



SYNERGIA

Opportunities and Challenges for Peri- Urban Recreation in New Zealand's Fastest Growing Cities

Research Report for
Sport New Zealand

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 5 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 6 |
| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| METHOD | 6 |
| KEY FINDINGS | 6 |
| CONCLUSIONS | 8 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT | 9 |
| 1.1 BACKGROUND..... | 9 |
| 1.2 FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH | 10 |
| 2. METHOD | 12 |
| 2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS | 12 |
| 2.2 ONLINE SURVEY | 13 |
| 2.3 PLANNER INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS..... | 15 |
| 2.4 PARENT/CAREGIVER INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS | 16 |
| 3. RECREATION ISSUES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT | 19 |
| 3.1 POPULATION PATTERNS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION | 19 |
| 3.2 ETHNIC AND AGE DIVERSITY IN OUTDOOR RECREATION | 19 |
| 3.3 DRIVERS OF FAMILY-BASED RECREATION | 20 |
| 4. AREA PROFILES | 21 |
| 4.1 AUCKLAND | 21 |
| 4.2 HAMILTON..... | 24 |
| 4.3 TAURANGA | 25 |
| 4.4 COMPARING THE FOUR CASE STUDY AREAS | 26 |
| 5. DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACTS ON RECREATION TRENDS AND PROSPECTS: REGIONALLY AND LOCALLY | 27 |
| 5.1 KEY EMERGING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES..... | 27 |
| 5.2 POTENTIAL DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACTS ON CASE STUDY AREAS | 29 |
| 6. PLANNER PERSPECTIVES: ONLINE SURVEY | 32 |
| 6.1 PRIORITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION | 32 |
| 6.2 KEY AREAS OF DEMAND FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 35 |
| 6.3 INFLUENCING DEMAND BEYOND THE PERI-URBAN FRINGE | 39 |
| 6.4 BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 40 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 6.5 | INCLUSION OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION IN ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES AND PLANNING | 43 |
| 6.6 | SUMMARY | 44 |
| 7. | PLANNER PERSPECTIVES: STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS | 45 |
| 7.1 | IMPORTANCE OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 45 |
| 7.2 | CHALLENGES TO PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 46 |
| 7.3 | ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN ISSUES | 49 |
| 7.4 | ENABLERS FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 51 |
| 7.5 | PERI-URBAN OPPORTUNITIES..... | 55 |
| 7.6 | PRIORITY POPULATION GROUPS | 57 |
| 7.7 | USE AND IMPORTANCE OF POLICY AND PLANNING IN PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 58 |
| 7.8 | FEATURES OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION IN EACH CITY..... | 59 |
| 7.9 | SUMMARY | 60 |
| 8. | FAMILY PERSPECTIVES | 61 |
| 8.1 | BEACHLANDS/MARAETAI (AUCKLAND) | 61 |
| 8.2 | WAITAKERE/TAUPAKI (AUCKLAND) | 67 |
| 8.3 | ROTOTUNA (HAMILTON)..... | 73 |
| 8.4 | BETHLEHEM (TAURANGA) | 83 |
| 8.5 | SUMMARY | 90 |
| 9. | OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL FORWARD DIRECTIONS . | 93 |
| 9.1 | OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION..... | 93 |
| 9.2 | CHALLENGES FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION | 96 |
| 9.3 | RESEARCH REFLECTIONS | 99 |
| 9.4 | POTENTIAL FORWARD DIRECTIONS | 100 |
| | APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT/CAREGIVER DISCUSSIONS..... | 102 |
| | APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH TEAM PROFILES..... | 103 |
| | APPENDIX 3: PROJECTED RECREATIONAL IMPACTS FROM POPULATION CHANGES | |
| | | 104 |
| | REFERENCES..... | 107 |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

As New Zealand's urban population has grown, so too has the number of people living in the transition zone between rural and urban. These 'peri-urban' areas are often key sites of competing demands between recreation and other land uses, and also between different types of recreation. This research explores the drivers and experiences of outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas in New Zealand's three fastest-growing cities: Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. The research provides insights on two areas of exploration:

- *Are peri-urban areas a potential area of significant growth in demand and supply of outdoor recreation within the context of changing demographic trends and participation preferences?*
- *How do opportunities for outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas relate to those in areas further away from towns and cities?*

METHOD

The research draws on multiple research approaches to understand challenges and opportunities for peri-urban recreation:

- Demographic analysis of projected population changes in the cities and four case study areas, alongside analysis of 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey data.
- Online survey of people from local government, regional sports trusts, and other organisations (36 respondents in total).
- Qualitative interviews with 15 recreation planners from councils and regional sports trusts.
- Qualitative interviews and focus groups with 30 parents/caregivers of children under 16 years from four case study areas: Beachlands-Maraetai and Waitakere Village-Taupaki in Auckland; Rototuna in Hamilton; and Bethlehem in Tauranga.

KEY FINDINGS

Demand and supply of peri-urban recreation opportunities

Peri-urban areas offer a diverse range of opportunities for recreation, depending on how they have evolved and developed, the natural amenity they offer and the recreation infrastructures that have been established.

The ongoing population growth in peri-urban areas over the next twenty years is likely to create increasing demands for recreation opportunities and infrastructure in peri-urban areas that are subject to rapid growth; given current planning priorities in each city, this is likely to occur in the four case study areas.

It is likely that there will be an increasing preference for walking and gardening as the population ages, and these interests are likely to become more varied as New Zealand's ethnic diversity increases. Cycling in particular appears to be an area of unmet demand, which in all four case study areas was constrained by traffic safety concerns.

In some areas, typically where older town centres are situated near naturally pleasant areas such as forest or coastline, and/or where there are recreation infrastructures in place, there is likely to be less demand for recreation facility development.

Recreation access and progression

In addition to being a source of local recreation for residents of peri-urban areas, peri-urban recreation has the potential to meet a further two different types of recreation use and development. Firstly, as a 'user-friendly', easily accessible, outdoor experience that allows city dwellers to utilise relatively close recreational opportunities and provide a connection with the outdoors. Secondly, as a stepping-stone for more adventurous activities further afield, by providing a supportive environment to test skills and physical ability. The research suggests that the first theme is probably more important as a motivator, based on the likely utilisation of peri-urban recreation spaces. However, there is some evidence that peri-urban recreation also has the potential to extend people's understanding and affiliation with nature and may also allow activity skills to be practiced in a manageable environment, depending on the opportunities available.

Interagency approaches

Interagency collaborative approaches, such as between local bodies, are shown in this research to be emerging as important ways of developing and improving peri-urban recreational infrastructure and opportunities, both for the strengths and resources they bring to such collaborations, and the potential resource efficiencies in tight fiscal circumstances.

Key challenges

Challenges to peri-urban recreation include the following:

- Competing demands for land use, between recreational, housing, commercial and other development, and competing demands between different types of recreation (for example, gardening and walking versus noisier pursuits, and organised sport versus horse riding).
- Tensions in some instances between resident and visitor recreation needs.
- Meeting the recreation needs of a changing population which is growing, ageing and increasingly more ethnically diverse.
- Ensuring access to recreational opportunities that may be constrained by transport or cost.
- Concerns regarding safety, particularly on roads but also for security.

- Developing and maintaining recreation facilities and infrastructure in tight budgets and competing fiscal pressures.

CONCLUSIONS

Recreation is a core function of participating in community and society, and for people in peri-urban areas this is no exception. The recreational experience sought in these areas is unique in many respects from more urban living, expressed through a common desire to be close to rural areas and away from the city, but enjoying the benefits of access to the city's offerings.

Maintaining that sense of place may be challenging in the face of ongoing demand for residential development, yet the natural features of peri-urban areas are attractors both for residents and for visitors alike.

From a recreational perspective, there is a range of attributes that together support quality peri-urban recreation. From this initial exploration, these included (but are not restricted to):

- A natural experience that provides an 'escape' from city living (such as forest, open space or coast).
- A 'user-friendly' experience considering access, signposting, information, appropriate facilities...
- ...Alternatively a rugged, "getting away from it all" experience (such as coast or forest) when the natural geography allows.
- Good transport links and connections including public transport or walking/cycling access.
- A safe environment both in terms of road safety and personal security.
- Multi-user and 'whole of family' opportunities.
- Quality walking and cycling opportunities ranging from easy, well-formed paths to less-formed trails.
- Low cost or free access to recreation areas.

Peri-urban recreation has been identified as a significant research gap in New Zealand. This initial exploration highlights many unique aspects and challenges of recreation in these areas, and warrants further review, particularly into the experiences and needs of diverse population groups.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND

Environmental planning decisions play an important role in influencing the physical engagement of individuals and groups with their outdoor environment (Baum 1998, Field 2004, Public Health Advisory Committee 2008). The convergence of such issues as population growth, changing demographics, and changes in lifestyles of modern New Zealanders have resulted in a dynamic population that has changed outdoor recreation requirements, barriers, motivators, and preferences. One potential area where this may be especially evidenced is in peri-urban areas (regions on the periphery of urban cities and towns). Developments on the periphery of urban areas are continuing to increase, with subsequent population growth, changes in demography, and demand for outdoor recreation opportunities.

A common feature of modern societies is the shift of populations from rural to urban areas. In New Zealand, this has been a marked feature since the second world war, to the extent that in 2006, 83% of the country's population resided in urban areas (Statistics New Zealand 2008). Such a shift brings with it both opportunities and challenges for recreation, as urban planners seek to ensure that people have access to different forms of recreation that give people the opportunity to be active and contribute to the social fabric and wellbeing of a community.

Within the post-war rural-urban shift, a key feature of urban development has been greenfield development, with many areas on the rural fringe transformed into large scale suburban developments, supported by government housing policies and development of transport corridors (Hall 1996, Pinch 1985).

These peri-urban areas, marked by a transition zone between urban and rural, have been identified in the international literature as being characterised by relatively lower population densities, mixed land uses and rapid land use change. They can also be subject to land speculation and uncertain land tenure, fast-growing population, and infrastructure requirements. They tend to comprise a mix of newcomers and long-established dwellers, and in so doing contribute to changing social and economic structures in these areas (Allen 2005, Broman 2010).

In the international literature, key issues that have emerged in peri-urban recreation include:

- The pressure that migration to peri-urban areas, from both urban and rural populations, places on competition for land use and recreational infrastructure (Allen 2005, Broman 2010, McGregor et al 2006).

- The importance of proximity and accessibility to local resources for activity to enable use and social benefits that can accrue from this (Coles & Bussey 2000, Jensen & Skov-Petersen 2002).
- The use of local resources for informal recreation use, such as walking, horse riding and biking, rather than utilitarian purposes (such as travel to specific venues) (Seeland et al 2002, Tzoulas & James 2010).

Peri-urban areas can be particularly challenging for providing recreation opportunities, where the rate of growth can exceed the capacity of the area to meet the needs of its inhabitants. Whilst all cities in New Zealand by their very nature have a peri-urban fringe, three cities – Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga – have consistently exhibited substantial urban development over the past 20 years (Statistics New Zealand 2010b). Whilst a high proportion of New Zealand’s population lives in cities, urbanisation has been consistently at or around the same level since 1991. The growth in peri-urban areas has paralleled ongoing population growth in these regions.

Despite the dynamic nature and growth of peri-urban areas, there is a paucity of information related to outdoor recreation provision in these areas (Booth & Lynch 2010). There is a clear research need to identify the patterns of need/demand for outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas, together with the challenges and opportunities for promoting and providing such activities. This can be used to inform planning, policy, and funding decision-making. In so doing, such research can contribute to the overarching intent of Sport New Zealand’s Outdoor Recreation Strategy, to increase participation in outdoor recreation, build the responsiveness of sector groups to the changes that impact on participation, and ensure that pressures on the natural areas used for outdoor recreation are managed effectively and in a way that is beneficial to outdoor recreation (SPARC 2009).

1.2 FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH

This report focuses on the opportunities and challenges for recreation in peri-urban areas of three New Zealand cities: Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga. The research focuses on the perspectives of urban and recreation planners, and residents of four case study areas from these cities. Outdoor recreation is the principal focus, although as is clear from many of the case studies, indoor sport and recreation opportunities also emerge as significant issues.

The goal of this research is to draw on existing data sources to explore the need and demand for outdoor recreation, and to apply these learnings in survey/qualitative research to identify the opportunities and challenges for meeting these peri-urban challenges.

The areas of study all share in common a drive for rapid urban development, yet have diverse landscape and population features. This research seeks to understand what the

common issues of demand and supply for outdoor recreation are in these areas, what features of local recreation planning are supporting or impeding access to recreation, and the potential innovative solutions that may be emerging.

Specifically, the research explores:

- The nature of population growth in these urban areas and the changes in demographics of peri-urban areas in comparison with other areas (urban, rural) over the past decade.
- The potential need/demand for peri-urban recreation given this population growth and demographics together with recreation preferences, drawing on existing population/recreational data sources.
- The approaches taken to recreation development in each of the three cities and their surrounds, in the context of city or regional recreation and planning priorities set by local government, RSTs and other organisations/agencies.
- The qualitative recreation experience of families (through the eyes of parents/caregivers) living in a selection of peri-urban areas in each of these cities.
- Potential opportunities for the further development of recreation opportunities in the peri-urban areas of these cities.
- The potential forward directions for recreation planning in light of the analyses.

This research provides a first effort to fill a clear gap in understanding of the issues enabling or hindering peri-urban recreation, and provides initial directions for consideration. This is acknowledged by Sport New Zealand in its Outdoor Recreation Research Agenda, which points to “no clear understanding of outdoor recreation opportunities in [the peri-urban] setting and how it links to other outdoor settings.” Little is known about participation in peri-urban areas and how this relates to participation in the back country, and about perceived risks of outdoor recreation participation (particularly among young people and adults) (SPARC 2011). Moreover, the brief review of the New Zealand literature undertaken for this review highlights a strong focus in the southern half of the North Island and South Island, and relatively little in the three urban centres that are the focus of this research (which together have a population of some 1.7 million people).

2. METHOD

A multi-method research approach was undertaken for this project, bringing together literature analysis, demographic analysis, online surveys, interviews with planners from the three cities and surrounding areas, and interviews and focus groups with parents/caregivers of children in four case study areas.

The research addresses two key questions set out in the SPARC 2010/11 Research Round:

- *Are peri-urban areas a potential area of significant growth in demand and supply of outdoor recreation within the context of changing demographic trends and participation preferences?*
- *How do opportunities for outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas relate to those in areas further away from towns and cities?*

The interdisciplinary research team that led this project have a shared interest in urban development and its implications for recreational, social, and health outcomes. The researchers have backgrounds in social science research, recreation and physical activity programme evaluation, public health research, human movement research, public policy, and economics.

For the purposes of this research, peri-urban is defined as a region on the periphery of urban cities and towns, and may include green belts, developing areas that verge on farmland or natural reserves, and areas of transition from rural to city. The research overall has a particular emphasis on outdoor recreation, which is defined by Sport New Zealand as having a physical component; requires access to natural, rural and urban open spaces; and is not primarily focused on competitive outcomes. Examples of “peri-urban recreation” include horse riding, orienteering, and mountain biking.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The first component of the research involved an assessment of the predicted population changes within each of the four case study areas to assess the potential changes in demand for recreation activity. This was completed using population census data and Statistics New Zealand population predictions combined with activity rates from the Active NZ survey (2007/08). These data sources were used to help predict the magnitude of change and any potential changes in the mix of recreational activity over time.

Population data was compiled for each of the four case study areas (Waitakere Village/Taupaki, Beachlands-Maraetai, Rototuna and Bethlehem), and also at the city level that each case study sits within (Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga). Selection of case study areas was based on requests/recommendations of recreation planners in each of the three cities. Findings from these analyses are detailed in section 5.

2.2 ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was distributed to staff from city councils, neighbouring district/regional councils, regional sports trusts (RSTs), Department of Conservation and other relevant organisations in September-October 2011.

The survey used Synergia's in-house Informis software, which delivers bespoke online surveys across multiple sectors (including health, physical activity, and local government sectors).

The research used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants from these sectors. The intention was not to achieve a representative sample, but to explore relevant institutional/expert knowledge to provide comprehensive insights into the opportunities and challenges.

Researchers directly contacted staff at each city/regional council, and local RSTs, to obtain the names and contact details of recreation planners. Researchers also accessed local, non-government organisation interests through networks in each centre.

Each staff member/representative was sent a weblink to access the survey. A snowball sampling method was employed, in which the initial wave of respondents was encouraged to forward the survey link to others who may have a useful contribution to make. Follow-up emails were sent to encourage participation.

Issues explored included:

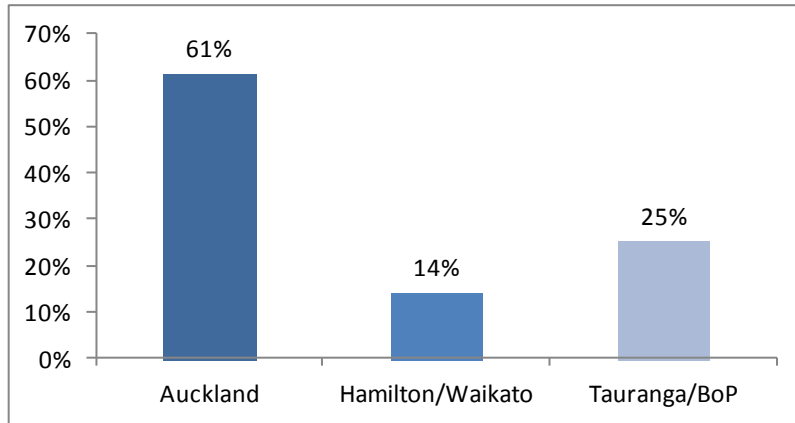
- Guidelines and policy documents that inform peri-urban recreation planning
- Priorities for outdoor recreation and peri-urban recreation
- Perceptions of growth and demand for peri-urban recreation
- Barriers and enablers for peri-urban recreation
- Perceptions of peri-urban links to back-country recreation.

In total, 40 responses were received, of which 36 were usable. This was very much at the upper end of expectations for the online survey and reflected substantial interest in this topic among the participating councils.

The graphs below show the profile of respondents. Findings from this phase are described in section 6.

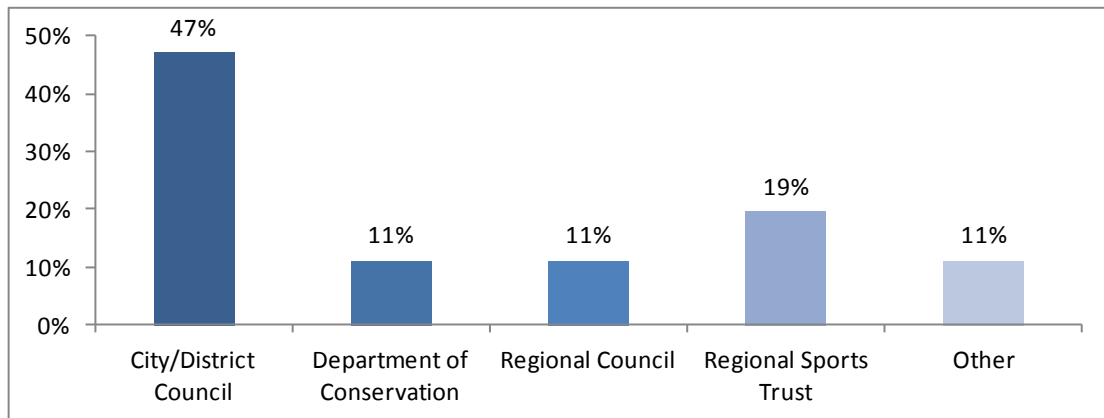
Over half of respondents were based in the Auckland region (61%), while a quarter were from Tauranga/Bay of Plenty (25%). Some 14% were from the Hamilton/Waikato region (14%).

Figure 1: Areas of online survey respondents (N=36)



Almost half of the survey respondents worked for a city or district council (47%), 19% worked for an RST, with the remainder split among the Department of Conservation (11%), regional councils (11%), and 'Other' organisations (11%).

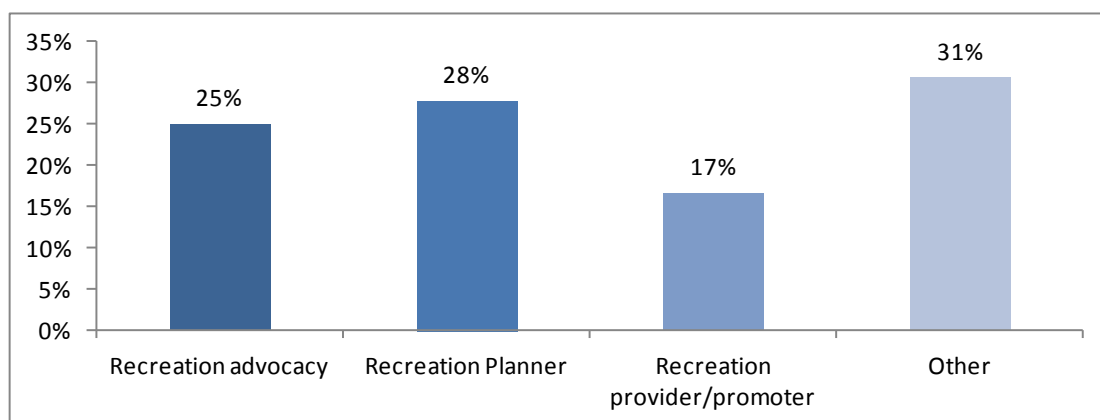
Figure 2: Organisations where online survey respondents employed (N=36)



Note: 'Other' organisations included District Health Boards, University staff, and contractors.

Around a quarter of survey participants worked as either a Recreation Planner (28%) or in a recreation advocacy role (25%), while 17% worked as a recreation provider or promoter. The rest of the respondents (31%) fell into the 'Other' category, which included managers (general, programme, parks managers), strategic planners, and researchers.

Figure 3: Respondent role (N=36)



Quantitative questions were analysed and presented in Microsoft Excel. Qualitative responses were grouped thematically and common or distinctive themes were identified and reported using representative or insightful quotes where appropriate.

For the sections about key priorities in outdoor recreation (section 6.1.2) and key documents used to inform respondent’s work (section 6.5), the responses were grouped into major categories and themes, which then allowed subsequent quantitative analysis.

2.3 PLANNER INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS

Informed by the online survey, seven interviews were conducted with a total of 15 recreation planners from RSTs, and city, district and regional councils in each area.

Individuals were contacted by email and telephone, and invited to participate in a face-to-face interview at a time and location convenient to them. All invitees agreed to participate in the interviews. Interview respondent details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview respondent details

| Region | Organisation | Type | Number of interviewees |
|------------------|---|---------|------------------------|
| Hamilton/Waikato | Hamilton City Council | Council | 4 |
| Hamilton/Waikato | Sport Waikato | RST | 1 |
| Auckland | Auckland Council | Council | 1 |
| Auckland | Counties Manukau Sport | RST | 1 |
| Auckland | Sport Waitakere | RST | 2 |
| Tauranga/BoP | Tauranga City Council Western Bay District Council Bay of Plenty Regional Council | Council | 3 |
| Tauranga/BoP | Sport Bay of Plenty | RST | 3 |

All interviews were conducted by Drs Field, Oliver, and/or Mackie during November and December 2011. A semi-structured approach to the interviews was employed, whereby key themes were identified from the online questionnaire and questions to investigate themes in more detail were then developed by the research team. The interview process allowed for an open discussion and emergent themes to arise. Interviews lasted between 60-90 minutes.

Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and the resulting transcripts imported into software for analysing this type of data (NVivo 9.2). Combined inductive and deductive analyses were undertaken to identify key themes in response to interview questions, and additional themes arising from the interview process. Predetermined parent nodes (themes) were determined from the suite of suggested interview questions. Themes arising in response to questions were then coded under each parent node. The data were then scanned for additional emergent themes; when respondents brought up themes not covered in the interview questions, further parent (and child) nodes were created. Data were classified by organisation type (regional sports trust or council) and region (Auckland, Tauranga/BOP, Hamilton). Where multiple interviewees participated in the same interview, all response coding was clustered at the interview level (i.e., n=7).

Word frequency searches were conducted from interviewee responses to explore issues of priority. Matrix coding was conducted to identify pertinent themes and potential differences in themes arising by organisation type and region.

Issues explored in the discussions included:

- Key peri-urban opportunities in each city
- Changes in peri-urban recreation in last five years and anticipated changes
- Importance/value of peri-urban recreation
- Challenges in managing urban growth and making recreation opportunities available
- High-needs groups in each area
- Examples of interagency approaches
- Features of case study areas

Findings from this phase are described in section 7.

2.4 PARENT/CAREGIVER INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS

To complete the research, interviews and focus groups were held with parents/caregivers of children aged up to 16 years in each of the four case study areas. The original intention had been to conduct up to 16 interviews across the four case study areas, recruiting via local networks. In most areas (with the exception of Hamilton) this proved difficult within the time constraints of the research. With approval of Sport New Zealand, this approach

was adapted to allow for four interviews in Hamilton (all living in the Rototuna case study area) and three focus groups of eight people each in Tauranga (Bethlehem) and Auckland (Waitakere Village-Taupaki and Beachlands-Maraetai). In total, 30 family representatives participated in the process.

The Hamilton interviews were recruited via local networks. The three focus groups were recruited via a qualitative research recruitment company (Prime Research Ltd), using their in-house recruitment database, and via networking through local schools and community organisations.

All interviewees and focus group participants were paid a koha in appreciation of their time and perspectives offered.

The table below shows demographic details about the participants. Of note is the strong representation of New Zealand European respondents; in part this reflects the composition of the case study areas, which tend to be dominated by this ethnic group. It also proved difficult to recruit Māori, Pacific and Asian people to these groups, despite a preference signalled to recruiters to obtain an ethnic mix.

Table 2: Parent/caregiver interview/focus group respondent details

| Area | Number of interviewees/ participants | Age range of interviewees | Ethnicity | Number of children |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Rototuna | 6 (2 couples) – 3 female, 3 male | 30-39 (3) 40-49 (1) N/A (2) | NZ European (6) | 2 children (3) 3 children (1) |
| Bethlehem | 8 – 6 female, 2 male | 30-39 (4) 40-49 (4) | NZ European (6) Māori (1) Pacific (1) | 1 child (1) 2 children (1) 3 children (6) |
| Beachlands-Maraetai | 8 – 4 males, 4 females | 30-39 (7) 40-49 (1) | NZ European (8) | 1 child (1) 2 children (5) 3 children (2) |
| Waitakere | 8 – 2 males, 6 females | 20-29 (1) 30-39 (1) 40-49 (5) 50-59 (1) | NZ European (8) | 1 child (1) 2 children (4) 3 children (3) 4 children (1) |

Note: With the exception of *Number of children*, figures in brackets represent the number of family representatives in each group. Figures in brackets for *Number of children* indicate the number of families with that number of children in each group.

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit perspectives on outdoor recreation in participants' own words, and to provide opportunities for unknown aspects of the topic to emerge. A bank of questions for use in the discussions were devised by the

research team, based on key findings from the initial data collation process for the research. Flexibility in the interview structure and methodology were used in order to capture unforeseen issues that might warrant further exploration.

Issues explored in the interviews/focus groups included the following:

- Experiences of living in the area
- Personal and family recreation activities, both locally and further afield
- Opportunities and constraints to recreation
- Factors affecting/driving recreation choices
- Source of information on recreation locally
- Area as an attractor for recreation
- Role of council or other organisations in making recreation opportunities available.

A full copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

All interviews/focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Combined inductive and deductive analyses were undertaken to identify key themes in response to interview questions, and additional themes arising from the interview process. Predetermined parent nodes (themes) were determined from the suite of suggested questions. Themes arising in response to questions were then coded under each parent node. The data were then scanned for additional emergent themes; when respondents brought up themes not covered in the interview questions, further parent (and child) nodes were created. Word frequency searches were conducted from interviewee responses to explore issues of priority.

3. RECREATION ISSUES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

Peri-urban recreation research is a significant gap in New Zealand, and indeed is relatively marginal in the international literature. There are however a range of studies in New Zealand that inform this research. These are explored briefly here.

3.1 POPULATION PATTERNS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Findings from the 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey showed that a wide range of outdoor recreation activities were undertaken by the population – among the ten most popular were walking (64%), gardening (43%), swimming (35%), cycling (23%), fishing (19%), jogging/running (18%), golf (13%), and tramping (9%) (SPARC 2008).

A review of outdoor recreation research by Booth and Lynch (2010) pointed to the following trends in relation to outdoor recreation – what is not known however is the extent to which peri-urban recreation reflects this or offers distinctly different patterns of activity:

- Progressive ageing of the population, particularly in rural and regional areas.
- Increasing urbanisation of the population (although as noted earlier, this has been steady for some 20 years; it is population growth rather than a shift towards urbanisation that has created pressures on urban development).
- Increasing concentrations of populations and increasing ethnic mix of populations, particularly in the Auckland area.
- Under-representation in active outdoor recreation among the young, non-European ethnic groups, and urban residents.
- Increasing preferences for more passive, home-based activities; with those interested in more active outdoor activities being most involved in those that can be undertaken closer to home and in a shorter time (Booth & Lynch 2010).

3.2 ETHNIC AND AGE DIVERSITY IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

The 2007/08 Active New Zealand study showed some substantial diversity in outdoor recreation preferences among ethnic groups, with swimming popular across all ethnic groups, and fishing especially popular for those of Māori and New Zealand European ethnicity, and tramping for New Zealand Europeans only. Organised sports tended to feature more strongly for Pacific populations, compared with the general population, while some individual, non-competitive recreation, such as cycling or fishing, did not feature among the top ten activities undertaken by Pacific people (SPARC 2008).

Within the limited literature available, there appears to be a general under-representation of non-Pākehā New Zealanders across most outdoor recreation activities. This is attributed to different cultural perspectives on what constitutes outdoor recreation activity. For example, a strict work and leisure split is inappropriate for understanding the involvement of many cultural groups in recreation and leisure, and this is particularly true for Māori. Recreation can involve aspects of connecting with the land and ancestors as a way of reaffirming cultural connections and values (for example, Māori are over-represented in outdoor recreation activities associated with fishing, especially the gathering of shellfish and diving). Māori, as well as Pacific people and many other ethnic groups, favour communal recreation and sporting activity by family groupings (Dignan & Cessford 2009).

There also appear to be considerable differences between recent migrants and New Zealand-born citizens in outdoor recreation, including frequency of participation, recreation group size and composition, and barriers to participation (Lovelock et al 2008).

In terms of age patterns, findings from the 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey showed that walking, cycling and swimming were consistently popular activities across all age groups, with fishing increasingly popular from age 25 onwards, and tramping common in the 35-64-year age group only (SPARC 2008).

3.3 DRIVERS OF FAMILY-BASED RECREATION

Family patterns in recreation have been only rarely explored in New Zealand, and Reis et al's (2010) qualitative study of family recreation in regional parks and the conservation estate provides an important benchmark. Twenty-five families were interviewed in Dunedin, Wellington and Twizel, and the activity choices, experiences, benefits and constraints of recreation were explored.

Among these families, key reasons for participation were health/fitness, family bonding or spending time together. Family life-stage (represented by such factors as age of children) influenced, and sometimes dictated, outdoor recreation involvement. Camping, day-walks, cycling and the beach were repeatedly identified as preferred activities for families with younger children, whereas longer day walks/overnight tramps, sailing and mountain biking featured more prominently in families with teenagers and young adults still living at home.

Of note for this peri-urban research, outdoor recreation sites within or close to urban centres were important introductory settings for families. These sites were seen to provide significant opportunities for introductory outdoor recreation activities, providing a stepping stone to more intense outdoor experiences, such as day walks or overnight tramps in national parks (Reis et al 2010).

The research also indicated that Māori, Pacific people and Pākehā cultures attach different meanings to outdoor family-based recreation, and the sense of purpose is distinct for each ethnic group. For example, Pacific families sought social time with their peers, and so

churches and schools played an important role in promoting outdoor recreation for these communities, with a preference for social sports. For Māori, outdoor recreation can fulfil cultural motivations such as visiting whānau lands, and coastal beach activities were often associated with outdoor recreation participation (Reis et al 2010).

4. AREA PROFILES

The three cities chosen for this research (Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton) share common strong patterns of growth in the past 20 years, particularly on their peri-urban fringes. They provide useful venues for exploring the extent to which existing research is consistent with the experiences of recreation planners and community members in each area.

4.1 AUCKLAND

In 2010, Auckland's seven territorial authorities, along with its regional council, merged to form the unitary Auckland Council. When formed, the new city served almost 1.5 million people. Peri-urban development has been a key feature of the city's growth, within efforts to contain growth within its metropolitan urban limits.

The city offers a rich array of outdoor recreation opportunities, including fishing and water activities in the Manukau and Waitemata Harbours, Hauraki Gulf and west coast beaches; and walking, hiking, cycling, and other activities in the regional and city parks. Motorised sport and horse riding activities are common in areas on the rural fringe.

A pivotal review of open space recreation undertaken in 2010 for the Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (ARPASS) identified that recreation demand is shaped by the region's population demographics and geographic features, yet is subject to significant challenges in meeting demands into the future:

"Auckland has New Zealand's largest, most ethnically diverse and youngest urban populations. While confined to a narrow isthmus of land, it actually has an extensive array of natural open spaces that have the potential to provide for a wide variety of informal outdoor recreation experiences. However, the current alignment of demand and supply does not yet provide the optimum setting for maintaining and increasing informal recreation participation into the future.

Demand for key informal activities (for example walking, tramping, running, mountain biking, horse-riding and motorised sport) is projected to continue increasing along with general population growth, subject to continued availability of suitable recreation sites. The availability of suitable recreation sites and opportunities, ideally close to home, will affect the extent to which more enhanced

recreation participation levels can be facilitated. There are potential threats which may reduce some key elements of current supply, and potential opportunities which can significantly increase some key future supply elements.” (Visitor Solutions Ltd 2010)

The two case studies within the region, Beachlands-Maraetai and Waitakere Village-Taupaki, offer contrasting geographic and resource features but have some attributes in common; in particular, they are areas of long-term, planned development and have similar population profiles.

4.1.1 Beachlands-Maraetai

Beachlands and Maraetai are two neighbouring communities on Auckland’s eastern edge, looking out towards the Hauraki Gulf and Waiheke Island. The two have a strong seaside village flavour and, like many established villages, have a range of services, facilities and amenities available. They have grown significantly over the past two decades.

As well as access to water-based sport and recreation, the two share a large recreation centre at Te Puru and the Omana Regional Park. Between the two villages is the Te Puru reserve and community/recreation centre, which offers an array of recreational and sporting activities, both indoor and outdoor, and which functions as a community hub.



The population estimates of the area for 2011 from Statistics New Zealand were 6,580, substantially European (78%) and with relatively small Māori (7%) Pacific (2%) and Asian populations (1.4%); the remainder were other ethnicities.

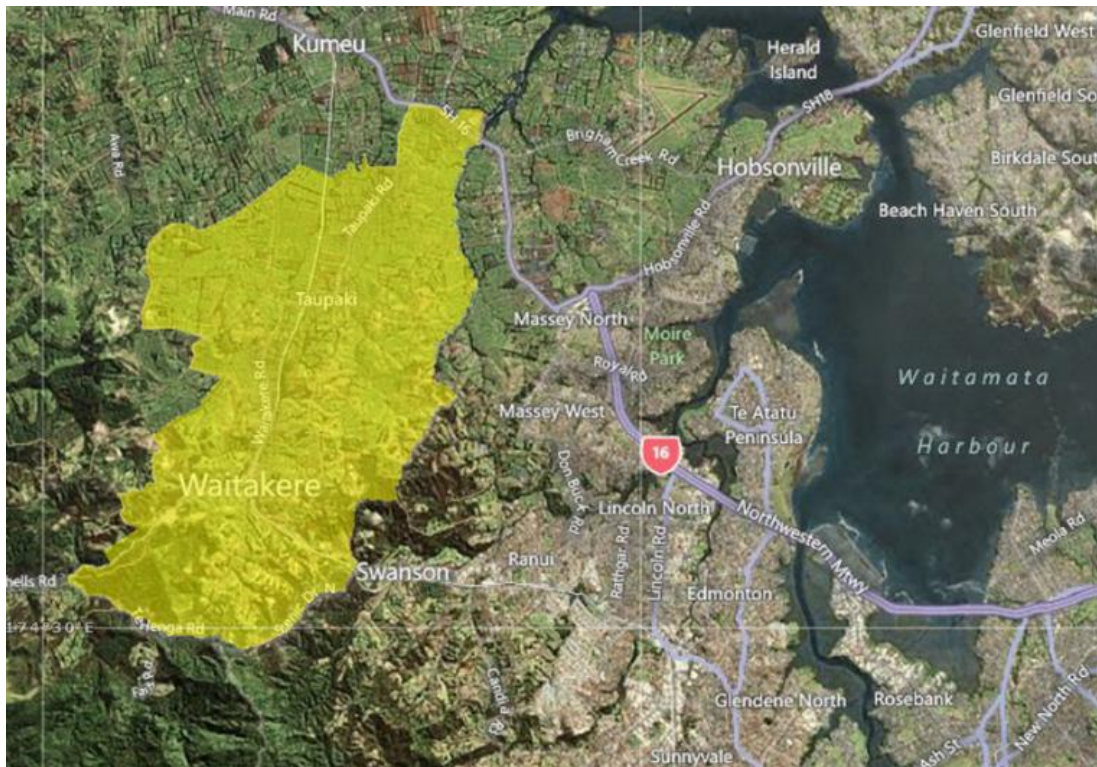
Travel to other parts of the city for most residents is by car (40 minute drive to the central city) or bus. For those wanting to get to the Auckland Central Business District there is a

ferry from Pine Harbour to downtown on weekdays. The area comprises a younger population with 10% who are 65 and over, compared with 13% nationally.

4.1.2 Waitakere Village-Taupaki

Waitakere Village and Taupaki sit in the foothills of the Waitakere ranges, between the Swanson-Massey and Kumeu areas of west Auckland. As well as a starkly contrasting geographic terrain to Beachlands-Maraetai, the areas are substantially less developed. However, the neighbouring Swanson-Massey areas have developed significantly since the 1980s and the area is therefore close to highly populated areas. Waitakere Village has direct passenger transport to the city (in common with Beachlands-Maraetai) with, at the time of writing, the most westerly stop for the train line into the city.

In 2011, the estimated population of the area from Statistics New Zealand was 3,990, of which 74% were European, 7% were Māori, 3.8% were Asian, 2% were Pacific, and the remainder were other ethnicities. The area comprises a younger population, with 10% who are 65 and over compared to 13% nationally.



4.2 HAMILTON

Hamilton is New Zealand's fourth largest city in terms of population, at an estimated 145,500 in 2011. Its urban area grew by 1.6% in the year to June 2010, matching growth in the Auckland urban area. The city's boundaries run relatively close to its areas of housing development; as a consequence peri-urban development tends to sharply demarcate between urban and rural areas.

The case study area, Rototuna, is an area of significant population and housing growth, and sits on the city's north-eastern fringe. It is the largest of the case study areas and has developed rapidly over the past decade. The case study area, pictured below, draws in both the developing Rototuna and Huntingdon areas, and the partially rural Horsham Downs.

The 2011 estimated population for the area was 14,270, of which 67% were European, 12% were Asian, 7% were Māori, 1.3% were Pacific and the remainder were other ethnicities. It is a younger population with 10% who are 65 and over, compared with 13% nationally.



4.3 TAURANGA

Tauranga had an estimated population in 2011 of 117,100. Its urban area grew only slightly less than Auckland and Hamilton in the year to 2010, by 1.5%. The city takes in the coastal areas of Mt Maunganui and Papamoa at its eastern edge, Welcome Bay in the South, and Otumoetai and Bethlehem to the North and West, respectively.

The case study area, Bethlehem, was for many years a close but definitely rural settlement on the outskirts of the city. By 2011, the area was continuously linked to the city by housing, and some development in Bethlehem North remains planned for the future. Its western edge of the Wairoa River is a key border between urban and rural. The case study area, pictured below, draws in the Bethlehem and Tauriko areas. A notable recreation feature of Bethlehem is the Carmichael Reserve, a former stormwater area converted into wetlands and a network of cycle/walkways.

In 2011, the area was estimated to have a population of some 7,120, of which 72% identified as European, 8% Māori, 3.4% Asian and 0.8% Pacific. It is an older population than in the other study areas, with 17% of the population 65 and over, compared with a national average of 13%.

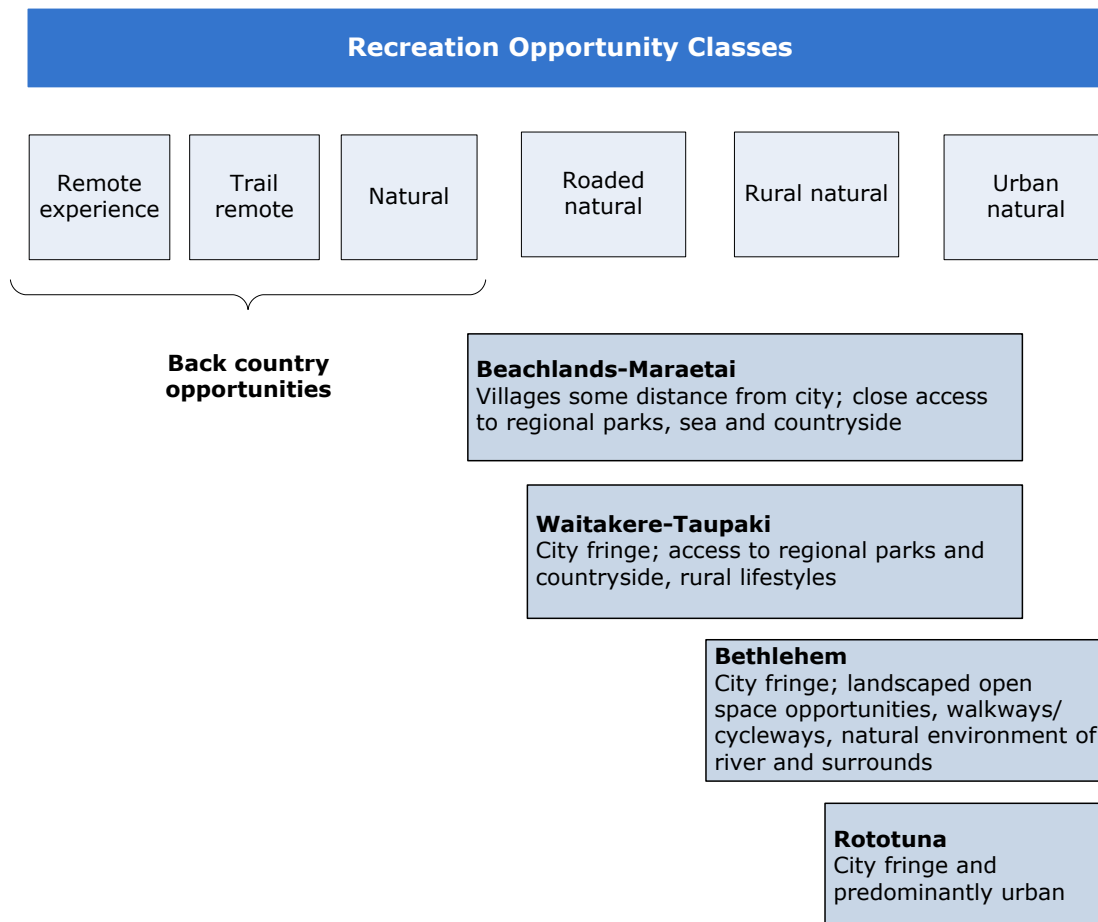


4.4 COMPARING THE FOUR CASE STUDY AREAS

The four case study areas have some very diverse features, based on their geography and open space and amenity access. One means of comparing these, based on a framework originating in the US and adopted in open space research in Auckland (Visitor Solutions Ltd 2010), explores the placement of each area on a 'Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.' This is shown below and shows a changing scale from remote (distant from urban areas and without trails), remote trailled (with some walkway access), natural (native vegetation), roaded natural (some roading through natural areas), rural natural (mixture of farmland and native vegetation) and urban.

Peri-urban areas by their composite nature tend towards the rural natural and urban ends of the spectrum, but as is indicated in figure 4 below, the range of opportunities offered in each area differ substantially. These differences are explored in more detail in section 8, which discusses the experiences of families in each area.

Figure 4: Recreational Opportunity Classes and Case Study Areas



5. DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACTS ON RECREATION TRENDS AND PROSPECTS: REGIONALLY AND LOCALLY

5.1 KEY EMERGING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Nationally, the makeup of New Zealand's population is changing. The population is growing, getting older, more ethnically diverse, and diverse in terms of family structure (a greater proportion of the population are now living alone or in sole parent families). These key changes are influencing people's preferences in recreational activity, which are summarised in table 3 below.

Table 3: Demographic changes nationally and associated impacts on recreational trends

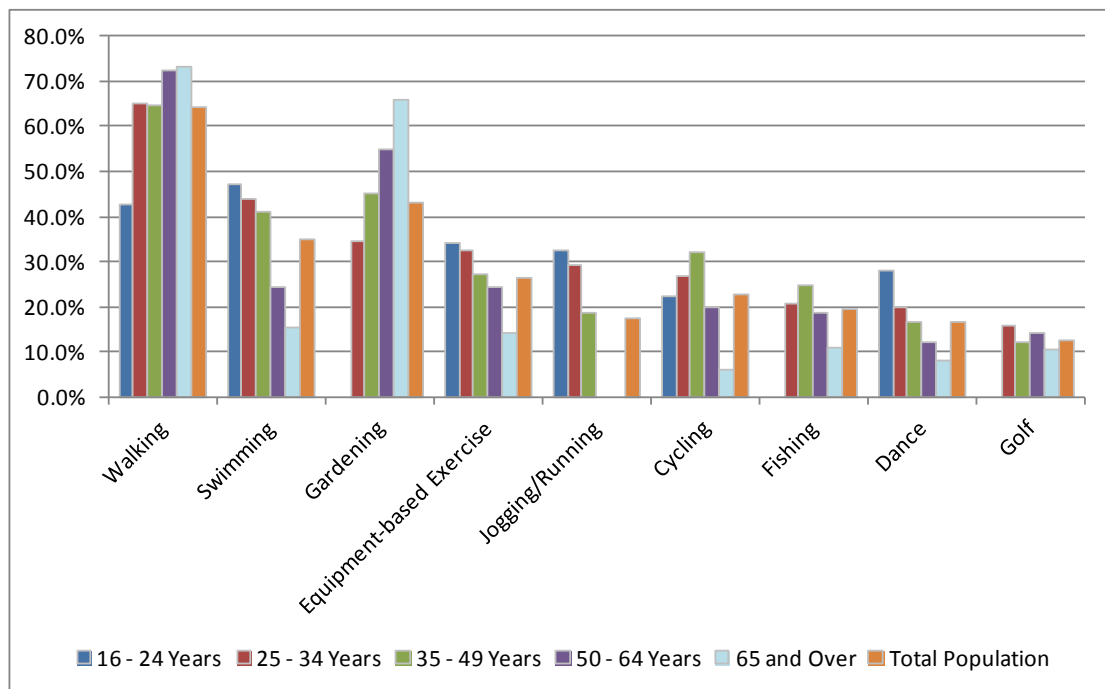
| Population changes | Description | Recreational Impacts |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Growing | Between 2011 and 2031, New Zealand's population is forecast to grow by 0.8 percent a year, from 4.4 million to 5.1 million. This growth is typically greater in the north of the country and lower in the south. Auckland is predicted to account for almost half (48%) of the national growth in households (Statistics New Zealand 2010a). | Increasing demands on infrastructure in fast-growing areas, such as those in our case studies. |
| Older | New Zealand's population is ageing, through a combination of rising life expectancy and lower birth rates. As a proportion of the population, those 65 and over will grow from 13 percent of the population in 2006 to a quarter of the population (25%) by the late 2030s (Statistics New Zealand 2007). In 2011, those aged under 65 outnumber those over 65 by almost 6.5:1 but this moves to a predicted ratio of 3.8:1 in 2031. | According to the 2007/08 SPARC Active New Zealand Survey, there is increasing participation in walking and gardening with age and a declining preference for swimming, equipment-based exercise and dance. As the population ages, we are likely to see a shift in the mix of activity towards walking and away from swimming. |
| More ethnically diverse | According to Statistics New Zealand, non-Europeans ¹ made up 23 percent of New Zealand's population in 2006. In 2026, this will be 31 percent. Growth in those identifying as Asian comprises | The 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey showed that walking and gardening still rate highly amongst non-Europeans but not as highly as the rest of the population. Non-Europeans |

¹ Non-Europeans here are defined as those identifying as Māori, Asian, or Pacific ethnicities, with or without other ethnic affiliations.

| Population changes | Description | Recreational Impacts |
|--|--|---|
| | a large proportion of this growth, with their proportion of the population growing from 9.7% in 2006 to 16% in 2026, just short of Māori who will make up 16.6% of the population in 2026. | tend to have more diverse interests e.g., fishing among Māori, yoga and badminton among the Asian population, and rugby and touch rugby among Māori and Pacific. These interests are likely to grow with growing ethnic diversity. |
| More living alone and as sole parents | As the population ages and family structures change there will be more couple-without-children households in the future. While the population is predicted to grow at 0.8%, the number of households is expected to grow at 1.2% to accommodate this change. | With more people living on their own and/or as sole parent families, it is posited that safety, or perceptions of safety, will be an important factor in outdoor recreational activity. This will be safety in a broad sense from risk of accidents through to risks associated with criminal activity. |

Figure 5 below shows the main areas of recreation participation by age group, drawn from the 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey, from which the scenarios for recreational impacts in this section are based.

Figure 5: Recreational activity rates by age group, 2007/08 (based on Top Ten activities)



Source: SPARC 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey, based on top ten activities for each age group. Note that there are missing values for some activities in some ages as they did not feature in the top 10 activities for that age group, but actual values are unlikely to be zero..

5.2 POTENTIAL DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACTS ON CASE STUDY AREAS

Each case study area has its own demographic characteristics and growth patterns which will impact the recreational preferences of the population. We took the projected populations by age for each of the case study areas and the city areas they are within for 2011 and 2021. We then used the 2007/08 Activity Survey participation rates by age to predict future activity levels and composition for each area. It was not possible to predict changes based on ethnicity as Statistics New Zealand do not do predictions by ethnicity at these case study area levels (Census Area Unit) due to the low numbers in some ethnic groups.

The results of this aged-base analysis and potential ethnicity-based implications are summarised below.

Table 4: Potential recreation changes in case study areas

| Case Study Area | Population changes 2011 – 2021 (Stats New Zealand) | Recreational implications 2011 - 2021 (using SPARC 2007/08 activity participation rates by age and population projections – See appendix 3 for more detail) |
|---|--|---|
| Beachlands -Maraetai and the broader Auckland City | Beachlands-Maraetai is predicted to grow by some 2,200 people from 2011 – 2021 or 34% - over twice the growth rate of Auckland City overall. The growth of those 65 and over (73%) is twice that of the other age groups. Best estimates suggest the ethnicity mix is unlikely to change significantly over 2011 – 2021, with a continuing high proportion of Europeans. | <p>In terms of peri-urban activity, walking is predicted to be the most frequent activity in Beachlands-Maraetai, with 65% or 3,191 people walking, followed by gardening (2,135) and swimming (1,694).</p> <p>Participation in all activities is predicted to grow in the Beachlands-Maraetai area between 2011 and 2021, although given the change in age structure, the data indicates an additional 1,163 people will want to walk (a 36% increase) and 801 garden (a 38% increase). An additional 512 people will want to swim (a 30% increase), and 429 do equipment-based exercise (a 33% increase).</p> <p>Across Manukau City, an additional 42,000 people are predicted to want to walk between 2011 and 2021 (a 23% increase) and 11,000 will want to cycle (a 28% increase). The biggest increases across Manukau City are expected to be in the number of people wanting to garden, walk and swim.</p> |
| Waitakere Village and Waitakere City | The Waitakere Village population is predicted to grow by some 10%, from around 3,700 in 2011 to over 4,000 by 2021. This compares with the broader Waitakere City population, which | Walking, swimming and gardening are predicted to have highest demand/participation rates like other areas. It is predicted there will be some 200+ extra participants in walking and gardening (13% and 16% growth, respectively) and growth from the broader |

| Case Study Area | Population changes 2011 – 2021 (Stats New Zealand) | Recreational implications 2011 - 2021 (using SPARC 2007/08 activity participation rates by age and population projections – See appendix 3 for more detail) |
|------------------------|---|--|
| | <p>is predicted to grow at 14%. The growth in those 65 and over in the village area is predicted to grow by 53% (similar to Waitakere City at 49%) but growth for those aged 0-14 years and 40-64 years is predicted to be low or decrease at 3% and -3%, respectively.</p> <p>Best estimates suggest a relatively small increase in the number and proportion of Asian and other ethnicities, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of Europeans in both Waitakere Village and Waitakere City.</p> | <p>Waitakere City at 18% and 21%, respectively. Given the declines in some age groups in Waitakere Village, there is a predicted to be a small decrease in the number wanting to tramp, and play basketball, rugby and tennis.</p> <p>The changes in ethnic mix may have a relatively small change in activities sought, although the majority of people are still expected to be European. There may be a slight decrease in those wanting to walk, garden and cycle, based on these predictions, and an increase in pilates/yoga, badminton and basketball.</p> |
| Rototuna | <p>The Rototuna area is predicted to grow by over 4,000 people between 2011 and 2021, an increase of almost 30%. This compares with the broader Hamilton City which is predicted to grow by 13%. The number of those aged 65 and over is predicted to grow at 2.5 times that of those under 65.</p> <p>Best estimates suggest the ethnic mix is unlikely to change significantly, with slightly more Asian and 'other' ethnicities and slightly fewer European and Māori.</p> | <p>Like other areas, walking and gardening remain the most popular activities in Rototuna and in Hamilton City. Rototuna will account for almost 25% of the increased levels of walking in Hamilton City over 2011 – 2021. Almost 2,500 more people from Rototuna will be looking to participate in walking, compared with an extra 10,600 across all of Hamilton.</p> <p>All activity is predicted to increase by some 34% in Rototuna, with higher numbers in bowls (a 75% increase or 140 people) and lower rates of increase in tramping (a 20% increase or 129 people).</p> <p>The small changes in ethnic mix are not likely to change activity levels as significantly as the changes in age structure.</p> |
| Bethlehem | <p>Bethlehem is predicted to grow by some 1,260 people or 18%. It is predicted that there will be significant growth in those 15-39 years (29%) and 65+ (62%) but no growth in those under 15 or 40-64 years. As a result, the number of those aged 65 years and over will grow some 3.5 times faster than the number of those aged under 65 years. This compares with Tauranga City where these groups are predicted</p> | <p>With the high number of those 65 and over, there is a strong preference for walking and gardening ahead of other activities. Combined, an extra 1,500 people in Bethlehem will be looking to participate in these activities over the 2011 to 2021 period. Overall, the population increase will drive increases in activities, with an extra 3,000 participants overall (or 21%). Again, in terms of outdoor activity, this growth is dominated by walking and gardening in raw figures and bowls in percentage terms (with 62% or 103 more people looking to play bowls).</p> |

| Case Study Area | Population changes 2011 – 2021 (Stats New Zealand) | Recreational implications 2011 - 2021 (using SPARC 2007/08 activity participation rates by age and population projections – See appendix 3 for more detail) |
|------------------------|--|--|
| | <p>to grow almost twice as fast.</p> <p>The ethnic mix is not predicted to change significantly from 2011 to 2021, with only a slight increase in Māori and 'other' ahead of European.</p> | <p>Despite the population growth, it is predicted that there will be a small (1%) decrease in tramping activities in Bethlehem.</p> <p>The small predicted changes in ethnic mix are unlikely to drive significant changes in activity rates, particularly compared with changes driven by changes in the age of the population.</p> |

6. PLANNER PERSPECTIVES: ONLINE SURVEY

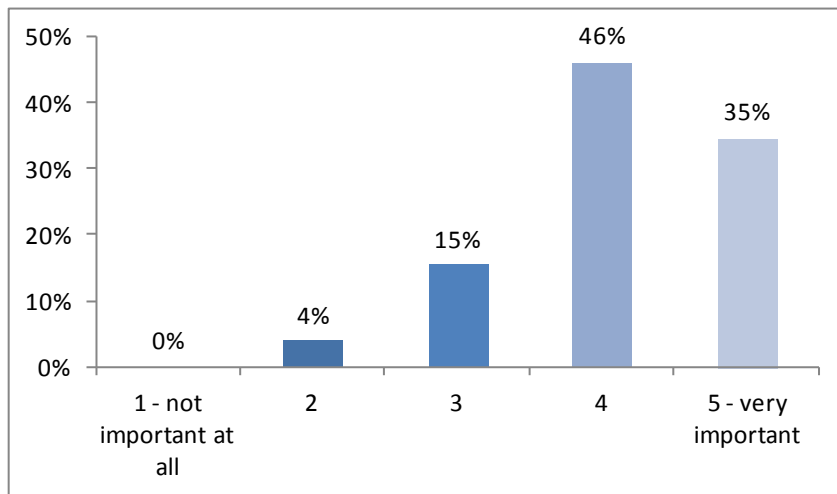
The following section describes the results of an online survey of 36 staff from city councils, neighbouring district/regional councils, RSTs, Department of Conservation and other interested organisations across Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga/Bay of Plenty regions. The survey contained a mix of open and closed questions which allowed both quantitative analysis and more in-depth qualitative analysis of the key themes.

6.1 PRIORITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

6.1.1 Promotion of outdoor recreation within the city

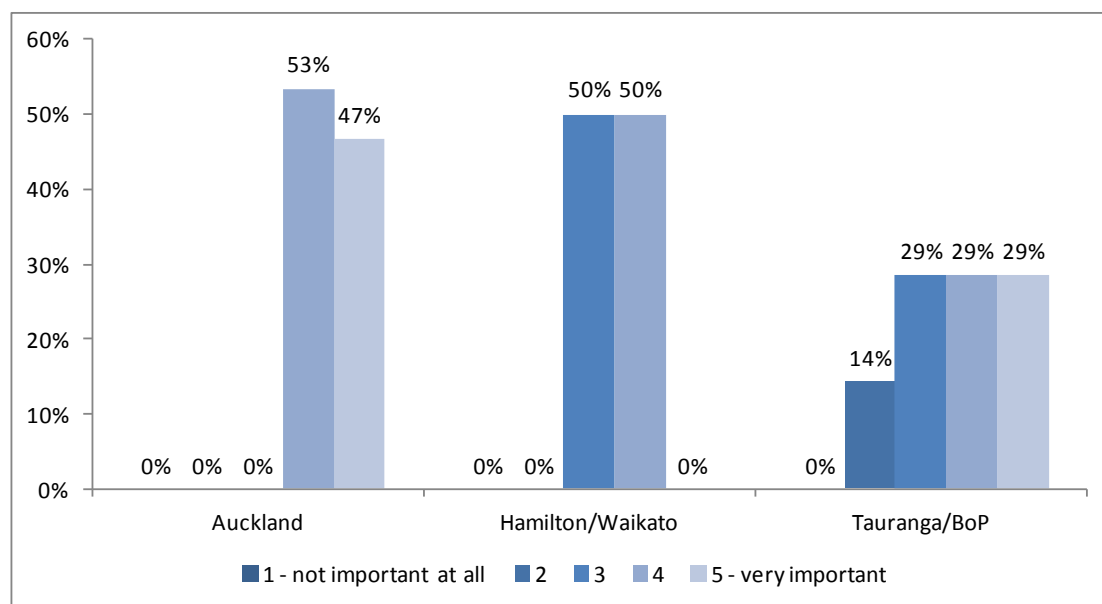
Respondents were asked how important outdoor recreation opportunities were to the organisation that they worked for. Most felt that promoting opportunities within the city was important, with over 80% rating either important or very important (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Importance of promoting outdoor recreation within the city (N=26)



When the results were analysed by the region the respondents worked in, promotion of outdoor recreation within the city was most important for respondents based in Auckland, with all answering important (53%) or very important (47%). Though the proportion wasn't as high in the other regions, more than half felt it was important in Tauranga/Bay of Plenty (29% important, 29% very important) and half in Hamilton (50% important).

Figure 7: Importance of promoting outdoor recreation within city by region (N=26)



6.1.2 Key priorities for outdoor recreation

Thinking from the perspective of their organisation, respondents were asked to list up to three of their organisation’s top priorities and rank them in order of priority. The priorities were then grouped during analysis into key themes.

Table 5: Priorities for outdoor recreation

| Theme | Number | First Priority | Second Priority | Third Priority |
|--|--------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Access to recreational opportunities | 17 | 47% | 24% | 29% |
| Access to recreational open space | 11 | 45% | 27% | 27% |
| Recreation infrastructure | 10 | 10% | 70% | 20% |
| Provision of and managing demand for sports facilities | 8 | 63% | 25% | 13% |
| Sports participation | 4 | 25% | 25% | 50% |
| Balancing the requirements of general and high-needs populations | 3 | 100% | | |
| Balancing recreation and conservation values | 2 | | 50% | 50% |
| Cycling | 2 | | 50% | 50% |
| Ensuring value for money | 2 | 50% | | 50% |
| Improve awareness of opportunities | 2 | 50% | | 50% |
| Partnerships across organisations/sectors | 2 | | 50% | 50% |
| Reviewing recreation planning strategies | 2 | | | 100% |
| Service delivery | 2 | | 50% | 50% |
| Providing training to teachers and other community members in outdoor recreation | 2 | | 100% | |
| Other ² | 5 | 20% | 40% | 40% |

² Including leadership, skill development, and city spatial management to promote recreation opportunities

The most common theme from the priorities identified by respondents focused on managing growth in demand from urban areas, and improving access to, and participation in, recreation opportunities.

"Providing outdoor recreation opportunities for a growing city"

"Future proofing regarding changing recreational demands"

"Responding to demand e.g. improving front-country/high-use site opportunities"

A similar theme centred around increasing the accessibility and availability of open spaces, parks, and reserves.

"To make recreation an easy option for all Aucklanders, recognising the diversity of our population demographics"

"Provision of large-scale open space for informal recreation"

Another commonly occurring priority focused on developing and maintaining infrastructure for recreational activities, such as walkways, cycleways, parks, horse riding facilities and playgrounds.

In addition to listing organisational priorities, respondents also ranked the importance of their organisation's priorities.

Although the number of responses was relatively low, all of the responses that focused on meeting general and high-needs populations' requirements were given the highest priority by participants that listed them. These populations included children and young people, and high-need communities.

Another theme receiving a large proportion of high rankings involved the provision of, and managing demand for, sports facilities, such as club facilities, multi-sport activities, sports fields.

6.1.3 Promotion of outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas

The response from survey participants was not as strong when asked how important promoting outdoor recreation within peri-urban areas was to their organisation. Just over half of respondents rated peri-urban outdoor opportunities as either important (27%) or very important (31%), while just under a fifth stated it wasn't important (15% not important, 4% not at all important).

Analysis of the results by region showed that promoting outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas was seen as important by three-quarters of the respondents based in Auckland (27% important, 47% very important). Similarly, over half of respondents from Tauranga/Bay of Plenty indicated the importance of promoting outdoor recreation in peri-urban areas. In contrast, it was not seen as important for respondents from Hamilton, with none indicating

it was important and half stating it was not important (25% not important, 25% not at all important).

Figure 8: Importance of promoting outdoor recreation within peri-urban areas (N=26)

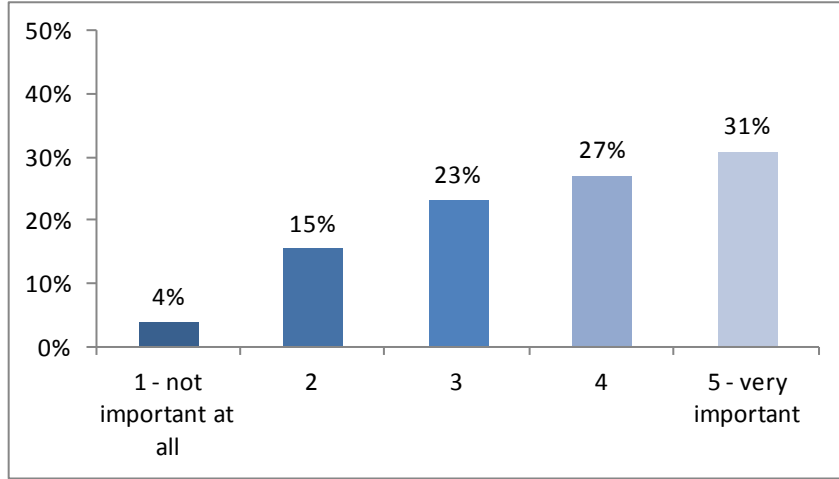
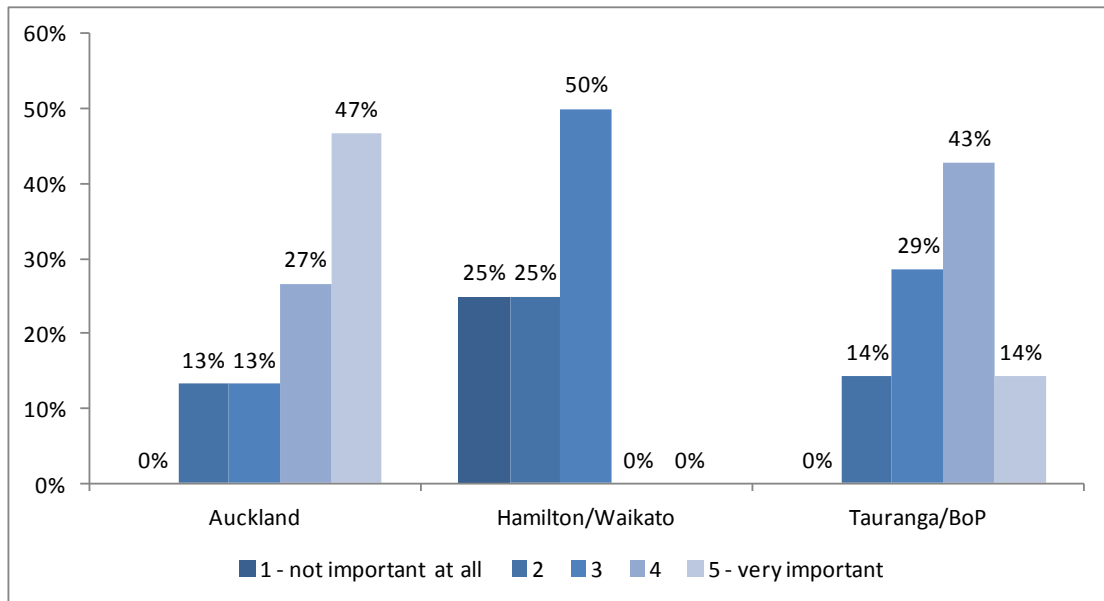


Figure 9: Importance of promoting outdoor recreation within peri-urban areas by region (N=26)



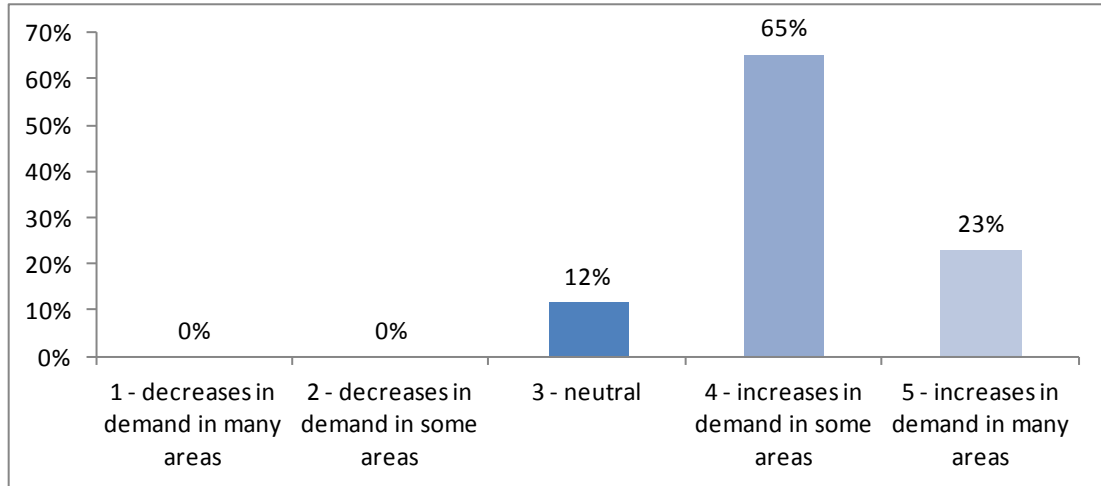
6.2 KEY AREAS OF DEMAND FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION

6.2.1 Demand for peri-urban outdoor recreation

Survey participants were asked to what extent the demand for peri-urban outdoor recreation in their region is changing. Almost all of the respondents felt that demand for peri-urban recreation was increasing, with two-thirds stating demand was increasing in

some areas (65%) and almost a quarter indicating increasing demand in many areas (23%).

Figure 10: Changes in demand for peri-urban recreation (N=26)



When asked to elaborate on which areas were seeing increased demand, a range of common themes emerged.

Many of the responses centred around the impact of the growth and development of the city on reducing available public spaces and driving demand into peri-urban areas.

"As the city develops the ability to provide for some types of activities within the centre of the city will continue to diminish. This is due to more intensive housing, less room for vegetation, and rising cost of land to provide for recreation"

"Population growth is increasing supply but also putting development pressure on available areas of open space"

The growth in demand for walking and various forms of biking in peri-urban areas was also a key driver of demand.

"People are increasingly interested in non-structured recreation activities, like mountain biking, tramping, and bush walking, which enable people to recreate at a time that suits them"

"Mountain biking and recreational use of walkways/cycleways are increasing"

"Some demand is being generated by facility provision, e.g. the TECT All Terrain park as a venue for activities such as mountain biking, horse riding, motor sports, and shooting, which is increasing the awareness within the city to some extent for these activities, as well as increasing opportunities for them to occur"

Related to the growth in demand for walking and cycling, respondents also commented on the shift towards the use of low-cost, unstructured recreation opportunities that don't use traditional recreation facilities.

"Our communities are wanting low-cost, local opportunities to be active that do not rely on a facility. Utilising the natural environment to be active is a way of achieving this"

"Some of the demand is currently met by private, commercial forest. If access to these are ever lost, there will be considerable demand placed on the council to meet this demand"

6.2.2 Population groups that are seen as high users of peri-urban opportunities

When asked who were the largest users of peri-urban recreation opportunities in their region, a diverse range of groups was identified, with no particular group standing out across all respondents.

Some of the respondents identified specific age groups as the largest users; however, the age groups varied substantially from youth to older adults, and families were also mentioned:

"Youth and younger adults for mountain biking"

"Active, early 20-year-olds and families with young children"

"40 plus age"

"Walking groups for retired"

"Older youth through to adults from the more affluent areas"

Many of the participants mentioned the relationship between high socioeconomic groups and use of peri-urban recreation, in particular:

"Middle- to high-income earners"

"People who can afford to travel and afford equipment such as bikes"

"Mobile, financially capable and informed about health"

Specific recreation activities were also associated with a large proportion of users of peri-urban recreation. These included walking, tramping, cycling (both road and mountain bike), horse riding, and water sports (such as kayaking).

Although most respondents did not mention a specific ethnicity associated with peri-urban recreation use, when they were mentioned, New Zealand European tended to be highlighted slightly more often than Māori, Pacific and Asian.

6.2.3 Peri-urban activities that are seen as high-demand growth in the future

There were a small number of activities that survey respondents felt were likely to experience growth in demand into the future in their region.

A substantial proportion of respondents highlighted the rising demand for all forms of cycling. This included mountain biking, recreational cycling (such as in parks and cycleways), road biking and motocross.

Walking, tramping/bush walking and running (both road and trail) were also commonly mentioned by respondents as activities that would experience high growth in demand.

Another common trend mentioned focused on the increase in demand for more casual and unstructured activities.

"Parks/open spaces which have opportunity for casual family and team social activities"

"Unstructured activity - individuals and groups coming together for impromptu play"

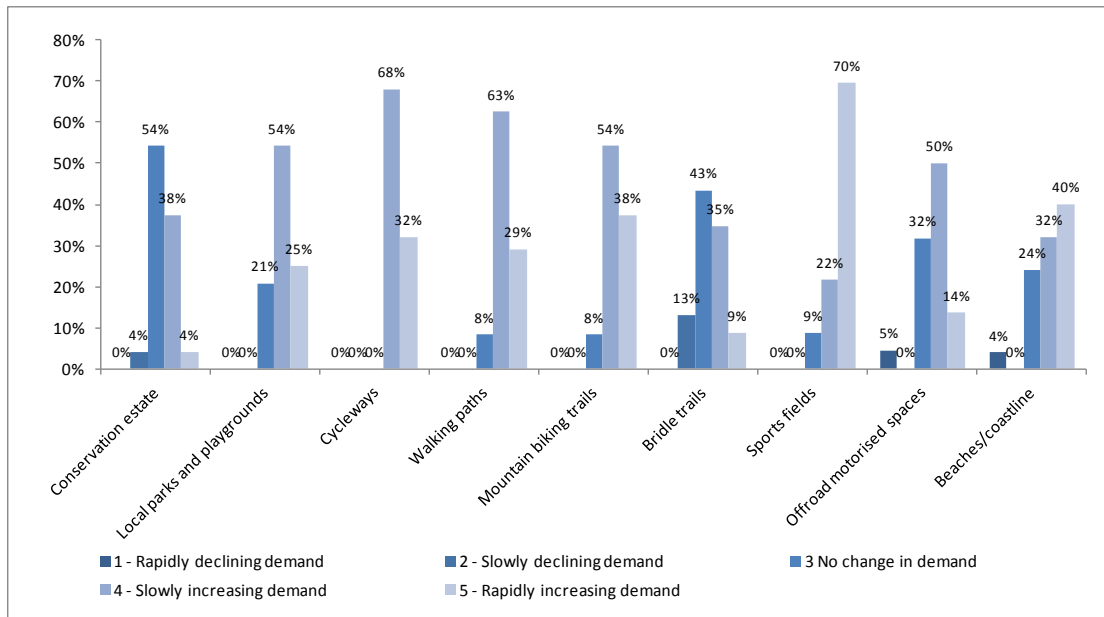
Other activities were also mentioned by a small number of respondents, though to a much lesser degree than cycling and walking. These activities were junior sports (particularly hockey, soccer and rugby), skateboarding, scootering, water sports, and equestrian sports.

6.2.4 Demand for specific peri-urban activities

Respondents were asked how the demand in their city or district was changing for specific peri-urban recreation activities. Overall, demand was increasing for the peri-urban activities, though the levels of demand varied between activities.

- A significant majority of survey participants felt that cycleways (100%), walking paths (92%), mountain bike trails (92%), and sports fields (91%) were experiencing increased demand. The demand for sports fields was increasing most rapidly (70% indicated demand was rapidly increasing).
- Over half of respondents felt that demand was increasing for local parks and playgrounds (79%), beaches/coastline (72%), and off-road, motorised spaces (64%).
- Fewer respondents felt the demand for bridle trails (44%) and the conservation estate (42%) was increasing, however the demand was not substantially decreasing either (13% and 4% respectively), indicating demand is fairly static, although with growth in some areas.

Figure 11: Demand for specific activities/recreation resources (N=23)



When the results were split by region, most of the peri-urban recreation activities showed similar patterns of growth in demand across the three regions.

6.3 INFLUENCING DEMAND BEYOND THE PERI-URBAN FRINGE

Survey participants were asked to what extent peri-urban recreation supports and/or encourages outdoor recreation further afield. Overall, peri-urban activities were seen to provide some form of support or encouragement, with almost half (48%) indicating moderate levels, and a quarter indicating significant levels of support/encouragement (24%) (Figure 12 on following page).

Respondents' comments were more mixed than appeared in the qualitative results. Some of them felt that peri-urban recreation is an important step in building and supporting the growth of outdoor recreation further afield.

"I believe there is a strong link, e.g. if people have the opportunity to ride on a cycleway locally which provides a safe, pleasant environment that can be enjoyed with family (including children) and friends, and by people of all ages, they are more likely to choose a cycling holiday on the Otago rail trail or the other cycleways nationally that are being developed. People need places that are reasonably close where they can gain confidence and improve fitness."

"People can get fit and acquire a taste for walking in a pleasant environment in the city and transfer that interest to tracks in the Waikato or further afield. I have no means of quantifying that though."

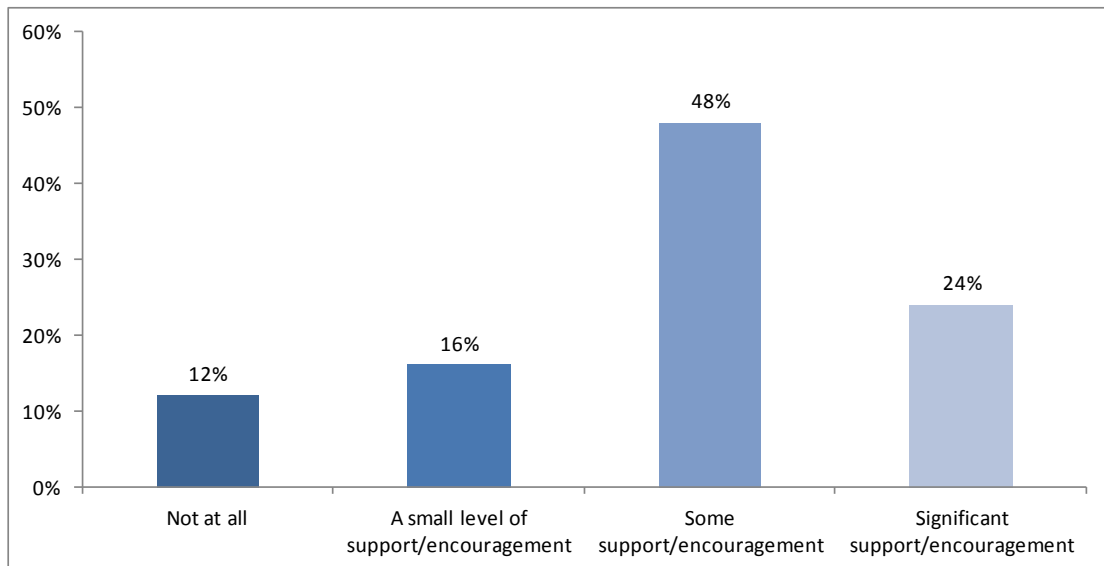
"Builds confidence and curiosity in longer walks"

However, some respondents felt that the link between peri-urban activities and recreation opportunities further afield was more tenuous. Comments indicated that people enjoy peri-urban activities as they are easily accessible with lower entry barriers, while the barriers to undertaking activities further out are much higher.

"I believe that urban dwellers are looking for easily accessible, time-efficient places to recreate. A higher level of motivation is required to take them further afield into more 'extreme' environments..."

"Travel is a barrier in the community I work in. So, unless they know of these areas and it is a high priority for them, it won't happen."

Figure 12: Extent to which peri-urban recreation supports and/or encourages outdoor recreation further afield (N=25)



6.4 BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO PERI-URBAN RECREATION

6.4.1 Key barriers to peri-urban recreation

Respondents were asked to describe the major barriers to peri-urban recreation in their area, which were then grouped into a range of key emerging themes.

Public awareness of the peri-urban opportunities available was one of the most common themes highlighted by respondents.

"People not aware of what's available in their area; often quite close"

"Public awareness of/interest in facilities available beyond city limits or beach"

"Public unsure how / if they can use land"

Another common theme focused on the barriers to accessibility - particularly around the availability of transport, the cost of travel, and the travel times required to participate in activities.

The safety and security of the activities and the peri-urban areas were also mentioned as a barrier. This included risk of injury, safety of cars and belongings, and fear of other walkers/hunters.

Some of the participants highlighted issues with funding, investment, and resources available to develop and maintain peri-urban recreation assets and opportunities.

"Resources for maintaining the fields to the standard requested by the user - causing field closure and a backlash"

"Lack of appropriate ancillary facilities (including signage) at the sites"

In relation to this theme, participants also described issues with locating available land that was affordable, accessible, and suitable for developing peri-urban opportunities.

"Lack of suitable locations that can tolerate high impact recreation"

"Size/scope of spaces/facilities available in close proximity to city"

The affordability of many of the activities was also mentioned as a barrier, with some respondents feeling that the cost of travel and the required recreation equipment was too high for many beginners.

Respondents also highlighted other substantial barriers to entry for beginners, which included lack of support and guidance.

"People need others to encourage them if they haven't done it before"

"Beginners unsure what to do on the space"

6.4.2 Key enablers to peri-urban recreation

After identifying barriers, survey participants then described key enablers or support factors for peri-urban recreation in their region.

Just as low public awareness is seen as a significant barrier, raising awareness among the general public and improving the information available was perceived as one of the most effective factors for supporting the growth of peri-urban recreation.

"Effective promotion utilising modern methods of communication, and events to draw people to a place"

"Better information on existing opportunities"

In relation to this theme, engaging with and supporting clubs and internet forums to promote activities was also commonly mentioned as a key enabler. In some cases,

respondents felt that simply increasing the visibility of people using the facilities and spaces can promote awareness of, and engagement with, peri-urban activities.

Providing support for people new to an activity was seen to have an enabling effect by giving people a positive initial experience and encouraging further involvement.

"Introducing people to the outdoor recreation experience in a supportive environment so they get a 'taste' for it"

"Promotion of 'stepping-stone' programmes to get new users familiar with locations and protocols"

Accessibility and affordability was also one of the more common themes expressed by respondents, with many stressing the importance of improving access to facilities and reducing costs to users.

"Accessibility - cheaper and easier transport; quicker travel times"

"Provision of localised recreational activities within 500m of any residential property"

"Free access to public recreational facilities"

Many respondents felt that improving and investing in infrastructure was vital to supporting peri-urban activities. Some of the comments specifically talked about the importance of developing networks and linkages in, for example, cycleways and walkways, while others mentioned the development of specific facilities (such as the TECT All Terrain Park in the Bay of Plenty) and increasing the diversity of options available.

"Perceiving walks as part of wider network of walks all of similar standard i.e. know what you are in for"

"An excellent network of country roads for cycling"

"Provision of opportunity e.g. local cycleways - the Orewa cycle and walking path is a great place to go with kids or older people and is relatively close for anyone on the North Shore. More options like this in the region, and like the cycle way in New Plymouth."

The importance of collaboration and coordination was underlined by some participants. This included joint agency approaches to providing and funding facilities and private/public ventures as an alternative funding option.

"Joint agency approach to providing and promoting recreation spaces/facilities"

"Coordinated public/private approach to meeting demand"

Respondents also mentioned that the weather can have a powerful effect in encouraging outdoor activity and our natural environment is often the reason people begin exploring peri-urban opportunities.

6.5 INCLUSION OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION IN ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES AND PLANNING

Survey respondents were asked to list up to three key guidelines, recommendations, plans or policy documents that informed their recreation-related work.

Overall, respondents' work was most commonly informed by Council policy and planning documents, with over a quarter of all the documents listed falling into this category (29%). Recreation and Physical Activity Strategies (13%) and ARPASS (10%) each represented around 10% of the documents mentioned by survey participants (Table 6).

Table 6: Key guidelines and documents (N=25)

| Key guideline/document | Percentage of total documents listed |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Council policy/planning documents | 29% |
| Recreation/Physical Activity Strategies | 13% |
| ARPASS | 10% |
| Open Space Strategy | 9% |
| Council strategic plans | 8% |
| Parks Management Plan | 6% |
| District Annual Plan/Strategic Plans | 6% |
| Reserves Management Act | 6% |
| Conservation Plans | 4% |
| Management Plans | 4% |
| Regional Parks and Reserves Management Plans | 4% |
| Commissioned research | 1% |

After listing the documents that informed their work, respondents then rated each document in terms of the extent that peri-urban activity features within them (either implicitly or explicitly), where 1 meant that peri-urban activities were not mentioned at all and 4 meant peri-urban activities were extensively referred to throughout the document.

Parks Management Plans received the highest average score (3.3 out of 4), which meant respondents felt that there was a relatively high degree of references to peri-urban activities throughout the plans. Management plans (3.0), Regional Parks and Reserves Management Plans (3.0), ARPASS (2.7), and Council strategic plans (2.6) were also seen to include a fair number of references to peri-urban activities.

Recreation and Physical Activity Strategies received the lowest average score (1.8), indicating respondents felt the strategies contained relatively few references to peri-urban activities.

Table 7: Respondent rating of peri-urban inclusion in key documents (N=25)

| Key guideline/document | Average score (n=25) |
|--|----------------------|
| Parks Management Plan | 3.3 |
| Management Plans | 3.0 |
| Regional Parks and Reserves Management Plans | 3.0 |
| ARPASS | 2.7 |
| Council strategic plans | 2.6 |
| Council policy/planning documents | 2.5 |
| Conservation Plans | 2.3 |
| District Annual Plan/Strategic Plans | 2.3 |
| Reserves Management Act | 2.3 |
| Open Space Strategy | 2.0 |
| Commissioned research | 2.0 |
| Recreation/Physical Activity Strategies | 1.8 |

6.6 SUMMARY

Peri-urban recreation emerged as an area of interest across all three cities, but with varying priority and consideration in local planning. It is however recognised as an area of growing demand. Managing that demand in the face of competing pressures and recreational interests is a key challenge.

Peri-urban recreation users were seen as a diverse group, with no single population group dominating as a particular priority. Cycling was identified as an area of ongoing growth in demand.

Inter-organisational collaboration, promotion of opportunities and investment in facilities and infrastructure were highlighted as key enablers to developing peri-urban recreation. However, resource constraints, awareness of opportunities and barriers to access were important constraints to recreation.

7. PLANNER PERSPECTIVES: STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

7.1 IMPORTANCE OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION

In this phase of the research, perspectives were obtained through interviews and group discussions with recreation planners and advisors in councils, RSTs, and other organisations (further details on the approach can be found in section 2).

Respondents were asked whether they believed peri-urban recreation was important, and, if so, why. This included questioning on the unique contribution that peri-urban recreation provided, which was not gained via alternative mechanisms. From this, two key themes were identified by respondents, these being the ability to experience nature and the outdoors for physical and mental wellbeing and the potential for new challenges and experiences to encourage people to progress to further experiences (Table 8).

Table 8. Unique aspects of peri-urban recreation

| Importance/unique aspect(s) of peri-urban recreation | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Outdoor experience & wellbeing | 6 | 16 |
| Progression of sport and recreation experiences | 5 | 11 |
| Socialisation & events | 1 | 1 |

The key theme related to the benefits and importance of peri-urban recreation was a multi-dimensional one of getting out of (escaping from) urbanity, losing oneself in nature, experiencing aesthetically pleasing natural environments, and the downstream effects of these factors on health and wellbeing:

"More people are starting to realise the benefits of green space for mental health and there's a lot of connection that people that actually live near green spaces or closer to a beach are actually healthier because the outdoors is stimulating them to get out there and see and experience it. I think people are starting to realise the value of it but I just don't think we highlight it enough"

"I think it gives the more urban dweller that outdoor experience which they start to pine for often and so I think that's really important and, whilst they are doing that, enjoying that outdoor experience, they learn values of open space and outdoors that's slightly different to your very formed, often very landscaped urban parks"

Additionally, some respondents noted that peri-urban recreation provided unique opportunities for people to try new activities, challenge themselves, and increase their confidence; thereby encouraging progression towards other recreation activities.

"If you can take your kids and have a bit of go at an off-road cycle you might enter in a few years time the Round the Taupo bike race or take your kids to Rotorua for

some of the big off-road events up there, so it leads into other sorts of the more pay-as-you-access event space”

“I think it also starts to change people’s focus about what they want out of urban form as well, so you look at Wynyard Quarter and why people are loving it. They’ve finally got access to the coast, they’ve got a place they can walk and promenade and cycle and play with their kids or their grandparents or their partners. I think that peri-urban space sort of resets your mind about what it’s like to live in the urban centre and pushes you to want different experiences in an urban environment as well. And further afield so if you go to that peri-urban space and think that’s crash hot and you love it, you are more likely to make the trip to the regional park that’s up north and an hour and a half away or two hours away, or to the volcanic plateau, or do the Araroa Walkway, or the cycle trails”

It was also acknowledged by respondents that this progression to other events related only to a sub-sample of the population, whereas others may simply enjoy one-off or repeat experiences in peri-urban recreation:

“I imagine some will just be quite happy to keep going in their peri urban areas doing what they do”

“I think it’s a combination to be honest. I think there’s some people [for whom] it’s convenient and easy and it’s their way of doing exercise for health. Other people actually will want to [say], we’ve done that, what’s the next thing I can do, or can I go further and all that sort of thing, so you get a combination of those sorts of things.”

7.2 CHALLENGES TO PERI-URBAN RECREATION

Respondents were asked what they thought the main challenges to provision of peri-urban recreation were. Responses varied from issues with safety to leadership and policy (Table 9). All respondents noted issues with accessibility and transport, environment and design, and funding.

Table 9. Challenges to peri-urban recreation

| Challenges to peri-urban recreation | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| Urban growth & land use issues | 6 | 44 |
| Accessibility, transport, distance, convenience | 7 | 42 |
| Environment & design issues | 7 | 28 |
| Funding | 7 | 23 |
| Leadership, prioritisation, & drive issues | 5 | 13 |
| Residents vs. visitors | 6 | 9 |
| Safety | 4 | 8 |
| Underutilisation of existing resources | 2 | 4 |
| Car dominance | 1 | 3 |
| Lack of communication & collaboration | 2 | 3 |
| Timeliness | 2 | 2 |
| Overutilisation of resources | 1 | 1 |
| Temporality & sustainability issues | 1 | 1 |

Key themes are explored in more detail below.

7.2.1 Urban growth and land use

Residential and commercial developments encroaching on rural/peri-urban land was the predominant theme in terms of barriers to peri-urban recreation. Respondents noted such developments resulting in increased land value, competing demands for land between recreation and development purposes, and between recreation codes themselves.

"I just think that push out into the rural sector means that often land is looked at as an economic value and people will try to optimise the economic use of land because of that. So you look at Albany and some of the areas in the south and you realise that, because of that higher land price, people want optimal usage and optimal economic return, and that means that participation sports like equestrian or off-road will get sometimes side-lined for other activities or other drivers"

"Things like where you put Rosedale Pony Club was something that North Shore City for example grappled with because they wanted to shift the pony club and use the land for football, because football had a higher participation rate, they could squash more people onto an artificial turf in Rosedale so it meant pushing the pony club further out"

Conflict between residents and users were also identified, particularly in terms of noise:

"We have got situations too where some of the off-road groups are being pushed further out and particularly in the south; we've got an off-road BMX and an off-road motor group that, because of higher numbers of residents around them, people want them to go away and go somewhere else, so that they don't hear the noise; but they were there first and have been there for a long time, so you are

going to see more of those sorts of things happen as people are less tolerant to noise and activity"

The importance of effective working relationships between Council, developers, planners, and architects in ensuring appropriate design of environments was noted.

"We might need recreational planners at Council that work across different teams to ensure that, if we are on the drawing board around open spaces, we are getting it right, and I think Auckland is paying for that poor planning in the urban sprawl that we've got."

7.2.2 Accessibility and transport

Accessibility was a major theme, cited by all respondents as being important to the successful provision and uptake of peri-urban recreation. Distance to settings was noted throughout interviews as being important:

"It has to be that it's where a lot of people are living so it's next to what they do, so it's accessible... They don't necessarily want to go way out into the back of the forest or something, that's just too hard, can't be fitted in, but you can go for a walk in Papamoa along the beach or whatever. It's accessible, it's time effective"

Specific issues with lack of public transport were also noted, particularly in Auckland:

"Some places yes, other places you'd have to really want to go there because you might have train and bus and then walk a certain distance. And public transport buses. In fact you can't bus to the Waitakere Ranges for example. You just cannot get public transport to any, apart from say the Pipeline which is still in Titirangi. So you can't just access that without a car"

Provision of resources for active transportation were also noted, albeit to a lesser extent:

"Well the walking and cycling one was important I think because you couldn't access a lot of areas because the roads grew so quickly, it was confusing to know where you went. You've even got that now with the new eastern link thing being built that you can't cycle that. You used to be able to cycle and you can't now"

7.2.3 Funding

Lack of funding was also consistently identified in all interviews as a key barrier to peri-urban recreation; as one respondent said, "It's the first thing that goes." Many cited current pressures on funding, and issues with competing priorities in the face of reduced funding availability. Financial issues were also highlighted in terms of continuity of provision of peri-urban recreation opportunities.

"One of the things I think will be really interesting to follow is what's happening overseas in the UK and in the States around austerity measures. Less money, less money for operations to maintain parks, less money for acquisitions, what does that mean? And so we are going to have to just keep an eye on that and think quite clearly and sensibly about priorities and what we do because I do believe that having a range of types of open space for recreation is going to be critical to mental and physical wellbeing. If we are honest about looking after our people and our city and our rural landscapes, we have to think really smart about what we would do under an austerity situation. And you hear from some of the other councils down the line who are already putting in place quite big cuts"

"But therein is our problem. Now we are experiencing very little growth. All the Councils are experiencing just about a nil spend on any of its recreational facilities because the growth hasn't kept up to what it was say 3 yrs ago, 4 yrs ago."

7.3 ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN ISSUES

7.3.1 Competing priorities between environment and development

The importance of environment and design issues in provision of, and participation in, peri-urban recreation emerged as a common theme across all respondents. Issues noted included competing ecological and development priorities with peri-urban recreation needs, specific design issues (such as path widths, signage, cycle lanes), maintenance of settings, and safety issues (such as provision of lighting).

"Being able to work with planners so that if they are putting in a housing estate the layout of that is going to be crucial. What green space is going to be included with that around the periphery. Are we going to have houses facing the park or are the back gardens going to be facing the park?"

"The Expressway is going all around town so that's also roadwise I am hoping and I am understanding that a good part of it is also going to be, have walkways and cycleways around it and in fact what they are developing now is where these big roundabouts you go down underneath and there's a network.... I think the public transport system is improving and the roading will help with that so I think ... they are working towards making things as accessible as possible"

7.3.2 Conservation and amenity value

The drive for peri-urban development was also identified as clashing with environmental and conservation priorities:

"It's all deemed future urban unless it's specific identification with construction plans for green areas. We had some remnant wetlands in Hamilton and they were all deemed future urban, so a lot of those have been dried out basically and drained and developed on, with consequent major problems."

Protection of green space and rural/conservation values in such developments was considered important throughout:

"As the city grows you keep some of these, I know they've got the parks but the real greenbelts that are actually a little bit different with little lakes or bush. We are talking about what they are doing here and they are doing a lot of planting now around this lake and out here with the walkway around. That's great. I think that's what I'd like to see more and more kept. So it becomes a liveable city, rather than just an urban what-have-you."

"I think you should protect, it's like this little area they are developing out here. I think that's what they should be doing so that you get a little bit of patch of rural area that might get surrounded by that, but you keep that."

7.3.3 Safety and mobility

The safety of some forms of recreation in peri-urban areas was noted by some respondents. This also created constraints for people with mobility restrictions:

"I'd certainly say from a safety aspect I think there's been calls from the community to improve the safety in those areas. Better lighting, improved signage, those would be examples. I don't know if it's related but I've come across people saying why don't you put in more fruit trees in the parks. It would be great if we could just walk up and pick a bit of fruit."

"And some of our older areas that have now got new growth around them, some of those older footpaths and walkways we've found both from having some new Mums walking groups and from some of our residents in wheelchairs, some of those footpaths and things aren't so friendly if you are on wheels, if you've got a pram or if you are in a wheelchair. They are not so easily run down, fine for us to walk down but as soon as you put wheels on, cracks and juddery which you don't notice until you are actually pushing a pram or in a chair."

Some areas in Hamilton were particularly noted for the efforts made to be accessible to people with different mobility needs:

"Just out of Te Rapa way, out here so that is out in rural land and they've got an equestrian centre that's out there as well and that's where your riding for the disabled and all those sorts of things are based out there, so there is a little bit there that does get used and there is a demand for that."

"The South Waikato river trail is a good example. I mean there's some parts where it's just not possible but other parts where they make it and really work hard to make it accessible, so this is an option for people with disabilities or elderly people that can manage to do that."

7.3.4 Differences by organisation type and region

Differences were found by organisation, with RST staff highlighting more barriers than Council staff in terms of accessibility (n=30 and n=12 citations, respectively) and less in terms of urban growth and land use issues (n=17 and n=27 citations, respectively).

Differences were also found by region, with respondents from Hamilton citing more issues with leadership (n=8 versus n=3 and n=2 for Auckland and Tauranga/BoP, respectively) and urban growth/land use (n=25 versus n=11 and n=8 for Auckland and Tauranga/BoP, respectively), and less environment and design issues than other regions (n=3 versus n=15 and n=10 for Auckland and Tauranga/BoP, respectively). Auckland and Tauranga/BoP responses were generally similar.

7.4 ENABLERS FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION

Interview respondents were asked to provide information on successful examples of peri-urban recreation, and factors they believed were important enablers of peri-urban recreation. Key themes arising are listed in Table 10 and are considered in more detail below.

Table 10: Enablers to peri-urban recreation

| Enablers for peri-urban recreation | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Interagency approaches | 7 | 44 |
| Multi-user capabilities | 7 | 23 |
| Informal, unstructured, no commitment required | 7 | 12 |
| Fit for purpose & community | 3 | 9 |
| Policy | 3 | 8 |
| Critical mass, awareness, information, education | 6 | 7 |
| Ease | 4 | 5 |
| Free or affordable | 3 | 5 |
| Community driven | 1 | 4 |
| New experiences, adventures, challenges | 3 | 3 |
| Dog ownership as an enabler | 2 | 2 |
| Innovative solutions | 2 | 2 |
| Facilities | 1 | 1 |

7.4.1 Interagency approaches

Respondents noted the importance of collaboration, communication, and sharing of resources, funding, research, and information across agencies in provision of sustainable and effective peri-urban recreation opportunities.

Key agencies/organisations cited as partners in interagency collaboration included Councils, RSTs, Sport NZ, local boards (in Auckland), New Zealand Recreation Association, the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand, the Cancer Society, Bike NZ, Swimming NZ, Lifesaving NZ, universities, and schools.

In the Bay of Plenty, interagency approaches were a key factor underpinning recreation planning, with active engagement and joint decision-making between the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council. This has flowed through into regional and sub-regional parks policies, strategies on specific water catchments with recreational aspects, and the establishment of the TECT All Terrain Park (a multiple-recreation facility).

A regional park in Papamoa was a significant example of interagency collaboration, which initially was owned by all three councils before the regional council assumed full ownership.

"[Papamoa Hills] was 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 between all Councils. So Papamoa Hills was probably the first cab off the rank in terms of peri-urban recreational landscape protection opportunities and the Council is working quite collaboratively towards that so Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council ... and the Regional Council obviously had a bit of a mandate around the heritage protection side of things, so there was value on all three Councils working together to try and secure the land, but at the time under the legislation the Regional Council weren't really in a position to be able to do that and to actually own land for that purpose... The Local Government [Act] at the time only related to Auckland and Wellington in terms of regional parks so then that changed through the Local Government Act 2002, which gave the Regional Council more power to be involved in these other kind of things. They developed a Regional Parks Policy, they came on board in terms of purchasing Papamoa Hills and then eventually the Regional Council bought out Tauranga City Council and Western Bay, and they now fully own and fully manage that park. I think Tauranga, Western Bay, and the Regional Council are quite proactive in that area. We've often talked to other Councils about the work that we've been doing, because it's seen a bit as a kind of little bit of a best practice model in that regard"

A key enabler of the regional park was a jointly developed parks policy, that emerged from a long history of engagement. This policy subsequently flowed into a joint sub-regional parks policy and collaboration on policies/strategies relating to the Tauranga harbour and

rivers in the area (in particular, the Wairoa River and the Kaituna-Maketu River), all of which have recreational aspects.

"I think the success to me at this stage anyway has been the harbour strategy which was a Regional Council strategy and it's the recreational use within the harbour and so Regional Council brought us on board with that so the strategy was developed by Regional Council but with our involvement and the outcome has been quite huge..."

The TECT All Terrain Park, another product of interagency development, combines such activities as off-road motor sports, horse riding, mountain biking and shooting. The park received an award for outstanding park in the New Zealand Recreation Awards. TECT arose principally from competing recreational and development interests that Western Bay of Plenty District Council was trying to manage, but which also involved many people living in Tauranga City.

"TECT All Terrain Park was very much pressure on Western Bay of Plenty District Council from various activities that were located on the fringe of the city that were eventually getting pushed out because of all the population growth. So they were types of activities that were noisy kind of boy sports, and the former Mayor of Western Bay had quite a vision in place to establish something like TECT Park; so it does come from the community but obviously you've got to have the political will in place to drive it as well. That was seen as an opportunity, why would Western Bay District Council just do that by themselves when a lot of the population that would use that park comes from Tauranga?"

A regional open space forum in the Bay of Plenty was seen as a useful cross-agency and cross-organisational engagement vehicle, and a similar forum is in place in Auckland.

An important driver of interagency approaches, noted by some respondents, was their importance in creating efficiencies in tight funding environments. As an Auckland interviewee noted:

"I think one of the things that Auckland will have to get its head around is how do we prioritise because there's big demands on our ratepayers and taxpayers to deliver some of the big key projects that might need to happen in Auckland so we have to be more innovative with less, and partnership is a big way you can achieve that"

Other respondents pointed to the importance of key individuals in driving interagency approaches:

"I think it needs that catalyst or that one person to see that idea but it's having the right people with that skill set that can stand at the top of the flag pole to see what needs to happen and then from that, well, ok what are the key people we need to get round the table and how can I pull that together. And then it will then lead to

policy implementation and all of those things so I think that person with the idea is critical. Everything starts with that"

"The other one is Waikato District they've had a planner there for a long time who's very keen on the city-country links. The Taitua walkway was a fruit of that."

A further strong theme in collaboration related to community organisations, which some respondents considered as essential to effective peri-urban recreation delivery. The Cycle West project in West Auckland was highlighted as a good example of the potential for councils to work across multiple organisations on peri-urban recreation initiatives. As one RST respondent said:

"We've just started a 3-year, Cycle West project which is a SPARC Active Communities funded project which is ourselves, Council, Bike NZ, Auckland Transport and the two bike clubs. Part of the project is to develop [the Birdwood Reserve] and create that as a hub for bike sports but also to look at bike opportunities across the city"

This was discussed further by an Auckland Council interviewee, who described it as "a really good example of lots of different agencies from sports and recreation and local board and community coming together and just creating a really cool project and getting on with it".

A similar initiative was underway in South Auckland (albeit in an urban rather than peri-urban setting), working with a school in Mangere.

"Nga Iwi School in Mangere can be one of the first schools in Auckland to have the Bike On Project, so they are going to have a cycle track around the periphery of the school grounds, a pump track and a BMX track. Through our funding and our organisation, we are able to put in Auckland Transport to support Auckland Council and other funders to make that happen, so the focus of the recreation co-ordinators will be able to do that but in that park setting"

7.4.2 Multi-user capabilities

Providing recreation opportunities for a range of skill levels, a variety of activity preferences, multi-sports, and a range of demographic groups (including mothers and children, elderly, youth) was also viewed as essential to the successful provision of peri-urban recreation. Examples of this include:

"It can't all be advanced off-road cycling or mountain biking space, it has to be some beginner, some intermediate, some advanced so you have to provide a range for the community, so those are a couple of big areas"

"Sometimes it might need something a little bit different to get things established, so the good example of that you have playgrounds for the kids, well what about

some of the green gyms for adults. We see all the kids playing but we see the adults all sat down. It might need something like some of that adult exercise equipment to stimulate more usage"

"So I think that's something that I've been a strong advocate for – is we've got all these mums and dads taking their kids to down the park but we need more stuff for them to do"

7.4.3 Differences by organisation type and region

RST respondents noted the importance of supportive policy (n=8) and provision of free or affordable opportunities (n=5) in enabling peri-urban recreation; these were not raised by Council respondents. The only other notable difference was found in Auckland, where considerably more comments were made with regards to multi-user capabilities (n=15 versus n=2 and n=6 in Hamilton/Waikato and Tauranga/Bay of Plenty, respectively).

7.5 PERI-URBAN OPPORTUNITIES

7.5.1 Activities in greatest demand

When asked where they thought the greatest demand for activities was going to occur in the future, respondents related their responses to current trends and noted the limited research available. As such, the responses in Table 11 below likely reflect a combination of current and predicted demand for specific activities. As can be seen in Table 11, biking and walking/tramping activities were seen to be most popular. Although not specific activities, demand for coastal and water-based activities also emerged clearly as being of great importance.

Table 11. Recreation activities in greatest demand

| Activities in greatest demand | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Cycling, mountain biking, off-road cycling | 5 | 16 |
| Walking & tramping | 4 | 14 |
| Coastal & water-based activities | 5 | 13 |
| Multi-purpose | 4 | 6 |
| Off-road activities | 3 | 5 |
| Gyms & exercise classes | 1 | 3 |
| Motorised sports | 3 | 3 |
| Equestrian and bridle trails | 2 | 2 |
| Gardening & community gardens | 2 | 2 |
| Farm visits & berry picking | 1 | 1 |
| Camping & motorhomes | 1 | 1 |

7.5.2 Ideas/opportunities identified by respondents

Events were seen as useful in terms of promoting usage, and peri-urban spaces were seen as important for hosting events:

"I think that we've got some really good parks but we don't hold nowhere near the number of events in parks that a number of other countries do. So I think that's something that we should be looking at. I know that's something that SPARC want to see – more events that can kick start activities and programmes"

Increasing accessibility and routes for cyclists and walkers was noted as a key opportunity of peri-urban recreation:

"The other thing is, and I don't know who, Council I guess, they've been very protective of gullies and stuff and I'd like to see some of them marked for mountain bikers to use in the middle of the city because I know cities are starting to develop bike parks and things, nothing better than a natural one"

"Well just a network of walkways that are happening. The aim is to go right from Ngaruawahia right through to link up with the South Waikato river trails and that sort of thing and so it takes it along the whole of the Waikato River. That's obviously a biggie in my mind for both walking and cycling"

7.5.3 Areas/regions of importance and opportunity

In Auckland, a large number of areas were identified as being in high demand and/or offering peri-urban recreation opportunities. These included Woodhill, Waitakere, Taupaki, Laingholm, Kumeu, French Bay, the Airport cycleway, Muriwai, Haas Park, Muddy Creek, the Twin Stream Cycle and Walkway, and Henderson Valley.

"Woodhill isn't actually in our region but a lot of people from our region go there so you've got use of Woodhill and it's not just bike, you've got tree adventures ... motor cross, ... horse riding, so there's quite a big catchment area for recreation and as long as the forest remains, which is always a risk, because it's privately owned, then that in theory will continue to be a major recreation place"

Attention was drawn by one respondent to the potential value of Waitakere-Taupaki for peri-urban recreation:

"Waitakere and Taupaki ... sit in like a little valley space that's adjacent to the Waitakere Ranges, it's in close proximity to the Woodhill Muriwai whole development so they are in a really unique space. They've got a whole range of quite amazing coastal and natural features that are quite close to where they are, and it's an area that it's going to be interesting to watch the impacts of the [Westgate] project"

In Hamilton/Waikato, Waiwhakareke, the Taitua Arboretum, Pirongia Farm Park, Minogue Park, Pirongia Mountain, Hakarimata Scenic Reserve at Ngaruawahia, Raglan, Claudelands, and Waitomo were identified as areas of importance and opportunity.

In Tauranga/Bay of Plenty, Te Puna, Papamoa, Tauriko, Greerton, and Pyes Pa were noted as areas for opportunity for peri-urban recreation:

"We are also looking in the next 10-year plan at developing this area we've called Parau Farms and it's basically about a 30-hectare, active reserve within Bethlehem that will be developed into sports fields and it will also provide a really good connection between the Bethlehem community and the Wairau River as well"

7.6 PRIORITY POPULATION GROUPS

When asked to identify priority population groups in terms of peri-urban recreation there was a general reluctance by interviewees to focus on any one priority group. Respondents noted the provision of existing programmes that are delivered for specific population groups; during these conversations a range of demographic groups was mentioned as being important to consider in provision of recreation opportunities (Table 12).

Table 12. Population groups identified as being important for provision of peri-urban recreation opportunities

| Priority population groups/settings | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Disabled, health concerns | 5 | 8 |
| Families | 3 | 7 |
| Elderly | 4 | 6 |
| Asian | 2 | 3 |
| Immigrants | 3 | 3 |
| Minority ethnic populations | 3 | 3 |
| Pacific | 3 | 3 |
| Youth | 2 | 3 |
| General population | 1 | 2 |
| Women | 1 | 2 |
| Low socio-economic status | 1 | 1 |
| Workplaces | 1 | 1 |

One respondent noted population ageing and the expanding range of opportunities sought by older people:

"Older adults will be really interesting. I think I mentioned it last time but older adults are such a different kettle of fish than they were 30 years ago and I often tell my team, if you were designing something for recreation for older adults 30,

35 years ago you'd be thinking 65, retirement, not much different, kind of not a lot on but in doing so now an older adult doesn't see themselves as older at 65, they see themselves as having plenty of recreation time ahead of them and we've had people who are kayakers at 97, we've had people finishing marathons at 82. We have 65-year-olds who see that life is just beginning in terms of new recreation opportunities at 65, and they are off doing off-roading and mountain biking, so I think that we've got to really rethink older adults in our heads and I wouldn't even consider somebody an older adult sort of myself until they are at least 75 now. We've been pushed upwards which is a good thing. You are only as old as your mind wants to tell you, you are and we should provide a range of opportunities because people are wanting to use them"

7.7 USE AND IMPORTANCE OF POLICY AND PLANNING IN PERI-URBAN RECREATION

Respondents were asked to identify key policy and planning documents that they considered important in providing for peri-urban recreation. These are listed in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Policy and planning documents and issues related to peri-urban recreation

| Policy and planning documents and issues | Number of interviews | Number of citations |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Research and data | 6 | 14 |
| Need for bridging gaps/lack of awareness | 7 | 13 |
| ARPASS | 2 | 3 |
| Auckland Plan | 2 | 3 |
| Region-specific strategies | 1 | 2 |
| Regional Parks Policy | 1 | 2 |
| SPARC role in recreation provision | 1 | 2 |
| Active Community Strategy | 1 | 1 |
| Hamilton District Plan | 1 | 1 |
| Hamilton Recreation Plan | 1 | 1 |
| Open Space Strategy | 1 | 1 |
| Parks Categorisation | 1 | 1 |

Research and data were a key emergent theme. Specific sources of information included the ARPASS review (noted in section 4), Active NZ research, Active Friendly Environments research, the Parks Categorisation process, and the SPARC Relay newsletter. Citations were made in respect to use of data in decision-making processes:

"And also we keep a close eye the things like the SPARC Relay newsletter; it is useful to use and we are sort of constantly Googling it and seeing what we can find out, what people are up to and what's happening"

"A good example would be the work that ARPASS undertook, that mapping exercise. I think that was a really good example because groups, a lot of the District Health Board would be able to use that to think well ok there's certain neighbourhoods here that are underutilised"

Linked with this issue was a second emergent theme related to a general lack of awareness of research, information, documentation, policy and planning supports for peri-urban recreation, as well as need for additional research:

"I think that we've really got to understand our populations a lot better and at the moment we've got bits and pieces of information but not really anything comprehensive that would drive our delivery"

Some areas were noted as being difficult to quantify and report:

"It's one of the softer community outcomes... What are the actual outcomes that you can deliver. You can't say you've completed this infrastructural thing here which has done this. Actually reporting is one of the key things sometimes to the success of projects. Being able to report on something and being able to come up with tangible results, like we even associate dollar figures to it sometimes, makes it easier for things to be sustained through the long-term planning process"

7.8 FEATURES OF PERI-URBAN RECREATION IN EACH CITY

Respondents were asked to identify the best features in their cities (in some cases, specifically the case study areas) for peri-urban recreation opportunities. In Auckland, Waitakere-Taupaki was noted for its rural amenity values for recreation:

Waitakere, Bethels Beach, and Taupaki – "So it's a pleasant place to go and you can do a nice loop. The roads are relatively quiet. It is a bit of a horse area I think, particularly Taupaki. So that's obviously for people who either have a horse or they are involved in that way, then that would be somewhere where they would recreate quite a lot. Imagine it's a cycling route because the roads are good roads and yet they are quite safe"

"Beachlands and Maraetai have got an amazing coastal experience and again people have purchased land out there because they like the attributes that it provides currently but I think that it's around designing the spaces and connections around them and through those areas that are a fit for purpose and appropriate to those landscapes, but anything that can develop coastal rides down there or down

to Miranda for a swim and then coastal rides back or through some of those spaces will be critical"

Respondents in Hamilton noted the proximity of green spaces and parks that are in close proximity to the city. Specific areas were also identified as noted below.

"You've got the lake and the city, you've got the Hamilton Gardens there and all these other parks and things so you get a little feel for getting away from things without having to get out of town in some ways"

"[Woodlands has] a lovely woodland area, lovely gardens, great big cricket oval for people to come and play in and that sort of thing, it's a lovely setting"

"The river walks, the gully walks, restoration at Waiwhakareke which is a natural heritage park. The linkages out into the district which are fairly few at the moment but Taitua Arboretum that was mentioned before is linked to the city by a walkway / cycleway"

Attention was drawn to the Carmichael Reserve in Tauranga, which is a major area of open space within Bethlehem. The Wairoa River was also noted for its potential for water access, biking, walking access, and track use.

[The Carmichael Reserve is] "quite a significant recreational asset to that community plus it also connects Bethlehem into other communities as well now, so there's quite, and it's still being developed, but there's really good walking access opportunities through there connecting into, so it has that open space feel but you are kind of in the middle of this urban environment on one side and on the other side and it's got a huge opportunity to connect in to other open space, wetland areas and stuff as well"

7.9 SUMMARY

Peri-urban recreation is seen as important for providing a unique opportunity to interact with the natural outdoor environment and wellbeing. Although important, numerous barriers to participation in, and provision of, peri-urban recreation were identified. Accessibility, distance, and lack of public transportation were identified as key barriers. Factors for success were effective interagency approaches, providing for multi-user capabilities, and providing opportunities that are easy, informal, and unstructured.

Biking activities, walking and tramping, and coastal and water-based activities were identified as activities in the greatest demand. Respondents utilised a variety of policy documents to support their practice, and noted the importance of and need for further quality research and data. Numerous opportunities and best practice examples were reported by respondents; sharing and promoting such information may aid increased successful promotion of peri-urban recreation.

8. FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

Findings from the online questionnaire and stakeholder consultation revealed numerous recreation themes that required more in-depth examination in relation to families and communities residing in peri-urban areas. Accordingly, interviews and focus groups were conducted with parents/caregivers of children aged under 16 years in the three key areas of study: Auckland (Maraetai/Beachlands and Waitakere/Taupaki), Hamilton (Rototuna), and Tauranga (Bethlehem). As noted earlier, these case study areas were recommended/requested by recreation planners in each of the three cities.

8.1 BEACHLANDS/MARAETAI (AUCKLAND)

8.1.1 Respondents

Four fathers and four mothers participated in the focus group for Beachlands/Maraetai. All had one or more children and had lived in the area for over 2 years.

Reasons for living in the area were predominantly related to proximity to the beach and natural environment and the lifestyle and strong community that this type of environment encouraged:

"Well for me it was definitely the water, close to the water and the lifestyle that you get off the water, the sea"

"You can go walking and half-an-hour walk takes about an hour or more because you are always running into someone and talk for 5 or 10 minutes"

Other reasons for living in the area were safety; living in a family-oriented environment; "walkability", i.e., being able to walk everywhere; good destination accessibility; large property sizes; and the "ruralness" of the region, i.e., being surrounded by land and a feeling of spaciousness.

"...you come out here, you are not hearing police cars every 5 minutes, not to say that things don't go on but it just feels better, safer and like it is quite a bit of a tight-knit community and people do look out for other people"

"My thing is being close to everything, everything is so close where you do only have to walk and I'm happy for my daughter to walk to school on her own or with friends. It's safe to me, that's what I like about it"

Interestingly, respondents also viewed the area as having good accessibility and proximity to other destinations, including Auckland city:

"You can get to anywhere within an hour. If you need to be in the city, get a ferry and be there in 45 minutes for a meeting whatever"

8.1.2 Recreation activities

Respondents were asked what types of activities they and their families participated in, either within their local neighbourhood or outside the area. A majority of activities were undertaken in the immediate local area, mainly due to convenience:

"In terms of activities here we tend to find that you encourage your kids into the activities that are here unless there's something specific you want to do outside, like my son's got really keen on cricket and there is a brief thing, I think that SPARC put on, someone put on end of last year for 6 weeks, and that was it, and so therefore we head off in a different direction because it's a little bit too difficult to go elsewhere"

Walking was by far the most common form of recreation for families, and walking for transport was also seen as important:

"Specifically since having my second child, I actually don't use the car anymore. It is all about being around here. I'm walking and being able to be within walking distance with our walking morning activities then home for lunch time, give him some sleep, I am very much about walking down to the beach, walking around to people's houses. We will get in the car to go to Maraetai or go to Omana, or go and see the animals but it actually is quite amazing how I really don't use the car, it's a joke but I don't leave Beachlands-Maraetai all week"

The other main activities undertaken within the local area (in order of frequency raised) were cycling/biking, swimming, and visiting parks and playgrounds. Specific activity locations cited were the beach, walkways and streets, Pine Harbour walkway, Te Puru (sports facilities, skate ramp and walking), parks and playgrounds, and the Pine Harbour markets.

"I take the kids to school and I go for an hour's walk with my dog and yeah I don't really do anything recreational on my own but then in the summer we'd have Touch with the kids down at Te Puru, other activities, outdoor activities that I do with the kids after school, come into the park, again cycling and stuff"

Families travelled outside the region predominantly for children's swimming activities (at Lloyd Elsmore pool in Howick). Other places travelled to were Formosa (golf and mountain biking), Botany (shopping and walking), Maraetai Beach, Omana Regional Park, Botanic Gardens/Totara Park (walking), and Western Springs park (walking, playgrounds).

Duders Beach was also noted as a possible location to visit, however this area was not often frequented due to safety concerns (such as theft from cars). Reasons for travelling outside the area for recreation activities were predominantly due to the lack of alternative options within the region (swimming lessons in particular), or limitations of existing teams/clubs within the local area.

"...there's more [netball] clubs out there that have got potentially more to offer with the whole club perspective"

"...here it's a good social hit-round but there's no interclub [tennis] teams. And there used to be once upon a time"

Other reasons for travelling were to experience a change of scenery, visiting places of importance/significance to the family, or visiting friends. The lack of a secondary school in the local area also meant that for families with older children, school-related recreational activities were often held outside their local residential area.

A majority of recreation activities noted by respondents were multi-purpose, accompanied, and with children and adults. For example:

"But we've also got, everyone has got a bike, or a skateboard or a scooter or something like that and we will go on family walks. Two people will be scootering, another couple be walking, and someone will be on a bike. There's no set practice what we do, when we do, it's just oh it's a nice night, let's go for a walk."

Some respondents also noted that they participated in outdoor recreation activities as a result of living in the area, and that this has led to trying out further recreation activities:

"Had we not moved out here I wouldn't do half the things I do out here like ... Omana, you were saying about the little bush bit there, we actually like walking in there because it's nice. We used to go up north in the holidays when I was younger and go stay in the bush there... I wouldn't have a problem going and camping somewhere and going for a tramp now, whereas when I was younger I probably would have gone ugh"

"Yeah I think there's lots of things you do in interest, like the sailing club down there if you are into sailing, can lead to other things. There's obviously bush and water and that, so if you start doing it and if you want to take it further you [can]"

8.1.3 Infrastructure/facilities supporting for peri-urban recreation

Respondents were generally satisfied with the provision of recreation opportunities in their area. Qualities that were seen to be particularly important were providing for multi-user capabilities (such as children and adults), and ensuring safety, particularly with respect to cycling:

"They've just started to put a few more pavements down some of the roads through Beachlands which is great because my kids are still quite young to be cycling on the road, so for me cycling on a pavement is better than being on the road, especially for my 6-year-old, she can be quite a handful at times. She doesn't see the danger so I think a pavement, what they are doing at the moment, is really, really good."

Specific enablers that were noted by respondents were ensuring safe pavements and accessible walkways, and providing a shuttle bus to Formosa for mountain biking.

Activities that were seen to support community recreation included the Omana Park Children's day; Have a Go days run through the local RST; Auckland Council events (e.g., movies in parks; albeit the closest movies in parks was hosted in Whitford); Carols by Candlelight; Clevedon fireworks; beach days; triathlons & duathlons; winter plunge; speed boats; and club fishing competitions.

The Omana Children's day was particularly highlighted by respondents. This is an annual multi-activity day that is well-attended by the community, even in bad weather. Maintaining this as a free event was seen to be particularly important for ensuring community involvement.

"I don't think they can improve it. It was very well done."

"And a lot of people griped about that because they were like well we are paying our rates so why are we paying to come to something and I know there was a lot of people that complained about that, but that's the only bad point I've ever heard about it"

The success of these events appears to be that they are very community-led, in that everyone turns up for them and many are fundraising for the local community. The local paper (Pohutukawa Coast Times) gets involved and the What's On section of this paper is a key source of information – it is free, short, and contains information specific to the community. Other sources of recreation/event information noted by respondents were road signage, Pohutukawa Coast website, Te Puru website, Council website, Eastern Courier, noticeboards, word of mouth, and the Beachlands School newsletter. No respondents had had any contact with their Local Board (Hunua).

8.1.4 Challenges and opportunities

When asked what they would most like to have changed, respondents agreed the provision of a swimming pool and indoor recreation facility centre was most needed, followed by provision for cyclists' safety on roads. Although respondents were generally satisfied with recreation opportunities in their area, some challenges and opportunities were raised, mostly due to facility maintenance and design, in particular safe roads, clean toilets, and loss of access to some walkways owing to works development:

"They don't provide hand soap, which I think is really bad because the toilets are so disgusting that you want sanitising hand soap, but they just don't, it's just water"

"...they've built this wonderful walkway that everybody thinks is wonderful, but now I'm having to kind of get in my car to go to 2nd View when it takes me literally minutes to walk. So as far as I know, there was no communication that they were

going to do that, it just kind of, overnight I went to take my dog and I'm like what's going on here. It was kind of very closed doors. So that's my gripe and my only real gripe"

Safety for cyclists on the main roads was raised as a key barrier:

"There's quite a few guys from work, I work in East Tamaki, that actually try and cycle from here to work and do it on a regular basis but cycling on that road is a little bit suicidal. It would be good if there was an extra metre on the side so you could actually cycle somewhat safely"

"Maraetai, Clevedon and round, and it's not a good road to cycle on, either for drivers or cyclists"

Other issues raised to a lesser extent were the lack of critical mass and costs for team sports, provision of shade in specific settings, padlocks on gates at Omana:

"I'd also say there's a fabulous playground on the beach front at Omana, not Omana Regional Park, it's fabulous. In summer it's unusable because it's too hot, there's no shade at all and it burns, the slide burns it's that hot"

"And lots of things cost money"

The influx of people over weekends and public holidays was seen as negative by residents, who cited feeling intimidated by visitors' unsocial behaviours, drinking, and bad language. Respondents noted that the increased police presence, alcohol bans, and police checkpoints were helpful to some extent. They also noted irritation and reduced enjoyment of their local environment with mass visitors not considering the residents, leaving rubbish, parking everywhere, and generating noise pollution.

"On the Sunkist Bay playground area, there as well, it's actually because the beach reserve is a dead-end and it can be, I have been down there where I actually felt really intimidated"

"And the rubbish that gets left behind as well"

"In the cars, just drinking and stuff. It can be quite scary actually"

"They will park on any patch of grass that's free, they are on it"



"Well for me it was definitely the water, close to the water and the lifestyle that you get off the water, the sea."



"They've just started to put a few more pavements down some of the roads through Beachlands which is great"



"...you come out here, you are not hearing police cars every 5 minutes, not to say that things don't go on but it just feels better, safer"



"everyone has got a bike, or a skateboard or a scooter or something like that and we will go on family walks"



"You can go walking and half an hour walk takes about an hour or more because you are always running into someone and talk for 5 or 10 minutes."

8.2 WAITAKERE/TAUPAKI (AUCKLAND)

8.2.1 Respondents

Six mothers and two fathers participated in the Waitakere/Taupaki focus group. The main reasons for living in the area were the quiet village-style, farming lifestyle, with a small community, small schools, proximity to beach and bush, and ease of accessibility to destinations.

For many, self-sufficiency was an underlying theme.

"Fresh air. Space. Open space. Nice water"

"I think it's a lifestyle for the kids too, like my kids have had eggs hatching in their hand and they know how a sheep comes into this world. They've had the pet lambs and it's a nice lifestyle to bring them up with"

"I find, like, even when I come to our place is you come here no matter what's going on, I always find it a lot more relaxing and I come, that's my place, back onto a vineyard, we can sit there, we look over that, I see the Waitakeres and my place I can see the Harbour Bridge, I have a view of the city and everything and it's just I can just sit back here"

8.2.2 Recreation activities

When asked what types of recreation activities they participated in, respondents initially noted a general lack of time for recreation due to pressures of working, as well as maintaining and farming their land.

"The difference between people who live where we live and people who live in the suburbs is that we don't have weekends to relax or we are like John Kirwan says we are active relaxers. What he really means is that we've got such a lot to do and you've really got to enjoy it otherwise we will pass out"

"If you've got a lifestyle block there are fences that need doing, there's fertilising that needs to be done, there's goats and lawns and animals"

When prompted further, the main recreation activities respondents cited participating in themselves were playing indoor netball (locally) or cycling (mostly outside the local area). Family activities centred around the outdoor environment, with the most common activities being walking and cycling.

"We go to Piha a lot and Bethels a lot, walks around the Cascades and the Falls. The kids go, we drag them along. I will take the dogs as well, so we are very conscious where you can take the dogs. North Piha you can take the dogs"

"If I go by myself I can cycle the roads, if I'm taking the children I need to go to Henderson, cycle track"

"Or if you want a really short cycle you can go round Taupaki Park. But it's better than nothing. But you cannot take the kids on the roads up there"

Other family and child activities included skateboarding, hang-gliding, parasailing, and fishing, and organised activities such as rugby, netball, cricket, dancing, tennis, aqua aerobics, zumba, and soccer. Organised activities were more common in winter, rather than summer.

"There's a little bit of a bridle track at Muriwai that the kids go on. The locals have got together and cut a track in the bush down behind the tennis courts. They've got a skate ramp there that they can all play on. Six tennis courts, actually three and then another one that's sort of got jumps all over it. Kids all go eeling out there and collect golf balls off the golf course. Hopefully while they are not in play. Sell them all back to the club house. A lot of time spent on the beach. Two beaches really. Māori Bay as well so spend time down there. Lots to do. Lots and lots to do. Horse riding and hangliding and parasailing"

"See I find for us coming into winter we get more focused on the whole sport side of things with your netball and your rugby, and what's going on and those sort of sporty events, whereas in the summer we just sort of do the more recreational activities"

Interestingly, although respondents resided in close proximity to numerous beaches, swimming at these beaches was not common, mainly due to safety concerns. Instead, children were taken to the Muriwai salt pool, local school pools, or Lake Wainamu for swimming.

When prompted, respondents also noted a high usage of the local regional parks, in particular going on bushwalks in the Waitakere Ranges. Specific walks noted were around Golden's Bush, Taupaki Domain, the Cascades, the Falls, Lake Wainamu, and beach walks.

"We just about live in it. I was at Arataki today with the kids from school"

Respondents believed they did not use the Waitakere Ranges more than those who lived outside the area, citing that they felt living there made you lose appreciation and take the area for granted. As well as beaches, regional parks, bushwalks, and swimming locations, other recreation locations cited were the Massey Pony Club, Redhills Pony Club, West Park Marina (for fishing), Twin Stream cycle lane, Taupaki Park (for short cycles), Muriwai (bridle track, salt water pool, skate ramp, tennis courts), Huapai tennis courts, and Swanson Park. With the exception of cycling, almost all activities were undertaken in the local area:

"Yes most of the times it will be something local. Go down to the local park or something like that or otherwise if you know it's going to look like a really good day always the safest bet is Western Springs"

Differences were noted between families with younger and older children, whereby those with older children tended to travel further for organised recreation activities:

"my daughter is 3½, she's got activities, soccer, swimming, dancing, so at the moment most of that sort of stuff is, do on Saturday, she does indoor little-kiddie soccer and stuff like that, otherwise the local stuff, we will do it, at her age most of the time is like the zoo, Kelly Tarlton's; we will head to the beach sometimes, it's weather dependent"

"As the kids get older though, I've got a 16- and a 17-year-old and her interests are a lot more varied as she's got older and, like this weekend for instance, we were over on the Shore, Lake Pupuke doing dragon boating and this week she's fencing, and so that takes her all over Auckland, so to get that variety you can't just stay in West Auckland. She's been dragon boating at Lake Pupuke, down in Westhaven, Downtown when they train"

Other reasons for travelling outside the local region for recreation was to have a change of scenery and experience city life:

"We still head back into Western Springs sometimes and go for a walk round. Sometimes crave a bit of city life. We don't have any street lights really. There's nothing to see at night, no shops open, so once you've moved to a place like that you are very wary of 'have I got enough milk'. When you are in the suburbs it's easy to just shoot to the shop but I mean we've gone the other way now, we get milk from a farm and we don't have much to do with, who cares, you just wait till tomorrow, whereas I know when we lived in Whenuapai it was 'need some munchies, let's go to Countdown' but now just no takeaways, no delivery food, there's nothing open, there's nothing to do, it's just everybody is locked down for the night, feel you've gone back in time"

8.2.3 Important aspects for peri-urban recreation

A number of important aspects for encouraging participation in recreation activities were cited. Activities needed to be free or low-cost, easily accessible, safe, have multi-user capabilities, and have adequate facilities.

"But I think from a recreation point of view from West Auckland's perspective is we've got the facilities, we've got everything to give us the recreation that what us the community require, it's just the base fundamentals, security, transport, and the correct facilities at the venue, toilets, parking and that sort of stuff"

Respondents often used the daily deals and coupons for recreation opportunities (such as Snow Planet, mini golf), or sought activities that were free (including visiting libraries, art galleries and art centres).

As identified earlier, water safety and cycle safety were of key importance, driving the choices that parents made for their family recreation activity types and locations:

"We use Wainamu a lot because it is safer for the kids than out on the beach itself"

Taupaki was identified as a good example of having multi-user capabilities, and the importance of delineating areas for children of differing ages was noted:

"Taupaki is good. They've got, we used to go a lot when the kids were younger, they've got the awesome playground with the swings and slides and stuff but they've also got the big walking track around the perimeter so the kids can have a swing and you can actually go and do your exercise while they are doing it"

Other examples of facilities or events that enabled or encouraged recreation were the provision of a footpath at Muriwai, clean toilets at Waitakere, free day at Kumeu Showgrounds, upgrading of existing parks, Auckland Council free events (such as movies in parks), and the Teddy Bears' Picnic. Respondents noted that a footpath from Swanson to Waitakere Township, and a park for children aged over eight years in Waitakere would facilitate increased participation in outdoor recreation. Sources of information for activities were: word of mouth, school newsletter, neighbourhood support letter, local paper (the Gannett), Western Leader, Council website, Council magazine, Event Finder, Libraries, billboards around the peninsula, radio advertising.

8.2.4 Challenges and opportunities

The greatest barriers to participating in recreation activities were time, cost, safety, and accessibility (including parking). One overriding issue for respondents was a need for safe cycleways/cycle tracks.

"We take the children too, they are only little, take their bikes down to the school and they practice cycling. That's about the extent of it but I would be nervous about cycling on Muriwai Road, 100 kms [speed limit]"

"We take the kids to a subdivision down our road. I wouldn't let them cycle...."

"If they brought some land in, put a cycle track on it, rather than just the circle one that goes around the [park]"

"Also this road out here, Swanson Road is lovely and wide and then they put these stupid concrete things for people to walk, they've tried to make it safer for walkers but cyclist have to cycle up it and then come out and they've made the road really narrow so my husband's nearly been hit a number of times"

A secondary issue was affordable and accessible public transport:

"I'd change the public transport and the trains. Talking about public transport, further out if there was like a loop bus that the city's got, they've got the main event so they've got the main loop bus that just runs all day and a link whatever and it drops off at the main locations, it's only like that out on a Saturday. It only runs once a week and it does a loop and it stops at Muriwai and a couple of the hot spots out here and you can jump on. \$1 or \$2 hop on and hop off, and does laps and people can just jump in and you know there's ones, there's a couple running every ½ an hour it will be at your location and it just makes it easier for transport out within the vicinity"

As well as water and cycle safety being drivers of recreation choices, personal safety and theft were significant barriers to participating in outdoor recreation:

"Yeah I probably wouldn't go for a walk in the Waitakeres with my children on my own. And even parking the car can be really dodgy sometimes"

"You don't know who might jump out at you"

The influx of visitors on weekends and public holidays was also a deterrent for residents undertaking recreation activities in their local area:

"We often don't go to the beach on a public holiday"

"There's no parking, there's nowhere to go really. Just leave them to it"

Increased pressure for land was noted as increasing property prices, changing the nature of the environment (such as increased retail) and influencing land restrictions, which were seen as both positive (protecting land for recreation spaces, improved economy) and negative (restricting building on land, encouraging people away from the outdoors).

"Possibly there's been a realisation though that you can't have that everywhere because I think that the Council has pretty much tied up now the recreation spaces that we have out here and I don't think it's ever going to be allowed to happen, what's happened in town luckily"

"Well there's more and more retail spaces and people are being encouraged inside these retail spaces. They are spending their recreation mall walking or window shopping or browsing. They walk inside"



"If you've got a lifestyle block there are fences that need doing, there's fertilising that needs to be done, there's goats and lawns and animals."



"Taupaki is good... they've got the awesome playground with the swings and slides and stuff but they've also got the big walking track around the perimeter."



"There isn't really anywhere to cycle out our way safely."



"...my kids have had eggs hatching in their hand and they know how a sheep comes into this world. They've had the pet lambs and it's a nice lifestyle to bring them up with."

8.3 ROTOTUNA (HAMILTON)

8.3.1 Respondents

Six parents participated in four family interviews. The most common reasons for living in the area were: good school, ease of access to other areas including Auckland, and perceptions of Rototuna being a safe, family-oriented environment. Employment opportunities, housing prices, space, country living, and section sizes were also noted by respondents:

"It's a very safe community. Friendly people. There's not huge security issues. It's multi-cultural but they seem, everyone seems, to be quite likeminded. A lot of professional people. People are friendly and seem happy with life, happy with the world"

"One thing we really did like about this area was the safety for the children in terms of the cul de sacs and them being able to get out in their scooters and their bikes and things like that. We couldn't do that at home"

"Very family friendly. I was actually really keen to escape Hamilton before children but after having the kids I really appreciate how easy it is to live here and how nice it is to be able to afford a really nice home that we could never even imagine getting anywhere close to in, in Auckland for example, and within zone of a decile 10 school and still have our lifestyle as well, so it's very much an easier lifestyle I think"

"It feels a safe place which we really like. It is very convenient I suppose you could say. Got two supermarkets just down the corner. Everything you need is here really with the exception of libraries but that's in Chartwell which is not very far away. Good schools which is the main thing"

"[It was] a new housing area and we definitely wanted to build. The quality of the surrounding dwellings. Good access both to the Coromandel and to Auckland via the Gordonton Road access way, close to my work which is in Te Rapa and more and more important as the kids get older, whereas they were getting older at the time, access to a good primary school within zone"

One respondent contrasted Rototuna with an area of the city they had previously lived in:

"We bought the house that we could afford and it was very cute but it had kind of dodgy houses on either side and the other thing that was happening in Hamilton East was that there was lots of infilling. So nice old period houses would be carted away and then you'd have 6 or 9 little flats made in the same space and so your next door neighbours could actually sell their house and you could have a series of flats next door to you on both sides. And just more traffic, lots of cars and things. When you've got kids it's an issue, whereas here there's covenants and things so

you can't, we can't carve the section up and put two lots of units on it or anything like that, so it kind of was a look at retaining the value of the house because we were looking at houses as an investment as well"

The area was generally not seen as a recreation destination for people in the wider region.

"Not at this stage, no. Lack of facilities. There's no extra turf, there's no tennis courts other than the ones the schools have got and lock up. There's no indoor sports complex"

"I don't think it attracts other people from out of the area at all. We wouldn't come here if we didn't live here put it that way, to this area"

"I think people from within Hamilton, some people, like I mean young people, are attracted to the hills for skateboarding and they hang out and ride and probably get the odd family just going for a Sunday walk through the hood" [i.e. neighbourhood]

8.3.2 Recreation activities

Weekday recreation for most parents was very limited, mostly due to time constraints.

Where parents did have time, walking was the most common activity:

"I have a very sedentary job. I mean I am sitting in front of a computer going like this all day and then I have very little free time after work. I don't really even have a lunch break. I just work through because I've got short hours and then I'm looking after the children until [father] comes and tags in and helps me"

Conversely, children participated in numerous after-school activities, including scootering, cricket at school or Flagstaff Park, swimming at Te Rapa, dancing, soccer (weekends also). On weekends, the most common form of recreation was informal walking, cycling, and scootering, and visiting parks. Triathlons, swimming, miniball, skiing, and gardening were also mentioned to a lesser extent.

"I should mention too that they do, the kids, I don't know if it's just us, I think it's wider, but the kids tend to prefer scootering a lot more than they used to, so when I say biking or walking, we'll walk and they'll either be scootering predominantly or biking"

"And I think generally the weekend we do things as a family, through the summer months, we do quite often just go up to the park, take the kids up and have a bit of a swing and slide and play"

"I walk every day and exercise every day and I've just recently joined a local gym, but I do a lot of walking and the kids walk in the summer in the afternoons and sometimes we go for a walk as a family in the weekend because there's some quite nice walks around, on their bikes and that. Sometimes we go to the school. The

kids play down there. Other recreation, we are involved in organised stuff like the kids are, they both play cricket and my son plays soccer, [daughter] does dancing. There's a local dancing studio down here, they both do gymnastics and they do swimming. They do swimming lessons so we are involved in a lot of that stuff... what we do quite often is we go to the pools but we often go all the way over to Tauranga, to use Baywaves actually, and we were thinking about looking online actually at some of the pools in South Auckland because we don't much like the one at Te Rapa... So we actually bother to drive an hour and a half to go to use the pools"

"And the swimming, my husband has taken that up because he wants to start triathlons at some point and just improve his fitness and it wasn't taking as long as squash to do that, so they would do Te Rapa and because there's no pool over this side, I mean you can either go here or you can go the uni, but the uni is not heated and it's got limited hours. I know Fairfield College does offer discounts to families in their pool, but again it's not heated"

Differing perspectives arose regarding the availability of local recreation opportunities, with some respondents indicating satisfaction with the walking and cycling opportunities in the immediate area, owing to the quiet streets that they lived on and activities provided by school settings. The most common activities undertaken in the area were: walking (to school, walking the dog, family walks), biking, scootering, and going to parks. Activities provided in the area were not seen as encouraging progression to participating in further recreation.

"I guess in here we are fairly, it's fairly contained. If we were living on Thomas Road... we wouldn't be as comfortable with the kids being up and down the drive and along the street a little. The walks wouldn't be quite so appealing, you'd want to whip into Somerton and up the hill there. We do do that actually. [My wife] walks in there and up the hills. I run in there to get some hill work. I ride up those hills at the end to get some hill work, just there's no hills in Hamilton"

"The nice thing is that the schools are quite well organised here and for example [child's] soccer, there's a Hukanui Rototuna club so that we are involved in a local team, so it's not all over the other side of Hamilton and that and they practice locally. So I guess I look, I try to find things to do that are as close to home as possible mainly because it cuts down the time and travelling to things when you are busy and trying to squeeze all the kid's activities in and also fuel costs"

"I know there are a lot of people walking round here. They just walk round the block round here. When it's not busy, if it's in the school holidays and it's not busy, we will bike our kids down and around and do a five km circuit through the school, past the dairy and then up through St James, and then back here, but we do not do it unless the roads are empty, pretty much"



"Very family friendly... after having the kids I really appreciate how easy it is to live here and how nice it is to be able to afford a really nice home."



"One thing we really did like about this area was the safety for the children in terms of the cul de sacs and them being able to get out in their scooters and their bikes and things like that."



"...a lot of parents that I've talked to would walk their kids but they are terrified of it. Just with the age group that you've got and if you miss the crossing by 15 minutes you are stuck."



"The thing we miss the most are we'd love to have a pool out this way. We'd also love to have better hall facilities."

Conversely, numerous comments were made about significant amounts of time spent travelling outside the immediate area to participate in recreation due to lack of facilities in the local area. Places travelled to included: Raglan (surfing, one father only), Waihi Beach, Coromandel, Mount Maunganui, Hahei, Mangatautari, National Park (skiing), Te Puke (beach), Te Awamutu, Cambridge, Te Rapa (squash, swimming, badminton, swimming), and Auckland.

"[father] plays squash but I don't think there's even a squash court out here, I think the closest one would be Te Rapa so he goes all the way into Day Street. I do badminton. For me to do that I go to Day Street to do that, otherwise it's Horsham Down School but it's not proper place. [father] does swimming so he goes all the way across to Te Rapa so our carbon footprint must be pretty high"

"We do from time to time go out to Raglan or even as far as the Coromandel to some of the beaches out there. We didn't have nice beaches where we lived before so we try and take advantage of that, and quite often I will take the kids to Hamilton garden, the botanical gardens. They love it there. We really like it there. And the Lake Domain. There's a big playground at the Lake Domain, we go there"

"The zoo is great and we take our son has a couple of times with [father] gone to the Go Cart Racing, the Daytona one at Sunshine Ave, so we do that and the rock climbing. Extremes Rock Climbing that's very good"

Reasons for participating in recreation were to spend time as a family together, improve skills, reduce screen time and get outside, and improve health, fitness, and skills:

"There's the need to sharpen up if you are doing events. [mother's] is more her own health and wellbeing. The kids, they both want to get out and about, but also a fourth [need] is we want to push them away from the screens so we have a real battle with reducing, restricting the PC or the iPod or the DVD, watching time, and you can't just say you've had your hours, get off. It's better to take them out and say let's go for a walk now it's a beautiful afternoon. So that's another, a big driver too for getting out and about"

"...it's mainly walking for fitness and just to get outside"

"We will just, you will just go, we do that as often as we can do something like that because that's just good family time"

8.3.3 Important aspects for peri-urban recreation

A number of important aspects were noted for encouraging participation in recreation. Activities that were easily accessible (in terms of time, location, and cost), were age-appropriate for children, and had multi-user capabilities were all seen as important.

"We are not big sporty people but, yeah, having kids, you know, the thing we would look for, the thing we'd like to do when we can grab the half hour here and there is take them out and kick a ball around, and just have somewhere to do that and then that satisfies, well my fitness for a little bit but the kids as well"

"We've got to do something short and sharp and get there not too far away, because if we are driving three hours to do something the girls are going to lose it within the first 1½ [hours] so it's got to be relatively close and easy to get to, and something that we can do quickly. Also, I guess at some points we are looking at cost as well in terms of petrol to get there and snacks and things. It's not so much an issue now when we are both working, but when I wasn't working and we were on one income then it was much more of a factor"

Locations such as halls, pools, libraries, and community gathering places were noted as specifically supporting recreation opportunities, none of which exist in Rototuna. Specific facilities at locations were highlighted as being important, particularly toilets and shops:

"For me important things it's got to be not educational but interesting and something different that you can't do at home and it's got to be clean with good facilities and decent food. Doesn't have to have a playground, but kids always like a playground. But, well-organised and also good, accessible hours of operation. Because sometimes you will find the times that you can go to places it's a bit hard to squeeze in because of the hours of operation"

"A toilet that doesn't make you heave just going into it, absolutely that's really important. With little girls who go all the time"

In terms of sourcing recreation information, respondents were generally proactive and sought out information specific to their needs. Information was gathered predominantly through word of mouth and the internet, as well as via local knowledge, a Plunket under-5s recreation booklet, City News inserts in the Hamilton Press, Facebook, Hamilton Events Guide, school newsletters, and Q magazine.

"I think we are quite proactive and so we will Google stuff and look for stuff, like I was Googling river trails just to see where they were a little while ago to have a look"

"They must advertise it somewhere and then a mate of mine puts it on Facebook and invites everybody to it, so I don't know whether it's in the Hamilton Events Guide. Hamilton City Council has an events guide that they put out monthly so they can do that. Rototuna School has a Facebook page and they update you on

that, what they're doing. They also give you a newsletter every week and then the PTA puts out newsletters"

"I keep my ears open if I hear things, I sort of remember it and then I get more information off the computer. So a lot of it is word of mouth because we didn't know..."

A number of events and activities were cited that supported families to participate in recreation, which were almost exclusively provided by local schools or childcare:

"Whatever the school organises. Hamilton North City Community Trust, I think that's them, they do something a couple of times a year which is quite good, like they had children's day yesterday down at Flagstaff Park and they provided bouncy castles and stuff like that and had heaps of free Vs. At Christmas they always do a Christmas in the Park thing and so that's really good, and they invite the schools to come along and display their bands or whatever and they have Santa and stuff like that. The school does galas or whatever"

"The school is trying to organise walkathons and encourage kids to get fit and that kind of stuff. I mean they don't have a pool, they've started swimming sports this year which is great"

"Although [child] has got really interested in walking now she's our 4-year-old because they are getting a walking programme at kindy where they are getting a reward system for walking particular distances and things, and they get a click on their ticket, and then once they have 12 clicks they get a balloon, choose between a balloon and a sticker, so [she] is actually the one suggesting let's go for a walk and we actually did that a couple of weekends ago..."

Council involvement in providing recreation opportunities was seen to be negligible, while some activities run by Sport Waikato were noted:

"I don't think the Regional Council is, not really, its place isn't really to promote that sort of recreational thing, they are more kind of looking after the environment... But the Hamilton City Council I don't think we've really looked at their website for recreational type stuff have we?"

"As far as the Council goes I don't really see anything from them unless you go looking for it. And sometimes their information can be outdated too"

"Sport Waikato do a fantastic job but their niche is not, we are not playing in that market... their focus areas aren't the events that we are doing, so I am not seeing what they are pushing"

"I am looking at Tri New Zealand and... to be honest, and unfortunately, I do look at the Sport Bay of Plenty website more than I look at Sport Waikato because they seem to have my type of events. They have some low-level triathlon, duathlon events, Sport Waikato doesn't"

"I think Sport Waikato actually do quite a good job because they, I believe that they are behind the football opportunities and soccer opportunities around here"

8.3.4 Challenges and opportunities

Traffic safety, particularly on or near main roads in the area was a key issue for parents and a cited as a major barrier to walking and cycling. Parking was also noted as a barrier to walking and cycling, due to reduced accessibility and concerns regarding traffic safety.

"Chartwell Square, ... they've taken out the crossing there, it's now shared zone, they just raise up the level of the road and then say off you go, risk, take your life at risk, which is amazing considering the amount of elderly people there and then you've got the teenage kids that can't be stuffed and, just, we'll go in front of you. So really, a lot of parents that I've talked to would walk their kids but they are terrified of it. Just with the age group that you've got and if you miss the crossing by 15 minutes you are stuck"

"...but to get there, because there's no footpath or anything or walkways I've actually got to go all the way down to Thomas Road, across up and whatever and it's not safe. I mean I think there was a kid hit by a bus last year just from all the stuff, another kid tried to walk across the road on his scooter the other day, almost got hit by a car because there was just nothing to notify the cars and it's just an accident waiting to happen really those roads"

"There are people that do a lot of cycling but I don't think Hamilton roads really cater for cycling, because they are wide enough in the cycle lane but cyclists don't like cycling in the kerb of the lane where they should be because it's got glass so their tyres are likely to slash, so they go and ride on the centre line which again is incredibly dangerous"

Interestingly, one family noted their area to have good traffic safety in the immediate vicinity:

"And I think a lot of young families live in this area and people are more in that mindset, there's children around and so for us we thought this was good for us because it meant our kids can walk to school and they can get out on their bikes, out on the street and I don't have to be fearful for them"

While children's personal safety was also a concern, respondents also acknowledged the importance of not over-protecting children:

"I was walking to school by myself at 5. There's no way I'd let my daughter do that"

"Sometimes parents are your biggest hindrance anyway, in their cotton wool syndrome. We've probably gone from being too tough and letting them climb trees and breaking everything to too soft and now they go to camp and break an arm and it's the end of the world whereas they could do it anywhere. There's a park up

there that we use, that we can walk up to so that's nice and easy up the hill. My only concern with that park is there's no fencing at the back of it and it goes straight onto Gordonton Road which is State Highway..."

After traffic safety, lack of facilities was the next greatest barrier.

"Rototuna really has been, well you have to say neglected over the years in terms of when you look at how many years of development contributions the Council has taken from developers, when previously most of the others suburbs even 20 years ago weren't piling those millions, and I know it's literally millions, into a Council, plus the amount of rates the properties out this way [pay]. Yeah, we have no hall, we have no pool, we have no library, and we do suffer because of that"

"If there were retail, recreation, library, hall, pool, etc and the neighbouring education present, if that was central like where they've planned in the scheme plan, that would be really good"

Some family representatives noted issues with cost, while others cited cost as no barrier to recreation. Time was consistently cited as a barrier to participating in recreation by all families:

"I tend to do 400 to 500 hours of overtime a year so that averages out to, it's like working six days, but you might work 36 in a row and then have four days where you haven't got much to do so it's a bit irregular and that makes it difficult for my recreation and some of the family activities."

"Time is the huge one. No cost issues. Accessibility. If we are going, as I said before, within suburbs, no drama at all. Good circular roads and safe and reasonable traffic. Not high speed traffic"

When asked what they would like changed in terms of recreation opportunities in their area, improved walkways, cycleways, and accessways were most commonly cited, both in terms of improved safety, access to destinations, and distance to destinations.

"Just having better footpaths and walkways where you don't have to worry about cars so you can just go with the kids on their bikes"

"I guess the completion or I guess more investment into the gully tracks that you mentioned because ... if you go off Hukanui Road into the Huntington end of the trails, the tracks in there are fantastic. You can run and you can walk and recreationally they are an amazing asset but you don't get that far before they pop back up onto a street and that's the end of it. Huge potential. About half way along there's a group of private residents who are developing the tracking, but it's literally retired people with the bit between their teeth, and that's what's getting it done"

"But it would be nice if you didn't have to drive all the way across the city to go for a walk. Like the river walk is quite good too but parking is not that easy, to go and park, because with kids you can't walk too far"

Specific facilities and destinations were also noted by respondents, in particular parks, gardens and reserves, and a swimming pool. Motorised activities (such as go-kart racing), and mini-golf were noted by two respondents.

"It would be quite neat to have, well I mean if wishes were, but I mean if you had a really big park that had walking, hiking tracks like in a forest that would be great but that's not something you can just flick your fingers and have because you are clearing farmland here"

"That would be awesome and having a nice community garden with fruit trees and things like that, but then it rots but there's no reason why we can't better utilise what we've got to feed the people that can't be fed either. We've got all this land, let's feed people. Bring back the community feel is where I'm at"

"Like when they are a bit bigger I'd like to take them, get them into mountain biking and that's something I wish was a bit more accessible. [Wife's] parents live in Rotorua, great tracks over there but really nothing around here. Nothing good"

"Before it never bothered us but now because we want to practice some soccer or cricket with the kids, we have to drive away somewhere. ... They have put in the planning lots of little, I wouldn't call them parks but little like squares of grass that have got like a little tiny playground or something on it which is great for your 2-years-olds and your 3-year-olds but not for your 9-,10-, 12-year-olds, and with, maybe, some decent planting and that and also, for example, this one up the top here, you go up the top of the hill and it's all quite private but it's exposed to Gordonton Road, all down the side so you wouldn't really let your kids play there on their own"

Land pressures were mentioned throughout as negatively influencing traffic safety and reducing land for recreation:

"I think if there was a park within walking distance, like there was for us living in Ham East to the gardens, we would use it a lot but the problem is, is that all of the land here has been sub divided and they are all building residential areas, and there's no real large recreational park areas. The vacant lots that are around we hear are earmarked for McDonalds and things like that, so there's no real kind of natural area for us to do something and I think that would be really great if there was a natural park that was large enough so you could have a really good walk"

"Now there is a proposal to put a McDonalds, possibly a Warehouse and a three-storey complex building with 120-space carpark right on the corner of the already congested roundabout"

8.4 BETHLEHEM (TAURANGA)

8.4.1 Respondents

Six mothers and two fathers participated in the Tauranga focus group. A variety of reasons for living in the area were cited, including the reputation of the primary school, being given free land, moving in with a partner, and attending the local church. Respondents noted the area was pleasant, had new developments, and provided a mix of city and country living, with good destination accessibility.

"Has an excellent primary school. That's the one main reason and it's a beautiful area I think especially where, well Bethlehem everywhere is, but where we live is countrified but right next to the city"

"So we can still have the lifestyle but we are still close enough. It's only a couple of minutes up the road and you are at the supermarket, post office, bank, anything"

In general, the best parts of living in Bethlehem were perceived to be good schools, safety, proximity to town, peace and quiet, and the strong community spirit. With specific regard to recreation, the Carmichael Reserve and Tauriko Lakes were the main features considered to be a benefit of living in the Bethlehem area.

"If we didn't have the lakes it would be dreadful. Nowhere to cycle, nowhere to walk the dog"

8.4.2 Recreation activities

Respondents said that recreation didn't really fit into their weekday, predominantly because the lack of footpaths and rural nature of the area made participating in recreation time consuming and problematic. Motorised transport was required to go anywhere, and competing needs of children often dictated family activity choices:

"I work eight hours a day and you get home it's bedtime for the young kids and stuff like that"

"So I don't know how you find it being a little bit further out of that central Bethlehem, but we've thought maybe after dinner we want to go for a walk as a family or something, but you just don't get in the car and go, whereas... we used to do that when we were more in Mayfield and all the walkways are there"

"Yeah, so you can drive to Bethlehem and it's only a few minutes' drive but it's the fact that you have to get in the car and drive and bundle everyone and everything up just makes it that, it's a deterrent that you don't"

"And if the kids are involved, or if there's any recreation, it's usually the kid's recreation, their sports or whatever and I'm just thinking about where we take our kids. It's actually not really Bethlehem so much as their school-based things. Like mine have now moved through primary, two of them are in intermediate and

college so it tends to be based at more Otumoetai where the intermediate and college is...."

In contrast, numerous weekend activities were cited:

"[at the Lakes], Tauriko, end of Cambridge Road, two-minute drive for us and it's fantastic for walking the dog, the kids learnt to ride their bikes there, they can ride around safely. Walking. There's walking tracks, they've done orienteering down there. The only thing it doesn't have is a big children's park, playground and there's heaps of space to have one. They've got, like some playgrounds only have one swing and one slide and that's it, but that's a great thing to do in the weekend"

The most common forms of recreation for parents were walking (including walking the dog) and cycling. Other activities included tennis, swimming, netball, waterskiing, geocaching, soccer, rugby, zumba, and fishing.

"And sometimes go cycling. Because it's not far enough down the Carmichael Reserve yet and sometimes through to ... Brookfield and then link up with the [Waikareao] Expressway, they have like a big walk that you can do or a cycle"

"I've just discovered that with a friend doing down through Grange Road and connecting onto that walkway, that's just gorgeous in there. Instead of going to the Mount"

Family activities centred around walking and visiting parks and outdoor recreation sites, with other activities including swimming, motocross, athletics, karate, and kayaking:

"We like to go on weekends and try and find a new park to go to. There is so many."

"Parks, often the Memorial Park just for a change. The swings and it's a bigger park. Biking, locally. Swimming, we usually go to Baywave or to the beach but, apart from school pools locally, we don't really go for that. Train rides and that was about it really. And I just noted that Mt Drury Park has got a neat, brand-new spongy sort of park, instead of bark, and that's quite cool, but some of the rides, just, they come and then they disappear straight away. It's like OSH has [said], they spin around too fast or something, or too pointy or too dangerous, and it's like we've sort of got to cotton wool our kids a bit, but kids aren't allowed to climb trees anymore; there's a white line painted where they've got to stop and things like that, but it gets a bit carried away. Yes, we don't want our kids to break bones but they still need to learn how to climb and hang and jump, and stuff like that"

Recreation locations included the Wairoa Rowing Club, TECT Park (motocross), Cambridge Road BMX track, walkways (Birch Ave, Te Puna, Carmichael Reserve), parks and playgrounds (Carmichael Road, St Michaels, Rotary Park out of Maungatapu, Bethlehem Heights), tracks (Carmichael Reserve, expressway, Coop Cycle track), Te Puna (rugby,

walks, sculpture parks, quarry), QE2, AFC (soccer), school hall (zumba), Bellevue (athletics), Otumoetai College (karate), and Grange Road.

Regional Parks were not well utilised due to their distance from Bethlehem, dog restrictions, and topology. Informal recreation activities were predominantly available locally, whereas families generally had to travel to participate in organized activities:

"We made use of the Wairoa River last weekend because the weather was fine so we just sort of put a couple of kayaks in and went upstream but... it would be nice if there was some other places to sort of get into the river because Waimarino is an... adventure park, or a sports thing, that you have to pay to go to and you can hire kayaks and it's quite a big setup"

"And tennis, those are my two kind of little pets or whatever, so I have to travel either out to Te Puna or to Otumoetai or into town to Tauranga Lawn, and I mean I can go down to the school but sometimes they don't have the net up, it's not really a proper surface. There's no club or anything there so you could go for a casual hit but if there was tennis courts and a swimming pool complex or something in Bethlehem I think a lot of people would get benefit out of that. Adults as well as kids"

"My kids do athletics but we go to Bellevue because they've got a club there and that's the closest club and that's not far away so that works for us but there's not much apart from a couple of parks in Bethlehem. There's not much else to do"

Within the group, there was a common lack of awareness of facilities and recreation opportunities. Sources of information were few; predominantly word of mouth, school newsletters, or chance discovery. Even within the focus groups, participants were sharing information on recreation opportunities that others knew nothing about. Recreation opportunities in Bethlehem were generally not seen as providing "stepping stones" to further recreation experiences, mainly due to lack of awareness of recreation opportunities available.

"Council have some little booklets but I've never read it and found this information out. I've just stumbled across it."

"[The Bethlehem Star] is probably more advertising than what's going on in the community I'm not too sure if it, when it opened, it mentioned about the reserve and the walkways, but probably not much since then"

"I think it has the potential to but people don't know, like you didn't know about where the rowing club is and there's no signage so like we didn't even know the rowing club was there until we moved in to our place and just decided to drive up the road and see where we come out. We actually came out half way up the Kaimais"

8.4.3 Important aspects for peri-urban recreation

Lack of time and distance to recreation locations were key barriers to participating in outdoor recreation, so places that were easily accessible were seen to be important, as well as locations that were safe and allowed dog walking. Locations that were successful in promoting participation in outdoor recreation included the Carmichael Reserve, Belcommon Reserve, and Te Puna Quarry:

"Well once you get down into the Carmichael Reserve yeah all round the tracks. It's great and when we built there weren't many other houses round and so we took what was given. We didn't expect much and so now that things are popping up, we are just oh great, we benefit from that, but there isn't a lot apart from a couple of parks"

"I've never explored that little section for us it just hasn't popped up. One thing I will say for the parks, we moved, in our first home we moved into a rental by the Cambridge Road Shops, there's a little park there called Belcommon reserve and I never, I've lived in Tauranga all my life, and never knew it was there, fantastic, enormous is it a walnut tree or something, it's a monster of a tree. You couldn't find a better place for shade, talk about the best kept secret, it is fantastic. Really nice little playground"

"Walking, up the [Te Puna] quarry, the quarry is just out of town, Te Puna and it's lovely. It's got sculpture parks and things like that. The kids love it, they bang on musical instruments and it's the whole Tauranga, Te Puna quarry, there's a foundational trust set up and they just a bunch of old people that just get out there and weed it and they do a wonderful job and that's worth going. If you've never been up the quarry, take your kids up the quarry"

While community events were seen as being important enablers of family recreation, participants did not know of any such events.

"A community event not to make money just for a community thing so you'd have to pay a small entry fee just to cover costs but yeah there isn't any sort of events that I know of that happen, that kind of a thing"

There was also generally limited knowledge of Sport Bay of Plenty or the activities they supported in the community.

8.4.4 Challenges and opportunities

Traffic safety was a key area of concern for respondents – lack of footpaths, speeding cars, and lack of safe places for children to cycle were seen as a major barrier to families participating in recreation activities, followed by lack of facilities:

"We are down by you know the Villa Ridge Cafe ... So it's full on, they get through, just past Miles lane, and they put their foot down and go until they get to the end of that bit there, and there's no way I'd let my 7-year-old bike there. There's already been a couple of biking accidents. People clipped"

"No footpaths especially on Cambridge Road and Westridge. We live off Westridge Drive and no parks for kids. Westridge Drive, with all those families, there's no park or footpath"

"The footpath just comes to an end and then it's quite a busy main road"

When asked what changes or features they would like for the area, the overriding feature was better connections and pathways to facilitate walking and cycling:

"We were riding around our area but we also to extend our rides we wanted to go through under or over the highway, and connect in there because we would quite often drive there and park. The Carmichael Reserve have got great walks, be it with the kids or with your partner or whatever and you can actually get a decent distance there but ... the cycle tracks are that close but there's just no connection ... without having, like a safe connection for the children"

"Yeah. It would be good if it was connected. You could let the kids just go 100 metres or 300 metres or whatever, depending on their age, and it's just so close. When they put the new Beaumaris ramp in it was, I was, oh I wonder what they are going to do here. I wonder if they are going to connect it because that was an issue for us... I got adventurous one day with the boys and came in from St Andrews heading towards the Carmichael Reserve and we went down an alleyway, just a mowing Council strip, and there was no clear crossing so we just crossed where we felt like crossing in the stream, kids got wet and so forth a bit. But it would be good if there was like even just a basic little bridge they could just cross and then connect. We went walking in Auckland out West and it was a new walkway they'd just built and it was fantastic"

"That's what I want to pick up as well on what you've said about the connection. That we've talked about the lakes is awesome, heaps of walkways and all that and then you've got Bethlehem here with heaps of walkways and there's no joining. You can't, if you could just get something that would either go along the Wairoa River which would be really pretty"

Specific facilities were also cited, such as a swimming pool, soccer pitch and/or field, indoor facilities (skate park, skating rink, sports courts), and parks and tracks (especially for older children):

"A park in Westridge. Kids' park. There's heaps of families that live there now and there's nowhere to take your kids unless you hop in the car. Like nowhere"

"Be quite nice to have some for older children. I've often seen bigger kids in the little play park, they have that basket thing that swings and they still want to have fun"

"They could easily put down a BMX track"

"If we could have a wish list, a swimming pool out our way would be amazing. Because we are only going to grow more and more and they are even talking about closing the lessons at Otumoetai Pool now, I don't know if they will or they won't"

"That's the other thing in Bethlehem, it needs to have like a soccer pitch or something [where] the kids could kick the ball around."

"Shooting hoops with an extra field or something. Would be a good thing, a public thing..."

Conflicting opinions arose regarding skateboard parks, with some respondents citing a need for them, and others concerned about associated safety issues:

"Skateboarding is another thing. A skateboarding park would be good somewhere in Bethlehem"

"There's one down bottom of 17th Avenue and I don't really like going down there. It just doesn't feel safe"

Although some families had to travel to TECT Park for motocross and would prefer for it to be closer, most would prefer for it not to be in their immediate environment.

"Yeah, I certainly wouldn't want it in my backyard"

"Yeah, I wouldn't want to listen to that all day"

"I can understand it not being in an urban area but it could be closer than where it is. Didn't need to be that far away"

Issues with increasing demand for land were noted (increasing land values, reduced prioritisation of recreation space), but were generally seen as not significantly affecting recreation opportunities.

"That was like the old Bay Park that got closed down. It was in the middle of nowhere and then all the houses came up and got it shut down"

In contrast with other focus group areas, visitors to the area were not seen as a hindrance to residents enjoying their local outdoor areas; respondents saw the usage of recreation areas by visitors as positive:

"Good to see people walking"

"Good to be used"



"So we can still have the lifestyle but we are still close enough."



"...it's a beautiful area I think especially where, well Bethlehem everywhere is, but where we live is countrified but right next to the city."



"the cycle tracks are that close but there's just no connection ... without having, like a safe connection for the children."



"That's the other thing in Bethlehem is it needs to have like a soccer pitch or something the kids could kick the ball around."

8.5 SUMMARY

Numerous similarities were found across families living in all four cities. Walking was the most common recreation activity undertaken by almost all families, followed by cycling. Consequently, improving traffic safety, pathways, walkways, cycleways, and accessibility to destinations were also seen as important by families in all areas. A need for swimming pools and indoor facilities was identified in each area – even those where beaches were easily accessible. Ease of accessibility to destinations in terms of time and location was important to families, as was ensuring their own and their child’s safety in getting to and spending time at these destinations. The importance of clean toilets at destinations such as parks and playgrounds was consistently highlighted by parents, especially those with young children. Having multi-user capabilities (i.e., activities that young children, older children, and adults can participate in) was also a feature that respondents looked for in a recreation destination.

There were key differences between peri-urban areas that might be considered “destinations” and those that could be called “fringe areas”, i.e., on the fringe of urban areas. Respondents in Maraetai/Beachlands and Waitakere/Taupaki spent a majority of their recreation time in their local area and were generally satisfied with the opportunities available to them in the area, most of which were related to engaging with the natural outdoor environment. Maraetai/Beachlands and Waitakere/Taupaki were also seen as recreation destinations for outside visitors. Respondents from both areas noted the influx of visitors during weekends and public holidays influenced their choice of recreation activities and locations, and reduced their enjoyment of the local area (especially in Maraetai). In contrast, both Bethlehem and Rototuna suffered from a lack of recreation facilities and opportunities. As such, many respondents in these areas travelled outside their local area to participate in family recreation, and did not see their areas as a destination for outside visitors.

In contrast with other areas, there was considerably more respondent-led discussion in Rototuna on land use, development, and pressure on land. Families were concerned about loss of recreation land due to development, and reduced traffic safety as developments prioritised motorised travel and increased traffic volumes. It is also notable that for the most part, even with the limitations noted by respondents, they were happy to live in these areas and enjoyed the lifestyle that each area in its own different way offered.

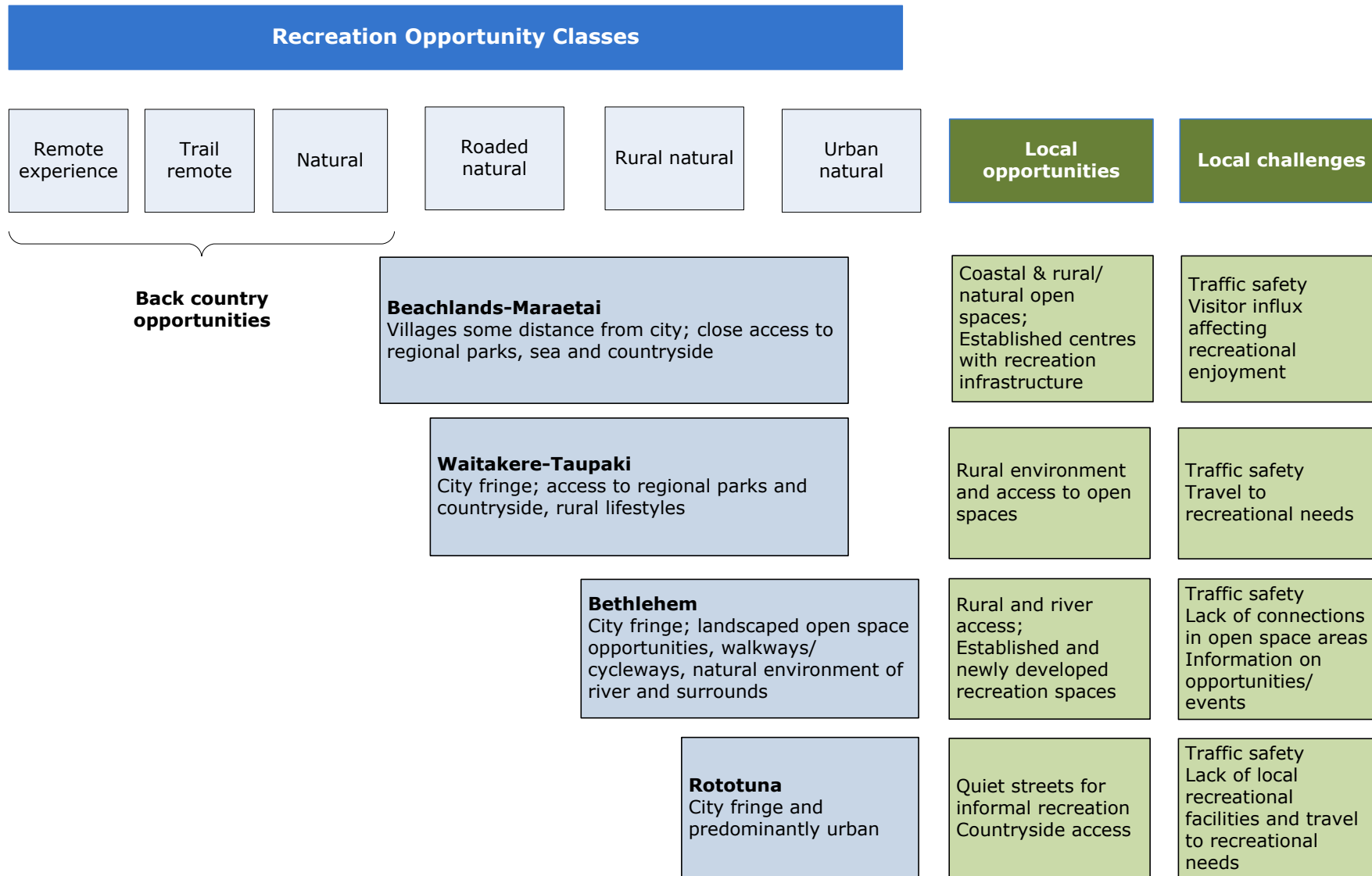
Respondents from Bethlehem appeared to have substantially less information provision for, and awareness of, recreation opportunities available in their area compared with respondents from other cities. Similarly, their awareness of their local council and Sports Trust activities were considerably lower than other areas. Although a consistent theme across all areas, the lack of footpaths in Bethlehem was a significant barrier to engaging in

outdoor recreation, with many families having to drive in order to participate in any form of recreation at all.

Figure 13 on the following page summarises some of the key opportunities and challenges for peri-urban recreation activities in each of the case study areas, linking with the recreation opportunity classes discussed in section 4.

Of note are the varying levels of recreation infrastructure available in the different case study areas, and also the opportunities for recreation that were perceived within each area. To some extent, the broader the categories of recreational opportunity classes that are covered by each area, the broader the range of opportunities available locally, and the less need there is for residents to travel to obtain their recreational choices; this was also affected by the degree to which each area was already established as a village centre (such as Bethlehem, Beachlands and Maraetai). A consistent theme across all four areas was the concern of traffic safety in these rural fringe areas, substantially due to vehicle speeds and narrow country roads.

Figure 13: Recreation opportunities in case study areas



9. OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL FORWARD DIRECTIONS

9.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION

9.1.1 Demand for peri-urban recreation

A key theme that has emerged from this research is a substantial latent demand for the types of experiences that peri-urban recreation might provide, especially for New Zealand's fastest growing cities. In some areas, typically where older town centres are situated near naturally pleasant areas, such as forest or coastline, and/or where there are recreation infrastructures in place, there is likely to be less demand for recreation facility intervention. Where peri-urban areas represent the boundary between urban growth from a city and the rural environment, it is more likely that more designed interventions for peri-urban recreation provision will be needed.

In either case, there are a range of favourable attributes that are likely to be associated with quality peri-urban recreation experiences. These attributes could be used to create a 'model' peri-urban recreation experience as shown in Figure 14 on the following page. This is not intended to be a prescription, but rather a collection of attributes that, if met, are likely to lead to quality peri-urban experiences; alongside these attributes are some of the key challenges to achieving such a peri-urban recreation environment.

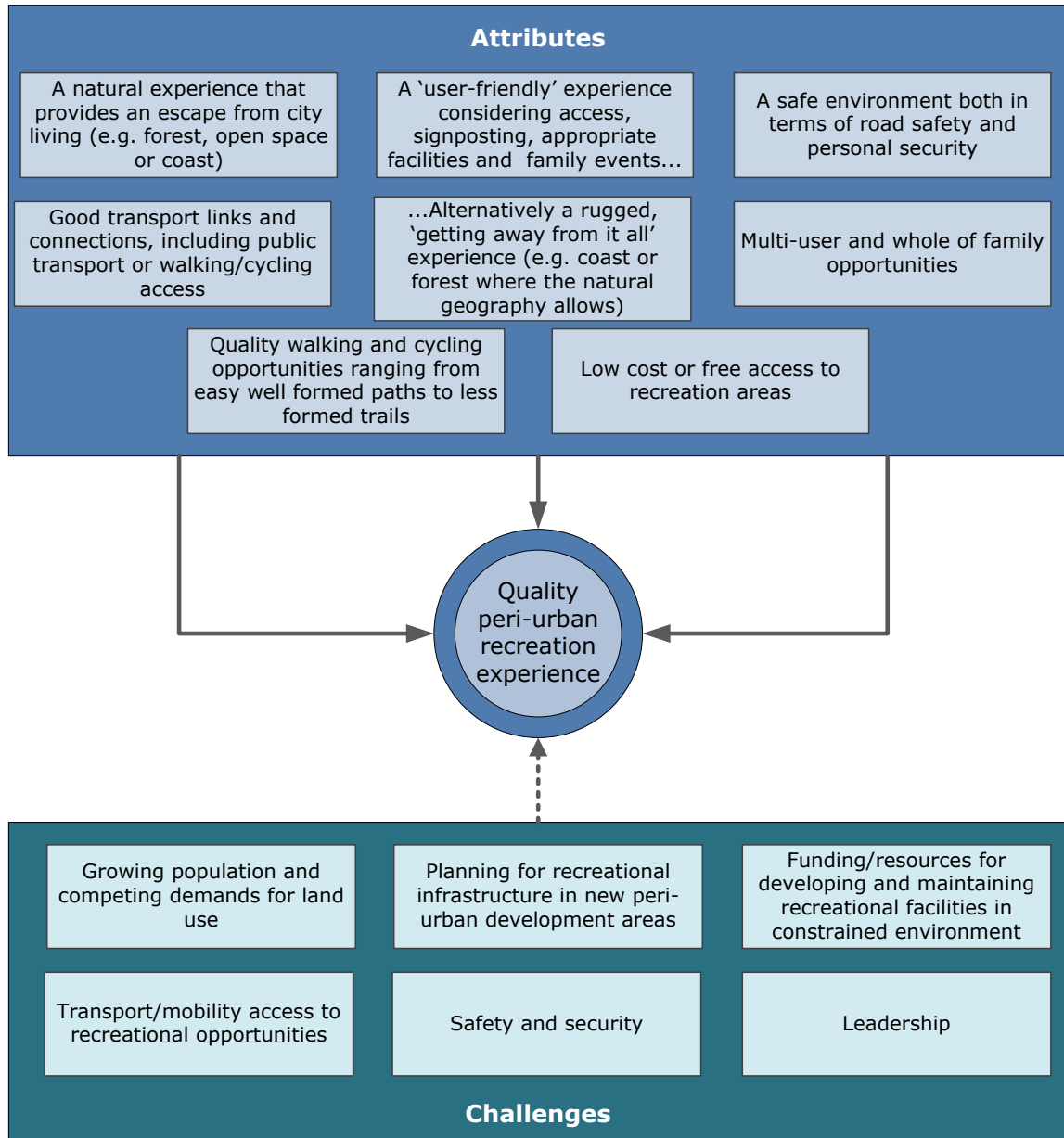
Peri-urban recreation has an important role in maintaining physical, mental, personal and social health and wellbeing for those living in urban centres, which seems to be understood by the general public, given the high demand for this type of recreation experience. Yet more awareness of peri-urban recreation opportunities at specific locations for urban residents could help to improve access and utilisation to such opportunities. Meanwhile, it appears that the importance of peri-urban recreation is understated within planning processes for such areas. There is an opportunity to improve the understanding of the benefits of peri-urban recreation to urban populations and therefore lift its priority within the mix of considerations that are needed for urban planning.

9.1.2 Interagency approaches

For some regions, there may be an acknowledgement of the importance of peri-urban recreation opportunities, but a fragmented local governance system prevents effective planning and implementation of these important recreation areas. Interagency approaches to planning, as demonstrated in the Bay of Plenty, provides the potential to take a coordinated approach to planning peri-urban recreation spaces and facilities, and the opportunities that they in turn provide. This research has shown that local government authorities, regional sports trusts and local residents are all likely to bring different important perspectives that can give support to effective interagency approaches. Further

integration might include the transport sector, as transport and connections to and from peri-urban recreation spaces have been identified as being important.

Figure 14: Attributes and challenges for quality peri-urban recreation experiences



9.1.3 Competing land uses

Securing well-positioned land for quality peri-urban recreation experiences is important and a constant challenge, given the multiple demands for various land uses on the periphery of cities. Although this point was cited more in the previous literature and by the planners within this research, than by residents and recreation organisations. However, given the importance of factors such as access links, safety, facility amenity, and overall 'user-friendliness', as demonstrated by this research, there are opportunities for improving

the quality of these parts of the recreation experience. There are numerous examples of quality improvements being made to public spaces within towns and cities (for example, riverbank walk in Hamilton, twin-streams cycleway in West Auckland) and perhaps more consideration of peri-urban recreation requirements could be given to existing peri-urban open spaces to provide a high-quality recreation experience.

9.1.4 Recreation utilisation and progression

In addition to being a source of local recreation for residents of peri-urban areas, another theme emerging from the research is that peri-urban recreation has the potential to meet two different requirements:

1. A 'user-friendly', easy-access outdoor experience that allows city dwellers to get out of town for a physical, social and even spiritual outdoor experience, and therefore providing a sense of balance between city living and inherent human connection with the outdoors.
2. A stepping stone for more adventurous activities further afield, by providing a supportive environment to test skills and physical ability.

The research suggests that the former theme is probably more important based on the likely utilisation of peri-urban recreation spaces. However, there is logic and some evidence that peri-urban recreation also has the potential to extend people's understanding and affiliation with nature and may also allow activity skills to be practiced in a manageable environment, depending on the opportunities available. An example might be that, if families were able to try cycling on some well-connected and designed trails near their home, then success at this level might stimulate an interest in adventures further afield, such as the numerous cycle trails that exist or are being built around New Zealand. The same logic might apply to walking and tramping. This extension in participation not only has implications for the type of activities that city based people participate in, but also may be important for the generation of domestic tourism. In this way, peri-urban recreation may have important wider economic benefits, in addition to those directly applicable to local populations and places.

9.1.5 Unmet demand

A very specific theme that has emerged from the research is an unmet demand for cycling of various kinds. While walking is clearly one of the most popular recreation activities, it appears that, while many people would like to cycle, existing facilities or infrastructure do not permit it. User-friendly access for sport cyclists may mean a quiet country road circuit that is relatively safe with lower traffic speeds, for mountain bikers a nearby quality off-road track that is free to use, and for families/beginners/children a good quality off-road path that is well connected to residential areas but also provides an open space or natural

experience. In most of the case study areas, these facilities do not exist or at least have some significant limitations.

9.2 CHALLENGES FOR PERI-URBAN RECREATION

9.2.1 Meeting the demands of growing populations

The research suggests that there is a demand for peri-urban recreation experiences that are not currently being met, or may not be met in the future as urban populations grow. As mentioned earlier it is likely that appropriate land supply is a major issue related to this, but the utilisation of existing spaces and the infrastructure and information systems that are required to maximise utilisation may also be an important issue.

As with other developed countries, New Zealand has an ageing population, which means the provision of peri-urban recreation opportunities for older people may need increased consideration. However, it is important that this process considers changing participation preferences in addition to the stereotypical activities associated with older people. As mentioned in this research, many people are remaining active for longer and it is now not uncommon for people in their 60s, 70s (and older) to be actively participating in activities such as cycling, swimming, hiking and running. In addition to providing for activities in which people currently participate, it is also important that unmet demands and potential future demands are considered. Current activity participation reported in documents such as the Sport New Zealand's Active New Zealand Survey may reflect a combination of people's preferences plus the availability of activities to people. For example, overall cycling is ranked sixth in the top ten preferred activities in the 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey, but evidence of an unmet demand suggests that it may rank higher if quality infrastructure were available for cyclists to use. Comments such as "I would love to cycle but the road is too dangerous and there is nowhere else that is suitable" were very common.

9.2.2 Leadership and Planning

It appears that leadership and planning are key challenges for the development of peri-urban recreation infrastructure and facilities. The research showed that providing recreation facilities was a high priority for regions, although there were differences between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. Auckland demonstrated the highest priority for providing recreation facilities, possibly as population pressure and the geographic spread of the urban population is greatest there. But, as with many civic projects, little progress is usually made unless there is a clear leader or champion for them and an underlying strong demand from the community. This needs to be supported by clear and robust planning processes that then allow this vision to materialise. This will be discussed further in the next section 'Potential Forward Directions.'

9.2.3 Established areas versus new areas

The different types of peri-urban areas (established areas of higher, natural value versus urban fringes of cities and towns) suggest different challenges. People choose to live in Beachlands/Maraetai and Waitakere/Taupaki partly for their outdoor recreation value, and visitors are common for the same reasons. In these places it is likely that challenges will be associated with good quality facilities, transport links, information/guidance and managing large crowds at busy times. In newer urban fringe areas such as Rototuna (Hamilton) and Bethlehem (Tauranga) challenges are more likely to be related to the competing interests of various possible land uses and allocation of land, along with provision for suitable activities.

Because the provision of peri-urban recreation is integrally related to planning, it is important that the different types of peri-urban areas are acknowledged within planning processes so that outdoor recreation opportunities can be planned appropriately by meeting the unique needs of different places.

Tensions are evident between established peri-urban areas, with an array of natural resources, and newly-developed and less well-provided areas. Residents of the established areas make substantial use of their community recreational spaces and resources, but in some cases feel that their enjoyment (particularly of the natural resources) is threatened by an influx of visitors over the weekend and summer. People in newly-developed areas, on the other hand, often value the immediate environment of home and surrounds, but are compelled to travel for recreational experiences. This adds personal time and financial costs, and also places further pressure on the transport infrastructure and attendant environmental impacts.

9.2.4 Funding

Related to planning is the funding required to support new and upgraded recreation facilities. This may be particularly pertinent during challenging economic times where hard decisions need to be made about the allocation of scarce resources. Pressure to use land and support activities that have direct economic benefits becomes greater in such times and there is a risk that the provision of recreation facilities is seen as a 'nice to have' area of expenditure; particularly where the resident populations are relatively small. There may be different types of funding challenges for different areas. Established areas that have significant natural appeal (such as Beachlands/Maraetai) may need less deliberate investment compared with newer city fringe areas with less natural appeal (such as Rototuna). Conversely, transport and access may be more of a priority for investment in areas where large numbers of people visit due to its natural value.

9.2.5 Awareness of recreation opportunities

Related to the challenges of increasing peri-urban recreation utilisation is the levels of awareness of recreation possibilities by residents. It appears that residents often have a limited understanding of the opportunities available to them, especially for those living on the newer fringes of cities. Examples of guides, websites or other information that outline the recreation opportunities available to residents that have been given within this research have uniformly been viewed positively, as have community events at different scales. Planners generally viewed the promotion of recreation opportunities as important, although there were clear differences between cities, with Auckland demonstrating the greatest need for promotion.

It should be pointed out that this is not likely to be a uniform issue for all peri-urban places. Some popular locations are extremely busy at various times of the week and year, while other places may be less familiar to residents even if they have lived in a city for many years.

9.2.6 Access and amenity

Providing 'door-to-gate', user-friendly recreation experiences is clearly a challenge for all cities. Almost all areas of natural beauty close to cities require private transport to get there. Cycling and walking are often not options due to distance or perceived safety issues for cyclists along busy or high-speed roads. Yet respondents in this research have stated that they would value outdoor recreation experiences where they don't have to use their car. For all the peri-urban recreation challenges faced by Hamilton, the river and lake walks and Hamilton Gardens are areas that are very well connected to the city, mainly because they are actually within the city rather than on the edge of it. The concept of walking or cycling from home along some sort of greenway to an outdoor experience on the edges or outside of the urban environment appealed to many within this research, yet this possibility is rare in most areas studied in this research.

Access to peri-urban recreation is also problematic for the social equity of recreation experiences. For example, a low-income family in Auckland may not be able to afford a family day of cycling at Woodhill – one of Auckland's best mountain biking facilities due to the costs associated with bike ownership or access, access fees and transport costs. This means that this type of activity is restricted to those on higher incomes. By comparison, the Redwood forest in Rotorua may be a much better model in terms of social equity due to the close proximity of the forest to Rotorua and free public access. Lack of public transport to popular peri-urban recreation areas was frequently cited as an issue.

Facilities and amenity at recreation destinations are important to people and they need to reflect the needs of users. This may mean good access for the mobility-impaired, clean toilets, seats, shade, shelter, suitable pathway quality, clear signage and information, and possibly lighting. At more remote places, a secure place to park and good information

about trails may be priorities. Most importantly, the needs of users should be well understood and planned for accordingly. Planners within this research have stated that this would be aided by the collection of better quality data and information about their populations and the requirements.

9.2.7 Safety and security

Poor safety and security is a challenge at various levels and was consistently mentioned as an issue, particularly by families. The following safety issues have been associated with peri-urban recreation:

- **Road safety** – particularly for cycling, either for sport cycling or access to recreation areas by people of all ages and abilities.
- **Personal security** – this may be a relatively higher issue for women, women in single parent families and older people. A key attractor for some peri-urban recreation opportunities is getting away from other people, yet isolation can also be intimidating, if not a safety issue, for some. Passive surveillance by others is a key feature that makes people feel safe. This is a particular challenge for peri-urban recreation, for example, people have reported feeling unsafe walking in the Waitakere Ranges yet they would be less likely to have these feelings in a similar backcountry environment. The proximity to the city is likely to be a factor, but also those in peri-urban environments may be more likely to be recreating alone.
- **Vehicle and property security** – remote and poorly supervised carparks have been cited as a key security issue that often prevents people from participating in recreation activities in some locations.

9.3 RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

This research provides an initial examination of the peri-urban experience, through both family and planner perspectives. The contrasting case studies, and experiences within them, highlights both the potential and the challenges for peri-urban recreation, and we believe has laid a useful foundation in this area.

Nevertheless, the research provides a partial perspective on peri-urban recreation, filtered through the eyes of planners and the substantially Pākehā and relatively well-off residents of the areas.

Potentially useful future research directions include the following:

- More detailed investigation of planning opportunities and barriers using specific case studies.

- Intervention studies measuring community recreation experiences and other outcomes prior to and following the implementation of new peri-urban recreation areas or facilities.
- Exploring the peri-urban recreational experiences and aspirations of more diverse populations, including Māori, Pacific and Asian peoples, older people and children. From an equity perspective, it would also be useful to explore in more depth the experiences of peri-urban people on lower incomes (for example, people living around marae on city fringes, or newly developed public housing areas on urban fringes).
- Development of tools for measuring the provision and quality of peri-urban recreation experiences in New Zealand cities and towns.
- Investigation of the supporting structures that enable peri-urban recreation (for example good transport connections).
- Closer investigation of specific areas of demand and how barriers to meeting this demand might be overcome.
- Closer investigation of the link between peri-urban recreation and outdoor recreation further afield.

9.4 POTENTIAL FORWARD DIRECTIONS

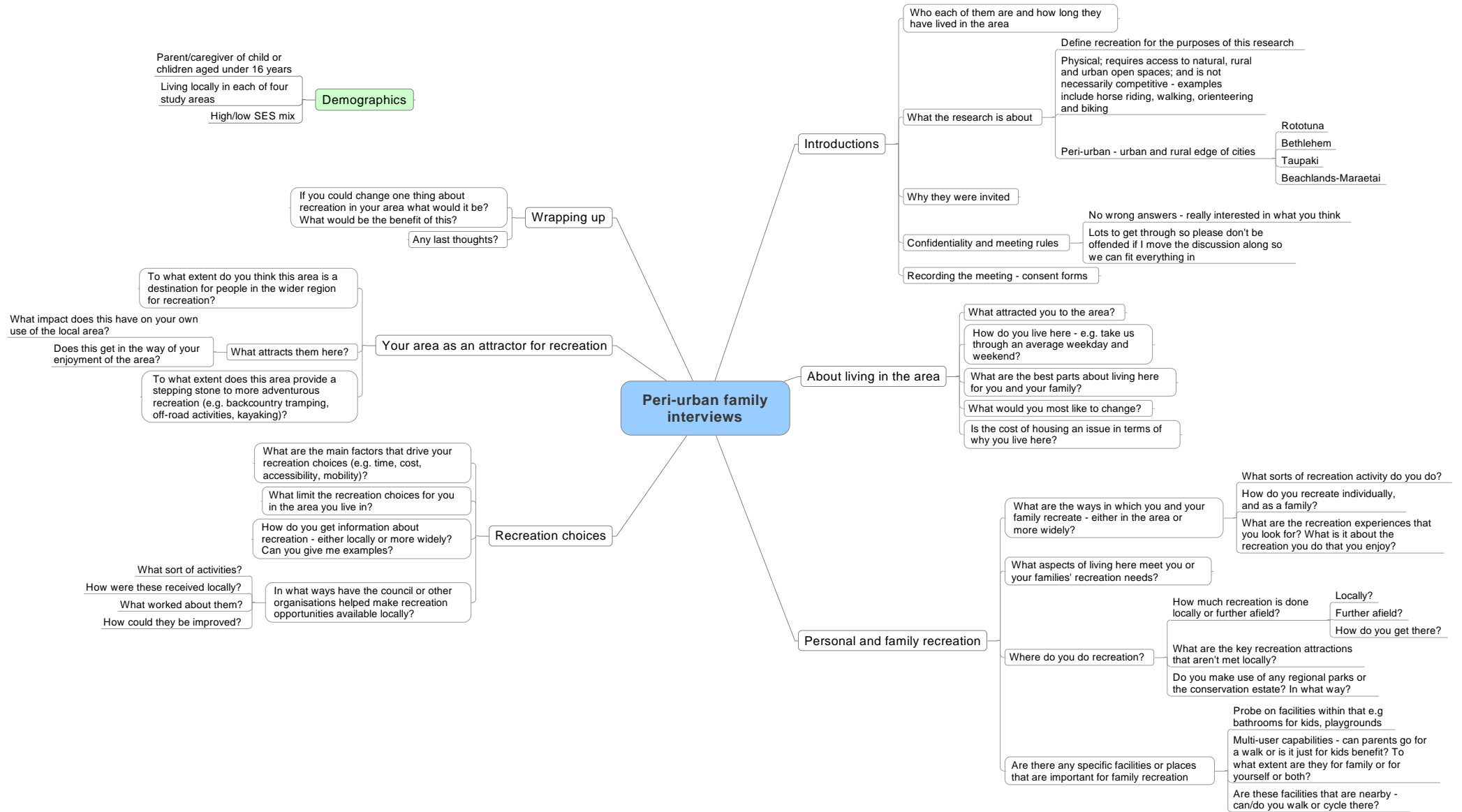
We suggest the following as potential next steps that need to be considered for future peri-urban planning and investment.

- **Clearer articulation of peri-urban recreation**, i.e. why it is important and the wider economic and social benefits, especially during challenging economic conditions. Apart from professionals, most people don't know what peri-urban recreation means, although they understand when local examples are given. Better data and a clearer understanding of the importance of peri-urban recreation would assist civic leaders and planners to provide for it appropriately. The concept of 'open space' recreation in and near urban centres is not new (such spaces are historically common overseas and in New Zealand). Perhaps a new conversation needs to be developed to build a case for such provision, especially when the financial implications are likely to be closely scrutinised.
- **Balancing amenity and conservation with economic development**: The urban fringes of cities in particular are at risk of being dominated by residential housing, roading and other essential infrastructure, often based on the maximum economic return to developers. A better understanding and articulation of the need for peri-urban recreation, and the many co-benefits that are likely to accompany it, would help to prioritise greenbelts, greenways, open spaces, public coastal

accesses, bush trails, and other spaces that are likely to support peri-urban recreation activities.

- **Planning for future demand based on population growth and preferences for different activities.** As an example, there is significant population pressure on Auckland (and to a lesser extent Hamilton and Tauranga). A common theme from interviews was that there is a demand for more cycling opportunities across all areas.
- **Planning for diversity,** including young and old, families and individuals, more designed spaces versus more remote 'backcountry' type places, and people from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Diversity also means variation in the form of peri-urban areas from established communities in high natural-value locations to the urban fringes of urban areas.
- **Inter-agency and inter-organisational collaboration** for better peri-urban recreation outcomes and improved efficiencies within constrained funding environments. Examples of stakeholders that might participate in such initiatives may include civic planners, transport planners, regional sports trusts, non-government organisations, NZ Police, sports clubs, interest groups, volunteer groups, local community groups and possibly private enterprises.
- **Meeting the requirements of local communities and visitors:** Good transport connections, amenity, free access, safe environments and quality outdoor experiences need to be included in the design of peri-urban recreation spaces. More attention should be given to the gap between what is being provided and what people want. Examples where community needs are being met tend to be very popular.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT/CAREGIVER DISCUSSIONS



APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH TEAM PROFILES

Adrian Field (MA Hons PhD) is a Director at Synergia Ltd. Adrian is an experienced researcher, evaluator and group facilitator, drawing on twenty years of experience in the policy, research and the NGO sectors. He has a strong interest in the challenges of modern urban form for sport and recreation, and population health. Adrian has led evaluations of physical activity, sport and recreation programmes in the Auckland area. His PhD explored urban community environments and access to services, facilities and amenities.

Melody Oliver (DipFT, BSR, PgradDipHSc, PhD) is a Research Fellow at AUT University. Her research comprises numerous studies of human movement, skill development, recreation and physical activities, and health. Dr Oliver is particularly interested in human behaviour and how this can be influenced by social and built environments

Hamish Mackie (MPhEd, PhD) is a Director of Mackie Research and Consulting Ltd. Hamish has 15 years of research and consultancy experience in human systems, in terms of how people interact with their environment, with recent expertise in the transport sector. Hamish's background in physical education underpins his specific interest in the links between physical activity, preventative health and land use. Hamish is experienced in working with local and central government stakeholders to deliver relevant and practical research and consultancy projects.

Kim Arcus (Dip Phty, BMS Hons, MSc International Health Policy) has a particular focus on macroeconomic analysis and policy implementation in his work, at both national and local levels. Kim has worked across local government, health organisations and central government. He is keenly interested in issues of urban form, physical activity and health.

Linden Dale-Gandar (BHSc Hons) undertakes both qualitative and quantitative research at Synergia, and has a particular strength in drawing together multiple research streams and distilling common themes and issues.

Grant Hanham is a Synergia associate with special expertise in complex data analysis and synthesis. Grant makes use of information databases, geospatial data systems, and online tools to inform client-centred strategy and analysis.

APPENDIX 3: PROJECTED RECREATIONAL IMPACTS FROM POPULATION CHANGES

The tables in this section show the projected changes in populations in each of the four case study areas and the city in which they are based. Using 2007/08 Active New Zealand survey data, they then show the potential changes in sport and recreation participation in 2021, from 2011 estimated levels.

These projections have been derived by taking the population projections compiled by Statistics New Zealand (as at April 2012) by age, and then multiplying the national participation rates by age from the Active New Zealand 2007/08 Survey.

Once the population projections for each age band are multiplied by the activity preferences for that age group, they are then aggregated to give the numbers in the tables below. It is important to note that:

1. The totals at the bottom of each table are the total number of activities and not the total number of people (as each individual may participate in more than one activity).
2. Data were only used for the top ten activities for each age band. This meant that data were available for activities in some age bands but not always in all age bands if they didn't feature in the top ten activities. For the top activities such as walking, gardening and swimming this was not material, as all age groups participated in these activities. However, where activities made the top ten in only one age group (e.g. rugby), participation rates were assumed to be zero as no data were available, whereas actual rates could be between 0 and 10%. Therefore, there is a high degree of confidence in the predicted activity rates in the top half of the table (as participation rates available for most or all age bands), but less confidence for those activities in the lower half of the table whose activity levels may be up to 20% higher than stated.
3. The tables show the projected activity levels in 2011 and 2021, and the degree of change, for each of the case study areas (i.e. the first four data columns). For comparative purposes, the projected changes between 2011 and 2012 are shown for the city that each case study sits within (i.e. the last two data columns). In the Auckland region, these are based on the pre-amalgamation city boundaries.

Beachlands-Maraetai and Manukau City

| Activity* | Year | | Beachlands-Maraetai | | Manukau City | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | 2011 | 2021 | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change |
| Walking | 3,191 | 4,353 | 1,163 | 36% | 41,495 | 23% |
| Gardening | 2,135 | 2,936 | 801 | 38% | 29,536 | 27% |
| Swimming | 1,694 | 2,206 | 512 | 30% | 17,946 | 18% |
| Equipment-based | 1,288 | 1,716 | 429 | 33% | 14,690 | 19% |
| Cycling | 1,173 | 1,498 | 325 | 28% | 11,275 | 17% |
| Fishing | 897 | 1,151 | 255 | 28% | 8,710 | 18% |
| Dance | 789 | 1,050 | 261 | 33% | 6,863 | 14% |
| Jogging/Running | 716 | 889 | 173 | 24% | 9,793 | 21% |
| Golf | 567 | 759 | 192 | 34% | 7,495 | 25% |
| Tramping | 327 | 416 | 88 | 27% | 2,326 | 16% |
| Basketball | 117 | 179 | 62 | 53% | 901 | 7% |
| Rugby | 104 | 159 | 55 | 53% | 799 | 7% |
| Touch | 101 | 155 | 53 | 53% | 779 | 7% |
| Aerobics | 97 | 125 | 28 | 29% | 714 | 7% |
| Tennis | 93 | 142 | 49 | 53% | 2,261 | 30% |
| Pilates/Yoga | 91 | 142 | 52 | 57% | 2,538 | 53% |
| Bowls | 80 | 138 | 58 | 73% | 1,273 | 30% |
| Callisthenics | 38 | 65 | 28 | 73% | 1,203 | 53% |
| Total Activities Participated in | 13,496 | 18,079 | 4,583 | 34% | 160,596 | 20% |

Waitakere Village and Waitakere City

| Activity* | Year | | Waitakere Village | | Waikare City | |
|---|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | 2011 | 2021 | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change |
| Walking | 1,991 | 2,248 | 257 | 13% | 18,137 | 18% |
| Gardening | 1,286 | 1,491 | 205 | 16% | 13,705 | 21% |
| Swimming | 1,072 | 1,146 | 74 | 7% | 6,483 | 11% |
| Equipment-based | 822 | 891 | 69 | 8% | 5,716 | 13% |
| Cycling | 712 | 748 | 35 | 5% | 3,943 | 10% |
| Dance | 517 | 554 | 38 | 7% | 3,237 | 12% |
| Fishing | 516 | 563 | 47 | 9% | 3,899 | 15% |
| Jogging/Running | 467 | 489 | 22 | 5% | 1,822 | 7% |
| Golf | 337 | 384 | 47 | 14% | 3,264 | 19% |
| Tramping | 183 | 180 | - 3 | -2% | 854 | 10% |
| Basketball | 115 | 112 | - 3 | -3% | 171 | 3% |
| Rugby | 102 | 99 | - 3 | -3% | 152 | 3% |
| Touch | 99 | 97 | - 3 | -3% | 148 | 3% |
| Tennis | 91 | 89 | - 2 | -3% | 136 | 3% |
| Aerobics | 60 | 82 | 21 | 35% | 892 | 21% |
| Bowls | 58 | 90 | 32 | 56% | 1,418 | 49% |
| Pilates/Yoga | 58 | 63 | 5 | 9% | 703 | 28% |
| Callisthenics | 28 | 43 | 15 | 56% | 672 | 49% |
| Total Activities Participated in | 8,516 | 9,370 | 854 | 10% | 65,353 | 15% |

* Top 10 activities reported in Active NZ survey

Rototuna and Hamilton

| Activity* | Year | | Rototuna | | Hamilton City | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | 2011 | 2021 | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change |
| Walking | 6,768 | 9,198 | 2,430 | 36% | 10,626 | 15% |
| Gardening | 4,398 | 5,994 | 1,596 | 36% | 8,022 | 19% |
| Swimming | 3,692 | 4,795 | 1,103 | 30% | 4,226 | 10% |
| Equipment-based | 2,798 | 3,726 | 928 | 33% | 3,424 | 11% |
| Cycling | 2,483 | 3,128 | 646 | 26% | 2,696 | 10% |
| Fishing | 1,824 | 2,293 | 469 | 26% | 2,411 | 14% |
| Dance | 1,751 | 2,336 | 585 | 33% | 2,041 | 10% |
| Jogging/Running | 1,636 | 2,062 | 426 | 26% | 1,321 | 7% |
| Golf | 1,167 | 1,552 | 385 | 33% | 1,751 | 15% |
| Tramping | 638 | 767 | 129 | 20% | 713 | 13% |
| Basketball | 345 | 527 | 182 | 53% | 261 | 5% |
| Rugby | 306 | 467 | 161 | 53% | 232 | 5% |
| Touch | 298 | 455 | 157 | 53% | 226 | 5% |
| Tennis | 274 | 417 | 144 | 53% | 207 | 5% |
| Aerobics | 220 | 311 | 91 | 41% | 173 | 5% |
| Bowls | 188 | 328 | 140 | 75% | 864 | 41% |
| Pilates/Yoga | 175 | 276 | 101 | 58% | 265 | 17% |
| Callisthenics | 89 | 156 | 67 | 75% | 410 | 41% |
| Total Activities Participated in | 29,049 | 38,787 | 9,739 | 34% | 39,868 | 13% |

Bethlehem and Tauranga

| Activity* | Year | | Bethlehem | | Tauranga City | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | 2011 | 2021 | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change | Change 2011 - 2021 | % Change |
| Walking | 3,651 | 4,543 | 892 | 24% | 11,250 | 19% |
| Gardening | 2,503 | 3,181 | 678 | 27% | 8,317 | 20% |
| Swimming | 1,771 | 2,061 | 290 | 16% | 4,439 | 15% |
| Equipment-based | 1,389 | 1,652 | 262 | 19% | 3,691 | 16% |
| Cycling | 1,174 | 1,315 | 140 | 12% | 2,683 | 14% |
| Fishing | 901 | 1,054 | 153 | 17% | 2,445 | 16% |
| Dance | 859 | 1,012 | 153 | 18% | 2,189 | 15% |
| Jogging/Running | 681 | 775 | 94 | 14% | 1,528 | 12% |
| Golf | 605 | 759 | 154 | 25% | 1,937 | 19% |
| Tramping | 325 | 324 | - 2 | -1% | 529 | 11% |
| Basketball | 178 | 194 | 16 | 9% | 254 | 9% |
| Bowls | 165 | 267 | 103 | 62% | 918 | 32% |
| Rugby | 158 | 173 | 15 | 9% | 226 | 9% |
| Touch | 154 | 168 | 14 | 9% | 220 | 9% |
| Tennis | 141 | 154 | 13 | 9% | 202 | 9% |
| Pilates/Yoga | 114 | 137 | 23 | 20% | 304 | 20% |
| Callisthenics | 78 | 127 | 49 | 62% | 435 | 32% |
| Aerobics | 67 | 129 | 62 | 94% | 481 | 25% |
| Total Activities Participated in | 14,914 | 18,023 | 3,109 | 21% | 42,050 | 17% |

* Top 10 activities reported in Active NZ survey

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