



PLAN RICHMOND COUNTY

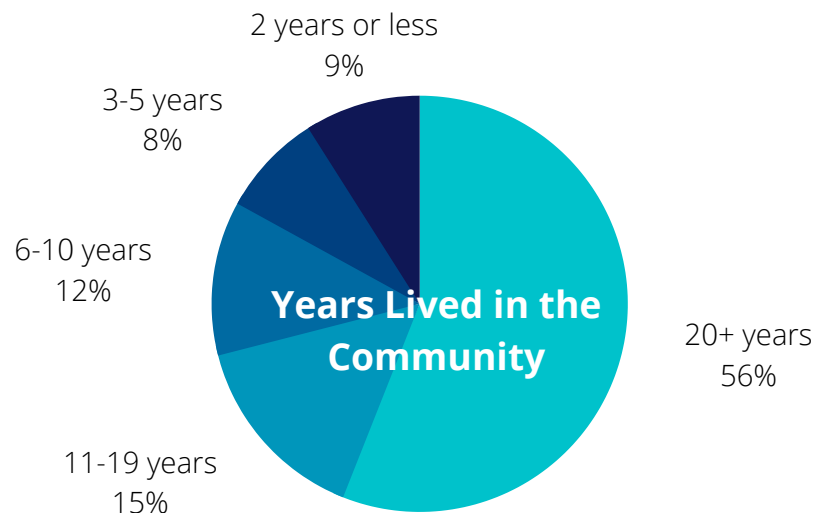
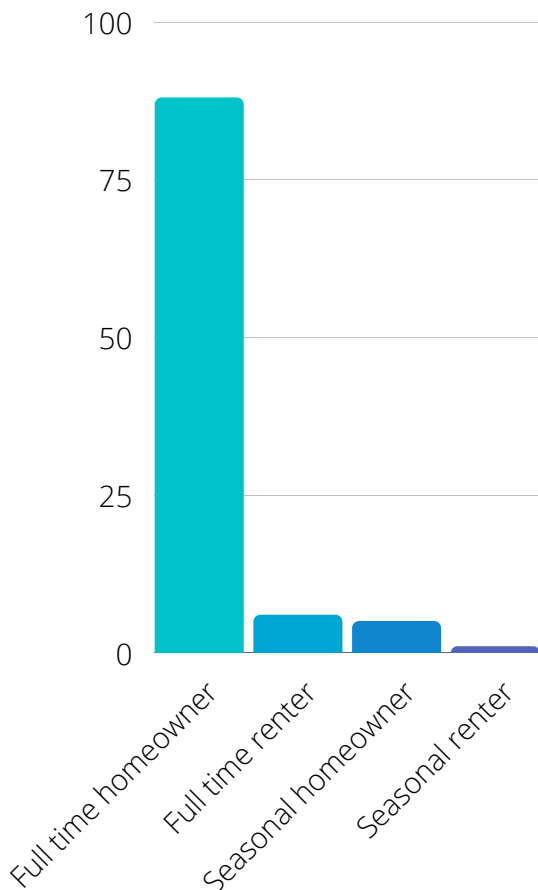
WHAT WE HEARD: INITIAL CONSULTATION SUMMARY April 2022

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)

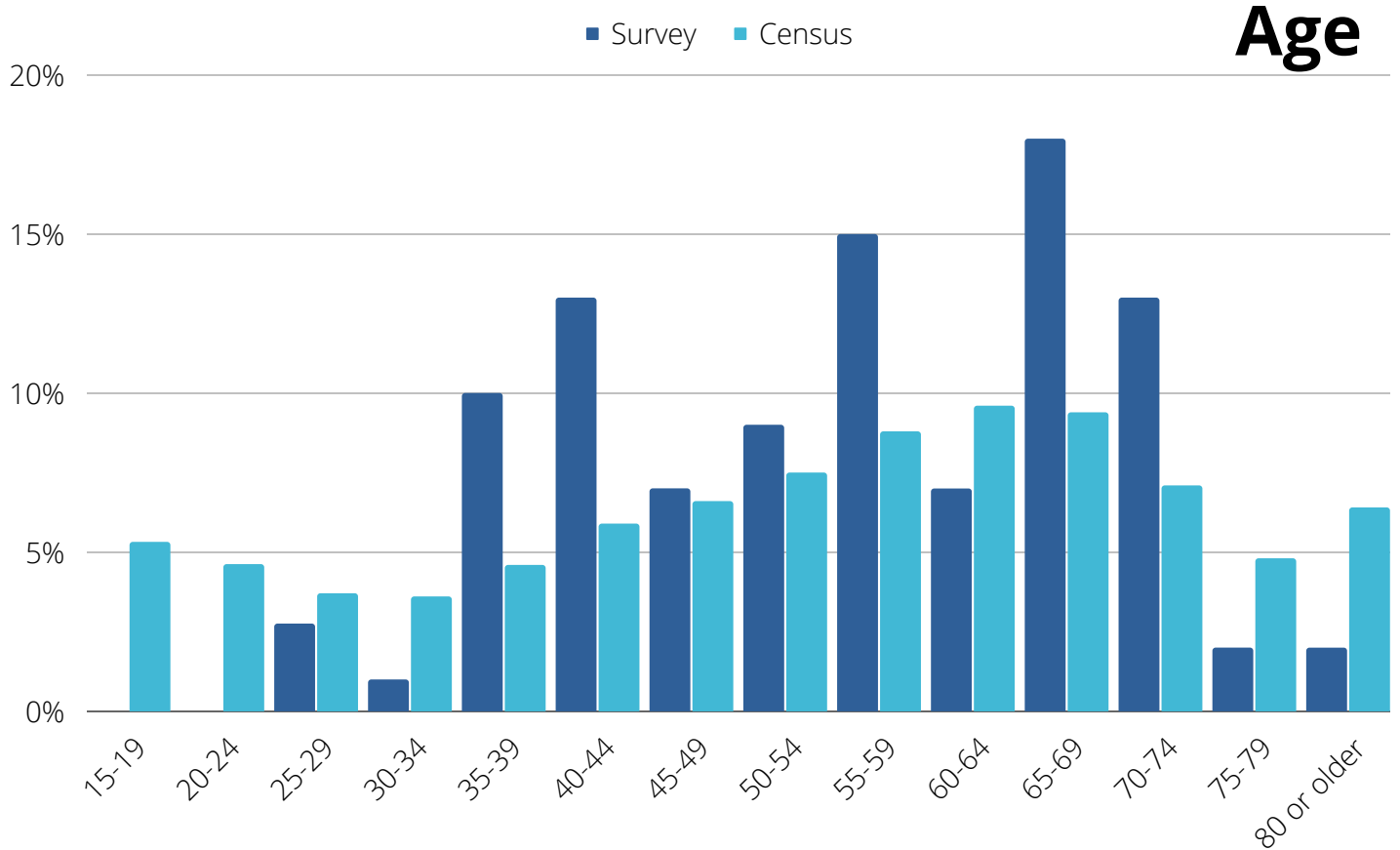
Who Did We Hear From

- + 157 survey respondents (see below for breakdown)
- + 1 email submission
- + 3 Community Vision Workbooks
- + 16 map comments

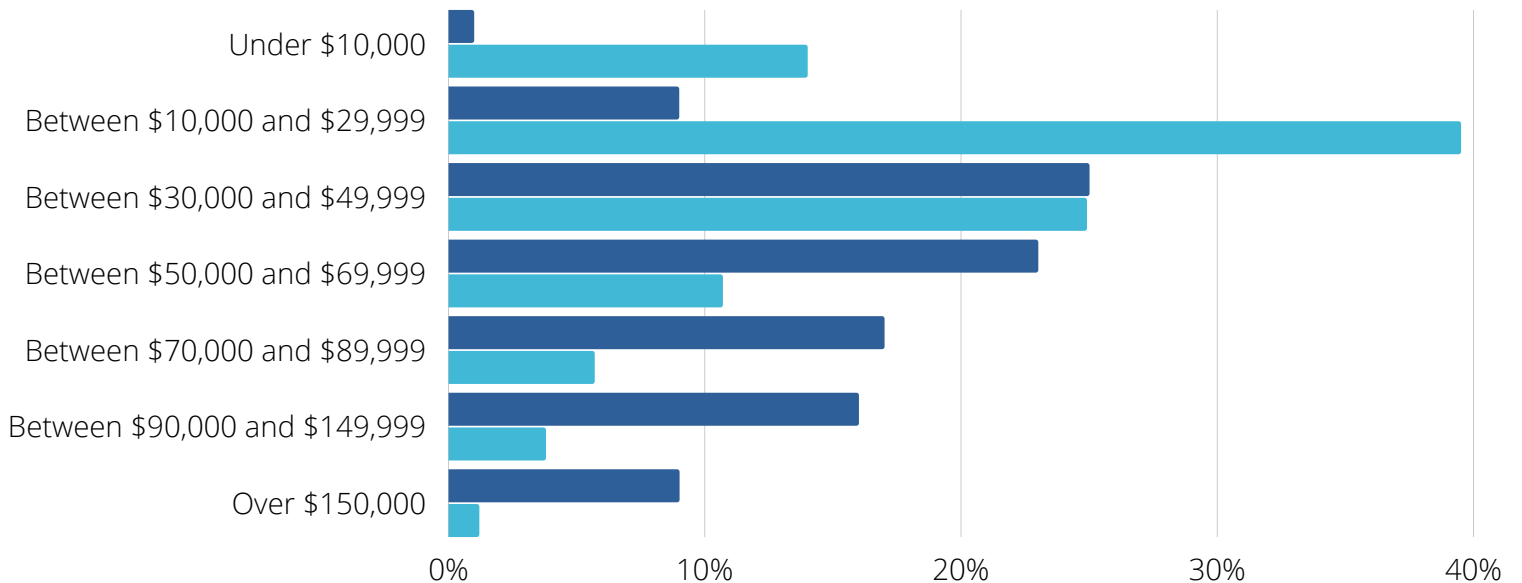


Survey Demographics vs Census Data

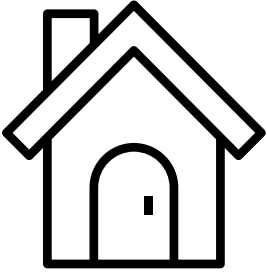
It's important when reading survey response data to understand *who* the survey has reached and *who it hasn't*. Below is a comparison of demographic data that shows survey respondents versus the most recent census data - this way we can see whose voices were over or under represented in the survey results.



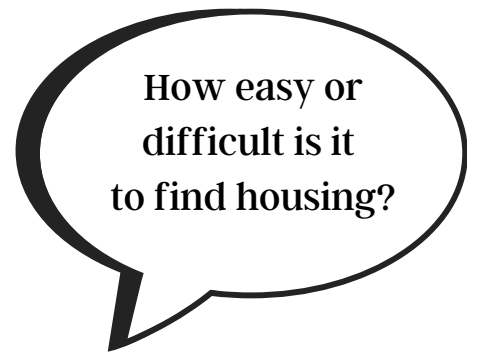
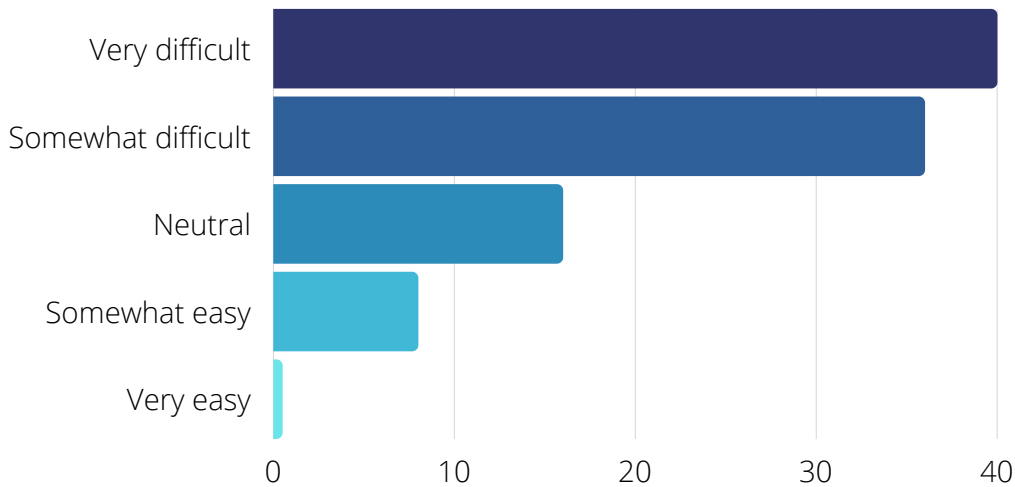
Income



What We Heard About Housing



Housing was a common topic across all engagement methods. Respondents felt that there was a lack of rental options and overall housing diversity, especially entry level homes for young families and smaller, accessible housing options for seniors. There is a desire to see communities become more diverse in age, income and cultural makeup, while maintaining the overall built character and rural atmosphere.



Top Issues for Renters:

1. Lack of year round options
2. Unaffordability
3. Difficulty accessing amenities without a vehicle
4. Properties in need of major maintenance or repair
5. Need for smaller and more accessible housing, including supportive housing options for seniors to age in place

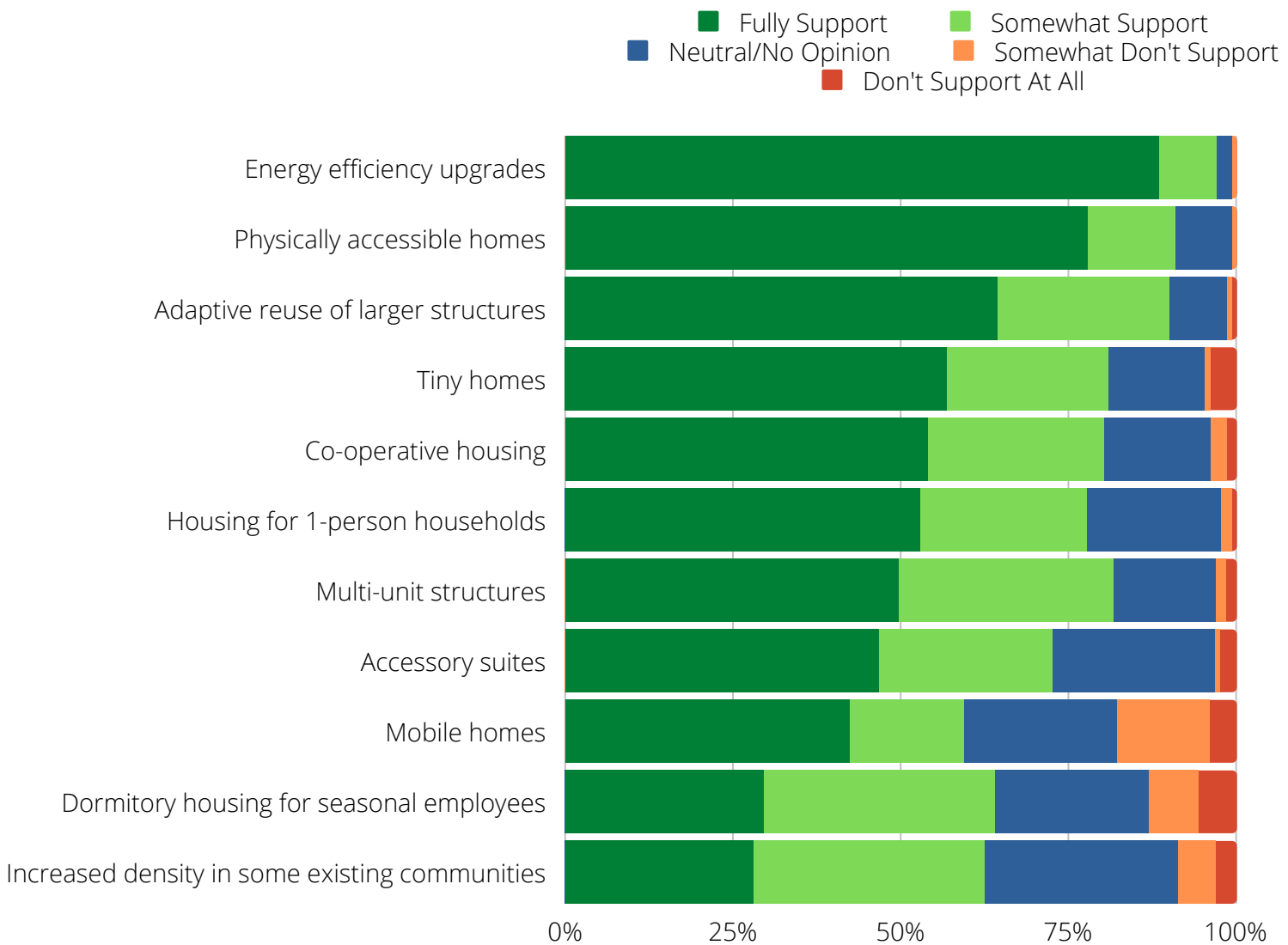
Top Issues for Homeowners:

1. Difficulties accessing amenities without a vehicle
2. Property in need of major maintenance or repair
3. Difficulty doing routine upkeep
4. Difficulty paying for services/utilities
5. Need for smaller and more accessible housing options

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 and co-operative housing. Approaches like tiny homes, housing for 1-person households, accessory suites and multi-unit structures did not receive the highest levels of support, but all saw very little opposition from respondents.

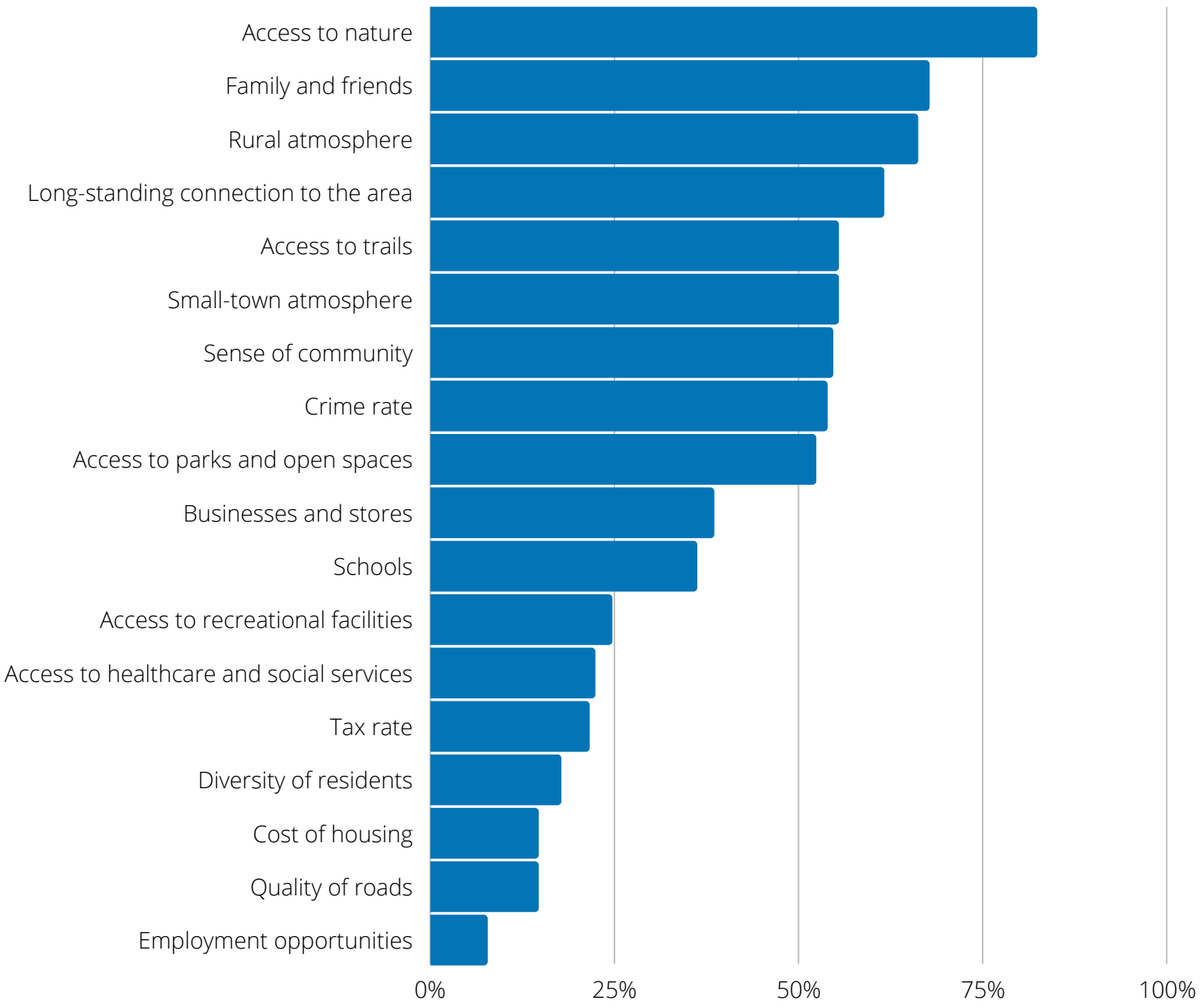


Other concerns we heard around housing:

- Development around lakeshores and coastal areas, especially the Bras d'Or
- Number of RVs permitted on a single lot
- Access to healthcare in more rural areas

What We Heard About Community Life

When asked what makes the community a great place to live, the natural environment and social fabric were top of mind with access to nature, family and friends, rural atmosphere and a long-standing connection to the area, taking the top spots.



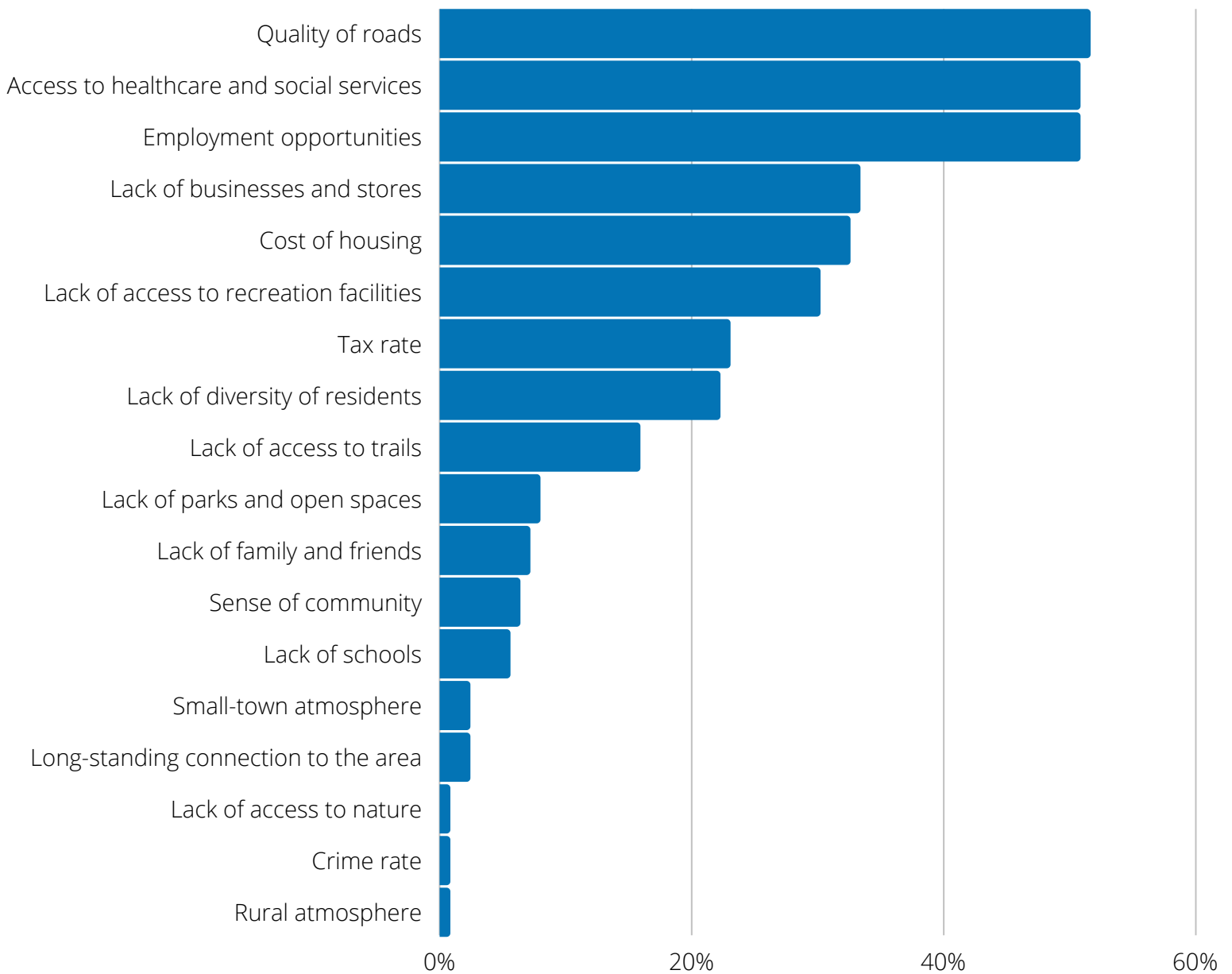
When asked what three words best describe their community, respondents were overwhelmingly positive using words like:

friendly, rural, beautiful, quiet and supportive

What We Heard About Community Life

The biggest challenges of living in the community were cited as the quality of the roads, access to healthcare and social services, employment opportunities, lack of businesses and stores and the cost of housing. Other challenges that came up across engagement methods included coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change. There was particular concern around the effects of development on the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed and protecting the quality of the water along the coast for the fishery.

Balancing the needs of recreational trail users was another issue that came up consistently across engagement methods, with many wanting to determine appropriate usage of the trail into St. Peter's (whether it should be motorized or non-motorized , or a combination, for recreational use).

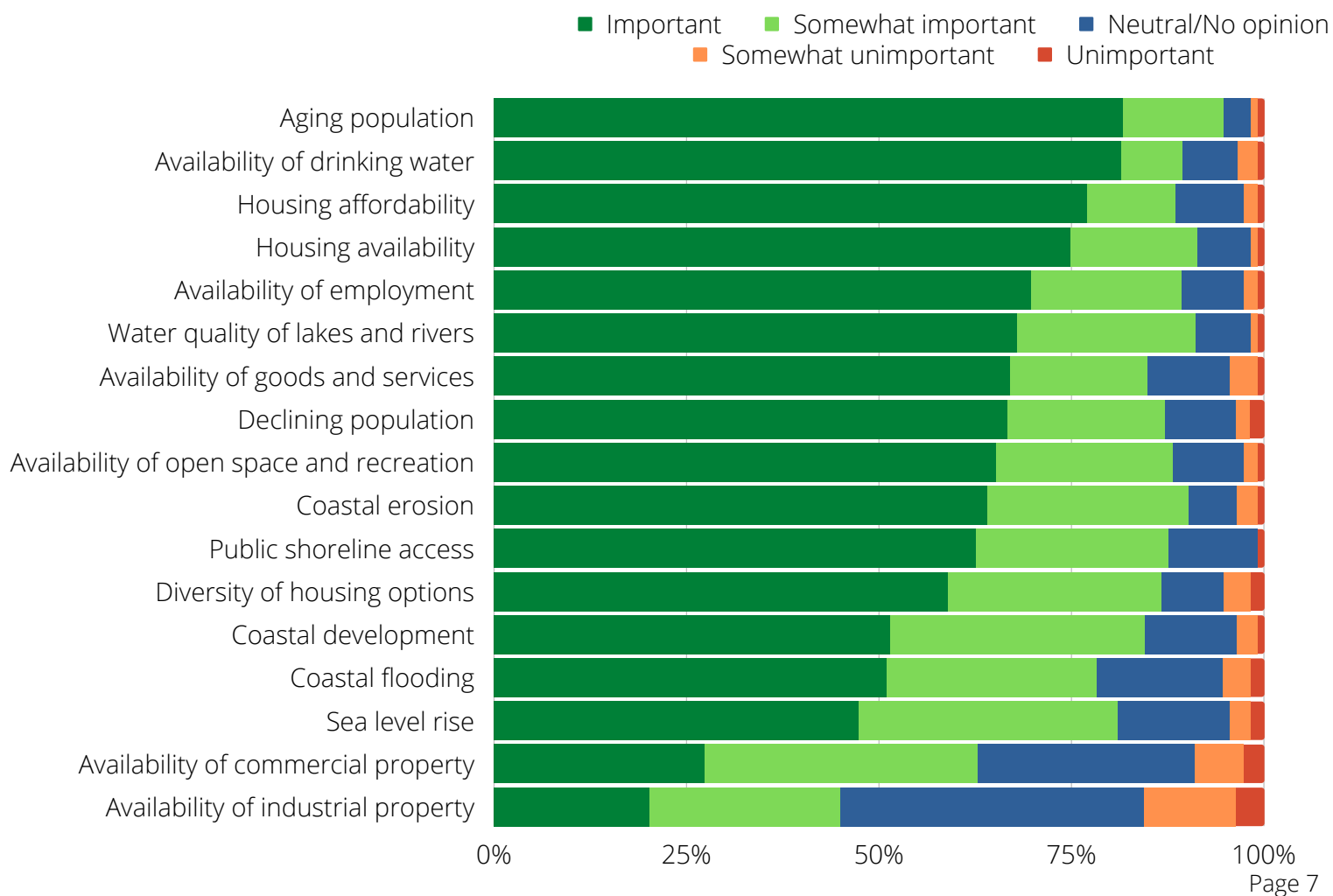


What We Heard About Planning

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 Richmond, 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. Residents also want regulations to be clear and easy to understand.

Survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of existing planning restrictions. The results were fairly evenly split with 41% of residents stating that restrictions were appropriate while another 30% felt they weren't restrictive enough, and the remaining 29% 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 aging population, availability of drinking water, housing affordability and availability, and availability of employment.



What We Heard About Planning

St. Peter's

We heard some specific feedback around this community, with a strong focus on trails in the community. There is a tension currently between ATV and non-motorized users of the local trail, and respondents were split on if motorized recreational vehicles should be permitted.

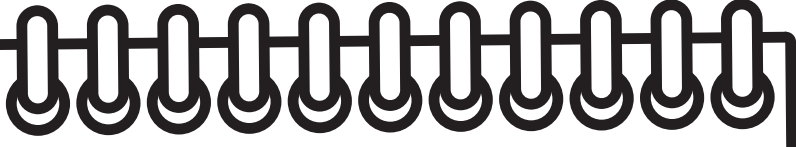
We also heard about housing affordability in the community and the desire to see more residential development to support the existing businesses and amenities that currently exist and to encourage a more robust year-round economy.

Respondents also want to see more active transportation infrastructure developed in St. Peter's, to encourage less car-dependent lifestyles.

River Bourgeois

We also heard specific feedback around River Bourgeois. There is significant concern around the impact of an aging population on the community's future. The tight knit community wants to see more supports put in place to service aging populations in rural areas and encourage residents to age in place. They also want to see more diverse housing options to encourage young families to move to the area.

In addition, there are also some environmental concerns in River Bourgeois, such as the protection of the local water supply and shorelines. Residents would like to see environmentally friendly small business grow in the area and suggested it would be a great location for a low-impact campground, which could result in more local employment and a diversification of the residents in the community.



Other Important Issues Raised:

- Trails - improvements and development of new trails for both hikers and ATVs
- Preserving public access to the coast
- Coastal erosion and protecting sensitive ecosystems from development
- Expansion of infrastructure and services such as sidewalks and bike lanes, high speed internet and cell reception
- Climate change adaptation
- Preserving rural character
- Working waterfronts
- More public consultation for large scale developments

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.planrichmond.ca
www.planeasternnova.ca

Questions or Comments?

Contact the project team at:
hello@planrichmond.ca



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