

Building connected communities to improve equity for older people

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“Delivering Equity for Older People in New Zealand”

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Some definitions:

- **Community:** a group of people living in the same place and/or sharing a particular characteristic, viewpoint or interest. It is a foundational part of the human experience, enabling people to lead happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.
- **Equity:** fairness and justice, recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.
(Note: Equality means providing the same to all)

* ***Older people:*** in New Zealand are defined as those 65 years of age and over. Sometimes, people between 65 and 80 are called 'young-old', and those over 80 are called 'old-old'.

* ***Connected community:*** rural, suburban, and/or urban groups, organisations and institutions that lend, borrow, give and share the available assets, knowledge, skills, technologies and time for the benefit of the community.

Why does community matter so much?

Isolation impacts mental and physical health

Aotearoa's Ministry of Social Development's '[The Social Report 2016](#)' showed:

- Loneliness was felt some, most or all of the time, by:
- 10% of those aged 65-74 (48,000+ people in 2023), and
 - 13% of those aged over 75 (52,000+ people in 2023)

But there's a stigma surrounding loneliness, and older people have too much pride to ask for help

Loneliness is painful and can lead to depression

Loneliness 'inadequate social relationships' is as bad for health as smoking

Loneliness is linked to increased likelihood of entering rest home care

Lonely people are more likely to drink heavily, smoke, not exercise, be overweight and have heart problems, all of which increase dementia risk.

Social isolation can increase a person's risk of dementia by about 60%

On the other hand:

Social contact/community helps to strengthen and maintain 'cognitive reserve' (resilience against the effects of Alzheimer's disease in the brain)

The 5 core elements of a community are:

- Sense of place;
- Sharing: common interests and perspectives;
- Joint action: a source of cohesion and identity;
- Social ties: the foundation for community; and
- Diversity: social complexity within communities.

Communities can be built

Communities can be large or small, in person or virtual

Some examples follow:

- A virtual village**
- A vertical community**
- Homesharing**
- Connected communities here and elsewhere**

Virtual Eastern Bay Villages: Te Kokoru Manaakitanga (VEBV: TKM)



Whakatāne based, this Trust was established in 2017 to support older people to live safely in their own homes, and to build connections to reduce loneliness and isolation.

Ruth Gerzon, co-founder & Coordinator, says:

"We all need services but they can weaken communities by making people into passive recipients of care.

For well-being people need the sense of purpose and belonging that comes from being active citizens."

<https://www.virtualeasternbayvillages.org.nz/>

Some regular activities:



Oranga Kai/Just Cook programme
in partnership with the NZ Nutrition Foundation

Some regular activities

- **Digital buddies:** members who are confident in digital literacy become digital buddies to others.
- **Shared meals:** Once every month or so members share a meal together at a local restaurant/café and meet members from other areas.
- **Public meetings with guest speakers:** Someone the members have requested or is relevant to current affairs at the time.
- **Thursday games afternoons:** A small group of members meet for games afternoons every Thursday
- **Taneatua & Ruatoki coffee mornings:** members meet throughout the year.

Virtual Village NZ Outcomes for members:

- Greater confidence in skills, knowledge, decisions and connections
- Enhanced well-being
- A sense of belonging
- Active involvement increases a sense of purpose
- Making intergenerational connections
- Confidence using technology

Vertical Voice [monthly email/newsletter to Auckland City apartment dwellers, part-funded by Auckland Council]

Events, information and diary reminders:

- City Centre ReUse Market (car boot sale)....
- Waitematā Local Board Quick Response Grant - round opening.....
- Fresh fruit & vegetable weekly pop-up store: run by Auckland City Mission - Te Tāpui Atawhai with social enterprise Foodtogether on Federal Street. A list of fresh fruit and vegetables are advertised via a weekly e-mail.....
- New public art outside Auckland City Mission: 8 large boulders, hand carved by artist Joe Sheehan, titled, '*Lost and Found*'.....

Events and diary reminders contd:

- Free Soil Saturday: Local retailer City Jungle offers free soil and use of their tools for people to repot house plants instore. For more information: [City Jungle, 23 Customs Street East...](#)
- Join a range of activities as part of Te Ara Tukutuku journey of regenerating Wynyard Point. Learn about coastal ngahere and marine creatures that inhabit Te Waitematā – details for events are below.....
- **Friday 26 April: Ferry trip to Rangitoto to observe a coastal ngahere – FREE**
- Saturday 27 April: Seedling dividing & planting workshop 10.00am – 4.00pm under the red tents at Base Spaces...
- Tai Chi classes in Aaiotanga Community Space, 22 Emily Place

Homeshare Pilot Programme



- Part-funded by Office for Seniors, and run and facilitated by Age Concern Auckland, ensuring Owners and Sharers are well supported throughout their entire journey with the Homeshare Pilot Programme.
- Underpinned by the belief that the social connection and friendship of a shared living arrangement can help mitigate against the detrimental impacts of loneliness and social isolation.
- Owners and Sharers can enrich each others' lives through the sharing of life stories, experiences, and skills.
- <https://www.ageconcernauckland.org.nz/what-we-do/homeshare/>

Each Homeshare relationship is based on trust and friendship, allowing people to age and live well within their chosen communities.

OWNERS

- Are you over the age of 65?
- Do you live in Auckland and have a spare room?
- Want to connect more with others?
- Would you like assistance with home tasks?

[READ MORE](#)

SHARERS

- Are you aged 20 or over?
- Seeking quality, affordable Auckland accommodation?
- Interested in connecting with an older person?
- Willing to assist with household tasks?

[READ MORE](#)

Connected communities are resilient, sustainable and united; they support each other in times of need and celebrate together in times of plenty.

Resilient communities can weather crises, adapt to change, and thrive despite challenges.

UK report: the value of connected communities: Community Capital

- 2010 the Royal Society for the Arts and its partners at the University of Central Lancashire and the London School of Economics began working with communities in 7 locations in England to research and strengthen relationships within communities.

The vision of 'Connected Communities':

- people linked into local networks of social support;
- social isolation reduced;
- people experience greater health & wellbeing
- understanding, mobilisation & growth of neighbourhood 'community capital' is improved

Community Capitals Framework

- **Natural Capital** – The environment, natural beauty, lakes, rivers and streams, forests, wildlife, soil, the local landscape.
- **Cultural Capital** – Ethnicity, generations, stories and traditions, spirituality, habits, and heritage.
- **Human Capital** – All the skills and abilities of people, leadership, knowledge, and the ability to access resources.
- **Social Capital** – Groups, organizations, networks in the community, the sense of belonging, bonds between people.
- **Political Capital** – Connections to people in power, access to resources, leverage, and influence to achieve goals.
- **Built Capital** – Buildings and infrastructure— schools, roads, water and sewer systems, and main streets—in a community.
- **Financial Capital** – Money, charitable giving, grants, access to funding, and wealth.

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA): Connected Communities initiative

Across the 5 boroughs of New York City, NYCHA is using design of the public realm to better physically connect residents to each other, and to the surrounding neighborhoods and resources.

The [Connected Communities Guidebook](#) (2018) details NYCHA's approach to urban design across its portfolio. Projects can be undertaken by NYCHA or through partnerships with City agencies as well as private and non-profit partners.

The urban design and community engagement principles outlined in the Guidebook inform how NYCHA works with residents and other community partners to improve public spaces while properties are renovated and preserved to better connect communities with surrounding neighborhoods.

NYCHA: How to Better Connect Communities?

- **Community Engagement** Designs that foster strong community ownership and sense of pride are more likely to be successful.
- **Safety and Security:** The perception of safety is critical to the use and stewardship of open spaces.
- **Health and Resilience:** Safe, clean, and accessible open spaces encourage physical activity, and promote residents' health, wellbeing, and social resilience.
- **Maintenance and Operations:** Considering maintenance requirements within the design ensures spaces improve residents' quality of life.

Why design for older people?

In New Zealand between 2020 and 2048:

- The number of people aged 65+ is expected to increase from 790,000 to 1.4 million (around 24% of all New Zealanders).
- The number of people aged 85+ is predicted to increase from 88,000 to over 300,000.
- Currently our urban places are generally not well designed to meet the needs of older people, and often do not enable older people to participate or be included in public life.
- Environments that have been designed to include, be comfortable and 'work' for older people are good for the whole community.

Investing in interventions eg Community Information Networks and information and communications technology (ICT) build and strengthen networks of social relationships, generating four kinds of shared social value or ‘dividend’:

- 1. A wellbeing dividend.** social connectedness correlates strongly with wellbeing.
- 2. A citizenship dividend.** There is latent power within local communities that lies in the potential of relationships between people, and it can be activated.
- 3. A capacity dividend.** Concentrating resources on networks and relationships, rather than on the ‘troubled’ individual as an end-user can have beneficial and positive effects on people’s children, partners, friends and others.
- 4. An economic dividend.** There is evidence that investing in interventions which build social relationships can improve employability and health, and create savings in health and welfare expenditure.

<https://www.thersa.org/reports/community-capital-the-value-of-connected-communities>.

Connected communities here

Reanga Tangata Taiao – conservation volunteers

- Because pro-nature behaviour and skills require active nurturing, the goal is to grow cohorts of people who are motivated and equipped to provide practical care for nature.
- Connected Communities focuses on fostering connection and resiliency in and between communities through conservation.

The three goals of these Connected Communities are:

- Connection through employment
- Connection through environmental education
- Connection with community and healthy green space through volunteering.

<https://conservationvolunteers.co.nz/connected-communities/>.

Conservation volunteers



Connected communities here: **COMMUNITY CONNECT**

PŪMANAWA ĀWHINA | CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



Community Connect is a community-led initiative that engages and empowers communities through social sport, arts, drama, culture and recreational activity.

The wider goal of Community Connect is to increase social capital in communities, particularly those identified as high deprivation.

Whangārei Community Connect is one of the 8 active Community Connect projects. It works with communities using recreation and activity as a vehicle for community and social development, delivering human and social outcomes. It is an approach that engages with participants and non-participants, providing regular opportunities to engage in multiple sport and other activities.

COMMUNITY CONNECT

Partners

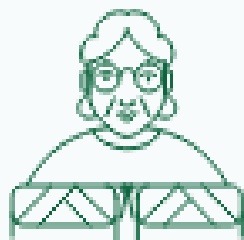


TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU
TAUAWHI KAUMĀTUA

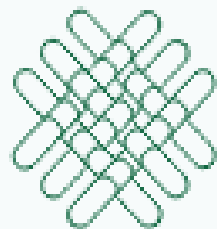
OUR ACTION PLAN HAS BEEN
CREATED TO RESPOND
TO THE NEEDS OF OLDER
AUCKLANDERS

The **Age Friendly Auckland plan** was created to respond to the needs of the growing and increasingly diverse older Aucklanders & ensure their needs are met now & into the future. This commitment is based on the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities and Communities Framework and Te Whare Tapa Whā, a Māori wellbeing framework, reflecting the bicultural identity of Aotearoa and the diversity of Tāmaki Makaurau.

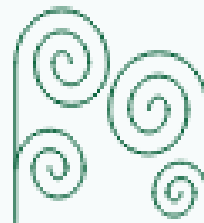
The plan will impact on:



Improving the quality of life
for older Aucklanders



Future-proofing our
region so that everyone is
supported to age well



Identifying and guiding
action to support those
most in need

He rerekē te hunga kaumātua o Tāmaki Makaurau

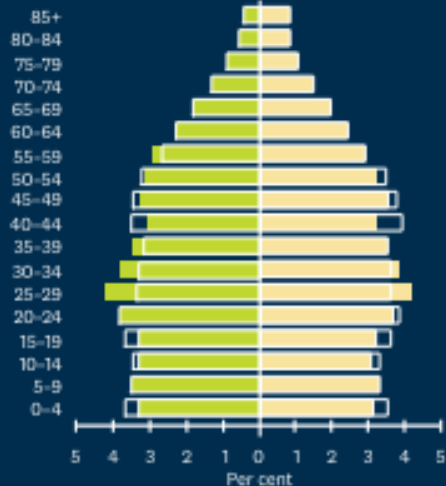
Older Aucklanders are diverse

12%

of Auckland's population was over 65 years of age in 2018, growing to **19%** in 2043



- Auckland population 65 years and older
- Auckland population



- 2013 Male
- 2013 Female
- 2018 Male
- 2018 Female

THERE ARE HIGHER NUMBERS OF OLDER FEMALES THAN OLDER MALES.

Ethnic Composition of Older Residents

Aucklanders over 65	Ethnicity	Overseas born over 65
5%	Māori	0%
73%	European	49%
7%	Pacific	15%
17%	Asian	36%
1%	MELAA	2%

PLACE OF BIRTH

44%

of Auckland's older population were born

OVERSEAS



HOME OWNERSHIP



67%

of older Aucklanders own or partly own their residence

10%

or

19,071

of older Aucklanders cannot speak English



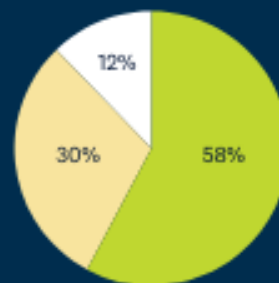
EMPLOYMENT



22%

A fifth of older Aucklanders are in full-time or part-time paid employment.

Age Distribution of Residents over 65



- 65-74yrs
- 75-84yrs
- 85+yrs



\$22,500

MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME

TAHA TINANA

Physical

Environmental and Physical Wellbeing

Helping us cope well with stress and boosting resilience.

TAHA HINENGARO

Thoughts and Feelings

Mental Wellbeing

The thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are vital to emotional and mental wellbeing.

TAHA WAIRUA

Spirituality

Connection and Spirituality

Our spiritual wellbeing, that we feel connected and included.

TAHA WHĀNAU

Family and Social

Community Wellbeing

Connections with whānau, friends, neighbours and feeling part of our communities.

Maintaining relationships and caring for young and old alike is an important part of life.



WHENUA

Land, Roots

Your Place of Belonging

Your connection to the land and to your roots and identity, including your whakapapa (genealogy).

Age-friendly o Tāmaki Makaurau

Whanaungatanga

A relationship through shared experiences and working together that provides people with a sense of belonging.

Wairuatanga

Spirituality, sense of identity and uniqueness – the holistic wellbeing of an individual.

Rangatiratanga

Autonomy, control, self-determination and independence.

Kaitiakitanga

Guardianship.

Manaakitanga

The process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.

Age-friendly Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland Framework



KAUMĀTUA

We are tangata whenua, and our unique cultural identity, tikanga and world view are recognised, respected and guaranteed.



CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

We are respected and able to stay connected, active and engaged in our culture, identity and customs.



TE TAIAO – THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

We live in healthy natural and built environments that provide public amenities that are safe and encourage us to stay active.



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

We have places to go, things to do and people to meet outside our homes to keep us active, stimulated, connected and healthy.



RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

We are visible; our decisions, diversity and experience are respected and appreciated.



CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

We have an active role in our community for as long as we choose regardless of our background, health and abilities, or first language.



TRANSPORT

We can get where we want to go in a comfortable and timely manner regardless of our abilities, mode of transport, income, time of day, weather or season, and distance to our destination.



HOUSING

We have a healthy, comfortable and secure home where we belong regardless of whether we rent, own a place or live on our own or with others.



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

We can easily find information and support in our community in ways that suit us regardless of our abilities, channel or medium preferences, or first language.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

We can proactively stay well and get wellbeing support when we want it regardless of our income or where we live.



Achieving collective impact through collaboration

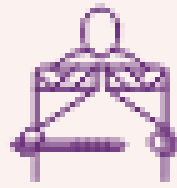
Tāmaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua is a cross-sector plan that enables collaboration between the council, aged-sector organisations and local communities to achieve collective impact for an age-friendly and inclusive Tāmaki Makaurau.

The plan identifies important actions that the council and key partner organisations are working on to improve older people's wellbeing.

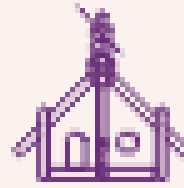
Many activities within the plan help people of all ages and stages.

What we do now to improve older Aucklanders' accessibility and quality of life will also benefit future generations.

Organisations
work in
partnership
to implement
the plan



Iwi



**Marae and Māori
organisations**



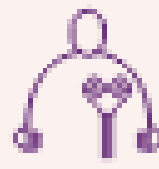
**Regional and national
organisations**



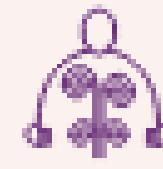
Charities



Tertiary institutions



District health boards



**Primary health
organisations**



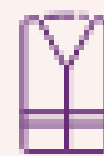
**Community
providers**



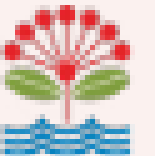
**Community clubs
or groups**



Churches



Volunteers



Auckland Council



**Government agencies
such as the Office for Seniors**



**Health and wellbeing
providers and businesses**

PARTNERSHIP WILL ENSURE THAT
TĀMAKI MAKAUURAU IS AGE-FRIENDLY
IN AN INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE
AND EQUITABLE WAY

Office for Seniors

Inclusive environments for all ages require:

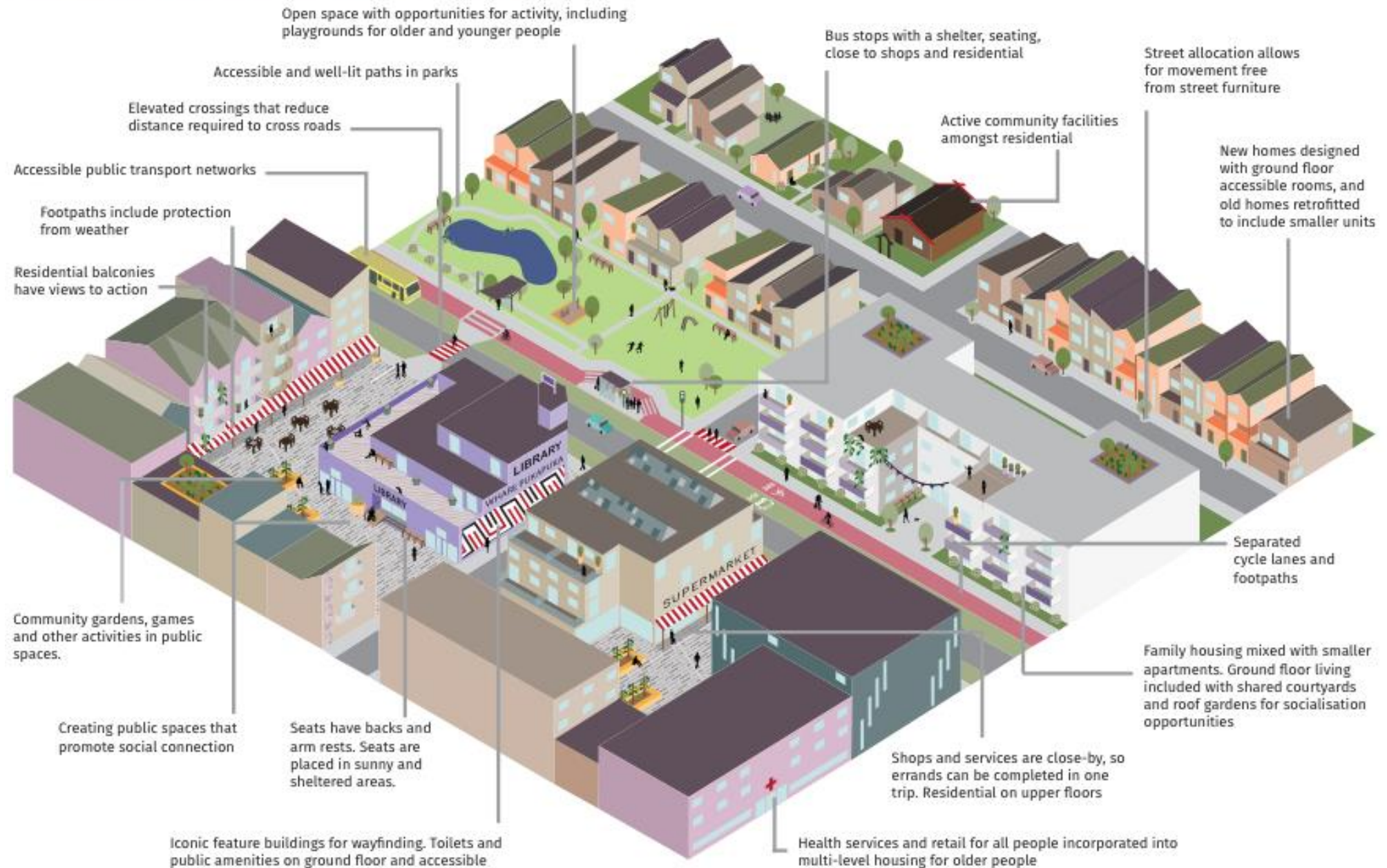
- multiple functional abilities
- Treaty of Waitangi principles
- inclusion of culturally diverse communities, &
- early engagement with communities of interest.

Planning guidance is in four sections:

- Streets and spaces
- Accessibility and movement
- Housing
- Community connections

<https://officeforseniors.govt.nz/our-work/age-friendly-communities/age-friendly/>

Ngā tū wāhi tāone pai mō te hunga kaumātua Creating Age friendly urban places



So: Building connected communities to improve equity for older people

As Denis O'Reilly writes in E-Tangata:

“The housing need is great, and so are the social needs of our whānau. So we should be intentional about building communities, not just houses.

Deliberately connecting communities increases their voice and power, enabling and improving equity.”

<https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/build-communities-not-just-houses/>

Thankyou

Questions?