

**BUILDING BETTER
HOMES, TOWNS
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Ko ngā wā kāinga hei
whakamāhorahora

Living at Density in Hobsonville Point, Auckland: Resident Perceptions

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Executive Summary

This Working Paper has been produced as part of the National Science Challenge 11 – Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities: *Ko ngā wā kāinga hei whakamahorahora*. This research sits within the Strategic Research Area (SRA) *Shaping Places: Future Neighbourhoods*. Shaping Places is focused on existing neighbourhoods to develop an understanding of the key principles and processes able to that create more successful future neighbourhoods.

Aligned research is being undertaken by researchers based at five New Zealand universities and includes research projects in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, and includes three Auckland neighbourhood case studies: Hobsonville Point, Waimahia and Glen Innes/Tamaki.

This Working Paper reports on the case study of Hobsonville Point, in Northwest Auckland – New Zealand’s largest master-planned residential development. From the inception, this was planned to be of higher density when compared to traditional suburban development, and to deliver an outcome consistent with the development agency aim *to build a strong, vibrant community that sets new benchmarks for quality and accessible urban development with an environmentally responsible focus*.

Over the past two decades, living at higher density has a number of drivers that includes urban planning for compact development, the efficient use of land, and achieving more sustainable urban forms. There is evidence to show that in Auckland, there is an increasing proportion of attached, and thus higher density, housing being delivered: over half of residential development in Auckland now involves attached housing types such as terraces and apartments. The question raised about this change towards New Zealanders living at higher density, is whether the outcomes will lead to necessary housing satisfaction on the part of residents, and deliver well-being? This is particularly of interest where living in lower density suburban housing in the past has been the norm. This working paper presents the findings from one aspect: Residents perceptions of living at higher density in Hobsonville Point. The research collected data in relation to three ways in which living at density is experienced: within the dwelling, within the larger neighbourhoods, and the emergence of a sense of community. Key findings are summarised below:

The Dwellings:

Overall, the responses indicate positive outcomes concerning the dwellings occupied by respondents in Hobsonville Point. Given the role that houses play in delivering wellbeing, the findings indicate that despite the density, relatively strong housing satisfaction is being reported. There are some variations to this overall indication, where better attention to design detail and layout would potentially be beneficial. For example, given attention to issues around parking, ensuring all dwellings have more privacy in the outdoor spaces, and avoiding ground level living spaces being directly exposed to the streets.

The Neighbourhood

Overall, appreciation of the physical environment of Hobsonville Point received very high levels of satisfaction on the part of respondents, with little variation by age, duration of residency and house type. This suggests a strong alignment between the design intentions and vision, and the experience of the respondents. What is also underscored is the key role that a quality neighbourhood plays in delivering housing satisfaction, when considered with the dwellings at higher density. Issues about planning for long term maintenance of public spaces in large scale developments such as this, is an issue worthy of further investigation. This is particularly important given the high value placed on public spaces in delivering housing satisfaction and well-being. Also requiring better understanding are responsible agencies for the range of public space elements that makes up public space that includes small and large parks, natural reserves, esplanades, storm water detention ponds and street berms and rainwater swales.

Sense of Community:

Overall, the respondents expressed a strong sense of community in Hobsonville Point, well matched to the vision of creating a strong and vibrant community. This is surprising, given the relatively short period of time that most residents have lived in the area. In part, this may also reflect a shared idea of all being 'pioneers' and having a more positive approach to making it work.

Summary of concluding points

Living at higher density in Hobsonville Point contributes positively towards housing satisfaction, leading to strong feelings of wellbeing among those surveyed. Of special importance is the key role that the high-quality public spaces and amenities play in housing satisfaction. This is of special relevance because of the prioritisation that was given to necessary investment in the

public spaces and amenities by the development agency, driven by its executives' vision. The same level of motivation for a generous investment in public spaces may not necessarily emerge from market driven developments. In this case there may be strong drivers for more of the value capture that comes from the development process to be turned into profit, rather than public amenity. There is no doubt that what is also strongly appreciated is the variability of the housing design and block layouts, arising from the use of different building partners.

Despite Hobsonville Point's being 2-3 times the density of a typical suburb, respondents in the survey expressed a reasonably high level of satisfaction with their dwelling design, and the relationships with their neighbours. In part, this satisfaction is derived from the amenity of the public spaces, but also from an appreciation of quality design. There are areas for improvement however, in relation to many detail aspects of house designs, especially living spaces directly facing streets, and the lack of privacy in backyards. This may be more acute as density increases with each successive precinct development. The original masterplan was conceived for 3000 dwellings, but the target is now 4500. These changes over time in part have been facilitated by the flexibility of the urban planning and development consenting process. It also potentially reflects growing confidence on the part of developers that there is an acceptance of living at higher density. Nevertheless, there are resident concerns about increasing traffic and parking issues as the neighbourhood grows to full development, and how new demands for retail and other community services will be catered for.

A problem facing the development agency in promoting Hobsonville at the outset of the project, was persuading people to buy into higher density on the western fringe of the city, and be prepared to tolerate living on a construction site for a period of time. In part this was countered by the marketing campaign constructing an idealised image of coastal living under the slogan, 'moments away, worlds apart', but also in the way in which development was staged. Building the schools, establishing bus and ferry services, some of the parks, the coastal walkway and making the place a destination by supporting the initial café and farmers market, all helped to promote interest and sales. Whether by design or self-fulfilling prophecy, high levels of appreciation expressed about the place, corresponds to the constructed image. Despite Hobsonville Point being less than a decade old, the residents now have a strong sense of community and a shared commitment to what is considered by respondents to be a unique place with a distinctive identity.

Hobsonville Point has now reached a halfway point of development. The challenges that lie ahead are maintaining the positive views of the place and the community in the light of an ever-increasing population. This will also include impacts from new surrounding developments at Scott Point and Whenuapai, being marketed with their proximity to Hobsonville Point highlighted as a positive attribute.

Overwhelmingly, the research demonstrates that housing satisfaction is strongly connected to the quality of the public realm, and how it is designed to deliver wellbeing for all residents. In the case of Hobsonville Point this required a clear vision and intention on the part of the development agency (HLC) and its professional teams. Where development at this scale is solely delivered by the private sector, there is a risk that investment in the public realm may not have the same incentive as a public agency pursuing 'public good' outcomes. However, what the development sector is increasingly realising, is that investment in the public realm as part of housing developments, adds value to their investments as well as to the properties. If this can be sufficiently grasped, there is no reason why housing in the quality neighbourhood contexts should not be the outcome of development processes, whether driven by the private or public sectors.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Living at Density in Auckland

Despite most residents in New Zealand cities continuing to live in low density, suburban detached houses, strong drivers towards urban intensification and building at higher densities have been promoted for some time. Concerned about the city's population growth and potential for urban sprawl, the Regional Growth Forum (RGF) was established in 1997, representing the seven regional and local bodies in Auckland at that time. Released in 1999, the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was an urban planning response to concerns about the growing population and the issue of where people would live. This RGS identified a need for coordinated growth management across the region and established a 50-year vision for a projected population of two million people¹. From three urban development models considered, the Regional Growth Forum favoured a compact city that restricted growth within existing urban limits. It sought to focus future growth in and surrounding existing 'town centres' and along transportation corridors across the urban region.

Following the establishment of the Auckland Council in 2010 as an amalgamation of previous local authorities into a single body² (the Auckland Council) the Auckland Plan 2012³ both reaffirmed the RGS aims and provided reasons for promoting compact development:

...that developing more compact urban neighbourhoods, supported by quality networked infrastructure offers opportunities to create healthy, stimulating, and beautiful urban environments. These in turn enhance social cohesion and interaction by attracting people across all demographic well-designed public spaces. Such places provide a range of activities to meet the full spectrum of people's everyday needs – for work, for play, for shopping and for education⁴.

These intentions were given effect in the statutory Auckland Unitary Plan (a land use zoning plan), reinforced in the current update to the urban growth vision: the Auckland Plan 2050 (Auckland Council, 2018). Achieving higher density residential development requires the deployment of more compact housing typologies such as duplex and terrace houses, and

¹ Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 1999

² The now disestablished former local authorities are: Auckland City Council, Manukau City Council, Waitakere City Council, North Shore City Council, Papakura District Council, Rodney District Council and most of Franklin District Council.

³ Auckland Council 2012

⁴ Ibid

apartment buildings of varying configurations and heights, and stand-alone detached houses on smaller subdivisions.

The impact of these intensification policies and plans are demonstrated by the increasing proportion of Auckland Council’s planning approvals over recent years for attached dwellings. As Figure 1 shows, the percentage of attached dwelling approvals increased from 15 per cent of the total in 2012/13, to 54 per cent in 2017/18, when they began exceeding detached housing for the first time⁵. Moreover, the average size of dwellings is also getting smaller – reducing from 213 m² in 2010 to 167 m² in 2018, in part a consequence of the increasing number of apartments and terrace houses among new housing stock⁶.

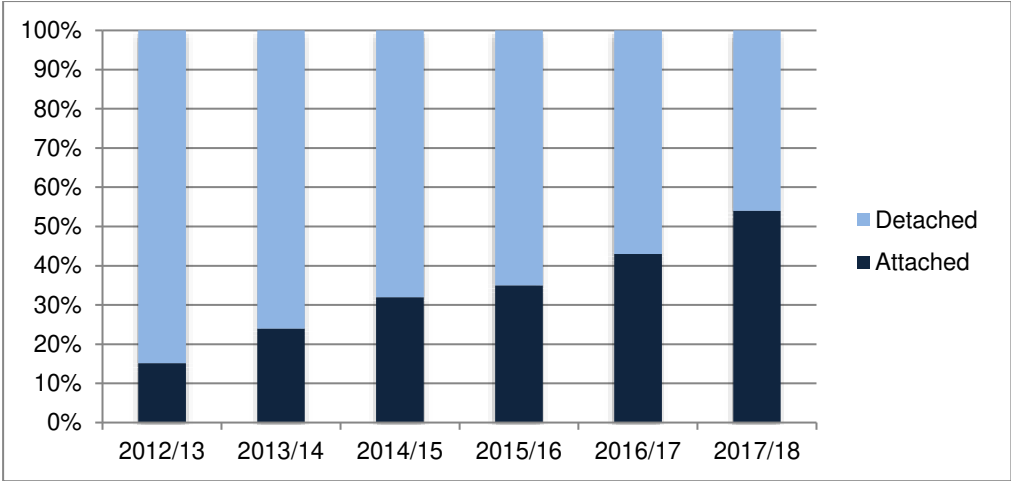


Figure 1. Percentage of attached and detached dwellings consented by the Auckland Council 2012-2017. (Source: Auckland Council, 2018; Interest.co.nz, 2018)

This represents a positive market response to the policies for compact development over the past two decades. The question raised is whether living at higher densities in smaller attached dwellings and more compact neighbourhoods will necessarily deliver housing satisfaction and residential wellbeing. This question is at the core of the research reported in this Working Paper.

When considering the literature, it became evident that, whilst there remains a significant and somewhat engrained preference for single detached dwellings, there is a growing preference and demand in New Zealand for a variety of typologies, sizes and higher densities⁷. Research

⁵ Interest.co.nz (September 8, 2018). Auckland Council is consenting many more dwellings, especially smaller dwelling units. <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:AZrhflcb9YgJ:https://www.interest.co.nz/opinion/95739/auckland-council-consenting-many-more-dwellings-especially-smaller-dwelling-units-and+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=nz>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷Yeoman & Akehurst 2015; Opit 2017; Holmes 2017; Dodge 2017; Kelly et al 2011

conducted by Dodge⁸, for example, highlights the changing patterns of demand in New Zealand by finding that respondents were increasingly willing to live in medium to high density areas. Predominantly, this is being linked to the preferences of residents for convenience⁹ where proximity to work, schools and shops/services are critical components in the trade-off process of residents choosing their homes. In some instances, this resulted in residents choosing density and proximity to amenities over size of the home further away¹⁰. Opit (2017) added that this is particularly apparent among younger generation-Y¹¹.

This research draws together within the urban growth paradigm a questioning of the relationships between housing choices and trade-offs, neighbourhood and housing satisfaction and a sense of community. This is examined as a case study, from the perspectives of residents living in Hobsonville Point, Auckland that is described in the part below. This is followed by a contextualisation of the housing development in the strategic urban planning of this part of Auckland, and the last part sets out the methodology for the survey of residents. The methods chosen were designed to build a picture of resident perceptions of density in Hobsonville Point, from a questionnaire survey, focus group sessions with residents, and a social media analysis.

1.2. Case Study: Hobsonville Point

Hobsonville Point is the largest master-planned residential development in New Zealand. It is of higher density when compared to more conventional suburb, with a range of two- to three-storey terraces, apartments of up to six storeys, and duplexes, as well as standalone houses on small lots (See Figure 2). This higher density¹² offers an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which current residents consider that their housing and neighbourhood meet their expectations.

⁸Dodge 2017

⁹ Allen 2016

¹⁰Randal & Hamer-Adams 2015

¹¹Opit 2017

¹² The current planned gross density is approximately 65 persons/hectare (including roads and public spaces), normally considered to be medium density.



Figure 2. Examples of the range of housing typologies at Hobsonville Point (Image source: Natalie Allen)

Hobsonville Point is located 25 kilometres northwest of Auckland’s city centre. It is well connected to the rest of the city by the Upper Harbour Motorway (SH18), which in turn connects to the Auckland motorway network (see Figure 3). There are weekday and weekend ferry sailings¹³ to the downtown ferry terminal. Several bus services run through Hobsonville Point to the North Shore, the Constellation Drive bus station on the Northern Busway to the city, and west to the Westgate town centre.

The 167-hectare site is largely on former New Zealand Defence Force land, dating back to the early 1930s when it was used as a flying boat base. Some of the land belonged to Waitakere City Council and some was in private ownership. A decision was taken by the New Zealand Government in 2000 to close Hobsonville airbase and make the Crown-owned land available for development¹⁴. In 2002, the air force began closing its operations and moving to the nearby base at Whenuapai. The government used its powers under the Housing Act 1955 to acquire some of the Council and private sites.

¹³ While a weekday ferry service has been running from a newly constructed ferry wharf at Hobsonville Point since 2013, also serving the nearby suburb of Beach Haven, the weekend service commenced in February 2019.

¹⁴ See: <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/abtcnl/pp/districtplan/dplanchanges/planchange13-fact13.pdf>



Figure 3. Hobsonville Point (indicated in red) in relation to Auckland central the motorway network, and the ferry service.

The amalgamated ‘greenfield’ site was viewed as an opportunity by both the government and the local authority at that time, to expand both industrial and residential development. A government agency – the Hobsonville Land Company (HLC¹⁵), wholly owned by Housing New Zealand, was established to lead the development.

The aim was to provide for 3000 new dwellings that included housing targeted at lower income earners, including affordable home ownership options under the then Labour Government’s ‘Gateway’ scheme¹⁶. This proposal was criticised by the opposition, whose leader and local MP for the area at the time argued that building state houses for lower income earners in Hobsonville Point was "economic vandalism" in "a very upmarket area"¹⁷. The further justification given was that, with falling interest rates, housing was becoming more affordable for lower income families¹⁸. Coming into power at the end of 2008, the National Party-led government and promoted the development as a Public Private Partnership (PPP), with

¹⁵ The Hobsonville Land Company was later rebranded ‘HLC’ – Homes. Land. Community. following the expansion of the activities of HLC to other areas in Auckland.

¹⁶ The gateway scheme was targeted home ownership at lower income earners meeting the thresholds set: first time buyer earning under \$100,000 can get a mortgage to build if they have at least a 10% deposit, Repayment on the land was to be deferred for 10 years. Only 32 Gateway houses were built, 17 in Hobsonville Point in phase 1. See: <https://www.interest.co.nz/property/59358/govts-gateway-affordable-housing-scheme-scrapped-funding-go-community-organisations>

¹⁷ Rudman, 2013.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Hobsonville Land Company (HLC) being the ‘public’ partner¹⁹. The PPP was argued by the Minister of Housing to be a model with a ‘long track record of success in delivering infrastructure in many other countries’²⁰. The ‘track record’ referred are government housing authorities in Australian States, such as Landcom (NSW) and Landcorp (WA), that acted as government land development agents working with the private sector²¹.

HLC established its own affordable housing scheme called the Axis Series housing. While this was designed and constructed by what HLC called its (private sector) building partners, the agency required that 20 per cent of the housing meet affordable prices, currently set (2018) between \$450,000 and \$650,000²². Axis Series houses are purchased after applicants are successful in a ballot, subject to meeting eligibility criteria²³. At the time of writing, 586 of the 1993 dwellings sold in Hobsonville Point are Axis Series houses, which at 29 per cent of the total, exceeds the 20 per cent target set by HLC²⁴.

Development phases at Hobsonville Point were organised around ‘precincts’, each of which contains a number of development ‘blocks’. The three precincts completed and largely occupied are Buckley, Sunderland and Catalina (see Figure 4).

Phase 1 (Buckley A precinct) commenced in 2010 and the first residents took occupation in 2011. As each precinct was released for development, growing confidence that the market would accept higher density housing led to the inclusion of an increasing number of attached housing forms, such as terrace houses and apartments, being included in each precinct.

¹⁹ Lietz, 2010.

²⁰ HLC, 2009.

²¹ Lietz, 2010.

²²This can be compared to recently listed houses for sale in Hobsonville Point that range from \$550,000 to \$1.5m. Hobsonville Point: Houses for Sale: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/for-sale>. Building partners include the following house builders: Jalcon, GJ Gardner, Platinum Homes, Fletcher Living, Ockham Residential, Ngāi Tahu Properties, Tall Wood and Classic Builders. Architects include Cheshire Architects, Salmond Architects, Context Architects, Isthmus, Sils von Bohemen, Stevens Lawson, Studio Pacific, Jasmox, Bossley Architects and Peddle Thorp.

²³Criteria include being a permanent resident/citizen, a first-time homebuyer, having a gross household income of between \$85,000-\$130,000, and agreeing to live in the house for a minimum of two years. Axis Series housing: <https://axisseries.co.nz/>

²⁴Source: HLC (April 2019).



Figure 4. A November 2017 aerial photograph of Hobsonville Point showing the extent of development, the three main precincts of Buckley, Catalina and Sunderland, and the coastal setting. With the exception of one block, all other land is now under development (source: HLC Ltd)

The vision established by HLC at the outset for the planning and design of Hobsonville Point was to: “build a strong, vibrant community that sets new benchmarks for quality and accessible urban development with an environmentally responsible focus”²⁵. The growing community is supported by an extensive range of public amenities that were identified in the masterplan and delivered through the development process²⁶. This includes 24 hectares of public parks, reserves, dedicated children’s playgrounds, pocket parks and public open spaces; and a 5km walking/cycle route (Te Ara Manawa), parts of which are illustrated in Figure 5. Other amenities include a new primary and secondary school²⁷, day care centres, ferry service and bus services to the CBD, a Farmers Market, several cafés and restaurants, community hall and resident meeting spaces, early childhood centres/kindergartens, and high-speed fibre broadband. A nearby business centre has a supermarket and other retail, food, personal service and commercial businesses.

²⁵ Barret, 2015, p284.

²⁶ Hobsonville Point: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/about/>

²⁷ These were the first schools in New Zealand built as a public private partnership. The building continues to be maintained by the private organization for a period of 25 years, after which ownership reverts to the Crown. The schools operate in every other way under the Ministry of Education and an elected Board of Trustees. <https://sites.google.com/hobsonvillepoint.school.nz/hpps>

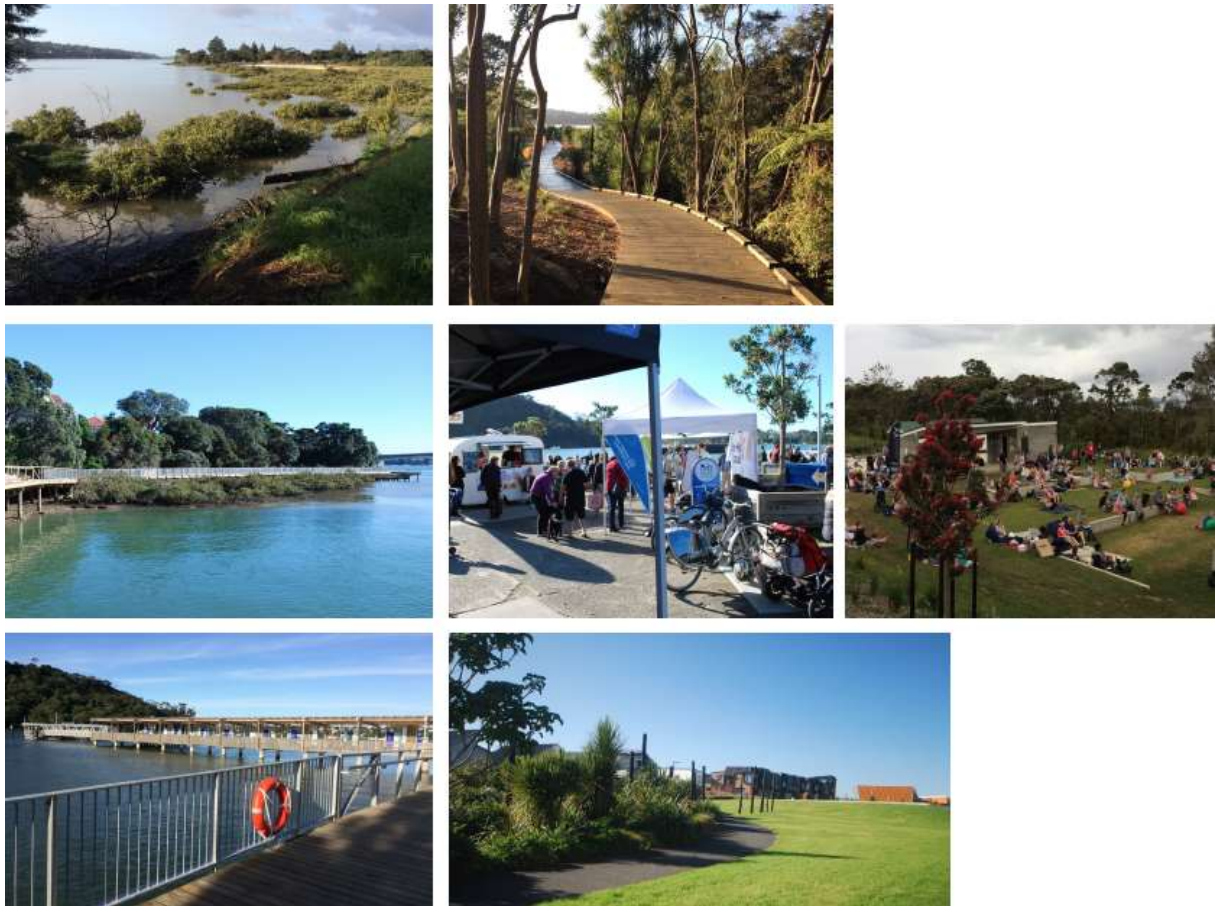


Figure 5. Images of the coastal setting. From top left to bottom right: the coastal setting, boardwalk, ferry wharf, Te Ara Manawa coastal walkway, farmers market, Hobsonville Point and children’s playground, and the Rifle Range outdoor amphitheatre . (Image source: Errol Haarhoff)

There is a requirement for all property owners to be members of the Hobsonville Point Residents Society Incorporated (HPRS), by way of encumbrances on title deeds. An annual membership fee is set by a Committee elected by members, governed by a constitution under the Incorporated Societies Act, and enforces a set of rules²⁸

Also completed, is the Waterford retirement village developed by the Manor Group, with 64 single-level houses and a further 90 apartments currently under construction. The development target for Hobsonville Point is now 4500 dwellings with a future population of 11,000 by 2024²⁹. With 1500 dwellings completed and 650 under construction, at the time of writing, development in Hobsonville Point had reached a halfway point³⁰.

²⁸ See Hobsonville Point Resident Society: <https://www.hprs.co.nz>

²⁹ See <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/about/>

³⁰ Approaching the halfway point: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/community/news/development/approaching-the-halfway-point/>

1.3. The Urban Planning and Design Process

It is important to contextualise Hobsonville Point in the urban planning and design process that shaped the development. The development forms part of a much wider urban growth management initiative through the Auckland Regional Growth Forum (RGF) established in 1997. This initiative was promoted by central government as a way to counter what was seen as a lack of co-ordinated planning for the future of the urban region. The Local Government Act (1998) was amended to mandate the establishment of the RGF to ensure that future growth in the Auckland region was co-ordinated between the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) and the then seven City and District Councils, for long-term planning with a 50-year time horizon. Reference has already been made to the 1999 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) advocating compact growth for the urban region. At that time, the Hobsonville area fell under the jurisdiction of the Waitakere City Council, disestablished in 2010 with the formation of Auckland Council.

A concern for the Waitakere City Council (WCC) at that time was a lack of employment opportunities within its area of jurisdiction and a worry of its becoming a dormant commuter suburb³¹. This pushed the WCC to find ways of creating new employment opportunities. The 1999 RGS created four sub-regions: North, South, Central and West. The Western section concentrated on two major growth corridors, with one along a proposed motorway development (SH18) running past Hobsonville to the Westgate, and connecting to the North-western Motorway (SH20)³². The Hobsonville air force base site fell within this Western corridor, and the decision to close it presented an opportunity for new development within Waitakere City on what was a relatively flat 167-hectare 'greenfield' site. Together with other opportunities in the corridor, a total of 580 hectares of land was available for future urban growth. However, most of this land fell outside what was then the Metropolitan Urban Limit (MUL), and proposed new development required an amendment to the Regional Planning Statement for the MUL to be moved further west. This was achieved through collaboration between the ARC, the local authorities and the government by way of coordinated changes to the Waitakere District Plan (see Figure 6).

³¹ Response for from interviewee, 2019 (Planner A).

³² Northern and Western Section Agreement 2001, p.14.

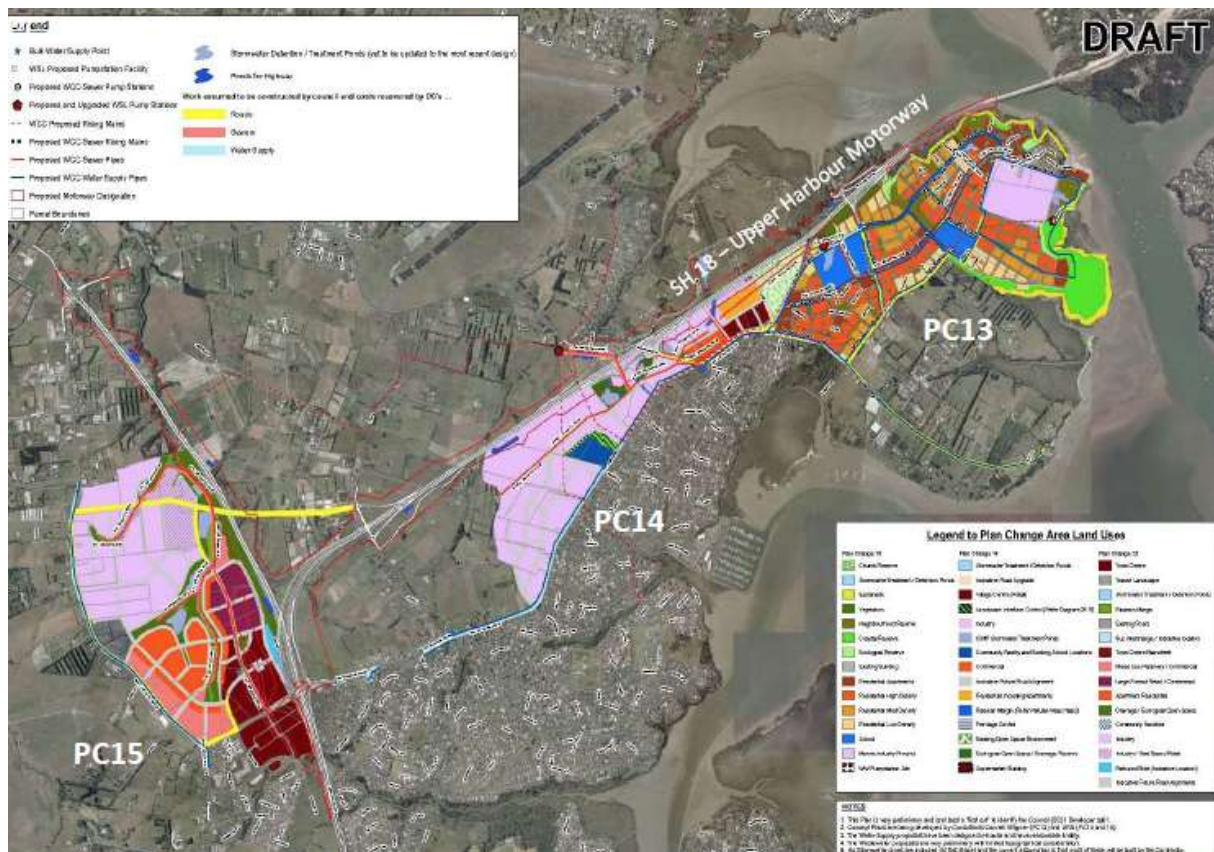


Figure 6. Areas of Plan Change 13, 14 and 15 to the Waitakere City Council District Plan; industrial land shown in purple. The Hobsonville Point area is PC 13, approved in 2011. (Source: Future Urban Growth Areas, Auckland Regional Council: Growth Strategies for Waitakere, June 2009)

Plan Change (PC) 13 encompassed the Hobsonville air base. PC 14 established a new ‘urban village’ and industrial land immediately to the west, and PC 15 made provision for the extension of Westgate/Massey North as a new regional town centre (now called NorthWest). The three Plan Changes are shown in Figure 6 including the extensive industrial land designations in PC 14 and PC 15, and the inclusion of a special zone for the Marine Industry Precinct in PC 13, in what was to become Hobsonville Point³³. These Plan Changes also reflected intentions under the Local Government Auckland Amendment Act 2004 for local Councils to integrate their land use and transport strategies to ensure consistency with the 1999 RGS, and give effect to the explicit promotion of sustainable and integrated land use and transportation planning.³⁴ Also embedded into the Plan Changes are provisions for employment generating opportunities linked to residential development with cycling and walking options, and good motorway access to the new Upper Harbour Motorway (SH18)³⁵.

³³ Future Urban Growth Areas, Auckland Regional Council: Growth Strategies for Waitakere, June 2009. See: <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/AbtChl/pp/pdf/DraftGMS/DraftGMSlayoutFutureUrbanGrowthAreas>.
³⁴ Decision Report of the Auckland Regional Council ARC 8 MUL Hobsonville and Massey North, 31 July 2007
³⁵ Decision Report of the Auckland Regional Council ARC 8 MUL Hobsonville and Massey North, 31 July 2007

Plan Changes 13, 14 and 15 to the Waitakere City Council District Plan were publicly notified in 2005, introducing ‘Special Areas’ into the Waitakere District Plan in 2007 instead of the more typical standard land use zones. The special zones created flexibility to comprehensively plan for future residential and business development. It also made provisions for ‘a high standard of pedestrian amenity’ to be included that provides for ‘circulation around a precinct, between precincts, to schools, parks and community services, and integrates with public transport nodes and bus stops’³⁶.

Following the hearing process and subsequent Environment Court appeals, Plan Change 13 (Hobsonville Point) was adopted in 2011, reflecting what was then an innovative approach to planning for development. The Urban Concept Plan (PC 13) contains key policy directions for the land to be ‘developed in a way that ensures a comprehensive, planned approach, making efficient use of the land resource’. Development was required to cluster and share common facilities, and integrate marine areas with development on the surrounding land, and create employment opportunities (see Figure 7)³⁷. The planning process involved three steps³⁸:

- The first step was the Plan Change and zoning framework (Urban Concept Plan – see Figure 7), that designated indicative land uses and policy for development, aligned to the urban planning directions embedded into the Western corridor plan.
- The second step was a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) for each defined precinct within the Plan Change area. The CPD included the land subdivision pattern, key uses, and related development requirements, including design guidelines. The CDP did not create new planning rules as such, but did impose specific conditions. CDP applications were to be made by the developer, and among other matters, had to include details of infrastructure provision and housing unit yield targets. Of note is that CDP applications could vary the Urban Concept Plan, including the boundaries of the precincts, provided the applicant demonstrates outcomes consistent with underlying planning principles. Plan Change 13 set out universal CDP requirements, but also specific additional ones for individual precincts depending on their characteristics and location.
- The third step was the application for specific subdivision and land use consents to authorise actual development. These had to comply with relevant CDP requirements (which included the building design guidelines) and the relevant planning rules, followed by the building consent approval processes.

³⁶ By this time a super yacht builder, Sovereign Yachts, had already set up manufacturing in a former air force hanger, with support from the Marine Industry Association and the government. It was envisioned at the time that Hobsonville Point could become a centre for innovative yacht design and building.

See: <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/abtcnl/pp/districtplan/dplanchanges/planchange13-fact13.pdf>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

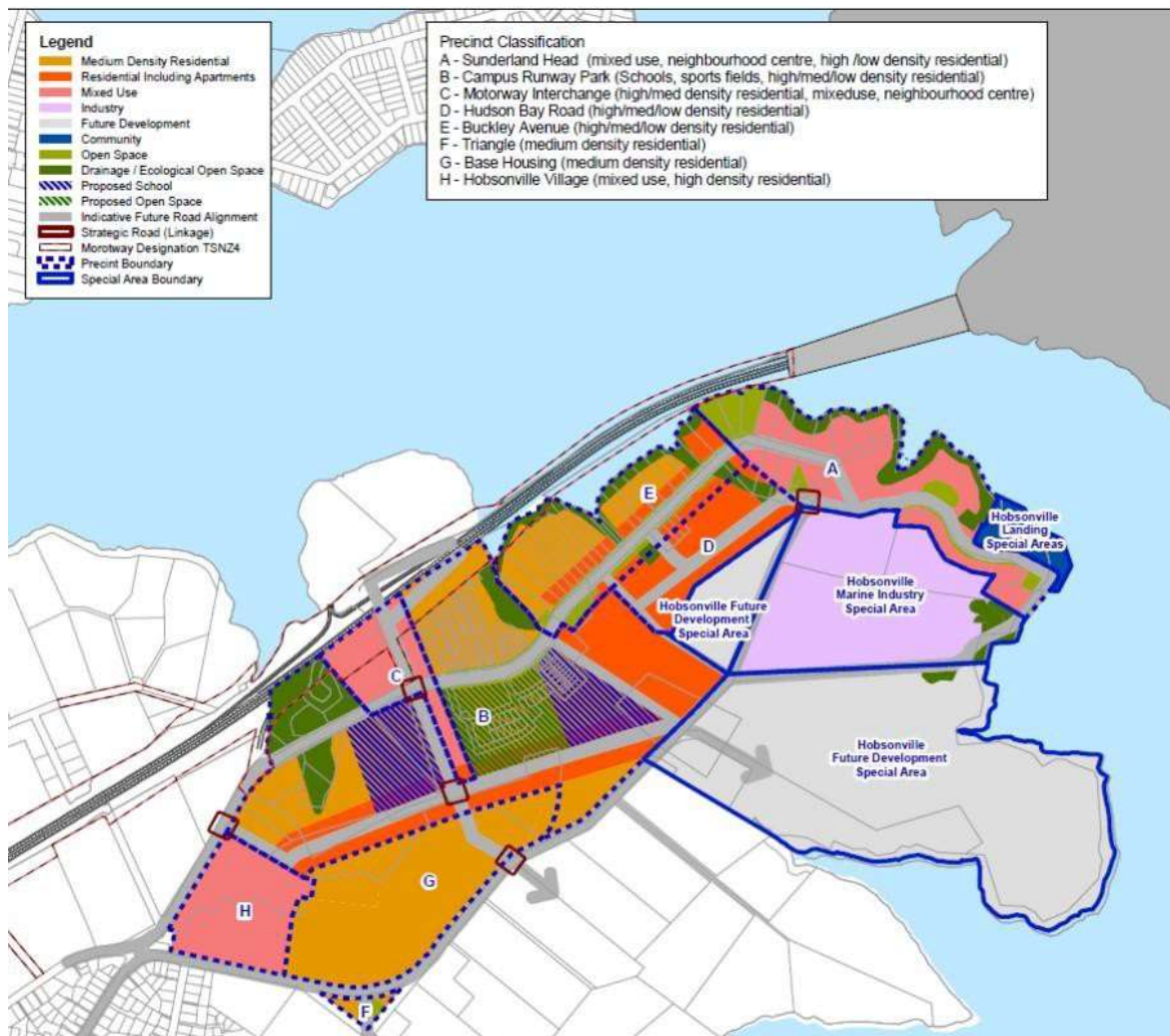


Figure 7. Hobsonville Peninsula Urban Concept Plan, Plan Change 13 (2009). This included a large area zoned as the Hobsonville Marine Industry Special Area (purple area) and a Future Development Special Area, the grey area later designated as the Catalina Precinct. (Source: Future Urban Growth Areas, Auckland Regional Council: Growth Strategies for Waitakere, June 2009)

The CDPs established a precinct-based detailed planning process, with subsequent land use development consent applications aligned to the applicable zone rules, as well as other conditions established by way of consenting process. The consented developments included much of the finer grain detail, including building designs and plans, with the CDP acting as a subdivision and activity layout ‘bridge’ between the high-level land use pattern and actual development outcomes. The key benefit of this approach was that the broad zoning created more flexibility for the detail block designs, but with confidence that the outcome would be integrated and consistent, rather than a series of small, individual site-based developments. This was particularly well suited to the medium-to-long-term timeframe running through to 2024.

and Construkt Architects, who were appointed to prepare the masterplan (see Figure 9), and the Comprehensive Development Plan for stage 1, Buckley⁴³. This plan followed the general principles of the Urban Concept Plan (Figure 7), but as foreshadowed, the opportunity was taken to exercise flexibility when developing the detail. More prominent in the masterplan is a spine road (shown in red) running from the entry point at the ‘village node’ across the site to a waterfront node. The two proposed schools are located on this spine road. Also shown is the green network along the coastal edges, and through the centre of the site, connected by a 5-kilometre walking and cycle track, and an indicative street and block layout. This masterplan is reproduced as a point of reference in each of the Comprehensive Development Plans, along with the ‘Project Vision’.



Figure 9. Masterplan for Hobsonville Point, reproduced in the Comprehensive Development Plans for each precinct. (Source: Hobsonville Land Company, Comprehensive Development Plan: Sunderland, Hobsonville Point, April 2013.)

The CPDs and the associated ‘Design Guides’ prescribed considerable detail such as building forms, the requirements for ‘marker’ buildings at strategic positions, materiality, street frontages and landscaping details. An example from the Sunderland Comprehensive Development Plan shows the design guide for the street-dwelling interfaces using various urban design and landscape elements (see Figure 10).

⁴³ Lietz, 2010.



Figure 10. Design Guide principles example from the Sunderland Comprehensive Development Plan, for street-dwelling interfaces, gates, walls and letterboxes.⁴⁴

The CPDs and Design Guides are points of reference for the detailed architectural design of each block. In Hobsonville Point, this is carried out by one of a number of HLC ‘building partners’, including architects and other professionals. All block designs are reviewed by an independent Design Review Panel through three stages of design development, before being submitted for final planning and building approvals. This process addresses the urban design issues and in effect becomes the Auckland Council’s technical ‘sign off’ for urban design issues as part of the development approval process.

Having a range of building partners ensures variability of dwelling design, and avoids monotonous repetition often found in larger scale housing developments⁴⁵. Most dwellings are sold ‘off-plan’ by the building partners using ‘show houses’. The process (with some exceptions) involves a buyer purchasing and transferring the land (or sectional title in the case of apartments), into their ownership, and agreeing to a fixed price contract for the construction of the dwelling. This has the advantage of purchasers buying dwellings at their base value, and thus avoiding market price appreciation.

Reference was made to the designation of a Marine Industry Special Zone within Hobsonville Point (see Figure 7). The 20-hectare land parcel was vested in the Waitakere City Council and at that time, Sovereign Yachts (later placed in receivership and then taken over by Yachting Developments Ltd) established a boat building business. However, no other marine-based business has yet followed this lead. With the establishment of the Auckland Council in 2010, the ownership of this area was transferred to the new Council’s property organization, Panuku

⁴⁴ Source: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Hobsonville-Point-Sunderland-CDP.pdf>

⁴⁵ An evaluation of the planning, design and development process is the subject of a future Working Paper.

Development Auckland. The masterplanning of the 20-hectare site has change land uses from being exclusively for a marine industry, with blocks now designated as ‘mixed use’ (blocks 5 and 6 in Figure 11). Blocks 1 to 4 are for residential use in what is now called the ‘Airfields’ precinct. Block 1 is complete and occupied, and blocks 2, 3 and 4 are currently under development.



Figure 11. Land owned by Panuku Development Auckland within Hobsonville Point, divided into six ‘mega-lots’. Mega-lot 1 is completed and infrastructure work for ‘megalots’ 2, 3 and 4 has just been completed⁴⁶.

While the promotion of an active marine industry and associated employment creation has not eventuated⁴⁷, other enterprises have been established. The area around the ferry wharf (now called Catalina Bay) has a number of employment generating enterprises: two restaurants, commercial offices serving as the HLC headquarters and other leasable commercial spaces, a new \$20m craft brewery and hospitality outlets, along with the farmers market established as a destination attraction when the first dwellings were being sold.

Originally, the masterplan made provisions for 3000 dwellings. However, growing confidence that the market will accept higher density housing, led to the inclusion of an increasing number of 2 to 3-storey terrace houses and apartments with each precinct released for development. Although only one apartment building was completed and occupied at the time of the survey in 2017-18, current developments includes a number of apartments. Ngāi Tahu Property Limited, the NZ Superfund and New Ground have teamed up to build 200 units that include two 4-5

⁴⁶ See: <https://www.panuku.co.nz/hobsonville>

⁴⁷ Originally 2000 jobs were targeted for Hobsonville Point (Lietz, 2010a)

storey apartment buildings, that includes dwelling offered with long-term leases⁴⁸. Ockham Residential has recently completed a five-block apartment complex with 120 apartments priced from \$525,000 to \$765,000⁴⁹. Just approved for development are a number of apartments, including a 15-storey residential tower⁵⁰ (see Figure 12) in the Marlborough Precinct, adjacent to Catalina Bay and the ferry wharf. This proposal also underscores the increasing density and inclusion of more apartments in the more recent phases, compared to the original masterplan, and predominately 2-storey scale of the phase 1 development in the Buckley precinct.



Figure 12. An image of the higher density and residential tower proposed and consented for the Marlborough Precinct⁵¹. (Source: NZ Herald)

Current estimates now target 4500 dwellings with a population of 11,000 by 2024 (a 30 per cent increase over what was planned for at the outset)⁵².

1.4. Methodology

Achieving the HLC vision implies the complex interactions of quality housing in a neighbourhood context, environmental responsiveness and good social outcomes. Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is a useful way of evaluating the performance of the built environment measured against aims and recognised standards. Although POE’s are more typically used at large building scales, there are newer applications to larger entities such as neighbourhood communities, cities and

⁴⁸ Ngāi Tahu Property Limited Media Statement: <https://ngaitahuproperty.co.nz/news/media-statement-hobsonville-point-investment/>

⁴⁹ Introducing Bernoulli Gardens: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/community/news/development/introducing-bernoulli-gardens-hobsonville-points-latest-residential-development/>

⁵⁰ Proposed apartment tower, NZ Herald.

See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/community/news/development/plans-for-marlborough-precinct-unveiled/>

⁵¹ Source: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12077330

⁵² See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/about/>

regions⁵³. POE is a methodology that supports the ‘triangulation’ of sets of research findings, allowing the construction of a multi-layered picture of the environment being assessed (Hofer, 2008). Although now a little less than half complete, with over 1500 dwellings and a population of around 4500, Hobsonville Point has sufficient scale to apply POE, with outcomes able to inform subsequent development and similar development elsewhere.

The key elements to this triangulation in the POE of Hobsonville Point are:

- Residents’ perceptions of housing satisfaction and wellbeing outcomes when living at density.
- The performance of the physical outcomes meeting established standards.
- The efficacy of the planning, design and delivery process to deliver outcomes consistent with set aims and goals.

This Working Paper reports on the data collected for the first of these POE elements, namely residents’ perceptions of housing satisfaction and wellbeing outcomes when living at density. The findings will inform the summative post-occupancy evaluation yet to be undertaken. However, the data and analysis collected is independently useful for those concerned about residents’ perceptions of living at density, and for the planning and design of other neighbourhoods.

A key motivation for undertaking this research was a lack of recent comprehensive data and analysis focussed on understanding resident perceptions of living at higher density in Hobsonville Point. Beacon Pathway undertook a survey in 2013, but at that time there were only 78 residents, of whom 65 responded to the survey (Bijoux, 2013). There was also a census in New Zealand in the same year, but again the few residents then in occupation limit the data. While a census was undertaken in 2018, results are still not available at the time of writing.

For these reasons, collecting more recent data Hobsonville Point was considered important, not only to understand the conditions within Hobsonville Point, but also because it presented an opportunity to evaluate higher density development where outcomes can inform a wider New Zealand context. Not only will this produce data from a much larger number of residents when compared to the 2013 survey, but over the elapsed time, conditions have changed, including the fact that there are now around 4500 residents.

⁵³ Based on a review of international literature, the application of Post-occupancy evaluation at neighbourhood scale has been fully explored in Working Paper 18-2: Boarin, Besen and Haarhoff, 2018.

To collect the information, all residents in Hobsonville Point were invited to complete an on-line questionnaire survey, and attend one of three focus group discussions⁵⁴. The questionnaire was constructed to include information required for other research streams within the POE, but for this research, the aim was to collect household data from which to construct a household profile, resident perceptions and levels of satisfaction with dwellings and the wider neighbourhood, and the extent to which residents perceived a sense of community⁵⁵. In a broader sense this enables the HLC aim to ‘build a strong, vibrant community that sets new benchmarks for quality and accessible urban development with an environmentally responsible focus’ (Barrett, 2015 p284), to be evaluated from a resident perspective, and the extent to which living at higher density leads to housing satisfaction and wellbeing.

Invitations to participate in the survey were delivered by hand or postal services to all occupied dwellings in November 2017⁵⁶. The invitation requested one response per household using either a Survey Monkey link to complete the questionnaire on-line, or alternatively to request a paper copy (none were requested). The number of questionnaires delivered corresponded closely to the number of owners registered with the Hobsonville Point Residents Society at that time (1449)⁵⁷.

Prompts to complete the survey were also posted on the community Facebook page in January 2018. The survey was closed at the end of February 2018 with 191 responses. Checks revealed that 14 of the survey forms had very few questions answered, and they were discarded. Checks were also made to ensure that each household completed only one questionnaire, and no duplicates were detected. This left 177 completed questionnaires (a 12 per cent response rate). All questionnaires were completed anonymously and returned via the Survey Monkey platform. While neither names nor addresses were collected, geographical location is known via the declared street in which the dwelling is located.

The request to complete the online survey called for one response from each household, and more females respondents than males reported completing the questionnaire – 64 per cent females versus 35 per cent males (1 per cent reported ‘other’ gender). This, according to Smith

⁵⁴ Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 6 November 2017 for three years. Reference Number 020345.

⁵⁵ The full list of questions is in **Appendix 1**.

⁵⁶ All dwelling owners are required to be a member of the Hobsonville Point Residents Society (HPRS), and the number of residents at the time of posting the survey invitation was 1449, as advised by the HPRS facility manager (Crockers). All dwellings have post boxes accessible to the streets, except for the apartments where delivery was done using postal services. This resulted in 100 per cent of residents at the time being invited to participate, including owner-occupiers and any dwellings rented to tenants.

⁵⁷ Information provided by the residents society’s (HPRS) property management company, Crockers.

(2008), is not unexpected in online surveys where female gender return rates were consistently found to be higher than male counterparts drawn from the same social environment. This is a self-selected sampling method and consequently may have some inherent bias related to those who chose to respond, but nevertheless this is considered an effective strategy involving human subjects⁵⁸.

To mitigate potential bias, checks were made to ensure that there was a sufficient geographical spread of questionnaire returns across the three completed precincts at the time of the survey: Buckley, Catalina and Sunderland. To do this, street names recorded by respondents were mapped. Of the 52 streets where residents were living at that time, respondents named 46, and these are shown in Figure 13. This indicates that there is at least one respondent (in most cases multiple respondents) in 46 of the 52 occupied streets at the time of survey, with coverage across the three precincts. Good geographical distribution of respondents also coincides with a good spread of residency duration, ranging from phase 1 development in Buckley, to the more recent development in Catalina.



Figure 13. Location of questionnaire respondents by street indicated in red in the three precincts. Streets without respondents are shown in yellow.

When completing the questionnaire, volunteers for follow-up focus group discussions were sought, and a call for further participants was made via social media. A total of 16 residents

⁵⁸ Laerd Dissertation see: <http://dissertation.laerd.com/self-selection-sampling.php#second>

responded. Three focus group sessions were held on 26, 27 and 28 May 2018. To optimise attendance, the dates were convenient times on a Saturday, Sunday and Monday evening to accommodate varying household commitments. Each session was two hours long, guided by a set of questions to ensure consistency over the sessions, and the recorded conversation was later transcribed⁵⁹. The transcription anonymises participants, as are the verbatim quotations from the focus group cited in this Working Paper.

The focus group discussions provide a qualitative method for probing issues emerging from the questionnaire survey. The transcriptions of the discussions were coded under key headings and aligned with relevant information from the questionnaire responses. This involved identifying patterns between the survey and focus group interview questions in order to categorise the information for the first round of line-by-line coding. Secondly, during the first round of coding, additional patterns were identified from participant responses to reveal additional categories that were then added to the coding structure. Where new codes were added, a second round of line-by-line coding was required to ensure key data had not been overlooked. The wording and description of each category was critiqued and added to, as the coding was reviewed and evaluated, and the write-up of the findings developed.

Questionnaire data was processed to produce outcomes for the respondents as a whole, and also sorted to examine key variances of response according to age, duration of residency, and type of dwelling. While noting that at its conception, the development at Hobsonville Point was subject to different political viewpoints, opportunities and outcomes, the specific form of development provides a contextual framework for the evaluation. This framework is characterised as follows:

- Development premised on delivering a higher density residential environment, three to four times denser than conventional suburbs, with the estimated population of 11,000 yielding a gross density of 65 persons per hectare.
- Development on a 'greenfield' site.
- Explicit delivery through a public-private partnership (PPP), with a government land development agency (HLC) taking the lead public role.
- The provision of quality public parks and amenities that enables an evaluation of their role in contributing to overall housing satisfaction.
- It is New Zealand's largest single housing development, thus able to reveal issues related to building at scale.

⁵⁹ Protocols approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Reference Number 020345) required each participant to sign a consent form, and a confidentiality agreement was signed by the professional transcriber. The pre-set questions for the focus group are in **Appendix 2**.

- Includes targets for 'affordable' housing.
- Opportunity to evaluate the method and success in delivering on the vision with regard to quality and accessible development, environmental responsibility, and building a strong and vibrant community.
- The efficacy of the master planning approach in conjunction with the use of design review panels aimed at achieving quality outcomes.
- The mandatory membership of a residents' society.

Set out in the next section is the respondent profile derived from the questionnaire survey.

2. Respondent Profiles

The last census in New Zealand was in March 2018, but results will not be available until sometime in 2019. The previous census was in March 2013, at which time very few new dwellings in Hobsonville Point were occupied. Consequently, there is no comprehensive census data on households in Hobsonville Point. For this reason we included the collection of some core household data in the questionnaire survey. Although this information needs to be interpreted with caution because of the potential for a self-sampling bias, it nevertheless provides a useful household profile in the absence of other data. The potential bias is mitigated by using a record-linking technique used by Smith (2008) whereby survey data is compared to other data available. In this case, survey data is compared to the New Zealand Parliament household data for the electorate in which Hobsonville Point is located – Upper Harbour⁶⁰.

One of the most striking factors about Hobsonville Point, as discussed, is its relative newness – it has grown from the completion of the first houses in 2011 to now having 1500 dwellings and a population of 4500 people when surveyed. Table 1 shows respondents’ reported residency duration in Hobsonville Point. This shows that four-fifths of respondents have lived in the area for a relatively short time of three years or less.

Residency duration	%	No
Less than 1 year	38	67
1 to 3 years	44	78
over 3 years	18	31
n=		176

Table 1. Respondent duration of residency in Hobsonville Point.

Among these, 38 per cent had lived there for less than one year, and only 18 per cent for between three and seven years. This raises questions about the extent to which a sense of community may have been forged in a relatively short period of time among new residents who have occupied houses in Hobsonville Point for a relatively short period of time, a question pursued later in this Working Paper.

⁶⁰ New Zealand Parliament: Electorate Profiles – Upper harbour. This includes the North Shore suburbs of Greenhithe, The Palms, Glenfield West, and south from Hobsonville Point to include Whenuapai, West Harbour, and Massy East and West. https://www.parliament.nz/en/mps-and-electorates/electorate-profiles/electorate-profiles-data/document/DBHOH_Lib_EP_Upper_Harbour_People/upper-harbour-people#_44



Figure 14. Aerial photographs of Hobsonville Point: top 2009 and bottom 2018 (Source: Google Earth)

Of the 16 focus group participants, the majority (11) had lived in Hobsonville Point for between one and three years and a smaller group (five) had lived in Hobsonville Point for over three years. None of the focus group participants were new residents of less than one year. The rapid development of the area is illustrated by the contrasting aerial photographs in Figure 14 taken in 2009 and 2018 (nine years apart).

The age of survey respondents was collected, and distribution by age cohorts shown in Figure 15. Given that this records the age of respondents, it does not give a full population age distribution that would include children nor variation of ages within households.

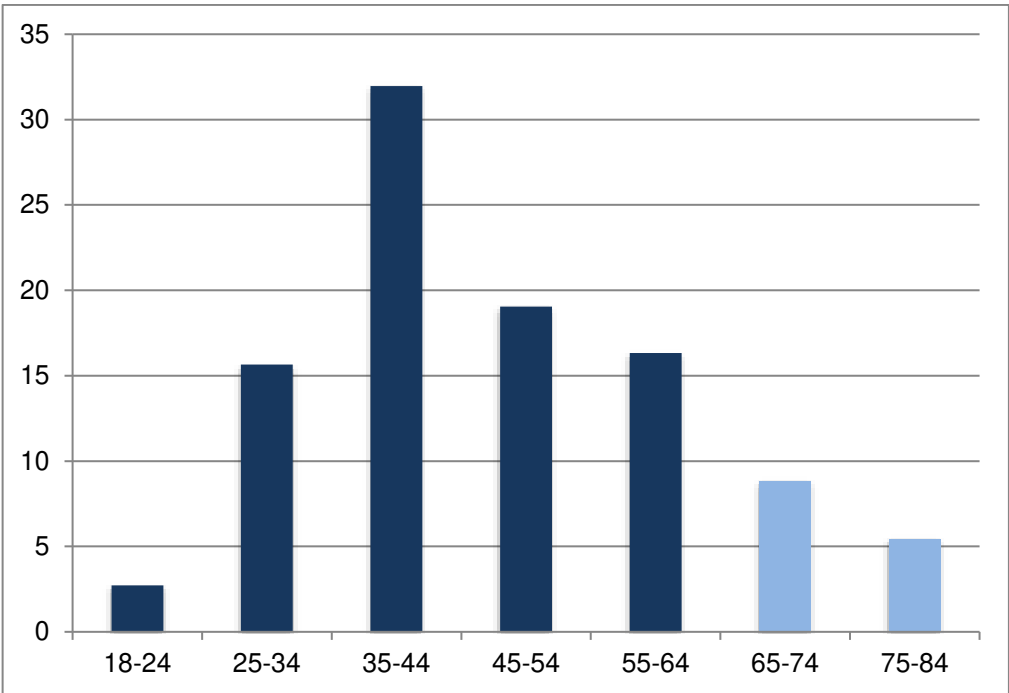


Figure 15. Percentage distribution of respondent age cohorts. (n=147)

Nevertheless, it provides useful information on the distribution of age across the respondent sample, with representation from all age cohorts reported. The largest percentage of respondents were in the 35-44 year cohort representing almost one-third of the total, with 14 per cent being over 65 years. Direct record linking was not possible, because the household respondent cannot be matched to population age distributions in the NZ Parliamentary household profile

The respondents' household income distribution is shown in Figure 16, and compared to the Upper Harbour Ward, and this shows respondents to be more affluent when compared to the electorate as a whole. Two-thirds of respondents report household incomes in excess of \$100,000 per annum, compared to 30.5 per cent in the electorate as a whole. Conversely, there are fewer in the lower income brackets among respondents compared to the electorate. For annual household incomes between \$15,000, and the \$70,000 to \$100,000 brackets, the distributions are closer, although consistently higher among the respondents in Hobsonville Point. In part, the level of income among respondents reflects necessary financial resources to afford home ownership in Hobsonville Point.

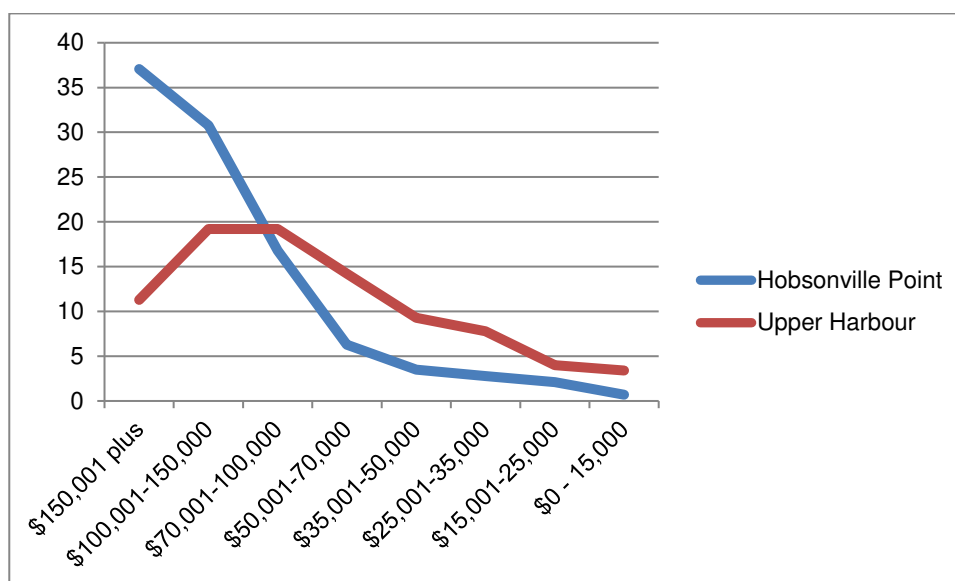


Figure 16. Percentage distribution of respondent annual household incomes by income brackets (n=147), compared to the averages for the Upper Harbour Ward, Auckland. Source: NZ Parliament⁶¹.

The relative affluence of the community in Hobsonville Point is also reflected in the primary and secondary school decile ranking. In New Zealand, decile rankings are established for each school funded by the Ministry of Education, with weighted funding for schools in more deprived communities. The two primary and secondary schools in Hobsonville Point were ranked decile 10 (least deprived on a scale of 1 to 10) in 2015, raised from decile 9 in 2014⁶².

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents owned their dwelling, just over half with a mortgage, and 30 per cent with outright ownership, as shown in Figure 17, not surprising in a development largely promoting house ownership. This compares to an overall home ownership rate of 66.6 per cent for the Upper Harbour electorate. The homeownership percentage for New Zealand was 63.3 per cent (2018), the lowest level for 66 years⁶³. Conversely, the percentage of renters in Hobsonville Point among respondents is relatively low at 11.2 per cent, compared to 33.4 per cent for the electorate as a whole (and 33 per cent nationwide)⁶⁴. Focus group participants also reported a 2/3 - 1/3 split between owners and renters. This suggests a high level of owner occupancy in Hobsonville Point, and a low level of absentee owners renting properties to tenants.

⁶¹ See: https://www.parliament.nz/en/mps-and-electoral/electorate-profiles/electorate-profiles-data/document/DBHOH_Lib_EP_Upper_Harbour_People/upper-harbour-people#_44

⁶² Ministry of Education: <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/resourcing/operational-funding/school-decile-ratings/>

⁶³ Auckland Profile – initial results from the 2013 census. See: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Documents/aucklandprofileinitialresults2013census201405.pdf>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

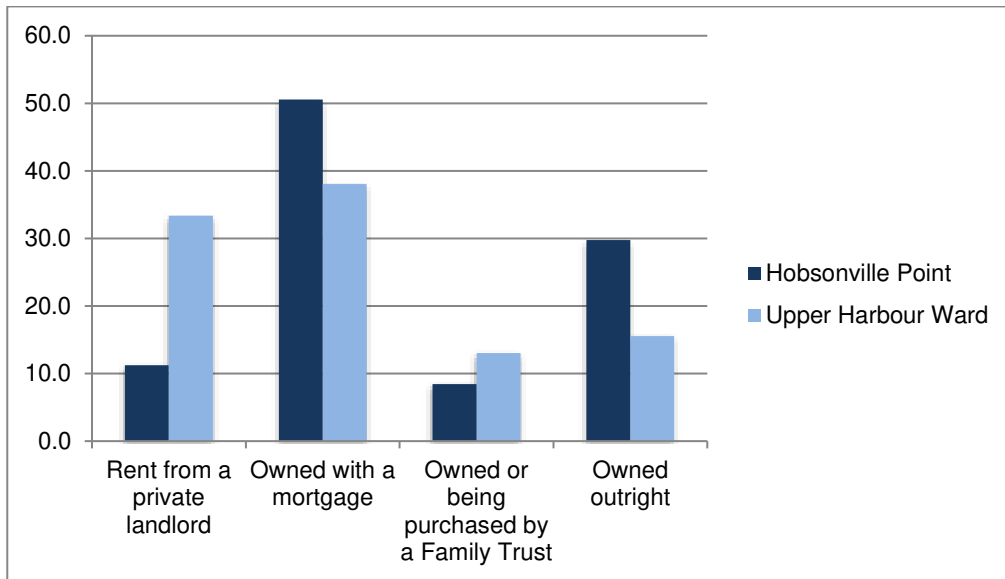


Figure 17. Tenure of respondents compared to the Upper Harbour electorate by percentage frequency for each type of tenure. (n=178)

Figure 18 gives the reported ethnicity of respondents, compared to the Upper Harbour electorate. European ethnicity dominates, and reported by 89 per cent of respondents, compared to 63 per cent in the Upper Harbour electorate. Māori and Pacific are very low by comparison, but more surprisingly, so is Asian. This distribution needs to be interpreted with a degree of caution, because of potential ethnic bias in responses to surveys of this kind. While a lower number of Māori and Pacific is not unexpected, this is for the Asian group. As Smith⁶⁵ points out, ‘more affluent people are more likely to participate in surveys...(as are)...younger people’. Those in the Asian ethnic category (especially Chinese) are also less likely to respond to requests for a survey, where language is a potential barrier, as was found in resident surveys in the suburb of New Lynn, Auckland⁶⁶. Observations within Hobsonville Point suggest a much larger Asian presence among residents than in the survey respondents.

⁶⁵ Smith, 2008, p3.

⁶⁶ Haarhoff, et al, 2012.

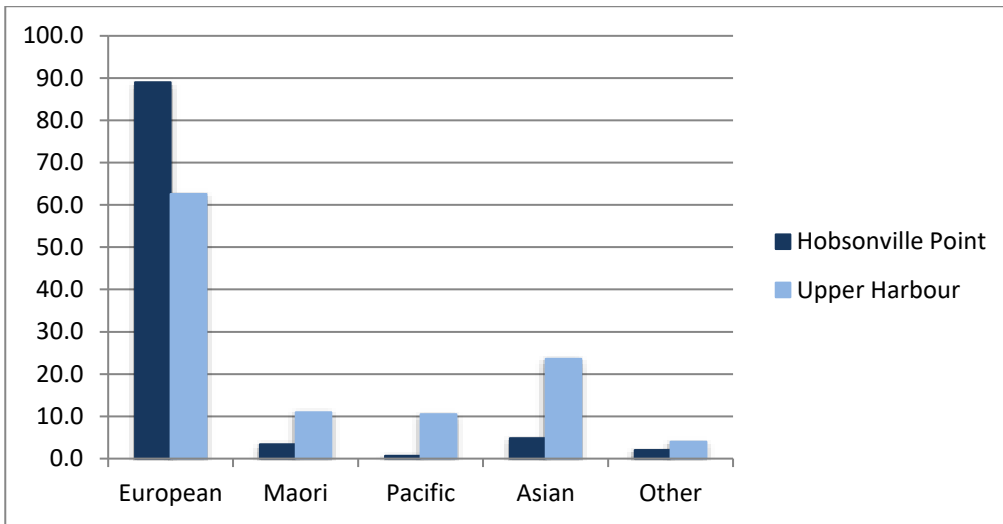


Figure 18. Percentage distribution of ethnicity of respondents in Hobsonville Point compared to the Upper Harbour electorate. (n=146)

Household sizes reported by survey respondents are shown in Figure 19. As can be seen, two-person households are the most common (34 per cent), with one-person households at 16 per cent (compared to 19 per cent for Auckland as a whole in 2013⁶⁷). Households with more than two persons total 50 per cent. The average household size among respondents is 2.94, almost identical to the Auckland average of 3.0⁶⁸.

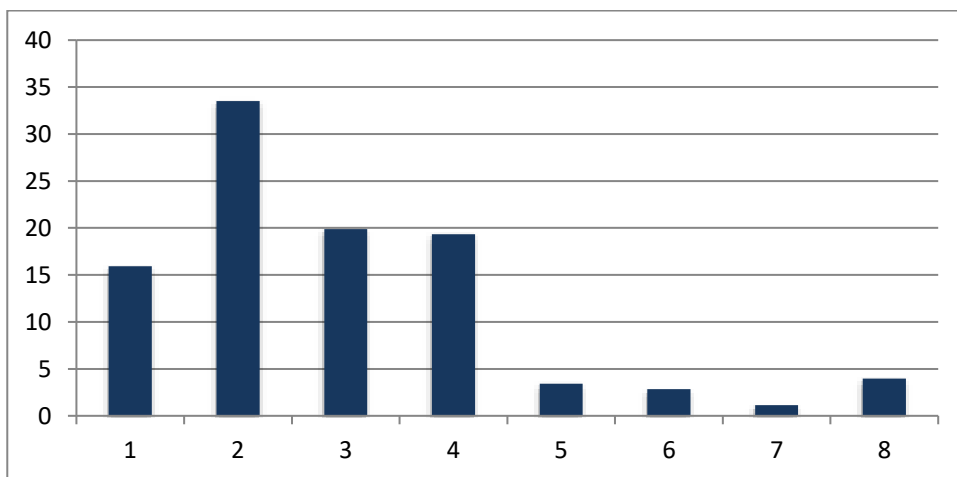


Figure 19. Percentage distributions of household sizes reported by respondents (n=176)

⁶⁷ Auckland Profile – initial results from the 2013 census. See: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Documents/aucklandprofileinitialresults2013census201405.pdf>

⁶⁸ Inside Auckland 2013–15: A profile of people and households in the Auckland Region. archive.stats.govt.nz/~and.../households/...auckland.../inside-auckland-2013-15.pdf

Lastly, Table 2 gives car ownership information for the survey respondents; 58 per cent of households have two cars, and 35 per cent of households have one car.

Cars per household	%	No
0	0.7	1
1	35.4	52
2	57.8	85
3	4.1	6
4 and more	2.0	3
	100.0	147

Table 2. Distribution of the number of cars in each respondent household.

Respondent residents were also asked to name the main modes of travel over a typical week, ranking them on a scale from one to seven, from most frequent (7) to least frequent or not at all (1), and this is shown in Figure 20.

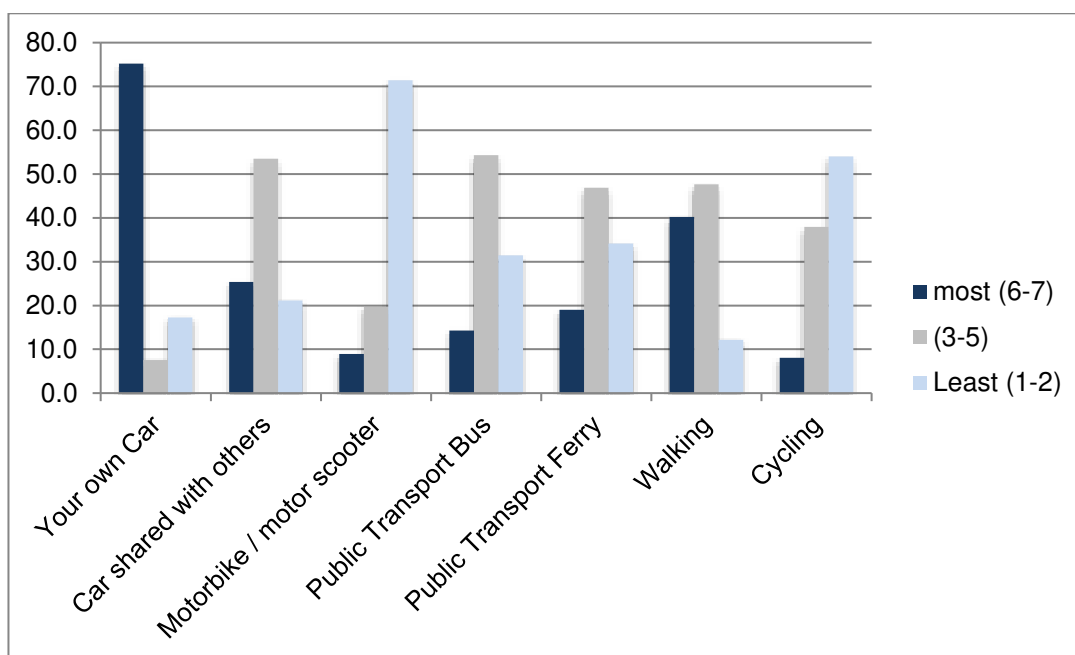


Figure 20. Frequency of use of transport modes over a typical week ranked from the most to least used. (n=133, multiple responses).

Unsurprisingly, the car is given as the most frequent mode of transport, by three-quarters of respondents. Only 17 per cent of respondents ranked their own car as least used if at all. Car ride sharing was reported by 25 per cent of respondents, and walking by 40 per cent of respondents.

Bus usage was low at 14 per cent, while ferry usage was higher at 19 per cent. The least used modes were motorbikes and cycling.

Overall, when compared to Upper Harbour, the demographics of the residents surveyed at Hobsonville Point are predominantly European and, in line with higher rates of home ownership, residents also earn more on average than those in neighbouring suburbs.

Set out in the three sections that follow are the results from the questionnaire survey and focus group discussion, organised as responses to the dwellings, the neighbourhood and perceptions of a sense of community.

3. The Dwellings

Housing satisfaction is a core component of overall satisfaction and wellbeing⁶⁹. Clapham argues that the “...house is the setting for family relationships and for community and friends as well as enabling access to work. It is a major item of family expenditure and contributes to good health”⁷⁰. This highlights the fundamental role that housing satisfaction plays in personal wellbeing.

New dwellings in Hobsonville Point sold ‘off-plan’ are promoted to offer features that include ⁷¹:

- Open plan living that is relaxed and casual.
- A warm, weathertight, energy-efficient home.
- Easy flow to outdoor living spaces.
- Low maintenance materials and easy-care sections.
- A balance between views and privacy.
- An interesting, varied and coherent streetscape.
- High quality construction by leading building companies.

These design intentions provide a framework for understanding the survey responses and the extent to which respondent dwellings lead to housing satisfaction. These are reported under the following sub-headings: dwellings types, dwelling size, privacy and noise, design quality and features, designing for sustainability, and finally, bringing up children.

3.1. Dwelling types

Most respondents were living in higher density, attached housing types such as apartments, terrace houses and duplexes, and the distribution is shown in Figure 21. As shown, over 67 per cent live in attached forms of housing, with close to half of respondents living in terrace houses (47 per cent). By comparison, just less than one-third of respondents live in detached dwellings (31.6 per cent), and then, on relatively small sites (typically 250-300 m²).

⁶⁹ Allen, 2016.

⁷⁰ Clapham, 2010, p253.

⁷¹ Your New Home in Hobsonville Point, HLC. See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Your-New-Home-at-Hobsonville-Point.pdf>

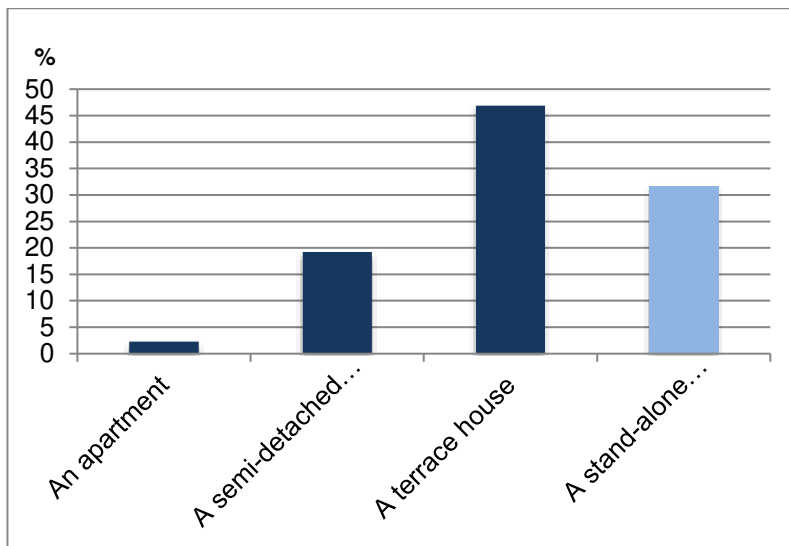


Figure 21. Percentage distribution of dwelling types (n=177).

Despite being more compact, Table 3 shows that 33 per cent of respondent dwellings have four bedrooms, and 29 per cent have three bedrooms. These numbers can be compared with averages for houses in New Zealand (2013): four bedrooms: 23.4 per cent; three bedrooms: 44.5 per cent, and two bedrooms: 19.1 per cent⁷². The combined proportion of respondents living in dwellings with two and four bedrooms is thus well above the New Zealand average, while the proportion of respondents in three-bedroom dwellings is lower. This may reflect the great diversity of choice available in Hobsonville Point.

No of Bedrooms	%	No
1	66	3
2	52	29
3	51	29
4	58	33
5 and more	10	6
	177	100

Table 3. Number and percentage distribution of the number of bedrooms in respondents' dwellings.

The average size (measured by area) of houses built in New Zealand since 2010 is 205 m².⁷³ By comparison, the average area of houses listed for sale in Hobsonville Point in December 2018 was 167 m² (with an average site area of 198 m²), indicating that houses in Hobsonville Point are smaller than the current New Zealand average.

⁷² See: <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-housing/number-bedrooms.aspx>

⁷³ QV.cp.nz (2011): <https://www.qv.co.nz/property-insights-blog/average-house-size-by-age/62>

Also asked in the survey among households with children, was whether they would move if they had an additional child, and there was an even split, suggesting that in some cases residents are not making initial house choices for future situations. However, affordability issues may also be a constraint. Also indicated from the focus group is that under these situations, residents do 'upsize' within Hobsonville Point, and the diversity of dwelling types makes it easier to match needs and affordability.

Although there is a wider range of dwelling types offered, and better options to match affordability with need in Hobsonville Point, on average, residents are living in smaller houses and on smaller sites when compared to averages in New Zealand. The key question is: Do these housing options result in housing satisfaction?

3.2. Dwelling Size

As reported in the focus group discussions, many residents in Hobsonville Point previously lived in other suburban areas, but most often in larger houses, reflected in the comments below⁷⁴:

"Well, for us, we were coming from Hamilton to Auckland and you have to spend a hell of a lot more money to get a lot less. We had a five-bedroom, brand new monopitch house with a double garage and 600 square metres of section...."

"We had had the big house and the big land because we'd had two businesses at home and kids at home and clients coming and going..."

"...we've been here almost a year, we're tenants we're not owners... our last house was on a large section, a third of an acre on Lake Pupuke, and with all the trimmings; a big house, swimming pool, you name it..."

Understanding perceptions of dwelling sizes was thus one area explored. Figure 22 shows the percentage distribution of respondents being satisfied / dissatisfied with the size of their dwelling. As can be seen, respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with size (despite being smaller on average than houses built in New Zealand since 2010)⁷⁵. The combined 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' reported by respondents is just over 80 per cent. Being 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' was reported by 10 per cent of respondents.

⁷⁴ Throughout the Working Paper, verbatim anonymous quotations are included from the focus group transcriptions.

⁷⁵ Ibid

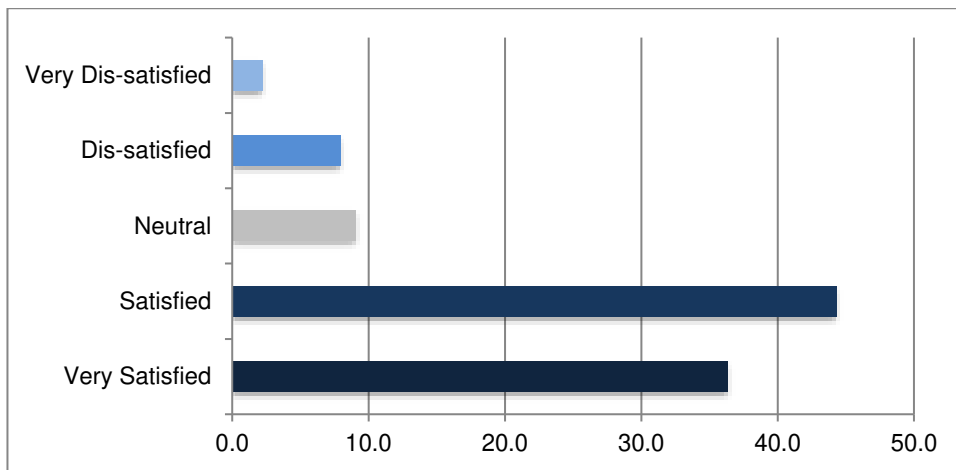


Figure 22. Percentage distribution of levels of satisfaction expressed by respondents on the size of the interior of their dwelling. (n=176)

Housing choice, of course, involves preferences and trade-offs in which Yeoman and Akehurst⁷⁶ found that respondents placed significant importance on the size of a dwelling when making choices. Interestingly, they also found that respondents were willing to trade off location against having a dwelling of acceptable size, even if this was an attached housing unit or apartment⁷⁷. While pointing to the methodological difficulties in measuring liveability, Thomas et al.⁷⁸ explored the relationship between density and liveability in an experimental simulation. Using randomly selected participants from Lower Hutt, New Zealand, the participants were asked to respond to reductions in house sizes and increases in neighbourhood densities. What they found was that the participants traded off closer travel distances to key destinations (such as workplaces) for a friendly, safe, clean neighbourhood environment. They also warn of a potential limiting factor to eliciting resident perceptions of liveability, because cognitive bias can lead people to always rate more positively what they have actively chosen⁷⁹.

Dwelling size was probed in the focus groups, with ten saying that their dwellings were the ‘*right size*’ to suit their needs. This meant something different to each participant. For example, one spoke about how they had three children and four bedrooms, and this was how they defined ‘*right size*’. Others felt their dwelling was the right size because, even though it was comparatively smaller than the dwellings they had previously lived in, they still had a “*small back garden*” and a “*veggie patch*”, lifestyle features that they valued highly. Describing the suitability and design quality of their home, another participant commented:

⁷⁶ Yeoman & Akehurst, 2015.

⁷⁷ Haarhoff, et al, 2012.

⁷⁸ Thomas et al., 2010.

⁷⁹ Thomas et al., 2010; Losciute & Perloff, 1967.

“Yeah, we think our place is really well designed, I mean massive change, 150 square metres from 350, but it's really well designed, it suits us, it was marketed as three bedrooms but it's not really, but it works from our perspective, we've got two decent sized bedrooms and then we use the third bedroom... for sewing and her office. Our grandson sleeps there when he comes around, but all the ground floor is totally open space living, and we think it's really well designed.”

Figure 22 clearly indicates that respondents to the survey expressed high levels of satisfaction with the size of their dwellings, with various reasons given in the focus groups participants. Most in the focus group were planning to stay in their current dwelling for the foreseeable future, with two participants planning to move to new dwellings within the neighbourhood. For one of these residents it would be her third home in Hobsonville Point, *upsizing* each time. For another, a move to a single level corner apartment with better natural light was a way to downsize her home but upgrade the liveability she experienced because the new dwelling she was moving to, she thought, better suited her needs.

These comments all reflect the variable needs and requirements that households have, and in the case of Hobsonville Point, how they exercise choices when faced with a larger diversity of housing options.

3.3. Privacy and Noise

The Design Guide associated with the Comprehensive Development Plan for each of the precincts in Hobsonville Point directs design to achieve street-dwelling interfaces that conform to best practice urban design principles, and that part dealing with privacy is summarised below:

Designs should encourage an attractive interface between public and private realms that facilitates outlook and social interaction whilst balancing the need for privacy. Care must be taken to provide privacy for occupants, particularly when the separation distance between windows is less than 6 m. In general, directly facing windows should be avoided where the separation distance is less than or equal to 6 m. Any sense of being observed while going about one's daily life in the house or apartment must be minimised. This applies to being overlooked from both the street and adjacent dwellings⁸⁰.

Given that these design guides (mediated by the design review panel) have informed the design outcomes, respondent responses to privacy and noise were of special interest, among other

⁸⁰ Comprehensive Development Plan Catalina <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Hobsonville-Point-Sunderland-CDP.pdf>

aspects. Figure 22 set out responses to a range of dwelling issues in answer to the question: 'How satisfied are you with the listed characteristics of your dwelling?' Responses are reported using a scale of 'very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S)', 'neutral' to 'dissatisfied/very dissatisfied' (D+VD).

As can be seen in Figure 23, feeling satisfied/very satisfied with 'privacy within the dwelling' and with 'noise from neighbours' was expressed by 62 and 61 per cent of respondents respectively. This drops to 57 per cent for 'privacy with regard to external spaces'. Responses concerning satisfaction with 'privacy within the dwelling from people walking by or living next door', was higher at 62 per cent (with 21 per cent dissatisfied/very dissatisfied). Higher levels of overall satisfaction were expressed with regard to 'orientation of the front doors to foster social interactions' and the design of entrance spaces to the footpath/street', with around two-thirds of respondents reporting being satisfied and very satisfied. Across all of the above issues, a relatively high level of satisfaction is expressed (with the exception of parking discussed below). These responses were probed in the focus groups.

Issues concerning privacy expressed by participants to the focus groups were almost all about visual rather than acoustic privacy. Acoustic privacy was not raised as a discussion point by the groups. Feelings of visual privacy, however, were raised often and were very personalised. As a result, patterns among participant responses in the focus groups were difficult to identify. Generally, perceived privacy seemed to relate to previous housing experiences and how one's current home related to a previous dwelling. For example, one participant who lived in a terraced home with neighbours either side commented that even though their section was 150m², and smaller than "*the typical kiwi experience*", they were happy with their sense of privacy because their living space had doubled in size compared to their previous home. This again underscores the process of residents making trade-off around housing choices.

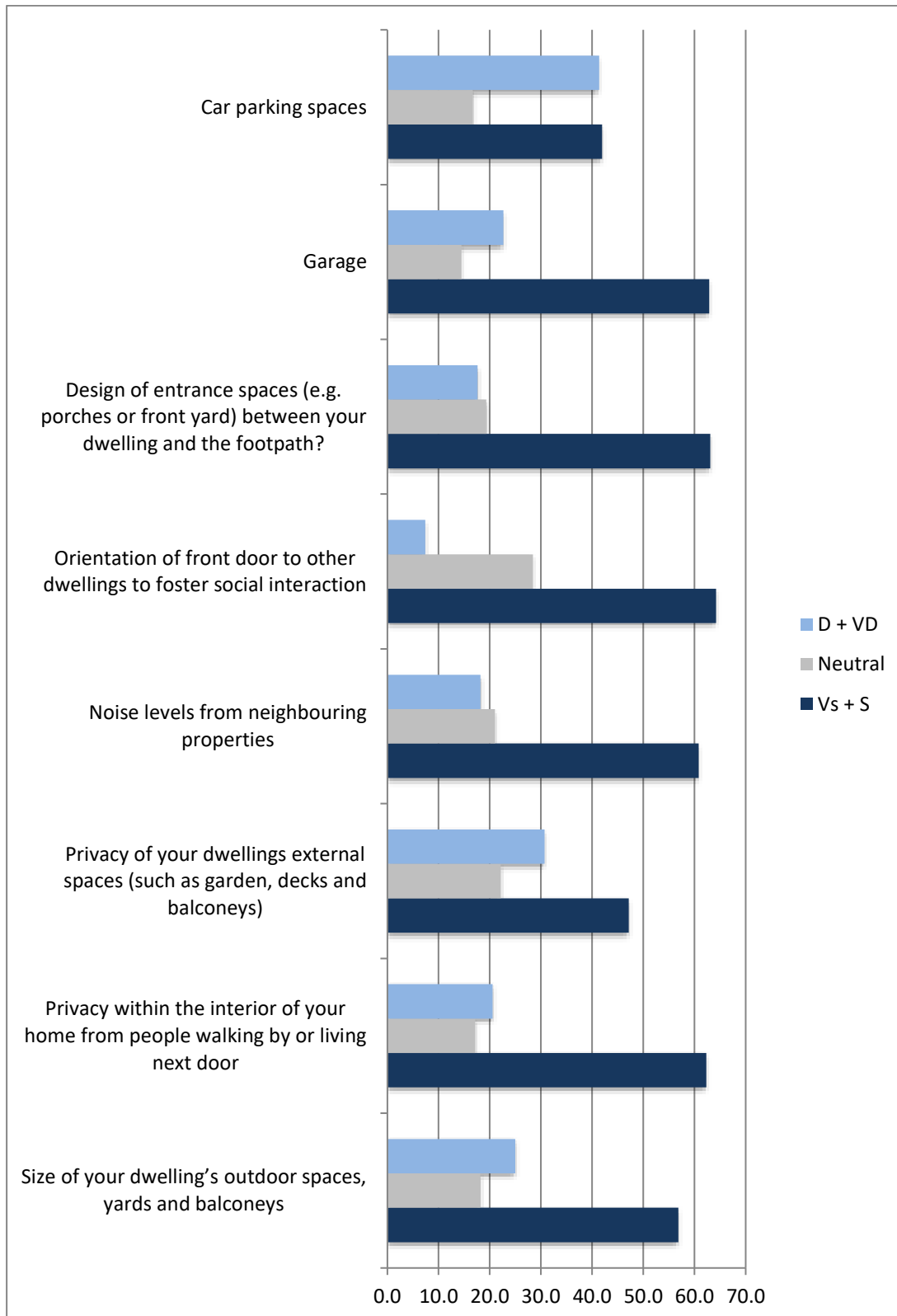


Figure 33: Responses to questions concerning level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with outdoor spaces, privacy, noise from neighbourhoods, entrance design, garaging and parking. Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied - D+VD; Very satisfied/satisfied – VS+S. (n=176)

Most focus group participants felt that they had visual privacy in their homes, one even commenting, *“our friends think it is absolutely amazing that we have complete 100 per cent privacy”*. In most instances, the privacy experienced in private outdoor spaces was the most discussed reason why participants felt they had privacy. The view, that private outdoor space was imperative for feeling that your home was private, was suggested by one participant who commented: *“you want to have your friends over for a barbecue at your place or a glass of wine or something like that and you want a little fence around it (to create) private space to do that, or listen to your records, whatever”*. Another participant described their requirement for privacy as having the living area at the rear of the home, opening on to a backyard area, so that no one was able to look in to their living spaces from the street, and that having the bedrooms at the front felt private because when one was in the rooms the curtains could easily be closed (see Figures 24 and 25).

When the focus groups were asked to comment on sufficient privacy in their own homes and privacy from the street, a number of participants commented about the lack of privacy they perceived in other people’s houses. In two instances participants spoke about thinking that homes with living areas facing the street had insufficient privacy. Another two spoke about homes where there is no private outdoor space as being an issue, one commenting that:

a lot of the newer dwellings are being designed with just a little bit of space in the front of the property. Often a lot of places don’t have any back or side private space. So, the design right now is that you have very open street-friendly type design for the fronts of the houses. The flipside of that is if you’re living in those houses you have no private outdoor space and that is a real issue.

Figure 23 also shows survey responses to two questions concerning dwelling designs in relation to the street: the orientation of the front door to the street that has an intention of fostering social interactions in the design of the entrance. Approximately 64 per cent of respondents were ‘satisfied/very satisfied’ with these design arrangements.

However, four participants did not feel they had privacy; one because their living was at the front of their house and if they left their venetian blinds open, they felt everyone could look in. Another did not feel they experienced enough privacy in their home because their terraced

house was on a laneway with no rear private space, resulting in their private space being in the front garden which they felt was too exposed to the street. In their view, *“it would be better to put the garages at the front and have a full back garden”*. Issues of visual privacy were solved by one participant using one-way film on their windows, to see out but prevented passers-by from seeing in. For these participants, a lack visual privacy was a sign of dissatisfaction with their dwellings.



Figure 24. Proximity of dwelling to the street, mediated by low walls, fences and gardens: dwelling in Saltmarsh Road, Catalina. (Image supplied: Errol Haarhoff)



Figure 25. A north-facing private rear yard garden in Bomb Point Drive that provides good privacy from the street to which living spaces open. (Image source: Errol Haarhoff)

The focus groups were further probed on the question of street relationships and perceived safety. One participant indicated they felt improvements could be made, whereas another felt that *“for some reason I think I could jump into someone's front door and knock on it, and they'd come to my rescue”* because the houses were designed in a way that felt accessible, and this resident had also had good experiences interacting with their neighbours. These are underscored in survey responses to neighbourhood support, and the question ‘I believe my neighbour would help me in an emergency’, was reported by 82 per cent of respondents (see Figure 23).

The relationship of the house to street was further probed in relation to personal safety. There were mixed feelings presented about whether or not it was beneficial to have living rooms opening out to the street. One participant commenting on the number of ranch sliders that open onto the street felt that while:

“that’s a nice feature, being able to walk out the front... I’d feel 10 times more secure, if I had windows at the front of my house, and a ranch slider at the back. Because the number of things that you read on the Hobsonville Point Facebook site about somebody nipping in, and just stealing a small little item that’s sitting on the table at the front of the house and wandering off”.

Another participant similarly commented, *“when I’m home, I’ll leave my back one fully open cos that’s fully fenced. And I’ll go upstairs, and I’ll feel quite comfortable, but the downstairs front one, unless I’m in the room, I won’t leave it open”*. Given the contentious nature of the relationship between perceived safety, threshold design, and window placements, this is an issue that could benefit from further research and design responses.

3.4. Design Quality and Features

Focus group participants were asked to discuss if they were happy with the quality and design of their home and, conversely, if there were aspects that they were not happy with. They were also asked if the room sizes and sense of space in the home felt suitable to their needs and, if they had a car, they were asked if they used their garage for parking or for other purposes.

The perceived variability of house design across Hobsonville Point was highlighted as a positive design characteristic and point of difference by the focus groups, where comparisons were made with other higher density developments in Auckland. One participant commented:

“I also looked at Stonefields (in East Auckland), and was much happier from the design perspective here, for the same reasons, it’s retained some of the air force and that kind of historical piece, which is what I like, I wish they’d retain a bit more, but, and the parks, you know, the, the open, outdoor spaces. The different designs of each area, so that it’s not just this one grey street, or when you come in to that looking from the top down into Stonefields you just look at this sea of grey. Whereas when you come into Hobsonville Point, you look at a whole variety and you get that different sort of sense. So, feels like it’s different neighbourhoods, and that sort of thing”.

This is a positive response to HLC’s strategy of engaging a number of different building partners and architects in house design. It also underscores the fact that despite all designs responding to the same CDP’s and Design Guides, the design interpretation is very variable, leading to perceived differences on the part of residents.

Responses were generally multifaceted when it came to discussing design quality, with multiple factors contributing to an overall sense of satisfaction with design quality. As with privacy, perceiving design quality for some participants related comparatively to where they had lived previously and how satisfied they had felt before. It also depended on what they were prioritising when looking for a home and how they defined their needs.

For three of the participants, part of their interest in their dwelling was the option to make internal modifications during the design/build process and to make their houses *“a little bit more of our own”* as a result. They valued having the opportunity to modify kitchens, internal specifications, add heating/cooling systems, and modify or add the locations of switches and power plugs⁸¹. Kitchens were the spaces where most modification were made, and viewed as option that enhanced housing satisfaction. One participant added:

“We completely changed our kitchen, because they had, they had the stove area, in the kitchen, and then they had a microwave unit hanging down right next to where

⁸¹ Options to make changes to dwellings sold ‘off-plan’ varied between building, and the stage of house completion. In some cases, this involves options for different colour package options, or in some case, minor alterations to internal configurations, and to the fit-out of kitchens and bathrooms.

you were going to be cooking, and I thought that's just ridiculous. Why would you not just have a big pantry that you put the microwave in, and it's out of sight and out of the way".

In contrast, two participants in the same group felt that they would have liked more information from their home building company about what they could have done to 'up spec' features.

Similarly, a number of participants commented that even though the proportions of their rooms were good, they did need to make modifications to their homes where possible, after they moved in, to ensure their housing satisfaction. For three participants this meant adding storage, one exclaiming that there was "*no cupboard for linen*" and another noting how they "*had to put in a whole extra bank of cupboards*" in their kitchen when they moved in because the pantry was so tiny. By contrast, one participant did speak about great storage; however, they had a larger home than others in the group.

Four participants considered the low-maintenance nature of their homes to be a feature of how they defined design quality. One participant felt that the quality of the dwelling was generally satisfactory, but had an issue with the poor quality finishing of the fence. Also, if they had been able, they would have added "*an extra window in the garage...because it doesn't have any, so every time you go in you have to turn the light on....And, an extra power point in the garage, because the garage was completely forgotten*".

For a further four, the orientation of their homes was an important factor, noting that the design guides called for appropriate orientation for sun exposure in the design of housing blocks. One participant commented: "*the thing I appreciate most about my house is it's north-facing*", another adding "*outdoor living is also, for us, north-west facing, so that's quite important, cos we do a lot in the summer, and when we can, we wanna get, be outside on our deck, or patio, and having that sun in the afternoon is quite important*". Three participants also spoke about having high studs (floor-ceiling height) in their living areas (either 2550 mm or 2700 mm, rather than the New Zealand minimum of 2400 mm), and that the extra height made their smaller homes feel more spacious.

Two participants commented about their housing satisfaction being tied to the provision of private outdoor space at their dwellings, from participants who did not have backyards:

“It would be nicer if there was a little bit more thought put towards creating a small place behind a house that’s yours, that’s private and as the intensity and intensification of the building and everything, that’s got squeezed. The original parts of this development were quite generous compared to brand new areas and people are finding that not having a little space to have a little dog or a safe place for your kid to play on their little tricycle or something behind your house that’s safe, that’s going missing and it feels like the developers are getting meaner, there’s less space”.

Lastly, when asked about parking, there was a split between those who thought the parking provisions at their homes was suitable and those who thought it was insufficient. In the questionnaire responses (see Figure 22), while garaging received ‘satisfied/very satisfied’ scores from 63 per cent of respondents, ‘car parking spaces’ was the aspect that received the least satisfaction (41 per cent), and was probed with the focus groups.

In Hobsonville Point there is a range of car garaging and off street parking arrangements: tandem garaging (two cars one behind the other), double garaging (cars side by side), single car garages, car ports (roof only), and off street open parking. Seven of the participants thought that the current garaging arrangement in their home was an issue. Not using garages for car storage was seen by many to contribute towards perceived parking problems, because cars ended up being parked on the streets.

Among reasons given for dissatisfaction with garaging was a view that they were narrow which made opening the car doors difficult. However, the larger issues expressed in relation to parking more generally, is that many residents do not use their garage for car storage, and instead using them as storage spaces, workshops, additional living spaces, play spaces and gyms. Conversely, participants who did use their garages for parking or who also had an off-street park for visitors did not find issues with the parking. These issues are reflected in Figure 22, where 42 per cent of survey respondents are recorded as expressing a high level of dissatisfaction with parking spaces, contrasted with an almost equal number who expressed being either satisfied or very satisfied. One participant who did not have a garage and had not previously thought the parking was an issue, struck a problem when selling, finding it *“problematic because... people want a garage (when you sell) and if you don’t have one that’s an issue for selling”*.

3.5. Designing for Sustainability

Particular attention is given to all Hobsonville Point dwellings in terms of providing good environmental performance in terms of insulation, energy saving hot water heating and lighting, and orientation to maximize sun exposure. These are set out as design guides in the Comprehensive Development Plans, highlighted in a promotion brochure published by HLC⁸².

This requires that all dwellings:

- are oriented to maximise solar gain from the sun. Living areas face north to collect heat in winter and eaves and other shading structures help avoid overheating in summer.
- are insulated to a level above the building code and have double-glazing, making them warm and less expensive to heat.
- have energy efficient lights installed throughout.
- have either a heat pump or solar hot water, saving more than half the energy used to heat water.
- include a rainwater tank to supply the water used in toilets, laundry and garden.
- have water efficient showers, toilets and taps installed throughout.
- include a fold-away washing line so reliance on the dryer is reduced.
- have natural ventilation 'designed in' so that air conditioning is not required.

HLC also produces an annual Sustainability Report, and in 2016-17 reported:

Sustainability, including investing in sound social outcomes, has been core to our vision from the outset and we are pleased with this year's results. Households in Hobsonville Point continue to have lower power and water use as compared to the average Auckland household, using 31% less water, and 29% less power. This is a significant saving and illustrates the value of building well-insulated homes with water saving elements such as rainwater tanks.

HLC (2017). Annual Sustainability Report 2016-2017.

The questionnaire included a question about respondents' satisfaction of their dwelling being energy efficient. Overall, very high levels of satisfaction were expressed, as shown Figure 26, with 86 per cent of respondents reporting being 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied', and only 1.7 per cent being 'dissatisfied' – a remarkably high positive response. This was probed in the focus groups.

⁸² Your New Home in Hobsonville Point. See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Your-New-Home-at-Hobsonville-Point.pdf>

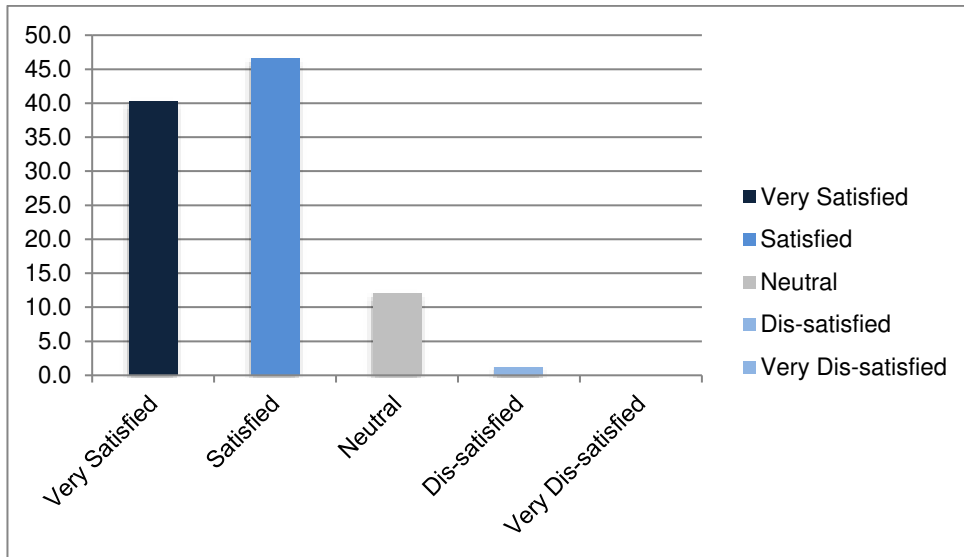


Figure 26. Percentage distribution of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with the energy efficiency of dwellings. (n=175)

Discussions with the focus groups probed for views on the extent to which they were perceived to be sustainable, and delivered good indoor environmental comfort. Among issues raised were those related to noise, natural light, and what heating, cooling, and ventilation they needed to be comfortable. All participants considered their dwellings to be *“well-insulated and warm”*. In fact, *“keeping the house cool, not warming it up”* was the most discussed issue when it came to indoor environmental comfort. One participant was pleased they had been able to put in air conditioning (heat pump with cooling functions) before their house build was finished. Another, discussing the issues they had had with overheating, noted that: *“the developers are unrealistic not putting in air conditioning automatically on the next level (second floor)”*, adding that:

“...it’s just one big problem for people when they move in (and) they all want to put in their air conditioning and it becomes an issue for the Residents’ Society about the piping and everything”.

One participant who was able to make changes said that the cooling in the living rooms and upstairs bedrooms *“had been a lifesaver”*. Keeping dwellings cool in summer rather than warm in winter was the bigger concern. Other participants expressed appreciation for the fact that their homes were warm and dry, and said that this was related to the newness of their homes.

The comments about dwelling dissatisfaction were predominantly around concerns with ventilation, with 11 participants identifying that they needed mechanical ventilation in their

homes for comfort. One was disgruntled that they had not had the opportunity to add a heat pump for cooling, saying:

“There are a few things I wish the builders had mentioned. So that I could have put them in at the start, like, putting a heat pump upstairs. I don’t know if anyone else has that same problem in summer, but, they (the terraced houses) get very, very hot in summer because they’re so well insulated, which makes them great for winter but not so great for summer”.

Another added that the biggest failure of modern homes is that *“they think about it being well insulated, and warm for winter, but they don’t consider the converse actually makes it incredibly hot in summer, and there are no eaves as you know in traditional houses”.*

There was comment offered about natural light. One participant noted that they *“couldn’t live in a house that didn’t have sun, and more importantly as you’re older and you’re retired, and you’re perhaps living in your home a bit more than before, it’s the natural light (that makes the home enjoyable to live in)”.* Also adding that they *“would sacrifice a view for the sun any day”.*

The collection and recycling of rain water for toilets, washing and the garden was commented on by the focus groups, that the *“grey water or rainwater tanks are fantastic”*⁸³ and one added that they would like to see photovoltaic panels as well, because *“that would go a long way to sending a message that we’re a new sustainable environment and community”.*

3.6. Bringing up children

Respondents in 60 per cent of surveyed households reported having dependent children, very close to the 2013 New Zealand average of 59.1⁸⁴. Given the presence of children in the Hobsonville Point dwellings, resident perceptions of bringing up children at higher density were sought. The primary and secondary schools were constructed as part of the first development

⁸³ The ‘grey water’ reference made by respondents in the focus groups is not an accurate description, because ‘grey water’ normally refers to the recycling of water consumed in a house for other purposes. All Hobsonville houses have rain water collection tanks used to supply toilets, the laundry and for garden taps, that have the intention of reducing mains supply consumption of treated water.

⁸⁴ Statistics NZ, 2013 Census QuickStats about families and households. The 2013 census shows that couples with dependent children are 41.3% and couples without are 17.9%. Households without dependent children represent 17.8%. <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/gstats-families-households/overview-families.aspx>

phase and opened in 2014⁸⁵, and promote as an attraction to living in the area, especially with children⁸⁶.

Respondents in the questionnaire survey were asked, ‘if you have children, how satisfied are you with the suitability of your dwelling for children of the various ages?’, marking one response for each age range of children in the household. A total 113 children were reported, and their distribution across age ranges that correspond to pre-schoolers, primary schoolers and secondary schoolers is given in Table 4.

Age ranges of children	%	Number
0-5 years	37	42
6-12 years	36	41
13-17 years	27	30
	100	113

Table 4. Distribution of all children by age among respondents who have children

Pre-school and primary school children were reported in roughly equal proportions (37 and 36 per cent respectively), with the smallest cohort being secondary school children (27 per cent). Although secondary school age groups are smaller, this will increase as the younger cohorts age over the next few years, increasing the number of teenagers in the community.

Figure 27 shows responses to the question: ‘If you have children, how satisfied are you with the suitability of your dwelling for children of the various ages?’ As can be seen, overall, for all age groups, the combined ‘satisfied/very satisfied’ response was reported by 74 per cent of respondents. In contrast, ‘dissatisfied/very dissatisfied’ respondents were only 8 per cent of the total. This indicates a high level of satisfaction being experienced by respondents who are raising their children in homes in Hobsonville Point. Figure 27 also shows that ‘satisfied/very satisfied’ responses for the three age groups range from 76 per cent for the 0 - 5 years age group to 71 per cent for the 13 - 17 years age group, reflecting that those with younger children are slightly more satisfied with their dwellings in this regard, than those with teenage children, although differences are surprisingly marginal.

⁸⁵ The two schools were the first in New Zealand to be built as a public-private partnership using private capital and leased back to the Ministry of Education. Ownership reverts to the Ministry after 30 years.
⁸⁶ Living at Hobsonville Point. See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Hobsonville-Point-Living.pdf>

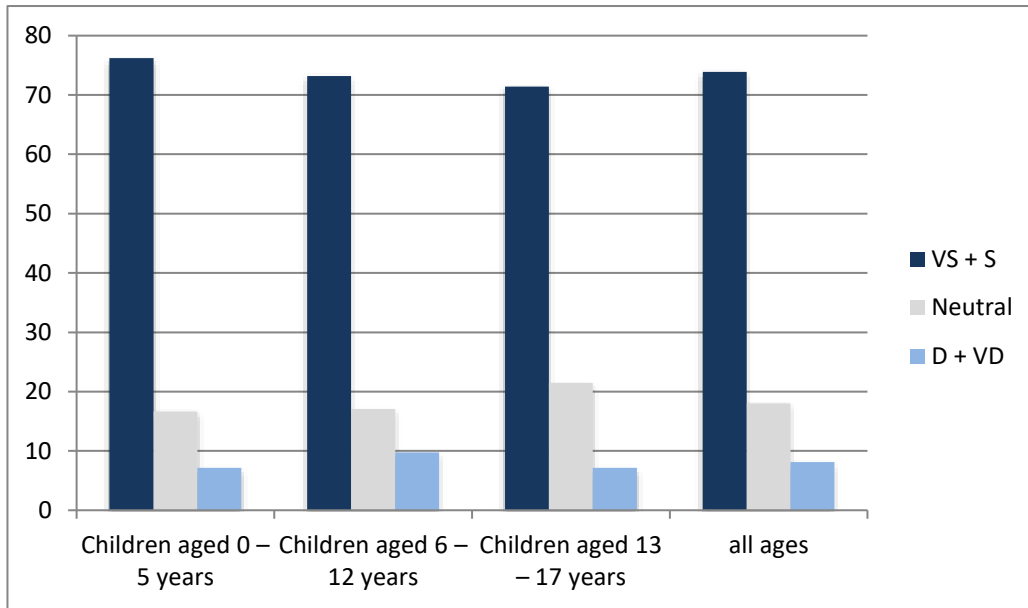


Figure 27. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction of the dwellings for children, by cohort age groups combining very satisfied and satisfied, and very dissatisfied and dissatisfied with neutral responses. (n=133)

Levels of satisfaction with the dwelling for those households with children were also probed in relation to specific design features: the amount of storage space, private outdoors space, number of bedrooms, space within the dwelling for playing, and flexibility of internal space as children grow. Respondent responses are in Figure 28, and combine very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (D+VD) responses.

The highest level of satisfaction (79 per cent of respondents with children) related to the number of bedrooms, and in part this reflects the choice made when purchasing the house. While 52 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their storage space, 27 per cent were not. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents were satisfied with play space within the dwelling for children (25 per cent dissatisfied), and the satisfied-dissatisfied responses were 49 and 29 per cent respectively for the amount of outdoor space related to the dwelling for children’s play. Although overall levels of satisfaction are high, when drilling down to dwelling features important for child rearing within the house, the responses are more varied, although the positive responses across all aspects remain higher than the neutral and dissatisfied responses.

These issues were responded to in the focus groups by combining both the dwelling and the wider neighbourhood in relation to bringing up children. Coding included comments by parents

and caregivers, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and residents who were making observations about others.

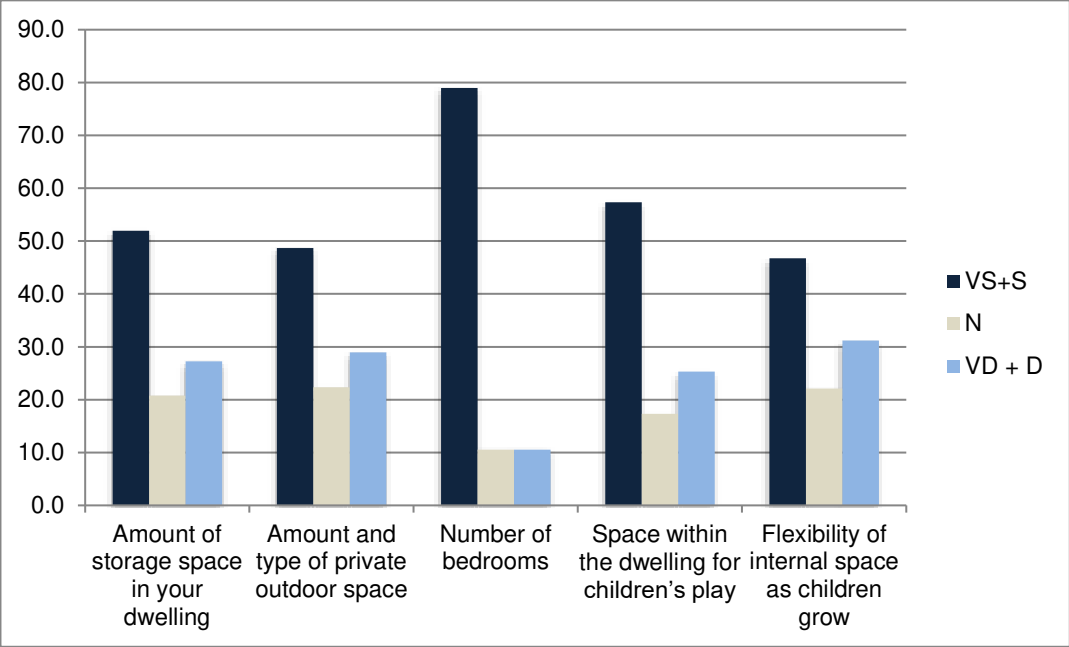


Figure 28. If you have children, how satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling? Combining very satisfied and satisfied, and very dissatisfied and dissatisfied with neutral responses. (n=133)

At a dwelling scale, comments about the dwelling being suitable to meet the needs of children was limited to the number of rooms suiting the preferences of the caregivers and the environmental quality of the homes as new-builds being perceived as being good for children. One participant observed that they “*have enough space for my young daughter to play outside but I don’t have all the maintenance*”. One participant appreciated their outdoor patio as a useful space for their children to play, when unable to get to the park.

This raised issues of walkability, a design intention for Hobsonville Point. Plan Change 13 set clear policy for the walkability, and that there should be ‘provision for accessible areas of usable open space, including around the coast and of sufficient number and location to be within a walkable distance for all residents, and integrated with surrounding land uses’⁸⁷. In relation to households with children, information was sought on travel modes to reach school⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ District Plan Proposed Plan Change 13, Waitakere City Council, July 2007.
⁸⁸ There are two new schools in Hobsonville Point that were built during phase 1 construction, Hobsonville Primary and Secondary Schools. The survey did not ask which school was being reported, but it can be assumed that walking related to the local schools.

Figure 29 shows that 22 per cent of respondents reported that their children were driven to school (and some of these will include schools outside of Hobsonville Point). Whereas the percentage of school journeys by foot involving primary school-aged children across New Zealand has fallen from 42 per cent to 29 per cent in the past quarter of a century⁸⁹, the respondents reported that a much higher 51 per cent walked to schools in Hobsonville Point, and a further 7 per cent cycled⁹⁰. This underscores two aspects: that the neighbourhood is perceived to be sufficiently safe for children to either walk or cycle, and that the design intention for a walkable community is being perceived by respondents to have been fulfilled.

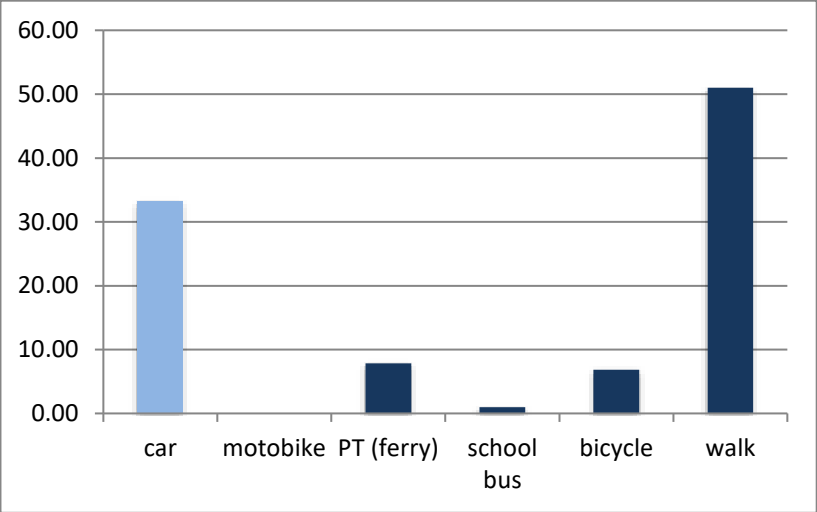


Figure 29. Travel modes by percentage distribution for children getting to school, among households with children. (n=133)

3.7. Summary

Overall, housing satisfaction was expressed by the respondents to the survey who had chosen to own or rent in Hobsonville Point; the majority of respondents were owner-occupiers. Respondents predominantly reported being satisfied or very satisfied with dwelling features ranging from their dwelling size, to perceptions of acceptable privacy and noise, to the satisfactory orientation of their dwellings and satisfaction with the overall design meeting their

⁸⁹ Ministry for Transport, (2018). 25 Years of New Zealand Travel: New Zealand Household Travel 1989-2014.

⁹⁰ This is fairly close to the 60 per cent claimed by HLC on its website: "Want to live somewhere your kids can walk to school, the park, and their friends' houses? Over 60% of children at Hobsonville Point walk or ride their bikes to school – more than double the national average". See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/families>

needs. This was also reported for those respondents who identified as raising children in Hobsonville Point.

There were areas where the housing satisfaction of respondents could have been improved, especially in relation to private areas facing streets and the feeling of privacy in backyards. Views about these detailed aspects of dwelling design often emerged as a very personal view of the suitability of the dwelling to both housing needs and expectations. This in turn suggests that to achieve overall housing satisfaction, the provision of a variety of housing typologies is more likely to result in housing satisfaction being experienced among diverse residents.

The only factor where equal proportions of respondents were both satisfied and dissatisfied concerned parking. This point was further unpacked in the focus group sessions which highlighted a broad range of issues whereby the design of the parking, as well as the issue of using garages for purposes other than parking vehicles, was raised.

4. The Neighbourhood

The idea and definition of 'neighbourhood' has been explored in a literature review published by National Science Challenge 11 Working paper 18-02: 'Concepts of Neighbourhood'⁹¹. Three often overlapping concepts are framed: neighbourhoods as spatial units, as social construct, or socio-spatial understanding of the urban condition⁹². Neighbourhoods are argued to be significant for a number of other reasons: they are 'recognisable and viable units of identity'⁹³, and they have 'political capacity to protect the interests' of residents⁹⁴.

Neighbourhoods are also seen to have an instrumental role in housing satisfaction. Conclusions from interviews with residents living in medium density apartments and terrace houses in Auckland showed:

...strong alignment between neighbourhood satisfaction and liveability, they (neighbourhoods) were also found to be closely aligned to the seamless integration of a mix of amenities within and beyond neighbourhoods. Indeed, evaluations of housing intensification over the past decade clearly demonstrate housing satisfaction and liveability are the result of both the quality of the housing, and the amenity of the neighbourhood in which it is located⁹⁵.

More specifically, public amenities within the public realm of neighbourhoods are crucial and a contributing factor to housing satisfaction, revealed, for example, by residents living in medium density apartments and townhouses interviewed elsewhere in Auckland:

...the finding from our interviews indicates that for the residents living in higher density areas, there was a positive expression of housing satisfaction. This satisfaction is derived as much from the housing units as it is from the amenities and services of the neighbourhood centre. In the context of the transit oriented development relevant to the three case study locations, where conditions have facilitated walkability and reduced car dependency, the outcome is seen in a positive way by those interviewed⁹⁶.

⁹¹ Allen, 2018.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Wellman and Leighton, 1979.

⁹⁴ Park and Rogers, 2015.

⁹⁵ Haarhoff, Allen and Beattie, 2018, p15.

⁹⁶ Haarhoff, Beattie and Dupuis, 2016

Given the instrumental role that the wider neighbourhood plays in housing satisfaction, the questionnaire survey and subsequent focus group sought information on the extent to which residents in Hobsonville Point engaged with their neighbours beyond their dwellings, and their satisfaction with this environment.

4.1. Designing for quality neighbourhood experiences

The masterplan for Hobsonville Point clearly articulated an aim to integrate the housing with the natural environment, where ‘public open spaces, school playing fields and coastal vegetation are linked in order to maximise ecological, visual and recreational resources’ illustrated in the consultant’s conceptual plan in Figure 30. This is argued to achieve the following:

What that means is that by the time the houses are all built the community will already have everything it needs to thrive, purpose-built to the right scale and located in the right place. Parks and well-planned roads, schools and a community hall, jobs in the neighbourhood and public transport to the CBD, shopping centres a short drive away and local restaurants, bars and cafés; family homes and apartments by the water. It will all be here⁹⁷.



Figure 30. Conceptual plan showing how the integration of housing and the natural coastal environment in Hobsonville Point define key qualities of the neighbourhood environment. The 5-kilometre Te Ara

⁹⁷ HLC Hobsonville Point ‘Philosophy’: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/about/philosophy/>

Manawa coastal walkway is shown in red, and the blue hatched areas show parks, public open spaces and ecological reserves. (Source: Barrett, 2015, p298)

This design aim has also been emphasised in the promotional information for Hobsonville Point:

To be socially sustainable, a place must provide for a happy, healthy life for all its residents and allow community spirit to flourish. Good design helps here, too. Hobsonville Point's neighbourhoods are being created with social sustainability in mind. For example, all of the homes front onto the street so that opportunities to meet and get to know your community occur naturally when you step outside your front door. One of the much-loved aspects of inner city suburbs is reduced reliance on cars. Hobsonville Point is designed to be pedestrian-friendly so that you can walk to the parks, shops, ferry wharf or bus stop and your kids can walk to school. Many of our residents report they can manage with one car, whereas they needed two in their previous suburb⁹⁸.

Considering the ambitious instrumental roles given to public space elements to deliver quality outcomes within Hobsonville Point, a number of questions were asked in the survey concerning the residents' perceptions of the extent to which these aims and performance expectation were being met. These issues were also pursued in the focus groups and comments coded into the sub-categories reported below.

4.2. Satisfaction with the Neighbourhood

To gain an impression of overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood, the survey asked respondents: 'How satisfied are you with your current neighbourhood in terms of its comfortably meeting all of your daily needs?' Their responses are summarised in Figure 31.

A very high level of neighbourhood satisfaction was revealed, with 37 per cent of respondents finding they are 'very satisfied'. When combined with those 'satisfied', the total is 77 per cent. There were relatively low levels of dissatisfaction. This expression of satisfaction was underscored by the focus groups. When considering responses about neighbourhood

⁹⁸ Your New Home in Hobsonville Point. See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Your-New-Home-at-Hobsonville-Point.pdf>

satisfaction, one pattern that became evident in focus group comments was reasoning around satisfaction being tied to positive views of neighbourhood design features and in some cases, the resultant spatial quality.

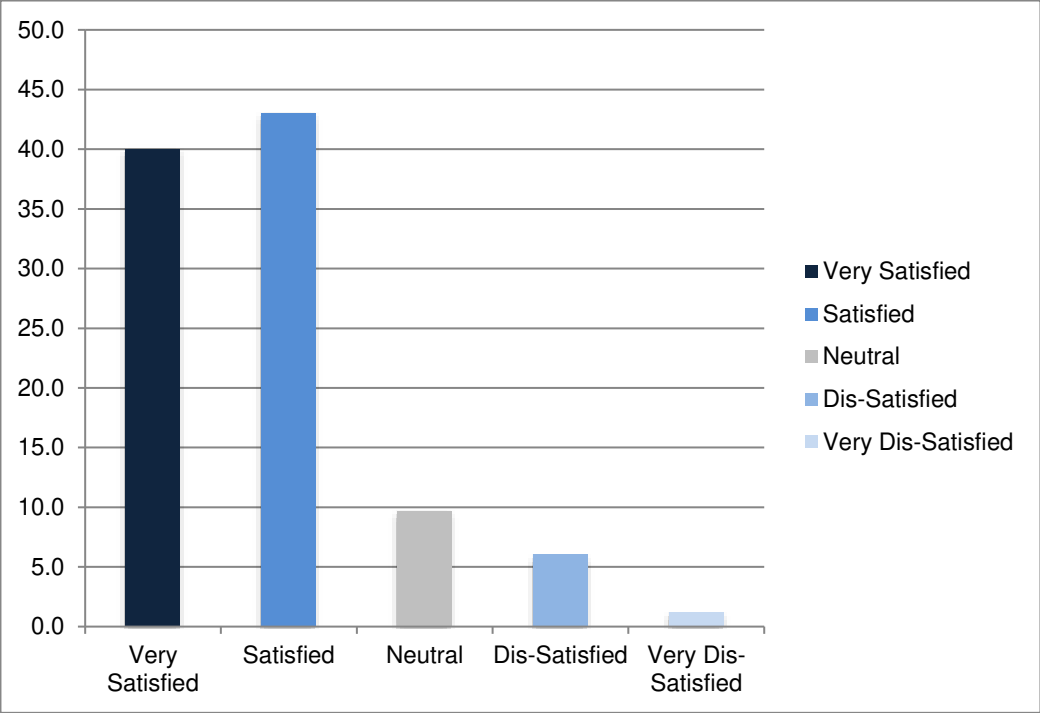


Figure 31. Percentage distribution of respondent expressions of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood meeting all daily needs. (n=165)

The most prominent reason expressed in the focus groups concerning satisfaction, was the variety of the built environment. Comparing Hobsonville Point with another higher density development in Auckland, one commented that if they were to compare the two, they felt that *“at Stonefields⁹⁹ you’ll take an entire street and it’s photocopied. You don’t have the same break ups of space for cafés or parks that you have here.”*

By contrast, those in the focus group commented positively on the variety of the built form in Hobsonville Point, and on the variety of the streetscapes as a factor that contributed to their neighbourhood satisfaction. Two participants spoke about the variety of the planting¹⁰⁰ and

⁹⁹ Stonefields is a medium density development in East Auckland, 8km from the Auckland CBD, located on a 110-ha former quarry site that aims to house 6000 residents by 2025. See: <https://www.toddproperty.co.nz/our-projects/stonefields>.

¹⁰⁰ The design guides for each precinct in Hobsonville Point, set out landscape design according to an overall plan and a variety of street-based themes. The outcome is that street trees and garden areas facing the street are all different. For an example, see the Catalina Sub-precinct Design Guidelines: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Catalina-Design-Guidelines.pdf>

views of both green and blue spaces throughout the neighbourhoods. This quality is underscored in the survey responses, where 77 per cent of respondents report being able to see 'green' from their homes (see Figure 33)



Figure 32. A variety of house designs and types, public spaces and streets in Hobsonville Point. Aerial photograph of Buckley (Google Earth, 2018)

There were concerns expressed around the maintenance of the streets in the focus groups, one participant noting, *“if you have deciduous street trees, you ought to have someone cleaning the streets regularly because leaves get all over the footpath”*. The variety of street landscaping was supported by others with one expressing the view: *“every street looks different, so you don’t feel like you’re walking around the same place”*. The CDP’s make provision for each precinct and street groups to be ‘themed’ by differences in landscaping species and design, all of which adds to the variability of the built environment.

At least one participant did have an opposing view to greenness, saying: *“I walk down Hobsonville Point street (Road), that’s terrible, you know, it’s just, houses, houses, houses, houses, cement, cement, cement”*, although this comment was directed specifically at the walk to the retail centre and supermarket at the entrance to Hobsonville Point.

A prominent note of dissatisfaction with neighbourhood design came down to the presence, or lack thereof, of shade. This was an issue four participants underscored as hampering their

satisfaction. One participant pointed out that there is *“street after street with no sun shade”*, another adding, *“there’s absolutely no shade for a half an hour walk”*. Concluding *“It doesn’t make any sense, in a country like this.”* Another participant saw a lack of shade as one of the biggest reasons they are put off walking to the supermarket on hot sunny days. The fact that this was a former air force base is the reason why it was largely devoid of trees. However, extensive landscaping has occurred as part of the development process and in the reserve areas to re-establish native vegetation, and while all streets have trees, it will take a few years of growth before they become effective in shading footpaths.

Others tied their neighbourhood satisfaction to the notion that they liked where they lived because it was new. One observing: *“it was nice to be part of something new where pretty much everyone else arrived at a similar time to you. That was something that gave the place a bit more cohesion than other neighbourhoods maybe.”* A further three also connected satisfaction to the design quality. One commented *“there’s a big tract of land, that has been really, really well designed from the ground up”*, and another adding *“it’s just so cool... all these, what do you call them, pocket parks, and laneways, it’s just it’s really well designed, in that we’re very dense but it’s not as though we’re living in one another’s pockets”*.

Respondents in the questionnaire were asked to express levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a number of factors concerning their wider neighbourhood. The first set concerned walking activities related to streets and footpaths, safety from vehicles, feeling safe walking in the daytime and at night, and access to bus stops and bicycle paths. Other questions probed perception about ‘greenness’, public spaces and street maintenance. The results are in Figure 33.

Overall, it can be observed that a majority of respondents were ‘satisfied’ and ‘very satisfied’ with the qualities of all neighbourhood conditions. Of particular note, over 80 per cent satisfaction was expressed for four conditions: feeling safe walking in the daytime (98%), pedestrian activity on footpaths (90%), the design and condition of footpaths and pedestrian crossings, (88%), and being able to walk to public transport within 10 minutes of homes (80%). When considering the low percentages of respondents being ‘dissatisfied’ and ‘very dissatisfied’, it underscores the high levels of satisfaction expressed with key conditions to a good neighbourhood environment:

- That the design of footpaths and pedestrian road crossing is good.
- Feeling safe – especially in the daytime (only 7 per cent feeling unsafe at night). This is supported by the reported people presence in public spaces being high, that enhances the feeling of safety.
- Despite the relative denseness of the residential blocks, two-thirds of respondents reported a view of trees or landscape from their dwelling, and 77 per cent reported the presence of green landscaping within their area. On the other hand between 11 and 18 per cent reported not having a ‘green’ view.
- A sense that the neighbourhood was well maintained agreed by 80 per cent of respondents.
- Being able to walk to public transport within 400 metres of dwellings was reported by 71 per cent, but with 18 per cent neutral, probably because they do not use public transport.

These issues were picked up with the focus groups, with 22 comments about safety being made by participants. The majority of comments were positive, and reasons given ranged from being able to take children or grandchildren safely to the local park or to bicycle around the neighbourhood, to comments about pedestrian safety due to relatively little day-time vehicular traffic.

There were also comments made about lacking a sense of safety in certain instances. Two participants mentioned their experiences with car break-ins and theft from cars on the streets. Four participants noted that they only felt safe during the day. Three correspondingly raised the issue of street lighting at night, one commenting: *“during the day, I think it’s great, fantastic. At night, I don’t feel massively safe, I think there’s not enough street lighting... If I’m catching the bus, and I get off up here, and walk down to my house, that’s a 20-minute walk, past some pretty deserted stretches, where nothing’s built”*. While there were three participants who spoke about not feeling safe at night, there were opposing views where participants did not agree, and said they felt safe, especially at night. Indeed, as shown in Figure 33, 75 per cent of respondents said they felt safe waking in the neighbourhood at night.

The standout highest negative response, relating to being ‘dissatisfied’ and ‘very dissatisfied’, is with speeding traffic (20 per cent). In part this is related to the on-going construction in the areas, and the considerable traffic movement this creates, a point underscored in the focus groups.

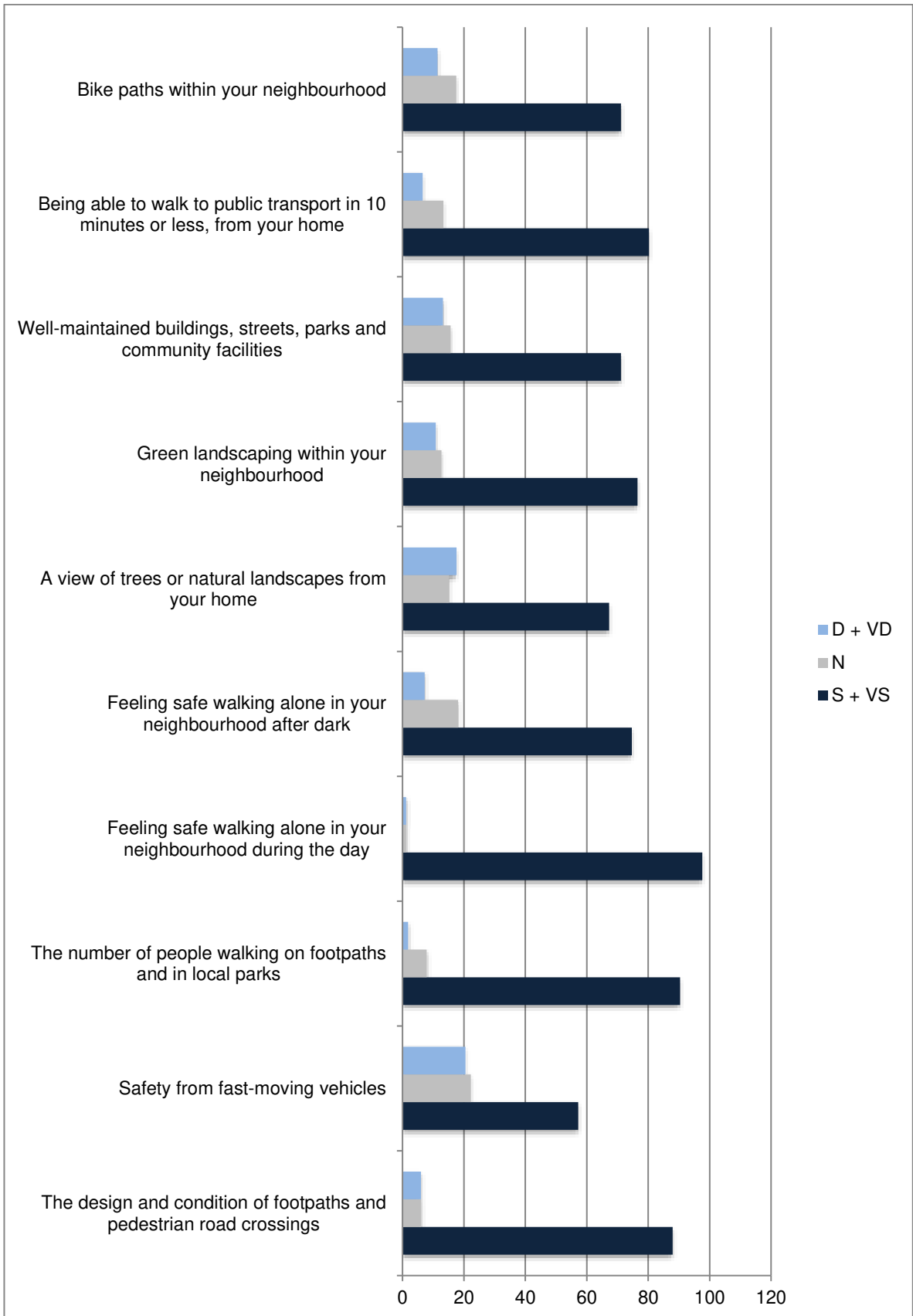


Figure 33. Percentage distribution of responses to the perceived quality of various neighbourhood conditions. (n=166)

4.3. Public Facilities and Public Spaces

Hobsonville Point has 24 hectares of parks, reserves, coastal esplanades and open spaces, much of this preserving a natural environment and ecological habitats. The importance of the neighbourhood environment to residents was strongly expressed in the focus groups, where one participant expressed: *“it’s the actual environment to me that’s more important than the house itself. I could live in a log cabin anywhere if I’ve got the right, particularly green, environment around me.”*

The survey asked respondents to nominate their ‘favourite place’ in Hobsonville Point, and the responses are in Figure 34.

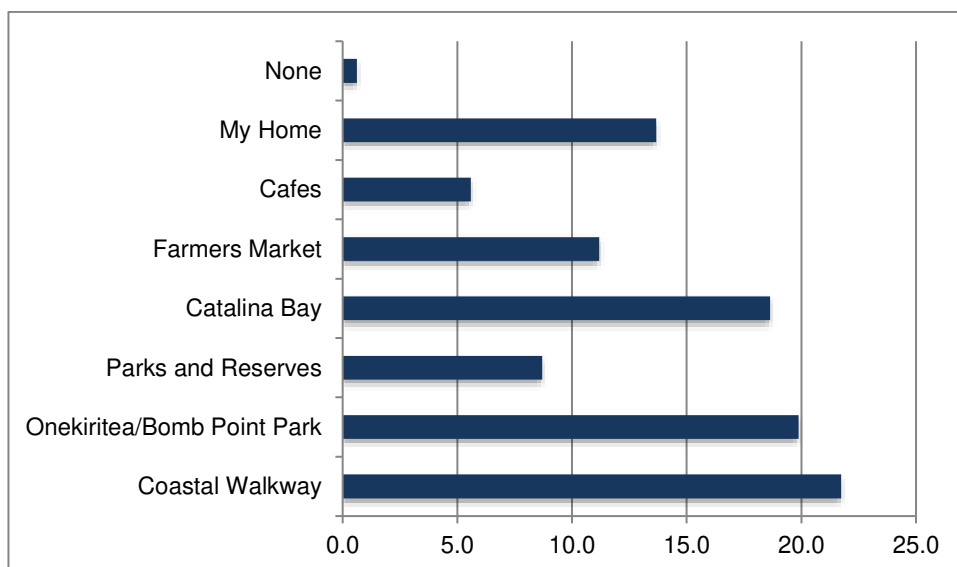


Figure 34. Percentage distribution of respondents’ ‘favourite place’ in Hobsonville Point. (n-141)

‘My home’, interestingly, was identified as a ‘favourite place’ by 13.7 per cent of respondents, with all other places being physical elements within the wider neighbourhood. The most frequently named favourite place was the coastal walkway (Te Ara Manawa) identified by 21.7 per cent of respondents. Interestingly, the 5-km walkway links with the other named places as a network: Bomb Point/Onekiritea Park, Catalina Bay, the Farmers Market and many cafés along this route, and the parks and reserves through which it traverses.

At a more micro scale, respondents in the survey were asked to think about the closest shared open space to their dwelling and consider it in terms of the following conditions:

- An attractive space
- A space with play equipment
- A space with seating provided
- Primarily a walkway and cycle route
- Mostly consists of parking areas and access lanes
- Mostly consists of footpaths and roadways
- Green open space
- Overlooked from surrounding dwellings
- Can reach it directly from your dwelling without crossing a road

For each condition, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not the condition ‘fits’, ‘partly fits’, or ‘does not describe the place’ in relation to each of the conditions. Responses are given in Figure 35.

The highest positive response (81 per cent of respondents) was given to the condition of the space being ‘overlooked’ by surrounding dwellings, considered to enhance safety and security through passive surveillance. Being ‘green’, an ‘attractive’ space and with seating was rated positive by 62, 57 and 54 per cent respectively of respondents. The existence of play equipment was rated positive by 45 per cent of respondents compared to 30 per cent rating this a negative feature. Being able to reach the nearest public space without crossing a road scored only 29 per cent versus 52 per cent negative responses. However, this needs to be considered in the light of the fact that apart from Hobsonville Point Road and Buckley Avenue, most other streets have slow moving traffic, something not raised as a crucial factor in the focus groups. What was raised as an issue was concern about construction traffic, although this will diminish as building activity draws to an end.

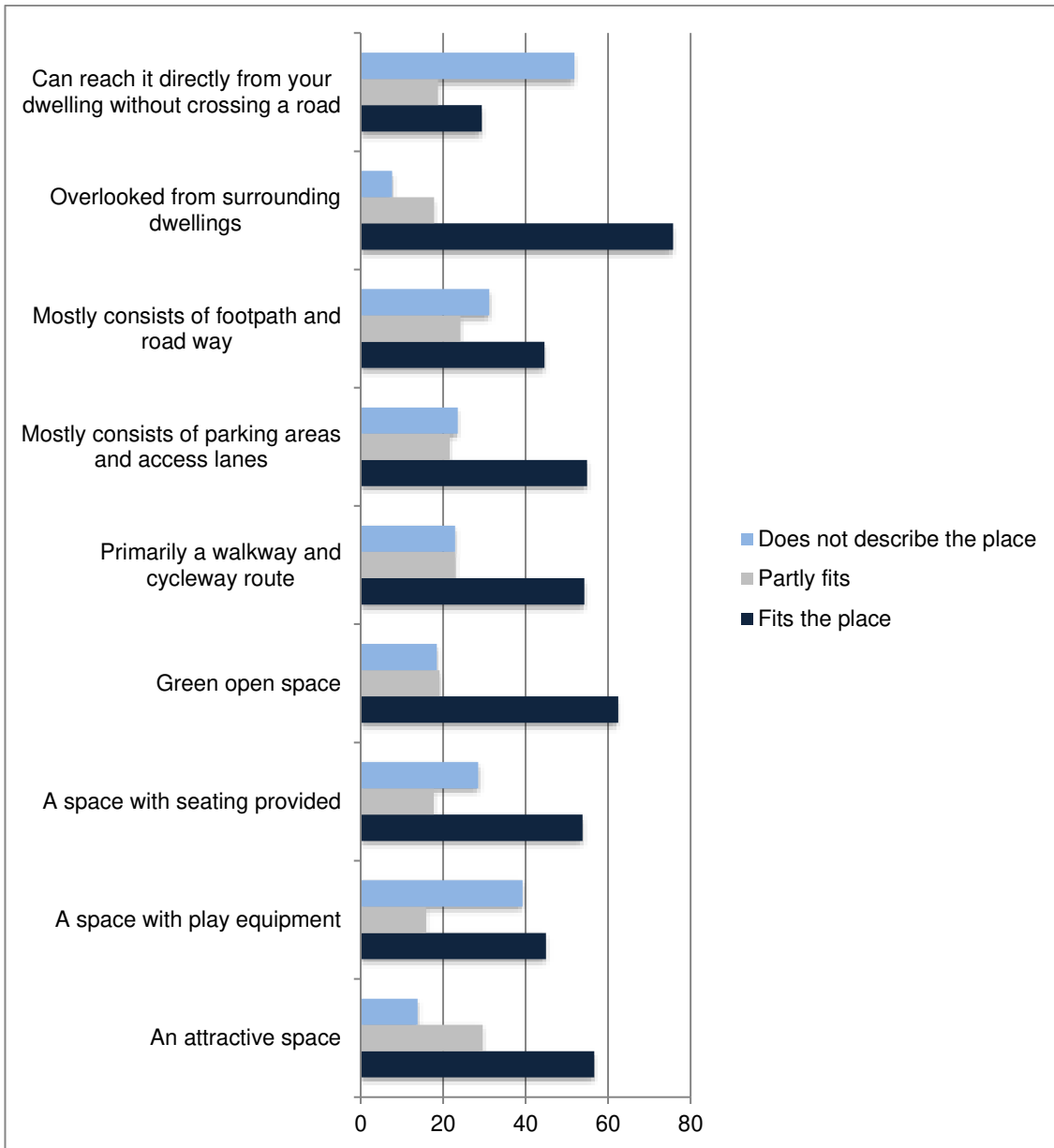


Figure 35. Respondents' positive and negative responses to amenities and perceived conditions in public shared spaces. (n=160)

Respondents were also asked to rate how well they considered their neighbourhood in meeting a range of expectations and the responses are set out in Figure 36. The responses called for the situations described being rated by respondents as 'well to very well met', 'partly met' or 'poor to very poorly met'

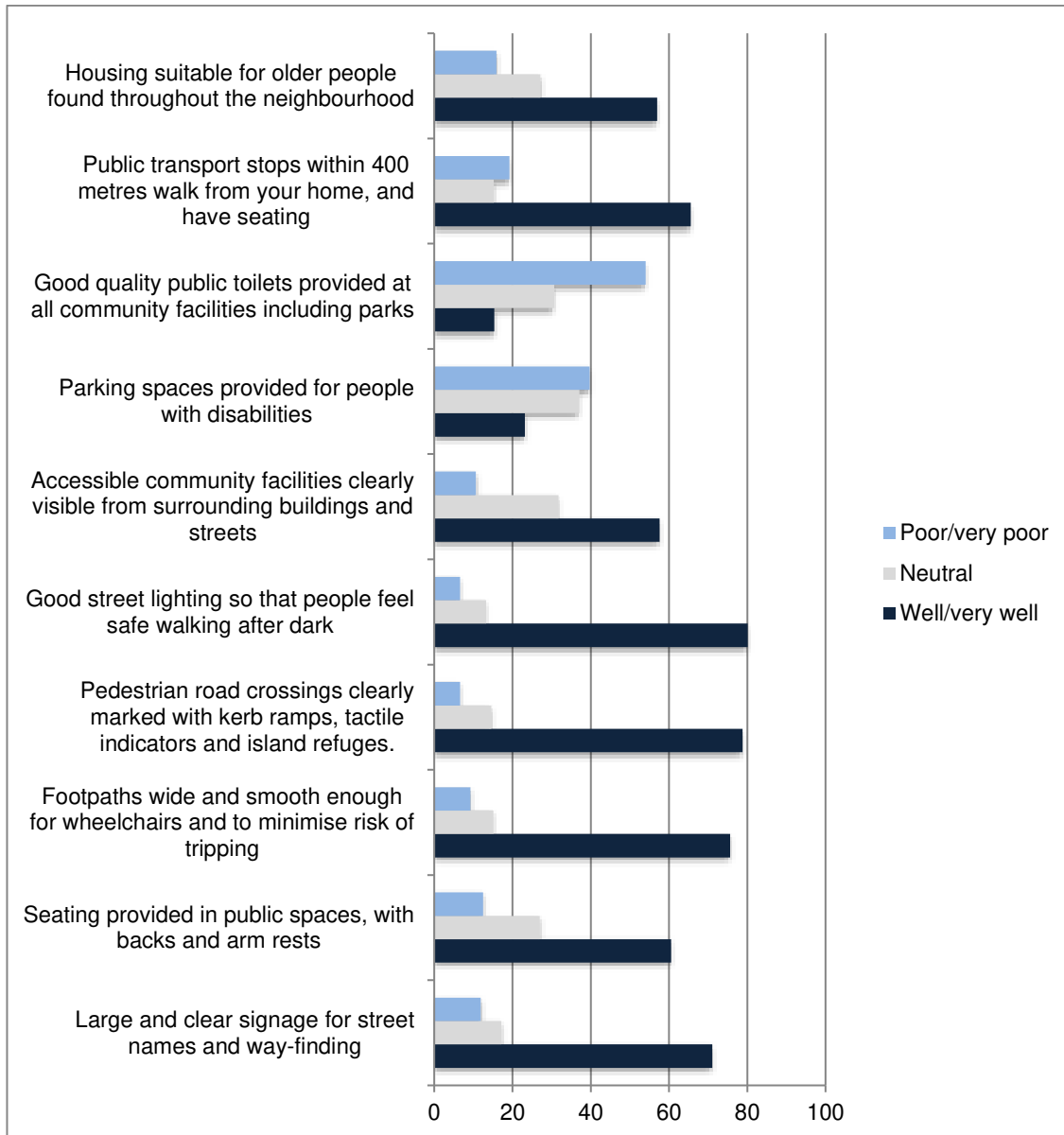


Figure 36. Percentage responses given to a range of environmental factors related to the neighbourhood, perceived to be as poor/very poor, neutral or well/very well. (n=152)

For each condition, the percentage of ‘well to very well’ responses are given below, with the ‘poor/very poor’ given in brackets.

- housing being suitable for older people throughout the neighbourhood: 57% (16%).
- public transport stops within 400 metres from home, with seating: 66% (19%)
- accessibility to community facilities being clearly visible from streets: 58% (11%).
- good street lighting so people feel safe after dark: 80% (7%).
- pedestrian crossing clearly marked with kerb ramps, tactile indicators and island refuges: 79% (7%).
- Footpaths wide and smooth enough for wheelchairs and to minimise risk of tripping: 76% (9%).
- Seating provided in public spaces: 61% (13%).
- Large and clear signage for street names and way-finding. 71% (12%).

Two factors where the 'poor/very poor' percentages indicated issues (signalled above) are good quality public toilets at all community facilities (54 per cent poor/very poor), and parking for people with disabilities (40 per cent poor/very poor). Comments on toilets relate to the fact that there were only two public toilets provided at the time of survey, apart from customer toilets in cafés and restaurants. Additional public toilets are now available, at the Farmers Market (Catalina Bay) and in Linear Park (near the Brickworks apartments).

Parking was consistently raised as a neighbourhood issue in the focus groups, one participant holding a view that *"the roads are not designed for parking"*. Another commented: *"the thing I hate most about Hobsonville Point, is the parking, and people illegally parking"*.



Figure 37. Parking garage entrances on Saltmarsh Road. With the absence of yellow line markings, a potential confusion is distinguishing between what are legitimate parking spaces and what are entrances to garages and off-street parking areas on private properties.

Many focus group participants expressed the view that roads and/or parking was poorly designed and led to car parking areas not always being obvious to motorists, particularly on the side lanes off the main vehicle routes. Two participants also made comment about the narrowness of car parks. Four repeated the observation that dissatisfaction was caused because *"people don't use garages"* for parking cars, while others did not feel that this was an excuse. Other reasoning offered by three participants for traffic issues were the density and that the population had increased beyond that originally planned for. In contrast, one participant commented, *"to me there's actually a lot of parking"*, and another felt the issue was

predominantly with the inadequate provision of visitor parking as opposed to it being a design issue with the parking provided.

Despite three-quarters of survey respondents responding positively to the provision of bus stops within 400 metres of their homes (see Figure 35), some focus group participants argued that the public transport service is not good enough, so people feel they need to drive. Another participant looked to the future, commenting, *“I’m hoping that they will put in electric car chargers around here, and we know it would be good to have Hobsonville shared cars.”*

An interesting point to emerge from the focus group discussions was a view that while most felt very positive about the neighbourhood some felt that Hobsonville Point lacked a ‘heart’. There is a ‘village centre’ at the entrance to Hobsonville Point (that includes a supermarket, cafés, retail outlets and health services), and within the planned area of Hobsonville Point, there are two clusters of retail, commercial and hospitality services. These are at Catalina Bay adjacent to the ferry wharf, and at the geographical centre around the Brickworks apartment near the intersection of Hobsonville Point and De Havilland Roads (see Figure 38 where they are marked in blue circles).

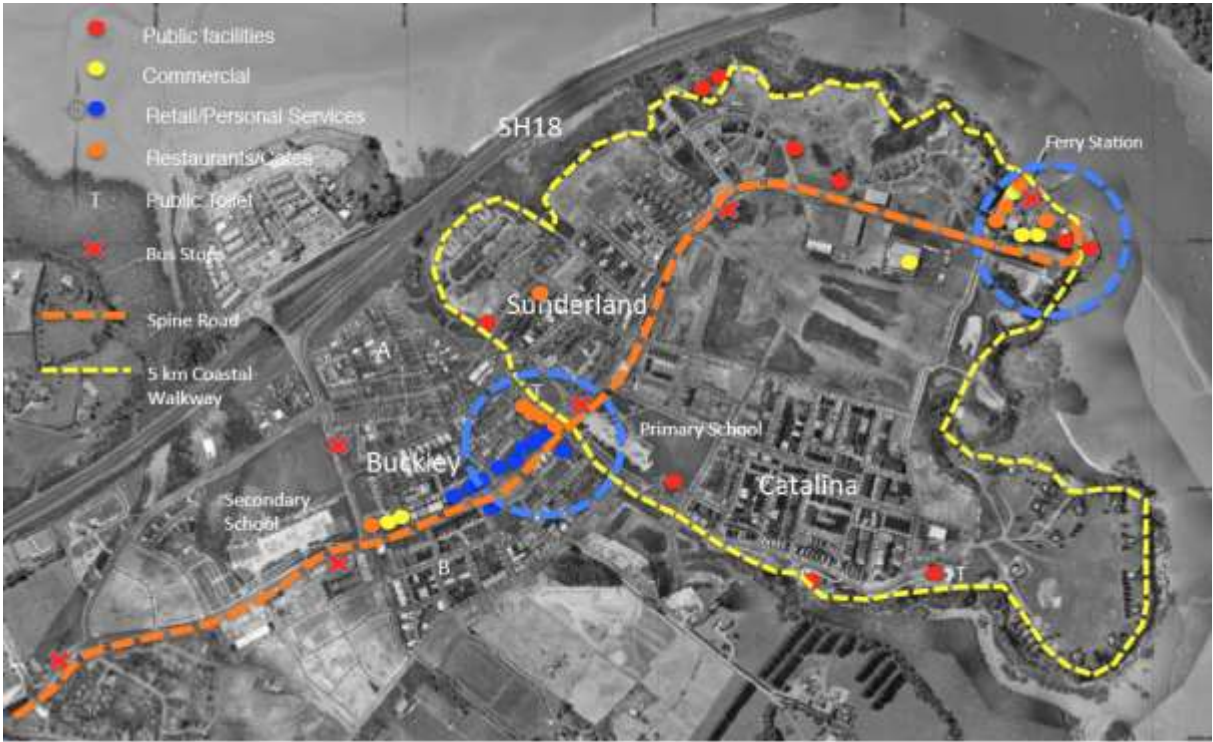


Figure 38. Aerial photograph of Hobsonville Point, overlaid with the main spine, and showing the retail and commercial clusters (blue circles), bus stops and other facilities. (Based map: Goggle Earth.)

Despite a clustering of retail and commercial activities around the Brickworks apartments, that includes some accommodated in live-work units along this part of Hobsonville Point Road, a view was expressed that Hobsonville Point lacked a clearly identifiable 'central space'. Some referred to this as the 'missing piazza' or 'plaza'. These participants conceptualised a hard surfaced public space surrounded by amenities and cafés. One participant stated, *"that piazza thing is such a critical idea I think, you know where people can go and have a beer, and have some fish and chips, go for a walk or meet their friends, and you know it's not quite there yet"*. Another added, *"you know, also, at times I feel disconnected... there's no congregation point, a piazza"*. It was also described as an intergenerational place that could bring together young and old.

Preferences for a variety of amenities in close proximity was also strongly related to how participants thought about neighbourhood improvements. Focus group participants wanted to see more *"cafes and, you know, small restaurants", "more shops", a "general store, like a dairy", "a theatre", a "drop-in community centre¹⁰¹" and a swimming pool"*, because with *"so many children, why not think about a swimming pool?"* One added, *"little shops is what promotes a sense of community. Cos people go to smaller shops and they spend more time around them. Big shopping centres, you kind of go in, you get your stuff done, and you leave, typically"*. Another added, *"if there was a grocer and a butcher and a bakery, I would go to them more often"*.

A further point made by participants was some confusion over who was responsible for maintenance of public spaces, both during and after the development process. One participant commented:

"I think, my understanding before I moved here, though was that that money that we paid in, would be to maintain the area, so I'd much rather our funds were being used for gardening and you know, street lighting and just generally making improvements to the community. And less on community events. That would be my take on it. If we could spend that money on making sure that everywhere we drove, gardens were neat and tidy and lawn mowing had been done, and you know that sort of thing, that would be more advantageous".

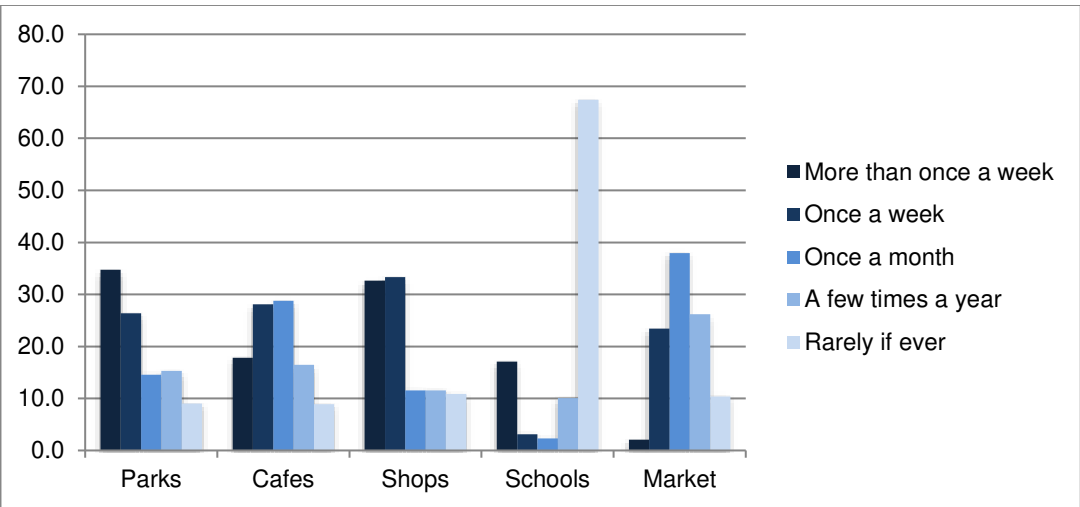
¹⁰¹ Since the surveys, an Auckland Council funded and operated community centre has been opened, in the refurbished former Air Force Officer's Headquarter Building. A further two cafés have also opened at Catalina Bay, and a micro-brewery will open in February 2019 that includes further cafés.

In part this confusion is related to the complex development process, whereby public space maintenance is the responsibility of the development agent (HLC), until they are vested into Council ownership. At present only the Buckley area and some other smaller areas have public spaces transferred to Council ownership, where they are responsible for maintenance. The Hobsonville Point Residents Society (HPRS), an incorporated society that all property owners are required to join and pay an annual levy to, also has responsibility to ‘ensure Hobsonville Point and the Properties are kept to a high standard of repair, maintenance and appearance’, and undertake additional public space maintenance in public spaces, especially where residents express a desire for a higher standard¹⁰².

4.4. Engagement with the neighbourhood places and spaces

An underlying source of neighbourhood satisfaction was convenience related to the residents’ daily life patterns and, in particular, needs aligned to life stages. There are a number of ways that convenience was coded in the data. From the perspective of focus group participants, this involved discussion about access to places and services that they used regularly, and how these amenities contributed to their sense of neighbourhood satisfaction.

The survey asked respondents to indicate the frequency with which they patronised parks, cafés, shops, schools and the farmers market. Figure 39 shows responses in terms of the frequency of use from more than once to week, to rarely if ever.



¹⁰² The Hobsonville Point Residents Society Incorporated Constitution. See: <https://www.hprs.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/HPRS-Constitution-December-2016.pdf>

Figure 39. Percentage frequency of patronage, reported by respondents, of parks, cafés, shops, schools and the market in Hobsonville Point. (n=144)

The most frequently used facilities are the parks (once a week or more) reported by 61 per cent of respondents. Local shops and cafés used once a week or more was reported by 66 and 46 per cent of respondents.

The weekly farmers market (at the time of survey, only open over weekends) was visited by about a quarter of respondents once a week. Visits to local schools stands out, with 77 per cent of respondents reporting visits a few times a year and rarely. This will in part reflect the fact that only respondents with school-going children will involve themselves with school activities, but it may also reflect a lack of community activities at school attracting the wider community.

4.5. 4.5 Walkability

Perceptions of the neighbourhood being highly walkable are strongly reported in both the questionnaire and focus group responses. Indeed, for many, perceived walkability is what attracted them to Hobsonville Point in the first place: *“The fact that the kids’ schools were within walking distance and we had the primary school and the high school within a two-minute walk of where we’re living was a major factor of it and it’s made our life a lot easier to do that.”* Six participants spoke about the walkability of Hobsonville Point as contributing to an ease of living and enhanced wellbeing. Proximity to urban amenities was also stressed as a key component of convenience, and in turn was a key contribution to neighbourhood satisfaction. One participant also connected proximity of amenities to a sense of community, commenting, *“in terms of community, the big factors there were probably to do with facilities and here there’s quite a number of cafés – (and) the Westgate and Northwest shopping centres”*. Proximity to a variety of amenities was identified by the focus groups as a component of neighbourhood satisfaction.

Interestingly, there was a divergence in how participants conceptualised their neighbourhood in terms of walkability. While many participants spoke about amenities in their immediate neighbourhood, others broadened their view to think about their proximity to neighbouring suburbs and regional amenities, such as beaches. One participant summed this idea up by referring to *“having everything on your doorstep”* as the best part, for them, of living in

Hobsonville Point. Another focussed on the proximity of amenities within Hobsonville Point but related their presence to how they thought about their place within Auckland, commenting that the proximity to green and blue spaces *“just kind of makes you feel like you’re less in a big city”*. Proximity to amenities and resultant neighbourhood satisfaction was also related by focus group participants to life stage factors. One, for example, commented *“we’ve since had a child, and I just love the fact that I can walk out the front door with her, we can go down to the end of the street, the park it’s got a playground. When she eventually goes to school, we’re in walking (distance) of both the primary and secondary school”*. Another added:

“Being a young family, and knowing other young families in the area, we would be like, oh shall we meet you at the Farmers Market, or do you wanna go for a walk around Bomb Point? Or, you know, shall we go get a drink and ah, you know, nibbles at Indian Summer (a restaurant) on a Friday afternoon”.

Lifestyle factors and preferences were also aligned between having a preference for a variety of amenities and neighbourhood satisfaction, and walking access to retail enterprises. In particular, the farmers market and cafés are mentioned as significant amenities in the area, and the way in which they contribute to the identity of place. Supporting local business was expressed in the focus group as part of the community spirit, with one saying:

“I’d have to say that since we moved here there’s two things that we’ve been adamant about is trying to spend our money locally, support the restaurants and support the cafés. We’ve owned businesses, we know that these guys are not rolling in a big cash flow, so we need to spend our money locally and I’m actually finding that our world is just here ... our world is becoming quite small...”

These responses to the survey and the focus group link access to the amenities used strongly to the ability to walk to most of them, and the contribution they make towards a feeling of satisfaction with the neighbourhood.

More direct engagement with the ‘green’ public spaces was sought in a number of survey questions concerning active and passive activities, and this response is shown in Figure 40.

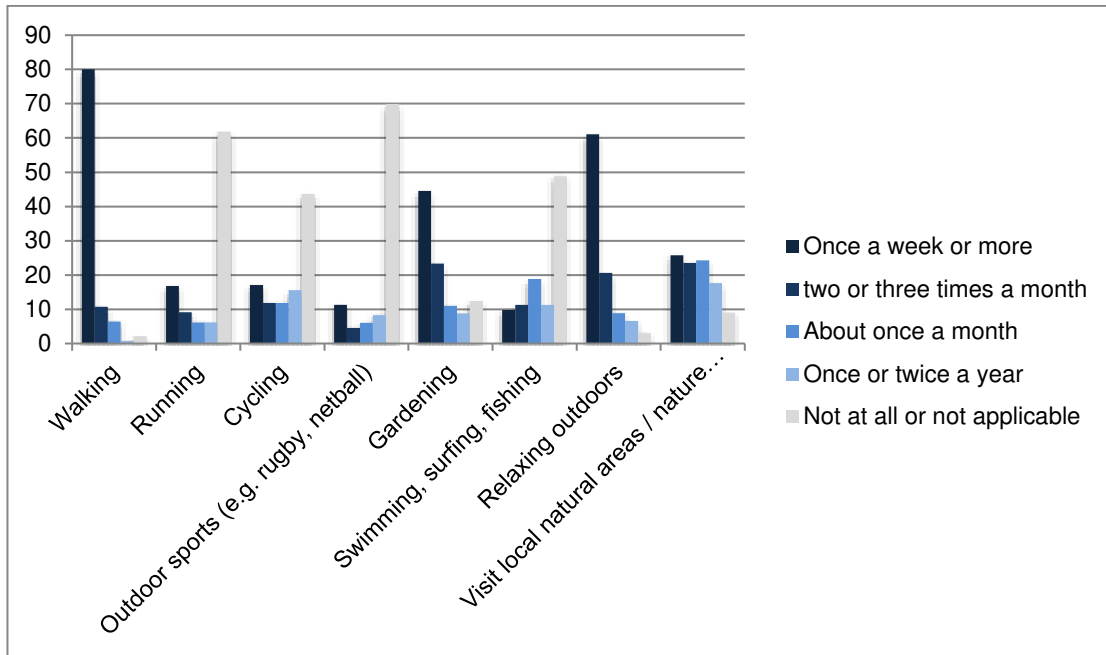


Figure 40. Percentage frequency of engagement of active and passive activities in the neighbourhood, reported by respondents. (n=146)

By far the highest frequency activity reported by respondents is walking, with 80 per cent doing this ‘once a week or more’. This reflects easy access to an extensive walking network in Hobsonville Point, including the 5-kilometre *Te Ara Manawa* coastal walkway (see Figure 38). Relaxing outdoors was reported as a ‘once a week or more’ activity by 61 per cent of respondents, and gardening by 45 per cent. The active activities of running, cycling and sports were reported as ‘not applicable’ by a large number of respondents, but among these responses, ‘once a week or more’ and ‘two to three times a month’ registered for cycling among 29 per cent of respondents. Visiting a nearby natural area/nature was reported to be a more frequent activity by 50 per cent of respondents.

In addition to the instances where participants in the focus groups related walkability to wellbeing, walkability was also discussed as a key component of their view that the places and amenities they wished to travel to were accessible via walking. Eleven focus group respondents spoke about walking within their local neighbourhood, one participant also commenting, *“I think that most people walk most places (in Hobsonville Point)”*. Others added, *“We love the fact that we can walk to the cafés, and we can walk to somewhere where we can eat at night, I wish there were more places we could walk to and eat at night”*. Five spoke about their child or children

being able to walk to school, reflecting the high levels of walking to school reported (see Figure 29).

In terms of other active transport modes, the focus group raised the use of bicycles, but saw this as largely for recreational purposes. Respondents indicated that buses were used for commuting purposes, the most popular route being that to the bus station at Constellation Drive (North Shore), with onward connections via the Northern Busway to the CBD. Some suggested that walking distances to the nearest bus stop (20 minutes) was a deterrent to regular use. While this may be the experience for some, nevertheless 66 per cent reported in the survey that they lived within 400 metres of a bus stop (see Figure 33). Others in the focus group spoke about using the ferry, some regularly and others more sporadically. The main concern raised was the issue of frequency, one participant confirming that *“if the ferry ran more frequently then I’d catch the ferry”*.

While many participants in the focus groups considered Hobsonville Point to be a *“walkable neighbourhood”*, it was also considered to be a *“car-oriented development”*, in part because *“access to the motorway is brilliant”*, and reflects the close proximity that Hobsonville Point has to SH18. While the majority of the focus group reported that they walked around the neighbourhood to go to the local cafés, restaurants, or the farmers market, the majority also drove to their places of work and the neighbouring suburbs. Most also drove to the supermarket, although some commented that they would never drive there. The focus group also suggested that within households, multi-modal transport is used and that the ferry service was a factor in choosing to live in Hobsonville Point. For example, one spoke about their household, commenting, *“my partner needed to have a good way of getting to work so the ferry was a real factor in us choosing here. I found a job in Avondale so I’m doing the whole commute on the motorway and stuff”*. Another spoke about their access to local amenities saying, *“bike, walk or drive depending on the weather and the time”*. Another spoke about how they would *“bike to the ferry or walk to the ferry so it’s part of my exercise as well”*.

Generally, in relation to transport, the focus group participants suggested that they would weigh up transport options, and generally do whichever was perceived as faster and more convenient for them. As described by one: *“if they increased the ferry sailings, then I would definitely use the ferry, to get in and out of town. But, it’s still quicker for me to drive the 10 minutes to*

Constellation". Another added that their choice to move to Hobsonville Point *"was more of a case of a balance of commuter times, good schooling, affordable housing"* and they *"felt that Hobsonville had that balance for us"*. This underscored the complexity of considerations that are made when making housing choices.

4.6. Summary

Responses about neighbourhood satisfaction were largely positive. Those who were satisfied or very satisfied that Hobsonville Point met their daily life needs, when combined, totalled 77% of respondents. The most popular places were the coastal walkway and open spaces at Bomb Point, closely followed by the commercial amenities and food retail at Catalina Bay. This led to the conclusion that the quality of the neighbourhood context, and the amenity it provides, is critically significant for overall satisfaction.

In turn, survey respondents reported walking once a week or more in their neighbourhoods and families with children in particular linked their neighbourhood satisfaction to the ability of their children to walk safely to school.

5. A Sense of Community at Hobsonville Point

In this part of the working paper, we turn to residents' expressions of a 'sense of community' and identity with place, for a number of reasons. First, there has been a longstanding recognition that positive interactions between neighbourhood residents engender a feeling of satisfaction with the neighbourhood¹⁰³. Mannarini et al.¹⁰⁴, argue that neighbourhood place identity is achieved 'as residents identify with and work to sustain a good quality of their residential environment', and that the 'identity of the neighbourhood grows from the continuous relationship between the place and its residents'. There is also a longstanding understanding that reinforces the instrumental roles that 'place attachment' and 'a strong sense of community' plays in delivering residential satisfaction. Farahani concludes from a study that:

In the contemporary society, mobility of neighbourhood residents, media and virtual networking has caused the concept of community not to be bound to the boundaries of locality. Yet, still the existence of local communities, attachment to local communities, neighbouring patterns and feeling a sense of community can be considered valuable to the quality of life in neighbourhoods¹⁰⁵.

The quality of the built environment has been found to influence a sense of community, where investigated in walkable neighbourhoods of Perth, Western Australia, where it was hypothesised that sense of community would be stronger in neighbourhoods that are pedestrian friendly¹⁰⁶. While this was a contributing factor, the findings also 'highlight the influence of local area perceptions on sense of community that appeared to be more important than objective environment characteristics'¹⁰⁷. This underscores the idea that place identity is not just a consequence of the physical environment, but how a sense of community is also constructed between individuals in a neighbourhood. The Western Australia study also saw the positive role that retail contributes towards a sense of community 'when the retail areas are designed to be walkable with less surface area dedicated to surface parking'¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰³ Ahlbrandt, 1984.

¹⁰⁴ Mannarini et al., 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Farahani, 2016

¹⁰⁶ French, et al. 2014

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Exploring the extent to which residents have a sense of community is important for other reasons. Sense of community is something that takes time, and given the relatively short duration of residency in Hobsonville Point, where two-thirds of respondents in the survey reported having lived in Hobsonville Point for three or less years, it is questionable whether this is sufficient time for a sense of community to emerge? This is relevant because the driving vision set by the development agency was to: *'build a strong, vibrant community that sets new benchmarks for quality and accessible urban development...'*¹⁰⁹.

The issue raised is whether the vision for a 'strong, vibrant community' can be detected from the resident survey, because from the outset, Hobsonville Point has been promoted by the development agency (HLC) as a place offering an affordable, unique coastal environmental setting. Apart from building houses, the aim 'is building a thriving community' and that 'by the time the houses are all built the community will already have everything it needs to thrive, purpose-built to the right scale and located in the right place'¹¹⁰. Questions about the advertising promotions for Hobsonville Point were raised by Opit and Kearns, as the first few houses were being completed. Concerned with the commodification of the idea of community, their contention was that 'with little concrete construction and no community actually in place, developers use symbols in their promotional material to capture the aspirations of potential buyers. In this way, developers can create an imagined future place before any physical manifestations eventuates'¹¹¹.

Opit and Kearns¹¹² do concede to limitations in their study, and conclude that while 'appealing to a contemporary yearning for nature and social cohesion at an urban coastal location has generated persuasive appeals in which community is being 'sold' at Hobsonville Point, yet paradoxically is yet to be found'.

In this section, findings are drawn together by considering responses to the questionnaire, the views of participants in the focus groups, and a thematic analysis of social media content from online forums.

¹⁰⁹ Barratt, 2016; Lietz, 2010.

¹¹⁰ See: <https://hobsonvillepoint.co.nz/about>

¹¹¹ Opit and Kearns, 2014 p93.

¹¹² Ibid, p101.

5.1. Views about Community

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked a number of questions related to a sense of belonging to a community in Hobsonville Point. Responses are given in Figure 41.

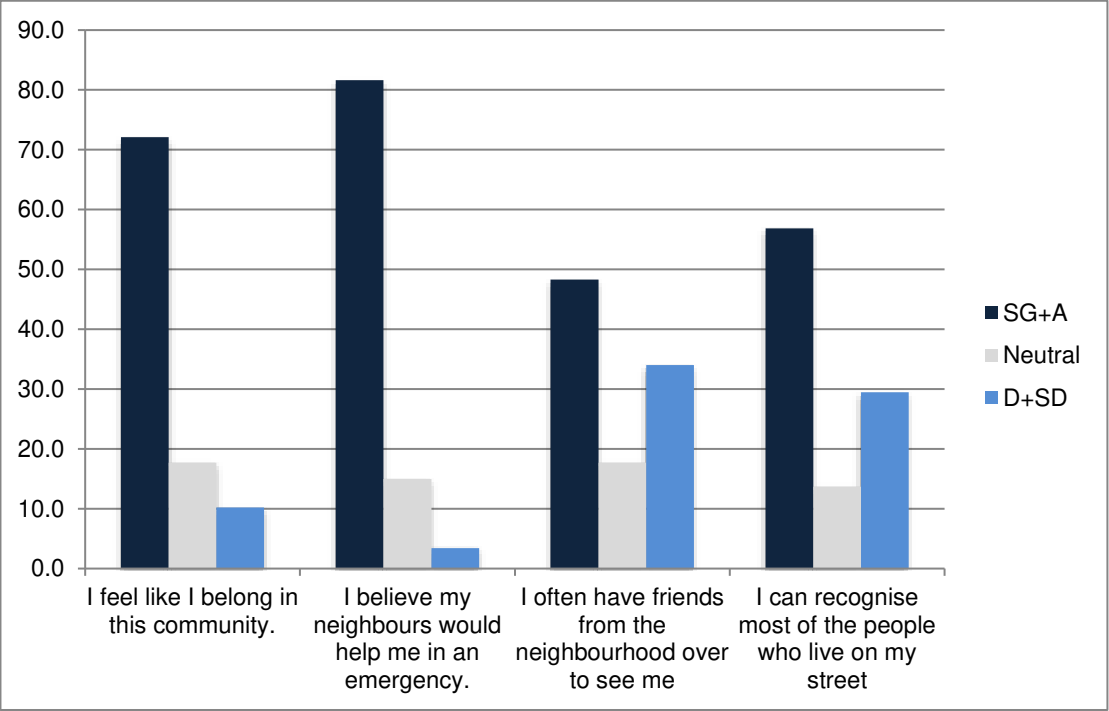


Figure 41. Respondent percentage responses to agree/strongly agree, neutral, disagree/strongly disagree answers to questions related to a feeling of belonging to the community. (n=147)

Seventy-two per cent of respondents agreed with the sentiment: ‘I feel like I belong to this community’, with 10 per cent disagreeing – a strongly positive response. Even stronger was the answer to whether respondents believed their neighbour would help them in an emergency, with 82 per cent agreeing, and only 3 per cent disagreeing. These two responses signify strong bonds that underpin a sense of community, even though many neighbours have not known each other for very long. This may relate to a perception that all residents are confronted by the same conditions of ‘newness’ and make more of an effort to integrate into the community. This idea was echoed in a comment in the focus groups: *“I would say that everybody has arrived with a pioneering attitude.”*

Forty-eight per cent reported having friends from the neighbourhood visit (34 per cent disagreed), and 57 per cent claimed to recognise fellow residents of their street (30 per

disagreed). While there is almost one-third who disagreed with these two questions, this is more understandable, given that having neighbours to visit and recognition in the street requires more personal effort.

Sense of community was a key component of satisfaction for a number of focus group participants. Because the responses given by participants were multifaceted and broad, they were coded in to a series of sub-categories: comments about neighbours, 'neighbourliness', social connectivity, and neighbourhood identity and reputation.

Comments about neighbours offered by the focus group were generally positive. Some responses saw positive community interactions being supported by a neighbourhood that was walkable, with easy access to others and places such as cafés. Five spoke specifically about feeling positive about the diversity of their neighbourhood, in terms of both the demographic and cultural mix. One participant commented: *"I think it's really good because we've got such a diverse range of ages, and ethnicities and what people are doing"*. Other participants used terms such as *"community feeling"*, *"nearness"* and *"community spirit"* to describe a positive association with their neighbours. Among the few negative comments were those related to personal incidents, the perceived homogeneity of the community (contradicting the views expressed by others concerning diversity), issues about some residents not looking after their gardens (and thus not contributing to their standard of tidiness), and discourtesy evidenced in the way people park cars.

Focus group participants also commented positively on opportunities for neighbours to meet, including barbeques organised by the Residents Society. One commented, for example, *"it's just inevitable that you run across neighbours"*, another adding, *"I work from home on Fridays, and there are quite a lot of people, other people who are also working from home. And, you know, so I see my neighbours, and, you don't feel you're just on your own, in a street, there are always other people around, walking around and doing that"*. Another commented, *"my neighbours and I are all good friends, we all get on well"*.

Reference was also made to opportunities for residents to join in community events, that built a sense of community, organised by the Residents Society and other organisations in the neighbourhood. One commented: *"I think the mix is so important and the fact that there's so*

many organisations – the Garden Club – there’s so many organisations you can join”. Another spoke of the “...walking group on Mondays and Fridays, so that was another way I got to meet people”.

Opportunities to join community activities were probed in the questionnaire survey, with responses given in Figure 42. Community events are well supported in the neighbourhood. The Hobsonville Point Residents Society (HPRS) invests part of its levy income in supporting community organisations and events. The HPRS also owns a small community events venue, Chichester Cottage, gifted to the Society by HLC, although not yet operational. Hobsonville Point is now also supported by the Auckland Council-owned community centre (located in the recently refurbished former air force Headquarters Building), with a paid organiser funded by the Council. There are also other organisations that support community events and organisations such as the Hobsonville Community Trust, and many other smaller organisations. In a way, these responses reflect the perceived degree of awareness of these support facilities and organisations, and opportunities to join.

Positive responses to the questions can be noted, but also evident are a large number who were neutral on the questions (especially the opportunities to volunteer). This is probably a response on the part of those for whom joining community events and volunteering was not something they sought. More marked is the consistent low level of disagreements (all at around 10 per cent).

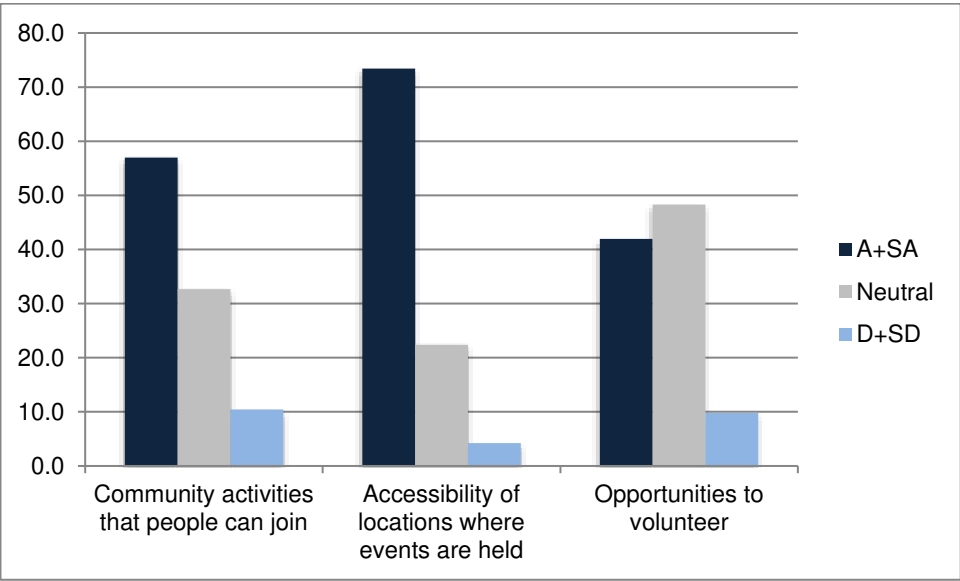


Figure 42. Percentage agreement/disagreement on opportunities for residents to join community events. (n=144)

The link between community and activities and a strong sense of community was embedded into two other comments made at the focus groups. One commented:

“...there is the eco one (local community group run by the residents association) which, I go to some of that stuff, and I mean that’s getting quite strong, and there’s quite a connection and some different projects are gonna start happening. I never imagined living anywhere that you could do that, and there’s a sense of like being able to make some real changes potentially. And like have kind of a say in the community you live in”.

And another gave as an example:

“... in the two years we’ve been here they’ve made a really big deal of Halloween and the idea is that if you’re going to participate in it, you put a balloon on the letterbox and that means it’s a treat-friendly house that the kids can go and knock on the door, which was really lovely because you could choose to participate or not. And all the kids felt safe walking around the neighbourhood and knocking on the doors and getting their treats and things and it was really lovely. All the parents would gather in the park and watch their kids wander off and come back in a safe environment and the whole community’s looking out for each other which was really nice... it was a really community-based thing”.

Given the age diversity in Hobsonville Point, the questionnaire survey sought residents’ views on the perceived inclusiveness of community events. Responses are given in Figure 43.

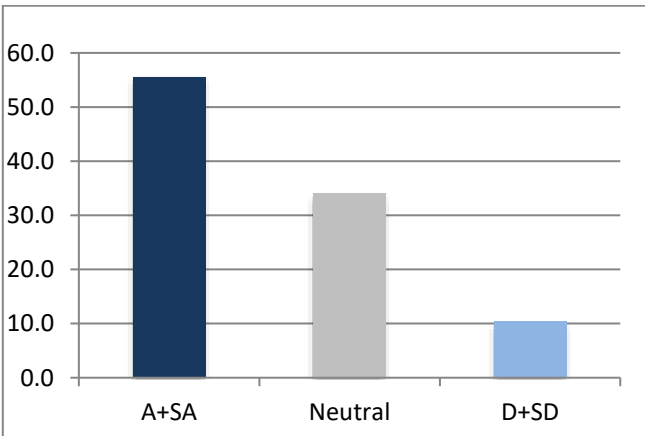


Figure 43. Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that community events provide good opportunities that bring younger and older people together. (n=144)

The agree/strongly agree responses were a reasonable 55 per cent, with disagree/strongly disagree responses at 10 per cent. The one-third who signalled a neutral response might reflect those who do not wish to be involved in events drawing together different age groups.

Sense of community is strongly associated with place identity, and in the survey, respondents were asked to express agreement/disagreement on whether Hobsonville Point has a distinct identity, with responses given in Figure 44. As can be seen, there is a strong positive response to the question with 77 per cent being satisfied/very satisfied that the neighbourhood has a strong identity.

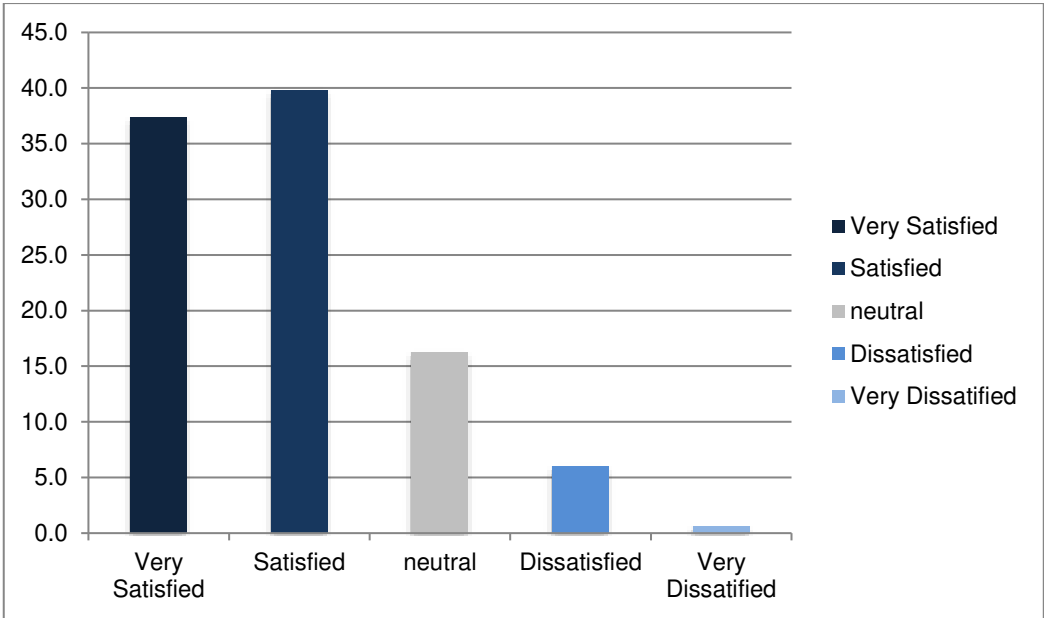


Figure 44. Percentage responses from respondents to a question about whether Hobsonville Point has a distinct identity. (n=144)

The identity of place was further explored in the survey, concerning the degree of connectedness, perceived specialness of the natural areas, what kind of pride they express and their perceptions of how they see the rest of the community compared to themselves. Responses are given in Figure 45.

Overall, there were strong levels of agreement with questions concerning identity with the neighbourhood. Feeling connected to the neighbourhood was agreed to by 67 per cent of respondents, with 14 per cent in disagreement. Given the emphasis placed on the environmental qualities of the coastal location, their incorporation into the design and ease of

access, there was a strong level of association expressed with this amenity – 67 per cent of respondents expressing that the natural areas were very special, and 8 per cent in disagreement.

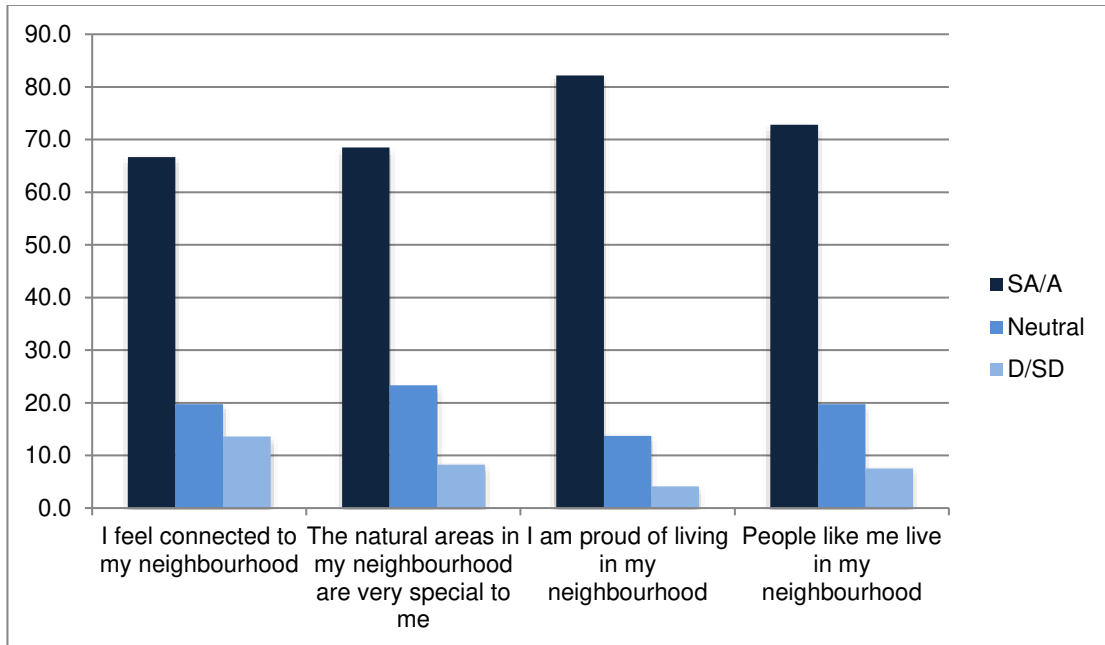


Figure 45. Respondents’ agreement/disagreement to identity with the neighbourhood (n=144)

Place identity is expressed in the pride respondents feel about their neighbourhood, with 82 per cent feeling proud of their neighbourhood (Figure 45), and only 4 per cent of respondents were in disagreement. While this high response may be tempered by the fact that people have chosen to move into Hobsonville Point, it nevertheless suggests a sustained pride in the place. A focus group participant commented: *“since we’ve lived out here, my parents have moved out (here too), cos they were like, this is great. You, we’re going to be close to you now, you’ve a child, grandkids. But, yeah, we, we just love it out here. And we’ve convinced a few other people to move.”*

In response to the question concerning community identity (in Figure 43), two-thirds agreed that *‘people like me live in the neighbourhood’*, with 8 per cent disagreeing. In part, this reflects the reality that buying into Hobsonville Point requires relatively high household income to afford the housing offered. Two-thirds of respondents reported household incomes in excess of \$150,000 per annum, and thus a shared socio-economic status. This perception is reflected in a focus group participant commenting that: *“it’s a very, very affluent area and it attracts a certain person”*.

Given the strong responses to sense of community, shared values and aspirations may also play a part in the responses. For example, in the focus groups, one suggested shared values across the community:

“You know, people, there’s but there’s always a sense that we’re all in it together. We all wanna, kind of make this a place where we want to be...it’s not a model village from the government, it’s not, you know, this politician having this wonderful example that they can hold up as this, this great thing. It’s a place where we live, and we wanna be here”.

Social connectivity is tied closely to neighbourliness. As well as some of the shared experiences and ideas exchanges with neighbours discussed above, which could also be coded as social connectivity, there was an additional sentiment expressed in the focus group sessions.

Sense of community was predominantly viewed by focus group participants in terms of physical connections and places, such as being able to see and interact with neighbours in the neighbourhood. However, the online community was also raised. Among the comments was the following:

“Facebook plays a role whether you love it or hate it, as a community for Hobsonville Point, and people vent on Facebook a lot, but they actually help each other a lot on Facebook as well, I had a situation where we ordered a lounge suite, we thought we could get it upstairs ourselves because it was very small. We couldn’t, and I put a little message on Facebook and within half an hour a young guy came round and helped us move that piece of furniture. That is the community, and I would do the same obviously for someone else”.

I’ve never lived anywhere that’s had the sense of community that is here as well. Like there is one, especially, and I guess the good and bad part, like the online thing is really strong”.

Based on the perceptions of residents, sense of place in Hobsonville Point is strongly bound to physical and environmental entities also identified as things that contribute toward neighbourhood satisfaction: the coastal walkway, the farmers market, Onekiritea Park, the green spaces, cafés, among others. These features are among those promoted by HLC at the outset as unique qualities around which a community will form. However, responses from residents suggest that the sense of community has extended beyond shared identities with physical environmental features, to meaningful bonds between individuals that underpin strong

communities. This is demonstrated in the posting below taken from the Hobsonville Point Community Facebook site:

"This is not a "check out my photography" post, but rather a post of appreciation with a bit of a "Hobby Point is awesome" theme. Wandered from home to the markets. "Picked up" friends at the water park. Saw more friends as soon as we got to the bottom of the stairs, and more friends on the boardwalk. Hey Bagel and Local Hero coffee for brunch then a wander along the boardwalk. One kid jumped on the other's knee, there were tears from both. The daughter went home with some of our friends, while the injured son and I sought help from our paramedic friend. I popped back into the markets for some Earth Monkey and Gourmet Gannet treats, before collecting my maimed child and wandering home, stopping to pick up the other kid on the way.

*This growing community is awesome. People who I didn't know a year or two ago are now great friends, and familiar faces, whether from the ferry or regular shopping at the markets, always greet you with a smile."*¹¹³

This Facebook posting is a sharing of daily life rather than environmental features, and also is reflective of a strong sense of community and the power of social media to communicate the narratives. Research investigating the role of social media in Edinburgh, Scotland affirmed 'the benefits of social media in producing a natural discussion about neighbourhoods and residence and the importance of creating ladders to the cloud for...neighbourhoods'¹¹⁴.

In Hobsonville Point, the most used social media is the very active closed group Facebook site of the Hobsonville Point Community page that at the time of writing had 8545 members. This number and usage far exceeds the Hobsonville Point Residents Society Facebook page only open to members (essentially property owners) that has just over 1000 members (of a current potential 1500). Given the role that social media plays in creating virtual communities, an analysis of the posting on the Hobsonville Point Community page was done for a three-month period, in January, February and March 2018, and given in Figure 46.

¹¹³ Posted on the Hobsonville Point Community Facebook page, 23 September 2018.

¹¹⁴ Matthews, 2014, p22.

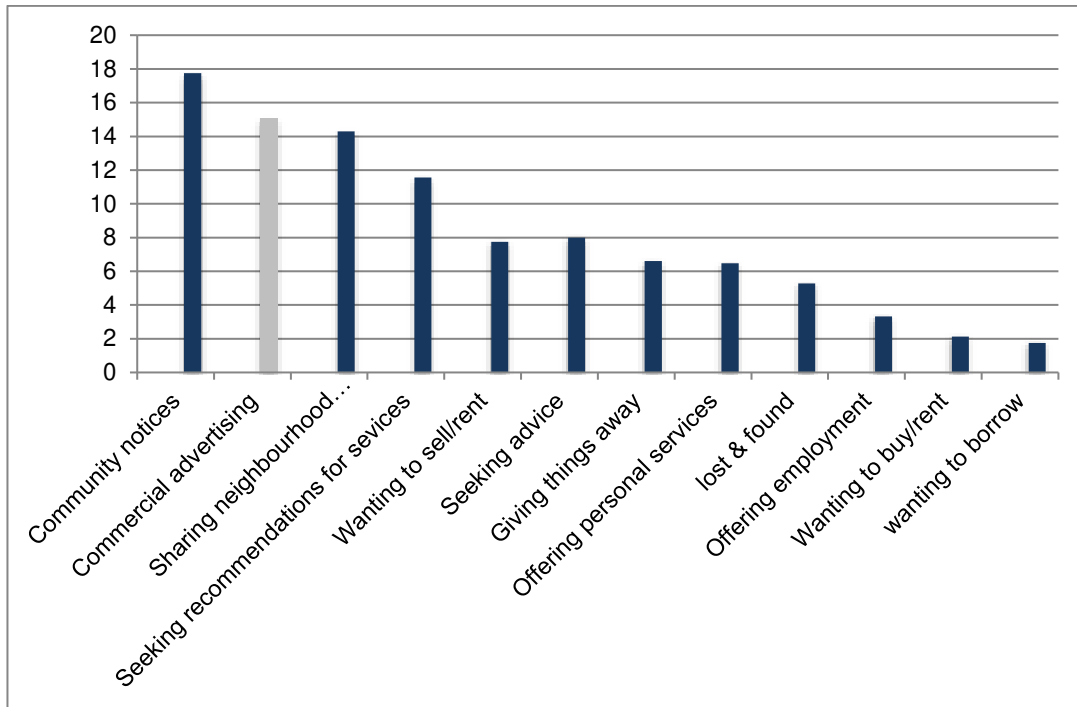


Figure 46. Percentage distribution of posting to the Hobsonville Point Community Facebook page by type. (n=723)

A total of 723 postings were made between 1 January and 31 March 2018, and these were categorised into twelve types in Figure 44. As can be expected, commercial advertisers, many from outside of Hobsonville Point, were present, and constituted 15 per cent of all postings. Of the remaining posts, community notices had the highest frequency at 18 per cent (almost one-fifth). These included notices about community events, health and fitness classes, sporting clubs and social activities. The third most frequent type of posting was ‘sharing neighbourhood experiences’ that includes frequent posting of photographs of sunrises and sunsets, the coastal walkway and considered by posters to represent the unique natural and built environment, and sharing this with the community.

All of the remaining posts are perhaps typical of many community social media sites: that of seeking advice and offering services and help to the community at large. Residents seeking to buy and sell goods and services, and renting property together constituted 10 per cent of posting. Personal services (7 per cent) related to residents offering services within the community such as beauty care, garden maintenance and lawn mowing and childcare. Other postings are of a kind that more deeply embody community engagement such as ‘lost and found’ (5 per cent), such as pets, and children’s soft toys found by residents; wanting to give

things away (7 per cent) such as surplus furniture (often related to ‘downsizing’ when moving into Hobsonville Point); seeking (and receiving) advice from the community (8 per cent); and although the least frequent, wanting to borrow (such as cake tins in the shape of a ‘4’ for a birthday party). Also present among postings are employment offers to residents from local businesses.

5.2. Summary

On the whole, residents who participated in the survey were engaged with their neighbourhood and a sense of ownership and collective identity emerged in the analysis. Over 70% of respondents felt like they belonged to their community and a similar number recognised that there were people like them in their neighbourhood. Over 80% believed that their neighbours would help them in an emergency and a similar number were proud to live in their neighbourhood.

The findings from the social media analysis indicate an actively engaged community online, which is predominantly focused on the daily-life experiences of living at Hobsonville Point. Social media is used predominantly to support interactions in the physical world. Based on the overall perceptions of residents, sense of place in Hobsonville Point is strongly bound to physical spaces. Neighbourhood amenities are identified as aspects of the built and natural environment that contribute toward neighbourhood satisfaction: the coastal walkway, the farmers market, Onekiritea Park, the green spaces, and cafés were most frequently mentioned.

Opit and Kerns raised a question from their study at an early stage of development about whether the image promoted would be found by new residents. There is overwhelming evidence to indicate that not only has there emerge a very strong sense of community, but also that this has moved beyond objective place identity, to a social strong social engagements.

6. Responses to variations of age, duration of residency and dwelling types

The data and analysis from the questionnaire survey reported in the sections above are drawn from the sample as a whole, reflecting overall respondent perceptions to living in their dwellings, the neighbourhood and of their sense of community. Given the diversity of respondents in terms of age, how long they have lived in Hobsonville Point, and living in a range of different dwelling types, a question was raised about whether there may be significant variations in the responses to these variables?

To test this, five sets of data from the questionnaire survey were selected for analysis (see Table 5 below).

Questions		Overall responses reference
The Dwelling	How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling? Noise levels from neighbouring properties.	Fig 23
The Dwelling	How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling? Privacy within the interior of your home from people walking by or living next door. ?	Fig 23
The Dwelling	How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling? Privacy of your dwelling's external spaces.	Fig 23
The Neighbourhood	How satisfied are you with your current neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all of your daily needs?	Fig 31
Sense of Community	I feel I belong to this community	Fig 43 + 45

Table 5. Key questions concerning living at density, selected for variability analysis.

These data sets are indicators of sensitivity to living at density: noise from neighbouring properties, privacy within the dwelling from neighbours and the streets, privacy in exterior parts of the dwelling (yard space, balconies, etc.), that the neighbourhood comfortably meets all daily needs, and the presence or absence of a sense of community. Table 5 lists the five areas for

testing (three for dwellings, and one each for neighbourhood, and sense of community), the selected questions from the survey, and the figure references in previous sections, where overall responses are given. Data from the survey for each of the questions were sorted to reveal the extent to which respondents expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction by three variables:

- Age
- Duration of Residency
- Dwelling types

6.1. Variations by Age

Age was selected as one variable, because it is likely that living conditions and environmental expectations between different age groups will vary (for example, those with children, those of retirement age, etc.), potentially heightened by living at higher density. Figure 47 gives the responses to the questions of noise levels from neighbouring properties, sorted by age cohorts.

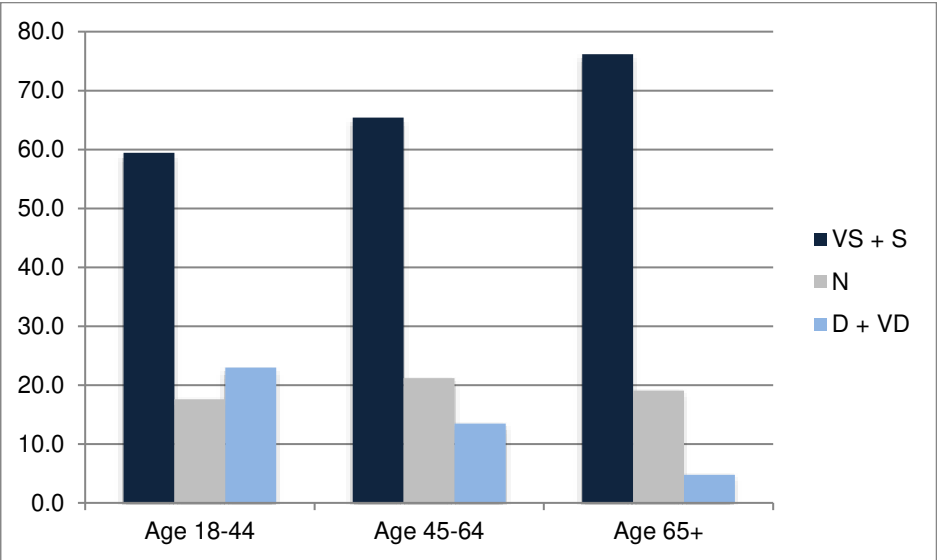


Figure 47. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with noise levels from neighbouring properties, by age cohorts. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

Overall levels of satisfaction with noise from neighbourhoods are shown in a previous section in Figure 23, where 63.1 per cent of respondents expressed being very satisfied/satisfied on this measure. When sorted by age cohorts, high levels of satisfaction remain evident (Figure 47),

although there is an increasing level of satisfaction from the younger to the older cohorts. Seventy-six per cent in the 65-plus cohort found noise to be satisfactory/very satisfactory, compared to 60 per cent for the 18-44 years group. Conversely the percentage dissatisfaction between cohorts declines more significantly from the youngest to oldest age cohorts (only 5 per cent of those over 65 years were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with noise).

Privacy is a potential issue when living at higher density. As was the case with 'noise', the older cohorts are progressively more satisfied than the younger cohorts over perceptions of privacy within their homes from neighbours (see Figure 48), but with even greater differences. Whereas satisfaction is expressed by 53 per cent of respondents in the 18-44 age cohort, this increases to 90 per cent satisfaction for the 65-plus group (with corresponding decreases in dissatisfaction).

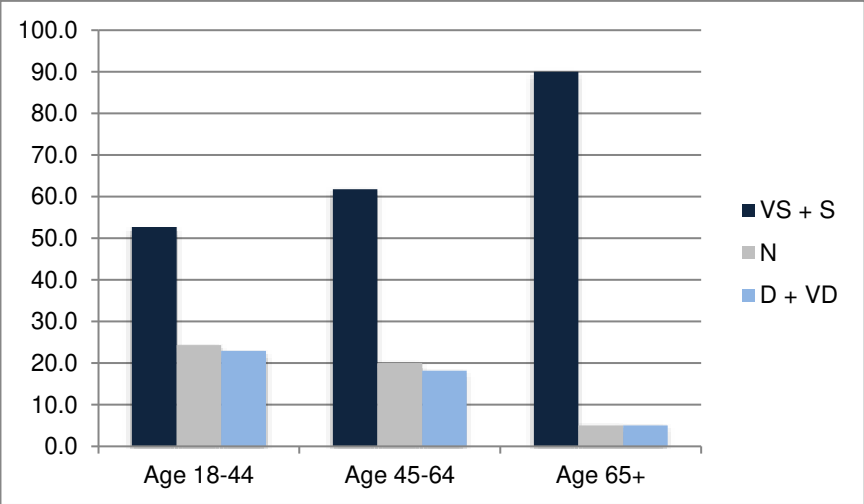


Figure 48. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy within the interior of dwellings from people walking by or living next door, by age cohorts. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

Concerning privacy in the exterior spaces, the same responses can be seen with increasing satisfaction with the older cohorts (see Figure 49). However, there are more marked percentages of dissatisfaction among the younger groups; indeed, there is an equal number dissatisfied. This indicates greater concern about privacy in external spaces connected to the dwelling, among an age cohort more likely to be bringing up younger children.

The analysis indicates a reasonably high level of satisfaction across these measures, except with external privacy among the youngest age group. Also clear is that those over 65 are the most satisfied respondents across all measures, with the 18-44 years group being the least satisfied.

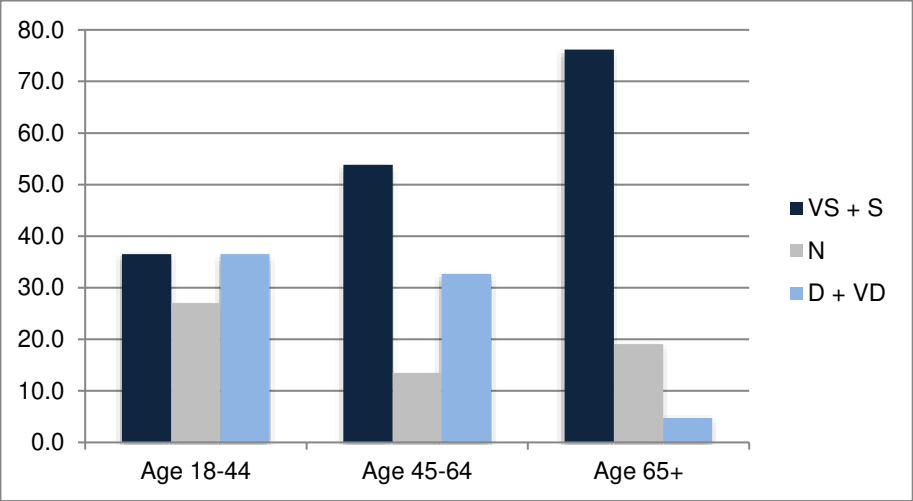


Figure 49. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy of your dwelling's external spaces, by age cohorts. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176) (n=176)

Moving to the wider neighbourhood, Figure 50 shows age variations to the question concerning how satisfied respondents are with the neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all their daily needs. Overall, 83 per cent of respondents expressed being satisfied/very satisfied with the neighbourhood 'meeting all their daily needs'. This high level of satisfaction is consistent across the three age cohorts (at or above 80 per cent). Although marginally different, the 65 plus age group again expressed the highest level of satisfaction on this measure.

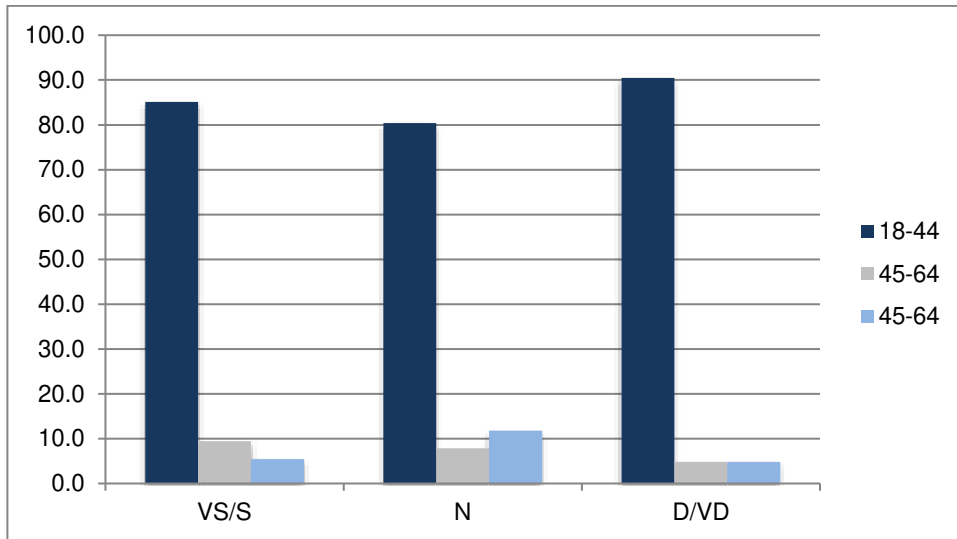


Figure 50. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all of your daily needs, by age cohorts. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=165)

The last analysis concerns variations in feeling connected to the neighbourhood, with the results in Figure 51.

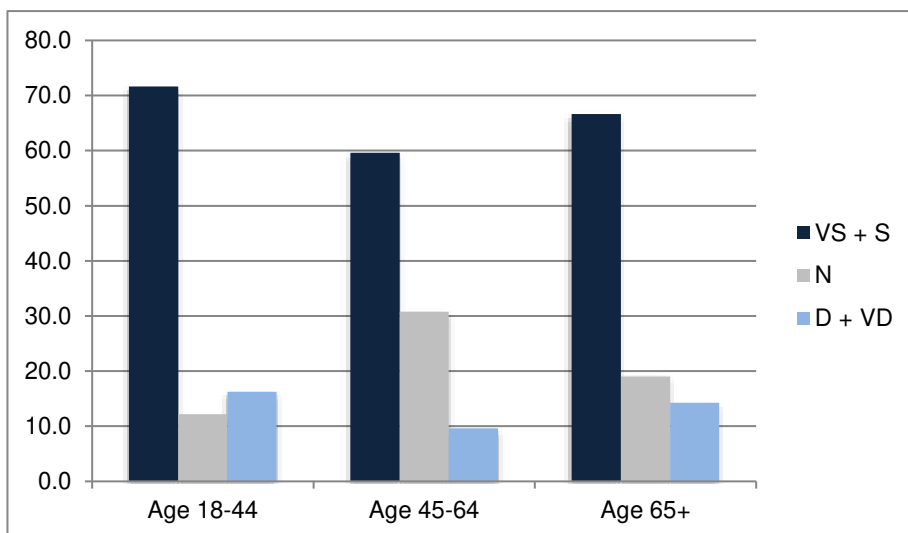


Figure 51. Agreement/disagreement with the statement: 'I feel connected to my neighbourhood', by age cohorts. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=147)

There are high levels of agreement across the three age cohorts, ranging from 60-72 per cent of respondents. The 18-44 age cohort expressed a higher level of dissatisfaction when compared to other groups, although in this case, the lowest level is expressed by the 45-64 years cohort,

although the differences across the three age groups is not large (where respondents represents between 10 - 16 per cent).

6.2. Variations by Duration of Residency

Attention has already been drawn to the fact that dwellings in Hobsonville Point have only been occupied since 2011-12, a relatively short period of time (9 years). Nevertheless, the data was sorted to see if there were any significant variations in relation to how long respondents had lived in Hobsonville Point. Duration of residency was compared to the same five variables use above for the age cohorts for three residency durations: less than 1 year, 1-3 years and more than 3 years. The first set of comparisons concerns the dwelling, and the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with noise from neighbours, and this is shown in Figure 52.

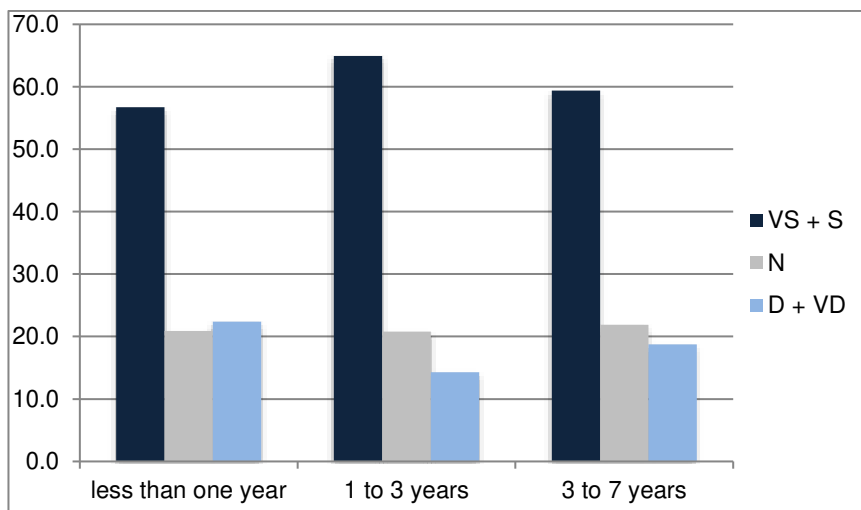


Figure 52. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with noise levels from neighbouring properties, by residency duration. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

As can be seen, differences on this measure are not significant when comparing how long respondents have lived in Hobsonville Point. The slightly higher level of satisfaction expressed by those who have lived there for over a year may reflect a kind of 'bedding in', but variations are not that significant. There is a small reduction in the expression of dissatisfaction from those who have lived in Hobsonville Point the least amount of time, compared with those who have been there the longest (from 22 to 19 per cent).

Figure 53 shows variations between residency duration when responding to privacy within dwelling from neighbours and the street. As with noise, those who have lived in Hobsonville Point for less than a year expressed a lower level of satisfaction, when compared to those who had lived in the neighbourhood for a year or more. For those who have lived in the area for 1 to 3 years and 3 to 7 years, the level of satisfaction is 69 and 71 per cent respectively. Correspondingly, the longer respondents have lived in the area, the less dissatisfied they are on this measure, possibly again indicating a ‘bedding in’ to the conditions of living at higher density.

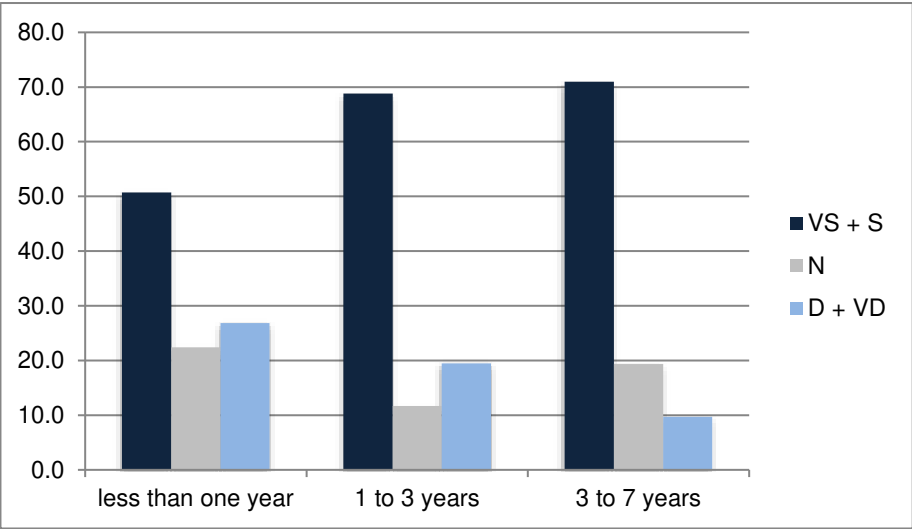


Figure 53. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy within the interior of dwellings and from people walking by or living next door, by residency duration. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

The same pattern can be seen with regard to levels of satisfaction with external space privacy: increasing satisfaction over time (see Figure 54), although at slightly lower levels for all time cohorts.

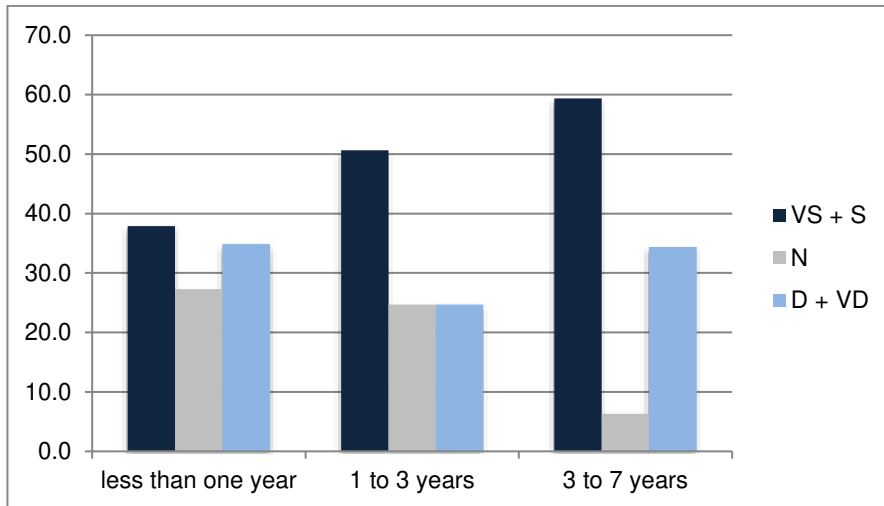


Figure 54. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy of your dwelling's external spaces, by residency duration. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

What is different when comparing the internal and external privacy responses are higher levels of dissatisfaction are much higher levels of dissatisfaction with exterior spaces. Moreover, the level of satisfaction among those who have lived for some time in Hobsonville Point is much higher when compared to the most recent arrivals. Since duration also corresponds to the phasing of building activity, those in the 3-7 year group are more likely to have lives in Buckley, where there are fewer terraced houses, and some caution needs to be exercised when interpreting this information.

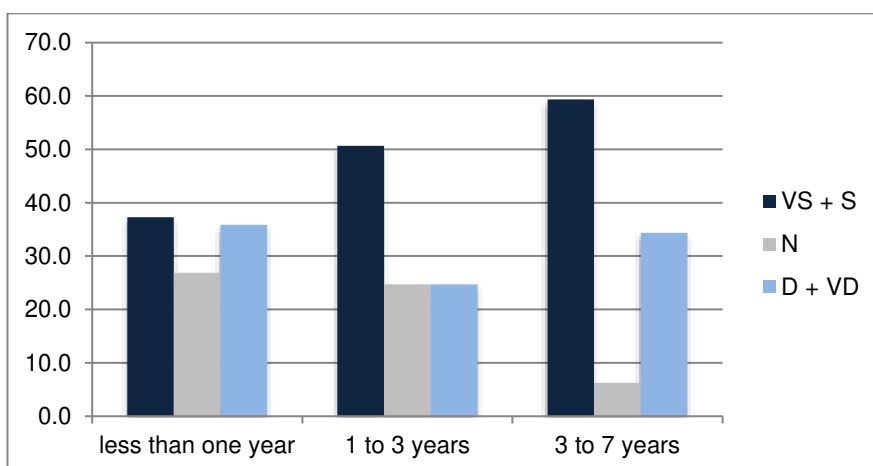


Figure 55. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all daily needs, by residency duration. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=165)

Similar patterns can be detected in variation of responses to the question of satisfaction with the neighbourhood comfortably meeting all daily needs (see Figure 55). There are increasing percentages that find this measure satisfactory over time (from 37 to 59 per cent (for less than one year, to more than three years respectively), and a corresponding decrease among those respondents who consider this neighbourhood impact neutral. What is evident, however, is that although a high percentage of respondents who had lived in Hobsonville Point for over three years expressed satisfaction with the neighbourhood meeting daily needs (59 per cent), 34 per cent reported dissatisfaction, more than those who had been in residence for shorter periods of time. An explanation for this requires a more in-depth investigation.

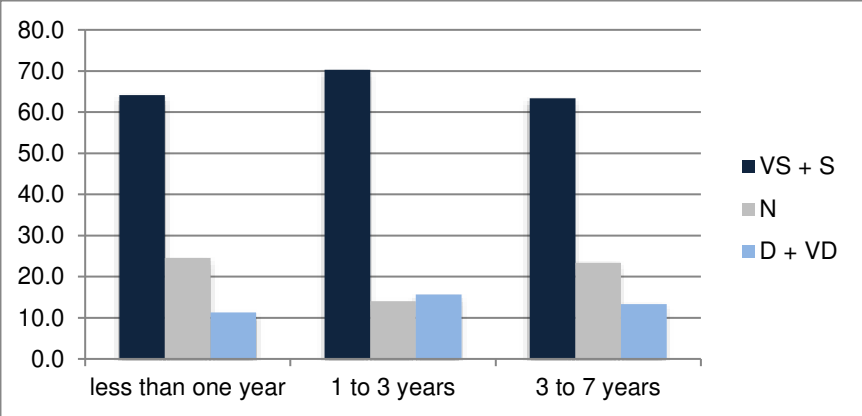


Figure 56. Agreement/disagreement with the statement: ‘I feel like I belong to this community’, by residency duration. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=147)

Responses to the question concerning how connected to their neighbourhood respondents feel (see Figure 56) indicates that time has little impact. There are consistently high percentages of respondents indicating satisfaction (all between 60 and 70 per cent), across all three residency duration periods. This suggests that most residents in Hobsonville Point relatively quickly feel connected to the community, and this persists over time.

6.3. Variations by House Type

The last set of variables concerns dwelling types. The majority of houses in Hobsonville Point are attached types that include terrace and duplex houses, and apartments. Many residents moving to Hobsonville Point are experiencing living in attached dwellings for the first time, as reported by the focus groups. Given the closer proximity to neighbours, it was of interest to know

whether house types were an influence on residents’ perceptions. Data was sorted by housing type: detached, semi-detached and terrace. At the time of survey, there was only one apartment development completed and occupied – the Brickworks, at the corner of Hobsonville Point Road and de Havilland Street. They represent a small proportion of apartments compared to other dwelling types at that time, and the number of responses received were correspondingly low. For these reasons, responses from those living in apartments have been excluded from this analysis.

Figure 57 shows variation of responses to levels of noise from neighbours. As can be seen, there is no significant variation among respondents finding noise issues from neighbouring properties, with satisfaction expressed by between 56 and 61 per cent of respondents. The least dissatisfied with this measure were those living in detached houses (11 per cent), compared with terrace houses and semi-detached houses, where dissatisfaction is recorded for 20 and 29 per cent of respondents respectively. What needs to be noted with regard to detached houses in Hobsonville Point is that they are on small lots, with little separation between houses. This investigation has shown that there is little difference in the levels of satisfaction across all three housing types.

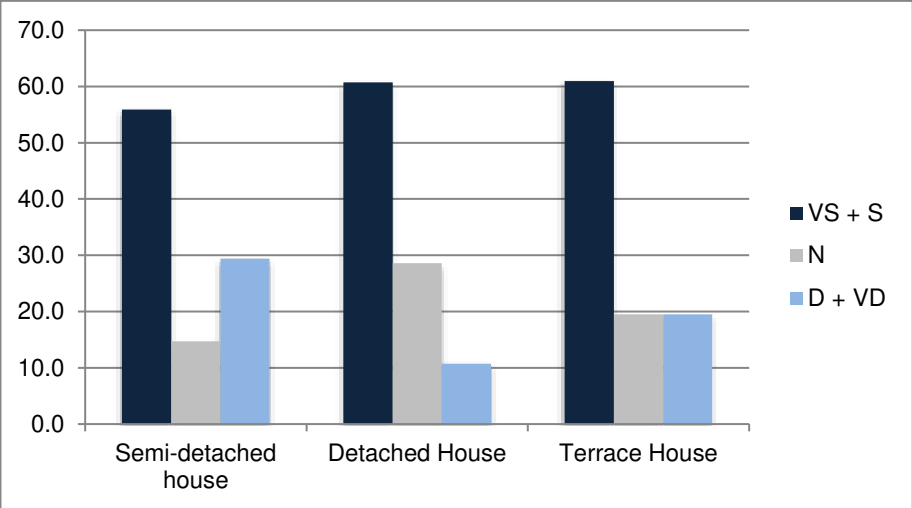


Figure 57. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with noise levels from neighbouring properties, by house types. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

Figures 58 and 59 show variations of responses in relation to perceived privacy within dwellings and in the associated external spaces.

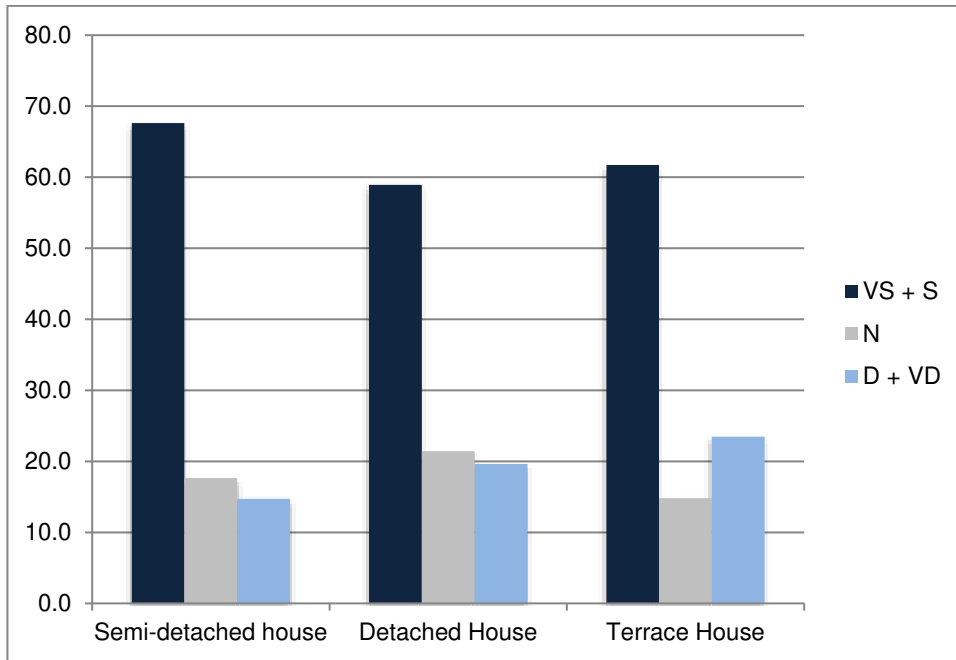


Figure 58. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy within the interior of dwellings from people walking by or living next door, by house types. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

Again, the percentages of respondents finding privacy measured in this way satisfactory are relatively consistent across the house types. Equally consistent are the levels of dissatisfaction within the dwellings with 15, 20 and 24 per cent of respondents respectively in semi-detached, detached and terrace houses, although differences again are not that great. By comparison, the percentages of dissatisfaction expressed about privacy in external spaces by respondents in the three house types are at higher levels when compared to internal spaces (27, 30 and 33 per cent respectively, but once again differences are not large. As far as the dwelling is concerned, variations in the expressions of satisfaction indicated by noise and privacy suggests that house type has a relatively small impact.

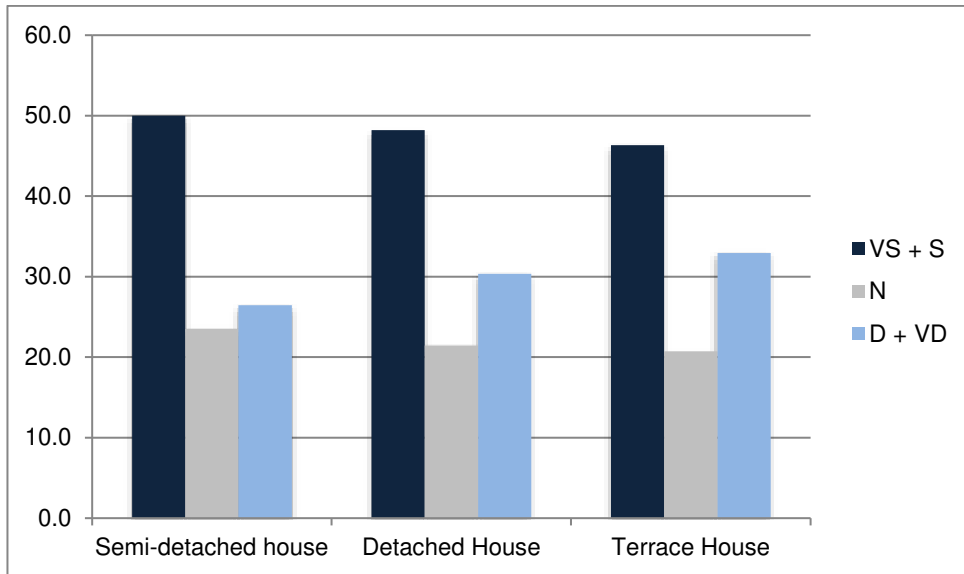


Figure 59. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with privacy of your dwelling's external spaces, by house types. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=176)

Moving to the neighbourhood, Figure 60 shows percentage responses to the question concerning the extent to which the neighbourhood comfortably meets all daily needs. Whereas the age and residency duration indicated variations on this question (see above), dwelling types variations are relatively insignificant on this measure, both for the percentages of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Reasons can be speculated, one of which is that irrespective of dwelling type, all residents share the same public amenities associated with the neighbourhood.

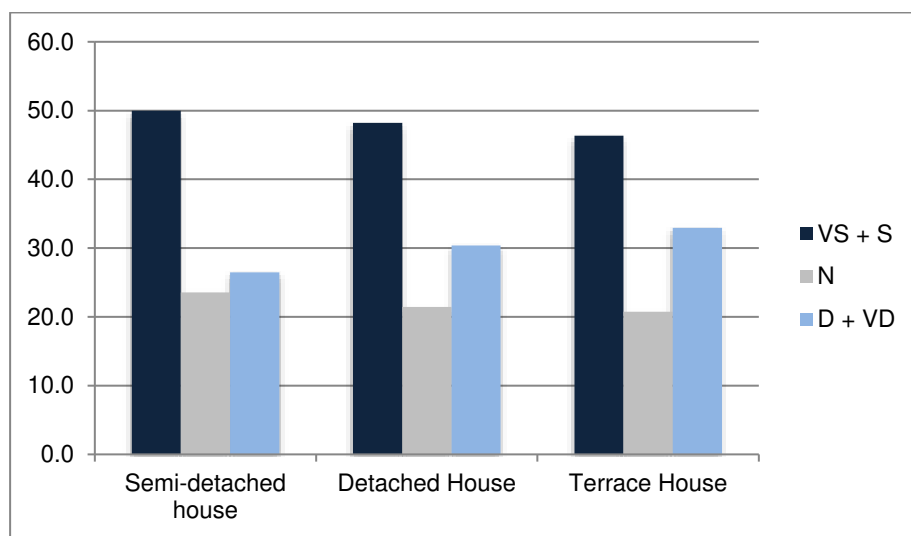


Figure 60. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all of your daily needs, by house types. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=165)

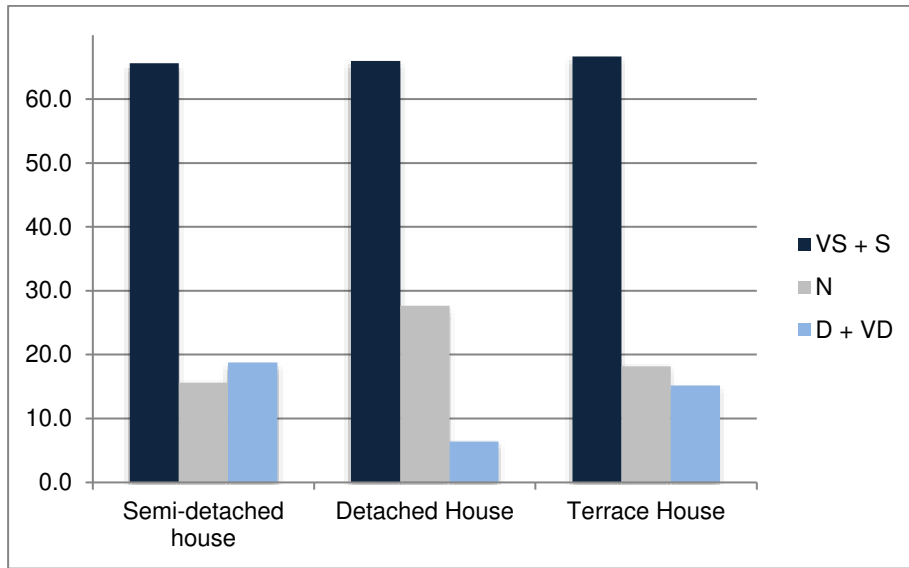


Figure 61. Agreement/disagreement with the statement: I feel connected to my neighbourhood, by house types. Very satisfied/satisfied (VS+S), and dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (D+VD). (n=147)

The last analysis concerns the question of respondents feeling well connected to their neighbourhood community (Figure 61). As with responses shown in Figure 59, house type seemingly plays little role in shaping a sense of community, partly because it is not bound to specific places.

Across all three analyses, examination of variations on these measures show that they are not greatly significant, especially with regards to forming a sense of community, and expressing strong satisfaction with the neighbourhood. With regard to age, there are more significant variations, where older residents tend to be more satisfied than younger ones.

7. Conclusions

7.1. Building at scale – the ‘Hobsonville Point Model’

Given the scale of development in Hobsonville Point (at commencement, the largest single housing development in New Zealand), having an efficient process able to deliver quality and accessible urban development was a crucial step. At the outset, the development aim was to create new development opportunities in the western parts of the Auckland region in a coordinated way, with a focus on job creation. Given concerns at the time for urban growth and development to proceed in a sustainable manner, the Regional Growth Forum embedded sustainable objectives to minimise environmental impact through low impact urban design measures and achieving walkability. A key instrument in the planning process was the creation of the former air base as a ‘special zone’ in a Plan Change, and although this established an indicative development framework and land uses, there was flexibility to make changes at the more detailed Comprehensive Development Plan stage, and through the development consenting stages.

This provided a framework from which HLC, the development agency, was to operate in a public-private partnership. A key step was the setting of the project vision to *‘build a strong, vibrant community that sets new benchmarks for quality and accessible urban development with an environmentally responsive focus’*. As a government agency operating on Crown-owned land, there was scope to incorporate the environmental drivers required, and through the master planning process, establish a robust urban framework for the development process. This enabled the following:

- Demarcation of areas for public parks, reserves and the environmental protection of the coastal edge that maintains full public access.
- Environmental responses including requirements for all houses to collect rainwater, low-impact design measures for storm water management. Attached housing types with

common separating walls are also able to achieve better building performance through passive means.

- Co-ordination with local and central government for the delivery of public transport, motorway construction and access, community facilities and local employment.
- The early delivery of key infrastructure apart from roads and underground services, such as the two schools, the coastal walkway, and a café and the farmer's market to attract interest and potential house buyers, generated public interest.
- A requirement for 20 per cent of houses to be 'affordable' (Axis Series), delivered through the market-driven building process. At the time of survey, the percentage of Axis Series dwellings exceeds the target.
- The deployment of a number of 'building partners' that ensured variability of development outcomes and the built environment.
- The establishment of sustainability indicators with annual reporting.
- Building at scale at higher density.
- A requirement for all dwelling owners to be a member of a residents' society with rules to promote future compliance with the original design guides.

The research is part of a larger post-occupancy evaluation of Hobsonville Point, and the reported in this Working Paper are the finding from a questionnaire survey and focus group discussion.

We now summarise the extent to which respondents to the survey expressed satisfaction with living at higher density in Hobsonville Point, and the extent to which this aligns with the vision.

7.2. The Dwellings

Key conclusions from the survey respondents are:

- Two-thirds of respondents were living in attached house types, and those in detached houses were living on relatively small lots.
- There are strong indications of residents matching space needs and affordability at the outset, facilitated by the wider range of house types and sizes available.
- Over 80 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with their dwelling size, although this needs to be understood in the light of a positive bias for a purchase they made.

- Despite the closeness of neighbours, satisfaction was expressed by between 57 and 64 per cent of respondents on the following aspects: size of outdoor spaces, privacy within the dwelling, noise from neighbours, the orientation of the front door to the outside, and garaging. Although overall satisfaction is relatively high, 30 per cent of respondents reported dissatisfaction with privacy in their external spaces.
- Age was a factor that influenced satisfaction/dissatisfaction with noise from neighbourhoods and concerns about privacy: respondents in the 18-44 age group were less satisfied with these factors when compared to the 65-plus age group. However, when considering how long respondents had lived in Hobsonville Point and the type of house, differences were not significant. This indicates that respondent age was a key variable over the measures, while differences of responses by house type and residency duration were not significant.
- One area of greater dissatisfaction (40 per cent of respondents) was a reported lack of street car parking, in part perceived to be caused by residents who use their garages for other uses and an under provision in the planning.
- Housing satisfaction was tied to the quality of private outdoor spaces, with a preference for these being located at the rear of the dwelling (not fronting the street).
- Given the effort made on the design of house-street interfaces (with principles mandated in the CPD design guides), it was interesting to note that the one factor that received the most satisfaction and the least dissatisfaction, was the orientation of the front door to other dwellings to foster social interaction. Despite the closeness of dwellings to the street and neighbourhood, the design of the street frontage, informed by the detailed design guides, is favourably considered by respondents.
- The aim of requiring more energy efficient dwellings was appreciated by respondents: 86 per cent reported being satisfied with this measure (only 1 per cent expressing dissatisfaction). Despite satisfaction being expressed about the environmental performance of dwellings, the bigger issue was the house being too hot, rather than too cold.
- Households with children were found across all age groups: pre-school, primary school and secondary school, and 14 per cent of survey respondents were over 65 year of age.
- Respondents reported very high levels of satisfaction (74 per cent) with dwellings as places to bring up children, with very little variation between those with younger and

older children. Overall, only 8 per cent of respondents reported dissatisfaction with their dwelling in this regard.

- With regard to dwelling characteristics, satisfaction of between 47 and 79 per cent was expressed by respondents over a number of factors. The area with most dissatisfaction (and least satisfaction) was the flexibility of internal spaces as children grow up. Dissatisfaction was expressed about the amount of storage space and the lack of privacy perceived in external garden spaces. This latter factor was of greater concern for those in the 18-44 years age group, compared to older age cohorts.
- Fifty-eight per cent of respondents with children reported that their children walked or cycled to school, a positive response where the aim has been to create a safe and walkable environment.

Overall, the responses indicate positive outcomes concerning the dwellings occupied by respondents in Hobsonville Point. Given the role that houses play in delivering wellbeing, the findings indicate that despite the density, relatively strong housing satisfaction is being reported. There are some variations to this overall indication, where better attention to design detail and layout would potentially be beneficial. For example, given attention to issues around parking, ensuring all dwellings have more privacy in the outdoor spaces, and avoiding ground level living spaces being directly exposed to the streets.

7.3. The Neighbourhood

The quality and amenity of the neighbourhood context is instrumental in leading to overall housing satisfaction. The masterplan is strongly conceptualised to integrate housing into the natural environmental, public parks and spaces and provide a range of amenities and services. Key conclusions from the survey are:

- In answer to the question: 'does the neighbourhood meet all daily needs', 40 per cent were *very* satisfied and a further 43 per cent satisfied (an 83 per cent level of 'satisfaction'). Only 7 per cent were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.
- The variation of housing design and configurations is highly appreciated, contrasting this with other developments where the design is all the same. This is a consequence of having a range of building partners and architects involved.

- The integration of the development into the coastal environment was strongly appreciated: the coastal walkway and Bomb Point Park featuring as the two top 'favourite places' in Hobsonville Point.
- Generally there was positive regard expressed by respondents to public spaces, and in particular, the laneways and public parks. Seventy-six per cent of respondents, for example, expressed satisfaction that the pocket parks were overlooked by surrounding dwellings, this providing passive surveillance. The majority of respondents found the following factors satisfactory: being an attractive space, had play equipment, and seating provided. More of a concern was the fact that very few public parks can be reached without crossing a road although most roads crossed have slow moving traffic, and in many cases low volumes of movement. Laneways were seen as more of an issue, where they are largely paved parking areas, or driveway access to garaging.
- Overall, respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with many design features of public spaces: signage, seating, wide footpaths, clearly marked pedestrian crossings, and walking networks giving access to amenities and facilities. Seventy-one per cent expressed satisfaction with cycle paths.
- Public toilet provision and parking for the disabled were considered to be major shortcomings.
- Sixty-six per cent of respondents were satisfied that their dwelling was within 400 m of a bus stop (the planning goal), and 80 per cent reported that their dwelling was within a 10-minute walk.
- Observations were made about Hobsonville Point lacking a 'centre' with clear identity (a 'plaza'). There are two areas designated for retail activities: the Brickworks apartment area and Catalina Bay adjacent to the ferry wharf. Although not yet fully developed, Catalina Bay is proving to be very successful with a focus on the Farmers Market, the cafés and the restaurants. Although there has been a good uptake of retail activities in the Brickworks area, these tend to be dispersed along Hobsonville Point Road rather than more positively integrated into an urban focus where agglomeration factors may enhance retail and social activity.
- Noting the generous provision of public spaces, respondents reported a high level of engagement and use. Parks, cafés and shops were reported to be frequented once a week or more by around two-thirds of respondents.

- The public spaces were reported to be frequently used by residents for a variety of social engagements, both organised and informal.
- Walking once a week or more was a reported activity by 80 per cent of respondents, a positive response to the design for a walkable community.
- The neighbourhood was perceived to be very safe by respondents: 98 per cent expressing satisfaction during the day, and 75 per cent after dark.
- High levels of satisfaction were expressed by respondents in relation to having a view of trees or natural landscape from their home (67 per cent) and having green landscaping in their neighbourhood (77 per cent).

Overall, appreciation of the physical environment of Hobsonville Point received very high levels of satisfaction on the part of respondents, with little variation by age, duration of residency and house type. This suggests a strong alignment between the design intentions and vision, and the experience of the respondents. What is also underscored is the key role that a quality neighbourhood plays in delivering housing satisfaction, when considered with the dwellings at higher density. Issues about planning for long term maintenance of public spaces in large scale developments such as this, is an issue worthy of further investigation. This is particularly important given the high value placed on public spaces in delivering housing satisfaction and well-being. Also requiring better understanding are responsible agencies for the range of public space elements that makes up public space that includes small and large parks, natural reserves, esplanades, storm water detention ponds and street berms and rainwater swales.

7.4. Sense of Community

Building a strong and vibrant community in a place where 40 per cent of respondents have lived for less than a year, and only 18 per cent for more than three years, is an ambitious aspiration. Key conclusions from the survey on this aspect are:

- Respondents reported high levels of agreement with the question: 'I feel like I belong to this community' (72 per cent), and even higher at 82 per cent in agreeing with the statement: 'I believe my neighbour would help me in an emergency'.

- The idea that Hobsonville Point has a strong ‘community feeling’ was very strongly reinforced by the focus groups, and how this closeness and congenial neighbourhood enhanced opportunities for social engagement.
- In relation to opportunities for community engagements, 73 per cent expressed satisfaction in having easy access to locations where events are held, 57 per cent expressed satisfaction with the range of community activities that can be joined. Dissatisfaction levels were all below 10 per cent.
- In terms of place identity, respondents expressed very high levels of satisfaction (77 per cent) with Hobsonville Point having a distinct identity. Place identity was extended to the expression of being ‘proud to live in the neighbourhood’ (82 per cent expressing agreement) and 66 six per cent of respondents expressed feeling ‘connected to their neighbourhood’.

Overall, the respondents expressed a strong sense of community in Hobsonville Point, well matched to the vision of creating a strong and vibrant community. This is surprising, given the relatively short period of time that most residents have lived in the area. In part, this may also reflect a shared idea of all being ‘pioneers’ and having a more positive approach to making it work.

7.5. Key summary points

Living at higher density in Hobsonville Point contributes positively towards housing satisfaction, leading to strong feelings of wellbeing among those surveyed. Of special importance is the key role that the high-quality public spaces and amenities play in housing satisfaction. This is of special relevance because of the prioritisation that was given to necessary investment in the public spaces and amenities by the development agency, driven by its executives’ vision. The same level of motivation for a generous investment in public spaces may not necessarily emerge from market driven developments. In this case there may be strong drivers for more of the value capture that comes from the development process to be turned into profit, rather than public amenity. There is no doubt that what is also strongly appreciated is the variability of the housing design and block layouts, arising from the use of different building partners.

Despite Hobsonville Point's being 3-4 times the density of a typical suburb, respondents in the survey expressed a reasonably high level of satisfaction with their dwelling design, and the relationships with their neighbours. In part, this satisfaction is derived from the amenity of the public spaces, but also from an appreciation of quality design. There are areas for improvement however, in relation to many detail aspects of house designs, especially living spaces directly facing streets, and the lack of privacy in backyards. This may be more acute as density increases with each successive precinct development. The original masterplan was conceived for 3000 dwellings, but the target is now 4500. These changes over time in part have been facilitated by the flexibility of the urban planning and development consenting process. It also potentially reflects growing confidence on the part of developers that there is an acceptance of living at higher density. Nevertheless, there are resident concerns about increasing traffic and parking issues as the neighbourhood grows to full development, and how new demands for retail and other community services will be catered for.

A problem facing the development agency in promoting Hobsonville at the outset of the project, was persuading people to buy in to higher density on the western fringe of the city, and be prepared to tolerate living on a construction site for a period of time. In part this was countered by the marketing campaign constructing an idealised image of coastal living under the slogan, 'moments away, worlds apart', but also in the way in which development was staged. Building the schools, establishing bus and ferry services, some of the parks, the coastal walkway and making the place a destination by supporting the initial café and farmers market, all helped to promote interest and sales. Whether by design or self-fulfilling prophecy, high levels of appreciation expressed about the place, corresponds to the constructed image. Despite Hobsonville Point being less than a decade old, the residents now have a strong sense of community and a shared commitment to what is considered by respondents to be a unique place with a distinctive identity.

Hobsonville Point has now reached a halfway point of development. The challenges that lie ahead are maintaining the positive views of the place and the community in the light of an ever-increasing population. This will also include impacts from new surrounding developments at Scott Point and Whenuapai, being marketed with their proximity to Hobsonville Point highlighted as a positive attribute.

Successive governments have pointed to Hobsonville Point as a ‘model’ for housing development at scale, and solving the housing supply problem¹¹⁵. The ‘model’ includes the masterplanning process, the provision of good public amenities, strategic staging of development projects, and quality house and public space designs. What has been achieved there also draws on the shared viewpoints of those who can afford to live there – in what is a relatively affluent community. Directly replicating the model elsewhere may not be effective where there are different conditions and acute affordability issues. Despite this, Hobsonville Point provides an exemplar of a process and outcome able to inform future higher density urban development across New Zealand.

Overwhelmingly, the research demonstrates that housing satisfaction is strongly connected to the quality of the public realm, and how it is designed to deliver wellbeing for all residents. In the case of Hobsonville Point this required a clear vision and intention on the part of the development agency (HLC) and its professional teams. Where development at this scale is solely delivered by the private sector, there is a risk that investment in the public realm may not have the same incentive as a public agency pursuing ‘public good’ outcomes. However, what the development sector is increasingly realising, is that investment in the public realm as part of housing developments, adds value to their investments as well as to the properties. If this can be sufficiently grasped, there is no reason why housing in the quality neighbourhood contexts should not be the outcome of development processes, whether driven by the private or public sectors. The increasing role of cross-sectoral partnerships and greater synthesis across the built environment industry, to deliver a more diverse product mix across the housing continuum, is also likely in this context. The penultimate outcome being that a best for project or best for neighbourhood approach is most likely to lend itself to a best for residents outcome in terms of the wellbeing experienced by those buying in to future neighbourhood developments.

¹¹⁵ See NZ Herald: Housing Minister Phil Twyford promises 12-15 'Hobsonville'-size housing developments https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11992831 ; Phil Twyford: ‘He says the authority will build on the success of "master-planned developments" like Auckland's Hobsonville Point, see: <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/shows/2018/11/phil-twyford-unveils-new-housing-and-urban-development-authority.html>

8. Appendices

8.1. Hobsonville Point Survey Questions

SURVEY for NSC11 Neighbourhoods

The survey is to be completed by one person in your household over the age of 18 years. It is an anonymous survey.

What is the name of your suburb or neighbourhood?
What is the name of your street? __

Your Dwelling:

Does your household rent or own your dwelling?

- Rent from a private landlord
- Rent from a community housing provider
- Rent from HNZC
- Purchasing with a mortgage
- Own outright
- Owned or being purchased by a Family Trust
- Other __

Which of the following best describes your dwelling type?

- An apartment
- A terrace house
- A semi-detached house
- A stand-alone detached house
- A combined house and workplace

If you live in an apartment building, which floor do you live on?

- Ground floor
- 1st floor
- 2nd floor
- 3rd floor
- 4th floor or higher

Is there a lift in your building or dwelling?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following best describes your dwelling size?

- Studio
- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedroom
- 3 bedroom
- 4 bedroom
- 5 bedroom or more

How long have you lived in your current dwelling?

- Less than a year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 7 years

7 years or more

Is this your primary residence? Yes/No

How many people live in your household? Please circle numbers

Number of adults:

Aged 65 + : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Aged 18-64: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Number of children:

Ages 13-17: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Ages 6-12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Ages 0-5: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

If you have children, how satisfied are you with the suitability of **your dwelling** for children of the various ages (please mark one response for each age range of children in the household)

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Children aged 13 – 17 years					
Children aged 6 – 12 years					
Children aged 0 – 5 years					

If you have children, how satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling:

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Amount of storage space in your dwelling					
Amount and type of private outdoor space					
Number of bedrooms					
Space within the dwelling for children’s play					
Flexibility of internal space as children grow					

If you had one additional child would you remain in your current dwelling? Yes/No

How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your dwelling?

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Energy efficient building					
Size of the interior of the dwelling					
Privacy within the interior of your home from people walking by or living next door					
Size of your dwelling’s outdoor spaces, yards and balconies					
Privacy of your dwelling’s external spaces (such as garden, decks and balconies)					
Noise levels from neighbouring properties					

Orientation of front door to other dwellings to foster social interaction					
Design of entrance spaces (e.g. porches or front yard) between your dwelling and the footpath?					
Garage					
Car parking spaces					

Is your dwelling designed for accessibility?

In this section we are interested in how well the design of your dwelling will allow you to age in place, or for family or friends who use a wheelchair or other walking aid to visit you

Which of the following best describes your dwelling? Please circle all that apply:

- The pathway from the street or main car-parking space to the front door is flat or gently sloping and is easy to use
- has a steep slope
- has a number of steps.

If there are steps, how many are there?: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or more

- The waiting area outside the front door
- Provides shelter from the rain
- Is a level surface of at least 1.2 metres by 1.2 metres
- Has lighting at night, either fixed or a sensor light

- The entrance doors into your dwelling have
- a high step into the home - that is 150mm or higher
- a small step into the home that is between 20mm and 150mm
- a small lip into the home that is 20mm or less

- On the same level as the entrance doors to your dwelling, please circle all that apply
- there is a small toilet.
- there is a toilet that has lots of space for a wheelchair
- there is a small shower that might be difficult to use freely.
- there is a toilet and shower room that is large enough for a wheelchair (1500 mm diameter circle)
- the shower has a level entry with no lip
- The kitchen is designed so that the majority of cupboards are below bench height
- There is a clear space in front of the kitchen benches of at least 1200 mm
- All doorways in the dwelling are at least 800 mm wide

- If your dwelling has 2 or more storeys, please circle all that apply
- There is a living room or dining area on the same level floor as the entrance
- All of the bedrooms are upstairs from the entrances
- There is space (or a room) for a temporary bed on the same level as the entrance, if needed.
- There is an internal lift
- All of the toilets and bathrooms are upstairs in the dwelling
- There is a toilet or toilet and shower room that is large enough to provide a 1500 mm turning circle.
- The shower has a level entry with no lip

About your neighbourhood:

How satisfied are you with your current neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all of your daily needs?

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
How satisfied are you with your current neighbourhood in terms of it comfortably meeting all of your daily needs					

How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of **your neighbourhood**?

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
The design and condition of footpaths and pedestrian road crossings.					
Safety from fast-moving vehicles					
The number of people walking on footpaths and in local parks					
Feeling safe walking alone in your neighbourhood during the day					
Feeling safe walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark					
A distinct neighbourhood identity					
A view of trees or natural landscapes from your home					
Green landscaping within your neighbourhood					
Well-maintained buildings, streets, parks and community facilities					
Housing for a range of income levels within your neighbourhood					
Being able to walk to public transport in 10 minutes or less, from your home					
Being able to easily satisfy most of your daily needs within a 15-minute walk from your home					
Bike paths within your neighbourhood					

Quality of shared open space in your neighbourhood:

Think about the **closest** shared open space to your dwelling. Please indicate which of the following descriptions fits that space.

	Yes, this fits	This partly fits	No, this does not describe this space
Can reach it directly from your dwelling without crossing a road			
Overlooked from surrounding dwellings			
Mostly consists of footpath and road way			
Mostly consists of parking areas and access lanes			

Primarily a walkway and cycleway route				
Green open space				
A space with seating provided				
A space with play equipment				
An attractive space				

Family with children friendly neighbourhood?

If you have children, how suitable is **your neighbourhood** for children of the various ages? Please mark one response for each age range of children in the household.

	Very Unsuitable	Unsuitable	Neutral	Suitable	Very Suitable
Children aged 0 – 5 years					
Children aged 6 – 12 years					
Children aged 13 – 17 years					

If you have children, how satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your neighbourhood?

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Proximity to parks and open green spaces	m	m	m	m	M
Proximity to early childcare centre / school					
Proximity to community centre					
Walkable neighbourhood, safe from traffic					

Age and disability-friendly neighbourhood

In this section we are interested in how well your neighbourhood is designed to provide quality environments for a diverse population, expecting that in the future people may choose to live in their current neighbourhood as they get older.

How well do you consider your neighbourhood meets the following characteristics?

	Very poorly	Poorly	Neutral	Well	Very Well
Large and clear signage for street names and way-finding					
Seating provided in public spaces, with backs and arm rests					
Footpaths wide and smooth enough for wheelchairs and to minimise risk of tripping					
Pedestrian road crossings clearly marked with kerb ramps, tactile indicators and island refuges.					
Good street lighting so that people feel safe walking after dark					
Accessible community facilities clearly visible from surrounding buildings and streets					

Parking spaces provided for people with disabilities					
Good quality public toilets provided at all community facilities including parks					
Public transport stops within 400 metres walk from your home, and have seating					
Housing suitable for older people found throughout the neighbourhood					

Transport

What are your main modes of travel over a typical week? Please rank from most frequent (6) to least frequent or not at all (0).

- _____ Your own Car
- _____ Car shared with others
- _____ Motorbike / motor scooter
- _____ Public Transport Bus
- _____ Public Transport Ferry
- _____ Walking
- _____ Cycling
- _____ Other, please explain _____

If you have children attending school, please indicate the primary methods of transport used to get to school. Please give the number of children for each type of transport.

- _____ Car
- _____ Motorbike / motor scooter
- _____ Public Transport (Bus, Ferry)
- _____ School Bus
- _____ Bicycle
- _____ Walk
- _____ Other, please explain _____

How many vehicles does your household currently own or lease:

- _____ Cars, including vans and utes
- _____ Motor bikes / motor scooters
- _____ Bicycles
- _____ Other, please specify _____

How many car parking spaces (garage spaces and driveway spaces) does your dwelling have? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

	Yes	No
Do you have access to the internet in your home?		
Do you own a smart phone or tablet?		
Do you use the service of shared mobility companies such as Uber and Zoomy in Auckland?		
Are you aware that companies such as Google, Tesla, and Nissan are currently working on self-driving cars, otherwise known as Autonomous Vehicles(AVs)?		
In the future, do you think that you would prefer to have an AV instead of your current car?		
Would you prefer to use sharing AVs (if sharing option will be significantly cheaper for you than the ownership) instead of owning an AV?		

How do you feel about the development of self-drive AV cars?

Excited

Concerned

Not bothered

Your neighbourhood

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel connected to my neighbourhood					
The natural areas in my neighbourhood are very special to me					
I am proud of living in my neighbourhood					
People like me live in my neighbourhood					

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel like I belong in this community.					
I believe my neighbours would help me in an emergency.					
I often have friends from the neighbourhood over to see me					
I plan to stay a resident of this community for a while to come.					
I can recognise most of the people who live on my street					

Neighbourhood spaces

Within your neighbourhood, how often do you visit the following places and have casual conversations with friends or neighbours?

	More than once a week	Once a week	Once a month	A few times a year	Rarely if ever
Parks					
Cafes					
Shops					
Schools					
Early Childcare Centres					
The Market					

Other, please specify					

What is your favourite place in your neighbourhood?

Community activities

Are you satisfied with the following types of activities **in your neighbourhood**?

	Very Dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Community activities that people can join					
Events that bring together younger and older people					
Accessibility of locations where events are held					
Opportunities to volunteer					

Outdoor Activities

Listed below are some outdoor activities that you might participate in. Please indicate how often you participate in these activities?

	Not at all or not applicable	Once or twice a year	About once a month	Two or three times a month	Once a week or more
Walking					
Running					
Cycling					
Relaxing outdoors					
Gardening					
Outdoor sports (e.g. rugby, netball)					
Swimming, surfing, fishing					
Visit local natural areas / nature reserves					

Connection to Nature

Nature can be anything from your own garden to a nearby natural area to beaches and mountains. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I prefer to walk in nature rather than city areas					
I walk or run in nearby reserves					
Even if it is cold or rainy, I like to go outside					
The sounds of nature relax me					
I prefer to live in the city					

Background Information

What is your gender?

Male Female Other

What is the approximate annual income for your household?

\$0 - 15,000
\$15,001-25,000
\$25,001-35,000
\$35,001-50,000
\$50,001-70,000
\$70,001-100,000
\$100,001-150,000
\$150,001- 200,000
\$200,001 or more

Which age range do you come into?

18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75-84
85+

What is your highest level of education?

No formal qualifications
High school qualifications (e.g. NCEA, School Certificate)
m Post-school qualifications (e.g. Vocational, Trade Certificate, Bachelor's degree)
Post-graduate qualifications

Which ethnic group do you belong to? Please tick one or more which apply to you.

NZ European
NZ Maori
Samoan
Cook Island Maori
Tongan Niuean Chinese Indian
Other such as Dutch, Japanese, Brazilian. Please state: _____

If you are NZ Maori, do you know the name(s) of your iwi? Yes No

If Yes, please print the name(s) and home area or region of your iwi below:

Following the survey and in a separate section to preserve anonymity:

Are you interested in participating in a follow up Focus Group in your neighbourhood? We would be interested to learn more about your current experience of living in this neighbourhood and find out what changes or improvements could make your neighbourhood more liveable in the future.

The Focus Group will take 1 – 2 hours of your time.

If so, please write your e-mail address here and one of the researchers will contact you with details:

Or please send an e-mail or call the researchers at the University of Auckland, pm.austin@auckland.ac.nz, or (09) 9238682 letting us know that you are interested in participating in a Focus Group.

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 6th November 2017 for three years. Reference Number 020345

8.2. Hobsonville Point Focus Group Questions

General Questions

1. Establish outline profile: Owners/tenants; type of house; how long in HP; children?
2. Where were you staying before, why did you choose to move to HP?

Your House/Apartment

3. How **satisfied** are you with your house/apartment?
4. Living at density: do you have **sufficient privacy in your home**?
5. Living at density: do you have **sufficient privacy from the street**; does your **back yard** meet your expectations and needs?
6. Are you happy with the quality and design of your home?
7. Are you happy with the **room sizes** and **space** in your home?
8. Are you happy with the **indoor environment comfort** of your home?
9. Are you happy with the pedestrian environment created outside your home? (the relationship between your house and the rest of the street/probe for walkability if required)
10. If you have a car, do you use the garage for parking?
11. Are there aspects that you are **not happy** with?
12. If an Owner, required to be a member of the HPRS – are **you aware of what they do**?
Probe re Rules and regulations.

The Neighbourhood

13. What do you consider to be **good about living** in this neighbourhood? Probe if necessary.
14. Do you **know your neighbours** (or have met others in the community)?
15. Do you find this to be a **friendly** community?
16. What amenities do you use in the neighbourhood? (parks, shops, cafés, etc.)
17. Do you walk/cycle – probe for how often and where to?
18. (For those with children) is this a good place to bring up children?
19. Transport modes – to work, etc. How good is this?
20. How do you think your neighbourhood could be **improved in the future**?

Are there any other ideas about your home or neighbourhood you would like to share with us?

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