



REGIONAL HOUSING INVENTORY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY





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1.0 Project Overview

Providing a mixture of housing types and tenures of varying levels of affordability is essential for creating a diverse, inclusive, and healthy community. To best meet the housing needs of current and future residents and understand how affordable, safe, and suitable housing options can be provided as the community evolves, the County of St. Paul, the Town of St. Paul, the Town of Elk Point, and the Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay are preparing a Regional Housing Strategy.

1.1 Project Approach



1.2 Engagement and Communications Overview

As part of Phase 1: Identifying Housing Needs, multiple engagement opportunities were provided to share information and gather feedback from the municipalities, residents, and interested parties. Community Workshops and Survey opportunities were advertised through posters, two newspaper advertisements in *Lakeland Today* and *Lakeland This Week*, social media posts (Facebook and Instagram), through each municipality's website, and through a project webpage (www.stpaulregionalhousing.com). External focus groups and key informant interviews were more targeted and those who participated received email invitations to provide feedback.

- **Online Engagement** (February 3 to 24): An online and paper survey was available to gather feedback from residents. 60 submissions were received. A project website was also created to serve as a central platform for sharing project information, engagement opportunities, and provide ways to contact the project team.
- **Council Workshops** (February 5 and 6): Two workshops were facilitated with representatives from Council from all four municipalities. These discussions were held to learn about what elected officials have been hearing from residents, gaps they have identified in their communities, and key housing priorities for each municipality and the region as a whole.
- **Community Workshops** (February 5 and 6): Two in-person drop-in community workshops were held in the Town of St. Paul and the Town of Elk Point to learn about residents' experiences with housing in the region, including any specific challenges they have faced, and ideas they have to address housing needs. Approximately 28 people participated in the workshops and provided input.



- **External Focus Groups** (February 10 and 11): Two virtual focus groups were facilitated. The first included local builders and developers, while the second was with housing and service providers (such as community agencies and representatives of at-risk groups. 14 distinct organizations and groups were represented at these focus groups.
- **Key Informant Interviews** (February 3 to 21): 8 telephone (or virtual) interviews were facilitated with key housing and service providers, representatives from each municipality, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and St. Paul/Elk Point Economic Development Alliance (STEP).

2.0 Phase 1 Community Engagement – Overall Key Themes

The table below details a high-level summary of key themes that emerged from feedback provided through the external focus groups, key informant interviews, the community workshops, and online engagement.

Key Themes	Description
Housing Affordability and Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable and accessible housing options are needed for young adults, single parents, low-income families and individuals, people experiencing homelessness, people with pets, people experiencing mental and physical disabilities, newcomers, and seniors.
Rental Availability and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More rentals are needed, along with increased accountability for landlords to provide safe and adequate housing. • More affordable rentals are also required to meet the needs of vulnerable sectors of the community, such as those mentioned above.
Housing Supports and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More services to obtain and maintain housing, such as physical and mental health supports, assisted living, and culturally sensitive services, among others, are needed to support vulnerable populations like youth, seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities, Indigenous residents, and residents experiencing homelessness and addiction.
Government Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More collaboration with all levels of government is needed to support service providers and industry in providing more affordable and diverse housing solutions. • Funding opportunities for service providers are limited, and more is needed to maintain and expand current emergency and supportive housing to meet the needs they are seeing in the community. • Developers are looking for financial incentives and more flexible regulations to develop more housing in the region since development costs often exceed the potential sale prices of homes, making it challenging to achieve viable profit margins. • Homeowners and/or landlords are also looking for government incentives for home maintenance and repairs to maintain safe and comfortable housing.
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable and accessible housing for seniors that supports different levels of independence and care is needed.



Increased Development and Housing Supply/Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to unlock a variety of residential development opportunities due to a shortage of diverse and affordable housing options, with the most popular housing options being smaller or tiny homes, and modest housing. • Other forms of housing noted to be in demand are short-term emergency housing (e.g. men's shelter) and higher density mixed-use developments like apartments and row housing/town houses. These options are in higher demand in some municipalities over others. • Regulatory and bureaucratic barriers to developing more diverse and affordable housing, such as zoning bylaws and long approval processes, are an issue for both service providers and industry. • To attract housing investments, more services, amenities and job opportunities are needed to retain current residents and sustain a steady growth rate.
Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a desire for collaboration and partnerships between developers, service providers, educational and other institutional facilities, and municipalities in the region to facilitate more affordable and diverse housing solutions.
Other Housing Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing-related costs, such as utilities and taxes, and the general high cost of living are adding strain on affordability.

3.0 Council Workshops

From the two workshops held with Council representatives from all four municipalities, the project team learned more about what Council members were hearing from residents regarding housing in the region. Council representatives shared there was an overall lack of supportive or transitional housing (e.g. for seniors, children/youth in foster care, and people with disabilities), affordable rental options and affordable options for middle-income earners. People who are most impacted are seniors, children and youth, Indigenous populations, people with disabilities, newcomers, and essential workers (e.g. RCMP, health care workers, social workers, and teachers). A number of barriers were identified within these conversations, both at the regional level and more specific to each municipality.

4.0 External Focus Groups

The following section provides a high-level summary of feedback gathered as part of the two external focus groups.

4.1 Themes from Discussions with Industry (Residential Developers, Landlords and Real Estate Agents)

- **Current Supply & Strengths:** The homeownership market in the region is relatively stable. However, rental demand is high, with little to no availability of quality rentals. Other regional strengths include affordability, recreational opportunities, and the welcoming environment of local communities.



- **Gaps & Challenges:** Developing rental housing is increasingly difficult due to high construction costs, and high property taxes, insurance, and utility costs. There is a need for senior housing and workforce housing (e.g., for RCMP officers, nurses, teachers). Developers struggle with zoning and regulatory barriers, long approval processes, making it easier to build in surrounding areas. There is also a preference for building housing for sale instead of purpose-built rentals.
- **Solutions & Strategies:** Developers suggest reducing regulatory hurdles, re-evaluating bylaws that limit certain housing options (such as tiny homes and ready-to-move houses or RTM), and providing financial incentives like tax breaks and grants (from all levels of government) to encourage housing development. There is interest in smaller, modest, and affordable housing options, as well as better collaboration between municipalities and developers.

4.2 Themes from Discussions with Housing and Support Service Providers

- **Current Supply & Strengths:** Some affordable and seniors' housing exists but demand far exceeds supply. The longest waiting lists are for seniors and larger family units. The region has a women's shelter, but there is no men's shelter, and emergency housing options are limited.
- **Gaps & Challenges:** The greatest shortages are in three- and four-bedroom units for larger families, accessible housing for people with physical and mental disabilities, transitional housing for individuals leaving hospitals, those requiring other support systems, and people experiencing homelessness. Other challenges include a limited rental market and safety concerns of short-term or overcrowded living spaces. Many residents struggle with affordability, and zoning regulations make it difficult to establish more diverse housing due to limited opportunities for densification and non-traditional forms of housing.
- **Solutions & Strategies:** Priorities include expanding safe and affordable rental housing, increasing accessible housing, and developing mixed-use housing with supportive services to meet diverse needs (e.g. community-oriented housing, housing with skill-building or mental health services). Alternative solutions, such as converting motels into housing or creating multi-generational living arrangements, were also discussed. Funding and limited organizational capacity continue to be major challenges for non-profits.

5.0 Key Informant Interviews

The following section provides a high-level summary of feedback gathered during the key informant interviews.

5.1 Town of Elk Point

Most Pressing Housing Needs

We asked what the most pressing housing needs in the Town of Elk Point are. The following comments were shared:

- Senior's housing is in high demand and people are looking for single-detached homes with support for landscaping, maintenance, and home upkeep.
- There is also a lack of housing for working professionals. Without enough accommodation in Elk Point, some working professionals are working remotely.



Gaps and Challenges

We asked what gaps or challenges exist in the current housing supply or infrastructure services in the Town of Elk Point. The following comments were shared:

- There are high rental costs and low availability. There is no availability of new apartments although some older apartments have been recently renovated.
- Currently there is no market for homes valued beyond \$350,000 in price. All homes valued under \$150,000 are no longer available.
- The Town is trying to attract industry as Elk Point does not have one specific industry providing employment like the Town of St. Paul.
- There is also a need to remove red tape (regulatory and bureaucratic processes) that act as barriers to addressing housing needs.

Current Resident Feedback and Concerns

We asked what feedback or concerns about housing are most often heard from residents and interested parties. The following comments were shared:

- People are saying that there is a need to attract young people to Elk Point.
- People are looking for growth in services and amenities to attract young adults and professionals to the Town.

Opportunities and Strengths

We asked what opportunities or strengths exist within the municipality and the region as a whole for addressing housing needs. The following comments were shared:

- Elk Point has land available and is currently working with developers to develop housing. For example, a hotel was recently converted into short-term housing.
- Elk Point also has 14 lots that are serviced and can potentially be used for building housing for seniors (for rent and for sale).
- The Town is open to working with partners and developers to get projects started.
- There is an initiative to attract young adults and professionals who are looking for a rural and affordable lifestyle.
- There is a good relationship between municipalities in the region to work together on housing, potentially sharing expenses and revenue.

Main Priority for the Town of Elk Point and the Region

We asked what do you see as the biggest priority for meeting future housing needs within the municipality and the region. The following comments were shared:

- Infrastructure needs to be in place to meet housing demand.
- Better planning can help with overcoming barriers to meeting housing demands.

5.2 Town of St. Paul

Most Pressing Housing Needs

We asked what the most pressing housing needs in the Town of St. Paul are. The following comments were shared:



- St. Paul is in need of diverse affordable housing for people of all ages and life circumstances. This may include housing for seniors, young families, and young adults/professionals. Many young adults, in particular, are unable to afford housing in the Town.
- Only a few housing projects have been initiated, with one or two developments each year.

Gaps and Challenges

We asked what gaps or challenges exist in the current housing supply or infrastructure services in the Town of St. Paul. The following comments were shared:

- People are unable to afford large homes. The Town needs options that are smaller and more entry-level. As a result, the Town is concerned about retaining current residents.
- There is also a lack of options for people with additional struggles (i.e. people lower income or people experiencing addiction).
- The Town of St. Paul is limited by support staff to address housing concerns.

Current Resident Feedback and Concerns

We asked what feedback or concerns about housing are most often heard from residents and interested parties. The following comments were shared:

- With increasing housing costs, there are more multi-generational families.
- Cost of building and the cost of construction is too high.

Opportunities and Strengths

We asked what opportunities or strengths exist within the municipality and the region as a whole for addressing housing needs. The following comments were shared:

- Currently the Town of St. Paul is busy processing numerous commercial or minor home occupation application from residents. People are able to work remotely and make an income while living in Town.
- Municipalities, developers, service providers and other partners must work together to address the housing situation in the region, although each municipality will require their own plan to meet local needs.

Main Priority for the Town of St. Paul and the Region

We asked what do you see as the biggest priority for meeting future housing needs within the municipality and the region. The following comments were shared:

- Having a Housing Strategy has brought attention to the housing issues in the area and will provide a baseline for making decisions.

5.3 County of St. Paul

Most Pressing Housing Needs

We asked what the most pressing housing needs in the County of St. Paul are. The following comments were shared:

- There is some availability, but housing is not always affordable or the right type of housing for people's circumstances. There are also areas where housing quality is inadequate.
- As a result, people are moving to urban centres to find options or must bring their own homes to the County.



Gaps and Challenges

We asked what gaps or challenges exist in the current housing supply or infrastructure services in the County of St. Paul. The following comments were shared:

- Need to meet the needs of lower-income households as these households will likely leave the County.
- More awareness building of what services are available in a rural area.
- There is interest in subdividing land however, not everyone can afford the cost.

Current Resident Feedback and Concerns

We asked what feedback or concerns about housing are most often heard from residents and interested parties. The following comments were shared:

- There is not much feedback or concern about housing in the County.
- Typically, housing discussions are centred around people looking for rental housing, which is done through social media or word of mouth.

Opportunities and Strengths

We asked what opportunities or strengths exist within the municipality and the region as a whole for addressing housing needs. The following comments were shared:

- Some previously seasonal homes are now becoming more permanent.
- The current regulations allow for more diverse housing options like secondary suites, mobile parks, and garage suites however there may be opportunities to continue broadening what housing options can be developed.
- The County will continue with single-lot subdivisions to create more housing opportunities in rural areas.
- Existing relationships between municipalities and Councils are strong, with communication happening regularly. There is increasing efforts to involve other service providers in planning and development like people in health and safety and fire department.

Main Priority for the County of St. Paul and the Region

We asked what do you see as the biggest priority for meeting future housing needs within the municipality and the region. The following comments were shared:

- Providing a diverse range of housing options that support single households, families and lower-income households. This includes exploring opportunities with small housing forms and housing that provides supports.
- Investing in maintenance and repairs of the current housing stock to make housing more liveable.

5.4 Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay

Most Pressing Housing Needs

We asked what the most pressing housing needs in the Summer Village are. The following comments were shared:

- Transitional housing for people who need to transition out of their rural homes. For example, seniors sometimes have to leave their community and live in other municipalities to access additional care and services.



- Young adults who grew up in Horseshoe Bay are unable to find or afford housing in the region.

Gaps and Challenges

We asked what gaps or challenges exist in the current housing supply or infrastructure services in the Summer Village. The following comments were shared:

- Horseshoe Bay is starting to see people leave the municipality and look for housing elsewhere.
- Current permits only allow single-detached homes.
- The community is reliant on vehicle transportation to access services.

Opportunities and Strengths

We asked what opportunities or strengths exist within the municipality and the region as a whole for addressing housing needs. The following comments were shared:

- There is a potential for incentivizing seasonal homeowners to convert their homes to year-round residential, either for their own purposes or for the purpose of selling or renting.
- Currently there are 35 vacant lots that are privately owned but could be used for new builds.
- There is currently a transportation study for the region that could benefit residents of Horseshoe Bay.

Main Priority for the Horseshoe Bay and the Region

We asked what do you see as the biggest priority for meeting future housing needs within the municipality and the region. The following comments were shared:

- Collaboration across the region is optimal for partnerships in addressing housing issues.
- The main priority is converting seasonal homes to year-round residential to create more housing opportunities.

5.5 Métis Urban and Capital Housing

The Métis Urban and Capital Housing provide affordable housing units across the province of Alberta in thirteen urban centres, with the Town of St. Paul being one the municipalities where they operate. Housing is provided for both First Nations and Métis people however some programs are prioritized for Métis people. Currently in the Town of St. Paul, there are seven units, one 4-bedroom unit and the six 3-bedroom units.

The following summarizes the challenges experienced by Indigenous peoples regarding housing in the region:

- Overall, there is a need for more subsidized or affordable units.
- Waitlist for units are lengthy, and individuals and families may have to wait up to a year or longer for housing.
- Another challenge includes securing contractors and materials supply in a timely manner so people can be housed quickly.

5.6 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

The RCMP is Canada's national police service and work in 150 communities across the country. The RCMP also provide policing services in more than 600 Indigenous communities. The RCMP Officer interviewed has a service area that includes Elk Point, Frog Lake First Nation, Fishing Lake Métis settlement, and surrounding rural areas and does not include the Town of St. Paul. In addition to the



Officer, other staff who provided input was the Crime Reduction Officer, St. Paul Sargent, and Acting Detachment Services Supervisor.

The following summarizes the housing challenges experienced by people in the region:

- The RCMP receives numerous calls (roughly 2-3 calls per day) related to unhoused individuals struggling with mental health or substance use. Only a few calls are about criminal activity, with most activity occurring within the unhoused community and not directed to the public.
- Gaps in housing and services to support the unhoused population creates a persistent cycle of homelessness. The RCMP will respond to calls and provide temporary shelter in jail cells however, unhoused individuals will return back to public spaces and continue to struggle.
- The RCMP is not equipped to provide shelter or support unhoused people. Resources are being strained as a result.
- Many people experiencing homelessness are Indigenous.
- Staff were also concerned about where funding will be sourced but noted that more funding is needed from all levels of government to build more supportive housing and services.
- Supportive housing examples shared by the staff include shelters that provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), a men's shelter, 24/7 services, and case management.
- The RCMP also occasionally receives calls about shelter referrals, with the only regional option being the Capella women's shelter in the Town of St. Paul. The next closest shelters are in Cold Lake or Lloydminster.
- The RCMP works closely with Alberta Supports, which connects people requiring shelter with local services and provides the appropriate referrals.
- The RCMP also noted that there are insufficient housing options for their staff and other public service professionals. There is also a high demand for housing for the Frog Lake First Nations and many are leaving their community to access housing. This could potentially increase the demand for housing and services in surrounding communities.

5.7 St. Paul/Elk Point Economic Development Alliance (STEP)

STEP works towards attracting and retaining residents and promoting economic development in the region. Member communities include County of St. Paul, Town of St. Paul, Town of Elk Point, and Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay. Key industries within the region include agriculture, energy, manufacturing and tourism.

The following summarizes the housing challenges and opportunities experienced by people in the region:

- Although there is a pressing need for affordable housing, there are housing needs across the continuum (i.e. market housing).
- Collaboration between municipalities and realtors is important for addressing housing demands and gaps.
- The region is currently investing in new economic projects that could attract more future residents like wind energy, hemp agriculture, and remote work.
- There is an opportunity to attract past residents who have left and bring them back to the region through economic and housing opportunities.
- Transportation and regional connectivity are key factors in facilitating access to more diverse housing opportunities. STEP is currently leading a transportation study for the region, which will represent a significant advancement of economic and social goals.



6.0 Community Workshops and Online Engagement

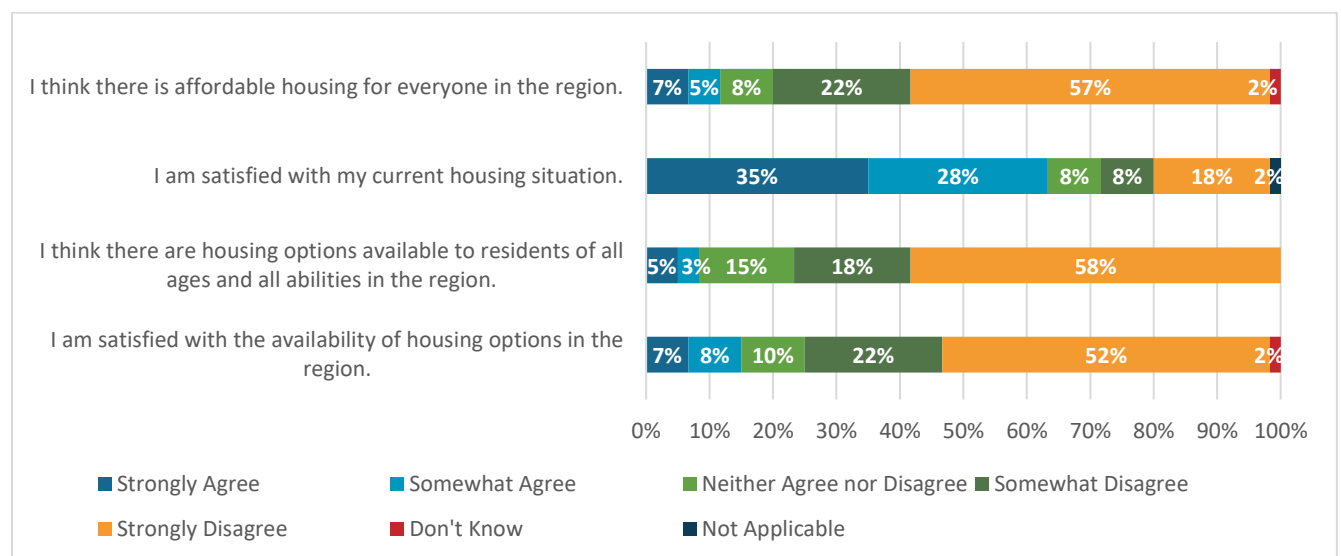
Interested and affected parties and residents were asked to provide feedback on the challenges and opportunities to providing and accessing safe, adequate, and affordable housing in the region. The following section provides a high-level summary of feedback received through the two community workshops and online survey. Paper surveys were available however all survey responses were received online.

6.1 Current Housing Perspectives

Survey participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements about the current housing situation in the region of St. Paul.

- When asking respondents whether they thought there were affordable housing options for everyone in the region, 79% of people **strongly or somewhat disagreed** with the statement.
- 63% of respondents **strongly or somewhat agreed** that they were satisfied with their current housing situation in the region.
- 76% of respondents **strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed** that there were housing options available for all ages and all abilities in the region.
- 74% of respondents **strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed** that they were satisfied with the availability of housing options in the region.

Responses: 60 through the survey



Responses: 74 through the survey

Survey participants were asked to explain their selections. The following summarizes the top themes from feedback shared:

- **Availability of housing:** People noted that there is a lack of housing as well as diversity of housing options within the town that can accommodate seniors, young adults and professionals,



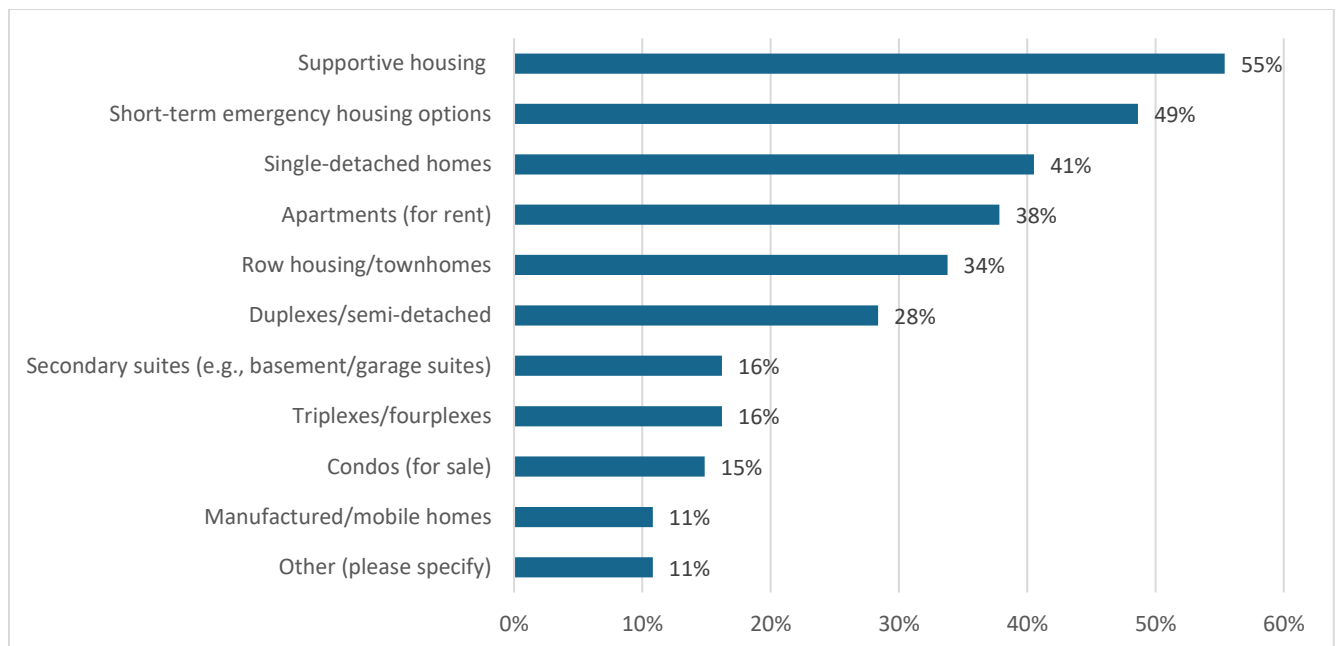
low-income households, families, and people with disabilities. Rental options are particularly lacking and/or not accommodating to families and people with pets. A small minority shared that there are lots of housing options but not the right types of housing.

- **Affordability of housing:** Many noted that more affordable housing, for rent and ownership, are necessary for the region. Those who were satisfied with their living situation were mostly homeowners or people sharing housing with family.
- **High housing costs:** Some people shared that the cost of housing and housing-related costs (taxes, utilities, etc.) are too high, making it challenging to afford a home.
- **Issues with current housing stock:** Several people shared that the current housing is poor quality and requires maintenance. Some rentals were noted to be unsuitable due to bug infestation, poor management, and undesirable activity.

Responses: 36 through the survey

6.2 Housing Options Needed

Residents were asked to share what types of housing they believe are most needed in the region. The top five housing needs participants identified were supportive housing (55%), short-term emergency housing options (49%), single-detached homes (41%), apartments to rent (38%) and row housing/townhomes (34%).



Responses: 74 from the survey and 16 responses from the community workshops (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses

- Homes up for sale that are being underutilized and owned by people who have moved out of region but have been unable to sell.
- Need for more diverse rental housing options.
- More housing options (tiny homes, housing co-ops, single-person dwellings, manufactured homes).



- Quality affordable housing for diverse groups.
- There is a need for short term emergency housing (e.g. men's shelter), supportive housing and apartments of higher quality.

6.3 Supportive Housing Needs

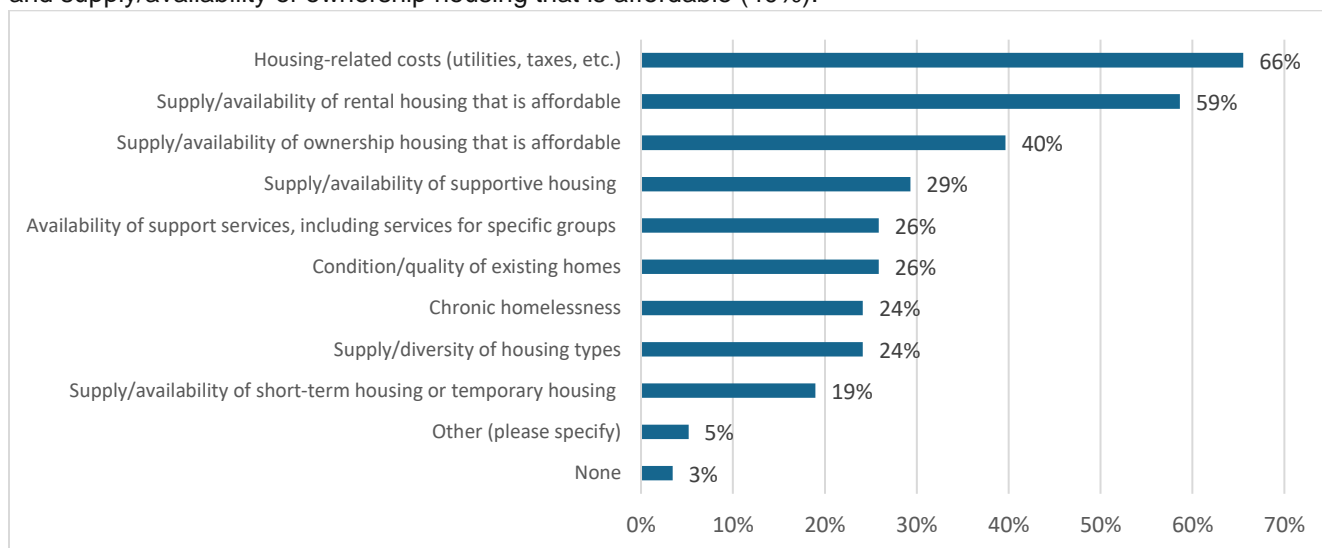
Participants were asked to further specify the types of supportive housing needed for the region. Below is a summary of the responses:

- **Housing for seniors:** The majority of respondents specified that housing for seniors and assisted living was important for the region. Some mentioned the importance of housing that prioritizes different levels of independence and care for seniors.
- **Housing for people with disabilities:** Some people noted that housing is needed for those experiencing physical and mental disabilities. Some examples include having housing that includes accessibility equipment, housing with assisted living, and supportive services for mental health.
- **Transitional housing and shelters:** A few people shared that housing is required for people experiencing homelessness or people struggling with substance use. Some examples include having transitional housing, a men's shelter, and generally housing that is accommodating to diverse support needs.

Responses: 35 from the survey and 6 responses from the community workshops

6.4 Pressing Housing Issues¹

We asked survey respondents to select the top 3 most pressing housing issues residents are currently experiencing in the region. The top 3 issues that people thought were most important were housing related costs like utilities, taxes, etc. (66%), supply/availability of rental housing that is affordable (59%), and supply/availability of ownership housing that is affordable (40%).



Responses: 58 through the survey (participants could select all that apply)

¹ Chronic homelessness is defined as individuals who have been homeless for six months or more in the past year



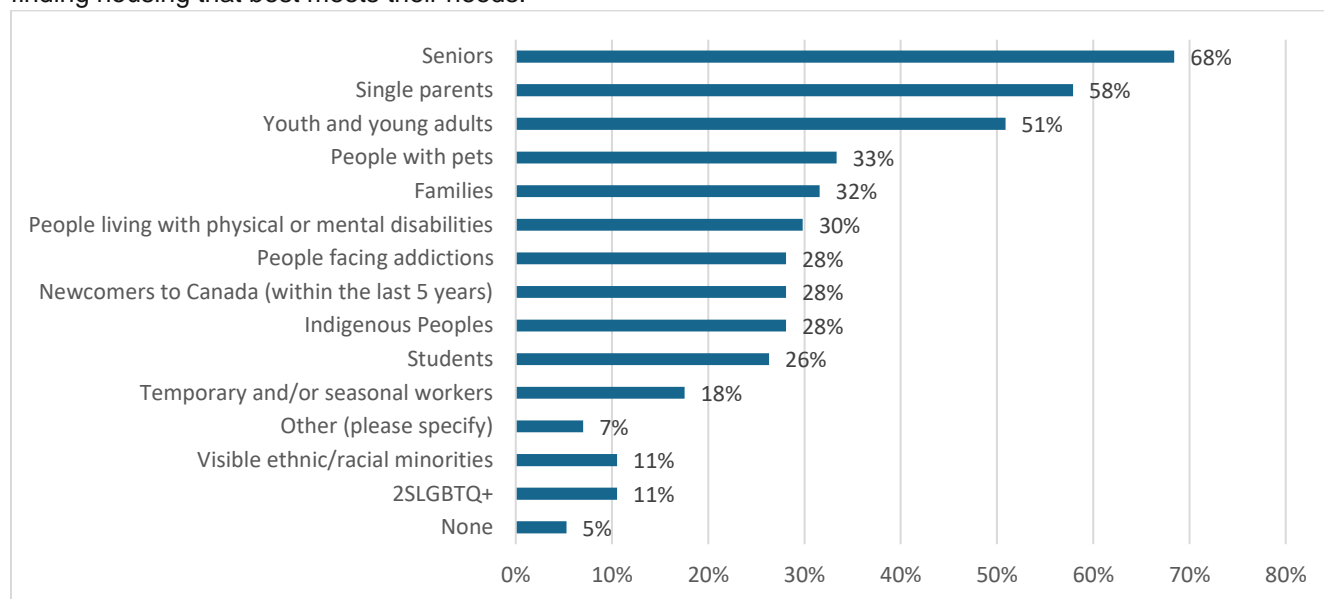
We asked people to elaborate on the top 3 issues identified above and the following comments were shared by survey respondents:

- Although the top concern was previously noted to be housing-related costs (66%), only a few people elaborated on housing-related costs being too high.
- The majority of concerns shared were on the availability and affordability of owning and renting in the region.
- Many people stressed that the costs of owning and renting are too high, and the price of homes are misaligned with the current quality of housing.
- Some respondents also raised concerns that more resources are needed to support those experiencing homelessness or addiction. For example, existing emergency shelters only provide housing to people who are sober.

Responses: 18

6.5 Groups Who Might Experience Challenges²

We asked survey respondents to identify groups who might experience more challenges in finding adequate housing in the region. Respondents indicated that seniors (68%), single parents (58%), youth and young adults (51%), people with pets (33%) and families (32%) might experience challenges when finding housing that best meets their needs.



Responses: 57 through the survey (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- People with financial challenges
- There are many options for everyone
- Landlords may be discriminatory and not accept applications from certain groups

² 2SLGBTQ+ is an acronym for Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and additional identities



6.6 Housing Challenges in the Next 5-10 Years

We asked survey respondents and people at the community workshops to share housing challenges that the region will face over the next 5-10 years. The following are key themes related to future housing challenges:

- **Availability of affordable housing options to own or rent:** The majority of people noted that the main challenge is the shortage of affordable housing available to meet the needs of diverse populations, including seniors, families, youth adults, and people experiencing homelessness. There were also a couple of concerns that housing will need to be resilient to climate change impacts and optimally, communities are created to encourage healthy lifestyles. A few people noted that housing valued more than \$300,000 is vacant and too expensive for the local market.
- **Senior housing:** Many respondents also stressed the need for more housing for seniors that offer different levels of care and are accommodating to Indigenous peoples.
- **Quality and maintenance of housing:** A few people pointed out the issue of aging homes and the general poor quality of housing options in the region.
- **Attracting people to live in the region:** Some people shared that there will be challenges in retaining current residents and attracting future residents due to the lack of housing and economic state of the region.
- **High cost of living:** A few people noted that the high cost of living will continue to be a challenge, with increasing costs to affording housing and related housing costs.

Responses: 38 through the survey and 6 responses at the community workshops.

6.7 Innovative Housing Options

To best meet the housing needs of residents of all ages and abilities, we asked survey respondents and people at the community workshop to share innovative housing options that would be suitable in the region.

- **Diverse housing types and increased density:** Most people mentioned numerous different types of housing options, with tiny homes or small starter homes being the most popular. Higher density housing was also noted several times, including apartments, row housing, multi-family dwellings, multi-use developments, and condos. One respondent shared that housing also needs to be inclusive and non-discriminatory, which may include not concentrating affordable/low-income housing all in one area and causing segregation. A few others suggested converting non-traditional structures into housing like hotels/motels, grain storage, shipping containers and winterized RVs.
- **Senior's housing:** A couple of people shared ideas for seniors housing that allow for continued independence with available supportive services and security in place for increased safety. These ideas include having more long-term care beds, small homes with communal spaces, and apartment buildings designated for seniors.
- **Transitional housing and shelters:** A few respondents stressed that transitional homes and shelters are still needed. These options will provide supportive services such as counseling, medical care, and education and career services to those in need. One individual emphasized the importance of housing as the foundation for improving other aspects of life (employment, health, stability).



- **Planning for maintenance and repairs of homes:** A few people mentioned that renters and homeowners require support to maintain safe quality housing, with support involving education/awareness building, grants to update current homes, and a long-term investment plan.
- **Public transportation:** A couple of people shared that public transportation could support housing in the region by reducing parking issues and allowing for population and economic growth in the region.
- **Regulatory and political barriers:** A couple of respondents noted that there were barriers within the bylaws for building more innovative housing solutions or that more diverse housing would need to be supported by municipal governments.
- Only a couple of respondents did not think the region needed innovative housing solutions.

Responses: 36 through the survey and 11 responses at the community workshops.

6.8 Identifying Priority Action

We asked survey respondents and people at the community workshop to identify one action that they think will have a positive impact on housing in the region. Most people identified the top priority for the region as building more diverse and affordable housing options. Other actions noted by respondents include:

- Building a shelter for people experiencing homelessness and focusing on harm reduction and trauma informed care.
- Creating a regulatory and policy environment that is supportive of development and investment by developers, industry and businesses.
- Implementing rent controls.
- Holding landlords and renters accountable to keeping the neighbourhood safe.
- Lowering taxes and utility costs.
- Investing in building industry and the economy to create local jobs, create upward mobility in the housing market, and retain/attract residents.

Responses: 35 through the survey

6.9 Additional Housing Considerations

We asked survey respondents if there was anything else people wanted to share about housing in the region. Many of the responses were similar to the previous sections. Some additions that were not mentioned previously include:

- Updates are needed to current facilities and hospitals to retain and attract future residents. People are discouraged from living in a community without access to medical care. Currently virtual medical care is being piloted in the region.
- More rent-to-own options in the region are needed.
- More communal and cultural spaces built into housing projects to make housing supportive and attractive.
- Affordable housing should not be concentrated in one area as that would create stigma and discrimination.
- People experiencing homelessness is a concern in some municipalities more than others.



- Some municipalities struggle more with safety than others. For example, a few people noted that better safety enforcement is needed within rental units. There were also some concerns regarding substance use and other undesirable activities in some communities.
- A community member proposed a partnership between the Town, St. Paul Regional High School, and non-profit housing agencies to develop affordable housing using closely supervised student labour. This initiative would provide students with hands-on experience and practical skills, helping them to jumpstart their careers in the trades after graduation. Experienced instructors would oversee the work, ensuring that all housing meets local building codes and standards.

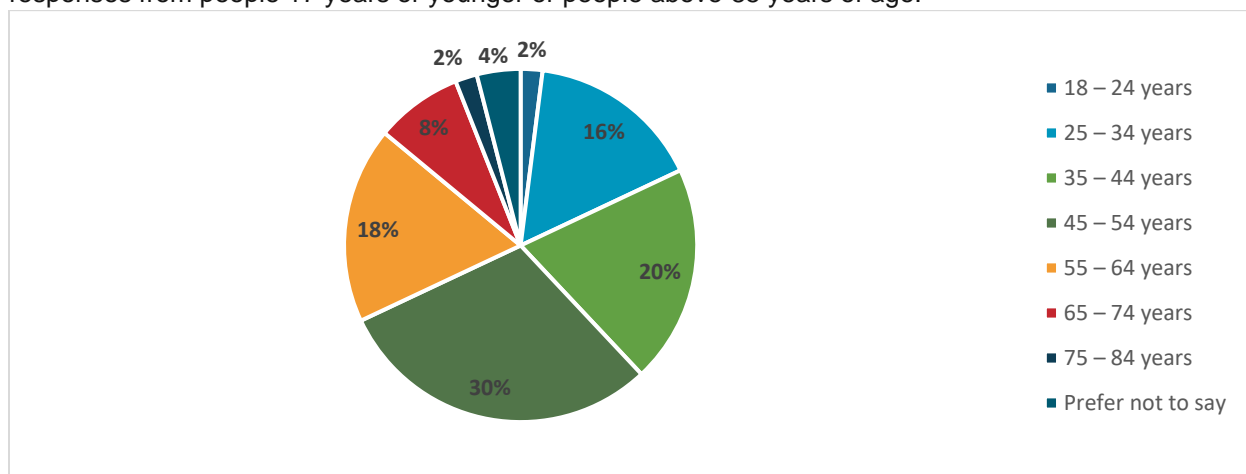
Responses: 18 through the survey and comments from the community workshop

6.10 Survey Demographics

The following section provides a summary of survey participant demographics, which were captured to better understand the diversity of people we were hearing from. Respondents were asked to only answer questions if they felt comfortable in doing so.

Age

Most survey respondents (84%) were between the ages of 25-64. The survey did not receive any responses from people 17 years or younger or people above 85 years of age.

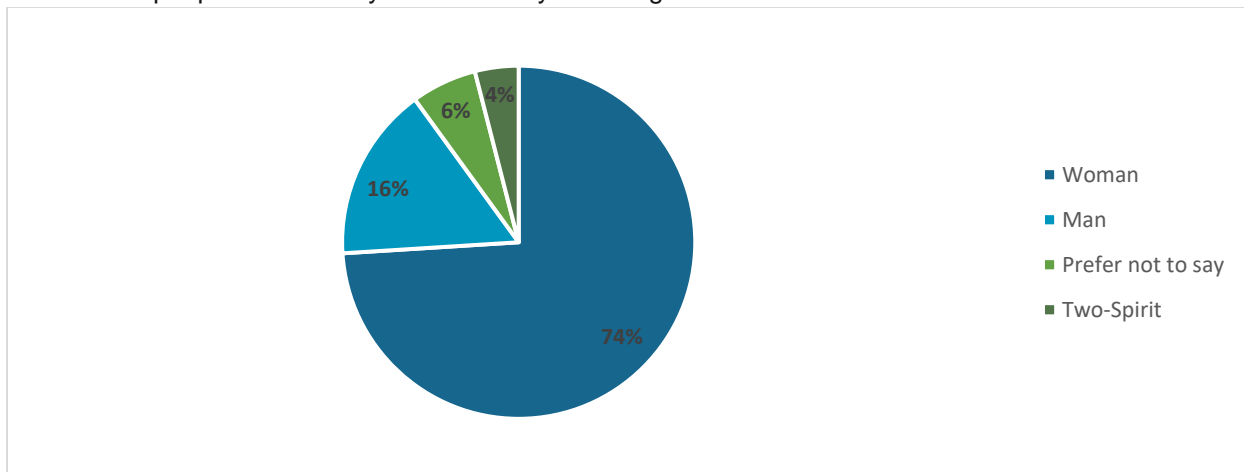


Responses: 50 through the survey



Gender

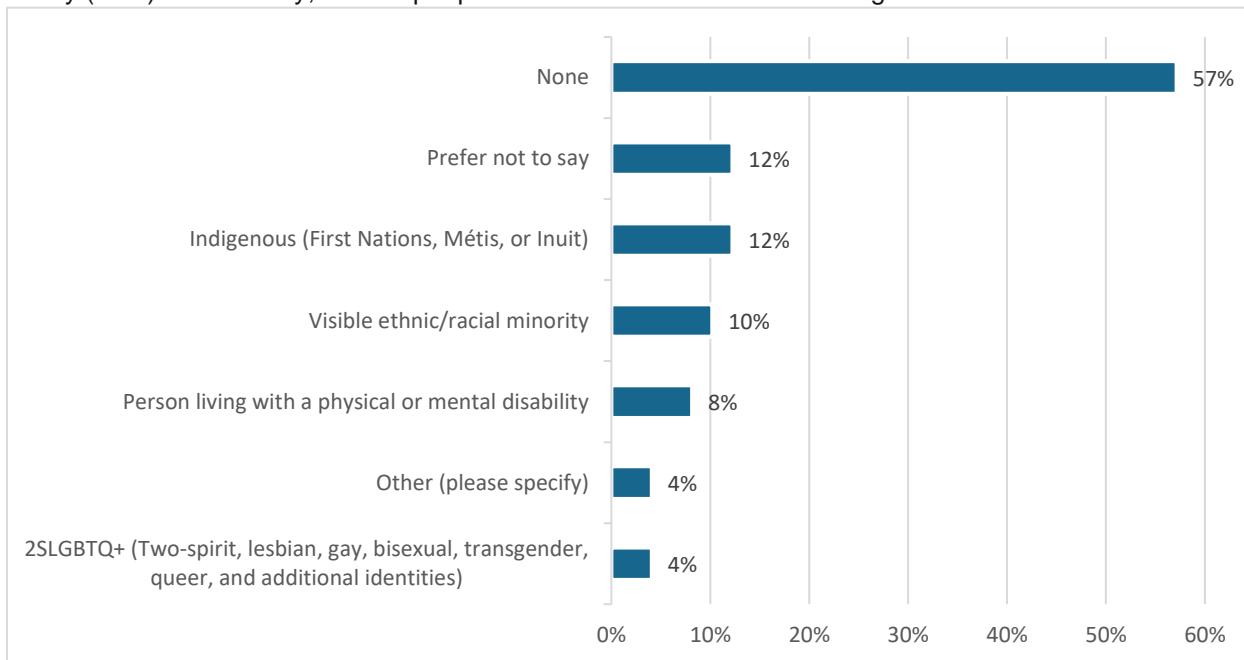
Survey respondents were primarily women (74%), with some responses from men (16%) and Two-Spirit individuals (4%). Some respondents preferred not to share their gender (6%), and no responses were received for people who identify as non-binary or transgender.



Responses: 50 through the survey

Group Self-Identification

The majority of survey respondents (57%) did not fall into any of the groups listed below or preferred not to say (12%). Additionally, 12% of people we heard from identified as Indigenous.

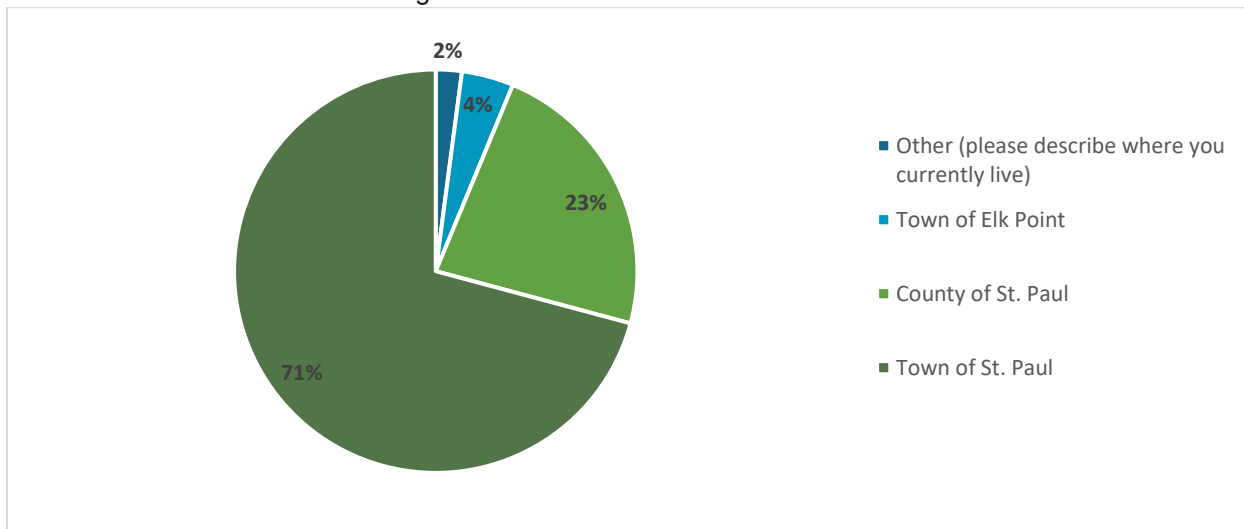


Responses: 49 through the survey (participants could select all that apply)



Place of Residence

Most survey respondents (71%) we heard from live in the Town of St. Paul. No responses were received from residents of the Summer Village.



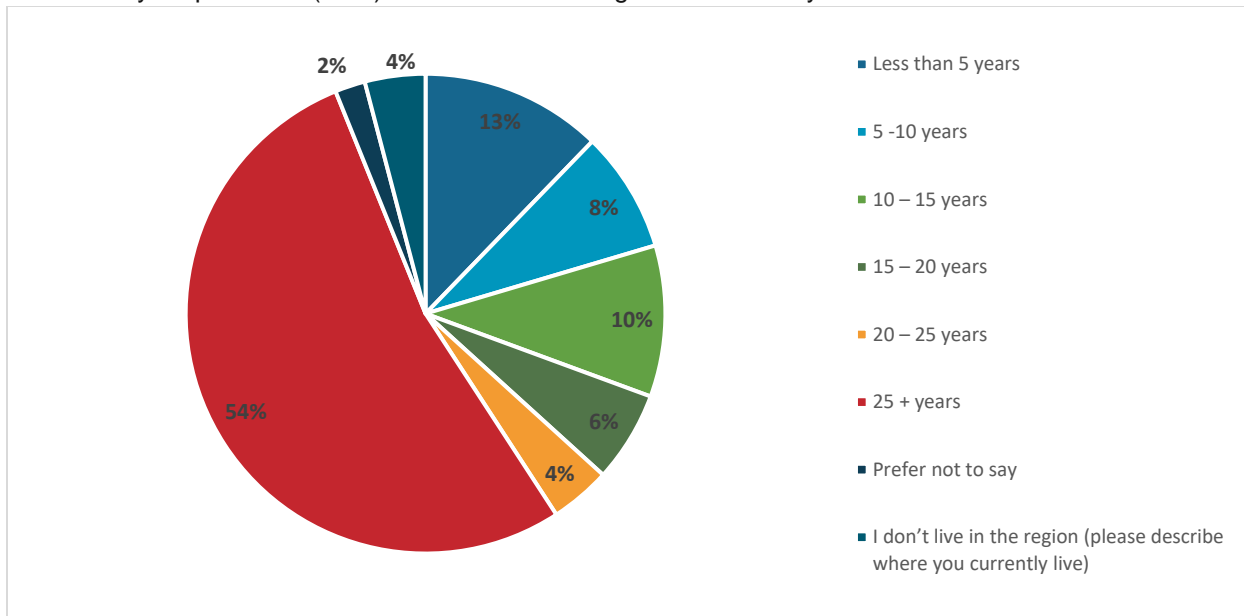
Responses: 48 through the survey

Other responses:

- Previously lived in the region and currently trying to sell home in St. Paul

Length of Time in Region

Most survey respondents (54%) have lived in the region for over 25 years.

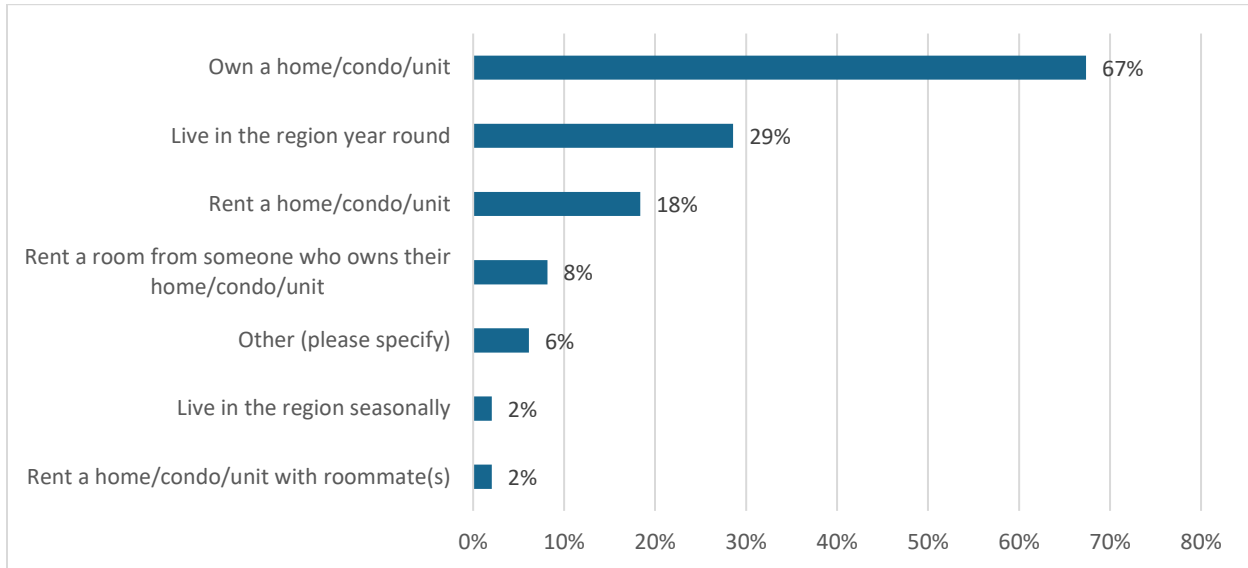


Responses: 48 through the survey



Current Housing Situation

Most survey respondents (67%) own their home/condo. 29% live in the region year-round and 18% rent their home.



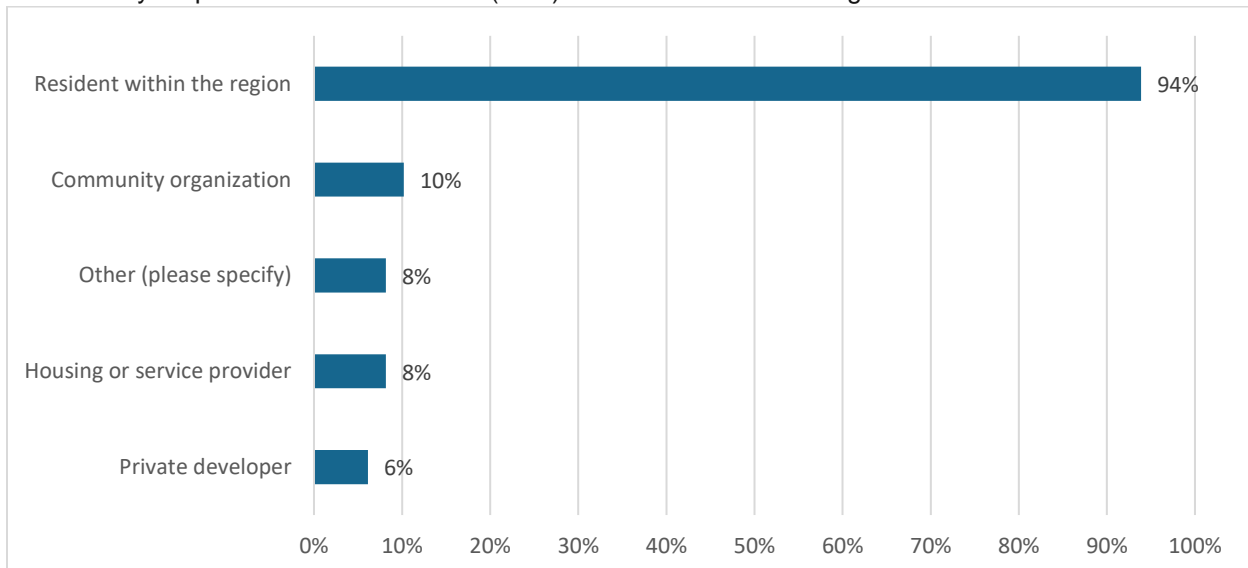
Responses: 49 through the survey (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- Living with parents
- Own a rental property in St. Paul

What Best Describes You and Your Perspective

Most survey respondents we heard from (94%) were residents of the region.



Responses: 49 through the survey (participants could select all that apply)

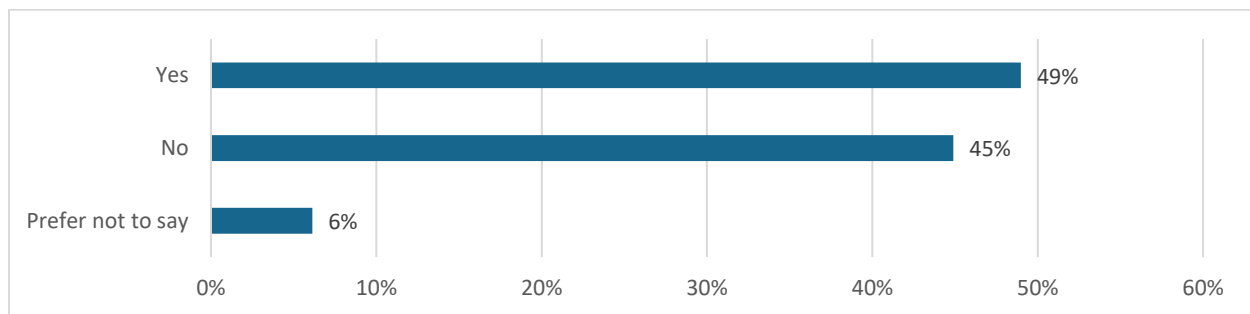


Other responses:

- Real estate agent
- Own property in the region but do not currently live in the region
- Building homes to sell or rent as affordable options

Challenges Finding and/or Maintaining Housing

We asked survey respondents if they have ever experienced challenges in finding and/or maintaining housing in the region that fully met their needs. 49% said yes, they have experienced challenges, whereas 45% said no.

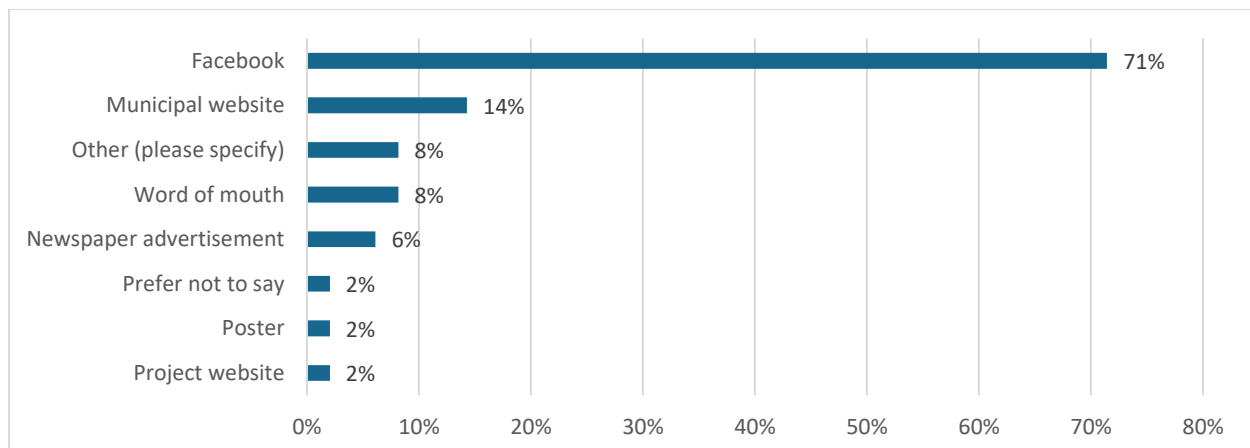


Responses: 49 through the survey

For those who said yes, challenges noted by 22 survey respondents included affordable, clean, and safe rentals, finding suitable housing within their budget and life circumstances (e.g. pet-friendly, single-parents, safe housing for 2SLGBTQ+), and general high cost of housing.

Survey Communications

The majority of people responding to the survey (71%) heard about the survey through Facebook. 14% also heard through the websites of a partnering municipality.



Responses: 49 through the survey

Other responses:

- Town mobile application
- Elk Point newsletter
- Invited to participate



7.0 Key Takeaways

The following is a summary of key takeaways for the region and each municipality based on the feedback received through the Council Workshops, Community Workshops, focus groups, key informant interviews, and surveys.

Regional Housing Needs

- There is a need for more available and affordable housing options for people of all ages, abilities, and life circumstances.
- Streamlining regulatory and bureaucratic processes will help businesses and organizations develop housing in the region more efficiently.
- Continued partnerships between municipalities are essential for regional housing development.
- Increasing collaborations with service providers, industry, and other public institutions will support housing initiatives.
- Incentives and subsidies are necessary for current homeowners to maintain and repair their homes.

County of St. Paul Housing Needs

- While some housing is available in the County, not all options are suitable for people's circumstances, and some housing quality is inadequate.
- Rural residents are moving to urban areas in search of housing that meets their needs.
- More support is needed for individuals wanting to subdivide land and create additional lots for development.
- Current regulations allow for diverse housing options, such as secondary suites, mobile parks, and garage suites, but there is room to further broaden housing development opportunities in the County.

Town of St. Paul Housing Needs

- There is a need for more affordable and modest single-detached homes, as well as higher density housing options like apartments, row housing, townhouses, and condos.
- Increased support and funding are required for short-term emergency housing and for vulnerable populations.
- Culturally sensitive housing is needed for Indigenous residents and newcomers.

Town of Elk Point Housing Needs

- More housing is needed to serve working professionals, young adults, and seniors.
- Seniors housing is in high demand, with people looking for housing options providing different levels of support and care to Elk Point's aging population.
- There is a low availability of rental properties.
- Expanding amenities, services, and the local economy will help attract and retain residents.

Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay Housing Needs

- The main priority is transitioning some seasonal residences into longer-term residences, thereby opening up more housing opportunities for the region.



- Consideration is needed for facilitating access to medical care and other amenities for current residents. Increasing transportation options is likely a solution for the Summer Village.

8.0 Next Steps

Feedback provided through the first phase of engagement will help inform the preparation of a Housing Needs Assessment. Feedback, along with best practices, review of background information, and demographic, economic, and housing data, will be used to support the development of key priorities and actions for the Regional Housing Strategy.