

Safe Crossing Williamstown Road



Engagement Summary Report

July 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

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Introduction

Project background

Williamstown Road in Port Melbourne is a busy, heavy freight route with limited safe crossing options between Todd Road and from Beacon Road to Graham Street. To improve safety for all road users (including people walking, riding and driving), the City of Port Phillip has been advocating to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for the introduction of a pedestrian-operated signalised crossing on Williamstown Road and a safe bike lane on Beacon Road that will help connect Port Melbourne to the growing Fisherman's Bend area, including the Port Melbourne Secondary College and the JL Murphy Reserve.

The proposed improvements are in line with Council's [***Move, Connect, Live Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-28***](#) which aims to *"Improve the pedestrian connectivity across major roads between Fisherman's Bend, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and Docklands including Williamstown Road and Lorimer Street"*.

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement process was to understand resident usage patterns, gauge support for specific safety measures proposed, and identify potential concerns.

About this report

This report outlines how Council engaged the community on this project, and summarises the feedback collected. Council will use the feedback from this consultation to advocate to the State government for improved safety features on the State-managed Williamstown Road.



Before reading this report

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- The information in this report is based on quantitative and qualitative sample research and does not necessarily reflect the views of a statistically representative sample of the community.
- City of Port Phillip strives to include diverse voices in our engagement activities. We acknowledge, however, that some people are likely to have experienced barriers to participation in the activities that are outlined in this report – including people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others.
- The word '**participants**' is used to describe the total group of community members and stakeholders who contributed to this engagement process. The terms '**respondents**' is used to talk about the sub-group of total participants who responded to a specific question or engagement activity.
- The information and views presented in this report are a summary of the opinions, perceptions and feedback heard from across all the engagement activities. The feedback has not been independently validated. As such, some information maybe factually incorrect, unfeasible or outside of the scope of this project.
- This report summarises key feedback from participants and does not preclude the project team from considering community feedback in its original format.
- The report summarises the feedback from engagement activities. While every effort is made to include the full breadth of feedback provided, not all comments, views or advice are shown in the findings of this report. Where appropriate, a mix of quotes, themes and metrics are used to convey community feedback.

What we did

Between Friday 10 May until Sunday 9 June 2024, we delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about Safe Crossing Williamstown Road and collected feedback through engagement activities.

Communications activities

To get the word out about the engagement process, we did the following:



Posters in and around the proposed Crossing

Posters about the engagement process and the opportunity to provide feedback were placed in JL Murphy Reserve, on Williamstown Road near Beacon Road and in the Garden City Reserve playground.



Postcards X 256

Postcards were distributed to the local community via post, explaining the engagement process and inviting people to complete a survey online.



Emails x 3

Emails were sent to key stakeholders including the Port Melbourne Primary school, Port Melbourne Secondary College and the sports clubs using the JL Murphy Reserve about the project and with links to the project website and survey.



Newsletters x 2

Project information and an invitation to engage was included in two newsletters during the engagement period: the *Shape our City*, May 2024 and *DiverCity*, May 2024 newsletters.



Social media posts x 2

We promoted the engagement process through social media posts on Facebook and Instagram, reaching 3,444 unique users.



'Have your say' website

Council's dedicated engagement website, 'Have your say' included a page for this project, with information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and opportunities to engage.

Engagement activities

To hear from the community and collect feedback we did the following:

Online Survey



This online survey collected demographic details about participants and asked for feedback on proposed safety improvements at the intersection of Williamstown Road and Beacon Road.

The survey aimed to understand resident usage patterns, gauge support for specific safety measures, and identify potential concerns.

Pop Up



Held in JL Murphy Reserve, aimed to engage with local sports clubs and athletes' families, gauge support and promote the online survey.

School Activity – Port Melbourne Primary



Held with the senior class's leaders' group, aimed to engage local children, gauge support for specific safety measures, and identify potential concerns specific to primary school children.

Reach and participation

Activity	Reach	Insights
Social media posts	3,444	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion through Facebook and Instagram, reaching 3,444 unique users.
Newsletters	16,434	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DiverCity is a monthly newsletter with more than 15,000 subscribers.
'Have your say' website	1,466 views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most visitors came to the website directly (52%) others came either via a campaign (29%) or social media (11%). A minority (8%) of visitors were referred via search engine. While 989 visitors came to the project page, only (24%, or 234 people) made contribution/provided feedback.
Survey Respondents	234	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey had a higher participation rate among females (60%) compared to males (40%)
Emails to Strategic Transport team	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two emails were received with the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility: Two emails identified accessibility issues with the survey, which were subsequently addressed. Design Feedback: Two residents contacted Council regarding the proposed design. These residents raised specific concerns through various channels, including contacting their councillors, emailing Strategic Transport team, and responding to the survey.

Who we heard from

Demographics

A total of 234 participants provided 252 responses to this survey, which asked demographic questions (such as age, gender, etc.) of participants to help us understand who we heard from. The responses are explored below.

Age

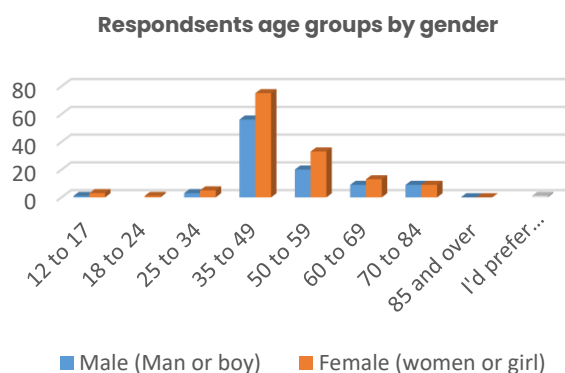
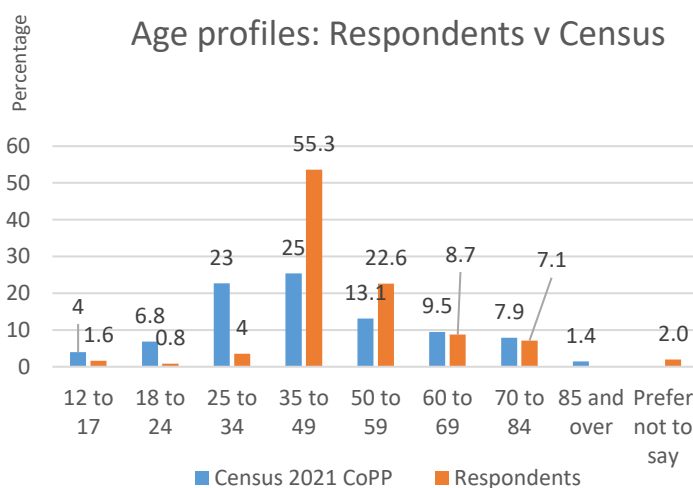
Answered: 252 (100%)

In total, 252 respondents provided their age in our survey.

Most respondents were aged 35 to 59.
The largest age group was 35 to 49 years (55.3%).

The age distribution broadly reflects 2021 Census data. There was an underrepresentation of younger adults (18 to 34), and an overrepresentation of older adults (35 to 59), which is common in community engagement processes.

Across all age groups, females participated most frequently. Female participants were more likely to be slightly younger than male participants.

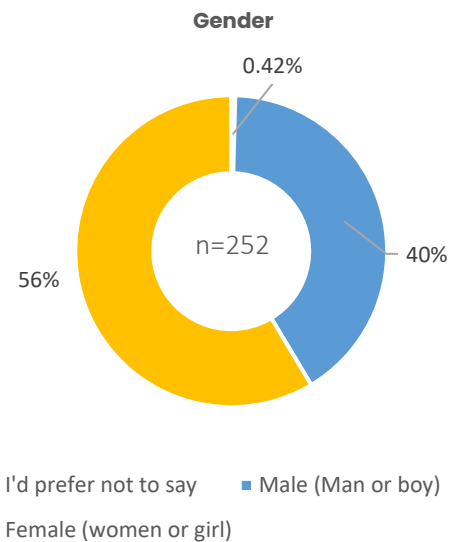


Gender

Answered: 252 (100%)

In total, 252 respondents provided a response to this question. **Over half of the respondents (56%) identified as 'female'.**

Higher participation by females often occurs in engagement projects unless the project has specifically targeted male participation or relates to the interests of a particular gender.

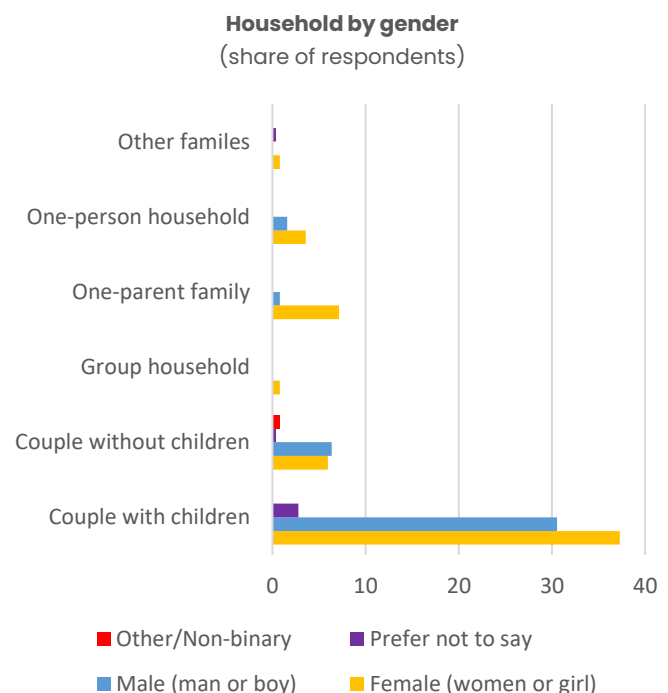


Households

Answered: 250 (99.21%)

We asked participants about the household they live in. 250 participants provided a response. Of these respondents, 71% were a 'Couple with children', 13.5% were a 'Couple with no children' and 5.1% were one-person households.

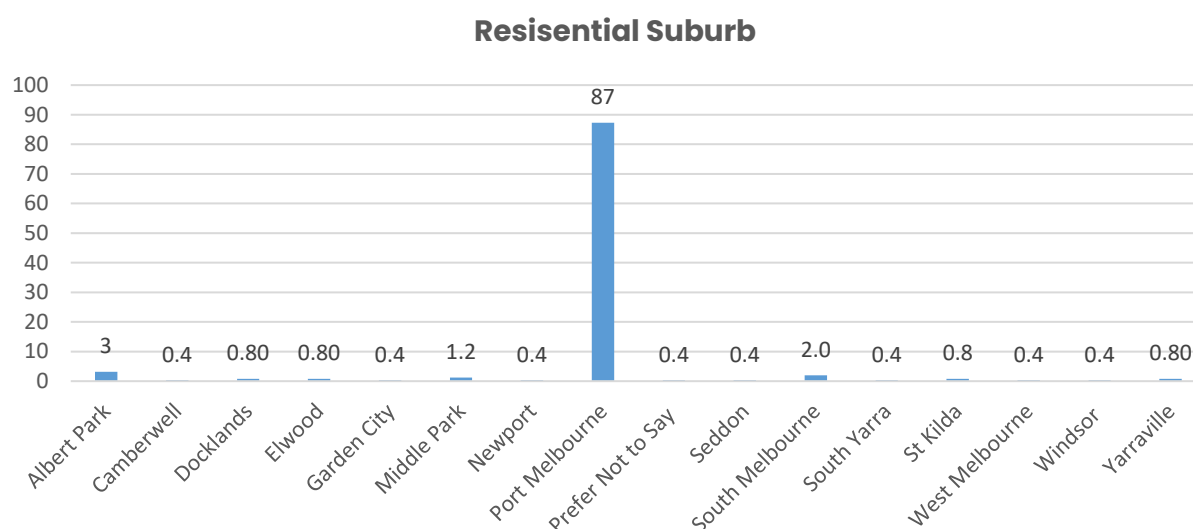
Only a small number (7.93%) of respondents were 'one-parent homes', although, women were highly represented (90%).



Residential Suburb

Answered: 251 (99.6%)

Participants were asked to provide the suburb they lived in, 96% of respondents told us they were local community members. **The most represented suburb was Port Melbourne, 87%.**



Diversity of participants

Answered: 239 (94.84%)

We asked people if they identified with a series of statements. Most people (69%) told us that none of the statements applied to them. Of the remaining participants, most selected one statement, but some participants identified with up to three statements.

- **'I'd prefer not to say' (23 responses).**
- 'I speak a language other than English at home' (22 responses).
- 'I identify as LGBTIQ+' (11 responses).
- 'I am a person with disability' (7 responses).

- 'I consider myself financially disadvantaged' (5 responses).
- 'I am from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background' (0 responses).

What we heard

What we set out to achieve

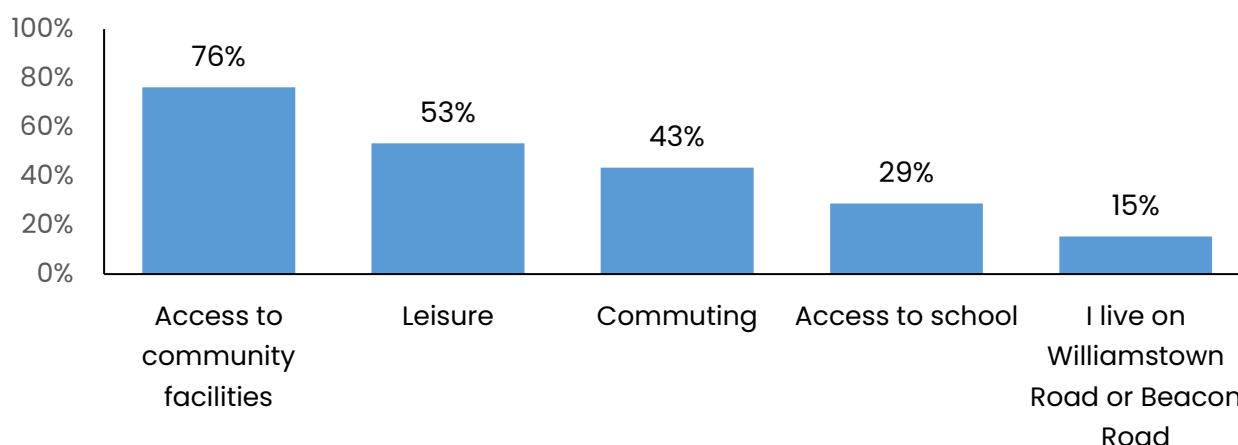
The survey aimed to understand resident usage patterns, test support for the proposed safety interventions and specific components and identify potential concerns.

Existing Usage patterns

Answered: 252 (100%)

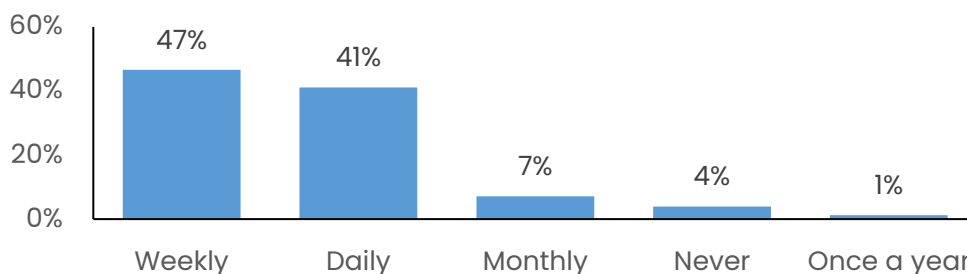
We heard from residents of Williamstown Rd and Beacon Rd, local students and their families, as well as the general public using this site. Overall, respondents represent a varied group of users of this location.

How do you currently use Williamstown Rd and Beacon Rd?



88% of participants cross at this location at least once a week, with many (41%) crossing at this location daily.

How often do you cross at the proposed location?

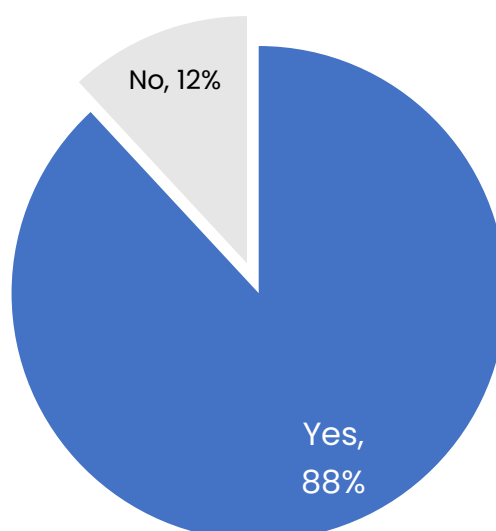


Overall, participants to the survey use this location often and for a variety of uses, informing a relevant feedback group for this community consultation.

General support

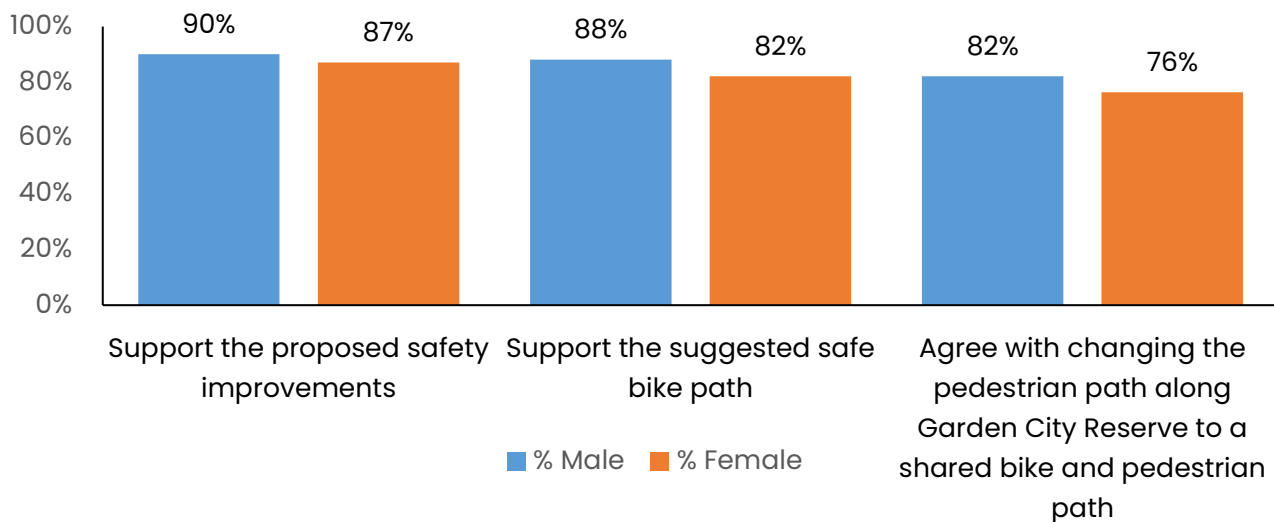
A very high share of participants (88%) supported the general safety improvements proposed for Williamstown Rd and Beacon Rd. Of the 30 respondents who objected to the proposed improvements, 6 noted that they never use this site.

Do you support the proposed safety improvements?



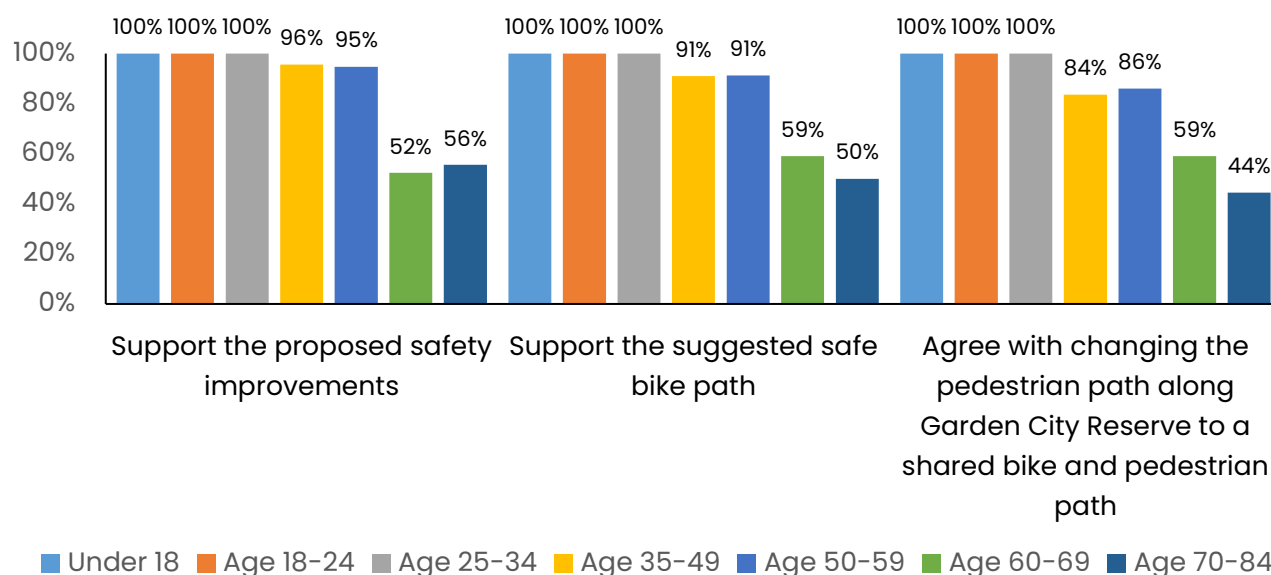
Both men and women strongly support the proposed interventions, although women's support is slightly weaker.

Support for the various proposed changes (gender)



This high level of support extends across the different age groups, apart from respondents above the age of 60, who still show support yet in lower levels. All participants who objected are older than 35 years old.

Support for the various proposed changes (age)



We asked our community for their views and possible changes to their travel patterns regarding each one of the project's components: the Pedestrian-operated signal (POS), the safe bike path, the transformation of the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared bike and pedestrian path and the movement of the bus station 100 meters from its current location.

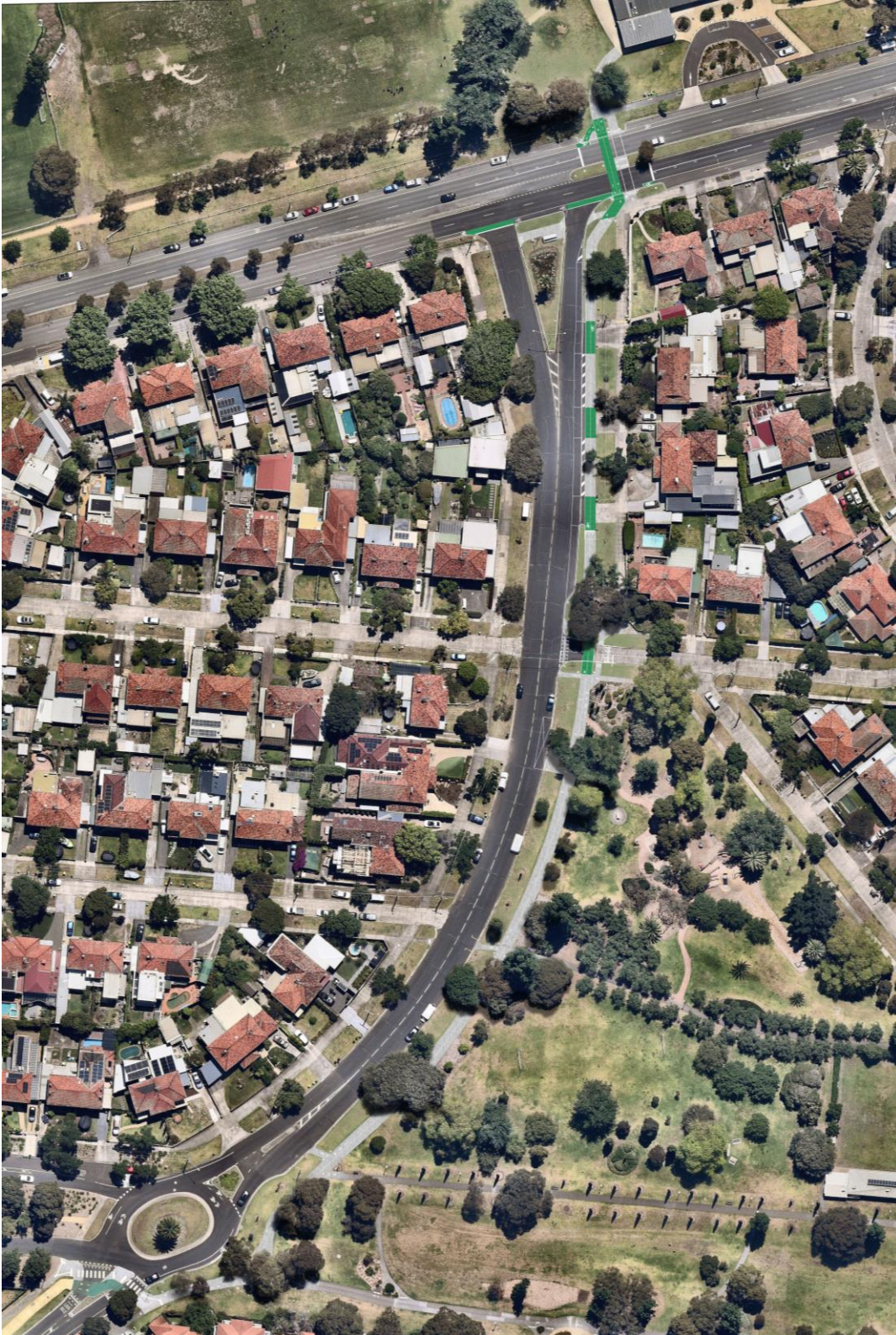


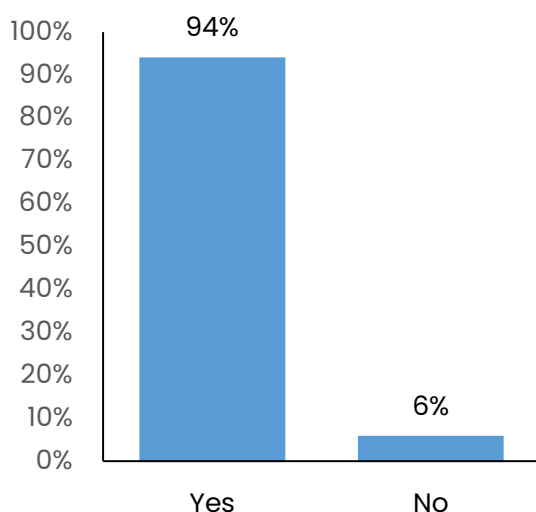
Figure 1: The proposed design, provided in the engagement activities.

Specific Project Components

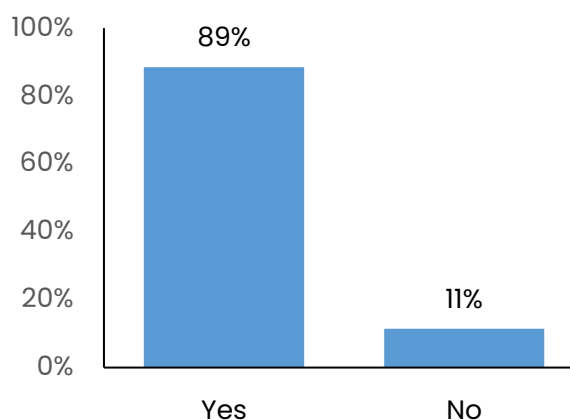
Only 15 respondents objected to the proposed POS on Williamstown Rd and Beacon Rd, with many suggesting they will use this crossing more often if the POS is installed.

Support for the POS is overwhelmingly high and crosses all ages, site uses, suburbs and household types.

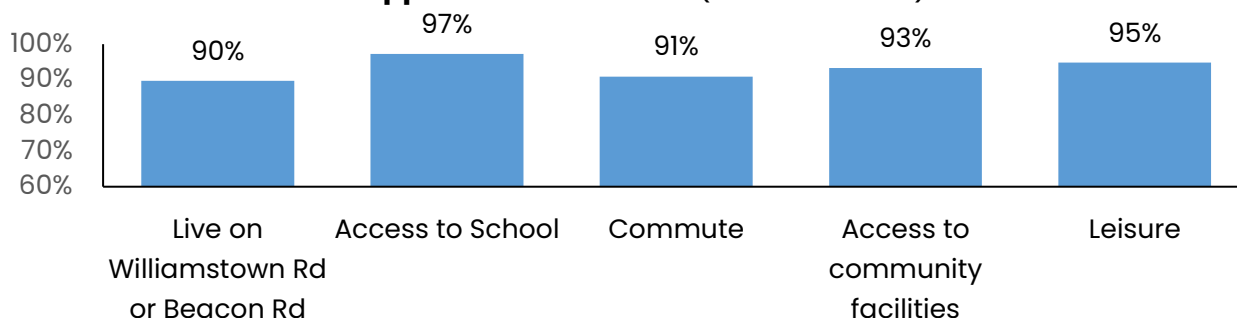
Do you support the POS?

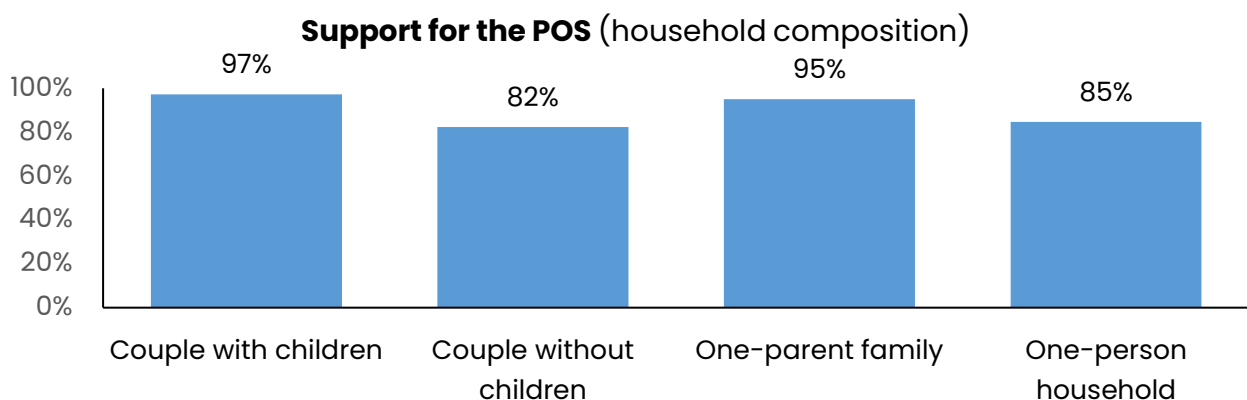
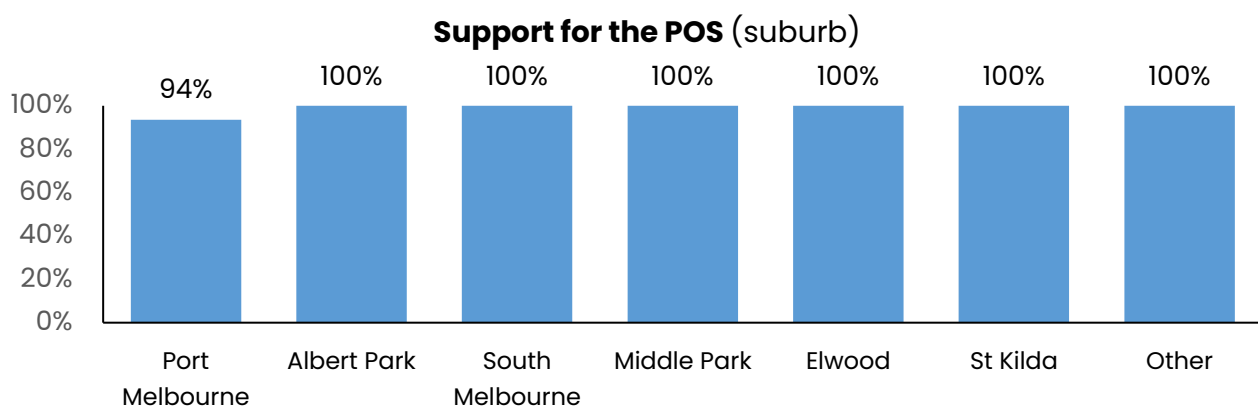
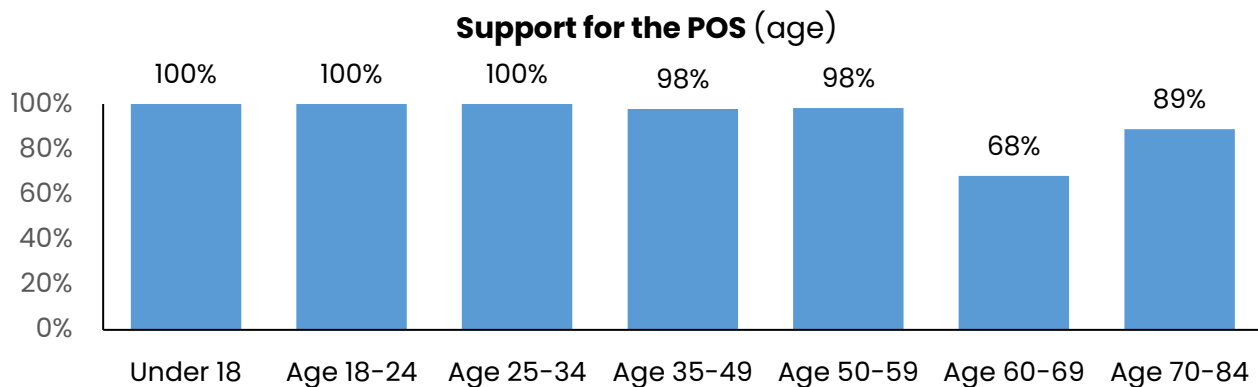


Would the proposed POS encourage you to cross at this location more often?



Support for the the POS (use of the site)





We asked participants if they had any specific concerns or comments regarding the proposed POS. Key themes that emerged include:

- **Need for full traffic lights intersection rather than solely pedestrian signal.**
 - *"With the Barak housing estate rebuild traffic will increase substantially. This intersection needs traffic lights to control vehicle and pedestrian traffic not just a pedestrian crossing."*

- *"Why would you install a pedestrian-only crossing rather than turning this intersection into a traffic light-controlled one? There have been several motor vehicle accidents at this intersection."*
- **Concerns about right turns from Beacon Rd onto Williamstown Rd.**
 - *"Turning right onto Williamstown Road from Beacon Rd is already busy and would become dangerous as traffic backs up during already busy times."*
- **Concerns regarding speed and compliance.**
 - *"Williamstown Road is a 60KPH road with a lot of heavy traffic. A crossing here would actually put users at risk due to the high-speed limit."*
 - *"That traffic will ignore the signal as they often do with the pedestrian crossing next to the Port Melbourne cricket oval."*
- **Impact on Bus and Vehicle Traffic**
 - *"It is quite hard for buses and cars to turn out of Beacon Rd into Williamstown Rd in peak hour. I can see the need to ensure a keep clear in the intersection to facilitate bus and car turns during the pedestrian sequence."*
- **Support given pedestrian safety.**
 - *"This is brilliant, so glad this dangerous area is being addressed. I see children every day running in and out of traffic."*
 - *"This is needed for the safety of our children and other family members. We use this route daily for access to the secondary school, gymnastics club, Murphy reserve for sporting and leisure activities."*
- **Alternative Suggestions**
 - *"We don't need more traffic lights, more frustrated drivers doesn't help pedestrian safety. I suggest a zebra crossing without flashing yellow lights and speed/signage before it."*



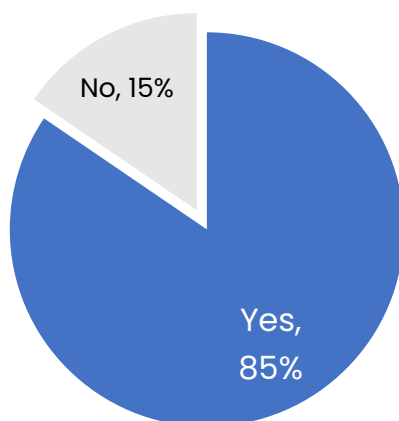
Figure 2: A render of the suggested pedestrian-operated signal, provided in the engagement activities.



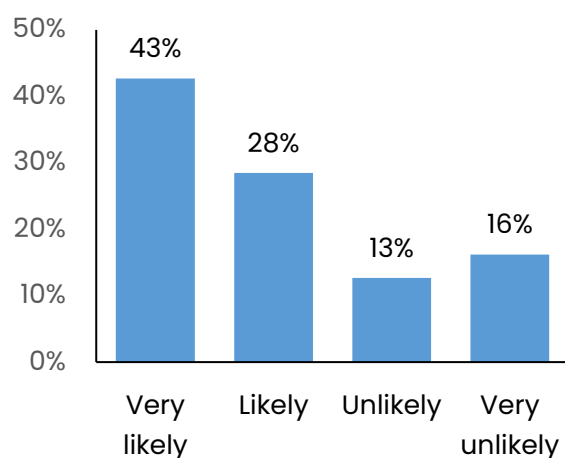
Figure 3: A render of the suggested pedestrian-operated signal, provided in the engagement activities.

Support for the safe bike path along Beacon Rd is only slightly lower, yet still overwhelmingly high and crosses all uses of the site, suburbs and household types, with over 70% of participants responding that they will likely use it.

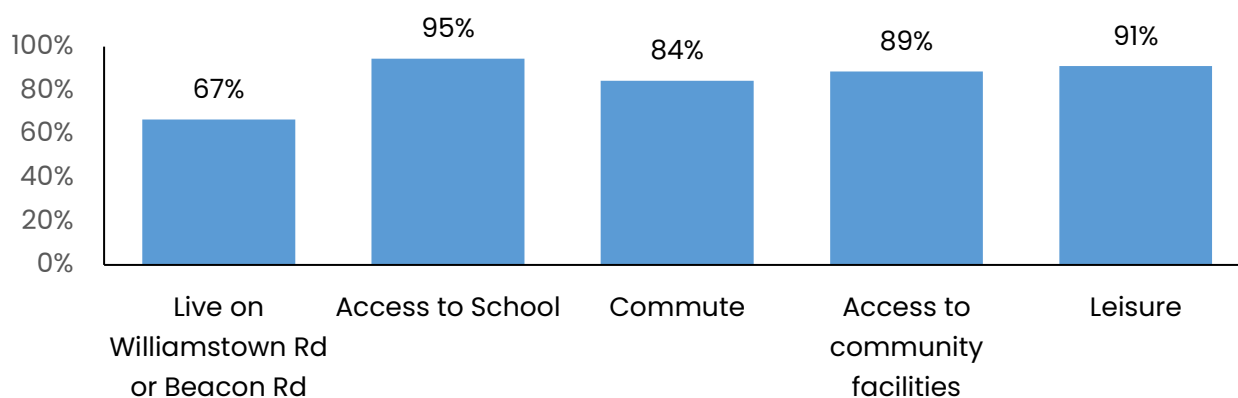
Do you support the suggested safe bike path?



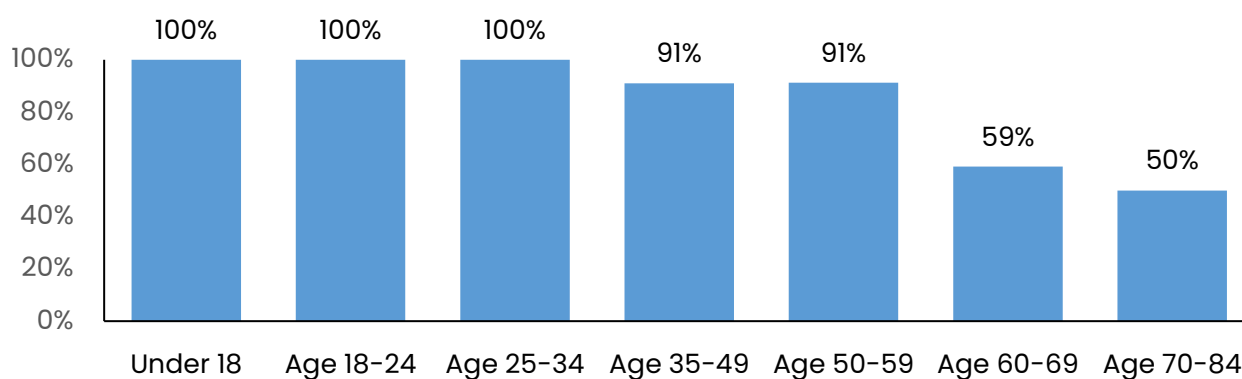
How likely are you to use the proposed new bike path?



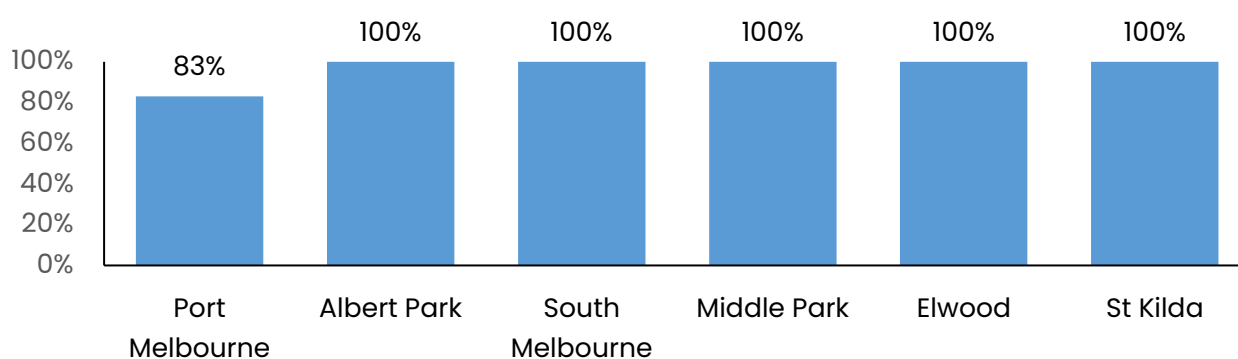
Support for a safe bike path (use of the site)



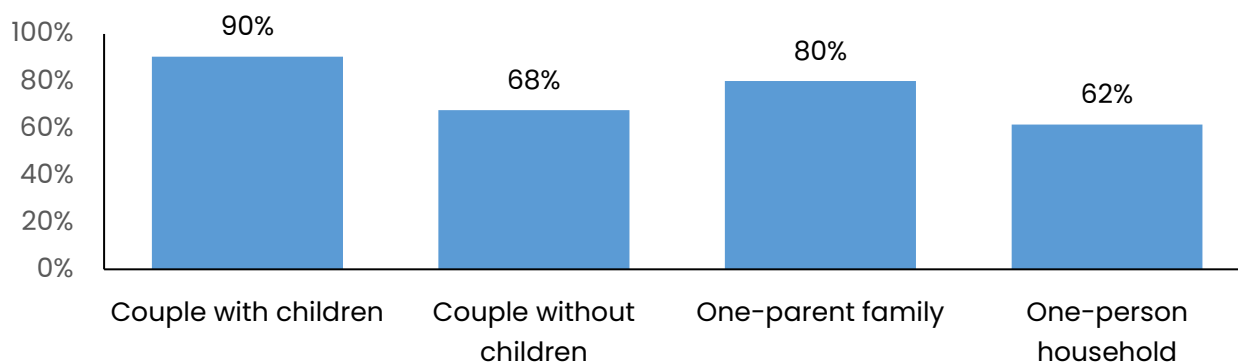
Support for a safe bike path (age)



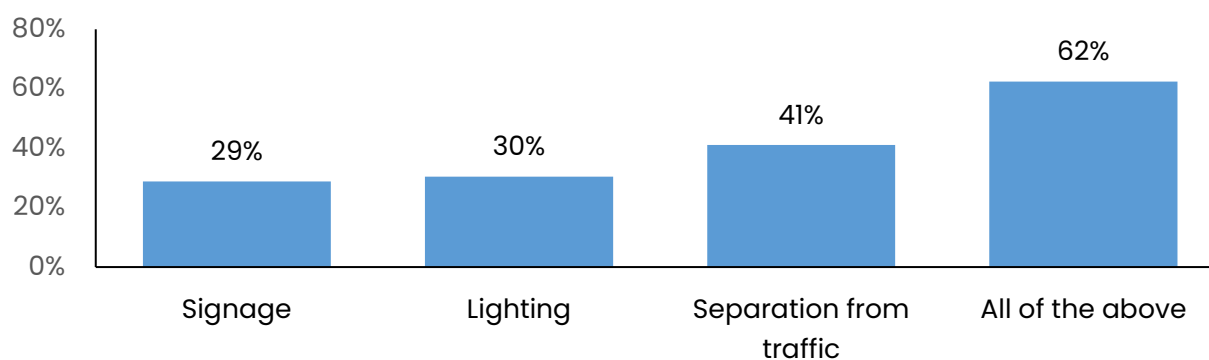
Supporting for a safe bike path (suburb)



Support for a safe bike path (household composition)

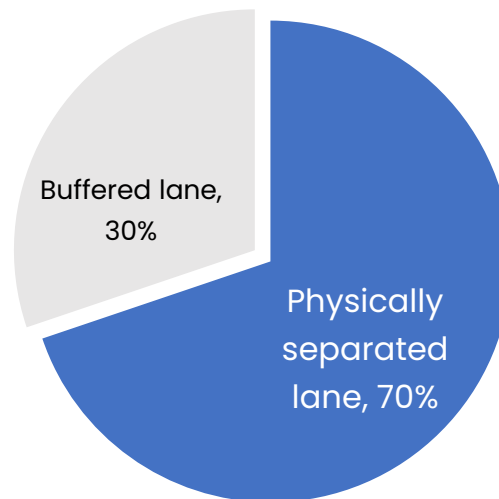


What features do you believe are essential for the safety and usability of the proposed bike path?



Most respondents who supported the bike path (n=212) prefer a physically separated bike lane, compared to a line buffered lane, not physically separated.

Do you prefer a buffered lane (line markings), or a physically separated lane with additional physical protection?



We asked participants if they had any specific concerns or comments regarding the proposed safe bike path. Key themes that emerged include:

- **Location and design of the bike path.**

- *"The pathways should be on the other side of beacon less traffic turns left onto Williamstown Road"*
- *"The residents are not opposing the safety proposal for the creation of a pedestrian crossing but (...) are not happy and will oppose the proposal for the creation of a bike path on the existing nature strip on Beacon Road."*

- **Safety concerns.**

- *"Confusion and safety of pedestrians including young children."*
- *"If there is a perception that by creating a bike path, as per proposed design, will enhance safety in our opinion it will achieve the opposite as vehicles coming out of existing driveways will put at risk bike riders and scooter riders alike."*

- **Concerns about existing usage of bike paths.**

- *"Bike users don't use existing bike paths in Port. All footpaths in Port are now bike paths."*
- *"We have many bike paths in Port Melbourne and they are hardly used and bikes and pedestrians don't work, very dangerous."*

- **Heavy vehicles and bike riders along Williamstown Rd.**

- *"Heavy vehicles - with bikes? The road is a very wide road that is more a transport link than safe bike track."*
- *"There is nothing to buffer bikes and there are a lot of off freeway traffic as well as heavy rigid vehicles this is not safe for anyone and will create traffic chaos. Trucks and bikes should not be mixing around 2 schools and sporting clubs."*

- **Suggestions for improvement.**

- *"Many Councils have signs on their bike and pedestrian paths to advise users to keep to the left and use voice or bell when passing. If Port Phillip put up signs on new and existing paths it would make them more pleasant to use and much safer."*
- *"Make the footpaths safe for pedestrians. I am 70 years old with acute osteoporosis. I can't walk on footpaths anymore for fear of serious injury. Your responsibility."*

- **Aesthetics and heritage concerns.**

- *"The Garden City area enjoys heritage overlay and the introduction of the new bike path in both Beacon Road and the GC Reserve is very inappropriate and unnecessary."*
- *"The path is visually intrusive for this heritage area."*

- **Existing Infrastructure is adequate.**

- *"The existing bike path on Beacon Rd is adequate."*
- *"Currently adults, children, bicycles and the like share the footpath organically and without issue. I feel a new bike path is unnecessary given current and future use."*

- **General opposition.**

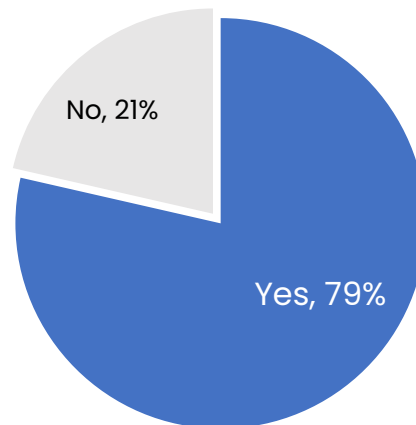
- *"Bikes and scooters shouldn't be encouraged along Williamstown Rd. I cycle to the city for work and even with an improved bike lane I avoid Williamstown Rd."*
- *"Unnecessary and a land grab. Please note I am a regular cyclist."*



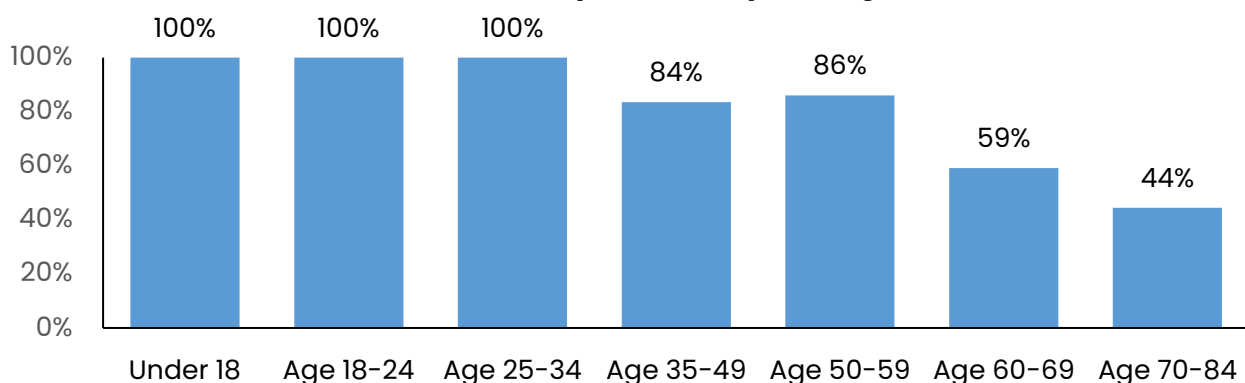
Figure 4: A render of the safe bike path and raised crossing across Crichton Avenue, provided in the engagement activities.

Changing the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared path for riders and pedestrians was also greatly supported by the survey respondents.

Do you agree with changing the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared bike and pedestrian path?

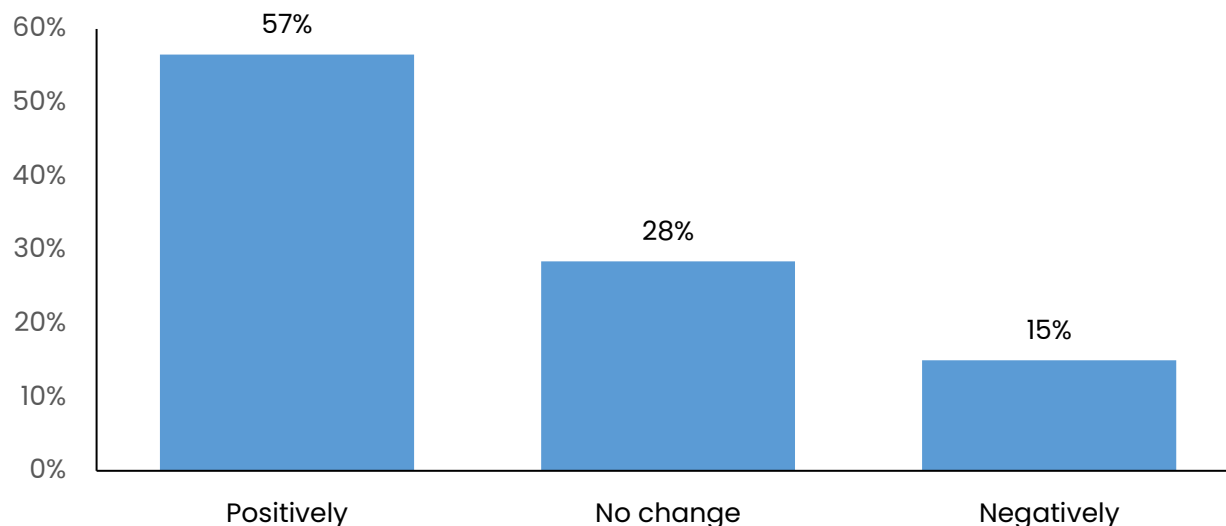


Supporting for changing the pedestrian path to a shared bike & pedestrian path (age)



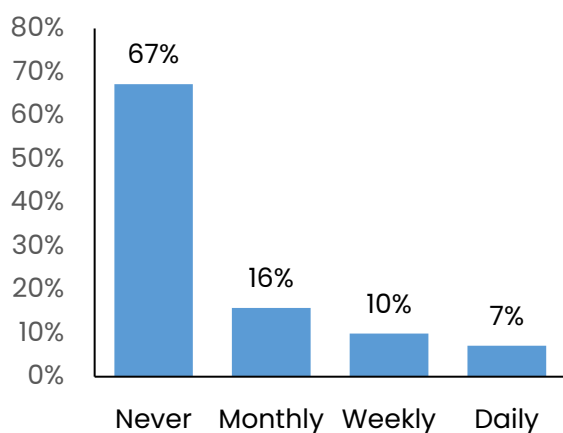
Only a small share of participants (n=38) said that changing the pedestrian path will affect them negatively, with most stating it will bring a positive change for them or no change at all. All of the 38 respondents who have responded that it will negatively affect them are above the age of 35, 24 of them are women, 23 represent a household with children, 17 of those have children in school ages and 3 have reported to have a disability.

How do you think this change will affect your daily use of the path?

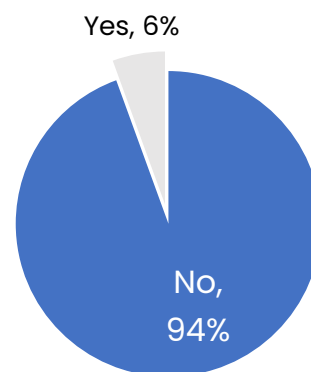


Most respondents stated that moving the bus station a 100 meters will not impact their usage and access to public transport (PT).

How often do you use this bus stop?



Will moving the bus station a distance of 100 meters impact you accessing PT?



The frequency of use of the bus station, of the respondents who stated a move will affect their use of PT (n=14) and the respondents who stated a move will not impact their use of PT (n=237):

	Impact	No impact
Daily	3	15

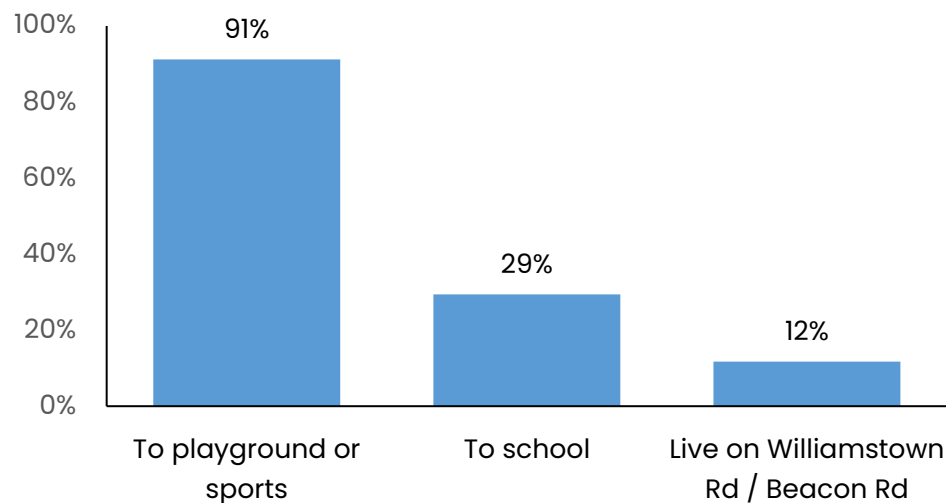
Weekly	4	21
Monthly	4	36
Never	3	165

Port Melbourne Primary School – Engagement session

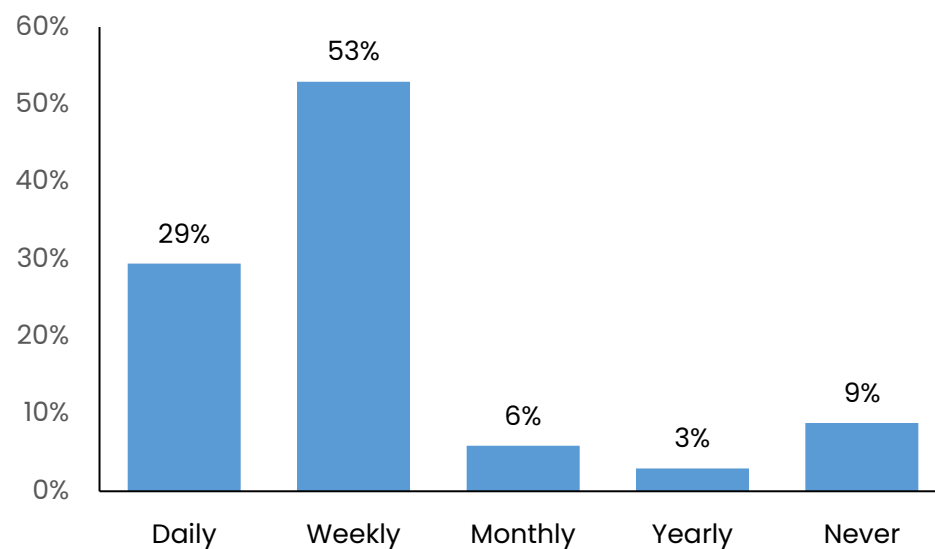
Council officers conducted a special engagement session with the Port Melbourne Primary School on Friday 10 May 2024. The session was attended by 34 Year Six students of the schools’ “leadership group”. We asked the students the same questions as the Have Your Say survey, with slight language adjustments to fit for age.

The participating students use this location often, for various uses, with some living adjacent the proposed site.

How do you currently use Williamstown Rd and Beacon Rd?

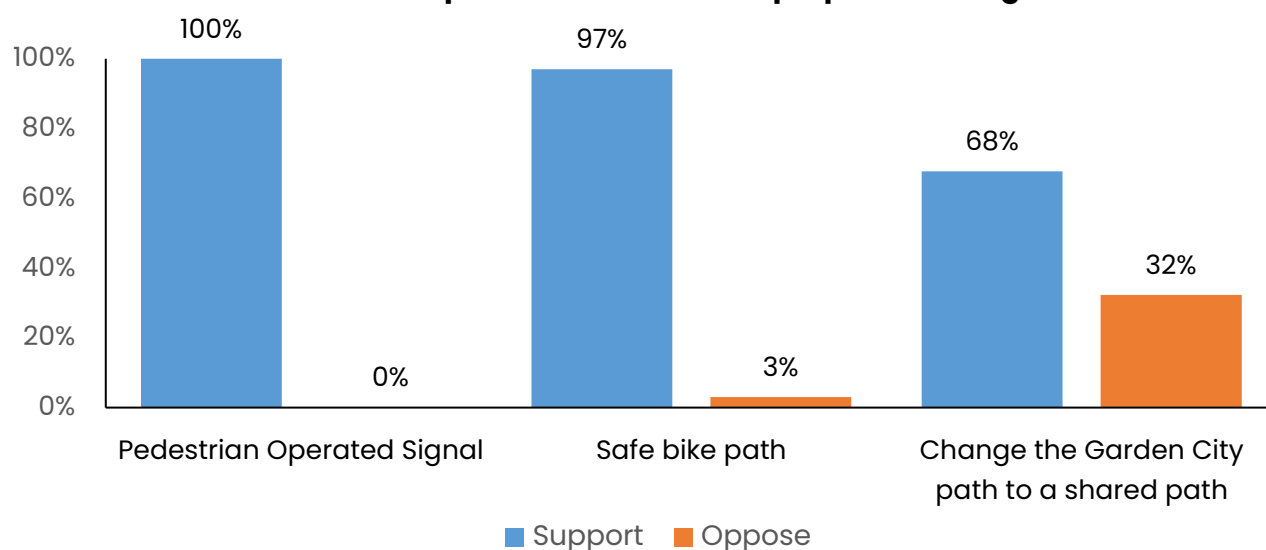


How often do you cross at the proposed location?



All the students supported the proposed POS, with all but 1 supporting the safe bike path. Interestingly, a third of the participating students opposed the transformation of the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared bike and pedestrian path, citing safety concerns as pedestrians compared to bike riders.

Students' responses to the various proposed changes



Key Themes:

Support for the POS:

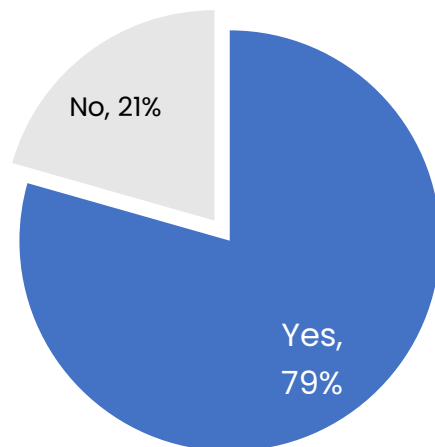
- *"Having that crossing make me feel way more safe. My parents would trust me more to cross the crossing alone."*
- *"It would be super helpful so I can commute to sport or to other activities safely and without my parents having to worry about me. It would also make me feel much safer when I am by myself."*
- *"I would feel more safe because I cross there a lot".*

Changing the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared path:

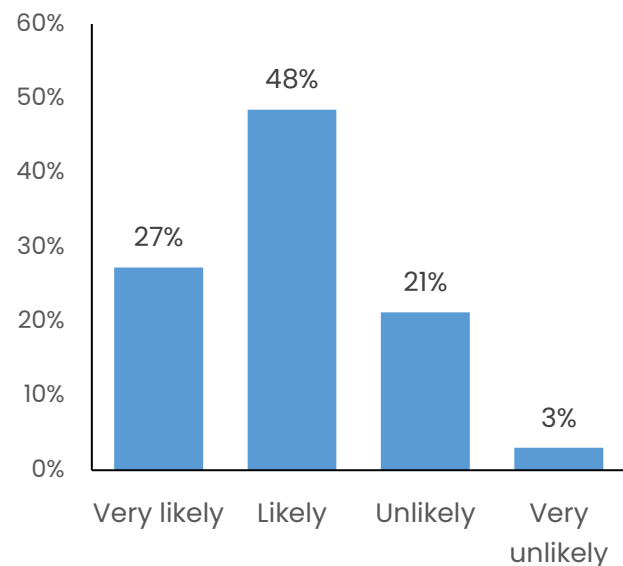
- *"I think that they should be separate so the bike can't run over me."*
- *"I would not like them because many bike riders may not see you and from experience of riding on a shared path pedestrians sometime wonder in the way of bikes."*

Participating students stated the proposed safety improvements will make them use the location more often to cross Williamstown Rd, with 75% stating they are Likely or Very Likely to use the safe bike path.

Would the proposed POS encourage you to cross at this location more often?

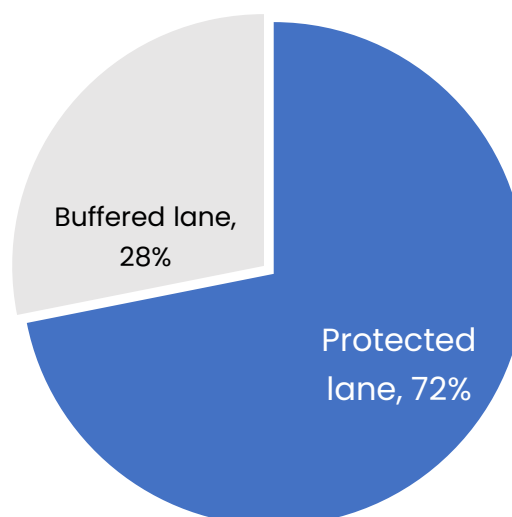


How likely are you to use the new safe bike path?



The participating students preferred a physically protected bike lane to a painted buffer lane, stating physical protection makes them feel safer from motor vehicles.

Which would make you feel safer?



Although a third of participating students stated they object to transforming the pedestrian path along Garden City Reserve to a shared path, only 16% (n=5) noted it will have an actual negative impact on them.

How do you think this change will affect your use of the path?

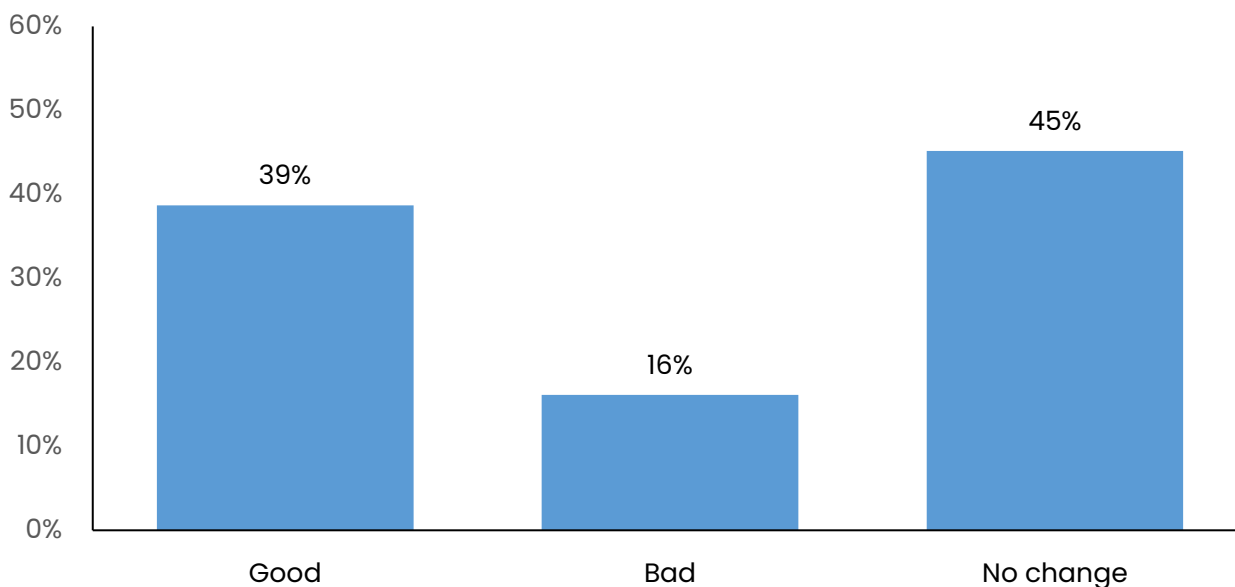


Figure 5: Port Melbourne Primary School's 6th graders participating in the workshop with Council officers.

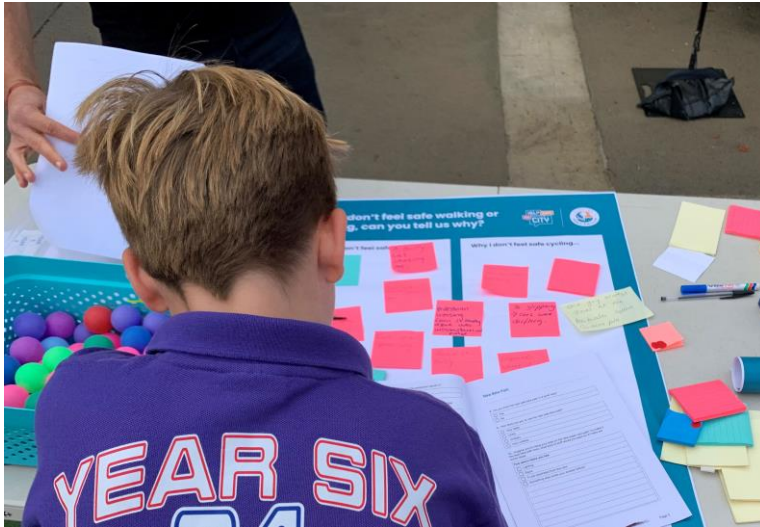


Figure 6: Port Melbourne Primary School's 6th grader answering the Have Your Say survey.

Next steps

How this report will be used

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback. This report, and the supporting data/feedback will be used by the project team to support the City of Port Phillip's advocacy efforts regarding this project.

The report will also be used to share with Council and the community how the engagement process went, and what changes (if any) will be made to the design or approach because of the engagement process.