

Affordable Housing Policy Review

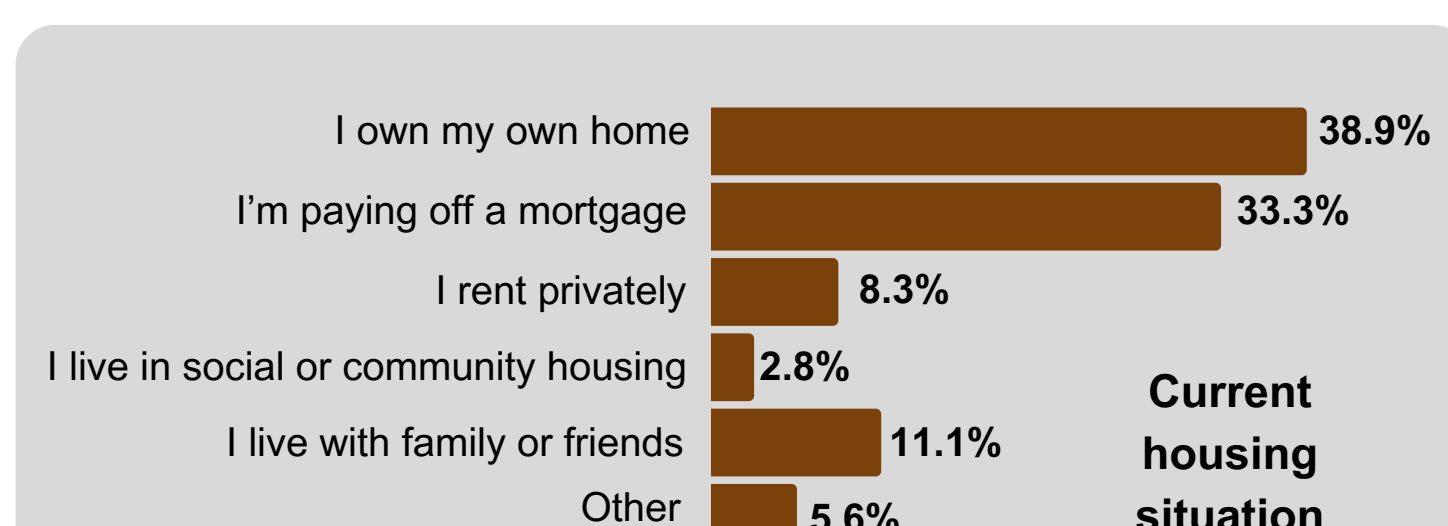
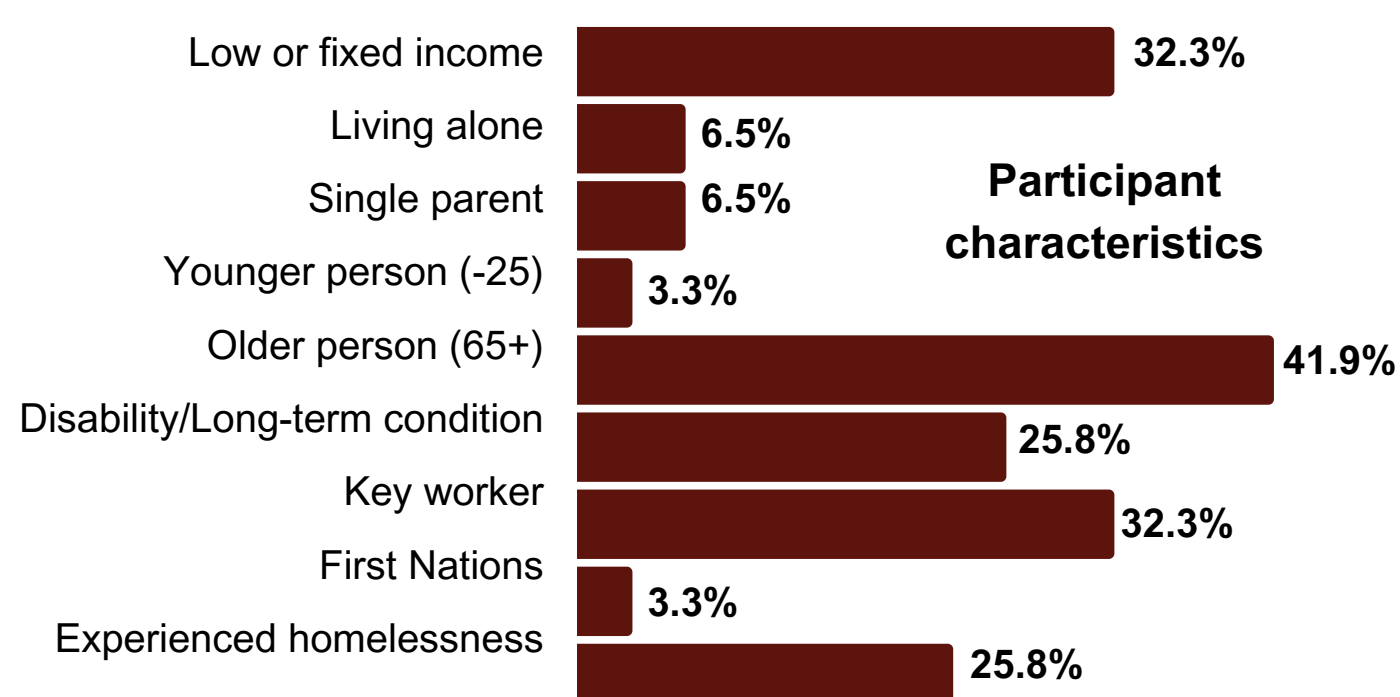
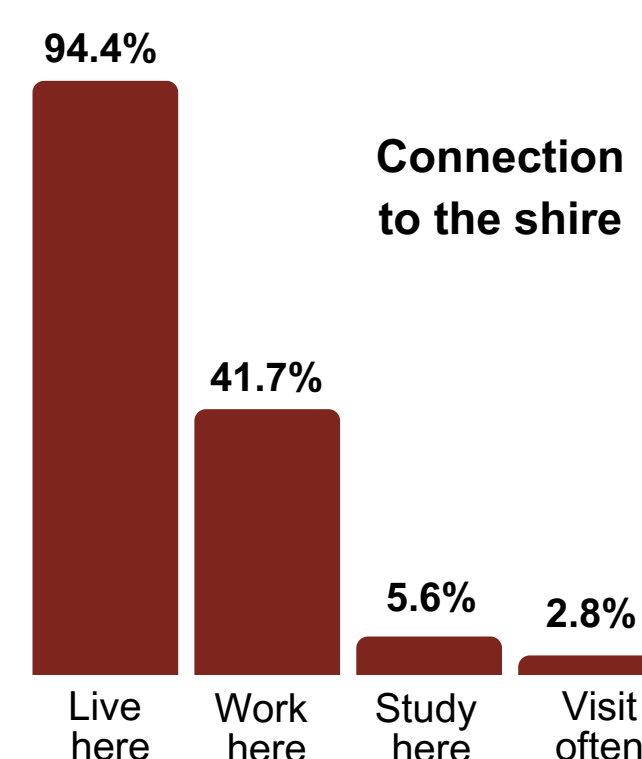
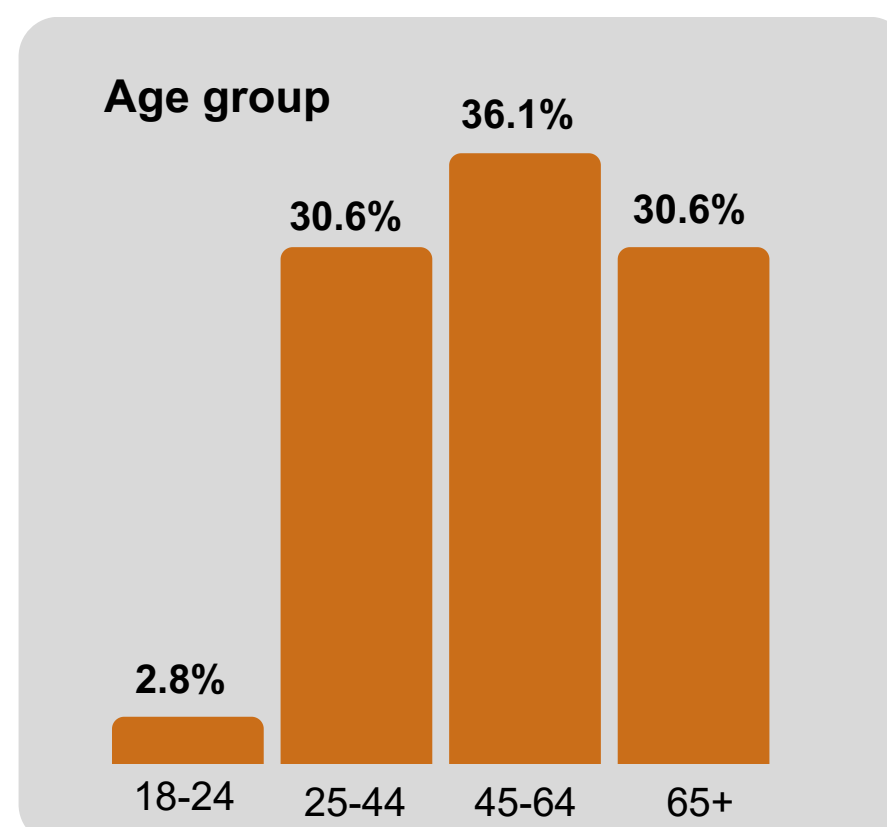
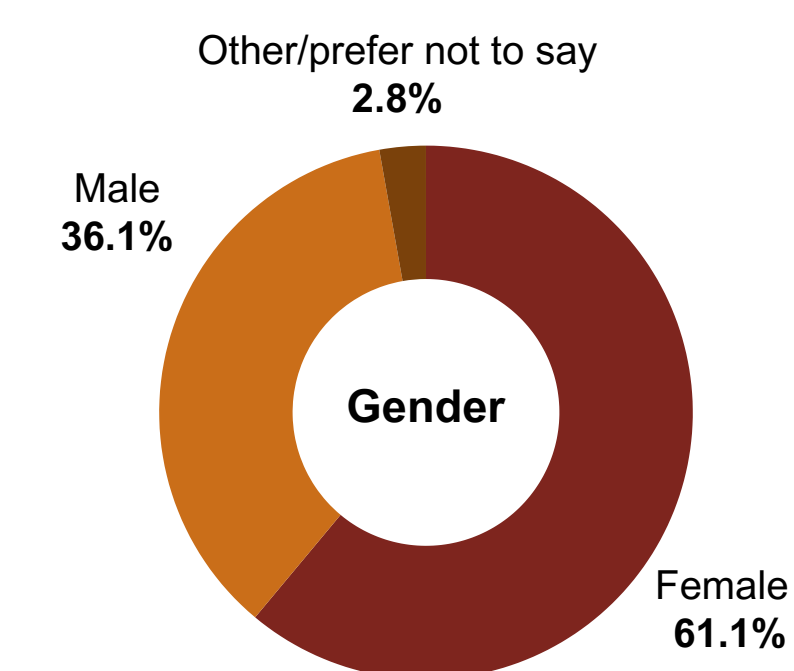
Closing the loop with the community

Thank you to everyone who completed survey or made a submission to inform the review of Council's Affordable Housing Policy.
Here's a summary of what you told us in the survey.

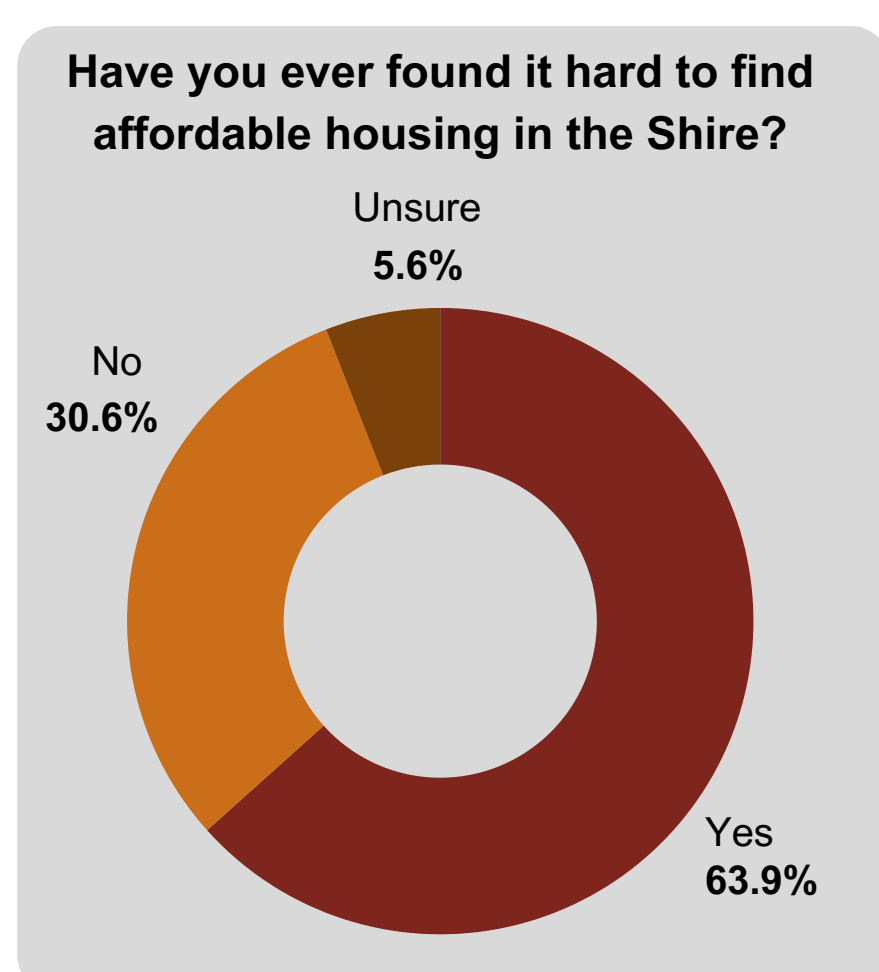
36

People
completed
the survey

Participants of the survey



Difficulty finding affordable housing



Key themes from shared experiences



Limited housing supply and high costs

Scarcity of affordable rentals, high rents and purchase prices, smaller homes are particularly difficult to find, households relying on personal connections to secure a home, some spending more than half their income on rent or moving frequently.



Barriers for specific groups

Single parents, single-income households, young people and people with disability face limited suitable options, high costs and difficulty finding safe, accessible homes close to support networks.



Impact on stability and wellbeing

Housing insecurity affects work, schooling and community connection, with some residents needing to move away despite wanting to stay, and some experiencing unsafe or temporary accommodation.



Suitability and quality of available homes

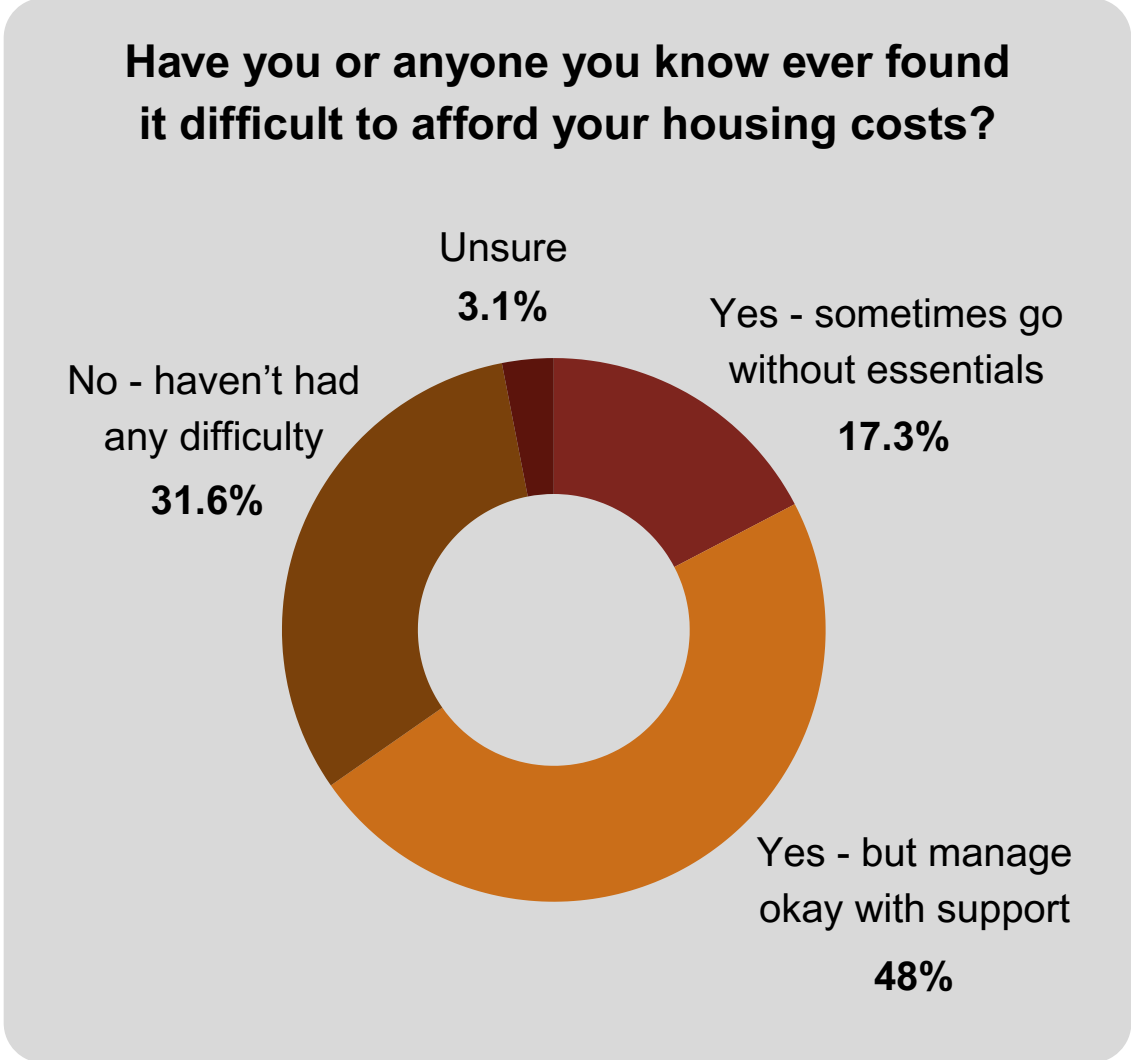
Some homes are poorly insulated or in need of repair, limited options near schools and services, few choices for families or people needing accessible layouts, and temporary accommodation is hard to secure.



Transport and location-related costs

Many towns require a car to access services, adding to living costs, and limited public transport makes some areas less viable for lower-income households.

Experiences finding suitable housing



Key themes from shared experiences

- Rising living costs affecting household budgets**
Power bills, rates and everyday expenses place pressure on households, with many relying on strict budgeting, additional work or family help to manage costs.
- Housing stress and past experiences of insecurity**
Some respondents described going without essentials, borrowing money or working multiple jobs to stay housed, and a few shared past experiences of homelessness.
- Support networks helping people stay in the shire**
Family assistance, volunteering for cost savings, shared living and support from housing organisations help some residents manage affordability pressures.
- Challenges for single-income households, carers and people with disability**
Single parents, people with disability and carers experience particular strain due to limited income, unexpected expenses and difficulty finding suitable, affordable homes.
- Different expectations and experiences of housing affordability**
Some residents emphasised working hard or choosing areas they could afford, while others noted generational barriers for their children; a small number expressed concern about how future housing changes may affect their neighbourhood.

Why affordable housing is important to the community

Housing as a basic right and foundation for life

Safe, stable housing supports wellbeing, health, security and opportunity.

Strong, connected and diverse communities

Affordable homes help people stay local and participate fully.

Supporting workers, families and future generations

Essential workers, young people and families need homes they can afford.

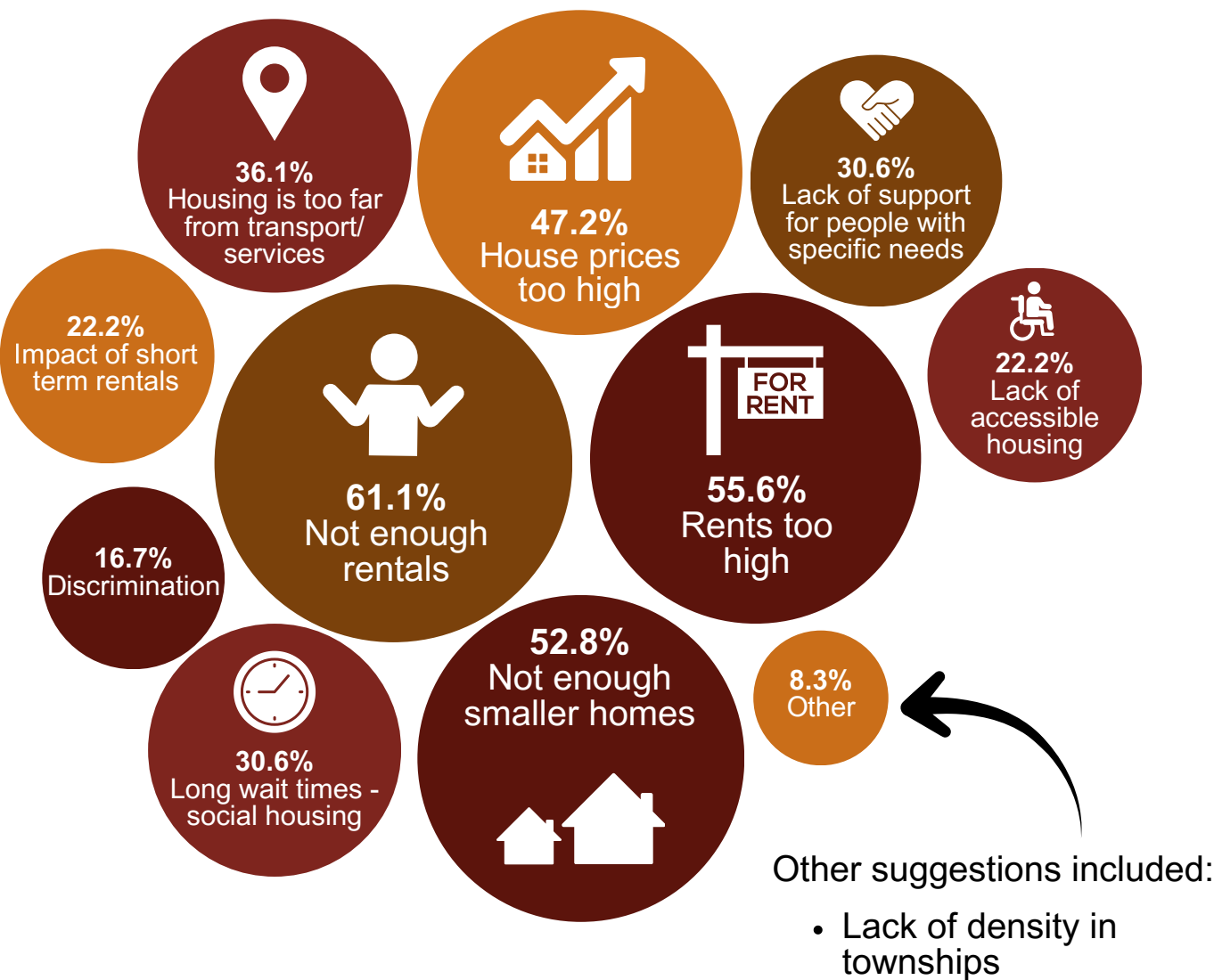
Economic stability and local resilience

Affordable housing reduces stress, strengthens the economy and supports local services.

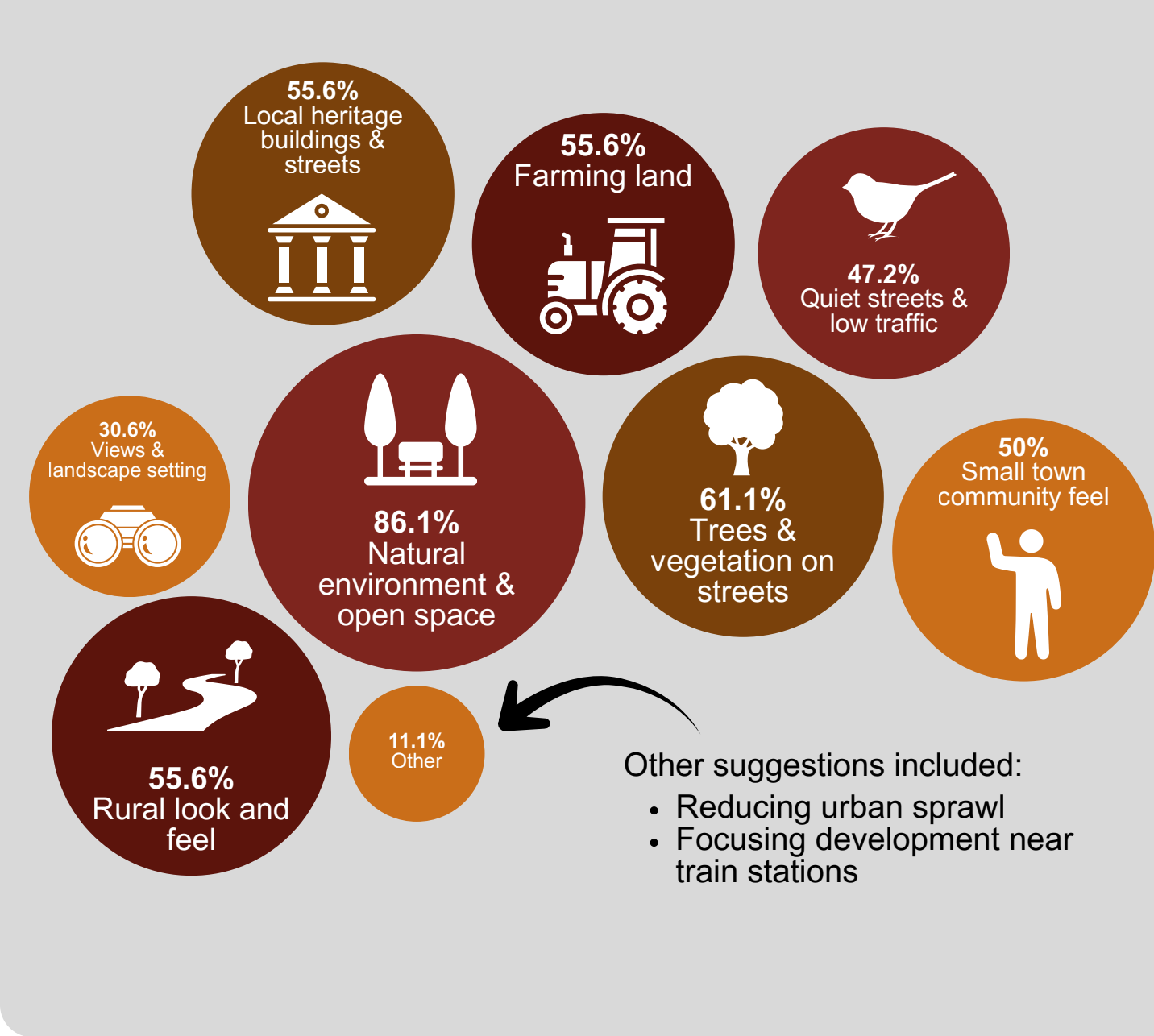
Mixed community views about change

Some residents worry about neighbourhood character, devaluation and rising density.

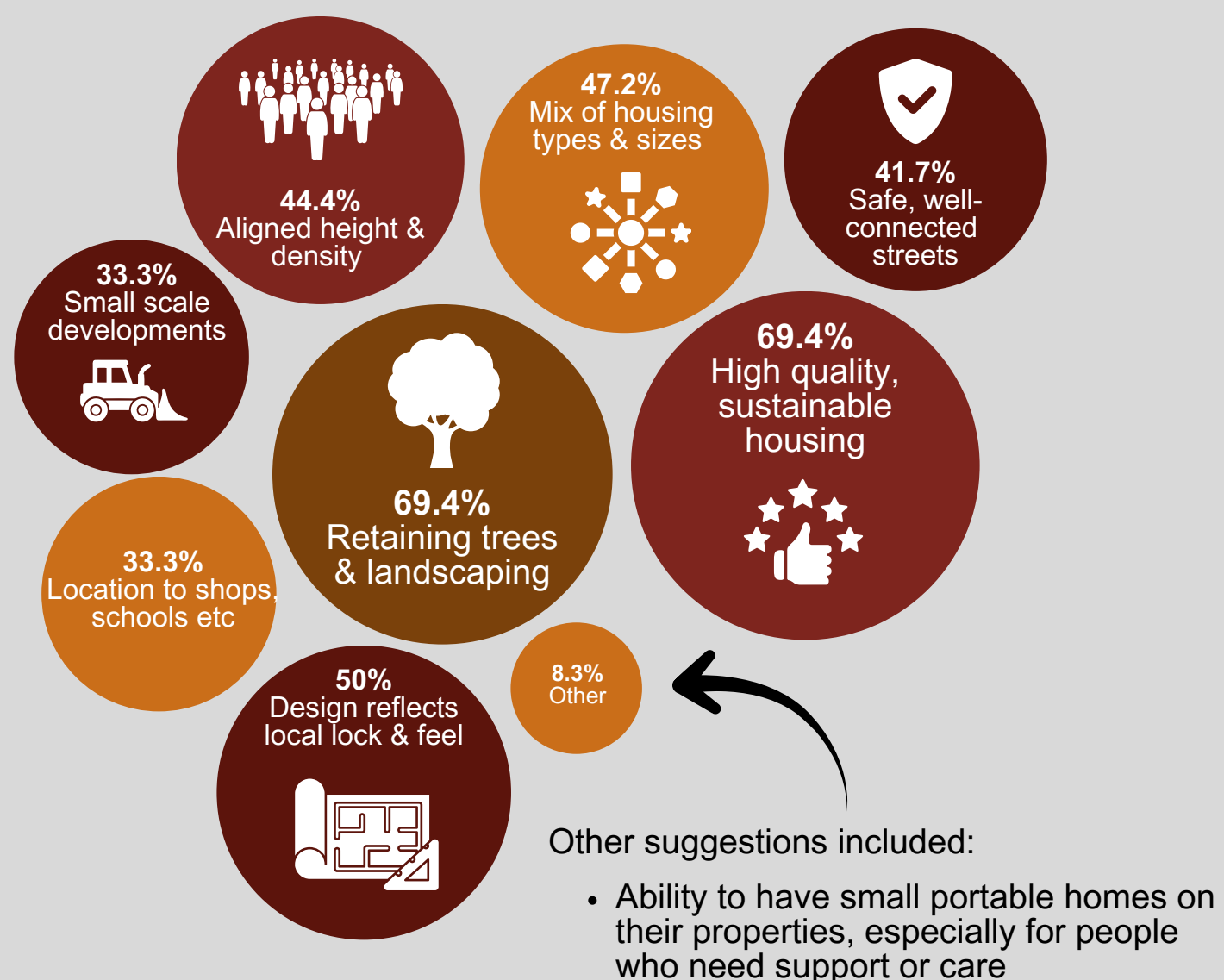
Biggest challenges in finding affordable housing



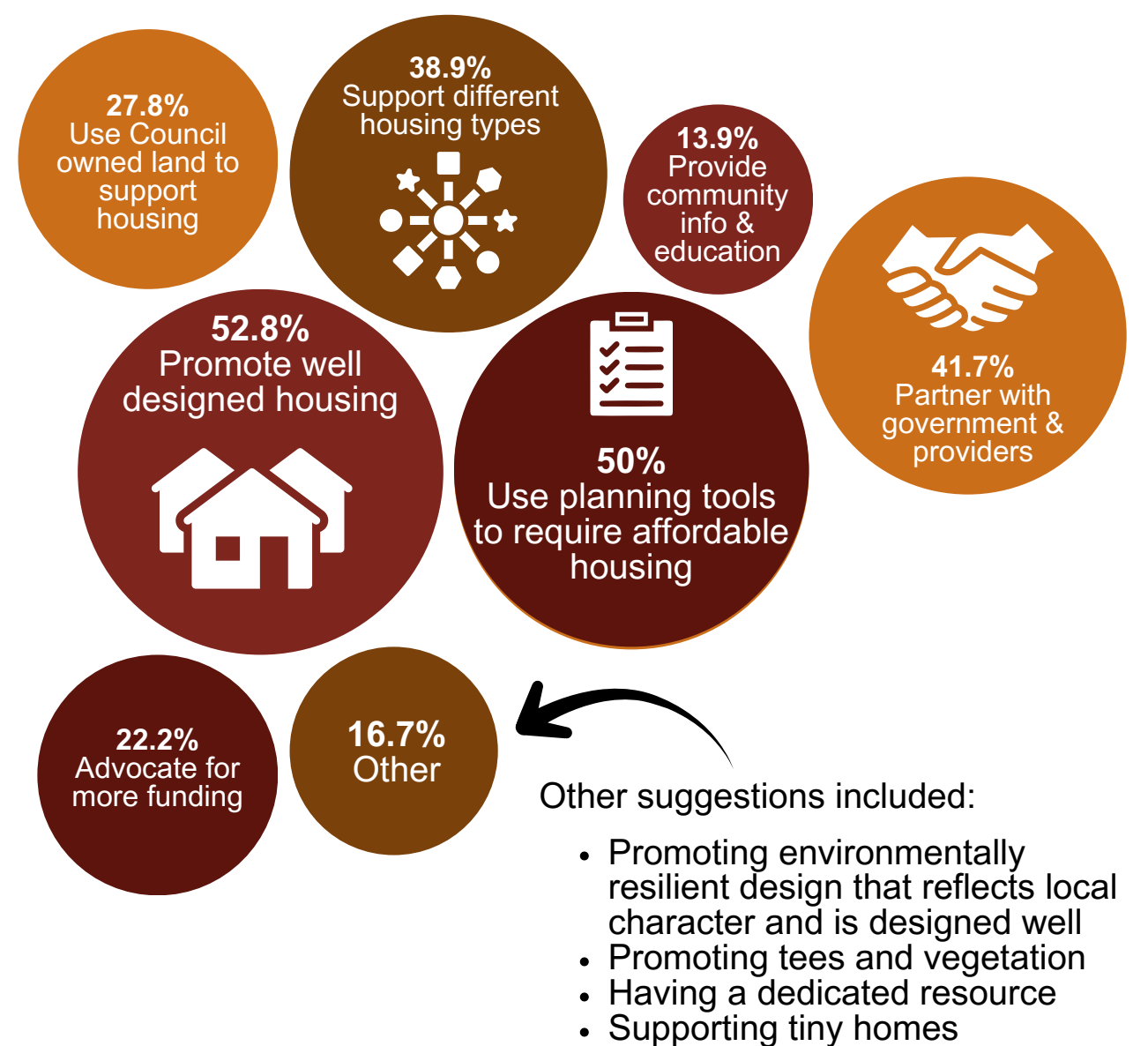
Features of Macedon Ranges' character to protect



What helps new housing fit the neighbourhood

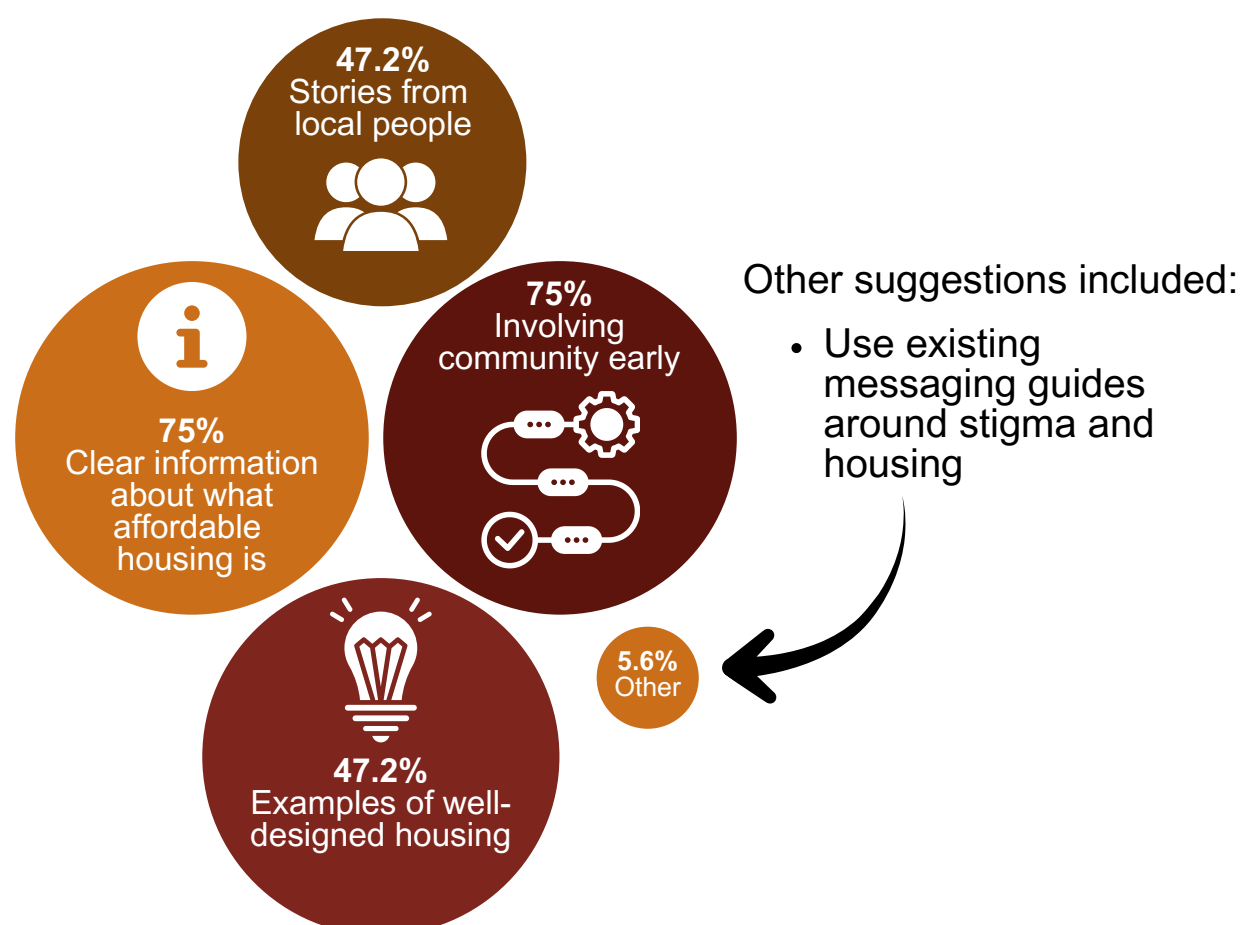


What Council should focus on



*Note that participants were invited to select more than one issue, so totals in the bubble charts above and below will not add up to 100%

Building community understanding and support



Other comments and ideas

- Planning, infrastructure and sustainable growth**
 Calls for infrastructure before development; interest in planned, well-serviced, climate-appropriate housing.
- Diverse and well-designed housing options**
 Support for small homes, infill, energy-efficient design, mixed housing types and creative approaches.
- Better use of land and existing assets**
 Suggestions for subdivision, rezoning, using vacant sites, converting unused buildings and allowing tiny homes.
- Strong partnerships and proactive delivery**
 Desire for Council to work actively with housing providers, pursue funding, and lead coordinated projects.
- Community expectations and local character**
 Views on maintaining neighbourhood character, avoiding poor-quality design, and balancing change with community values (including some concerns about housing types and density).

What happens next?

Council will now bring together all the feedback from the survey and written submissions, along with the research and data we are gathering on local housing needs. This analysis will help us build a clear picture of the key issues and opportunities across the shire.

These insights will guide the next stage of work, where Council will review its current approach to affordable housing and consider the most appropriate framework for the future. The outcomes of this process will shape Council's direction and priorities for supporting more affordable, well-located and accessible housing in the Macedon Ranges.

Once a draft approach is prepared, it will be shared with the community for further feedback.



Key feedback from written submissions

Alongside the community survey, Council received three written submissions from organisations working in housing, design and community development.

These submissions provided detailed ideas about how Council could strengthen its role in supporting more affordable, well-located and well-designed homes in the shire. The suggestions varied in approach, but several common themes emerged.

3

Written submissions were received



A stronger and clearer Council role

Across the submissions there was support for Council taking a more active role in:

- working directly with community housing organisations
- identifying Council-owned or government-owned land that could be suitable for affordable housing
- providing clearer planning guidance for developers
- using engagement and communication to build community understanding and reduce stigma

These organisations encouraged Council to be more deliberate and consistent in how it supports and negotiates affordable housing outcomes.



More housing close to services

All three submissions highlighted the importance of locating affordable and accessible homes near shops, health services, public transport and community facilities. Suggestions included:

- allowing more low-rise, higher-density housing in town centres
- encouraging smaller, low-maintenance homes suited to older residents and people with mobility needs
- designing homes and neighbourhoods that are easier to move around without a car

This aligns with survey feedback about the importance of access to transport and essential services.



Better design and a wider mix of housing types

Submissions highlighted the need for:

- well-designed, energy-efficient and climate-appropriate homes
- more diverse housing types such as townhouses, units, apartments over shops, and mixed-use developments
- design approaches that respect local character while still supporting growth

One submission suggested Council consider developing “pattern book” style design examples to fast-track good-quality housing in the right locations.



Supporting older women, older residents and people with specific needs

There was strong support for housing that meets the needs of:

- women over 60 who are at higher risk of housing insecurity
- older people who need smaller, accessible, low-maintenance homes
- people with disability who need well-designed and affordable housing close to support networks
- Aboriginal households, who face higher rental stress and lower home ownership rates

These suggestions reinforce the survey findings about the different barriers faced by particular groups.



Using Council land and partnerships to deliver more housing

Two submissions encouraged Council to:

- review under-used Council sites that could support affordable or mixed-use housing
- work in partnership with registered community housing organisations that already manage affordable housing across Victoria
- support funding applications to State and Federal programs
- create demonstration projects on strategic sites to show what high-quality, well-integrated affordable housing can look like



Ideas for new policy tools Council could consider

Some organisations suggested new or emerging approaches, including:

- requiring major developments to include an “Affordable Housing Impact Statement” that explains how the proposal responds to local incomes and housing need
- monitoring land release patterns to improve transparency
- regulating short-stay accommodation under new State Government legislation
- exploring Community Land Trusts (CLTs) or similar models that help keep housing affordable long term