

UNSEALED ROADS – LOWER BLUFF, ST LEONARDS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Lower Bluff area in St Leonards has 12 unsealed roads that service around 300 properties.

In June 2019, we applied a blended gravel treatment to the roads, with the aim of improving the dust issues during the summer period. We have however received some community feedback that dust continues to be an issue and mud has also become a concern during winter.

The most effective solution to remove dust and mud is to seal the roads. But we wanted to hear from the community on their preferred option. We asked the community

- What their connection was with the Lower Bluff.
- If we had identified the main spine roads accurately.
- Their preferred option to improve the road condition.
- If they'd be willing to participate in a speed reduction trial.
- To provide further feedback on unsealed roads in the Lower Bluff, St Leonards.

Quick stats

During the engagement period



WHAT WE HEARD

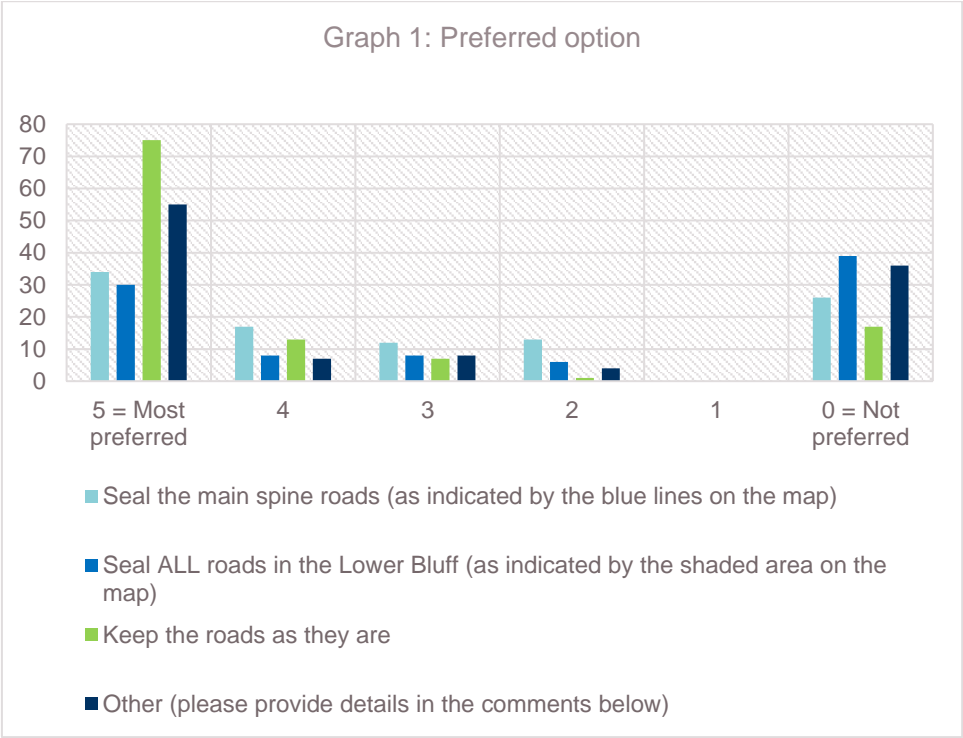
Connection with Lower Bluff

Of the 153 survey responses received:

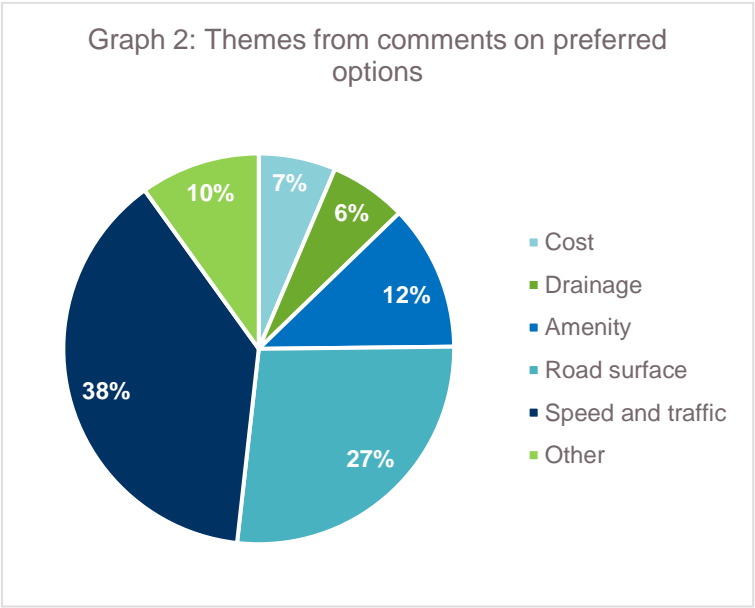
- 92 live or own property in the area
- 61 live locally and visit/use the roads regularly

Feedback on the proposed options

When asked to select their preferred option, 75 people indicated *Keep the roads as they are* as their most preferred option.



There was also an opportunity to provide additional comments on the proposed options. When analysed, the comments centred around five themes with *Speed and Traffic Volume* receiving the most comments.



Verbatim quotes

From the feedback it was clear to see that the community are passionate about their local area. The following is a selection of quotes received from the survey and engagement sessions.

Table 1: Sample of comments from the survey grouped by theme

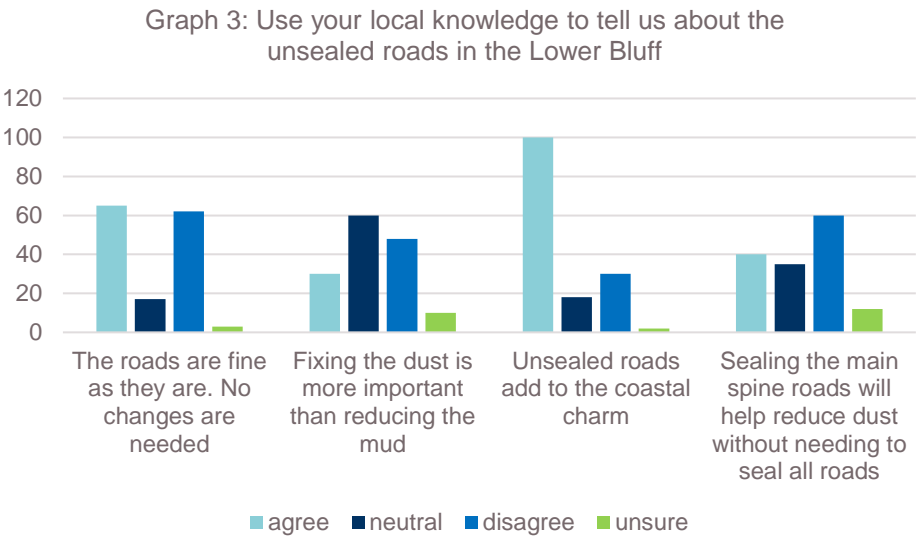
| THEME | COMMENT |
|--------------------------|--|
| COST | <i>"Asking locals to contribute to the cost of sealing roads (as I expect would happen) may put some residents in a difficult position as they might not be able to afford it."</i> |
| COST | <i>"It would be good to know the approximate cost to residents of sealing the roads to help make a decision"</i> |
| DRAINAGE | <i>"Sealing the roads with culverts is unnecessary because surface water is gone soon after rain."</i> |
| DRAINAGE | <i>"Sealing the spine roads will also further contribute to the runoff that is experienced after rain, making walking along the sides of the roads difficult and compromising driveways."</i> |
| AMENITY | <i>Leave the roads as they are because it is one of the reasons Lower Bluff area is so unique. We see concrete everywhere "it is great to live in an area that so close to nature."</i> |
| AMENITY | <i>"Unsealed roads were and are part of the attraction of living here, mosquitoes notwithstanding."</i> |
| ROAD SURFACE | <i>"All roads should be sealed to reduce dust and improve accessibility"</i> |
| ROAD SURFACE | <i>"Change the type of road base and topping to that similar to the road base and topping on e.g. Ibbotson road. This "appears to be all weather durable with less potholes and shoulder disruption."</i> |
| ROAD SURFACE | <i>"I accept that for residents the dust is unbearable in Summer, but I love the beach feel - SO if the main spine roads need to be sealed; do it like country roads. NOT GUTTERS etc that make it look like every other Suburban street. Keep the "integrity of the beach feel."</i> |
| ROAD SURFACE | <i>"I am happy with the roads as they are, i have never been bothered with dust problems."</i> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC | <i>"I believe you should trial the 40km/hr speed limit on all roads on the lower bluff for 12 months then review, together with sourcing a new road surface that does not turn to glue in the winter. We enjoy the relaxed amenity of having dirt roads and are concerned sealing the roads (even just spine roads), will increase traffic speed."</i> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC | <i>"These roads are used by motor vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and people with babies in strollers. All weather access is important, but we don't need sealed footpaths if we can use the road safely. I would like to see the road labelled as a multiuser thoroughfare (similar to the bike/pedestrian signs) with 40kph as a safe limit, even when sealed not just for dust mitigation."</i> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC | <i>"I only support reducing speed limits alongside sealing the roads, not as an alternative"</i> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC | <i>"Keep unsealed and add Speed humps or alternate speed limiting devices on all spine roads ie narrowing strategic areas of spine roads to single lane with plantings or shaping."</i> |

| THEME | COMMENT |
|-------|---|
| OTHER | "The roads need a permanent solution to provide safe driving conditions." |
| OTHER | "Would like to include all dirt roads in St Leonards to reduce dust and improve drainage" |

Speed reduction trial

Industry research suggests reducing the speed of traffic from 50kph to 40kph is likely to reduce dust levels by up to 50%. When asked if they supported a speed reduction trial, 78% of people said yes. However, several people noted that "locals" generally drive to the conditions and that the speed reduction would need to be supported by infrastructure such as speed humps or slow points.

Additional feedback on the unsealed roads



We received 68 additional comments that centred around five themes. While many of the comments echoed the earlier feedback there was new commentary around the local habitat. Other people also used this opportunity to note their support for sealing the roads or request additional maintenance.

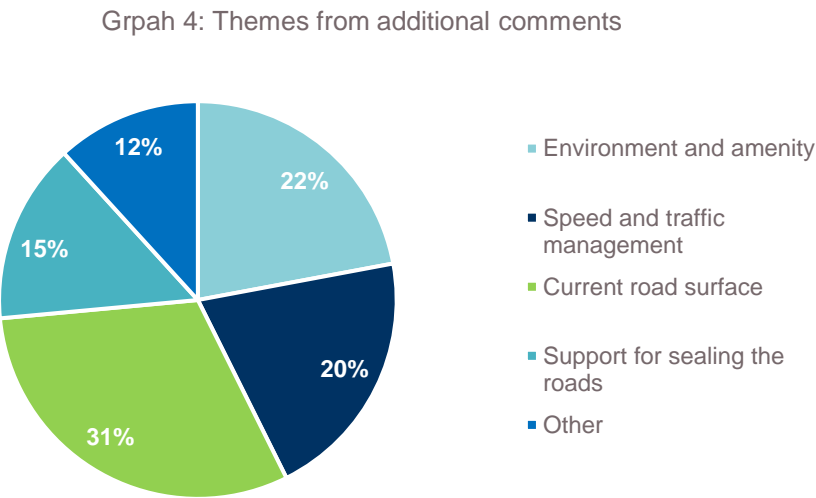


Table 2: Sample of additional comments from the survey grouped by theme

| THEME | COMMENTS |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ENVIRONMENT & AMENITY | <p><i>"This area of St Leonards is unique, and still unspoiled. It is a highly sought-after area for real estate because of its special character and making the roads will destroy this unique heritage.</i></p> <p><i>We have lived here for 35 years and have never felt the need to complain about the roads as long as they are graded when appropriate, which has mostly been the case.</i></p> <p><i>Planting indigenous trees and shrubs have protected us from much of the dust and is an environmentally friendly and aesthetic way to make the area better.</i></p> <p><i>The huge development that has been allowed to completely change the character of the rest of St Leonards should not be allowed to destroy the Lower Bluff as well.</i></p> <p><i>I am very strongly against any sealing of the roads in the Lower Bluff."</i></p> |
| ENVIRONMENT & AMENITY | <p><i>"Sealing the spine roads may reduce the dust but will impact the charm and increase heat for wildlife and residents."</i></p> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT | <p><i>"As far as I am concerned, dust is not an issue. Speed is the issue. Slow the traffic via verge planting and thereby reduce speed and dust."</i></p> |
| SPEED AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT | <p><i>"Sealing the main spine roads is a reasonable option but is likely to result in an increase in traffic speed which will affect the coastal charm and safety in the area. The roads are mostly quite straight so people will be inclined to drive faster on sealed roads."</i></p> |
| CURRENT ROAD SURFACE | <p><i>"There is no charm when you are sprayed with mud coming off the unsealed surface in winter and spring. The dust is a nuisance for the residents. The poor quality of the current road surface is dangerous for cyclists."</i></p> |
| CURRENT ROAD SURFACE | <p><i>"We like unsealed roads - just need a better surface and monthly grading program"</i></p> |
| SUPPORT FOR SEALING THE ROADS | <p><i>"The dust deterrent you put down on unsealed roads only works until it rains, then it washes it away and your back to square one. A total waste of money, if you seal it, it is fixed forever. Can you please include Margaret St, the dust is very bad and people don't slow down to help the issue. There are always pot holes that impose a hazard in itself."</i></p> |
| SUPPORT FOR SEALING THE ROADS | <p><i>"As much as we have liked the unsealed roads, I think it's time to make improvements of a more permanent nature"</i></p> |
| OTHER | <p><i>"It shouldn't be at residents' expense as we pay rates and car registration. State government and council should pay."</i></p> |

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

When asked to select their preferred option, 75 people preferred to keep the roads as they are, and 55 people would like to see an alternative solution.

When analysing the comments on “other” there was a strong emphasis on traffic management and traffic volume and several requests to replace the current gravel blend and limit the volume of traffic passing through the area.

Based on feedback from the community, the City will **not** progress sealing the roads within the Lower Bluff, St Leonards.

We have taken on the feedback regarding reducing the volume and speeding drivers and will be

1. Seeking support from Department of Transport to reduce the speed limit.
2. Reviewing the current traffic signs and installing appropriate signage to identify no through roads.
3. Creating slow-points on the main spine roads to encourage drivers to drive slowly and discourage using the roads as a ‘rat-run’.
4. Considering truncating Cliff Street at Wattlehill Grove to further reduce traffic.

Note that items 3 and 4 will be subject to further community consultation regarding the design and placement.

We will also review the gravel blends available when the roads are next scheduled to be resheeted to determine a suitable product for the Lower Bluff.