

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

BUILDING BETTER BIKE CONNECTIONS



BUILDING BETTER BIKE CONNECTIONS – SOUTHERN LINK, STAGE 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City is creating two new major cycling routes to make it safer and easier for anyone to ride. We received a \$6.3 million grant from the TAC's Safer Pedestrian and Cyclist Fund to create two cycling connections:

- The Western Link connecting central Geelong with Herne Hill via Geelong West.
- The Southern Link to connect central Geelong with Waurin Ponds via Belmont.

Both routes are designed to be used by cyclists of a wide range of ages and abilities to safely ride to destinations like shopping areas and key employment precincts.

The Western Link, and stage 1 of the Southern Link (Moorabool, Carr and Gheringhap streets) have been completed.

During previous community engagement (January 2018 and February 2019) we shared several designs for the second stage of the Southern Link. Option 2b was chosen by the community as the preferred option and was endorsed by Council in April 2019.

With the Western Link and Stage 1 of the Southern link complete we wanted to hear from users about their experience to help us identify any further improvements. We also wanted to share with the community the detailed design for Stage 2 for feedback to assist as we progress this stage of the project.

During the engagement period (28 April to 30 May 2022), more than 260 people engaged with the City:



31 DAYS
of engagement on
BBBC Southern
Link (Stage 2)



51
People following
the project



30+
Attendees at the
information pop-up



239
Participants
in online
survey



30
One on one
call backs

2. WHAT WE HEARD – KEY FINDINGS

The survey was designed to collect feedback from the community on

- their connection with the area – did they cycle, drive, work or live nearby
- how cyclists used the links and how often – for recreation, commuting or other
- their experience driving or cycling along the links
- whether the project meets the aim to create cycling routes that make it safer and easier for anyone to ride to key destinations.

Below is a summary of the key themes we heard via the survey and informal feedback sent to officers, Councillors or lodged via Customer Service.

SUMMARY

Feedback on the completed Western Link

WE ASKED	WE HEARD
PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE COMPLETED SECTIONS OF THE WESTERN LINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 participants had ridden a bike along the Western Link • Bike riders who provided mixed feedback (44.7%) typically indicated support for the project but also highlighted a concern or possible improvement • 15 participants mentioned a concern about safety or risk to road uses. • 10 specifically mentioned the increase to safety because of the bike lanes.
PARTICIPANTS IF THE COMPLETED SECTION OF THE WESTERN LINK MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS (1-5 RATING)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 104 participants responded • Average rating was 2.96 out of 5

Feedback on the completed Southern Link

WE ASKED	WE HEARD
PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE USING THE COMPLETED SECTIONS OF THE SOUTHERN LINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 107 participants had ridden a bike along the Southern Link • Mixed sentiment typically indicated general support for the project but also highlighted a concern or possible improvement • The most common statement amongst those that had ridden the completed southern link was a feeling of safety or increased safety with 27 participants mentioning safety in their long text answer • The most common concern raised was increased risk to road users (56), specifically at intersections (31). Driver awareness (21) and bike visibility (18) were suggested as places for improvement. • 30 participants specifically mentioned the increase to safety because of the bike lanes. With a total of 21 participants praising the separated the bike lanes.
IF THE COMPLETED SECTION OF THE SOUTHERN LINK MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS (1-5 RATING)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 198 participants responded • Average rating was 2.67 out of 5

Feedback on the designs for Stage 2 Southern Link

WE ASKED	WE HEARD
<p>IF THE DESIGN OF STAGE 2 OF THE SOUTHERN LINK MET OUR AIM TO CREATE NEW MAJOR CYCLING ROUTES THAT MAKE IT SAFER AND EASIER FOR ANYONE TO RIDE TO KEY DESTINATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% said yes, while 46% said no and 15% were unsure • Participants were asked to expand on their response, and we received 164 responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% were generally supportive but often provided suggestions for improvements • 46% were unsupportive of the project regardless of any changes to design • 2% of responses were of such brevity that support sentiment could not be assessed • 19 participants specifically praised the separated bike lanes and 18 mentioned the design would increase safety • 29 participants raised concerns with using High Street and suggested a different route would be more beneficial or safer. • The most common concerns related to High Street were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic congestion caused by bike lanes (15) • The steepness of the hill (9) • Poor outcomes for or impact on High Street business (8) • Loss of street parking (8)



Figure 1: Artist impression of Stage 2 Southern Link at High Street

3. HOW WE ENGAGED

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

A project specific engagement page was developed to provide project information and methods of ways to engage with the City.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE PORTAL YOURSAY.GEELONGAUSTRALIA.COM.AU	An online Have Your Say (HYS) project page was designed to share relevant information to encourage community feedback on the completed sections of the BBBC project and the detailed designs for Stage 2. The project page hosted an interactive map, detailed designs, frequently asked questions, and a summary of the 2018 engagement.
SURVEY (ONLINE AND HARDCOPY)	The community could provide feedback on the BBBC project via a survey on the HYS page. A hard copy of the survey was also available on request.
INFORMATION POP-UP	We hosted an information pop-up on 23 May 2022 at Belmont Library. Community members could drop in at any time between 2.30pm and 7pm to view the plans and speak with an officer.
LETTERBOX DROP TO BUSINESSES	We delivered over 100 flyers on two occasions to the traders along High Street, Belmont. The first flyer encouraged traders to visit our project page to provide feedback onstage 2 of the Southern Link. The second flyer informed traders of the pop-up information session.
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS	Open at any time during the public engagement period. Submissions could be provided by email or mail. Informal feedback sent to officers, Councillors or lodged via Customer Service has been included in this engagement.

COMMUNICATIONS

We used a range of channels to promote the engagement period to the community. This included advertising via print and social media, direct email to residents who participated in our 2018 engagement and flyers to High Street traders.

SOCIAL MEDIA



4,359

Reach and Impressions

114

Actions (Clicks, reactions, shares, comments etc.)



200

Flyers delivered to local businesses



200+

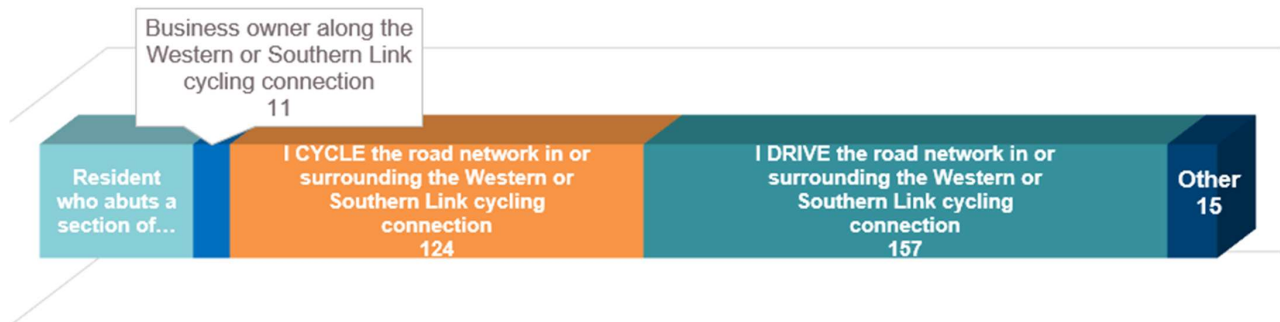
Emails sent to residents who had participated in the 2018 engagement

4. WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

PARTICIPATION

The community were invited to share their connection to the Western and Southern links of the BBBC project.

Graph 1: Participant connection to the Building Better Bike Connections (BBBC) project



We further analysed showed that participants generally interacted with the network in a range of ways.

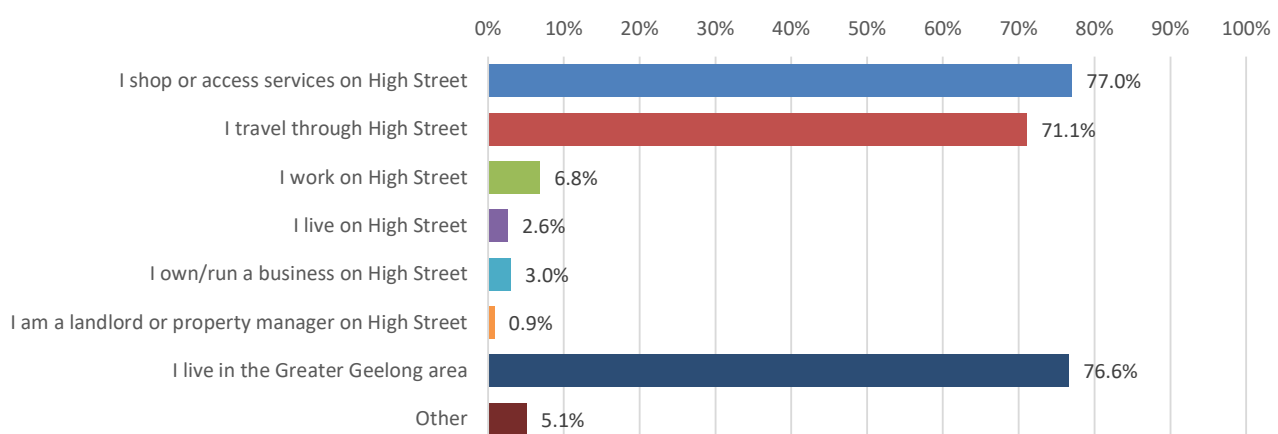
Of the 124 cyclists that responded to the survey

- 84% also drive the road network
- 24% live near a section of the western or southern link
- 24% live, visit or work in the area surrounding the western or southern cycling connection
- 24% Only cycle
- 3% own a business along the western or southern link

Of the 157 drivers that responded to the survey

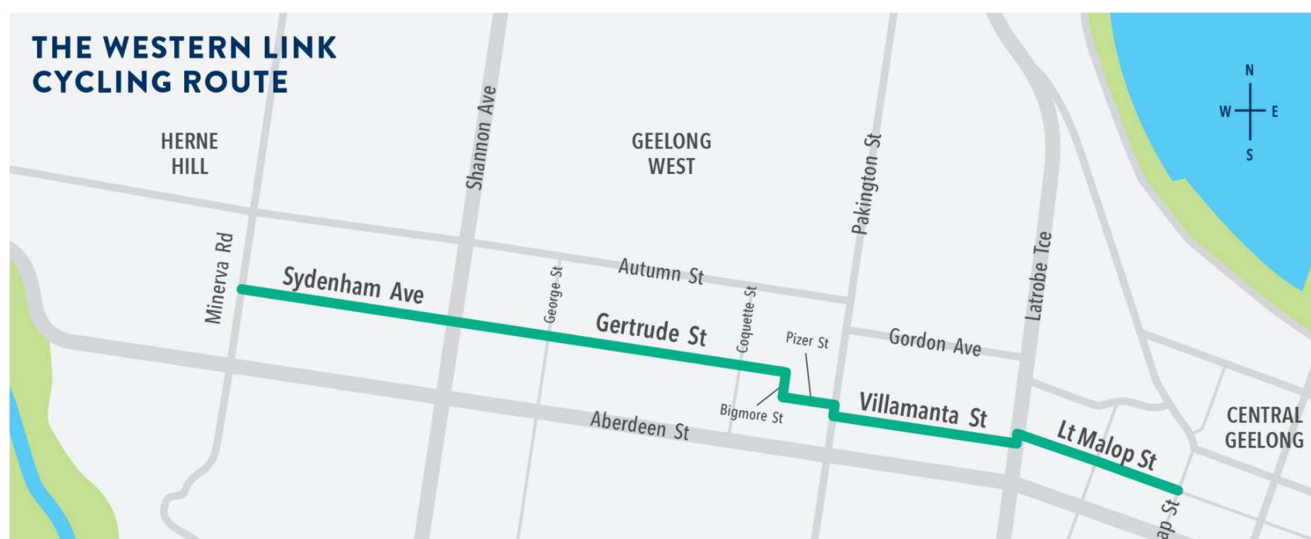
- 84% also cycle the road network
- 82% live, visit or work in the area surrounding the western or southern cycling connection
- 33% live near a section of the western or southern link
- 26% only drive
- 5% own a business along the western or southern link

Graph 2: Participants connection to High Street, Belmont



5. WHAT WE HEARD – DETAILED ANALYSIS

FEEDBACK ON THE COMPLETED WESTERN LINK



WE ASKED

PARTICIPANTS WHO HAD RIDDEN THE COMPLETED SECTIONS HOW THEY USE THE WESTERN LINK

WE HEARD

- 53 participants had ridden a bike along the Western Link
 - 52.8% for recreational riding
 - 13.2% for commuting
 - 28.3% for a mixture of both
 - 5.6% (3 participants) selected other

PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE USING THE WESTERN LINK OF THE BUILDING BETTER BIKE CONNECTIONS PROJECT

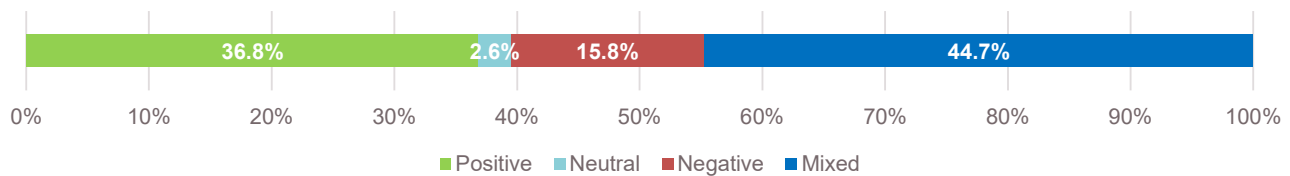
Feedback from participants who have ridden the completed section of the Western Link

- The following insights were derived from the 43 participants who had said they had ridden a bike along the Western Link
- Sentiment was generally positive (37%) or mixed (45%) with 16% negative and 2% neutral (See Graph 3)
- Mixed sentiment typically indicated general support for the project but also highlighted a concern or possible improvement
 - 7 participants mentioned feeling safer using the bike lines
 - 5 specifically mentioned using the bike paths with children and families
 - Several possible improvements were raised; including clearer or more markings and signage (4) to help inform road users of the change in condition. This would also address other concerns raised such as poor visibility (2) and confusion in design (5).

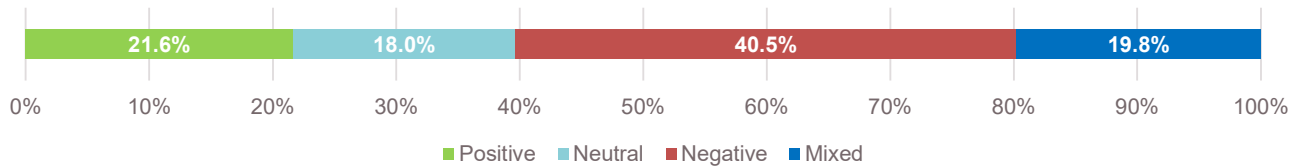
Overall feedback from participants regarding the completed section of the Western Link

- The following insights were derived from the wider 111 participant answers to the question
- Sentiment was mixed; 40.5% negative, 21.6% positive, 19.8% mixed and 18% neutral
- 23 participants wrote generally supportive comments without specific feedback (see Graph 4)
- The most common concerns raised were the appearance of underutilisation of the bike paths (16 participants) and by extension the feeling that investing in bike paths was a waste of money (11)
- 15 participants mentioned a concern about safety or risk to road uses. While 10 specifically mentioned the increase to safety because of the bike lanes.
- 10 participants raised concerns that the route was not connected to other parts of the network or key areas within Geelong, including the northern suburbs.
- 6 participants requested clearer or more signage and markings while 4 found the route unclear or confusing

Graph 3: Analysis of feedback provided by cyclists on the Western Link by sentiment



Graph 4: Analysis of all feedback provided on the Western Link by sentiment



Verbatim quotes



Positive feedback

- I live on the Western link and work in the City. The link is great especially the crossing on Pakington Street. The traffic is calmer on this bike route and car drivers are aware to look out for cyclists.
- It makes it easier and safer to ride along this route. I have noticed many students riding along this route and have been pleased to see they have a safe way to ride to and from school.
- Much safer for bike riders and easy for drivers like myself to navigate.
- The signage and pavement details make it easy for a driver to be aware this is a bike zone.



Mixed feedback

- All my family has been able to ride more safely with the new bike lanes. Unfortunately there are not enough of the new lanes to be able to get to many places by bike, and they don't yet connect very well.
- Any lane and awareness is great, but the links are clunky and hard to follow verging on dangerous at times.
- It is imperative that there is infrastructure for cyclists in Geelong. This route was a lazy attempt to create safe cycle paths. Unless it is constantly upgraded with lines and signage otherwise a waste of \$\$.



Negative feedback

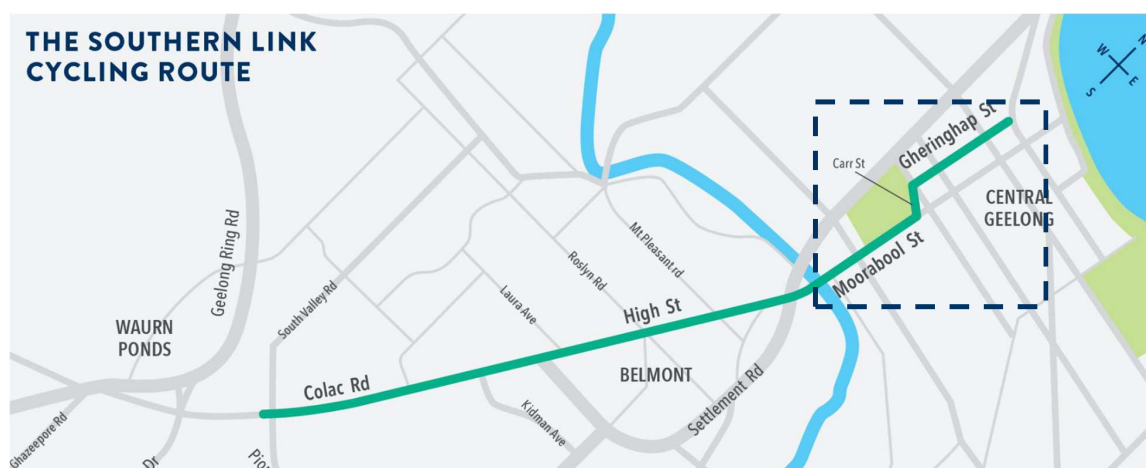
- Have not seen one cyclist in Malop Street ever!
- I thought this would be really good, but it's disruptive to traffic flow.
- Why are we wasting countless millions of dollars on these projects that a tiny fraction of the community uses?
- Waste of money, taking out our customers car parks, riders have no respect for traffic laws.
- I believe that bicycle paths are a waste of money.
- Bicycle are an inefficient and dangerous form of transport. Bicycle owners and users are elitist and undeserving of the millions spent on useless means of transport.



Neutral feedback

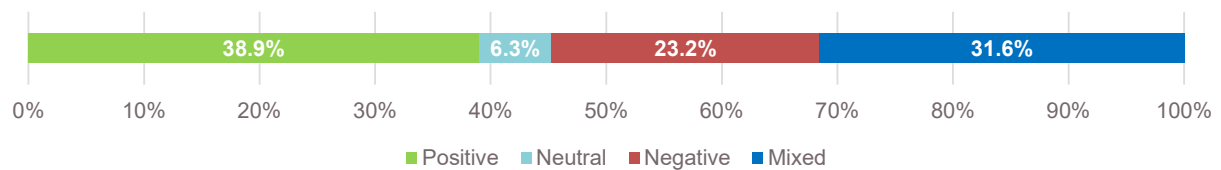
- Where wide streets can accommodate bike lanes this should be prioritised. Hopefully the streets chosen are on an existing bicycle route and are connected to other routes.
- I haven't ridden it yet
- I live in Belmont and have a friend that lives in Herne Hill. We both have cargo bikes to carry our kids and we ride together occasionally for recreation. Sometimes I got his way, sometimes he heads over my way

FEEDBACK ON THE COMPLETED SECTIONS OF SOUTHERN LINK

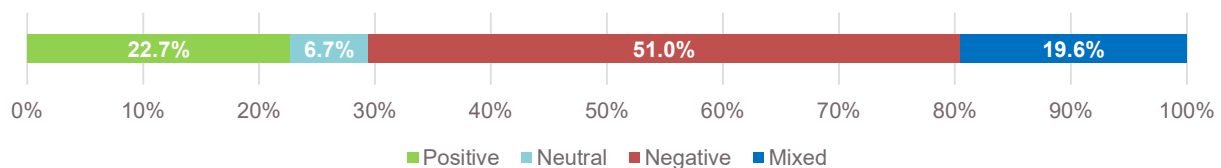


WE ASKED	WE HEARD
<p>PARTICIPANTS WHO HAD RIDDEN THE COMPLETED SECTIONS HOW THEY USE THE SOUTHERN LINK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 107 participants had ridden a bike along the Southern Link <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32.1% for recreational riding 27.4% for commuting 37.8% for a mixture of both 3.7% (4 participants) selected other 1 participant did not answer
<p>PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE USING THE COMPLETED SECTION OF THE SOUTHERN LINK OF THE BUILDING BETTER BIKE CONNECTIONS PROJECT</p>	<p>Feedback from participants who have ridden the completed section of the Southern Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 participants said they had ridden a bike along the COMPLETED section of the Southern Link Response sentiment for those that had ridden the southern link was largely positive (39%) with 32% mixed, 23% negative and 6% neutral (see graph 5) Mixed sentiment typically indicated general support for the project but also highlighted a concern or possible improvement The most common statement amongst those that had ridden the completed southern link was a feeling of safety or increased safety with 27 participants mentioning safety in their response 21 participants wrote generally supportive comments without specific feedback 18 participants mentioned the advantage and benefit of separated bikes lanes 14 participants had concerns about obstacles on or near the bike path blocking the lane. For example, temporary traffic signs used in road works. Several possible improvements were raised; including clearer or more markings and signage (4) to help inform road users of the change in condition. This would also address other concerns raised such as confusion in design (19) and poor driver awareness (17).
	<p>Overall feedback on the completed Southern Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following insights were derived from the wider 194 participant answers to the question Sentiment was largely (51%) negative with 23% positive, 20% mixed and 7% neutral 25 participants wrote generally supportive comments without specific feedback The most common concern raised was increased risk to road users (56), specifically at intersections (31). Driver awareness (21) and bike visibility (18) were suggested as places for improvement. However, 30 participants specifically mentioned the increase to safety because of the bike lanes. With a total of 21 participants praising the separated the bike lanes. 30 participants thought the bike paths were underutilised and by extension the feeling that investing in bike paths was a waste of money (15) 15 participants raised concerns that the route was not connected to other parts of the network or key areas within Geelong, including the northern suburbs.

Graph 5: Analysis of feedback provided by cyclists on the completed section of the Southern Link by sentiment



Graph 6: Analysis of all feedback provided on the completed section of the Southern Link by sentiment



Verbatim Quotes

Positive feedback

- They are a great initiative I like how they are completely segregated from the road meaning I feel much safer on my commute.
- The new section is a dramatic improvement on the user experience when compared to the prior road space allocation. It's now a joy to ride along this corridor.
- I have found the Southern Link from the river into the Geelong CBD to be excellent. Despite the challenge of the shared path area outside the Shell service station and street crossing at Park Avenue
- Well done CoGG! The separated bike lanes work well - it's a big step in the right direction. As a cyclist, I feel significantly safer. As a driver as well, there is no change.

Mixed feedback

- Overall I'm really happy to have them there. I do feel they are let down by many features of their design and construction, which could be improved in future sections, or progressively in the future.
- I feel much safer riding my bike on the new sections of the Southern Link compared to riding along High Street. I find the existing bus stops are uncomfortable to ride over because the ramps on either side are quite steep. It would have been great if more trees could have been incorporated into these sections.
- I see well designed bicycle lanes but I rarely see anyone using them. I don't see (maybe I'm not looking properly) places where people can leave their bicycles for long periods where there isn't the fear of having them stolen, and where they are protected from the weather

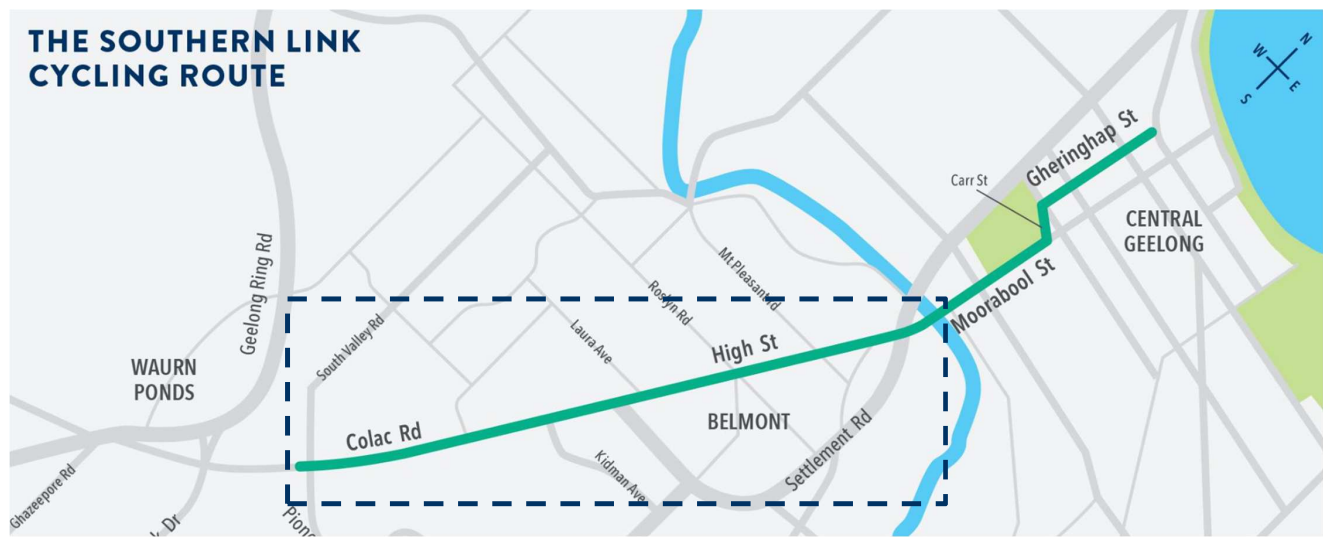
Negative feedback

- Absolutely ridiculous where the parked cars are now. They constantly hold up traffic as cars have to merge behind them. There are rarely any bike using them.
- Not great with the construction site part way up the hill. Too many curves and road crossings aren't great when cars parked in nearby spots especially for riding visibility.
- Terrible use of space with parking bays stuck out and impacting roadway, trip hazard in Moorabool St leaving stadium.
- I have not seen anyone riding on this link since it's completion & it has reduced car parking. & ease for drivers, why waste the money constructing these links for very little usage. Whether council likes it or not we are car drivers!
- The road is now dangerous for every user. Nothing aligns, the traffic flow is all over the place and parking reduced.

Neutral feedback

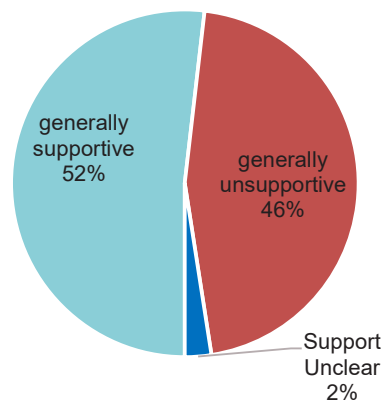
- Need to market route to locals and visitors alike.
- Cyclists are still using the road instead of the bike lanes...
- I still see some cyclists travelling into the CBD on alternate roads, so it would be good to ensure they are educated to use the link. Making cultural change like this takes time and perseverance; I urge council to persist with the plan and give it the time needed to change to habits for cyclists and drivers.
- We need the same to connect the North!! I've tried several times to ride my bike from Corio into town and it's just dangerous.

FEEDBACK ON DESIGN OF STAGE 2 SOUTHERN LINK

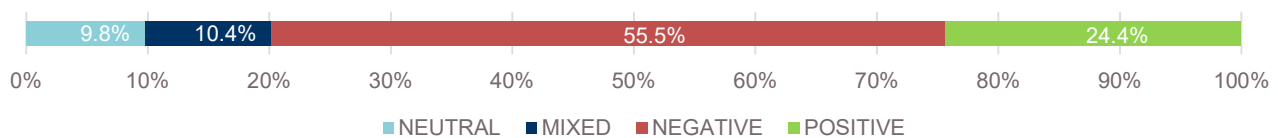


WE ASKED	WE HEARD
<p>PARTICIPANTS ASKED IF THEY FELT THE DESIGN MET THE AIM TO CREATE NEW MAJOR CYCLING ROUTES THAT WOULD MAKE IT SAFER AND EASIER FOR ANYONE TO RIDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% said yes, • 46% said no • 15% were unsure
<p>PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO EXPAND ON THEIR ANSWER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 164 responses were recorded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 52% of responses were generally supportive of the project as a whole but often provided suggestions for possible improvements ○ 46% of responses were unsupportive of the project regardless of any changes to design ○ 2% of responses were of such brevity that support sentiment could not be assessed • Participants used the text response to raise concerns and suggestions for improvement to the design. • 19 participants specifically praised the separated bike lanes and 18 mentioned the design would increase safety. • 29 participants raised concerns with using High Street and suggested a different route would be more beneficial or safer. • The most common concerns related to High Street were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased traffic congestion caused by bike lanes (15) ○ The steepness of the hill (9) ○ Poor outcomes for or impact on High Street business (8) ○ Loss of street parking (8) • 38 participants raised concerns relating to risk or safety however no specific safety issue was raised a high number of times. • 10 participants found the designs provided confusing or hard to understand.

Graph 7: Analysis of feedback provided on the design for Stage 2 of the Southern Link



Graph 8: Analysis of all feedback provided on the designs for Stage 2 of the Southern Link by sentiment



Verbatim comments

Positive feedback

- The BBBC project is great - it's a no-brainer. Any change is going to be a challenge. Surely there is enough support for the project - do we keep needing to consult the community only to hear the same thing. Let's just build it and be proud of it!
- It is useful for travelling to the shops
- Designs appear to be easy to use and sensible. I'd feel much more comfortable riding with my child to High Street.
- Option 2B wasn't my preferred option, in 2018 I thought a lane on each side would be better but I've come round to two lanes on one side. The main thing is the cars are away from us so we don't get killed
- Separated lanes are essential to maximise the amount of cyclists who feel safe to use them.
- I think it's a good way to meet the needs and wants of both cyclists and car users.

Mixed feedback

- It would be even better if dedicated separated bike lanes were provided but I understand that this can not be achieved in the space available. Don't forget to include street tree planting to provide shade and make the route attractive.
- The separated sections along high St retail are critical. The move from bidirectional path to one way at mt pleasant Rd is the correct place for this. I am not sure that bidirectional path is correct along settlement Rd.
- Would be direct and fine for cyclists but not for the local shopping strip. Francis Street is a wide street with less traffic which may be a better alternative.

Negative feedback

- It is focussed on bike riders only and should take into consideration everyone who is affected by this project.
- No one ride this way! It's a waste of my rates!
- Safety concerns around Cambra Rd. The new pedestrian crossing between Apex and Allit Avenue looks too close to the merge onto High Street, drivers may get annoyed. Concrete barriers between bike lane and parking/footpath slightly hazardous - Scandi design?
- People don't ride their bikes around this area, they drive cars to shop, use services. Parking is already challenging along High St this will make it disastrous. Local businesses are leaving & moving to shopping centres, local strip shopping will die
- Stop spending money on cyclists!!!
- Who is going to ride up the high street hill

Neutral feedback

- Uses a very busy and narrow street (High Street) where the new bike lanes are to be constructed. Have any alternatives been looked at to get cyclists safely between Roslyn and Moorabool St bridge.
- The new route should be via Francis Street, Belmont
- It might look okay on paper but it will depend on the actual implementation, quality of surface and traffic behaviour.
- I am concerned that drivers would take time to adapt to the new design

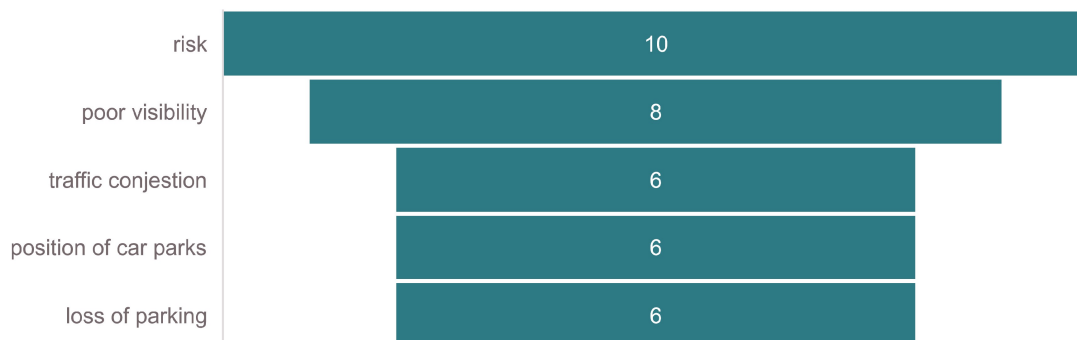
WRITTEN FEEDBACK

We received an additional 59 comments through channels outside of the Have Your Say survey. This included

- 41 requests for service
- 13 comments via Facebook
- 4 emails
- 1 phone call (unrelated to the call back request in the survey)
- 0 hard copy surveys returned

The feedback was reviewed using the same methodology as the survey by tagging common words and phrases. Feedback provided outside of the survey was generally negative or mixed. Mixed feedback was generally supportive of the project but identified potential improvements.

Graph 9: Most frequent themes raised regarding the BBBC project outside of the survey



6. CONCLUSION

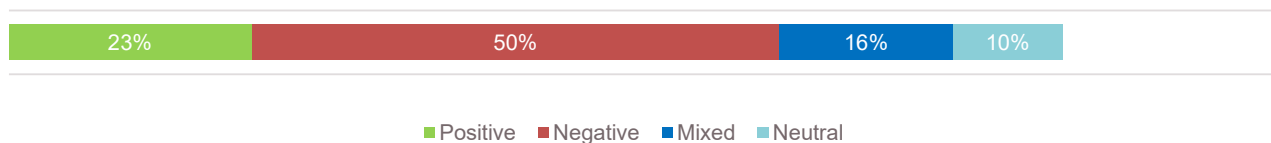
We received 469 comments across 3 questions relating to the completed sections of the BBBC project and the designs on Stage 2 of the Southern Link.

The comments were analysed to understand the general sentiment of the feedback (Graph 10).

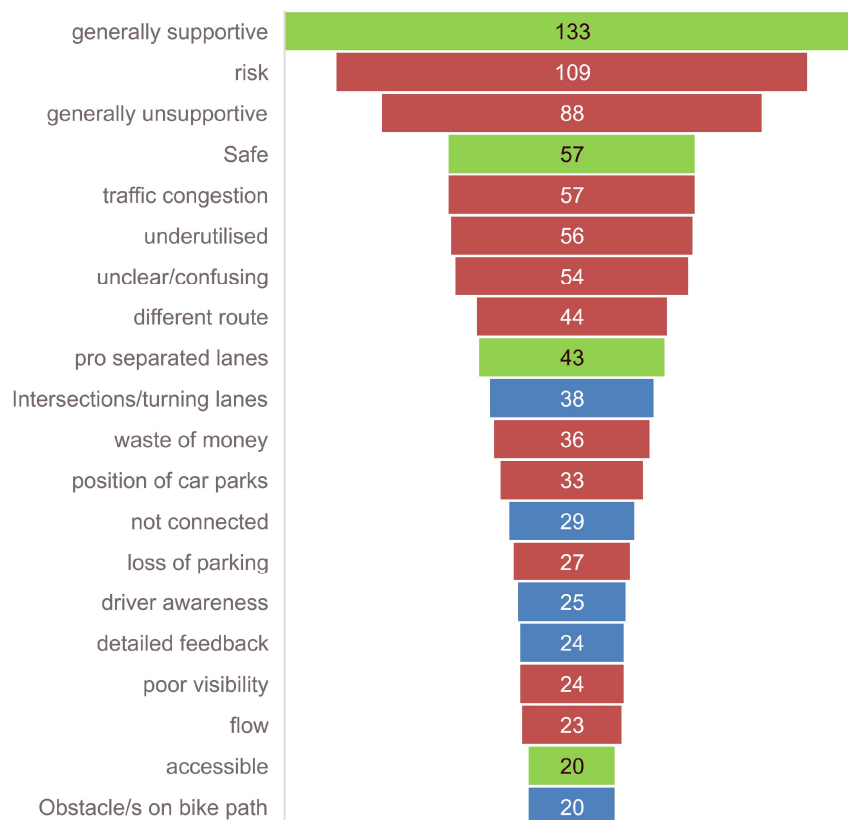
Each of the comments were also tagged to gauge the frequency of themes. We applied 73 unique tags to the comments with many comments raising more than one theme. Feedback was varied and centred around safety, design, and amenity.

The most frequently mentioned themes are displayed in Graph 11 below.

Graph 10: Analysis of feedback provided on the three open text questions



Graph 11: Top 20 most frequently raised themes



From the feedback we collected during the engagement period there were also a number of specific requests regarding the completed sections and the design for Stage of the Southern Link. These items will be reviewed separately, and a summary will be provided on the BBBC web page along with a response from the City.

We will continue to update the community as the project progresses via the BBBC engagement page <https://yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/building-better-bike-connections>.