

Public perceptions of Cuba Street

Results from an online survey

May 2025

Methodology

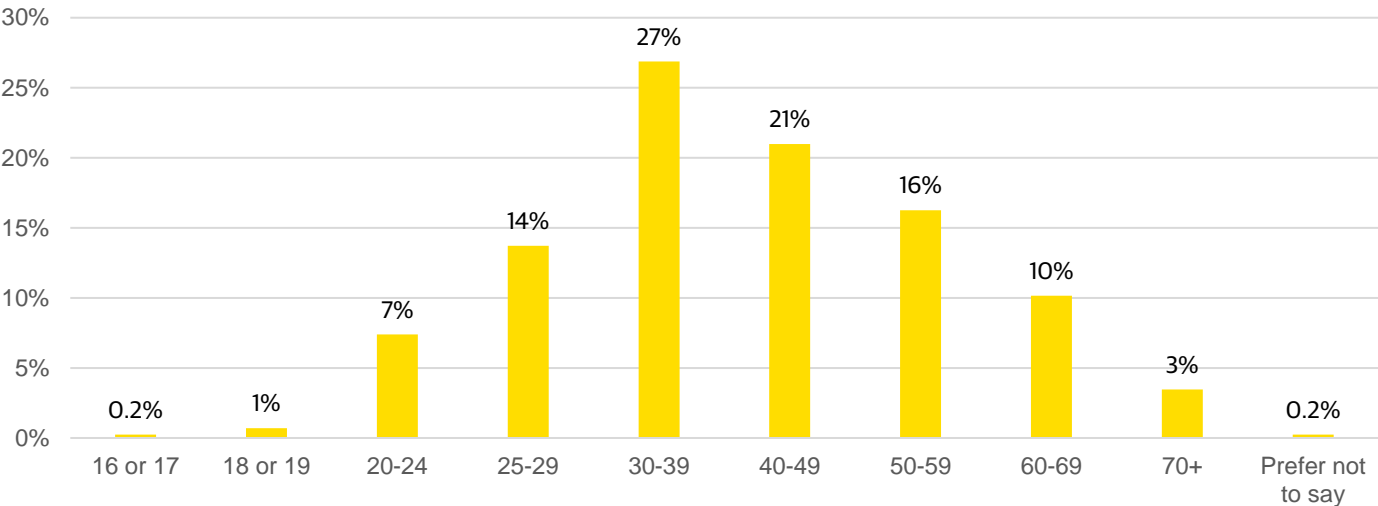
- An online survey was shared by Wellington City Council to gather public feedback on what makes Cuba Street special, what needs a rethink, and what would make it an even better place to visit.
- The survey was shared through Facebook and Instagram advertising, as well as the Wellington City Council website and socials. A small prize draw was offered to thank participants for their time.
- The survey was open from 2 to 27 April 2025. It was open to anyone 16 years or older who had visited Cuba Street in the past year.
- Interest in the survey was high and there were 867 complete responses. All data presented below is based on the total number of respondents, unless otherwise stated.
- This report was prepared by Wellington City Council's Strategy & Research team.



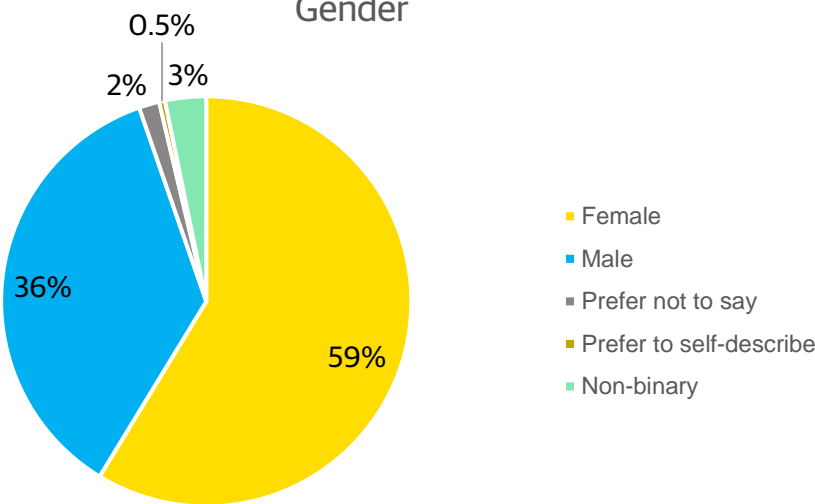
Respondent demographics

Total survey respondents = 867 people

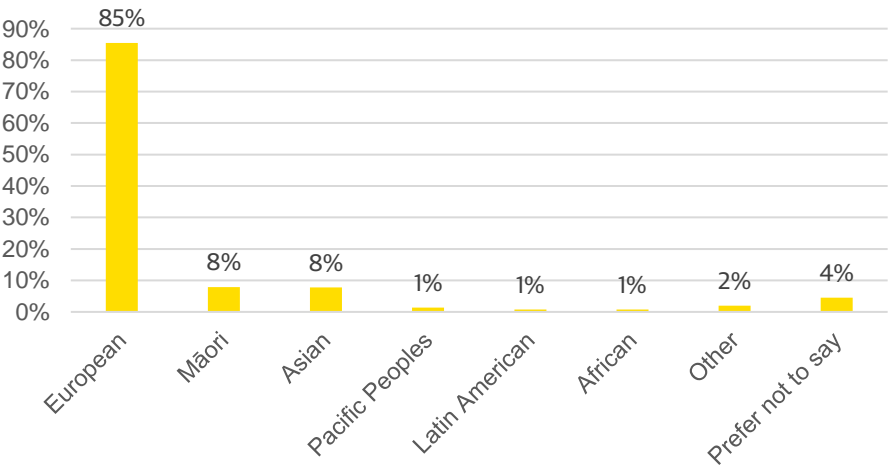
Age (proportion of respondents in each age group)



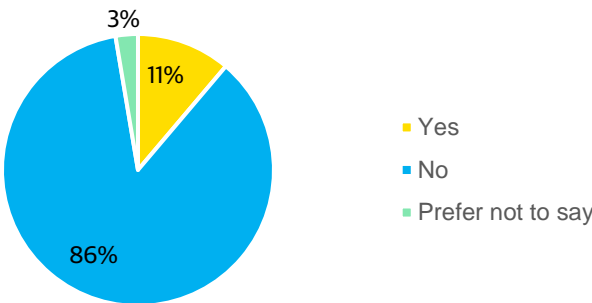
Gender



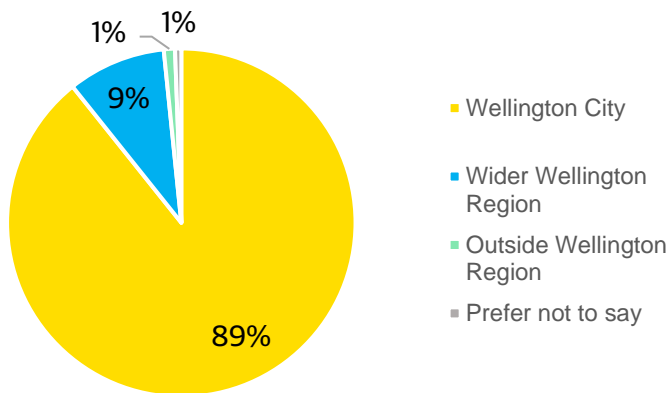
Ethnicity



Do you identify as living with a disability?

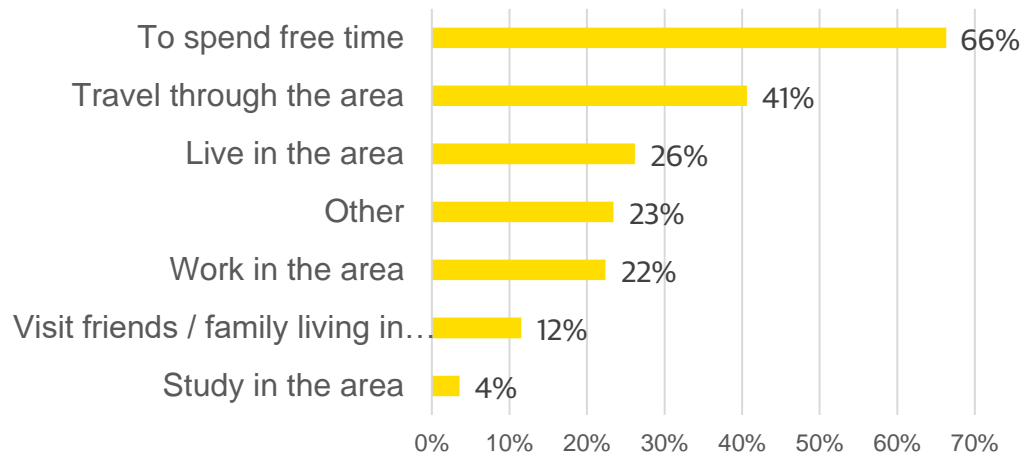


Where do you currently live?



Connection to Cuba Street

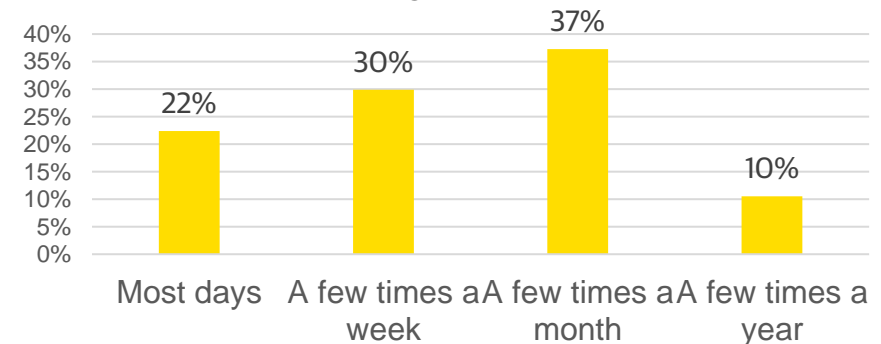
Why do you typically visit Cuba Street?



Note - the main responses for the 'other' category were dining and drinking (14% of responses overall) and shopping (13% of responses overall). Respondents could choose more than one answer so percentages sum to more than 100%.

Two-thirds of respondents visit Cuba Street to spend free time. Most respondents visited Cuba Street regularly over the past year.

Frequency of visitation in the past year



**“What
words come
to mind
when you
think about
Cuba
Street?”**

**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



First impressions

What words come to mind when you think about Cuba Street?

813 respondents answered this open-text question.



Vibrant

The top perception of Cuba Street is that it is vibrant and lively (433 responses). People also see it as quirky and alternative (308 responses).



Diverse offering

People appreciate the diverse offering in terms of hospitality, with good food and drink options (202 responses). They also like the eclectic range of shops, many of which are independent or alternative (181 responses).



Inclusive

Cuba Street is seen as diverse and inclusive (154 responses). It is also a creative and artistic hub for the city (105 responses).



Iconic

Cuba Street is quintessentially Wellington, with character and iconic features (137 responses). It is appreciated as a pedestrian-friendly space (104 responses).

First impressions

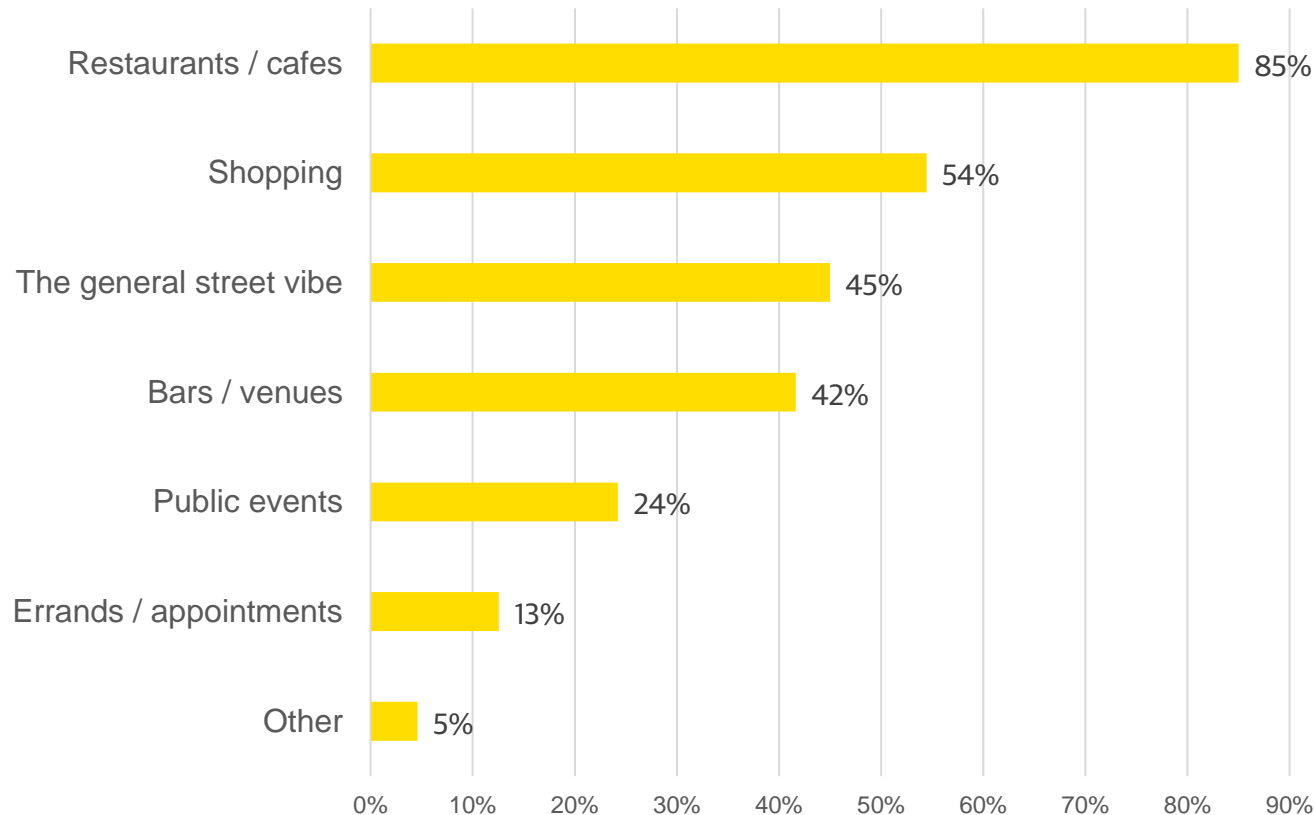
What words come to mind when you think about Cuba Street?

Respondents' first impressions of Cuba Street also highlight areas for improvement:

- Aged and run down (123 responses): the street is seen as tired, grungy and outdated.
- Cleaning and maintenance required (109 responses): the most common comments on this theme relate to dirtiness and bad odors.
- Concerns about chain stores taking over and a loss of character and vibrancy in the area (96 responses).
- Concerns about social issues, such as homelessness and begging (59 responses).
- Need to improve safety (51 responses). The main concerns seem to relate to social causes, with reports of intimidating and aggressive behaviour.

Top attractions

What are the top things that attract you to Cuba Street as a place to spend free time? (choose up to 3)



Restaurants and cafes are the main draw to Cuba Street. People are also attracted by shopping, the vibe and bars/ venues.

What do you love about Cuba St?

Respondents were asked this as an open-text question and 766 people responded.
The top themes were:

1. Diverse and vibrant hospitality

The theme with the most mentions is the diverse food and drink options available on Cuba Street (259 responses). Respondents also talked about the vibrant hospitality, especially the bars (94 responses).

2. Diverse retail options

The next most common theme relates to the diversity of stores and respondents like that many stores on Cuba Street are unique and/or independent (227 responses).

3. Vibrancy and character

People also love the eclectic, alternative vibe (162 responses), the historic and iconic elements, e.g. heritage buildings, Bucket Fountain (155 responses). It is also seen as lively and bustling, with plenty to see and do (146 responses). People like the street performers and public events (67 responses).

4. People friendly

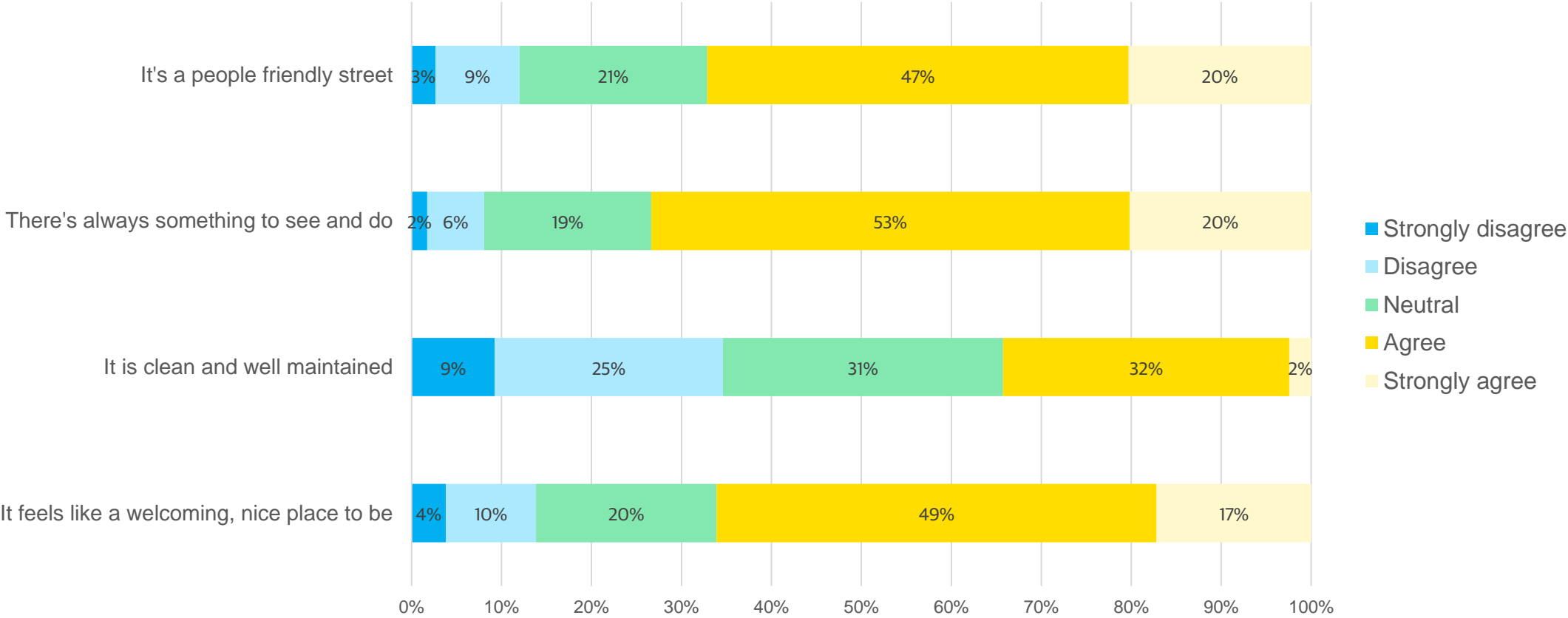
Cuba Street prioritises pedestrians (128 responses). It is very walkable and the pedestrianised sections are appreciated (85 responses).

5. Sense of community

Cuba Street is seen as inclusive (105 responses), a hub for creativity (77 responses) and welcoming (49 responses). It is a gathering place for the community, with outdoor spaces and seating for people to meet socially (59 responses).

General views

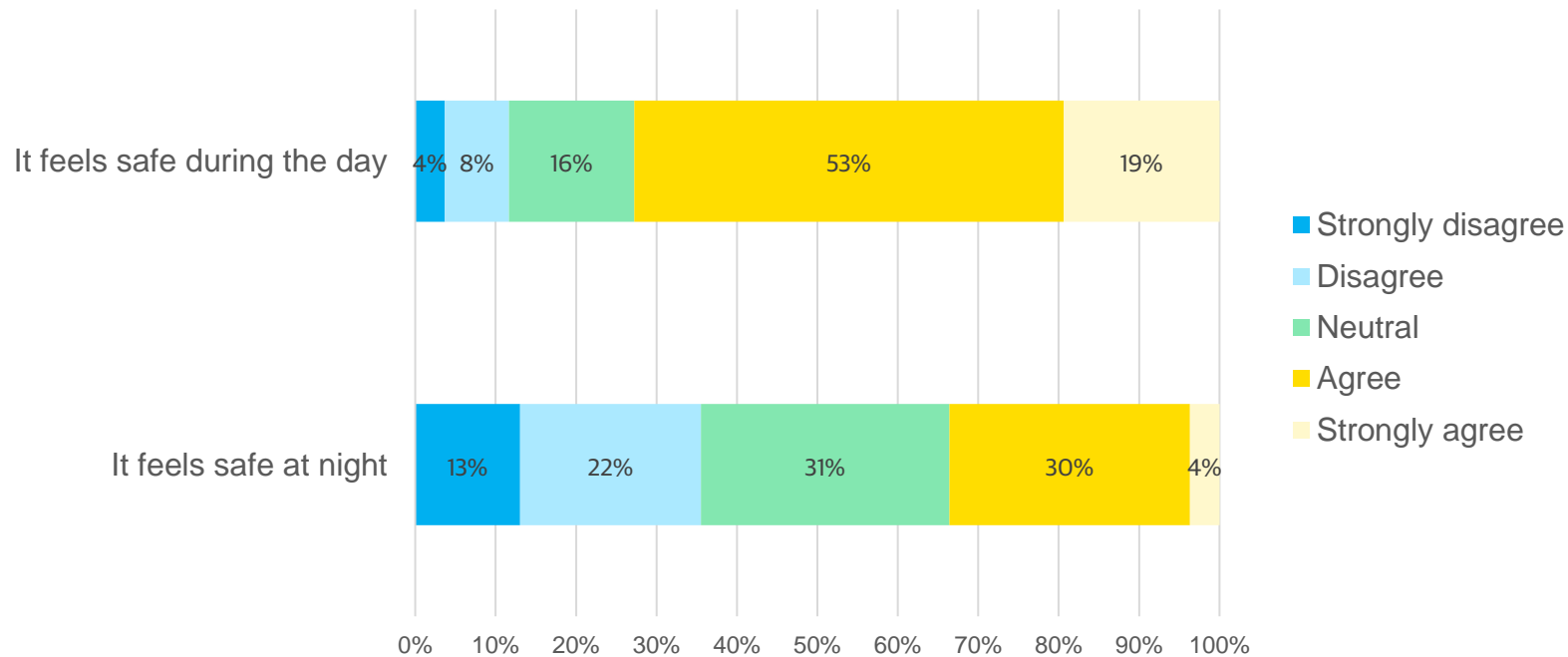
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Cuba Street?



Safety on Cuba Street

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



72% of respondents agree Cuba Street feels safe during the day.

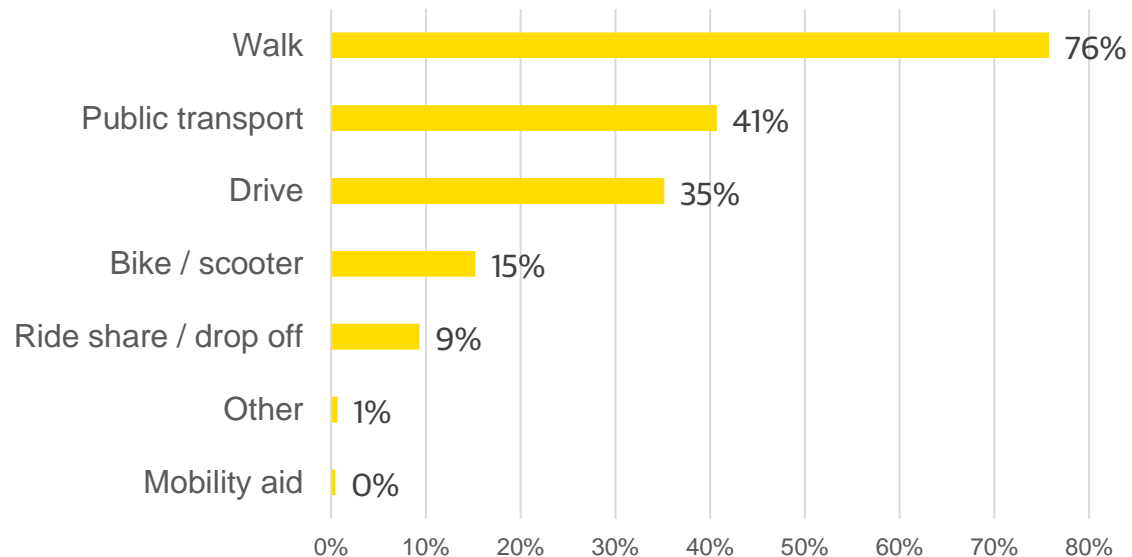
Only 34% agree it feels safe at night.

Transport

**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**

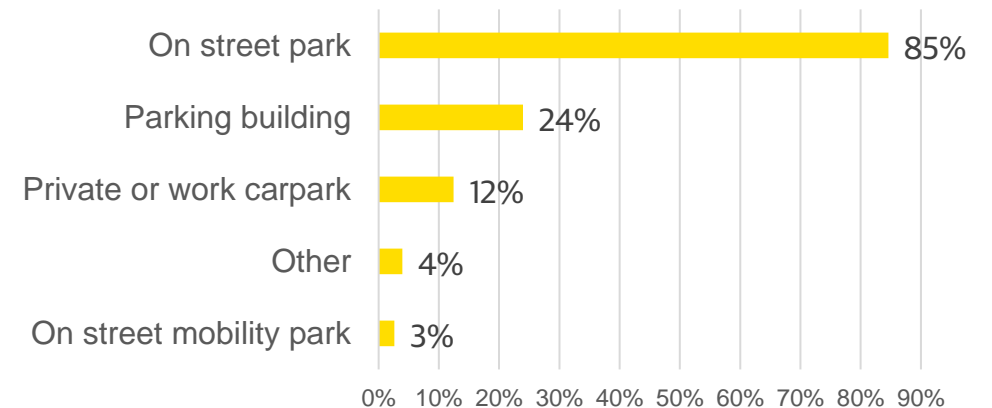
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

How do you typically get to the Cuba Street area?
(choose all that apply)



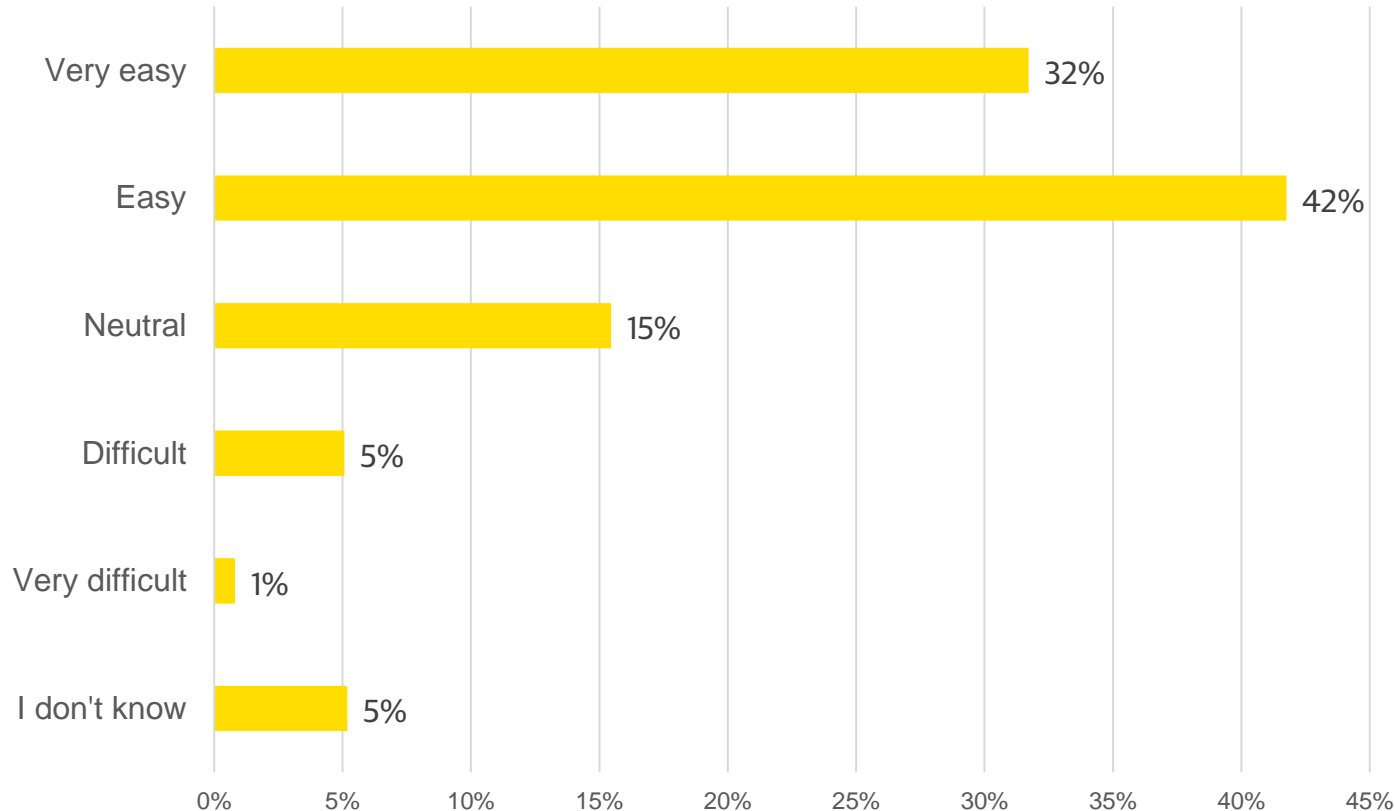
People who report driving to the Cuba Street area were asked a follow-up parking question. There were 305 respondents to this question.

When you drive, where do you usually park around the Cuba Street area?*



Ease of movement

Overall, how easy or difficult do you find it to move through
Cuba Street on foot or with a mobility aid?



74% of respondents find it easy to move around Cuba Street as a pedestrian, while 6% find it difficult.

Ease of movement in detail

532 respondents answered an open-text question: 'Do you have any specific comments about things that make it easy or hard to get around Cuba Street?' The top themes from these responses are:

Need to improve the pedestrian experience:

- Crowded footpaths with bottlenecks along the street (92 responses).
- Difficulty navigating intersections and crossings, e.g. long wait times at some intersections (91 responses).
- Narrow footpaths and lack of space (87 responses).
- Increase pedestrianisation (71 responses).
- Slippery and uneven surfaces (62 responses).
- Obstacles and clutter on footpaths (48 responses).
- Cars impact pedestrian flow, e.g. movement and sight lines (47 responses).
- Being confronted by homelessness and antisocial behaviour can be challenging (35 responses).

Issues for other modes:

- Difficulty finding car parks (42 responses).
- Insufficient space for cyclists and e-scooter riders (23 responses).

Positive experiences:

- Easy to navigate and get around (46 responses).
- Comfortable and enjoyable walking experience (42 responses).
- Parking is available and convenient (29 responses).

What could be improved?

793 respondents answered an open-text question on what could be improved about Cuba Street. The responses were grouped into themes and these are reported below.

Expand pedestrianisation

The theme with the most responses relates to expanding pedestrianisation on Cuba Street, either by fully pedestrianising the street or extending the area that is currently pedestrian only. One-quarter of respondents who answered the question on ways to improve Cuba Street mention wanting further pedestrianisation (190 responses).

In addition, there is a preference to prioritise pedestrians over cars (80 responses), reduce traffic (71 responses) and improve the pedestrian experience, e.g. provide more space, improve crossings and reduce hazards for pedestrians (57 responses).



Cleanliness and appearance

Respondents would like an increase in regular street cleaning and maintenance (176 responses), as they report Cuba Street is grimy and unclean.

The overall visual appeal and presentation of the area could be enhanced (74 responses). Many report it is shabby and run down and would like it to be made more inviting.

Maintenance is needed for the paving, which can be slippery. The footpaths and paving can also be worn and uneven (44 responses).

Building façades could also use cleaning and some need maintenance to restore their appeal (40 responses).

Social issues and homelessness

A key concern for Cuba Street is addressing anti-social behaviour, including aggressive behaviour, aggressive begging and issues related to drug use and public intoxication (145 responses).

Respondents would like to see better support for people experiencing homelessness or mental health issues (74 responses).

A number of people report safety concerns at night, but also to some extent during the daytime too (85 responses on safety in total).

Respondents would like to see improved lighting to make the area feel safer (65 responses) and increased police presence and patrols (30 responses).

Enhance vibrancy and amenity

A theme emerged around improving vibrancy and atmosphere. Top responses for this theme are:

- Host regular events (e.g. night markets), festivals and activations to draw people in (82 responses).
- Introduce more outdoor dining, seating and spaces to gather (67 responses).
- Retail: Discourage the proliferation of chain stores (69 responses), attract diverse businesses (50 responses) and support independent and locally-owned businesses (33 responses). Repurpose vacant shops (29 responses).
- Preserve Cuba Street's unique character and sense of local identity (47 responses).

There were also suggestions for how to improve amenity in the area:

- Integrate more greenery, planting and natural elements (40 responses).
- Improve public seating and rest areas (34 responses).

Improve accessibility

This slide provides suggestions for how to improve accessibility. These answers were not widely reported but nevertheless identify accessibility issues.

- Improve surfaces that may be slippery or uneven.
- Pavers uncomfortable for wheelchair users.
- Kerb cuts unsafe for wheelchairs.
- Retain mobility parking.
- Improve accessibility from footpaths to shops and restaurants.
- Widen and declutter footpaths.
- Increase space on footpaths at crossings.
- More public toilets and seating.