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Child and Youth Consultation Report
13 • CHILD AND YOUTH CONSULTATION

13.1 Child and youth overview

“I would like a good community. People walking around with smiles on their faces instead of looking down.”

Groups of children and youth were engaged to get their input to the Wiri Spatial Structure Plan. This was focused on their perceptions and experiences of these neighbourhoods and future considerations they believe will enhance the living environment for children and families.

Wiri is a relatively youthful population with almost a third (30%) who are under 15 (compared with 20% nationally) and almost half of the population is under the age of 25 years old (compared with 35% nationally) hence the importance of engaging these groups. The proposed 50-year timeframe of the Wiri Spatial Structure Plan, along with Manukau City Council commitment to the First Call for Children are fundamental reasons for the inclusion of children and young people in planning, consultation, development and decision-making.

Manukau City Council adopted the principal of First Call for Children in March 2000. First Call for Children is an initiative from the 1990 United Nations World Summit for Children that spells out the responsibilities that local government has under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). The aims of First Call for Children are:

• A focussed advocacy voice both inside and outside council to ensure that the needs and issues of children are recognised and addressed
• Provision of services to meet the needs of children and young people in Manukau
• Involving children and young people in decision making including their direct participation in policy making and projects

13.2 Child and youth approach

Manukau City Council staff consulted with approximately 50 children (aged 18 years and under) in the month of July 2010 using focus groups. Participants lived in and around the Wiri area. Parents were notified before the workshops and participants and parents / caregivers were sent an overview of the Wiri Spatial Structure Plan process and general information. The contribution of children and young people in their own space was supported by a child-friendly approach, with the provision of food during the consultation process and free movie tickets afterward. They were also invited to add their comments to the draft report.

Consultations included:
1. A local primary school – Wiri Central School
2. A high school – Manurewa High School
3. A church youth group - DYCE (Dream Youth Centre Extreme)

The views of the children and young people consulted reveal the diverse worldview through a lens that differs from adults. They are sensitive to a stigma they feel over their neighbourhood and have aspirations for a more cohesive and happy community.

The main themes that arose included:
1. Safety which included both personal safety walking to and from school and general safety of the environment in which they live
2. Housing specifically housing size, style, layout and the culturally specific needs of the community and families that live in Wiri
3. Play and leisure the access to good neighbourhood play provision, including a local leisure facility that encompassed both facilitated activities, exercise / gym facilities / social services and sport facilities such as a basket ball court, swimming pool, soccer and rugby fields
4. The neighbourhood environment – the use of the Puhinui stream and an increased amount of well maintained green space for all to enjoy. Building of neighbourhoods through community participation, sense of place, ‘nicer community’ feel

14 • WIRI CENTRAL SCHOOL CONSULTATION

14.1 Wiri central school consultation approach

This HIA consultation was timely as Wiri Central School was currently studying ‘community’ as a part of their curriculum. The consultative workshop was convened to hear about the experiences of 11-13 year old students who live in Rata Vine and Wiri neighbourhoods and to seek their advice about prospective changes and thoughts on the urban plan.

Eight children from Wiri and two from Rata Vine, of Maori and Pacific ethnicity, participated in the workshop that lasted approximately 2 hours. The workshop was facilitated by Janine Mitchell (Healthy City Advisor), Alison Searle (Child Advocacy Co-ordinator) and Jessica Maihi (Cadet) from Manukau City Council.
The workshop included the following:

Discussion around photographs of the Wiri and Rata Vine neighbourhoods:

This included:
- Identifying local landmarks
- Identifying whether they used places and their reasons why / why not
- The facilitators extended conversation as it developed with open ended questions to ensure topics such as, transport methods were included in the discussion

Mapping:

Children were invited to mark areas on an aerial photograph according to whether they were used, safe or unsafe and what new facilities or changes they would make to their community.

Perfect world scenario:

Students were invited to pause and give feedback on their ‘dream,’ ideal neighbourhood that would be great for families to live in and ideas for change. Each student gave feedback.

Art:

Individual drawings were completed of places they enjoy in the neighbourhood, improvements they envisage / aspirations for the Wiri area and the numbers of occupants in their home were noted on the page. Each student explained the meaning of their drawing.

Discussion:

Additional discussion included:
- What do they do at the end of the school day?
- Their future on leaving school after talking about the planned Manukau City Centre developments – University and railway
- How they and their families travelled around Wiri and the wider region?
- General discussions regarding safety

14.2 Wiri central school consultation findings:

14.2.1 Safety

Safety was a dominant theme that was raised by the children. This included personal safety on the streets, in their homes and road traffic safety. Children believed their views sometimes go unheard by the police and other adults. Gang influence in the neighbourhood causes an underlying fear of retribution and a reluctance to inform adults of their concerns in case it inflames existing neighbourhood conflict. General disorderly behaviour and violence were also mentioned, as was a peeping tom and safety on the neighbourhood streets.

The children related numerous examples of violence on the street, of themselves being chased, that they linked to a sense of powerlessness at being unable to improve the situation.

“You never know who might come out. I always play around there but near my house so that if anyone jumps out and tries to chase me its easier for me to get home.”

“I don’t want to live there anymore.”

“The thing is, we’re not allowed to snitch/ tell on people around here... They’ll come chase after us, hunt us down, punch us.”

Additionally there were concerns with traffic and road safety. Many children need to cross the main roads and highway to get to school. This was the direct response regarding both traffic safety and the trip to school.

Do you cross at the lights?

“Sometimes I don’t. I like to be in a rush, can’t be bothered waiting for the lights so I wait in the middle of the road, then I just go.”

“One time I was waiting at the lights and it went green for me to go, then this car drove fast as straight through.”

Concerns were also raised about the effects of alcohol on the behaviour of people on the street, in public parks and thoroughfares.

Safety and a specific response to a photo of the Puhinui Stream:

“And a lot of fights happen there, and they chuck people in the creek, like people 18 and over, big fights”

“There’s this park that we play at in Wiri, but these men always throw their bottles and scare the kids away, even in the day time. And they vandalise.”

There were also repeated discussions about fences in relation to household safety in the neighbourhood.

“I think everyone should have a fence. Just in front of their lawns. Stops stuff happening on their lawns.”

“It’s (high fences are) safer; if you have a little fence they can jump over and get you. This man jumped the fence because I was looking at him. He was sitting by my fence, and he was with this other man who was swearing at him. I looked at him and he tried to get me and I ran inside. He tried to get in the door and the latch broke and he got in. My neighbours’ dad came and grabbed him, took him out because it was only me, my little brother and my Mum.”

“Down our street, everyone’s getting fences now. People starting to get new fences... at my house we have this long as white fence that goes along the grass, where people walk on. Stops some of the bad stuff from happening.”

14.2.2 Housing

Size and safety were the central themes of feedback about housing. Manukau City Council staff spoke to the primary school children about homes to accommodate large whanau, of the ten children, five usually had 8 or 9 people living in there home, two had 6 or 7 and two had 4 people living in their home. Children talked about the need for larger houses, with a minimum of 4 bedrooms. With family often coming to stay, children were the ones expected to share and move out of their rooms.

“That’s just like with us. When you have 3 rooms and 4 kids and your cousin comes over, 3 of us have to share a room and your cousin that came over has their own room. It’s always like that.”

Initially children said they prefer a one storey home, citing it “getting ‘freaky’ at night time” because you wouldn’t know what is happening upstairs or downstairs. It was also raised that “someone could push you down the stairs”. Also, some children wanted a flat house with high windows “so you can’t see in or get in the window.”

Others thought that apartment living with lots of neighbours could make it safer, although they feared falling off a balcony. In the ‘dream scenario’, several children drew their ‘ideal home’. Two featured double storey homes with trees beside the house, houses had many bedrooms and one had a pool and security cameras outside and a large visitor room. The other two were single storey homes, one with a basketball hoop and a high fence.

14.2.3 Play and Leisure

Students would like to have an after-school programme similar to what is offered in a holiday programme “where people could hang out (to) keep the kids off the street”. Several students have an interest in drawing and would value a wall for children/youth to draw on – with reference to groups known for tagging. Activities for children and youth are required, especially in Wiri. Manukau Leisure offer Amp’d weekly in Rata Vine, the children of both neighbourhoods do not necessarily benefit from these activities offered to Rata Vine as the area is a distance apart.
There have been some changes since the Community House opened in Rata Vine.
“Since our community house has come to Rata Vine my friends have settled down.”
They should make a youth group in Wiri, so people can come and get active.
“somewhere gangsters can change.”
“What kind of things do you want to see”
“Just activities, kids playing, having fun, instead of seeing people on the street looking homeless.” “A bigger park”
“In Rata Vine, after school on Tuesdays, we have this crew called Amp’d, they come around afterschool play games, its cool to see everybody playing around having fun, and you see everybody’s faces being happy and stuff like that.”

The last few comments say a lot about the expectations that these students have for changing their peers with support and through being extended with worthwhile activities. In a ‘perfect world scenario’ question, students were asked to visualise their dream community. They voiced dreams of entertainment, sport facilities, a youth facility and local church.
“A park or pools. A swimming pool, indoors.”
“A skate park”
“Should be a church there”
“Should have a rugby field so we can practise.” “Then it could be RalRiwi against Manurewa, Mangere…”
“Should have a big adventure playground.”

The leisure facility discussed included a vision of a facility for entertainment, internet and a place to complete homework.
“It would be nice to have a gaming place, like Xbox and that.”
“Like an internet café, pay money and use the computer for homework, then play games.”

The student artwork also produced a youth centre / youthtown.
“This is mine, go into youth town, you’re lifting weights, there’s entertainment, and you’re swimming and playing sports....”
“Yeah, all in one building, just in one place.”
“The good things about my community is there’s heaps of people, there’s a gym close by, and we play sports with Amp’d. Things I want are a youth centre, where people can go.”
“My ones a youth centre with heaps of people and when you walk inside there’s gymnastics as well, so you can train at flips.”

The TelstraClear centre is close to both communities and is very familiar to all students who were consulted. It is accessible on foot and the children had positive reflections of opportunities they have had as dancing performers in inter-school cultural events (Diversity) and with their local community in RaWiri idol. They also recalled seeing Helen Clark and John Key there on Waitangi Day, events with New Zealand musicians, dancers and an orchestra, which all seemed positive.

14.2.4 Means of Travel
Going to school, to TelstraClear or perhaps Manukau City Centre are the main destinations for these children, who walk most places. Their use of the train (with no local station) or bus is limited to occasional trips outside the area, with Sylvia Park being one of few far-away destinations mentioned.

Although some children owned a bike they were not generally used to get from A to B, more often as a form of neighbourhood recreation, helmets were also lacking and said to be a reason for not biking.

Initiatives by groups such as “New Zealand Green Bikes Trust” could be considered for Wiri. New Zealand Green Bikes Trust was formed in 2002 to provide a free bike program for local residents and visitors to the Porirua central business district. Unwanted bikes were donated by the public and collected from various refuse dumps, painted, serviced and made roadworthy by volunteers working out of the Trust’s workshop in Porirua. Most recently, over the past 2 years the trust has opted for distributing free recycled bikes in Wellington to community groups and disadvantaged families. This type of programme could work well to promote the ‘healthier transport choice’ of cycling in the area.

14.2.5 Neighbourhood and the environment
Comments about the open land below the SuperClinic began with students’ suggestions for a ‘forest’ where they could play, study the animals, climb trees or go camping. Students also saw this area as a potential site for housing development:
“Because like in our community in the weekends, there’s hardly anyone to play with, so it will be good to have neighbours n stuff like that.”

The stream and surrounding environment was familiar to all the students; the swimming hole was formerly a good place to enjoy.
“yes, The water smells sometimes”
“People used to swim in it, like back in 2002. Used to be a pool for us and then it got all dirty.”

The students who were consulted would like to see the water free of pollution again and more bridges to safely cross the stream.
“They need to clean the water.”
“Because we want fish and that to come and have a clean environment.”
“There are fish, but people can’t eat it.”
“And ducks swim in the dirty water, I feel sorry for them.”
“They fish there.” “And people catch eels, go stab them with a spear, check if it’s a yellow belly, some of them and eat it.”
“Everything is beautiful, but all you need to do is clean up the water. It look real nice just the water. Then we can have fishes jumping around” “Then we can eat them.”
“It’s a nice walking area”

Broken windows, tagging and vandalism were seen as ugly; the students prefer a tidy neighbourhood image.
“You know that dairy? Someone should tell them to fix their windows. They’re broken, it will literally get smashed and they still won’t do anything, they just put something over it.”
“And people burn down the bushes, that’s why our bushes look ugly.”

At the end of the consultation, in the ‘Perfect World Scenario’ students were questioned about their aspiration for their neighbourhood, comments included:
“A police station so they can come straight away.” “They say “We’ll be there in 5 minutes” and come an hour later.”
14.3 Wiri Central School consultation mind map
The diagram below summarise the key themes to emerge from the consultation

Wiri Primary School Key Themes and aspirations

Use of the Puhinui stream
Cleaning the water in the Puhinui stream - making it clear of pollution
Increased well maintained green space
Building of neighbourhoods through community participation
Possible use of the CMDHB land for a forest
Aesthetics of place - clean up rubbish, fix broken windows

The neighbourhood environment

Housing

Mostly single story homes with 4 or more bedrooms
Large Homes
Nice gardens and places to play safety

Housing style and size
Layout of housing - facing the street and parks
Increase population through more housing

Personal safety walking to and from school

Housing

High fences required around homes
Safety and home design - single story homes to prevent accidental falls and injury
Increased safety in the home
decrease in disorderly behaviour and gangs

Well maintained pathways and shortcuts
Clear line of sight and more than one entrance / exit from paths and shortcuts

Safety

Pedestrian overpass over the main road and main highway
More traffic lights and pedestrian crossings
Increased education on road safety
Install speed bumps
Traffic and safety

Better access to play and leisure

Alcohol and safety - Decrease access to alcohol to reduce alcohol related crime and reduce fear
15 • MANUREWA HIGH SCHOOL CONSULTATION:

There were 16 students present at this consultation as well as the principal for the first hour of the discussions. Students were well spoken and open with great ideas and things to consider.

15.1 Manurewa High School consultation approach:

The appraisal questions were discussed in a focus group with the Manurewa High School Student Council. Students spent 2 hours considering issues faced by families in the Wiri neighbourhoods and their aspirations for the community.

The workshop included feedback about the draft plan and discussion of a photo collage. Participants were asked to discuss the potential impacts (positive and negative) for each of the key focus areas, and to identify the foundations that need to be in place to maximise positive outcomes. These were framed through six central questions for each focus area:

- What are your aspirations for Wiri?
- What are the potentially good impacts that could happen from the plans for Wiri?
- What are the potentially bad impacts?
- What are the particular issues for vulnerable population groups (e.g. Maori, Pacific, people with disabilities, children and youth, and older people)?
- To improve health and wellbeing, what needs to change in the plan/in Wiri?
- How can we make those changes happen?

Open discussion was also encouraged and an affinity diagram was used at the end. The five key themes identified were:

- Housing and housing type
- Leisure and play
- Access to services including transport
- Safety
- Economic development

15.2 Manurewa High School consultation findings:

15.2.1 Housing

Discussions began regarding housing students felt there was a need for bigger homes: “More room in the houses.” Students consulted felt that Pacific Island families in Housing New Zealand or ‘state housing’ were likely to include extended family members or more than one family to save on rent. With this overcrowding comes the risk of associated health issues.

Students focused on housing that needed to be more affordable and made with better materials for e.g. foundations that minimise house vibrations from motorway traffic, particularly trucks.

“Whenever a truck goes past you can feel the whole house shaking. Fix unstable houses and have foundations.”

It was also felt that health was affected by leaky homes, healthy homes also needed adequate insulation.

“I personally live in a leaky home. It was built when they were using office techniques, (using) MDF, just gets all wet and soggy.”

“That would be something to look at health wise”

Students were shown a draft plan of the Wiri/ Rata Vine development and discussed the options and thoughts on the plans. Students had concerns about apartment living and identified that it may cause pressure on people with excessive noise and lack of play areas for children. They also raised concerns that there wouldn’t be enough space for large families with small living areas and no outdoor area to use when lots of people are around.

“Apartments? You can get rowdy people. And lots of people living in close quarters, there is that potential for explosive arguments to happen. Loud cars and all that, people being woken up at all hours of the morning… something to watch out for I guess.”

“There’s nowhere for the kids to play, you’re up on the tenth storey; it’s not safe to go down and play on the fields.”

Apartments living was considered a suitable option for students using the planned academic campus in the city centre, but otherwise not appropriate.

“Those apartments could be useful especially for the new AUT site and MIT. In the area I live in there’s a lot of foreign exchange students who live in houses or normal urban areas, but with that it could be more like what’s happening in the city now, heaps of communal apartments where people can get to campus.”

“Yes accommodation wise it could house students, but for families you wouldn’t?”

“Personally I wouldn’t put a family, a big Samoan family right next door in an apartment.”

“How would you feel if we put students in the apartments and you were living right next door to those apartments?”

“Yeah…”

“As students are, rowdy, noisy…” “Not good.”

Apartments that all look the same, particularly certain colours are perceived as a visual deterrence. Emergency access to apartments was also brought up as a concern and an issue for health, safety and wellbeing:

“accessibility for the police, if there is a standoff on the 2nd floor; you’re going to want easy access so they can get up there and tone the situation down a bit. The longer it takes to get (police) up, the more likely it is for someone to get hurt.”

The facilitators started discussion on other housing types and options and students liked the idea of single story homes for families and apartments for students and the possibility of other house types for their community.

Child safety on driveways and adequate household parking was also mentioned:

“If there was a long driveway I think there should be a maximum of two houses that seems reasonable. Any more than that would be too crowded.”

15.2.2 Leisure

Suitable, well maintained play areas are perceived to be inadequate:

“Space? I don’t live in Rata Vine, but I know a family that do, every time you’d go, kids are playing on the road. (despite) all the billboards saying “the road’s no playground”, there’s not enough space and greenery for them. There is a small park, next to the dairy though.”

“You know the space outside the Health Park? I think it’d be a good space for the health (leisure) centre. It would provide a lot more activities and also fairly close to school, centralised for the wider community because it’s not too far to walk or drive.”
The aspirations for improved leisure facilities were strong. “Just like a park that people can do their exercises. Like other minorities, you see them walking around everywhere, maybe give them somewhere that looks good. A better, safer, nicer place to walk?”

“What about making it a community centre thing. Because groups like Youthline and that do personal development courses”

“Run workshops to help the community.” “Community development.”

“More gyms, like we’ve only got one behind Happy Days (restaurant).”

“A squash court. We don’t have one of those.”

“A softball field.”

“Walkways, but like exercise walkways…”

15.2.3 Access
Family health service access is poor in Wiri, despite the Health Park situated nearby; students had strong thoughts about access to localised services:

“Maybe have one at the Health Park? A local doctors for people in Wiri.”

“Yea a free clinic”

Access to Public Transport was discussed and students felt that bus access to the city centre Westfield is generally good although Brown’s Rd is not well served.

“Correct me if I’m wrong, but there are no buses that go down Browns Rd, only school buses.”

15.2.4 Safety
On several occasions students voiced there concerns regarding an unsafe alleyway that borders the school that many students use daily.

“Walking home is safer, but definitely not down the alleyway.”

“The alleyway is so dangerous”

“Maybe make that safer. Our students walk down that alleyway and it’s really muddy.”

“Maybe have fluorescent lights?”

Safety also occurred in discussions regarding the Puhinui Stream, and raised issues regarding neighbourhood support and community trust.

“The stream going through Wiri. … I used to walk that way after school but where the stream is, with all the houses backing onto it, it’s not safe because all the houses are facing the road. There’s not much visibility there, people can’t see what’s happening.”

“We should set up a community watch”

“Maybe have a walking bus for schools?”

One respondent wanted to see the area overcome the stigma associated with his community:

“…To create a better, safe environment for our community in which will help our people to become prosperous and happy. To go against the stigma of ‘South Auckland.’”

The degree to which everyone feels included and accepted in their community is a key determinant of a sense of place.
15.3 Manurewa High School consultation mind map

The diagram below summarises the key themes to emerge from the consultation.
16.1 DYCE Group consultation approach
DYCE (Dream Youth Centre Extreme) is a Youth Group that is held at the Dream Centre (former Manukau cinema) adjacent to the Rata Vine and Wiri communities and we consulted with 28 young people (with 3/4 of Pacifica descent) when they attended their regular evening youth group. Of the young people aged 12-21 years, approximately 10 live within Wiri. After a meal, an hour-long discussion took place in two groups, reflecting on the Wiri neighbourhood, its strengths and their perspectives on solutions to issues.

The appraisal questions were discussed in a focus group. The workshop included feedback about the draft plan and discussion of a photo collage. Participants were asked to discuss the potential impacts (positive and negative) for each of the key focus areas, and to identify the foundations that need to be in place to maximise positive outcomes. These were framed through six central questions for each focus area:

- What are your aspirations for Wiri?
- What are the potentially good impacts that could happen from the plans for Wiri?
- What are the potentially bad impacts?
- What are the particular issues for vulnerable population groups (e.g. Maori, Pacific, people with disabilities, children and youth, and older people)?
- To improve health and wellbeing, what needs to change in the plan/in Wiri?
- How can we make those changes happen?

16.2 DYCE group consultation findings

16.2.1 Housing
Overall feedback requested housing that was warm, carpeted, with good insulation; a preference was given for brick houses, with gates to keep the children safe. Since these families often have overseas visitors, sleep-outs were suggested as an option for guest accommodation. Parking for visitors should also be planned for; possibly with centre street car-parks.

House size is important for these mainly Pacific youth who often experience their present accommodation as overcrowded, causing “frustration that can lead to violence.” Youth indicated that they were concerned about the long driveways and the “multi driveways” being dangerous, and lacking visibility and line of sight. Visibility would be enhanced by shorter fences and shorter driveways, with fewer houses using each driveway. They also suggested room for family living and cultural activities, houses with ideally 4-5 bedrooms and more storage, perhaps in the form of a basement. There was a suggestion for multi level houses, so that different generations can live together, yet separately.

Adequate back-yards with raised decks are important for family outdoor play and for hosting extended family. Outdoor space could also then be used for vegetable gardens (“to provide for yourself”), outdoor cooking (umu or hangi or barbeques) and safe places for children to play. There was also concern that permits need to be readily obtainable for outdoor cooking.

16.2.2 Safety
Safety was a concern; participants said houses require sensor lights, higher fences for privacy, and they also wanted to see out across the residential area. Youth wanted to see “bigger yards so there’s more room for the children to play, nice gardens but with less maintenance.”

Safety on the street could be enhanced by speed bumps, a lower speed limit in places, and better speed surveillance by police and speed cameras because some people are “ruining it for the rest of us”. Raising the driving age would also improve traffic safety according to participants.

16.2.3 Vulnerable populations
There should be ramps at dwellings to give universal access to all, including those temporarily or permanently disabled.

Issues identified for Pacific and Maori youth included association with a gangster mentality and a need to stay in school (leaving age should be raised to 18 years) and abstaining from alcohol and drugs. Strategies are needed to minimise family violence. Concerns were raised about the lack of knowledge in the community about the ‘Supercity’ changes.

16.2.4 Access to Food and Alcohol
Youth felt there was a need to close down liquor stores and limit the opening hours. Youth are concerned that this is leading to excess drinking, even in parks. Food choices available in the area could be enhanced by having less fat food restaurants and better quality takeaways in Wiri. A larger dairy with more food variety would also assist with wider available food choices. Food choices can also be widened by adequately sized sections to encompass a family vegetable garden.

16.2.5 Neighbourhood Environment
To improve health and well being houses should not be situated as close to motorway noise and pollution as they are in the present Wiri neighbourhood.

There were concerns regarding drainage in the park and the associated flooding as this was a health concern for children. Youth were concerned that the Puhinui waterway is very polluted; their waterhole is dirty with litter and rubbish requiring disposal.

Public outdoor park areas are inadequate, particularly in Rata Vine; according to youth they offer a distraction from drugs and alcohol. Upgraded public toilet facilities are required.

There were concerns about the impacts on the community with the proposal of the 1,500 bed male prison that is to be built in Wiri.

16.2.6 Youth aspirations
Youth aspirations for Wiri included improved access to health services, especially free medical care including family planning services. The environment was thought to be blighted by vandalism and liquor stores, and participants wanted them eliminated from the neighbourhood.

There was a request for increased access to churches in the area, an education centre, library and homework centre. There was acknowledgement that another school (or a bigger) school will be required.

The commercial area could offer more shops including a games arcade and computer/internet café.

Local sport and recreation facilities are keenly sought for the youth of this community. These include a rugby field to allow for sports on Saturday as well as a touch club. A local youth centre with a gym that could organise exercise programmes and a swimming pool are desired. Youth also wish for a music centre, a big screen for outdoor movies in the park as well as a skate park.

Youth consulted wanted the community involved in projects with direct consultation and public input into planned projects.

When asked how aspirations could be implemented, suggestions included fundraising, a petition, sponsorship and informing their families (getting the word out).
16.2.7 Youth concerns – drugs, alcohol, safety and employment opportunities

The young people interviewed were concerned about the ease of access to drugs and alcohol as well as how they might access employment and decent wages. They disliked the lack of safety and the current image of a local “gangster world.” Youth did not like the present prison being so close by and disagreed with the proposal of the new 1,500 bed male prison to be built in Wiri.

16.2.8 Impacts

The potential advantages that the Spatial Structure Plan may bring to the community were that more people may bring new skills and career pathways to the community members in need. Increased activity could in turn provide greater income for the community. However, participants were also concerned that more people in the area and poor planning could lead to increased vandalism, gangs, tagging, and alcohol consumption in parks and even riots at the extreme.
17 • OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL AND YOUTH CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Below are combined conclusions and findings from the three child and youth consultations.

17.1 Safety
Personal safety is a particular concern of the primary school children consulted, all of whom lived in Wiri. Within the groups of children who were consulted there was a general discontent about their neighbourhood. The gangster mentality has affected some children and within the groups MCC staff spoke to it was felt that they had to strategise to cope with a worst case scenario concerning personal safety.

They sometimes witnessed inter-gang or family violence perpetrated by neighbours and recalled incidents of people stealing or trespassing in their home environment. Children described an underlying adult tension between the neighbourhoods of Rata Vine and Wiri. Despite the proximity of the police station they sometimes felt that help was slow to arrive and that when police talk only to adults, they miss the children’s different perspectives of ‘street’.

Alcohol was mentioned as an aggravating factor in the behaviour of adults and youth on the street and around the Puhinui Stream. Participants recommended reduced access to alcohol.

Similarly the youth had concerns about the safety of the stream vicinity and trails for young children. Safety was perceived to be hindered by poor design affecting the view from nearby houses, unsafe or inadequate bridges over the stream, flooding and large vegetation. Participants suggested neighbourhood support or community watch groups as a worthwhile development.

Road safety is also an issue with a busy highway dividing these two communities which needs to be negotiated to access schools. Participants were supportive of a fly-over pedestrian bridge on the Great South Rd. Access for pedestrians on the motorway bridge is very narrow.

Secondary students raised repeated concerns about personal safety along an unsafe alleyway beside the school and felt that lighting and upgrading surfaces would go some way to making the alleyway more desirable to access school.

Safety around the home was an important issue, largely due to the possibility of pedestrian run-overs on badly designed driveways as well as fencing and lighting for added home security. Traffic speeding is an issue in some neighbourhood streets that would be alleviated by speed bumps, more active policing and a review of the driving age, according to participants.

Youth participants dislike having a prison in their neighbourhood and are troubled by the stigma the locality carries.

Local youth are vulnerable to the gangster mindset and unwise use of drugs and alcohol in a community where there are few parks or sport facilities. They would value a youth centre that offered sport and social activities in and outside for active community engagement. Youth hold uncertainty about their education, future employment opportunities and the unitary Auckland Council.

17.2 Housing and housing type
Existing housing in the area is frequently overcrowded sometimes due to large Pacifica extended families living together or hosting visitors in homes that are too small. Overcrowding can lead to violence and commonly affects children who are expected to make way for others. Housing and driveway design should create adequate safe spaces for play.

Aspirations for better housing in the Wiri area are for large, warm, insulated homes with adequate storage areas. A house with at least four bedrooms was favoured potentially with a sleep out for visitors. Family occasions often involve preparation of food outdoors and a good size back yard is important for umu or hangi as well as children’s play.

Similarly, apartment living for families was viewed as too constraining. Participants perceived family living to be better on the ground, with adequate outside play space. Safety on balconies and around the home was a concern. As well as an increase in size, new housing must be well built of sound materials with adequate insulation.

17.3 Environment
The neighbourhood environment was concerning for all due to social problems, however improvements in the physical landscape were also keenly sought. The Puhinui stream offers great potential if it was to be cleaned up and landscaped with appropriate vegetation, pedestrian and cycle-ways, houses facing onto it and bridges over it. In the recent past, children who spend time around the stream remember it being clean enough to swim in. Children also visualised a forest area or reserve on the vacant land if it is not used for housing.

17.4 Play and leisure
Larger parks with sport and recreation facilities that provide opportunities such as Amp’d are favoured by all young people. A leisure or community recreation centre would also be a positive influence in these communities. A play/recreation area would be positive with some form of social services encompassed in the centre. Pupils liked the ideas of a ‘one stop shop’ for entertainment, exercise, social services, that may encompass a swimming pool, basketball courts, soccer, rugby fields and a obstacle course of types with a flying fox.

Importance was placed on facilitated activities to ensure that everyone got along and had a nice time.

The Wiri and Rata Vine neighbourhood environment includes the Puhinui stream and young people are dissatisfied with the poor drainage in surrounding areas, pollution of the stream and their waterhole, and rubbish lying in the surrounding areas that attract vandalism and antisocial behaviour. They aspire to a cleaner, safer, park-like stream area that is swimmable, surrounded by an attractive green area for recreation.
17.5 Child and youth discussion
Consultation and involvement of children and young people are key means of empowering local communities, returning a sense of their ability to control their own environment and ensuring their well-being. We need to understand what well-being means for this important population group (they are experts in their own lives) if plans and policies are to succeed. The value of the informed contributions from local children and youth about their neighbourhood speaks for itself and participants reflected positively on their inclusion in this HIA process.

Children and youth in this community are keen to participate in a development that results in pride of place in a vibrant Wiri community. They need access to a physical environment that supports their developmental needs to play, to move freely and socialise within a safe urban neighbourhood that offers recreational activities, services and green spaces that counter current sedentary lifestyle trends. Designing spaces from the point of view of children can make for a community that is good for everyone. Although the due consideration and involvement of children and young people is a relatively recent development, a child-friendly city actively engages the rights of all citizens to one that is socially and environmentally sustainable. Giving youth and children a voice also creates opportunities for building local capacity to negotiate and solve problems and for civic participation now and in the future.

Children (under 18 years) in Wiri make up a ‘majority minority’ and for the most part are invisible in an infrastructure that relies on adults to advocate for their views to be given due weight in the spatial structure plan. Local children and youth should continue to be involved in the follow-through and implementation phases of this project.