



City of
Kelowna

Engagement Report - Phase 1 Official Community Plan & Transportation Master Plan

July 2018



Background

By 2040, Kelowna is expected to be home to 50,000 more people. To plan for this growth, four possible growth scenarios have been developed based on public input gathered during engagement for the community's strategic vision, Imagine Kelowna. The Official Community Plan (OCP) review involves significant public involvement to ensure goal and policies reflect community concerns and hopes for the future. The open, transparent review process requires broad input from residents, elected officials, staff and stakeholders.

The OCP review coincides with development of a Transportation Master Plan, which will identify investments needed over the next 20 years to create a safe, cost-effective and sustainable transportation network. Because land use and development patterns often significantly determine transportation behavior, the decisions around where new growth is located will have a major impact on travel patterns of future residents and the transportation system required to support them.

Kelowna residents were invited to share how they want Kelowna to grow by participating in the Pick Your Path to 2040 activity and questionnaire. Participants learned about four possible growth scenarios for Kelowna and, by completing a questionnaire after the activity, shared with the City which scenario they prefer.

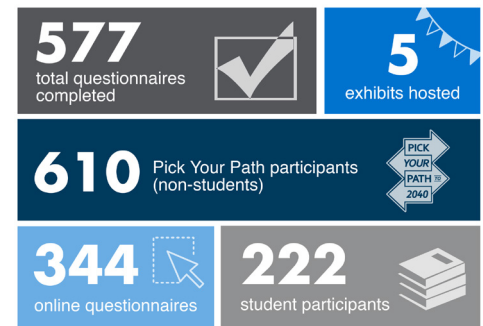
This report summarizes input received during the initial phase of engagement, which will be used to help shape the draft 2040 Official Community Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.



Format & location

Both in-person and online participation options were offered. Five in-person, interactive exhibits were hosted between June 2 and June 7, and staff attended a DKA Business After 5 event to share the storybook and information about the OCP and TMP review. An online version of the exhibit, in the form of an interactive storybook, was also available from June 1 to June 30.

To reach a variety of residents throughout Kelowna, the in-person exhibit was offered at three locations: Stuart Park (one day), Okanagan College (two days), and Rutland Centennial Hall (two days).



Promotion

Input opportunities were promoted through the City's e-bulletins, website, and social media channels, as well as through posters, roadside electronic signs, and newspaper ads.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this phase of engagement were to inform residents of the Official Community Plan and Transportation Master Plan updating process and gather input on the four proposed growth scenarios.

Questionnaire

Of the 610 storybook and exhibit general participants, 577 completed the questionnaire. Of these, 350 people completed the online questionnaire, while 227 exhibit participants completed the hard-copy version. In addition, 222 high-school students participated, of which 203 completed the hard-copy questionnaire.

Results from open questionnaires such as this are a collection of opinions and perceptions from interested or potentially affected residents and do not represent a statistically random sample of all Kelowna residents. This report contains results from the open questionnaire. Due to the opt-in and open method, results are qualitative in nature and cannot be said to represent views of all Kelowna citizens.

Timeline



"This was excellent and I am so glad you asked for public input. Also, I changed my viewpoint as a result of today's session." – Survey comment

What we heard

The questionnaire serves as a record of input on topics related to: how residential growth should be focused; preferred housing and neighbourhood mix; plans to move; development distribution and infrastructure costs; driving preference in relation to home location; climate change; and preferred growth scenario for Kelowna. Input from the students is summarized separately.

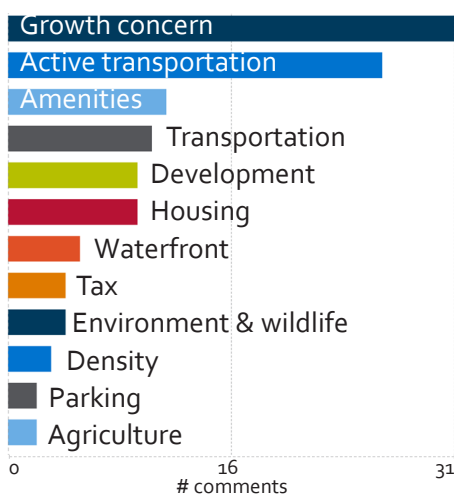
Growth scenarios

Participants were asked to share both which growth scenario they arrived at, either while at the exhibit or through the storybook, as well as which growth scenario they think is best for Kelowna. For some participants, the growth scenario they think is best for Kelowna differs from the scenario they arrived at during the Pick Your Path activity.

Through both the in-person exhibit and the online storybook activity, the two scenarios that participants arrived at most often were scenarios four and three. 20 per cent of participants arrived at scenario two, while 7.5 per cent arrived at scenario one.

The growth scenario that the most respondents chose as best for Kelowna is growth scenario three. This means that, overall, respondents envision a more deliberate shift toward a compact and complete community that would see more multi-family development focused in the Urban Core and less residential development in suburban areas. This would allow for a more concentrated investment in sidewalks, cycling routes and transit, and it would focus infrastructure in the Urban Core. Growth scenario three will also optimize investment in infrastructure as needs continue to increase.

Primary themes:



Comments - primary and secondary themes

Comments regarding the growth scenarios centered around 12 primary themes, picture to the right. The most common secondary themes include active transportation and concerns about exactly what growth might look like and the impacts growth will have. A few growth concerns include a resistance to increasing density and population, a desire to lower building height maximums, a resistance to urban sprawl, a desire to preserve historical and cultural areas, and a desire to protect the environment and wildlife.

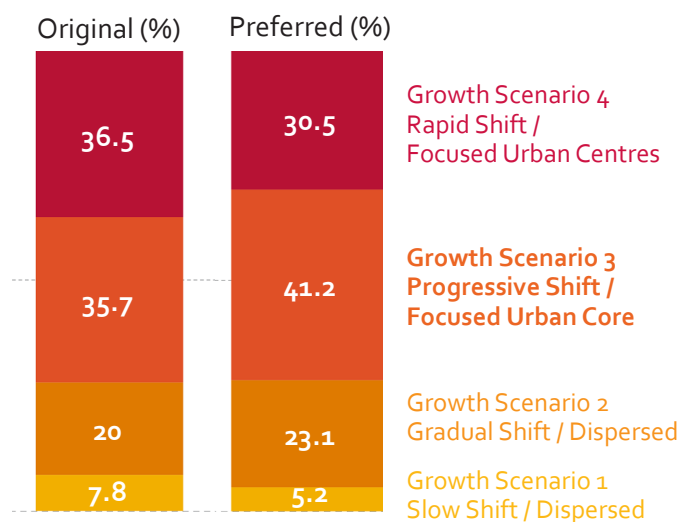
The most popular theme, active transportation, reveals a common desire to improve transit, improve walking and bicycling paths, and improve bicycling safety. Some respondents who support growth want to also see growth align with effective improvements to public and active transportation networks. The one common interest among all four scenario preferences is improved transit. Common interests among at least three scenario preferences include high-quality amenities and improved active transportation infrastructure and safety.

Secondary themes:



"I am all for concentration of population living in urban cores, although I would like to see a limit on the height of how tall buildings can get."

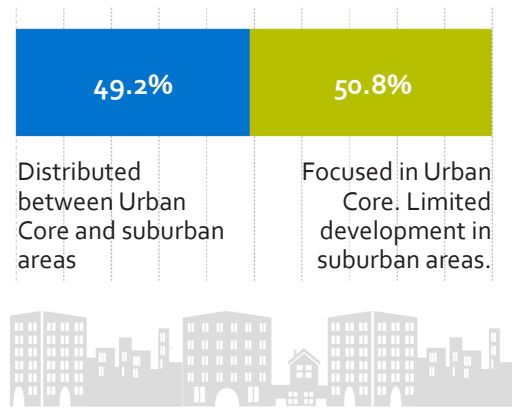
– Survey comment



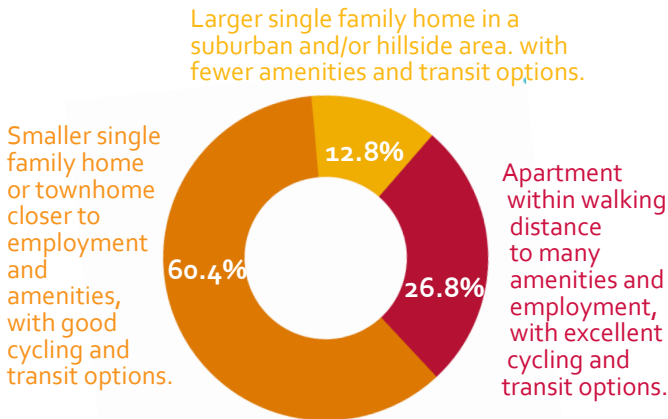
Focus of residential growth

The OCP will guide where new homes will be located, such as through development of new residential neighbourhoods in suburban areas or through redevelopment in existing neighbourhoods in the Urban Core.

In considering this fact, respondents were fairly evenly divided. The majority would like to see residential development focused in the Urban Core, with limited development in suburban areas. However, a nearly equal number of respondents prefer that residential development be distributed between the Urban Core and suburban areas.



Preferred housing and neighbourhood mix



Participants were asked to consider that we must often make choices between the type of home we want to live in and a neighbourhood that offers all the amenities we are looking for.

The majority of respondents prefer a smaller single family home or townhome in a neighbourhood that is closer to employment and amenities and offers good cycling and transit options. Some prefer an apartment within walking distance to amenities and employment and with excellent cycling and transit options.

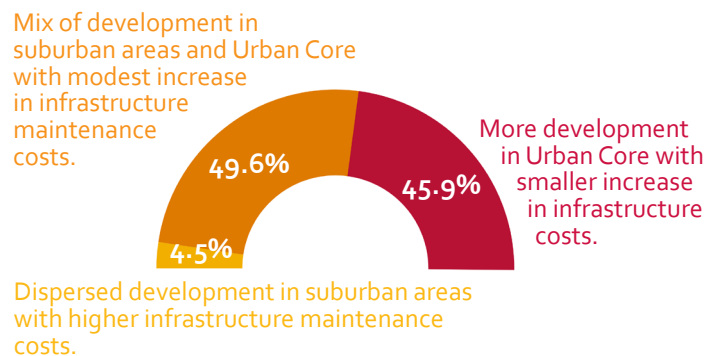
"I think we can do a better job of suburban growth by looking to create more efficient housing forms, a greater range of housing, and still find community amenity spaces."

– Survey comment

Development distribution and infrastructure maintenance costs

In considering that development in suburban areas is typically more expensive for the City to maintain long-term—because infrastructure costs more when it is spread out and serves fewer people—half of respondents would prefer a mix of development in suburban areas and the Urban Core, with a modest increase in infrastructure maintenance costs. An almost equal number of respondents would prefer more development in the Urban Core and a smaller increase in infrastructure maintenance costs.

Question: What mix of development distribution and infrastructure maintenance costs would you support?



Willingness to drive in traffic

We asked respondents to consider the relationship between where they live and the amount of traffic they drive in. The majority of respondents (71 per cent) would prefer to live closer to employment and amenities to avoid driving in traffic, while 18 per cent prefer to live in a suburban area even if it means driving in more traffic.

Plans to move

In considering where existing Kelowna residents plan to move within the city, most respondents (47 per cent) do not intend to move, while 22 per cent intend to move to a home in the Urban Core. Eight per cent of respondents intend to move to a home in a suburban and/or hillside area.

"Increased, reliable frequent public transportation is very important for this city to take on the developments proposed. Increased growth begs for reliable public transportation."

– Survey comment

Physical health and choosing where to live

We told participants that people who live near services and amenities that are easily reached by foot or bicycle are more likely to get the recommended 30 minutes of daily physical activity than people who live in suburban areas. To the majority of respondents (65 per cent), these physical health benefits are very important to them when choosing where to live.

"Kelowna needs better active transportation infrastructure. Walking and biking paths should be prioritized before anything else."

– Survey comment

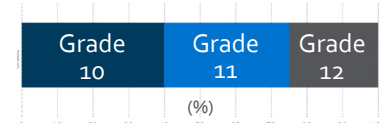
Climate change

Taking action to address climate change was one of the goals identified by the community during the Imagine Kelowna process. The top two actions that respondents are willing to take to reduce their impact on climate change are to walk, cycle, carpool or take transit more often (34 per cent) and upgrade their home to be more energy efficient (19 per cent).

What we heard from students

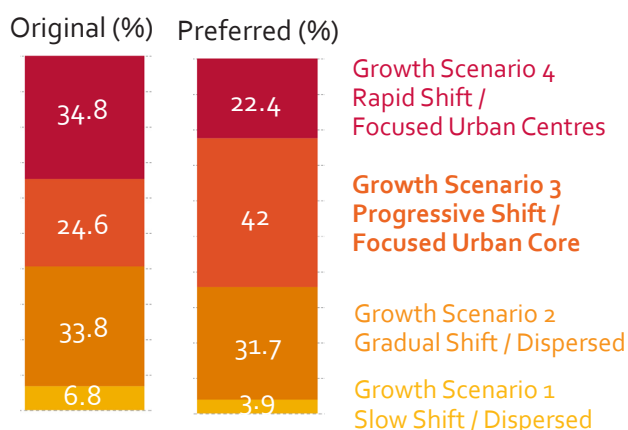
Through a collaboration with School District 23, arrangements were made for eleven high school classes to attend the exhibit. 222 students from central neighbourhoods participated, of which 203 students completed the questionnaire. Gender representation was fairly equal, with approximately 53 per cent being female and 43 per cent being male. Students' feedback regarding the activity was, overall, positive. While input on some topics mirrored that of other respondents, input on a few topics varied somewhat in comparison.

Student participation by grade



Growth scenarios

The two most popular growth scenarios that students arrived at during the activity were scenarios four and two, a different result than that of other participants. Similar to other participants, however, the growth scenario that students generally think is best for Kelowna is scenario three.



Development distribution and infrastructure maintenance costs

Three quarters of students prefer a mix of development in suburban areas and the Urban Core, with a modest increase in infrastructure maintenance costs. This result differs from that of other participants, of which only half indicated a preference for this same development distribution.

Willingness to drive in traffic

Nearly half of student respondents would prefer to live closer to employment and amenities to avoid driving in traffic, while one third would prefer to live in a suburban area even if it means driving in more traffic. Compared to other respondents, student respondents are, on average, more willing to drive in traffic to live in a suburban area.

Moving plans

Not surprisingly, considering students' age and stage of life, many students plan to move within the next five years to a home in the Urban Core, and some plan to move but are not yet sure to what type of neighbourhood.

Residential growth

Contrasting input from other respondents, the majority of students think that growth should be distributed between the Urban Core and suburban areas, rather than limit development in suburban areas.

Housing and neighbourhood mix

The majority of students participants prefer a smaller single family home or townhome in a neighbourhood that is closer to employment and amenities and offers good cycling and transit options. Approximately one quarter would prefer an apartment within walking distance to amenities and employment and with excellent cycling and transit option. This result is similar to that of other respondents.

Physical health and choosing where to live

To nearly half of students, physical health benefits associated with housing and neighbourhood mix are very important when choosing where to live. To 44 per cent, these health benefits are a little important. To five per cent, these benefits are not important. This is a somewhat different result than that of other participants.

Climate change

Similar to other respondents, the most important thing students (35 per cent) are willing to do to reduce their impact on climate change is to walk, cycle, carpool or take transit more often.

Engagement feedback

Many participants thought the Pick Your Path activity was an interesting, interactive and unique way to involve the public. For 80 per cent of respondents, the material presented enough information for them to provide an informed opinion on the project. Some participants thought the activity and questionnaire could have better balanced the benefits and disadvantages of each growth scenario.

Other information that some respondents would like to have seen include: more maps, financial impacts, transportation impacts and plans, more growth scenario options, more pictures, infrastructure plans, parking plans, growth scenario timelines, and impact on public amenities.

Engagement feedback presents an opportunity to ensure future engagement shows a clear connection with Imagine Kelowna and to reiterate how future public input will impact decision-making.

Exhibit

Nearly all participants thought the information was clear and understandable. More than 80 per cent understood how public input has been used and felt that participating was a valuable experience. 89 per cent indicated they had an opportunity to share their views, and 77 per cent of respondents learned something new.



Storybook

Nearly all storybook participants thought the information was clear and understandable, while 79 per cent felt they had an opportunity to share their views. 66 per cent understood how public input has been used in this process, 69 per cent felt that participating was a valuable experience, and 59 per cent of respondents learned something new.

Key takeaways

Based on public input collected through the Pick Your Path to 2040 engagement process, there is a trend among the 577 respondents in that most would like to see Kelowna move toward a progressive shift in growth with a focused Urban Core.

The questionnaire shows a divide in preference for how residential growth should be focused and/or distributed between the Urban Core and suburban areas. Results also show a trend in respondents' desire to live close to amenities and employment.

Regarding how development and infrastructure should be distributed between the Urban Core and suburban areas, respondents were also nearly equally divided in their preference for either a mix of development in the Urban Core and suburban areas or more development in the Urban Core. What is clear is that very few respondents want to see dispersed development in suburban areas with higher infrastructure maintenance costs.

While the questionnaire revealed a higher preference for a progressive shift and focused Urban Core, there is some concern regarding how the City will manage growth and the increased traffic that might come along with it. There is also some concern about what increased density will look like in terms of building height, as some respondents indicated a preference for increasing density through a variety of building heights rather than only through high-rise buildings.

Next steps

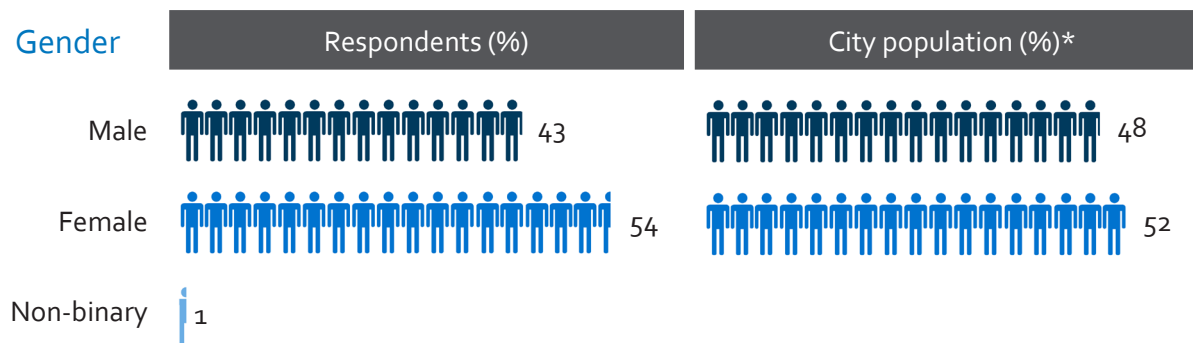
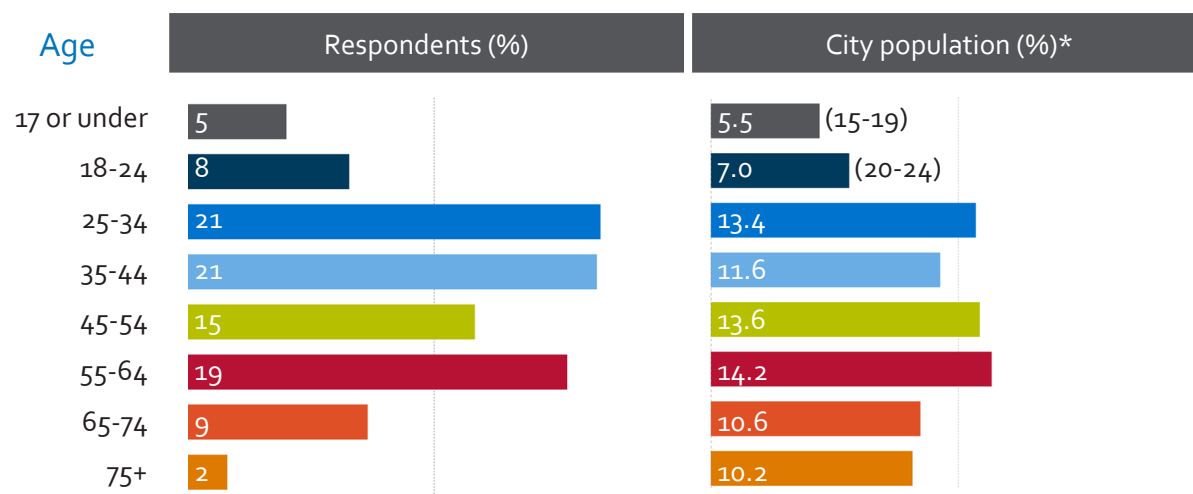
Based on public input, analysis and research, a preferred growth scenario will be selected for Council's consideration in fall 2018. The scenario will provide context for the corresponding policy directions recommended in the 2040 Official Community Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. The first of a series of stakeholder workshops was hosted on July 11, and the next round of public engagement is anticipated for spring 2019. Engagement on recommended policies corresponding with the OCP update is anticipated for Council consideration in late 2019.

"How will the City respect its current citizens, rather than sacrificing their interests for growth? Are there mechanisms to cap the population growth that you have not highlighted?"

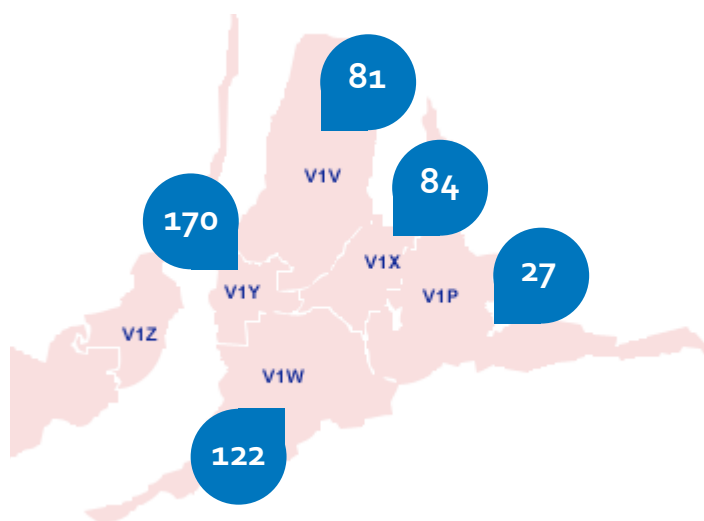
– Survey comment

Demographics

We heard from a broad range of ages, with the highest percentage of participation being from those between the ages of 25 and 64. We also heard from a fairly balanced gender representation. Participation by resident location was also somewhat balanced, though representation from the Black Mountain area was the lowest, with 27 participants. The following demographics do not include those of student participants.



Number of survey respondents by postal code



* 2016 Census

"Thank you for putting in the time, effort and money to engage the community as a part of the development of the OCP. I appreciate having the opportunity to voice my opinion on Kelowna's future." – Survey comment