

Transurban Community Feedback

Western Distributor

30.07.15

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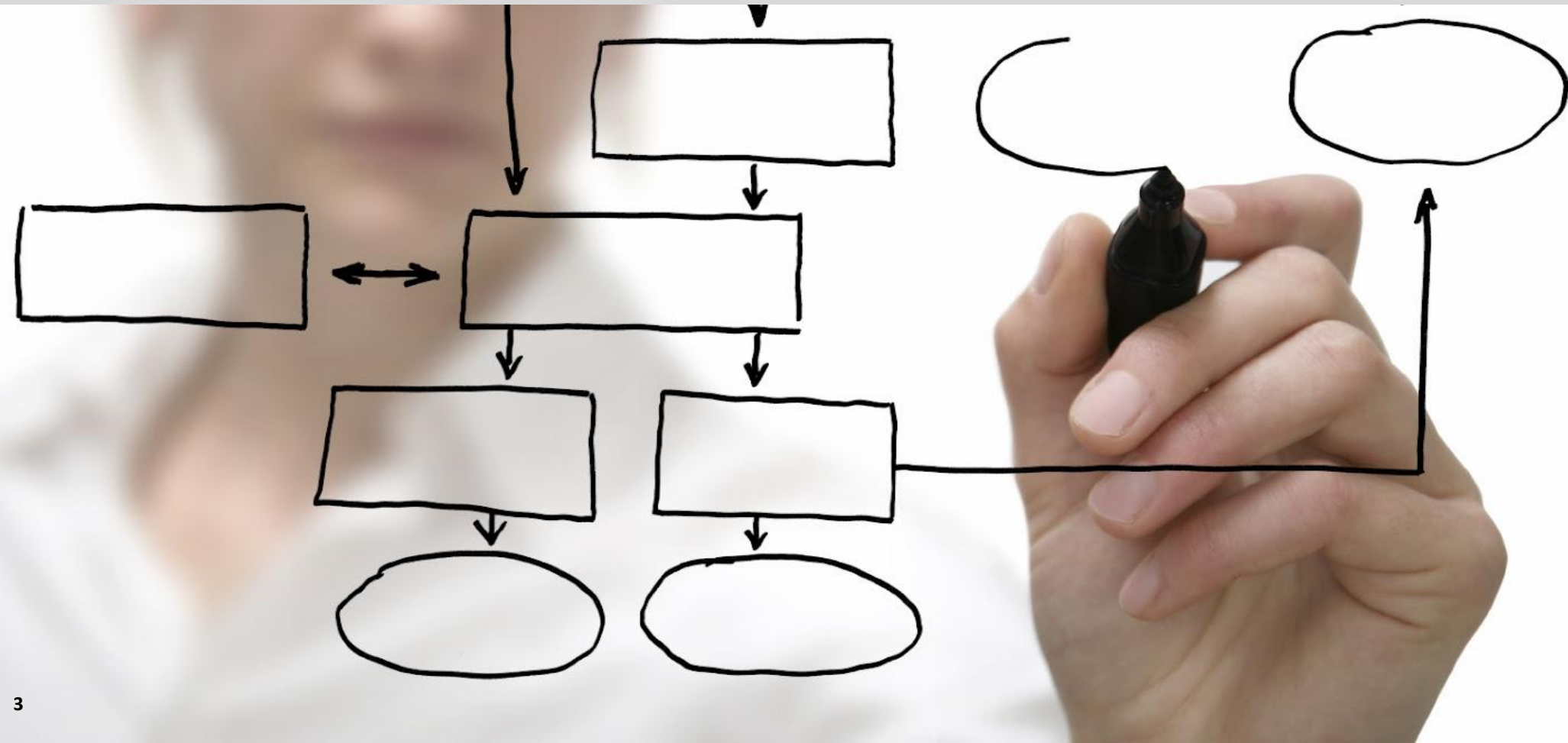
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1. Methodology & objectives



Background

Transurban's Western Distributor proposal is being developed through a five-phase engagement, design and planning process. A program of community engagement took place between 30 April to 21 June 2015 to obtain initial feedback on the proposed project. During this time, Transurban looked to explain the proposal and build an understanding of community priorities, concerns and aspirations to inform further development of the proposal.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the findings of key engagement activities to date. Analysis of the data provided by Transurban has been completed by independent research agency Nature.

The following sources of feedback have been evaluated within this report:

Online survey of locals

(n=169 respondents)

Online survey of the general community

(n=40 respondents)

Discussion forum

There were three forum topics, however only forum topic 1 had sufficient sample for analysis. Results for the other two are shown in the appendix and are indicative only.

(Topic 1 n=58 comments from n=28 people)

Comments made on an interactive map

(n=198 comments from n=87 respondents)

Q & A

(n=46 comments from n=39 respondents)

Methodology

Responses to the **online surveys** were analysed using statistical software 'Q' and Excel.

Responses to the **discussion forum, interactive map, Q&A and open ended questions from the online surveys** were subject to content analysis, which involves coding and grouping similar responses. Categories for the answers were generated based on these comments.

Following content analysis, responses from the **discussion forum, interactive map and Q&A** were collapsed into respondent / person level data, and analysed statistically in 'Q'. This removes any skew in results from one person providing multiple (very similar) responses. However, in order to analyse the number of 'votes', response level data was analysed. Response level results should be treated with care as we lose the ability to control for one person answering multiple times with similar comments.

Significance testing was conducted, with significant differences at a level of 95% confidence noted where relevant. Significance testing was conducted to compare results between different areas of residence e.g. Yarraville vs. other inner west suburbs, or the inner west vs. the broader community. If a difference in results is noted as being significant, this indicates that 95 times out of 100 we can expect to replicate the difference.

The sample was not controlled. Therefore these results should not be considered to be representative of all those who reside in the inner west or broader community.

Results and content analysis have been data checked following the completion of the report.

2. Executive Summary





Trucks are a significant issue for the local community, particularly those in Yarraville. Locals want to see trucks moved off their streets in order to improve safety and air quality. They are seeking assurances that trucks will use the new freeway.

- **90%** of locals are impacted by truck traffic (particularly those in Yarraville 98%).
- **42%** of locals rank 'moving through truck traffic off local streets and away from homes' as the number one benefit of this project (*increasing to 59% for those in Yarraville, and to 76% taking into account the top three ranking positions*).
- The most common comments made on the interactive map were in relation to **extending the truck ban / ensuring trucks stay on the freeway** (30%). Similarly, the most common general concerns / improvements cited in survey responses related to toll avoidance and banning trucks on local streets (20% and 19% respectively).
- For those in **Yarraville**, the two biggest impacts of truck traffic are **pedestrian safety (30%)** and **air quality (25%)**.

"I am very supportive of this project as the inner west is sorely neglected for infrastructure but is rapidly growing in population and subsequent requirements to support urbanisation in this area. I feel confident that it will improve the livability of this area and deal with the added traffic from the expanding ports."

"The Villagey feel of Yarraville and the sense of community is very important and removing trucks and other heavy traffic will be of great benefit."

"Truck bans need to be a priority to get them off local roads."

"I am highly sceptical that many truck drivers will pay the toll if this is all built and will continue to find alternate routes. What measures will be in place to assist in moving trucks to a new toll."



A key benefit of the project is relieving congestion and providing an alternative to the West Gate (particularly for those outside of Yarraville). However, some question whether it will be enough to solve existing issues.

- **86%** of locals are impacted by traffic congestion in the inner west and **87%** of the broader community are affected by congestion when travelling on or around the West Gate Freeway or Bridge.
- **50%** of the **general community** rank providing an **alternative to the West Gate as the main benefit** of this project.
- One of the most **common first impressions** of the project is that it will **alleviate congestion** (forum 1)
- **21%** are **concerned that congestion will remain after widening the West Gate Freeway**, making this the second most common concern about the freeway widening.
- The third common **concern** about the proposal more generally is **that this project isn't enough to address congestion / question if it will cause more congestion** (18%).

"Will greatly improve the amenity of this area, especially if trucks / traffic are encouraged to use the proposed infrastructure."

"Only concern is whether the existing West Gate Freeway will be able to cope with traffic in the lead up to the new tunnel even though it is being widened."

"Benefit seems to be towards private motor vehicles and encouraging vehicle use during peak hours. Having said that the growth in the outer west needs an alternative and convenient option to the West Gate."



Tunnel exit / entries and ventilation structures is a topic of significant interest and should be prioritised in further detailed discussions. This corresponds with local resident concerns around air quality.

- **90%** of locals (and 84% of the general community) would **prefer a tunnel** over a road.
- **38%** rank the location of the **tunnel exit / entries and ventilation structures** as the number one priority for more detailed discussion, *(which increases to 63% taking into account the top three ranking positions).*
- The number one concern with the proposed locations of the entry / exit points is '**emissions / placement of ventilation structures**' (22%).
- Locals, particularly those in **Yarraville**, **report that trucks have a strong impact on air quality** (ranked number two in Yarraville), indicating the importance placed on air quality in this area.
- The third most common comment made on the map related to **concerns about the ventilation structures / air quality** (25%).

"Careful consideration is required of the tunnel alignment, entry/exit ramps and exhaust stacks."

"We already live in a polluted area. I am concerned about the site of the exhaust outlet for any tunnel."

"I worry that the entry will adversely affect my home – especially air quality and appearance."



There are concerns around traffic noise, particularly in relation to the West Gate Freeway widening

- The most common comments about the West Gate Freeway widening are around **traffic noise / ensuring sound barriers are in place** (23%).
- Furthermore, the **third most common concern about the proposed locations for the tunnel portals is traffic noise** (19%) highlighting the importance of minimising noise in this area.
- The fourth most common general comments/suggestion improvements relate to **traffic noise / noise barriers** (15%).
- Concerns around noise are also linked with **truck acceleration and deceleration**.

The current noise from the (West Gate) freeway corridor concerns me deeply, and the formation of four new lanes just exacerbates this concern. I like the height, and the look of the sound barrier walls along the Tullamarine Freeway, and feel it's due time the walls along the West Gate Freeway were upgraded.

"The plan should have some type of noise and air pollution barriers to protect residents that live close to the freeway."

"If done right, this could greatly improve the quality of life for those living in and around the freeway and congested inner west areas, particularly in terms of noise reduction and the ability to utilise outdoor spaces."

"The tunnel entry/exit at Williamstown Road - I would assume there would be speed restrictions going into the tunnel. I'm concerned about trucks slowing down and using engine breaks. The noise could be a problem"



When asked what other types of complementary initiatives should be considered as part of the proposal, improved cycling and walking facilities was the top preference, followed by changes to the surrounding network.

- **‘Improved cycling and pedestrian facilities’ is the number one ranked complementary initiative for locals (29%)** (and comes in second behind changing the surrounding road network to complement the proposal for the general community (25%)).
- **Access to amenities and community facilities, and parks, sporting and recreation** are the two most important features and facilities for locals (55% and 52% respectively). Coming in directly **behind this, in third and fourth position, is being able to walk or cycle safely** (31% and 23% respectively).
- **‘Changes to the surrounding road network’ is the complementary initiative most preferred by the general community (28%)** (and comes in second behind cycling / pedestrian facilities for locals).
- **47% rank finding out more about ‘how the new road connects with other roads in the area’** within the top three topics for more detailed discussion.
- Preference for this initiative **may also be linked with the truck and congestion issues**, particularly in relation to banning trucks on local roads *(90% of locals affected by truck traffic / 86% of locals affected by traffic congestion / 87% of the general community affected by congestion on the West Gate Freeway or Bridge).*

“I think there is a real chance for a win-win, by developing an additional bike path to cross the river, reducing the impact on Shepherds Bridge and increasing the capacity of what is one of Melbourne's most used cycle routes.”

“Would be good to connect a bike path to the Hyde St bike path. Frightening cycling down Francis St, trucks and cars are so close and don't leave much clearance between you and parked cars”

“What changes will happen to existing roads a result of this project? E.g. Footscray Road, Wurundjeri Way, Millers Road and Williamstown Road?”

“Trucks must be banned on residential streets, it is not enough to hope that they use this road.”

“I am concerned about traffic congestion heading to and from Docklands and the City where Footscray Road meets the existing Citylink and then combined with the new Western Distributor.”

3. Detailed Findings





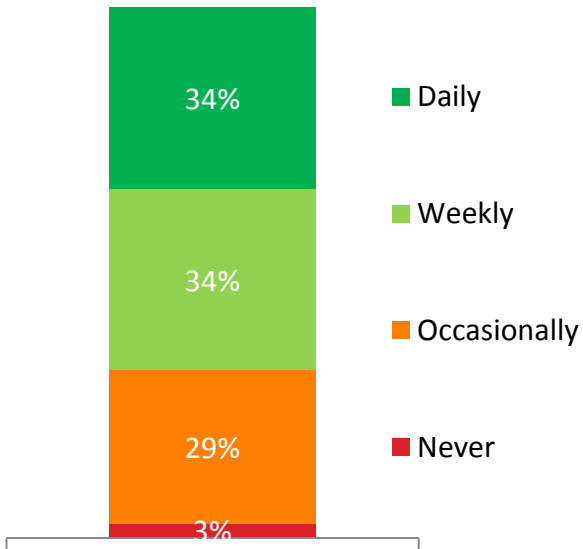
Online surveys

Surveys were used to collect detailed information on what is important, what people would like to see considered in the project's development and preferences for future engagement. Two surveys were designed to seek specific feedback from a) local residents and b) the general community. Both surveys were open between 25 May and 21 June 2015.

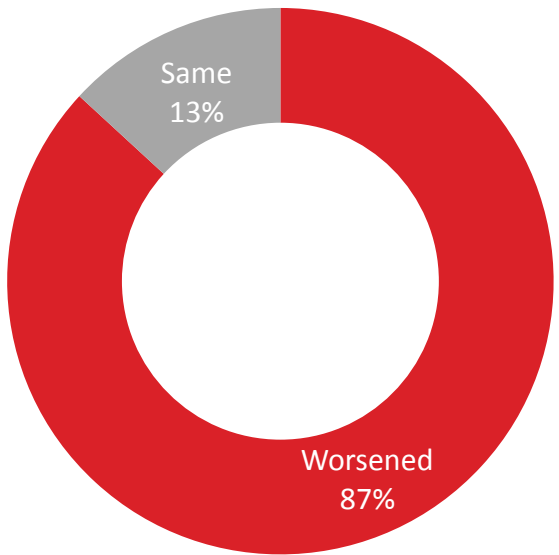
Two thirds of the broader community participants use the West Gate Freeway or West Gate Bridge at least weekly. Almost all agree that congestion in these areas has worsened, and the majority report to be impacted by congestion.

GENERAL
COMMUNITY

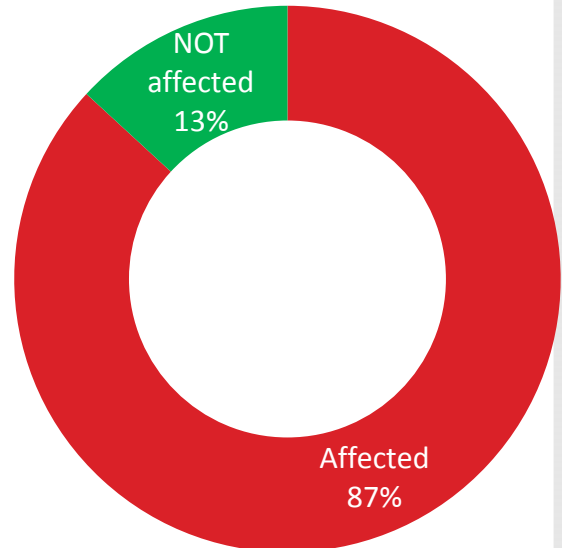
Frequency of travel on the West Gate Freeway / Bridge



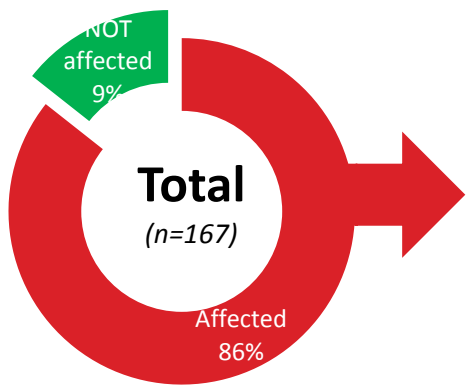
Changes in congestion over the last five years on West Gate Freeway /Bridge



Affected by traffic congestion when travelling on or around West Gate Freeway / Bridge



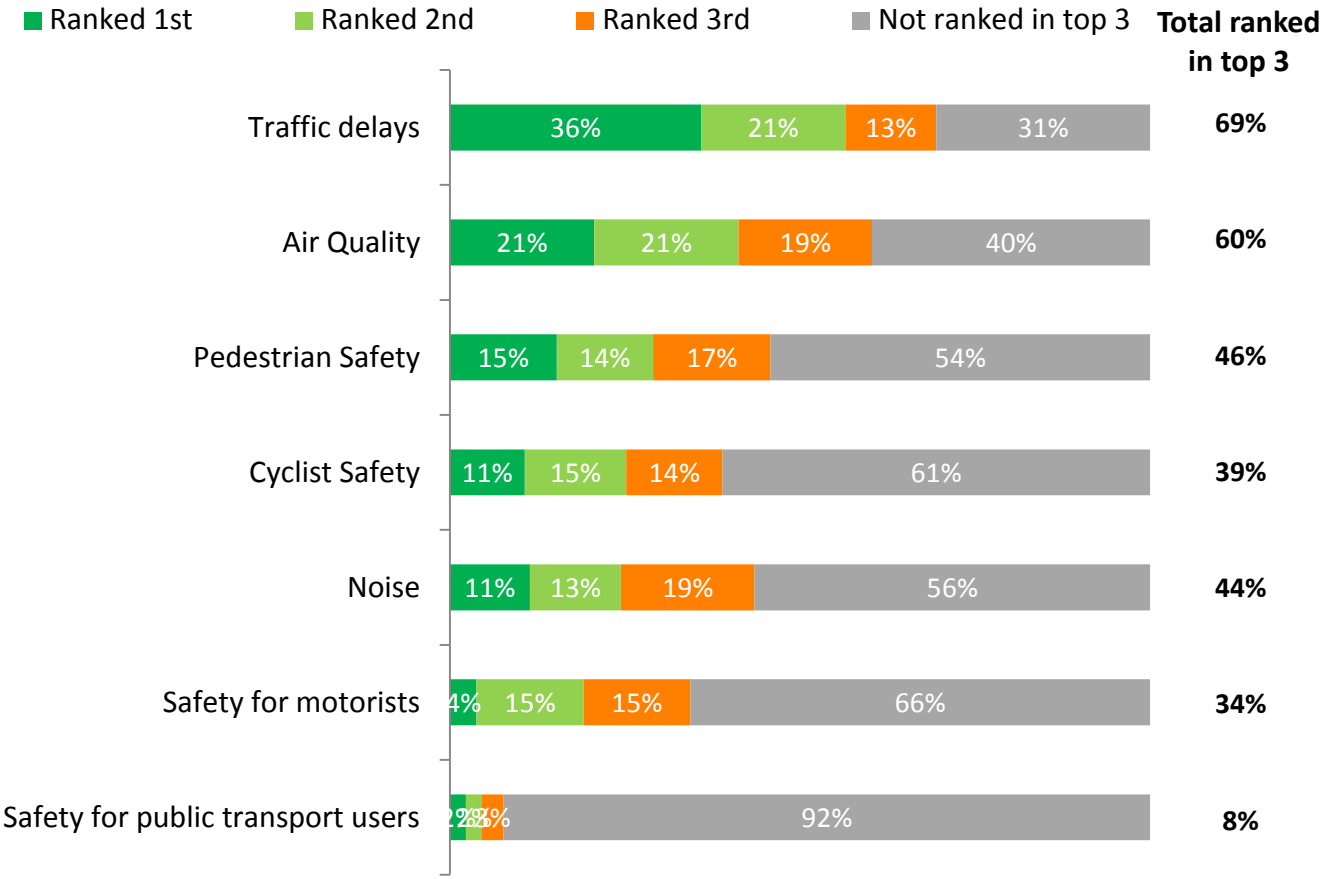
Delays are seen to be the biggest impact of traffic congestion, followed by air quality and safety



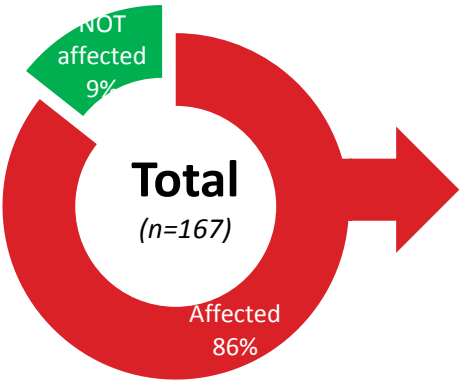
How traffic congestion affects locals

Those impacted by traffic congestion (n=131)

LOCAL



When asked to report any other ways in which locals are impacted by congestion, most continue to report time delays or issues with trucks



Other ways impacted by traffic congestion

Open question coded / Amongst those impacted by traffic congestion (n=143)

Trucks: Aggressive drivers / too many / use local streets / block or park on streets / run red lights / damaging local roads / slow down traffic / are getting bigger / breach curfews / other comments

Congestion / delays

17%

16%

Lost productive time / long work commutes

5%

Traffic noise / horns

4%

Child / pedestrian safety

4%

Specific mentions of Francis Street

4%

Poor air quality / dust / diesel / dirt

3%

The lack of bike lanes / Cyclists' safety concerns

3%

Single lane roads / should be two lanes

2%

Impacts on amenity / visual amenity

2%

Speeding vehicles/ trucks

2%

Lack of or poor infrastructure

2%

School zones slow traffic

1%

Other

12%

Nothing else

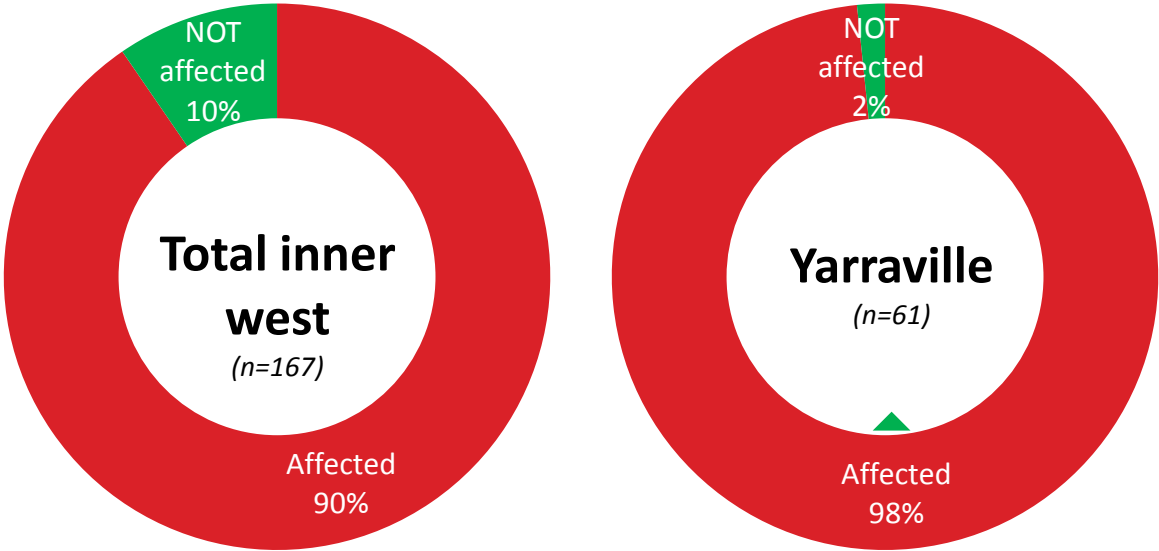
58%

LOCAL

The impact of truck traffic is particularly strong for those residing in Yarraville

LOCAL

Impacted by truck traffic by area of residence

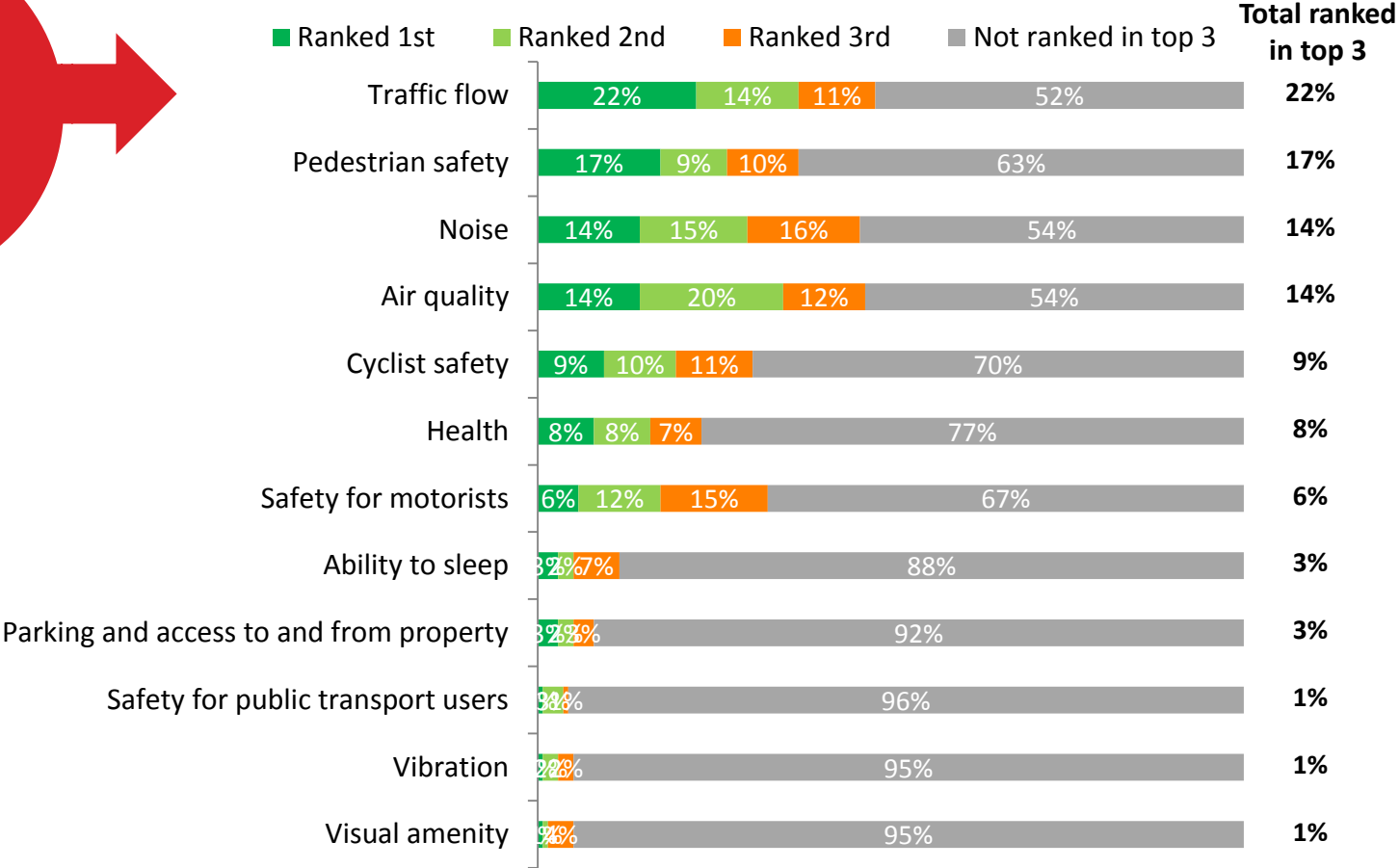
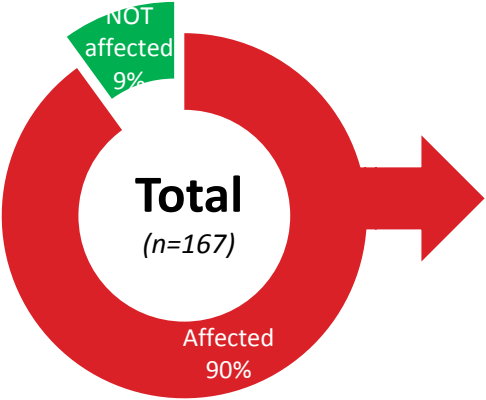


Local residents report being impacted by truck traffic in many ways, with the most significant impact being traffic flow. Trucks are also seen to impact road safety, create noise, affect air quality and health.

How truck traffic impacts locals

Those impacted by traffic congestion (n=138)

LOCAL

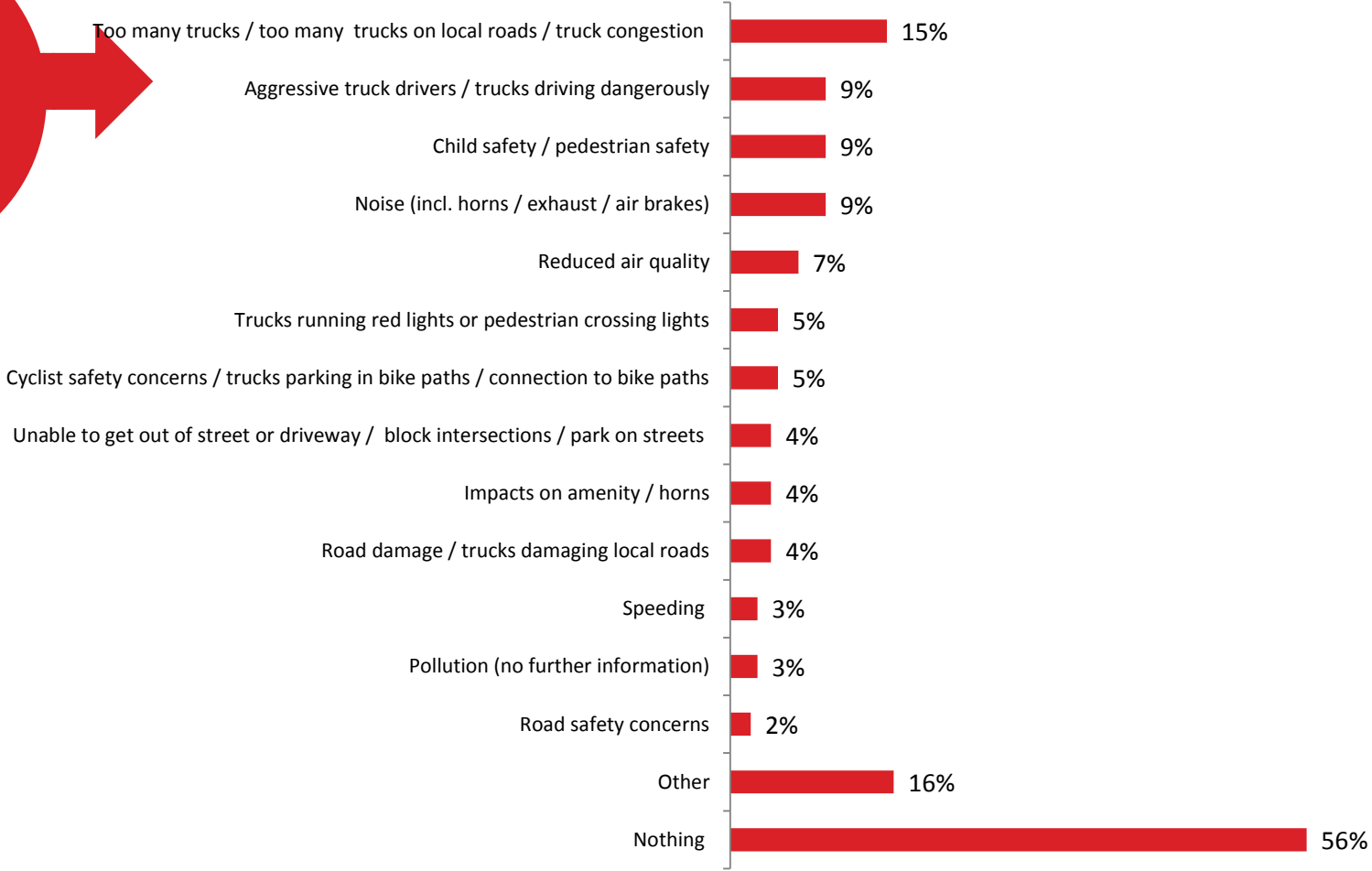
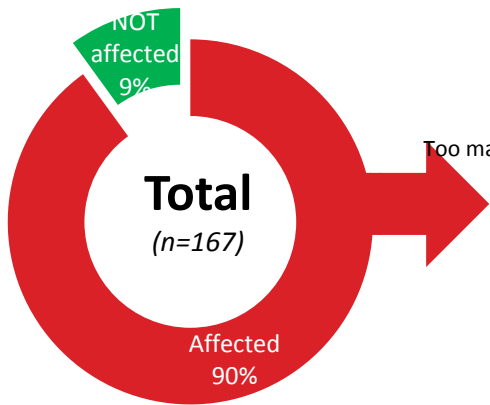


When asked if they are impacted by trucks in any other ways, people again emphasised the traffic issues caused by truck congestion and associated safety issues

Other ways impacted by truck traffic

Open question coded / Those impacted by truck traffic (n=151)

LOCAL



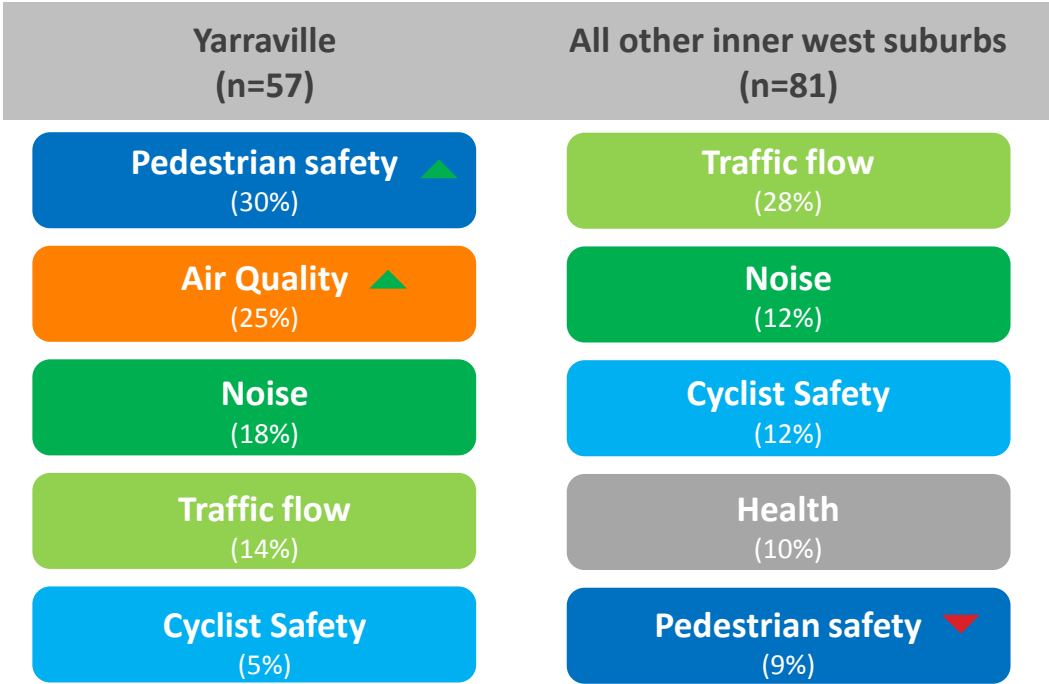
The impact of trucks varies by area of residence. Those in Yarraville see the strongest impact of trucks being pedestrian safety and air quality, while for those in other areas of the inner west, the strongest impact of trucks is traffic flow.

How truck traffic impacts locals by area of residence

Top 5 items ranked in first position

Those impacted by traffic congestion (n=138)

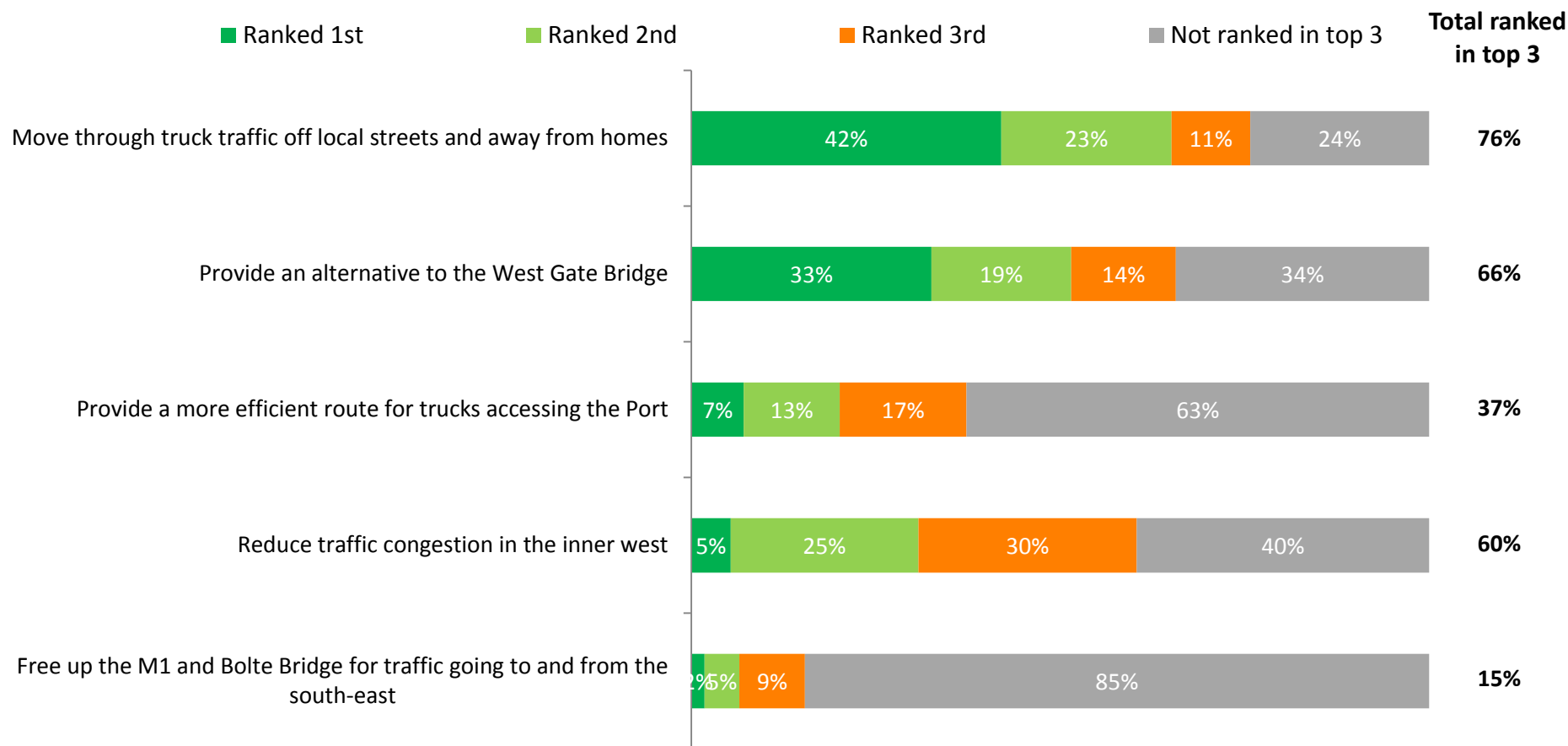
LOCAL



The main project benefit for locals is 'moving trucks off local streets'

LOCAL

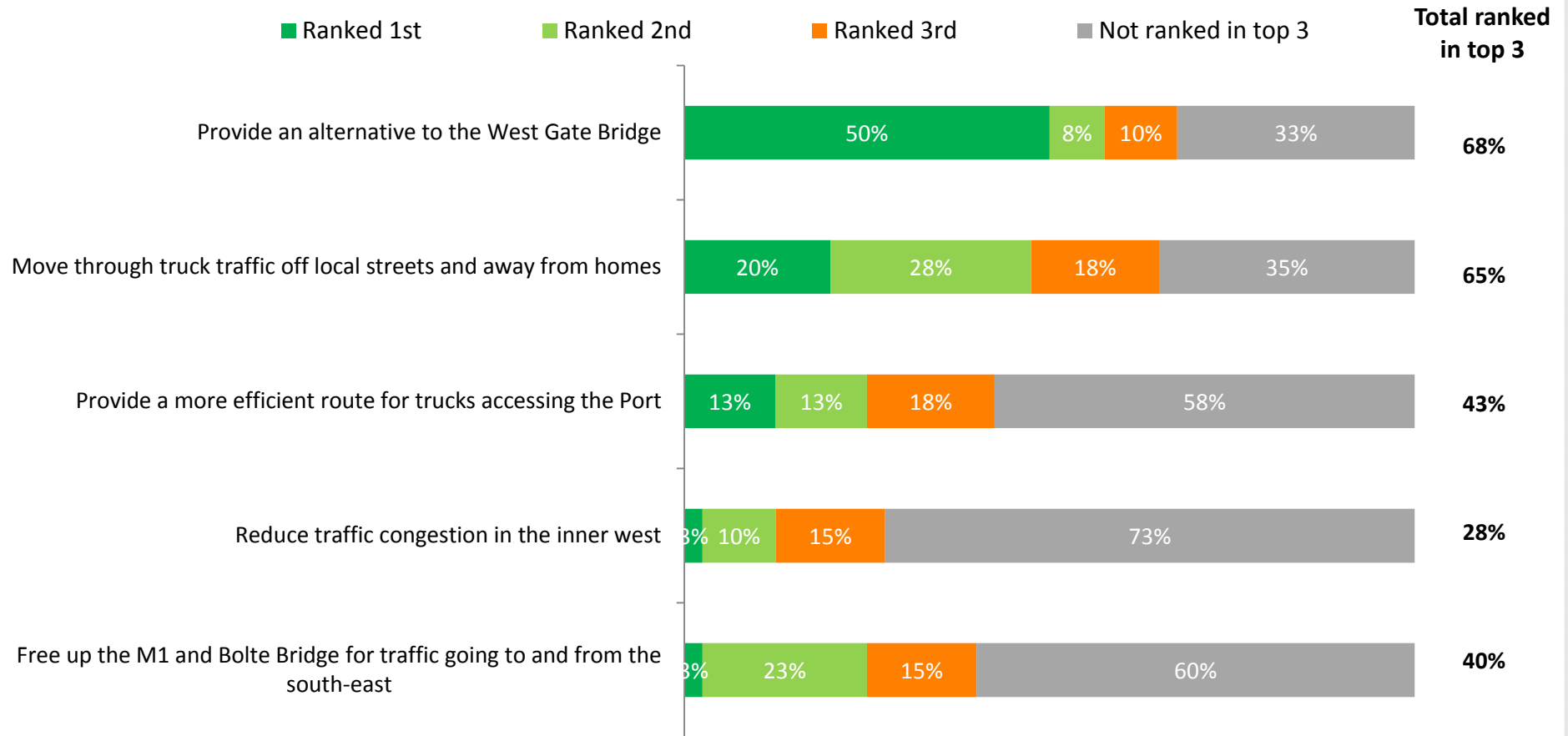
Ranking of benefits of project



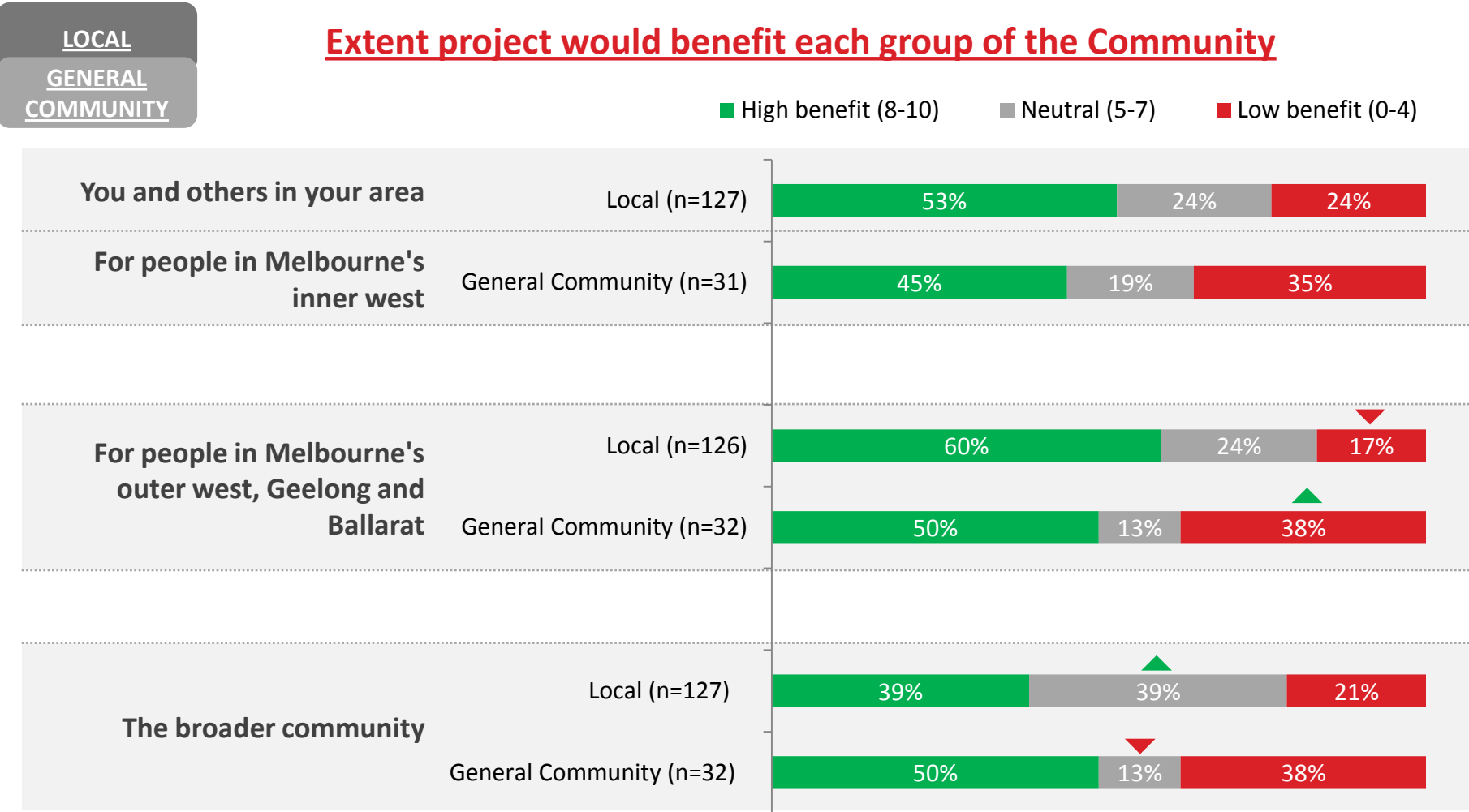
For the general community providing an alternative route to the West Gate is seen as the main benefit

GENERAL COMMUNITY

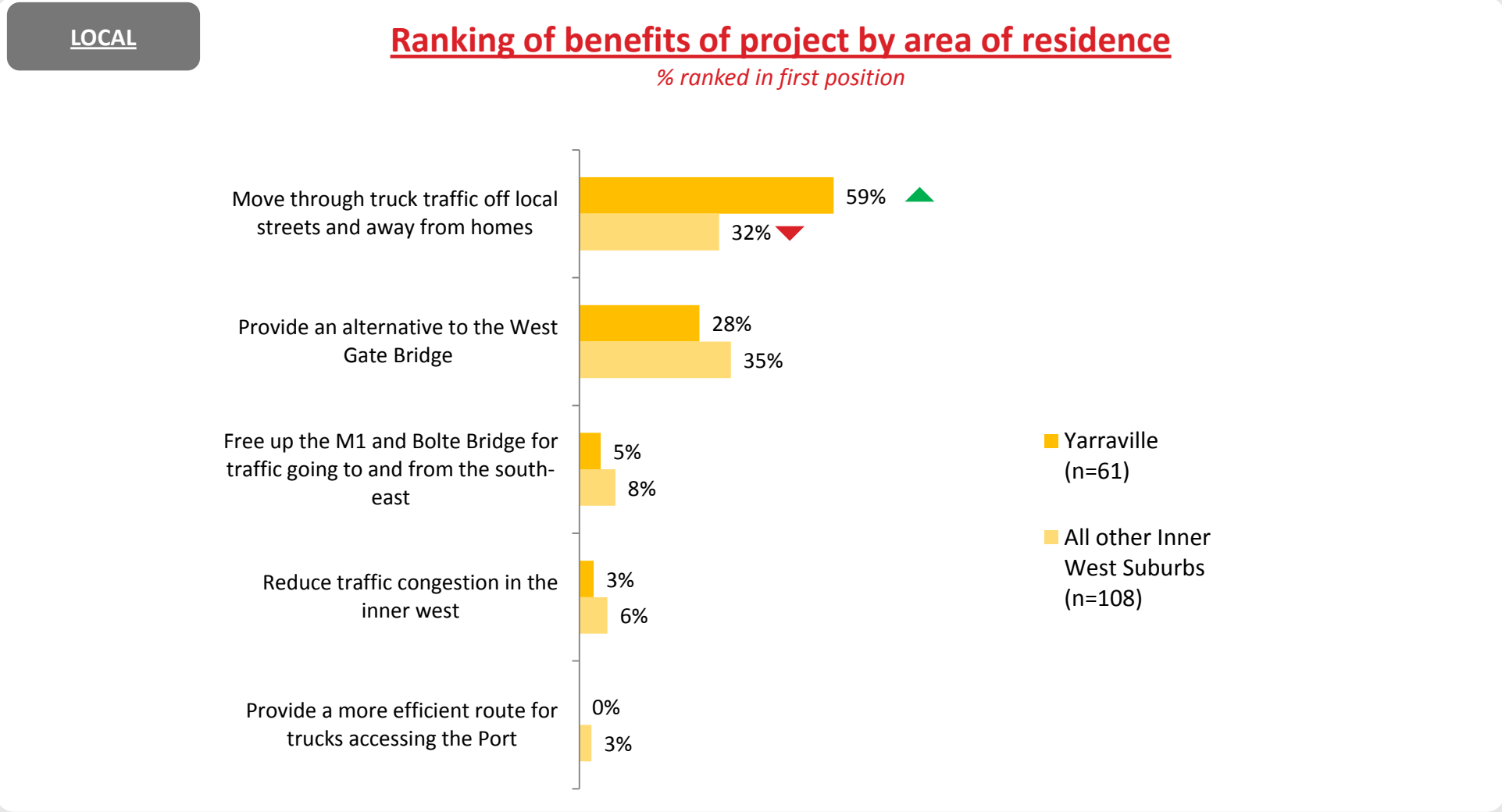
Ranking of benefits of project



Residents of Melbourne's inner and outer west are seen to be the greatest beneficiaries of the proposal



Almost six in ten Yarraville residents rank moving truck traffic off local streets as the number one benefit.

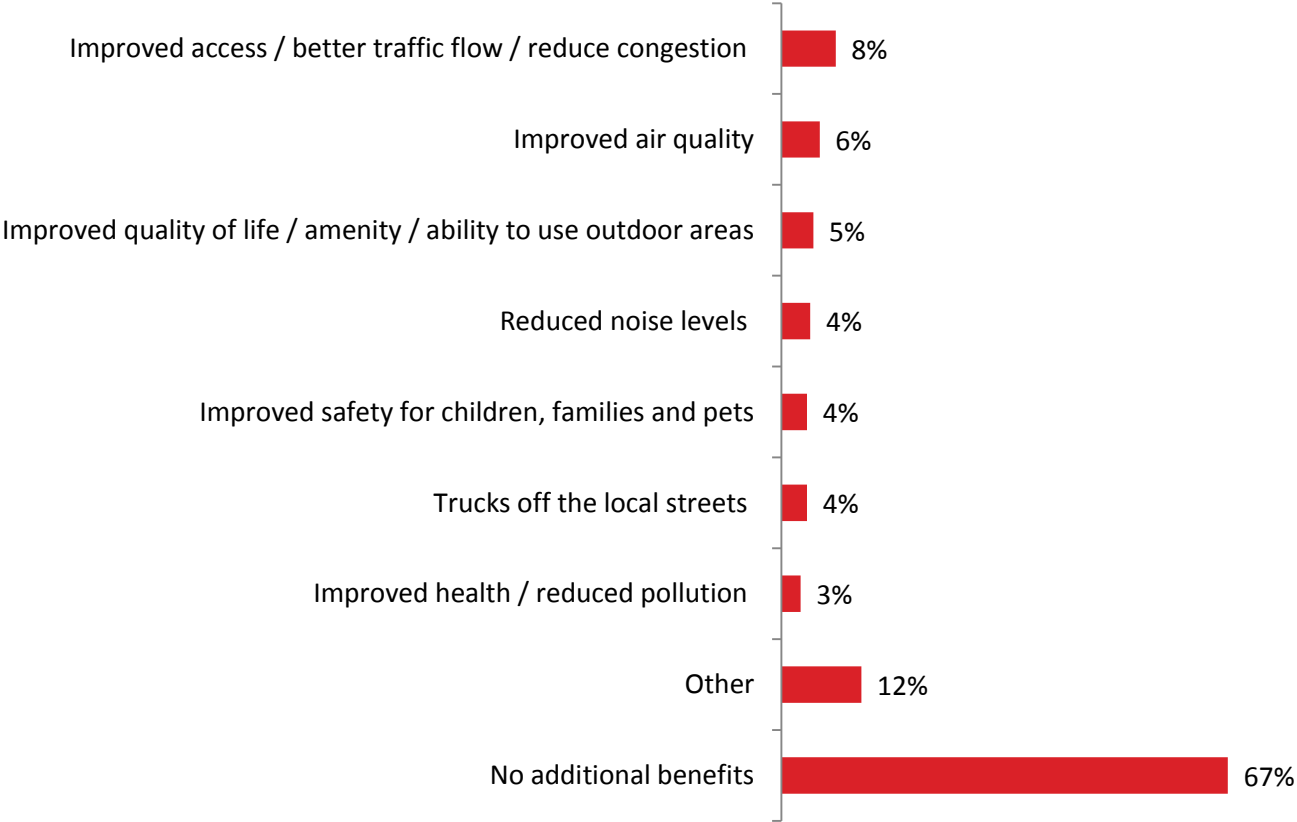


Other benefits listed include better traffic flow and improved air quality and amenity.

LOCAL
GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Other benefits of the project

Open coded question / Local plus general community combined due to low base for general community in isolation

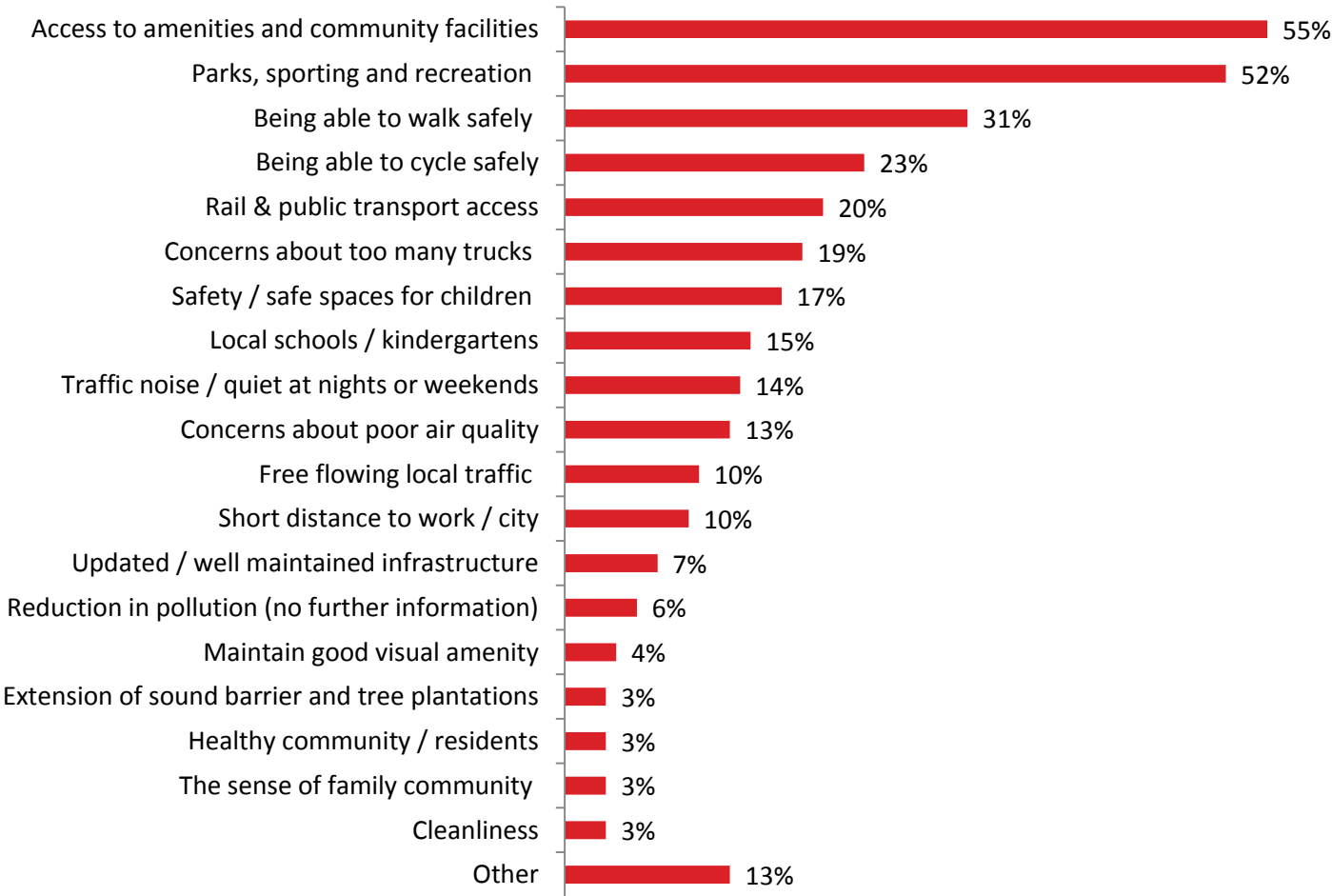


The features and facilities of the inner-west that are most important to local residents are open space – particularly parks, playgrounds, sporting and recreation facilities - and safety while walking and cycling.

Features and facilities in local area that are important

LOCAL

Open question coded

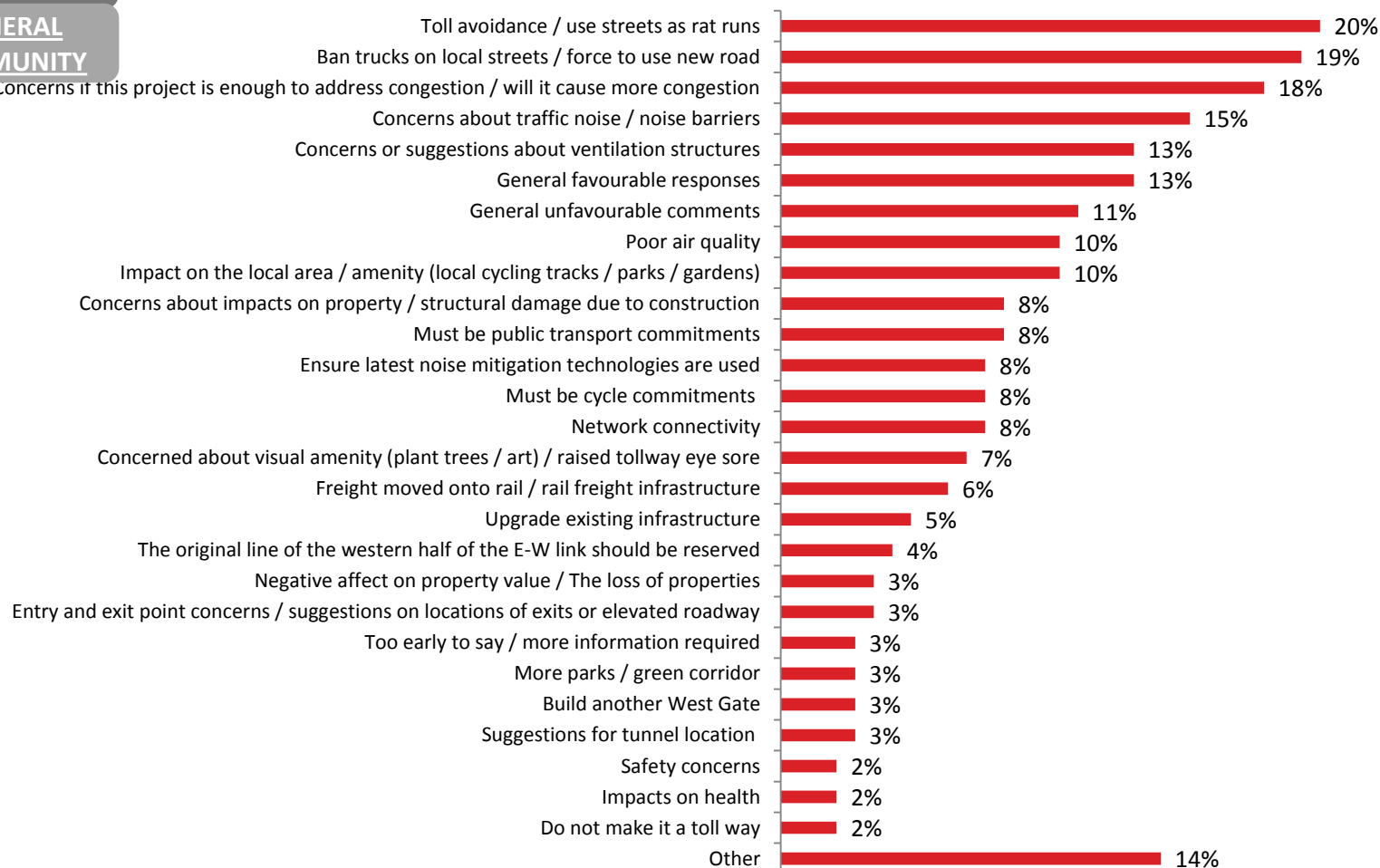


Concerns and suggested improvements again centred on truck issues – particularly toll avoidance and truck bans.

LOCAL

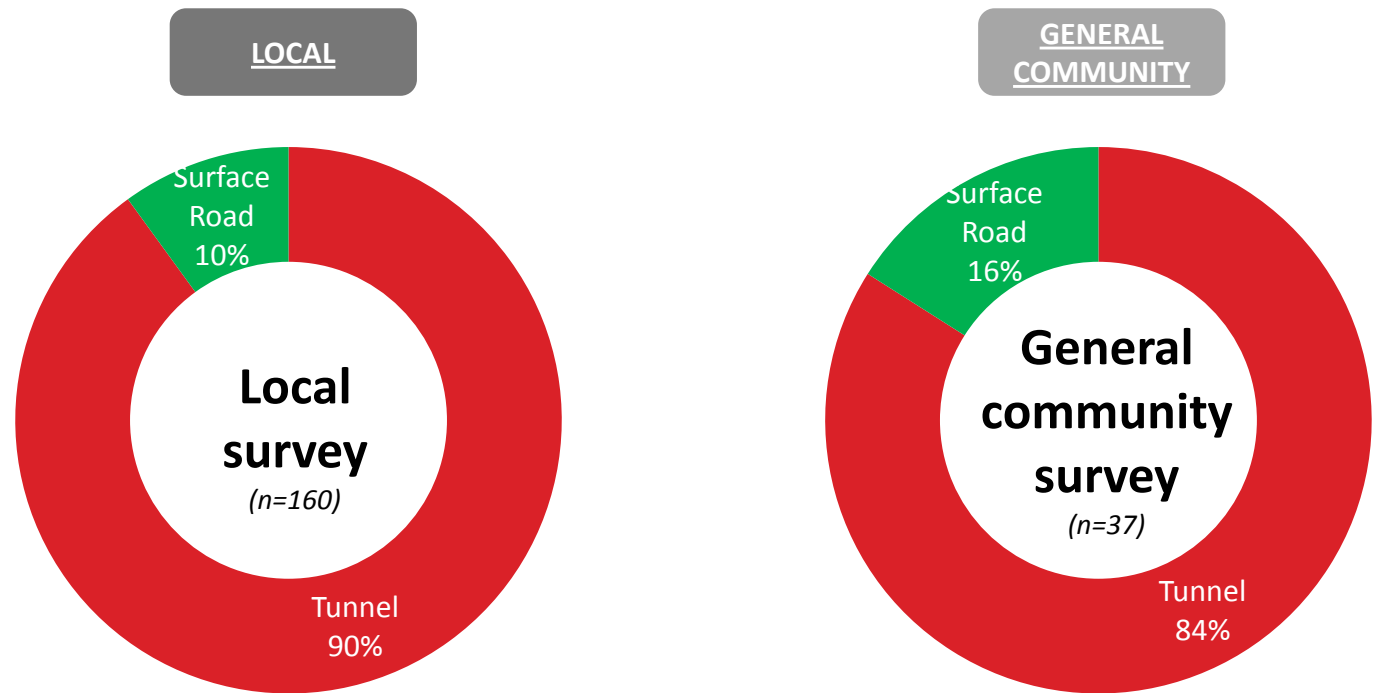
GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Concerns / suggested improvements about the proposal



Almost all participants would prefer that a tunnel is built rather than a surface road

Preference for tunnel vs. surface road



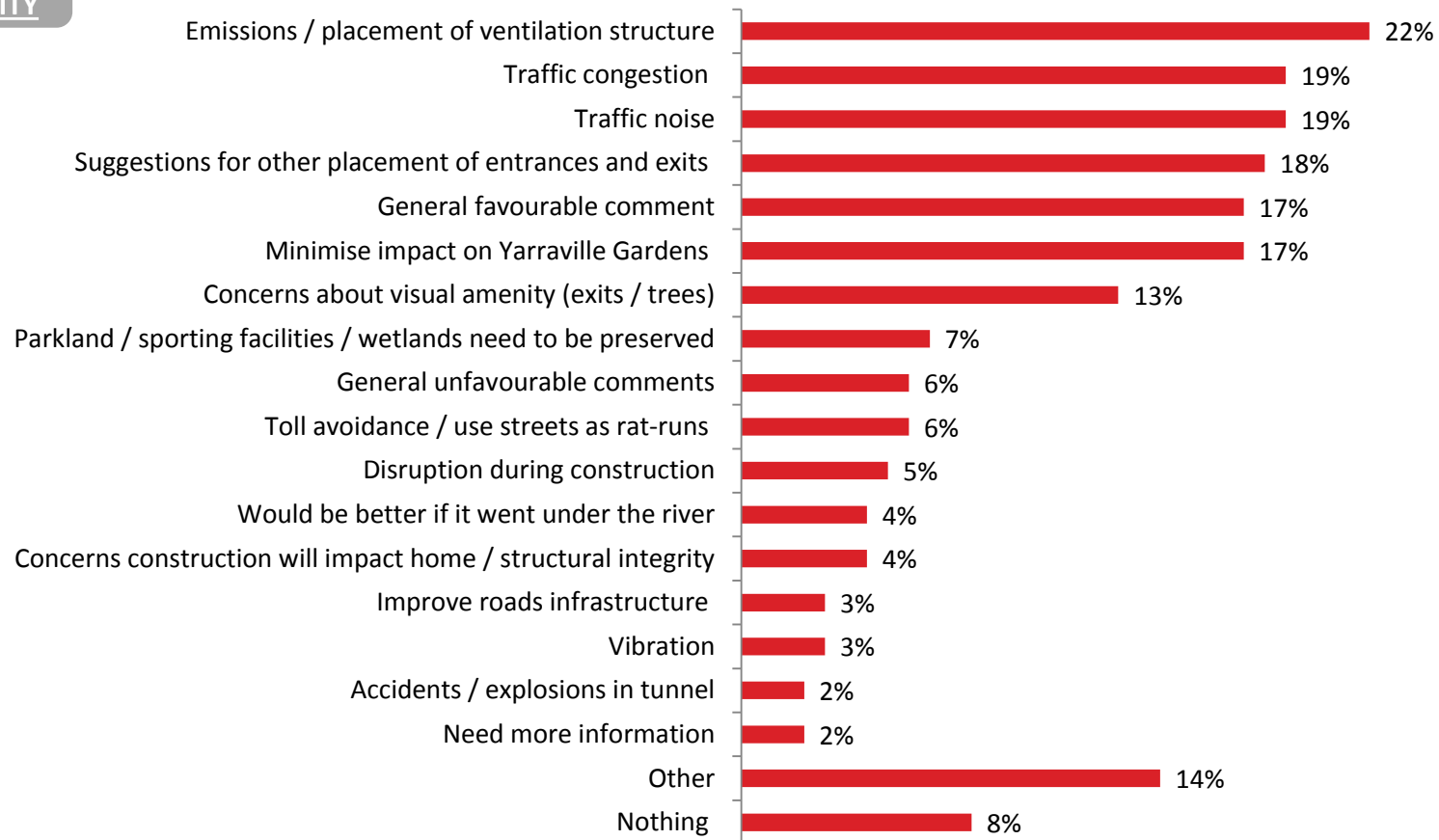
Ideas and concerns raised about the proposed tunnel entry / exits focus on emissions, traffic congestion, traffic noise and the location. Protecting Yarraville Gardens and other open space is important.

LOCAL

**GENERAL
COMMUNITY**

Ideas / concerns about the proposed locations for tunnel entry / exits

Open coded question / Local plus general community combined due to low base for general community in isolation



Ideas and concerns raised about the West Gate Freeway widening focus on traffic noise, ability to cope with future traffic volumes and general support.

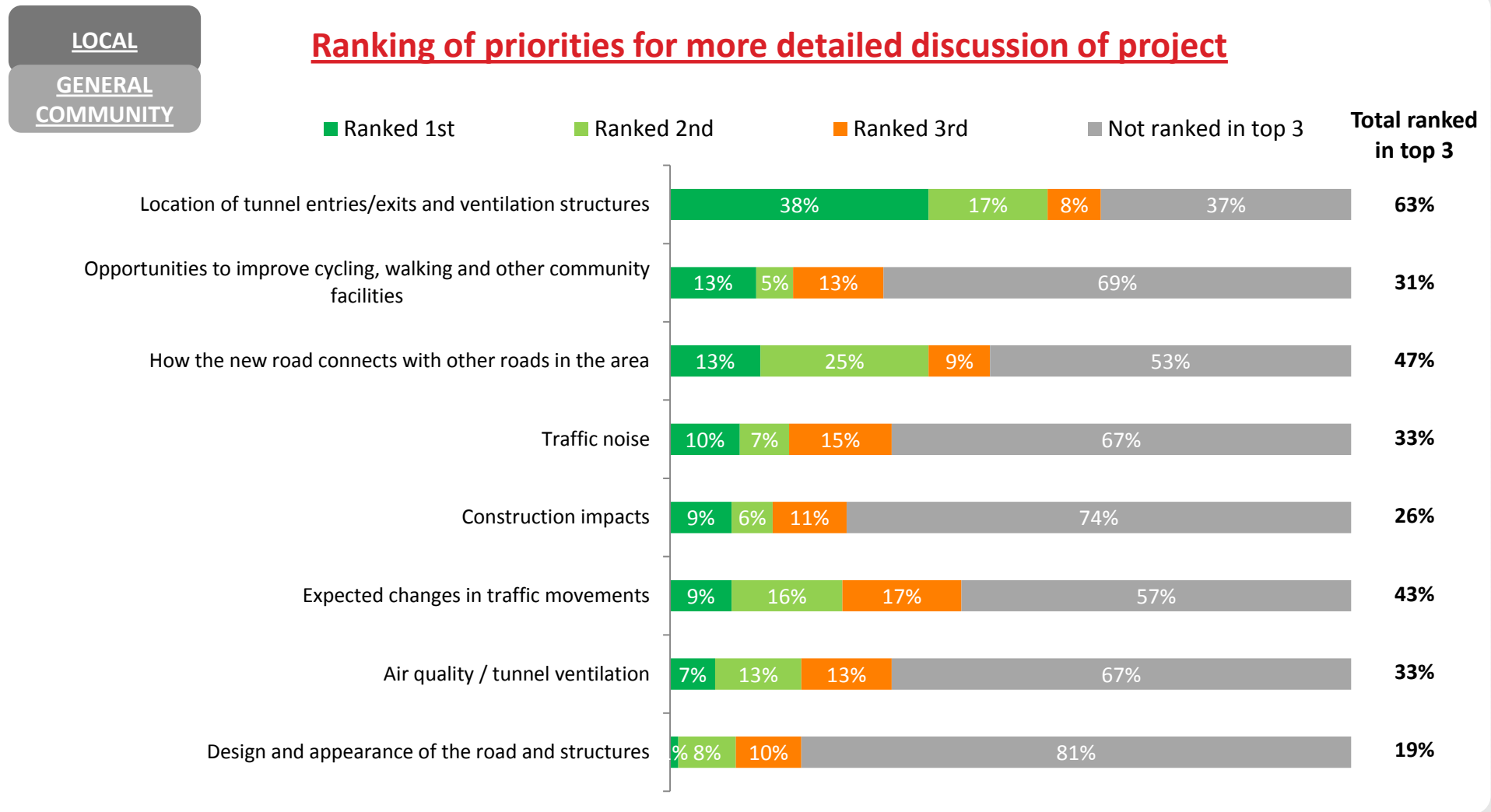
LOCAL
GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Ideas / concerns about the proposed widening of the West Gate Freeway

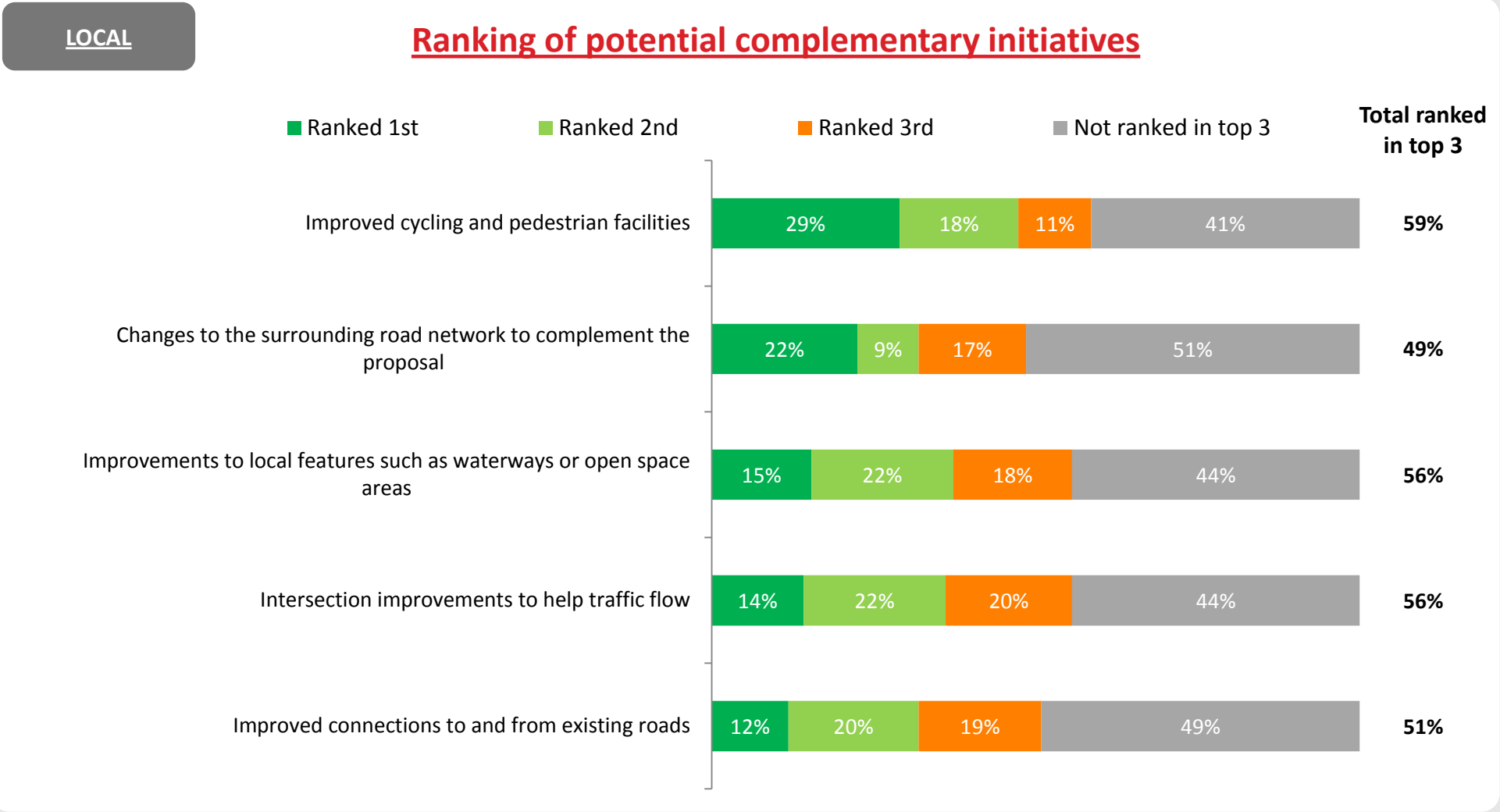
Open coded question / Local plus general community combined due to low base for general community in isolation



The number one priority for further discussion is the location of the tunnel entry / exits and ventilation structures.



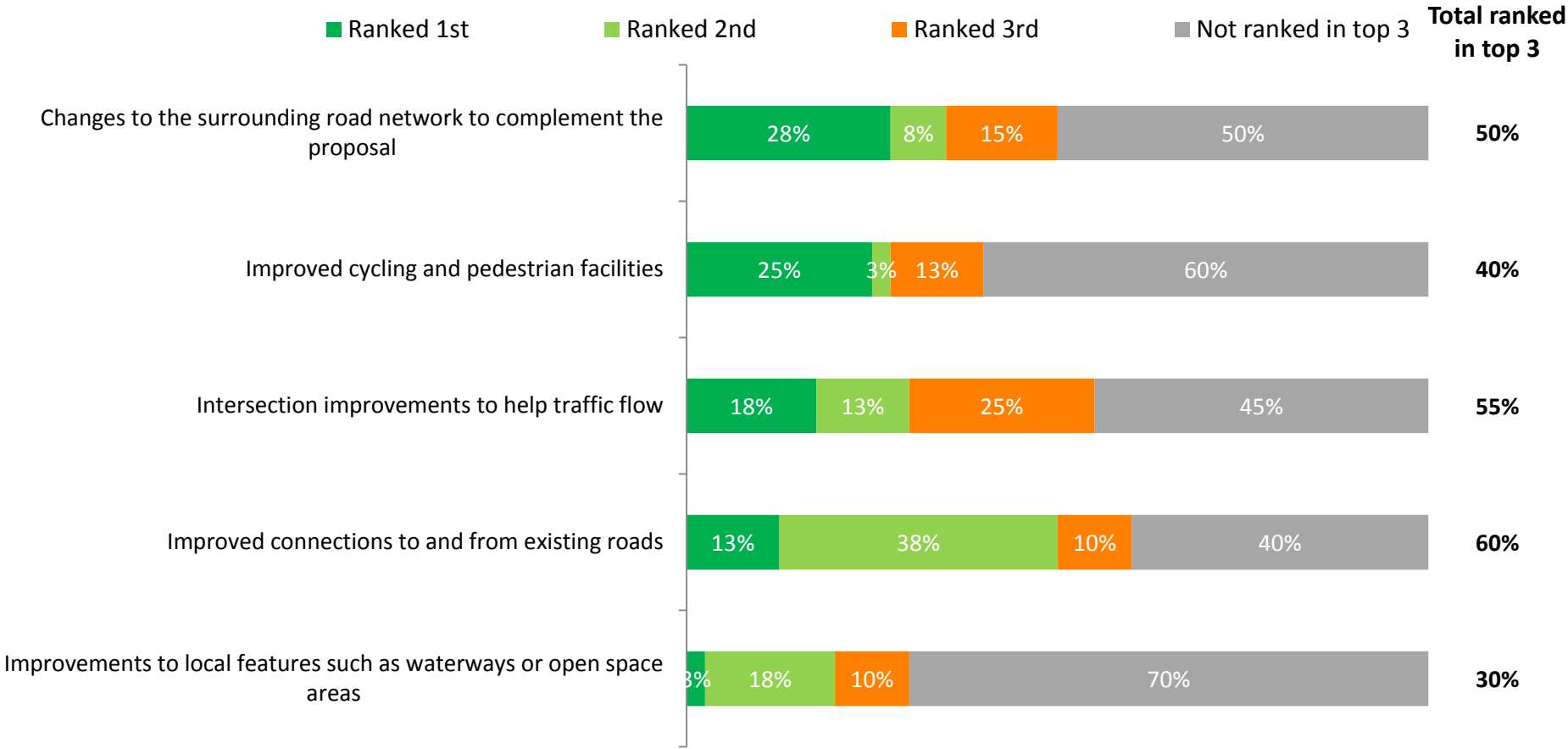
When asked what complementary initiatives could be considered, the strongest preference for locals was for improved cycling and pedestrian facilities.



For the General Community, it's changes to the surrounding road network that is the most preferred potential complementary initiative

GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Ranking of potential complementary initiatives



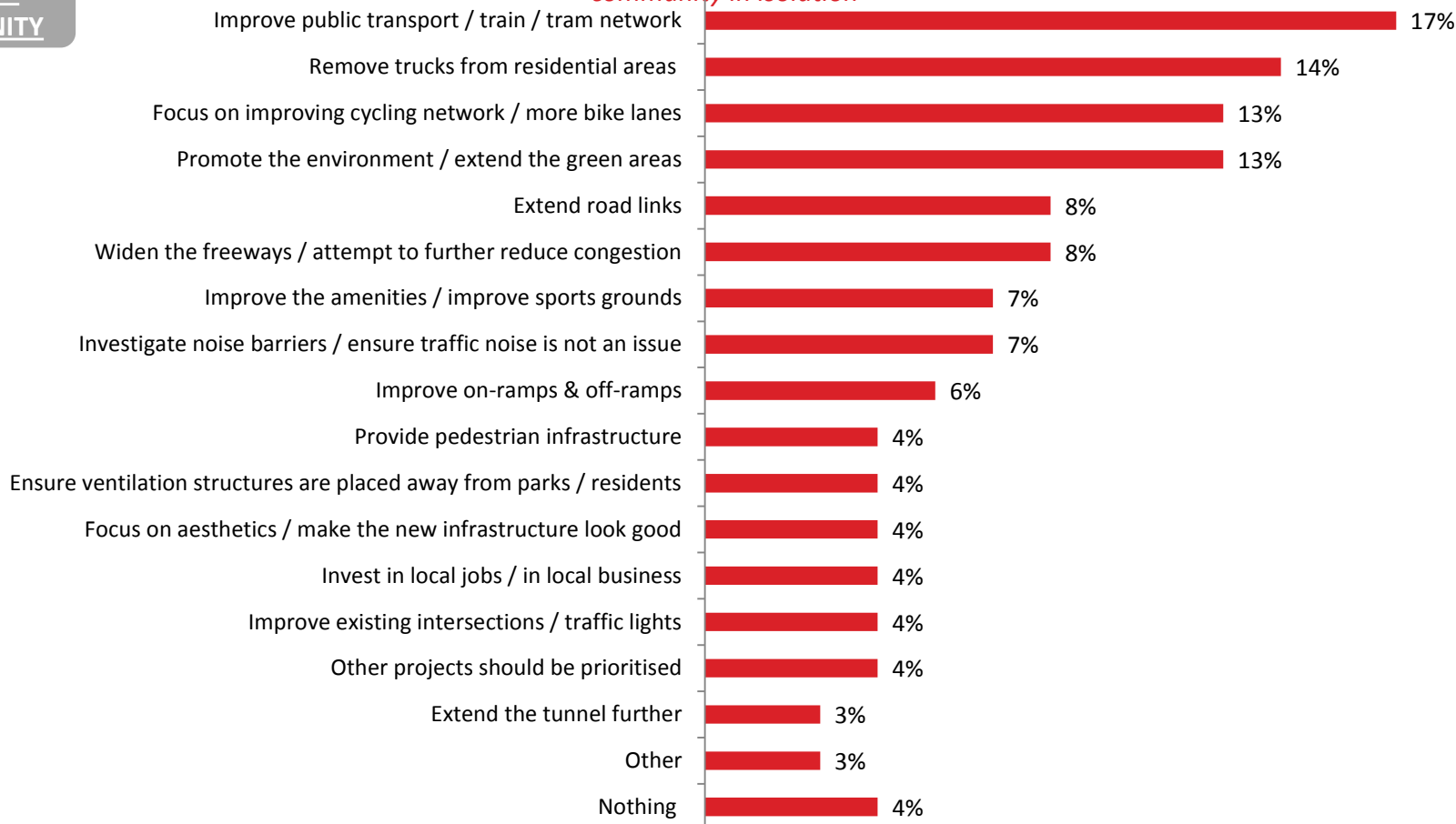
The main suggestion for other complementary initiatives is public transport improvements, truck bans and open space improvements.

LOCAL

GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Other complementary initiatives that should be considered

Open coded question / Local plus general community combined due to low base for general community in isolation





Interactive map

The interactive map provided a way for people to pinpoint exact locations that are important, or where they see an issue or opportunity. This tool was open from 30 April until 21 June 2015.

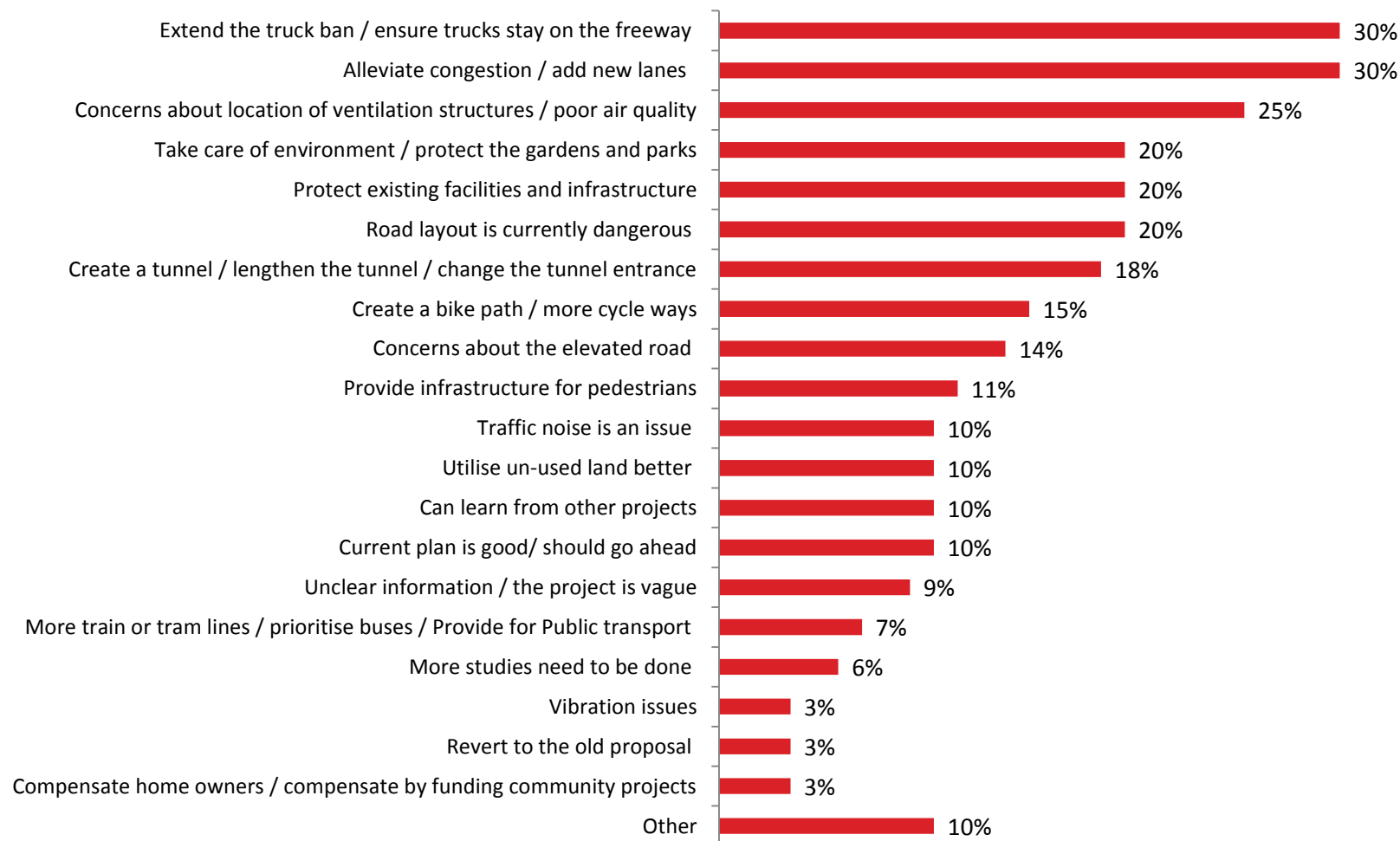


In response to the interactive map most respondents made comments relating to extending truck bans and alleviating traffic / congestion

INTERACTIVE MAP

Map comments

Open question coded, respondent level data

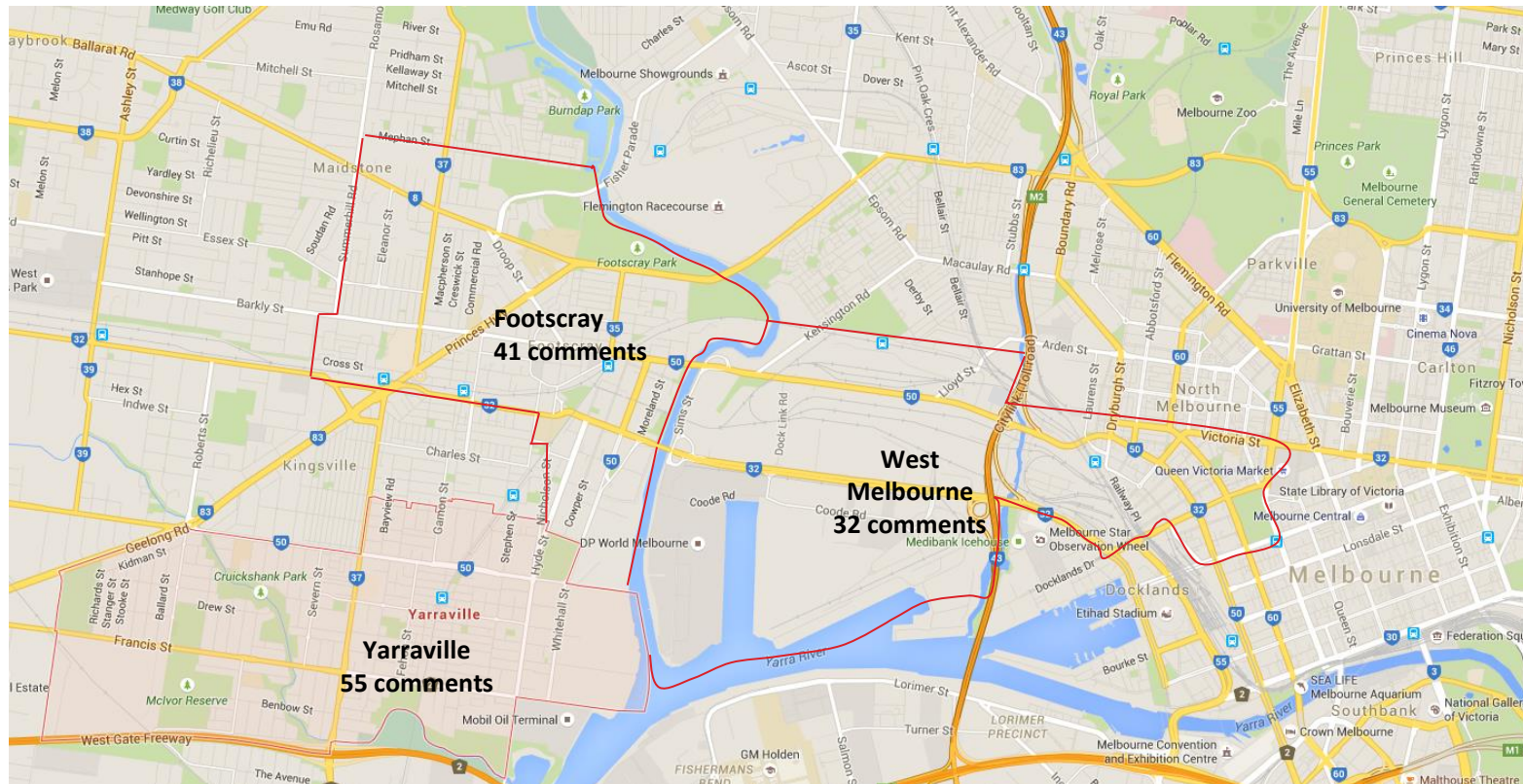


When evaluating by individual comments, the majority of comments were made in Yarraville, Footscray and West Melbourne

INTERACTIVE MAP

Map comments

Open question, response level



Note that response level data does not take into account that the same person can make multiple comments. 48 of the 198 comments were made by one person meaning that response level data should be treated with caution.

Comments made in Yarraville were more strongly related to air quality and trucks whilst comments made in other areas had a greater skew towards alleviating congestion and allowing for public transport

INTERACTIVE MAP

Map comments

Open question, response level

Yarraville (55 comments)		Footscray (41 comments)		West Melbourne (32 comments)		Other (70 comments)	
Concerns about location of ventilation structures / poor air quality	▲ 33%	Alleviate congestion / add new lanes	▲ 41%	Alleviate congestion / add new lanes	▲ 41%	Alleviate congestion / add new lanes	▲ 40%
Extend the truck ban / ensure trucks stay on the freeway	▲ 29%	More train or tram lines / prioritise buses / provide for public transport	▲ 20%	More train or tram lines / prioritise buses / provide for public transport	▲ 28%	Extend the truck ban / ensure trucks stay on the freeway	▲ 20%
Protect existing facilities and infrastructure	▲ 15%	Extend the truck ban / ensure trucks stay on the freeway	17%	Concerns about the elevated road	▲ 22%	More train or tram lines / prioritise buses / provide for public transport	13%
Create a tunnel / lengthen the tunnel / change the tunnel entrance	▲ 15%	Protect existing facilities and infrastructure	▲ 17%	Road layout is currently dangerous	▲ 19%	Can learn from other projects	▲ 11%
Alleviate congestion / add new lanes	13%	Create a bike path / more cycle ways	▲ 15%	Create a bike path / more cycle ways	▲ 16%	Concerns about location of ventilation structures / poor air quality	9%

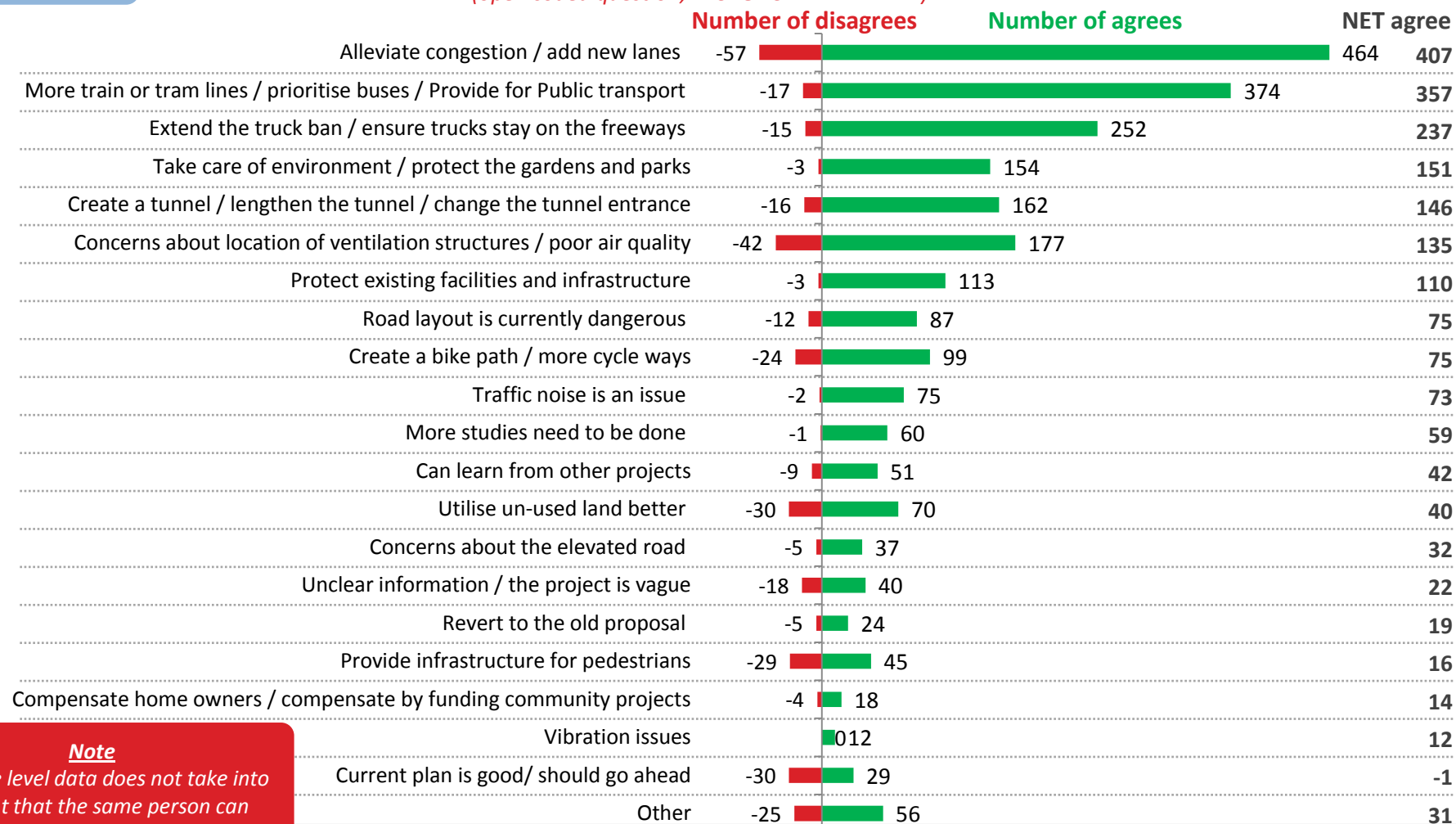
Note that response level data does not take into account that the same person can make multiple comments. 48 of the 198 comments were made by one person meaning that response level data should be treated with caution as this may have the effect of hyper-inflating codes.

Map comments about alleviating congestion, considering public transport and extending the truck ban attracted the highest level of 'up votes' indicating strong support.

INTERACTIVE
MAP

Map Comments – Up / Down Votes

(open coded question; **RESPONSE LEVEL DATA**)



Note

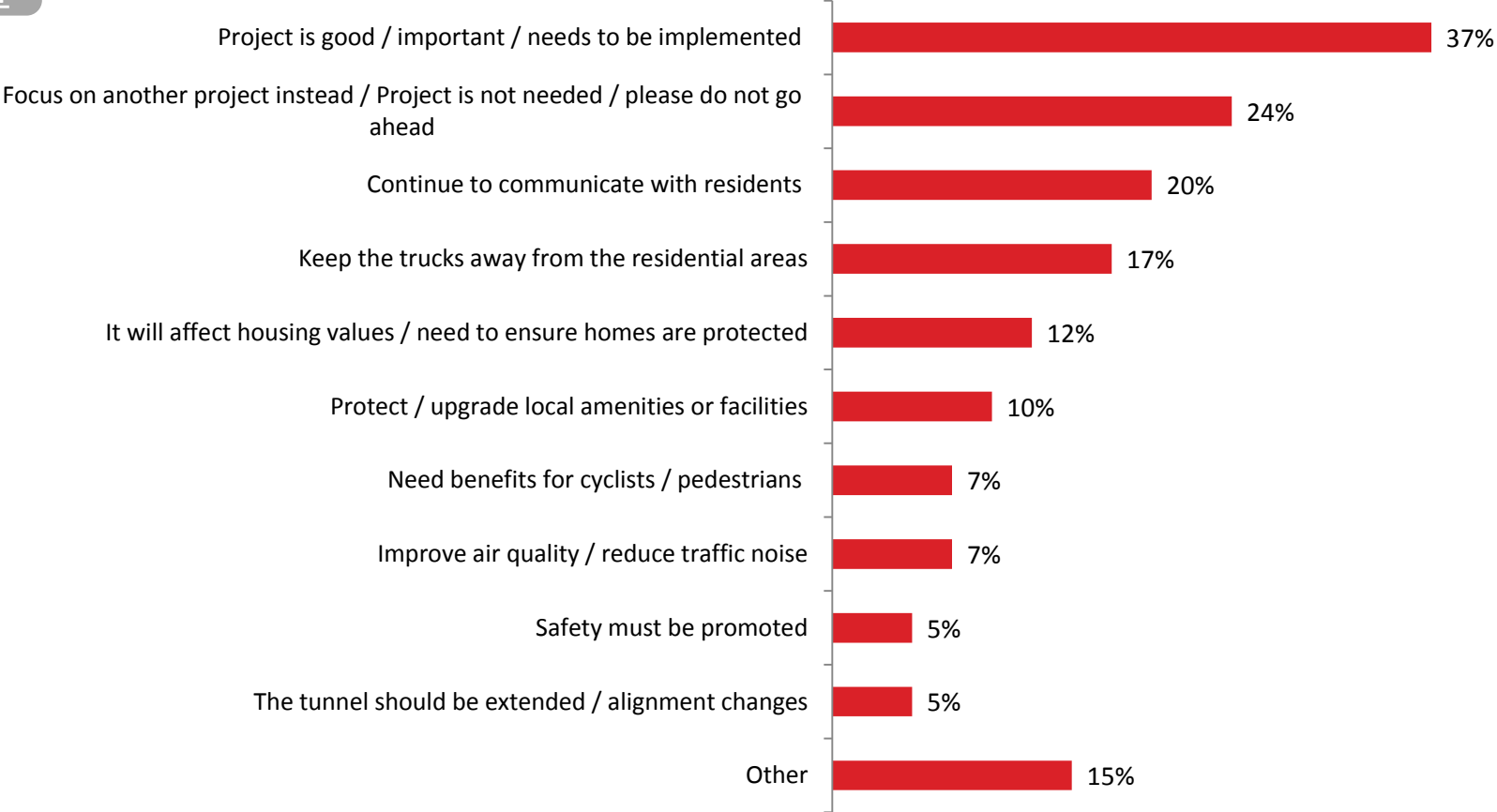
Response level data does not take into account that the same person can provide the same answer many times

Other comments provided about the project tended to be positive.

LOCAL
GENERAL
COMMUNITY

Other comments about the Western Distributor Proposal

Open coded question / Local plus general community combined due to low base for general community in isolation





Online discussion forums

The discussion forums allowed for open conversation on set topics. Transurban posted three questions and participants were able to post their views and respond to or vote for comments made by others.



“What are your first impressions of the Western Distributor proposal?”

Example verbatim comments

(open coded question; those who responded to Forum Topic 1 n=28)

The most common answers to this question were regarding alleviating congestion, managing truck movements and support for the proposal.

“I like that this proposal may assist with getting trucks off residential streets (well 50% is a start anyway). As a Moreland St resident I am concerned about potential noise and the aesthetics of an elevated freeway on Footscray Rd. I would like to see the main approach to Footscray enhanced, not taken a step backwards by adding a freeway to the mix. More detail about this aspect of the proposal would be really helpful in developing an informed view of the project. Thanks in advance”

“Applying the Smartroads approach, could truck and bus priority lanes be activated whenever needed to ensure efficient freight and public transport flows on the upgraded West Gate Freeway and Western Distributor?”

“Just heard on the news a trip will cost \$13 for a truck. With that sort of cost, what is the incentive to a truck operator to use it when they currently (and I imagine will continue to do so) use the residential streets for free?”

“Good Improvement! good project! hopefully construction could be started soon. The traffic in West Gate is so bad now”

“I agree with the comments regarding concerns that a major disadvantage of this plan...is that a breakdown / accident on the West Gate Freeway would still impact the only major route in from the West”

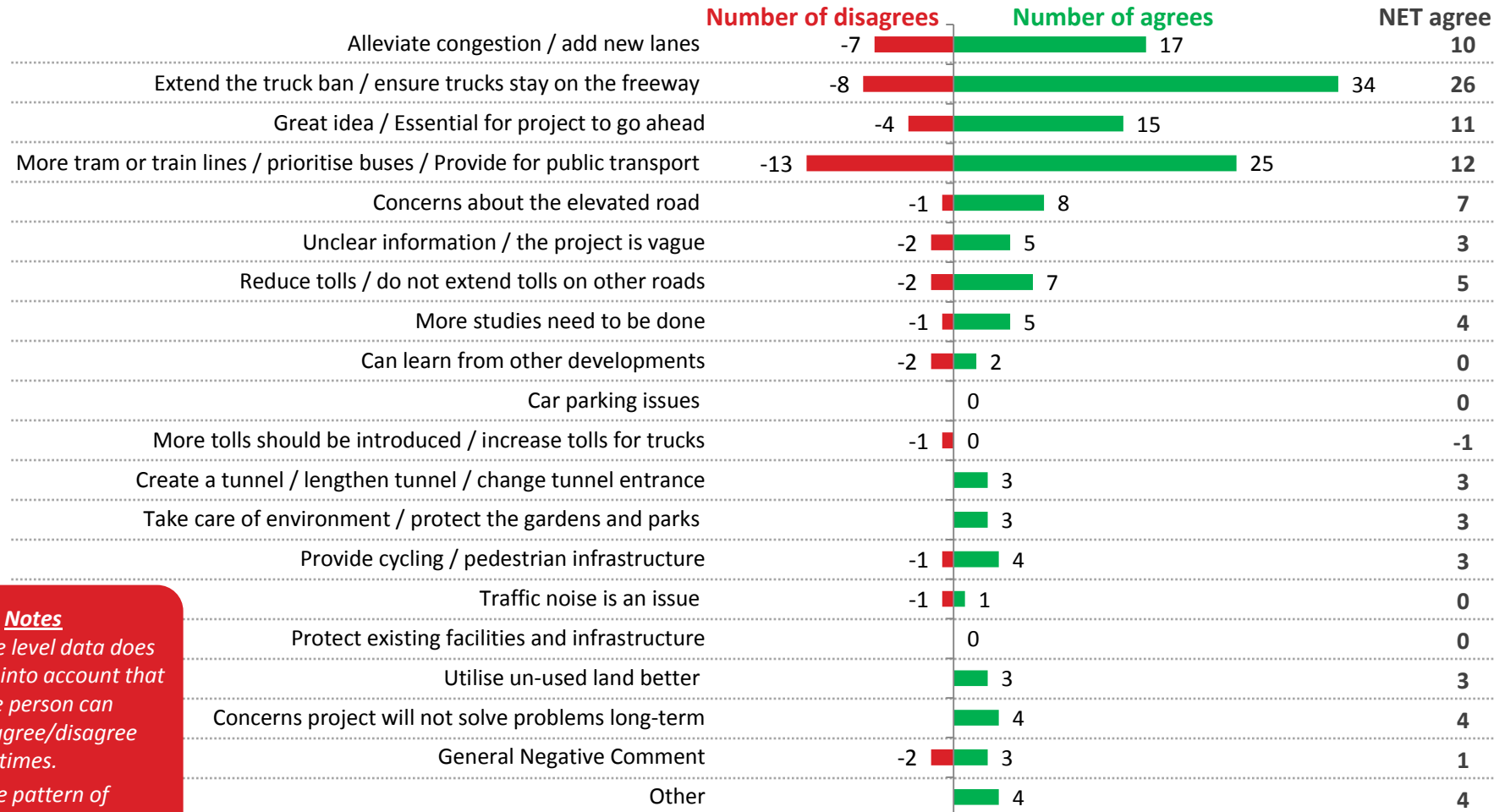
“Can there be a better explanation about what is to happen at the end of the elevated freeway? It seems to me that all this is serving to do is divert traffic off the West Gate freeway and dump it on Footscray Road or Dudley St, which might be fine for people in the outer South west but is going to create more congestion for people in the inner west?”

Comments about trucks, and public transport generated the highest levels of agreement

FORUM 1

First impressions of Western Distributor Project – Agree / Disagrees

(open coded question; RESPONSE LEVEL DATA)



Notes

- Response level data does not take into account that the same person can answer agree/disagree multiple times.
- The same pattern of results is largely seen for 'votes'.

Of the few who responded to forum topic 2, the main challenges faced when travelling in the inner west are congestion / delays, many also mention public transport and cycling issues.

FORUM 2

Main transport challenges faced when travelling in the inner west

*Those who responded to forum topic 2 (n=15)**

“Major congestion getting onto West Gate Fwy city bound from Williamstown Rd southbound during the morning peak”

“What about Rail! It is crazy that the Werribee line has to travel to the city via the northern approach and go through 6 stations before getting to the CBD. How about when you are tunnelling you do a second tunnel under the Yarra near Newport or Spotswood to take a train line into Fisherman's bend and the city....”

“I have been a resident of Yarraville (near the corner of Williamstown Rd. and Francis Street) for ~ 28 years. There must be action taken to better manage the sheer volume and nature of traffic in this area. The associated problems of safety, noise, congestion, pollution and the sheer inefficiency of traffic gridlock require an urgent solution...”

“My greatest challenges are the lack of safety for walkers and cyclists, particularly children in the Footscray area. In particular, there is the lack of efficient and safe cycle paths/lanes in Footscray...”