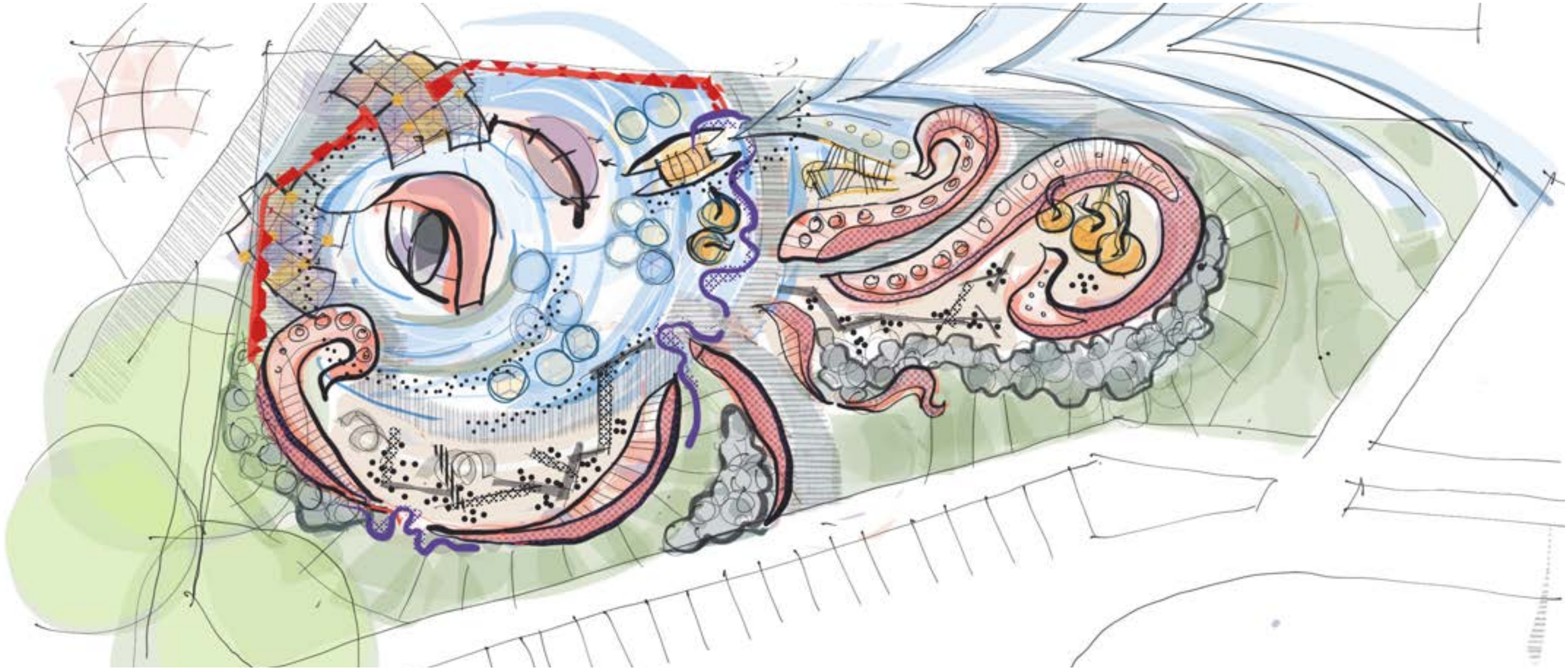
Playspace Whakatū.
Te Tauihu.
Concept.

31 July
2025

Isthmus. creo kūmānu ENVIRONMENTAL



Document record

Issue	Revision	Author	QA	Date
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100%	B	HM/MK	HK	04.07.25



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This concept document outlines the exploration and proposed portrayal of landscape and cultural narratives that form the basis of the proposed playspace concept.

Cost estimation for construction is ongoing and this concept, while based on preliminary sqm rates, is to be taken as indicative of experience and spatial relationships. Precedent images are used to convey intent. The final scale and quantity of landscape elements, equipment selection, opportunities for mahi toi and specific materials and finishes are to be finalised through the developed design phase in the coming months.

Approach to Play.
Principles.

The principles below interpret and combine the vision for the playspace set prior to the commencement of concept design, the community engagement feedback and kōrero received during formal and informal hui with Iwi representatives, during the concept design process.

They have guided the concept development outlined in the following pages.

Here, play will be:



Intergenerational: for the whole whānau, deepening the relationships between adult and child.



Inclusive: a quality play experience for tamariki of all ages and abilities, and their caregivers.



Wellbeing enhancing: for individuals and whānau, across all aspects of Te Whare Tapa Whā.



Identity enriching: through incorporation of mātauranga Māori; Connection to knowledge, to language, to place and to story, a vehicle for culture transmission.



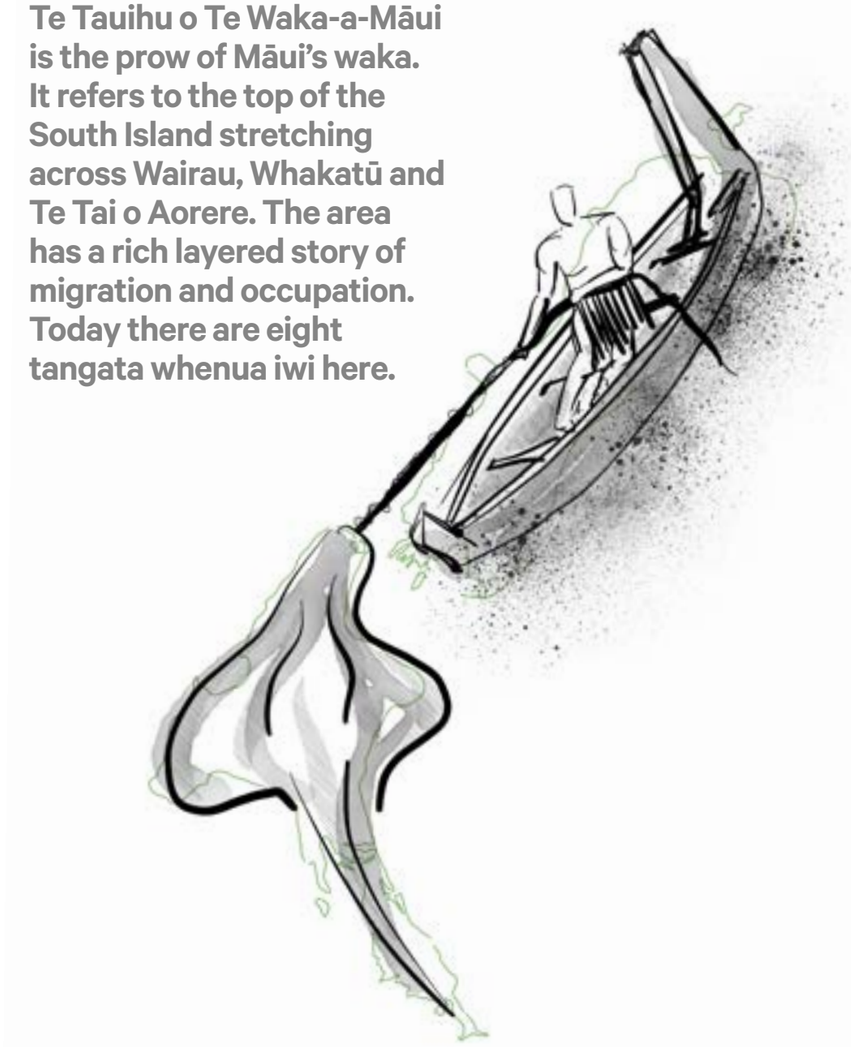
Uniquely Whakatū: through the representation and experience of local kōrero and pūrākau across multiple scales.

01. Place Story.



Cultural Landscape.
Te Tauihu o Te Waka-a-Māui.

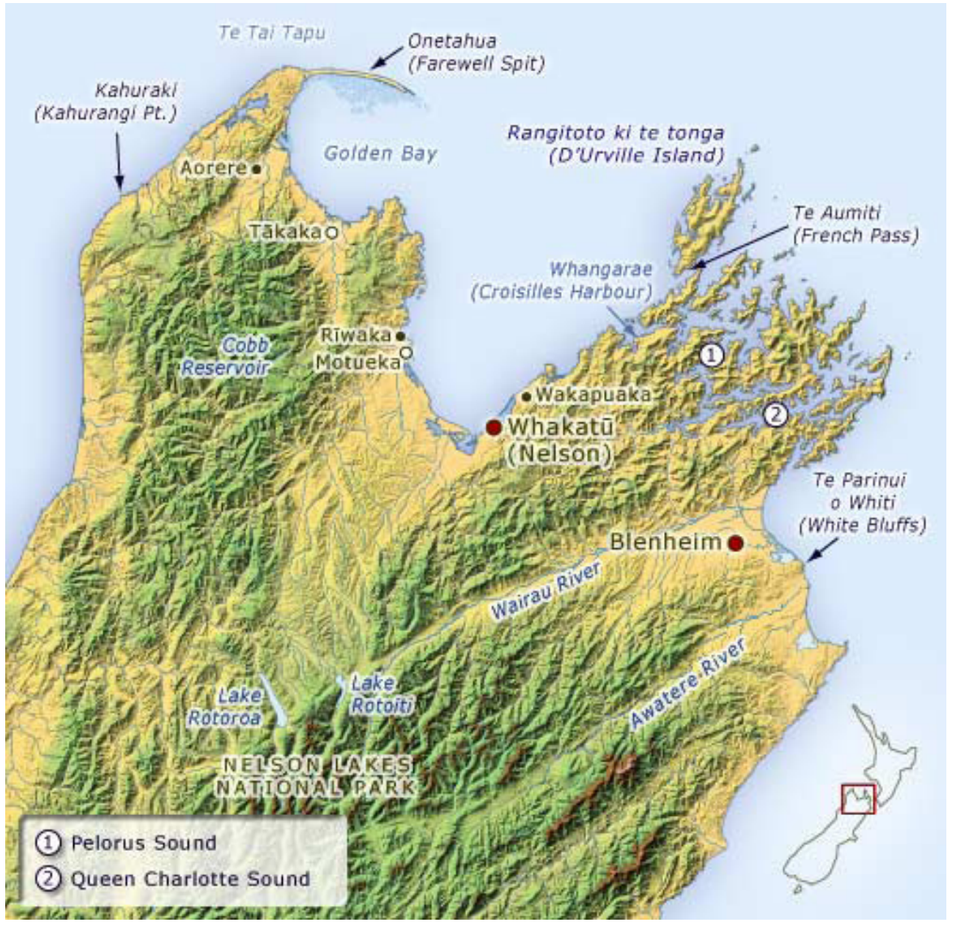
Te Tauihu o Te Waka-a-Māui is the prow of Māui's waka. It refers to the top of the South Island stretching across Wairau, Whakatū and Te Tai o Aorere. The area has a rich layered story of migration and occupation. Today there are eight tangata whenua iwi here.



Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau, and Ngāti Apa ki Te Rā Tō are of Kurahaupō waka. They descend from some of the earliest known people in the area such as Hāwea, Waitaha, and Ngāti Māmoe.

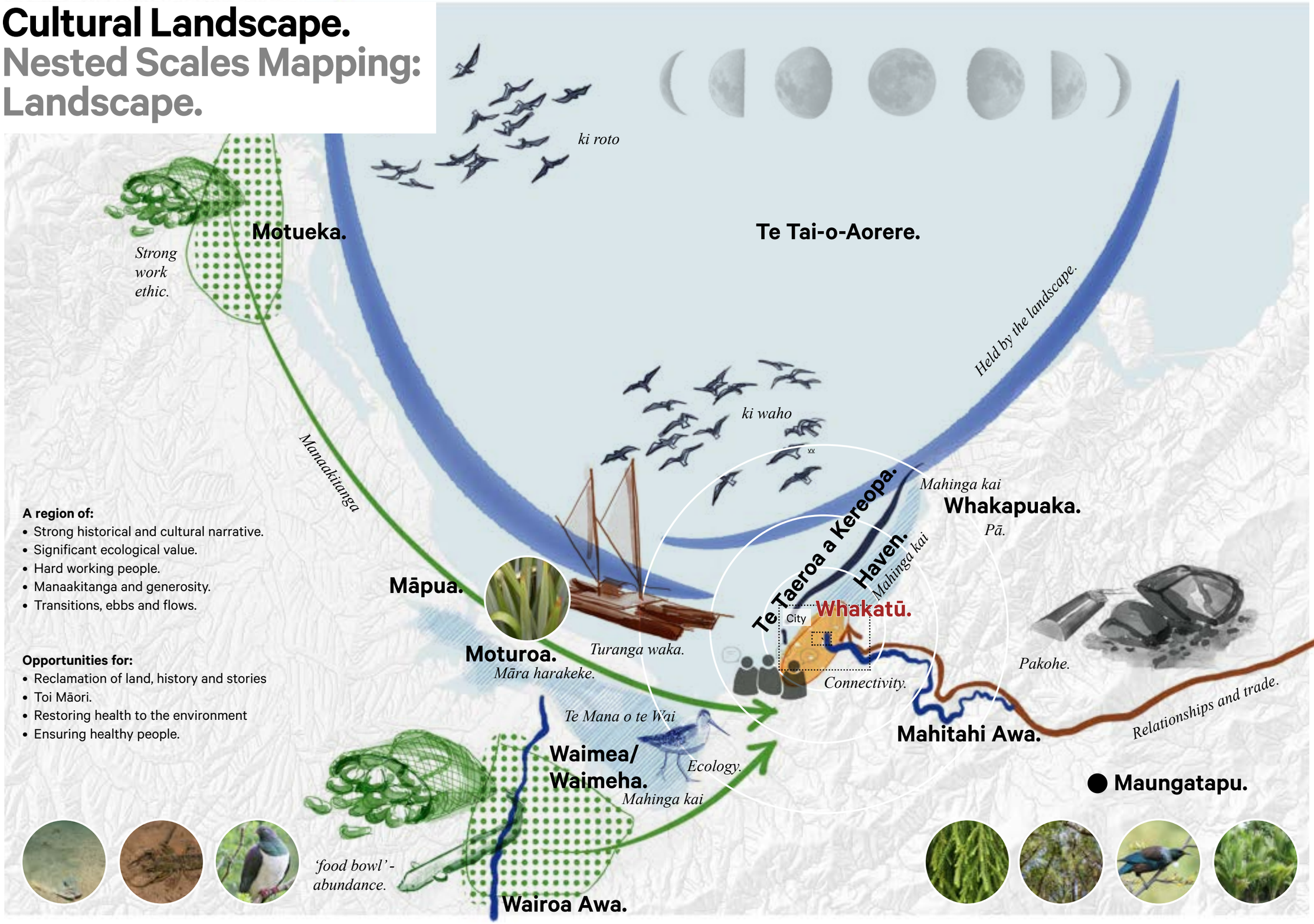
Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Koata and Ngāti Rārua descend from Tainui waka. They arrived here through a series of migrations from Kawhia and Taranaki in the 1820s and 1830s.

Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui and Ngāti Tama ki Te Tauihu are of Tokomaru waka. They who also arrived here during the hekenga (migrations) in the 1820s and 1830s.



https://teara.govt.nz/en/map/540/te-tau-ihu-region

Cultural Landscape.
Nested Scales Mapping: Landscape.

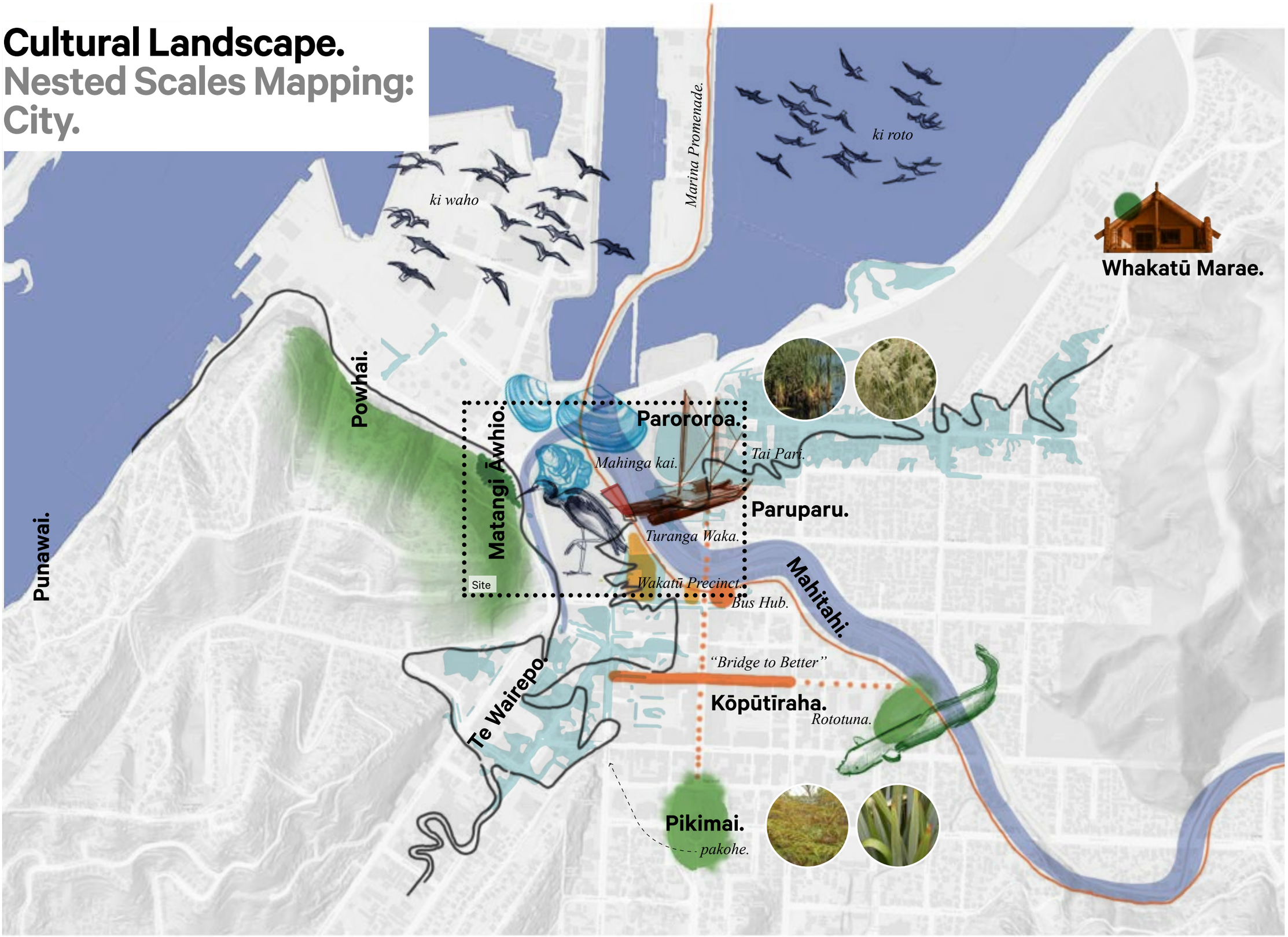


A region of:
- Strong historical and cultural narrative.
- Significant ecological value.
- Hard working people.
- Manaakitanga and generosity.
- Transitions, ebbs and flows.

Opportunities for:
- Reclamation of land, history and stories
- Toi Māori.
- Restoring health to the environment
- Ensuring healthy people.

Isthmus.

Cultural Landscape.
Nested Scales Mapping: City.

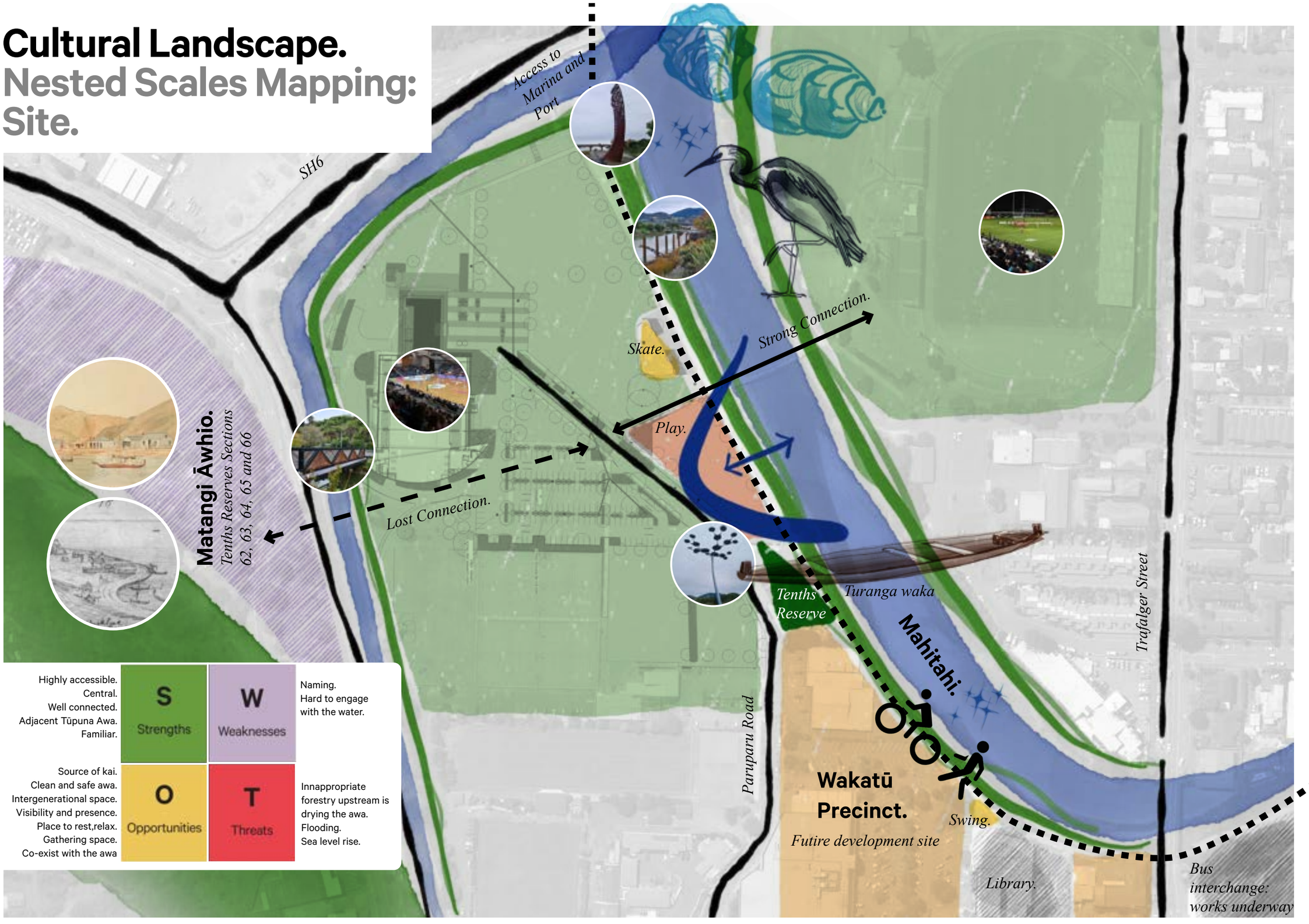


Isthmus.

Playspace Whakatū.
Te Tauihu / OD & Co.
31 July 2025.

N

Cultural Landscape.
Nested Scales Mapping: Site.

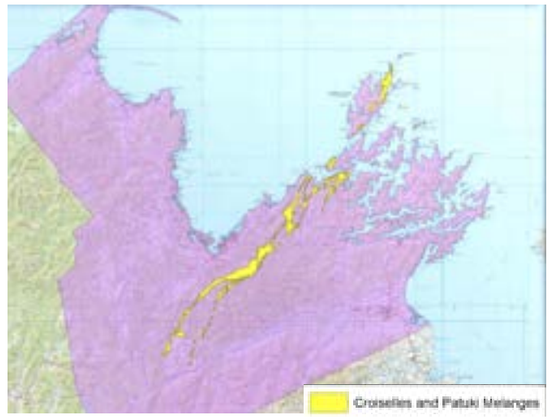


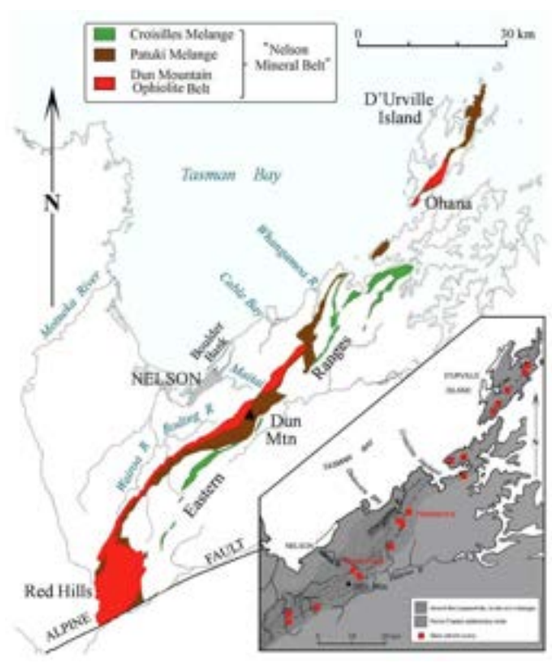
Highly accessible. Central. Well connected. Adjacent Tūpuna Awa. Familiar.	**S** Strengths	**W** Weaknesses	Naming. Hard to engage with the water.
Source of kai. Clean and safe awa. Intergenerational space. Visibility and presence. Place to rest,relax. Gathering space. Co-exist with the awa	**O** Opportunities	**T** Threats	Innappropriate forestry upstream is drying the awa. Flooding. Sea level rise.

Natural Landscape.
Geology.

Pakohe (Argillite).

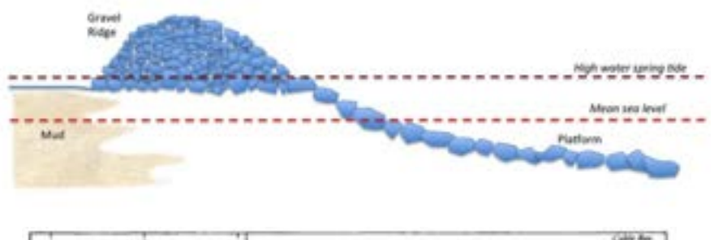






Te Taero a Kereopa (Granodiorite)





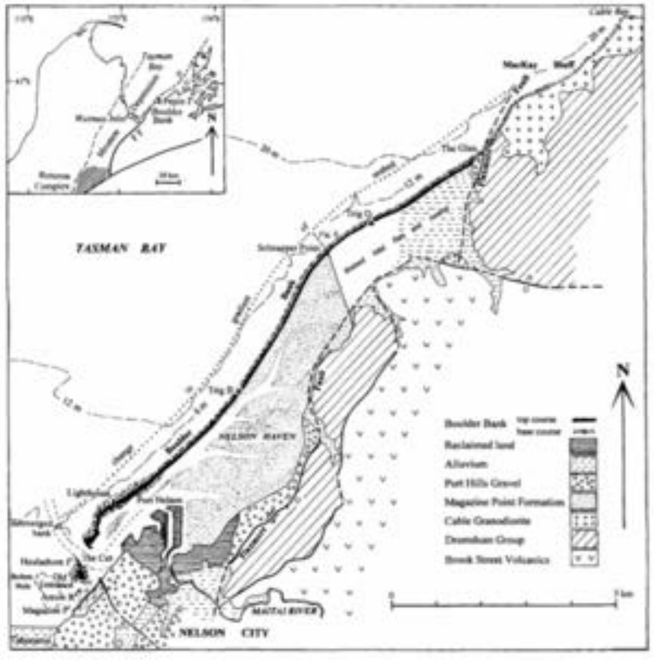


Figure 1. Geology of the Boulder Bank area (from Johnston 2001)

Māori gravel soil. (fertile/cultivated)



Map showing the distribution of Maori Gravel Soil in the Waimea Plains, Nelson.
Scale 40 inch = 1 mile.

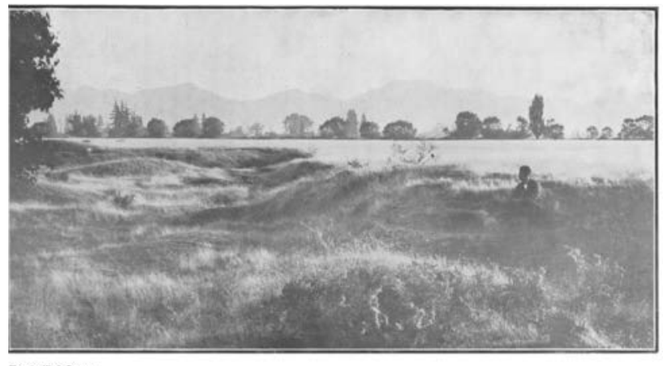


Photo by W. C. Davies.

TYPICAL MAORI GRAVEL LAND AND PITS, WAIMEA WEST, NELSON.
The mounds in the foreground consist chiefly of large stones discarded by the Maoris.

Natural Landscape.
Key Species.

Realm of Tāne: coastal forest.



Pukatea
Laurelia novae-zelandiae



Rātā
Metrosideros robusta



Kahikatea
Dacrycarpus dacrydioides



Kererū



Tūi



Beech
Fuscospora



Rimu
Dacrydium cupressinum



Nikau
Rhopalostylis sapida



Kākā



Korimako

Realm of Tangaroa: rivermouth wetlands, estuary and harbour.



Kahawai



Kokopu



Pātiki



Īnanga



Kōura



Tuna



Harakeke



Tuangi / Tuaki (Cockle)



Tio (Oyster)

Kōtuku



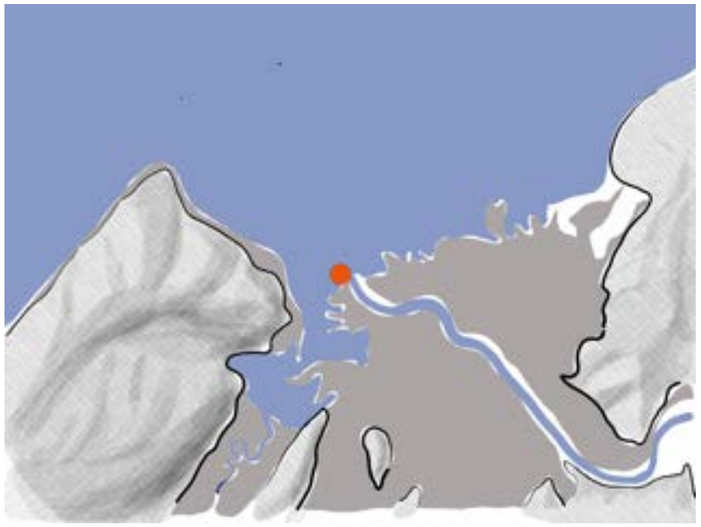
Royal Spoonbill



Seagrass

Natural Landscape.
Water.

Reclamation.



Whakatū Nelson original shoreline, with the playspace site at the delta of the Maitai/ Mahitahi Awa.



Whakatū Nelson current 'shoreline', with the playspace site on the edge of the reclamation.

Inundation.



Coastal Inundation Flood Map: Present Day (2024).



Coastal Inundation Flood Map: 0.5m Sea Level Rise (projected as early as 2060).



Coastal Inundation Flood Map: 1.0m Sea Level Rise (projected as early as 2100).

Flooding.



"Floods have, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the city of Nelson, particularly the Maitai / Mahitahi River, the Brook or York Streams, and more widely across the Tasman region. Flooding has wrought havoc on property, and resulted in injury and even death to residents"
https://www.theprow.org.nz/events/nelson-and-tasman-floods/

Marine & freshwater environments.



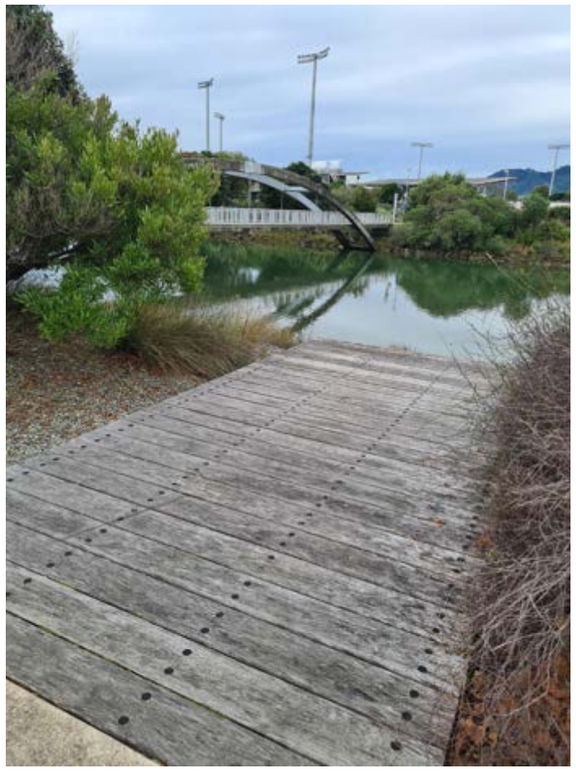






The Site.
Site photos.

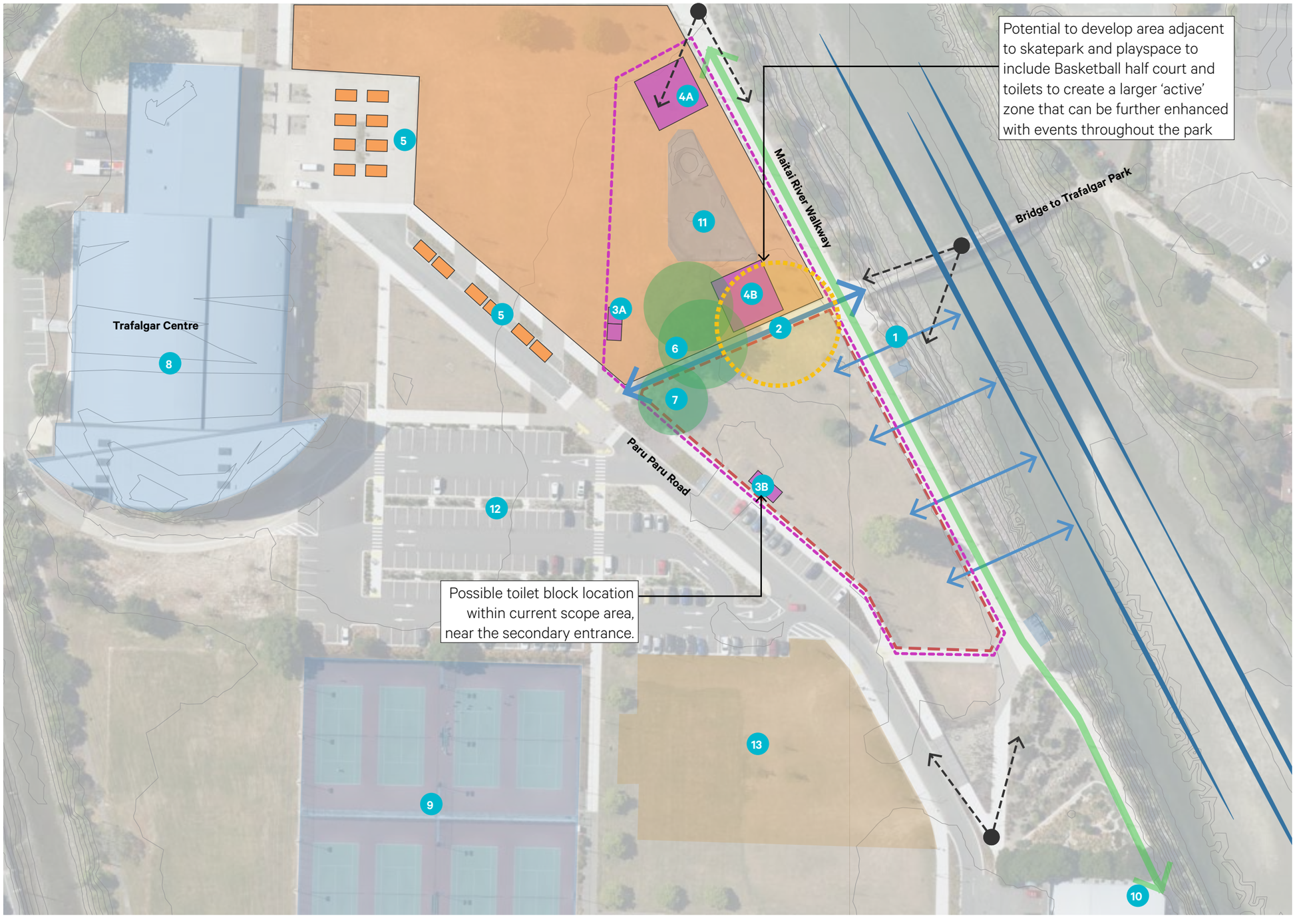







The Site.
Opportunities.



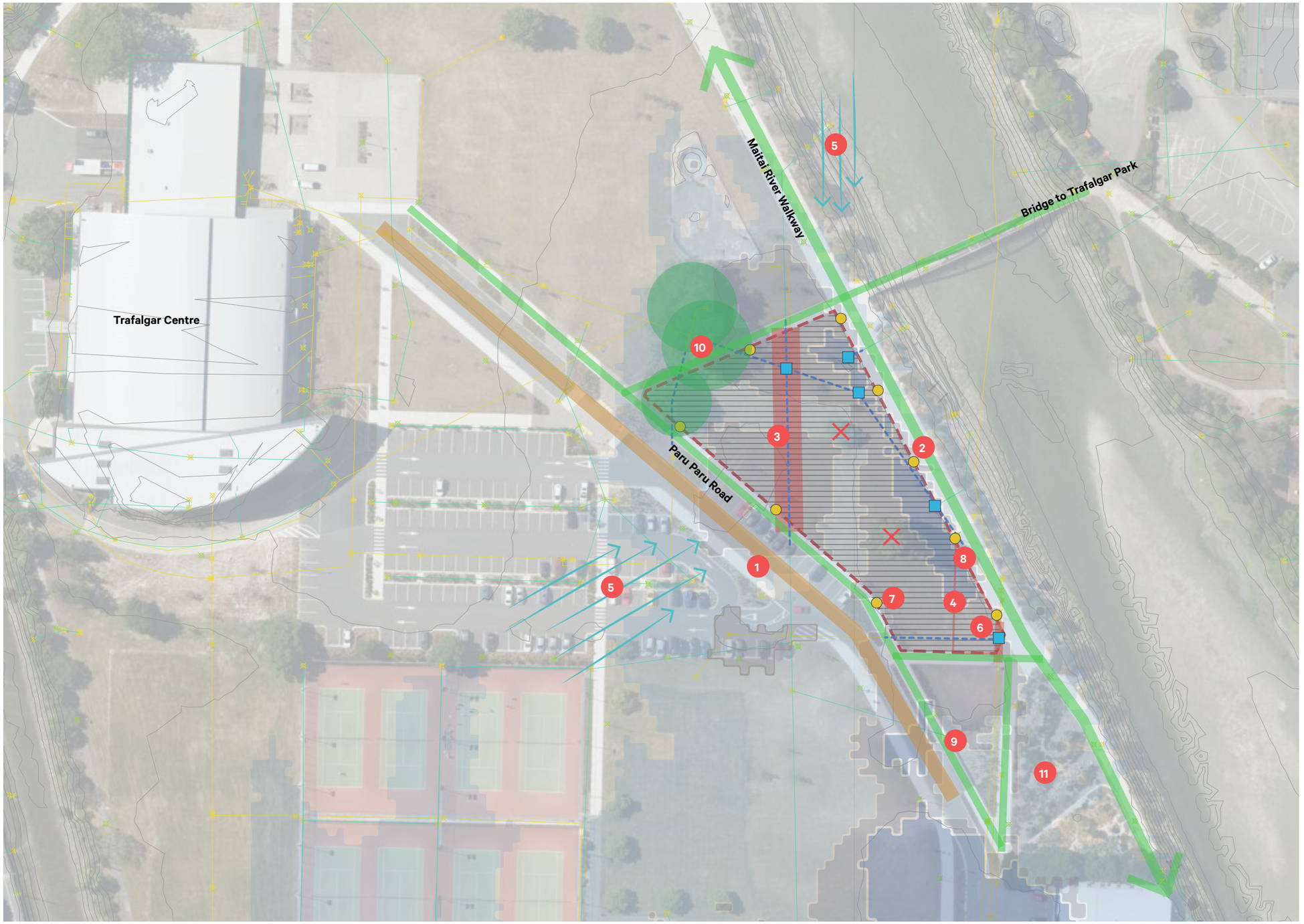
Legend

- Current Scope Area
- Existing Elements
- Future development opportunities
- Potential extension & consolidation of play opportunities
- Activation Opportunities
- Key Viewshafts into site
- Shared Path
- Trees to be retained

1. Promenade viewing platforms
2. Potential Shade Structure to extend from playspace
3. Proposed future toilets (Options A & B)
4. Proposed future Basketball 1/2 court (Options A & B)
5. Food trucks/coffee carts
6. Established trees with height/ shade to be retained
7. Existing Nature Play Logs
8. Trafalgar Center
9. Nelson Lawn Tennis Courts
10. Towards Library / City Centre
11. Existing Skatepark
12. Existing Carpark
13. Future Carpark

0m 10m 20m 50m N

The Site.
Technical Constraints.



Legend

- Current Scope Area
- Flood Hazard*
- Future Flood Hazard*
- Future High Flood Hazard*

*Layers from NCS GIS data

- Active Edges
  - -Shared Path / Cyclists
  - -Pedestrian
  - -Vehicular

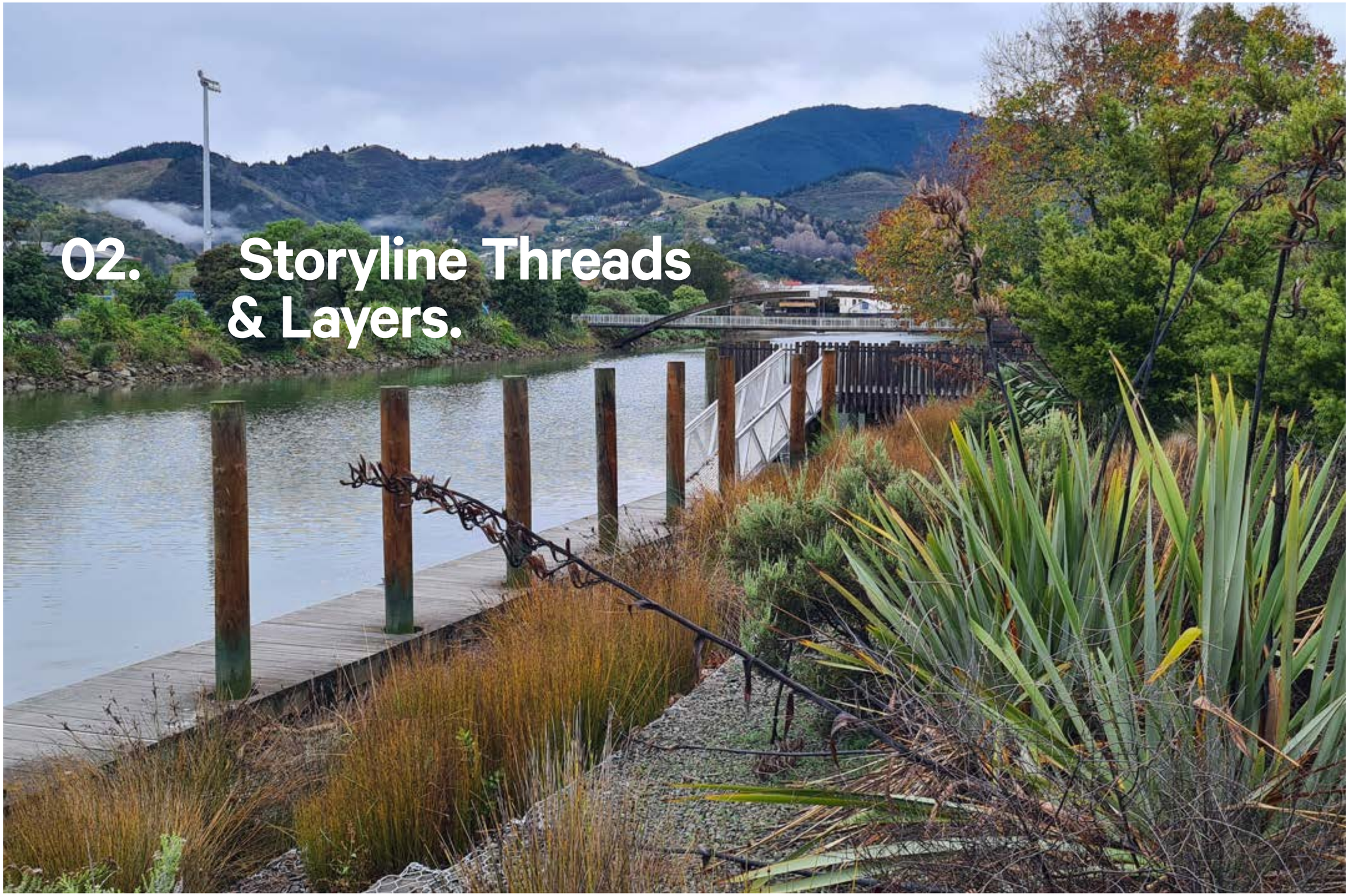
Within project scope extents

- Underground Services
- Building Restrictions
- Existing Streetlights
- Contaminated Soil
- Trees to be removed
  *Note preservation/rellocation of smaller trees within site will be explored through developed design
- Service Lids / Pits

1. Carpark Edge
2. Shared Path Edge (cyclists)
3. Old Brick Stormwater Culvert
4. Localised low point / Wet Area. Ground Conditions likely to contain variable draining substrate
5. Predominant winds (Northerly and South-westerly)
6. Road Reserve + Pressure sewer rising main requiring future upgrade
7. Existing Streetlights
8. John Mitchell Memorial (to be retained with view to Phil Price Sculpture to be preserved)
9. Phil Price Sculpture (to be retained)
10. Large Trees to be retained
11. Waka Landing Site

0m 10m 20m 50m N

02. Storyline Threads & Layers.



Pūrakau.
Te Wheke a Muturangi.

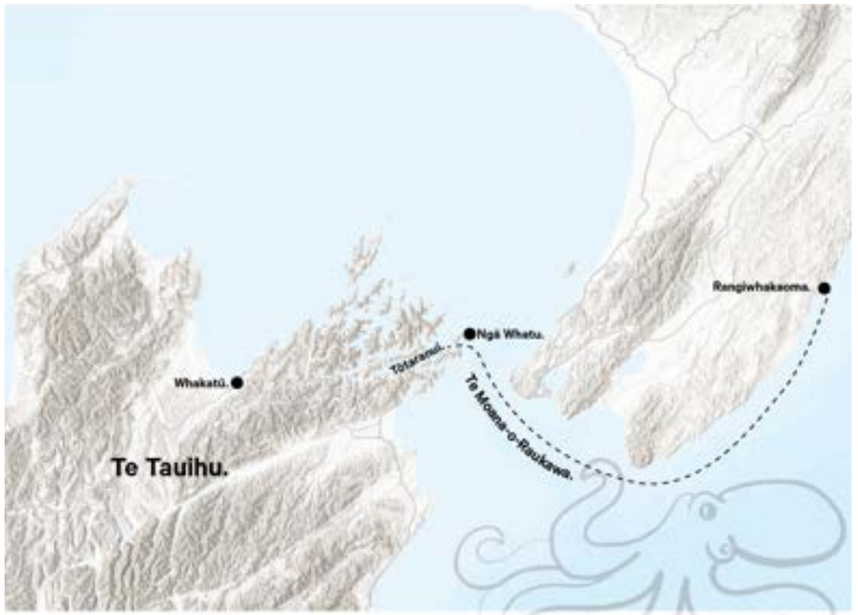


Muturangi, a powerful tohunga, called forth a great wheke (octopus) whose long tentacles stretched across the ocean, depleting fish stocks and upsetting the balance of life.

The people struggled. Their calls for help reached Kupe, a great navigator and rangatira, who set out in pursuit. The journey took him across vast waters, tracking Te Wheke from Hawaiki to Aotearoa. Along the way, the chase itself shaped the land - bays, harbours, and straits formed in the wake of their battle.

When Kupe finally confronted Te Wheke in the turbulent waters of Tōtaranui and Te Moana-o-Raukawa, it was not brute force that won the day, but cunning. Kupe used hue (gourds) to deceive Te Wheke, tricking it into striking at false targets before delivering the final blow. The wheke's eyes became Ngā Whatu (The Brothers Rocks), a reminder of where the battle was won.

Credit: Mat Tait

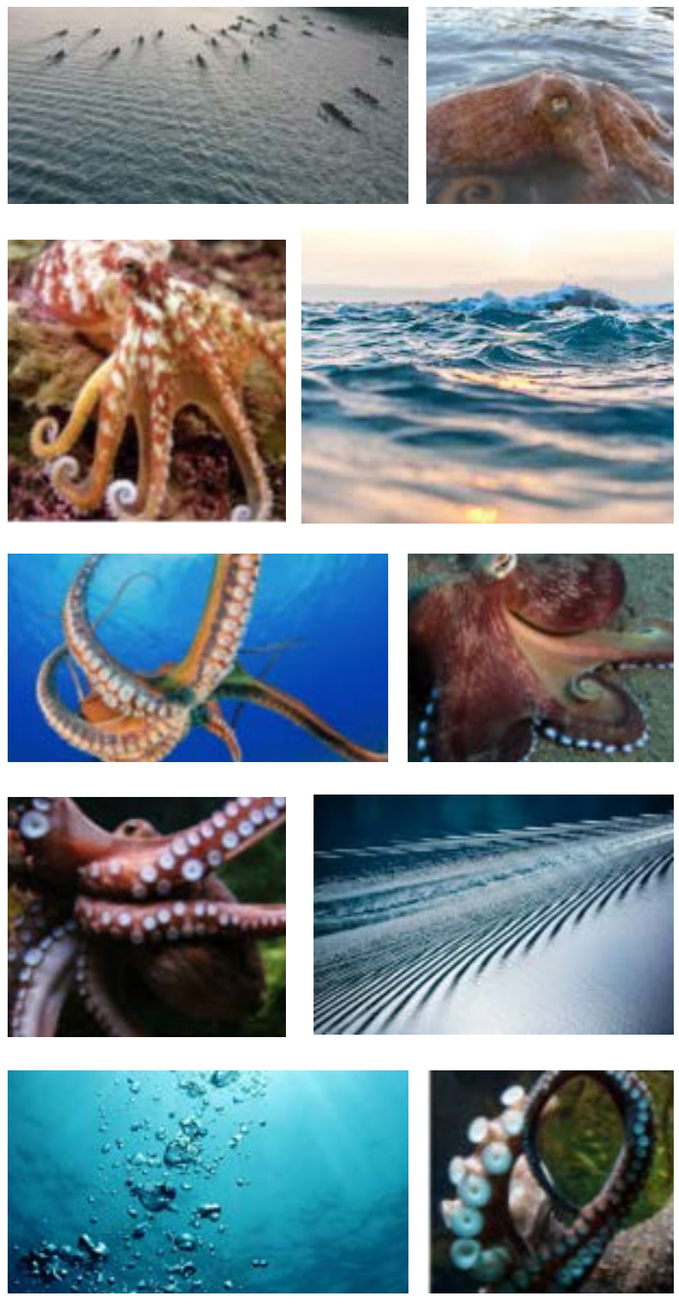


Above. Map identifying key landscapes within the Pūrākau Te Wheke a Muturangi..

The story of Te Wheke a Muturangi presents a rich narrative full of characters and landscapes, themes and learnings that can be respectfully brought to life in the playspace.

Themes for translation into the landscape and play experience:

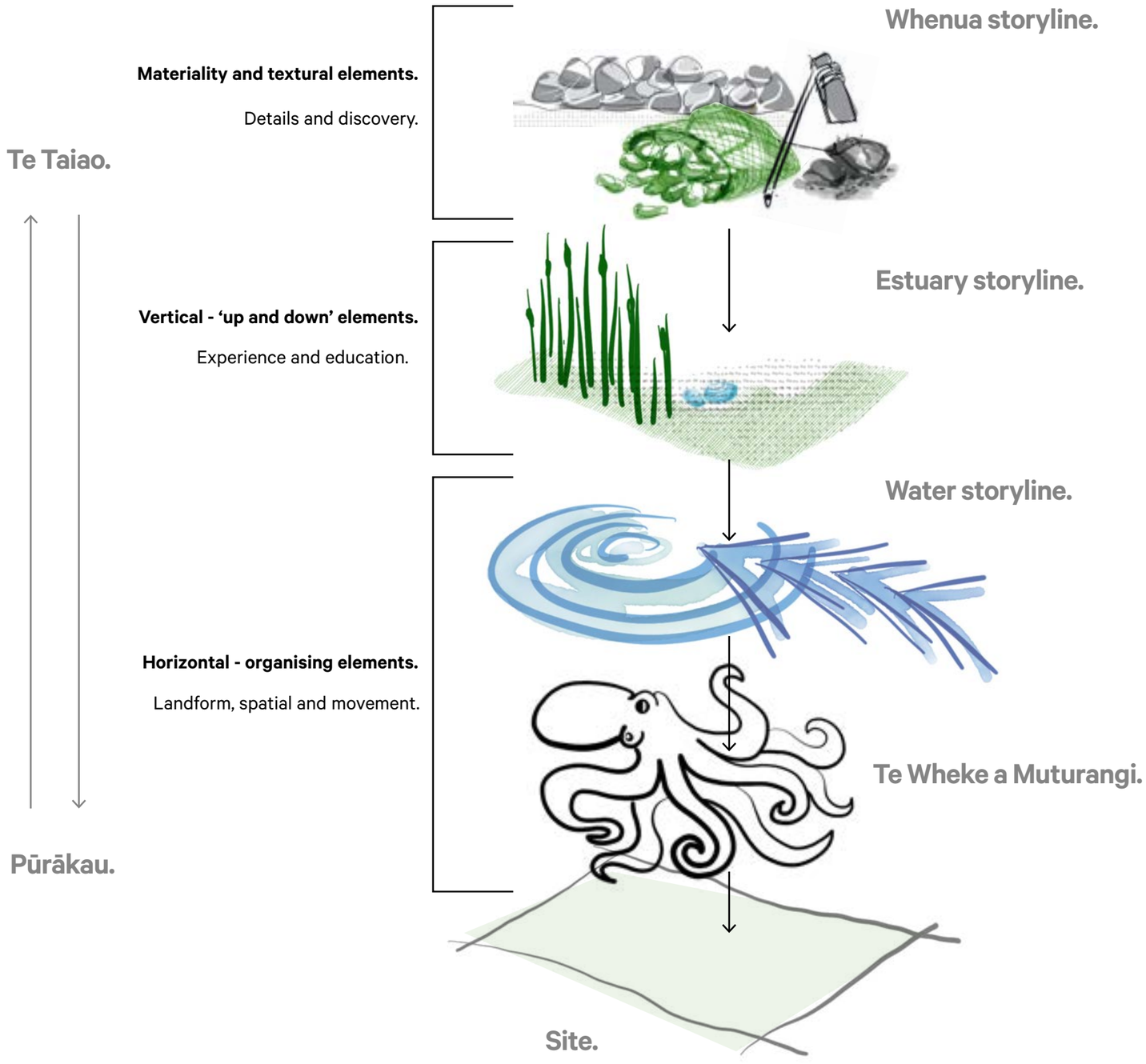
- Discovery.
- Strategy.
- Resilience.
- Movement.
- Challenge.
- Adaptation.
- Cunning.
- Pursuit.
- Perseverance.
- Bravery.



Concept.
Layers of Narrative.

The concept for the play space looks to represent key narratives found in both the pūrākau Te Wheke a Muturangi, and the natural and cultural landscapes of Whakatū.

These storylines layer to influence different elements of the play landscape and play experience.



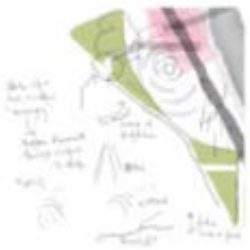
Exploration.
Narrative / Storyline: Movement through water.

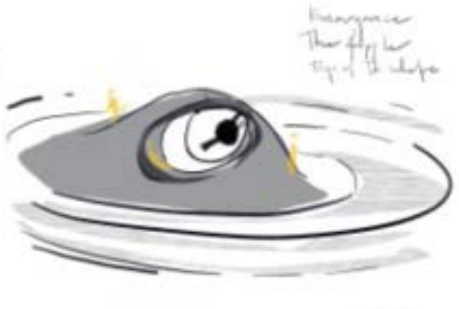
Pursuit, trade, emergence and convergence, centre.

EMERGENCE

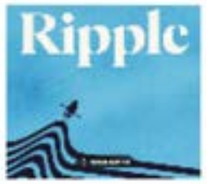
RIPPLE

EYE/CENTRE









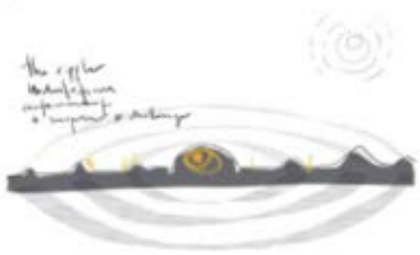












WATER ENERGY

MEMORY OF WATER

WHOLE SITE









WAKE

WAKA

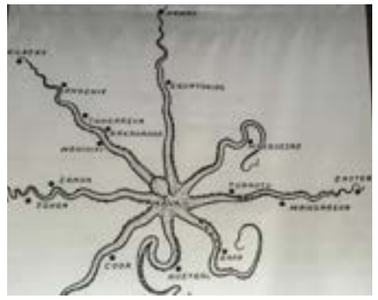
TRADE

HIGHWAY





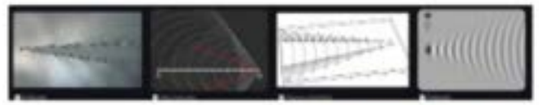








Voyage.
Navigation.



WAKA CHASE

PROW

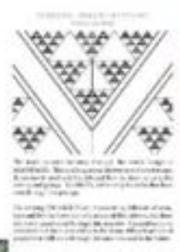
TE TAUIHU O TE WAKA-A-MĀUI

MIGRATION

LAND FORMATION

Supergraphics
Low cost interventions?













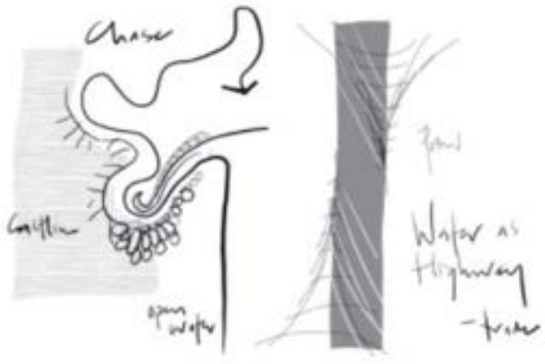




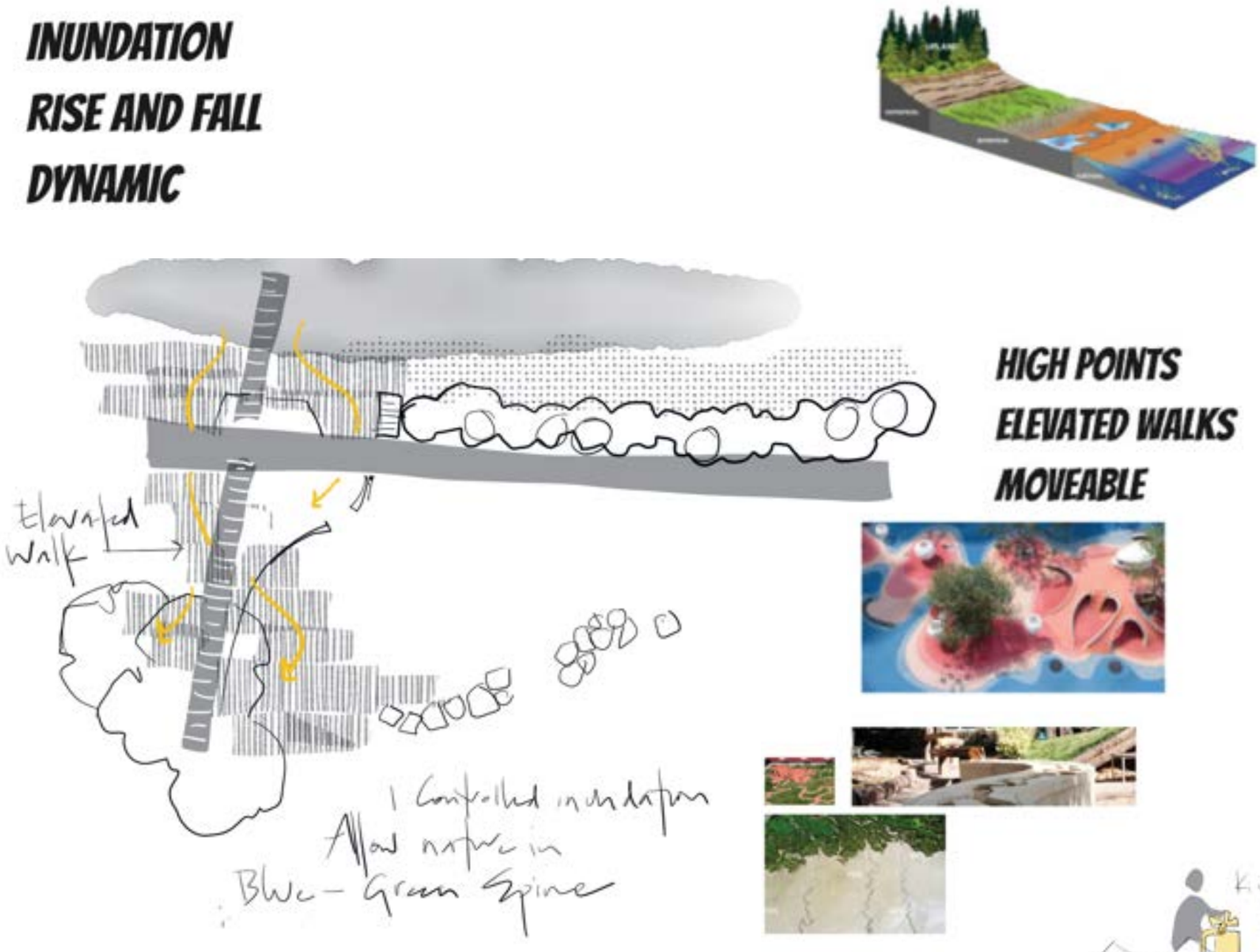
canopy- light/shade
see through the eye?

giant suckers as seats/ step-ping stones?

play on scale?



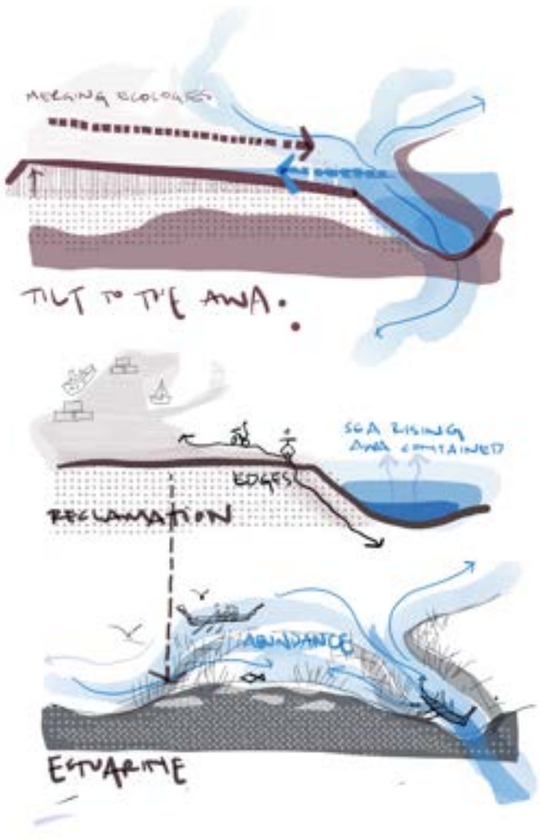
Exploration.
Narrative / Storyline: Movement through water.



Tilt toward the Awa. Building the land up gives us an opportunity to once again face the awa, lifting above the reclaimed land to stand tall and proud. This is a statement about the land continuing to layer over time, bring the stories of tangata whenua back to the surface .

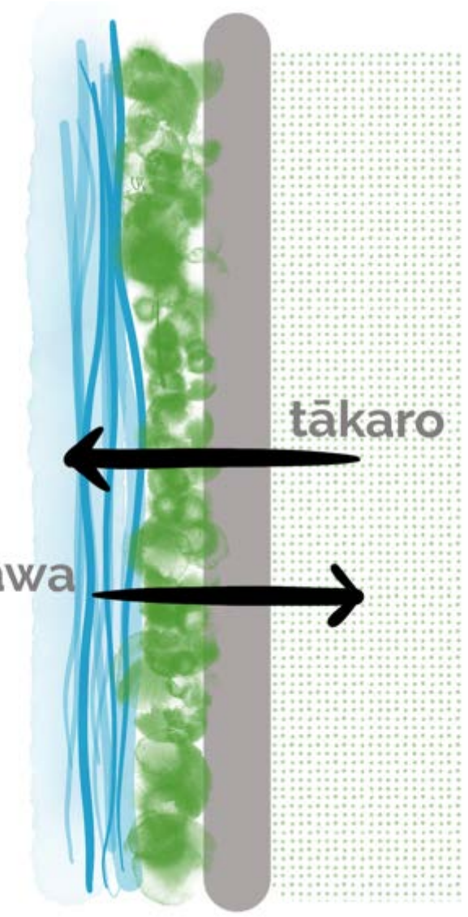
Adapt for resilience. Hard edges become softened- and over time this creates resilience and restores mauri. Once again water finds its shape as it meets the shallow gradient of a new shoreline. This is dynamic and ever changing as we adapt to our changing environment, and increasing inundation.

One ecosystem. In the merging of ecologies this becomes one ecosystem - te taiao and tākaro. A simple idea, brought to life through the complexity and texture of a play ecosystem- one habitat full of life and rich interaction like the original estuarine edges .



Exploration.
Narrative / Storyline: Estuary Habitat.

Interplay, threshold, transition, abundance, gathering.



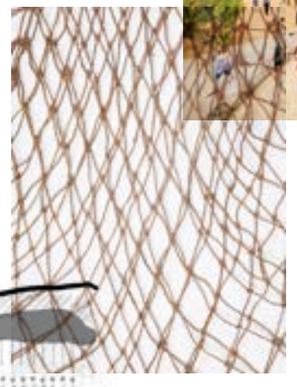
PARU
DVE
NUTRIENT DENSE
TIDE RISE AND FALL
MOVEMENT
UP AND DOWN





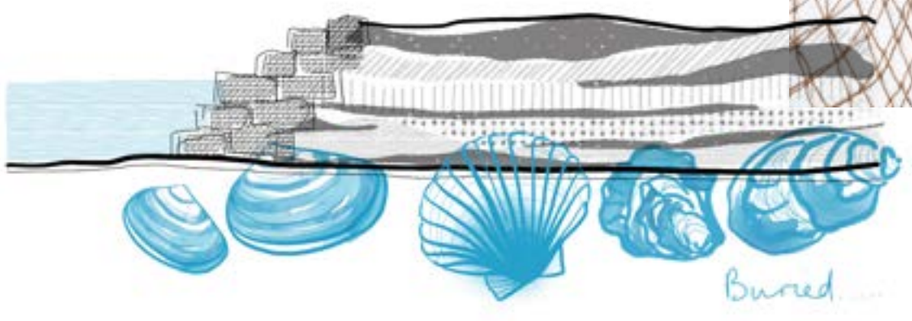


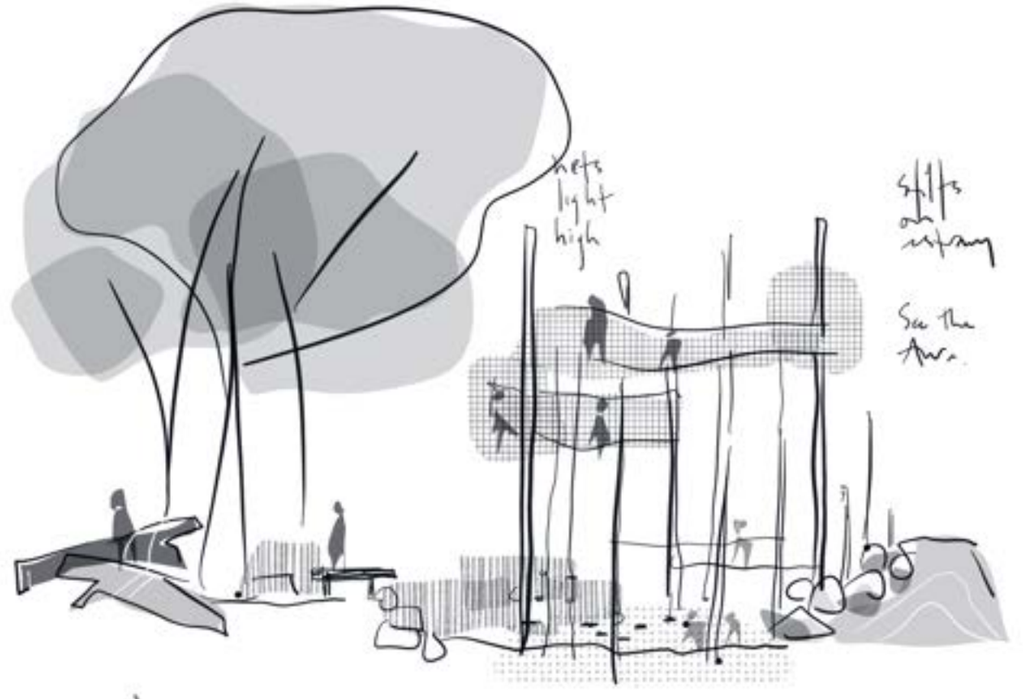
Kupenga.





WADING BIRDS
STILTS
THIN AND LIGHT
RAUPO
REEDS
TREE WALK







Exploration.
Narrative / Storyline: Relationship to the whenua.

Resources, tools, taonga, cultivation, growth, innovation, haven.

PAKOHE
MINERAL BELT
DUN MOUNTAIN
QUARRIES
TRADE
TRANSPORT







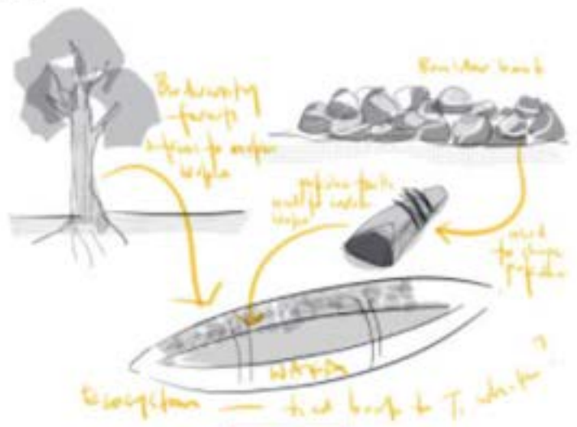
Marutea- light silky grey shade

Uriuri (dark charcoal shade)





pakohe
used to chisel the waka
waka - totara? from the forest



BIODIVERSITY







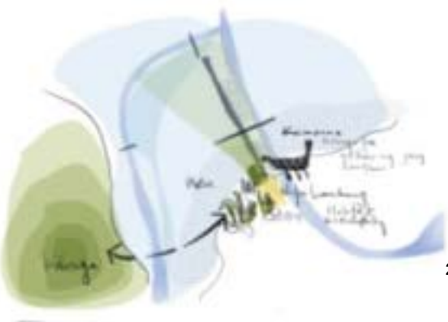
WAKA LANDING
NESTLED
SAFE
HAVEN
ELEVATED
THRESHOLDS
WAHAROA

PAKOHE
MINERAL BELT
DUN MOUNTAIN
QUARRIES
TRADE
TRANSPORT



FERTILE
GRAVEL SOILS
MARA HARAKEKE
CULTIVATED GARDENS

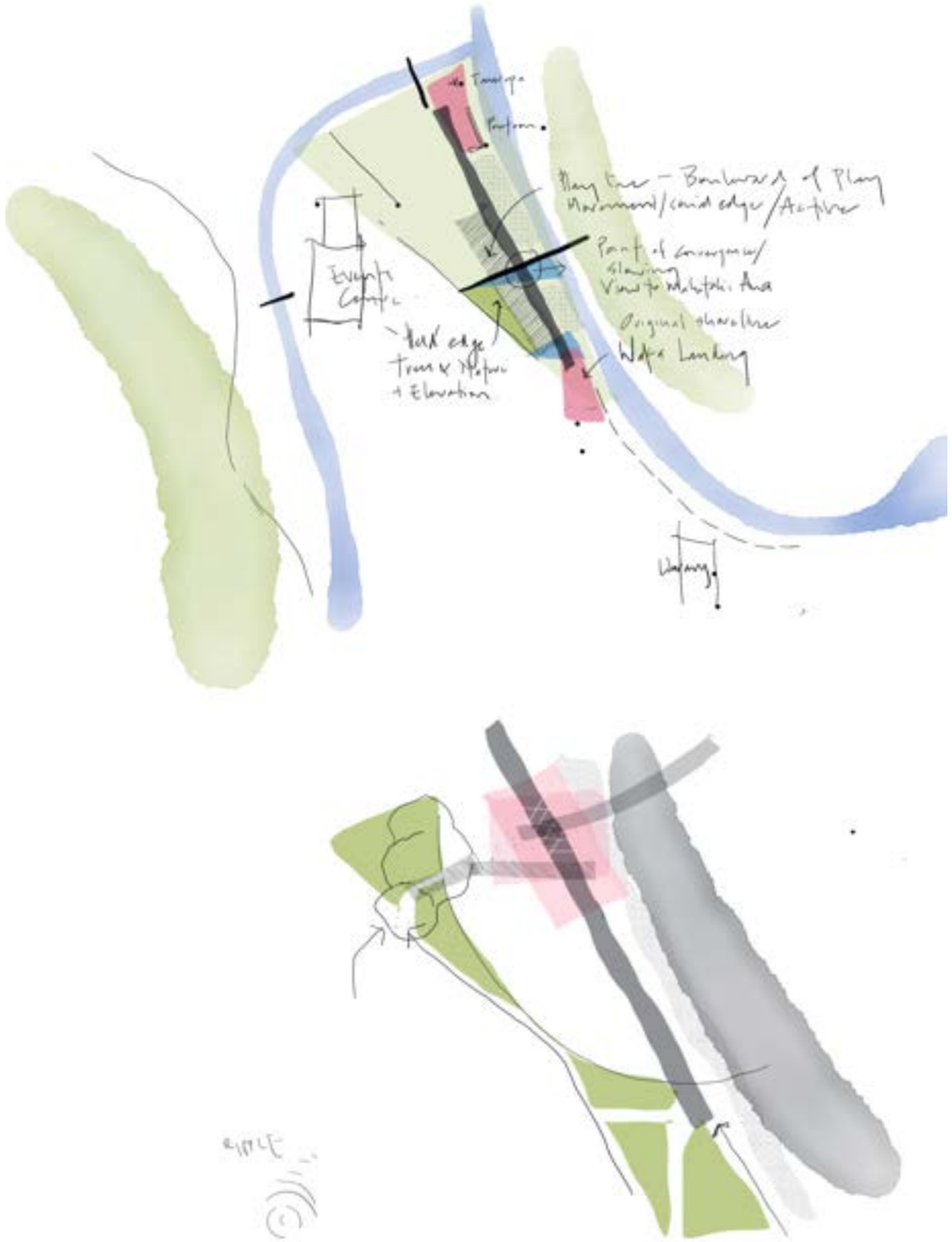


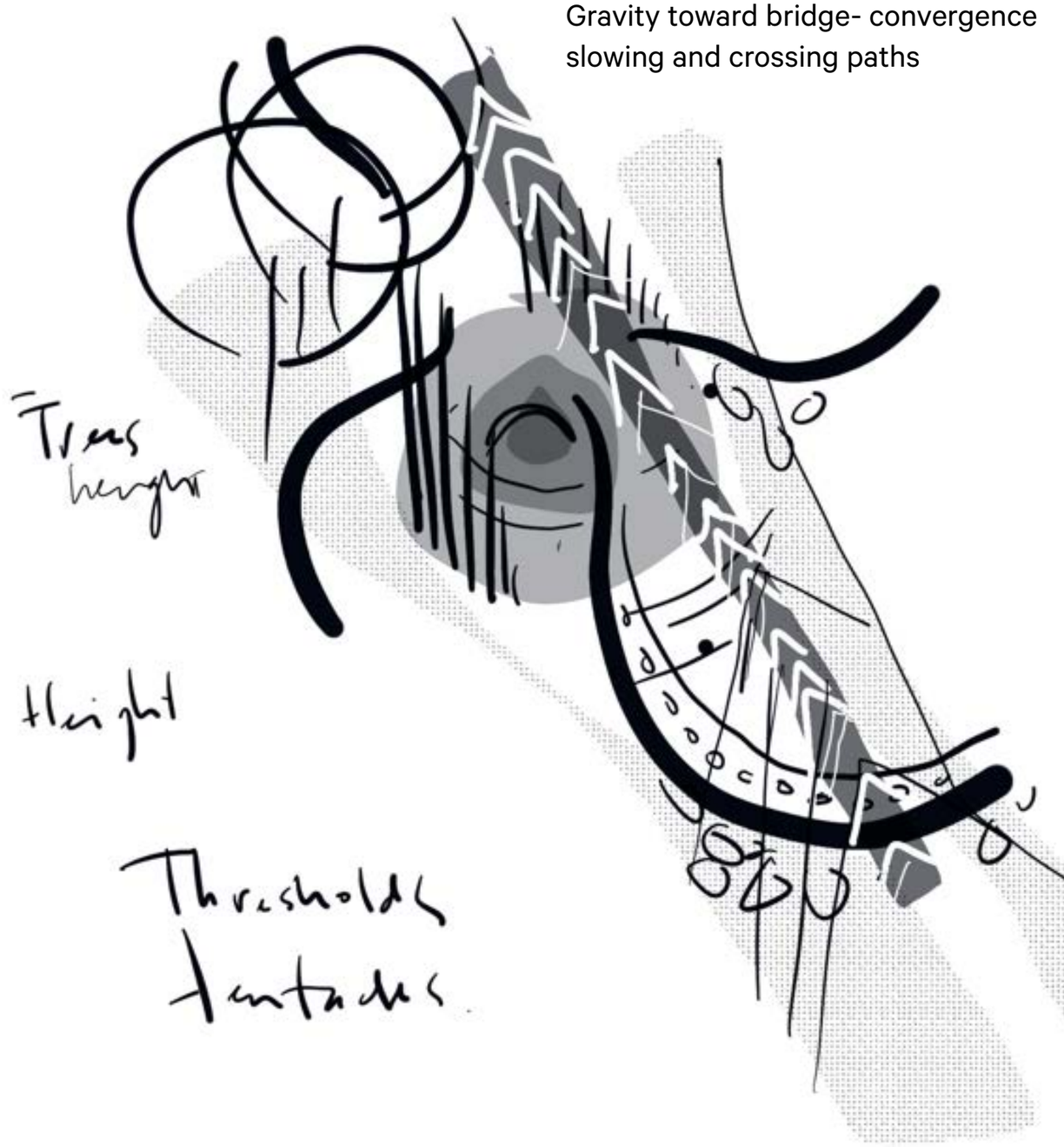


03. Concept: Spatial Layout.

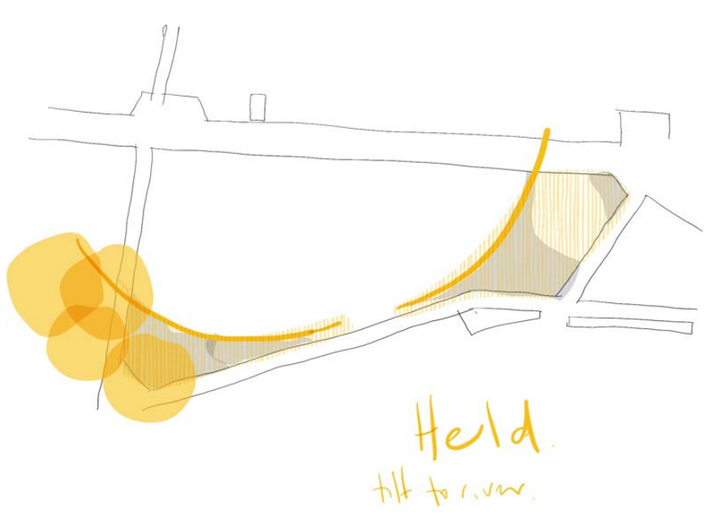


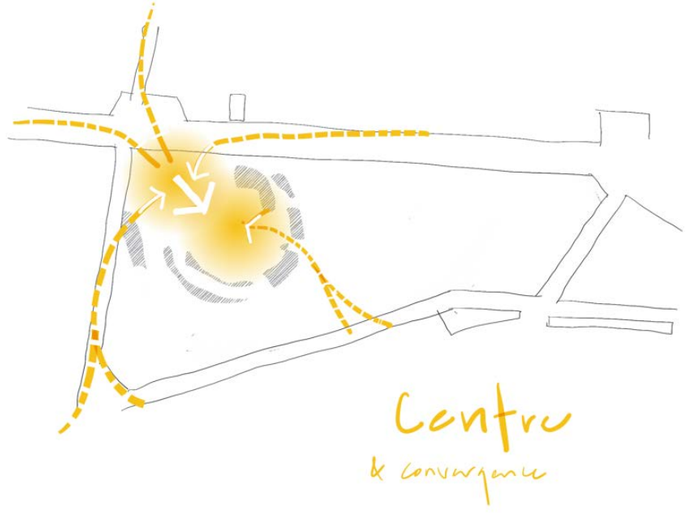
Key Moves.
Spatial Considerations.

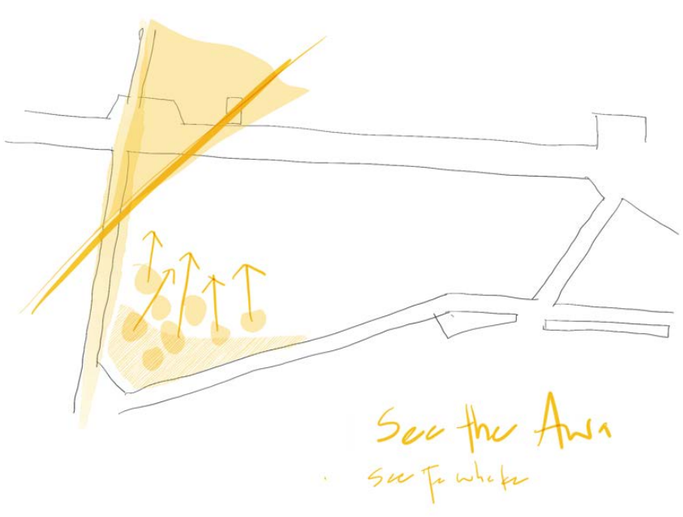


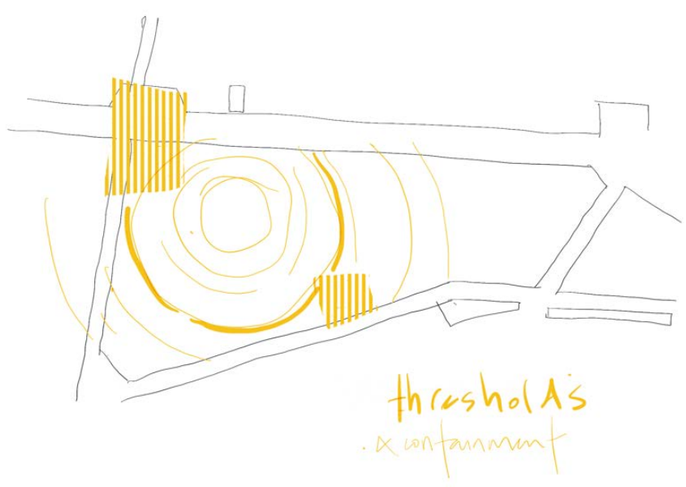


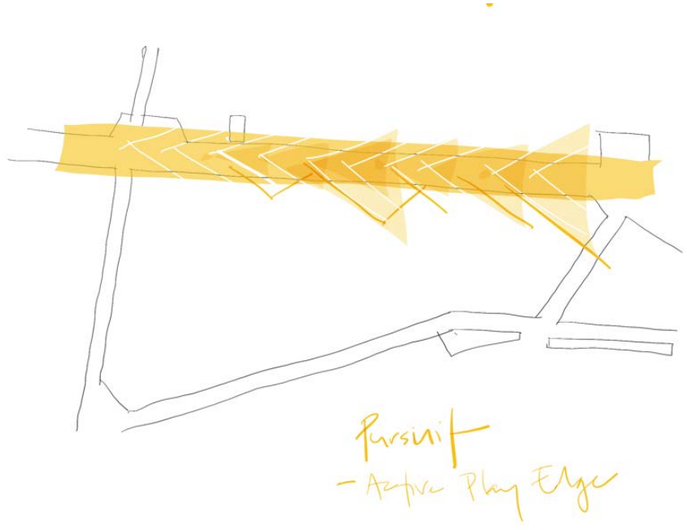
Key Moves.
Spatial Scaffold.

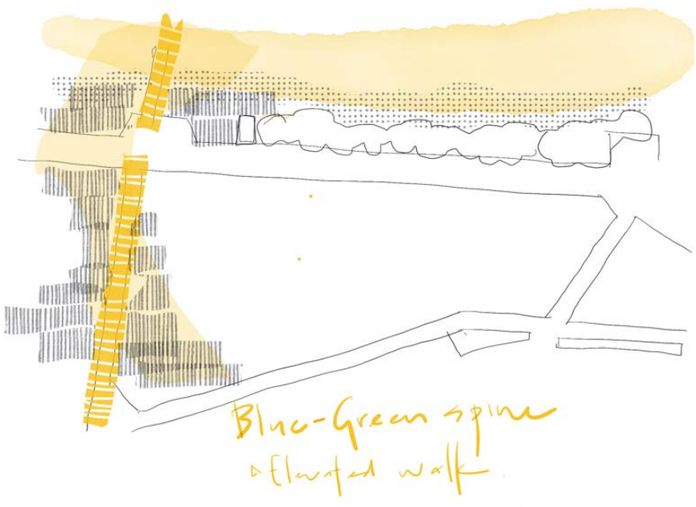




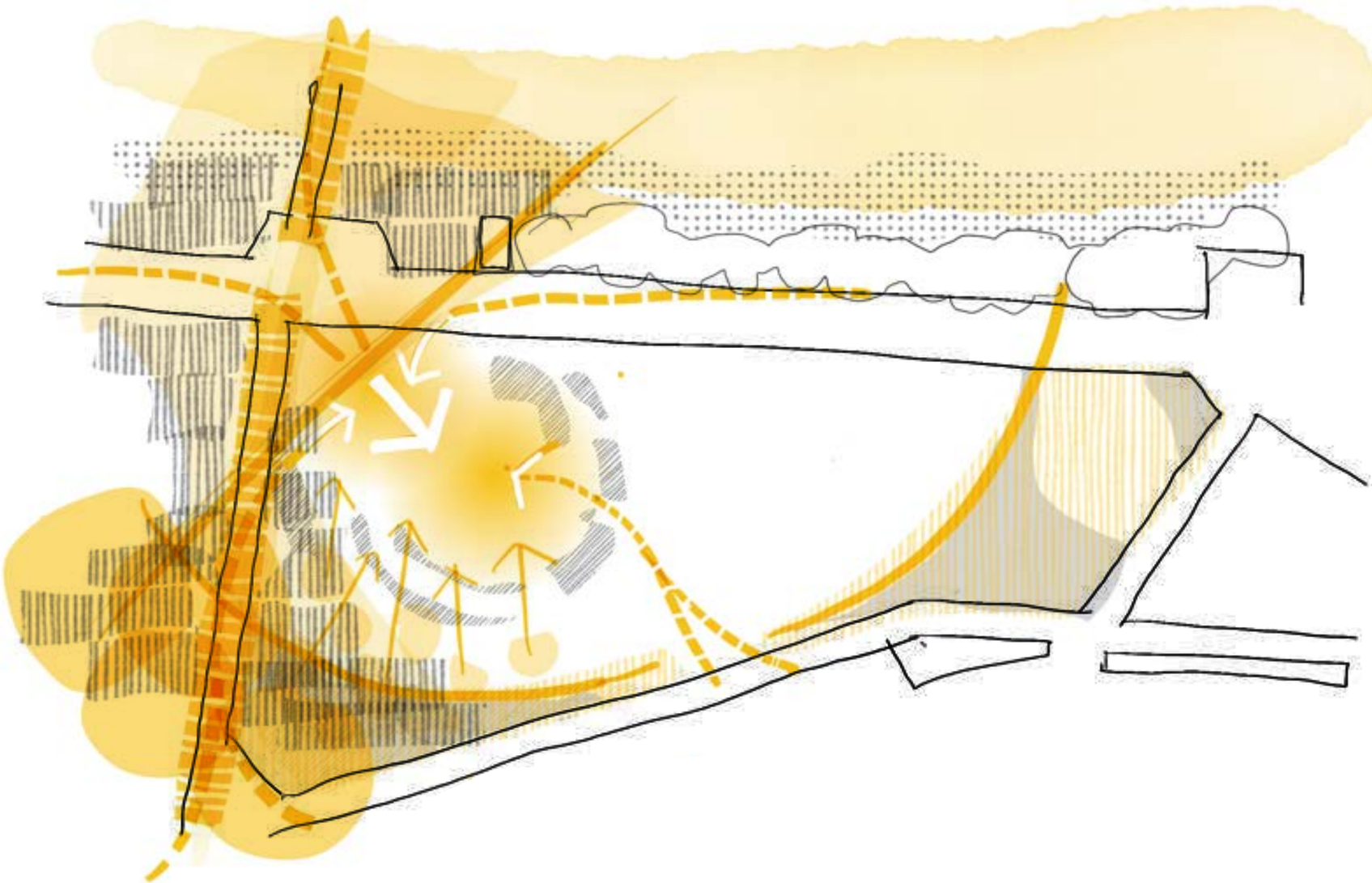






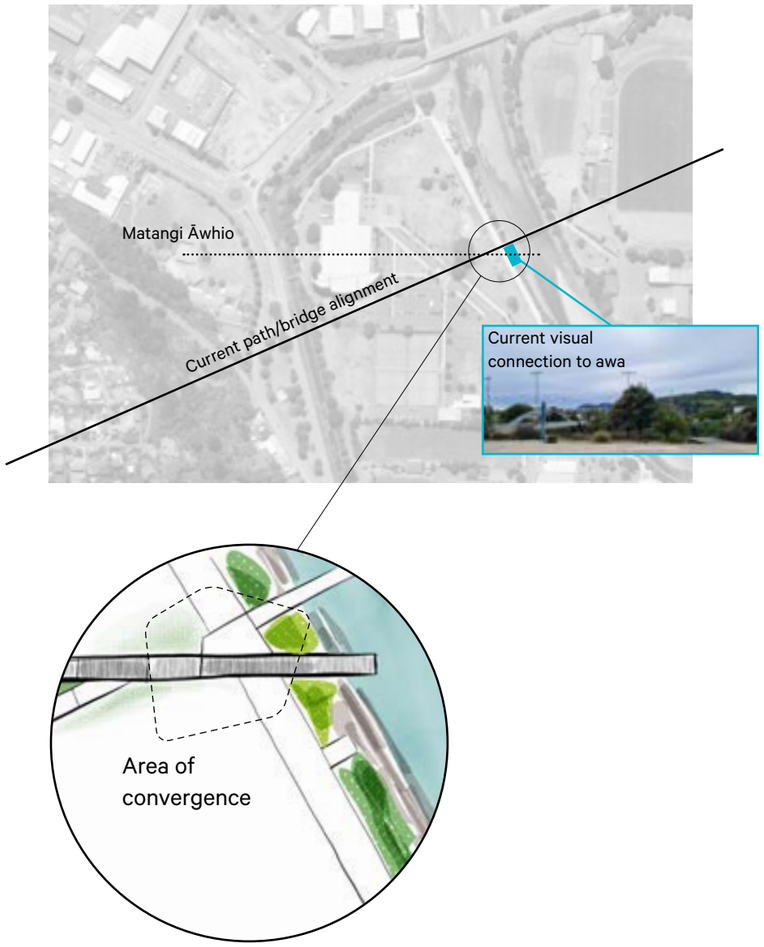


Key Moves.
Spatial Scaffold.

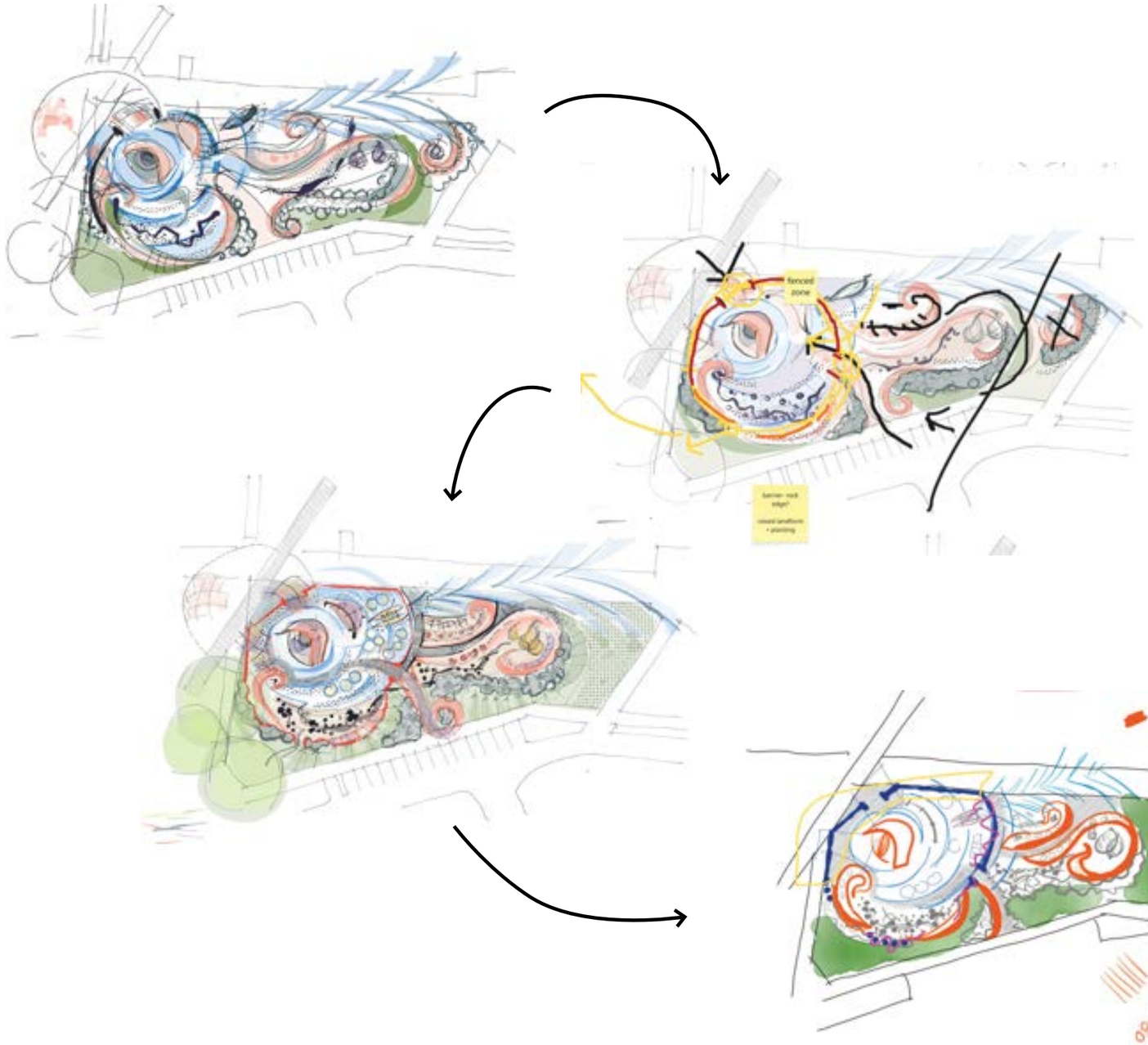


Exploration.
Spatial Layout.

Alignment.

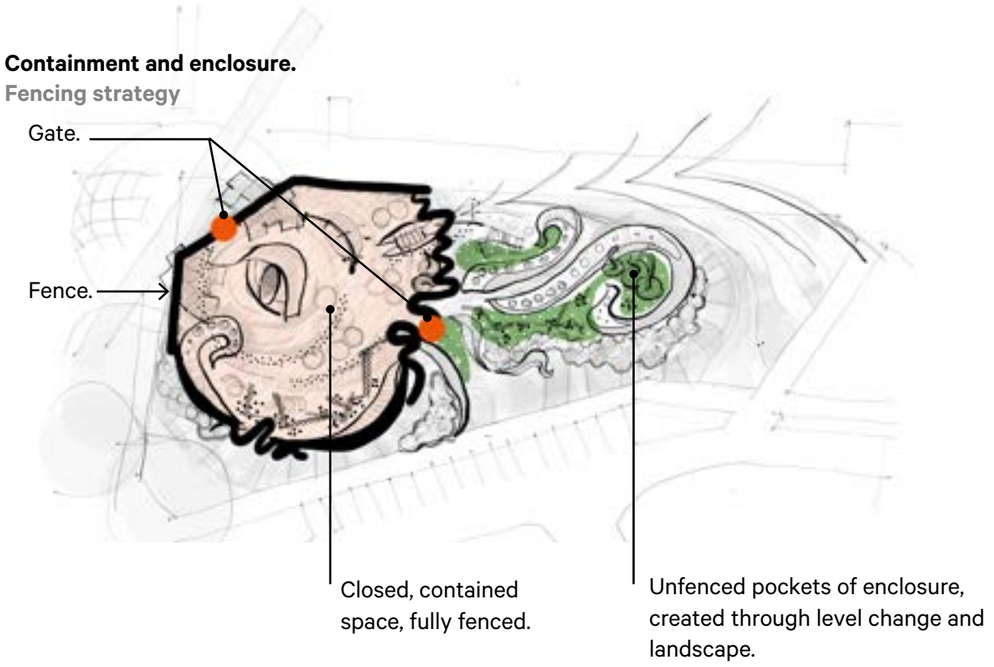


Layout sketching, concept progression.

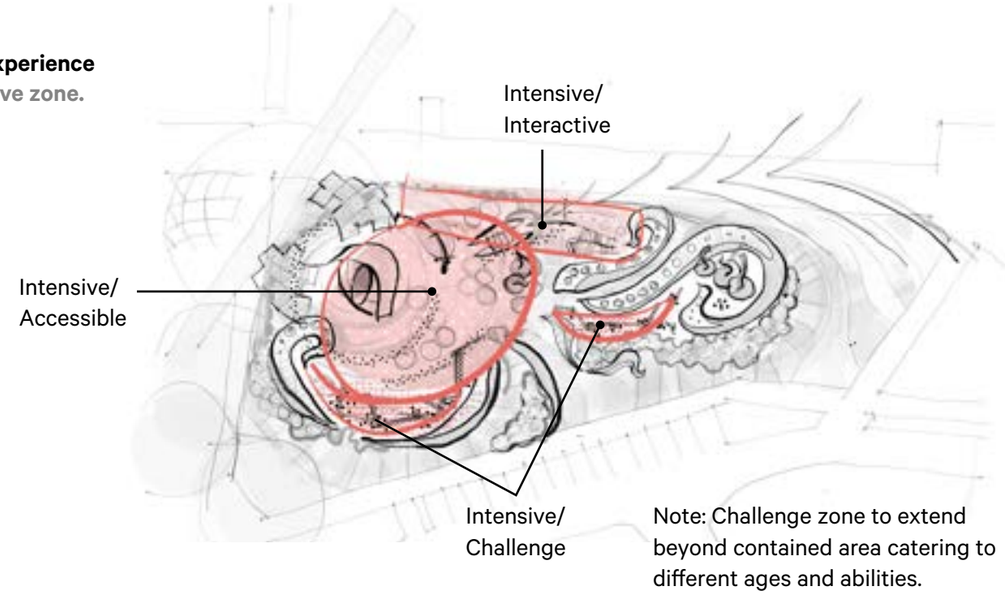


Concept.
Play Zones.

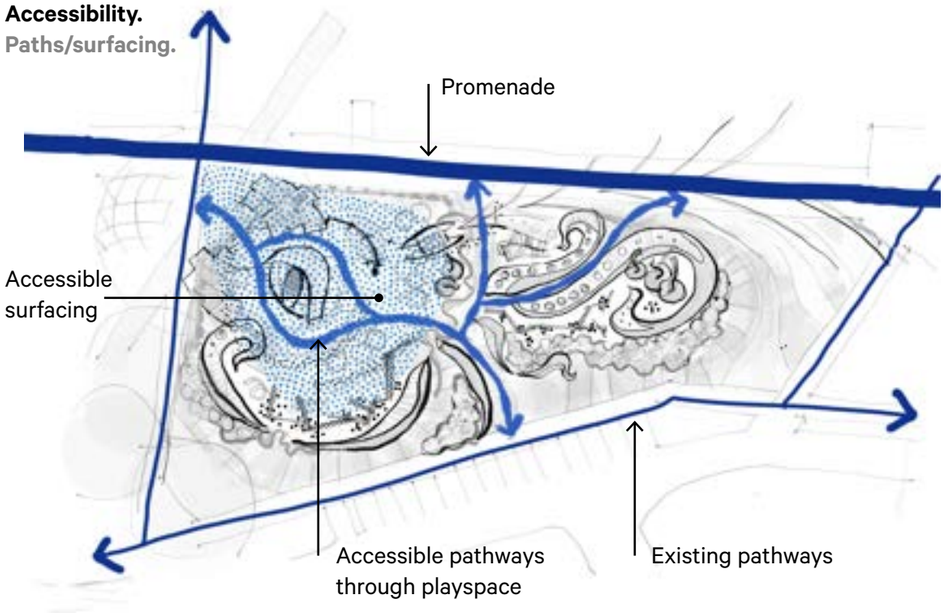
Containment and enclosure.
Fencing strategy



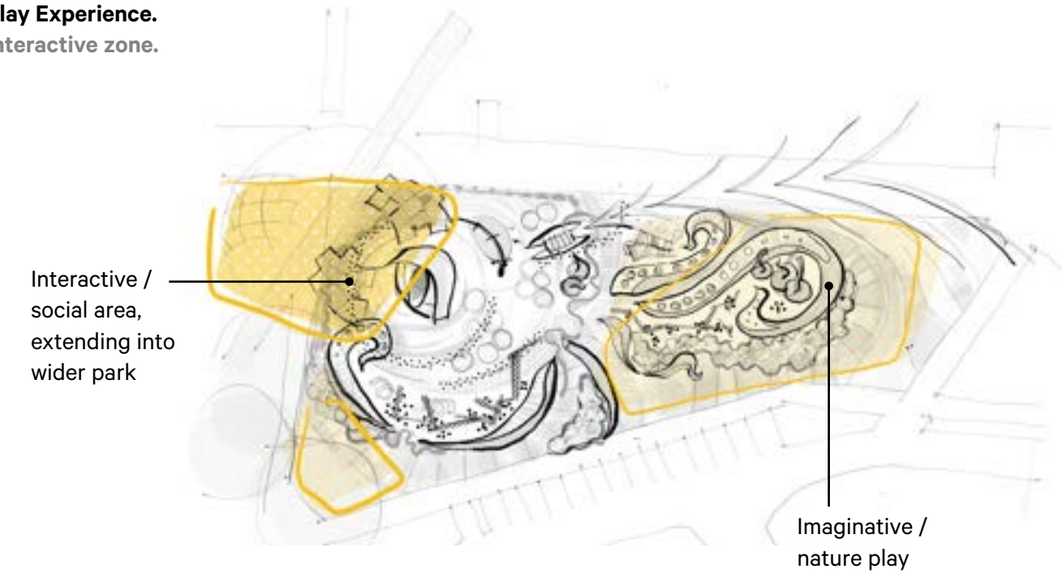
Play Experience
Intensive zone.



Accessibility.
Paths/surfacing.



Play Experience.
Interactive zone.



Concept.
Illustrative Plan.



Legend

Surfacing

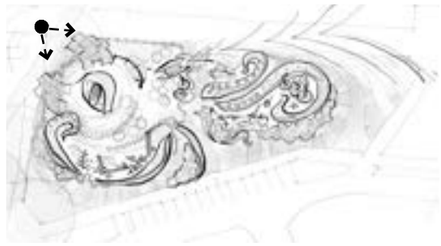
- Hardsurface / accessible pathway
- Wetpour / accessible playsurface
- Planting
- Sand / Cushionfall

Edges & Furnishings

- Sculptural Kupenga Fence
- Urban Edge Fence
- Boulder Edge
- Tentacle Edge

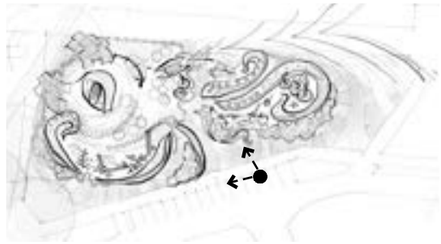
1. Sculptural Wheke eye (under & over)
2. Swings (atop closed eye)
3. Urban Edge to fence
4. ‘Bubbles’ accessible
5. Waka
6. Fitness Bars
7. Wake Supergraphic
8. Sucker Seats / Steppers
9. Sculptural Play Theme (gourds)
10. Planted edge - gravel & estuary mix
11. Low-step progressive challenge
12. Boulder Bank - natural enclosed play
13. Planted slope
14. Hardsurface - pathways
15. Estuary Edge - ropes challenge (tall ‘raupo’ cluster)
16. Fence integrated with boulder edge/bank
17. Sculptural tentacle ‘tips’
18. Canopy seating / gathering

Concept.
3D perspective sketches.



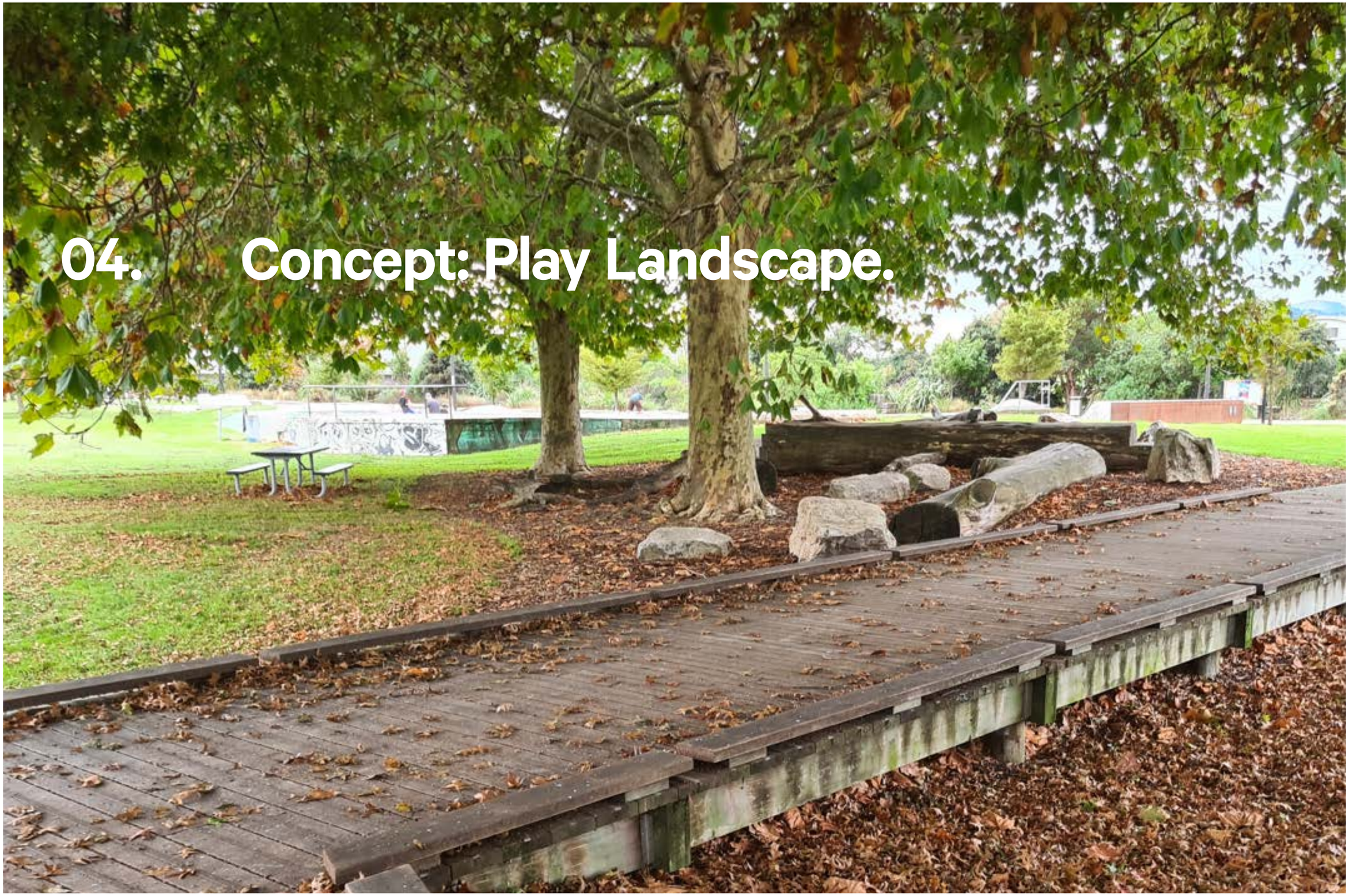


Concept.
3D perspective sketches.

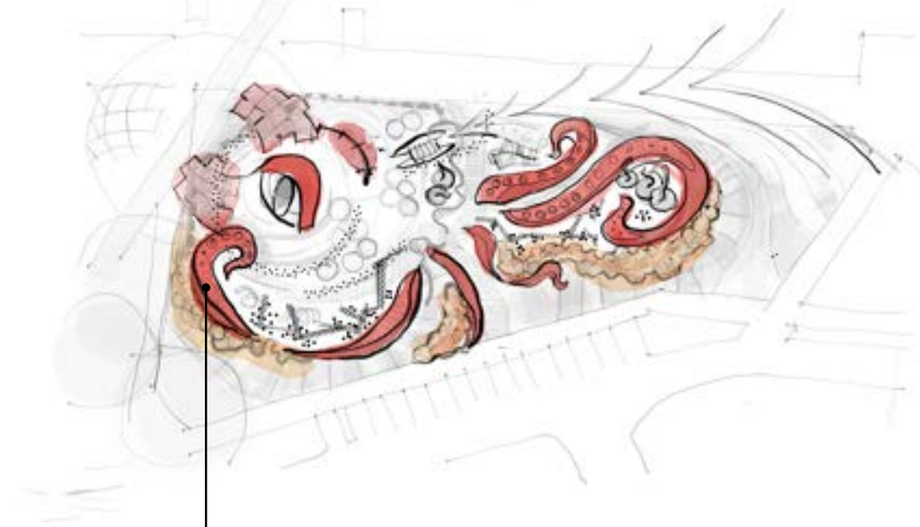




04. Concept: Play Landscape.



Play Landscape.
Te Wheke: Tentacles.



Colour.
Form.
Ground plane.
Walls/retaining.
Topography.

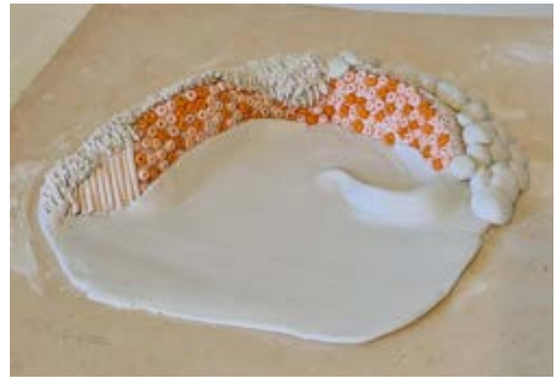
— Physical barrier in some places, to contain and embrace safe play spaces, playable feature in others
— The full form isn't revealed at once. Only from above can Te Wheke's shape be fully understood, with hints emerging along the way.







Banks of planting or boulders 'churned up by the arms of Te Wheke (retaining and slope cover).

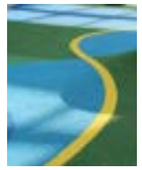


Face of retaining wall changes in texture/cladding to denote inside or outside of tentacle, enhancing the portrayal of dynamic movement.
Seamless transition of form between wall and ground.































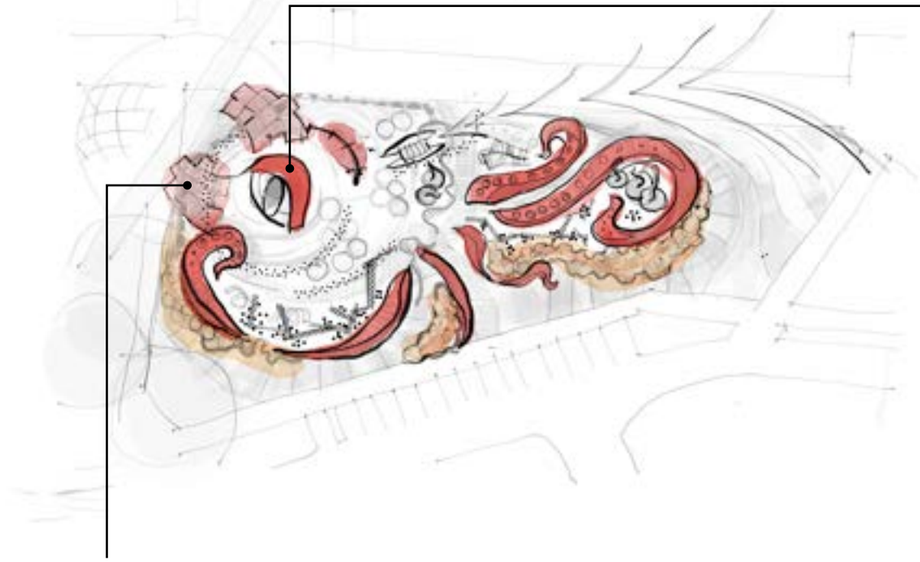


Balance.
Crawl.
Observe.
Discover.
Storytell.
Imagine.
Learn.



Opportunity for repurposing / recycling of local material to be explored.

Play Landscape.
Te Wheke: Head.

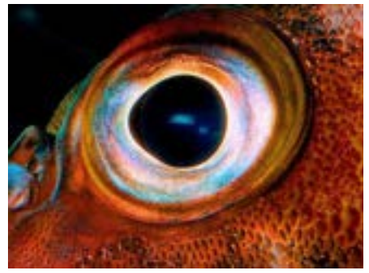


Colour.
Form.
Pattern.
Texture.
Shadows.

Karu.

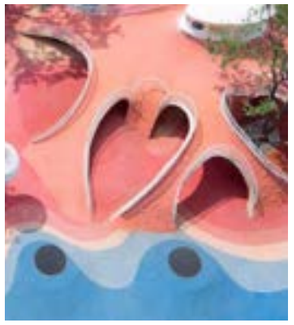




























Hide.
Crawl.
Discover.
Spy.
Through,
Under &
Over.

Māhunga.











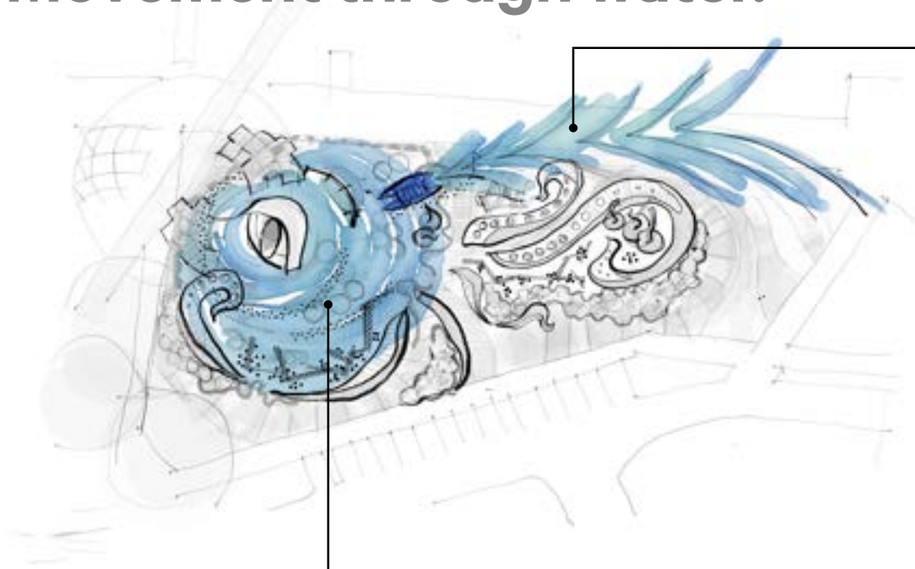






Gather.
Rest.
Observe.
Shade.

Play Landscape.
Movement through water.



Colour.
Form.
Shadow.
Ground plane.







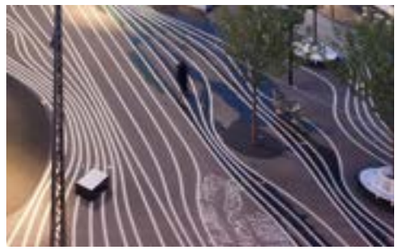
Supergraphics.
Etched?
Painted?





Ripples
Undulating ground.
Circles.
Bubbles.

























Play Landscape.
Estuary Habitat: Play Structures.



Verticality.
Scale.
Views.
Graded challenge.



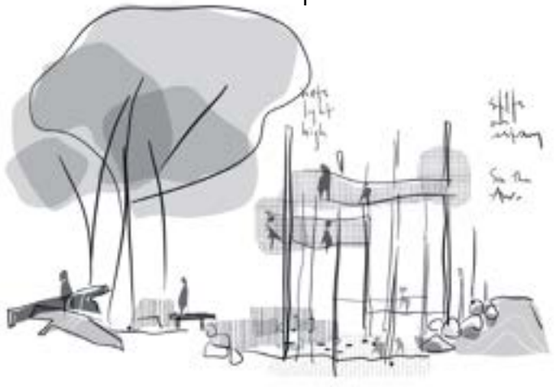








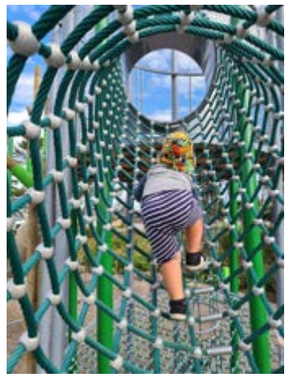
Climb.
Step.
Balance.



Explore down below!



Get up high!







Strength.
Bravery.

The full form of Te Wheke isn't revealed at once - glimpses emerge along the journey, with its shape and views of the awa only fully revealed from above.



Play Landscape.
Estuary Habitat: Soft landscape.



Planting.
Nature play.

















Plant palette.

1. Apodasmia similis
2. Juncus kraussii subsp. australiensis
3. Leptinella dioica
4. Schoenoplectus pungens
5. Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani
6. Selliera radicans













Play Landscape.
Relationship to Te Whenua: Materiality and texture.









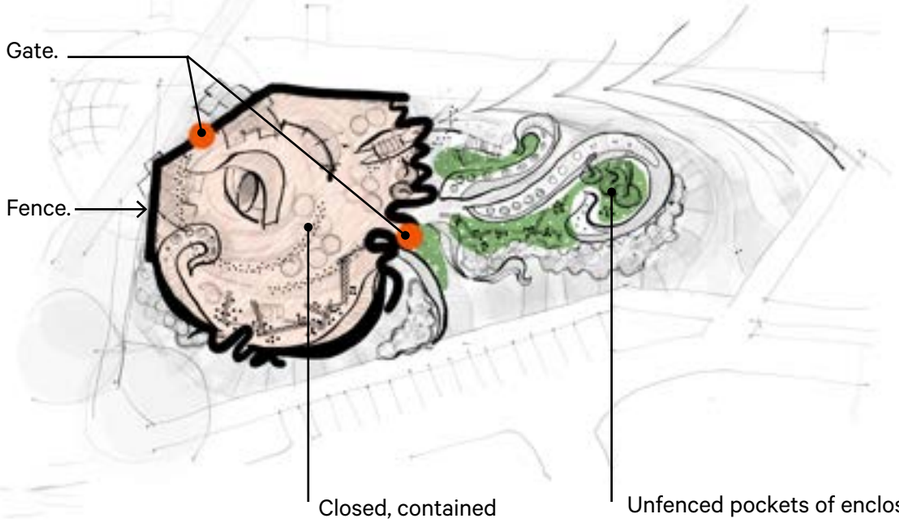









Play Landscape.
Containment and Enclosure.



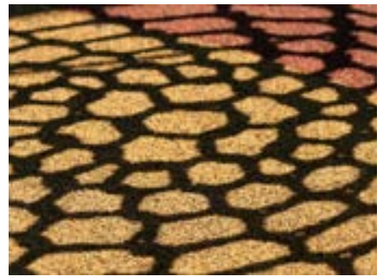


Imagination
Sound
Pattern Texture
Learning
Shadows









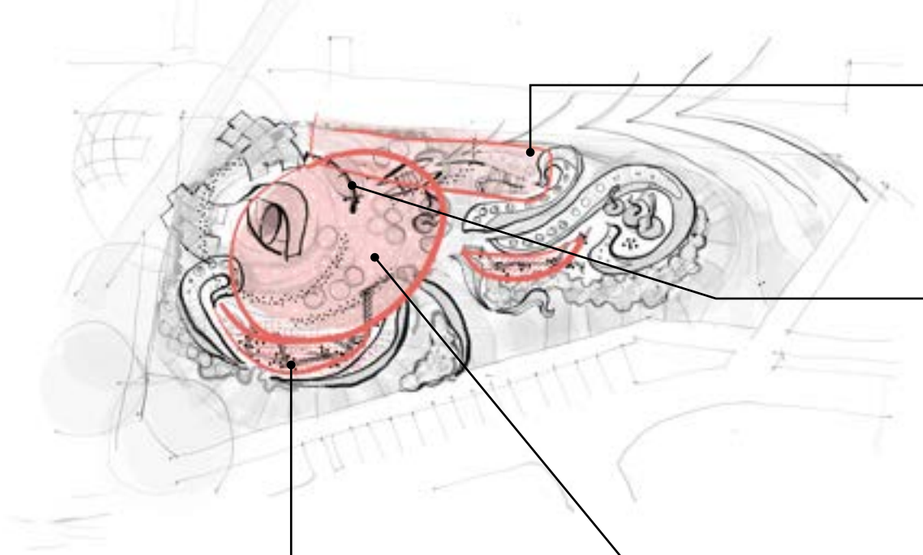





Mahi toi fence/wall - urban, artwork, strong line, solid and visually permeable.
Kupenga fence - light, visually permeable, twisting, draping.
Wheke tentacle barrier - solid, landform, level change.

Play Equipment.
Intensive zone.

Note: Play equipment shown is indicative of the experience proposed..
Equipment selection will occur during developed design.











Swings.

Fitness.



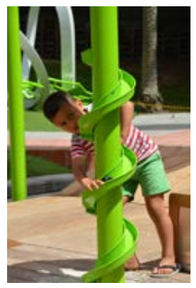








High Walk.





















Accessible.
Sensory.
Inclusive.

Isthmus.

Play Experience.
Interactive zone.



Interact.
Engage.
Socialise.











Imagine.
Explore.
Wonder.













05. Ensuring success: principles, strategies & tools.



Vision.
Vision statement and key principles. (Design Guidance).

Vision

To create a **uniquely** Whakatū play **destination** **connecting** people and place

Must-visit destination
Draws people in, destination appeal, popular attraction.

Uniquely Whakatū
Iwi-led, proudly Māori, unmistakably ours.

For everyone
Inclusive, accessible, intergenerational.

Born of this place
Inspired by our surrounds, built to last, low impact.

Design Principles

Tūhono (Connect)
Encourage playful interaction across all ages, cultures, and abilities, making the space a must-visit destination.

Tūranga (Belong)
Build awareness of the unique cultural identity of Whakatū, ensuring tangata whenua values, knowledge, and practices are central to the space.

Toitū (Sustain)
Support the protection and restoration of the natural environment through sustainable, low-impact materials.

Tūturu (Genuine)
Reflect the whakapapa, stories, and presence of tangata whenua, ensuring the design is distinctively Whakatū.

Matatū (Prepared)
Design a safe, enduring space adaptable to seasons and weather, ensuring accessibility for all ages and abilities.

Local voices, values, and visions.
Community Engagement Report. (Summary).



A PLAYSPACE EVERYONE CAN USE

A space where everyone can participate with ease, comfort, and dignity.

Whānau want a space where tamariki of all abilities can play safely and confidently. This means accessible equipment that isn't separated from the rest of the playground, secure fencing, thoughtful surfacing, and toilets that meet complex medical needs.

1. **Safe, secure fencing** that supports neurodivergent tamariki and creates peace of mind for whānau.
2. **Accessible equipment** such as web swings, sloped ramps, and wheelchair-friendly carousels.
3. **Mobility-friendly surfacing** and wide, smooth paths throughout the space.
4. **Inclusive facilities** like toilets with medical shelves, accessible picnic tables, and armrest seating.
5. **Design for all ages and abilities**, including quiet/sensory zones and under-5s areas.

BIG, LOUD, IMAGINATIVE PLAY

Big, bold, imaginative play that reflects how tamariki love to move, dream, and explore.

Tamariki want a place that's exciting, energetic, and full of adventure — with water play, flying foxes, bold colours, noteworthy features, and creative play ideas that spark the imagination.

1. **Waterplay** is the most consistently requested feature: splash pads, fountains, slides, and pools.
2. **Dynamic physical elements** like flying foxes, trampolines, climbing walls, and bounce pillows.
3. **Imaginative features:** castles/towers, treehouses, maunga, and interactive murals.
4. **Sensory-rich play** with textures, movement, sounds, and multi-user swings.
5. **Design for different energy levels:** zones for high energy, quiet reflection, and creative play.

A PLACE THAT LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE US

A celebration of Whakatū's cultural identity through design, stories, and symbolism.

The community wants a space that reflects Whakatū Nelson's unique identity — with strong Te Ao Māori designs, local stories, native plants, and cultural elements woven into every part of the design.

1. **Cultural markers** like waharoa, whare, pātaka kai, and waka-inspired features.
2. **Tamariki-inspired motifs** including the Tino Rangatiratanga flag embedded into play elements.
3. **Naming and narrative** in te reo Māori, grounded in local history and whakapapa.
4. **Design elements that teach and reflect mātauranga Māori** (e.g. native plants, play maunga).
5. **Partnership with iwi and tamariki Māori** in shaping cultural design language.

A SPACE FOR THE WHOLE WHĀNAU

A destination where tamariki, parents, and kaumātua all feel welcome and connected.

People want more than just a playground — they want somewhere whānau can gather, relax, eat, and spend time together. Comfortable seating, shaded tables, and social areas matter as much as the rest of the playground.

1. **Shaded seating and picnic areas** that support rest and socialising for whānau.
2. **Inclusive kai spaces** — tables that accommodate wheelchairs and diverse whānau setups.
3. **Comfortable furniture** like armrest seats, benches for elders, and flat access for mobility.
4. **Playful gathering zones** that support multigenerational engagement and watching tamariki.
5. **Encouraging longer stays** through comfort, shade, and food-friendly design.

A NATURAL, BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO BE

A playspace that honours Papatūānuku through natural materials, design, and care.

The community wants a space that feels alive, natural, and grounded in the taiao — with ample trees for shade, soft ground to play on, and design that respects Papatūānuku and reflects our local natural environment.

1. **Natural surfacing** (grass, sand, bark) that supports sensory diversity and eco play.
2. **Trees and plantings** that provide shade, kai (e.g. apple trees), and cultural meaning (e.g. harakeke).
3. **Design for climate resilience** – flood-conscious layout and runoff sensitivity.
4. **Recycled and low-impact materials** used in structures and landscaping.
5. **Interactive nature zones** that invite tamariki to explore, plant, touch, and tend.

A DESIGN SHAPED BY THE PEOPLE

A space that is co-designed with us, not for us.

We need the design to visibly reflect the voices of tamariki, whānau, and iwi who contributed their ideas, hopes, and lived experiences — not just during the consultation, but throughout the process.

1. **Tamariki and whānau voices** are embedded in the design decisions.
2. **Whānau stories and lived experience** reflected in priorities like fencing, seating, and access.
3. **Visible acknowledgment** of who shaped the space — through design, signage, or storytelling.
4. **Iwi values, identity and narratives** guide the design from concept through to delivery.
5. **Building knowledge and trust through open-source design**, not just consultation on a single project.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

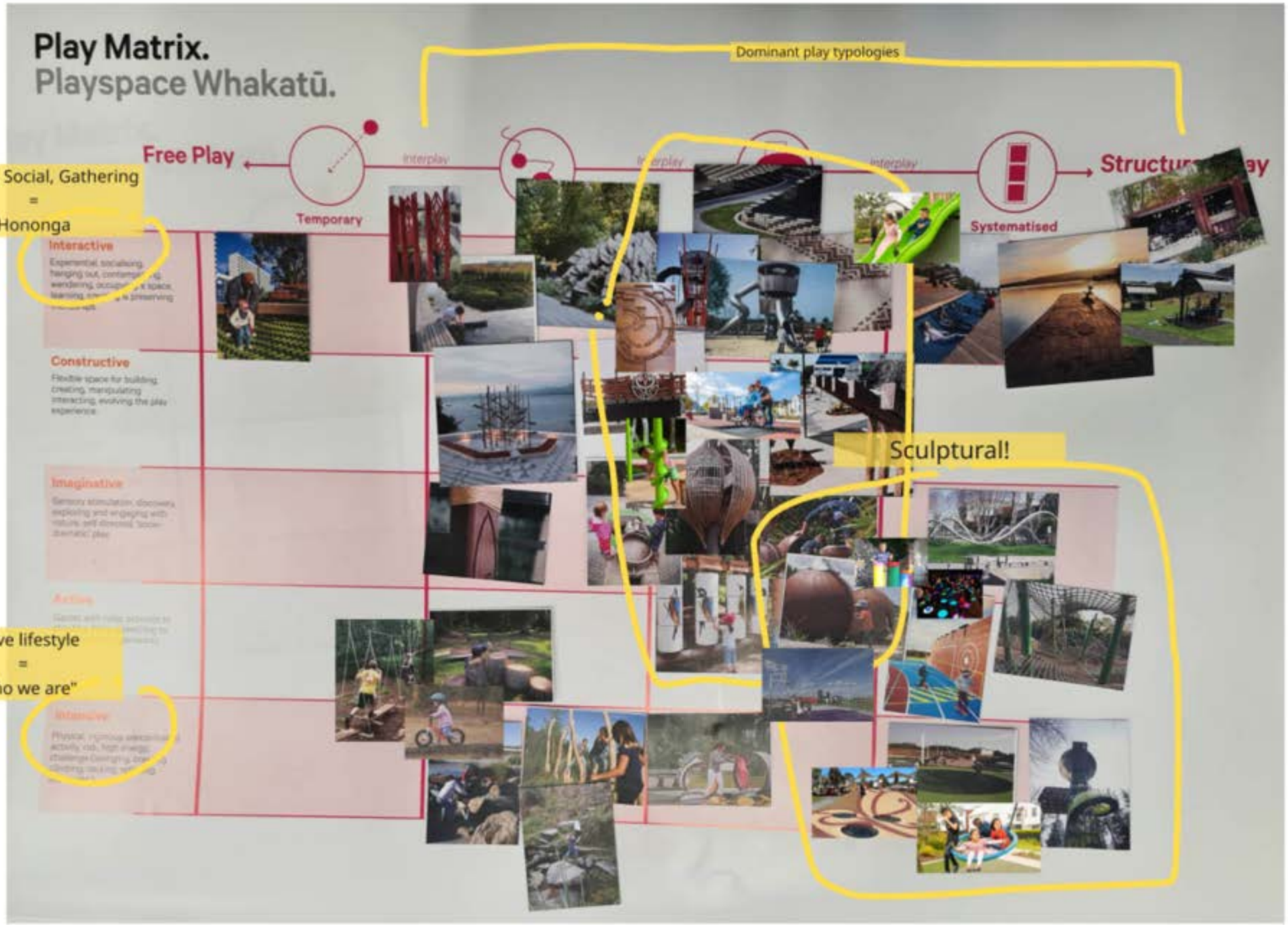
Across hundreds of submissions, creative workshops, hui and everyday conversations, the message was clear:

Everyone should feel welcome and included.
Tamariki want big, bold, beautiful play.
Whānau want shade, kai spaces, and time together.
Te Ao Māori must be central — not decorative.
The space should feel alive, local, and unique to Whakatū.

Approach to Play.
Play Matrix.

The purpose of the Play Matrix is to identify where play value is seen (in play types/ experiences), and how this relates to site context (tākaro and taiao entwined).

In Hui 1, attendees selected 3 to 5 play image cards that resonated or set a benchmark for the site, and added to them to the matirx. From this we can draw patterns of priority, preference and aspiration for this unique project.



Approach to Play.
Design Strategies.

We propose the following design strategies for the Playspace Whakatū. We believe these are key to delivering a whānau friendly, inclusive, safe and accessible public space.

Make everything playable, creating a complete 'play landscape' with play value at every scale and in every element- furniture, edge, fences, ground plane, interaction with natural edges, movement and scale..



Create intensity through clustering play zones tightly. This creates a feeling of energy and 'buzz' in the space and also aids easy observation encouraging longer visits while delivering best 'bang for buck' allowing the highest possible m^2 rate.



Integrate age groups by designing to encourage different ages to play alongside each other in each zone (do not split by age group). This does not mean moderating challenge for older children, but instead ensures inclusion and graded challenge across all areas of the playspace.



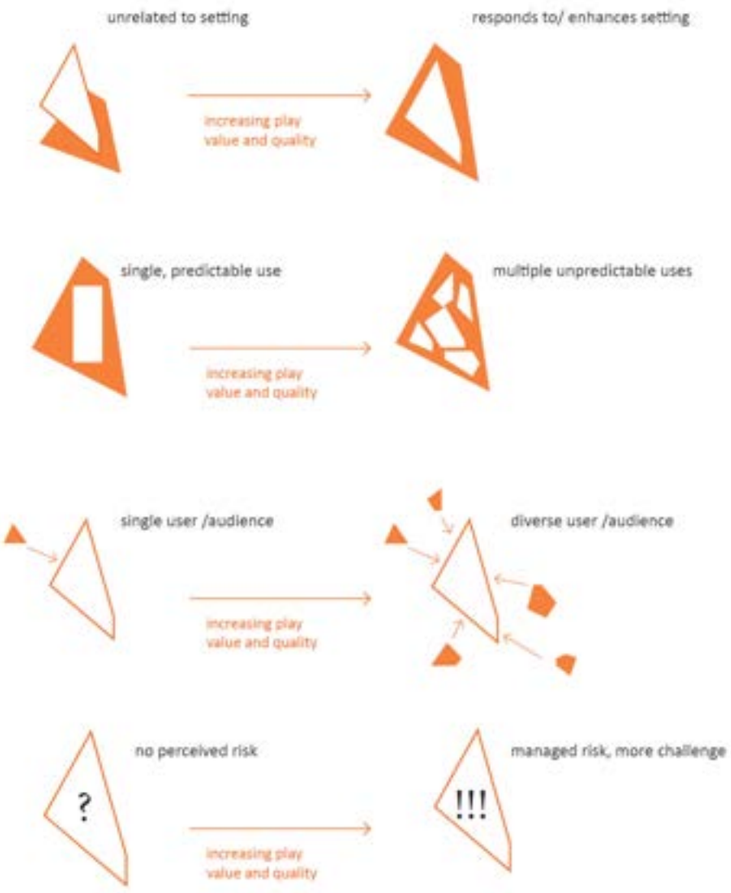
Ensure a multi-faceted experience of Te Wheke a Muturangi. Ensure the pūrakau can be experienced physically, visually, experientially, alone or in groups, literally and figuratively. This ensures experiences for all and that it can be discovered differently, understood more deeply each time someone visits.



Focus on play value and quality. Components don't always need to be expensive to deliver the desired experience, look to innovation in materials and environment first and foremost.

Offer risk without hazard. The benefits of risky play are now commonly recognised and celebrated. Ensuring levels of challenge and opportunities for tamariki of all ages to test the limits of their abilities is critical in ensuring positive outcomes for their physical and cognitive development as well as making the space a truly desirable destination to keep coming back to.

Balance the energy, ensuring the space allows and facilitates play that is quiet and unrushed, as well as loud, fast moving activity, and social interraction for both tamariki and their caregivers.



Above. Our approach to increasing play value and quality.

Sustainability & Regeneration.
Te Kāpehu: Project Impact Compass.

Scoring note	
-1	Less than acceptable
0	Average/'Business as usual'
1	Step in right direction
2	Exemplary

Design Principles/Values

Tūhono (Connect)
Encourage playful interaction across all ages, cultures, and abilities, making the space a must-visit destination.
Tūranga (Belong)
Build awareness of the unique cultural identity of Whakatū, ensuring tangata whenua values, knowledge, and practices are central to the space.
Toitū (Sustain)
Support the protection and restoration of the natural environment through sustainable, low-impact materials.
Tūturu (Genuine)
Reflect the whakapapa, stories, and presence of tangata whenua, ensuring the design is distinctively Whakatū.
Matatū (Prepared)
Design a safe, enduring space adaptable to seasons and weather, ensuring accessibility for all ages and abilities.

-Preliminary Design Guidance | Playspace Whakatū

Te Kāpehu is a navigational tool for project outcomes in a wider context of regeneration,and helps with the likely challenges and opportunities to navigate as part of the design process and beyond. It is tailored to the site and project.
Scoring was completed as part of Hui 1 with Iwi engagement. It represents the group's aspirational outcomes at start of concept phase. This is now an evaluation tool - to be revisited during future design phases and beyond.



Isthmus.

Sustainability & Regeneration.
Te Kāpehu: Project Impact Compass.
Papatūānuku - Planet.

	Whakatū Playspace Preliminary Design Guidance	*Score.*	*Discussion notes.*	*Aspirations.*
CARBON (operational)		0	Aim to make good decisions, carbon emissions are not a focus for this project.	1. Best practice playspace design in accordance with Playspace Whakatū Design Guidance.
CARBON (embodied)	— Listening to the Whenua: Materials. *What materials work best in this environment? Prioritising natural, locally sourced, and enduring materials like timber and stone strengthens the connection to place while ensuring longevity.*	0	Aim to make good decisions, carbon emissions are not a focus for this project.	1. Best practice playspace design in accordance with Playspace Whakatū Design Guidance.
CARBON (landuse)	— Listening to the Whenua: Impact. *What design choices reduce long-term environmental disruption? The whenua has already been modified significantly - further largescale earthworks should be avoided where possible in favour of design solutions that respond to, rather than alter, the landscape.* — Historical and Environmental Considerations: Soil Stability & Site History.	0	Highly modified site - Earthworks is the most critical landuse factor. Cycling connections are strong and should be emphasized. Potential for E-bike charging near/on site in the future.	1. Best practice playspace design in accordance with Playspace Whakatū Design Guidance. 2. Minimise ground disturbance.
BIODIVERSITY	— Creating a sense of place: An invitation to restore. *To consider how design can heal rather than harm.*	1	Inclusion of original native plantings could be an educational tool. Taonga plant species are important here as are inter-tidal species. - Heighten and raise awareness, educate, recognise and celebrate unique ecology and habitat on site. The natural environment could be engaged with through views beyond the site as well as experiences within the site. Currently the view of the natural world is highly curated on site. Potential for mahinga kai?	1. Ensure plant selections are exemplary for this location, including taonga species, to hold the high standard already begun with regenerative planting on the banks of the awa. 2. Deepen the connection tamariki feel to te taiao and this indigenous landscape, through: a variety of sensory experiences, opportunities for discovery and learning.
TE MAURI O TE WAI	— Listening to the Whenua: Water. *How does the playspace interact with water? The site is low-lying and prone to flooding. Instead of working against this, the design should embrace permeable surfaces, natural plantings, and water sensitive features that allow for natural filtration and flow.* — Creating a sense of place: An invitation to restore. *To consider how design can heal rather than harm.* — Historical and Environmental Considerations: Flooding & Water Management. — Listening to the Whenua: Resilience. *How will the playspace adapt to changing conditions? The design must account for sea-level rise, heavy rainfall, and fluctuating temperatures, ensuring the space remains usable for generations to come.*	1	Limited potential here to influence the wider stormwater systems and effects due to site size and contaminated soils. Best to cap the site and get the water off it rather than let it soak due to the contaminants and potential leaching into the Mahitahi Awa. Some filtration through planting may be possible but not significant. Should consider material choices and maintenance programmes here in terms of run off into the awa. Relationship to the awa and potential educational opportunities are perhaps the biggest advantage/potential here. Land and water are central/core considerations here - we must do what is in the best interests of the river and land. How do we live ***with*** the river? Let the river be the river. It will flood, what is the role of the playspace when it does? Opportunity for this project to role model a good relationship to water.	1. Ensure water entering the awa from our site is clean and life supporting. 2. “Let the river be the river.” - embrace its natural systems, and changing levels within the design as opportunities rather than constraints. 3. Deepen the connection tamariki feel to te awa and wai māori through: a variety of sensory experiences, opportunities for discovery and learning.

Sustainability & Regeneration.
Te Kāpehu: Project Impact Compass.
Tangata - People.

	Whakatū Playspace Preliminary Design Guidance	*Score.*	*Discussion notes.*	*Aspirations.*
MĀTAURANGA MĀORI	— Storytelling, curiosity, and discovery. Play can be a way for tamariki to encounter pūrākau, tikanga, and mātauranga through experience rather than instruction. — Traditional Māori play was about: • Whanaungatanga - learning how to move together, interact, and build relationships. • Pushing boundaries - testing limits and growing resilience. • Transmission of knowledge - passing on pūrākau, whakapapa, and mātauranga. • Developing body and mind - preparing for life's real challenges.	2	This is how we will achieve other aspirations within the compass. It is the core lens to look through and the way to promote learning and education within the final outcome. We are in unchartered territory, the are seldom opportunities like this, we must excel and set the standard for all projects going forward.	1. This project is recognised as exemplary across Aotearoa through its use and portrayal of mātauranga Māori, in both its process and outcome,
COMMUNITY IDENTITY	— Historical and Environmental Considerations: Cultural Landscape & Protection of Heritage. — Why this location? 2. Cultural Significance. 4. Visibility and Impact. — An expression of who we are, what we value, and where we are going.	2	Critical to the success of the project - uniquely Whakatū = core outcome. Huge opportunity within the wider region to portray and celebrate Te Tauihu identity, (currently lacking).	1. Unprecedented success within Te Tauihu for celebrating and making visible the regions māori identity - "We can see our faces in this place"
HAUORA / WELLBEING (physical, social, mental, emotional: te whare tapa whā)	— Creating a sense of place: An invitation to connect. *To recognise that whenua is not just a resource but a living presence.* — Creating a sense of place: An invitation to restore. *To consider how design can heal rather than harm.* — Creating a sense of place: An invitation to belong. *To ensure our tamariki grow up surrounded by their stories and their culture woven into the places they play.* — Key Site Considerations: Perimeter Safety, Inclusivity and Accessibility, Amenities for Whānau. — Whānau feel a deep connection to place. — Places to rest, to gather, and to pause. — Spaces that cater to different energy levels and abilities. — A design that welcomes all. — Intergenerational connection.	2	Blue zone. Third place. Immersive experience, for everyone. Wellbeing through connection, to each other and the environment.	1. All ages and abilities play. 2. All aspects of a persons wellbeing (physical, mental, social and spiritual) can be enhanced through this play environment.

Sustainability & Regeneration.
Te Kāpehu: Project Impact Compass.
Ōhanga - Economy.

Whakatū Playspace Preliminary Design Guidance	*Score.*	*Discussion notes.*	*Aspirations.*
PROJECT ECONOMICS	2	Feasibility. Commerciality. Streamlined consenting. “Tight ship” Innovation. Life maintenance costs. Progressive design build process/contract has ensured these things are being taken care of. All decisions have been/are being very carefully made with the right people involved at all stages. This project has been set up for success with many months preparation even prior to engagement of team, we are setting a new precedent for delivery with this project.	1. Set a new precedent for the design and delivery of built environment projects with Iwi partners at the core, that becomes a catalyst for other projects like it across Aotearoa.
COMMUNITY ECONOMY — Why this location? 1. Transport connectivity. 3. Integration with existing facilities. 5. Future Development Potential.	1	The playspace as a driver/enabler of regeneration. The long term plans for bus depot and surrounding mixed use development will have success enhanced by playspace and vice versa. Opportunities created for diverse groups of people using the spaces together. Capitalise on natural attributes. Contributes to Whakatū being a great place to live. Major generator of vitality and attraction in the city.	1. Create a true destination space for Whakatū Nelson, repeatedly drawing both locals and visitors to the site and surrounds.

Land.
People.
Culture.
Isthmus.

Tāmaki Makaurau
Auckland
Level 6
246 Queen Street
PO Box 90366
Auckland Central 1010

+64 9 309 9442

Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Wellington
Level 1
191 Cuba Street
PO Box 27136
Wellington 6011

+64 4 499 9832

Ōtautahi
Christchurch
Matai Common
10 Mollett Street
PO Box 1153
Christchurch 8011

+64 3 983 7360