

REVIEW OF VALLEY FLOOR RESERVES

TAITA AVALON

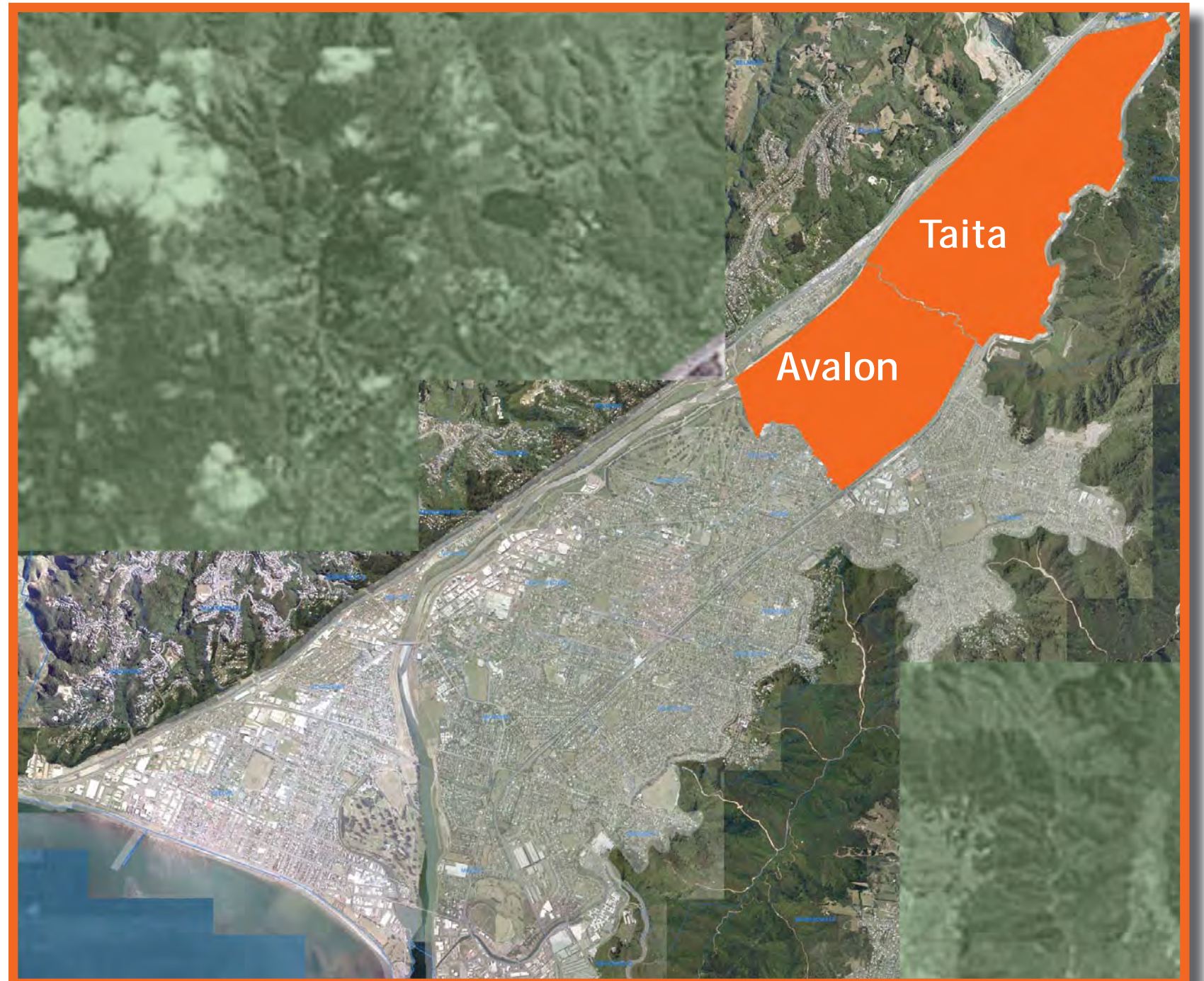




Figure 1: Colson Street Reserve

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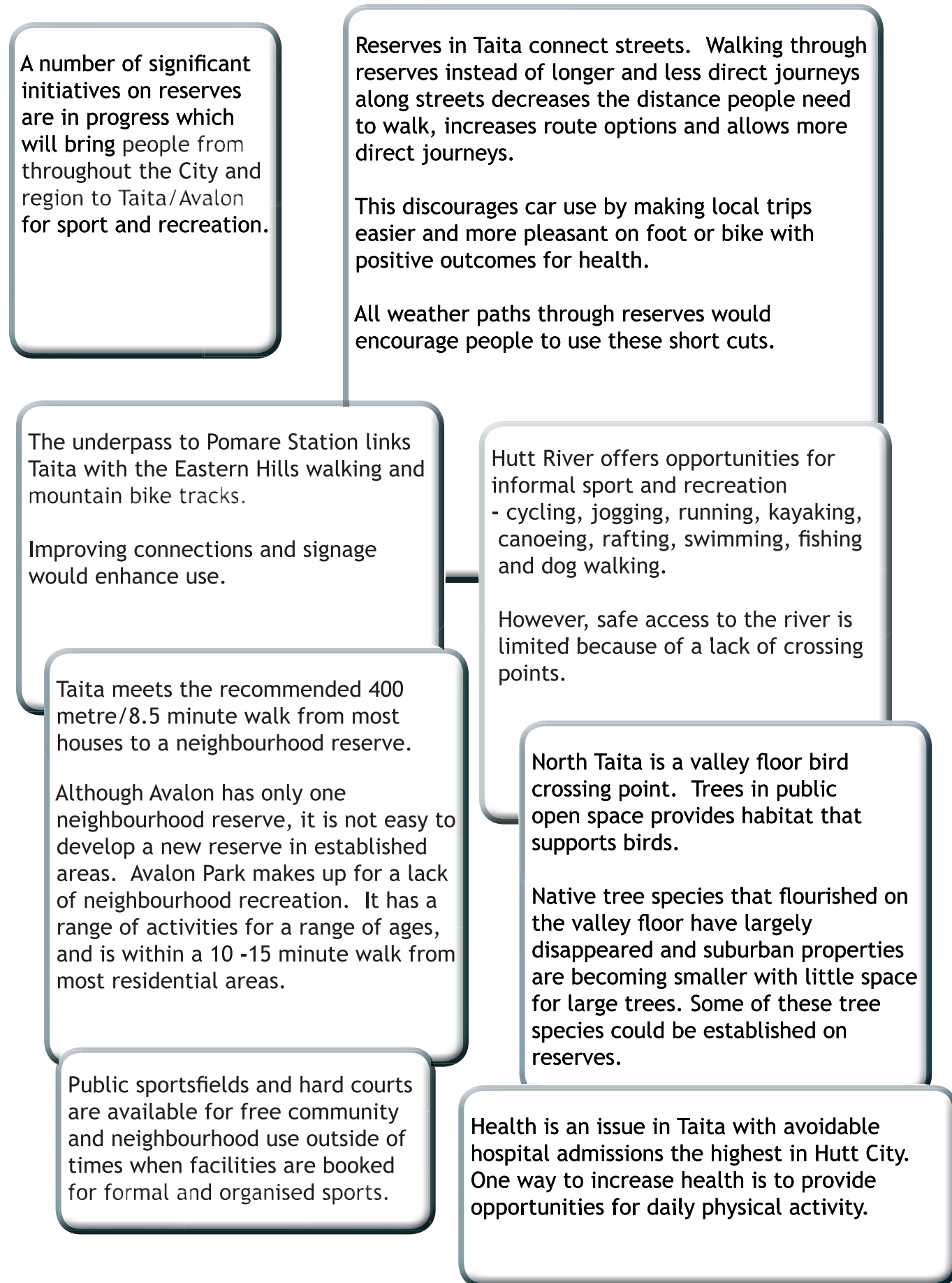
Figure 2: Hutt River - Taita rock



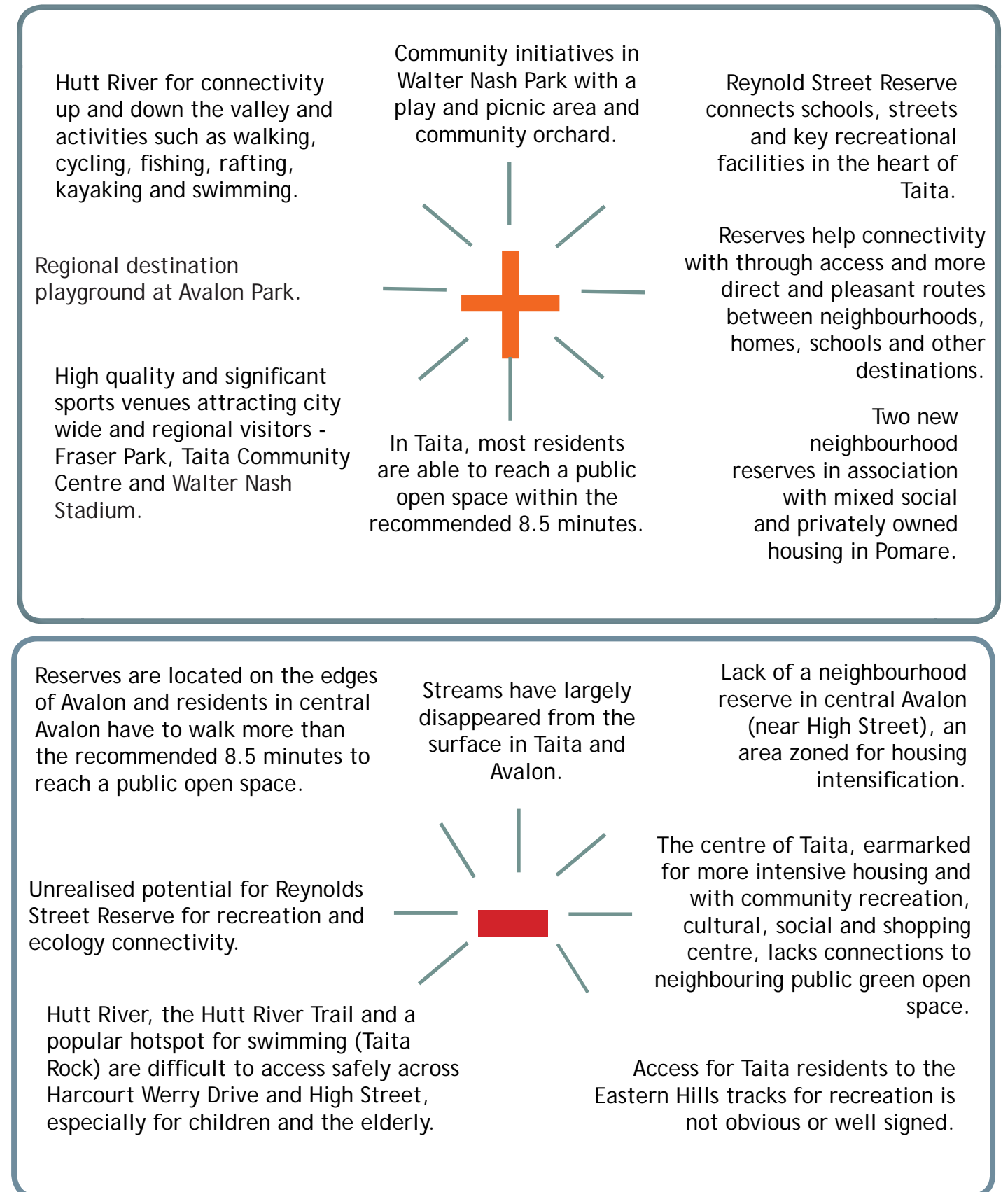
Figure 3: Avalon Park



Summary



Positives and negatives of Taita/Avalon reserves

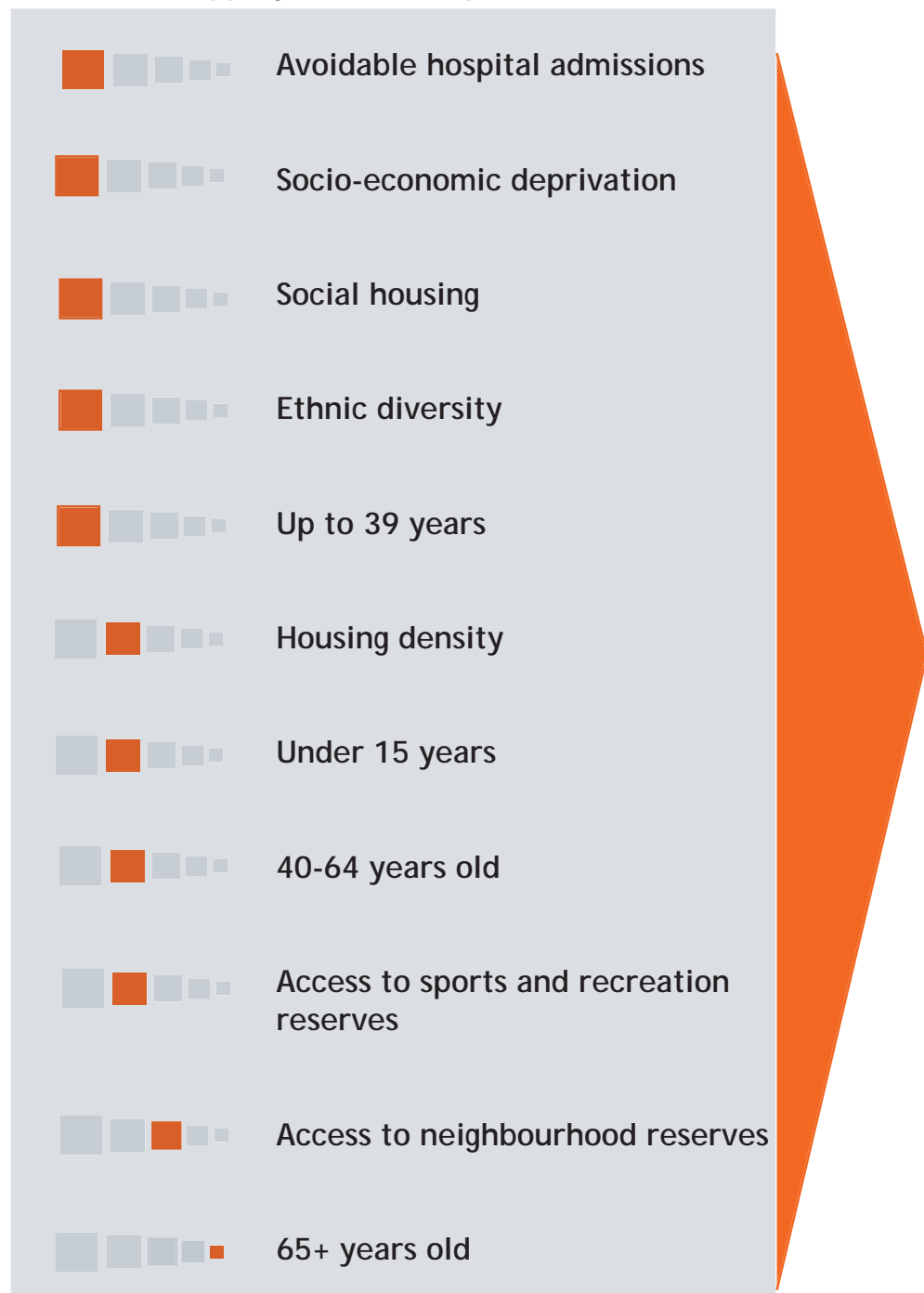


Suburb Profile - Taita¹

The population in Taita is the third largest of valley floor suburbs and housing density is likely to increase. Taita has a high percentage of people 39 years or younger at 64% of the population. The elderly are expected to increase from the current low 8% of the population to 20% over the next 17 years, similar to the projected numbers of children. The suburb is culturally diverse with a higher proportion of Maori and Pacific peoples than other valley floor suburbs.

Taita has regionally significant sports facilities and an important industrial/business area and central shopping centre with positive economic outcomes.

Taita is an area defined as most deprived and has high levels of social housing. Health is an issue with 46% of hospital admissions identified as avoidable, the highest of valley floor suburbs.² This has social and economic implications. Easily accessible, safe and attractive parks and walkable streets can increase physical activity levels and reduce chances of developing adverse health effects associated with inactivity.



R e s e r v e N e e d s

Neighbourhood reserves that are safely accessed by children and within sight and earshot of homes.

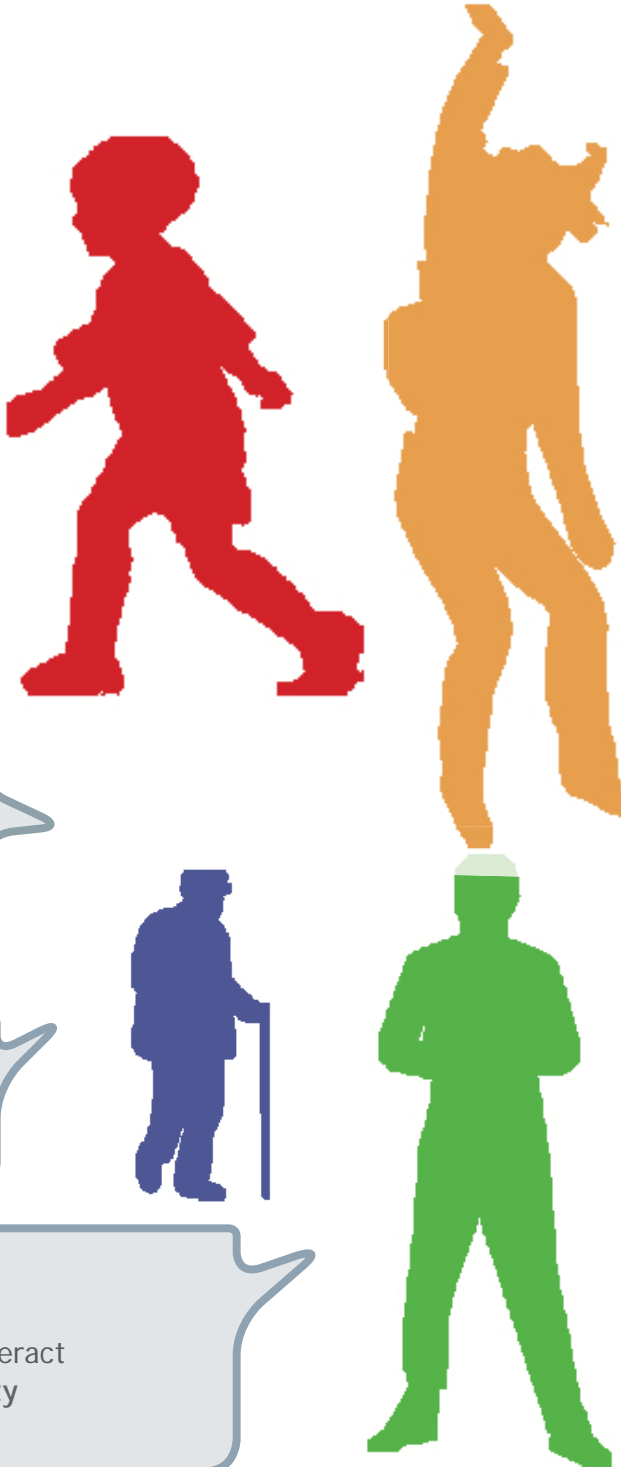
Places for young people to actively recreate and that allow youth to see and be seen.

Access to natural areas for walking, cycling and enjoying natural environments.

Connectivity through reserves to link neighbourhoods, provide short cuts between neighbourhoods and destinations and opportunities for daily physical activity.

Opportunities for casual sports and recreation as well as organised sport and recreation.

Accessible neighbourhood reserves with surfaces, seating and shelter from wind and sun with opportunities for people to interact socially and become involved in community activities.



Space for large trees.

Spaces for large and small groups, with picnic tables and drinking water.

Open space for children to run around and imaginative and natural play opportunities as well as standard play equipment.

Reserves close to people's homes because of limited space in higher density areas for private gardens, edible ornamental plants and for quality specimen trees.

Reserves that are accessible for the elderly, easy to navigate with safe surfaces, seating, and shelter from sun and wind.

Multi-functional and flexible open space that can adapt as demographics and open space needs change.

¹ See Appendices for details

² Avoidable hospitalisations are influenced by housing quality, access to services and opportunities for daily physical activity. The latter is improved through access to places to exercise, walkable street patterns, public transport and access to parks and reserves - E. Lucie-Smith, Measuring the Difference - Avoidable Hospitalisations, Hutt Valley DHB, 2012)

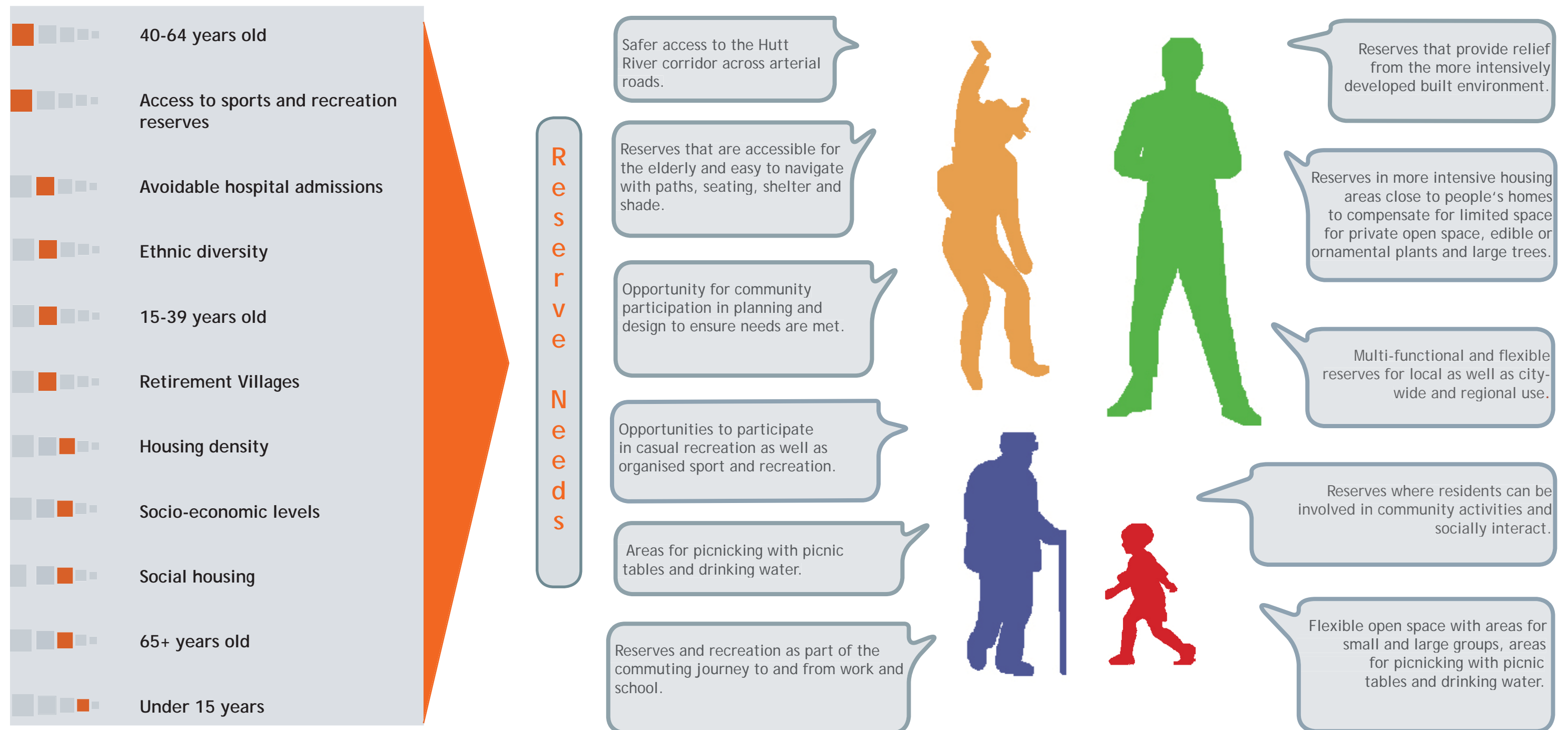
Suburb Profile - Avalon²

The population in Avalon is the fourth largest of valley floor suburbs, has the largest percentage of elderly residents of all valley floor suburbs and projected to have the smallest percentage of children. Avalon is ethnically diverse with Asian peoples second to Europeans.³

Housing density is proposed to increase along the central spine of High Street and in the most socio-economically deprived and social housing areas along the railway line.

Health is an issue with 44% of hospital admissions identified as avoidable, the third highest of valley floor suburbs. Health issues are linked to social deprivation and social housing which are located in the eastern and southern parts of Avalon. Such neighbourhoods typically have low levels of social interaction, fragmentation and attachment to a neighbourhood.³

Avalon has close access to regionally significant parks Avalon Park and Fraser Park.



² See Appendices for details

³ Avoidable hospitalisations are influenced by housing quality, access to services and opportunities for daily physical activity - improved through access to places to exercise, walkable street patterns, public transport and access to parks and reserves - =E. Lucie-Smith, Measuring the Difference - Avoidable Hospitalisations, Hutt Valley DHB, 2012)

Recommendations to meet needs and better use of existing resources

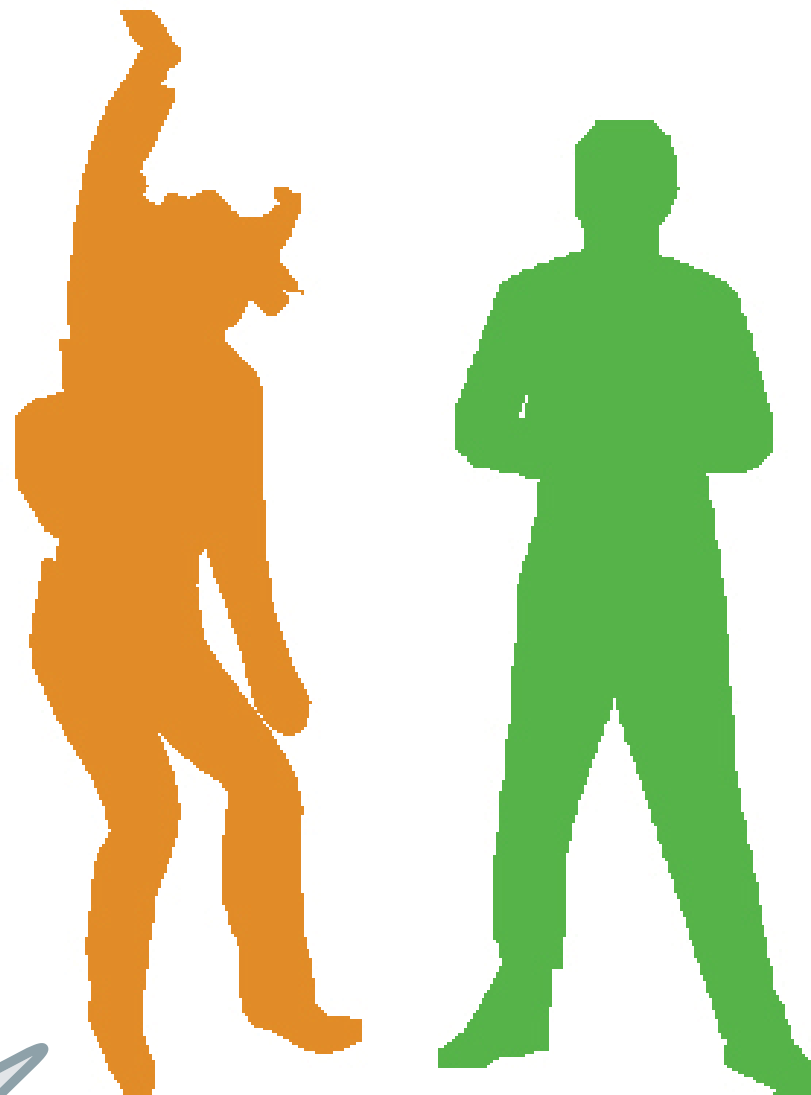
Safer access to Hutt River across Harcourt Werry Drive/Taita Drive/High Street from Avalon, Taita and Pomare. This would improve accessibility to the river for walking, cycling and a host of recreation opportunities and the 'hotspot' Taita Rock.

When developing Avalon and Fraser Parks consider the needs of locals and welcome their use e.g. with safer access across Taita Drive, an all weather perimeter path in Fraser Park.

Engage with local communities on reserves in the neighbourhood. This includes targetting the range of cultures e.g. with Asian communities in Avalon. This is likely to require a variety of approaches to engaging with the public.

Addressing the narrow entrance to Walter Nash Park once you pass through the distinctive character gates at the Tocker Street entrance would improve connections and re-integrate the park into the urban centre of Taita.

The site of the former caretaker's house in the north west corner of Avalon Park, could be considered for disposal and the proceeds used for reserve improvement.



Enhance the Taine Street entrance to Reynolds Street Reserve as a neighbourhood pocket park in the centre of a higher density zoned area e.g. path, seats, feature tree and a path along the length of the reserve.

Molesworth Reserve does not have a defined role and only one street entrance, reducing its role of connecting parts of the suburb. Revocation as reserve and its sale would release funds that could be used to improve Taita reserves.

Work towards daylighting the stream in Reynold's Street Reserve. This means reinstating the stream above ground, creating an attractive stream reserve with habitat for aquatic life and raising awareness about the importance of water.⁴

Improve safety by replacing solid boundary fences with visually permeable fences with gates that open onto reserves (e.g. wire, mesh, paling fences with gaps, low fences or a combination of the two).

Signs on Eastern Hutt Road and Pomare Station underpass with information on access to Eastern Hill tracks.

Investigate opportunities for public open space which the Wingate workforce can use. Wingate Reserve is an option with some roading configuration to make it safe for recreational use.

⁴-This would need to be carried out with Wellington Water, owned by the four Wellington City Councils and GWRC's water supply group. Daylighting urban streams has been successful in many cities in NZ, with multiple benefits which include cost benefits.

1.0 Introduction

This review of public open space in Taita and Avalon builds on the June 2013 Review of Valley Floor Reserves. The aim is to better understand the extent that reserves in the suburbs are likely to meet public open space needs over the next 30 years.

Of particular interest are neighbourhood reserves. These local reserves increase in value as urban density increases. They are especially important in areas like Taita, and to a slightly lesser extent Avalon, where opportunities for physical exercise are important to improve health, and where there are low socio-economic levels and high levels of social housing and numbers of children, young people or the elderly.

This review takes the position that urban reserves are important public open spaces. Among the benefits are:

- Contribution to the character of urban areas and to day-to-day experiences of where residents live
- Role in improving health by offering opportunities for physical exercise outdoors and for play
- Connecting neighbourhoods and destinations which discourages car use by making local trips more pleasant on foot with health and economic benefits
- Locations for indoor or outdoor community facilities which bring people together
- Locations for large trees which may no longer have a place in more intensive urban areas where private outdoor space is smaller than traditional suburban gardens
- Space for large trees and habitat for birds and other species in urban areas
- Opportunities for residents to experience the natural world as they go about their day to day activities
- Increasing value of properties near reserves
- Facilities that attract visitors to an area contributing to that area's economy.

1.1 The Setting

Avalon and Taita are located where the valley narrows towards Taita Gorge. A key bird corridor between the eastern and western hills crosses the valley where it narrows at the gorge. Urban development began in the middle of the 20th century as part of the government's state housing scheme. Before this the fertile, forested and flood prone valley floor was cleared of forest for farming and later market gardens, when the road reached the area in the second half of the 19th century. The oldest church in the Wellington region is in Taita on Eastern Hutt Road.

Hutt River/Te Awakairangi is the key natural feature of the suburbs and a major ecological and recreational corridor. The Eastern hills borders Taita with tracks for walking, mountain biking and dog walking. Tracks are accessed from Eastern Hutt Road via Pomare station overbridge from Taita.

To meet the needs of the school age population, the suburbs have four primary schools, two secondary schools and two intermediate schools, early childhood centres and a school of art and creativity. These have open space for sport and sometimes playgrounds, but are not always open for public use.

Development is occurring with implications for public open space:

- Mixed social and private housing in Pomare with two new neighbourhood reserves
- Fraser Park as a regional sporting 'hub' with indoor and outdoor sporting facilities and natural and artificial turf sportsfields
- Avalon Park as a regional destination playground
- Taita Sports and Community Centre at Taine and Tocker Street Reserve and improved linkages between the community centre, shopping centre and Taita Station
- More intensive housing along High Street, the rail corridor, and in central Taita.

1.2 Reserve supply in Avalon/Taita

Taita has a larger area of actively maintained reserve land when compared to other suburbs on the valley floor with 4.70 hectares per 1000 residents. This is primarily due to Fraser Park, the largest sports ground in the region. Avalon has less with 2.5 hectares per 1000 residents, principally made up of Avalon Park. This compares with 2.71 hectares for Hutt City as a whole and is well under the NZ median of 8.05 hectares.⁵ These figures do not include the Hutt River corridor because it is owned and managed by the regional council. When the open space along Hutt River is considered, the total actively managed public open space available to Avalon and Taita residents is larger. Improving safe access to the Hutt River corridor is therefore important.

The area of reserve land per population is only one aspect to consider. Others are types of reserves, whether reserves meet residents' needs, the degree reserves have positive effects on the lives of residents and their health and physical, mental and economic wellbeing, the environment and linkages to other open space and destinations.



Figure 4: Molesworth Street entrance to Walter Nash Park

⁵NZRA, Yardstick Performance Analysis Report 2013, page 11.

2.0 Taita/Avalon Reserve locations, types and facilities

- 1 Avalon Park - A high profile park with green open lawns, event area with stage, two playgrounds, a boating pond, model railway, mini golf, pavilion, amenity planting, petanque court, skatepark and on site parking. The play area is currently being developed as a regional destination playground.
- 2 Fraser Park - At 27 hectares it is Wellington region's largest sportsfield catering for multiple sporting codes with grass and artificial turf sportsfields. The park is a hub for sport and recreation following the 'sportsville' model with artificial turf, a multi-sports centre and on site carparking. The development is likely to extend park use for sports, events and tournaments, as well as opportunities for local community use for casual and informal recreation.
- 3 Walter Nash Park - A 3.7 hectare recreation reserve with a street frontage on Molesworth Street where there is a feature entrance, playground with large picnic table and seating, an open grassed area with community planted fruit trees, tennis courts and basketball hoop. A driveway off Reynolds Street leads to a carpark and the former clubrooms and bowling greens of Taita Bowling Club, proposed to be the new base for Waimarie Croquet Club. To the south an open grassed area with specimen trees and a lane leads to Tocker Street. The impact of this former main park entrance with its imposing brick gates is now reduced to a narrow lane entrance with sight lines blocked by housing inside the gates.
- 4 Taine and Tocker Street Reserve and Walter Nash Stadium - This reserve is intensively developed as the Taita Sports and Community Centre combining Walter Nash Stadium, Taita Community Hall, Taita Community library and Hutt Valley netball courts. The intention is a hub for community activities as well as a venue for activities such as trade shows. Outdoor space is largely hard courts.
- 5 Reynolds Street Reserve - A 1.5 hectare linear grassed open space between Taita Drive at Fraser Park and Taine Street at Taita Sports and Community Centre with multiple entries from neighbouring streets. It has a swale with a piped stream and a bridge across the swale linking streets. Access along the length of the reserve is restricted in wet weather because the surface is wet underfoot.
- 6 Hughes Crescent Reserve - An open grassed area of just under 0.5 hectares with two street frontages and mature specimen trees.

- 7 Colson Street Reserve - A grassed reserve just under 0.5 hectares with specimen trees, street frontage on Colson Street and a lane from Hollard Grove connecting the two neighbourhoods. Good surveillance from houses overlooking the reserve.
- 8 De Menech Grove Reserve - A small grassed pocket park at the corner of De Menech Grove and Chesney Street with small tree and shrub planting on the boundaries.
- 9 Molesworth Street Reserve - At under 0.3 hectares, the reserve has no street frontage and is accessed from a lane off Molesworth Street. It currently has a second access next to Pomare Foodmarket across private land. The reserve is a grassed area with a large willow next to a school with high wire fencing on the boundary and has poor drainage.
- 10 High Street Pomare - Grassed area reserve of nearly 0.7 hectare has a playground and one street frontage on High Street and boundaries with residential properties on three sides. Good surveillance from houses overlooking the reserve. A former entrance off Farmer Crescent has been lost to housing, reducing connections between streets. Opportunities to develop the reserve with a focus on play for older children, specimen trees, path and seating.
- 11 Hutt River Corridor and Floodplain - An area valued for its natural features, cycle/walking trail and for recreation. A swimming hole with 'Taita Rock' near Pomare is popular. The river is visually and physically separated from the built area by roads and the stop bank. Safe access across busy roads is difficult for children and the elderly.
- 12 Pomare Reserves - Two new neighbourhood reserves established during the redevelopment of Pomare with street frontages on Waitara Street and Farmer Crescent.
- 13 Wingate Reserve - A grassed area with feature specimen trees at the Wingate overbridge next to Wingate Station. The reserve is separated from its neighbourhood by roads which limits any use for informal recreation, although it is an area without reserves that could be used by the Wingate workforce for recreation.
- 14 Small grassed area on eastern Hutt Road in Windgate business area with picnic table under a mature totara tree.

KEY

- Sports and Recreation - facilities for organised sport (sportsfields, club rooms, hard courts, changing rooms etc)
- Recreation and Ecological Linkages - linear typically with low levels of development
- Neighbourhood - Small reserves in residential areas with open areas for play and relaxation; often have playgrounds
- Natural - Emphasis on the natural environment

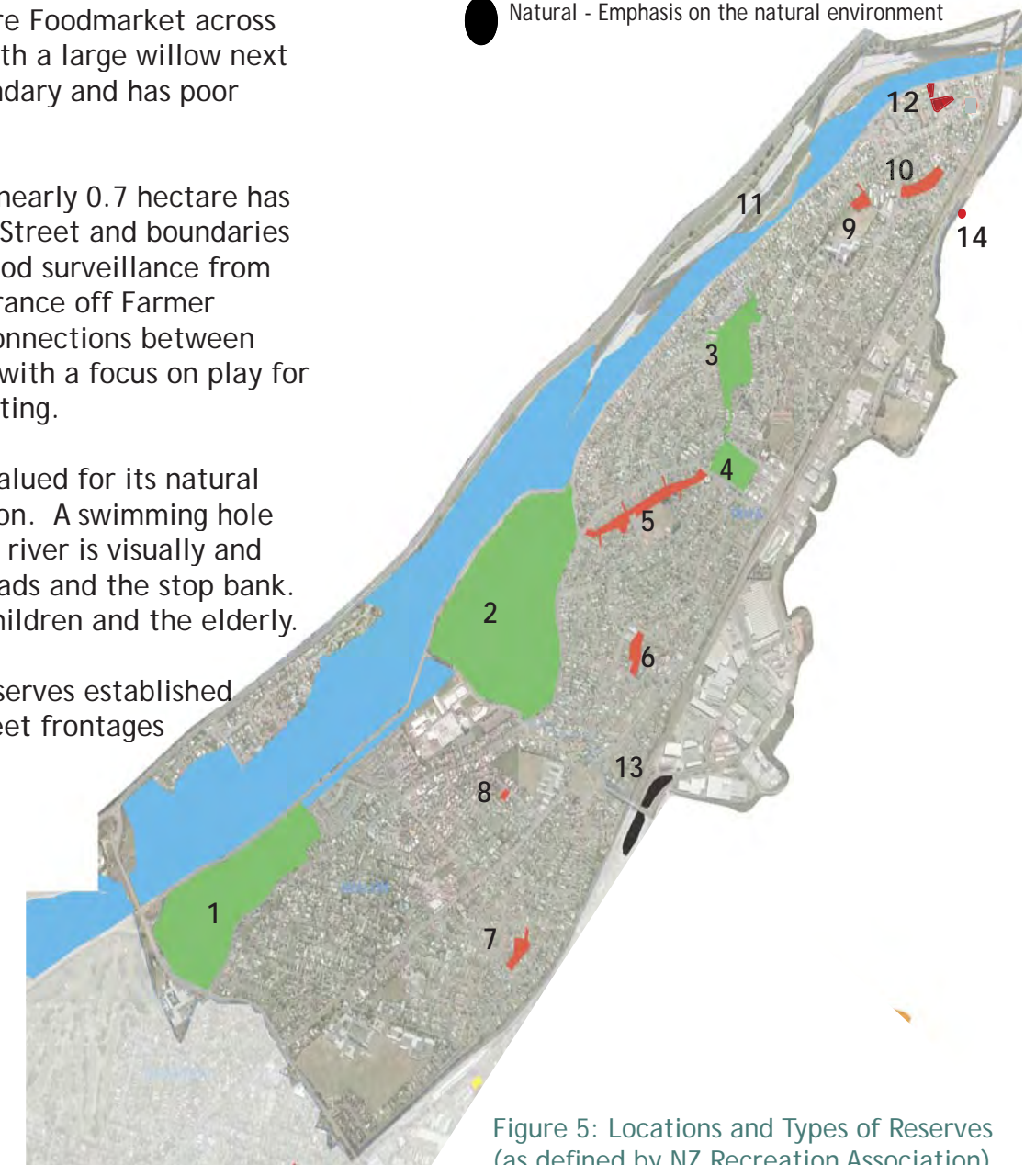


Figure 5: Locations and Types of Reserves (as defined by NZ Recreation Association)

3.0 Roles of reserves and suggestions to improve

3.1 Neighbourhood Reserves

3.1.1 Role

These are small reserves, often with open grassed areas for play and relaxation. They sometimes have playgrounds. Some larger parks may have areas that function as neighbourhood reserves. The Molesworth end of Walter Nash Park is an example and serves central Taita.

Use of neighbourhood reserves often changes as people move in and out of a neighbourhood, therefore it is important that they have flexible open space, a grassed area large enough for ball games and other similar activities and ideally large trees. Specimen trees bring maturity to a reserve, are generally taken as a sign of stewardship and care. This maturity is particularly valued by immigrants to NZ.

Taita neighbourhood reserves are generally accessible, connect neighbourhoods and provide opportunities for informal neighbourhood recreation and enjoyment in an area with a high proportion of young people, high levels of socio-economic deprivation, health issues and where higher density housing is proposed.

Avalon has only one neighbourhood reserve and a pocket park in northern Avalon. Avalon Park is a significant open space for informal recreation and play opportunities for local residents. Residents in central Avalon where higher density housing is proposed are further than the recommended 400 metres or 8.5 minutes walk from a neighbourhood reserve.

Roles of neighbourhood reserves in Avalon and Taita:

- 1. Flexible green neighbourhood open space within residential blocks with room for energetic activities such as ball games and safe for users (away from roads, easy to access, close to people's homes without having to cross busy streets and houses that overlook the reserves for safety):**
Taita - High Street Pomare Reserve, Molesworth Street end of Walter Nash Park, Hughes Crescent Reserve, new Pomare Reserves, Molesworth Street Reserve
Avalon - Colson Street Reserve.
- 2. Connectivity between streets - Walking through reserves instead of longer and less direct journeys along streets decreases the distance people need to walk, increases route options, provides easy access to destinations and allows more direct journeys between destinations such as home and school. This discourages car use by making local trips easier and more pleasant on foot than by car with positive outcomes for health. Lack of all weather paths limits access through reserves in wet weather**
Taita - Reynolds Street Reserve, Walter Nash Park, Molesworth Street Reserve (although access from Farmer Crescent next to Pomare Foodmarket is across private land)
Avalon - Colson Street Reserve.
- 3. Pocket parks - These small grassed areas often have trees, offer respite from the street environment and are places to stop and rest.**
De Mensch Grove Reserve - This is a small reserve on a street corner in Avalon.
Eastern Hutt Road - a small grassed area with a mature totara and picnic table offers respite and a place to rest and have lunch for local Wingate workers.

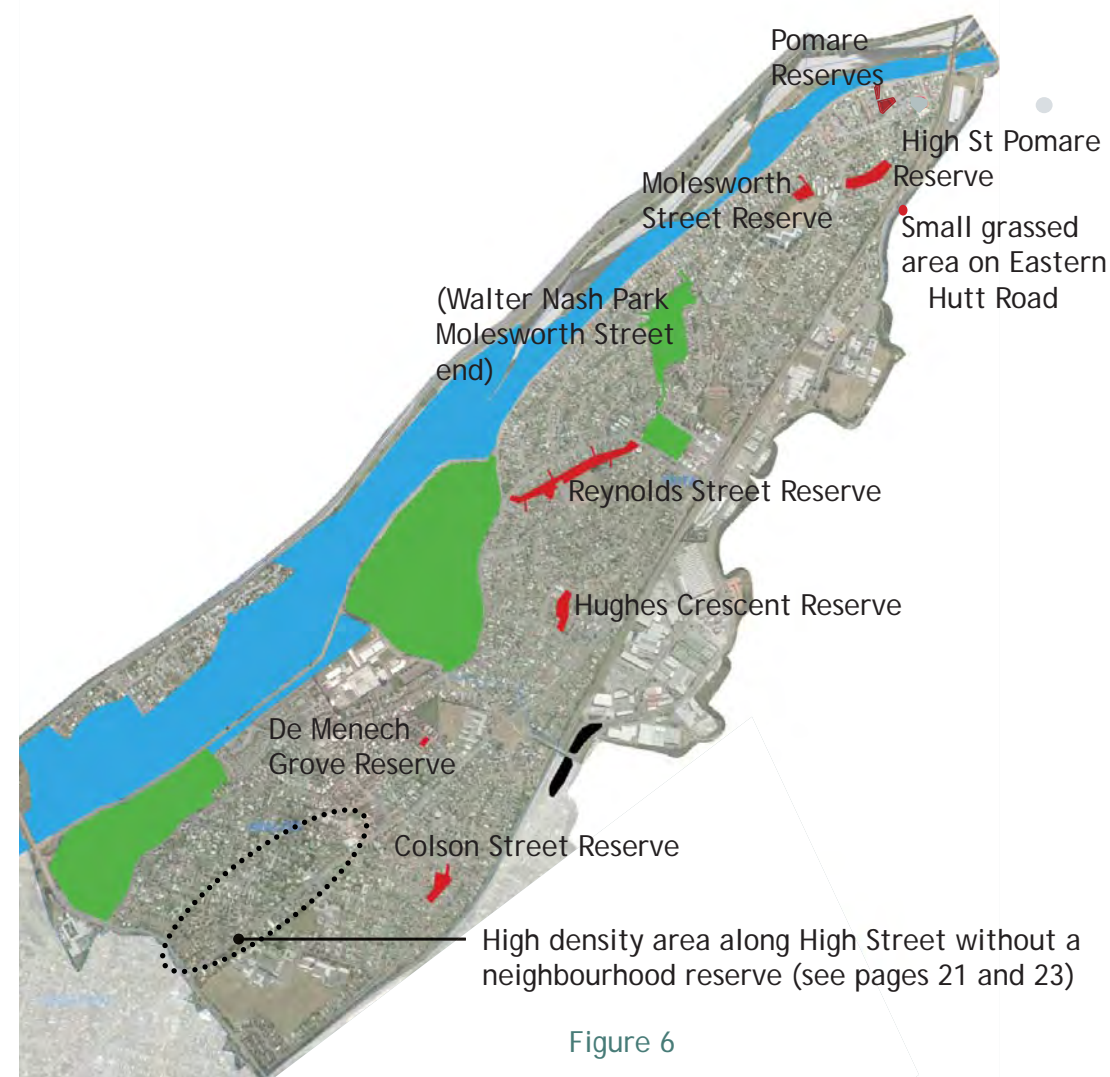


Figure 6

● Neighbourhood reserves



Figure 6: Colson Street Reserve



Figure 7: Reserves under development- Pomare



Figure 8: Play and picnic area with community orchard in the background - Walter Nash Park

4. **Community facilities: Reserves with facilities for local community services and use**
Taita - Pomare Community House.

3.1.2 Opportunities

1. Keeping open space in neighbourhood reserves for flexible use and activities.
2. Working with neighbouring property owners over time towards replacing reserve boundary fences with a combination of wire fencing and solid fencing where privacy is critical. This will improve safety for reserve users as activities will be overlooked by neighbours. Openings in fences from neighbouring properties will increase accessibility from neighbouring properties and encourage use.
3. Molesworth Reserve does not have a defined role and only one guaranteed street entrance, reducing its role of connecting parts of the suburb. Revocation as reserve and sale would release funds that could be used to improve Taita reserves.
4. Central Avalon intensification area on High Street lacks a public park within the recommended 400 metres or 8.5 minute walk. However, Avalon Park is a large public open space and although a 10-15 minute walk from central Avalon its extensive facilities and attractive spaces means it is a major feature for people living in Avalon. In addition, central and eastern Avalon have access to Naenae College grounds (although continued public access is not guaranteed).

The northwest corner of Avalon Park and site of the former caretaker's house is undeveloped and like other former caretaker house sites could be considered for reserve revocation and sale, with revenue from the sale used for reserve development.

5. Facilities for the Wingate workforce would enhance the industrial area - a grassed area for informal ball games and other outdoor recreational activities, a hard court and a pleasant outdoor area with shelter and shade for lunch breaks would enhance Wingate industrial area.

Neighbourhood reserves with grassed open space and attractive specimen trees for shade and shelter and few structures allows for flexible use.

The site of the former caretaker's house in the northwest corner of Avalon Park could be considered for sale and proceeds used to improve reserves.

Avalon Park is Avalon's key green space with extensive play and community recreational opportunities.

Revocation of Molesworth Street Reserve as reserve and sale would release funds that could be used to improve Taita reserves.

Improve safety by replacing solid boundary fences with visually permeable fences with gates that open onto reserves (e.g. wire, mesh, paling fences with gaps, low fences or a combination).

An area where the Wingate workforce can recreate would add value to the industrial area.

Some small changes to the Taine Street entrance to Reynolds Street Reserve such as a path, seating, specimen tree and other planting would transform it into a pocket park. This would enhance the area for visitors to Walter Nash Stadium and the netball courts.

It would also be a neighbourhood reserve for residents as the area intensifies as anticipated in the District Plan.



Figure 10: Over time replace solid boundary fences to improve visibility and safety



Figure 11: Taine Street entrance to Reynolds Street Reserve



Figure 12: Taine Street entrance to Reynolds St Reserve as a pocket park

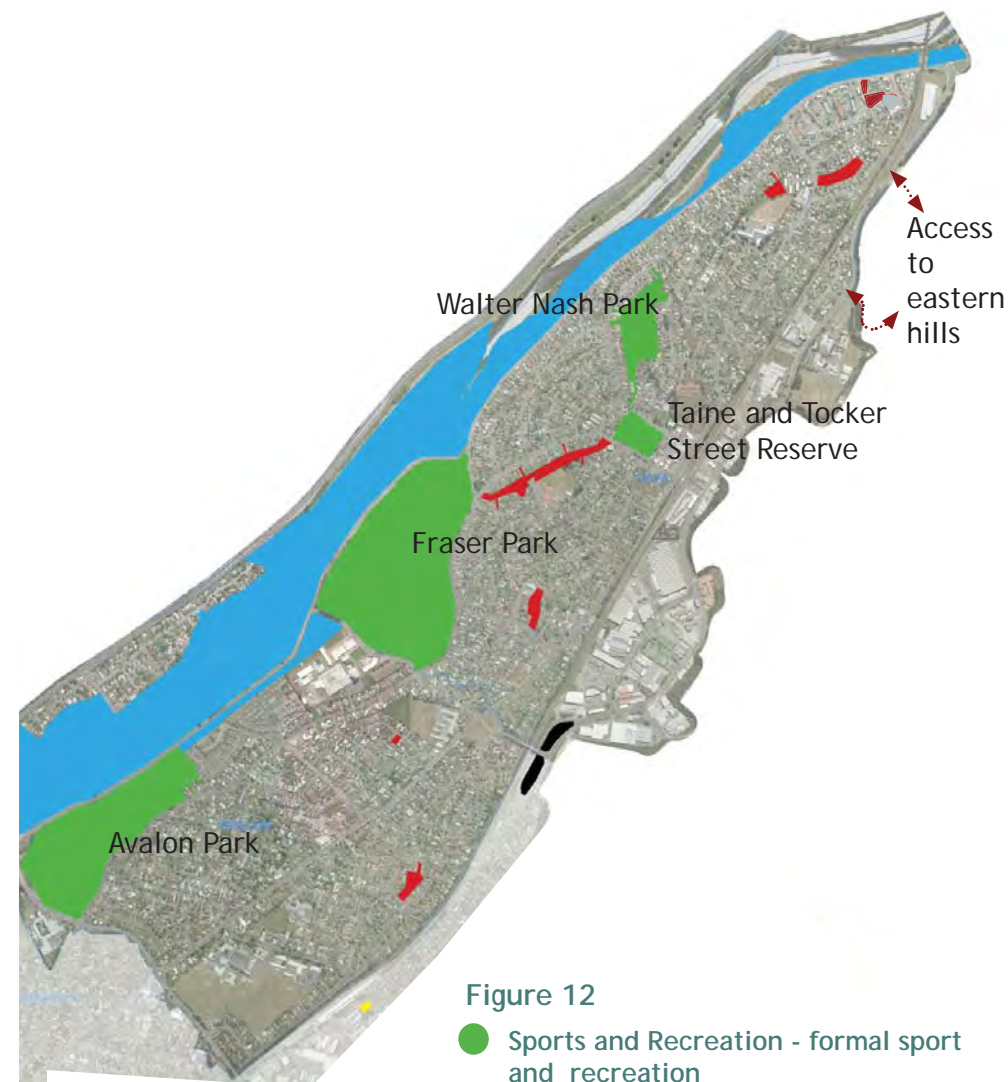
3.2 Sports and Recreation

3.2.1 Role

Formal Sport and Recreation

This area has high quality sporting and recreation facilities that are destinations for people from outside of Avalon and Taita. Fraser Park is developing as a regional sports hub, Taine and Tocker Reserve is the location of major sports and recreation facilities. Avalon Park is developing as a destination playground park. Facilities in these reserves are comprehensive:

- **Sportsfields**
 - Natural turf sportsfields for softball, rugby, cricket and football (Fraser Park)
 - Artificial turf for hockey and proposed artificial turf for football



- Squash courts (Fraser Park)
- Tennis courts (Avalon Park, Walter Nash Park)
- Outdoor bowling/croquet greens and clubrooms of former Taita Bowling Club in Walter Nash Park are proposed to be used by Waimarie Croquet Club
- Petanque court (Avalon Park).

Informal Sport and Recreation

Public sportsfields and hard courts are available for free community and neighbourhood use outside of times when facilities are booked for formal and organised sports:

- Sportsfields at Fraser Park
- Outdoor netball courts at Taine and Tocker Reserve
- Public tennis courts at Avalon and Walter Nash Parks.

Playground park

Avalon has extensive facilities for a range of activities and events and play areas for toddlers, older children and young people:

- Beginners cycle route
- Model train
- Mini golf
- Model boating pond
- Picnic facilities with barbeques and tables
- Skatepark
- Public tennis courts.

Adventure and outdoor recreation in a natural setting

Hutt River along the western boundary of the activity area offers opportunities for informal sport and recreation:

- Walking, cycling, jogging and running along Hutt River trail
- Kayaking, canoeing and rafting
- Swimming (Taita Rock is a popular swimming hole)
- Fishing
- Dog walking.

Recreational Connectivity

Hutt River Trail and the river connects Avalon and Taita with suburbs up and down stream. However, safe access from Avalon and Taita is compromised by a lack of crossing points over busy and in places 70 kph roads, especially for children and the elderly. The stop bank is a further barrier to access.



Figure 13: Informal recreation in Avalon Park

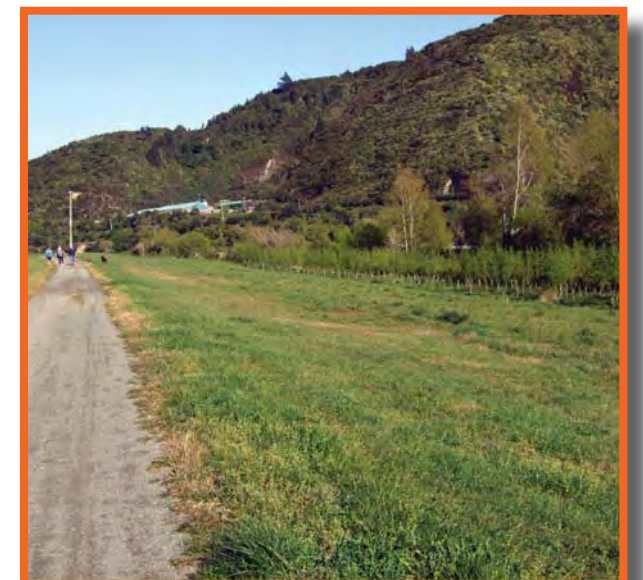


Figure 14: Walking along Hutt River in Taita

- Reynolds Street Reserve connects Fraser Park with Taita Sports and Community Centre. It also links neighbouring streets on either side of the reserve and provides short cuts to schools and early childhood centre. Apart from one path and bridge crossing the swale that runs along the length of the reserve, the grass surface limits use of the reserve in wet weather
- The underpass to Pomare Station links Taita with the Eastern Hills walking and mountain bike track 'Old Soil Bureau Track'.

Opportunities

1. Fraser Park sports hub increases opportunities for community and local neighbourhood use when the park is not in use for booked activities. This widens park use, gives a sense of local ownership which encourages 'eyes on the park' to reduce vandalism. Measures that attract casual local use would complement the regional sporting facilities and would also contribute to a positive experience for sports participants, their supporters and spectators:
 - All-weather perimeter path (walking is the most popular recreation activity among all age groups⁶)
 - Seating
 - Extend amenity values with planting associated with park development e.g. in the new carpark off Taita Drive.
2. All weather path along the length of Reynolds Street Reserve.
3. Looped walking trail through reserves linking key recreation facilities and Hutt River (see Figure 14 page 15).
4. More defined and safer access across Harcourt Werry Drive from Avalon and Fraser Parks, Taita and Pomare to the Hutt River and Hutt River Trail.⁷ Road design measures would warn motorists of road crossing points e.g. kerb extensions, planting and landscape treatment to attract driver attention and advanced warning. A repeated vertical element would mark a pedestrian entry.
5. Improvements to the Tocker Street entrance of Walter Nash Park to re-integrate the park with the urban centre of Taita and key recreational, social and cultural facilities. Housing units built inside the 'grand' entranceway with distinctive brick and iron feature gates block sight lines and reduce park access to a narrow lane, making it difficult to improve access to this important

public open space. The park complements Walter Nash Stadium and the hard courts of Taine and Tocker Reserve, and improving connections would create a comprehensive public recreation area in the heart of Taita.

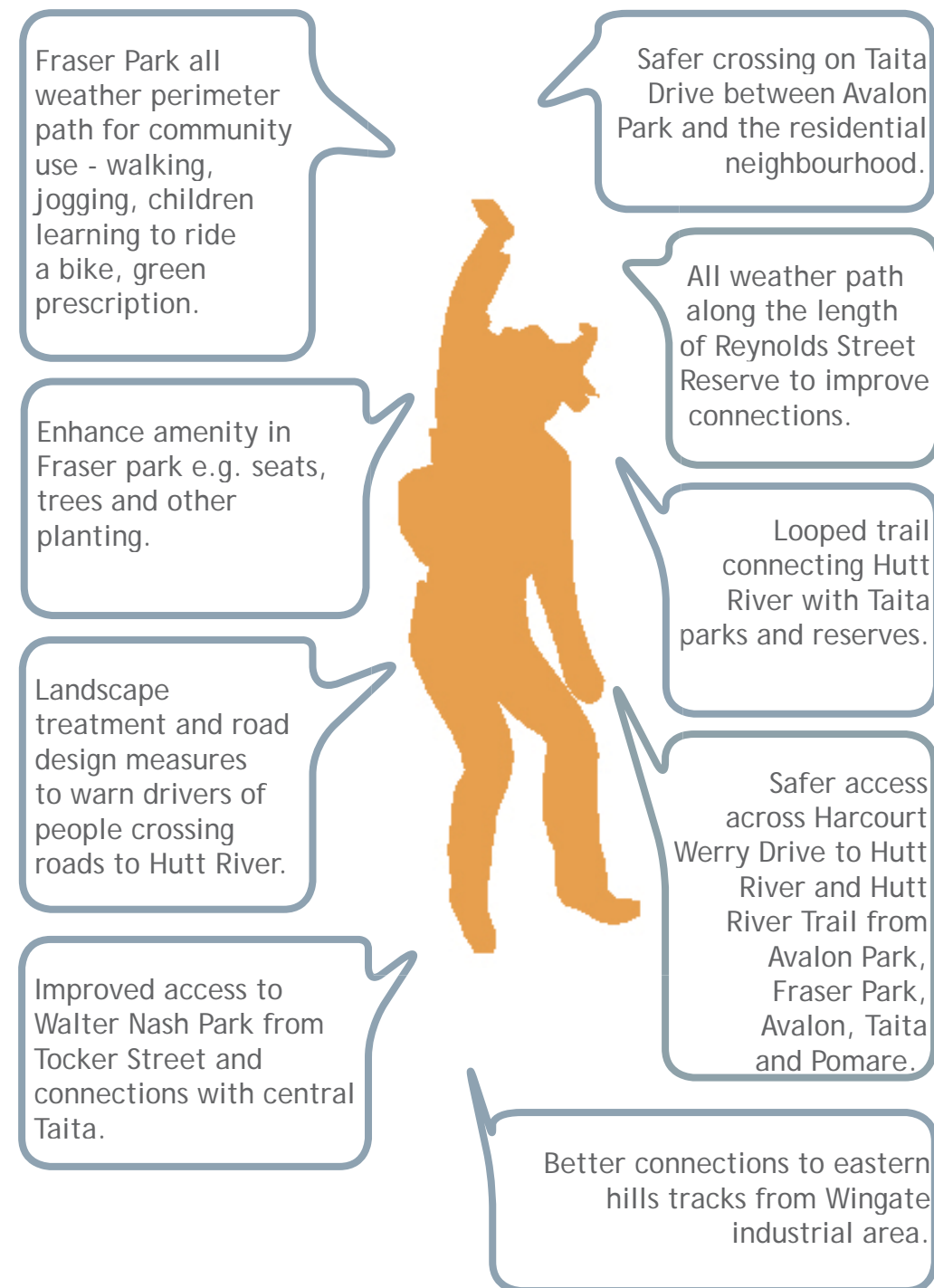


Figure 15: Walter Nash Park entrance gates and entrance constrained by housing



Figure 16: Hutt River swimming hole at Taita



Figure 17: Improving access across busy roads to Hutt River trail would enhance connectivity

⁶NZ Recreation Association Active NZ Survey 2007/2008 <http://www.activenzsurvey.org.nz/Results/2007-08-Active-NZ-Survey/National-Report/Participation-in-Sport-and-Recreation/>
⁷Refer Fraser Park Management Plan; Avalon Park Management Plan

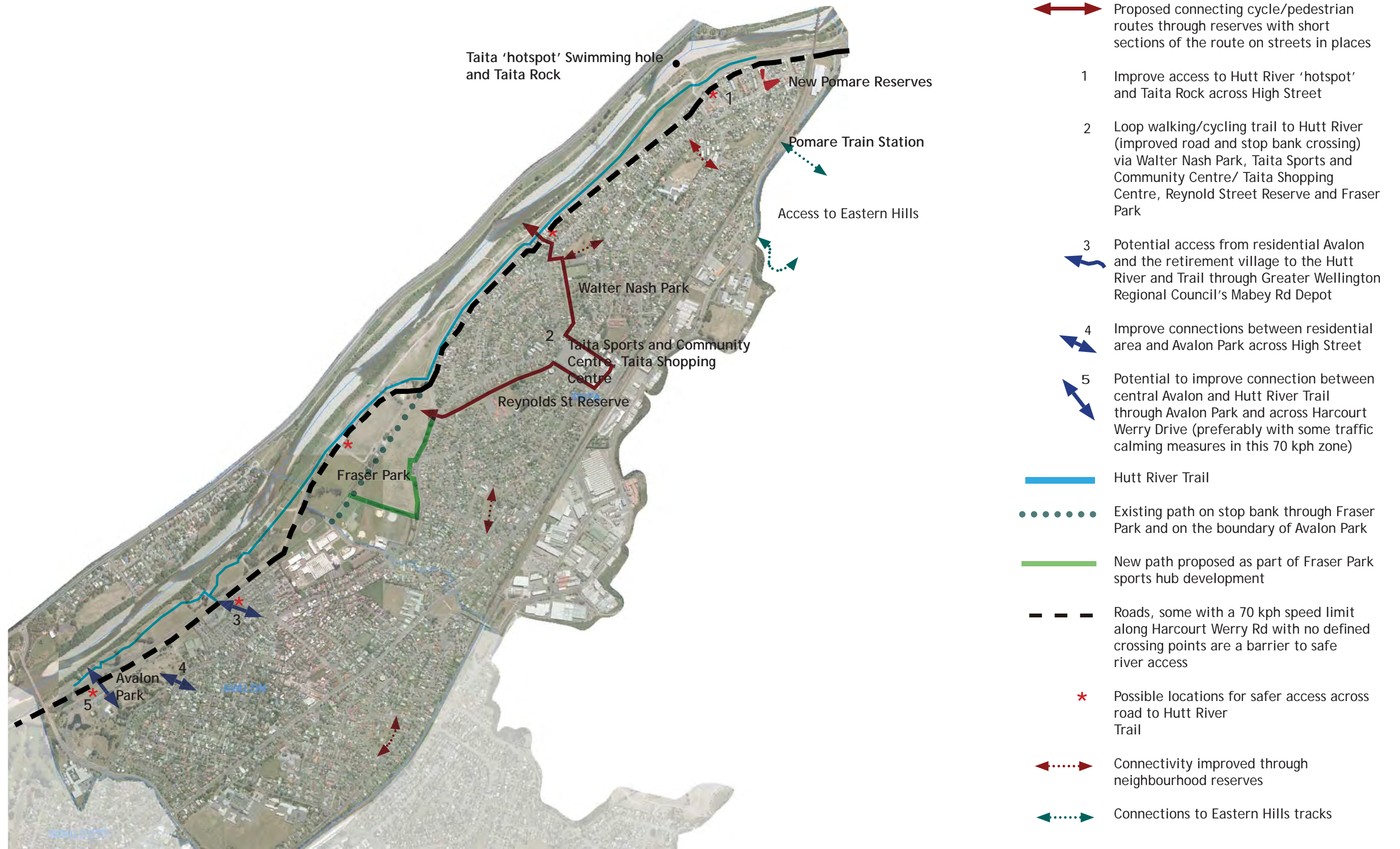


Figure 18: Recreational Connections through reserves

3.3 Ecological Connectivity

3.3.1 Role

1. Support bird valley crossing point

The narrowest section of the valley floor lies just north of Taita and is a bird crossing point connecting eastern and western sides of the valley. Planting in public open space to provide habitat that supports birds has a role to play in improving ecological connectivity.

2. Trees

Native tree species that flourished on alluvial river terraces and flood plain have largely disappeared from the valley floor because of changes to flood and water management. Some of these species could be established on reserves with appropriate conditions.

Suburban properties are becoming smaller with little space for large trees. Reserves as a location for large trees provide shelter, shade, nesting and roosting for birds, as well as many amenity benefits such as local identity and character.⁸

3. Streams

Streams have largely disappeared from the surface in Taita and Avalon. Selected reserves have a role in 'daylighting' these streams, re-establishing fresh water habitat and amenity.

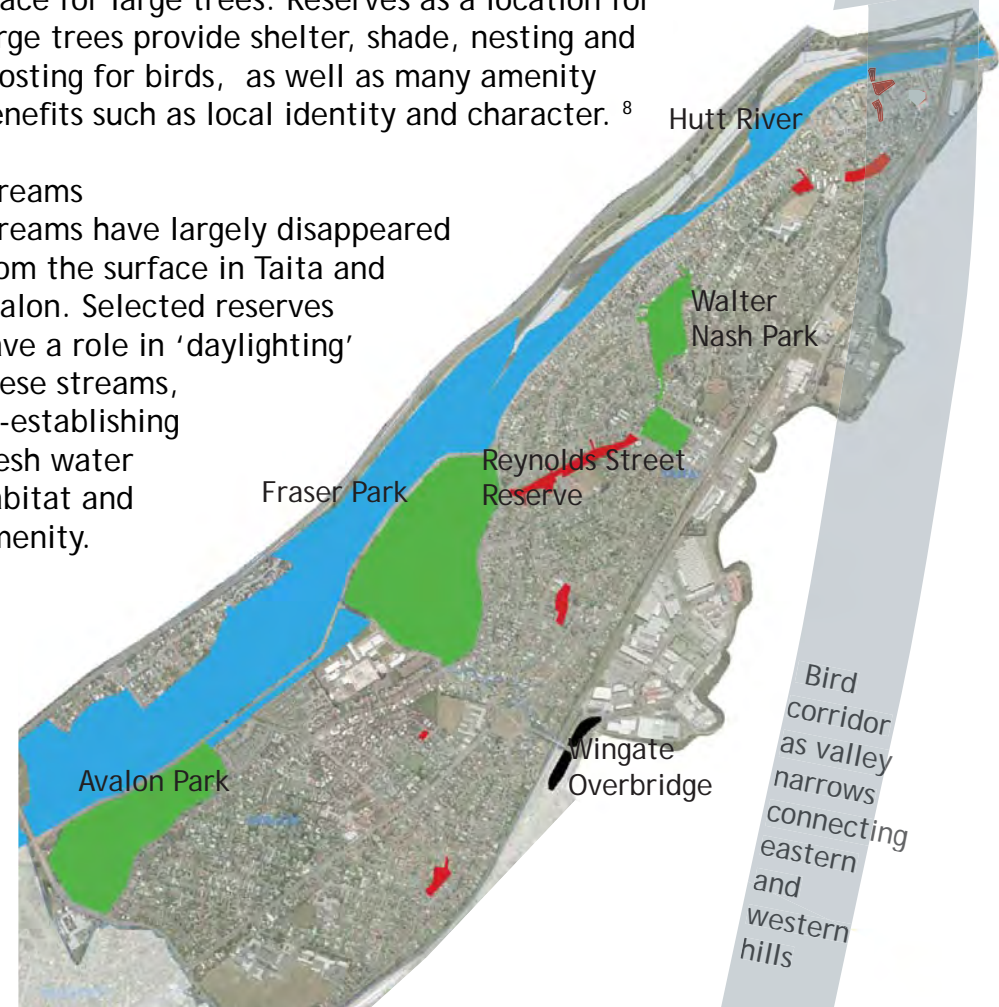


Figure 19: Reserves important for ecological connectivity

Plant trees with birds' needs in mind.

When planting trees consider species of the river flood plain and now largely missing from the valley floor.

The large parks - Avalon Park, Fraser Park and Walter Nash Park - have scope for attractive specimen trees.

Trees in neighbourhood reserves add character, shelter and shade for local users as long as open grassed space is left for activities.

Daylighting the stream in Reynolds Street Reserve would have many benefits - for ecology, amenity and for education.

Planting along banks of the two small streams in Fraser Park would improve stream habitat and add amenity for the enjoyment of park users.⁹

Wingate Reserve has scope to widen ecological habitat.



Figure 20: Reynolds Street Reserve - A long term goal to daylight the stream would enhance the reserve and ecological connectivity

⁸For detail on benefits of urban trees see Hutt City Council Urban Forest Plan 2009

⁹See Fraser Park Management Plan

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Figure 21 View south to High Street/Taita Drive intersection and less than safe entrance for pedestrians and cyclists across the stop bank to 'hotspot' Taita Rock



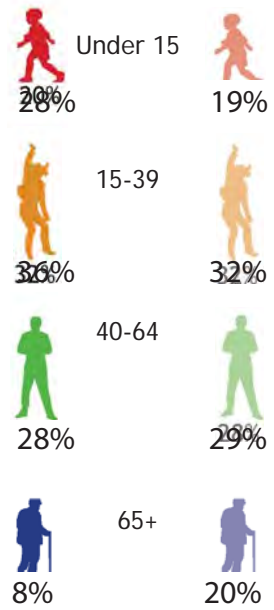
Figure 22 View from the stop bank to the river and Taita Rock

Appendix: Profile of Taita/Avalon

1. Population, projected demographic changes, ethnic breakdown

KEY

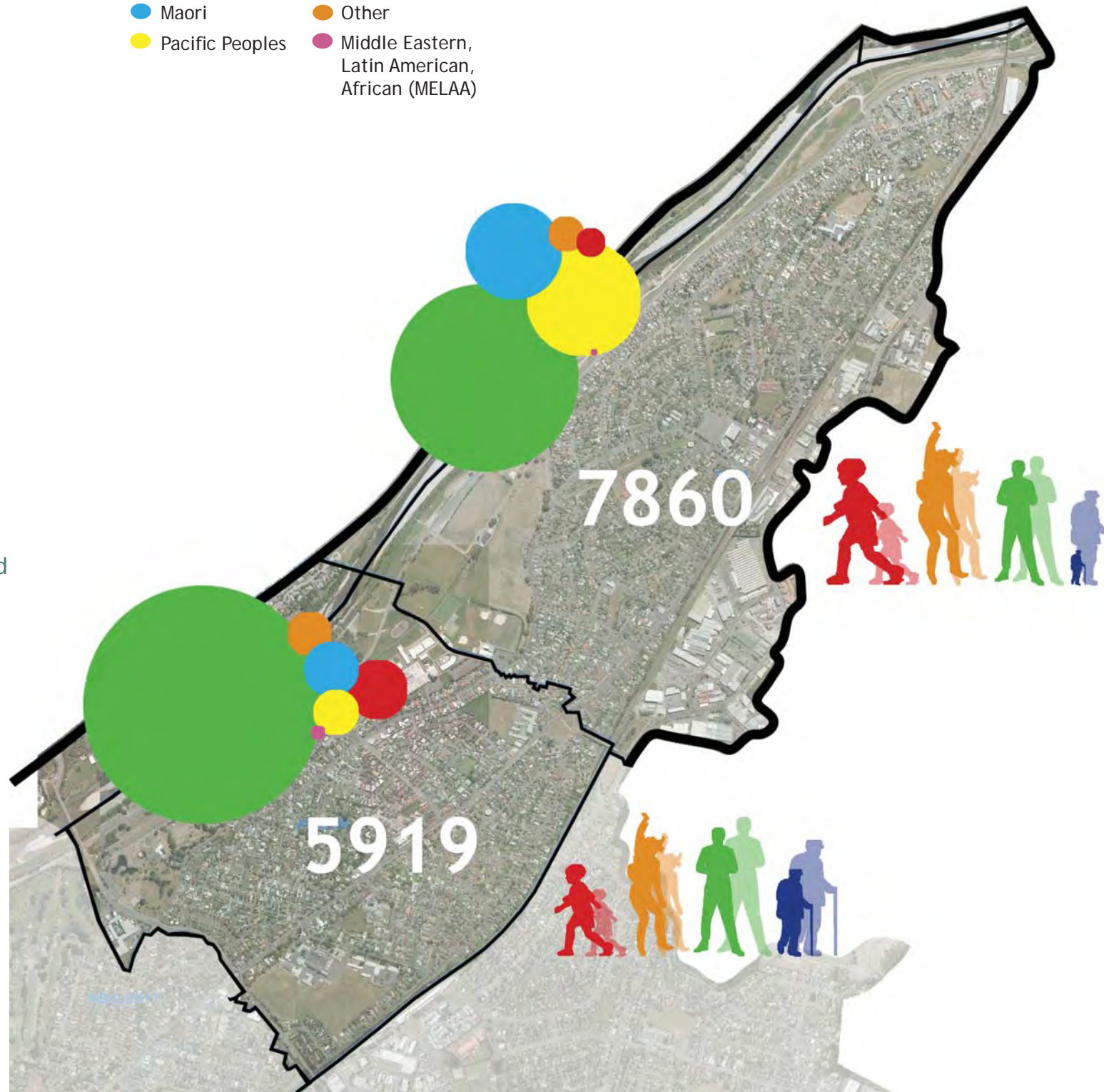
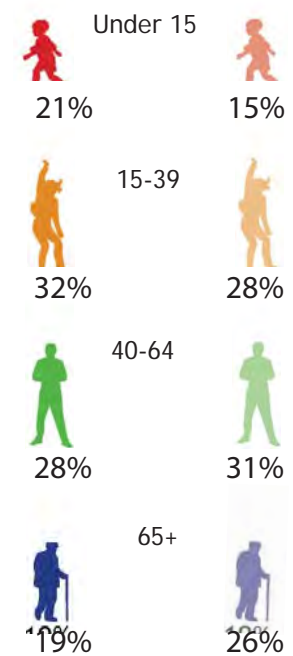
Taita: Current Projected



Ethnic breakdown



Avalon: Current Projected



SUMMARY TAITA

- The most culturally diverse suburb with a high proportion of Maori and Pacifica Island peoples
- Second largest population of Valley Floor reserves after Naenae
- Largest proportion of children of any suburb although projected to decrease over time
- 15 year olds to middle aged the largest demographic
- Elderly population to increase.

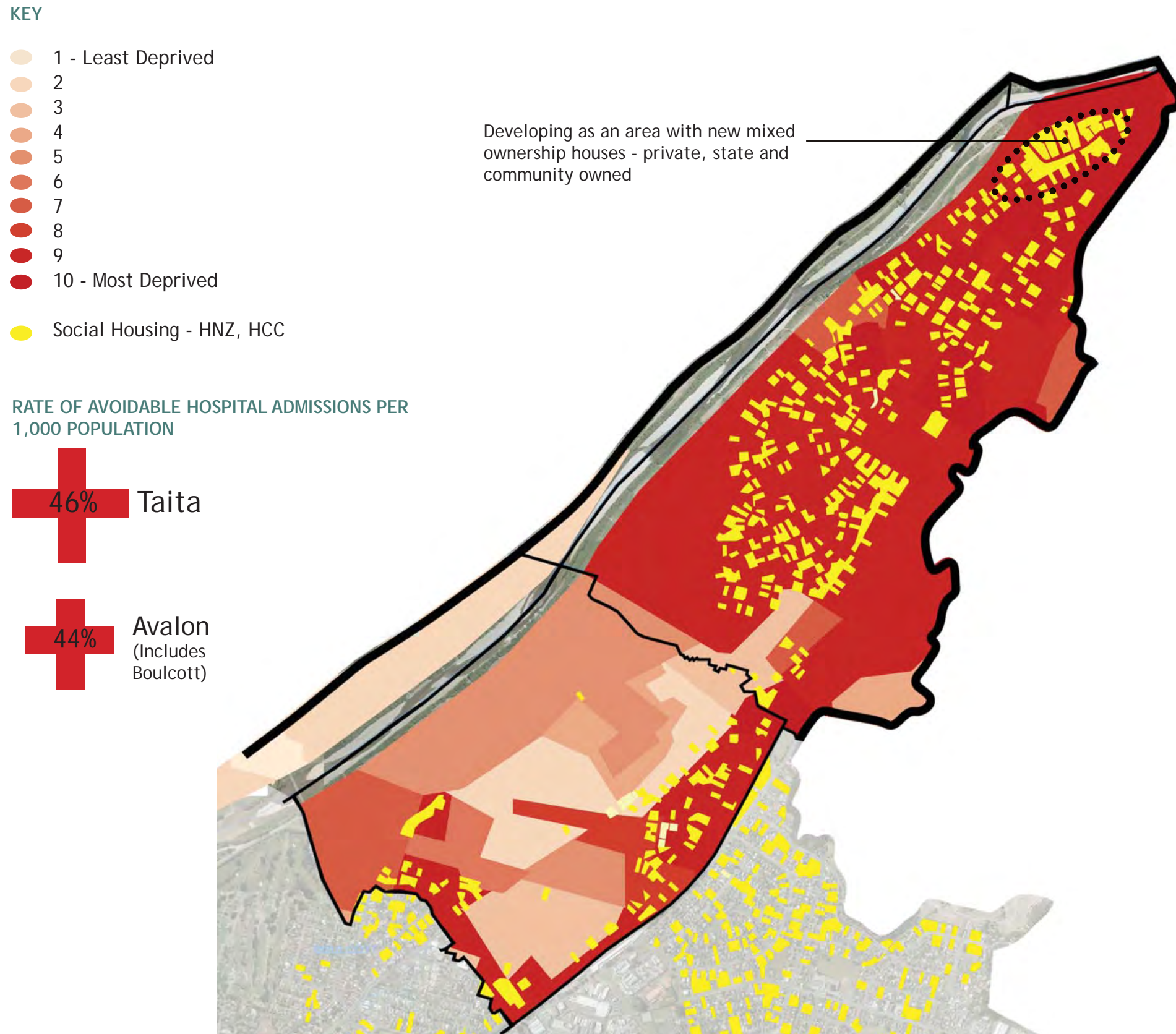
SUMMARY AVALON

- Ethnically diverse suburb with Asian peoples second to Europeans followed by Maori, Pacifica and other ethnicities
- Population the fourth largest after Naenae, Taita and Petone
- Projected to have the smallest percentage of children of all valley floor suburbs
- Numbers of youth projected to decline slightly
- The middle aged population is projected to increase slightly
- A major retirement village in Avalon means the suburb has the largest percentage of elderly of all valley floor suburbs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESERVES IN TAITA/AVALON

- Reserves that cater for multiple ages, are multi-functional and have flexible open space that can adapt as demographics change
- Opportunities to participate in casual active sports and recreation as well as organised sport and recreation
- Places for young people to actively recreate and that allow youth to see and be seen
- Reserves and recreation to be part of the commuting journey to and from school and work for young people to middle-aged adults
- Neighbourhood reserves that are easy to access, within sight and earshot of homes for young children, are safe, have opportunities for undirected cooperative and individual play rather than relying on standard play equipment
- Reserves that are accessible for the elderly, easy to navigate with safe surfaces and paths, and provide for comfort e.g. seating, shelter from sun and wind
- A variety of reserves with spaces for large and small groups
- Imaginative and natural play opportunities
- Areas for picnicking with picnic tables and drinking water
- Quality materials, well maintained with evidence of stewardship and care
- Opportunity for community participation in planning and design to ensure needs are met.

2. Socio-economic levels, social housing and health



SUMMARY SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVELS, SOCIAL HOUSING AND HEALTH

- Taita has very high levels of social and economic deprivation across the suburb. In Avalon, areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation are in the eastern and southern sides of the suburb
- In areas with higher social deprivation, often associated with social housing, households are generally larger with a greater number of people per property and fewer square metres per person.
- Housing is more dense with adjoining and multi-storied units
- The quality of back and front yards is typically low because of changing tenancy and limited resources
- Less access to private and public transport meaning reserves within walking distance are important
- Taita has the highest levels of avoidable hospital admissions in Hutt City and Avalon the third highest. Avoidable hospitalisations are influenced by housing quality, access to services, opportunities for daily physical activity.

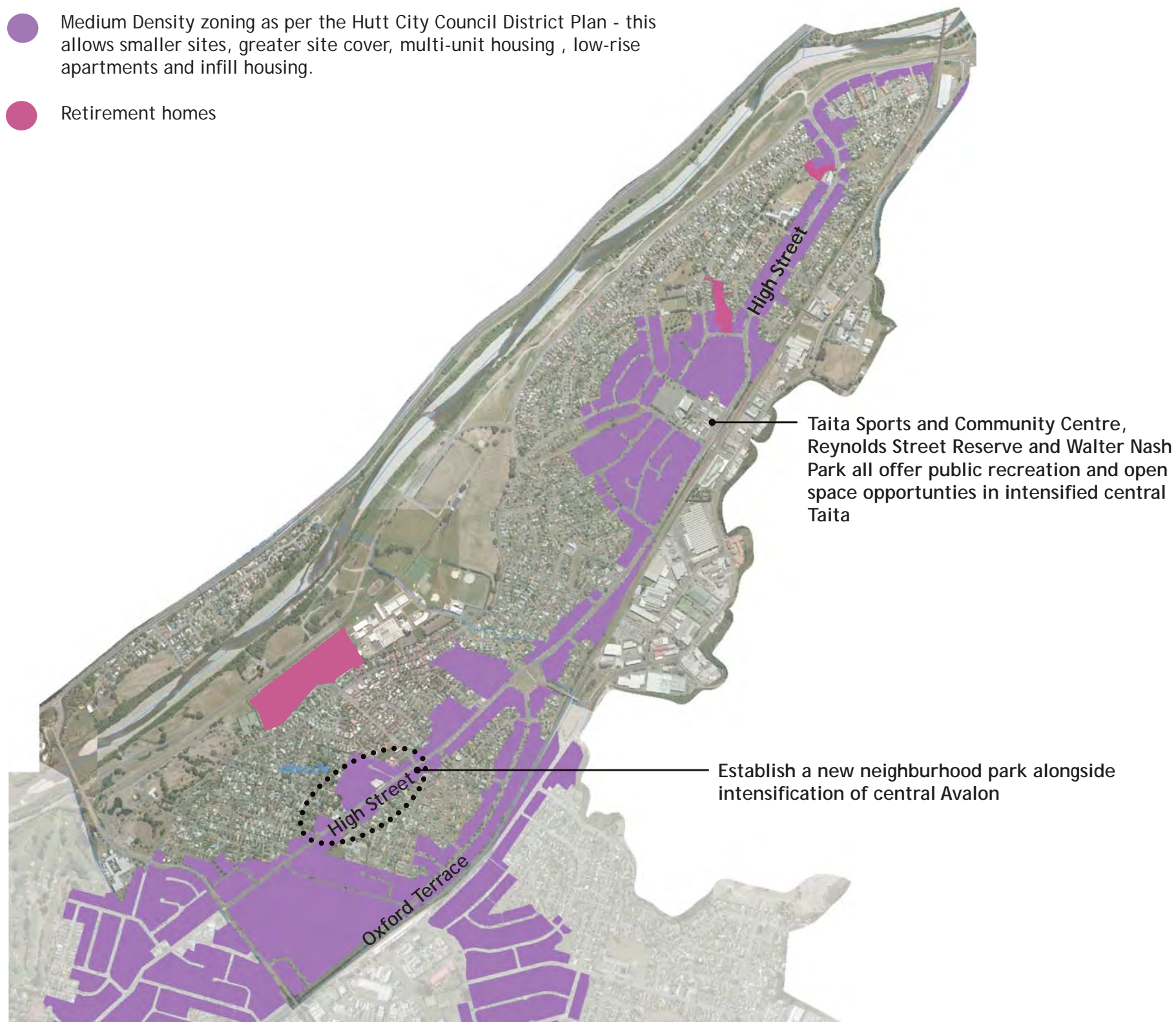
IMPLICATIONS FOR RESERVES IN TAITA/AVALON

- Reserves that offer opportunities for:
 - social contact and for residents to engage with each other
 - play for young people and children
- Reserves linked by streets providing direct and leisurely paths to destinations. Routes that encourage physical activities - either targeted or as part of everyday activities e.g. on route to shops, schools and work
- Neighbourhood reserves that are easily accessible from retirement homes and for children
- Reserves that provide relief from the more intensively developed built environment and a generally greener number of people per property
- Free active recreation opportunities close to people's homes which do not require membership
- Community activities to do with fruit and vegetable production are often important in low socio-economic areas where people have fewer resources for their own production and/or are mobile moving addresses and unable to commit resources to their own production.

3. Housing density and retirement homes

KEY

- Medium Density zoning as per the Hutt City Council District Plan - this allows smaller sites, greater site cover, multi-unit housing, low-rise apartments and infill housing.
- Retirement homes



SUMMARY

- Housing density proposed to increase along High Street and the rail corridor, the centre of Taita clustered around Taita shopping centre and the Taita Sport and Community Centre, and the south east corner of Avalon
- New social housing in Pomare with state and community housing providers mixed with private 'affordable' housing
- Retirement homes in Taita and a large retirement village in Avalon between Avalon industrial area, Avalon Park, Harcourt Werry Drive and suburban

IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED HOUSING DENSITY

- Demand for reserves close to people's homes because of limited space for private gardens, edible or ornamental plants and for quality specimen trees
- Open space for children to run around in and play
- Opportunities for people to interact socially
- Unpaved areas and soft surfaces to absorb stormwater, reduce runoff and improve water quality before it runs into Hutt River
- Quality open space to compensate for smaller open space (such access makes higher density living more widely acceptable)
- Space for large specimen trees.

IMPLICATIONS OF RETIREMENT HOMES

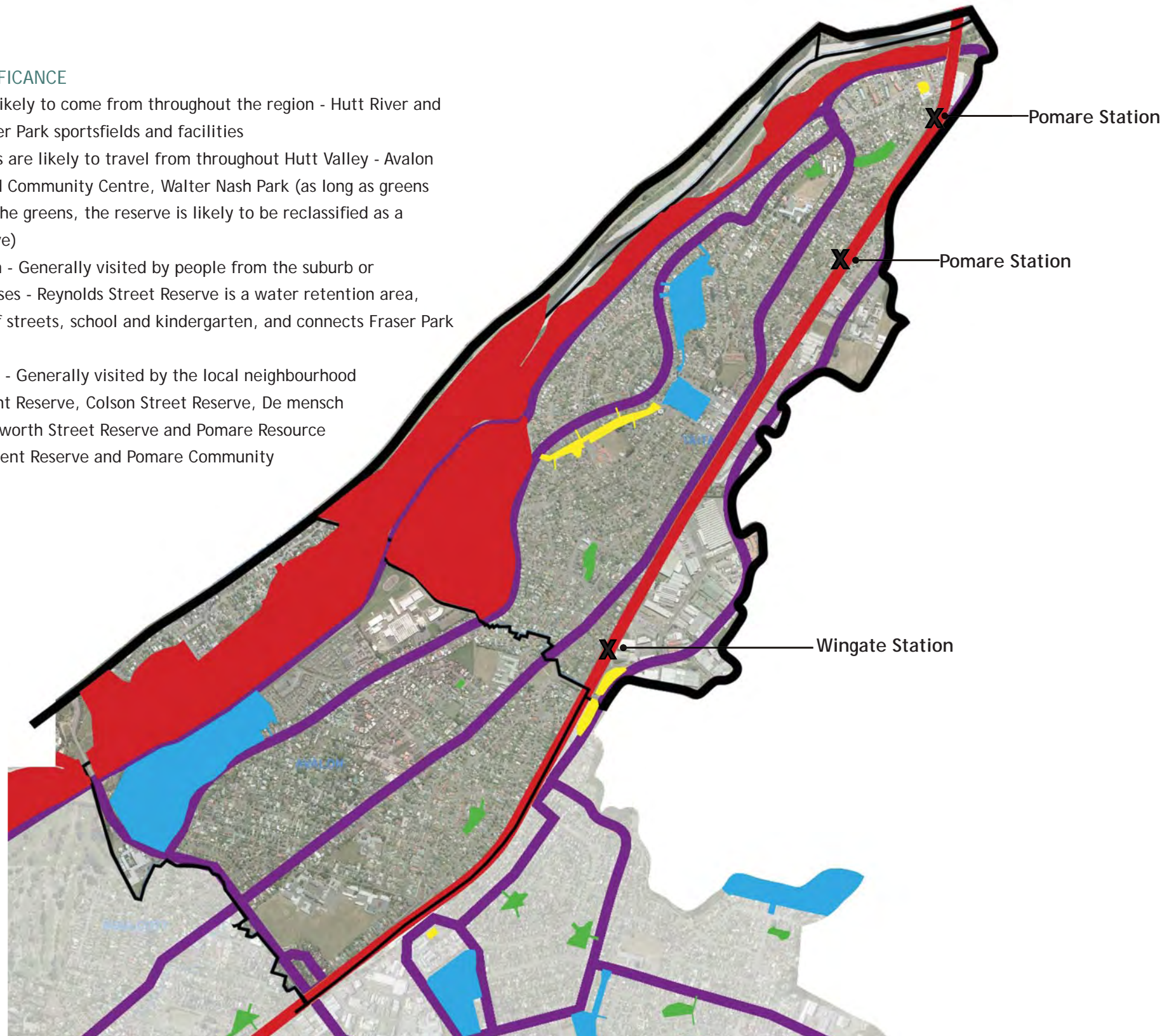
- Neighbourhood reserves accessible from retirement homes where elderly residents can be involved in community activities and socially interact
- Multi-functional and flexible reserves (to allow people to meet and interact with the wider community and participate in community activities)
- Access to the Hutt River corridor for leisure, recreation and interaction with the natural world.

KEY TO TRANSPORT

- Rail network
- Bus network
- X** Train stations

KEY TO RESERVE SIGNIFICANCE

- Region - Visitors are likely to come from throughout the region - Hutt River and Hutt River Trail, Fraser Park sportsfields and facilities
- City/District - Visitors are likely to travel from throughout Hutt Valley - Avalon Park, Taita Sports and Community Centre, Walter Nash Park (as long as greens are in use. Without the greens, the reserve is likely to be reclassified as a neighbourhood reserve)
- Community/Suburban - Generally visited by people from the suburb or have a specific purposes - Reynolds Street Reserve is a water retention area, connects a number of streets, school and kindergarten, and connects Fraser Park to central Taita
- Local/Neighbourhood - Generally visited by the local neighbourhood only - Hughes Crescent Reserve, Colson Street Reserve, De mensch Grove Reserve, Molesworth Street Reserve and Pomare Resource Centre, Farmer Crescent Reserve and Pomare Community House Reserve



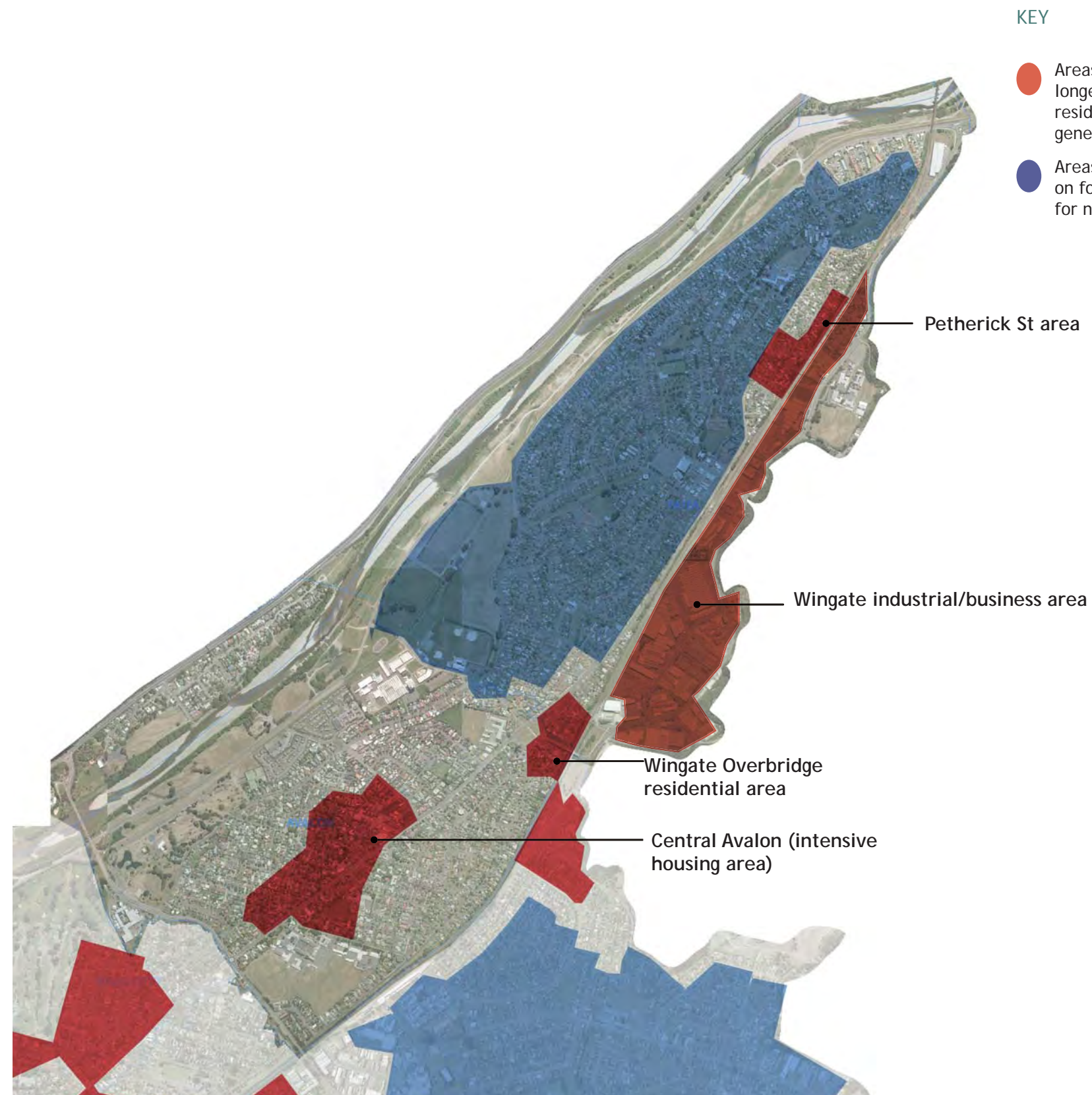
SUMMARY

- Taita and Avalon has good access to key valley transport routes (road, train and bus) and to key City and regional recreation reserves (Fraser Park, Avalon Park currently being developed as a regional playground, soon to be developed Taita Sports and Community Centre and Hutt River) along Taita Drive, High Street and Harcourt Werry Drive (although Harcourt Werry Drive is a 70kph zone which restricts access)
- Hutt River cycleway runs pallel to the suburbs connecting them and major reserves Fraser and Avalon Parks to the north and south
- A string of reserves in Taita run between Pomare and Fraser Park
- Hutt River trail is an established commuter and recreation cycle route.

IMPLICATIONS

- Avalon and Taita are on major train and bus routes and reserves are generally accessible to residents by private car or public transport
- Fraser and Avalon Parks are accessible from key transport routes (road and bus) from elsewhere in Hutt Valley and from the wider region
- Taita Sports and Community Centre in the middle of Taita is an accessible facility
- The string of reserves have potential to be developed as a route connecting key recreation reserves and as a predominantly off road route for cyclists and pedestrians.

5. Areas with a reserve shortfall; Areas with access to more than one reserve



KEY

- Areas with a reserve shortfall -i.e. it takes longer than an 8.5 minute walk for most residents to reach a reserve that is open to the general public for casual use
- Areas where most residents can reach a reserve on foot within 8.5 minutes. This is the target for neighbourhood reserves.

Most people in Avalon are able to reach a reserve suitable for neighbourhood type activities within the recommended 8.5 minutes.

People in central Taita are able to reach one or more reserve within 8.5 minutes, the time it takes an elderly person or child to walk 400 metres. This distance is recommended to be the maximum from a public reserve.

However, these reserves are not all able to be used as a neighbourhood open space. For example Taine and Tocker Reserve, the location of the planned Taita Sports and Community Centre combining Walter Nash Stadium, Taita Community Hall, Taita Community library and Hutt Valley netball, is a built reserve. Reynolds Street reserve is a large linear reserve but has a disadvantage of being wet underfoot at times reducing options for use e.g. as a short cut between streets and as a safe cycle/ pedestrian path away from streets.

Four areas fall outside the recommended minimum distance to a reserve. Three are within areas earmarked for intensive housing which means demand for public open space increases:

- The middle of Avalon along High Street
- Between the Wingate overbridge and High Street along Oxford Terrace
- Between High Street, Petherick Street and the railway line
- The Wingate industrial/business area on the eastern side of the railway line with few recreational opportunities for the Wingate workforce e.g. green open space for ball games and improved access to Eastern Hill tracks for walking and mountain biking. Between High Street, Petherick Street and the railway line
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