



BAY ROBERTS
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BAY ROBERTS PLAN REVIEW

What We Heard Report



April 2026



Bay Roberts Plan Review: What We Heard Report

April 2026

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01 INTRODUCTION



Introduction

About the Project

In January 2026, the Town of Bay Roberts began the process of reviewing and updating its Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. These documents, adopted in 2011, have served the community well. With continued growth, shifting demographics, and evolving community priorities, the Town is completing a comprehensive review and update of these documents to ensure they reflect current community conditions and needs.

What are the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations?

The Municipal Plan serves as the town's long-term vision, outlining goals, objectives, and policies that guide future land use and development. It establishes principles for managing growth in a sustainable way, preserving Bay Roberts' character, and supporting a high quality of life for residents.

The Development Regulations are the rules that control how land can be used and developed within our communities. Regulations include zoning, development standards, and environmental protections.

This Plan Review is being carried out by UPLAND Planning + Design Studio in collaboration with Town staff.

Planning 101

Planning is a collaborative process used to help communities control change and development in their physical environment. Fundamentally, it provides a framework to guide how land is used, how and where growth and development happens, and how and where buildings are built. Planning plays a significant role in keeping communities safe and healthy and allocates growth through proactive (or deliberate) transportation and infrastructure planning, making it easier and more efficient for people to get around.

Planning is important because...

- ▶ It helps communities prepare for change, whether that be environmental change, like sea level rise and erosion, or social change, like an aging population;
- ▶ It supports our community's character and culture by promoting good urban design, a quality public realm, and by keeping development consistent and complimentary;
- ▶ It protects special and sensitive environments by preventing or limiting development in these areas;
- ▶ It helps to protect people from developing in areas where the natural environment presents a high risk;
- ▶ It helps to maintain a healthy, sustainable economy by ensuring there is a good balance and proximity between places of work and places to live - it ensures there is enough available land for resource, industrial, and commercial uses; and
- ▶ It helps to enable different types of housing to make sure there are lots of options for residents to call home.

Community Feedback and How it will be Used



Community input is critical to the planning process. Feedback from residents and stakeholders helps ensure that the planning documents align with the community's vision for itself and addresses topics and issues that matter most to the municipality's residents. By working together, the Plan can respond to community needs and help the municipality adapt to change over the coming decade in a thoughtful and sustainable way.

This report summarizes what community members shared about life in the town and their priorities for the future. The feedback has been organized into key themes, which are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Alongside background policies and research, this report will be used to identify the key issues and potential options for the future. The next phase of engagement will dive deeper into these topics and explore how the project can address them. Together, this will form the foundation of the draft planning documents.

02 WHAT WE DID



What We Did

Project Website

A project website was hosted on Social Pinpoint. The website served as the central hub for project information, including detailed background information, project timelines, and engagement opportunities. You can visit the website at speakupland.ca/bay-roberts-plan-review.



Public Survey

An online survey was open to community members from February 13 to March 22, 2026. The questions were designed for community members to share what life is like in Bay Roberts, including what they like, dislike, and hope for the future. The main topics of interest were housing, community life, and transportation. The survey was completed by 130 participants.

Engagement Events

An in-person launch meeting on March 4 and office hours with the project team on March 5 were held at the Wilbur Sparkes Complex to kickstart the initial engagement phase of the project. An online session was held on March 10 for those unable to attend the in-person activities. The in-person and online launch meetings provided an overview of the project, including the purpose, timeline, and goals. Each event also provided attendees with the opportunity to ask questions and share their vision for the future of Bay Roberts. During office hours, community members were encouraged to drop by at their convenience to voice any questions, concerns, or thoughts they might have on the project.

In addition to the above engagement events, the project team was also available for phone conversations, which allowed for more in-depth conversations about specific topics and issues.

Approximately 27 community members and stakeholders participated in one or more of the engagement events.

03 WHAT WE HEARD



What We Heard

Over the course of the formative engagement period, we heard from a variety of community members and stakeholders. Through the online and in-person engagement activities, we clearly heard that residents care deeply about Bay Roberts and want the town to be a place where their families and friends can thrive.

Many participants have lived in Bay Roberts for most of their lives, and they hope to continue living here. They have strong social connections and deep roots in the community. Looking to the future, residents expressed wanting to see more opportunities for recreation improvements, economic growth, and thoughtful development.

A wide variety of topics were discussed through the engagement period. What we heard will directly inform the development of the draft planning documents. The following key themes are discussed in more detail over the following pages:

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Community Life
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Planning and Development

**"It is now my home.
I like the way the
community feels.
Rural but not
isolated, has a bright
future...but we have
to work at it."**



Housing

Highlights

Housing availability and affordability were prominent concerns for participants. Nearly half (49%) of survey respondents said they find it somewhat or very difficult to find housing in Bay Roberts.

Concerns about affordability were consistently shared by both renters and home owners. When asked about housing issues, participants with rental experience noted a lack of rental options and rents for available units feel unaffordable. Those with homeownership experience highlighted challenges with rising property taxes and unaffordable mortgage payments. Specific to property taxes, some homeowners do not feel they are receiving services equal to the taxes they are paying.

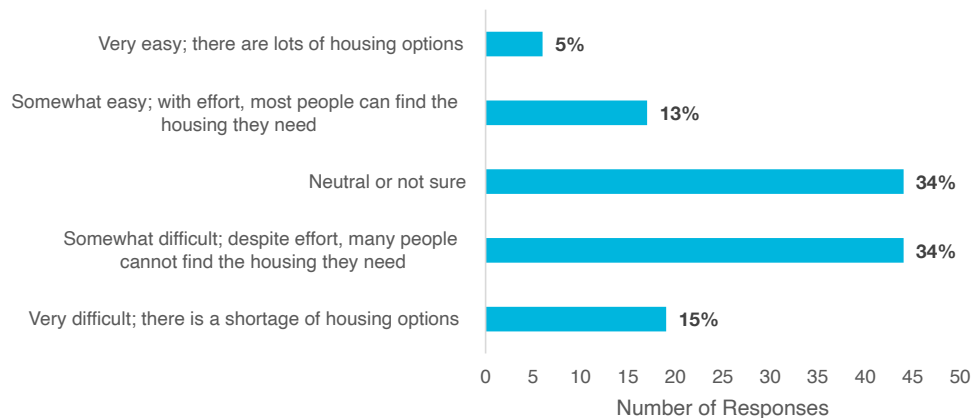
When asked to select potential approaches to improving housing availability and affordability, exploring residential development in currently undeveloped areas was identified as the top priority. Multi-unit structures and adaptive reuse or conversion of large homes, churches, and halls were the next most popular options. We also heard a need for more housing that is appropriate for single people or couples who work in the area, reflecting changing household compositions in Bay Roberts.

**In the future, I want
Bay Roberts to be...
"A leader in housing
opportunities for all
levels of prices and
affordability and
uniqueness."**

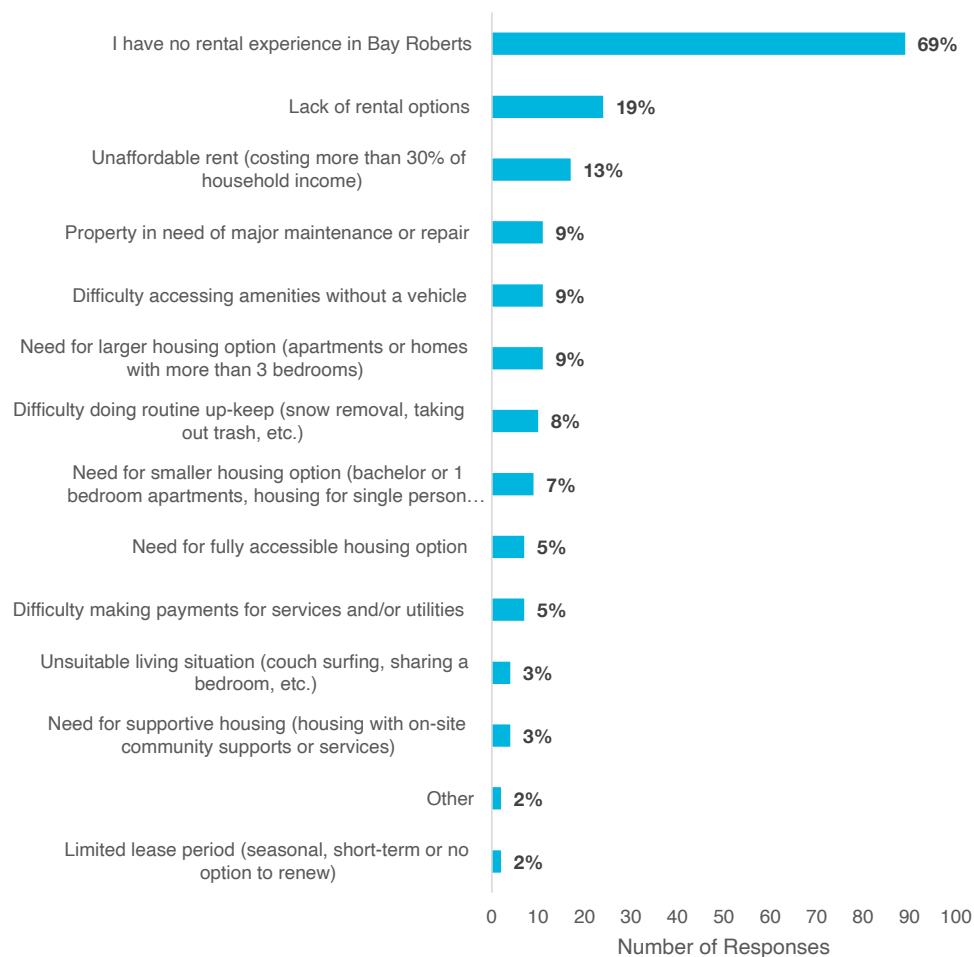


Survey Results

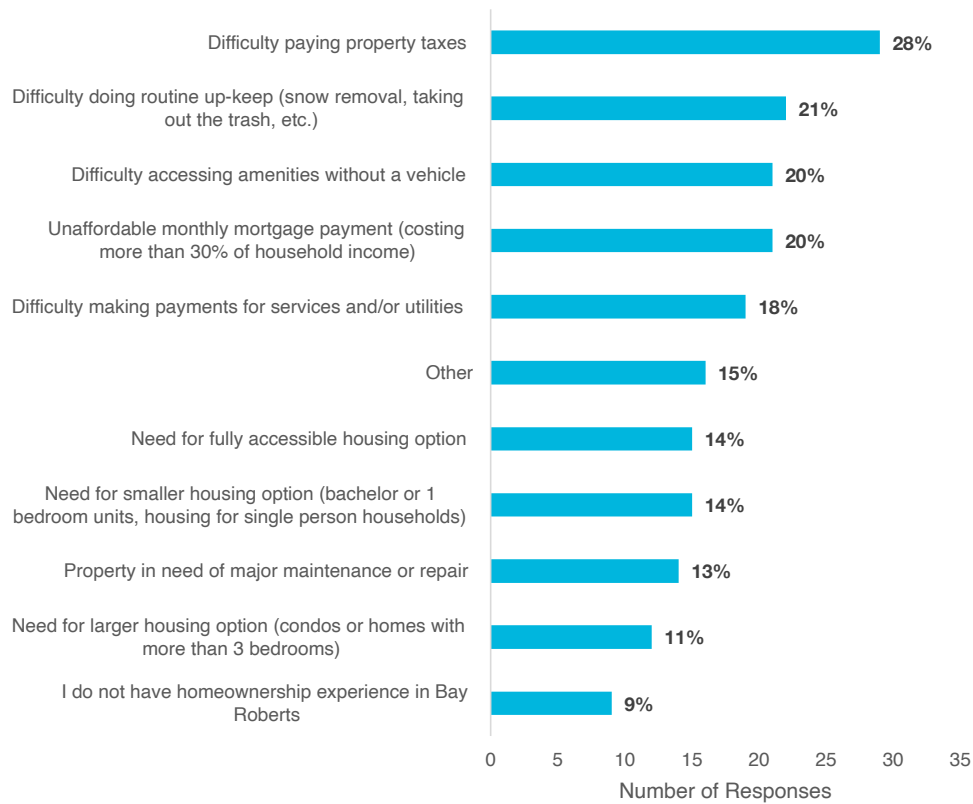
Based on your observations, how easy or difficult is it to find housing in Bay Roberts? (130 responses)



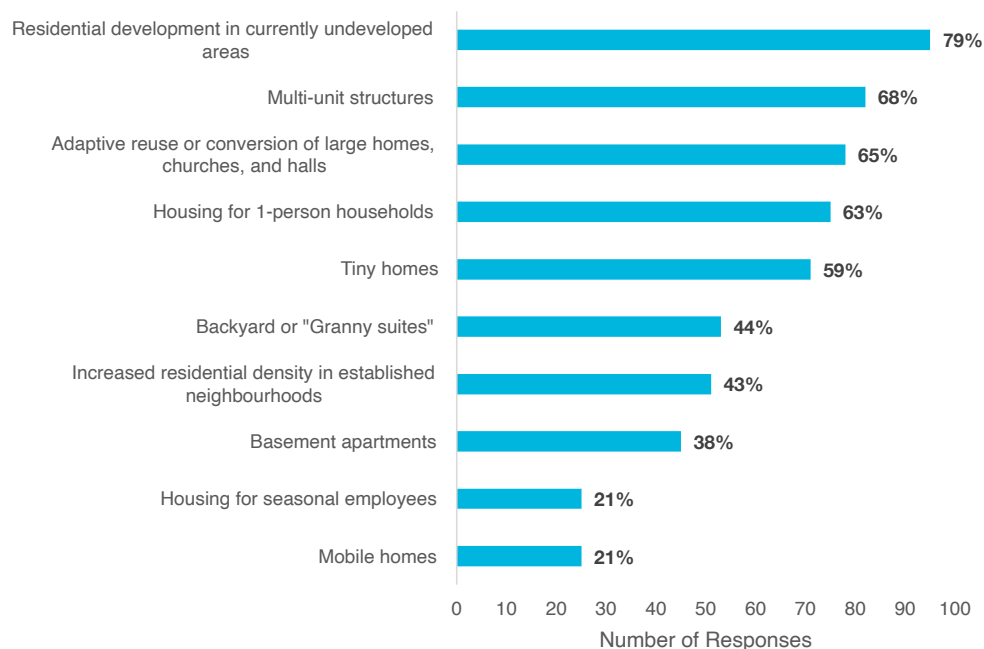
Which of the following housing issues are relevant to your rental experience in your community? Select all that apply. (129 responses)



Which of the following housing issues are relevant to your home ownership experience in your community? Select all that apply. (105 responses)



Select the five approaches you feel are most important to increasing housing availability or affordability, based on which you feel are most important. (120 responses)



Community Life

Highlights

Bay Roberts is seen as a community with a lot to offer its residents and visitors. It is a friendly community with a rural feel, but still close to key services and amenities. While participants had a lot of positive things to say about Bay Roberts, there are areas for improvement.

A recurring theme was the desire to become a hub for sports and recreation. Many participants expressed strong interest in a new recreation complex that includes indoor space for a variety of activities, including an arena, rink, and indoor pool. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of preserving and enhancing green space and wooded areas. While development is important, many do not want it to come at the expense of losing wilderness areas.

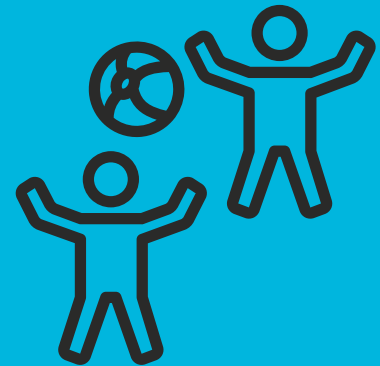
An important part of a thriving community are ample job opportunities. Participants shared the need for more and better paying job opportunities. While participants want to stay in Bay Roberts, some indicated they would be open to leaving if a better job opportunity took them somewhere else.

Having key services and amenities available is another key piece of a vibrant and thriving community. Bay Roberts has limited retail and commercial options, forcing most residents to travel outside of town to access what they need. Many survey respondents shared their interest in seeing more retail options in Bay Roberts, especially more big box stores like Walmart and Canadian Tire. They do not want to have to drive to Corner Brook just to do their normal shopping.

When asked to envision the future of Bay Roberts, key features that were repeatedly mentioned included:

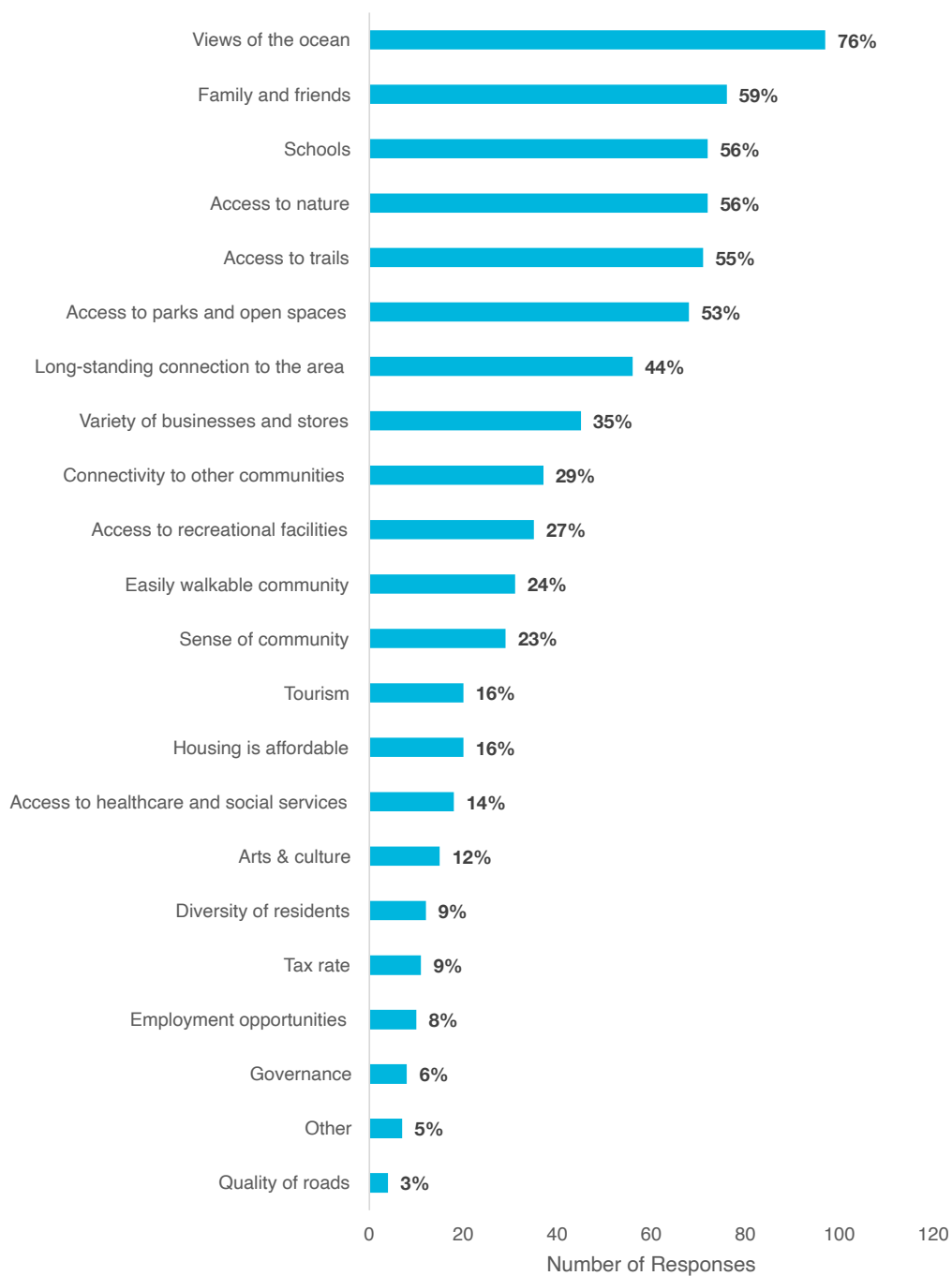
- ▶ a safe community that is an attractive place to live and visit;
- ▶ a hub for sports and recreation activities;
- ▶ easy to travel through the town on foot and by car;
- ▶ a place where people can shop, eat, work, and play; and
- ▶ a variety of activities, especially for youth and seniors.

"This town NEEDS an updated recreation centre. Year round swimming pool, arena, community center."

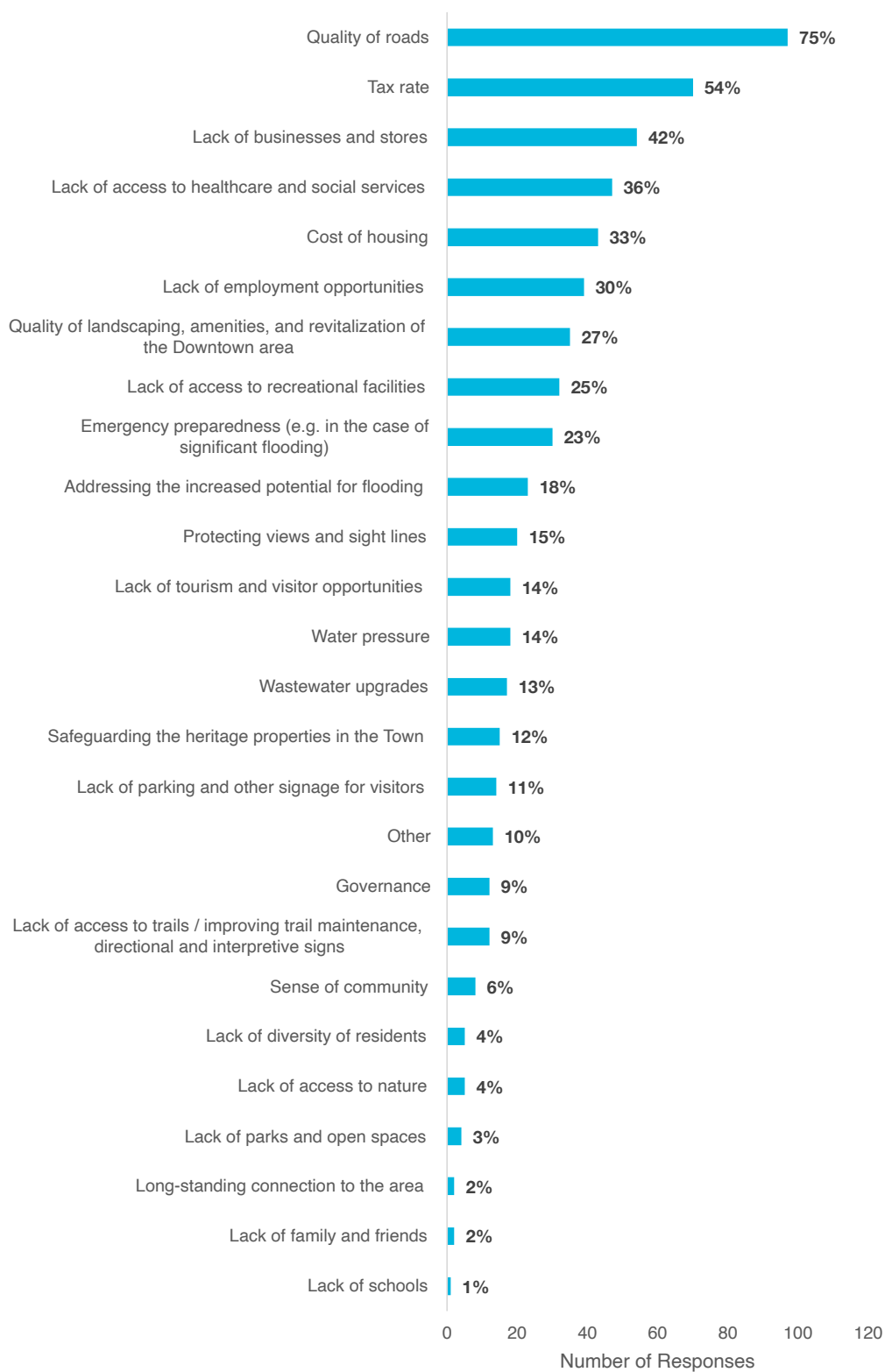


Survey Results

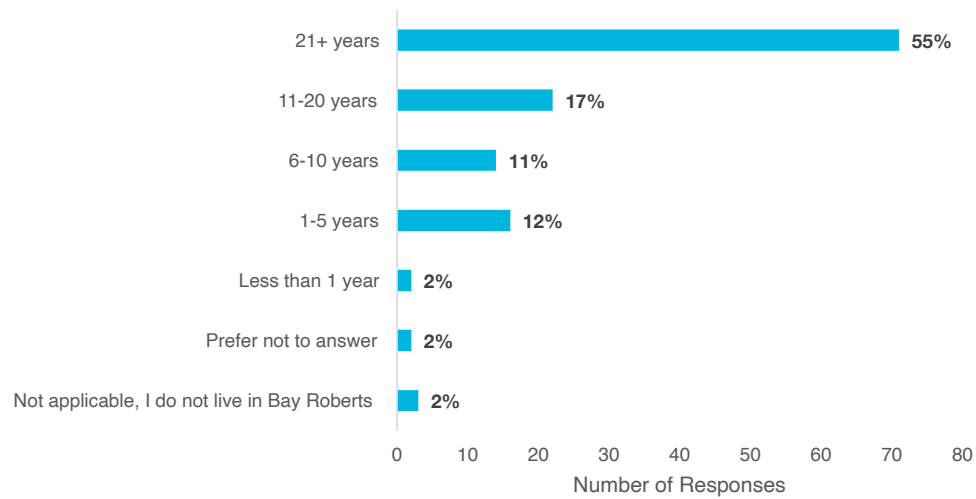
What makes Bay Roberts a great place to live? Select all that apply. (128 responses)



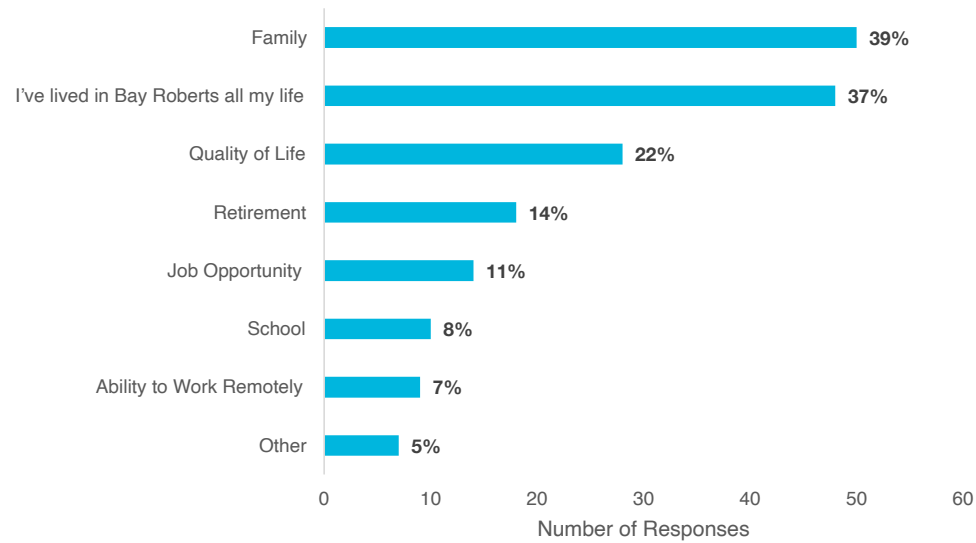
What are the challenges of living in Bay Roberts? Select all that apply. (130 responses)



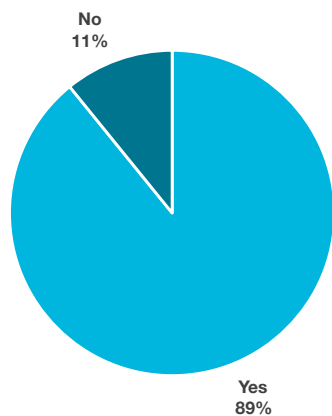
How long have you lived in Bay Roberts? (130 responses)



What brought you to Bay Roberts? Select all that apply. (129 responses)



Do you plan to stay in Bay Roberts for the foreseeable future (5-10 years)? (129 responses)



Transportation

Highlights

Survey results highlight a strong reliance on personal vehicles for getting around the community, with the vast majority of residents (91%) identifying driving as their primary mode of transportation. While only a small share of respondents rely on walking or other active forms of travel (2%), there is still a notable portion of the community that feels comfortable moving around the town in this way (61%).

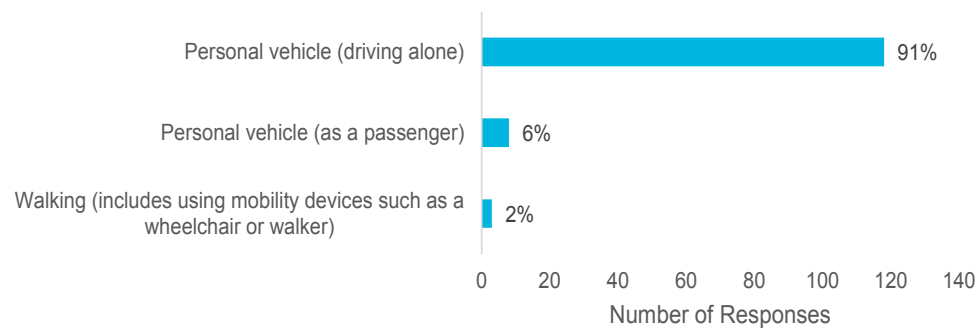
However, it should be acknowledged that there are important gaps in the current transportation network, seeing as almost 40% of respondents report not feeling safe walking or cycling in Bay Roberts. In particular, respondents emphasized the lack of appropriate infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, as a key barrier. This, alongside the distance between destinations, make active transportation impractical for daily needs. These findings suggest that while driving remains the dominant travel choice, there is an opportunity to improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility to better support active transportation across the community.

"I would like to see sidewalks on Central Street and Water Street. It is a hazard to walk."

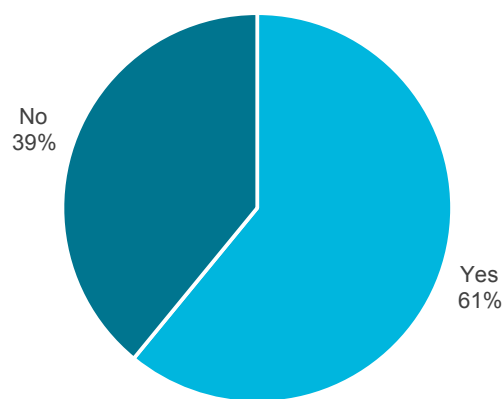


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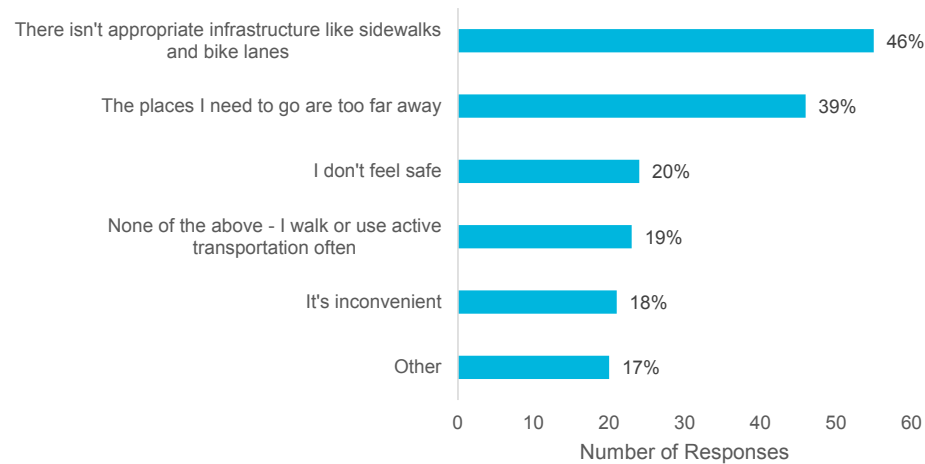
What is your main way of getting around Bay Roberts? (129 responses)



Can you comfortably and safely access the amenities you need for daily life by walking or using other forms of active transportation? (128 responses)



What are the barriers that stop you from walking or using active transportation to go about your daily life? Select all that apply. (119 responses)



Planning and Development

Highlights

Views on planning and development are mixed, with differing perspectives on how land use should be managed. While many residents indicated they are not familiar enough with current regulations to form a clear opinion on the matter (39%), others stated that land use controls in the town were too restrictive (25%), raising concerns surrounding complex permitting processes, limited flexibility in rezoning, and barriers to developing vacant or underutilized land - particularly in areas like the downtown where there is interest in encouraging new businesses. At the same time, some respondents expressed support for the existing regulations (22%), emphasizing the importance of maintaining the town's character by limiting higher-density development and preserving large lot sizes, natural areas, and heritage properties.

Across responses, there is a clear consensus on several key priorities for the future. Residents consistently identified housing affordability, access to goods and services, and local employment opportunities as top concerns, alongside a desire for a greater range of housing options. The preservation of heritage resources also emerged as a widely shared value, reflecting a strong appreciation for the town's identity and history.

Looking ahead to the future, residents envision a community that balances growth with conservation, one that enhances safety, supports environmental stewardship, and expands commercial and recreational opportunities. Suggestions for achieving this vision include improving walkability through additional sidewalks and trails, investing in road safety measures, enhancing the harbourfront, protecting valued green spaces like the Mad Rock Trail, and enhancing community infrastructure such as recreation facilities. It is clear that there is a shared desire for thoughtful, balanced development that strengthens quality of life while retaining the character that defines Bay Roberts.

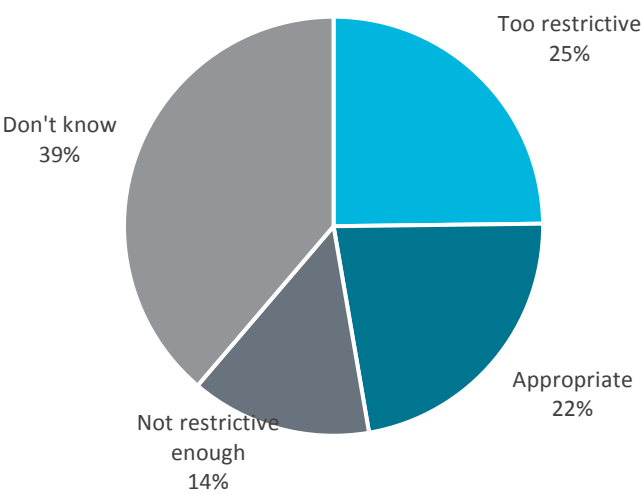
Specific land use requests we heard included,

- **Infrastructure improvements:** Residents highlighted the need for continued investment in core infrastructure, including extending sewer services to support new development, upgrading existing roads, and improving drainage systems.
- **Development of an industrial park on LT Stick Drive:** There was a strong interest in advancing the proposed industrial park to support local employment and economic development. However, it was noted that moving this project forward is largely dependent on the extension of municipal sewer services to the area.
- **Site-specific rezoning and land use changes:** A number of residents identified opportunities for more flexible land use policies, including requests to permit the conversion of rural lands for commercial purposes, review and potentially update environmental protection zones to allow for development, and rezone certain areas to residential designations such as R1 and R2 to support housing development.
- **Regulations and enforcement:** Residents emphasized the need for clearer, more transparent, and consistently applied policies and approval processes. Concerns were raised over inconsistencies in how regulations are interpreted and enforced, as well as a lack of clarity around requirements, timelines, and decision-making.

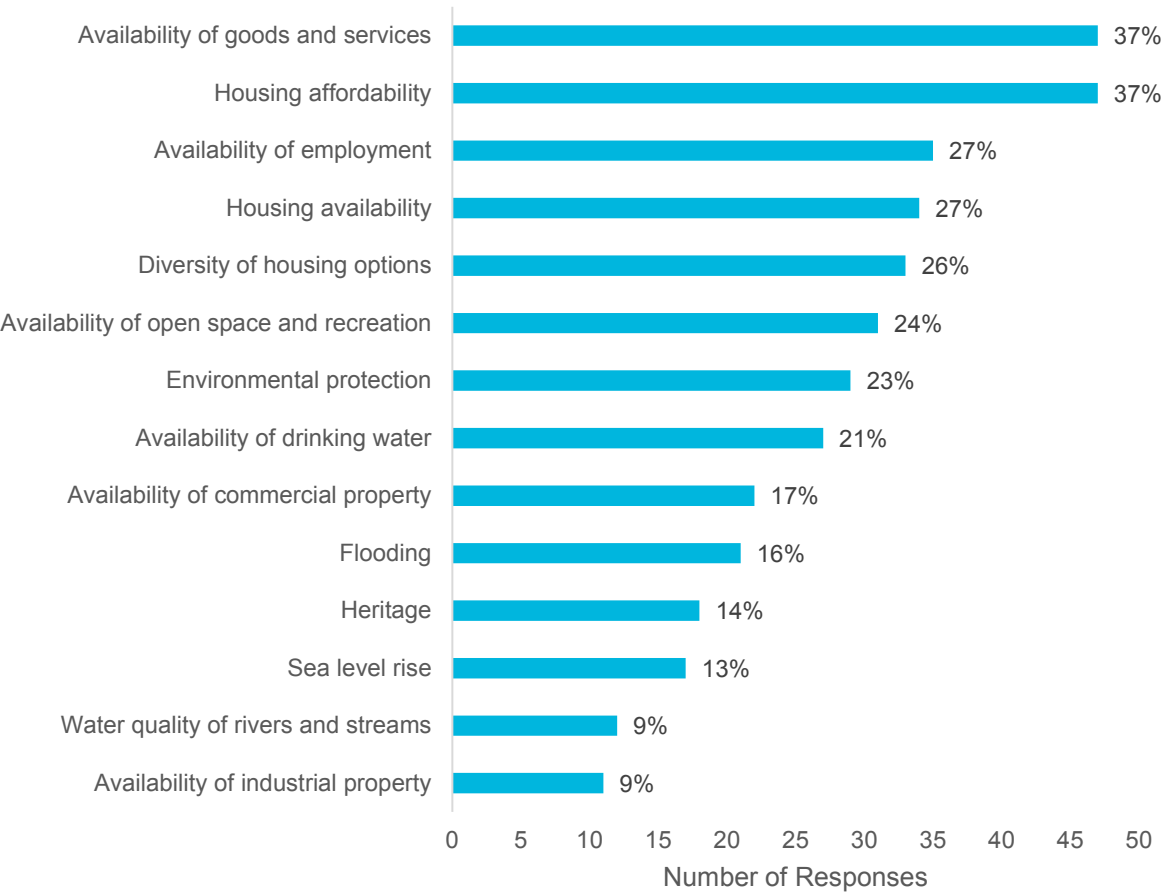


Survey Results

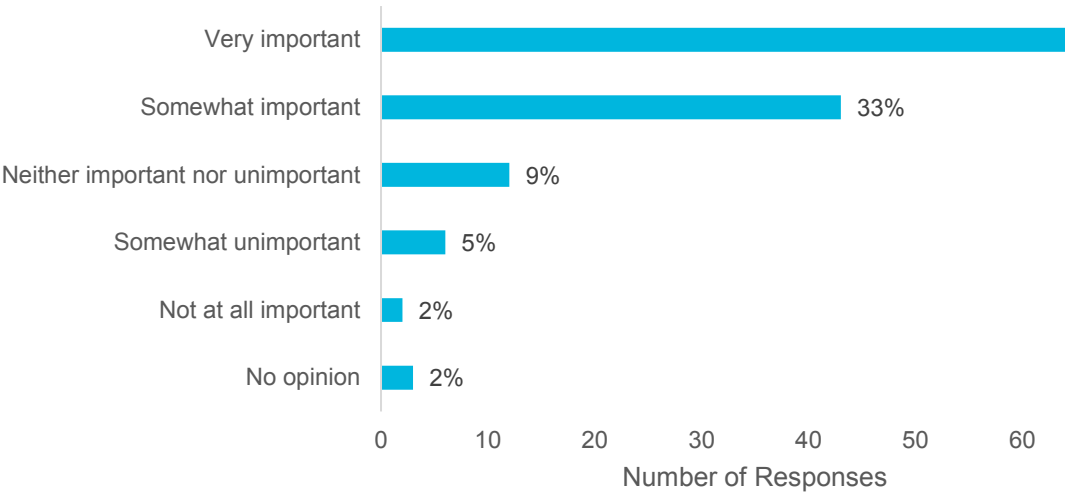
When thinking about land use controls in Bay Roberts, they are: (129 responses)



Select the top 3 most important issues that you would like to see addressed in the Municipal Plan. (128 responses)



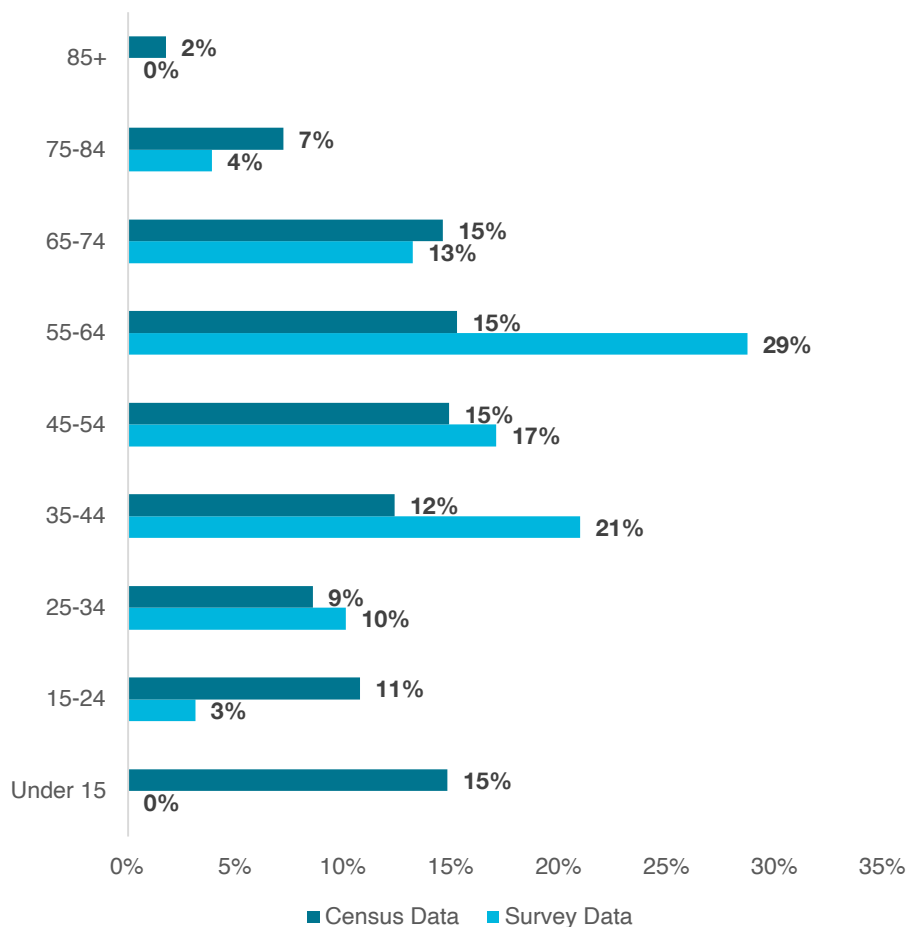
How important do you feel it is to preserve heritage properties in Bay Roberts? (130 responses)



Demographics

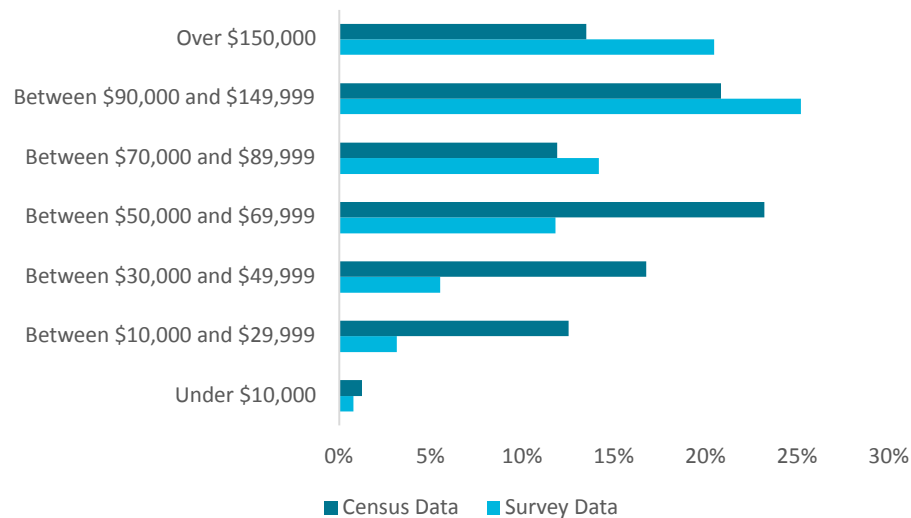
What is your current age? (129 responses)

Comparing the survey results to 2021 Census results, respondents between the ages of 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 are overrepresented in the survey, while those under 25 and over 75 are underrepresented.

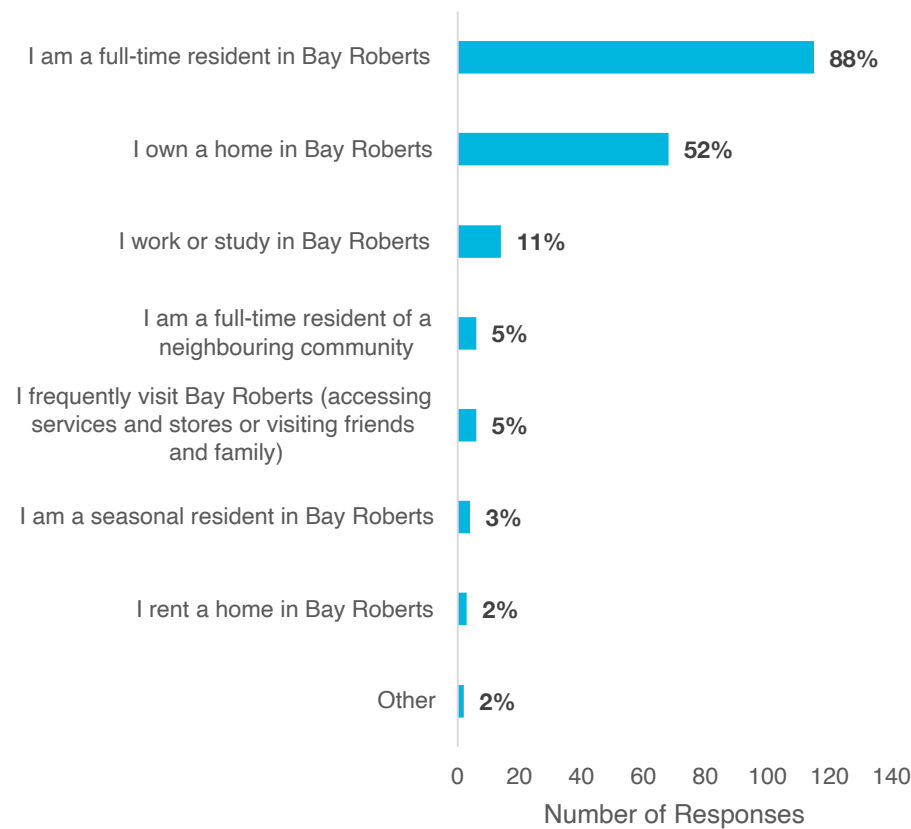


What is your household income (before tax)? (127 responses)

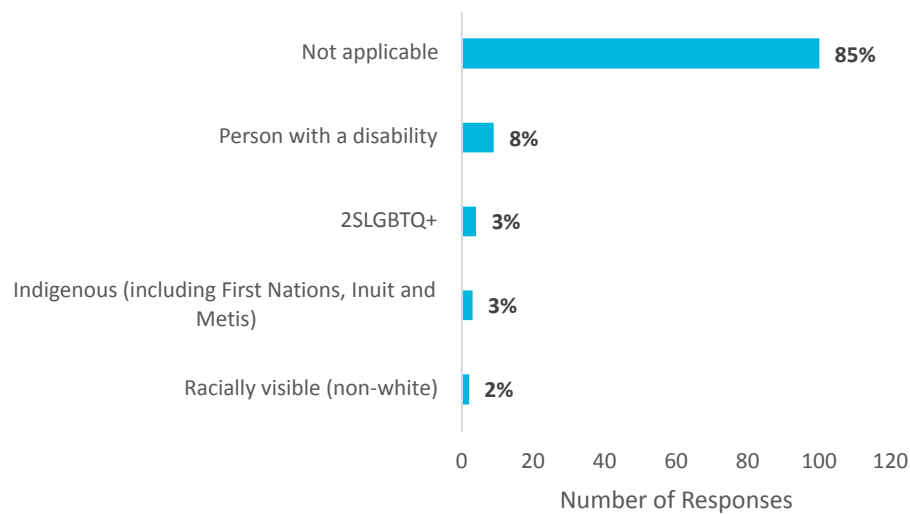
Comparing the survey results with 2021 Census results, individuals earning less than \$70,000 are underrepresented while those earning over \$90,000 are overrepresented.



What is your connection to Bay Roberts? Select all that apply. (130 responses)

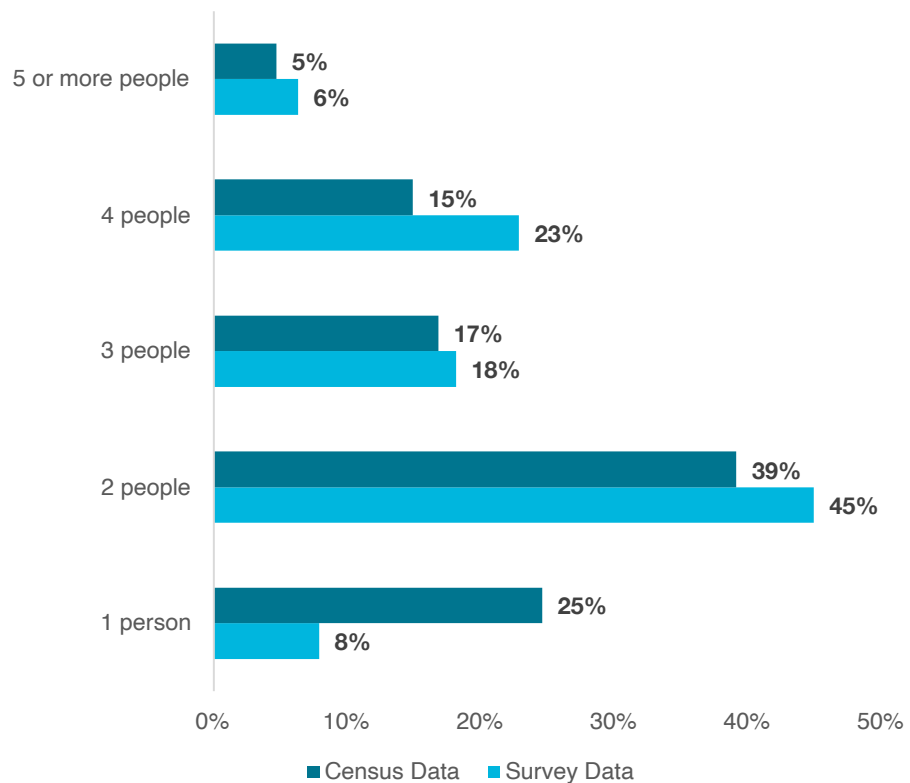


Do you identify as a member of any of the following equity-deserving groups? Select all that apply. (118 responses)



How many people live in your household? (127 responses)

Single person households are underrepresented in our results, compared to 2021 Census results, and households with 4 or more people are overrepresented.



04 DRAFT VISION + NEXT STEPS



Draft Vision

The initial engagement feedback summarized in this report has provided a clear image of both the challenges residents face as well as their vision and hopes for Bay Roberts' future. To help guide the next phases of the project, we have drafted a vision statement and core planning principles that encompass the most important issues brought forward at this stage of the project. Adapted versions of these will be part of the final planning documents once all phases of engagement are complete.

Draft Vision Statement

Bay Roberts is a welcoming, safe, and resilient community where people feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in where they live. From Mad Rocks to Butlerville, we are a connected community that works together - bringing neighbourhoods together and building on our shared history. Shaped by our rugged coastline, community traditions, and gathering places - from red chairs overlooking the water to local events - Bay Roberts is a place where people of all ages can connect, stay active, and enjoy a high quality of life.

As a service centre for the region, Bay Roberts provides access to the services, amenities, and opportunities people need close to home. A range of housing options supports residents at every stage of life, while local businesses are strengthened and new opportunities are welcomed to support a vibrant, sustainable economy.

Growth will be guided thoughtfully and proactively with consistent and clear regulations - balancing new development with the protection of natural areas that make the community so special.

Whether you've lived here for generations or are new to the community, Bay Roberts is a place where people can put down roots, contribute, and feel proud to call home.

Draft Planning Principles



Providing a spectrum of housing options, including affordable and accessible housing



Providing opportunities for activity and recreation at any age



Preserving our network of green and open spaces



Supporting a diverse economy and creating more jobs for residents



Enabling mobility locally, whether by motor vehicle or on foot



Providing residents with the services they need in town



Developing a vibrant community where people want to live and visit

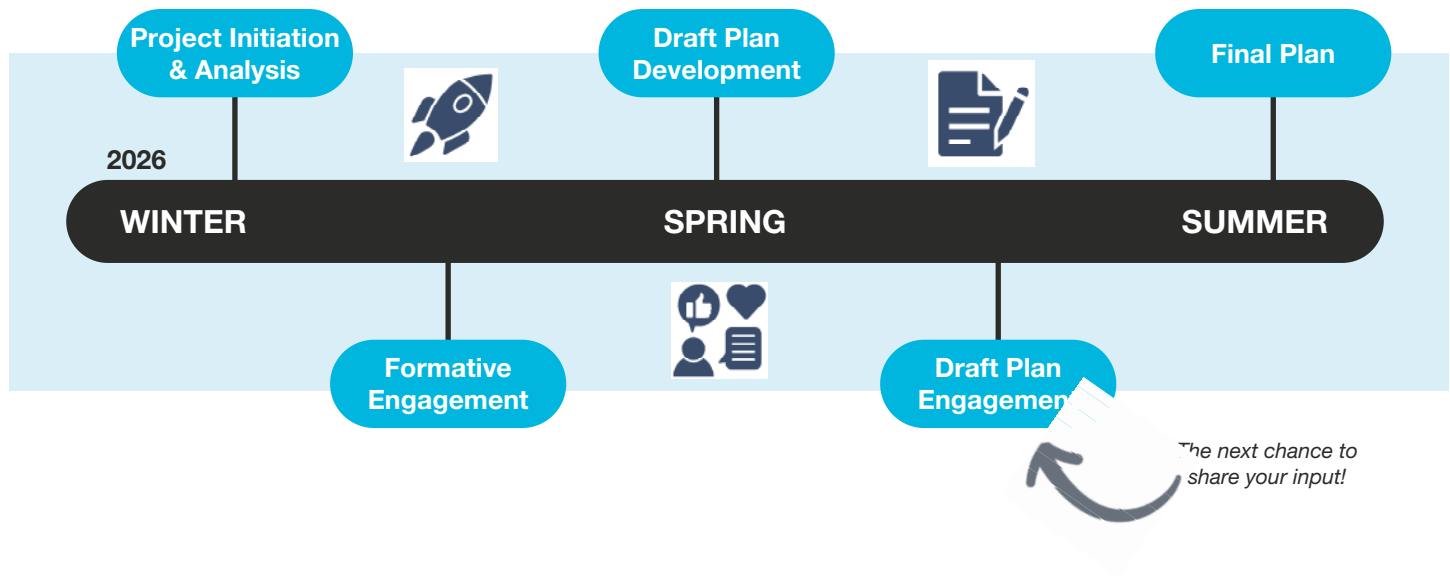


Creating clear and transparent development processes

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in this round of engagement. Feedback gathered through the engagement events, stakeholder interviews, and online survey will be used to inform the updated drafts of the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. Once the draft documents have been prepared, community members will be invited to review and provide feedback to be incorporated into the final documents.

Project Timeline



Project updates and information will continue to be posted to the project website at speakupland.ca/bay-roberts-plan-review. Stay tuned to the Town's social media accounts for details about the next phase of engagement.

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