



ENVISION
COCHRANE 2050

valuing our heritage, planning our future

ENVISION COCHRANE 2050

PHASE 2 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

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OVERALL INSIGHTS

What Stands Out

The project team received feedback from over 400 residents through a variety of methods. During this phase we asked residents to identify their priorities.

Prioritization helps to understand community interest and identify actions for Cochrane that contribute a high quality of life for our residents. It is not meant to pit other actions or topics against each other. Actions listed in one section of this report can also help contribute to and enhance other subject or topic areas. For example, we found residents prioritize gathering spaces and connecting with friends and neighbours as a reoccurring theme in this phase.

A high-level summary is below.

- How the West is Now:** "Small-town feel" is about knowing your neighbours, attending community events and honouring heritage. A "small-town feel" is a well-connected community where it is easy to get around and access businesses, services and amenities. "Small-town feel" considers thoughtful growth and expansion that maintains mountain views and considers the need for public and private green space.
- Economic Vitality:** Priorities include attracting more business and retail diversity and protecting the Historic Downtown. It is also important to prioritize existing businesses before encouraging more, including making it more attractive and accessible for residents to support business through incentives to shop local.
- Arts and Culture:** Priorities include support programming and events that bring the community together and creating new venues and spaces ranging from small to large. It is also important to use what we have before adding more.
- Parks and Recreation:** Priorities include ensuring venues and facilities are centrally located, connected and completed. This includes supporting sports and recreation activities and balancing park experiences with amenities like benches, washrooms and playgrounds.
- Natural Environment:** Priorities include protecting and preserving the natural environment by limiting development, encouraging naturalization and allowing human activity in certain areas through a mix of accessible pathways and naturalized trails.
- Neighbourhood Centres:** Ideas to strengthen these areas include activities beyond shopping such as housing and gathering spaces. There is interest in building more that fit in with the aesthetic and have mobility options.
- Development Corridors:** Ideas to strengthen these areas include their design to be inviting and emulate the charm of Historic Downtown. They currently offer complementary uses and could build more to include housing choice and mobility connections.
- New Downtown:** Ideas to strengthen this central location is to extend the character of the Historic Downtown and expand more retail and housing. This is a convenient location for many residents.
- Housing:** Most residents are interested in remaining in Cochrane and have a desire for affordable and high quality housing options in neighbourhoods with amenities nearby. There are concerns associated with growth such as parking, servicing and privacy that must be addressed in identifying growth locations.

"Accessibility to residents. Feels vibrant whilst maintaining a historic, western feel."

"I like that there is more shopping options but I would like to see smaller businesses flourish yet still find the balance with big box/big businesses."

"Every community needs access to good green trails, good play space, and good gathering spaces."



How the West is Now

Think of residents as connected socially and physically where we know our neighbours and community amenities and necessities are nearby.



Arts & Culture

Prioritize community and cultural events and venues that bring visitors and residents together for celebrations.



Economic Vitality

Prioritize local businesses, protect the Historic Downtown and encourage local shopping.



Parks and Recreation

Prioritize multi-use gathering spaces and sports and recreation opportunities are connected by the pathway network.



Housing

Ensure housing affordable and offers high quality, thoughtfully designed and amenity-rich options.



Natural Areas and Open Spaces

Prioritize pathways and trails that offer access to nature while protecting sensitive areas and wildlife.



Neighbourhood Centres

Ensure neighbourhood Centres are the heart of each community with convenient shopping, services, and amenities.



Development Corridors

Ensure Development Corridors are gateways to Cochrane and provide a cozy look and feel.



Downtown

Ensure the New Downtown is centralized with a variety of retail, housing and gathering spaces. Preserve the historic character of the Old Downtown.

ENGAGEMENT OF ENVISION COCHRANE 2050

Envision Cochrane

The Town of Cochrane is updating its Municipal Development Plan. This long-term plan guides municipal growth, infrastructure and servicing needs and land use. It seeks to balance the needs of people, the economy and the environment by addressing challenges, such as growth and housing and reinforcing the town's strengths like the preservation of natural and historic assets.

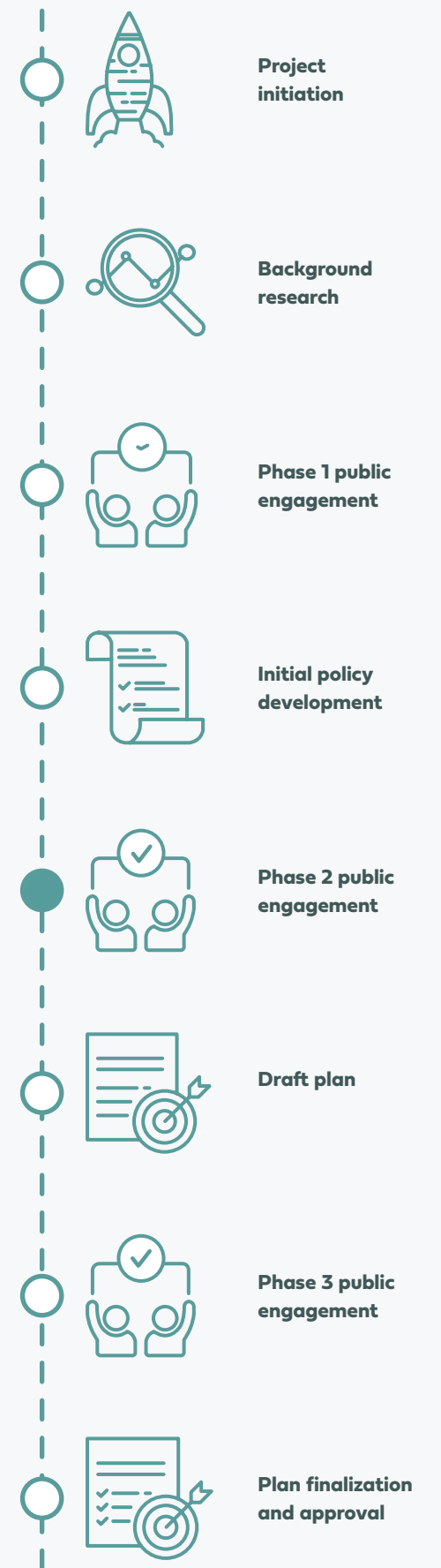
Participants had the opportunity to comment on nine topics or focus on the areas that they were most interested in or passionate about. These topics influence the organizational framework of this document.

- **How the West is Now:** Priorities to reinforce and celebrate our identity.
- **Economic Vitality:** Priorities to develop strategic actions for the economy.
- **Arts and Culture:** Priorities to develop strategic policies for arts and culture.
- **Parks and Recreation:** Priorities to develop strategic policies for parks and recreation facilities.
- **Natural Environment:** Priorities to develop strategic policies to protect nature.
- **Neighbourhood Centres:** A vision to inform policy on how to plan for existing and new centres.
- **Development Corridors:** A vision for to inform policy on how to plan for existing and new corridors.
- **New Downtown:** A vision for New Downtown to inform policy on how to plan for growth and density in this area.
- **Housing:** Future housing needs to inform policy on how to plan for new housing typologies in Cochrane.

Engagement Philosophy

To ensure this engagement was well-considered for all Cochrane residents and stakeholders, all engagement within this project aimed to be:

- **Inclusive:** Create a welcoming space for conversation that respects the diverse lived experiences of all participants.
- **Accessible:** Make it easy to participate and access information. Consider diverse abilities, learning styles, and amount of time required.
- **Meaningful:** Provide opportunities for participants to share ideas and concerns openly and authentically.
- **Transparent:** Provide clear information about the process, how decisions are made, and report on what was heard.
- **Adaptive:** Be flexible to respond and adapt to the changing needs of participants over the course of the project.
- **Respectful:** All participants demonstrate respect for each other with polite discourse and active listening.



PHASE 2: ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

PHASE 2 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

Engagement Purpose

Envision Cochrane 2050 promotes community-based planning to shape how Cochrane grows and evolves. During Phase 1: Envisioning Cochrane’s Future, respondents gave ideas for how Cochrane can grow in the future including economic vitality, arts and culture, housing, mobility, land use, growth, parks and recreation, and natural and open spaces. In Phase 2: Planning Cochrane’s Future, respondents were asked to prioritize areas based on findings from the first phase to guide policy creation as well as provide their vision for Neighbourhood Centres, Development Corridors and the New Downtown.

Communications Approach

Phase 2 occurred over one month from February 15 until March 17, 2024. To help promote engagement, posters, business cards, signs and advertisements were shared online and around Cochrane Trailblazers, Global Pet Foods, Coffee Traders, Found Books, Cochrane Lanes and 5 Street south of the tracks. Over sixty community and recreational groups were directly emailed about the engagement opportunities and provided materials and information to share amongst their membership. Additionally, twenty organizations with a direct role in development, community advocacy, business development or environmental advocacy were offered interviews with four interviews completed.



1,322

Website Views

2

Newspaper Advertisements

19

Social Media Posts

13,929

Utility Bill Inserts

242

Business Cards

Engagement Tactics

A range of engagement tools were used to reach out to Cochrane residents. Online, place-based, and in-person tactics were employed, giving residents a choice of engagement based on what was most convenient for them.

In-person

Community Conversations: Information and activity stations facilitated by the Project Team encouraged connection with Cochrane residents face-to-face. These events were set up in locations with high foot-traffic or at community events to encourage passersby to participate:

- SLS Centre
- Trivia Night at Found Books

The Project Team also attended the State of Cochrane Mayor’s Address hosted by the Cochrane Chamber and spoke to over 30 businesses, developers, and community organizers.

Online

Online Survey: A variety of ranking and open-ended questions were available online and encouraged participants to provide input at any time within the engagement period. A paper survey was also available for those could not access the online version.

Interview: Twenty organizations with a direct role in development, community advocacy, business development or environmental advocacy were offered interviews with four interviews completed. These interviews occurred by video-call.

Place-based

Lobby Display: Large interactive posters were located at indoors to promote the survey and gather quick feedback on-the-spot using dots and post-its. The lobby displays were available at the following locations during the engagement period:

- The Station
- Cochrane Public Library
- SLS Centre
- Cochrane RancheHouse

Lobby displays also had physical surveys and a map hand-out with questions about a vision for Neighbourhood Centres, Development Corridors and New Downtown.

9

Survey topics

4

Lobby Displays

2

Community Conversations

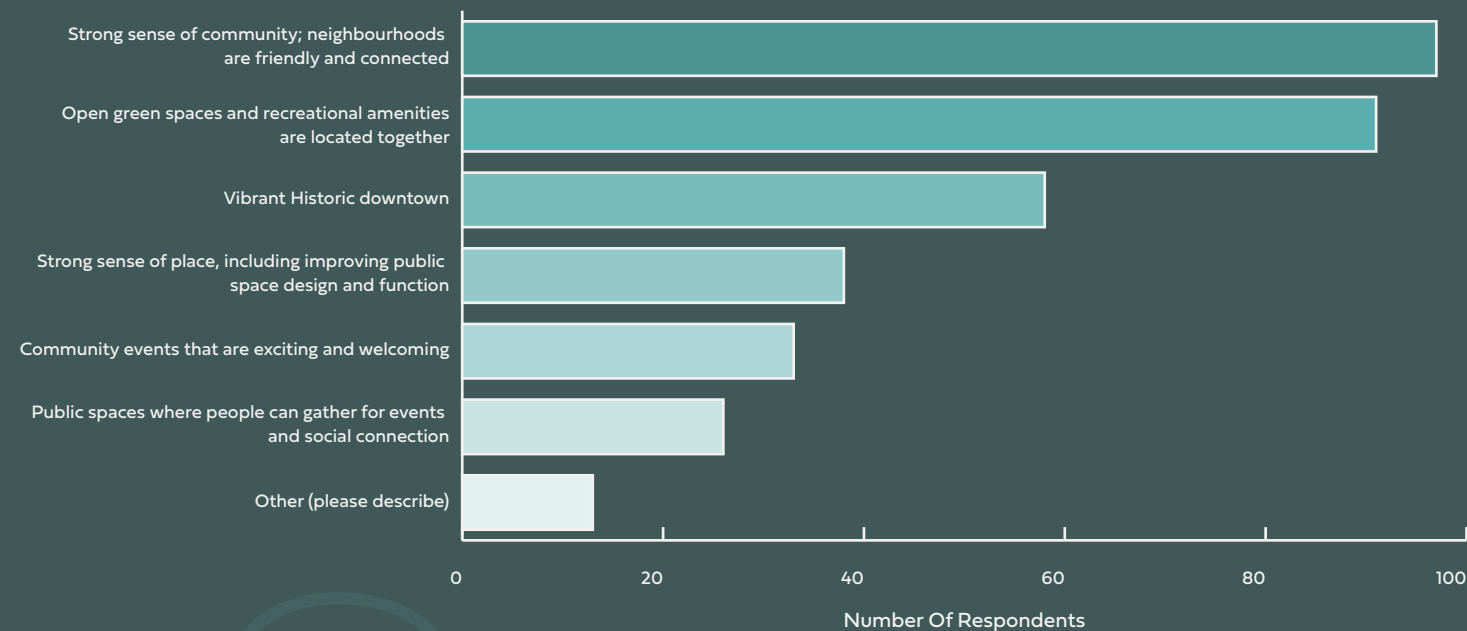
QUESTION SUMMARY

HOW THE WEST IS NOW

Priorities that reinforce and celebrate our identity

Participants were asked the specific elements that support Cochrane’s current identity to ensure Envision Cochrane 2050 supports strategic growth while maintaining the fundamental components of what makes Cochrane a great place to live. This feedback will help finalize the Plan’s vision.

“What do you value the most about Cochrane?”



Most respondents valued the sense of communities and open green spaces and recreational amenities. Additional responses included:

- Location and proximity to other places including the Mountains, Provincial Parks, National Parks and Calgary
- Natural and recreation amenities within the Town including access to the Bow River, mountain views, wildlife corridors, parks, bike paths, and walking trails
- Close to shopping and independent businesses

“This is mostly about recognizing people in your community - connecting and friendliness... we maintain the walkability of the town, spaces for connecting (particularly social infrastructure), and a dense downtown core, this will keep that feeling.”

“I first think of ‘where everyone knows your name’, A place where people, community, care together, are connected. A place where small businesses are celebrated, create opportunities. A place where everyone is welcome.”

“Connectivity, being able to walk or bike to all amenities. Being able to get everything you need within a short drive.”

“What does ‘small town feel’ mean to you?”

Knowing your neighbours, part of community events and honouring heritage

- Sense of safety and recognizing people
- Close-knit community where you look out for and help your neighbours informally and formally (volunteering)
- Slow-paced, relaxed and quiet lifestyle
- Knowing your local representatives and government transparency
- Participating in free heritage and cultural events (i.e. the Farmers Market, rodeo, charity fundraisers, festivals, parades, concerts)
- Gathering together in public green spaces and plazas

A well-connected community where it is easy to get around and access businesses, services and amenities

- Everything is within a 10-minute drive such as grocery stores
- Celebrate boutique and locally owned businesses, limited big box stores or franchises and ample parking to support them
 - *Some respondents felt national or larger chains belonged on the fringes whereas others felt it had no place*
- Connected through safe and accessible pathways and trails
- A highly walkable Downtown
- Access to amenities and services you need like parks, green spaces and recreation opportunities
- Calm or no traffic

Thoughtful growth and expansion that maintains mountain views and considers the need for public and private green space

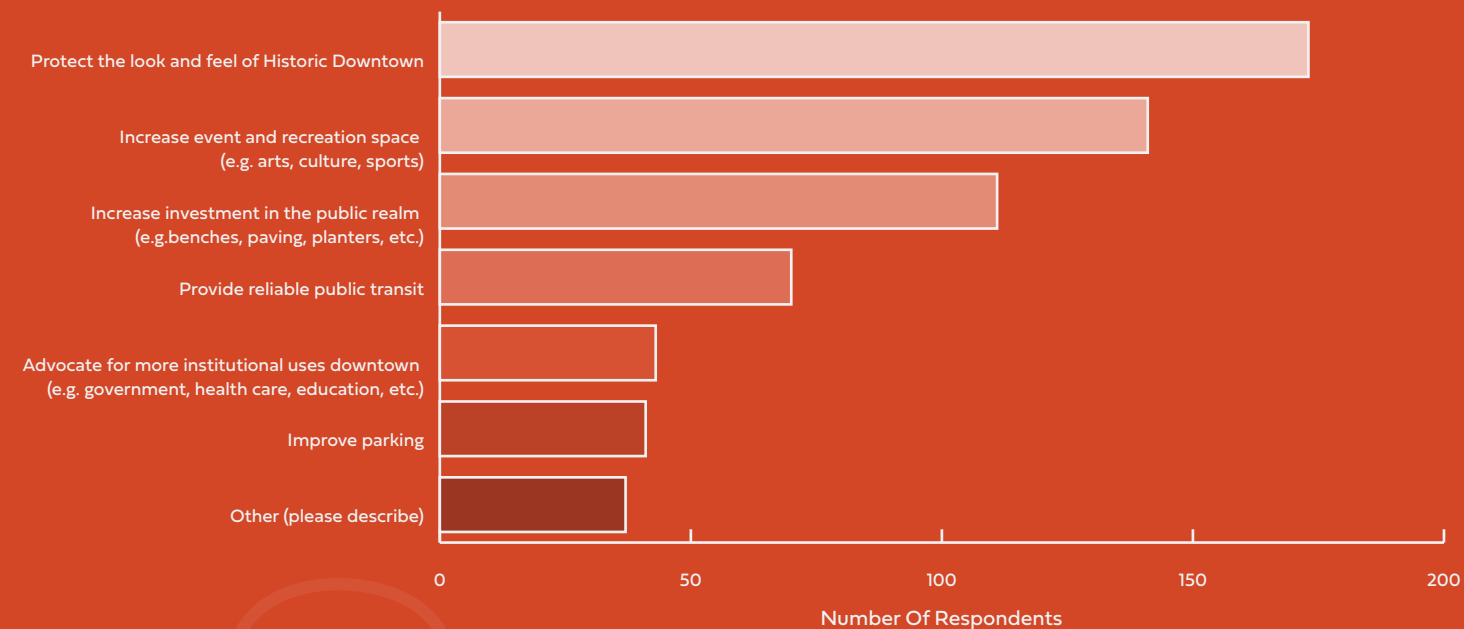
- A variety of housing options
- Built heritage is protected like the Historic Downtown and architectural requirements are enforced in adjacent areas
- Taller buildings and higher density are appropriate Downtown
 - *Some respondents wanted to see no buildings over 4 to 6 storeys to protect views or the look and feel of the Downtown*
- Limited sprawl to maintain access to views, green spaces and tree protections
 - *Some respondents had a preference for growth to be spread out to allow for large lots and yards*
- A small population that does not accommodate growth
 - *Due to this, some respondents felt Cochrane no longer had a small town feel*
 - *Some respondents felt growth happens but at a slower pace with some acknowledging Cochrane’s growth is inevitable*

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Cochrane is home to a flourishing business community.

With a dynamic downtown core and vibrant shops and restaurants. Participants were asked to prioritize actions to develop strategic actions for the economy. This feedback will help craft policy direction.

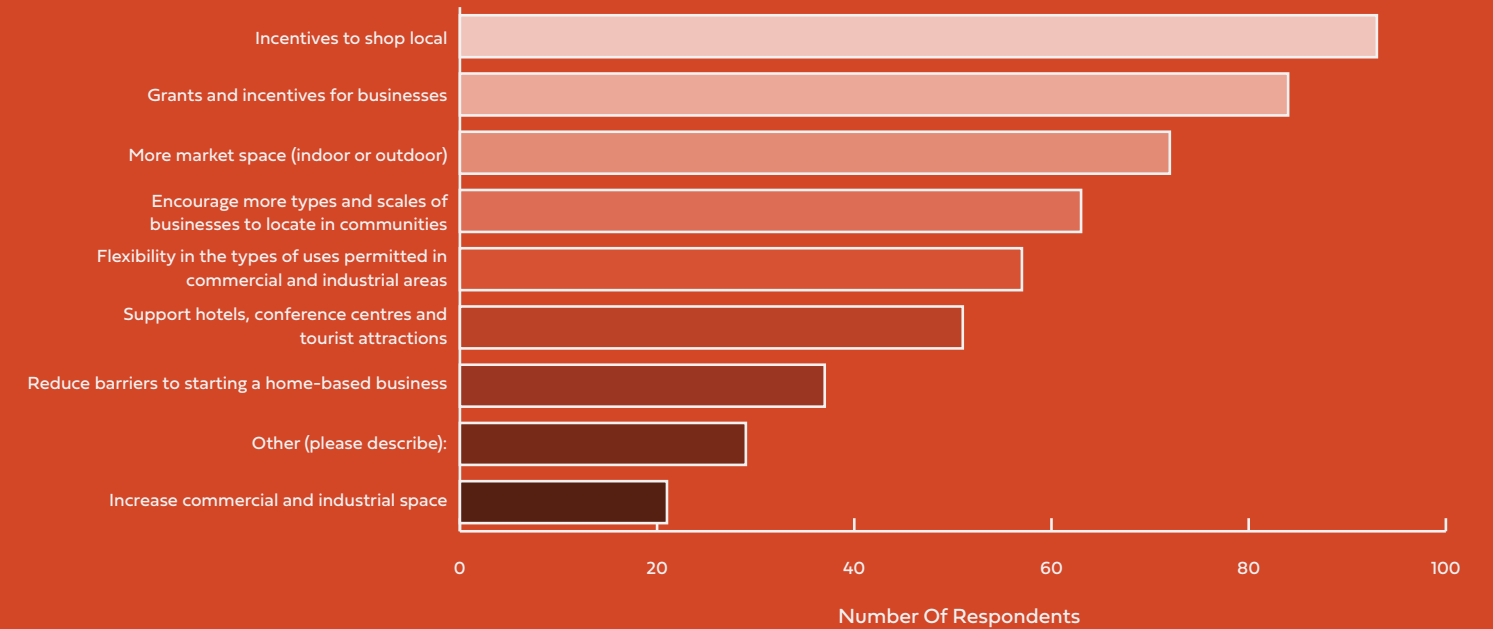
“Select the three priorities you think would best support the vibrancy and economy of Cochrane’s Downtown (Historic and New Downtown)”



Most respondents felt protecting the look and feel of Historic Downtown is of highest priority. This was followed by increasing event and recreation space and investing in the public realm. Other actions included:

- Create a pedestrianized street and open air market
- Favour unique and boutique local businesses
- Create and activate gathering spaces like fire pits and bbqs to keep it vibrant
- Provide tax incentives for small/medium sized businesses for implementing western heritage guidelines
- Connect to the rest of Cochrane with safe walking and bike routes
- Encourage a diversity of businesses including restaurants, coffee shops, cocktail bars
- Encourage affordable commercial leases and explore rent caps to make it affordable to open and maintain a storefront
- Create green spaces

“Select three priorities you think would best support Cochrane’s small local businesses”



Most respondents wanted incentives to shop local and grants and incentives for businesses. However, some respondents did not want to see government and public funding supporting private industry or economy.

Other actions included:

- Allow Innovative and flexible food options such as shared commercial kitchens and food trucks
- Make it easier and more enjoyable to walk and bike to businesses
- Encourage affordable commercial leases and explore rent caps to make it affordable to open and maintain a storefront
- Create an economic development strategy to inform city planning
- Designate buildings and blocks with historic and heritage value
- Support hotels, festivals, events, attractions and experiences that welcome residents and visitors to support other local businesses
- Encourage youth and recent graduates to start businesses
- Increase the residential density downtown to encourage longer business hours
- While some respondents wanted to see increases to the non-residential tax base, others wanted to see a decrease in commercial and industrial areas
- Encourage made in Cochrane products and services and themed shopping areas

ECONOMIC VITALITY (continued)

“Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience or vision for economic vitality in Cochrane?”

Attract more business and retail diversity

- Provide employee training opportunities
- Encourage more businesses diversity and businesses open at different times of the day
- Encourage tourism supports local businesses
- Continue to attract new businesses in technology, sports and recreation
- Need more grocery stores as an anchor

Promote existing businesses and provide opportunities to thrive before encouraging more

- Advertise, promote and market small local businesses
- Make data-informed decisions such as identifying economic and employment gaps and trends and provide the results to existing businesses
- Ensure there is a strong organization to advocate for a business-friendly environment
- Encourage affordable commercial leases

Make it more attractive and accessible to support business

- Connect walking and cycling pathways and routes to commercial and retail destinations
- Expand public transit to fixed routes and schedules and explore rail for better access to job opportunities
- Maintain the charm and look of the community through green space investments, western heritage guidelines, and landscaping

Respondents noted places to look to for economic inspiration including Norwich, England for Downtown improvements and creating a sports team, like the Okotoks Dawgs.



“Tourism is important, but so is a calm, safe and mobile place for the residents. We don’t need more big box businesses. Support the ones who are here”

“Cochrane needs to find a way to attract employers to create offices and businesses. There is a growing population but I think that most people commute to Calgary. It would be nice to see more opportunities for people to work in town.”

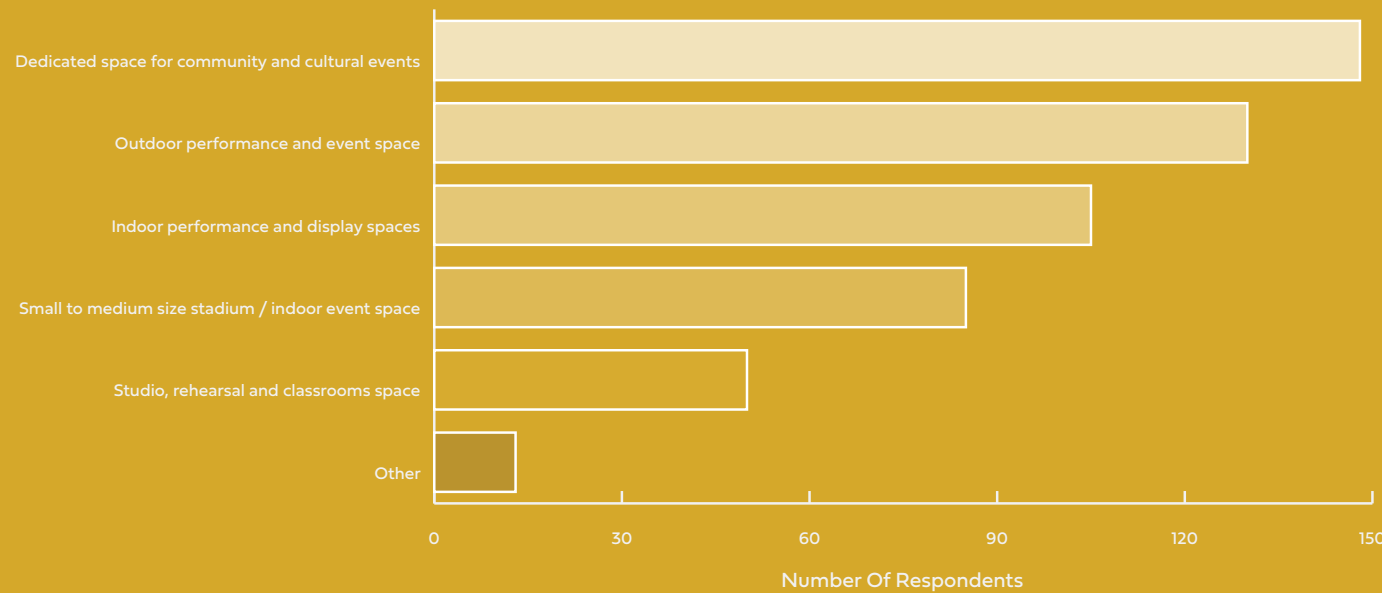
“More mixed use areas. Places for brunch, places to work and places to live all next to each other.”

ARTS AND CULTURE

Cochrane has a unique and charming identity that distinguishes the community from others in the region.

Participants were asked to prioritize actions to develop strategic policies for arts and culture. This feedback will help craft policy direction.

“In the list below, select the three priorities to support Cochrane’s arts and culture scene.”



Most responses were interested in dedicated space for community and cultural events and outdoor performance and event spaces. Other priorities included:

- More venues like multi-use spaces, theatres, performing arts centres, larger event spaces in addition to small and medium venues and expanding the library.
- Provide more sports entertainment and tournaments
- Create a long-term art and cultural strategy and apply for grants to support an increase in public art and cultural events and themes.
 - Some respondents did not want to see investments in arts and culture or were content with current budget
- Invest in transit to make it easier to attend events
- Partner with organizations to utilize and enhance existing spaces
- Maintain free or low cost programming and events

“Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience or vision for arts and culture in Cochrane?”

Support programming and events that bring the community together

- Continue to support public art, murals and sculptures
- Maintain events for families and children
- Encourage community-oriented events such as street festivals, fairs, food tours, and art shows
- More organized events during all seasons
- Promote and advertise events
- Ensure diverse representations
- Explore opportunities for an Artist or Writer in Residence program
- Apply for grants to support arts and culture

Create new venues and spaces ranging from small to large

- Invest in accessible or barrier-free venues
- More venues and stages to support music festivals
- Expand the library and have ancillary uses
- Create a public atrium or outdoor venue for markets, events, plays, or music
- Invest in new venues and spaces such as performance theatres and convention centres

Use what we have before adding more

- Partner with private and non-profit venues to host events
- Improve existing before investing in more, such as provide servicing at the Ag Society Grounds and add lighting to the Mitford stage

Respondents mentioned Canmore Folk Music Festival, Arts Commons in Calgary and artsPLACE in Canmore as arts and cultural venues they would like to see in Cochrane.

“Ensure an international flavour that celebrates our heritage, our present and our future! There are so many wonderful ethnicities in our town - let us showcase our stories, traditions, art, music, and dance and come together as THE BEST ‘new west!’”

“Build a new library space together with a theatre and cultural opportunities.”

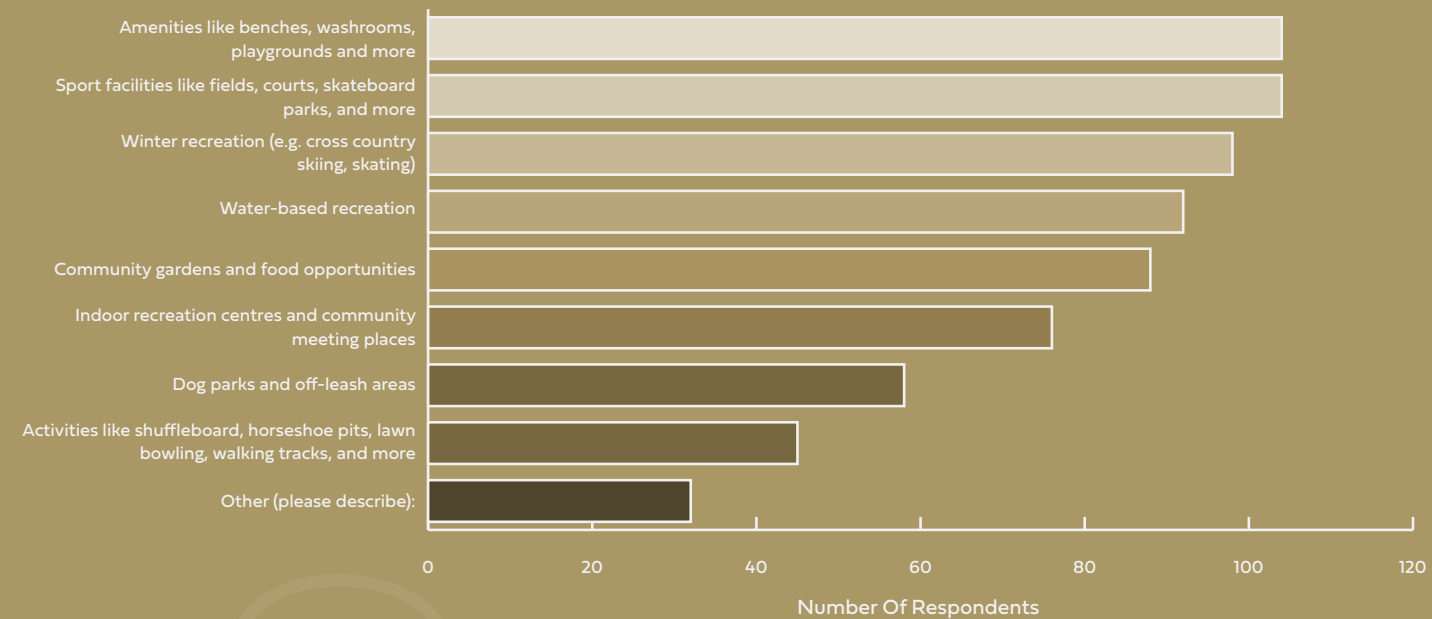
“Music and outdoor community gathering would really help bring more people together.”

PARKS AND RECREATION

Cochrane is a place where residents appreciate opportunities to experience connection with nature, active and passive recreation, festivals.

Participants were asked to prioritize actions to develop strategic policies for parks and recreation. This feedback will help craft policy direction.

“In the list below, select the three priorities to support Cochrane’s parks and recreation facilities and amenities.”



Most respondents were interested in amenities like benches, washrooms, playgrounds and sports facilities closely followed by winter recreation. Other examples are summarized on the following page.

Venues and programming

- Keep facilities affordable and low cost or free
- Consider programming that is for all ages, including adults without children
- Provide more opportunities and spaces south of the Bow River
- Maintain what we have and do not develop more
- Identify more sport facilities for indoor or outdoor soccer pitch, pump tracks, outdoor basketball courts, pickle ball
- Support winter activities like skating rinks tobogganing hills
- Support water-based recreation such as a surf wave or whitewater park
- *Other respondents prioritized prohibiting motorized river access*

Amenities, maintenance and etiquette

- Install outdoor furniture for gathering such as picnic tables and fire pits
- Find more places to park and lock bikes
- Beautify existing spaces such as weeding, tree planting and trail and pathway maintenance
- Interpretive signs
- Enforce pet bylaws

Pathways and trails

- Twin popular walking and cycling pathways
- Invest in safe, wide, paved and connected pathways
- Create naturalized paths
- Explore more mountain biking trails and network

Respondents would like to see walking paths similar to Canmore, park features and amenities like Calgary’s Bowness Park, more pump tracks like Okotoks and Airdrie and an equipment program like Edmonton’s GreenShack.

PARKS AND RECREATION (continued)

“Which of the following scenarios do you prefer for Cochrane’s park?”

* Smaller parks means simple green spaces that are able to accommodate a few amenities, such as playgrounds. Large parks can accommodate many amenities and features like sports fields, picnic areas and naturalized spaces.



Most respondents want to see a mix of small and large park spaces. There was an equal number on each side. This reflects the types of amenities residents would like to see that require larger areas as well as the convenience of smaller parks nearby.

“For equal access to parks and recreation, spaces need to be balanced throughout town in all neighborhoods. Regardless of size, access should be priority.”

“Cochrane is unique in a sense that communities are spread out with lots of open spaces. There is an opportunity to connect the communities with pathway and they don’t always need to be paved. You can spend a whole day exploring.”

“More sports areas, Cochrane sports are having to push into Calgary since we don’t have enough space for sports to practice.”

“Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience or vision for parks and recreation in Cochrane?”

Ensure venues and facilities are centrally located, connected and completed

- More neighbourhood parks you can walk to
- Locate parks in a central location, such as a central park downtown or at neighbourhood centres
- Balance parks and recreation facilities across town
- Connect parks with tree-lined streets, dual sidewalks and boulevards
- Identify better locations in new developments and redevelopments
- Build complete public spaces early in development phasing
- Maintain connected parks through linear parks
- Continue to expand the pathway network including connecting Cochrane’s parks to regional open spaces like Glenbow Ranch and Rockyview County

Balance park experiences with amenities

- Identify more green spaces
- Plant trees and add safety lighting to pathways
- Consider the accessibility in the design and programming of spaces
- Continue to invest in gathering spaces and plazas by adding fire pits, gardens, water features, paths, trees, public washroom, garbage cans
- Explore ways to incorporate on and off-leash dog areas in every community including agility equipment, leash optional areas, “dog friendly spaces”, fenced areas or temporary options during development phasing
 - Clearly define dog and non-dog space and enforce bylaws
- Prioritize the pathway system by twinning popular walking and cycling pathways and allowing more natural trails
- Enforce park and pathway etiquette

Support sports and recreation activities

- Develop more indoor recreation facilities like, and alternatives to, the SLS Centre with affordable and flexible programming and scheduling
- Support more winter and shoulder season sports and recreation options like cross-country skiing
- Build more indoor and outdoor sports facilities to keep up with growth such as pools, skate parks, ball diamonds, soccer domes, baseball pitches, ice sheets, pump tracks, beach volleyball courts and tennis courts, spray parks, and swimming lakes
- Upgrade and add outdoor playgrounds and play spaces and indoor recreation play areas like trampoline parks
- Explore recreational activities in or near the river including a beach area, park improvements, seating, cafes, surf wave and hand launches
 - Some respondents were not in favour of a river waterpark
- Expand tourism such as tournaments and horseback riding
- Encourage larger community gardens and other food growing and production options

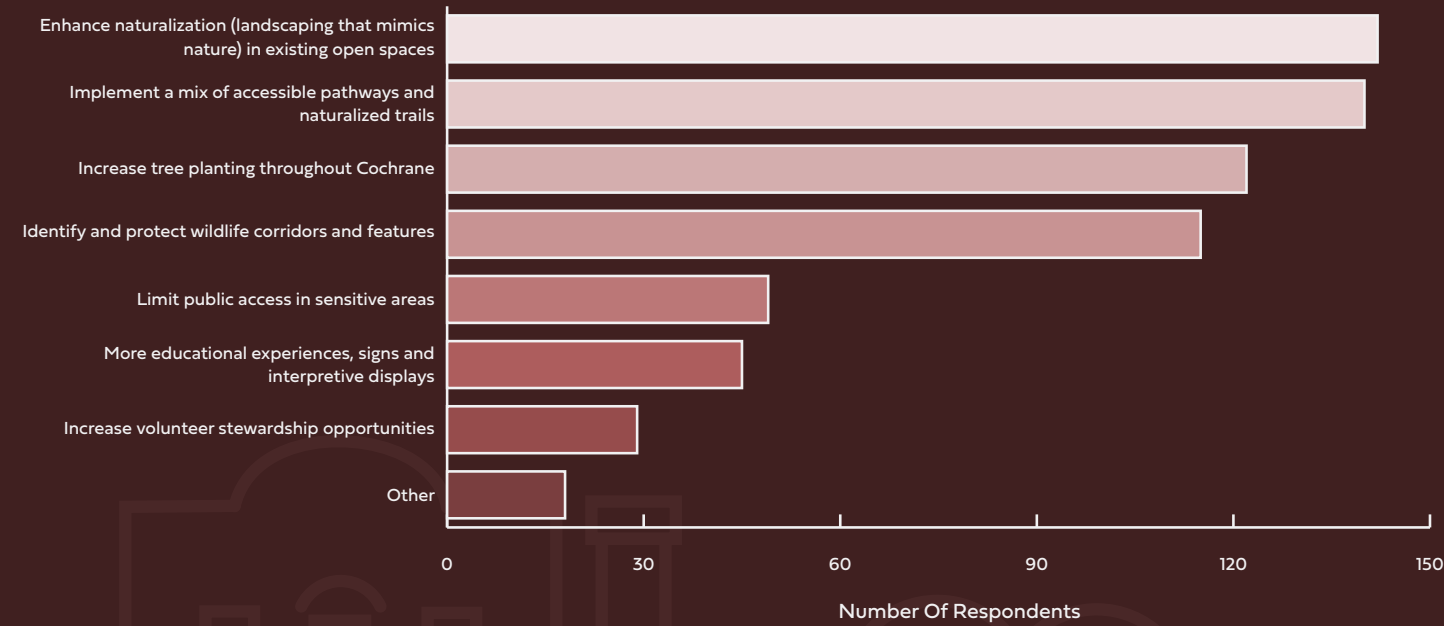
NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACES

Cochrane’s natural topography offers dramatic vistas with rolling hills and treed valleys.

Participants were asked to prioritize actions to develop strategic policies to protect nature. This feedback will help craft policy direction.

“In the list below, select the three priorities you think would maintain or enhance your experience of Cochrane’s natural environment.”

Most respondents prioritized naturalization enhancements closely followed by implementing pathways and trails. Expanded actions are listed below.



Limit development in natural areas

- Leave areas natural in new developments
- Limit development and stop overdeveloping
- Restrict activity in natural terrain and enforce consequences
- Enforce pet bylaws to protect wildlife
- Encourage transparent decision making and accessibility to government and council

Protect and preserve the natural environment

- Establish a land trust for environmental protection of natural areas and wildlife corridors
- Partner with regional municipalities to establish and maintain wildlife corridors
- Clearly define the boundaries between recreational areas and environmental reserves
- Consider establishing biosphere reserves to preserve existing natural heritage areas including biodiverse areas, spawning habitats, riverbanks, and wetlands

Encourage naturalization and allow human activity in certain areas

- Encourage planting native grass, trees, shrubs and flower species and reduce water use through low maintenance vegetation and drought resistant landscaping
- Improve trail accessibility, add interpretive signs, and create paved pathways where appropriate
- Make the river accessible with trails and pathways
 - *Some respondents were concerned with river access and did not want activity*



GENERALIZED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

Cochrane offers vibrant places like Neighbourhood Centres, Development Corridors and the New Downtown.

We heard from Cochrane residents and Council that there is a preference to focus density downtown, as well as along major Development Corridors and in Neighbourhood Centres. Increased residential density and commercial uses in these areas help create compact development, increase the viability of local shops and services and improve housing diversity.

We provided Cochrane's development map and asked respondents to share their feedback on Neighbourhood Centres, Development Corridors and the New Downtown. A summary of each placetype is on the following pages.



NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Neighbourhood Centres typically consist of a small commercial core surrounded by medium or higher density housing, and may contain amenity space, such as a park.

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Centre is to provide basic local conveniences and be easily accessible for residents within the community. Participants were asked to share their vision for Neighbourhood Centres to inform policy on how to plan for existing and new centres. This feedback will help refine Council approved direction.

“What do you like about existing Neighbourhood Centres in Cochrane that you would like to see implemented in future Neighbourhood Centres? What’s not working or could be improved?”

Design Neighbourhood Centres to be more than a strip mall

- Prioritize different types and sizes of spaces to avoid business saturation.
- Continue to offer convenient options such as grocery stores, hardware stores, gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants, take-out options, car washes, gyms, clothing shops, pubs, bakeries, coffee shops, bulk food store
- *Some respondents were supportive of larger scale options, while others felt Cochrane had enough and bigger retail options was more appropriate in larger municipalities*
- Provide more options to buy and sell grown produce
- Encourage a range of uses such as office spaces for medical and paramedical services
- Support affordable spaces for local businesses

Allow more housing options with and near Neighbourhood Centres

- Continue to provide mixed density housing to support commercial areas
- Encourage housing with a mix of variety and uniformity, colourful paint and plantings
- Support housing affordability and non-market housing
- Explore innovative housing options such as residential above commercial shops, tiny homes, co-housing, terraced homes, condos, affordable housing)
- Encourage convenience by directing new housing near Neighbourhood Centres

Ensure better connectivity to connect to and between Neighbourhood Centres

- Invest in public transit and a reliable bus service
- Require two entrances and exists for each community
- Connect Neighbourhood Centres to the pathways and trail network
- Design more traffic circles to enter and exit Neighbourhood Centres
- Prioritize pedestrian and cycling investments to encourage walking such as sidewalks, crossings and pathways

Prioritize Neighbourhood Centres in more places

- Ensure Neighbourhood Centres are central and convenient
- Avoid locations next to highways
- Encourage Neighbourhood Centres are equally distributed and dispersed across the Town and communities
- Allow different sizes and types of Neighbourhood Centres

Ensure Neighbourhood Centres fit in with the aesthetic of the community

- Maintain current height restrictions and small buildings
- Limit buildings over 4 storeys
- Avoid industrial looking buildings
- Limit developing in natural areas such as wetlands and wildlife corridors
- Encourage transitions in density where higher density is closer to Neighbourhood Centres

Encourage Neighbourhood Centres to be central gathering spaces for each community

- Improve the public realm to make them more inviting and vibrant such as unique street lamps, plantings, planting trees and adding colour
- Invest in green spaces for gathering and play including plazas and playgrounds and shaded areas, as well as, indoor spaces
- Preserve large green spaces along riverbanks, hilltops, and bird nesting areas and create view points
- Advocate for more schools
- Provide better maintenance such as installing garbage and compost bins and consider animal proof bins



Respondents highlighted local examples they loved to see more of like Bow Meadows, Sunset Ridge and Heartland and looked to Canmore’s Three Sisters Mountain Village for inspiration.

“They are important to create intentional and convenient availability of food, beverage, and gas requirements. Having Neighborhood Centres reduces congestion downtown as well. They are valuable.”

“When independant businesses make it, it’s great to see those.”

DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS

Development Corridors are linear strips of commercial uses and sometimes higher density housing along busier roads.

Cochrane has several existing Development Corridors. The most prominent examples of these corridors include Westside Drive and River Heights Drive. Participants were asked to share their vision for Development Corridors to inform policy on how to plan for existing and new corridors. This feedback will help refine Council approved direction.

“What do you like about existing Development Corridors in Cochrane that you would like to see implemented in future Development Corridors? What’s not working or could be improved?”

Encourage a variety of mobility connections to Development Corridors

- Improve walkability by investing in pathways, trails, wide sidewalks on both sides, better crossings, pedestrian bridges
- Make Development Corridors safer for bikes and scooters, such as adding bike lanes and wider streets
- Explore more parking options
- Improve access and consider traffic flow when development is designed such as roads through controlled intersections, separations from traffic and drive-thrus
- Prioritize Development Corridors along main roads and off main roads
- Explore opportunities for overpass or underpass
- Identify a dedicated truck route, highway bypass, and heavy truck parking
- Support better maintenance, like snow removal

Support a mix of complementary uses in Development Corridors

- Encourage developments have related businesses together that can benefit from each other to stimulate business
- Continue to provide more shops, places to eat, dine like coffee shops, bakeries, markets, refilleries, grocery stores, hardware
 - *Some respondents did not want grocery stores in neighbourhoods*
- Direct less duplication of services and more diversity
- Encourage different sizes of business spaces
- Create Development Corridors to separate uses such as commercial and industrial

Design Development Corridors to be inviting and places to gather

- Create functional spaces with high-quality design guidelines
- Encourage developments have places for lunch breaks
- Create green spaces, parks, music and dance spaces as gathering opportunities in natural spaces
- Establish rules to prevent light pollution and sound mitigation
- Prioritize space for trees, landscaping and plantings
- Explore commercial gathering options like roof top developments, gardens and patios

Emulate the charm of Historic Downtown to Development Corridors

- Design buildings to follow western heritage
- Encourage better signage and advertising
- Transition from low to high density through design, setbacks and scale to protect views
- Maintain clear sight lines and visibility through tree maintenance
- Adhere to heritage design guidelines and create Development Corridors as gateways to town

Identify locations for more Development Corridors

- Distribute Development Corridors in Cochrane so services are more spread out
 - *Some respondents felt existing locations were too crowded*
- Identify growth areas for development and redevelopment
- Invest in Infrastructure in advance of growth
 - *Some respondents felt there was enough and did not want to encourage additional locations.*

Balance housing needs near Development Corridors

- Encourage a variety of housing options including duplexes, townhouses, bungalows, larger lots, backyards for children to play
- Support more affordable housing options
- Support higher density housing and taller buildings
 - *Some respondents wanted to limit density*
- Mix housing and services together for convenience



“Make all development corridors walkable and bikeable. Access to public transit is important too. If we want small town feel, our development corridors need to still feel cozy and comforting, people focused verses car focused. Street facing with parking behind.”

“Good mix of small business space, larger commercial and some industrial space. May be nice to integrate community greenspace like small parks or walking paths to make the commercial space less of an ‘in and out’ kind of use case.”

NEW DOWNTOWN

The New Downtown will continue to experience growth and support a range of commercial and residential uses.

New Downtown is roughly defined as being south of the railway tracks, east of Fifth Avenue, west of River Avenue and north of Griffin Road. It contains some of Cochrane’s major businesses such as Walmart, Safeway, Winners, Canadian Tire, Garmin, and SaveOn Foods. This area of Cochrane will continue to experience growth and support a range of commercial and residential uses. Participants were asked to share their vision for New Downtown to inform policy on how to plan for growth and density in this area. This feedback will help refine Council approved direction.

“What do you like about the New Downtown? What’s not working or could be improved?”



“This area is essential for providing a wide range of larger businesses in the downtown core, many of these businesses keep residents shopping local.”

“Traffic is easy to navigate and roads are well engineered. Low profile buildings keep the feeling of wide open spaces. Large parking spots are also important.”

“This area seems to lack opportunity for small, non-franchise businesses, a better mix would make the shopping experience more enjoyable. Big retail stores require large parking lots, the area feels less pedestrian and customer friendly - shop and go.”

Expand retail and housing offerings

- Continue to offer essential amenities and services like grocery stores clustered together
 - Response was mixed in terms of future commercial uses. While some respondents would like to see larger ‘big box’ stores like a major hardware store, others felt the New Downtown needed a better mix of smaller businesses.
- Encourage affordable commercial units, especially for smaller in scale and locally owned businesses
- Offer better signage and advertising for businesses
- Encourage higher density housing nearby like condos and apartments
- Explore unique housing options like residential above commercial and retail businesses
- Encourage effective use of existing buildings before accommodating more growth

Continue to offer a centralized and convenient New Downtown

- Maintain the free parking supply
 - Most respondents felt current parking conditions were working well with some even mentioning parking lots were too empty and underutilized. A small number felt parking was difficult to find.
- Provide safer options for pedestrians and cyclists, such as:
 - Building pedestrian walkways along Griffin Road
 - Connecting spaces together with paved pathways
 - Avoiding narrow roads
 - Prioritizing snow plowing and winter maintenance of bike lanes
 - Celebrating the success of the pedestrian railway crossing linking Old and New Downtown
- Invest in railway underpasses or overpasses to avoid congestion
- Spread out amenities to other communities and identify locations for more downtowns as Cochrane grows

Design to be more than just a retail hub and extend the character from Historic Downtown to New Downtown

- Enforce the western architectural guidelines to maintain views and look and feel of the community
 - Some respondents felt the architectural guidelines were overdone and liked the modern look and feel of New Downtown buildings
- Continue to landscape and plant trees and flowers, wild grasses, especially species that are not water intensive
 - Some respondents noted current trees are not maintained and cause visibility concerns
- Offer family- and youth oriented options such as indoor recreation spaces, outdoor parks like the pump track and hang out spaces for teenagers
- Create outdoor gathering spaces like plazas and green spaces to hang out with benches, tables, group seating and patios
- Identify more places for public washrooms
- Expand arts and cultural venues such as a multi-use centre, new library, and convention centre

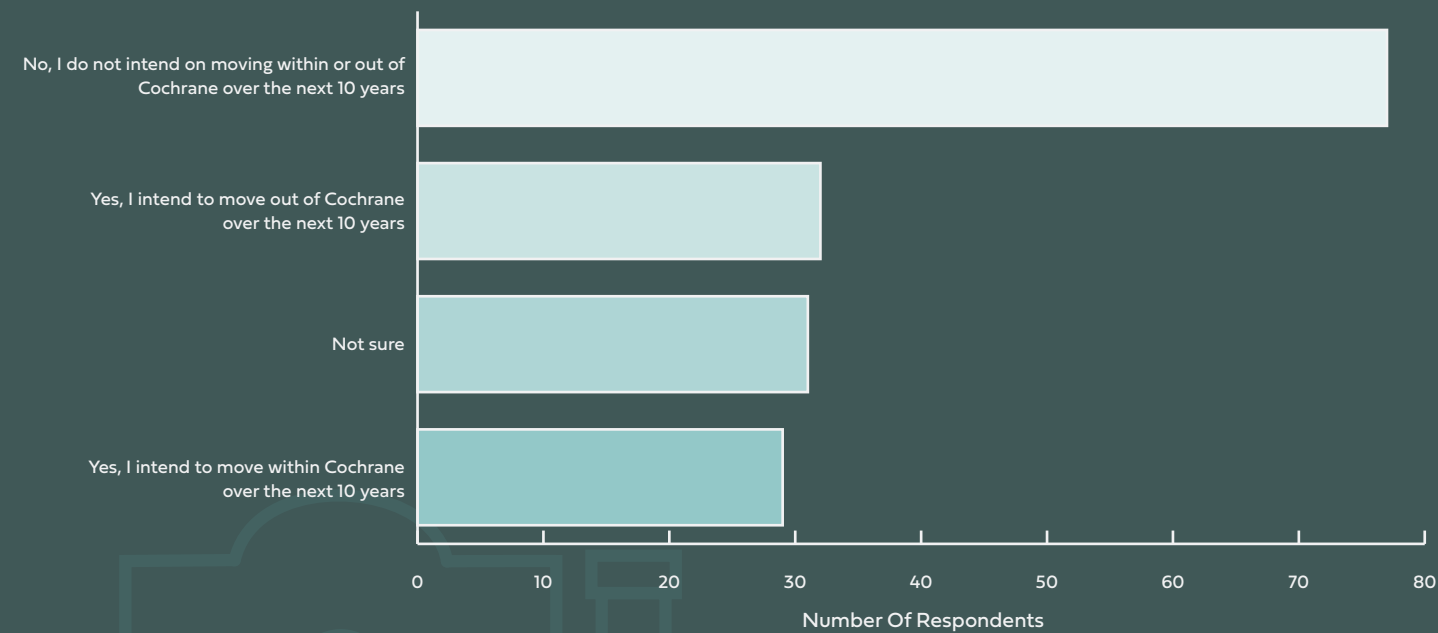
Respondents recommended Whistler Village and Calgary’s University District as additional New Downtown design examples.

HOUSING

Cochrane residents and Council have a preference to maximize housing diversity by providing a range of housing types from single detached homes to semi-detached home, row houses and apartments.

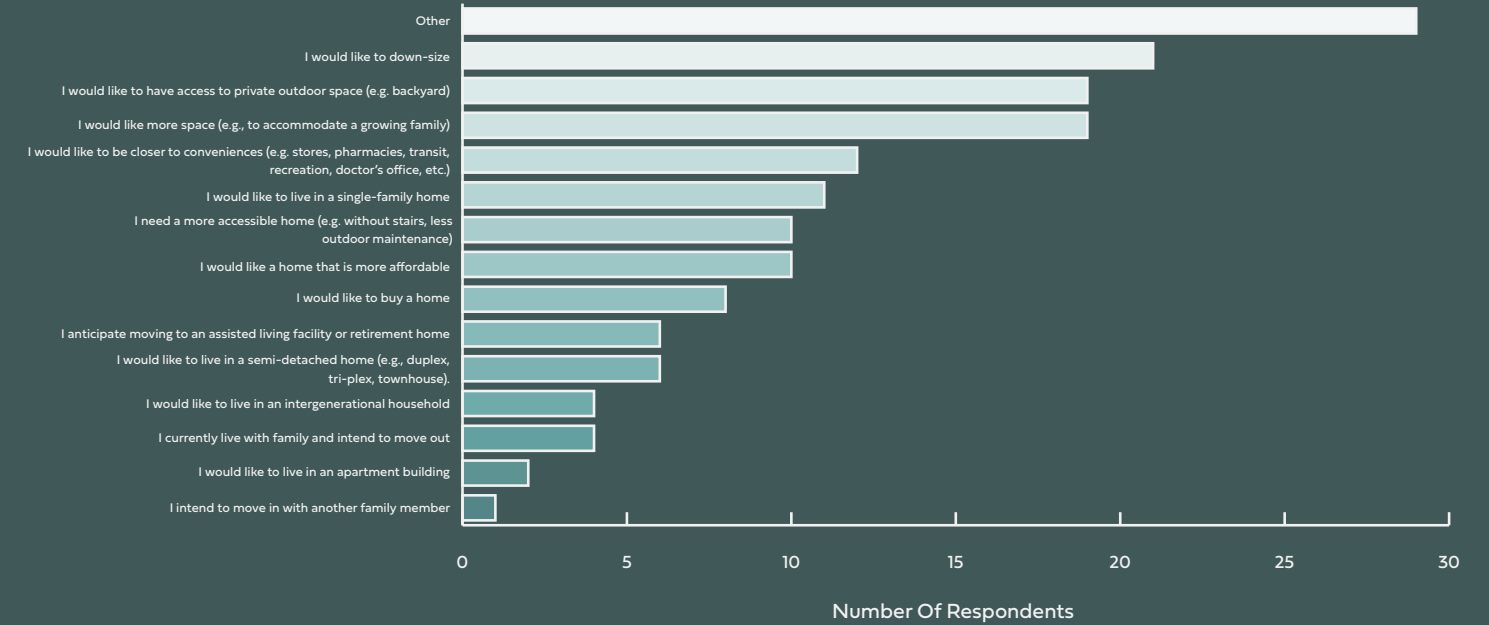
This approach will help with housing affordability and increase housing choice options for residents in different life cycles. Participants were asked to share their future housing needs to inform policy on how to plan for new housing typologies in Cochrane. This feedback will help refine Council approved direction.

“Over the next 10 years, do you anticipate moving from your current place of residence into a new home?”



Most respondents indicated they were not intending on moving, neither within or out of Cochrane. A relatively equal number of respondents were unsure, intending to move out of Cochrane, or intending to move within Cochrane.

“Which of the following best describes your motivations for moving over the next 10 years?”



Only those who indicated they were moving (either within or out of Cochrane) or unsure were able to respond to this question. Most respondents selected other reasons for moving. They are summarized below:

- Considering moving within Cochrane to Heartland because of the access to green spaces lacking south of the Bow
- Moving away from Cochrane because housing options are missing including pet-friendly, affordable, private backyards, larger backyards and acreages
- Moving to another community that is lake-front, the country, a smaller town, or has a better view of the mountains
- Moving to another town, city, province or country because of the desire for a warmer climate, to be closer to family, or better political alignment

HOUSING (continued)

“Is there anything else you would like us to know about housing in Cochrane?”

Encourage different housing options that are affordable

- Consider different housing forms (single detached, stacked bungalows, tiny homes, lane way homes, carriage house, garage suites, terraced homes, ground-oriented units, larger lots, smaller homes, townhouses, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, and secondary suites)
- Consider the different needs of residents (Pet friendly housing, seniors housing, accessible housing)
- More rental units and purpose built rental developments are needed
- Encourage different housing options and variety in each community
- Consider housing affordability
- Invest in affordable, non-profit, supportive housing

Address concerns around growth and higher density housing

- Identify areas appropriate for growth and new housing including high density options
- Limit high-rise apartment buildings
 - Respondents both encouraged and discouraged high density housing
- Avoid sprawl
- Invest in infrastructure in advance of growth
- Limit growth and housing development
- Manage parking
- Preserve low density neighbourhoods and maintain mountain views
- Prioritize spacing between houses

Prioritize the design and amenity offerings alongside housing

- Design neighbourhoods to be walkable with housing close to services and amenities including community spaces, green spaces, coffee shops, grocery stores, pubs
- More privacy and spacing or setbacks between developments including larger lots
- Maximize and optimize green spaces
- Plant native plants and flowers in public areas
- Encourage private and public open space including private yards and patios
- Invest in sustainable housing materials and techniques including rainwater harvesting, solar and green energy
- Design housing facades and architecture to be interesting and unique
- Encourage transitions and setbacks between building types

Respondents wanted to see Cochrane permit higher density housing like Okotoks and encourage small houses like in Ghost Lake.



“I would like to see roads and supporting infrastructure getting updated while housing developments are taking place. Trying to update infrastructure after the fact has been chaos.”

“Consider tiny homes and limit the sprawl. Slow down the pace of building sprawling new communities and make smarter use of density options for housing.”

“If you are going to do a mix of housing, be intentional and gradual about the change in buildings, with large setbacks between buildings and free space and walkways separating the buildings.”

PHASE 2: DATA AND TACTICS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Collection method

Survey participants were asked to respond to optional demographic questions. In Phase 2 the Project Team introduced the inclusion of the “Prefer not to answer” as a response to clarify this. Demographic information was limited to paper and online survey responses only and was not collected for other in-person or place-based tactics to allow people to participate quickly through those methods. Questions were asked regarding residency, household composition, age, and language. Some findings are noted separately or compared to Statistics Canada demographic data, where available.

Demographic Findings

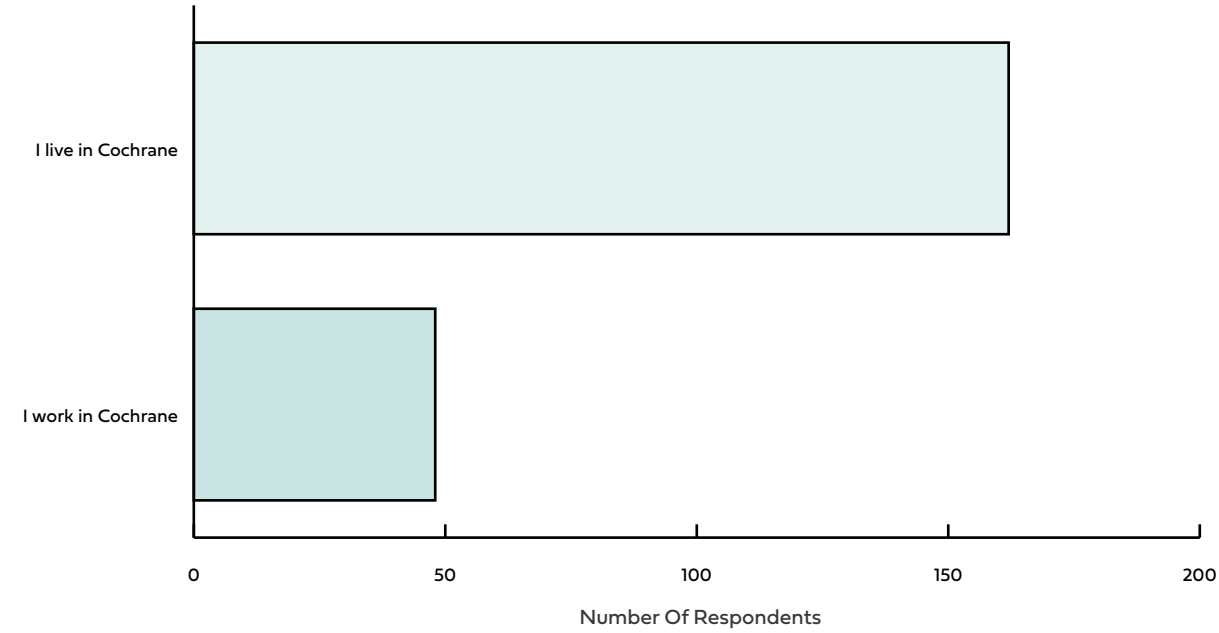
“What area of Cochrane do you live in?”

We heard from people in every community within Cochrane. The top five neighbourhoods reporting were:

1. **Sunset Ridge**
2. **West Valley / West Terrace / West Point**
3. **Heartland**
4. **Fireside**
5. **Bow Meadows /Bow Ridge**

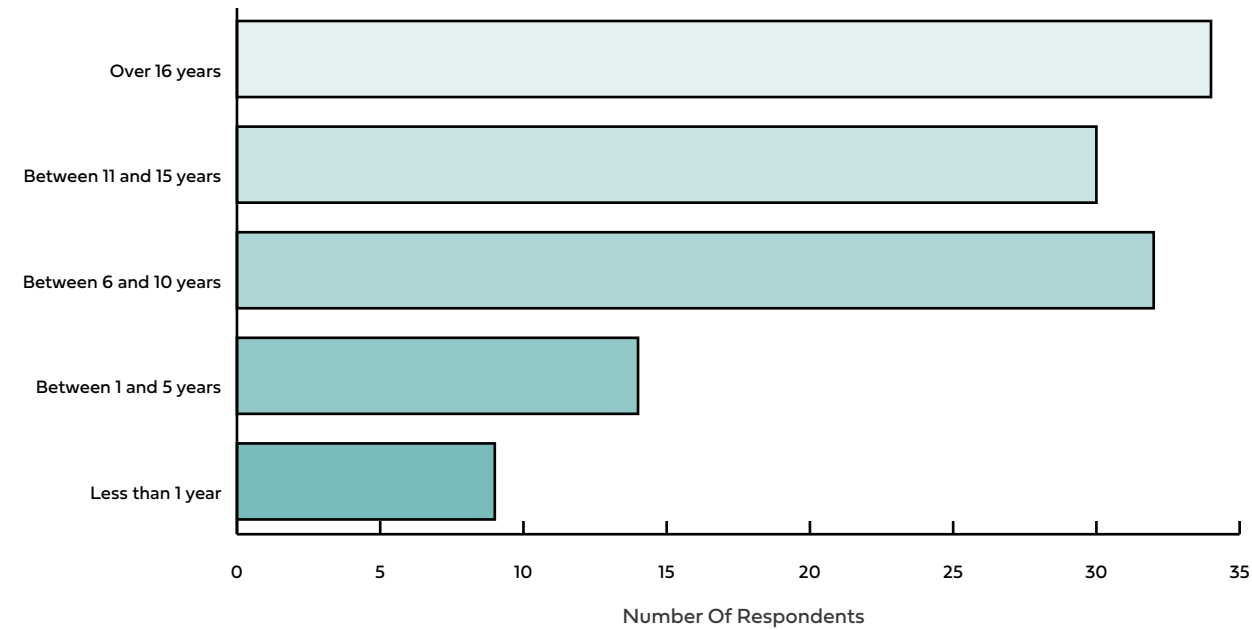
“Which of the following best describes you?”

Many people we heard from both live and work in Cochrane. This question was also used to identify residents and remove respondents who were ineligible such as visitors.



“How long have you lived in Cochrane?”

Most respondents had lived in Cochrane for at least 6 years with most responding to living in Cochrane for over 16 years.

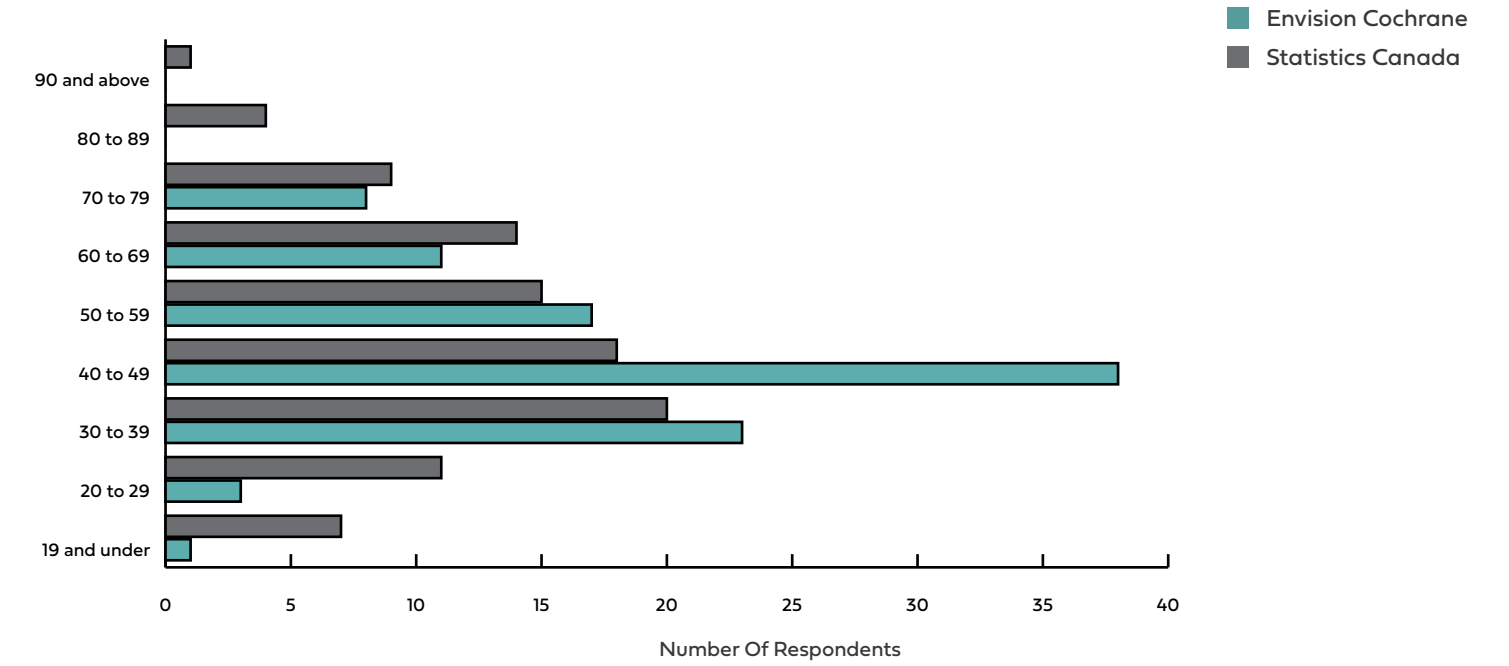


Alignments

The remaining demographic questions were compared to similar questions collected for Statistics Canada’s Cochrane Census Profile

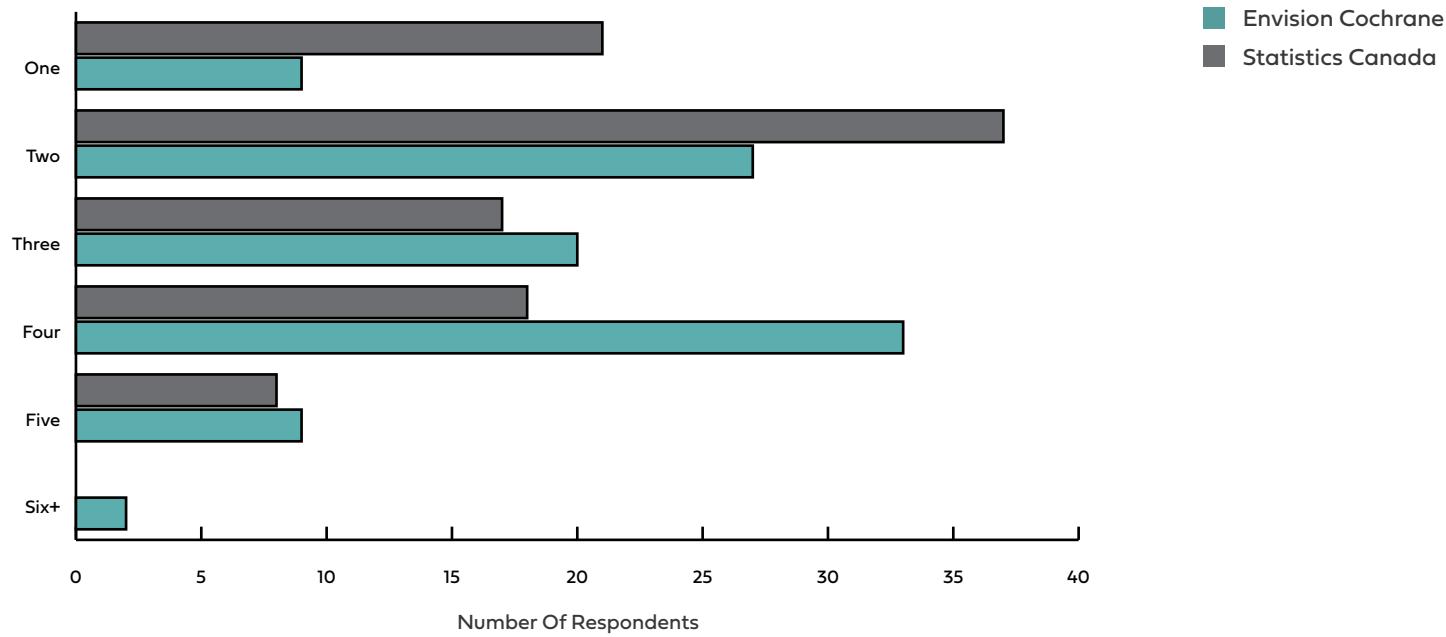
“How old are you?”

Those aged 40 to 49 were most likely to respond to the survey and respondents 19 and under were less likely. No one identified as aged 80 or older. Overall, this distribution aligns with Statistics Canada’s demographic information.



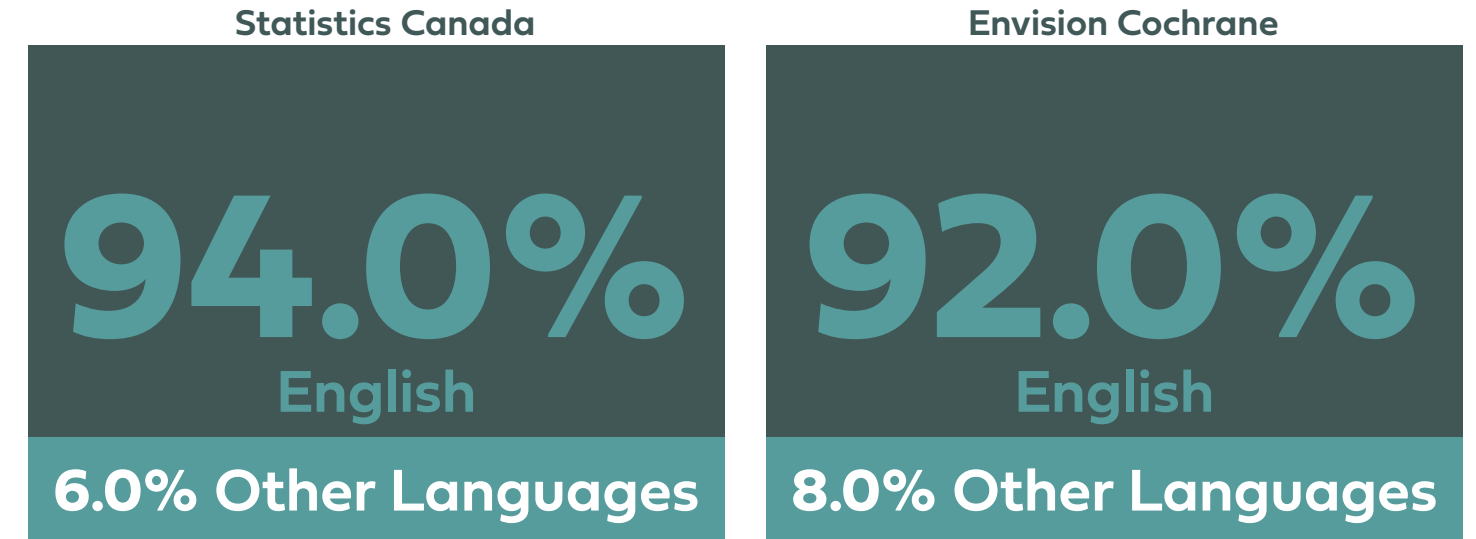
“Including yourself, how many people live in your home?”

Four-person households was the most common household size reported in the survey, followed by two-person and three-person households. Less respondents reported living alone compared to Statistics Canada data and are underrepresented in survey responses. Except for three-person and five-person households, this distribution does not align with Statistics Canada’s demographic information.



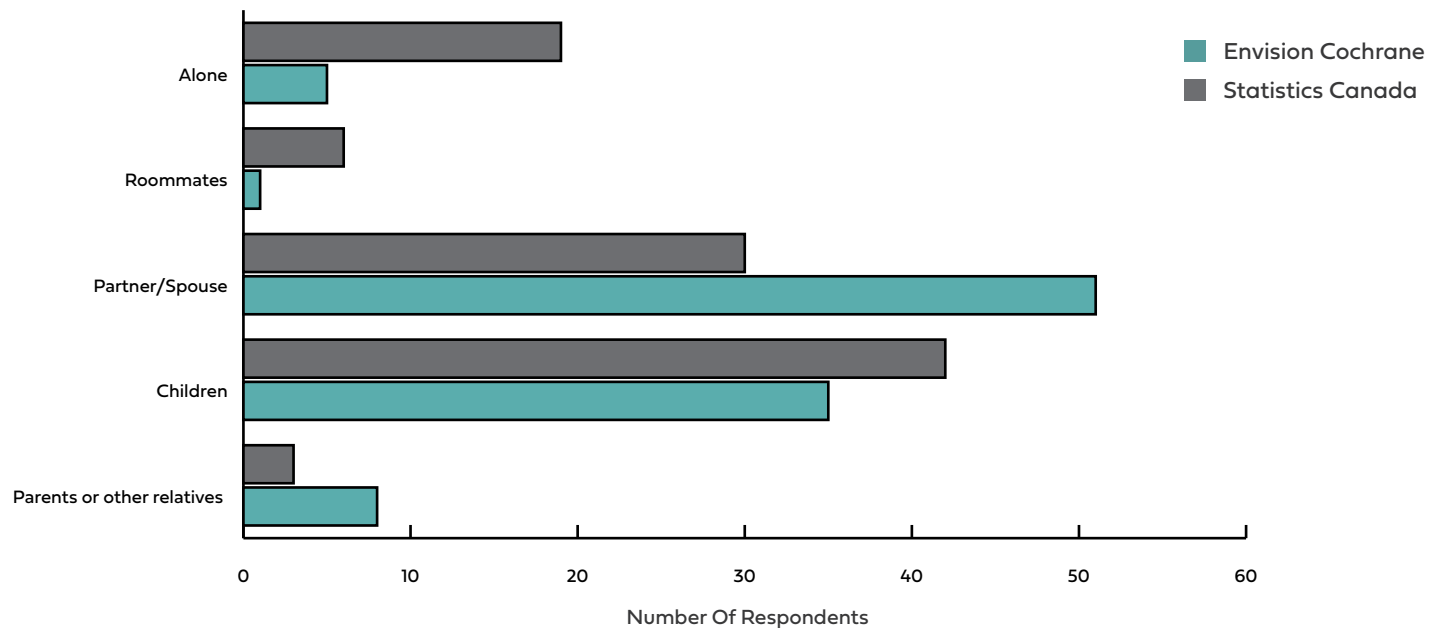
“What languages do you speak at home?”

Most respondents speak English at home and this aligns with Statistics Canada’s reporting. Other languages reported included French, Dutch, German, Spanish and Hindi.



“Who do you live with”

Most respondents reported living with a partner or spouse, followed by children. Around six percent (6%) of respondents reported living with roommates or alone which is lower than Statistics Canada data. This distribution does not align with Statistics Canada’s demographic information as there are higher reports of living with partners and parents or other relatives and lower reports of living with children, roommates or alone. Response confusion is one potential reason for this misalignment. For example, a person may be living with a combination of household members (partner, children, and other relatives), but only reported one group.



TACTIC EVALUATION

Highly successful engagement tactics

Lobby displays were a successful tactic likely because of their placement at frequently visited Town facilities and quick activities. The SLS Centre and the Library received the highest number of comments.

The Community Conversation at the SLS Centre received the highest in-person attendance. Learning from our experience in Phase 1, the Project Team set-up at the entrance and on a weekend. This allowed us to speak directly with close to 80 residents.

Both the Lobby Display and Community Conversations used similar activities asking residents to place a dot next to a list of priority actions or to write it down on a post-it if it was missing. This was a quick activity to complete at the Lobby Display and also prompted respondents to provide additional feedback to the Project Team at the Community Conversation. There were 458 dots placed on the Lobby Displays and 102 additional comments submitted. The Project Team estimates between 150 to 250 respondents participated in the Lobby Displays.

Interest group interviews were another successful tactic which provided more in-depth questions and comments. We heard back from four of the twenty interview invitations, which is a typical response rate for a project like this. Many interviewees helped spread the word about Envision Cochrane to their members.

Moderately successful engagement tactics

The survey (both online and paper versions) were moderately successful. Similar to Phase 1, lower responses are likely due to online portal requirements which required respondents to register. As a response to feedback received during Phase 1, some responses allowed for unlimited characters or text.

The Project Team also received feedback asking the difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 and if those who participated in Phase 1 could still participate in Phase 2. As a response, social media posts were shared explaining the difference. This could also explain the moderate turnout for the surveys. Some residents felt participation in Phase 2 wasn't necessary as they participated in Phase 1.

400+
Total Respondents

128
Community Conversation Attendees

662
Priority Dots

141
Post-Its

4
Interest Group Interviews

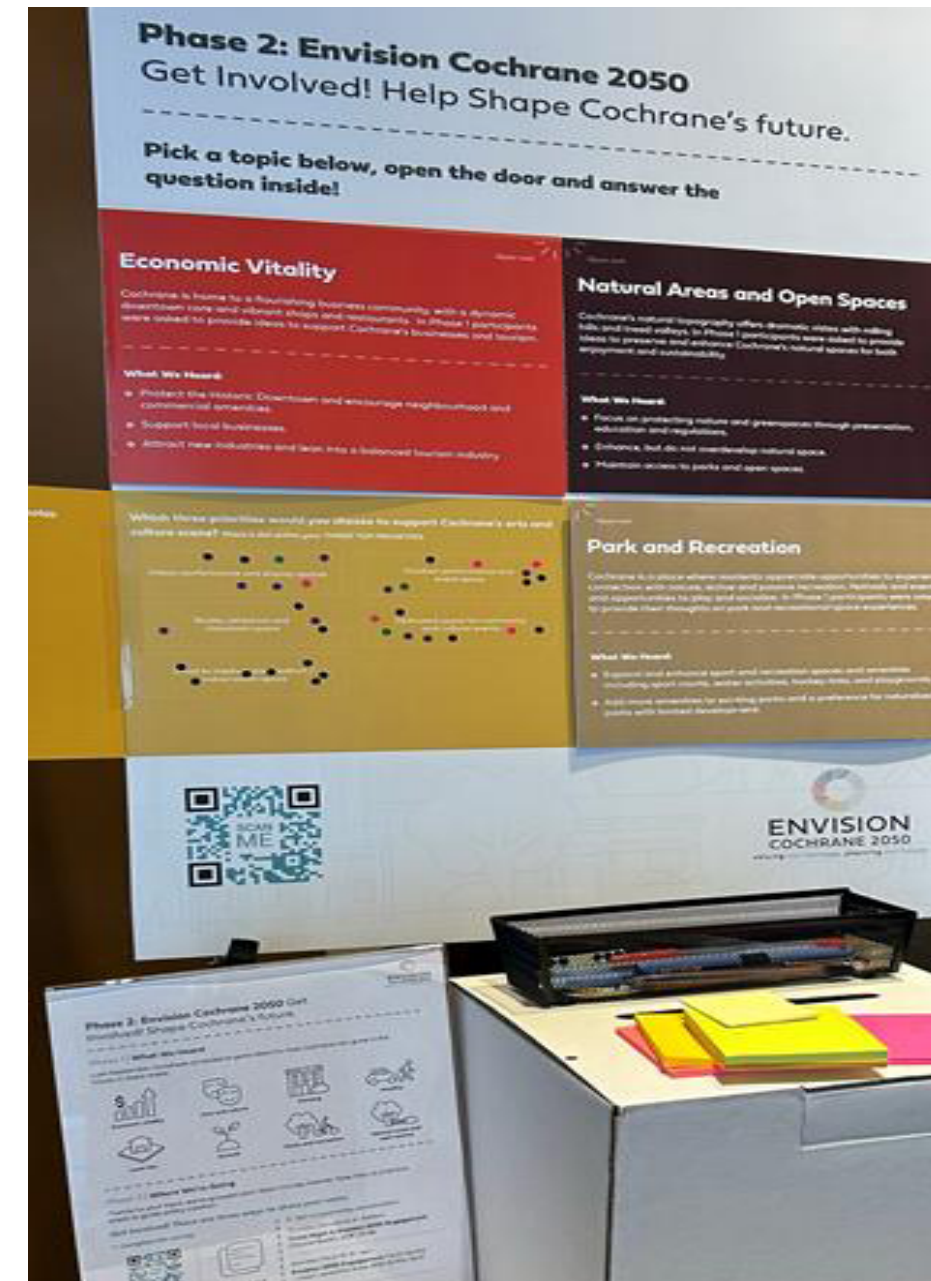
146
Online Survey Participants

22
Paper Survey Participants

Less successful engagement tactics

The hand-out with questions about a vision for Neighbourhood Centres, Development Corridors and New Downtown was the least successful tactic. We only received one during the entire period even though many of the map hand-outs were removed from the display. Unlike the survey, there was no instructions about where to submit it. It is likely that respondents took it home with them as information or didn't know how to provide their feedback after completing it.

1
Map Hand-Out



LOOKING AHEAD

PHASE 3

Purpose of Phase 3

Now that Phase 2 is complete, the Project team will use the feedback collected to inform policy approaches and write policy to create a draft Plan. Community residents will be given an opportunity to review and provide final input on the draft plan during Phase 3: Finalizing the Plan later in 2024. A major component of Phase 3 will include providing the Plan in its entirety. This differs from Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement which asked questions about resident experiences, challenges and priorities. Phase 3 will be focused on policies created and crafted based on feedback from the public and Council.

Considerations

Tactics used in Phase 1 or Phase 2 will be refined and adjusted for Phase 3. Lobby Displays and Community Conversations were highly successful and the same locations will be used again. In-person engagement is most successful when it is associated with an existing event or at gathering place location where people are willing to stop for a few moments. Most post-its were submitted to the survey box at Lobby Displays rather than being stuck to the topic area. This suggests Topic Cards from Phase 1 are desirable and respondents are looking to submit their information rather than display information.

The Project Team also received valuable feedback on how questions were asked and priority list options. For example, respondents were asked what they liked about the New Downtown, Neighborhood Centres and Development Corridors. Framing the question this way assumes respondents like the areas to begin with. Another way to garner this information would have been to ask, if they liked these areas and if so, why, or why not.

The Project Team grouped similar actions together as one priority so that the list of priorities presented at Lobby Displays and in the survey could be digestible or manageable for respondents to select an option. This may have biased respondents from prioritizing certain actions over others. For example, respondents asked for clarification on what constituted 'Water-based recreation' and suggested spray parks and river surf areas although water-based, are very different types of activities. Support for tourism was also framed as large-scale tourism (Support hotels, conference centres and tourist attractions) rather than building on the intentional tourism such as the programming, events and businesses that already exist in Cochrane.

We look forward to hearing from you in Phase 3!