

TOWN OF EDSON HOUSING STRATEGY

PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2 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 Town of Edson (“the Town”) is preparing a Housing Strategy.

1.1 Project Approach

The first part of developing a Housing Strategy is completing a Housing Needs Assessment to better understand the current housing situation in Edson. This process was complemented by an initial round of community engagement (fall/winter 2024) to understand housing gaps and current issues/barriers, existing and future needs, areas of priority, and ideas to address current issues/barriers.

The second phase of the project involved developing the Housing Strategy itself, which provides policies, objectives, and actions to help the Town and community partners take steps towards creating and maintaining an affordable, safe, and suitable supply of housing. This process was complemented by a second round of community engagement (spring 2025) to confirm and gather feedback on the preliminary goals and actions proposed in the draft Housing Strategy.



2.0 Phase 1 Community Engagement

2.1 Engagement and Communications Overview

Multiple opportunities were provided to gather feedback as part of the initial round of engagement. The survey and community session opportunities were advertised through posters, newspaper advertisement in *The Weekly Anchor*, utility bill advertisement, social media (Facebook, X, and Instagram), and through the Town’s website. The external focus groups and key informant interviews were more targeted and those who participated received email invitations to provide feedback.

- **Community Survey** (October 29 to November 22): A survey was hosted on the Town’s website to provide an opportunity to gather feedback from residents. **74** submissions were received.

- **Council Workshop** (November 12, 2024): A discussion was facilitated with Council members to learn what they are hearing from residents, gaps they see, and key housing priorities.
- **External Focus Groups** (November 13, 2024): Two virtual focus groups were facilitated with housing and support service providers (e.g., community agencies and representatives of at-risk groups), non-profit housing providers, managers, and local builders and developers. **Six (6)** distinct organizations and groups were represented at these focus groups.
- **Community Session** (November 13, 2024): An in-person drop-in community session was held to learn about resident experiences with housing in Edson, including any specific challenges being faced and ideas to address housing needs. Approximately **25** people participated in the session by chatting with the project team and/ and/or providing input.
- **Key Informant Interviews** (December 2024-January 2025): **Six (6)** telephone (or virtual) interviews were facilitated with key housing and service providers and people who have experienced challenges accessing and securing housing.

2.2 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 session, and online engagement.

Key Themes	Description
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable 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, and seniors • Housing-related costs, such as utilities and taxes, are said to be too high and impacting affordability
Rental Affordability and Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable rentals are needed, along with increased accountability for landlords to provide on-going maintenance and repairs
Housing Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for different types of housing options, such as single-detached homes, apartments, duplexes/semi-detached, manufactured homes/mobile homes, tiny homes, supportive housing, and transitional housing • Currently, housing options are mostly single-detached homes, many on large lots
Supports and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More services to obtain and maintain housing, such as mental health supports, emergency accommodations, assisted living, rental subsidies, etc. are needed to support vulnerable populations like youths, seniors, people with disabilities, and residents experiencing homelessness
Government Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More government support is needed to support people in becoming homeowners
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable 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"> • Increased development is needed due to a shortage of diverse and affordable housing options, such as secondary suites, garden suites, manufactured homes, mobile homes, co-op housing, supportive housing, transitional housing, and repurposing underutilized commercial buildings into residential

Key Themes	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory barriers to developing more diverse and affordable housing, such as zoning bylaws and permitting, are an issue
Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a desire for collaboration and partnerships between developers, support services, and the Town of Edson to facilitate affordable, high-density, and diverse housing solutions
Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about flooding in the community impacts the perception of housing quality Cost concerns include flooding impacting property values and the increase in costs for repairs and maintenance after a flood event

2.3 External Focus Groups

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

2.3.1 Key Messages & Emerging Priorities

- **Affordability Issues:** There is a growing need for affordable housing options, especially for lower-income groups, seniors, newcomers, and individuals at risk of homelessness. Rising construction costs, high rent prices, and economic fluctuations impact housing accessibility.
- **Housing Shortages for Vulnerable Populations:** Supportive and transitional housing options are notably lacking, creating instability, and limiting resources for unhoused residents and vulnerable populations.
- **Economic and Regulatory Barriers:** Economic downturns, high development costs, and some restrictive zoning regulations hinder new housing projects, particularly affordable and diverse housing types.
- **Community Partnerships and Policy Adjustments:** There is a desire for collaboration between developers, support services, and the Town to facilitate affordable, higher-density, and diverse housing solutions.

2.3.2 Themes from Discussions with Housing Developers, Landlords and Real Estate Agents

- **Supply and Market Conditions:** There is adequate land supply, but high building costs and slow economic activity have led to stagnant housing development. The current market has available inventory, but it's often unaffordable or not suited to low-income residents.
- **Barriers to Development:** Developers face high costs per square foot, and Land Use Bylaw regulations on minimum house sizes can restrict and complicate affordable housing projects. There's a need for smaller unit sizes and more affordable rental units. There is some sense that there is a lack of interest in being a landlord.
- **Diverse Housing Needs:** There is a gap in housing options for seniors, workforce housing, and smaller unit sizes. Challenges include long waitlists for seniors housing, social housing, and subsidized housing. A need for affordable rental housing was also emphasized.
- **Policy and Strategy Suggestions:** Suggested solutions include infill development, higher-density zoning, and supportive policies to encourage affordable housing projects close to community amenities.

2.3.3 Themes from Discussions with Housing and Support Service Providers

- **Housing Instability Among Vulnerable Groups:** Lower-income families, newcomers, and women fleeing domestic violence struggle to find safe, affordable housing. Overcrowded housing conditions and poor housing quality are prevalent among those unable to afford better options.
- **Lack of Supportive and Transitional Housing:** There's a lack of supportive and transitional housing, with long waitlists for social housing. Homelessness visibility is increasing, with some residents forced to live in rough or in inadequate temporary accommodations.
- **Challenges with Access to Housing and Resources:** Support services are strained, and residents often lack knowledge about available housing assistance. The need for affordable entry-level ownership housing, affordable rental housing, and targeted support for vulnerable populations was emphasized.
- **Potential Solutions:** Recommendations include creating affordable housing (examples include tiny home communities for seniors and unhoused residents), increasing transitional and supportive housing, and ensuring safe and accessible housing options for the Town's most vulnerable populations.

2.4 Key Informant Interviews

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

2.4.1 The Evergreens Foundation

The Evergreens Foundation is a not-for-profit housing management body that supports independent housing across six Albertan municipalities. They currently operate three housing developments in Edson.

Table 2.1: Evergreens Foundation Housing Breakdown, Town of Edson

Building	Number of Units	Unit Type	Number of Accessible Units
Heatherwood Manor	23	21 1-bedroom, 2 bachelor	1*
Heritage Court	32	1-bedroom	1
Parkland Lodges	105	82 Bachelor, 21 1-bedroom, and two 2-bedroom	105

**Of note, while Heatherwood Manor and Heritage Court each have one accessible unit, scooters and electric wheelchairs are not permitted.*

Wait List

Parkland Lodges maintains its own waiting list and had approximately 14-18 people waiting for a non-subsidized unit and about 36 people waiting for a subsidized unit. Non-subsidized units are on a first-come, first-served basis, while the subsidized units are based on need.

For Heatherwood Manor and Heritage Court, there were approximately 5-8 people waiting.

2.4.2 Edson Friendship Centre

The Edson Friendship Centre (EFC) is a non-profit organization that provides support and services to Edson and the surrounding community. Operating in Edson for over 30 years, it includes a drop-in centre and delivers a range of cultural programs, youth services, early learning programs, family supports, and nutrition programs.

The EFC also provides the Wayfinding program that serves individuals in the community who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. This program connects people with addiction services and income support, as well as helps people navigate other community resources. The Wayfinding program is delivered by two social workers and operates Monday to Thursday. In November 2024, the program supported about 75 unhoused individuals including approximately 20 who are youth and seniors (65+).

Challenges currently impacting individuals accessing the Wayfinding program include a lack of transitional and supportive housing, lack of rental subsidies, and the need for additional supports such as mental health supports and supports for people to help maintain their housing. Additional barriers in accessing housing include discrimination by landlords, and the eviction of lower-income tenants when demand for rental housing increases. Barriers to creating transitional and supportive housing include a lack of operational funding and NIMBYism.

2.4.3 SCOPE

SCOPE operates supportive housing for persons with developmental disabilities in Edson. Overall, SCOPE operates 5 supportive housing homes with a total of 23 beds and provides 24/7 support to three individuals in their own apartments (two individuals live in a two-bedroom unit, and the other individual lives in a one-bedroom apartment).

Representatives from SCOPE note that there is strong demand for more supportive housing in the area, the waiting list is maintained by Development Services Ontario. Housing affordability is the main challenge for persons with developmental disabilities trying to find housing in Edson. Representatives of SCOPE also point to the need for having the right support services in place and ensuring appropriate accommodations for people as they age (i.e., to meet accessibility needs).

2.4.4 Yellowhead Shelter

The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter (YES), located in Hinton, provides short-term accommodation for women and their children fleeing violence, as well as for women in crisis from the surrounding region, including Edson. The facility comprises 10 beds across 4 bedrooms, though occupancy is not consistently at capacity. Despite this, the shelter occasionally has to turn people away, particularly individuals who are actively using drugs or who display aggression towards staff. Staffing limitations also mean only one staff member is on duty at any given time.

Approximately 10% of the shelter's residents come from Edson. However, staff report that many women in Edson choose to stay in their community to maintain connections to their jobs or local support systems. To address this, Yellowhead offers outreach services to support women in need directly in Edson.

For those who do stay at the shelter, securing housing is a significant challenge due to a lack of affordable options. Although rents in Edson are generally lower than in Hinton, they remain out of reach for individuals and families relying on income assistance. Staff highlight the need for additional rental



subsidies, particularly in Edson, where some housing supply is currently available. Barriers such as a lack of references and poor credit history further complicate access to stable housing.

A proposed solution to these challenges includes establishing supportive housing in the area. This model would combine affordable housing units with on-site or connected services provided by local organizations, including YES, to support residents in achieving stability and independence.

Staff also identified a recent, concerning, trend in the local rental market where landlords are increasingly offering only short-term leases ending in May or June, and then converting properties into Airbnb rentals for the summer; this significantly reduces housing availability during those months.

2.4.5 Local Realtors

When speaking with local realtors in work in Edson and the surrounding area, the following topics were raised:

HOUSING MARKET:

Prices in Edson are considered comparable to other communities, however, Edson offers larger lots and older homes. Generally, there is a high supply of homes but low demand, although there has been a slight increase in market activity following a recent drop in mortgage rates.

HOUSING AVAILABILITY:

There is a wide range of housing types available in Edson, but there is a significant need for seniors housing. It was noted that seniors are moving out of their homes but have limited options on places to go due to long waitlists for existing facilities.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SUPPORTS:

Providing homes alone was noted as not being sufficient as individuals experiencing homelessness may struggle with living independently. Related supports are required.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES:

Edson is perceived as an expensive place to develop due to high infrastructure costs and lack of local developers. Additionally, past experiences with Town development processes being referred to as “slow,” combined with recent labour and materials supply shortages have created additional barriers to residential development.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES:

There are both negative perceptions and first-hand experiences with flooding in Edson that impact the quality of the current housing. It was noted that flooding is attributed to issues with the existing infrastructure, not poor household maintenance.

TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- Following the Jasper wildfire in 2024, there was an influx of people who bought homes in Edson, which had an unexpected impact on the local housing market.

- Infill housing was identified as a potential opportunity to split large lots and develop higher density housing that could cater to different demographic groups.

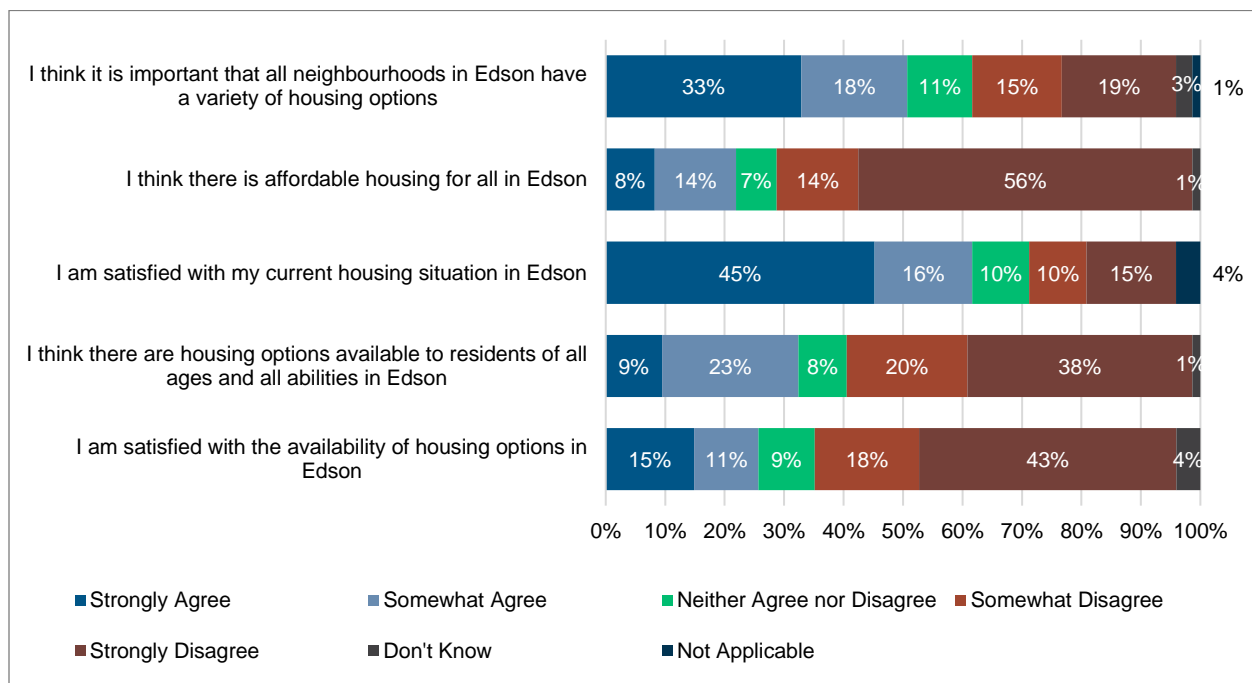
2.5 Community Session and Online Engagement

Interested and affected parties and residents were asked to provide feedback on the challenges and opportunities of ensuring safe, appropriate, and affordable housing is available for all residents in the Town of Edson. The following section provides a high-level summary of feedback received through the community session and online survey.

2.5.1 Current Housing Perspectives

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

- Slightly over half (51%) of respondents **strongly or somewhat agreed** that it is important that all neighbourhoods have a variety of housing options (74 responses).
- When asking respondents whether they thought there were affordable housing options in Edson, 70% of people **strongly or somewhat disagreed** with the statement (74 responses).
- Of those responding, 61% of people **strongly or somewhat agreed** that they were satisfied with their current housing situation in Edson (73 responses).
- 58% of respondents **strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed** that there were housing options available for all ages and all abilities in the town (73 responses).
- 61% of respondents **strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed** that they were satisfied with the availability of housing in Edson (73 responses).



Survey responses: 74

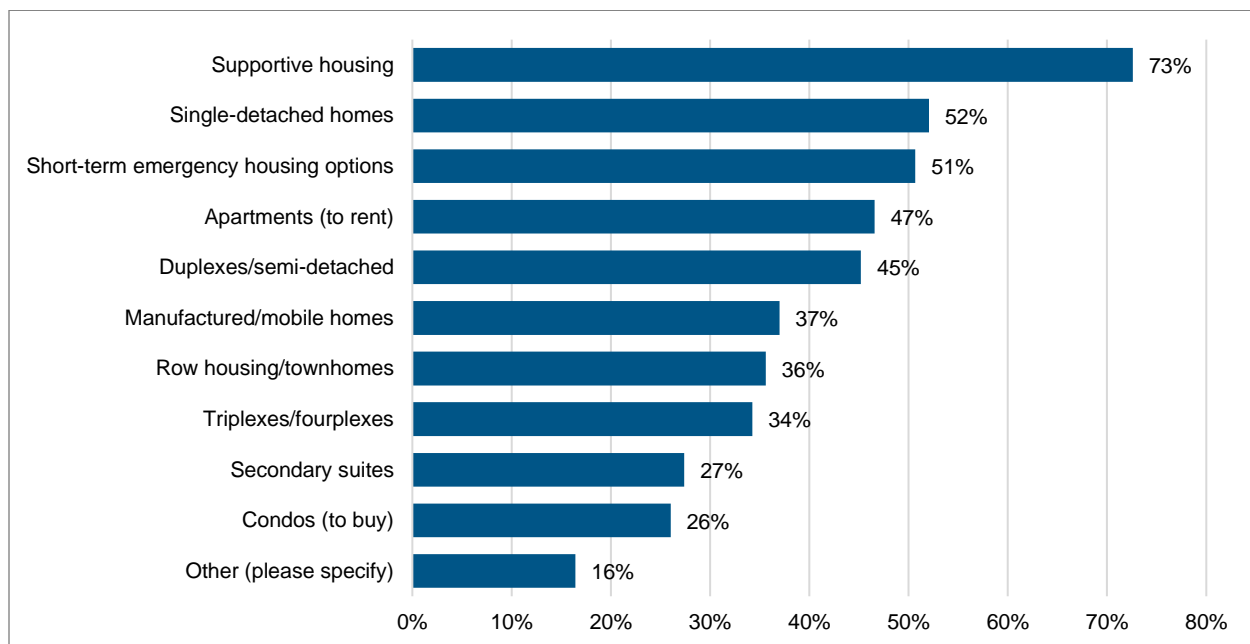
Survey participants were asked to explain their selections. The following summarizes the top themes from feedback shared:

- **High cost of housing:** Most participants shared that housing is not affordable in Edson and the cost of owning a home and land or renting were too high.
- **Affordable and diverse housing:** Some participants shared that there is not enough affordable housing and there was not enough diversity to accommodate seniors, people with disabilities, and single-income households. However, there were a few participants concerned that more diverse housing would lead to safety issues in those neighbourhoods.
- **Unhoused population:** There were a few concerns that the lack of affordable housing options is contributing to people becoming or remaining unhoused.

Survey responses: 46

2.5.2 Housing Options Needed

Residents were asked to share what types of housing they believe are most needed in Edson. The top five housing needs participants identified were supportive housing (73%), single detached homes (52%), short-term emergency housing options (51%), apartments to rent (47%) and duplexed/semi-detached homes (45%).



Responses: 73 from the survey and 10 from the community session (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- Mobile homes
- Tiny homes
- Government owned housing with rent controls
- Homes for families with big yards
- More pet-friendly options
- More housing options

- More affordable housing options

2.5.3 Supportive Housing Needs

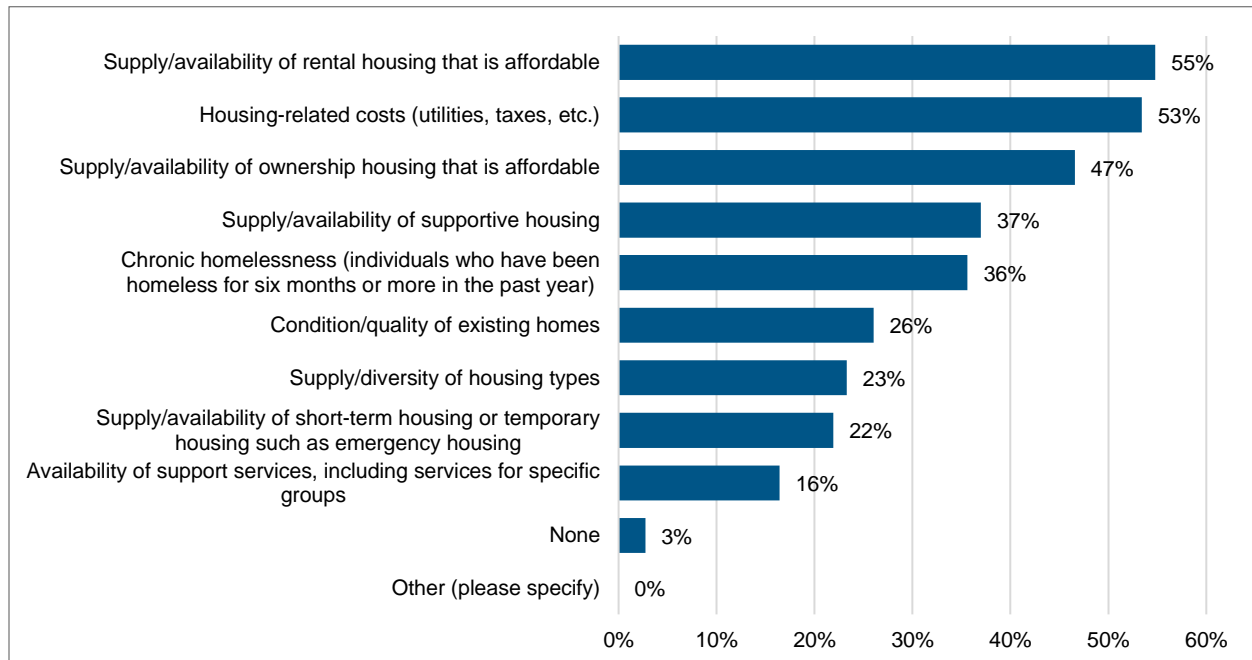
Participants were asked to further specify the types of supportive housing needed for Edson. Below is a summary of the responses:

- **Housing for seniors:** The majority of respondents specified that housing for seniors and assisted living was important for the town. Some mentioned the importance of housing that prioritizes different levels of independence and care for seniors.
- **Housing for low-income households:** Many others noted that housing is needed for lower-income households, which may include single parents and people with disabilities.
- **Diversity of housing:** A few respondents mentioned different types of housing they would like to see such as transitional housing for different community groups (seniors, people with mental health/addiction or medical challenges), tiny homes, apartments, mobile homes, home that provide assisted living and communal spaces (e.g. shared living spaces, co-op housing, community gardens, etc.), and accessible housing for seniors and people with disabilities.

Survey responses: 43

2.5.4 Pressing Housing Issues

We asked survey respondents to select the top 3 most pressing housing issues residents are currently experiencing in Edson. The top 3 issues that people thought were most important were supply/availability of affordable rental housing (55%), housing related costs like utilities, taxes, etc. (53%), and supply/availability of affordable housing that people can buy (47%).



Survey responses: 73 (participants could select all that apply)

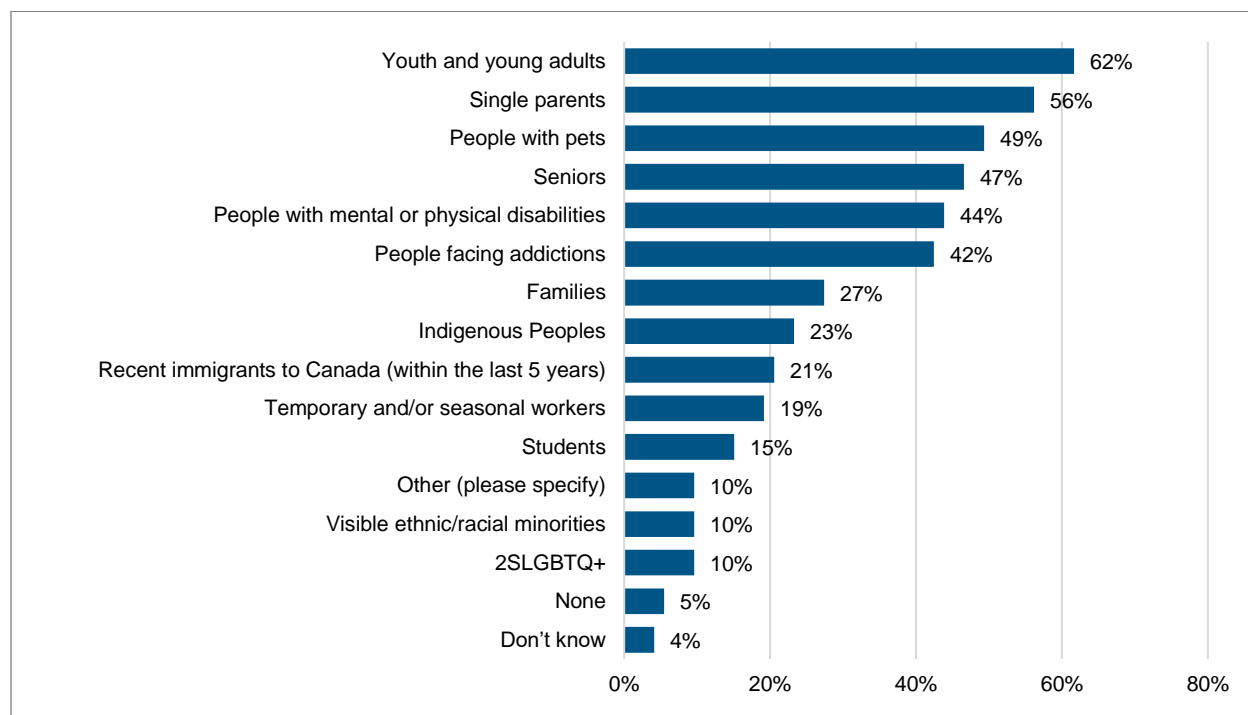
Additional details on the top 3 issues shared by survey respondents:

- There were some concerns that housing-related costs (utilities, taxes, etc.) were becoming too high and people wanted to see the town finding ways to cut costs. This included better preventative maintenance of utility infrastructure to reduce future repair costs.
- Affordability is top of mind for participants and a few suggested a need for controls and caps on rentals and housing prices.
- Although some people recognized the importance of housing for low-income populations and housing for the unhoused population, a few people expressed concerns for these housing types but did not specify why. Others shared feedback on the complexities and systemic barriers related to homelessness.
- A few people further emphasized the need for supportive housing that is accommodating to all ages and abilities in Edson.
- A few people are sharing the systemic issues and complexities of providing housing for people experiencing homelessness and addictions.

Survey responses: 26

2.5.5 Groups Who Might Experience Challenges

We asked survey respondents to identify groups who might experience more challenges in finding adequate housing in Edson. Respondents indicated that youth and young adults (62%), single parents (56%), people with pets (49%), seniors (47%), and people with mental/physical disabilities (44%) might experience challenges when finding housing that best meets their needs.



Survey responses: 73 (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- People with single income
- People with low income or working minimum wage jobs
- People in the service industry

- Families
- Residents should have priority over immigrants

2.5.6 Housing Challenges in the Next 5-10 Years

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

- **Increasing costs:** People consistently stated that the cost of homeownership, renting, taxes, and utilities will remain a challenge in the coming years. There were also a few people concerned that the town is spending tax dollars to lead residential development, which could mean increased costs passed onto residents.
- **Availability of housing options:** Some people noted other challenges like the availability of housing for families, seniors, supportive housing options, and housing for people with pets.
- **Aging housing infrastructures:** A few people commented on challenges relating to aging homes and increasing maintenance and repair costs to older homes.
- **Increasing number of people becoming unhoused:** A few people shared concerns for the growing unhoused population, stating that more support is needed. There was also safety concerns related to unhoused residents.
- **Attracting people to live and invest in Edson:** Some people shared that there will be challenges in retaining current residents and attracting future residents due to the lack of affordable housing. Others were concerned about current zoning bylaws limiting housing diversity within certain neighbourhoods. It was noted that these bylaws are making it difficult for developers, builders, and investors to develop housing in Edson.
- **Regulatory barriers:** A couple of people also noted the administrative barriers of development, including studies and assessments requirements and off-site levies prior to development.
- **Flooding:** A few people noted concerns about extreme weather events and natural disasters like flooding, which could impact homes and property values.
- **External concerns:** Some people point to broader challenges beyond Edson, such as the federal government's role in housing, the current Canadian economy, population decline, immigration, and the mismatch in wages relative to housing costs.

Responses: 59 from the survey and 25 from the community session

2.5.7 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 session to share innovative housing options that would be suitable in Edson.

- **Diverse housing types:** People mentioned numerous different types of housing options, with apartments and tiny homes being the most popular among respondents. Other housing types mentioned include secondary suites, garden suites, group housing, low-income housing, mixed-use developments that combine residential/commercial/recreational spaces, seniors housing, townhomes/condos, cooperative housing options, shelters, and housing for seasonal workers.
- **Lowering housing-related costs:** Some people commented that finding ways to lower taxes and utility costs are important but did not mention how that can be done.

- **Regulations:** Many people talked about limiting rental prices and implementing rent controls. A few others shared that government support is needed in terms of tax rebates for renovations, government loans for housing, and the removal of barriers for building different housing types like secondary suites and mobile homes. For example, people frequently refer to land development in Hillendale that can be facilitated by updating the land use plans and zoning bylaws to allow for more diverse housing types.
- Only a couple of people did not think Edson needed innovative housing solutions and one respondent was unsure.

Responses: 53 from the survey and 13 from community session

2.5.8 Identifying Priority Action

We asked survey respondents and people at the community session to identify one action that they think will have a positive impact on housing in Edson. The top priority actions noted by respondents include:

- Implementing rent controls and lowering rental costs
- Increasing the availability of affordable housing options
- Removing barriers to and attracting investors and builders
- Implementing manufactured homes and pre-approved housing plans to reduce costs
- Adjusting land use plans and zoning regulations to facilitate certain housing types to be built in Edson
- Lowering taxes and utility costs
- Implementing preventative maintenance measures on housing and utility infrastructure so as to reduce future repair costs
- Meeting with key groups to better understand barriers (groups noted by respondents include social service agencies, home builders and developers)
- Finding a solution for the unhoused population and working with current social service agencies already doing the work

Responses: 45 from the survey and 2 from the community session

2.5.9 Additional Housing Considerations

We asked survey respondents if there was anything else people wanted to share about housing in Edson. 29 responses were received for this question. Many of the responses were similar to the previous sections, with affordability and the high cost of owning, renting, taxes, utilities, and maintenance being the main themes. Some additions that were not mentioned previously include:

- Some people noted the complexities of developing a housing strategy and commented that Edson needs a housing strategy that creates a more resilient community for all.
- A few people were concerned about the addition of infills, more modern and unaffordable luxury homes, and the removal of character homes in Edson.

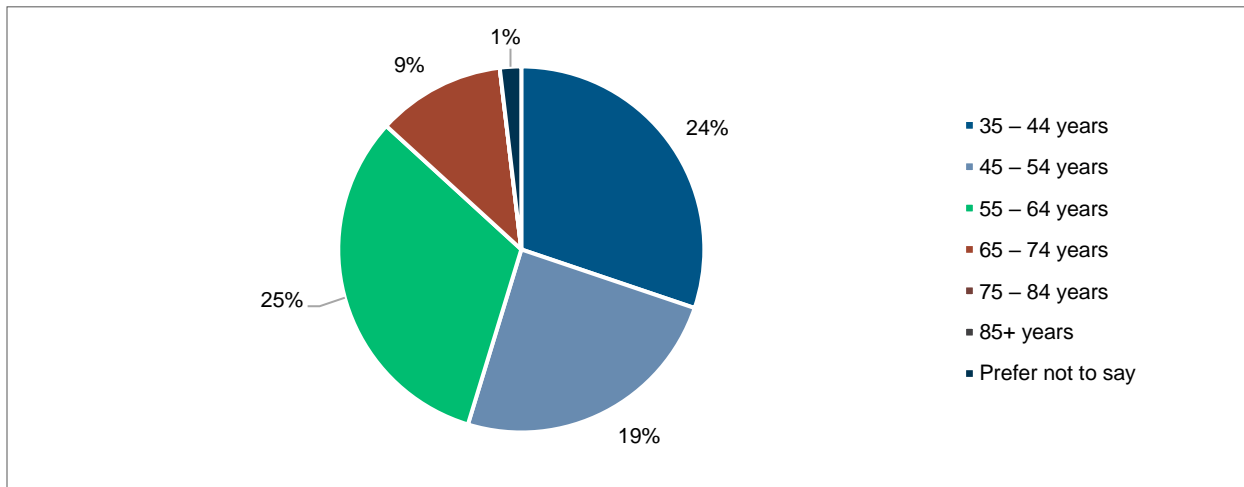
Survey responses: 29

2.5.10 Survey Demographics

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

AGE

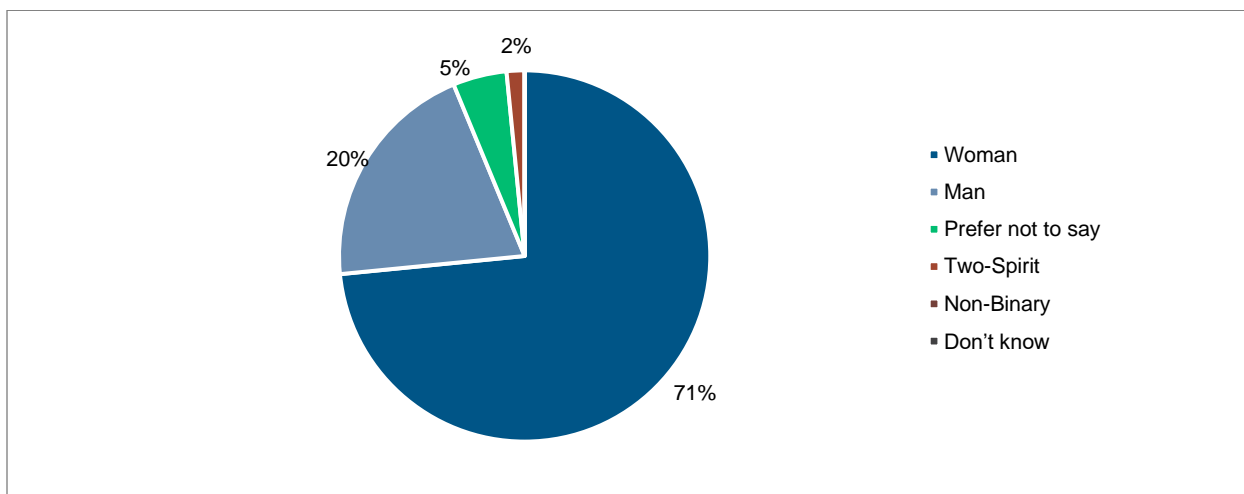
Most survey respondents (87%) who responded were between the ages of 25-64. The survey did not receive any responses from people 17 years or younger or people above 75 years of age.



Survey responses: 67

GENDER

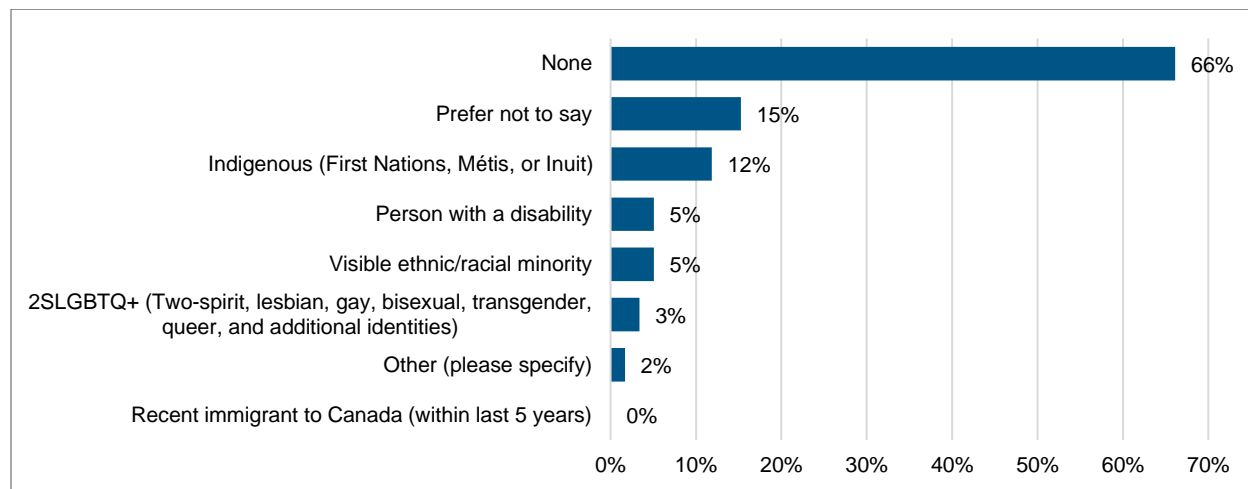
Survey respondents were primarily women (71%).



Survey responses: 66

GROUP SELF-IDENTIFICATION

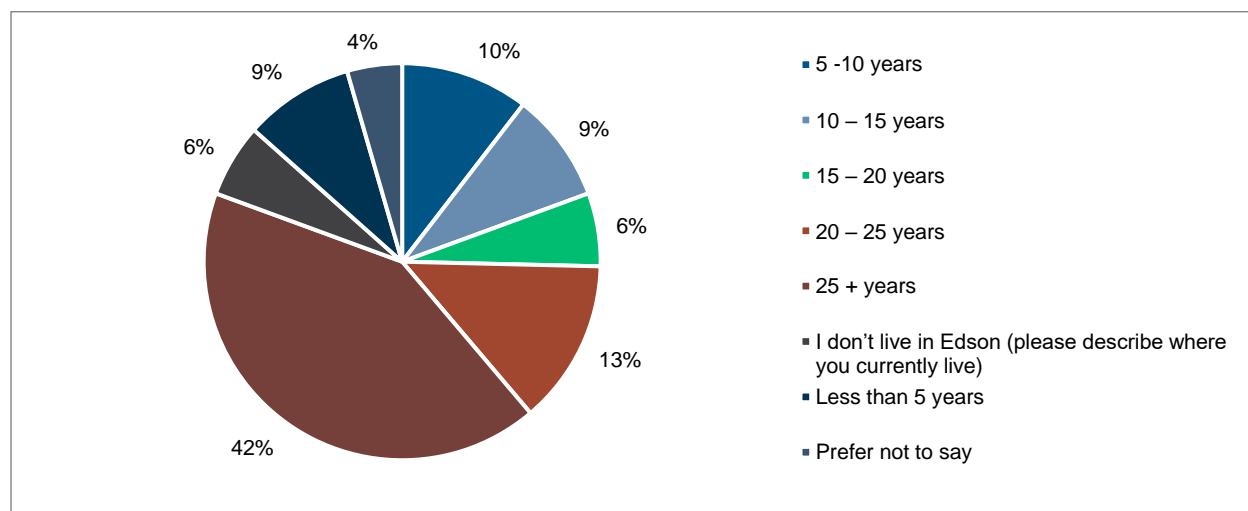
The majority of survey respondents (66%) did not fall into one of following groups or preferred not to say (15%). 12% of people we heard from identified as being Indigenous.



Survey responses: 59 (participants could select all that apply)

LENGTH OF TIME LIVING IN EDSON

Most survey respondents (42%) we heard from have lived in Edson for 25+ years.



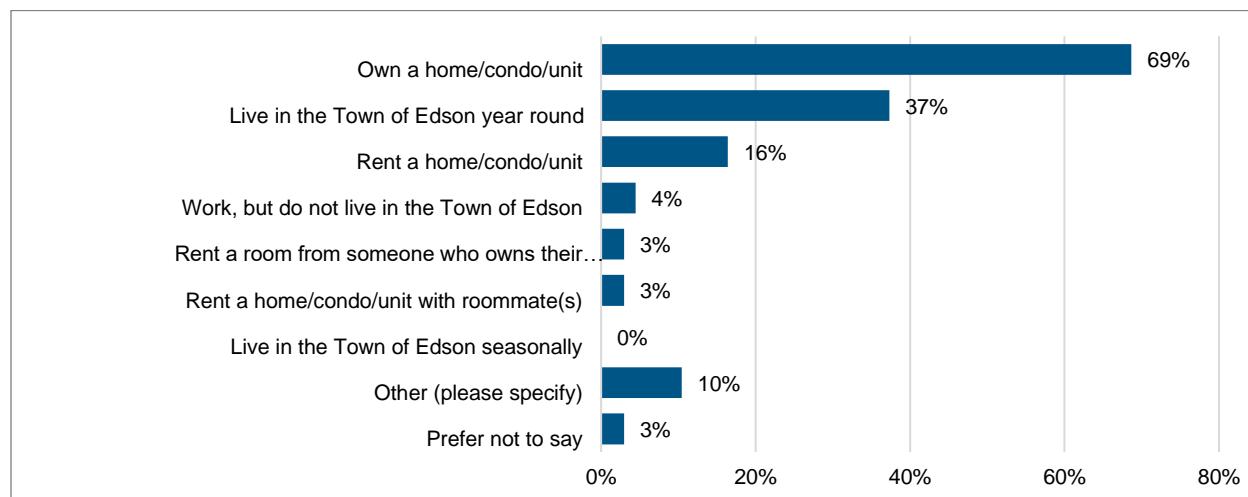
Survey responses: 67

Other responses:

- Residents of Yellowhead County
- Resident of Niton Junction

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION

Most survey respondents (69%) own their home/condo. 37% live in the town year-round and 16% rent their home.



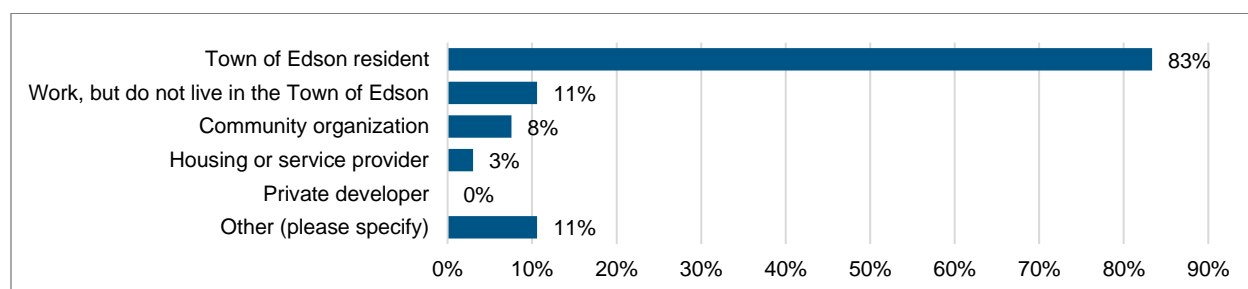
Survey responses: 67 (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- Residents of Yellowhead County
- Someone wanting to move to Edson
- Someone who owns numerous rentals in Edson

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU AND YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Most survey respondents we heard from (83%) were residents of the Town of Edson.



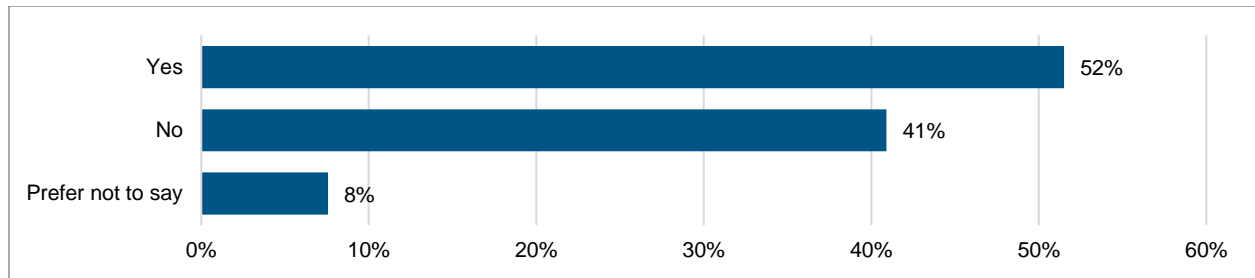
Survey responses: 66 (participants could select all that apply)

Other responses:

- Residents of Yellowhead County
- Someone wanting to move to Edson
- Someone wanting to leave Edson

CHALLENGES FINDING AND/OR MAINTAINING HOUSING

We asked survey respondents if they have ever experienced challenges in finding and/or maintaining housing in Edson that fully met their needs. 52% said yes, they have experienced challenges, whereas 41% said no.

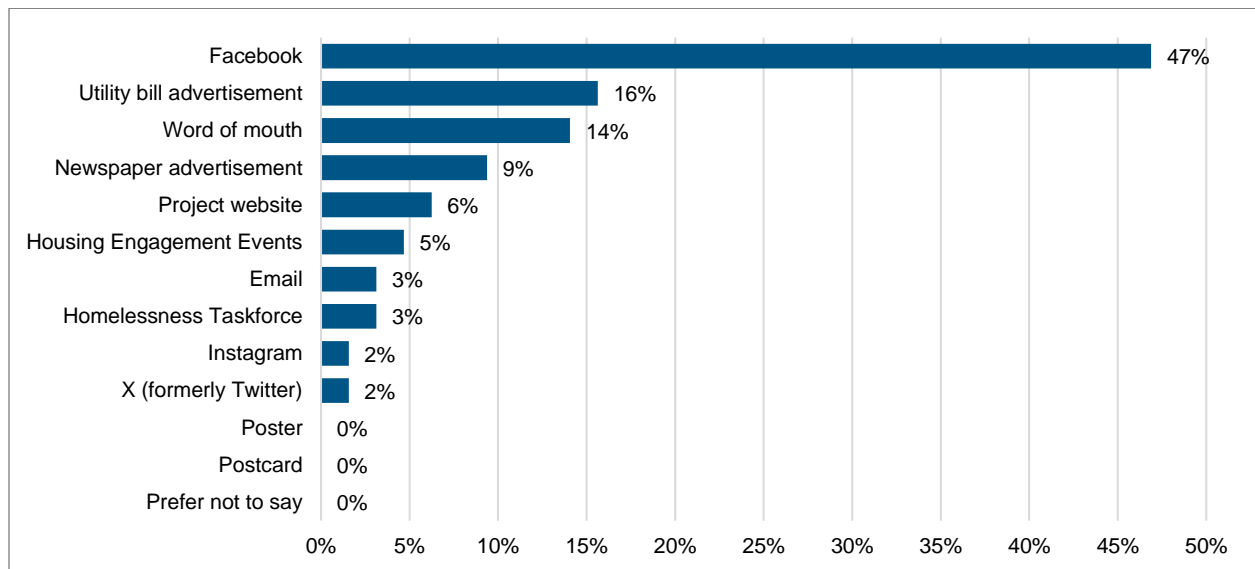


Survey responses: 66

For those who said yes, challenges noted by 33 survey respondents included affordability, such as finding suitable housing within their budget and life circumstances. A few people noted the difficulties in finding pet-friendly housing. A few others commented that the cost of utilities and taxes have made housing unaffordable. A couple of people shared the difficulties of being a landlord.

SURVEY COMMUNICATIONS

Over half of the people responding to the survey (51%) heard about the survey through social media (Facebook, Instagram, and X). 16% also heard through the utility bill advertisement and 13% through word of mouth.



Survey responses: 64

3.0 Phase 2 Community Engagement

3.1 Engagement and Communications Overview

As part of the second round of engagement, opportunities were advertised through the same communication channels used in the first round, in addition to hand-delivering posters to local facilities. People provided feedback on components of the draft Housing Strategy through the following engagement opportunities:

- **Community Survey** (March 10 to 31, 2025): A survey was hosted on the Town's website to provide an opportunity to gather feedback from residents on the preliminary goals and actions. **90** submissions were received.
- **Community Session** (March 27, 2025): An in-person drop-in community session was held to share the preliminary goals and actions proposed in the draft Housing Strategy and gather feedback from the public. Approximately **Nine (9)** people attended the event.

3.2 Overall Key Themes

The table below details a high-level summary that emerged from feedback provided through the survey and community session.

Key Themes	Description
Confirmation of Phase 1 Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We asked people to review and confirm the key themes developed to summarize the first round of engagement. The majority of participants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the themes presented. • Out of all the themes presented, most people strongly agreed with the summaries on affordability (71%) and seniors housing (66%).
Support for the Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overwhelming majority of people supported the draft goals developed for the Housing Strategy. • Most people agreed with Goal 5: Facilitate diverse housing options (67%) and Goal 1: Adapt housing priorities to evolving community needs (66%).
Support for the Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly, most participants indicated strong agreement with the preliminary actions proposed for each of the five goals. • The actions that received the most support included: regularly engaging with the community on housing (76% strongly agreed), applying for federal and provincial grants and funding programs (76% strongly agreed), and updating the Town's MDP to include policies that support affordable and diverse housing (71% strongly agreed).
Additional comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When asked to share what could be improved with the draft goals and actions, people suggested more detailed actions that could be taken. These comments were similar to what was heard in the first round of engagement. • A summary of additional comments can be reviewed on page 23.

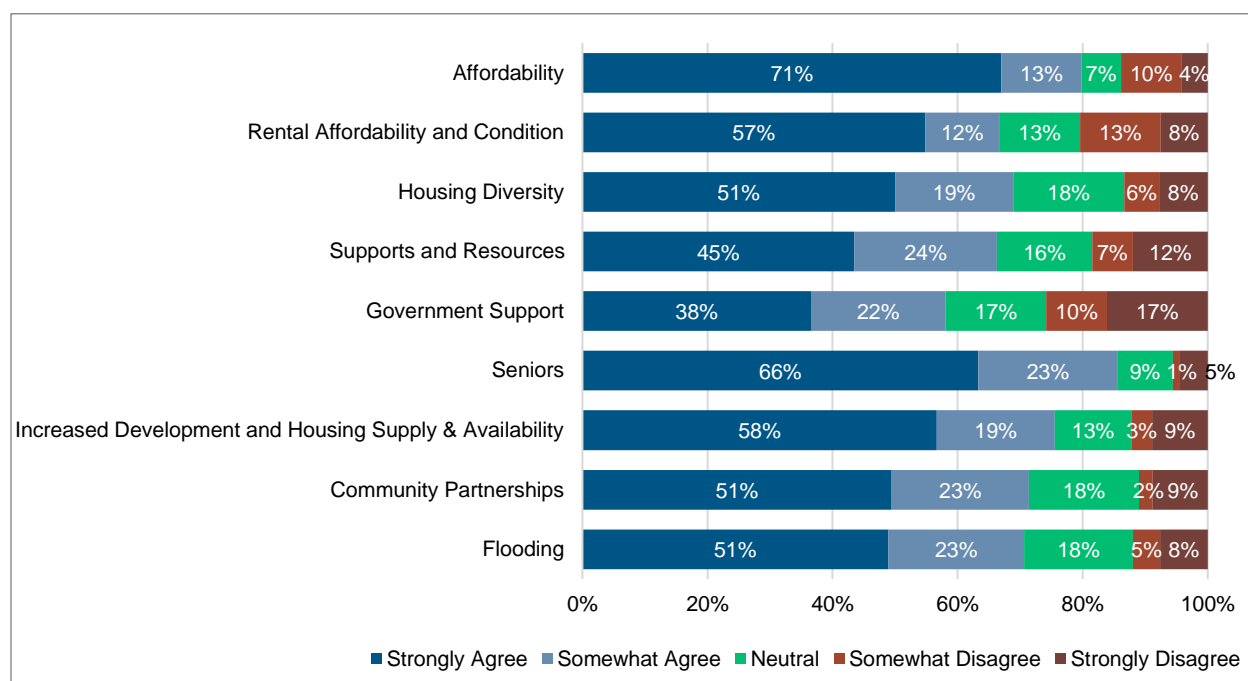
3.3 Community Survey and Community Session

Interested and affected parties and residents were asked to provide feedback on the preliminary goals and actions developed for the Housing Strategy to support safe, appropriate, and affordable housing in

Edson. The following section provides a high-level summary of feedback received through the community survey and community session.

3.3.1 Confirming What We Have Learned

We asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the summarized themes from the first round of engagement. The majority of people strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the themes that were presented following the first round of engagement. People most strongly agreed with the themes of affordability (71%) and housing for seniors (66%).



Responses from the survey and community session: 99

We asked participants to share if there were any themes missing from those presented above. In this section, many reiterated their support for the above themes by stating specific elements that the Town should focus on. Additional themes that were not captured by the above summary include:

- Increased engagement with residents on the topic of housing
- Support for middle class residents in affording home ownership
- Concerns over the future growth of Edson straining resources for current residents
- Improved Town infrastructure to attract investments by developers
- Thinking the Town should not be involved in housing

Responses from the survey and community session: 32

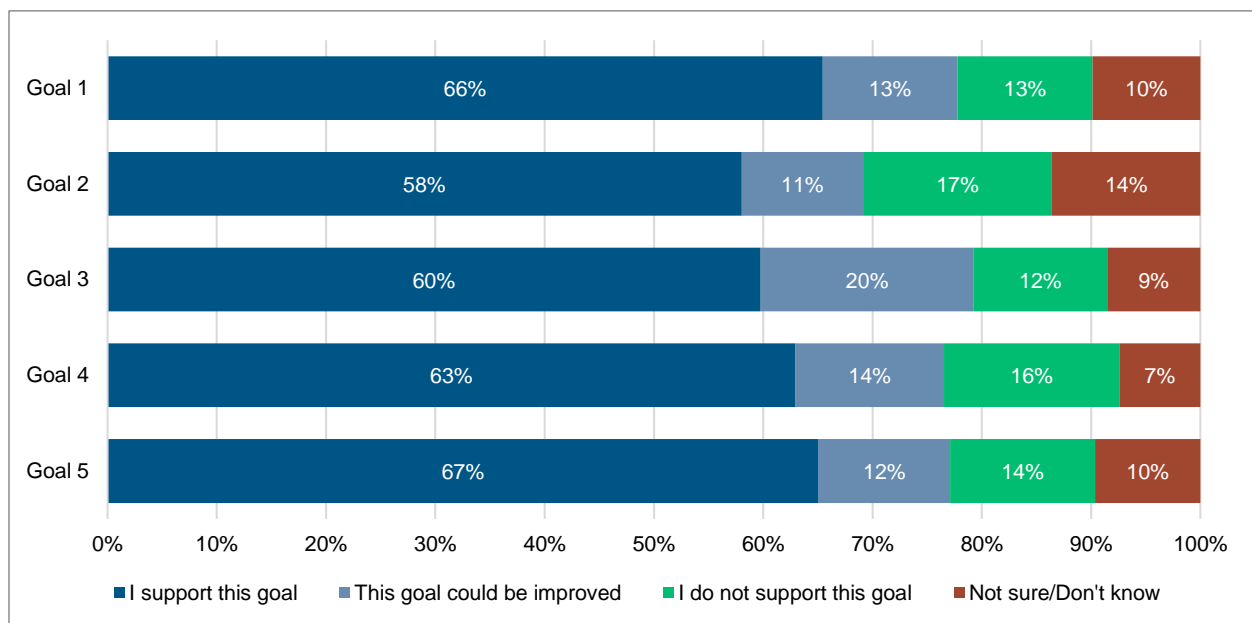
3.3.2 Goals for the Housing Strategy

We asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the five draft goals that were developed. The goals were as follows:

- **Goal 1:** Adapt housing priorities to evolving community needs: Active engagement with the community will monitor housing needs and help facilitate appropriate and coordinated housing action.

- **Goal 2:** Increase availability of short-term and supportive housing and related support services: Meeting the needs of individuals and families includes having short-term and supportive housing options to respond to those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- **Goal 3:** Maintain and adapt existing houses: Improving existing houses through regular maintenance, upkeep, or renovations can encourage movement within the existing housing market.
- **Goal 4:** Increase supply of rental housing, while maintaining quality of existing rental units: Rentals provide housing for residents who may not want to or may not be able to afford a home. Protecting and increasing the number of rentals helps provide suitable, adequate, and affordable options for existing residents and shorter-term renters.
- **Goal 5:** Facilitate diverse housing options: A more diverse range of housing options can attract residents in different life stages and better respond to needs of different cultures and aging populations.

The majority of participants were supportive of the draft goals. Goal 5 received the most support (67%), followed by Goal 1 (66%).

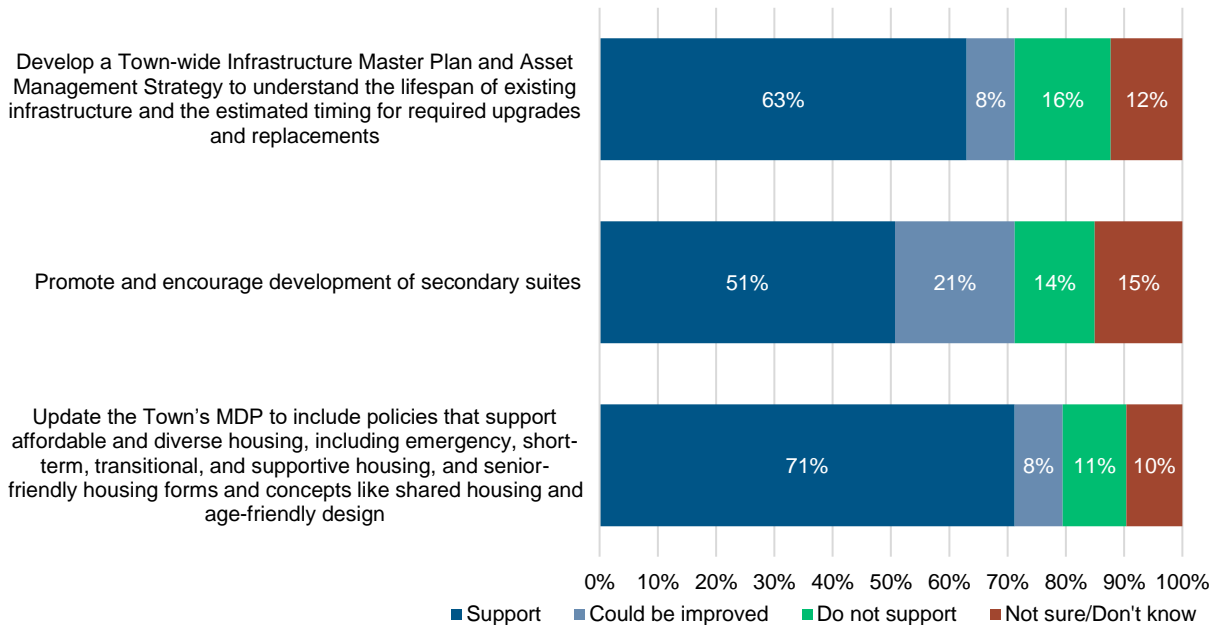


Responses from the survey and community session: 85

3.3.3 Taking Action

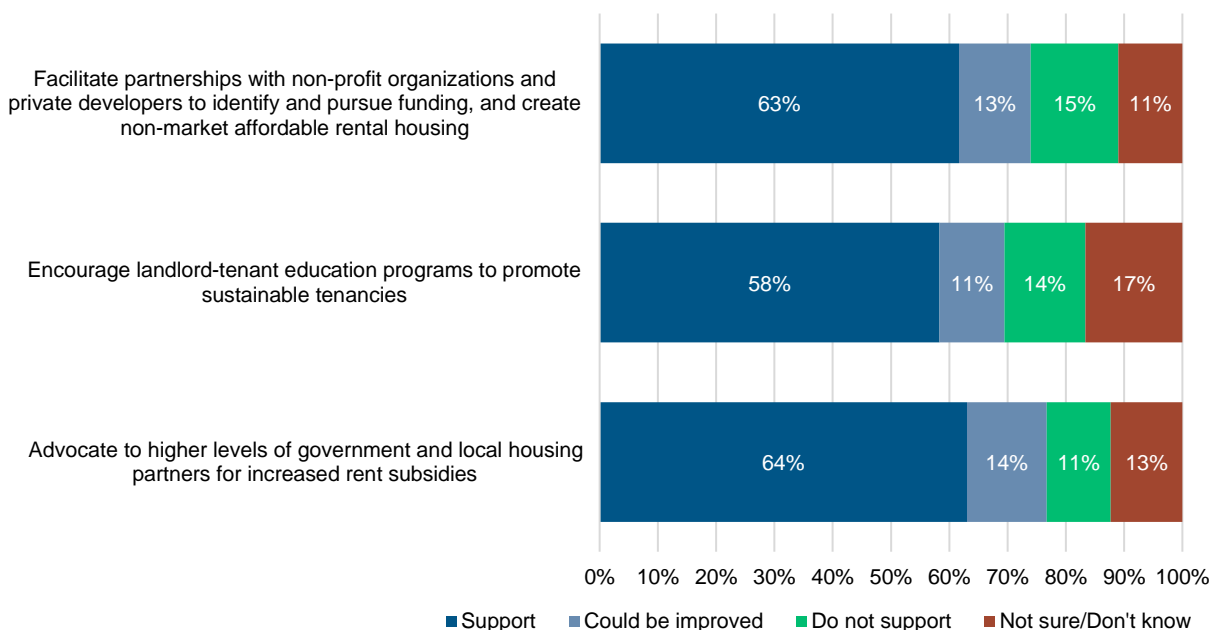
We asked participants to share their level of support for the preliminary actions related to the draft goals. The majority of people strongly agreed with the actions presented. The actions that received the most support included regularly engaging with the community on housing (76%), applying for federal and provincial grants and funding programs (76%), and updating the Town's MDP to include policies that support affordable and diverse housing (71%).

Preliminary actions under goal #1: Facilitate diverse housing options



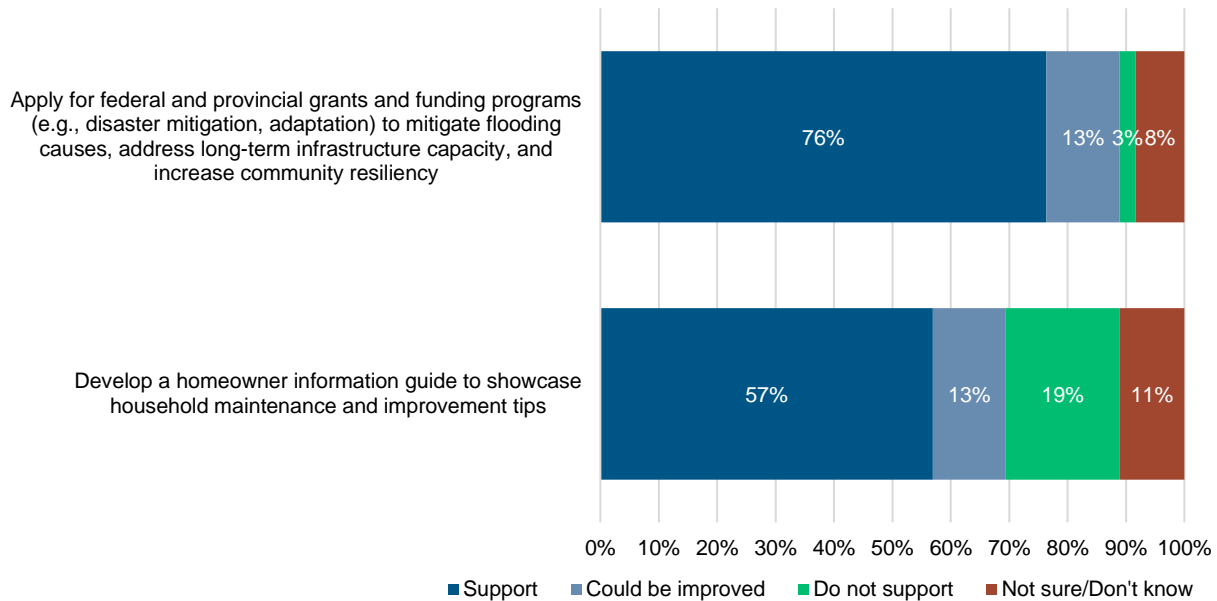
Responses from the survey and community session: 74

Preliminary actions under goal #2: Increase the supply of rental housing, while maintaining the quality of existing rental units



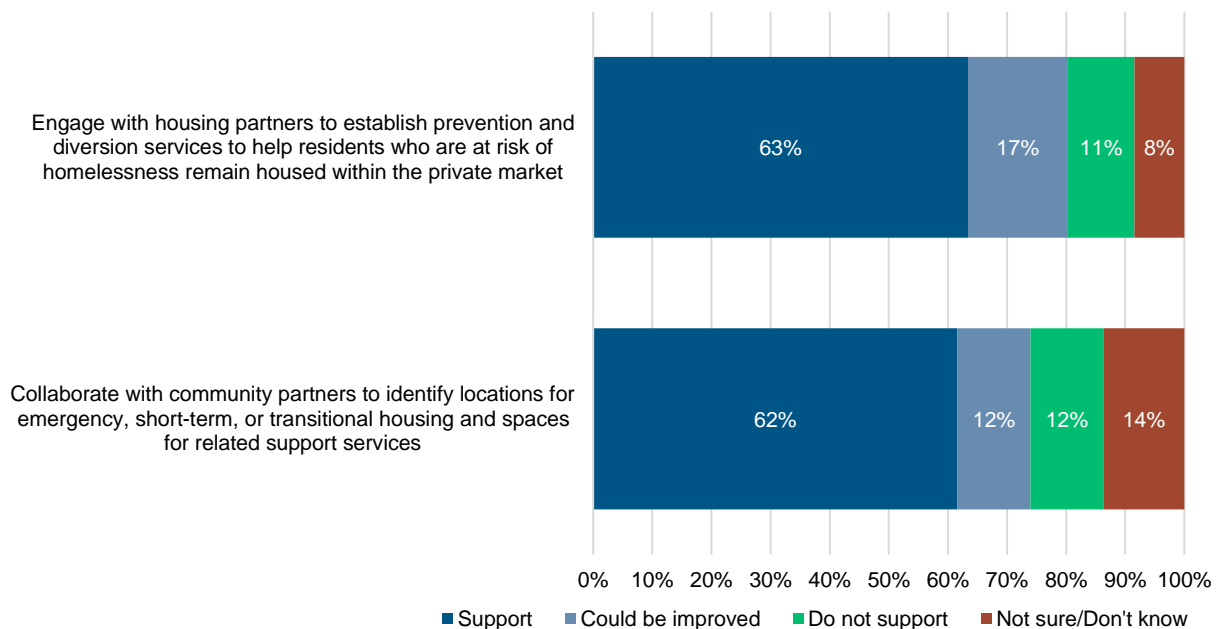
Responses from the survey and community session: 75

Preliminary actions under goal #3: Maintain and adapt the existing housing stock

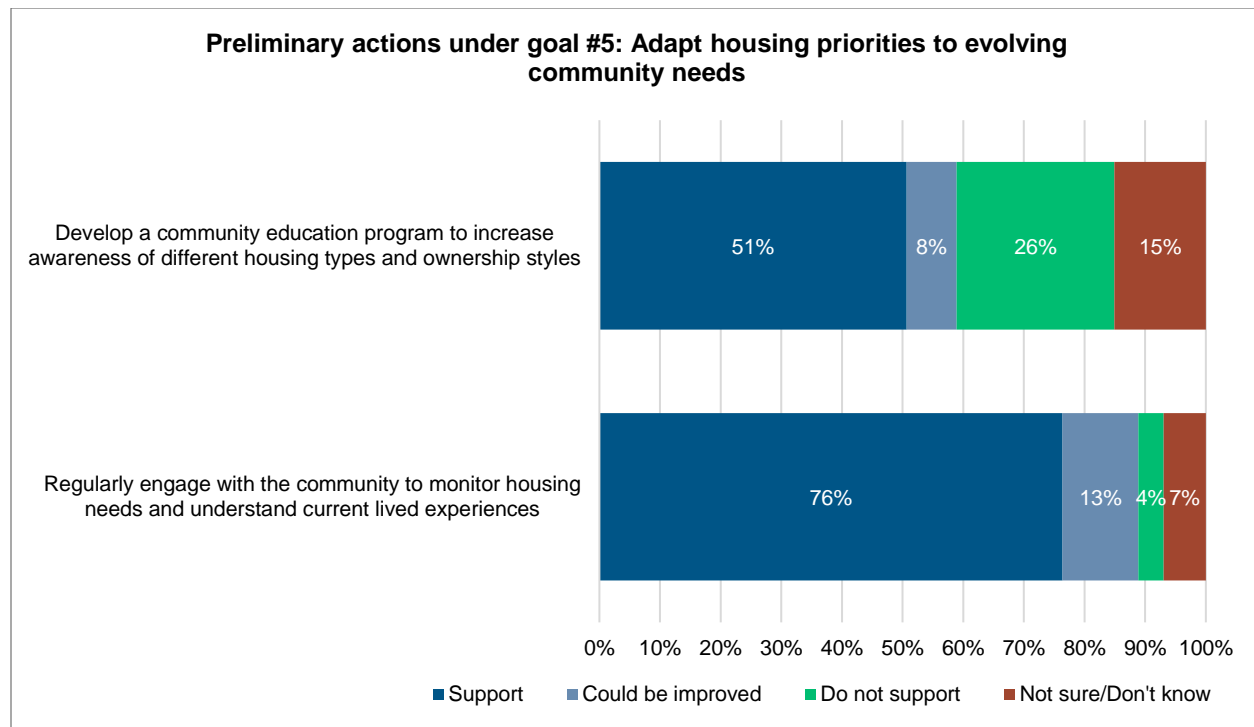


Responses from the survey and community session: 73

Preliminary actions under goal #4: Increase availability of short-term and supportive housing and related support services



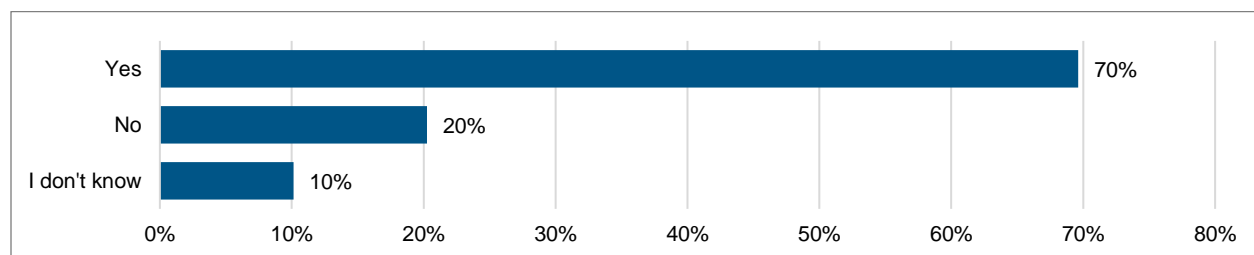
Responses from the survey and community session: 73



Responses from the survey and community session: 74

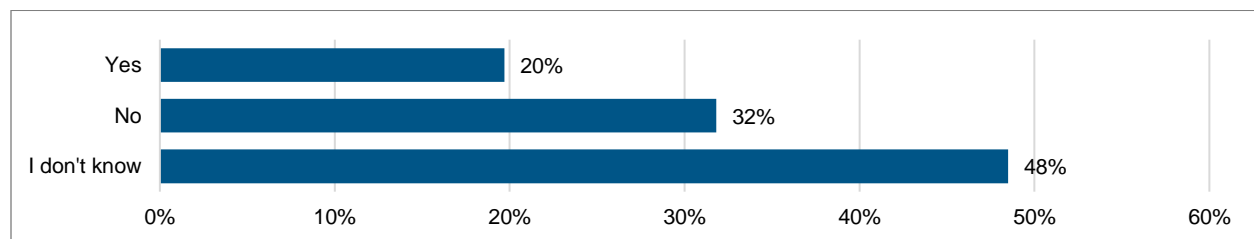
3.3.4 Recommended Improvements to the Goals and Actions

We asked survey respondents whether the draft goals related to the key themes and identified housing needs. 70% of survey respondents agreed that the goals related to the key themes.



Survey responses: 79

We asked survey respondents if anything was missing from the proposed actions. 20% of people said yes, there was something missing from the proposed actions.



Survey responses: 66

When asked how the goals and actions could be improved upon, the majority of survey respondents shared actions that they would like to see implemented rather than overarching goals. The following was shared from participants for both the goals (28 responses) and actions (24 responses):

- People wanted more information on timelines, actions for each goal, and who will be responsible for enacting the goals.
- Funding the Housing Strategy was another concern, with a few people noting that they would not want to see an increase in taxes to fund the strategy.
- There were a few concerns that housing priorities will favour future residents over current residents. A couple people noted that Edson needs to focus on increasing employment opportunities and housing (to buy/own) for current residents.
- A couple of people were concerned about where affordable housing and short-term emergency housing will be built in the Town. Others were concerned that regulatory barriers and building codes prevent short-term housing from being built more quickly.
- Regarding community education programs, one individual noted that renters and landlords need to be brought together in conversation to share perspectives and build understanding.
- A small number of people thought that the Town should not be involved in housing.
- Remaining comments were similar to what was shared in the first round of engagement, with people wanting action to lower housing-related costs; ensuring safe and comfortable rental options; adjusting regulations and creating incentives to promote development or retrofits; creating incentives to support current homeowners in maintenance/repairs; building more accessible housing options and more diverse housing; and having more supportive services for vulnerable populations.

3.3.5 Addressing Housing Needs

We asked survey respondents whether the draft goals and actions will successfully address housing needs in Edson. The majority of respondents (~65%) said that the goals and actions will fully or partially address current housing needs in Edson. A quarter (25%) of respondents were not as optimistic and the remaining were unsure.

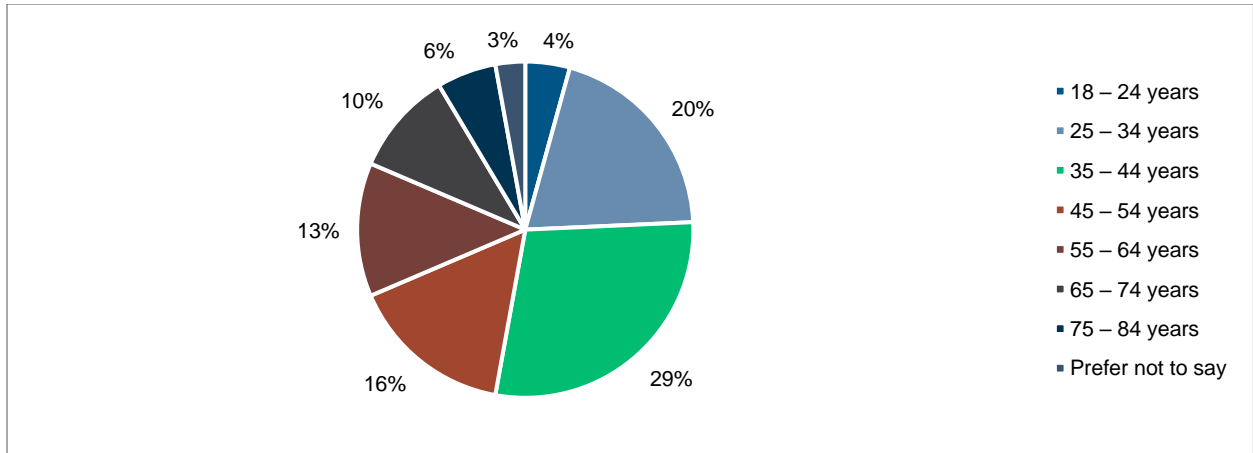
Responses from the survey: 27

3.3.6 Survey Demographics

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

AGE

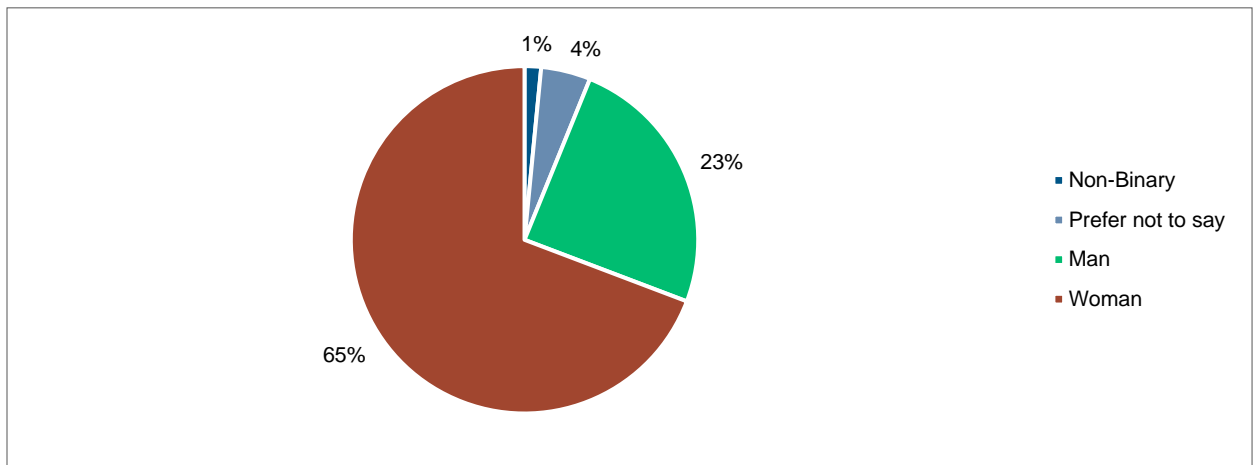
Most survey respondents (87%) who responded were between the ages of 25-64. The survey did not receive any responses from people 17 years or younger or people above 85 years of age.



Survey responses: 70

GENDER

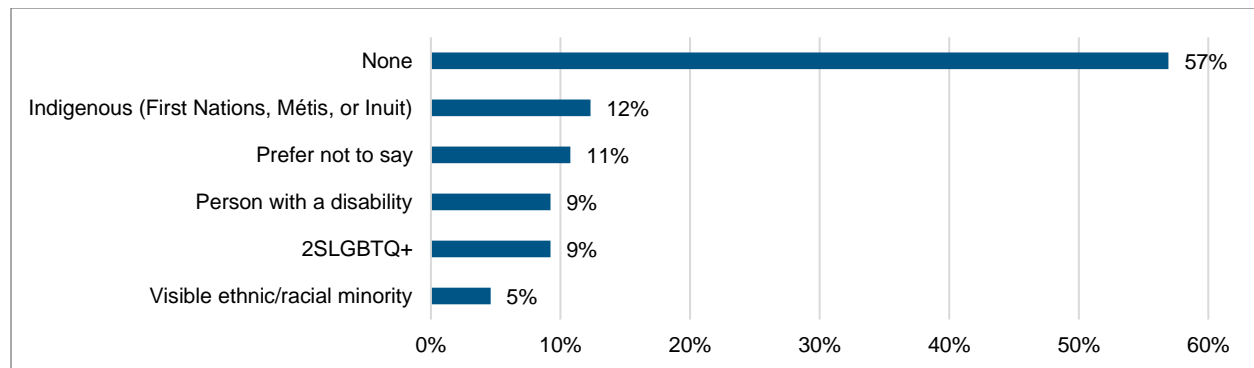
Survey respondents were primarily women (65%).



Survey responses: 69

GROUP SELF-IDENTIFICATION

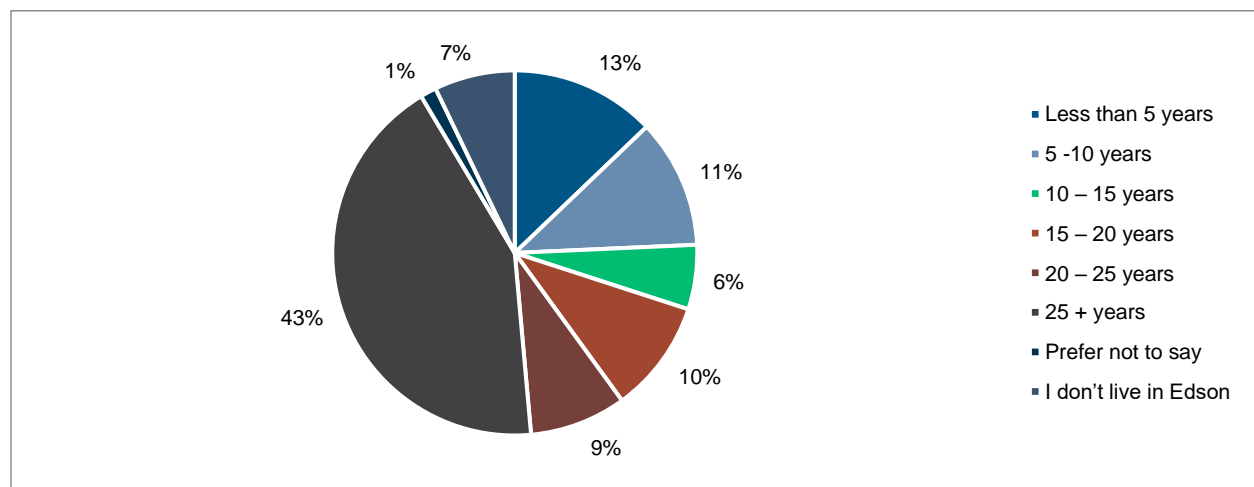
The majority of survey respondents (57%) did not fall into one of the following groups. 12% of participants identified as being Indigenous.



Survey responses: 65 (participants could select all that apply)

LENGTH OF TIME LIVING IN EDSON

Most survey respondents (43%) have lived in Edson for 25+ years.



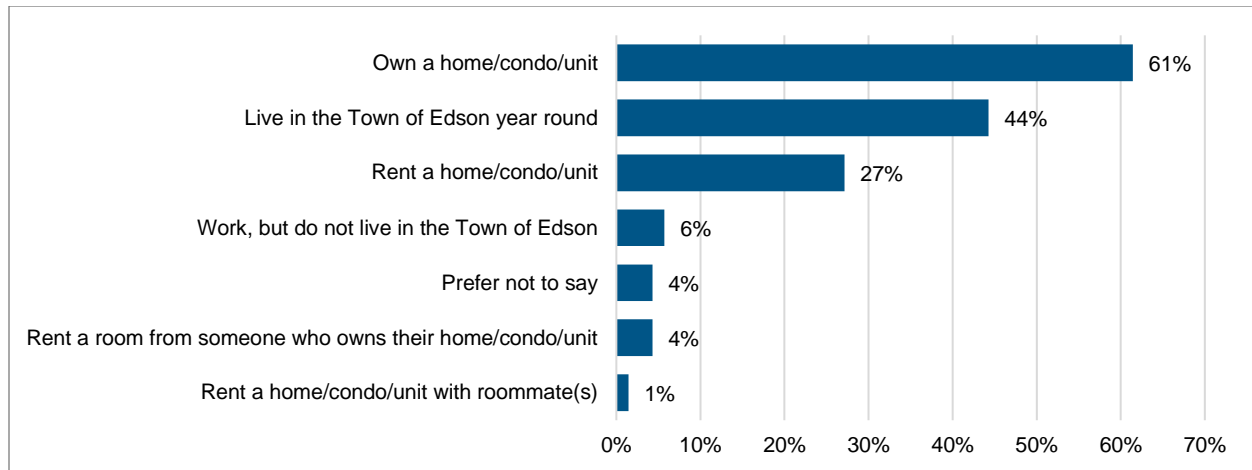
Survey responses: 70

Other responses:

- Yellowhead County
- Work in Edson but do not live in the community
- Own a home in Edson but do not live in the community

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION

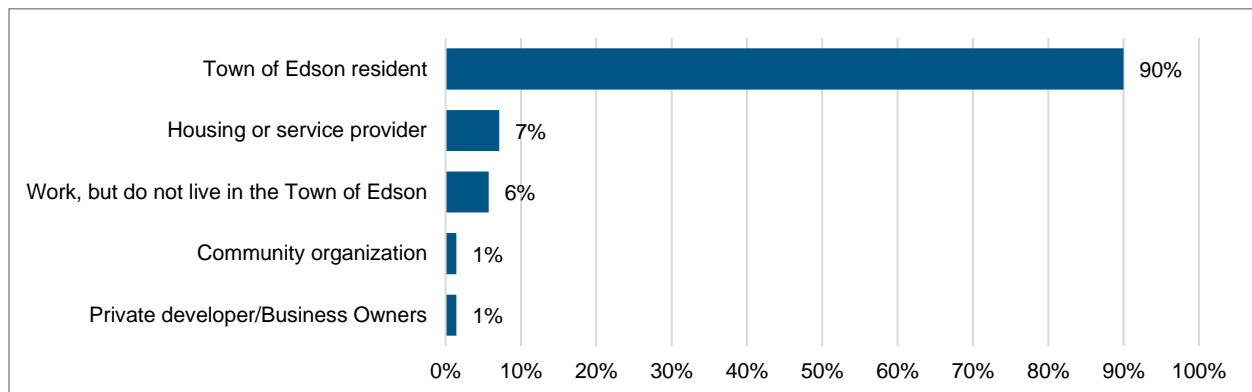
Most survey respondents (61%) owned their home/condo/unit. 44% lived in the town year-round and 27% rented their home/condo/unit.



Survey responses: 70 (participants could select all that apply)

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU AND YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Most survey respondents (90%) were residents of the Town of Edson.



Survey responses: 66 (participants could select all that apply)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, SUPPORTS, OR INCENTIVES

We asked survey respondents what additional information, supports, or incentives would be beneficial to increase residential development in the Town of Edson. The following comments were shared:

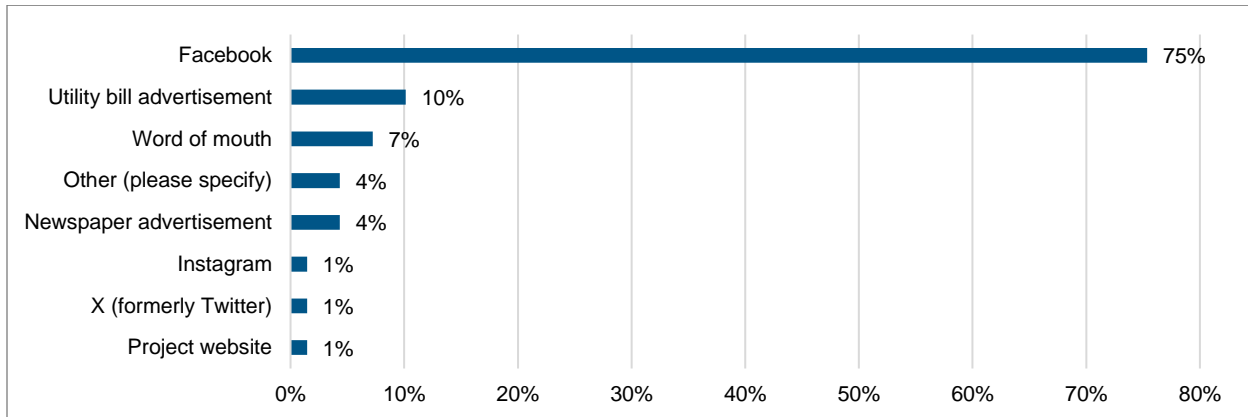
- Programs to incentivize development and thereby attract new residents.
- Prioritizing smaller housing options that are inherently more affordable and provide some supportive services (e.g., townhouses).
- Prioritizing affordable seniors housing and housing with supports for people with physical and mental disabilities.
- Finding ways to reduce taxes to alleviate costs to homeowners and landlords.
- Implementing a rent cap.
- Support programs for home repairs and maintenance.

Survey responses: 26



SURVEY COMMUNICATIONS

Most survey respondents (77%) heard about the survey through social media (Facebook, Instagram, and X). 10% also heard through the utility bill advertisement and 7% through word of mouth.



Survey responses: 69

Other responses:

- Edson's online community calendar
- Visiting the library during the engagement event
- Email communications

4.0 Next Steps

Feedback received through the first round of public engagement was used to inform development of objectives and actions proposed within Edson's draft Housing Strategy.

Feedback received through the second round of engagement was used to confirm the key themes heard through the first round of engagement, refine the proposed objectives and actions, and develop an implementation plan that includes timelines, priorities, and community leads and partners required to successfully implement Housing Strategy actions.

The Housing Strategy will be presented to Council in the spring 2025 and will be shared on the Town's webpage following acceptance.