



Global Research
Turning **Information** Into **Insight**

Wellington Community Sentiment — informing the 2023 Long Term Plan

Mining recent engagement consultations for insights

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Prepared by Global Research Ltd

For

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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INTRODUCTION

Global Research has been tasked with reviewing and synthesizing a number of previous community engagements and surveys to produce a document outlining key issues facing Wellingtonians, and drawing out attitudes and opinions about these issues to gain a broad understanding of Wellington's priorities.

Because the data analysed were in many cases addressing consultation topics, or, more often, were answers to specific questioning within engagement consultations, the topics presented in this report cannot be considered to be representative, or to encompass the views of all Wellingtonians.

Our processes

Global Research analysts reviewed data from 26 community engagements provided to us by WCC. Engagement data was in a range of formats including summary reports, presentations, raw datasets, and comprehensive analysis reports, and each was searched for topics related to the following six key themes:

1. *Our urban form*
2. *Our culture*
3. *Our community*
4. *Our environment*
5. *Our economy*
6. *Our transport network*

Under each of these themes, key topics or issues have been listed, described, and supporting evidence from the data have been included. A list of the documents consulted can be found on page 5.

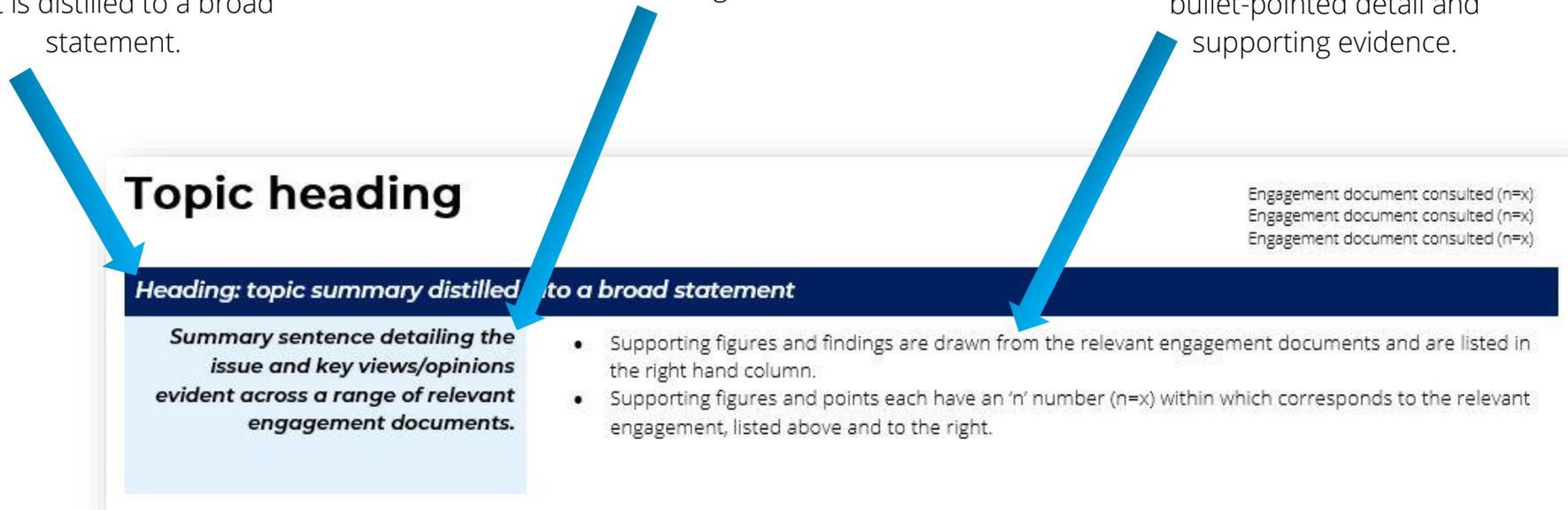
How to read this report

This document is laid out in six main sections, each of which is headed by one of the six key themes, beneath which are the relevant topics. Beneath these, successive levels of detail are available to the reader, as shown below. Adjacent to each topic heading, the documents consulted for analysis are listed in alphabetical order, along with the 'n' number representing the number of respondents that contributed to that engagement.

The reader may look to **topic summaries** for information that is distilled to a broad statement.

For greater detail, the reader can **scan the lefthand column** for top-level analysis of findings.

If the reader wishes, they can **look to the righthand column** for bullet-pointed detail and supporting evidence.



DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

This review was informed by the following consultation documents, each of which was provided by WCC.

	Consultation name	Respondents	Reporting year
1	Brooklyn Road Trial Survey	768	2021
2	Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to city	638	2022
3	Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal	1,875	2022
4	Cobham Crossing and Speed Consultation	3,518	2021
5	Golden Mile 2022 Mid-Year Engagement	3,043	2022
6	Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway Improvements Engagement and Consultation Report	5,692	2022
7	City Housing Tenants Survey	303	2022
8	Climate Change Perceptions	738	2023
9	Residents Monitoring Survey	1,070	2023
10	Wellington at Night Survey	608	2021
11	Accessibility Action Plan Early Engagement Survey	199	2022
12	Community Facilities Plan - Needs Analysis Background Report	≈4,000	2023
13	Dog Policy and Animal Bylaw Review	743	2023
14	Economic Wellbeing Strategy	69	2022
15	Future of the Central Library Consultation	1,463	2020
16	Gambling Venues Policy	115	2021
17	Strategy for Children and Young People	86	
18	Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy	358	2023
19	He Anamata Para Kore Mō Pōneke - A Zero Waste Future	83	2023
20	Long Term Plan 2021	1,999	2021
21	Annual Plan 2022/23	840	2022
22	Annual Plan 2023/24	351	2023
23	Draft Social Wellbeing Framework	37	2021
24	Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy	137	2021
25	Representation review	52	2021
26	Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct	76	2021
Total consultations		26	
Total submitters' feedback reviewed		28,861	

KEY FINDINGS

The points below summarise the main themes and topics across the 26 engagements analysed.

Owing to the mostly high levels of support for many of the objective statements presented to respondents, we can see that residents support an idealised version of Wellington and consequently, that they want a good life and good opportunities for all in the city. However, there are differing opinions on how this can be achieved, which, coupled with a general reluctance to be impacted on financially, presents a challenge to decision-makers. Additionally, people acknowledge that they don't always know enough about Council spending priorities to comment on matters like budgets.

Our urban form

- ▶ People seek city surroundings that are pleasant and inviting, and that enhance their experience of living, working, and playing there.
- ▶ There is an understanding that the city will grow but people want housing and infrastructure that can cope with growth, and for housing to be warm and affordable.
- ▶ People want urban features complemented by tranquil green and open spaces – expected to become increasingly vital for recreation, and wellbeing. Accessibility needs of different people are important when planning these spaces.
- ▶ People support city regeneration and want attractive buildings and surrounds, utilised (e.g., not vacant or run-down), and appealing. This also applies to open spaces like the waterfront, which is considered an example of a popular and well-used space.

Our culture

- ▶ Wellington has a strong identity, and most people think it is a great place to live.
- ▶ People are supportive of the arts generally, and people report that greater investment would return increased community benefits, though initiatives might not necessarily return profits. There is great demand for funding at the grassroots level, and continuity of funding was felt to be crucial for real effect.
- ▶ There is support for te ao Māori to be acknowledged and for greater inclusion across many realms of Council and city life.
- ▶ Libraries, as community and cultural centres, are valued and popular assets throughout the city. It is anticipated that the function of libraries will evolve to encompass a more diverse range of uses, and that a more diverse group of people will visit them in future.

Our community

- ▶ People want greater social cohesion through initiatives that enable informal community interaction, such as providing spaces that facilitate connections (e.g., sport and recreation spaces, art spaces, social housing, and spaces for youth, parents of young children, people with disabilities, and cultural communities).
- ▶ There was a sense amongst respondents that social inequity is growing. Some groups were thought to face more barriers than others to accessing a 'good' life; the prevalence of alcohol-affected people and homeless on the streets was cited as evidence of this, as were poor outcomes for some demographic groups. In particular, equitable access to housing and support services were sought for all Wellingtonians.
- ▶ People mostly feel safe, but not in the city at night where alcohol-dominated events and activities are perceived as the norm. People feel that more lighting (for amenity and safety) and greater police presence could increase safety.
- ▶ The potential impacts of natural disasters and climate change are well known to residents, but not everyone is adequately prepared for extreme events. People want resilient communities as well as resilient infrastructure (e.g., buildings, water and underground infrastructure), but the associated costs are recognised as an issue.

Our environment

- ▶ People believe that more needs to be done to mitigate the impacts of climate change on Wellington, though ultimately, there appears to be a reluctance to make the necessary trade-offs to achieve sustainability goals. In particular, safety, resilience, and cost have a significant influence on decision-making, and trump sustainability for many.
- ▶ There is broad support for sustainable initiatives, such as a fund to encourage sustainable buildings and carbon zero transport options, but, again, people do not want to bear the costs of these initiatives themselves.
- ▶ City green spaces, while supported for their restorative and recreation functions, are also important to people for environmental benefits such as sites for native planting, as habitats, and as carbon sinks.

Our economy

- ▶ Costs are a big concern to people, particularly when it affects them personally. While it appears that Council spending is not well understood, people are certain that they do not want ongoing rates rises and higher costs of living.
- ▶ People support Council objectives around business and employment, and want to see growth in these areas. Development of digitally innovative economies was supported, as was a circular economy with less wastage.
- ▶ The night-time economy, although enjoyed, is viewed as too alcohol focused and people report that intoxicated and unpredictable people in the city at night deter them from visiting. Additionally, high costs (e.g., parking and events) are felt to be a deterrent.
- ▶ There was a lack of commentary in the engagement data about where funds come from; this was in contrast with the stated expectations for Council to fund initiatives of many types (and the reported opposition to rates increases).

***Our
transport
network***

- ▶ People want to move freely about their city, and although they support ideals around emissions reduction (from vehicle use), they also view private vehicle use as their right and want to see cheaper and more widely available car parking.
- ▶ Buses and cars are the most popular modes for commuting, with younger residents more likely to bus and residents with children more likely to drive.
- ▶ However, there was majority support for cycleways and improving active transport infrastructure to encourage uptake. Much of this support is from residents as opposed to business manager/owners, whose fears of parking loss dominated commentary on this topic.
- ▶ Connectivity impacts on people's choice of transport mode, and higher connectivity (seamless, uninterrupted, reliable routes) promotes use of public and active transport.

OUR URBAN FORM

Accessibility

Accessibility Action Plan Early Engagement Survey (n=199)

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)

Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to city (n=638)

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)

Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043)

Newtown to city bus and bike proposal (n=1875)

Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

Meeting the needs of Wellingtonians living with disabilities or mobility issues

The majority of responses across all eight relevant engagements indicated that there is more WCC could/should be doing to improve life in Wellington for people with disabilities or mobility issues.

- 58% of Accessibility Action Plan respondents (n=199) disagreed or strongly disagreed that Wellington City Council is meeting the needs of disabled people.
- Between 20% and 30% of respondents felt that accessibility was bad or very bad for parking (25%), cycleways (25%), parks, playgrounds, and other green spaces (21%), and public events (20%).
- Between 30% and 40% of respondents rated accessing accessibility information (36%), pedestrian access (39%), and public amenities (40%) as bad or very bad.
- Respondents to this consultation (n=199) had varied assessments of the accessibility of different aspects of city life, including:
 - Equal proportions of respondents rated accessibility of the democratic process (like voting, standing for council, or participating in WCC meetings and consultations) and wayfinding good or very good and bad or very bad (21% and 29% respectively).
 - The only aspect which over half of respondents felt was good or very good was WCC facilities, which 51% of respondents rated positively.

Accessibility impact of proposed roading changes

A significant proportion of respondents to engagements about proposed changes to the transport network felt that changes would not benefit those living with mobility issues.

- Almost half of respondents (n=768) felt that the proposed roading changes for the *Botanic Gardens ki Paekākā to City* project would have a neutral or negative impact on people with mobility or accessibility issues.
- Of the 44 respondents to this engagement (n=638) who indicated they were living with a disability or accessibility issue, only a third felt the impact of the proposed changes would be positive, compared to almost half who felt it would be negative.
- Almost a quarter (451) of respondents from the *Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal* engagement (n=1875) felt that proposed changes would have a negative impact on those living with mobility/accessibility issues, while a slightly greater number (489 respondents, 26%) didn't know or thought the impact would be neutral for this group.
- 131 respondents to this same engagement indicated that they were living with a disability or accessibility issue. Among this group, just over half felt the impact of the changes would be negative for people living with a disability or accessibility issue, while fewer than half felt the impacts would be positive.
- In a third engagement (n=768), similar proportions of respondents felt the changes would have a negative (24%) or positive (22%) impact on people living with mobility or accessibility issues, while remaining respondents weren't sure or were neutral.

Accessibility should be a core part of WCC's plans

Overall views were that accessibility is a good aim to ensure maximum participation but some expressed concerns about the potential to reduce the experiences of the majority by focusing too much on small groups with specific needs.

- People (n=137) wanted to see the arts made more accessible to everyone, including those living with disabilities or other barriers to participation, so that everyone can access and engage in arts and culture in Wellington.
- People (n=768) listed things they wanted, including mobility parking on every side street, accessible footpath surfaces (smooth, flat, and safe), raised crossings, and provision for drop-offs and pick-ups on the Golden Mile for disabled and elderly, particularly near St James Theatre and other popular venues. What they *don't* want to see is WCC missing the opportunity to make the city more accessible.
- Comments (n=358) called for accessibility of open spaces and council owned and operated buildings to make the city more inclusive. Improved accessibility on public transport and active transport routes was also suggested to ensure that people can actually enjoy accessible spaces.
- Submissions from the *Strategy for Children and Young People* engagement (n=86) echoed calls for accessible public spaces, including playgrounds, suggesting organisations and services (such as speech and language therapy, and groups that make sport accessible for young people with disabilities) should be recognised in WCC's strategy for their crucial role in making things more accessible.

City living

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)
 Dog Policy and Animal Bylaw Review (n=740)
 Future of the Central Library consultation (n=765)
 Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043)
 Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
 Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)
 Wellington at Night Survey 2021(n=608)

People appreciate an attractive city, and want it to be a pleasant place to be

Across a range of projects, responses indicated that people desire a city that is inviting, tidy, and aesthetically pleasing. Tangible aspects raised included support for clean streets, more street planting, and less disruption from construction.

- The city centre was seen as lively and attractive by 42% (n=1,070), but 35% disagreed. This metric has tracked downwards since 2017, when 88% agreed it was lively and attractive.
- Streetscape upgrades were largely supported for the Golden Mile as a way to make the area more pleasant to spend time in (n=3,043); specifically, comments pinned to locations indicated support for broad and smooth footpath surfacing, more planting of natives and fruit-trees, daylighting the Kumutoto Stream, and an increase in the types of shelter available to street users.
- Construction disruption was of concern to residents who did not want to see their city in a period of ongoing construction; this applied to 20% of those commenting on the implementation of mass transit policies (n=5,692) and to a lesser degree, some of those submitting on the central library redevelopment (n=765).
- Over half of respondents (58%) (n=1,070) were satisfied with the quality of street cleaning in Central Wellington in 2023, down from 61% in 2022. A similar proportion (57%) were satisfied with the maintenance of roadside vegetation throughout the city, up from 55% in 2022.
- Dog mess in parks and on streets was an issue for over half of those who submitted on pet peeves regarding dog ownership (n=740).

Street lighting contributes aesthetically as well as for safety

Street lighting was discussed in a range of contexts. As well as safety, people reported that lighting forms a vital part of city amenity and contributes to a welcoming after-dark environment.

- Creative lighting was in the top 3 things that people (n=608) want to see more of in Upper Cuba, Newtown, Kelburn and Thorndon.
- Residents (n=1,070) reported more satisfaction than dissatisfaction with street lighting in both the central city and in local suburbs. However, satisfaction levels were higher with street lighting in the central city (66% satisfied), compared to respondents' local suburb (58% satisfied).
- Satisfaction with street lighting in the central city remained consistent in 2023 with 2022 results (n=1,070), though it is trending downwards overall from a peak of 84% satisfaction in 2018.
- Improved lighting arose as a theme for the Golden Mile which would enhance its "vibe" (n=3,043).

Dogs are cherished by owners but can irritate city dwellers

Dogs are part of the city and while valued for their wellbeing contributions, dog owners as well as others are frustrated by the negative impacts including noise and mess.

- Almost three quarters of the 498 respondents who raised gripes about dogs in Wellington stated that irresponsible owners were problematic, and almost half objected to dog waste.
- People (usually dog owners) desire a range of dog-friendly improvements for the city, including cafes being more welcoming, more off-leash areas, and extended beach hours.

The waterfront and its surrounds are significant to Wellingtonians

The waterfront is well used by residents and visitors alike. It is valued for its amenity, as a public open space, and for its proximity to the city and to cultural and recreation opportunities.

- The most frequently visited galleries and museums are located in the vicinity of the waterfront: City Gallery (42%) and Wellington Museum (40%) (n=1,070).
- The waterfront was among the most used green/open spaces, used by around 80% of respondents (n=1,070), and with 40% visiting at least weekly.
- Te Ngākau Civic Square is a high-value precinct with notable potential for greater public utilisation (n=765).
- 70% of respondents (n=76) supported the objective "Te Ngākau is a place that integrates with the city and the waterfront", and the majority of support was strong.
- Walking/running is one of the most popular recreation pursuits noted by respondents (n=358), and the waterfront is a location for this activity.

Water

Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)
Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Investment in city water infrastructure is supported

People passionately argued that/called for the city needs to invest in its three waters infrastructure (drinking, waste, and stormwater) noting that provision of adequate water infrastructure is a vital city aspect and should take precedence over other areas.

- 60% of respondents to the 2021 Long Term Plan engagement (n=1,999) would prefer Council to remove investment from other areas to fund the city's three waters investment.
- In the same engagement, the majority (68%) of comments made on three waters investment related to prioritising and funding infrastructure. This issue was described as essential and critical.

Stormwater management systems are not well supported, nor understood

Views were split on storm water management in the city.

- In the 2023 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070), similar proportions of respondents were satisfied (34%) and dissatisfied (37%) with the city's stormwater management, while almost a third were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Satisfaction with stormwater management has been declining in the last 8 years, dropping consistently from the 68% satisfaction reported in 2016.
- Divergent levels of satisfaction coupled with a large proportion who were neutral on this topic could indicate a lack of knowledge around the functions of this type of infrastructure.

Green spaces, open spaces, natural spaces

Accessibility Action Plan Early Engagement Survey (n=199)

Annual Plan 2023/24 (n=351)

Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

City open space and green spaces are highly valued and enjoy high use

More people are using green and open spaces, and people who gave feedback continue to call for these spaces to be accessible, usable, well-maintained, and plentiful. It is feared that these types of spaces may be under pressure from development needs.

- Use of open and green spaces is tracking up since 2014, with greater proportions of respondents (n=1,070) using coastal areas, parks, the green belt, gardens, the waterfront, playgrounds, and streams.
- The waterfront and 'local parks and reserves' were the most used green/open spaces by around 80% of respondents (n=1,070), with at least weekly usage by 40% and 44% respectively.
- Beaches and coastal areas, walkways and trails, forested areas, and the outer green belt were also all regularly used by respondents (over half use the spaces at least monthly) (n=1,070).
- Investment in walking and mountain biking trails is supported by many as a means to provide open space recreation opportunities and to provide world class experiences for visitors.
- There is support for an integrated and expansive open space network (n=358).
- Almost half of respondents, the majority of whom had a disability or access need or supported someone who did (n=199), felt that accessibility of parks, playgrounds, gardens, and other green spaces is good or very good.

Demand for green and natural city spaces are high and their uses and benefits are varied

People want to see green spaces in the city retained, maintained, and enjoyed by people for a range of activities, both active and passive.

- Since 2019, green and open space usage has increased more sharply than in the period prior, and this has corresponded with declining satisfaction levels.
- People acknowledged that green spaces contribute positively to mental health and wellbeing (n=86) and want to see them prioritised for this reason.
- Young people especially support the idea of community gardens and/or fruit tree planting to address food insecurity and poverty (n=86).
- There is concern that golf courses lock up land that could be a valuable recreation resource for the broader public (n=358).
- There remain high and relatively stable levels of agreement that Wellington's connection with nature improves quality of life. This peaked in 2020 at 97% (probably due to COVID lockdowns offering residents more opportunity to be in their neighbourhoods) (n=1,070).
- The feeling that Wellington's natural environment is appropriately managed and protected has been dropping since 2017, with agreement now at 61% that this is happening (n=1,070).

There is support for the Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Open Space and Recreation Strategy

There is majority support for the Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Open Space and Recreation Strategy with two thirds (n=358) in strong support, and 83% supportive to some degree of the overall direction of the strategy.

- When asked about the five principles within the Open Space and Recreation Strategy, respondents (n=358) were far more likely to offer 'strong support' than they were to offer any other response.
- The highest proportion of support was for principle 5: 'We recognise how important it is to have fun, play and enjoy ourselves. Recreation and open spaces will help people to thrive by supporting balanced, fun, and joyful lifestyles', which was supported by 93% of respondents (n=358).

Urban development

Annual Plan 2022/23 (n=840)
 Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)
 Future of the Central Library consultation (n=765)
 Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
 Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)
 Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

People understand that the city will grow but they don't want to lose the things they love about it

It is important to people that development is 'done right'. While this means different things to different people, there was agreement that some degree of control is needed over development. However, there is declining confidence that this is being implemented. There is difficulty in striking the right balance between keeping costs down and catering for urban growth with appropriate development.

- There was far more agreement than disagreement from Let's Get Wellington Moving survey respondents that housing intensification and development is necessary and should be encouraged (n=5,692).
- There was more disagreement (41%) than there was agreement (27%) that the character of the city is preserved by Council's building and development control settings (n=1,070).
- Over 4 out of 5 people surveyed (n=1,070) agreed that regenerating city areas adds to its vibrancy.
- People under the age of 44 were more likely to agree that new buildings constructed in the city maintain or enhance attractiveness (n=1,070).
- 82% of people (n=69) supported the Council's aims to be a compact city with a dynamic CBD.
- 78% of respondents (n=69) thought it is important to explore opportunities to activate empty buildings in the city.
- The Central Library redevelopment was thought by some respondents (n=765) to need to cater to greater numbers of and a more diverse range of who may work and live differently in future; this points to a dynamic and ever-changing set of needs so far as the built environment is concerned.
- Retaining (and even increasing) community housing was supported as a way to cater to population growth, and half of respondents (n=840) wanted to see Council establish a Community Housing Provider to manage this.

Housing

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)
 Annual Plan 2022/23 (n=840)
 City Housing Tenants Survey (n=303)
 Community Facilities Plan (n=4,000)
 Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
 Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

People want to be able to have high-quality and affordable housing

The health of people's homes is relatively stable and is generally improving but there remain a large proportion of people who report cold and damp housing. These are more likely to be people renting than those who own their home. Housing affordability, in its broadest sense, is of concern.

- Young people (n=86) expressed concern that 'the basics' are not available to all, that is, that homelessness remains an issue, and that healthy homes are not universally available.
- The health of people's homes is relatively stable, and has improved slightly across damp/cold/hard-to-heat metrics since 2014 (n=1,070).
- 51% of residents (n=1,070) reported that their home is sometimes, often, or always cold (mostly sometimes), and 37% stated their home is sometimes, often, or always hard to heat.
- Renters were more likely than homeowners to experience damp, cold, or hard-to-heat homes, and interior walls were the least insulated parts of people's homes (over a third stated there was no, or poor wall insulation) (n=1,070).
- Housing affordability is the main factor for retaining young people, as well as for attracting experienced professionals (n=69).
- Housing affordability was noted in the context of creatives, for whom rising costs are presenting issues for their ability to keep living in the city (n=137).

City housing tenants are largely satisfied, and city (social) housing is supported as a concept

City housing tenants (n=303) were generally satisfied that their house or apartment was in good condition, and that the services and facilities they use are satisfactory. Advisory and communication services were also broadly assessed as satisfactory.

- Tenant satisfaction with city housing services and facilities, though high at 91%, has been tracking slightly downwards since 2019 (in the 4 years prior to which it was 94% or above).
- Almost three quarters (74%) rated their apartment or house as in excellent or good condition, with 5% giving a poor or very poor rating (n=303).
- There is broad public support for the continued operation of social housing, but establishing a Community Housing Provider to manage these services was preferred by almost 50% of respondents (n=840) compared to the service remaining Council-run and requiring a rates rise, which was preferred by 14%.
- City housing community spaces are valued by tenants as places to build community connections, but are reportedly used by just 6% of the city housing population. More use could be made of these spaces.

OUR CULTURE

City identity

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)

Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

People perceive Wellington as a culturally rich place with a strong, but waning identity

People report feeling the city's identity is not as strong as it has been, but they see great potential for improvement. In particular, there is support for creating highly desirable spaces within Wellington that can be used and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

- 61% of residents (n=1,070) agree that Wellington's distinct local identity is valued and protected, a figure which is tracking downwards, but which has improved by three percentage points since 2022.
- Around four out of five residents (n=1,070) agreed that overall Wellington is a great place to live, work, and play – this is tracking up since 2021. Just over half agreed that they have a sense of pride in how Wellington looks and feels (this has been tracking down since 2018).
- 71% of respondents (n=69) support aims to raise the profile of Wellington.
- There is support for Wellington's open and green spaces (including the waterfront and Botanic Gardens) to become world class experiences. One fifth of comments about priority 5 of the Draft (128 comments) felt that creating world class experiences would benefit Wellington.
- There was majority support that Te Ngākau Civic Square is vibrant and welcoming (n=76) and almost two thirds of respondents supported the idea of the area as 'the beating heart of our capital city'.
- The city is seen as a creative and arty place, and some respondents felt that the image of Wellington as a creative hub is reason enough to better support the arts (n=137).

Libraries

Community Facilities Plan (n=4,000)
Future of the Central Library consultation 2020 (n=1,463)
Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

Libraries are a cherished and important aspect of Wellington

Libraries are a prized community asset and are well used and valued by a range of residents. The community space libraries provide is almost as important as the services available, with large numbers of people agreeing that libraries offer broad and varied social benefits.

- Libraries are reportedly visited by a cross-section of around 73% of the population (n=4,000).
- High satisfaction is reported with libraries and the services they provide (n=4,000) (n=1,463).
- In the central library redevelopment consultation, respondents revealed that simply having a library available to them was a high priority. This was reflected in multiple calls for reinstating the central library quickly, and in calls for longer library opening hours in the suburbs.
- It was suggested that library fines may act as a barrier to youth participation, and that libraries partnering with tertiary providers could be beneficial to pathways for youth (n=86).
- Young people (n=86) in some cases used consultations about unrelated issues to call for the reinstatement of library services, indicating frustration but support for libraries generally.

Heritage

Future of the Central Library consultation 2020 (n=1,463)
Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)

Heritage buildings have inherent value but there are conflicting ideas about protection

Older buildings contribute to the look and feel of Wellington, and people like to see this protected, however, what constitutes heritage is debated.

- Three quarters of respondents (n=1,070) agreed that heritage contributes to Wellington's identity and over half (53%) agreed that heritage contributed to the identity of their local communities (less than half that disagreed).
- There was 47% agreement (n=1,070) that the character of historic suburbs is adequately protected. This has been tracking downward since 2019.
- Of the 74 responses about Te Ngākau being 'a place that respects and incorporates experiences of architecture, design and heritage balanced with ensuring its functional role for the city', 11% expressed opposition to this, while 58% supported it. Around a third were neutral.
- There was debate about how old a building needs to be for it to be considered heritage; this was relevant for the central library redevelopment, with divergent views expressed about its heritage value.

Māori culture

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)

Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

Representation review (n=52)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

Māori culture and values are relevant to everyday life and are broadly supported

There is support for the recognition and representation of te ao Māori in many aspects of Wellington life. While it is reasonable to suggest that those who disagree with this notion may not submit on this topic, support was expressed for several strategies in which this topic was expanded on.

- Several contributors to the *Strategy for Children and Young People* engagement supported the strategy's focus on te reo Māori and te ao Māori.
- There was majority support (n=1,070) for all four statements around Māori culture and language (recognition, visibility, Council action on revitalising te reo Māori, and revitalising Māori culture in the city). Across all four statements, less than one in five respondents disagreed.
- There was over 60% support for partnering with Te Mataru a Maui and mana whenua to build capability of Māori in digital technology and enable authentic storytelling (n=69).
- Māori-led partnerships with WCC were supported for the arts by 21% of respondents (n=137), specifically to strengthen and add value to the arts voice of Māori.
- Only slightly fewer respondents (16%) raised points related to telling the nation's stories through Māori art and supporting artists to do so; this was through initiatives like promoting traditional art and highlighting Matariki.
- There was more support (59%) than opposition (41%) to proposed representation arrangements for Council which included the establishment of a Māori ward for at least the 2022 and 2025 elections (n=52).
- There was majority support for Strategic Focus 5 of the *Open Space and Recreation Strategy* (re-indigenising) (n=358) though support was less than for other focus areas. The concept of kaitiaki was particularly relevant in an open space and recreation context, some thought.

Arts

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)

Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Wellington has a rich, diverse, and valued arts and culture scene

There is agreement that Wellington is an arts and culture capital, a status which contributes to a sense of identity and people's pride in the city. People regularly engage with and participate in the arts in different capacities and report general satisfaction with what's on.

- Over half of people (n=1,070) had attended a Council-delivered arts or cultural event in the previous year, and 85% were satisfied with events like these.
- Over a third of people (n=1,070) regularly (more than once a month) engage with cultural or arts activities in the city, and participation of at least once a year is at 87% and has been tracking at a stable level since 2015.
- Those with disabilities and those on low incomes were less likely to participate in cultural or arts activities or events.
- There was 90% support for the overall direction of the Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137) and 4% opposition.
- There is high satisfaction with galleries and museums in Wellington, with upwards of 87% of respondents rating their experience good or very good (n=1,070).
- Awareness of museums and galleries is high, and the most visited are the City Gallery (42%) and Wellington Museum (40%) (n=1,070). However, visitation of all galleries and museums is tracking slightly downwards since 2014.

There is support for greater investment in the arts, particularly at the grass-roots level

There is concern that arts funding does not always reach those who would benefit from it, and that community access to artistic and creative outlets is lacking. Although people don't begrudge the high-profile arts receiving funding (as there is recognition of the broad value of this), people want to see local art supported and promoted.

- Investment was a popular topic for discussion, with commentary on this arguing that sufficient and sustained investment in the arts is required.
- Over half of respondents (n=137) talked about forging community links to both promote the arts and to activate communities artistically.
- There were calls for the profit imperative for artistic ventures to be reduced or removed (due to the inherent value of the arts), relatedly, affordable spaces for people to make and view art were supported.
- Affordability for artists was of concern, with cost of living reportedly an issue.
- 73% of respondents (n=69) agreed that it is important to investigate building/creating a weather-resilient space for farmers/artisan markets.

OUR COMMUNITY

Emergencies and resilience

City Housing Tenants Survey (n=303)
Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)

Resilience, for both people and buildings, needs to be a priority for Wellington

People indicated that there is work to do for Wellington to be considered a truly resilient city. Community preparedness and the resilience of buildings are important, but people also highlighted the need to consider a wide range of possible factors, such as climate change and sea level rise when talking about (and planning for) resilience.

- About two thirds of respondents (n=303) said they felt either somewhat or very prepared for a significant emergency such as earthquake or tsunami.
- Respondents aged 70+ were more likely to say they felt prepared (somewhat or very), while the proportion of under 70s who felt prepared was just 57%.
- Almost a third of respondents (n=1,070) believe that WCC is making adequate progress on addressing building resilience-related issues in the city, while just over a third did not think that was the case. Belief that WCC is making adequate progress on these issues has tracked downwards since 2019.
- Respondents (n=76) argued for a sustainable resilience approach, noting that not every building needs to be saved and that the cost of earthquake strengthening must be appropriately weighed against the impact on the city's ratepayers and residents, and the longevity of buildings (taking factors like sea level rise into account) must also be considered.

Personal safety

City Housing Tenants Survey (n=303)
Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)
Wellington at Night Survey 2021 (n=608)

People do not always feel safe in the city, particularly at night

There is an overall perception among respondents across engagements that Wellington central city feels unsafe after dark, though people generally feel safe in their own homes and neighbourhood after dark. Feeling unsafe was most often attributed to the unpredictable, loud, or aggressive behaviour of others.

- The majority of residents in Wellington (n=1,070) reported feeling safe in their own home after dark (96%), in Wellington's CBD during the day (90%), and in their neighbourhood after dark (86%).
- 57% of respondents (n=1,070) reported feeling unsafe in the CBD after dark. Perceived safety in the city after dark has decreased steadily over the past 5 years.
- The top two issues facing Wellington's wider central city at night were aggressive, violent, or offensive behaviour and excessive intoxication, as indicated by approximately two-thirds of the respondents (n=608) who did spend time in the city at night.
- City Housing residents (n=303) generally felt safe both at night and during the day in their housing complexes. 13% did not feel safe during the day, while around 23% did not feel safe after dark.
- Females were more likely than males to say that sexual harassment/violence was an issue (51% vs 36%) (n=608).

People want to feel safer and had ideas about how this could be achieved

Suggestions to improve safety targeted behavioural and physical issues such as drunkenness and lighting, as well as broader societal issues like addressing root causes of homelessness, over-use of alcohol, and mental health.

- Alcohol harm reduction was a focus for a group of young people who submitted on the *Strategy for Children and Young People* (n=86), who supported enforcing liquor bans or stricter licencing regulations. Another submitter advocated for greater cooperation with and support for organisations and social services working to assist people dealing with alcohol or drug addiction.
- Police foot patrols were in the top 3 things that people (n=608) want to see more of at night in Upper Cuba, Newtown, Kelburn and Thorndon.
- Education around sexual consent, providing more street lighting, and providing safe and inclusive spaces for young people (such as a youth hub) were suggested to help make the central city safer (n=86).
- More support for rough sleepers, improved lighting, increasing mental health support services, addressing drug-related harm, and greater police presence were the top ways that respondents (n=608) felt safety in the city at night could be improved.

Social connectivity

Accessibility Action Plan Early Engagement Survey (n=199)
 City Housing Tenants Survey (n=303)
 Future of the Central Library consultation 2020 (n=1,463)
 Te Whai Oranga Pōneke - Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
 Wellington at Night Survey 2021 (n=608)

There is demand for places for people to go and be with other people

People felt that public places open to all types of people are an important aspect of city life. Some common characteristics of these spaces were that they are welcoming, and are not necessarily commercially oriented. Libraries in particular are prized community spaces.

- The second most offered response about what a new central library could be like was that it should function as a community space that is accessible (physically, socially, and financially) to people of all backgrounds (n=1,463).
- Community spaces suitable for parents, young children, youth, elderly, disabled, artistic/creative, and low-income people were variously called for across engagements.
- 75% of people who gave feedback on Wellington at night (n=608) agreed that the wider central city is a place they can go and socialise or connect with others.

Social connectivity is important but may need to be fostered

People who gave feedback recognise the importance and benefits of social connectivity but can find it hard to make these connections, or at least, they report a desire for more opportunities to connect.

- 89% of respondents (n=347) supported the notion that social connections are important, and that recreation and open space communities provide opportunities to connect.
- Over half of WCC city housing tenants (n=303) had spoken to or helped a neighbour with something in 2022. Older city housing tenants were more likely to know their neighbours, but city housing tenants are less likely than the general Wellington population to interact with neighbours.
- The percentage of residents (n=1,070) who had spoken with a neighbour in the previous year, though at 87%, is the lowest it has been since 2014.
- Almost two thirds of residents (n=1,070) feel they could rely on a neighbour in an emergency, similar to previous years 2019-2022.

Sport and recreation

Community Facilities Engagement (n=4,000)
 Long Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)
 Residents Monitoring Survey, RMS (n=1,070)
 Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)
 Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

Sport and recreation facilities have high use and are facing increasing demand

Reported use of sport and recreation facilities (e.g., pools and sports grounds) is fairly consistent or higher in 2023 than in previous years. Pools were the most used facility by those who gave feedback, but recreation centre use is declining overall.

- 72% agreed (n=1,070) that there are a wide range of recreational activities on offer in Wellington.
- The use of swimming pools and recreation centres is average compared with other cities, and satisfaction with all pools (aside from Keith Spry Pool) – though high – declined in the two years before 2023. The 42% of Wellingtonians that are pool users are more likely to be: adults (aged 40-49); in households with children; or to be Pacific Peoples.
- There was concern that golf courses lock up land that is a valuable recreation resource (n=358).
- Sports fields are also contentious, with more equitable use sought by some and protection sought by those who want to give time for organised sport numbers to recover post-COVID (n=358).
- Costs of facility use are an issue for young people and there are concerns about the continued availability of land for organised sport (n=358).

Sport and recreation options are varied and expanding

Sport and recreation is most likely to be self-directed (i.e., not through an organisation or club), and options are becoming more diverse; walking/running, cycling/mountain biking, dog walking, gardening, and skateboarding are popular.

- There was support for the provision of skateboarding facilities, both indoor and outdoor. Kilbirnie Recreation Centre's comparatively high usage (19% of 1,070 people surveyed) is attributable to its dedicated indoor scootering/skating space. However, the latest Residents Monitoring Survey (RMS) showed that 75% of respondents (n=1,070) had not used a skatepark in the last year (to April 2023).
- Biking/mountain biking were selected by 64% of respondents who were asked about recreation and open space activities they do (n=358), and many stated in comments that investment in mountain biking and walking trails is required to ensure Wellington is well provisioned in this regard.
- Given the increasing preference for self-directed physical activity, green and open spaces are highly valued by people who gave feedback (see 'Green spaces, open spaces, and parks' section, page 14). Non-traditional recreation activities such as playing (mainly children), gardening, and food gathering were pointed to as important to acknowledge.
- Proponents of organised sport expressed concern that, in the face of changing sport and recreation habits, their clubs or codes will suffer from resourcing and popularity decline (n=358).
- More respondents thought it unimportant (41%) than important (37%) to invest in Sky Stadium (n=69).

Facilities and amenities

Accessibility Action Plan Early Engagement Survey (n=199)
 Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)
 Community Facilities Plan (n=4,000)
 Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Public facilities and amenities must be accessible so that everyone can benefit from them

Amongst the community of Wellingtonians who are living with disabilities or accessibility needs, there is a perception WCC facilities are more accessible than public amenities like toilets, public seating. However, it is also apparent that more needs to be done to ensure accessibility.

- Accessibility of public amenities like seating, toilets, and bike stands, were rated by 40% of respondents (n=199) as bad or very bad, while 26% rated them good or very good.
- Respondents (n=199) wanted more fully accessible public toilets, more public seating (including sheltered seating, and seating that wheelchair-users can sit alongside), and more bicycle stands that can be used by people who use adaptive cycles.
- Accessibility of facilities owned or operated by WCC (like libraries, pools, and community centres), was rated by 51% of respondents as good or very good, while 15% rated them bad or very bad (n=199).

Public amenities must be widely available and well maintained

People want to see lots of public amenities like public toilets, lighting, and rubbish bins out and about in Wellington, and want these to be well maintained so that people can comfortably use them.

- Respondents (n=4,000) rated public toilets with equal levels of satisfaction to dissatisfaction. Females, gender-diverse people, younger people and people with disabilities were more likely to be dissatisfied. Appearance is the most significant area of dissatisfaction due to public toilets being unclean, smelly, or poorly maintained.
- People (n=3,043) want secure, convenient bike parking, more CCTV, EV chargers on side streets, parking for lower emissions travel options like motor bikes, mopeds and electric vehicles, and shelter from the elements. Rubbish bins, improved street lighting, and good maintenance of facilities to ensure things are clean and tidy were also desired.

WCC should encourage higher use of community facilities through initiatives to make them more appealing and accessible

More could be done to encourage higher rates of use for community facilities, particularly among communities or groups that currently experience barriers to use, such as organisations with limited funds for venue hire.

- Libraries were by far the most used community facility, with 73% of respondents (n=1,070) saying they had used one in the past year, compared to 22% who had used a community centre, and 17% who had used a community hall. Among respondents who had visited the library at all in the past year, almost one in five said they did so at least weekly on average.
- The most significant demographic influence on use of community facilities is having children in the household, though this is not necessarily children themselves; rather, this group has increased awareness of community facilities (like libraries and swimming pools) than other demographic groups (n=4,000).
- About two-thirds (68%) of respondents (n=1,070) felt that Wellington City Council's recreational facilities and programmes were generally easy to access. Less than one in ten found them difficult to access.
- Respondents (n=199) argued that the council's focus on making money from its investments excludes arts events that are not lucrative, suggesting that some community and creatively driven use of council facilities should be mandatory.

Youth

Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

Young people make up an important part of the community and must be considered in decision-making

People want a future where young people are viewed as an important part of society, where they are engaged in decision-making, and their needs are considered in urban planning and design.

- Safety was a concern for some respondents (n=86) who specifically wanted alcohol harm addressed, shorter licensing hours, and better street lighting to help young people feel safer in the city. A group of young people also suggested education around consent for young people.
- Respondents also wanted to have dedicated spaces for young people, such as a youth hub, which are safe and inclusive.
- Opportunities for young people to connect with nature and the outdoors were also sought, including more green spaces in the city and better active transport options. Respondents felt that connection to nature was vital for both mental and physical health.
- Equity for young people was a concern, with respondents calling for greater support for children and young people living in poverty by providing solutions for homelessness and healthy housing initiatives, improving food security through community gardens, and education about cooking and healthy/sustainable eating.
- Respondents wanted to see more engagement with young people and even discussed their support for lowering the voting age to 16 to give young people more of a voice.
- People also wanted to see more support for young people entering the workforce by connecting them to employment, education, and volunteering opportunities.

Social wellbeing

City Housing Tenants Survey (n=303)
Draft Social Wellbeing Framework (n=37)
Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)

Social inequities must be acknowledged and addressed to achieve greater social wellbeing

There is a sense that social inequity is growing, and that some groups are being more negatively impacted than others.

- Respondents (n=37) felt that inequities facing Māori need to be acknowledged, and supported the integration of te ao Māori and Te Whare Tapa Whā into wellbeing strategies to better support Wellingtonians. Respondents also suggested that Te Tiriti o Waitangi should be at the forefront of decision-making.
- There was an overall sense (n=37) that equity of participation (for example, in team sports) and having basic needs met requires attention and improvement to give all Wellingtonians a better chance of a good life.
- 78% of Wellingtonians living in city housing (n=303) reported that their quality of life was good, while 6% reported it as poor. When asked specifically about their quality of life during Covid 'lockdown' or isolation periods, respondents were less positive, with 'good' responses decreasing to 70%, and 'poor' ratings doubling to 12%.

Without appropriate action, growing cities can lead to more social problems and less cohesion

Growing cities where people do not feel safe, connected, or a sense of community can lead to growing social disparity and feelings of isolation.

- Respondents (n=37) advocated for improved social connection through urban design that supports active transport. This was with the idea to facilitate incidental interactions between community members.
- People expressed support for funding not-for-profit organisations and volunteering opportunities as a means for people to connect.
- Personal safety concerns, particularly fear of anti-social behaviour, can stop people from interacting, so making cities safer may help encourage more social connection.

Wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of factors, all of which have to work together to achieve better outcomes

Wellbeing is determined by a wide range of factors, from housing quality to transport options, as well as personal safety, mental and physical health, and community connection. People acknowledge the variety of areas that need improvements to ensure better social outcomes.

- Respondents (n=5,692) argued that better public transport would support the wellbeing of Wellingtonians.
- Wellingtonians report experiencing more housing challenges, including poor housing quality, low affordability, and personal safety issues associated with housing. With the rise in people working from home and the poor housing experienced by many, the importance of 'third spaces' such as libraries has been highlighted.
- The role of organisations and institutions such as employers, volunteer organisations and faith-based institutions in supporting people's wellbeing was recognised by respondents (n=37).

Acceptance and belonging

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)
 Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)
 Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)
 Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)
 Wellington at Night Survey 2021 (n=608)

Diversity is what makes Wellington a unique and vibrant city, and this should be celebrated

People want Wellington to be a vibrant and inclusive city that celebrates its diversity, even more than it already does. Ensuring that the city caters to a wide range of people is important to help people feel a sense of acceptance and belonging in the city.

- Particular groups that respondents wanted to see considered when discussing diversity and inclusivity across the five projects analysed for this topic include Māori and Pasifika people, other ethnic minority groups in Wellington, the LGBT+ community, people with disabilities, and people of all ages and genders.
- Respondents (n=137) wanted to see Wellington's arts scene embracing diversity as a strength and ensuring that art and events are accessible to everyone. Venue affordability was noted as a potential barrier for some people. In particular, people wanted to see the disabled community considered more as both artists and audience.
- At least 58% of respondents (n=608) felt accepted for who they are in each of the main city precincts (at night-time) with Newtown being the place where most people felt accepted (84%), followed by Kelburn area (76%) and Upper Cuba (70%).

A sense of belonging can be facilitated through the built environment

Using design and the built environment to support Wellington's diverse population was seen as an important way to help people feel acceptance and belonging in the city.

- Employing universal design principles to make spaces accessible and inviting to all was seen as a good step to achieve this goal.
- Respondents (n=137) also wanted to see safe spaces created where members of different communities could gather, create, and spend time.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Climate change

Climate Change perceptions (n=738)

Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1999)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

Not enough is being done to reduce climate change impacts

Respondents expressed doubt that enough was being done to prepare Wellington for the impacts of climate change. There is high awareness of the likely impacts of climate change, and many believe these impacts are starting to be felt. Strong, decisive action is required to manage climate change.

- Very few respondents (n=738) believed that the city is on track to achieve its emission reduction targets in 2022 (6%). This had increased slightly from 5% the previous year. Central and local government are viewed as bearing the greatest responsibility for this.
- The dominant reason cited by 47% of respondents (n=738) is the absence of a clear response or visible progress in addressing the issue. This indicates a perceived lack of action or effective measures taken to reduce emissions.
- Approximately 25% of respondents (n=738) believe that the city's high reliance on cars is hindering progress in meeting emission reduction targets. This suggests that the prevalence of private vehicles is seen as a significant obstacle to reducing emissions.
- 72% of respondents stated it was very or somewhat important to partner with mana whenua and Māori to explore a Māori worldview of managing climate change and moving to a circular economy (n=69).

Sustainability

Annual Plan 2022/23 (n=840)
 Climate Change perceptions (n=738)
 Future of the Central Library consultation 2020 (n=1463)
 Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)
 Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)
 Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

Wellington needs to act sustainably

Respondents want to see Wellington taking the lead on sustainability, including sustainable building practices, and low or zero carbon transport options. They want to see improved public transport, better waste management or a circular economy, and a reduction in car use to protect the city against the impacts of climate change.

- 75% of respondents (n=738) think that providing low or zero carbon transport options in the city is very important to reduce emissions, while 62% think that incentivising improved energy efficiency of city buildings is very important.
- 75% of respondents (n=358) supported re-indigenising as a strategic focus for Wellington City.
- 50% of respondents (n=840) support the idea of a \$20m fund to support the building of energy efficient homes or buildings in Wellington.

Residents do not always prioritise sustainability when trade-offs are required

Though discussion of sustainability as a concept often elicited supportive and sometimes urgent commentary, when respondents were asked to make trade-offs in real situations, sustainability did not emerge as a key priority, with things like safety, resilience, and cost influencing decision-making more strongly.

- 27% of the 1098 respondents from Wellington ranked 'Making the building safe' the number one factor in their decision, compared to just 3% who selected sustainability as their top influencing factor when considering the future of the city's central library.

Waste management

Annual Plan 2022/23 (n=840)
 He anamata para kore mō Pōneke - A zero waste future for Wellington (n=83)
 Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Wellingtonians need to be supported to improve their consumption and waste management.

Respondents want improved waste management but owing to objections to rates increases, want this to be facilitated via an alternative organisation.

- The Zero Waste Strategy objectives focused on safe and responsible disposal of waste that cannot be avoided, reduced, reused, or recycled; a shift towards a more circular economy; accessible waste reduction; and a rethink or redesign of products to reduce the waste created. Overall, there was majority support for all four objectives presented in the Zero Waste Strategy, with between 88% and 94% of respondents supporting each of them (n=83).
- The most common theme raised by respondents (n=83) across all four objectives was the implementation of the Zero Waste Strategy, with comments indicating an overall desire for responsible waste management options to be accessible to Wellingtonians through equitable services and programmes.
- The majority of respondents (n=1,999) supported improving waste management but many were wary of the cost so preferred for funding to originate from sources other than the Council.
- Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents (n=1,070) were satisfied with kerbside recycling collection, while 78% were satisfied with rubbish collection. Both measures have remained relatively consistent over the past few years, and both experienced a low point for satisfaction in 2019 (65% and 71% respectively).
- Similar numbers (n=1,070) indicated that their main method for disposing of kitchen food scraps were the rubbish bin (39%), or home composting (36%).

OUR ECONOMY

Costs

Aho Tini 2030 Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (n=137)
Annual Plan 2022/23 (n=840)
Annual Plan 2023/24 (n=351)
Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)
Future of the Central Library consultation 2020 (n=1463)
Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)
Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)
Wellington at Night Survey 2021 (n=608)

People who gave feedback are concerned about Council spending and high costs

There was a lot of debate about council spending and how this is reflected in rates and other costs to residents. Although 'nice to haves' are broadly thought less important than 'necessary' projects, each is defined and prioritised differently by groups with different interests.

- There was 78% support for a funding grants review to ensure they best deliver outcomes for the wellbeing of local community economies (n=69).
- Slightly more respondents thought it unimportant (41%) than important (37%) for council to invest in Sky Stadium (n=69). There was more support than opposition for investment in TSB Arena and the Opera House, however.
- Support for material fees increase was expressed by 60% of respondents (n=351) while 19% and 21% respectively did not support increases or didn't know/were neutral. There was some support for an increase in material fees to offset rates increases.
- The cost of redeveloping the Central Library was of concern to respondents (n=1,463), particularly considering its questionable status as a heritage building and the time a remediation could take. People suggested other projects were more deserving of funding.
- The 2022/23 Annual Plan Budget garnered mixed levels of support, with a majority of 55% stating they were either neutral or that they didn't know if they supported it (n=840).
- The 2021 LTP engagement showed that support for the Budget was mixed and that there was more support from people who made submissions (54%) than from survey respondents (29%) (n= 1,999). Again, there were a high proportion of neutral and 'don't know' responses.
- Negative opinions about Council spending were often rates-driven as opposed to being driven by opposition to the actual initiatives (n=1,999).

People don't want to see rates increases

There were wide-ranging objections to rates increases. While many simply stated their objection to rates rises, others characterised rates rises as an increasingly tough burden on residents. However, there was some support for targeted rates rises to fix infrastructure, for example.

- The most frequent theme within overall comments on the 2023/24 Annual Plan was an objection to rates increases (n=351). Next most frequent themes were support for cancelling projects, and general support for the plan.
- There was support for costs savings over rates increases (n=351).
- There was more support for establishing a community housing trust (50%) than there was for Council to raise rates to retain City Housing (14%) (n=840).

Costs and pricing can deter activity

High costs associated with parking, entertainment, events, and recreation activities deter city residents' participation in various activities. The notion of cost as a barrier was repeatedly referenced with direct and indirect statements made about how this affects certain groups.

- Low-cost or free events were in the top three activities/services desired by respondents (n=608) for Wellington precincts and a quarter of these same respondents stated that they did not spend time in the city at night as it was too expensive.
- For young people, the cost of internet connections and recreation activities act as a barrier to their digital literacy and physical activity participation (n=86).
- There was 61% support (n=840) for removing library charges to remove barriers to accessing Council libraries.
- Those with an interest in the arts expressed concern that costs of living are such that creatives can find city living untenable – almost a quarter of people stated this (n=137). Additionally, venue hire costs (including for Council-owned venues) were said to be a barrier for performing artists.
- Welcoming community spaces in which there is no commercial imperative, such as libraries, were supported in the city (n=1,463).
- 10% of respondents (n=1,070) stated that costs were one barrier to accessing sport and recreation (lack of time was the greatest barrier, however).

People are concerned about the rising costs of living

Statements such as “it's getting too expensive” were made in relation to rates, fees, facilities use, entertainment and nightlife options, rent and housing, and parking.

- When asked for comments on material fees, the most frequent theme raised was cost of living (n=351).
- Poverty and the basic needs of people not being met were of concern to young people (n=86).
- The living wage and the cost of living were themes raised amongst oral submissions for the 2023/24 Annual Plan.
- Housing affordability was a concern in relation to enabling residents to remain living in Wellington (n=69).

Businesses and employment

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)
 Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043)
 Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal (n=1875)
 Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)
 Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

People want equitable employment opportunities for all Wellingtonians

People support a future where employment, education, and volunteering opportunities are accessible to all Wellingtonians, including young people, people living with disabilities, and new residents. Ensuring support for groups that currently face barriers to employment and education was seen as important.

- Respondents to the *Strategy for Children and Young People* engagement suggested that support is needed to connect young people with employment, education, or volunteering opportunities (n=86).
- One organisation suggested that partnering with immigrant families to ensure that they are aware of initiatives like free kindergarten may help to reduce barriers to employment or education opportunities.
- Another organisation wanted to see more support for young people living with disabilities regarding employment and education. These comments argued that good opportunities can attract families to the city.
- There was majority support for the Council taking action to reduce barriers to employment (n=69).

Upgrades need to be carefully implemented so that businesses and the public alike can all benefit

Overall, people believe that street and amenity upgrades, including better active transport infrastructure, beautification, enhanced lighting, more public seating, and more open and green spaces will improve the experience of people visiting or working in the area.

- Businesses consulted on the Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043) expressed concerns over the removal of parking spaces, yet supported the overall vision for better amenities and more pleasant and safe streets through improved lighting, better cycle infrastructure and public transport, and more outdoor spaces.
- More respondents believed that a connected, city-wide cycle network would have a positive impact on people visiting, working at, or owning businesses in areas where streets are upgraded with cycle infrastructure, than a negative impact (n=768) (n=1,875).
- 73% of respondents (n=69) agreed that it is important to investigate building/creating a weather-resilient space for farmers/artisan markets.

Night-time economy

Wellington at Night Survey 2021 (n=608)
Gambling Venues Policy (n=115)

Wellington's nightlife is lively and valued

Wellingtonians value the city's nightlife, particularly its hospitality venues, and see the city as a place to connect socially and have fun.

- For all of the proportions and percentages listed below, n=608.
- The top three activities that bring people to Wellington at night were restaurants, pubs/bars, and visiting or meeting friends; dining out was rated as good or very good by 93%.
- Upper Cuba, Newtown, the waterfront, Courtenay area and Lower Cuba were all places where at least 50% of respondents felt there was always something for them to do.
- Half of respondents had gone to the central city area in the previous week for social, cultural or recreation reasons.
- The large majority (80%) thought that early evening drinks, free events, and performing arts shows on offer in the central city were good.
- Respondents who study in the wider central city were more likely to rate going clubbing/dancing as good (69%).
- Word of mouth is the most popular way that respondents find out about what is on in Wellington (71%), followed by websites/online (65%) and social media (59%).

Costs and the bad behaviour of others represent a barrier to people enjoying the city at night

People want to enjoy nights out but worry about aggressive behaviour and affordability. Fear of aggressive patrons, and the cost of things like parking and events are prohibitive factors, and people want a greater variety of cheap/free things to do in the city.

- For all of the proportions and percentages listed below, n=608
- 67% of respondents stated that aggressive, violent, or offensive behaviour was the main issue facing Wellington central at night. This was followed by intoxicated people (64%).
- More low-cost or free events were amongst the additional activities/services that respondents desired in the city at night.
- Actions respondents felt would make them more likely to visit the city at night included reducing costs of parking and events, improving access and connections to the city, and improving the safety and look of the city.

Gambling does more harm than good to the community

People feel gambling does more harm than good and support a reduction in the number of gambling venues.

- When asked about their desired approach to reduce gambling venues/machines in Wellington, the majority of respondents (n=115) supported taking a 'sinking lid' approach, rather than lowering caps on maximum machine numbers or taking other more direct measures.
- Respondents felt that this would allow community organisations who receive funding from gambling revenue to find alternative sources of funding, while also reducing harm to the community by making gambling less accessible.

Overall economy

Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69)

People want Wellington to have a strong economy with few barriers (both as consumers and employees) for people to access this

People want WCC to take on clear actions to help the city's economy function more smoothly and benefit all Wellingtonians. Housing affordability, a circular economy, and breaking down barriers to employment were important to Wellingtonians.

- 76% of respondents support the overall direction and vision of the Economic Wellbeing Strategy (n=69).
- Over 70% of respondents supported actions to reduce barriers to employment, facilitate a transition to a circular economy, partner with mana whenua, streamline council and business processes, and support small businesses.

Digital technology offers opportunities to grow the local economy

Opportunities are seen for Wellington to develop its economy by harnessing and promoting itself as a centre of digital innovation.

- Two thirds of respondents (n=69) thought it important to develop sector profiles to understand future potential.
- Close to two thirds supported exploring opportunities for science and innovation to co-locate and commercialise their research.
- 62% thought it important to broaden the reach of targeted programmes to support emerging digital tech companies to scale up.

OUR TRANSPORT NETWORK

General connectivity

Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to city (n=638)

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)

Golden Mile 2022 (n=3,043)

Newtown to city bus and bike proposal (n=1,875)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Te Ngākau Civic Square Precinct (n=76)

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke – Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy (n=358)

People want obvious and easy connections between different parts of the city

Use of public and active transport modes is contingent on its ability to provide seamless, aligned, and connected travel experiences.

Additionally, the perceived connectedness between various parts of the city impacts on people's access to and use of areas.

- The majority of respondents believed it was important to make street changes so that buses are faster and more reliable: 78% and 84% stated this (n=1,875 and n=638 respectively).
- The majority of respondents believed it was important to have a connected network of bike routes across the city: 68% and 76% stated this (n=1,875 and n=638 respectively).
- The most requested improvement to the Brooklyn Road cycle lane trial was to improve the connections to and from the trial location (n=768).
- There was much greater support for better bus and bike connections between Newtown and the city from those who live in the area (77%) than there was from people who own or manage a business in the area (27%) (n=1,875).
- There was support for pedestrian connections to the railway station (n=3,043) and for keeping pedestrian ways and cycleways from crossing paths (to allow each mode unbroken transit).
- 65% of respondents supported the objective of Te Ngākau Civic Square as a place that is “easily and safely accessible and integrated with the wider transport network” (n=76) (just 8% opposed). However, there were different ideas about how this would be implemented.
- The goal to have parks within 10 minutes walking distance of most city residents was broadly supported (n=358).

Cycleways

Accessibility Action Plan (n=199)
Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to city (n=638)

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)

Climate Change Perceptions (n=738)

Golden Mile 2022 (n=3,043)

Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)

Long-Term Plan 2021 (n=1,999)

Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal (n=1,875)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

General support for cycleways

Across the engagements related to cycleways there was broad support for cycle infrastructure to be a WCC priority. Supporters of cycling infrastructure believe that good cycling facilities will improve the safety and efficiency of active transport and encourage mode shift. However, support was not universal; objections to cycleways were most often about them not being used/needed, or about the costs.

- Respondents (n=1,999) made 525 comments about cycling and cycleways investment, two thirds of which stated that cycleways are a high priority and require adequate funding.
- Respondents (n=5,692) made far more positive comments and suggestions about cycling and active transport modes (1,410) than unfavourable comments (402).
 - The majority of favourable comments simply called for the provision of active transport facilities (1,292 comments).
 - Even amongst unfavourable comments, a majority argued that proposed roading changes do not provide enough facilities for walking, cycling and active transport modes (251 comments).
 - Meanwhile, a smaller number (151 comments) opposed facilities for walking, cycling and active modes.
- Respondents to this same engagement who were less supportive of walking and cycling facilities felt the money would be better spent elsewhere on the transport network. They contended that Wellington's climate and terrain are not conducive to cycling, and argued that the bike paths and walkways won't be used enough to justify the investment.
- 75% of respondents (n=738) think that providing low or zero carbon transport options in the city, including cycleways, is important to reduce emissions. This was rated the most important emission reduction action by respondents.
- There was more satisfaction than dissatisfaction amongst respondents (n=1,070) for cycling on Wellington's cycleways (36% dissatisfied, 41% satisfied).
- Satisfaction with cycleways has increased steadily from 33% in 2019 to 41% in 2023.

People want safe, well-connected cycleways

Responses across several community engagement projects indicated that people want a city that is well connected, enjoyable and safe for people to walk, cycle, or scooter around.

- 76% of respondents (n=638) thought it important or very important to have a connected and complete network. 19% believe it is of low importance or not important.
- When respondents (n=3,043) shared what they did and did not want in relation to cycleways, it emerged that people wanted to feel safer cycling, and did not want breaks or unnecessary bends or curves in cycleways. People also want separate cycleways instead of shared paths, with clear definition between cycle path and pedestrian areas, including markings and signage between modes.
- To make cycleways more usable, people also want dedicated, safe, and convenient places to park bikes and scooters (n=3,043).

Cyclists benefit from roading upgrades over other groups

Respondents across a range of submissions indicated that WCC's roading upgrades have the greatest positive impact on cyclists, while users of other transport modes, including drivers of vehicles, bus users, and those with mobility issues, would not benefit to as great an extent.

- 74% of respondents (n=768) felt the new road layout trailed on Brooklyn Road had a positive impact on cyclists. Other groups received significantly lower results, with only 42% of vehicle drivers (the second highest group) reporting positive impacts.
- Overall, however, respondents (n=768) felt the changes made Brooklyn Road safer for all users (64%).
- People on bikes were most likely to answer positively and people driving vehicles were most likely to answer negatively (n=768).
- Respondents to the *Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal* engagement (n=1875) indicated that proposed roading changes would have positive impacts on cyclists, bus users, pedestrians, people visiting a business, or those working/owning businesses in the area, but would have neutral or negative impacts on drivers.

Cycleways are not accessible to all

Cycleways in Wellington were said to not have been designed with accessibility in mind and to be difficult to navigate as a person with limited mobility. There was a perception among some respondents that WCC prioritises cyclists over the accessibility needs of disabled people.

- When asked to rate the accessibility of cycleways, almost half (47%) of respondents (n=199, with 84% of respondents living with/supporting someone with a disability or access need) report they do not use them. Of the remaining respondents, 25% think the accessibility of cycleways is bad or very bad.
- As well as accessibility concerns about cycleways themselves, some respondents (n=199) also expressed worry over the loss of parking spaces for the creation of cycleways or noted that cycleways can make it harder to access and use bus stops, or limit where people can be dropped off and therefore how close they are to their destination.
- Sharing urban space with cyclists was seen as challenging, especially for those with visual impairments or mobility issues who face difficulties in safely crossing the road due to cycleways.
- Across two engagements on proposed cycleways (n=638 & n=1,875) respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the changes would have a positive or negative impact on particular groups. In both engagements, people living with a disability or mobility issue had the second lowest percentage of positive ratings, behind drivers of vehicles.

Walking/other active transport

Accessibility Action Plan (n=199)

Golden Mile 2022 (n=3,043)

Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)

Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal (n=1875)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

Strategy for Children and Young People (n=86)

People want safe, accessible, and well-connected pedestrian routes

People support providing good active transport infrastructure; this was evident from all six projects relevant to this theme. Respondents value being able to safely and effectively move around on foot or via other active transport modes such as e-scooters.

- In the *Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal* engagement (n=1875), over half of the 10% of respondents who primarily walk/run along the route thought the impacts for pedestrians/runners would be positive. This group more often perceived bus users and cyclists as likely to be positively impacted by the proposed changes.
- Respondents (n=5,692) made far more positive comments and suggestions about active transport modes (1,410) than unfavourable comments (402). The majority of favourable comments simply called for the provision of active transport facilities (1,292 comments) and over half of unfavourable comments noted that suggested options do not provide enough facilities for active modes (251 comments). Comparatively, only 151 comments actually opposed facilities for active modes.
- Respondents (n=3,043) indicated that they wanted pedestrians to be separated from cyclists and wanted traffic lights programmed to allow enough time for pedestrians to cross. They also wanted raised, paved crossings as these are accessible, safe, slow vehicles down, and create a more pedestrian-friendly look and feel.
- Just over two thirds of respondents (65%) (n=1,070) indicated they were satisfied with walking on Wellington's footpaths.

Accessibility – heading in the right direction but needs work

Pedestrian crossings and walking routes are improving, but still need work to become more accessible to everyone.

- Respondents (n=199) argued that access to pedestrian crossings is improving, but challenges remain with steep and narrow kerb cuts affecting wheelchair users. Use of kerb cuts is reported as being inconsistent and patchy across the city.
- Respondents suggested that signals at crossings also need improvement. People want to see audio signals installed at more crossings and want longer durations and louder sound. This is especially important for people with low vision, who rely on audio and tactile clues for safe crossing.

Public transport

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)

Climate Change perceptions (n=738)

Golden Mile 2022 (n=3,043)

Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)

Newtown to City Bus and Bike Proposal (n=1875)

Public transport needs improvement

Improvements are needed to make Wellington's public transport more efficient and more appealing to Wellingtonians.

- 44% of respondents (n=738) thought that Wellington City was not on track to meet emissions targets. Of these, 24% attributed this to the city's public transport not being good enough.
- In the same engagement, 75% of respondents thought that providing low carbon transport options, including public transport, is important to reduce emissions.
- 78% of respondents (n=1875) think it important or very important to make street improvements so buses are quicker and more reliable. 10% believe this is of low importance or not important.
- Opinions were split on whether the changes made in the Brooklyn Road trial (n=768) had a positive or negative impact on bus users, with 29% of respondents believing the impact was positive, while 31% felt the impact was negative.

Buses and bus stops must be reliable and comfortable to use

People seek reliability from bus services; they want to be able to be sure that their bus will come, and that while they are waiting they are safe and comfortable (e.g., sheltered from rain, wind, sun).

- In the Golden Mile 2022 mid-year engagement (n=3,043), people discussed what they want and do not want for buses and bus stops. People want shelter from sun, wind, and rain, including walls for diagonal rain, electronic signs displaying bus information visible from both sides, and parking for lower emission travel options (motorbikes, mopeds and EVs). Some people like the reduced number of stops, while others wanted the stops to remain where they are, particularly on Lambton Quay and Courtenay Place.
- People don't want bus stops to be in or near a shared space with cyclists and pedestrians, glass bus shelter roofs that don't protect people from the sun, inline bus stops that prevent buses from passing each other, and did not want the physical distance between stops to be too long, especially for elderly or those with mobility issues.

Parking

Accessibility Action Plan (n=199)
 Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)
 Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)
 Long-Term Plan (n=1,999)
 Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)
 Wellington at Night Survey (n=608)

Parking was a contentious topic with support for both more/cheaper parking and for less parking

People reported that parking is difficult and expensive in Wellington, and the sentiment remains that car parking availability is a requirement for city living. However, support was offered in equally forthright terms for parking spaces to be converted to road space for active mode choices (and, more broadly, to deprioritise car use).

- Satisfaction with parking availability is relatively low and is tracking downwards: in 2023, 30% of respondents were satisfied with weekday parking availability and 26% were satisfied with weekend parking (n=1,070).
- Low parking availability was in the top two reasons given by people who had not recently visited Wellington City at night for why they do not visit (n=608).
- An occupancy survey undertaken to assess the Brooklyn Road cycleway trial actually showed excess parking, even with a 35% reduction in parking spaces that the cycleway trial resulted in.
- Commentary around car parking was typically based on opinions that fell into one of two camps: that reducing car access would have multiple environmental and social benefits, and that allowing car access would benefit individuals who wish to travel that way (n=5,692).
- There was some support for reducing car parking availability to encourage mode-shift (n=1,999).
- Car parking was of particular importance to those with disabilities; 25% of respondents (n=199) assessed mobility parking availability in the city as bad, and more enforcement of non-permitted mobility parking was supported.

Parking is viewed as expensive

People object to paying high prices to park their car and do not want to see fees increase. The costs associated with parking were cited as deterring visitation to Wellington city in the evenings (other times were not asked about).

- 54% of respondents do not support parking fee increases – the majority of which was strong opposition – while 29% supported fees increases (n=1,999).
- Reasons offered for opinions on car parking fees increases aligned with broader opinions on car use – that is, advocates for fees increases wanted to see cars deprioritised, while others wanted unimpeded private vehicle access.

Mode choice

Brooklyn Road Trial Survey (n=768)

Community Facilities Plan (n=4,000)

Let's Get Wellington Moving Combined Mass Rapid Transit and Strategic Highway (n=5,692)

Residents Monitoring Survey (n=1,070)

People use a variety of modes to get around Wellington, and want to have the ability to choose

Mode choice is impacted by a range of factors, not all of which are revealed in commentary on this topic. Bus and car use remain the most popular modes for commuting, and cycling was seen to increase with the installation of one trial cycle lane, at least. The proximity of destinations can impact on mode choice, as can preference, weather, and habit.

- Among respondents who travel into central Wellington on most weekdays, similar proportions said their main mode of travelling was by bus, car, or walking (29%, 28% and 21% respectively) (n=1,070).
- The number of commuters who walk and who take the train are tracking down overall, while bus and car commuting (as well as cycling) is tracking up (n=1,070).
- Impressions of the acceptability of peak travel volumes is tracking downwards to 40% in 2023 (n=1,070), a factor that can impact on people's mode choice.
- Cars remain the most popular mode for accessing pools (76%), and recreation centres (75%), but more people walk to libraries (55%) than drive (46%) or bus/train (26%) (n=4,000).
- Most people reported that they are more likely to use community facilities where travel time is less than 10 minutes (n=4,000).
- There was support for retaining private vehicle access *alongside* improving active modes; this was to allow personal choice while the provision of active transport infrastructure is rolled out. 10% of the 3,123 respondents who offered unprompted statements in a LGWM consultation suggested this (n=5,692).
- Cyclist numbers were observed to increase (6% and 10% on weekdays and weekends respectively) during the Brooklyn Road cycle lane trial and average traffic speeds (85th percentile) fell from 56 km/h to 51.7 km/h (n=768). Note this is still over the 50 km/h limit.

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