

Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) Park and Stream Restoration Project: an Impact Evaluation

Jacob Otter

June 2020

Technical Report 2020/007



Research and
Evaluation Unit

RIMU

**Auckland
Council**
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau





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Executive summary

From 2016 to 2019, extensive modifications and upgrades were undertaken on Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) Auckland, between Sandringham Road and Richardson Road, through Walmsley Park and Underwood Park. These upgrades saw the transformation of the waterway from a concrete-lined, fast-flowing culvert to a naturalised, meandering stream replete with native planting. A central focus of this upgrade was stormwater and flooding management, as surrounding properties were known to flood following large rain events. Significant social and cultural dimensions to the design of the upgrade emerged through engagement with mana whenua, the establishment of a Community Advisory Group and several innovative social procurement processes.

To understand the impact of these changes, Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) has published a suite of reports documenting the upgrades to Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek). The social and cultural dimensions were analysed in an earlier report (Allpress 2016a; also, 2016b), as were the social procurement outcomes (Field et al. 2017). This report discusses the results of observation counts and intercept surveys of Walmsley Park users before and after the upgrades.

This study found changes to the way Walmsley Park is used since the upgrades. The observation counts identified a significant increase in everyday usage, notably:

- increase in the number of children in Walmsley Park, especially on weekends
- weekday increase in walking
- weekend increase in cycling.

The intercept survey collected information on respondents' reasons for visiting Walmsley Park and their perceptions of the park. Responses to the latter question were gathered on a five-point ranking scale. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide open-ended, short answer responses.

An important finding was the changes to how people visited Walmsley Park. In 2016, over 60 per cent of respondents lived within 10 minutes of the park. In 2019, following the upgrades, 45 per cent of respondents lived within a 10-minute walk of the park. Notable increases in people walking 11 minutes or more to Walmsley Park, suggesting they may have travelled by bike or car, were also identified. These changes suggest more local residents using Walmsley Park, and more people coming to visit the park as a destination in itself.

Another important finding was the impact of the upgrades on respondents' perceptions of the importance, satisfaction and pride in the park. Responses to the 2016 and 2019 surveys show that respondents considered the park to be important. However, following the upgrades, satisfaction with Walmsley Park increased by eight per cent, and pride increased

by 25 per cent. Respondents' perceptions of 12 facilities within the Walmsley Park also remained steady or increased, while perceptions of creek health showed a substantial increase (30%), as did interest in volunteering to help maintain the creek (17%). For the 2019 respondents who had used Walmsley Park prior to the upgrades, nearly 90 per cent stated they considered the park much better, and 69 per cent stated they were using the park more.

Finally, the 2019 short answer questions focused on perceptions of the changes to Walmsley Park. When asked whether the park was better or worse than before the upgrades, responses were overwhelmingly positive with key themes including the generation of positive effects and feelings (n=36) and a more attractive environment to be in (n=30). Similar themes were generated from the question about the park being used more/less. The most significant theme was that Walmsley Park was now more enjoyable (n=37) and that it was better for exercise (n=24).

Table of contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Rationale for improvements	3
1.2	Scope of the evaluation	5
1.3	This report.....	6
2.0	Evaluation research method.....	7
2.1	Data collection methods.....	7
2.2	Demographic characteristics of respondents	9
3.0	Observation counts	12
3.1	Activity counts	12
4.0	Intercept survey results	14
4.1	Visiting Walmsley Park	14
4.2	Perceptions of Walmsley Park	16
5.0	Conclusion.....	27
6.0	References	28
Appendix A	Park user count template.....	29
Appendix B	2016 Intercept Survey	30
Appendix C	2019 Intercept Survey	34
Appendix D	Responses to questions not asked in 2019.....	39

List of tables

Table 1: Reasons for visiting Walmsley Park (%).....	14
Table 2: Frequency of visits to Walmsley Park (%).....	16

List of figures

Figure 1: Outdoor classroom (Jay Farnworth/Boffa Miskell).....	2
Figure 2: Te Māra Hūpara (Auckland Council).....	2
Figure 3: Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) paths (Jay Farnworth/Boffa Miskell)	3
Figure 4: Oakley Catchment	4
Figure 5: Underwood Park and Walmsley Park	4
Figure 6: Intercept survey locations	7

Figure 7: Sandringham Road Intercept Survey location (pictured before construction)	8
Figure 8: Beagle Ave Intercept Survey location (pictured before construction).....	8
Figure 9: Age of respondents (%).....	10
Figure 10: Gender of respondents (%)	10
Figure 11: Ethnicity of respondents (%).....	11
Figure 12: Length of time respondents have lived in the area	11
Figure 13: 2016 and 2019 Observation count.....	12
Figure 14: 2019 Activity count.....	13
Figure 15: Travel mode to park.....	15
Figure 16: Estimated time to walk from home to Walmsley Park.....	15
Figure 17: Importance of Walmsley Park (%)	17
Figure 18: Satisfaction with Walmsley Park (%)	18
Figure 19: Pride in Walmsley Park (%).....	18
Figure 20: Word cloud.....	19
Figure 21: Satisfaction with facilities (%).....	20
Figure 22: Perception of creek/stream health (%).....	21
Figure 23: Care for health of creek/stream (%).....	22
Figure 24: Interest in volunteering to improve the health of the creek/stream (%).....	22
Figure 25: How well neighbours are known (%).....	23
Figure 26: Respondents who used the park before the changes (%)	23
Figure 27: Perception of improvements 2016 to 2019 (%).....	24
Figure 28: Perceptions of use 2016 to 2019 (%).....	25

1.0 Introduction

In 2016, Auckland Council commenced significant improvements to Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) at Walmsley Park and Underwood Park. The improvement project was initially conceived as an engineering response to stormwater and flooding mitigation, but, in response to public consultation and mana whenua engagement, evolved into a three-year transformation of the surrounding public spaces and parks. These included a number of community facilities such as toilets, community fale, an outdoor classroom (Figure 1), play areas including Te Māra Hūpara (Figure 2), a bicycle pump track, new bridges, paths and extensive landscaping (Figure 3).

These improvements required extensive infrastructure investment and community engagement by Auckland Council. Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) was approached by the Healthy Waters Department to collaborate on a number of evaluations that assess the impacts of the upgrades. The evaluation had three distinct components:

1. The first focused on the impacts of the project team's engagement with mana whenua, local boards and the community during the design of the project (Allpress 2016a, 2016b).
2. The second evaluated case studies of two social procurement initiatives connected to the project: a youth employment initiative and a native nursery led by Te Whangai Trust and based at Wesley Intermediate School (Field et al. 2017).
3. The third focused on the impact of the park developments on the experience of park users.

This report presents the results of this third component: the impact of the project on the experience of park users.

Figure 1: Outdoor classroom (Jay Farnworth/Boffa Miskell)



Figure 2: Te Māra Hūpara (Auckland Council)



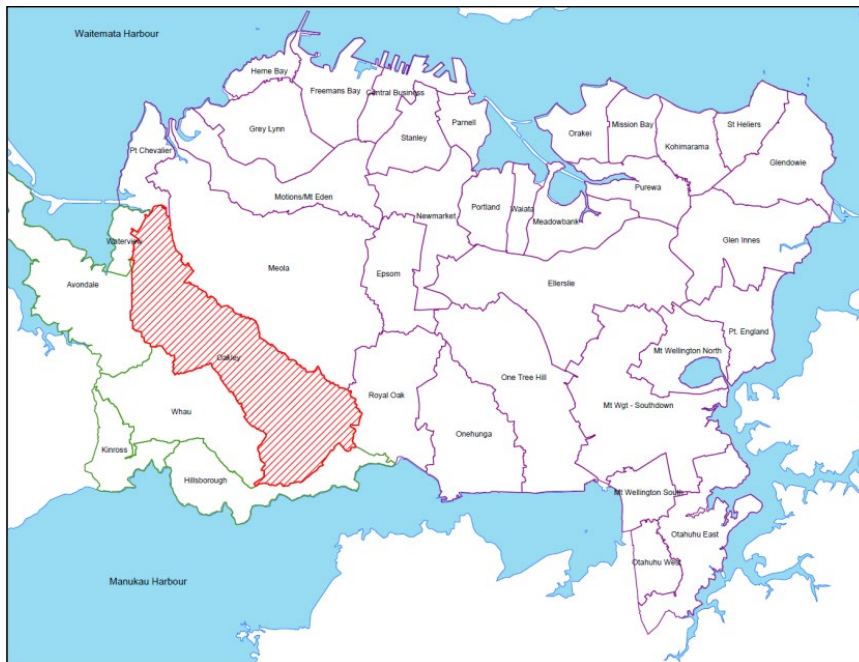
Figure 3: Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) paths (Jay Farnworth/Boffa Miskell)



1.1 Rationale for improvements

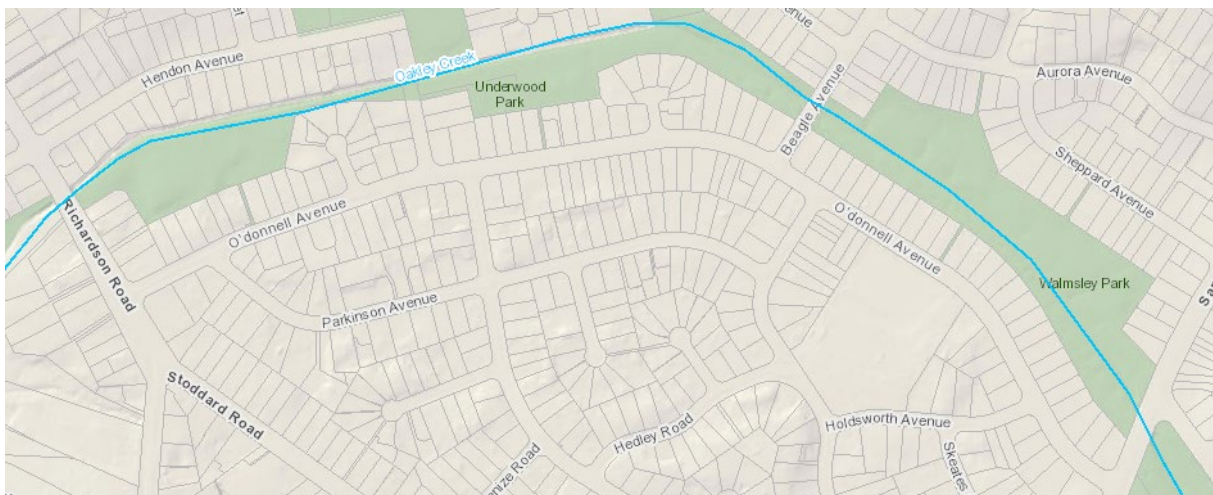
As mentioned above, the changes to Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) at Walmsley Park and Underwood Park were initially conceived as engineering responses to stormwater and flooding mitigation. Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) is fed by the Oakley catchment (Figure 4) and is a significant water course within the Auckland isthmus. The creek was regularly beset by significant flooding issues, especially along the 1.3 kilometre section of the creek between Sandringham Road in Mt Roskill and Richardson Road in Mt Albert (Smedley, Stumbles et al. 2013).

Figure 4: Oakley Catchment



This section of Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) is divided by Beagle Avenue, with Walmsley Park to the east and Underwood Park to the west (Figure 5). To overcome these issues, Auckland Council proposed replacing the existing concrete channel with a wider, naturalised stream channel.

Figure 5: Underwood Park and Walmsley Park



1.1.1 Community engagement

Key participants in preparations for the upgrades were mataawaka, local schools, community groups, mana whenua, and the Whau, Albert-Eden and Puketāpapa local boards. The governance structure and engagement processes are discussed in Allpress (2016a). This engagement with different sectors of the community was a key factor in the redevelopment of Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek).

Mana whenua were engaged through the resource management process and had a significant influence on the project¹ including:

- identifying appropriate native plant species for planting
- ensuring incorporation of rain gardens, vegetated swales, and catchpit inserts/enviropods to manage water runoff and filtration from roads and paths
- Te Māra Hūpara play area at Underwood Park².

The project team supported the development of a Community Advisory Group (CAG) that was also influential in guiding many of the design features in Walmsley Park.

The CAG included local residents, and representatives such as a mataawaka organisation, local schools, and local Bicycle User Groups (BUGS). Design features that emerged from the CAG at Walmsley Park included:

- the width of the paths
- the underpass at Richardson Road
- public toilets
- outdoor classroom
- community fale
- open spaces (Allpress 2016a).

Furthermore, the social procurement features of the redevelopment have generated significant financial and wellbeing outcomes for local residents (Field 2017).

Construction work began on the upgrade in late 2016 and was completed early 2019, with Walmsley Park opening slightly earlier than Underwood Park. A formal opening ceremony was held on 6 July 2019.

1.2 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation presented here only focuses on Walmsley Park. Delays to the construction and opening of Underwood Park meant it could not be included, however, some respondents provided feedback on the whole redevelopment.

As discussed in more detail below, intercept surveys with Walmsley Park users were conducted before the upgrades in 2016, and after the upgrades in 2019. The purpose

¹ Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Tamaoho, Te Akitai, Waiohua – Tāmaki, Ngāti Te Ata, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

² <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2019/04/mara-hupara-ancient-innovation-in-play-learning-and-exercise/>

of the intercept surveys was to evaluate any changes in perceptions of Walmsley Park and enable the attribution of these changes to particular changes.

1.3 This report

This report outlines the results from intercept surveys undertaken with Walmsley Park users in 2016 and 2019.

Section Two outlines the data collection methods used and provides an overview of sample sizes and demographics.

Section Three provides the results of the surveys. Part one outlines findings from the observation counts. The observation counts recorded the numbers of people in Walmsley Park, their activity, and which part of the park they were in (i.e. on the path, on the grass etc). Part two discusses findings from the intercept surveys including the reasons participants gave for coming to Walmsley Park, survey participants' perceptions of Walmsley Park, and analyses the short answer responses.

Section Four provides concluding remarks and recommendations.

2.0 Evaluation research method

This section outlines the data collection methods that were used for this evaluation and outlines the broad demographic characteristics of the 2016 and 2019 samples.

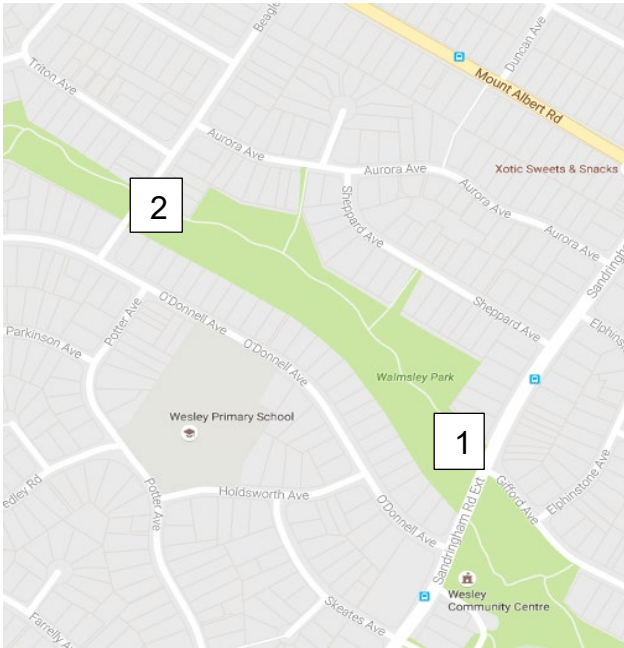
2.1 Data collection methods

Data was collected for this research project prior to the upgrades of Walmsley Park in 2016, and after the upgrade in 2019. The data collected included park user counts and intercept surveys. Notes were also taken of weather and any other factors that might be of significance e.g. the Wesley Market, lawn mowing.

The two surveys were undertaken at the same time of year, from mid-November to mid-December. The surveyors sought a good balance between morning and afternoon, weekday and weekend, between 8am and 6pm. This general balance was ensured for 2016 and 2019.

The user counts and intercept surveys were conducted from the same sites in 2016 and 2019, at each end of Walmsley Park (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Intercept survey locations



Site one was located on the path entering Walmsley Park from Sandringham Road (Figure 7). Sandringham Road is a significant local arterial route, and the intercept site is across the road from the Wesley Community Centre.

Figure 7: Sandringham Road Intercept Survey location (pictured before construction)



Site two was located on the path at the Beagle Ave entry to Walmsley park (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Beagle Ave Intercept Survey location (pictured before construction)



Surveyors worked in pairs or alone. At any given time within a shift, surveyors worked at a single site within Walmsley Park. However, across the course of a day, surveyors may move to the second site to help ensure consistency between the 2016 and 2019 surveys. This meant that counts only measured the number of people during the survey shifts. As data of park usage outside the times surveyors were working was not collected, surveys and counts should be considered as indicative only.

The intercept surveys were the primary task of surveyors and counts were a secondary task. The relatively low flow of users meant both could be conducted simultaneously. Intercept surveys were delivered at the same locations as the user counts. These were delivered by a surveyor standing at the pre-determined location with respondents

recruited as they passed by the surveyor. It was not noted if the user was entering or leaving Walmsley Park. All 2016 surveys were administered on paper with surveyors providing instructions to respondents about how to complete the survey. In 2019 the surveyors delivered the survey to respondents verbally or let them complete the survey themselves. Approximately half the respondents completed the survey verbally and half completed the survey form.

The observation counts were an attempt to get an indication of the broad numbers of people using the park and where they were performing different activities. As the intercept surveys were the priority, categories of activity and age were recorded at a broader level to enable quick recording from the surveyors. The survey questions aimed to generate a demographic profile of Walmsley Park users, along with data on their perspectives and attitudes about the park. There were some differences between the surveys; the 2016 survey sought perspectives on the current state of the park and views on improvements (Appendix A), while the 2019 survey included questions about park users' views on the recently completed upgrades (Appendix B).

The 2016 survey was delivered by surveyors recruited from the local community with training provided by researchers from RIMU. Unfortunately, some of this data was compromised and had to be deleted. The 2019 survey was delivered by an independent research company on behalf of RIMU.

Ethics permission was gained through Auckland Council's Human Participants Ethics Committee (Application #2016-007).

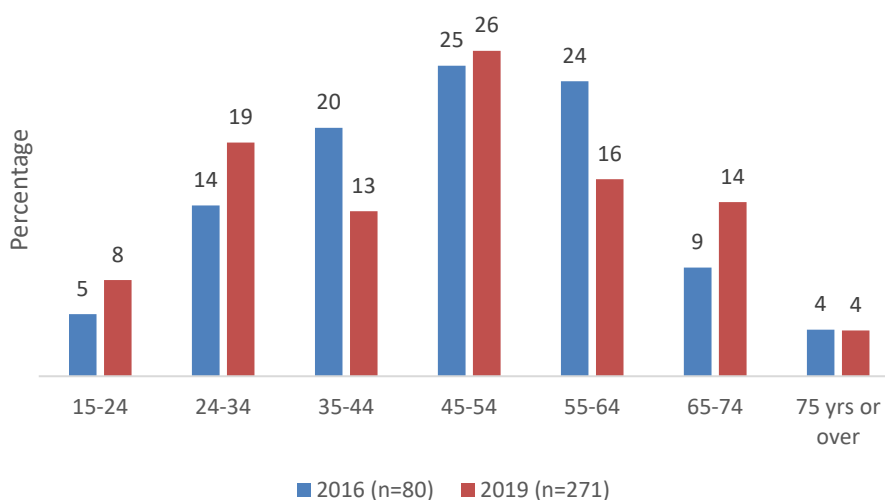
2.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The total number of survey respondents in 2016 was 80, whereas the total number of respondents in 2019 was 271. As discussed above, the compromises to the 2016 data meant that approximately 100 surveys needed to be excluded from the final sample. The small sample size means the results may not be representative. Differences over time or between groups have not been tested for statistical significance due to reduced 2016 sample size.

Demographic information about the age, gender, ethnicity, and time lived in the local area was collected from the survey participants. Differences in the demographic characteristics of respondents in the two survey periods may also be related to the changes in usage patterns of Walmsley Park.

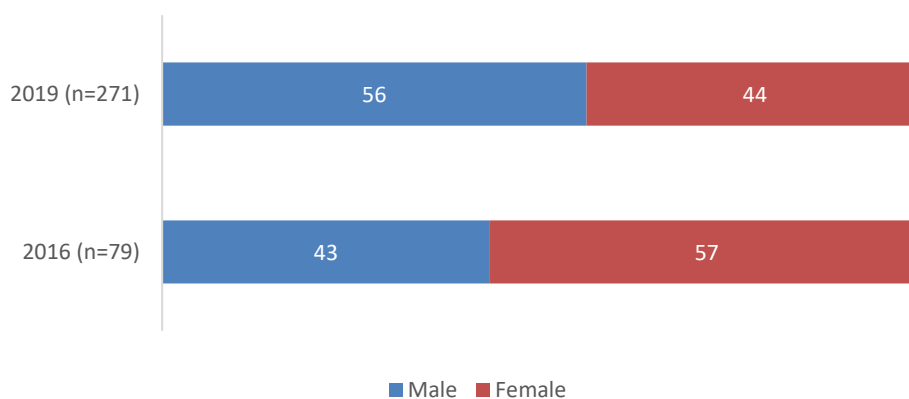
As Figure 9 shows, respondents were from all age groups, with the largest number in each survey period aged 45 to 54 years.

Figure 9: Age of respondents (%)



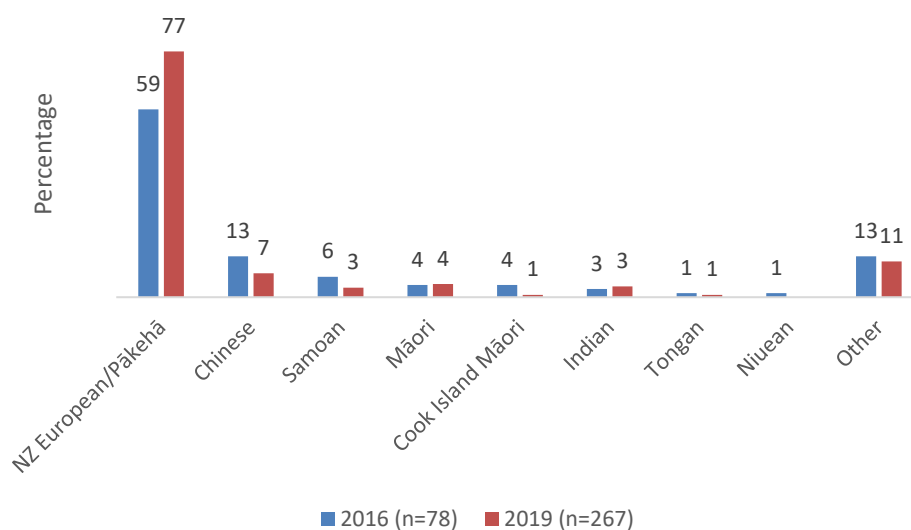
The gender of respondents varied across the two samples (Figure 10). The 2016 sample had a higher number of female respondents, whereas the 2019 sample respondents had a higher number of male respondents. There were no Gender Diverse responses.

Figure 10: Gender of respondents (%)



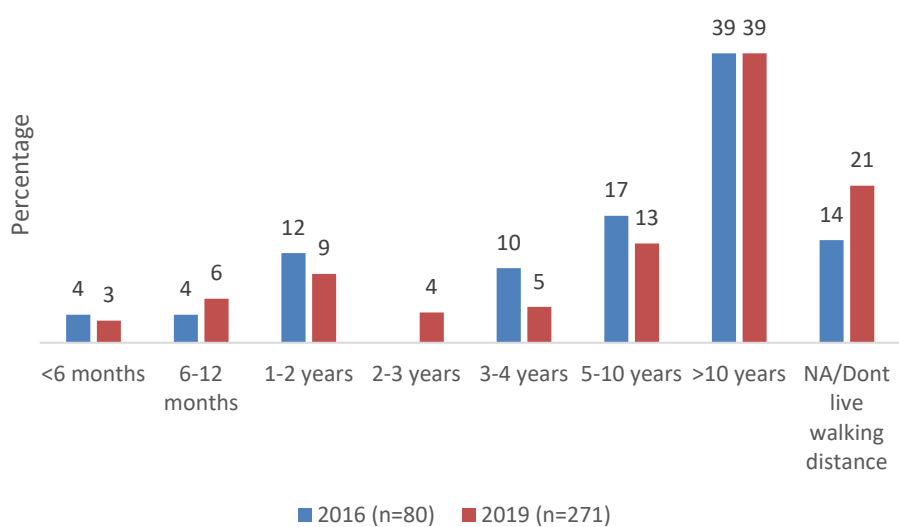
Respondents were asked to select their ethnic identity with the option to choose more than one (Figure 11). A significant majority in both samples identified as NZ European / Pākehā. In 2016, four per cent of respondents chose more than one ethnicity, in 2019 eight per cent of respondents chose more than one ethnicity. Two respondents did not provide their ethnicity in 2016, while in 2019 four respondents did not provide their ethnicity.

Figure 11: Ethnicity of respondents (%)



Respondents were asked how long they had lived in the local area. As Figure 12 shows, over a third had lived in the area for 10 years or longer.

Figure 12: Length of time respondents have lived in the area



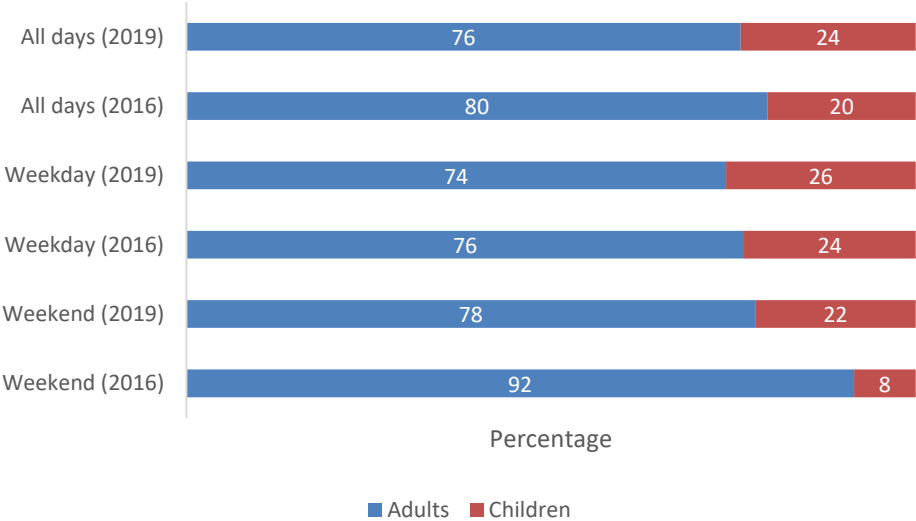
3.0 Observation counts

Counts were undertaken of the number of park users, with further information collected about the numbers of adults and children, activity types, and what part of the park they were in. Data was entered through a tally as opposed to a clicker counter (refer to Appendix A for the template used).

Observation counts in 2016 and 2019 tracked the number of people using Walmsley Park (Figure 13). In the 2016 observation count, 330 individuals were counted over 39 hours across nine days. The majority of individuals were adults (80%) across all days. On weekdays, the number of children increased (24%), while on weekends the number of adults increased (92%). However, following the upgrades, the 2019 count showed marked differences.

In 2019, 1585 observations were made over 54 hours across 16 days. This is an increase of over 250 per cent from 2016. Also notable is the change in age demographics among those observed. Across all days, 24 per cent of users were children, up four per cent. While weekdays were found to have a smaller increase in children (2%), weekends show a 14 per cent increase in the number of children in Walmsley Park.

Figure 13: 2016 and 2019 Observation count

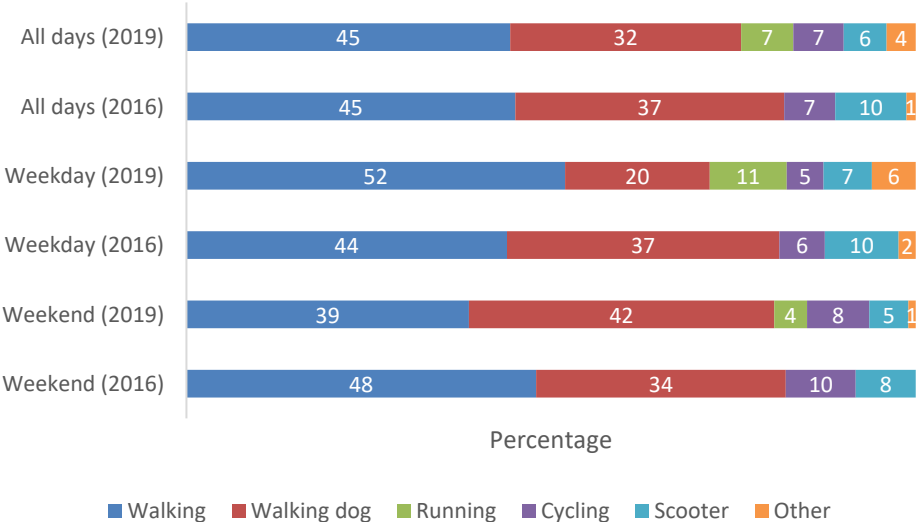


3.1 Activity counts

Activity counts undertaken in 2016 and 2019 showed changes in the way Walmsley Park is being used (Figure 14). In 2016 the main activities undertaken in the park were walking, dog walking, running and cycling. The most popular activity, on all days, was

walking. In 2019, activity types in the Walmsley Park were beginning to shift, suggesting changes to how visitors are using the park. Walking appears to have become a more significant activity on weekdays (up 8%), while on the weekends, cycling appears to have increased (up 8%). A further change is the increase in scooters; no scooters were observed in 2016 but by 2019, seven per cent of activities involved scooters. This may be due to the emergence of e-scooter services or the use of scooters by children. Notable also is a decrease in dog walking as a percentage of all activities, down four per cent from 2016.

Figure 14: 2019 Activity count



4.0 Intercept survey results

Walmsley Park users were asked to participate in a survey about their reasons for visiting, their perceptions of the changes, along with short answer feedback. This section reports on the results to these questions.

4.1 Visiting Walmsley Park

Respondents were asked to record all their reasons for visiting Walmsley Park that day (Table 1). As this question allowed for multiple responses there is overlap in the results and percentages add to more than 100. In 2016, 34 respondents chose multiple reasons for visiting, compared to 94 in 2019. All respondents in 2016 and 2019 answered this question.

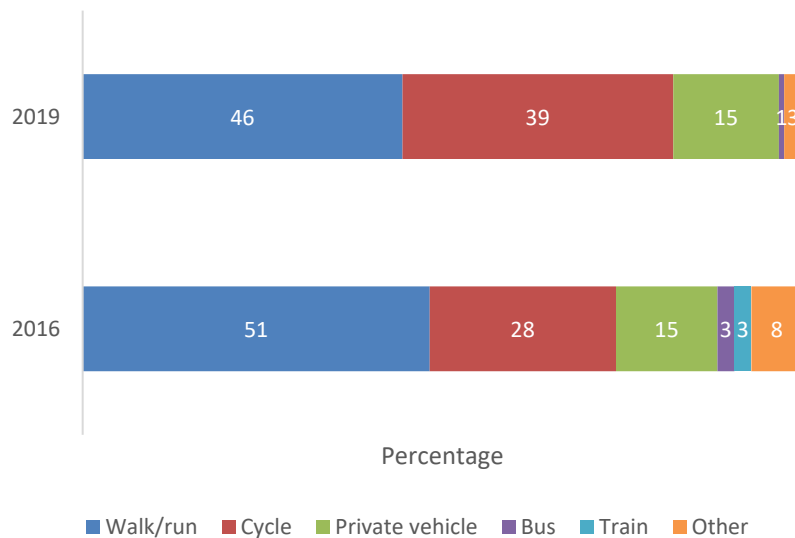
Table 1: Reasons for visiting Walmsley Park (%)

	2016 (n=80)	2019 (n=271)
Cycling	33	38
Walking	34	32
Exercise	26	27
Passing through / commuting	26	20
Walking the dog	20	11
Spending time in nature	18	11
Peace and quiet	16	6
To be near the creek / stream	10	6
Entertaining / supervising of children	8	4
Picnic/BBQ	3	2
Other	9	3

Reasons for visiting Walmsley Park were similar before and after park upgrades. Cycling (33% in 2016, 38% in 2019) and walking (34% in 2016 and 32% in 2019) were the most common reasons for visiting.

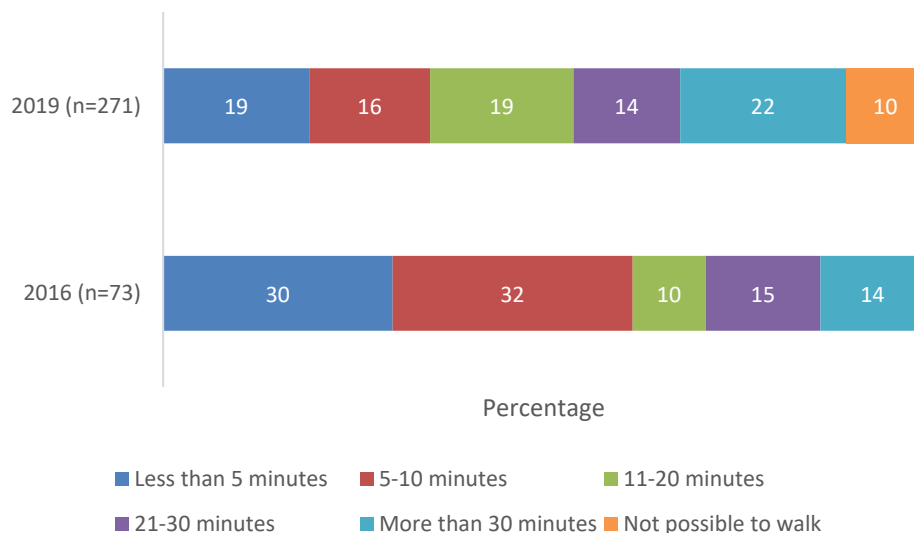
Respondents were also asked how they travelled to Walmsley Park (Figure 15). In both 2016 and 2019, the largest number of respondents stated that they had walked or run (51% and 46% respectively). Cycling was also a popular mode in both 2016 (33%) and 2019 (38%). Relatively small numbers stated they had taken a private vehicle or public transport.

Figure 15: Travel mode to park



Changes were observed from 2016 to 2019 in the time it would take Walmsley Park users to walk to the park (Figure 16). This question was asked of all respondents to understand how far they lived from the park. In 2016, 62 per cent of respondents to the survey lived less than 10 minutes walking distance, with this proportion smaller in 2019 (35%). In 2019, the increase in people travelling more than 30 minutes (8%) and for those whom it was not possible to walk (10% – no responses to this were recorded in 2016), suggests Walmsley Park is becoming a destination that people are willing to travel longer distances to visit.

Figure 16: Estimated time to walk from home to Walmsley Park



Both surveys asked respondents how often they visited Walmsley Park (Table 2). Results to these questions found that the percentage of visits everyday decreased from 2016 to 2019 (9%), but there were increases in monthly visits (7%) and in first visits

(5%). This could be because, if people are travelling further to get to Walmsley Park, they are making the trip less frequently.

Table 2: Frequency of visits to Walmsley Park (%)

	2016 (n=80)	2019 (n=271)
Every day	21	10
Several times a week	29	31
About once a week	15	16
About once a fortnight	13	13
About once a month	4	11
About 2 to 6 times a year	10	8
About once a year	3	1
First visit	6	11
Not sure / too irregular	0	1
Total	100	100

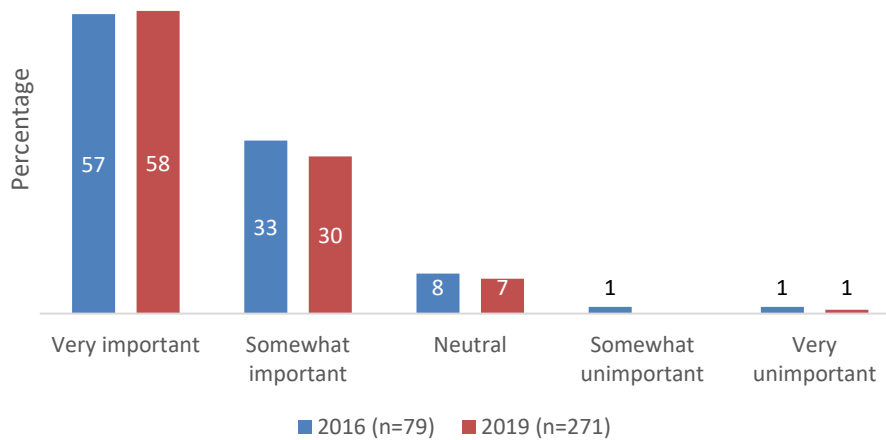
In summary, the results from the intercept survey questions about users’ reasons for visiting Walmsley Park indicates some changes. Cycling appears to be emerging as a more popular reason for visiting Walmsley Park, while more users appear to be willing to come from further away to visit that before the upgrades.

4.2 Perceptions of Walmsley Park

In both 2016 and 2019, respondents were asked a series of questions on their perceptions of Walmsley Park. They were asked to rate aspects of the park using five-point Likert scales. Where deemed appropriate, the five point scales have been converted to three point scales in order to aid readability. The 2016 and 2019 intercept surveys also asked participants some short open ended questions. The responses have been woven through the analysis to support interpretation of the results.

The majority of survey respondents rated the park as being important to them (Figure 17). In 2016, further questions were asked of the importance of individual aspects of the park (Appendix C). These questions were not asked in 2019 to reduce the time it took the respondent to complete the survey.

Figure 17: Importance of Walmsley Park (%)



Responses to this question show that the overall importance of the park remains high amongst all users.

In 2016, one short answer question was asked: “If there was ONE change you could make to this park, what would it be?” Of all responses to this question (n=70), the largest number of responses to this question tended to suggest infrastructural changes or upgrades. The largest group requested a playground (n=14):

Play ground for my mokoz (Grandchildren).

Include play area for kids, sitting areas, tables.

To have it upgraded, with more play area for kids, user friendly for families.

Other popular infrastructure requests included seating (n=7) and lighting (n=8).

A second significant theme to these responses pertained to the stream (n =17). Many of these comments focussed on the health and cleanliness of the stream.

Increase the health of the stream.

I would like the creek to be cleaner.

The stream should be upgraded. Water is very dirty.

Other comments on the stream included safety issues, particularly for children:

The stream is also not safe area for children.

Safety / cleanliness of creek.

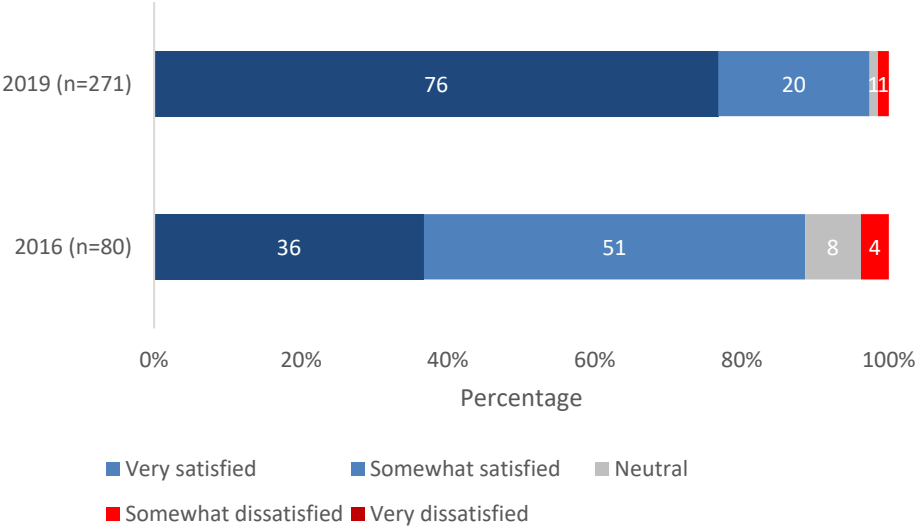
The stream is very dirty and unsafe for the children.

The minor themes that emerged from responses to this question included more planting (n=9), and comments about dogs (n=9). The comments about dogs were

polarised across those who wanted to see the park remain dog-friendly, to those who felt dogs in the park needed to be controlled.

Results show an increase in levels of satisfaction (Figure 18) and pride (Figure 19) following the completion of the upgrades.

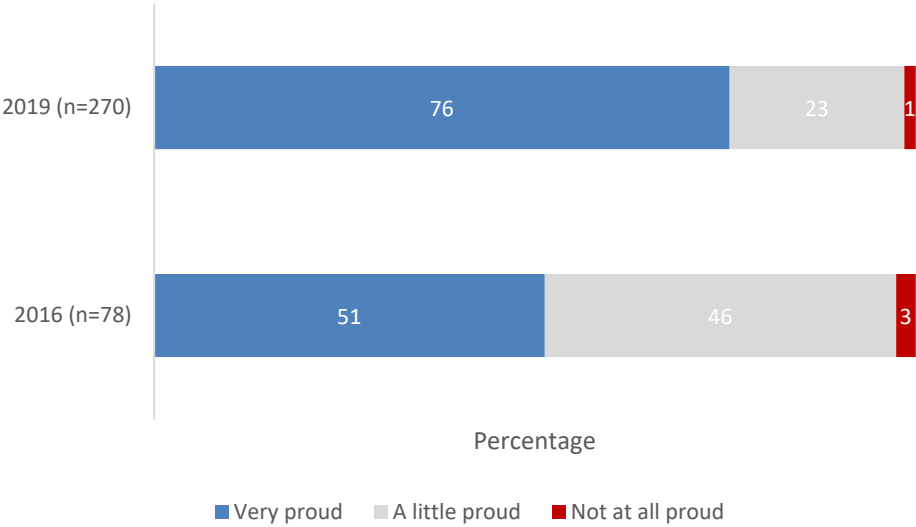
Figure 18: Satisfaction with Walmsley Park (%)



Overall satisfaction with Walmsley Park increased from 88 per cent to 96 per cent, while dissatisfaction decreased from five per cent to one per cent. This suggests that the upgrades to Walmsley Park have increased levels of satisfaction commensurate to its longstanding importance and needs of the users.

Similarly, the survey found an increase in levels of pride from 2016 to 2019 – from 51 per cent in 2016 to 76 per cent in 2019.

Figure 19: Pride in Walmsley Park (%)



One of the 2019 short answer questions asked respondents to give three words that describe Walmsley Park. Interpretation of results is complex as the meaning of individual words is unclear. However, a word cloud generated from the weighted percentage of word frequency within the responses, gives a good indication of the positive reactions of survey participants to the upgrades (Figure 20).

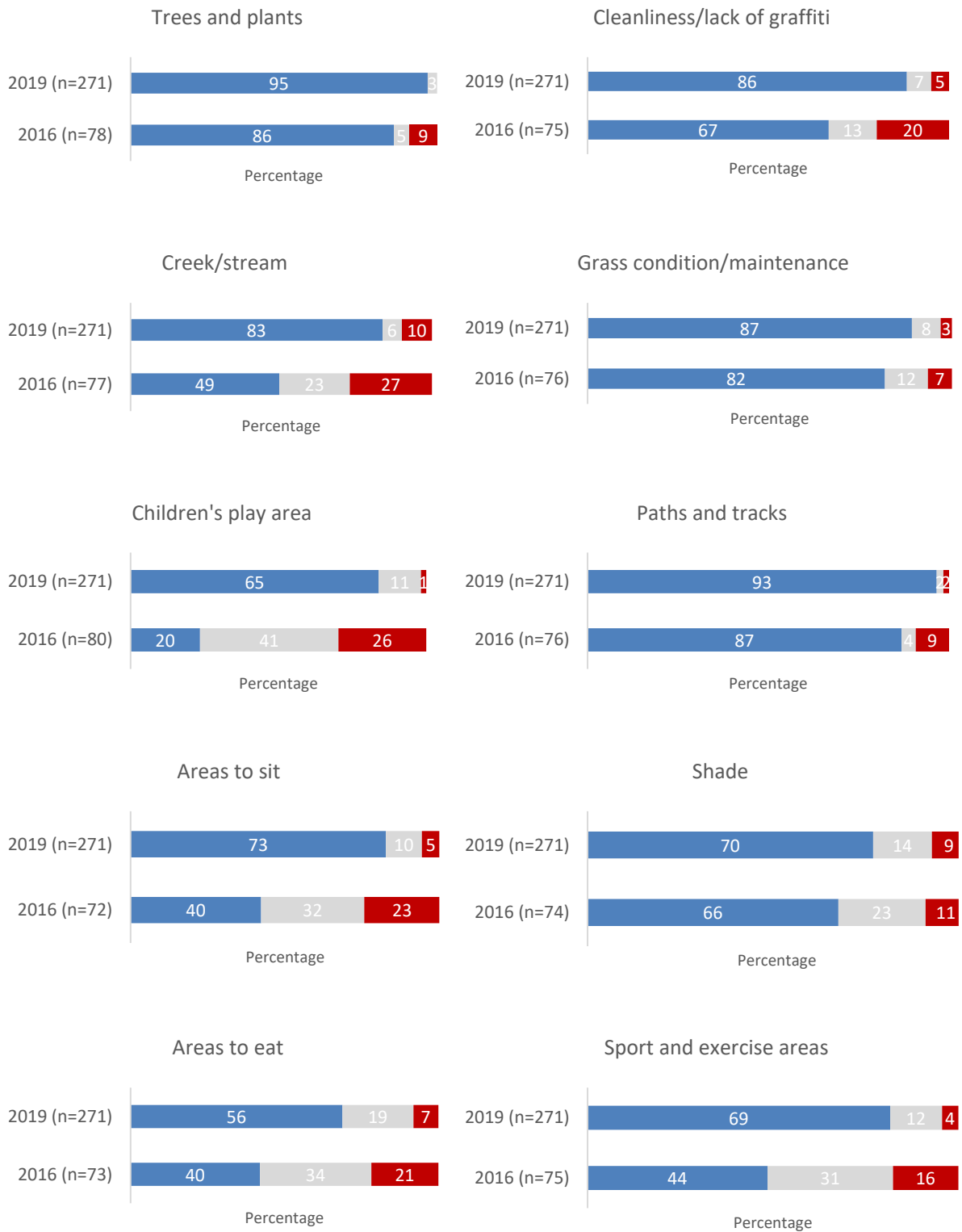
Figure 20: Word cloud

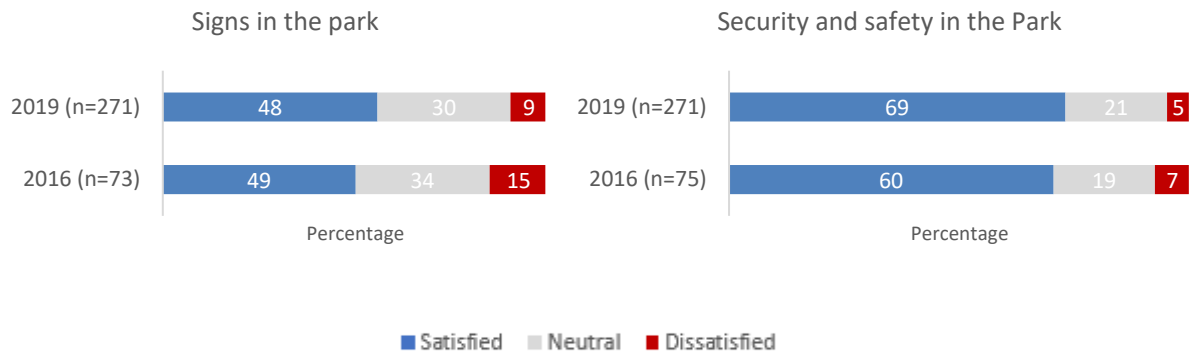


The larger words in the centre of the word cloud, especially ‘great’ and ‘better’ were the most common responses. Adjectives such as ‘beautiful’ and ‘peaceful’ stand out, as do features of the landscaping (‘plants’, ‘paths’, ‘nature’) and different activities (‘walking’, ‘cycling’). Nouns, such as ‘improvements’, ‘access’, ‘green’, and ‘friends’ are also notable. These words help to build a picture of the ways that respondents considered the upgrades to be beneficial and positive.

These findings are supported by responses to questions about satisfaction with park facilities. In both 2016 and 2019 respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with 12 facilities within Walmsley Park (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Satisfaction with facilities (%)

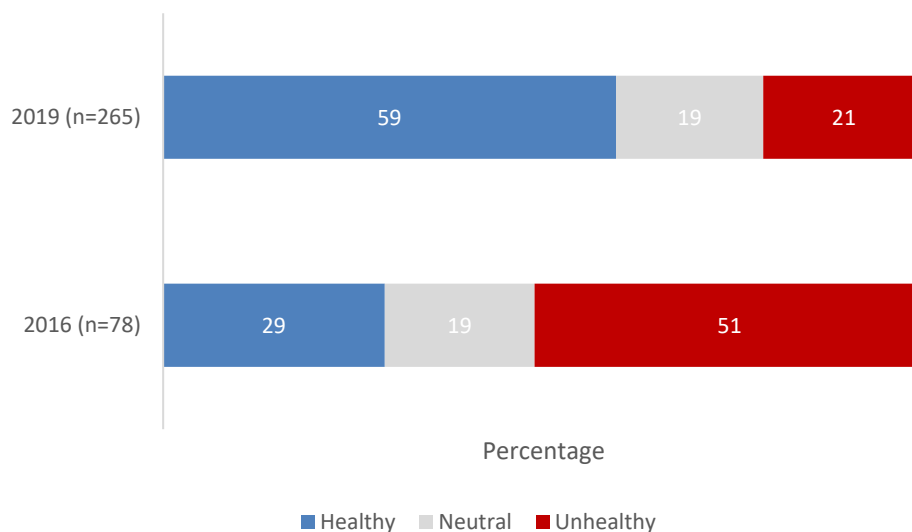




It was found that satisfaction increased across all these facilities with large increases in ‘Children’s play areas’ (45%) and ‘Areas to sit’ (33%) and Creek/stream (33%)

Perceptions of the health of the Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) were specifically sought in the survey. As documented in Section 2.1, engagement with mana whenua generated several modifications to the design of the stream upgrade that would contribute to higher water quality. Respondents were asked how healthy they thought the creek/stream was (Figure 22).

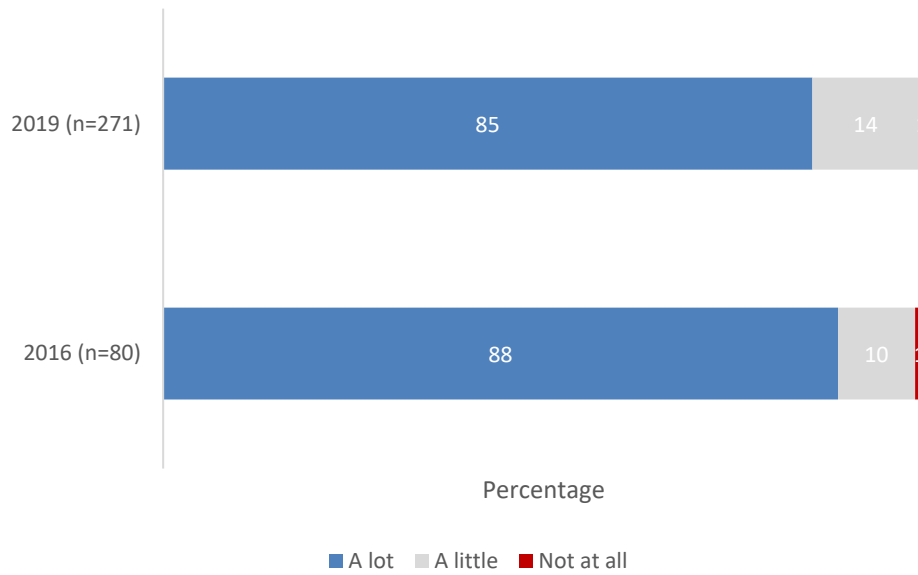
Figure 22: Perception of creek/stream health (%)



Perceptions that the creek/stream was healthy increased by over 30 per cent from 2016 to 2019. The survey did not identify the factors that informed respondents perceptions of stream health, however the short answer responses discussed below give some indication, as does the following question about how much respondents care for the health of creek/stream.

In both 2016 and 2019, over 85 per cent of respondents stated they care about the creek/stream “a lot” (Figure 23).

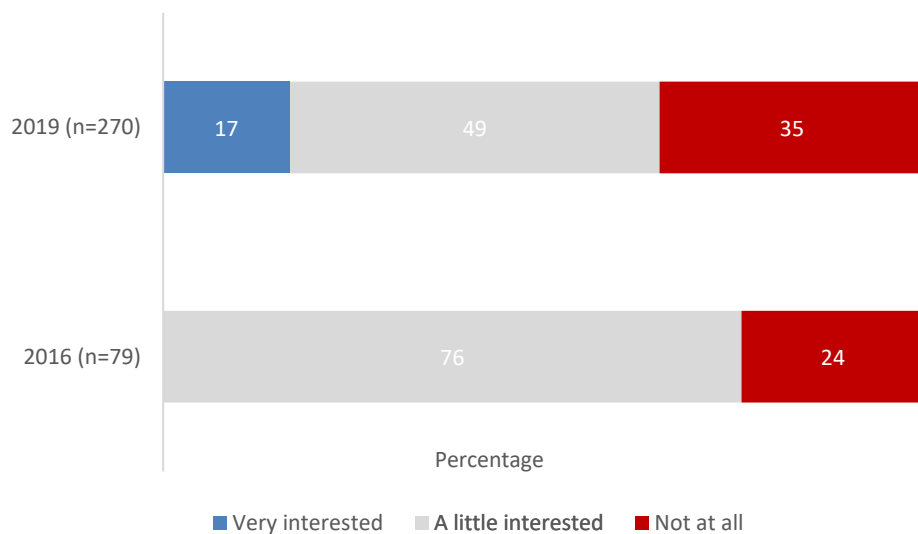
Figure 23: Care for health of creek/stream (%)



It may be that informing respondents responses to the health of the creek/stream are very high levels of care.

To test these perceptions about care, respondents were also asked about volunteering (Figure 24). The assumption was that if care was found to increase, then there would likely be an interest in volunteering. This assumption proved to be true, with a significant increase in interest from respondents to volunteer to improve the health of the creek/stream.

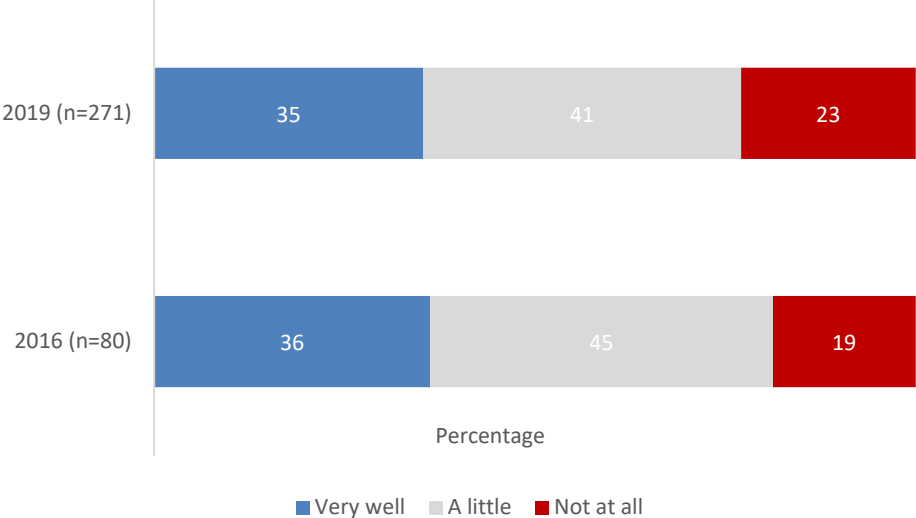
Figure 24: Interest in volunteering to improve the health of the creek/stream (%)



In 2016, no respondents stated they would be 'Very interested' to volunteer whereas, in 2019, 17 per cent of respondents stated they would be 'Very interested'.

The intercept survey also asked participants how well they knew their neighbours, with the view to understanding if changes to Walmsley Park influenced these relationships (Figure 25).

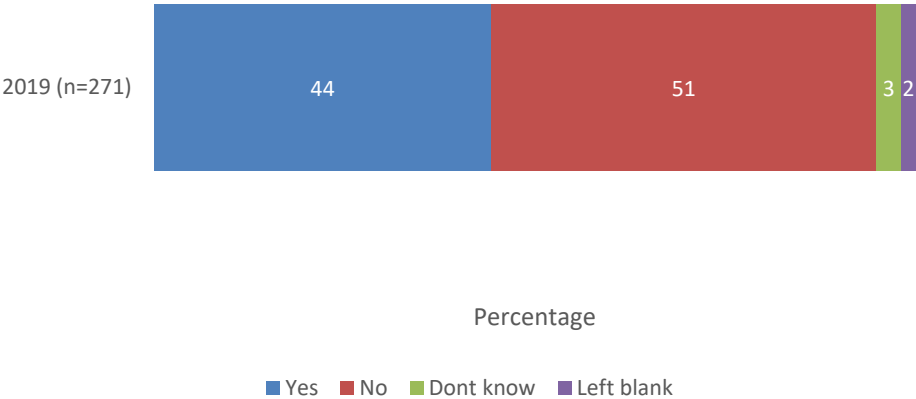
Figure 25: How well neighbours are known (%)



It does not appear that upgrades to the park have influenced relationships between neighbours as there has been little significant percentage change between 2016 and 2019. More research is needed to understand the influence of Walmsley Park on relationships between neighbours.

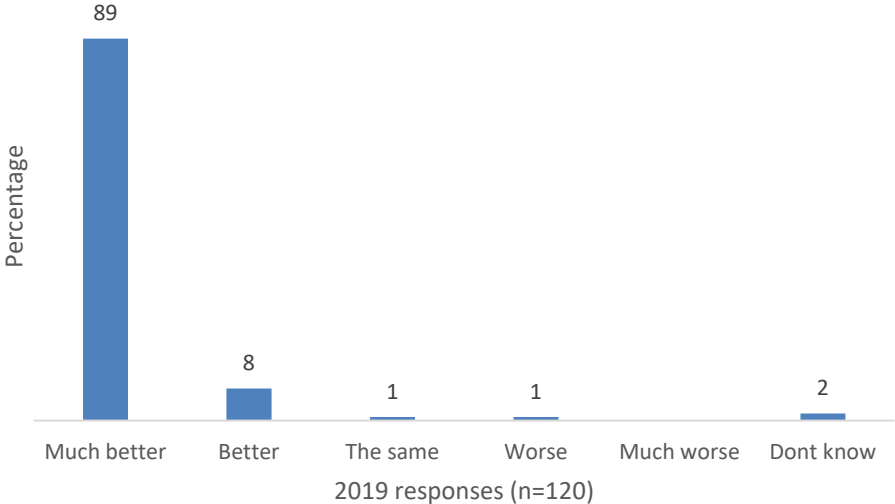
A series of questions pertaining to perceptions of park modifications were asked in the 2019 intercept survey. These questions were asked of respondents who had used Walmsley Park before the upgrades began in December 2016 (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Respondents who used the park before the changes (%)



Less than half (44%) of respondents had used the park before the changes began in 2016. Of this number, the majority considered that Walmsley Park was now 'much better' or 'better' (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Perception of improvements 2016 to 2019 (%)



Survey respondents were also asked short answer questions about why they think Walmsley Park is better or worse. Responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive (n=112). The largest number of responses referred to the overall effect of the landscape design whereby the perception of an enhanced natural environment respondents to invoke affective terms to describe their feelings (n =36):

Looks fabulous, a space to be proud of.

Better layout, well designed and peaceful.

It is very natural, beautiful and easy access.

Many respondents made general reference to the improvements by invoking how the park had changed (n=30):

Beautification.

More useable, friendly.

Not neglected.

Upgrades across the board.

Other popular feedback themes included the paths (n=27) and flora and fauna (n=26). Responses that mentioned the paths included:

All the paths.

Nicer for walking & cycling, more community feel, more people using it.

Paths, planting, links with other paths.

Responses that mentioned flora and fauna included:

More natural and better habitat for the animals.

Planting, stream and birdlife are better.

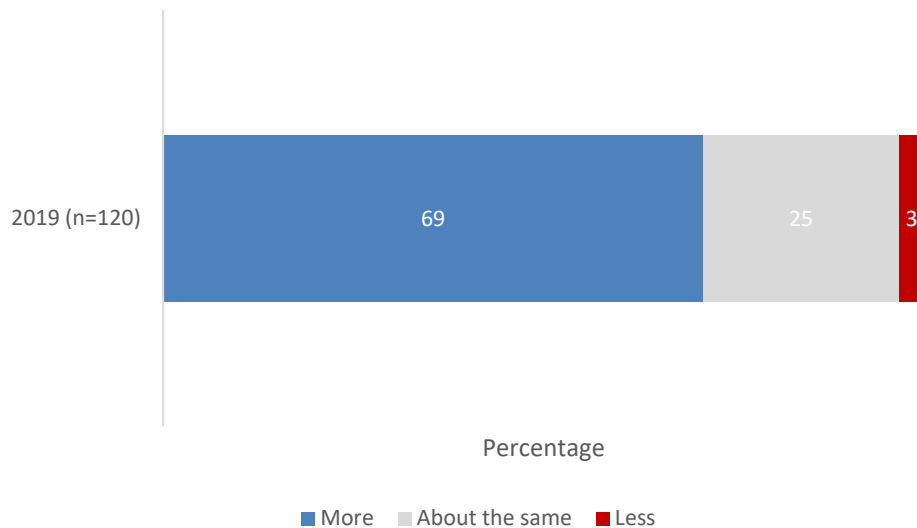
Native planting, landscaped, green space in a low-income area.

Much more natural and encourages wildlife.

Other themes included improvements to the stream (n=18), infrastructure such as seating and toilets (n=16), and accessibility/connectivity (n=13).

These positive perceptions are reflected in the increasing use of the park by this group of previous users (Figure 28); nearly 70 per cent stated they were using the park more.

Figure 28: Perceptions of use 2016 to 2019 (%)



Short answer responses were available for respondents to state why they now use Walmsley Park more or less (n=101). Very few respondents stated they used the park less or the same as prior to the upgrades (n=4).

The most common theme within the positive responses was that Walmsley Park was more enjoyable (n=37).

Park became better, nicer to walk through.

It is a far more pleasant atmosphere.

More inviting, more pleasant to be in.

A further reason why respondents stated they used the park more was due to undertaking some sort of exercise or activity (n=24):

Cycling, walking dog.

Nice place to be, run and bike.

More walking.

A third significant reason for the increase in use was that Walmsley Park was now connected to a wider network of paths and parks (n=21):

Because now they can use the cycleway to Western Spring, and use of playgrounds.

it's a pleasure to walk through and links up walkways.

Biking more as a family, using it as access route to the motorway.

Other significant themes included that Walmsley Park was now more family-friendly (n=11) and due to the facilities and infrastructure (n=10).

The final question from the 2019 impact survey asked respondents if they had 'Any other comments?' A large number of respondents used this question to suggest improvements (n=33).

Need drinking fountains, rubbish bins, some people don't pick up dog poos need poo bins.

One thing we'd like to see is a plaque and water tap outside Arthur Lydiard's old house. 5 Wainwright Ave. It needs to be marked before it gets bulldozed!

Easy to access, safe to walk, needs a water fountain - for people & dogs.

A similar number of respondents used this question to compliment the upgrades to Walmsley Park (n=29).

This space has become inviting & feels invigorated by the planting. Makes me enjoy my neighbourhood and I'm excited about watching it develop & grow into its new space.

The designs of the seats, tables, fale, toilets, the bridges, the rocks in the stream and playground all thoughtfully done.

I live in Mt Eden and cycle through here often. This is a great park for all. A place to be proud of and great for the community.

A lot safer for children & families. Nicer to look at. I live local, was raised in this area. Security lights for night time walkers are much needed, as well as drinking fountains for us humans and our 4-legged friends, our babies. Thank you!!

5.0 Conclusion

The success and support for the upgrades to Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) were the fruits of collaboration between Auckland Council, mana whenua, the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and the relevant local boards (notably the Puketāpapa Local Board). The observation counts and intercept surveys conducted by RIMU have found high levels of use and strong public backing for the naturalisation of the stream through the extensive planting and landscaping, and the inclusion of community facilities, toilets, and widened paths.

Earlier work by RIMU identified the collaborative approach with mana whenua, CAG, and local boards contributed to broadening the scope of the project to be more environmental, community-focused, and inclusive of different activities and cultural backgrounds (Allpress 2016a; Field et al. 2017). That engagement resulted in the inclusion of extensive native planting, stormwater management, a community fale, outdoor classroom and wide paths. The findings from this user survey show that the environmental features such as the planting and increased water quality has had a positive impact on the user experience. So much so that user numbers have dramatically increased and many now appear to be travelling further from home to use the park. These results indicate the effort associated with the engagement of different community groups contributed significantly to the subsequent user experience and residents' pride in the area.

6.0 References

Allpress, J. (2016a). *Te Auaunga Awa (Oakley Creek) social evaluation: report 1 – engagement*. RIMU, Auckland Council technical report, TR2016/041.

Allpress, J. (2016b). *Lessons for successful mana whenua engagement. Tips for people who don't know where to start*. RIMU, Auckland Council.

Field, A., R. Butler and Dovetail (2017). *Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek) social evaluation – social procurement case studies*. RIMU, Auckland Council.

Smedley, R., C. Stumbles and N. Nitchie (2013). A large integrated stormwater solution for Oakley flooding – Auckland. Water New Zealand Stormwater Conference 2013, Water New Zealand.

Appendix A Park user count template

Date											
Location											
Weather											
Notes											
Time		8:00-9:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:00	13:00-14:00	14:00-15:00	15:00-16:00	16:00-17:00	17:00-18:00
Age	Adult										
	Child										
Activity	Walking										
	Walking dog										
	Running										
	Cycling										
	Other exercise										
	Picnic										
	Playing										
	Scooter										
	Push chair										
	Skateboard										
Where	Path										
	Park										
	Stream										
Total people											

Appendix B 2016 Intercept Survey

Question 1: Why have you visited the park today?

1. Passing through/commuting
2. Walking
3. Walking the dog
4. Cycling
5. Exercise
6. Peace and quiet
7. Spending time in nature
8. To be near the creek/stream
9. Entertaining/supervising of children
10. Picnic/BBQ
11. Other

Question 2: How did you get to the park today?

1. Private vehicle
2. Walk/run
3. Cycle
4. Bus
5. Train
6. Other

Question 3: How long would it take you to walk to the park from your house?

1. Less than 5 minutes
2. 5-10 minutes
3. 11-20 minutes
4. 21-30 minutes
5. More than 30 minutes
6. Not possible to walk

Question 4: How often do you visit Walmsley Park?

1. Every day
2. Several times a week
3. About once a week
4. About once a fortnight
5. About once a month
6. About 2-6 times a year
7. About once a year
8. First visit
9. Not sure/too irregular

Question 5: Overall, how important is Walmsley Park to you?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat unimportant
5. Very unimportant
6. Not applicable

Question 5.1: How important to you are the following facilities in this park?

- a. Trees / plants
- b. The creek / stream
- c. Children's play areas
- d. Areas to sit
- e. Areas to eat
- f. Signs in the parks
- g. Cleanliness / lack of litter / lack of graffiti
- h. Grass condition / maintenance
- i. Paths and tracks
- j. Shade
- k. Sports / exercise areas
- l. Security / safety while in the park

Question 6: How satisfied are you with the condition and quality of the following facilities in Walmsley Park?

- a. Trees/plants
- b. Creek/stream
- c. Children's play areas
- d. Areas to sit
- e. Areas to eat
- f. Signs in the parks
- g. Cleanliness (lack of litter and graffiti)
- h. Grass condition/maintenance
- i. Path and tracks
- j. Shade
- k. Sports and exercise areas
- l. Security and safety while in the park

Question 7: Overall, how satisfied are you with Walmsley Park?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Not applicable

Question 8: How proud are you of Walmsley Park?

1. Very proud
 2. A little proud
 3. Not at all proud
99. Left blank

Question 9: How healthy do you think the creek/stream is?

1. Very healthy
2. Somewhat healthy
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat unhealthy
5. Very unhealthy
6. Not applicable

Question 10: How much do you care about the health of the creek/stream?

1. A lot
2. A little
3. Not at all

Question 11: How interested would you be in volunteering to improve the health of the creek/stream?

1. Very interested
 2. A little interested
 3. Not at all interested
99. Left blank

Question 12: Now thinking about your neighbours, how well do you know them?

1. Very well
 2. A little
 3. Not at all
99. Left blank

Question 13: If there was ONE change you could make to this park, what would it be?

Specify

Question 14: Which of the following best describes your age group?

1. 15-24

2. 24-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55-64
6. 65-74
7. 75 yrs or over
8. Left blank

Question 15: What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Gender diverse

Question 16: Which ethnic group(s) do you identify with?

1. NZ European/Pākehā
2. Māori
3. Samoan
4. Cook Island Māori
5. Tongan
6. Niuean
7. Chinese
8. Indian
9. Korean
10. Other

Question 17: How long have you lived in this area?

1. 6 months
2. 6-12 months
3. 1-2 years
4. 2-3 years
5. 3-4 years
6. 5-10 years
7. >10 years
8. NA/Don't live walking distance

Appendix C 2019 Intercept Survey

Question 1: Why have you visited the park today?

1. Passing through/commuting
2. Walking
3. Walking the dog
4. Cycling
5. Exercise
6. Peace and quiet
7. Spending time in nature
8. To be near the creek/stream
9. Entertaining/supervising of children
10. Picnic/BBQ
11. Other

Question 2: How did you get to the park today?

1. Private vehicle
2. Walk/run
3. Cycle
4. Bus
5. Train
6. Other

Question 3: How long would it take you to walk to the park from your house?

1. Less than 5 minutes
2. 5-10 minutes
3. 11-20 minutes
4. 21-30 minutes
5. More than 30 minutes
6. Not possible to walk

Question 4: How often do you visit Walmsley Park?

1. Every day
2. Several times a week
3. About once a week
4. About once a fortnight
5. About once a month
6. About 2-6 times a year
7. About once a year
8. First visit
9. Not sure/too irregular

Question 5: Overall, how important is Walmsley Park to you?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat unimportant
5. Very unimportant
6. Not applicable

Question 6: How satisfied are you with the condition and quality of the following facilities in Walmsley Park?

- a. Trees/plants
- b. Creek/stream
- c. Children's play areas
- d. Areas to sit
- e. Areas to eat
- f. Signs in the parks
- g. Cleanliness (lack of litter and graffiti)
- h. Grass condition/maintenance
- i. Path and tracks
- j. Shade
- k. Sports and exercise areas
- l. Security and safety while in the park

Question 7: Overall, how satisfied are you with Walmsley Park?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Not applicable

Question 8: How proud are you of Walmsley Park?

1. Very proud
2. A little proud
3. Not at all proud
99. Left blank

Question 9: How healthy do you think the creek/stream is?

1. Very healthy
2. Somewhat healthy
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat unhealthy

5. Very unhealthy
6. Not applicable

Question 10: How much do you care about the health of the creek/stream?

1. A lot
2. A little
3. Not at all

Question 11: How interested would you be in volunteering to improve the health of the creek/stream?

1. Very interested
2. A little interested
3. Not at all interested

99. Left blank

Question 12: Now thinking about your neighbours, how well do you know them?

1. Very well
2. A little
3. Not at all

99. Left blank

Question 13: What three words would you use to describe Walmsley Park?

Specify

Question 14: Had you used the park before the changes had been made (works began in Dec 2016)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

99. Left blank

If 'yes' to Q14, ask Q15-18

Question 15: Compared to what Walmsley Park was like before the changes were made, would you say the park is now ...

1. Much better
2. Better

3. The same
4. Worse
5. Much worse
6. Don't know

Question 16: Why do you think Walmsley Park is better/worse?

Specify

Question 17: Compared with before the changes were made (before 2016), would you say you now use Walmsley Park ...

1. Much more than you did before
2. More
3. About the same
4. Less
5. Much less than you did before
6. Don't know

Question 18: Why do you now use Walmsley Park more/less?

Specify

Question 19: Which of the following best describes your age group?

1. 15-24
2. 24-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55-64
6. 65-74
7. 75 yrs or over
8. Left blank

Question 20: Which ethnic group(s) do you identify with?

1. NZ European/Pākehā
2. Māori
3. Samoan
4. Cook Island Māori
5. Tongan
6. Niuean
7. Chinese
8. Indian
9. Korean
10. Other

Question 21: How long have you lived in this area?

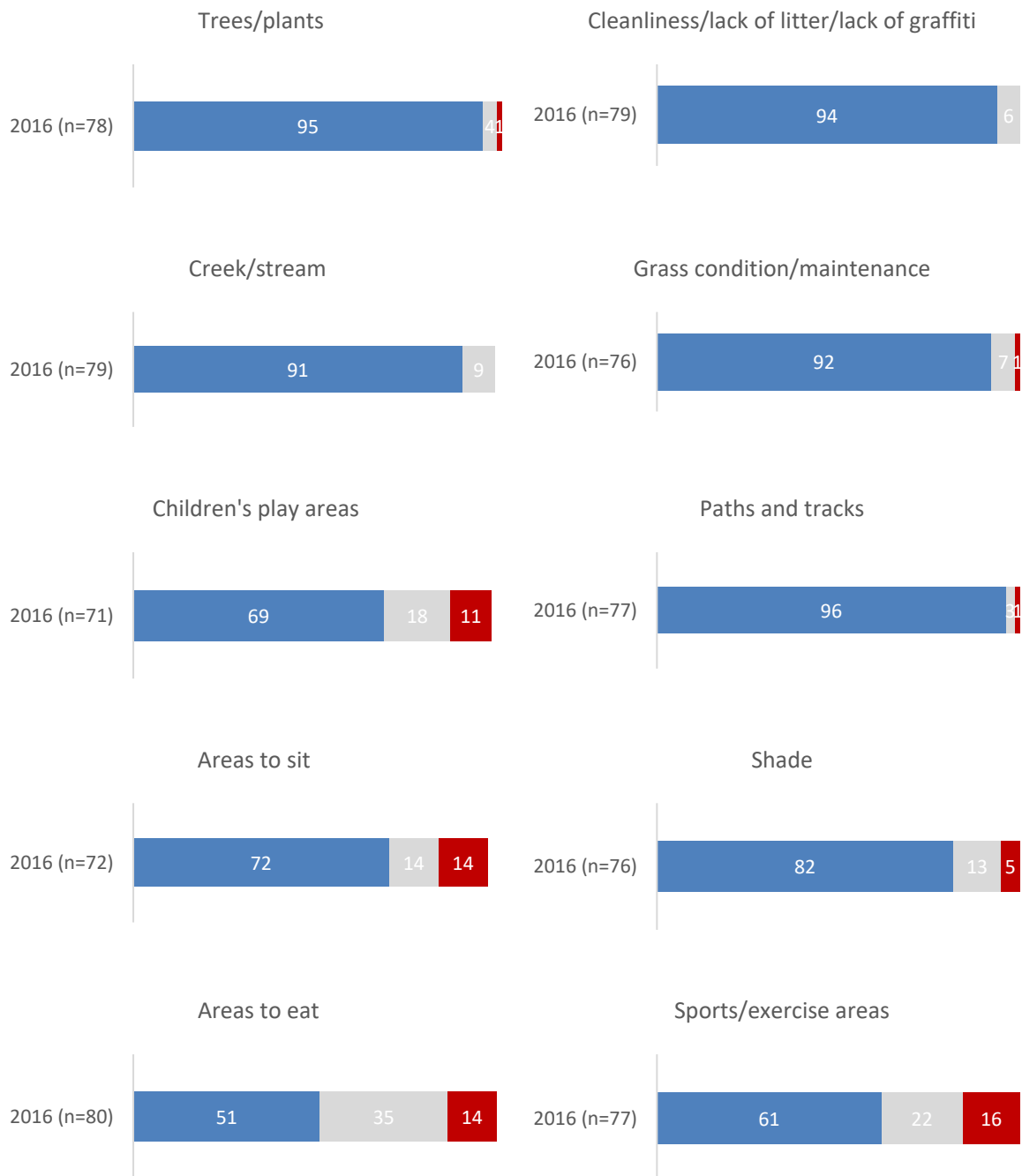
1. 6 months
2. 6-12 months
3. 1-2 years
4. 2-3 years
5. 3-4 years
6. 5-10 years
7. >10 years
8. NA/Don't live walking distance

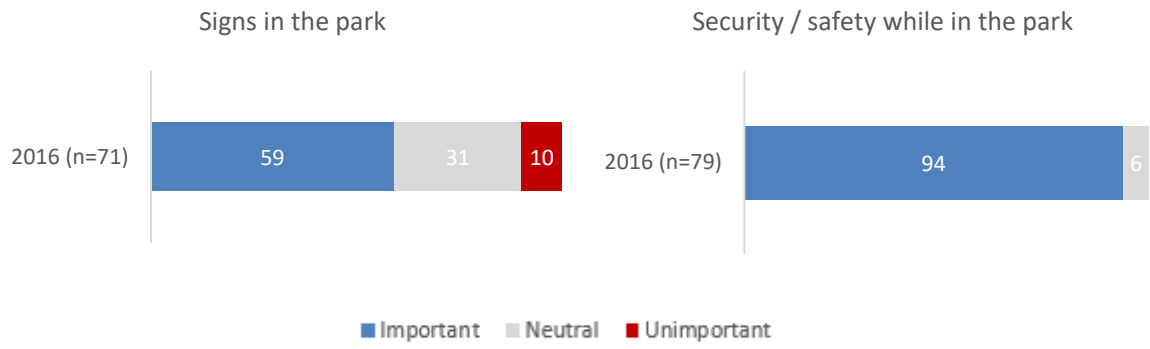
Question 22: Gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Gender diverse

Appendix D Responses to questions not asked in 2019

Q5.1 How important to you are the following facilities in this park?





Find out more: phone 09 301 0101, email rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and knowledgeauckland.org.nz