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ENGAGEMENT, FACILITATION, COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE

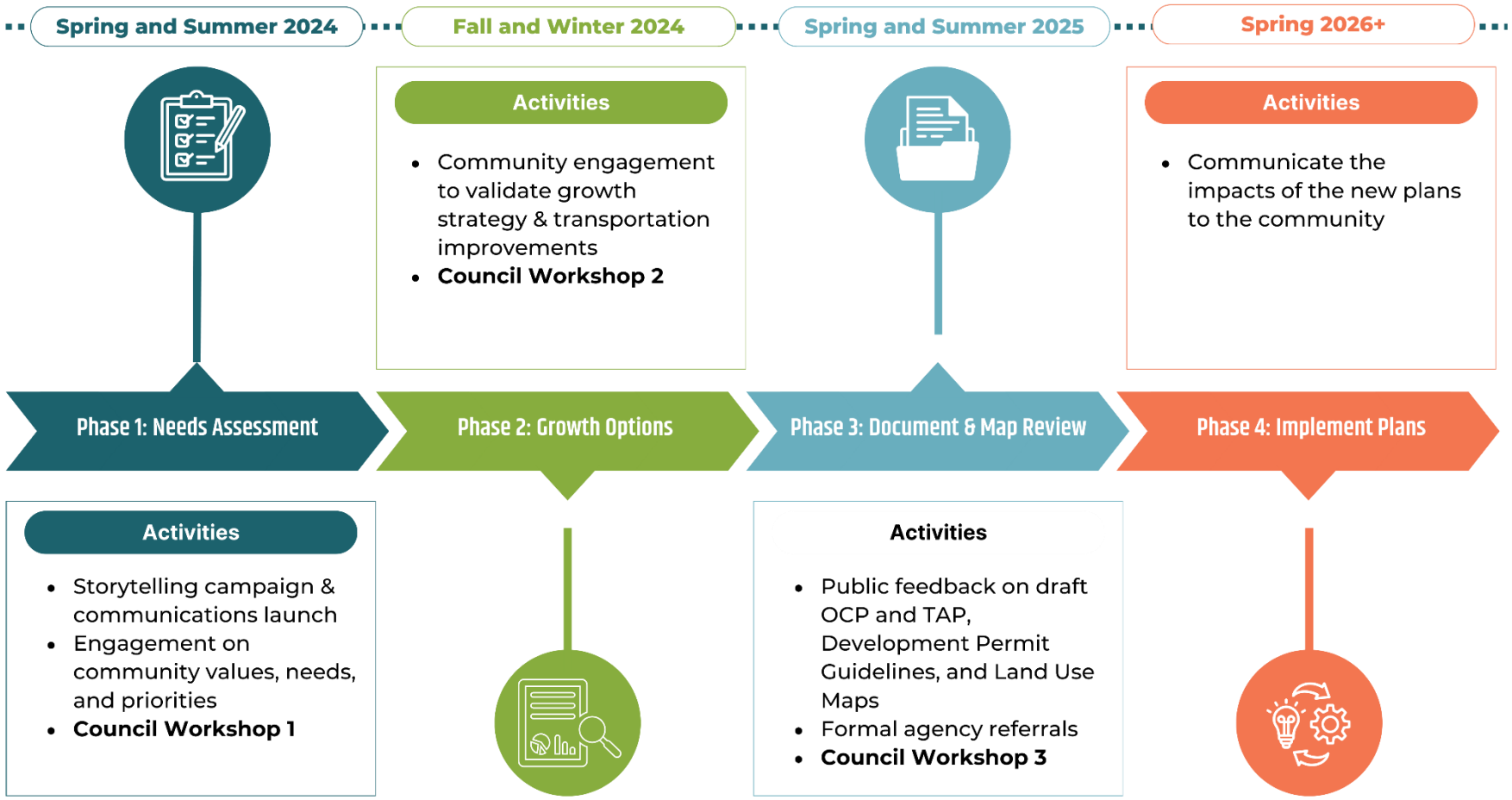
CITY OF Vernon

Official Community Plan & Transportation Plan Update

Community Engagement

Summary of Findings
July 2024

The project - timelines



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The Phase 1 Engagement

Community Survey



Online survey



1,396 respondents



On EngageVernon.ca

Community Workshops

Ten invitation-only workshops with **168** attendees





Held **in-person** between May 9 and June 19, 2024

Topics/groups engaged: Housing; unhoused/underhoused; newcomers – VDICSS; newcomers – RNIP; community services; family resource centre; climate, parks + trails; tourism; economic development; APC/developers.

Community Pop-up events



Booths at **9 events**



882 visitors



Across Vernon between May 17 and June 28, 2024

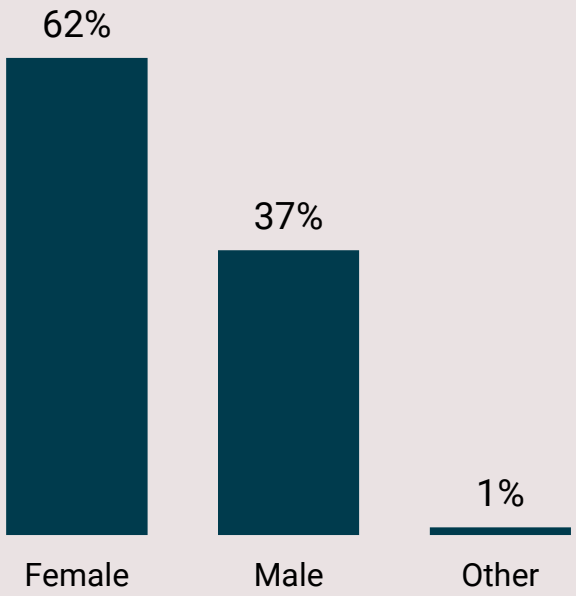


Survey Findings: Who Responded

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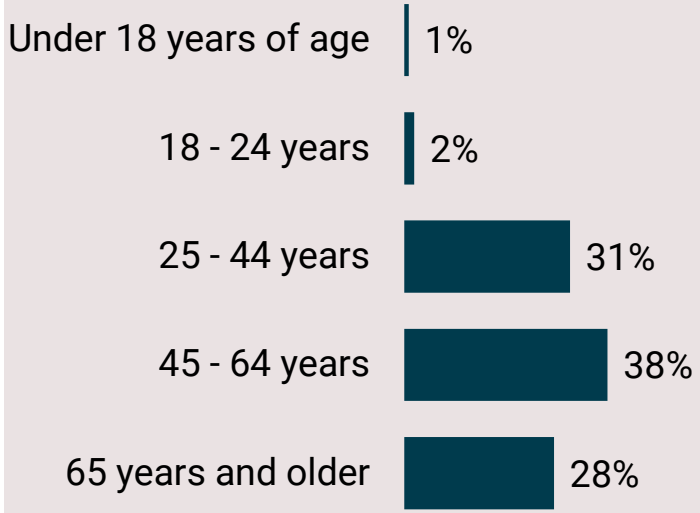
Who Responded: Demographics

Gender



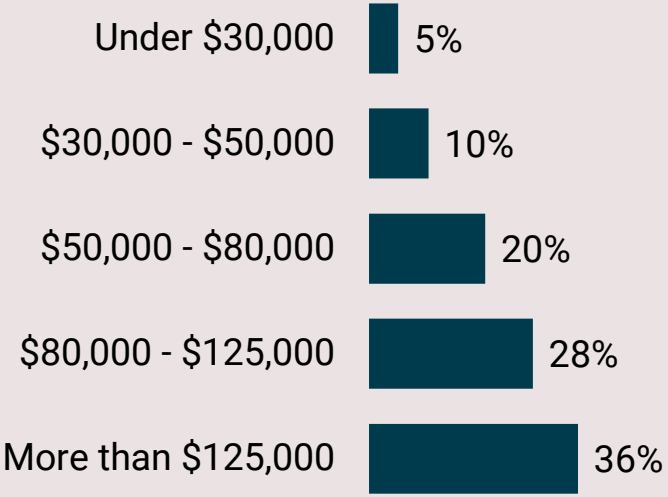
2021 Census: 52% female/48% male

Age



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

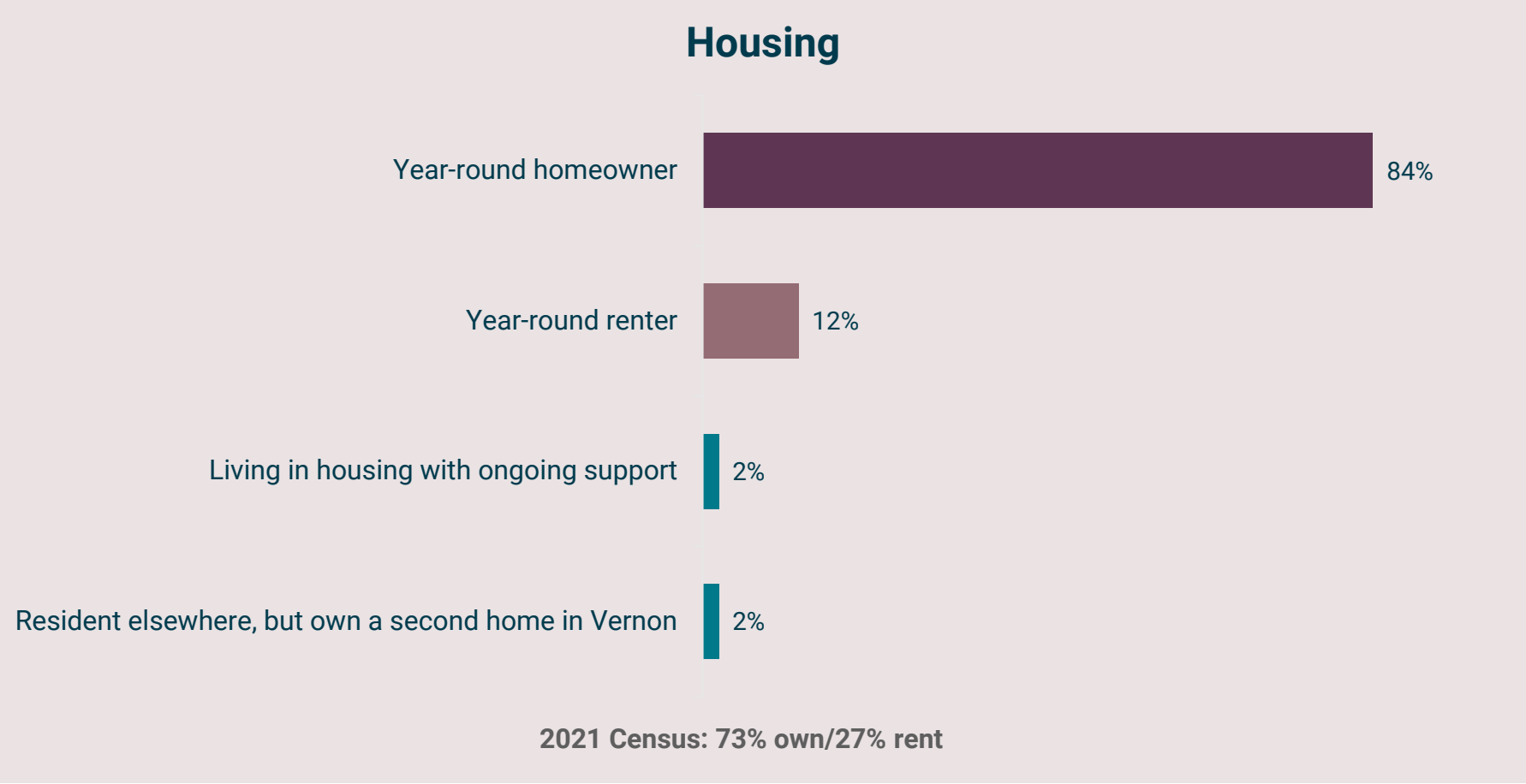
Household Income



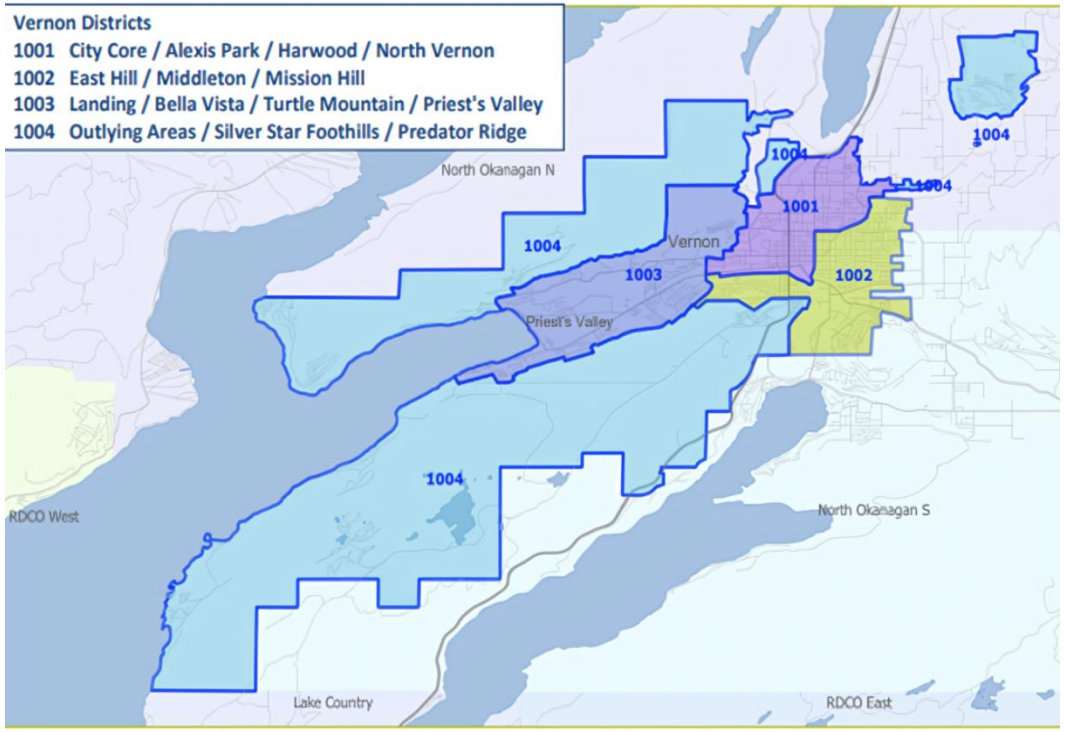
2021 Census:
<$30K: 9%
$30-50K: 12%
$50-80K: 16%
$80-125K: 45%
$125K+: 19%

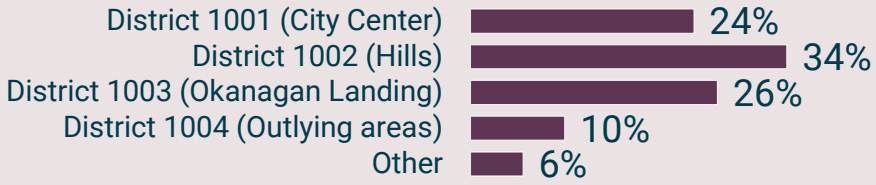
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Who Responded: Housing

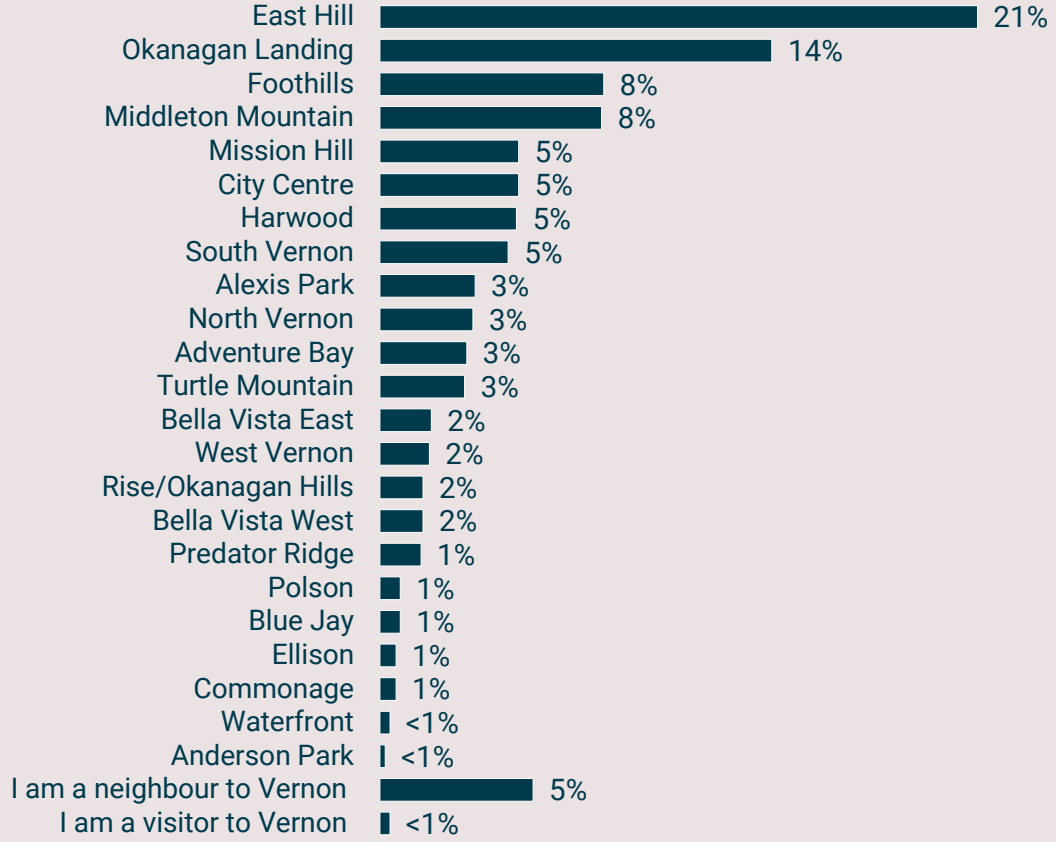


Who Responded: Area





Neighbourhood





Survey Insights

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Living in Vernon – Now and in the Future

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About Living in Vernon

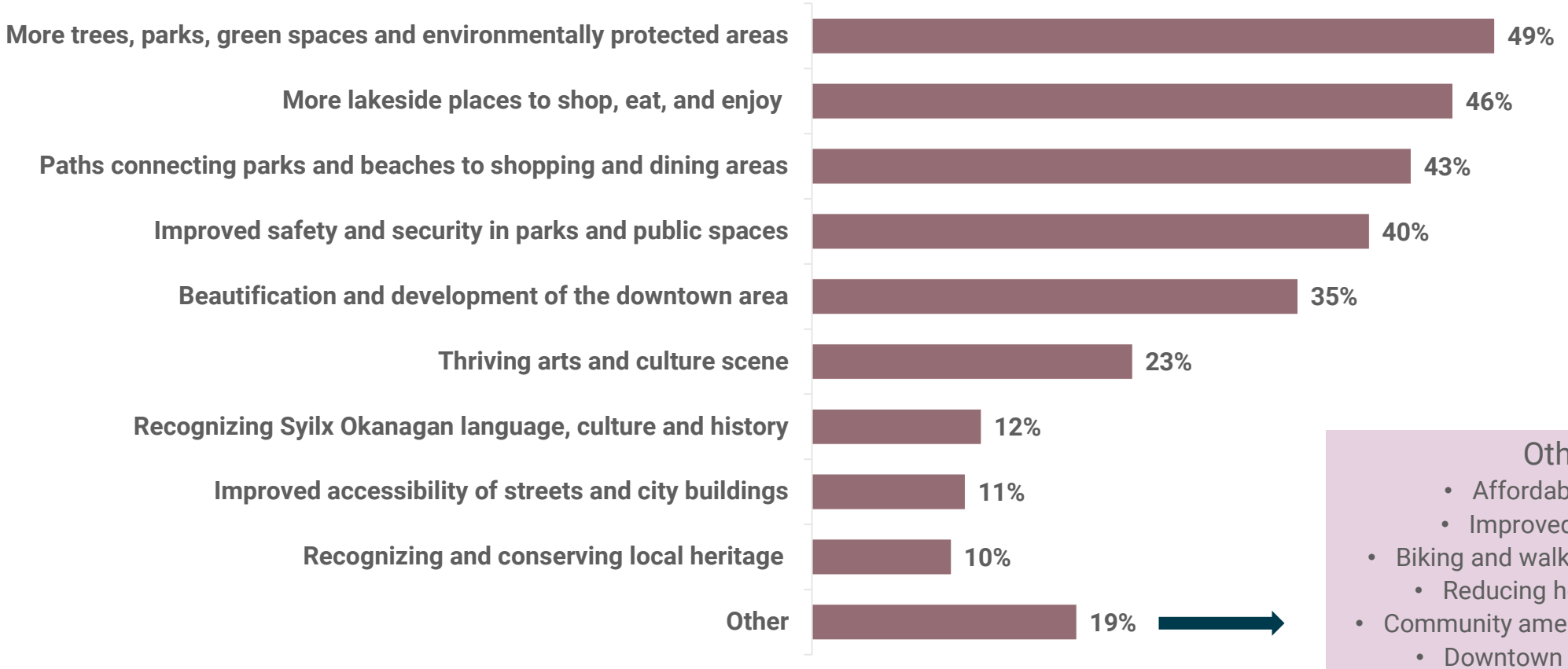
Overall, the comments paint a picture of Vernon as a beautiful, accessible, and community-oriented town that balances the charm of a small town with the convenience of city amenities. The natural surroundings, favourable climate, and strong sense of community are key factors contributing to the high quality of life in Vernon. Addressing concerns related to safety and maintenance could enhance the overall appeal of its neighbourhoods further.

Top Themes:

- Natural Beauty, Scenic views and opportunity for many Outdoor Activities
- Adequate Amenities and Accessibility (including walkability and bikeability)
- Serenity and Quietness
- Safety
- Sense of Community and Social Connections
- Affordability and Reasonable Cost of Living
- Recreational, Cultural, and Family-Friendly Opportunities
- Favourable Climate and Weather

Community Improvements

What **community improvements** would you most like to see in Vernon over the next 20 years? Please select your **top three**.

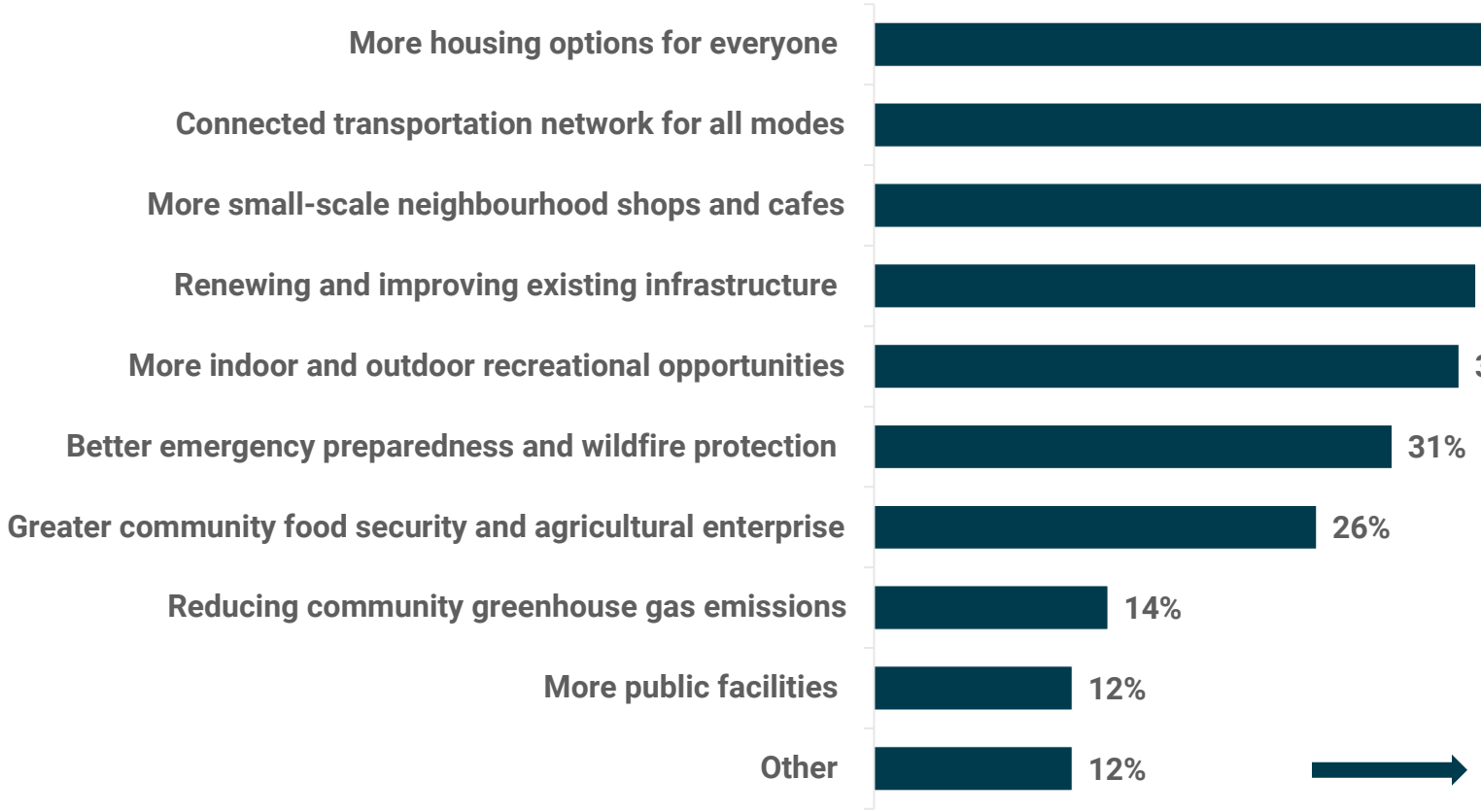


Other:

- Affordable housing
- Improved roadways
- Biking and walking infrastructure
- Reducing homelessness
- Community amenities and services
- Downtown development

Public Investments

What other **public investments** would you most like to see in Vernon over the next 20 years? Please select your **top three**.



Other:

- Downtown safety and cleanliness
- Highway bypass
- Business and industry attraction
- Green spaces and agricultural preservation
- Mental health and medical facilities
- Cultural centers and gathering spaces
- Enhanced public transit
- Better governance

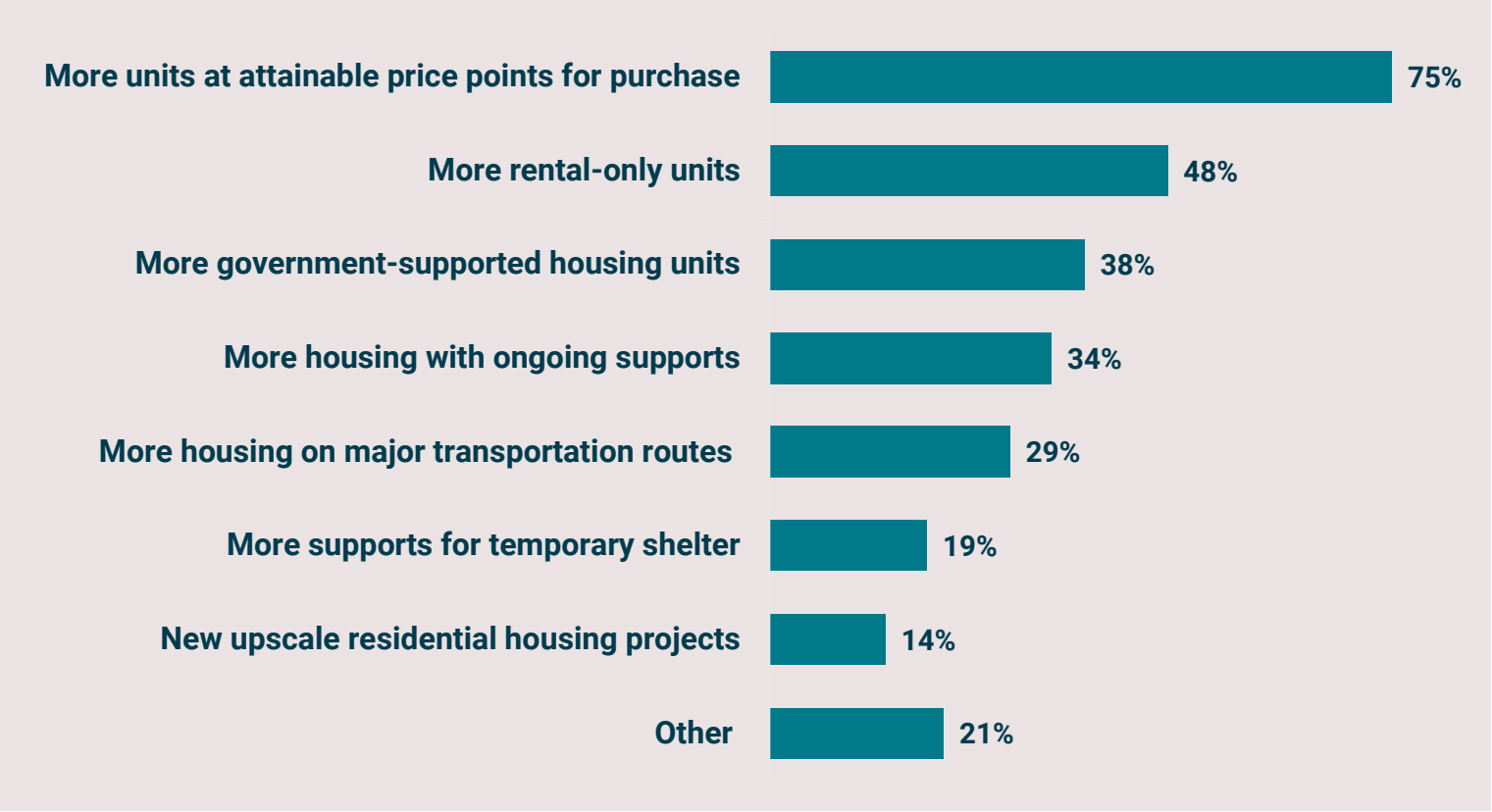


Housing

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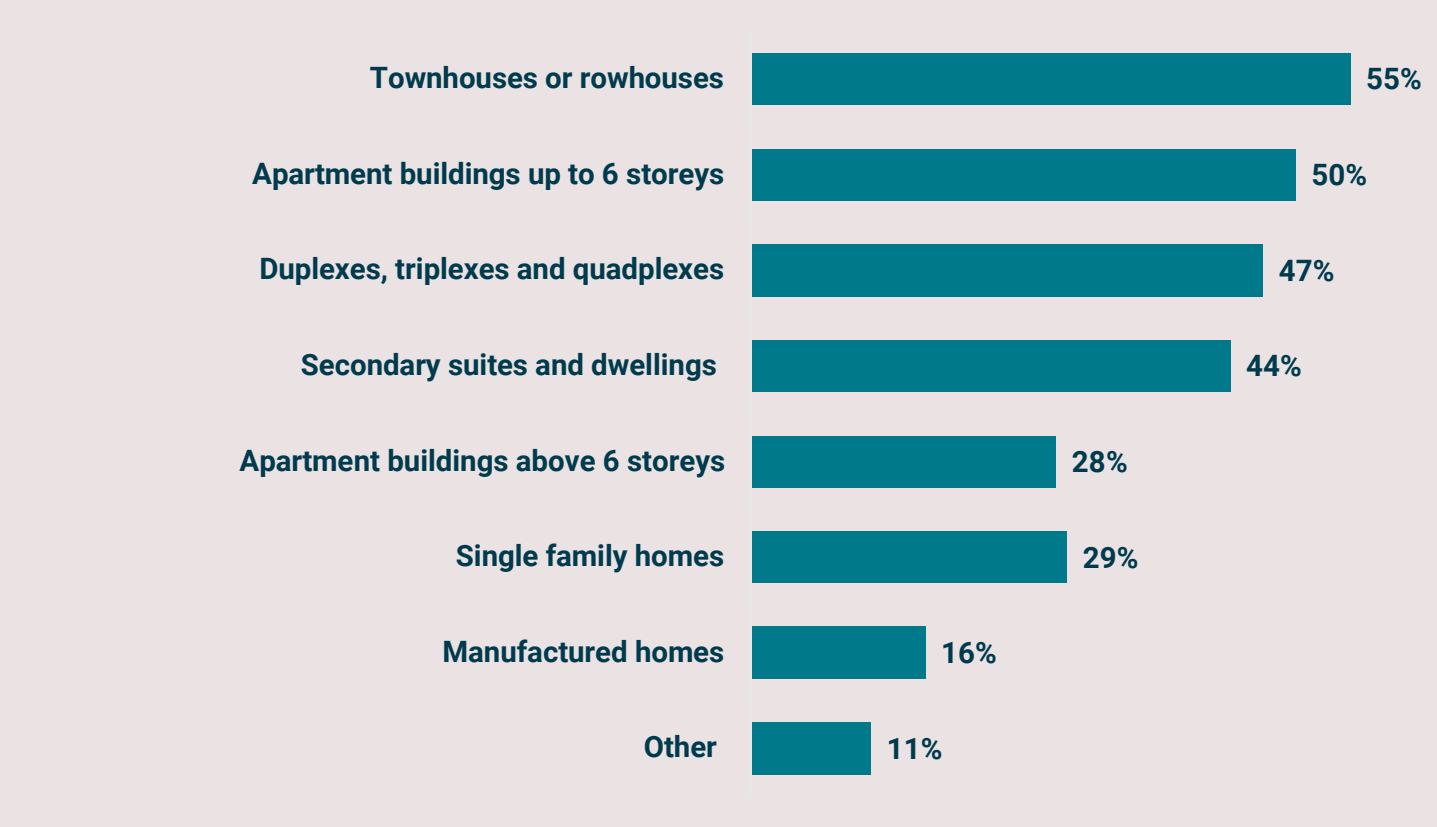
Meeting Housing Needs

How can we ensure there is **housing that meets the needs of everyone**?
Please select your **top three**.



Preferred Housing Forms

What types of **housing forms** would you like to see more of in Vernon to meet the urgent need for more housing? Please select your **top three**.



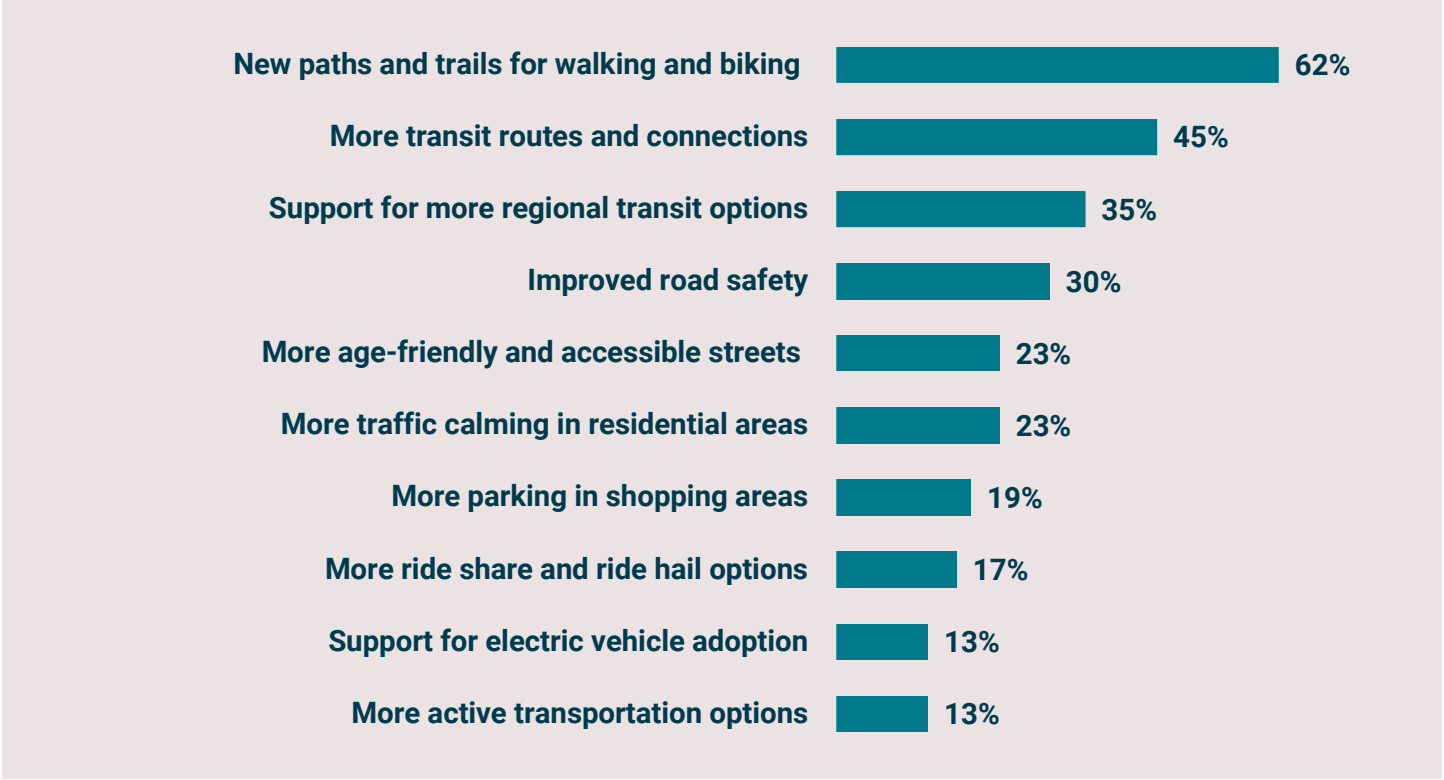


Transportation and Safety

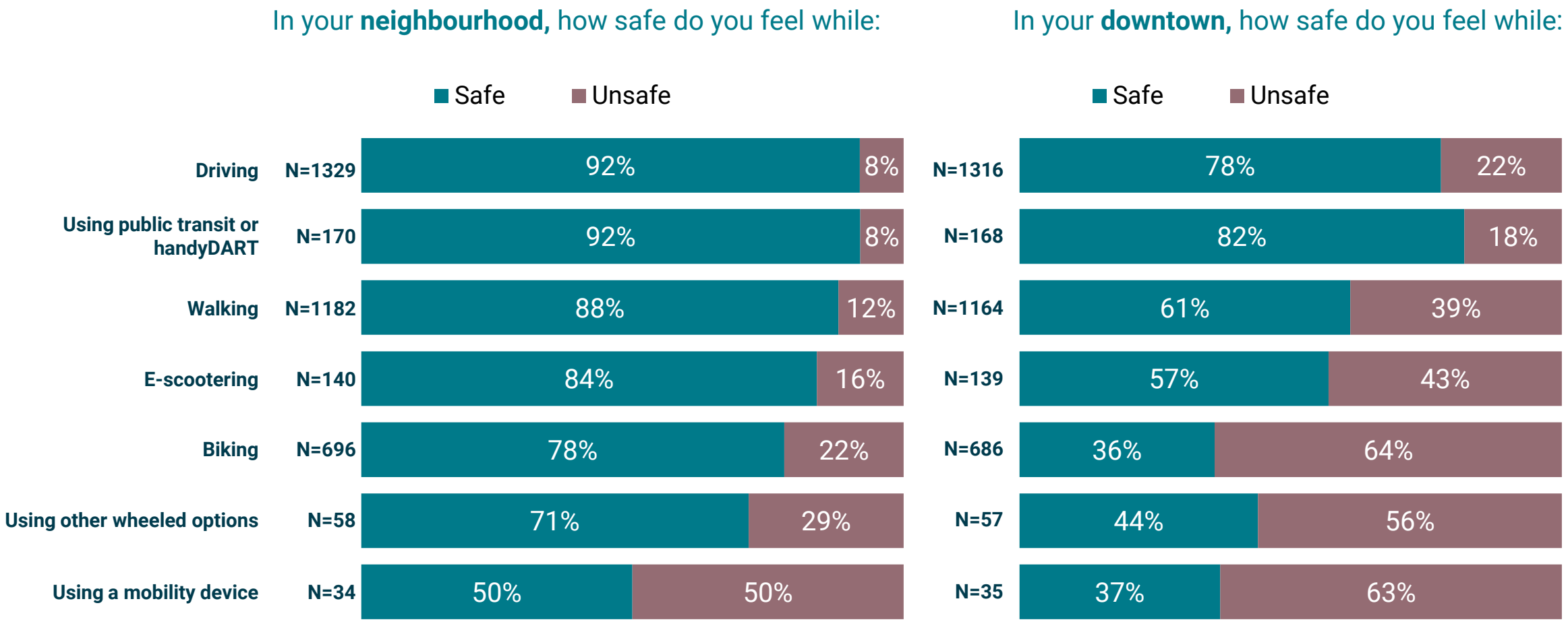
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Meeting Transportation Needs

How do you think the City can best meet its goal to **build a safe and accessible transportation network** that offers many ways to move around?
Please select your **top three.**



Feeling of Safety



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Vernon's Future: The Big Picture

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Making Vernon *Even Better*

Final comments reflect where respondents would like to see the City focus its efforts to make Vernon an even better place to live, work and play over the next 20 years. These themes collectively reflect the diverse perspectives and priorities of survey respondents, highlighting their concerns and suggestions for enhancing the quality of life and sustainability of their community. They emphasize a need for balanced growth, improved infrastructure, affordable living, enhanced safety, and cultural enrichment.

Top Themes (in order of number of mentions):

1. Housing and Affordability
2. Infrastructure and Maintenance
3. Transportation
4. Community Safety and Environment
5. Economic Development and Employment
6. Recreational and Cultural Amenities
7. Environmental Sustainability
8. Quality of Life and Accessibility
9. Urban Planning and Development
10. Social Issues and Inclusion
11. Retail and Entertainment
12. Government and Civic Engagement

Making Vernon *Even Better*

The following is a summary of the main themes from these final comments (in order of number of mentions):

Theme	Concerns	Suggestions
Housing and Affordability	Respondents expressed significant concerns about the housing crisis, with many mentioning the lack of affordable housing options. There is frustration over restrictive rental conditions and the difficulty in finding suitable housing within budget constraints.	Calls for more subsidized housing programs, support for homeless shelters, and updates to bylaws to accommodate the current housing challenges. There is a desire for more options that allow families and individuals to own homes rather than rent.
Infrastructure and Maintenance	Many respondents emphasized the need to prioritize infrastructure maintenance over new projects that require ongoing upkeep. There were frequent complaints about the condition of streets, with a specific focus on fixing potholes and improving road safety.	Improve road maintenance schedules, allocate funds for street repairs, and rethink the allocation of resources to balance new projects with maintaining existing infrastructure.
Transportation	Traffic congestion, especially on main roads like 32nd Street, was a common complaint. Respondents highlighted issues with the current transit system, including bus stops that disrupt traffic flow and inadequate connections between routes.	Rerouting highways to alleviate traffic, improving accessibility with more walking paths and bike lanes, and enhancing the efficiency and reliability of the transit system with better scheduling and route planning.
Community Safety and Environment	Safety concerns related to drug use in public spaces, particularly parks, were prevalent. Respondents expressed a desire for cleaner and safer public areas, free from drug paraphernalia and activities that pose risks to families and children.	Increase police presence and patrols, implement policies to address drug-related issues, and improve park maintenance to ensure they remain safe and welcoming environments for all residents.
Economic Development and Employment	There is a desire for economic growth that attracts diverse industries and provides more stable, well-paying jobs. Respondents expressed concerns about over-reliance on hospitality and seasonal work, which do not sustain families adequately.	Encourage tech and other industries to set up in Vernon, support local businesses over large corporations, and create initiatives to stimulate job creation for young people and families.

Making Vernon *Even Better*

The following is a summary of the main themes from these final comments (in order of number of mentions):

Theme	Concerns	Suggestions
Recreational and Cultural Amenities	Respondents value recreational spaces and cultural amenities but desire more options and accessibility. There were requests for expanded parks, community centers, and programs that cater to a diverse range of interests and age groups.	Develop more parks and recreational facilities, support local arts and cultural events, and provide affordable access to recreational activities for families and individuals of all ages.
Environmental Sustainability	Preservation of green spaces and addressing environmental issues such as pollution in lakes were key concerns. Respondents highlighted the importance of sustainable development practices and protecting natural resources.	Implement energy-efficient building guidelines, promote renewable energy initiatives, and invest in projects that enhance environmental sustainability, including cleaning up local waterways and improving waste management.
Quality of Life and Accessibility	Accessibility for seniors and disabled individuals was a recurring theme. Respondents emphasized the need for infrastructure improvements that enhance mobility and make public spaces more inclusive for everyone.	Improve accessibility features in public areas, provide more affordable housing options that meet accessibility needs, and create free community spaces that are accessible to all residents.
Urban Planning and Development	There were mixed opinions on urban development, with some advocating for controlled growth to maintain a small-town feel, while others supported densification and mixed-use zoning to accommodate population growth.	Develop a balanced approach to urban planning that preserves community character while accommodating growth, update zoning laws to encourage mixed-income housing, and ensure infrastructure keeps pace with development.
Social Issues and Inclusion	Respondents expressed a desire for a more inclusive community that supports multiculturalism and provides safety and support for minorities. There were concerns about social issues such as homelessness and mental health.	Implement initiatives to support multicultural communities, provide resources for homeless shelters and mental health services, and promote social inclusion through community programs and outreach.



Workshop Findings

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Official Community Plan

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Theme 1: Housing and Neighbourhood Development



"Affordable housing, maybe more rental properties, especially for newcomers."

"Housing options for working age group, older adults living at home or cared for at home."

Theme 1: Housing and Neighbourhood Development

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Affordability	The need for more inclusive and distributed affordable housing throughout the city targeting seniors, working-age, youth, newcomers and low-income individuals.	• Maintaining a 5% vacancy rate, increasing housing supply, and offering more rental and ownership options. • Policies such as incentives for long-term rentals, adjustments to subsidies, and the creation of a centralized housing hub.
Housing Diversity	Diverse housing options that cater to the needs of different demographics, from youth, to families, to seniors.	• Inclusion of RV parks, single-family homes, low-rise buildings, and apartment-style condos to ensure a broad range of choices. • Fill “the missing middle.” • need for co-ops, social housing, and non-market housing to support affordability and community living
Housing Regulations and Policy	Regulatory and policy changes to improve affordability, inclusivity and accessibility of different housing options	• Reducing strata rules to create more flexible living environments. • Strengthening landlord-tenant relationships through education and adopting a la carte rental pricing; implement rent caps on units rather than individuals. • Adopt policies to reduce homelessness.

Theme 2: Urban Planning and Infrastructure



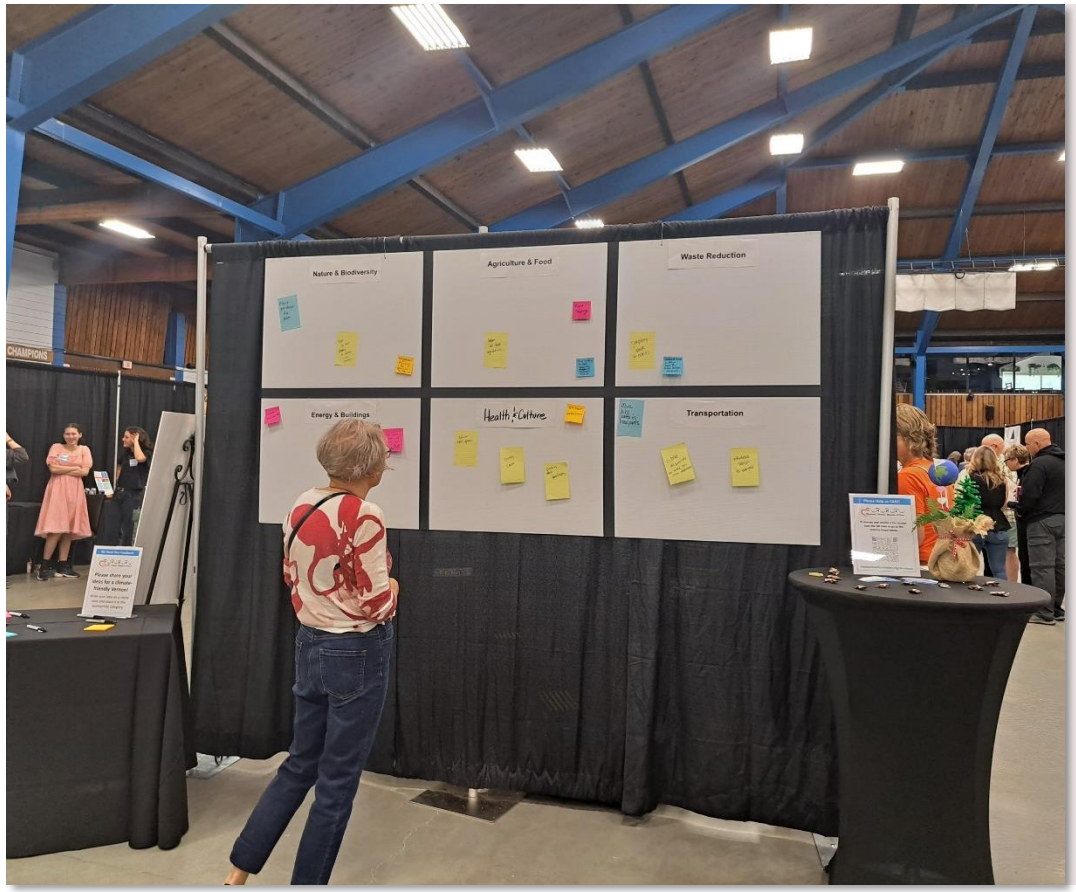
"Having pockets of high-density areas placed around town. This will space our living areas while integrating the community without congesting traffic."

"Reduce bureaucracy - better integration between municipalities - streamline processes - governments working together - permit approval streamlined - developers supported - more effort to attract developers."

Theme 2: Urban Planning and Infrastructure

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Community Planning	"Smart" planning, including cohesion within Vernon and with its surrounding communities, transit-oriented development, consideration for green spaces, building up where appropriate rather than out.	• Updating design guidelines. • Ensuring housing is conveniently located near parks, recreation, shopping, and transit. • Increased density, building higher. • Urban tree canopy expansion. • Infrastructure improvements to support population growth.
Partnerships	Vernon to enter into more public-private partnerships in order to ensure a cohesive development plan that meets the needs of all community members.	• Partner with non-profits and private developers to ensure a mix of affordable units and streamline the development process. • Increasing density of housing and strategic purchasing of properties to aid in social housing and development. • Focus on designing mixed-use developments to integrate residential, commercial and recreational spaces.
Policies, Processes and Regulations	Create a more efficient, supportive, and adaptive regulatory environment to encourage sustainable and inclusive development.	• Improving zoning regulations, permitting and other regulations to streamline the process, facilitate development and promote flexibility. • Waiving development costs, lowering fees, and simplifying approval processes to make property purchase and building easier.
Community Engagement	Fostering connected and informed communities.	• Reducing NIMBYism by actively listening to residents and involving those most at risk/impacted in decision-making processes. • Focus on facilitating neighbourly interactions through common areas and community hubs.

Theme 3: Economic Development



"More support for small businesses"

"Don't be afraid to grow: stop the small-town mentality, you can be warm yet accommodating."

Theme 3: Economic Development

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Tourism	Encourage tourism and promote Vernon as a tourist destination.	• Increasing the city's visibility and attractiveness to tourists by promoting Vernon extensively and engaging in community conversations about raising its profile. • More hotels and improved tourism infrastructure, (a local airport and YLW transfers), shopping centers, and enhanced recreational facilities. • Supporting tourism through arts and culture, seasonal dispersion of tourists, and waterfront accommodations
Employment and Supports for Businesses	Enhanced employment and (small) business supports.	• Increasing employment services, promoting industrialization, and creating more job opportunities in retail, childcare, and indoor activities. • Supporting local businesses with trade centers, exhibitions, grants, and promotions • Simplifying business development processes and improving the city's reputation as a business-friendly location.
Focus on Local Economic Growth	Fostering community and economic growth through a variety of strategies, focusing on overcoming the “small-town mentality,” embracing growth, and create vibrant neighbourhoods with accessible shops and services.	• Expanding commercial waterfront amenities. • Encouraging the establishment of big brands and local enterprises such as bakeries, restaurants, and shops. • Encourage more diverse businesses and entrepreneurial spaces, along with expanding patio spaces and improving shopping centers to enhance the local economy.

Theme 4: Community, Social Services and Wellbeing



"Have a community crisis center where people can get what they need + operated by the city which includes showers."

"Create social safety nets for people in recovery or trying to make a better life."

Theme 4: Community, Social Services and Wellbeing

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Community Health	A focus on a comprehensive approach to addressing health and social challenges.	• Harm reduction initiatives, such as street clinics, safe consumption sites, and more detox beds and transitional housing. • Creating sober safe homes, mental health facilities, and a community crisis center. • Incentives for health care professionals to work in Vernon
Vulnerable Residents	Initiatives and strategies to support vulnerable groups and provide comprehensive support across various demographics.	• Increased investment in youth programs • Expanded childcare support • Specialized care for seniors, including more facilities and services to foster social connections. • Integrating health services with housing
Community Engagement and Education	Increased community engagement and education in order to enhance social services and community wellbeing.	• Creating opportunities for the community to enhance knowledge about available services. • City to facilitate better communication and collaboration among community organizations, schools, and local authorities.
Safety, Wellbeing and Food Security	Creating a safe and inclusive environment for all residents.	• Social services in every zone • Ensuring nighttime safety • Providing safe spaces with basic amenities like water, washrooms, and heat, and having mobile operation sites. • Ensuring access to healthy, locally sourced food
Regulations	Regulation and policy changes to support social services and wellbeing for all residents.	• Increased workplace regulation on drug and medication use. • Implementing homelessness prevention programs. • Establishing common rent banks. • Ensuring good street and wheelchair access to all spaces.

Theme 5: Climate and Environment



"(Have a) ***Comprehensive Environment Plan - protection of natural areas - wildlife corridors - salmon preservation - inclusion of First Nations principals in partnership.***

"Encourage smaller passive solar, buildings, houses for energy efficiency"

Theme 5: Climate and Environment (1 of 2)

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Natural Resources	A focus on the importance of preserving and enhancing natural spaces to maintain biodiversity and ecological health in Vernon, while achieving a balance between urban development and nature conservation to ensure resilience and livability.	• A comprehensive environmental plans that incorporate wildlife corridors, wetland protection, and the inclusion of Indigenous principles. • Avoiding urban sprawl, protecting natural corridors, and encouraging native plant use while actively managing invasive species.
Climate Resilience	Integrating climate resilience into all city planning with a focus on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing green infrastructure.	• Promoting zero-carbon new builds with EV plugs and heat pumps, encouraging the use of passive solar energy, fast-tracking permits for green initiatives, creating shading for parking spaces with solar panels. • Incorporating drought-tolerant perennials in public gardens to support pollinators. • Cooling stations.
Urban Green Spaces	Increased and interconnected green spaces within urban cores, integrating natural areas into city planning.	• Enhancing streetscapes to be clean and accessible. • Promoting densification while maintaining green spaces, incorporating designs with more trees and green roofs. • Preserving and enhancing the urban tree canopy, banning artificial landscaping, and encouraging biodiversity.

Theme 5: Climate and Environment (2 of 2)

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Sustainable Agriculture	Enhancing agricultural investment and protection within the city	• Increasing investment in farming and agriculture, such as establishing a flour mill and attracting more investors through government subsidies. • Protecting agricultural spaces, promoting organic farming, and preserving hobby farms within city limits. • Becoming a hub for growing, processing, and distributing food, supported by strategies like winter farmers markets.
Emergency Preparedness and Safety	Emphasis on emergency preparedness and safety, particularly focusing on wildfires.	• Enhancing community education on safe evacuation procedures • Considering lakes for evacuation routes and ensuring multiple access roads in developments to prevent bottlenecks during emergencies. • Update landscaping bylaws to ban fire-hazardous plants • Promote water conservation. • The community needs to be fire-smart, with strategies to mitigate risks, protect daily life from smoke and fires, and have plans for businesses during wildfire season. • Address the need for adequate accommodation during evacuations.

Theme 6: Parks, Recreation and Trails



"Create opportunity for creators / artist to put on events / art collectives to help them grow ."

"Winter is long and cold. If there is more indoor sports complex, that would be great for the kids and family to spend some quality and fun time during the cold wintertime."

Theme 6: Parks, Recreation and Trails

Sub - Theme	What this entails	Example strategies
Recreation and events	A shift from traditional systems to holistic and varying recreational activities and events.	• Building an active nightlife. • Diverse and spread-out activities, year-round activity plans. • Increased options for young adults. • Enhanced sports programs in schools, more drop-in activities for youth, • Revitalizing festivals, supporting cultural activities, and organizing block parties to foster community engagement.
Parks, Facilities and Recreational Infrastructure	Enhancing the cleanliness, safety, and accessibility of community spaces.	• Increasing garbage facilities and maintenance in parks/facilities • Creating more indoor sports complexes and play areas for winter, and providing safe, free places for youth. • More shaded playgrounds, community gardens, and better dog-friendly areas. • Improving existing parks like Justice Park and Polson Park.
Accessibility and Inclusivity	Enhancing accessibility and inclusivity across various aspects of community life, emphasizing the need for multi-generational, income-diverse, age-inclusive, and ability-friendly designs.	• Smaller, accessible parks with outdoor fitness elements. • Better accessibility for paddlers on Okanagan Lake. • Lower user fees and streamlined processes for event bookings and program implementation. • A recreation plan that aligns with population needs and includes accessible trails and amenities in subdivision plans was stressed.



Transportation Plan

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Transportation Plan



"Prioritize transit to outer Vernon and to draw people to lakes / tourist destinations / downtown.

"Highway beautification / entrance clean up - changing Vernon's image."

"Sidewalks are icy in the winter - How do we keep moving all year?

"E-scooters need their own lane"

Transportation Plan: Main Themes (1 of 2)

Theme	Key sub-areas
Public Transit and Personal Vehicle Alternatives	• **Transit system improvements:** more bus routes, increased frequency, and extended hours to better serve work commute times and employment areas. Safer transportation options, especially after dark, and more bus schedules and stops. • **Enhancing transit connectivity,** emphasizing the expansion of public transit to various key areas. • **Promoting and enhancing alternative transportation options,** increasing public awareness, and reducing reliance on cars. • **Enhancing accessibility and affordability of transportation options**: offering taxi vouchers and bus tickets, providing cheaper, subsidized, or free transit passes, and implementing free bus services one day a week, especially for youth.
Roads	• **Significant improvements to road infrastructure** to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and better accommodate various modes of transportation. Address lack of appropriately zoned lanes, insufficient left-hand turns (particularly downtown) and the absence of multi-use paths. • **Beautification and better signage on highways** to improve traffic flow and Vernon's image, as well as the need for better access to Kelowna airport.

Transportation Plan: Main Themes (2 of 2)

Theme	Key sub-areas
Walking and Bike Trails	• **Enhance walkability,** emphasizing the need for year-round, all-season accessibility, including improved snow clearing in winter; addressing the lack of sidewalks, ensuring better connectivity of pathways, and reducing the emphasis on parking in favour of car co-ops and shared mobility options. • **Enhanced connectivity and safety for trails and paths** as well as the need for better integration of multi-use paths (MUPs) and bike paths within the town. • **Biking**: better design and dedicated bike paths to create a more bikeable community, including creating separated bike paths lined with trees, establishing a bike share program, and fostering a community where biking is a safe and integral mode of transportation.
(e)Scooters And Mobility Devices	• **Improving their use and integration** into urban mobility. • **Increasing affordability** for the scooter program. • **Address safety concerns** regarding e-scooter use.
Parking	• **Increased and accessible parking downtown**, ample parking for multi-unit buildings and hospitals. • **Balance the demand for parking with sustainability** by avoiding excessive gravel parking and implementing a no-parking policy on both sides of certain streets. • **City to address parking complaints**



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Questions? Comments?