Connecting COMMUNITY with DESIGN

Welcome!

THANK YOU FOR COMING!

The purpose of this project is to develop policies and actions that would help Esquimalt retain and enhance its sense of social connectedness as the Township adds density.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

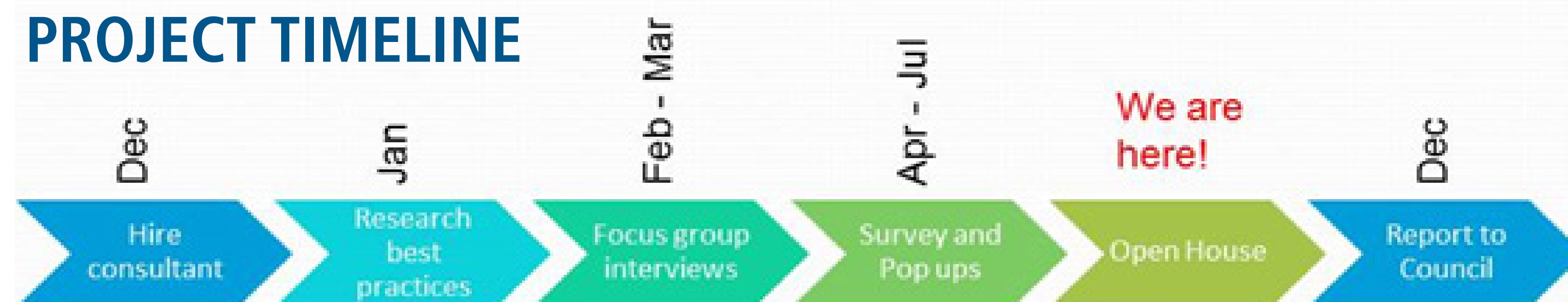| 1. Review the display boards & watch the video monitors.	2. Place your dots next to the actions you would prioritize.	3. Use post-it notes to add your thoughts on the blank posters.

INPUT TO DATE

Throughout 2019 we have been doing research and gathering residents' feedback on the importance of multi-family housing design to social connectedness.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Five focus groups	**35** stakeholders representing residents, community associations, developers and builders, architects, landscape architects, housing providers, faith organizations, CFB Esquimalt and non-profit group .
One community survey	**438** respondents
Three pop up events	Farmer's market, CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum open house and Esquimalt Adventure Park.
One open house	Today!

The goal of this open house is to get a sense of whether we have captured people's preferences and obtain feedback on the approach and recommendations.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Dec	Jan	Feb - Mar	Apr - Jul	We are here!	Dec
Hire consultant	Research best practices	Focus group interviews	Survey and Pop ups	Open House	Report to Council

NEXT STEPS

Input gathered at this open house will help us refine the recommendations for social connectedness in multi-family housing. Staff will begin working on a set of design guidelines and potential new Official Community Plan policies for Council to consider in spring 2020.

Township of ESQUIMALT   plan h   island health   esquimalt.ca/DesigningDensity

Connecting
COMMUNITY
with DESIGN

? What is social connectedness?

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Social connectedness is the degree to which we feel connected to other people and have a sense of belonging in our communities. It is defined by frequency of contact with others, personal relationships, and engagement in the community.

Social isolation during childhood and adolescence can lead to chronic isolation and can significantly hinder a child's academic success. Social isolation in seniors can be as impactful on health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

A recent study found that although 67.6 per cent of British Columbians felt a strong or very strong connection to their local community, a significant percentage (32.4 per cent) did not.

Social connectedness is a key driver of well-being and resilience. Well connected people and communities are happier and healthier, and are better able to take charge of their lives and find solutions to the problems they are facing.

Communities with higher levels of social well-being also show lower levels of anxiety and depression and higher levels of trust and cooperativeness, among other positive traits.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Many factors can influence our social well-being and sense of connection with others. These include your personality, family background, your health or lack of health, living arrangements, socio-economic status etc.

There is, however, a growing body of evidence that the built environment also has a huge effect on our ability and opportunity to connect with others. For example, being active, experiencing nature, feeling safe and having privacy all have been found to influence our social connectedness outcomes.

This study focusses on how the built environment (specifically multi-family housing) can be designed to better foster social connections and a sense of well-being in its residents.

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? How does housing affect social connectedness?

THE HIGHLIGHTS

We spend 90 per cent of our lives indoors so the design of those buildings (mostly homes, but workplaces too) is very important to fostering our social well-being.

As municipalities try to address the simultaneous challenges of affordability and well-being, it is crucial to identify design strategies for multi-family housing that foster positive social connectedness – we need homes and communities that bring people together in positive, meaningful ways.

The Happy Homes report by the Happy City consultancy in Vancouver has summarized the research into social connectedness in multi-family buildings into ten main principles. These can be seen in the image below.

In our study, we focussed on three of these areas to ask our questions: 'Doing things together', 'Nature', and 'Feeling safe'. Many of the other principles such as exposure, comfort and walkability arose in our conversations.
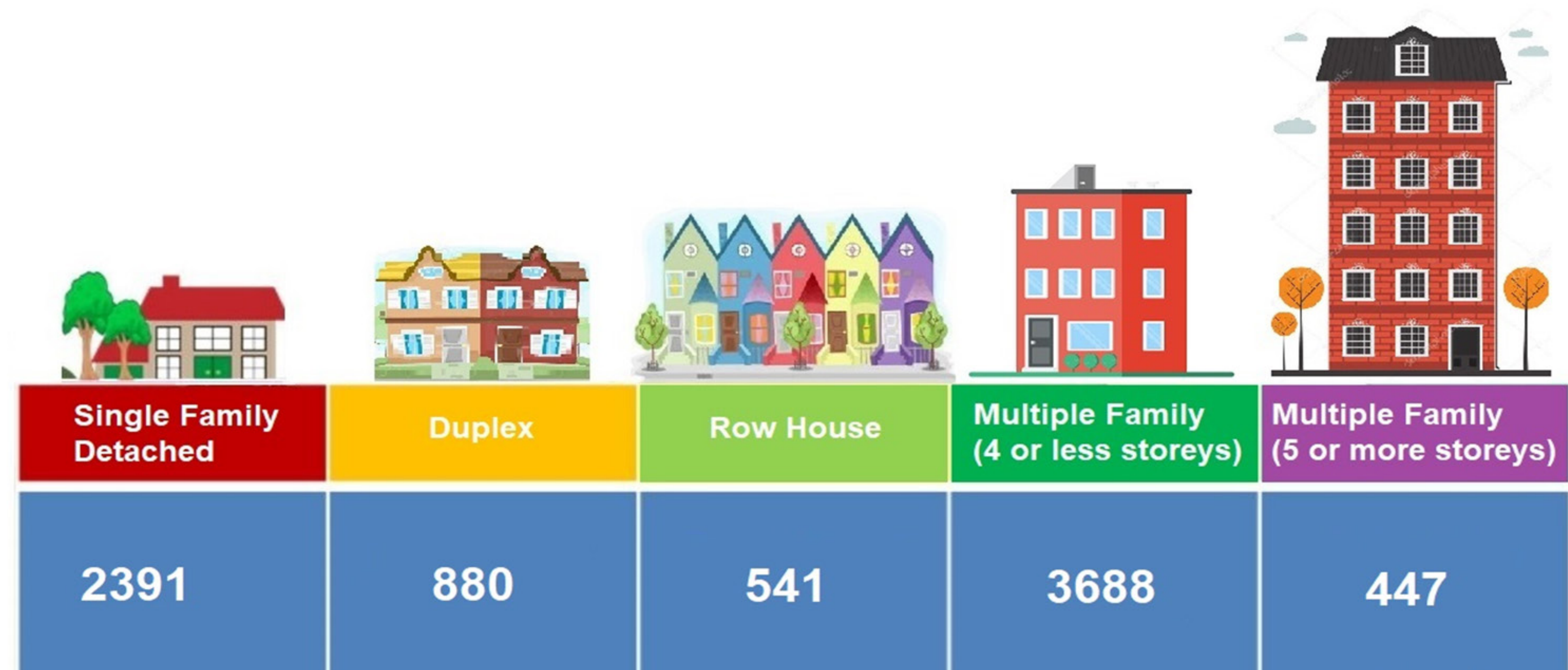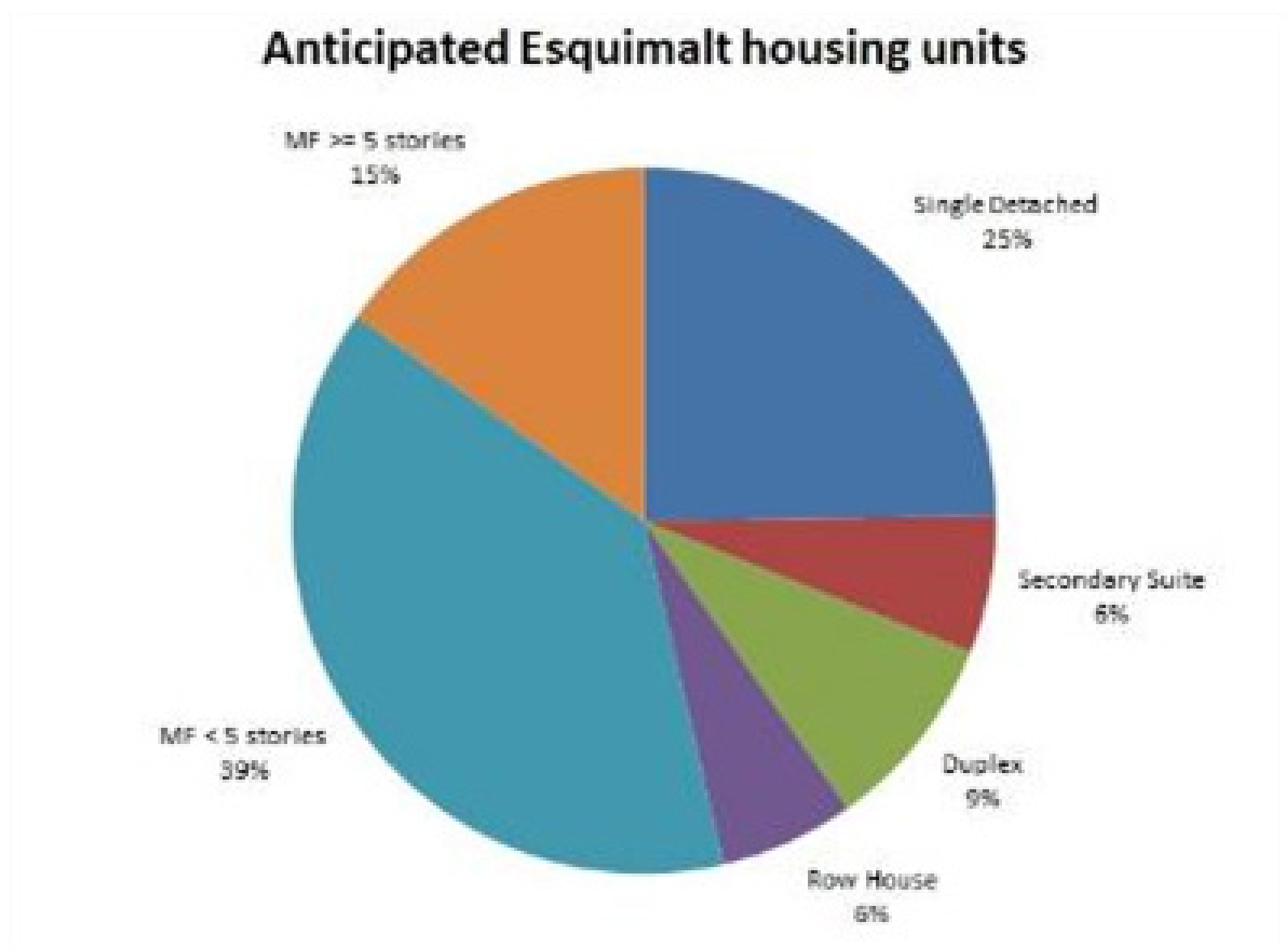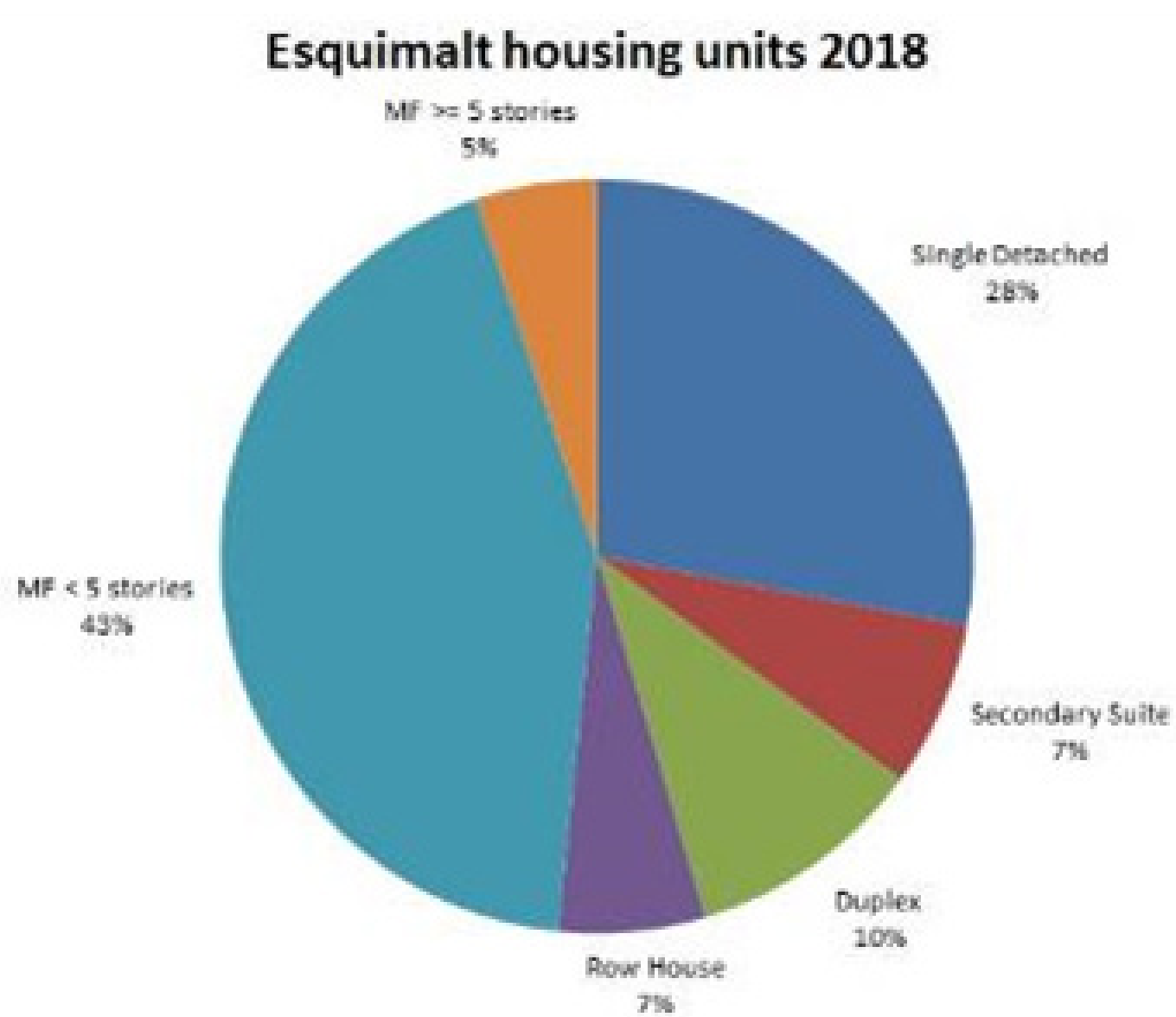
? Is this an issue in Esquimalt?

ESQUIMALT IS GROWING UP!

Based on the figures below, units in multi-family buildings now account for about 55 per cent of the units in Esquimalt (not including duplexes). When all the units that have been approved or are under construction are completed and occupied, this number will rise to 60 per cent, of which a substantial proportion (25 per cent) will be in buildings 5 or more stories high.

Research indicates that people who live in high-rise apartment buildings are more likely to experience social isolation, especially if they live on a high floor. As Esquimalt adds larger and taller multi-family buildings, we will need to pay more attention to keeping our thriving community connected.

Esquimalt housing units 2018

MF >= 5 stories 5%
Single Detached 28%
MF < 5 stories 43%
Secondary Suite 7%
Duplex 10%
Row House 7%

Anticipated Esquimalt housing units

MF >= 5 stories 15%
Single Detached 25%
MF < 5 stories 39%
Secondary Suite 6%
Duplex 9%
Row House 6%

Single Family Detached	Duplex	Row House	Multiple Family (4 or less storeys)	Multiple Family (5 or more storeys)
2391	880	541	3688	447

HOUSING UNITS BY CATEGORY 2018

# Connecting COMMUNITY with DESIGN

? Housing choices

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the study goals was to find out more about how people feel about living in multi-family buildings; what they like, and what could be improved. Not all the answers had to do with social connectedness, but it does give us more information about what people's needs are when living in more dense communities.

Q: If cost was NOT a factor, which would be your most preferred form of housing?
(3 choices)
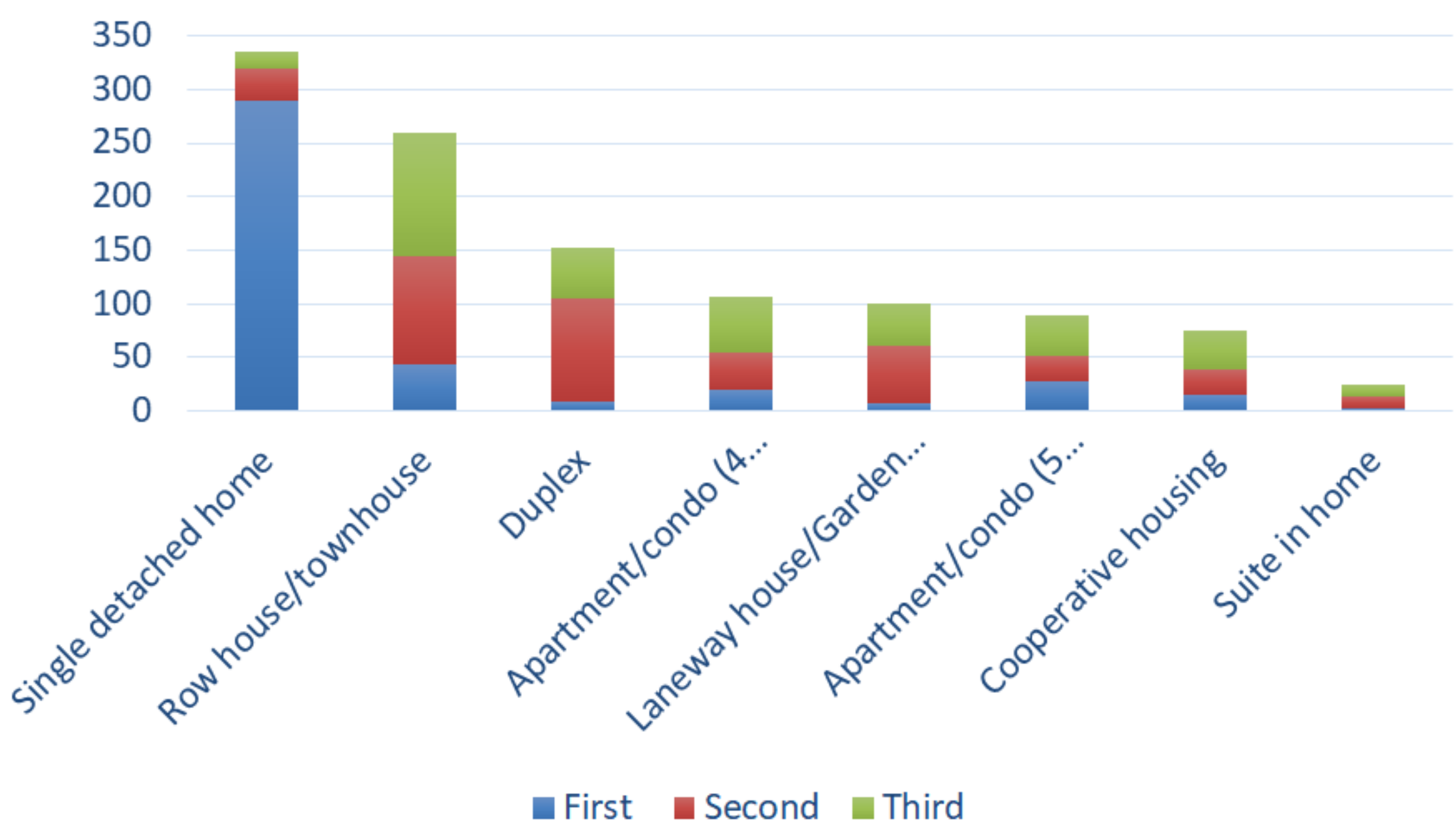
A single family home is overwhelmingly the first choice for respondents, but most are very open to the idea of multi-family living if well-designed. Here is some of what we heard:

"*Most builds like condos aren't suited for family living. Not enough green space, yard, personal space.*"

"*With better design and better intention, I and many others would likely choose multi-family housing options.*"

"*I like having neighbours close, but at the same time my privacy.*"

"*I have a dog, and condominiums and apartments are notorious for size and breed restrictions.*"

"*I currently live in an older condo and love it because it allows me the freedom to travel with-out having to worry about getting someone to house sit. It also allows one to get to know ones neighbours far better because of [social functions] we hold in our building.*"

"*Co-op family housing is an excellent idea for affordable housing and community building. It is difficult to get on the list for the available ones in Victoria.*"

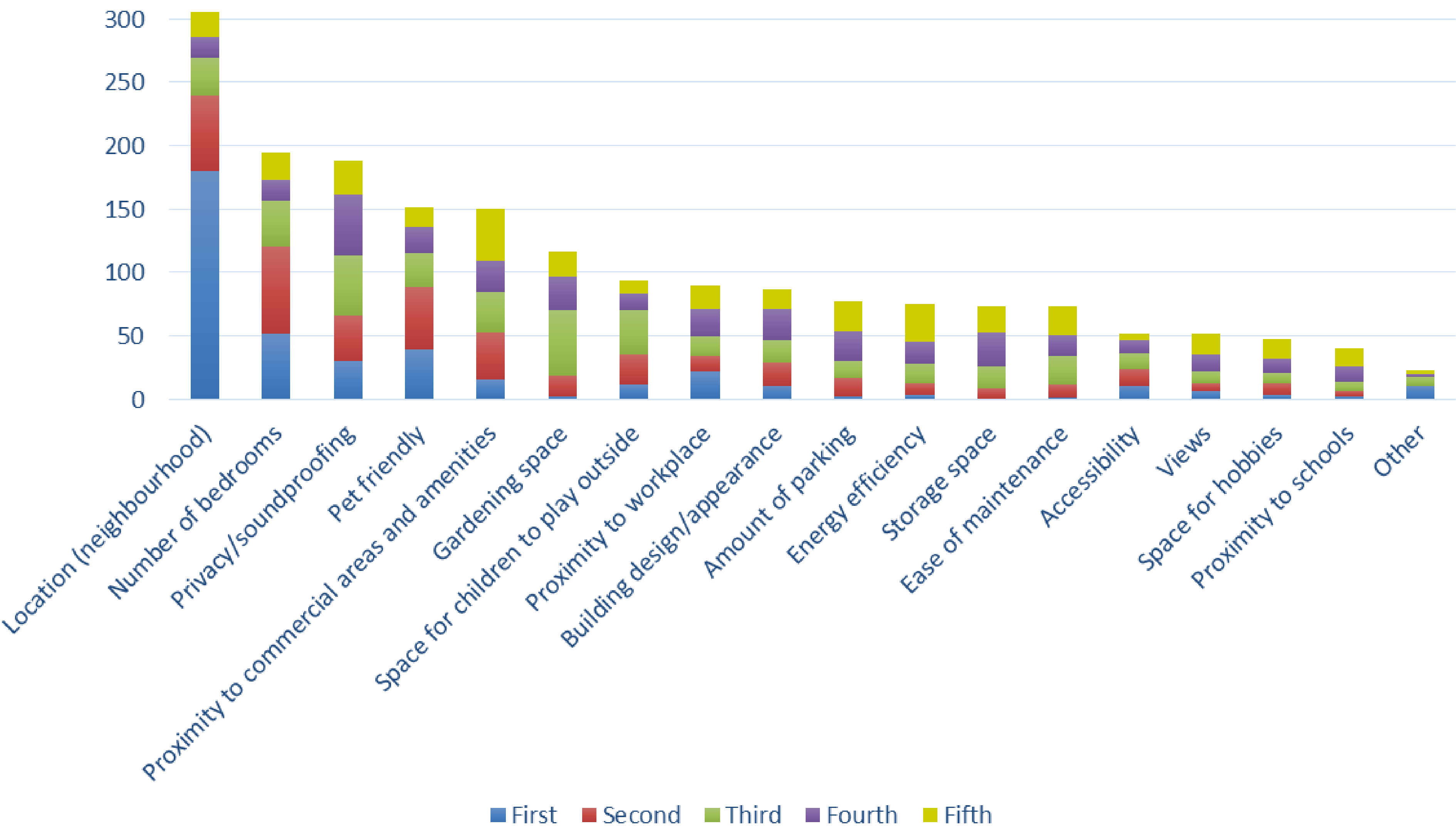**We will discuss these issues and others in further detail on the following boards.**

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& Building location and neighbourhood

WHAT APPEALS TO YOU?

The neighbourhood in which a building is located is part of its appeal and can influence the ease of making social connections. Having amenities and services within easy walking or cycling distance make it more likely that people will choose to walk or bike – an option that is healthier for them and for the environment. For some, this may avoid the need for car ownership, making life more affordable.

We asked people to tell us what things they looked at when they bought or rented a home. No surprise, location was by far the most important factor, followed by size of the home. But what are the more detailed elements of this decision?

Q: We know that cost is a major consideration when choosing housing. What OTHER factors (related to social health) are important to you when you are considering a new home? Choose up to 5 in order of importance.
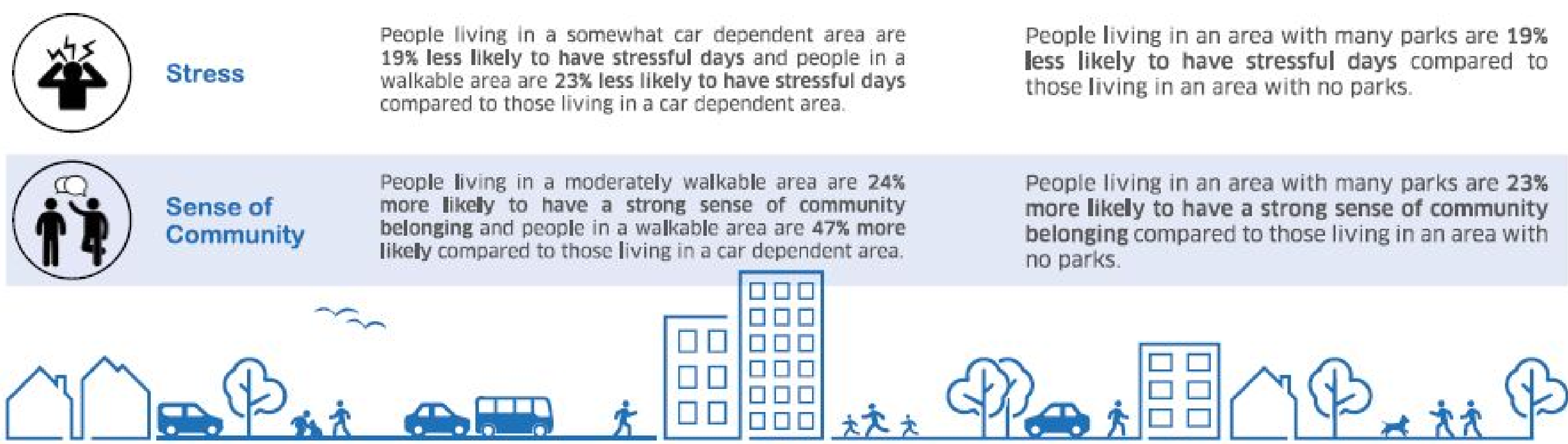

Legend: ■ First ■ Second ■ Third ■ Fourth ■ Fifth

Chart categories: Location (neighbourhood), Number of bedrooms, Privacy/soundproofing, Pet friendly, Proximity to commercial areas and amenities, Gardening space, Space for children to play outside, Proximity to workplace, Building design/appearance, Amount of parking, Energy efficiency, Storage space, Ease of maintenance, Accessibility, Views, Space for hobbies, Proximity to schools, Other

& Building location and neighbourhood

HIGHLIGHTS

| What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
Proximity to amenities such as shops and restaurants is a desirable feature for residents looking for a new home.	Ensure enough space is zoned to meet the commercial needs of future residents	Undertake a commercial needs assessment to determine the amount and type of commercial space that will be required to accommodate Esquimalt's future population. Consider the principles of the 20 minute neighbourhood when assessing rezoning applications for multi-family developments.
Although people want to be near amenities, the noise from busy streets is annoying. A quiet location, on a non-arterial road is important to many.	Locate multi-family housing, especially those with larger units on quiet streets wherever possible.	Review land use designations in Official Community Plan for multi-family to ensure it is distributed on quiet streets as well as busier roads.
When asked about how they want to get physical activity, most respondents stated that they preferred public amenities such as parks, trails, recreation centres and active transportation routes over in-building fitness equipment	Have a system of parks and public spaces that include a mix of children's playgrounds, pet-friendly spaces, picnic areas, natural spaces and community gardens. Create a high quality network for active transportation throughout the municipality.	Amend the Parking Bylaw to include requirements for bicycle parking. Require the dedication of Statutory Rights of Way along property frontages to create wider pedestrian spaces and bicycling infrastructure.

Stress
People living in a somewhat car dependent area are **19% less likely to have stressful days** and people in a walkable area are **23% less likely to have stressful days** compared to those living in a car dependent area.

People living in an area with many parks are **19% less likely to have stressful days** compared to those living in an area with no parks.

Sense of Community
People living in a moderately walkable area are **24% more likely to have a strong sense of community** belonging and people in a walkable area are **47% more likely** compared to those living in a car dependent area.

People living in an area with many parks are **23% more likely to have a strong sense of community belonging** compared to those living in an area with no parks.

& Building location and neighbourhood

HIGHLIGHTS, CONTINUED

What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
Respondents value creativity and individuality in the design of multi-family buildings and the public spaces around them.	Encourage place-making activities such as public art, little free libraries or tool libraries.	Require developers to incorporate public art in the public realm adjacent to their development. Develop an Esquimalt themed street furniture program, including benches, bicycle racks, lighting and garbage receptacles.
Trees and greenspace are very important to residents especially as density increases and access to personal greenspace diminishes.	Ensure that high quality streetscapes are provided along with new development. Ensure that all residents are within reasonable walking distance of a park or greenspace.	Require developers to provide street trees for all new developments. Conduct a gap analysis of existing park infrastructure. Create a target for walking time from any residence to the nearest park space.

Drawings from a child who is driven (left) and one who walks to school.
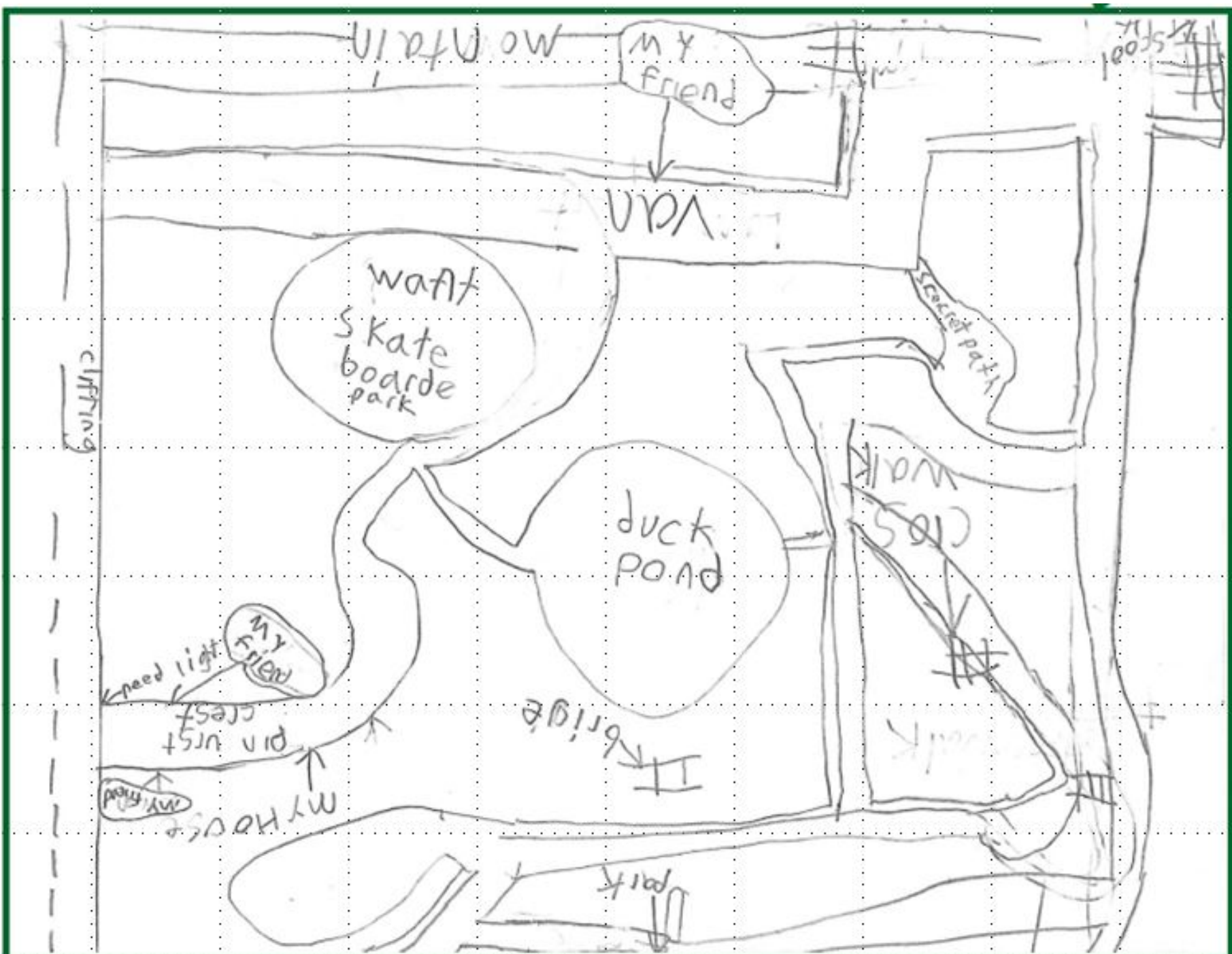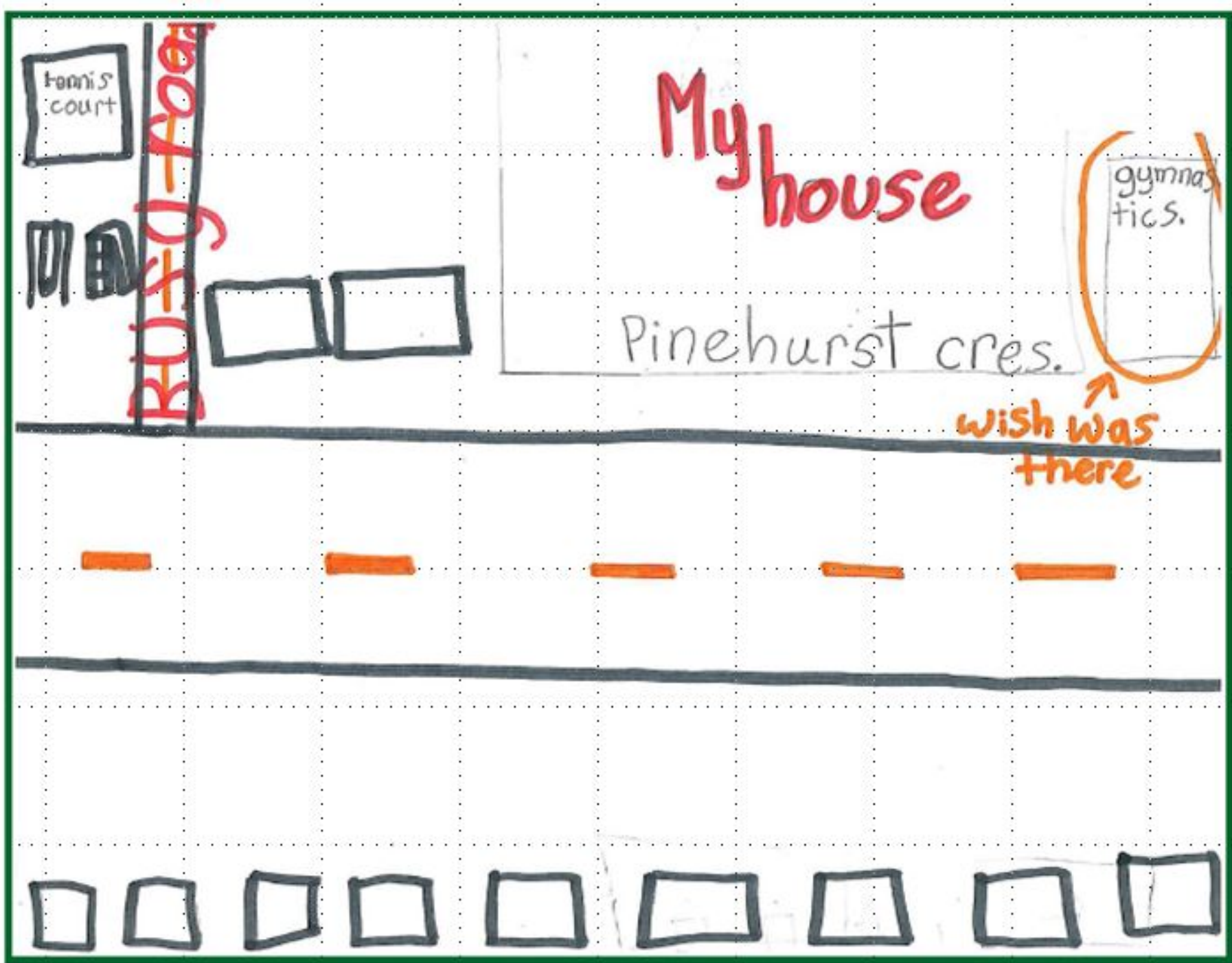
☑ Building size and layout

HIGHLIGHTS

Respondents also told us that the size of the building and the number of units is important. We heard that large stratas can be difficult to deal with and that noise issues are compounded in larger buildings. Also, it is just harder to get to know each other when so many faces are unfamiliar. A building with a smaller number of units increases the likelihood that people get to know all the other building residents

What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
The perception of crowding in multi-family housing can damage and corrode interactions with neighbours and others in the community. Limit the number of neighbours that residents come in close contact with to no more than several dozen.	Encourage developers to limit the number of households sharing a main entrance and/or the number of clusters in townhouse/ rowhouse developments .	Develop design guidelines for clustering and entrance design in multi-family.
There is a strong desire on the part of respondents for more variety in housing types in forms such as rowhouses and townhouses.	Promote a wide range of housing forms in residential neighbourhoods currently zoned for single-family homes.	Fast-track rezoning projects that include mixed-use, mid-density developments. Relax parking requirements for medium density developments close to transit stops (parking bylaw review).
Flexibility of space is important for growing families and downsizing seniors. Flexible spaces allow people to stay longer terms in their homes where they already know their neighbours and have social supports.	Encourage designs which would allow people to add bedrooms for growing families, rent out unneeded space as children move out, or create an in-law suite to accommodate aging parents.	

Missing middle housing is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with detached single-familiy homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living.

DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES DUPLEX TRIPLEX/FOURPLEX COURTYARD APARTMENT BUNGALOW COURT TOWNHOUSE MULTIPLEX LIVE/WORK MID-RISE

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

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OPTICOS

Seeing green

HIGHLIGHTS

We've talked about access to public parks, trails, street trees etc., but green space is also a very important component of multi-family housing.

We asked people their thoughts on the open space provided with their multi-family and about their preferences for green space at or near their unit.

What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
Access to greenspace and trees was overwhelmingly important to survey respondents.	Ensure that both quality and quantity of soft landscaping is addressed for multi-family housing projects.	Require street tree plantings for all multi-family developments. Continue with urban forest program. Review landscaping design guidelines for multi-family development permit areas.
The preferred form of open space for multi-family is passive space with seating and space for eating, reading or quiet activities.	Ensure that landscaping in multi-family housing offers residents quiet peaceful spaces and abundant greenery.	Create design guidelines for open space required in new multi-family projects that includes trees and seating requirements.
Residents prefer landscaping to be in a unified area ather than arranged on the perimeter of the building.	Provide a mix of open space types: smaller private areas for a conversation with a friend, and larger open spaces for family games. Spaces should include places for interaction and for privacy.	Create design guidelines for landscaping requirements for multi-family housing projects. Address landscaping on social well-being checklist.
Residents prefer their own gardening space over communal gardening space. Patios and balconies are important to those who like to grow plants for a hobby.	Encourage multi-family developments to include garden plots.	Continue supporting community garden program (with individual plots) in public parks and look for potential to increase as density increases. Address garden plots on the social well being checklist.

> "Access to nature is strongly linked to positive neighbourhood relationships and trust among community members. People who live near green public spaces are more involved in social activities, receive more visitors at home, and know more of their neighbours. They also feel a greater sense of belonging, and feel that their neighbours care and support one another." (Happy City)

Elements of a proposed 'Social Well-being Checklist'

We heard lots of ideas about the interior design of multi-family buildings and units: areas under control of the designer/developer. Similar to the Green Building Checklist, we are proposing to create a 'Social Well-being Checklist' that developers would be required to provide to us at the time of application for a new development. By completing this checklist, applicants would be encouraged to incorporate some of these features within the development as the checklist will become part of the package submitted to Council. Below are some of the suggestions made by respondents that could be incorporated into this checklist.

WHAT WE HEARD

SOCIAL AMENITY SPACES
People value social spaces within their building or complex; communal hobby space, common rooms and pet friendly spaces were the most popular choices.
Rooftop gardens and decks were also mentioned frequently as a popular way to achieve open space on constrained sites. Combined with gardening space and a place to cook, eat and socialize, these gardens can be welcome respites from the city below.
Shared spaces are best located in strategic places that are visible and easily accessed by all residents.
Pet friendly policies and spaces enable people to keep and interact with pets.
A welcoming entranceway or lobby space, perhaps with a bench or chair for visiting inside or out, provides a casual way to interact with neighbours.
A building manager or volunteer social organizer can help create a sense of community.
Social media like Facebook or iMessage are useful to let residents know what events are planned or building news to share.
An open stairwell that people want to use is good for health and socialization.
Being able to book a patio, common room or meeting space allows residents to entertain, hold parties together or have work meetings which may not be possible inside their individual unit.
The most popular recreational facility for connecting with others is an on-site gym.

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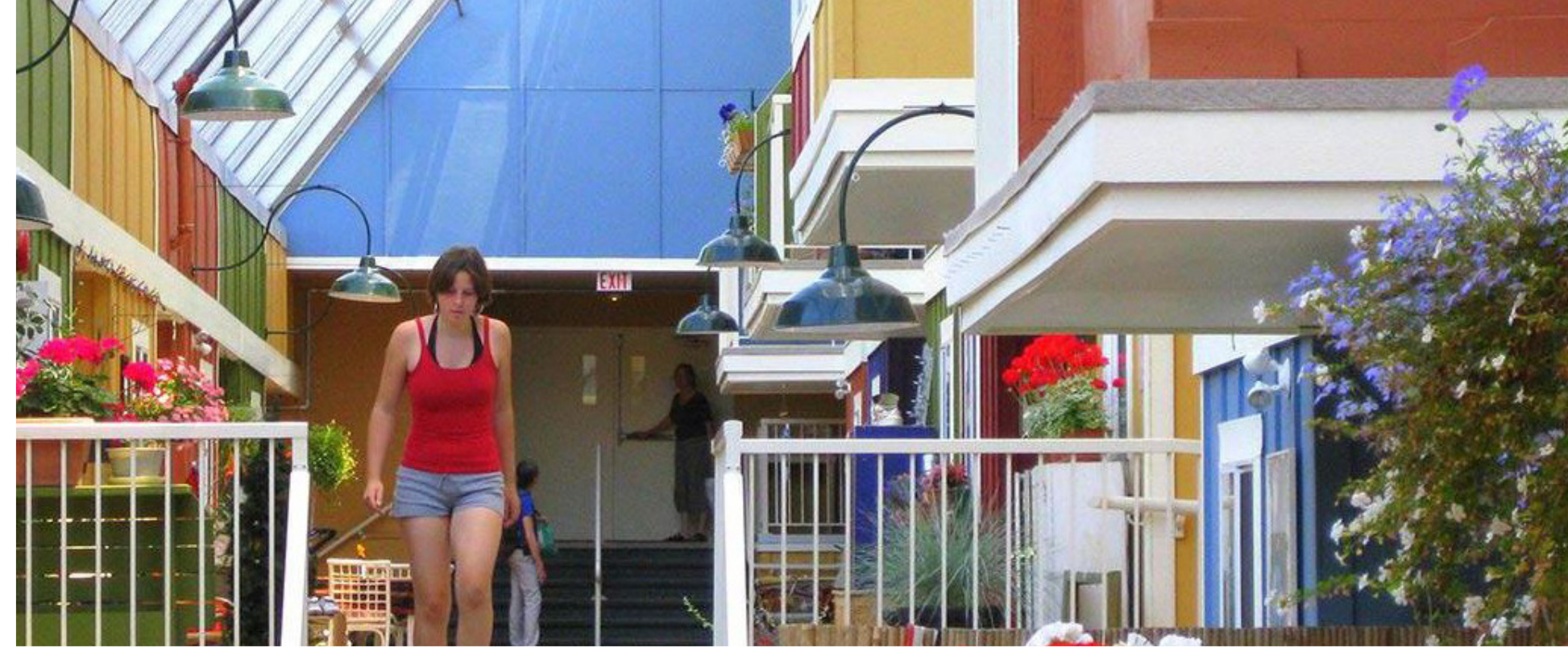
✓ Share your thoughts

WHAT DID WE MISS?

"There is a big difference in the effectiveness of good communal space (attractive, inviting, practical) and poor communal space (the dingy room in the basement with old furniture)."

"Social spaces should not be a closed room (which can be daunting for new person to go into), but open area off foyer so that people feel they can drop in."

"Common rooms are often not aesthetically exciting; design common spaces so they invite people in."

"Common spaces in complexes tend to be used if there are kids, but often empty with older residents."

"Shared woodworking spaces with lockers would be ideal."

Elements of a proposed 'Social Well-being Checklist'

WHAT WE HEARD

FEELING SAFE

"People are more likely to build trusting and meaning-ful relationships in environments that feel safe."

Elements that make residents feel safer include well-lit common areas, hallways and landscaping.

Building upkeep and maintenance is also very important to people's perception of safety in a building.

An onsite building manager to deal with problem tenants and to contact in times of trouble is an excellent safety measure.

Long corridors with identical doors discourage casual interactions and are more difficult for children and some seniors to wayfind.

Security measures such as fob entry, cameras and swipe cards are good in moderation but can also lead to unsafe feelings (eg. Heavy fire doors, locking stairwells) and make the building inaccessible to children.

Natural surveillance from residences and businesses increases feelings of safety.

EXPOSURE

"People who live in spaces that give them a greater sense of control over their exposure to others are more likely to build positive social connections."

Lack of privacy was the most commonly cited reason why many prefer not to live in multi-family housing.

Soundproofing is very important especially in buildings with children. Soundproofing allows neighbours to feel free to use their space as they wish without becoming a nuisance to residents beside them. Good soundproofing can help prevent the stress of living in close proximity to others.

COMFORT

"People are more likely to engage with others in environments that feel pleasant and comfortable."

The environment affects how residents feel, and in turn, their social well-being. Cross-ventilation, natural lighting and odor control all make a more livable environment.

Ample, secure and convenient (not in the basement) bicycle storage is a necessity for encouraging active modes of transportation.

"When everyone's unit is the same floor plan it is depressing. There is no pride or individuality."

"In narrow hallways and elevators, space is small and people shut down, retreat into their own personal space."

"Balance community 'vibe' with ability to seek privacy when needed."

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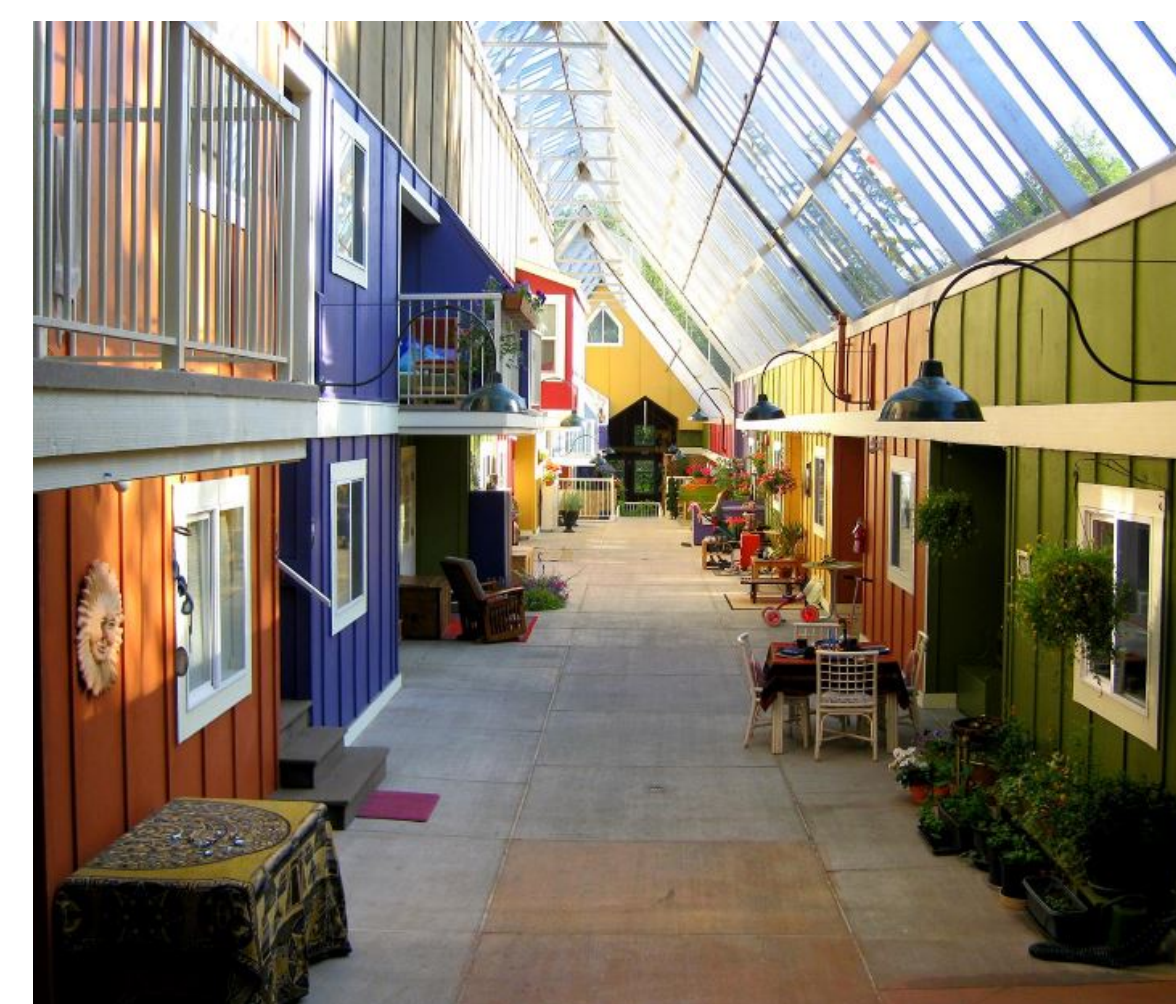
☑ Existing Official Community Plan policies for social connectedness

- Encourage the development of seniors housing that is within close proximity and accessible to services and amenities.

- Encourage the provision of medium and high density commercial mixed use development designed for families with children.

- A landscaped transition zone in between the entryway and public sidewalk should be considered on streets with high traffic volumes.

- Site lighting should provide personal safety for residents and visitors and be of the type that reduces glare and does not cause the spillover of light on to adjacent residential sites.

- Provide for building occupants to over look public streets, parks, walkways and spaces, considering security and privacy of residents.

- Apartment lobbies and main building entries should be clearly visible from the fronting street with direct sight lines into them.

- Landscaping should emphasize the creation of an attractive streetscape, as well as provide privacy between individual buildings and dwellings, screen parking areas and break up large expanses of paving.

- Retention and protection of trees and the natural habitat is encouraged wherever possible.

- A landscaped transition zone in between the entry way and public sidewalk should be considered on streets with high traffic volume (West Bay DP guidelines).

- Incorporate courtyards, greenways, gardens and other common areas as defining element of projects (West Bay DP guidelines).
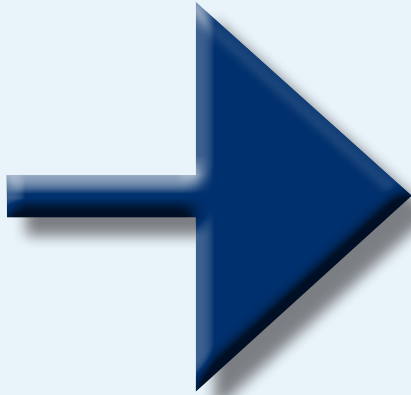
➡ Creating multi-generational housing

HIGHLIGHTS

Most multi-family homes are designed for singles and couples, however more and more families are choosing to living in apartments due to the high cost of single family homes. Multi-generational living is also on the rise. We asked people to tell us what design features would help people of all ages co-exist happily in multi-family buildings.

What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
People are very interested in living situations where there is a higher level of intergenerational cooperation and connectedness.	Encourage housing designs and models that promote intergenerational cooperation and connectedness.	Develop design guidelines that promote intergenerational connectedness. Develop regulations for Detached Accessory Dwelling Units.
Families want to live in multi-family housing for affordability and social connections with other families, but have difficulty finding units with sufficient numbers of bedrooms and with suitable amenities for children.	Ensure that multi-family developments include appropriately sized units whenever possible.	Conduct a housing needs assessment that includes an analysis of the number of family-oriented units with a sufficient number of bedrooms that are likely to be needed in future multi-family developments. Consider exempting the third and fourth bedrooms in larger family-sized units from calculation of Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Dedicate a portion of affordable housing units for low-income families through the use of Housing Agreements. Ensure that amenity zoning programs work to encourage family-sized units.
Families and some older adults prefer units on the ground floor to increase accessibility to the outdoors and for stroller/walker/wheelchair access.	Encourage developers that are including family sized units to place them on the ground floor.	Consider height variances where family-friendly or senior-friendly units are located at ground level.
People with children prefer locations on quieter streets and side roads, not busy arterials so their children are safe when entering and exiting the building and have more options to travel around on their own when older.	Locate multi-family housing with family sized units on non-arterial roads.	Require multi-family buildings that are located on non-arterial roads to incorporate some larger units for families and family-friendly amenities.

Creating multi-generational housing

WHAT WE HEARD, CONTINUED

What we heard	Proposed recommendation	Proposed action(s)
Families require additional storage space as well as extra living space.	Entryways and hallways should be accessible to strollers and walkers, and provide storage space for these just outside the unit.	Address storage needs on social well being checklist
The noise of children playing is not always welcome to all residents.	Provide safe outdoor spaces for children to play, preferably where parents and grandparents can watch them from their unit. A good option is to have homes designed around a central courtyard.

Provide safe indoor spaces for children to play. | Do not require the installation of expensive playground equipment but rather consider naturalize plan environments that stimulate a child's curiosity.

Provide child-friendly indoor spaces, such as a shared playroom or internal playground. |
Over ninety per cent of parents felt they would be comfortable having their children play outside with out their supervision as long as the play area is visible and accessible from family's unit and was fenced for safety.	That security provisions be assessed for outside children's play areas.	Require a CPTED assessment of all outdoor children's play areas.
Not all outdoor play space needs to be lawn. Children benefit from having a safe paved surface to learn to ride their bikes, skateboard, play street hockey, use sidewalk chalk or similar activities in a car-free or low car use zone.	Provide a central open space where people meet and see each other. This works well if units overlook this inner courtyard and people can watch their children playing.	Consider the benefits of hard surfaced play areas when assessing development proposals.
Residents may wish to stay in their units as they age or become disabled, but their units are not appropriate any longer. Moving away from friends cuts the social ties they have developed over a long period.	Consider the needs of less-abled people when designing the building and units. Features that support wheelchair accessibility are also important for people pushing strollers, bikes and other wheeled options.	Create adaptable housing guidelines for development based on the princi-ple of "visitability". This means that people's homes should be accessible to everyone, not just able-bodied people. It eases problems associat-ed with isolation, and allows peo-ple with physical limitations to visit friends and neighbours, and stay in communities where they have developed social ties.
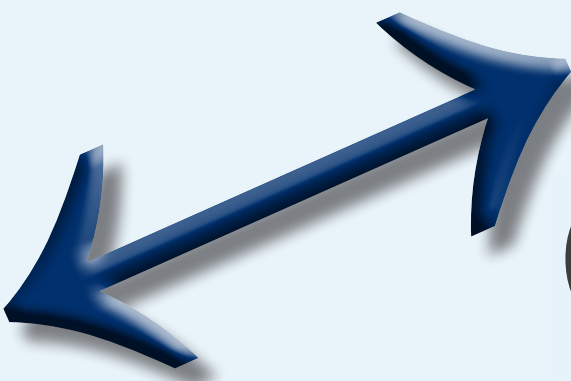
Challenges and opportunities

WHAT WE HEARD

In the process of speaking to residents and stakeholders about social connectedness, we learned that there are some obstacles to implementing some of these ideas. With challenges, come opportunities!

Challenge	Opportunities
As Esquimalt grows, residents are concerned about whether infrastructure needs (particularly transportation)are keeping up	Undertake a development capacity analysis to assess the physical, social and environmental development capacity of Esquimalt. The assessment will include an analysis of gaps in existing infrastructure and facilities based on future growth projections. Complete and update infrastructure and asset inventory.* Development of asset management strategy and plans.* Develop Active Transportation Plan for completion by the end of 2020.* Research and consider best practices for multi-modal traffic initiatives and strategies.*
Developers told us that providing some of these amenities will raise the overall cost of housing	
Change in the form of additional density can create fear and resistance among some residents.	When people participate in shaping their environment, it fosters a sense of empowerment and connection to the community. Continue to provide opportunities for residents to provide local knowledge and expertise to development projects. Measure social connectedness in the Township and monitor over time. Add gentle density to single family areas through the introduction of policy and regulations for detached accessory dwelling units.*
It is very common for parking requirements to become dominant in the discussion about added density and what amenities eventually are added to a building.	Develop parking strategy including review and update of parking bylaw.*
Not everyone will actively participate. In fact, 22 per cent of respondents told us they were not interested in socializing with their neighbours.	Adjust expectations of others to participate. Provide a balance of areas for both social connection and privacy. Continue to provide opportunities for the community to gather and get to know each other.
Open space (in sufficient quantity) on very dense projects is difficult to achieve.	Consider adding contribution to public park space to amenity list for bonus density. Continue with opportunity to replenish Parkland Acquisition Fund.*

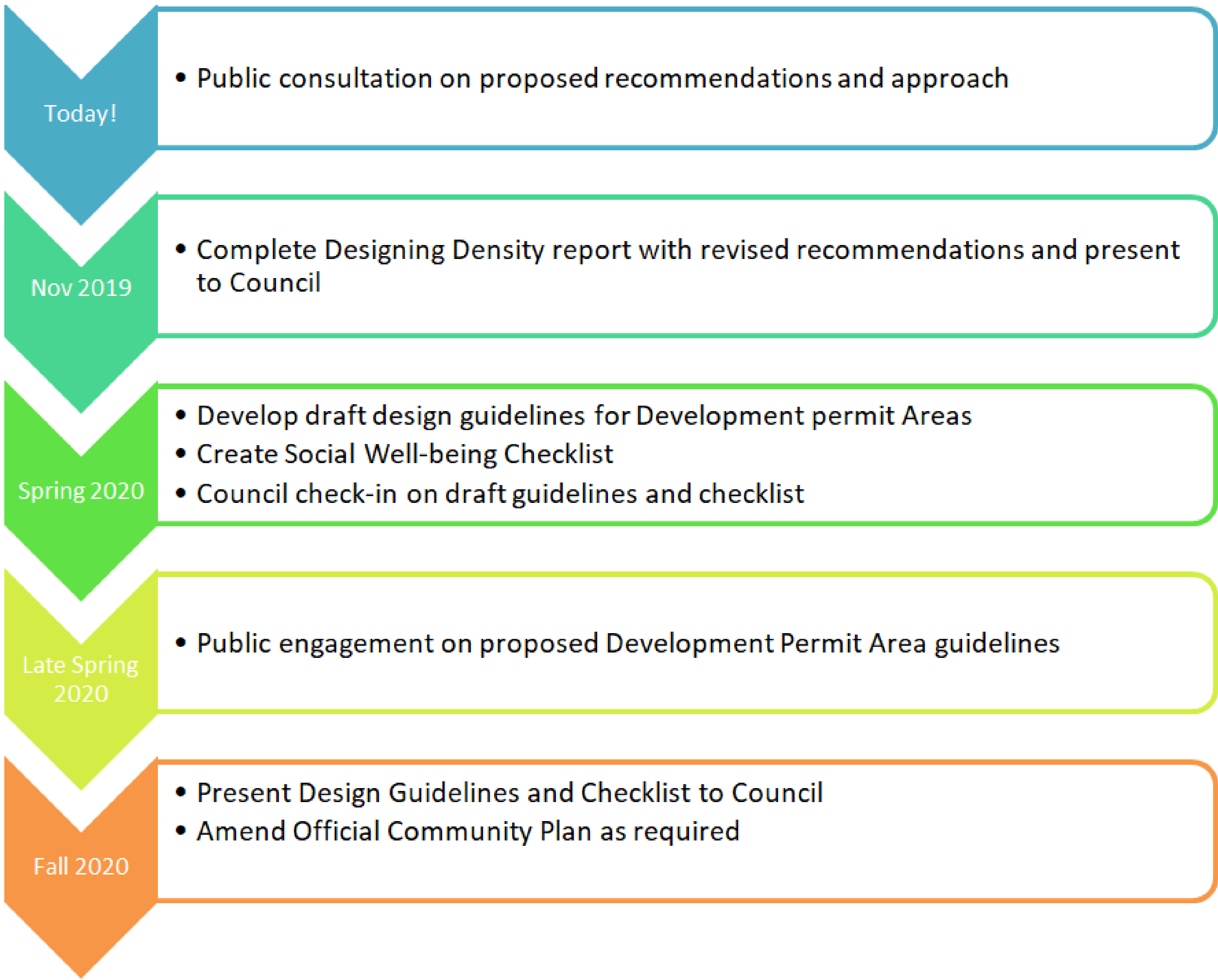*indicates existing strategy in Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Next steps

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING TODAY!

Moving forward, staff will be working on the project throughout the rest of 2019 and into 2020.

See our next steps for Designing Density:

Today!
- Public consultation on proposed recommendations and approach

Nov 2019
- Complete Designing Density report with revised recommendations and present to Council

Spring 2020
- Develop draft design guidelines for Development permit Areas
- Create Social Well-being Checklist
- Council check-in on draft guidelines and checklist

Late Spring 2020
- Public engagement on proposed Development Permit Area guidelines

Fall 2020
- Present Design Guidelines and Checklist to Council
- Amend Official Community Plan as required

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! Share your thoughts

WHAT DID WE MISS?