

He whiringa whakaaaro Engagement Report

City Centre Street Upgrades & Riverside Park

August 2026



Ngā hua o roto

Contents

1. Horopaki	4
Background	
2. Ngā mahi whakawhiti whakaaro	6
Engagement activities	
3. Ngā whakaaro whānui	10
General sentiment	
4. Ngā kaupapa matua i kōrerohia	12
What people talked about most	
5. Ngā urupare o ia wāhi	16
Area specific feedback	
6. Tākai Here – Mana Whenua	36
Mana Whenua Partnership	
7. Ngā urupare o ia rōpū	37
Group specific feedback	
8. Whakarāpopototanga o ngā urupare	50
Summary of feedback for both projects	
9. Whakakapinga	52
Conclusion	



Image: Manaaki Ability Trust Workshop

1. Horopaki Background

Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi

Mana Whenua gifted the name Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi – The Soothing Waters of Te Awa Kairangi to the programme previously referred to as RiverLink. It is a once-in-a-generation programme to protect Lower Hutt from flooding, make it easier and safer to get around, and revitalise our city centre.

The programme is a partnership between iwi Taranaki Whānui ki Te Ūpoko o Te Ika, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Greater Wellington, Hutt City Council and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.

Greater Wellington Regional Council is leading the flood protection works and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi is leading the State Highway interchange and Melling station relocation works.

Hutt City Council is leading the parts of the programme that shape our city centre and support the people who live, work, visit, or run a business here.

This includes:

- upgrading city centre streets.
- delivering the City Link Bridge – a direct pedestrian and cycle connection between the new Melling Station and the city centre.
- delivering a new riverside park between the stopbank and the river edge on the city side.

City Centre Framework

The City Centre Framework was adopted by Council in July 2025. The Framework sets the vision for future development and improvements in the city centre, including street upgrades.

Our community and businesses helped inform the vision for our city centre – a beautiful urban riverside where businesses and communities thrive.

Previous Engagement

Before this 5th round of engagement, 4 earlier rounds were held between March and November 2025, covering people's aspirations and experiences, street investment options, and early ideas for Riverside Park. This feedback informed the sketch designs shared in March to May 2026 with businesses and April to May 2026 with communities. The 4 previous engagement rounds included:

- **March–May 2025:** *Gather people's vision for the city centre through:*
 - An online survey, including an 'intercept' survey at the opening of Te Tōpūnga hapori i Daly Street, the Daly Street pop up space.
 - A Qualifyr (AI) survey.
 - 10 interviews with members of our migrant communities and rangatahi (young people).
 - An in-person evening workshop.
 - 25 interviews with local businesses.

- **August 2025:** *Focused on people's experience of the city centre and ideas for improvement through:*
 - An online mapping tool.
 - 12 in-person workshops, meetings and activities with community groups e.g. accessibility advocates and rangatahi.
 - 2 stands at the Riverbank market.
 - 3 visits to city centre venues and events to gather feedback and direct people to our online engagement (Thursday Night Market, War Memorial Library and Park Run).
- **September 2025:** *Focused on feedback on potential investment scenarios for street upgrades through:*
 - 4 drop-in sessions at 174 High Street.
 - In-person visits to 105 city centre businesses.
- **November 2025:** *Gather early thoughts and ideas on the Riverside Park through:*
 - Conversations with specific user groups e.g. events organisers.

Streetscape Strategy

The Streetscape Strategy was adopted by Council in March 2026. The Strategy identifies priority locations for street upgrades in the city centre.

This work included:

- the development of a long list of potential street upgrades.
- the assessment of the long list which led to a short-list of potential scenarios.
- a multi-criteria assessment of the scenarios to identify the recommended programme of upgrades.
- cost estimates of the scenarios.
- parking impact of the scenarios.

Purpose

The purpose of the 5th round of community and business engagement was to gain feedback on early sketch designs to inform the concept design. The feedback will continue to shape the designs as they develop.

This document summarises the feedback received. (The feedback received in earlier rounds of engagement can be found [here](#)).



2. Ngā mahi whakawhiti whakaaro

Engagement activities

2.1 Community Engagement

Community engagement ran from 8 April to 8 May 2026, with some follow up conversations and presentations past this date to further extend our reach. Our in-person activities reached approximately 1,085 people through over 50 face-to-face engagement events, meetings, conversations and drop-ins.

Our engagement activities included:

- **14 workshops** with approximately 335 attendees e.g. schools, migrant communities, Mana Whenua.
- **Engagement display and drop in events at the War Memorial Library** with team members available every Thursday 11am to 4pm during the five weeks of engagement, and also on Saturday 11 April and 2 May from 10:30am to 1pm. The 7 staffed drop-in sessions had approximately 126 visitors.
- **13 specialist stakeholder meetings** e.g. disability advocates.
- **20 events and visits to community spaces or specialised businesses** e.g. Early Childhood Education centres.

- **Booklets in 5 languages and large print**, available at 5 speciality supermarkets throughout the city and 2 libraries.
- **A Park Run pop-up** with around 400 attendees, over 200 booklets handed out, and approximately 50–100 informal conversations.

The team had planned to attend the Riverbank market, but this was cancelled due to very poor weather.

2.2 Business Engagement

Business engagement was in-person and door-to-door, reaching approximately 120 businesses over nine weeks between March and May 2026. This began prior to the wider engagement to allow for more time for in-depth conversations.

2.3 Online and collateral reach

An online survey, webpages and downloadable information packs were available from 8 April to 8 May 2026. Online and collateral reach has been substantial, with:

- 44,307 online views.
- 1,317 visits to our webpages.
- 165 completed web surveys.
- 7 Have Your Say email responses.

Physical collateral included distribution of 1,755 booklets, of which 301 were translated or large-print versions, alongside 73 colouring-in pages and 36 posters throughout the city centre.



Hutt City Council's post

Hutt City Council
10 April · 🌐

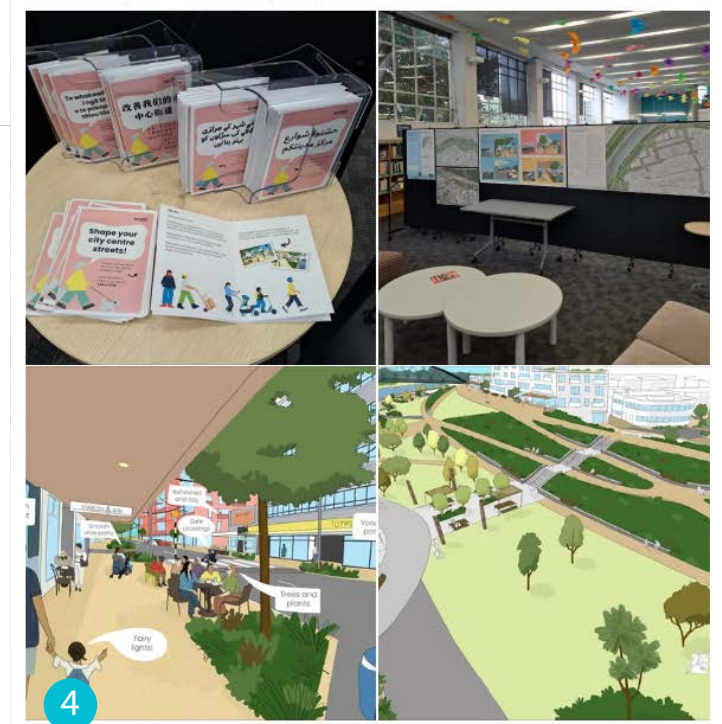
The future of our city centre starts here 📍

We're planning a once-in-a-generation transformation of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt's city centre and we'd love your input.

Check out our concept plans for refreshed streets and a new riverside park, designed to better connect our city to our awa (river).

Take a look and let us know what you think before Friday 8 May at <https://haveyoursay.huttcity.govt.nz/> and go in the draw to win vouchers from our city centre cafes ☺️

Want to see the big plans in person? Head on down to War Memorial Library and check out our stand! The project team will also be on site Saturday 11 April from 10:30am-1pm to answer all your questions.



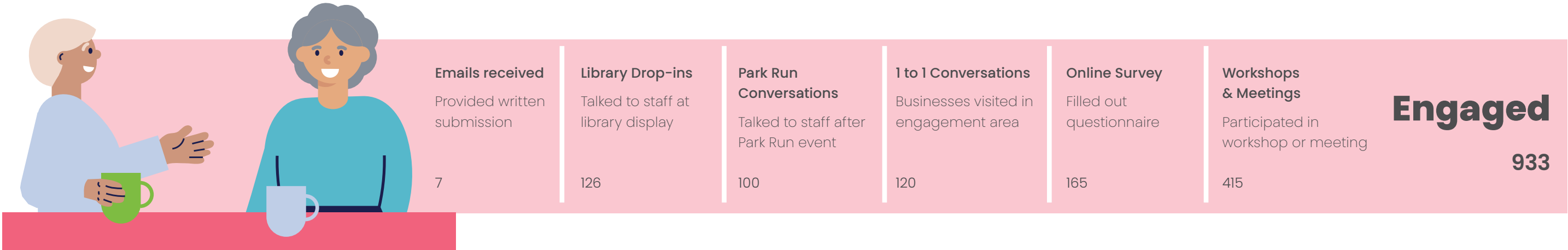
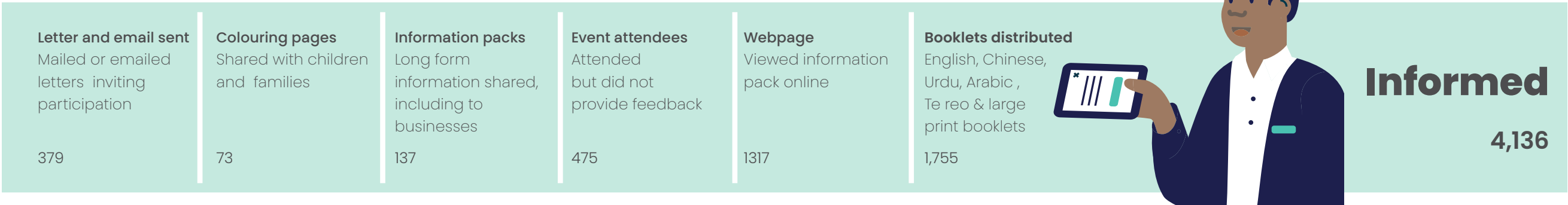
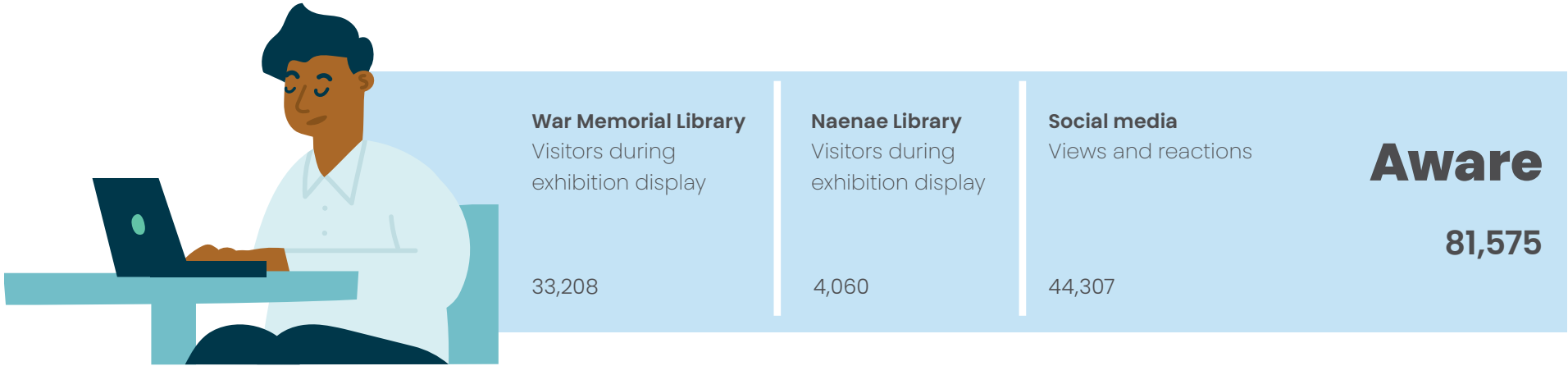
Amir Mashini, Julian N. Plus and 54 others

45 comments · 11 share

1. Park Run Pop-up
2. War Memorial Library display being used for discussions with the Multicultural Council
3. School Workshop
4. Social media post
5. Colouring-in pages
6. Translated and large print booklets

2.4 Overall engagement reach

This page indicates levels of engagement reach, rather than a count of unique participants. People may have engaged through multiple channels, including online information, booklets, workshops, and surveys. The diagram distinguishes between awareness, information sharing, and direct participation in engagement.





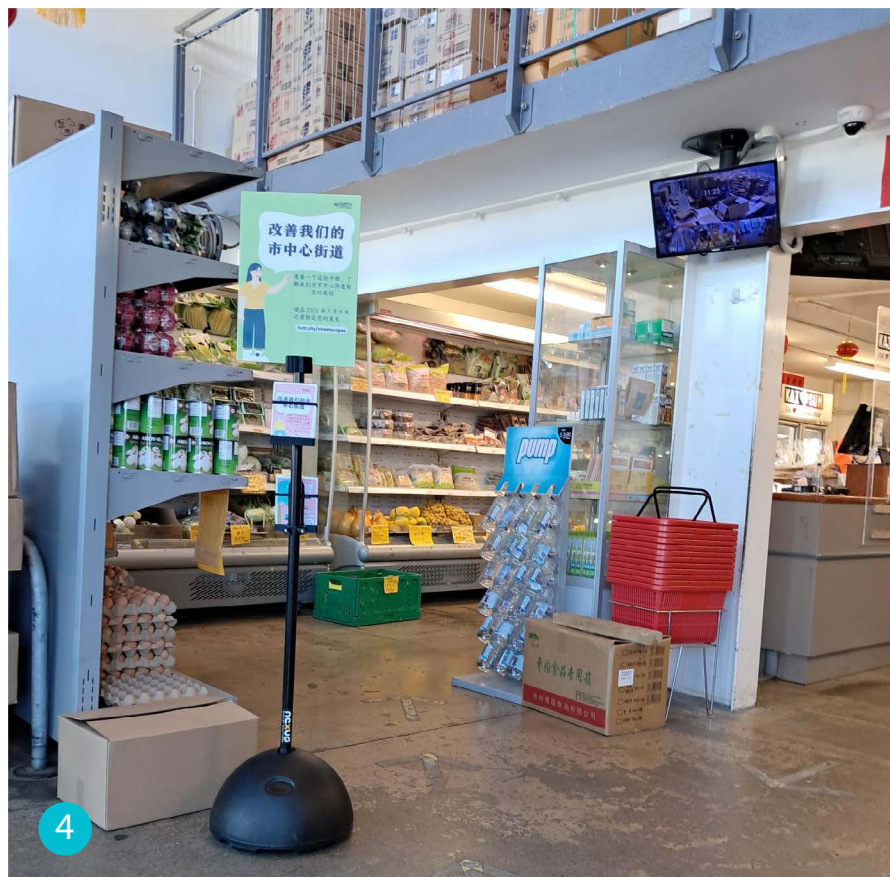
1



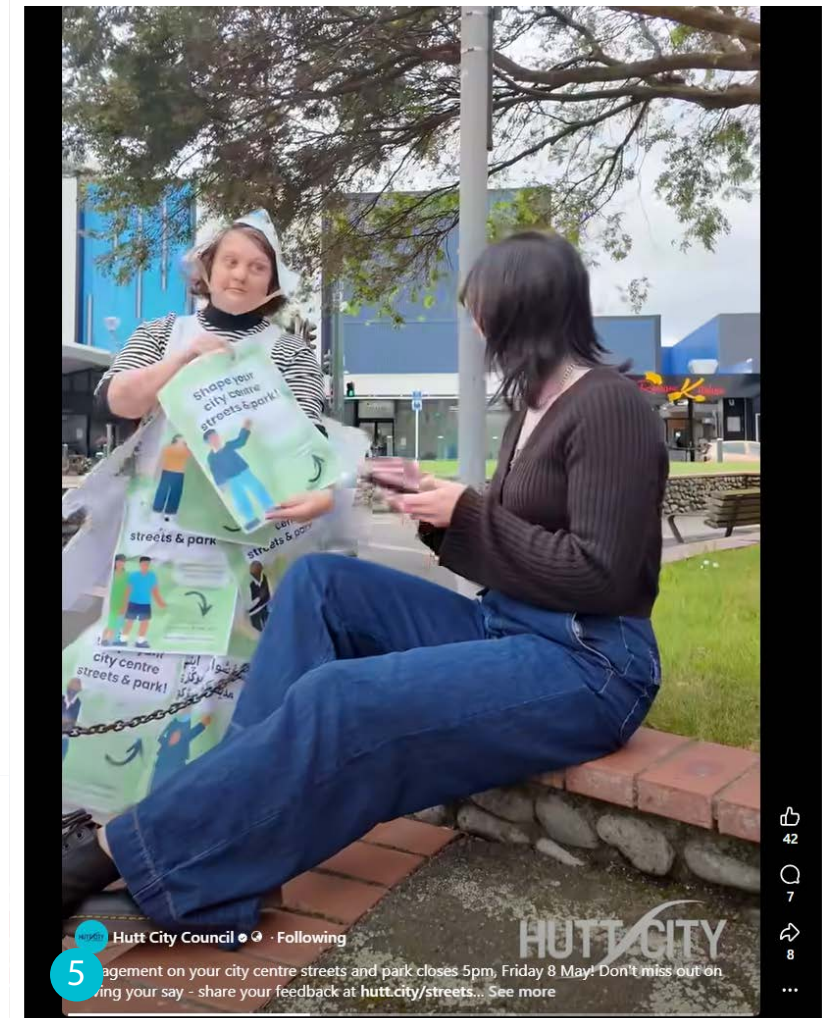
2



3



4



5

1. Posters around the city
2. English Teaching College workshop
3. War Memorial Library display drop-in sessions
4. Pop-up booklet stand at Yan's supermarket
5. Social media video

3. Ngā whakaaro whānui

General sentiment

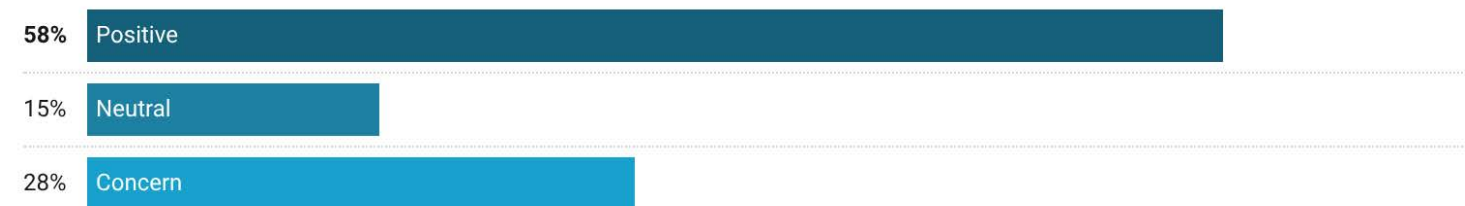
3.1 Overall sentiment

At a high level, people are broadly excited by the vision of the two projects, but support is conditional on practical access, safety, toilets, parking flexibility, construction disruption, and business impacts being handled well.

The general sentiment was positive for 1,765 comments and concern for 839 comments with the balance mixed or neutral.

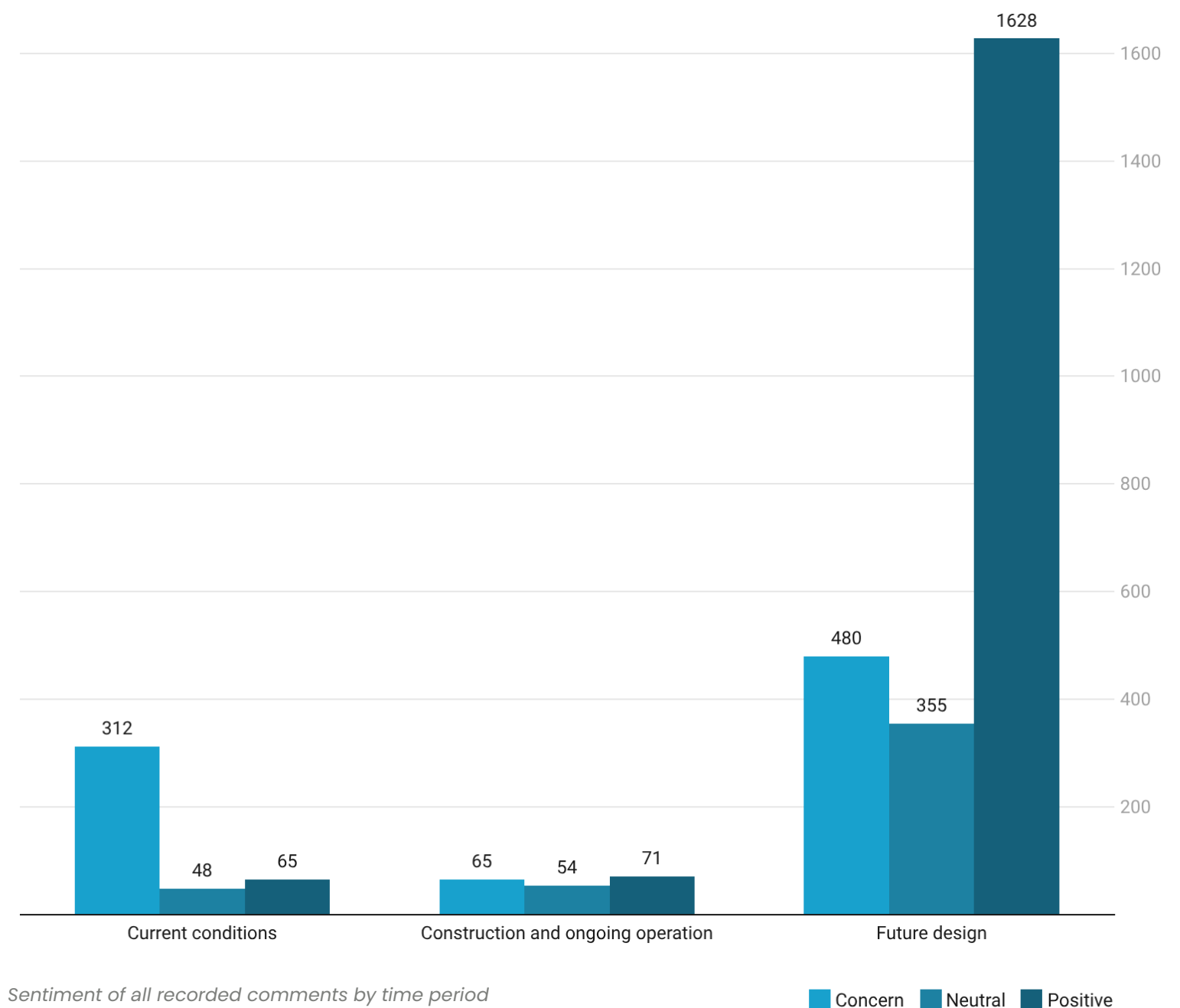
3.2 Current issues vs future design

When separating comments about the current state of the streets and park versus comments about their future state, the vast majority of comments express a positive sentiment.



Percentage of all recorded comments by sentiment

Figure 3.1 What was the general sentiment of feedback?

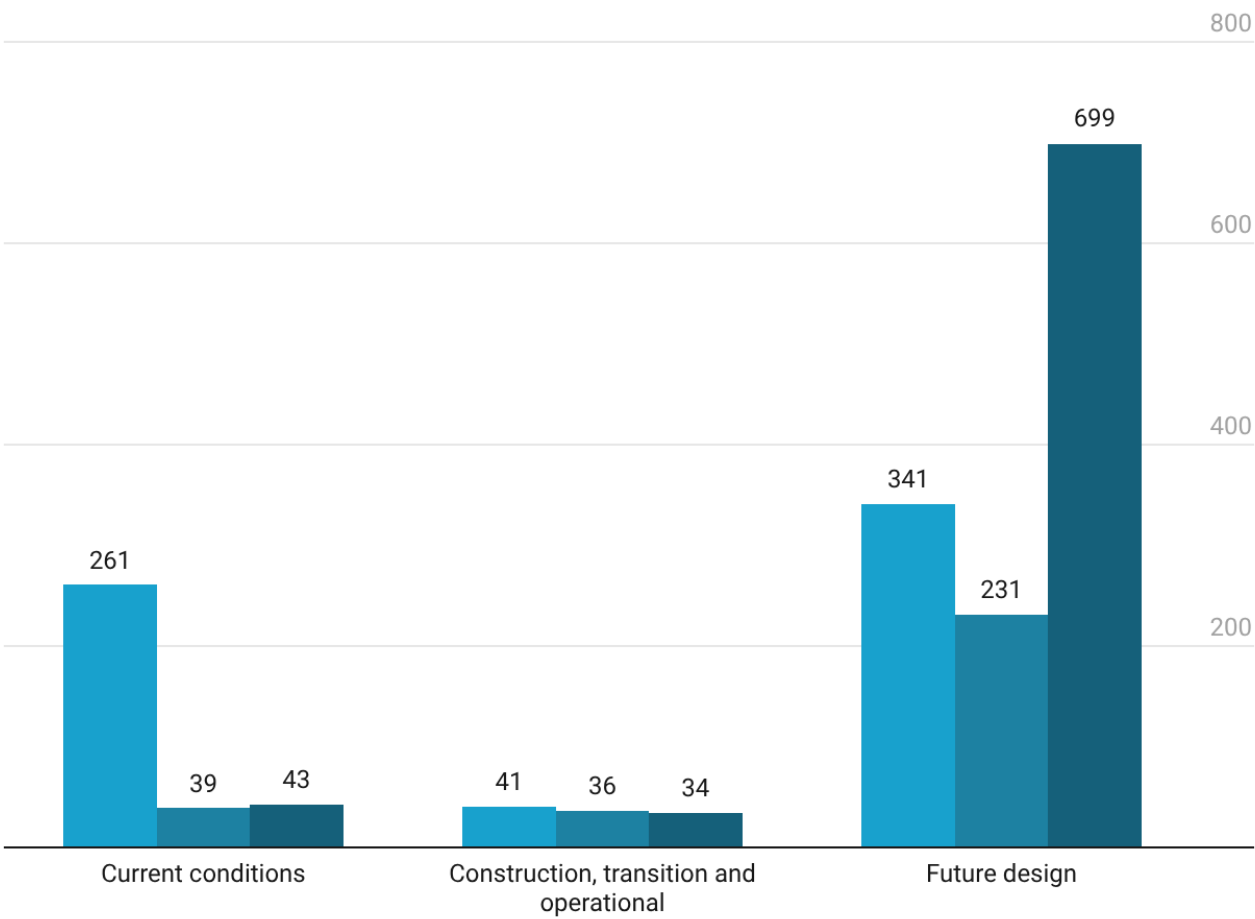


Sentiment of all recorded comments by time period

Concern Neutral Positive

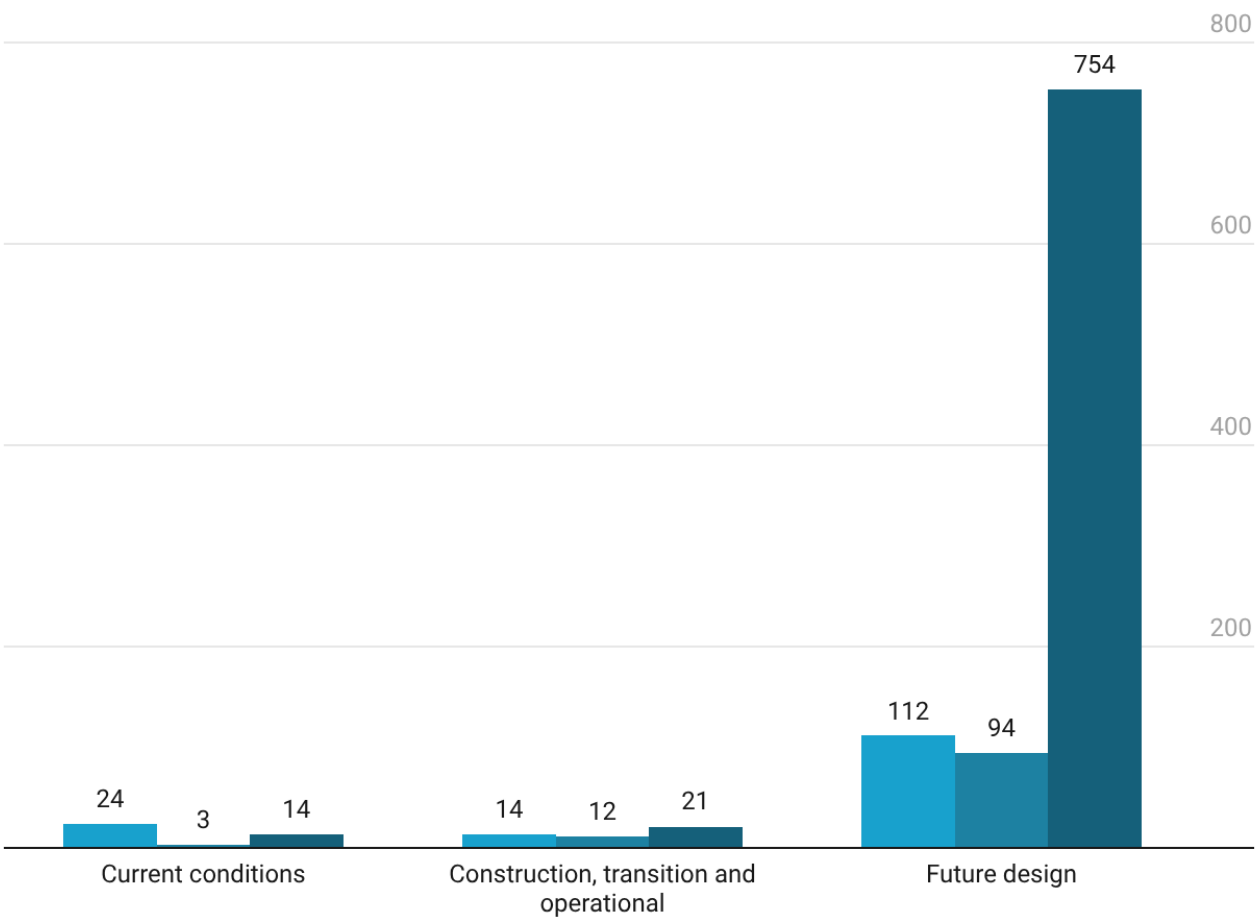
Figure 3.2 Were people talking about current issues or the future design?

Perhaps due to the lower perceived disruption of the works, the Riverside Park comments had a stronger positive sentiment than the Street Upgrade comments, noting that positive sentiment dominates for both projects' future state.



Sentiment of Street Upgrade comments by time period

Figure 3.3 Street Upgrade sentiment



Sentiment of Riverside Park comments by time period

Figure 3.4 Riverside Park sentiment

4. Ngā kaupapa matua i kōrerohia

What people talked about most

A broad range of topics emerged in discussions about both the proposed designs and current state of the city centre. Fig. 4.1 shows the proportion of total comments associated with each topic, while Fig. 4.2 shows the sentiment within each topic. The following sections provide a brief overview of feedback associated with each topic, ordered from most to least discussed:

Public amenities: *Facilities for spending time in the city*

Feedback focused on creating places where people can meet, eat, attend events and spend time together. People saw these activities as important for making the city centre and Riverside Park feel lively, social and worth visiting.

Recreation & play: *Places for play, sport and activity*

There was strong interest in having more things to do in the city centre. People saw the Riverside Park and street upgrades as an opportunity for more play, sport and recreation for children, rangatahi, families and adults.



Figure 4.1 Percentage of total comments associated with each topic

Parking: *Availability, location & timing*

Feedback wasn't solely focussed on the number of spaces, but about having the right type of parking in the right places. Location, cost, accessibility and concerns about the effect of parking changes on businesses were recurring considerations.

Public & active transport: *city centre mobility*

People wanted easier and safer ways to move around the city centre without relying on a private vehicle. A key focus was on the connection between the new Melling Station, the City Link Bridge, bus hub and destinations like the Civic Precinct.

Connecting the awa: *Linking the city centre and Te Awa Kairangi*

People strongly valued better connections between the city centre and Te Awa Kairangi. Feedback supported making the river easier to reach and enjoy while recognising that Riverside Park needs to function safely and reliably within a flood environment.

Gatherings & experiences: *Supporting life in the city*

Feedback focused on creating places where people can meet, eat, attend events and spend time together. People saw these activities as important for making the city centre and Riverside Park feel lively, social and worth visiting.

Inclusive & accessible: *Equitable city spaces*

Feedback emphasised accessibility across the whole journey, from arriving and parking through to moving around and using public spaces independently. Small design details such as gradients, kerbs, surfaces and crossing controls can determine whether spaces are genuinely accessible.

Business vitality: *Trade through change*

Businesses generally supported improvements that could bring more people into the city centre, while focusing strongly on how change would affect day-to-day trading. Feedback highlighted the need to maintain customer access and business operations through construction and longer-term changes.

Vehicle movement: *Traffic flow and access*

Feedback considered how vehicles will move through and service the city centre as street layouts change. Businesses in particular highlighted the need for workable loading, deliveries and service access alongside changes to the road network.

Personal safety: *Feeling safe in the city*

People wanted streets and public spaces that feel safe during the day and at night. Feedback covered aspects like good lighting, and personal security when moving through public spaces and spending time near the river.

General views: *General support or opposition of the design*

Some participants gave a clear overall response to the designs without raising a specific issue. The majority of these comments expressed support.

Cost, value & trust: *Financially responsible design*

People wanted confidence that investment would provide lasting value and that new spaces could be maintained and delivered well.

Identity & expression: *Places that reflect our communities*

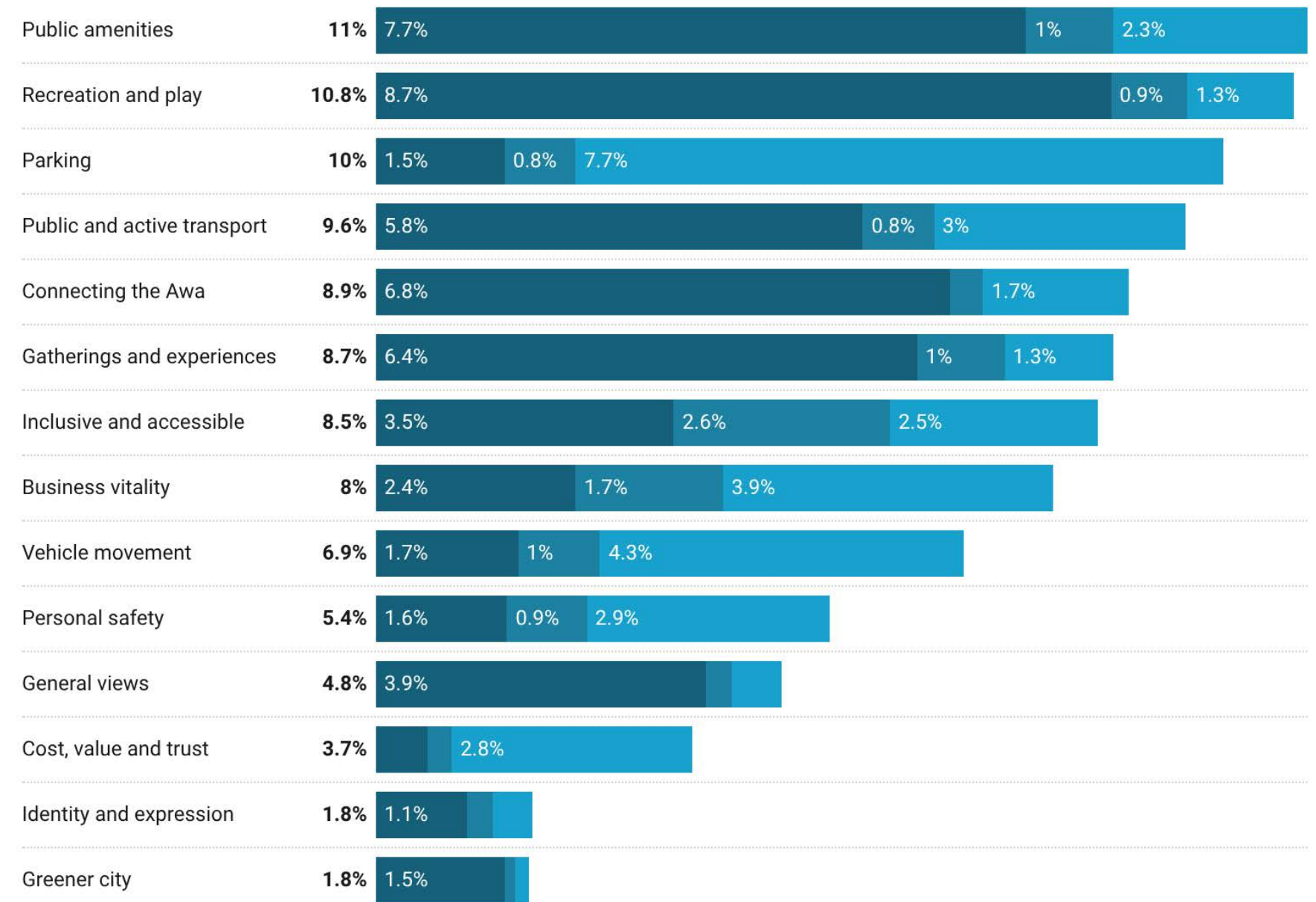
People wanted the city centre and Riverside Park to feel distinctive to Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai. Feedback highlighted opportunities for Mana Whenua narratives, art and cultural expression to reflect the communities who use these places.

Greener city: *Connecting with nature*

People wanted more greenery and stronger connections with nature across the city centre and Riverside Park. Feedback also highlighted the need to balance planting with visibility, accessibility, maintenance and how the spaces function.

Figure 4.2 shows the balance of positive, neutral and concern sentiment associated with each topic. Overall, the pattern is consistent with previous engagement and reinforces the same broad priorities. When related topics are considered together, such as recreation and play, public amenities, gatherings and experiences, and connections to the awa, a clear message emerges: people are positive about creating more reasons to visit, stay and spend time in the city centre, and about making it a more attractive and enjoyable place to be.

Concern about parking is slightly more pronounced at this stage than earlier engagement. This is likely influenced by the composition of the feedback and the increasing level of detail. Businesses contributed a higher number of comments per participant and were more likely than the wider community to raise parking-related issues (see Fig. 7.1.1). At the same time, the project has moved from broad ideas into specific proposals. This has brought practical concerns to work through in the design.



Percentage and sentiment of comments assigned to themes including comments about current conditions

Positive Neutral Concern

Figure 4.2 Percentage and sentiment of comments about both projects assigned to each theme

What are people most positive about?

Topics where positive sentiment accounted for more than 5% of all comments

Recreation & Play

8.7% positive

People were most supportive about providing more opportunities for recreation and play in the city centre. This was about having reasons to spend more time in our city centre, with the Riverside Park seen as the greatest opportunity to provide this.

Connecting the awa

6.8% positive

Better connections to Te Awa Kairangi for people walking, cycling and on small wheels was seen as a key opportunity for both projects.

Public amenities

7.7% positive

People were most supportive about providing facilities that make the city centre comfortable and inviting to spend more time in e.g. seating.

Gatherings & experience

6.4% positive

There is strong support for creating spaces to gather, spend time and socialise within our city centre.

Public & Active Transport

5.8% positive

People were very positive about improvements to crossings, the bus hub and pedestrian and cycling connections.

Parking

7.7% concern

Parking concerns focused on availability, location, mobility parking design and cost. Businesses raised these issues more often than the wider community (Figure 7.1.1) and they provided more comments per person overall.

What are people most concerned about?

Topics where concern accounted for more than 5% of all comments



5. Ngā urupare o ia wāhi

Area specific feedback

5.1. High Street South

Existing condition and engagement proposals for this area.



Figure 5.1.1 Existing condition of High Street South



Figure 5.1.2 Engagement illustration of High Street South proposal

High Street South



What are we proposing?

- 1 Roundabout removed - central raised median installed, creating a left-in / left-out from High Street
- 2 Pouwhenua (carved wooden posts) marking opportunities at entrance to Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai / Lower Hutt CBD
- 3 Road realignment creates space for planting and existing path to be widened
- 4 Raised pedestrian crossings
- 5 Existing trees retained and traffic lanes repositioned
- 6 Path lighting along stop bank crest
- 7 Accessible parking with level access to footpath and 3m wide central aisle
- 8 New seating and planting
- 9 Pedestrian crossing and stair access to stop bank crest path and Riverside Park
- 10 Continuation of High Street light poles and festoon lighting to match the section between Andrews Ave and Margaret Street
- 11 Indicative future development site
- 12 Existing trees
- 13 Renovation or renewal of existing seating
- 14 Proposed realignment of Daly Laneway South, extends to join High Street, with seating, planting and lighting opportunities
- 15 Space for outdoor cafe seating areas, existing and proposed
- 16 Kerb build outs to reduce crossing distances
- 17 Parallel accessible parking bay with level access to footpath
- 18 New trees
- 19 P10 accessible drop off and loading zone

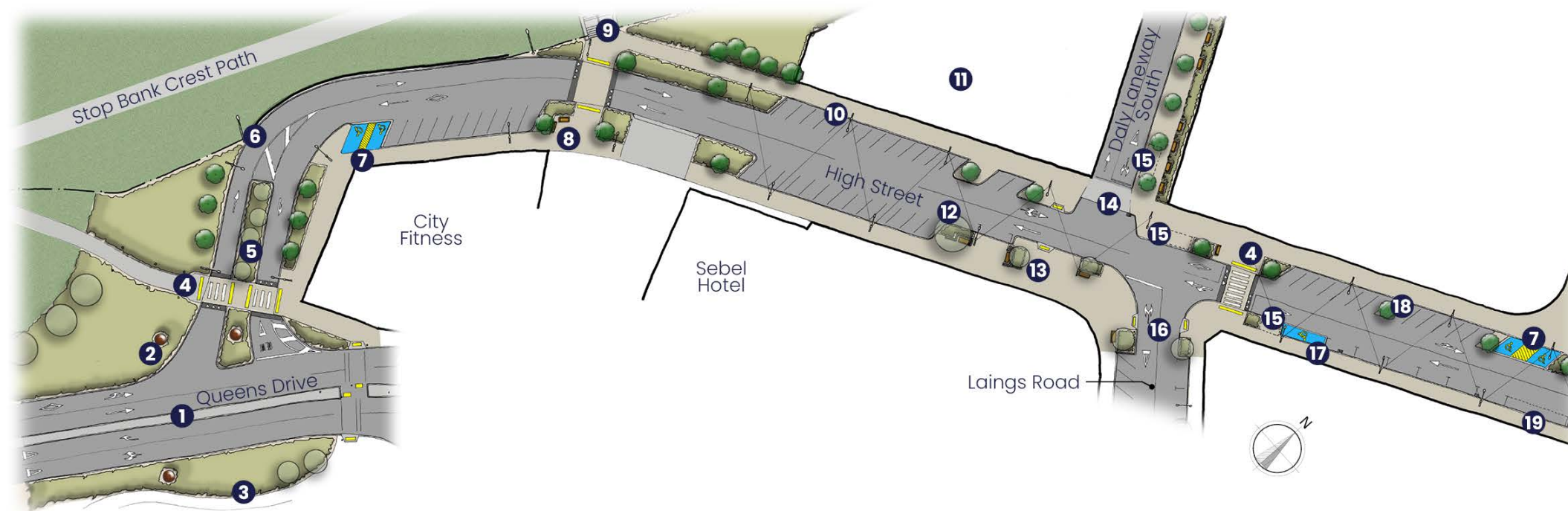
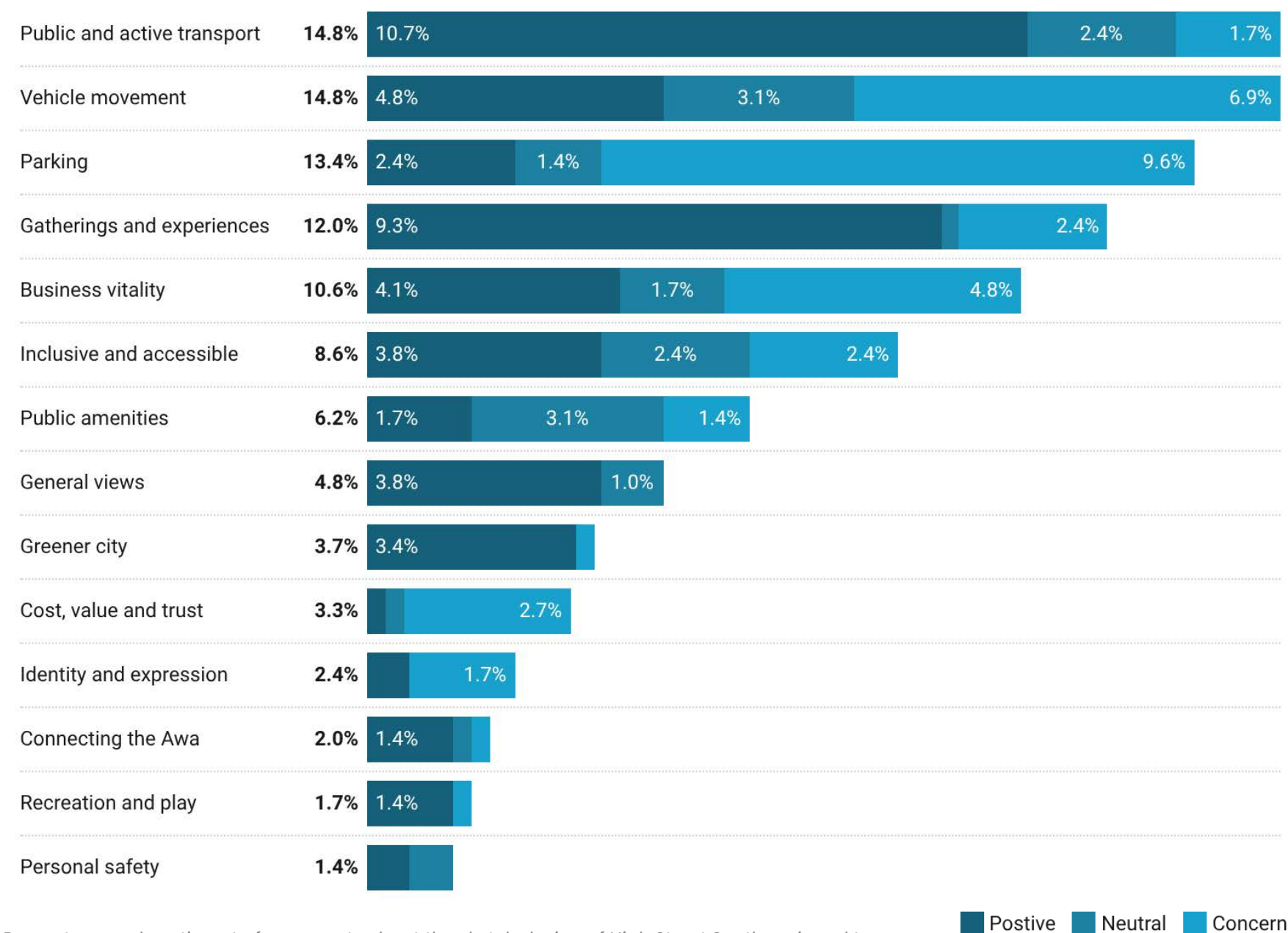


Figure 5.1.3 Engagement sketch plan of High Street South proposal



Percentage and sentiment of comments about the sketch design of High Street South assigned to themes, excluding comments about current conditions

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Concern

Figure 5.1.4 Percentage of comments about High Street South assigned to each theme

What did people say about the High Street South Design?

Street activity and vibrancy

- People support a greener, safer, well-lit and more attractive street, with additional room on the footpath for seating and tables that create places for people to gather, sit, and spend time. This reinforces feedback from previous rounds of engagement that the area feels tired and needs to be uplifted into a more welcoming and inviting place.
- Businesses saw opportunity in the design of the Daly South laneway to accommodate spill out activity, seating and planting.

Vehicle Movement, active transport and parking

- Communities and businesses valued the proposed additional crossings both for pedestrian safety and to slow vehicle speeds. This feedback was split across a number of themes e.g. active transport, vehicle movement, accessibility and inclusivity.

- Views were mixed on the provision of angled parking:
 - Some people felt that angled parking should be removed to better support pedestrians and cyclists.
 - In contrast, other comments about parking in this area shared concerns over parking loss when considering the closure of the southern end of the Riverbank car park.
 - People with lived experience of disability and accessibility advocates were positive about the provision of different types of accessible parking e.g. parallel, angled and drop off options. These groups also suggested practical improvements to mobility parking spaces.
- Concerns around vehicle movements were largely about wanting further information:
 - In general people wanted to understand how the design and removal of Daly Street would impact traffic flows.
 - Businesses wanted more information about what the adjacent development site and laneway would look like.
- Businesses noted that loading on High Street was difficult currently and so were supportive of the improvements in provision for loading activities in this street.

Way forward

What we're proposing to **keep** in the design based on the feedback:

- Raised crossings, footpath buildouts, seating, trees and improved lighting in the design.
- Loading bay provision.
- Some angled parking as a balanced approach to offsetting parking loss. This responds to concerns around the closure of the southern end of the Riverbank car park and feedback from people with lived experience of disability and accessibility advocates.

What we're proposing to **refine or change** based on the feedback:

- Review the location and design of mobility parking spaces.
- Develop the design to specify locations of cycle and motorbike parking.
- Work with our communities to explore opportunities to express identity through the design of functional street elements e.g. seating and lighting. Integrating identity into practical elements provides a cost-conscious approach that delivers both cultural and functional value.

5.2 City Link Bridge Corridor

Existing condition and engagement proposals for the City Link Bridge Corridor – Daly & Margaret Street.



Figure 5.2.1 Existing condition of Daly & Margaret Street



Figure 5.2.2 Engagement illustration of Daly & Margaret Street proposal

Daly Street & Margaret Street

What are we proposing?

- 1 City Link Bridge - new pedestrian and cycling bridge
- 2 Terraced seating and "tables" at landing areas between stair flights
- 3 Ramped pathway at 1:20 gradient to provide an accessible route from the bridge
- 4 Raised planters, lighting and seating at the base of stairs / ramp from new bridge
- 5 Pedestrianised space with bollards and emergency service vehicle access
- 6 Shared zone, vehicle access to Daly North Laneway and adjacent businesses
- 7 Seating areas with planting
- 8 Space for temporary activation e.g. food trucks or seating
- 9 Dudley / Rutherford Street intersection reconfigured with traffic lights, kerb build-outs and pedestrian crossing shelter
- 10 Footpath widened along the sunny side of street with opportunities for planting and seating
- 11 P10 accessible drop off and loading zone
- 12 Parking reconfigured to north side of road
- 13 Kerb build-out to reduce crossing distance
- 14 Cycle markings to define cycling route between bridge and bus hub
- 15 Upgrade of existing furniture and planting. Layout of this section of Margaret Street to remain the same
- 16 New trees
- 17 Existing trees

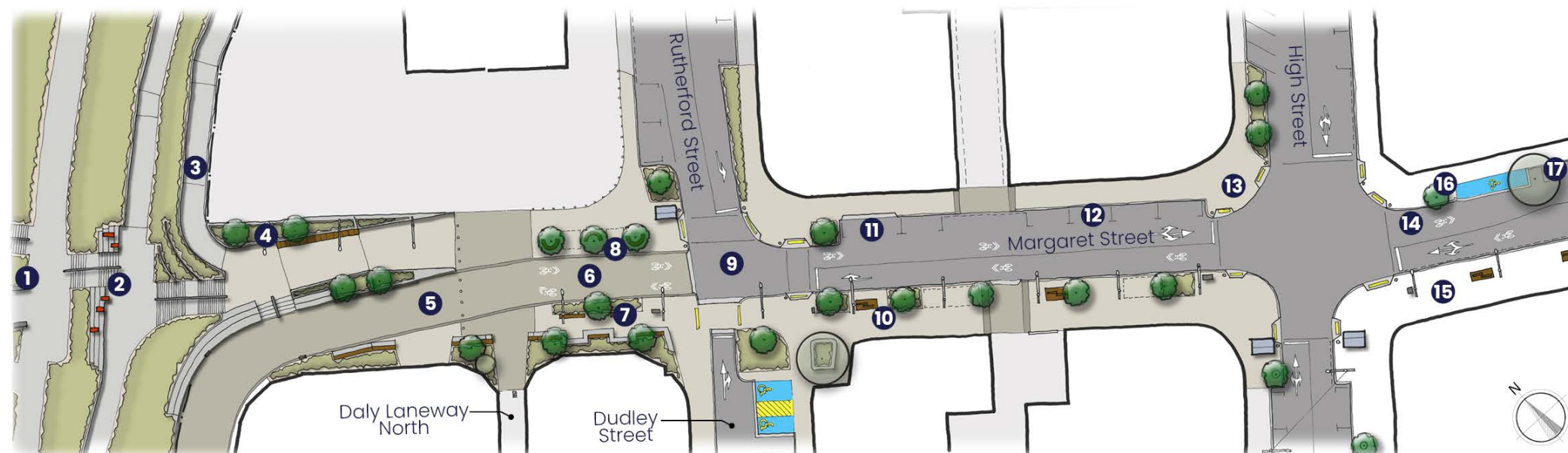


Figure 5.2.3 Engagement sketch plan of Daly & Margaret Street proposal

Existing condition and engagement proposals for the City Link Bridge Corridor – Bunny Street & Knights Road.



Figure 5.2.4 Existing condition of Bunny Street & Knights Road



Figure 5.2.5 Engagement illustration of Bunny Street & Knights Road proposal

Bunny Street & Knights Road

What are we proposing?

- 18 Upgrade of existing furniture and planting. Layout of this section of Margaret Street to remain the same
- 19 Existing trees
- 20 New trees
- 21 Adjustment to bus stops on Queens Drive and Bunny Street to reduce footpath congestion
- 22 Kerb build-out to reduce crossing distance with opportunity for seating and planting
- 23 Separated bi-directional cycle lane and a widened footpath on the sunny side of the street
- 24 Opportunities for outdoor cafe seating
- 25 Bunny Street becomes one way. Service Lane and existing off-street car park exit by right turn only for vehicles. Bus routes using north lane of Bunny Street to reroute via Laings Road.
- 26 Bus hub footpath widened, paving replaced
- 27 Knights Road intersection signalised to improve safety and ease of crossing

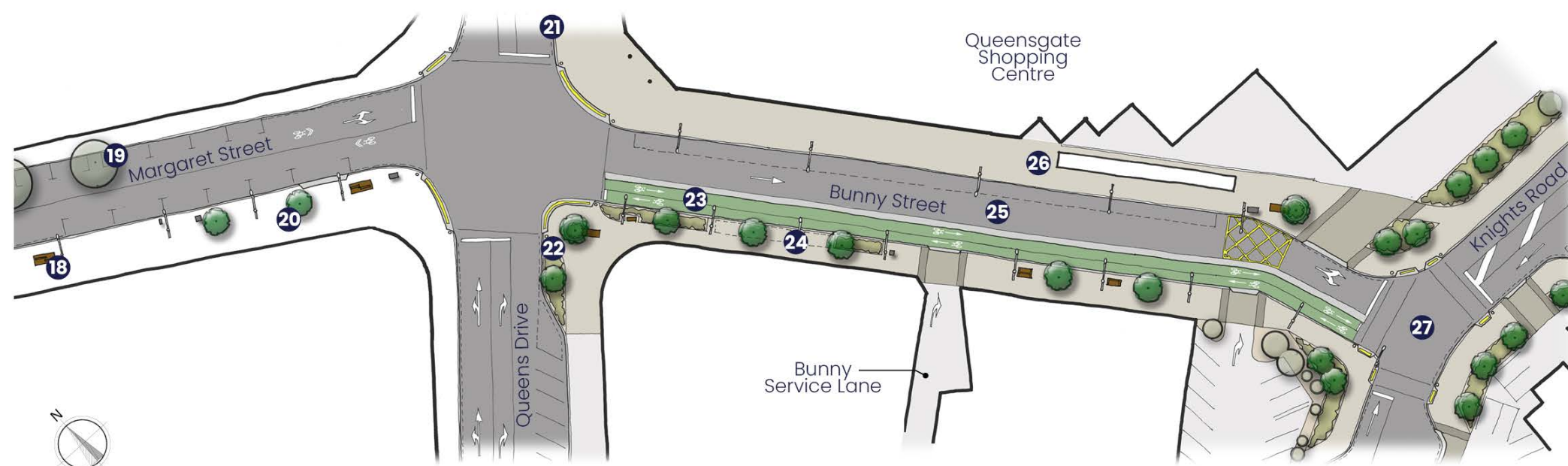
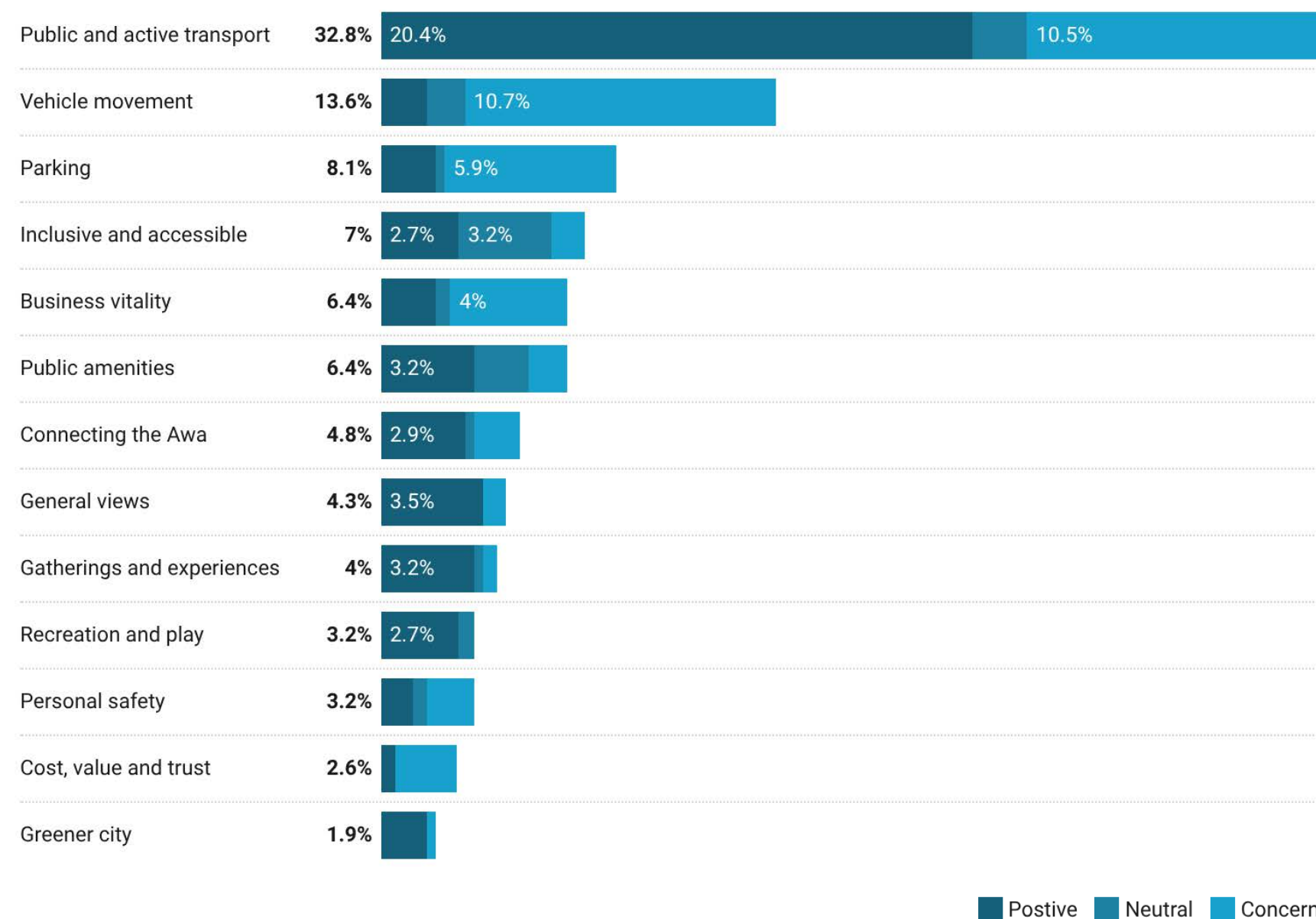


Figure 5.2.6 Engagement sketch plan of Bunny Street & Knights Road proposal



Percentage and sentiment of comments about the sketch design of the City Link Bridge Corridor assigned to themes, excluding comments about current conditions

Figure 5.2.7 Percentage of comments about the City Link Bridge Corridor design assigned to each theme

What did people say about the City Link Bridge Corridor?

Cross City Connection

- Connecting the new Melling Station to the city centre and through to the civic precinct for pedestrians and active modes is widely seen as the right priority for the city. This included support for both proposed signalised crossings, the shared environment at the bridge landing and widening the footpath on the sunny side of the street. This reinforces the findings in previous rounds of engagement.
- The community were positive about the Knights Road signalised crossing because it provides better and safer connection to:
 - the bus hub, particularly for school aged children.
 - the civic precinct, noting the Saturday market's future move to the Dowse Square. Businesses saw a benefit to better connection to the market.
- Concerns expressed under the 'public and active transport' theme were that the design needed to go further to support public and active transport across the corridor.

Bunny Street and the Bus Hub

- Participants identified the current hub as a congested space that is difficult to navigate, inaccessible for some users and an unpleasant place to wait. The proposed rerouting of buses received little to no negative feedback.
- When the option of splitting bus stops between Bunny Street and Queens Drive (around the corner of Queensgate Shopping Centre) was discussed, it was strongly supported by most participants, especially people who use the bus regularly. People saw this as a practical way to reduce footpath congestion, make the bus hub easier to understand and to create a more comfortable and accessible waiting environment.
- Wider footpaths were supported to ease foot traffic in this area.
- Businesses were not against providing safer cycle facilities but were concerned about the loss of parking on Bunny Street and the visibility of their business.
- Some businesses on Bunny Street noted that people often cross mid-block from the bus hub and that there have been collisions between pedestrians and scooters on the footpaths here.

- Less than 0.5% of responses on Bunny Street had concerns about the proposal to change the street to one-way.
- Whilst there have been improvements to safety at the bus hub in recent years, provision of a police parking space in the area is seen as positive and supporting this. The police were engaged with and are firmly behind any upgrade in the urban environment.

Vehicle movement and property access

- Most of the concerns about vehicle movement were regarding the closure of Daly Street for the improved flood protection and understanding these impacts on traffic flow.
- Businesses raised concerns about the one existing loading bay in the corridor being congested and used by businesses on both Margaret Street and Bunny Street.

Way forward

What we're proposing to **keep** in the design based on the feedback:

- Signalised crossings at Rutherford and Knights Road intersections.
- The additional P15/loading spaces on Margaret Street.

- Wider footpaths on the sunny side of the street and at the bus hub. This includes the change of Bunny Street to one way, and relocation of some bus stops to Queens Drive.
- Separating active modes and pedestrian movements from buses to improve safety.

What we're proposing to **refine or change** based on the feedback:

- Provision of a shared path along Bunny Street instead of a bidirectional cycle lane.
- Show how the cycling route integrates with the surrounding road network, including advanced stop boxes along the route.
- Provide a dedicated police parking space.
- Explore converting parallel parking spaces to angled on Knights Road to offset the loss of parking spaces on Bunny Street.
- Convert some parking spaces to P15 close to the intersection of Queens Drive and Bunny Street to offset the loss of P15 spaces on Bunny Street.
- Work with GWRC Metlink on bus stop(s) relocation to Queens Drive.
- Develop the design to specify locations of cycle and motorbike parking.
- Relocate the advertising sign on Bunny Street following business feedback.

5.3 Andrews Avenue

Existing condition and engagement proposals for Andrews Avenue.



Figure 5.3.1 Existing condition of Andrews Avenue



Figure 5.3.2 Engagement illustration of Andrews Avenue proposal

Andrews Avenue



What are we proposing?

- 1 Stair access to Riverside Park
- 2 Accessible ramps - 1:20 gradient both sides of stop bank, with rest landings and seating along route
- 3 Low planting
- 4 Indicative future development site
- 5 Existing Daly Laneway North, widened for vehicle and emergency service access
- 6 Proposed realignment of Daly Laneway South
- 7 Small stage area with power for events, opportunities for food trucks with informal seating
- 8 Accessible parking with level access to footpath and 3m wide central aisle
- 9 Sloping Lawns for play and relaxation
- 10 Play features with seating, picnic tables and drinking fountain
- 11 Lighting poles to match Margaret and High Streets
- 12 Angled parking spaces
- 13 Existing mature tree retained within new raised planter and seating
- 14 Existing pedestrian crossing shelters
- 15 Improved crossing at High Street
- 16 New trees
- 17 P10 accessible drop off and loading zone
- 18 Space for outdoor cafe seating, existing and proposed

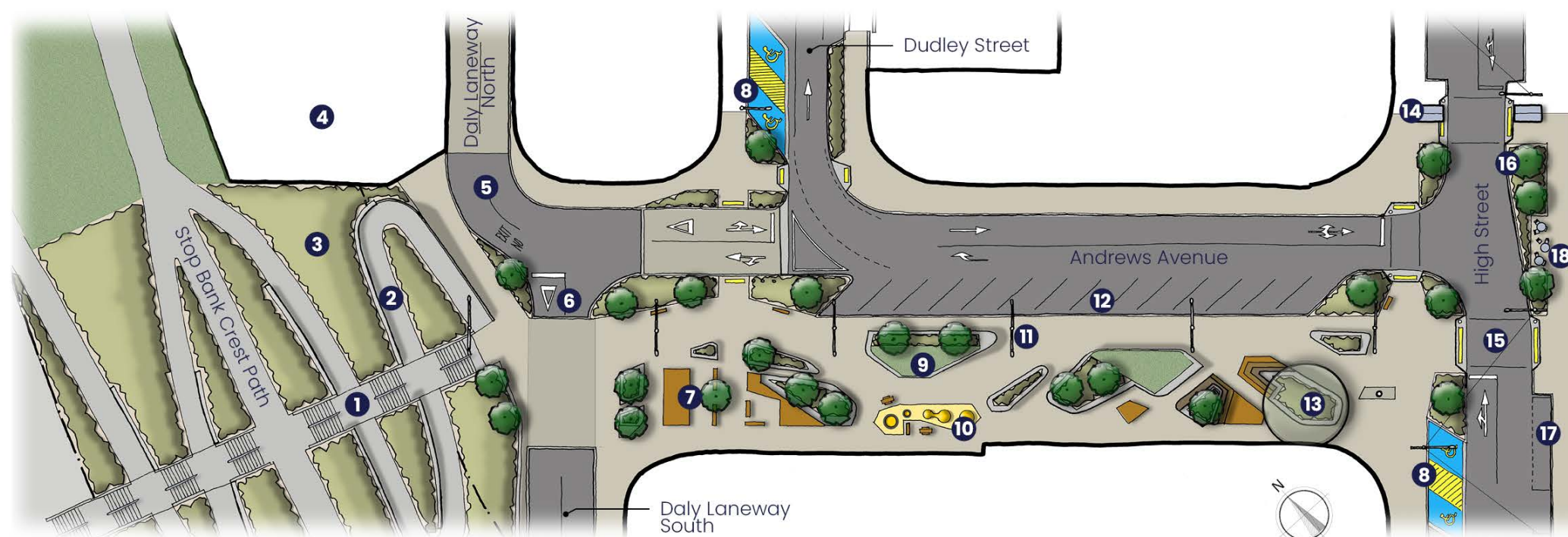


Figure 5.3.3 Engagement sketch plan of Andrews Avenue proposal

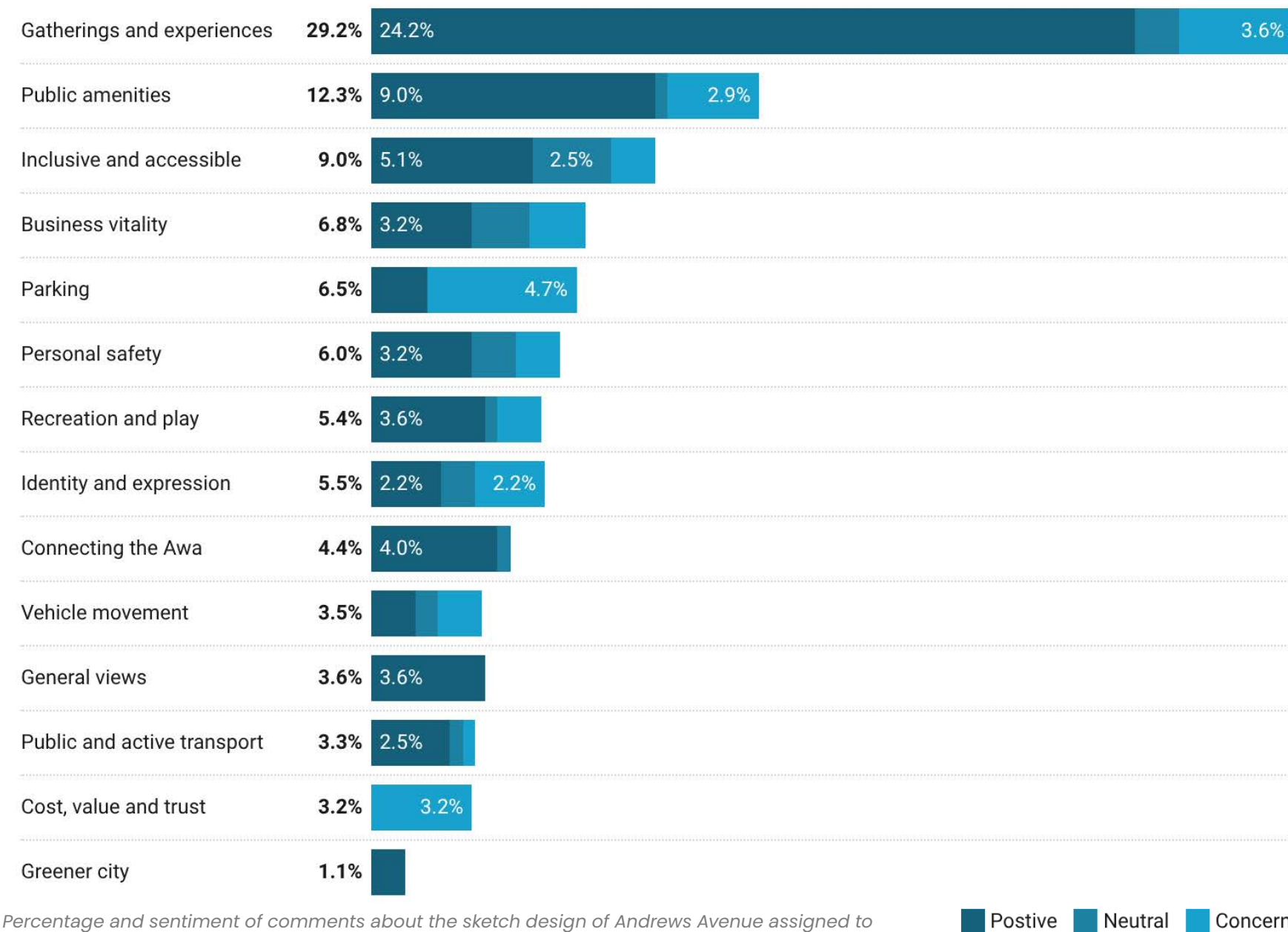


Figure 5.3.4 Percentage of comments about the Andrews Avenue design assigned to each theme

What did people say about Andrews Avenue?

A social place for community gathering

- Andrews Avenue is a place where people are supportive of small-scale events, food trucks, music, art, seating, lunch breaks, casual gathering and a more playful city. This reinforces feedback from previous rounds of engagement where our communities expressed a desire for events and spaces that would encourage them to visit.
- Concerns recorded under related themes largely focused on shelter, sunlight, maintenance, safety and functional design to ensure the space is comfortable and well used.
- Mana Whenua highlighted opportunities to embed site-specific cultural narratives that strengthen tūrangawaewae (ancestral connection, cultural identity, and sense of place).

Inclusivity and connection

- Communities and businesses valued the improved and accessible connection to the Riverside Park.

- Accessibility advocates, people with lived experience of disability and the wider community supported the improvements to crossing facilities and the potential for more accessible seating options.

Parking

- There was general support for simplifying the road, parking and public space layout.
- Parking concerns raised in the feedback were about the potential loss of short-term parking and suggestions of alternate locations for mobility parking in the area.

Way forward

What we're proposing to **keep** in the design based on the feedback:

- A simpler parking and public space layout with a clear, accessible connection to Riverside Park.
- Flexible spaces for small-scale activities and informal play opportunities.

What we're proposing to **refine or change** based on the feedback:

- Explore opportunities for shelter from wind, especially around seating, while considering access to sunlight and maintaining good visibility and safety.
- Work with our communities to explore opportunities to express identity through the design of functional elements e.g. seating and play. Integrating identity into practical elements provides a cost-conscious approach that delivers both cultural and functional value.
- Provide opportunities for short-stay parking.
- Review the location and design of mobility parking spaces.
- Develop the design to specify locations of cycle and motorbike parking.

5.4 Dudley Street

The proposals for Dudley Street are relatively minor changes and were included in both engagement packs related to the City Link Bridge Corridor and Andrews Avenue. Fig. 5.4.1 shows the engagement proposals for this area.

What did people say about Dudley Street?

- The community and local businesses are supportive of the change of direction proposed for Dudley Street (from one-way southbound to one-way northbound).
- The provision of additional car parking on Dudley Street is well-supported.
- Changes were suggested for the location and design of the proposed accessible parking bays.

Way forward

What we're proposing to **keep** in the design based on the feedback:

- The one-way traffic direction to run south to north.
- The provision of additional angled and perpendicular car parking bays to increase parking numbers.

What we're proposing to **refine or change** based on the feedback:

- Review the location and design of mobility parking spaces.



Dudley Street

We are upgrading this area because:

To make the street network work seamlessly and to mitigate the loss of parking, we are also proposing low-cost changes to Dudley St.

What are we proposing?

- 1 Dudley Street direction reversed to run south to north
- 2 Accessible parking with level access to footpath and 3m wide central aisle
- 3 Planting beds
- 4 Parking increased along west side of street by changing from parallel to angled bays
- 5 Eastern side parking and property access to remain
- 6 Pedestrian crossing at end of laneway is rebuilt to improve accessibility
- 7 Property access crossover as existing
- 8 Perpendicular parking bays
- 9 New exit onto Margaret and Rutherford Street with safer signalised intersection, in alignment with Rutherford Street

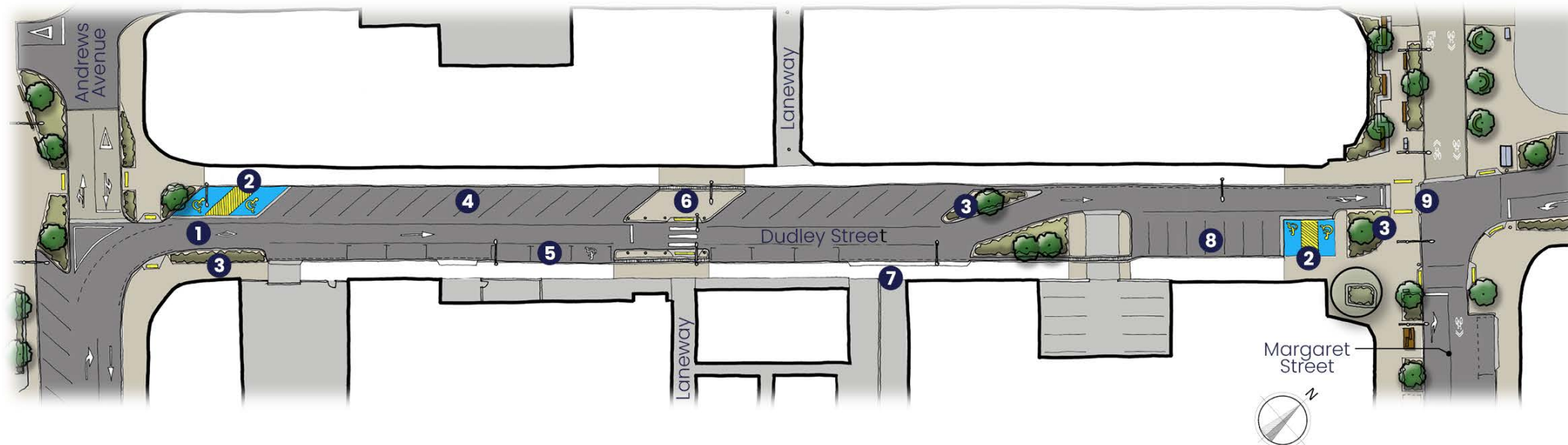


Figure 5.4.1 Engagement sketch plan of Dudley Street proposal

5.5 Riverside Park & Car Park

Engagement proposals for Riverside Park & Car Park.

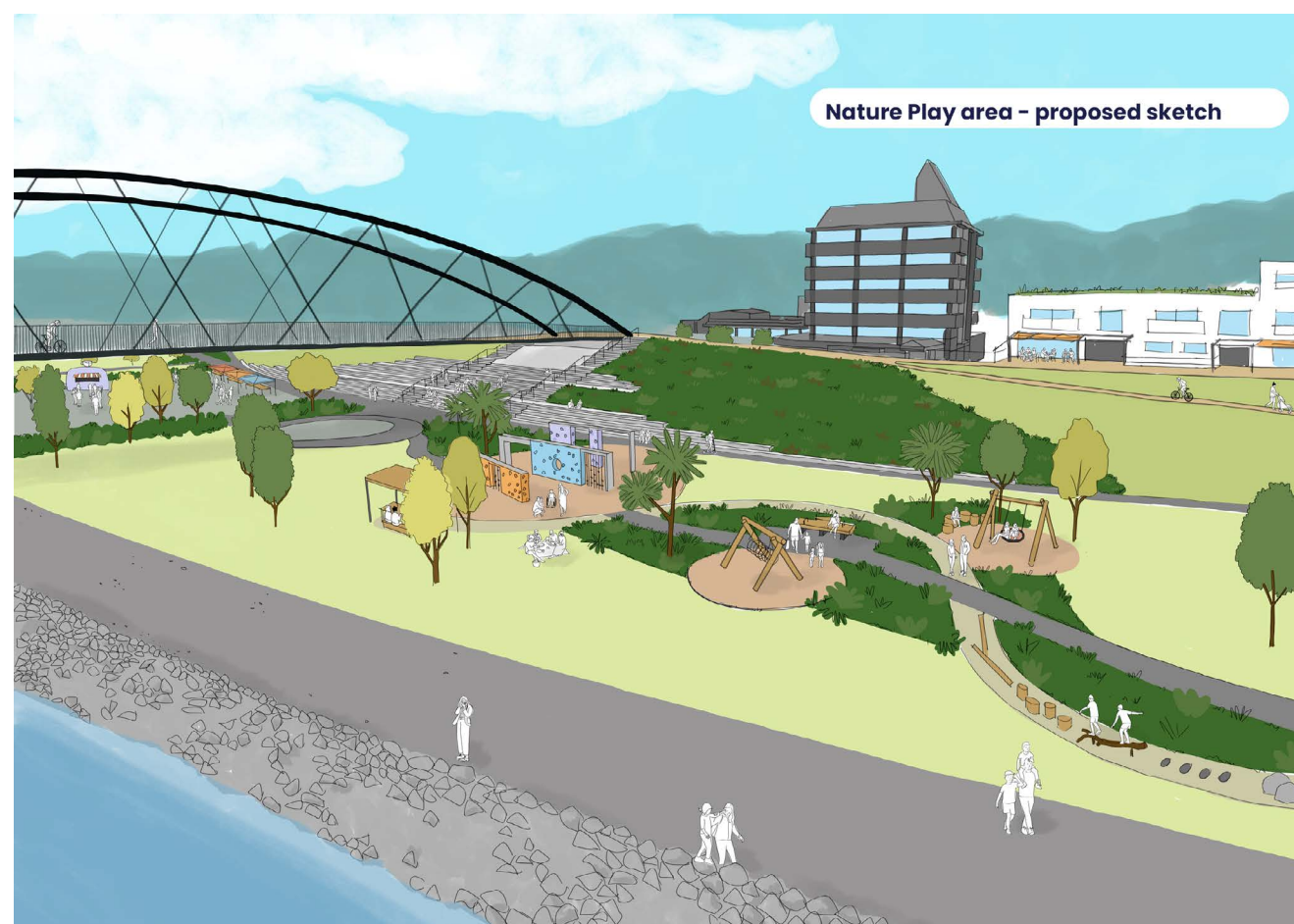


Figure 5.5.1 Engagement illustration of the nature play area proposal



Figure 5.5.2 Engagement illustration of the ūrunga and river access proposal

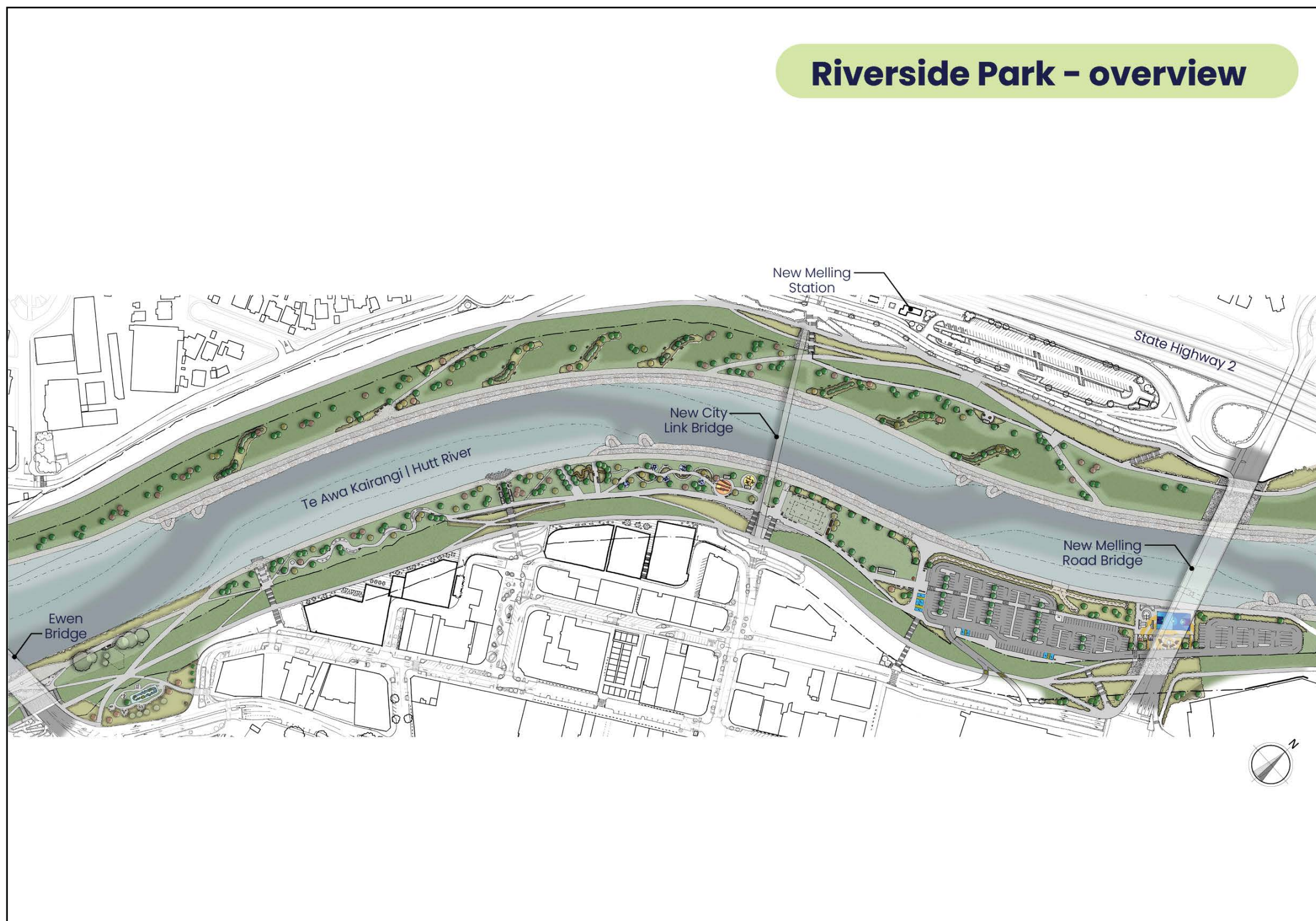
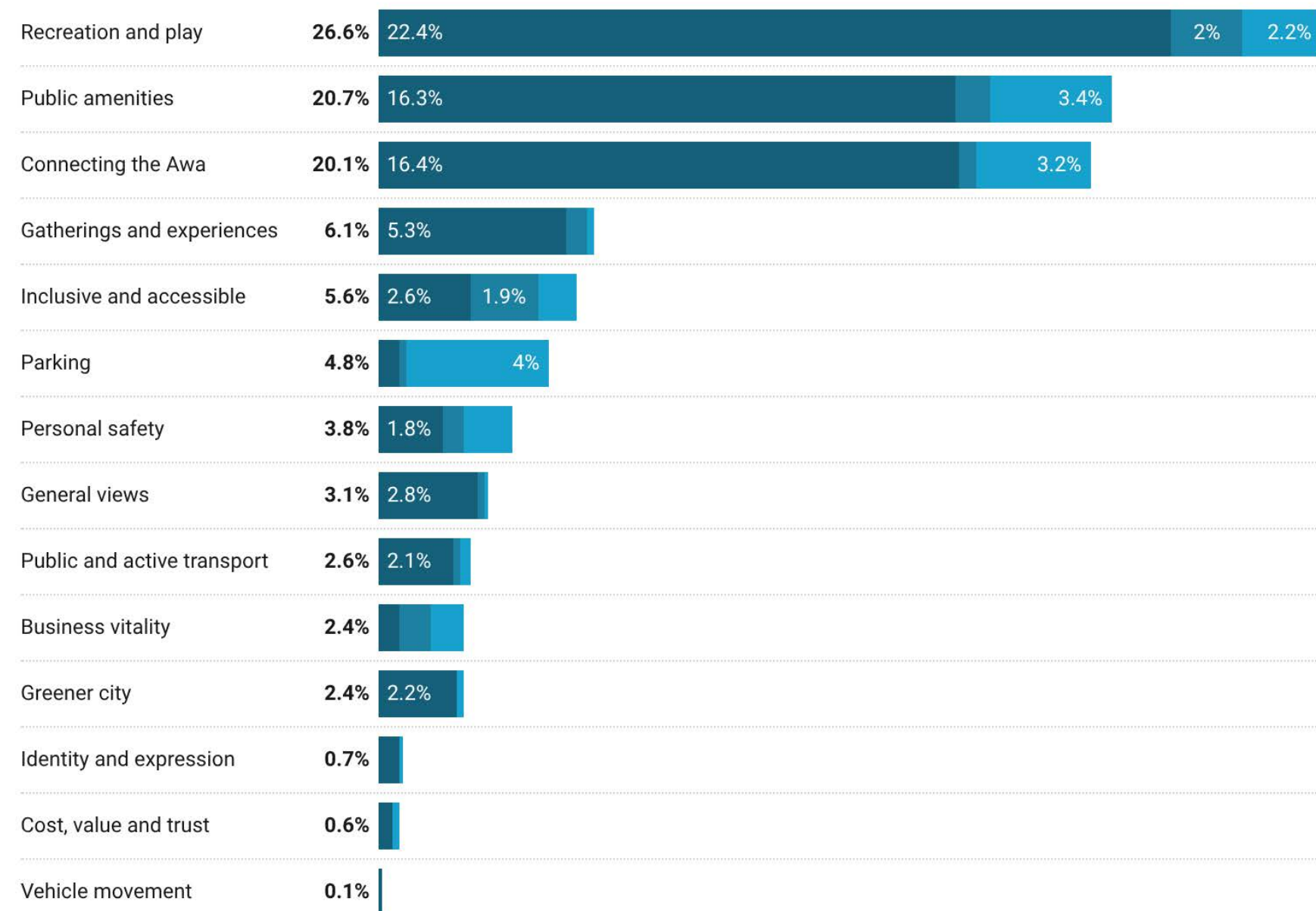


Figure 5.5.3 Engagement sketch plan of the Riverside Park & Car Park proposal



Percentage and sentiment of comments about sketch design of Riverside Park assigned to themes, excluding comments about current conditions

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Concern

Figure 5.5.4 Percentage of comments about the Riverside Park design assigned to each theme

What did people say about the Riverside Park and Car Park?

A reason to spend time in the city centre

- People saw the park as somewhere they wanted to visit and spend time in, with very strong support across the community. Feedback focused on the features that would help make the park a welcoming, inclusive and practical destination, including:
 - Toilets to allow people to stay longer.
 - An inclusive, cost-efficient play area that appeals to a range of ages and demographics, with a fairly consistent preference for swings over other play features.
 - Cafes and places to eat or buy food.
- Most businesses were positive about the park, with those closest in proximity being the most enthusiastic. There were some concerns expressed about the proximity of long-stay parking for their staff and safety at night.

Mana Whenua:

- supported the intent for Māra Ako (a learning garden) and inclusion of Māra hūpara (cultural learning through play).

- liked the idea of the ūrunga but suggested further access was needed along the river. It was also requested to extend access to allow for contemporary waka docking.
- requested access to the deepest parts of the river for traditional kai cultivation.

Community priorities

- There was general excitement about the provision of play and recreation within the design.
- Our refugee and migrant communities were enthusiastic about event spaces, music and gatherings. They would like to see facilities like food preparation areas and power included. Some strongly expressed concerns about the availability and cost of parking.
- Young people strongly supported the activities proposed within the park e.g. basketball, swings, skating and having space to spend time.
- Families with young children are enthusiastic about making the riverside more usable for their family, especially those who live close to the city centre. They were very positive about what was planned and asked us to include more facilities e.g. shade, fencing and toilets.

- Our disabled communities were looking forward to being able to access the park, particularly noting the accessible pathways. They requested toilets, drinking fountains and accessible play equipment to be included.

Way forward

What we're proposing to **keep** in the design based on the feedback:

- A broad range of activities within the park design e.g. spaces for events, Māra Ako, Māra hūpara.
- Facilities to support activities e.g. shelter, places to gather and eat kai (food).
- Access to the river.

What we're proposing to **refine or change** based on the feedback:

- Explore options around access to the river with Greater Wellington Regional Council.
- Consider natural barriers that provide separation for young children without adversely affecting flood management.
- Develop the play design in response to communities' preferences e.g. swings.

We will also investigate options to provide toilets nearby, noting they cannot be located within the park itself as it is a flood management corridor.



6. Tākai Here – Mana Whenua Mana Whenua Partnership

How we engaged

Regular engagement with Mana Whenua, supported by Hutt City Council's Tākai Here agreements, helped shape the cultural values and strategic direction of the City Centre Framework 2025. These insights and continued regular engagement with Mana Whenua guides the delivery of Riverside Park and City Centre Street Upgrades.

Overview of feedback

Cultural Narratives and Expression

Mana Whenua expressed a desire to move toward place-based historical narratives. Margaret Street, Andrews Avenue, and Riverside Park were identified as distinct locations, each containing localised histories that should inform the design direction.

These narratives include Rotokākahi, the Aukati line, occupational patterns including Te Ahi-o-manono pā, Motutawa kāinga, and Maraenuku pā, as well as traditional relationships and practices associated with Te Awa Kairangi.

Collectively, these narratives present an opportunity to strengthen tūrangawaewae and connection to place within the project area.

Mana Whenua are in the process of further developing these cultural narratives for integration into the project.

Priorities

Mana Whenua supported the public realm actively enabling cultural practice and the transmission of mātauranga Māori through everyday interactions.

This includes:

- supporting the **continuation of cultural practices** associated with Te Awa Kairangi, including kai gathering, rongoā, cultivation, and river-based activity.
- enabling learning through engagement with place-based environments such as **māra hūpara** (cultural learning through play) and **māra ako** (learning gardens).
- strengthening access to and **relationship with the awa**, including exploring opportunities for waka use and expanded river interface at the ūrunga and along the river corridor.
- embedding **cultural narratives** within the design of the streets and riverside park, rather than expressing them as standalone features.

7. Ngā urupare o ia rōpū

Group specific feedback

The engagement reached a wide range of communities, including groups who are often less represented in online council engagement. Feedback from different groups generally supported the overall direction of the projects, but each group tested the design through a different practical lens: whether the city centre would be easier to access, safer, more welcoming, more useful, and better able to support everyday public life.

Among records where gender was identified, 47.0% were female, 44.5% were male, 8.2% were recorded as a group of people with different genders, and 0.3% were recorded as trans. Individual demographic data was not collected for larger workshops, so these figures should be read as indicative rather than representative. However, facilitators note that the gender balance in workshops was generally even across groups. Rainbow community spaces were intentionally included in the engagement however representation of gender-diverse communities could be strengthened in future.



7.1 Businesses

How we engaged

Business engagement was more intensive than most other engagement channels. Facilitators visited ground-floor retail businesses across the project area and many upper-floor businesses. Around 120 businesses provided recorded feedback, with a further 40-50 contacted but choosing not to engage. Many businesses had more than one conversation with facilitators and were given project information and links to the online survey.

Because this engagement was largely one-to-one, business feedback generated more detail per participant than most community engagement. This means business feedback has a larger volume of comments and graphs in this document should be read with that context in mind.

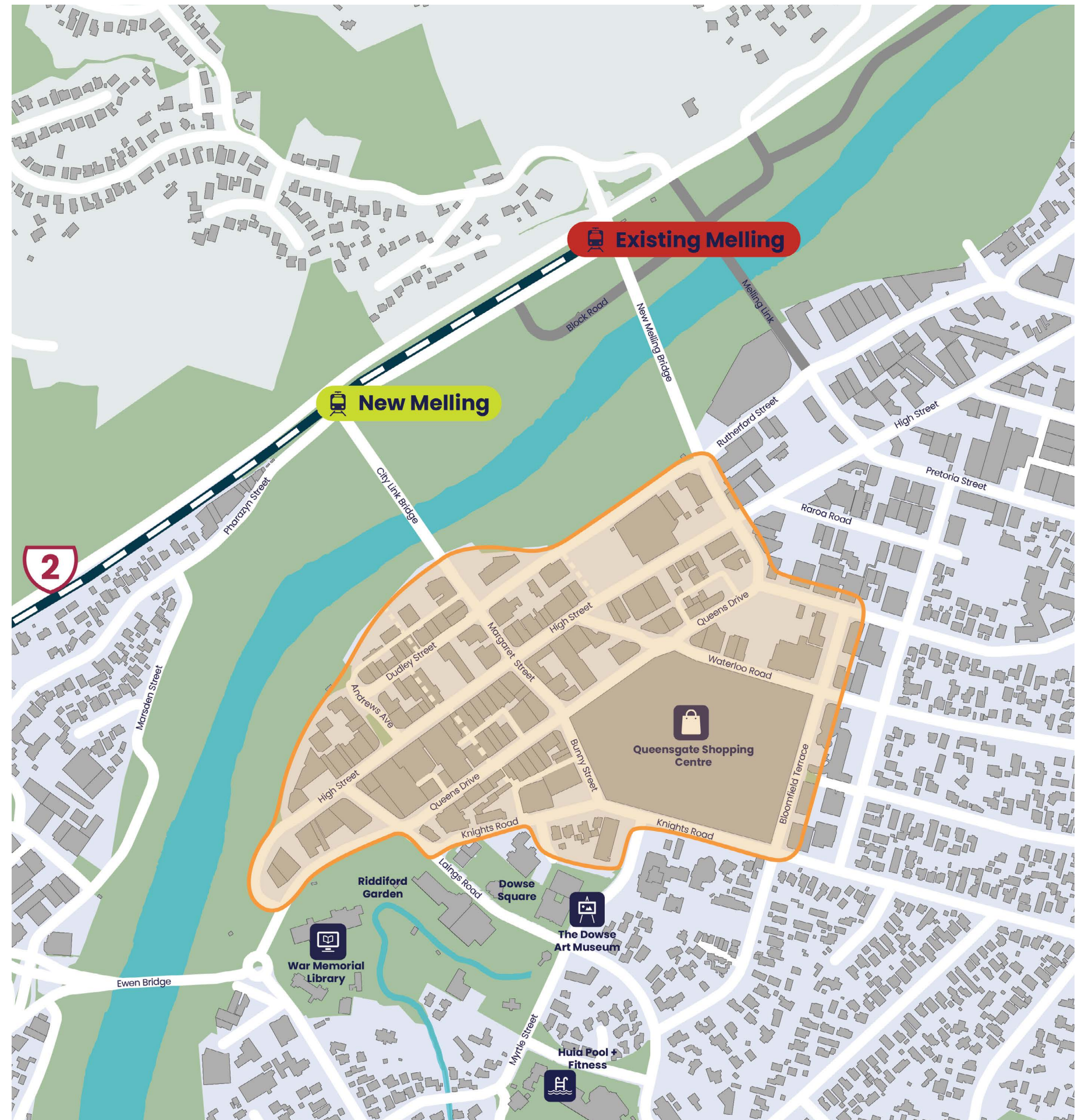
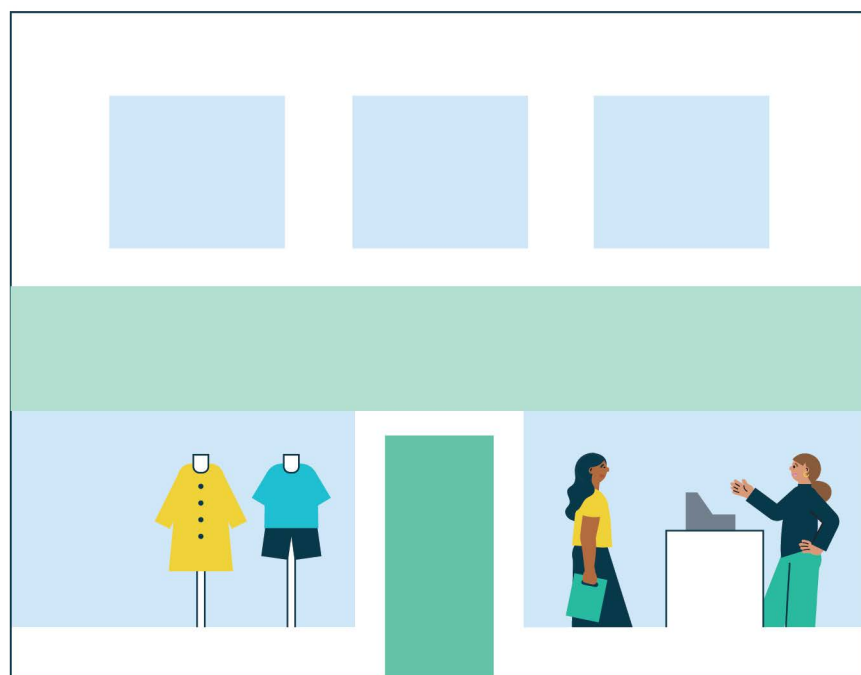


Image: Map showing area business engagement was undertaken



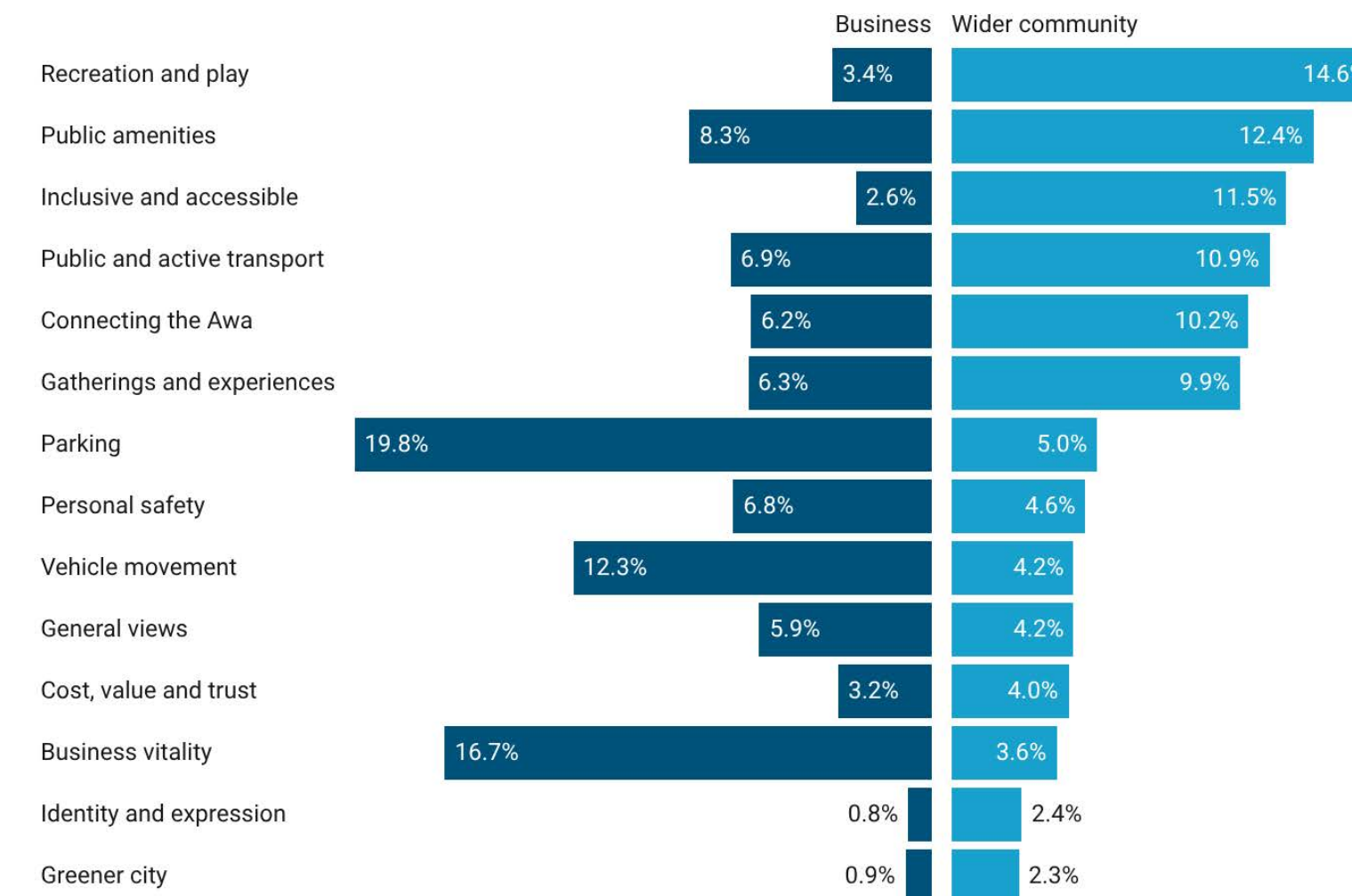
Overview of feedback

Businesses recorded both the highest number of positive comments and negative comments overall. This suggests that business concerns should not be read as opposition to change. Rather, businesses were **asking for careful integration of the design** with customer access, parking, loading, construction staging and day-to-day trading needs.

Businesses **supported changes that could bring more people, activity and confidence into the city centre**, but were concerned about anything

Percentage of comments from businesses and the wider community assigned to each theme

Figure 7.1.1 How most discussed topics differ between businesses and the wider community



that could make trading harder, less visible, or less accessible during and after construction.

Priorities

Business and community feedback reflected different perspectives rather than opposing views. Business participants focused on the practical implications of the proposals, including customer access, parking, loading, servicing and the potential impacts of construction on business continuity.

Community members more often emphasised the long-term benefits of a more walkable,

vibrant and river-connected city centre, with spaces for families, recreation and everyday public life.

Both groups recognised the importance of an accessible, safe and functional city centre. The key difference was in focus: businesses were primarily concerned with how the changes would be delivered and future access, while the wider community placed greater emphasis on the experience and opportunities the completed project could provide.

7.2 People with lived experience of disability and accessibility advocates

How we engaged

As with the previous rounds of engagement, an important objective was to hear directly from people with lived experience of disability and those working in the accessibility sector. Seven tailored engagement activities were held with around 105 participants.



1. Hikoi around the City Centre
2. Manaaki Ability Trust workshop
3. Mobility Parking engagement visit
4. MASH Trust engagement on push button distance
5. Wheels & Canes workshop

Overview of feedback

Participants appreciated seeing their earlier input into the Streetscape Strategy reflected in the proposed designs. They supported the accessible routes over the stopbank, signalised crossings at Rutherford Street and Knights Road, raised crossings, wider smoother footpaths around the bus hub, and the range of mobility parking and drop-off options with flush kerb access.

Participants emphasised that **accessibility of the whole journey matters**. To achieve this, they need to be able to: arrive safely, exit from the side or rear of a vehicle, move independently along smooth and continuous paths, cross streets safely, participate in public spaces and return to their vehicle or public transport without encountering avoidable barriers. Suggested refinements included relocating some mobility parking spaces to support safer unloading, ensuring kerb transitions are gentle enough to stop wheelchairs getting stuck, providing clear tactile indicators, accessible crossing controls and sufficient crossing time at traffic signals.

For Riverside Park, participants **welcomed the accessible pathways** and the opportunity to use recreation, gathering and event spaces. Accessible toilets and changing facilities were considered essential. Participants also identified the importance of drinking fountains, shelter, regular seating and rest points, clear sightlines, good lighting and inclusive play equipment that disabled and non-disabled children and adults can enjoy together.

Overall, the **feedback confirmed that the designs are addressing the right issues**, with several smaller details needing further refinement. These changes will be incorporated in the next stage of design and people with lived experience of disability and accessibility advocates will remain involved as the designs develop, particularly in reviewing mobility parking, crossings, paths and surfaces, toilets, seating and inclusive play.

7.3 Former Refugee and Migrant Communities

How we engaged

As Fig. 7.3.1 shows, online survey participation does not always reflect Lower Hutt’s multicultural population.

A key part of the strategy was reducing barriers around language and familiarity with Council processes, to allow more people to participate. To do this we met people in places and through networks they already knew and trusted.

More than 150 people from migrant and former refugee backgrounds participated through: Hutt Valley Refugee and Migrant Stakeholder Forum, Hutt Multicultural Council, English Teaching College, a local mosque, speciality supermarkets, businesses and organisations.

Engagement material was translated into Urdu, Arabic and Simplified Chinese, with these languages selected to better reach communities less likely to access English-only information. Translated material also supported conversations outside formal meetings.



Images: Photos from Stakeholder Forum workshop

Ethnicity as recorded	Percentage of recorded ethnicity data
NZ European	78.9%
NZ European, Māori	4%
Chinese	3.5%
Samoan	2.5%
Sri Lankan	2.5%
NZ European, Australian	2%
Indian	1%
Pakistani	1%
Asian	0.5%
Filipino	0.5%
Indo-Fijian	0.5%
Irish	0.5%
Laos	0.5%
Māori	0.5%
NZ European, English, Scottish	0.5%
NZ European, Indian	0.5%
NZ European, Samoan	0.5%

Figure 7.3.1 Ethnicity of online survey respondents

Overview of feedback

Tauiwi, former refugee and migrant communities shared many of the same priorities found in the wider engagement but placed greater emphasis on spaces that **support large family gatherings, cultural celebrations and social connection**.

They were excited about Riverside Park as a place for festivals, music, markets, cultural performances and family-friendly events. They valued free-to-use public spaces, the large picnic tables and supported opportunities for food preparation.

Their feedback suggested opportunities to broaden the recreation offer, with some participants expressing interest in activities such as volleyball and badminton.

Communities wanted the city centre to **better reflect the cultural diversity of Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai**. They identified public art and design as an opportunity to celebrate a range of identities and stories alongside those of Mana Whenua.

Concerns for this group related to parking, access and personal safety. Participants highlighted a need for affordability and clarity of parking. They also shared concerns about racial harassment, intimidation and antisocial behaviour, particularly for women and diverse

community members, and how these experiences can influence their willingness to use the city centre.

Widening the perspectives in our feedback meant we were able to cater for important needs. For example, engagement with a local mosque highlighted the importance of nearby

short-stay parking for people accessing the mosque for midday prayers.



Image: English Teaching College workshop

7.4 Older People

How we engaged

Kaumātua, older people were represented through accessibility-focused workshops, online survey responses, emailed feedback and Library drop-ins. Several older-adult community groups were invited to take part in the April–May 2026 engagement period and although that outreach did not result in feedback at that time, council staff were able to follow up with a group in July 2026 for a presentation and discussion session. The feedback from that session has been added to this report.

Where demographic information was recorded, older adults aged 65+ made up 8.4% of all participants. This is likely an undercount, as age was not recorded for all participants and individual demographic data was not collected from larger group workshops.



Overview of feedback

Feedback from older participants reflected the same broad range of views seen across the wider engagement, rather than a set of priorities defined by age. Participants expressed differing views about how people should move through the city, how streets and public spaces should function, and what would make the city centre easier and more appealing to use. Some strongly supported the proposed changes, while others were more cautious about how they would work in practice.

A common thread was an interest in how well the city would function day to day. Older participants frequently tested the proposals against practical questions about moving around safely, accessing destinations easily and using public spaces comfortably and independently. Their comments were not limited to their own needs; some also considered how the proposals could benefit other user groups, for example by providing more activities and spaces for young people.

Accessibility and ease of movement

Feedback covered smooth and level paths, avoiding difficult surface transitions, tactile paving, kerb ramps, pedestrian desire lines,

accessible crossings, stopbank ramps, safe mobility parking, rear-entry unloading, and designing above minimum accessibility standards. Feedback on Riverside Park also called for accessible seating with armrests and backrests, colour contrast on steps, and more detailed testing of wheelchair access.

Sightlines and safety

Older participants raised concerns about sightlines, particularly around heights of planting or trees where they could obstruct visibility at intersections. This was also a consideration for personal safety.

Support for improving the public realm

There was support for improving the quality and accessibility of public spaces. Participants supported more accessibility improvements such as tactile paving, removing roundabouts and providing accessible ramps to the riverside for better connection to the river. A small number wanted the designs to go further by reducing traffic lanes to provide wider footpaths and a more attractive pedestrian environment, including on High Street South.

Alongside this support, participants wanted greater clarity about the implications of the proposals for vehicle access and route changes.

Some also emphasised the importance of ensuring that new planting and landscaped areas would be well maintained.

How we engaged

This group made up 24.9% of participant records, where recorded.



- ## Hutt City Council Engagement Report City Centre Street Upgrades & Riverside Park August 2026

Overview of feedback

Rangatahi expressed more positive sentiment than the wider engagement overall. When weighted response counts are used, positive sentiment among young people is about 86.3%, compared with 66.0% overall. Negative sentiment was also lower.

Young people's feedback mostly aligned with the wider community, but they were different in what they got excited about and how they imagined using Riverside Park.

There was a stronger focus on the park as a **place to do things and for social connection**, particularly basketball, skating, swings, informal sport, active play and spending time with friends. Unlike older adults or business feedback, which tended to focus more on how the city centre functions, young people placed greater emphasis on the quality of public spaces, river access, seating, play, active recreation and safe crossings. They also highlighted the importance of **hang-out spaces** as free, visible, well-lit and welcoming spaces where they could gather casually without needing to book, buy something or be moved on.

Tama rangatahi (Teen boys) tended to focus on activity, recreation and socialising. Their feedback emphasised spaces for basketball, skating and other activities, alongside places to spend time with friends.

Wāhine rangatahi (Teen girls) placed greater emphasis on creating spaces that felt welcoming, inclusive and designed with girls in mind. They highlighted the importance of open, well-lit spaces with planting, public art and natural, colourful design features that encourage people to gather and spend time.

7.6 Families with young children

How we engaged

Families with young children were an important focus of the engagement. We met with Lower Hutt, Alicetown and Waterloo Playcentres, and delivered information for families to four ECE centres in and around the project area. We also connected with families through the library exhibition, Baby Bounce and multicultural playgroups.

Translated material, including information in simplified Chinese, was particularly useful when engaging with families from diverse communities and helped make the project information easier to share and discuss.

Colouring-in versions of the proposed designs gave younger children an easy way to take part while creating opportunities to talk with parents and caregivers. These were very well received and proved especially useful when meeting with playgroups and families with young children.



Image: Children using the colouring-in pages

Overview of feedback

Families with young children gave some of the strongest support and feedback, particularly about how Riverside Park needs to function. Their comments focused on designing for the whole visit from arriving safely and supervising children to accessing toilets, shade, seating, food and drink, and leaving without the trip becoming stressful.

This group was one of the clearest in expressing a **desire to use the city centre more**. Parents, caregivers and early childhood education (ECE) centres said the city centre does not currently work well for families with young children. They wanted it to support a longer family visit or "day out", rather than a short stop.

Early childhood education centres within walking distance of the project area include more than 600 children, and their feedback suggests there is existing, underserved demand for places where families and ECE groups can spend more time in the city centre and along the riverbank after pick-up or as part of group visits. Catering for this group could support both community wellbeing and city centre activity by giving families a practical reason to stay longer and visit nearby businesses.

The main priorities for this group were nearby **toilets and changing facilities, shade, seating, family-friendly parking, food and drink options, and play spaces** separated from the river edge. Participants consistently described the need for public spaces where children can play safely, and adults can supervise more than one child without needing to leave for basic facilities. Fenced or clearly protected play areas were seen as especially important for families with babies, toddlers and older children, as well as for ECE visits, providing separation from the river edge and nearby movement routes.

Toilets were repeatedly identified as essential, with many saying the existing facilities are too far away to support regular use of the riverbank. One participant noted, "if you want us to spend time on the riverbank and take the kids, it's not possible without a close toilet."

Overall, families were positive about the proposed play offer, the range of equipment and the variety of play opportunities, with some supporting even more play. There was also strong interest in making greater use of the river setting through water play and nature play. One ECE centre offered to organise a community co-design workshop with Council and local

ECE providers to help shape the nature play experience. Some participants noted that paid parking could make regular family visits feel less achievable.

8. Whakarāpopototanga o ngā urupare

Summary of feedback for both projects

8.1 The projects have a strong positive mandate, with conditions

There are far more positive comments than negative ones.

The strongest level of support is for: the Riverside Park, green spaces, places to sit and eat, basketball, play, river access, and Andrews Avenue activation.

But the support often comes with conditions i.e.:

- yes, if it is safe
- yes, if there are toilets
- yes, if disabled access is real
- yes, if parking and construction disruption is managed with local businesses in mind.

8.2 Riverside Park gets people excited

The recurring language in feedback on the Riverside Park is about whānau (families), children, memories, nature, play, events, walking, sitting, eating, river connection, and something Lower Hutt can be proud of.

Both community and businesses see this as a chance to shift the identity of the city centre.

8.3 Andrews Avenue has real potential as an activation space

Andrews Avenue comes up repeatedly as a place where people can imagine events, food trucks, music, seating, lunch breaks, casual gathering and a more playful city. People see Andrews Avenue as a place where the city centre can feel more welcoming, social and people-friendly.

There is also a strong message that we need to consider sunlight, shelter, maintenance, safety and functional design so it does not become another underused or intimidating space.

8.4 Safety must be designed-in

Personal safety is a key consideration for the community and businesses.

Safety feedback focuses on lighting, visibility and surveillance, as well as reducing anti-social behaviour and making public spaces feel safe and comfortable for women, young people and the wider community.

8.5 Public toilets are needed

Public toilets come up as a priority for almost every group: parents, older people, disabled

users, businesses, park users, parents, young people, runners, and visitors.

For the community to spend more time in the city centre or Riverside Park, clean, safe and accessible toilets and baby-change facilities are essential.

8.6 We received strong feedback on accessibility

The disability and accessibility feedback was highly specific and provided guidance to improve the design.

Council must address accessibility needs early in the design process to be cost effective and increase our ability to deliver the project well.

Specific topics in the accessibility feedback included:

- **Pavement design:** dropped kerbs, crossfall, tactile pavers contrast, ramps.
- **Toilets:** accessible toilets.
- **Accessible parking:** flat access from parking, rear-entry vans, not forcing people to exit vehicles onto live traffic lanes.

- **Other features:** lighting, safe crossings, shelter, wheelchair play, seating distribution.

8.7 Businesses support improvements but are concerned about disruption

Business feedback is generally supportive of the vision, while expressing concerns about the impact of construction and changes to parking, traffic flow, deliveries and access. Businesses support making the city centre better but want to ensure the practical conditions that let them trade are not removed.

Businesses also want to understand if Riverside Park visitors will come into the city centre and spend money.

8.8 Parking is important

Parking needs came up for many different users: businesses, customers, staff, and mobility card holders. Not everyone wants more parking; many people want different types of parking to be available.

The city centre needs a balanced provision of: accessible, short-stay, delivery, evening, long-stay and riverbank parking.

8.9 Connecting to the City Link Bridge is a priority

Connecting the new Melling station to the city centre and through to the civic precinct via the City Link Bridge is widely seen as the right priority for the city.

The proposed signalised crossings at Margaret Street / Dudley Street and Bunny Street / Knights Road, which support the connection to and from the City Link Bridge, were well received.

Detailed design will need to show how cycling connections integrate with the surrounding road network.

We also received feedback on the importance of more frequent public transport services from Melling Station and Bunny Street.

8.10 Family-friendly spaces are desired

There was strong support for play, picnic, event and recreational spaces.

Families and Early Childhood Education centres are enthusiastic about the design.

Many families with young children expressed that they currently feel excluded from the city centre. This group currently feels underserved in terms of public spaces in the city centre.

The feedback demonstrates support for basketball, skateable features, swings, nature play, climbing, informal sport, youth hangout spaces, and picnic areas.

The area under the new Melling Link Road bridge is one of the more discussed in the feedback. The value of this area for young people was clear, and consideration around personal safety was seen as key to its success e.g. good lighting and vibrant colours.

9. Whakakapinga Conclusion

Our engagement has reached a large and varied audience through a mix of in-person, online, business, stakeholder and accessible channels.

Reach of the engagement

Lower Hutt had 107,562 usual residents at the 2023 Census. Face-to-face community engagement involved 933 participants, equivalent to approximately 0.9% of the city's population. Together with the informed reach was equivalent to approximately 5%.

Awareness of the projects was considerably broader through channels such as social media and library displays. These figures should not be interpreted as unique individuals, as people may have encountered or participated in the engagement through more than one channel.

An intentionally inclusive approach

The engagement was designed to hear from a broad cross-section of the community. This included tailored engagement with Mana Whenua, businesses, young people, tauiwi communities, disabled people and accessibility advocates, parents and caregivers, rainbow communities, property owners and developers, and a range of community organisations.

This approach enabled Council to hear from communities that are less likely to participate through conventional consultation channels and added depth to the feedback, particularly around accessibility, day-to-day use of the city centre and the practical implications of the proposals.

The overall design direction has tested well

The clearest finding is that communities and businesses are generally supportive of the direction of both projects, subject to specific concerns being addressed as the designs develop.

This is consistent with previous rounds of engagement. Feedback continues to show dissatisfaction with aspects of the existing city centre and support for changes that would make it more attractive, accessible and enjoyable, and provide more reasons for people to visit and spend time there.

Of the coded comments relating to the future design, 1,610 were positive and 472 expressed concern. This represents approximately 66.5% positive sentiment and 19.5% concern, with the remainder neutral.

Businesses support the direction, with practical issues to resolve

Businesses also provided substantial positive feedback about the design direction. They supported greener streets, outdoor seating, safer crossings, increased activity and stronger connections between the city centre and Te Awa Kairangi. Businesses identified opportunities for the projects to activate the area, attract people into the city centre, improve visibility and create more useful public spaces.

Their concerns were predominantly practical. Businesses want Council to ensure that existing pressures are not made worse through construction or through unresolved parking, access, loading and traffic arrangements. They also raised an important question about the value of the investment and whether the proposed changes will encourage more people to visit and spend time in the city centre.

Community feedback provides useful evidence in this regard. Participants repeatedly identified many of the elements proposed through these projects as things that would encourage them to visit, stay and spend time in the city centre. These included play and recreation, events and gathering

spaces, safer and more attractive streets, better access to Te Awa Kairangi, shade, seating, toilets and family-friendly amenities.

Community support is accompanied by practical expectations

The feedback indicates that support for investment in the city centre is accompanied by clear expectations about how it is delivered.

There is support for the park, play and recreation, stronger connections with Te Awa Kairangi, safer walking and cycling, and higher-quality public spaces. At the same time, this support often comes with conditions i.e. yes, if it is safe.

Disabled people and accessibility advocates made a particularly valuable contribution, identifying practical improvements that can be incorporated as the designs develop. This feedback reinforces the importance of considering accessibility beyond minimum standards and continuing to test detailed design decisions with people who have lived experience of access barriers.

Next steps

The next stage for both projects is the development of concept designs for Council consideration and approval.

The engagement findings will continue to inform the concept designs and subsequent design

stages. Council will also continue targeted engagement with relevant user groups and other stakeholders as more detailed designs are developed.

Overall, the engagement supports progressing the proposed design direction while addressing the practical issues identified through the feedback. The next phase provides an opportunity to retain the elements that communities value while resolving the matters that will determine how well the city centre functions day to day.