
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report

Frenchs Forest Active Transport Network

Consultation period: 20 September to 20 October 2024

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1. Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement as part of the exhibition of the proposed Frenchs Forest Active Transport Network project conducted between 20 September to 20 October 2024.

The feedback collected during consultation indicated a high level of support for active transport in the area with comments citing the anticipated benefits for residents by making walking and bike riding in the local neighbourhood an easier and safer transport option.

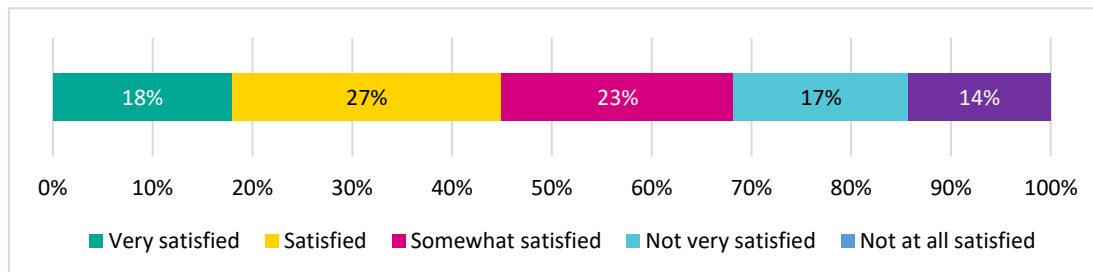
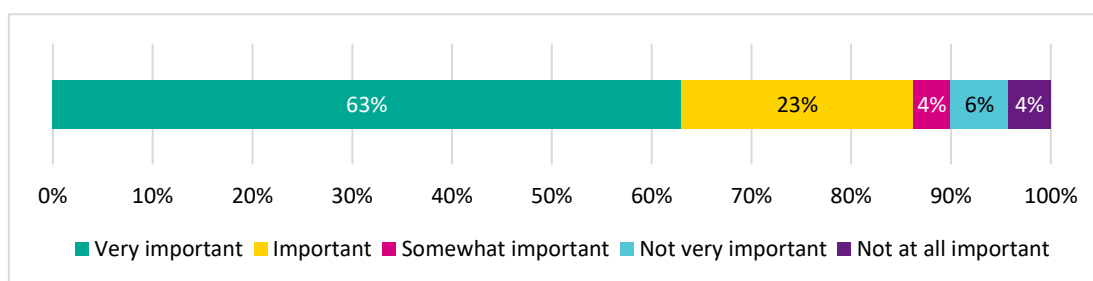
Feedback also suggested that Council should consider the dynamic between people walking and bike riding when designing the shared-user paths, particularly with the growing use of e-bikes, to ensure that everyone feels safe.

Respondents who were not supportive of the proposal felt that there were other priorities that Council could focus on, including road maintenance and new footpaths. Some respondents were also concerned about potential environmental impacts including tree removal and the urban heat island effect.

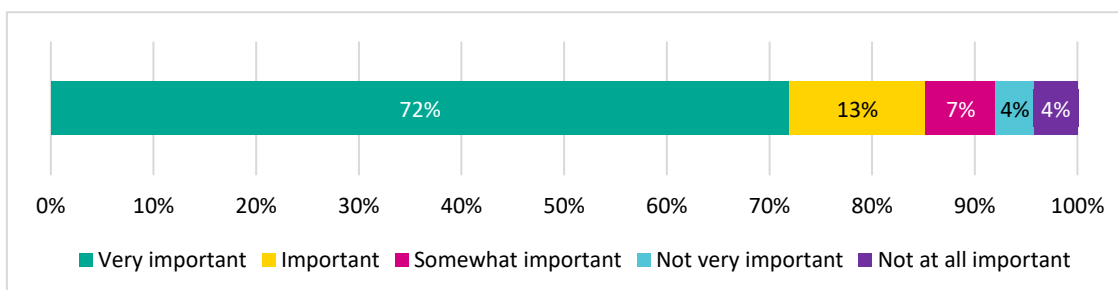
1.1. Key outcomes

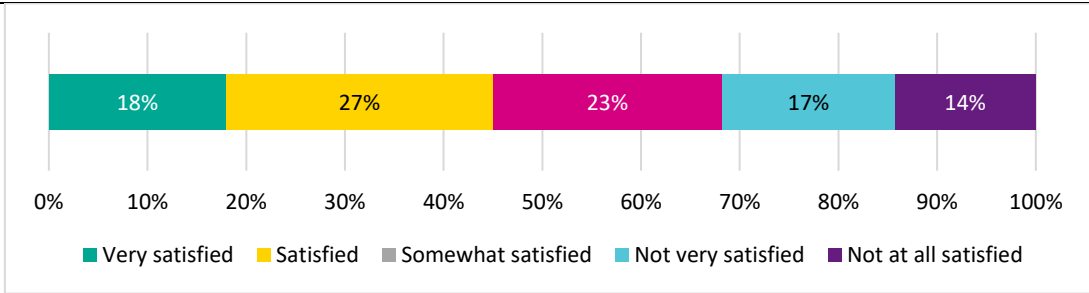
	202	
Total unique responses		
	Your Say – Survey Email	Completions: 189 Completions: 13
How responses were received		

Having the choice to walk, ride a bike or drive for local trips (Importance vs. Satisfaction)

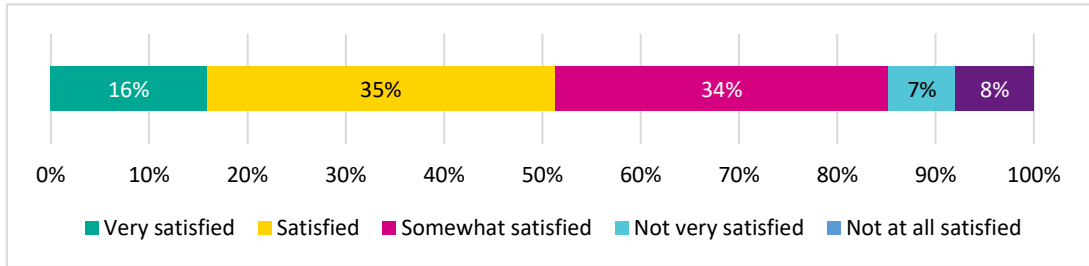
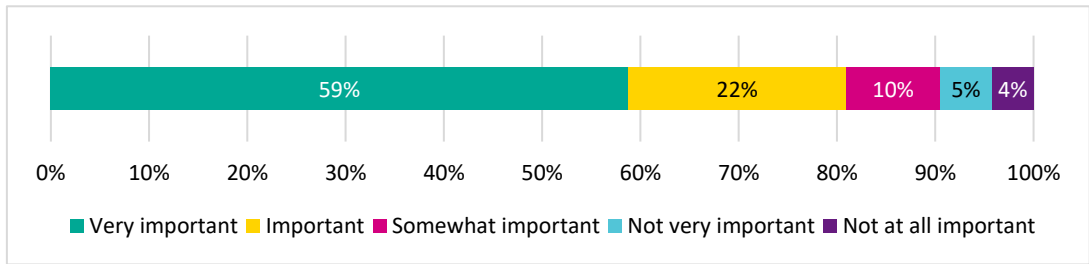


Safer routes for walking and bike riding (Importance vs. Satisfaction)

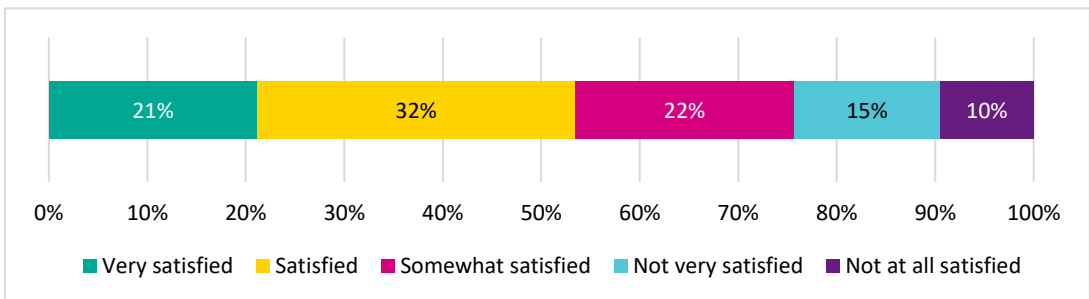
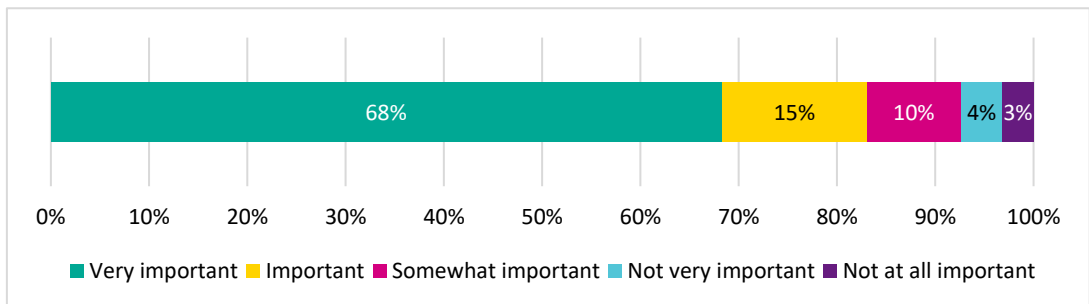




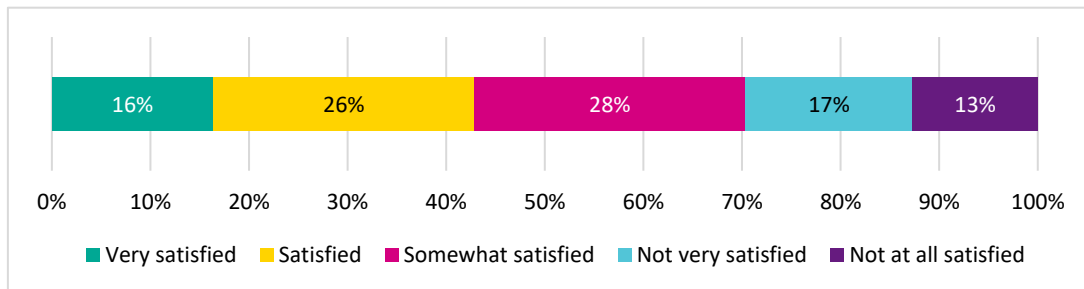
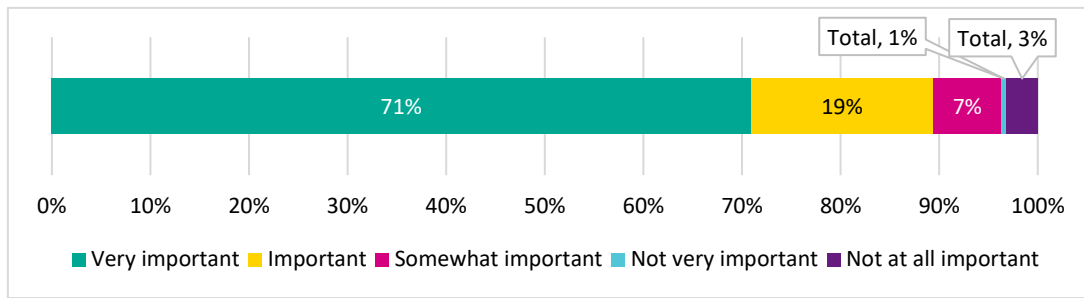
A cleaner, greener local environment (Importance vs. Satisfaction)



Easier connections to local shops and schools (Importance vs. Satisfaction)






**A transport network that is efficient (reliable and convenient)
(Importance vs. Satisfaction)**







Feedback themes

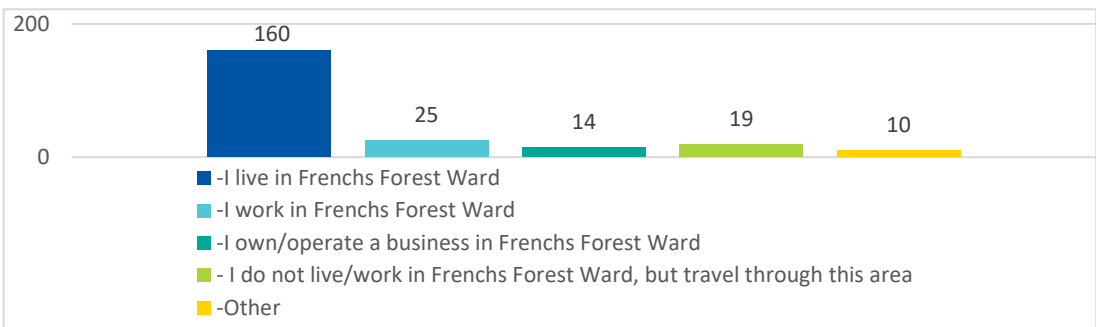
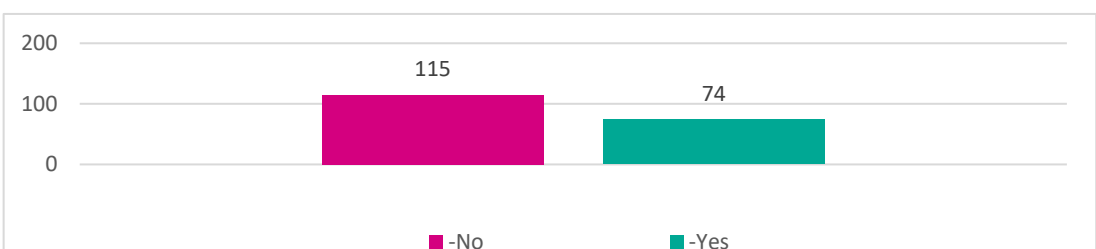
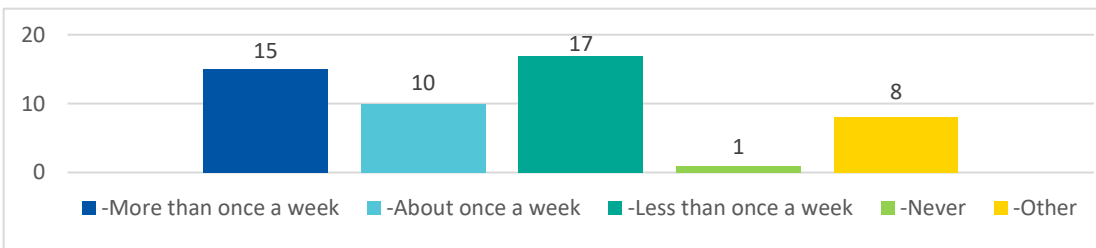
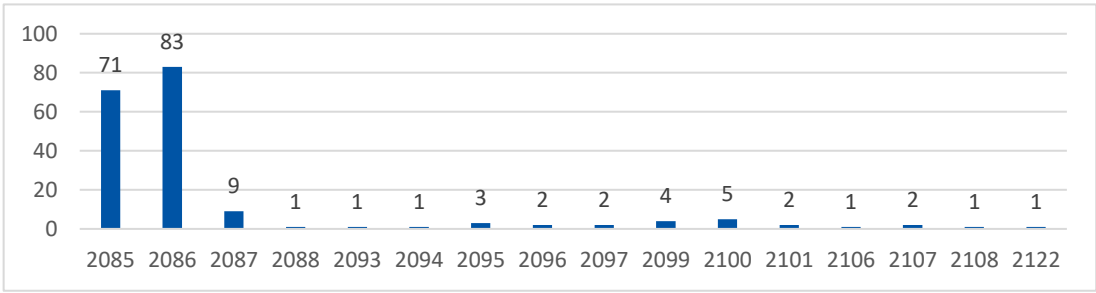
- Safety concerns
- Connectivity and coverage
- Infrastructure quality and design
- Traffic and parking impact
- Environmental and aesthetic considerations
- Public transport integration
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Implementation and enforcement
- Community sentiment

1.2. How we engaged

 Have Your Say: visitation stats	Visitors: 2,606 Visits: 3,434	Average time onsite: 1 minute 50 seconds
 Print media and collateral	Letterbox drop: 2100, 2085, 2086 Site signs used: 16 VMS boards: 4	Distribution: 780
 Electronic direct mail (EDM)	Community Engagement (fortnightly) newsletter: 3 editions Council (weekly) e-News: 2 editions The WAVE disability Newsletter: 1 edition	Distribution: 21,900 Distribution: 58,100 Distribution: 1,386

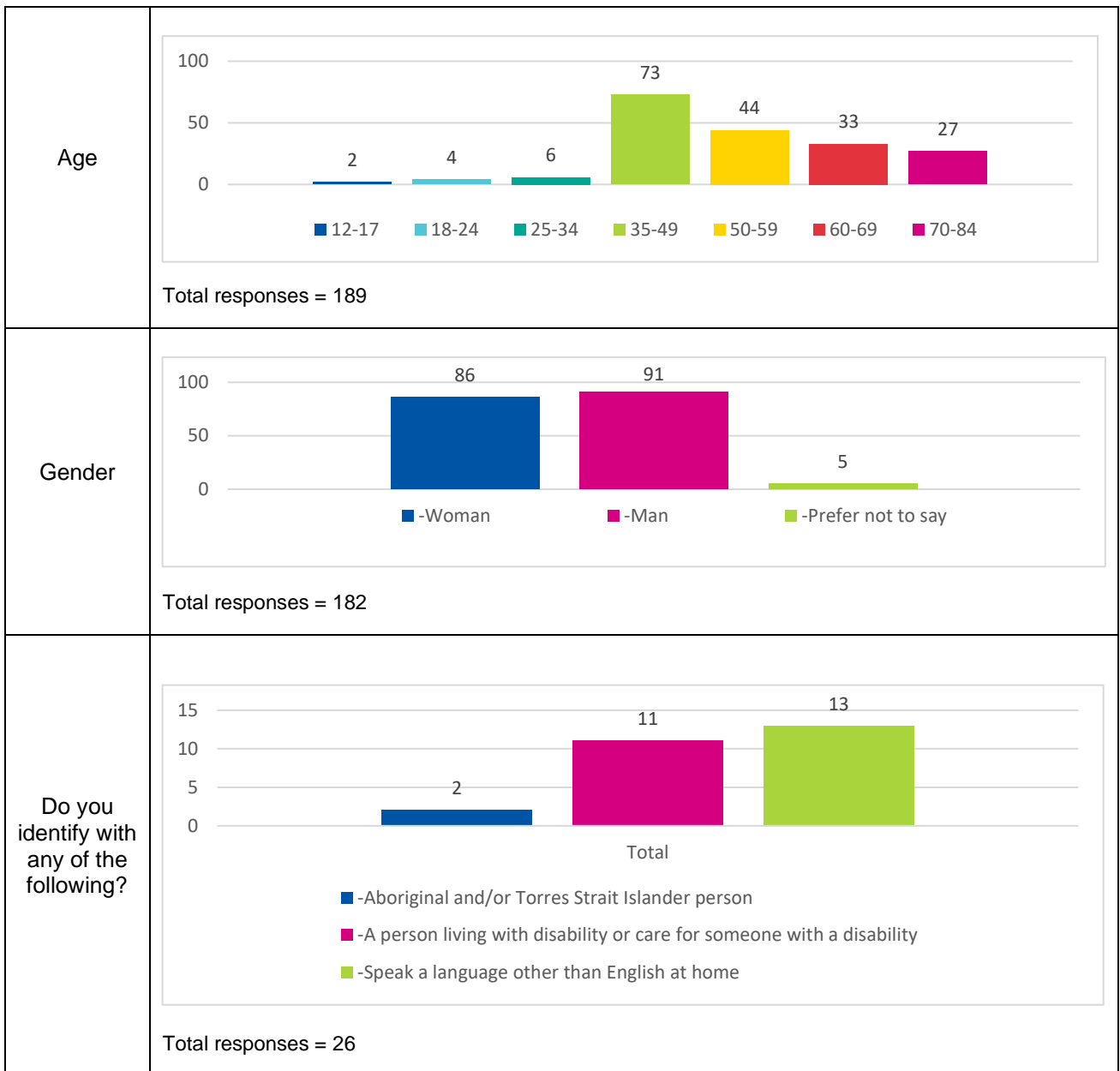
	KALOF Newsletter: 1 edition	Distribution: 1,732
 Face-to-face sessions	Pop up event: 1 Business drop-in sessions: Skyline Shops	Approx.82 attendees Distribution: 12 businesses
 Key stakeholder engagement	School notification emails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Martin’s Catholic School • Kambora Public School • Mimosa Public School • Davidson High School • Wakehurst Public School • Frenchs Forest Public School • The Forest High School • Allambie Heights Public School • Beacon Hill Public School Business notification email and letter distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestway Shopping Centre management (for distribution to retail tenants) • Business letter box drop first floor offices of 14 Frenchs Forest Road Key organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keolis Downer Northern Beaches • Bicycle NSW • NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service 	Distribution: 9 schools Distribution: 8 businesses
 Social media	Geotargeted sponsored Facebook post Location target: Frenchs Forest Ward Campaign results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32,021 reach • 63,351 impressions • 103 link clicks • 180 total engagement 	

1.3. Who responded¹

<p>Help us better understand our community</p>	 <p>Total responses = 228²</p>
<p>Do you live or work along the shared-user path route?</p>	 <p>Total responses = 189</p>
<p>How often do you drive, walk or bike ride through this area?</p>	 <p>Total responses = 51</p>
<p>Postcode</p>	 <p>Total responses = 189</p>

¹ Demographic data was gathered by request only. The data represented only includes those respondents who provided this detail. No demographic data was captured for respondents who contributed feedback in writing.

² Respondents could select all that apply. Respondents who selected “Other” included comments such as visiting the area and using similar facilities in nearby locations.



2. Background

The Pipeline Active Transport Corridor project, which received funding from the NSW Government, has been discontinued due to the original intended route being less suitable than anticipated, impacting the project's feasibility. Council developed a revised project route through the Frenchs Forest Active Transport Network to meet the original goal of enhancing active transport options in the area.

This new project aims to establish a 7.7km shared-user path network extending from Beacon Hill to Davidson, covering the areas of Beacon Hill, Frenchs Forest, and Davidson. The network will feature new connections and upgrades to existing paths, significantly improving access to local schools, shopping centres, and recreational facilities. Our focus is on creating routes that are primarily off-road or situated on quieter streets, prioritising safety for families, children, and all users.

Key features of the project include shared-user crossing facilities and proposed speed limit reductions in select areas. These elements are designed to enhance the overall safety and usability

of the network. Our primary objectives are to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, prioritise safety, and enhance community access to key local destinations.

3. Engagement objectives

Community and stakeholder engagement aimed to:

- build community and stakeholder awareness of participation activities (inform)
- provide accessible information so community and stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way (inform)
- identify community and stakeholder concerns, local knowledge and values (consult)
- communicate to community and stakeholders how their input was incorporated into the planning and decision-making process (inform)
- provide vulnerable and marginalised groups access to the engagement process (equity).

4. Engagement approach

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Frenchs Forest Active Transport Network project was conducted between 20 September and 20 October 2024 and employed a variety of methods to ensure broad community participation.

The engagement was planned, implemented and reported in accordance with Council's [Community Engagement Strategy](#) (2022).

A Your Say project page³ was established which provided comprehensive information about the proposed plan in an accessible and easy to read format.

Direct outreach efforts included notification letters sent to key stakeholders along the route, such as schools, community facilities, businesses, churches, childcare centres, resident groups, and local residents. Schools received targeted information to share with their wider communities.

The project team utilised multiple channels to promote engagement opportunities. These included the Council's regular email newsletter, local media channels, and strategically placed signage along the proposed route and at key destinations. A geotargeted social media campaign focused on the Frenchs Forest Ward, inviting residents to attend a pop-up event and learn about the project.

To gather feedback, an online comment form was embedded on the Have Your Say project page. The form included a unipolar rating scale which asked respondents to rate specific values in order of importance and followed by another question asking for their satisfaction on whether the plan delivers each of these values. We also asked respondents to provide any suggestions on how we could improve the plan. Additionally, a Saturday morning pop-up event was held at a key location along the shared-user path network, allowing face-to-face interactions between the project team and community members.

³ <https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/frenchs-forest-active-transport-network>

Ensuring inclusivity, project information was distributed through The WAVE disability newsletter and KALOF newsletter to reach a diverse audience. The engagement process also welcomed comments via email and in writing, providing multiple avenues for community input.

This comprehensive engagement approach aimed to maximise community involvement and gather a wide range of perspectives, reflecting the diverse needs and opinions of the local community regarding the Active Transport Network project.

4.1. Reaching diverse audiences

A thorough stakeholder mapping exercise was completed to identify and understand the needs of the whole community.

We encouraged community participation and sought feedback on the project through several other activities to attract all the potentially affected people including:

- information was provided on Council's Have Your Say project page
- a community pop-up event with the project team held on a Saturday morning
- direct key stakeholder notification
- direct school notifications
- direct contact with specific local business directly along the proposed route
- letterbox drops to residents residing along the route
- displays of onsite notification posters
- VMS boards at key locations to reach those travelling through the area by vehicle
- Inclusion in the WAVE disability and KALOF newsletters
- Geotargeted social media post targeting community members in Frenchs Forest Ward
- News article
- Mayor's weekly e-news.

5. Findings

During consultation we received 202 unique contributions. The majority of respondents significantly value:

- Having the choice to walk, ride a bike or drive for local trips
- Safer routes for walking and bike riding
- A cleaner, greener local environment
- Easier connections to local shops and schools
- A transport network that is efficient (reliable and convenient)

Overall, there was strong support for initiatives to improve walking and cycling infrastructure to provide better travel options for local trips in the neighbourhood. Many people stated that this project would make it easier to walk and bike ride to local destinations, and to achieve modal shift

particularly for short trips. Most responses also supported the 26 new crossing facilities, citing safety benefits from better access to key destinations and traffic calming effects.

Many comments cited the relevancy of this project given the recent uptake of e-bikes throughout the LGA as well as upcoming developments such as the Frenchs Forest Town Centre. The community identified a range of potential users including school children, families and commuters.

There were a range of suggestions to improve the proposal which included a wider path, consideration of path obstacles (e.g. power poles and bus shelters), end of trip facilities (e.g. bike parking) and better integration with public transport services. There were also suggestions to expand the network to provide improved connectivity to Glenrose Village, Belrose and Oxford Falls as well as regional connections to Chatswood.

However, a major concern was for people walking and bike riding sharing the same space, especially with the growing use of e-bikes. Feedback from the community has indicated a desire for separated bike paths and footpaths where possible.

The community also expressed a desire to maintain the local character of streets by minimising any loss of trees or green space, citing environmental concerns.

Some residents questioned whether this project is a priority, and whether it would generate sufficient usage.

Table 1: Issues, change requests and other considerations.

Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised	Council's response
Shared-User Path Concerns	<p>Many respondents cited concerns for people walking and bike riding sharing the same space, especially with the growing use of e-bikes.</p> <p>Some community members raised the importance for all path users to feel safe including those with mobility issues.</p>	<p>We recognise the increasing popularity of e-bikes which is making cycling a more accessible option for a wider range of trips and people of all ages and abilities. This has been considered in the design by ensuring a sufficient width of 3m where possible along the route. This is wider than the majority of existing shared-user paths in the LGA.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council's Road Safety team continue to deliver community education campaigns around safe use of shared-user paths.</p>
	<p>There were requests for separated bike paths and footpaths where possible.</p>	<p>In the detailed design phase, we will look to incorporate sections of separate bike paths and footpaths where possible, subject to funding constraints and constructability considerations.</p>

Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised	Council's response
		Beyond this project, we will continue to actively plan and deliver new separated bike paths across our key regional routes in the Northern Beaches.
Infrastructure Quality and Bike Facilities	<p>There was a high level of support for improved walking and cycling facilities.</p> <p>Some respondents requested wider paths and consideration of obstacles such as power poles, trees, bus shelters and driveways.</p>	In the detailed design phase, we will consider the shared-user path alignment in relation to potential obstacles to ensure a high-quality design.
	There was some desire for more bike facilities to be included as part of the project including bike parking and other end of trip facilities.	Bike wayfinding, bike parking and other end of trip facilities will be considered to complement the implementation of this project.
Network Connectivity	<p>There was a high level of support for providing better walking and cycling links to key local destinations.</p> <p>Some community members requested better connections to some local destinations such as Glenrose Village, as well as requests for the network to be extended to areas such as Belrose and Oxford Falls.</p>	<p>We will investigate a link to Glen Street Theatre and Glenrose Village as part of this project.</p> <p>Other extensions to the bike network will be considered in a future works program in line with the routes identified in the Northern Beaches Bike Plan.</p>
	Some feedback indicated the need for adjoining streets to have new footpaths to connect to the proposed shared-user path network.	New footpaths in surrounding streets will be considered when we next review the walking network as part of the New Footpath Program.
	There was also a high level of support for the proposed crossing facilities, with many commenting on the need for safer crossing points and traffic calming. There were some requests for additional crossings, particularly near schools and the Lionel Watts precinct. However, a small number of respondents were concerned by the large number of crossings proposed, citing	<p>We agree that the proposed crossing facilities are an important part of the project to make it safer for people to access local destinations and to make our streets calmer. Whilst they can generate some additional noise, there is a net positive benefit for the community.</p> <p>Additional crossing facilities will be considered as part of</p>

Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised	Council's response
	potential noise and traffic flow impacts.	the Belrose Central Safer Neighbourhoods Program which is currently scheduled for the 2025/26 Financial Year.
Public Transport	Whilst supportive of the project, some feedback expressed a desire for improved public transport services in the area.	Whilst Council fully advocates for improved public transport services and connections to, from and within the Northern Beaches through our adopted 'Move' Transport Strategy; the provision of public transport services is a State Government responsibility.
	There were suggestions from the community for better integration of this project with public transport services through providing interchange facilities (e.g. secure bike parking) at key bus stops such as Forestway Shopping Centre.	We will consider opportunities to improve the interchange of people walking and bike riding with public transport services at key bus stops along the route to complement the project.
Environment and Trees	<p>There was a strong desire to preserve the local character and minimise tree removal across the project route. Many respondents stressed the importance of trees, greenery and open space, with some respondents requesting more trees and shade along the project route.</p> <p>Some community members raised concerns about the potential urban heat island effects from the proposed shared-user path.</p>	<p>We recognise the importance of street trees as part of our local environment and in providing green, leafy and shady places. Tree canopy was one of the considerations in planning the route alignment, with preference for the side of the street that will maximise retention of valuable and mature trees. Where possible, we will work around existing trees with pinch points to minimise impacts on trees. As per our adopted Tree Canopy Plan, a minimum of two trees will be planted for any one tree removed from public land. We intend for any replanting to occur directly along the project route to provide a shady path for people walking and bike riding. This will include consideration of tree pits in the shared-user path or intermittent tree planting in the</p>

Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised	Council's response
		parking lane where space allows.
Traffic and Parking	Community feedback indicated mixed opinions on the proposed Quietway. Some respondents whilst supportive of the concept believe more needs to be done to make these streets more comfortable for people walking and bike riding. Other respondents are not in favour of the proposed safer speed limit.	A Quietway is a high-quality low-speed mixed traffic environment where bicycle riders travel with vehicular traffic in the centre of the traffic lane. Dareen Street and Akora Road were selected because they are low-volume local residential streets where a Quietway will improve safety and network connectivity.
	Some feedback raised concerns about potential reduction in on-street parking.	There will be minimal impact to on-street parking as the shared-user path will be built along the road reserve. However, to ensure safer intersections and adequate sight lines, there will be some localised reductions in on-street parking immediately around the new pedestrian crossings as per statutory requirements.
	There were some suggestions raised by community members for additional traffic-calming measures throughout the project route.	Additional traffic-calming measures will be considered as part of the Belrose Central Safer Neighbourhoods Program which is currently scheduled for the 2025/26 Financial Year.
Project Implementation	Some questions were raised about the implementation timeline, with some requests for the delivery to be accelerated.	Given the high level of support for this project, Council intends to commence construction in early 2025 and anticipates the project will be open to traffic by the end of the current financial year.
	Some respondents questioned the need for risk analysis to be conducted prior to delivery.	Council will follow its standard project management practices including risk management as required.
	There was a sentiment of disappointment that the original Pipeline Active Transport Corridor	Whilst the Pipeline Active Transport Corridor is currently not feasible, if conditions change, it will be reconsidered

Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised	Council's response
	proposal is not feasible at this time.	in the future as per the Northern Beaches Bike Plan.
Education and Enforcement	There were some requests for bike riding education programs, particularly aimed at primary school students.	Council's Road Safety team regularly run bike rider safety initiatives and community education campaigns including the recent 'e-bike code' campaign.
	There were also suggestions for more enforcement of shared-user path and bike rider related rules.	Enforcement is a matter for Council Rangers and NSW Police.
Funding and Usage	Whilst supportive of the concept, some feedback indicated that this project is not required, and that funding would be better spent on road maintenance or new footpaths.	As part of the Northern Beaches Move Transport Strategy and Northern Beaches Bike Plan, it is important to cater for and provide the community with easy and safe transport options. This includes walking and bike riding, particularly for short trips, which can lead to economic, environmental, and social benefits. Council runs separate programs for new footpaths and road maintenance.

6. Appendix 1 Verbatim community and stakeholder responses⁴

Click here for attachment:

<https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/Document.aspx?t=webdoc&id=opq3BNFhyhEV0A60ki4OEg==>

⁴ *Personal details and inappropriate language have been redacted where possible. Spelling and grammatical errors have been amended only where misinterpretation or offence may be caused.*

Document administration	
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Notes	Community and stakeholder views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Beaches Council or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.