



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 21, 2017
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Meeting Date: May 3, 2017

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
SUBJECT: Character Home Zoning Review - Report Back and Directions

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a summary of the Character Home Zoning Review and feedback received from the public and stakeholders. It also identifies next steps, which include public consultation prior to referral to Public Hearing on potential zoning amendments to introduce optional incentives for character home retention in RS zones city-wide and draft design guidelines. The proposed incentives include: increased floor area, introduction of new dwelling unit types (i.e. infill and multiple conversion dwelling), unit stratification, and related zoning relaxations. These incentives and associated design guidelines are attached to the report as Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

No zoning changes are recommended for new home construction in RS zones, at this time. The consultation process identified a wide variety of opinions regarding new construction. This included some support for the approaches used elsewhere in the City, and presented as part of the public consultation, to retain character buildings. This approach provides a lower outright floor area (or density) to help manage the scale and fit of new homes. Others raised concerns with the potential impact this could have on property values, and the need for greater housing choices. As a result, this report identifies the need for a broader public discussion on the role of single-family neighbourhoods and other parts of the City, as part of the Housing Vancouver Strategy or other city-wide planning programs. The question of neighbourhood character and potential zoning changes for new construction will be examined through future processes in terms of how and where existing character is maintained, evolves, or transforms in the future.

For Council's information, the administrative bulletin entitled *Heritage and Character Buildings Review - Interim Procedure* has been updated to incorporate revised character merit assessment criteria for use in discretionary zones (RS discretionary zones include RS-5, RS-3, and RS-3A), as provided in Appendix C. The balance of the current interim procedure remains unchanged and will apply until such time as the relevant district schedules are reviewed and updated as part of the Housing Vancouver Strategy or other planning programs.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Heritage Action Plan (December 2013)

Heritage or Character Buildings Review - Interim Procedure (June 2014)

Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion Strategy (June 2014, updated December 2015)

Character Home Zoning Review - Public Consultation Update Presentation (March 2017)

Housing Vancouver Emerging Directions (March 2017)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The Character Home Zoning Review was initiated by Council through the adoption of the Heritage Action Plan as Medium-to Long-term Action #6 in December 2013. This action directed consideration of amendments to RS district schedules (zoning regulations) using RT 3/6/8 district schedules as a model to encourage heritage retention. The purpose of the review was to work with the community to identify ways to encourage retention of character homes in single-family neighbourhoods (RS zones) while also meeting other city goals. Character homes add definition and vibrancy to our neighbourhoods. Tools for their retention can also improve housing choices and help meet Greenest City goals by introducing new dwelling types to established single-family neighbourhoods and rehabilitating these buildings for future generations.

Action #6 was included in the Heritage Action Plan in response to community concern around increasing demolitions, rising land values, compatibility and fit of new homes, and the related erosion of neighbourhood character in single-family areas. There has been a trend of increasing demolitions of high-quality, renovated older homes still suitable for family living, which are often replaced with larger single-family houses. Residential property values have also been rapidly increasing, with approximately a 200% increase city-wide in the last decade. The City has used zoning to manage neighbourhood character retention since the 1970s. This includes HA zoning in Gastown and Chinatown, and RT zoning in Kitsilano (RT-7 and RT-8), Mount Pleasant (RT-6), and Strathcona (RT-3) to mention only a few. RT zoning includes special incentives for character retention, such as more floor area and different dwelling unit choices. Demolition of character homes in RT zones is infrequent and has seen little change in terms of overall numbers of demolitions over the years. Change in RT zones often includes conversion of character homes to multiple units, infill construction, and new construction of multiple units on non-character sites.

The Character Home Zoning Review began by focusing on ideas to encourage the retention of character homes in discretionary zones (RS-5, RS-3 and RS-3A) with several consultation activities held in 2015. The focus of the review expanded in mid-2016 to include all RS zones, due to broad city-wide interest in the issues. A comprehensive public consultation process was held in November 2016 to January 2017.

Options and Ideas Explored

The review looked at a wide range of options to encourage the retention of character homes. Rather than a singular proposal, there were many ideas presented for public consideration and feedback. These included the definition of character homes, location and boundaries for four study areas, zoning options for character home retention and new home construction, regulatory approaches, and other ideas to support retention, such as grant programs. Details on all options and ideas presented for public feedback are included on the information display boards which may be viewed on the project website (www.vancouver.ca/characterhomereview).

One of the most controversial ideas presented was the concept of reducing the allowable floor area for all new home construction in the study areas, regardless of the age of the building being replaced. This idea, often described as ‘down-zoning’, was based on the model used in the City’s RT zones. The intent was two-fold: 1) to create incentives for character home retention; and 2) to modify the size of new single-family homes to improve compatibility and fit in older neighbourhoods where existing character homes tend to be smaller. The economic analysis, conducted by Coriolis Consulting, indicated that the zoning incentives alone would not be sufficient to encourage retention of a character home based on recent market land economics. A summary of the economic analysis conducted is provided in Appendix D.

As the Character Home Zoning Review was directed by Council as part of the Heritage Action Plan with a focus on retention of character homes, the study did not include within its scope ideas for zoning changes that would change the overall intent of the single-family zones, i.e. the introduction of new housing types such as duplex or triplex to increase housing unit density and affordability. These types of zoning changes are typically introduced through community plans or city-wide planning programs that take into consideration population growth and related needs for housing, transportation, parks, public amenities and other factors.

Summary of Public Engagement and Consultation Activities

Public consultation for the Character Home Zoning Review has been multi-faceted, providing the public with a variety of ways to get involved, learn more, and provide their feedback. Staff were assisted in developing and delivering the public engagement process by CitySpaces Consulting. A summary report of the public consultation prepared by CitySpaces is attached as Appendix E. Highlights of the various engagement opportunities during the November 2016 to January 2017 consultation period are summarized below.

Notification

- Over 31,000 notification postcards were mailed out to homes in the study areas.
- Four advertisements were printed in four newspapers (two being Chinese language newspapers).

- Posters were placed in all library branches and community centres.
- Emails were sent to the Heritage Action Plan email notification list which has 930 registrants, approximately 700 of which registered during the Character Home Zoning Review consultation period.
- Ideas were presented through a social media campaign consisting of one Facebook advertisement, seven Facebook posts, and 19 Tweets.

Open Houses and Practitioner Workshop

- Four public open houses were held with over 1,000 attendees in total. All open houses included City staff (including multilingual staff representing eight languages) and consultants to engage with participants on the presented content. Information, ideas, and concerns were shared through one-on-one engagement, informal group discussions, and the interactive activities.
- One Practitioner workshop with 50 architects, designers, home builders and small-scale developers.

Questionnaire

- A questionnaire consisting of multiple choice and open-ended questions related to the proposed options for character home retention was distributed online through Talk Vancouver and as hard-copy at the open houses.
- A total of 3,322 questionnaires were completed between December 3, 2016 and January 15, 2017.
- A full summary of questionnaire responses is attached as Appendix F.

Other Submissions

- The Character Home Zoning Review page on vancouver.ca was viewed approximately 8,400 times during the seven week consultation period.
- Hundreds of written comments were received by post and email.
- Hundreds of conversations were held between City staff and community members during events and meetings, and by telephone.

Previous Consultation (focused on RS-5/3/3A - 2015)

- In addition to the consultation period held in November 2016 through January 2017, previous consultations were held in 2015 on the topic of character home retention as part of the overall Heritage Action Plan.
- The focus area for the 2015 consultation was the RS discretionary zones, specifically RS-5, RS-3, and RS-3A. These consultations included two open houses, an online questionnaire, and a stakeholder workshop.
- Summaries from these consultations can also be found on the project website (www.vancouver.ca/characterhomereview) and the Heritage Action Plan website (www.vancouver.ca/heritageactionplan).

Strategic Analysis

The following provides an overview of the options and ideas presented, summarizes the feedback heard, and identifies proposed directions.

Questionnaire Findings

To help inform the Character Home Zoning Review, the public was invited to complete a questionnaire to share their thoughts and attitudes on ideas to encourage greater retention of character homes. The questionnaire was available online for seven weeks, and hard copies were provided at four public open house events held throughout the city in November and December. The response was tremendous with a total of 3,322 questionnaires completed and over 11,000 responses to open-ended questions. Nearly three-quarters of respondents were property owners, and over half of all respondents lived within the study areas. Respondents were generally older, with more than half reporting they are over 50 years of age. However, a broad range of ages and most age groups were well-represented. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents were long-time residents that have lived in the study areas for over a decade.

Through online and handwritten questionnaire responses, comments included both support and concern about a range of topics related to and beyond the Character Home Zoning Review. An update on the public consultation, including a summary and highlights of the feedback received to date, was presented to Council on March 7, 2017. That presentation is available on the City's website

(<http://council.vancouver.ca/20170307/documents/rr1presentation.pdf>).

The following is a high-level overview of the questionnaire responses. A full summary of the Character Home Zoning Review questionnaire is provided in Appendix F.

Areas of Support

- A large number of respondents (68 percent) felt the City should encourage the retention of character homes and 67 percent agreed with the intent of the floor area options being explored for character home retention.
- There was a high level of agreement (75 percent) with the intent to increase flexibility in zoning to support character home retention with (71 percent) supporting the idea of including broad zoning relaxations, and similarly 75 percent agreed with using design guidelines to help clarify requirements and support renovations.
- The majority of respondents (61 percent) agreed with the criteria and method for evaluating character merit.
- A large number of respondents (67 percent) agreed with exploring the retention of character homes in the identified study areas.
- Other areas supported include the following items:
 - multiple secondary suites (70 percent);
 - multiple conversion dwelling (MCD) (63 percent);
 - stratification of MCD and infill (62 percent); and
 - infill units (61 percent).
- In addition grants for energy retrofits (77 percent) and maintenance (66 percent) and improved permit processing (65 percent) were supported.

Areas of Concern

- At a broad level the affordability of housing choices was identified as the top concern for respondents with over 80 percent expressing concern followed by the limited availability of housing choices (72 percent).

- For character related issues, concerns about property value increases (74 percent), loss of pre-1940 character homes because of demolitions (73 percent), and compatibility and fit of new houses built in older areas (73 percent) received the highest responses.
- Respondents were least concerned about property value decreases in single-family neighbourhoods with only 30 percent expressing concern.
- Overall, the levels of concern were similar between those who own or rent both in the study areas and city-wide with little variation between the different groups.

Areas of Uncertainty

- For a number of questions, responses were mixed indicating areas of uncertainty and/or requiring further review. For example, when asked about the pre-1940 date used to determine character homes, 50 percent agreed and 50 percent were not sure (17 percent) or did not agree (33 percent).
- On the question of limiting floor area for new construction, this was supported by 43 percent while 57 percent were neutral/not sure (32 percent) and disagreed (25 percent).
- Limiting new house construction was supported by 39 percent with 31 percent neutral/not sure and 30 percent disagreeing which indicates a wide range of opinion on this question.

Practitioner Feedback

The Practitioner Workshop was attended by 50 architects, designers, home builders and small-scale developers who have experience in character retention projects in RT zones or retention or new home construction projects in RS discretionary zones. Through a series of small group discussions the practitioners reviewed and provided comments on the technical aspects of options and ideas explored through the review.

Comments received related to concerns with character merit assessment criteria and process, impact of reducing the floor area for new home construction, implications for livability, sustainability, and affordability, as well as feedback on design guidelines and other incentives. A full summary of the workshop notes is included in the CitySpaces summary report included as Appendix E. A high-level summary of comments heard as part of the small group discussions is provided below:

Character Merit Criteria and Process

- Concern surrounding objectivity, consistency, and predictability of character assessments.
- Criteria are not viewed as all being of equal importance, should be weighted
- Some houses that do not meet the criteria could easily be made to meet criteria through renovations.

Character Retention Projects

- Process for approval should be clear, consistent, and timely.
- Some felt incentives being considered are not sufficient to encourage retention, while others believed they would be sufficient, i.e. infill housing that could be strata titled.
- Some felt a broader review of the role of single-family areas is needed to meet housing needs, particularly for middle income earners.

- Design guidelines and regulations can support retention of character but also can limit the design and construction of new forms of character housing.

New Home Construction

- Restricting new homes to 0.5 FSR:
 - Could have negative impacts on quality of construction, livability of new homes, and feasibility of projects.
 - Would discourage the creation of secondary suites.
 - Would not prevent the construction of incompatible single-family houses.
- FSR alone is not to blame for construction that is inconsistent with neighbourhood character.
- If FSR is lowered, higher FSR should be considered if the design is exceptional.

Other Submissions of Public and Stakeholder Group Feedback

Throughout the consultation period and afterwards, staff have received a significant number of phone calls, emails, letters, and other submissions from the public and stakeholder groups on the Character Home Zoning Review. The topic of character retention generally has generated expressions of very disparate and divisive points of view. Strong opinions on all aspects have been expressed by residents of the study areas (including renters and homeowners of both pre-1940 and post-1940 homes), people who do not live in the study areas, planning and design professionals, academics, the media, housing advocacy groups, and heritage and character advocacy groups. There is no consistent viewpoint amongst the submissions received.

Overall, the key themes of the comments received are as follows:

Support for Character and Heritage Retention

- Many people were very supportive of the review and expressed concern about current development trends where an older home is demolished and replaced with a much larger new house which is felt erodes neighbourhood and streetscape character.
- Concerns were expressed about demolitions of substantially sized character homes and recently renovated character homes, with commenters pointing out how this trend seems contrary to the Greenest City Action Plan goals, such as 'zero waste'.

Concerns related to the Housing Crisis

- Criticism and opposition of the review for not including within its scope a broader consideration of single-family zoning to increase housing unit density and improve affordability.
- Comments that reviewing the role of single-family areas should be prioritized over efforts to encourage character retention in single-family neighbourhoods.
- Generally, comments received were not opposed to providing incentives to retain character homes. Rather, many commenters spoke out in opposition to the review because it lacked the inclusion of duplex, triplex and other medium density housing forms as ideas for new home construction.

Ideas for Retention Incentives

- Many comments were received that included ideas for other forms of incentives than presented in the consultation materials. Some of these ideas include:
 - Increase bonus floor area for character retention to more than 0.75 FSR.

- Consider property tax exemptions for character retention.
- Revise the Laneway House Program to include laneway floor area in the total site FSR calculation for non-character homes, but continue to exclude laneway floor area when a character home is retained.
- Improve the renovation permit process for character buildings through the following improvements:
 - Create a specialized process to make it easier, faster and more attractive to retain an older home.
 - Establish an integrated team of planning, permitting and inspection staff for all retention project permit processes.
- Improve flexibility in the Vancouver Building By-law for character building retention through the following improvements:
 - Support greater levels of character retention when a home undergoes a major renovation or converts to a Multiple Conversion Dwelling etc.
 - Improve clarity and identify new alternative compliance equivalencies the Vancouver Building By-law for upgrade requirements to character and heritage buildings.

Ideas for New Home Construction

- Many comments were received with ideas for new home construction:
 - Allow new homes to ‘earn back’ floor area by meeting design guidelines or providing secondary suites.
 - Introduce/update design guidelines to improve compatibility and fit of new homes, i.e. limit ceiling heights, require a minimum roof slope, require authentic building materials, reduce bulk of second storeys etc.
 - Remove design guidelines in discretionary zones to better enable contemporary architecture.
- Some comments were made that rather than downzone all single-family zoned sites in the study areas, the City should inventory all single-family homes in the city (approximately 66,000 homes) to identify heritage homes and ‘let go’ all others to be redeveloped.

Concerns about Property Value Impacts

- Many comments were received from homeowners very concerned about the potential for property value loss. These concerns came from owners of pre-1940 homes who believed measures to encourage retention were punitive, as well as owners of post-1940 homes who did not support reduced floor area for new construction.

Requests for RT Zoning to Improve Neighbourhood Character Retention

- Many comments were received calling for adoption of RT-type zoning in parts of the study areas looked at through the review. Specifically, these comments requested that Council:
 - Adopt conditional RT-model zoning where a retained character home can seek additional FSR, and character home demolition leads to reduced FSR.
 - Add gentle density through retention, laneway homes, additional suites and infill to provide more housing affordability.
 - Promote basement suites in new construction on non-character sites.
 - Implement design guidelines for new construction on non-character sites.
 - Allow conditional FSR for new buildings on non-character sites that follow design guidelines and include secondary suites.

- Increase flexibility in zoning to support character home retention.

Proposed Directions

Pursue Incentives for Character Home Retention City-wide in RS Zoning Districts

Introduce Optional Zoning Incentives

A priority action out of this review is further consultation and technical implementation of character retention incentives into all RS zoning district schedules city-wide. These incentives would be voluntary options for homeowners who wish to pursue them.

Appendix A outlines the potential amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law required to implement the incentives. These draft provisions reflect in technical zoning terms ideas similar to those presented in the information display boards for the November 2016 - January 2017 public consultation. Incentives proposed for consideration include increased floor area, new dwelling unit types such as infill and multiple conversion dwelling, stratification, and related zoning relaxations.

Staff will consult with the public on these draft zoning provisions and make refinements prior to recommending specific zoning amendments to Council. Also as part of this next phase of work staff will assess and report back on the feasibility of increasing the amount of floor area incentive to improve attractiveness of retention over new home construction. Staff will also explore and consult on alternative floor area incentives for the RS-3 and RS-3A zones. These zones have a different approach to calculating allowable floor area than other RS zones so require a unique approach (they include an above-grade floor area limit and exclude basement floor area).

Also provided in Appendix B are draft design guidelines. These draft guidelines are intended to support the new development opportunities enabled by the zoning incentives described in Appendix A. They are based on existing design guidelines typically found in zones where similar incentives are provided, such as the opportunity to build infill buildings in RT zones and laneway houses in RS zones.

The draft design guidelines in Appendix B also include revised character merit criteria. Staff propose the criteria be revised to reflect public and professional feedback as follows: emphasize original building form and massing, streamline the period detail criteria, and add a streetscape context criterion. As part of these criteria, staff also propose that homes built in, or after, 1940 that possess particular architectural merit and retain original and distinctive character features be considered for possible character merit status and qualify for character retention incentives at the owner's request.

Staff will seek public and professional input on the draft design guidelines and will bring forward refinements when recommended zoning amendments are tabled for Council's consideration.

No Changes to RS Zoning for New Construction

No zoning changes are recommended for new home construction in RS zones (i.e. no 'down zoning'), at this time. The consultation process identified a variety of opinions regarding new

construction. This included some support for the approaches used to retain character buildings elsewhere in the city (i.e. in RT zones) presented as part of the public consultation. This approach provides both a lower outright floor area to help manage the scale and fit of new homes, and a higher outright floor area as an incentive to encourage retention of character buildings. There are several key reasons why staff do not recommend that existing maximum RS floor area (density) be reduced, at this time.

Firstly, there is no consensus regarding reducing the floor area for new construction. While the questionnaire results showed support for the City taking action to encourage retention of character homes (68 percent), increasing flexibility in zoning to retain character homes (75 percent), and decreasing floor area to better manage scale and fit of new homes (59 percent), less than half of the respondents agreed with the specific amounts of reduced floor area identified in the study (39-43 percent). Homeowner respondents were also concerned about property value decreases (40 percent of all homeowners in the study areas were either concerned or very concerned, with 45 percent in the Southwest study area). In addition, concerns about property value impacts were expressed to staff and Council in many of the other submissions. Many written submissions were from people concerned that the zoning changes for new construction could result in a market-wide negative impact on property values.

Secondly, there were the recent policy changes from all levels of government intended to help stabilize the housing market. A new Foreign Purchaser Tax, mortgage rule changes, and a new Empty Homes Tax were all introduced during the Character Home Zoning Review. These changes could potentially compound the public's concern about the housing market. Staff note that as the full impact of these policy changes are not yet known, zoning changes that limit all new construction could add further uncertainty and volatility to the single-family market.

Thirdly, there are significant time and resources implications associated with a new RS zone that involves both reducing and increasing allowable floor area. The work would involve developing new, custom district schedules and design guidelines informed by, but not fully replicating, the RT (two-family) zoning model. Based on the consultation to date, staff anticipate that this approach would be highly contentious and require significant public consultation. The proposed incentive-only approach is expected to have broader support and is less complex to introduce and administer within existing RS zoning district schedules.

Finally, there is a need for a broader public discussion to be held on the role of single-family neighbourhoods and other parts of the City, as part of the Housing Vancouver Strategy and future city-wide planning programs. One outcome of the Character Home Zoning Review and the Housing Vancouver Strategy could be the partial conversion of RS zones into new 'RT-like' or even 'RM-like' (multi-family) zones with character retention objectives. However, at this point the Character Home Zoning Review did not explore the ability to build new multi-family dwellings on non-character sites in single-family zones. These larger questions of neighbourhood character and potential zoning changes for new construction should be part of broader scale study and consultation on the future of the city's low-density neighbourhoods.

Potential Outcomes of the Incentives-Only Approach

Staff expect that introducing incentives for character retention alone may not result in a significant change to current development trends in single-family zones. Independent

economic analysis has shown incentives alone are not likely sufficient to curb demolitions under recent market conditions. The analysis indicates that recalibration (or reducing) the floor area for new construction, as exists in our RT zones, is likely required to bring about wide-spread retention. While the new incentives may provide some change in behaviour (as well as new housing opportunities), there will continue to be character homes demolished and rebuilt with new, larger homes.

There are over 15,000 pre-1940 homes in RS zones city-wide. Conservative estimates indicate that approximately 80 percent of pre-1940 homes possess character merit indicating that approximately 12,000 homes in the RS zones may qualify for the proposed retention incentives. At this stage it is difficult to estimate how many homeowners would pursue the character incentives, or how many additional dwelling units might be created. Based on the last two years (2015/2016) the annual development in RS zones has seen 300-400 new single-family homes, 800-850 new single-family homes with a suite, and over 500 laneway units. With the character incentives, the potential exists for hundreds of new units to be added as additional suites and laneway homes (including possible strata laneway/infill homes) as part of a character home retention project.

If the character zoning incentives are adopted by Council, staff will likely recommend a trial period for report back after 2 years. This timeframe allows homeowners to become aware of the opportunities, and to submit and receive permits that utilize the new incentives. Staff will provide Council with an update on the number of character homes retained and demolished, and for those retained which incentives were pursued and how many new dwelling units were created. This timeframe also enables work arising from the Housing Vancouver Strategy to advance, so a better understanding of what income brackets and family types are served by the character retention approach should also be available.

Next Steps for Implementation of Incentives

Staff will begin public consultation as soon as possible and will aim to return to Council with proposed amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law and recommended design guidelines in mid-2017. The intent is to coordinate this consultation with the next phase of the Housing Vancouver Strategy. By making the incentives available in the zoning as quickly as possible, character home owners across the city will soon have new, optional opportunities that support the retention of their homes.

Through the Heritage Action Plan, ideas around additional supports for character and heritage buildings, such as grant programs and improved permit processing, will also continue to be explored.

As discussed above, staff will not pursue changes to RS zoning for new home construction as part of the Character Home Zoning Review. Instead, these ideas will be incorporated into the Housing Vancouver Strategy (as adopted in-principle March 29, 2017), or other city-wide planning programs. The Housing Vancouver Strategy will engage the public on ideas to create new types of affordable homes across the city.

Update the Interim Procedure Character Merit Checklist for Discretionary Zones

This report provides revisions to the current Administrative Bulletin entitled *Heritage or Character Buildings Review - Interim Procedure for Discretionary Zones*, to incorporate the

revised character merit criteria described above. These revisions are outlined generally in Appendix C. This interim procedure was adopted in June 2014 as part of the Heritage Action Plan to require review of pre-1940 character merit for all buildings where conditional zoning benefits are available but design guidelines do not include character criteria.

In the single-family zones, this procedure is applied only to RS-5, RS-3, and RS-3A. If a home is deemed to have character merit it can access the conditional or discretionary bonus density in zoning if it is retained. However, if it is demolished, it is limited to the outright density, which is the same outright amount allowed in most other RS zones such as RS-1. Sites that do not have a character home will also be able to access the discretionary bonus density if they meet the applicable design guidelines.

Implications

Applications in Process

There are no implications to applications in process with this report. Should Council support zoning incentives, new opportunities for character retention may be introduced into zoning pending further public consultation and Council decisions. Owners of character homes in RS zones may be interested in pursuing these future options but retention of a character home will not be required as part of this phase of work.

Environmental

Vancouver Building Bylaw

Earlier this year Council approved amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law to improve the energy efficiency of multi-family buildings up to six storeys. At that time Council requested a report back on approaches for heritage and character buildings to simplify energy efficiency requirements based on the principle that the existing condition of the heritage/character building cannot be made worse by the proposed work. Staff have consulted with the Vancouver Heritage Foundation on possible improvements to the requirements, and will be reporting back before the end of June with recommendations.

Green Demolition By-law

The Green Demolition By-law (approved 2014) applies to all pre-1940 one- and two-family dwellings. It requires reuse/recycling of demolition waste as follows:

- *Houses built before 1940:*
 - 75 percent of materials by weight, excluding hazardous waste, and;
- *Houses built before 1940 and deemed to have character merit by the City:*
 - 90 percent of materials by weight, excluding hazardous materials.

On December 16, 2015, Council approved a report that recommended amending the Green Demolition By-law to provide greater incentives for deconstruction and reuse of materials. These incentives include earlier demolition permits for deconstruction projects and additional weight credits for salvaged materials. Council also approved in principle an expansion of the bylaw to newer homes, to be done incrementally over time. The by-law amendments to include pre-1950 homes will be brought forward for Council consideration in late Summer or early Fall.

Heritage Energy Retrofit Program

Beginning in 2015, the City has provided funds and support to the Vancouver Heritage Foundation, partnered with City Green Solutions, to develop a grant program for homeowners of heritage and pre-1940 buildings undertaking energy efficiency upgrades. The grants provide an incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The first (pilot) year of the program saw ten homes completed with an average greenhouse gas reduction of 2.07 tonnes. The program was renewed and expanded in November 2016 for two more years and recently received a 2017 Heritage BC *Award of Recognition for Heritage Planning & Management*.

Zoning Changes through Approved Community Plans

In addition to the review of character homes in RS zones as part of the Heritage Action Plan, there are planning programs underway in Grandview-Woodland and Mount Pleasant to implement zoning amendments to encourage character home retention and expand opportunities for new forms of housing. Both neighbourhoods have approved community plans that include this direction, thus these concurrent planning programs are not impacted by this report.

CONCLUSION

The Character Home Zoning Review examined ways to encourage greater retention of character homes in Vancouver's single-family neighbourhoods. The options and ideas explored stimulated significant interest and generated thousands of responses from the public. In parallel to the review, there was also increasing public attention and concern about housing issues, particularly housing affordability for middle-income earners and young families as this demographic group has become priced out of the city's single-family neighbourhoods, the focus area for the Character Home Zoning Review.

As a result, this report identifies directions for further exploration of optional zoning incentives for character home retention in all RS zones city-wide, however no changes are proposed to new home construction in RS zones as part of this report. Next steps include additional public consultation on the potential zoning amendments and the draft design guidelines needed to implement zoning incentives for character home retention.

The administrative bulletin entitled *Heritage and Character Buildings Review – Interim Procedure* has also been updated to incorporate revised character merit assessment criteria for use in discretionary zones. The balance of the current interim procedure remains unchanged and will apply until such time as the relevant district schedules are reviewed and updated as part of the Housing Vancouver Strategy or other planning processes.

With new and urgent direction from Council to address other objectives in our low-density neighbourhoods, including housing diversity and housing affordability, broader discussion on the role of single-family areas and neighbourhood character are better addressed in larger housing and city planning discussions, such as the Vancouver Housing Strategy.

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POTENTIAL ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT BY-LAW AMENDMENTS FOR RS ZONES:

FOR ADDITION TO RS DISTRICT SCHEDULES:

Intent

- (a) To encourage the retention and renovation of existing buildings with confirmed character merit that maintain an architectural style and building form consistent with the historical character of the area.

Conditional Approval Uses

- 1) *Infill* which means a building of one to two dwelling units on a site already containing one or more existing buildings some or all of which are retained;
- 2) *Multiple Conversion Dwelling* resulting from the conversion of an existing building provided that:
 - a) before making a decision, the Director of Planning shall assess and confirm the character merit of the existing building, and shall consider the quality and livability of the resulting units, the suitability of the building for conversion in terms of size and condition, and the effect of the conversion on adjacent properties and the character of the area;
 - b) building additions shall be in keeping with the character of the building where they are visible from the street; and,
 - c) no housekeeping or sleeping units shall be created.

Regulations

- 3) *Floor Space Ratio*
 - a) The Director of Planning may approve an increase in maximum floor area for multiple conversion dwellings, infill, or one-family dwellings to 0.75 FSR when an existing building with confirmed character merit is retained, provided that consideration is given to the intent of the schedule and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

Note: The RS-3 and RS-3A zones require a different approach to calculation of floor area incentives for character home retention, due to the current formula used to calculate floor area in these zones reflecting the predominantly larger sized lots. Further study is underway to determine an approach to floor area incentives.

Relaxation of Regulations

- 4) The Director of Planning may relax the above-grade floor area, site coverage, yard, building depth, and related provisions when an existing building with confirmed character merit is retained if the Director of Planning first considers the effect on neighbouring properties, and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the RS District Schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law and pertain to the conditional uses of Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling, associated with the retention of a character house.

Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling may be permitted to encourage retention of existing character houses, and provide additional housing choices.

The intent of the guidelines is to ensure that:

- (a) renovations and additions to existing character houses maintain a form and character consistent with the original house; and,
- (b) infill and conversion developments are compatible with adjacent properties and provide a good fit with the overall neighbourhood.

The guidelines will be used to:

- (a) assist owners and applicants in designing developments; and,
- (b) provide a basis on which City staff evaluate projects for approval of the conditional uses of Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling and discretionary variations in regulations.

2 General

(a) Character House Criteria

Character houses are defined as those built before 1940 that maintain significant elements of their original character. An assessment is required to determine if a house is considered to have character merit and a candidate for discretionary incentives in zoning, including Infill or Multiple Conversion Dwelling.

The following are the minimum requirements for character merit:

A. Must have:

- i. *Original massing and primary roof form* - Alterations/additions that are subsidiary to the original massing and primary roof form, such as dormers, are not considered to have altered the character of the house.

B. Plus any four of the following:

- i. *Entry* - Original open front porch or veranda, or only partially filled in, or other original entry feature.
- ii. *Cladding* - Original cladding or replacement cladding consistent with pre-1940.

- iii. *Window Openings* - Original location, size and shape (50% or more). The windows themselves may not be original.
- iv. *Period Details* - Two or more period details such as fascia, window casing or trim, eave brackets, soffits, exposed beam or joist ends, half-timbering, decorative shingling, porch columns, original wood doors, entry transom/sidelights, decorative or feature windows (special shapes, bay windows, crafted/leaded glass), brick or stone chimneys, piers or foundations, secondary porch, turrets, etc.
- v. *Streetscape Context* - The house is part of a context of 2 or more character houses.

Pre-1940s buildings which have been too altered to qualify as character houses may be considered for infill and/or conversion if character elements are restored as part of a development proposal.

In special cases, a house built in or after 1940 that has particular architectural merit and retains original and distinctive character features may be considered a character house. In these cases, retention incentives in zoning, including infill and/or conversion, may be supported on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Director of Planning.

(b) Level of Character House Retention Required

To be considered for infill or conversion, the existing character house must be retained and restored in-keeping with its original character. An assessment of the existing condition of the building will be undertaken and will inform the amount of restoration required. Minimum expectations regarding the level of retention required in a character house undergoing major renovations and seeking conditional benefits in zoning are outlined in the Zoning By-Law Administrative Bulletin: *Retention and Renovation of Character Merit Buildings - Scope and Documentation* (<http://bylaws.vancouver.ca/bulletin/R021.pdf>).

3 Uses

(a) Multiple Conversion Dwelling

Multiple Conversion Dwelling is the conversion of an existing character house to contain more than one dwelling unit.

In considering development permit applications for multiple conversion dwellings, the following factors will be taken into account:

- (i) quality and livability of the resulting units;
- (ii) suitability of the building for conversion in terms of age and size;
- (iii) effect of the conversion on adjacent properties; and
- (iv) effect of the conversion on the form and character of the existing house.

Additions may be permitted. While there is no set limit to the size of additions, it is noted that the addition should be in-keeping with the form and character of the existing house. The maximum floor space ratio of 0.75 FSR may not be fully achievable for sites

where the existing house is quite small. In those cases, infill may be a more suitable option.

Additions that project into rear yards beyond neighbouring buildings should be designed to minimize impact. New windows and balconies or decks should be carefully positioned to ensure privacy, and portions of the building that project beyond neighbouring buildings may step down in height to reduce their impact on adjacent properties.

(b) Infill

Infill may be permitted as an incentive to retain existing character houses by allowing the construction of a second residential building in the rear yard on sites with a developed lane. In certain cases where there is no lane access, such as large sites where there is a consistent pattern on the block of vehicular access from the street, rear yard infill may be considered.

To facilitate the provision of infill, relocation of the existing house may be considered with due regard to the zoning regulations for front and rear yards, provided significant features such as stone foundations and pillars will not be jeopardized.

The Director of Planning may consider front or side yard infill buildings on large sites on a case by case basis, where doing so would not detract from the prevailing streetscape pattern of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Infill will be subject to a condition that the existing house on the site cannot be demolished without the approval of the Director of Planning.

The following guidelines are intended to ensure a modest, neighbourly scale for the new infill building.

a. Floor Space Ratio (FSR)

The infill should not exceed 0.20 FSR.

b. Yards, Separation and Building Width

The minimum side yard should be 1.2 m (4 feet).

The minimum rear yard setback should be 0.9 m (3 feet).

There should be a minimum separation of 4.9 m (16 feet) between the existing building and the infill building.

The maximum width of rear yard infill and accessory building should not exceed 80 percent of site width.

c. Site Coverage

The maximum site coverage is 45% of the site area.

d. Height

Infill height is limited to one and a partial upper storey. Designs that approach the appearance or impact of a full two-storey expression should be avoided. The permitted height will be related to the proposed roof form as follows:

i. Pitched roofs

The partial upper storey should be contained within a simple, steeply pitched primary roof form of a minimum pitch of 7:12, although secondary roof forms may be provided as outlined below (Dormers).

The height is limited to 7.7 m (25 feet) to the ridge of a roof with a minimum pitch of 7:12.

The spring height should be no more than 0.60 m (2 feet) above the 2nd floor level.

ii. Dormers

Dormer roof slopes should generally not be less than 3:12.

Dormer walls should be set in a minimum of two feet from the wall below and from adjacent walls (end gables) where possible.

The eave height of dormer roofs should be as low as practical to reduce the perceived scale of the partial upper storey.

On a roof where the ridge runs across the property:

- The largest dormer(s) should face the lane, and should not exceed 60% of the width of the partial upper storey.
- Dormers facing the character house should not exceed 35% of the width of the partial upper storey.

On a roof with gable ends facing the lane:

- Dormers facing a required side-yard should not exceed 50% of the building length.

iii. Flat roofs, shed roofs and roof pitches less than 7:12

On flat, shed or shallow pitched roof infill buildings, more design care is necessary to minimize the appearance of a two-storey building, and to avoid privacy issues with upper-level decks. Tallest elements and upper level floor space should be located adjacent to the lane, and/or centrally located on the site on larger lots.

The height is limited to 5.5 m (18 feet) to the highest point of a roof with a pitch less than 3:12; or 5.8 m (19 feet) to the highest point of a shed, arched, butterfly roof, or any sloping roof with a minimum pitch of 3:12 but less than 7:12.

A flat, shed, or shallow pitched roof infill building should have an area of lower height adjacent to the backyard. The second storey should be set back 1.5 m (4.9 ft.) from the exterior face of the main floor below, facing the principal

residence. Projections may be allowed into this area provided they do not exceed 30% of the width of the building and are located to minimize shadowing on adjacent sites.

3 Quality, Durability and Expression

Conversion and infill projects should be designed to be lasting, quality additions to neighbourhoods. Changes to existing character houses should maintain their original form and character, and additions should be compatible. A variety of architectural styles may be considered for infill development, so that neighbourhoods may continue to evolve, but in a way that respects the character of existing buildings and streetscapes.

4 Green Roofs

Green roofs on infill buildings are encouraged to improve environmental performance and to provide an amenable outlook from upper levels of neighbouring houses.

5 Balconies and Deck

Balconies at infill buildings should be located facing the lane on mid-block lots, or facing the lane and/or the flanking street on a corner lots. Upper level roof decks are not permitted for infill buildings.

6 Access to Dwelling Units - Vancouver Building By-Law

Access to the dwelling unit in the rear yard infill building is provided via the side yard adjacent the existing building. The path may also provide access to dwelling units located within the existing building. The width of the path is related to the number of units served by the path and must meet Vancouver Building By-law fire fighter access requirements as follows:

Access to one dwelling unit:	0.90 m (3 feet)
Access to two dwelling units:	1.2 m (4 feet)
Access to more than two dwelling units:	2 m (6.56 feet)

7 Dwelling Unit Density

For the overall site, the dwelling unit density should be 74 units per hectare.

Where the calculation of dwelling units per hectare results in a fractional number, in which case, the nearest whole number shall be taken and one-half shall be rounded up to the next nearest whole number.

The dwelling unit density will generally allow 3 units on a standard 33 foot wide lot and 4 units on a standard 50 foot wide lot.

8 Parking

One parking space per unit is typically required. The Director of Planning may consider a lesser number of parking space where warranted due to site constraints. One parking space contained within the infill building may be excluded from floor area.

9 Garbage and Recycling

Garbage and recycling should be provided onsite with a designated storage area that is located along a common pathway, accessible to all units on the lot and screened from private patio areas and the lane frontage.

10 Landscape

The landscape design should enhance the experience of the lane, improve the environmental performance of the property, provide sufficient outdoor amenity space for dwelling units on the site, and assist with the creation of privacy for the dwelling units on site and for neighbours.

(c) Tree Protection and Retention

The Protection of Trees By-law applies to all trees on private property, and includes requirements for the retention and replacement of trees on the development site, and protection of trees nearby on neighbouring sites. In accordance with the provisions of this by-law, applicants may be required to submit an arborist's report.

Infill should be located and designed to preserve existing trees where possible. The Director of Planning may require the retention of a significant tree. The Director of Planning may relax the regulations regarding infill location, and the required number of parking stalls to accomplish this. Alternately, sites may not be considered suitable for infill if significant tree removal is required.

(d) Useable Open Space

Semi-private or shared outdoor areas should be provided at grade, adjacent to and convenient for each dwelling unit. The amount of open space provided should be functional and should relate to the size of the dwelling unit. Where the rear yard is limited in size, a usable upper level deck with a minimum depth of 1.5 m (5.0 ft.) may meet the intent of the guidelines for private outdoor space.

(e) Lane Frontage

The 0.9 m (3.0 ft.) minimum setback between an infill building and the lane should be permeable and landscaped where not required for vehicle access. Planted areas that face the lane are intended to expand the public realm and should not be blocked from view by private fencing. Fencing, where desired, should be set back from the property line to enhance the prominence of the planting. Where possible, plants should be located at grade in contiguous soil, i.e. avoiding planter boxes. Hose bibs should be located near lane edge planting.

Character Checklist Updates to the Zoning By-Law Administrative Bulletin - *Heritage or Character Buildings Review - Interim Procedure*

Outlined below are updates that will be made to the Zoning By-Law Administrative Bulletin - *Heritage or Character Buildings Review - Interim Procedure* (<http://bylaws.vancouver.ca/BULLETIN/H006.pdf>).

This interim procedure is applicable only to homes built pre-1940 in RS zones with discretionary zoning (RS-5, RS-3, RS-3A) and other discretionary zones that do not currently have character merit criteria. The balance of Interim Procedure shall remain the same.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

1. STRIKE from the Administrative Bulletin:

Character Checklist for pre-1940 houses (4 or more required):

- Original massing and roof form
- Original open front porch or veranda, or only partially filled in
- Original cladding or replacement cladding consistent with 1940
- Period windows (50% or more), with original location, size and shape
- Original casings or trim (50% or more) such as around windows and doors
- Period details or decorative elements (2 or more of brackets, beams, joist ends, etc.)
- Other period features (porch, roof, foundation, etc.)

2. AND REPLACE WITH the following:

Character Merit Checklist for Pre-1940 Houses

A. Must have:

- i. *Original massing and primary roof form* - Alterations/additions that are subsidiary to the original massing and primary roof form, such as dormers, are not considered to have altered the character of the house.

B. Plus any four of the following:

- i. *Entry* - Original open front porch or veranda, or only partially filled in, or other original entry feature.
- ii. *Cladding* - Original cladding or replacement cladding consistent with pre-1940.
- iii. *Window Openings* - Original location, size and shape (50% or more). The windows themselves may not be original.
- iv. *Period Details* - Two or more period details such as fascia, window casing or trim, eave brackets, soffits, exposed beam or joist ends, half-timbering, decorative shingling, porch columns, original wood doors, entry transom/sidelights, decorative or feature windows (special shapes, bay

windows, crafted/leaded glass), brick or stone chimneys, piers or foundations, secondary porch, turrets, etc.

- v. ***Streetscape Context*** - The house is part of a context of 2 or more character houses.

Special Consideration for Severely Altered Houses or Houses Build in or after 1940
Pre-1940s buildings which have been severely altered and do not qualify as character houses may be considered for conditional zoning provisions if character elements are restored as part of a development proposal.

In addition, a house built in or after 1940 that has particular architectural merit and retains original and distinctive character features may be considered on a case by case basis for qualification as a character house. In these special cases, conditional zoning provisions may be supported at the discretion of the Director of Planning.



Background and Scope

The City of Vancouver is considering ways to encourage (but not require) the retention of character and Heritage homes in older single-family neighbourhoods.

The City developed a list of possible changes to the RS-5 zoning regulations (which mainly apply to Dunbar, Kerrisdale, and Second Shaughnessy) and asked Coriolis Consulting Corp. to analyze the financial impacts of these changes and to comment on whether the findings are applicable to other parts of the City that have a large stock of character houses (including Cambie Village, Hastings Sunrise, Kensington Cedar Cottage, Riley Park, Third Shaughnessy, Upper Kitsilano, and West Point Grey).

The existing conditions (e.g. lot size, existing house size, condition of existing house, siting of existing house) for un-renovated, pre-1940s houses on RS zoned lots in the character zoning review focus areas vary significantly, so we used illustrative examples to test whether each change being considered would have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on the decision to demolish and build new versus retain and renovate.

Our detailed analysis is documented in a report dated October 2016 entitled, "Economic Analysis of Possible Changes to RS-5 Zoning Regulations to Encourage Retention of Pre-1940s Character Houses." Readers interested in the detailed analysis should contact the City of Vancouver.

Zoning Changes Being Considered by the City

The existing maximum density and allowable forms of housing in the RS-5 zone and the changes being considered by the City are summarized in the table on the following page.

The table distinguishes between what is permitted and what is being contemplated under three circumstances for RS-5 zoned properties:

- Demolishing an existing house and replacing it with a new house.
- Retaining a pre-1940 house with character merit and renovating it to a "character" standard (i.e. projects that maintain the existing external architectural character but are not required to use specific materials and are not legally protected).
- Retaining a pre-1940 house with character merit and renovating it to a "Heritage" standard (i.e. projects with a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, heritage designation, or covenants where the owner agrees to restore, preserve, and protect the building and/or specific heritage features and is required to meet a high standard of conservation).

Existing Maximum Density and Allowable Forms of Housing in the RS-5 Zone and Possible Changes Tested

	Maximum Density		Housing Forms Permitted in Addition to Single Family Dwelling	
	Existing	Scenarios Tested	Existing	Scenarios Tested
Demolish existing house and build new	0.7 FSR	0.6 or 0.5 FSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary suite • Rental laneway house 	Same as existing regulations
Retain/renovate existing pre-1940 house to a "character" standard	0.7 FSR	0.7 or 0.75 FSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary suite • Rental laneway house 	Same as existing regulations plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill dwelling (for personal use or stratified) or • Multiple Conversion Dwelling ("MCD") with 2 units or • MCD with 2 units and an infill dwelling unit
Retain/renovate existing pre-1940 house to a "Heritage" standard	0.7 FSR	0.7 or 0.83 FSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary suite • Rental laneway house 	Same as existing regulations plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCD with 2 units and an infill dwelling unit

Notes about terminology: FSR (Floor Space Ratio) is the amount of floorspace that can be built on a lot expressed as a ratio of the lot area. Under the existing regulations, the outright maximum density for both new houses and retention/renovation projects in the RS-5 zone is 0.6 FSR but this can be increased to 0.7 FSR at the discretion of the Director of Planning based on specific considerations and adopted guidelines. FSR includes the floorspace in a secondary suite or infill dwelling but the floorspace in a rental laneway house is in addition. A Multiple Conversion Dwelling ("MCD") is a strata titled project with townhouses or apartments in a conversion of the former single family dwelling.

The City does not necessarily plan to implement all of the possible changes, so the economic analysis evaluated the potential financial impact of each proposed change independently and then considered whether each change (or a combination) might reduce the number of pre-1940 houses that will be at risk of demolition.

Increasing density or allowing additional forms of housing for retention/renovation projects are possible incentives for retention of character and Heritage houses, but restricting new houses to a lower maximum density than renovation/expansion projects (i.e. 0.6 FSR or 0.5 FSR) would be a disincentive for demolishing a pre-1940 house and replacing it with a new house. The City's objectives in restricting new houses to a lower maximum density than renovation/retention projects would be to increase the financial difference between building new and retention/renovation (thereby creating more of an incentive for renovation) and to improve the relationship of new houses to the neighbourhood in character areas.

Summary of Findings

1. Retaining a pre-1940 house that would otherwise have been demolished and replaced can result in additional construction cost, as renovation is often more expensive than new construction. For houses that require extensive renovation to create an updated residence the cost premium is significant. For houses that need only partial or cosmetic renovation to produce an updated residence, renovation is less expensive than demolition/replacement although this can involve compromises in floor plan, room sizes, and other house features.
2. Providing an incentive in the form of a small increase in the maximum allowable floor area for a character house retention is, on its own, not likely to create enough financial incentive for retention over demolition/build new for most projects involving extensive renovation.
3. Providing an incentive in the form of allowing new types of units on the lot (such as an infill dwelling unit or stratified main house) does not generate enough new value to offset the renovation cost premium and create a financial incentive for retention of houses that require extensive renovation of the whole house.
4. Even the combination of a small increase in density and the ability to accommodate new unit types is not enough to offset the cost premium of a full renovation of a house that would otherwise have been demolished/replaced and create a material financial incentive for retention/renovation.

-
5. To tip the balance more in favour of retaining pre-1940 character houses, it is necessary to offer incentives (extra density and additional unit types) and to also reduce the maximum floor area that can be achieved in construction of a new house. The City is considering reducing the density achievable in a new build to 0.5 or 0.6 FSR. This disincentive to demolish coupled with the incentives to retain is likely to result in more retentions of pre-1940 character houses.
 6. The overall impact of these changes is likely to be downward pressure on all single detached lot values. However, this impact is lower on retained/renovated houses (because of the higher achievable density) than on demolition/replacements (because of the reduction in achievable density), so the net result is likely to be more retentions. The market wide downward pressure on lot values of the proposed changes is likely in the range of 5% to 10%. To put this in the context of price trends, new single detached house prices and lot values in Vancouver increased by about 25% to 35% during September 2015 to July 2016. Starting in August 2016, though, there have been signs of market softening in part due to policy changes such as the new 15% tax on non-resident purchasers (the effects of which are still not fully known as not enough time has passed) and other changes such as new resilience rules for mortgage qualifications. Taken together, these changes (including the City's proposed zoning changes) suggest that house prices may return to mid-2015 levels.
 7. Post-1940 houses and pre-1940 houses not deemed to be character houses will have the negative financial impact of reduced maximum density for new construction but will not be eligible for any offsetting financial benefits. For these properties, there will be a negative impact on value due to the reduced density. This is likely to result in more retention and renovation of large non-character houses so they can keep all of their existing floorspace.
 8. The reduced maximum density in new builds is likely to cause some decline in interest in secondary suites or result in smaller secondary suites, especially if allowable density in new builds is reduced to 0.5 FSR, because secondary suites use some of the (reduced) floorspace available for the main house. This impact will be felt most strongly on small lots (i.e. 33 foot frontage) because the size of new house that can be achieved at 0.5 FSR on a small lot would be more like a townhouse (about 2,000 square feet) than what can be built under zoning today.
 9. While the economic analysis focused mainly on RS-5 zoned properties in Kerrisdale, Dunbar, and Second Shaughnessy, the findings can be generalized to other single detached neighbourhoods that are being considered for the character house retention policies (i.e. RS-3 zoned properties in Kerrisdale, RS-3A zoned properties in Third Shaughnessy, and RS-1, RS-5, and RS-7 zoned properties in Cambie Village, Hastings Sunrise, Kensington Cedar Cottage, Riley Park, Upper Kitislano, and West Point Grey).



Consultation Summary

Vancouver Character Home Zoning Options

Prepared for the City of Vancouver | March 2017



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Introduction

The Vancouver Heritage Action Plan (HAP) was approved by Council in December 2013. Since that time, key areas of action and implementation have been formalized while ongoing public consultation has sought feedback from residents regarding specific proposed action and implementation strategies. The five key areas of action and implementation:

1. Heritage Conservation Program review;
2. Heritage Register upgrade;
3. Character home zoning review;
4. Sustainability initiatives; and,
5. Awareness and advocacy initiatives.

To date, some key milestones have been reached for the implementation of the Heritage Action Plan including a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) in First Shaughnessy and a review and analysis of character home zoning options in RS-3, RS-3A and RS-5 zones.

As a key area of implementation, four study areas were identified for the Character Home Zoning Review. The purpose of this process was to explore policy and regulatory options to incentivize retention of character homes in the study areas, and obtain feedback from the public and stakeholders on the proposed options.

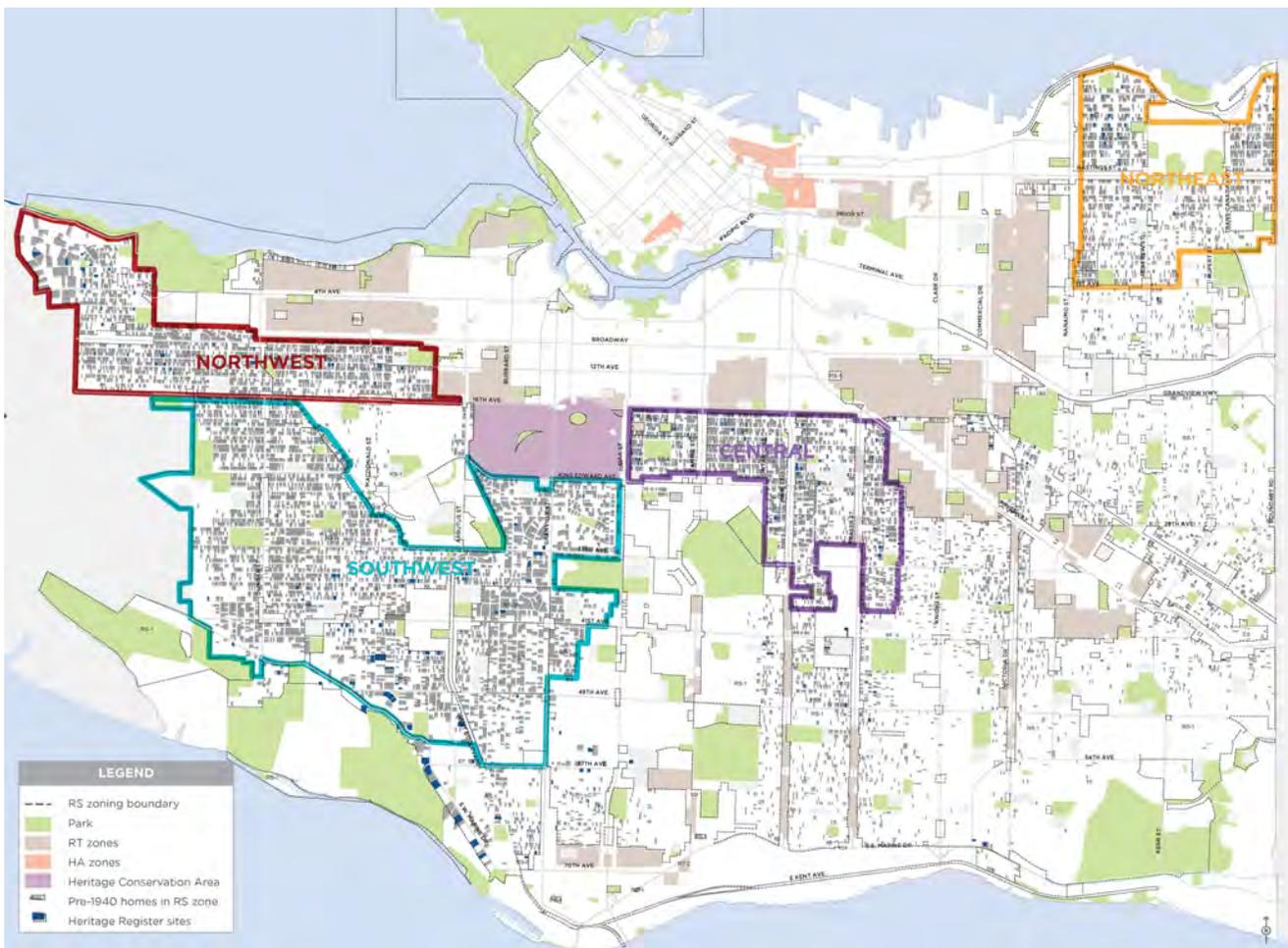
Specifically, this report summarizes consultation efforts related to character home retention in the study areas, which focused on a continued dialogue on how character is defined in Vancouver and potential policy and regulatory options to support character home retention.

Consultation Study Areas

Four study areas (Northwest, Southwest, Central, and Northeast) were identified based on the following criteria:

- High concentration of pre-1940 homes (the majority of blocks having 50 percent or more pre-1940 homes);
- General character and quality of homes in the surrounding area;
- Current zoning boundaries;
- Neighbourhood history and role in early Vancouver;
- Adjacency to existing Character Areas (e.g. RT zones, Heritage Conservation Areas); and,
- Community Visions character area boundaries.

Of the 66,509 total homes in RS zones, the four study areas comprised 26,755 homes. Of those study area homes, 44% are pre-1940.



Consultation-At-A-Glance

To facilitate feedback from the public and stakeholders, the following activities were undertaken:



ads printed in
4 newspapers

4 Open Houses
with over
1,000
total attendees



282
responses on the
Visual Explorer
display board

Over
31,060
notifications
mailed out to homes in
the study areas

Over 18
hours of one-on-one
engagement
with residents and
stakeholders

1 Workshop with
50 design
practitioners

Posters
placed in all
library
branches and
community centres



30
display boards
to share information

Over
8,400
views on the
Character Home Zoning
Review web page

2 hands-on
activities
to spark ideas

3,322
surveys
completed
with over 11,000
open-ended comments

Consultation Activities

Open Houses

In total, over 1,000 people attended four open houses held in November and December 2016. Two open houses were held at the Hellenic Community Centre on Arbutus, one was held at Vancouver City Hall, and one was held at the Pacific National Exhibition. Three were held in the evening for 4 hours with one held on a Saturday for 6 hours. All Open Houses included representatives from City staff and consultants to engage with participants on the presented content. Information, ideas, and concerns were shared through one-on-one engagement, informal group discussions, and the interactive activities. A summary of the responses received by staff at the Open Houses can be found in the “What We Heard” section of this report.

Interactive Activities

Below are descriptions of some of the fun and interactive activities incorporated into engaging with residents, generating discussions and valuable feedback on the Character Home Zoning Options.

VISUAL EXPLORER

The Visual Explorer game is a tool for creative conversations using imagery. An adapted version of the activity was developed using a wide variety of images relevant to character in Vancouver. Participants chose an image that, in their opinion, represented character. Participants then described why it represented character, recorded their comments on sticky notes, and displayed those comments on a display board for other open house participants to review and discuss.



LEGO ACTIVITY

The LEGO activity is a tool for hands-on conversations using physical models that represent the proposed zoning options. With support of content outlined in the display boards, LEGO models at a 1/16th scale were developed to provide open house participants with a three-dimensional visual activity to learn and provide feedback on the proposed zoning options. The following models were created using LEGO bricks for participants to explore a sample neighbourhood:

- 2,000 ft² Character House with an 800 ft² footprint;
- 2,800 ft² New House (Current) with a 900 ft² footprint;



- 2,000 ft² New House (Option) with a 670 ft² footprint;
- 1010 ft² and 220 ft² Additions;
- 640 ft² Laneway House with a 400 ft² footprint; and,
- 800 ft² Infill House with a 500 ft² footprint.

The activity included a “Sample Neighbourhood” map that was scaled to illustrate how each model could be positioned on typical residential lot sizes in the City.



Practitioner Workshop

The City extended an invitation to design practitioners to provide an in-depth review and comment on the technical aspects of the proposed zoning options. Invitees to the workshop were a mix of architects, designers, home builders and small-scale developers with substantial recent experience working in RT zones on character retention projects, or in RS zones on retention projects and/or new home construction, particularly in the single-family discretionary zones (RS-5/3/3A). A total of 50 design practitioners attended the workshop which included an overview of the study, facilitated small group discussions, and reported back to the group key themes. The Workshop focused on three main topics: the character merit assessment, character retention projects, and new home construction. A summary of the responses recorded by staff is located in the “What We Heard” section of this report and a transcript of the discussion notes is attached as Appendix B.



Survey

The City of Vancouver prepared a survey consisting of multiple choice and open ended questions related to the proposed options for character home retention. The survey was made available online, as well as in hard copies at the open houses, with a total of 3,322 surveys submitted by the deadline of January 15, 2017. The survey included many opportunities for participants to submit open ended comments and over 11,000 open-ended comments were made in the 3,322 submitted surveys. A summary of the survey is found in the “What We Heard” section of this report and a full summary of the survey findings can be found in a separate report by the City of Vancouver.

What We Heard

Open Houses-At-A-Glance

Over 1,000 people attended the four Open Houses hosted by the City. Below is an at-a-glance summary of the reoccurring themes from group discussions and one-on-one conversations staff had with attendees at the Open Houses.

The following bullets are the summarized key themes of **support** based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- Support for the retention of character homes
- Increasing housing options through suites, laneway homes and strata units
- Increasing choice for homeowners with character homes
- Reduction of the size and scale of new homes
- Strengthening design guidelines for protecting neighbourhood aesthetics
- Significant interest in the strata infill house option, especially as a mortgage helper with more immediate recoup of costs
- Streamlining of the permit process, especially for character home renovations
- Interest in the various grants and financial incentives for character home retention

The following bullets are the summarized key themes of **concern** based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- Potential impact on property values
- Potential impact on future saleability
- Cost of maintaining character homes
- Concern that higher density options are not proposed as a part of this process (ie.. townhouses, rowhouses, low-rise apartments)
- Concern that 0.5 FSR does not allow large enough spaces for larger families
- Unsure that 1940 is the appropriate cutoff for character merit
- Concern that an increase in staff time required due to administration of character merit checklist could delay permitting process

The following bullets are a summary of the **questions** from participants based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- How will the City incentivize character home retention on irregular lots where laneway or infill homes are not possible?
- Why are ideas to allow higher density housing in new construction not being considered in this review?
- Can setbacks be adjusted to allow for more units on a lot?
- Are there potential property tax incentives for retention of character homes?



Open House Key Themes

The following summaries the key themes collected through staff conversations with open house attendees.

Character Retention: Throughout the Open Houses, participants expressed concern with the number of demolitions in their neighbourhoods and indicated support for character home retention, however staff collected a variety of mixed responses to the proposed retention tools.

Size and Design of New Homes: A key theme at the Open Houses were a concern with the size and design of new homes in the City. For homeowners who indicated they lived within the study area, there were many comments about new homes being constructed in ways that were, in their opinion, incompatible with the existing neighbourhood character. This included concerns about both size (maximizing allowable FSR) and design (box-like, overshadowing older homes). Participants who expressed these concerns were generally in favour of incentives for character home retention and the reduced size for new homes to provide a disincentive for demolition.

In addition, there were also some concerns expressed by attendees with regard to potential loss of green space, privacy, and parking through the incorporation of laneway homes and the proposed infill units.

Impact of Reduction in FSR: A consistent topic of conversation with City staff were related to the proposed reduction of FSR to 0.5 for new homes. While some participants spoke in favour of the FSR reduction to provide disincentives for tearing down a character building, there were an equal number of participants who presented their concerns for this component of the proposed zoning options. Concerns included the potential negative impact on market value for individual homes, the limitations on space in new homes for families, and the possibility that a lower FSR could lead to property owners not incorporating secondary suites.

Housing Options and Affordability: Participants expressed support and concern for the proposed zoning options based on issues of housing mix and affordability. Many homeowners who attended the open houses expressed interest in the infill home strata option. They commented that the strata infill option could provide equity faster through sale, rather than the laneway home rental option.

A number of Open House attendees also commented that the options presented did not fully address their concerns regarding housing affordability throughout the City. A key theme that was communicated was a

desire to see more housing options available within RS zones including townhouses and low-rise multi-unit buildings. Comments included concerns regarding the unaffordable prices of single detached homes and the limited rental housing options within RS zones.

Cost to Upgrade or Maintain: A key theme that also emerged through conversations at the Open Houses was the cost associated with the ongoing maintenance and upgrades to a character home. While there are incentives available to offset some of these costs, a common concern from participants was the ongoing costs to maintain an energy inefficient character home as well as the cost of renovations when building an addition to a character home and the upgrades that could be required by the City and the Building Code.

To many participants, the costs associated with building a new home were cheaper and less ambiguous, compared to the costs associated with renovating a character home. It was posited to staff by participants that the character merit design elements can be incorporated into new homes, which could be a less costly process.

The Character Merit Question: A consistent issue brought to staff's attention was a variety of concerns regarding the definition of character merit. Many attendees were concerned that the character merit checklist process was not fully realized yet and expressed their concerns about the implications for their home and its value.

Other comments regarding the character merit checklist included concern that using a date (1940) for defining character homes may not achieve the desired goal for retention of character buildings. Participants commented that some pre-1940 homes are not worth saving due to poor maintenance and energy inefficiencies, and that some post-1940 homes are worth retaining because of their contribution to the character of a street and neighbourhood.

Streamlining the Process: A consistent comment brought to the attention of staff at the Open Houses was how the development application process should be streamlined while the character merit checklist could require additional staff review time. Participants also expressed concern that the character merit checklist could add time to the process.



Interactive Activities

VISUAL EXPLORER

The following summarizes the reoccurring themes from the responses and feedback provided by participants at the Visual Explorer activity. Samples of the sticky note comments provided at the activity are provided in Appendix A.

Reoccurring comments from this activity suggested character is:

- Street & Neighbourhood collectively
- Quality materials
- Interesting and attractive

Reoccurring comments from this activity expressed concern that character is:

- Culturally influenced and reflects values of a different time
- A subjective exercise, hard to assign a specific time period
- Costly to maintain, based on the proposed definition of character



LEGO ACTIVITY

The following summarizes the reoccurring themes from the responses and feedback provided by participants at the LEGO activity.

Participants expressed support for the following:

- Incentives for retention of character homes
- Increasing housing options and mortgage helpers
- Design standards for new homes
- Streamlining permitting process

Participants expressed concern for the following:

- Potential impact on property values for non-character homes
- Increased FSR may limit green space
- Increased units may have impact on parking availability



Questions:

- How will the character merit assessment be administrated?
- Should “greener” new builds have similar FSR incentives?
- What is the strategy for retaining character homes outside of the Study Areas?

Practitioner Workshop-At-A-Glance

A total of 50 architects, design and building professionals attended a Practitioner Workshop hosted by the City. Below is an at-a-glance summary of the recorded themes from the small group discussions and feedback provided by participants in the practitioner workshop.

The following bullets are the summarized key themes of **support** based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- Allowing larger additions to character homes and proposing options for repurposing existing homes could be effective for retention
- Strata infill units could be an effective incentive for character retention
- Increasing efficiency for processing applications
- Design requirements could be an appropriate strategy for character retention

The following bullets are the summarized key themes of **concern** based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- Character merit criteria is subjective, lacks flexibility and may result in unfeasible retention projects
- Compliance with proposed character merit criteria in addition to all other building regulations is challenging
- 0.5 FSR for new builds would discourage secondary suites, impact livability, and could reduce property values

The following bullets are a summary of the **questions** from participants based on the proposed options for character home retention:

- How does the character merit criteria fit with other City planning goals?
- What happens when retention conflicts with sustainability and livability?



Practitioner Workshop Key Themes

The Practitioner Workshop included three main sessions of table discussions on three topic areas: character merit assessments, character retention projects, and new home construction. Over the course of the Workshop, the following were the key themes that emerged through the small group discussions.

Concerns with Character Merit Assessment: An overall theme that emerged through the workshop was overall concern with the proposed character merit assessment. Comments included concern that the criteria were subjective and could be misinterpreted. The suggestion was made that the criteria could be weighted to place more value on the massing and form of a structure. An additional suggestion posited that greater flexibility and discretion for working with the unique challenges of character retention projects. Additionally, participants expressed concern that the proposed criteria threaten the feasibility of retention projects, in particular with the requirements of the building code.

Impact of FSR Reduction: When discussing the topic of new home construction, participants expressed strong concerns with the proposed reduction of FSR for new homes. Participants were concerned that the change would reduce property values, discourage the addition of secondary suites, negatively impact livability for families, and threaten project feasibility. By reducing home sizes, commenters expressed that owners would find it more difficult to justify building a secondary suite and that developers would experience more difficulty with accommodating the space needs of families.

Livability and Sustainability: Through the small-group discussions, participants indicated concern that the proposed zoning options and character merit checklist could limit a designer's ability to meet livability and sustainability requirements. Participants commented that home livability is challenging when there are increased restrictions, especially when those restrictions could be subjective. They also commented that the proposed zoning options could make it more difficult to build environmentally friendly houses.

Affordability: The suggestion was made by participants that the character retention conversation should not happen in isolation to the ongoing affordability conversations in the City.

Design Guidelines or Design Regulations: A consistent issue brought to staff's attention during the workshop was the consideration of design guidelines or design regulations as a tool for retention projects. There was not full agreement as some participants commented that character retention could be prioritized through strong design guidelines while others commented that guidelines may not provide enough incentive for character retention. Alternatively, some participants suggested that clear and simple design regulations would be more practical and efficient for use by designers and developers. Generally, participants expressed support for a balance of flexibility and regulation, but also expressed that the current ideas presented did not find this balance.

Other Incentives: Some participants commented that incentivizing character retention would likely reduce demolitions of character homes. Many went on to suggest types of incentives that they believe would be effective, such as strata titling and subdivisions for infill and laneway homes, relaxation of tree retention requirements, density transfer, and expedited permit processing.

Survey-At-A-Glance

The City of Vancouver issued a survey on Character Home Retention through their Talk Vancouver web platform and made hard copies available at the open houses. The survey contained both multiple choice and open ended questions. These questions allowed participants to review the Open House Boards, at the Open Houses or online, and provide comments on the content. Participants were asked to provide feedback on:

- Areas of concern when thinking about single family zones;
- The definition of a character home;
- The identified character home zoning review study areas;
- The proposed zoning options, including floor area, building design, and number of dwelling units; and,
- Other considerations including grants and special requirements.

The survey was available online for 7 weeks. Participants were given until January 15, 2017 to submit their responses. A total of 3,322 responses were received and a summary of the survey findings are included in a separate City of Vancouver report.

Closing Comments

A key element of implementing the Vancouver Heritage Action Plan process is engagement with residents and stakeholders. This is evident through the opportunities made available through the Character Home Zoning Review process. Through the consultation activities and events outlined in this report, the City received a significant response from the community, revealing the importance of this conversation to City residents. Through conversations at the Open Houses, the Practitioner Session, and the online survey, several consistent themes emerged with a variety of perspectives and concerns catalyzed by this phase of the Heritage Action Plan.

Feedback over the course of this phase was a mix of support and concern over the proposed zoning options. There is support for using some zoning options to incentivize character home retention, while there is an equal measure of concern regarding the potential land-value impact of reducing FSR limits and housing affordability and diversity. Through the practitioner workshop, support for a balanced approach in regards to flexibility and regulation was expressed, but participants indicated that the current ideas if all implemented do not find that balance.

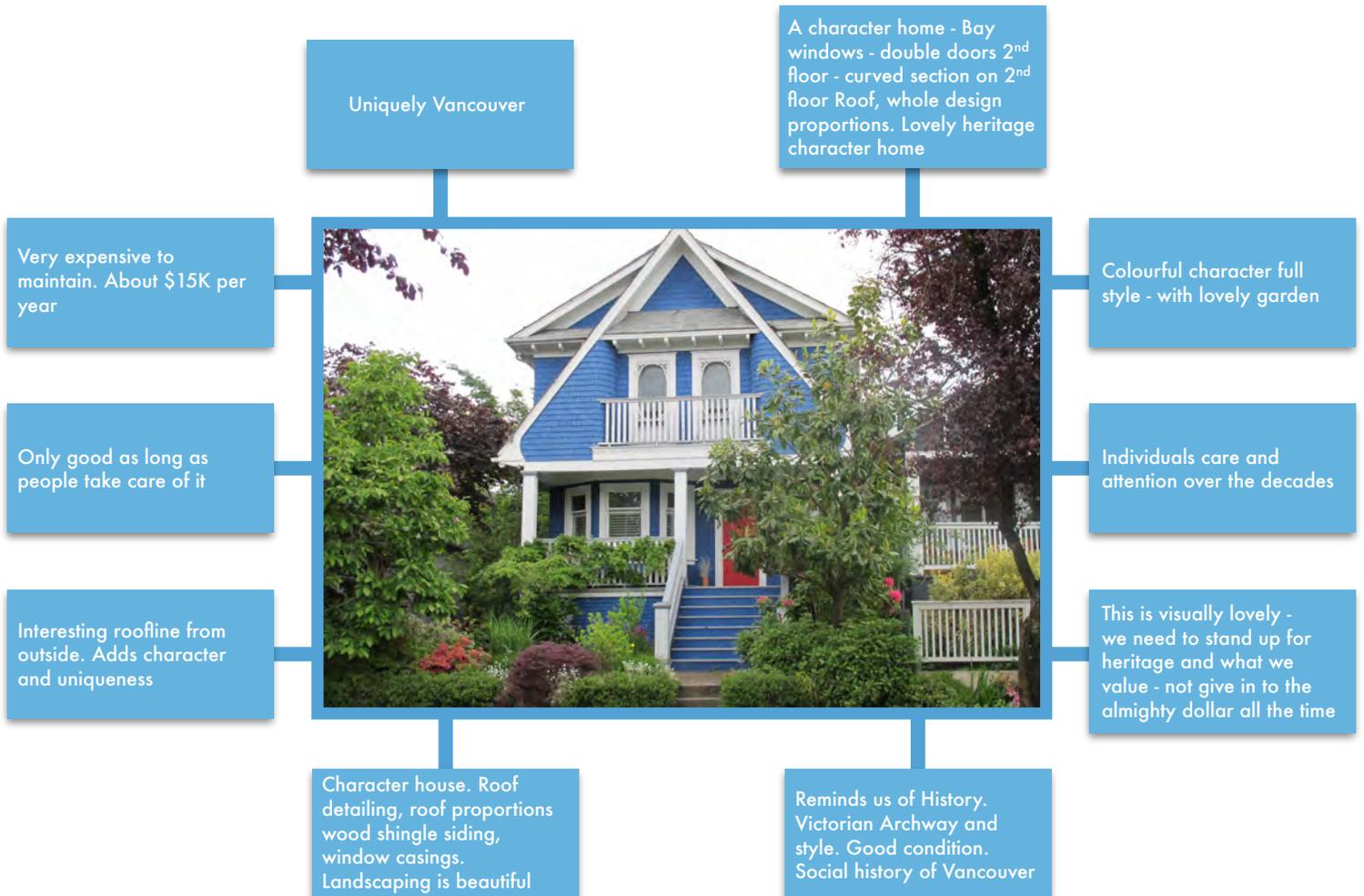
Based on comprehensive input from the public and stakeholders, it is clear that there are many diverse views about what the City should do regarding character homes. Feedback from the consultation process indicates that the diverse perspectives and opinions are polarized, and planning issues and opportunities outside of this technical exercise are inherently relevant and influential.

The purpose of this Consultation Summary is to report on the consultation activities in addition to those summaries found in the separate City of Vancouver report on the survey findings. In terms of next steps, this report of the community and stakeholder input will be presented to City Council for consideration during their review of staff recommendations for moving forward with this stage of the Heritage Action Plan.

APPENDIX A

Visual Explorer Responses

DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?



DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?

Front porch makes the lot
and block feel more
welcoming

Character! Original
window frames, nice
roofline and real chimneys



Well articulated buildings
with distinct design
features

Materials you can
no longer get at any price

DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?

Add suite to retain = good

Craftsmanship and design
are wonderful

Verandahs add character
and a good feeling when
people sit in them.
Different roof levels



Front balcony is character
feature

Too many modifications,
loses character, losing
modesty

DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?

Just a box

New house is a box and boring

Different is ok. Needs time for landscaping to mature. Duplex = good

Like the old porch. Nice roof line. Modern house box, not warm



Subtle patterns and symmetries but not necessarily identical

Need more housing options. House on left is equitable

Make it fit without being a replica

Older house sadly decayed - out of context now with modern neighbours

House on left looks like a power station. Energy efficient but hideous

DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?

Is character and should be allowed to have renovation. Relax to keep

If you gave incentives to keep, sure

Community and history



Beautiful old home

A home or development built solely to satisfy an economic or population need is not an example of character

DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?



DOES THIS PHOTO REPRESENT “CHARACTER” IN YOUR OPINION?



APPENDIX B

Practitioner Workshop Discussion Notes

Character Home Zoning Review - Practitioner Workshop

Round Table Discussion Notes

Discussion Topic 1: Character Merit Assessment

SUMMARY:

- The criteria should be weighted
- The criteria are too subjective
- There should be flexibility / room for negotiation in assessing character merit
- Character merit assessments should be unbiased
- Character merit assessments should be predictable
- The criteria do not capture essence of what is character
- Modern interventions do not necessarily detract from character
- Homes that do not meet the character criteria could be made to meet criteria through renovation
- 1940 date is not an appropriate measure of character
- Character merit should be assessed beyond street elevation (i.e. the whole house)
- Qualitative criteria should be considered in assessing character
- Context should be considered when assessing character
- Not everyone agrees that character homes are worth preserving
- The criteria threaten feasibility of potential retention projects
- It is unclear how character merit assessment fits in with other planning goals

TRANSCRIPT:

The criteria should be weighted

- Most important:
 - Massing, roof form
 - Major components - retaining % openings/size needs to be higher and clearer
 - Massing/form important
 - Massing should have more merit
 - Most important criteria are:
 - Massing / form
 - Date built
 - & should be weighted
 - Date built, massing, form = important
 - Form, scale - mass to retain
- Least important:
 - Detail

- Weighting:
 - Should be weighted
 - Weighting Yes!
 - Weighted is absolutely necessary
- Items 3, 4, 5 are related
 - #5 less important for character retention (vs. heritage)

The criteria are too subjective

- How do staff evaluate what is “original”?
 - And how do we evaluate “partial” porches? (how much can be filled in?)
- 1st house: hard to retain. Practitioners perform a character merit assessment. Not a great house to retain. Subjective.
- “window openings” is too vague. Very subjective.
- Checklist is subjective... valid → what comes after is key
- What are we fighting for??
 - On a case-by-case basis, with more room for negotiation with and architect or designer
- Current list too subjective

There should be flexibility / room for negotiation in assessing character merit

- Allow interpretive and qualitative data (evaluate on case-by-case) & room for negotiation
- Flexibility!!
- Becoming less flexible... need to move back to being more flexible
- There needs to be flexibility / discretion in handling character retention projects
- Allow for flexibility to provide innovation within modern living styles
- Planning needs to be more flexible on renovation projects e.g. guidelines approach, broader scope of consideration
- More support for contemporary additions and infills (flexibility)
 - City shouldn't dictate style
 - Contemporary additions complement character!
 - Encourage contrast while respecting original components

Character merit assessments should be unbiased

- City staff doing character assessments vs consultant
 - Public assurance that it's less biased
- Staff biased to retain
- What about another step in process?
 - i.e. 3 architects / 3rd party to evaluate
 - independent group with expertise, opinion
- Should an architect or designer be involved in the evaluation process?

Character merit assessments should be predictable

- Potential issues with consistency of evaluations (particularly over time)
- System is opaque, more transparent or clear to the public
- Higher caliber for evaluation of character homes
- Need a dedicated, multi-disciplinary, streamlined process to address character retention projects (not a panel of experts)

- Character housing renovation centre
- Have consistent, predictable interpretation
- Establish a “character housing renovation centre”

The criteria do not capture essence of what is character

- Checklist:
 - Can't check 3 without 4
 - Criteria do not make sense
 - Superficial
 - Fundamentally disagree
 - Unable to change roofline is limiting
 - Need context of streetscape
 - Symbolic retention
- Character replication → Disney Effect
- Several criteria need tweaking
- trees add character

Modern interventions do not necessarily detract from character

- Modern interventions should be allowed
- Respecting neighbourhood character does not mean dictating style and parameters
 - Design intent = the important bit
 - Protecting character details relentlessly (and on principle alone) = a waste of time
- Incentives for retention while contrasting modern additions

Homes that do not meet the character criteria could be made to meet criteria through renovation

- Bonuses need to be made available to non-character houses that can be shown to have character merit through restoration
- Flaw: materials can be removed to reveal character material

1940 date is not an appropriate measure of character

- Character is character. 1940 irrelevant. Character is a design guideline feature built new or retain
- Extend date to 1945 or 1950s
- character should not be limited to pre-1940s
- Date built → extend to 1945 or 1950s
- Options should be made available even to post 1940s

Character merit should be assessed beyond street elevation (i.e. the whole house)

- Why do we only evaluate the frontage?
 - Why not a character interior?
 - Can we retain character while altering the frontage? i.e. adding a second story...?
- Expand the definition of character beyond the original frontage
- Streetscape weighted priority (façadeism)
- Needs to be more than face value

Qualitative criteria should be considered in assessing character

- Should homes be evaluated qualitatively?
 - Is the home “special”?
- Broaden the definition of character and allow interpretive and qualitative criteria
- Allow interpretive and qualitative data (evaluate on case-by-case) & room for negotiation
- Character should be based on a vernacular (vs. of a particular House) - what the house can be when it grows up
- Identify qualities instead of stylistic mandate

Context should be considered when assessing character

- Context should be included in assessment
- Streetscape
- Streetscape feasibility to retain

Not everyone agrees that character homes are worth preserving

- Homeowners forced to live with a building style they don't agree
- Character retention not valued (particularly of smaller homes in RS zones)
- Homeowners are forced to live in an older home that is not necessarily favoured
- Degree of retention should be better aligned with the homeowner's priorities
- Clear on what character retention is for; define
- As long as new construction follows the neighbourhood's existing pattern of massing and cadence, what is the point of retention?
- Qualities of a livable city > needs of fickle homeowners (“protect our homes!” ... “how dare you devalue our neighbourhoods!”)
- By the character merit standards they are “character” but the houses are of little value
- Old homes not valued by homeowners → should align with their priorities
- Too much time / resources spent on retaining old homes

The criteria threaten feasibility of potential retention projects

- Small houses with minimal detail are more difficult. Poor outcome/product
- More staff trained and informed on viable projects
- Structural needs to be considered (i.e. structural integrity of the building itself)
- Case studies: all character but 2nd floor not “livable” / functional
 - → marketable to higher end
- How feasible to retain
- Underutilization 40-60%
 - → <60% of allowable FSR (Introduce underutilization criterion)
- Evaluation deeper - structural (concern over costs associated with low structural integrity)
- Small houses hard to retain
- Retention should be conservative
- Feasibility to retain
- Incentives to retain
- Many houses are marginal and difficult to work with

- character needs to be incentivized to a safe and higher value
- What are we retaining?
 - Hard for designer to be accountant i.e. interpreting % retention
- Character is being treated too much like heritage

It is unclear how character merit assessment fits in with other planning goals

- What happens when retention conflicts with sustainability and livability?
- Is the checklist stifling innovation?
- Livability
- Corner lots are a missed opportunity
- Character of Tomorrow → density, max SF, accommodate population
 - New construction with character merit
- Within planning there needs to be a value hierarchy to meet set objectives.
- Project merit needs to be fair to everyone
- Council initiatives and rationales need to be better incorporated
- Character retention not worth it if home does not meet sustainability/livability requirements
 - And qualitative goals
- Current standards and regulations for retentions / additions actually decreases livability of the overall home in some cases
 - Living spaces patch worked together
- It is incredibly difficult (and expensive) to maintain sustainability goals and to comply with new regulations when performing a retention. If adding a rain screen requires removal of the cladding... then what's the point???
- What is the point of retention if you need to tear a house apart in order to meet sustainability & livability requirements???
- Too hard to look at in isolation of discussion of unit type and affordability

Discussion Topic 2: Character Retention Projects

SUMMARY:

- On incentives:
 - Proposed incentives for retention are insufficient
 - Relaxing yard setbacks would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Restricting FSR to 0.5 would be effective in reducing demolitions of character homes
 - The ability to sell or transfer density would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Subdivision would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Relaxation of tree retention requirements would be effective incentive for character retention
 - The option to repurpose existing homes as laneway homes would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Allowing larger additions to character homes would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Basement FSR exemption would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Strata titling would be an effective incentive for character retention
 - Expedited processing of character retention applications would be an effective incentive for character retention
- Some of the proposed criteria are more feasible than others
- Compliance with proposed criteria in tandem with other regulations is challenging
- There is variability in feasibility of criteria across different neighbourhoods / streets / houses
- Process of neighbourhood approval could challenge retention projects
- Different proponent groups have different needs
- Design Guidelines should be considered for retention projects
- Character retention should consider future housing needs
- Process for Character Merit Assessment and approval of retention projects should be clear and timely

TRANSCRIPT:

On incentives:

Proposed incentives for retention are insufficient

- Incentives for retention are not meaningful
- Tools that wouldn't work well:
 - Floor area exclusions e.g. RT approach for parking
- What retention tools to improve outcomes

- Character is being treated too much like heritage →not asking for major bonuses
- Impacts of retention on cost
- City-proposed incentives aren't appealing enough
- More incentives for retention (FSR)
- More incentives are needed for retention
- building outright is winning over retention
- Increase incentives for retention
- Each project needs to earn density

Relaxing yard setbacks would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Yard setbacks

Restricting FSR to 0.5 would be effective in reducing demolitions of character homes

- 0.5 FSR is a big enough disincentive to prevent demolition of character houses

The ability to sell or transfer density would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Density transfer
- Sell bonus density!
- Bonus density transfers

Subdivision would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Subdivide

Relaxation of tree retention requirements would be effective incentive for character retention

- Option to replace mature trees
- Allow mature tree removal and replacement
- Tree replacement

The option to repurpose existing homes as laneway homes would be an effective incentive for character retention

- repurpose bungalows as laneways
- Keep main homes and separate homes in the back of the site rather than additions which overwhelmed the retained house

Allowing larger additions to character homes would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Sympathetic 2-storey additions need to be considered for low character homes

Basement FSR exemption would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Subterranean living space
- Below-grade additions
- Allow subterranean lives
- Give more carrots to character retention e.g. exempt basements

- Crawlspace have been converted to livable spaces
- No limit on basement floor area, just above grade, would allow basement suites.
- Allow designers to be creative in finding livability solutions and subterranean spaces

Strata titling would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Strata infill housing strong incentive
- Strata is enough
- Allow option for strata in all areas
- Strata for laneway
- Flexibility re: new units in existing form and ownership e.g. strata
- Incentivize retention, i.e. infill strata is good, strong incentive
- Strata titling is enough incentive, don't "down zone"

Expedited processing of character retention applications would be an effective incentive for character retention

- Processing times!
- "down zoning" will consume staff time and not meet objectives

Some of the proposed criteria are more feasible than others

- need ability to create livable buildings (5' ceilings not accepted)
- need minimum 7' ceiling
- Brackets easy to retain
 - But fascia, window sills often damaged
- Retaining roof line is restrictive
- Building upgrade → costly
- How to buy character / old wood → contemporary style
- Easiest elements: roof, massing
- Difficult: foundation, roofline if low profile (e.g. California bungalow)
- Roofline being the biggest barrier, therefore looking at "superficial" aesthetic choices
 - Adherence, no flexibility
- Size is major limiting component → affects what elements are "easy" vs. "difficult" to work with
- incentivizing character homes will stop demolitions

Compliance with proposed criteria in tandem with other regulations is challenging

- Code requirements, upgrades, degree of retention
- Limitation on assessing as "structurally unsound"
- Where is owner's interest? Could be putting owners at risk if not fully compliant e.g. water, fire
- There is less flexibility in interpretation of regulations - building inspectors (staff) have had discretion removed
 - Interpretation also varies; inconsistent advice
- VBBL is inflexible
 - Needs more flexibility to address character
- Need dedicated, streamlined processing → Housing Renovation Centre was a dream

- Economics - if full upgrades required, retaining character house will be more expensive than building new
 - Balance land value economics through use, # units

There is variability in feasibility of criteria across different neighbourhoods / streets / houses

- Strata → density → may not fit Dunbar, Point Grey
- Case Study #3 Extra House - simple, existing housing
 - Good incentive for achieving density
 - Increased value
 - Housing options
 - Limited areas of the city you can do this
 - Front/back subdivision
 - Redefine character
- Case Study #2 BC Ferry - disagree with forcing retention!
 - You can replicate same plan but new
 - Retain concept, not literal structure
 - Design Guidelines new const.
 - Select certain elements to replicate
 - Character is form, people complain about massing
 - Add level in middle → raise roof → changes massing
 - Fitting new layer in City within old Zoning Bylaw
 - New generation of density
 - Need more flexibility to design façade
 - Bring massing to front; front yard is dead space
 - Reduce setbacks
 - RS1 does not work → too restrictive on front yard
 - Need flexibility
 - What's the aversion to above grade? Massing
 - Show what you can do with new construction of Design Guidelines without retention
 - Sentiment value to be addressed
 - Visualization of the city and blocks → present to public
 - Include streetscape in Design Guidelines
 - Mail out notification too widespread
 - Should be able to modify
 - City internal review produces vague comments
 - Retention = loss opportunities
 - Need better clarity on what can or can't be modified
- Level of Retention:
 - Depends on bldg. - size (small not good) designs get rejected, therefore too aggressive
 - "good bones" mandatory
- Citywide application would have better effect on character retention
- Don't want to create "Mickey Mouse" land with the whole City
- Neighbourhood role to control

Process of neighbourhood approval could challenge retention projects

- process of neighbourhood approval [notification process] makes case #2 difficult

- public input can kill density project
- neighbourhoods dislike change

Different proponent groups have different needs

- “worth it” to who?
- How can the City so strictly determine level of retention? This is a private home, not a piece in a museum!
- Depends who it’s for: developer vs. owner-occupier each have unique needs
- Degree of retention should be better aligned with homeowners’ priorities

Design Guidelines should be considered for retention projects

- retention should be voluntary with guidelines
 - with incentive = strata +FSR
- take it back before, with strong design guidelines
 - guidelines should follow design guidelines = better results
- you can preserve character by building with new design guidelines
- Focus on streetscape via design guidelines
- additions can be poor aesthetic (incompatible)
- Guidelines like RT
- Triplex in RS form: creative approaches to keep overall form but integrate new layout/unit count
- Have technology to replicate character homes with new construction → Design Guidelines
 - Get specs and rebuild all new

Character retention should consider future housing needs

- real change in demographics
- views are changing within homeowner groups
- Should not maintain an 1FD zone

Process for Character Merit Assessment and approval of retention projects should be clear and timely

- [Character Merit Assessment] Process should be quicker than 1-2 weeks, whatever the approach
- Process too long
- Planning needs to be clear and timely on character retention. Process must be easier
- Require professionals (certified) to do the reviews, to reduce staff time

Discussion Topic 3: New Home Construction

SUMMARY:

- FSR should not be restricted for new home construction:
 - 0.5 FSR would reduce property values and development feasibility
 - 0.5 FSR would discourage the creation of additional dwelling units
 - 0.5 FSR would negatively impact liveability, particularly for families
 - 0.5 FSR would negatively impact housing quality
 - 0.5 FSR would be contrary to achieving other planning goals such as housing affordability and environmental sustainability
 - FSR above 0.5 should be considered if the design is exceptional
- Proposed zoning changes would not prevent the construction of incompatible single-family houses
- Increased density in single-family neighbourhoods should be incentivized in new home construction as well as character retention
- New construction in of itself is not responsible for bad design / incompatible neighbourhood fit
- Design Guidelines for new construction would be an effective way to enhance neighbourhood character
- Do not require neighbourhood notification for new construction
- The Character Home Zoning Review process is raising concern within the development / building industry

TRANSCRIPT:

FSR should not be restricted for new home construction

- Understanding about pre-1940, but this “new construction” concept restrictions replaces everything
- Bad plan. Bad idea. Wrong direction
- Keep same differential between the two
- Step back. Flawed
- Tear-down 1995 = can only build this concept → terrible idea
- Confusing! This applies to all replacement homes
- Will result in legal battles
- Creating one type of client
- Will there be exclusions for FSR under sloping roof forms - like current RS 5?
- Requiring 0.50 FSR for new construction on non-character house sites make no sense
- 0.8 for retention
- No downzone
- 0.7 remains
 - 0.6 above grade new
 - 0.85 retention
 - Larger size infill e.g. 0.25 rather than 0.16
- 0.25 below, 0.45 above grade is ideal

- Keep the FSR as is (outright)
- Yes, it's a big enough stick, 0.5 FSR
- What's the point?
- Purely punitive
- Give .75 or .8 to retain
- Goes back to envelope
- Just give them the crawlspace, they will dig it out anyways
- Why are we stuck on 0.5? Focus on above grade sq. ft.
- Again, wrong direction
- Punitive

0.5 FSR would reduce property values and development feasibility

- Ridiculous ratio of sq. ft. / lot size / property value
- Impacts property value
- This will reduce property values. Unintentional results.
 - Bad for existing homeowners; good for aspiring homebuyers
- 0.5 FSR not workable
- Also more expensive to build per square foot
- 4 m for 1400 sf. due to economy of scale (vs. could buy a floor of a condo building)
- 0.6 minimum that people used to
- Expectation 0.7 → 0.5 not support

0.5 FSR would discourage the creation of additional dwelling units

- Concept for new construction (0.5) absolutely wrong direction and too punitive. Backfire. Reverse on affordability. Lose all secondary suites. Density gone.
- This approach will kill suites, reversing what was achieved in 2009 → forget the two thirds / one third arrangement
- No downzoning, you'll eliminate suites
- 0.5 is too small for basement suite
- Going to a smaller dwelling (e.g. 0.5) would not improve compatibility with older houses and would do away with suites and become a "box"
- Suites will be lost at 0.5
- Basement → small for 1FD → 0.5 not feasible
- Additional units would help create diversity in neighbourhoods
- No personal space in basements
- Lose suites → can't afford to buy without suite
- Basements are not visible. Why does it matter?
 - Incentivizes rental units
- Contrary to density
 - Exemption to downzoning if doing multi-family; should only apply downzoning to one-family dwelling

0.5 FSR would negatively impact liveability, particularly for families

- 0.5 too punitive - doesn't allow 1FD with more family members
- 0.5 FSR is too small for family living

- Livability is greatest challenge if 0.5 is imposed. Should allow higher FSR for retention and keep a more reasonable FSR for new (0.6)
- Livability is greatest challenge is 0.5 is applied
- Not livable (0.5 FSR for 33' lots)
- floor area for livable SF home:
 - 0.4 or 0.5 effectively outlaws new houses
 - Challenge at 0.5
 - More appropriate at 0.6
 - Impact on 33' lot much different from that of 50' lot

0.5 FSR would negatively impact housing quality

- Compatible of new homes with older? No, therefore becomes a "box"
- Quality of construction will be affected, therefore meet only minimum standards when keeping character
- Housing stock at 0.5 will have a very short lifespan
- Form/scale/massing
 - Would achieve a more basic box
 - 2/3 - 1/3 ratio
 - Get rid of below grade-above grade massing
 - Will improve compatibility with older character homes
- Balance out, therefore allow earning back (good design should be exempt from 0.5 FSR)
- Will result in building a box without character to max sq. ft. (0.5 FSR for 33' lots)

0.5 FSR would be contrary to achieving other planning goals such as housing affordability and environmental sustainability

- Below-grade construction should be exempt, and should in fact be encouraged to help tackle housing affordability while maintaining neighbourhood fit and fabric
- 0.5 FSR will be less affordable because would not allow for more family members in one house
- Affordability is gone (0.5 FSR for 33' lots)
- Physically couldn't build a passive house ← volumetric requirements

FSR above 0.5 should be considered if the design is exceptional

- Allow earning back of FSR
- Designers all have different response to how to "earn back" additional FSRs

Proposed zoning changes would not prevent the construction of incompatible single-family houses

- Have consultants (independent authority) chime in to establish definition of quality design
- Over regulation tends to encourage cookie cutter design
- Guidelines
 - New faux heritage houses are ugly
 - New construction should not be restricted by guidelines
 - But there's also an argument for some guidelines
 - Guidelines should be applied based on context e.g. streetscape

- Need big enough carrot for guidelines
- Guidelines are easy to circumvent
- No agreement on guidelines, but agreement not to over-regulate process
- Going to a smaller dwelling (e.g. 0.5) would not improve compatibility with older houses and would do away with suites and become a “box”
- Simply build new to look old!!!!
- Disincentivizing new homes is unfair to new homebuyers (who may not want character homes) and to architects whose creativity and innovation is being stifled.
- These small houses will be beside these new large homes and won't “fit”

Increased density in single-family neighbourhoods should be incentivized in new home construction as well as character retention

- Always use incentives
- 3 tiers:
 - Preserve house
 - Price covenant 5 units
 - Rental (6 units)
- Subdividing 50' lots and corner lots
- Decreasing front yard setbacks
- Disincentivizing new home construction is unproductive!
- Exempt below-grade construction
 - Possible solution to increasing density while retaining neighbourhood aesthetic
 - Don't discourage density... just find more creative solutions and let designers innovate!
 - Discouraging density in new home construction is counterproductive to housing affordability (requiring retention in order to increase density is not always appropriate for new buyers... not everyone wants a character-styled home!)
- Abolish above-grade density penalties for sloping sites
- Should be able to earn (back) additional FSR based on quality design (with or without guidelines)

New construction in of itself is not responsible for bad design / incompatible neighbourhood fit

- Why are there barriers to innovation in new construction?
- Keep a minimum standard for construction that is not led by an architect, but don't hold credited and innovative architects to the same mandate. They know how to find alternative design solutions!
- Will 0.5 make houses better?
- Suggestion to restrict massing above grade

Design Guidelines for new construction would be an effective way to enhance neighbourhood character

- Design regulations - cut down by about 1/3 - yes, if clear and simple
- Design regulations vs. guidelines → speed things up
- Yes! To design regulations

- Guidelines vs. Regulations: regulation only if they are clear and simple and speed things up, predictable interpretation!
- Design Guidelines for new construction!!!!
- YES = Design Regulations = more efficient compared to guidelines
 - Context of streetscape
 - Control massing
 - Practical
- Technical Design Guidelines ← Design Criteria / Design Regulations

Do not require neighbourhood notification for new construction

- Design review could be similar to LWH regulations, where requires planning review, but no notification
- Either Design regulations or design guidelines reviewed by planners are ok - but no notification

The Character Home Zoning Review process is raising concern in the development / building industry

- Currently no due process
- There are more demolitions at the moment during Character Home Zoning Review process due to concerns about less FSR for new houses
- Don't over-regulate the process
- Don't regulate like LWH, which are too regulated





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Character Homes



**VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
ACTION
PLAN**

**CHARACTER
HOME ZONING
REVIEW**

Questionnaire Summary
April 2017



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Consultation Overview

Background

The City of Vancouver is conducting the *Character Home Zoning Review* to explore retention of pre-1940 character homes in single-family zones (also called RS zones), while improving the compatibility of new homes in older neighbourhoods. This review was initiated in response to growing public concern over the loss of character homes and neighbourhood character in the city, the compatibility of new homes in older neighbourhoods, and rising property values. It was requested as part of the Heritage Action Plan, approved by City Council in 2013, which is a comprehensive program to review and improve how the City supports heritage conservation in Vancouver.

With the community, the *Character Home Zoning Review* explored ways to encourage the retention of character homes in single-family neighbourhoods in Vancouver, while also meeting other City objectives. The review explored a variety of options and ideas, including geographic areas, zoning tools, and the trade-offs and implications for new home development. It began with an assessment of challenges and opportunities, which informed the development and testing of options and ideas, followed by an analysis of the feedback received which includes this questionnaire summary.

Public Engagement

To help inform the review, we held four public open houses in various parts of the city in November and December 2016. These consultation events were very well attended, attracting over a thousand people that generated hundreds of conversations and written submissions, as well as significant media coverage. We invited members of the public to complete a questionnaire to share their thoughts and attitudes on ideas to encourage greater retention of character homes. The questionnaire was available for a seven week period between November 27, 2016 and January 15, 2017. It was broadly promoted with over 31,000 direct mail postcards, four newspaper advertisements, and posters in local community centres and libraries. There was an extensive social media campaign that generated over 8,000 webpage views.

The questionnaire was widely available, including:

- At four consultation open houses (Nov & Dec 2016)
- On the *Character Home Zoning Review* webpage (vancouver.ca/characterhomereview)
- Via the Talk Vancouver panel
- Through social media links (Facebook, Twitter)

Quick Stats

- 3,322 completed questionnaires
- 11,000 open ended responses
- 72% home owners and 25% renters
- 56% lived in a study area
- 64% lived in study area for over 10 years
- 62% lived in pre-1940 home in a study area
- 57% over 50 years of age



Consultation Overview

Executive Summary

The following is a high-level overview of the *Character Home Zoning Review* questionnaire summary.

Areas of Support

The highest levels of support were provided in the following areas:

- Grants for energy retrofits for character homes (77 percent);
- New homes should meet higher standards for energy efficiency (77 percent);
- Require site character retention when character house demolished (76 percent);
- Increase flexibility in zoning to retain character homes (75 percent);
- Use design guidelines to clarify requirements/support renovations for character home (75 percent);
- Include broad zoning relaxations to retain character homes (71 percent);
- The City should encourage the retention of character homes (68 percent);
- Explore the retention of character homes in the identified study areas (67 percent); and
- Increase floor area to retain character homes (67 percent).

Areas of Concern

A number of concerns were identified with the highest response rates in the following areas:

- Affordability of housing choices (80 percent);
- Property value increases (74 percent);
- Loss of pre-1940 character houses (73 percent); and
- Compatibility and fit of new houses built in older areas (73 percent); and
- Limited availability of housing choices (72 percent).

Neutral or Areas of Uncertainty

For some questions there was a wider range of opinions (including a higher proportion of neutral and uncertain responses) in particular those more technical in nature.

- 50 percent agree with the pre 1940 date to determine character homes and 50 percent were not sure (17 percent) or did not agree (33 percent);
- While decreasing floor area to better manage new homes in neighbourhoods was supported (59 percent), ideas to limit floor area for new construction (reduce to 0.5/0.4 FSR) is supported by 43 percent and 57 percent were neutral/not sure (32 percent) and disagree (25 percent); and
- Limiting new house construction (max 10,000 sq. ft.) is supported by 39 percent, with 31 percent neutral/not sure and 30 percent disagreeing.

Demographics

- Nearly three-quarters are home owners, and more than half lived in the study areas.
- Respondents were a broad range of ages, but more than half were 50+ years of age.
- The Central and Northeast study areas had a higher number of younger respondents.
- Nearly two-thirds lived in the study area 10+ years and a significant number 20+ years.



Part 1. Background



Part 1. Background

Question 1

When thinking about the single-family zones in Vancouver, how concerned are you with the following?

Snapshot

- Affordability of housing choices was identified as the top issue (80 percent)
- Respondents were least concerned (64 percent) about property value decreases
- Similar responses between those who own and those who rent with the exception of questions about property value increase and property value decreases where opinions differed
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide, and across study areas

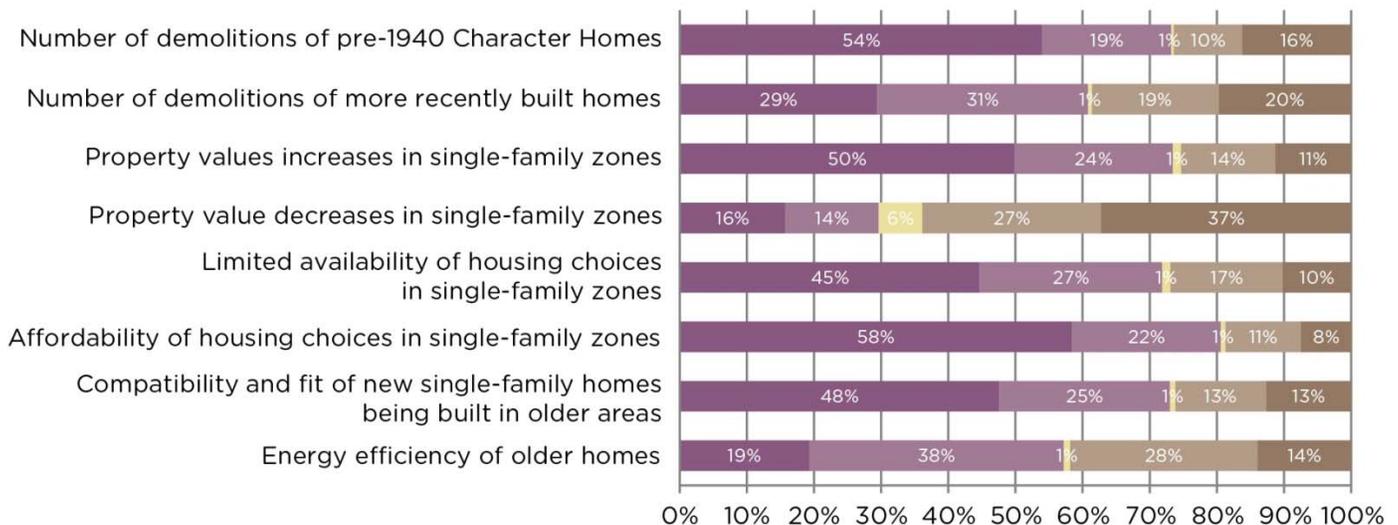
Top 5 Issues

1. Housing affordability (80 percent)
2. Property value increases (74 percent)
3. Demolition of pre-1940 character homes (73 percent)
4. Compatibility and fit of new houses built in older areas (73 percent)
5. Limited availability of housing choices (72 percent)

Results

All respondents (3,322 responses)

Very concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Don't know
 Not very concerned
 Not at all concerned

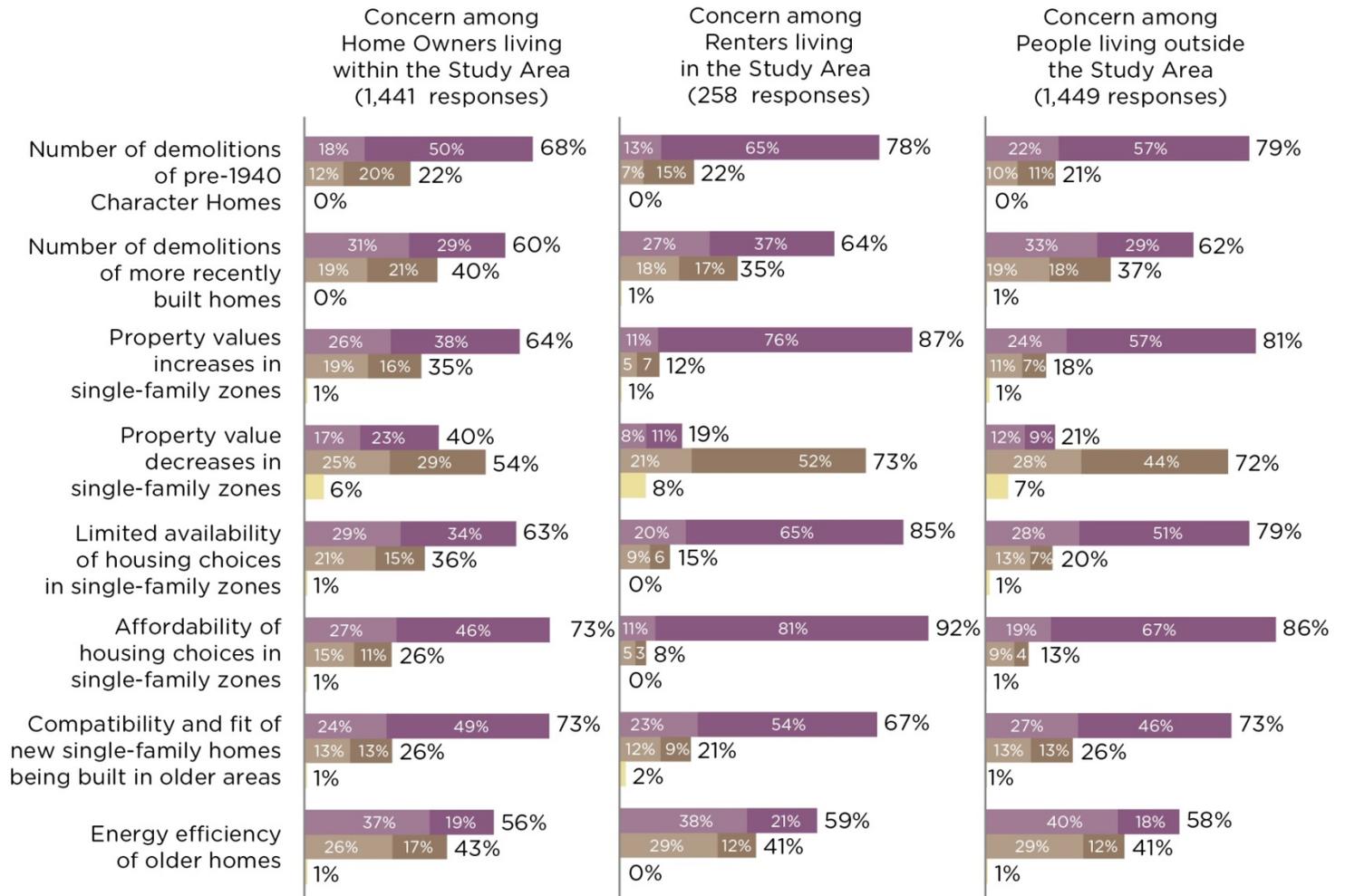




Part 1. Background

All respondents by residency type (3,148 responses)

■ Very concerned
 ■ Somewhat concerned
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Not very concerned
 ■ Not at all concerned

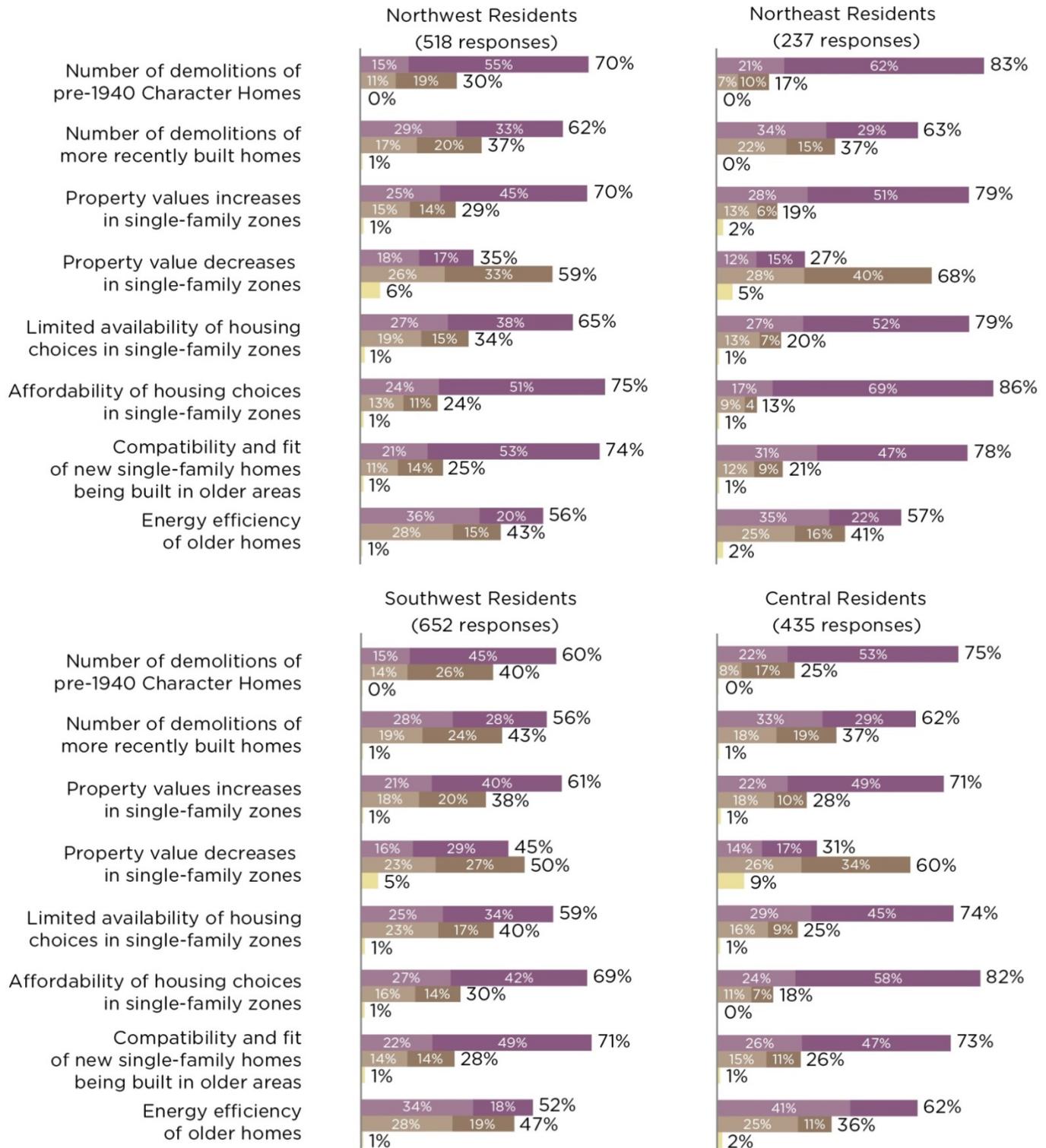




Part 1. Background

Respondents that lived a study area (1,852 responses)

■ Very concerned
 ■ Somewhat concerned
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Not very concerned
 ■ Not at all concerned





Part 1. Background

Other thoughts we heard

Main themes:

- The effect of new developments on established neighbourhoods, such as the look and feel of new houses, sense of community, impacts on local businesses, and environmental impact of demolitions
- Vacant and unoccupied homes and lots, and concern about lack of maintenance
- Zoning suggestions, ranging from maintain single-family zones to removed zoning entirely and thoughts on how to accommodate increased density, while maintaining heritage buildings across the city
- By-laws, permits, and building codes, including concerns about cost, complexity, and processing time
- The loss of greenery and green space, such as trees, plantings, and gardens

Sample comments:

- “YES! Lack of availability; EXTREMELY high prices, knocking most people out of the market.”
- “Very high assessment values and increase in taxes.”
- “Floor space ratios were increased a few years ago. It did not help affordability, it did not create more housing options. It was generally not used for secondary suites to increase density. In fact, many of these monster homes are vacant.”
- “Lack of housing diversity in these areas is contributing to those high prices and homogenising the neighbourhoods. More housing types would enable families and younger people to live in these neighbourhoods.”
- “I am a third generation Vancouverite and what I am seeing is the utter destruction of our narrative. By killing off these heritage homes we are destroying the very story of our own destination, of our culture, and the violence of this isn't lost on those of us who have grown up here—it's upsetting and it's a hopeless, demoralizing feeling to live here now.”
- “Large homes being built on lots designed for smaller footprints, making the neighbourhood look ‘all house’ and less greenery or yards.’ - Large homes that are not being occupied. - Homes bought and left to deteriorate.”
- “The single family zones will have a lack of children as families with children will not be able to afford them.”
- “City can help address affordability and housing shortage by relaxing the bylaws and policies to allow moderately higher density (duplex/multi family) in single family zones.”
- “Our house is pre 1940's and getting permits to Reno have been time-consuming and painful. It would be easier to start fresh and build a new house.”
- “Destruction of trees, gardens and plants to accommodate mega size homes. Destruction of good homes whose waste goes to landfill, contradiction with our green city claim.”



Part 1. Background

Question 2

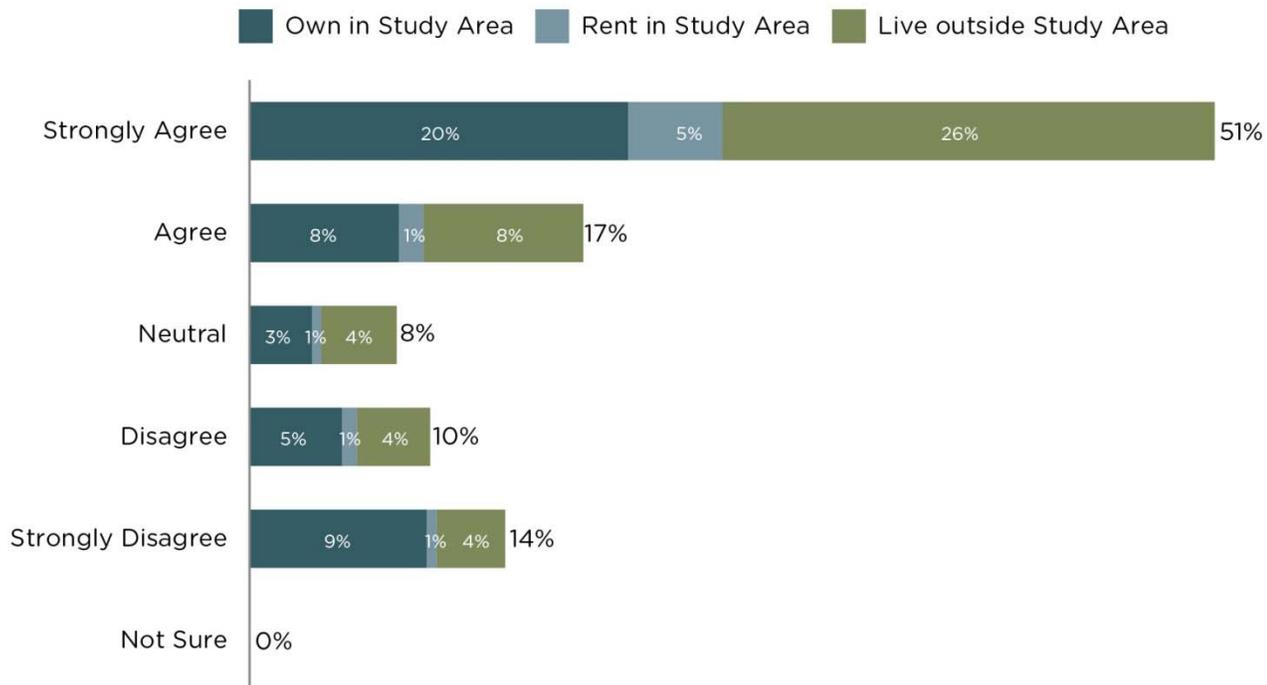
Overall, do you agree or disagree with the City taking actions to encourage the retention of character homes?

Snapshot

- The majority (68 percent) agree with the City taking actions to encourage the retention of character homes
- Strongest support in the Northeast (78 percent) and Central (71 percent) study areas
- Moderate support in Northwest (64 percent) and Southwest (54 percent) study areas
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

All respondents (3,321 responses)

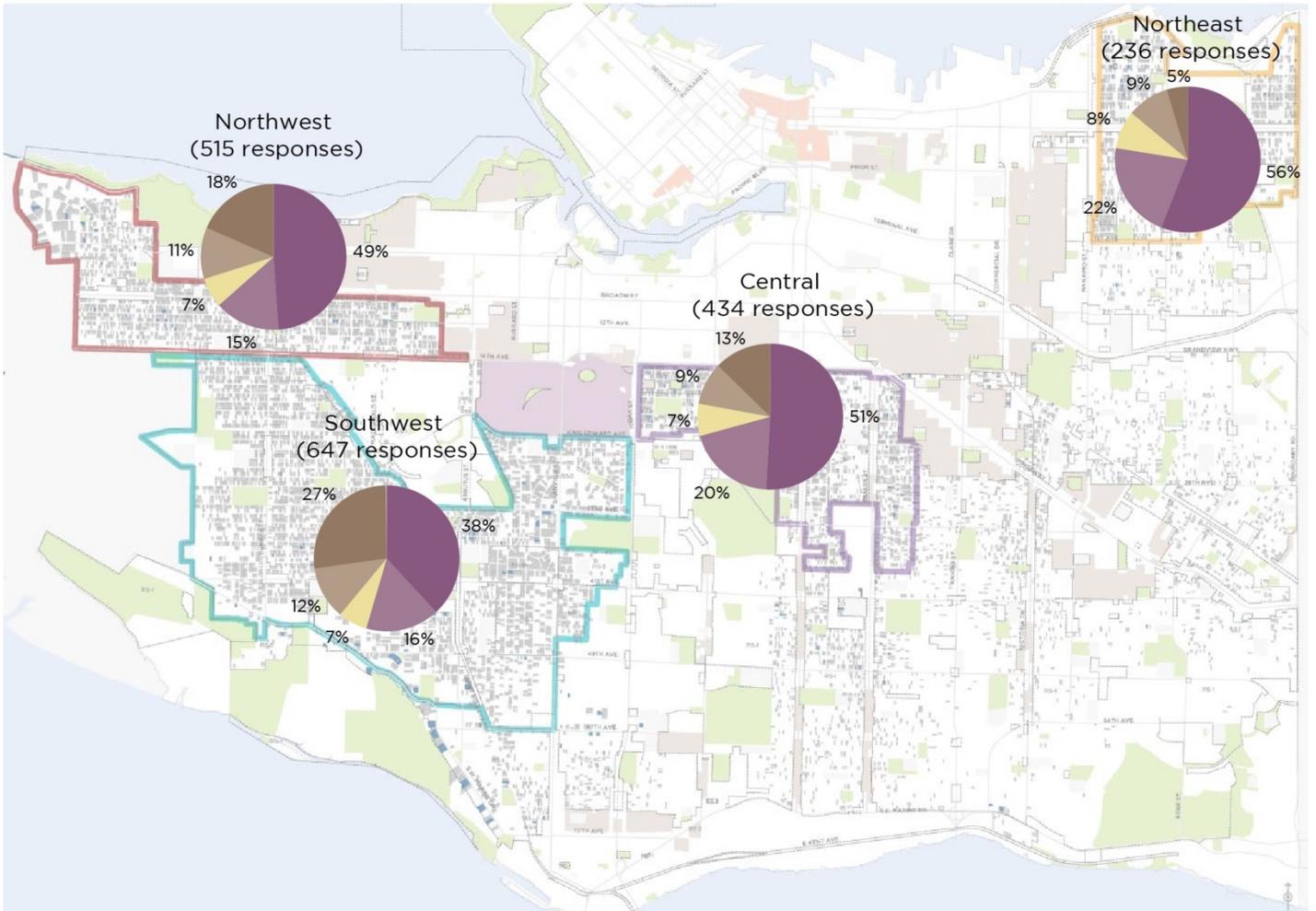




Part 1. Background

Respondents that lived a study area (1,832 responses)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Sure





Part 1. Background

Other thoughts we heard

Main themes:

- The effect of new developments on established neighbourhoods, such as the look and feel of new houses, sense of community, and impacts on local businesses
- The pace of change and impacts of the loss of heritage on neighbourhoods, and Vancouver's identity and culture
- By-laws, permits, and building codes, thoughts ranging from heritage retention and preservation to demolitions and new buildings
- Support for the City's Greenest City mandate and environmentally sustainable practices, but noting the financial costs related energy efficiency and renovating and maintaining character homes
- Concerns about the lack of housing affordability, housing options, diversity, and supply, specifically rental
- Support for incentives to retain character homes, and concern of the effect on property values with an emphasis on the free market
- The importance of maintaining green space, and feelings about its loss or preservation
- The high quality of construction and materials in character homes.

Sample comments:

- "Too many wonderful homes, full of character, integrity, craftsmanship and aesthetics have been demolished in our city. Entire neighbourhoods have been obliterated, our history completely erased! This needs to stop! Whatever is left of our character homes, has to be preserved as much as possible."
- "Character homes add to the history and beauty of our city. They are an important part of our shared culture. Protecting them not only protects this culture, but also provides some respite from constant condo construction."
- "You need to offer incentives for retention and less restrictive upgrading requirements. It is now easier to knock a character home down and recycle none of it than it is to keep it and renovate or repurpose it."
- "Destroying a perfectly good well crafted home and carting it off to a landfill or only being partially recycled to be replaced by a new home that consumes more resources flies in the face of this city's so called green philosophy."
- "I question why this hasn't happened until now. The amount of demolition of single family homes, and HUGE amount of high density development has changed the character of the city immensely. It's not the Vancouver we loved 10 years ago and it's driving young people who aren't wealthy out of the city. They should be the future of our city."
- "I strongly agree with retaining Character Homes, and believe that Character Homes can help with the housing situation in the city if they become multiple-family dwellings and/or laneway housing is allowed in their backyards."
- "I am extremely concerned about home owner's rights being taken away from them. I am against restricting homeowners, with homes that were built pre-1941, from re-developing on the land that they own. These restrictions will cause financial damage



Part 1. Background

to those homeowners and it is shocking the city would do this and not compensate for the loss they cause. These homeowners are not supporting this.”

- “A lot of old-growth trees gave up their lives to build these homes and Vancouver now trashes them.”
- “I miss the beauty of trees, bushes, and flowers that disappear when character homes are replaced.”
- “Although not every old home has ‘character,’ those that do offer a historical context to this city, and the way they were built with the materials used will likely outlast most of the new construction going up today. So it’s important to maintain, upgrade and keep them if possible.”



Part 2. Character Home Definition



Part 2. Character Home Definition

Question 3

The City of Vancouver currently defines character homes as those that were built prior to January 1, 1940 and meet four or more of the following seven criteria:

- Original massing and roof form
- Original open front porch or veranda, or only partially filled in
- Original siding or replacement siding consistent with 1940
- Period windows (50% or more), with original location, size and shape
- Original casings or trim (50% or more) such as around windows and doors
- Period details or decorative elements (2 or more of brackets, beams, joist ends, etc.)
- Other period features (porch, roof, foundation, etc.)

a) Does the date of pre-1940 seem appropriate to you?

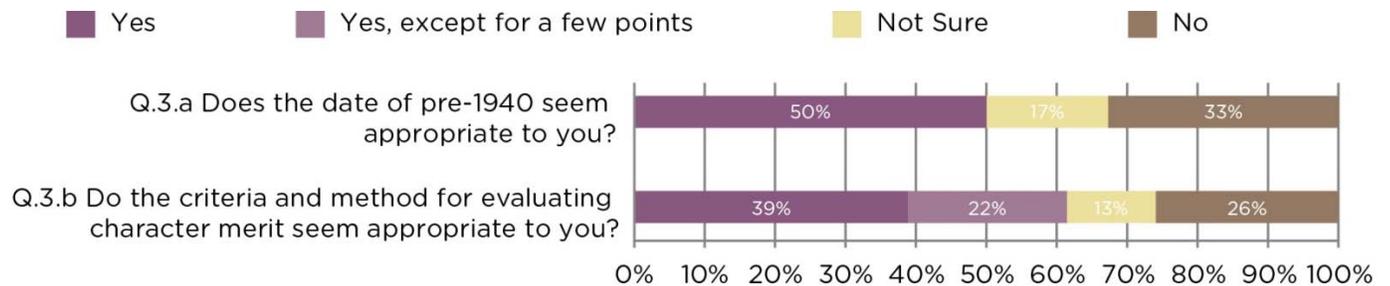
b) Do the criteria and method for evaluating character merit seem appropriate to you?

Snapshot

- Half of respondents felt January 1, 1940 was an appropriate date
- The majority (61 percent) supported the criteria and method for evaluating character merit, while a quarter (26 percent) did not
- Similar responses between pre-1940 and post-1940 home owners

Results

All respondents (3,321 responses)

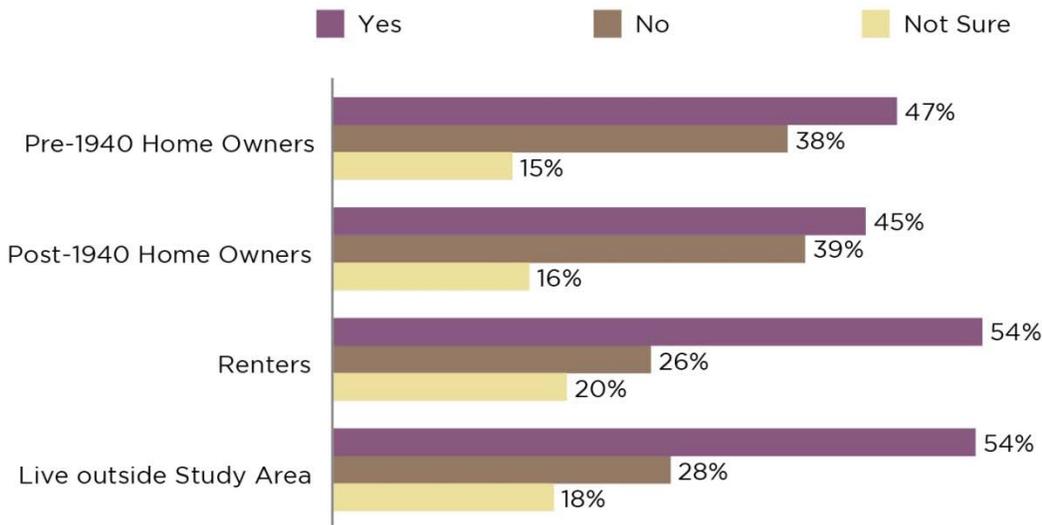




Part 2. Character Home Definition

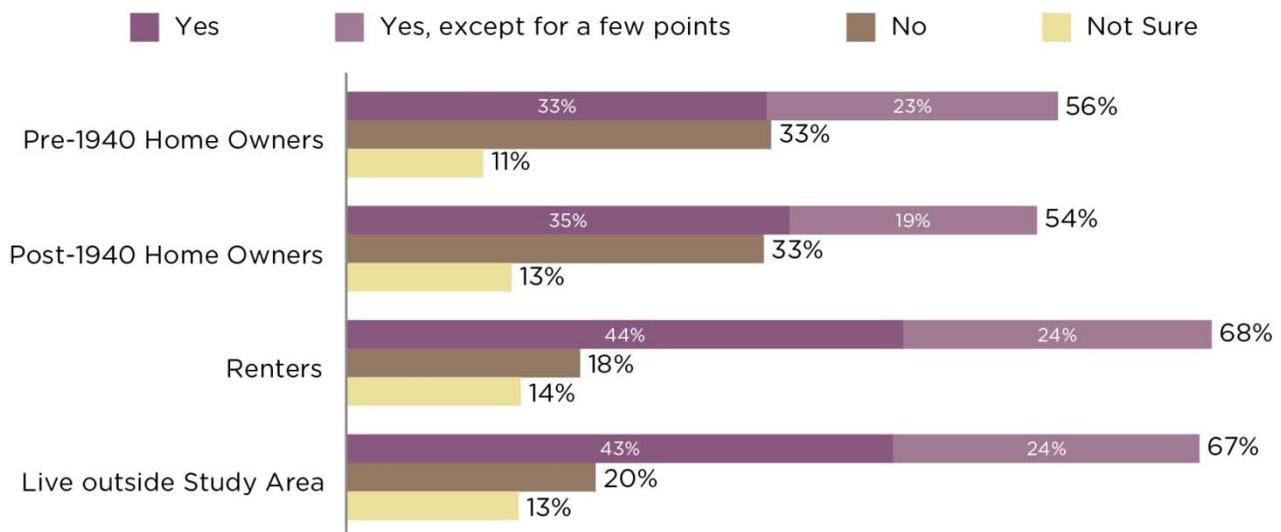
a) Does the date of pre-1940 seem appropriate to you?

All respondents by residency type (3,321 responses)



b) Do the criteria and method for evaluating character merit seem appropriate to you?

Respondents by residency type (3,321 responses)





Part 3. Study Areas



Part 3. Study Area

Question 4

This review identifies areas of the city with high concentrations of character homes. The following criteria were used to identify the study areas:

- Concentration of pre-1940 homes
- General character and quality of homes
- Zoning boundaries
- Community Visions boundaries
- Neighbourhood history and role in early Vancouver, and
- Adjacency to existing character areas.

Four study areas have been identified (see map on following page) where zoning changes to encourage retention are being explored. This means that for now, any options to encourage retention are not applicable to individual pre-1940 character homes outside of the study areas.

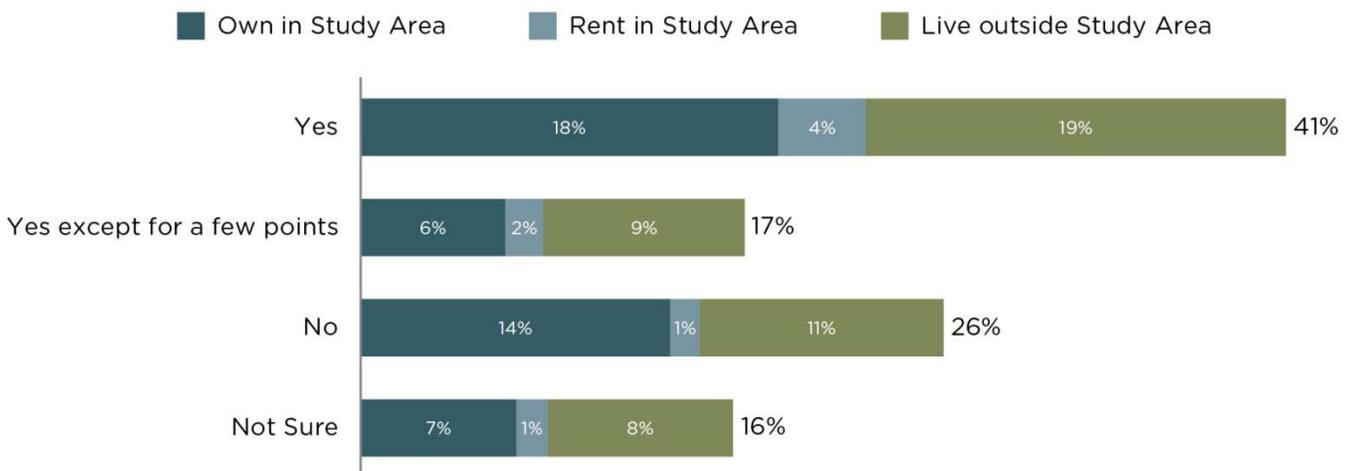
Does the approach to identify the study areas seem appropriate to you?

Snapshot

- The majority (58 percent) felt the criteria used to identify the study areas were appropriate
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

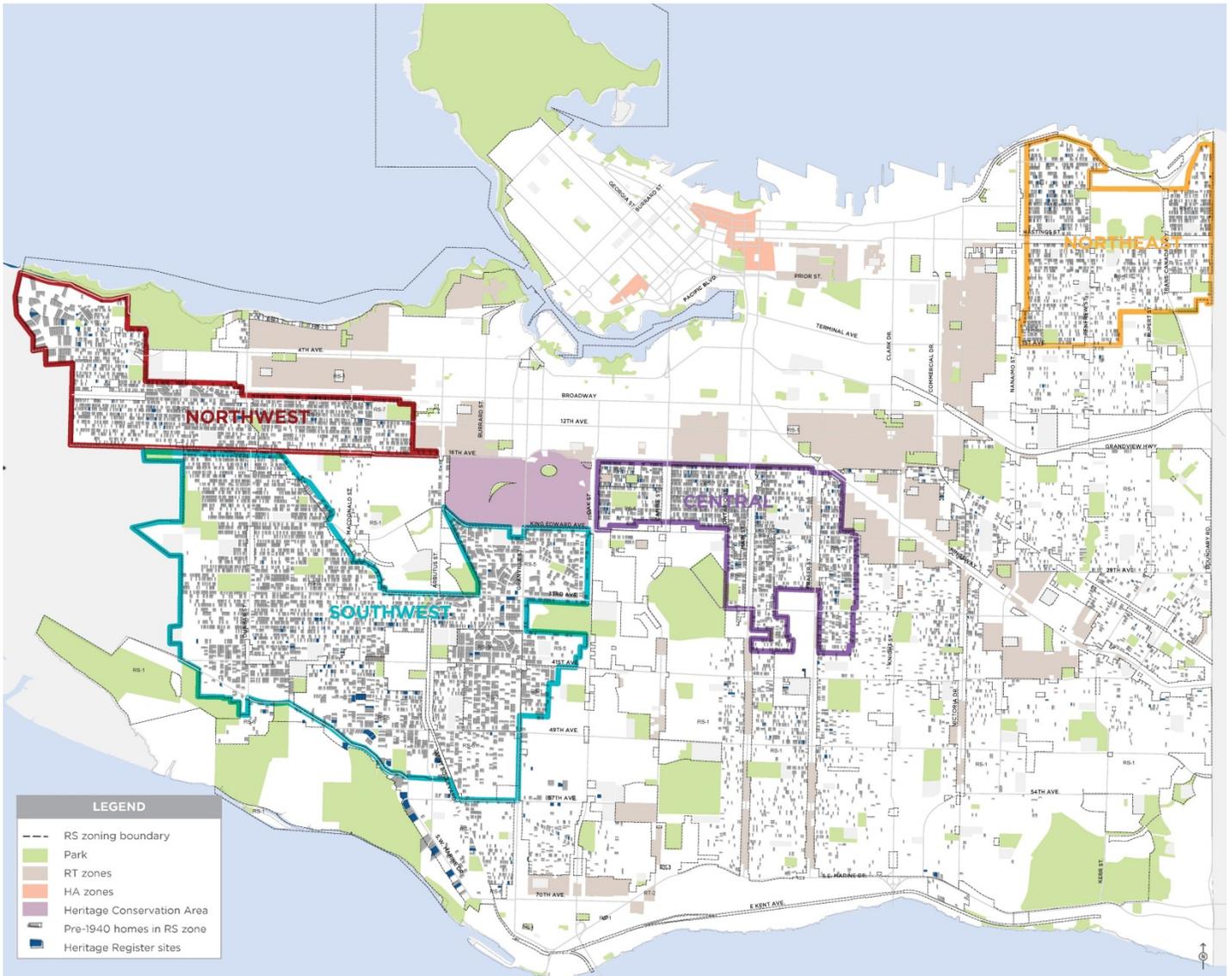
All respondents by residency type (3,321 responses)





Part 3. Study Area

Map 1 - Study areas





Part 3. Study Area

Question 5

Do you agree or disagree with exploring the retention of character homes in the:

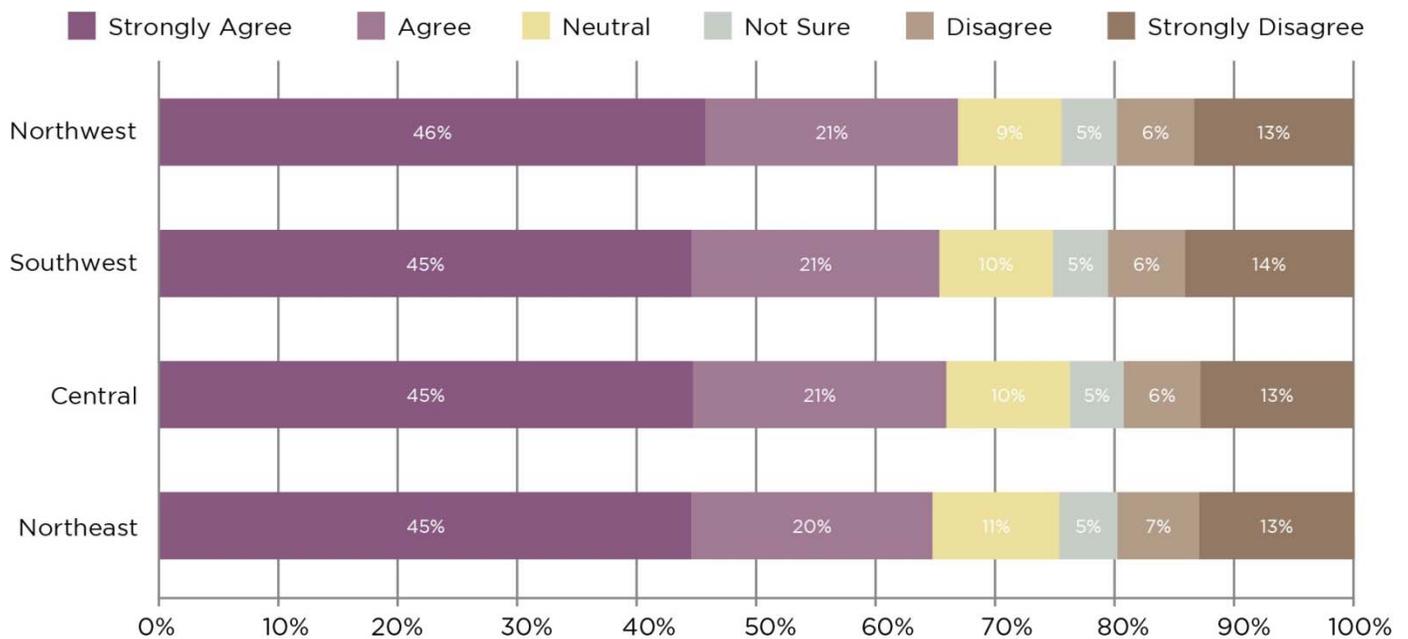
- Northwest study area?
- Southwest study area?
- Central study area?
- Northeast study area?

Snapshot

- Two-thirds (67 percent) agreed with exploring the retention of character homes in the identified study areas
- Generally similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide, with exception of greater agreement (75 percent) in the northeast study area (refer to map on next page)

Results

All respondents (3,272 responses)

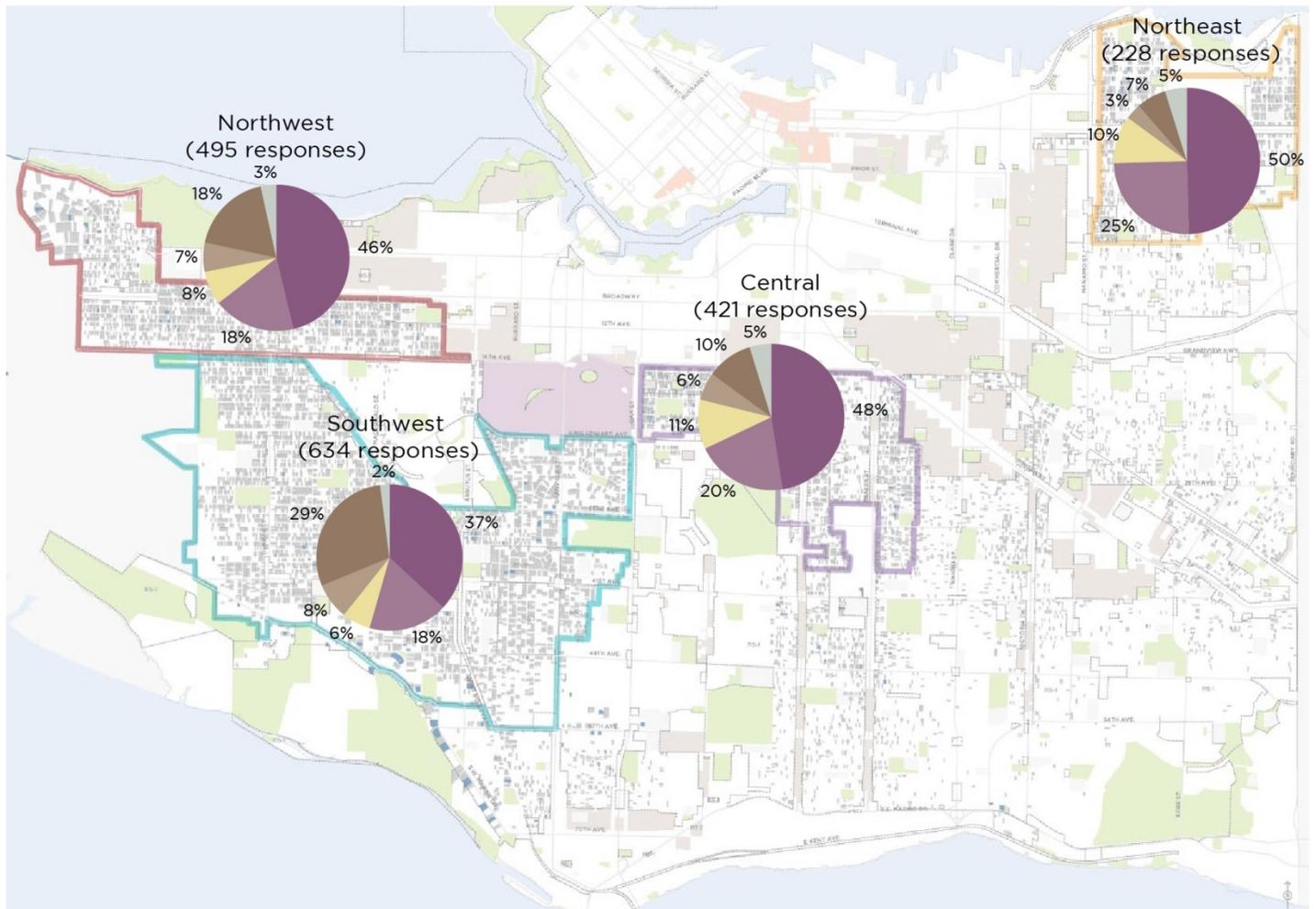




Part 3. Study Area

Respondents that lived a study area (1,778 Responses)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Sure





Part 4. Zoning Options



Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 6 - Floor area options

For character home retention, do you agree or disagree with the following:

- The intent of options to improve opportunities to increase floor area?
- Allowing up to 0.75 FSR for a typical-sized site?
- Allowing up to 0.65 FSR for a large site?

Snapshot

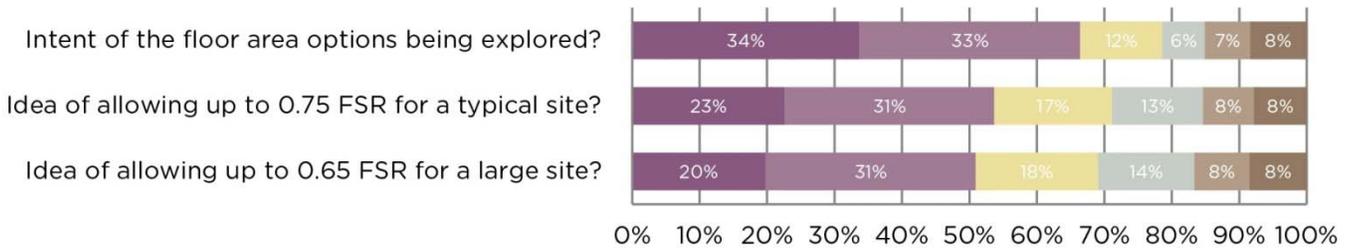
For character home retention:

- Two-thirds (67 percent) agreed with the intent to improve opportunities to increase floor area
- Over half (54 percent) agreed with allowing up to 0.75 FSR for a typical-sized site
- Half (51 percent) agreed with allowing up to 0.65 FSR for a large site
- Approximately a third were unsure about both floor area options
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

All respondents (3,278 responses)

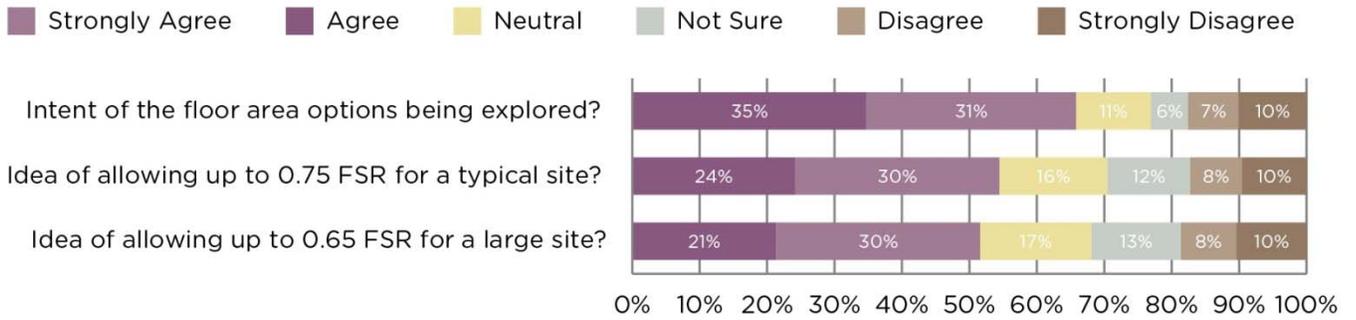
Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Not Sure
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree





Part 4. Zoning Options

Respondents that lived a study area (1,817 responses)





Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 7 - Floor area options

For new home construction, do you agree or disagree with the following:

- The intent of options to decrease floor area to better manage scale and neighbourhood fit?
- Allowing up to 0.50 FSR for a typical-sized site?
- Allowing up to 0.40 FSR for a large site?
- Allowing up to a maximum floor area of 10,000 square feet?

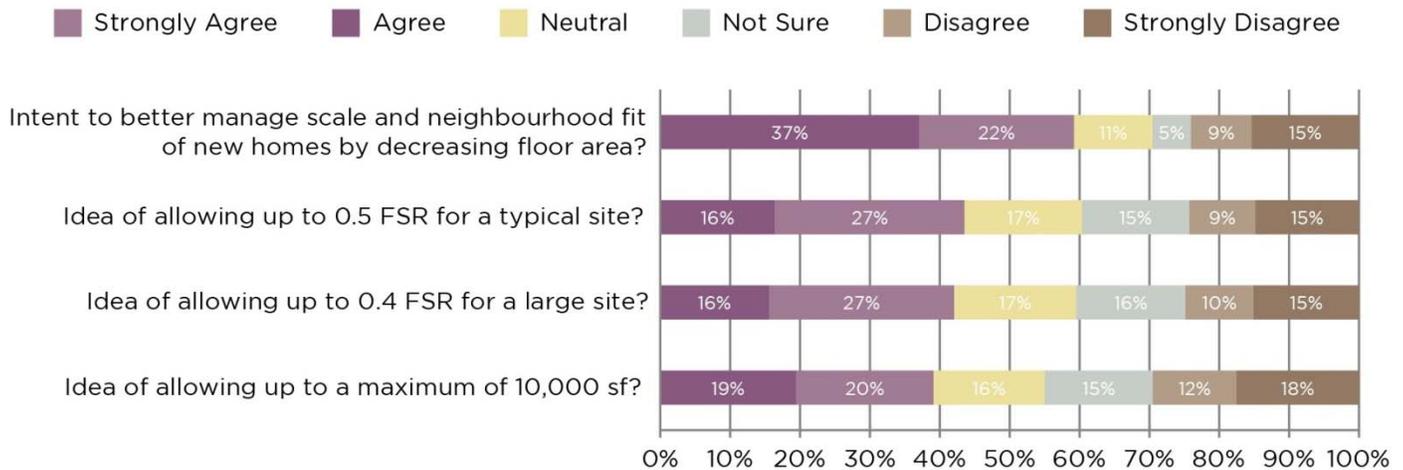
Snapshot

For new home construction:

- The majority (59 percent) agreed with the intent to decrease floor area to better manage scale and neighbourhood fit
- Less than half (43 percent) agreed with allowing up to 0.5 FSR for a typical-sized site, or allowing up to 0.4 FSR for a larger site
- Approximately a third were neutral or unsure for all three floor area ideas
- Two-fifths (39 percent) agreed with allowing up to 10,000 square feet
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

All respondents (3,283 responses)

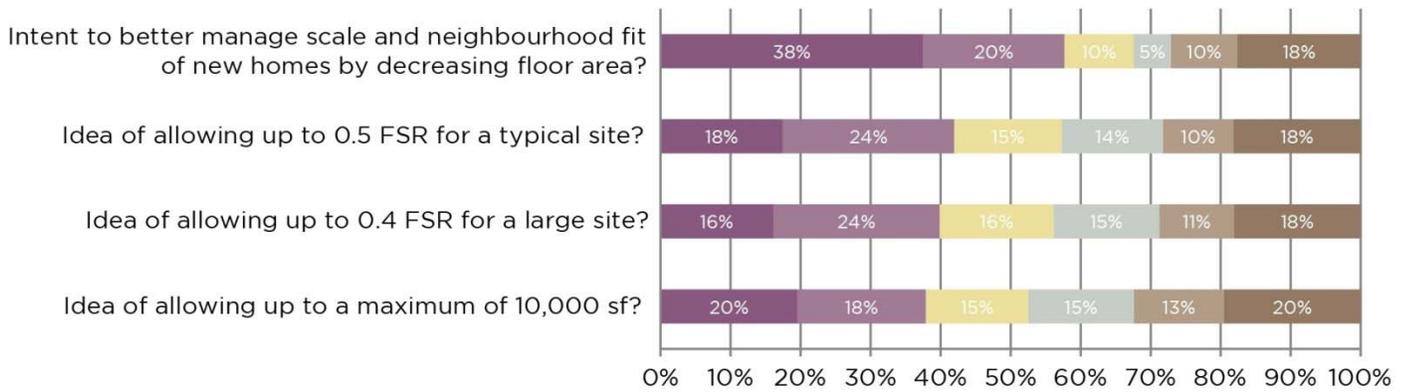




Part 4. Zoning Options

Respondents that lived a study area (1,818)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree





Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 8 – Building design and site options

For character home retention, do you agree or disagree with the following:

- The intent of the options to increase flexibility in zoning?
- Including broad zoning relaxations?
- Using design guidelines to help clarify requirements and support renovations that maintain character?

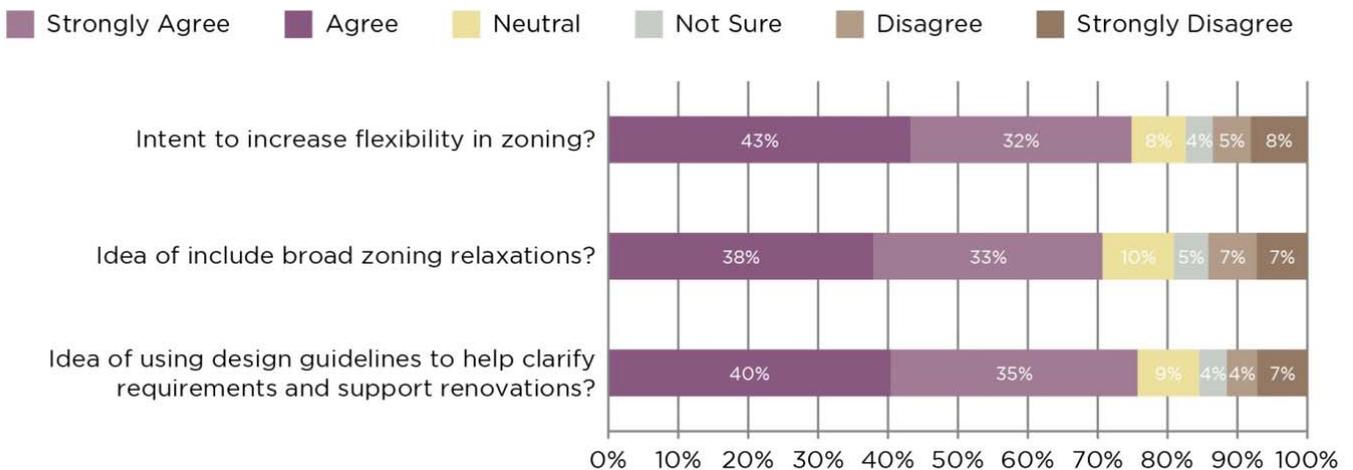
Snapshot

For character home retention:

- Three-quarters (75 percent) agreed with the intent to increase flexibility in zoning
- Over two-thirds (71 percent) agreed with including broad zoning relaxations
- Three-quarters (75 percent) agreed with using design guidelines to help clarify requirements and support renovations that maintain character
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

All respondents (3,279 responses)





Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 9 – Building design and site options

For new home construction, do you agree or disagree with the following:

- The intent to simplify zoning regulations?
- Simplify floor area allocations?
- Including basic design regulations in zoning?

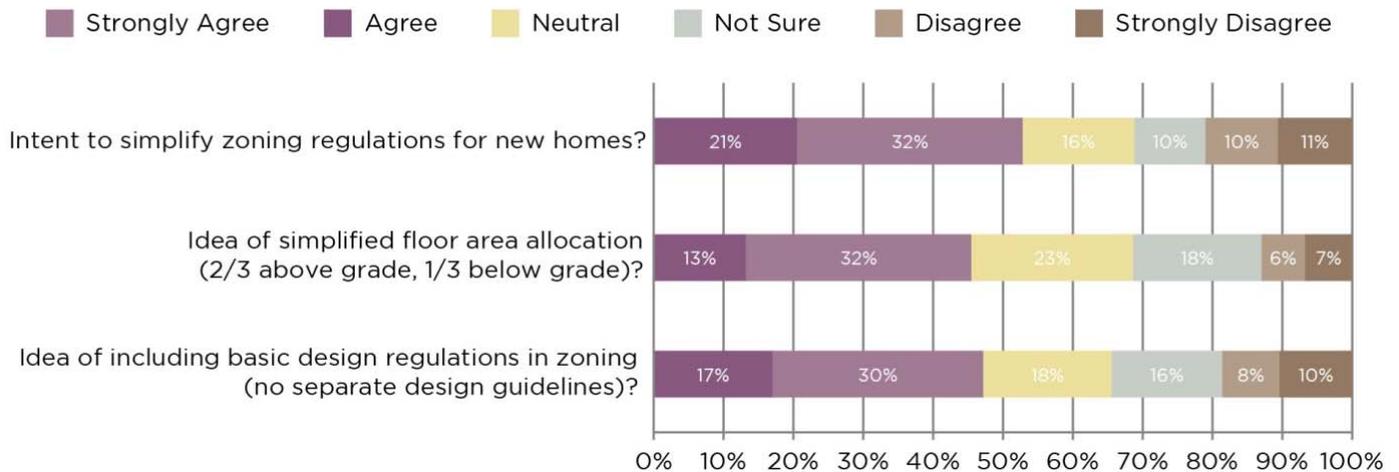
Snapshot

For new home construction:

- The majority (53 percent) agreed with simplifying zoning regulations for new homes, while over a quarter (26 percent) were neutral or unsure
- Less than half (43 percent) agreed with the idea of simplifying the floor area allocation, while a comparable level (41 percent) were neutral or unsure
- Less than half (47 percent) agreed with the idea of including basic design regulations in zoning, while a third (34 percent) were neutral or unsure
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

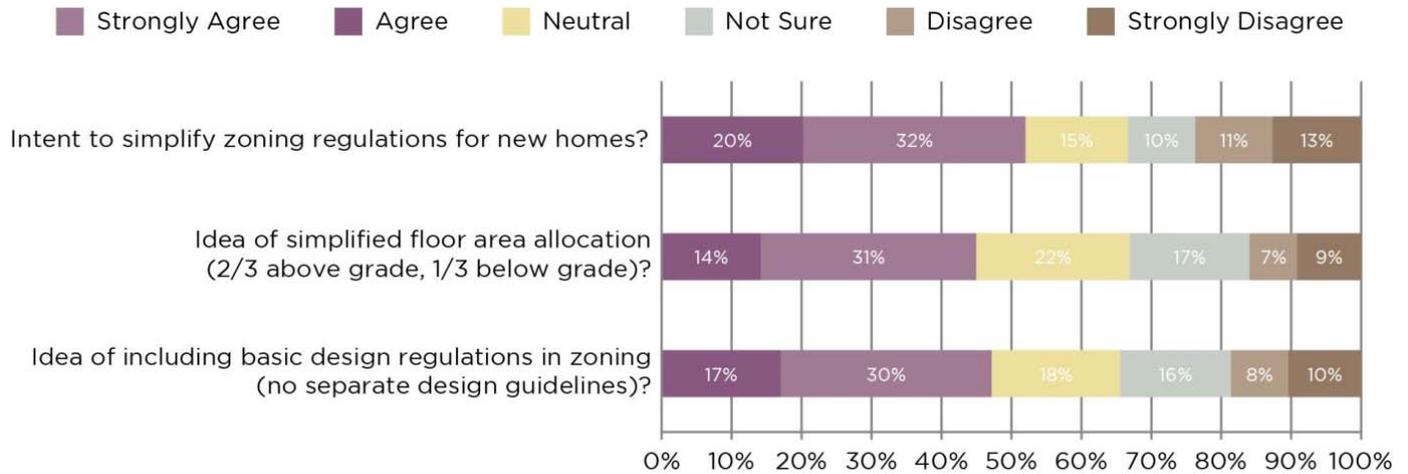
All respondents (3,275 responses)





Part 4. Zoning Options

Respondents that lived in a study area (1,814 responses)





Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 10 - Dwelling unit options

For character home retention, do you agree or disagree with the following:

- The intent to provide new dwelling units opportunities?
- Allowing multiple secondary suites?
- Allowing multiple conversion dwelling units?
- Allowing infill?
- Allowing stratification of multiple conversion dwellings and infill units?

Snapshot

For character home retention:

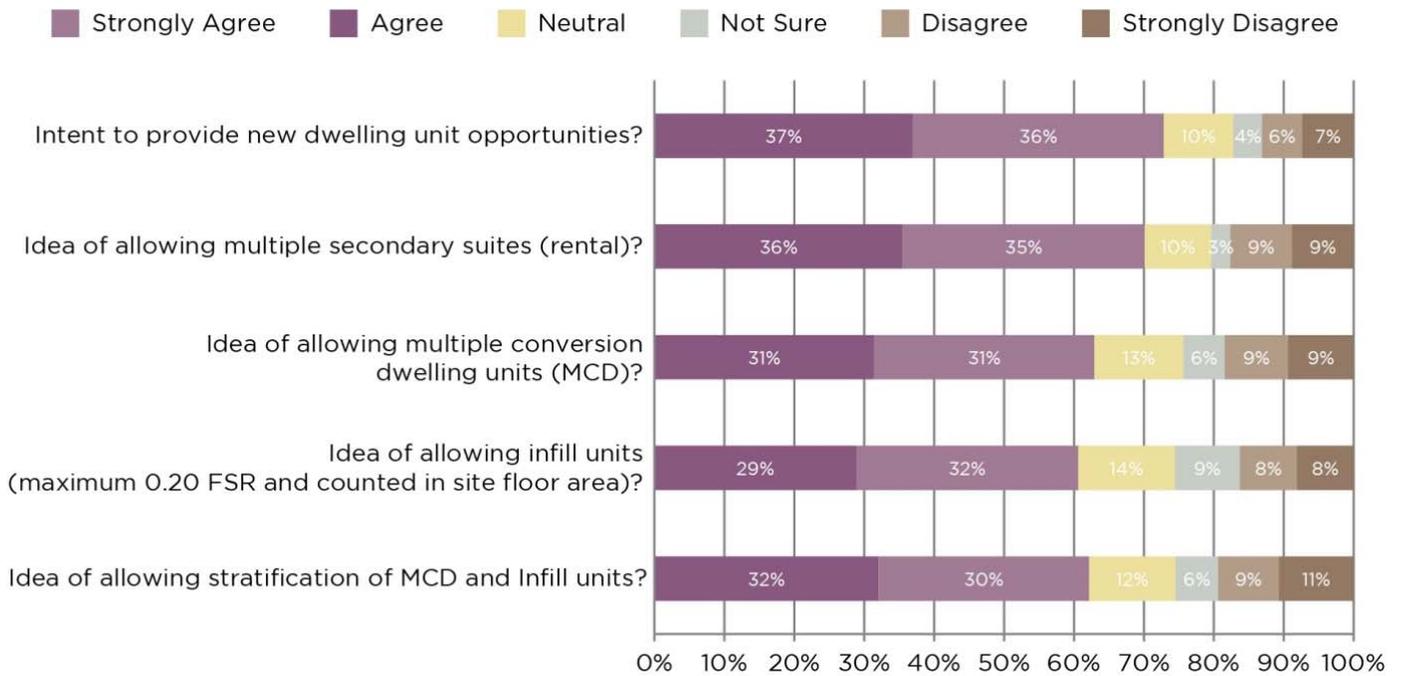
- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) agreed with the intent to provide new dwelling unit opportunities
- Over two-thirds (71 percent) agreed with allowing multiple secondary suites
- Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) agreed with allowing multiple conversion dwelling units
- The majority (61 percent) agreed with allowing infill units
- Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) agreed with allowing stratification of multiple conversion dwelling units and infill units
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide



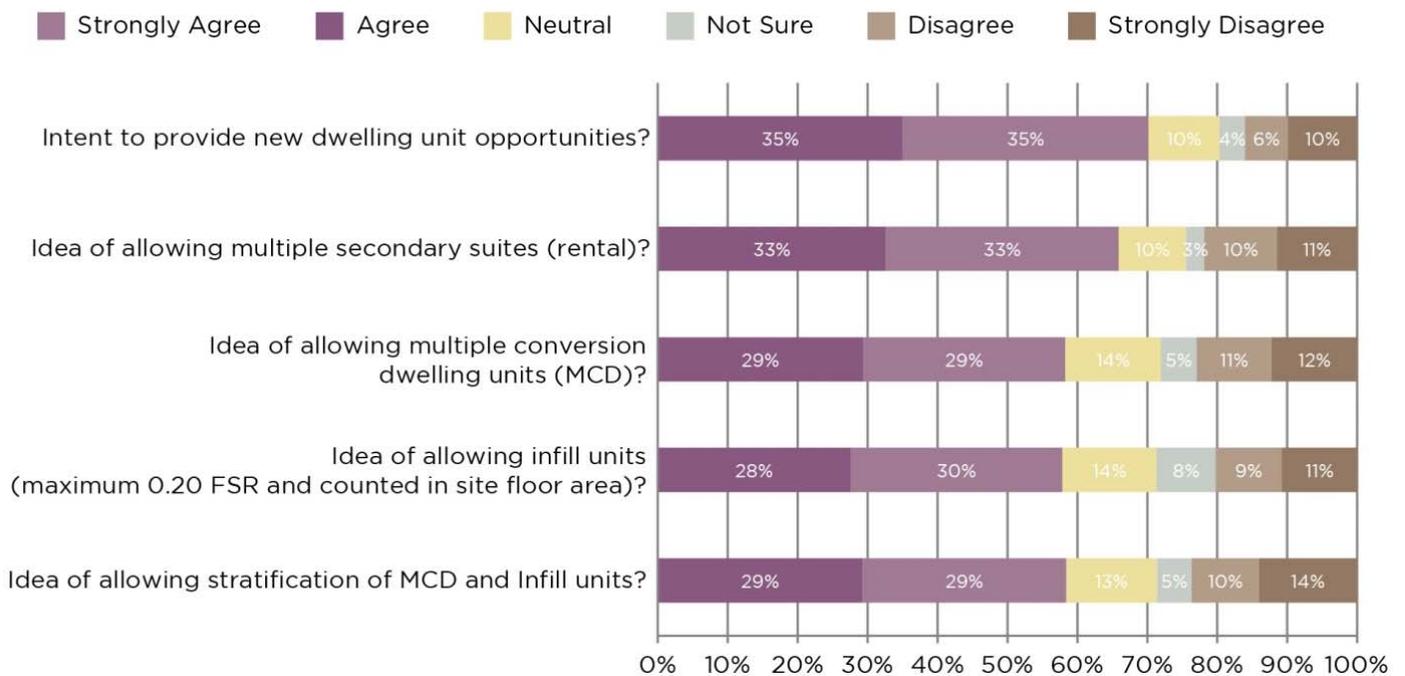
Part 4. Zoning Options

Results

All respondents (3,267 responses)



Respondents that lived in a study area (1,814 Responses)





Part 4. Zoning Options

Question 11 - Dwelling unit options

For new home construction, do you agree or disagree with the intent to maintain the number and type of dwelling units in current zoning (single family home, one secondary suite, and laneway house) with no stratification allowed?

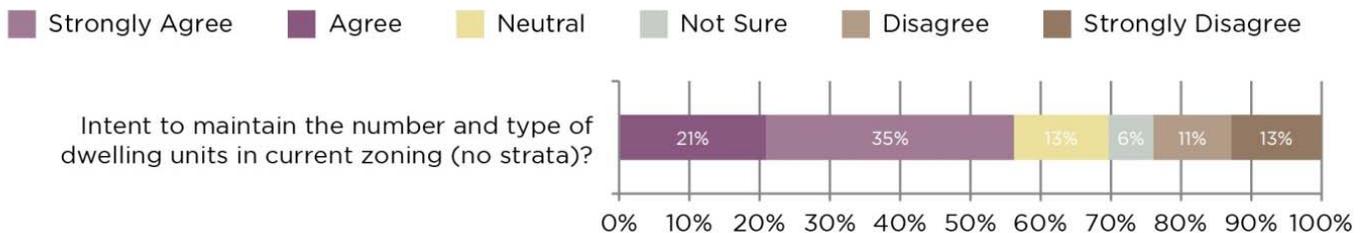
Snapshot

For new home construction:

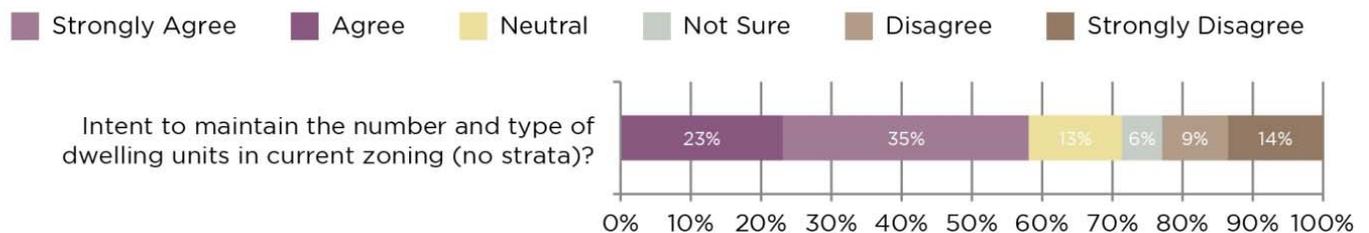
- The majority (56 percent) agreed with the intent to maintain the number and type of dwelling units in current zoning
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide

Results

All respondents (3,282 responses)



Respondents that lived in a study area (1,820 Responses)





Part 5. Regulatory Approach



Part 5. Regulatory Approach

Question 12

The City could use one of two systems of regulations to encourage the retention of homes with heritage character in single-family neighbourhoods: Zoning approach or a combination heritage and zoning approach. The heritage and zoning approach includes elements of the zoning approach but with an overarching Heritage Conservation Area Official Development Plan guiding renovation and new home construction in the area.

Which system of regulatory approach do you prefer to encourage the retention of character homes in single-family zones?

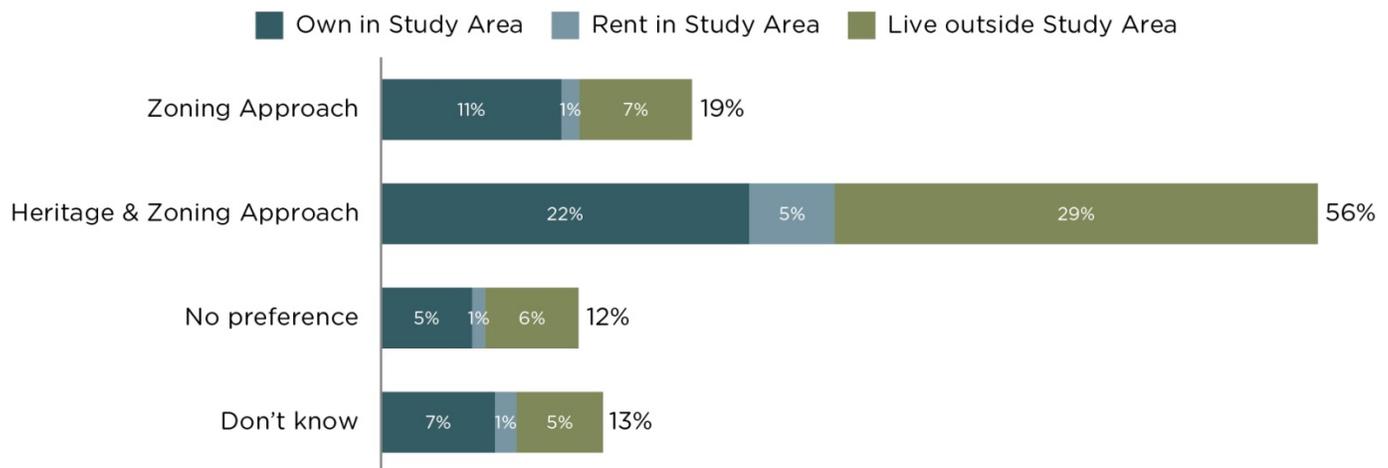
Snapshot

- The majority (56 percent) preferred a combined approach of both zoning and heritage conservation tools to encourage the retention of character homes in single-family zones
- Similar responses between those who live within the study areas and citywide, and across study areas

Results

All respondents (3,322 Responses)

Overall Preferred System of Regulatory Approach (3,322 responses)

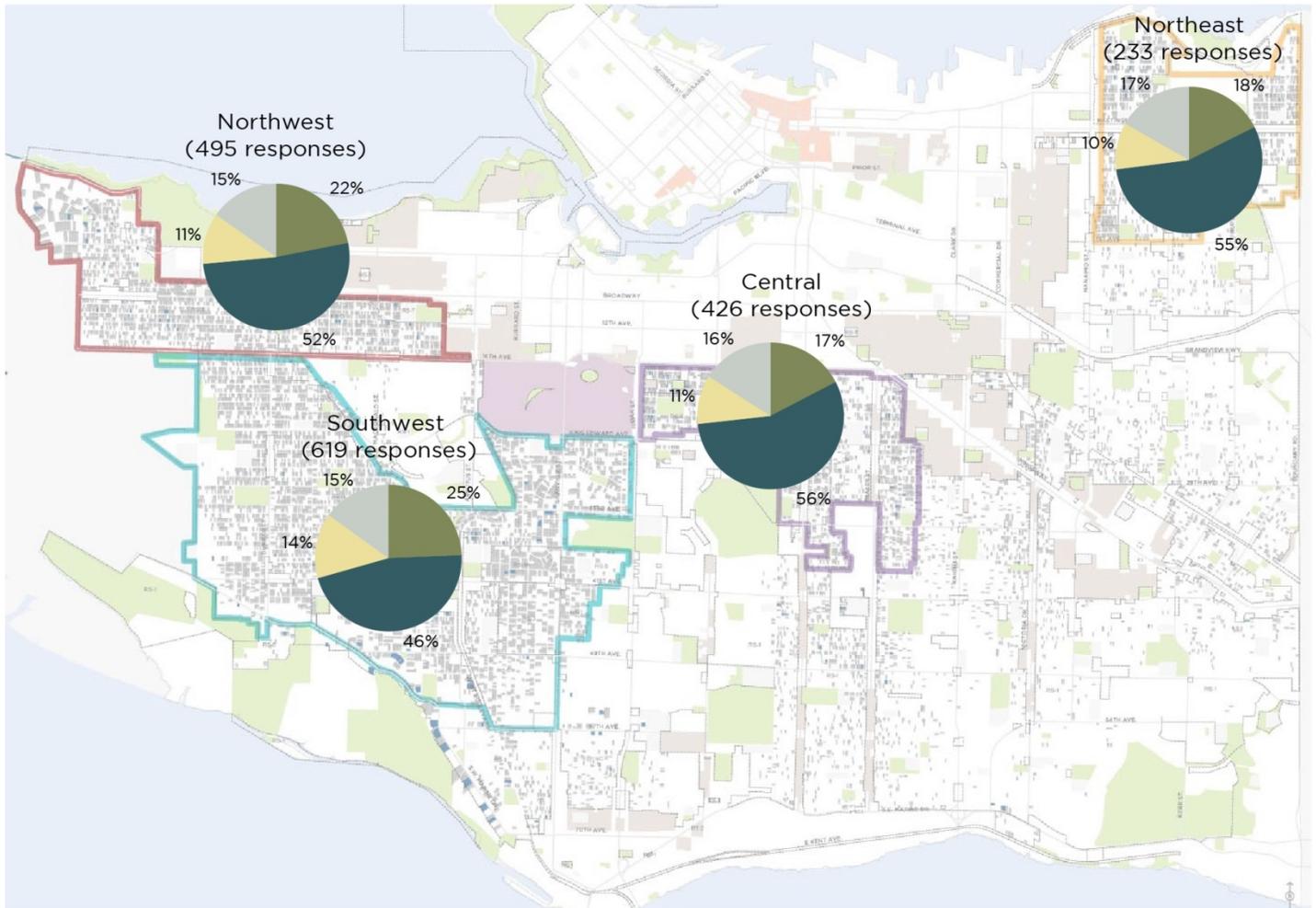




Part 5. Regulatory Approach

Respondents that lived in a study area (1,773 Responses)

■ Zoning Approach ■ Heritage and Zoning Approach ■ No preference ■ Don't know





Part 6. Other Considerations



Part 6. Other Considerations

Question 13

The City can support and encourage character home retention in a variety of ways. This could include special incentive programs, measures to discourage character home demolition and ensuring that replacement homes contribute to other City objectives.

Do you agree or disagree with the other options to support character home retention?

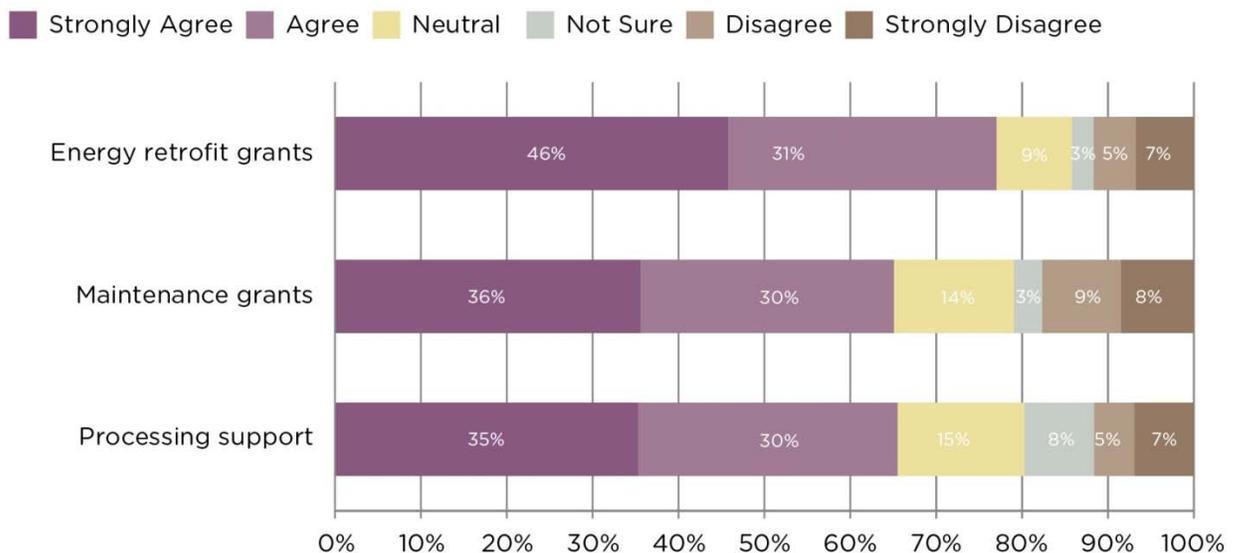
Snapshot

For character home retention:

- Over three-quarters (77 percent) agreed with exploring energy retrofit grants to support character home retention
- Two-thirds (66 percent) agreed with exploring maintenance grants
- Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) agreed with exploring processing support

Results

All respondents (3,322 responses)





Part 6. Other Considerations

Question 14

When a character home is demolished, the City can introduce special requirements aimed at meeting other City objectives.

Do you agree or disagree with the other options for replacement homes (new homes built in place of a demolished character home)?

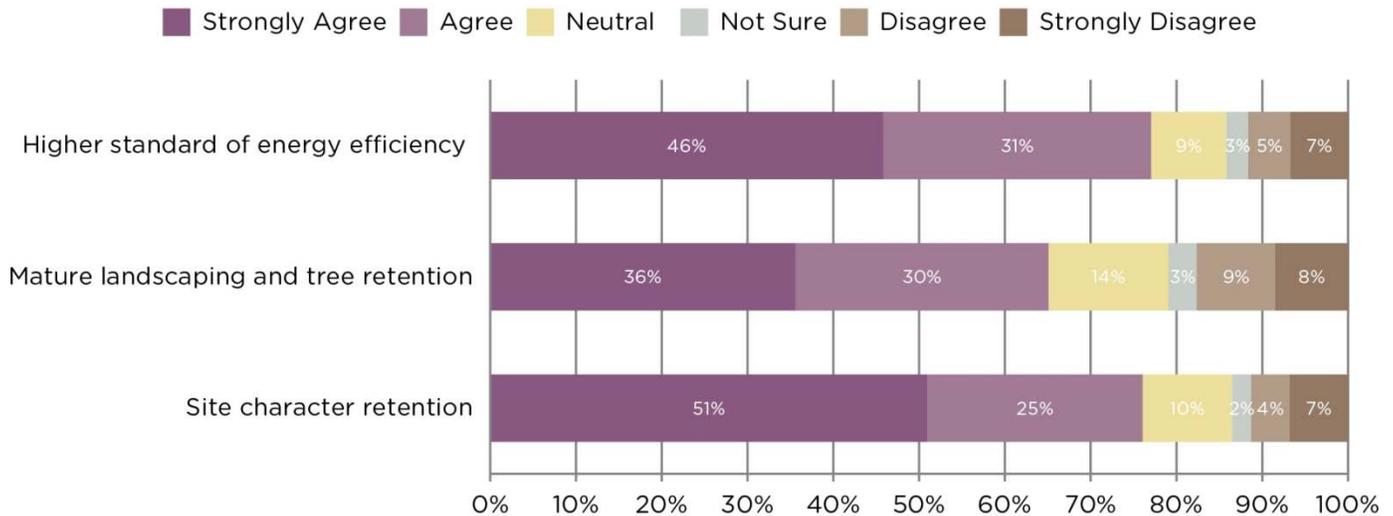
Snapshot

For new home constructed in place of a demolished character home:

- Over three-quarters (77 percent) agreed the new home should meet higher standards of energy efficiency
- Two-thirds (66 percent) agreed with requiring mature landscaping and tree retention
- Over three-quarters (76 percent) agreed with retaining site character

Results

All respondents (3,318 responses)





Demographics



Demographics

Question

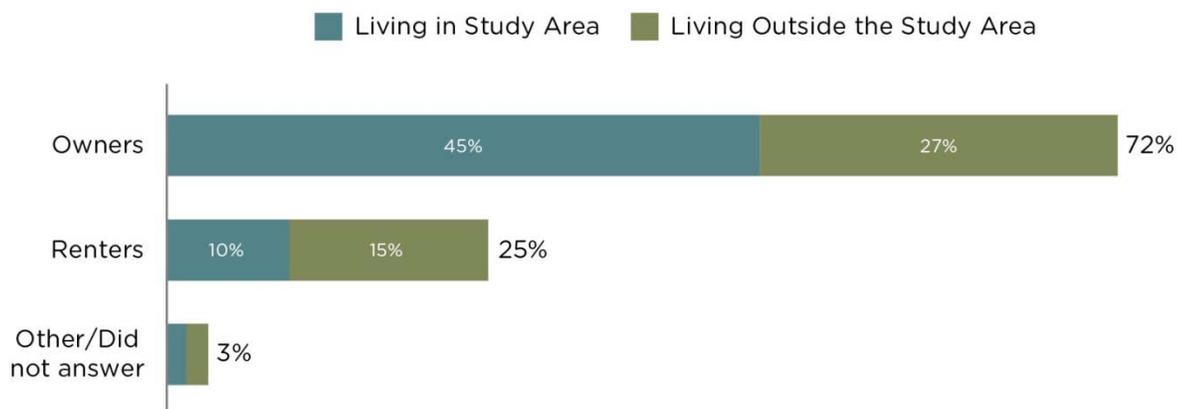
Do you own or rent your home?

Snapshot

- Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) are home owners
- Over half (55 percent) lived in a study area

Results

All respondents (3,322 responses)

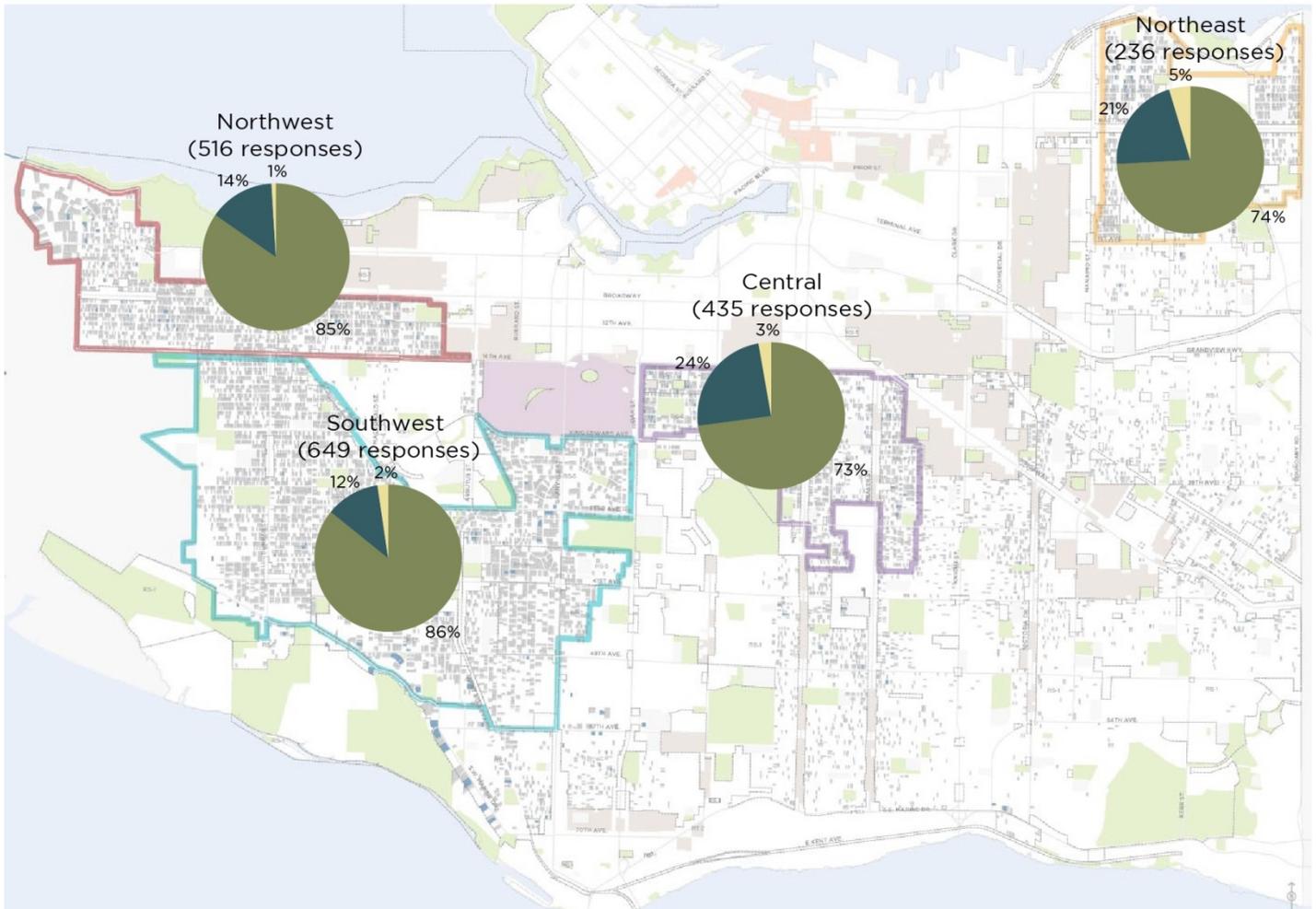




Demographics

Respondents that lived in a study area (1,842)

Own Rent Other





Demographics

Question

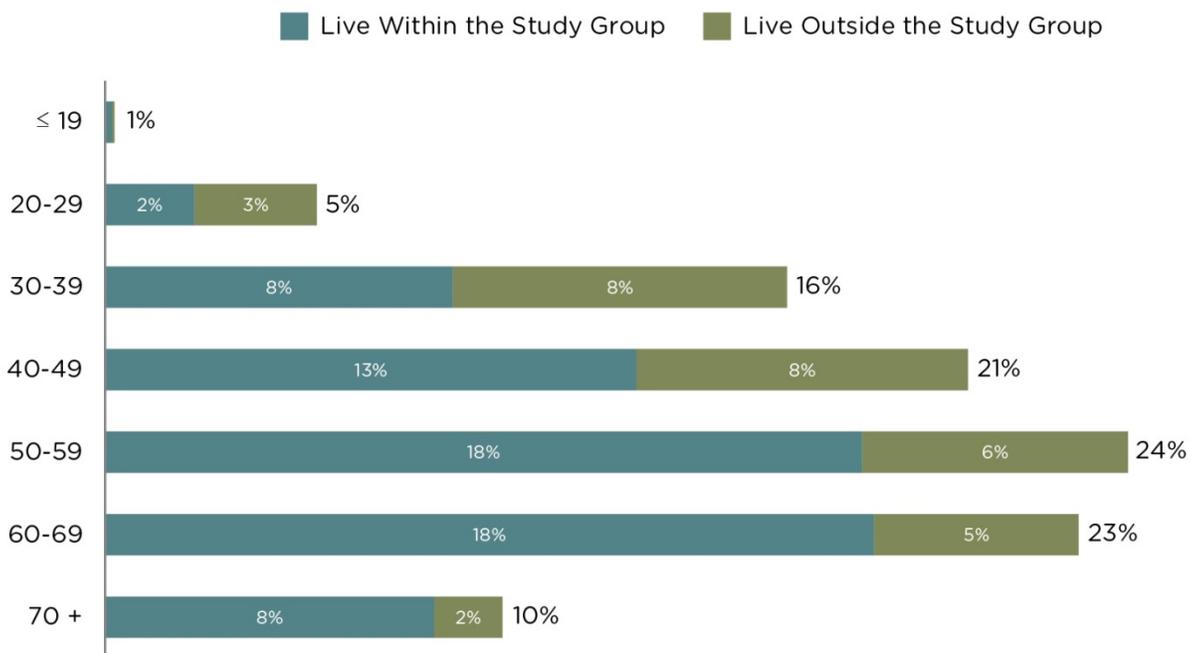
What is your age category?

Snapshot

- More than half (57 percent) were over 50 years of age
- One fifth (22 percent) of respondents were under the age of 40
- The Central and Northeast study areas had a higher number of younger respondents.

Results

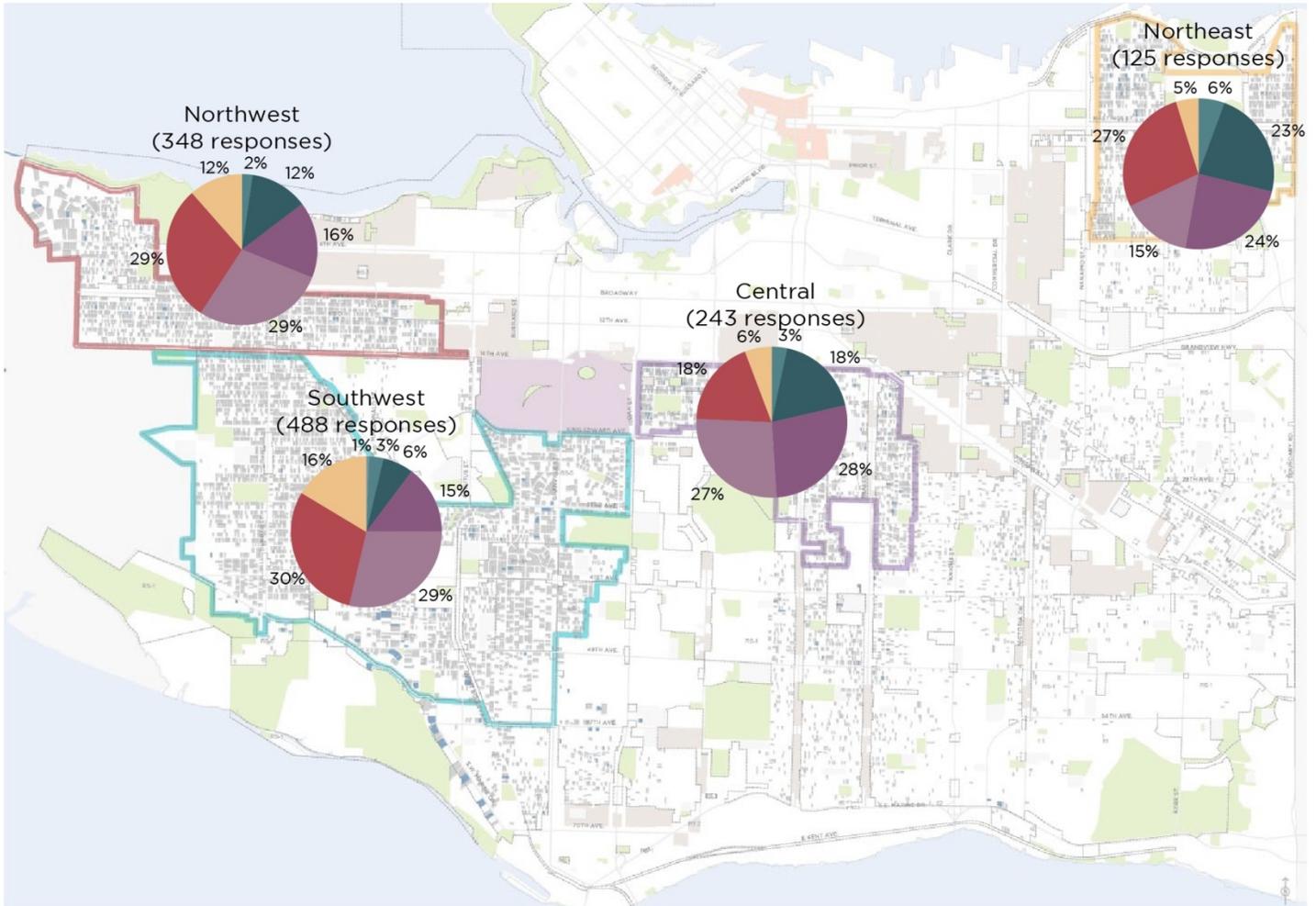
All respondents (1,769 responses)





Demographics

Respondents that lived in a study area (1,204 responses)





Demographics

Question

If you live in a study area, how long have you lived there?

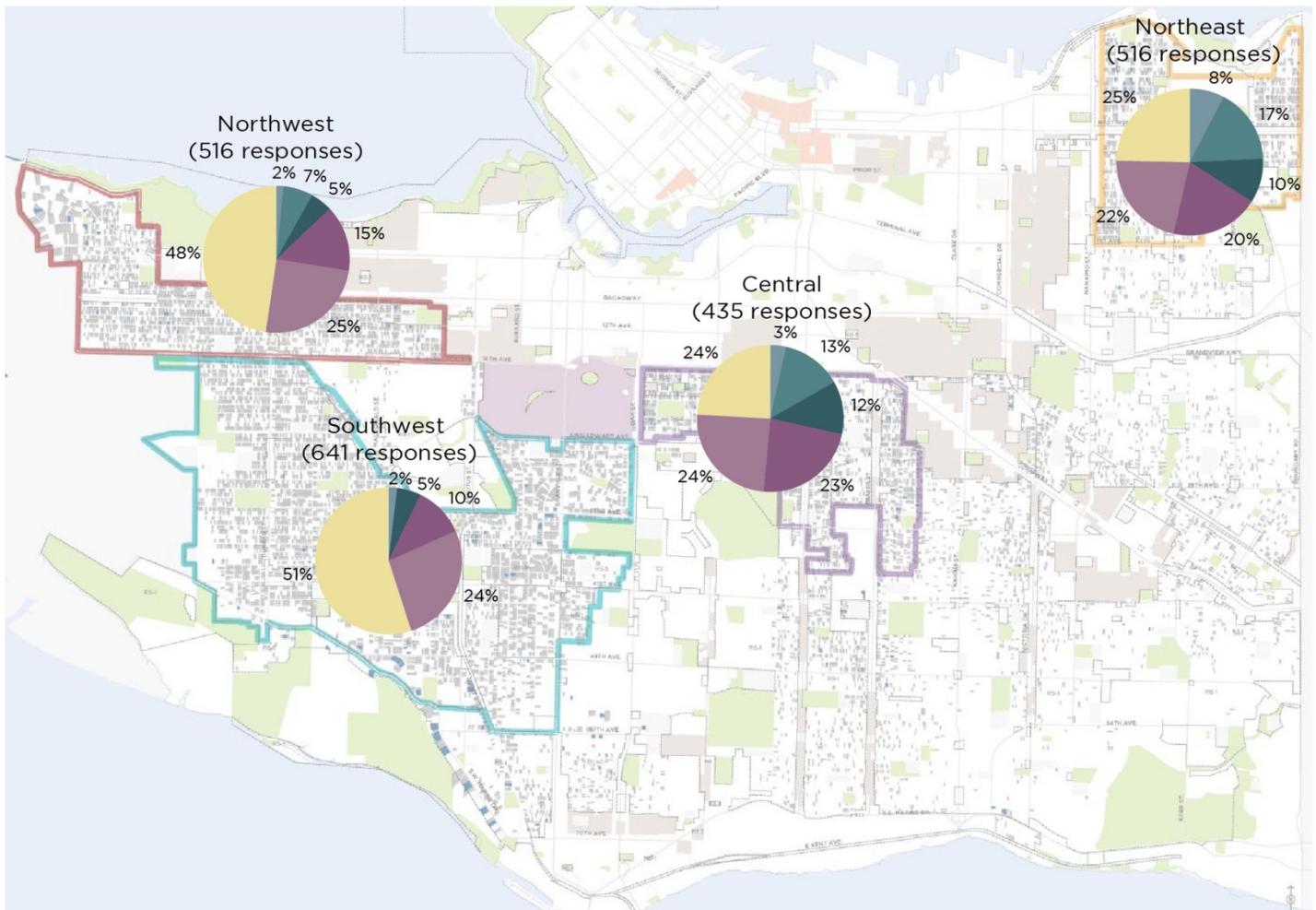
Snapshot

- Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) lived in the study area over 10 years

Results

Respondents that lived in a study area (2,108 responses)

< 1 year
 1-3 years
 4-5 years
 5-10 years
 11-20 years
 > 20 years





Demographics

Question

If you live in a study area, which best describes you?

Snapshot

- Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) lived in a pre-1940 home

Results

Respondents that lived in a study area (1,699 responses)





Demographics

Question

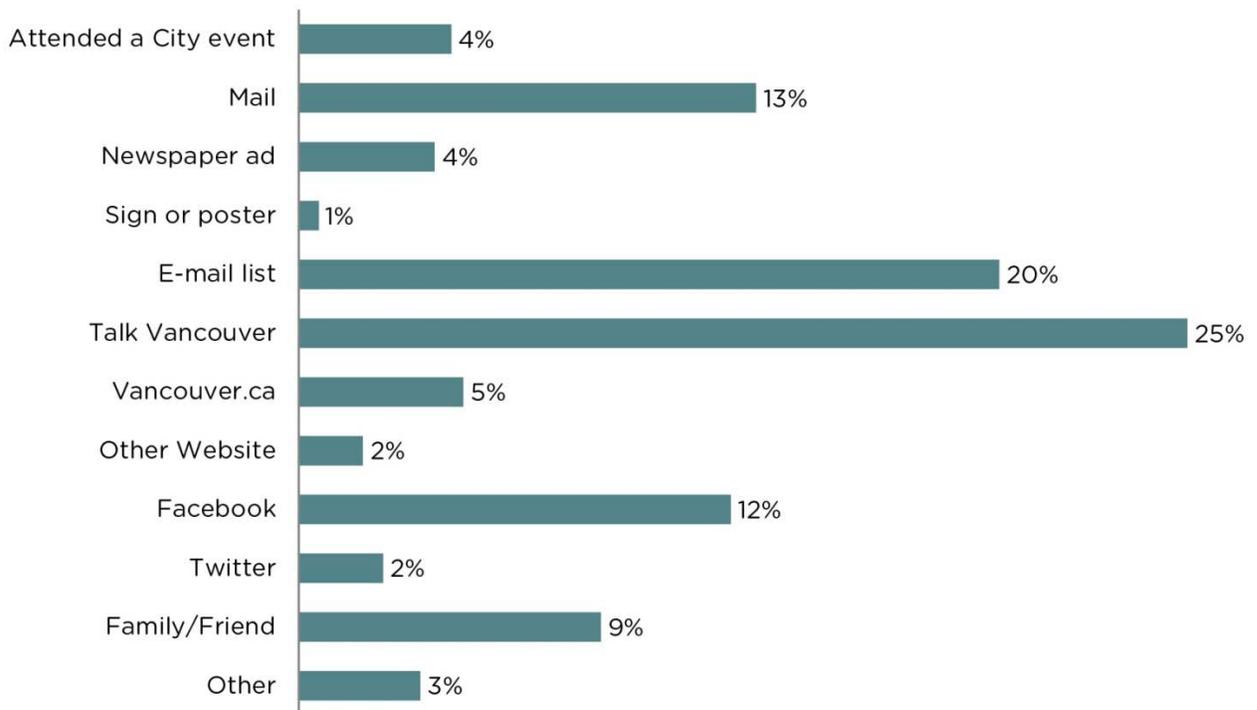
How did you hear about the Character Homes Zoning Review consultation?

Snapshot

- Two-thirds (66 percent) heard about the *Character Homes Zoning Review* consultation through an online source

Results

All respondents (3,291 responses)





Questionnaire Methodology



Questionnaire Methodology

Questionnaire Methodology

As respondents are self-selected, the results are an indication of general sentiment rather than a statistically significant test of responses. Respondents were not required to provide a response, and could respond only to the questions that interest them. As a result, the number of responses may vary by question. The responses to the quantitative questions are summarised below as percentages, charts, and graphs.

Respondents could also provide additional feedback through open ended questions. Over 11,000 comments were received, with the two initial questions generating the highest number of responses. However there was repetition of comments with later questions receiving similar comments provided in the initial questions. An in depth analysis was completed on the two initial questions in the *Character Home Zoning Review* questionnaire that asked respondents: a) what are other areas of concern for respondents, and b) how respondents feel about character home retention. Comments were grouped into the broad themes that emerged. A summary of the broad themes and a sample of comments can be found in the 'Background' section on pages 7, 10 and 11.