

Greening our city - How creating more green space in our city centre benefits everyone

- Tena koutou katoa. Good evening and welcome everybody. My name is Frith Walker and I will be facilitating the conversation this evening. I'm so grateful to be joining you all this evening, albeit from the comfort of our lounges so thank you all for being here. Auckland Conversations provides an opportunity to inspire and stimulate your thinking about the challenges facing Auckland. Tonight, we will be joined by a panel of informed and passionate experts who will raise the city... Sorry, the profile of the city centre master plan and engage us in a discussion around the environmental, social, and health benefits that come from greening a city. First and foremost my best air hostess impersonation, so some housekeeping notes for this evening. This session is being recorded. All members of the audience will have their cameras and microphones disabled, but you can all ask questions via the Q&A chat function. Please note that due to time constraints we may not get to all questions, but we will do our very best. If you want to direct your question to someone specific on the panel to respond, please add their name to your question. You're of course welcome to tweet during the event using the hashtag #AKLConversations. We have for the sake of a wonderful conversation this evening, zero tolerance for profanity or cruel remarks. We're here to have a useful and friendly discussion on the topic of Greening Our City. So any comments and questions that are disrespectful, off topic... Or off topic sorry, will be dismissed. Be kind out there folks. We always try to ensure that Auckland Conversation events are inclusive and accessible. So the session is being recorded and on demand viewing of the event and a full transcript will be available on the Auckland Conversations website in the next few days. Just acknowledging also that this is the first time Auckland Conversations has been fully totally online. Something we are all getting used to. So fingers crossed I don't press the button... The wrong buttons, sorry, Or freeze weirdly on you. Ladies and gentlemen, joining the discussion tonight are the following amazing speakers, Ngarimu Blair from Ngati Whatua Orakei. Councillor Richard Hills, Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee. Howell Davis, Principal Specialist- Urban Ngahere for Auckland Council. Chloe Swarbrick, MP Auckland Central, Iain White, Professor of Environmental Planning University of Waikato, and Dr. Natalie Allen, Director of the Urban Advisory. What an amazing lineup. But before we go any further, I'd like to introduce and hand to Ngarimu Blair, Ngati Whatua Orakei, to formally open our evening together. Tena koe Ngarimu.

- Back to you Frith.

- Tena koe Ngarimu, nga mihi nui Ladies and gentlemen, it's a really important and incredible conversation that we get to have tonight and the panellists, we were just talking before about how important this kind of thinking is during these weird times that we are living in. So a reminder of the title of tonight's conversation, "Greening Our City: How Creating More Green Space in the City Centre Benefits Everyone." As we said in the write ups, urbanisation, a growing population and climate change, call for new solutions to how we create a healthy



and happy city centre. Greening a city is an important part of future proofing our city and improving livability. The city centre master plan is a vision to ensure that the heart of our city remains a vibrant bountiful place for everyone and sets the strategic direction for our city centre over the next 20 years. It was first published in 2012 and recently refreshed following extensive engagement and consultation, which revealed overwhelming support for a prosperous, livable, green, accessible and inclusive city centre. Tonight's event is the second in a series of Auckland Conversations, planned around some of the big topics that that plan addresses like transport, climate change, connectedness, livability, affordability and inclusivity with the aim being to dig into the city centre master plan, remind ourselves of its vision and make sure we are making a future worthy of our mokopuna. There is some awesome work underway. A prime example is the city centre master plan transformational move number six, Te Ha Noa Victoria Street Linear Park, which by the way is out for consultation until Wednesday, the 3rd of November. So please do go online at akhaveyoursay.nz to tell us what you think. Some wonderful words from one of the wonderful people behind that project. Te Ha Noa Victoria Street Linear Park is imagined as a green link, eventually connecting Victoria Park to Albert Park. At the moment we are delivering on the section between Albert Street and Kitchener Street in line with the CRLs Aotea station. Te Ha, the breath in the Maori, is the essence of life itself, encompassing all the senses and Noa is to be free within the journey to experience. Journeying from the middle ridges that form through ways of breathing, create a pulse and rhythm of heart breath within the city centre and to the lower part of the city between karagahape and the waitemata. Through this moment... Movement sorry, the Ha is the hub or nucleus that brings into existent pockets of vitality and breathing life into the city coming alive. What an awesome city to be living in that we're talking about it like that, ladies and gentlemen. And far more work than that. A really important mention is that, we need a clear strategic direction, but it's also important to translate that vision into delivery. So what are we doing as a city centre to deliver these outcomes? All right ladies and gentlemen, let's get into it. Let's conversate. So the way this is gonna work, is it will be an introduction by each of our panellists, followed by a panel discussion where you the audience will have . Sorry, opportunity as I said before to ask questions using the Q&A chat. Tonight's about having a friendly, open discussion about greening our city centre and to raise awareness of the city centre master plan. Reminding you that we have a limited amount of time to get through everything. So, it'd be really great if your questions are to the point and as we like to say, that they should actually include a question, that's always a good thing. And if you'd like, again if you'd like to speak to a specific member of the panel, please put their name in the chat. So dear panel, over to you for our first section of talking this evening. Please could we ask you to give a brief intro of yourself, how your background or role fits into the topic at hand and also tell us succinctly, we have more talk time coming, why is greening our city important and what are some key features that make a green city centre? So those two questions again, handle them how you will. Why is greening a city important? And what are some key features that make a green city centre? Dear Ngarimu, can we please start with you?

- Kia ora no tatou My background is Ngati Whatua as I stated in the karakia. It goes from the Manganui Bluff down to Tamaki. I grew up on the South Kuputa, kind of in the middle of the tribe. I have links into the North Kuputa as well from my great-grandmother who named me.



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And I've spent most of my working life, if not all of my working life down this end of the tribe with our Ngati Whatua Orakei people. And I currently live in the waitakere ranges between karangahape and parirua not to be confused with Parou. And my role the last 21 years has been working for Ngati Whatua Orakei, the descendants Tuperiri, who established us here from the one tree hill. Really to build relationships and work with good folk like yourselves, listening in and on the panel. To work how best we can bring back the key parts of our culture that we had lost, over the last 181 years. Not only our language but importantly we've lost a lot of our ngahiri, our biodiversity. And along with the loss of our great trees, our birds, our insects, we have lost huge parts of our cultural knowledge, our matauranga, putaiarau our science, our songs, our karakia, our poems and relation to all of those things have gone with it all. So it's really important for us to be able to put back a smidgen of what we have lost in such a short time, over the last 200 years. If for nothing else, that our people can then reconnect with those plants, with those birds and those animals, to be inspired by them again and to relate to them again, and to actively look after them again and be kaitiaki once again. So, I'll leave it there. Tena koutou

- Tena koe Ngarimu, Thank you so much. Councillor Richard Hills, can I hand it to you?

- Richard Hills Thanks Frith and Kia ora Ngarimu, and thank you to Ngati Whatua Orakei for opening this evening and being and the allowing us to use the city centre the way do today. And thank you for helping us reinvigorate what is there now and what is going to be there in the future. I'm the chair of the climate. Environment and Climate Change Committee, and Councillor Pippa Coom is the deputy chair. We are responsible for the Urban Ngahere strategy, which is our Auckland's Climate plan, which we built from the beginning with our mana whenua kaitiaki forum, which Ngarimu is co-chair. And we are trying our best to restore the Mauri of Tamaki Makaurau and what should have been. And we hope to see being brought back. And we are seeing that. For me greeting our city is ensuring that every kid got the opportunity that I did when I was a kid growing up on the main streets of Bloomfield and Beach Haven. We had trees everywhere we had... Every walk to school no matter what school I went to, I got a Bush track to go through. There was trees on every street. I was sheltered from the sun and it was enjoyable, there was birds the whole way. It wasn't until I grew up and realised that that tree canopy in kaipatiki is not across the whole city. And so our drive is to ensure that we lift that Urban Ngahere, that tree canopy for every kid across every part of . The city centre which many people forget, also has a lot of people living there. So it's not just about the visitors and there's, you know... There are thousands of kids that live in our city centre and they also deserve the Urban Ngahere that I got when I was a kid and that I still enjoy today.

- Amazing, just a shout out to all the Beach Haven kids out there, just wanted to acknowledge that. Thank you, Councillor Hills. Hal Davies, keeper of our trees and we go to you next, please sir.



- Thanks Frith kia ora katoa. Ngarimu and Richard thanks very much. Good afternoon everyone my name's Howell Davies. I work in Auckland Council, I'm the principal specialist for the Urban Ngahere. My department is park, sport and recreation. And I guess my role over the last 28 years that I've been working in the tree business or tree industry in New Zealand has been about planting and being the Kotiaki of some of the trees that I now see people sitting under. You know, I guess the... One of the key parts of my journey along, Frith has been around you know, working with people like on the panel, looking up to what we can deliver for our communities into the future, you know, greening of the city. When you look at the city centre master plan, and I think back to my involvement and that started back in Auckland City Council days back in probably around 2008, 2009. So, I've been on quite a journey. I've enjoyed every second of it to be honest. What really gets me outta bed every day is to see the people that I work with, the enjoyment that we provide for our communities. You know, we build great communities, we provide connections to nature. I get out every Winter to like plant trees. I still climb trees. You know, I'm an arborist by trade And yeah as you will have experienced, I can be growly on times unfortunately, when people aren't very nice to trees. And I guess that's just part of being, you know, somebody that really wants to promote the value of urban nature, because we all have to appreciate and live with as Ngarimu has pointed out. You know, Aotearoa has had one of the most I guess, fantastic botanical collections of trees that we unfortunately have come and decimated over time. And our role now is to try and promote the values and benefits of how we need to recreate it and bring that Urban Ngahere back to Auckland and back to the North Island and back to Aotearoa. You know, the more we can plant trees and preserve, the better it is for all of us, because it's you know... Connecting people to nature is good for everybody, it's good for everybody's health. You know. Kia ora thank you.

- I just want to also put it on record that if Hal's ever growled me, it was coz I was doing something very silly and I deserved a growling so. So thank you Howell for keeping us aware of the treasure that we have out there and how we should be looking after them. Dear Chloe, can we go to you next please?

- Absolutely kia ora e te whanau, tena koe to Ngarimu, thank you for opening this space for us. So my name's Chloe Swarbrick, I am a former failed mayoral candidate, but I now have the privilege of serving as your Auckland Central MP. So if we wanna talk about greening the city centre, we're one step of the way there. I just I guess to provide some background to the kaupapa that I bring to this very much actually is fundamentally in the charter of my party. And I know of course, we all come from different backgrounds, but nonetheless this is the coop that I'm subscribed to. Fundamentally that is recognition at a base level, fundamentally to te tiriti o waitangi. That is power sharing land back, moana back control therein as well and Governance Katiaki. But at you know, those four core principles first and foremost, ecological wisdom, recognition of the fact that resources are finite. Those that do regenerate need time and space, and God forbid some planning to regenerate. If you accept that as a premise, the next one follows logically and that is social responsibility. Known, you know, derogatorily on the internet as social justice. If you accept that those resources are somewhat finite, then we need to ensure that everybody has base level access to them in



order to have a civil, let alone functioning society. From that comes appropriate decision making, devolving decision making powers down to a level where it actually affects people. To me, that's what real sustainability looks like, that's what local leadership looks like. It's also about removing some of the centralization that we've seen over the past two decades in particular. And finally nonviolence, which I think to see as a sustainability measure is about recognising not just, you know, the obvious, unlike going to war, but from a systems level way of thinking about things, it's about saying if we were to design systems that work as best as possible for everybody, we need to have a diversity of perspectives and opinions around the table from the get go, so that we don't design systems that leave people out. And here, when I'm thinking about our city centre in particular, that's why I'm really stoked with that Auckland council has been doing with particularly disability advisory groups, around making sure that the city centre and development there in is more and more accessible to everybody. 'Cause sustainability has many facets and I'm sure will come to unpack that, so kia ora.

- Hmm, thank you so much Chloe. Just, there's a couple of quotes coming through about being able to speak to the place in a way that, in a language that the place understands. So, our ability to maybe listen for those voices better be on the as well, sort of getting a bit deeper on it, which I know is what Ngarimu said as well so thank you. Just a reminder if it's okay, can I ask you to use the Q&A function to ask your questions and not the chat function? I am a notorious Luddite when it comes to technology. So please, if you can feed it through the Q&A, there's a brilliant team of people helping us make sure that your questions come through and we ask them in the right order. If it's okay to send out that little, little request from your MC, who likes talking but doesn't like pressing buttons. Thanks very much. Again, thank you Chloe. Amazing . Dear Iain, whose name is spelled properly. I'd just like to acknowledge that this is an Iain with his name spelled properly. Thank you very much. Can we hand it to you next please?

- Kia ora kotou katoa Thanks everyone for basically tuning into the event. 600 people is a lot of people, really appreciate you spending your evening with us. I'm a planner and social scientist, and I've been researching issues connected to the natural and built environments for over 20 years now which sounds a lot. And in particularly how it links to climate change. I did my PhD on this, sort of way back at the University of Manchester in the UK and I ran a research centre there that specialised in this and did research on this for the UK government and the EU. So this goes back quite a long time, a sort of the green agenda. I moved here about eight years ago. And while there are different policies settings, there's a lot of similarities. Particularly in regard to the untapped potential and also why this is so hard, to be honest. Because of things like property rights, which just transcend national boundaries. As an academic, my focus has generally been on knowledge production. So, providing evidence of the benefits of urban greening and then insights into how it could be applied in practise, which then you hope is picked up by national governments and city institutions and there are a huge number of benefits. In some ways urban greening done well is probably one of the closest things we have to a silver bullet for urban public policy. It just, it can do so much for you. It can cool cities, it can store and slow water to lessen flood risk. It can support



biodiversity. It can improve access to nature, it can improve mental health and so on. But beyond this countries is to climate policy, I just wanted to flag up some of them because of the announcement today around densification. I'm leading research into the 20 minute city idea. And we know we can make density more political acceptable, by instead of focusing on the numbers of dwellings or the development footprint we focus on improving the quality of the surrounding environment too. It's all part of the same announcement or it should be. And that's the message I'd like to stress today, but I'll stop there and I'll pass back to colleagues.

- Now, I think that's a message we'd probably like to keep bringing up this evening if that's all right with the panel. Very dear to my heart personally. Ladies and gentlemen, last but absolutely not least Natalie Allen.

- Kia ora kotou, ko Natalie Allen toko ingua, I'm a director at the urban advisory and we're a team of urban strategists. We exist to bring decision makers, stakeholders and communities together, and throughout the whole urban development process to build homes, neighbourhoods, towns and cities. We have great privilege of working across scales and across Aotearoa And our focus is to deliver better outcomes for people and places. So our vision is really for a shared future where all places are good for all people. And greening the city is obviously a critical component of that. And I think, you know, in raised so eloquently, the full range of ways that greening the city is important. And I think the fundamental one for me and it's, you know, so simple and so complex at the same time. And then the evidence is overwhelming is that access to nature improves our wellbeing quite simply. I mean that's our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. And we shouldn't need more of a reason than that to make it our focus. And then the key features of a green city centre to me are fresh air. So you mentioned how before Frith and that's so important. And that's that experiential moment. It's how we are all able to, you know, enjoy our surroundings. I think also a green city centre is layered. It's not just about the grand gestures of greenery and open spaces. It's about creating all those small, wonderful human scaled moments when you are just, you know, interacting with the people and the environment around you. It's bio diverse and it's connected across all scales as well, and it enables us to be more connected as people. And I'll save the rest for the questions.

- All right, that's amazing Natalie, thank you so much. What an incredible range of panellists covering such a broad range of expertise. And I'd just also like to acknowledge Councillor Pippa Coom who's with us and will be bringing us home at the end and sending us on our way with thoughts to carry. So I know you'll be listening in Pippa, taking notes and we'll come to you at the end. So thank you for being with us as well. We're gonna head into the conversation section of this Auckland Conversations dear everyone. So panellists, are you ready? We are very organised, we're gonna do this in a very wonderfully, try not to talk over each other kind of way, but the idea here is now is to enter into a, let's all have a chat about stuff. So panellists, I'm gonna direct questions to you each individually, but if there's anything you'd like to add to a fellow panellists answer please raise your hand and as I said before, I'll try not to be too much like a school teacher, but I'm definitely trying get you all having a chat as much as we can on Zoom. So dear Ngarimu, if it's all right to start with you. Again, I'm



actually gonna combine a couple of questions, 'cause I know you spoke into this in your opening introduction. The topic of conversation tonight as we know is greening the city, in terms of how we can incorporate the natural environment and systems thinking into the city centre. So can you talk to us about what that means and looks like from a Ngati Whatua Orakei perspective. And are there any examples in the city centre that align with your thinking or are maybe, on the way to aligning that we are working on up here?

- Yep, Greening the city. I'd probably call it Browning the City. We wanna make it Maori again and green's a part of it. I was just going through Logan Campbell's book, John Logan Campbell's book again last night and he is talking in there about approaching into Orakei Bay on his dinghy and pulling up and wanting a Kai and you know, within a few minutes they've got 15 kukupa. 15 wood pigeons for dinner and chucked in a pot. And so I guess that the simple goal for many Maori is, we just wanna eat decent pigeons in the city again. Not those rats with wings. So how do we go about achieving that? So that comes down to, what we are planning in our parks. You know, we need the crudity rather than the Oak tree and what are we planning in the streets? What are we encouraging private properties to plant as well? So yeah, really just thinking with our stomachs on this one is kind of helpful. But also then thinking about, what do birds need to eat to survive? And yeah, I've been around a little bit now. I think I started scraping with Howell's predecessors, the city arborist about what was being planted in the city centre. And you know, we've won a few battles, we learned off each other and you know, we did some good stuff in Ateus centre, you know, that started out. The first plan is... I can't remember what they were Howell, but I think the trees were from Mexico. But we ended up with mostly natives and I've seen TUI up there now coming out of the town hall, which is amazing. St. Pat's Square, another one which started out as all exotics in the first scheme which we changed, when yet just taking it to another level as his key street. Bur probably, a little piece of paradise for me, which looks a little bit maybe what it used to look like for my ancestors six and seven generations ago when Hobson arrived and Logan Campbell is a little bit left down in Simon street cemetery under the Grafton Bridge at the headwaters of the white Purdue stream, a little piece of magic still there, a lot of exotic stuff as well but there's a stand in there. I hope it's still there, I haven't been there for a couple of years and a 30, 40 metre stretch of the original stream. So that's what we should be aiming for to meet and noting some good stuff that's happened in the last 20 years

- Ngarimu, and thank you for all your and helping those things happen. I might actually throw to Howell next, just coz the conversation seemed to head your way Howell and a question here which I think hopefully follow on from that and I a way definitely but, there's a lot of technical work that goes into ensuring trees not only survive but flourish in the urban environment. Can you give us a bit of an overview on this? Have you had any recent examples of where this has been done in the city centre and may be adding to that, what happens when we plant species that are indigenous? What happens when you're working with plants that are of land? In your humble opinion good sir?



- Yeah, it's been a long journey I guess. First thing that I'm to talk about, you know, what do we need to provide for trees in the city centre? I guess in urban spaces the biggest issue that we face is finding space for trees. Above ground space is relatively easy for us to see and manage, it's the below ground space that's really important. The actual physical connection to papatuanuku. You know the trees need to connect to the and to actually grow well. And I think we're starting to recognise that a lot more now with some of the designs. You know, in terms of the work I guess I've been involved with over the last, sort of I guess 15 years really, has been focused on trying to work with engineers and planners and everybody else to understand the issues that they have with us planting trees. 'Cause you know, when I first started with city park service is back in 1995, I was planting trees where we literally cut out a little hole in the tar sealed pavement and planted a tree. You know now we dig very large trenches, we fill them with good quality soil. We provide a really good environment for the trees to grow in and I think that's I guess, one of the biggest challenges that I've faced over the time as Ngarimu has talked about. I mean, if you look at a Yautia Centre, We are dealing with a rooftop garden. Not many people realise that, you know, you are literally... You have trees planted on top of what is the roof of the car park. It's a four story car park below so Now managing how we can plant trees into that environment is very challenging. You know, some of it been successful and some of it's not. Same as St. Pat square. I think for me over the last 10 years, Auckland city has really... Auckland Council has really focused on providing really high quality space, which I think was first rolled out with Queen Street then the Win yard Quarter, which you've been involved with over a decade now and seeing how that's developed, I think what we've really... We've challenged everybody else to give, I guess tree space because, at the end of the day trees are probably the most important part of that urban fabric where we want people to connect to. They actually provide that realism I guess, of nature is still there in the city. Although we know it's sirens and lights and everything else and that's really foreign to birds, but the one thing that birds really recognise is trees and as Ngarimu says, we are now starting to see TUI in the city because we now have things like Coif planted, which have a food source for them. Interestingly, I saw a wood pigeon sitting on one of those exotic trees on Myrtle Drive last year. And you know, that's just a resting place. So, it's a funny thing that trees... Birds and animals don't really recognise the difference between exotic and native trees. But in my experience, the more that we've worked with Ngati Whatua Orakei and mana whenua and just listening to the kaitiaki of the land, of what we should be planting, Some of the spaces that we're now creating are really successful and putting us on an international stage. You know, you look at Key Street, key street is a great example of what is a mini forest. We've created a mini New Zealand forest right on our doorstep. And so when people come to New Zealand, when they're finally allowed back on those, thousands of people will turn up on their cruise ships and they get off the boat, and they walk along Key Street and they will see what was as Ngarimu talked about, original species that were found in the original forest of Aotearoa. And that's really challenging to do that in a space that's dominated by cars, vehicles, utilities, everybody wants their lights, everybody needs water, sewer, finding the space to actually put a tree in amongst all that plethora of utilities is really, really challenging. And I guess through engineers, maybe it's me Frith, banging on their doors long enough to encourage them to provide space for trees, because as you now see the trees that we've got planted in Win yard Quarter have... You know, it's a very successful, prosperous, engaging area that brings people to Auckland. You know, us creating that as a group of people. And



there's a lot of hard mahi as you know with all the engineers and the contractors and everything else. I mean that that's not delivered overnight. There's years of work going to that. So, I think we need to sort of, `you know, recognise that.

- Hmm, amazing. Thank you, Howell and as you know, sort of don't wanna sound glib but we also care about oxygen, which is why we should care about trees. I think also encourage the audience, if you haven't done study into what happens under the ground, we think that a tree is that but actually there's quite a lot. If it's all right to recommend a book in front of you Howell, "Finding the Mother Tree" is a very useful read. But understanding what trees need underneath the ground is not a bad bit of research to do ladies and gentlemen. I'm gonna stay on the theme of what council's up to, if it's all right to hand to your Councillor Richard Hills. And would you be okay to tell us about some of the work that is being done in the city centre that shows the council's level of commitment to achieving some of the outcomes of those strategic plans that we're putting out there?

- Yeah absolutely. I think just a list more generally of the recent big changes I guess, that in 2018 the natural environment targeted rate across the whole city but also the city centre enabled hundreds of millions of dollars through Auckland has had, offering basically the submitters, well over three to two thirds of the submitters said they wanted to pay more for improving our biodiversity across , and that includes tree planting, pests and everything else. But also this year, we approved the 10 year budget and we secured significant budget for more trees, including 11,000 more mature street trees, 200 hectares of forest in our regional parks, 200,000 seedlings in our nurseries, but also all of our projects now, there's a far bigger focus on native trees forest as Howell was saying. I mean, council helped approve these things. The public helped support these things and lobby us, but it's the people like Howell, who do the mahi people that, you know, Howell took Councillor Coom and I up to the black bridge nurseries where I've seen trees that have been sitting there for years and years and years, ready to go into our projects. So, I've seen the puriri that have just been recently planted in base mere road. We stood next to them there. And all the planting that was the 200 mature native trees that have been planted in Te Wananga and Key Street. And that was Howells team, but also Ngati Whatua Orakei nurseries. I was there on the day that all that under story was planted. And as both Ngarimu and Howell have said, that they're the original plants that were there before when it was coastline. And that was so special speaking to those from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei who were planting it and bringing back those indigenous species. But also I think, when you talk from a climate perspective, yes trees reduce carbon but I think one of the biggest things about things like Key Street and Tuwananga, that was also so about making that space. So removing four lanes of traffic and providing space for trees. So you're not gonna... Trees aren't gonna fix climate change. Yes, if we planted half a trillion I think it is, it will reduce carbon emissions by about 25%. But, you know, we can do our part, obviously water quality and air quality, but it is if you are transforming spaces and removing concrete and removing cars and removing things and giving it over back to nature. And in this case, Key Street, Tuwananga, winning quarter houses by the via duct, event centre there, those groves of Pohutukawa now, it has hundreds of Tui in them. You know, I wait for my bus now down by, on Key Street. And there



are Tui and Piwakawaka in those trees already. I mean pre-lockdown, and those trees have only been there a short time. So already, the birds and animals are coming back. So I know it's not perfect, but I think we are really, really ramping up in all cases, extra budgets, but I know that healthy waters, your team, Frith at Panuku all the new greening of our streams and getting rid of the pipes and putting in that under story in those native plants, like right across Tamaki Makaurau. But you know, the Vic Linear Park is gonna be, I don't think people realise, I think it could be better than the design. The design is amazing, but people are already saying, "There's too much concrete." And probably four or five years ago people were saying, "How dare you rip up all that concrete." So, I think that the public is moving ahead of us, which is fantastic but I think, we're gonna have forests all the way through our city centre and if we're doing this now, imagine what people are gonna be demanding and the elected members working in partnership finally from the beginning with mana whenua are gonna achieve in the next five to 10 years. There was almost no trees in 12 years ago, and it's like a forest down there between all the buildings. So yeah, there's a lot more to come but, I'm pretty proud of what the city is doing and all the workers across it.

- Yeah Kia ora Richard. Yeah it's a team sport one might offer. It's pretty exciting to be a part of that change and exciting to see where it might end up when... Well somebody says, plant trees that you won't get to sit under. So, ability to think long range and accrediting people like your good self on thinking like that. I wonder if we can stay at the way we're having this conversation, maybe which Richard just touched on and go to you, Natalie. Are you able Dr. Natalie Allen, to explain to us the concept of designing for wellbeing and what parts are trees, plants, parks and green spaces play in this.

- Easy Frith

- Easy peasy .

- Well, I guess like... First of all, wellbeing is really multifaceted. So, we need to consider the impacts of the world around us on our health, our emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing, as well as our impact on the world around us. So I really connect with the model that also includes whenua, the land and roads as part of our overall wellbeing and how we understand it. And I think also, there's other ways that you can kind of look at it in terms of wellbeing being about, our subjective perceptions of how we're being affected and how we're affecting the world around us. Social connections, safety and security as Chloe mentioned, is a critical part of wellbeing. You know, community wealth is actually a really key part of wellbeing as well. Our education, you know, skills, ability to have leisure and recreation opportunities, the access and mobility, we have to move round and connect with one another, all these kind of different aspects come together and you know, critically cultural identity underpins so much of that as well. And then we've kind of got the usual understanding of health as well, being sort of the physical impact on us. And I think it's... You know, so often we fall into the trap of trying to oversimplify it, but we really need to live with that complexity and acknowledge that it is so multifaceted and it needs to function across scales. And so I guess the part that trees,



plants, parks, green spaces et cetera, play in this, is because it's really about creating those spaces, those environments, for all those well beings to come together. Because, we exist in the world around us and we like the tactility of it. You know, we want to be able to engage. And I think that trees, plants, et cetera, enable us to do that. There's some fantastic research actually that's been done, and a shout out to from a AUT who's looked at the impact of sensory gardens, on how students were able to sort of stay on top of their lives. And that extends to all of us is that that sensory experience around us is critical. And I guess I could cover it later, but I just also want to flag that, edible landscapes are also critical in this process. And so, when we think of wellbeing in our health, it's not just that they create spaces where we can breathe fresh air, et cetera, but they also give us the opportunity to have access to food. And we know that across our city, that is an issue for many people.

- Awesome, thank you Natalie. Chloe?

- Yeah, I apologise. I just wanted to button . But to add . Throw on top of what Natalie has just said, that we know and we have an evidence base from the mental health and addiction inquiry that the government commissioned, which actually was kind of groundbreaking in that the very first time the government commissioned research on mental health which wasn't triggered by a really traumatic event, but also looked at the social and environmental factors that determine mental ill health. And what it found is reflective of the majority of contemporary research out there that all of us of course have biological predispositions towards, greater or lesser manifestation of mental ill health, but it is largely our environment and our context that can help to turn those things up or down a notch. So particularly it's that access to those outdoor spaces. I mean, Councillor Hills was saying before, we've got a number of people living in the city centre. That's been particularly profoundly felt during the COVID lockdowns, as I've been advocating for testing stations and vaccination sites that people can walk to because we also have the lowest rates of car ownership here. You know, 40,000 people living in the apartments and townhouses in the city and I'm one of them and this is our backyard. So having access to a space that actually is a backyard, particularly as we contemplate being PSUD changes going through parliament tonight, these are really important critical conversations that we have to be having about how we also enable adjust transition. Something which doesn't set us for potential gentrification of these spaces and push people who can't afford to be in these spaces further and further out. I don't wanna see a future where we have kin of an enclosed gardens like New York or London for the old money. I wanna see public spaces that are available and accessible to everybody, and that are informed by transitional move number one, and the CCMP, which is Maori outcomes.

- Amazing. I think you've... 'Cause we've just totally practised this and we're awesome. I think you actually just managed to answer the question I was gonna ask you about the impact you believe green spaces and environments will have on our mental health and the wellbeing of our communities. So I might follow on from that with you Chloe and say as MP for Auckland Central, sorry, can you give us some examples of developments or innovations that you are proud to see coming to life or that give you hope?



- Yeah, I'm really actually to the point that Ngarimu was making before and I'm quite the city and what Natalie was saying around the likes of our soil. There's some really cool opportunities with particularly community gardens and the opportunity that that provides for actually reinvigorating our soil, which has been so depleted by some of the actions that largely actually colonial practise have imposed on the . So the there's been some really awesome proposals and some amazing fighting from people like Kennedy for the love of bees, major shout out actually to local board as well, who have invested quite a substantial amount in doing the background work on what it takes for council to approve kind spaces and places for these community gardens. That might potentially actually require legislative change because of the deeds of kind of transfer for the land. So there's a cool local bill potentially I'm yet to progress through parliament, so I thinking I offer that. Been also progressing some over the past few years, particularly off the back of learning more and more about what was playing out at canal road for tree protection. So in the environment select committee, when we were doing RMA reforms about two, three years ago now, I put up an amendment at the environment select committee, didn't get that through. So I'll leave you all read the politics there. Sage also actually has members go on the ballot at the moment that would reinstate that too. I think, you know, around the CCMP and around Queen Street in particular and the kind of stitch across the parks that we've been speaking to, there's some really amazing opportunities that I'm really stoked to support. But I also think, thinking about a really unique space right next to the hauraki gulf, is a really also quite phenomenal opportunity for us. And that is another thing which is reflected in the CCMP. And there's been an amazing example of what can happen when mana whenua are properly meaningfully engaged and council works and does the mahi and invests, with the likes of te wananga. So more of that please.

- Awesome, awesome work. Thank you Chloe. I've got a very selfish question about apartment dwellers, but I might hold that if we have time. Iain to you good sir. You recently said in an article in The Listener, that one idea is to think of nature strategically as green infrastructure. Can you tell us what that means? And can you see how and where this approach could be applied and should be applied to Auckland's city centre?

- Yeah thanks Frith. Well, green infrastructure or GI is a term academics came up with about 20 years ago. Partly out of frustration that the contribution nature brings wasn't recognised. So the idea is we've got grey infrastructure, which we know about the pipes, the roads, and we know those perform functions and we accept that one critically But we've also got green infrastructure, trees, parks, community gardens, the green strips by highways even. And they perform functions too. So the honour was by adopting the terminology of traditional infrastructure, its benefits could become more easily accepted by engineers and politicians and so on. And there's a few extra nuances which were... It helps you look at it from a strategic to plan network perspective by near subject terminology, just automatically makes you think about scale and connectivity. And it also, another thing that it stresses is around multi-functionality. So a lot of our grey infrastructure, they don't serve multiple purposes. A car park does a car park, but if you think about the value we have in urban land, we need it



to be multifunctional. We need it to do health, climate adaptation, habitat recreation, and so places which are more multi functionary should be more valuable. So that's one of the ideas. I think green infrastructure is a little like vaccination rates in the fact that every little helps, but you also you wanna target it really to get the biggest advantages and so. I mean we did some research looking at the impacts of climate change and trying to look at the identification agenda and look at the... You know, to try and quantify and get a figure on how much green infrastructure could make a difference and take the load off our pipes, in order to give that a financial calculus. We want to have even a small amount of green infrastructure, five or 10% of green in... And we call it green in the matrix. Green in an area will have a significant influence by reducing the load on your pipes. So it can actually save money and we can quantify that. And then we added another layer of information, which is around the characteristics of neighbourhoods. We know that poor areas have less parks, for example. So by targeting investment in green infrastructure in areas where we know there are green deserts or, you know, where we don't have... We have underserved population, we can actually use our scarce public resources pretty well. And the last thing we did was we looked at who owns the land. So basically one of the problem with this entire agenda is that private poverty rights mean you can't do what you want when you wanna do a network. So, just by looking at publicly own lands or council land, we worked out it was completely feasible to have this effect on surface runoff. So one of the main threats, and I'll just finish off by saying a couple of wider points around. I think one of the real threats and opportunities with is its synergies with the rapid densification agenda we're having right now. And if we don't take proactive steps, the green space we have now will be the most we will ever have. Developments are gonna gradually erode what we have, we've got creeping urbanisation, and we need to focus on the quality of life associated with that. You know, community gardens has come a few times, which are a brilliant example of social connectivity as well as food miles and food security health. So we need to look at the spaces between development footprints, which we don't do very well. But if you think about it from an infrastructure perspective it makes sense. So, I just wanna end up by saying that every park or green space, anyone listening to this has ever enjoyed was a result of a battle of a public space that might have happened long before you were even born. Those green spaces you enjoy today are a gift from past activists, planners and politicians. And that's why I want us to think about today is how can we given our development pressures? How can we leave a beneficial legacy to who comes behind us too?

- Amazing Iain, thank you. What I'd like to do now if it's all right with the panel, is sort of jump between our prepared questions and what we can see coming through in the Q&A. So, lovely people putting questions in the Q&A, thank you. I'm gonna jump around and hopefully get to a brilliant range if possible. Brilliant, brilliant. I think I'm gonna learn how to use it. If it's all right, I'm gonna start with the question I can see from Margaret Stanley if that's all right with Ashley, who's actually the boss of me this evening. But it follows on from something Iain asked and it's pretty central to our conversation around the CBD. How can private businesses and landowners in the city centre be supportive and intent... Sorry, supported and incentivized to plant native species, to increase biodiversity and cultural benefits? Does anyone on the panel wanna have a crack at that one as a starter? They need to... We'd like them to .



- I can give a really... Oh no, Iain go for it.

- Oh well, I'll be very quick then Chloe. I think it's not the most productive avenue to follow. I think you have your planning roles which can protect stuff, but really a lot of the nature that we see in gardens isn't native. You know, there's a colonial legacy. But if you look at who owns land in urban areas, you can really make a lot of ground with regard to using the State or even having planning policies, which if we're gonna have much more denser urban footprints, we need to leave our own investment in green and attach to that direct investment.

- Awesome, Chloe did you wanna get in there too?

- I was just gonna throw out a bit of a grenade for everyone to respond to, which was what about all the golf courses? Which is also a point actually about affordable housing and the lengths to which we'll go to subsidise with people on rent and rates, and certain kinds of activities in our city. But I also, yeah, just wanted to talk over the point that had been made by Iain about, where we can most productively use our resources in there. And I think, councils lands that it currently has access to, but also I think providing green education to people by virtue of exposure to these trees. These in public spaces is also incredibly beneficial. Inviting the public to engage in things like hands on tree planting is also massively beneficial. I was over in the UK back when we were allowed to internationally travel with it being 10 years subsequent to them passing their equivalent of the Zero Carbon Act, the Climate Change 2008 Act. And they had their equivalent of the ministry for education... Sorry for the environment, working with the ministry of education on how they could better improve wellbeing outcomes for school kids, but also for the general populace, as well as get greater buy in to the climate action that the government was hoping to achieve by getting people out in nature and engaging hands on in these activities. And I guess that is kind of the purpose behind initiatives like the green infrastructure fund as well.

- Thank you Chloe, Natalie?

- Yeah great. I just wanted to add that I think the real opportunity here and Chloe already gave a shout out to the fantastic group for the love of bees. You know, there's a real opportunity to support these grassroots organisations more and they can be best supported by also partnering them with a lot of these businesses who oftentimes are actually trying to seek out opportunities. And it's really a case of council being the connector between, you know, these different groups to be the catalysts for opportunities. Because I think in that sense and by supporting those grassroots groups, you're sort of on funding businesses in that way. And I think that's an opportunity that we can push a lot more as we see more development happening in the city. And just in case I don't get the chance to mention it later. We have huge opportunities at the moment, the land around the CRL stations. Dare I



mention whatever may happen with our port, to see these kinds of grassroots organisations becoming our brilliant engagement place making tools so that we can actually decide together what we want those spaces to look like and engaging businesses in that process will be critical to the success as well.

- Amazing Natalie, thank you. Iain, did you wanna add in there?

- Yeah, I just wanted to link in just very quickly with the grassroots organisations with another question that's come through around leftover spaces. So we have a term for this in planning slope. Spaces left over after planning, which you have just little bits on the corner that you can't get it dwelling on you landscape a bit. But there's movements, particularly in the UK called gorilla gardening. I mean, so this doesn't have to be a formal thing by policy on this day, is that they just planted veggies down a strip undercover of darkness maybe, I don't know. And it just started a movement of these spaces are green, but they're just monocultural deserts. It's just a little bit of grass. We don't necessarily want them to be, to perform as function anymore. The community wants something different and they just planted veggies all down. Then if you Google gorilla gardening, it's just a really cool set of grassroots people doing what they in spaces which are left over after planning.

- Yeah, amazing. Natalie, I'm just checking. Is that a new hand up or an old hand--

- Oh yeah. I just wanted to quickly add to that. In Auckland city we have a whole lot of bonus floor areas that could. And Professor Dory Reeves has actually done a lot of work in this space, in terms of identifying them. There are places that are meant to be public, even though they're part of kind of commercial premises. And so, raising the profile of those spaces as part of that whole, you know, joining the dots between business and grassroots groups, I think is part of that whole opportunity that I was speaking to. So thanks for triggering that thought in.

- What I'll do is follow on from a question, I'm following the rules now and actually using the chat as I was supposed to. But going to a question from the audience, I'm opening it up to the rest of the panel as well. We're in a biodiversity crisis and climate emergency, how will central and local government ensure that people living in more dense housing have access to space to grow their own food, to contribute to soil health, feeding the greater ecosystem. And welcome back Councillor Richard Hills. It's good to have you back with us. We're already sort of in this topic, but who else would like to pick that up, Richard?

- Yeah sure. Sorry, I got cut off there. Yeah, I mean we are purchasing about \$50 million worth of parks and reserves each year. So that helps a bit. The other thing on BEMs that Councillor Pippa Coom has been fighting this fight for 10 to 11 years or longer that the use of berms should be an obvious thing apart from maybe two or three rules. Like blocking site lines and damaging infrastructure and being okay about it. If it has to be dug up. The rest I



feel like should be pretty much up to the people near those booms or that tend to those booms will have to manage those anyway. So Pippa and I are going to try again, to try and loosen up that so that people would have the opportunity to plant on those pieces of land. There are community groups already doing great urban farming of things within the city centre, and surrounds. I mean I personally don't know if there is. If there is something standing in the way of people doing that, myself and Pippa would follow up in a heartbeat of how we can help people have access to booms or gardens or you know, there's plenty of green spaces around the city that could be better utilised. And if people are having issues with that, we'll follow it up. But I mean, there's nothing that, that right now that I think would preclude us doing that. From a building or resource consent, I'm not sure that we could require apartments to be built with gardens or veggie gardens or be that prescriptive. But I think a lot of people are moving that way as well, because it's actually becoming a marketable thing for people to go to those or purchase those apartments or rent those apartments with access to soil and being able to not only be around natives, but also be able to go grow your own food. So yeah, any ideas are welcome and Pippa and I would gladly follow those up.

- And thinking about the sort of innovative other solutions out there, Natalie, back to you lady and then over to Chloe. But as you were saying before, and also, do you wanna follow on from there?

- Sure, I mean I feel like I've already said enough, but I guess I think what's really interesting is that we've just seen this huge trend over time of different community groups mobilising, you know, everything from kind of sort of has been around for a long time like Oakley Creek to this Sunny Nook Community group, with life and reserve is just one example and there's the Pippa called a stream restoration. And I think what would be really fantastic from an innovation point of view is to actually network those groups together as part of this whole process. Because while I totally understand that tonight is about the inner city and that's critical, you know, our whole city is a system. And so actually understanding sort of the potential impact of all these groups when we think of it in that way is where I think we'll get a real shift. And because, obviously council has a really significant role, but it's about the whole team of Auckland er's that's gonna be required to actually get this to work and to turn things around for the city.

- Yeah absolutely Natalie, Chloe?

- I was just gonna have my 2 cents on this is, as far as kind of emergencies go. And I say this is as a person who fought for two years in parliament for the declaration of the climate emergency. Don't leave the politics to politicians, is real easy to come through with the rhetoric, but it is, as we've all seen politically, so-called economically difficult to do the follow through. But we've also seen in the context of COVID-19, that all of the things that we were told for so long were politically or economically or whatever else impossible, were always a matter of political willpower. So I'd say, I've got in the background here, I'm going up Queen



Street the school strike from a year or two ago now, and that was mass mobilisation of a bunch of rangatahi But nonetheless, that one off action is unfortunately while a huge amazing effort, not going to be the thing that is going to require that sustained effort through the nine to 12 months that it takes for policy to pass through parliament into legislation, let alone for a budget. So I think all eyes actually need to be on the budget in May next year in parliament to see if it lives up to the challenge of what is particularly going to be something informed by the emissions reductions plans and the nationally determined contribution to be announced in the not too distant future. But I also just wanted to ask this question actually to Ngarimu because I understand that there's been some mahi on matakai so I think that there's some amazing lessons that we can learn about that, kaupapa and how we can get more of that happening across tamaki makaurau.

- Yeah, just thinking, historically we had some epic, epic gardens in Tamaki. I'm just thinking of , Another name is . Our great ancestress who was like... shed market gardens that went from North side, all the way to Ellerslie which is two kilometres. Huge, huge garden. So once we're gardeners, we were. Our generation has very much lost those skills that our great grandparents had. They were living by the maramataka. My great grandparents generation, less so the grandparents and definitely not my parents or my generation. So it's a lost skill and art that we have been trying to bring back. I've had a couple of goes at community gardens, matakai with spectacular failures. You know, a hundred people turn up on day one, a month later there's five people and three months later it's weeds. So I've had a few go's, but we have learned a lot and we do now have a pretty epic garden up at , which is up Kipper Road in Rake. And that was developed by Rob small, who came into our Iwi from a parks background actually, and did his thesis on maramataka. And so that one's really pumping at the moment. It's probably only operating, it looks like at about 33%, but a heap of kai coming out of there. We've had plenty of kumara come out of there. And it's just beginning to really engage whanau, we have Tuesdays, you can go on pick up free veggies. I guess the next part is then to teach everyone how to make kale taste nice. So we'll need to add those sorts of lessons, but yeah, that's going... That is definitely something to come and visit and look at and learn from and advise us on as well 'cause we're still learning. And yeah, I guess it's more places like that that we need right across our city so that people can connect to it. And we have a lot of housing in New Zealand kainga ora homes, very near to the garden as well. So that's one of the aims is to, is to bring people in, attract them in and they can, you know, lighten the load on their household bills by grabbing some Kai and helping out in the garden.

- All right, awesome. Kia ora Ngarimu. Iain, we might come to you next with that green wall question, but is it all right to just go to Howell, who's had his hand up very politely for a long time now.

- Thanks Frith. I was just really on the back of what Natalie was saying around, you know, us as Auckland Council working with local community groups. I think we've learned a lot over the last decade around how do we engage with our communities, especially in the parks department. We certainly... I guess our main goal is to try and connect with the people that



want to volunteer and provide, I guess love and care to our parks. And we are just a facilitator and an enabler and a big shout out to our regional parks staff and our volunteer coordinators in the local parks that work with communities. We deliver hundreds of thousands of hours of work across the region and the network of 4,000 odd parks. In terms of that sort of growing locally, like Ngarimu, I've in my time at council, I've seen community gardens come and go. It really needs, I guess, a little bit of that sort of structure put around it. And I'm all for gorilla gardening Iain, it's a challenging space to get into. But you know, from a council perspective, we're the land owner. We are more than happy to work with communities to see what we can do to grow food within parks. But we also need the communities to work with us to help us support, you know, what we're trying to do in terms of planting, looking after, et cetera. So I guess it's a two way, you know, two way agreement in some ways. Two way, you know... We are certainly there to try and facilitate the public and their accessibility to parks and work with the various spaces that we have. Unfortunately sometimes we're constrained with as you know, with some of our parks unfortunately have been previously landfills. So growing food on them is not particularly appropriate in some cases, the same with planting veggie gardens next to the road corridor. We still have diesel buses that put out a lot of particulates. So, there are things to think about in terms of, you know, growing in your local road corridor, or street environments. But I guess for us as a parks department, we want to work with the public to help, Ngarimu's example around what they're doing at poriwa is I'd encourage everybody to go and have a look, it's a fantastic operation. You know, it really does... It brings a life and spirit to the place. You can see the people that are working there are really getting something out of it.

- Amazing, there's a lovely question in the chat, which I might come back to to you Howell, around how people can get involved. But Iain, can we address the green wall question please? Are green walls starting to join green roofs, it's something that developers are doing and councils are allowing.

- Okay, green wall's are really cool actually. I mean, literally they are cooling. That's my one joke for you--

- Hey, hey.

- So enjoy it. If you've ever been there, well they are really, they're nice things to look at and they do change the atmosphere and you know, and they do cool it. It's difficult because the problem we have is that the research suggests that it's not a policy problem as such, because it's a developer architecture desire really. They're worried about ongoing maintenance. If it looks a bit crap, if things die and they're worried whether they'd know how to do it. And we did some research in the UK on where were the green moves and to cross reference the green moves with the policy framework. So, you'd imagine places with better, stronger policy, would've more green moves, there wasn't any correlation at all. One of the places that had it, was just... It turned out it was just a guy like Howell who works at the council, who was just get when the developer is doing something and you'd chat to them and



they'd put it in. And you'd sort of de-risk it a little bit by showing them how to do it. So it was around champions within the council that really pushed it and within the architecture sector, as well as the development sector. So, it's limited to mandate this. I mean, Germany did it with some of the sort of green roofs coverage. But the green roofs are just not as effective, 'cause they're so high up their cooling effect is so far removed from where you are. It doesn't translate as well as green walls.

- Mm-hmm. Thank you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's one of those things that's moved a conversation on, but maybe there's more conversations to go on from there. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm really conscious of sending you all home on time. So what we're gonna start doing now is getting into our final few questions. So please panellists, if there's something that you haven't been able to say that you wanna say, jump in there and raise your hand. I'm gonna go for this question that's just come through. How can we better enable leftover spaces? What did you say Iain, sloaps? I.e public open space that is not used for sports that is just planted with grass in our city, not just the city centre, to be planted with native trees more urgently, noting that council has limited resources to do this themselves. I think it probably also relates to the micro question. How can we make, you know, I think you said this Iain, The small gestures that actually carry a lot in this conversation. Feelings from the panel, how can we do this?

- Yeah, I think... Once again, it's about that ground up. What Iain was saying and what Ngarimu was saying as well around you need community around something. Council can't just enable something and hope it works, so I think we've got, you know, funds that we passed last year. This year, sorry. That people can apply for, community groups and to partner with us. Our Urban Ngahere strategy, now almost every local board is rolling out their own Urban Ngahere strategy and it is about those little... Those little bits and those little areas and places you can have many, many biodiversity, many forests basically. You know, there's so many good ideas in Northco. It feels like it's been forever over a decade, right? Frith, you know, the Northco Greenaway, just years of what we thought. And it was largely ideas from kids, from school students and it felt like an impossible idea. Now we're redeveloping that space with and the the Greenaway is gonna be backed onto all the schools. So the ownership there, is the schools. Manafino had been working with the project, kind of everyone getting around together. So you have their ownership. So there will be food forests and gardens, but there will be a whole lot of native greenery there, but that it's also an infrastructure project to prevent flooding and to improve water quality. But those ideas can only come from community and they can only come if everyone works together, council is not great at just pointing things out and hoping that they, they work. They really need the ground up. Work I seen when I was on the local board, you know, a small group of the people, volunteers like begging us to do stuff in our parks and reserves. Now with a little bit of support from council over time, it's grown past keys there. Now I think there's something like 87 halos across with hundreds of volunteers. And that's just neighbours doing. There might be one thing a year, one plant or one rat trap or one, whatever it is. And people work on their strengths. And I think if you have ideas, take them to your local board, take them to your... There's community groups all over the city, talk to your local Iwi, and there's



something for everyone. Or create an idea yourself. But I guess if you're waiting for council to figure out what to do all those little bits, it probably will take a while and it'll be bureaucratic. So, we really need that people to step up and ask for help, or just ask for, Don't ask for help and just do it and then apologise later. But I didn't say that.

- Didn't hear you, didn't record you saying that. Just as a shout out, if anybody who was in the untouched world, awataha stream project. It was over a decade ago is listening to this call, your work counted. I just wanna... I know you're all grownups now, but your work counted just to pass that on, Howell my friend, you have your hand up.

- Yes. Thanks Frith, really just following from what Richard said, in terms of, how do people make use of these spaces within our parks. Network is go and talk to your local board, and talk to our local volunteer, coordinators, you'll find a lot of information through Auckland councils, you know, website, if you go to our parks Facebook page, you'll find we're able to connect. You know, we will be able to connect you to a local volunteer group that can help with as Richard said, you know, trapping, or tree planting or weed control. So re really it's about, we can help enable, but the communities also need to reach out to us. And then, we can work with them and help provide them with the tools. 'Cause that's, I think that's where our best successes are gonna be going forward with is to actually provide the tools to the local communities, to help them look after the parks in the way that they would like to see our parks looked after. You know, we can provide those base services, but yeah, the extra little bit, that's where we look on our communities to try and help us. And yeah, the local boards' is definitely a place to start. As Richard said, they've 16 of the local boards now. Are involved in the local board, ngahiri programme and they provided funding we've helped them develop, helped them develop specialised plant oil. Individual planting plans or planting opportunities for each of their local board areas. And you know, in those documents there's opportunities for the public to have feedback, call our call centre and they can put people in touch with how to best get connected with our volunteer groups, et cetera that we have out there. So yeah, we just need the people to put their hands up.

- Amazing, can I just just acknowledging, the person who's identified the himself as a young student, good on you for being here and good on you for your passion. What he just said, get in there.

- And just on that frith, a lot of just on the council resource and the promise around the Urban Ngahiri, I saw a question earlier. A lot of that will go to the areas of need. Everyone will get a little bit with the 10 year budget budget, that we put forward. But I will be going to those local boards who have six and 9% urban street canopy. And those are where those big trees are gonna go. And those are where the focus has to go because I have 35% urban tree cover in my local board area. I am gonna get a little bit more but, but we need to focus on those areas, which are so poorly served. And it's unfair that that kids are still growing up with no trees.



- Yeah, thank you. Thank you, thank you Counsellor Hills. I'm gonna squeeze two more questions in to the whole panel. Agree that green spaces create places for all well beings to come together. What we're missing with this discussion is the connectivity between these spaces. We can't design spaces that are inaccessible e.g. no place. Sorry. Places that are not wheelchair, or push chair friendly and probably, yeah. Does anyone wanna take, take a good answering that one for me, Natalie?

- Yeah, this is a fantastic point. And just to kind of give an overseas example, I'm sometimes reluctant to do that because I think we can actually do better than overseas and we have te ao maori so we definitely, should be doing better in terms of green spaces and that connection to our environment. But one amazing place where I had the pleasure of going was Freiburg in Germany, where there's a neighbourhood called Vauban. And what's so fantastic about that area is that accessibility is actually baked into the design of that place. And here, I often kind of feel like grey guides you, whereas there you genuinely feel that green guides you. So, all the kind of access to mobility is really framed around this network of green spaces and it's visual. They have a light rail corridors that are planted in grass. When you sort of cross the road, you are actually crossing that. What feels like a green space and from a distance, especially visually it looks like one, but they also have all the kind of significant wrap around social service. So it's not just about, you know, planting trees, it's about all the programmes and there's a whole kind of economic development component to this around how they set up their businesses to make them accessible. And again, I just think that that's a really great example without going into too much more detail that we can learn from. And again, it's that whole system's approach to solving the problem.

- Beautiful Natalie, thank you Chloe.

- Yeah, I mean, one of the core tenants again, to back to the city centre master plan, which is a beautiful, wonderful document, first released in 2012 and refreshed in 2020 with its own website, is access for everyone. And while that totally is talking about the design of Auckland City Centre, it also very much has at its core accessibility and streams to all people. You know, to give you an example of something that has been a really interesting space to kind of have this fight, it's actually been the playground on parliament's lawn. So when I was first elected at the end of 2017, there was a lot of modes to make parliament more family friendly. And the speaker announced that we would be having a playground on parliaments lawn. I wrote to him at that point in time, pointing out that unless it was a playground available for and accessible for all children, then it probably didn't fit particularly well with the kaupapa that he was trying to promote and put forward a number of design and accessibility principles which should be, I think, core tenant to everything and that at the very least the public sector is funding. And at that point in time, I didn't hear anything back, and a few months later plans were solidified and I was later told that the heritage standards around parliament building and the character protections or whatever else was being extrapolated ultimately meant that the playground had to be designed at 150K odd that it ended up being developed to look the way that it did being a slide and some steps that kids could play on, which again is not something accessible to kids in wheelchairs or with other disabilities. So, you know, I think



so often we end up prioritising something like aesthetics when it should be the case that form follows function. And it should be the case that we should be putting people at the centre of everything that we are designing and people of all walks of life, including those that are so frequently excluded from being at the decision making table. And there's some really great universal accessibility standards that we can impose on the way that we do things here. I guess, you know, just finally talking about how we can make that more accessible to everybody, particularly to apartment dwellers and to the new homes that we're hoping will come on stream as a result of things like BMPUD changes, that all comes down to creating some universal standards because the products will then fit that mould. So there's some great opportunities with potentially building and construction requirements.

- Amazing, thank you Chloe. Ngarimu, if I can go to you for the last question. If we were to adopt more of this approach, is there a particular area in the city centre that you feel we should be turning our collective focus to physical or otherwise?

- Hmm Yeah, we need to take back our port and re plan that, that would that would help. It's about 80 hectares that's a good start. Unfortunately, there's little political appetite for that right now or anytime soon. But yeah, I think there's been a few questions tonight around. I think it's around connectivity. That is probably something we. I mean, I know there's corridors talked about and how are we working on that, but it's probably, how do we. How do we connect everybody up from the apartment dweller, from the developer, from the young student who wants to find out where they they can, you know, help out somewhere. And then how do we connect up the street trees with the patches of little bits of recovering bush connected to them the, you know, the bigger patch that might be in the domain that then connects with to best point then to keep a bush and so on and so on. And tell that story, tell that narrative. So it kind of makes sense to someone who might be a first homeowner who's just bought a apartment or a terraced house on the edge of the city and they can, I don't know, figure out how they might be able to do their little bit. That they might plant a kowhai if they've got a bit of space that might do just a little bit for them. So yeah, probably not one thing other than getting our port back is yeah. How might we tell that narrative and connect all of that up a bit better so everyone can know their role in what little thing or big thing that they could do to contribute.

- Thank you so much Ngarimu. It has been a very great privilege to be with you all in this conversation. So thank you so much panellists for bringing what you've brought, a really important conversation for our city. And sorry, what just sprang to the top of my head is we need to think like the trees, we need to remember we're all connected and be together in this journey. So thank you for your wise words and for your help in steering this fine city that we live in. So ladies and gentlemen that's it from me. It is now my extreme pleasure to... I'm famous for fan girling her and messing up her introduction. So now I won't do that, Councillor Pippa Coom, can we please hand it to you to send us all home?



- Short of breath you took my line. I was gonna say I'm your fan girl and the fan girl of all the panellists but... Nga mihi mahana kia kotou katoa It is my privilege to be able to give the vote of thanks this evening for this Auckland Conversations totally online. Thank you to start with, with all of those of you who've joined us this evening. I think we topped out at about 160 participants, which is pretty amazing really, that we can all come together in this time of lockdown, just as we're about to enter into our 10th week. I hope everybody is keeping well and safe in your bubbles. And you've been able to enjoy checking in with us this evening. There's been a lot of takeaways from the conversation and I appreciate we haven't got through all of the questions. I was very grateful tena koe Ngarimu that you kicked us off this evening and really grounded us in terms of the starting point has got to be around as you called it, Browning the city. But moving ahead in terms of our partnership. And I first met Ngarimu I think over a decade now, when he was telling Auckland... The old Auckland City Council that the wrong kind of trees were being planted on Park Road, and he was absolutely right. Because those trees are now exactly just causing a whole lot of issues. And if we'd just gone ahead with his wise words at the time, we wouldn't have gotten into such a pickle, but there's so much that we can be appreciative of around our city and the greening that has taken place. And it's been great to have Howell with us, he reminded me this picture I've got behind me of the trees on on Key Street. I think Howell has hugged every single one of these Nahiri. He is a tree hugger in chief and has just made an immense contribution to this city. I've learned new things this evening. Thank you Iain, for enlightening me about sloaps. I think I've got that right. And also just Natalie you've really reminded us too just about how greening the city is so important for all of our wellbeing. And we have focused this evening on the city centre, but of course all of this mahi to happen right across Tamaki Makoto and me and Councillor Richard, who's great. He's been out on the panel as our fearless leader of the climate and environment change committee. There is just amazing work happening right across the city. And many of you are here on this call tonight. It's awesome, all of the grassroots work that is going on, we haven't had the chance to acknowledge all of you, but I do really appreciate all of your work that's out there. There was some other kind of things that came through on the questions that we weren't able to touch on, but I do want to just acknowledge and thank for all of those questions, particularly around, you know, what do about tree protection? Around, we could be doing more with planting at schools. I think there was questions around the building act, and hopefully we can find a way of kind of pulling some those, those things together. Iain has just put a comment in that spaces left over after planning. A sloap, sloap. . So there's heaps of more to do, and I can sense some of the frustration coming through too in the comments and questions that as I think it was Iain said that, we have to be proactive now because this is... We've got to absolutely grasp all of the this extra space that we've got, the green spaces that we possibly can work with now, because this is... If we don't take this chance now they might be gone forever. And that's particularly top of mind, as the city grows and intensifies, and we have to meet all of the challenges ahead of us, particularly climate change. So I do want to bang on seven o'clock, suppose Frith isn't giving me a little . So, let me just make sure I've done all of my thank yous. MC Frith, as always love your MCing, our panellists, Iain, Ngarimu, Richard, Natalie and Howell, thank you so much. Oh, oh my goodness. I've forgotten . No, how could I ever forget Chloe? It was just so your photo wasn't showing on my bar. And it was like... So Chloe who is just doing fantastic work as the MP for Auckland Central and giving us the bigger picture. So I want to thank you all. I'd like to thank Ashley and the Auckland



Conversations team for bringing this together as an online event. And most of all, to all of our... Everybody who's been able to join us online this evening, keep an eye on the Auckland Conversations website for the next event that'll be coming up. Hopefully it'll be in person, but if this format has worked we'll make sure that it goes ahead online. And a final call to action is please give feedback on Te Ha Noa Victoria Street Linear Park, that consultation is out until the 6th of November, and you can find the details on the Auckland council website. So noho oro mai thank you so much for joining us this evening, take care. And we hope to be back with you soon with the next edition of Auckland Conversations. Nga mihi, kia ora.



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