Tir Conaill Draft Concept Plan



September 2026 - DRAFT

Howick Local Board
Auckland Council



Revision Control

September 2026	Working draft

Prepared by Auckland Council's Parks and Community Facilities department



Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

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Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve Development | September 2026

Introduction and project scope

Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve is a small, newly established neighbourhood park located in Flat Bush, positioned at 41 Tir Conaill Avenue.

Currently, Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve is within walking distance of three existing small reserves (Arrowsmith Drive Park, Earnslaw Park and Raphoe Park). Larger parks in the area include Totara Park to the south and Murphys Bush to the north.

The most recent (2020) Play Gap Analysis Report does not include Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve, as it was acquired after the report was completed. However, inputs from public consultation, internal specialists, and other relevant stakeholders have helped shape the initial play values and development considerations for both sites.

Tir Conaill reserve is approximately 4,000 square metres in size and currently consists of open lawn. The Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve site is mostly flat, and currently undeveloped. This offers a blank canvas for future design, and are bordered by drainage reserves on one side.

The reserve is easily accessed via the local street and path network, with on-street parking available. It is located within areas of new infill housing, increasing the importance of well-designed, accessible public spaces.

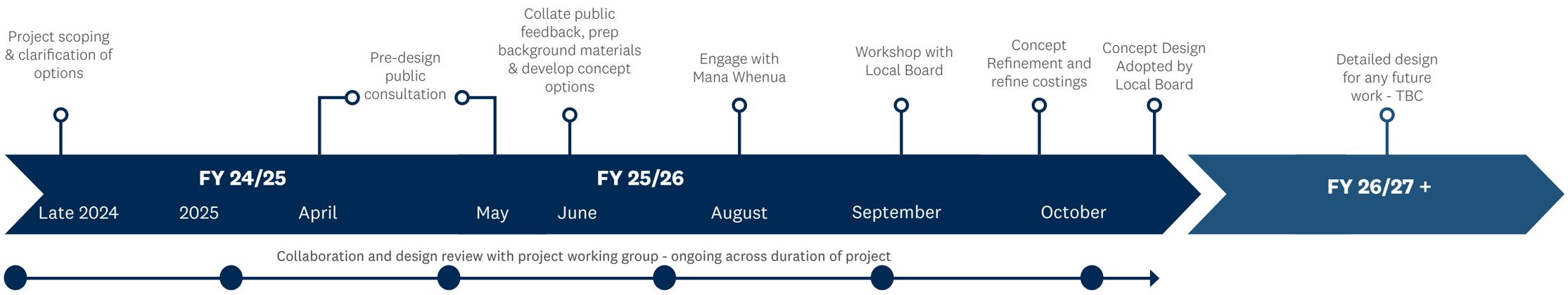
Key considerations for the development of new playgrounds at Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve include:

- Providing different focus areas to offer a variety of play opportunities for all ages in the neighbourhood
- Prioritising accessibility and inclusive design
- Improving site drainage to support long-term use and function

Mana Whenau Input

A meeting with Mana Whenau was held with a representative from Ngāti Tai Ki Tāmaki on Tuesday 6th June 2025 to introduce new playground provision projects. They agreed to supply a narrative for the playspaces.
On 13th August 2026, a site visit with the same representative was carried out, and cultural narrative and design direction was provided.

Project timeline



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1.2 Strategic Context

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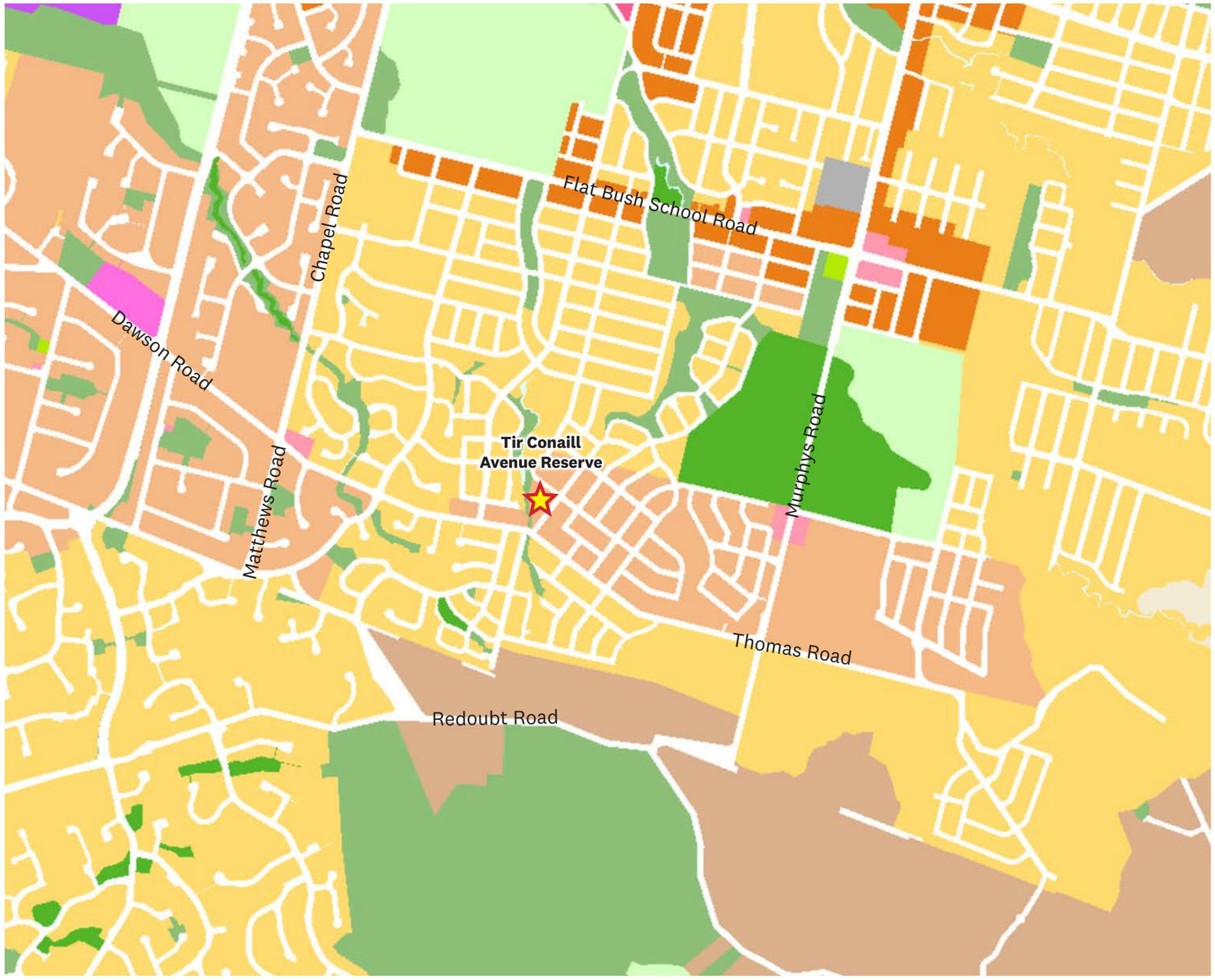

Auckland Unitary Plan

The Auckland Unitary Plan controls land use and development within the Auckland region. The Unitary plan includes zoning which outlines the appropriate uses for the land, as well as additional controls based on the special values relating to specific areas.

Tir Conaill Reserve is zoned as Mixed Housing Urban zone, with natural stormwater infrastructure which zoned as conservation located at the western boudary of the reserve.

Sport and Active Recreation Zone

Conservation Zone

The Open Space – Conservation Zone applies to open spaces with natural, ecological, landscape, and cultural and historic heritage values. These areas include volcanic cones, bush reserves, headlands, natural wetlands and coastline and play an important role in protecting and increasing the populations of threatened and endangered species.

Mixed Housing Urban Zone

The Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone is a reasonably high-intensity zone enabling a greater intensity of development than previously provided for. Over time, the appearance of neighbourhoods within this zone will change, with development typically up to three storeys in a variety of sizes and forms, including detached dwellings, terrace housing and low-rise apartments. This supports increasing the capacity and choice of housing within neighbourhoods as well as promoting walkable neighbourhoods, fostering a sense of community and increasing the vitality of centres.

Mixed Housing Suburban Zone

The Residential – Mixed Housing Suburban Zone is the most widespread residential zone covering many established suburbs and some greenfields areas. Much of the existing development in the zone is characterised by one or two storey, mainly standalone buildings, set back from site boundaries with landscaped gardens.

LEGEND

- Reserve Location
- Mixed Housing Urban
- Mixed Housing Suburban
- Single House
- Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings
- General Coastal Marine
- Water
- Coastal Transition
- General Business
- Light Industry
- Metropolitan Centre
- Mixed Use
- Sport and Active Recreation
- Conservation
- Informal Recreation
- Community

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Online Have Your Say & Open Day:
April - May 2025

Consultation of Thomas Road and Tir Conaill Avenue Recreation Reserves were undertaken from April to May in 2025 via Have Your Say online surveys and public open day on site.

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

38 people had their say online

64% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE IN THE HOWICK LOCAL BOARD AREA

63% OF RESPONDENTS LIKE TO SEE 1 RECREATION AREA EACH IN BOTH RESERVES

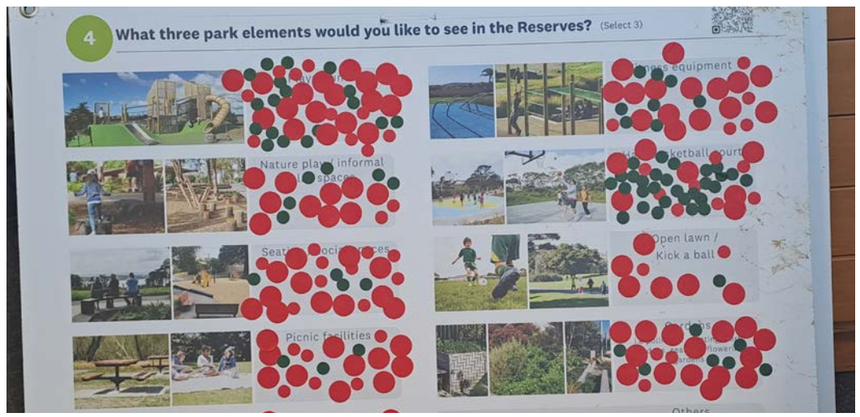
205 opinions of play equipment expressed on open day

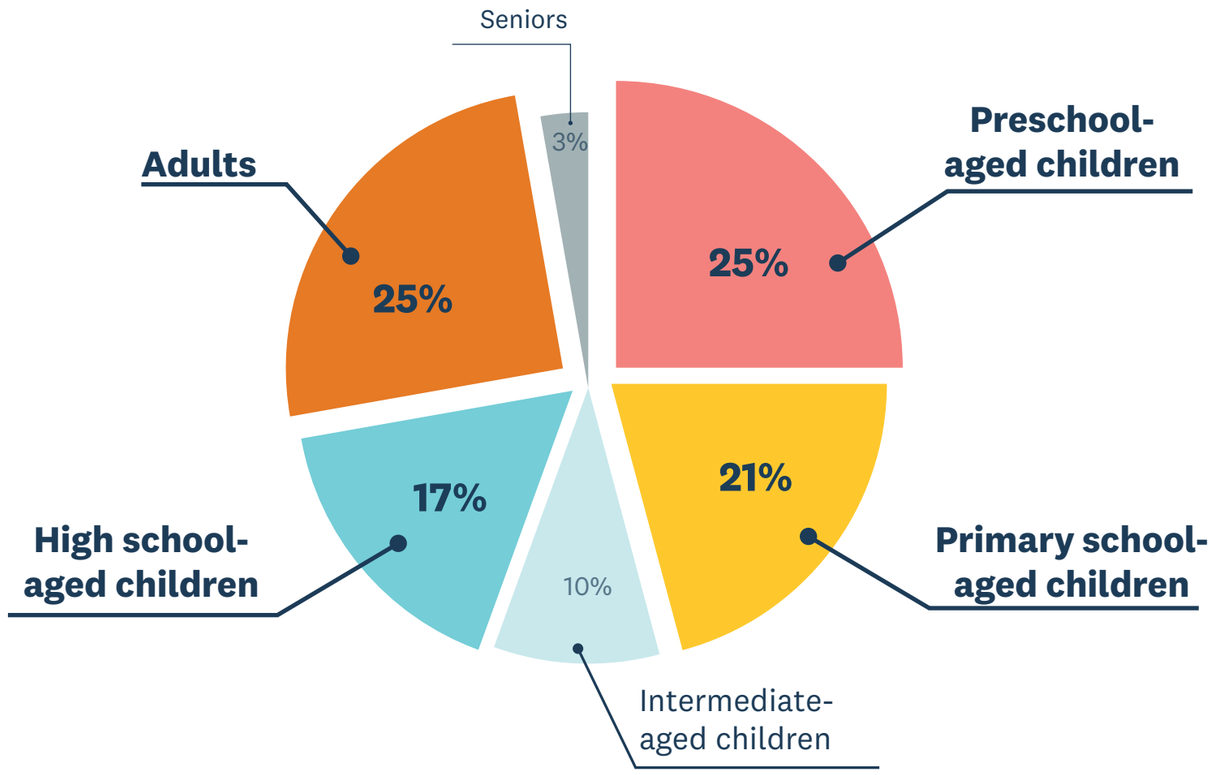
59% OF RESPONDENTS PREFER OPTION B - BRIGHT VIBRANT COLOURS FOR THE RESERVE











Consultation Result on **User Age Group**

1.5 Consultation Summary

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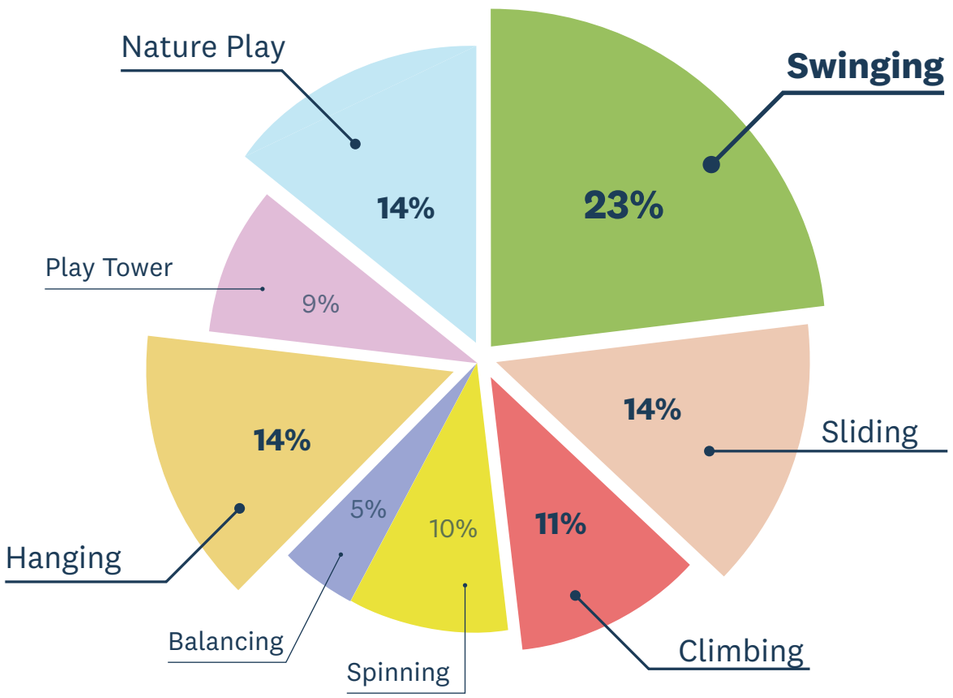
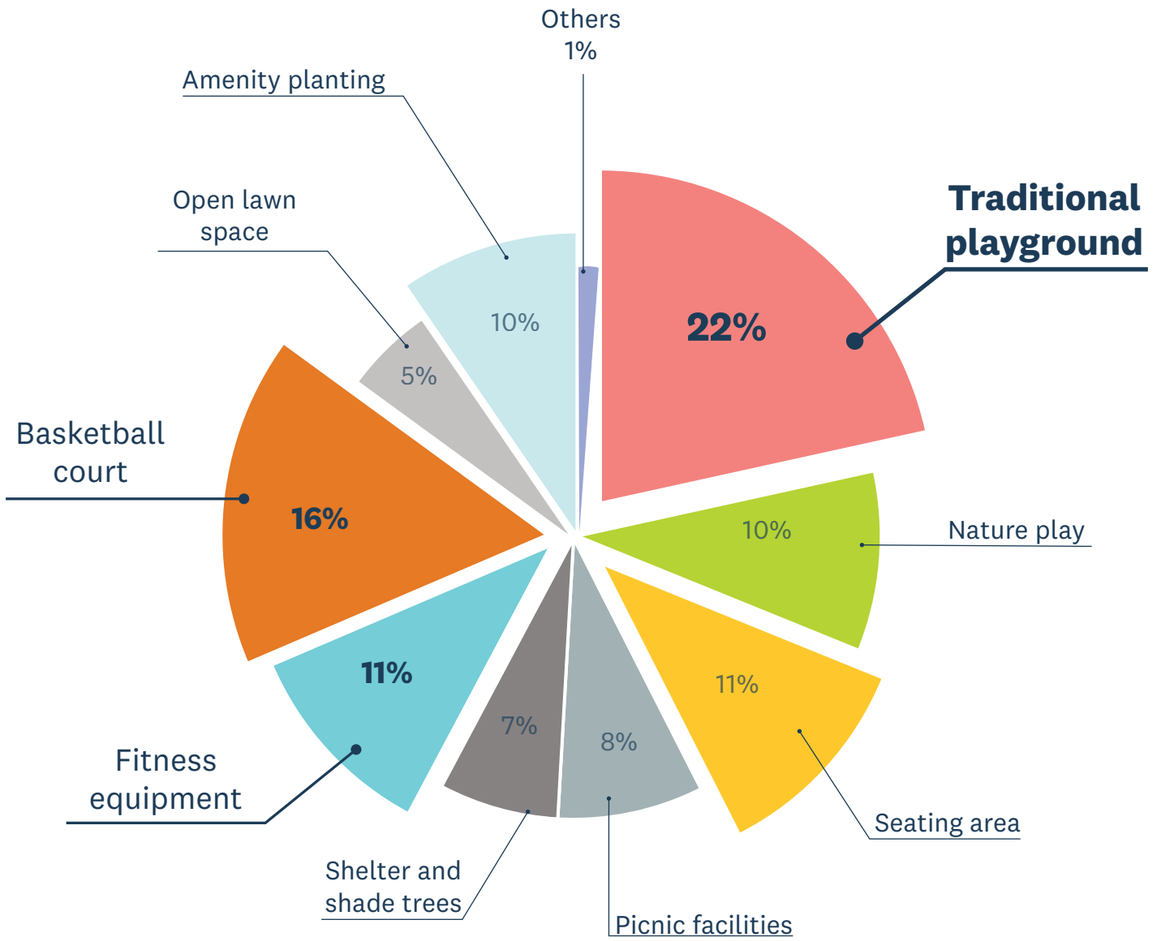


Consultation Result on **Play Activities**



Consultation Result on **Park Elements**

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1.6 Cultural Design Opportunities

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A consultation was held with a Ngāti Tai ki Tāmaki representative on 13 August 2026 at Tir Conaill Reserve to develop a concept for the park. The key outcomes are as follows:

Whakapapa
Identity

Connection to Ngāi Tai ancestor Manawatere, expressing cultural identity and sense of a place through design elements and storytelling.

Hīkoi
Journey

Echoing the legacy of Manawatere who carved his mark to guide those who followed — an 'S' shaped pathway weaves through the site. Infused with rich red ochre (karamea), unifies the play spaces, inviting curiosity, exploration, and meaningful connection across the landscape.

Whakatau
Marking the Arrival

Through the living act of whakatau, planting traditional multi-trunked Pōhutukawa marks the threshold of arrival and settles people into place. The trees stand as a visual anchor of tūrangawaewae (a place to stand), deepening cultural connections to Manawatere and weaving an enduring bond between people (tangata), land (whenua), and heritage.

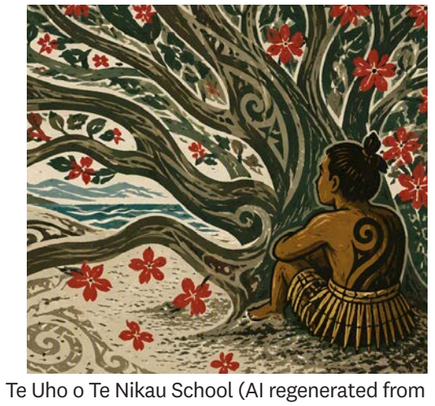


The Landing Site at Cockle Bay - Manawatere marked a pohutukawa tree with local red ochre, to show subsequent relatives that he had arrived safely and that they should settle the area (1980)
Source from: *https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/39351/*









Telling Your Stories - The Story of Manawatere, Te Uho o Te Nikau School (AI regenerated from the schoolworks, 2026)
Source from: *https://www.tellingyourstories.co.nz/te-uho-o-te-nikau*

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Section 2: Site Analysis

2.1 Playspace Network within Walking Distance

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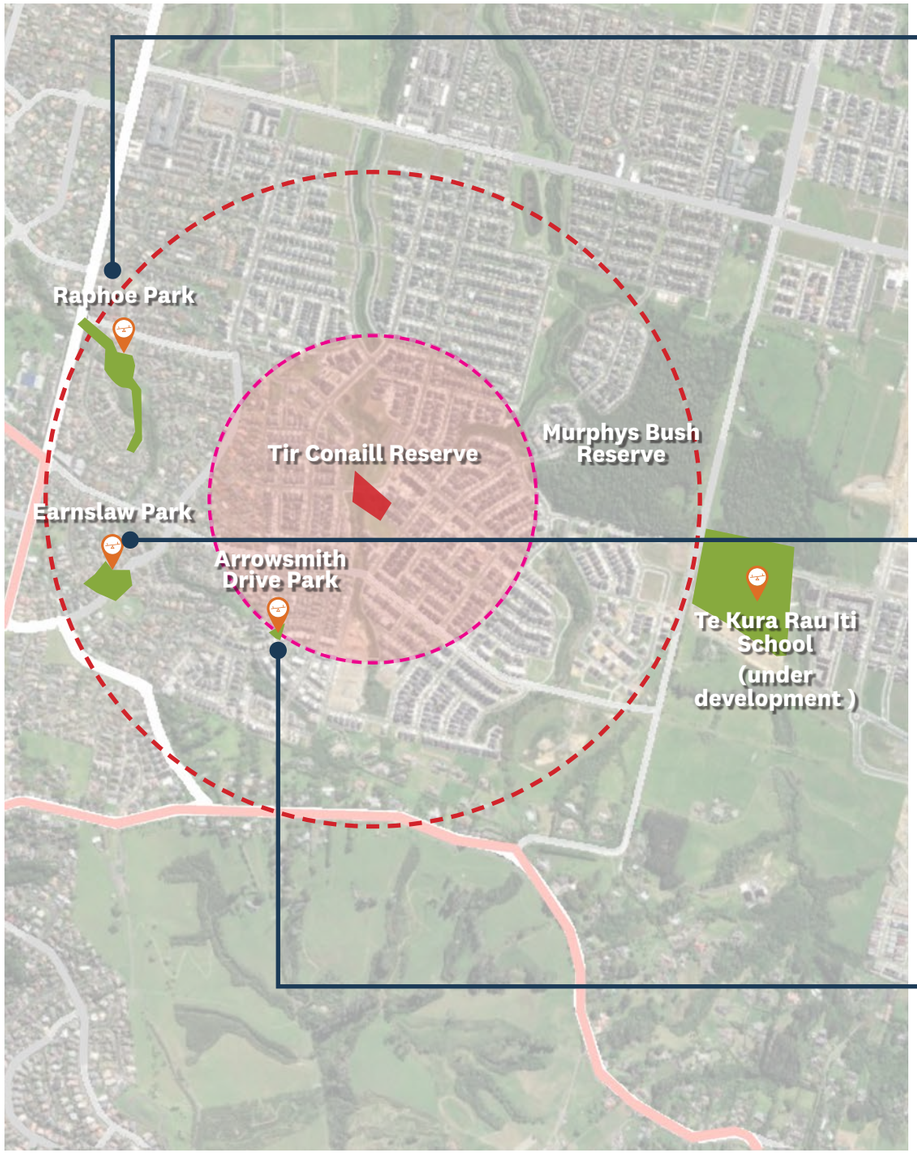


LEGEND

- Proposed new playground
- Existing playground
- 400m / 5 mins walking distance
- 800m /10 mins walking distance

Raphoe Park

Mixed Play

- Module with slide, climbing and overhead structure
- Basket and belt swings
- Fitness equipment





Earnslaw Park

Mixed Play

- Module with slide, climbing and overhead structure
- Swing set
- Fitness equipment

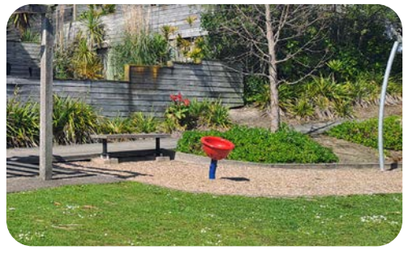
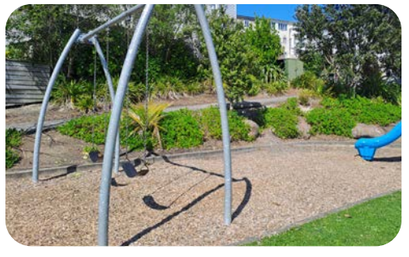




Arrowsmith Drive Park

Junior Play

- Slide, spinner and swing set

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Existing Site Plan



The Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve is mostly flat and open, bordered by residential houses and low-traffic roads that contribute to neighborhood visibility. It is recommended to provide active and traditional play elements due to its location and characteristic.

Site Photographs



Relatively flat, open site with road frontage to two sides





Residential housing and bush reserve on the boundary of the park







Existing condition of Tir Conaill Avenue - speed bump, raingardens and swales

Section 3: Concept Plans

3.1 Concept Zoning - Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve

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LEGEND

- Road
- Existing footpath
- Proposed footpath (1.8m)
- Proposed park entrance signage
- Proposed junior play zone
- Proposed senior play zone
- Proposed adult fitness zone
- Nature play area
- Proposed seating area with shelter
- Proposed low planting buffer area
- Proposed grass mounds

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3.2 Concept Plan - Tir Conaill Avenue Reserve

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Tir Conaill as a new neighbourhood-scale park that supports local population growth with diverse, age-appropriate play opportunities, it will cater to a broad age range with inclusive play options for early childhood through to seniors.

Play Space
The park is predominantly flat, with its northeastern and southeastern edges bordered by local streets. Play areas are centrally located, separated from roads by planted buffer zones that improve safety and enable natural surveillance from nearby homes. Informed by community feedback and demographic needs, the design includes a high-quality playground with medium-challenge equipment, nature play and senior fitness elements.

Amenity Planting
The amenity planting in the "S" shape form, which representing the mark of Manawatere, provides opportunity to incorporate informal nature play features such as balancing logs and stepping stones. The amenity planting helps define space and create way finding and connection between the two play areas. It also acts as natural buffer between proposed play area and adjacent residential housing.

Open Lawn Area
An approximately 600 sqm of open lawn is proposed for free play or community events.

Connectivity
A new 1.8m-wide concrete path will connect the park to the wider path network. All paths will be designed with accessible gradients to ensure inclusive access for people of all abilities.

Social Space
A strucutral shaded social area with picnic table, rubbish bin and seating is positioned between the senior play area and junior play area, with views of both playgrounds, open lawn, and the street. The social space supports year-round community use, informal gatherings and low impact exercise e.g. taichi.

DESIGN NOTES

1. Inclusive playspace (junior focus)
2. Swing set
3. Playspace (senior focus)
4. Fitness equipment (seniors focus)
5. Buffer planting
6. Concrete path
7. Gathering space
8. Seat / bench
9. Shelter with picnic table and bench
10. Rubbish bin
11. Nature play
12. Existing pedestrian crossing
13. Existing pedestrian path
14. Specimen tree
15. Grass mound
16. Park signage

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3.3 Concept - Park Elements Precedent Images

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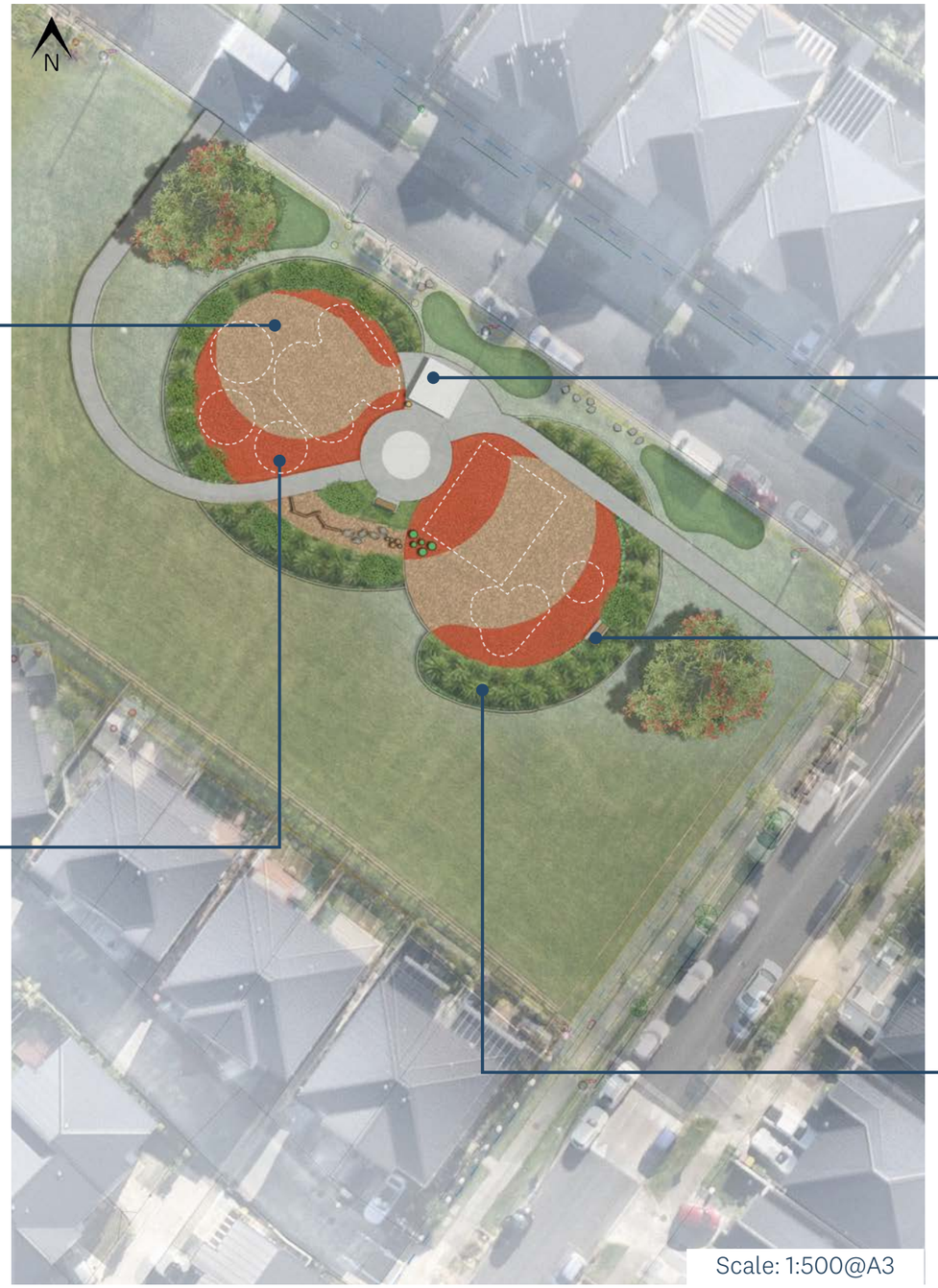
Traditional playground



Fitness equipment (adults & seniors)





Picnic facilities



Seating



Amenity planting & Specimen tree



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3.4 Concept - Play Activities Precedent Images

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Play activities icons

Sliding | Swinging | Spinning | Hanging | Climbing

1 Junior Play



2 All Age Play / Swing Set



3 Senior Play



4 Open Lawn



5 Nature play



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