Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

mainroads WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Swan River Crossings Alignment Options Assessment Survey Outcomes Report

Contents

Introduction

Main Roads as part of the Fremantle Bridges Alliance (FBA) delivered a comprehensive three-week program of broad community consultation on four proposed bridge alignment options for the Swan River Crossings Project.

The Swan River Crossings Project will replace the Fremantle Traffic Bridge and increase passenger and freight rail capacity, improve safety for road and river users and provide modern and safe standard cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Part of the consultation program was the online Swan River Crossings Alignment Options Assessment Survey. Respondents were asked to apply a sentiment for each of the four bridge alignment options and give feedback on potential traffic impacts during construction. Other questions sought information on each respondent's local government area, frequency of using the bridge and asked how they wanted to be consulted in the future.

Face-to-face and digital engagement was delivered to create awareness of the project and encourage feedback via the survey on the alignment options from a broad range of stakeholders, local to the bridge project area and beyond.

A key feature of the consultation was the online visualisation tool to showcase the alignment options. The tool allowed for each alignment option to be viewed from multiple viewpoints, and included additional project information. Users could click directly from the tool to the survey.

The survey was promoted via a range of channels including:

- the invitation only community forum (coordinated to launch the public consultation period)
- electronic direct mail (EDM) to project subscribers
- online webinar presented by the Alliance
- a series of pop-up information events at various locations in Fremantle
- direct engagement with local businesses
- online communications and social media support from various key stakeholders and community groups
- local community newspapers advertisements
- Main Roads facebook page and LinkedIn

Almost 1,000 people completed the online survey, with Facebook as the highest source driving traffic to the project webpage followed by direct access URL and google.

The key findings of the online survey are examined below.

Respondent demographics

973 surveys were completed with two thirds of responses coming from City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle residents. More than 70% of respondents described themselves as a Fremantle resident and 20% identified as a business owner or a worker in Fremantle. Almost 30% were visitors to the Fremantle area and 3% were students. Respondents to the survey were able to choose more than one category for this demographic.

Almost all respondents travelled across the Fremantle Traffic Bridge by car, with almost half of respondents indicating they also travelled by bike or foot across the bridge. Almost 20% of respondents travelled under the bridge by boat. The frequency with which people travelled across the bridge showed almost 40% took the journey on a daily basis, with just over 30% completing the journey more than once a week.

This data supports the conclusion that respondents to the survey were primarily those who either live near or use the Fremantle Traffic Bridge on a regular basis. Below is a snapshot of these results.

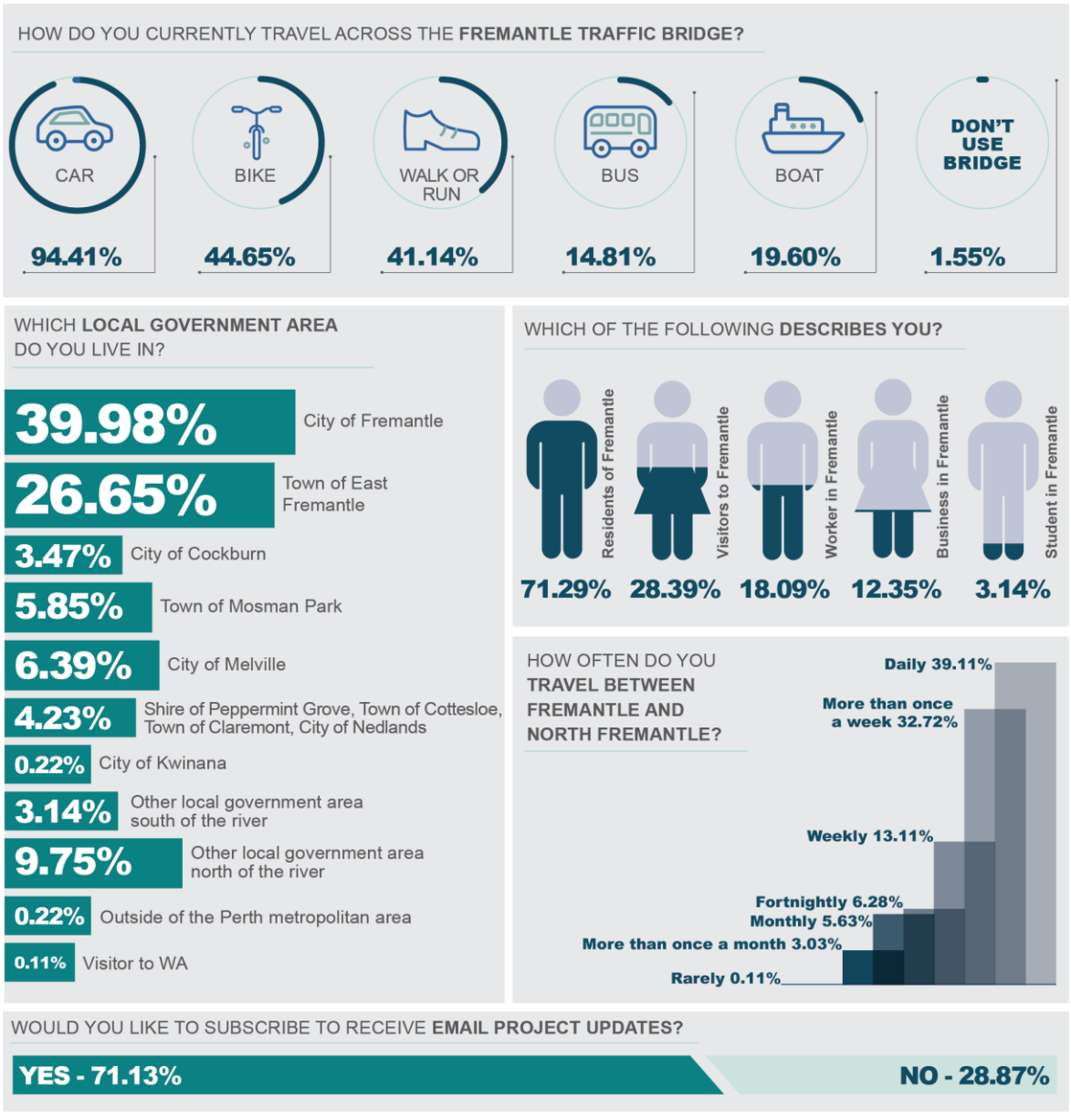


Figure 1: Demographic snapshot of survey respondents

Alignment Option 1

Description

Option One proposes to build two new bridges between the existing rail bridge and the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge. The new passenger rail bridge includes two tracks, to the east of the current rail bridge.

Figure 2: Alignment Option 1

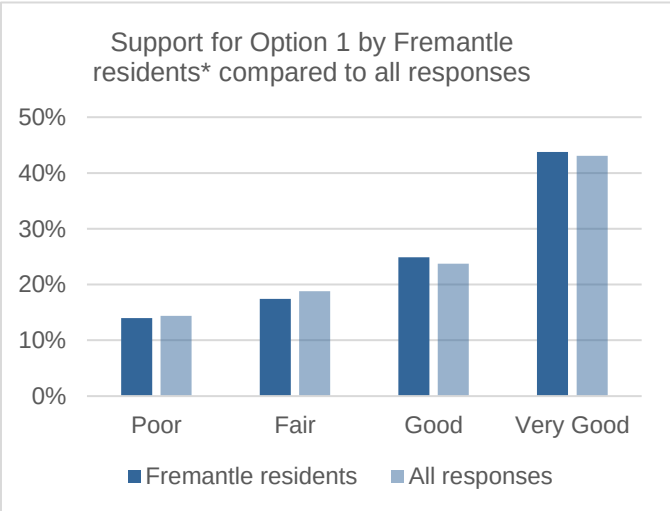
Key considerations for this alignment are:

- all transport infrastructure would be closer together, maximising the available space for urban landscape and design on the southern bank
- facilitates the possible retention of a remnant portion of the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge
- constrained site would make design and construction more complex
- the heritage listed Ferry Capstan base would need to be relocated or reinterpreted
- current estimates would see construction of this alignment finished by late 2025.

Feedback on Option 1

Survey results indicated Option One was preferred**,** with 67% of respondents rating this alignment option as Good or Very good and one-third rating it as Poor or Fair.

The weighted average for Option One was 2.95, indicating an overall rating of Good. Commentary attached to the ratings indicated respondents valued the following features of the alignment:



*Fremantle residents include all in the City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle

- The distance from North Fremantle residents; the alignment is farthest from North Fremantle properties.
- The opportunities created for space activation on the south bank.
- The reduction in the overall footprint of transport infrastructure, bringing the road bridge closer to the rail bridge.

Responses from City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle residents mirrored those across all responses, with 68% of respondents selecting Good or Very Good.

Those who did not support the alignment were concerned about the duration of construction and a perceived over investment in rail infrastructure, by providing a rail bridge with two new tracks of rail.

Some respondents unsupportive of the alignment, were opposed to the project proceeding at all, as they believed a broader planning process needed to be pursued for the Fremantle Ports land and other future developments.

Alignment Option 2

Description

Option 2 proposes to build two new bridges between the existing rail bridge and the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge. The new passenger rail bridge includes one track, to the east of the current rail bridge.

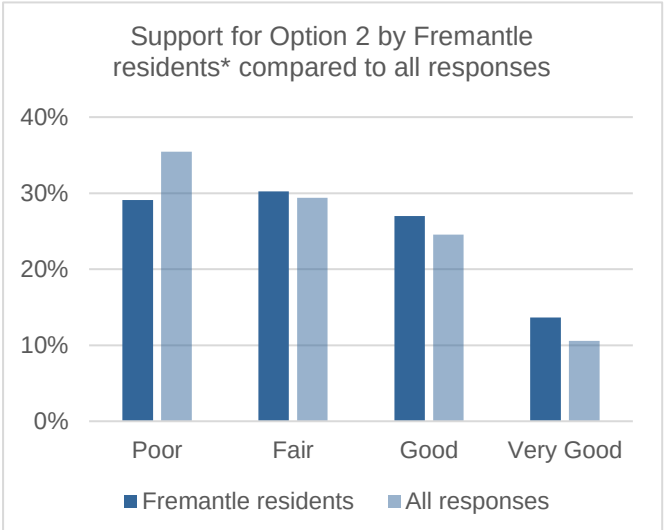
Figure 3: Alignment Option 2

Key considerations for this alignment are:

- all transport infrastructure would be closer together, maximising the available space for urban landscape and design on the southern bank
- facilitates the possible retention of a remnant portion of the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge
- the listed Ferry Capstan base would need to be relocated or reinterpreted
- the rail bridge would only facilitate one new track for passengers
- existing rail bridge would require significant work (or replacement) in 30 to 40 years
- current estimates would see construction of this alignment finished by late 2025.

Feedback on Option 2

Community and stakeholder feedback on Option Two showed the alignment was **not preferred**. Almost 65% of respondents to the survey rated the alignment as Poor or Fair. The weighted average for this alignment was 2.1, placing it in the category of Fair.



*Fremantle residents include all in the City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle

While the traffic bridge proposal for Option Two did not differ from Option One, commentary showed respondents did not see the value in supporting an option which limited future rail replacement options for the Public Transport Authority (PTA). Conversely, commentary supportive of Option Two regarded the rail infrastructure as potentially wasteful, given the proposed future relocation of the Fremantle Port.

The majority of comments unsupportive of the alignment refer to the under delivery of rail infrastructure, with almost 80% of respondents expressing a view that it would be better to have two tracks.

Alignment Option 3

Description

Option 3 proposes to build the new traffic bridge to the east of the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge and includes a new passenger rail bridge with two tracks, to the east of the current rail bridge. This is the alignment that was presented by Main Roads last year.

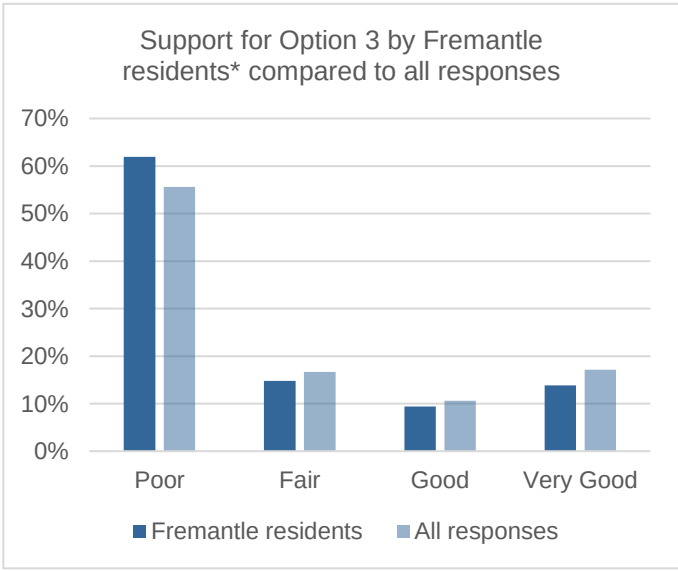
Figure 4: Alignment Option 3

Key considerations for this alignment option are:

- facilitates the possible retention of a remnant portion of the old Fremantle Traffic Bridge, in between the new rail and road bridges
- alignment (including footpath) would move approximately 15m closer to the northern bank apartments than the existing alignment
- simpler more efficient southern intersection (Canning Hwy / Queen Victoria St)
- the alignment would widen the footprint of the transport infrastructure
- current estimates would see construction of this alignment finished by late 2024.

Feedback on Option 3

Feedback collected through surveys and face-to-face engagements with community and stakeholders showed Option Three was not preferred, with 73% of survey respondents rating the alignment either Poor or Fair.



*Fremantle residents include all in the City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle

The weighted average for Option Three was 1.89, indicating an overall rating of Fair, though more than 55% of respondents selected Poor.

Commentary attached to the ratings indicated respondents were unsupportive of the following aspects of the alignment:

- The proximity to North Fremantle residents; the alignment is closest to North Fremantle properties
- The increased footprint of the project area and creation of "dead space" in public open space areas
- The direction of the alignment, taking motorists and cyclists away from the centre of Fremantle.

Responses from City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle residents mirrored those across all responses, with 62% of respondents selecting Poor.

Those who supported the alignment highlighted the shorter duration of construction and longer-term traffic management benefits. The majority of comments unsupportive of Option Three refer to local impacts against residents in North Fremantle, with more than 80% of respondents criticising the proximity of the alignment.

Alignment Option 4

Description

Option 4 proposes to build the new traffic bridge on the same alignment as the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge and includes a new passenger rail bridge with two tracks, to the east of the current rail bridge.4 description.

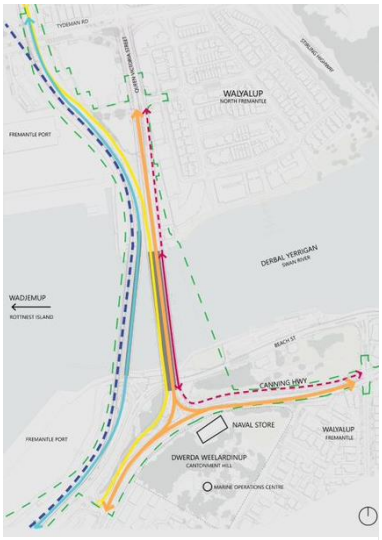


Figure 5: Alignment Option 4

Key considerations for this alignment option are:

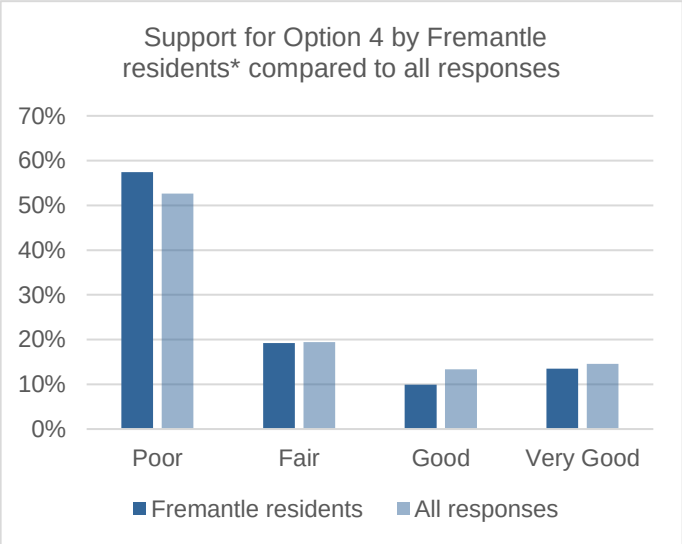
- reduced construction complexities due to demolition of existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge
- the alignment would be on an already disturbed footprint of development
- the alignment would require the full closure of the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge for up to 2 years, which is expected to have a significant impact on the adjacent road network
- heritage aspects would need to be interpreted differently as the new bridge would replace the current structure
- current estimates would see construction of this alignment finished by late 2024.

Feedback on Option 4

Feedback collected through surveys and face-to-face engagements with community and stakeholders showed Option Four was not preferred with 72% of survey respondents rating the alignment either Poor or Fair. The weighted average was 1.90, indicating an overall rating of Fair, though 57% of respondents selected Poor. Commentary attached to the ratings indicated respondents were unsupportive of the following aspects of the alignment:

- The degree of traffic disruptions to come from the closure of the bridge
- The inability to retain any part of the existing bridge, therefore leading to heritage loss.

Responses from City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle residents mirrored those across all responses, with 57% of respondents selecting Poor.



*Fremantle residents include all in the City of Fremantle and Town of East Fremantle

Those who supported the alignment highlighted the benefits of a shorter construction period and the ability to use the existing space and tie-ins for alignment.

Some feedback suggested it was the best option to open up the space for a new piece of infrastructure.

Traffic impacts and tolerances

Two specific survey questions asked respondents to provide feedback regarding their individual preparedness to tolerate increases to traffic congestion associated with construction. Public information on the alignment options described two scenarios with respect to traffic. Options One, Two and Three would require the closure of one lane in each direction on the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge, along with some other short-term impacts. Option Four would require full closure of the bridge during construction for up to two years. Both scenarios are predicted to result in local congestion and some travel delays.

Figure 6: Example journey

The first question asked respondents to rank their tolerance to increased congestion on Stirling Bridge and associated routes. The responses showed:

- 41.12% of people would not accept increased traffic congestion.
- 36.49% of respondents selected the option "I understand the need and I accept this."
- 22.39% selected "I am not happy about it, but I am willing to tolerate this."

An example journey between North Fremantle to Fremantle was shown in the survey tool (refer Figure 6). Respondents were asked to indicate the maximum journey delay they would be willing to tolerate for the example trip. More than 60% of respondents selected a delay of more than five minutes - with the longest band being more than 15 minutes. See responses in the graph below.

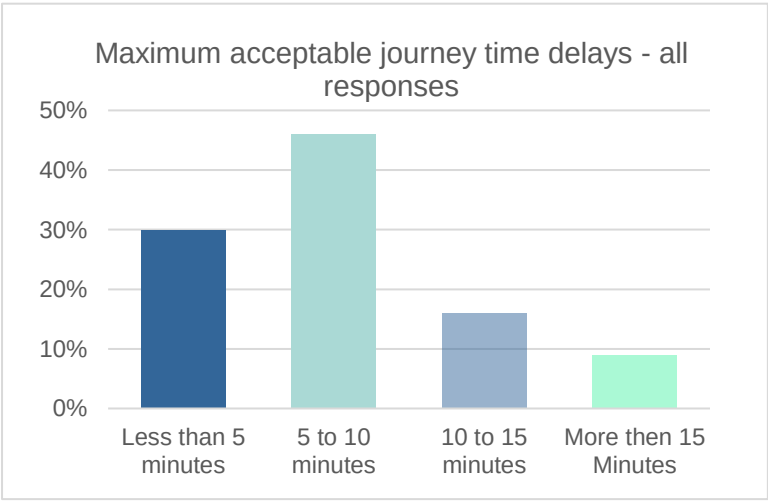


Figure 7: Acceptable journey times

Comparative analysis

A comparative view across all options shows a preference for Option One as shown in the graph. Option 2 might be considered as the second preferred option, though only 36% of respondents selected Good or Very Good. Options Three and Four were strongly not preferred by respondents to the survey, with many selecting Poor.

The analysis shows support for Option One was primarily due to the decreased proximity to North Fremantle residents compared to Option Three, and reduced traffic impacts during construction, compared to Option Four. Respondents also preferred the opportunities for public open space provided by Option One.

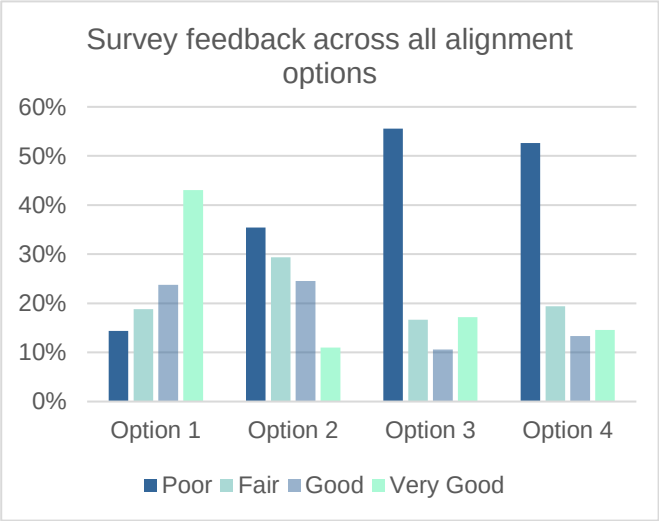


Figure 8: Survey feedback across all alignments

On the qualitative feedback, the least preferred option was Option Four, with comments highlighting the negative traffic impacts during construction and impacts to heritage.

Next steps

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their interest for participation or providing feedback on future topics of consultation. The categories reflected the key areas of interest expressed by community and other stakeholders during face-to-face engagements. Almost 70% of respondents wanted to be involved in discussions about bridge aesthetics, the same degree of interest was expressed in walking and cycling paths and almost 58% were interest in public spaces.

This feedback supports the conclusion that Swan River Crossings stakeholders are highly motivated to be involved in aspects of the project, which will lead to improved amenity and provide ways to enjoy the crossing location as a place to visit for recreation or enjoy using alternative modes of transport - such as walking or cycling. The responses will strongly influence our next steps regarding consultation - with our next focus being on the design of the bridge structure (bridge aesthetics).

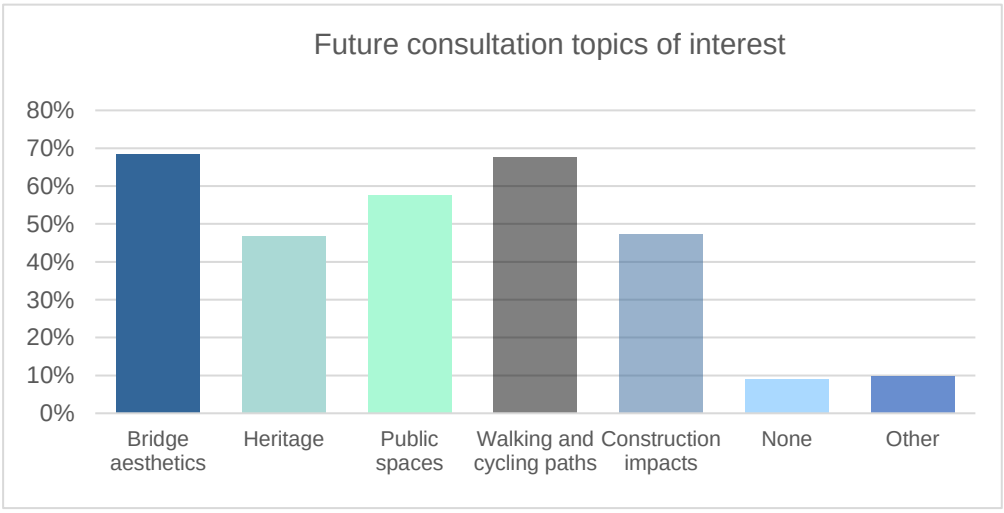


Figure 9: Future consultation topics of interest.