and fruit trees that serve multiple purposes (look pretty, provide shelter and kai) were the most important amongst various demographics because of versatility.
- BBQ areas came up frequently with

parents, with emphasis on having plenty of tables and seating, running water and a cleanup space separate to toilets for kai preparation being of high importance.

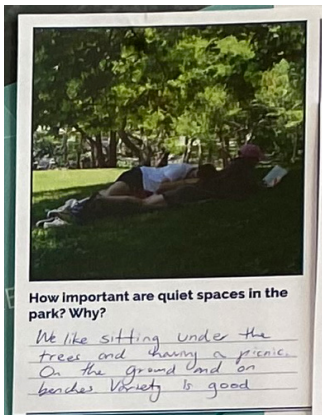


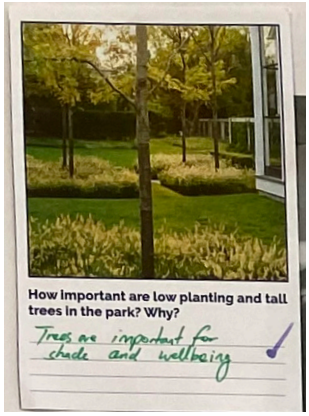




SHELTER

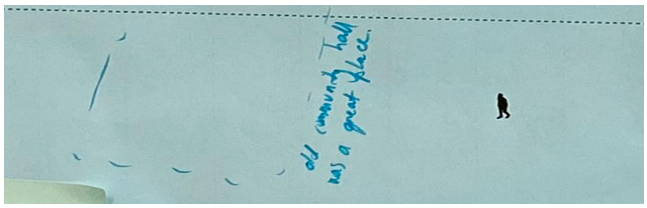
- Some people brought up roofed spaces for rain and wind as being important for spending time in the park even in rainy weather. Trees for shade and shelter came up even more frequently as a preference for young and older people.
- Wind shelters were mentioned only a few times, with emphasis that this does not mean areas should be "fenced-off" (this relates quite closely to the points in "Safety".





OTHER THINGS TO FLAG

- Endeavour Street crossing was noted as unsafe but no detail was given around how to make it more safe.
- Events such as projector movie nights, family days, rentable beanbags and sports equipment like volleyball nets were mentioned as part of the ongoing use of the park.
- The history of the old community hall was mentioned a few times as being important and a social hub to the elderly community.



Easter Egg Hunt

From 3pm till 5:30pm on the 27th of March 2024, Ellie from Third Studio talked to around people about their aspirations for the park, including members of the public who are:

- Tamariki and rangatahi
- Parents and caregivers
- Māori
- Accessibility community

Most feedback came from women and girls. Community members were asked to come have a chat and contribute their feedback on a small "polaroid" printouts with design ideas derived from The Voice of the Community Survey and Voice of Naenae report were available. Sticky notes and other material was also available to draw and write on.

Insights & Conclusions about the engagement process

THIS IS A UNIQUE PROCESS THAT IS CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

Numerous parents and caregivers asked how long the exhibition will be up for and planned on coming back to contribute again when they "had more time." The willingness of the Library staff to help communities connect to the kaupapa reflected the trust that they hold with their community.

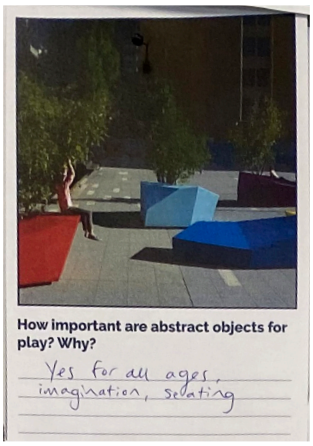
THIS EXHIBITION IS CONNECTING TO PEOPLE WHO ALREADY GO TO THE LIBRARY

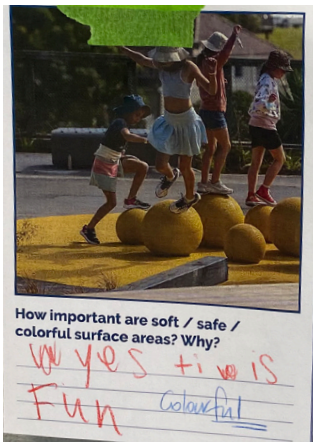
The exhibition is doing well at enticing those who are already visiting the library. It is likely that the reach of this event is limited to people how already visit the library or pass by the library.

Summary of Key Themes

IMAGINATIVE PLAY

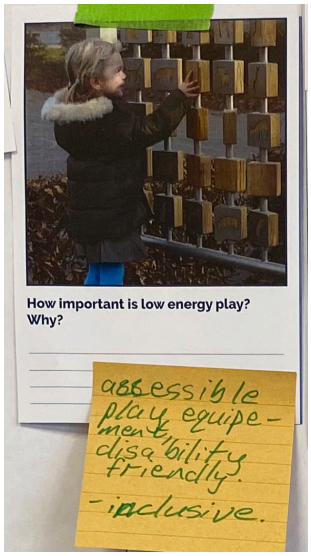
- Among younger and older people, colourful and different levels of difficulty were opportunities for imaginative play.
- This is important because it is fun to "make up games with friends".

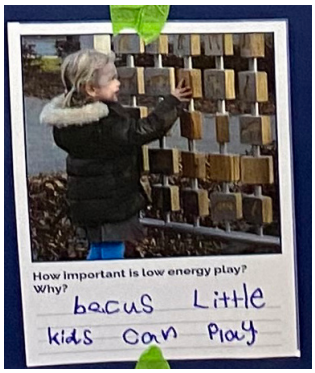




ACCESSIBLE PLAY

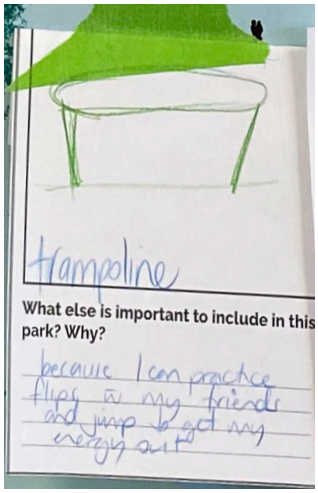
- Disability-friendly and tamariki-friendly play was very important across age groups.
- Play for different abilities and different energy levels are important so everyone can feel like they are part of the community and to "feel happy".





RISK AND CHALLENGE

- Opportunities for jumping, climbing, and risky play came up, with emphasis on challenging play with friends and teenager-friendly activities (different challenge levels).

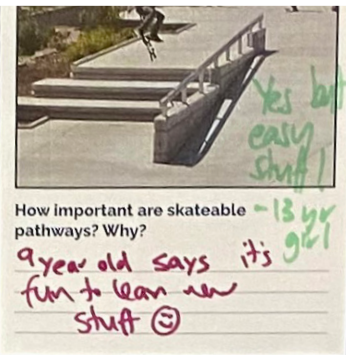


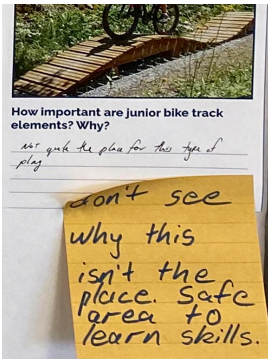
COMFORTABLE GROUP SEATING

- Spaces to hang out, whether in a swing, on seating or on the ground, were mentioned as important for "meeting" spaces and hanging out with people.
- Emphasis was placed on these spaces being comfortable and safe, otherwise people won't use them.

SKATING & WHEELED ACTIVITIES

- People added to previous feedback about skating - the design should ensure it is easy for young girls to try.
- Previous comments about bike tracks not being the right for the park were challenged because the park feels like a "safe area to learn skills".

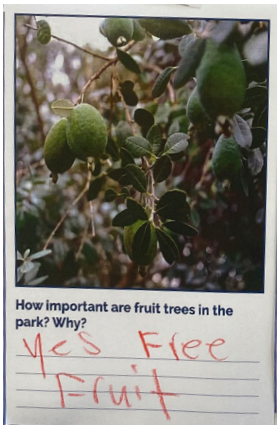


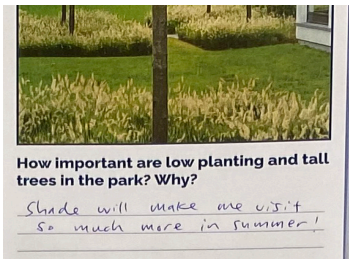


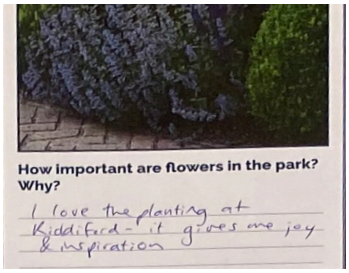
A "safe area to learn skills"

CONNECTION TO NATURE

- Designing for seasonal change can entice people to use the park - for example, shade from trees during summer is important.
- Fruit trees, flowers and other vegetation spark joy and "inspiration" for some of the residents.

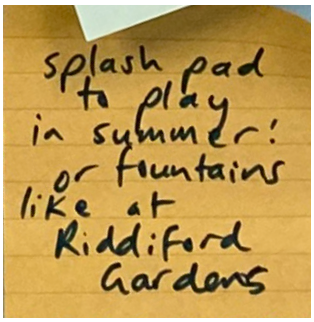


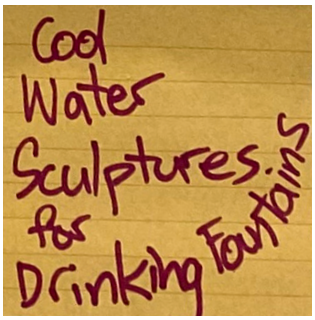




ACCESS TO WATER

- Water fountains came up both for practical purposes but also as an opportunity for expressions of identity, sculputral expression and water play opportunities.



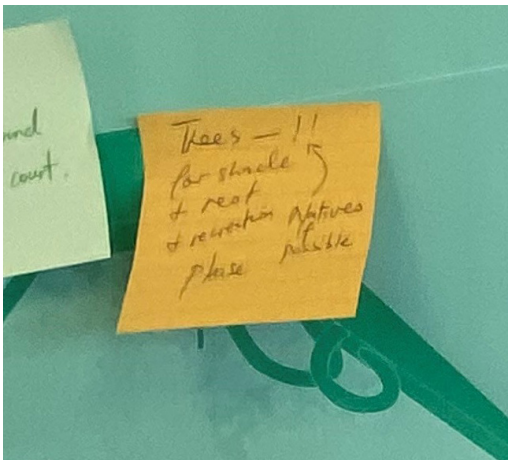


Ongoing Exhibition

Summary of Other Feedback

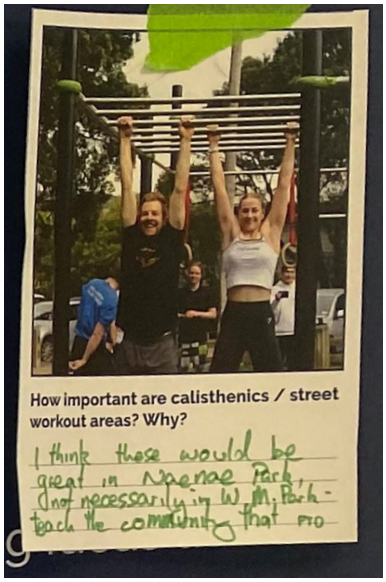
NATIVE TREES

- Native trees for shade, shelter and recreation



STREET WORKOUT AREAS

- Opportunity to work out in the park (but not nevessarily Walter Mildenhall Park)



Suggested Design Translations

Based on these workshops and the ongoing exhibition. To be viewed alongside translations from other community engagement.

1. NATURAL IMAGINATIVE PLAYSCAPES

Have park elements that provide "scaffolding" for imaginative play. Opportunities for this include:

- Abstract or deconstructed familiar shapes like mounds, archways, a-frame structures that encourage creativity for all ages.
- A variety of heights/levels of difficulty. For example, low-to-ground elements, skeletal structures that people could walk into, climb on, hop from element to element, spin, rock, balance, etc.
- Emphasis on natural materials (timber, stumps, tree tunnels, natural surfacing, etc), with opportunities for bespoke manufactured elements to express community identity.
- Playscapes that are amongst nature, not separate to it.

2. ENCOURAGING PLAY AND CONNECTION FOR ALL AGES & ABILITIES

Design to invite play and recreation so people feel encouraged to connect, challenge themselves and relax:

- Include a variety of seating (high and climbable, low to the ground, with backs, without backs, with tables) and use comfortable materials to sit on (timber was most preferred).
- Include wheelchair accessible play equipment and low energy play for younger tamariki.
- Include sensory play.
- Include accessible signage (for example, appropriate fonts, imagery or communication boards to accommodate neurodivergent people, etc.

3. PLANTING

Existing planting should be kept and added to enrich the park for people and for Te Taiao:

- Keep existing trees and add planting for shade and shelter. Only use built shelters where absolutely necessary.
- Low energy, tranquil places and high energy places should be separated and should transition gradually through design interventions.
- Sight lines should be unobstructed (low bushes and high tree lines).
- Avoid "grey zones" with overuse of concrete.
- A mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees to keep greeness alive during winter months.
- Where appropirate, fruit trees and rongoa could be included and demarkated to educate.

4. MULTI USE ELEMENTS

Elements should be usable in multiple ways and by multiple people simultaneously, For example, a "spider swing" or an "expression swing" could be used for a thrilling group swing, or seating with friends.

5. SAFETY

As well as avoiding vegetation that blocks lines of sight, the park:

- should have designed obstacles that signify a change in safety without "fencing off" the park. For example, there should be design elements like play equipment, vegetation, seating and changes in topography that stop young tamariki from running into the street.
- could have CCTV cameras if and where appropriate.
- could use lighing in creative ways to illuminate the park at night and bring enchantment to dark spaces.

6. EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY

Colour and sculpture should be used in intentional ways to highligh community identity:

- include creative, "organically Naenae" ways to imbue colour and sculpture into natural play elements, seating, water fountains, pavements, etc.
- include features that are made to change and be re-invented over time.
- opportunities to tell the stories of Naenae. For example, a "Naenae walk of fame" or poetry about Naenae embedded into pavers to be discovered on walks in the park.

7. SKATING AND WHEELED ACTIVITIES

Smaller, more accessible skate/wheeled elements in high energy areas are a priority and may include:

- Elements like ledges, rails, circle flatbars (see page 6 for advice from an active skater)
- Multipurpose and subtle elements for wheeled activities along active transport routes.

8. KAI AND WAI

Eating and drinking facilities should be integrated into the fabric of the park visually and be places where its appropriate for tīkanga to be practiced and for sight lines to play areas to be clear. These spaces could:

- Cluster eating amenities with a variety of group sitting amenities.
- Have sculptural water features/fountains that reflect identity of the park.
- Have running clean water at kai preparation areas.
- Have food preparation areas next to BBQ facilities that have sight lines to play areas.

For the feedback in raw form please
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THIRD STUDIO
creating opportunities in design processes

HUTT CITY
TE AWA KAIRANGI

local