Newcastle voice

The City of Newcastle

Newcastle Voice

Community Survey

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The City of Newcastle

Executive summary

In May 2015 Newcastle City Council (Council) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UrbanGrowth NSW that acknowledged Council's role in the urban renewal process and defined how the two parties would work together to implement and deliver the NSW Government's Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program. In the spirit of the MOU, Council worked with UrbanGrowth NSW to ensure that as many people as possible were able to have a say in revitalisation of Newcastle's city centre during the six-week Revitalising Newcastle community engagement program. To extend the reach of the Revitalising Newcastle engagement program, a survey was conducted of Newcastle Voice members in September 2015. The survey broadly sought to understand community sentiment towards urban transformation of Newcastle's city centre. In total, 710 Newcastle Voice members completed the survey. Data was weighted post-collection to be representative of the LGA in terms of location (ward), age and gender.

City visitation, aspirations and values

- 51% of respondents reported visiting the city centre at least weekly in the past six months, with a further 34% having visited at least four times. **Frequency of visitation declines with age**.
- The main activities undertaken in the city centre are **retail** such as shopping and dining (accounts for 38% of visits), followed by **recreational** activities like going to the beach or a park (accounts for 33% of visits).
- **Improved public transport** (75%) and **better walking and cycling connections** (67%) are the city centre enhancements respondents would most like to see occur in the future.
- Newcastle's **beaches** and **surrounding natural assets** are the elements respondents most strongly value about the city centre, endorsed by 88% and 70% of respondents respectively.

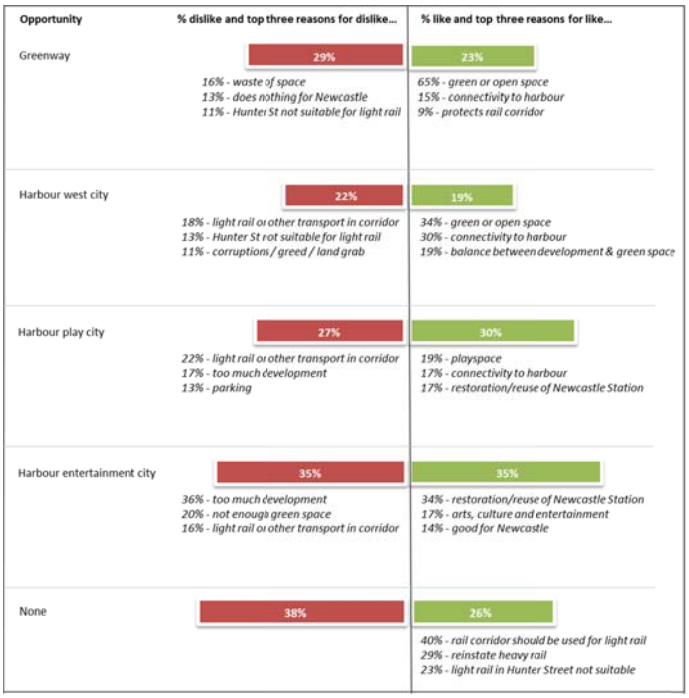
Urban transformation program objectives

The top three issues survey respondents suggested for inclusion in the urban transformation program objectives included:

1. **Transport**: extension of the proposed light rail, parking, connectivity and cycling.
2. **Urban design**: protecting Newcastle's unique heritage and character.
3. **Community benefits**: integrating and promoting arts, culture and entertainment.

Urban transformation opportunities

The **Harbour Entertainment City opportunity received the greatest support** (35% endorsement). Respondents liked this opportunity for its proposed re-use of Newcastle station, its potential to leverage and strengthen Newcastle's art, culture and entertainment, and because it was generally seen as being beneficial for Newcastle as a whole.



The **next most liked opportunity was Harbour Play City** with 30% endorsement.

One-in-four respondents (26%) **did not like any of the opportunities**.

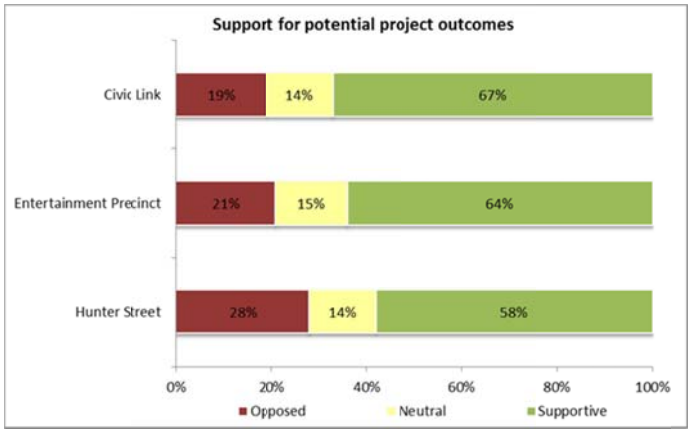
Harbour Entertainment City was polarising, with as many respondents disliking it as liking it. The key reasons given for disliking this opportunity were that there was too much development, not enough green space and that the rail corridor should be preserved for transport purposes.

Appeal of Harbour Play City and Harbour Entertainment City was higher among respondents under 45 years of age and increased the further you move away from the city centre. Respondents aged 45+ years and those living in the city centre disliked these opportunities more so than other groups.

Across all four opportunities, a number of comments were received **opposing the light rail running along Hunter Street** and that all or part of **the existing corridor should be maintained as a transport corridor** (including light rail, cycling and pedestrian access).

Potential program outcomes

The majority of respondents were supportive of the potential program outcomes. Two-thirds of respondents were supportive of the Civic Link and Entertainment Precinct (67% and 64% support respectively), and revitalisation of Hunter Street was supported by 58% of respondents.



Support for potential program outcomes tends to increase the further you move away from the city centre. Similarly, support for the potential program outcomes decreases with age.

The majority of respondents agreed that **urban renewal can have good outcomes** if planned and delivered well (89% agreement) and that **urban renewal can improve the area** by bringing in more jobs, shops public facilities and housing (79% agreement). Agreement with these statements was higher among respondents aged under 45 years.

Preserving heritage was important to 80% of respondents overall. It was more important to respondents aged over 45 years and became less important to respondents living further away from the city centre.

There were **strong levels of disagreement** that any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area and that the city centre is largely fine as it is (79% disagreed with each statement).

Recommendations

On the basis of the survey results, the following recommendations are made:

- UrbanGrowth NSW revise the Newcastle urban transformation program objectives to recognise the importance of maintaining Newcastle's heritage and character.

- UrbanGrowth NSW and Council note that community preference was highest for the transformation opportunities that included progressively higher levels of development on the corridor- Harbour Play City and Harbour Entertainment City. Given opinion on Harbour Entertainment City was mixed, it is suggested that consideration be given to developing a concept that lies in between Harbour Play City and Harbour Entertainment City.

- Council note that the pattern of results obtained in the Newcastle Voice survey are broadly consistent with the findings of other engagement activities conducted by UrbanGrowth NSW.

- Transport for NSW be provided the survey findings in relation to community opinion on light rail.

Newcastle voice

The City of Newcastle

Table of Contents

Executive summary 2

1. Background 9

1.1 Objectives 9

1.2 Survey context 9

1.3 Report distribution 10

2. Methodology 11

2.1 Survey tool 11

2.2 Survey timings 11

2.3 Sampling 11

2.4 Response rate 11

2.5 Data handling and analysis 12

3. Survey findings 13

3.1 City visitation, aspirations and values 13

3.1.1 City visitation 14

3.1.2 Activities undertaken in the city 15

3.1.3 Future aspirations for the city centre 17

3.1.4 Best things about the city centre 18

3.1.5 Awareness of urban renewal plans for the city centre 19

3.2 Urban transformation program objectives 20

3.2.1 Transport 22

3.2.2 Urban design 23

3.2.3 Community benefits 24

3.2.4 General 24

3.2.5 Rail truncation 25

3.3 Urban transformation opportunities 26

3.3.1 Overview 27

3.3.2 Greenway 29

3.3.3 Harbour West City 31

3.3.4 Harbour Play City 33

3.3.5 Harbour Entertainment City 35
3.3.6 Do not like any of the urban transformation opportunities 37
3.4 Potential program outcomes 38
3.4.1 Civic Link 40
3.4.2 Entertainment Precinct 42
3.4.3 Hunter Street 44
3.5 Attitudes towards transformation of Newcastle city centre 46

List of figures

Figure 1: Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program study area 9
Figure 2: Number of visits to city centre in past six months (Base, all answering, n= 709) 14
Figure 3: Share of total visits to city centre by activity type (Base- visited city centre in past six months, all answering, n= 693) 15
Figure 4: Activities undertaken in city centre in past six months (Base- visited city centre in past six months, all answering, n= 693) 15
Figure 5: Future aspirations for city centre (Base, all answering n= 709) 17
Figure 6: Best things about the city centre (Base, all answering, n= 708) 18
Figure 7: Awareness of urban renewal plans (Base, all answering, n =707) 19
Figure 8: Urban transformation objectives 21
Figure 9: Program objectives - categorisation of responses (Base, all respondents, n= 710). 21
Figure 10: Overview- Transformation opportunities 26
Figure 11: Urban transformation opportunities - likes (Base, all answering, n= 699) 27
Figure 12: Urban transformation opportunities - dislikes (Base, all answering, n= 693) 28
Figure 13: Greenway - top five likes and example verbatim comments 29
Figure 14: Greenway - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments 30
Figure 15: Harbour West City - top five likes and example verbatim comments 31
Figure 16: Harbour West City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments 32
Figure 17: Harbour Play City - top five likes and example verbatim comments 33
Figure 18: Harbour Play City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments 34
Figure 19: Harbour Entertainment City - top five likes and example verbatim comments 35
Figure 20: Harbour Entertainment City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments 36
Figure 21: Support for potential project outcomes 39
Figure 22: Support for Civic Link project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 701) 40
Figure 23: Reasons for supporting Civic Link project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Civic Link - those answering, n= 475). 41
Figure 24: Reasons for opposing Civic Link project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Civic Link - those answering, n= 148). 41
Figure 25: Support for Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 696) 42
Figure 26: Reasons for supporting Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Entertainment Precinct - those answering, n= 304). 43
Figure 27: Reasons for opposing Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Entertainment Precinct - those answering, n= 156). 43
Figure 28: Support for Hunter Street project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 698) 44
Figure 29: Reasons for supporting Hunter Street project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Hunter Street concept - those answering, n= 287). 45
Figure 30: Reasons for opposing Hunter Street project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly oppose Hunter Street concept - those answering, n= 211). 45
Figure 31: Attitudes towards transformation of Newcastle City Centre (Base, all respondents) 47

List of tables

Table 1: Visits to city centre by demographic group 14
Table 2: Activities undertaken in city centre by demographic group 16
Table 3: Future aspirations for city centre by demographic group 17
Table 4: Best things about the city centre by age group 18
Table 5: Awareness of urban renewal plans by demographic group 19
Table 6: Urban transformation opportunities liked by demographic group 27
Table 7: Urban transformation opportunities disliked by demographic group 28
Table 8: Greenway - likes and dislikes by demographic group 29
Table 9: Harbour West City - likes and dislikes by demographic group 31
Table 10: Harbour Play City - likes and dislikes by demographic group 33
Table 11: Harbour Entertainment City - likes and dislikes by demographic group 35
Table 12: Do not like any opportunity by demographic group 37
Table 13: Support for Civic Link project outcome by demographic group 40
Table 14: Support for Entertainment Precinct project outcome by demographic group 42
Table 15: Support for Hunter Street project outcome by demographic group 44
Table 16: Attitudes toward transformation of Newcastle city centre by demographic group (mean score out of five) 48

1. Background

In May 2015 Newcastle City Council (Council) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UrbanGrowth NSW that acknowledges Council's role in the urban renewal process and defines how the two parties will work together to implement and deliver the NSW Government's Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program.

The MOU acknowledges that whilst they have differing views, **Council and UrbanGrowth NSW will work together to deliver high quality urban transformation projects for Newcastle**. This will include various projects and infrastructure initiatives designed to stimulate activity, jobs, development and investment in the city centre.

In the spirit of the MOU, Council worked with UrbanGrowth NSW to ensure that **as many people as possible were able to have a say in revitalisation of Newcastle's city centre** during the six-week Revitalising Newcastle engagement program. To achieve this, Council conducted the Revitalising Newcastle survey (designed by UrbanGrowth NSW) with its community reference panel, Newcastle Voice.

1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the survey were to:

- understand city visitation and community aspirations for the city centre,
- investigate whether the program objectives developed by UrbanGrowth NSW for transformation of the Newcastle city centre resonate with the broad community,
- test the community's appetite for urban transformation of the city centre by exploring four urban transformation opportunities for surplus government lands,
- gauge the level of support for three specific potential projects outcomes, and
- broadly understand community attitudes towards urban transformation of Newcastle's city centre.

1.2 Survey context

The survey was conducted in September 2015. At this time, the decision to truncate heavy rail and the light rail route had been made by the NSW Government. At the time of the survey, rail truncation was subject to ongoing legal action.

The focus of the survey was on urban renewal of surplus government lands indicated in yellow in figure 1.

Figure 1: Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program study area

1.3 Report distribution

The report will be distributed to Newcastle City Councillors to inform future decision-making about planning for the city centre. The report will also be provided to UrbanGrowth NSW to complement other information obtained during the six-week Revitalising Newcastle community engagement program. It is envisaged the findings of this report will be used by UrbanGrowth NSW to develop a suitable proposal for use of the surplus government lands. The report will also be provided to Transport for NSW for noting. A copy of the report will also be publically available on Council's website.

2. Methodology

2.1 Survey tool

The Revitalising Newcastle survey was developed by an independent market research agency, Jetty Research, for UrbanGrowth NSW. Feedback on the survey was obtained by workshopping the survey with relevant stakeholders including the Project Steering Group, which included members from Council, UrbanGrowth NSW and the Hunter Development Corporation. The survey contained a mix of 25 closed and open questions broadly relating to the following areas:

- City visitation and aspirations
- Urban transformation program objectives
- Urban transformation opportunities
- Potential outcomes
- Demographics

A copy of the survey and accompanying information booklet are included in Appendix A and B respectively.

2.2 Survey timings

The Newcastle Voice Revitalising Newcastle survey was open from 3 - 18 September 2015.

2.3 Sampling

Newcastle Voice is Council's community reference panel. Individuals join Newcastle Voice to have a say on a variety of Council projects and activities via surveys, workshops and information sessions. Individuals are recruited to Newcastle Voice through different methods including but not limited to, face-to-face recruitment at community fairs and festivals, social media, paid advertising and via Council's website.

All active online Newcastle Voice members (n= 2224) were emailed an invitation to the Revitalising Newcastle survey on 3 September 2015. Reminder emails were sent to members who had not yet completed the survey on 8 September and 16 September 2015.

The survey was also printed and distributed in hard copy to those Newcastle Voice members who requested not to receive surveys via email (n= 251). The survey was mailed on 8 September 2015. A pre-paid envelope was included to encourage survey return by 18 September 2015.

2.4 Response rate

In total, 714 Newcastle Voice members completed the survey representing a response rate of 28.8%. Throughout the survey period, a number of Newcastle Voice members contacted Council's Engagement team advising that they had already completed the Revitalising Newcastle survey elsewhere. These members were thanked for their participation in the Revitalising Newcastle engagement activities to date and were advised that completion of the Revitalising Newcastle survey sent out by Newcastle Voice was at their own discretion. While prior completion of the Revitalising Newcastle survey is testament to the broad reach of the Revitalising Newcastle engagement program, this impacted the response rate to the Newcastle Voice survey.

2.5 Data handling and analysis

Weighting has been applied to the data post collection by location, gender and age distribution of the population. The weights include location (i.e. where respondents live or own property in terms of Council Ward), and gender and age based on 2011 Newcastle LGA ABS census data. Respondents with missing data in any of these variables were excluded from the weighted data set, resulting in an effective sample size of n= 710. Further information on the weighting applied can be found in Appendix C.

Data handling and analysis was also carried out using Sparq software. Trend analysis was conducted from the open-ended question responses. All responses are treated in confidence to ensure the anonymity of respondents, and edited only for grammar and spelling if inserted as verbatim comments into the body of the report. Data presented in this report for open-ended questions are unweighted, and are therefore not representative of the LGA but rather indicative of important issues.

3. Survey findings

3.1 City visitation, aspirations and values

Snapshot

Overall, 51% of respondents reported visiting the city centre at least weekly in the past six months, with a further 34% having visited at least four times during this period. **Frequency of visitation declines with age**.

The main activities undertaken in the city centre are for **retail** purposes such as shopping and dining (accounts for 38% of visits), followed by **recreational** activities like going to the beach or a park (accounts for 33% of visits).

Improved public transport and **better walking and cycling connections** are the city centre enhancements respondents would most like to see occur in the future (endorsed by 75% and 67% of respondents respectively).

Newcastle's **beaches** and **surrounding natural assets** are the elements respondents most strongly value about the city centre, endorsed by 88% and 70% of respondents respectively.

A high proportion of respondents (88%) were aware of the NSW Government's plans for city renewal prior to the survey.

3.1.1 City visitation

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they have come into the Newcastle city centre in the past six months. The majority (51%) of respondents have visited the city centre at least once a week in the past six months, with a further 34% of respondents visiting at least four times during this period.

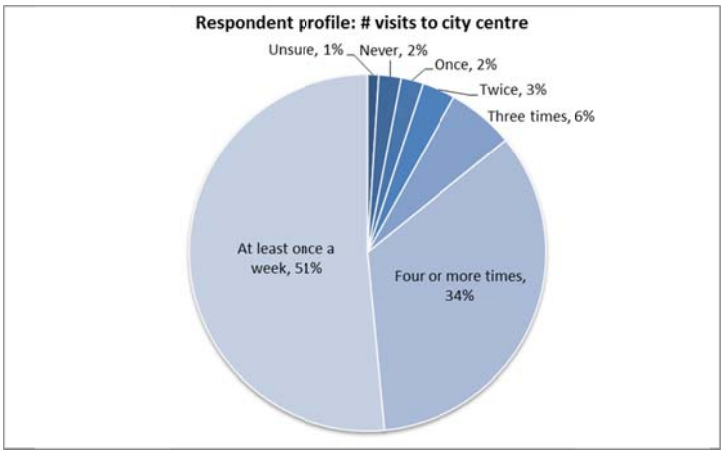


Figure 2: Number of visits to city centre in past six months (Base, all answering, n= 709)

Analysis by key demographic groups reveals that frequency of city visitation is higher amongst those in Ward 1 than in other parts of the LGA. Respondents aged 18-44 years reported visiting more frequently than respondents in other age groups.

Table 1: Visits to city centre by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base(those answering)	*709*	*168*	*169*	*169*	*169*	*35*	*347*	*362*	*355*	*220*	*134*
Unsure	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0	1%	1%	0	0%	5%
Never	2%	1%	3%	3%	1%	0	3%	1%	1%	1%	7%
Once	2%	0%	4%	1%	4%	3%	1%	4%	2%	2%	3%
Twice	3%	1%	1%	5%	5%	7%	3%	3%	2%	5%	4%
Three times	6%	2%	2%	7%	**13%**[B]	7%	5%	8%	4%	6%	**14%**[D]
Four or more times	34%	32%	36%	33%	36%	24%	32%	35%	33%	37%	29%
At least once a week	51%	**63%**[A]	53%	50%	38%	58%	55%	48%	**58%**[C]	48%	38%

Source- Q5: To start things off, how often have you come into Newcastle city centre during the past 6 months?

A= significant difference to Ward 4

B= significant difference to Wards 1 and 2

C= significant difference to 65+ years

D= significant difference to all other age groups

3.1.2 Activities undertaken in the city

Of those who had visited the city centre in the past six months, most were visiting for retail pursuits (accounts for 38% of city visits), followed by recreational activities (33%), followed by work related purposes (15%).

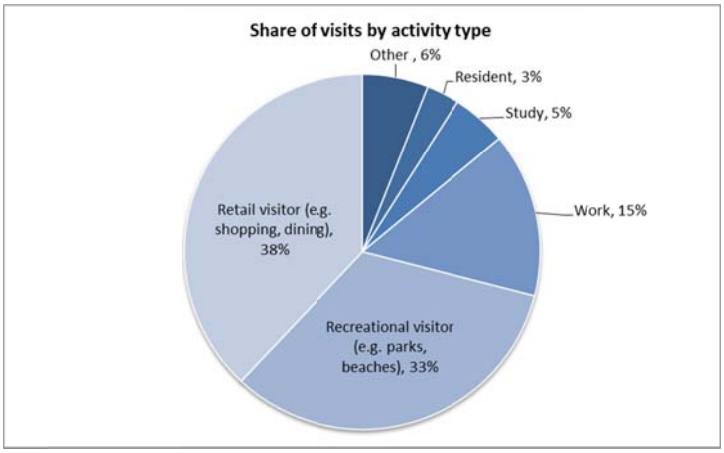


Figure 3: Share of total visits to city centre by activity type (Base- visited city centre in past six months, all answering, n= 693)

Retail visitors include those who visited the city centre for activities such as dining and shopping. In total, 79% and 62% of respondents reported undertaking these activities in the past six months.

Recreation visitors included those who have visited city centre beaches (65%) and parks (59%).

Figure 3 outlines further detail on activities undertaken in the city centre. Of the 22% of respondents who reported undertaking 'other' activities in the city centre, most were attending medical appointments, visiting cultural facilities such as the Art Gallery or Museum, or for exercise such as walking, cycling or going to the gym.

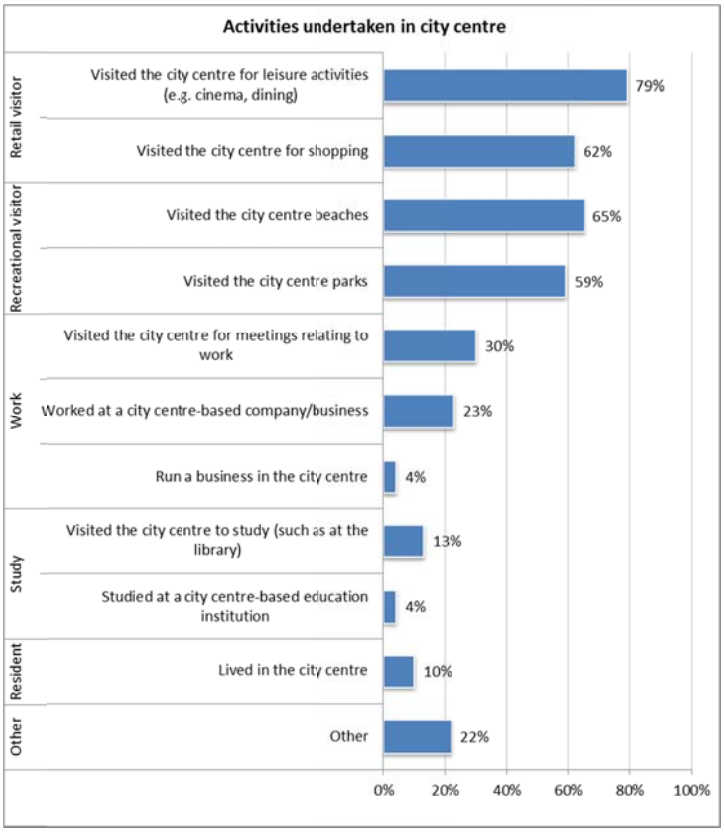


Figure 4: Activities undertaken in city centre in past six months (Base- visited city centre in past six months, all answering, n= 693)

There were few differences in activities undertaken in the city centre by key demographic groups. All groups reported visiting the city centre for leisure activities as their top activity, followed shopping or visiting beaches or parks. In general, respondents aged 18-44 years undertook more activities in the city centre than respondents in other age groups.

Table 2: Activities undertaken in city centre by demographic group

			Location:					Gender:		Age:		
		Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
	Base (those answering)	*693*	*166*	*163*	*163*	*165*	*35*	*338*	*355*	*353*	*217*	*124*
Retail visitor	Visited the city centre for leisure activities (eg cinema, dining)	79%	85%	85%	73%	74%	81%	78%	81%	**86%[E]**	77%	66%
	Visited the city centre for shopping	62%	**77%[A]**	**71%[B]**	43%	56%	61%	61%	62%	65%	58%	59%
Recreational visitor	Visited the city centre beaches	65%	**77%[C]**	62%	61%	64%	52%	63%	67%	**73%[E]**	60%	54%
	Visited the city centre parks	59%	74%	59%	61%	**39%[D]**	71%	58%	59%	**69%[E]**	48%	50%
Work	Visited the city centre for meetings relating to my work	30%	31%	27%	30%	30%	31%	33%	26%	**41%[E]**	**24%[F]**	8%
	Worked at a city centre-based company/business	23%	26%	21%	22%	21%	32%	24%	22%	**33%[E]**	**17%[F]**	5%
	Run a business in the city centre	4%	7%	2%	4%	1%	2%	4%	3%	5%	2%	3%
Study	Visited the city centre to study (such as at the library)	13%	**20%[E]**	13%	9%	8%	17%	12%	13%	12%	13%	14%
	Studied at a city centre-based education institution	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	0	4%	4%	6%	2%	3%
Resident	Lived in the city centre	10%	**33%[A]**	4%	2%	0	4%	10%	9%	10%	9%	12%
Other	Other	22%	20%	20%	22%	20%	38%	20%	24%	17%	**26%[G]**	27%

Source- Q6: And which of the following activities have you undertaken in the city centre in the past six months?

A= significant difference to Wards 3 and 4

B= significant difference to Ward 3

C= significant difference to Wards 2 and 3

D= significant difference to all other Wards

E= significant difference to all other age groups

F= significant difference to 65+ years

G= significant difference to 18-44 years

3.1.3 Future aspirations for the city centre

Respondents were asked what they would like to see change to make Newcastle city centre a better place to work, live or visit. Results are summarised in Figure 4.

Transport and getting around the city centre were of clear importance with 75% of respondents wanting to see improved public transport and 67% wanting to see improved walking and cycling connections.

Approximately one-in-two respondents would like to see more open or green space (53%), more local events (51%) and improved traffic flow (50%).

Of the 24% of respondents who left an 'other' comment, most were about improved parking, followed by heavy rail truncation and light rail.

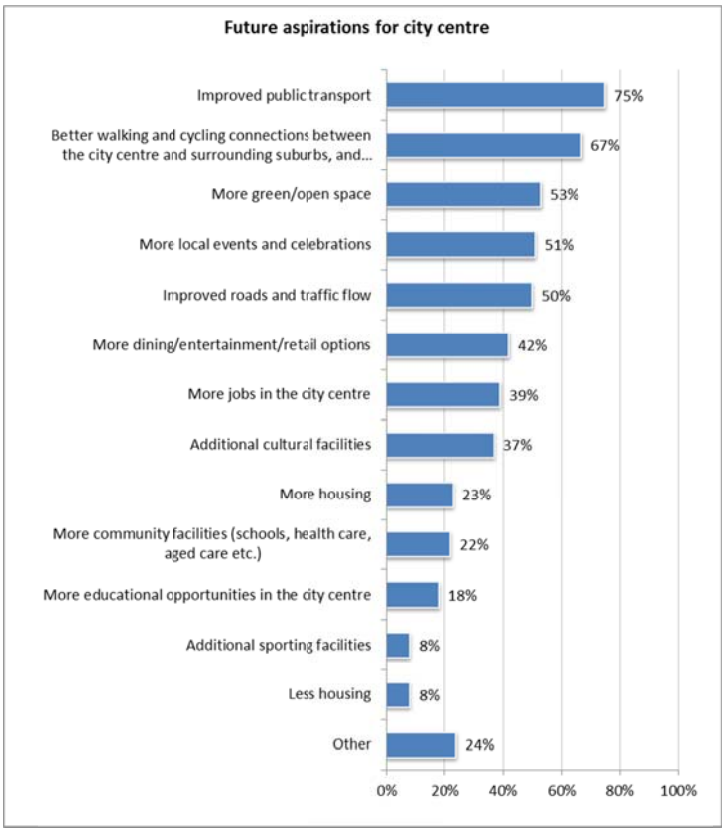


Figure 5: Future aspirations for city centre (Base, all answering n= 709)

Improved public transport was the most endorsed option amongst all demographic groups. Better walking and cycling connections and more open/green space also received consistent support across all groups. For respondents who live in Ward 4 (western part of the LGA) or outside of the LGA, improved roads and traffic flow also received high endorsement.

Table 3: Future aspirations for city centre by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base (those answering)	*707*	*168*	*169*	*166*	*169*	*35*	*346*	*361*	*355*	*220*	*132*
Improved public transport	75%	78%	69%	78%	74%	80%	76%	74%	76%	73%	74%
Better walking and cycling connections	67%	68%	75%	67%	57%	64%	67%	67%	75%	66%	**45%**[D]
More green/open space	53%	**60%**[B]	53%	55%	42%	64%	50%	56%	54%	56%	46%
More local events and celebrations	51%	51%	48%	51%	49%	77%	49%	53%	**63%**[D]	42%	35%
Improved roads and traffic flow	50%	41%	43%	46%	**63%**[A]	70%	52%	47%	47%	47%	59%
More dining/entertainment/retail options	42%	41%	44%	44%	37%	55%	43%	41%	**49%**[D]	38%	31%
More jobs in the city centre	39%	44%	47%	**28%**[A]	36%	41%	41%	37%	41%	36%	36%
Additional cultural facilities	37%	**44%**[B]	33%	41%	27%	53%	34%	40%	38%	36%	36%
More housing	23%	27%	27%	18%	19%	23%	**29%**[C]	17%	21%	24%	25%
More community facilities	22%	28%	25%	20%	16%	21%	19%	26%	23%	22%	21%
More educational opportunities in the city	18%	21%	15%	16%	17%	23%	16%	19%	20%	15%	15%
Less housing	8%	11%	6%	8%	7%	9%	7%	9%	7%	10%	8%
Additional sporting facilities	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	9%	8%	9%	11%	7%	4%
Other	24%	25%	21%	24%	24%	39%	25%	23%	21%	27%	28%

Source- Q7: Thinking about the future of Newcastle, is there anything you would personally like to see change in the future to make the Newcastle city centre a better place to live, work or visit?

A= significant difference to Wards 1 and 2

B= significant difference to Ward 4

C= significant difference between genders

D= significant difference to all other age groups

3.1.4 Best things about the city centre

Newcastle's local beaches and beach culture were most strongly valued as the city centre's best aspects (88%). The city's surrounding natural assets and beauty were valued by 70% of respondents, with 48% of respondent's indicating that the city's closeness to everything was the best element of the city centre.

Of the 19% of respondents who indicated an 'other' response, the city's dining and venue options and it's heritage received a high number of mentions.

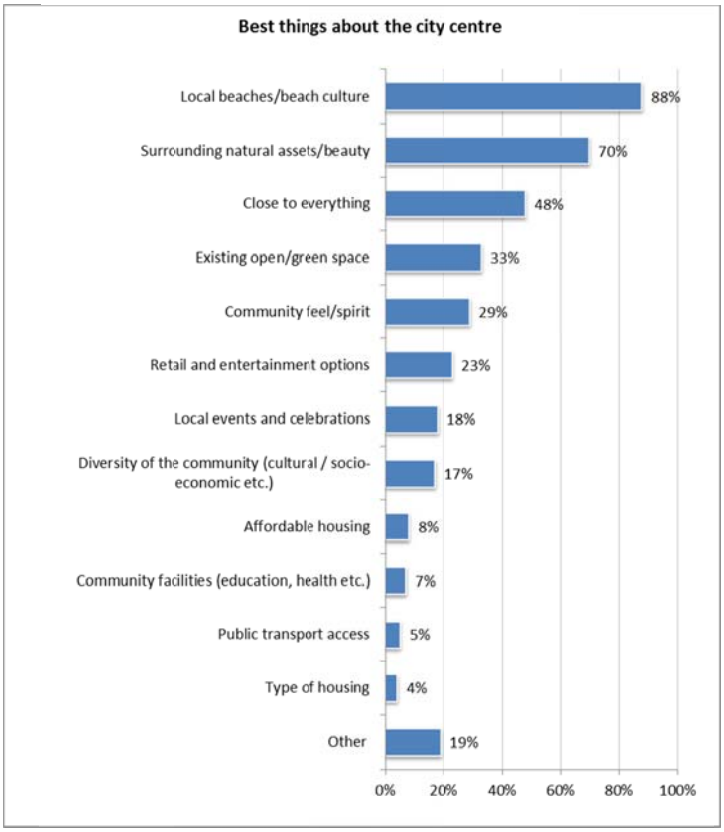


Figure 6: Best things about the city centre (Base, all answering, n= 708)

All demographic groups endorsed Newcastle's beaches, surrounding natural assets and proximity to everything as the best things about the city centre. Respondents aged 18-24 years were less likely than other age groups to endorse existing open/green space, and those aged 70+ years were more likely than other age groups to endorse close to everything and community diversity than other age groups.

Table 4: Best things about the city centre by age group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base (those answering)	*708*	*167*	*169*	*169*	*169*	*35*	*347*	*361*	*355*	*219*	*134*
Local beaches/beach culture	88%	90%	89%	90%	84%	86%	88%	89%	89%	88%	87%
Surrounding natural assets/beauty	70%	75%	73%	68%	64%	73%	72%	68%	67%	71%	77%
Close to everything	48%	**61%[A]**	**57%[A]**	47%	29%	39%	47%	48%	43%	47%	**61%[C]**
Existing open/green space	33%	37%	29%	39%	29%	28%	33%	33%	**26%[C]**	41%	40%
Community feel/spirit	29%	**40%[B]**	28%	21%	27%	28%	26%	32%	27%	32%	32%
Retail and entertainment options	23%	31%	22%	20%	18%	28%	21%	25%	26%	21%	18%
Local events and celebrations	18%	22%	13%	16%	19%	31%	18%	19%	16%	22%	19%
Diversity of the community	17%	22%	14%	13%	20%	16%	17%	18%	13%	19%	**27%[D]**
Affordable housing	8%	9%	6%	10%	7%	12%	7%	9%	6%	7%	14%
Community facilities	7%	8%	9%	8%	5%	3%	9%	5%	**3%[C]**	12%	12%
Public transport access	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%	8%
Type of housing	4%	8%	2%	4%	3%	0	4%	4%	2%	6%	5%
Other (please say what)	19%	20%	20%	12%	19%	34%	15%	22%	18%	21%	17%

Source - Q8: And if you were talking to someone new to Newcastle, what would you tell them are the best things about the city centre as it is now?

A= significant difference to Ward 4

B= significant difference to Ward 3

C= significant difference to all other age groups

D= significant difference to 18-44 years

3.1.5 Awareness of urban renewal plans for the city centre

Respondents were asked whether, prior to the survey, they had heard about the NSW government's plans for urban renewal of the city centre including the areas around Wickham, Civic and Newcastle stations. Results are depicted in figure 6.

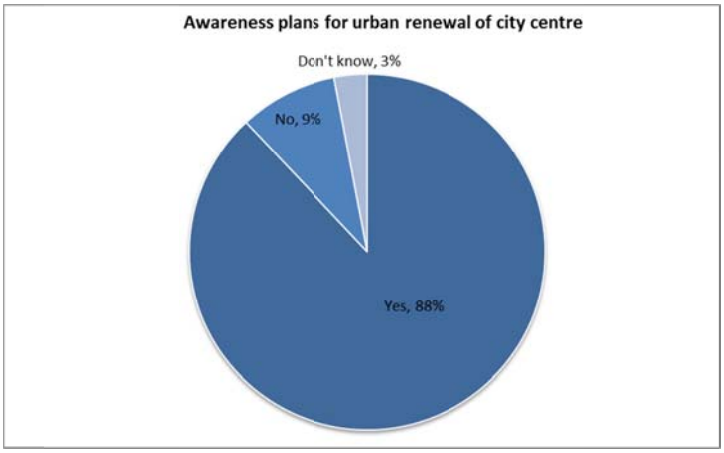


Figure 7: Awareness of urban renewal plans (Base, all answering, n =707)

Overall there was a high level of awareness of urban renewal plans (88%). This result is not unexpected given Newcastle Voice members have been kept up to date on the NSW Government's activities via the monthly MyVoice newsletter and the extensive media coverage on the issue.

There were some differences in awareness of urban renewal plans by demographic group. Males were more aware than female respondents, and younger respondents were slightly generally aware than other age groups. Awareness of the urban renewal plans tended to be higher amongst respondents living closer to the city centre (i.e. Wards 1 and 2) than in other areas.

Table 5: Awareness of urban renewal plans by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base (those answering)	*707*	*168*	*169*	*169*	*166*	*35*	*347*	*360*	*353*	*220*	*134*
Yes	88%	91%	**94%[A]**	85%	81%	88%	**92%[B]**	84%	84%	**92%[C]**	93%
No	9%	6%	6%	8%	14%	12%	5%	12%	11%	6%	6%
Don't know	3%	3%	0	6%	4%	0	3%	4%	4%	3%	1%

Source - Q9: Prior to this survey, had you heard about the State Government's plans for urban renewal of the city centre, including the areas around Wickham, Civic and Newcastle Stations?

A= significant difference to Ward 4

B= significant difference between genders

C= significant difference to 18-44 years

3.2 Urban transformation program objectives

Snapshot

The top three issues respondents suggested for consideration in the urban transformation program objectives included:

1. **Transport**: extension of the proposed light rail, parking, connectivity and cycling.

2. **Urban design**: protecting Newcastle's unique heritage and character.

3. **Community benefits**: integrating and promoting arts, culture and entertainment.

Respondents were presented with Newcastle urban transformation program objectives (figure 8) and asked, in an open ended question, whether there are any other objectives you think are important for the future of Newcastle.

Figure 8: Urban transformation objectives

In total, 459 respondents (65%) left a response. This suggests that for 35%, there was nothing further to add to the stated objectives. Please note, the following results are based on raw, unweighted data. As such, these results cannot be considered representative of the LGA but they are indicative of the issues that are top of mind for Novocastrians.

Responses were categorised according to eleven broad themes. Transport related comments were dominant, mainly in regard to the light rail and parking. Comments related to urban design were focused on maintaining Newcastle's heritage and character, followed by building heights.

The top five themes are discussed in the ensuing sections of the report. All percentages mentioned are based on all survey respondents

(n= 710). Full verbatim responses are included in Appendix D.

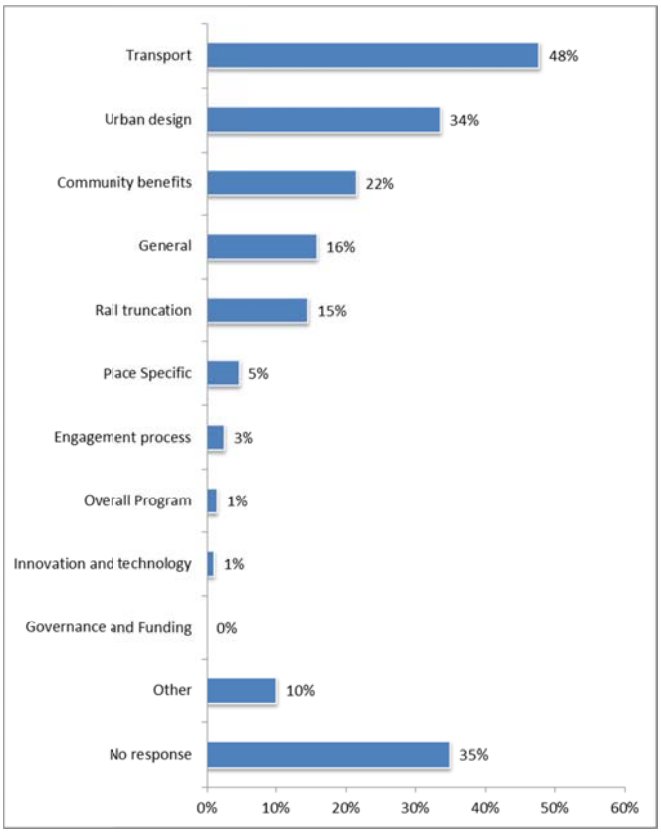


Figure 9: Program objectives - categorisation of responses (Base, all respondents, n= 710).

Note: respondents could mention more than one theme, hence figures will not add to 100%

3.2.1 Transport

Overall, 48% of comments related to transport. Of this, comments about the light rail accounted for 8.5%. For the most part these comments were about extending the proposed light rail to surrounding suburbs and not running the light rail down Hunter Street:

"Extend the light rail from along the current rail line - not Hunter and Scott Streets and extend the light rail further south to beaches and local suburbs e.g: Bar Beach and Cooks Hill"

"Light rail or dedicated electric buses should run on the existing rail corridor. This does not exclude building above and around modern public transport on the existing corridor"

"A light rail down the old rail corridor from Hamilton to Newcastle. Not down the road"

"The transport interchange at Wickham without a park and ride and the light rail in Hunter street will create massive problems."

A further 7.7% falling under the transport theme were about parking. Most of these related to paid parking and lack of available parking, with a few comments specifically noting the need for a park and ride facility:

"Parking availability . People will not come to Newcastle if there are no parking spaces or they will get fined"

"Parking or rather lack of it and affordability"

"Need plenty of good cheap parking close to Wickham interchange; park and ride concept"

"Newcastle still needs a large multistorey car park - not everyone can use public transport"

Transport connectivity was noted in 6.9% of comments, with the focus being on ensuring connectivity between the city centre and surrounding suburbs:

"Connect the City Centre to its surrounding suburbs with better transport. Transform the culture in Newcastle to leave the car at home and use public transport / walkways and cycleways to travel to the city, just like in other major cities in Australia and around the world"

"The most important is transport - easy reliable and complete to take people to all parts of the city and beaches - I know so many people who do not "go to town" anymore because of no real public transport and parking - people will return if access is reasonably easy"

"Make access easier by public transport, to achieve this public transport must be linked, seamless and extend to all areas and in and around the city centre and suburbs"

Cycling related comments were also noted in 5.8% of responses. Most were about improving cycleways to make cycling a more viable mode of transport in Newcastle:

"Dedicated cycleways that make bike use a viable transport alternative"

"Reduce the traffic and develop dedicated cycle lanes completely separated from traffic. Encourage the use of cycling around the Newcastle City and inner suburbs. It would be great to see Light Rail and Cycling as the main mode of transport connecting the inner city suburbs."

A small proportion of comments were also provided relating to buses, cars, walking, ferries and transport accessibility. Please refer to Appendix D to review all verbatim comments.

3.2.2 Urban design

After transport, urban design was the next most commented on theme (34%). Maintaining Newcastle's unique heritage and character were the most prominent elements of urban design noted by 8.8% of respondents:

"Protect and enhance the historic assets of the city of Newcastle (both Aboriginal and European). Ensure existing historic buildings are maintained and any development does not detract from them."

"Retain and promote historical aspects of the "old" city."

"Provide a funky heritage-rich alternative type destination area to balance the high-rise business precinct further west."

"Recognise the unique, heritage vibe of Newcastle East and build on it."

Building heights was the next most common theme categorised under the urban design theme (6.6%):

"Although I support medium level density housing, I do not think the 19 story height limit for apartments is appropriate. The old restriction of around eight stories is plenty."

"Do not spoil the city with high rise buildings. Keep to the existing height limits"

"Please limit high rise in the East End to 8 storeys."

Scepticism regarding development was also evident amongst 5.5% of respondents:

"The current plans are pandering to the developers who wish to use the rail corridor for high rise buildings. The proposed plans are nothing but pandering to vested interests."

"Maintain the public ownership of public land and not sell it off to developers. I'm referring to the selling off of railway land. Once this asset is sold it will never again become public land."

"No Government or City Council should give up a transport corridor to commercial development."

3.2.3 Community benefits

The community benefits theme, mentioned by 22% of respondents overall, encompasses a wide range of topics including arts, culture and entertainment, which was noted by 7.2% of respondents:

"Integrate art in the city- Newcastle has a higher-than-national-average of artists who have made a great contribution to keeping the city alive these last 10 years."

"NCC to campaign for philanthropic / performing arts based opportunities focussing on corporate / industry investment that is nationally and internationally competitive. The performing arts / fine arts domain is the best reflection for the region and it's tourism industry."

"Newcastle needs a contemporary cultural arts space where music, art, performance can thrive. Every other city in Australia seems to have a site like this where festivals are developed and the community and tourists alike can expect to be entertained. The Newcastle train station and part of the corridor is a once in a life time opportunity to create an amazing site that can operate 7 days a week with happenings on all day. The cultural economy is a real one and Newcastle is perfectly primed to take it on. Even NSW trade and investment brought a speaker out from the States to spruik the positives of cultural tourism."

City liveability was noted by 3.7% of respondents as an important element of the program objectives:

"Part of 'bringing people back to the city centre' needs to be primarily shopping, dining, food and beverage premises. These are always the drive of people finding a reason to visit a place"

"Maybe more theatres, small cafes open later say after the theatre has closed. People visiting always ask is there a café area in the main street opened. Open up the old buildings to trade & eating, dining. Bring more shows into town. We have a beautiful city let people use it or it will die a slow death."

Other topics categorised under the community benefits theme related to the natural environment (2.7%), educational facilities (1.8%) and environmental sustainability (1.7%).

3.2.4 General

The 'general' theme covered a broad range of topics, including local business and economy which was mentioned by 5.9% of respondents. Though outside the study area, a number of comments classified under this topic included a call for a major retailer to return to the city centre:

"Definitely need a retail draw-card like a DJ's or Myers."

"Retail centre similar to the old 'David Jones' is needed .We so miss this type of shopping experience in the CBD !!!!"

A greater focus on making Newcastle a tourist destination was suggested by 4.9% of survey respondents:

"Promote the city more for tourism. Cruise ship potential could be greatly enhanced"

"Become a world class tourist destination (for backpackers, cruise ships Australian holiday makers). Expand the night life (meaning late night venues like inner Melbourne and Darling harbour in Sydney) and excitement of inner Newcastle to try and entice University Students to stay when they graduate."

Other comments falling under the general theme included traffic, visual amenity and local infrastructure.

3.2.5 Rail truncation

Although truncation of the heavy rail line was not in scope of the Newcastle urban transformation program, 15% of survey respondents left a comment in this regard. Of this, 8.3% where specifically opposed to rail truncation:

"Bring back the rail system so that you can catch a train to the 7th largest city in Australia. So you can take your kids with prams, carry a surf board and it be convenient."

"Reopen the railway line into the city centre. Its closure was absolutely ridiculous!"

"Reinstate the railway service to Civic and Newcastle"

"Removing the railway was completely ridiculous. A solution where you can get from Sydney into the city centre without changing trains is extremely important."

A further 5.6% commented that the rail corridor should be maintained as a transport corridor or for other non-development purposes:

"Keeping rail, either light or heavy, in the rail corridor."

"The elephant in the room is the rail corridor. It must be retained for rail transport use."

"Increasing the amount of available parking by utilizing the old rail corridor to solve the historical parking shortage"

"Maintain the current transport corridor for transport."

"Leave the rail line open to green space and not tall buildings"

A broad range of comments falling under other themes such as place specific comments and comments about the engagement process were also received. Please refer to Appendix D to review full verbatim responses.

3.3 Urban transformation opportunities

Snapshot

The **Harbour Entertainment City opportunity received the greatest support**, 35% of respondents endorsed this option. Respondents liked this opportunity for its proposed re-use of Newcastle station, its potential to leverage and strengthen Newcastle's art, culture and entertainment offerings, and because it was generally seen as being beneficial for Newcastle.

The **next most liked opportunity was Harbour Play City** with 30% endorsement.

One-in-four respondents **(26%) did not like any of the opportunities**.

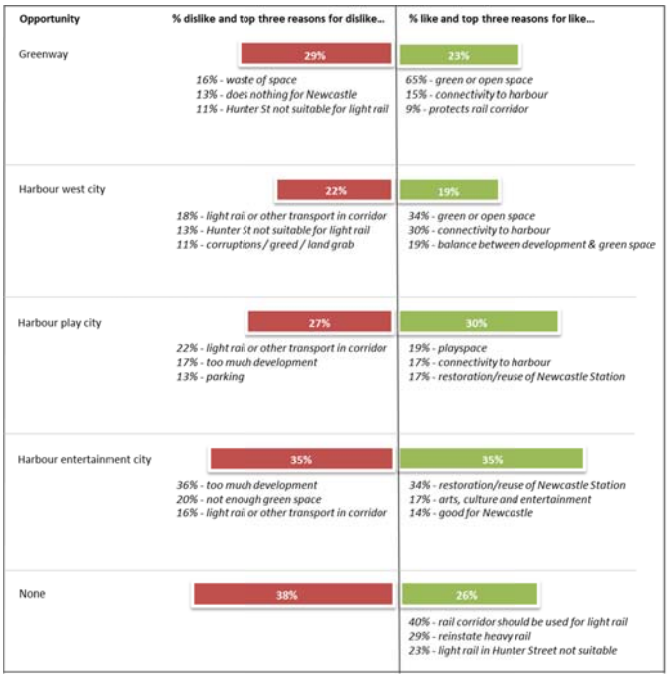


Figure 10: Overview- Transformation opportunities

Harbour Entertainment City was polarising, with as many respondents disliking it as liking it. The key reasons given for disliking this opportunity were that there was too much development, not enough green space and the more general opinion that the rail corridor should be preserved for transport purposes. **Greenway was the next most disliked opportunity.**

Appeal of Harbour Play City and Harbour Entertainment City was higher among respondents under 45 years of age and increased the further you move away from the city centre. Respondents aged 45+ years and those living in the city centre disliked these opportunities more so than other groups.

Across all four opportunities, **a number of comments were received opposing the light rail running along Hunter Street** and that all or part of **the existing corridor should be maintained as a transport corridor** (including light rail, cycling and pedestrian access).

3.3.1 Overview

Respondents were presented with information regarding four transformation opportunities and asked to select which one(s) they liked. Respondents also had the opportunity to say if they did not like any of the opportunities.

The Harbour Entertainment City opportunity received the greatest support, with 35% of respondents endorsing this option. This was closely followed by Harbour Play City with 30% endorsement. Just on one-in-four (26% of respondents) indicated they did not like any of the opportunities.

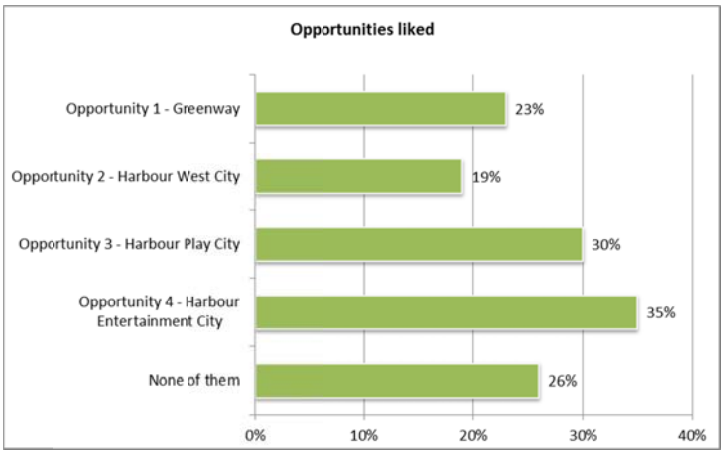


Figure 11: Urban transformation opportunities - likes (Base, all answering, n= 699)

When analysed by demographic group, differences emerge. Significant differences between groups are represented in bold below in table 6. In regard to location, support for Harbour Entertainment City increases as you move further away from the city centre - respondents in Ward 4 (western LGA) were significantly more supportive of this option than respondents Ward 1 (who live in or close to the city centre). One-in-three (33%) of respondents in Ward 1 selected 'none' as their response.

Amongst the 18 - 44 year age group, Harbour Play City and Harbour Entertainment City received the strongest levels of support at 38% and 37% respectively. The proportion of respondents not liking any of the opportunities increased with age, with 39% of respondents aged 65+ years selecting 'none' as their response.

Table 6: Urban transformation opportunities liked by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
Opportunity 1 - Greenway	23%	26%	27%	15%	23%	24%	24%	22%	20%	**30%[B]**	19%
Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City	19%	20%	18%	24%	15%	14%	20%	18%	19%	20%	19%
Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City	30%	24%	31%	31%	35%	29%	30%	31%	38%	**22%[B]**	25%
Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City	35%	23%	35%	35%	**44%[A]**	42%	31%	38%	37%	34%	28%
None of them	26%	33%	20%	25%	27%	24%	30%	23%	18%	**32%[B]**	**39%[B]**

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?

NOTES:

A= significant difference to Ward 1

B= significant difference to 18-44 years

In terms of transformation opportunities disliked, 38% of respondents said that they did not dislike any of the opportunities, suggesting that the majority of respondents (62%) liked at least one of the opportunities. Just over one-third (35%) of respondents indicated they did not like Harbour Entertainment City. Given this opportunity also received the highest level of 'likes', the Harbour Entertainment City concept polarises opinion in the community. Greenway was the next most disliked option.

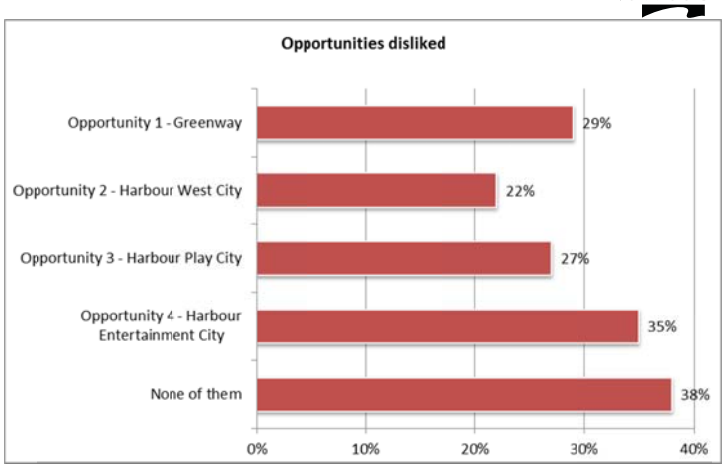


Figure 12: Urban transformation opportunities - dislikes (Base, all answering, n= 693)

A number of differences in the opportunities disliked are evident among different demographic groups. From a location perspective, the proportion of respondents choosing to not dislike any of the opportunities increases the further you move away from the city centre - 48% of respondents in Ward 4 did not to dislike any of the options compared to 29% in Ward 1. Similarly, there was an age related increase in the proportion of respondents disliking opportunities 3 and 4. In terms of gender, males tended to dislike all opportunities more so than females.

Table 7: Urban transformation opportunities disliked by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*693*	*165*	*168*	*165*	*161*	*34*	*339*	*354*	*355*	*216*	*122*
Opportunity 1 - Greenway	29%	32%	28%	24%	31%	33%	**34%**[B]	24%	30%	26%	33%
Opportunity 2 - Harbour West City	22%	26%	20%	20%	22%	24%	**27%**[B]	18%	17%	25%	**34%**[C]
Opportunity 3 - Harbour Play City	27%	38%	25%	27%	20%	17%	29%	25%	21%	**32%**[C]	**36%**[C]
Opportunity 4 - Harbour Entertainment City	35%	50%	31%	38%	26%	11%	**40%**[B]	30%	30%	**40%**[C]	41%
None of them	38%	29%	35%	35%	**48%**[A]	49%	**33%**[B]	42%	37%	36%	40%

Source- Q13: And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?

NOTES:

A= significant difference to Ward 1

B= significant difference between genders

C= significant difference to 18-44years

Each opportunity is presented in further detail in the following sections.

3.3.2 Greenway

More people disliked the Greenway opportunity (29%) than liked it (23%). In terms of likes, Greenway ranked in third place after Harbour Entertainment City and Harbour Play City respectively. There was little differentiation in the demographics characteristics of those who liked this option, however respondents aged 45-64 years did like Greenway more so than those aged 18-44 years and males disliked Greenway more so than female respondents.

Table 8: Greenway - likes and dislikes by demographic group

GREENWAY		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
% Like	**23%**	26%	27%	15%	23%	24%	24%	22%	20%	**30%[A]**	19%
% Dislike	**29%**	32%	28%	24%	31%	33%	**34%[B]**	24%	30%	26%	33%

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?. Source- Q13: And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?
NOTES:
A= significant difference to 18-44 years
B= significant difference between genders

The main reasons liking and disliking Greenway are presented in figures 13 and 14 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix E for full verbatim responses.

Amongst those who liked Greenway, 65% of respondents reported liking this option for the amount of open or green space available. Respondents commented that Greenway fulfilled the objective to improve connectivity to the waterfront (15%) and a small proportion (4%) commented about the potential of Greenway as recreational space.

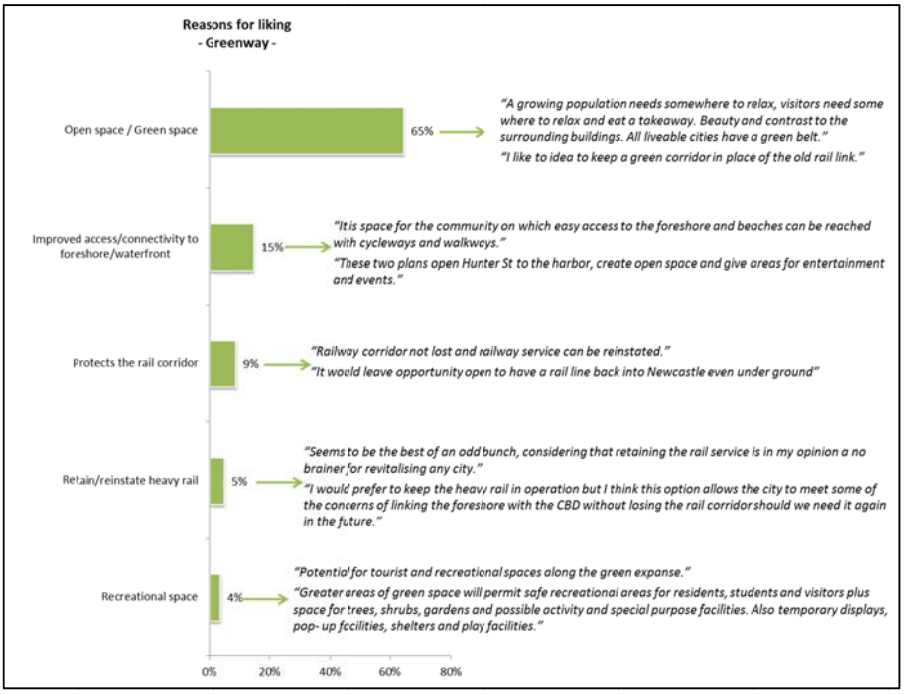


Figure 13: Greenway - top five likes and example verbatim comments

Respondents who disliked Greenway commented that it was a waste of space (16%), a missed opportunity for Newcastle (13%), that Newcastle has enough parks already (8%), and that this opportunity did not feature anything that would entice people into the city (7%). Like all four opportunities, respondents also reported disliking this opportunity because the light rail runs along Hunter Street.

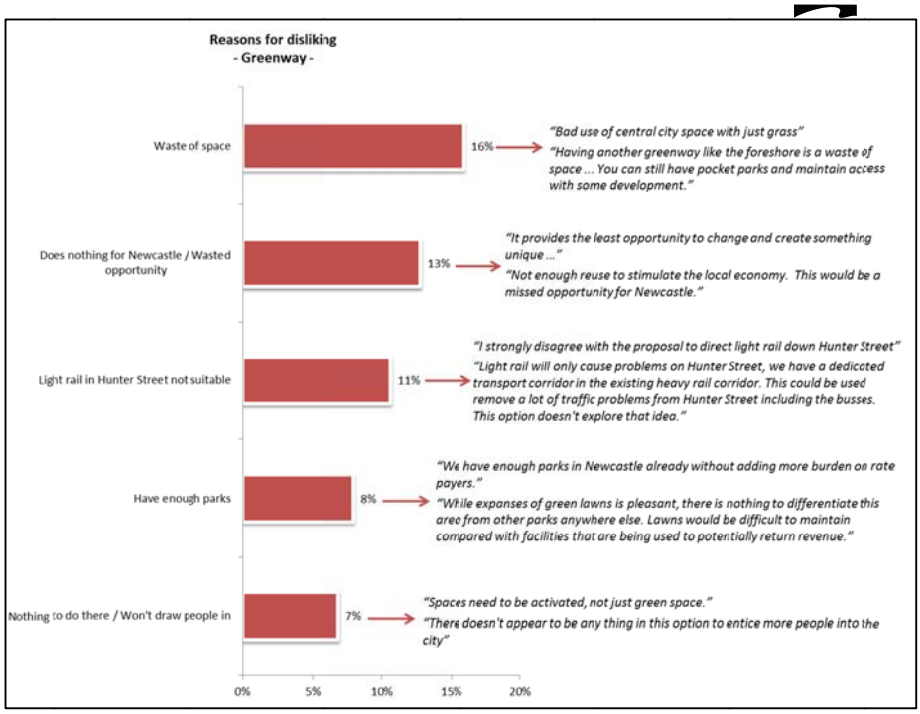


Figure 14: Greenway - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments

3.3.3 Harbour West City

The Harbour West City opportunity received the least support of all options in terms of likes (19%). Slightly more respondents disliked this opportunity (22%) than liked it. There were few demographic differences observed for those who liked Harbour West City. Those who disliked this opportunity skewed towards being male (27% dislike) and aged 65 years and over (34% dislike).

Table 9: Harbour West City - likes and dislikes by demographic group

HARBOUR WEST CITY		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
% Like	**19%**	20%	18%	24%	15%	14%	20%	18%	19%	20%	19%
% Dislike	**22%**	26%	20%	20%	22%	24%	**27%[A]**	18%	17%	25%	**34%[B]**

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?. Source- Q13: And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?
NOTES:
A= significant difference between genders
B= significant difference to 18-44 years

The main reasons liking and disliking Harbour West City are presented in figures 15 and 16 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix F for full verbatim responses.

The Harbour West City opportunity was liked for the amount of green space it provided (34%), improved connectivity to the waterfront (30%), and that it balanced development with open spaces (19%).

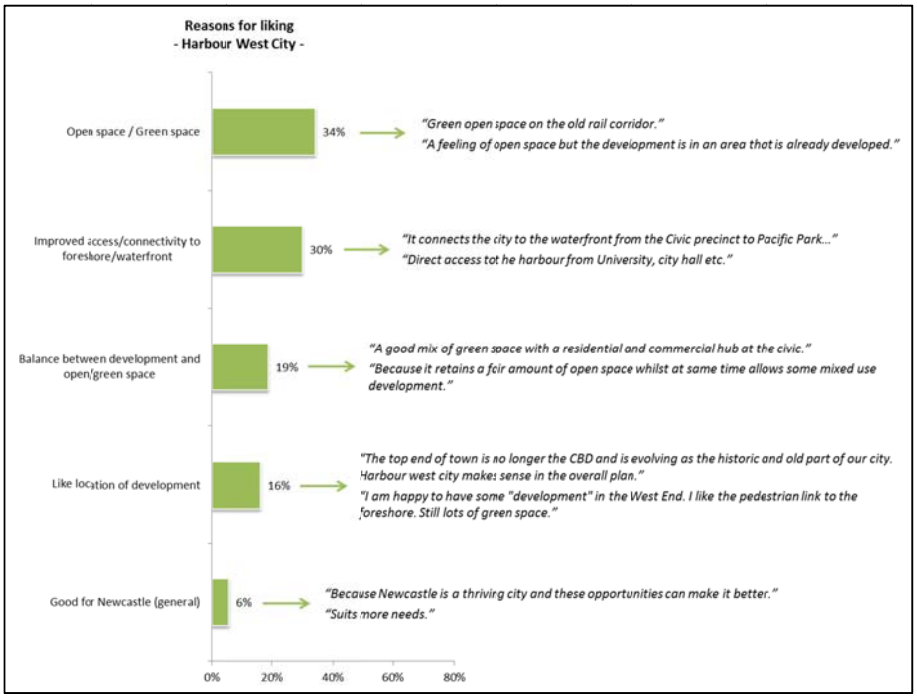


Figure 15: Harbour West City - top five likes and example verbatim comments

The main reasons given for disliking the Harbour West City opportunity were not specific elements of the opportunity per se, but related to transport. These included comments that the corridor should be used for light rail or other forms of transport (18%) and that Hunter Street is not suitable for light rail (13%). Approximately one-in-ten respondents (11%) made comments relating to scepticism about the transparency and purpose of the renewal program.

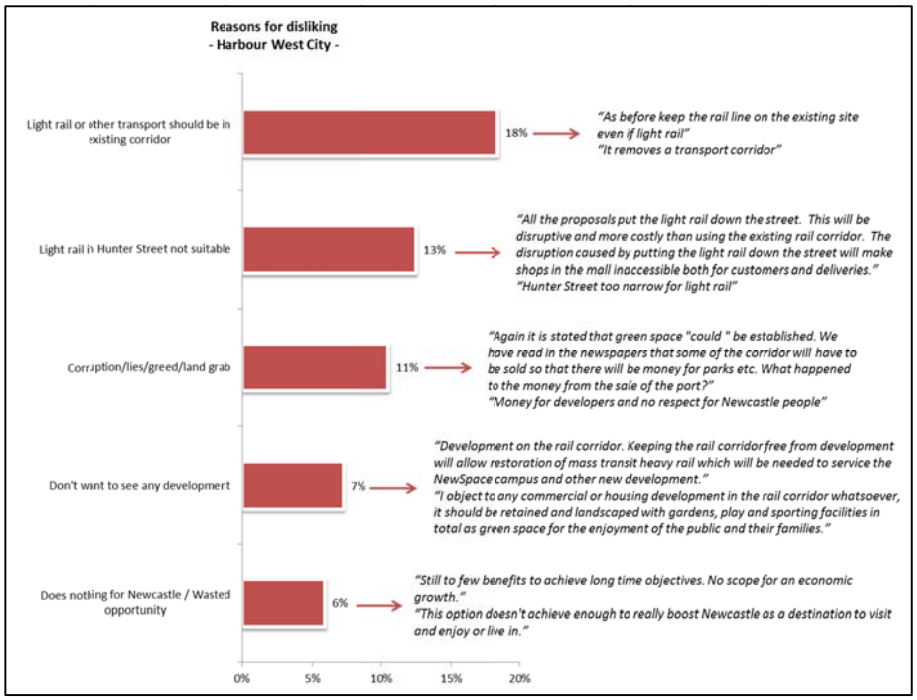


Figure 16: Harbour West City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments

3.3.4 Harbour Play City

Just under one-in-three respondents (30%) indicated they liked the Harbour Play City opportunity, which ranked in second place of the four opportunities. Harbour Play City was the only opportunity that received more likes (30%) than dislikes (27%). Support for this opportunity increased the further you move away from the city centre with 24% of Ward 1 respondents liking this opportunity compared to 35% in Ward 4. The 18-44 year age group were more favourable towards this opportunity than respondents in other age groups.

Table 10: Harbour Play City - likes and dislikes by demographic group

HARBOUR PLAY CITY		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
% Like	**30%**	24%	31%	31%	35%	29%	30%	31%	38%	**22%[A]**	25%
% Dislike	**27%**	38%	25%	27%	20%	17%	29%	25%	21%	**32%[A]**	**36%[A]**

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?. Source- Q13: And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?
NOTES:
A= significant difference to 18-44 years

The main reasons liking and disliking Harbour Play City are presented in figures 17 and 18 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix G for full verbatim responses.

The Harbour Play City opportunity was liked for the playspace (19%), the amount of open or green space (17%), and the proposed reuse of Newcastle Station area (17%). This opportunity also appealed to respondents as it provided a good balance between development and green space (15%) and it improved connectivity to the waterfront (13%).

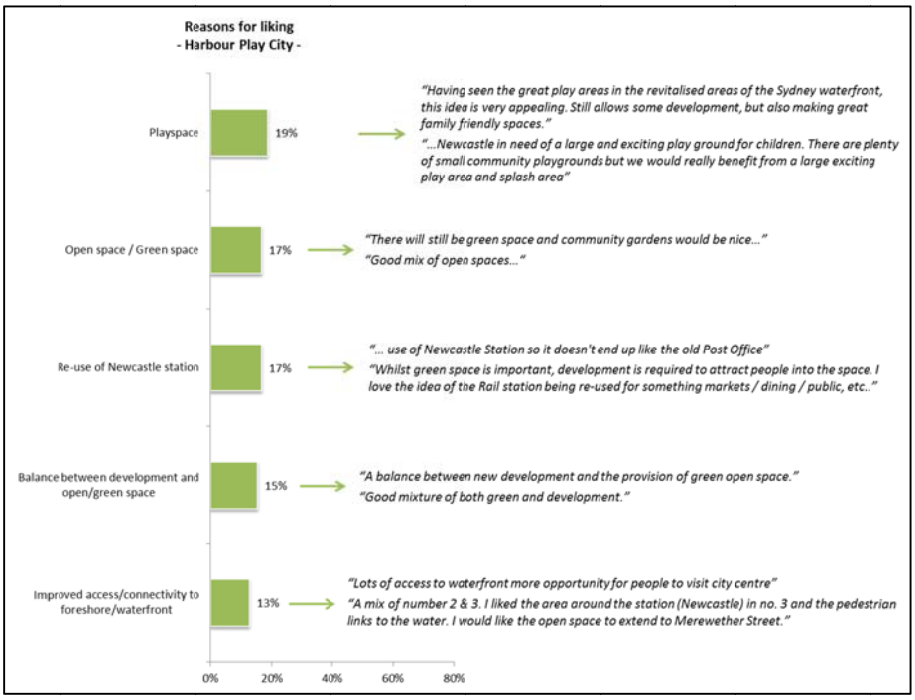


Figure 17: Harbour Play City - top five likes and example verbatim comments

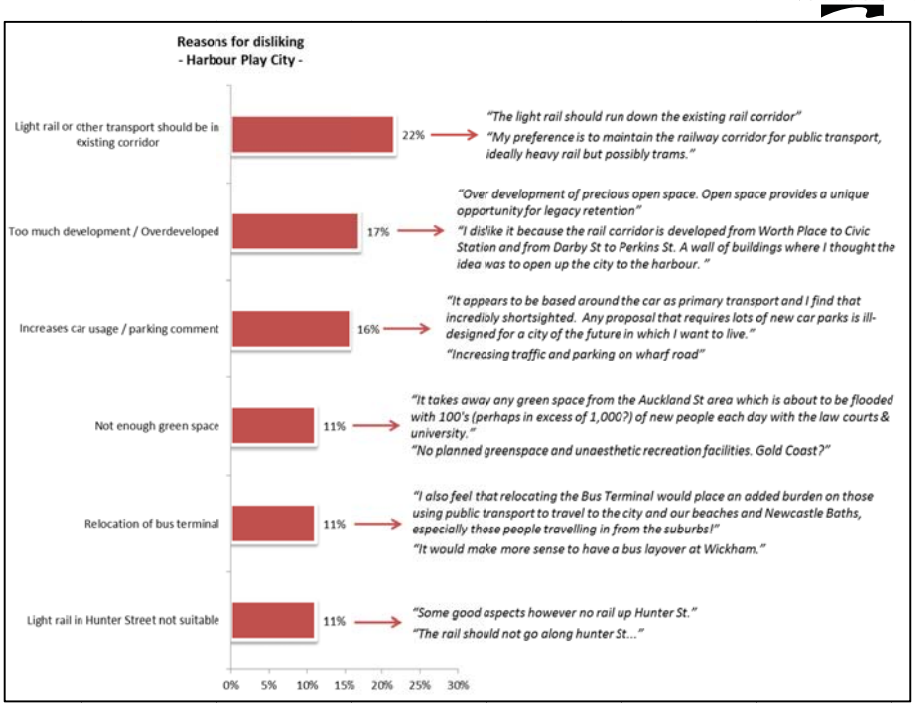


Figure 18: Harbour Play City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments

Like with other opportunities, light rail or other transport not running in the corridor and the light rail running along Hunter Street were among the key reasons for disliking the Harbour Play City opportunity. Other dislikes included too much development (17%), comments about the car park included in this opportunity promoting car usage over public transport (16%), and not enough green space (11%). Respondents also expressed concerns about relocation of the bus terminal (11%), including comments that it should be at the Wickham Transport Interchange. Though it didn't quite make the top five, the playspace was also mentioned as a dislike, with some respondents indicating that the city centre is not the appropriate location for this and others concerned that it would be 'theme park' like and that they did not want to see Newcastle morph into the Gold Coast.

3.3.5 Harbour Entertainment City

The Harbour Entertainment City was the most liked opportunity, with 35% endorsement. Appeal of this opportunity tended to improve the further away from the city centre. There was also an age-related gradient in liking this option, with Harbour Entertainment City more popular among younger respondents.

However Harbour Entertainment City was also the most disliked opportunity (35%). Half (50%) of respondents who live in or own property in Ward 1 disliked this opportunity, which was higher than in other areas. In general, respondents aged over 45 years disliked Harbour Entertainment City more so than those aged under 45 years.

Table 11: Harbour Entertainment City - likes and dislikes by demographic group

HARBOUR ENTERTAINMENT CITY		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
% Like	**35%**	23%	35%	35%	**44%[A]**	42%	31%	38%	37%	34%	28%
% Dislike	**35%**	**50%[B]**	31%	38%	26%	11%	**40%[C]**	30%	30%	**40%[D]**	41%

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?. Source- Q13: And are there any of the opportunities you particularly dislike?

NOTES:

A= significant difference to Ward 1
B= significant difference between Ward 1 and Wards 2 & 4
C= significant difference between genders
D= significant difference to 18-44 years

The main reasons liking and disliking Harbour Entertainment City are presented in figures 19 and 20 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix H for full verbatim responses.

The key reasons given for liking Harbour Entertainment City included the proposed reuse of Newcastle Station (34%) and the arts, cultural and entertainment opportunities the concept provides (30%). A further 14% of comments related to this opportunity being broadly beneficial to Newcastle. Just over one-in-ten (11%) commented that Harbour Entertainment City would draw people into the city centre, which is a key objective of the renewal program.

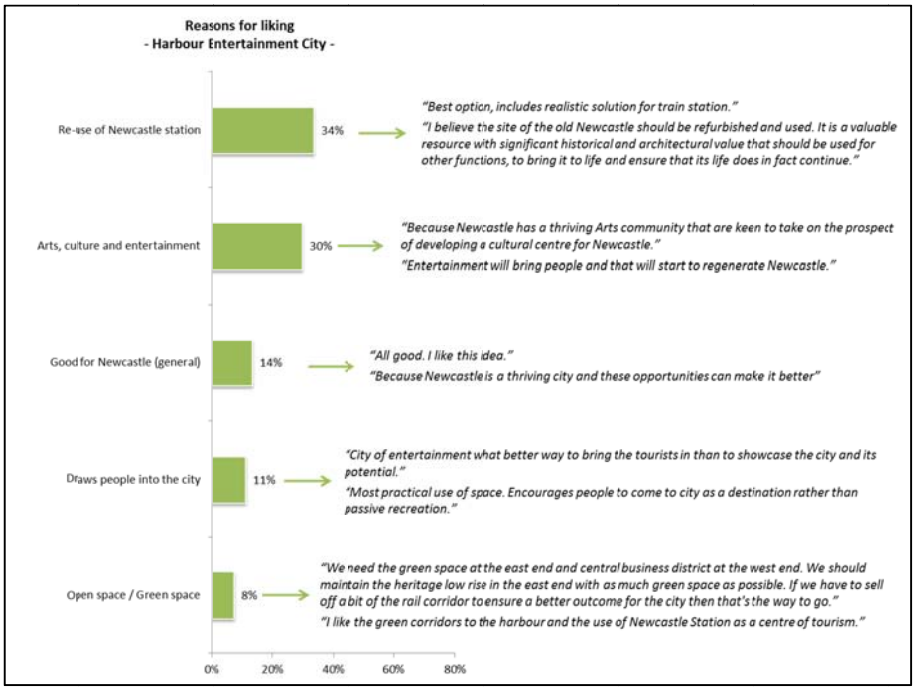


Figure 19: Harbour Entertainment City - top five likes and example verbatim comments

Amongst those who disliked Harbour Entertainment City, 36% cited too much development. One-in-five (20%) commented that there was not enough green space. As for all opportunities, 16% of responses also noted that the corridor should be used for light rail or other forms of transport. There was also some concern regarding the car park proposed at the foreshore (13%) and selling off public assets (12%).

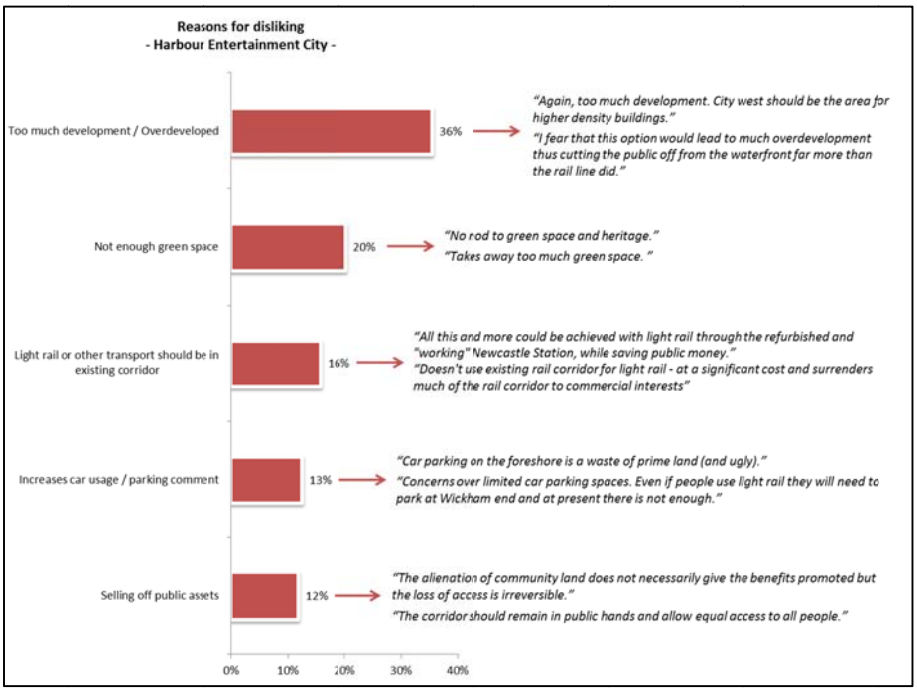


Figure 20: Harbour Entertainment City - top five dislikes and example verbatim comments

3.3.6 Do not like any of the urban transformation opportunities

Respondents were also given the option to not like any of the urban transformation opportunities. In total, 26% of respondents indicated they did not like any of the opportunities. This was driven by respondents living in or near the city centre (Ward 1, 33%) and by respondents aged over 45 years.

Table 12: Do not like any opportunity by demographic group

NONE OF THESE		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base	*699*	*166*	*168*	*166*	*165*	*34*	*342*	*357*	*355*	*218*	*126*
% indicating they did not like any	**26%**	**33%[A]**	20%	25%	27%	24%	30%	23%	18%	**32%[B]**	**39%[B]**

Source- Q11: Looking at the four different opportunities, are there any you particularly like?

A= significant difference to Ward 4

B= significant difference to 18-44 years

The main reasons given by these respondents for why they do not like any of the proposed opportunities were that they believe the rail corridor should be used for light rail or other transport options, that heavy rail should be reinstated, and that Hunter Street is not suitable for light rail. Please refer to Appendix I for full verbatim responses.

3.4 Potential program outcomes

Snapshot

The majority of respondents were supportive of the potential program outcomes. Two-thirds of respondents were supportive of the Civic Link and Entertainment Precinct potential program outcomes (67% and 64% support respectively). Potential revitalisation of Hunter Street was supported by 58% of respondents.

Support for potential program outcomes tends to increase the further you move away from the city centre. Similarly, support for the potential program outcomes decreases with age.

Approximately 20-30% of respondents opposed the potential program outcomes (Civic Link - 19%, Entertainment Precinct - 21%, Hunter Street - 28%). The reasons for this opposition were almost exclusively about transport, in particular light rail running in Hunter Street and not in the corridor.

Respondents were presented with information about three potential outcomes of urban transformation including: the creation of a Civic Link; the revitalisation of Hunter Street; and the creation of an Entertainment Precinct in the city's East End. Respondents were asked their opinion towards each of the three potential outcomes, the reasons for their opinions and their ideas on future uses for this site.

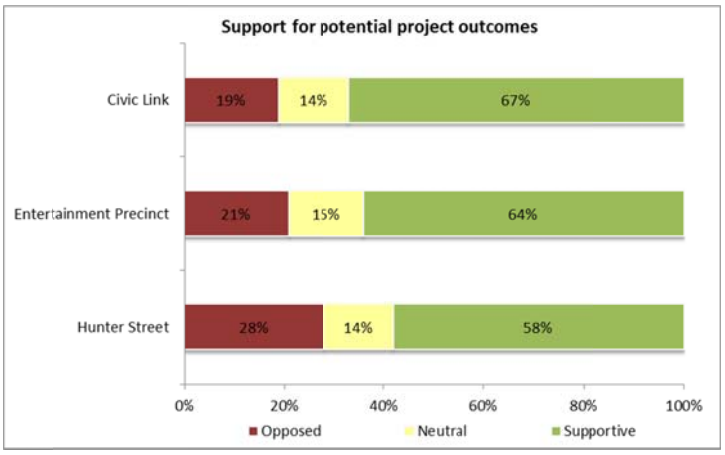


Figure 21: Support for potential project outcomes

Overall, the majority of respondents were supportive of the three project outcomes (figure 21). Approximately two-in-every three respondents were supportive of the Civic Link and Entertainment Precinct proposals (67% and 64% respectively), and 58% of respondents were supportive of the proposed revitalisation of Hunter Street.

Each proposed outcome is presented in further detail in the following sections.

3.4.1 Civic Link

In total, 67% of respondents were supportive of the idea of a Civic Link from the Civic Precinct to the harbour. Approximately one-in-five (19%) of respondents were not supportive of the concept.

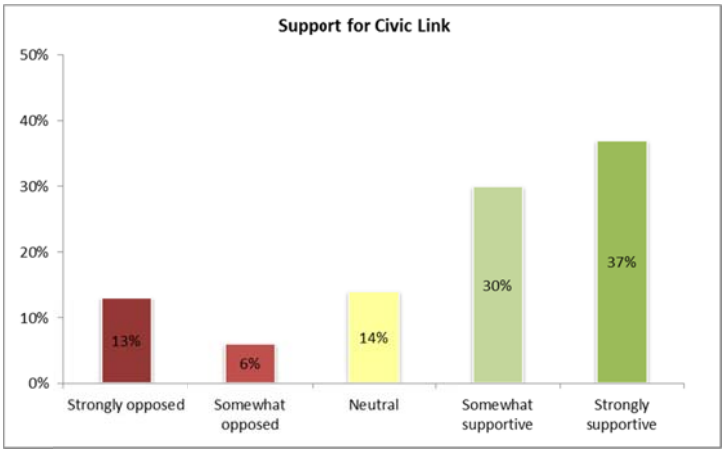


Figure 22: Support for Civic Link project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 701)

The majority of respondents across all demographic groups supported the Civic Link concept. Support was higher among respondents aged under 45 years.

Table 13: Support for Civic Link project outcome by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	**Ward 1**	**Ward 2**	**Ward 3**	**Ward 4**	**Out of area**	**Male**	**Female**	**18-44yrs**	**45-64yrs**	**65+yrs**
Base (those answering)	*701*	*166*	*169*	*167*	*166*	*33*	*344*	*357*	*355*	*219*	*127*
Strongly opposed	13%	23%	13%	9%	8%	5%	14%	11%	7%	20%	14%
Somewhat opposed	6%	6%	5%	8%	5%	5%	7%	5%	5%	6%	10%
Neutral	14%	7%	14%	14%	23%	10%	11%	17%	15%	11%	18%
Somewhat supportive	30%	28%	24%	32%	32%	38%	30%	29%	30%	30%	26%
Strongly supportive	37%	36%	44%	37%	32%	43%	38%	37%	42%	33%	32%
Mean score (out of five)	*3.73*	*3.48*	*3.83*	*3.79*	*3.76*	*4.08*	*3.71*	*3.76*	*3.96*	***3.50***^{A}	***3.51***^{A}

Source- Q15: Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW's idea of a Civic Link from the Civic Precinct to the harbour?
NOTES:
A= significant difference to 18-44yrs

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for supporting or opposing the concept in an optional open ended question. The main reasons supporting and opposing the Civic Link proposal are presented in figures 23 and 24 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix J for the full verbatim responses.

Among the 67% of respondents who supported the Civic Link proposal, the key reasons for supporting the idea related to improving access to the harbour (30%) and the creation of a usable open space (16%). A further 11% asserted it was a generally a good idea. Respondents (7%) also commented on the pedestrian and cycling opportunities provided by the link, and noted the potential of the Civic Link to tie together the city's cultural facilities and provide additional cultural opportunities (5%).

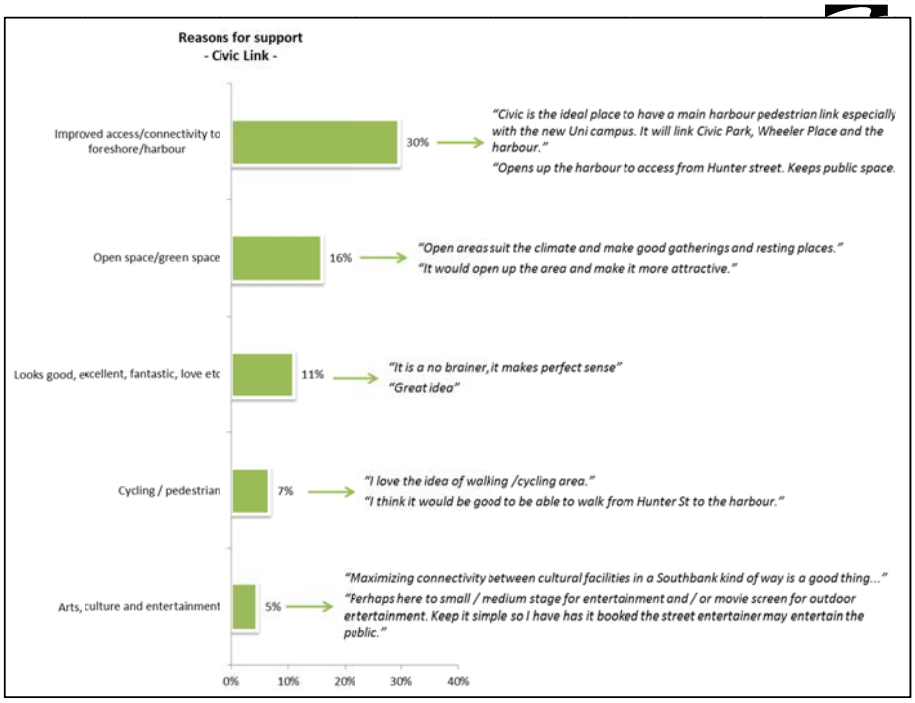


Figure 23: Reasons for supporting Civic Link project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Civic Link - those answering, n= 475).

The reasons given among the 19% of respondents overall who opposed the Civic Link concept related almost exclusively to transport. A number of those who opposed the concept (16%) expressed that Hunter Street is not suitable for light rail, with 16% also noting that light rail (or other modes of transport) should be in the rail corridor. Of those who opposed to the Civic Link idea, 12% commented about reinstating the rail and 10% protested against the removal of Civic Station, given it limits future potential of returning heavy rail services to the Civic precinct.

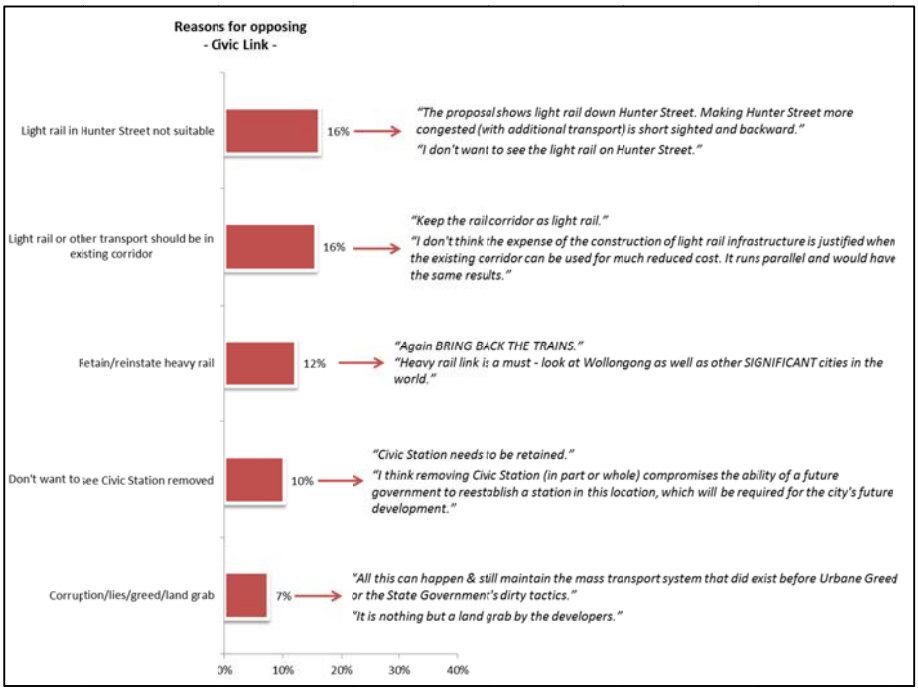


Figure 24: Reasons for opposing Civic Link project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Civic Link - those answering, n= 148).

3.4.2 Entertainment Precinct

In total, 64% of respondents were supportive of the idea the Entertainment Precinct. Approximately one-in-five (21%) respondents were not supportive of the concept.

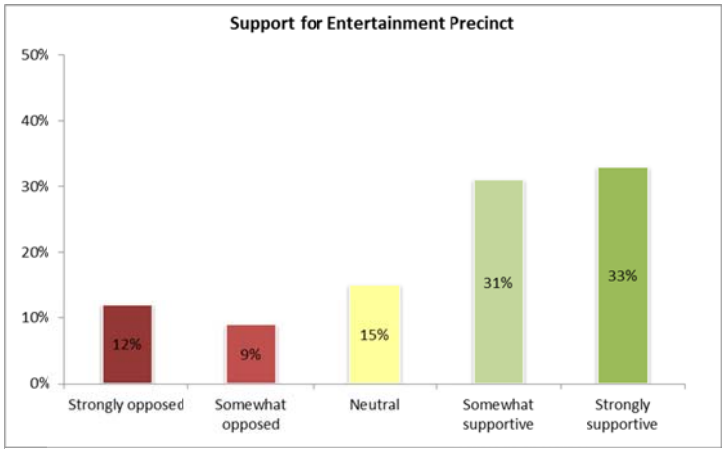


Figure 25: Support for Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 696)

The appeal of the Entertainment Precinct differed significantly by different demographic groups. The extent to which the Entertainment Precinct appealed to respondents increased the further you move away from the city centre - 54% of respondents who live or own property in Ward 1 supported the concept versus 75% support in Ward 4. Similarly, appeal of this concept declined with age.

Table 14: Support for Entertainment Precinct project outcome by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base (those answering)	*696*	*166*	*167*	*165*	*164*	*34*	*341*	*355*	*355*	*216*	*125*
Strongly opposed	12%	23%	13%	11%	4%	2%	13%	12%	8%	18%	14%
Somewhat opposed	9%	8%	11%	10%	10%	8%	12%	7%	6%	12%	15%
Neutral	15%	15%	14%	17%	12%	19%	15%	15%	15%	13%	15%
Somewhat supportive	31%	31%	26%	26%	40%	35%	32%	30%	32%	27%	32%
Strongly supportive	33%	23%	36%	37%	35%	36%	29%	37%	38%	30%	23%
Mean score (out of five)	*3.62*	*3.22*	*3.62*	***3.69***^{A}	***3.91***^{A}	*3.94*	*3.53*	*3.71*	*3.86*	***3.40***^{B}	***3.33***^{B}

Source- Q21: Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW's idea of an Entertainment Precinct in the city's East End?
NOTES:
A= significant difference to Ward 1
B= significant difference to 18-44yrs

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for supporting or opposing the concept in an optional open ended question. The main reasons supporting and opposing the Entertainment Precinct proposal are presented in figures 26 and 27 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix K for full verbatim responses.

Those who supported the Entertainment Precinct concept did so because they liked the proposed reuse of Newcastle station (18%) and felt it would draw people into the city (10%). Heritage preservation was noted in 9% of responses. 8% of respondents noted the playspace, though opinion was mixed.

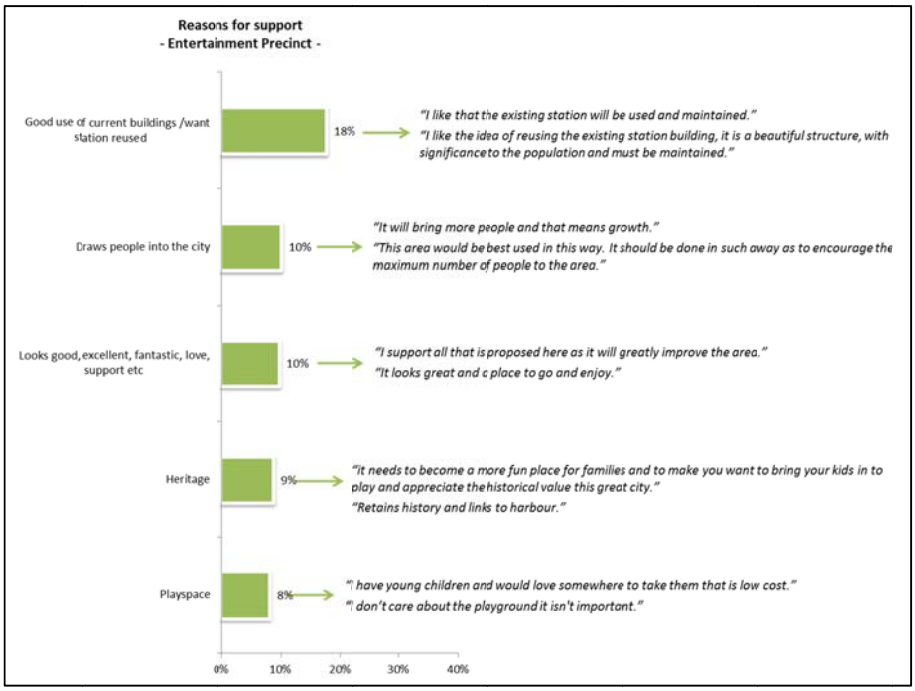


Figure 26: Reasons for supporting Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Entertainment Precinct - those answering, n= 304).

Among those who did not support the idea of an Entertainment Precinct, almost one-in-five (18%) commented that trains should still be running to Newcastle Station. A similar proportion (17%) commented that the area does not have sufficient parking or public transport access to support the proposal. A number of respondents (12%) felt the area should remain open and green.

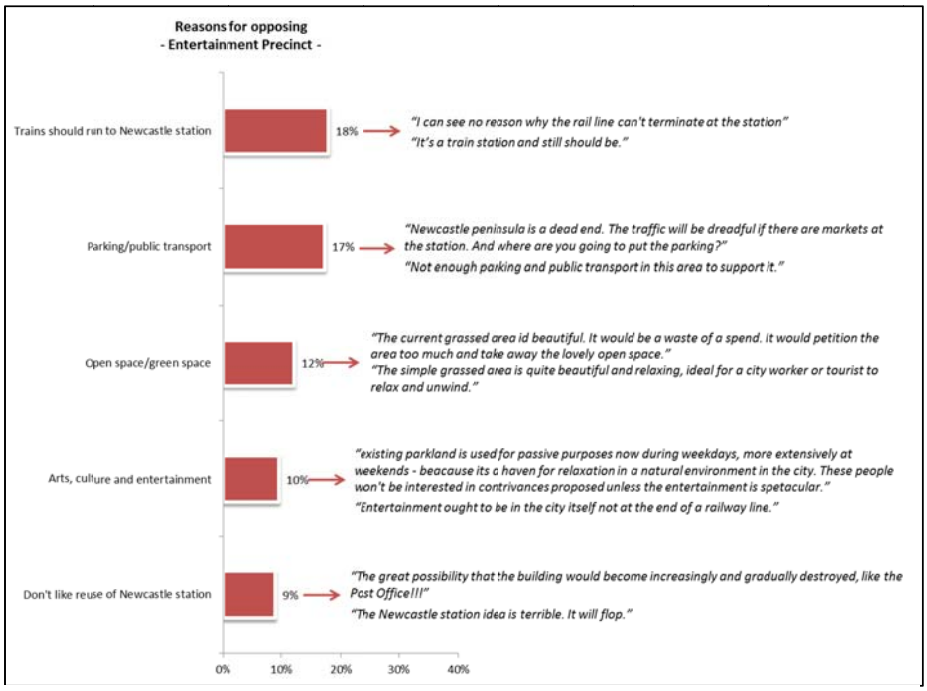


Figure 27: Reasons for opposing Entertainment Precinct project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Entertainment Precinct - those answering, n= 156).

3.4.3 Hunter Street

Overall, 58% of respondents were supportive of the proposed revitalisation of Hunter Street. Just over one-in-four respondents (28%) were opposed to what was proposed.

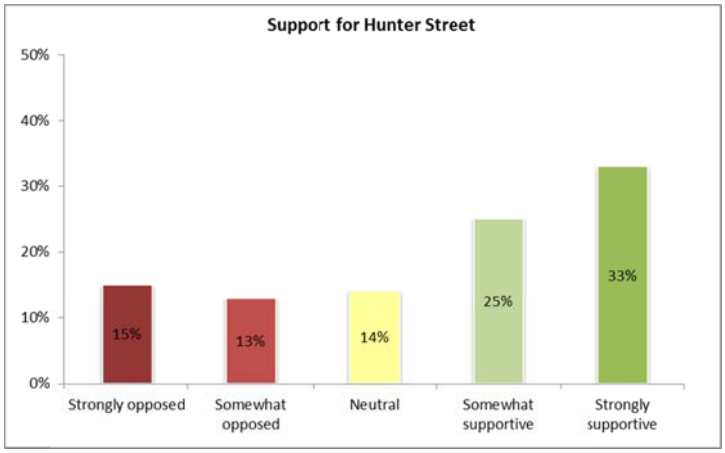


Figure 28: Support for Hunter Street project outcome (Base, all respondents, n= 698)

As seen in other areas of the survey, the results for this question differed by location and age. Support for the proposed concept for revitalising Hunter Street increased the further you move away from the city centre - 52% of respondents who live or own property in Ward 1 supported the idea compared to 62% in Ward 4. Similarly, 66% of respondents aged under 45 years supported the concept, with the level of support decreasing with age (45 - 64 years - 53%, 65+ years - 47%).

Table 15: Support for Hunter Street project outcome by demographic group

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Base (those answering)	*698*	*167*	*168*	*166*	*164*	*34*	*343*	*355*	*355*	*217*	*127*
Strongly opposed	15%	26%	14%	14%	6%	19%	17%	14%	10%	22%	19%
Somewhat opposed	13%	11%	12%	12%	17%	11%	14%	11%	11%	11%	21%
Neutral	14%	12%	15%	15%	14%	6%	12%	15%	14%	13%	13%
Somewhat supportive	25%	22%	22%	26%	27%	33%	25%	25%	26%	25%	23%
Strongly supportive	33%	30%	36%	33%	35%	31%	32%	35%	40%	28%	24%
Mean score (out of five)	*3.49*	*3.20*	*3.55*	*3.52*	*3.68*	*3.47*	*3.41*	*3.57*	*3.76*	***3.25***^{A}	***3.13***^{A}

Source- Q18: Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding UrbanGrowth NSW's idea to revitalise Hunter Street?
NOTES:
A= significant difference to 18-44yrs

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for supporting or opposing the concept in an optional open ended question. The main reasons supporting and opposing the Hunter Street proposal are presented in figures 29 and 30 respectively, with example verbatim comments included. Please refer to Appendix K for full verbatim responses.

The key reason given by respondents who supported this idea related to the current state of Hunter Street and its potential (23%). Light rail was another theme noted as reasons for supporting the concept (15%), though this included a mix of those who liked the idea of light rail and those who questioned the viability of light rail. Other reasons for supporting the concept included more general comments that it would be good for Newcastle overall (12%), that the proposal looks good (8%) and that the proposal has the potential to help stimulate the economy (7%).

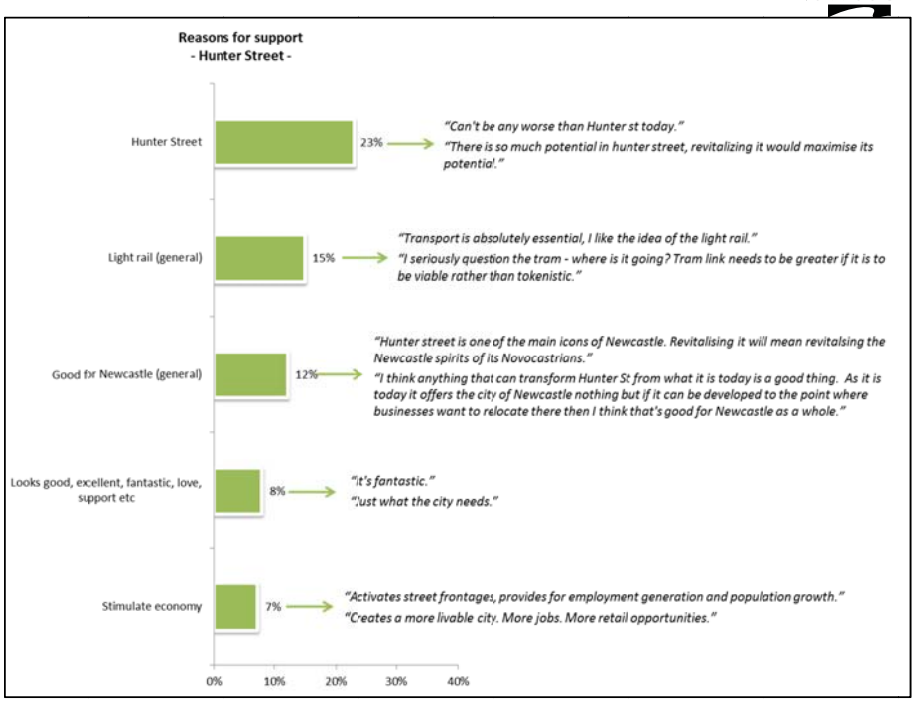


Figure 29: Reasons for supporting Hunter Street project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly support Hunter Street concept - those answering, n= 287).

The main reasons given for opposing the Hunter Street proposal related to transport. Of the 28% of respondents overall who opposed the idea, the majority (38%) commented that Hunter Street is not suitable for light rail and that light rail and/or other modes of transport should be in the existing corridor (23%). Traffic concerns were evident in 9% of responses, as were comments that the proposal limits opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians (6%). Ten percent of those who opposed the Hunter Street proposal commented that Hunter Street is adequate as it is.

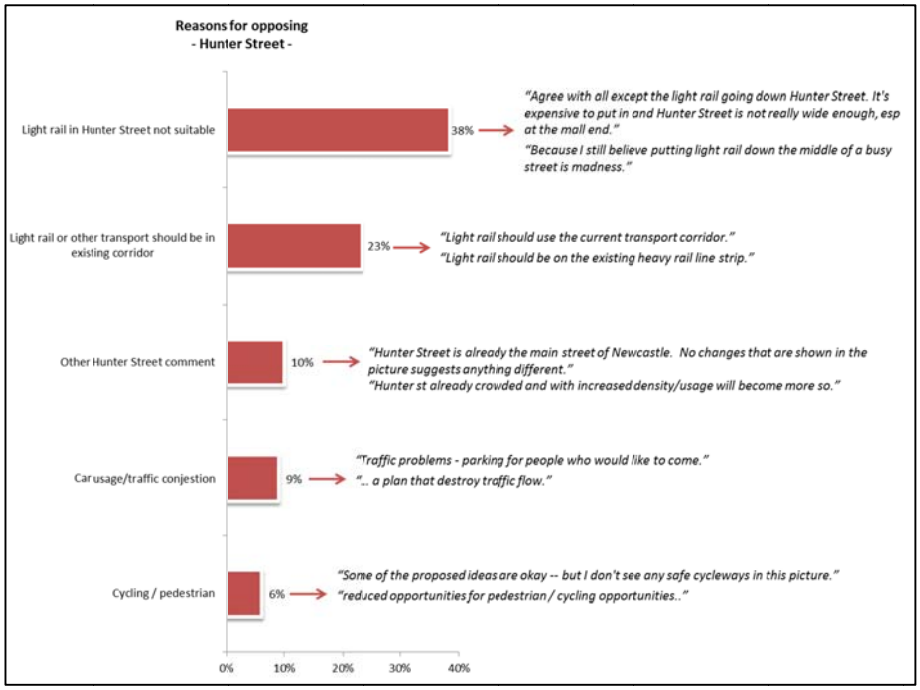


Figure 30: Reasons for opposing Hunter Street project outcome (Base, somewhat or strongly oppose Hunter Street concept - those answering, n= 211).

3.5 Attitudes towards transformation of Newcastle city centre

Snapshot

The majority of respondents agreed that **urban renewal can have good outcomes** if planned and delivered well (89% agreement) and that **urban renewal can improve the area** by bringing in more jobs, shops public facilities and housing (79%). Agreement with these statements was higher among respondents aged under 45 years.

Preserving heritage was important to 80% of respondents overall, was more important to respondents aged over 45 years and became less important to respondents living further away from the city centre.

There were **strong levels of disagreement** that any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area and that the city centre is largely fine as it is (79% disagreed with each statement).

Respondents were presented with a series of attitudinal statements relating to the Newcastle city centre and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point scale. The attitudinal statements were designed to understand respondents' attitudes towards urban renewal. Figure 31 outlines the level of agreement with each of the eight statement, ranked according to the largest proportion indicating strong agreement.

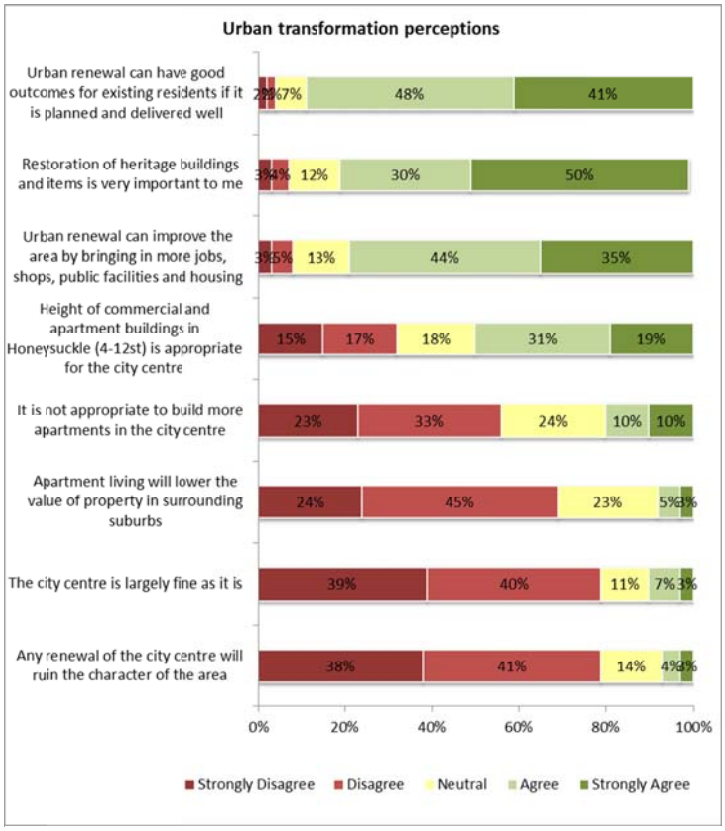


Figure 31: Attitudes towards transformation of Newcastle City Centre (Base, all respondents)

Agreement with statements outlining the benefits of urban renewal was high. 89% agreed that urban renewal can have good outcomes for residents and 79% agreed that urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing. Disagreement with statements outlining concerns regarding development was also high, with 79% of respondents disagreeing that renewal would ruin the character of the area and 69% disagreed that apartment living would lower the value of property in the area.

Similarly, 79% of respondents disagreed that the city is largely fine as it is. This suggests general community acceptance that urban renewal would have a positive impact on the city. However respondents indicated that the way in which the urban renewal was undertaken was important, with 80% indicating restoration of heritage buildings was important to them.

In regard to buildings heights, 50% of respondents agreed that current building heights (4-12 storeys) in the city centre is appropriate. More than half of survey respondents (56%) disagreed that it is not appropriate to build more apartments in the city centre - by comparison, 20% of respondents agreed with this statement.

To enable efficient comparison of attitudes by demographic group, mean scores were calculated for each statement where a mean score of 1 indicates a strong level of disagreement and a score of 5 indicates strong agreement. Table 15 shows the mean score (out of five) for each statement by demographic group. Cells have been colour coded whereby green indicates a strong level of agreement, yellow denotes neutrality and red indicates disagreement.

In short, respondents under 45 years of age were more positively disposed towards Newcastle's urban renewal than respondents aged 45 years and older. The importance of heritage preservation tapered off the further you move away from the city centre.

Table 16: Attitudes toward transformation of Newcastle city centre by demographic group (mean score out of five)

		Location:					Gender:		Age:		
	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Out of area	Male	Female	18-44yrs	45-64yrs	65+yrs
Urban renewal can have good outcomes for existing residents if it is planned and delivered well	4.24	**4.37**	4.24	4.27	4.07	4.31	4.20	4.28	**4.37**	4.15	4.04
The restoration of heritage buildings and items is very important to me	4.19	**4.40**	4.23	4.17	4.00	4.07	4.08	**4.30**	4.13	4.26	4.27
Urban renewal can improve the area by bringing in more jobs, shops, public facilities and housing	4.03	3.97	4.11	4.06	3.97	4.08	4.01	4.05	**4.26**	3.81	3.77
The height of commercial and apartment buildings in Honeysuckle (4-12 storeys) is appropriate for the city centre	3.22	3.11	3.30	3.22	3.22	3.45	3.20	3.25	**3.40**	3.08	2.98
It is not appropriate to build more apartments in the city centre	2.52	2.53	2.33	2.52	2.77	2.22	2.29	**2.74**	2.51	2.52	2.55
Apartment living will lower the value of property in surrounding suburbs	2.18	2.24	2.10	2.26	2.16	2.10	2.07	**2.29**	2.12	2.28	2.18
The city centre is largely fine as it is	1.96	**2.18**	1.94	1.94	1.78	1.88	1.93	1.99	1.85	1.98	**2.22**
Any renewal of the city centre will ruin the character of the area	1.94	2.00	1.93	1.91	1.91	1.95	1.97	1.90	1.73	**2.06**	**2.30**

Source- Q24: Thinking now about Newcastle's city centre overall, please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.
NOTES:
Green shading denotes agreement (mean score 3.50+)
Yellow shading denotes neutrality (mean score 2.51-3.50)
Red shading denotes disagreement (mean score of less than 2.50)