

What We Heard Report

Land Use Bylaw 2024 Engagement

Report: January 29, 2025



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OF WOOD BUFFALO

We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis.

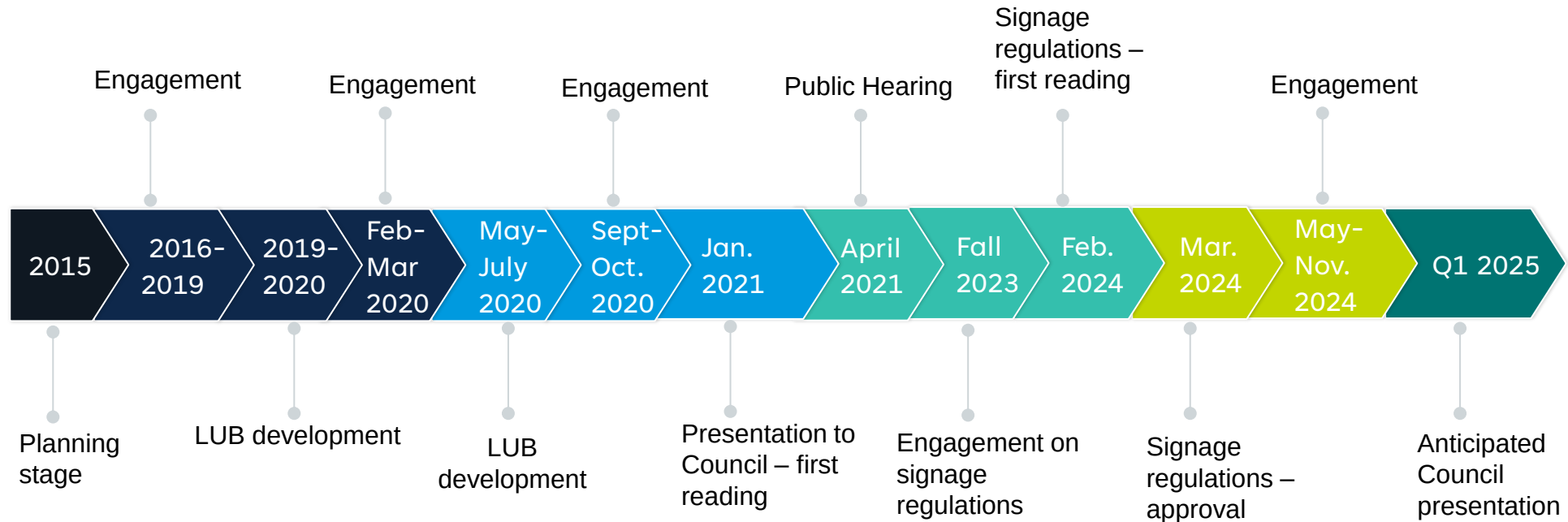


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LAND USE BYLAW (LUB) TIMELINE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The process of updating the Land Use Bylaw began in 2015, with phased public engagement starting in 2016.

Since then, region-wide input collected from more than 50 in-person and virtual meetings, 48 public open houses, and online engagement featuring multiple feedback tools, has helped shape the draft bylaw's development.

This report focuses on the final phase of engagement which took place in 2024. This phase informed the public, Indigenous Partners, business community and community groups that the draft bylaw will be presented to Council soon and provided a final opportunity for feedback.

Highlights from 2024 engagement include:

- 350 surveys completed
- 13 meetings and presentations
- 11 public engagement events (virtual and in-person)
- Seven Council-appointed committee meetings

Planning and Development Services intends to bring the proposed bylaw to council in early 2025. Key findings and themes identified during public engagement are highlighted in report.



KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



Parking

- Over **58%** of survey respondents identified **parking** as one of the **most important** aspects of the Land Use Bylaw to them.
- Participants noted the importance of **having designated and adequate parking** for home-based **businesses and basement suites**.
- Concerns with on street parking, ranging from making residential streets “extremely narrow” and describing it as “obnoxious” and “ridiculous,” to calling for “single side of the street parking on narrow streets.”
- Respondents also highlighted **vehicles on lawns**, and parking of **tractors and recreational vehicles**.



Secondary suites

- **34%** of survey respondents selected **secondary/basement suites** as one of the **most important** aspects of the bylaw.
- **Support** for the addition of new types of secondary suites like **garden suites and loft suites**.
- Recognition that these “options provide flexibility and affordable housing options.”
- **Concern** about the **impact** of secondary suites on **water and sewer** infrastructure.



KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



Home-based businesses

- Almost **40%** of survey respondents identified **home-based businesses** as one of the most **important** aspects of the bylaw.
- Comments included “Home based business regulations should be allowed.”
- The need for **home-based businesses** to have **parking** available on their property.



Enforcement

- When providing additional feedback in the open-ended question, respondents emphasized the need for **enforcement**, including general enforcement and specific areas like **parking for home businesses and secondary suites**.
- Stakeholders raised enforcement questions about basement/secondary suite parking and **ensuring accessible/seniors' parking spaces**.



KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



Lot sizes

- Over **25%** of survey respondents identified **lot size** as one of the **most important** aspects of the bylaw.
- **Diverse opinions on lot sizes** with some indicating they should be larger and others commenting that reduced sizes is a positive step towards making housing more accessible and affordable.

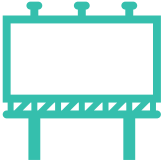


Zoning

- Respondent comments highlighted re-zoning, zoning and residential zoning.
- In the open-ended question, survey respondents had various thoughts and comments related to different zoning aspects, including:
 - Lot size and accuracy of zoning in Gregoire Lake Estates
 - “Urban Expansion District on the north-east side of the tracks in Anzac is not wise.”
 - “I don’t want the zoning to change in Sapræe Creek as this would mean that I would not be allowed my pets that are listed as livestock.”
 - Small Holdings District on Draper Road should not allow for private function/wedding/event uses.



KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



Signage

- When asked to identify aspects of the updated bylaw that are most important to them, two survey respondents identified **signage** and portable signage.
- When asked for any additional feedback in the open-ended question, five respondents highlighted issues around signage, specifically: the new 180-day rule for portable signage, the rule that real estate “For Sale” signs cannot be taller than 2 m, and the need for businesses to update and renovate inside and out, including signage.
- The project team met with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and received feedback on changes to portable signage.

Please note signage regulations were the focus of an earlier phase of engagement in 2023. Findings from engagement on signage are available in Appendix D of this report and at participate.rmwb.ca/LUB:

- [WHAT WE HEARD AT THE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND LUNCHEON](#)
- [WHAT WE HEARD REPORT LAND USE BYLAW SIGNS: PART 7A, PART 7B, PART 7C.](#)



ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

Who did we talk with?

- Urban and rural RMWB residents
- RMWB business community
- Council-appointed boards and committees
- First Nations and Métis communities
- Internal participants



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

Aware

Ways people saw communications and advertisements:

505	Booth walk-bys (at in-person engagements)
3,752	Online project page views
28,788	Social media impressions
7,456	PWB newsletter recipients*

*Land Use Bylaw was included in the May, June, and July 2024 issues of the newsletter.



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

Informed

Times people learned more about the project:

2,240	Online project page unique visitors
4,511	Online project page document downloads
5,242	Participate Wood Buffalo newsletters opened
87	Open house attendees
417	Attendees at pop-up events



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

Engaged

Times people took action to provide feedback:

- 350 Completed surveys
- 188 Answered a quick poll
- 114 Questions at Council-appointed committee meetings
- 160 Meaningful conversations at open house & pop-ups



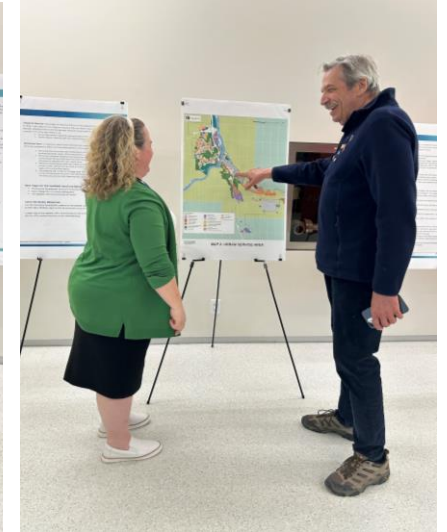
OPEN HOUSE

Eighty-seven people participated in an in-person open house at the Jubilee Building lobby on June 20, 2024, from 3-6 p.m.

Attendees from rural communities and Fort McMurray neighbourhoods:

- Spoke with subject matter experts
- Reviewed information boards
- Provided feedback by completing a survey, quick poll and dotmocracy

Planning and Development Services staff engaged in one-on-one conversations with 30 residents.

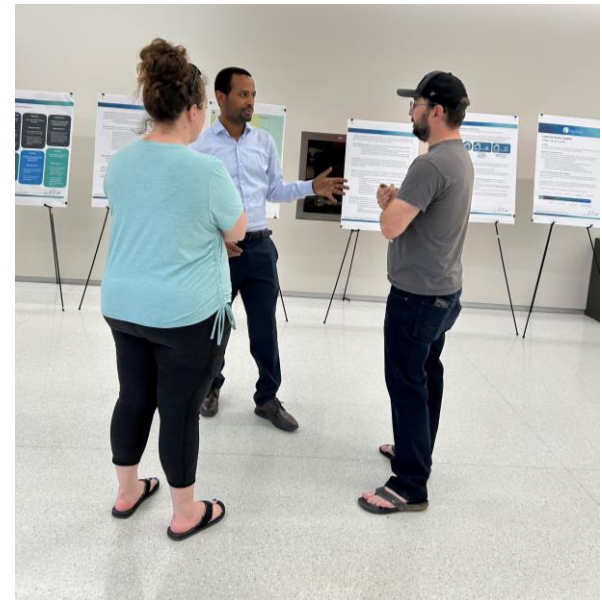


OPEN HOUSE

Feedback summary

Conversations with open house attendees included the following topics:

- Proposed secondary suite types
- Secondary suite regulations
- Accessory building regulations
- Multiple Anzac residents attended and spoke about topics including:
 - Proposed district change from Hamlet Commercial to Hamlet Community Core
 - Proposed change from Hamlet Residential to Hamlet Community Core and if it is still possible to build an accessory building



What's most important to you about the Land Use Bylaw?

Choose one.



2024-2025 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Land Use Bylaw project team participated in the following in-person community engagements:

- Anzac and Gregoire Lake Estates – March 6, 2024
- Saprae Creek – April 4 & June 6, 2024
- Janvier – April 24, 2024
- Conklin – May 1, 2024
- Draper – October 17, 2024
- Fort Chipewyan – Re-scheduled to February 2025



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Conversations with participants included the following topics:

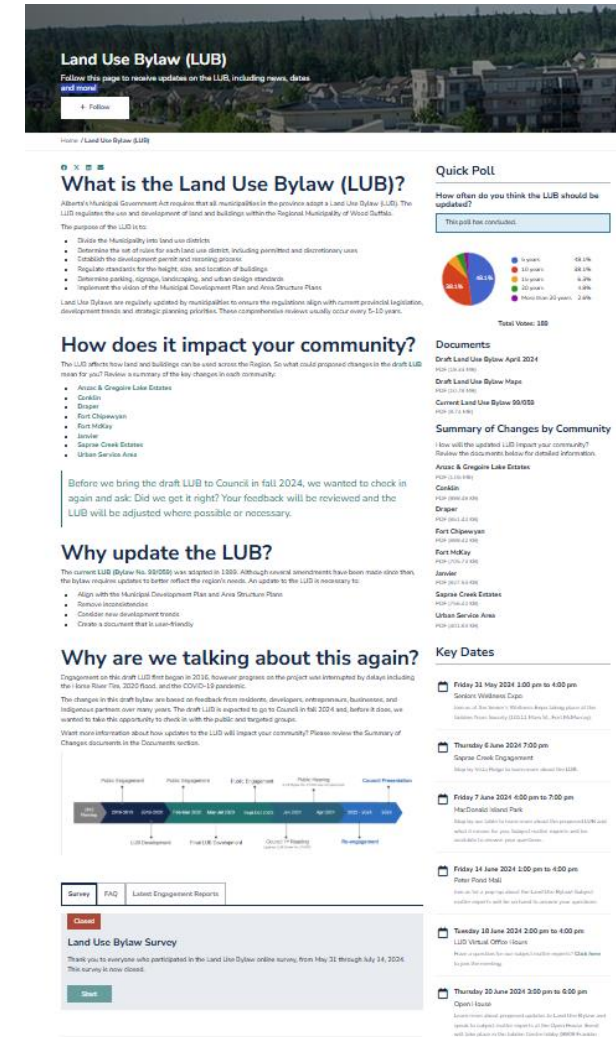
- Land Use Bylaw Process:
 - Request for documents summarizing changes between the current LUB and proposed Bylaw, specific to each community.
 - Residents inquired about opportunities to provide comments on the updated LUB.
- Accessory Buildings:
 - On larger lots, maximum accessory building size should be increased.
 - Residents asked if sea-cans can be moved within a property once a development permit has been issued.
- Agriculture and Animal Allowances:
 - Residents had questions around how many animals are allowed on residential lots.
 - What are the agriculture regulations.
- Land Use Districts:
 - The Environmental Preservation district should not include 'Recreational Facility, Outdoor' as a use.
- Land Use Bylaw Enforcement:
 - Enforcement should be pro-active.



MEETINGS

In 2024, the Land Use Bylaw project team participated in the following virtual and in-person meetings:

- Fort McKay First Nation (x 2)
- Fort McKay Métis Nation (x 2)
- Chard Métis Nation
- Quarry Ridge Development
- Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce
- Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism
- Seven Council-appointed boards and committees:
 - Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee
 - Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee
 - Wood Buffalo Pro-Business Advisory Committee
 - Wood Buffalo Waterfront Development Advisory Committee
 - Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity
 - Subdivision and Development Appeal Board
 - Advisory Committee on Aging



MEETINGS

Feedback summary

Conversations with meeting participants included the following topics:

- Accessibility: meeting and maintaining accessibility standards
 - Reduce the distance from accessible parking stalls to entrances
 - Accessible units in apartment buildings
- Parking stalls - overall support for new regulations:
 - Seniors' parking stalls
 - Bicycle parking
- Basement/secondary suites:
 - General support for introduction of new secondary suite options (attached, detached garage, garden and loft suites)
 - Questions about garage height and impacts on neighbouring property
 - Concern about parking and enforcement
- Portable/Temporary Signage
 - Concern about 180-day limit



MEETINGS

Feedback summary

Examples of quotes from meeting participants:

Re: Updated allocations for seniors parking in new developments: **“That’s awesome!”**

-Member, Advisory Committee on Aging

“If you can do it [make the proposed changes to Commercial Districts] it will help.”

-Member, Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (RACIDE)

“It appears that many of the topics we see with appeals are covered in the changes. This will be a good support.”

-Member, Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

“This brings clarity and is long, long overdue.”

-Member, Wood Buffalo Pro-Business Advisory Committee

“It looks like there are great changes to support businesses and to make the document easier to read and navigate overall. It has been a long time to get to this point - Great work!”

-Representative, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development & Tourism

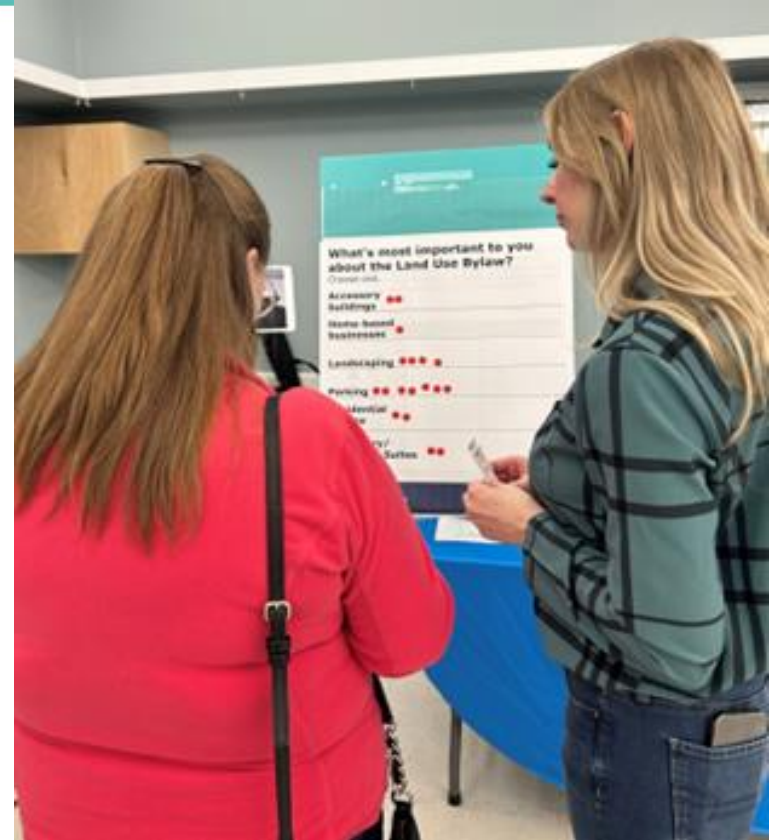
Enforcement: **“Unless there are signs with restrictions, there’s nothing to stop people from parking on the street.”**

-Member, Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee



NEXT STEPS

- Planning and Development Services has reviewed the feedback and updated the proposed Land Use Bylaw.
- It is anticipated that the proposed bylaw will be presented to Council for approval in early 2025.



+Follow the participate.rmwb.ca/LUB project page for updates.

For more information about Council, including the meeting schedule and agendas, visit rmwb.ca/council.



Thank You

For more information on this report email participate@rmwb.ca.



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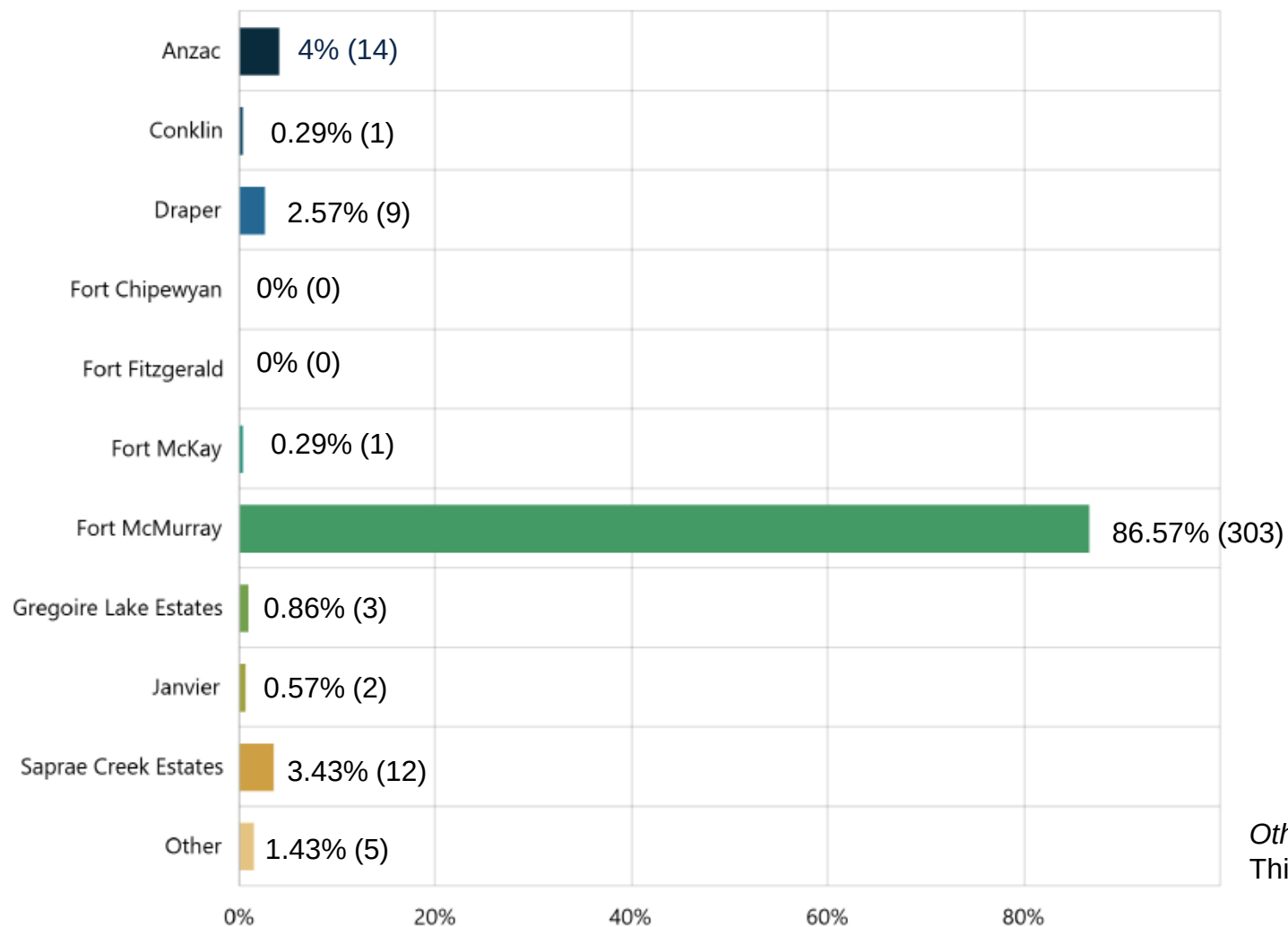
APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESPONSES

(Total: 350 responses)



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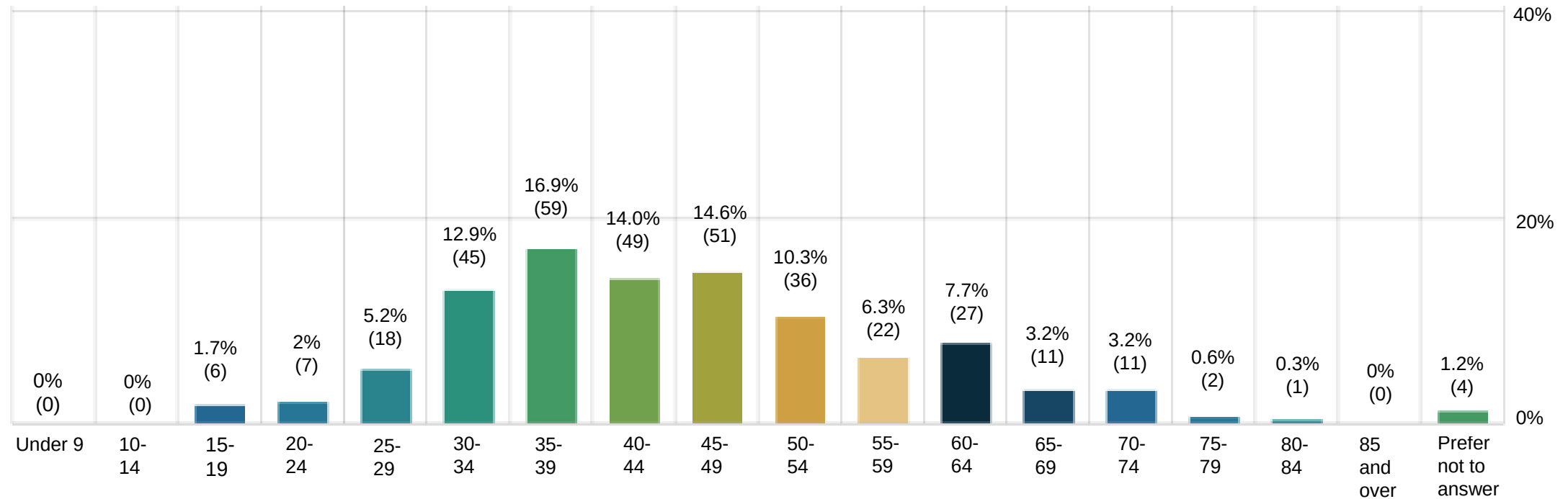
Q.1: Which community do you live in? (Answered: 350)



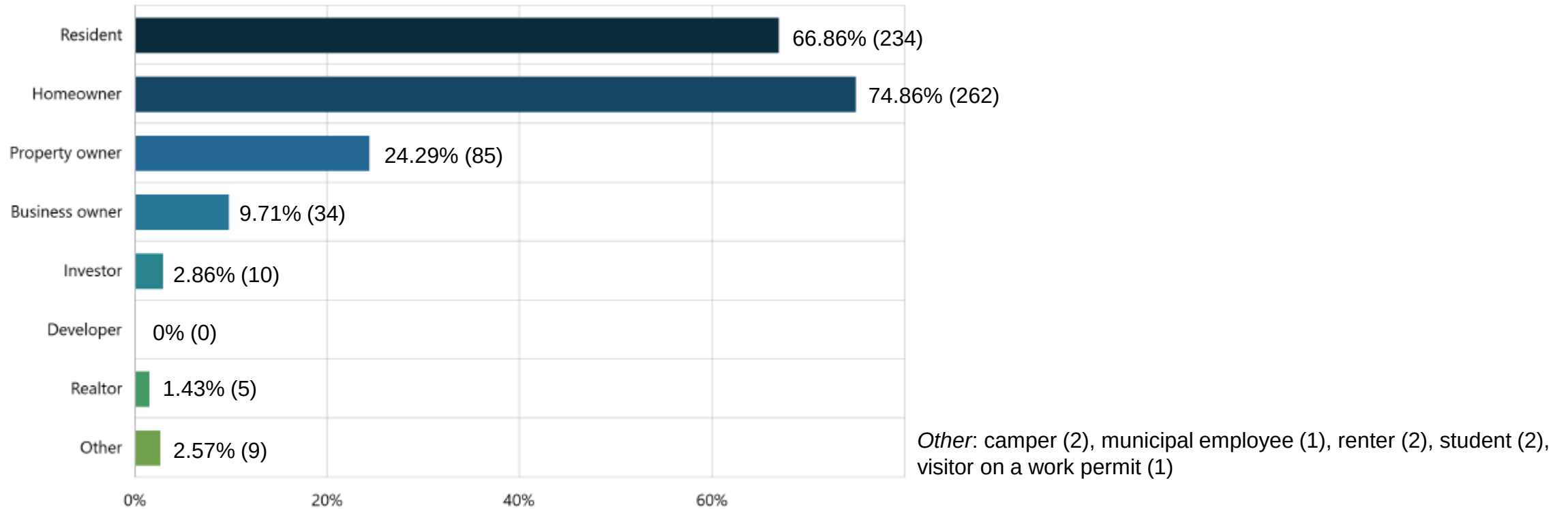
Other: Beacon Hill, Prairie Creek, Rural District, Thickwood, British Columbia



Q.2: Age Group (Answered: 349)

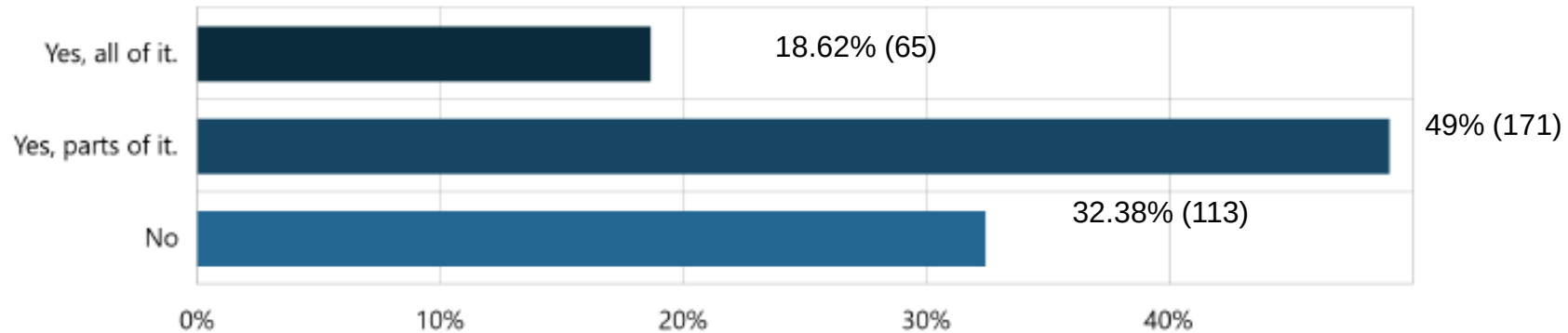


Q.3: I am a...(Please select all that apply) (Answered: 350)

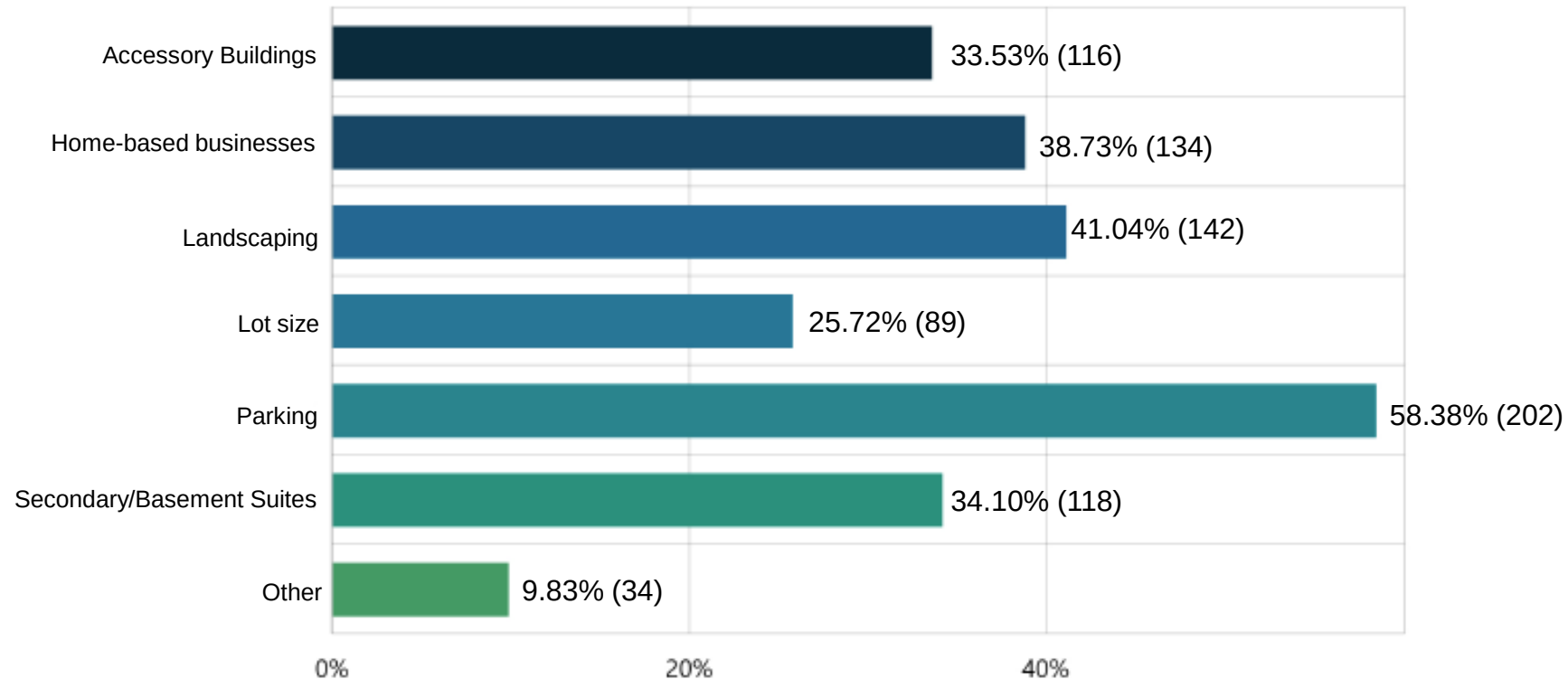


Q.4: Have you read the proposed Land Use Bylaw?

(Answered: 349)



Q.5: What aspects of the updated bylaw are most important to you? You may choose up to three responses. (Answered: 346)



Q.5: What aspects of the updated bylaw are most important to you? You may choose up to three responses. (Answered: Other (34))

Examples of responses

- Residential character in Draper protected
- Zoning (x3)/Residential zoning (x1)
- Signage (x1)/ Portable signs: 180-day clause (x1)
- Campgrounds
- Types of homes allowed to exist on property
- Parking of tractors and recreational vehicles
- Vehicles on lawns
- Livestock and agriculture
- Land use types



Q.6: Do you have any additional feedback about the proposed Land Use Bylaw that you would like to share?

(Answered: 123)

Examples of responses by theme

Parking

- “We need to address on street parking in residential areas where everyone parks on the road. It makes the residential street extremely narrow.”
- “The revised Land Use Bylaw should reflect and enforce that designated and adequate parking be required for home businesses and home/basement rentals. On street parking should not be the answer, nor permitted.”
- “Consider single side of the street parking on narrow streets”
- “I would love people to stop parking on their lawn”

LUB overall

- “The bylaw appears to be comprehensive and clear with definitions and specification requirements.”
- “As usual the RMWB can’t get anything done right.”
- “It all seems straight forward.”
- “Why change something if it isn’t broken....Leave the LUB alone.”
- “As it relates to Draper, looks good.”
- “Love the added flexibility for dwelling units, mandatory bike parking requirements, and added flexibility to remove minimum parking standards.”



Q.6: Do you have any additional feedback about the proposed Land Use Bylaw that you would like to share?

(Answered: 123)

Examples of responses by theme

Home-based businesses

- “Home based businesses are great for both the business owners and the community.”
- “Operators of major home businesses should be allowed to have secondary suites. This flexibility can significantly benefit families by providing additional income streams, supporting local entrepreneurship, housing accessibility, and enhancing the use of residential spaces.”
- “Home occupation/businesses should be allowed customers to pick up door orders without 3 car parking if they aren’t coming inside.”

Secondary/Basement suites

- “When considering secondary suites or increasing ability to have an additional rental space on property, consider available parking in the areas or requiring the lot owner to provide parking. Where parking is on-street increasing available rental suites greatly impacts the available parking for homeowners.”
- “No secondary suites should be allowed...abolish them in most areas. Not necessary anymore.”
- “We’re pleased with the addition of secondary suites like garden suites, loft suites, and detached garden suites. These options provide flexibility and affordable housing solutions.”
- “I like that you’re allowing more types of secondary suites.”



Q.6: Do you have any additional feedback about the proposed Land Use Bylaw that you would like to share? (Answered: 123)

Examples of responses by theme

Enforcement

- “I am concerned that there isn’t enough capacity to enforce the LUB, so people “get away with” all sorts of infractions and they don’t care about the LUB.”
- “Enforce the bylaws or remove them, simple.”
- “Needs to be policed better.”
- “It’s one thing to have a Bylaw in place; quite another when many aspects are consistently not enforced by the Bylaw Services group for whatever reasons individual Community Peace Officers may offer up. And that’s when and if they choose to respond. It is a serious gap that must be addressed.”

Lot sizes

- “I think for fire reasons the space between homes needs to be increased moving forward.”
- “The reduced minimum lot size for new builds is a positive step towards making housing more accessible and affordable for new homeowners.”

Signage

- “The 180-day rule for portable signs is the dumbest thing I have ever read. WHY 180 DAYS?”
- “Business regardless what they think in this city need to update and renovate inside and out. This includes signage.”
- “By applying a 180-day clause on the use of Portable signages you are effectively telling the businesses of Fort McMurray how to advertise. Stay out of the private sector.”



Q.6: Do you have any additional feedback about the proposed Land Use Bylaw that you would like to share? (Answered: 123)

Examples of responses that recommend changes to the draft bylaw

- “Please allow or even require mixed use building in “pedestrian oriented areas” such as downtown. No new building along Main Street or Franklin should be commercial only. If you want an area to be walkable and safe, you need people to live there not drive there.”
- “Should change lot usage percentage and fence height.”
- “Remove 180-day clause for portable signs.”
- “Community maps don’t identify sewage Lagoons and Transfer Stations as Public Service both of these items also require 300 m setbacks. Fort McKay also doesn’t identify the Water Treatment Plant as a Public Service. They are all shown as Urban Expansion.”
- “I would like more precise wording when it comes to driveway access, for example (R1P), if there is a lane in the back, it should state in the bylaw that frontage driveway is not allowed. Often the builders do not know this and design the house with frontage driveway.”
- “The Land Use Bylaw pertaining to Lot sizes & Zoning in Gregoire Lake Estates is flawed. It is labelled as CR and refers to a minimum lot size of 1 ha or 2.47 acres. There are no lots in Gregoire Lake Estates larger than +/- acres or 0.10 ha.”
- “Clarification on if the grandmother house is part of the square footage percentage.”
- “The re-zoning of 234-236 Stoney Mountain Rd. are being zones as C4 Commercial Highway and these are residential condominiums.”



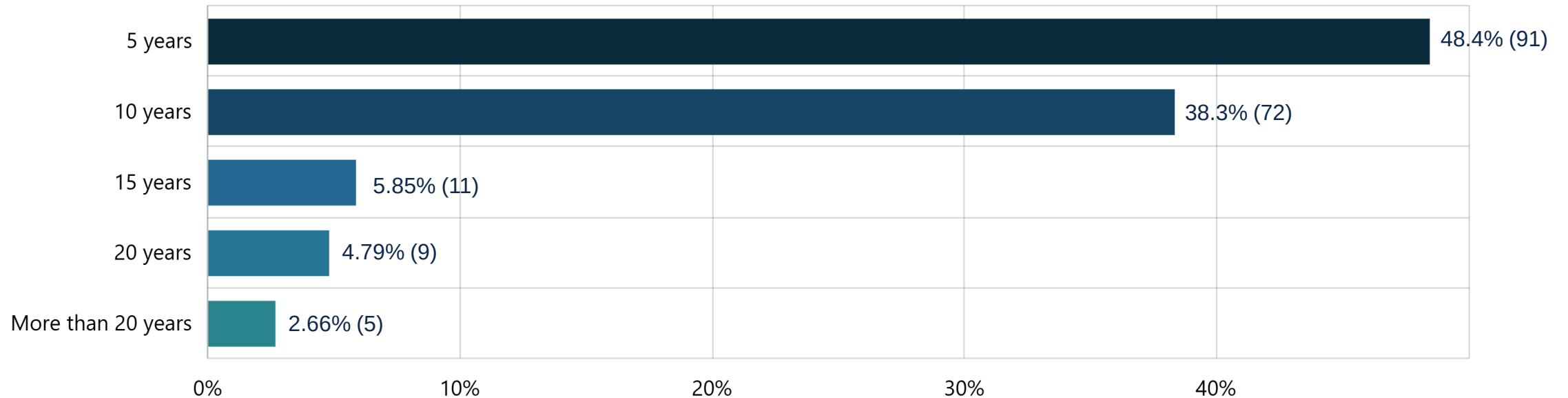
APPENDIX B – Quick Poll

(Total: 188 Responses)



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How often you think the LUB should be updated? (Answered: 188)



APPENDIX C – Dotmocracy

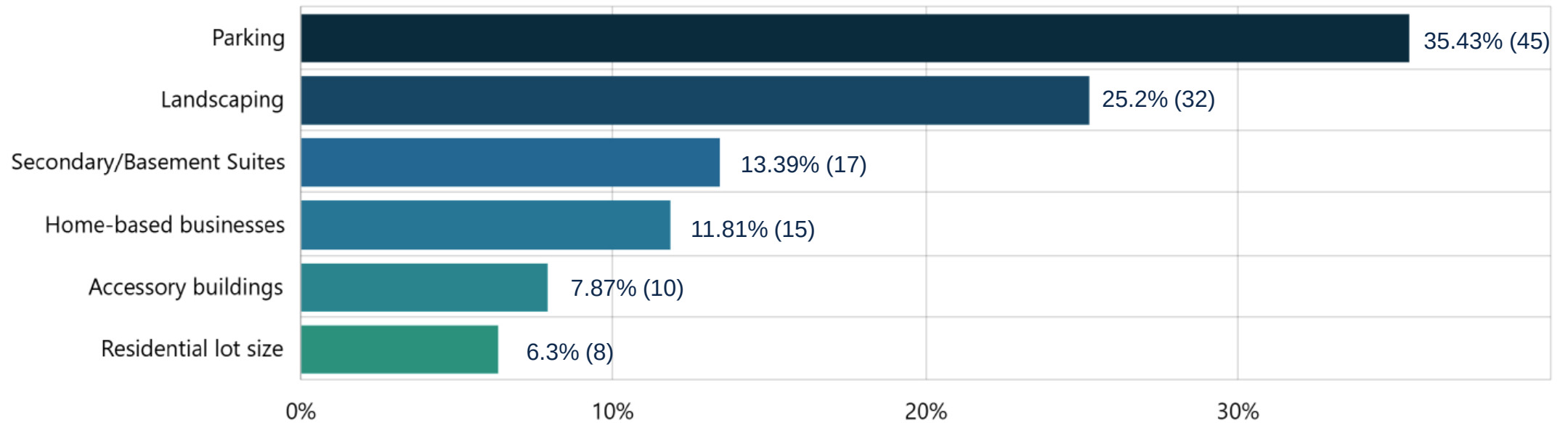
(Total: 127 Responses)



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Dotmocracy

What's most important to you about the Land Use Bylaw?



What We Heard Report: LUB 2024 Engagement



APPENDIX D – Recent What We Heard Reports (related to Land Use Bylaw engagement)



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LATEST ENGAGEMENT REPORTS RELATED TO RECENT LAND USE BYLAW ENGAGEMENT

- What We Heard About Land Use Bylaw Draper Area Structure Plan and the Land Use Bylaw
- What We Heard About Land Use Bylaw Signs: Part 7A, Part 7B, Part 7C
- What We Heard at the Business Engagement and Luncheon

Please note all reports are available at participate.rmwb.ca.

