

East Coast Bays Needs Assessment Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Point Research
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Table of contents

Executive summary	3
Introduction.....	7
Purpose of the Research	7
Method.....	7
Background.....	10
Findings from residents	18
What attracted residents to the area	18
What residents like about their neighbourhood, suburb and area	19
Enhancing life in the Bays.....	20
Priorities	20
Preserving the environment.....	20
Traffic, parking, cycle ways and road management including improving public transport links	21
Children and young people	22
Balance of Activities and Facilities	22
Improving safety in the area	24
Local economic development and local jobs	25
Reducing isolation	26
Strengthening sense of community	27
Specific suggestions.....	27
Moving from the Bays	29
Recommendations	30

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Report Disclaimer

In preparing this report it has been necessary to make a number of assumptions on the basis of the information supplied to Point Research Limited for the Community Needs Assessment. The authors did not carry out an audit or verification of the information supplied during the preparation of this report, unless otherwise stated in the report. Whilst due care was taken during enquiries, Point Research Limited do not take any responsibility for any errors nor mis-statements in the report arising from information supplied to the authors during the preparation of this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the research is to understand the community development priorities in the East Coast Bays area. The Local Board can use this to make decisions about the services and programmes that will meet the needs of the community.

The research was undertaken in three parts:

1. A demographic analysis of the East Coast Bays area;
2. A stocktake of community groups, initiatives and organisations was undertaken using information supplied by the Community Coordinator, along with an online search to augment it; and
3. The emerging issues were interrogated in focus groups, an intercept survey, an online survey and 12 stakeholder interviews.

This report outlines the findings of this study, and includes recommendations for the interventions that would best meet the needs of the East Coast Bays community.

A total of **285** residents and visitors to the East Coast Bays area were surveyed, along with 12 stakeholders. In order to ensure that feedback included people that may not normally respond to surveys or attend meetings and groups, a mix of methods was used, including:

- An intercept survey of 203 residents and visitor to the area, mainly participants were from Torbay, Mairangi Bay, Murrays Bay, Campbells Bay and Browns Bay. Given the length of the questionnaire, these were akin to short interviews, with most taking around 10-15 minutes as people wanted to share their views on the area.
- Five focus groups totalling 30 residents.
- An online survey of 52 residents who were mainly from Torbay, Mairangi Bay, Murrays Bay, Campbells Bay and Browns Bay.

In addition, a stocktake of activities, initiatives and programmes in the East Coast Bays area was undertaken.

Participants were asked:

1. What attracted them to the area they live in;
2. Now they are here – what they like about their neighbourhood, suburb, or area (what they would like to retain, what matters to them);
3. What types of things could the community, council and other organisations do (or not do) which might enhance their life here (what changes they would like to see);
4. Whether they would consider moving from the East Coast Bays area, and if so - what might keep them here;
5. What community priorities are in their area;
6. Whether there are other priorities in the area that they would like us to know about;
7. Whether they have any comments about how to address the priority areas identified;
8. If there are other activities they would like to see in their area;

9. If they were interested in getting to know their neighbours better;
10. If they were interested in being more involved in neighbourhood and community activities; and,
11. Whether they have any other comments about their area.

About the area

- The population of Hibiscus and Bays has increased by one-quarter since 2001, and will increase by a further 42 per cent by 2031.
- The population is older than Auckland as a whole. One in five residents over 65, and a rapidly growing elderly population.
- 85% of the population is European (higher than the Auckland average), but the most rapidly growing groups are non-European and non-Māori ethnicities.
- Neighbourhood walkability and public transport options are limited in parts of the Bays area.
- Median income is slightly higher than the Auckland average, and has seen a similar increase in wealth to Auckland as a whole since 2001.
- The number of businesses in the area has increased by around 40 per cent since 2001, which is slightly above the Auckland average.
- Unemployment remains slightly lower than the Auckland average.
- Home ownership and median rents are higher than the Auckland averages, but housing and rents are becoming increasingly unaffordable in Hibiscus and Bays, with over one-quarter of Orewa and Whangaparaoa residents spending more than 30 per cent of income on housing in 2006.

Residents' views

- Most residents felt that the East Coast Bays had a strong sense of community once people managed to 'find their place' in it, find out what was on and once they got to know people,
- Over half said that they were attracted to the area because of the beaches and natural environment.
- Many had friends and family in the area, or had a historical connection to the area, having lived there a long time or having been to school there as a child.
- Some said that they were attracted to the area by the amenities on offer, in particular the proximity to shops and other facilities, or the quality of the schools.
- They enjoy using the beaches, parks, bush and walkways.
- They like that the Bays are quiet and peaceful, and that it is generally uncrowded. It has a holiday feel about it.
- Neighbourhoods feel safe and clean.
- It is a good, safe place for children to grow up, and they liked the quiet cul de sacs as they extended the backyard into the street where children could get together and play safely.

- The community is friendly and well connected and integrated, largely because people tend to stay living in the area for a long time, and the lay-out of the streets, make it easy to get to know their neighbours.

Residents and stakeholders have identified the following priorities:

The key priorities identified include:

- Preserving the environment: People in the Bays said they loved the natural environment and wanted to see continued and increased investment in this. There is a strong emphasis on maintaining and protecting the natural heritage of the area including the waterways, greenbelt and beaches. Residents would like to see the streams continue to be restored.
- Transport and traffic congestion: People were concerned that increases in population had led to serious traffic congestion problems, particularly in areas such as Constellation Drive and that the infrastructure was not keeping up. They felt it was necessary to look at solutions to the morning traffic jam into the city, to expand the Park and Ride areas, extend frequency of public transport options, more carparks in certain areas and to increase cycle pathways.
- There are concerns that young people, particularly those at Intermediate school, are being left home alone and unsupervised. There was also concern that young people leave school, training and education without the skills and qualifications required by the new economy, including soft skills. Several business people noted that young people did not always have the soft skills required, such as customer service skills.
- While most felt that activities were well catered for, both staff from agencies and parents felt that if there was a gap, it was in activities for young people of intermediate age.
- Most residents feel the area is reasonably safe. Most of the safety concerns raised in focus groups related to family violence, bullying, online safety, issues with dogs, traffic, speed, boy-racing and the need for more pedestrian crossings.
- One-third of residents, particularly elderly and newcomers to the area, considered reducing isolation to be an urgent or high priority. This is broadly consistent with international findings, however, for one in three older adults surveyed¹ isolation and loneliness are key issues. Those who felt this way described the negative consequences of loneliness and isolation on their lives, or the lives of older adults in their life.
- Residents and business association staff would like to see the town centres spruced up with murals, colourful plantings, welcome signs and changes to rubbish collection.
- Residents and business association staff would like to see a greater diversity of shops, more parking, and areas activated through markets and events designed to draw people to the area.

It is recommended that the Local Board:

1. Support initiatives designed to preserve and restore environmental health. Specifically, support initiatives to restore stream health through daylighting, riparian planting and pest control

¹ Analysis of Age Concern survey (2016), taking a sample of older adults in the study area.

2. Provide shade areas in public spaces, including beaches, parks and malls.
3. Increase the number, size and collection frequency of rubbish bins along beaches and in public spaces, ensuring that they are bird and animal proof and of sufficient size to accommodate pizza boxes
4. Work with Auckland Transport on initiatives to reduce traffic congestion, such as expanding the Park and Ride areas, extending the frequency of public transport options, and increasing cycle pathways.
5. Support initiatives aimed at engaging Intermediate school aged students in after school activities.
6. Support initiatives designed to reduce family violence, bullying, and online safety.
7. Support initiatives designed to reduce traffic, speed, and racing.
8. Identify and introduce pedestrian crossings where needed.
9. Support initiatives designed to support older adults and newcomers to the area, such as combining activities and classes with a social aspect where people can connect and get to know each other.
10. Implement the town centre plan and spruce up areas with murals, colourful plantings, welcome signs, more frequent maintenance schedules and changes to rubbish collection.
11. Support the activation of town centres through markets and events designed to draw people to the area.
12. Investigate ways and implement initiatives designed to attract different types of shops and businesses to the area.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to understand the community development priorities in the East Coast Bays area, so that the Local Board can make informed decisions about the services and programmes that will meet the needs of the local community.

The research was undertaken in three parts:

1. A demographic analysis of the East Coast Bays area was undertaken, from which priority areas for further interrogation were investigated;
2. A stocktake of community groups and organisations was undertaken; and
3. The emerging issues were interrogated in focus groups, an intercept survey and an online survey.

This report outlines the third part of this study, and includes recommendations for the interventions that would best meet the needs of the East Coast Bays community.

Method

A total of 285 local residents and visitors to the East Coast Bays were surveyed. In order to ensure that groups included people that may not normally respond to surveys or attend meetings and groups, a mix of methods was used, including:

- An intercept survey of 203 residents and visitors to the area, mainly participants were from Torbay, Mairangi Bay, Murrays Bay, Campbells Bay and Browns Bay.
- Five focus groups totalling 30 residents
- An online survey of 52 residents who were mainly from Torbay, Mairangi Bay, Murrays Bay, Campbells Bay and Browns Bay.
- Interviews with stakeholders including the police, a family violence coordinator, teachers, a community coordinator, surf lifesavers, local business associations, and staff from local NGOs such as Raeburn House and Age Concern.

In addition, a stocktake of activities, initiatives and programmes in the East Coast Bays area was undertaken.

Intercept survey

An intercept survey was undertaken, where interviewers stop people in public places and invite them to answer questions. Although not representative of a population, it is way of reaching people who may not normally attend focus groups or answer online surveys. Over a six-week period interviewers were sent to parks, shopping precincts, bus stops and events across the East Coast Bays area. Interviewers were asked to be mindful of selecting interviewees from hard to reach populations, such as disabled, older adults, and to select people from a diversity of ethnicities.

It is noted that intercept surveys generate some refusals, however interviewees were demographically more diverse than those participating in the online survey. The intercept survey focused predominantly on finding what respondents liked and disliked about their communities, and what activities or services they would like to access.

Question areas

To get a sense of what East Coast Bays residents like about their neighbourhood, suburb, or the area they live in, and what might enhance it, the following questions were explored:

The survey asked residents about:

1. What attracted them to the area they live in;
2. Now they are here – what they like about their neighbourhood, suburb, or area (what they would like to retain, what matters to them);
3. What types of things could the community, council and other organisations do (or not do) which might enhance their life here (what changes they would like to see);
4. Whether they would consider moving from the East Coast Bays area, and if so - what might keep them here;
5. What community priorities are in their area;
6. Whether there are other priorities in the area that they would like us to know about;
7. Whether they have any comments about how to address the priority areas identified;
8. If there are other activities they would like to see in their area;
9. If they were interested in getting to know their neighbours better;
10. If they were interest in being more involved in neighbourhood and community activities; and,
11. Whether they have any other comments about their area.

Focus groups, workshops, meetings and stakeholder interviews

The focus groups comprised small discussion-based groups which allowed issues to be explored in more depth. Again, a limitation is that they involve fewer people hence are not representative of a population. Nonetheless, this can be mitigated to some extent by undertaking focus group with different population groups in different areas.

Where possible, focus groups were held with groups of residents. The focus groups were selected to ensure a general range of ages (young, old, parents, working people) and geographic locations across the study area. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed based on the online questionnaire.

Participants were asked:

- What are things you like most about this community?
- What do you think are the key areas for you and others in this community?
- How could these key issues be addressed?
- Are there activities, programmes or services you would like to have access to but which are not available in your area?
- Do you have any other comments?

Five focus groups and workshops were held with 30 residents. Specifically, these included:

- New mothers and newcomers
- Older adults
- Young people
- Parents, and
- Residents with an interest in the environment.

Stakeholders to be interviewed were based on recommendations from Auckland Council, the Community Coordinator and Local Board, and included representatives from 3 local business associations, the police, the community coordinator and from NGOs and organisations working in the area, such as Age Concern, Family violence coordinator, environmental groups, and teachers and principals.

Analysis

The data from secondary data sources such as Statistics New Zealand and the Quality of Life reports, intercept survey, online survey, interviews, focus groups and other sources were collated and analysed to identify themes and priorities across the East Coast Bays. It is noted that as the responses came in a wide range of forms, the feedback has been treated largely qualitatively, analysed and reported thematically and triangulated. This is because the surveys, by and large, may not be representative of the population and most of the questions were open ended, lending themselves to thematic analysis. Giving undue weight to survey percentages could be misleading. The report tries to reflect the weight of answers across the different forums and formats. Where residents have raised issues in one forum, but not another, these have been noted.

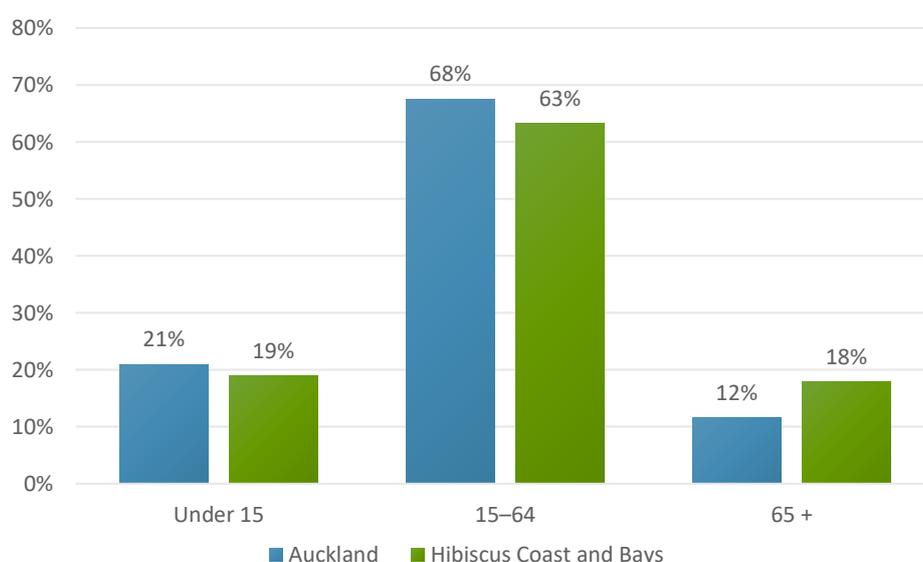
Limitations

Every attempt was made to triangulate the findings through the mix of methods used (statistics, focus groups, intercept surveys and online surveys). It is noted that whilst the overall themes remained largely consistent between the different data collection methods, there was often considerable variation in the information underpinning these themes. The broad themes have been reported in the body of the report. The variation has been captured illustratively in sidebars.

BACKGROUND

The population within the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board grew by nearly one-quarter (24%) between 2001 and 2013 (which is similar to the 22% growth seen across Auckland)², to reach nearly 90,000 residents in June 2013. The area is projected to grow by a further 42 per cent by 2031 (slightly above the Auckland-wide average of 39%), with a further 38,000 residents expected.³ In contrast to Auckland as a whole, which is expected to increase primarily as a result of natural increase rather than migration, nearly three-quarters of population growth in Hibiscus and Bays is expected to be from migration rather than natural increase.

Demographically, the population of Hibiscus and Bays is slightly older than Auckland as a whole, with a mean age of 42.4 in 2013 compared with an average of 35.1 across Auckland. Although the proportion of Auckland's population over the age of 65 has increased since 2001, this trend has been more pronounced in the Hibiscus and Bays area, where the number of people aged 65 and over has increased by 50 per cent since 2001 (compared with 41% across Auckland). Nearly one in five Hibiscus and Bays residents was aged 65 or over in 2013

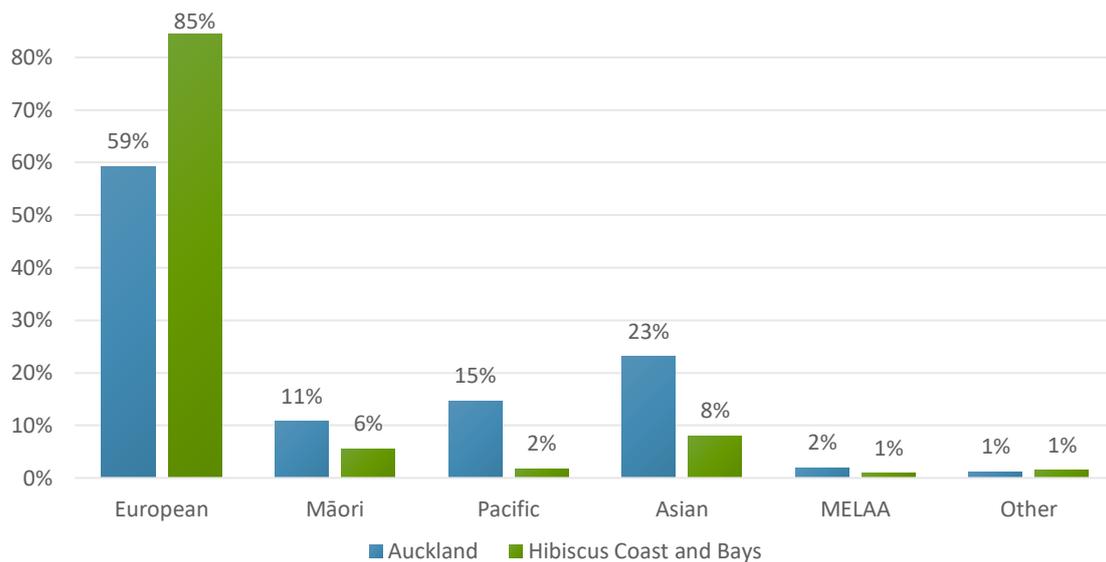


2013 Age profiles of Auckland and Hibiscus and Bays.

Hibiscus and Bays has a higher proportion of European ethnicities than Auckland as a whole, with 85 per cent of the population identifying as European in Hibiscus and Bays compared with only 59 per cent across Auckland. This, however, is shifting, with the most rapidly growing groups in Hibiscus and Bays being members of non-European and non-Māori groups. Populations of Asian, Pacific, MELAA, and other ethnicities all increased by at least 70 per cent between 2001 and 2013, and now make up 12 per cent of the Hibiscus and Bays population, compared with 8 per cent in 2001.

² Unless otherwise specified, all data were obtained from the New Zealand 2001, 2006, and 2013 censuses, available online at www.stats.govt.nz.

³ This is a medium projection based on 2006 baseline levels, available from Statistics New Zealand www.stats.govt.nz.



2013 Ethnicity profiles of Auckland and Hibiscus and Bays.

Infrastructure

Parts of the East Coast Bays area, such as Browns Bay are considered to have low car dependency, with high neighbourhood walk scores⁴ indicating that destinations such as grocery stores, schools, parks, restaurants, and retail shops are reasonably accessible on foot. Public transport options are generally good, with transit scores⁵ indicating that there are generally buses available. Parts of East Coast Bays, such as Long Bay, are particularly car-dependent, with neighbourhood walk scores⁶ indicating that amenities are not particularly accessible on foot. Public transport options are also limited in some areas, with transit scores⁷ indicating that there limited options for travelling by public transit in parts of the Bays such as Okura. Travel times to the central city by bus have been improved by the introduction of bus lanes, and travel time by private car can be longer than by public transport in peak periods.

The high level of car-dependency is reflected in the commuting habits of Hibiscus and Bays residents, with nearly nine out of every ten commuters getting to work through either a private or company-owned vehicle in 2013 (88%, compared with 84% across Auckland), though public transport use for commuting is on par with Auckland as a whole, with 8 per cent of commuters using public buses to get to work. The Quality of Life survey found that Hibiscus and Bays residents (83%) were more likely than Auckland residents (71%) to agree that public transport was safe, however (42%) were more likely than Auckland residents (33%) to disagree that public transport is affordable.

⁴ As measured by Walk Score via www.walkscore.com. Note that although the walk score gives a general indication of how readily accessible available daily destinations are on foot (such as groceries, schools, and parks), it does not consider other features that make urban design pedestrian-friendly, such as road width and footpath continuity.

⁵ Again, as measured by Walk Score via www.walkscore.com.

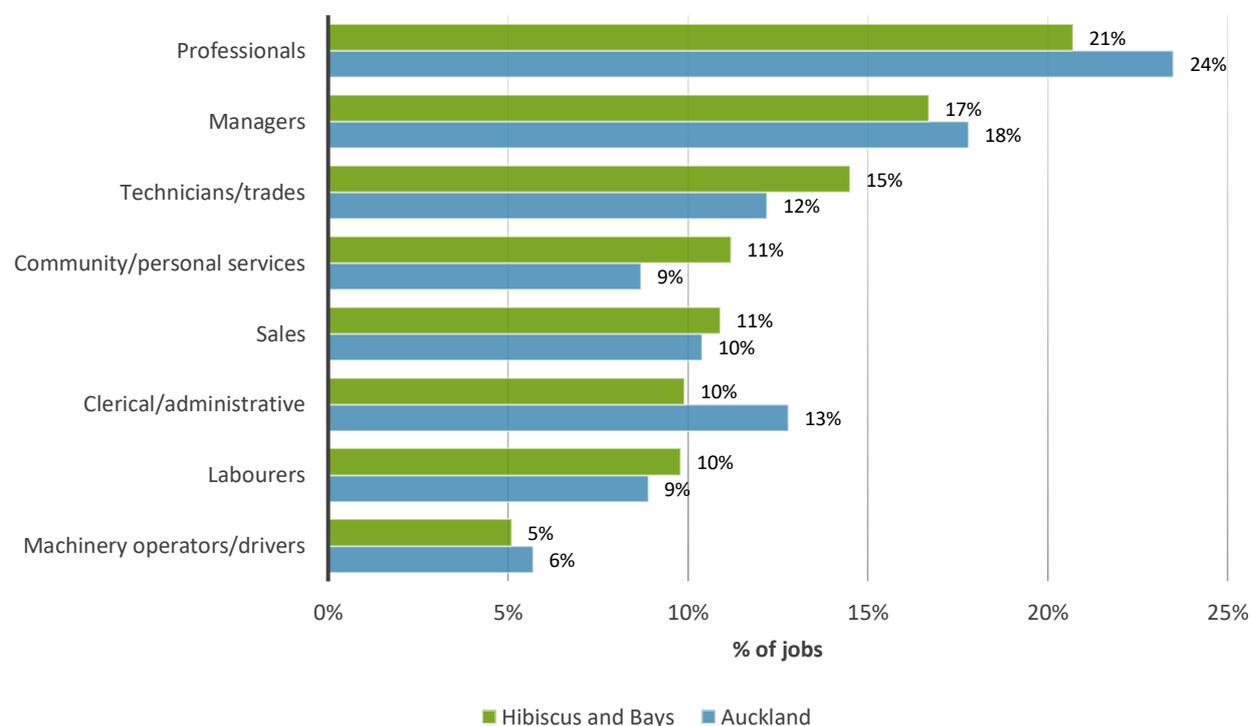
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⁷ Again, as measured by Walk Score via www.walkscore.com.

Public transport infrastructure is also important for young people in the Hibiscus Coast area, given that although there are a number of local primary and secondary schools. Young people may need to commute to the central city or Albany for tertiary training and work opportunities.

Jobs in Hibiscus and Bays require a similar skill level to Auckland as a whole, with around one in three jobs requiring a high level of skill (33%, slightly below the Auckland-wide average of 37%), one in ten jobs medium-high skill, 15 per cent medium skill, and two in every five jobs requiring a low level of skill. Compared with Auckland as a whole, Hibiscus and Bays has slightly fewer professionals (21% of jobs compared with 24% across Auckland) and clerical or administrative staff (10% compared with 13%), and slightly more community and personal service workers (11% compared with 9%).⁸

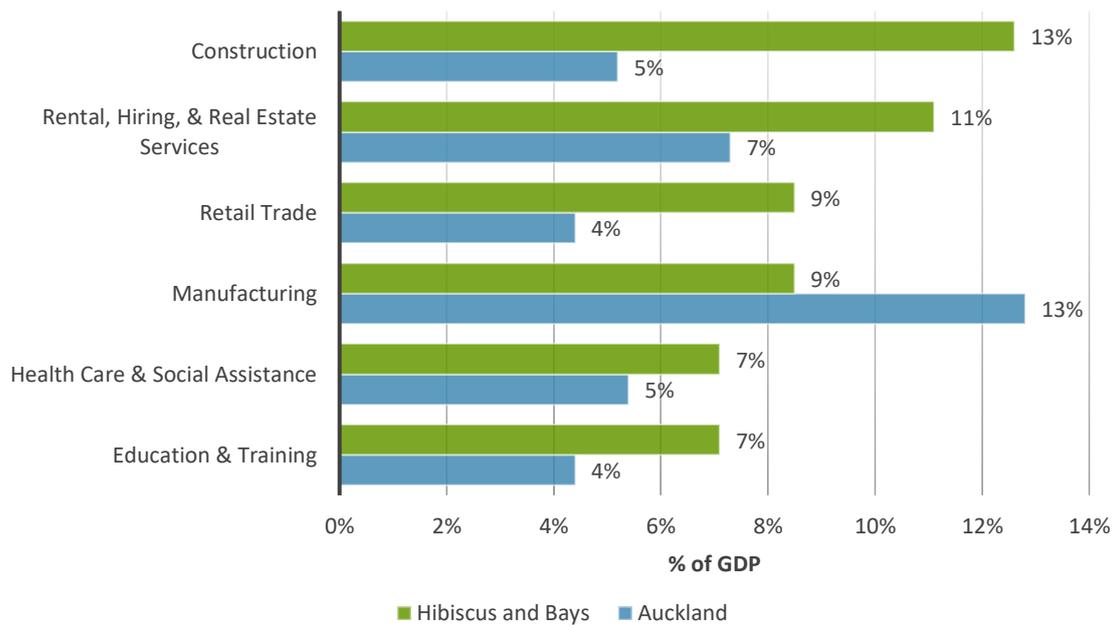
A slightly lower percentage of Hibiscus and Bays workers are employees than the Auckland (76% compared with 80% across Auckland in 2013), and a slightly larger percentage are self-employed (15% compared with 13%).



Employment types in Hibiscus Bays and Auckland, 2013.

The industries that contribute most to GDP in Hibiscus and Bays are: construction (13%); rental, hiring, and real estate services (11%); retail (9%); manufacturing (9%); health care and social assistance (7%); and education and training (7%).

⁸ Data on GDP and job type were obtained from Infometrics: <http://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/Hibiscus%2band%2bBays>



Top industries contributing to Hibiscus and Bays GDP, 2013.

The number of geographic business units in the Hibiscus and Bays area has increased by over 40 per cent since 2001, which is slightly higher than the growth across Auckland as a whole (34%).⁹

Unemployment in the Hibiscus and Bays area has been consistently lower than Auckland as a whole since 2001, with 5.6 per cent of the Hibiscus and Bays labour force unemployed in 2013 compared with 8.1 per cent across Auckland. About one-third of Hibiscus and Bays residents aged 15 and over were not in the labour force in 2013, which was on par with Auckland as a whole.

Wealth and Education

The median household income in Hibiscus and Bays area was \$78,200 in 2013, which is slightly higher than the Auckland average of \$76,500. Although the median household income has risen in the Hibiscus and Bays area since 2001 from \$47,800 (approximately \$64,600 in 2013 terms¹⁰), this is comparable to the rise seen across Auckland (in 2001 median income for Auckland was \$49,000, or \$66,200 in 2013 terms).

The 2014 Quality of Life survey found that, similar to Aucklanders as a whole, 40 per cent of Hibiscus and Bays residents felt they had enough or more than enough money to meet their needs, 41% had just enough money, and 15% did not have enough money to do this.

Qualification levels are similar to Auckland as a whole, with 14 per cent of Hibiscus and Bays residents lacking a qualification (compared with 17% across Auckland), 43 per cent holding a secondary school-level qualification (41% across Auckland), and 43 per cent holding a Level 4 certificate or higher (42% across Auckland). However, student achievement is slightly stronger than across Auckland, with 84 per cent of

⁹ Data from Infometrics: <http://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/Hibiscus%2band%2bBays>

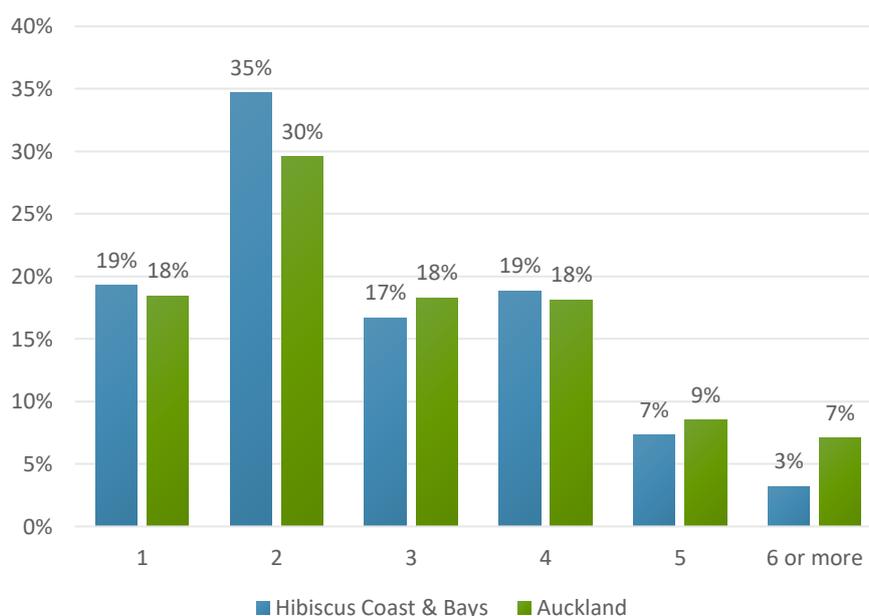
¹⁰ All inflation-adjusted figures were calculated using the Reserve Bank of New Zealand online inflation calculator:

http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/monetary_policy/inflation_calculator/.

2013 school leavers in Hibiscus and Bays gaining at least NCEA Level 2, compared with 79 per cent across Auckland. Māori students in Hibiscus and Bays were less likely than other groups to leave school with at least NCEA Level 2 (58%, compared with 56% across Auckland). Participation in early childhood education (ECE) is also slightly higher than the Auckland average, with 99 per cent of new school entrants participating in ECE prior to starting school (compared with 94% across Auckland).

Housing and Families

The Hibiscus and Bays area has a slightly higher percentage of one- and two-person households than Auckland as a whole, and a slightly lower percentage of households with six or more residents. Two out of every five families in Hibiscus and Bays are couples without children (41%, slightly higher than the Auckland average of 27%), nearly half are couples with children (46%, on par with the Auckland average of 47%), and over one in ten are single-parent households (13%, below the Auckland average of 18%).



Residents per household in Hibiscus and Bays and Auckland, 2013.

Nearly half of Hibiscus and Bays residents surveyed in 2013 had lived in the area five years before (46%, compared with 44% across Auckland), while over one-third (38%, on par with Auckland as a whole) had lived elsewhere in New Zealand and nearly one in ten had lived overseas (9%, 10% across Auckland).

The area has a relatively high rate of home ownership, with nearly three-quarters (74%) of dwellings owned, partially owned, or held in a family trust by the usual residents in 2013, compared with 61 per cent across Auckland. Median weekly rental costs for households in Hibiscus and Bays have risen steeply from \$240 in 2001 (approximately \$320 in 2013 terms) to \$400 in 2013, which is higher than the Auckland median rent of \$350 per week. In 2013, more than two-thirds of renters in the Hibiscus and Bays area (68%) paid rents of \$350 or above per week, compared with just over half of all renters across Auckland (54%).

The 2014 Quality of Life survey, found that similar to Aucklanders as a whole, 40% of Hibiscus and Bays respondents disagreed that their housing costs, such as rent, mortgage, rates, house insurance and house maintenance costs, are affordable.

Telecommunications

Residents in the Hibiscus and Bays areas have comparatively high levels of access to phones and the internet. Most households have access to telecommunications systems with 87% of households having access to a mobile phone, 91% access to a telephone and 86% access to the internet. Only 0.7% of households had no access to telecommunications. This is higher than access to telecommunications across Auckland with 84% having access to a mobile phone, 86% access to a telephone and 82% access to the internet.

Perceptions of wellbeing

The Quality of Life survey in 2014 found that most Hibiscus and Bays residents rated their overall quality of life positively (84%)¹¹. One-quarter (24%) said that their quality of life had increased over the past 12 months, compared with 15% who felt that it had decreased.¹² Most rated their overall health as very good or excellent (52%) with a further 33% rating it as good.

Over half (53%) of Hibiscus and Bays residents said that they have been active (15 minutes of vigorous activity or 30 minutes of moderate activity) five or more days a week prior to the survey. This is higher than Auckland respondents (40%).

Most (71%) say they are generally happy these days and satisfied with life in general (76%). Similar to Aucklanders, 17% say they regularly experience stress that has a negative impact on them. Most (64%) however, felt satisfied with their work-life balance.

Community, culture and social networks

Three quarters of Hibiscus and Bays respondents to the Quality of Life survey agree that it is important to feel a sense of community with the people in their local neighbourhood. Similar to Aucklanders, half (51%) of Hibiscus and Bays residents agree that they feel a sense of community and 42% said that they have had strong positive contact with people in their neighbourhoods in the previous 12 months, such as a visit or asking each other for small favours. Most (94%) have had some positive social contact with people in their neighbourhood in the past 12 months. Fifteen per cent have had some negative social contact with people in their neighbourhood over the same period, with one in ten (9%) reporting outright tension or disagreement.

Most Hibiscus and Bays respondents (72%) say they have not or only rarely felt isolated or lonely over the past 12 months. Seven per cent have felt this way always or most of the time.

The social networks they identified as belonging to included:

¹¹ Differences between Hibiscus and Bays and Auckland were not significant.

¹² Differences between Hibiscus and Bays and Auckland were not significant.

- Online networks such as Facebook (46%)
- People from work or school (49%)
- A hobby or interest group (26%)
- A church or spiritual group (16%)
- A sports club (31%)
- A community or voluntary group such as the Rotary, RSA or Lions (18%)

These networks are similar to those identified by other Aucklanders.

Most (89%) have someone they can turn to if they are faced with a serious illness or injury, or need support during a difficult time.

Hibiscus and Bays residents are less likely than Aucklanders as a whole, to think that cultural diversity makes their city a better place to live (41% compared with 53% of Aucklanders). Similarly they are less likely to agree that their local area has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene (21% compared with 34% of Aucklanders).

Perceptions of safety

A 2012 survey of public perceptions of safety found that those in Hibiscus and Bays were more likely to feel safer than those from the whole Auckland Region.¹³ Only 5% of Hibiscus and Bays residents felt that the Auckland Region was unsafe. Similarly, only 4% felt that their neighbourhood was unsafe. They were also less likely to feel unsafe walking in their neighbourhood during the day, after dark, or waiting for a bus after dark.

They are also less likely to have been victims of crime or harassed.

Environment

The East Coast Bays area covers 29KM² representing 0.6% of the Auckland region. The land cover is mainly urban (50%) with substantial areas of native (19%) and pastoral (28%) vegetation. The extent of impervious or hard surfaces is high (29%) when compared with the Auckland regional average of 9%. This contributes to storm-water run-off which contains contaminants that can have toxic ecological effects.

East Coast Bays is an area known for its beaches and outdoor lifestyle. The water quality of beaches tested between Devonport and Long Bay has been ranked as excellent by Auckland Council, with low concentrations of nutrients, low turbidity and low concentrations of dissolved oxygen. Of the six bathing beaches tested during summer 2015/16, 98% passed recreational bacteria guidelines. This grade has improved since the 2014 report card. This improvement is driven by reductions in the concentrations of phytoplankton, suspended sediment and an increase in dissolved oxygen in the water column. It is noted, however, that recreational bacteria guidelines are still being breached and there is further room for improvement.

¹³ Longdill and Associates, March 2012. *Public perceptions of safety from crime in the Auckland Region*, Auckland Council.

Habitat in this area comprises largely of intertidal sandy beaches and sandstone reefs and subtidal soft sediment areas and low relief rocky reefs providing a diversity of habitats for plants and animals.

Auckland Council monitor a number of subtidal reefs around the region. The number and abundance of species on these monitored reefs remain relatively stable since monitoring began in 1999. There has, however, been a general increase in invasive species. While Auckland Council monitoring has found no signs of increasing degradation in reef ecosystems, neither have there been improvements.

According to the 2016 Auckland Council Freshwater Report Card¹⁴, the health of the East Coast Bay's rivers is impaired. Residents believe this is due to the intensity of urban development. Waterways in the East Coast Bays reporting area tend to have riparian margins with some trees and bush, which provide shade, leaf litter and woody debris to the stream and anchor the stream banks. The debris enhances the quality of habitat for flora and fauna, although some of the original riparian vegetation has been removed to allow more intensive land use. There have been efforts by residents to restore streams through riparian planting, pest control and daylighting streams, however residents note that that considerably more needs to be done to restore them to better health.

Overall perception of local area

Overall, the Quality of Life survey found that 94% of Hibiscus and Bays residents compared with 79% of Aucklanders, agree that their local area is a great place to live and take pride in their area (77% compared to 63% of Aucklanders). They are less likely than Aucklanders to perceive air pollution (10%), noise pollution (12%), tagging or graffiti (26%) as an issue.

Ninety one per cent felt that the general area or neighbourhood their housing is in suits their needs and the needs of others in their household.

¹⁴ <http://stateofauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/freshwater-report-card/east-coast-bays-reporting-area-2/>

FINDINGS FROM RESIDENTS

What attracted residents to the area

Residents were asked what had attracted them to the area. Over half said that they were attracted to the area was because of the beaches and natural environment. Many had friends and family in the area, or had a historical connection to the area, having lived there a long time or having been to school there as a child.

Some said that they were attracted to the area by the amenities on offer, in particular the proximity to shops and other facilities, or the quality of the schools. A number of people said they had moved there because they had found affordable housing there, although these tended to be residents who had lived in the area for some time. People also said they were attracted to the area as it was quiet, peaceful and safe.

Attracted to areas	Percent
Beach	46%
Friends and family/ Community	24%
Environment	21%
Connection to the area eg. went to school there	18%
Amenities eg. Parks, shops, cafes	16%
Schools	15%
Cheap, affordable or bigger housing	11%
Quiet and peaceful	6%
Close to work	5%

n=203

RESIDENT VOICES

I like the community feel – I moved here from England and had a good look around New Zealand. There were great schools here. (Browns Bay)

I like the beach, the rolling hills and the countryside (Torbay)

It has everything - beaches shops, it is close to everything (Northcross)

I like the climate, the space, the trees, the views (Okura)

Felt like you were on holiday when visiting here. people are friendly. I have been here for over forty years (Murrays Bay)

I like d the proximity to the beach and sea, we have a great rental and it is close to school.(Campbells Bay)

What residents like about their neighbourhood, suburb and area

Residents were asked what they like about living in their neighbourhood, suburb and area *now they are living there*.

The most common responses related to the natural environment. People said they love the beaches, parks, bush and walkways. People named a wide range of beaches and walking tracks that they enjoyed most.

They also said the Bays are quiet and peaceful, and generally feel uncrowded. Some said the area still has a holiday feel about it. Many like that their neighbourhood feels safe and clean. They said it is a good, safe place for children to grow up, and that they like the quiet cul de sacs as they extend their backyard into the street. Neighbourhood children are able get together and play there safely.

Many people said that the East Coast Bays community is friendly and well connected and integrated, largely because people tend to stay living in the area for a long time, and the lay-out of the streets, makes it easy to get to know their neighbours. Some believe the Bays are friendlier and less busy than other parts of the North Shore, such as Milford or Takapuna, and they prefer that.

Public facilities and amenities were also mentioned as aspects that they liked, especially the quality of schools and shops. People like being close to the motorway and shopping areas. Good local facilities such as the libraries and Sunday markets were also mentioned.

Many people said they liked the walkability of the Bay. Some reflected that they are able to walk to everything and dog owners liked that they can walk their dogs easily.

Only, one in ten people said that the public transport, specifically buses, provided a good service.

LIKE ABOUT THE AREA

Beach	51%
Amenities and facilities	41%
Friendly people and community	35%
Environment	28%
Peaceful/ quiet	19%
Location	18%
Schools	13%
General safety	11%
Transport	10%
Child friendly and safe for families	9%
Ease of living	6%
Public events	5%
Dog walking/ walking	4%

I like that there is easy access by walking, low crowds, and there is good big library (Waiake)

I like the beach and the area is quiet (Campbells Bay)

Close to the beach and the affordability at the time (Glenvar)

It is country living yet it is close to all the facilities we need e.g. shops, doctors. There are friendly neighbours, everyone keeps an eye out on things and looks out for each other. (Okura)

Enhancing life in the Bays

Residents were asked what types of things the community, council and other organisations could do (or not do) which might enhance their life in the Bays, and what if any changes they would like to see.

The main issues that people said, if addressed, would enhance their life in the Bays were around the environment, traffic, parking, cycle ways and road management. This was followed by issues relating to the amenities in the area, activities for children and families, and safety issues. Residents also shared ideas that would enhance their life that were specific to their suburb.

PRIORITIES

Preserving the environment

The environment was the highest priority for East Coast Bays residents. Three-quarters of online respondents said this was an urgent or high priority. It was also the most commonly raised issue in the intercept survey and focus groups.

People in the Bays said they loved the natural environment and wanted to see continued and increased investment in this. There is a strong emphasis on protecting the natural heritage of the area including the waterways, greenbelt and beaches. Residents would like to see the streams continue to be restored. Several focus group participants noted the work that has been undertaken by community groups to clean up streams and control pests were positive examples of restoration and felt that it had improved the amenity value of these areas.

In addition to maintaining the natural amenities, and enhancing them through walking trails, participants want to ensure that any further development and housing intensification does not further encroach on the natural environment. There is concern about the impact of development on public spaces. Some residents point out that infill housing and further development will require more public space rather than fewer.

Residents noted issues around beaches. They asked for more rubbish bins and collections on beaches, and for liquor bans near beaches and boat ramps to be enforced.

Some residents asked for more environmental protection activities, such as additional stream clean ups, and more bird breeding and protection initiatives to be introduced. Others noted a loss of large native trees in the area and the impact of this on the birds which feed on them, and wanted to see the protection of large trees reinstated.

Focus group residents, along with some in the intercept survey were concerned about the impact of the Long Bay housing development both visually, and environmentally. A number of residents noted the impact of the development on water quality, and the potential flow on effects to the marine environment.

“Please stop destroying the beautiful Long Bay hills.”

“Too much housing development, with the promises to the people not being kept. There were promises that there would still be a green belt and you would not be able to see the houses from the beach. These have been broken. From the development there has been no effort to protect the environment this will have a big effect on the marine life in the area. All the extra surfaces added in the development have caused extra run off into the stream. After a big rainfall the sea floor is more like sludge.”

There was also widespread concern about the cliffs around the walkways eroding, crumbling and being unsafe. Residents were concerned again that the impact of development, combined with weather events, was impacting on safety of cliffs and walkways. When asked how these issues should be addressed residents said:

- Council should “stand strong” on decisions to limit intensification.
- Limit future development.
- Cap the number of apartments.
- Ensure all the environmental effects of developments are acknowledged and addressed, and not swept under the carpet.
- Ensure the impact of any future developments are planned for, addressed and the agreements adhered to by developers.

It is noted that those who live in the new Long Bay development say that they very much enjoy living there and enjoy the lifestyle.

Traffic, parking, cycle ways and road management including improving public transport links

Improving transport was the second highest priority for residents. Seventy-nine percent of online residents said this was an urgent or high priority. Traffic congestion and parking were of concern to residents. People were concerned that increases in population had led to serious traffic congestion problems, particularly in areas such as Constellation Drive and that the infrastructure was not keeping up.

They felt it was necessary to look at solutions to the morning traffic jam into the city. When asked how these issues should be addressed some residents suggested the need to invest in a second harbour crossing and to look at rail into the city. They would like to see an increase in the availability of ferries, investment in high rise parking buildings and the introduction of traffic calming measures.

There were mixed responses to bus services. Some said the bus services were good but that the Park and Ride gets full too quickly and needed more parking.

“The park and ride is often full by 8am and then we have to drive to the city. It means that people are getting there earlier and earlier to get a park, so the parking is full earlier and earlier. I have school aged kids and this means I am leaving earlier and earlier to get to work, and they are basically home alone in the mornings. It is not ideal.”

The need for multi-level parking was noted by many.

Residents would like to see the bus express way improved and extended, and the night bus services increased, especially after big events like concerts or sports events.

Some said that the Albany area was well serviced but the Bays local stops were no longer as well serviced, and suggested better buses on Beach and East Coast Roads.

Residents and local business people expressed the need for more parking in most shopping areas. It was suggested in a focus group that this could include the investment in high rise parking buildings and that parking could be extended along Glen Rd.

People also noted the problem of speeding cars and 'boy racers' at night, and suggested traffic calming in busy areas was needed to increase safety.

There was a call for roads to be made more friendly to cyclists and pedestrians. Residents asked for cycle lanes to be built along main roads, especially along arterial roads such as East Coast Road and Oteha Valley Road.

Residents would like to see more pedestrian crossings in busy areas. They noted that there needed to be better crossings for school children along East Coast Road and around the supermarkets in Browns Bay.

Children and young people

The third highest priority was ensuring children and young people have a good education, and then get training and work opportunities, with around two-thirds of online respondents saying it was an urgent or high priority. Several residents in focus groups and some stakeholders felt that while young people were largely catered for, there were issues with young people, particularly those at Intermediate school being left home alone and unsupervised. There was also concern that young people need to leave school, training and education with the skills and qualifications required by the new economy, including soft skills. Several business people noted that young people did not always have the soft skills required, such as customer service.

Those with school aged children noted that the quality of schools in East Coast Bays is extremely good and a draw card for families shifting into the area.

Balance of Activities and Facilities

Just over half online respondents said having the right balance of activities and facilities in each area was high priority. Respondents felt that the area was lively, had a good choice of events and activities, was well served by facilities, and that there was often something on.

While most felt that activities were well catered for, both staff from agencies and parents felt that if there was a gap, it was in activities for young people of intermediate age. Community-based organisations and

activities have been shown to have a significant impact on the skills, attitudes, and experiences of young people. Evidence suggests that activities which involve sport, computers, music, gaming, cooking, and art are key to meaningfully engaging with the young people, particularly if there are opportunities for friends and family to be involved.

Previous consultations along with literature in this area suggests parents have a significant influence over the activities of their 9-13 year olds. Any initiative for this age group will need to balance the needs and interests of the young people against the responsibilities and obligations which are important to their parents e.g. church, homework, sports training, and caring for siblings. Parents say they need information that outlines the benefits to their children of participating in community-based activities and how this participation can aid their social, emotional, and academic development.

Essentially, the provision of activities, can help young people develop resilience, positive relationships, appropriate social behaviours, and academic competence, which then support social self-efficacy, contribution, connection, and educational success.

Although the parents acknowledged that East Coast Bays is a safe area, there was a zone of safety for primary and intermediate aged students. For some it was a corridor between home and school. For others, it included a shopping mall or library if they went with friends. Some had to be home within the time taken to travel to and from school. Others were allowed out during daylight hours, to the mall, a public library or sports training, if they were with friends and parents knew where they were. It was acknowledged that this limited the activities that young people could participate in.

Amenities for families and children

Residents enjoy the existing amenities in East Coast Bays. Facilities such as the Beach Volley Ball club were considered exceptional, and were well used. Residents said they would like to see the investment in services and activities for families and children continue, and for new bike and skate parks and more playgrounds including water parks (with fountains) to be built to cater for the increase in population. Some said they particularly enjoyed the local events for families e.g.. parades and outdoor cinema, and would like to see more of these including more celebration of the area and cultural events like Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Amenities

People shared lots of ideas about public amenities that would enhance life in the Bays. These included:

- More children's playgrounds and more activities in children's playgrounds, such as water play
- More parks and greenspace, so that local parks are always in walking distance
- An attraction to draw people to the area, something akin to Butterfly Creek in East Coast Bays
- More shade areas in parks and beaches
- More outside cover for outdoor activities e.g. for Tai Chi to protect participants when it rains
- Half-court basketball courts and hoops and a skate park in Mairangi Bay
- A swimming pool (in the Bays not Albany) - outdoor and salt water pools, water slides
- Bigger libraries

Improving safety in the area

Residents were asked how much of a priority increasing safety in the area was. Half of online respondents said it was not an urgent or high priority, largely as many residents feel the area is reasonably safe. Most of the safety concerns raised in focus groups related to family violence, bullying, online safety, issues with dogs, traffic, speed, boy-racing and the need for more pedestrian crossings.

Family violence

Family violence was raised as an issue in focus groups. Some residents were concerned that it was a hidden issue, and due to the socioeconomic status of East Coast residents, was not acknowledged or talked about.

The North Shore Family Violence Team (at North Shore Policing Centre in Mairangi Bay) receives between 50-70 POL1310 (Family Harm reports) on a weekly basis. This includes reports from the East Coast Bays area. The North Shore Family Violence Coordinator notes that the East Coast Bays has a growing migrant population so the issues are complex with the need for specialist service providers addressing cultural and language needs.

Bullying and Cyber safety

Bullying, particularly in relation to cyber safety, was raised by focus group participants. The schools and agencies say that this issue is trending on the North Shore and is a significant issue for the East Coast Bays. Schools are responding with primary prevention endeavours, and primary prevention in primary schools is a paramount focus of the NSFVP Network. Oranga Tamariki have noted that on-going issues of cyber safety involving large groups of young people across several schools are seriously impacting on the well-being of children and their families.

SAFETY

Although not specific to East Coast Bays, the Quality of Life Survey asks respondents about a range of crime and safety issues. Hibiscus and Bays respondents were less considerably likely to view safety as an issue:

- Vandalism (25%) compared to Auckland as a whole (43%)
- Car theft, damage to cars and theft from cars (37%) compared to Auckland (62%)
- Dangerous driving (46%) compared to Auckland (61%)
- Graffiti and tagging (26%) compared to Auckland (47%)

Hibiscus and Bays respondents reported a high sense of safety in their homes during the day. 83% said they felt very safe compared to Auckland as a whole (67%). Similarly, they were more likely (Hibiscus and Bays respondents said they felt very safe at home considerably more than Auckland as a whole at 47%. 71% of Hibiscus and Bays respondents said they felt safe walking alone after dark compared to 55% across Auckland.

“What we see is serious emotional harm on these children that can result in self-harming, bullying, social withdrawal and a decrease in their educational progress. Further, we have had children accessing mental health services due to the impact of this abuse on them.” Agency staff member

Dogs

Some residents were concerned about dogs. Some suggested that dogs should not be allowed off leash at all. Others were more specific and said it was most important dogs were not off leash in playground areas. Several residents said that dog by laws were not being enforced, and that there were problems with people not picking up after dogs

When asked how these issues should be addressed residents said:

- Allocate half the beach to dogs
- Secure off leash areas for dogs
- More walk ways that are dog-friendly

Some in focus groups raised concerns about family violence in the area and what to do when overhearing shouting and witnessing controlling behaviour. They would like to see this addressed in the East Coast Bays area as they believe it is a hidden issue.

Public toilets

The public toilets are open late and some residents felt that they attract groups of people and unwanted behaviour, such as partying with loud music and drinking or drug use. Residents have asked that they be closed earlier to make the areas around them feel safe.

Walkways

As previously mentioned, there is concern about the safety of walkways, particularly in relation to the erosion of cliffs. Residents have expressed interest that the reasons for the erosion are addressed, so that the walkways are not permanently closed.

Local economic development and local jobs

Residents and businesses believe that area is doing reasonably well, although most said that they worked outside the East Coast Bays area. Some like the mix of ethnic restaurants and cafes, others liked the bar and café scene, particularly in the Browns Bay area.

Both business representatives and residents raised issues relating to town centres. Although they acknowledged that they could get most of their goods and services locally at centres such as Browns Bay, they consider the area to be becoming unattractive, run down and in need of a spruce up. There was concern about the quality and diminishing diversity of shops in the East Coast Bays area.

They would like to see:

- A sign welcoming people to Browns Bay (LIVE LAUGH ENJOY).
- The implementation of the Town Centre Plan in Browns Bay.

- Improvements to the streetscape, more colour in shopping centres and along Beach Rd such as murals, paving and gardens with more colourful flowers.
- A roof over the plaza in Browns Bay to make it usable in all weathers.
- More markets to attract business and customers to the area, particularly on Sundays. It was noted that markets in other parts of the North Shore were highly successful.
- The extension of CCTV cameras and information TVs in Browns Bay.
- Recycling bins, and bins that accommodate pizza boxes, similar to those found in Takapuna. Bins along beachfronts need to be bigger and there needs to be more of them.
- Change the collection of commercial rubbish, i.e. the orange rubbish bins currently collected from the main streets could be collected from behind the shops, to tidy up the look and feel of town centres.
- Increase the regularity of council teams which maintain the area, for example the edges around the toilets need more regular maintenance as the weeds cover the drains.
- A rent ceiling so local shops can afford to stay open.
- A better mix of businesses, including fewer restaurants and more retail shops. It was felt that the shopping centres need to be more diverse. Some felt that there used to be more specialty shops, such as a British goods shop, where people from the UK could meet up.
- More car parking.
- The redevelopment of Council buildings. Several residents noted that they are not inviting or welcoming.
- Parents said they would like parents' rooms in shopping centres.

Reducing isolation

One-third of residents, particularly elderly and newcomers to the area, considered reducing isolation to be an urgent or high priority. This is broadly consistent with international findings, however, for one in three older adults surveyed¹⁵ isolation and loneliness are key issues. Those who felt this way described the negative consequences of loneliness and isolation on their lives, or the lives of older adults in their life.

It was noted that East Coast Bays is well served by events and activities for older adults. There are many groups that older adults can attend and these groups are well attended. While some older adults could attend recreation centres, parks or facilities, some had issues with mobility which they said restricted their ability to get and about. The period after spousal bereavement, and prior to moving into retirement villages or care were identified as particularly vulnerable times for older adults. Although there are volunteer programmes and visiting services for older adults experiencing isolation, their children noted that they would not always use them as they did not want to be seen as "a bother or burden". Agencies noted that older adults after moving into retirement villages often say they wished they had moved earlier.

Similarly, newcomers to the area, in particular new parents, said that they found it difficult to meet other parents and develop friendships. They suggested that programmes have a social option at the end, such as

¹⁵ Analysis of Age Concern survey (2016), taking a sample of older adults in the study area.

a cup of tea, to help newcomers to an area get to know their neighbours, and meet people with similar interests.

Some of the newcomers to the area, particularly new migrant families with young children, said they had felt isolated and lonely when they arrived. They found the lack of social connection very hard to overcome.

There is evidence that how well each member of a family adapts to settlement will affect the settlement outcome i.e. whether a family settles or leaves. Successful settlement is dependent on a wide range of factors, including work, children's educational opportunities, social connectedness, and possibilities for recreation and leisure.

Focus group respondents believe there are few opportunities for new migrants, or newcomers to an area to get together unless they belong to one of the larger ethnic minority communities that have social or cultural clubs. Newcomers said they do not know what is available locally, nor what they could join or take part in. Focus group respondents were unaware of the welcome pack to newcomers in the area. Some had joined the gym, or an exercise class, but said there is little opportunity for social connection during the class and none after the class as people leave immediately.

They suggested that structuring activities to provide a social dimension, such as providing a cup of tea after an exercise class, or an opportunity for a coffee together after a toddler class at the library, would help them to meet other people with similar interests.

Strengthening sense of community

In the online survey, people were asked how much of a priority strengthening sense of community was half felt that it was a medium priority. Most residents felt that the East Coast Bays had a strong sense of community once people managed to 'find their place' in it, find out what was on and once they got to know people. It was felt that the schools were hubs of the community, and the natural environment meant that people were often out and about walking, so overall it felt warm, friendly and connected.

Some new parents noted that with traffic and long work hours, some partners were less likely to feel connected into their community than those at home, as were those who returned to work soon after birth, however they did not see this as concerning or as a high priority.

Specific suggestions

In addition to the aforementioned suggestions, residents also had specific suggestions about the suburb in which they lived.

Long Bay

- Café wanted
- Reduce speed on Vaughan Road (80 to 50kms) and address problems with Vaughan and Okura Road intersections
- More events at Long Bay

Torbay

- Create fenced dog walking area behind football field on Deep Creek Road
- Fruit trees and community garden allotments in small reserve such as Tui Street to cater for housing intensification
- Traffic calming needed in Lingham and Glamorgan Drives, and Deep Creek bridge
- Pedestrian crossing at Deep Creek bridge
- Try monthly markets and art corner

Browns Bay

- More parking
- Movie theatre
- Upgrade the recreation centre

Murrays Bay

- Keeping up maintenance of the parks especially lawn mowing at Speedy Reserve
- Better landscaping at Murray's Bay wharf
- Too many fisherman on the wharf, need a designated area
- Exercise equipment at Mairangi Bay parks and reserves

Campbells Bay

- New childcare centre on the corner of Park Rise and Beach Road was impacting on use of the beach because of increased traffic
- Set netting at beach no good

Mairangi Bay

- Build an enhanced beach experience at Mairangi Bay Beach - beach, reserve, dining experience looking out to Rangitoto from the beach
- Install exercise equipment along the beachfront
- Upgrade and reposition surf club and create a multi-purpose community space
- Convert Mairangi Bay Park from an all grass facility to a multi-purpose (rugby/soccer) facility like Greville Park
- Better play ground
- Public toilets not kept clean and need upgrade and more women's toilets needed
- Pedestrian crossings at Sunnynook Road
- Traffic calming in shopping centre
- Skate park

Castor Bay

- Road maintenance and traffic calming needed

Milford

Although Milford is not in the East Coast Bays area, residents in neighbouring suburbs used the Milford shopping centre and amenities, and commented.

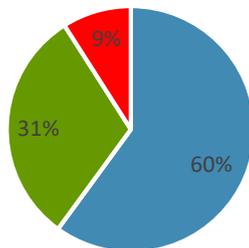
- Milford is changing, and that’s not bad, but the increased traffic and congestion is having an impact on quality of living in East Coast Bays
- Increased traffic has led to parking issues over time – need enforcing.
- More pedestrian crossings (Inga Rd)
- Rodents in the parks at dusk

Moving from the Bays

Residents were asked whether they would consider moving from the East Coast Bays area.

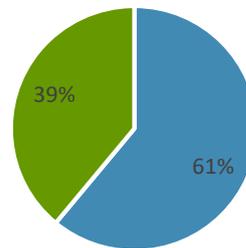
Although most said that they would not consider moving from East Coast Bays, around one third said they would.

Online survey (n=35)



■ No ■ Yes ■ Not sure

Intercept survey (n=193)



■ No ■ Yes ■

Those who had considered moving from the Bays were asked what might keep them here. In general they said that they would like to stay if there were:

- More affordable housing, and larger sections
- Rates decreases
- Improvements to public transport
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Less infill housing
- It didn’t get too overpopulated

Others said they liked the area but were thinking about leaving after they retired or may “cash up and go down the line”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Local Board:

1. Support initiatives designed to preserve and restore environmental health. Specifically, support initiatives to restore stream health through daylighting, riparian planting and pest control
2. Provide shade areas in public spaces, including beaches, parks and malls.
3. Increase the number, size and collection frequency of rubbish bins along beaches and in public spaces, ensuring that they are bird and animal proof and of sufficient size to accommodate pizza boxes
4. Work with Auckland Transport on initiatives to reduce traffic congestion, such as expanding the Park and Ride areas, extending the frequency of public transport options, and increasing cycle pathways. This could include introducing smaller coaches in suburban streets, more frequent buses at interchanges and a ferry/taxi service around the Bays, as in Sydney.
5. Support initiatives aimed at engaging Intermediate school aged students in after school activities.
6. Support initiatives designed to reduce family violence, bullying, and online safety.
7. Support initiatives designed to reduce traffic, speed, and racing.
8. Identify and introduce pedestrian crossings where needed.
9. Support initiatives designed to support older adults and newcomers to the area, such as combining activities and classes with a social aspect where people can connect and get to know each other.
10. Implement the town centre plan and spruce up areas with murals, colourful plantings, welcome signs, more frequent maintenance schedules and changes to rubbish collection.
11. Support the activation of town centres through markets and events designed to draw people to the area.
12. Investigate ways and implement initiatives designed to attract different types of shops and businesses to the area.