



**Where's**



**your**



**happy**



**place?**

**Where's your happy place?**  
Engagement Report  
4 March to 8 April 2022

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

# Introduction

- This report is about a public survey conducted from 4 March to 8 April 2022, as part of the Wellington City Council’s review of its Open Space and Recreation Strategy, Our Capital Spaces (2013).
- The survey was undertaken during the information-gathering phase of the review to gain insight into people’s experience and expectations of the city’s public spaces, and to invite comment and ideas about what would improve their experience in future.
- It was designed to encourage a wide range of people to participate by making it a quick 5-minute survey, which could be easily completed on a mobile phone, accessible online or through a QR code displayed on notices and flyers. The theme, “Where’s Your Happy Place”, was devised to be appealing, drawing on other feedback that had shown residents value public spaces as places for enjoyment.
- The survey asked about both outdoor and indoor public spaces, including for comparison, some indoor places that are not within the scope of the Open Space and Recreation Strategy, such as museums, galleries, community centres and libraries.
- A Te Reo Māori version of the survey was available for the last two weeks of the survey period.
- A total of 1452 survey responses were received, including four in Te Reo. More than 99% were completed online and 12 responses were completed on paper.
- The survey was made available through the Council’s Kōrero Mai | Let's Talk website page and promoted via direct email to more than 350 stakeholder groups; Council’s e-newsletters to residents’ associations, posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; posters in parks and recreation/community facilities; and direct engagement with people in public places.

# Engagement

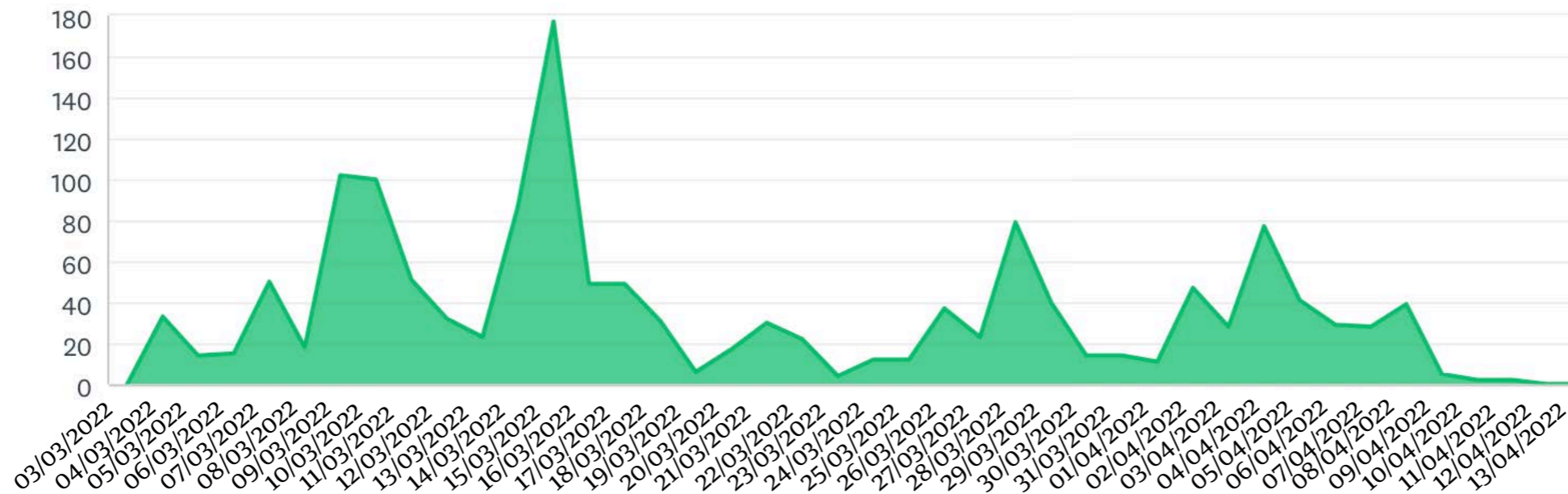
How many responses did we get?

**1452**  
Responses

**This includes:**

4 responses provided in Te Reo. These were translated and included in the analysis.

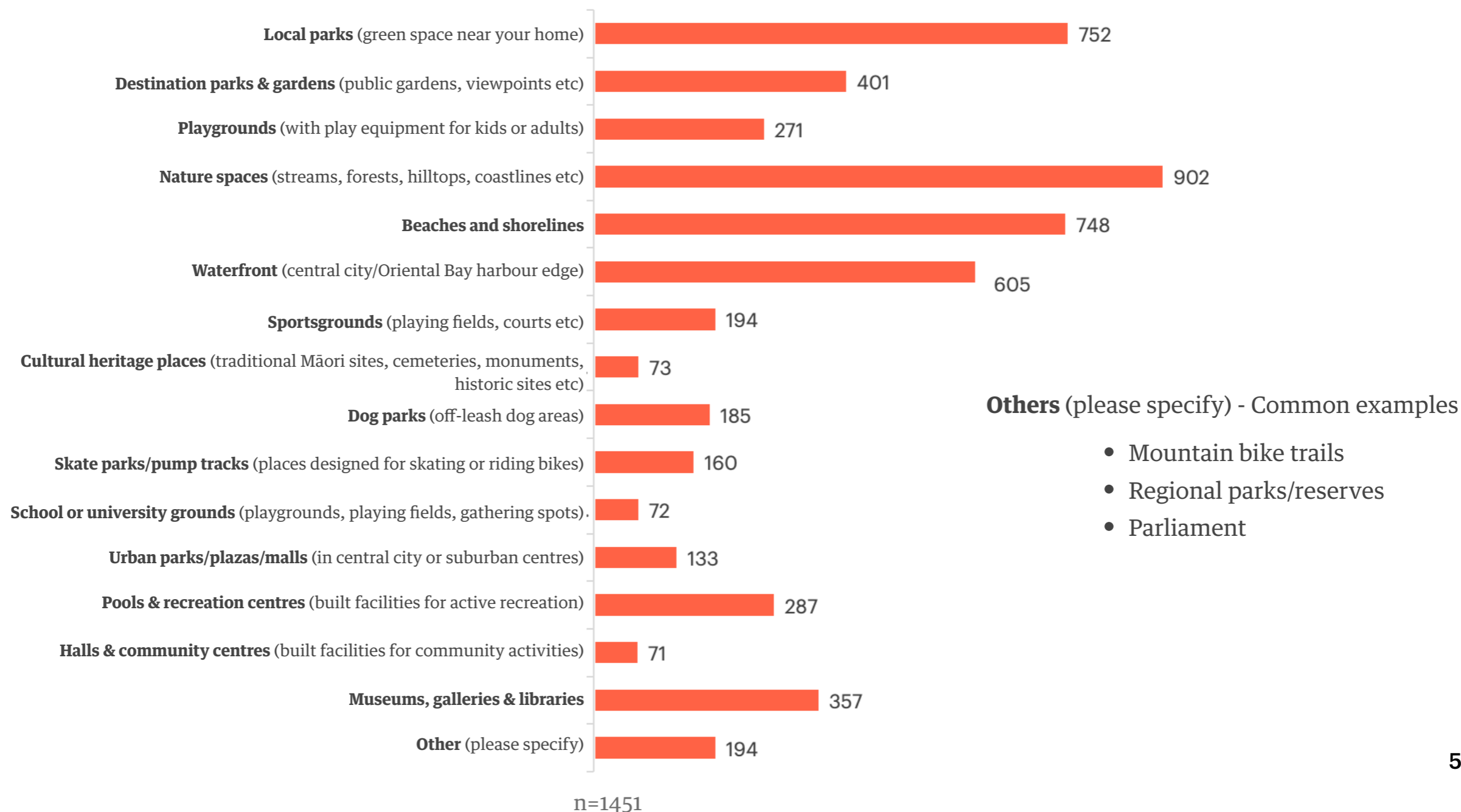
**Number of daily responses over duration of engagement:**



**How people responded**

# Which public spaces do you visit?

Which public spaces do you visit?  
When you're out of the house, where do you go the most?  
[Choose your top 4]



# Who do you normally spend time with at these places?

## Who do you normally spend time with at these places?

[Choose as many as you want]



n=1446

### Others (please specify) - Common examples

- Dogs (A large proportion of 'other')
- Other children
- Other protestors

# What do you do there?

**What do you do there?**  
 At these places, what do you most often do?  
 [Choose as many as you want]



**Others** (please specify) - Examples:

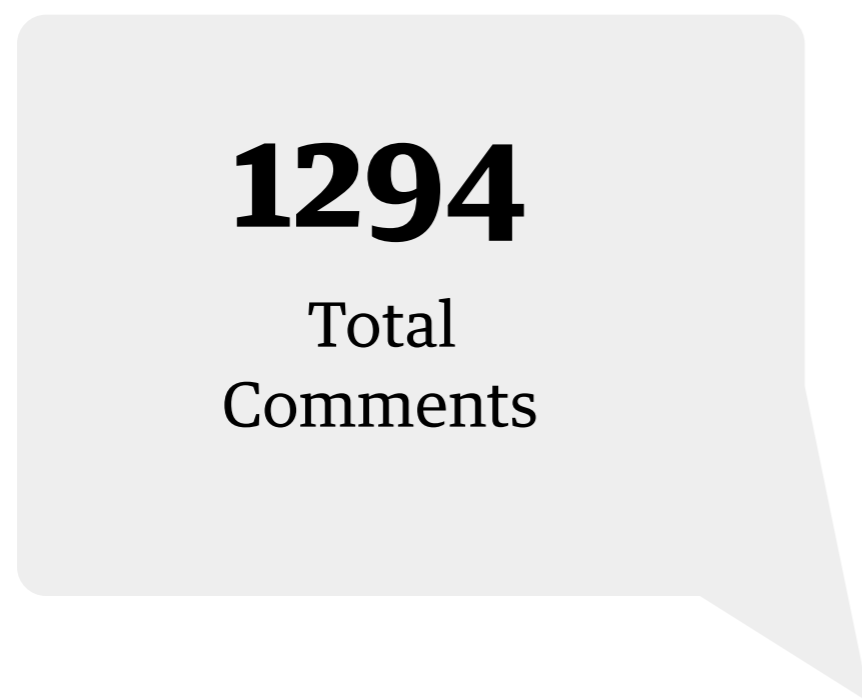
- Band practise
- Skateboarding
- Parkour
- Mountain biking
- Forage
- Snorkelling
- Protesting
- Riding horses
- Do art related activities
- Birdwatching

n=1447

## Why do you like doing these things?

In a few words, describe how you feel when you're in these spaces.

1294 comments





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The themes below summarise the sentiment of the comments. One comment can contain multiple themes. The larger the word the more common the sentiment.

1294 comments



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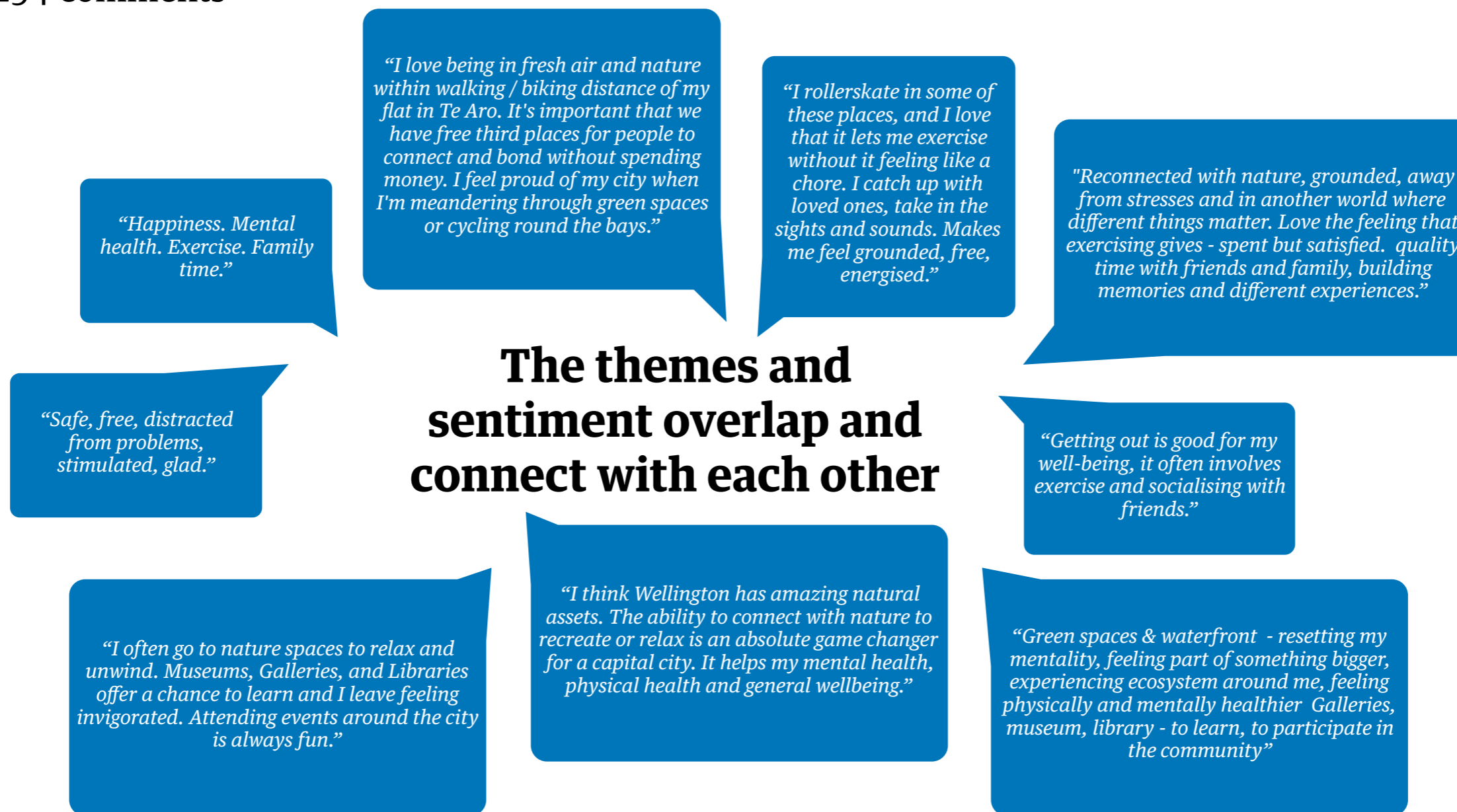


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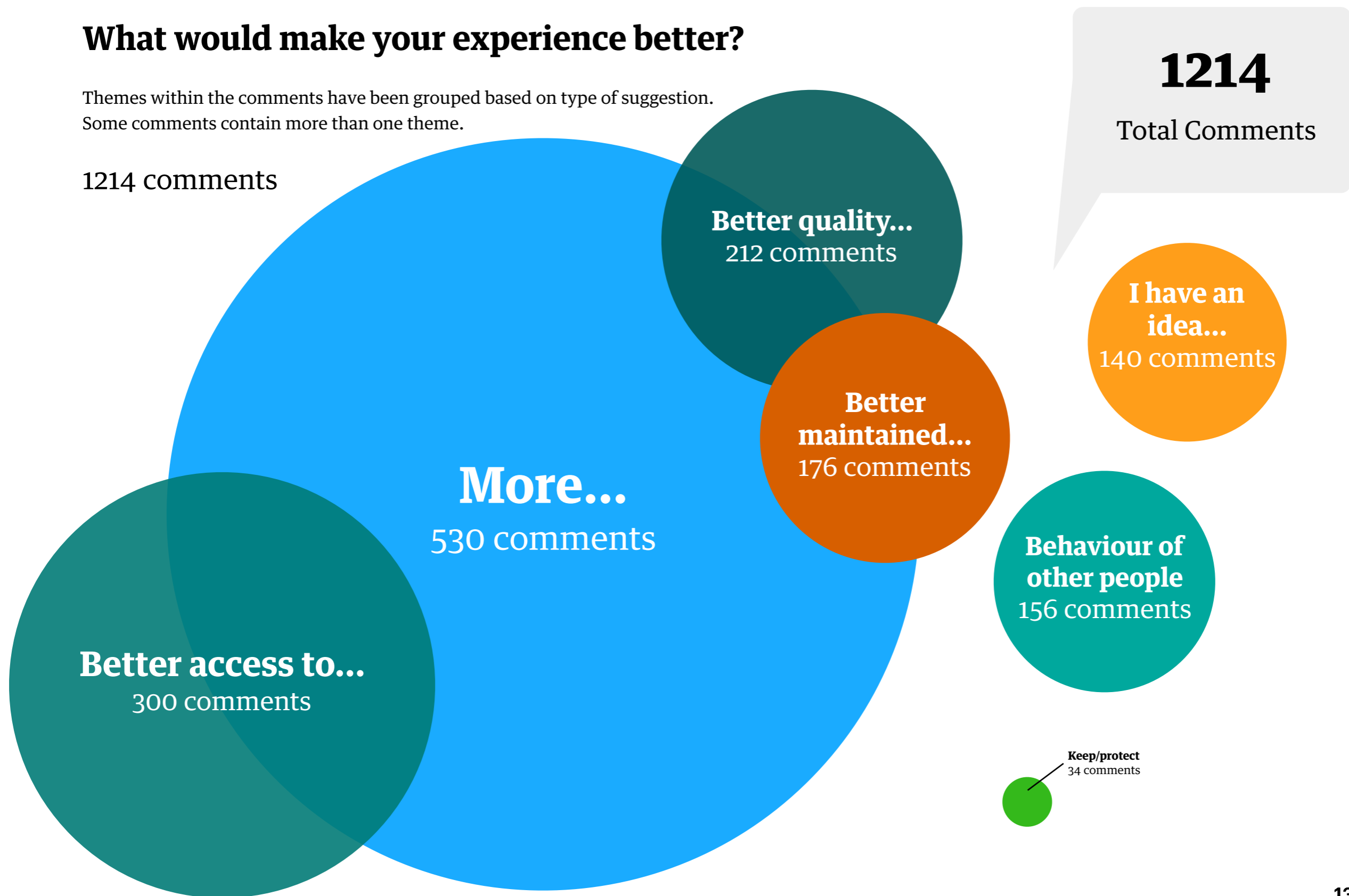
1294 comments



# What would make your experience better?

Themes within the comments have been grouped based on type of suggestion.  
Some comments contain more than one theme.

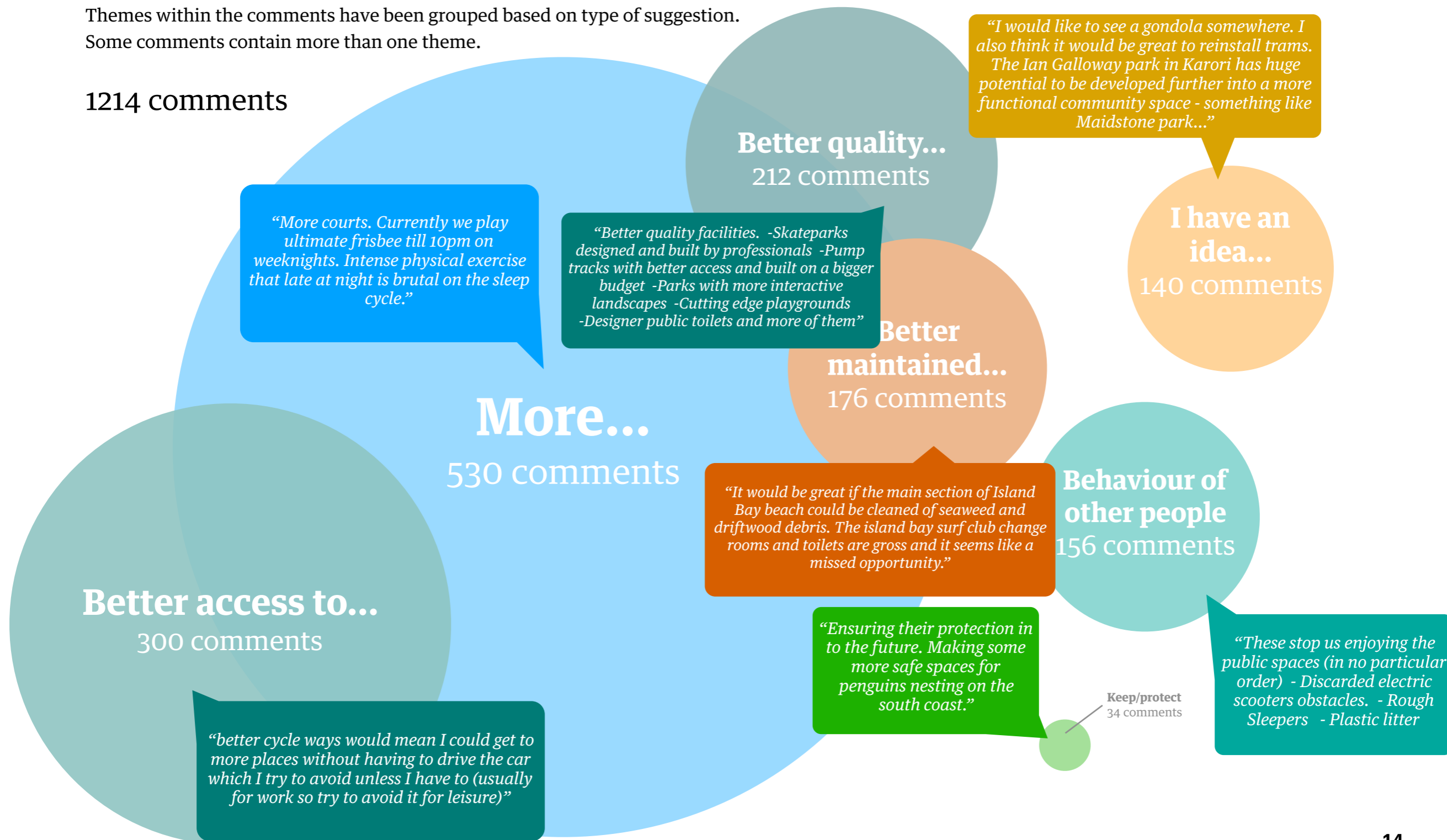
1214 comments



# What would make your experience better?

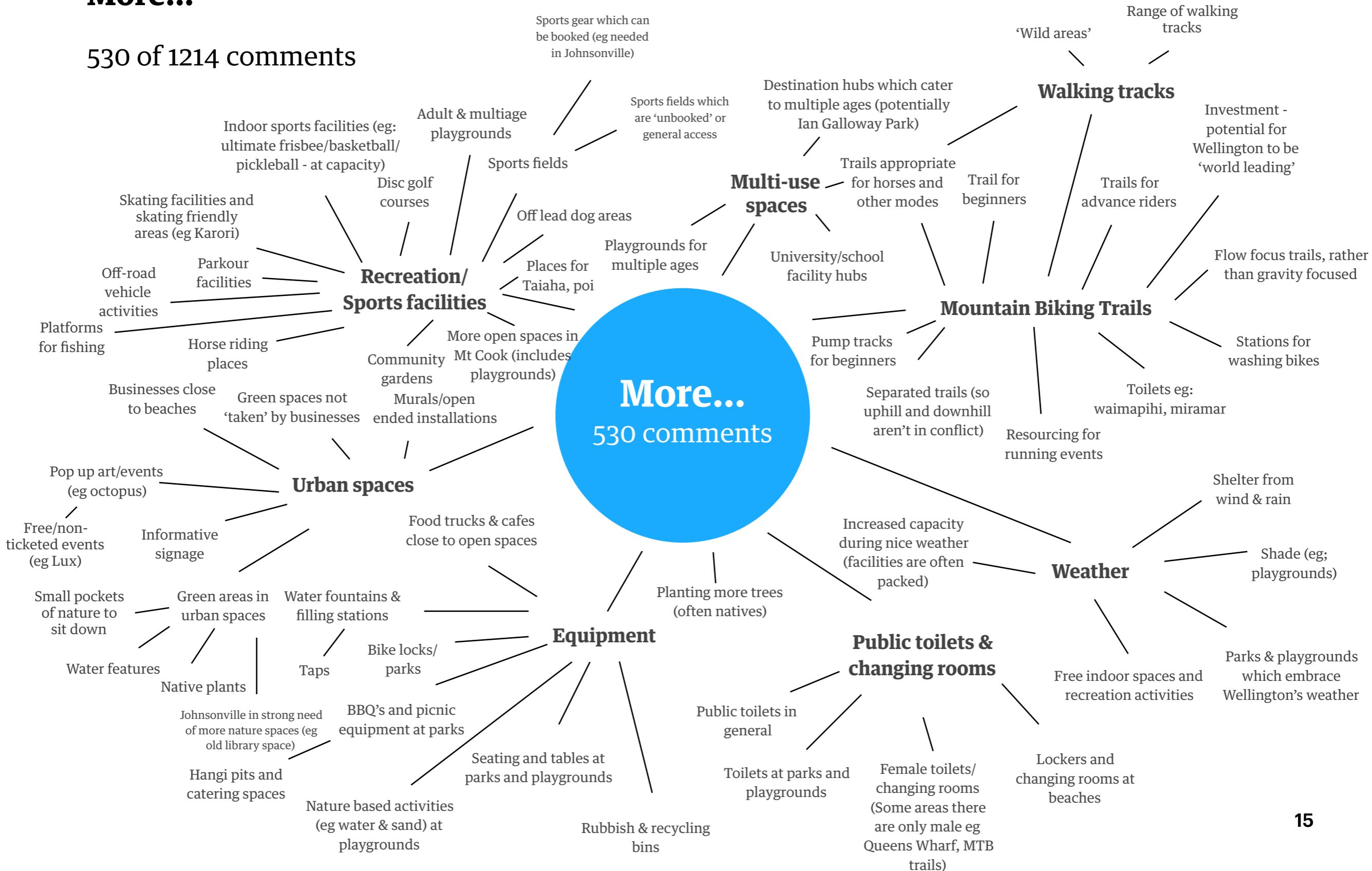
Themes within the comments have been grouped based on type of suggestion. Some comments contain more than one theme.

1214 comments



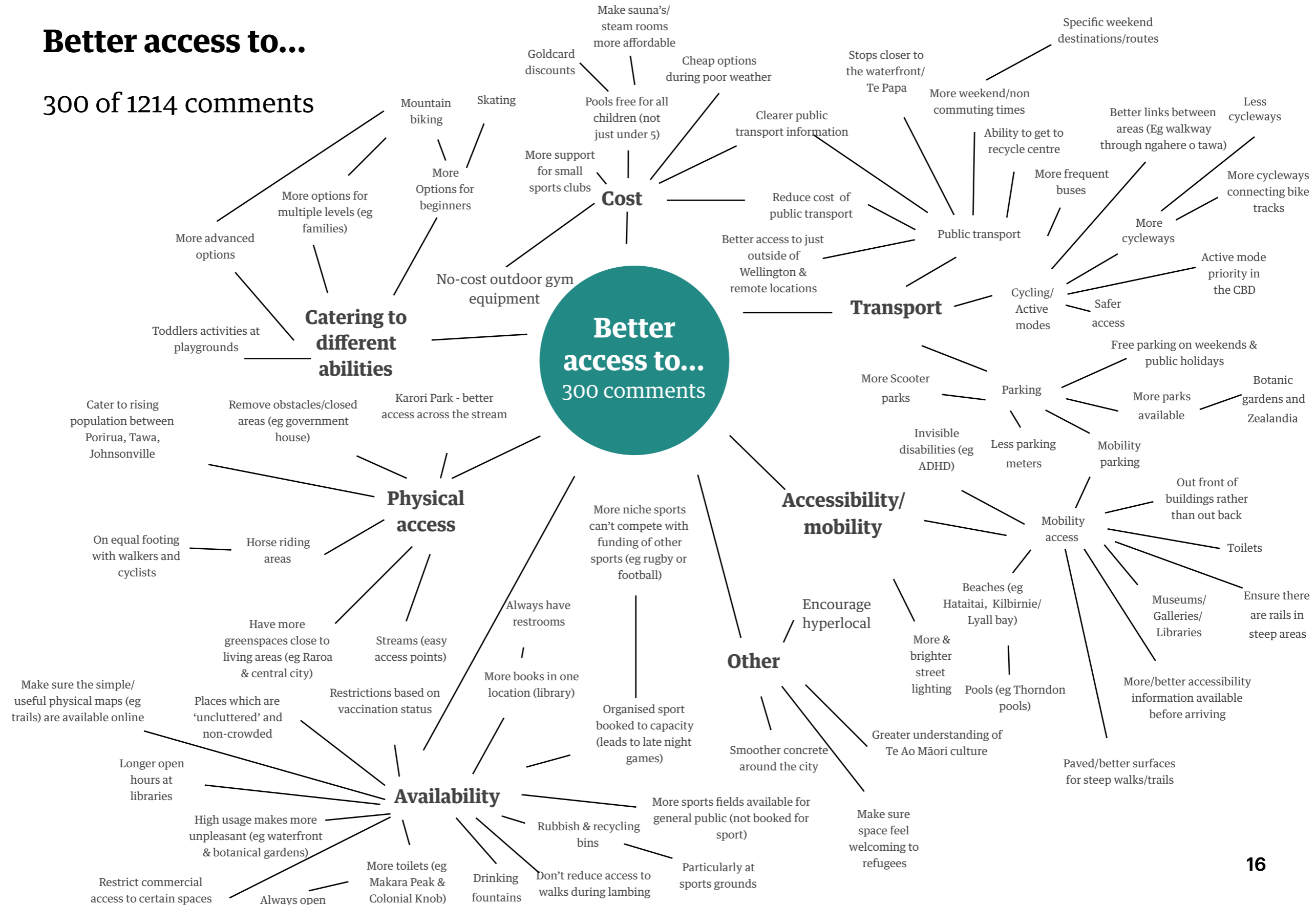
# More...

530 of 1214 comments



# Better access to...

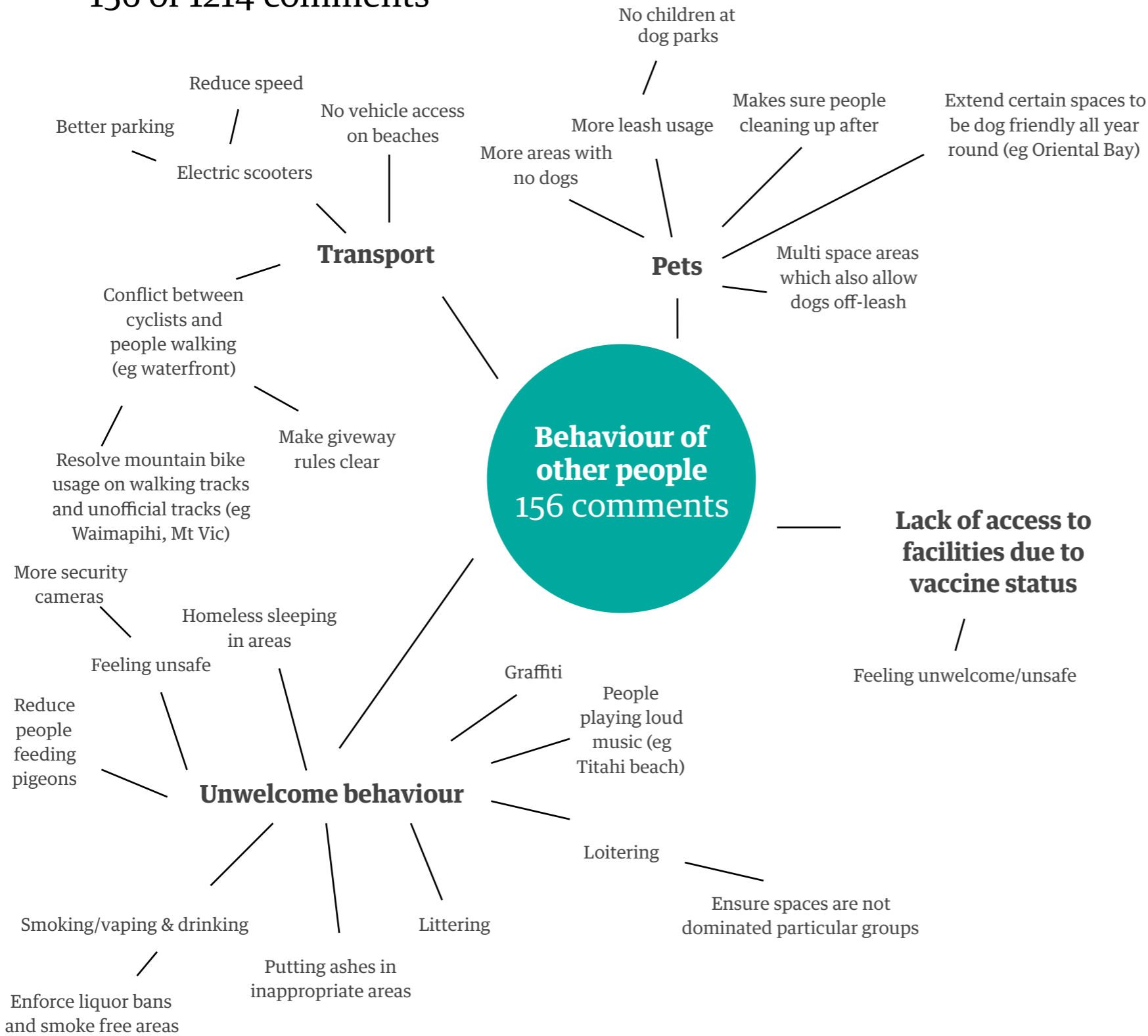
300 of 1214 comments





# Behaviour of other people

156 of 1214 comments



## Example comments:

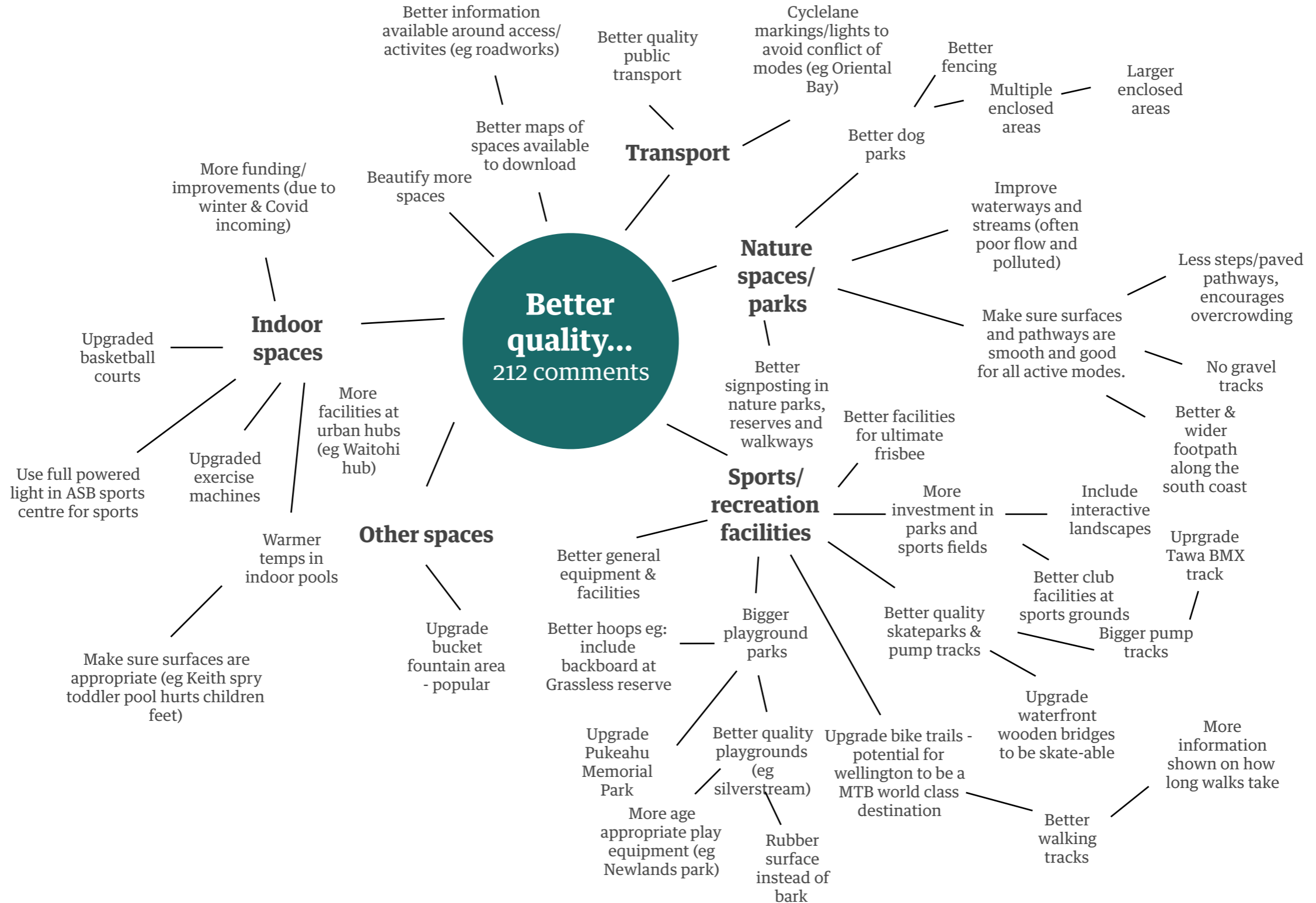
*“I am afraid of dogs so council asserting rules around on leash is always welcome. That said I love dogs that I get to know and feel it’s essential to have well equipped dog parks. I’m pleased to see the one on Curtis Street Northland is gradually being improved.”*

*“Smoking and vaping being 100% banned outside. No litter. Clean streets.”*

*“...I hate electric scooters and the indiscriminate nature of their speed and parking - there needs to be regulation around their speed, where they can park and they should be banned from the footpath.”*

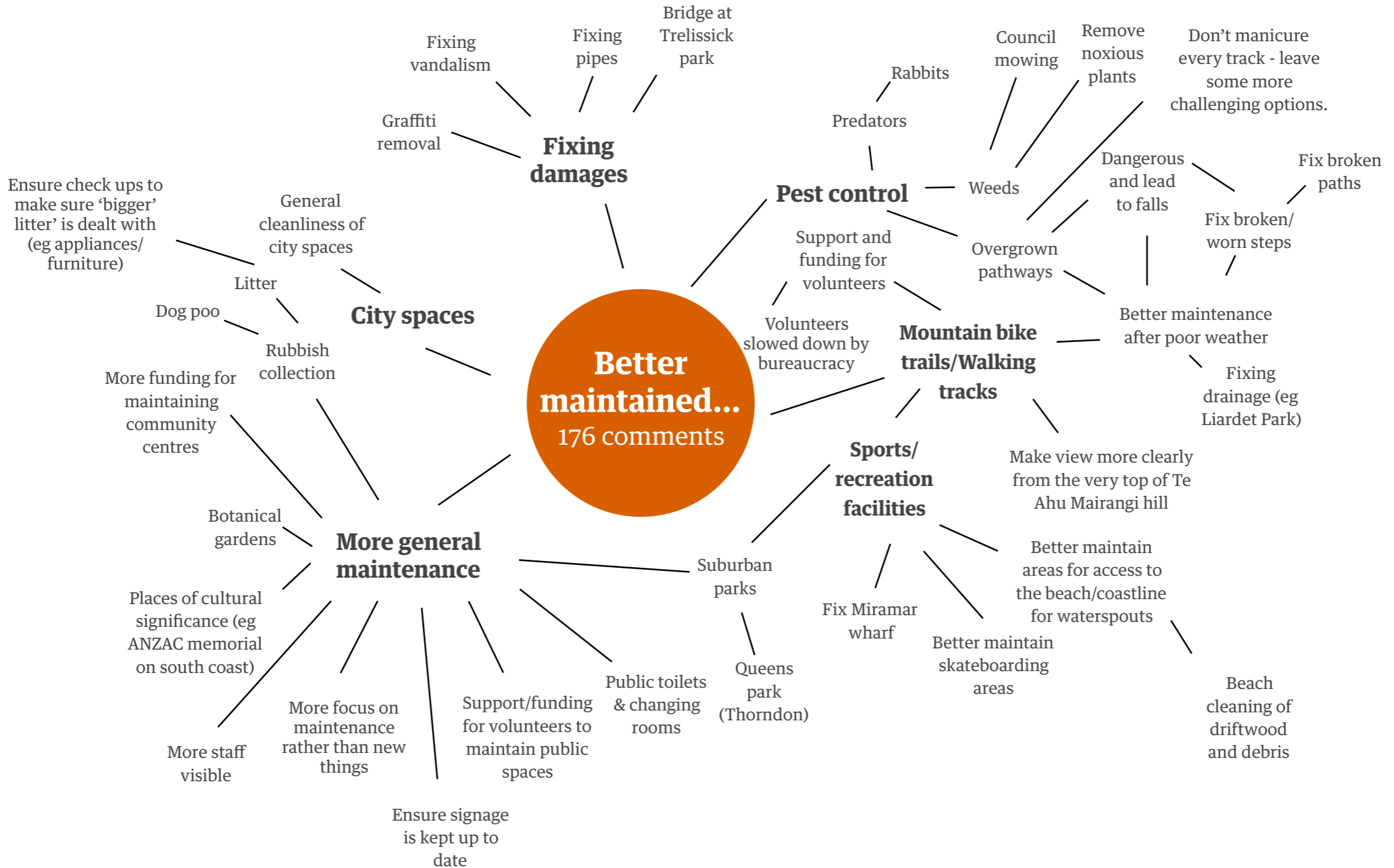
# Better quality

212 of 1214 comments



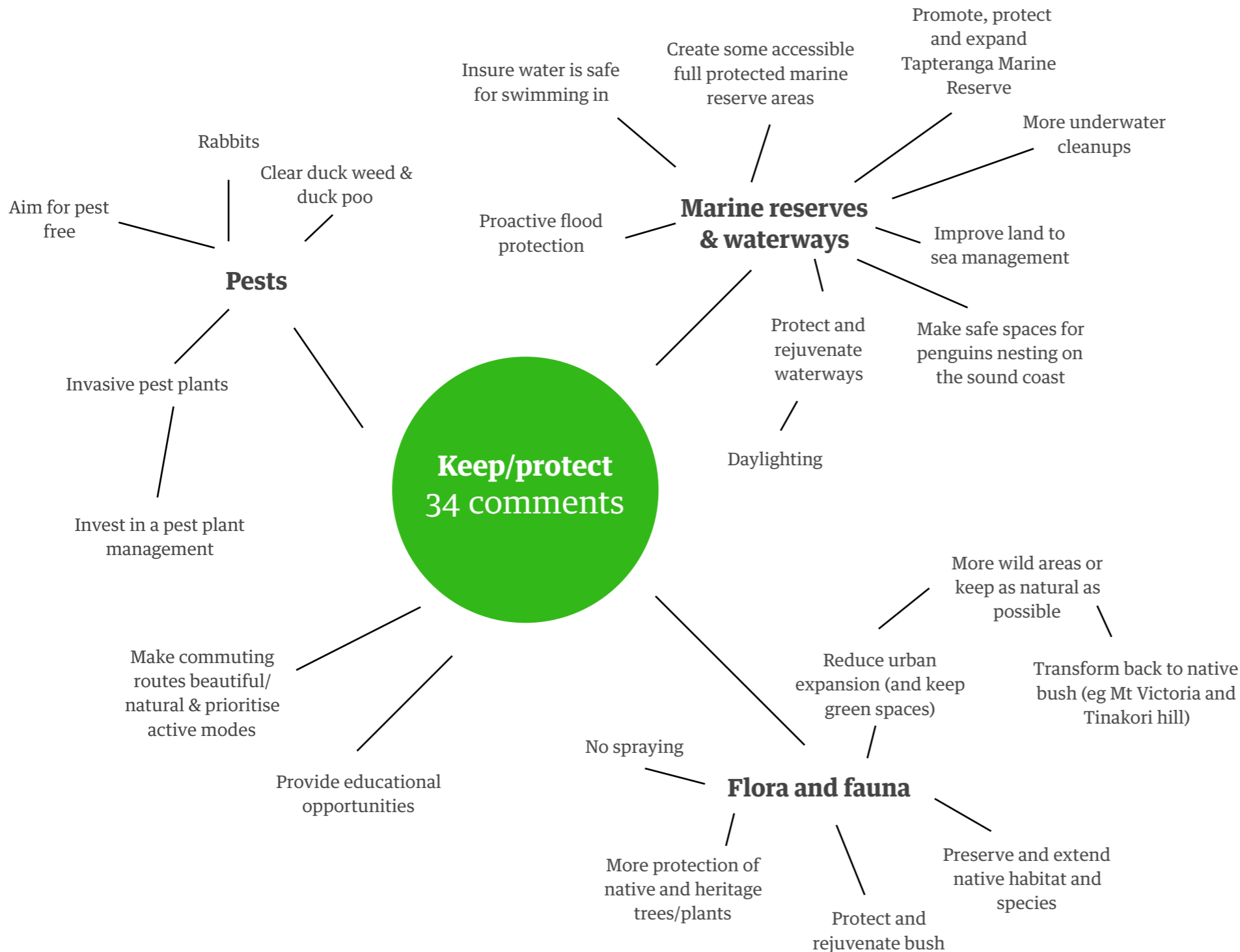
# Better maintained...

176 of 1214 comments



# Keep/protect

34 of 1214 comments



### Example comments:

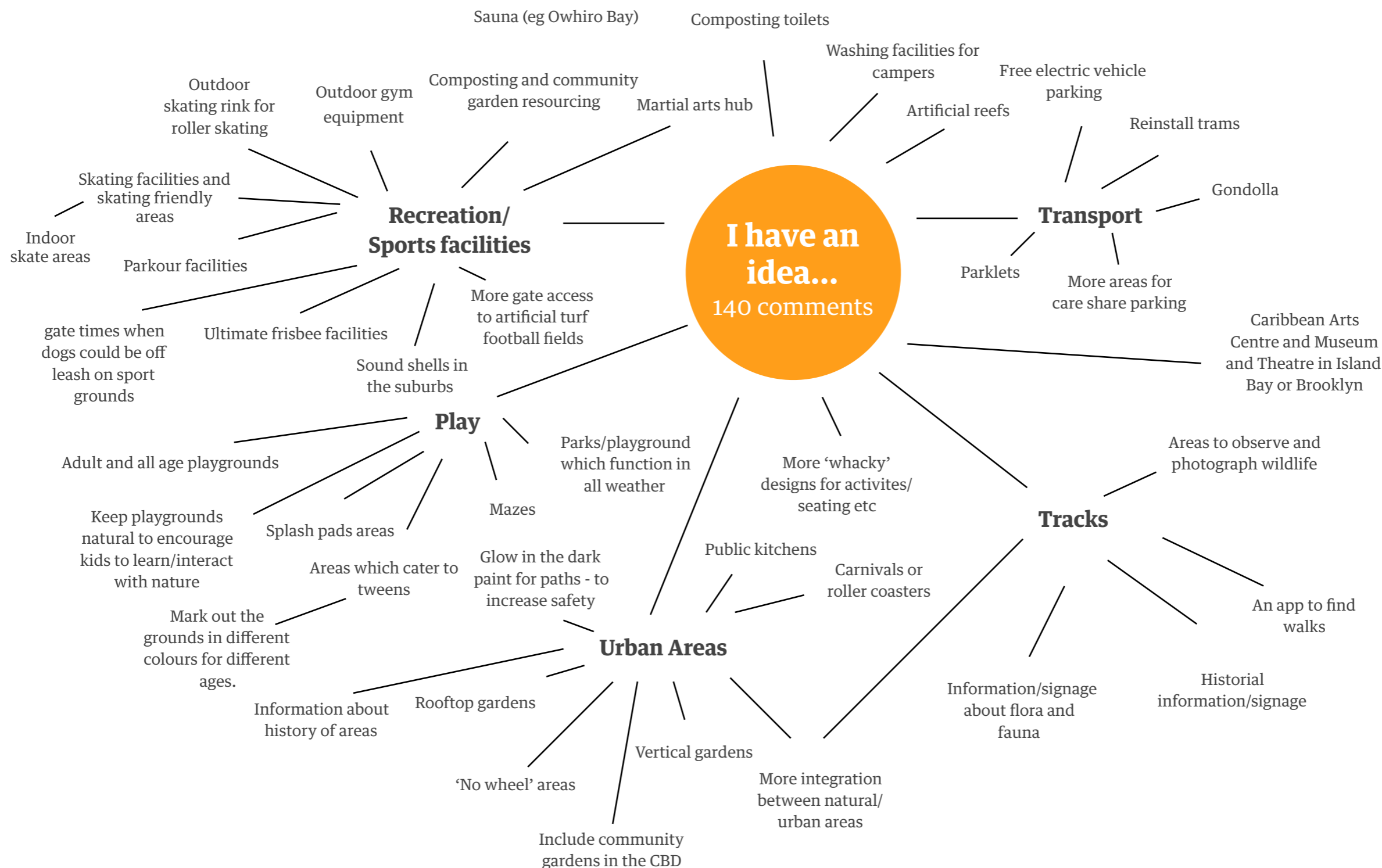
*“More care taken to protect our native plants. Where I walk which is mostly the Skyline walkway above Ngaio. It is over run with rabbits and invasive pest plants killing native flora. In our suburbs walking around this is also a problem, so many sycamore seedlings beside the footpaths. Invest in pest plant management to ensure our suburbs natives flourish.”*

*“Ensuring their protection in to the future. Making some more safe spaces for penguins nesting on the south coast.”*

*“Keep spaces as natural as possible. Don't clutter with equipment, bikes, etc Let nature take its course. We go there to be away from Human intervention.”*

# I have an idea...

140 of 1214 comments



# I have an idea...

140 of 1214 comments

## Example ideas

*"I'd say take more risks, have graduates design really wacky seating/activities that give more identity to a green area in the city"*

*"I wish there were more rotundas for outdoor singing sessions!"*

*"More natural landscapes being integrated into the streetscape, creating wetlands to help reduce toxins in the water supply and other restorative native species being reintroduced into the community :)"*

*"The sports fields can sometimes look fairly empty and unused - it isn't very welcoming or friendly. It would be great to find innovative, news ways to use them in conjunction with sports or find new community partnerships to utilise the space, to bring life and friendliness to them no matter the time of day. "*

*"A dedicated parkour park or less strict security around parkour"*

*"As many Outdoor classrooms as possible would be awesome..."*

*"We could maximise the food production and ensure long term sustainability of our community garden by exploring a paid part-time role rather than relying on a volunteer coordinator. This would be a big step but as society becomes increasingly transient, it may be harder in future to maintain enough core regular volunteers to keep a garden going - and the role of coordinator is the hardest of all to find replacement volunteers for."*

*"Calisthenics park on the waterfront to encourage fitness"*

*"Add play for adults. Outdoor table tennis tables, chess, fitness equipment to local parks and play spaces. "*

*"Haha wouldn't it be fabulous to have a Gondola like they do in Queenstown. (only for when I'm old and can't walk up hills anymore)."*

*"An ocean pool or harbour pool"*

*"I would love to see rollersports like roller skating, roller blading, and longboarding considered more in planning. Not everyone who enjoys skating can use a skatepark full of ramps – big open spaces with flat concrete are an absolute treat for people like me who want to work on skate dancing, skating for leisure etc."*

*"More splash pads please! More fenced in facilities for young kids. Cafes or food trucks nearby"*

## References to open spaces from other places

*These are the non-Wellington locations that people suggested were good examples:*

- Cambridge pump track
- Playgrounds implemented in Shellharbour, NSW
- Westfield Newmarket - ‘beautification’
- Auckland's Mission Bay Calisthenics park
- Dunedin - Training/exercise route with training equipment (behind the stadium)
- Marton Playground
- Downtown Auckland - use of planters
- Carterton - exercise equipment
- Rotorua CBD - colourful street planting
- Overseas initiatives - children led playground design
- Levin Adventure Playground
- Queenstown - mountain biking destination (tourism)
- Rotorua - mountain biking destination (tourism)
- Taupo - equal access to pools

### Example comments:

*“Fund the trails network more and turn it into a mountain biking destination like Rotorua and Queenstown have done.”*

*“Play equipment for teens and adults like in Levin (the really hard circuit).”*

## Top themes (that span multiple categories)

1214 comments

### Toilets/Restrooms

*~ 98 comments*

- More of them available (particularly at playgrounds and sports grounds and MTB trails)
- Keep them maintained & tidy
- Some places missing female toilets
- Should always be open (24/7)

### Dog walking

*~ 79 comments*

- Better quality dog walking areas (eg better fencing, larger)
- More and larger enclosed areas
- More areas with no dogs
- More dog walking parks and off leash areas
- Make sure dog poo is picked up and bins are available

### Playgrounds

*~ 81 comments*

- More seating, eating areas and drinking fountains at playgrounds
- Include outdoor gym equipment for adults
- Better quality equipment and playgrounds
- Play equipment available for older age groups
- More shade provided
- Upgrades not needed as children enjoy regardless

### Mountain bike trails

*~ 210 comments*

- Better maintain trails, particularly after poor weather
- More support programmes and funding for volunteers
- More toilets, bike washing stations and drinking fountains
- Better quality trails - potential for Wellington to be leading destination
- Different trails for different skill levels
  - More beginner trails
  - More advanced trails



## Top themes (that span multiple categories)

1214 comments

### Indoor sports facilities

*~ 29 comments*

- Currently at capacity - leading to long wait times and late evening games
- In winter, even more capacity issues
- End up sharing with multiple different sports
- Difficult to organise and pay for spaces

### Multi-use spaces

*~ 49 comments*

- Need spaces which suit families with a wide range of ages
- Create hubs
- Allow multiple modes to use spaces particularly for skating/biking/scootering etc
- Utilise trails for both walking and biking
- Better utilising green space
- Utilise sports fields when not in use

### CBD

*~ 20 mentions*

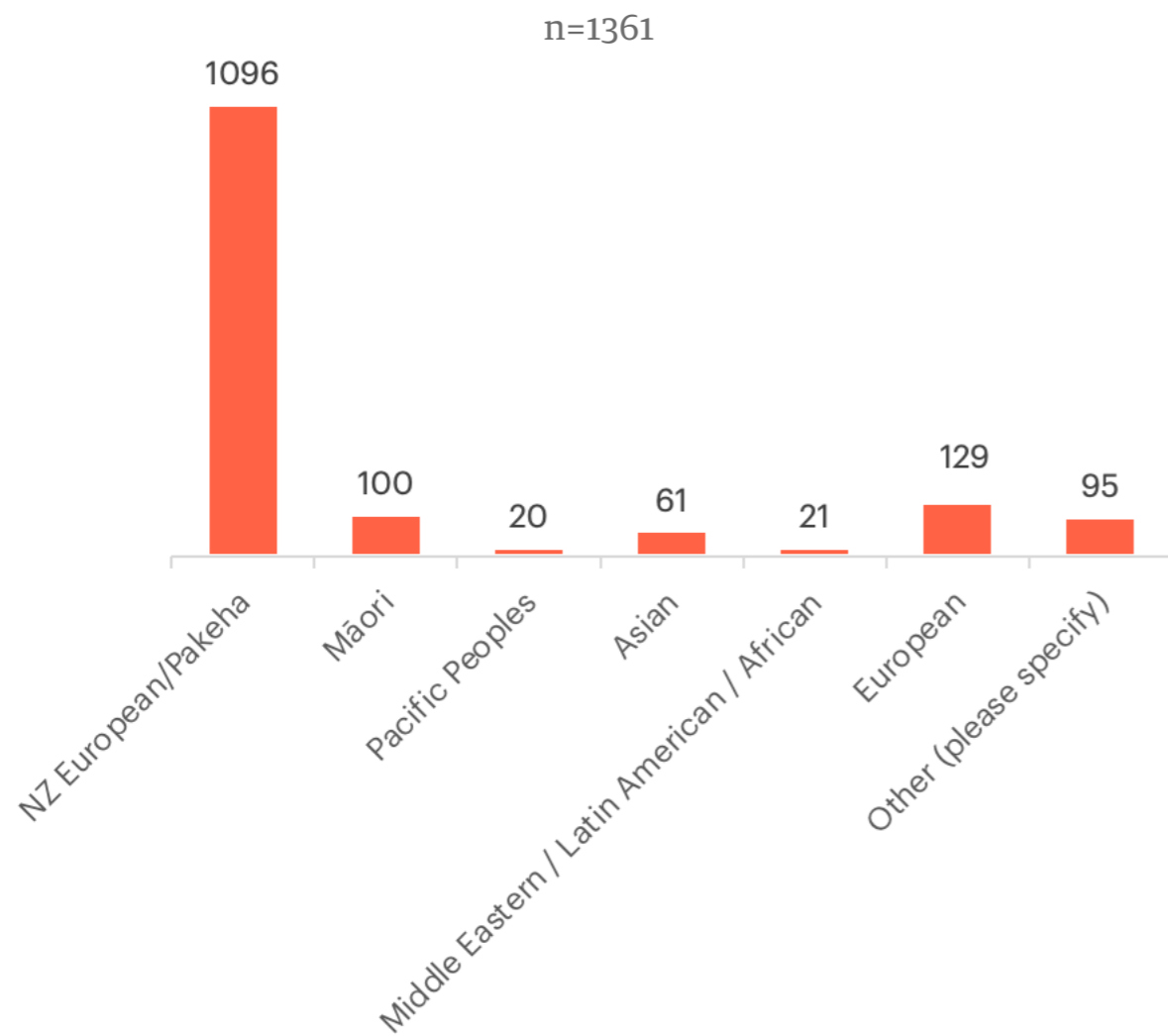
- Ensure easily accessible parking
- More green spaces and parks
- Improve pedestrian priority
- No wheel areas
- Can feel unsafe/dangerous
- More training areas
- Better cater to skaters

## **Who we heard from**

## Demographics

The audience that engaged with the ‘Where’s your happy place?’ survey was self-selecting. It was a qualitative engagement, not quantitative research. The demographics and views captured may not be representative of all Wellingtonians.

Please choose the ethnicity group/s you identify with:  
(You can select more than one)



**80% of respondents** identified as NZ European/Pakeha

**7%** identified as Māori

**1%** identified as Pacific Peoples

**4%** identified as Asian

**2%** identified as Middle Eastern / Latin American / African

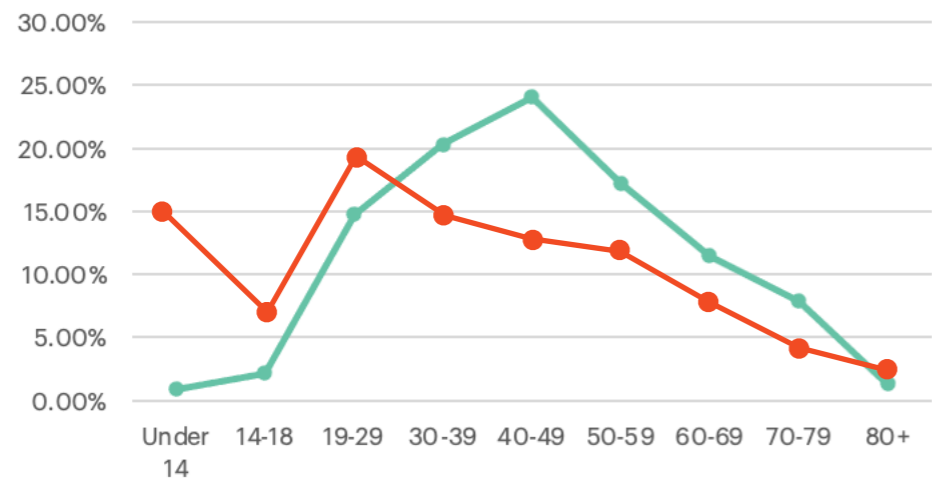
**9%** identified as European

**7%** specified another ethnicity

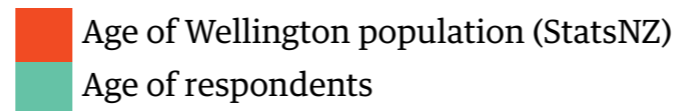
# Demographics

Age of respondents vs age of Wellington population

n=1364

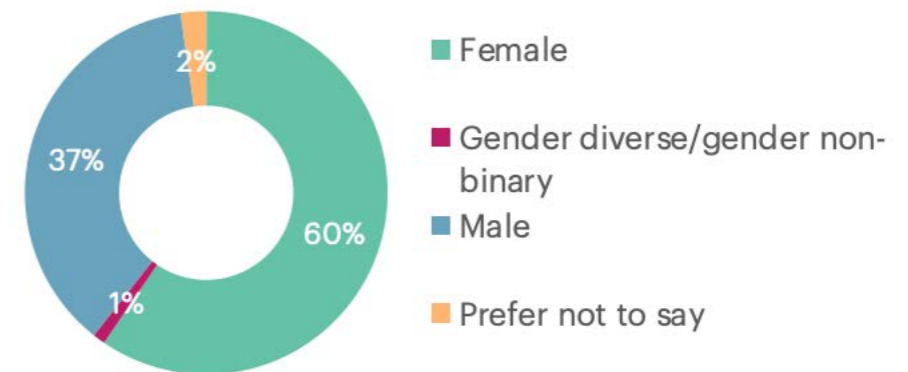


Source: 2018, StatsNZ



Please choose the gender that best identifies you:

n=1365

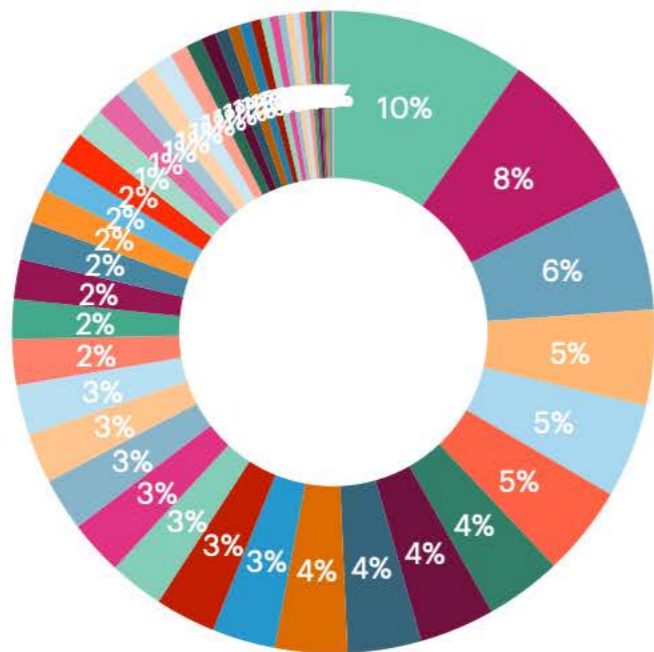


# Demographics

Which suburb do you live in?

If you live outside Wellington City, please select 'other'

n=1349



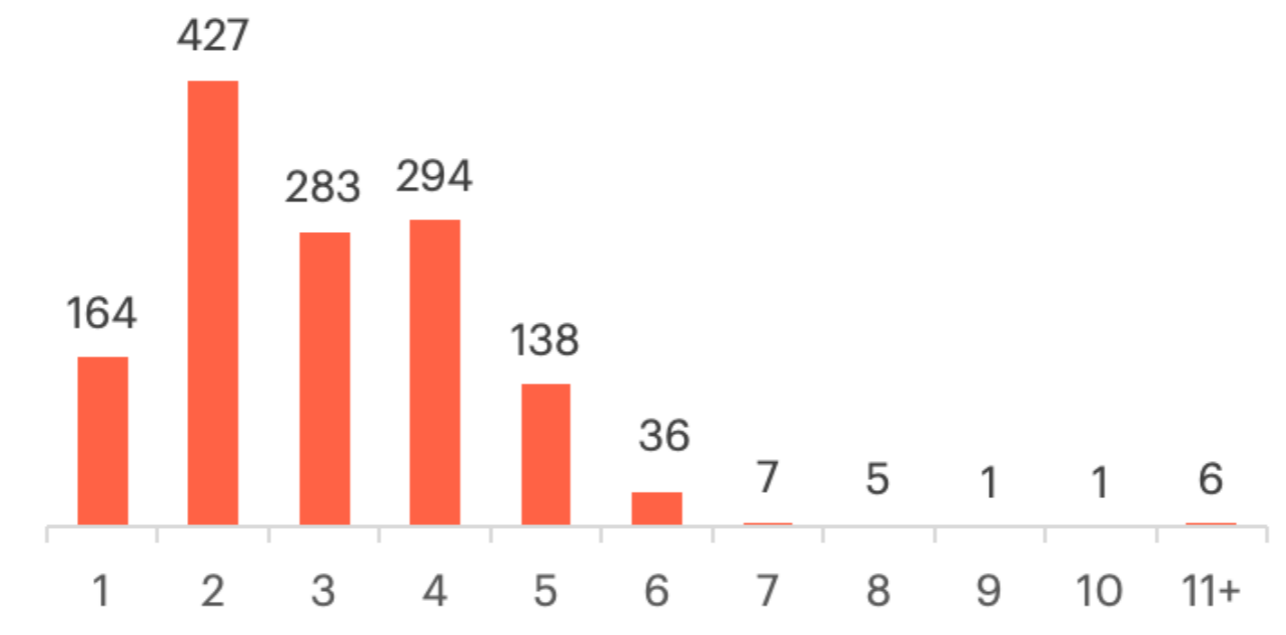
- |     |                    |    |                 |   |               |
|-----|--------------------|----|-----------------|---|---------------|
| 132 | Other              | 27 | Wadestown       | 6 | Vogeltown     |
| 105 | Karori             | 27 | Kelburn         | 6 | Southgate     |
| 85  | Tawa               | 26 | Churton Park    | 5 | Breaker Bay   |
| 65  | Te Aro             | 23 | Thorndon        | 5 | Glenside      |
| 64  | Brooklyn           | 22 | Aro Valley      | 4 | Highbury      |
| 61  | Ngaio              | 22 | Wilton          | 4 | Houghton Bay  |
| 52  | Johnsonville       | 20 | Strathmore Park | 4 | Mornington    |
| 51  | Khandallah         | 17 | Lyall Bay       | 4 | Oriental Bay  |
| 50  | Newtown            | 15 | Kilbirnie       | 3 | Rongotai      |
| 49  | Hataitai           | 15 | Melrose         | 3 | Woodridge     |
| 43  | Mount Victoria     | 14 | Crofton Downs   | 3 | Kaiwharawhara |
| 41  | Island Bay         | 12 | Paparangi       | 1 | Ohariu        |
| 37  | Berhampore         | 11 | Roseneath       | 1 | Maupuia       |
| 37  | Mount Cook         | 10 | Broadmeadows    |   |               |
| 36  | Northland          | 9  | Owhiro Bay      |   |               |
| 34  | Miramar            | 8  | Kingston        |   |               |
| 34  | Newlands           | 8  | Seatoun         |   |               |
| 31  | Wellington Central | 7  | Pipitea         |   |               |

# Household size

Average of **3**  
people per  
household

How many people live in your household?

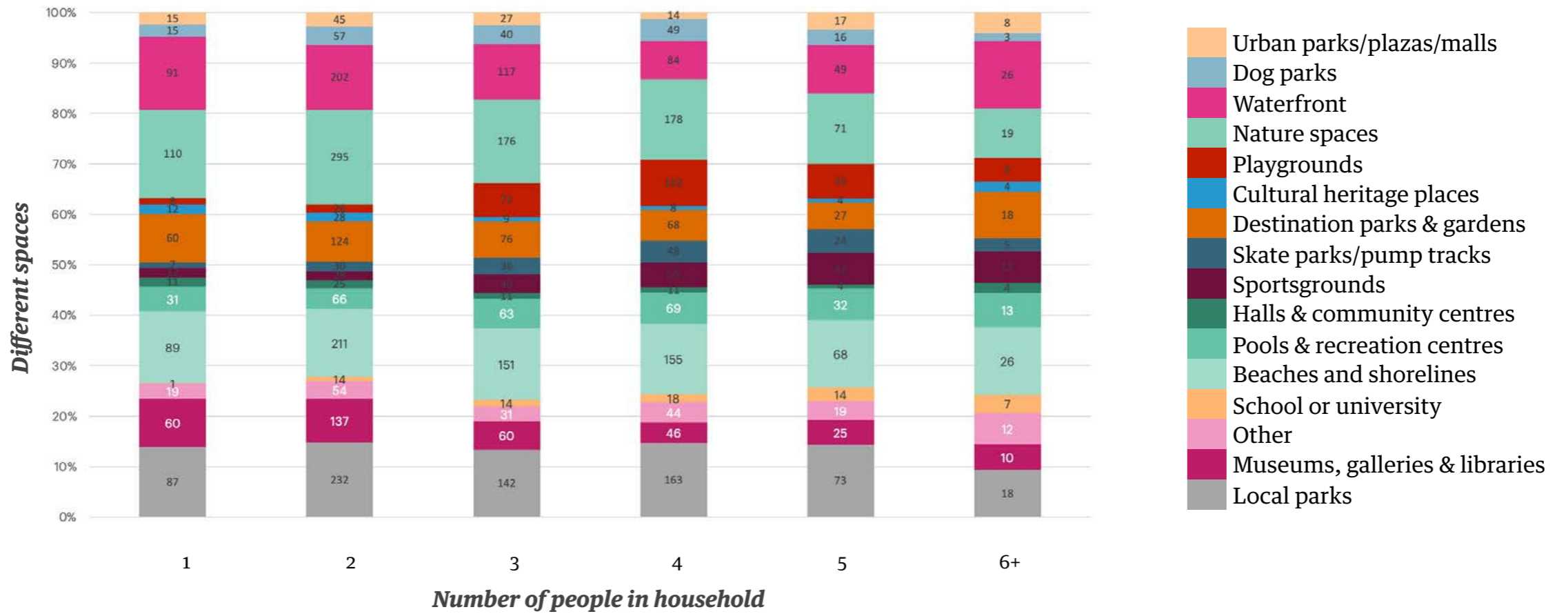
n=1362



**Insights from different demographics**

# Household size and spaces

Which public spaces people visit based on household size



*Smaller households were more likely to go to museums, galleries and libraries*

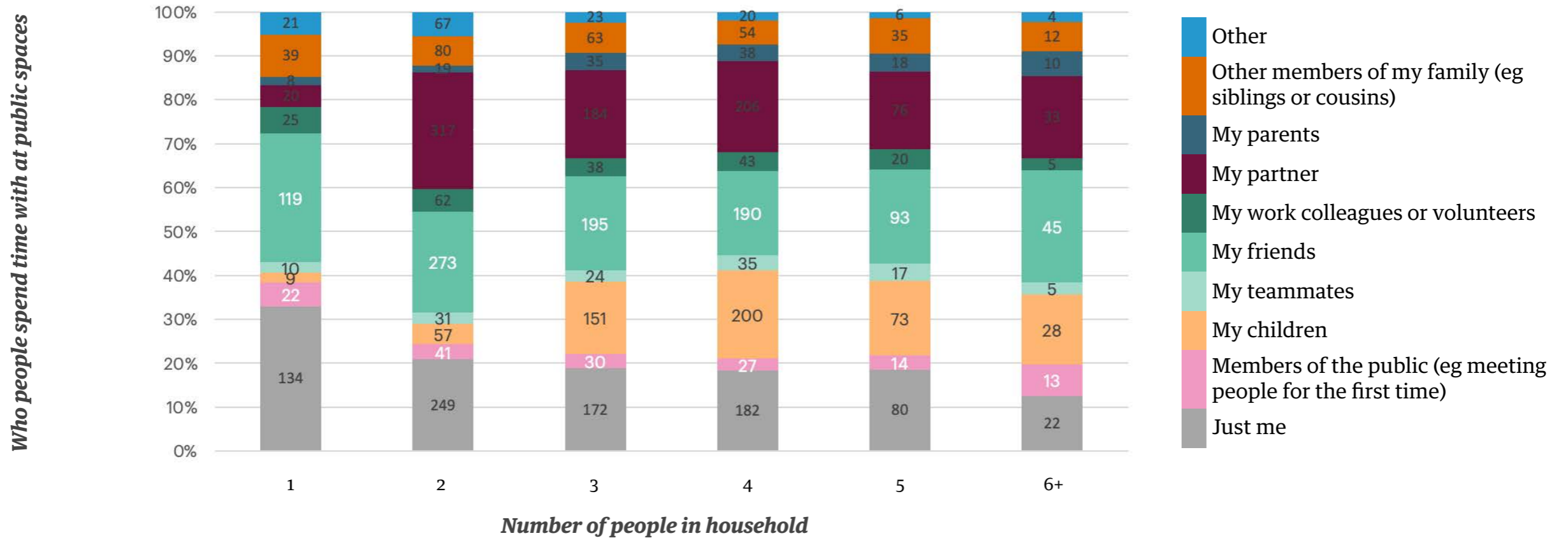
*Larger households were more likely to go to destination parks and gardens*

*6+ households were more likely to put 'other' and these comments included Freedom village/Parliament grounds.*



# Household size and who you spend time with

Who people spend time with at public spaces based on household size



*People in smaller households were much more likely to spend time in public spaces with friends*

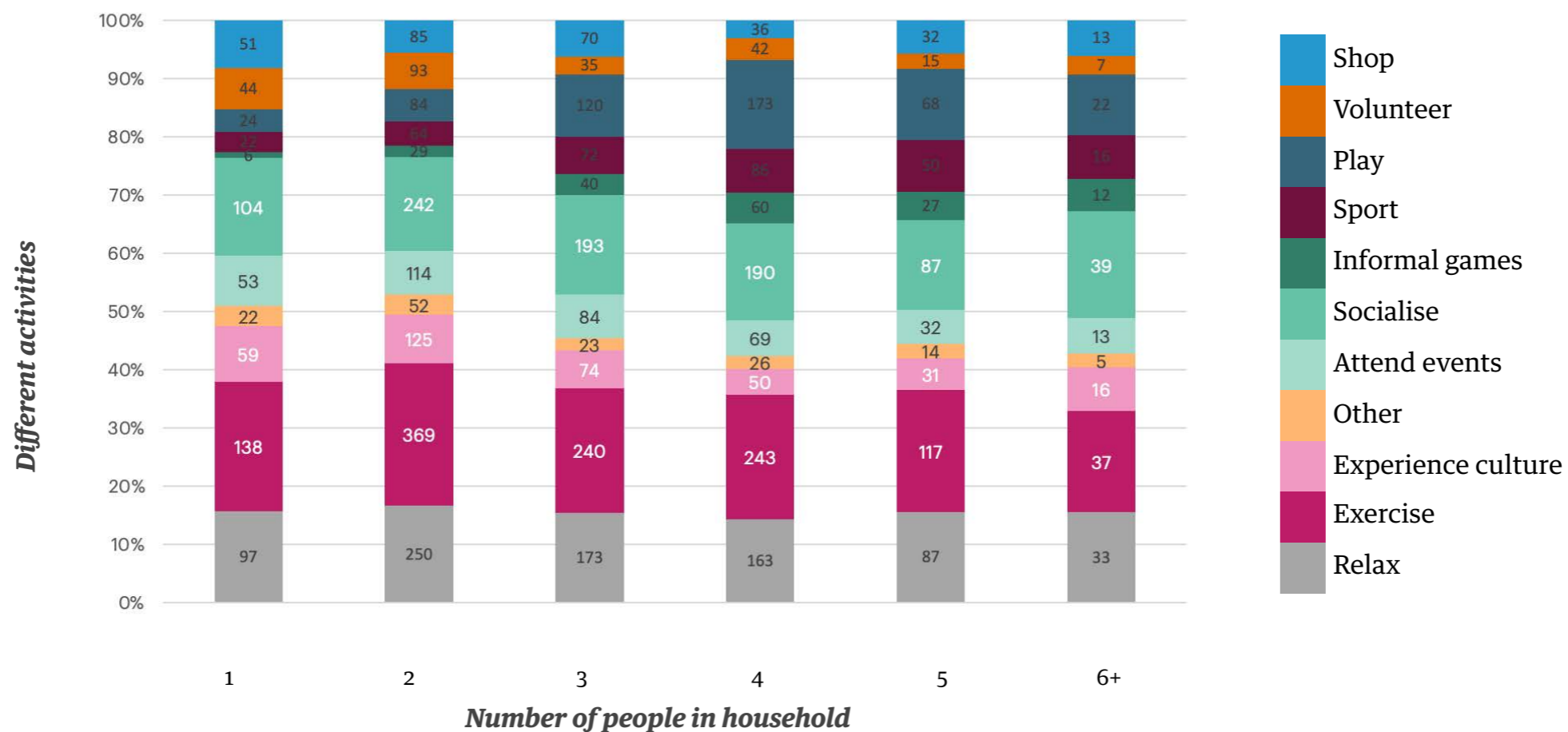
*People who live alone are much more likely to spend time in public spaces on their own*

*People who live in houses with one other are more likely to spend time with their partners*

*People who live in large households (6+) are much more likely to spend time with members of the public*

# Household size and activities

What activities people do based on household size



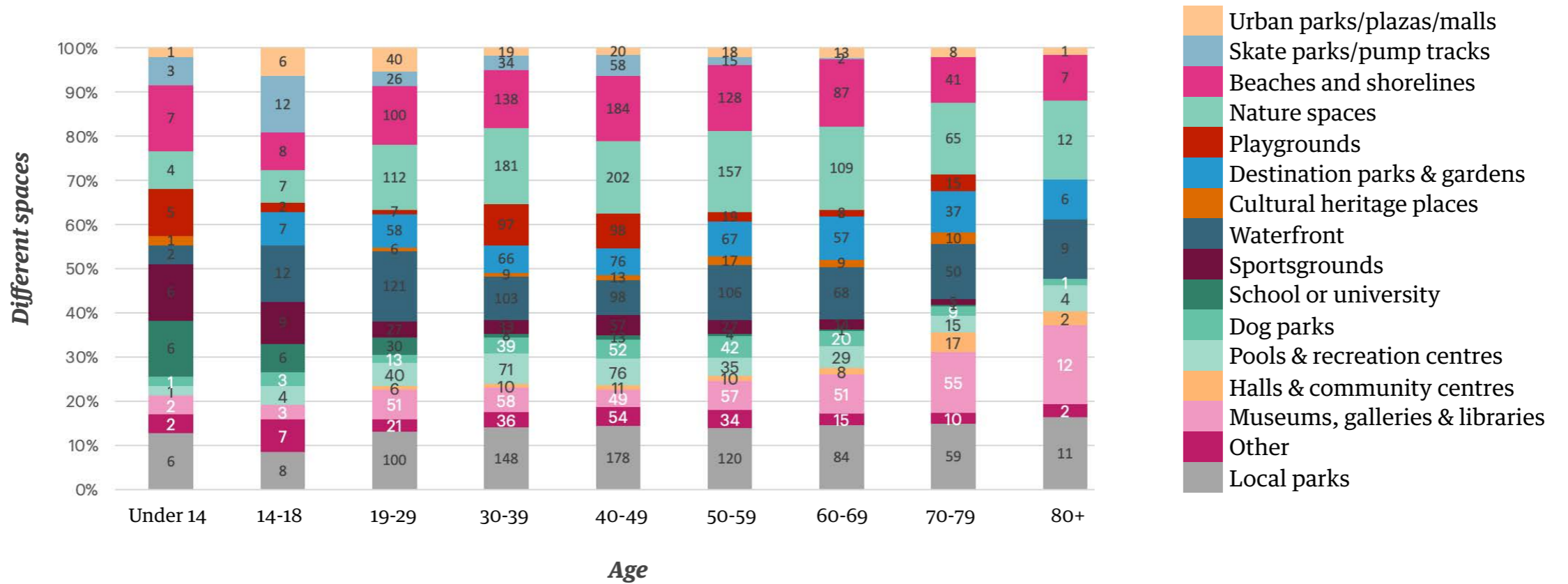
*People in smaller households are more likely to spend time exercising*

*The larger the household, the more likely people are to engage in play or sport*

*Socialising in public spaces is an important activity for all households*

# Public spaces visited based on age

Which public spaces people visit based on age



*Younger people are more likely to use urban parks/plaza/malls*

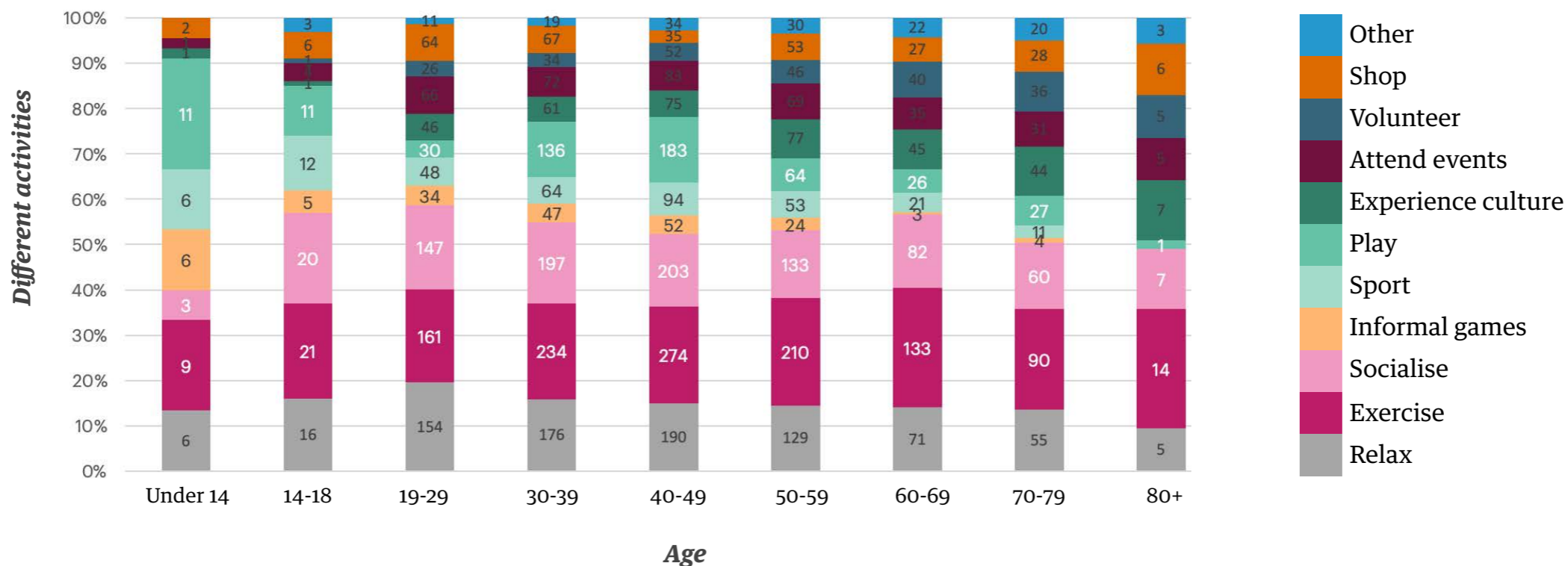
*Playgrounds are most visited by respondents between the age of 30 and 50*

*Older people are more likely to spend time in halls and community centres, as well as museums, galleries and libraries*

*Nature space and local parks are popular across almost all age groups*

# Activities people do based on age

Which activities do people do based on age



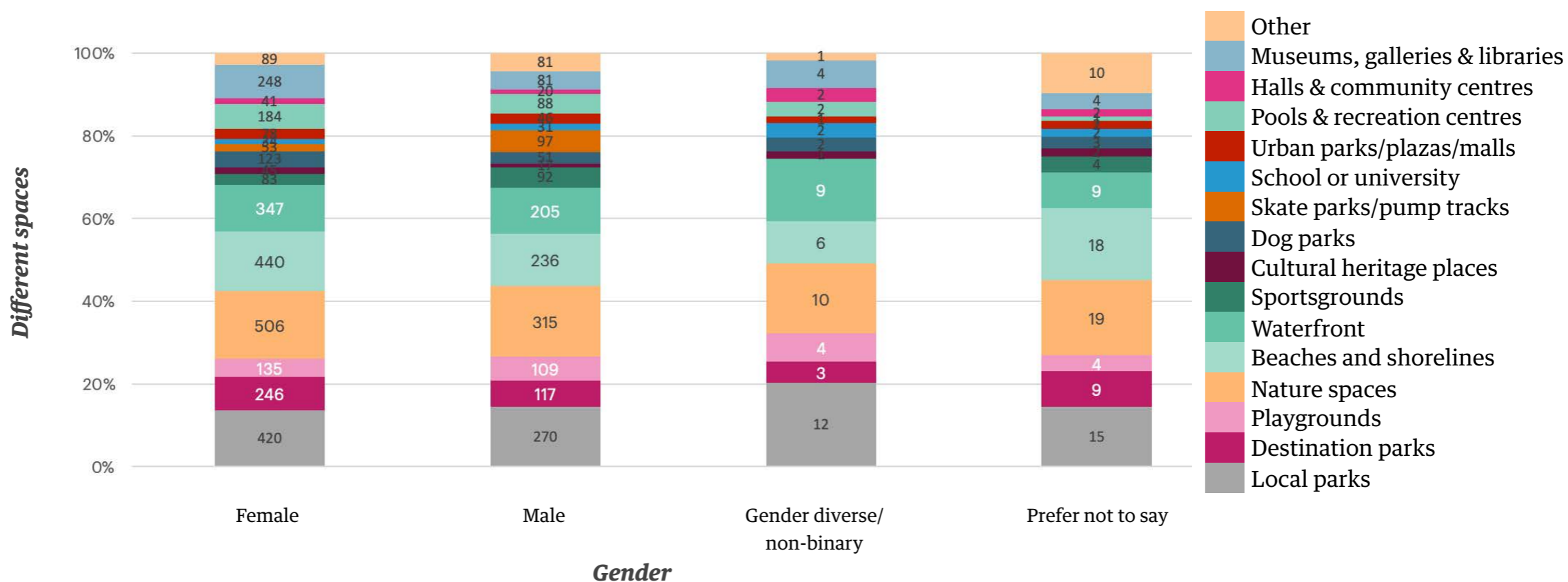
*Older ages are more likely to use public spaces for experiencing culture.*

*Younger people are more likely to use public spaces for relaxation, play and informal games.*

*Older people are more likely to be volunteering in these public spaces than younger people.*

# Public spaces visited based on gender

Which activities do people do based on gender



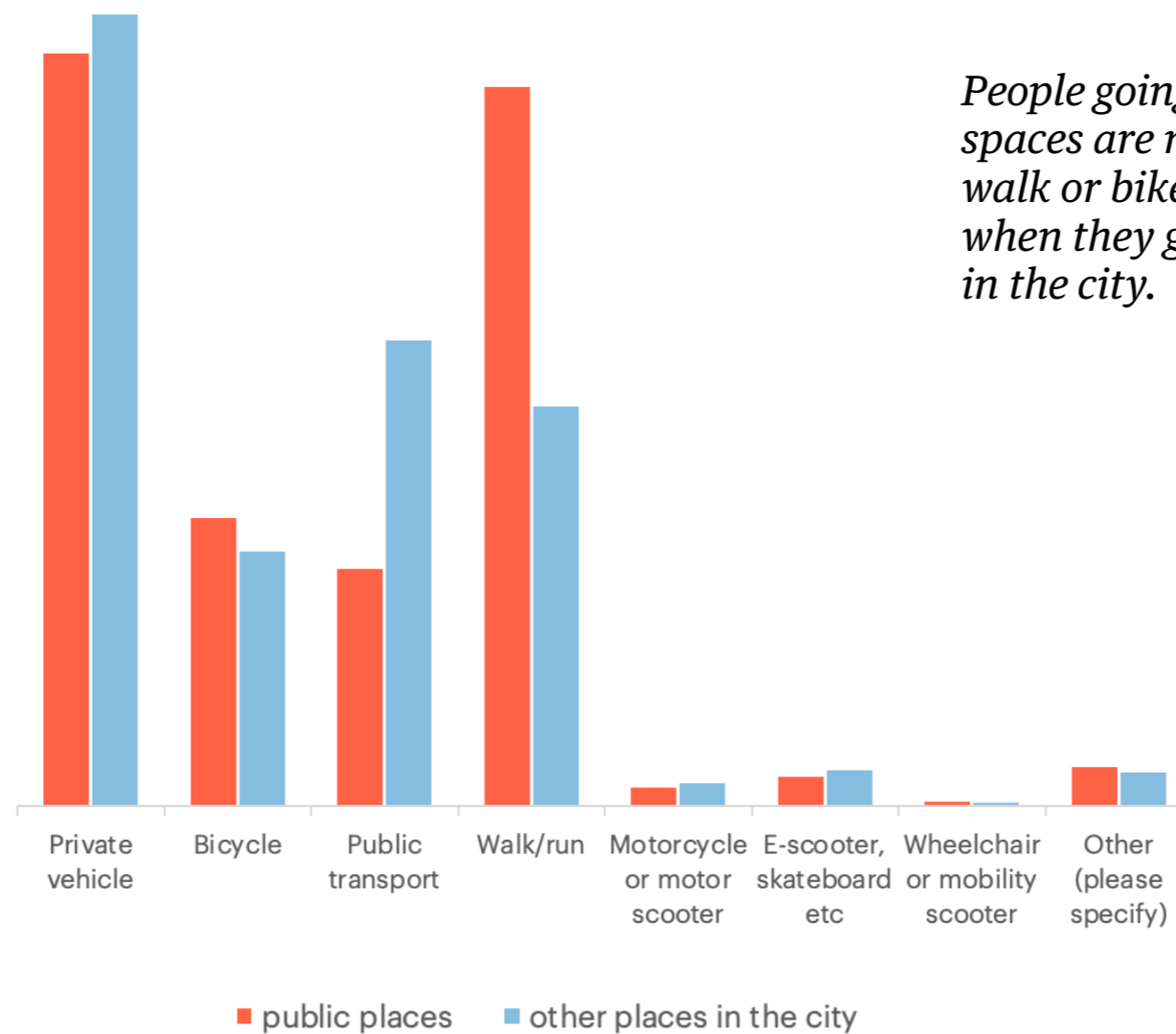
*Females are more likely to go to museums, galleries and libraries.*

*Males are more likely to go to skate parks/pump tracks and sportsgrounds.*

# Transport choices

How people get to public spaces compared to other places in the city

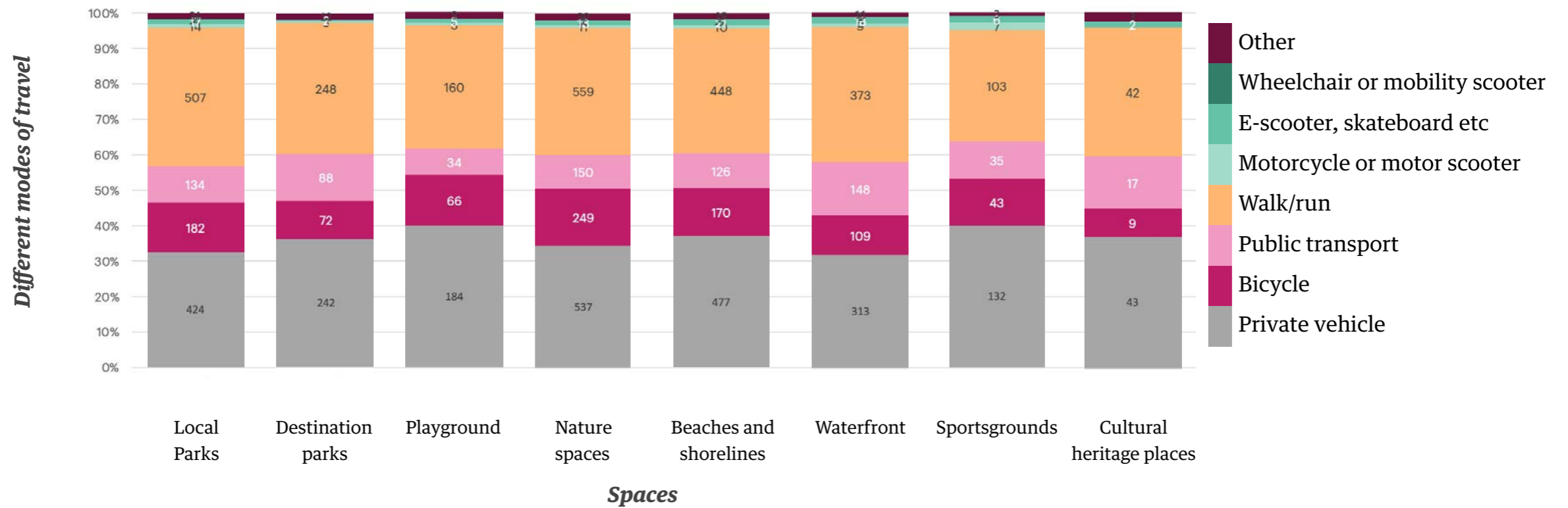
n=1370



*People going to public spaces are more likely to walk or bike compared to when they go to other places in the city.*

# Travelling to open spaces (1 of 2)

How do people travel to different spaces



# Travelling to open spaces (2 of 2)

## Other spaces - Common examples

- Mountain bike trails
- Regional parks/reserves
- Parliament

How do people travel to different spaces



*More bicycles are used to get to skateboard/scooter to skate parks and pump tracks*

*More public transport is used to get to Urban parks/plazas/malls*



## **Other engagement activities**

## Face-to-face engagement

During the survey period, Council officers talked to more than 400 people in public places across the city including parks, beaches, markets, recreation and community centres. Officers encouraged people to participate in the survey and also recorded feedback from conversations. Nine written submission were also received during the survey period.

The themes in this feedback were similar to those of the survey, including:

- More community green space in the CBD and suburban centres
- More dog exercise areas, including fenced
- Accessibility, equity and inclusiveness
- Support for recreational hubs
- Play equipment for adults
- Events and markets to bring people together

Quotes from face-to-face feedback include:

“Fully incorporate universal design features so that accessibility can be easily achieved for everyone”

“Install concrete table tennis tables - can be used for all sorts of other activities too”

“Bring back the Sunday concerts WCC used to sponsor and take into the suburbs”

“Think about how to serve the 'have nots' as well as the 'haves'”

“Playgrounds that cater for all ages are easier so can take the whole family and all children are entertained”

### Written submissions were from:

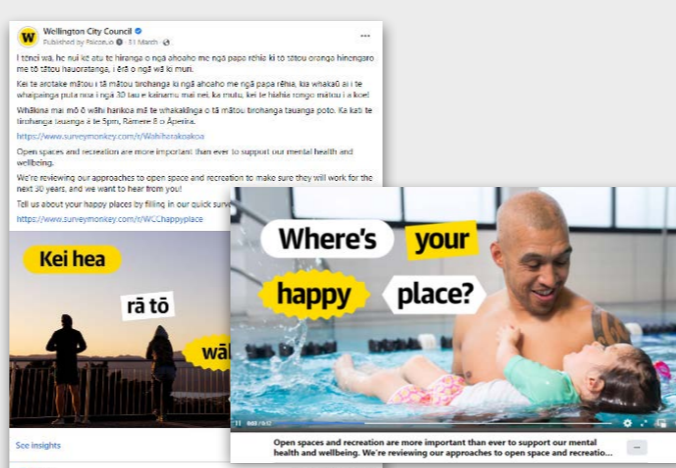
- Anirudh Bhate
- Capital BMX
- Charlotte Doyle
- Claire Owens
- Disabled Persons Assembly
- Glenside Progressive Association
- Paul Forrest
- Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association
- Wellington City Mission

## Social media/online activities



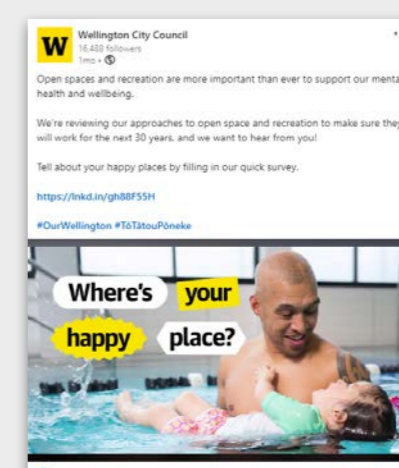
### Twitter - Organic promotion

- 2 Tweets - video and still
- Impressions: 3,599
- Link clicks: 28
- One comment complaining about cycle lanes, another wanting more “picnics in parks” i.e. parklets etc.



### Facebook - Organic promotion

- 2 Posts - the video and still photo
- Reach: 17,231
- Total likes: 56
- Comments were derailed a bit by anti-vax comments about Council facilities (this was before our mandates were lifted)



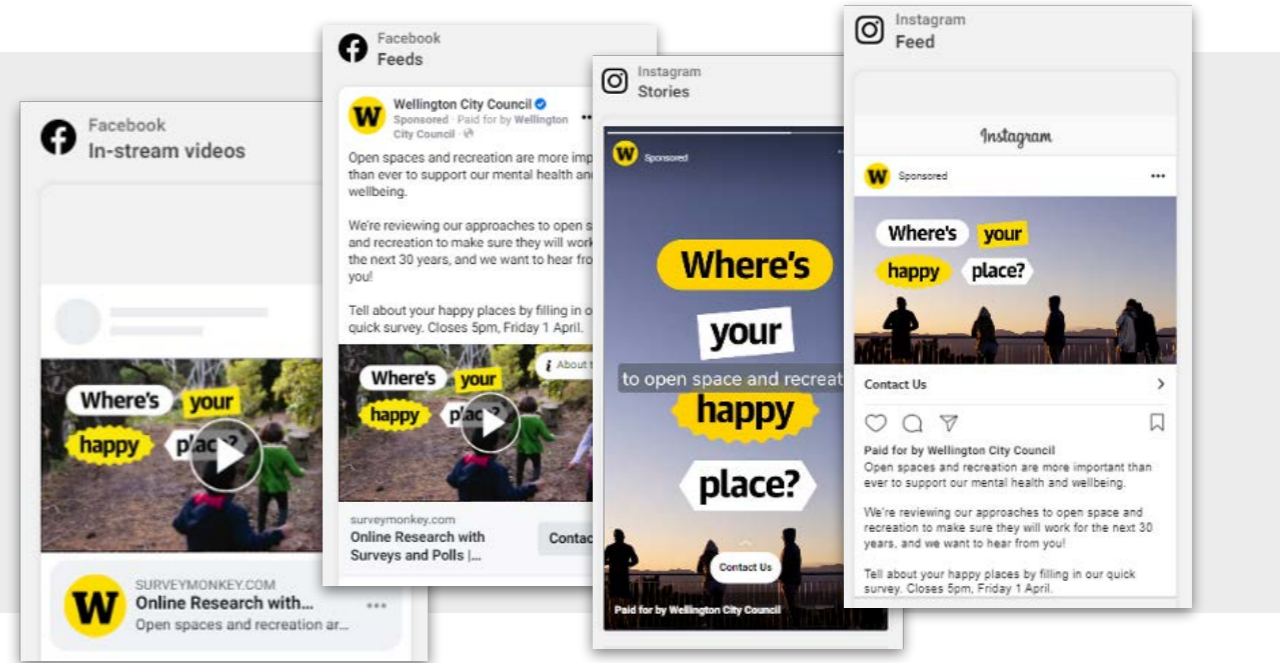
### LinkedIn - Organic promotion

- 1 post with video
- Impressions: 880
- Link clicks: 9
- Reactions: 16

## Social media/online activities

### Facebook/Instagram Ads

- Impressions: 76,327
- Link clicks: 3,006



**So what do respondents think...**

According to respondents, it's not all about new or big ideas...

# **What makes a great space**

- **Being able to sit down while your family plays/does activities**
- **Having toilets available at the space**
- **Being able to use a space in poor weather**
- **Being able to use a space in good weather**
- **Being able to use spaces for free (or low cost)**
- **Having spaces that cater to multiple skill levels and ages**
- **Having spaces open for longer hours during the days, and for longer seasons (or all year round)**
- **Having drinking fountains or close by food/drink options (eg coffee carts)**
- **Having spaces people can enjoy while being around other people**

The feedback tells us:

**Open spaces are crucial to our mental health, our physical health, and feeling connected to nature and one another.**

**People want well-maintained spaces they can get to easily using active modes, with appropriate facilities so that every person can enjoy Wellington, no matter the time of day, skill level or weather.**