



STAGE 1 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Reimagining and reconnecting the **Whakatāne town centre & riverfront**

Te Tāmatatanga o te pokapū
me te paretai o Whakatāne

The journey so far...



SUPPORTED THROUGH
**PROVINCIAL
GROWTH
FUND**
TUAWHENUA

whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou

THE FIRST STAGE OF ENGAGEMENT ASKED TWO KEY QUESTIONS:

**What do you love about the
Whakatāne town centre and riverfront?**

What would you change if you could?

**We wanted
to hear your
ideas!**

We received close to 1,400 responses during the public engagement period from 19 September to 16 October. Through the engagement we heard some concerns over issues like access and parking. But we also heard from people who were excited about the possibility of better connecting the town to the riverfront, expressing the uniqueness of Whakatāne culture and heritage, having more people and entertainment in town, and providing more jobs and opportunities for our people.

This consultation process may have felt unfamiliar to some people as we came out with a blank page, rather than with set thoughts or plans. We were seeking people's views on the CBD and the key development sites that relate to guiding principles and objectives for the regeneration of our town centre.

Here's the journey so far...



What is Te Ara Hou? *Te kaupapa o Te Ara Hou*

Te Ara Hou is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalise the Whakatāne town centre and riverfront area, strengthen ties within the community and the awa (river), and create long-lasting social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits for years to come. It builds on planning work and ongoing community feedback dating back more than a decade.

Funding was secured from central government for projects that can revitalise our town centre and riverfront areas. Council has matched this using the harbour fund, so there's now more than \$20 million available for town centre and riverfront redevelopment (including the wharves package), with no impact on rates.

What is the purpose of the projects?

Te take o ngā waitara

These projects are about creating spaces that enable better public access between the CBD and riverfront, and reflect and celebrate our rich cultural history.

The refreshed urban design will provide focal points for entertainment and activity that, in turn, will create opportunities for economic development, tourism and private sector investment.

This is a unique opportunity to protect the things we love about our current CBD and riverfront area, and enhance others, so we future-proof these valuable assets and protect our environment.



What have we learned?
I ako mātou i te aha?

We've reconfirmed that our district is filled with people who are passionate about the place they call home and are proud of our unique culture. The information we received through this engagement is invaluable. The key themes, challenges and opportunities will guide the creation of concept plans, which you be able to comment on in stage two consultation.

Consultation approach

COMPLETE

STAGE 1 CONSULTATION

Objectives, principles and priorities about what is important for access and use of town centre and riverfront spaces.

Urban/Landscape Designer and Cultural Design Advisor appointments

Cultural narrative developed

Concept designs developed

STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

Feedback on concept designs

PREFERRED DESIGN DEVELOPED

ONGOING PARTNER, HAPŪ AND KEY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

What happens next?

He aha e whai ake nei?

Due to the level of feedback, we've decided to postpone the second stage of engagement until the new year. The dates are yet to be determined, but will be advertised well in advance. We encourage you to keep thinking about how you would like our CBD and riverfront to evolve as you use these spaces over summer. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, website and in local media for updates.

How did we engage with the community?

I pēhea mātou i uiui i te hapori?

The changing COVID-19 alert levels dramatically affected planning for stage one consultation. However, we were able to collect close to 1,400 responses from Saturday, 19 September to Friday, 16 October. A significant number of responses were generated from community-led initiatives such as the Voice of Whakatāne Facebook page.

**Council's
Kōrero Mai
consultation
website**

- Newspaper and radio advertising
- Media releases
- Interviews
- Surveys

**Wharaurangi
pod
engagement
& electronic
billboard**

**Council's
Facebook
posts**

**Councillor,
Community Board and
Youth Council briefings
Community group
presentations**

- Key stakeholder briefings
- Promotion through stakeholder agencies

- Consultation and summary documents
- Paper submission forms

Post-it note taking, thought bubbles and lots and lots of conversations at the engagement pod.

How people got involved

I pehea te hunga i whakahoki kōrero

659

TE ARA HOU DIRECT RESPONSES

- Kōrero Mai online submissions
- Hard copy submission forms
- Written letters
- Whakatāne District Council in-house submissions
- Wharaurangi consultation pod - post-it note comments

63

WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT COUNCIL FACEBOOK PAGE POSTS

*Not all posts have been counted as a response.
The number of responses has been calculated by the
number of people posting, not the number of posts.*

490

VOICE OF WHAKATĀNE ONLINE SURVEY

134

PAPER PLUS CUSTOMER SURVEY

25

WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT YOUTH COUNCIL COMMENTS

1,371

TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL RESPONSES

What our communities told us

Ētahi kōrero a te hāpori

“ The riverfront needs to be a place to congregate, eat, shop and enjoy. ”

“

Having enough carpark is essential to our elderly, our disabled folk and families with young children. ”

”

“

Small boutique hotels with waterfront views would bring tourists to the area, adding to the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre. ”

”

“

Greater connection to the waterfront, taking advantage of the view. ”

”

“

More visible Māori culture, bilingual signs. ”

”

“

A unique town area that encourages outside dining, music, entertainment, markets and most of all takes advantage of one of the best features of Whakatāne, the river, the view to the sea, Whale Island etc. ”

”



What did our communities say? *He aha te whakahoki kōrero a ngā hapori?*

Our communities' key comments and ideas are summarised on the following pages.

THE TOP SIX THEMES



1 Create spaces for activities, events and encourage family-friendly activities.

2 Create and encourage pedestrian-friendly streets, alternative transport options and improve disability parking.

3 Connect to the river, create a wide promenade with hospitality and public facilities.

4 Retain car parking and/or change car parking facilities (parking buildings).

5 Enhance natural environment connections, promote green spaces and parks.

6 Greater recognition of local Māori culture and enhance connections.

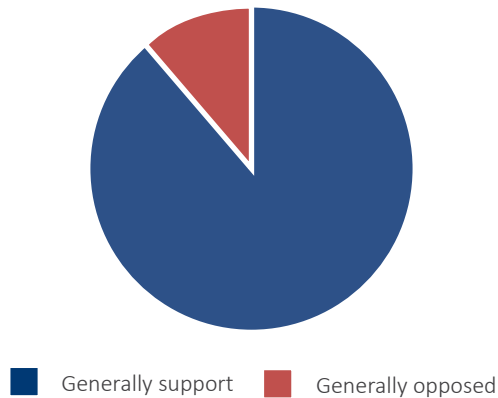


Guiding our town centre development

E ārahi ana i te whanaketanga o te pokapū o te tāone

These questions identified the high-level principles and objectives that we believe are important to guide our future growth.

GENERAL PREFERENCE FOR THE GUIDING OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES



TE ARA HOU QUESTIONS - DIRECT RESPONSES

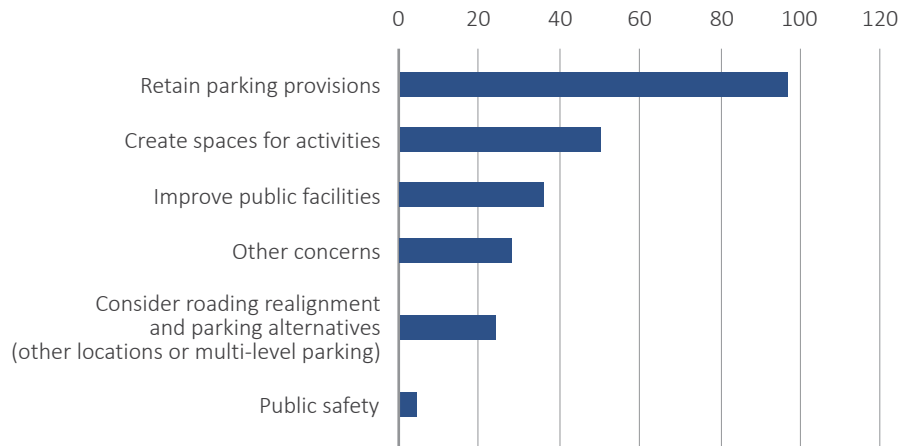
116

QUESTION ONE:
Do our objectives and principles reflect what is important to you?

178

QUESTION TWO:
Anything further?

KEY THEMES - COMMENTS RAISED IN GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES



Distinctive local culture

He ahurea motuhake

These questions were aimed at understanding what our community values and what makes us culturally distinct and different from other parts of the country. It also sought feedback on what we can do to improve our town centre so it is a fun vibrant place for the future.

TE ARA HOU QUESTIONS - DIRECT RESPONSES

109 **114**

QUESTION THREE:

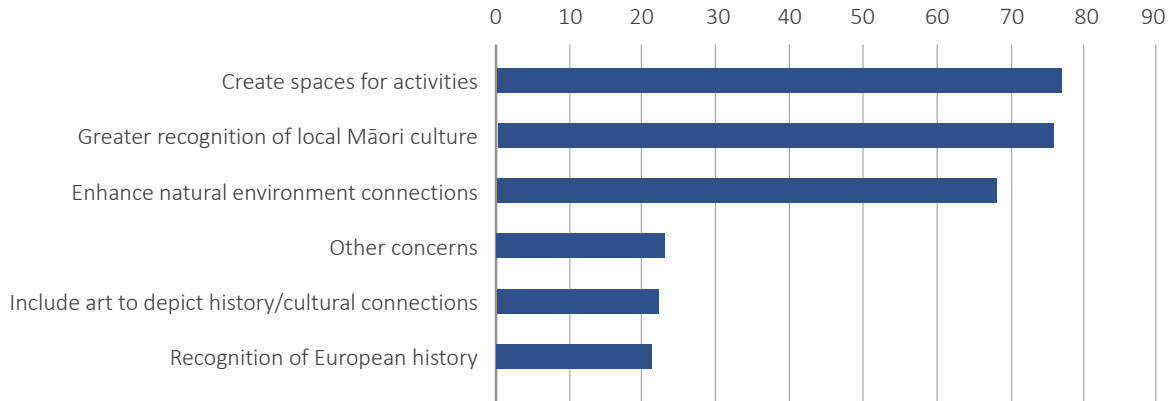
What defines the unique culture of Whakatāne for you?

QUESTION FOUR:

What would you like to see in the town centre and riverfront area that reflects this unique culture?

*Our
communities
want to
see...*

KEY THEMES - DISTINCTIVE LOCAL CULTURE RESPONSES



“ **Connections to the Whakatāne awa from the township.** ”

“

Sculptures, carvings, respecting water and mana of certain sites, showing stories through signs similar to Pōhaturoa / Wharaurangi.

”

“

Acknowledgement of cultural sites and their historical importance.

”

“

Good use of the waterfront.

”

“

Connection with nature, kiwi and sunshine.

”

”

“

More spaces that provide focal points for events and for community use.

”

Connecting with our natural environment

E hono ana ki te taiao



These questions recognised that our town adjoins the riverfront and attractive natural environment. We wanted to know how our town centre can better connect to the riverfront and how we can encourage development that makes the most of the river, natural environment and views.

TE ARA HOU QUESTIONS - DIRECT RESPONSES

189 **151**

QUESTION FIVE:

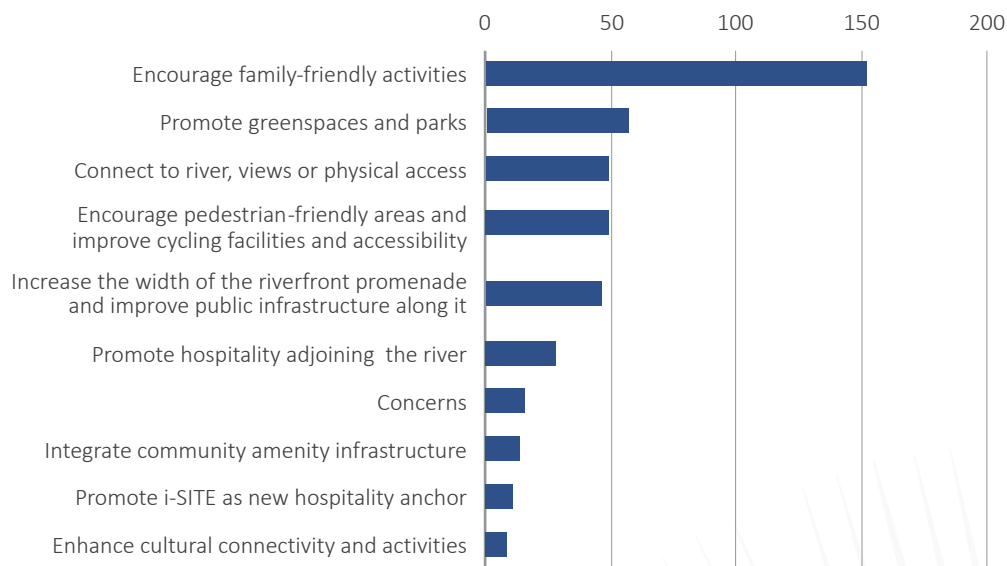
How would you like to connect with our cultural and natural environments in town?

QUESTION SIX:

What would you like to see in the town centre and riverfront area that reflects this unique culture?

Our communities want to connect with the environment by...

KEY THEMES - CONNECTING WITH OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESPONSES



“ Entertainment and picnic facilities adjoining the footpath but within reach of the Wharaurangi precinct. ”



Outdoor dining for both day and evening. A mix of spaces for families eg. beanbags for outdoor cinema, waterpark playground, fairy lights etc for night markets and events like cultural shows, small live music events.



“ Promote the two waterfalls in the town centre and their connections to the river. ”



Link The Strand to the river, an obvious point is near the i-SITE. Why not extend a covered platform above the river?



A night time light path (solar powered) with designs and interactive artworks that reflect and celebrate our area.



Way finding and connecting within our town

*Ngā haerenga i te tāone
(mā runga waka, mā raro)*



These questions identified that our town has a large carpark between the river and town. We wanted to know if this is the best use for this site and if we could do something else to connect town with the riverfront, while enabling easy access and parking.

TE ARA HOU QUESTIONS - DIRECT RESPONSES

142

QUESTION SEVEN:
What are your views on promoting pedestrian-friendly spaces in the town centre?

129

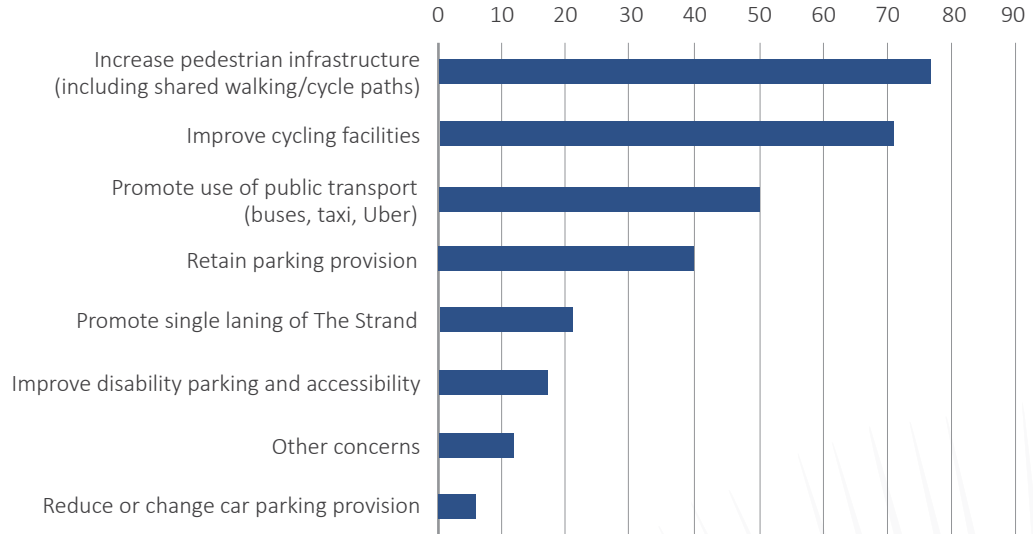
QUESTION EIGHT:
Would you consider using alternative transport?

136

QUESTION NINE:
If so, what facilities would you expect to be available?

Our communities recognise access is important and want...

KEY THEMES - WAY FINDING AND CONNECTING WITHIN OUR TOWN RESPONSES



More parking areas for disability vehicles, families with push chairs, more ramps for access from footpaths.

Bike racks/stands and possibly lock up and E-bike chargers.

Ensure there is adequate parking near town centre and need more disability and parent with pram parks.

The CBD - more pedestrian friendly, maybe crossings could be converted into proper pedestrian crossings.

More reliable buses from different areas of town, maybe small buses that are more frequent and rural bus services.

Four-hour parking introduced at rear of The Strand instead of all day – enough time for cinema and café visit.

Growing opportunities

E tipu ake ana ngā whaiwāhitanga



These questions recognised that historically, our town centre has changed over time to meet the changing needs of our community. We wanted to know how we might need to adapt our town to meet the business, shopping and entertainment needs of the next generations.

TE ARA HOU QUESTIONS - DIRECT RESPONSES

142

QUESTION TEN:
What type of commercial, entertainment and hospitality developments would you like to see in the town centre heart and wider CBD?

129

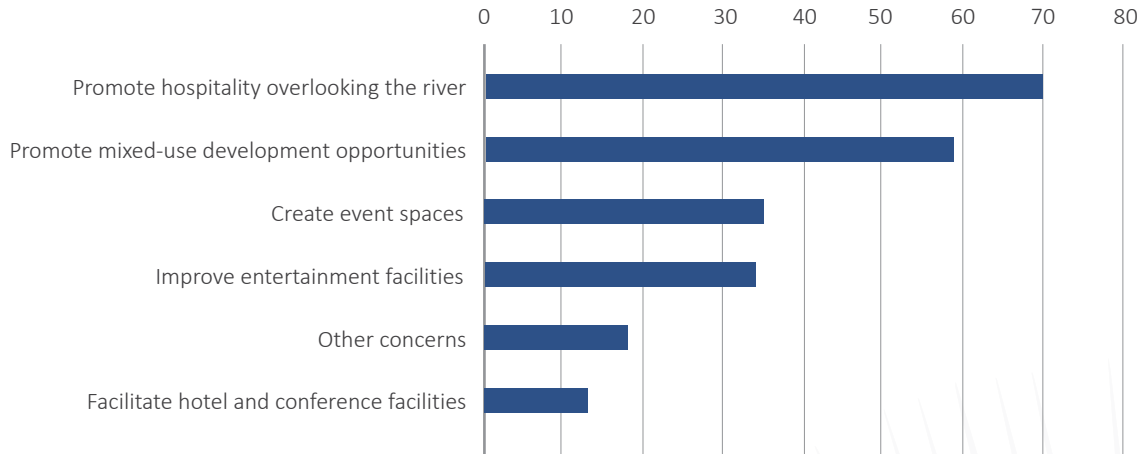
QUESTION ELEVEN:
Would you like to see more residential development in the CBD?

7

QUESTION TWELVE: Do you have a design idea you'd like to show us?

Our communities want to see growth encouraged and...

KEY THEMES - GROWING OPPORTUNITIES



“ A wider stopbank with space for more cafés, restaurants and bars along the riverfront. ”

“

The i-SITE as a restaurant music venues and a weekly riverside market.

”

“

Shops on the riverside of The Strand with dual entrances.

”

“

Future commercial development on a two-storey level so that restaurants can take advantage of the view.

”

“

Boutique-type shopping, cafés and outdoor concept spaces, outdoor movie area in summer would be wonderful.

”

“

Deck or balcony areas extended over the car park to utilise the view over the river and out to sea.

”

”

YOUTH COUNCIL

KAUNIHERA TAIOHI



More local youth events

A youth hub

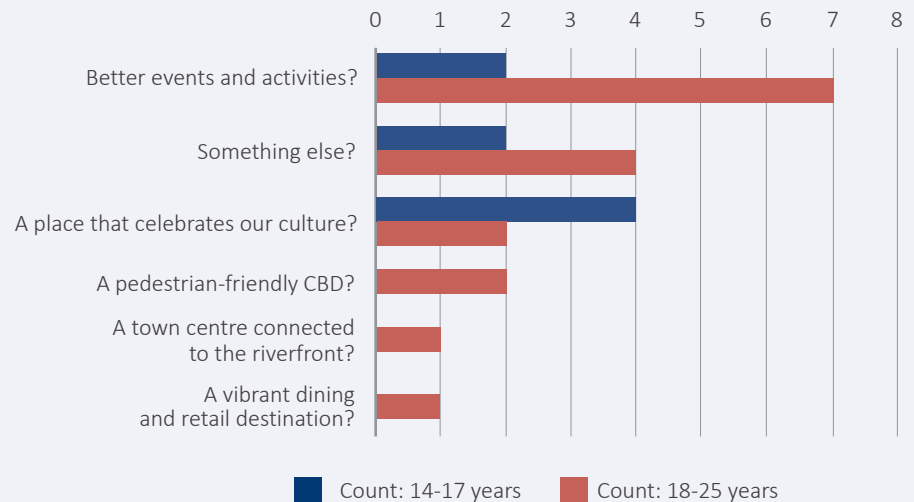
Arcades, trampoline park
and basketball courts - close to town



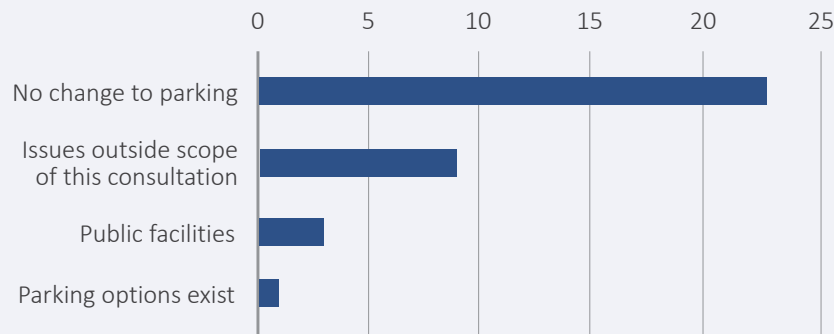
Whakatāne Youth Council members provided Council staff with high level views. Their primary concerns were that:

- the current town centre had limited appeal to younger members of the community, and
- accessing the town centre from communities around the district was difficult as little to no transport options exist for youth to use.

WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT YOUTH COUNCIL - IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES



Whakatāne District Council social media themes *Ngā kaupapa i te pae pāpahi pāpori*





Voice of Whakatāne online survey

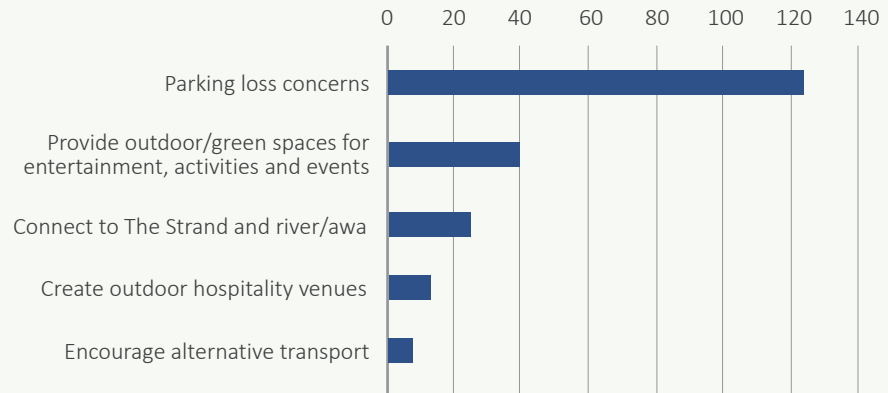
Whakatāne Online Retailers, through their Facebook page, worked to raise the profile of community awareness of the consultation.

Using a survey portal called 'Voice of Whakatāne', they asked questions focussed on parking, accessibility and improvements to facilities.

The information captured helps to identify how important future growth in our town is to the community.

Five key themes emerged from the Voice of Whakatāne online survey responses.

KEY THEMES - VOICE OF WHAKATĀNE SURVEY

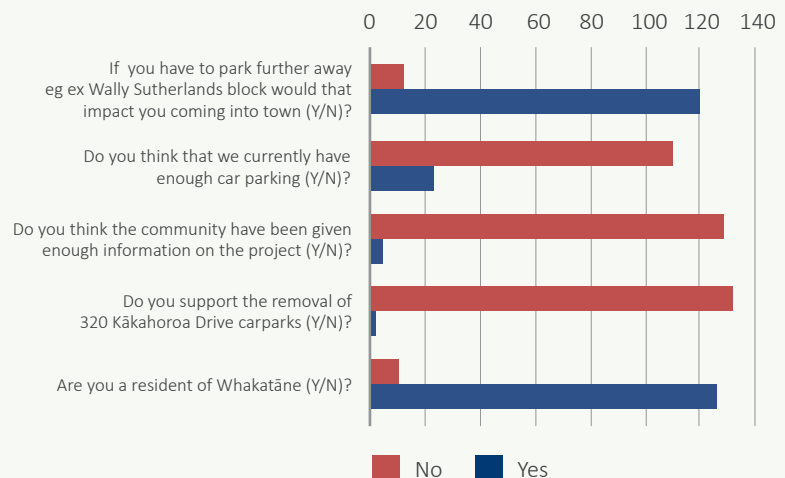


Whakatāne Paper Plus survey

Whakatāne Paper Plus carried out a survey of their customers. The information captured helps to identify how important parking is to the community and some customers commented that:

- Elderly require parking close to 'shops of choice'.
- More disability parking is needed.
- A car parking building would alleviate parking concerns and Wally Sutherlands is too far.
- The rear-Strand parking is an asset.
- Loss of parking spaces would result in a 'dead' CBD (comparison with Tauranga and Hamilton).

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS - PAPER PLUS SURVEY





For the full consultation summary or to be part of the next stage of consultation visit our website koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz

MISCELLANEOUS FEEDBACK

Some feedback we received was on issues or topics that are outside the scope of the Whakatāne Town Centre and Riverfront Promenade projects. Where possible, suggestions linked to identifiable Council processes will be passed on for consideration.

SUPPORTED THROUGH



PROVINCIAL
GROWTH
FUND
TUAWHENUA

Shade
+
green
spaces

Connect town
Centre to coastland
via a bridge
→ link to
national
workways

Elevate
development
to get up to
Views -
useless on flat
carparks

central
public
toilet

easier for biking
a disabled

Connect
Whakaraupaki to
river - can't
get there

Beautiful
town but need
make more of
town get people
in

a destination
for markets
+ concerts