

Community Housing Needs Assessment

What We Heard Report

Council Meeting
May 4, 2026

Presented by Gina van den Burg,
Housing Strategist

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Why We're Here Today

- Share what we heard from the community
- Highlight key housing challenges and opportunities
- Provide context for future housing decisions
- Set the stage for the final Housing Needs Assessment

Town of Cochrane

Housing Needs Assessment

What We Heard Report

April 2026



cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Engagement Overview

More than 676 community voices helped inform the Housing Needs Assessment.

- Community Survey
  549 Participants
- Community Pop-Ups (SLS & Library)
  35+ Participants
- Seniors on the Bow
  43 Participants
- YAP Group
  7 Participants
- School Counsellors Focus Group
  4 Participants
- Lived Experience Interviews
  6 Participants
- Indigenous Feast & Chat
  6 Participants
- Social Service Provider Focus Group
  11 Participants
- Developers Focus Group
  15 Participants

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Key Message

Housing Affordability is the #1 Issue

- Affordability concerns across **all income levels**
- Impacts:
  - Stability
  - Well-being
  - Ability to stay in Cochrane

Housing affects the entire community

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Key Themes

What We Heard (Top Issues)

- Housing Affordability
- Cost of Living Pressures
- Limited Rental Options
- Lack of Housing Diversity
- Infrastructure Challenges
- Seniors and Young Adult Housing Gaps
- Social Service Strain



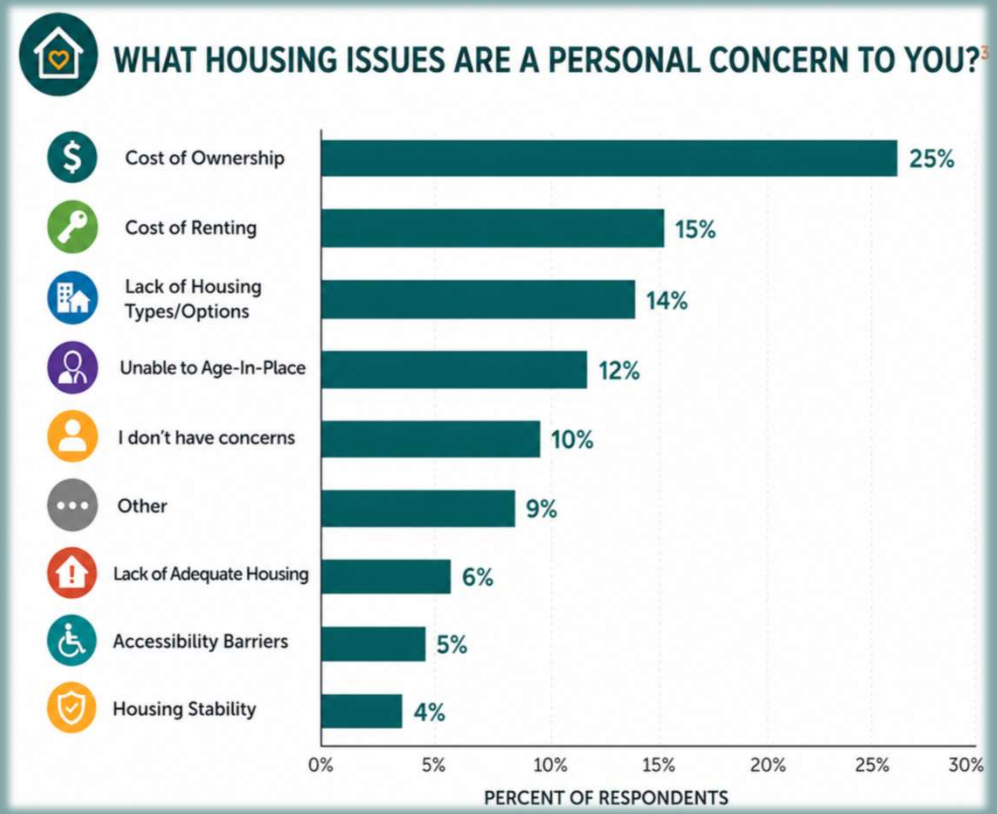
Housing Affordability

The Core Challenge

- ~40% of respondents indicated that cost of ownership or renting was a personal concern.
- 27% of respondents unsure they can remain in their home
  - 49% indicated affordability concerns due to insufficient income or unable to afford rent/mortgage

Affects:

- Youth
- Seniors
- Middle-income households



cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Cost of Living Pressures

Beyond Housing

- Rising:
  - Groceries
  - Gas
  - Utilities
- Fixed incomes not keeping pace
- Youth leaving school to support families

"Wages not keeping up"

"Hard to find housing"

Housing challenges tied to broader affordability



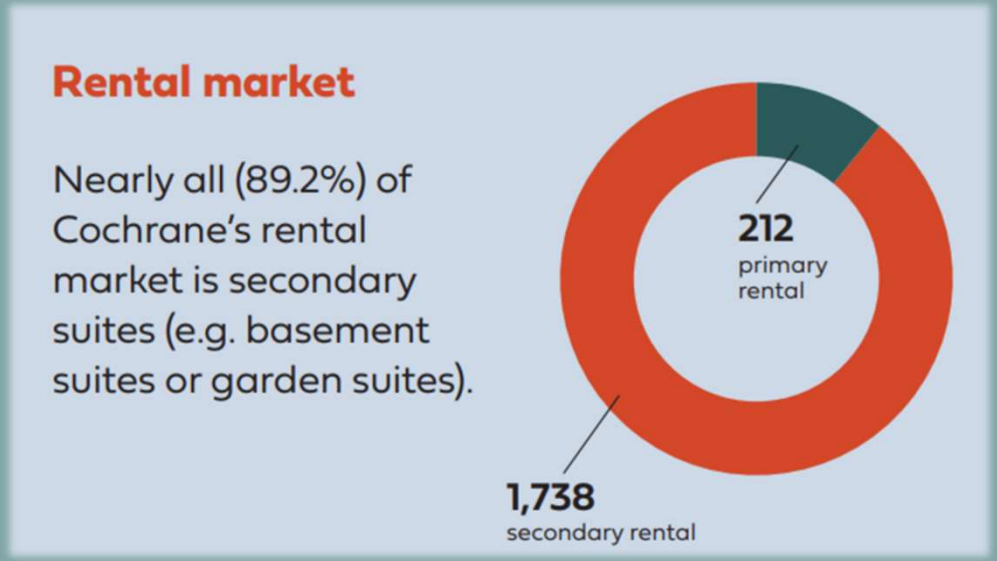
cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Limited Rental Options

Constrained Rental Market

- Dominated by secondary suites
- Few purpose-built rentals

- Issues:
  - Limited availability
  - Poor condition (some units)
  - Lack of security



Renters face instability and limited choice

Lack of Housing Diversity

Mismatch in Housing Supply

81% of homes have 3+ bedrooms

Missing:

- Apartments
- Townhomes
- Smaller units/homes





Limits options for:

- Seniors downsizing
- Young adults entering market
- Families priced out of homeownership

Infrastructure Challenges



Growth vs Capacity

Concerns include:

- Water & sewer capacity
- Traffic congestion
- Limited transit
- Distance from services



cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Senior Housing Needs

Growing and Underserved Population

Limited:

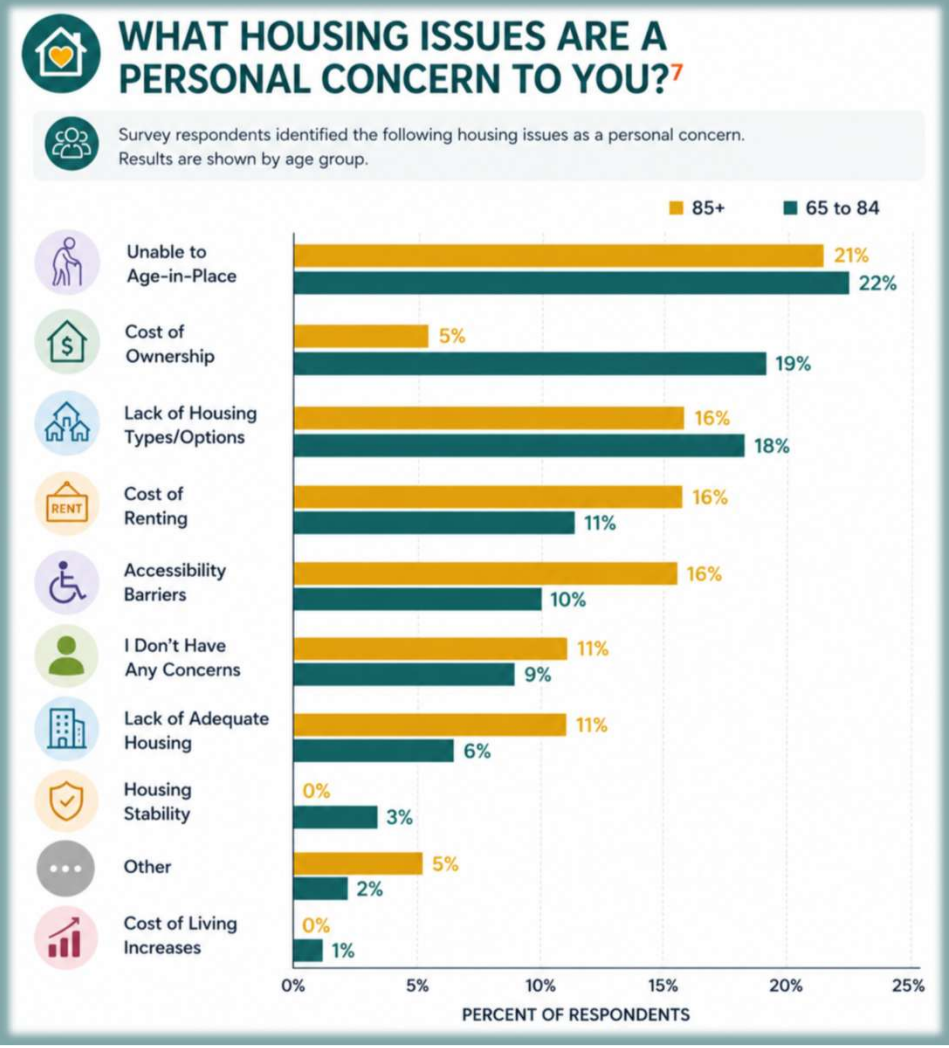
- Assisted living
- Long-term care
- Accessible housing
- Aging supports in the home & community

Seniors:

- "Over-housed"
- Leaving Cochrane to find options

Strong desire to **age in place**





cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

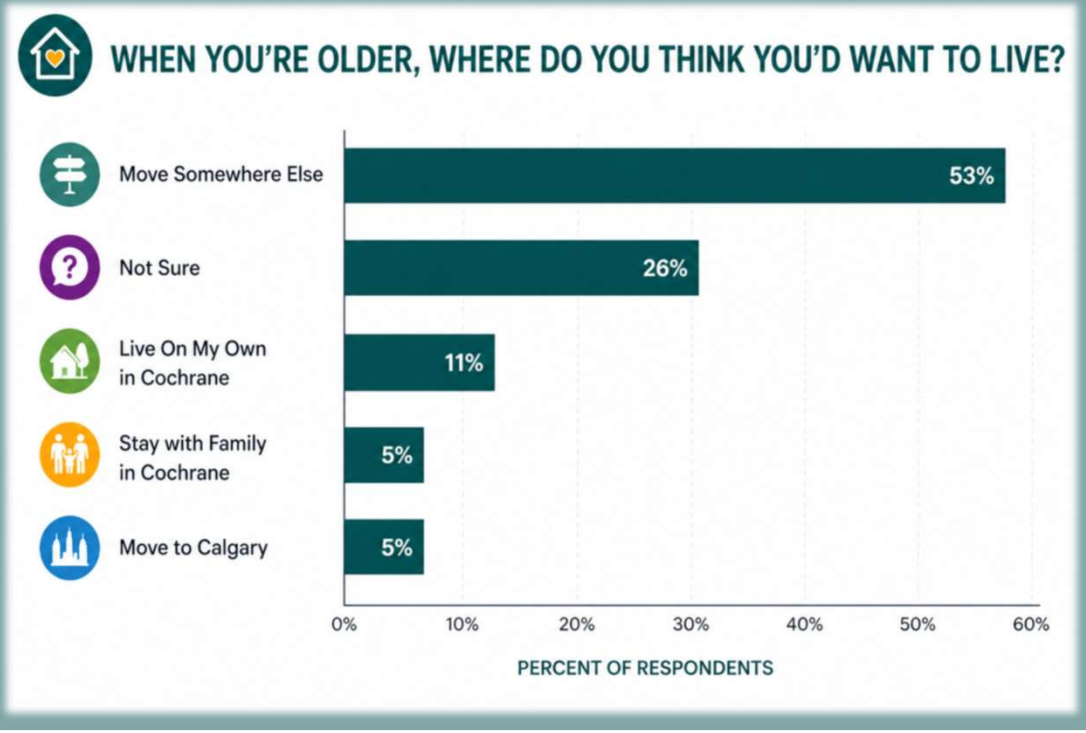
Youth & Young Adults

Future Risk to Community Sustainability

- 58% expect to **leave Cochrane**
- 71% say housing will be hard or unaffordable
- ↑ Mental Health concerns

Barriers:

- Limited rentals
- Low wages
- Transportation
- Distance from supports

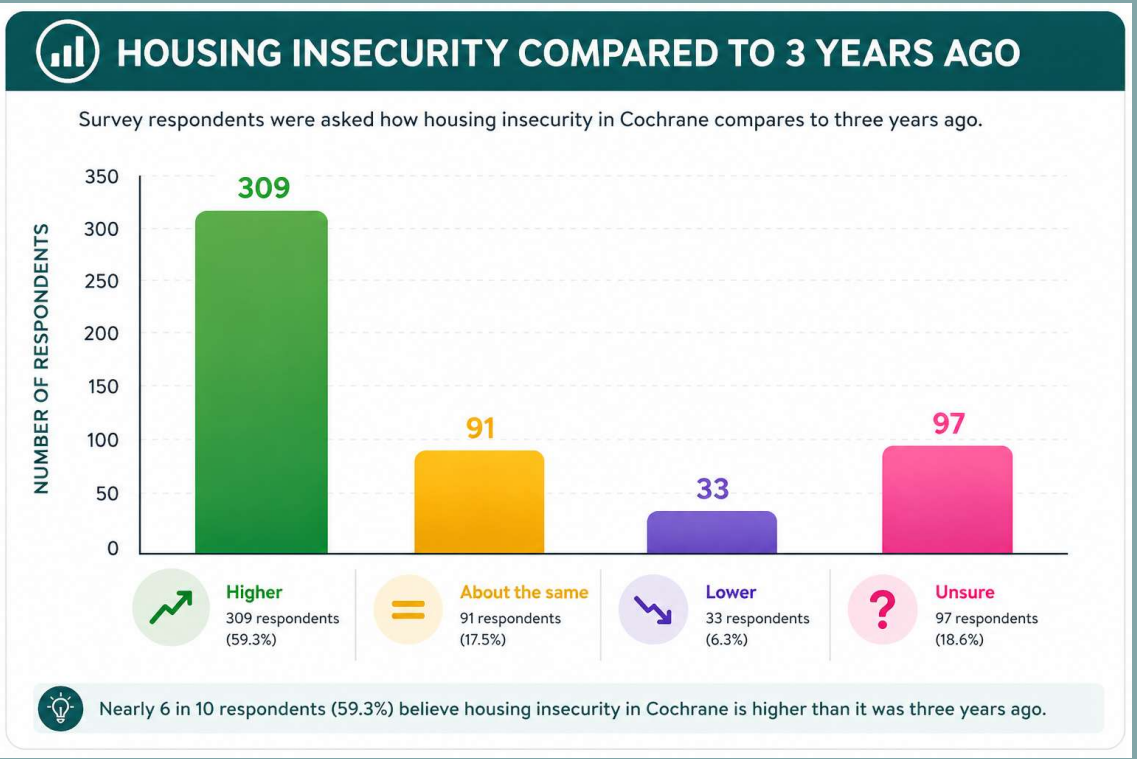


cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Housing Insecurity

Increasing and Changing

- 59% say housing insecurity has increased
- Visible and hidden homelessness present
- Includes:
  - Couch surfing
  - Living in vehicles/RVs
  - Temporary stays (Motels)
  - Vacant garages



cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Social Services Gaps



System Under Pressure

- Increased demand across:
  - Food bank
  - Mental health
  - Family supports
- Middle-income households now accessing services

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Common Solutions Identified by Community

- More affordable housing
- More rental options
- Greater housing diversity
- Supportive & accessible housing
- Partnerships with non-profits



cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Key Takeaways from Community Engagement

What This Means

- Housing challenges are widespread and growing
- Supply does not match community needs
- Affordability pressures affect all income levels
- Growth is outpacing infrastructure and services
- Action will require partnerships and policy change

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

What Comes Next

Next Steps

1) Final Housing Needs Assessment (June 1, 2026)

2) Housing Strategy
   - Policy and strategy development
   - Action plan and implementation

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Thank you

Questions? Thoughts?

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Recommendation

That Council receive the Community Housing Needs Assessment ~ What We Heard Report for information.