

3.6 Character Areas

The Masterplan divides Aokautere into six character areas. These residential precincts have distinct qualities based on variations in topography, streetscape, lot sizes and building types:

1. North Village
2. South Village
3. Plateaus
4. Promontories
5. Retirement Village Option
6. Rural Residential Valleys

Except for the Retirement Village Option, character areas do not have hard-and-fast boundaries. Neighbouring areas merge along their margins. Typical features are most recognisable at the centre of each zone.



1 North Village

North Village is the heart of the Aokautere Masterplan. Occupying the largest expanse of flat (or nearly flat) land, the village has small blocks and a regular street pattern. Like other parts of Aokautere, the village is shaped by open spaces. However, these areas are formally laid out parks rather than naturally occurring gullies. The village has the highest concentration of intermediate density housing. It contains local-serving commercial activity with above-ground apartments.



2 South Village

South Village straddles the extension of Pacific Drive. Smaller than North Village, this area lacks the higher density housing and specialised functions of its northern counterpart. Nevertheless, the village has a demonstrably urban character that sets the area apart from surrounding plateaus. Streets form a grid, and a linear park creates a formal landscape connection between the Turitea Valley escarpment and the nearest gully reserve.



3 Plateaus

Plateaus contain narrow fingers of low-density residential land. Seldom more than three lots wide, the curvilinear subdivision pattern is shaped by neighbouring gullies. Each plateau has a single continuous 'north-south' street. These are flanked intermittently by cross streets, cul-de-sacs and other secondary routes. Longitudinal streets are not fully built up. They emerge periodically onto a gully edge, where they provide an interface with Aokautere's extensive open space system.



5 Retirement Village Option

The Retirement Village Option provides an alternative development scenario for the southern half of North Village. Small residential blocks with fully detached, semi-detached and terraced units continue the pattern of intermediate density. North Village's formal open space carries into the complex as a series of landscaped courtyards and linear parks. The retirement village helps to complete the local centre by adding apartments, communal facilities and street-facing retail premises.



4 Promontories

Plateaus end in narrow, north-facing spurs that have views and vegetation on three sides. Instead of allowing development to peter out, the Masterplan brings the rural-urban boundary into sharper focus. The plan creates a positive place at each of these locations. Small lots allow more people to enjoy proximity to nature. Streets become shared surfaces with informal shapes but strongly defined edges. Townhouse clusters frame views of the surrounding landscape.



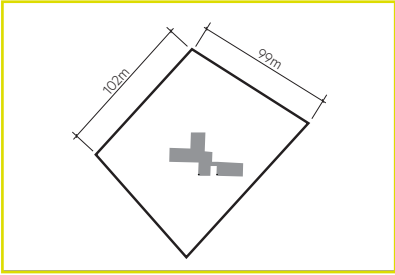
6 Rural Residential Areas

1.5 hectare lifestyle blocks create an inhabited green belt around the more densely settled area. Rather than indicating future subdivision, these areas provide a permanent expression of the rural-urban boundary. Visual character is determined primarily by landscape, which includes everything from regenerating bush to pasture, shelter belts and formal gardens. Buildings are equally diverse. Some are modest and possess a rustic charm. Others resemble country estates.

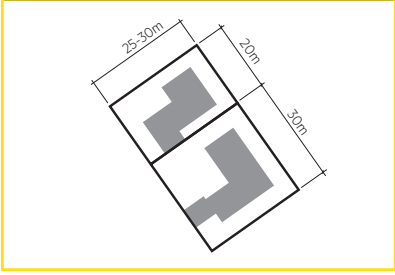
3.7 Lot Type & Plan Density

Subdivision patterns determine much of the character and amenity of residential areas. The size and shape of lots have a strong influence on subsequent building development. This relationship is especially apparent when whole neighbourhoods have consistently laid out property boundaries. The Masterplan uses subdivision patterns to help establish Aokautere's urban structure. The variation in lot types also controls density thereby attracting a more diverse population and a broader range of households.

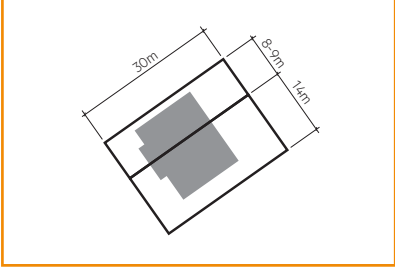
- 1**



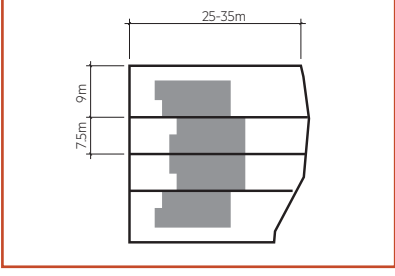
Rural Residential Density
Parcels of 0.5 to 1 hectare or more continue the low-density lifestyle blocks of Valley Views Road. Large houses with ancillary structures form orthogonally planned building clusters in the centres of the lots.
- 2**



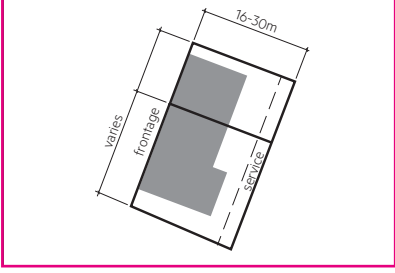
Suburban Low Density
Generally ranging from 500 to 600 to 900m², these conventional suburban lots comprise the majority of Aokautere's residential land. They accommodate one or two-storey detached houses with garages.
- 3**



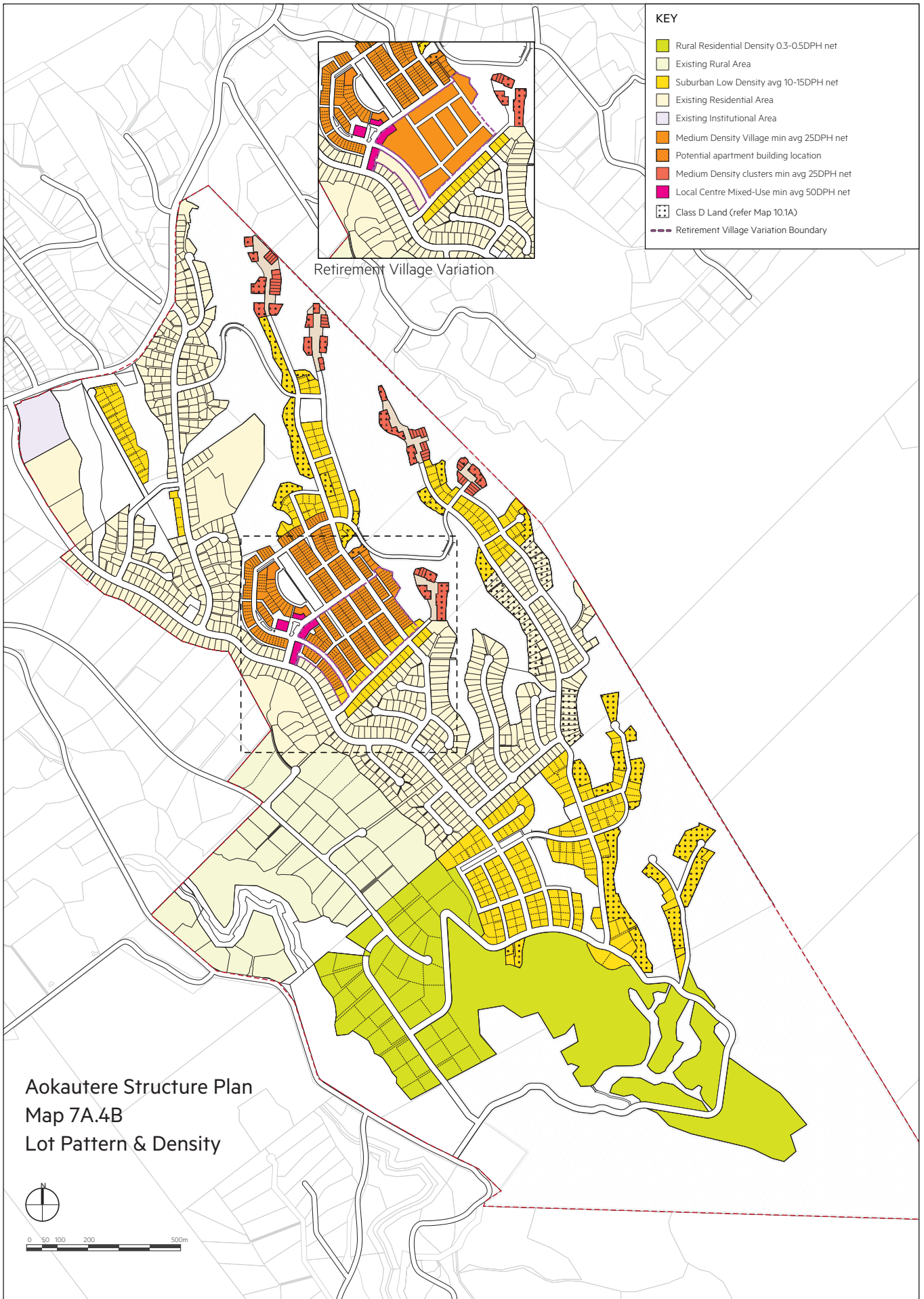
Medium Density Village
Min lot size set at 250sq.m (min). Roughly half the size of conventional suburban sections, these lots cater for semi-detached two and three-storey townhouses. They front reserves in the Village centre.
- 4**



Medium Density Clusters
Min lot size set at 150sq.m (min). They enable clusters of terraced and semi-detached townhouses on the ends of plateaus, where surrounding reserves offer high amenity and supplement private outdoor space.
- 5**



Local Centre Mixed-Use
No minimum lot size. These lots accommodate higher density residential and commercial accommodation. They enable a local centre hub within North Village. Buildings sit at the street edge and form a continuous frontage.

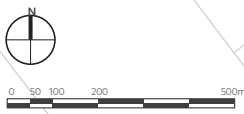


KEY

- Rural Residential Density 0.3-0.5DPH net
- Existing Rural Area
- Suburban Low Density avg 10-15DPH net
- Existing Residential Area
- Existing Institutional Area
- Medium Density Village min avg 25DPH net
- Potential apartment building location
- Medium Density clusters min avg 25DPH net
- Local Centre Mixed-Use min avg 50DPH net
- Class D Land (refer Map 10.1A)
- Retirement Village Variation Boundary

Retirement Village Variation

Aokautere Structure Plan
 Map 7A.4B
 Lot Pattern & Density



3.8 Bringing It All Together

The Aokautere Masterplan identifies open spaces, streets, activity areas and other major determinants of physical character. However, the plan does not prescribe exact outcomes. Detailed site-specific design will occur incrementally over an extended period, as individual land parcels are subdivided and developed. The Masterplan compensates for this uncertainty by depicting sections of Aokautere as they might appear in ten or twenty years. With a mature landscape and fully built-up streets, these simulations are more than just illustrations. They test the effectiveness of the masterplan by showing how streetscapes, lot sizes and building footprints combine to produce a coherent urban fabric with a high level of amenity. Two of these detailed planning studies address typical residential streets on Aokautere's plateaus. A third examines conditions at the promontories, where the plateaus narrow to become fingers of elevated land. The most extensive investigations relate to areas within North Village.



North Village Wetland Park & Green

The geometrical layout of streets and open spaces helps to differentiate North Village from surrounding residential areas. The village's central feature is its wetland reserve. This continues Aokautere's network of gullies and watercourses but formalises the landscape as a linear park with boardwalks and semi-natural vegetation. The crescent-shaped village green is manifestly artificial. Its uniform expanse of grass is suitable for events and active play. The two contrasting spaces are symmetrically arranged. Together, they create a pedestrian-oriented cross axis that leads to the largest of Aokautere's gullies.



North village and its mixed use local centre have the highest residential density and offer a range of housing choices. Options include detached single-family homes, semi or fully attached townhouses and apartments. The different dwelling types are fitted to the street plan. Increased site coverage and building height correspond to locations where amenity is greatest and strong spatial definition is desired. The best sites face the wetland park and flank the village green. These are reserved for two small apartment blocks, which are built close to the street edge and reinforce the urban character of North Village.

As well as providing access, streets shape the open spaces and help to confirm their public status. Rows of townhouses front the wetlands and the village green. However, there is no risk that these spaces become privatised, because intervening rights-of-way clearly separate public and private domains. Small blocks and closely spaced streets have other benefits, especially in areas of medium-density housing where private outdoor space is at a premium. The fine grain gives every dwelling a street presence. It accommodates more street trees and boosts the number of on-street car parks.

Plateau & Gully Edge Streets

A single centrally placed street is an efficient way to access Aokautere's plateaus. Many properties front a street and back onto a gully reserve. The dual aspect is beneficial for property owners. However, it risks privatising the gully, which is less accessible and concealed from public view. To avoid this, the masterplan sometimes brings longitudinal streets out to the edges of the plateaus. Residents still enjoy views over the bush-clad reserves. However, gully edges are demonstrably part of the public domain and provide direct access to recreational trails.



Promontory Clusters

Promontories are framed by regenerating bush, yet they have ready access to Urban Connectors. As low-impact high-amenity locations, they are suited to quality developments that combine the benefits of down-sizing with the semi-rural experience of a lifestyle block. Clustered and laid out on a grid, individual dwellings cohere to create a “hill town” with a semi-public quadrant at its core. With only four-to-six attached townhouses in a row, gaps are frequent and strategically located to maintain visual and physical access to the surrounding reserves.



Ohiro Road Townhouses, Novak+Middleton

Neighbourhood Centre



Aokautere's Neighbourhood Centre contains local-serving retail and a modest range of commercial activities. It provides a walkable destination and a social hub for the expanding community. The centre occupies a gateway position with a foothold on Pacific Drive. Many residents will pass by daily, as they enter or exit the new suburb.

Shoppers park at the street edge or within a triangular central plaza, which is more park than parking lot. This arrangement allows shops to sit forward on their lots and face the public domain. Rear access is reserved for servicing, which is screened from the street and adjacent housing.

Although parked cars are located front and centre, the precinct is a pedestrian-oriented environment. Vehicle speeds are low. Retail premises line the footpaths with active frontages and continuous shelter.

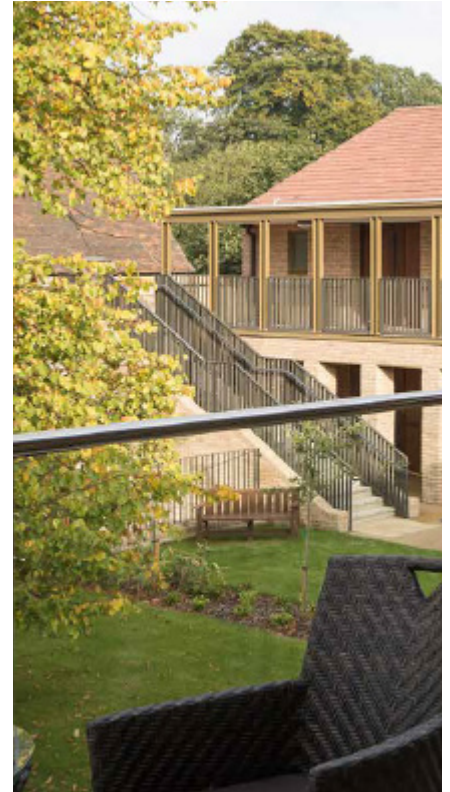
Two and three-storey buildings combine with high-quality streetscape to give the precinct an urban character. The centre is not just a zone for local businesses but a public place of the highest order.

Most shops are small with street frontages measuring 7m or less. These premises create a traditional retail strip, which runs all the way from Pacific Drive to the Wetlands Reserve. The centre is anchored by a stand-alone superette. Corner sites provide opportunities for local landmarks and a more conspicuous commercial presence.

A mix of uses adds vitality and extends activity into evenings and weekends. Ground floors are designed for retail including hospitality. First and second-floor accommodation is occupied by commercial offices or residential apartments. The centre is surrounded by medium-density housing. Residents in these blocks enjoy the amenity of nearby services. They also increase the customer base for local businesses.



Retirement Village Option



In this development scenario, a retirement complex occupies a 6.5Ha (approx.) site on the south side of North Village. The complex has over 200 townhouse-style dwellings and apartments. A resthome and a dementia care facility add a further 90 (approx.) residential units. The comprehensively planned complex is grafted onto North Village's street pattern and open space network. The development option also helps to complete Aokautere's local centre.

With gridded streets and small blocks, the retirement village provides a natural extension to North Village. Although there are no individual house lots, semi and fully attached dwellings establish the same front-and-back relationships found elsewhere in the Medium Density area. The resulting residential fabric resembles the traditional format of street frontages and private rear yards - albeit at a smaller scale.

The retirement complex is bordered by public streets. Perimeter dwellings face out towards these thoroughfares. The Type E Local Street - adjacent to the Wetland Reserve - continues through the complex as viewshaft, gateway and landscaped circulation spine. So, although the retirement village is demonstrably a private enclave, the site allows physical and visual access for members of the wider community - provided they adhere to rules of a low-speed, pedestrian-oriented environment.

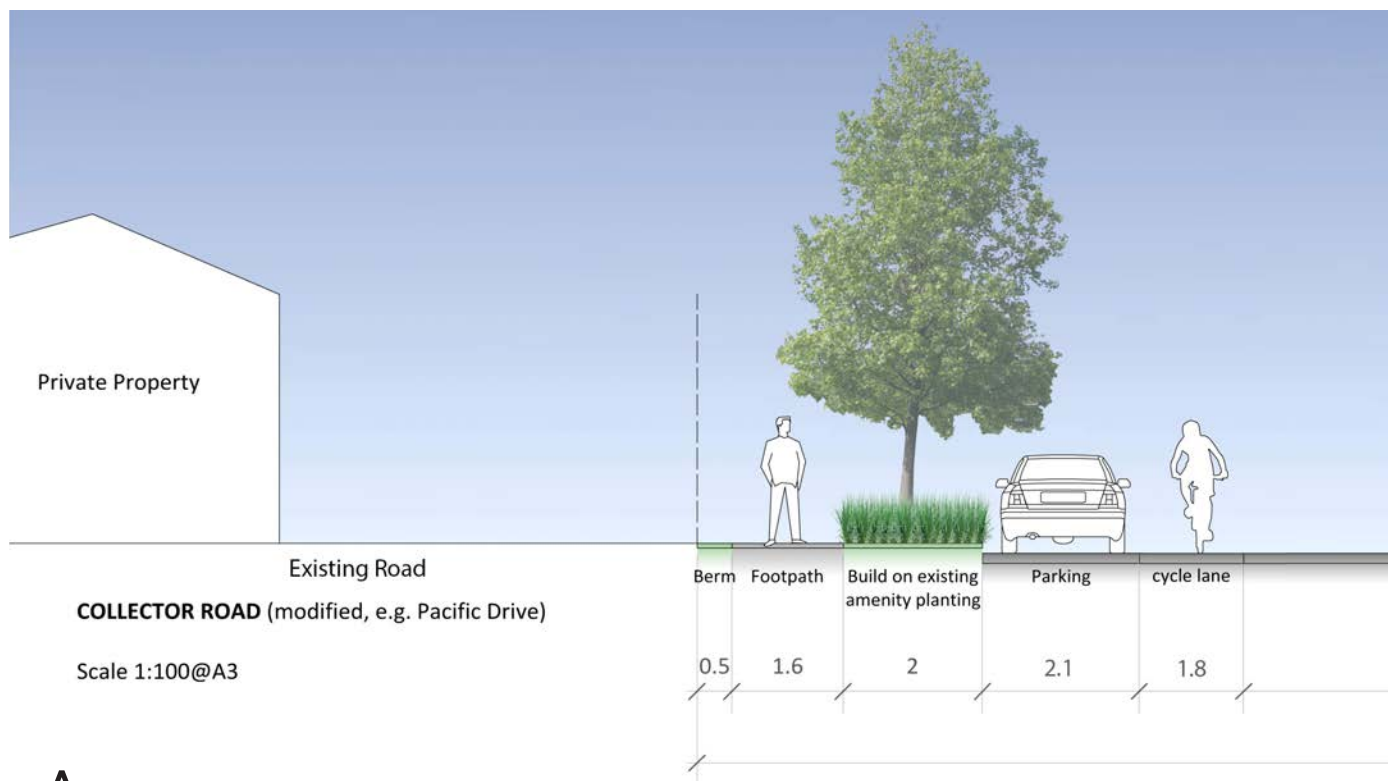
Conversely, the circulation spine directs retirement village residents to the Wetland Reserve and the crescent-shaped village green. Both are just a short walk away. A second, transverse route - also intensively landscaped - connects the heart of the complex to the neighbouring gully reserve. So, residents of the village have highly legible, orthogonal links to Aokautere's major open space assets. The residents' own recreational facilities are located at the junction of these two pathways.

Communal facilities are gathered in the north-west corner of the complex, where they complete the Neighbourhood Centre. At two or three storeys, the LTO apartment block helps to frame the retail area's triangular central plaza. In the base of this building, a cafe and other communal facilities have a street-facing component, which further integrates the complex with the life of North Village.

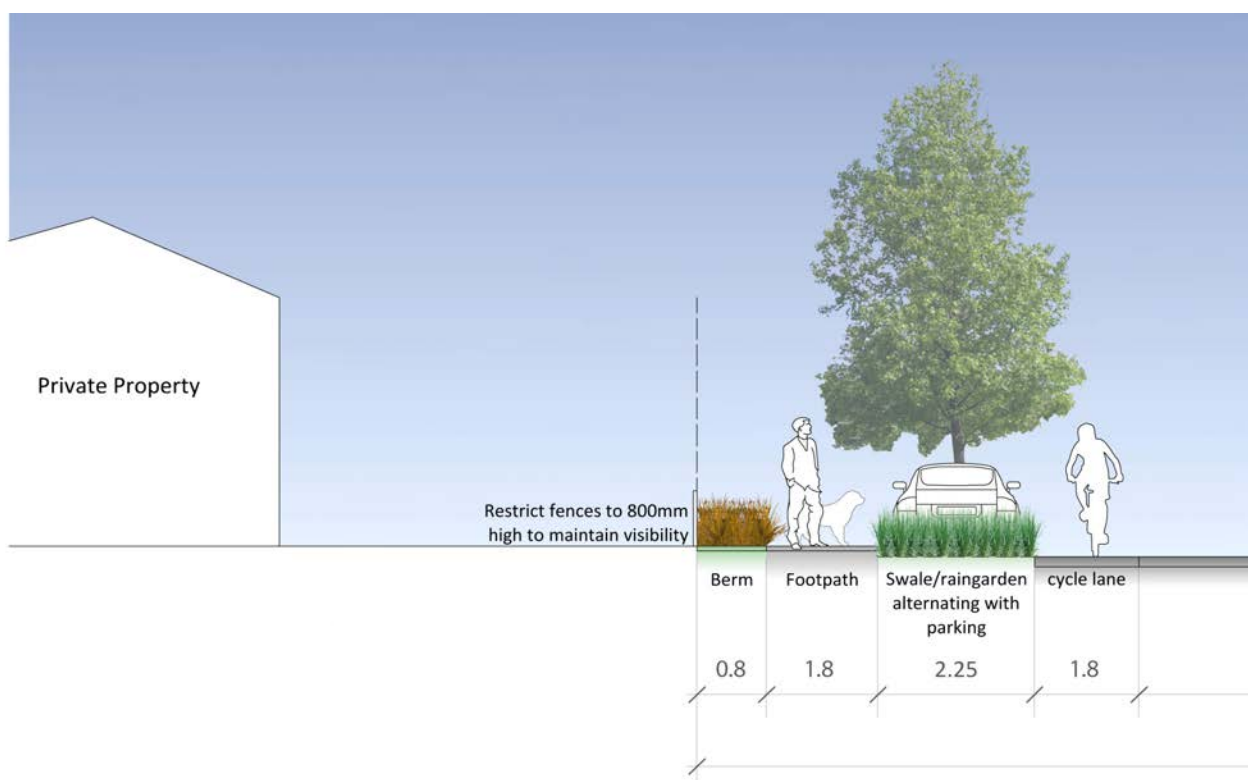


Appendix A

Street Cross Sections

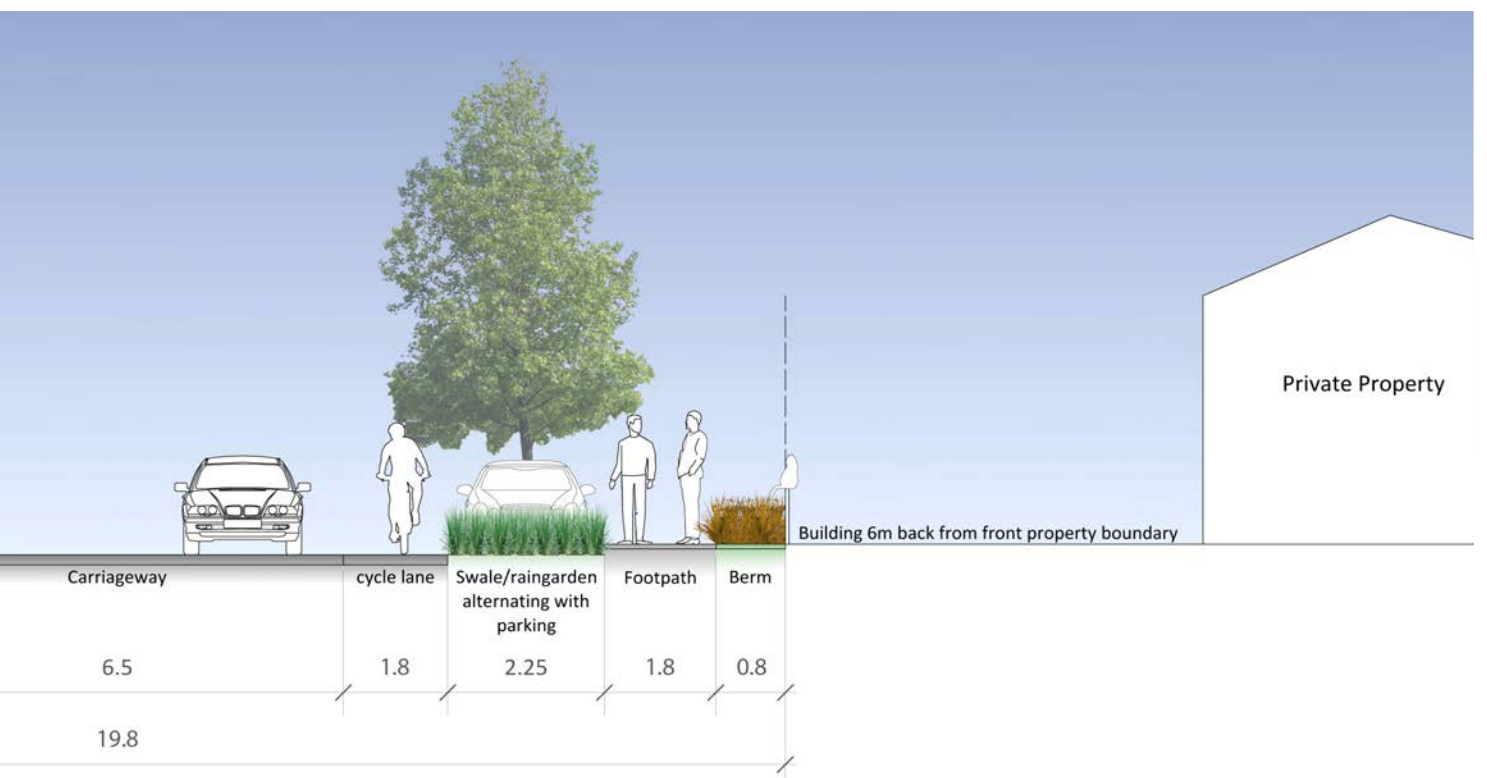
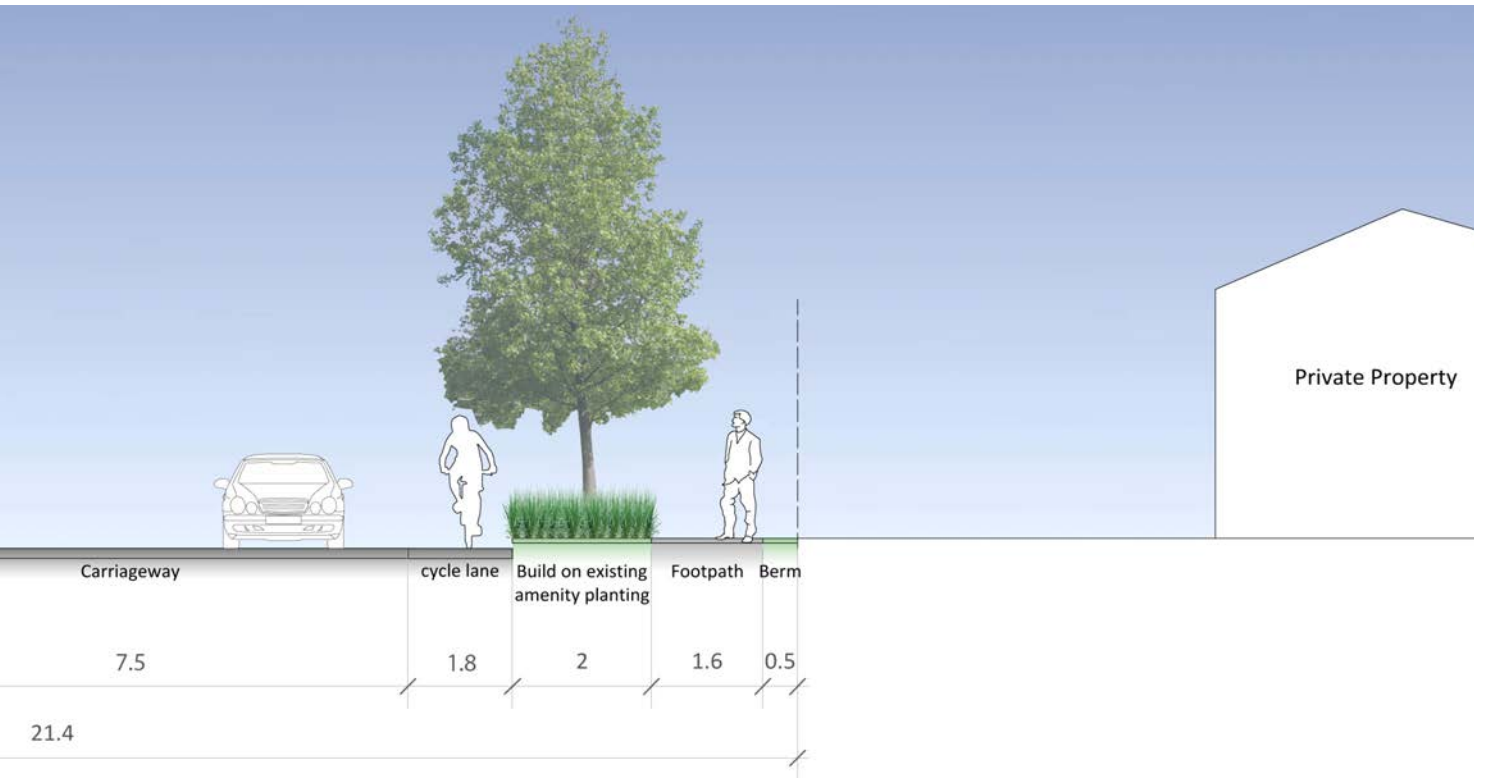


A

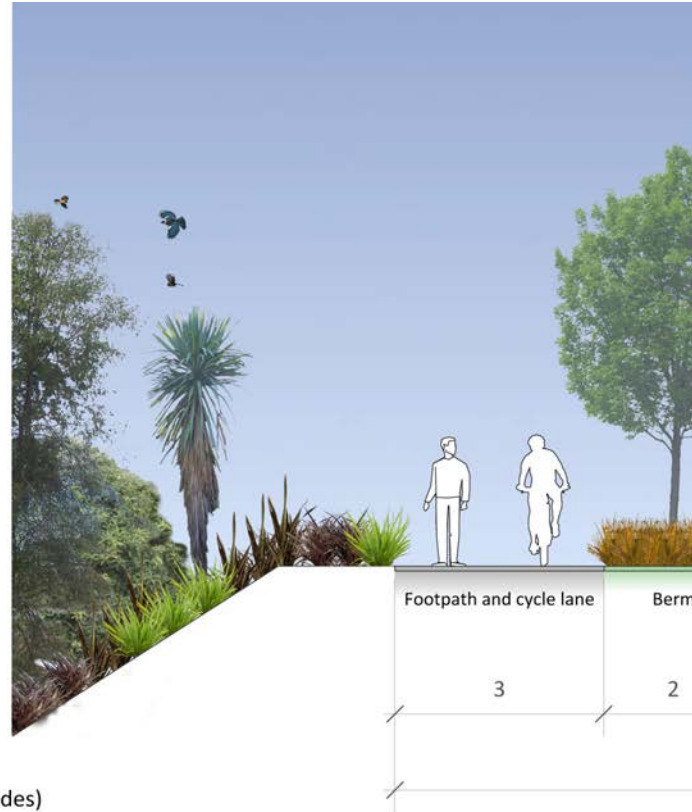


B

Urban Connectors

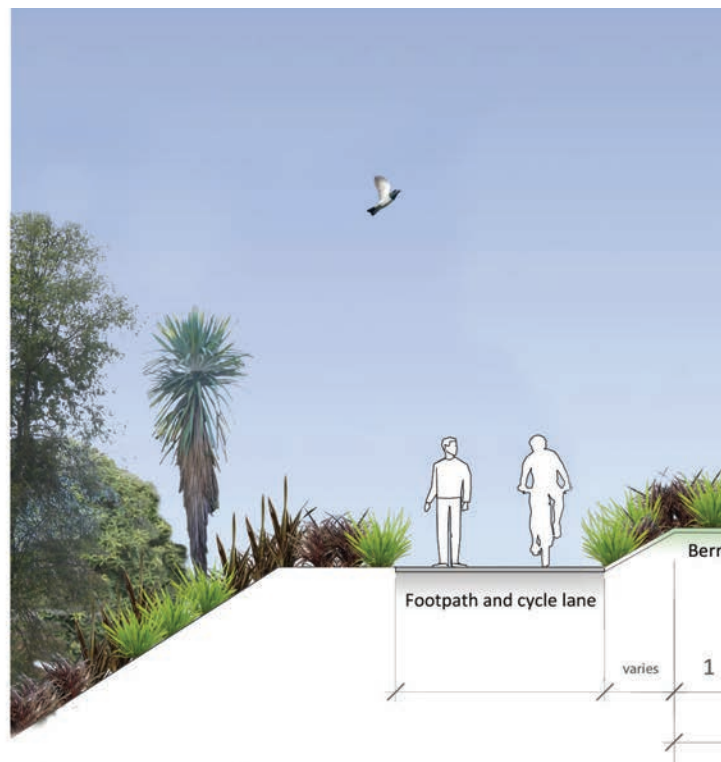


C

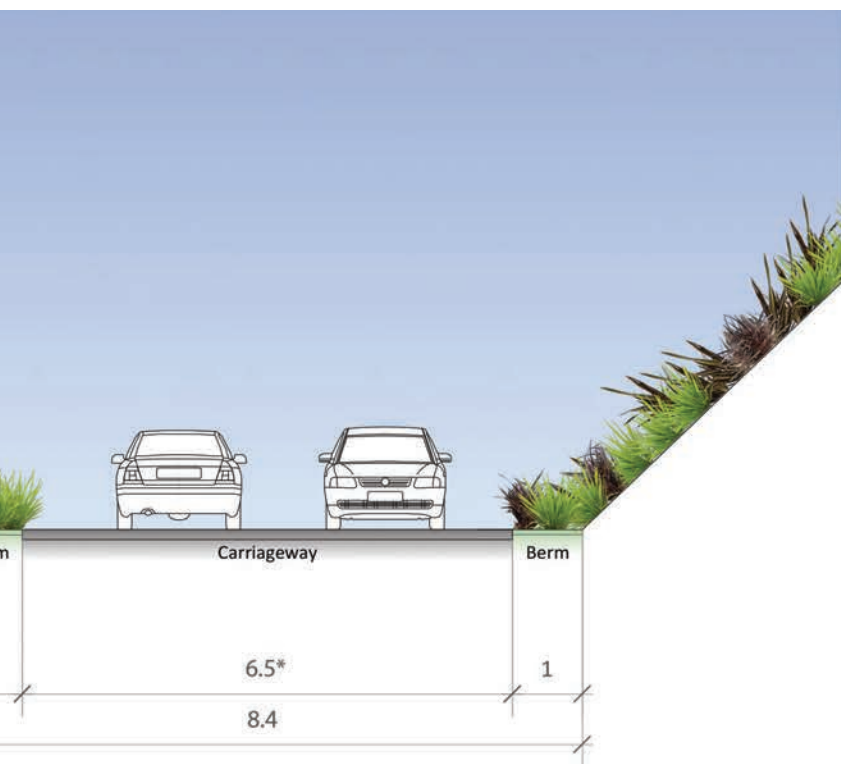
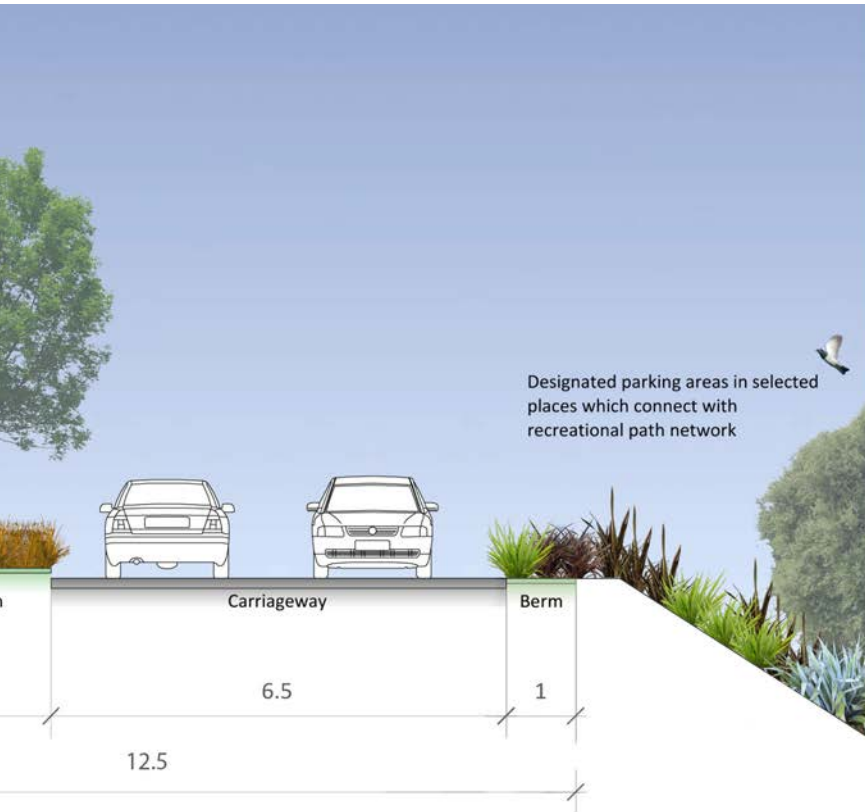


LOCAL COLLECTOR (gully both sides)

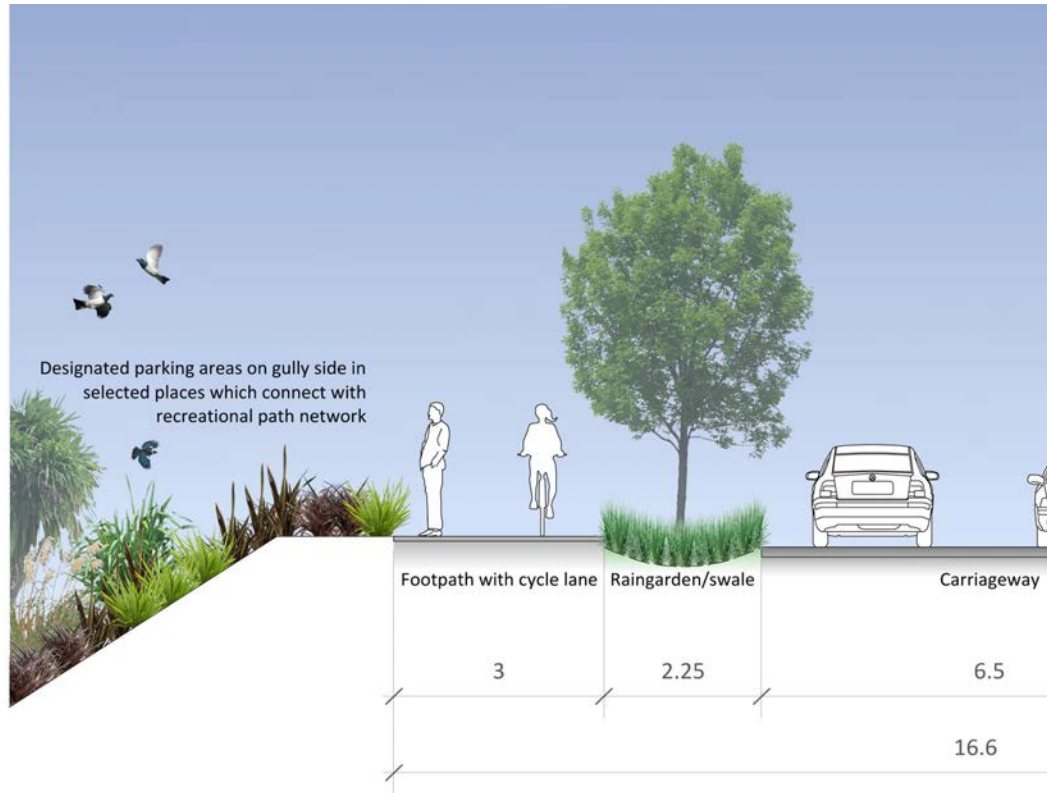
D



* Possible widening on corners



E



F

