

THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

30 Km/h Speed Limit Changes
within Urban Areas

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RSA

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Speed Limit Changes within Urban Areas
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RSA 30 Km/h Speed Limits Changes within Urban Areas



Research Background & Objectives



Speeding on Urban Roads



Perceived Safety for Pedestrians & Cyclists



Speed Limits that Should Apply



Awareness & Support for 30km/h Speed Limit



Anticipated Effects & Changes



Key Learnings

Research Background & Objectives

Local Authorities (City/County Councils) are currently reviewing urban speed limits which may result in a number of roads changing to a 30 Km/h speed limit in urban areas.

This survey was designed to measure awareness of this review, and perceptions and support towards 30 Km/h speed limit within urban areas. This report analyses perceptions among motorists at the national level, and differences across different road users. Namely, pedestrians, cyclists and e-scooter users.

Where possible, results from previous research conducted around 30 Km/h speed limits are included for contextual comparisons.

The research comprised a nationally representative online survey of 1,000 adults plus a booster sample of 250 adults living in urban areas to increase the number of pedestrians, cyclists, and e-scooter users.

- Quota controlled in terms of gender, age, region and area.
- Fieldwork was conducted in July 2025.

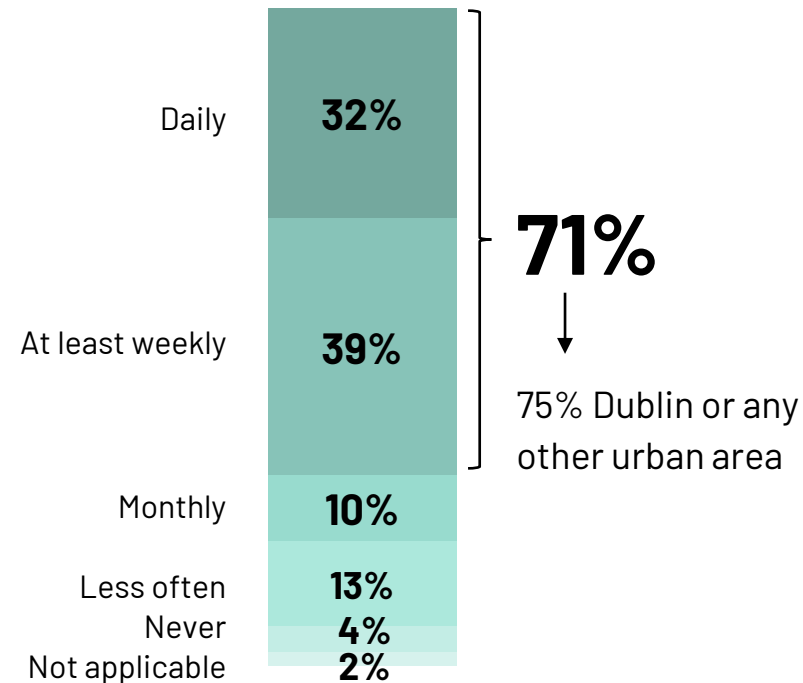
SPEEDING ON URBAN ROADS

Nearly half of motorists (47%) 'regularly' speed on 30 km roads—matching 50/60 km routes; 83% who speed at 50 km also do so at 30 km. Speeding peaks among men, under-35s and abc1s, often because 30 km is seen as too low.



Urban Roads with 30 Km/h Speed Limit: Frequency of Travel

Virtually all motorists have a degree of experience with 30 Km/h speed limit; 71% travel on this road type at least weekly.

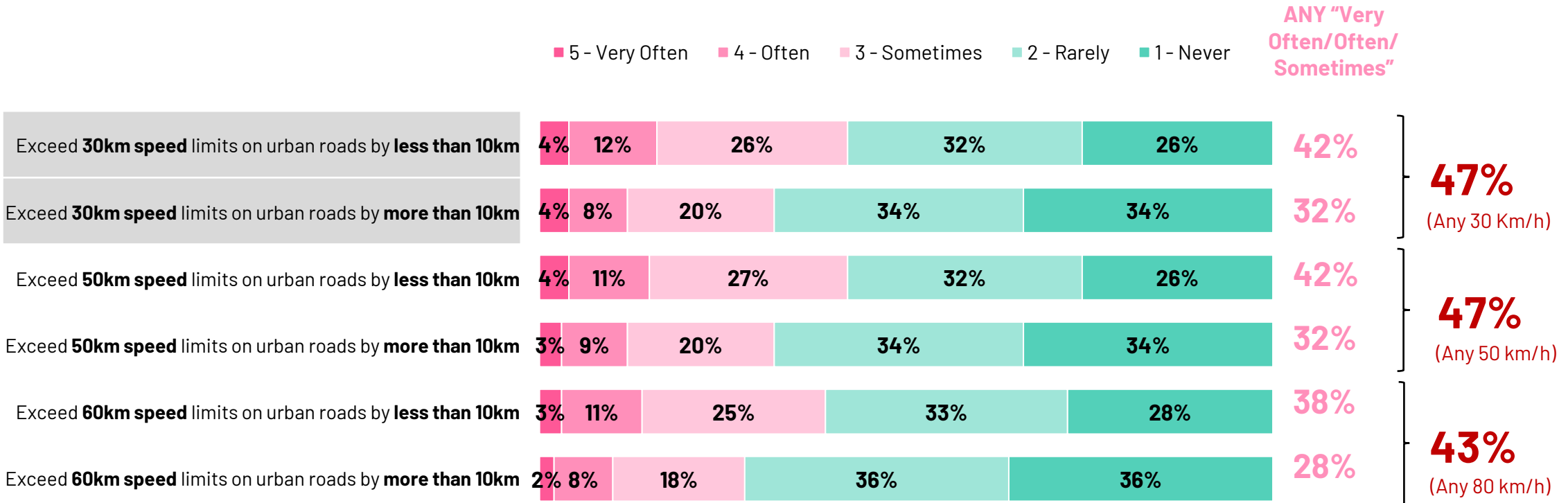


Q.5 Which of the following best describes how often you typically travel on roads with a speed limit of 30 Km/h in urban areas as a CAR DRIVER?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,083

Speeding: 30 Km/h, 50 Km/h & 60 Km/h Speed Limits

In a striking finding, motorists indicate they speed as frequently on 30Km roads as they do on 50Km or 60Km: in total **47%** of motorists speed with some regularity on 30Km roads.



Q.6a How frequently do you do each of the following activities as a CAR DRIVER on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very Often'?

Base: All Car Drivers N - 1,083

Speeding: 30 Km/h, 50 Km/h & 60 Km/h Speed Limits

Speeding is an ingrained behavior irrespective of road type/ speed limit: 83% of those who 'regularly' speed on 50 km roads also 'regularly' speed on 30 km roads. The basic demographic pattern of speeders is therefore consistent across road type: peaking among men, under 35 years and ABC1s.

ANY SPEEDING Very often/often/sometimes	Total	Gender		Age			Social Class		Area		30km roads car driver Weekly+	Very Often/Often/Sometimes Speeding		
		Male	Female	Under 35 yrs	35-64 yrs	65+ yrs	ABC1	C2DE	Urban	Rural		Any exceed 30km	Any exceed 50kn	Any exceed 60km
Base	1083	500	583	281	618	184	650	433	760	323	784	503	512	465
30km speeding	47%	54%	40%	60%	43%	39%	50%	43%	49%	43%	46%	100%	83%	82%
50km speeding	47%	52%	42%	64%	44%	35%	52%	41%	48%	45%	47%	84%	100%	90%
60km speeding	43%	49%	36%	58%	40%	28%	50%	34%	44%	40%	42%	75%	81%	100%

Q.6a How frequently do you do each of the following activities as a CAR DRIVER on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very Often'? Red figures are stat higher than average
Base: All Car Drivers N - 1,083

Reasons for Speeding: 30 Km/h Speed Limit

Perceptions that 30 Km/h speed limit is too low is main reason for speeding, as well as a generalised perception of safety/ little risk. Perceived familiarity is also a factor (but less so in comparison to speeding on local roads; ref. RSA Research January 2025).

Speed limits of 30 Km/h on some urban roads are **too low**

Any 'safe to drive faster'/ 'little risk of collision'

I am familiar with these urban roads and can drive like this safely

Lapse in concentration

When there is no traffic congestion it is safe to drive faster than the speed limit**

At night, when there is very little traffic, it is safe to drive faster than the speed limit**

There is little risk of a collision with people who walk or cycle on these roads**

I am a skilled driver and can drive like this safely

Unlikely to be detected by Gardai

I often drive faster than the speed limit on all roads

I am usually in a hurry when using these urban roads

Other drivers drive too slowly on these urban roads

I enjoy driving like this

My friends/family drive like this

Other

Don't know

'Regular' 30Km/h speeders

44%

41%

28%

22%

19%

19%

16%

14%

7%

7%

7%

6%

5%

3%

2%

5%

Top Four Reasons for Speeding on Local Roads*

1. I am familiar with these roads (36%)
2. I am a skilled driver (19%)
3. Speed limits are too low (17%)
4. Unlikely to come across other road users (17%)

* RSA - 'Change Of Speed Limit On Rural Roads (from 80 km/h to 60km/h)' Jan 2025

Q.6b Which of the following would you say are reason(s) you speed on these roads?

Base: Any 30km speeding N - 503

** Included in summary code 'Any safe to drive faster/ little risk of collision'

PERCEIVED SAFETY OF URBAN ROADS FOR PEDESTRIANS & CYCLISTS

Pedestrians rate areas away from city centres and highly populated urban streets as most unsafe. Cyclists are seen at substantially higher risk across all road types, peaking on busy urban and high-population streets.

Road Types in Urban Areas Reviewed

Urban Areas

Streets in **higher populated urban areas** with shops and businesses where there can be regular interactions with vulnerable road users (e.g. pedestrians or cyclists)



Mixed residential and commercial streets with low to moderate pedestrian and cyclist presence, such as in village centres or residential neighbourhoods



Housing estates and **residential streets**



Roads or **streets outside a school** in a city, town or village



Urban Areas Away from the Centre of the City

Busy roads and key public transport routes in urban areas outside the centre of the city or town



Suburban connector roads, outside the centre of a city or town, with mixed commercial/industrial areas and potential cycle lanes.



Suburban exit roads leading to motorways or major roadways, with dedicated cycle/pedestrian paths












Summary: Perceived Safety for Pedestrians & Cyclists

Cyclists are consistently considered more at risk than pedestrians on urban roads.

Urban Areas

Urban Areas Away from the Centre of the City

	Streets in higher populated urban areas	Mixed residential and commercial streets	Housing estates and residential streets	Roads or streets outside a school in a city, town or village	Busy roads and key public transport routes in urban areas outside the centre of the city or town	Suburban connector roads , outside the centre of a city or town, with mixed commercial/industrial areas and potential cycle lanes.	Suburban exit roads leading to motorways or major roadways, with dedicated cycle/pedestrian paths
							
	Unsafe	Unsafe	Unsafe	Unsafe	Unsafe	Unsafe	Unsafe
 Walk	23%	15%	10%	17%	22%	26%	28%
 Cycle	54%	33%	19%	30%	43%	35%	29%

Q.4a How would you rate these roads in terms of road safety for **people who WALK**? **Q.4b** How would you rate these roads in terms of road safety for **people who CYCLE**?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,138

SPEED LIMIT THAT SHOULD APPLY

Strong public backing for 30 km/h on local streets—around two-thirds to four-fifths support limits for shopping streets, housing estates and school areas.



Roads in Urban Areas: Speed Limit that Should Apply

Very encouragingly, there is a consistently strong perception that 30km/h speed limits should apply on local streets: roughly two-thirds to four-fifths back 30 km/h for shopping streets, mixed-use roads, housing estates and school areas.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what speed limit they thought should apply to each of the following roads. They were provided with both road description and image to make their judgment.

	Streets in higher populated urban areas 	Mixed residential and commercial streets 	Housing estates and residential streets 	Roads or streets outside a school in a city, town or village 
20 km/h	20%	16%	28%	32%
30 Km/h	53%	51%	57%	51%
40 km/h	11%	12%	7%	6%
50 km/h	16%	20%	7%	10%
60 km/h	0%	1%	1%	1%
80 km/h	0%	0%	0%	0%
100 km/h	0%	0%	0%	0%
NET higher than 30km/h	27%	33%	15%	17%
	73%	67%	85%	83%

Q.3a We are now going to show you different road types that can be found in urban areas, for each of these, can you indicate which speed limit you think should apply?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,138

Roads in Urban Areas: Speed Limit that Should Apply

Perceptions that 30 Km/h or lower speed limit should apply are consistently strong across demographic groups, but age is an important determinant with younger adults less likely to share this perception.

30 Km/h Or Lower Speed Limit Should Apply	Total	Gender		Age			Social Class		Area		30km roads car driver	Other Road User*				
		Male	Female	Under 35 yrs	35-64 yrs	65+ yrs	ABC1	C2DE	Urban	Rural	Weekly +	All Motorists	Cyclist	E-scooter	Public transport user	Pedestrian
Base	1138	532	606	309	641	188	679	459	803	335	784	1017	275	118	330	958
Streets in higher populated urban areas with shops and businesses where there can be regular interactions with vulnerable road users (e.g. pedestrians or cyclists)	73%	70%	76%	62%	76%	80%	71%	76%	73%	73%	77%	73%	75%	66%	76%	74%
Mixed residential and commercial streets with low to moderate pedestrian and cyclist presence, such as in village centres or residential neighbourhoods	67%	66%	68%	59%	70%	66%	66%	68%	68%	64%	70%	67%	67%	60%	70%	68%
Housing estates and residential streets	85%	82%	88%	78%	87%	91%	84%	87%	85%	86%	88%	86%	78%	72%	85%	86%
Roads or streets outside a school in a city, town or village	83%	80%	85%	77%	85%	85%	84%	82%	84%	80%	86%	83%	80%	75%	85%	84%

Note: E-scooter users are more likely to think that 20 km/h speed limit should apply in comparison to other road users

	Significantly Higher
	Significantly Lower

Q.3a We are now going to show you different road types that can be found in urban areas, for each of these, can you indicate which speed limit you think **should** apply?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,138




*All road users types are weekly+ basis, except for e-scooter users and cyclists which are on monthly+ base for min sample size.



Roads in Urban Areas Away from the Centre: Speed Limit that Should Apply

The clear majority of motorists associate roads in urban areas away from the centre of the city with 50 km/h speed limits or more.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what speed limit they thought should apply to each of the following roads. They were provided with both road description and image to make their judgment.

	Busy roads and key public transport routes in urban areas outside the centre of the city or town 	Suburban connector roads , outside the centre of a city or town 	Suburban exit roads leading to motorways or major roadways 
20 km/h	2%	3%	3%
30 Km/h	14%	13%	12%
40 km/h	16%	15%	15%
50 km/h	42%	39%	34%
60 km/h	19%	23%	25%
80 km/h	6%	8%	10%
100 km/h	1%	0%	1%

Q.3b We are now going to show you roads that can be found in other urban areas away from the centre of the city, town or village where there may be commercial, office, residential or recreational facilities or which may link urban areas to higher speed roads. For each of these, can you indicate which speed limit you think **should** apply?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,138

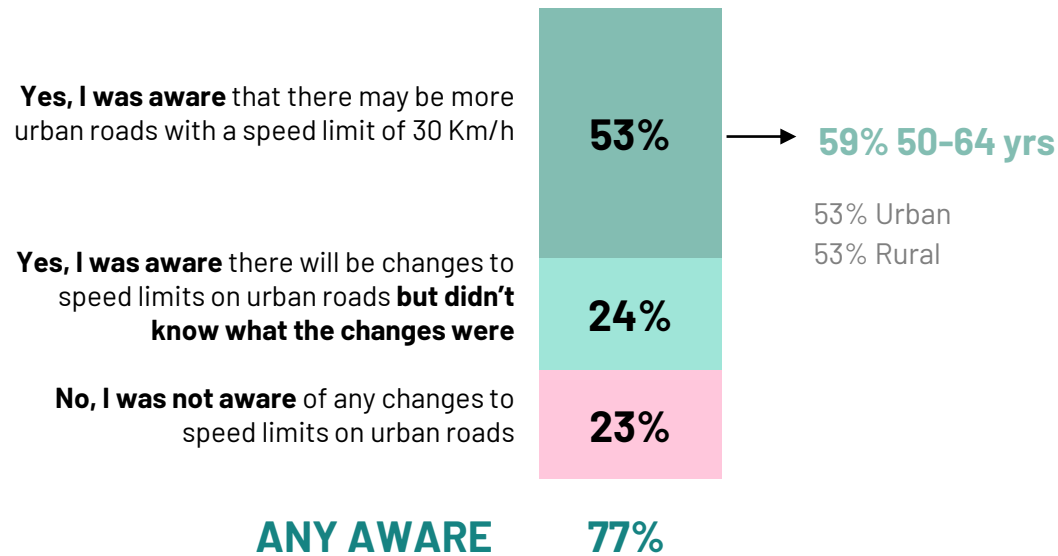
AWARENESS & SUPPORT FOR 30KM/H SPEED LIMIT

Awareness is high (77%) and overall support is positive and growing, but varies by road type. Cyclists and public-transport users are more supportive; young adults and rural residents less so. Safety (74%) key reason for supporters.

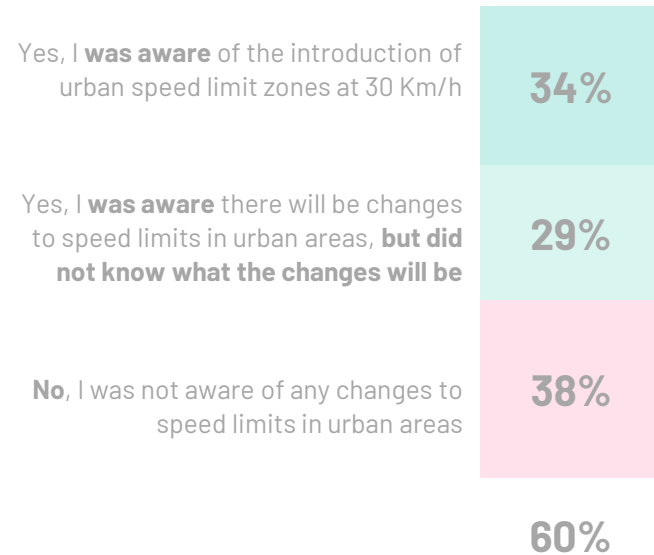
30 Km/h Speed Limits: Awareness of Change

Awareness is strong of potential upcoming changes to 30km/h speed limits with 77% of motorists aware to some degree. Comparisons with previous RSA research suggest rising awareness, and stronger awareness relative to other speed limit changes.

Local Authorities (City/ County Councils) are reviewing urban speed limits and may make changes resulting in a greater number of roads with a 30 Km/h speed limit in urban areas.



Awareness Levels
January 2025*
Base: All Motorists 1,263



Awareness of speed limit change for other road types*

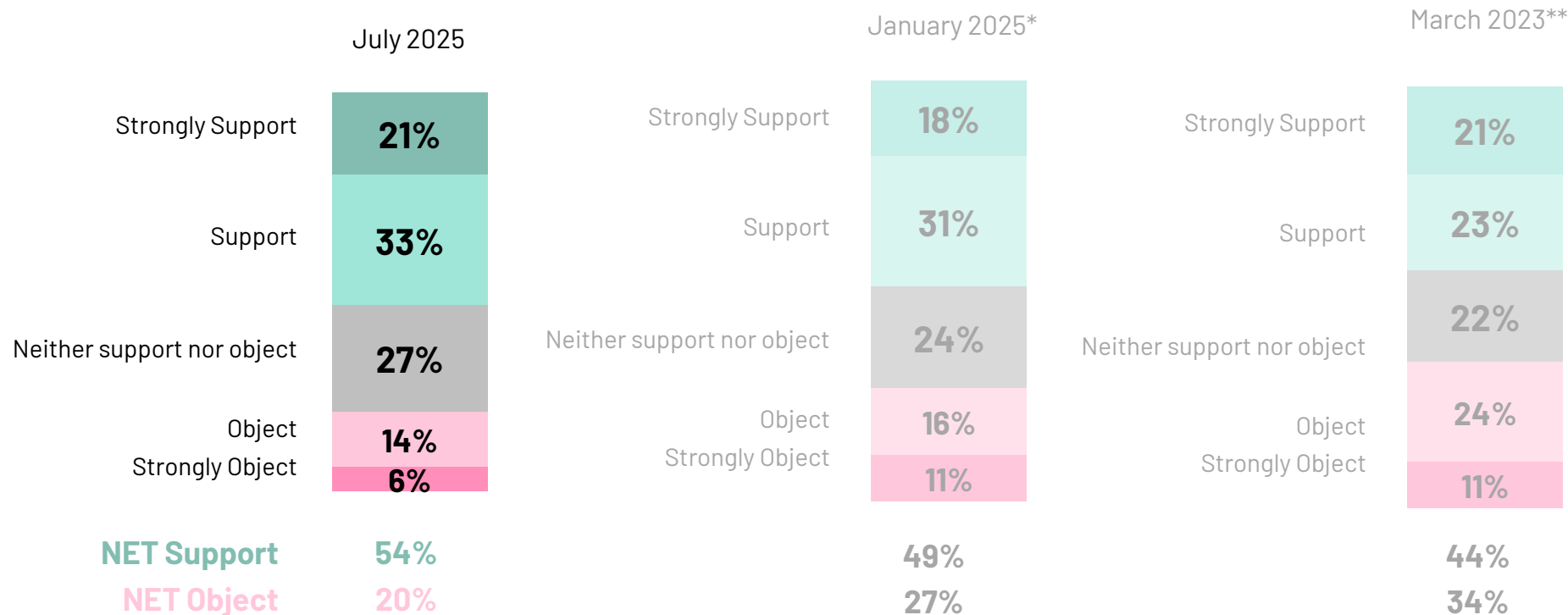
- Local Roads: **32%**
(aware of change from 80 km/h to 60 km/h)
- National Secondary Roads: **22%**
(aware of change from 100 km/h to 80 km/h)

Q.7 Local Authorities (City/ County Councils) are reviewing urban speed limits and may make changes resulting in a greater number of roads with a 30 Km/h speed limit in urban areas. Were you aware of this?"
Jan '25 Research: Q.12 Currently urban roads (including built up areas, housing estates and town centres) have speed limits of 50 km/h and 30 Km/h.
New speed limit zones will be introduced to reduce the posted speed limit to 30 Km/h on most roads in urban areas. Were you aware of the introduction of these new speed limit zones
Base: All Motorists N – 1,138

* RSA – 'Change Of Speed Limit On Rural Roads (from 80 km/h to 60km/h), Jan 2025

30 Km/h Speed Limits: Level of Support

Level of overall support for 30Km/h speed limits remains positive (at 54%), with signs of growth. While only 20% of motorists currently object to the speed limit, the challenge will be to graduate the 'Neither' (27%) group towards 'Support'.



Support Levels for other Speed Limit changes *

- Local Roads: **63%**
(Net support of change from 80 km/h to 60 km/h)
- National Secondary Roads: **46%**
(Net support of change from 100 km/h to 80 km/h)

Q.9b To what extent do you support or object to roads in urban areas having a speed limit of 30 Km/h?

Jan 2025: Q.12b To what extent do you support or object to the application of new speed limit zones in urban areas where the posted speed will be 30 Km/h on most roads?

Mar 2023: Q.3 To what extent do you support or object to the introduction of 30 Km/h speed limits on the following types of roads:

Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

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* RSA - 'Change Of Speed Limit On Rural Roads (from 80 km/h to 60km/h), Jan 2025

**RSA: 30 Km/h Speed Limit (Pre-Campaign) 2023



30 Km/h Speed Limits: Level of Support

Support levels are higher among other road users than motorists, being especially the case among cyclists and public transport users. Young adults and those living in rural area report lower support levels (albeit not significantly higher objection levels).

	Total	Gender		Age			Social Class		Area		30km roads car driver	Road User Types*				
		Male	Female	Under 35 yrs	35-64 yrs	65+ yrs	ABC1	C2DE	Urban	Rural	Weekly +	All Adults	Cyclist	E-scooter	Public transport user	Pedestrian
Base	1138	532	606	309	641	188	679	459	803	335	784	1258	295	123	390	1070
NET Support	53%	52%	55%	47%	56%	55%	52%	55%	57%	46%	56%	55%	68%	60%	61%	57%
Neither support nor object	27%	27%	26%	34%	23%	28%	27%	27%	25%	30%	25%	27%	24%	33%	26%	27%
NET Object	20%	21%	19%	20%	21%	17%	22%	18%	18%	24%	19%	18%	9%	7%	13%	16%

	Significantly Higher
	Significantly Lower

Q.9b To what extent do you support or object to roads in urban areas having a speed limit of 30 Km/h?

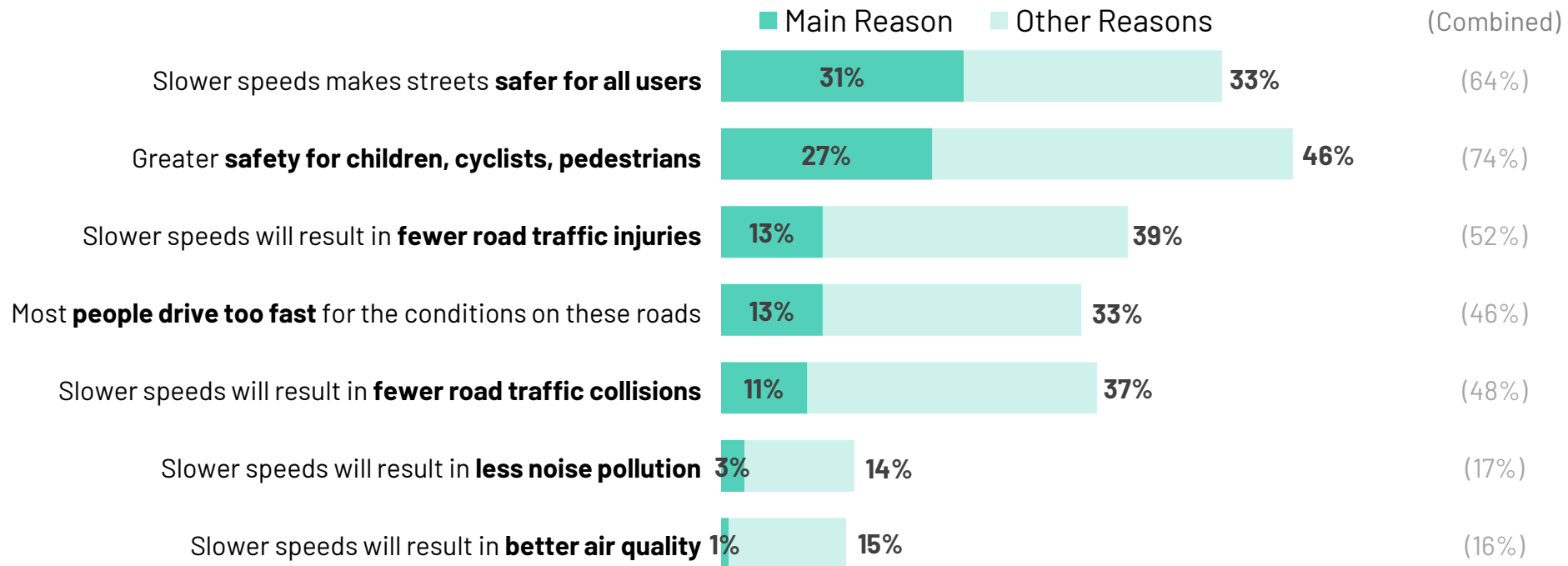
Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

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30 Km/h Speed Limits: Reasons For Support

Safety clearly drives support: 74% cite protecting children, cyclists and pedestrians and majorities expect fewer injuries and collisions. Environmental benefits (noise, air quality) are relatively less prominent.



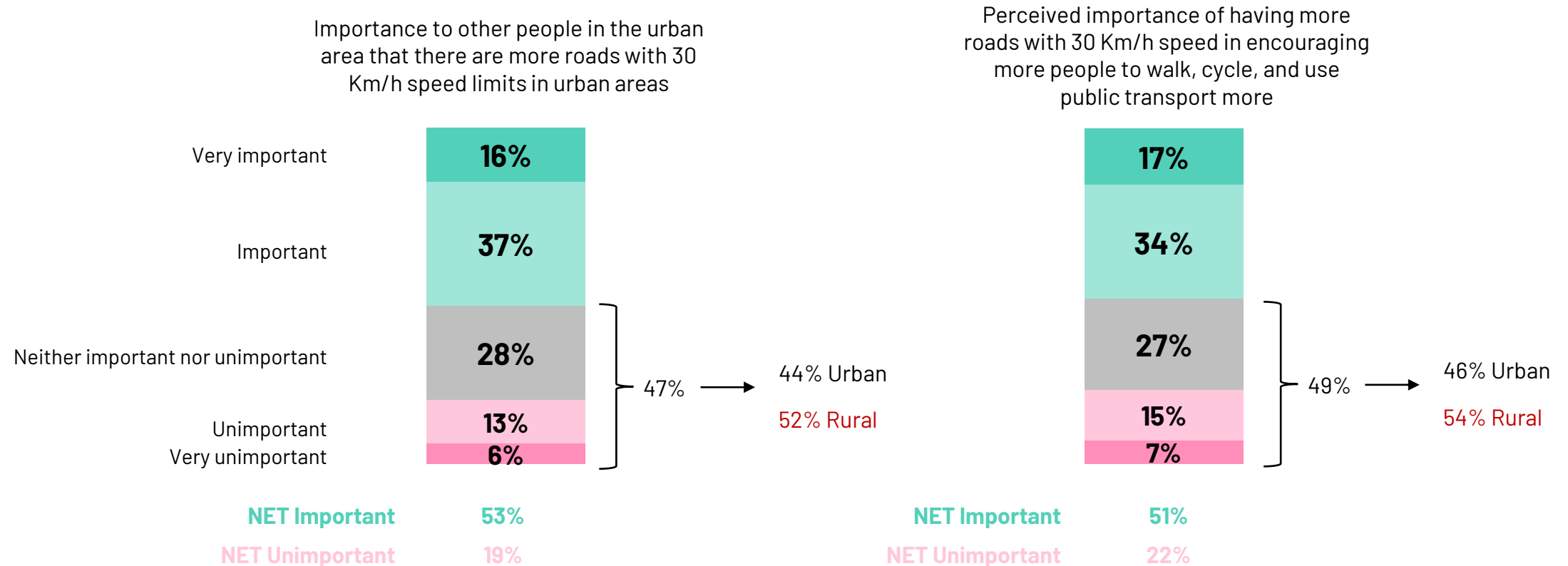
Q.9c Please indicate below the main reason for this support?

Q.9d And are there any other reasons for this support?

Base: All Motorists supporting the change N - 622

30 Km/h Speed Limit: Perceived Importance

About half of respondents see expanding 30 km/h zones as important—both as a community priority (53%) and for encouraging walking, cycling and public transport (51%). Yet substantial neutrality and a notable minority are unconvinced.



Q.11a How important do you think it is to other people in the urban area (city, town, village or suburb) in which you live, or the urban area you visit regularly, that there are more roads with 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas?

Q.11b How important do you think having more roads with 30 Km/h speed limits in urban areas would be in encouraging more people to walk, cycle, and use public transport?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,258

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS & CHANGES

Motorists chiefly expect impacts on viability and enforcement—about three-in-five foresee longer journeys, more speeding penalties and greater congestion, while roughly half anticipate safety gains. Many remain uncertain; 65% expect non-compliance; 43% foresee more children walking/cycling.

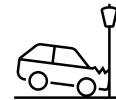
30 Km/h Speed Limit: Effects Overview

Largest changes are expected in relation to 'viability and enforcement'; about 3 in 5 motorists expect increases in journey times, speeding penalties and level of congestion. Roughly half expect safety improvements (fewer collisions and injuries). Environmental benefits are seen as modest, and some outcomes (car use) show little net change.



Viability & Enforcement

	Net increase	Net reduce
Journey times when using these roads	68%	9%
Number of speeding penalties issued	59%	14%
Level of congestion on these roads	52%	12%



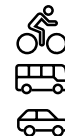
Road Safety

	Net increase	Net reduce
Safety of people who walk and cycle using these roads	51%	20%
Number of traffic collisions on these roads	22%	43%
Number of pedestrians and cyclists injured on these roads	17%	49%



Environment

	Net increase	Net reduce
Air pollution	23%	33%
Noise levels near these roads	21%	36%



Transport Mode Shift

	Net increase	Net reduce
Number of people cycling and walking	40%	5%
Number of people using public transport	26%	7%
Number of people using cars	15%	16%

Q.8 What do you think the effect of a 30 Km/h speed limit on urban roads and streets has on the....?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

30 Km/h Speed Limits: Effects (Supporters vs Objectors)

Those objecting to the 30km/h speed limits consistently anticipate more negative effects in terms of viability and enforcement. They are also less likely to anticipate positive changes.

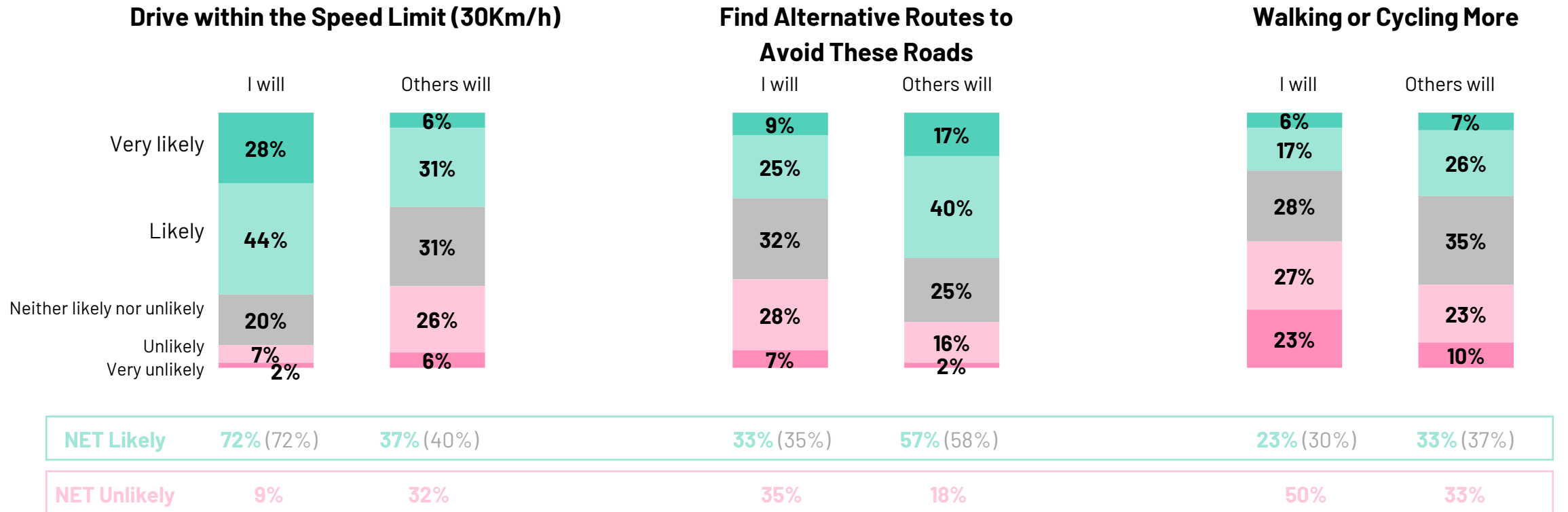
	All Motorists			All Motorists Objecting 30 Km/h Speed Limit		
	Net increase	No effect	Net reduce	Net increase	No effect	Net reduce
Journey times when using these roads	68%	23%	9%	80%	16%	5%
Number of speeding penalties issued	59%	27%	14%	66%	27%	7%
Level of congestion on these roads	52%	36%	12%	63%	31%	6%
Safety of people who walk and cycle using these roads	51%	29%	20%	33%	55%	12%
Number of people cycling and walking	40%	55%	5%	16%	80%	6%
Number of people using public transport	26%	67%	7%	13%	84%	3%
Air pollution	23%	45%	33%	26%	54%	19%
Number of traffic collisions on these roads	22%	35%	43%	26%	53%	12%
Noise levels near these roads	21%	43%	36%	21%	57%	22%
Number of pedestrians and cyclists injured on these roads	17%	34%	49%	12%	57%	31%
Number of people using cars	15%	69%	16%	7%	84%	9%

Q.8 What do you think the effect of a 30 Km/h speed limit on urban roads and streets has on the....?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

30 Km/h Speed Limit: Behavioural Changes

Negative expected behaviour is predominantly associated with 'other drivers'; most drivers report that they will drive within the speed limit, but they expect other drivers won't.

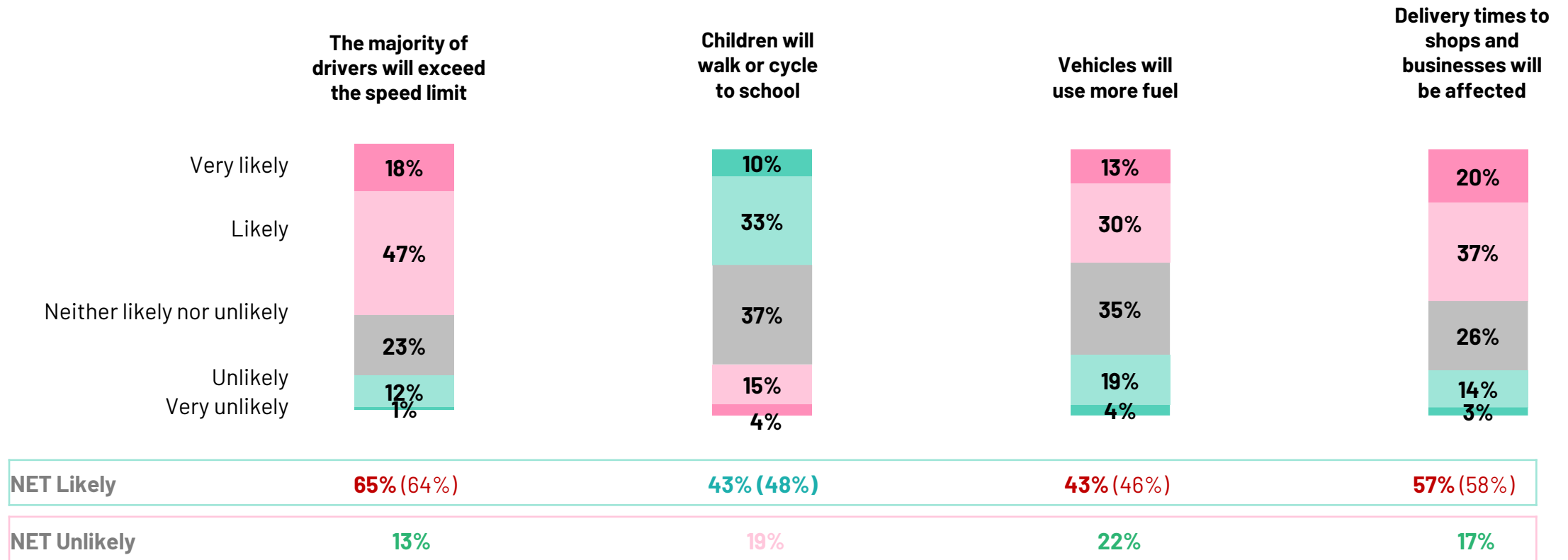


(Urban)

Q.9 When the speed limit on urban roads and streets is 30 Km/h, how likely, on these roads...
Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

30 Km/h: Other Changes

65% of motorists expect 'the majority of drivers will exceed' the 30km/h speed limit; 43% expect children to walk or cycle to school more.

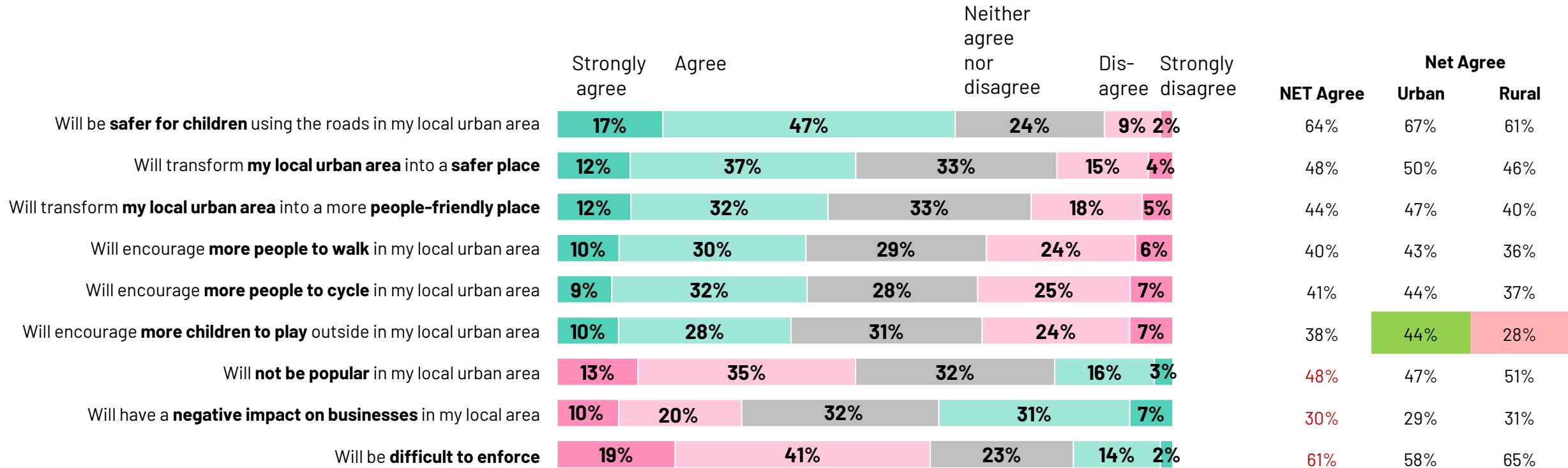


Q.9 When the speed limit on urban roads and streets is 30 Km/h, how likely, on these roads...
Base: All Motorists N - 1,138

(Urban)

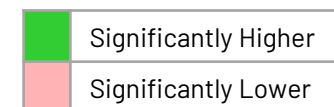
30 Km/h: Attitudes

Motorists most strongly see 30 km/h as making local roads safer for children (64%). Many also expect streets to become safer, more people friendly and to boost walking and cycling (38–48%), but a majority foresee enforcement challenges (61%) and nearly half expect it won't be popular (48%).



Q.10 Thinking about the urban area (city, town, village or suburb) in which you live, or the urban area you visit regularly, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. More urban roads with 30 km/h speed limits...

Base: All Motorists N - 1,138



KEY LEARNINGS



30 Km/h Speed Limit Changes within Urban Areas: Key Learnings



Almost all motorists are familiar with 30 km/h streets, with 71% using them at least weekly. yet 47% report regular speeding on these roads. This widespread exposure coexists with high self-reported non-compliance, indicating that 30 km/h zones are a common part of driving routines but also sites of persistent speed behaviour.



Speeding is entrenched and patterned: 83% of those who regularly speed at 50 km/h also do so at 30 km/h. Regular speeding peaks among men, under-35s and ABC1s. The dominant self-reported reason is that 30 km/h is perceived as “too low,” with familiarity playing a smaller role.



Awareness of proposed changes is high (77%), and overall support for 30 km/h is again positive with signs of growth. Strong backing exists for 30 km/h on local streets. Safety is the principal motivator – 74% cite protecting children, cyclists and pedestrians – and about half view expanded 30 km/h zones as important for encouraging walking, cycling and public transport.



Risk perceptions vary by user and road type. Motorists and pedestrians rate risks for pedestrian use similarly, but cyclists are seen as far more vulnerable across all urban road types. Perceived danger peaks on highly populated urban streets and busy arterial/public-transport routes outside centres.



Motorists anticipate the largest impacts for 30 km/h limits relate to viability and enforcement: about three in five expect increased journey times, speeding penalties and congestion. Roughly half expect safety benefits such as fewer collisions and injuries, while environmental gains (noise, air quality) are seen as modest.



While many motorists say they would adhere to a 30 km/h limit, expectations about compliance are skeptical - 65% expect most other drivers will not comply. Therefore, while support for 30 km/h speed limits is positive, driven by perceptions of greater safety, motorists overall appear to hesitate over cost benefit analyses and doubt levels of compliance.

THANK YOU