

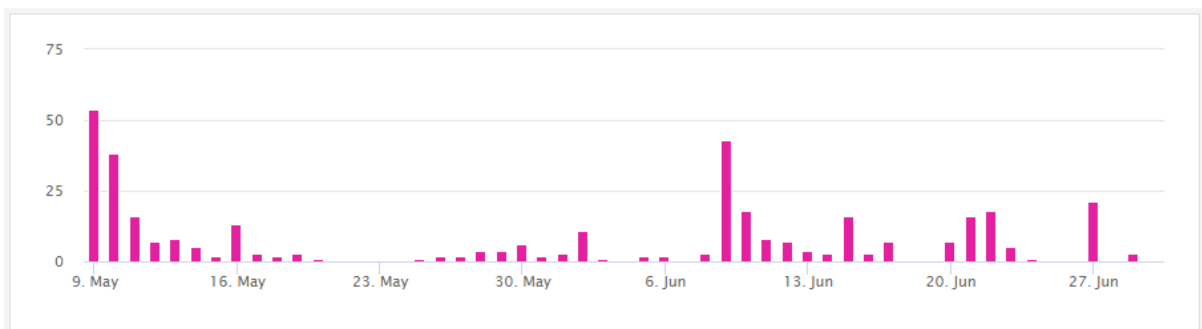


Meldreth to Melbourn A10 Underpass Consultation Response Summary

About this document

This document contains an analysis of responses to the Meldreth to Melbourn A10 underpass consultation received between 9th May and 30th June 2022, and includes both online responses and paper copy responses which were input into the survey platform on 16th June. Graphical representations of answers to questions with tick box, multiple choice and numerical answers are given in each section, followed by an analysis of the free text field responses. Finally, a proposed three stage project plan is suggested.

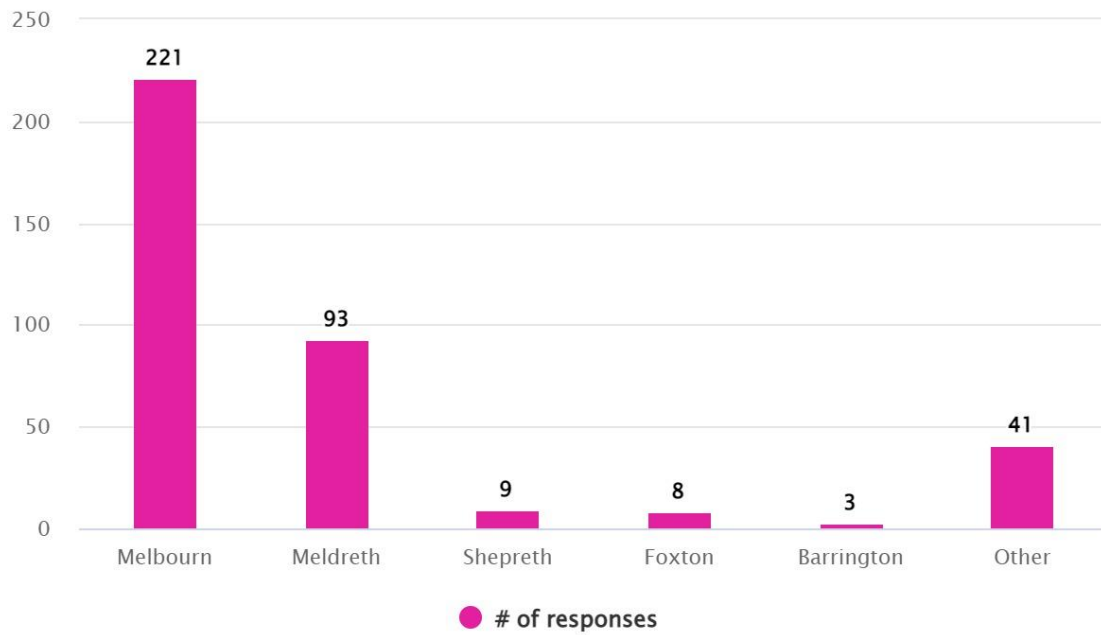
Responses over time:



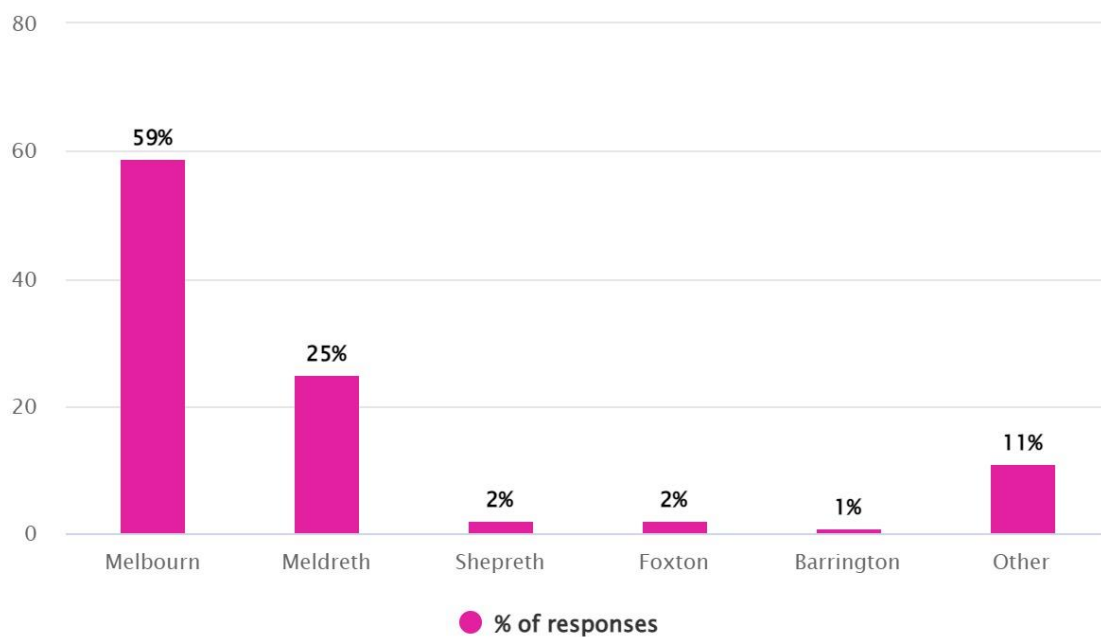
The initial deadline of 18th June was extended to 30th June to allow more responses to be collected from a wider age range.

About you and your use of the underpass

Where do you live?

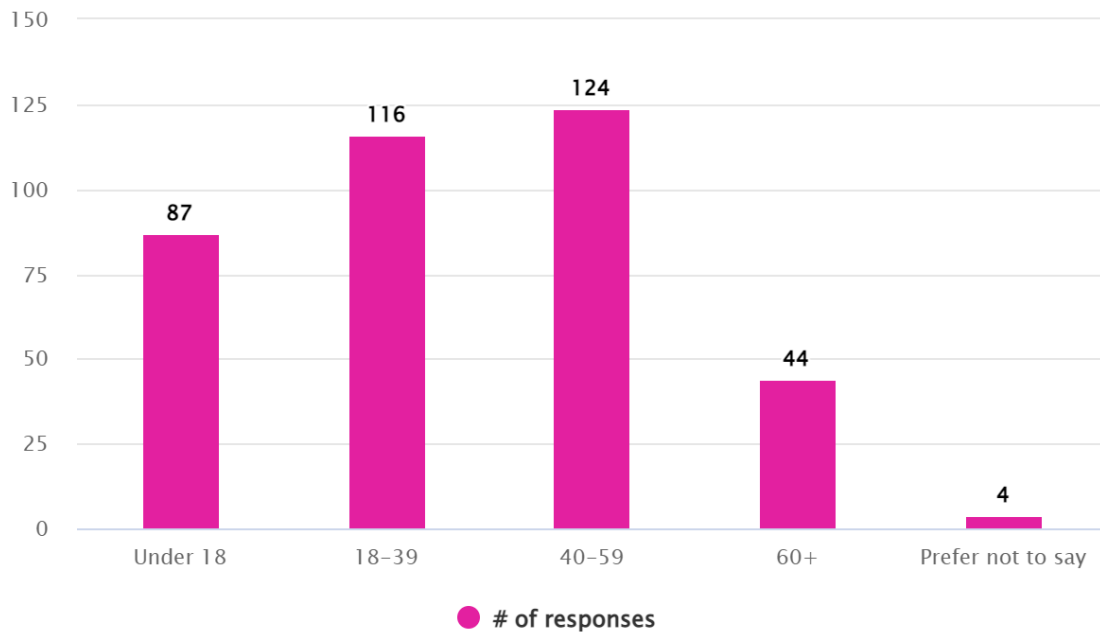


Where do you live?

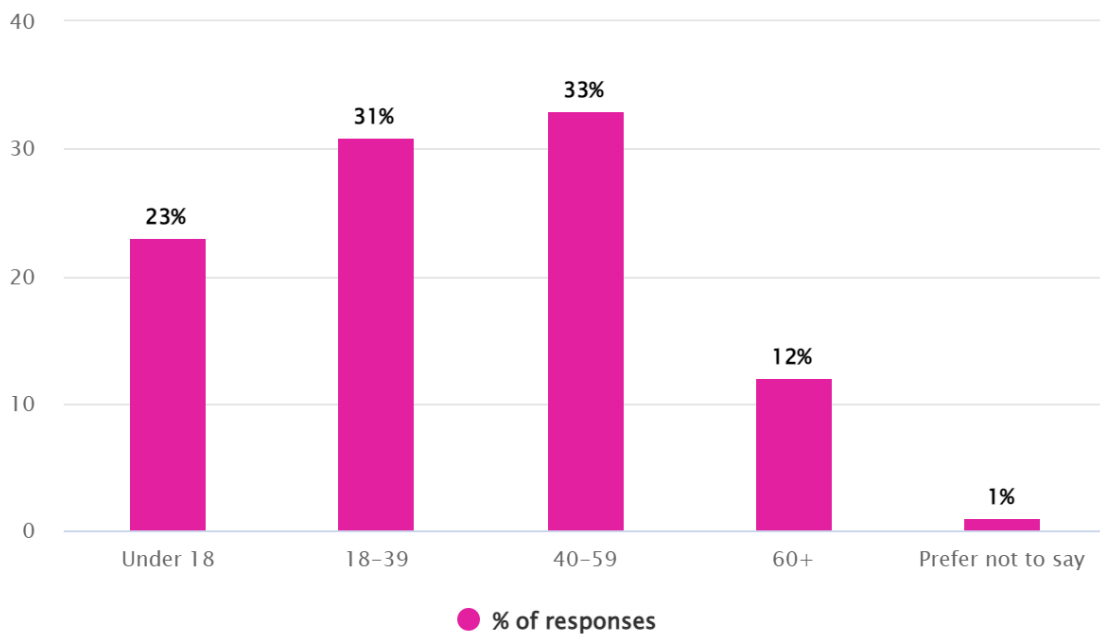


Of 41 “other” responses, 16 live in Cambridge.

How old are you?

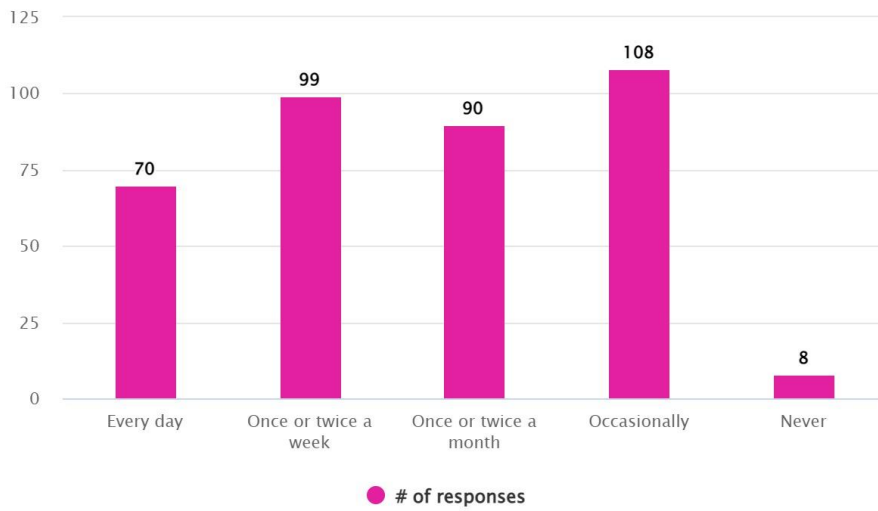


How old are you?

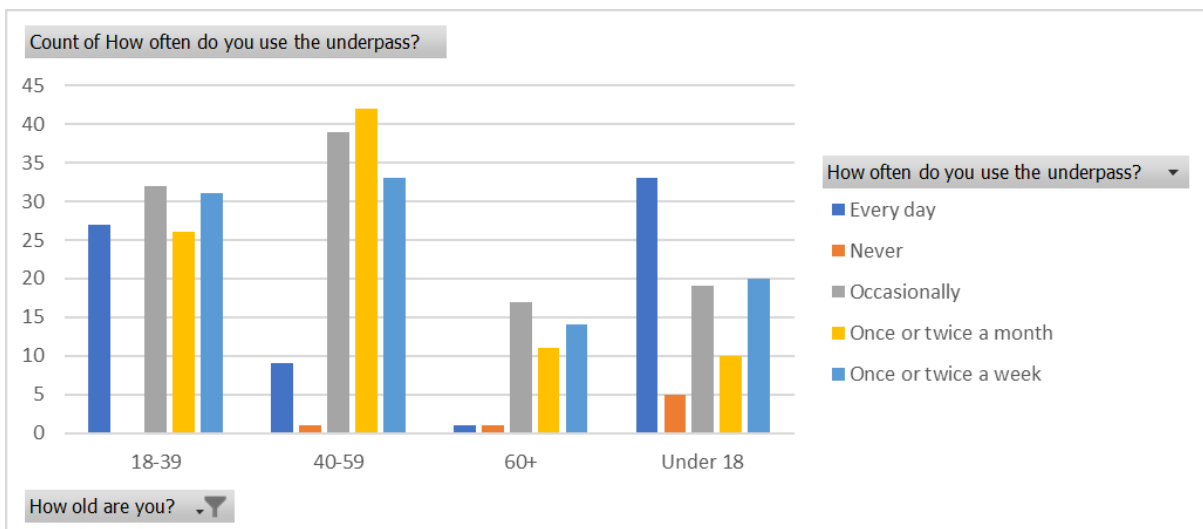
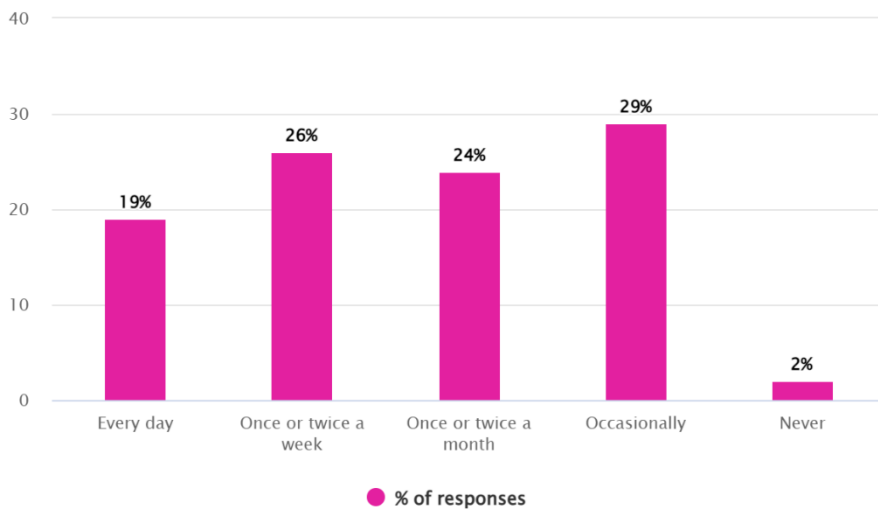


As the deadline of 18th June approached, the percentage of respondents in the under 18 category was very low. At that point the decision was made to extend the deadline and have an in-person intervention at the underpass where users were asked to scan the barcode and complete the survey, this resulted in an increased percentage in the under 18 respondents.

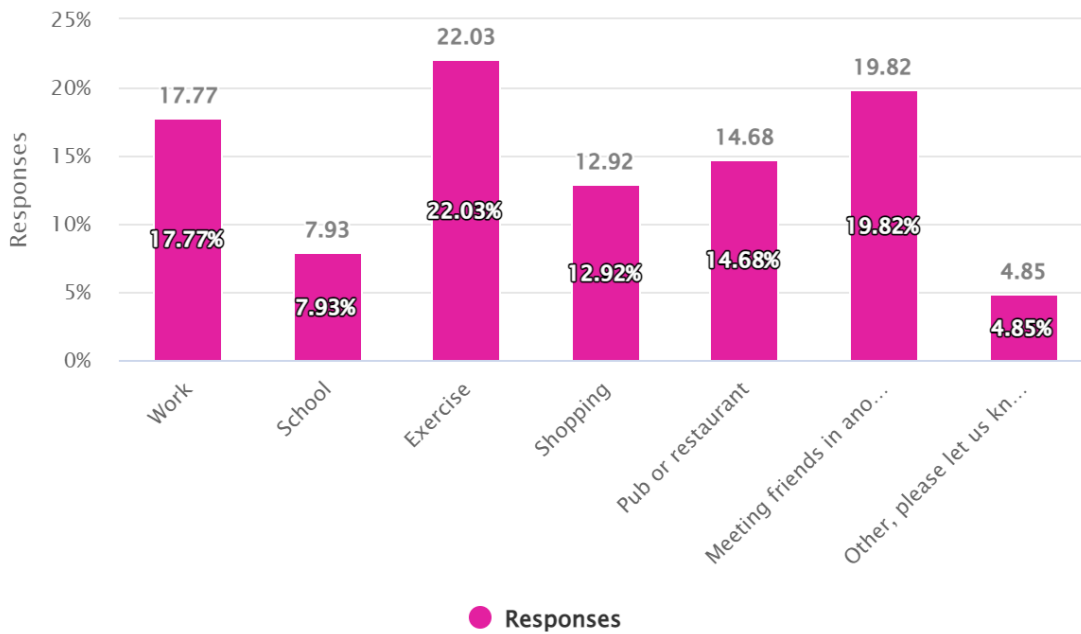
How often do you use the underpass?



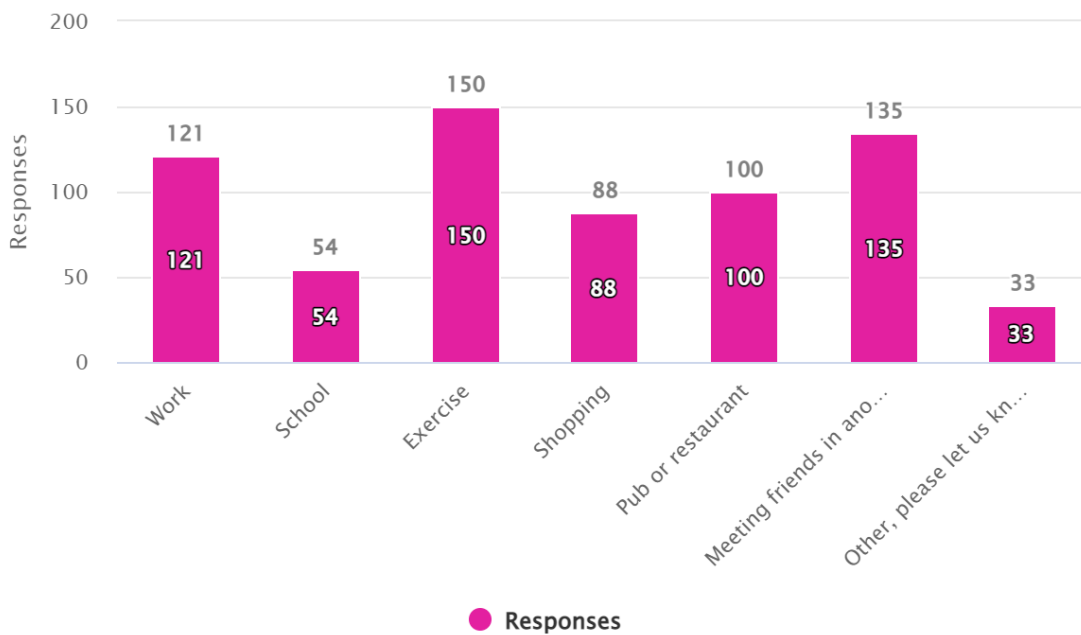
How often do you use the underpass?



Where are you going when you use the underpass?



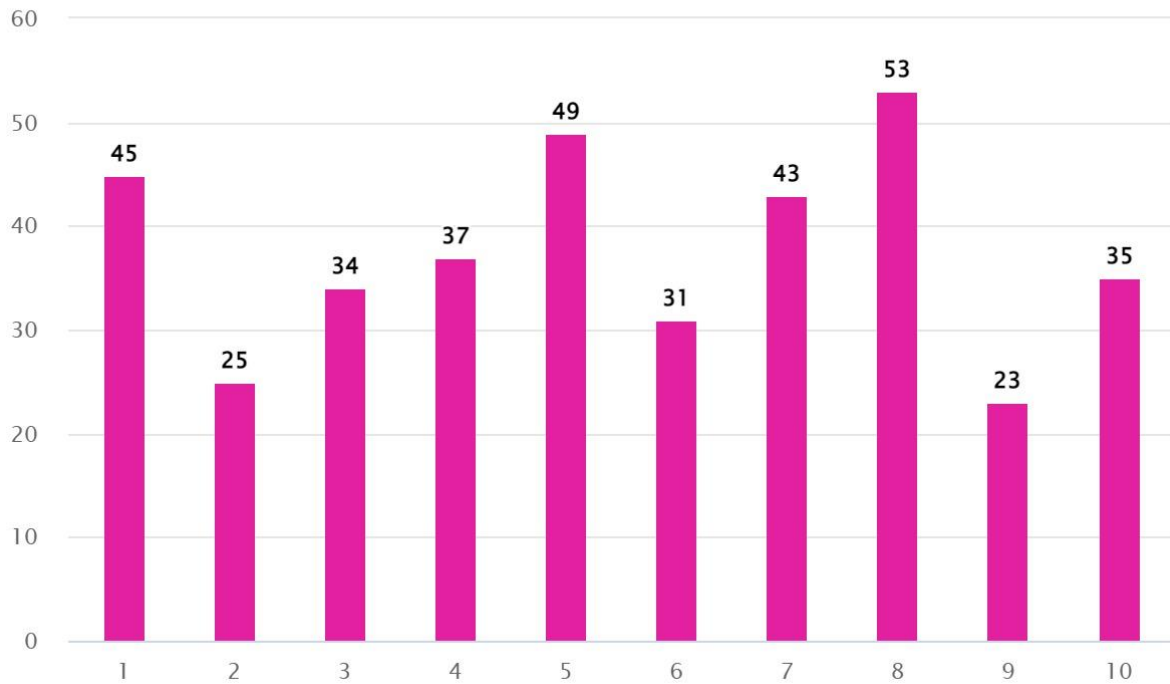
Where are you going when you use the underpass?



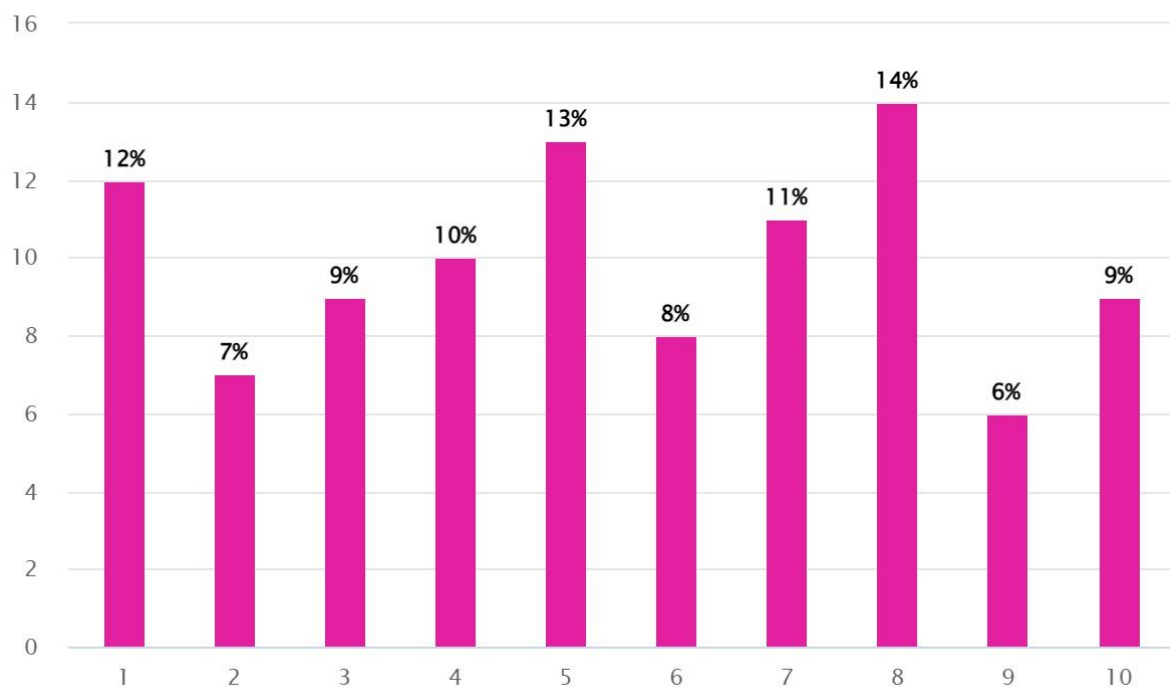
Most of the “other” responses were variants on “taking the train”, with 7 responding “dog walking” or other walking.

Your feelings about the safety of the underpass

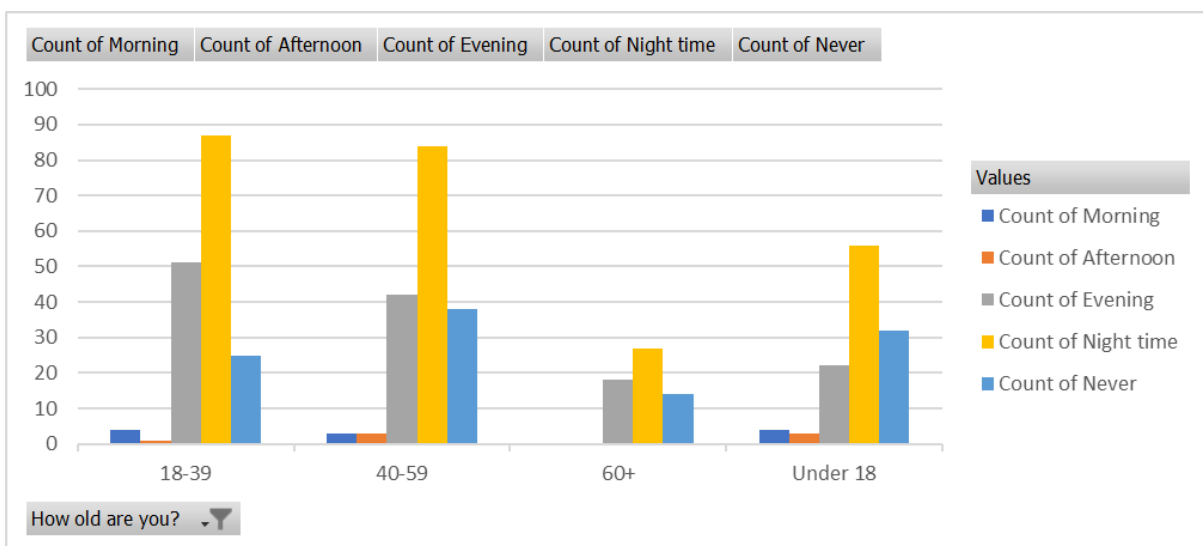
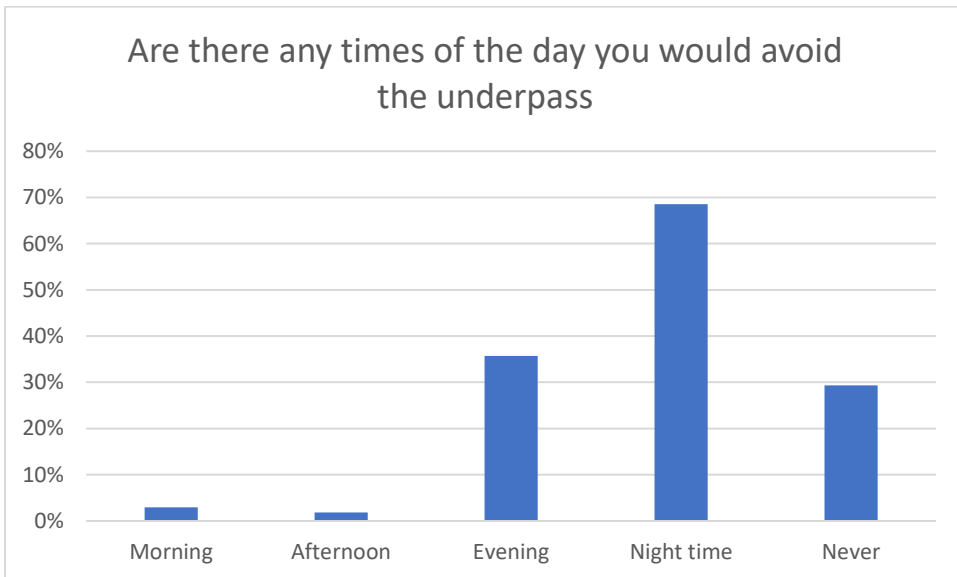
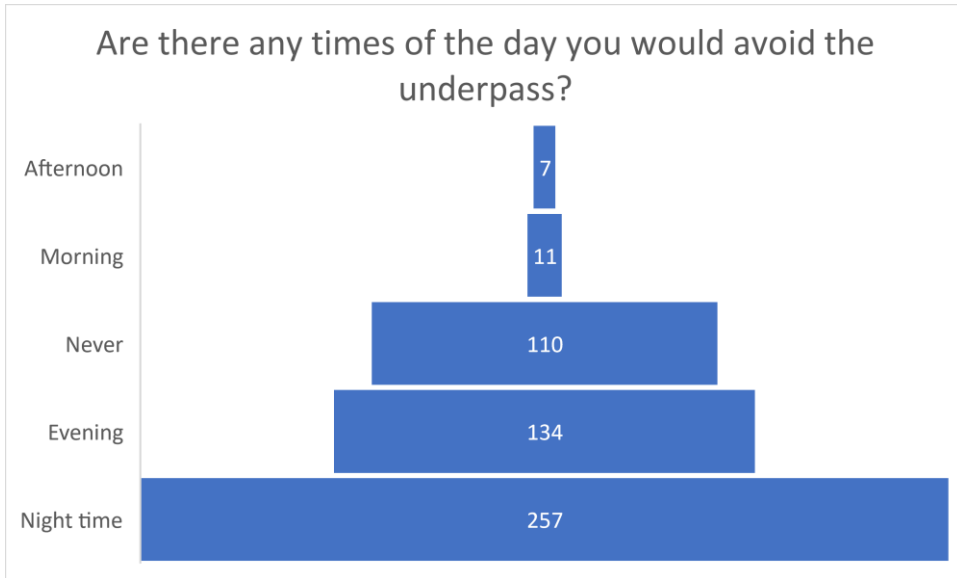
How safe do you feel using the underpass?



How safe do you feel using the underpass?



1 is not safe at all, and 10 is perfectly safe



Free text fields concerning safety

The graphs show that responses to “How safe do you feel using the underpass?” were fairly evenly split across values 1 – 10, and across various groupings of values to represent “safe” vs “unsafe”. However, further analysis shows that for those giving a 6 or 7 safety value, 75% and 63% respectively would still avoid the underpass at some time of day, and even of those giving a 9 or 10 for feeling safe, 35% and 23% would avoid at some time of day.

| Safety Value | Sum | Free text responses? | % of total using free text | Would avoid at some time of day | = % |
|--------------|-----|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 | 45 | 34 | 76% | 14/15 | 93% |
| 2 | 25 | 21 | 84% | 1 | 100% |
| 3 | 34 | 26 | 76% | 33/34 | 97% |
| 4 | 37 | 28 | 76% | 31/37 | 84% |
| 5 | 49 | 32 | 65% | 36/49 | 73% |
| 6 | 31 | 24 | 77% | 3/4 | 75% |
| 7 | 43 | 21 | 49% | 27/43 | 63% |
| 8 | 53 | 34 | 64% | 22/53 | 42% |
| 9 | 23 | 16 | 70% | 8/23 | 35% |
| 10 | 35 | 22 | 63% | 8/35 | 23% |

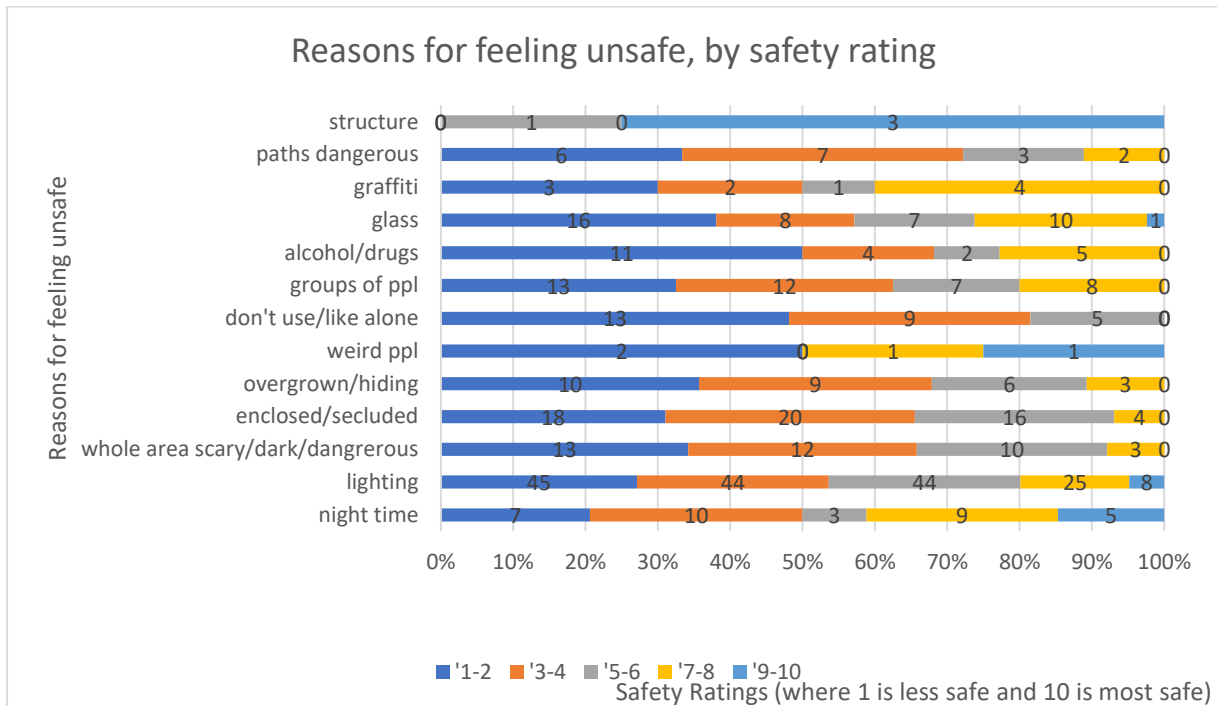
When combined with responses to “For what reason would you avoid the underpass?” (if respondent has selected at least one time of day when they would avoid the underpass), reasons for feeling unsafe are summarised:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Total survey responses | 375 |
| Respondents using free text for either “to expand on why you have given this (safety) score”, “for what reason would you avoid the underpass” (unless they said that they never would avoid it), or both | 258 |
| (Surveys with no free text for either question | 117) |
| Total number of surveys with usable free text responses (a handful were unable to be categorised) (When responses mentioned more than one reason, tallies were given for all reasons mentioned) | 231 |
| Number of responses (out of 258) with no negative elements | 12 |
| Text analysis, number of times themes were mentioned: | |
| Light/dark; day/night | 187 |
| Secluded | 58 |
| Groups loitering | 45 |
| Smashed glass – creating fear, or not specified | 32 |
| Whole area not just underpass | 31 |
| Overgrown | 31 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Would not use alone | 28 |
| Alcohol/drugs | 24 |
| Worse for women and girls | 21 |
| Bumpy/not well maintained | 15 |
| Smashed glass - danger walking/cycling | 11 |
| Suggestion of CCTV | 10 |
| Personal experience of surprise, crowds | 9 |
| Graffiti giving negative feelings | 9 |
| 2020 assault mentioned | 7 |
| Cyclists/walkers not seeing each other | 3 |
| Elderly | 2 |
| Accessibility once at station | 2 |

It should be noted that the questions asked were “Please feel free to expand on why you have given this score” (how safe do you feel using the underpass?) and “For what reason would you avoid the underpass?”. The majority of reason tallies were given for “please feel free to expand” and so this was asked for all 1 – 10 safety ratings, though it must be noted that some (about 1/5) of the tallies came from free text responses to the question of “for what reason would you avoid the underpass” and so assumed negative feelings about the underpass. Also significant is the fact that 117/375 respondents did not choose to enter any free text explanations on the subject of safety, and these respondents were skewed towards the “feeling more safe” end of the scale, though approximately 1/3 of “no comment” respondents gave a 5 or lower safety rating.

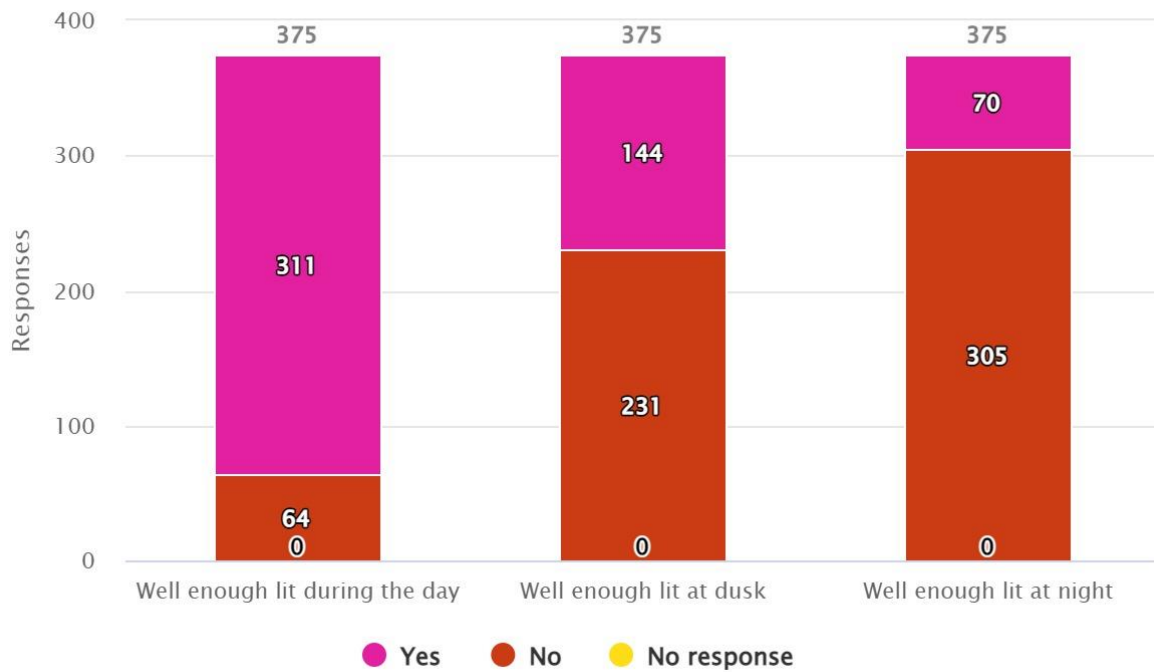
The following graph shows themes mentioned in free text responses, broken down by the values given for safety (slightly different categories):



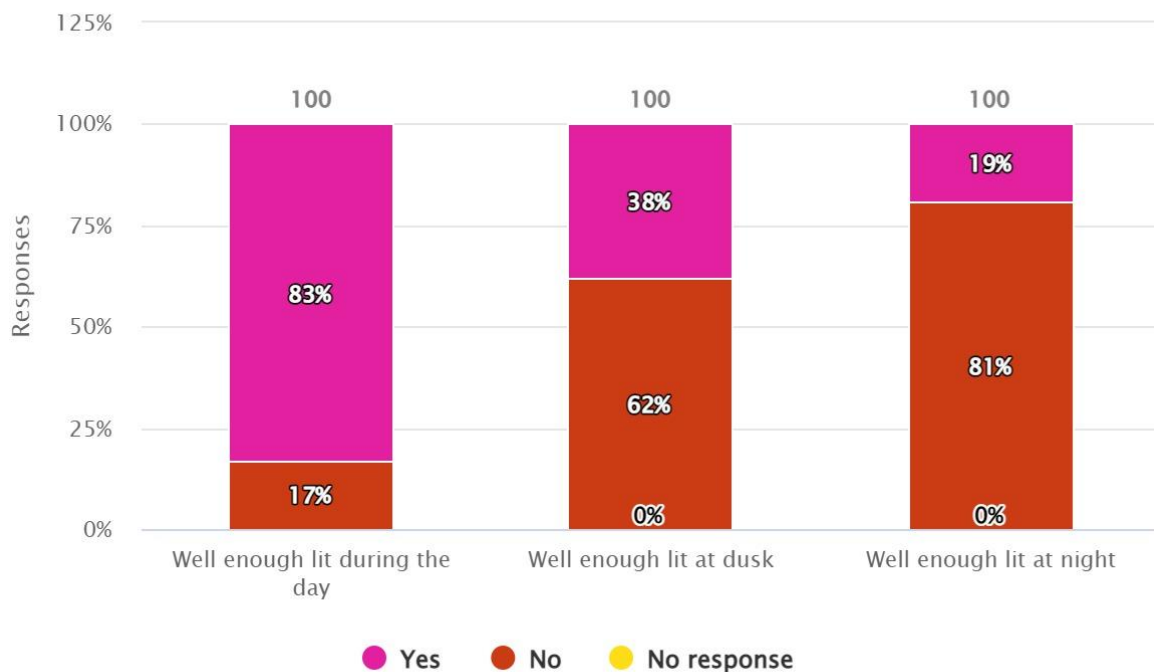
NB: A small number of respondents interpreted “safety” as relating to the physical structure and integrity of the bridge. Possibly for this reason they gave high safety ratings.

Your feelings about the physical aspects of the underpass

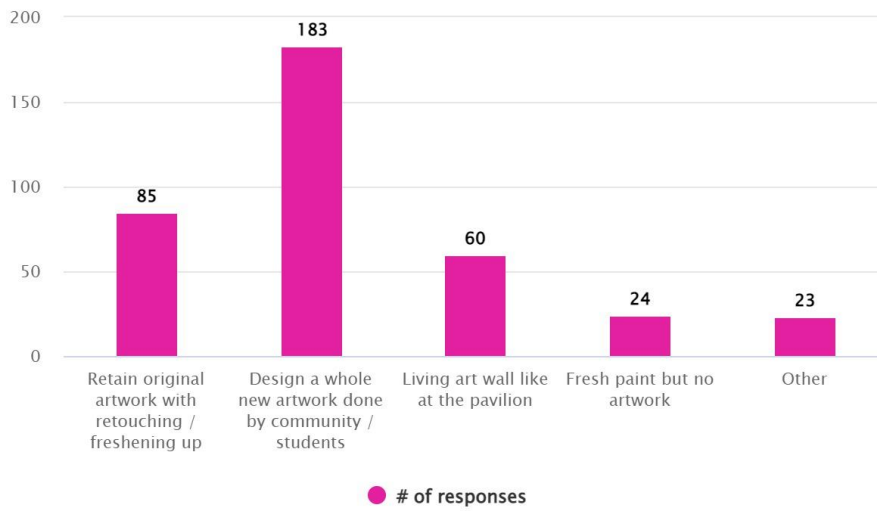
How do you feel about the lighting in the underpass?



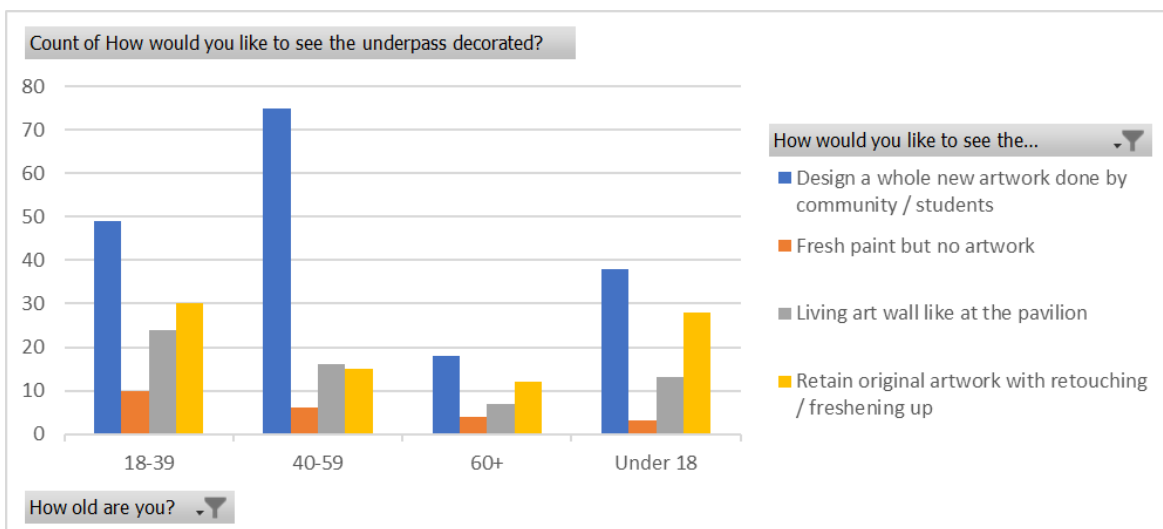
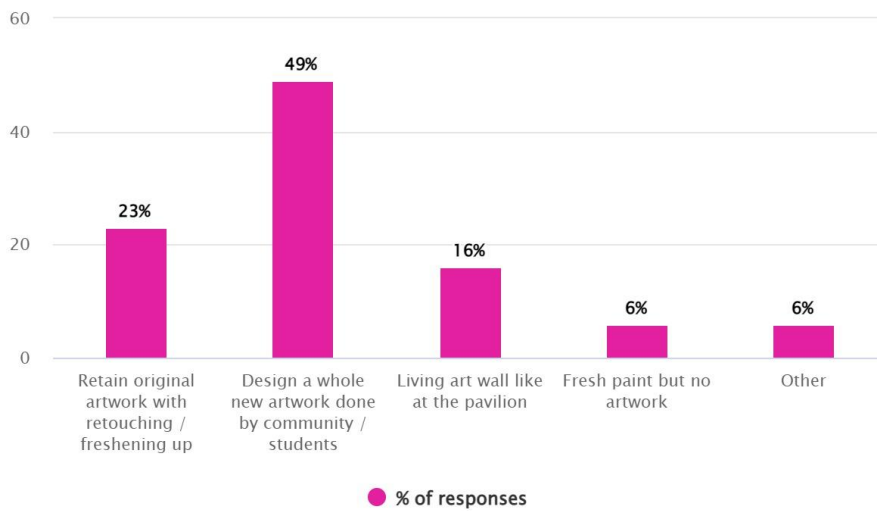
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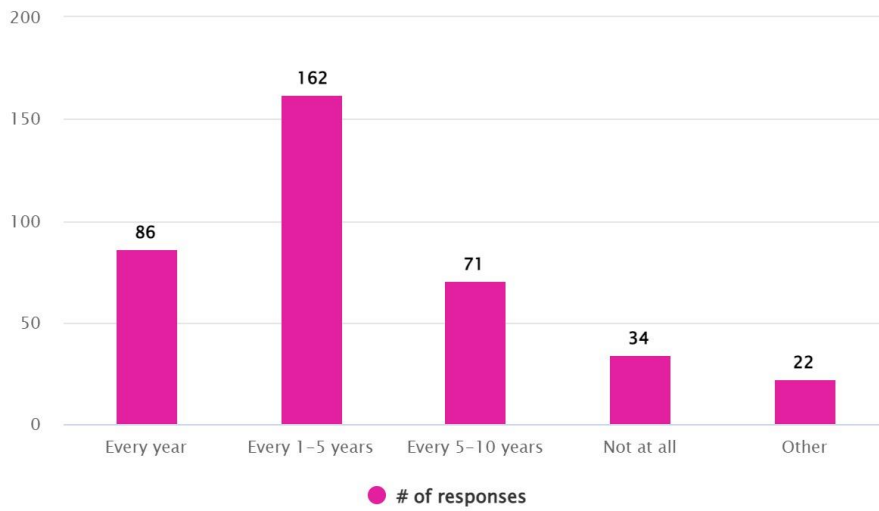
How would you like to see the underpass decorated?



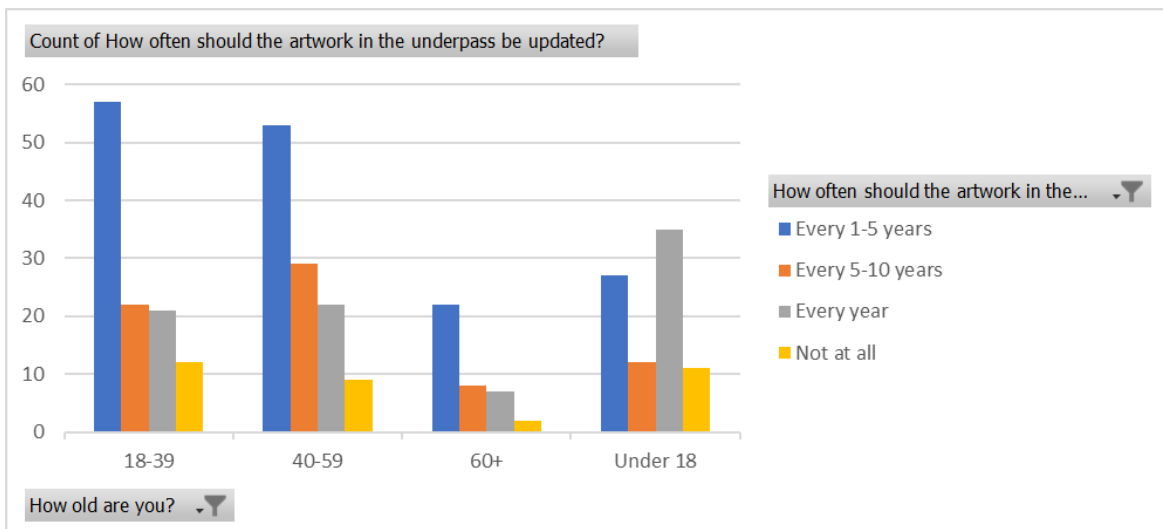
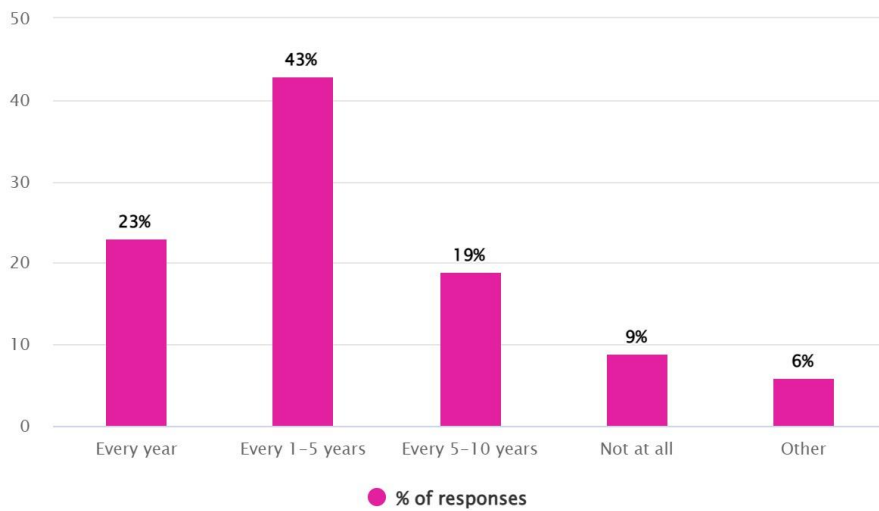
How would you like to see the underpass decorated?



How often should the artwork in the underpass be updated?



How often should the artwork in the underpass be updated?



Free text fields concerning decoration

Questions were “How would you like to see the underpass decorated? (Multiple choice)”, and “How often should the artwork in the underpass be updated? (Multiple choice)”. If “other” was chosen for either of these then free text responses were available. As shown in the graphs, 23 respondents chose “other” for decoration options and 22 for frequency of update options. Overall, 34 individuals gave a free text response about decoration; about type, frequency, or both. Some individuals gave an “other” response on both questions, hence fewer individuals than the sum of total answers.

The split between options for types of decoration favoured “new artwork done by community/student” with 183 votes, then “retain original with retouching” with 85, then 60 votes for “living art wall like the pavilion”. With further analysis, the 23 votes for “other” included:

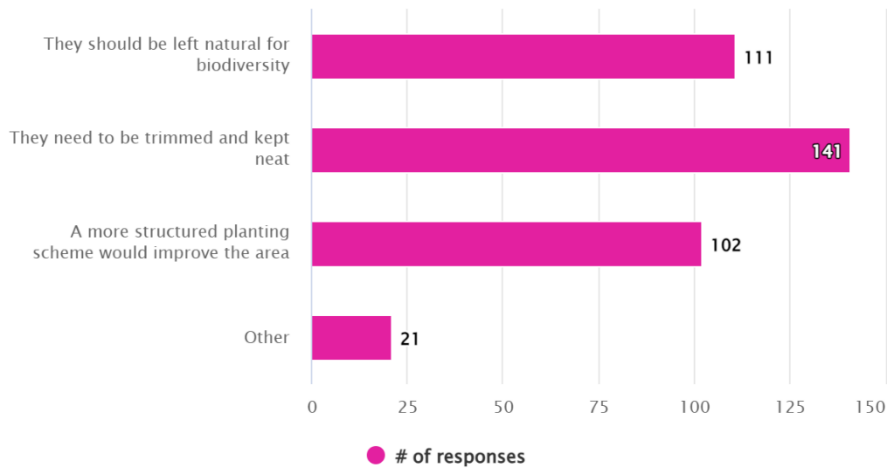
- 6 specifically state that they have no opinion/preference.
- 4 responses only comment on safety and that any artwork decision is secondary and relatively irrelevant, and another mentions safety but also local artwork.
- 2 responses specify a preference for no graffiti-style artwork as they feel it gives the wrong impression. 1 of these suggests photography or illustration.

Regarding frequency of redecoration, “other” responses showed:

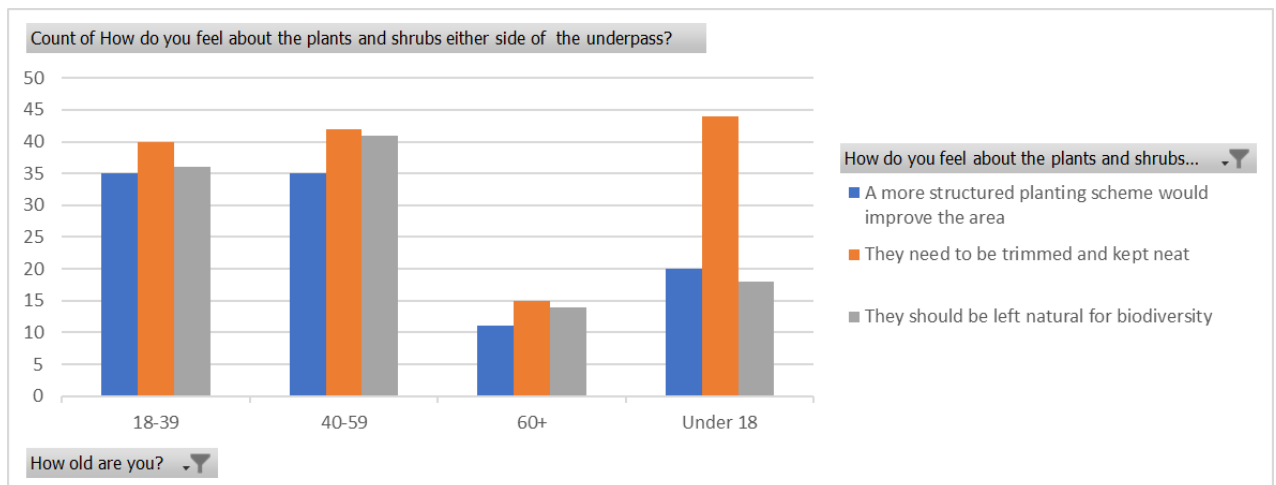
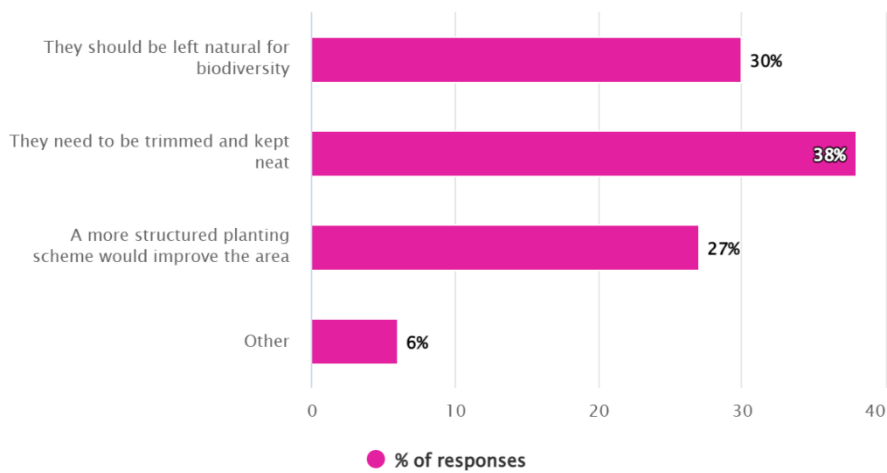
- 5 specifically state “no opinion/preference”.
- 2 specifically state that safety concerns are paramount and that decoration frequency is irrelevant.
- 6 state it should be refreshed just when necessary, including if it is graffitied or dirty, “when tired looking or vandalised”, and so as not to waste resources if not needed yet. One further response also says “It depends how worn and defaced it becomes. It also depends as much on the frequency of cleaning and litter clearance. If, say, students wanted to do fresh art even couple of years that would be OK.”

In conclusion the majority of people favour new artwork which involves the community and/or students, and reiterate that safety is a real concern.

How do you feel about the plants and shrubs either side of the underpass?



How do you feel about the plants and shrubs either side of the underpass?



Free text fields concerning plants and shrubs

The graphs show that the priority was for plants and shrubs to be trimmed and kept neat (141 responses), though there was also a large call for natural biodiversity (111) and a structured planting scheme (102). From the free-text responses regarding safety, overgrowth was also mentioned many times with comments about hiding places and lack of visibility adding to feelings of discomfort for users of the path and underpass. The multiple choice question about shrubbery was “how do you feel about the plants and shrubs?”. Of the 21 respondents who chose “other” and were offered a free-text option, 20 gave further information:

- 4 said that they didn't have an opinion.
- 3 said that safety/removing places for people to hide should be priority, a further 2 mentioned overgrowth causing feelings of claustrophobia or feeling trapped when using the underpass.
- Other responses spoke of safety from a perspective of physical injury caused by overgrowth, including stinging nettles, ease of passing others, blocked entrance to the underpass, and difficulty using the path in a wheelchair due to growth over the path.
- There were 7 responses that focused on the physical impediment caused by overgrowth.
- Two further respondents were of the opinion that overgrowth makes the underpass look ill-cared for, leaving it vulnerable to further anti-social behaviour, and as such biodiversity is not a priority in this location.
- The final two respondents suggested regular maintenance was crucial, whilst still allowing for biodiversity and retention of “natural rural character”.

Free text field for other comments

The last free-text question was “If you have any other comments about the underpass please let us know in the box below”. Respondents mostly used this to reiterate their previous responses about safety, decoration, ideas for plants; a few commented on ways the survey could be improved. 116 respondents left comments here.

Some ideas of note, and questions that respondents asked in this space:

A number of respondents again spoke of issues with the whole area/path rather than only the underpass. Themes included paving/unevenness of the path and that it all needs resurfacing, lighting along the whole stretch, overgrowth along the whole stretch. A few people commented that the path needs widening to allow cyclists and pedestrians to pass each other. More commented on the state of the fences. A few mentioned that there are accessibility issues both due to the uneven path surface, overgrowth, and also once the station is reached.

Some examples of such responses (reproduced as given):

- *Improving the pathway to the station is a much higher priority- it is uneven with no lights which is a real problem for commuters. It should be resurfaced and lit with LEDs: this would be a major benefit to both villages, connecting us properly for pedestrians.*
- *It is generally run down and the paths either side need work. The fences are in a poor state. The pebbles ins side the underpass are loose and often pulled out. It just needs a complete makeover.*
- *It would be good to split the path into a walking and cycling lane.*
- *Melbourn is inhabited by some old farts like me. The access to Meldreth station should reflect this reality.*
- *There is no point in just updating one, very small section of a long walkway. The entire length needs to be updated, safeguarded and the stairs to the train station should be cemented over to create a ramp so families with strollers and commuters on bikes can easily avoid road traffic. The paths should be widened to show pedestrians to pass each other at safe distance and pass cyclists.*
- *The section next to the poultry shed (between the underpass and the path through the fields to Meldreth station) could do with some attention. It is extremely uneven and completely unilluminated at night (and the tree cover blocks any moonlight), which means it is necessary to tread rather carefully at night or you will find yourself tripping over a tree's root! The path through the field could do with a little bit of patching up too.*

A number of respondents would like to see regular sweeping and maintenance due to broken glass on the paths, and litter. Others asked for more bins. Glass was mentioned as a cause of fear, but also a safety issue for cyclists, and dog walkers.

One respondent sums up feelings of frustration: *It's the most direct route to Meldreth station, it has never been well maintained and peoples safety has never been properly considered. Walking the roadway is not a safer option because of traffic blind spots. The path by the turkey farm has never been properly maintained. It's an unsafe eye sore, that should be a priority. Too little too late.*

While others are more hopeful: *Thank you for taking this on, and It's part of a valuable off-road walking link.*

Different flagged issues included:

- *All non motorised users need to be able to use this underpass safely, including horseriders and cyclists. Please install a concrete mounting block either side so that horseriders can dismount, lead their horses through and remount. Thank you.*
- *i cant get my bike through the poles going towards Melbourn and The pillars in the middle are a slight hazard for bikes/in large groups*
- *The path leading to the underpass is often covered in leaves for months.*

Further suggestions included:

- *A secure car park towards Melbourn village right next to train station and a path that connects to the high street would potentially benefit the community.*
- *Some discussion with the school kids about the negative consequences (of broken glass) of this especially for cyclists would be helpful. Or even better some recycling bins.*
- *Maybe the artwork could be nature based? Use anti graffiti paint as people will probably try to draw over any new paintings.*
- *...the start of the path should be indicated more clearly from the road.*
- *The path that goes along the side of the Turkey farm to Station Road is pointless. If it continued to the river it would be better. Otherwise its just somewhere for someone up to no good to use.*
- *The underpass gives cycle access to the station. If the ramp along the side of the steps to the Cambridge bound platform could be improved to the same standard as those at Cambridge station it would complete this access better.*
- *It would be good to have more concrete paving on either side so I don't get muddy in my work clothes*
- *It would be interesting to see how other communities maintain their underpasses/ make them safe.*

- *More cheerful planting and wildflowers or flowering shrubs. And Planters installed at either end - Native flowers and shrubs planted in them - either fix or removed broken fencing*

And another question raised was:

- *I echo my earlier comments about treating the underpass and the path to Meldreth Station as a whole. I also ask where we are regarding the upgrading of the path which was promised by builders and others.*

Next Steps

Lighting

The first stage of the proposed project will be to follow advice from the Cambridgeshire County Council Highways team on how to improve the lighting in the underpass. This will include:

- Pressure washing the underpass to remove existing dirt and grime
- Painting the ceiling, floors and walls white to improve the Light Reflectance Value in the underpass (this will reduce the level of light needed, and reduce the energy requirements)
- Installing new lighting controls so that control of the lighting inside the underpass can be separated from the lights outside the underpass, allowing lights to come on earlier.

Vegetation

From the free-text survey responses regarding safety, overgrowth was mentioned many times with comments about hiding places and lack of visibility adding to feelings of discomfort for users of the path and underpass, further respondents believed overgrowth makes the underpass look ill-cared for, leaving it vulnerable to further anti-social behaviour.

The second stage of the proposed project will be to cut back some of the existing vegetation. This will improve sight lines on the approach to the underpass and tackle the feelings of intimidation. 38% of respondents said that the plants and shrubs either side of the underpass should be trimmed and kept neat.

Artwork

The survey also asked what should be done about the existing artwork in the underpass. Originally a community project, this now dates back around 15 years and has become disfigured by graffiti in many places. Whilst 23% of respondents were in favour of retaining the existing artwork, 49% preferred new artwork to be designed by the community and local students. Additionally, a visit by the Cambridgeshire County Council Think Communities team to Melbourn Village

College identified the need to provide creative activities to enhance the mental health of young people.

The third stage of the proposed project will be to follow the advice of the Head of Art at MVC to employ an artist to run workshops for students and local residents to design artwork to decorate the underpass. If the artwork is designed in lighter colours and does not cover the walls fully top to bottom this will have an improved effect on the Light Reflectance Value. The artist will then transfer the artwork onto the underpass walls.

Project Benefits

Our survey showed that in addition to travelling to work (20%) and school (8%), the underpass is also used extensively for exercise (22%). So the project will benefit local residents who are not necessarily commuters.

The benefits of the project will be:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Enhancing the environment around the station to encourage use of active travel and public transport
- Providing creative activities for local residents, especially young people, to support their mental health and develop skills.