



PLAN INVERNESS COUNTY

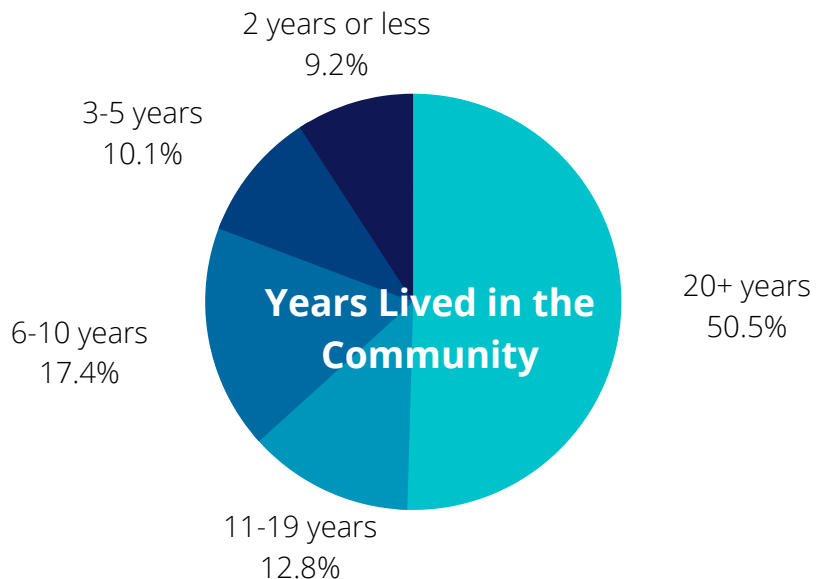
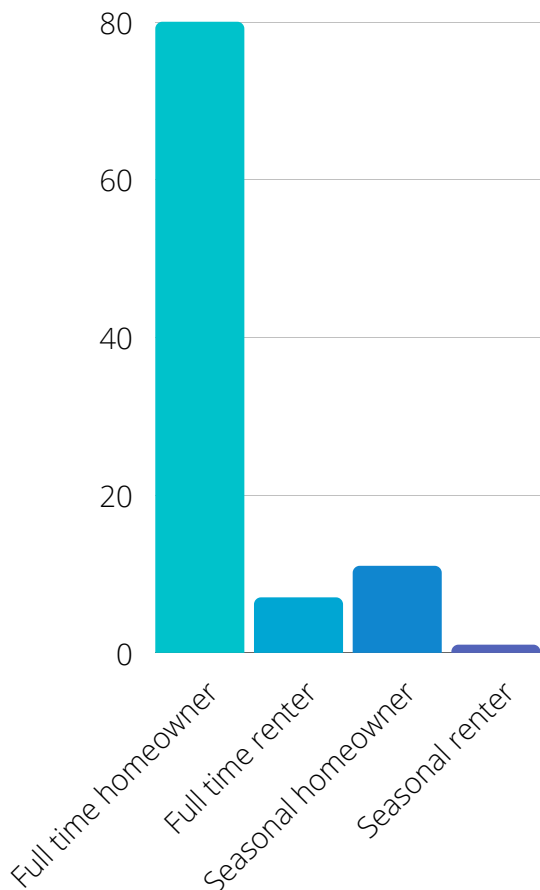
WHAT WE HEARD: INITIAL CONSULTATION SUMMARY April 2022

What We Did

- + Community Open Houses to introduce the project (November 2021)
- + Public Survey (November 2021 through February 2022)
- + Online Interactive Map (November 2021 through February 2022)
- + Stakeholder Meetings (January-February 2022)
- + Community Visioning Workbooks (January-February 2022)
- + Email, letter & phone submissions of feedback (November 2021-February 2022)

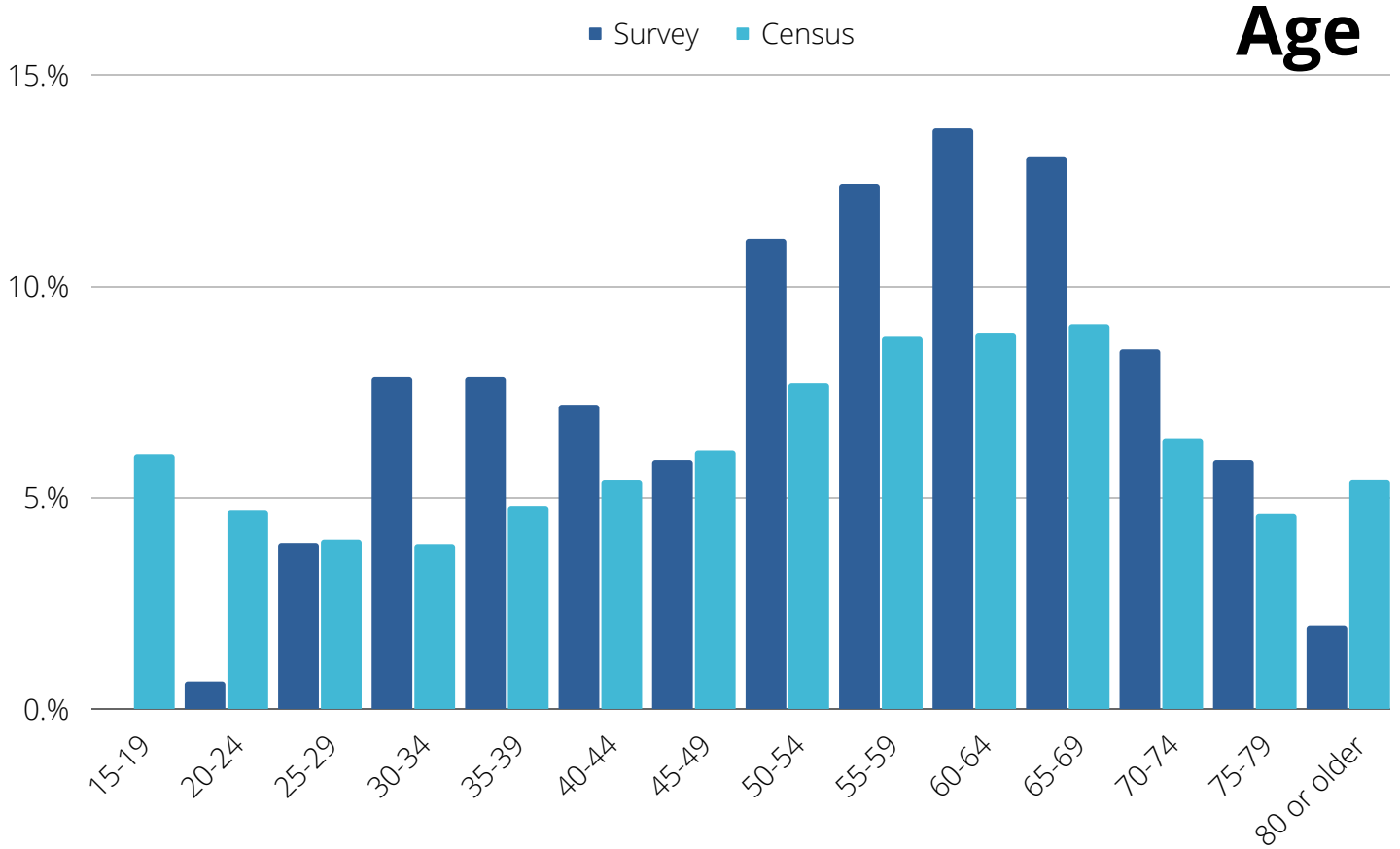
Who Did We Hear From

- + 198 survey respondents (see below for breakdown)
- + 8 email/letter submissions
- + 2 Community Vision Workbooks
- + 11 map comments

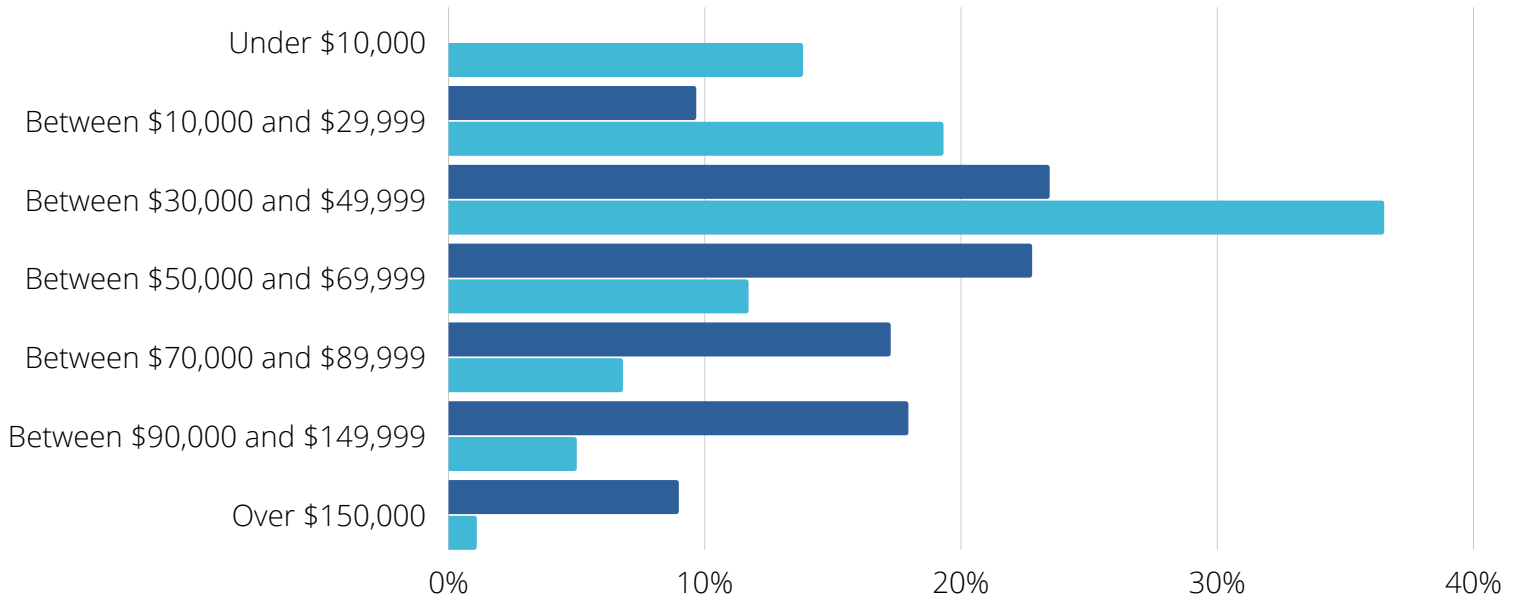


Survey Demographics vs Census Data

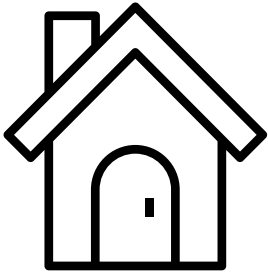
It's important when reading survey response data to understand *who* the survey has reached and *who it hasn't*. Below is a comparison of demographic data that shows survey respondents versus the most recent census data - this way we can see whose voices were over or under represented in the survey results.



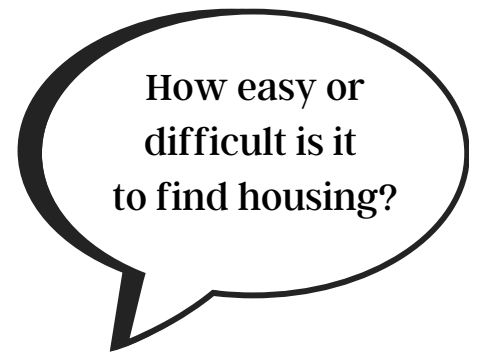
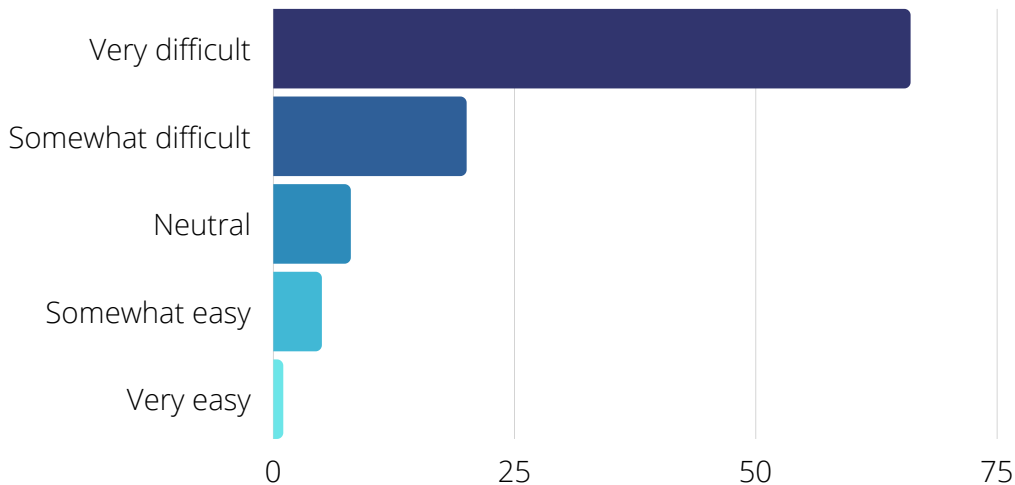
Income



What We Heard About Housing



Housing was a common topic across all engagement methods. Respondents felt that there was a lack of rental options, entry level homes for young families and supportive housing for seniors to age in place. Another topic that came up consistently was the proposed tax for out of province homeowners, with many citing this would be bad for the local economy and deter new residents to the area.



Top Issues for Renters:

1. Lack of options
2. Unaffordability
3. Difficulty accessing amenities without a vehicle
4. Limited lease periods (short term, seasonal rentals)
5. Need for smaller housing options

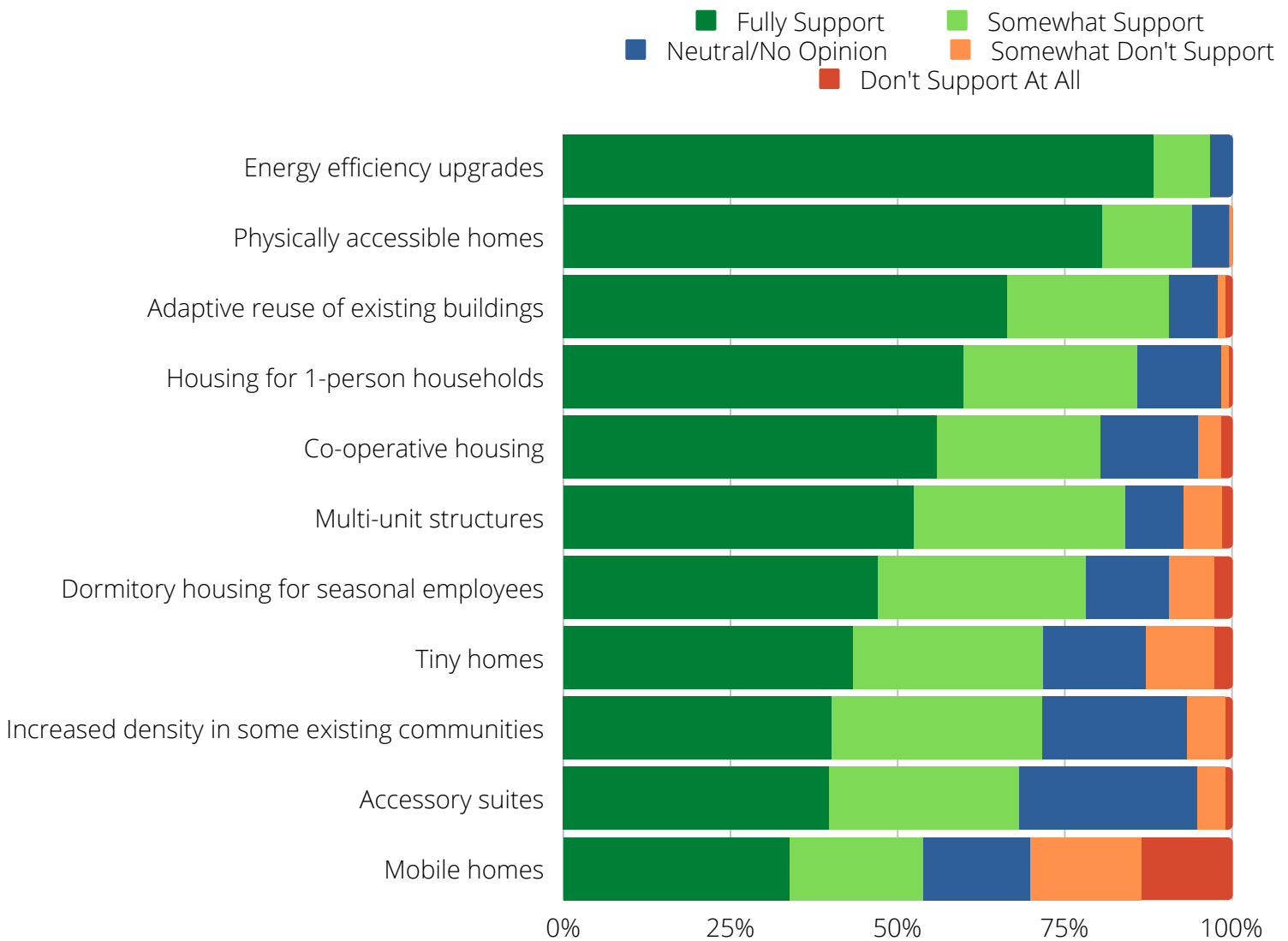
Top Issues for Homeowners:

1. Difficulties accessing amenities without a vehicle
2. Property in need of major maintenance or repair
3. Need for smaller housing options
4. Difficulty doing routine upkeep
5. Difficulty paying property taxes

What We Heard About Housing

Approaches to increasing housing diversity & affordability

The most favourable approaches to increasing housing availability and affordability were energy efficiency upgrades, physically accessible homes, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, housing for one person households and cooperative housing. The most contentious approach by far was mobile homes.

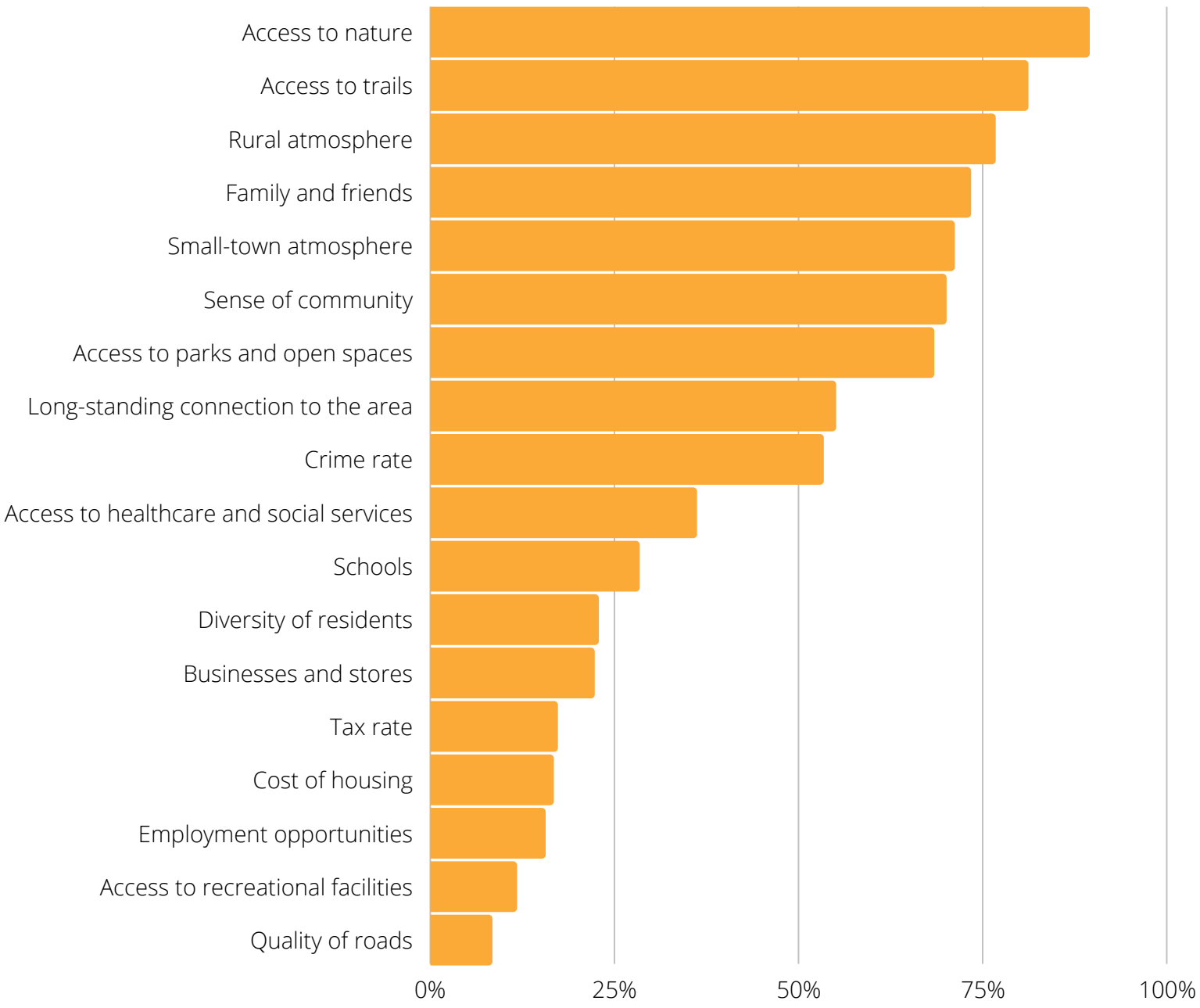


Other concerns we heard around housing:

- Regulating short term rentals to provide more year-round housing
- Attracting and retaining young families in the community
- Housing options for seasonal workers

What We Heard About Community Life

When asked what makes the community a great place to live, the natural environment was top of mind with access to nature and trails, as well as the rural/small town atmosphere, family and friends, and sense of community, taking the top spots.

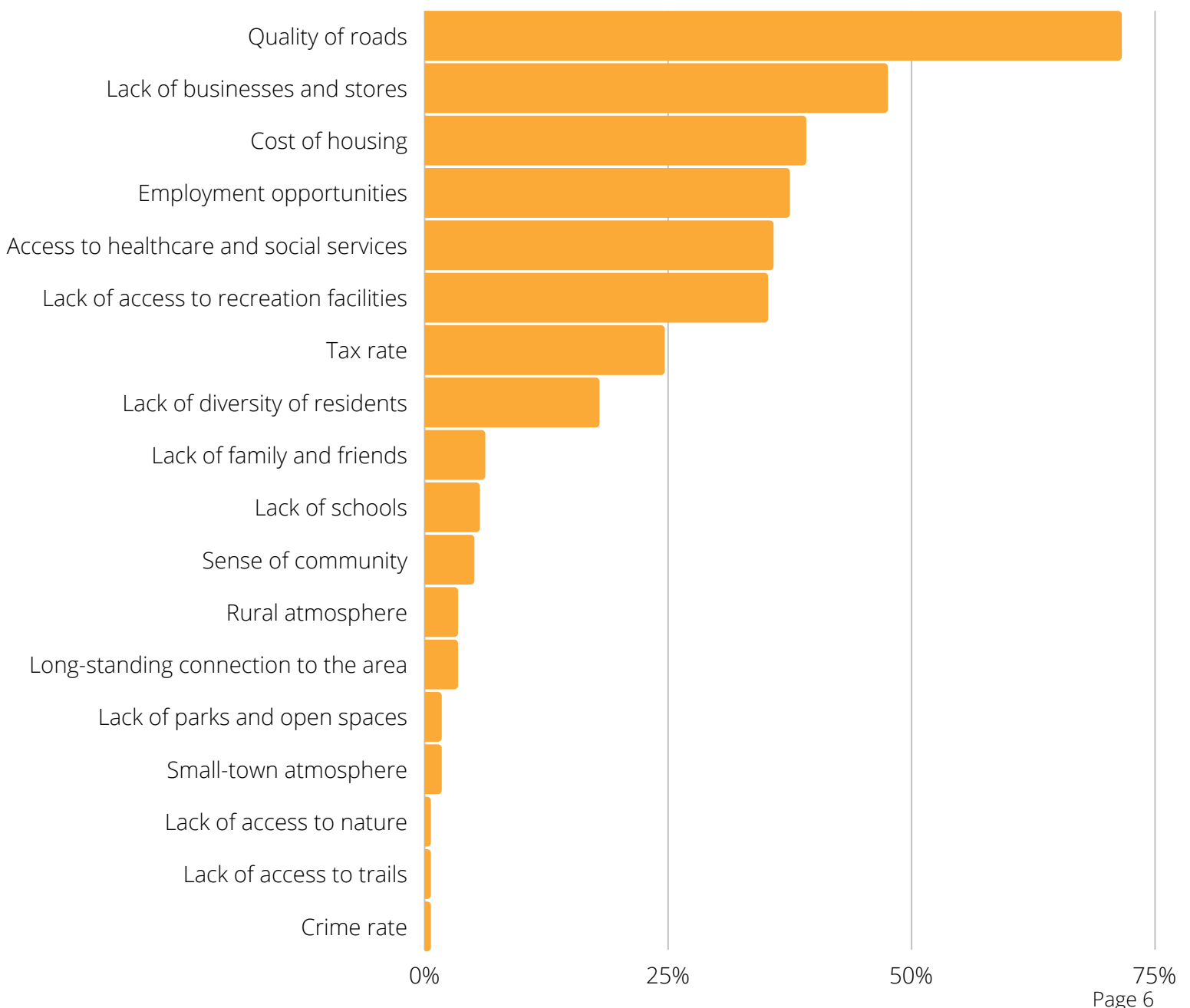


When asked what three words best describe their community, respondents were overwhelmingly positive using words like:

friendly, scenic, beautiful, peaceful, rural and quiet

What We Heard About Community Life

The biggest challenges of living in the community were cited as the quality of the roads, lack of businesses and stores, employment opportunities, cost of housing and employment opportunities. Other challenges that came up across engagement methods included the tension between renewable energy development projects, like wind farms, with the need to preserve view planes and community character for tourism. Many residents were concerned about how the wind farm development on the Creignish Mountains along Route 19 would impact tourism along the Ceilidh Trail. Another concern that came up consistently during the engagement was balancing the preservation of lands with agricultural potential with the needs of farmers to profit from the sale of their lands for development.

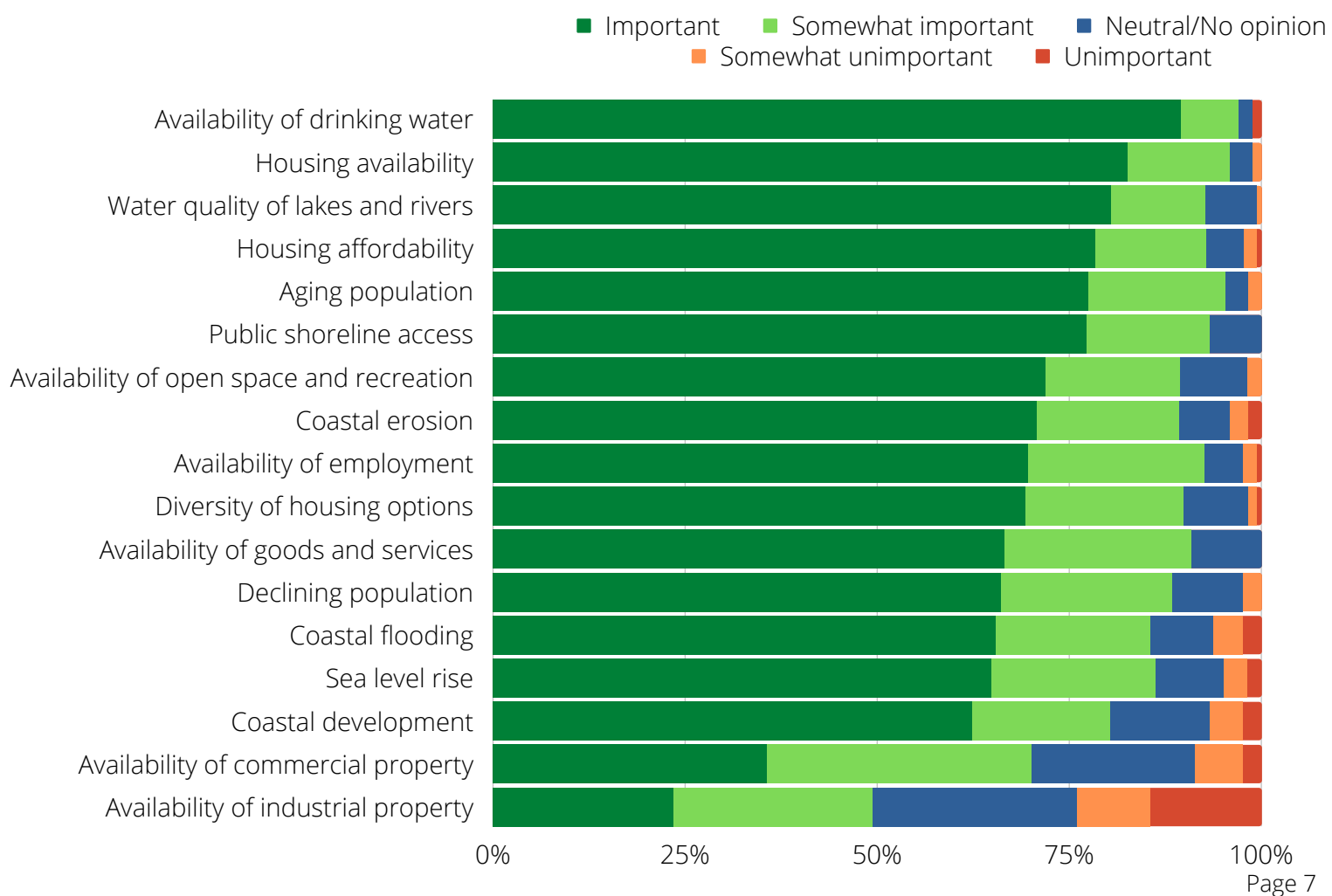


What We Heard About Planning

Across engagement methods, the majority of respondents were in support of developing planning documents for the unplanned parts of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, however they were clear that planning regulations needed to be appropriate for the rural nature of these communities. There was a strong desire to see the community character remain intact, and to avoid overly restrictive regulations whenever possible, especially where it may hinder economic development opportunities.

Survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of existing planning restrictions. The majority of residents felt that restrictions were not restrictive enough (46%) while another 41% felt they were appropriate, and the rest (14%) felt they were too restrictive.

When asked what the major issues respondents wanted to see the planning process address (see table below), the top responses were availability of drinking water, housing availability and affordability, water quality of lakes and rivers, aging population, followed by public shoreline access and availability of open space and recreation.



What We Heard About Planning

Incentivizing Development

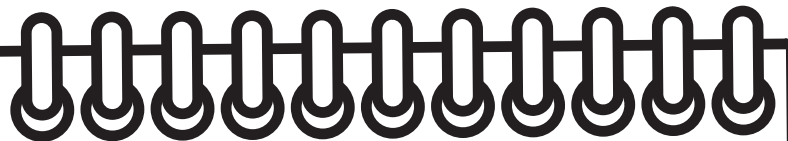
We heard some specific feedback around a desire to see incentives put in place to encourage development in established communities with amenities and infrastructure to support higher residential density. There is also a desire to see a greater range of housing diversity in these areas, such as small apartment buildings, condos and supportive housing options to accommodate different lifestyles and life stages.

Growing populations in established community cores means a greater number of residents to support more local businesses and amenities, especially those open year-round, which is strongly desired by many respondents.

Environmental Protection & Eco-Tourism

We heard a lot about the importance of the natural environment to residents in Inverness. Access to beaches, trails and rivers was of great importance to residents across all engagement methods. There is a desire to see protections around development on waterbodies, such as lakes and rivers, as well as proper setbacks from the coast.

Protecting environmental resources in the Municipality was also important to many for the economic opportunities it brings. Eco-tourism is growing in the Municipality of the County of Inverness and residents want to ensure that the new planning documents do not hinder the sector's ability to grow and prosper.



Other Important Issues Raised:

- Preserving public access to the coast
- Coastal erosion and protecting sensitive ecosystems from development
- Unregulated campgrounds and RV parks
- Lack of infrastructure to support development (i.e. water, sewer)
- Expansion of services such as high speed internet and cell reception
- Desire for restrictions around industrial development and wind turbines
- Preserving rural character/identity
- Subdivision of agricultural lands

Next Steps

Draft Engagement

There will be another round of engagement in early Summer 2022 where residents will be given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Planning Documents (both the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Land Use Bylaw). These documents are a first draft and will be subject to change pending the results of the engagement.

Engagement opportunities will include both online and in-person activities. Stay tuned for dates and locations for a workshop near you. To stay in the loop and receive regular updates, sign up on the project website:

www.planinverness.ca
www.planeasternnova.ca

Questions or Comments?

Contact the project team at:
hello@planinverness.ca



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