

Neighbourhood Play System

Stanhope Road School

SEPTEMBER 2022



ACTIVE



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Front cover:

This pukana from the children of Stanhope Road School throws down the wero to adults to create more time, space and permission for play.

Executive summary

Te Whai Kori – A Regional Play Framework for Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland outlines the plan to develop play across Tāmaki Makaurau and has been endorsed by Aktive, CLM Community Sport, Harbour Sport, Sport Auckland, Sport Waitākere, and Auckland Council. With the support of Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa and Aktive, Sport Auckland tested the Neighbourhood Play System blueprint to assess play within the suburb of Mount Wellington and the neighbourhood surrounding Stanhope Road School. This Neighbourhood Play System report provides a comprehensive assessment of the area surrounding Stanhope Road School and evaluates the opportunities identified through an assessment and consultation process for creating playful neighbourhoods through tamariki co-designed play initiatives, which link to the outcomes in Te Whai Kori.

The Neighbourhood Play System is a novel approach to urban design that places the key stakeholder – our tamariki – at the centre of the design process. Through co-design practices and conversations, the key barriers, and opportunities to play in their neighbourhood have been identified and shaped into initiatives that have the potential to dismantle the systems of play inequity within and surrounding the school setting.

The kaupapa of this project was to understand how various urban systems impact tamariki's play opportunities in their community and to support the development of initiatives that contribute to creating an equitable tamariki-friendly urban environment.

The Stanhope Road School Neighbourhood Play System project is the fifth of its type in Aotearoa, and the first in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland.

Stanhope Road School is a full primary school situated in Mount Wellington (Maungarei), Auckland, catering for tamariki from Year 0 to 8. The school is part of the Maungakiekie Community of Learning, Panmure – Mt Wellington and has a growing and increasingly culturally diverse roll. In late July 2022, the school welcomed a new principal and currently there are over 60 nations represented in the school community, which is a key factor in shaping what makes Stanhope Road School unique. The school rolls show that 13 percent of tamariki identify as Māori, and the school is open about celebrating diversity and being responsive to the needs of their community.

Within the school grounds there are a broad range of play opportunities and evidence of much creativity in terms of how play is provided for different ages, gender, and developmental stages – this is achieved both through assets and in-class opportunities. The school has a progressive approach to play and a number of supportive play champions amongst the staff. Play is clearly a vehicle for the school to move towards its vision that “everyone will thrive and succeed in an ever-changing fast-moving world” (Stanhope Road School, Vision and Values).

In looking across the community however, it is easy to see challenges to play access have been manifested by the constant growth and development across the area. Through conversations with tamariki, a strong sense of being ‘hemmed-in’ has surfaced.

The residential area of the community is between an extremely busy four-lane arterial route, an industrial area, busy, local shops and big box retail.

As a result of their car-centric environment, tamariki feel nervous and fearful about playing in the area. This has led to extremely low active transport levels (eight students arrive at school by bike) and no perceivable ‘play-on-the-way’ type activities taking place. This is having a direct impact upon the physical activity levels of tamariki at Stanhope Road School.

Figure 1: Whole School photo.





Figure 2: Stanhope Road School children at play.

Stanhope Road School was once gate-free and open to the public for use, however due to issues with vandalism and Covid-19 lockdowns the school chose to close its gates to the community. As a result, the Stanhope Road School area is a 'play desert'. While there is a decent provision of green spaces within the broader community, there is only one dedicated and fit-for-purpose play asset (playground) within the walking radius (650m) of the school (Thompson Park), and access to spaces for play is limited. As a result, play is not prioritised by whānau, and according to teachers, rarely takes place at a community level. With similarities to other Auckland settings and plans for accelerated urbanisation in the city (Auckland Council, The Auckland Plan) - this report presents a vital test case.

also challenge the adult decision-makers in the area to enact the intentions of their strategy directly, for the benefit of the tamariki that live in the area now and in the future.

Capitalising on these opportunities to create an equitable 'neighbourhood play system' will require strong local governance, vocal play champions drawn from key community stakeholder groups and a continuation of the inspiring community-led, co-design approach with the tamariki of Stanhope Road School.

This report recognises and elevates tamariki as valued contributors to society, giving them the space to participate and take responsibility for factors that affect their daily lives. This aligns to the school vision and value outcomes of being "...Friends (Whakahoahoa), Learners (Ākonga), and Guardians (Kaitiaki) - in all aspects of their learning and life". If we are to fully bring this document to life, tamariki of the school will need adult decision-makers to join them in taking action. If we can do so, we will optimise the development of our tamariki and instill in them a belief in democracy.

“ It is a little heartbreaking to see the school grounds that were once open to the surrounding community for after-hours and weekend use are now gated, closed and empty. ”

Teacher - Stanhope Road School

To support Stanhope Road School tamariki to enjoy more play we propose a range of short-, medium- and long-term actions. This approach aligns to the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board plan and uses it as a framework to address the challenges to play access, through the eyes of tamariki from Stanhope Road School. In doing so, we commit as a community to the direction that has been chosen. But we



The Neighbourhood Play System

This Neighbourhood Play System report highlights some of the key issues and sets out the current play context at a city, neighbourhood, and school level within and surrounding Stanhope Road School. It also proposes a set of recommendations that can be implemented by enablers of play through integrated actions, messaging and infrastructure which promotes play and independent active mobility of tamariki (figure 3).

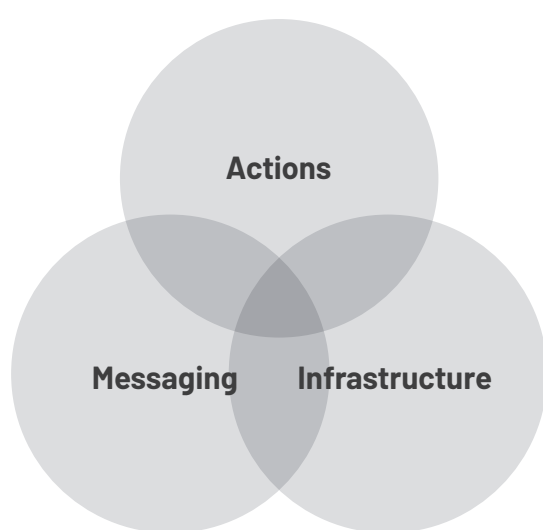


Figure 3: Shows the three domains of work which will sustainably grow play.

- Actions are short term activations, programmes, projects and events, which drive action. These are often low to no cost, are temporary and may include play streets or the activation of school and community play spaces
- Messaging is about how we shape systems, communities, and places for play. This occurs with consideration of Council documents, perceptions, and the ongoing impacts/context of spaces. We will usually try to evolve case-studies and learnings from locally led approaches into policies, strategies and plans.
- Infrastructure is about the transformation of our public spaces in order to create playable communities. This recognises the value that play has in the lives of tamariki and whānau, shaping how we consider and design urban environments to be 'child-friendly'.

For example, to address road safety concerns 'Infrastructure' could include installing safe pedestrian crossings along with 'messaging' (policies) to reduce vehicle speed in the area and 'Actions' to educate tamariki and the community about road safety and the benefits of active and independent mobility for play.

What is play?

If we think back to our childhood memories, play is spontaneous, tamariki-led, fun, accessible, social and freely chosen with no pre-determined outcome. It is usually highly active with elements of challenge and risk that tests boundaries in an imaginative way. Play allows tamariki the space to practice, learn and develop the skills they need to be active for life. These include fundamental movement skills, self-directed creativity and innovation, social and emotional connections, resilience, independence, leadership and informed risk-taking.

For more information about how we might grow our Aotearoa play system.

[Play | Play Development | Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa \(sportnz.org.nz\)](https://sportnz.org.nz)

The right to play

Children have the right to play and this right is encapsulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - Article 31: "That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts".

Figure 4: Stanhope Road School children at play.

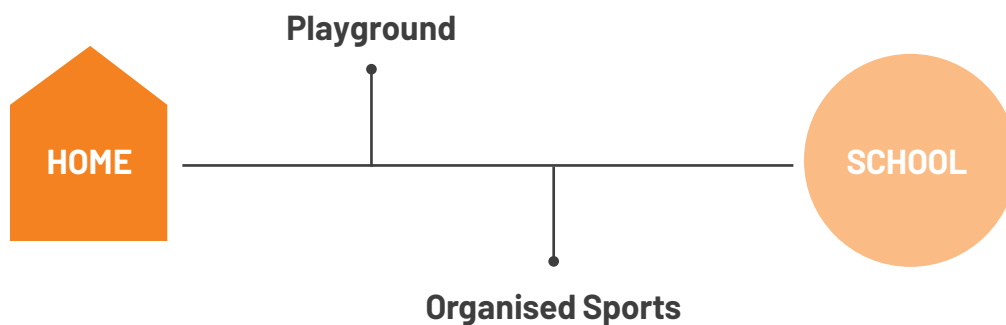


Play is under threat

The playful upbringing enjoyed by previous generations is no longer as accessible to many tamariki, due to changing social, environmental, technological and economic pressures. Young people need the time, space and permission to play. But with increasingly structured lives and reduced free time, the loss of traditional play spaces such as streets and driveways, heightened fears around safety and risk, and a loss of societal connections means play deprivation is increasingly becoming a national and international concern.

Play spaces and play locations have become car-centric destinations that require whānau to drive tamariki to, for play to occur (see Figure 5). For too many tamariki however, access to these play spaces and play locations are determined by systemic barriers such as income and postcode. This topic is particularly prevalent in Tāmaki Makaurau, where density, and car ownership are both high and growing.

Figure 5: Car-centric play system.

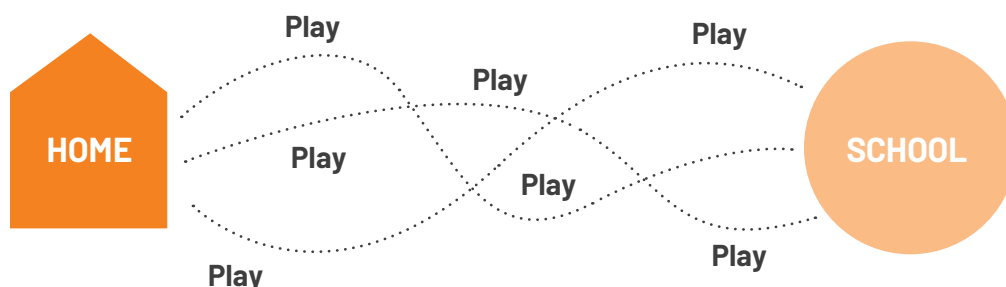


The neighbourhood footprint

Tamariki and whānau need safe and clean streets, access to green spaces, clean air, things to do, the ability to get around, the freedom to see friends, and somewhere to call home. Each neighbourhood across Tāmaki Makaurau has the opportunity to build upon its own cultural, political, socio-economic and environmental contexts to realise the benefits of play through child-friendly urban planning. Schools are usually located at the heart of neighbourhoods and communities but more and more often, school grounds are not publicly accessible after hours (with many schools fenced and gated), which dramatically decreases play opportunities. The neighbourhood footprint surrounding a school is just as important in creating a liveable and playful city for our tamariki and their whānau.

Considering that tamariki spend most of their time at home or at school, these two settings should be used as anchor points for play within the neighbourhood footprint. Providing safe travel routes to enable independence and creating a network of opportunities to play on the way and in every space available helps form the foundations of a truly child-friendly city (see Figure 6).

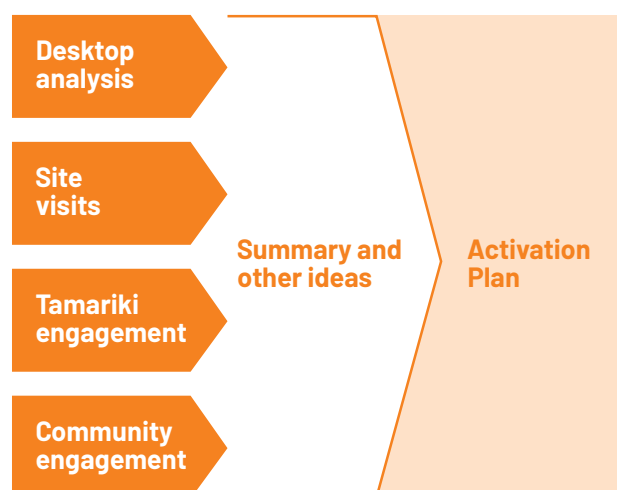
Figure 6: Walkable play system.



The Neighbourhood Play System Approach

The Neighbourhood Play System provides a blueprint to identify and address key barriers and opportunities for tamariki to play inside their school and in their surrounding neighbourhood. This is approached through the eyes of tamariki and their whānau who live, work, and play in that community (see Figure 7). The blueprint seeks to link with local plans and funding opportunities and considers how to embed play elements through school grounds, footpaths, streets, alleyways, greenspaces, waterways, industrial zones, marae, churches, and shops to promote play every day.

Figure 7: Neighbourhood Play System approach.



Desktop analysis

Desktop analysis was conducted to map and gain a current understanding of the local context, including the built- and natural environments. A mapping service was used to note the following considerations:

- Locations of dedicated play spaces (for example, playgrounds, parks/fields, beaches, bush areas)
- Locations of other play locations (for example, community halls, libraries, churches, marae, temples)
- Locations of other soft infrastructure (for example, drinking foundations, seating areas)
- Details of:
 - walkable catchments (for example, footpaths)
 - pedestrian crossings
 - traffic lights
 - road signs
 - alleyways
 - cycle paths
 - main roads
 - public transport routes (bus, train, ferry)
 - waterways
 - street lighting
 - community surveillance
 - steep hills
 - unsafe areas.

Noted alongside the map were details of

- school enrolment/zoning areas
- socioeconomic deprivation profiles
- one Network Road classifications
- Auckland Council plans for that area
- Travelwise school programmes
- play initiatives in that area
- Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa funding history for the school.

Site visits

Site visits were conducted to appraise accessibility, site conditions, tamariki friendliness and hazards presented by the natural and built environments, traffic flow and potential barriers to play.

Using the map from desktop analysis, a route was determined and days/times when tamariki would typically be accessing the neighbourhood for play activities. The following was noted during the visits:

- The condition and appearance of play spaces and play locations at the school and in the surrounding neighbourhood (for example, new, dirty, broken).
- Any physical barriers that might reduce access to tamariki for play spaces and play locations (for example, difficulty using footpaths, busy roads, high-speed areas, gated play location, high curbs, bollards preventing use of alleyways, no street lighting, vandalised areas, narrow cycle paths).
- Coverage from rain, wind, and sun (for example, shading, trees), and seating.
- Whether houses in the area have outdoor spaces for play (for example, front/back yards, berms).
- Where tamariki 'hang out' and the journey they take between play spaces and locations and home (for example, public spaces, play on the street).
- Whether tamariki are by themselves or supervised by adults.

Tamariki engagement

Taking the time to undertake whakawhanaungatanga with tamariki provided a shared sense of connection and purpose as well as creating a safe and trusted environment for the voices of our youngest stakeholders to be heard. This was essential to capture their perceptions about barriers and/or opportunities they experience in their school and neighbourhood.

Figure 8: Tamariki engagement exercises.



A series of engagement sessions were used, such as:

- Tamariki drawing a map of their neighbourhood from their home to school and the places they play or travel.
- Providing a birds-eye view map of the school and/or neighbourhood and asking tamariki to mark areas on the map that they would and wouldn't play.
- Providing large photos of play spaces and play locations and in groups, asking tamariki to put post-it notes on to label elements that are fun, or scary, for example.
- Tamariki creating something to explain their favourite play experience and then tell their story.

This was done to gain a clear understanding of their current perceptions of play, what the key enablers and barriers for playful spaces are in the school, and neighbourhood, and what a playful child-friendly neighbourhood could look like in the future.

The key considerations for the engagement included:

- balancing quality data with building connections and relationships
- ensuring tamariki felt comfortable being vulnerable
- ensuring all voices were heard and captured
- ensuring tamariki were the co-leaders/co-designers on this project
- ensuring that the tamariki recognised their role as agents of change in their own neighbourhood.

Community engagement

Engaging with the wider community was done to gather information from whānau about barriers and/or opportunities to play at school and in the surrounding neighbourhood. This was done through a survey with questions based off time, space, and permission for play currently in the neighbourhood for their tamariki. Consultation was also carried out through one-on-one meetings and through activation events.

Everything that was found (desktop analysis), seen (site visits) and heard (tamariki and community engagement) was then collated to help form this document.

Stanhope Road School context map

Figure 9: Broader community aerial map.



Current conditions

Mount Wellington

Census place summaries show that this is a fast-growing area, with the resident population growing from 2049 in 2006, to 3129 in 2018 - this represents a 53 percent increase over the period. Broader Mount Wellington has grown 19 percent over the same period and the number of private dwellings in the area grew by 22.4 percent to 1,356 private dwellings.

Similarly, the Māori population of the area has grown from 114 to 192 over the same period, a 68 percent increase. Despite this, only 1.2 percent of residents can speak te reo Māori.

In terms of the ages of residents, in general, this community, like most in Aotearoa is growing older, although 19.4 percent of Mount Wellington North residents are tamariki (0-14), this is comparable to a national average of 19.6 percent

The area has a broad range of represented ethnicities, which is echoed in school enrolment data, although the key recent trend is growth in the European population. This is not represented in school statistics, which may indicate that they are choosing to go to school elsewhere.

Figure 10: School Demographics.

	2006 (%)	2018 (%)
European	48.6	60.2
Māori	5.7	6.1
Pacific peoples	8.1	6.6
Asian	34.4	32.2
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	3.0	2.7
Other ethnicity	7.2	0.7

Transport statistics for the area present Mount Wellington North as a strongly car centric community. Only 4.3 percent of residents use active modes to get to work. And while 16.6 percent of students walk to school or education, only 0.6 percent of students scooter or bike. At last count there were eight bikes in the Stanhope Road School bike racks.

According to school records, there are 90 students living on the same block as the school that don't have to cross a road to access school facilities.

From an economic standpoint

- Only 4 percent of local residents are unemployed, (5 percent National average).
- The 2018 median household income was \$36,300 (vs. National average of \$31k).
- 17 percent of households earn over \$70,000.
- 23.1 percent of residents possess a qualification at Bachelor's degree level or above this is higher than the Auckland average of 18.6 percent. 'Home ownership is slightly above the Auckland average (46.7 to 45.4 percent).
- 86.7 percent of locals have access to the internet, this is slightly below the Auckland Average.
- All of the mesh blocks within the walking catchment of the school have an above average or high level of deprivation as expressed by the Environmental Health Intelligence NZ deprivation tool. Those students drawn from the Panmure end of the school home zone are more likely to suffer from the broader effects of deprivation, as they are high (9) on the deprivation scale.
- Anecdotally, there is daily evidence of the effects of deprivation, particularly around clusters of shops.

19%

Broader Mount Wellington has grown 19%

4.3%

Only 4.3% of residents use active modes to get to work

0.6%

0.6% of students scooter or bike

Stanhope Road School

Stanhope Road School is in the statistical (census) area of Mount Wellington North, although school students come from a 'home zone' across a number of surrounding statistical areas – notably Mount Wellington East and Mount Wellington Ferndale.

Environmental Health Intelligence NZ monitor deprivation levels across New Zealand communities. Their deprivation tool shows that Stanhope Road School home zone features a wide range of deprivation zones. Most of the zones though are in the medium to 'most deprived' range (figure 10). This is most relevant for the purpose of this report due to the correlation between deprivation and other factors like public health, public safety and social disturbance.

Figure 10: Stanhope Road School 'home zone'.

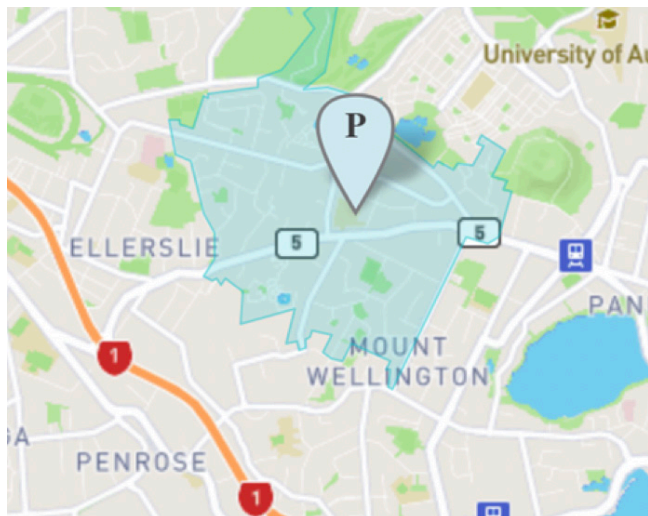
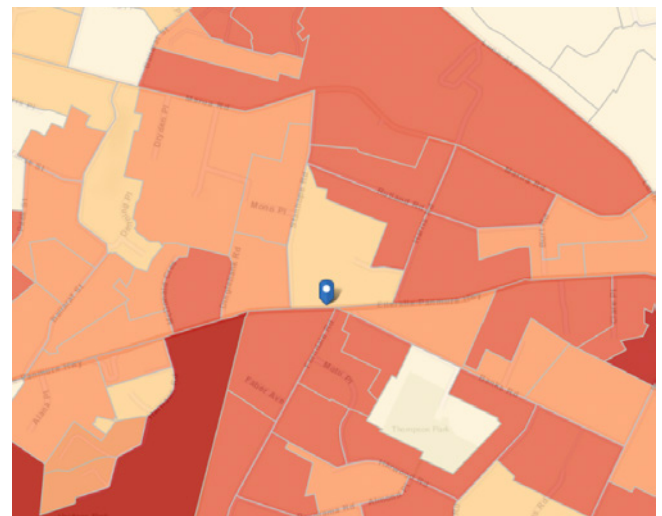


Figure 11: EHINZ deprivation within the school zone.



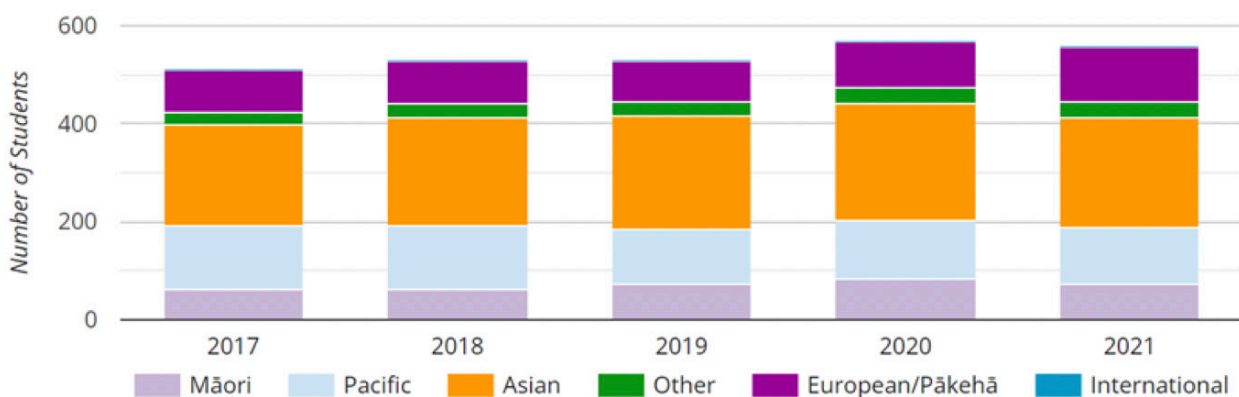
Legend - Statistical area 2 (SA2)

NZDep2018 decile

- 9 - 10 most deprived
- 7 - 8
- 5 - 6
- 3 - 4
- 1 - 2 least deprived
- no data

Figure 12: Stanhope Road School Student Population (Education Counts).

Roll by ethnic group, as at 1 July (2017-2021)



Inside the School Gates

Play within the school gates is abundant and plentiful. Stanhope Road School has large grounds and a broad and interesting range of play infrastructure, assets and opportunities. The three dedicated playground areas are a popular attraction (see Figure 13). The playgrounds are zoned to cater to different ages and abilities and adjacent to the classrooms of the appropriate class groups. Anecdotally, the children thrive on the opportunities for physical development, testing their abilities and embracing risk.

Figure 13: Stanhope Road School playground areas.



There is further provision through water play, a sandpit, an obstacle course, broader nature play, mud kitchens and a dedicated loose parts play area with a large lockable shed full of gear. (See Figure 14).

Figure 14: Stanhope Road School loose parts/junk play, sandpit, mud kitchen.



In addition, there is sports gear available at lunchtimes and intervals, a sports canopy, a swimming pool, two table tennis tables, a volleyball court and a basketball court (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Stanhope Road School.



A recent development in 2019 is "Treemendous" – an outdoor learning area that was designed by Year 7/8 students focused upon creating an outdoor learning environment centred around the great range of established trees in school grounds. (See Figure 16). This was a previously under-utilised area of the school that has been transformed into a popular play area, with connections to learning inquiry. There is still a sense that this space is under-utilised by students, but this might be down to its location within the school footprint.

Figure 16: Stanhope Road School "Treemendous" area.

All of this takes place in a 'no limitations' environment, which leads to student experimentation and exploration around the grounds. A visit to the school grounds during lunchtime places you in the middle of a frenzy of action, as hundreds of students race around sampling the vast array of options. Naturally, opportunities for self-actualisation have emerged, as groups have migrated towards their preferred type of play and all of the benefits of play are being unlocked within the allotted time and space.

Figure 17: SRS student exercise "How do you like to play?"

" I go outside and use the leaves and mud to cook in my kitchen. "



" I like to find things to hang on and go upside down. "

" My favorite thing to do is play dress ups with my friends and pretend we are princesses. "



The absence of many steps, curbs, or tiling ensures that movement or 'flow' around the school is easy and inclusive for all. There are a handful of strong 'play champions' amongst staff who drive the creation and promotion of these opportunities and embed a play as a priority within the school culture and within classwork. As such, the school is recognised as one of the leading schools for play within the Tāmaki school cluster.

Artwork and designs around the school capture the cultural richness of the community and enact the schools pledge to celebrate diversity, promote creativity and bi-cultural heritage (see Figure 18). Tākaro Māori play is a priority of classwork and extracurricular activities and is supported and encouraged across the school grounds.

Figure 18: Stanhope Road School cultural artwork and designs.



Figure 19: Tākaro Maori Play.



School leaders are proud of what they have on their grounds and are eager to protect it. This is the reason that in 2020, the school closed its gates outside of school hours due to pronounced damage and littering on the grounds over the weekend and evenings. School gates and fences have also been effective in keeping parents and whānau off the property during periods of Covid-19 restrictions. The spinoff has been a less connected community, as evidenced through a range of community conversations.

Unfortunately, the design of the school presents a range of challenges from a security standpoint. The layout of the buildings has created a range of blind spots and corners and limited lines-of-sight which might support natural supervision across the school footprint. This is more pronounced on the motorway side of the school, where there are also fewer fence lines share with neighbours.

These images demonstrate a vast range of diverse play opportunities for Stanhope Road School tamariki, which present a number of ideal circumstances for development.

Figure 20: Outdoor areas at the school.



Figure 21: Play opportunities at the school.



Figure 22: Proximity of dwellings (school in centre).



Across the community

In exploring the community through site visits and transect walks, we have observed the following:

Stanhope Road School is situated on the Ellerslie-Panmure Highway in Mount Wellington, State Highway 5. As a 'regional' road, the highway is said to be a major connector with a 'significant contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of the region'.

“ There are 23,251 motor vehicles on this road each day, which equates to one car every 3.7 seconds, with 7 percent of those vehicles classified as heavy vehicles. ”

Waka Kotahi, One Network Road Classification

In addition, there are three arterial roads within the school home-zone, which are said to perform a 'lifeline function' with over 7,000 cars crossing them each day.

Figure 23: A Student-led traffic awareness campaign.



“ This is a super high-risk school ”

Waka Kotahi employee

The walkable catchment of the school is extremely busy, with movement driven by industry, retail, and the commute to work and education. From a child-mobility standpoint, the area is punctuated by major severance provided by the highway to the south and Lunn Avenue to the north. Lunn Avenue is an extremely busy retail area. The road layout limits access to both public green spaces within the school home-zone (Maungarei Mount Wellington) and Thompson Park). The growth in dwellings identified earlier in this report has been driven by Kainga Ora developments in the neighbourhood. Beyond the census measurement period, a large new (private) apartment building will have added to local density.

Figure 24: ONR classification.

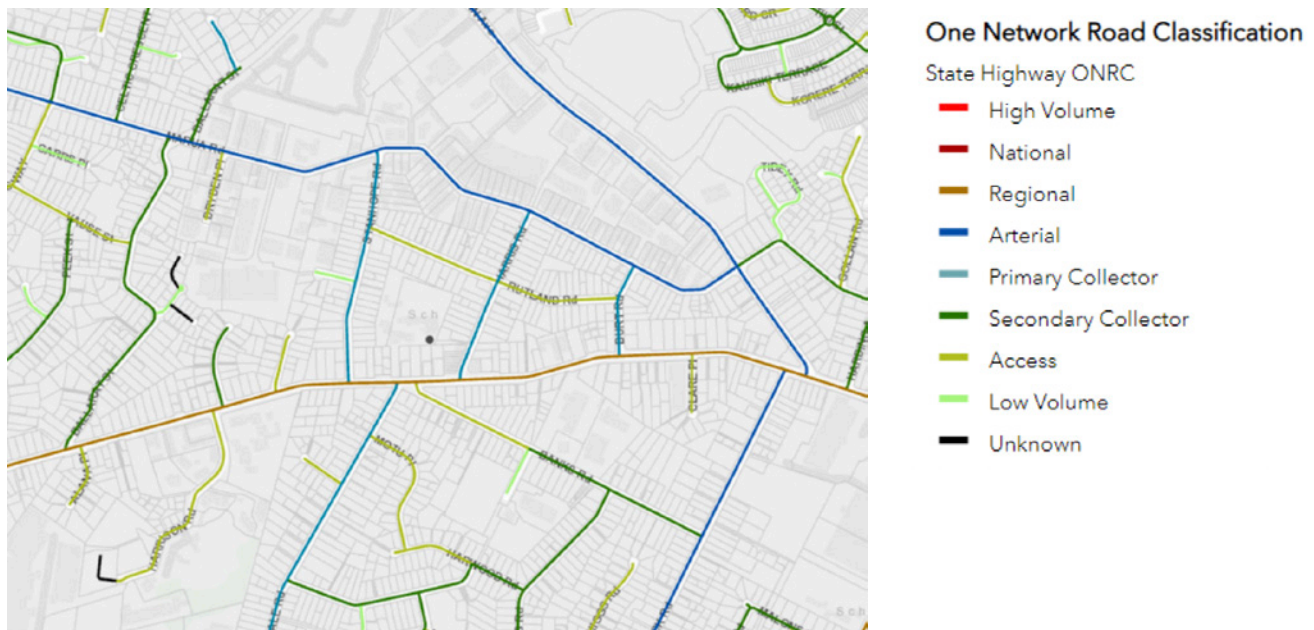
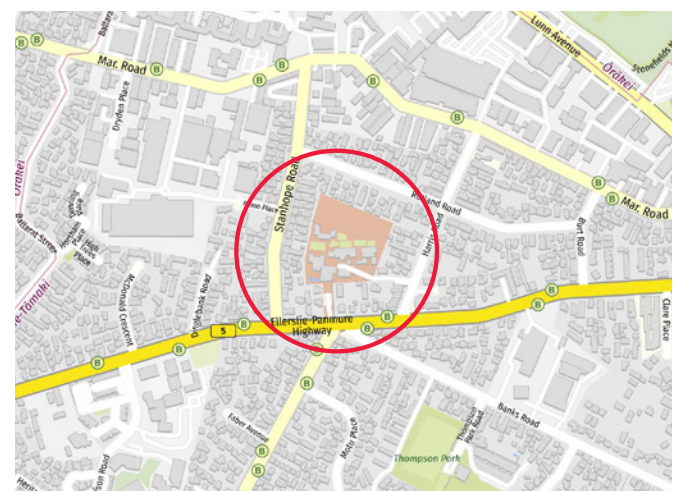


Figure 25: 800m walking radius around the school.



Figure 25b: 400m walking radius around the school.



Few of the dwellings in the home zone have a quarter acre section. Subdivision, townhouse development and apartments have decreased the overall play spaces available to tamariki. A series of narrow, private rights of way, backing onto the school are noteworthy for their location and play potential. Their suitability for activation could be explored. There are significant green spaces nearby, but these are largely corporate owned or unsuitable for activation (for example, St John's front lawn) (see Figure 26). Tamariki are not generally visible in the community outside of typical school drop-off and pickup times, and even then, they are usually accompanied by adults.

Figure 26: St John's front lawn opposite the school.



Figure 27: Aerial view of the school/surrounding neighbourhood.



The footpaths and alleyways of the area are in serviceable condition, and generally support some use of small wheels (scooters and skateboards) although there are areas of asphalt cracking and moss/lichen. The cracks are most pronounced near the shops in front of the school, combining this with litter, gravel, high traffic volume and scrambling for carparks, making the area generally unappealing for whānau. General observation across the community is that the physical environment, the quality of pavements, lighting, dropped kerbs, crossings, present an average walking and wheeling landscape.

Figure 28: Showing road signs covered by vegetation.



While the main road creates severance to the south, if we cross it, we find a community that is largely residential and generally quieter. There are however, lots of cars on 'rat-runs' and anecdotally, few children visible in the community.

There are few obvious opportunities for Play Streets type provision or events. Some of the cul-de-sacs near to the school have high volumes of industrial traffic and parked cars (for example, Dinglebank Road and Mono Place). With three good quality green reserves within Mt Wellington North, it may be wiser to work on activating these as a focus of gatherings.

For the purposes of this report, we can classify a child's roaming radius as 750m-1km. Figure 29 demonstrates that there is only one dedicated play asset within this radius - Thompson Park. This is a good local park with a decent playground and serviceable amenities. There are public toilets, lots of tree shade and a large carpark, mainly to service the rugby league club and softball club based there. Many students in the area exist in a 'play desert' in that they don't have a physical play asset within 750m of their homes.

Location and size of dedicated play areas

Figure 29: Thompson Park – playground, Mt Wellington Rugby League Sports Club (650m from school, ~8 min walk).



Figure 30: Playco playground, climbing nets, monkey bars, curved slide, tunnel slide, bridge, toddler playground, crawl tunnel.



Play trails/play on the way

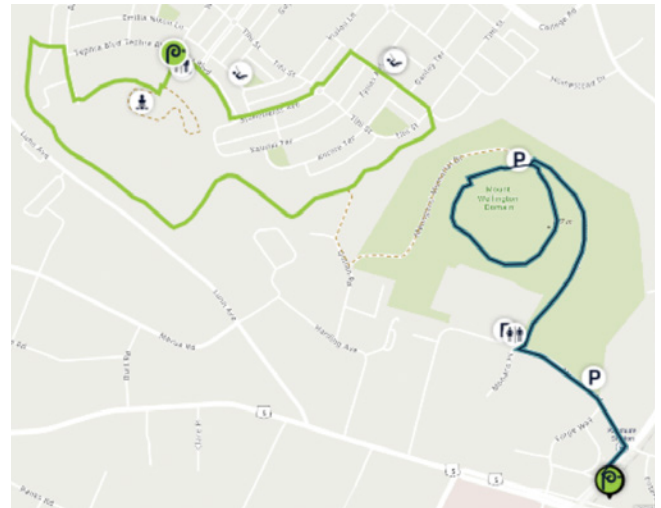
With much retail and industry to the north, the main opportunities for playing on the way are to the south of the school, across the main road. Thompson Park is the only dedicated play asset within the Neighbourhood Play System, but immediately to the south there are two more interesting reserves, connected by sightlines and well-planned pathways.

As outlined, while there are a number of local parks and reserves, the common consensus is that they are underused and inaccessible. This is due to a range of factors identified during site observations. This includes speeding motorists, 'rat-running' and a lack of driver courtesy, as well as parental fears. It seems that much of the challenge of this work is to normalise usage of what exists, and perhaps modify it for added appeal.

“ I hardly ever see any kids on the playground in front of us, but I know that there are lots of kids around here ”

Local apartment resident

Figure 31: Paths/Walks - Maungarei (Mt Wellington), Stonefields Path.



Historical decisions have been made to ensure that the provision of local reserves and play assets is good, but there is a sense that rapid societal changes have made them less attractive and appealing.

Figure 32: Maungarei (Mt Wellington) - access from Gollan Road (1.3km from school, ~15 mins walk).

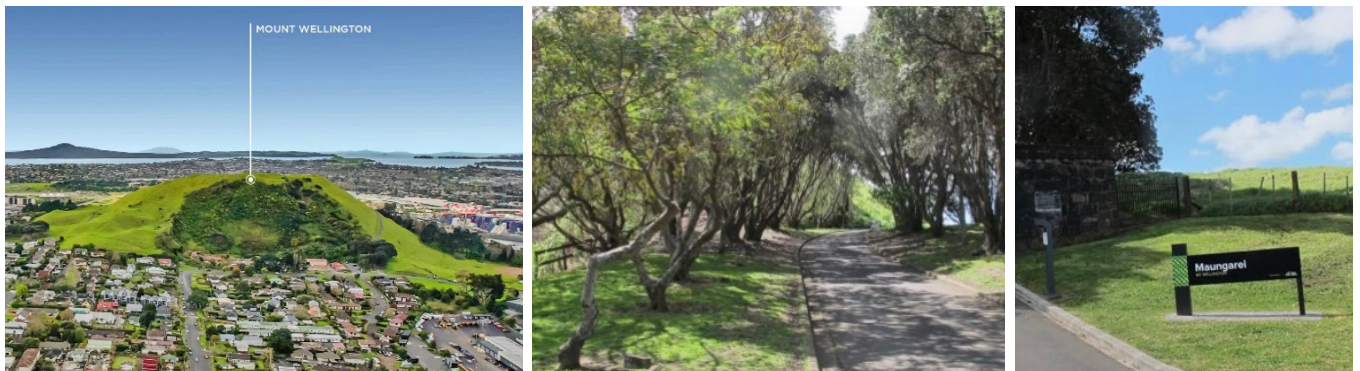


Figure 33: Stonefields Path - connects to Maungarei path at end of Gollan Road.

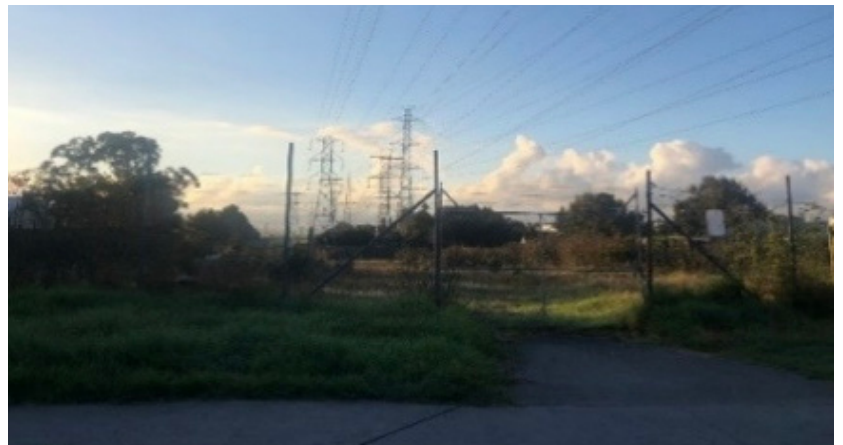


Natural environments/waterways

Figure 34: Almond Reserve (Alcock Street – 1.1km from school, ~ 13 min walk).



Figure 35: Alcock Reserve/Lavas Reserve – 1.2km from school, ~15 min walk.



Strategic/Planning context

In aiming to address the factors that support or inhibit play at a community level, we move into the remit of a wide range of strategic plans and approaches, which is amplified in big cities. These strategies cover education settings, community development, transport, the sport and active recreation sector, and play itself. In general, there is strong alignment between many of these strategies as elected members and local leaders have been proactive in identifying and prioritising many of the focus areas that lead to the wellbeing of residents. This is strongly the case in fast-developing urban environments like the Stanhope Road School home zone.

	Education	Play, Active Recreation and Sport	Community	Transport
Very relevant	Stanhope Road School Strategic Plan	Te Whai Kori – A Regional Play Framework for Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland Sport NZ Strategic Plan Aktive Strategic Plan Kia Hianga- Sport NZ Play Plan	Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board Plan 2020	Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan
Relevant			The Auckland Plan I Am Auckland - the Children and Young People’s Strategic Action Plan Auckland Council Parks and Open Spaces Plan	

We have identified that the document of most relevance to this report is the [Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board Plan 2020](#) (See Figure 36). This document identifies a range of familiar recurring themes, as factors that require further attention and investment. We consider that aligning the considerations of the school with those of local leaders and governance gives us a good chance of creating a conversation with local leaders which is aligned and where a direct line can be drawn between the aspirations of elected officials and better outcomes for local children.

Figure 36: Outcome areas of Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board Plan 2020.

We will focus on six outcomes to guide our work and make Maungakiekie-Tāmaki a better community for all. Our aspirations are outlined below.



Panama Primary school performing a traditional Māori welcome at the local board inauguration ceremony

Outcome 1: Our diverse communities are active, involved and engaged

Our communities are empowered to take the lead on community projects and planning for their areas. We feel connected to each other and this area. We find unity in our diversity. Our quality of life is high, and we have the opportunity to develop to our full potential.



Tāmaki Primary school children performing at the local board inauguration ceremony

Outcome 2: Te ao Māori is thriving and visible

Māori culture and identity are integrated into all of our work across the local board area. We acknowledge the importance of Māori in our journey.



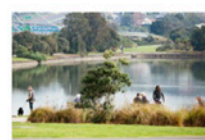
Skateboarding competition at Panmure Basin

Outcome 3: Our physical and social infrastructure is future-proofed

We have varied green spaces to enjoy and our community facilities are well used. Growth is well planned and enlivens our town centres. We enjoy healthier homes in connected neighbourhoods.



Drone view of Tāmaki shared path and estuary.



Onehunga Basin loop

Outcome 4: Our transport choices are accessible, sustainable and safe

We have easy and accessible transport choices that reduce dependence on cars. We feel safe moving around our area.

Outcome 5: Our built, natural and cultural taonga / treasures are protected and celebrated

Our water, land and air are healthy and thriving. We celebrate our natural, cultural and built heritage. We are resilient to the impacts of climate change.



People wandering among stalls in outdoor market in Panmure town centre

Outcome 6: Our people and businesses prosper economically and socially

We can live, work and play locally. We are skilled and our businesses thrive.

Current state of play

The Mount Wellington neighbourhood around Stanhope Road School faces a number of challenges that affect the ability for tamariki to play safely and independently. Throughout our engagement with the community and tamariki we heard a diverse range of concerns and opportunities for play.

Gated school

The school is currently gated and locked off at all times except before and after school to let staff and tamariki onto the grounds. Due to being gated there is no community use of the facilities outside of school time during the week or weekend. During consultation there were differing views, but definite frustrations on both sides.

"We've had instances where teachers ask children to get down from playgrounds after-school and tell them to go home. "

Stanhope Road School Parent

Previously the school wasn't gated and was open to community use, however due to incidents of damage and rubbish being left at the school it is no longer accessible to the community.

"We used to have tamariki and rangatahi come and use the basketball hoops however they can't access them anymore. "

Stanhope Road School Teacher

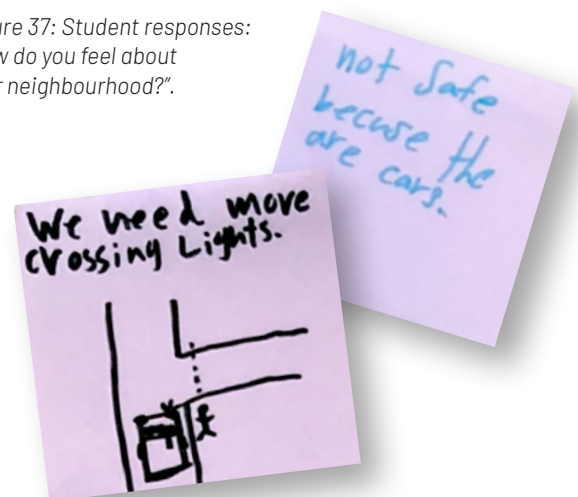
Outside of school hours, some teachers take the gated school philosophy seriously, telling kids to get off the grounds and go home. This reinforces the idea that quality play opportunities are something that can only take place during the school day. There is a belief that children will go home and play, but there is limited evidence of play across the school home zone, through backyard provision and street play. From the whānau engagement, work commitments and extra-curricular activities are considered to be barriers to the amount of play which takes place.

Traffic/road safety

The school is located on a busy main highway. There are multiple safety issues from cars travelling fast around the area. There is also a general sense that the school signs are not strong visible on the main road- which would encourage a greater level of awareness of the child amongst motorists. There is a 2.2km gap between the motorway off ramps speed limit zone, and the speed limit on the other side of the school. This leads to vehicles entering the school zone at high speed.

As a result, not many tamariki travel to school on bikes or scooters due to safety issues. Tamariki are not trusted to get themselves to school. The responses from students represent a strong awareness of the danger presented by traffic, and depictions of the community are usually heavily car-centric.

Figure 37: Student responses: "How do you feel about your neighbourhood?".



"The cars stop people playing on the streets. "

"Sharp corners, no space, cars going through red lights. "

"Add some signs to let people know. "

School Students



The school has three different traffic crossings surrounding the area as well as school zone signs, however these are minimal and not easily readable.

Figure 38: Existing school road crossings.

During the class engagement exercises, students were very forthcoming about the size of paths and how many of them are narrow. This is a mixture of the space being small and berms or shrubs being overgrown making the path smaller.

“ There’s not enough walking space. ”

“ I think we should put a scooter track so kids don’t keep bumping into other people that are taking a walk and get them injured. ”

Suggestions were made by staff and tamariki during engagement sessions as to how safety concerns could be addressed.

“ School zone sign early so people at the start know there is a school there. ”

“ A light to tell you when to stop if cars are coming through the gate. ”

Figure 39: Student drawings which answer the question “ Draw your journey from home to school”.



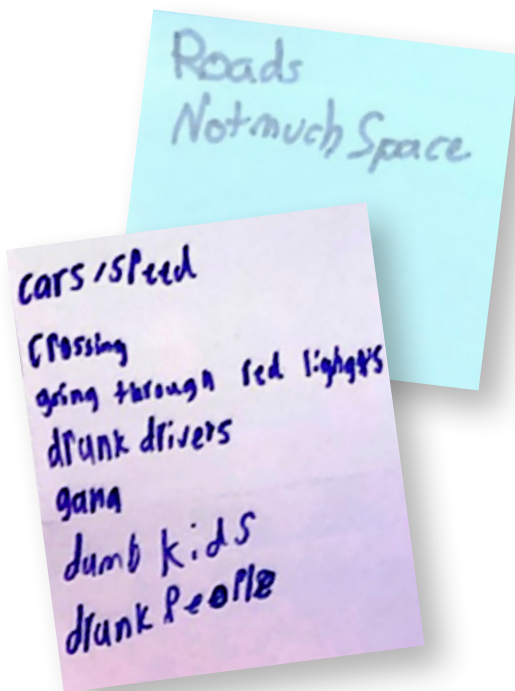
Figure 40: Creations which addresses the question: “how do you get to school?”.



Safety in the community

Stanhope Road School tamariki have a strong sense of a range of issues relating to the overall safety of the neighbourhood. When students were asked to reflect upon their personal safety, the spectrum of responses was broader than we have seen in other settings. We were surprised to collect depictions of a range of social safety factors, including gangs, the effects of alcohol abuse and local bullies.

Figure 41: Student activity "what are some features of your neighbourhood?".



In ensuring that children can be safe going forward, we think that more exploration and conversations need to take place. This way we might work towards restoring the willingness of whānau to support play across the community. In the meantime, efforts which promote 'passive supervision' across the neighbourhood make sense.

Engagement from teachers

As evidenced through their comments and during our visits, there are some extremely strong Play advocates amongst staff, including on the senior leadership team. There is however more varied engagement in play from teachers. This is beginning to improve as teachers begin to introduce their classes to more play opportunities, particularly the middle school teachers.

" We previously used to have shared learning experiences which worked really well. "

" I have noticed some senior students using the loose parts area at lunch after their teacher used the area during with their class "

Figure 42: Teacher engagement in Play



The arrival of a new principal at the school has brought new energy for community connection and partnership. There have been constructive conversations regarding the role that the school might have in growing social capital across the community, and play has been a central theme.

Accessibility/Time

The school already provides a large range of play-based opportunities which are all highly engaged in, however due to the size of the school (roll) the areas/activations often become busy and crowded. As they must leave the school grounds after the bell, they are unlikely to enjoy play outside of school hours, unless play is prioritised by family, and transport is available.

Tamariki also commented during engagement sessions that the time they do have to play isn't long enough.

“ And when you're playing you only have a short time and it's really annoying. I just wanna have fun. ”

Stanhope Road School student

Figure 43: Loose parts play equipment.



Figure 44: Tamariki engagement session - "what play opportunities do you want to see?".



“ A giant roller coaster with lots of different stops to play different things. ”

“ A magical fairy forest with unicorns. ”

“ A fort to go and play with my friends. ”

What the ideal state of play could look like

The purpose of this section is to articulate what 'ideal state' might look like. In doing so there are many positives that we can evidence in the current conditions, particularly inside the school gates. There are also clear leads on what gaps exist, and how we must address them. The emboldened headings constitute the Stanhope Road Neighbourhood Play System's overall aspiration for the play sufficiency, or play-friendliness of the area.

Access and movement

This aspect refers to the degree to which tamariki of all ages and abilities and their whānau can feel safe and are able to freely access play opportunities in their communities.

What success looks like:

At Stanhope Road School (within the school gate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a range of play assets, which are accessible and can be used at any time • Students have all hour's access – lighting creates more time for play and security, passive supervision
In the Mount Wellington neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki can freely and safely move and play between home and school
Across the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki local board area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki have enough space to play • Tamariki use active transport modes to access all of their activities • There is somewhere for everyone to play • There is ready access to the taiao (natural environment)

Built and natural environment

This aspect refers to the degree to which local built and natural environments facilitate a variety of play opportunities suitable for tamariki of all ages and abilities and their whānau.

What success looks like:

At Stanhope Road School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are enough good playgrounds on school grounds • There is a range of opportunities for play and different types of play
In the Mount Wellington neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and cars aren't a barrier to play
Across the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki local board area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is more than just a passive environment which prioritises the movement of cars, there is a focus upon active engagement and connection • There is evidence that the built environment may encourage meaningful play and exploration

Awareness and agency

This aspect refers to the degree to which play is actively supported and encouraged (through time and permission) by tamariki and their whānau as well as community members, and city authorities.

What success looks like:

At Stanhope Road School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school consider that play is important, and they support children to play • Investment in play is sufficient and there is an approach to maintenance
In the Mount Wellington neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki are allowed to go out and play, go to playgrounds and play independently and with friends in the neighbourhood
Across the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki local board area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult decisions support play provision and work on removing the barriers to play

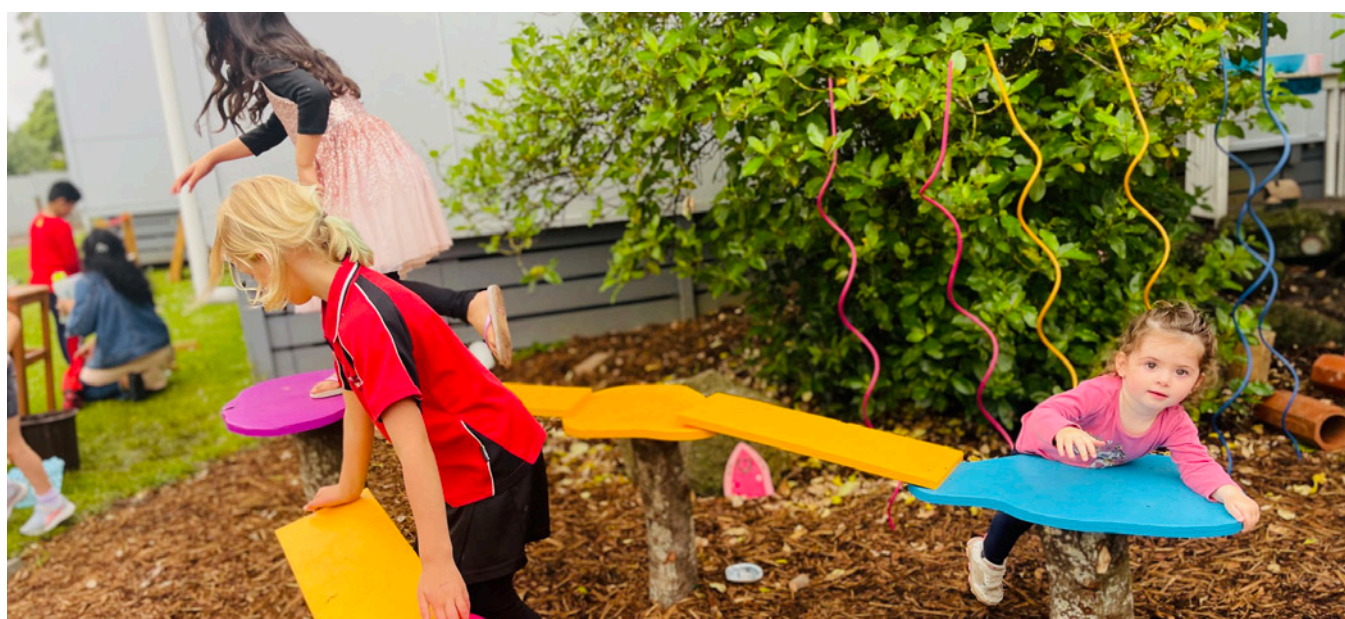
Enjoyment

This aspect refers to the degree to which tamariki of all ages and abilities with their whānau, continually enjoy their play experiences.

What success looks like:

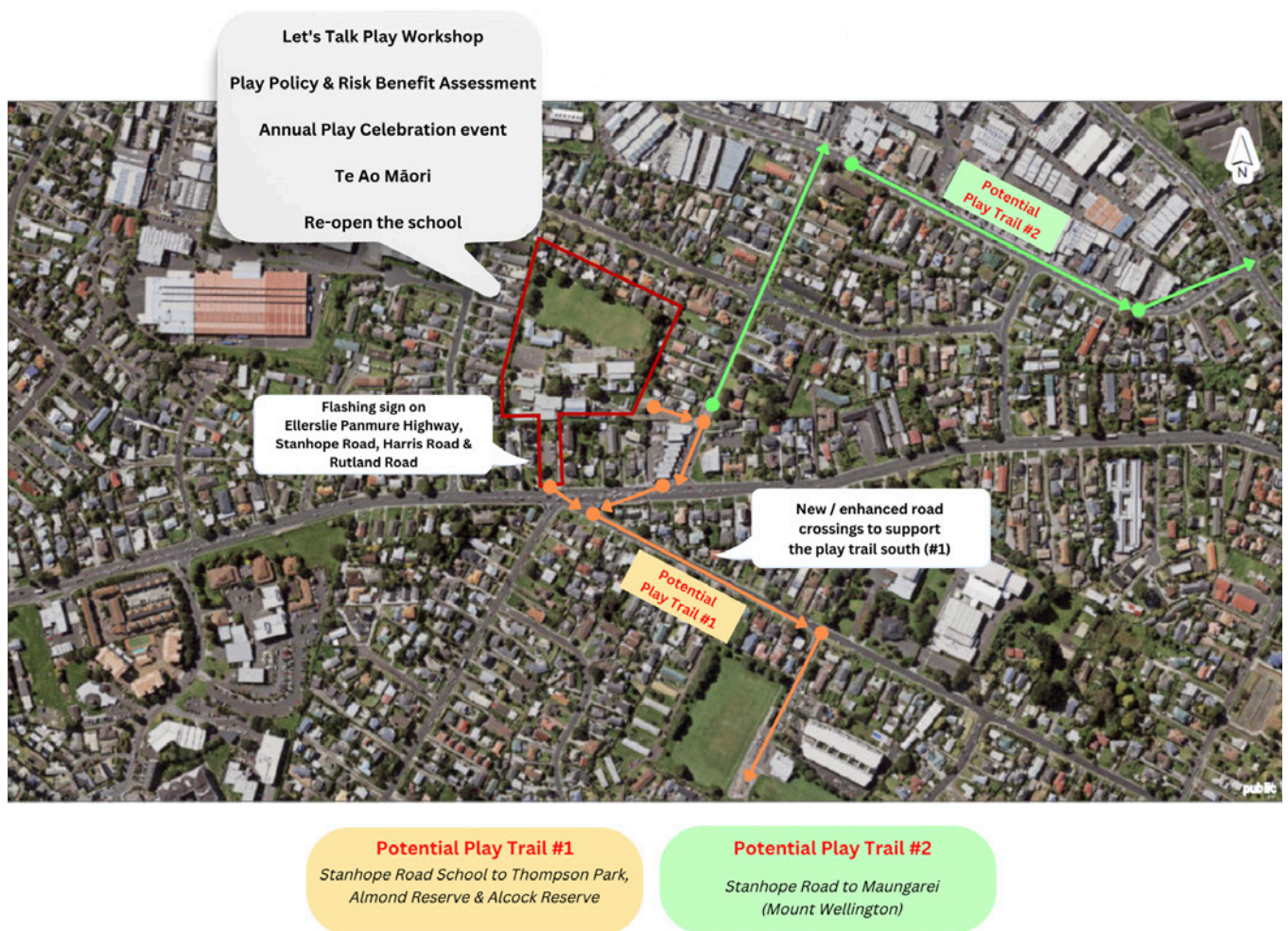
At Stanhope Road School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki enjoy playing at the school, embracing risk and physicality
In the Mount Wellington neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki enjoy playing out with friends in the neighbourhood
Across the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki local board area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamariki enjoy spending time outside in their communities and in both dedicated play spaces and other play friendly areas

Figure 45: Fairy garden area at Stanhope Road School.



Opportunities identified and recommendations

There are a number of opportunities to shape access to quality play opportunities for tamariki and whānau living in Mount Wellington- this section represents a selection of actions, messaging and infrastructure changes to achieve this. In order to frame these up as a cogent package, they have been aligned to the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki local board plan.



At a glance

Recommended play actions, messaging and Infrastructure for Stanhope Road School (see page 30 for further detail).

<p>01 Let's Talk Play workshop</p> <p>An introduction to play for educators, whānau, local businesses and other relevant stakeholders</p> 	<p>02 Play Policy & Risk Benefit Assessment</p> <p>A policy that sets out Stanhope's commitment to providing play opportunities</p> 
<p>03 Annual Play Celebration Event</p> <p>An opportunity to be a catalyst towards more play opportunities and opening up the school gates</p> 	<p>04 Te Ao Māori</p> <p>Bringing purakau and whakapapa to life across the community</p> 
<p>05 Re-open the school</p> <p>Stanhope Road School as the centre of play in the community</p> 	<p>06 Road Safety & Physical Severance</p> <p>Ensuring that social and built environment factors are addressed including traffic calming interventions</p> 
<p>07 Active modes of travel</p> <p>Begin to address social variables including perception and travel attitudes which limit active modes of transport</p> 	<p>08 The future of the built environment</p> <p>Tactical conversation needs to take place regarding future developments to promote safe mobility</p> 
<p>09 Community Play Trails</p> <p>A way to normalise play across the entire community and improving links between neighbourhoods</p> 	<p>10 Pop Up Play Events</p> <p>Development of a regular calendar of diverse offerings to encourage and further normalise play</p> 

Recommended play actions, messaging and infrastructure for Stanhope Road School

Local Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Our diverse communities are active, involved and engaged

Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Opportunities

We must create opportunities to come together for cultural celebration and play. Conversations about how the value of play and how the area serves our tamariki present as a reason for unity

Recommendation

1. Let's Talk Play Workshops

In play, we have a subject matter of rich emotional currency upon which to build. Encouraging those in the community to share and reflect on their personal play story is a great way to break down barriers and draw the community together.

As such, local play leadership should use the "Let's Talk Play" workshop to discuss play and the experience of children in the context of the SRS community. This should be rolled out to the Neighbourhood Play System 'kaitiaki group' in the first instance and then considered for educators, whānau, local business groups and so on.

This approach also will enable us to enhance our understanding of to understand of how social, cultural, and economic variables shape people's mobility.

2. Write a School Play Policy and Risk Benefit Assessment

Stanhope Road School have a number of passionate play champions within their staff, which leads to a range of possibilities for their students. Producing messaging which is a formal and enduring part of school practices recognises these strengths and will ensure that this remains the case through staff turnover and other crises. This document should also reflect the courageous role that the school could play in working towards safe play opportunities across the Neighbourhood Play System footprint and school 'home zone'.

A school play policy could also outline a process to address any gaps in provision and engage the broader community in a conversation about creating the space, time and permission for play.

Opportunities currently perceived as risky and dangerous include tree climbing, adventurous play, playing with sticks and use of the swing can be addressed in both the Play Policy and Risk Benefit Assessment.

3. Annual Play celebration event

Given that this is such an ethnically diverse neighbourhood, we expect a raft of play ideas and experiences to come to the surface, a play celebration event presenting a forum to build upon the great work that the school does in nurturing their diversity. At least one annual event should be developed to be delivered on school grounds, which celebrates differing approaches to play.

This event should initiate more events of its type, and be one of the catalysts towards both normalising more play across the Neighbourhood Play System and re-opening the school to the community. This should be led by the Neighbourhood Play System kaitiaki group, but with input from others for example, Auckland Council. This idea is in line with the local board's aspiration towards gatherings like 'neighbours' day' events.

The Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa fund is well-placed to empower an event of this type.

Local Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Te ao Māori is thriving and visible

Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Opportunities

We must develop community play assets and interventions which reflect our cultural history, and which bring life to pūrākau and whakapapa

Recommendation

4. Take Te Ao Māori outside of the classroom and into the community

Evidence of deep and rich Te Ao Māori enquiry is a keen focus of the school towards NZ curriculum outcomes and pervades across most SRS classrooms. We have an opportunity to use the children's work and ideas, and the leadership of the educators to ensure that these sensibilities and ideas are visible across the community.

This may include signposting/ wayfinding which reflects pūrākau and whakapapa, themed play assets and public art (story trails etc.). A first step would be discussion with local iwi and Mana whenua, but again input from local government should take place early and often.

Local Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Our physical and social infrastructure is future-proofed

Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Opportunities

Future decisions must consider the tamariki of the area, this requires joined up thinking, and we have an opportunity to catalyse this.

Recommendation

5. Re-open the school as the centre of play in the community

By the admission of most involved in the school community, having such a stunning play space as Stanhope Road School closed beyond school hours and on weekends dramatically constricts local play and the development of social capital. With the energy and positivity of new leadership, we have the opportunity to re-open the school grounds. This should be a key tenet of a new School Play Policy.

It is likely that a step-wise approach is best, but in working towards a plan to do so, 'passive supervision' should be a key focus. This enables us to explore actions (programmes, projects and events) which would make the school busy as often as possible and ensure that those on its boundaries voluntarily adopt a kaitiaki role over the school and its assets.

Examples of this include

- An event which welcomes and celebrates the 'Neighbours' of the school
- Opening the Cul de sacs and ROWs open onto school grounds through new gates, and signposting accessways.
- Revisiting the idea of a community garden
- Inviting local sports clubs to use the assets (Basketball, Volleyball, Local churches)
- Inviting interest to deliver after school/ weekend activity programmes on school grounds
- Inviting a swimming teacher to base him/herself at the school pool
- Promoting hall hire an usage.

It may be that more 'security' focused interventions (for example, cameras, security guards) are a necessary part of the transition to an 'open' school.

Local Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Our transport choices are accessible, sustainable and safe

Maungakiekie – Tāmaki Board Opportunities

Decisions must be made which foster, promote and normalise active transport

Recommendation

6. Take steps to improve road safety, and reduce physical severance by roads

At present, there is a general sense that active modes of transport are neither attractive, inclusive, nor accessible. There are immediate actions which could be taken to ensure that both social and built environment factors are addressed in making the SRS community feel safer and adopting active modes of transport.

In conjunction with item seven, targeted traffic calming interventions can be made now to the SRS community. As an example, it must be safer to cross the Ellerslie/Panmure Highway outside the school, as this is a key contributor of cars into the community and at present it is considered that they move too fast. This may include flashing speed limit signs, improved lighting, improved lines of site and calming/ speed on connecting streets.

7. Begin to address the social variables which limit active modes of travel in the area

While we consider that we don't have a fully holistic sense of the factors leading to low levels of active transport in the area, with a pervasive scepticism in the community, this project presents a willing local leadership structure to tackle the social variables (like perceptions and travel attitudes) which limit active modes. More research needs to be done.

8. Planning for the future of the built environment

Mainly though, Stanhope Road school acknowledges that evolution of our physical environment takes time. The Neighbourhood Play System project group (including school leadership) are clear on the need for community participation. Top-down decision-making processes are likely to miss the nuances of the day-to-day needs and experiences of the local community, and particularly those of community members marginalised by race, disability, age, and other differences. Community-led engagement and ongoing participation across different levels of decision making are crucial in ensuring that any changes respond to the specific, place-based needs of residents. As such, we wish to commence conversation in a consistent and focused fashion

A tactical conversation needs to take place with Auckland transport regarding future developments in the area and how we retrofit our environments to promote more safe mobility.

This may lead to the development of...

- Pedestrian crossings
- Cycleways
- Removal of trees to improve lines of sight.
- Signs which promote awareness
- Transport awareness training
- Creation of a safe zone of 100m around the school.
- School street campaigns
- A new School crossing in Ferndale Ave
- Improved safety around access and egress into the school.
- General Improvements to footpaths and berms

Local Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Our built, natural and cultural taonga / treasures are protected and celebrated

Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Opportunities

Our tamariki need direct, regular and safe access to play environments - something that they don't have at present

Recommendation

9. Community Play trails

A community play trail is a great way to normalise play across an entire community, and creates focus and a centerpiece for us to understand how we might plan for children's needs in public spaces.

The bare bones of an engaging, playful community are already in place in Mt. Wellington North, but much work should be done to refresh, promote and encourage their use. We believe that the quickest win for this idea might be to link the front entrance of the school, all the way down through Thompson Park/ Alcock and Almond reserves to the Lavas Place entrance to Lavas reserve. This could be a roughly 1km play trail and would encourage exploration of the community with little need for road crossing.

The children of Stanhope Road have been forthcoming with ideas for how we might do this, they could include...

- "Play nudges" like swings in trees and painted footpaths.
- Pop up activations on under-used reserve spaces (hut building, water slides etc.)
- Open up the park to neighboring Kainga ora residents
- Student led design elements for example, Footpath markings, murals and other artwork
- Pop up activations on berms
- Challenges which utilise existing assets
- More diverse offerings for family members which encourage them to stay (fitness courses).

Ongoing advocacy for more diverse and interesting play assets, and to freshen and improve what exists.

Once this is established, a second play trail linking the school to Maungarei Mt Wellington could be considered. This is particularly exciting as the path to the top of the maunga and the flat land at the top presents a massive canvas for play opportunities. Also, this would present a single end-to-end play trail across all of Mt Wellington with the school as the centre-piece.

This approach aligns to the Local boards' aspirations of 'safe, high amenity walking connections' and 'improved links between neighbourhoods and open space facilities.

Figure 46: Teacher and students participating in Taonga Tākaro.



Local Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Plan Outcomes

Our people and businesses prosper economically and socially

Maungakiekie - Tāmaki Board Opportunities

Quality programmes, projects and events must be provided which establish foundations for lifelong opportunities for learning and social interaction

Recommendation

10. Pop-up play events alongside Auckland Council Activation team

As above, we have an opportunity to normalise play across the school home zone in a range of ways, including on school grounds. A regular calendar of diverse offerings should be developed across the area, and could commence in summer 22/23, to give this plan a flying start.

This may include...

- Cultural events on school grounds
- Play streets on appropriate cul-de-sacs
- Council activation events in local reserves
- Events which leverage play as a reason to unite, but which present opportunities for local businesses

Figure 47: Stanhope Road School students on wheels.



Conclusion

Play is fundamental to the quality of enjoyment tamariki have in their daily lives. It is also a vital instrument in developing our tamariki with the skills, abilities, and resilience to go forward and lead productive and fulfilling lives as adults.

The process of undergoing a Neighbourhood Play System exploration puts in full view the day-to-day lives of a select group of tamariki, and the ways that they are afforded the time, space, and permission for play. Our sense of the tamariki at Stanhope Road School is that educators understand the role that play can have and have made great efforts to ensure that through play, they can thrive- both in terms of their childhoods today and their future.

Outside of school hours, and in the broader neighbourhood however, there is a different picture. The opportunities for tamariki to play outside and become familiar with their locality have been narrowed by restrictions to their mobility, prohibitions, and constraints on the use of space and environments which aren't play promoting. Understanding children's play preferences and patterns can help adults appreciate how to design spaces that support tamariki to play - or begin to acknowledge that protecting children's right to move and play freely within their local environments can be a priority. The Stanhope Road School Neighbourhood Play System is, put simply, too cramped, too busy, too scary, and too boring to support play.

Through their play, tamariki both adapt to and shape their environments. Play permeates all aspects of children's lives, often in broader and more complex ways than adults expect. As examples, greening areas, community art and even traffic calming can add significant play value in a neighbourhood. Local decision makers have a raft of actions, messaging and infrastructure tools at their disposal to address this, but with the range of challenges identified in this report and 23,000 cars a day passing the front gate of the school, promoting play may require novel or innovative approaches and interventions. Luckily the children of the area are experts on how we might achieve this.

What we have proposed in this document is a range of programmes, projects and events largely put forward by the children themselves, which will begin to make the neighbourhood more playable immediately. We must then consider policies which will establish the foundations for a playable future. As we progress, we need local Kaitiaki to join us in bringing tamariki voices to life.

We hope that this report will be a test case for how we might give our tamariki a springboard into a happy healthy life. If we can identify how to unlock play in hectic Auckland communities like Stanhope Road, we can give ourselves inspiration and ideas for ensuring that broader Tāmaki Makaurau can become a great place to be a child.

Figure 48: Stanhope Road School students interacting with a Tū Manawa project.





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