

THE WALKWAY SURVEY

Measuring public use of Council administered walkways
within the locality of St Johns Hill

Whanganui District Council
June 2016

Executive Summary

- User counts support and correlate with perception survey findings
- Walkways that respondents' were most aware of, also had the highest use.
- Alexa Place walkway, despite its closure still generates interest and usage from the public.
- Walking and jogging was predominately the usual method of travel across all walkways.
- Recreation, exercise, and walking pets were the more common reasons respondents utilised all walkways.
- On average nearly 12 % of respondents utilised a surveyed walkway on a daily basis, 26 % weekly, and 23%monthly.
- All walkways had the highest use during 3-6pm for weekdays and at 12pm on weekends.
- Respondents were overall satisfied (78%) with walkways.
- 91% of respondents stated it was very easy or easy in accessing surveyed walkways.

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Project Overview

Background and objectives

The Whanganui District Council undertook a study of a number of walkways in the St Johns Hill area. The objective of this study is to determine public reasons for accessing and frequency of use of Council administered walkways within the locality of St Johns Hill.

The walkways studied forming part of this study are as follows:

- Smart Terrace
- Alexa Place
- Burnett Terrace
- Christies Hill
- Victoria Park
- Ghost Track A
- Ghost Tract B
- Hillside Terrace

Methodology

The research found within this report was developed through two key methods:

- Traffic counts of users who access the surveyed walkways; and
- Surveying of residents

User counts

Over a period of 10 days (2 weekend days and 8 weekend days) between 30 May 2016 and 8 June 2016, a contractor was employed by Council to count persons accessing the walkways. Weekday and weekend methods in collecting traffic differ as this was found to be the right balance between data collection and resource expenditure. Weekday counts were collected on a randomised weekday at set time intervals when traffic was expected. Weekend day counts were collected between 4pm to 6pm and days randomised.

Surveying of residents

The Walkways Survey (Appendix 1) was administered via the following avenues:

- Mail drop- to residents that neighboured or were thought to be in proximate use of nearby walkways – approximate buffer of 100m done through GIS mapping.
- Online Panel- *Our District, Your Say*, Council's online Panel. Panellists were sent a link to an online version of the survey.
- Intercept surveys- Accompanying user counts, random walkway users were asked to complete the Walkway survey.

Response rate

The response rate is calculated based on the total amount of surveys sent out via mail drop, the Panel, and via intercept surveys adding up to 624. A total of 158 surveys were completed meaning the response rate for the Walkway survey is 25%.

Margin of Error

Margin of Error (MoE) is a statistic used to express the amount of random sampling error there is in a survey's results. The MoE is particularly relevant when analysing a subset of the data as smaller samples sizes incur a greater MoE. The final sample size $n = 158$ which gives an overall margin of error $\pm 8\%$ at the 95% confidence interval. This is, if the observed result on the total sample of 158 respondents was 50% (point of maximum margin of error), then there is a 95% probability that the true answer falls between 42% and 58%.

Results

Walkway User Counts

Weekday User Counts

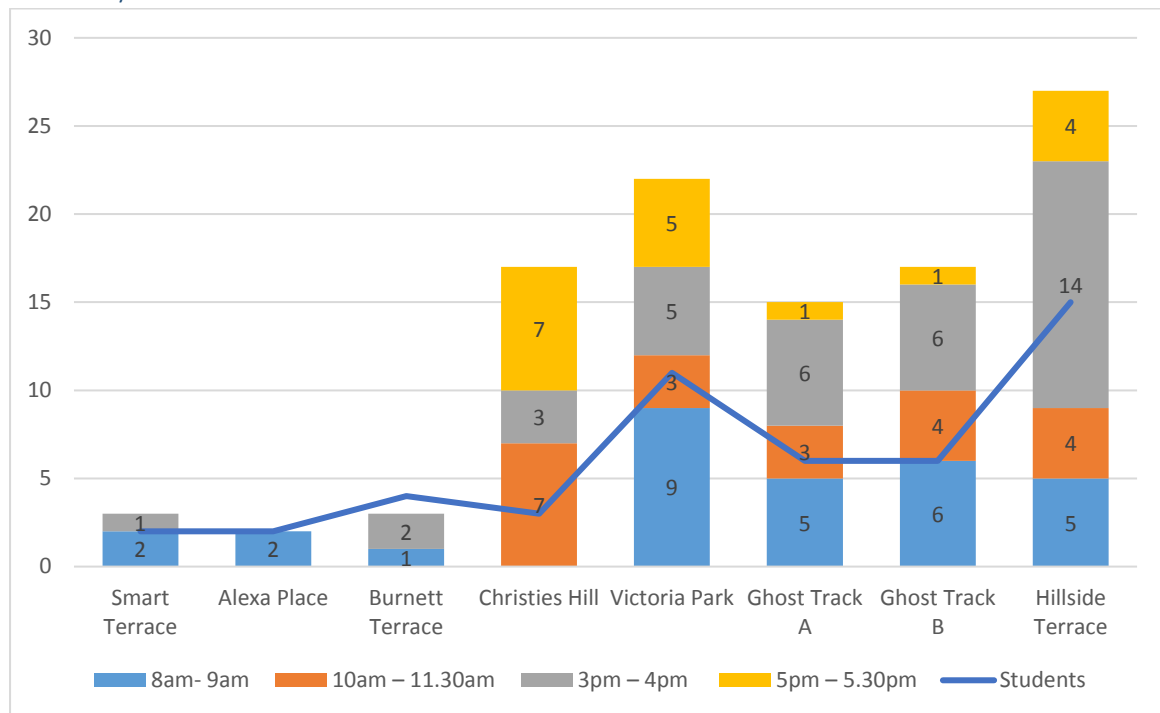


Figure 1 Weekday User Counts

The highest count of users for each time interval:

- 8am -9am – Victoria Park
- 10am-11.30am – Christies Hill
- 3pm-4pm – Hillside Terrace
- 5pm-5.30pm – Christie Hill

Christie Hill walkway looks to have higher counts for both later morning and in the late afternoon, but was the only walkway to have zero counts for 8am-9am. Overlaying counts identified as students (line graph), higher counts of students utilised Hillside Terrace (15) indicative of the walkway's use for students to access the nearby school. Victoria Park had the second highest count of students (11).

Weekend User Counts

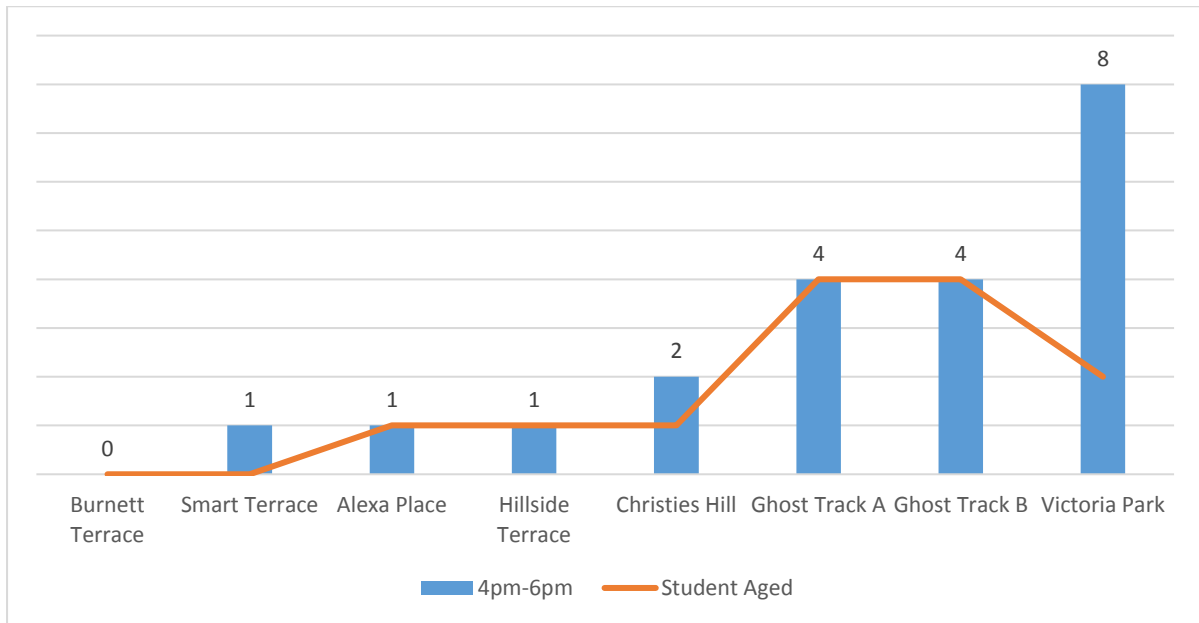


Figure 2 Weekend User Counts

The snapshot presents Victoria Park walkway as the busiest, followed by Ghost Tracks A and B. Victoria Park's results were expected with three individuals identified as runners, but it is surprising Ghost tracks maintained at lesser levels than other walkways had the next highest traffic counts. Individuals identified as utilising the Ghost track were thought to be of school age.

Walkway Familiarity and Use perceptions

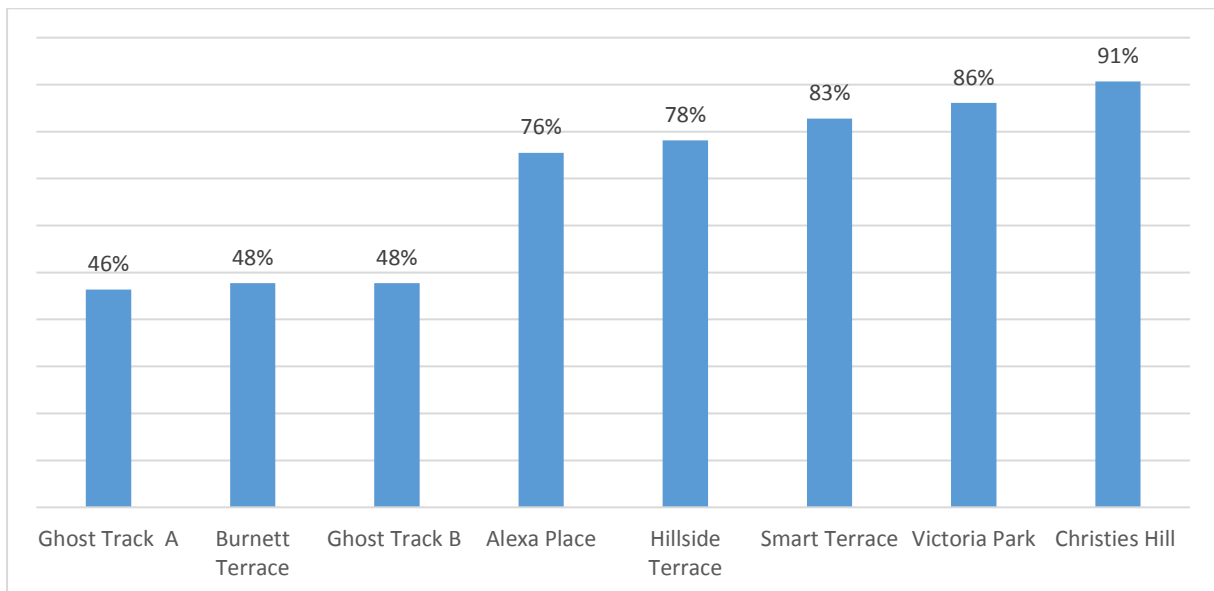


Figure 3 Walkway familiarity¹

¹Q: Have you heard of the following walkways? (n=151)

Respondents were most aware of Christies Hill (91%), Victoria Park (86%), and Smart Terrace (83%). Respondents were least aware of Ghost tracks which is reasonable considering the location of these tracks and the name they are labelled by. As respondents equally scored Burnett Terrace, it is feasible the walkway is more known to nearby residents.

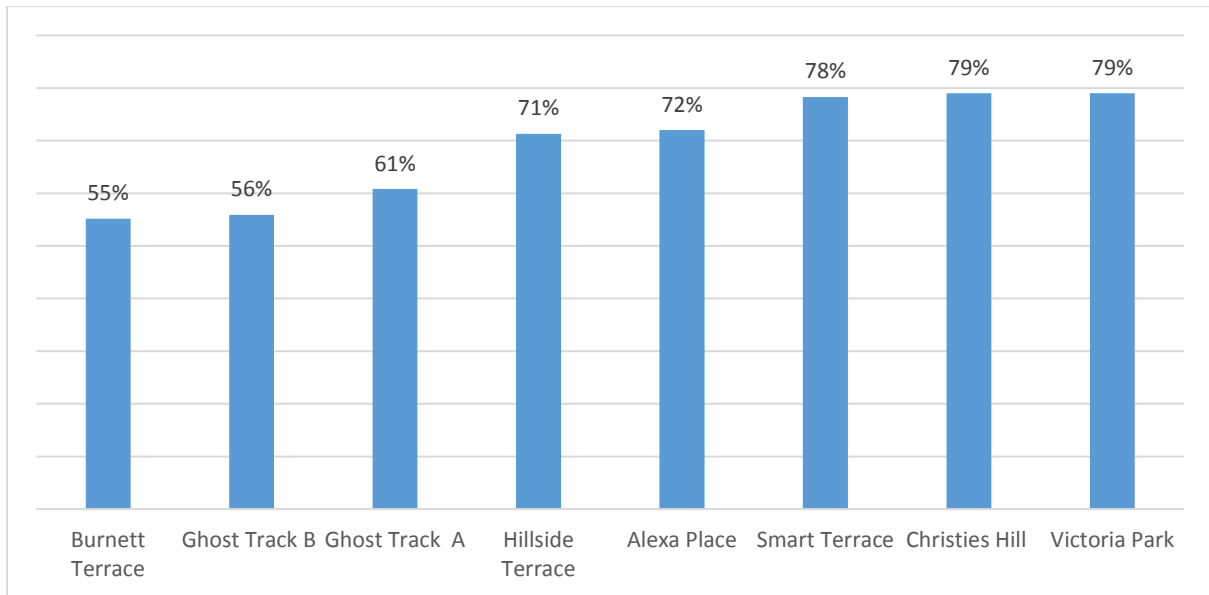


Figure 4 Respondent walkways usage²

As expected, the walkways that respondents' were most aware of, also had the highest use.

Looking at respondent usage perceptions, with the exception of Burnett Terrace and Ghosts tracks A and B, all other Council administered walkways range between 71 to 79 percentages of respondent use. Traffic counts correlate with respondent usage accounts as relatively low counts traffic counts were received for Burnett Terrace (3 weekdays; 0 weekend) match respondent perceptions of use (55%).

Revisiting walkway familiarity amongst respondents, usage percentages are relatively lower for Burnett Terrace and Ghost tracks correlating with low respondent familiarity. It can be argued the lower the familiarity with a walkway the less likely it would be used.

Alexa Place Walkway

In consideration Alexa Place walkway has been closed to the public for more than a year, respondents who in the previous question said they utilised Alexa Place walkway were asked a follow on question of how exactly they navigated the closed walkway (figure 5).

² Q: Which of these walkways have you used? (n=143)

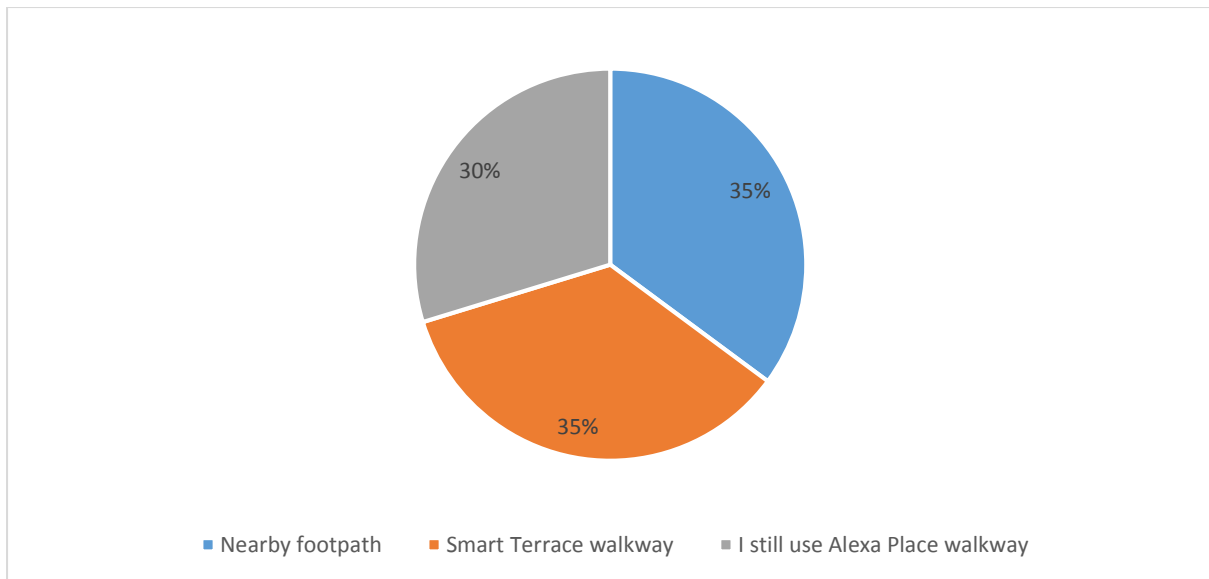


Figure 5 Alexa Place walkway current access³

Despite 103 respondents indicating in Figure 4 that they had used Alex Place walkway, only 37 respondents completed this question (response rate: 36%).

Results were fairly well spread between the three options, with the two highest responses equally being *Nearby footpath* and *Smart Terrance walkway* (35% respectively).

Key to note, is despite the walkway being closed, nearly a third (30%) of respondents who answered the question said they still used the walkway. Compared with traffic counts, all individuals sighted appeared to be of school age and quite possibly the closed walkway provides an alternative route to and from school or places of interest. It should be noted respondents who use Alexa Place may have felt less inclined to answer truthfully as to how they currently navigate this walkway due to the perception of wrongdoing knowing the walkway is closed.

It appears the Alexa Place walkway, despite its closure still generates interest and usage from the public.

³ Q: Given Alexa Place walkway has been closed since the June 2015 floods, what alternative path do you use?(n=37)

Usual method of travelling/accessing walkways

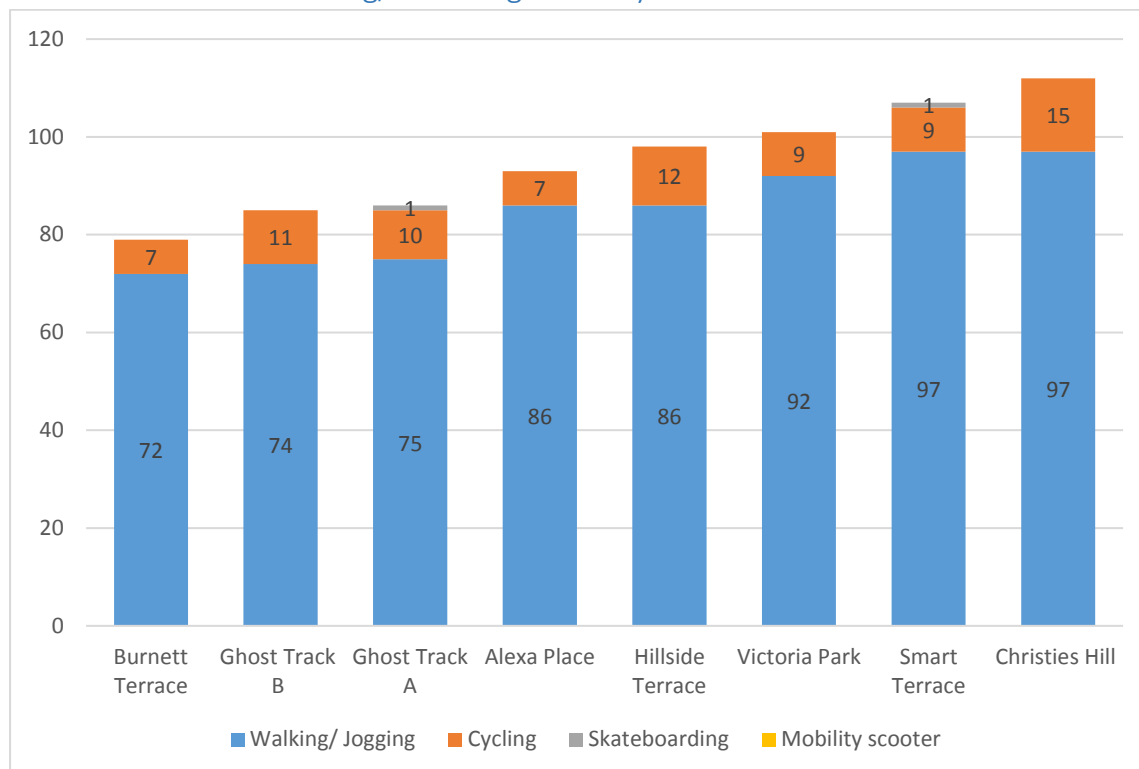


Figure 6 Usual method of walkway access⁴

Figure 6 provides respondent's usual methods of travelling walkways surveyed by counts. Walking and jogging was predominately the usual method of travel, with Christies Hill having the highest share of walking/jogging counts (97). Christies Hill (15), Smart Terrace (9), Alexa Place (7) and Ghost tracks A (10) and B (11) had higher shares of cycling than other walkways. Only Ghost track A and Smart Terrace recorded usage of skateboards. No respondents said they used a mobility scooter, though the survey's sample suggests the possibility of mobility scooter usage, mobility scooter prevalence district wide and walkway suitability may be reasons for this.

⁴ Q: What is your usual method of travelling the walkway/s you access? (n=131)

Purpose for using/accessing walkways

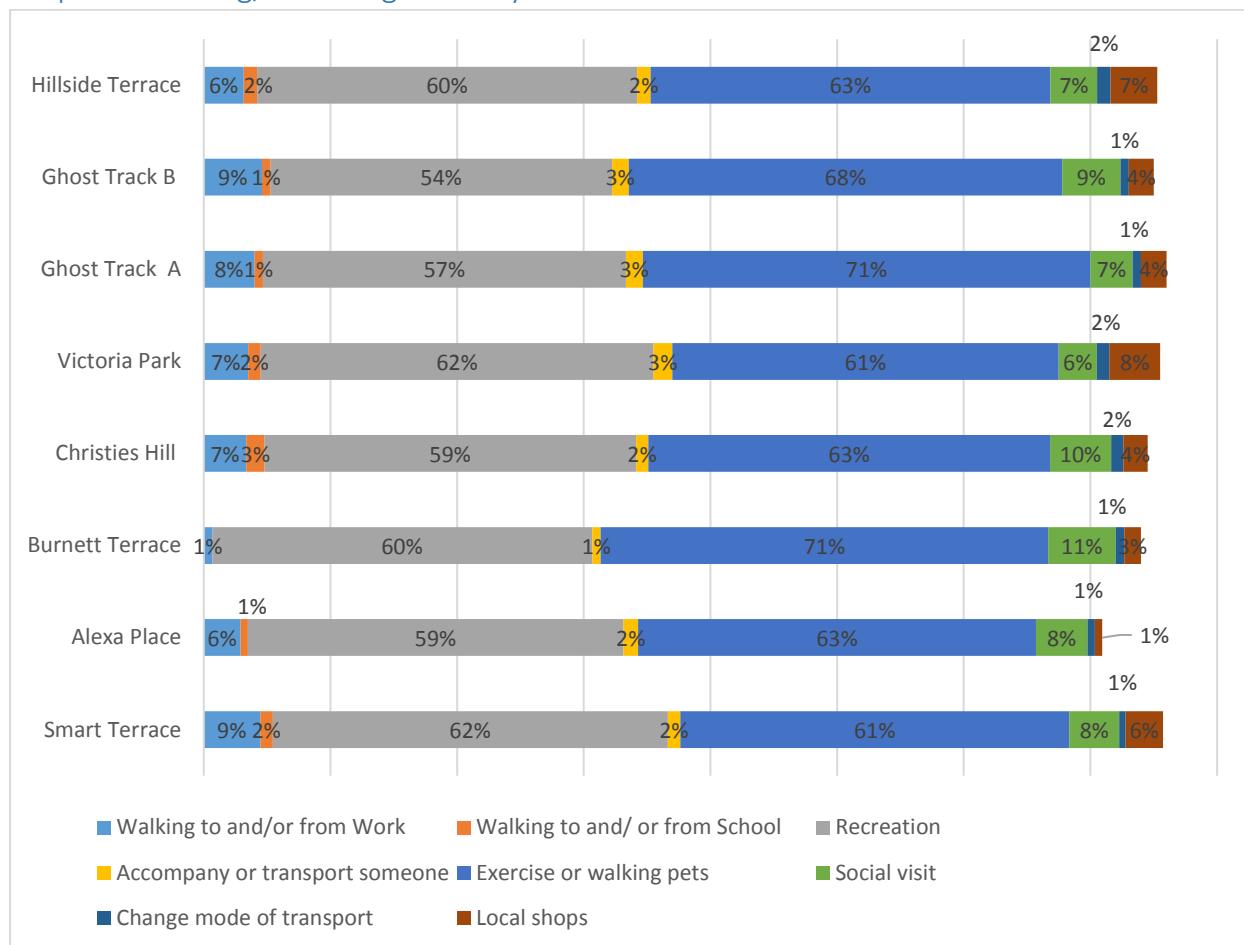


Figure 7 Reasons for accessing walkways⁵

Percentages presented in figure 7 display use and access reasons from respondents and are represented as percentages overall (i.e. 71 % of all respondents said they utilise Burnett Terrace to exercise or walking pets).

Recreation and *Exercise or walking pets* were the more common reasons respondents utilised all walkways. Burnett Terrace had little use for travelling to or from work comparatively to other walkways. *Social Visits* range from between six to 11 % of usage.

Change mode of transport, where an individual would move from mode of transport to another was scored relatively low as a reason for use across all walkways.

Respondent user frequencies

Walkway frequency use by “daily”, “weekly”, “fortnightly”, “monthly”, and “yearly”.

Christie’s Hill had the highest frequency of *daily* users, *weekly* usage was generally well spread (27%-29%), Ghost Track A the highest for *fortnightly*, Ghost Track B the highest for *monthly*, and Alexa Place captured the highest frequency for *once or twice a year*.

⁵ Q: What are your purposes for using the walkway/s you access? (n=127)

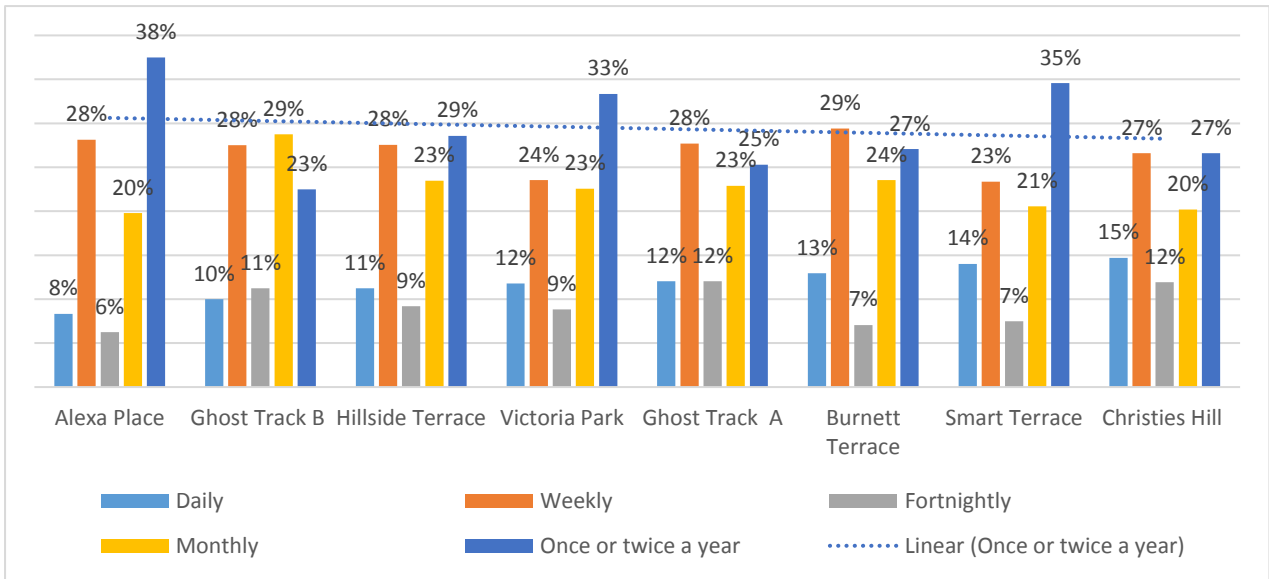


Figure 8 Walkway user access frequencies (bar)⁶

On average, nearly 12 % of respondents utilised a surveyed walkway on a daily basis, 26 % weekly, and 23% monthly.

At first there appears a correlation of weekly and once or twice a year usage frequency when comparing the walkway at ends of the graph (comparing Alexa Place daily and once or twice a year frequencies with Christies Hill at the same frequencies; where there is a higher daily usage, it is less likely the walkway will be only once or twice a year. This provides an indication the walkway is more likely to be used more frequently.

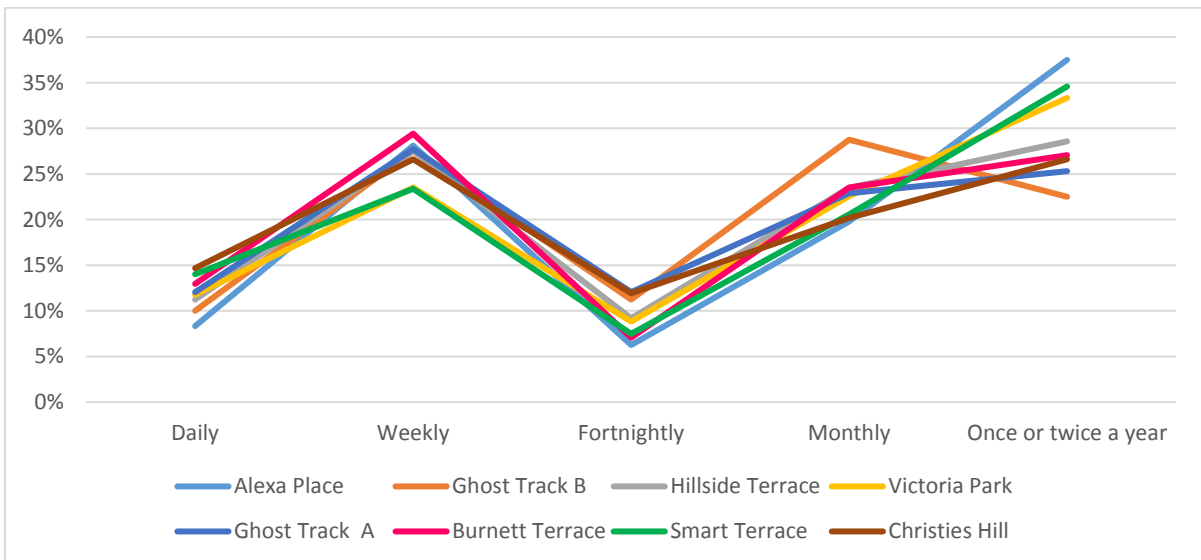


Figure 9 Walkway user access frequencies (line)⁷

⁶ Q: How often do you access the walkway/s you access? (n=132)

⁷ How often do you access the walkway/s you access? (n=132)

Times walkways are accessed

Weekday

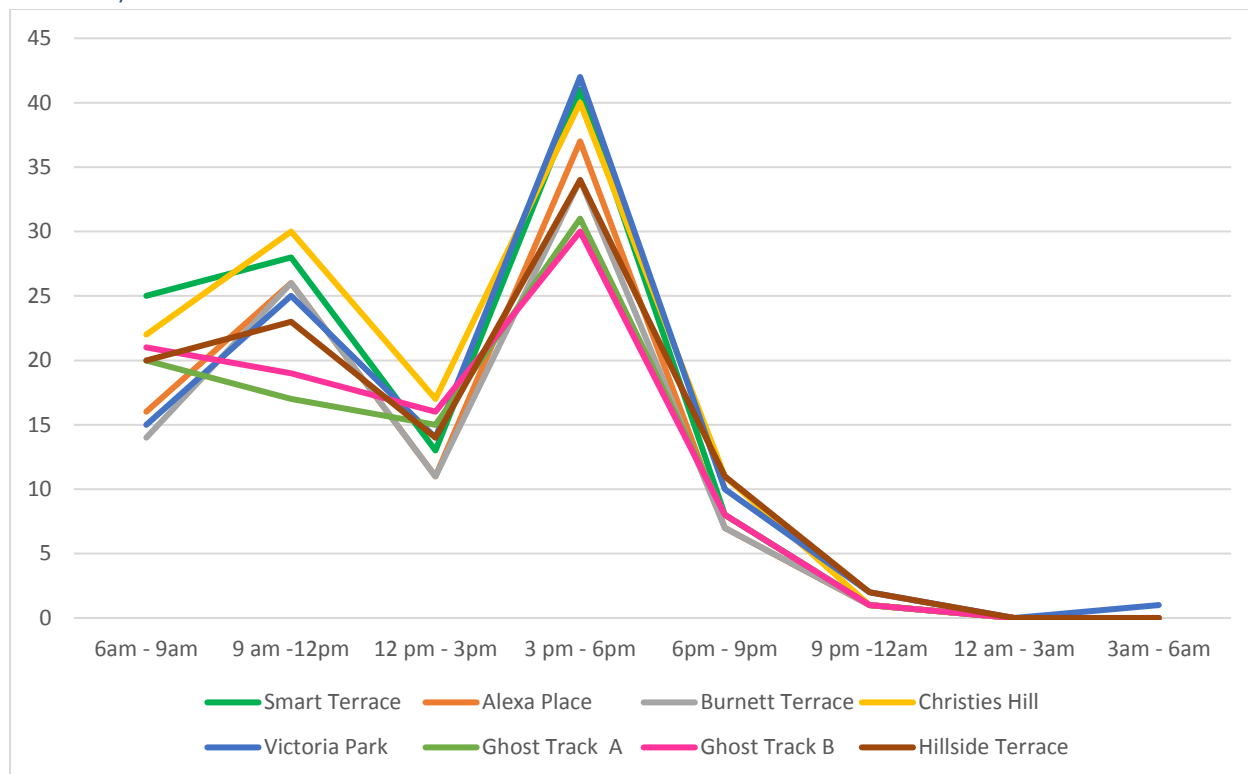


Figure 10 Times walkways are accessed (weekday)⁸

All walkways had the highest use during 3-6pm. This could be attributed to users walking home from work or accompanying a student from school.

Smart Terrace has high frequency of use between 6am-12pm and be due to the route being utilised for traveling to work.

Christies Hill has the highest use frequency for 9am-12pm. While this walkway is a connecting avenue for Hillside avenue and Virginia road residents, it provides an alternative shorter route for nearby residents residing on streets including Tulloch street, Porritt street, and Halswell street. This higher frequency at this interval also supports anecdotal evidence Christie Hill walkway is utilised by residents for exercise/recreational purposes. Both Ghost tracks remain relatively low use at this time.

There is a steady decline of use for all walkways between 12pm-3pm, followed by a sharp rise between 3pm-6pm. 3pm-6pm attracts the highest use frequency for all walkways, led by Victoria Park (42), Smart Terrace (41), and Christies Hill (41). Part of this high use can be explained as respondents are travelling from places of work and school⁹. Most of this high use frequency can be attributed to the walkways utilised for recreation and exercise purposes (Figure 7).

⁸ Q: At what times do you normally access the walkway/s you access? (n=128)

⁹ As the sample rate does not contain secondary schooling age respondents, it is feasible as supported by figure7 that parents or guardians are accompany children from school to home.

A steady decline of all walkway use occurs between 6pm-12am with Christies Hill (11), Hillside Terrace (11), and Victoria Park (10) have higher frequency counts. 3am-6am is where there is a slight increase from Victoria Park (1), but all other walkways have no user frequency counts for this interval.

Weekend

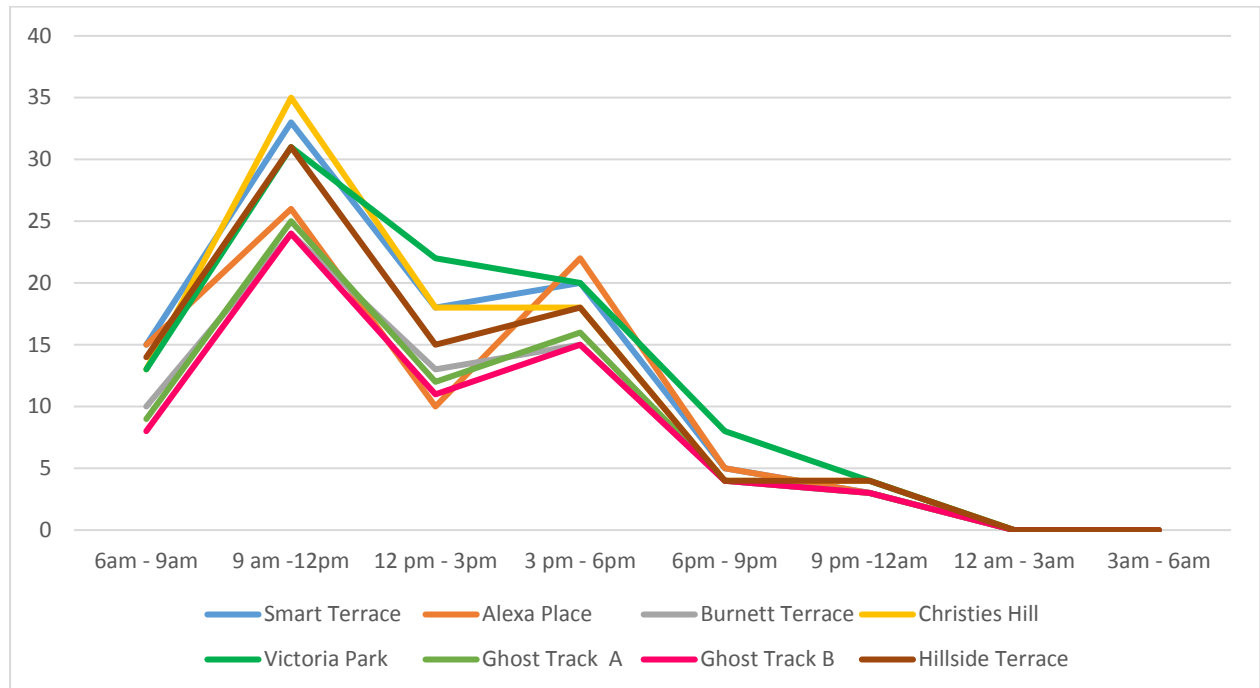


Figure 11 Times walkways are accessed (weekend)¹⁰

A steady increase of user frequency occurs for all walkways from 6am on weekends, peaking at 12pm. Christies Hill (35) had the highest counts for this interval followed by Smart Terrace (33), Victoria Park (31), and Hillside Terrace (31).

Walkway user frequencies decline from 12pm onwards, with most walkways experiencing an increase in frequency between 3pm-6pm (highest: Alexa Place- 22; Victoria Park- 20; Smart Terrace 20), bar Victoria Park walkway.

6pm-9pm shows Victoria Park continuing to have high user frequencies (8). Hillside Terrace (4) retains a stable user frequency between 6pm-12am.

No walkway experiences any user frequencies between 12am -6am for weekends.

Satisfaction and Easy of access perceptions

Satisfaction with walkways

Respondents were overall satisfied (78%) with walkways, 6 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied and 1 per cent very dissatisfied.

¹⁰ Q: At what times do you normally access the walkway/s you access? (n=128)

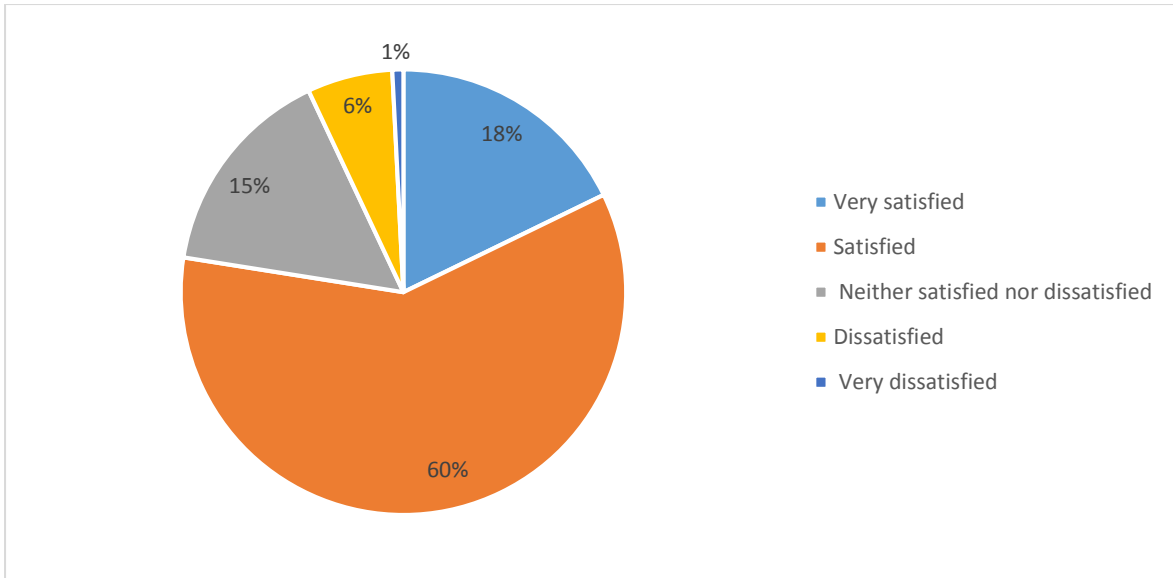


Figure 12 User satisfaction¹¹

Ease of accessing walkways

Respondents were asked to rate their ease of accessing walkways to determine any perceived barriers that could be further investigated.

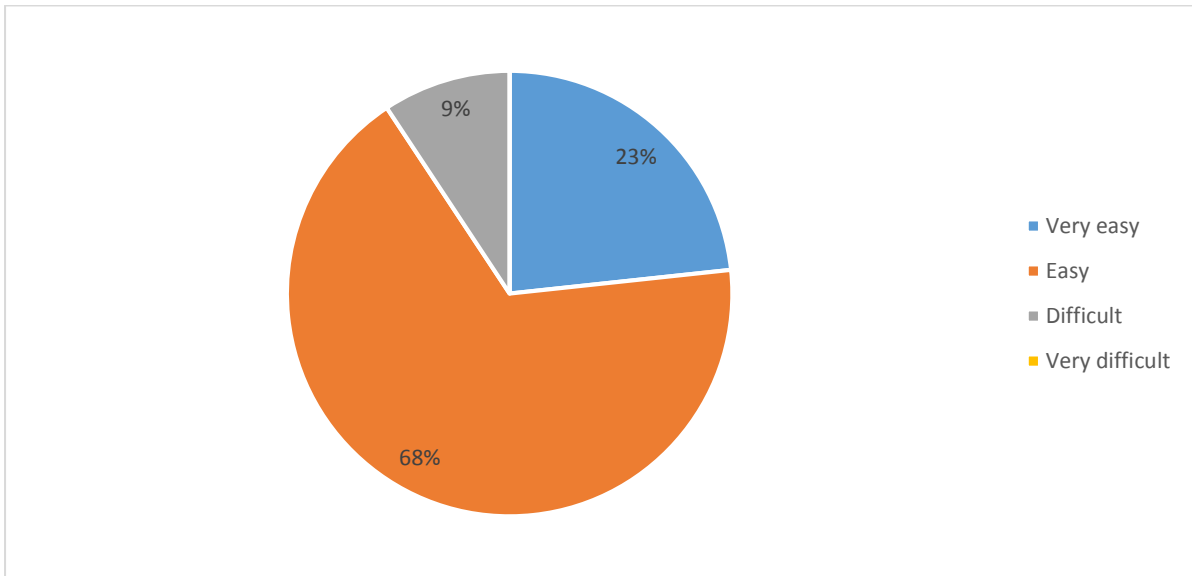


Figure 13 User perceptions of access¹²

Most respondents (91%) stated it was very easy or easy in accessing surveyed walkways. Nine per cent of respondents felt there was some difficulty in access. 0% of respondents provided the response very difficult.

¹¹ Q: How satisfied are you with the maintenance of the walkway (n=129)

¹² Q: Generally, how would you rate the ease of accessing the walkways use access (n=129)

Verbatim responses

The survey was not designed to capture verbatim responses, but some verbatim responses were captured via Panellist emails and paper copies. Box 1 below captured in the verbatim responses and incite for to remove perceived access barriers and increase satisfaction amongst respondents.

Box 1: Verbatim responses by themes

Alexa Place

- *Dissatisfied Dissatisfied with walkway closed for more than a year (Alexa Place)*
- *Alexa Place recreation - should get repaired.*

Lighting and safety

- *Lighting is poor on the Victoria Park track and the surface is also in a poor condition.*
- *Halswell street light blocking trees*
- *would be good to have more lighting around the lake for safety reasons*
- *Do not always walk in winter and no lights on some of the walkways I don't feel safe*

Repairs/Maintenance/Improvement

- *Surfaces need repairs*
- *in poor condition; the walkway needs urgent attention.*
- *Bridge accessing Ghost Track A & B is slippery when wet. Could the council add a non-slip top to be\the board please?*

Increase awareness

- *Please make the tracks to us more publicised*

Conclusion

This study and report demonstrates all walkways with varying degrees of maintenance levels presented are in healthy use amongst respondents surveyed. With Victoria Park, Christies Hill, Smart Terrace, Alexa Place, and Hillside Terrace ranging between 71-79% of respondent use.

User counts reflect perception survey findings for the most part. User counts on weekend days tended to be lower than weekdays, but as the weekend user counts took place between 4pm -6pm, this is reflected in the decline of users across all ways as depicted in Figure 10.

Respondents were more likely to walk or jog when navigating walkways. Anecdotal evidence as supported by user counts suggests cycling to be more prominent than the current survey results have portrayed. This can be attributed to response bias as the sample may not be inclined or dispositioned as cycle users.

Most respondents are satisfied with the current level of service, bar some improvements are requested.

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Sample

Age

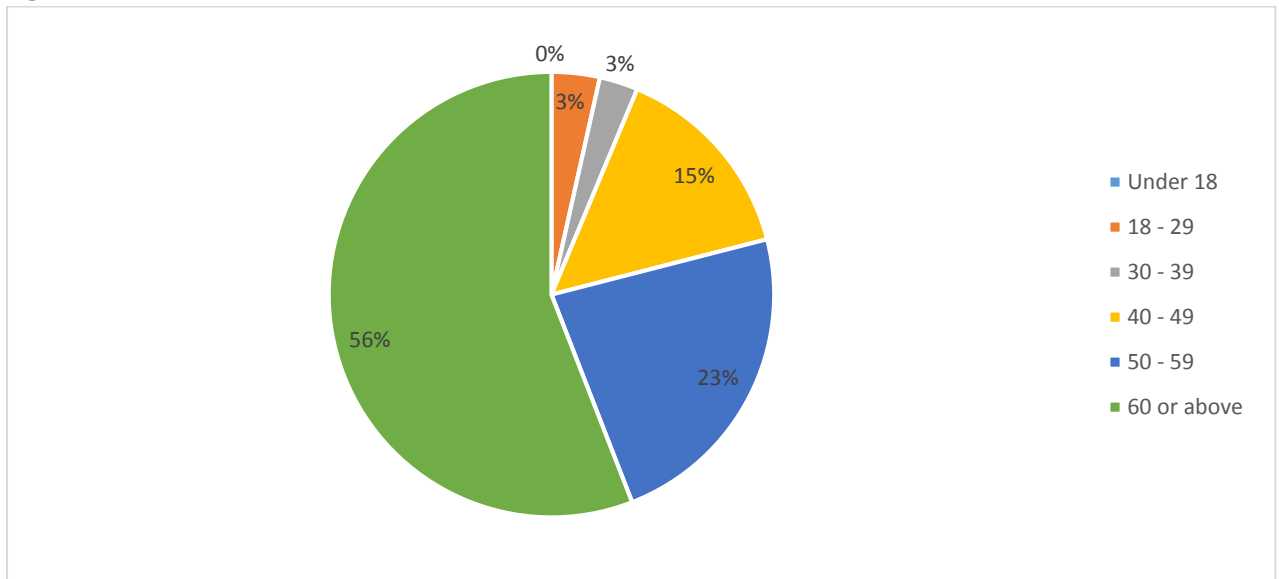


Figure 14 Sample age

Gender

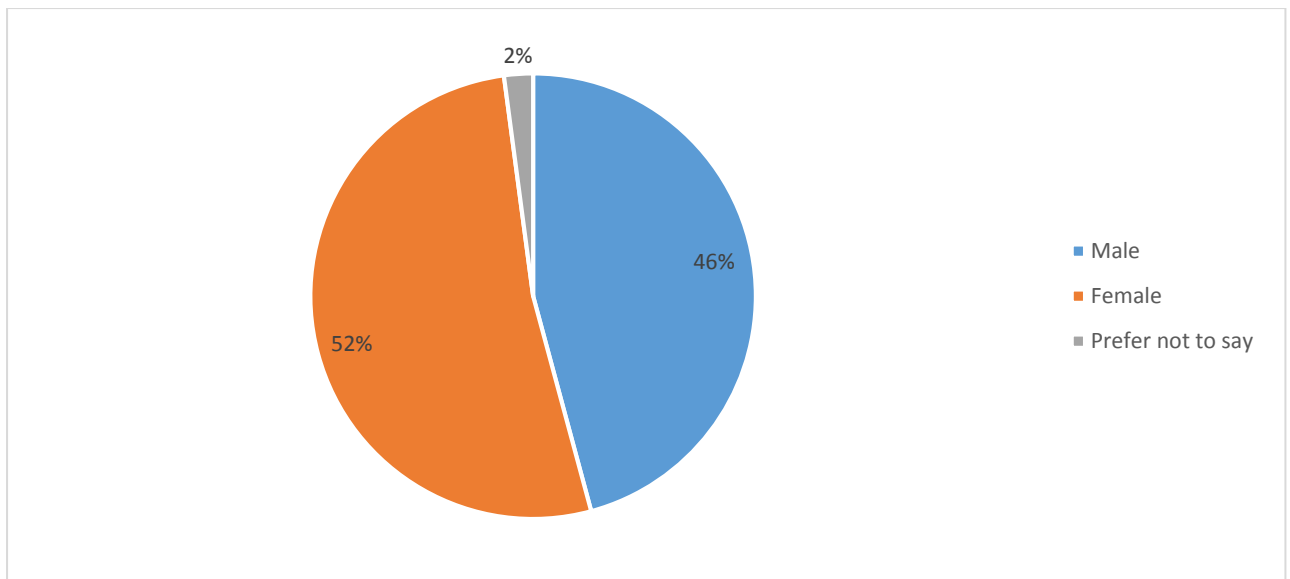


Figure 15 Sample gender

Location

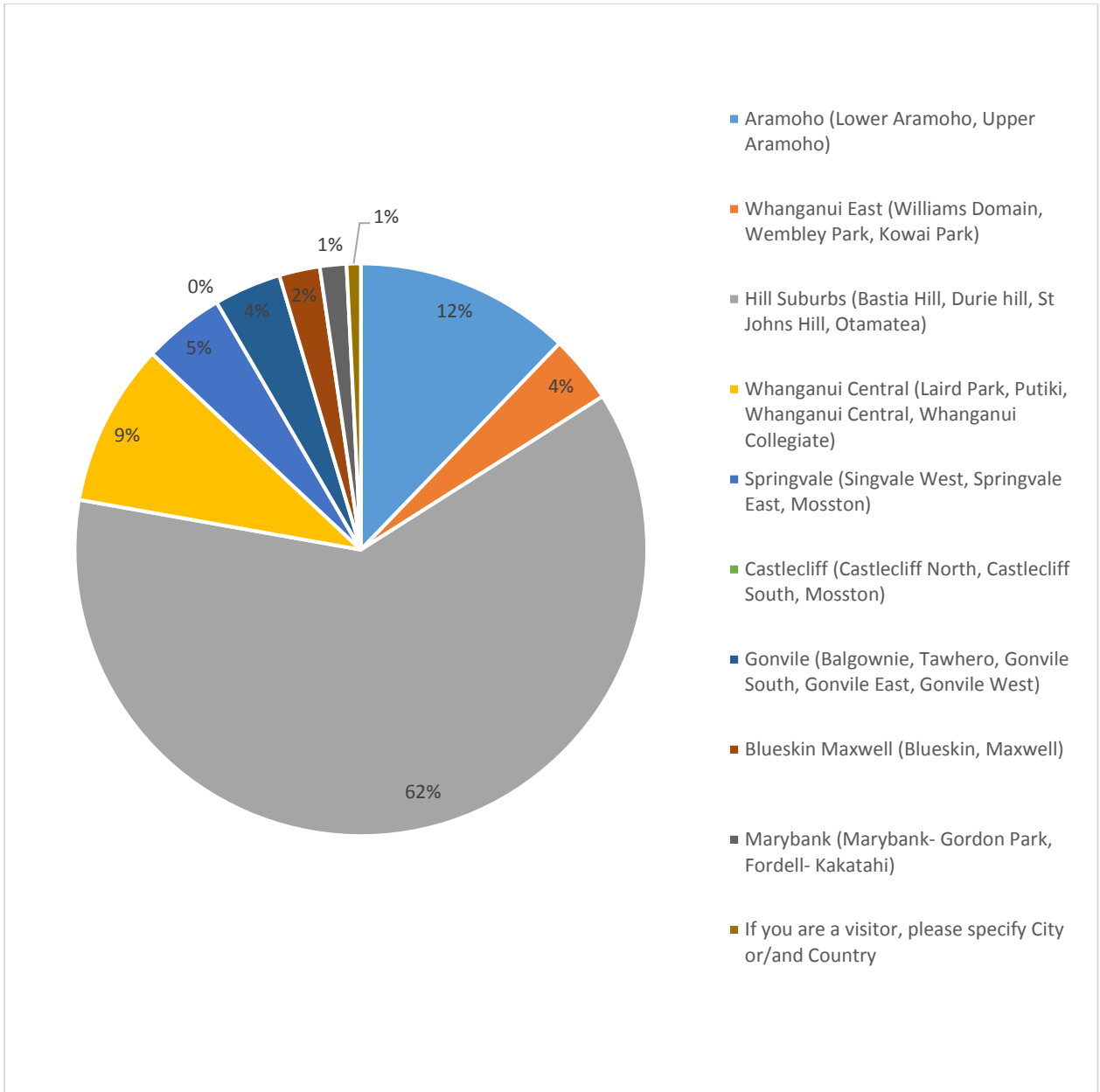


Figure 16 Sample location

Appendix 1

Whanganui District Council Walkways Survey

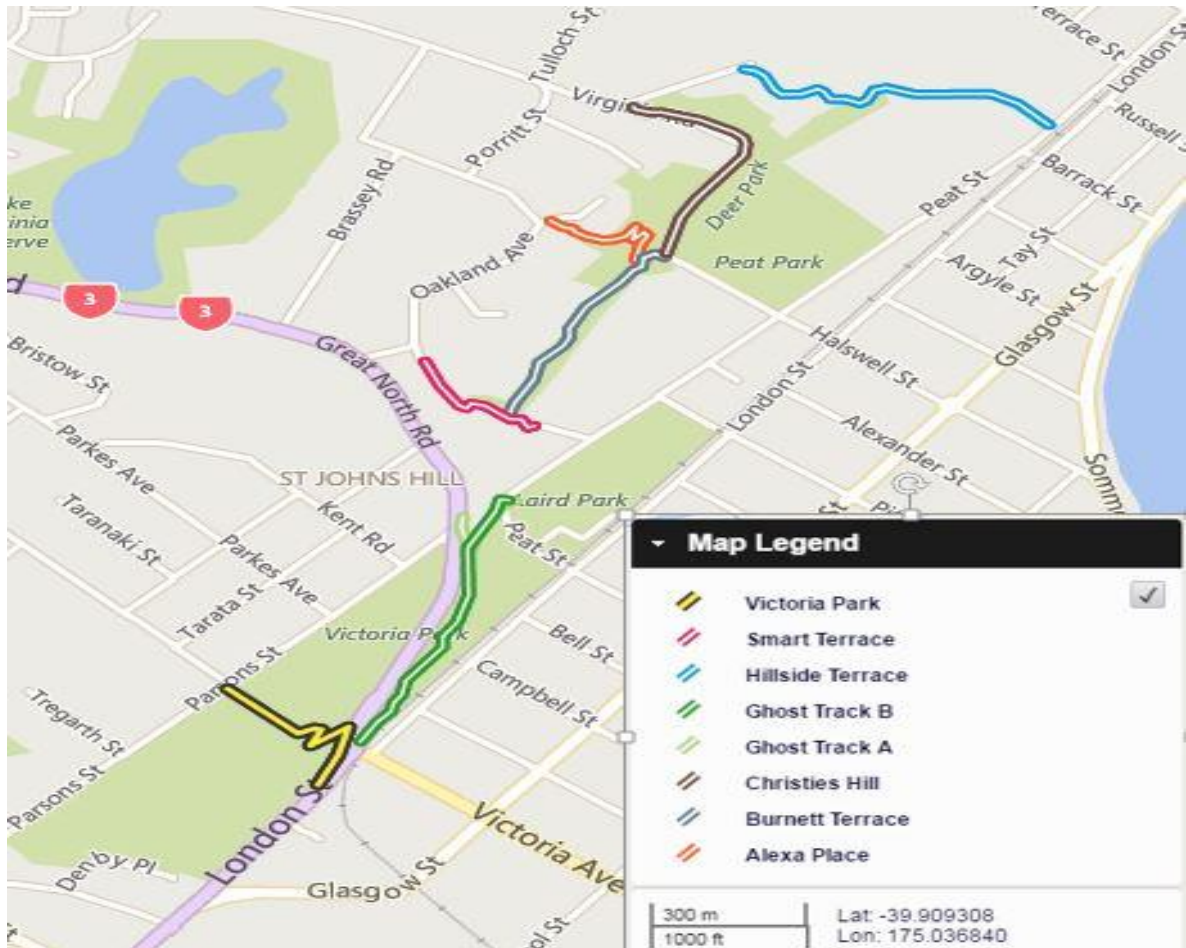
May -June 2016

Question 1: Have you heard of the following walkways?

- Smart Terrace
- Alexa Place
- Burnett Terrace
- Christies Hill
- Victoria Park
- Ghost Track A
- Ghost Track B
- Hillside Terrace

Question 2: Which of these walkways have you used?

- Smart Terrace
- Alexa Place
- Burnett Terrace
- Christies Hill
- Victoria Park
- Ghost Track A
- Ghost Track B
- Hillside Terrace



Question 3: If you have used Alexa Place walkway, and given it has been closed since the June 2015 floods, what alternative path do you use?

- Nearby footpath
 Smart Terrace walkway
 I still use Alexa Place walkway

Question 4: What is your usual method of travelling the walkway/s you access? (*tick as many that apply*)

| | Walking/ Jogging | Cycling | Skateboarding | Mobility scooter |
|--|------------------|---------|---------------|------------------|
| Smart Terrace (Goes from Smart Terrace off Peat Street up to Smart Terrace off Oakland Avenue) | | | | |
| Alexa Place (goes from bottom of Virginia Road to Alexa Place) | | | | |
| Burnett Terrace (Joins Alexa Place to Smart Terrace walkway) | | | | |
| Christies Hill (From Peat Park to Hillside Terrace) | | | | |
| Victoria Park (From Great North Road to Victoria Park) | | | | |
| Ghost Track A (From Peat Street to St Johns Hill) | | | | |
| Ghost Track B (From Peat Street to Victoria Avenue) | | | | |
| Hillside Terrace (From Hillside Terrace down to Peat Street) | | | | |

Question 5: What are your purposes for using the walkway/s you access?

| | Walking to and/or from Work | Walking to and/or from School | Recreation | Accompany or transport someone | Exercise or walking pets | Social visit | Change mode of transport | Local shops |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Smart Terrace (Goes from Smart Terrace off Peat Street up to Smart Terrace off Oakland Avenue) | | | | | | | | |
| Alexa Place (goes from bottom of Virginia Road to Alexa Place) | | | | | | | | |
| Burnett Terrace (Joins Alexa Place to Smart Terrace walkway) | | | | | | | | |
| Christies Hill (From Peat Park to Hillside Terrace) | | | | | | | | |
| Victoria Park (From Great North Road to Victoria Park) | | | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track A (From Peat Street to St Johns Hill) | | | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track B (From Peat Street to Victoria Avenue) | | | | | | | | |
| Hillside Terrace (From Hillside Terrace down to Peat Street) | | | | | | | | |

Other (please specify) _____

Question 6: How often do you access the walkway/s you access?

| | Daily | Weekly | Fortnightly | Monthly | Once or twice a year |
|--|-------|--------|-------------|---------|----------------------|
| Smart Terrace (Goes from Smart Terrace off Peat Street up to Smart Terrace off Oakland Avenue) | | | | | |
| Alexa Place (goes from bottom of Virginia Road to Alexa Place) | | | | | |
| Burnett Terrace (Joins Alexa Place to Smart Terrace walkway) | | | | | |
| Christies Hill (From Peat Park to Hillside Terrace) | | | | | |
| Victoria Park (From Great North Road to Victoria Park) | | | | | |
| Ghost Track A (From Peat Street to St Johns Hill) | | | | | |
| Ghost Track B (From Peat Street to Victoria Avenue) | | | | | |
| Hillside Terrace (From Hillside Terrace down to Peat Street) | | | | | |

Question 7: At what times during weekdays do you normally access the walkway/s you access?

| | Weekday | | | | | |
|--|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| | 6-9am | 9-12pm | 12-3pm | 3-6pm | 6-9pm | 9-12am |
| Smart Terrace (Goes from Smart Terrace off Peat Street up to Smart Terrace off Oakland Avenue) | | | | | | |
| Alexa Place (goes from bottom of Virginia Road to Alexa Place) | | | | | | |
| Burnett Terrace (Joins Alexa Place to Smart Terrace walkway) | | | | | | |
| Christies Hill (From Peat Park to Hillside Terrace) | | | | | | |
| Victoria Park (From Great North Road to Victoria Park) | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track A (From Peat Street to St Johns Hill) | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track B (From Peat Street to Victoria Avenue) | | | | | | |
| Hillside Terrace (From Hillside Terrace down to Peat Street) | | | | | | |

Question 8: At what times during weekends do you normally access the walkway/s you access?

| | Weekend | | | | | |
|--|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| | 6-9am | 9-12pm | 12-3pm | 3-6pm | 6-9pm | 9-12am |
| Smart Terrace (Goes from Smart Terrace off Peat Street up to Smart Terrace off Oakland Avenue) | | | | | | |
| Alexa Place (goes from bottom of Virginia Road to Alexa Place) | | | | | | |
| Burnett Terrace (Joins Alexa Place to Smart Terrace walkway) | | | | | | |
| Christies Hill (From Peat Park to Hillside Terrace) | | | | | | |
| Victoria Park (From Great North Road to Victoria Park) | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track A (From Peat Street to St Johns Hill) | | | | | | |
| Ghost Track B (From Peat Street to Victoria Avenue) | | | | | | |
| Hillside Terrace (From Hillside Terrace down to Peat Street) | | | | | | |

Question 9: Generally, how satisfied are you with the walkways you use?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Question 10: Generally, how would you rate the ease of accessing the walkways you use?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult

About you (optional)

Question 11: Which suburb do you live in?

Question 12: Age

- Under 18
- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or above

Question 13: Gender

- Male
- Female