

Healthy Housing Strategy Online Survey Results

February 2018



Healthy City Strategy
kelowna.ca/planningprojects



Introduction

Kelowna, like many other cities across Canada, is facing unprecedented housing challenges including escalating housing costs, low rental vacancy and increased population growth. As part of the Healthy Housing Strategy, the City of Kelowna has completed a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) which identifies housing needs based on current and future trends and experiences from community partners and agencies.

Respondent feedback, in addition to research and best practices, will help develop the Healthy Housing Strategy to meet the housing needs of residents today and tomorrow.

Summary

Residents were invited to share their thoughts regarding housing in Kelowna from November 20 to January 15 through an online survey.

The online survey provided insight into respondent attitudes regarding housing in Kelowna. Survey respondents were asked about their experience with housing in Kelowna, and where there may be opportunity for the City to improve upon housing needs for the citizens of Kelowna.

Timeline



Online survey & comments

An online survey was made available from November 20, 2017 to January 15, 2018 and was promoted through many channels, including: City of Kelowna Website, Get Involved, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A total of 1,563 filled out the survey with 1,096 respondents accessing the survey through the City's Get Involved public engagement website, 362 respondents accessed through a Twitter link, 67 respondents accessed through a Facebook link and 38 respondents accessed through the City of Kelowna Website.

Results from the online surveys such as this are a collection of opinions and perceptions from interested or potentially affected residents, and not a statistically significant random sample of all Kelowna residents. This report contains results from the survey, due to the opt-in and open method, results are qualitative in nature.

"We have been in BC for three years and it was very difficult to find rentals that were pet friendly and affordable. We were finally able to purchase a mobile home as that was all we qualified to purchase."
– Survey respondent

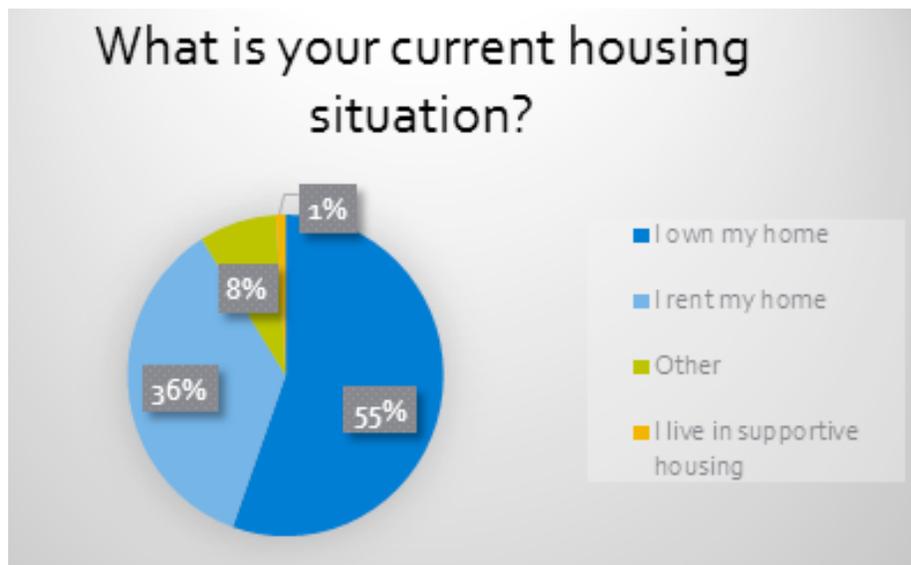
Online survey & comments (cont.)

The primary objectives of the engagement were to:

- ▶ Gather input on general attitudes towards housing in Kelowna
- ▶ Obtain input from residents regarding what is important for the future of housing in Kelowna

Who we heard from

Of the 1,563 respondents who completed the survey, 875 (55 per cent) identified themselves as someone who owns their own home, 564 (36 per cent) identified themselves as someone who rents their home, 125 (eight per cent) said other and 12 (one per cent) people said they live in supportive housing. According to postal code information provided a majority of respondents stated they live in Kelowna.

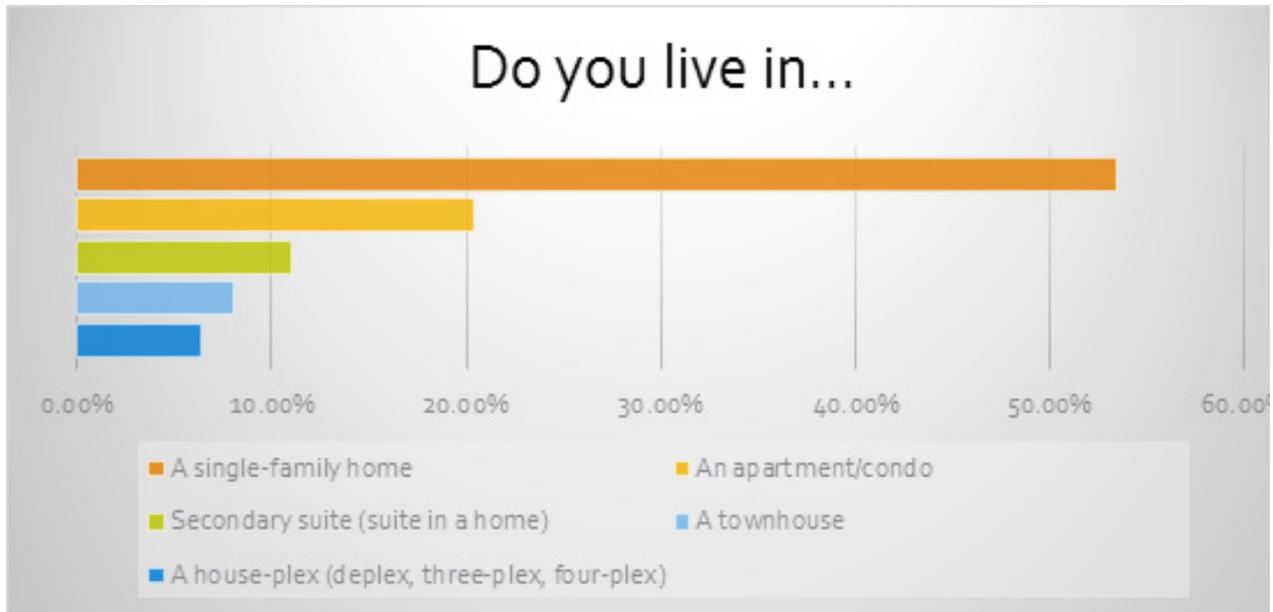


According to the surveyed 1,563 respondents, the majority of respondents (90 per cent) said they receive no support to help maintain their housing, 75 (five per cent) said they receive financial support such as rent subsidies, 64 (four per cent) people said other, and 27 (one per cent) people said they receive service supports such as health or social supports.

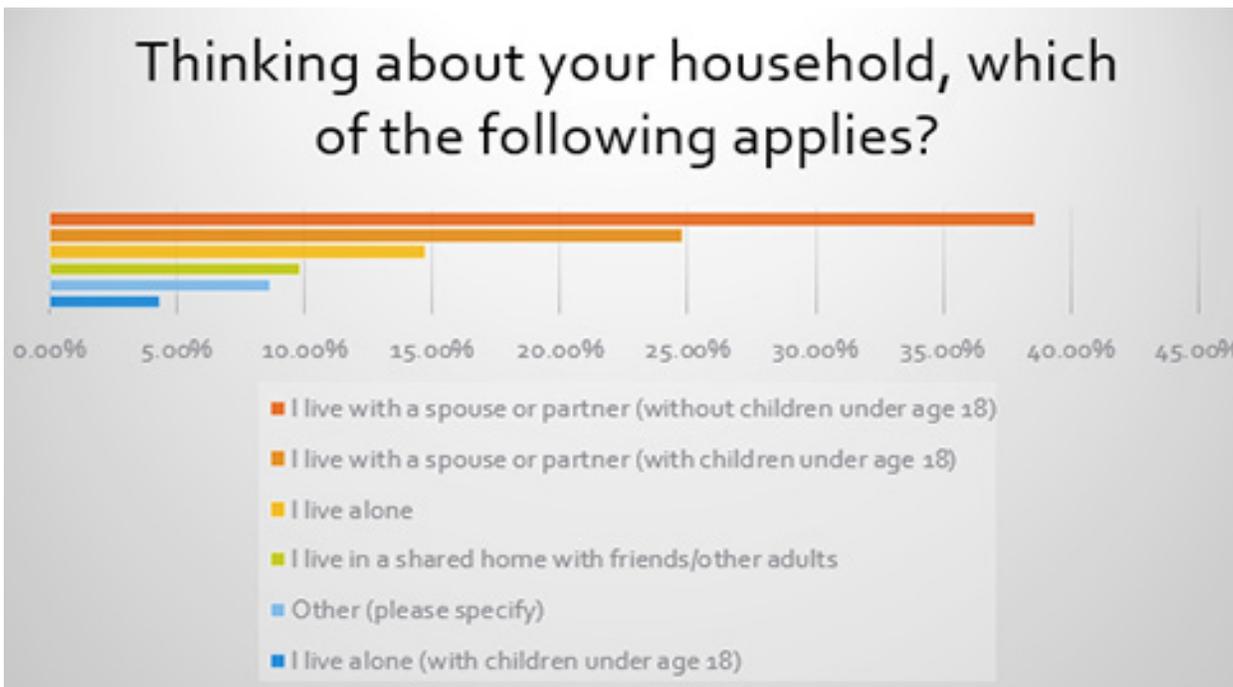


Experience with housing

Survey respondents were asked about their current living situation to gain insight into their housing experience in Kelowna. Out of those surveyed respondents, 842 (53 per cent), said they live in a single-family home with 322 (20 per cent) residing in an apartment/condo.



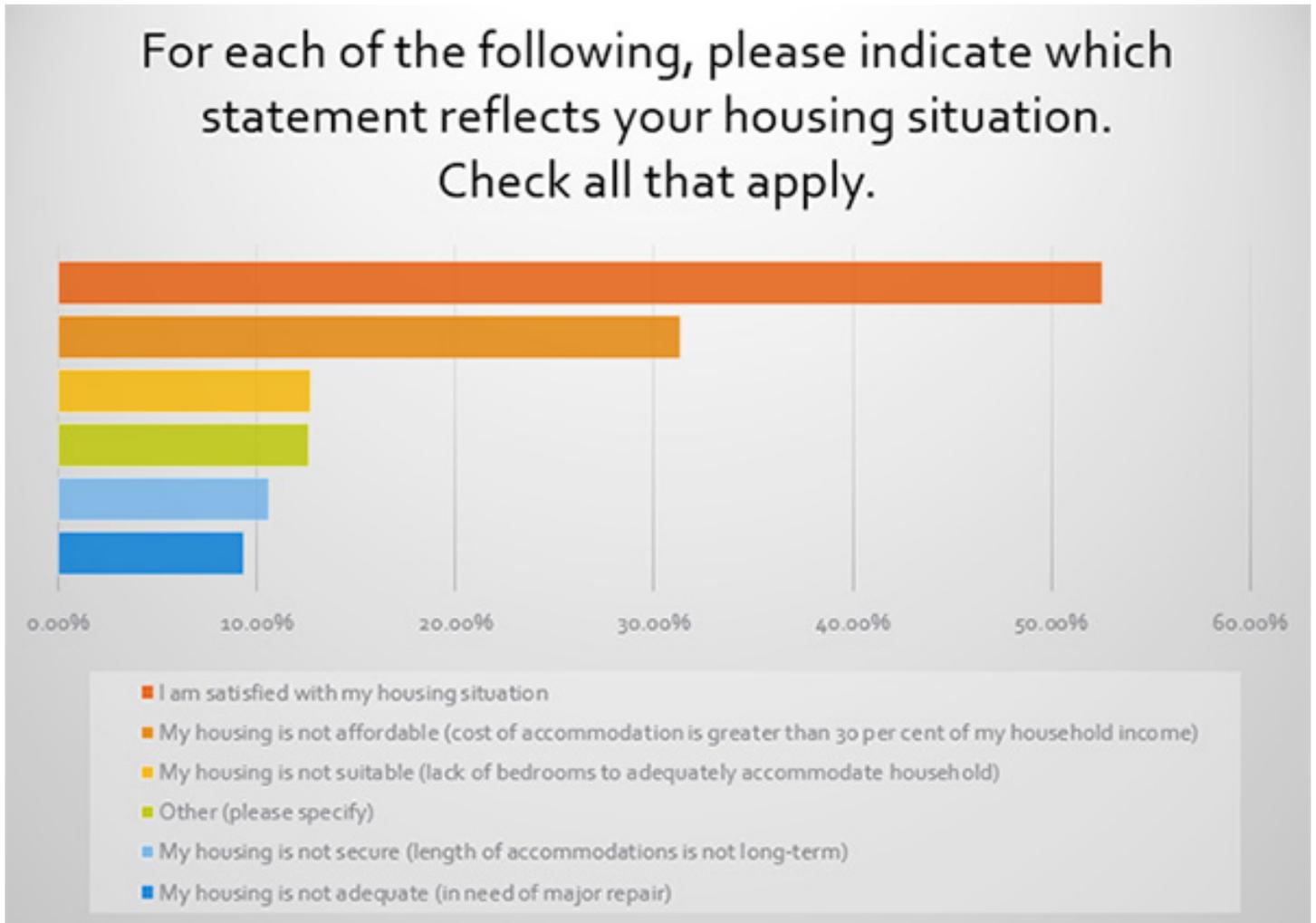
The majority of survey respondents (39 per cent) identified as living with a spouse or partner (without children under age 18), 25 per cent live with a spouse or partner (with children under age 18), while 15 per cent live of respondents live alone.



“Our government (local, federal, and provincial) all need to realize how dire the rental situation is throughout the Okanagan. The cost of rentals and the lack of pet friendly housing is insanely high.” – Survey respondent

Experience with housing (cont.)

To gain insight regarding survey respondents' attitudes towards their housing situation, respondents were asked to identify which of the following statements applied to their situation. The majority of respondents (53 per cent) identified as being satisfied with their housing situation, while 31 per cent said their housing is not affordable (cost of accommodation is greater than 30 per cent of my household income).

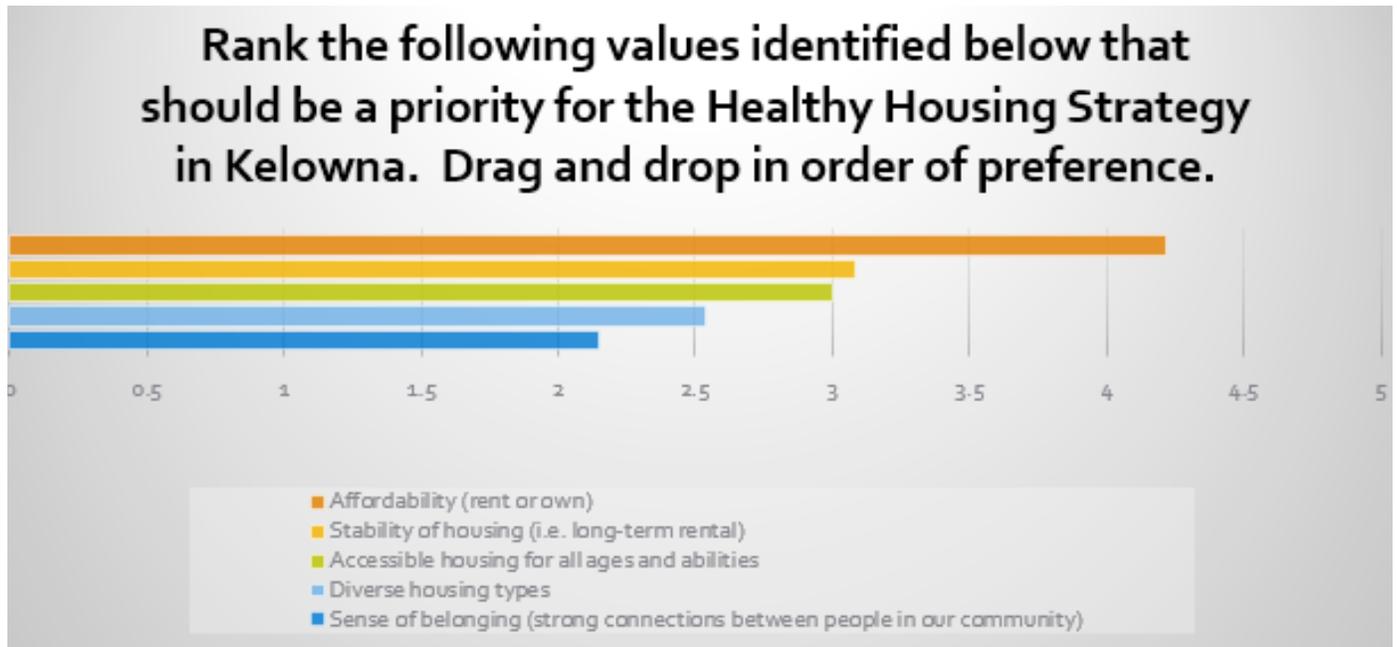


Values

Respondents were asked to rank five values from least important to most important, and an average score was determined for each value. The highest ranked value identified as a priority for the Healthy Housing Strategy in Kelowna was affordability (rent or own), with a score of 4.22 (out of a possible top score of five). The lowest identified priority for the Healthy Housing Strategy was a sense of belonging (strong connections between people in our community).

Although the basement suite we live in is too small (single bedroom when we actually require three) it would not be possible to move elsewhere in Kelowna because of the insanity of the cost of housing. So we're kind of "stuck". – Survey respondent

Values (cont.)



A follow-up question asked respondents if there were any values missing that should be considered. The top missing value was the availability of housing in Kelowna.

This question was open-ended and responses were provided by participants. The text was analyzed through the survey tool “word cloud” and the top tags were created as categories. The five themes are listed in order of the frequency they were mentioned.

Important Home Ownership Density Seniors Think Roads
 Transportation Life Community
 Ability Pets Public Transit Affordable
 Single Family Housing Infrastructure
 Rental security Access Walking Parking
 Water Property Green Space Homeless Condos

Values (cont.)

Top 5 Themes

- ▶ Availability of housing
- ▶ Affordability
- ▶ Rental availability
- ▶ Pet-Friendly Rentals
- ▶ Accessibility

The majority of respondents (35 per cent) thought missing values to be considered for the Healthy Housing Strategy was the affordability and availability of housing in Kelowna. Eighteen per cent of respondents thought rental availability and the availability of pet-friendly rentals was a missing value, as well as accessibility as it relates to good and services.

Survey respondents were then given an open-ended question asking: When you look 10 years or more into the future what is the most pressing issue you are concerned about regarding the housing needs for the next generation? The following word cloud was generated and themes were determined accordingly:



Top 5 Themes

- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ Quality of life
- ▶ Rental availability
- ▶ Availability of housing
- ▶ Opportunity to own a home

The plurality of respondents (over 70 per cent) identified the most pressing issue regarding housing needs for the next generation will be the lack of affordable housing in Kelowna. Survey respondents are also concerned about living a comfortable lifestyle, the availability of rental units and housing as well as the ability to own a home in Kelowna.

Housing types and tenure

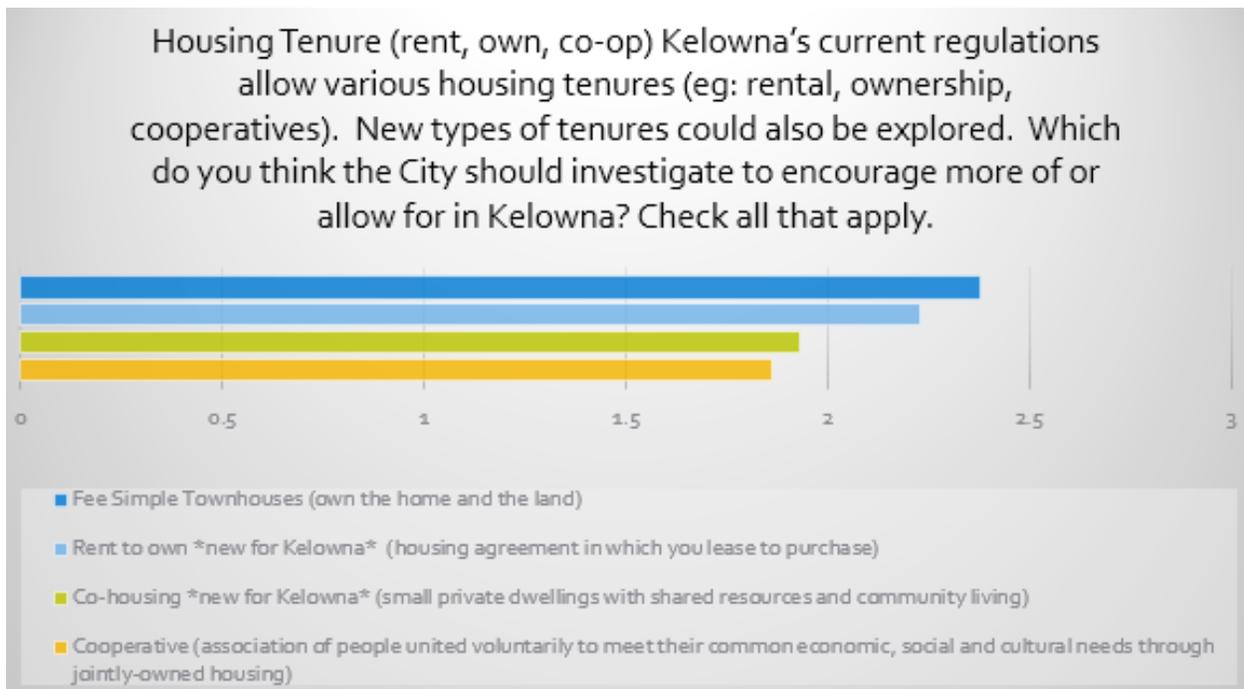
Respondents were asked to indicate for each housing type whether it was Very Preferred, Somewhat Preferred, Not Preferred or they didn't know. The results were then weighted to give a final score out of three. The majority of respondents (2.23 out of three) thought bungalow courtyard/cottage housing should be considered by the City as a housing type to further improve Kelowna's state of housing. Respondents (2.06 out of three) also thought a house-plex (appearance of a single-family housing and the cost savings of attached homes) would improve the state of housing in Kelowna. Micro suites were the least preferred housing type.



Using the same type of weighted scale, respondents were also asked to show their preferences for housing tenure. The results were also weighted to give a final score out of three. Fee simple townhouses (own the home and land) were the most preferred (2.38 weighted average) and cooperative housing (association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs through jointly-owned housing) the least preferred.

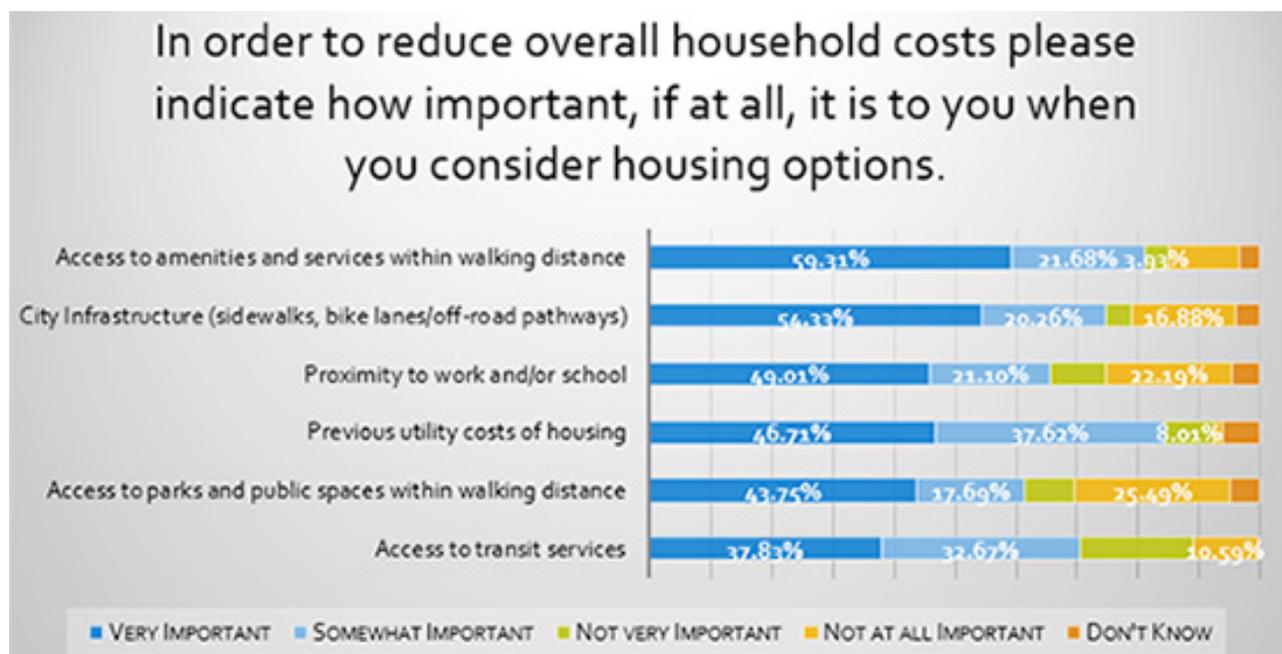
"We are considering selling our house and moving into a townhouse. When we're older we would consider the bungalow courtyard cottage type of housing."
 – Survey respondent

Housing types and tenure (cont.)



Housing and partnerships

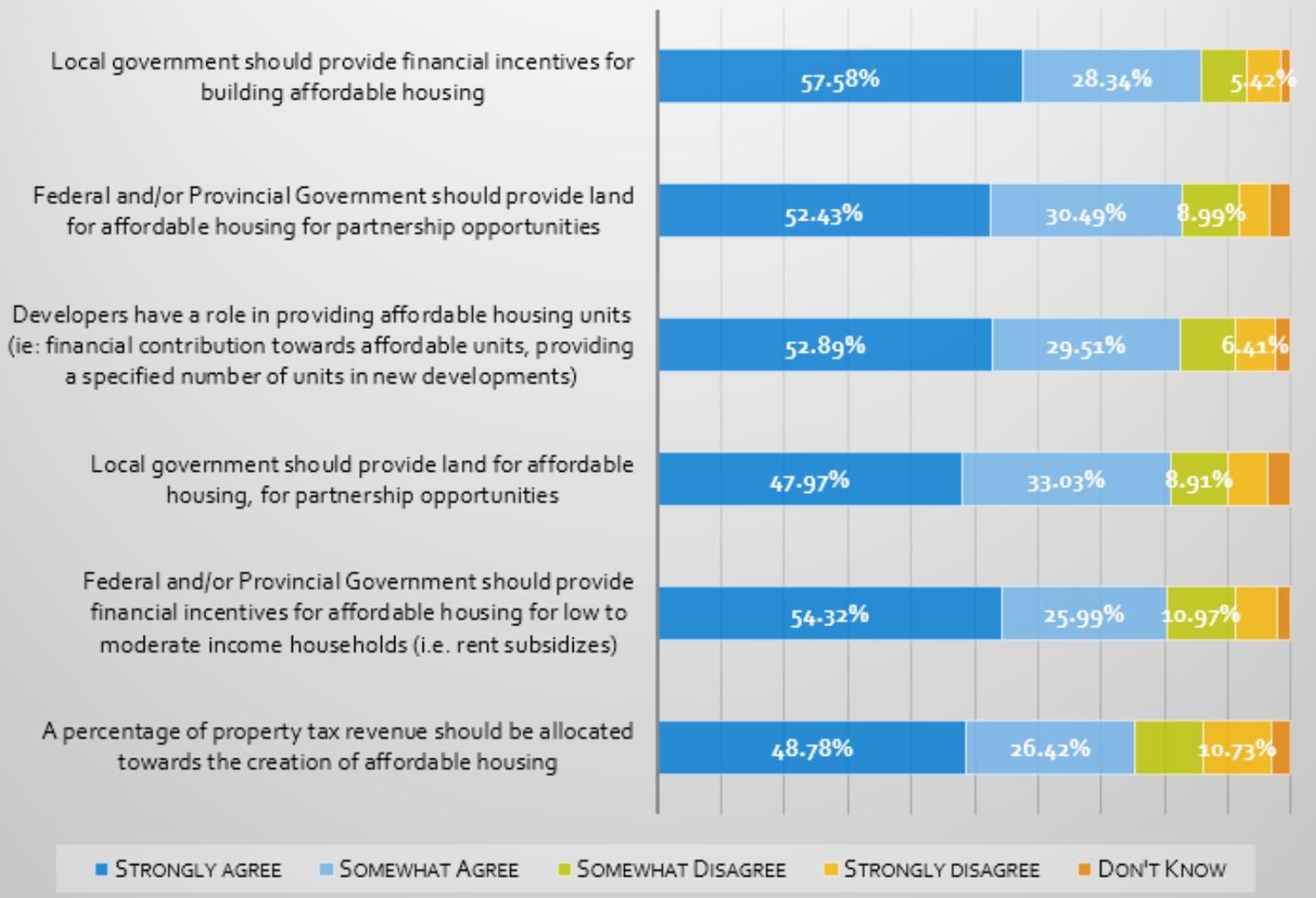
Respondents were given a list of factors and asked to rate the importance of each factor when considering housing options. Previous utility costs of housing was the most important and access to parks and public spaces within walking distance was the least important (though 61.44 per cent of respondents still said it was Very Important or Somewhat Important).



Housing and partnerships (cont.)

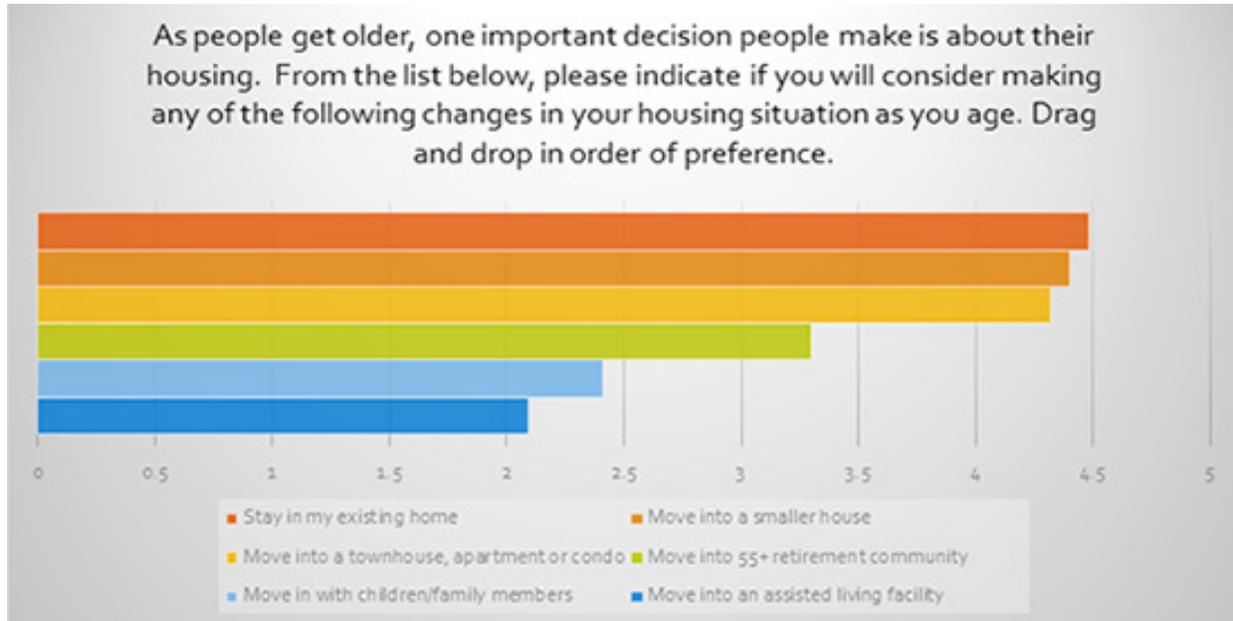
Respondents were given a list of actions that can be taken to create new affordable housing and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each action. The majority of survey respondents (over 82 per cent) agreed that developers have a role in providing affordable housing units to residents. Having a percentage of property tax revenue allocated towards the creation of affordable housing was the least important (though 72.5 per cent of respondents still said it was Very Important or Somewhat Important.)

In rental and ownership categories, many Kelowna residents are spending over 30% of their annual income on housing costs. Both private and public sectors need to share responsibility in creating new affordable housing stock and partnerships will be critical moving forward. Continued action needs to be taken to expand affordable housing in Kelowna. Rate your level of agreement/non-agreement for the following.

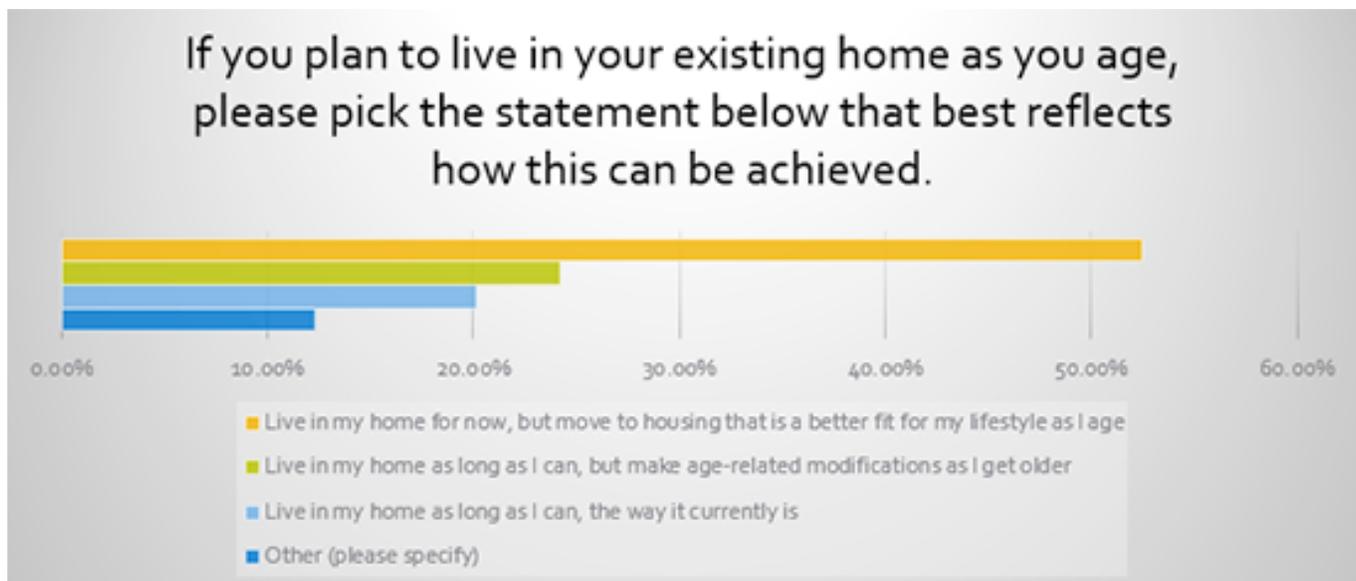


Housing for all ages and abilities

Respondents were given a list of changes they can make to their housing as they get older and asked to order the options in terms of preference. The results were weighted to give each option a final weighted score out of six. “Stay in my existing home” was the top preference with a weighted score of 4.48, while “move into an assisted living facility” was indicated as least important with a score of 2.09 out of six.



Respondents were then asked about how they will live in their existing home as they age. The plurality of respondents (52.46 per cent) indicated that they would live in their home for now, but move to housing that is a better fit for my lifestyle as they age, while 20 per cent of respondents identified that they would live in their home as long as they can, the way it currently is.



Housing for all ages and abilities

Survey respondents were posed an open-ended question asking: What else would help you stay in your existing home as you age? The following word cloud was generated and themes were determined accordingly:



Top 5 Themes

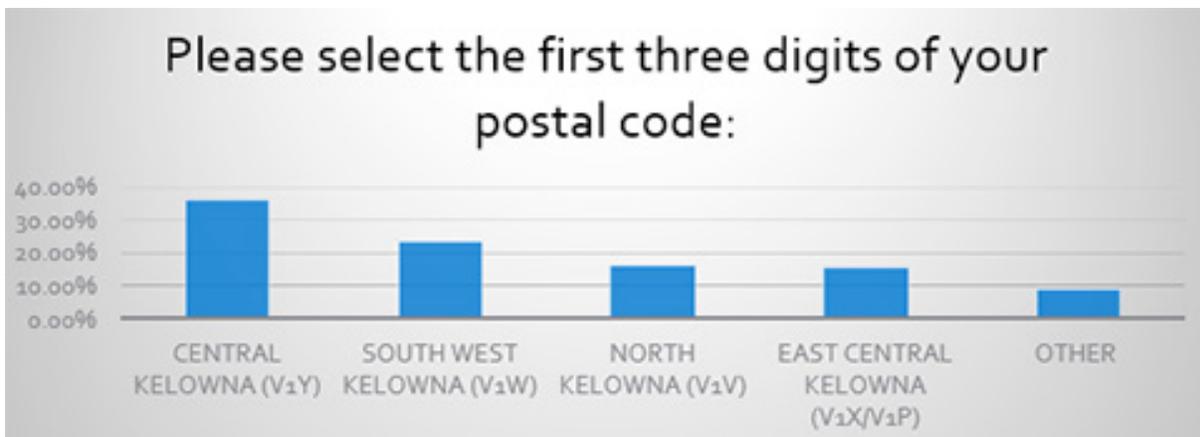
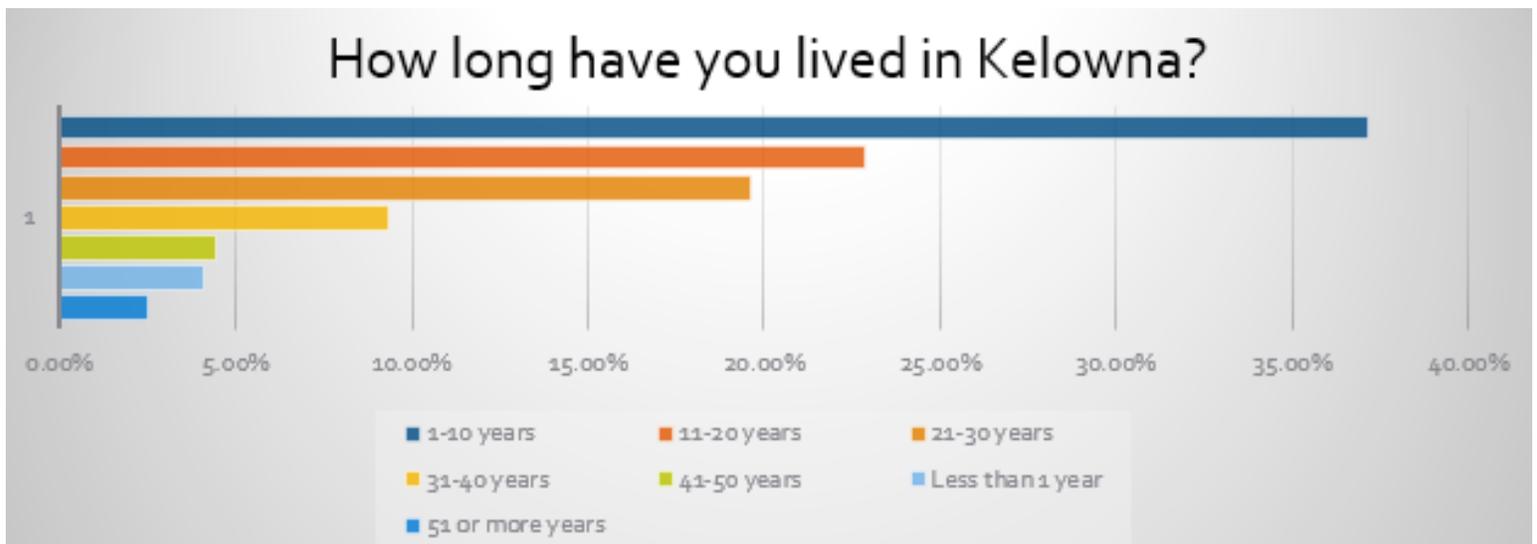
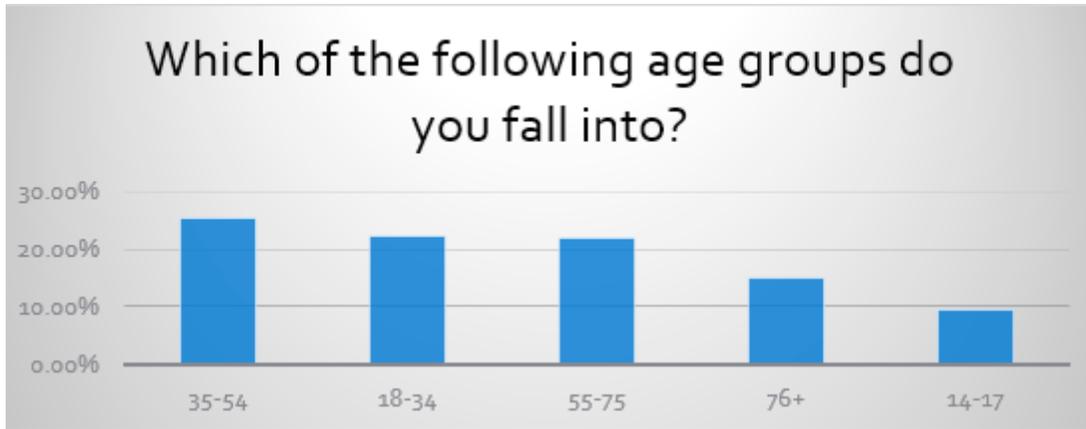
- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ Rental availability
- ▶ Property tax increases
- ▶ Accessibility to services
- ▶ Family support

The majority of respondents (over 20 per cent) identified “affordable housing” as a factor that would help them to stay in their existing home as they age. The availability of rental units, property tax increases, accessibility and the support of family were also identified as important factors to respondents.

“Rental assistance or mortgage assistance. Perhaps turning a basement into a suite to generate more income. Modifications to the house could be mandatory to accommodate lack of mobility. These are all costly renovations that most elderly cannot afford.” – Survey respondent

Survey respondent demographics

Over 68 per cent of respondents identified as being over the age of 35 with 60 per cent identified as female. The majority of survey respondents (41 per cent) acknowledged themselves as someone who has lived in Kelowna for 10 years or less. The majority of survey respondents (36 per cent) identify as being from the postal code “V1Y”, which is central Kelowna.



Final comments

Survey respondents were asked to provide any additional comments they felt were applicable to the survey. The following word cloud was generated and themes were determined accordingly:



Top 5 Themes

- ▶ Desire to live in Kelowna
- ▶ Affordability
- ▶ Rental availability
- ▶ Quality of life
- ▶ Family

The majority of respondents (over 27 per cent) made a statement regarding their desire to live in Kelowna paired with the fact that Kelowna is becoming un-affordable for many citizens. Many respondents commented on the lack of rental units in Kelowna, and the fact that many citizens are not satisfied with their living situation, therefore sacrificing their quality of life. Several comments mentioned a concern for family members who may not be able to live in Kelowna in the future.

"I am less concerned about the rental market and more concerned with the home buyers prices. Young families will not be able to move here, and Kelowna is quickly changing to an "old and rich" market only." – Survey respondent

"It is a struggle for young families to get into the housing market with current prices in Kelowna, especially while paying high rent prices it's a challenge to come up with a hefty down payment." – Survey respondent