

Infill Options

Engagement Summary Report | Fall 2023



Contents

Infill Options Engagement Summary 1

Education Campaign 1

Engagement strategy 2

What we heard – survey results 2

Social media 8

Conclusion 8

Outreach..... 9

Engagement feedback 10

About our respondents 12



Infill Options Engagement Summary

The Infill Options project is a strategic initiative to improve housing diversity and attainability in established Core Area neighbourhoods by expanding infill housing, consistent with the direction laid out in the 2040 Official Community Plan (OCP) and the provincial government's housing strategy.

As part of the project, the City conducted a public engagement process to gather input from residents, about their priorities for introducing infill housing policies within the Core Area. The engagement process included an education campaign and was followed by an online survey.

This report summarizes the key findings and themes from the public engagement process. The report also outlines the next steps for the project.

Education Campaign

Despite the fact that residents broadly supported the OCP's growth strategy and a shift away from single-detached development, some find it challenging to support infill as a tangible outcome of the strategy. Therefore, efforts undertaken prior to engagement were anchored in educating the public about how the City plans to grow – and why. Ad imagery centred around different scenarios in which space needed to be opened up or shared in order to accommodate more people. Audiences could then draw parallels between the images they were seeing and the need for the City to manage space more effectively in order to create more homes for people.

The campaign took place on social media and other web channels, as well as through traditional, print-based media and ran for approximately one month.

Learnings from the campaign confirmed that affordability, housing typology and infrastructure-related concerns are common and suggest that public awareness of the City's role in housing is low. In addition, the relationship between the OCP, and Transportation Master Plan, and Infrastructure plans - as well as the City's jurisdictional limits when it comes to service areas like schools and hospitals - are not well understood. Concerns around sustainability were also heard, along with concerns that the City is allowing growth despite the fact that other systems (such as healthcare) are challenged. Ultimately, many of those who commented said that while they weren't opposed to growth, they were concerned the City is growing too quickly, and feel that corresponding levels of services/amenities are not following suit quickly enough.



The campaign sought to engage residents' curiosity and drive them to one simple platform to learn more about the benefits of increasing our supply of infill housing within Kelowna. This phase served as a stepping stone into engagement where the public was asked to provide input more specifically.

Engagement strategy

Engagement was focused on select questions, since expansion of infill is being mandated by the province and is already indicated within the 2040 Official Community Plan. Instead of asking residents if infill should be supported, questions were aimed at understanding how infill should be expanded and implemented. This builds on earlier engagement that took place as part of the 2040 OCP process.

The Infill Options survey consisted of three multiple-choice options, with opportunities for open-ended input. The survey sought to understand what residents want the City to prioritize in developing its recommendations for the expansion of infill across Core Area neighbourhoods.

Limitations

Results from open surveys such as those provided do not represent a statistically significant, random sample of all Kelowna citizens. Due to the opt-in and open nature of participation, results do not necessarily reflect the views of all Kelowna citizens. Advertising efforts spanned a number of channels, including news releases, social media, e-newsletters, and traditional media. Additionally, results may not be representative of groups experiencing the greatest housing need.

What we heard – survey results

576 survey submissions were received over the course of the engagement period spanning September 21 to October 15, 2023.

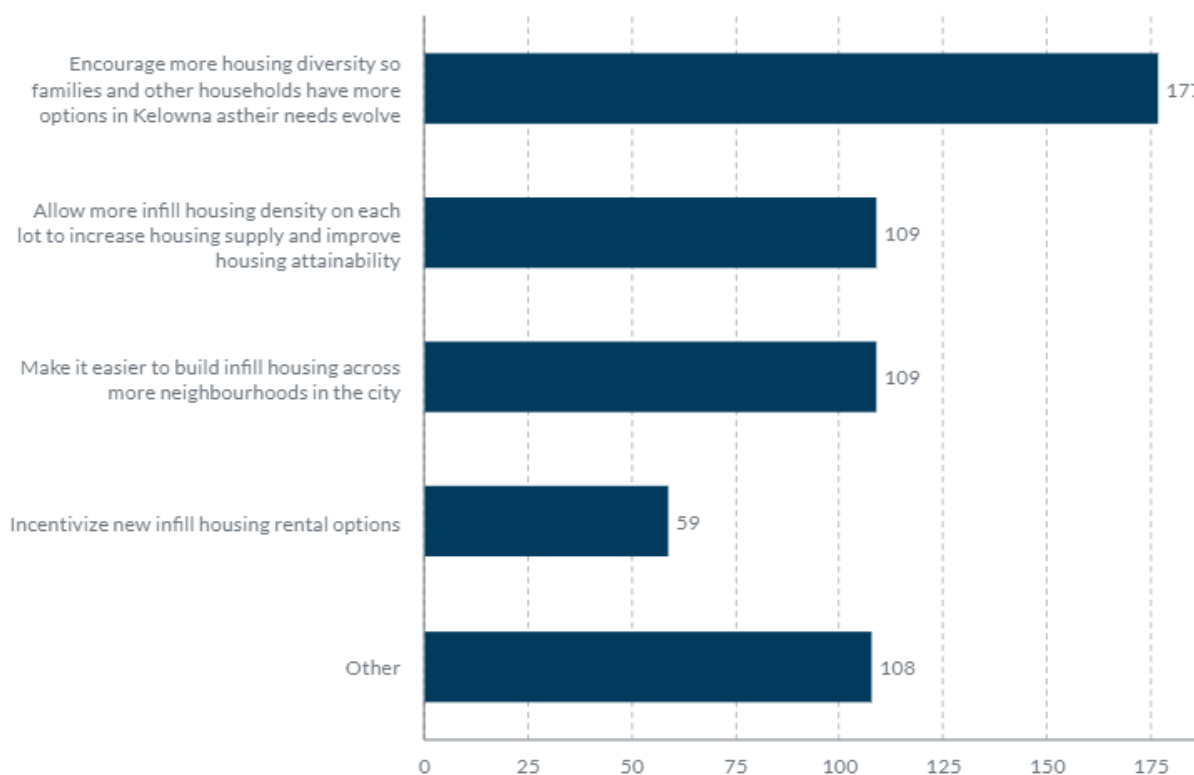
Question 1

In keeping with the feedback heard during earlier engagement processes, including Imagine Kelowna and the 2040 Official Community Plan, residents continue to value diverse housing to support people of all ages, life stages and income levels.

When asked to prioritize various infill objectives, encouraging housing diversity was most important to respondents.



When it comes to infill housing, which of the following objectives is the most important to you? (Responses = 562)



“Other” comments indicated support for the following:

- **Trees & Green Space:** Several respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring that neighborhoods retain or increase the number of trees, green spaces, or parks. Others advocated for yards or other outdoor spaces surrounding properties.
- **Parking & Infrastructure:** Several respondents asked for more parking to be available to residents. Others advocated for additional transportation options or stated the need for additional infrastructure to support an increase in population density.
- **Affordability:** Several respondents emphasized the importance of creating affordable housing options.
- **Single Detached Homes:** Several respondents hoped that some single detached houses would still be permitted. Some of these respondents strongly preferred detached homes over infill housing, while others advocated for a balanced mix of the two.
- **Neighborhood Feel:** Others hoped to maintain the current look, feel, or character of neighborhoods, with some expressing concern about increased population density in neighborhoods.
- **Opposition:** Some respondents expressed explicit opposition to infill housing.

Encourage more publicly owned and co-op housing to aid with affordability - the infill strategy seems to disproportionately benefit lucky landowners by making their land much more valuable (and is likely to displace folks who have affordable rentals today) – Survey respondent

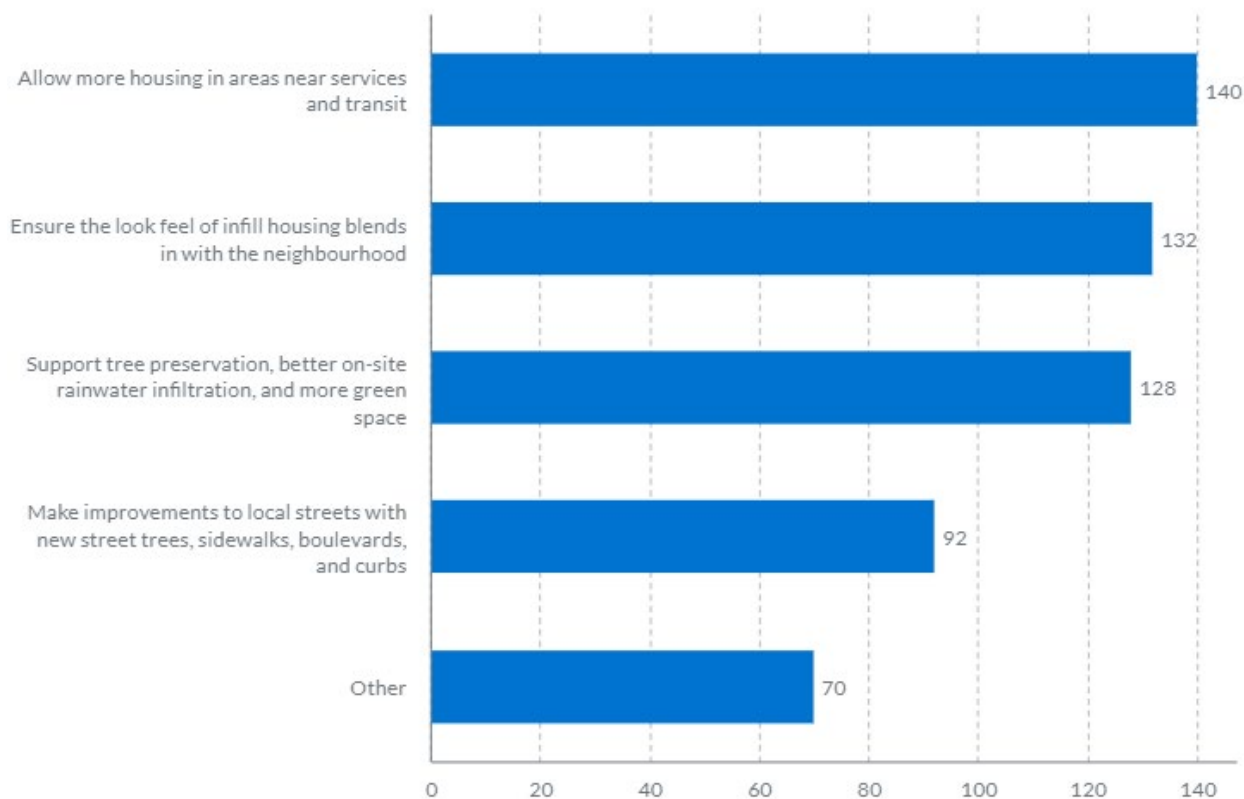
I agree with infill housing...to fill the needs for young families and lower cost housing but I believe in the age of climate change it is extremely important to also maintain and expand the tree canopy so that we don't end up with concrete deserts. – Survey respondent

Making sure that new infill projects size and design respect the existing neighborhoods, and do not negatively impact those living around them. – Survey respondent

Question 2

Next, participants were asked to select which aspect of infill would be important to prioritize in order for new development to complement surrounding neighbourhoods. While the results among the first three options were close, the top choice among respondents was “allow more housing in areas near services and transit.”

What feature below do you feel is most important for infill to successfully integrate into existing neighbourhoods? (Responses = 562)



“Other” priorities included:

- **Parking:** An emphasis on more available parking was the most common theme, with some advocating for additional off-street parking, specifically.
- **Trees & Green Spaces:** Several respondents reiterated requests for maintaining or adding more trees and green spaces.
- **Affordability:** Some stressed the importance of housing affordability.
- **All of the Above:** A handful of respondents believed all of the given choices were important.

Approve more townhouses/duplex/triplex homes rather than condos.... We need more options for families of 4+ people. The only people buying condos are investors who charge too much for rent. We do not need any more condos or low rise apartments. – Survey respondent

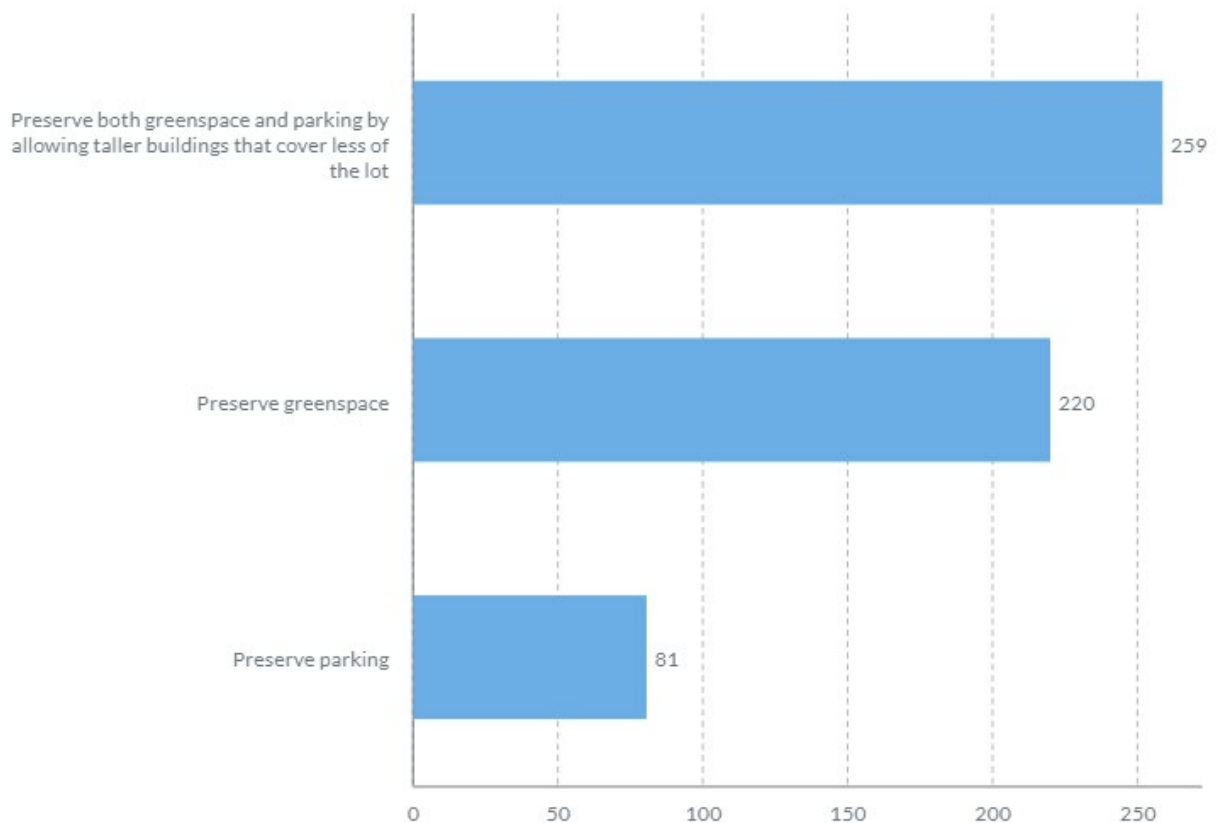
Making it less expensive and take less time to approve building permits for zoning changes from single family to multi family. I believe the biggest hurdle to increasing the number of homes available in Kelowna is the cost and time it takes to build a duplex, tri-plex, four-plex or townhomes. – Survey respondent

By improving transit, pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, street trees and allowing for at least 3 stories. – Survey respondent

Question 3

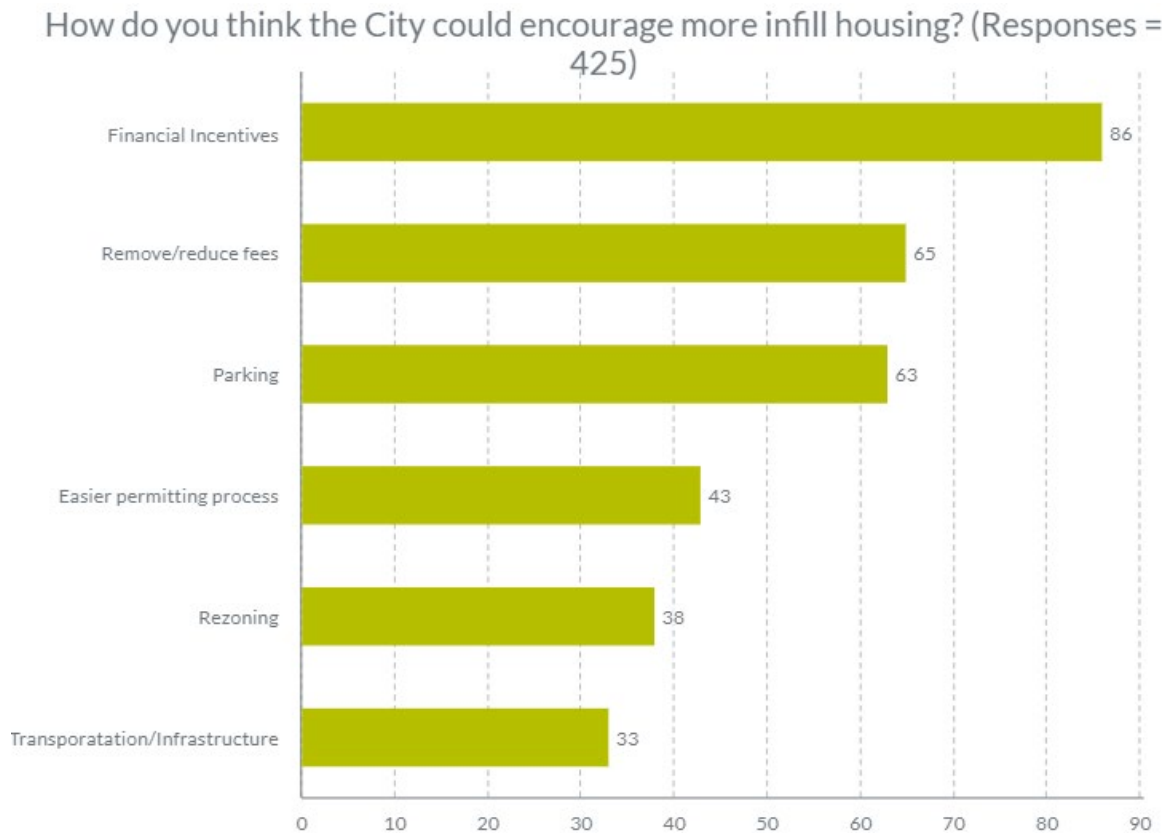
Next, respondents were invited to consider spatial constraints on typical core area lots. When asked if having to choose between parking and greenspace, or allowing taller buildings to preserve both, respondents preferred the latter option. This means respondents were willing to accept taller buildings in their neighbourhoods if it meant that both parking and greenspace could be accommodated alongside infill. Despite hearing concerns about parking throughout the survey, it was the lowest priority among respondents when it came to how space should be allocated on any given lot.

Which of these is most important? (Responses = 560)



Question 4

The next question was open-ended and asked respondents to share their perspectives on how the City could encourage more infill.



- **Financial Incentives:** The most common suggestion was to have the City provide financial incentives such as rebates, subsidies, or tax breaks, among others.
- **Remove/reduce Fees:** Similarly, many suggested removing or reducing DCCs or other fees throughout the development process.
- **Parking:** Parking was a major theme, as many respondents emphasized the need for sufficient parking in Core Area neighbourhoods. However, some advocated for fewer public parking spaces in favor of more robust public transportation options.
- **Easier Permitting Process:** Several respondents asked to make the development permitting process easier to navigate or more “streamlined.”
- **Rezoning:** Several respondents suggested the City change zoning laws to allow for infill housing to be more easily developed.
- **Transportation & Infrastructure:** Others suggested that the City prioritize improvement to public transportation and other infrastructure to accommodate a rising population, such as sidewalk and road improvements, bicycle infrastructure, and increased water and sewer capacity. Many respondents simply mentioned “infrastructure” without further specifications.

Question 5

Lastly, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments they wanted to share regarding infill. The following themes emerged:

- **Infrastructure:** The most common theme was respondents' emphasis on improving or expanding public infrastructure, such as public transportation, bike paths, roads, and alleviating traffic congestion. Affordability: Several emphasized the importance of affordable housing options.
- **Parking:** Parking continued to surface as a major theme, as many respondents advocated for increased parking. However, a handful of respondents advocated for eliminating parking minimums.
- **Trees & Green Spaces:** Several respondents advocated for the amount of trees, green spaces, and parks to be maintained or increased.
- **Short-term Rentals:** Some respondents expressed concern or frustration regarding short-term rentals, often advocating for stricter regulations.

Infrastructure is vital for this. If we densify, we will have the ridership to operate a more robust build transit system. This will also reduce the reliance on cars and help with space for parking. Finally, making more active corridors that are protected will ensure they are used as unproductive ones (ie. Glenmore, Ben Voulin) will deter it. – Survey respondent

*Ideally infill housing solutions will be done in ways that won't diminish the beauty of our city or exacerbate issues such as parking, traffic flow, or lack of accessible green space.
– Survey respondent*

*Figure out how to discourage speculators and investors from buying so much of what is built and turning our housing into their cash-cows. We have so many condos that are just expensive rentals rather than permanent homes.
– Survey respondent*

*While supporting infills is a good thing. I am worried about some of services/roads/parking/sewer/ not being able to handle 10x the population the neighbor[hood] was designed for...
– Survey respondent*

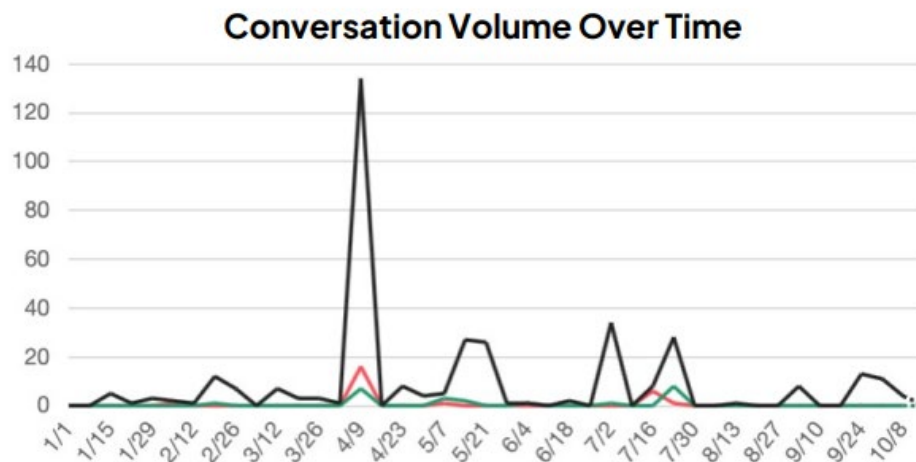
*Allow prefab micro homes to be installed in backyards
- Survey respondent*



Social media

An independent review of data collected from social media and news outlets showed that between January and October 2023, the online social media discourse about infill generated approximately interactions (interaction count consists of all social media engagements (posts, tweets, likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc)).

Nearly all of these conversations occurred on unofficial channels, predominantly driven by posts from local news organizations.



The largest spike in conversations occurred in April, prompted by a news article shared on Twitter with the caption, “Neighbourhood groups in Kelowna, B.C., say they're worried the B.C. government's plan to end single-family zoning will change the character of their neighbourhoods.” In response to this post, most comments expressed criticism of these neighborhood groups and voiced support for infill housing, asserting that changing a neighborhood’s character is worth the benefit of creating more homes. However, a few commenters echoed concerns about changing neighborhood character and decreased green spaces, specifically.

Conversations on other posts were limited, but several themes that arose among survey responses were also mentioned online—namely, residents’ desire for more parking spaces, expanded public transportation, and affordable housing options.



Conclusion

For survey respondents, several priorities emerged:

- Many hoped that infill housing would create more affordable housing opportunities and felt that this should be a priority.
- Respondents appear to appreciate the connection between transportation and land use, and supporting increased housing density in areas near transit.
- Respondents stressed the importance of maintaining or increasing tree canopies, green spaces, and parks.
- Many advocated for more available parking for residents while others suggested reducing parking spaces in favor of expanded public transportation.
- Respondents believed that infrastructure needs should also be considered as neighborhood density increases.
- Finally, many advocated for expanded or improved public transportation, bikes lanes, roads, and sidewalks, among others.

While infill is part of our city's growth strategy, it will be important to continue educational efforts in order to help residents better understand how infrastructure, transportation and land use plans work together in support of growth, as well as to share information about efforts underway to support non-market housing and affordability.

Outreach

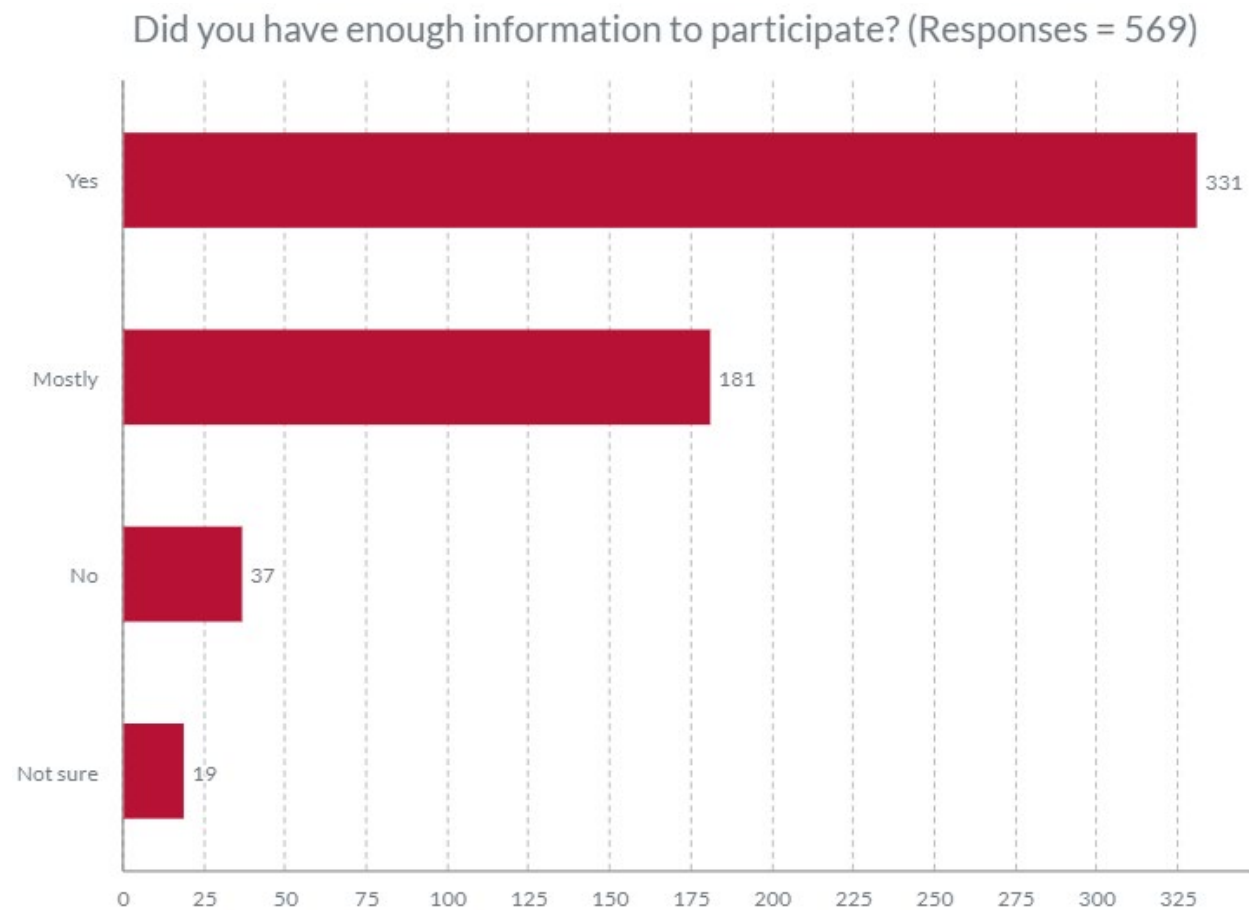
Engagement

Channel	Reach
Get Involved	3,140 views 2,274 visitors 584 contributions
Daily Courier ad x 2	6000 subscribers per issue
Castanet ads	946,064 impressions 172 links clicked
Social media ads	155,143 impressions 41,131 reach 813 links clicked
e-newsletter	4,693 delivered 2,439 unique opens 173 link clicks

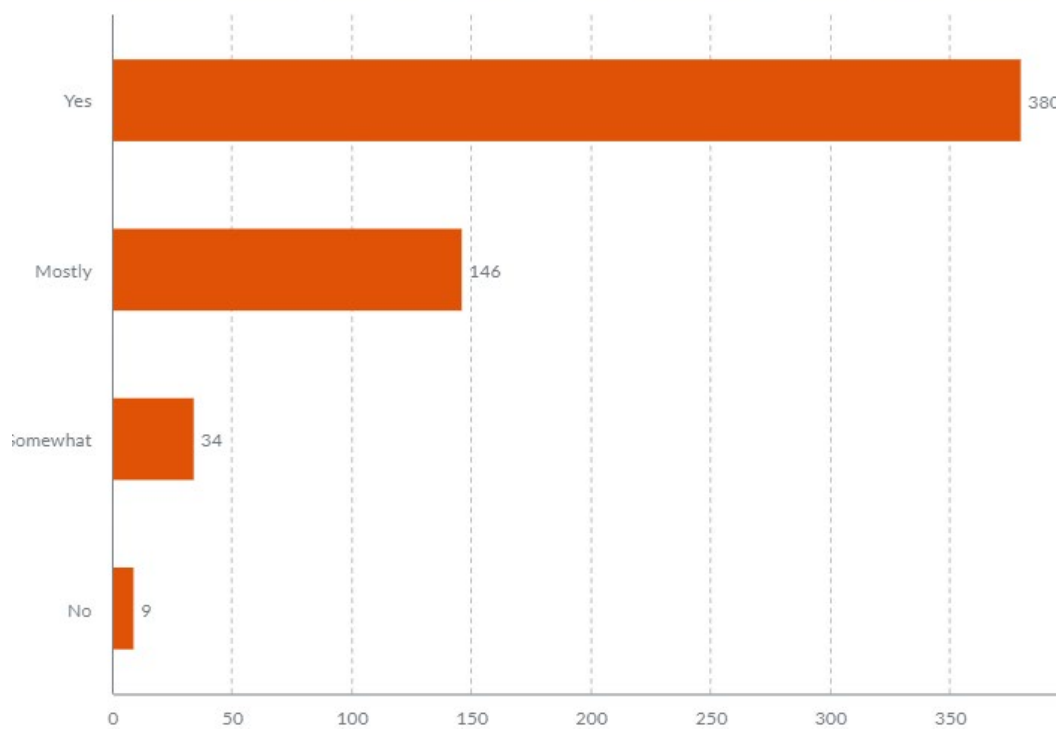


Engagement feedback

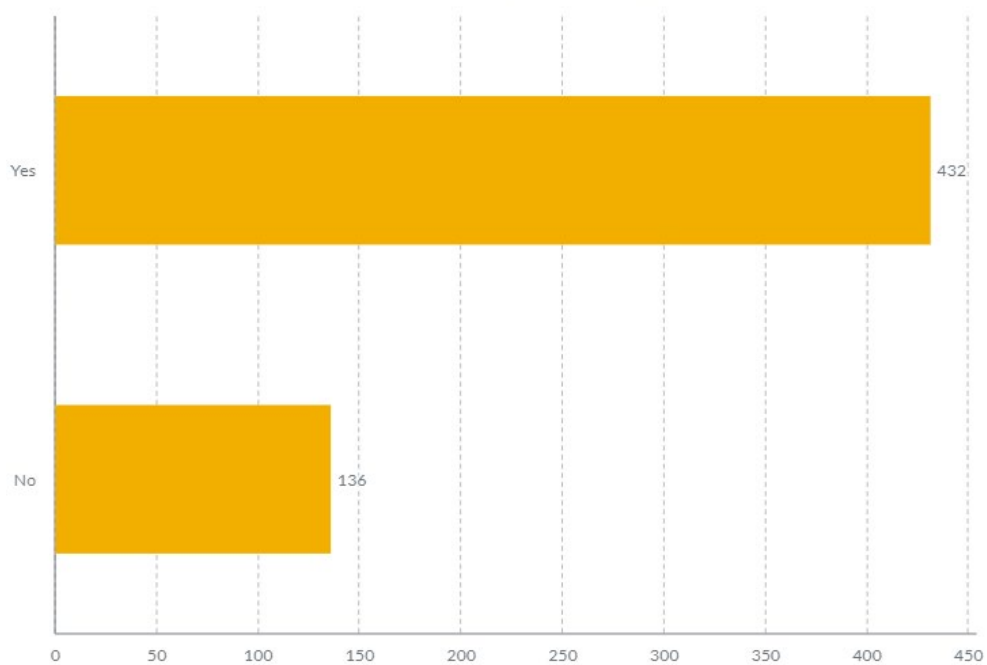
Public engagement met objectives to inform and consult with interested members of the public on Infill Options. Nearly all (90 per cent) in-person respondents indicated they had enough information to participate and that the information was easy to understand. Three-quarters of respondents said they learned something new and over 80 per cent said they had some understanding of how their input would be used.



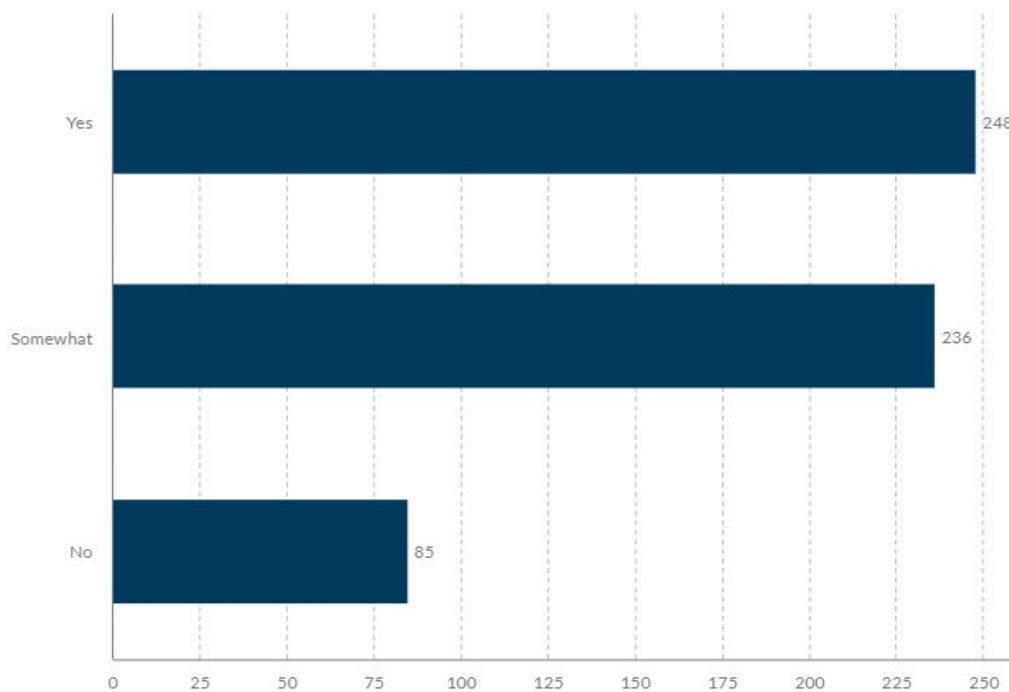
Was the information provided easy to understand? (Responses = 569)



Did you learn something new? (Responses = 568)

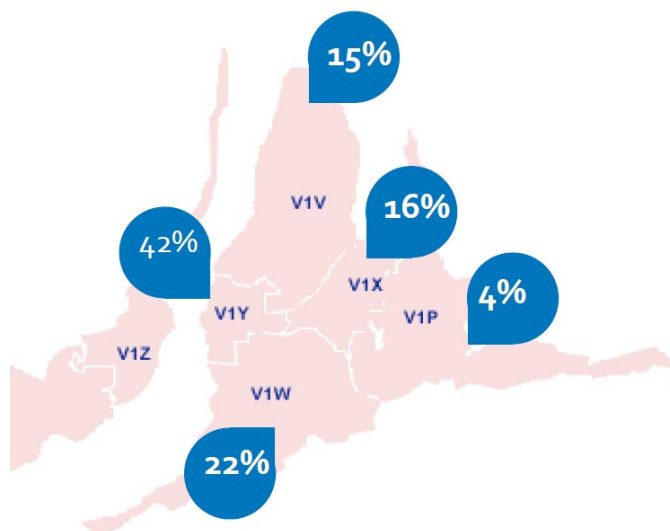


Do you understand how your input will be used? (Responses = 569)

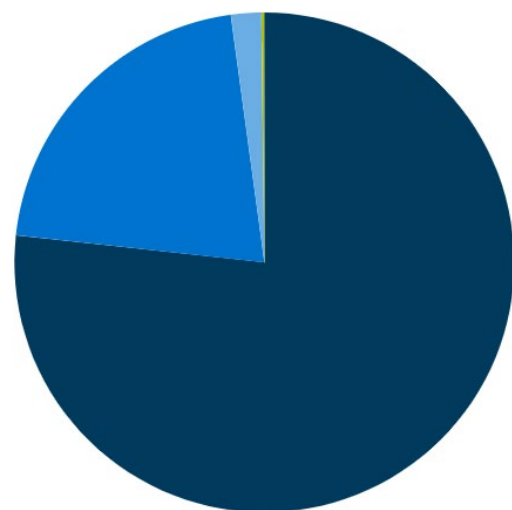


About our respondents

The largest proportion of respondents lived in the VIY postal code with the vast majority indicating they own their homes.



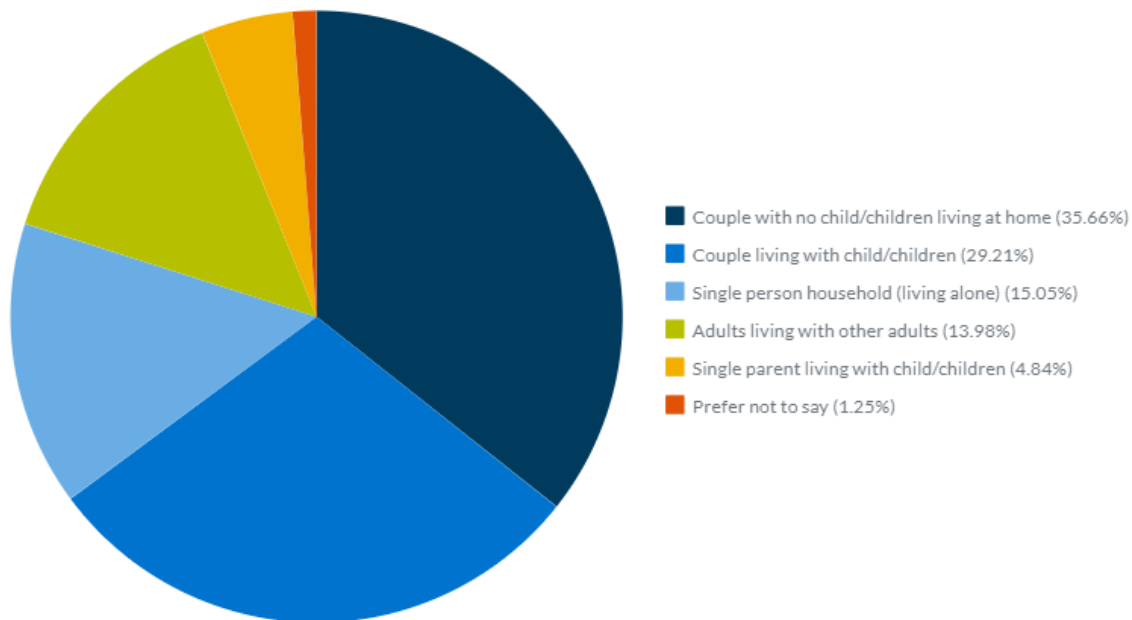
Own or rent



■ Own (76.74%) ■ Rent (21.11%) ■ Prefer not to say (1.97%) ■ Other (0.18%)

The largest proportion of respondents indicated they live with a spouse or partner without any children in the home. The majority of respondents live in a single-detached home, consistent with the percentage of detached homes found in Kelowna.

Household composition



Dwelling type

