Cultural Landscape Tools

Semi-Public Space – Cultural Landscape Tools: Naenae Town Centre Case Study

**RESEARCH SYNTHESIS REPORT**

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# Introduction

This study focuses on improving residents’ wellbeing by ensuring better access to and usage of key semi-public spaces. This particular study as one part of a wider suite of investigations done in Central Auckland and Sylvia Park, Auckland is centred in Naenae, a suburban settlement in Hutt City, Wellington. The case study provides a different context from those found in Sylvia Park and Central Auckland as the shopping mall, Hillary Court which sits at the centre of the study site is typical of the arrangement of space in many other suburbs around New Zealand. The retail space is itself privately owned but the movement corridors that surround these are publicly owned. However, in recent years, Naenae has seen a downturn of investment into the retail spaces and many are now being rented out as storage space. This, of course has a huge impact on the liveliness of the publicly owned urban realm and it is this inter-relationship between private and public space that has received little attention in suburban Aotearoa New Zealand. Also, due to the fact that the retail space is privately owned, all decision-making around the form and function of these spaces remains exclusively with the private owners despite it effectively being semi-public space.

This study explores the relationship between increased access to decision-making processes and community wellbeing, doing this through a cultural landscape lens that enables a diversity of cultural landscapes to be articulated and acknowledged. To this end, this study asks, what are the cultural landscapes of Naenae residents, past and present? How does the articulation of these cultural landscapes improve access to decision-making processes with respect to semi-public and public spaces? Could a cultural landscape mobile app that acknowledges historical and contemporary cultural landscapes and enable the sharing of community and official knowledges improve access to decision-making processes? If thought useful, what types of information and function would such an app include?

This document outlines the history and contemporary context of the case study, Naenae, methods used in the study, and highlights key findings.

# Why a Cultural Landscapes Framework?

Cultural landscapes are at the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity (Rössler, 2006). They are landscapes, purposefully managed by humans, valued for the ecosystem services and the biodiversity they offer, sustained through complex land use and changing human settlement (Antrop, 1997). Landscapes and places are social constructs based on a person’s connection to a space (Bruns, 2013) meaning that landscapes and places can mean different things to different people. Landscapes are synonymous with and representative of cultural images which in turn are based on the structure and symbolism in the space (Daniels & Cosgrove, 1988). The notion of a cultural landscape was first articulated] in the mid-19th century by Wilhelm Riehl and was founded on the inextricable link between people and the landscape (Körner & Eisel, 2006; Kühne, 2015a). It has come to be an inclusive term that covers the concepts of heritage, identity, memory, and sense of place. It is these four these, alongside technical and official information that we are keen to explore with respect to the development of an app.

Heritage values are special or historic features within a landscape that have memories for the collective or an individual, which provides a sense of continuity and belonging in the natural and cultural environment (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Tengberg et al., 2012). There are tangible aspects of heritage such as the physical objects or places that remain over time, but there are also intangible components of a landscape that include languages and cultural behaviours that have been passed on through the generations (Harrison, 2010). The intangible aspects are connected to the historic aspects of the landscape and are therefore considered to be place-specific cultural heritage values (Muñoz Viñas, 2005). Similarly, contemporary landscapes can generate new languages and knowledge systems, which can influence an individual’s identity in a landscape (Tengberg et al., 2012). Identity can refer to sameness (continuity) and distinctiveness (uniqueness), which people can associate with places (Lewicka, 2008). Furthermore, peoples’ connections to place can refer to the sense of self based on the social and interpersonal connections found in a place (Tengberg et al., 2012). Memories are tied to cultural heritage and identity and shape the cultural landscape. Culture is to society what memory is to individuals (Triandis, 1994). Cultural landscape values can contain personal (Taylor, 2010) and community information (Lewicka, 2008). Thus, cultural landscapes are not static and need to be revaluated with changes over time (Tengberg et al., 2012).

Cultural landscapes were introduced as a new category of importance when assessing heritage in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1992 (Antrop, 2015). UNESCO describes cultural landscapes as a representation of the combined works of nature and man, showing the changes in human society through time (UNESCO, 1992). There are three categories used to recognise cultural landscapes, each containing heritage values considered outstanding and universal:

1. “Designed landscapes have been created intentionally by man such as gardens and parkland landscapes. They are constructed for aesthetic (and sometimes political) reasons and are often associated with monumental ensembles.
2. Organically evolved landscapes are the result of an interactive process between a specific culture and developed in response to their natural environment. There are two sub-categories:
   1. Relict (or fossil) landscapes are the ones that still show characteristic material features resulting from the processes that made them but came to an end;
   2. Continuing landscapes are the ones that are sustained by persisting active traditional way of life in the contemporary society;
3. Associative cultural landscapes have a symbolic reference relating to powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than to material cultural evidence”(UNESCO, 1992).

Cultural landscape research methods are concerned with human perceptions of the environment and their involvement with nature (Schaich et al., 2010). The dominant method used to assess cultural landscapes is landscape assessments. Each landscape assessment is designed with the location or site in mind based on the local features and cultural values. The overall design is considered holistic and the capacity to personalise the research based on the landscape gives more flexibility and depth to the study (Plieninger & Bieling, 2012). The core component of landscape assessments is to incorporate local knowledge and needs as people construct landscapes based on their social and cultural backgrounds. This differs to the perceptions of ‘experts’ of the space (Frank, 2013; Kühne, 2015b).

Landscape studies integrate natural and social sciences, humanities and local knowledge in their analyses (Hötchtl et al., 2007). Landscapes are assessed at various temporal and spatial scales (Schaich et al., 2010; Vos & Meekes, 1999). Landscape assessments are often based on perceptions, which are usually limited to the visual landscape (Antrop, 2015). There are two main approaches used to assess visual landscape perceptions, either through the objectivist or subjectivist paradigm (Antrop, 2015). The objectivist paradigm focuses on identifying the physical landscape properties and is considered landscape centred, whereas the subjectivist paradigm focuses on the observer and acknowledges that social and cultural background plays a role in perceptions (Sevenant & Antrop, 2010). Cultural landscapes are also studied through a phenomenological research approach, by analysing narratives, discourse and iconographic representations by people regarding their landscape (Antrop, 2015; Daniels & Cosgrove, 1988; Lowenthal, 1975). However, this method has been critiqued as being too narrow in focus, which can create a bias in perception. Sooväli, Palang, Kaur, Peil, and Vermandere (2003) suggest combining methods rather than focusing on one approach to develop a more comprehensive depiction of the landscape.

Along with qualitative analyses, landscape maps are to mark locations based on a series of questions (Fagerholm & Käyhkö, 2009; Plieninger, Dijks, Oteros-Rozas, & Bieling, 2013; Tyrväinen, Mäkinen, & Schipperjin, 2007). The maps are then compared and analysed highlighting form, function and meaning for users (Bryan, Raymond, Crossman, & Macdonald, 2010). Interviews and focus groups with local communities and decision-makers show the difference in perceptions of the cultural landscape and the types of value that is placed on features (Chan, Satterfield, & Goldstein, 2012).

Another approach used in the literature is land evaluations consisting of third party reviews of tangible landscape and intangible heritage through visual quality and place identity assessments (Vejre, Jensen, & Thorsen, 2010). Visible manifestations of the cultural ecosystem services are assessed by taking a visual inventory of the study site. Essentially, the researcher would cover the study area and record all relevant signs of features such as park benches, gardens, guide signs, public facilities, and historical sites. Each feature is spatially mapped to determine whether there was a pattern (Bieling & Plieninger, 2013). The visual manifestation method provides a context for the types of cultural features that are present in the landscape, however, there is a perception bias as the researcher interprets the purpose of the features. Furthermore, it only provides a surface analysis (Bieling & Plieninger, 2013).

Other studies have redefined cultural landscapes and created alternative frameworks. Walter and Hamilton (2014) used archaeology as the foundation of the research looking at cultural landscapes in Solomon Islands. The cultural landscape framework was developed with local community being involved in deciding the parameters, data collection, analysis. The participatory research involved site visits and comparisons to create more dialogue and add depth to their understandings of the landscape. Compared to landscape assessments, this cultural landscapes framework was more action orientated and useful for the participants.

Stephenson (2008) develops a new conceptual framework to improve the foundations of the landscape assessments. The *Cultural Values Model* is designed to be holistic and adaptable landscape tool for both insiders and outsiders. The purpose of the Model is to provide more guidance and direction when undertaking landscape assessments by making sure the research considers the fundamental components - relationships, forms, and practices (and processes) (Stephenson, 2008). The components interact and can be analysed together. *Relationship* variables consist of: spirituality, symbols of ideology, memories, sense of place, meanings, aesthetics, stories; *form* variables consist of: archaeological features, human-made structures, vegetation, historic features, natural landforms; while *practices* include: human activities, historical processes, historical events, ecological processes, and human systems (Stephenson, 2008). The conceptual framework provides a basis for understanding the diversity of a cultural landscape and the various factors that need to be considered when making assessments.

Another approach is the *DIVE-methodology*. The four-step DIVE analysis (Describe, Interpret, Valuate and Enable) looks at the whole landscape rather than fragments and is designed to assess cultural heritage (Riksantikvaren, 2009). The analysis uses a time/scale matrix that can be used to organise the collected data and to show changes to the landscape over time. Within the time/scale matrix, aerial photographs, historic and contemporary maps and historical records are analysed, semi-structured interviews are undertaken with key stakeholders, and inventories of the built environment are analysed to determine the overall structure of the landscape and areas of importance (Karlsson, 2008). Incorporating frameworks such Stephenson (2008) Cultural Values Model, the time/scale matrix can be more detailed and inclusive of additional cultural landscape values, lending more insight into local knowledge of the site (Tengberg et al., 2012).

More recently there has been a move toward thinking about cultural services as part of an ecosystem services framework. The use of the term cultural landscapes in publications has declined, while the use of the concept ecosystem services has increased (Schaich et al., 2010). The *Millennium Ecosystems Assessment* (MA) was developed in 2005 and the framework distinguishes between provisioning, regulating and supporting cultural services. The aim is to assess the capability of ecosystems to provide goods and services, either directly or indirectly for human needs (de Groot, 1992). Furthermore, the purpose of MA was to establish an approach that can empower local people in resource management by integrating local knowledge in policy formulations (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Tengberg et al., 2012). An outcome of MA is that ecosystem services have become a mainstream concept (de Groot, Alkemade, Braat, Hein, & Willemen, 2010). The work on cultural ecosystem services shows an overlap with cultural landscapes. At this stage, only three components of the cultural services are currently used for assessment. These are (1) spiritual and religious values, (2) aesthetic values, and (3) recreation and ecotourism assessment (Schaich et al., 2010). The remaining seven components (4) cultural diversity, (5) knowledge systems, (6) educational values, (7) inspiration, (8) social relations, (9) sense of place, and (10) cultural heritage are not consistently assessed (Fisher, Turner, & Morling, 2009; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Schaich et al., 2010).

The commonality shared between ecosystem services and cultural landscapes is that they are both concerned with the human demands and benefits placed on the environment or landscape (Tengberg et al., 2012). However, cultural landscape research is mostly empirical and the research uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches, often in the same study. The research has a high practical impact and a low political impact, with the spatial scale orientated towards regional or local case studies, and the timescale usually directed to the past (Schaich et al., 2010). Whereas, ecosystem services are more conceptual, and are predominantly quantitative, with an emphasis on modelling. The research is highly political and has a medium to high practical impact, with the spatial scale focus on national or global case studies, and a timescale referring to the present or the future (Schaich et al., 2010). The disconnect between cultural landscapes and ecosystem services highlights the intersections where research can overlap.

Cultural landscapes are loosely defined in the literature, allowing the researcher flexibility in how they wish to interpret and analyse place. The cultural ecosystem services approach has improved the focus of research, but has shifted the focus away from cultural landscapes into what services the place has to offer humans. The interaction of cultural landscapes and cultural ecosystem services may provide for richer analyses (Bieling & Plieninger, 2013). Some of the challenges for assessing cultural landscapes is the use of terminology and concepts used (Schaich et al., 2010). The basic concepts need to be defined to ensure communication is clear. A mixed methods research approach is the best option when analysing cultural landscapes, particularly using both participatory and interpretive research techniques. These are needed to effectively understand both the collective and individual cultural landscape and the underlying values that connect people with particular places (Fish et al., 2016). The perception of the landscape is dependent on the participant and the purpose behind the research. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the local individual’s cultural landscape compared to an expert or community decision-maker as they place different values and purposes on cultural variables (Read, 2005). Furthermore, consideration is needed for the historical context and the contemporary environment to ascertain the heritage values, especially in environment that is shifting from rural to urban (Coates et al., 2014).

# Methods

As noted previously, the central focus of this case study has been to explore the potential of a cultural landscape app to improve community access to decision-making processes. Our methods focused on engaging with a wide range of community members alongside business owners and local and central government agencies tasked with service provision in Naenae that may influence the ongoing form and function of Naenae’s private, public and semi-public spaces. In addition to undertaking a review of the literature on cultural landscape assessment, the project methods centred on key informant interviews and wānanga to engage with community members that tend to not be well represented in decision-making processes with respect to the built environment. Twenty semi-structured key informant interviews were undertaken with representatives from mana whenua, key community groups, a historian, shop owners and keepers, and local and regional institutions (Appendix 1 outlines the questions asked).

In addition, four wānanga were undertaken with youth, Māori, Pasifika and older Naenae residents. Wānanga included a mental mapping exercise asking residents to draw Hilary Court and surrounding Naenae to understand what features and spaces were key (in terms of use and identity) in the minds of residents. Participants were then asked to identify key spaces for them on a large plan of Naenae to understand how residents used spaces across the suburb. Discussion was recorded across these two exercises. Finally, a series of questions was asked of the participants in relation to Hilary Court in particular and Naenae more broadly, as well as questions about a potentiality of a cultural landscape app. (Appendix 2 outlines the workshop exercises and questions).

# Background to Case Study: Naenae

Māori have lived in the Naenae and wider Hutt Valley area for hundreds of years, but very little of this is documented. Schrader and NZHPT note that further, and oral, research on Māori habitation of the area would be beneficial – including on Te Mako pā and Te Ati Awa leader Wiremu Tako Ngatata’s tenure there (2012, p. 4 & 20).

The Lower Hutt suburb of Naenae has a significant place in the history of planning and urbanism in New Zealand. Naenae is where the spatial and social aspects of the garden city vision in New Zealand were most fully met. Naenae was “a uniquely New Zealand expression of the garden city ideal” (Schrader & NZHPT, 2002, p. 17) – although ultimately reality did not meet the vision in full.

Naenae’s construction began in 1945 and aimed to accommodate up to 10,000 people. The incumbent Labour government held high visions for Naenae; an ideal ‘brave new world’ drawing on principles of garden city planning. Naenae was never meant to be a garden city in Ebenezer Howard’s utopian concept, however, it did showcase many garden city features such as streets following the natural contours of the land, considerable green reserves and corridors (15% of the land was set aside for reserves), and an industrial zone set within parkland (Schrader, 2005; Schrader & NZHPT, 2012, p. 9).

The original design of Naenae was made by Austrian immigrant Ernst Plischke, working in the Housing Division’s town planning section. The centrepiece of Plishcke’s vision for Naenae was a community centre, drawing on inspiration from the cities of medieval Europe. Plishcke’s design included three pedestrian squares, a community centre, and hotels and offices which aimed to replicate the vibrancy of San Marco (St Mark’s) square in Venice (ibid). A vision for community cooperatives was also strong in Naenae’s early days, driven particularly by Canadian immigrant William Robertson[[1]](#footnote-1). This resulted in a consumer cooperative[[2]](#footnote-2) being established in central Naenae and a community hall being constructed, although plans for a health cooperative were shelved (ibid).

Plishcke’s planned community hub for Naenae was never completed. The community hall did belatedly open in 1954.[[3]](#footnote-3) And, a slimmed-down alternative to Plishcke’s original concept – Hillary Court,[[4]](#footnote-4) New Zealand’s first pedestrian mall – was opened. New Zealand urban historian Ben Schrader argues that the vision for Naenae was not met for a number of reasons. Firstly, when the community hall was finally opened, “it was a glorified hall that never became the centre of community life. Nor was it built as the focal point of the suburb…. [with]…. [t]his role taken by Hillary Court” (2005, p. 175). Secondly, Naenae may have been just too big a suburb to promote and meet the community ideals originally envisaged and espoused (1996) – ideas that stemmed from Europe’s more densely and highly-urbanised model of community as opposed to New Zealand’s suburban culture and experience. In Naenae, residents generally preferred to socialise at home, or with immediate neighbours (2005). Overall, Schrader argues, Naenae lacked a strong sense of community at a suburb-wide level because the “ideal of a privatised familial suburban environment ultimately had more resonance in the suburb of Naenae than the ideal of local community” (1993, p. iv).

In summary, Schrader’s argument holds true: Naenae does hold a special place in New Zealand’s urbanism (Schouten, 2015), although Plischke’s spatial, and Robertson’s social, visions were not fully realised. However, heritage values, based on aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, social and traditional significance, are strong (Schrader & NZHPT, 2012, p.4)

### A changing demographic profile

Between 1945 and 1956 Naenae’s population grew very quickly from 2,800 to 11,700 people – characterised by working Pākehā families living in state houses (Schrader & NZHPT, 2012, p. 16). From the early 1950s some tenants, taking advantage of generous terms, purchased their state houses, or left Naenae for elsewhere. In addition, from this time, the government began to redirect state housing towards the poor and disadvantaged. By the 1990s Naenae was characterised by low-income households, many of whom were Māori and Pasifika (ibid). Latest 2011 Census information shows a relatively young population compared with Lower Hutt City in general and large Māori and Pacific populations compared with the rest of Lower Hutt (Figure 1 & 2).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age profile** | | **Naenae North** | **Naenae South** | **Lower Hutt City** |
|  | median age | 33 | 32.9 | 37.2 |
|  | <15 (%) | 24.4 | 23.8 | 21.4 |
|  | 15-64 (%) | 64.3 | 66.8 | 65.8 |
|  | 65+ (%) | 11.3 | 9.4 | 12.8 |
|  | Figure 1: Age Profile of Naenae as compared with Lower Hutt City (2013 Census | | | |
| **Cultural diversity** | | **Naenae North** | **Naenae South** | **Lower Hutt City** |
|  | European | 55.4 | 56.2 | 71 |
|  | Maori | 26.9 | 23.6 | 17.1 |
|  | Pacific | 25.5 | 20.7 | 11 |
|  | Asian | 8 | 10.6 | 11.7 |
|  | Middle East, Latin America, African | 2.2 | 3.7 | 1.1 |
|  | Other | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.6 |

Figure 2: Cultural Diversity of Naenae as compared with Lower Hutt City (2013 Census)

Despite the industries in Lower Hutt, the New Zealand Index of Deprivation Report published in 2014 indicated that Lower Hutt also has some of the most deprived communities in the country (Atkinson, Salmond, & Crampton, 2014, p. 33; Singh, 2014). For example, communities that are regarded as having the highest indicators of deprivation make up 16% of the total population in Lower Hutt (Statistics New Zealand). These are communities that score 9 or 10 on the deprivation scale, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the highest level of deprivation. Lower Hutt[[5]](#footnote-5) has significantly higher numbers of:

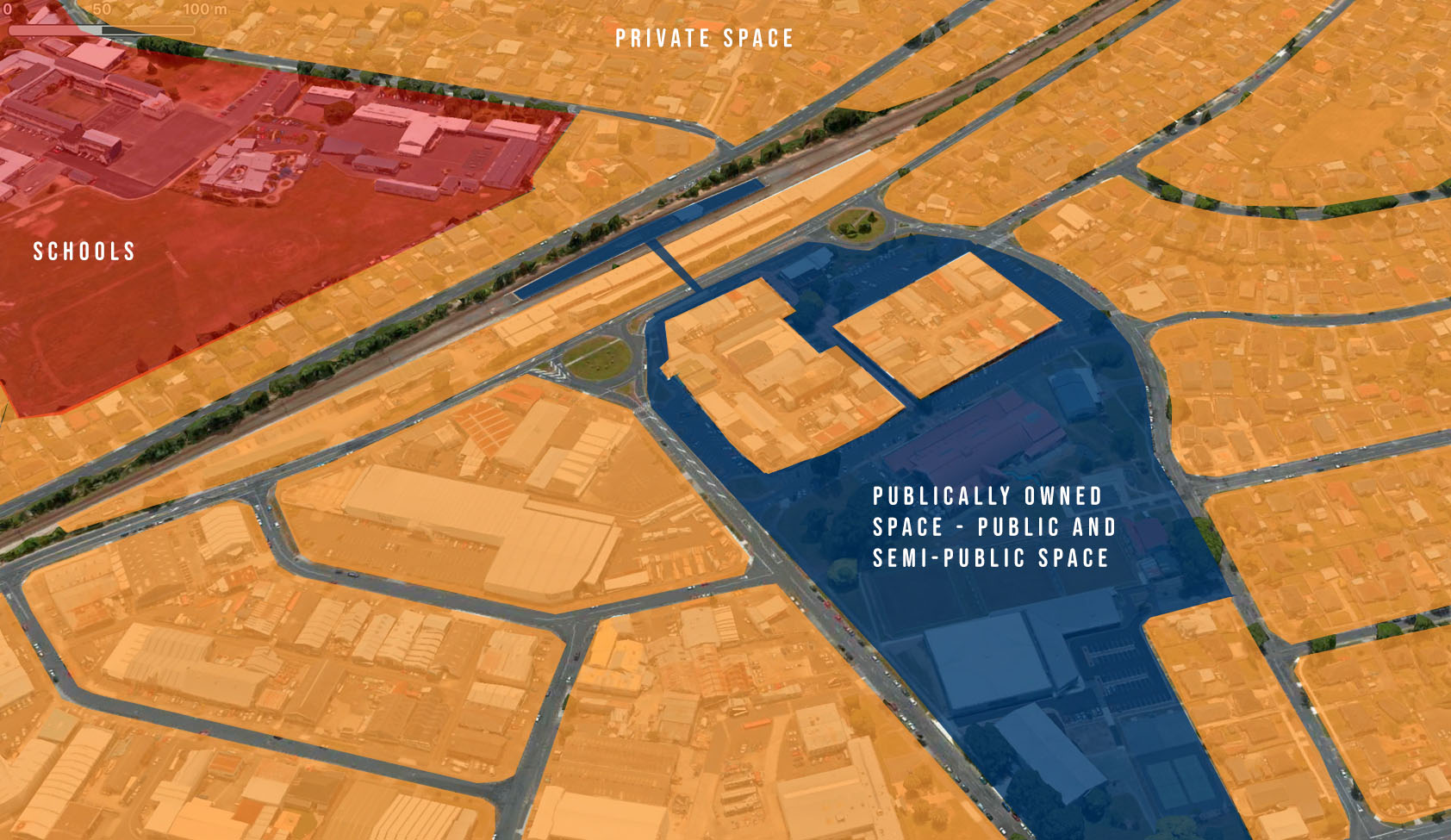
* people with no educational qualifications – 26%, compared to national average of 18%
* unemployment – 14%, compared to the national average of 7%
* households with incomes under $30,000 –25%, compared to the national average of 19%
* households renting social housing – 24%, compared to the national average of 5%
* one parent families – 31%, compared to the national average of 18%
* households not owning a vehicle – 16%, compared to the national average of 8% (Statistics New Zealand) (cited in Pak, L. Paper delivered at: STEAM into Sydney: IFLA Public Libraries Mid-Term 2017, Divide and Multiply -Lillian Pak, Hutt City Libraries)
* N.B. This is Lower Hutt in General, we have been told that it is significantly more exaggerated than these figures for the Naenae/Epuni/Taita & Stokes Valley areas.

# Hilary Court and Naenae today

Today Hillary Court remains the centre of Naenae although many of the original uses have gone from the centre including a cinema, a large supermarket, much retail, and postal services. Figure 3 outlines the current land uses in and around the mall. As can be seen, the mall and immediately surrounding areas are characterised by a number of $2 type shops, a pawn broker and other second-hand shops, convenience stores and transitional housing for single men. In addition, there is a pub, pharmacy, a new social enterprise café and a large number of takeaway food shops. The library currently sits within the mall adjacent to bus and train transport links. Other social services such as Ministry of Social Development sit along the Eastern side of the mall and others such as Pacific Health Service, Community Policing and the Youth Hub sit outside the mall in the surrounding blocks. In addition, outside the mall there are a number of sporting facilities including Billy Graham’s boxing academy, a basketball court, an Olympic-sized swimming pool (a feature of ealy Naenae) and new regional bowling and badminton facilities. A Sikh temple is housed in what was a New World supermarket to the south of the mall and commercial units such as Bunnings and Resene sit alongside that. The mall is located parallel to the trainline although access is only through an underpass/subway. The land between the mall and the train tracks is now privately owned by a storage company.



Figure 4: Land use plan of Naenae



The buildings in the mall itself are privately owned apart from the library building which is owned by the Hutt City Council (HCC) Pedestrian spaces, verges and carparking are also Council owned. The block to the east of the mall which houses the Pool, the Youth Hub, the Men’s Shed, basketball court, community hall and bowling facilities is owned predominantly by the Council also.

More recently, the Council have proposed a new development to be built in 2020 and 2021 on the site of the existing community hall, to the north of Naenae Pool in Everest Avenue (<http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Your-Council/Projects/naenae-community-hub/>). The Council’s expressed vision for the Hub is as follows:

*Council aims to meet the Naenae community’s needs. We want to provide a community hub with a balanced mix of spaces and experiences which will attract and welcome the whole community. The Naenae Hub will reflect the local community, resonate with Naenae’s history and connect with local Māori history* (<http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Your-Council/Projects/naenae-community-hub/>).

The HCC had been engaged in a multi-year, multi-site, modernisation of community assets drive (Integrated Community Facilities Plan adopted by HCC, 2013). Two Community Hubs have been built in the previous three years: Koraunui Stokes Valley (opened November, 2017) and Walter Nash Centre in Taita (October, 2015). The announcement that the new Naenae ‘Community Hub’ would be built on the site of the existing Naenae Community Hall, took many residents, and regular hall users, by surprise (interviews with residents and attendance at community meetings).

Long term residents in attendance at the second and third Naenae Resident’s Association meeting, several people referred to the earlier “research” that had cost HCC significant expense. The report from Ian Bowman, Architect was completed in 2008 (appended at X?)

HCC announced via a Facebook post that they were “starting to plan for a new Community Hub in Naenae” on the 14th November 2017. The survey used to consult the community, was though active from 1 November 2017 – 1 December 2017. The survey included a range of questions enquiring whether the community would like a new Hub but not clearly indicating where the new Hub would be located, and that it involved the demolition of the community hall. That the local and well-patronised Naenae Library would also be re-purposed, or demolished, and its staff re-deployed into the new Hub, was also not clear to many who filled in the late 2017 survey. (See one page summary of Survey Figure 1.)

Thus the tension and degree of concern about semi-public space in a suburb that had up until that time, been well-supplied with facilities of relative high quality, became apparent within weeks of the project beginning (June, 2018).

In addition, much of the large social housing stock in Naenae is in need of upgrading. Local protests to get housing built on vacant government-owned sites, in combination with a new Labour government who seems motivated to build more social and affordable housing, has seen Housing New Zealand announce their intention to build on vacant land and the redevelop existing housing stock that is not ‘fit for purpose’ (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/109461630/longvacant-hnz-land-in-lower-hutt-to-get-37-homes>).

In addition, some gentrification is evident, but is, perhaps constrained by the significant proportion of state-owned housing (ibid, p. 17). Anecdotal accounts from interviews also suggest some more middle-income households are moving into the suburb, likely chasing more affordable housing than that available in Wellington and central Lower Hutt. These developments may suggest that Naenae is on the cusp of change.

These developments suggest that Naenae is potentially on the cusp of change. Anecdotal accounts from interviews suggest some more middle-income households are moving into the suburb, likely chasing more affordable housing than what is available in central Wellington and central Lower Hutt. Overall, some gentrification is evident, but is limited by the significant proportion of state-owned housing. Further change may depend on Housing New Zealand plans..

# Findings and Discussion

Our enquiry focused on three main areas with the first centring on understanding how community, business and local and central government understood the form, use and meaning of Hillary Court and its immediate surrounds. The second area of enquiry focused on the broader issues of community agency in semi-public and public space decision-making processes. And, finally, the third area of focus concentrated on the viability of a cultural landscape mobile app and the nature of such an application.

Specifically, we wanted to understand:

1) what worked well and what didn’t work well with respect to the public and/or semi-public spaces of Naenae (with a particular focus on Hilary Court);

2) how current decision-making processes were working for different stakeholders; and,

3) how useful a cultural landscape app might be for participants and if useful, what type of information might be most important to include and how might it be socialised and used by the wider community.

In the rest of this section we share key themes for each of these three foci.

## Public/Semi-public Spaces: What works and what doesn’t

Local residents and business people identified Naenae’s public and semi-public spaces as being: the Library, the Community Hall, the old Post Office and Clock Tower for its heritage value, Hillary Court, the Pool, and Naenae’s green spaces. These spaces had many positive attributes as shown in Table 1.

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| --- |
| *Hillary Court:*  Modernist heritage value, especially the old Post Office; a range of shops and eateries; potential for re-vitalising the suburb; opportunities for encounter |
| *Library:* Considered the ‘heart’ of Naenae by most residents; offering safety (especially for school-aged children) and friendly staff, as well as opportunities for interaction, learning and community activities |
| *Old Post Office and Clock Tower (now closed):*  Modernist heritage value; previous opportunities for encounter; symbol of past vitality and of hope for the future |
| *Pool and Fitness Centre (recently closed due to earthquake vulnerability concerns):*  Modernist heritage value; health-benefits; brings in people from outside of Naenae; flow-on benefits to local businesses from pool users |
| *Community Hall:*  Part-owned community asset; heritage value; largest internal hall in Hutt Valley; opportunities for community events and activities |
| *Green Spaces (parks, bush, stream walkways):*  Opportunities for community building and improved health and wellbeing through sports and recreation, as well as environmental activities such as tree planting. |

Table 1: Positive Aspects of Naenae’s Public and Semi-public Spaces

Increased Valuing of Naenae’s History and Amenities  
Naenae’s public spaces were valued because of their connection to the unique Māori and Pākehā histories of the settlement. These histories are currently undergoing a resurgence of interest:

*“You know, one of the striking things that has changed in recent years is the Naenae residents themselves have become much more aware of the area’s history. [...] [T]hey are all now really engaged in Naenae’s history, both Māori and Pākehā, and really identifying Naenae as having a strong sense of place and identity, and wanting to [...] put it at the forefront of our discussions of Naenae because [...] they are at the cusp of quite substantial re-development. [...] One of the things that is happening now is the sort of rediscovery of that Māori history and discussing ways of how that can be made more aware of and how to represent that in the community. [...] Along with that change is the growing recognition [...] that the Naenae is a cultural landscape...” (Historian)*

Local residents involved in the Naenae Residents’ Association, Naenae Nature Trust and Naenae Community Cinema, along with support from Library staff, have been active in promoting these local histories and their connections to key public spaces through social media and events. Movies have been screened in buildings such as the Old Post Office and Community Hall. Heritage displays and meetings have been held in the Library and there are regular postings to their on-line Facebook sites. Perhaps as a result, there was a growing understanding about the value of Naenae’s built heritage for future development evident in participants’ comments:

*“we talk a lot about placemaking these days in terms of community and trying to create a sense of place but this was all happening in the 1940’s and this is what people were trying to do then. I really think by understanding Naenae’s past, both socially and spatially there is ways to inform the present” (Participant: O/A)*

*“I have the greatest admiration for whoever came up with the plan for this [centre of Naenae] because in the 1940’s, they built or created a space that still worked for people really well in the 1970’s. That is like really asking for someone in the 1980’s to build something that is still working for people that now have internet and smart phones. [...] They must have obviously looked at the basics of human interaction and in a smart way to make it a pleasant area; to make it something - a space that works” (Participant: SO/A).*

Participants talked about the unique (neglected) value of **Hillary Court** in particular:

*“It is an amazing design [...] It’s a real focal point for the community. That’s what I really like about Hillary Court –the public place, the public areas. And [it’s] actually quite rich in history and heritage” (Resident X)*

*“After I’d been to the shops, I googled it. Funny. I googled it and read up about it and I thought ‘oh this is so exciting because it has such historical value for New Zealand and people’. Not everybody realises that. [I]t’s the first pedestrian mall but it is also the way that it is designed, like a market square. The clock tower – I read all this online – the clock tower is the first clock tower they [the government] allowed post offices to build after the big earthquake in Napier, because after that, post offices couldn’t have clock towers anymore and then they finally allowed it, and Naenae was the first. So that clock tower is quite important cause it marked a kind of shift in belief and attitudes.” (Participant: R/X).*

*“The best thing about it [Hillary Court] is that it’s welcoming to all. I mean a public space is something that everyone, no matter, you know whether you’re homeless or in a mansion you can go sit beside each other and be in that same space. So, that is my favourite thing about public spaces, I love spaces that welcome everyone equally. (Participant: R/Y)*

**The Pool**, like Hillary Court, was recognised for its heritage value and its provision of many inexpensive spaces for recreation and interaction, particularly for young families:

*“I was really impressed [by the pool] and I googled it up as well and realised how impressive the pool was because you know it’s like an Olympic pool and to hear how much the residents love it. They paid to put on a roof. I mean that tells you something about how important it is to the community. [...] I know lots of families around here and that’s their place to go because it is inexpensive, the kids love it, you can take your own food and drinks, and just make a day of it. There is nowhere else you can really do that. I can’t think of any that’s also safe. Yeh inexpensive and safe – yeh I can’t – and within walking distance for a lot of families” (Resident X).*

**The Bowling Club**, while a regional facility rather that a strictly local one, was also valued as a big asset by young and old alike (youth and seniors’ focus groups). The youth group talked about the affordable and delicious meals available at the Club and seniors noted:

“*I think Naenae is very lucky – we've got the beautiful pool, the lovely bowling complex. I mean they are two great facilities here*” (Participant, senior focus group).

**The Community Hall** was recognised for both its heritage value and its function as a community social hub.

*“I think the idea of the Hub is a good idea but as a historian I’d be really disappointed to see the community hall demolished because it’s a really important part of the history of Naenae in particular the social history of Naenae because it was half paid for by the residents of Naenae through that special rating and certainly in the early 1990’s when I was talking about the importance of the hall to the Naenae residents they said it was a social hub and it was and is still even today a high percentage of use. I would like to see it adaptively reused if that’s a site they are going to use rather than it being demolished” (Participant: O/A).*

It was also valued for being one of the largest hireable indoor venues in the Hutt Valley regularly used for senior fitness, weddings and others social events until its recent closure.

#### The Library more than any other public space however, was consistently referred to as the heart of the community in meetings associated with the Council’s proposal to relocate it into the new Community Hub. Its symbolic positioning as Naenae’s ‘heart’ reflected how people valued the space it provided for impromptu community interaction and learning that frequently led onto the development of friendships and other activities:

*“I think that was also one of the first places I also went to in Naenae was to get a library card. Because once you’ve got a library card, it kind of opens the world. But also they have programmes there that I could attend with my child – my baby. And, they are always welcoming” (Resident X).*

*“I loved it cause you could pop in, you’re welcome and it’s warm, it’s clean and it’s dry. And, it’s just a nice place to go. Sometimes I would meet the other mums in there and it’s funny because that would sometimes be the starting point. Like oh let’s go to the Zoo. We will take the bus or the train and we will meet at the library, not at the platform of the bus stop but at the library. And it’s a safe place. If you – not that I’ve ever felt scared in Hillary Court but I’ve figured if I ever did, that’s where I would go first because they are there to help you – the library is there to help you. The library staff are there to help you” (Resident X).*

The Library, as a public space connected to experiences of safety, sanctuary and welcome, was particularly significant because of its proximity to the underpass/subway (where lack of safety was highlighted particularly by youth and seniors), and because of the permanent presence of helpful, engaged staff who could act as trusted childminders:

*“But basically the kids know that this is a library and with it next to the subway, just as Participant PFC/B suggested how we all have safety issues around, so it’s good for them to come here knowing there is wifi and everything for them to connect with family, play here. Because when my daughter gets off the train from uni, I always tell her to either, if it’s before nine, brisk walk home to Rata Street or she’ll have to uber home. But she always connects here when she has no data.” (Participant: PFC/A).*

Furthermore, the Library provided vital services to residents with limited mobility and resources to enable them to complete important activities:

“*It is quality care that they [Library staff] provide to the community in telling people what’s happening and connecting and knowing who to talk to or what you need or, or like just spending the time that they do every day teaching people how to use the photocopier, right? That, which is, which is very important if you don’t have a printer at home. If you have legal documents that you need to send and you don’t have the money to afford a computer, who with disabilities has the money to afford, afford that? I don’t know very many. And then to go the library which is a difficult space and spend money to use a photocopier and a computer is hard, an important thing to get done for legal documents, for things for WINZ, for all sorts. So, so their public service there is crucial, absolutely*” (Naenae Resident HJ)

There were many serious concerns that relocating the Library into the new Hub would undermine its important social function:

*“Here in Naenae we have a very good well working library that draws people in from all the area so what does re-placing the working library actually fix? Goes nowhere” (Participant: O/A).*

“*I’ve seen what they’ve done at Walter Nash and I’ve seen what they’ve done in Stokes Valley and I can see, it looks very fancy, but what they’ve done is they’ve taken away the security of a quiet space which is the library and put it in the middle of concourse. Like, so there’s people going to play basketball, there’s a random café, it’s hallway there’s no safety there. You can’t have your kids in there because they can run out into the, you know. And for someone who has anxiety issues, who needs things to be a certain way when they go there that, that is completely untenable. I know people on the spectrum who can no longer use those spaces [in Koraunui & Walter Nash Hubs] ‘cause it’s noisy, there’s too many things happening and there’s too much change. If they do that again, here, then shame on them for not listening. Absolutely, that is just hubris*” (Naenae Resident HJ).

Landscape Features: Compactness and accessibility  
Many people talked about how features of compactness and accessibility enabled interaction and connection between local residents which in turn increased feelings of safety through regular encounter:

“*I think I just got to know the people [...] you end up going to school with their daughter and then you’re like ‘well okay, that person’s not scary ‘cause I know their kid!*’” (Participant, youth focus group).

Free and open public spaces such as the **basketball court** next to **the Clubhouse** that could be adapted to different users were also regarded as vitally important for bringing people together and encouraging public ownership and engagement:

“*...having spaces that are free, are accessible and can be adapted to different people’s and different groups’ uses because there isn’t any formal process for them to have to access those spaces. [...] having that access and openness is, is key yea. [But] there’s not enough spaces like that court [basketball], where people can just direct their own activities, and there’s not enough public space that’s hireable or bookable or affordable.*” (Naenae resident, L)

In addition, Naenae’s landscape features were recognised for their re-development or re-vitalisation potential, with several people expressing that Naenae’s fortunes were about to change, if sufficient investment and valuing of its assets could be secured.

*“I mean to be quite honest Naenae in the last 20 years has had such a hard time. But it’s on the turn, you know….. yeah it’s on the turn and the attitude is changing and people are changing so if the council get on board more and are prepared to do more here and promote it better, it would certainly be great” (Participant: SO/B).*

The current state of Naenae’s public spaces was often linked to wider socio-economic processes, particularly the closure and removal of key services and businesses over the last twenty years. Many residents noted the impact that closing the New World supermarket had on residents, particularly those with low mobility, as well as on other businesses in Hillary Court as residents had to go elsewhere for their key supplies:

*“One thing that did bring people in from Taita or Stokes was the New World. You would stop on the way kind of thing. But since they took that, Naenae just went dead. And, my Mum’s a taxi driver so she does reduced fares for heaps of the elderly around here because they can’t afford to go to the Hutt to get there with their pension. And then she brings them here to the dairy, which is still a rip off compared to …. So it’s a struggle for the community” (PFC/A).*

On a more encouraging note, the central redevelopment potential of Naenae’s public spaces was also positively associated with young, more affluent families, priced out of Wellington and central Lower Hutt housing markets, moving into the area:

*“I think there is a lot of good things happening. It’s an affordable first home area for young couples and we are seeing that change – that demographic change with young families moving into homes that are affordable. Obviously renovating, and when I drive around, there is a lot of lovely ex-state homes that are looking quite swish. It is a credit to them” (Participant: SO/B)*

*“I would say Naenae is in a prime position to become like Jackson Street, Petone, or you know Ponsonby for the bigwigs in Auckland. It could have a really good village feel, because you have a lot of housing around here, it’s mostly on the flat, it’s young families that are moving in now because Naenae is affordable. You are getting that thirty-year cycle again so in the next thirty years, I think Naenae will come up a bit because of the type of young families that are moving in” (Participant: SO/C).*

There was also a recognition of the role that different businesses could play in revitalising the central public space of Hillary Court, especially if these could cater to more wealthy people moving into the area from central Wellington. The Trade School Kitchen cafe and social enterprise (TSK) which supports the reintegration of previous female prisoners was talked about positively by everyone who mentioned it – young and old:

*“Because you have opened a nice coffee bar with good coffee [TSK], that is an incredible busy place, its unbelievably busy, and it’s brought a whole lot of more affluent people into the Naenae area for the shopping. And that’s changed the dynamics a little bit, which is great for Naenae. I think we can all see, anybody that’s a trader can see, how successful that’s been. Hopefully people will realise that those middle-income earners are coming into Naenae. Young families that want to afford a house, rather than struggle with a mortgage, can afford to live in Naenae, can buy an older house and do it up and not be burdened financially. So, I think with that success of the coffee bar, I believe more boutiquey-type restaurants, coffee bars, and shops may start to open. I think [it] may be the beginning of a bit of a transition in Naenae. With the Council doing the Hub across the road, I think that would be very good, it’ll add to it” (Participant: SO/C)*

Some residents also considered how longer-term shifts in energy production and consumption would influence people’s mobility and influence any proposed redevelopment of Naenae’s public spaces:

*“People talk about extending the car park [alongside Hillary Court]. Think about it, look around, look to Europe. The fact that we own cars will change. Cars/driving will be [a] service. You will have a swipe card. You will hop into whatever is parked near you. You will pay the service provider per kilometre and you will leave it wherever you need to go. And that will be the future of transport. We won’t need thousands of carparks for our 2.5 vehicle per family or head. We will be having less than one car per person soon. It won’t be long and cars will be something you collect. You need to think about assuming you have less cars in what do you with that space. What could you do with that space? Could you develop another level – a three dimensional level to break up the space. Different smaller spaces. That’s what you need to look at – not post shops, not banks – that’s not going to be the future” (Participant: SO/A).*

### Naenae’s Recreation and Green Spaces

As noted previously, there are many parks and green spaces in Naenae including reserves, pocket parks, playgrounds, sports fields and banks alongside the tributaries of the Waiwhetu Stream. Many residents valued this aspect of space and ability to connect with nature and keep active within their own suburb.

*“I think one of the great things about public space in Naenae is the reserves and the areas like the recreation spaces. The parks which are still used. I think there is huge potential to maintain them and improve them and make them more accessible and safer for people.” (Participant: O/A).*

Unfortunately, many of these public spaces (like the built spaces) have been neglected or treated in an isolated or piecemeal way as was noted in comments such as:

“*Naenae park is pretty niggly like they have troubles with the actual pitch and the ground and the drainage and all that kind of stuff and the clubrooms are all run down. [...] it’s not a good sports facility*.” (Naenae resident, A).

“*There is just not enough places for young people [...] there’s places like Naenae park playground. This is, you know, our main kind of playground and the one outside the library for kids in Naenae and they are completely run down. There’s been almost no investment in them. And I just think that’s really disappointing and, and it’s unfair [...] we know that people who live in Naenae are high deprivation, high needs, so I think we should be doing more in these places not less*.” (Naenae Resident, L)

Participants in the youth focus group made similar observations:

“*They [HCC] should redo Naenae Park or get a better playground because it’s pretty punk.”*

*“...the flying fox is broken and no one fixes stuff like that. Like the swings will break and stuff will just break and it gets left*.”

These young people felt that while Avalon Park was a great addition for young families in the Hutt Valley, it was too hard for them to get there independently because of its location outside of Naenae and safety concerns about the Naenae underpass/subway. They noted it took 30-45 minutes to walk from Naenae to Avalon Park especially if they avoided the subway and took the bridge route.

They were also emphatic about what they perceived as the neglect of pre-teens and teenagers in the provision of public spaces in and around Naenae, and proposed that: "*Somewhere in the Hutt Valley, there needs to be a playground that’s aimed at older kids*.” (Participants, Youth Focus Group).

This note about neglect also fed into many ongoing concerns outlined in the next section.

### Ongoing Concerns: Neglect of Public Spaces and Loss of Previous Vitality

Many participants acknowledged the rich and diverse assets in Naenae providing for people to gather, but implicit in their comments was a recognition that most of these were semi-public rather than public. The dominance of semi-public spaces resulted in a feeling that people were somehow ‘hidden’ and that opportunities for interaction were less than desirable for Naenae to feel vital:

*“We have a lot. We’ve got lots of shops, lots of schools, lots of centres for kids. We’ve got a marae, we’ve got churches. We have everything that we need. But it still doesn’t feel like there’s people around. If that makes sense. Even in the centre [Hillary Court]. I think it’s an awesome asset but I don’t think we use it very well” (Participant: PFC/A)*

There was also considerable concern over the ways in which these spaces had been neglected by successive councils and out-of-town landlords, and how this neglect has reduced Naenae’s former vitality.

*“when I was growing up here in Naenae, we had such an array of stores here. Men’s shops, women’s shops, shoe shops; we had the picture theatre. We had travel agents, jewellery shops, yea it was a real humming place, but the bulk of that’s all gone now” (Participant: SO/D).*

*“I’m pretty sure every shop was open [in previous times]” (Participant: PFC/C). “Everything felt full” (Participant: PFC/A). “And there were heaps of people milling around. It felt safe – even for me as a teen. [Now] I think the busiest place might be the Pool. And, very jokingly, the pub” (Participant: PFC/B).*

In particular, many residents and key informants expressed dismay over the empty shops, broken windows, and old paint in Hillary Court.

*“It looks dead. It looks unloved. It looks unkept.” (Resident ?)*

*“I feel a lot of the empty spaces and shops in Naenae is a waste. ... They’re an eye sore because people graffiti on them and it doesn’t seem to be much there in a way to keep children occupied.” (Elder Focus group participant)*

*“There is a sense of what was once a vital heart, that would attract not only people from Naenae/Hillary Court but from surrounding communities, has been facing a sort of slow death. [...] It’s [Hillary Court] changed quite significantly from being a really vital hub to being seen as a dying heart really.” (Participant: O/A).*

*“It’s a pity that it’s [Hillary Court] been allowed to fall into – well not disrepair – but lose its reason for being I guess…..” (Participant: SO/B).*

Local retailers in particular reflected on how challenging it was to create a viable business in this space, unless additional (more affluent) customers could be drawn in:

*“With the withdrawal of the public service, banks, post shop, cinema it’s become harder and harder for the retailers. You need to be on your toes. You need to bring your ‘A game’ every single day or you won’t last very long because if you are not the destination there is very little now that draws people into the area. [...] the Naenae dollar is well fought for. If I sell someone something, they probably won’t spend the money across the road at the takeaway so what we need is the money from outside the area” (Participant: SO/A).*

### Need for Improved Accessibility into Naenae’s Public Spaces

The challenges of how to attract more people and their purchasing power into Naenae was also linked to the issue of accessibility. While some people felt that Naenae’s public spaces were compact and accessible, others emphasised limitations of the current provision of public transport and its relationship to bringing more ‘out-of-towners' into public spaces like Hillary Court:

*“I think the major downfall for me is when there is public transport, there is no way for people outside to go over the bridge to go over here. You have to go the long way back to the Hutt and go through to High Street. So I always have my mum visiting the kids, but she catches two bus rides. But she prefers going through the front way. So not having that makes us feel disconnected with Naenae college and that area. That’s why I always forget that’s a part of Naenae……. But the main thing is the transport for us to connect with over the bridge, the railway tracks – that’s always been a downfall for Naenae” (PFC/C)*

*“[we need] like a bus route, to go from like here to over the bridge. The one that separates us from Taita rather than everyone catching it all the way to Queensgate, catch another bus at Queensgate to go all the way” (PFC/C)*

*“It really needs a loop. Go over the bridge go to Wingate to Avalon” (PFC/A)*

*“It looks like there is only one way into Hillary Court – from this way. So if you open up that you’ll get more traffic from that area as well” (PFC/B).*

Safety/Lack of safety  
Related to these comments were concerns about the lack of safe passage into Naenae from the railway station through the underpass to Hillary Court. For many residents, the underpass/subway was the worst public space in Naenae:

“*We’ve had so many reports from our kids that that’s where all the bullying and abuse happens to them when they’re coming from school or intermediate. There’s been multiple attacks and sexual attacks down there and it’s been going on for a long time. I went and did some research about it and, you know, it’s been an issue for a long time that has, no one’s done anything about. They’ve all kind of thrown up their hands in the air and said ‘it’s too difficult’; ‘we can’t do anything about it’; it’s going to cost too much money’. Yea so I am concerned with some of the areas of Naenae not being safe, but that’s probably the worst I’d say*.” (Naenae Resident, L).

*“The only problem we have is the underground tunnel to the railway station that is basically a rat race of people hanging out there. You don’t want to be unless you’ve got very little choice with train tracks on one side or a fifty-metre barrel run to get into Naenae. That’s not really ideal” (Participant: SO/A).*

For young people and seniors who participated in our research, the public space of the underpass was also a major safety concern, and one that they felt had been consistently neglected by HCC over the years. In addition, they mentioned feeling unsafe when walking past the pub (Olympic Hotel) and the nearby vacant lots.

Concerns about safety were also expressed in relation to the multiple users of public spaces such as Hillary Court. Conflict between users of Hillary Court (particularly business owners or managers and temporary housing residents) as well as the behaviour of some young people and transitional housing residents has recently compounded a sense that Hillary Court was no longer a convivial place for some.

*“now it feels like you are avoiding it, to avoid people asking you for money or asking you to buy things. So you just go where you need to go and then leave. You just come whatever purpose you came to; you don’t really just hang out here. It’s not that I don’t feel safe. It’s the annoying I guess for me” (Participant: PFC/A)*

*“He said well you grow up, you go to school and then you move out. For him, Naenae has just been a place to live in and so the word disconnect came up. Disconnected from Naenae as a community – he doesn’t mind living in Naenae and I guess he’s removed enough from the centre to not really know what’s going on unless he comes into the centre” (Participant: PFC/A).*

*“That rental accommodation does create a lot of transient group of folk who live and well go about their day-to-day activities, but never really have that sense of belonging to the community” (Participant: SO/B).*

In light of these kinds of concerns, some users suggested a stronger Police presence was needed, while others acknowledged many people and organisations, as well as themselves as parents, had a role to play in working with others to accommodate different users of this public space:

*“they should put a police station in the middle of that Hub – they should have it right here in the scene. The kids don’t want to hang about because the police could come out. If the police presence is here, getting in and out the cars, going to the donut shop, they will get to know the kids and the kids will be less likely to hang around here” (Participant: SO/C).*

*“I guess from as my boys came through in the late ‘90’s early 2000s, I was always talking to them about not loitering. Because there was a problem with young people after school we’ve had. Lots of security people making sure the young people moved on. So as time has gone by, as the trends come through, its educating children how to respond to the changing environment. From young people wanting to sit under the trees after school to people who have nothing to do and maybe having no motivation or no hope, so they just sit at the tables for whatever reasons, wanting money. So for me, it’s been teaching my kids how to respond to them and not be afraid of them. So it has been good that the police presence has come in. Māori wardens were involved. And also the Hutt City Council had their safe people patrolling. My brother who is also a social worker, who lived in Naenae for a while he was a part of the night patrols with the volunteers. So although I still like to come to Naenae, I know there are places that are still unsafe” (Participant: PFC/B).*

*“My husband and I were like “the people who hang out here during the day – they don’t look welcoming but I think they come here because they don’t have anything else to do at home.” So they come to be part of a community. I don’t think it’s very fair that we judge them for being here and being scared when they just want to be a part of a community too. So it’s maybe bridging that disconnect (Naenae Resident ?).*

For some residents, the current and ongoing issues associated with diverse users in Hillary Court suggested that this public space should be removed and completely new approaches be taken to the redevelopment of the suburb, including the removal of the pedestrianised space altogether:

*“in my humble opinion, they should take the precinct [Hillary Court] away and put the road back through because the precinct only encourages all those deadbeats hanging around the stores, which discourages ordinary people – mum and dad bring the kids down and doing the shopping – so I think you should take the foot area, you should go back to having a footpath with a road going through it, even though the road might not be used, it stops them hanging about” (Participant: SO/C).*

*“why I think they need to change Hillary Court and do away with the pedestrian precinct. I think it’s a real negative. I am not against public spaces. I don’t want to squeeze people out but what’s that done is over the last thirty years is become a hangout day and night for kids to throw balls about, for kids to yahoo and swear, for kids to beg for money” (Participant: SO/C).*

Other people however, argued strongly that Naenae’s socio-economic status and high deprivation population demanded more concerted and constructive action, rather than less and that the increased diversity in the community was an opportunity to work with in terms of creating a vital Naenae:

“*We know that people who live in Naenae are high deprivation, high needs, so I think we should doing more in these places not less*.” (Naenae resident, L)

“*Well certainly the community has become a lot more diverse, multi-culture. When I commenced business it was really the families of returned servicemen close to retirement age. And then the changes occurred with the Pacifica and the Māori folk. A lot more rental accommodation I would say. Asian … African nations. We’ve got a real cross section of New Zealand’s society which has given it a real diversity*” (Participant: SO/B).

### Future Dreaming: Revitalised, Inclusive Public Spaces

Some residents noted the lack of ‘true’ public spaces in Naenae. References were made to the closure of the Community Hall, the proposed merger of the Library into the new Hub and the membership required to access many of Naenae’s apparently public, but in reality semi-public, spaces (the Bowling Club, Pool and Fitness Centre) as evidence of a gradual erosion of accessibility to public assets.

There was a sense in which many people felt like a new approach was needed to Naenae’s public spaces:

*“The other thing that needs to change is how the public space is looked at.” (Participant: SO/A).*

“*I’ve just come across a couple of articles about the third space. About how people have their work space, their home space and the third space to linger. If you are Italy, Spain or Berlin, if you want New York, you find old people sitting in a park playing chess or on benches talking and having a cup of coffee… just having a third space a part to retreat. We have that here. Maybe Kiwi’s don’t have a great need for third space because by in large they don’t live in apartments, they live in homes and sections. They have a piece of green but no company, no interaction. There is no community in that. That’s what we found as soon as we started here in business. This is still a really functioning community. I have in my shop at the same time, three different gangs, fully patched and not a word of trouble. There is not even a sideways glance. We are like a ‘Church of meat’*.” (Participant: SO/A).

Many female residents and regular users of public spaces in Naenae mentioned the need for a drop-in centre (with a resident coordinator) where people could meet, share a cup of tea and get information about local services or events:

*“if we can have like a community space that people can just drop in, and talk to each other and have a drink and it doesn’t cost anything. A space where people can connect up and talk and, and just be [...] help connect with what they need [...] That would be really good, yea.” (Naenae Resident, E).*

Others talked about ways to revitalise existing public spaces like Hillary Court:

*“making [Hillary Court] it a little more user friendly. I know there is some seating there. It’s a little bare… whether making it a little more attractive with planting, with seating. Giving it a little more user friendly feel” (Participant: SO/B).*

*“[O]utside gym equipment would be great, also some accessibility to water, for drinking would be an improvement” (Naenae Resident Y)*

*“Hillary Court I think could be rejuvenated and be a social focal point again and that’s a great public space” (Participant: O/A).*

*“I’m not sure what the answer is [to revitalising Hillary Court], but it needs a little more diversity and to create some more interest in that space” (Participant: SO/B).*

*“Yeah, and that’s what I’d love to see of Hilary Court and I mean all the public spaces in Naenae. And a lot of them do that already, but Hilary Court is one that could be a really beautiful space, for that reason of all walks of life in the Hutt Valley, you know there are quite various degrees of wealth and class, you know , and it would be really cool to see everyone be in the same space and all be, feel like they are welcome there” (Participant: R/Y).*

For many residents public spaces, their important pasts and potentially revitalised futures, were most fundamentally connected to the value of people within Naenae’s community as one resident expressed:

*“Well …the best thing about the public spaces or semi-public spaces is the people in them, that’s what I get out of it. ... yeah places like the Library and the Community Centre [Hall] and my interaction with groups and people in those places are the real heart of the community… I know that Naenae has lost a lot of kind of public spaces through losing the post-office and things like that, which was a place where I would interact with people really, really often, just standing in the queue and you’d get talking with people that you wouldn’t normally talk to often. And the Library is a bit like that as well. I think, yeah just having those places available for people to meet up and be together and see each other and interact is really, really important. And I cannot imagine a community that didn’t have that” (Naenae Resident L)*

Local business people also recognised the value of shops for increasing opportunities for social interaction and encounter:

*“So the way I see it, everyone here, every business owner also fulfils the social function. The door opens, people meet each other and haven’t seen each other for weeks and they stand there for five minutes talking. That happens every day” (Participant: SO/A).*

Community ideas about how to revitalise Naenae’s future therefore mainly centred on Hillary Court, the old Post Office and the Library: the old Post Office (and its clock) in particular was seen by some as representative of both Naenae’s vibrant urban past, as well as a symbol of its future hope. However, some residents also raised the idea of a new public space in the form of a Museum. Their idea was that a former state house could be converted into a new amenity for locals and visitors to Naenae through which local history, artefacts and stories could be shared. Such a space could also potentially have flow on effects to local businesses helping to further regenerate the area.

In addition to celebrating and honouring the unique development of Naenae in NZ’s history, such a space, it was noted, could also increase local children’s access to a Museum experience through the hosting of temporary exhibitions from Te Papa, the Petone Settlers’ Museum and the Dowse. (Naenae resident, A).

## Quality of decision-making processes

#### Many adult and youth residents alike expressed frustration at Hutt City Council’s (HCC) processes of engagement with people in Naenae noting years of neglect or under-investment, as well as a top-down approach to decision making that didn’t appear to listen to local concerns or apparently siloed and un-coordinated action to different assets and spaces within the suburb. Frustration was also expressed over the lack of clear information and communication provided by HCC. Several people noted the need for more community engagement and control over Naenae’s spaces.

### Neglect, Lack of Access and Unequal Treatment

There was a clear sense from the interviews that local people felt neglected:

“*...in terms of public spaces, I think that people of Naenae should be treated equally [with other centres like Petone] in terms of access to things, if not better because of their lack of mobility and things like that. I think the Council ... should be going out of their way to give Naenae more, because they know that we’re not, we can’t access other things as easily*.” (Naenae resident, A)

Top down solutions to community problems  
Some residents expressed frustration about the Council’s approach to engagement with Naenae and linking it to both the influence of pre-existing perceptions of the community as well as their processes of information sharing and engagement with it:

“*There is a real sense the community haven’t been listened to, but they’ve been told this is going to happen. That any consultation has been lip service*” (Participant: O/A).

“*You wouldn’t do this [carry out council processes] in Belmont or Petone. [It’s] this feeling that you’re being treated differently. [...] I get the feeling the community’s a liability to them [HCC] [but] the community’s an asset*.” (Naenae Resident, A)

“*So where is that engagement with the whole community? The Council in their defence bought the plan [to the recent community meeting on the Hub] – their map – where they have drawn leaflet drops. My streets on it but I never got a leaflet. But obviously I am lying and so were the other hundred and nineteen people at that meeting. No-one’s ever seen that leaflet, bar two I think*” (Participant: SO/A).

“*[I am] feeling like pushing this heavy load uphill all the time and not, still not being listened to about how things could be done differently*” (Naenae Resident, E.)

### The Hub as lacking a strategic/holistic vision

In terms of ideas for Naenae’s future, many concerns were expressed over the consultation processes surrounding and informing the Hub development. Several people saw the Hub as an exclusionary space, which would produce further divisions between different residents.

“*I have now witnessed in the last three or four public meetings I saw a sorely missed a holistic approach to the whole thing. Every single thing, the Hub is the best example gets approached as a disconnected, disagreed unit where I focus on one problem, I execute one action and I have my solution. But there is no consideration of how that fits in with the rest*” (Participant: SO/A).

“*They’ve chosen an area that’s…. less suitable than the current library site they have at the moment. [The] current building [is] very easily accessed with those with disabilities or mobility problems and that’s a big part of the community – elderly folk like to use a library and I think they need to consider that more fully. You know at the moment, it is close to Taxi’s, its close buses, the train stops, the subway is there. You know I believe it’s an ideally suited building. Six million dollars is a lot to spend. I don’t know if they’ve actually determined what they intend to do is really getting the best value out of the ratepayer’s investment. I think it really needs to be taken back a step and review the options and consult more widely with some of what those options might be. And be prepared to look at existing buildings and perhaps refurbish*” (Participant: SO/B).

“*I don’t really think of what is being proposed at the moment is what I think of as a community hub. [...] [T]o me it’s about the council saying: ‘Here’s a thing. Here’s a big new shiny thing that you can use but if you’re, if you fit our ideas of what you need’ and that programmes that are imposed, [...] and you can hire a room if you’ve got money. [...] I think it should be thought about [...] in a broader way*.” (Naenae Resident, E).

### Community as Experts

Yet a number articulated the fact that the community should be treated as experts rather than others deciding for them what they should have in their community:

“*the community would need to be a part of that project and part of deciding what happens, rather than kind of gentrification, someone coming in and just revamping it*” (Participant: R/Y).

“*community space has to be led by the community. So yeah, it is a really beautiful thing and it should be everywhere and it should, you know, should be revitalised but it needs to be led by the community itself and they need to have a say in it or else, its, you’re not targeting the right audience*” (Participant: R/Y).

## Empowering communities through knowledge sharing and cultural landscape articulation – how might an app support this?

For most, the ideal of a cultural landscapes app that had some practical functionality had merit worthy of further exploration. Firstly, whilst the suburb of Naenae has for the last few census periods shown some of the highest indices of ‘deprivation’ (see statistics summarised earlier in the report) there is good reason to believe that smart mobile phone usage will be comparable with national averages as these are often prioritized expenditure to be able to connect with others .

Currently information channels relevant to Naenae residents such as HCC’s website are large and complicated to deal with given the enormous amounts of compliance and regulatory information available on them. They can be difficult, confusing and time-consuming to use, particularly on a smartphone. Unless using computers available for free use at places such as libraries, many people in suburbs like Naenae do not have the bandwidth (and thus time) or money (amount of data left in a mobile phone plan) to use these regular channels.

In addition, research participants highlighted the fact that HCC was for them synonymous with punitive measures. “That’s where you go to pay your parking infringement…! HJ, Naenae Resident”. Thus, an unconscious association with the penalising experience of institutions/authorities may inhibit some locals’ interactions with the main sites of relevant and useful information. In the case of Naenae, a monthly newsletter *Hutt at Heart* can be subscribed to, or checked manually for updates however this covers the broader Hutt region rather than Naenae specific issues. This is not the same as receiving targeted information.

A number of ideas were talked about in terms of what might be represented on the app.

### Local histories

The most common theme discussed in relation to a potential app was the value of Naenae’s rich social history and its ongoing connection to public and semi-public spaces. For some, an app represented a digital space to crowd source and archive formal recorded history and people’s memories in a kind of multi-layered repository:

“*so you could have that one layer of the kind of formal history, but having that community voice being able to feed into [it] as well. [...] really bringing those places to life*.” (Naenae resident, A)

In this way, an app could potentially generate a cumulative story having functions like ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ and being sorted with notifications of when people had responded to enhance interactivity and engagement.

For others, an app was potentially also a means to enhance local knowledge and pride:

“*One thing that I personally realise is that I know absolutely nothing about the Māori culture of this place. Other than Naenae means sand-fly I have not – I haven’t gone out of my way to get that information. But it’s just nowhere depicted. In Berlin for instance you get lots of plaques basically like in Jackson Street on the floor. In Berlin they have them on buildings, old road signs, lampposts and stuff like that. They have a QR code on them and basically you can point your phone at it blows up…… The in depth information, maybe a couple of links to Wikipedia if you want. If it tickles your fancy you can dive into the material….. Maori knowledge I’ve never even – if someone asked me if there was a Pā here or where I wouldn’t have a clue but I wouldn’t see why not. There is running water, there’s a hill side, so the defence perimeter is available but wouldn’t have a clue. So that would be nice*” (Participant: SO/A).

Some residents also felt that an app could use local histories and information about local amenities for the promotion of Naenae’s businesses and to attract further investment into the area. For example:

#### “I reckon if people knew … who didn’t grow up in Naenae would need some history of Naenae. If they had a board to explain the history of Naenae, what Naenae was like. And the, just the positives of Naenae with the swimming baths, what’s going to be happening with the hub. And like I see in other areas, promoting some small businesses in Naenae for people to see what is available in Naenae instead of going down to Lower Hutt” (Participant: SO/D).

“*same so an app is a good thing – it’s a tool for the future that reaches the young generation coming through. I think it has to be easy to use, and I think it has to give people relevant information – some of the things that are current – for example, you have a great swimming pool complex, where a first aid centre is because it’s what people might need in an emergency – you need a first aid centre. Where the police office is because again, people might need to know where the policemen if there is an accident or if something goes wrong. Where the basic things are, shops, identifying where shops are, because if somebody has a baby, you need to a nappy, they need to know where to go and which stores might sell groceries or nappies, who might sell bandaids or plasters. Where the library is, where your council services are*” (Participant: SO/C).

### What’s going on in the community?

A number of people noted that they would use an app like this just to understand what was happening in the community and what facilities were available to use:

*“What can I use? When can I use it? (HJ, Naenae resident).*

*“Where are drinking water fountains, public toilets … are there events on at local spaces? (YY, Naenae resident)*

*What spaces are for hire (esp. for community groups)? (WK Naenae resident)*

*I’d like to know what events are happening, what programmes are happening, when and where. Who is offering what services, who is offering what products, and then also what groups are running, what clubs are running and how you can actually engage with them.… I would like to know stuff like that. I would also like to know if there are playgroups around, you know how to join them. So, it’s just, as much information as possible, and it’s about connecting people with the information but it’s also about allowing people to know how to get involved … If we had a bigger market in Naenae, it would be really great if even people shared recipes that they had – with things they have buy at the market, or the things they buy at the butchery. Naenae Resident XX (emphasis added)*

### Celebration of positive things

Acknowledging positive things that happened in the community was seen as opportunity for such an app with people in the community added to it to help life community spirits:

“*Even the little – because the community is about celebrating the good stuff. I think we hear a lot about the bad stuff but if it’s all the good stuff from all the schools. Like when they do their interschool athletics – first, second and third at each… if you wanted to look at it – it’s there. Celebrating all our kids together*” (Participant: PFC/A).

“*I know does Team Naenae does a great deal – lifting community spirit. Things like the Naenae festival. The Friday night markets and other events they have held over the years. But their still a small voice in terms of website and things like that*” (Participant: PFC/B).

“*They don’t know about it but also they really like contributing this stuff. I’ve started talking to people … and everything that’s happening in Naenae through the residents meeting. People love to be heard, and I didn’t realise that like that was a new thing to me, people love talking about their memories, of the clocktower, climbing the clock tower, doing this, doing that. If they could capture that, it would add a lot of value to the community, so that added value would also preserve the heritage, not in a museum - like way, but in that collective memory which is really important, and really culturally appropriate in this area, because you might not want to write a book about your memories but you certainly want to talk about it. Yeah, that would be great. The Christchurch city libraries does have that, they have a memory wall very similar. I’m trying to think what that feeds into. So, yeah that would be great, I hadn’t even thought of that until now. That’s cool*” (Naenae Resident Y)

“*Everything – you are talking about you kids and having to go out of Naenae to find activities but we’ve got a boxing place in Naenae that do stuff for teens. And all of the sports clubs, that are connected to Naenae park – theres everything; softball, touch, rugby, soccer. But having all that information available for the community I think would be awesome. What’s going on in the schools at different times. Gardens… because they are always happening and unless you know someone who is doing it, you don’t know*” (Participant: PFC/A).

“Yeh sometimes you have to visit Hutt City Council website to source what is happening in Naenae and it’s not necessarily up to date. So I think Naenae having its own would be great!” (Participant: PFC/B).

“*So that’s a good idea what you mentioned – linking the information with the schools. Not just limited to what’s being printed in the newsletter because half the time you don’t read it. But it’s god for other people. And it would be good for the schools as well. Get some traffic in. An app would be good!*” (Participant: PFC/C).

“Well that’s why an app is cool – there is more of a – it feels more instant” (Participant: PFC/A).

### Access will be important

In a community as diverse as Naenae and with its connectivity challenges resulting from social and economic deprivation, finding the most accessible platform was recognised by many as an essential aspect of a future app’s relevance and success. Concerns were noted about how older people would engage:

“How would you connect with our elders who still like to be connected but wouldn’t have access to technology?” (Participant: PFC/A). “Yeh that’s a good point…” (Interviewer). “Yeh you’ve got a big community here of elderly people…Newsletters?” (Participant: PFC/A). “*But like bring out a binder and update the binder as a way to counteract?* (Interviewer) “Or could put up a community notice board up on the window or something. The main shops that they use… bus stops (Participant: PFC/C). “Could maybe do a digital noticeboard” (Interviewer). “Yeh a lot of the elderly come along to the library (Participant: PFC/B).

Others acknowledged the high numbers of residents with English as a second or third language and how this could affect the design of the app.

Alongside these considerations, some residents focused on the types of apps already available such as Facebook, Neighbourly, Instagram etc. Or on the technological know-how of people in the area as well as their access to data or wifi. One resident suggested: “... either going for a low hanging fruit that people are already on [such as] Facebook and/or a standalone app that’s specifically accomplishes what you want to do” (Naenae Resident, A).

Despite the existence of local Council websites and flyers that are put up on civic noticeboards and/or library windows, many residents do not know how to find out what is available for them in their locality.

### Multilingual Information needs

Ensuring different languages were represented on the app would enable access to the range of cultures living in Naenae:

“Yeh with your app, you could have it as bilingual kind of thing for those that don’t…Multilingual option for them to just have it (Participant: PFC/C).

### Socialising the App

There was a sense that the app would need to be socialised and investing time into a strategy for this would be crucial if it were to work:

“Through young people – Naenae college ambassadors. Could probably have a rep from Naenae College. Give them some experience to help you guys running this app” (Participant: PFC/B). “Yeh that’s cool (Participant: PFC/A). “Yeh have some sort of teenage influence on it (Participant: PFC/C). Yeh could get them like an internship or something. Could have feature blogs from students or something (Interviewer). “Yeh in that way, you are getting them – they can get their friends engaged and all that. Rather than them just thinking it’s just for old people (Participant: PFC/C)”. “Yeh sometimes what we think is good for the community doesn’t align with what the kids think sometimes” (Participant: PFC/C). “It’s a bit like trying to get the young kids to eat fruit and vege. You’ve got to get them involved. Let them make their own salad to each it (Participant: PFC/B).

### The value of a Locality App

Being able to geolocate things would seem advantageous to the overall design of such a community-based app. Usually these are configured so that when the user first opens their new app a dialogue box opens asking if the app can access the user’s location services. If it also has direct access to any booking timetable (as in accommodation or vehicle hire online systems) it shortens the ‘inquiry-to-use’ time period. It is like that more people would use a service if it is easy and intuitive to operate. Existing precedents include Foxton District Council’s Te Awahou Niewe Stroom app. Identifying the key parameters of potential user needs (people numbers, dates, times and costs,) within a geographic radius, increases efficiency.

### Security and Privacy

Almost exactly one year after the EU’s launch of its General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) it is worth considering the implications of security and privacy. Michael Grothaus’ article on hacking, data insecurity and corporate irresponsibility point out that online security and an individual’s reasonable expectations of privacy, cannot be guaranteed.

On March 17, 2018, the Guardian and the New York Times broke the story of how British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica harvested the data of at least 87 million Facebook users without their knowledge after obtaining it from people who partook in a quiz app….The biggest problem with the quiz app was that 87 million people didn’t take it–at most, several hundred thousand did. The quiz app exposed a loophole in the Facebook API that allowed it not to just take the data of the quiz users themselves, but of all their friends as well–people who never even took the quiz or had ever interacted with the app in any way (Grothaus, 2018).

He agrees with other commentators that the revelation of this insufficient corporate responsibility became a watershed moment. European legislators had been already very critical of many corporate Tech Giants’ lax privacy provisions, so their introduction of the GDPR was not unexpected, but in the wake of the CA/Facebook scandal, it became an enormous line-in-the-sand. The fact that it is ‘only’ a European Union legal provision is unimportant as it applies to systems/products/networks that originate outside its jurisdiction, but have any impact on its member State’s citizens.

It is essential to say something about the inescapable significance of the 15th of March Christchurch mosque murders and the role of social media. These three screen captures illustrate the intersection of ‘free’ social media networks, Privacy, Mobile device capabilities, place, identity and risk. To participate in the ‘trade’ of Community Newspaper advertising/announcing of Community Events, rather than just availing oneself of the generosity of old print media traditions of ‘free’ advertising of non-profit community announcements; traditional Print Media’s lost revenues to Online Advertising mean that they have the “If you can’t beat ’em - join ‘em” approach. Stuff (.co.nz) owns and runs Neighbourly (.co.nz), capturing every ‘subscriber’ and producing a cumulative total of nation-wide ‘Neighbourhoods’ and ‘an audience’ for the corporate ‘Partners’ with a direct interest in keeping their products/Services in the forefront of ‘readers/viewers’ minds.

In order to get some local announcement/advertisement out a huge amount of personal, geo-located data is ‘authorised’ for use by local residents. Names and localities are searchable by other local members. As these deliberately pixellated screen shots show, anyone could draw conclusions about a person’s ethnicity or even probability of religious affiliation, from a name. Given the increased awareness of on- and off-line racism in Aotearoa since March 15, and the number of resettling refugee-background people residing in Naenae; it will be absolutely important that any app development for enhancing social inclusion in a given locality, bears in mind the new ‘realities’ of interweaving strands of: visible difference; shared data; privacy; virtual-actual security and place-based community development.

### Guardianship/Ownership

In ICT4D literature there are many examples of how important the relationship between the medium, for example a community owned and run radio/TV station, and the local community is. As the discussion of the security and privacy issues above illustrates, the risks of ‘joining-in’, showing-up, and being ‘visible’ are not insignificant. The conjunction of media and personal mobility in smartphones means that the app takes on many of the characteristics of a local newspaper, radio station and TV channel.

The model of kaitiakitanga (translated as guardianship) might be the most appropriate form of structural relationship between the app and its users. The importance of community agency was stressed by many attendees at several community meetings/workshops. Therefore, the notion of vesting control of such a community asset, in a trust, independent of local government, was seen as a possibility worth investigating.

# Conclusion

This rich data highlight both local and global concerns and implications. It seems clear that further exploration of a cultural landscape app would be valuable, particularly in terms of how such an app might support decision-making processes at the suburban level and how it might support community agency in those processes.

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1. William Robertson convinced Prime Minister Peter Fraser and local MP, and Minister of Finance, Water Nash, of his plans to set up cooperatives in Naenae – receiving a position in government bureaucracy in return. Robertson played a key role in establishing the consumer cooperative and the community centre, although was later dismissed after resisting being moved to other duties when his role was perceived as an anomaly within the Division. This did not stop the impassioned Robertson, however, who persisted with plans for a community playground in Naenae, with various sports coordinated and supervised by the Department of Internal Affairs. Robertson, however, fell into depression when the community playground scheme collapsed; penning his ‘Final Statement’ blaming Walter Nash for stymieing his plans and committing suicide in November, 1950; a “sad end for a man who had been unable to find his sense of community” (Schrader, 2005, p. 175). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The consumer cooperative had collapsed by 1969 due to a combination of poor management and competition from private operators (Schrader & NZHPT, 2012, p. 16). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. At the opening of the community hall on 7 August 1954 Internal Affairs Minister William Budkin declared “[e]very district needs a focal point where it can centre its activities and which can give a sense of identity to the district (in Schrader & NZHPT, 2012, p. 15). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Named after New Zealander Edmund Hillary, famous mountaineer and the first man, with Nepalese Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, to scale Mount Everest. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These are figures for Lower Hutt in general. Statistics are even more exaggerated for the Naenae, Epuni, Taita and Stokes Valley areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)