

# Civic Redevelopment Engagement: 1903 Design Principles

What We Heard: Phase 2

May 2025



## Background

Phase 1 took place from July to October 2024; the District sought public input on the future development of 1903 Mt Newton Cross Road as the District began considering options for how best to replace aging municipal facilities. Informed by this feedback and direction from District planning documents\* (Official Community Plan, Saanichton Village Design Plan, Community Satisfaction Survey), Council endorsed design principles for the site and sought further input from the public in early 2025.

*\*Reflecting what we have already heard in other engagements, particularly during extensive community visioning such as the OCP, honours what we have already heard, and is an important principle of meaningful engagement. Using previous direction as a jumping off point and to shape further engagement is best practice to avoid engagement fatigue and ensure diverse representation.*

## Early input: July to October 2024 (Summary)

From July to October, the District held open houses and had a research firm conduct a random-sample phone survey that was weighted based on demographics.

<b><i>We asked:</i></b>	<b><i>The public told us:</i></b>
<i>What features would you most like to see incorporated at the site, if possible, to best serve the community?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Housing (focus on families and seniors)</li> <li>2. Greenspace/plaza/courtyard encouraging gathering</li> <li>3. Restaurant/café</li> <li>4. Medical/dental</li> <li>5. Childcare</li> </ol>
<i>Tell us more about what you want to see incorporated at this site!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep civic facilities here</li> <li>- Community amenities</li> <li>- Low density development</li> </ul>
<i>What concerns do you have about this site?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development/density/population</li> <li>- Lease site</li> <li>- Expropriation of Hovey</li> <li>- Impact to neighbours</li> <li>- Traffic</li> </ul>

## Purpose of Phase 2 engagement

Council wanted to hear directly from residents on the direction for the future of 1903 Mt Newton Cross Road. This site is a significant community asset and it is important Council and the community have a shared vision for its future.

The most recent phase of engagement from January to February 2025 focused on gathering input on Council's design principles.

## Affirming direction: December to January 2025

The District held events and offered both print and online surveys to gather feedback on the design principles. Participation was voluntary, helping the District hear from those most interested or affected.

It's important to note that because participation was self-selected, the results reflect the views of those most engaged, not the entire community. Younger and marginalized groups are often underrepresented in this kind of input.

Survey responses closely matched Central Saanich's age demographics, with most responses coming from Saanichton. This suggests the project is especially important to that neighbourhood.

## Engagement Opportunities

Date	Engagement Opportunity	Details
December 2024 to February 2025	Survey	291 surveys received
January 2025	New Year's Open House presentation boards and feedback forms	Approximately 50 conversations
February 2025	Coffee with Council	No direct feedback received

## Promotion

- January 2025 *Community Focus* newsletter
- Peninsula News Review
- Social media
- LetsTalkCentralSaanich.ca/CivicRedevelopment and notification to subscribers (86)
- CentralSaanich.ca/News and notification to subscribers (166)



## What We Asked

The public was asked to rate the level of support and share comments or questions on the principles.

### Height and Massing

- Along the streetscape (Wallace and Mt Newton), up to six-storey, mixed-use buildings would be appropriate, with commercial at grade.
- Four-storey maximum building height towards residential neighbourhood (West & South) with increased setbacks and screening.

### Commercial

- Active ground-floor commercial uses with large windows and inviting entrances to enhance the street experience.
- Prefer commercial uses such as a medical office, childcare and restaurant/cafes, (but these are not required).
- Provide approximately 15,000 square feet of commercial space (can be flexible).

### Public Space Amenities

- Maximize community amenities by including as many as feasible.
- Create a high-quality pedestrian environment.
- A design with green space is preferred. Include a plaza or courtyard open to the public, consider use for commercial tenants as well as community events.

### Housing

- There is flexibility about the type, tenure and size of housing units, including smaller studio and one-bedrooms.
- Ideally, achieve a minimum of 10% affordable housing and work to achieve more affordable and attainable housing.

### Parking

- Prioritize underground for residential parking, but not for commercial.
- Meet current District parking policies.
- Should recognize rural area and need for vehicles.



### **Accessibility**

- May include fully accessible units (e.g. the minimum of 5% as required by BC Housing), versus adaptable ones as likely to be required under the BC Building Code.
- It is recommended that commercial units have automatic doors.

### **Active and Alternative Transportation**

Though not required, the priority areas for active and alternative transportation include:

- Multi-use pathways on internal roads.
- Connectivity to existing active transportation infrastructure.
- Increased residential bicycle storage (with e-bike facilities).

### **Sustainability**

- Sustainable design is important, but the latest BC Building Code requirements are acceptable.
- Incorporate green space and natural assets for community use.

## **What We Heard**

The Civic Redevelopment survey for 1903 Mt Newton Cross Road reflects what we know to be true about Central Saanich: the community values rural charm, livability, green space, and accessibility, and has concerns about building heights, density and traffic impacts.

**Commercial uses** received mixed support. Nearly half (49.14%) agreed with incorporating active ground-floor commercial spaces with large windows and inviting entrances, suggesting a desire for a vibrant streetscape. While 46.39% favored commercial uses like medical offices, childcare, and cafés, though these were not mandatory, 40.55% opposed the proposed 15,000 square feet of commercial space, indicating concerns about scale and business type, which was reflected in the comments about preferring businesses that encourage public use, as opposed to offices.

**Public space amenities** were positively received. A strong majority supported creating a high-quality pedestrian environment (55.67%) and integrating green spaces with plazas or courtyards (52.92%). Nearly half (48.8%) also wanted to maximize community amenities, reflecting a clear preference for accessible, community-oriented design.

**Building height and massing** received 43.99% in support of a four-storey maximum near residential areas, and only 24.4% agreed with six-storey mixed-use buildings along Wallace and Mt Newton, with 66.32% opposing this idea—highlighting concerns about scale and neighborhood character. The comments reflected concerns about losing the ruralness of Saanichton, and the increase of traffic and population.

**Housing flexibility** was moderately supported, with 40.55% agreeing to varied unit types and sizes. However, opinions were split on affordable housing, with 38.83% in favor and 40.21% opposed, with comments suggesting many felt the proposed minimum (10%) for affordable units was too low. Comments reflect a strong preference for large units (3 bedrooms) for families and concerns about studios and one-bedrooms.

**Parking and accessibility** garnered strong support. Over half (54.64%) agreed with prioritizing underground residential parking and recognizing rural vehicle needs. Accessibility features, including fully accessible units and automatic doors, were supported by 52.58%.

Finally, **sustainability and transportation** initiatives were well received. Over half (54.64%) supported sustainable design and green space integration, while 47.77% favored active transportation infrastructure.

#### Land Use and Land Expropriation

Open-ended comments centered on the use of 1903 Mt Newton, with approximately half of all survey respondents leaving comments about a preference for municipal facilities to stay at the existing site at 1903 Mt Newton Cross Rd.

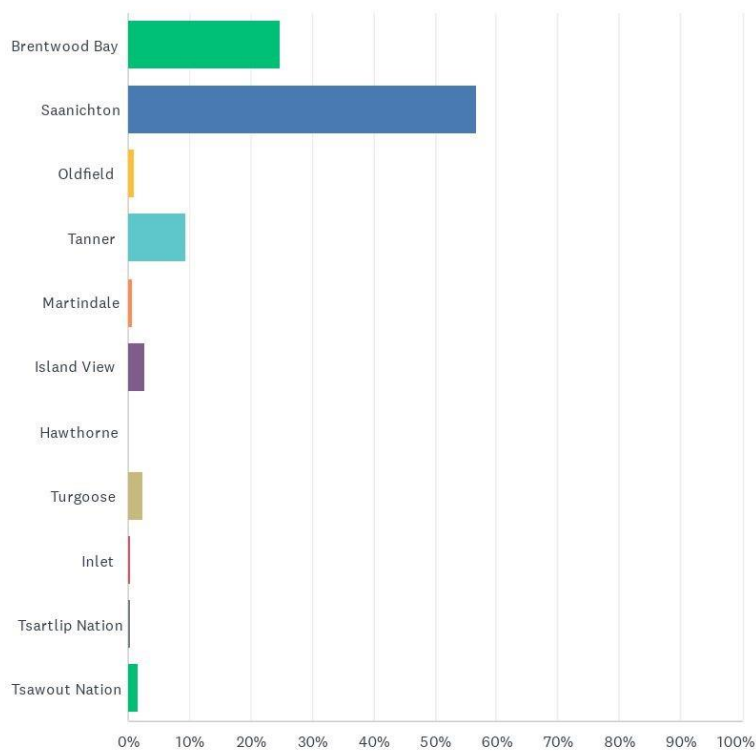
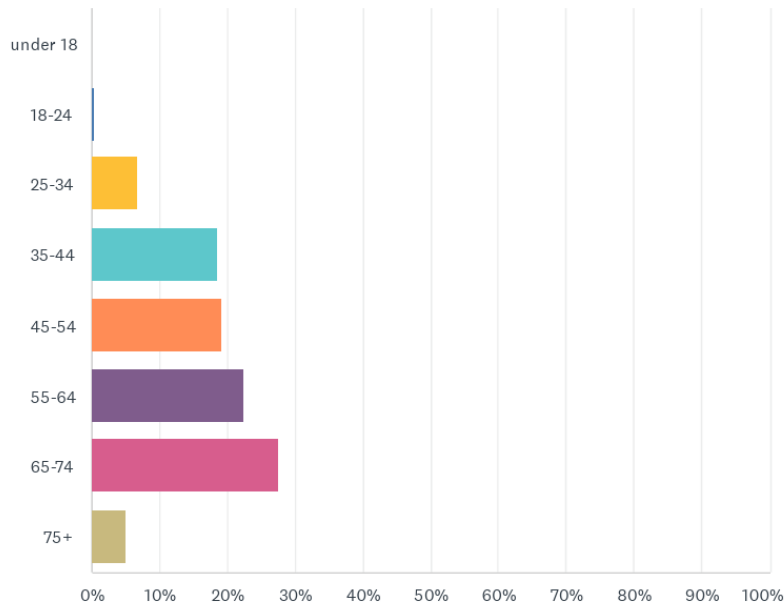
#### Next Steps

These responses will help inform decisions on the use of the site. To stay informed, please visit [letstalkcentralsaanich.ca](http://letstalkcentralsaanich.ca) for the latest project information.

## Appendix 1 –Survey

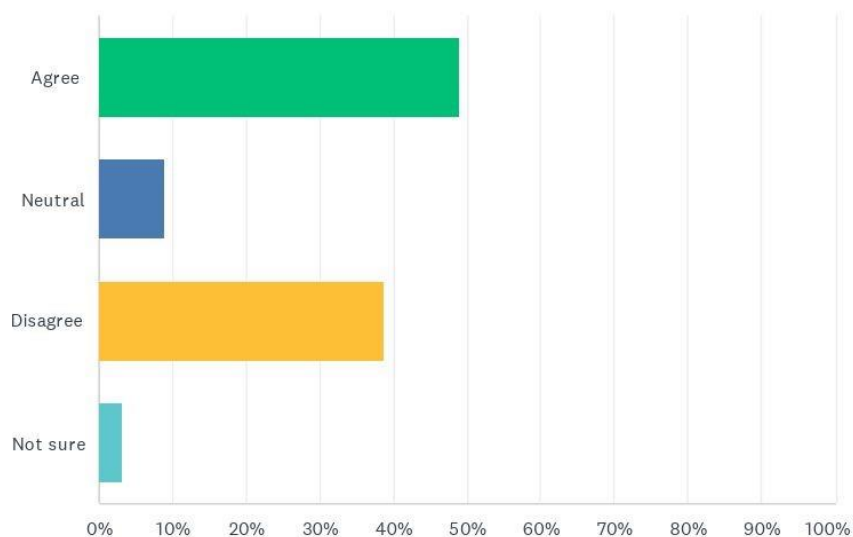
### Demographics

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



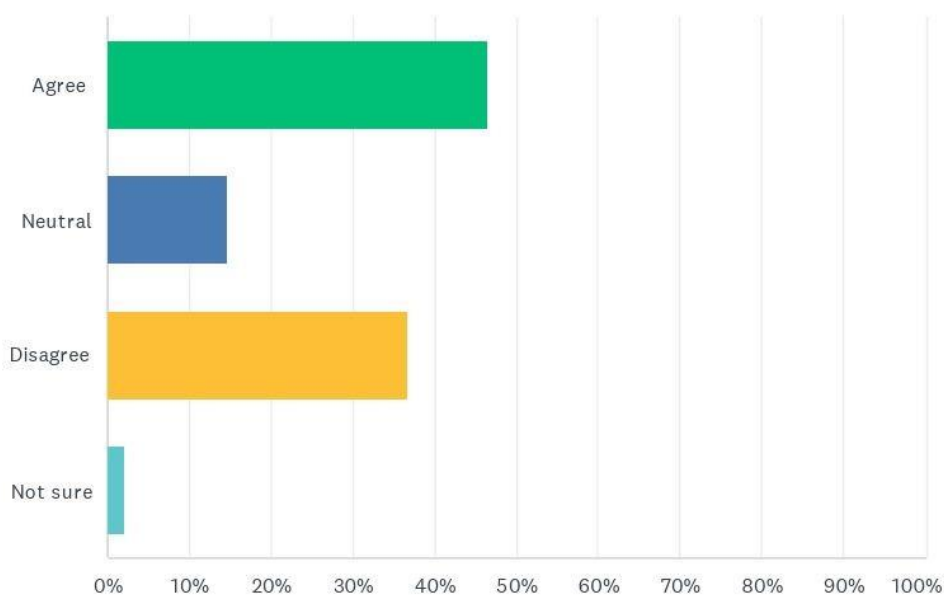
## Q1 Commercial Active ground-floor commercial uses with large windows and inviting entrances to enhance the street experience.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



## Q2 Commercial Prefer commercial uses such as a medical office, childcare and restaurant/cafes, (but these are not required).

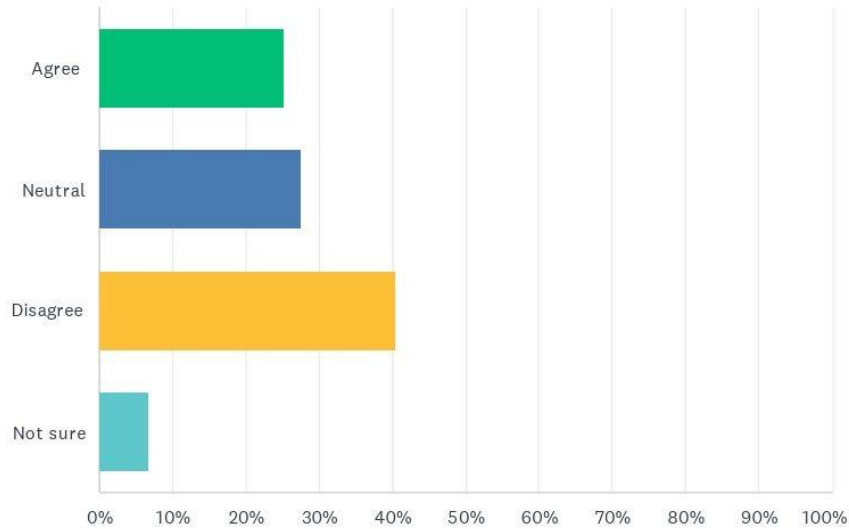
Answered: 291 Skipped: 0





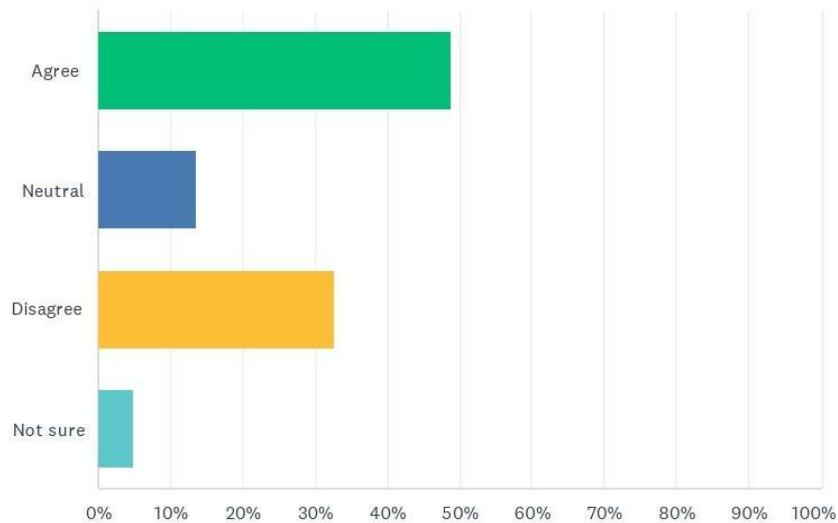
Q3 Commercial Provide approximately 15,000 square feet of commercial space (can be flexible).

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



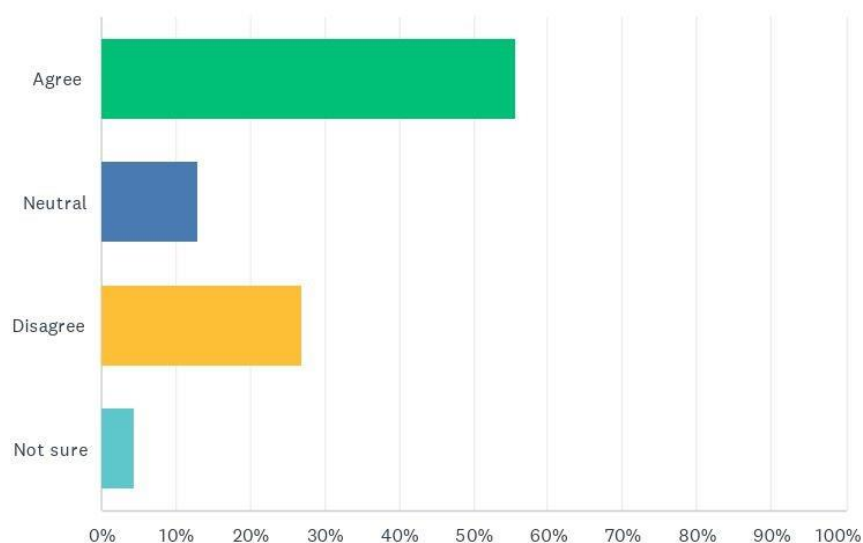
Q4 Public Space Amenities Maximize community amenities by including as many as feasible.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



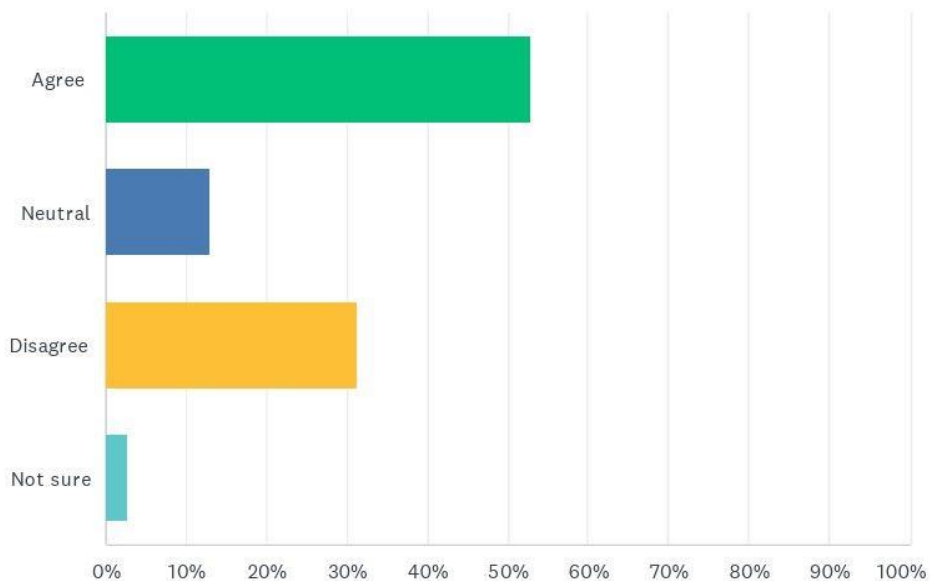
### Q5 Public Space Amenities Create a high-quality pedestrian environment.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



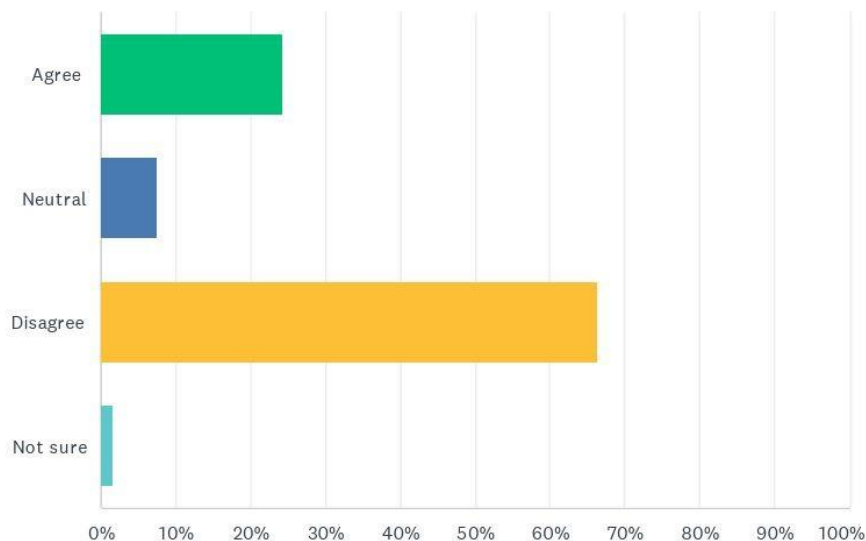
### Q6 Public Space Amenities A design with green space is preferred. Include a plaza or courtyard open to the public, consider use for commercial tenants as well as community events.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



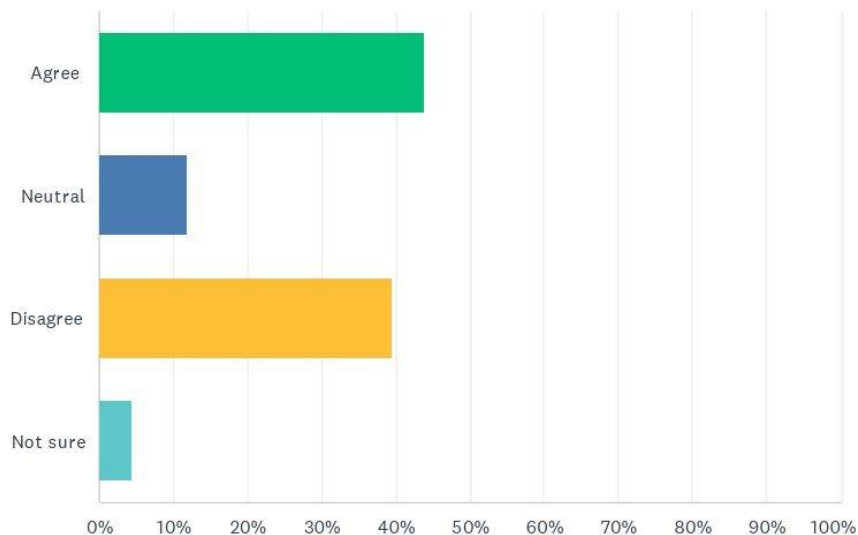
**Q7 Height and Massing** Along the streetscape (Wallace and Mt Newton), up to six-storey, mixed-use buildings would be appropriate, with commercial at grade.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



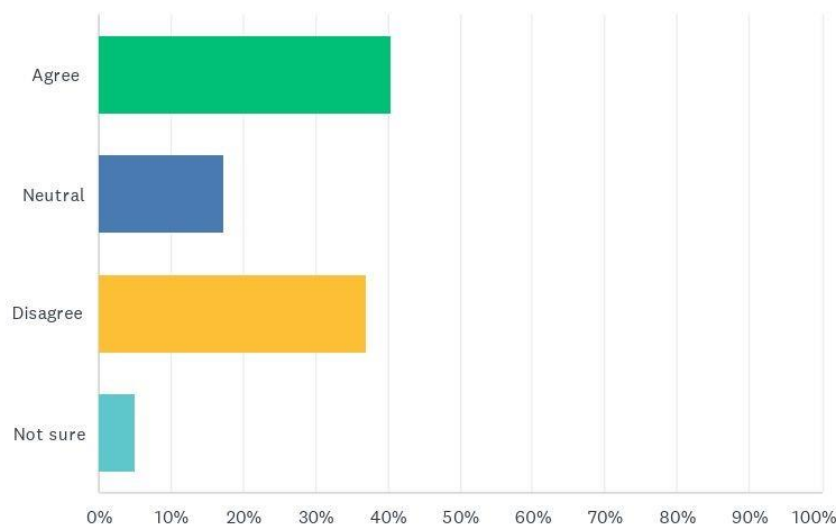
**Q8 Height and Massing** Four-storey maximum building height towards residential neighbourhood (West & South) with increased setbacks and screening.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



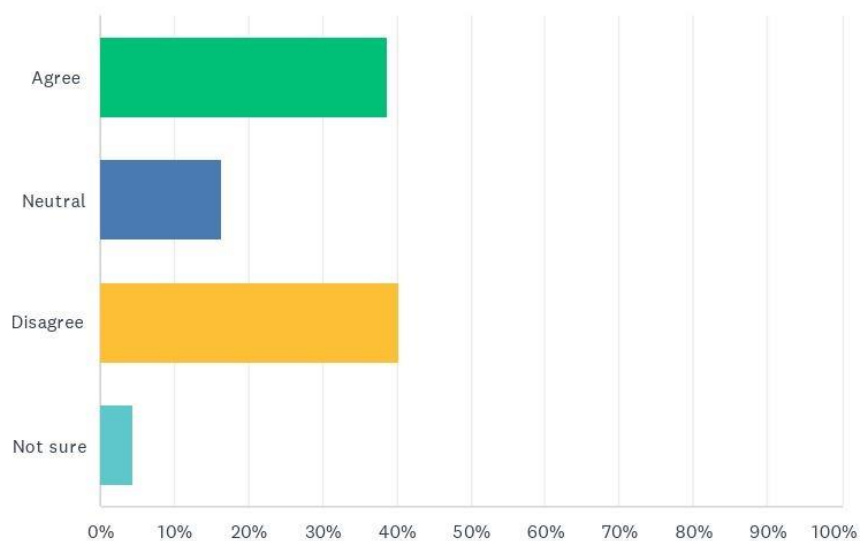
**Q9 Housing** There is flexibility about the type, tenure and size of housing units, including smaller studio and one-bedrooms.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



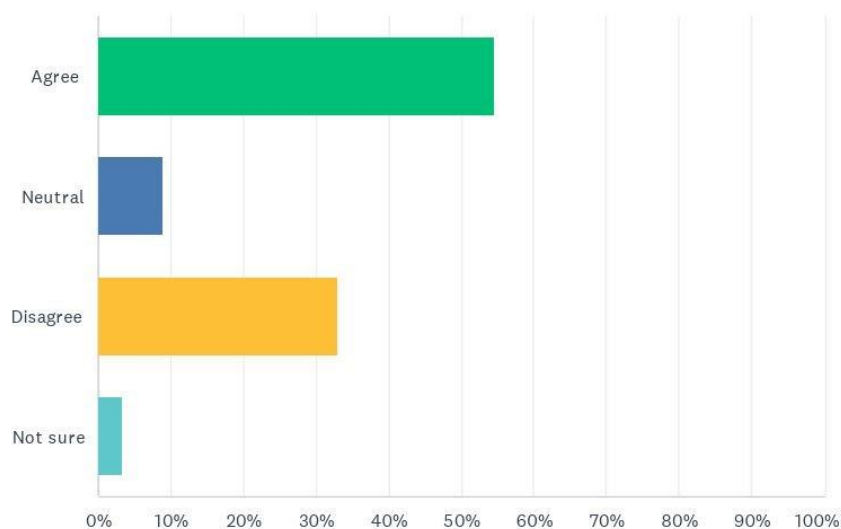
**Q10 Housing** Ideally, achieve a minimum of 10% affordable housing and work to achieve more affordable and attainable housing.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



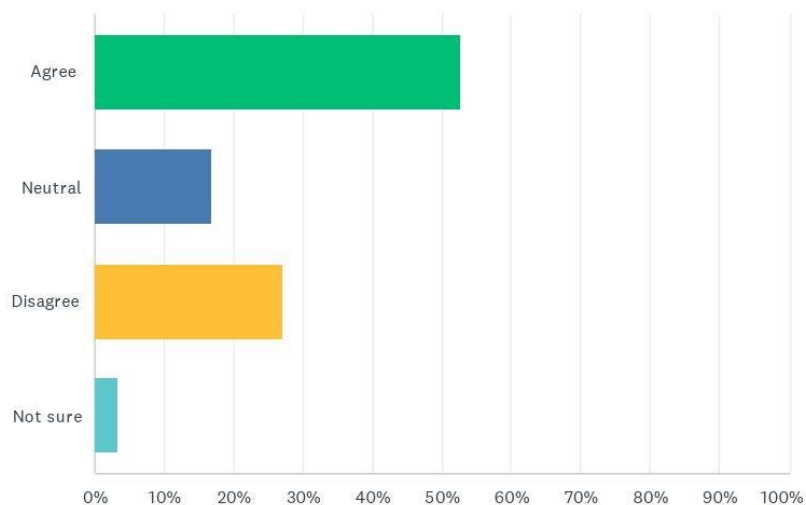
**Q11 Parking** Prioritize underground for residential parking, but not for commercial. Meet current District parking policies. Should recognize rural area and need for vehicles.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



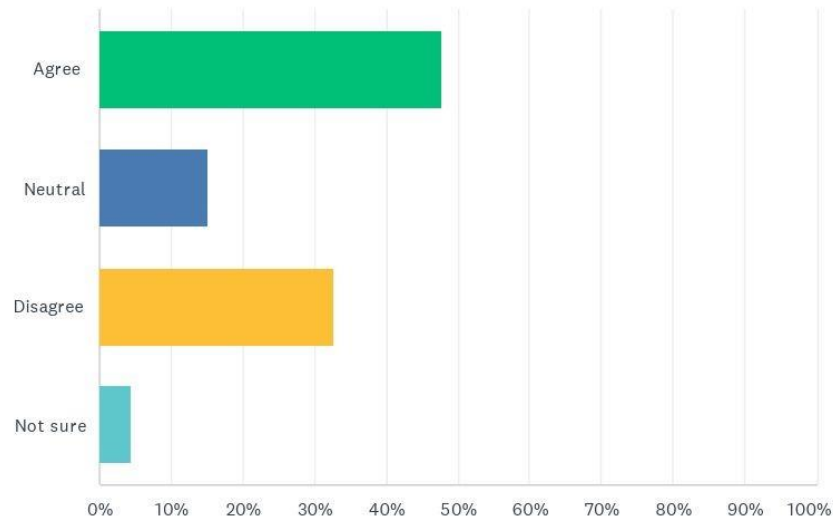
**Q12 Accessibility** May include fully accessible units (e.g. the minimum of 5% as required by BC Housing), versus adaptable ones as likely to be required under the BC Building Code. It is recommended that commercial units have automatic doors.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



Q13 Active and Alternative Transportation Though not required, the priority areas for active and alternative transportation include: Multi-use pathways on internal roads. Connectivity to existing active transportation infrastructure. Increased residential bicycle storage (with e-bike facilities).

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0



Q14 Sustainability Sustainable design is important, but the latest BC Building Code requirements are acceptable. Incorporate green space and natural assets for community use.

Answered: 291 Skipped: 0

