THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter Weeber, Chief Administrative Officer **FILE:** 6480-02 / 8300-07

PC: **DATE:** November 27, 2024

FROM: Danielle DeVries, Manager, Transportation

SUBJECT: **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN JOINT REVIEW – PHASE 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

On November 14, 2024, the Phase 2 Engagement for the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Transportation Plan (TP) closed. During this time, 744 people participated in the community survey and 245 people attended the open house on November 7, 2024.

The results from both engagement activities will be presented by the consultant, Engage Delaney, at the December 9, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting (Attachment 1). The results will also be released back to the public in a *What We Learned* report in January 2025. The results, along with findings from technical studies, will shape the growth options for the City, policies in the draft plans, and prioritization for infrastructure projects in the Transportation Plan (TP).

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive for information the memorandum titled "Official Community Plan and Transportation Plan Joint Review – Phase 2 Public Engagement Update", dated November 27, 2024, and respectfully submitted by the Manager, Transportation.

Respectfully submitted:

Danielle Devries
Manager, Transportation

Attachment 1 – Engage Delaney Presentation

Approved for the Agenda by the CAO

G:\6400-6999 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT\6480 COMMUNITY PLANNING - OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN\02 OCP REVIEW\2023 OCP REVIEW\01-COUNCIL AND SMT\2024\241209\241127_DD_MEMO_OCP TP_PH2_ENGAGEMENT.DOCX

ATTACHMENT 1

engage delaney

ENGAGEMENT, FACILITATION, COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE

CITY OF Vernon

Official Community Plan & Transportation Plan Update

Phase 2 Engagement Summary

Community Survey and Open House Findings
November 2024

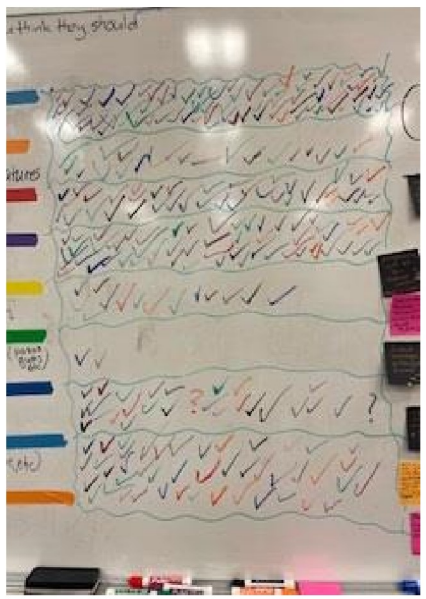


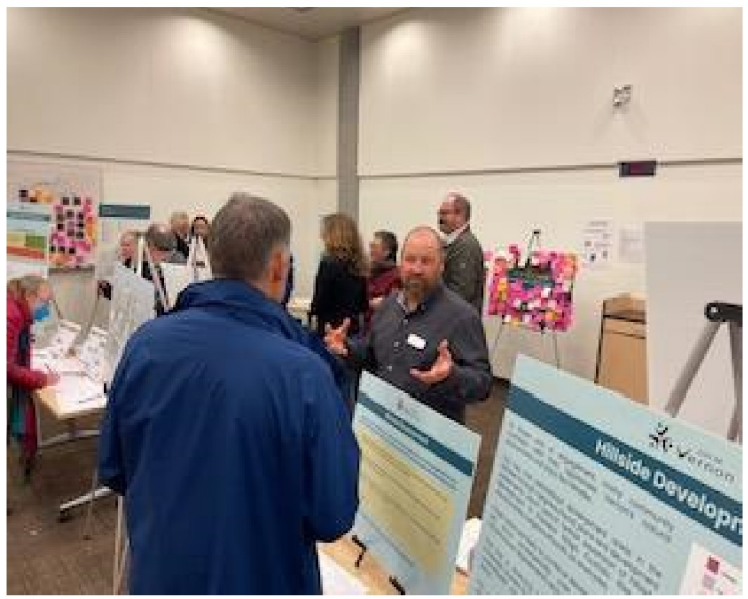
We acknowledge that the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.

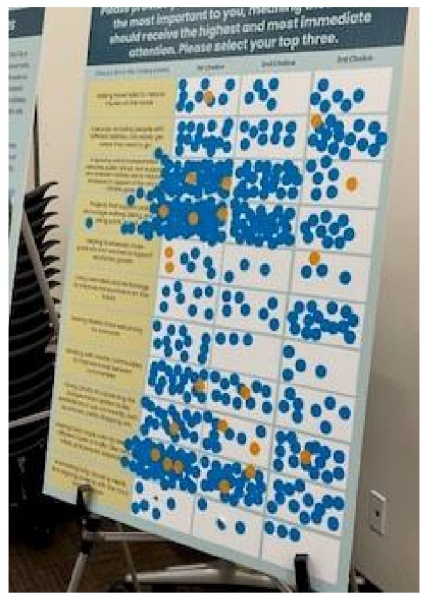
Today's Report Back

The purpose of today's presentation is to report back on Phase 2 engagement findings. These include:

- **Community Open House**
- **Online Survey**
- **Letters/Emails**









About the Survey

- ✓ Online survey with 744 respondents (of which 18 completed on paper and were manually entered)
- ✓ Data collected between October 28 and November 15, 2024, on **EngageVernon.ca**
- ✓ Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

About the Open House

- ✓ Held on November 7, 2024 from 1-8 p.m.
- ✓ 245 participants
- ✓ Data collected through feedback frames, dot voting, comment cards and sticky notes
- ✓ Staff present to answer questions and listen and document feedback

Email Feedback

- ✓ Seven individuals emailed additional letters and comments

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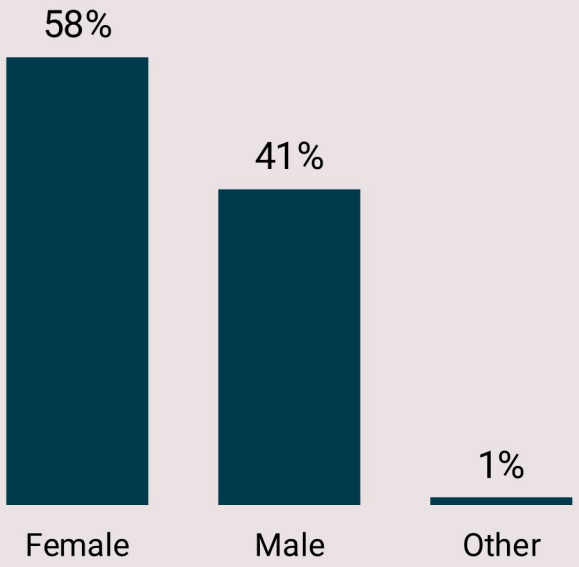


Survey:
Who Responded

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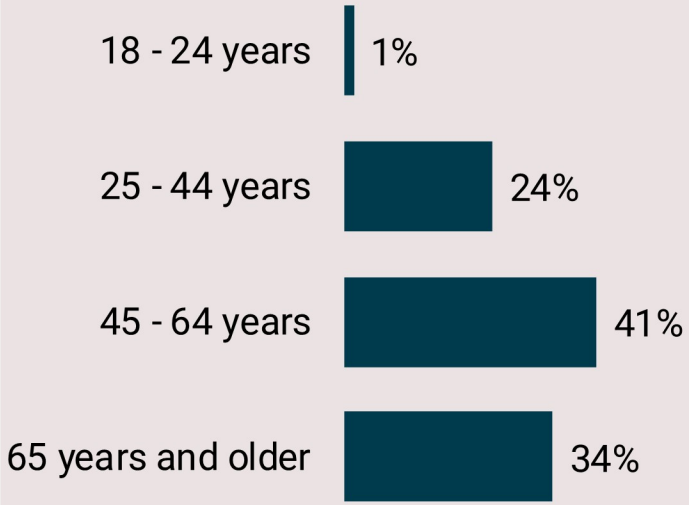
Who Responded: Demographics

Gender



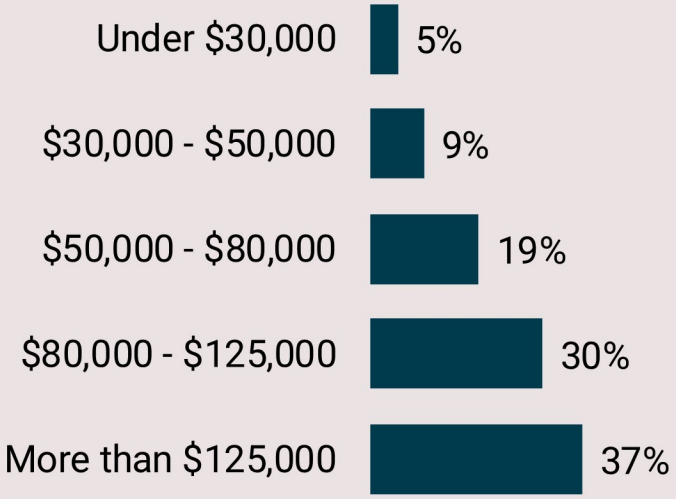
2021 Census: 52% female/48% male

Age



2021 Census:
15-24: 10%
25-44: 25%
45-64: 32%
65+: 32%

Household Income

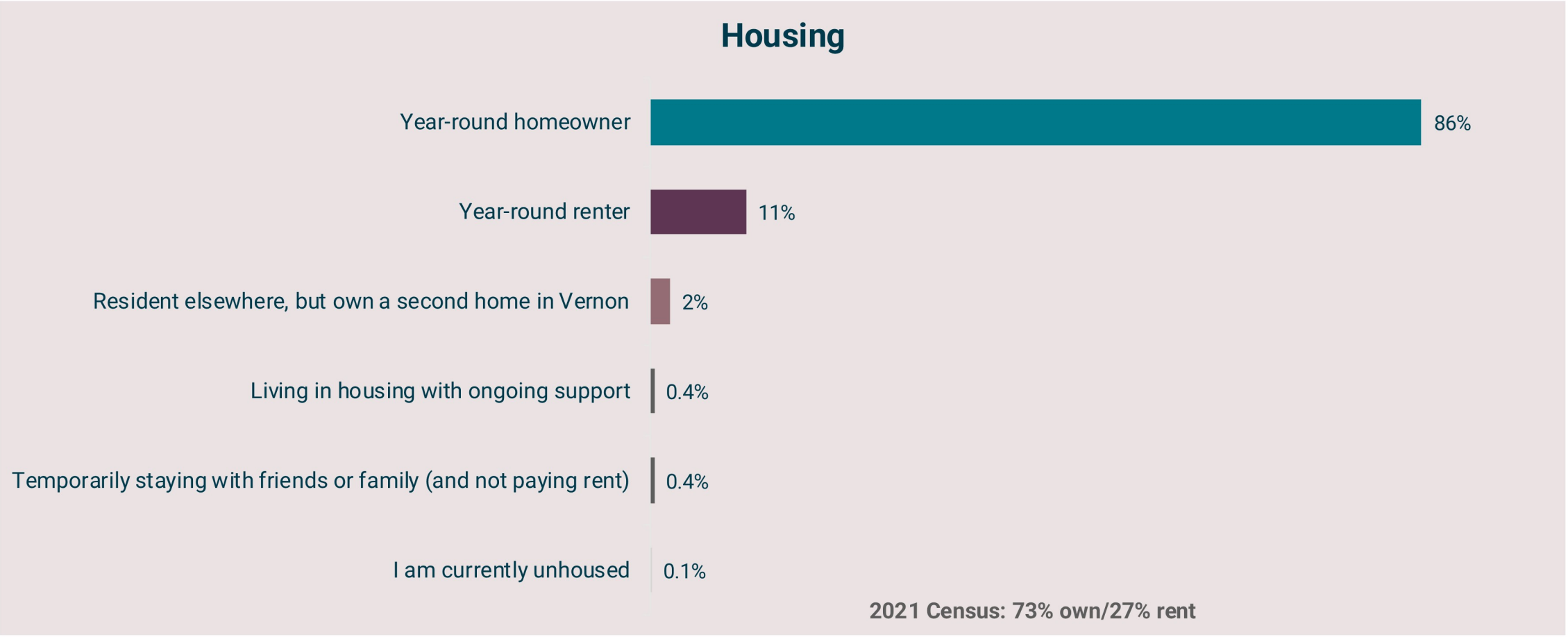


2021 Census:
<$30K: 9%
$30-50K: 12%
$50-80K: 16%
$80-125K: 45%
$125K+: 19%

N=564-705

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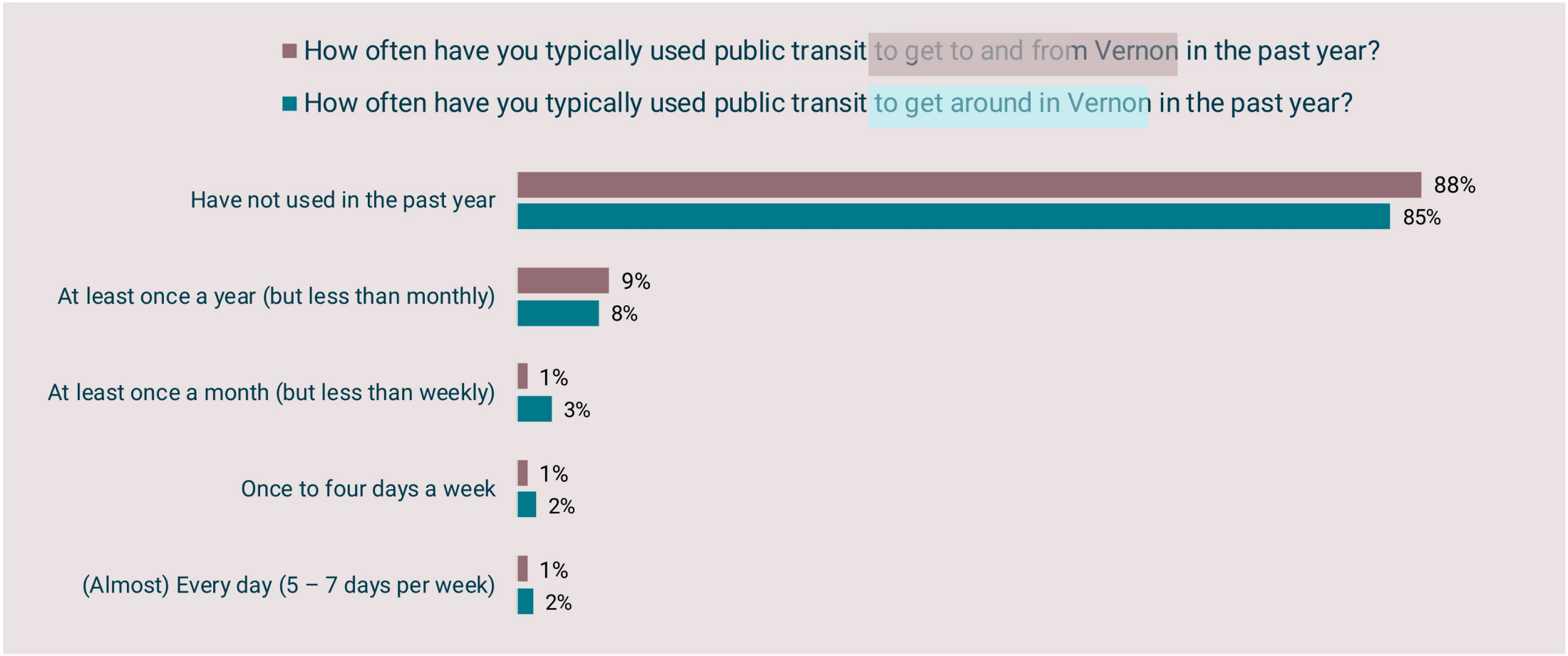
Who Responded: Housing



N=730-736

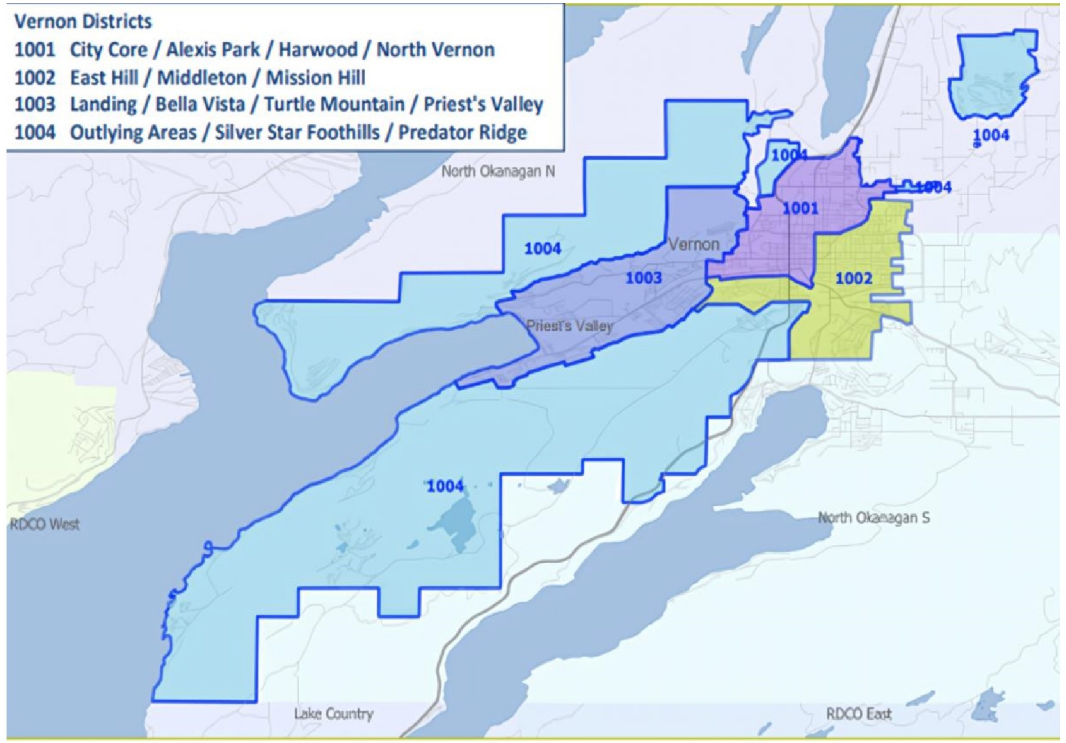
engage delaney

Who Responded: Public Transit Use



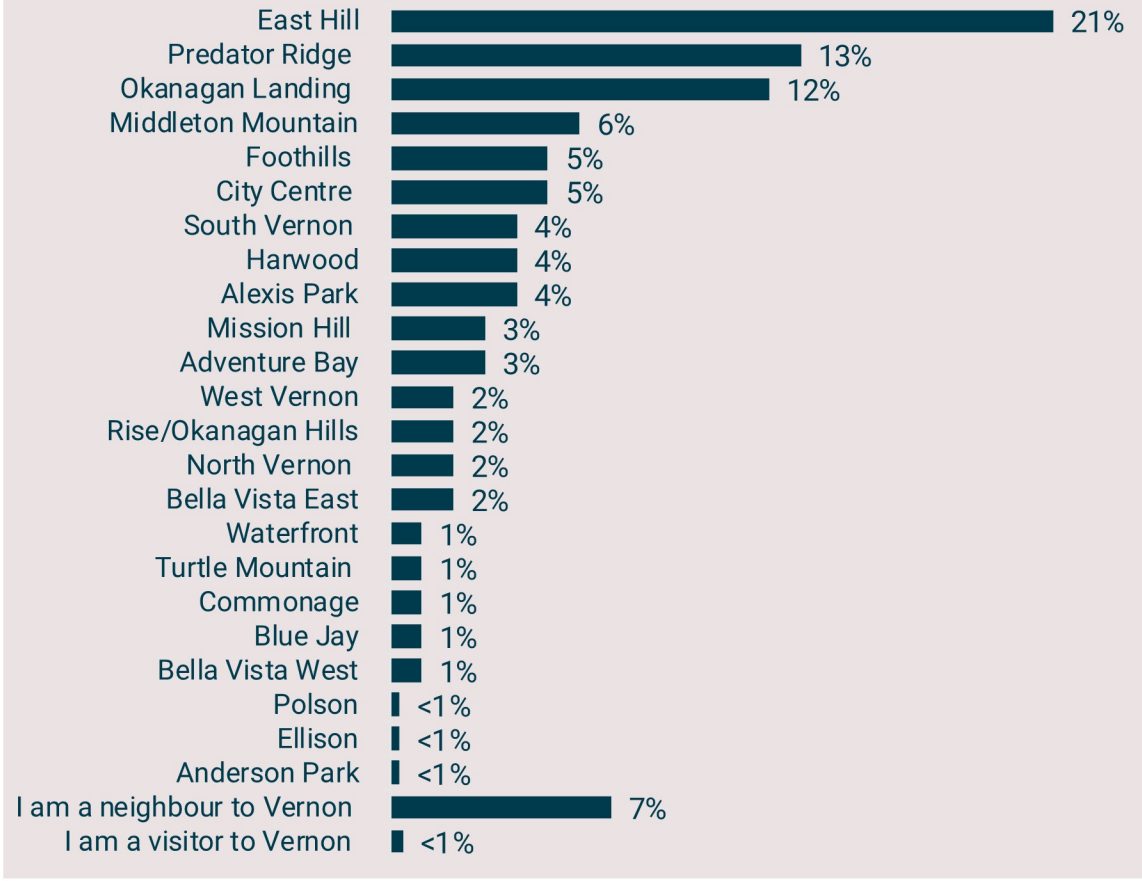
N=730-736

Who Responded: Area





Neighbourhood



N=726

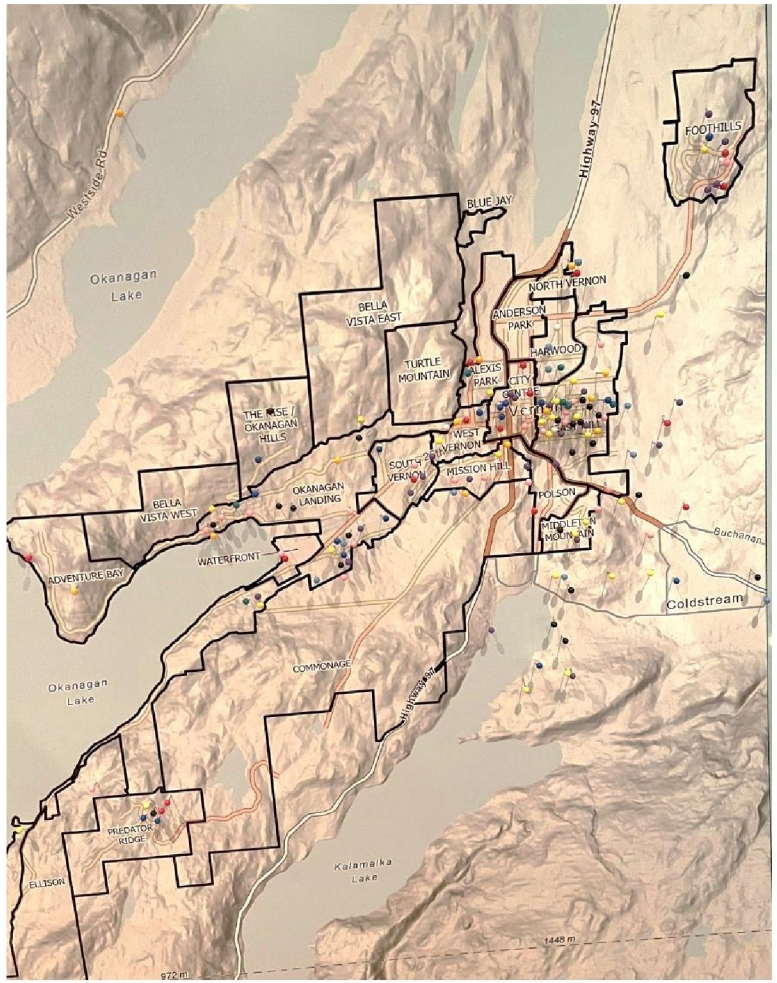
engage delaney

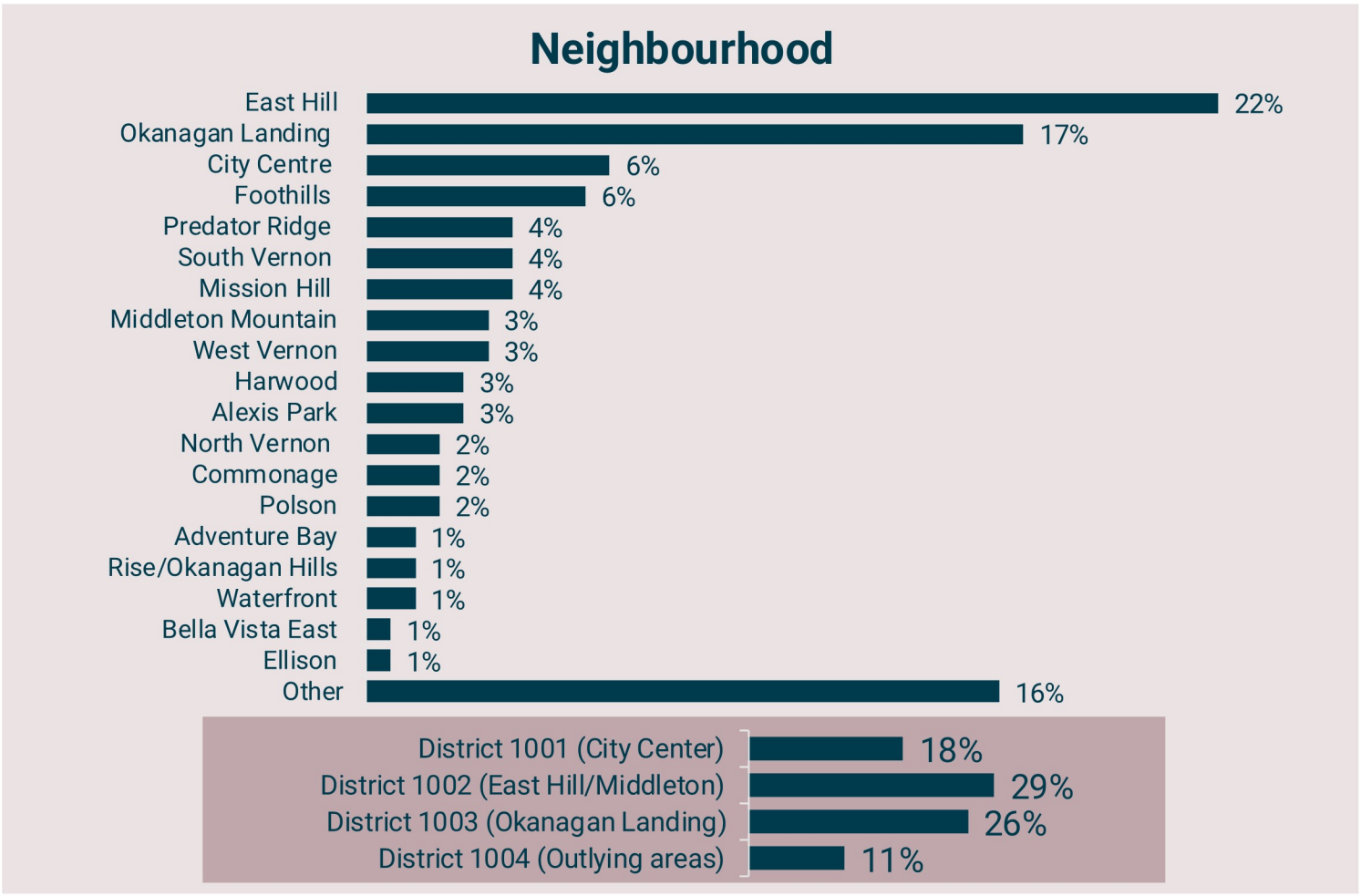


Open House: Who Participated

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Who Participated: Area





N=164

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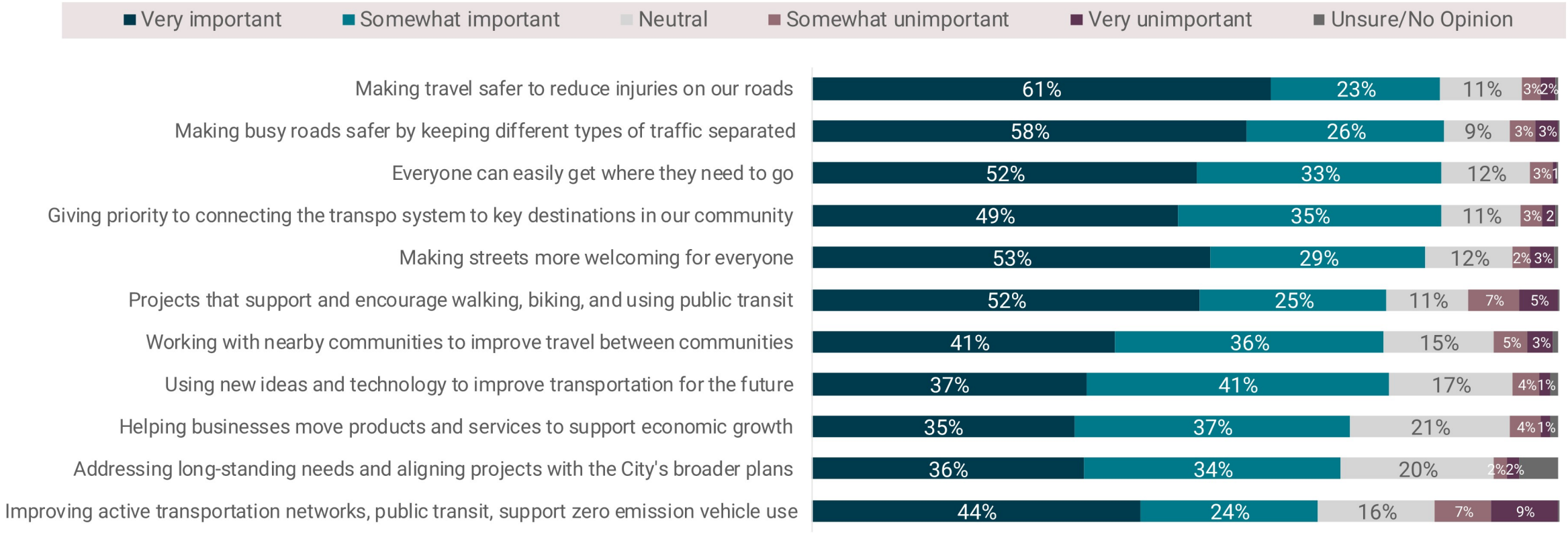


What We Learned: Transportation Plan

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Survey: Transportation Plan Priorities

Please rate the following factors in terms of importance in prioritizing what the City should focus on the most urgently.

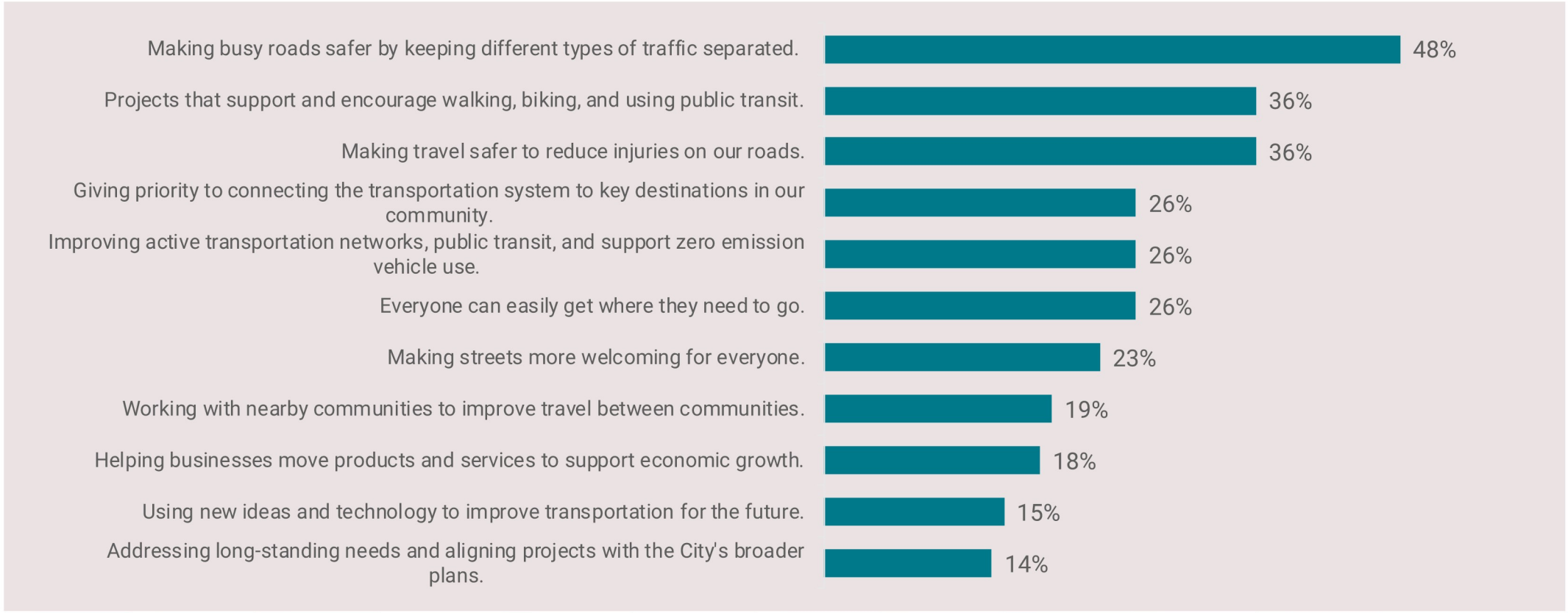


N=730-736

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Survey: Transportation Plan Priorities

For these same factors, which ones are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority? Please select your top three.

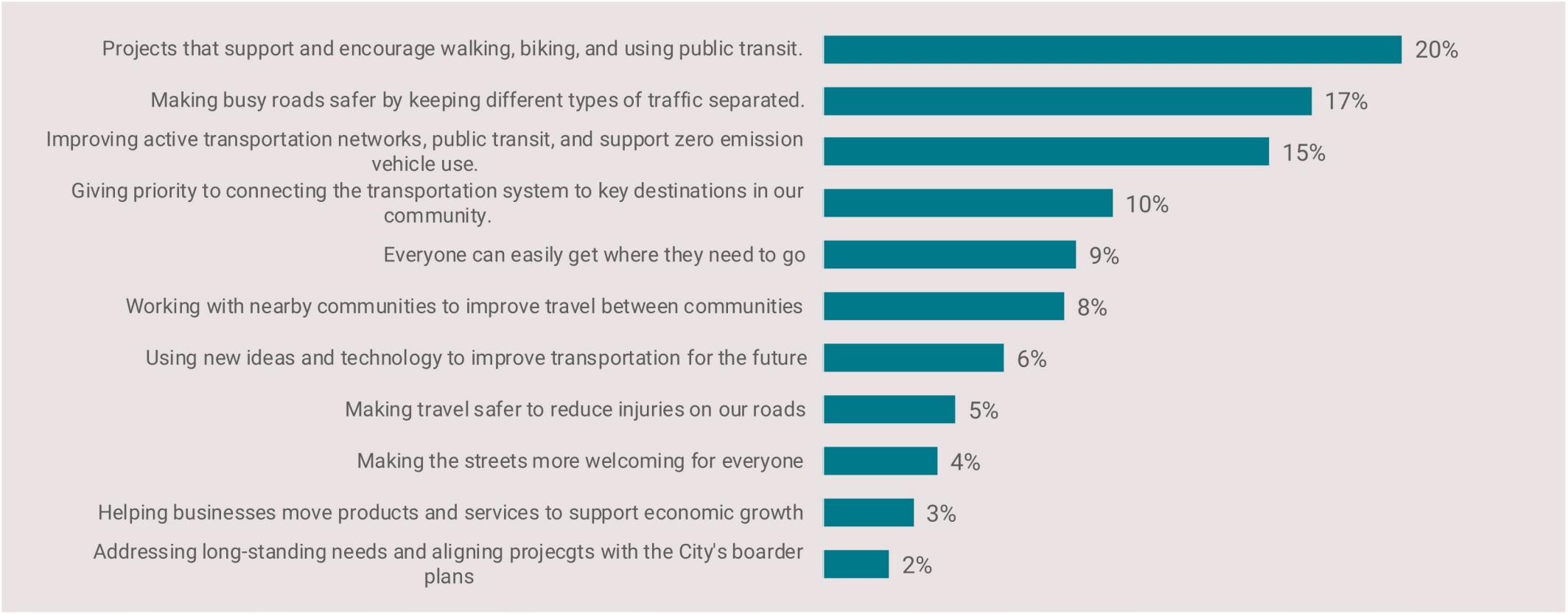


N=729

engage delaney

Open House: Transportation Plan Priorities

Which of the following factors are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority?



# of dots = 478

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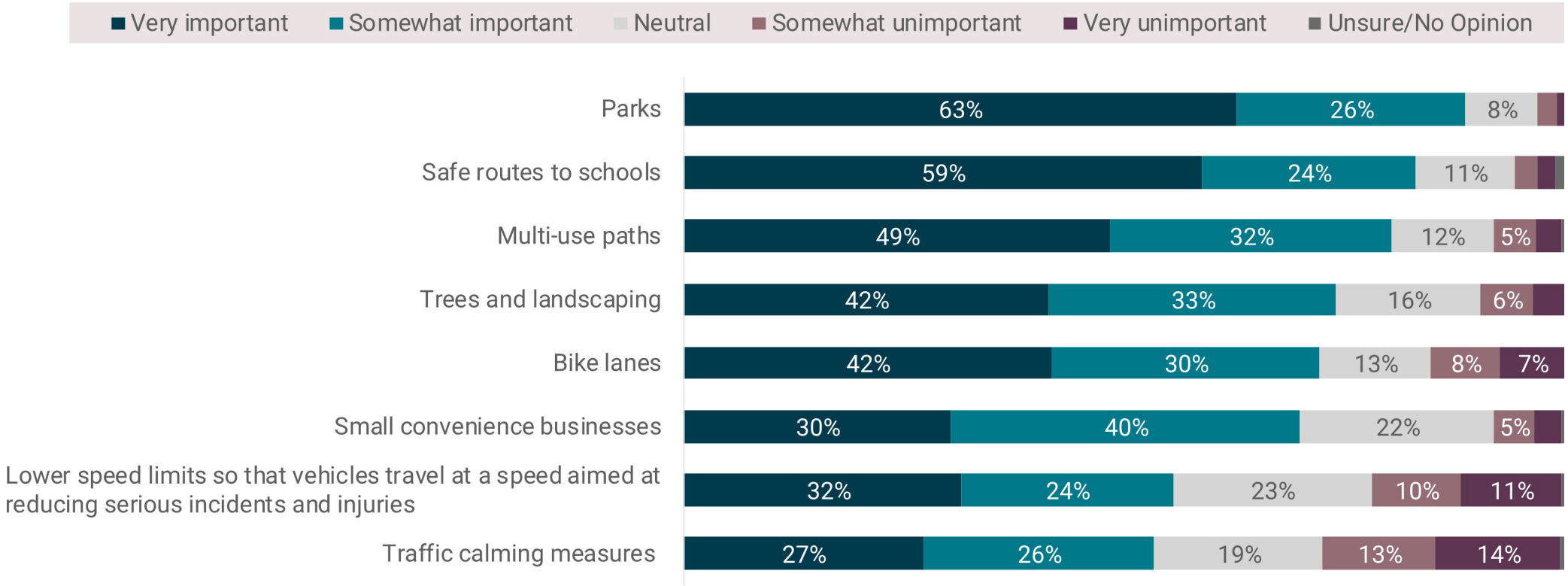
Heard at the Open House: Transportation Plan Priorities

Key Themes from comments:

- Vernon is seen as being at a **pivotal stage** to shape its future Transportation Network.
- **There is interest in balanced transportation options**, including enhanced public transit in general, calls to improve bus routes and their destinations, and to focus on walkability, and separating road users from each other.
- There was some interest in **lowering speed limits**, prompted by concerns about near misses and **safety** on roads.
- Support was expressed for **community-focused initiatives** like street closures and creating a vibrant city core.
- Some participants noted the desire to have a bypass or ring-road that would remove highway traffic from downtown.

Survey: Community Features and Amenities:

When looking at amenities and features in your local neighbourhood, please rate the following on their level of importance, thinking of what you would like the City to focus on adding or addressing:

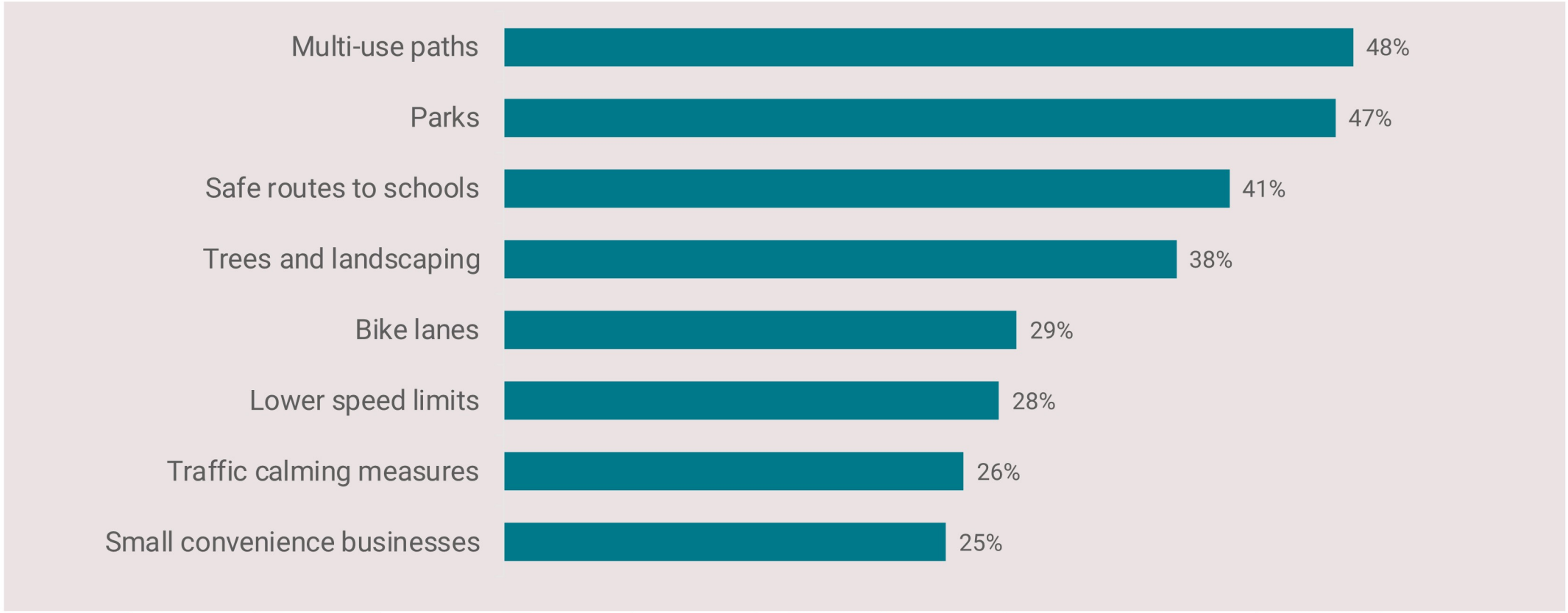


N=727-732

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Survey: Community Features and Amenities:

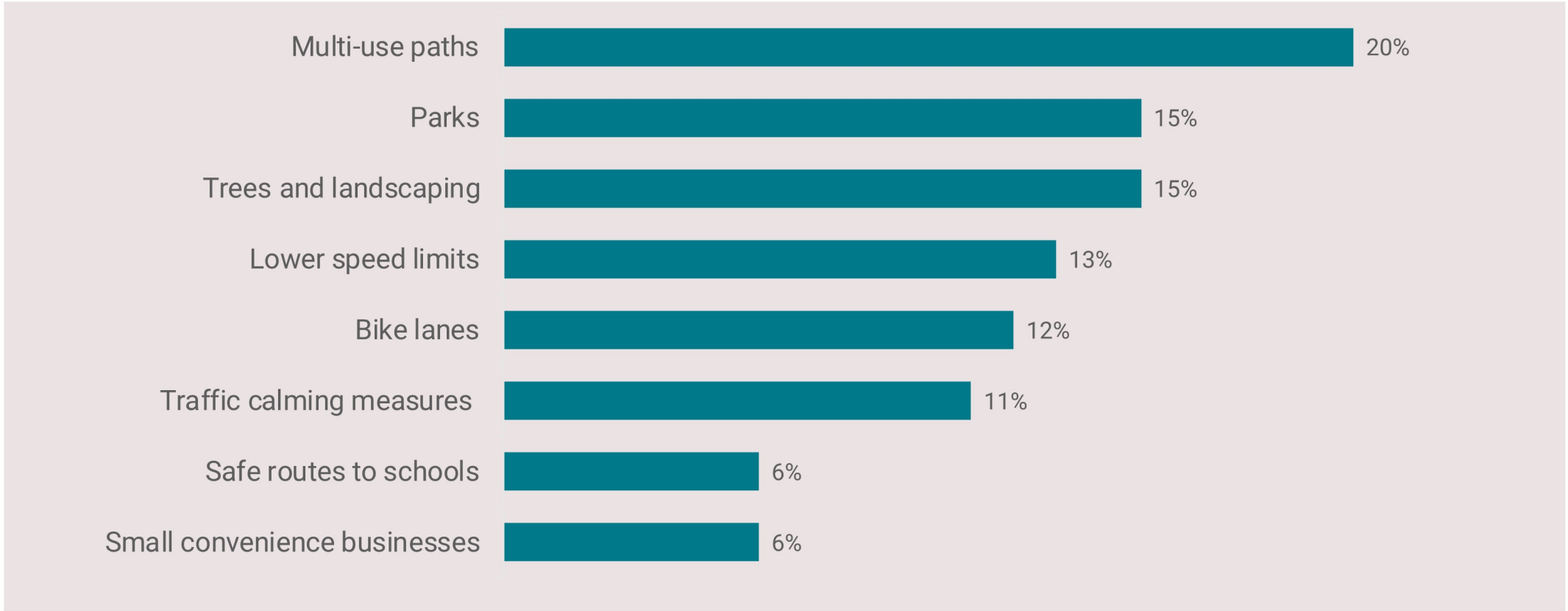
For these same amenities and features, which ones are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority? Please select your top three.



N=730

Open House: Community Features and Amenities:

For these same amenities and features, which ones are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority? Please select your top three.*

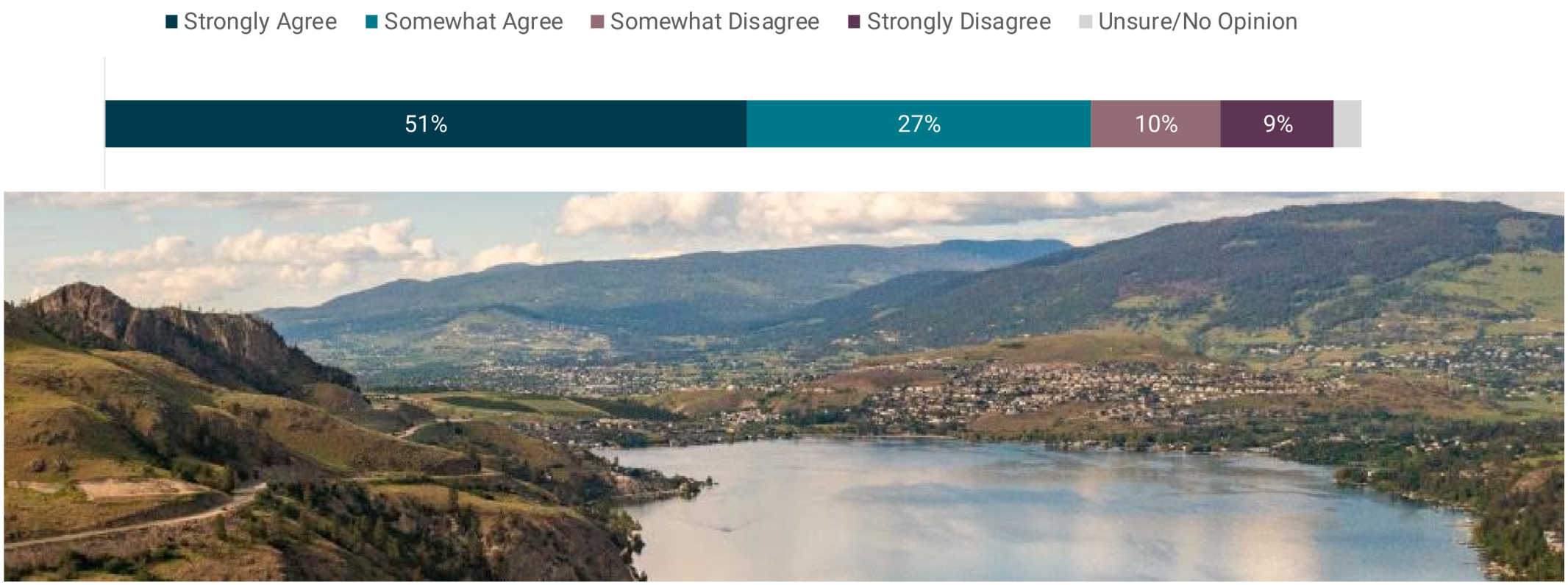


# of dots = 481
*** % Based on # of dots**

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Survey: Proposed Changes and Priorities in Our Community

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: **If roads are designed to be safe and useful for people rather than designed solely to move cars quickly, our community will be a much safer and more pleasant place to live.**



N=738

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Open House: Proposed Changes and Priorities in Our Community

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: **If roads are designed to be safe and useful for people rather than designed solely to move cars quickly, our community will be a much safer and more pleasant place to live.**



N=132

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Heard at the Open House: Changes and Priorities

Key Themes from comments:

- **Prioritizing People Over Cars:** Support for designing roads and communities with pedestrian and cyclist safety in mind.
- **Improved Infrastructure and Safety:** Suggestions for more roundabouts, widened sidewalks, separated pathways, and better walkways.
- **Urban Planning and Development**: Calls to reduce urban sprawl, plant more trees, and relocate highways out of city center.
- **Challenges of Implementation:** Recognition of climate, geographic, increased maintenance costs (for example: taking care of more trees) and distance-related limitations for reducing vehicle dependency.

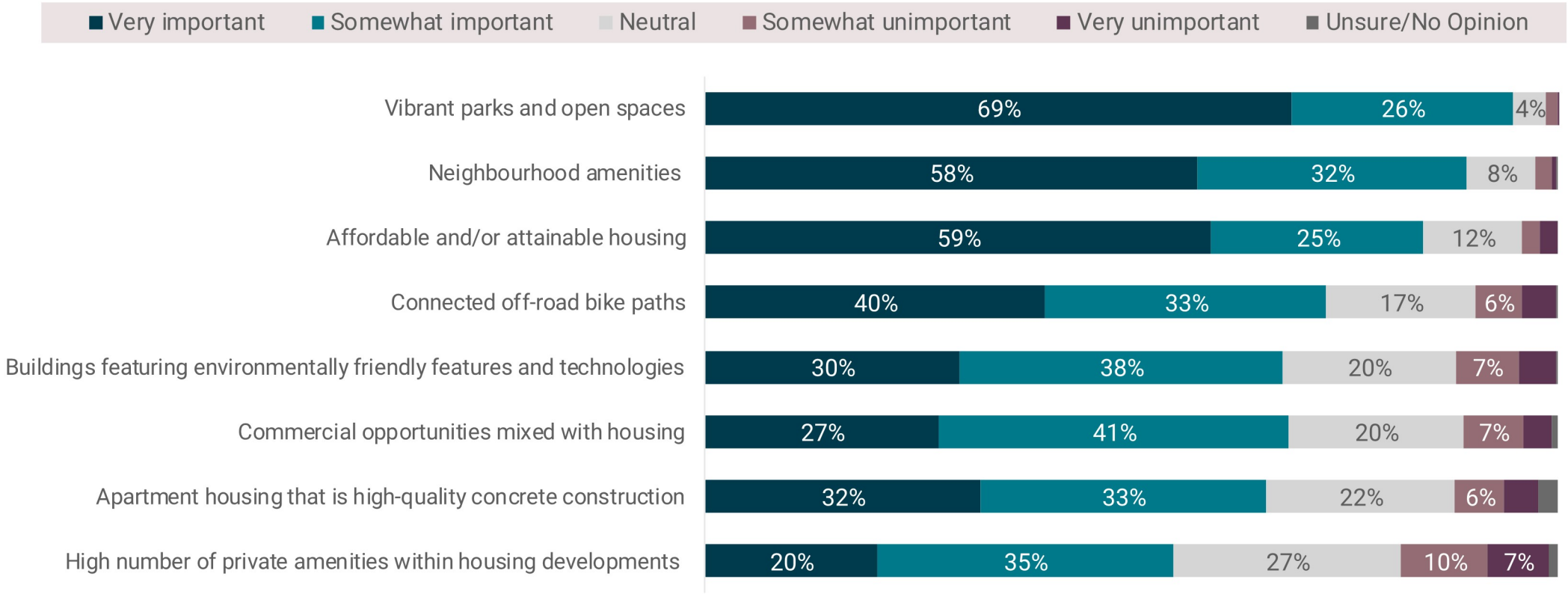


What We Learned:
Community Growth Model

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Survey: Community Growth Model

When you think of an urban area that you would enjoy visiting or living in, how important are each of the following features?

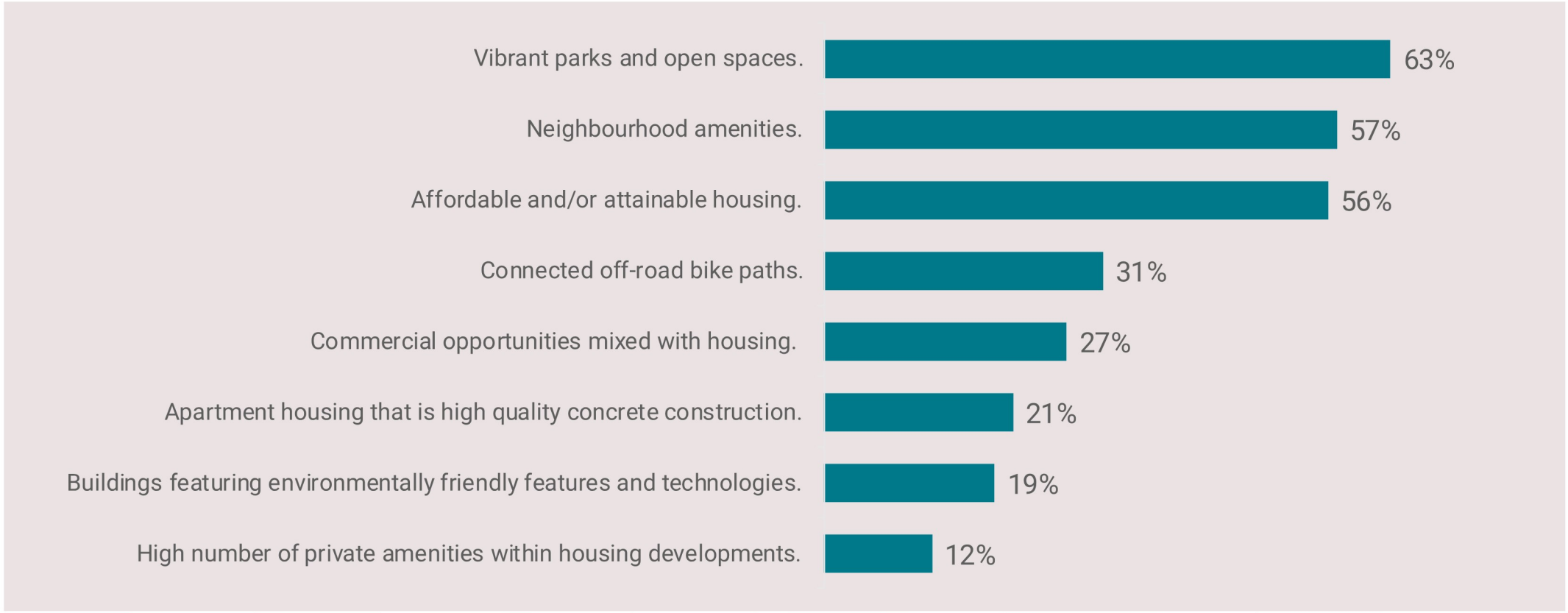


N=729-734

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Survey: Community Growth Model

For these same amenities and features, which ones are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority? Please select your top three.

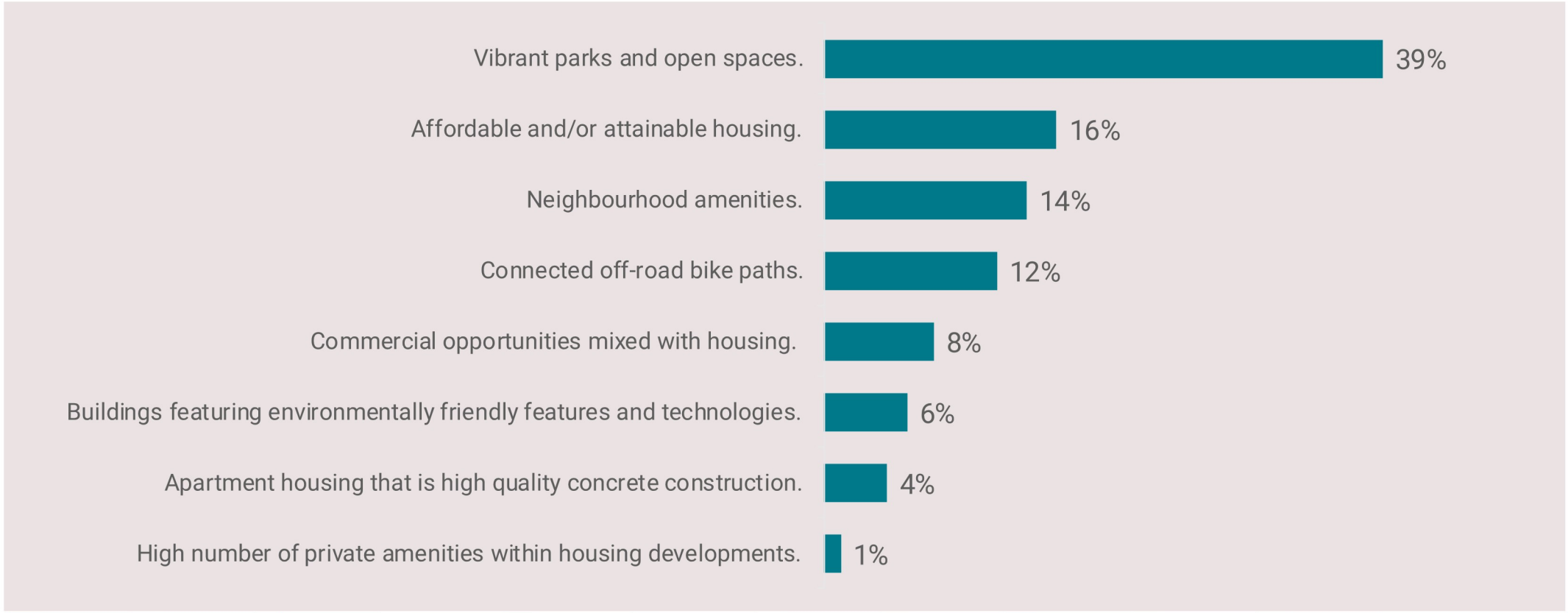


N=731

engage delaney

Open House: Community Growth Model

For these same amenities and features, which ones are the most important to you, meaning you think they should receive the highest and most immediate priority? Please select your top three*.

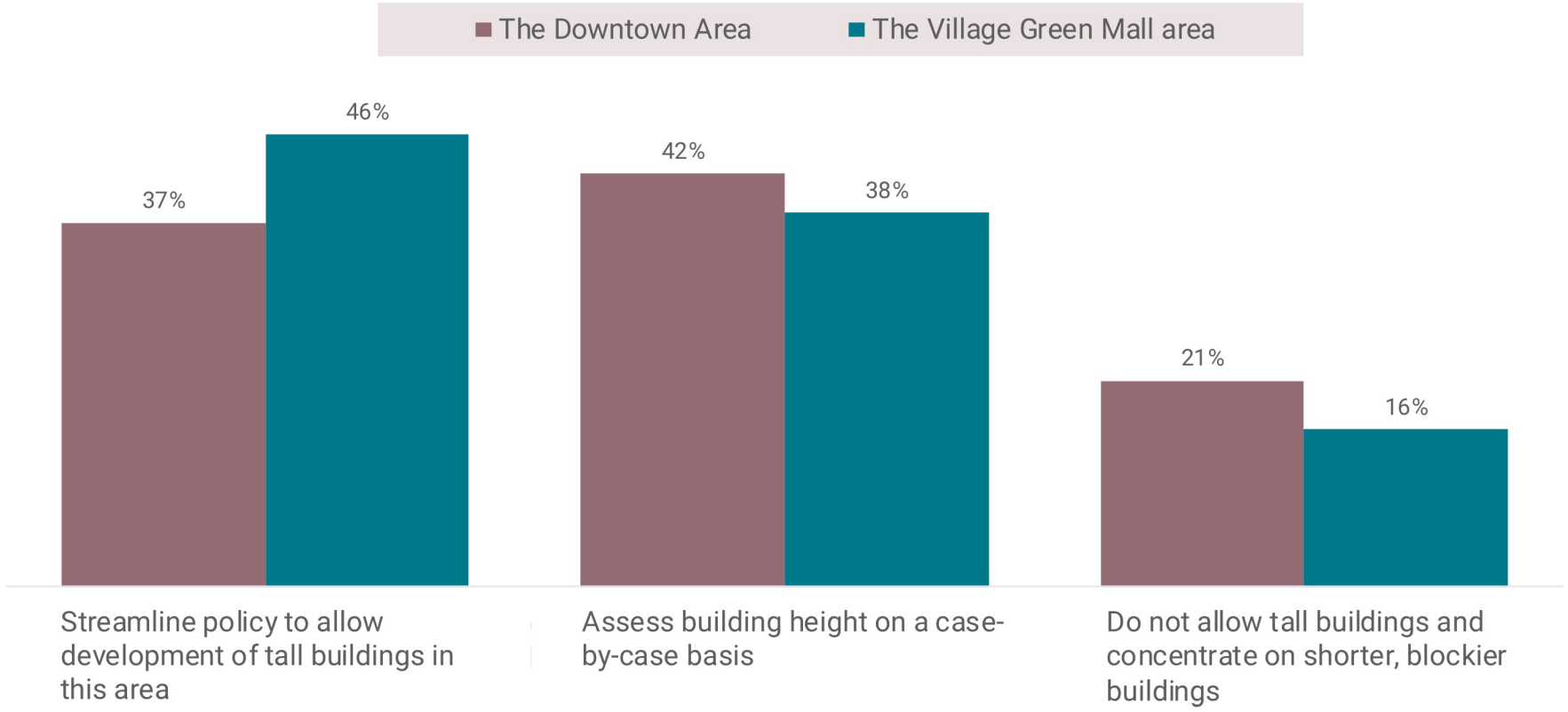


# of dots =433
*** % Based on # of dots**

engage delaney

Survey: Building Height

The City of Vernon is considering the possibility of tall buildings (defined as 18 stories or higher) in the Downtown and Village Green Mall areas. **Which of the following would be your preferred approach for….?**

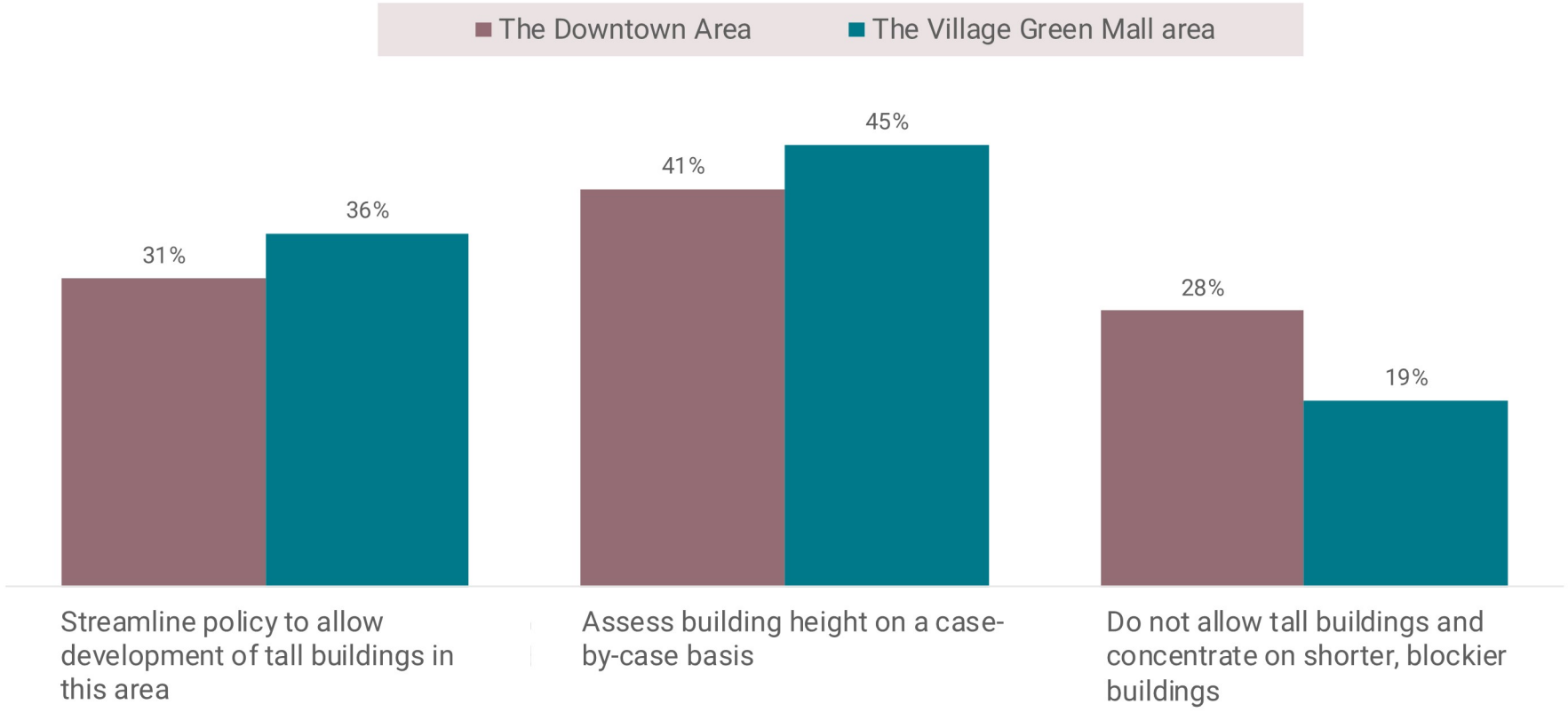


N (valid)=702-705

engage delaney

Open House: Building Height

The City of Vernon is considering the possibility of tall buildings (defined as 18 stories or higher) in the Downtown and Village Green Mall areas. **Which of the following would be your preferred approach for….?**



N=121-149

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Heard at the Open House: Building Height

Key Themes from comments:

- **Support**: There is support for taller buildings as a solution to increase housing options, promote business opportunities, and preserve green spaces. Many residents favour mixed-use developments that combine housing with businesses on the ground floor to enhance functionality and community appeal.
- **Livability Concerns:** However, concerns were raised about preserving Vernon's livability and historical charm. Residents worry about shading, reduced light on streets, and visually unappealing modern designs. Some prefer focusing taller buildings in areas like the Village Green to minimize the impact on the historical downtown area. There were also worries about taller buildings being too hot on the upper floors and creating an uncomfortable living environment.
- **Planning Process:** The need for consistent and transparent planning processes is emphasized, with opposition to case-by-case decision-making due to potential inconsistencies. Infrastructure considerations include concerns about increased traffic, parking demands, and the stability of Vernon’s clay-based soil for very tall structures.
- **Personal Preferences:** While there is a clear preference for building “up” rather than “out” to protect rural and undeveloped areas, residents also stress balancing housing needs. While open house participants communicated a preference for taller buildings to address housing shortages, a number still prefer traditional homes for their personal living situations.
- **Suggestions**: To maintain livability, suggestions include limiting building heights, ensuring adequate light, and designing smaller upper levels to avoid shading and wind tunnels. The community shares an understanding of the need for more housing but seeks thoughtful, balanced solutions that respect both environmental and urban needs.

Heard at the Open House: Transit Oriented Development Areas

Downtown:

Strengths and Opportunities:

- Support for taller buildings downtown to increase housing density and create opportunities for businesses and young buyers.
- Preference for four to five story buildings, with some higher, to allow for shared parks, green spaces, and efficient transit systems.
- Advocacy for housing near amenities and the integration of greenery around tall structures.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Concerns about shading, blocked views, and the potential loss of downtown's historical charm and character.
- Emphasis on reusing existing buildings and limiting new developments to six stories or fewer.
- Worries about traffic increases, parking shortages, and soil stability for taller buildings.
- Strong opposition to replicating the development patterns of larger cities like Kelowna.

Village Green Mall:

Strengths and Opportunities:

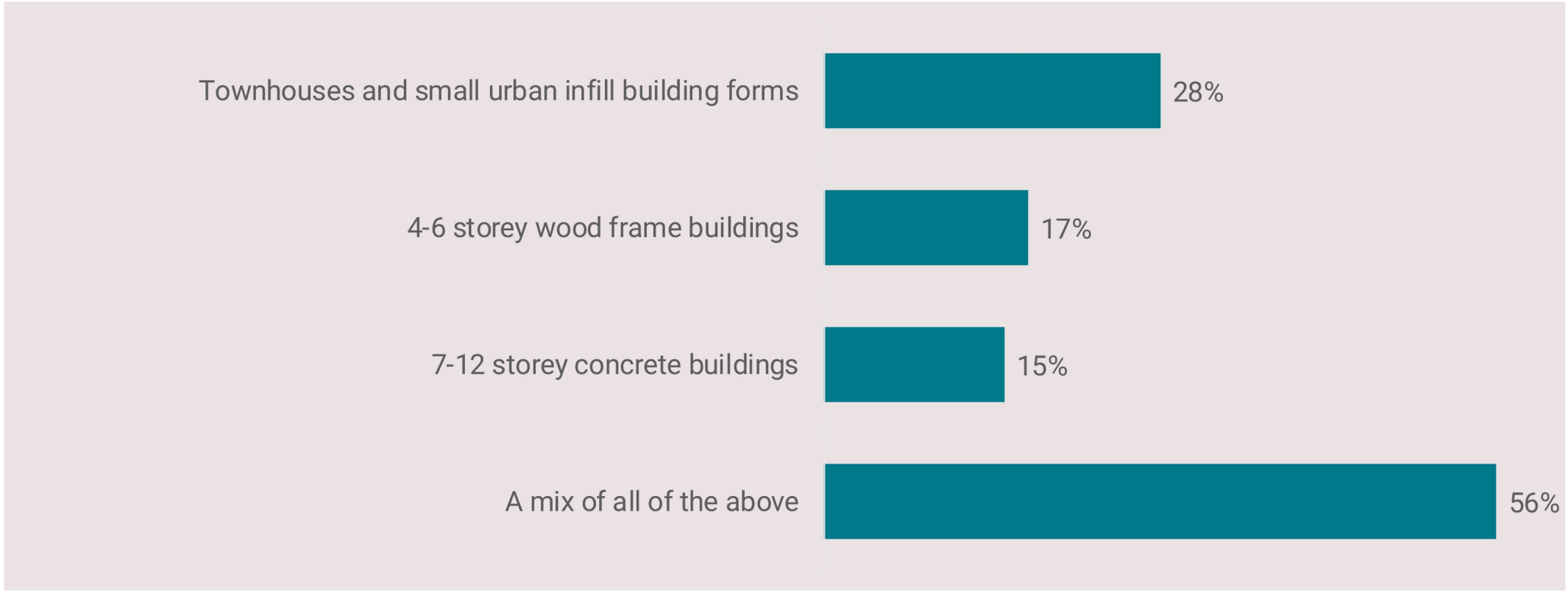
- Support for using the Village Green area to expand housing options with taller buildings. Agreement that taller buildings can promote housing, jobs, and growth while increasing urban density. Village Green is seen as a preferable location for taller buildings due to its lack of historical character compared to downtown.
- Surrounding taller buildings with parks and greenery is viewed as essential for maintaining a calm and livable environment.
- A mix of building heights and housing near public transportation is encouraged to support diverse needs.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Calls for a case-by-case approach to ensure services and infrastructure can support taller buildings in the Village Green area.
- Questions were raised about appropriate height caps, with many suggesting a maximum of 10 stories rather than 18.
- Concerns about flood risks and the stability of Vernon's clay-based soil were highlighted as potential challenges for taller structures.
- Sense that modern, blocky building designs lack charm and detract from the city's character.

Survey: Public Transit Corridors

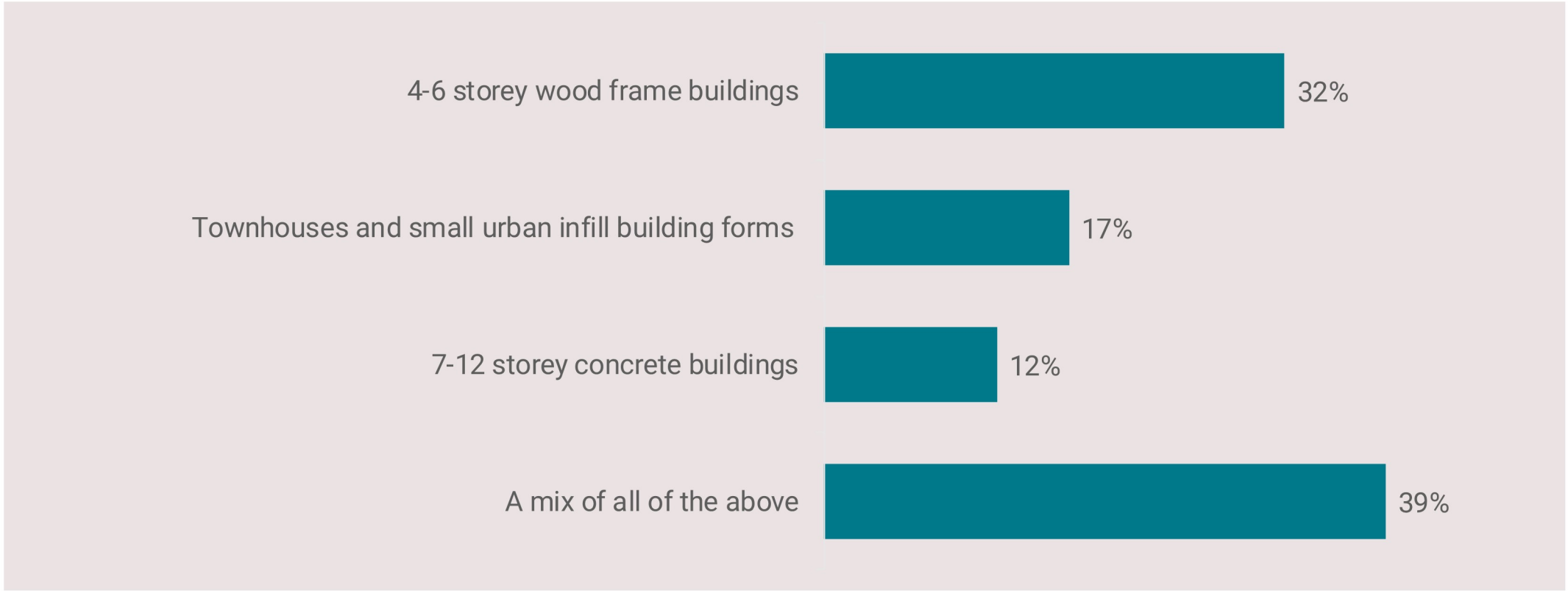
When it comes to building along public transit corridors in Vernon outside of the Downtown and Village Green Mall areas, which of the following building forms and types would you prefer? *[Please select all that apply]*



N(valid)=698

Open House: Public Transit Corridors

When it comes to building along public transit corridors in Vernon outside of the Downtown and Village Green Mall areas, which of the following building forms and types would you prefer?



N=145

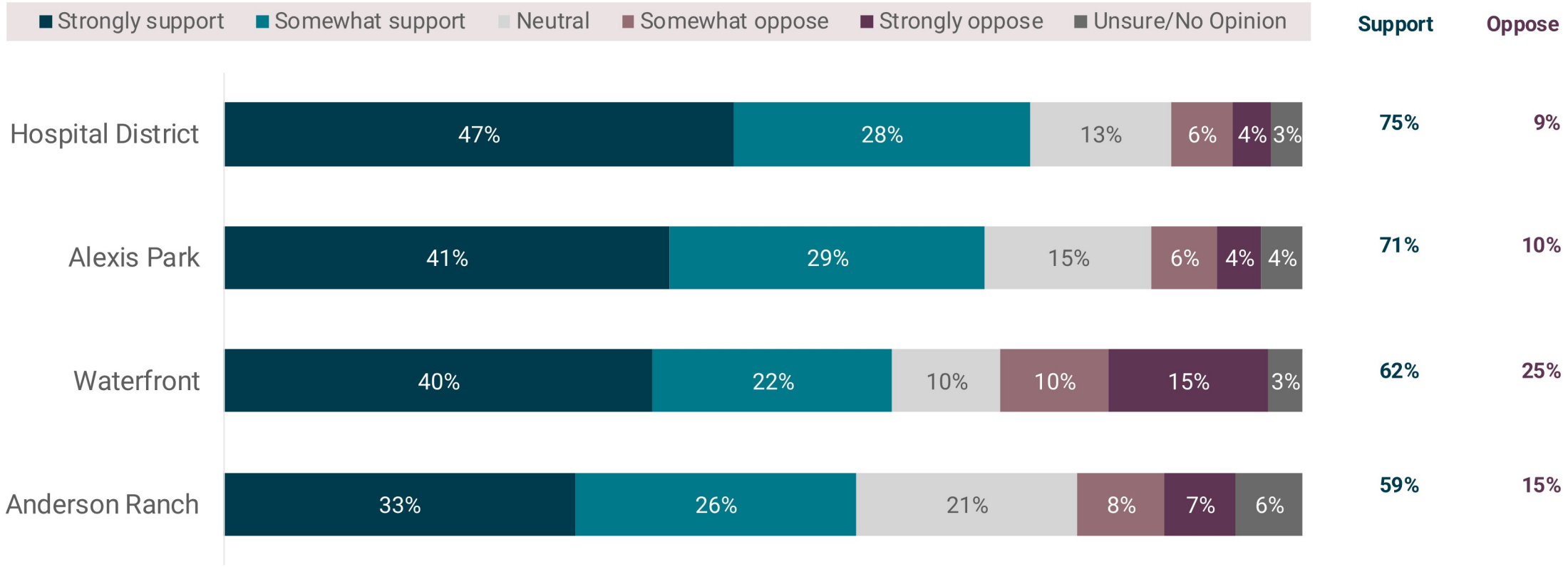
Heard at the Open House: Public Transit Corridors

Key Themes from comments:

- **Building Design and Heights:** Support for smaller upper levels on tall buildings to avoid shading, wind tunnels, and overheating on top floors. Preference for four to six story buildings with nearby green space and mixed-use options (retail, groceries, offices). Strong opposition to low-quality, "cubist quick-build" designs.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure**: Calls to move the airport, as its location is limiting waterfront growth. Support for creating a bypass to redirect highway traffic away from downtown, reducing congestion and promoting a calmer city core. Greater focus on improving public transit, including adding bus service to certain areas. Encouragement for active transportation options and integration of one-way streets to allow more space for greenery and walkways.
- **Growth and Density**: Increased support for taller buildings in the northern part of town while avoiding development outside the city core. Emphasis on ensuring densification is concentrated in areas near services and transit to reduce reliance on personal motor vehicles.
- **Parking and Permeability**: Concerns about inadequate parking requirements for high-rise developments, with strong calls for addressing parking needs. Emphasis on incorporating permeable surfaces, tree planting, and green spaces to support sustainable urban environments.
- **Housing Needs and Sustainability**: Acknowledgment of the need for housing types that meet community needs, including affordability and the balance of rental vs. homeownership options. Focus on sustainable growth that aligns with transit-oriented development, green spaces, and minimized environmental impact.
- **Opportunities for Improvement**: Support for densification in the city center with improved transit and better access to necessities to reduce transportation needs. Calls for thoughtful planning that balances growth, sustainability, and livability with robust public transit and active transportation options.

Survey: Village Centres

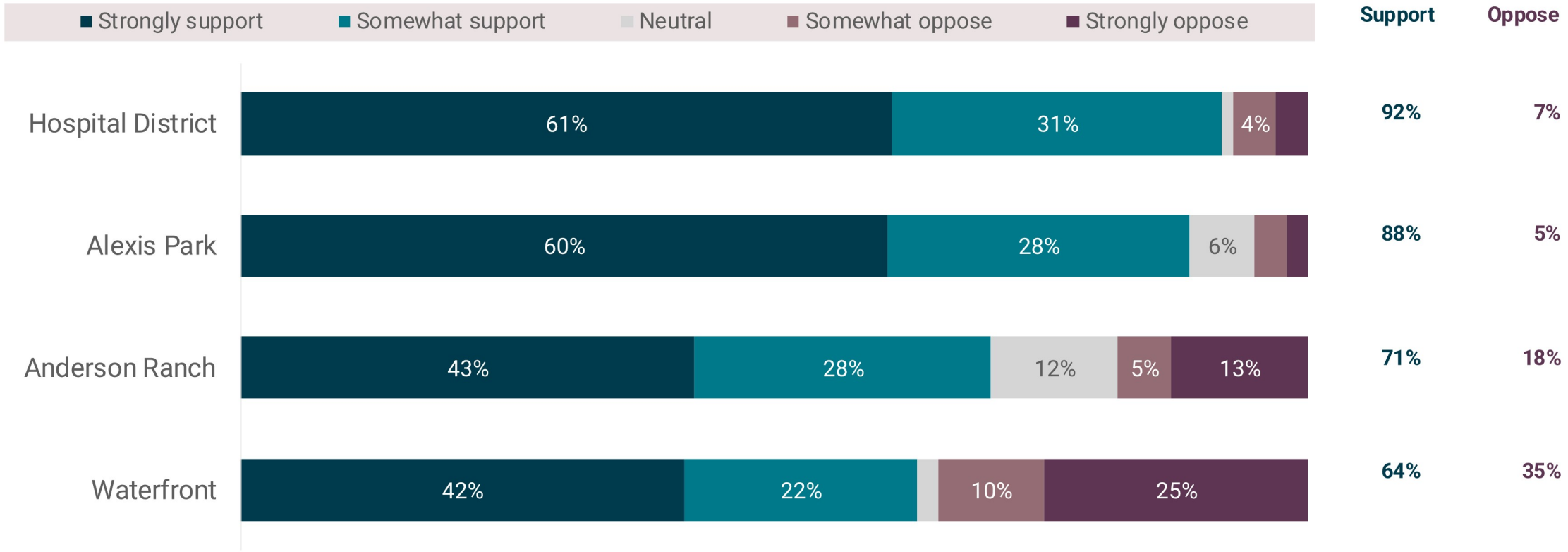
Thinking about the following neighbourhoods, to what extent do you support or oppose each of these being designated as a Village Centre?



N=728-732

Open House: Village Centres

Thinking about the following neighbourhoods, to what extent do you support or oppose each of these being designated as a Village Centre?



N=115-121

engage delaney

Heard at the Open House: Village Centers (1 of 2)

Alexis Park:

Strengths and Opportunities:

- The area is close to downtown, amenities, and London Drugs plaza, making it a convenient location.
- Support for walkability, which promotes healthier, happier lives and increases access to local businesses and jobs.
- There is potential to create a walkable, community-focused neighbourhood.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Significant environmental concerns regarding the area's wetlands, with frequent flooding and its importance for flood control and biodiversity.
- Suggestions to preserve the wetlands or move the center to a less environmentally sensitive area.
- Concerns about overcrowding and potential disruption to nearby housing.

Anderson Ranch:

Strengths and Opportunities:

- Support for walkability, which contributes to healthier lifestyles and boosts local businesses and jobs.
- Potential for a new bus route connecting Pleasant Valley to Silver Star, improving transit options.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Strong emphasis on preserving the wetlands, BX Creek, and Swan Lake areas for their importance to flood mitigation, biodiversity, and bird habitats.
- Opposition to developing on riparian zones and green spaces, with calls for downtown densification instead.
- Suggestions for ensuring adequate riparian setbacks and incorporating nature preservation into the planning process.

Heard at the Open House: Village Centers (2 of 2)

Waterfront:

Strengths and Opportunities:

- The waterfront offers potential for tourism-friendly development, with ideas like boardwalks, shops, cafes, and hotels.
- The area could become more bike- and pedestrian-friendly, enhancing livability and access.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Opposition to privatizing waterfront spaces, with calls to prioritize public access and preserve natural areas.
- Builds are too big and smaller homes should be required.
- Concerns about the impact on riparian areas, marsh flooding, and the ecological health of the lakeshore.
- Warnings about transportation challenges, as the area is far from downtown, with limited transit options and potential for congestion.

Hospital District:

Strengths and Opportunities:

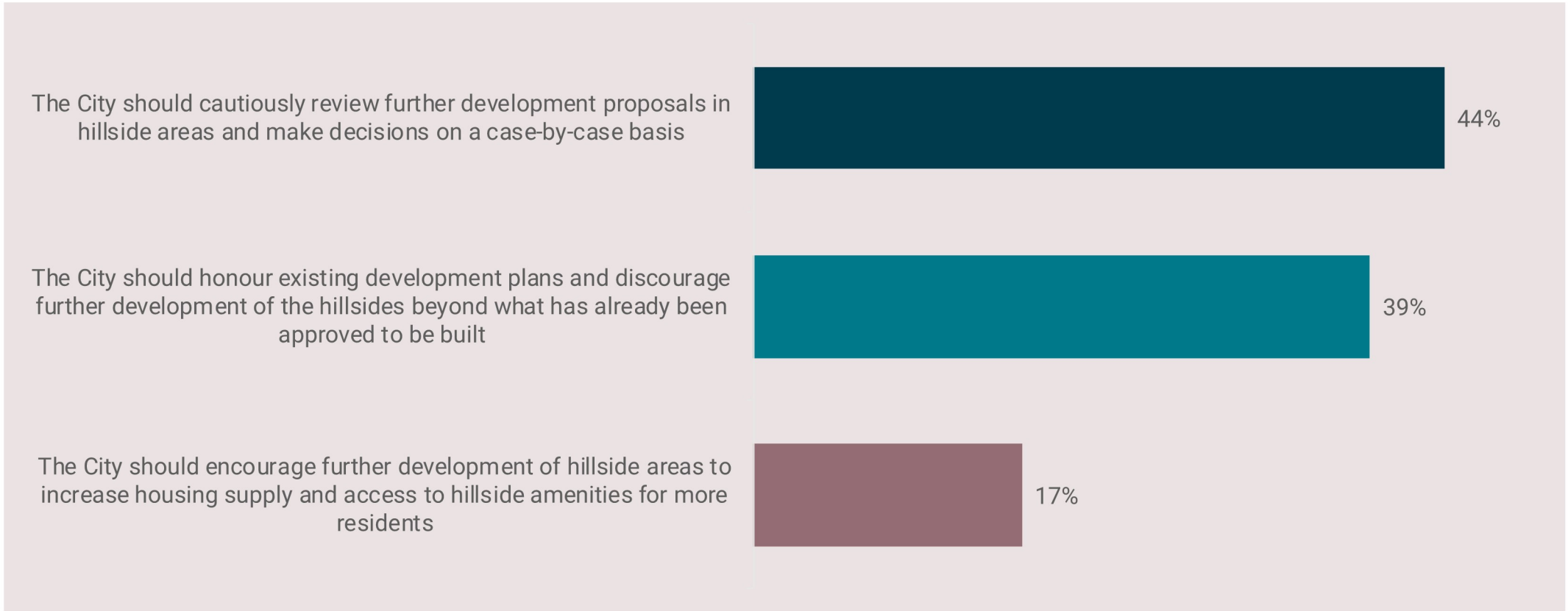
- Proximity to the hospital makes the area ideal for seniors, hospital workers, and those needing healthcare access.
- The area is walkable, with good transit connections, and offers potential for light commercial and public amenities.
- The location is close to downtown, making it convenient for businesses and job creation.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Traffic and access issues, including poor road conditions, lack of proper crossings, and limited exit points onto Highway 97.
- Parking shortages and concerns about infrastructure strain if density increases.
- Environmental concerns about protecting wetlands, Polson Park, and ensuring urban forest opportunities.
- Calls for a four to six- story height limit and ensuring development remains environmentally friendly.

Survey: Future Development - Hillsides

How should the City approach reviewing applications for further development in hillside areas outside of currently approved developments?

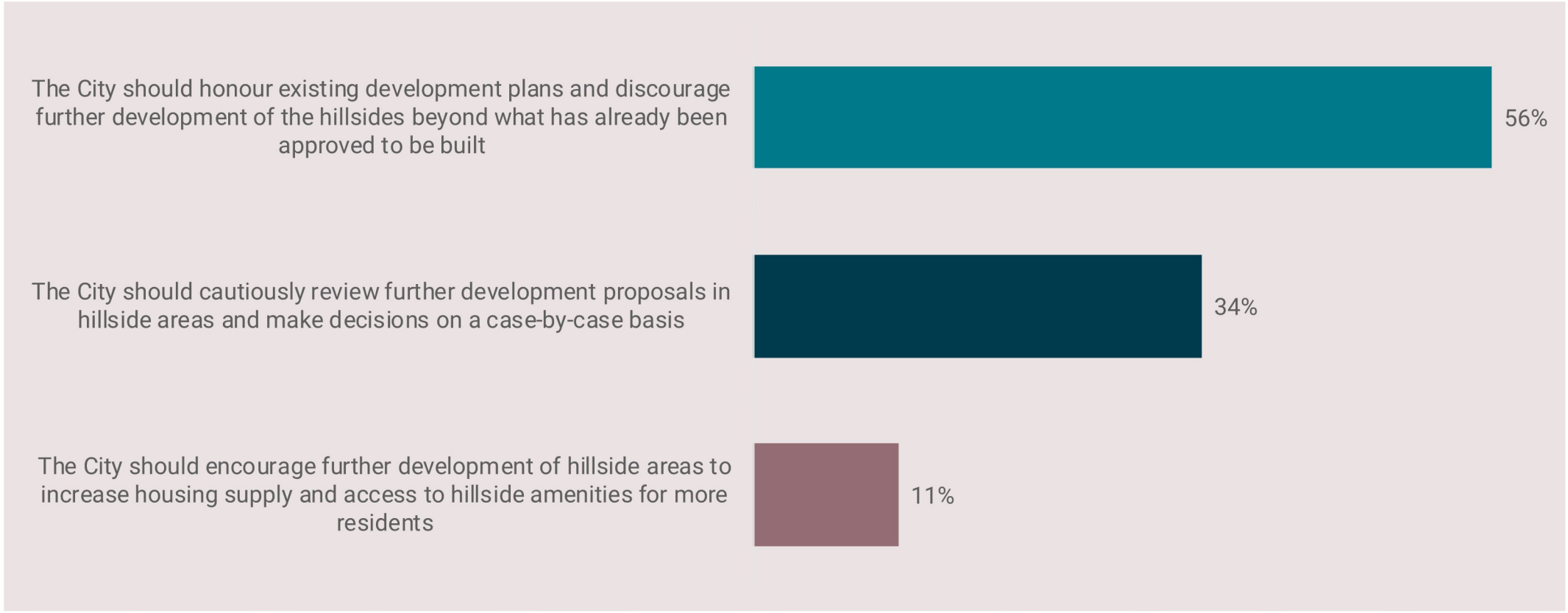


N (valid)=724

engage delaney

Open House: Future Development - Hillsides

How should the City approach reviewing applications for further development in hillside areas outside of currently approved developments?



N=149

engage delaney

Heard at the Open House: Hillsides

Key Themes from comments:

- **Environmental Protection:** Strong emphasis on preserving natural areas, including hillsides, wetlands, and water sources, due to their ecological importance, contribution to biodiversity, and role in mitigating risks like landslides, fires, and flooding. Hillsides are seen as vital green spaces for wildlife and the community, providing refuge, charm, and visual appeal. Calls to protect sensitive environmental zones and enforce restrictions, such as the 30-degree slope limit, to promote long-term sustainability.
- **Focus on Existing Urban Areas:** Opposition to hillside development, with suggestions to prioritize densification and revitalization within the existing urban footprint. Recommendations include building higher downtown, using underutilized lots in existing hillside developments, and upgrading existing housing stock to avoid expanding into pristine areas.
- **Public Access and Green Space:** Importance of preserving public access to parks, trails, and beaches, with a land acquisition plan recommended to maintain walkability and ensure green spaces remain available for all residents.
- **Transportation and Accessibility:** Strong support for integrating a transit plan with new development, along with increased accessibility for bikes, scooters, and other forms of active transportation.
- **Housing Affordability and Design:** Preference for smaller, more affordable housing rather than large, expensive homes that block views and cater to wealthier individuals. Residents advocate for denser housing options over sprawling developments to meet affordability challenges while protecting natural areas.
- **Cost**: Concerns about the financial costs of hillside development, including water infrastructure, roads, and emergency services, which would increase taxpayer burden.

Survey Comments (420) – Themes (1 of 3)

1) Infrastructure and Traffic

Respondents frequently highlighted concerns about infrastructure and traffic management in Vernon. Many said that existing infrastructure is insufficient to support current and future growth, with particular emphasis on bottlenecks along Highway 97 and other key routes. Comments included calls for a bypass to reduce downtown congestion, synchronization of traffic lights, and upgrades to existing roads to handle increasing volumes. Others mentioned the need for new evacuation routes in hillside developments and upgrades to aging water and sewage systems to meet future demand. Several respondents also emphasized the importance of integrating infrastructure planning with any new development projects.

2) Downtown Revitalization and Density

Revitalizing downtown Vernon emerged as a strong theme, with many respondents advocating for increased residential density in the city core. Respondents said that 4-6 storey mixed-use buildings with retail and residential spaces would bring vibrancy to downtown and make it more appealing for businesses and residents alike. Others highlighted the need for affordable, modern housing downtown to support a diverse community and reduce urban sprawl. Comments included suggestions to replace underutilized lots, improve pedestrian safety, and enhance public spaces downtown. Many expressed concerns about the lack of parking and the challenges of accessibility in this area.

3) Hillside and Environmental Preservation

Preserving Vernon's natural hillsides and protecting environmentally sensitive areas was a priority for many respondents. Comments included strong opposition to expanding development into hillside areas, citing risks such as landslides, loss of natural beauty, and wildfire hazards. Respondents said the City should prioritize infill development and avoid urban sprawl that encroaches on natural spaces. Others suggested limiting construction on steep slopes and protecting wildlife corridors and agricultural lands. Many expressed a desire to keep Vernon's unique character and avoid overdevelopment, similar to what some described as happening in Kelowna.

4) Active Transportation (Biking/Walking)

Active transportation infrastructure, including bike lanes and pedestrian pathways, was another key theme. Many respondents said that Vernon needs safe, accessible bike lanes and walking paths that are separate from road traffic and well-maintained year-round. Comments included requests for better connectivity between existing bike paths and for infrastructure that discourages vehicles from obstructing bike lanes. Others suggested incorporating active transportation routes into all new developments and increasing pedestrian safety, particularly near schools and busy intersections. Some respondents expressed concerns about the design of existing bike lanes and the enforcement of traffic laws for cyclists.

Survey Comments (420) – Themes (2 of 3)

5) Public Transportation

Public transportation was a frequently mentioned topic, with many respondents calling for expanded and more frequent bus services. Comments included requests for routes that better connect outlying neighbourhoods, such as Predator Ridge, Foothills, and Okanagan Landing, to the city center. Some respondents said that public transit schedules should be extended to accommodate commuters and residents with irregular schedules. Others suggested environmentally friendly solutions, such as smaller electric buses, and emphasized the need for affordable options, especially for seniors and low-income residents. A few mentioned the challenges of using public transit compared to private vehicles and called for system improvements.

6) Affordable Housing and Development Prioritization

The need for affordable housing was emphasized by many respondents, who said that increasing the availability of affordable rental and ownership options should be a priority. Comments included calls to focus on infill and denser housing developments, particularly in the downtown area, rather than sprawling hillside developments that are less accessible. Some respondents said that large, expensive homes on the hillsides do not address housing affordability issues and contribute to speculation. Others encouraged stricter regulations on vacation rentals and short-term accommodations, which were seen as reducing long-term housing supply.

7) Parks, Green Spaces, and Natural Areas

Many respondents highlighted the importance of parks and green spaces in maintaining Vernon's quality of life. Comments included support for protecting lakefront areas and natural spaces from overdevelopment, as well as creating more accessible parks within walking distance of all neighbourhoods. Respondents said that parks and public spaces should prioritize native plants, wildlife conservation, and pollinator-friendly landscaping. Others emphasized the value of recreational opportunities, such as walking paths, bike trails, and waterfront amenities, for both residents and tourists.

8) Community Safety and Social Concerns

Concerns about community safety were frequently raised, with many respondents highlighting issues related to homelessness, substance use, and crime in downtown Vernon. Some respondents said that there should be more support services for people experiencing homelessness, while others emphasized the need for stricter enforcement to address public safety concerns. Comments included requests for additional police presence and traffic law enforcement in residential areas. Several respondents also suggested improving lighting in public spaces while ensuring it does not intrude into homes.

Survey Comments (420) – Themes (3 of 3)

9) Climate Change and Sustainability

Some respondents emphasized the need for climate action and sustainability in City planning. Comments included calls to integrate the Climate Action Plan into development decisions, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and prioritize water conservation. Many highlighted the importance of protecting natural assets, such as wetlands and waterways, as well as implementing environmentally friendly building practices. Others said that preserving biodiversity and preparing for climate-related risks, such as wildfires and floods, should be key considerations for the city's growth.

10) Aesthetic and Cultural Enhancements

A smaller but notable group of respondents focused on the aesthetic and cultural aspects of Vernon's development. Comments included suggestions for more public art, unique architectural designs, and tree-lined streets to enhance the city's appeal. Others said that the City should invest in cultural amenities, such as libraries, coworking spaces, and community centers, to foster a sense of community and attract younger residents. Some expressed concerns about noise pollution and emphasized the importance of creating a visually appealing and welcoming environment.

Open House Comments (63 Stickies) – Themes (1 of 2)

1) Protecting and Enhancing Natural Areas and Climate Resilience

Open House visitors highlighted the importance of protecting and respecting the watershed, wetlands, and riparian zones to preserve biodiversity and ensure climate resilience. Many emphasized the need to keep hillsides and undeveloped green spaces free from housing developments to maintain Vernon's natural beauty and minimize environmental impacts. There was strong support for sustainable urban forests, the protection of ALR lands, and making water sources a priority in planning. Suggestions also included aligning policies with the city's Climate Action Plan, ensuring net-zero emissions by 2050, and integrating nature-based solutions to address climate change.

2) Smart, Dense Development and Revitalization

Many comments stressed the need for smart growth strategies that prioritize densification over urban sprawl. Participants supported focusing on infill development, particularly in the downtown area, instead of building outward into sensitive hillside and greenfield areas. Calls to revitalize downtown Vernon were frequent, with ideas for creating vibrant, walkable areas featuring mixed-use developments, affordable housing, and more local businesses. Participants suggested maintaining a balance between preserving the natural environment and meeting housing needs, favoring small homes and medium-density projects over larger, sprawling developments.

3) Affordable Housing and Homelessness Support

Affordable housing emerged as a significant concern, with participants advocating for housing options that cater to young adults, workers, and families. Ideas included using government lands for affordable housing projects and integrating the Housing Action Plan to meet diverse needs. Several comments urged the city to address homelessness by creating better support systems and housing solutions, particularly for vulnerable populations, while maintaining public spaces for the broader community.

4) Infrastructure, Walkability, and Transit

Improved infrastructure was a recurring theme. participants encouraged investment in safer sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and transit options. Suggestions included creating continuous multi-use paths connecting neighbourhoods to parks and lakes and ensuring active transportation routes are safe and accessible. There were calls to enhance transit efficiency and develop transportation options for key areas like Silver Star, Predator Ridge, and The Rise, while reducing reliance on cars for daily commutes.

Open House Comments (63 Stickies) – Themes (2 of 2)

5) Youthful and Inclusive Community Planning

Participants expressed a desire for more youth-focused activities and strategies to attract and retain young residents. Many also highlighted the need for a culture of social inclusion, equity, and collaboration, with community amenities such as parks, trails, and gathering spaces that cater to people of all ages and abilities. Some emphasized designing age- and dementia-friendly spaces while promoting equity and diversity in all planning efforts.

6) Preservation of Cultural and Heritage Values

There was support for protecting heritage buildings and ensuring the city's development respects Vernon's cultural identity. participants also suggested collaborating with the Syilx (Okanagan) Nation to prioritize truth and reconciliation in urban planning.

7) Sustainability in Building and Development

Environmentally conscious building practices were a focus, with suggestions for green, low-emission buildings and using innovative designs that prioritize energy efficiency and sustainability. Participants emphasized minimizing the environmental footprint of new developments and maintaining high standards of compliance with provincial and federal environmental laws.

8) Economic Development and Local Business Support

Several comments encouraged the city to adopt a business-friendly attitude while putting the needs of small- and medium-sized local businesses first. Participants called for a balance between economic growth and preserving Vernon's unique character, with suggestions to create spaces that support vibrant, local economies.

9) Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Many participants advocated for expanded and better-maintained green spaces, parks, and trails. Ideas included creating "parks within parks" with skateparks, gardens, workout areas, and quiet spaces for relaxation. Several emphasized the importance of integrating shade trees and natural elements into public spaces, while others suggested prioritizing the preservation of open spaces for public use over private development.

10) Community Engagement and Collaboration

Participants expressed the need for a culture of collaboration between the city, non-profits, and the broader community to align decisions with public values and ensure long-term benefits. Suggestions included encouraging innovative, community-driven solutions and fostering open, transparent engagement with residents throughout the planning process.

Emails and Letters (7) – Themes

1) Climate Resilience and Environmental Protection

Across all seven letters, with specific focus on climate emergency recognition, integration of the Climate Action Plan, and protecting natural assets like riparian areas, wetlands, and hillsides.

2) Public Engagement Concerns

Consistently highlighted, particularly the inadequacy of surveys, workshops, and public consultations, as well as the lack of transparency in the engagement process.

3) Housing and Urban Development

Widely mentioned, including the need for affordable housing, preventing urban sprawl, and incorporating sustainable building practices.

4) Transportation and Connectivity

Repeatedly discussed, with focus on improved public transit, active transportation options, and addressing traffic and safety concerns.

5) Infrastructure and Resource Management

Mentioned in multiple letters, particularly concerns about water, wastewater, and city infrastructure's ability to handle growth.

6) Governance and Reconciliation

Several references to the importance of integrating reconciliation efforts with the Okanagan Indian Band and using a climate change lens in governance.

7) Community Well-Being

Highlighted by a few authors, focusing on inclusive neighbourhoods, shared community amenities, and local food systems.

8) Economic and Regional Development

Less frequently discussed, though some concerns were raised about sustainable tourism, local business support, and economic impacts of climate change.



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Questions? Comments?