

This report summarises our engagement approach and any community feedback in relation to the safety trials on Featherston Street in late-August.

It does not present any findings or data from the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the trial period.

We tested a new road layout on Featherston Street in August

We tested a new road layout as part of our detailed design process to the Featherston Street cycleway project, so we could monitor the impact of specific design elements to see how they would perform before construction takes place in early-2024.

The tests focused on two key elements and took place in late-August:

Keep Clear spaces

The first involved implementing a ‘keep clear’ space in front of the entrances to Mitre 10, McDonald’s and Ngata Street. These spaces include yellow markings on the road so drivers queuing at the lights don’t block people from entering and exiting those entranceways. These have remained in place following the trial period.



Merging two lanes at Featherston/Rangitikei intersection

We also tested the merging of the left and straight lane at the Rangitikei/Featherston Street traffic lights to monitor the effects of queuing on vehicles at the lights. This was included in the design following public support for a separated cycleway that extends through each set of traffic lights on Featherston Street.

See below for a sketch of the lane layout between McDonald's and Countdown during the trial period, which ran from Tuesday 22 August until Sunday 27 August.



Other elements were also tested

These included tests to identify which type of cycleway barrier is best for rubbish\recycling trucks and emergency services, and the impact of in-lane bus stops on traffic flow.



We informed our stakeholders of the trial period in early-August

In early-August, three weeks before the trial period, we began informing directly affected stakeholders, such as businesses, residents, schools and everyone who had participated in the process so far through feedback submissions or co-design sessions.

We began communicating with the wider community the week before the trials commenced.

We informed our stakeholders and community through the following channels:

- Face-to-face meetings with schools and major businesses
- Emails to stakeholder database
- Letters to 1264 addresses
- Media release
- Social media
 - Facebook post x2
 - Instagram
- Featherston Street project webpage
 - Online survey
- Newspaper advertising
- Radio advertising



Manawatu Guardian advertisement 17 August

Social media summary

Our three social posts on Instagram and Facebook reached 183,900 individual accounts and received 921 comments or shares.

General sentiment of the comments expressed was of strong criticism, especially about the impact of merging the left and straight lanes causing congestion, the cycleway component in general and that we hadn't listened to community feedback regarding right-turns at major retailers.

However, it's important to remember that social engagement tends to attract negative opinions when change is proposed, skewing the perception towards a more critical standpoint. Often if people see negative comments on social media, others with opposite views do not comment. It's worth noting there were positive comments. So, while the social media feedback reflects a notable degree of dissent, it may not provide a fair or balanced representation of the broader community's sentiment.

It's also important to note that a thorough engagement process was conducted on this project, and with all transport projects we see large amounts of feedback relating to change.

Webpage summary

Our project webpage experienced a significant spike in traffic during the trial period – due to the online survey for people to provide feedback on the trials.

See the below summary of our webpage data:

	Views	Users	Average engagement time	Clicks on survey link	
Project page	250	101	0:53	61	This is the project webpage: www.pncc.govt.nz/Featherston
News page	294	111	1:58	16	This is media release on the news section



Survey page 586 227

- 77% of the traffic came from Facebook, either landing on the project page then directed to the survey page, or directly on the survey page.
 - Of the 133 online forms we received, 95 of them came from Facebook traffic, 38 from other channels.
 - 97% visitors scrolled to the end of page
-

We took surveys online and on-site to capture public feedback

Our stakeholders and the community could provide their feedback on the new road layout via an online form on our website. We also had three people surveying road users over two days during the trial period between Aroha to North Streets.

In total, we received 373 survey responses.

These consisted of 133 online surveys via our website and 240 responses recorded by our surveyors on-site.

We asked several questions about why they come to Featherston Street and how often, as well as how they get there and their perception and feedback on the impact of each element that was tested. We received hundreds of comments, many reiterating the sentiment on social media, which we have summarised into key themes and presented below.

It's important to note with transport projects that many people only comment if they perceive the change negatively, so many of the comments expressed critical viewpoints.

The on-site surveys were taken across four hours in the afternoon of Thursday and Friday, 24-25 August.

One question we asked on-site, but removed from the online form, was if they noticed any changes to the duration they waited at the Rangitikei intersection on those particular days. This was to ensure accurate data by preventing people who responded online from commenting on something we couldn't guarantee they had experienced.

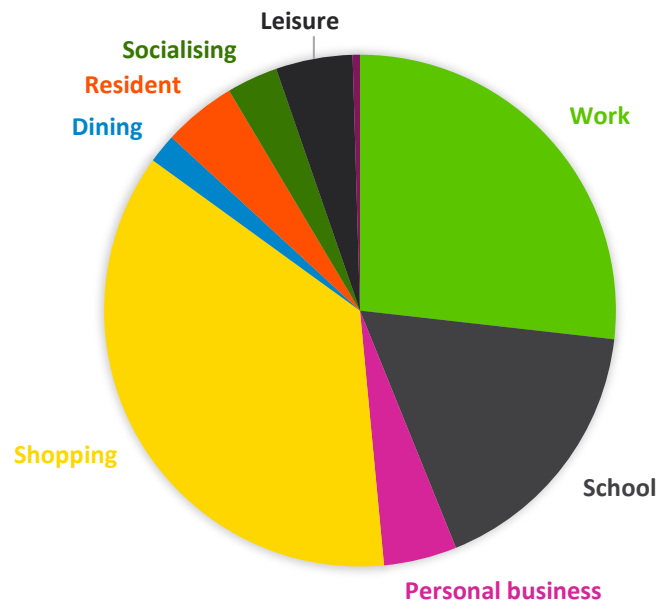
We've grouped together and summarised the key or most popular themes in relation to feedback on the trial design elements:

- Keep clear space at Mitre 10 works OK, but one at McDonald's promotes dangerous manoeuvres due to visibility issues (particularly for right turning cars out of McDonalds when traffic is waiting at the lights) and the one at Ngata Street is creating additional congestion by motorists on Ngata St pushing out onto Featherston when traffic is backed up from the lights.
- Many drivers are not complying with the keep clear spaces.
- Many surveyed expressed frustrations over concerns from businesses who asked to maintain right turns into their entrances and how this has been retained over measures to ban right hand turns to improve driver safety near the Rangitikei intersection.
- Many asked us to not merge the left and straight lanes due to the impact on traffic.
- Many reported the merged lanes and change to traffic signals promoted erratic behaviour (e.g. running red lights, or left turning cars not waiting for left arrow to turn green). Several near misses reported, but no crashes.

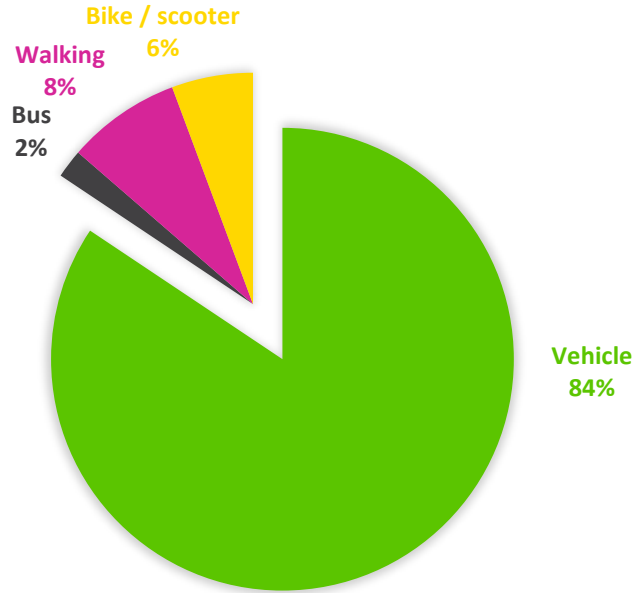


Data from the public surveys is summarised below:

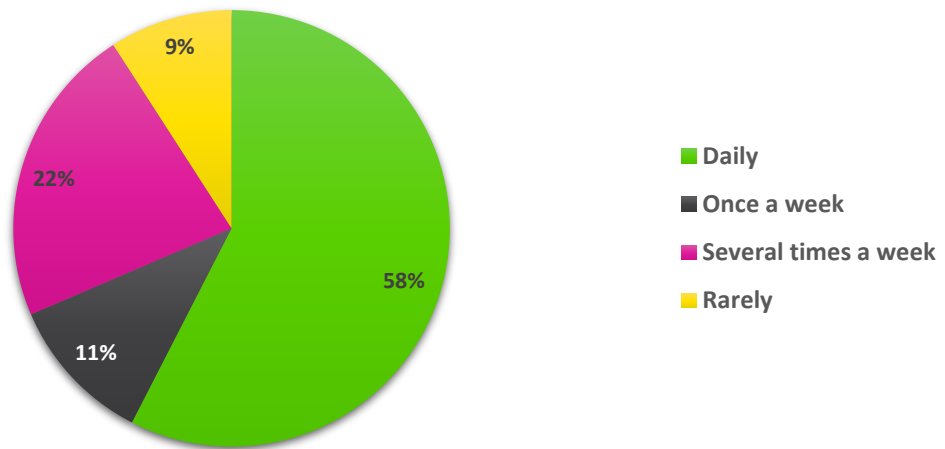
What brings people to Featherston street?



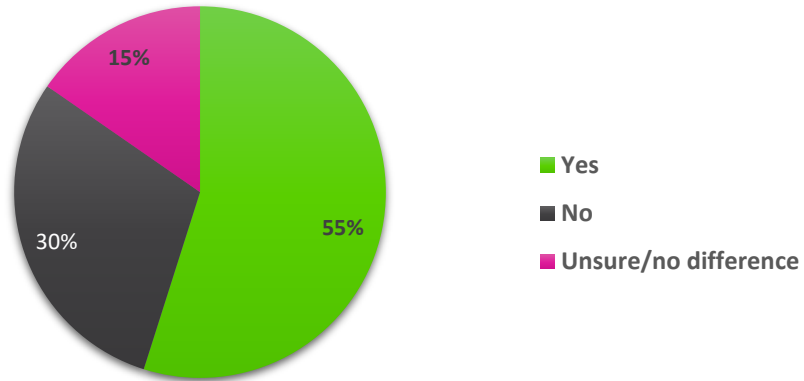
What form of travel do they use?



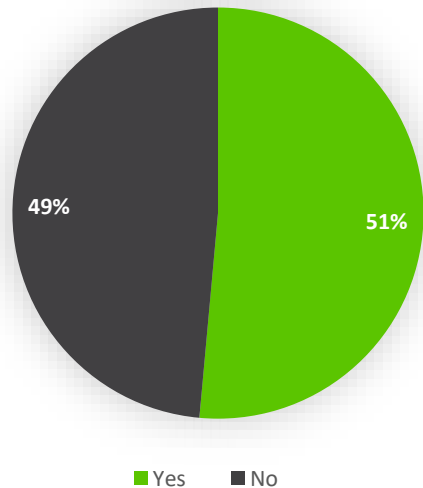
How frequently do people travel on Featherston Street?



Do people think the yellow 'keep clear' spaces are making it safer for vehicles entering and exiting entrances?



Did people see or experience any concerns with motorists using the 'keep clear' spaces?

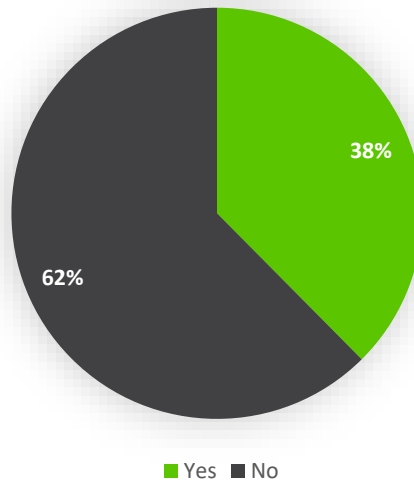


Feedback on keep clear boxes and access to businesses:



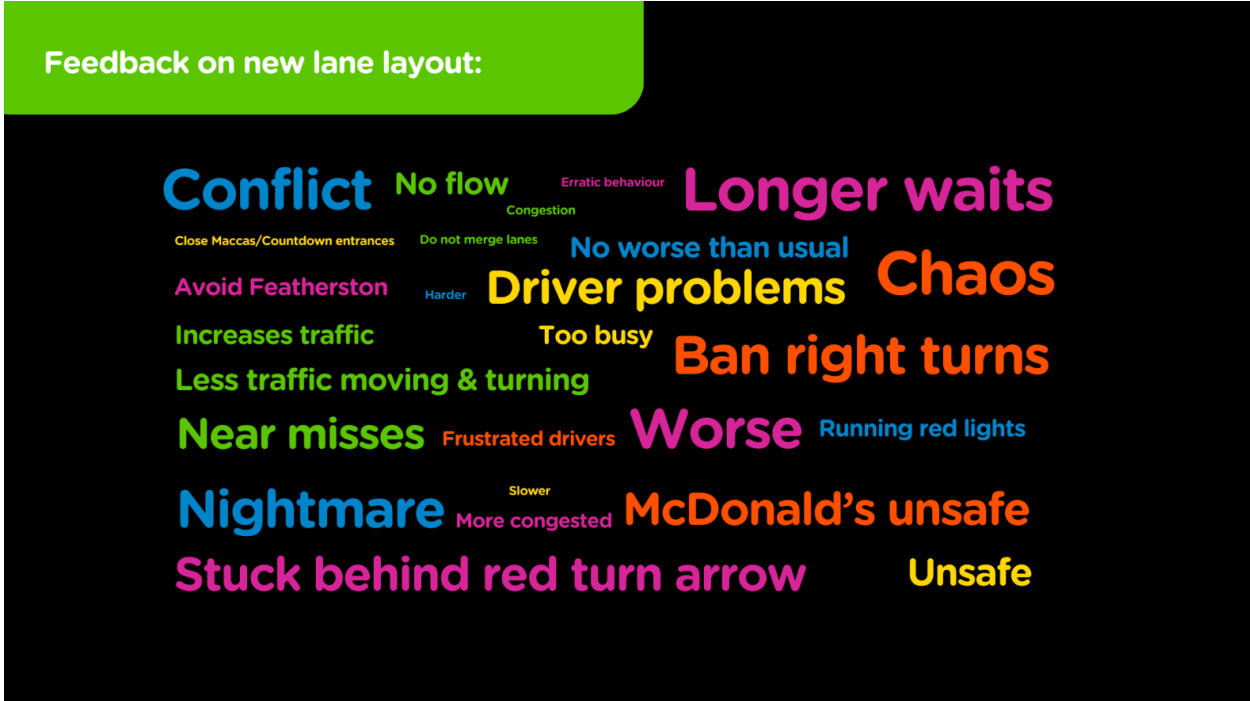
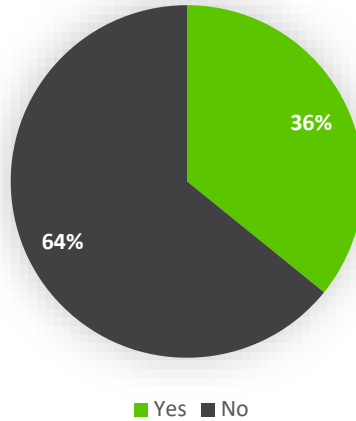
These are the key themes summarised from the public feedback surveys. Font size is indicative of the popularity of each key theme.

Did people notice any changes to the duration they waited at the Rangitikei lights?



It's important to note this question was removed from the online survey, but was included as part of our on-site surveys with 240 road users. This is because we could not guarantee online submitters had experienced the changes at the lights on that day.

Did people find it easier to access businesses, schools and organisations while the layout was in place?



These are the key themes summarised from the public feedback surveys. Font size is indicative of the popularity of each key theme.

Elected members observed the new lane layout

We arranged an opportunity for elected members to observe the new road layout during a bike ride hosted by Active Transport Manager Michael Bridges on Thursday 24 August at peak morning time (8.30am).



This provided a good opportunity to see the new road layout and any traffic impact before their workshop in mid-September, and council meeting later in the year.

Five councillors attended, alongside Chief Planning Officer David Murphy and Waka Kotahi representatives Jena Western and Tom Keedwell.

Next Steps:

The next step is for us to trial the separator with different types of vehicles.

We're also meeting with businesses and other organisations about the changes for them.

In September, Council's elected members will see the designs of the road before it is sent to Waka Kotahi – NZ Transport Agency for approval.