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# SAFER SPEED LIMIT

## AN INSIGHT INTO CITY RESIDENTS' OPINIONS



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# BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- The proposal is to reduce the speed limit in Wellington's central city to 30 km/h. This would extend the limit that already applies along the Golden Mile to a wider area.
- The Wellington City Council held a public consultation on the proposal. This public consultation closed on March 9, 2014.
- From 2008–2012, there were 766 crashes in the central city. Lowering the speed limit is designed to reduce the number and severity of crashes in Wellington, making the city centre safer, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council also believes that lowering the speed limit will make the city centre a more pleasant place to shop and do business.
- Introducing a safer speed limit follows the Government's focus on safer speed areas and is consistent with changes being made in other cities in New Zealand and overseas.

# RESEARCH DESIGN

- The research was conducted via an online survey.
- Wellington City residents, who are members of panels managed by Survey Sampling International (SSI), were invited to participate in this survey.
- Quotas were set for age and gender to help ensure the sample approximatesthe make-up of Wellington City's population. Adjustments were made to the data by weighting to ensure that the sample was representative of the population.
- The survey was designed to compare respondents' initial opinions to their informed opinions. Opinions were informed by an article originally published in the Dominion Post that presented different perspectives on the proposal.

# INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

After stating their initial reaction to the proposal, respondents were asked to read this article. Respondents were then asked to indicate whether they had changed their opinion on the proposal and, if so, why they had chosen to do this. This article was selected because it presented both sides of the argument

**KATIE CHAPMAN**  
WELLINGTON

DRIVERS will simply ignore a planned 30kmh speed limit in central Wellington, and the streets would be safer if cameras were installed at more intersections to nab red-light jumpers, the AA says.

The motoring organisation told a city council subcommittee that it opposed the speed limit plan because it had "a range of flaws" and would not improve safety.

It wants the council to take a "holistic approach" that would include upgraded pedestrian crossings, physical barriers to prevent jaywalking, encouraging cyclists to wear hi-visibility clothing, and putting more cameras on traffic lights at dangerous junctions.

The AA surveyed almost 6000 of its members in the Wellington region, and found they had strongly divided views on cutting the limit to 30kmh, with many unconvinced it would improve road safety, or

that drivers would take any notice of the limit outside peak times.

"We do not believe that simply reducing the speed limit will materially affect crash numbers," Wellington district chairman Michael Gross said.

But while the AA shot down the 30kmh proposal to councillors yesterday, other organisations, including police, have praised the plan as helping improve city safety.

That division is reflected in public feedback. Of the 734 submissions received by the council, exactly half opposed the proposal, and half either supported it, or said they agreed with it with some changes.

The council wants to extend the 30kmh limit from the Golden Mile to the rest of the CBD, where the limit is now 50kmh.

The change would cost about \$250,000 and includes parts of The Terrace and Taranaki, Tory, Willis, Featherston, Ghuznee and Dixon streets. The harbour quays and



Vivian St would not be included.

From 2007 to 2011, there were 2200 injury crashes in Wellington City, of which 19 per cent involved pedestrians.

The AA was among groups addressing a special council subcom-

mittee on the plan yesterday, and presented its own survey results.

The survey had 7814 responses – about 37 per cent of the AA's Wellington membership – and a margin of error of 1.1 per cent.

Among its findings was that

## WHAT THE PUBLIC SAID

Feedback from 734 submissions to Wellington City Council on its proposal to extend the 30kmh speed limit from the Golden Mile to the rest of the central city.

**Yes – in general support: 34 per cent**

**Yes – in support, but with changes: 16 per cent**

**No – do not support: 50 per cent**

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The subcommittee will meet next month to discuss the plan, and will give a recommendation to the full council to debate.

drivers said people probably would not obey it, and 10.12 per cent said people definitely would not.

The survey also found a three-way split for different speeds: 31.25 per cent preferred 30kmh, 32.57 per cent supported 40kmh, and 34.67 backed 50kmh.

The results showed no clear mandate for the council to change the speed limit, AA argued.

That message was supported by several other submitters and some criticised the council's crash data, saying it had no reference to how many central-city crashes involved cars travelling at more than 30kmh.

After the meeting, the council's safe and sustainable transport manager, Paul Barker, said the council was looking at a raft of changes alongside the speed limit, including waiting times at traffic lights to discourage jaywalking.

"It needs to be part of a package, and we see it as part of that." Red-light cameras were being

looked at by central government, but Wellington was likely to get no more than three, for the most dangerous intersections, he said.

Other submitters praised the speed-limit proposal.

Several suggested the area should be extended to ensure a bigger catchment that covered the whole inner-city area and join up with cycle lanes, making people feel safer when they left the dedicated lanes because they'd be in a slower zone.

Subcommittee chairman Andy Foster said any expansion would require a further consultation, but the council could look at a "phase two".

Senior Sergeant Richard Hocken, Wellington district road policing response manager, supported the 30kmh limit but warned there would not be any greater policing. "I'm not promising you long-term special policing. We will assist in making the change but you're not going to get any more than you currently get."

# SAMPLE SIZE ACHIEVED

A total of 371 residents completed this survey.

Of the 371 total respondents, 356 travel into the city centre at least once a week and 292 are drivers.

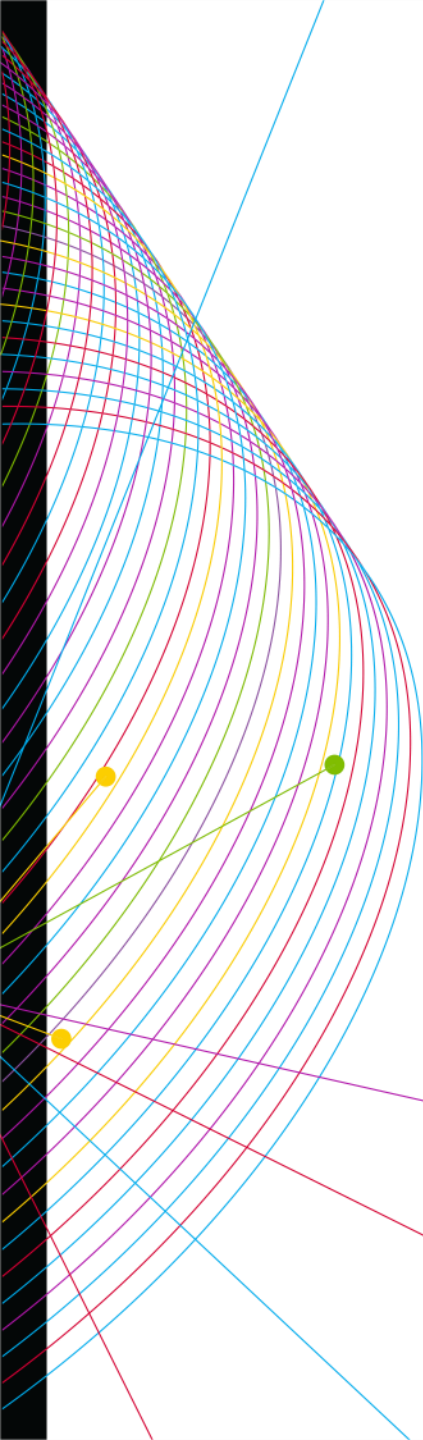
The breakdown of this sample, compared with the make-up of the Wellington City population, is outlined below:

Gender	Age Group	Population	Sample size achieved	% of unweighted sample	% of weighted sample
Male	15-24	10%	19	5%	10%
	25-39	14%	33	9%	14%
	40-59	16%	47	13%	16%
	60+	8%	51	14%	8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Female	15-24	11%	41	11%	11%
	25-39	15%	63	17%	15%
	40-59	17%	68	18%	17%
	60+	9%	49	13%	9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>52%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data has been weighted to account for the differences between the sample and population.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The findings of this survey differed from those of the public consultation. A significantly lower percentage of respondents reported initially opposing the proposal in this survey than in the public consultation (23% cf. 50%). Additionally, the percentage of respondents who initially supported the proposal was higher than that reported in the public consultation (49% cf. 34%). The percentage of respondents who initially supported the proposal, but with amendments, was relatively consistent across both surveys, with 13% of respondents in this survey initially supporting, but with amendments and 16% doing so during the public consultation.
- After reading the informative article, there were no significant changes in opinion. The small changes that did occur, however, were in the direction of the opinions expressed during the public consultation.
- Most of the respondents who initially supported or opposed the proposal were resolute in their opinions, with 91% of those who initially opposed the proposal continuing to do so after reading the article and 76% of those who supported it initially doing the same. Overall, after reading the article, 25% of respondents opposed the proposal and 40% supported it.
- Regardless of their support for the proposal, many respondents also felt that pedestrians needed to be more conscious of their own safety.
- The type of transport used frequently by respondents did not seem to have a large affect on their perception of the proposal or reasons for supporting the proposal. The only exception to this was amongst cyclists, who did find certain reasons for supporting the proposal more compelling than those who used other forms of transport and were more supportive of the proposal than motorists. These included a reduced speed making it safer for active modes of transport and less variation in speed creating a more steady traffic flow.



# INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL

# HOW DID RESPONDENTS INITIALLY REACT TO THE PROPOSAL?

Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) opposed the proposal. This was significantly less than the percentage of respondents who reported opposing the proposal during the public consultation (50%). While the percentage of respondents who mostly supported the proposal, but with amendments, did not vary much in comparison to the public consultation, a larger percentage of respondents indicated supporting the proposal in this survey (49% cf. 34% during the public consultation).

## QUESTION AS IT APPEARED IN THE SURVEY

Wellington City Council is proposing a speed limit of 30 km/h for Wellington's central city; extending the limit that already applies along the Golden Mile (Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Manners Street and Courtenay Place), to a wider area. They believe this will make it safer for all those using the roads: drivers and passengers, pedestrians and cyclists.

This new speed limit will cover most central city streets **including**:

- a) Parts of Te Aro
- b) The Cuba and Courtenay precincts
- c) Part of the Terrace.

But **excluding** most existing arterial routes, which would remain at 50 km/h, including:

- a) The Waterfront
- b) Cambridge and Kent Terraces
- c) Vivian Street

If you would like to see the map again, please click here.

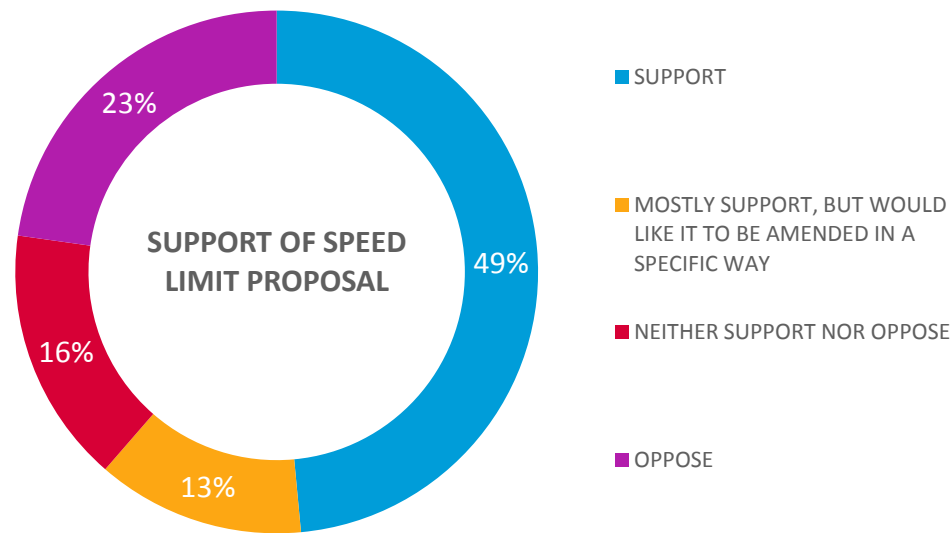
Overall, do you support or oppose this proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 kms in the central city?  
[SA]

Support .....

Mostly support, but would like it to be amended in a specific way .....

Neither support nor oppose .....

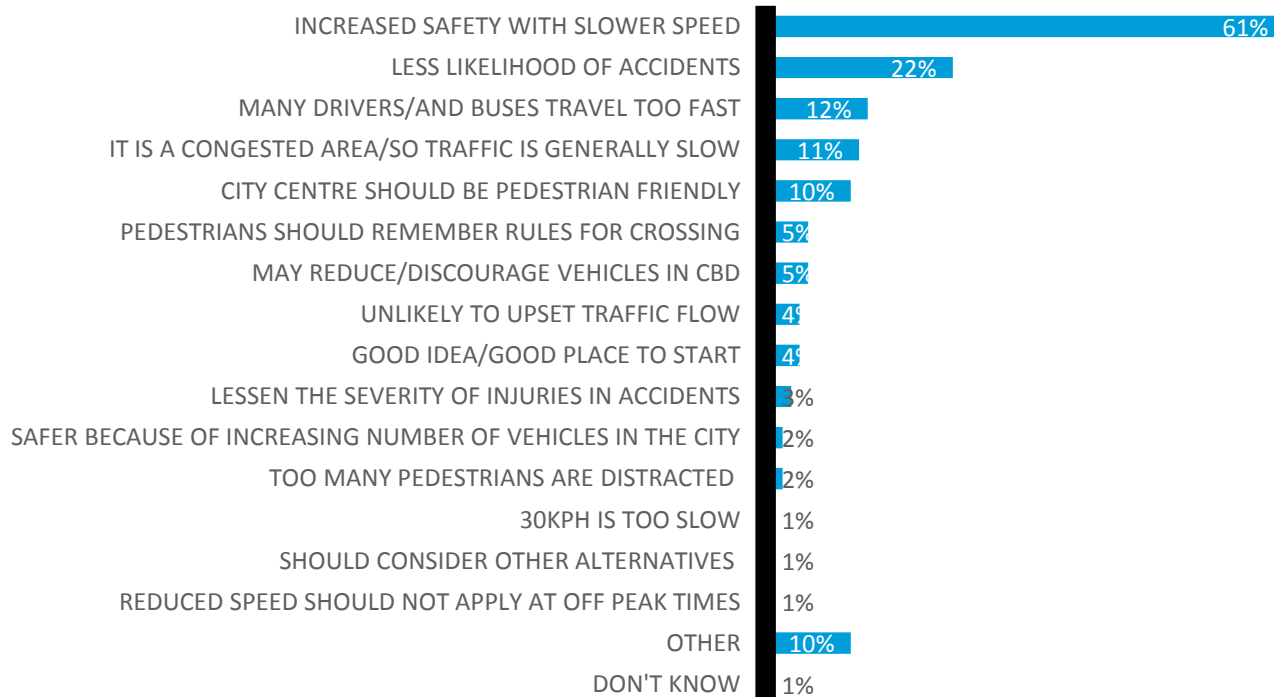
Oppose .....





# INITIAL REASON FOR SUPPORTING PROPOSAL

Of the 49% of respondents who initially supported the proposal, 61% did so because they felt there was increased safety at slower speeds.

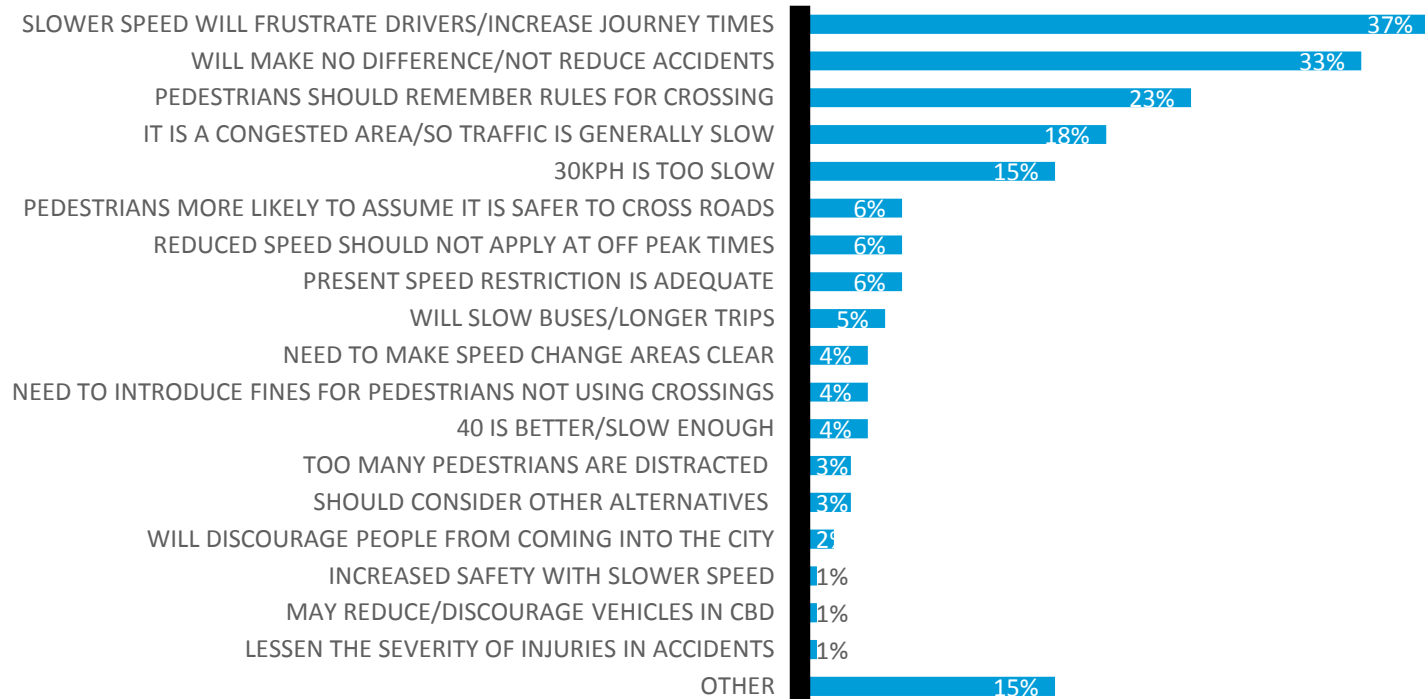


Q8. For what reason do you <insert response Q7> this proposal?

Base: Wellington City Residents who Support Proposal Pre-Information (n=174)

## INITIAL REASON FOR OPPOSING PROPOSAL

Of the 23% of respondents who opposed the proposal, the perception that slower speeds would frustrate drivers and increase journey times was the most commonly cited reason for initially opposing the proposal, with 37% of those who opposed the proposal citing this as a reason. Following this, 33% of respondents who opposed the proposal did so because they did not feel the reduction in the speed limit would make a difference or reduce accidents.



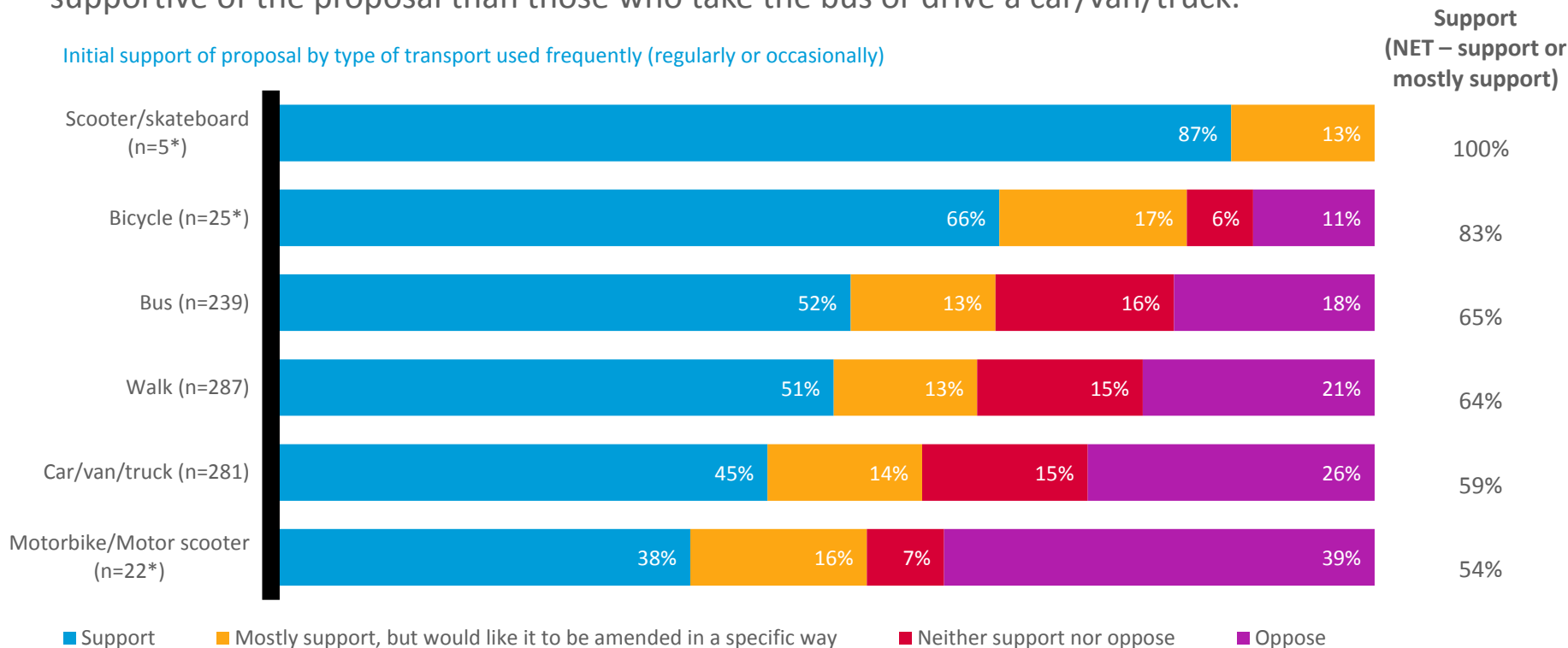
Q8. For what reason do you <insert response Q7> this proposal?

Base: Wellington City Residents who Oppose Proposal Pre-Information (n=84)

# ARE RESPONDENTS DIVIDED IN THEIR INITIAL OPINION OF THE PROPOSAL BY THE TYPE OF TRANSPORT THEY USE?

Regardless of the form of transport, over half of respondents either support or mostly support the proposal. Respondents who frequently ride a bicycle, however, are significantly more supportive of the proposal than those who take the bus or drive a car/van/truck.

Initial support of proposal by type of transport used frequently (regularly or occasionally)



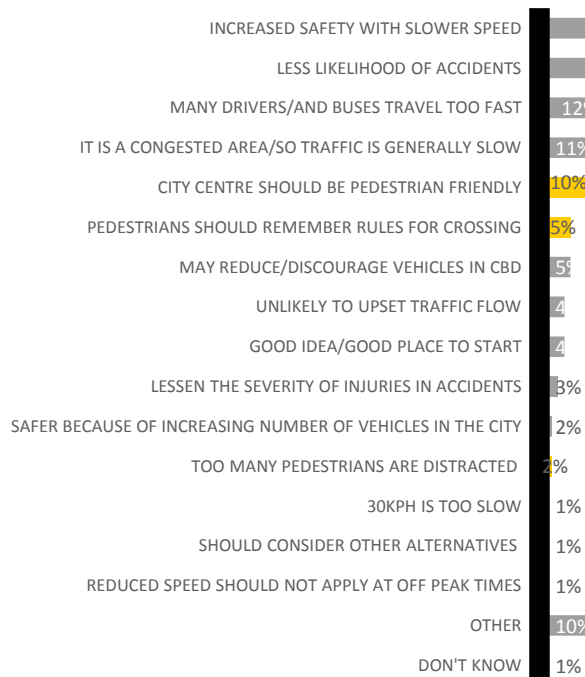
Q7. Overall, do you support or oppose this proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 kms in the central city?  
Base: Wellington City Residents who travel into the city at least once a week (n=356)

\*Small Base

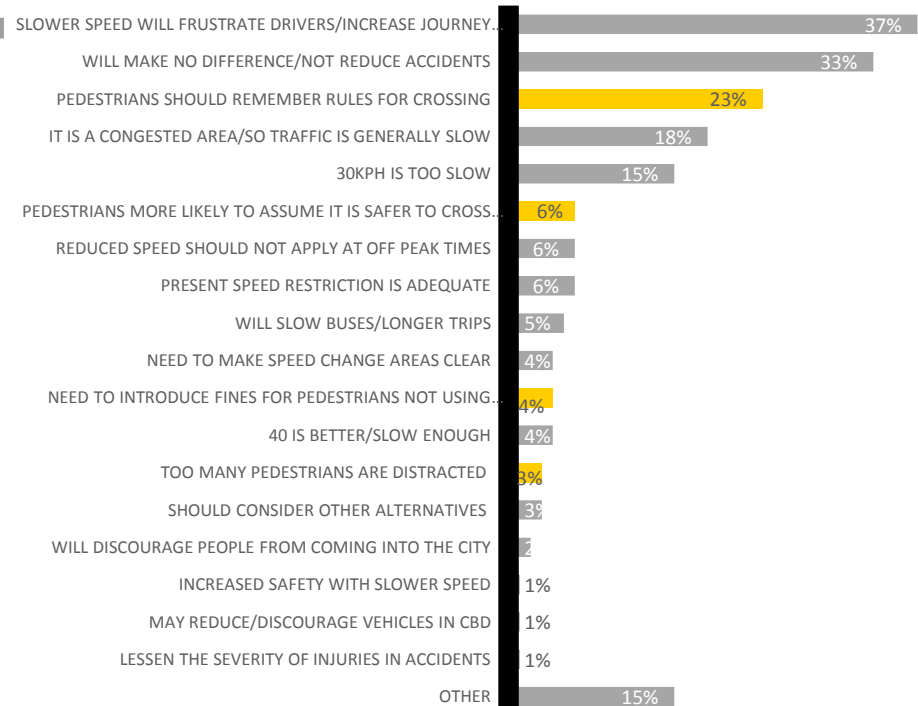
# PEDESTRIANS ALSO NEED TO BE MORE RESPONSIBLE

Pedestrian behaviour inspired respondents to both support and oppose the proposal. Regardless of their support for the proposal, respondents generally felt that pedestrians were not conscious enough and needed to pay more attention when crossing roads.


## Support




## Oppose




# COMMENTS ABOUT PEDESTRIANS



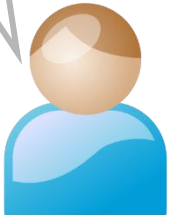
Most accidents are caused in the city by pedestrians dashing across the road instead of using crossings or people listening to music etc and not being aware of what is going on around them.



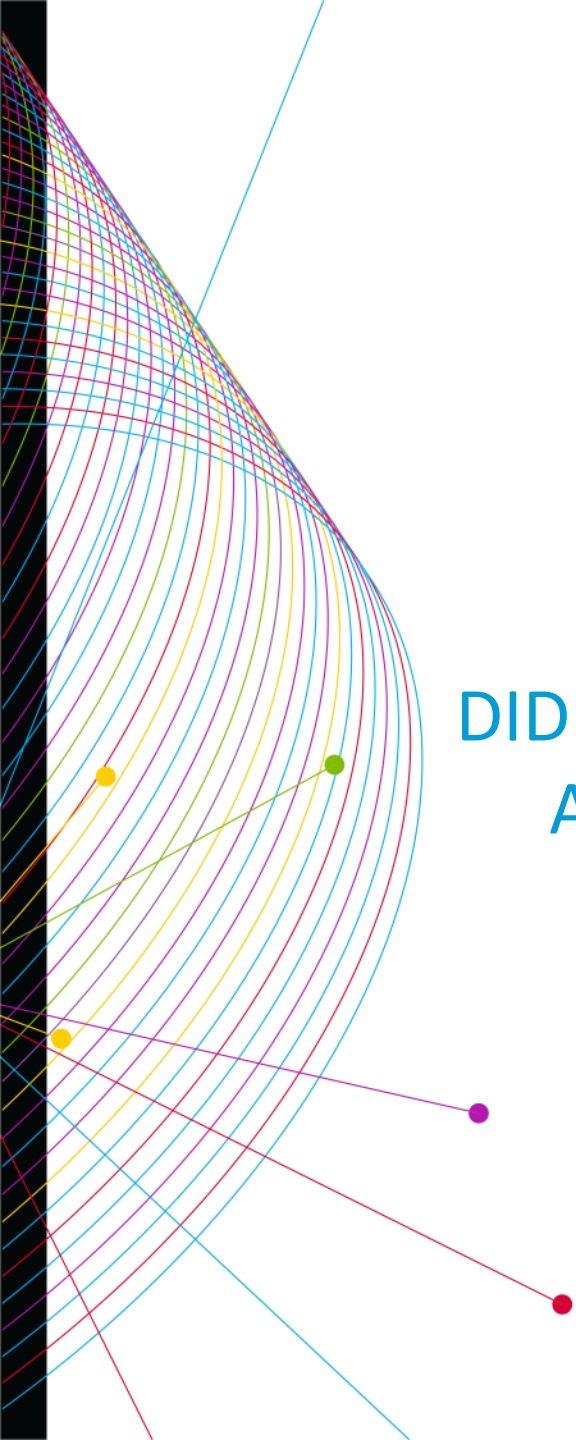
There are far too many "close calls" with public transport operators and other drivers. Please install cameras to monitor pedestrian behaviour so that vehicle drivers aren't held responsible for accidents and "close calls". There are far too many pedestrians who are irresponsible.



Drivers are not the primary problem in Wellington; pedestrians are. When you can get them to stop stepping out in front of vehicles when it is dark and they are wearing dark clothes so that they are hard to see, then maybe things would change.



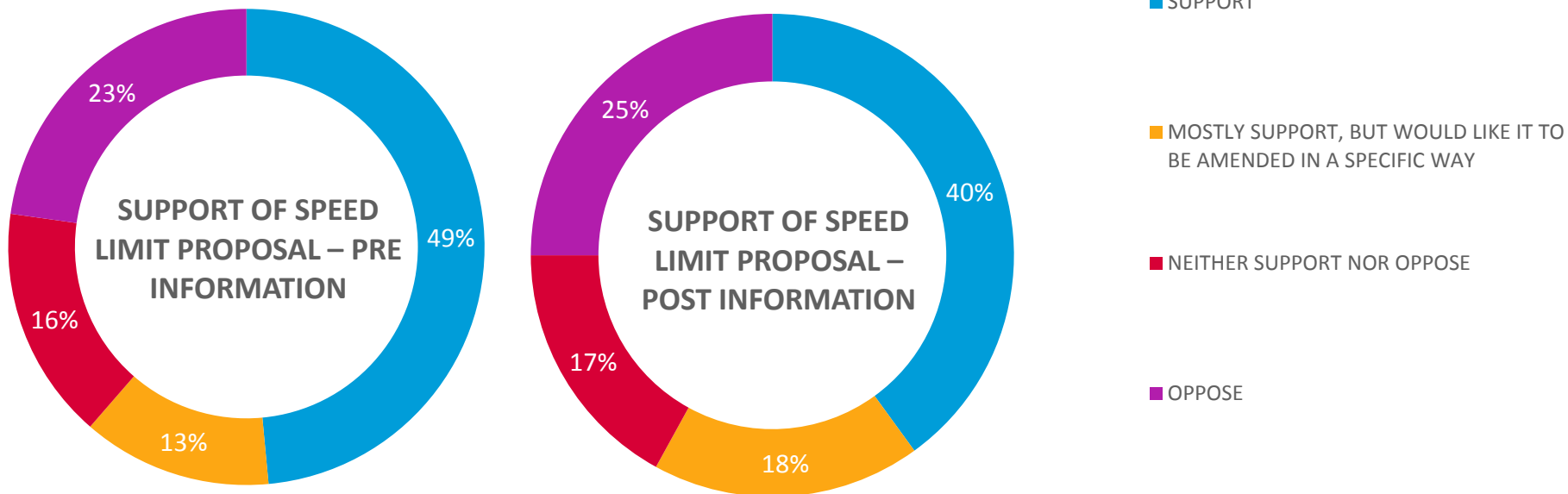
I believe a lot of the problems we have are from pedestrians. Many don't look before stepping out on to the road. In Wellington in Manner Street there are a number of accidents where it has been reported that a bus ran into a pedestrian where in the majority of case is it should be that a pedestrian walked right in front of a bus. What has happened to the "Look Right, Look Left, Look Right" before stepping out on to the road?



# DID RESPONDENTS CHANGE THEIR OPINION AFTER READING THE DOMINION POST ARTICLE?

# HOW DID RESPONDENTS REACT TO THE PROPOSAL POST-INFORMATION?

Support for the speed limit proposal remained relatively consistent. The percentage of respondents who supported the proposal dropped, but the percentage who opposed it did not rise considerably. The main movement seemed to be towards mostly supporting the proposal, but with amendments.



Q10. Overall, do you support or oppose this proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 kms in the central city?  
Base: Wellington City Residents who travel into the city at least once a week (n=356)

## HOW DID OPINIONS CHANGE?

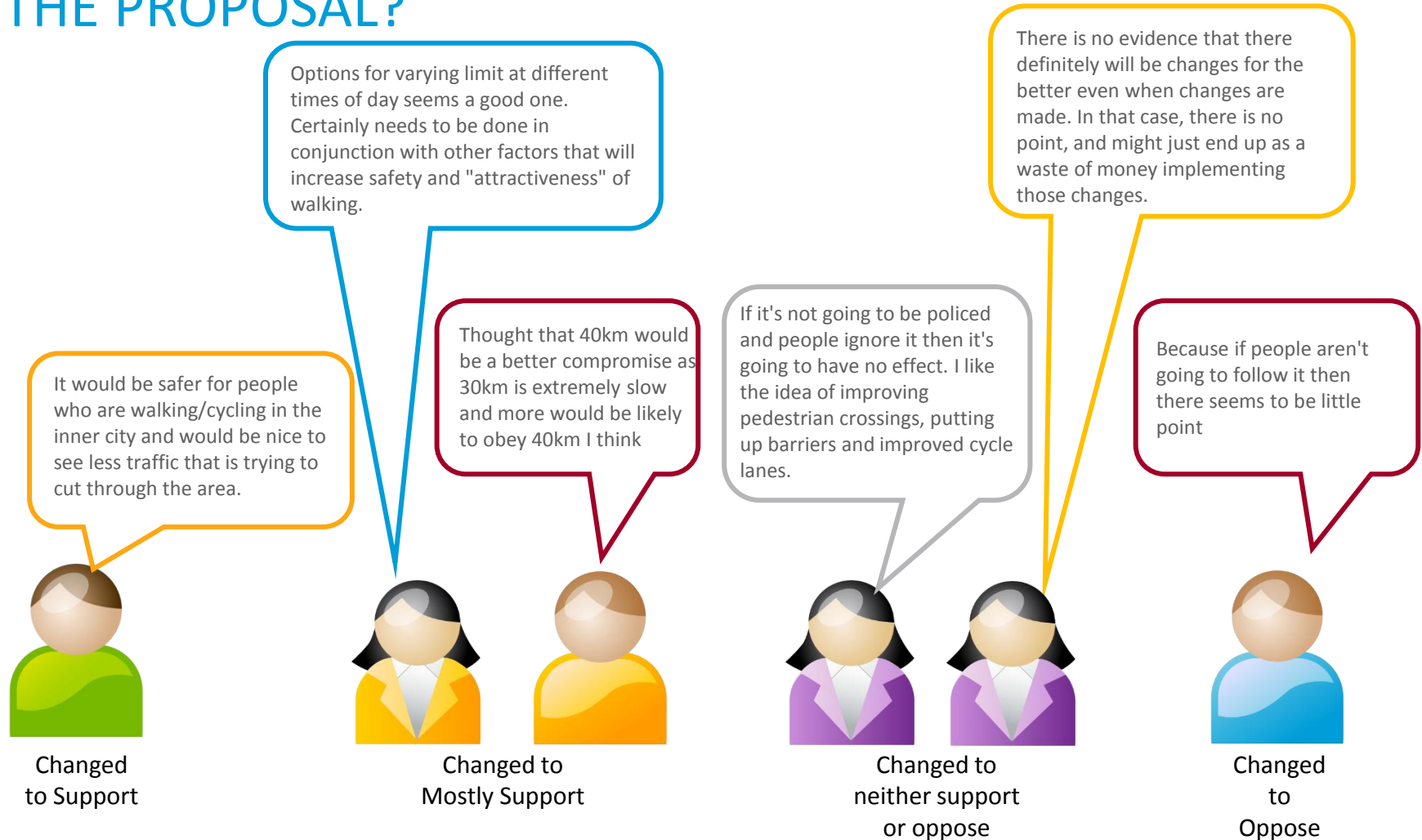
For the most part, respondents were steadfast in their initial reaction to the proposal, particularly those at the poles, with 76% of those who initially supported the proposal continuing in their support and 91% of those who initially opposed continuing to oppose. For those who did change their opinion, more information about the proposal generally had a positive effect on their opinion to the proposal, with no one who initially supported the proposal changing to oppose it and only a handful who were neutral towards it (7%) or only supported it with amendments (2%) deciding to oppose it.

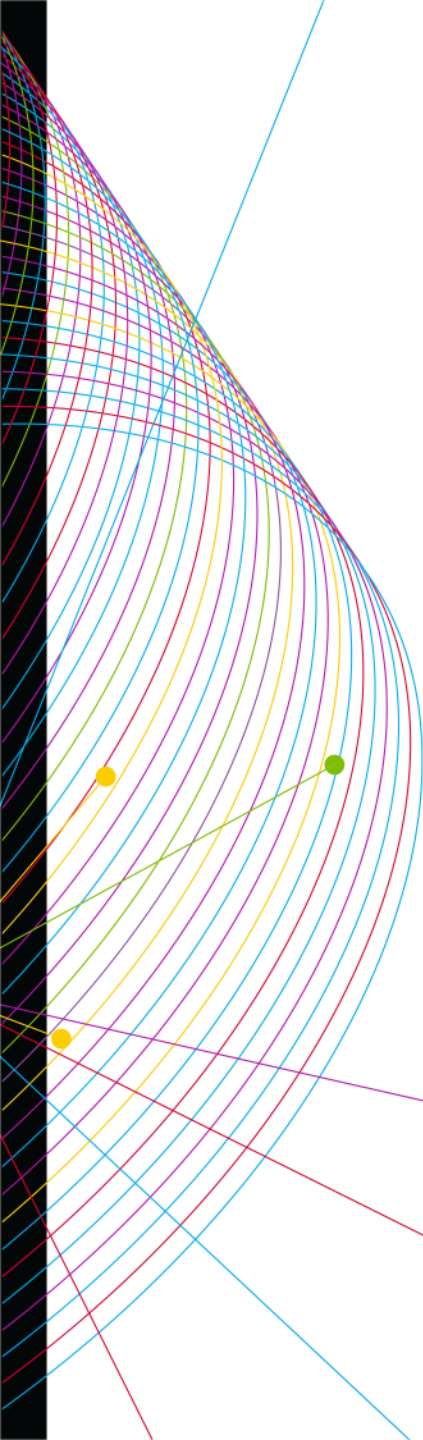
VIEWS ON PROPOSAL	SUPPORT (POST – INFORMATION) (N=174)	MOSTLY SUPPORT, BUT WOULD LIKE IT TO BE AMENDED IN A SPECIFIC WAY (POST-INFORMATION) (N=42)	NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (POST-INFORMATION) (N=56)	OPPOSE (POST-INFORMATION) (N=84)
SUPPORT (PRE-INFORMATION)	76%	18%	3%	0%
MOSTLY SUPPORT, BUT WOULD LIKE IT TO BE AMENDED IN A SPECIFIC WAY (PRE-INFORMATION)	18%	60%	11%	2%
NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (PRE-INFORMATION)	6%	18%	67%	7%
OPPOSE (PRE-INFORMATION)	1%	4%	9%	91%

Q7. Overall, do you support or oppose this proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 kms in the central city?  
Base: Wellington City Residents who travel into the city at least once a week (n=356)



# WHY DID RESPONDENTS CHANGE THEIR MIND ABOUT THE PROPOSAL?

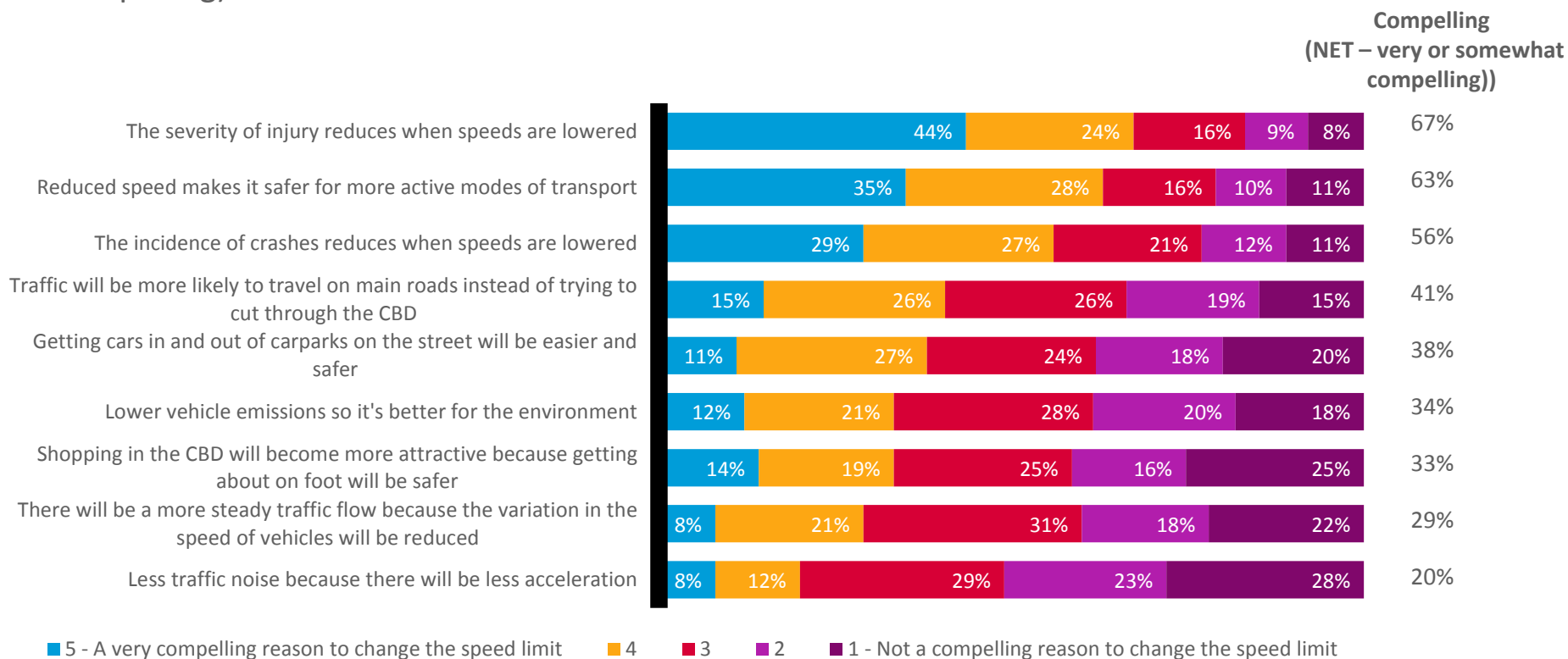




# ASSESSMENT OF REASONS TO REDUCE THE SPEED LIMIT

# WHICH REASONS FOR REDUCING THE SPEED LIMIT WERE MOST COMPELLING?

The reduction in the severity of injury when speeds are lowered was found by the largest number of respondents to be a compelling reason for reducing the speed limit (67% found it compelling).

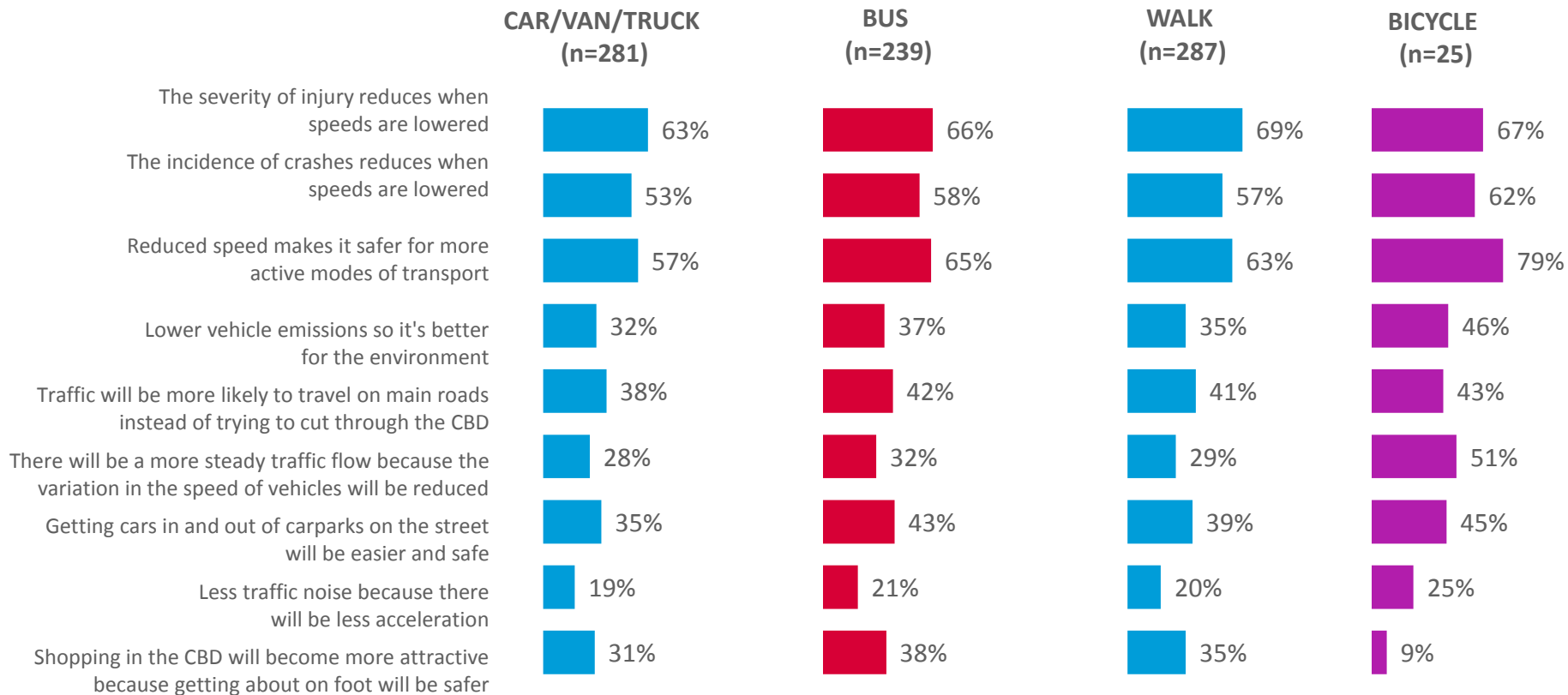


Q9. Below are listed some reasons given by the Council for reducing the speed limit in the central city. Please rate how compelling each reason is to you.

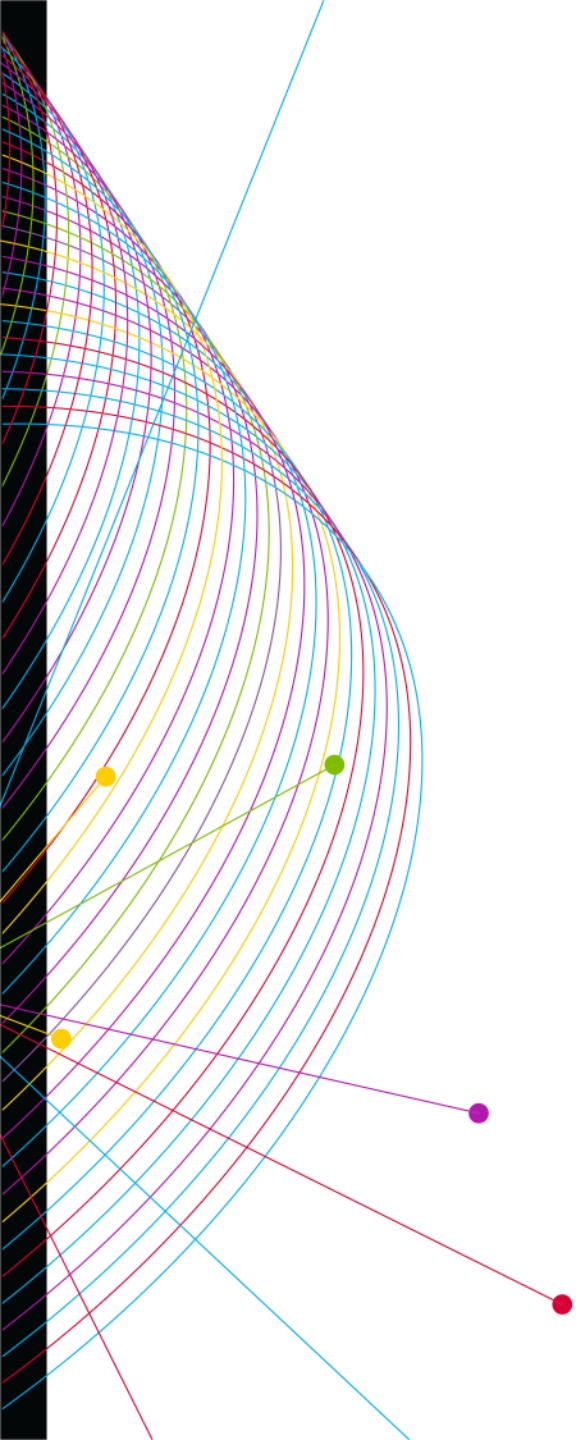
Base: Wellington City Residents who travel into the city at least once a week (n=356)

# DO RESPONDENTS WHO USE CERTAIN TYPES OF TRANSPORT FIND SOME REASONS MORE COMPELLING THAN OTHERS?

Respondents who drive a car/van/truck, ride a bus or walk tended to find reasons equally compelling. Bicyclists, however, found certain reasons significantly more compelling than drivers. These included a reduced speed making it safer for active modes of transport and less variation in speed creating a more steady traffic flow.



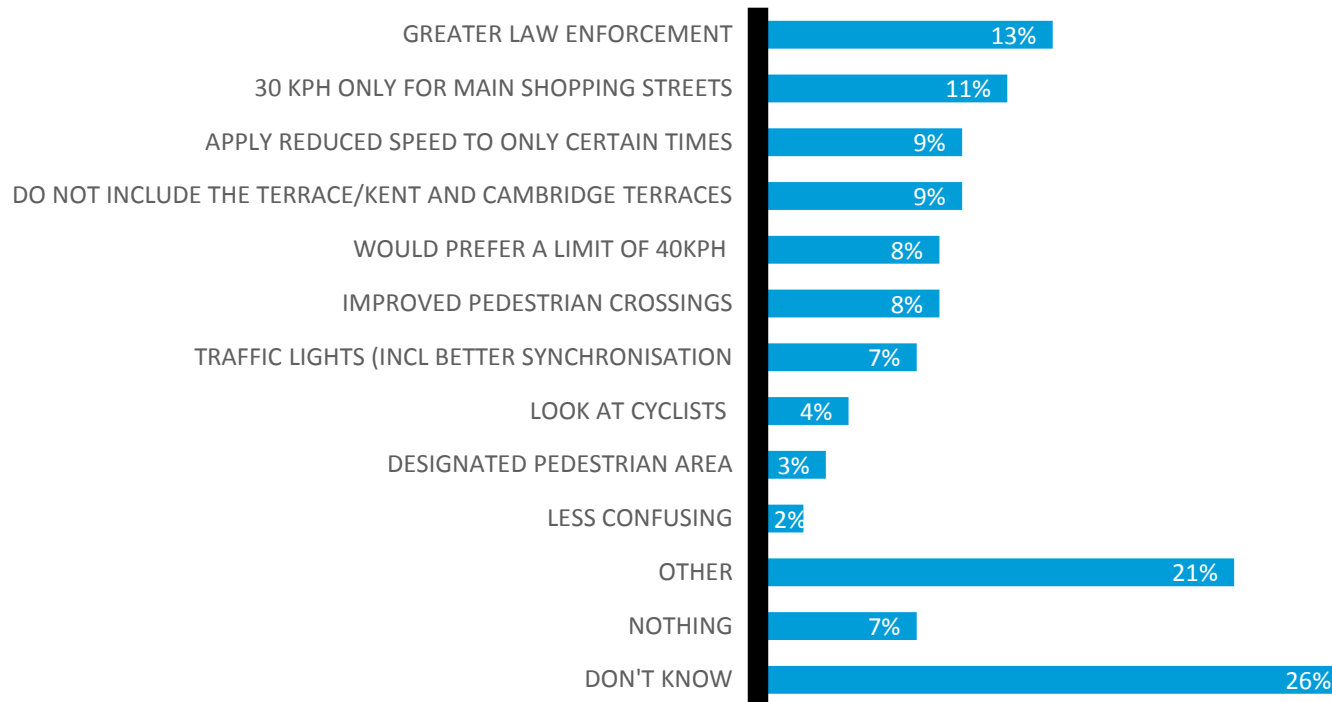
Q6. And when travelling into or through the central city how frequently do you use the following forms of transportation?  
Base: Wellington City Residents who travel into the city at least once a week (n=356)



# SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE PROPOSAL

## AMENDMENTS TO PROPOSAL

Although more than a quarter of respondents (26%) who chose to mostly support the proposal with amendments did not know which amendments they would suggest, those who did suggest amendments focused on greater law enforcement (13%) and a more flexible speed limit that only applied at certain hours (9%) or to certain main shopping streets (11%).



Q12. What amendments would you like to see made to this proposal?

Base: Wellington City Residents who mostly support the proposal but would like it amended (n=67)