



















**Town of Fort Smith**  
**Community Services Committee**  
 Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7:00 pm  
 Town Hall Council Chambers

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Declaration of Financial Interest
  - a. Statement of Disclosure of Interest
3. Review
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Minutes
  - c. Visions and Values
  - d. Community Services Master Plan
  - e. Economic Development Plan
4. Directors Report
  - a. CRC Statistics – May 2023
  - b. Mary Kaeser Library Statistics – May 2023
5. Economic Development
  - a. Economic Development Report – May 2023
    - i. Small Communities Employment Fund
    - ii. Fort Smith Labour Market Study
6. Advisory Boards
  - a. Community Services Advisory Board
    - i. CSAB Minutes May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - b. Economic Development Advisory Board
    - i. EDAB Minutes May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - c. Fort Smith Housing Plan Advisory Board
    - i. HPAB Minutes May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
& Presentation/Survey Overview
    - ii. HPAB Minutes May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
& Presentation/Visioning Workshop
7. Administration
  - a. Briefing Note Canada Day Road Closure 2023
  - b. Councillors to Review Canada Day Award Nominations
8. Other Business
9. Excusing of Councillors
10. Date of Next Meeting
11. Adjournment

Attached Documents	
 Statement of Disclosure of Interest	
 Community Services Minutes May 9, 2023	 Vision and Values.pdf
 Community Services Master Plan 2020.pdf	 Economic Development Plan.pdf
 CRC Stats - May 2023.pdf	 MKL Stats - May 2023.pdf
 Small Communities Employment Fund -	 Fort Smith Labour Market Study.pdf
 CSAB Minutes May 11 2023.pdf	 EDAB Minutes May 25 2023.pdf
 FSHPAB Minutes May 18, 2023.pdf	 Fort Smith Advisory Board Meeting 3 Pre
 FS Housing Plan Advisory Board Min	 Fort Smith Visioning Workshop
 Briefing Note - Canada Day Road Cl	



Town of Fort Smith  
*Code of Conduct for Council Members*

ATTACHMENT A

**STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Name of Council Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Meeting or \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of type and nature of Interest (i.e., Interest or Conflict of Interest)

Interest:            Personal       

                         Pecuniary       

Conflict of Interest:       

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Councillor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Use Only:**

Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Town of Fort Smith  
Community Services Standing Committee  
Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7:00 pm  
Town Hall Council Chambers

Chairperson: Cr. Fergusson  
Members Present: Mayor Daniels, D/M Macdonald, Cr. Campbell, Cr. Korol, Cr. Tuckey, Cr. Couvrette, Cr. Pischinger, Cr. Beaulieu

Staff Present: Emily Colucci, A/Senior Administrative Officer  
Jim Hood, Interim Senior Administrative Officer  
Adam McNab, Director of Protective Services  
Katie Reid, Executive Secretary

Delegation/Guests: Rafik Salehmohamed, Pharmacist Wally's Drugstore  
Merrell-Ann Phare, Executive Director CLI Team  
Michael Miltenberger, CLI Team Steering Committee  
Colleen Sklar, CLI Team Steering Committee  
Ernie Campbell, CLI Team Advisory Team/Northern Advisor  
Richard Farthing-Nichol, CLI Team Project Manager

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and handed the Chair to Cr. Fergusson.

Cr. Fergusson read the acknowledgement of First Nations.

2. Declaration of Financial Interest

a. Statement of Disclosure of Financial Interest – There were no disclosures of financial interest.

3. Delegation

a. Wally's Drugstore Blister Pack Update/Rafik Salehmohamed – Mr. Salehmohamed gave an update on pharmaceutical blister pack prescriptions.

Mr. Salehmohamed advised that a significant amount of workload is dedicated to filling blister packs, and they are happy to provide this service. He advised that the pharmacists would like to offer more services that provide direct patient care, and to meet blister pack demand they would start to have blister pack prescriptions filled at a sister-pharmacy in Winnipeg, MB. He advised that blister pack filling is an optional program and that patients must provide written consent to have them filled at an offsite location. He stated that patient files would still be kept and available at Wally's Drugstore. He hopes with the freed time that pharmacists would be able to perform additional medication calls and reviews, be able to discuss medical supplies, and progress as health care providers.

D/M Macdonald thanked Mr. Salehmohamed for the update and asked if the decrease in workload would affect staffing levels. He asked if having the prescriptions filled at an offsite location is clearly communicated to patients. Mr. Salehmohamed advised that there would be no changes or decreases to staffing levels, but the goal is to provide additional services. Secondly, he felt that pharmacists are doing a good job on communicating the changes and explaining options to patients as well as indicating that consent can be revoked anytime.

Cr. Korol asked what the turn around time is to receive the blister packs from Winnipeg, MB. Mr. Salehmohamed replied that it takes approximately one-week and that after prescriptions are filled the refill will be requested for arrival prior to pick up. He noted that the pharmacy did test orders to ensure timely arrival. Cr. Korol asked if blister packs would be redone if there are changes to medication. Mr. Salehmohamed confirmed and advised that they use the same branding, packaging, and process. He noted that there is flexibility and medication can still be filled on site or in advance if leaving town. Cr. Korol asked if Northern Lights Special Care Home blister packs would be filled on site. Mr. Salehmohamed confirmed there would be no changes in filling NLSCH medications.

Cr. Beaulieu asked if statutory holidays or weather conditions were considered to ensure on-time arrival of medications. Mr. Salehmohamed replied that this wasn't specifically reviewed, but they are ordered 4-weeks in advance and would still arrive on time with delays.

Cr. Korol asked if there would a change in cost to the patients. Mr. Salehmohamed replied that there would be no changes to cost, and if a prescription was double filled, they would not duplicate bill but invoice the next month.

- b. Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI) Group – Mr. Miltenberger advised that he and colleagues were pleased to meet with Council and discuss the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources and the Collaborative Leadership Initiative, and what it can mean for Fort Smith.

The Executive Director of CIER, Merrell-Ann Phare, gave an update on her background and her colleagues introduced themselves.

She provided an update on the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) and advised that it is a national organization founded in 1995 by ten First Nations Chiefs. She added that it is Canada's first Indigenous-directed environmental non-profit charitable organization and they have completed over 450 projects in partnership with over 300 Indigenous Nations across the country. She noted that CIER has two focus areas; building sustainable communities and protecting lands and waters.

She reviewed the CLI Team and gave introductions of team members that were not at the meeting. She advised that the group facilitates reconciliation-based conversations to move forward with issues of common concern and is structured for leaders to work and forward together. She noted the need to step back and think about shared history to move forward in a structured way and that CIER provides resources and funding. She indicated that the structure was adopted from Africa and adapted to Canada and involves advancing actions towards reconciliation.

Ms. Phare advised that the Collaborative Leadership Initiative is a facilitated process with Indigenous and municipal elected leaders, finds solutions to shared water challenges, provides resources, expertise, and a structured process, provides a track record of building trust, strengthening relationships, and advancing action toward true reconciliation. She reviewed their approach being locally driven, rooted relationships, solutions based, future focused, and sustained outcomes.

Ms. Phare reviewed the governance table in Fort Smith including bringing leaders to the table who know the watershed best and have the authority to make change on the ground, as well as help advance shared priorities, flex unexercised jurisdiction, and create more leverage over territorial/federal governments. Ms. Phare noted that leadership has more leverage together and advised that CIER's MOU was adapted from MOU signed in the north between the Tlicho and GNWT.

Ms. Phare reviewed their workplan in Fort Smith and reviewed opportunities for partnership.

D/M Macdonald advised that he and Cr. Korol were engaged in the CLI process and felt it was an inspirational, clear process in bringing leaders together.

Ms. Phare stated that the CLI initiative moves leaders through a structured process of meetings. She continued that history is discussed to come to a common place of understanding and to move forward on opportunities together. She noted that a relationship is formalized through an MOU agreement and CIER sometimes assists in finding funding for projects. She clarified that the process is a cemented working relationship to accomplish common goals.

Mayor Daniels asked if the CLI Team has worked with other governments in the NWT. Ms. Phare responded that Fort Smith is the first community to perform the Collaborative Leadership Initiative and is based on approaches lead in the North.

Mr. Miltenberger advised that the GNWT works with Indigenous governments to co-write and co-draft legislation and are signed off by leaders.

Mayor Daniels agreed that the only way to overcome is by working together. He felt this is a unique initiative to bring governments together to work on common goals and he looks forward to working together. He noted the current economy's financial restraints and sustaining for the next generation.

D/M Macdonald and Council thanked the CLI Team for coming to Fort Smith and presenting to Council. He appreciated their efforts and looks forward to meeting tomorrow with Community Leadership.

4. Review

- a. Agenda – The agenda was reviewed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Korol**

**Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette**

**That the agenda be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- b. Minutes – The Community Services Standing Committee Minutes of April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, were reviewed and adopted at the Regular Meeting of Council on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

- c. Vision and Values – The Vision and Values were reviewed. Cr. Couvrette requested updating the visions and values to drive Council forward through the remainder of their term. He noted upcoming consultations with the review of the Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw and suggested engaging residents with how the envision the community in the future.

Cr. Couvrette would also like to update Economic Development Plan in consideration of economic changes due to COVID-19, etc., and as the Strategic Plan was adopted in 2018. Mayor Daniels agreed with Cr. Couvrette. Cr. Couvrette advised that the Capital Plan includes the Strategic Plan Update project for 2025 and suggested advancing the project.

Cr. Couvrette made a recommendation for Administration to review the possibility of advancing the Strategic Plan Update as per the 2025 Capital Plan. Mayor Daniels seconded the motion.

D/M Macdonald noted discussion from the last meeting about performing a functional review and suggested doing an internal review first, and in consideration of changes in Administration. He also suggested determining the direction of Mayor and Council, and developing a terms of reference, followed by requesting feedback from the Administration prior to engaging a consultant with the projects. Cr. Campbell agreed and would like feedback from Administration. Cr. Couvrette agreed but doesn't want the projects pushed back. He suggested assigning funds for to develop a terms of refence to move the functional review and strategic planning process forward.

D/M Macdonald agreed on identifying a vision to move forward to determine a direction and to give options to the next Mayor and Council.

Cr. Couvrette amended his recommendation. Mayor Daniels approved the amendment.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**

**Seconded by: Mayor Daniels**

**That Administration identify a process to draft a terms of reference for the reviews needed for the Economic Development Plan, Strategic Plan, and Functional Review.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- d. Community Services Master Plan – The Community Services Master Plan was reviewed.
  - e. Economic Development Plan – The Economic Development Plan was reviewed.
5. Directors Report
- a. CRC Statistics April 2023 – The CRC Statistics for April 2023 were reviewed. Administration advised that the hot tub is filled, and they are working on the chemistry and bringing the water to temperature.

She noted that CRC usage has decreased due to the warm weather and that the winter soccer season is ending, and summer soccer season registrations are open. She noted that the Trade Show had 860 people in attendance.

Cr. Campbell requested an update on the hot tub controls and CRC basement leak. Administration replied that the Curling Rink is still leaking and that they will start replacing the caulking annually before removing the ice as a preventative measure. Administration advised that the hot tub is functional and will be opening along with the Pool and new changerooms.

Cr. Korol asked if there were issues with the decommissioning of Arena or Curling Club ice plants. Administration replied that the Director of Municipal Services is working to get reports from CIMCO.

Cr. Couvrette attended the South Slave Tourism Development Workshops and thinks it went well. He requested a follow up briefing note on the expenses and funding sources, as well as follow up actions resulting from discussions at the conference.

D/M Macdonald requested more information on the water leak in the CRC and asked if it is isolated from the ice surface. Administration noted that there have been water issues in different areas of the facility and that the Curling Rink is a contributing factor. She advised that increased snow removal was performed around the building. Cr. Campbell requested the leak be fixed with Blueskin rather than caulking.

Mayor Daniels requested an on the Seniors' Room. Administration advised that the Seniors' Society had a meeting today and are in the moving-in stage.

b. Mary Kaeser Library

i. Library Statistics April 2023 – The Library statistics for April 2023 were reviewed. Administration advised that Library attendance has been far greater than at the old location. She was pleased with circulation and programming through the facility.

ii. Library Activity Report April 2023 – The Library Activity Report for April 2023 were reviewed.

6. Economic Development

a. Economic Development Report May 2023 – The Economic Development Report for May 2023 was reviewed. Administration was pleased with the recent South Slave Tourism Development Workshops and felt that Fort Smith showcased they could handle a conference.

Administration advised that the Housing Plan Advisory Board is meeting in May and will review survey results to incorporate in the Fort Smith's Housing Strategy as it moves forward.

7. Advisory Boards

a. Community Services Advisory Board

i. CSAB Reappointment Rohma Nawaz – The expression of interest form was reviewed. Cr. Korol noted that that there wasn't a CSAB meeting in April 2023.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Korol**

**Seconded by: Cr. Pischinger**

**That Rohma Nawaz be reappointed to the Community Services Advisory Board for a period ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Economic Development Advisory Board

i. EDAB Minutes April 27, 2023 – The EDAB minutes from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, were reviewed.

- ii. EDAB Reappointments – The expression of interest forms were reviewed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Korol**

**Seconded by: D/M Macdonald**

**That Kevin Antoniak, Pierre-Emmanuel Chaillon, Michael Keizer, and Alyssa Etsell be reappointed to the Economic Development Advisory Board for a period ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- c. Fort Smith Housing Plan Advisory Board – Cr. Pischinger advised that there is an upcoming meeting in May. She noted that the board has completed the survey stage and is amalgamating data to analyze and incorporate into the Housing Plan for Fort Smith.

D/M Macdonald asked if meetings would start occurring monthly. Administration replied that the project is nearing completion potentially in June 2023 but it may be extended.

Cr. Couvrette was pleased with over 200 surveys completed and noted that funding was received by Housing NWT for the development of a Housing Strategy for staffing and that they provided staff resources. Administration agreed and advised that the strategy will be Fort Smith specific. D/M Macdonald asked if there is a staff member processing data. Administration confirmed and advised that funding is carried through the duration of the project.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Community Services Standing Committee meeting will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

9. Adjournment

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Korol**

**Seconded by: D/M Macdonald**

**That the meeting be adjourned at 8:09 pm.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

# Vision

The vision statement outlines what our community wants to be. Our vision statement provides a basis for future decision-making and activities.

**The Town of Fort Smith will work with our partners to enhance our excellent quality of life by respecting values, traditions, and healthy lifestyles. We will continue to advance as a unified, active and prosperous community.**

# Values

The mission defines how the Town will operate; it represents what is fundamentally important to us in how we work with each other and represent the citizens of Fort Smith.

- **Welcoming** – we are a friendly community which embraces our visitors, students and residents alike.
- **Innovative** – we take on new challenges in the pursuit of excellence.
- **Sustainable** – we are committed to sustainability in our Town’s operations and development.
- **Unified** – we work with Indigenous governments and our partners to implement our plans and achieve our goals.
- **Committed** – we operate professionally and to the highest ethical standards.

## Town of Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre Stats

May-2023

Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre	April Sessions	April Participants	May Sessions	May Participants	
Squash	Operational for 28 days		27	Operational for 30 days	50
Pete's Gym	Operational for 28 days		963	Operational for 30 days	1123
Senior Lane Swim	6 of 8	39		7	39
Public Swim	8 of 8	103		7 of 9	167
Family Swim	No Family Swims	-		No Family Swims	-
Public Lane Swim	8 of 10	28		12 of 12	27
Parents & Tots Swim	6 of 8	9 Parents; 11 Tots		7 of 7	7 Parents; 7 Tots
Daycare Swim	5 of 7	70		3 of 5	58
Summer Camp Swim	-	-		-	-
Lifeguard Training	-	-		-	-
ASCP Swim	5 of 6	136		1 of 4	27
JBT Swim	-	-		-	-
PWK Swim	-	-		-	-
Pool Rentals	No Pool Rentals	-		No Pool Rentals	-
Swim Lessons	No Swimming Lessons	-		No Swimming Lessons	-
Frolics: Kids Carnival, Youth Outdoor Games	-	-		-	-
Adult Soccer	over for indoor season	0		2	34
Drop-in Soccer	3	27		4	57
Drop-in Volleyball	4	51		4	62
Drop-in Badminton	5	11		4	19
Drop-in Sports	10	71		8	81
Drop-in Basketball	3	34		5	60
Family Drop-in Sports	5	29		4	30
Parents & Tots Gym	15	61 Parents; 128 Tots		26	61 Parents; 128 Tots
Gym Rentals	18 of 30	351		17 of 24	387
Pickleball	7 of 11	49		9	70
Coding Camp Spring Break (Hilary Turko)	8	76		-	-
Youth Night	8	162		8	149
Youth Drop-in	-	-		26	257
Zumba (fitness room)	4	40		8	49
PWK Fire Drill	-	-		1	102
Archery	6	12		-	-
Girl Guides (curling Lounge)	6	74		7	84

Comments: .

Fort Smith Centennial Arena	April Sessions	April Participants	May Sessions	May Participants	
Rec Hockey		Arena Closed for Year		Arena Closed for Year	
Womens Hockey					
Old Timers Hockey					
Public Skate					
Family Skate					
Rentals					
Minor Hockey					
Figure Skating					
Youth Shiny					
Parents N Tots					
Minor Hockey Tournament U13					
Frolics Hockey Tournament					
Parks Fire Fighting Fitness Test (curling)				1	36
ENR Fire Fighting Fitness Test (arena)				3	84
Trade Show	3	approx 860			

Comments: .

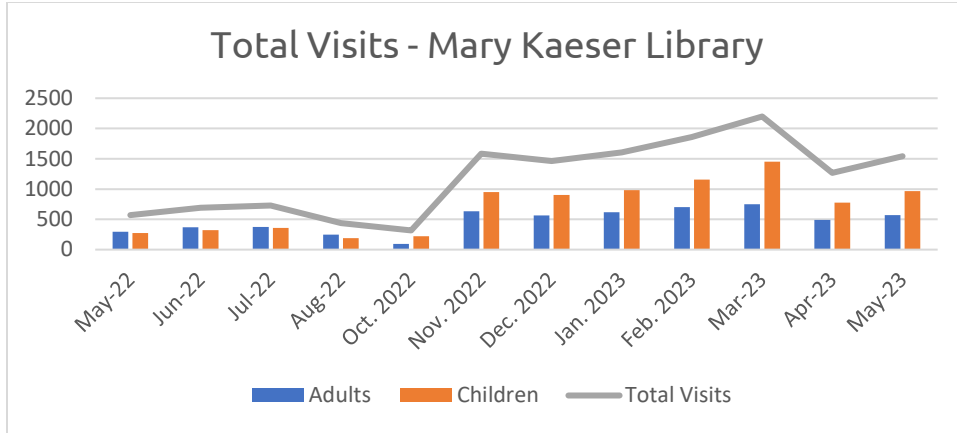
Fort Smith Child Care	April Sessions	April Participants	May Sessions	May Participants
ASCP	18	457/540; 35 Drop-ins(HD)		549/660; 3 Drop-ins(HD)
Daycare	18	16FT, 2HT, 3FTI; 2 Drop-ins(HD)		17FT, 1HT, 3FTI; 4 Drop-ins(HD)

Comments: .

FTI is for Full Time Infant

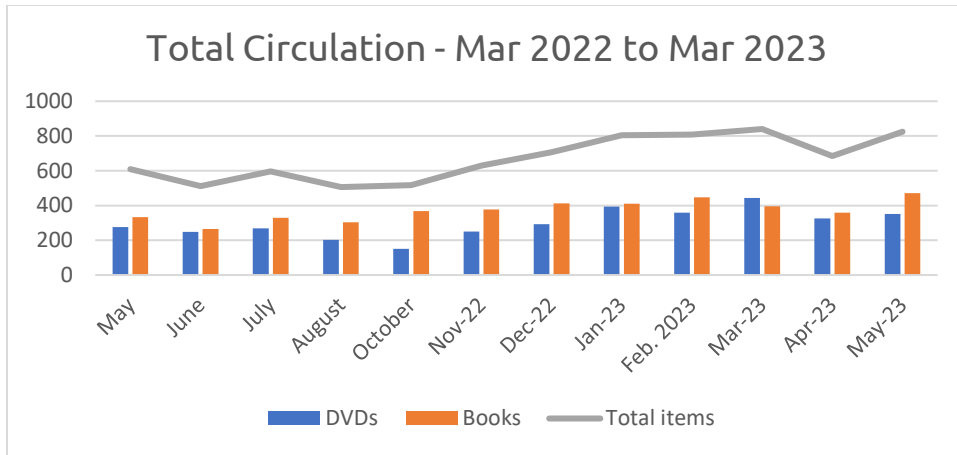
FTI is for Full Time Infant

Mary Kaeser Library May 2023 Stats

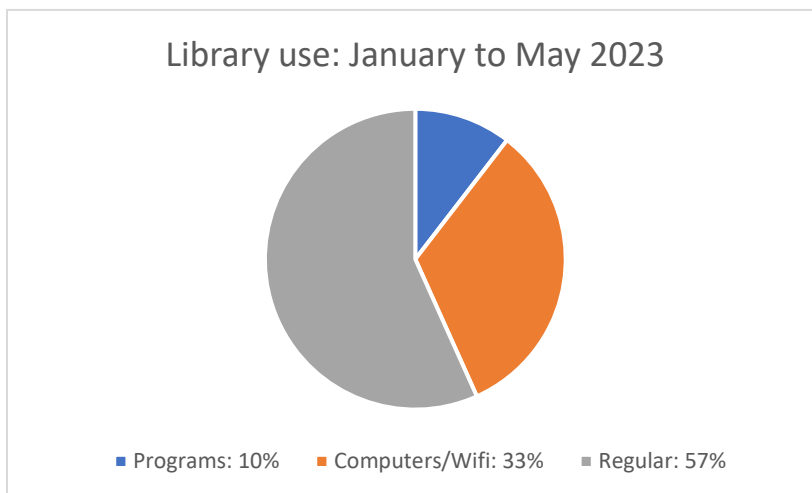


	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Total visits</b>
<b>May-22</b>	296	272	<b>568</b>
<b>Jun-22</b>	368	323	<b>691</b>
<b>Jul-22</b>	373	358	<b>731</b>
<b>Aug-22</b>	249	188	<b>437</b>
<b>Sep-22</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Oct. 2022</b>	95	222	<b>317</b>
<b>Nov. 2022</b>	631	952	<b>1583</b>
<b>Dec. 2022</b>	564	901	<b>1465</b>
<b>Jan. 2023</b>	620	984	<b>1604</b>
<b>Feb. 2023</b>	703	1157	<b>1860</b>
<b>Mar-23</b>	747	1451	<b>2198</b>
<b>Apr-23</b>	489	778	<b>1267</b>
<b>May-23</b>	572	968	<b>1540</b>

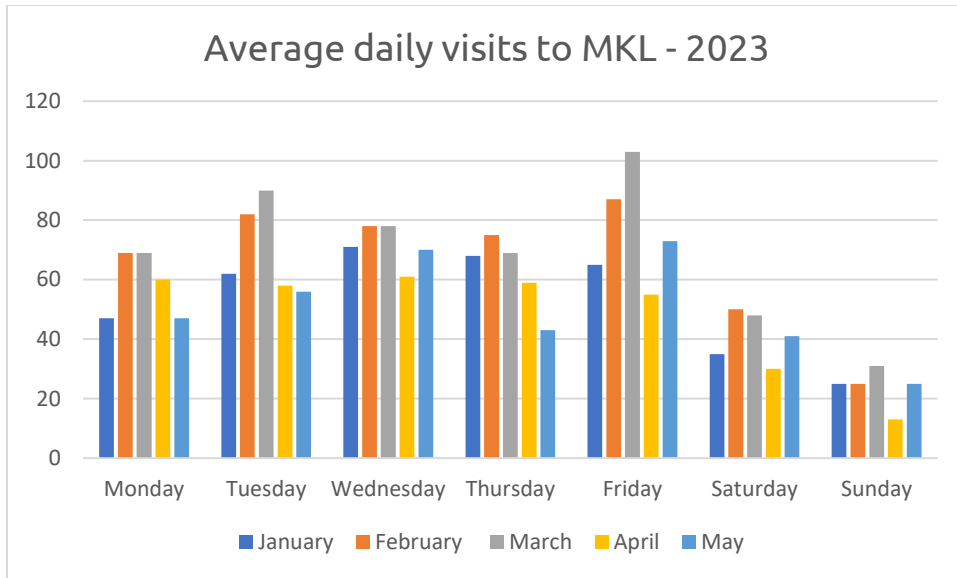
## Mary Kaeser Library May 2023 Stats



	DVDs	Books	Total Items
<b>May</b>	276	333	609
<b>June</b>	248	264	512
<b>July</b>	268	329	597
<b>August</b>	203	303	506
<b>September</b>	0	0	0
<b>October</b>	150	368	518
<b>Nov-22</b>	251	378	629
<b>Dec-22</b>	293	413	706
<b>Jan-23</b>	394	411	805
<b>Feb. 2023</b>	359	448	808
<b>Mar-23</b>	444	396	840
<b>Apr-23</b>	325	359	684
<b>May-23</b>	352	471	824



Mary Kaeser Library May 2023 Stats



Avg. Daily visits	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Monday</b>	47	69	69	60	47
<b>Tuesday</b>	62	82	90	58	56
<b>Wednesday</b>	71	78	78	61	70
<b>Thursday</b>	68	75	69	59	43
<b>Friday</b>	65	87	103	55	73
<b>Saturday</b>	35	50	48	30	41
<b>Sunday</b>	25	25	31	13	25



**Fort Smith**  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



# **Small Communities Employment Fund**

**Town of Fort Smith - Funding Report 2022 - 2023**

# Small Communities Employment Fund



## Fort Smith, NT 2022 - 2023

### Reporting on Successes and Challenges

**1. Please provide a brief explanation of what the SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Program achieved in 2022 - 2023 in comparison to what you anticipated achieving when you submitted your annual plan, identifying any adjustments that took place.**

The Town of Fort Smith (Town), through funding from GNWT ECE, supported businesses in the creation of eighteen seasonal jobs, eleven full time jobs, and four part-time jobs. We provided support in the following industry sectors:

- Construction
- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Hair care
- motor vehicle repair
- tourism
- finance
- food services.

The Town Annual Plan estimated the creation of 26 jobs and the results were a total of 33 jobs created.

Number of seasonal jobs created: 18

Number of full-time jobs created: 11

Number of part-time jobs created: 4

Total number of jobs created: 33

**2. Please provide a brief description of the successes you encountered through the implementation of the SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Program.**

Successes in the SCES program in Fort Smith include:

- Increased employment and retention of Northern and Indigenous labour force
- Increased employment for “hard to employ” individuals who are not able to work full-time or struggle with social issues. Employers hired seasonal staff or allowed staff to work flexible hours.
- Increased business involvement in talent creation with on-the-job training
- Increased number of employees being paid a living wage
- Increased employee retention
- Allowed businesses to take on new projects and expand services

**3. Please provide a brief description of the challenges you encountered through the implementation of the SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Program in 2022-2023.**

The greatest challenges are ensuring proper application process and reporting. The goal of the program is to create new jobs and support the growth of local businesses. Issues arise to ensure that a business is using the funding as intended, which is to create new jobs, not necessarily to have a new person enter into the same job. Ultimately, we want this funding to support a businesses in creating a job and at the end of two years of support and that the position would become self-sustaining.

**4. Please describe anything that occurred through the SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Program during 2022 - 2023 that was outside of what you expected to achieve through the project, either positive or negative (these are regarded as unexpected outcomes or impacts of your project)**

There was a higher number of seasonal and part-time jobs created. This allowed more flexibility for businesses to both meet the needs of their staff as well as of the business.

Support for economic development was stronger in the areas of retail than initially identified in the Fort Smith Annual Plan. This allowed for stability and expansion in the retail sector.

## Reporting on Most Significant Impact

**1. In your opinion, what has been the most significant impact (either positive or negative) that has occurred in your community as a result of the implementation of the SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Program within 2022-2023?**

The most significant impact for the 2022-2023 SCES program was the ability to keep northern Fort Smith residents employed in their home community with a living wage and on-the-job training. This allowed for an increase in skills for residents and supported local businesses in retaining staff and expanding operations.

**2. Why do you think this impact is important for participating communities?**

It increases employment retention for local businesses that struggle to keep staff by allowing them to train them and pay a living wage, It is also allowing for businesses to grow and expand their operations which provides better service and products to the community of Fort Smith.

**3. What difference will this impact make for participating communities in the future?**

Providing on-the-job training and a living wage provides stability for the labour market which puts Fort Smith in a better position for long-term economic growth. This impact benefits both employers / business owners and employees / job seekers. The program greatly assists individuals with little or no work experience, who might not be able to access many jobs. Employees expand their skills and gain experience to grow their career. This increases the individuals' future employability and therefore expands the skills and earnings in the labour market.

A growth and expansion of the individual businesses will create a stronger economy for Fort Smith and therefore be attractive for future businesses and in attracting new residents.

## Financial Reporting Requirements

Funding is fully provided through GNWT ECE.

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Government of the NWT - ECE	\$215,000	
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Compensation to local businesses	\$182,750	
Administration Fees	\$32,250	
Revenues less Expenditures	\$ -	

## Reporting on Deliverables – 2022 - 2023

The fund had 12 applicants this year, 8 second year applicants and 4 new, first year, applicants. Priority was given to the first year applicants who received a slightly higher amount than second year applicants. In the 2021-22 year we were given extra money for COVID relief funding that could be put towards this program and had fewer applicants which allowed us to deliver the maximum amount to each applicant in that year.

Positions	Pay stubs or payroll records submitted met funding application				Amount received
	Complete	Incomplete	Other	Not applicable	
Labourer	x				\$ 12843.75
Summer Students	x				\$ 12843.75
Social Media, skilled Labourer	x				\$ 12843.75
Assistant	x				\$ 12843.75
Student Customer Service	x				\$ 12843.75
Grounds Operator	x				\$ 12843.75
Supervisor, Cashier, Sales, General Administration	x				\$ 12843.75
Accounting	x				\$ 12843.75
Manager and front-line staff	x				\$ 20,000
manger	x				\$ 20,000
manager	x				\$ 20,000
Summer students	x				\$ 20,000

# Fort Smith Labour Market Study



## Study Process

The business and labour market study was a survey and a series of business visits which incorporated the following categories of questions:

- Local Business Overview
- Public/Private Delivery Expectations
- Snapshot of Current/Future Demand
- Expected Timelines

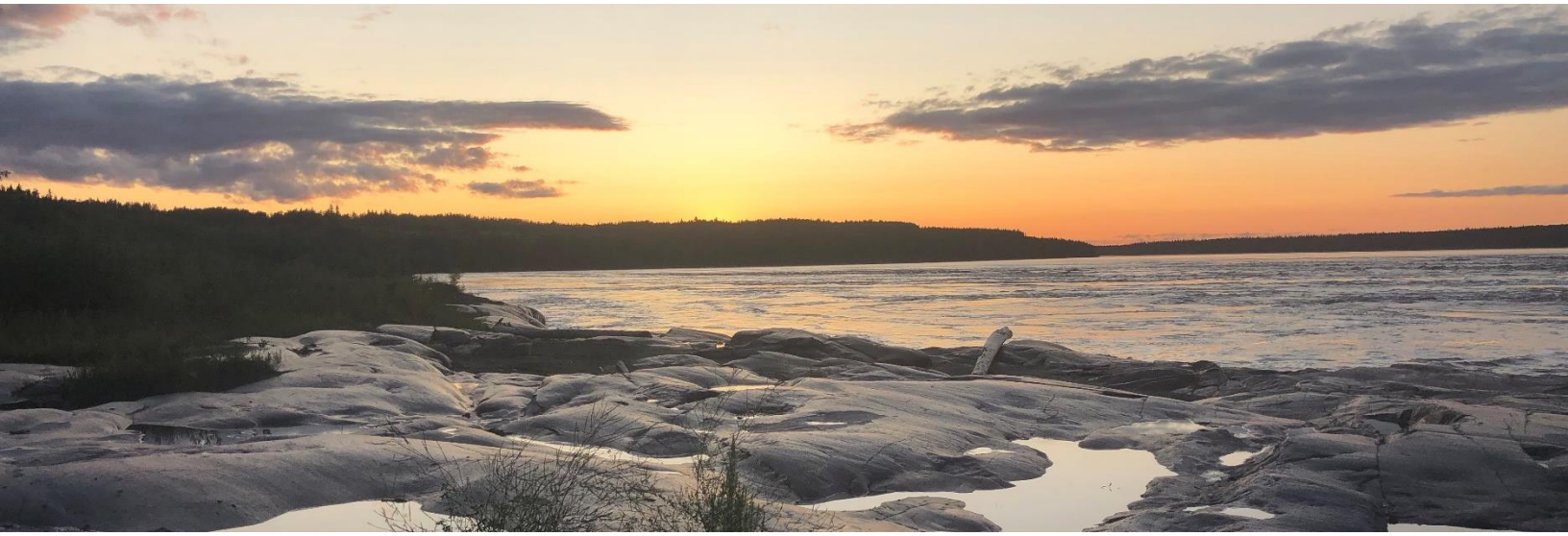
Research and review for this project included a literature review of the Town of Fort Smith 2022 Strategic Marketing Plan, Economic Development Strategy 2016~2022, Fort Smith Strategic Plan, business registry public domain information, Fort Smith Community Plan and the Fort Smith Recreation Master Plan.

Research sourced from the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Statistics Canada community statistics on population, income, labour ages & participation rates and education. Additionally, the project ensured to review the 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the highlighted Priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

In connection to this Community Labour Market Study, there are a number of Priorities of the Government of the Northwest Territories which either are primary in nature or are able to support the potential solutions and resulting recommendations of this plan. In respect of the 19th Legislative Assembly, and the priorities associated with the 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories this study would seek to collaboratively leverage and align with the outcomes associated with each of these priorities.

### Directly Associated Priorities

- Increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing need.
- Increase employment in small communities.
- Adopt a benefit retention approach to economic development. (NWT residents and businesses should benefit from economic development in the NWT to the greatest extent possible.)
- Increase student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada.
- Create a polytechnic university.
- Increase regional decision-making authority.
- Reduce the municipal funding gap.
- Advance universal childcare by increasing availability and affordability.
- Enable seniors to age in place with dignity.



## Community Profile

The Town of Fort Smith is a diverse community located in the South Slave Region of the Northwest Territories, along the border with Alberta. Its 2,700 residents are comprised of Indigenous persons (59%), which include Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis as well as non-Indigenous people (41%).

Some resident families have resided in the community for generations while others are long-term residents who made it their home, while others are more recent arrivals. The community has a strong cultural heritage and is surrounded by great tracts of undisturbed boreal forest that continue to be used by residents for traditional hunting and gathering practices as well as a range of outdoor recreational activities. It is the gateway to Wood Buffalo National Park.

The Town of Fort Smith is committed to working with local and regional partners and stakeholders including the Salt River First Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, Métis Council, and the Town of Hay River.

In 2017, the Town of Fort Smith adopted an Economic Development Plan which prioritized three streams of growth for the community: attracting new residents, attracting new businesses, and attracting business and leisure travellers.

The Town recognizes that a more versatile and diversified economy and workforce is required to maintain and grow the community. Currently, more than half of Fort Smith's employed residents work for municipal, territorial, Indigenous, and federal governments.

In recent years, the community has seen some reduction in territorial government jobs as a result of centralization, which increases the importance of seeking out alternatives to ensure that the community has the critical population mass necessary to continue being a healthy and prosperous community.

## Vision and Values

The vision for the Town of Fort Smith is as follows:

*“The Town of Fort Smith will work with its partners to enhance our excellent quality of life by respecting values, traditions, and healthy lifestyles. We will continue to advance as a unified, active and prosperous community.”*

The values are as follows:

- We value an open, transparent, effective government.
- We value our natural environment.
- We value a safe and hospitable community for our residents and visitors.
- We value education.
- We value the use of sustainable energy sources.
- We value active living, health and wellness.
- We value effective communication.
- We value community unity through partnerships.
- We value the passion and commitment of our volunteers.

The goals of the Town are as follows:

- Operate an open, transparent and effective government.
- Operate the Town of Fort Smith in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Provide excellent municipal programs and services to the citizens.
- Continue as a responsible employer.
- Preserve, advocate and enhance the natural environment in the Town.
- Maintain a safe community.
- Support all educational opportunities within the community.
- Be a leader in sustainable environmental practices in our community.
- Foster a strong cohesive community spirit.
- Maintain a healthy, active community.
- Grow our residential and business community.
- Promote Fort Smith as a desirable destination.



## Economic Development Goals

### **Goal #1: Foster and Encourage Business and Job Creation and Retention**

- Opportunities Assessment
- Develop Land & Business Inventory
- Gather input from Business Community
- Identify Investment Objectives & Strategies
- Implement Investment Strategy
- strengthen Government Positions in Fort Smith


### **Goal #2: Increase Communication with and within the Business Community**

- Assess Local Business Climate
- Provide Educational & Networking Opportunities
- Regular Communication with Business Community
- Support Chamber of Commerce with Shop Local Campaign

### **Goal #3: Diversify the Local Economy**

- Create a Cooperative Planning Strategy with Community and Regional Partners
- Identify Areas of Economic "Leakage"
- Encourage Youth Entrepreneurs

### **Goal #4: Attract and Retain Residents to live in Fort Smith**

- Identify the Current Situation
  - Define Key Target Markets, Messaging & Strategy
  - Develop a Marketing Strategy
  - Increase Housing Options
  - Create a Resident Ambassador Program
- 

# Economic Development Goals

## Goal #5: Enhance Liveability

- Identify Areas Needing Improvement
- Strengthen Public Engagement
- Community Improvement Plan/Guidelines
- Create Municipal Funding Program
- Identify Transportation Concerns
- Grow Culture and Arts Sector

## Goal #6: Attract Shoppers and Visitors from the Region into our Community

- Direct Marketing Campaign
- Improve Visitor Experience


## Goal #7: Champion and Assist with Tourism Product Development

- Champion New Development
- Identify the Barriers to Tourism Development
- Encourage Cultural Aspects to Tourism Development

## Goal #8: Increase number of Festivals, Sporting Events and Conferences held in Fort Smith

- Create and Maintain Active Volunteer Base
- Collaborate with Local Organizations to Host and Market Events

## Goal #9: Work with Regional Partners to Market Fort Smith (Hay River, Fort McMurray, Yellowknife, Edmonton)

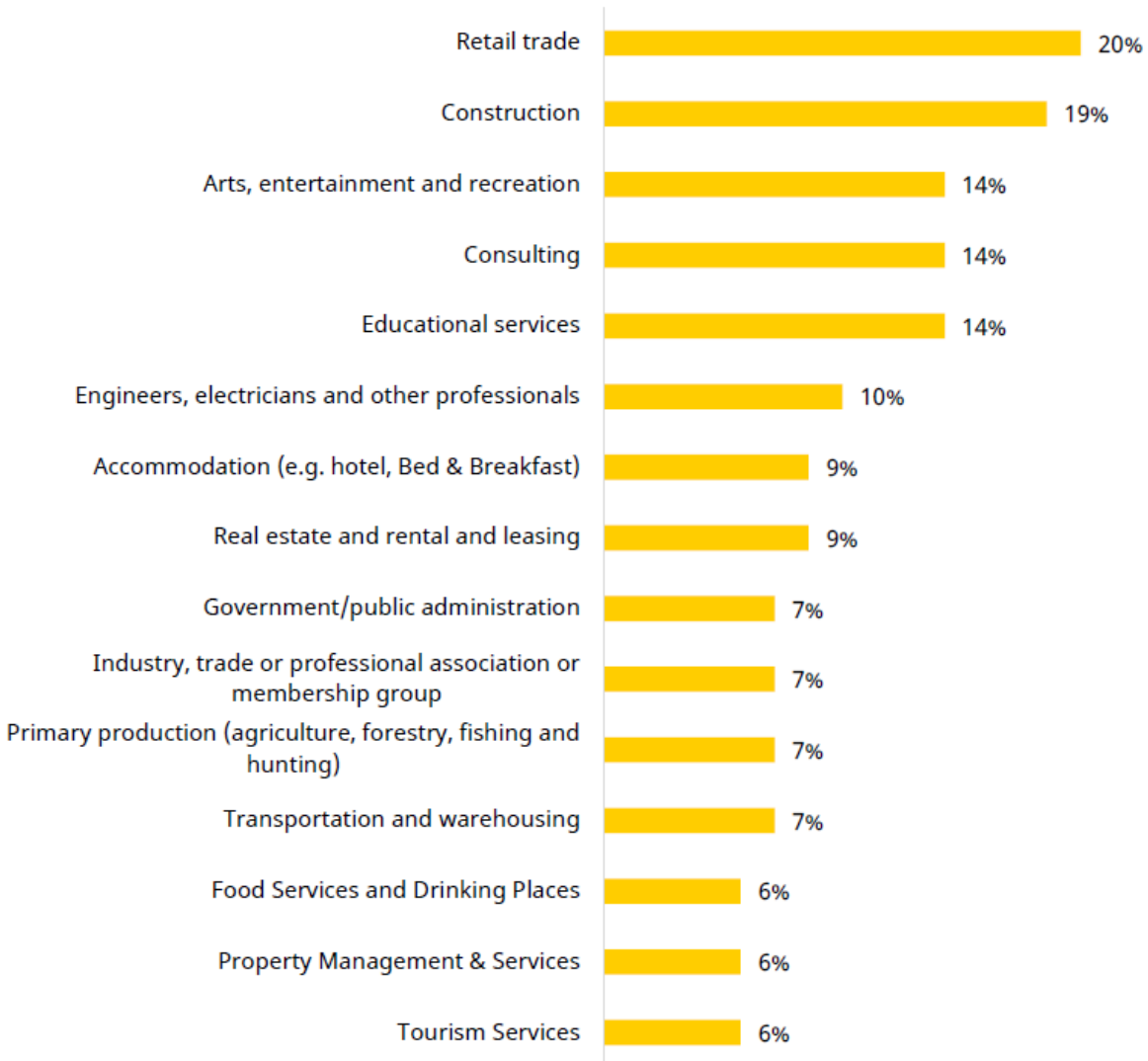
- Market Fort Smith regionally, nationally and internationally
- 

## Business Survey Data

In 2022 Town of Fort Smith economic development department visited over 40 local businesses and developed an online survey for businesses to complete.

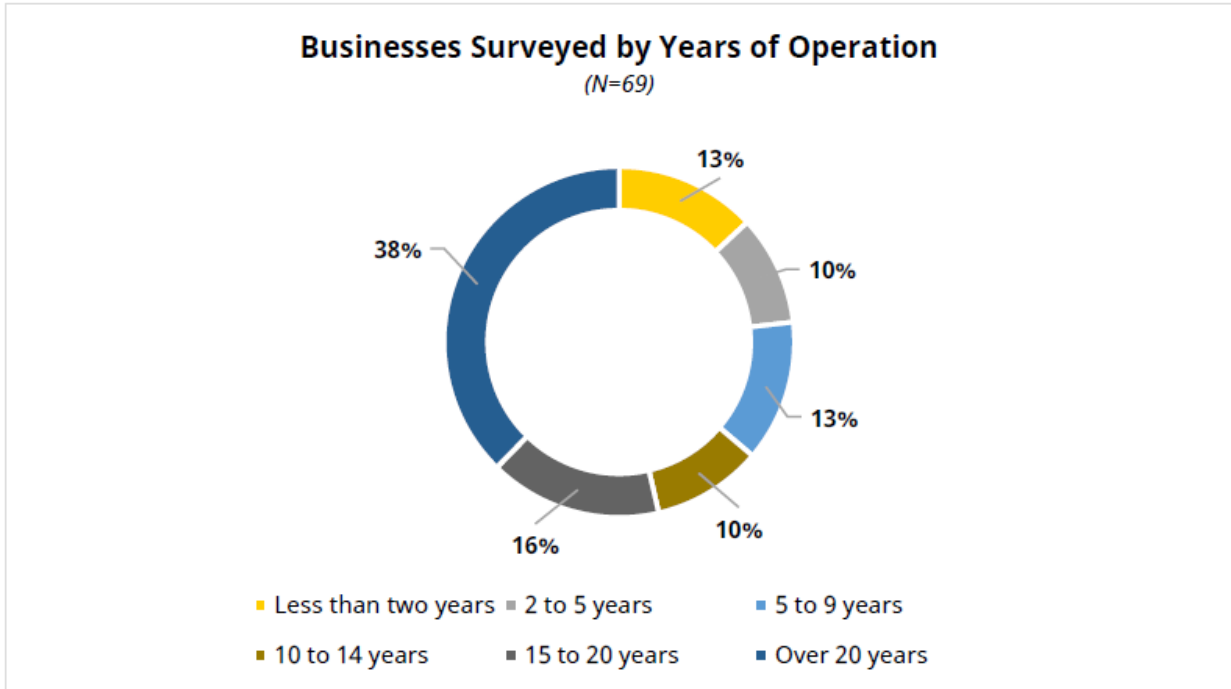
### Businesses Survey: Top 15 Industry Sectors

*Question: In what sector or sectors is your organization primarily involved?*

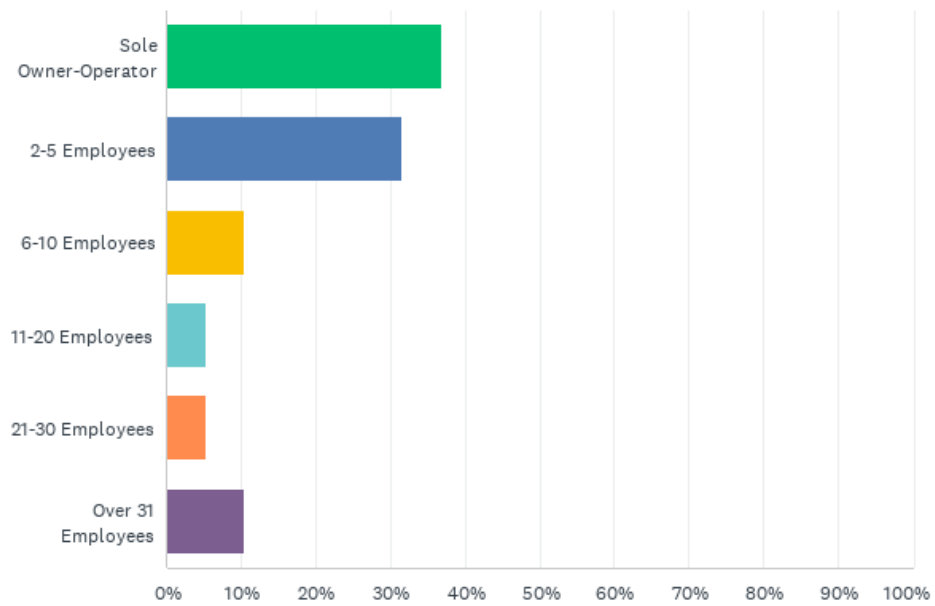


Most of the businesses are small (72% have five or fewer employees) and primarily serve local customers.

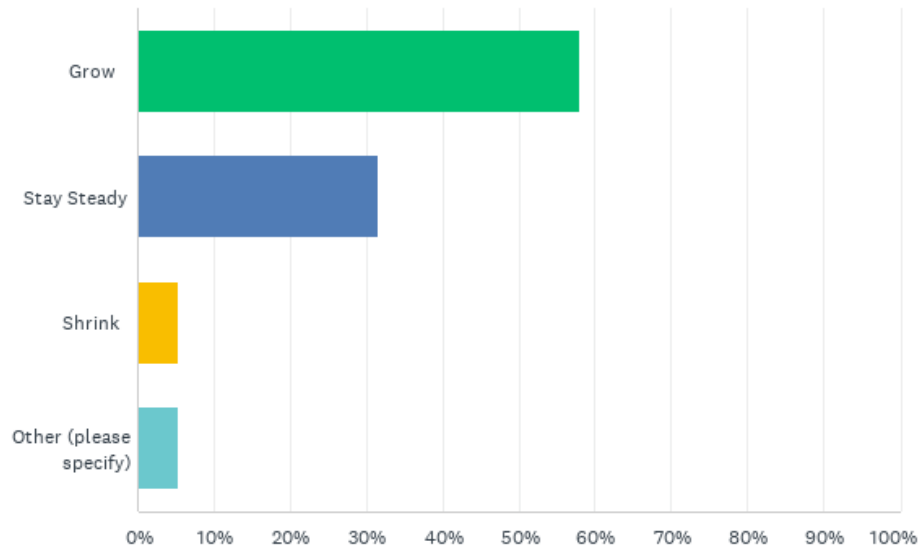
Of the businesses surveyed, 65% have been in operation for 10 or more years including 38% that have been in operation for over 20 years.



### Q4 How many people does your business employ?



Q5 In the next 1-2 years do you expect your business to grow, stay steady or shrink?



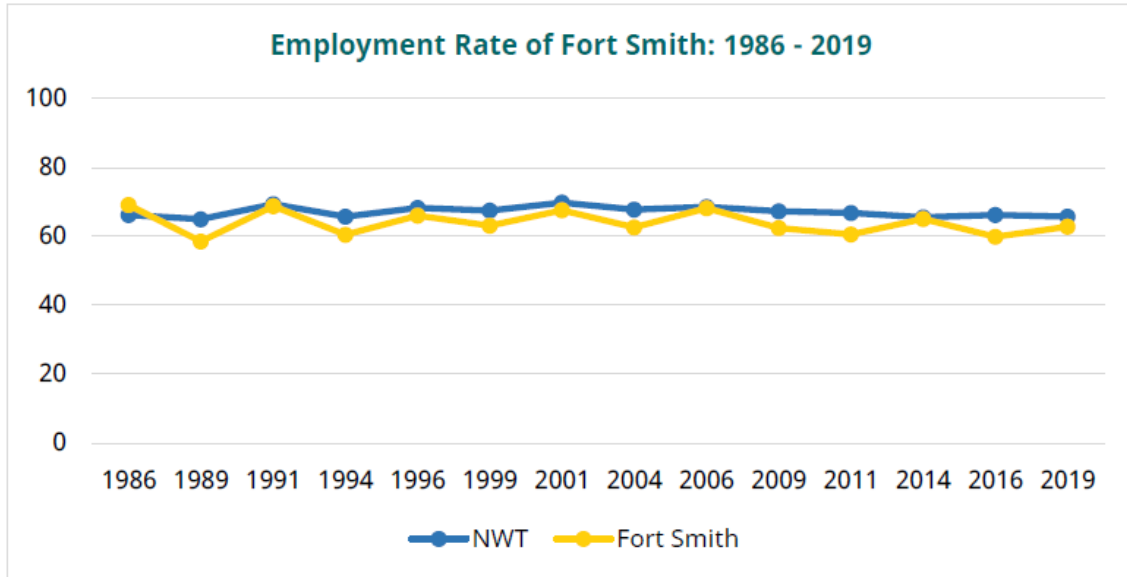
## Q7 What opportunities do you see for yourself and your business in Fort Smith?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 5

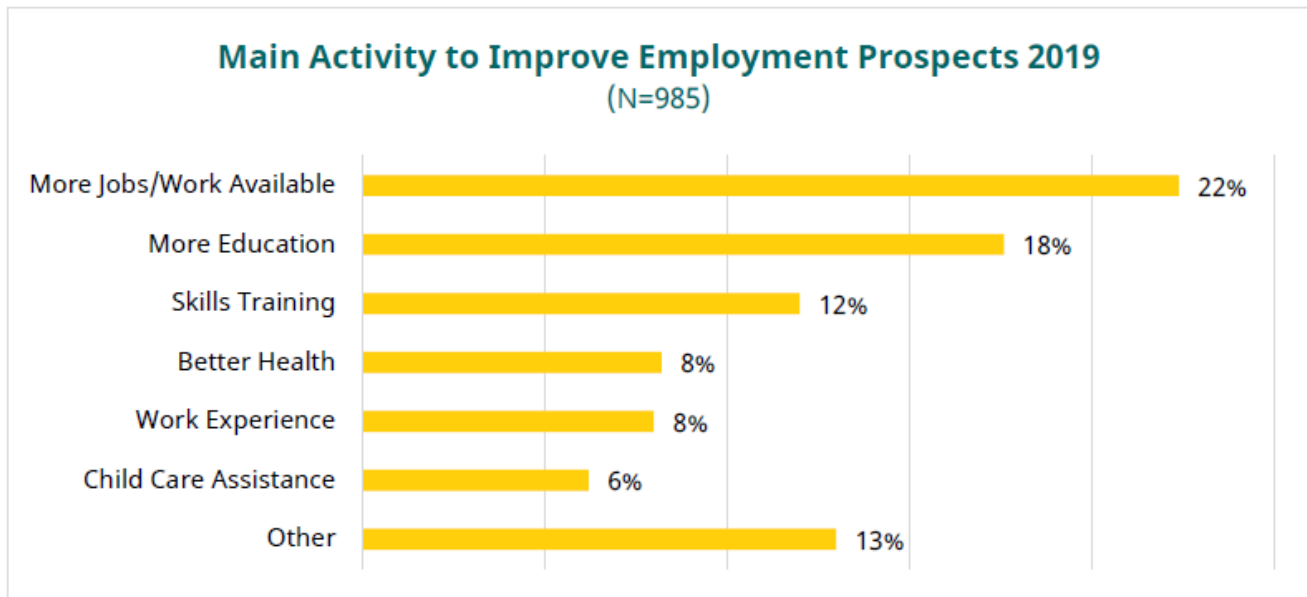
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	none	1/5/2023 2:47 PM
2	Tourists	12/20/2022 12:57 PM
3	growth of tourism packaged products	12/16/2022 10:06 AM
4	Centre for Flight Simulation	12/14/2022 5:26 PM
5	In the rennovation market	11/23/2022 1:24 PM
6	There is a need for more accommodation choices in Fort Smith - at certain times of the year the shortage of accommodation is acute - for example Fort Smith doesn't have enough commercial accommodation to host a conference as you know	11/15/2022 12:22 PM
7	NONE	11/15/2022 12:04 PM
8	Hoping to have a base to purchase from instead of just online	11/15/2022 11:28 AM
9	None if the harassment from the town continues	11/15/2022 11:28 AM
10	Fort Smith is a wealthy community with little competition.	11/15/2022 8:46 AM
11	residential rental units	11/14/2022 12:54 PM
12	I'd like to help grow the music scene, and turn Fort Smith into a destination for recording music.	11/14/2022 12:43 PM
13	Opportunities are limitless here. We are only limited by our staffing issues	11/14/2022 12:42 PM
14	Continued support from the community and increased tourism	11/14/2022 12:12 PM



## Labour Market Participation and Employment Data



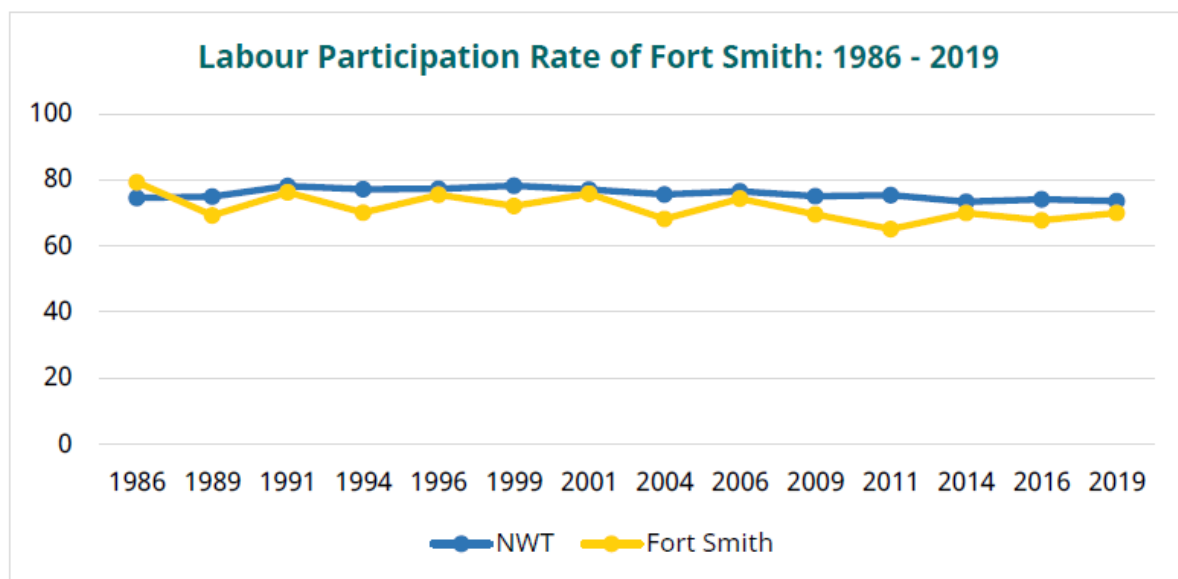
Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics 1986-2019



### Fort Smith Labour Force by Occupation

(Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, 2011, 2016)

Occupations	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Fort Smith Labour Force Surveyed	1,320	100%	1,020	100%	1,045	100%
Occupations in education; law and social; community and government services	215	16.3%	225	22.1%	230	22.0%
Trades; transport and equipment operators and related occupations	210	15.9%	180	17.6%	165	15.8%
Sales and service occupations	300	22.7%	160	15.7%	160	15.3%
Business; finance and administration occupations	205	15.5%	140	13.7%	155	14.8%
Management occupations	165	12.5%	140	13.7%	120	11.5%
Health occupations	65	4.9%	45	4.4%	60	5.7%
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	75	5.7%	50	4.9%	45	4.3%
Occupations in art; culture; recreation and sport	30	2.3%	30	2.9%	40	3.8%
Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	10	0.8%	10	1.0%	15	1.4%
Natural resources; agriculture and related production occupations	45	3.4%	35	3.4%	25	2.4%
Occupation - not applicable	0	0.0%	5	0.5%	30	2.9%



Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics 1986-2019

## Fort Smith's Leading Employers

(Source: Draft Fort Smith Community Profile)

	# Employees
Government of the Northwest Territories	513
Aurora College – Thebacha Campus	93
Northwestern Air Lease	70
Parks Canada – Wood Buffalo National Park	65
Town of Fort Smith	63

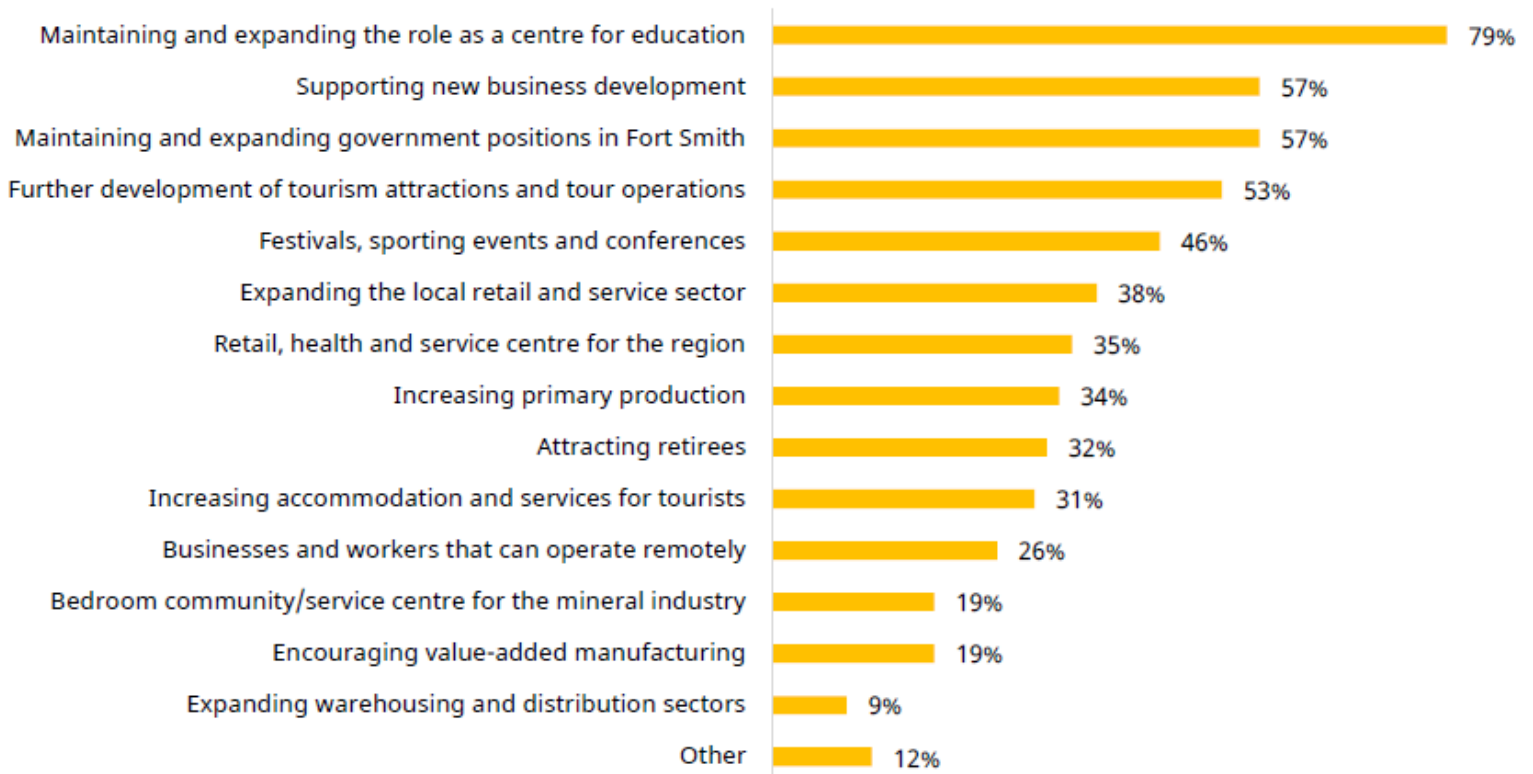
## Fort Smith Commuting (Work) Destination

(Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, 2016)

Commuting destination of work	2006		2016	
	#	%	#	%
Total surveyed labour force worked at usual place	1,105	100%	850	100%
Commute within town	1,025	93%	795	94%
Commute to a different town within the country	60	5%	0	0%
Commute to a different town within NWT	0	0%	45	5%
Commute to outside of NWT	15	1%	10	1%

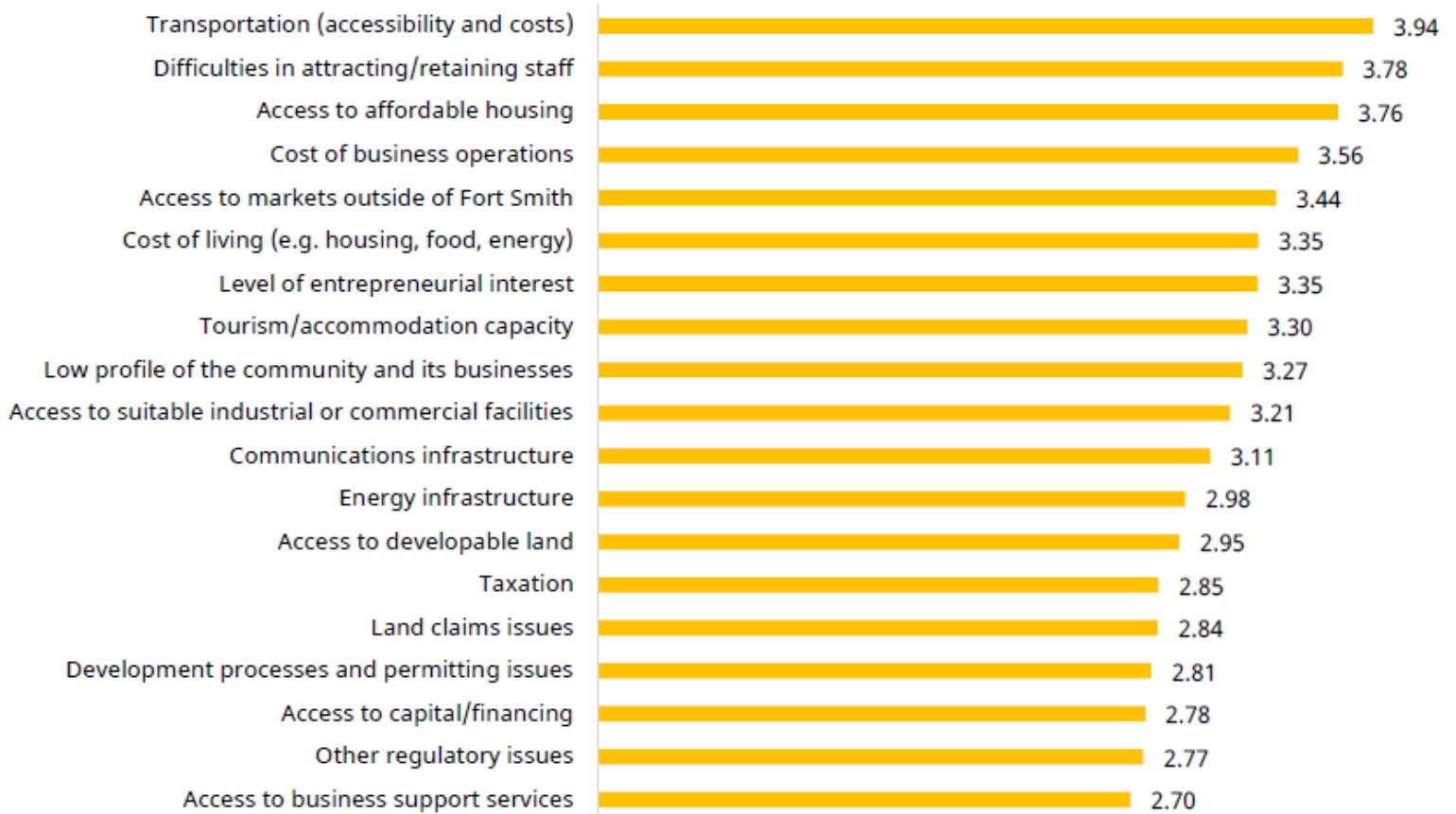
**When asked to identify the three major economic development opportunities for the community over the next five years, the businesses most commonly identified maintaining and expanding Fort Smith’s role as a centre for education; supporting new business development; and maintaining and expanding government positions in the town.**

**What do you see as the major opportunities for economic development in the community over the next five years?**



**Access to transportation, staff, and affordable housing were identified by businesses as key factors constraining economic development in Fort Smith.**

**On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, 3 is somewhat, and 5 is to a great extent, to what extent do you believe the following factors are constraining economic development in Fort Smith?**



Although there has been an overall decrease in employment compared to two years ago, most business owners do not expect employment to further decrease over the next two years.

### Employment Change: Current, 2 Years Ago, 2 Years from Now

Employees	2018-2020		2020-2022	
	#	%	#	%
Increased/Expect to increase	10	17%	18	26%
Decreased/Expect to decrease	15	25%	15	22%
Stayed the same/Expect to stay the same	35	58%	35	51%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following table compares the employment distribution between 2018, 2020, and 2022. Excluding data provided by one large employer, 58 surveyed businesses provided data on employment in 2018 and 2020 as well as projections for 2022. As indicated, aggregate employment for these 58 businesses declined from 371 in 2018 to 359 at the time of the survey (a decrease of 3.2%) but is projected to increase slightly to 365 in 2022 (an increase of 1.7%).

### Employment Distribution: Current, 2 Years Ago, 2 Years from Now

Employees	2018		2020		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 5	44	76%	40	69%	42	72%
5 to 10	7	12%	8	14%	6	10%
11 to 20	2	3%	6	10%	6	10%
Over 20	5	9%	4	7%	4	7%
Total reported all periods of employment	58	100%	58	100%	58	100%
<i>Total</i>	371		359		365	
<i>Average Employment<sup>32</sup></i>	6.4		6.2		6.3	
<i>Change</i>	-3.2%				+1.7%	

Over the past two years, nearly half of the businesses surveyed have hired new workers on a permanent, temporary, or part-time basis to work in Fort Smith. While most of those new hires were already residing in the town, nine percent of the new hires moved to Fort Smith for the employment opportunity.

### Number of New Hires over the Past Two Years

# of New Hires	2018	
	#	%
None	34	51%
1 to 4	18	27%
5 to 10	8	12%
11 to 20	5	7%
Over 20	2	3%
Total Respondents	67	100%
<i>Total New Hires</i>	434	
<i>Average New Hires<sup>33</sup></i>	2.8	

Labour challenges can make it difficult for a business to maintain and expand operations. Seventy-one percent of businesses who had new hires over the past two years indicated that it has been at least somewhat difficult to hire and retain good staff, particularly for entry level, customer service, management, and administration positions.



Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, potential factors, issues, or developments identified by survey respondents that are the most likely to affect the number of people businesses employ in Fort Smith in the next two years are summarized in the table below. The leading factors are the level of demand and revenue (i.e., the amount of work available and sales); the availability of skilled labour; government funding programs, contracts, and spending; and how much tourism related activities return post pandemic.

### What potential factors, issues, or developments are most likely to affect the number of people your organization employs in Fort Smith in two years?

Potential factors, issues or developments	#	%
<b>Total Survey Respondents</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
The level of demand/revenue and available business opportunities	12	30%
The availability of and access to qualified workers/talent (e.g., difficulty in finding qualified staff in town or those willing to work town or the NWT)	9	23%
The current COVID-19 situation (e.g., finding a vaccine for COVID-19)	8	20%
Government funding, contracts and spending (e.g., funding for filming such as ITI or NWT Arts)	7	18%
The level of Government travel and tourism and related activities return post COVID-19 (e.g., travelers, music festivals, filming etc.)	5	13%
The economy in Fort Smith in general (e.g., development and growth opportunities; business capacity; local resource developments etc.)	5	13%
GNWT policies and decisions; Utility and power related policies (e.g., the town's strategic direction; local bargaining of unions; Taltson power dam)	4	10%
Housing availability; housing market fluctuations, and cost of living	2	5%



# Business & Labour Market Oriented Recommendations


## Short Term

1. **Develop Resident Attraction & Retention program**
2. **Business sector study and Labour Development Plan** - Increase employer access to workers, including skilled workers and managers.
  - a. In the survey, businesses identified attracting and retaining staff as a major constraint to development. A labour market study should be conducted to review the demand for and supply of workers, identify critical skills and labour shortages, assess key constraints to accessing needed staff, outline strategies to fill the identified gaps, and develop a plan through which employers can coordinate recruitment activities and work together to address the major constraints. The potential strategies could include education and training, employee and resident attraction initiatives, student retention programs (i.e., encouraging a higher percentage of Aurora College students to remain in the community post-completion), and use of foreign worker and immigrant employment (e.g., PNP) programs. The results will help to inform employee development and attraction programs and decisions regarding the future operations of Aurora College in Fort Smith.
3. **Determine Government Roles & Responsibilities:** undertake a high-level study related to labour attraction and retention, education and training, programs and initiatives and the roles, responsibilities, mandates, program deliverables as is delivered for governments at all levels (municipal, Government of the Northwest Territories, Government of Canada)
4. **Develop Fort Smith Housing Plan** – Increase access to affordable housing, particularly smaller rental units for singles and couples. This is critical to improving the attractiveness of the community to prospective permanent and temporary residents (including remote workers and digital nomads).

## Mid- Term

1. **Increase access to business development training and services.**
  - a. The Town needs to create more of an entrepreneurial culture and an environment that is supportive to business development. Fort Smith should pursue opportunities to lever the strategies being developed by the GNWT to increase access to entrepreneurial training, co-working spaces, early-stage capital, and other business support services.
2. **Increase access to reliable and affordable connectivity**
  - a. The GNWT has identified connectivity as a high priority and is actively working with telecom suppliers to improve access. Given the importance of the reliable, affordable connectivity to competitiveness, the Town should continue to advocate with the GNWT, Northwestel, and other telecom providers for system improvements. There is also a need to facilitate access to training and other support that will assist local businesses in digitizing their operations as well as in using social media and other platforms to operate and promote their businesses.
3. **Youth Career Exploration**
  - a. Develop a youth career exploration program in collaboration with Aurora College, GNWT ECE, GNWT ITI, the Fort Smith business community, and local industry leaders. Identify clear pathways for high school students to be able to experience a selection of positions, understand employment options, allow students and families to make more informed decisions regarding education and employment, and ensure that there are supports (career councillors and funding initiatives) to make the successful transition from high school through education to the workforce.
4. **Collaborate with Aurora College** as it transitions into a polytechnic university. Demonstrate local need and potential to expand post-secondary degree programs.
5. **Improve the attractiveness of the community to potential residents and businesses**

## Long Term

1. **Develop Partnership Collaborations** – Develop new and innovative ways to connect the community across generations, interests, etc. in person and online.
  2. **Support Aurora College** in their endeavours to expand local educational offerings to bring in students, administration and faculty.
  3. **Work with Business Community** – Continue to survey and develop strategies in alignment with the needs of the business community.
  4. **Review Fort Smith Labour Market Plan** - Assess progress, successes, learning gaps, and forward minded goals.
- 



## **Town of Fort Smith Community Services Advisory Board Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 12:00pm CRC Curling Club Room - Regular Meeting**

### Attendees:

- Jonah Mitchell, Chair
- Jeri Miltenberger, Vice Chair
- Allie MacDonald
- Jacie Macdonald
- Mike Vassal
- Dianna Korol, Council Representative

### Regrets:

- Rohma Nawaz
- Payton Vogt
- Gail Hartop
- Sebastien Bourke

### Administration:

- Emily Colucci, Director of  
Community Services
- Katie Reid, Executive Secretary

### **A. Call to Order**

Jonah Mitchell called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

### **B. Delegations**

- a. Brand Style Guide Presentation – Diane gave a presentation on the brand refresh and style guide. She reviewed what branding is and things to know about branding. She advised that the former Tourism and Trade Advisory Board created the branding logo approximately 12-years-ago.

Diane reviewed the icons in the brand logo and advised they would be incorporated into signage and social media posts to expand on how the logo is used. She advised that the brand tone for Fort Smith is confident, dynamic, and adventurous, and that nature and indigenous culture fit into the brand. Additionally, she advised that the tagline, “Unexpected, Unforgettable”, has been expanded on. She advised that products and activities are the backbone to the brand and local businesses are the key driver for the brand. She noted that there is a good base of businesses and organizations using the brand already and that sports groups and other events can build the brand through their activities.

The Director of Community Services advised that with the brand refresh, consistent advertisement templates have been created for different departments, and for the public to be aware of outgoing communications.

Mike asked if the brand is unique enough to differentiate between Hay River and Yellowknife brands. Diane replied that there are unique components including WBNP, the rapids, etc. She noted that the attractions in Fort Smith are accessible rather than having to fly out to see attractions. The Director replied that common elements in the branding set the brand tone and highlight existing attractions in Fort Smith. She added that signage would be the next component in directing individuals to the attractions.

**C. Approval of the Agenda**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Jeri Miltenberger**

**Seconded by: Allie McDonald**

**That the agenda be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**D. Approval of the Minutes**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Jeri Miltenberger**

**Seconded by: Allie McDonald**

**That the minutes of February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**E. Business Arising from the Minutes**

The Director advised that the new process in applying for Town funding and donations is being used and that all applications are brought to Council for decision.

**F. New Business**

- a. CRC and Library Statistics February/March 2023 – The statistics were reviewed.

Emily advised that the Pool is planned to reopen on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Upcoming Events**

- PWK Grad Convocation May 25<sup>th</sup> 1PM SRFN Conference Centre.
- NLMCC Witness Blanket May 25<sup>th</sup> – open until the end of July. Exhibit on Paulette Caveat.
- CRC Grand Reopening July 12-13<sup>th</sup> – Ribbon cutting, speeches, and community barbeque along with free access to the pool and gym activities.
- Aurora College Grad Convocation June 9<sup>th</sup> 1PM SRFN Conference Centre
- Dark Sky Festival August 17-20<sup>th</sup>

- Art in the Park in August
- Track and Field in June
- Indigenous People's Day June 21<sup>st</sup>
- Canada Day at Conibear Park July 1<sup>st</sup> – Dianna advised that the event would be scaled down from past years and that it would be open to vendors to sell food.
- Dene National Assembly July 18<sup>th</sup> – Jeri advised that the NLMCC is hoping to have the reopening of the Cultural Centre during the Dene National Assembly.

#### **H. Excusing of Members**

Rohma Nawaz, Gail Hartop, and Sebastien Bourke were excused from the meeting.

#### **I. Date of Next Meeting**

That the next CSAB meeting be scheduled on Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 in the CRC Curling Club Room.

#### **J. Adjournment**

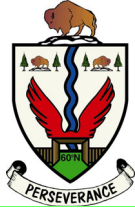
***MOTION***

**Moved by: Allie McDonald**

**Seconded by: Jeri Miltenberger**

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



# Town of Fort Smith Economic Development Advisory Board Minutes May 25, 2023

Regular Meeting – Town Hall Council Chambers

**Attendees:**

Alyssa Etsell  
Kevin Antoniak  
Mike Keizer  
Linda Martin

**Regrets:**

Cr. Mike Couvrette  
Pierre Emmanuel-Chaillon  
Helena Katz

**Administration:**

Diane Seals, EDO  
Emily Prescott,  
Economic Development Assistant  
Katie Reid, Executive Secretary

**A. Call to Order**

Kevin Antoniak called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Mike Keizer**

**Seconded by: Alyssa Etsell**

**That the agenda be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. Approval of Minutes**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Mike Keizer**

**Seconded by: Alyssa Etsell**

**That the EDAB minutes of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**D. New Business**

- a. Home Occupation Business Recommendations to Council – Diane reviewed past discussion on home occupation recommendations and advised that a recommendation was drafted and put forward to the December meeting but not formalized by the board.

Alyssa suggested preparing a document with supporting information and research regarding EDAB's recommendations along with other considerations.

Linda reviewed home occupation food sales and noted that craft sales are not required to have a home occupation business license. Diane replied that there was concern with home food sales and multiple home occupations impacting neighbourhoods and that Bylaw Enforcement had encouraged compliance which resulted in the increase in home-based food business applications.

Alyssa acknowledged enforcement initiatives and compliance of individuals following the business licensing process. She added that there the GNWT Public Health governs food permitting which cannot be obtained without compliance and felt that the Town should not have to enforce other regulations.

Mike responded that the board discussed making the application process easy as to encourage business and not be a barrier or impediment for business start-up.

EDAB suggested the following:

- Not all businesses be required to reapply/renew licenses annually
  - Low cost for license renewal
  - Remove hawker/peddler from the application
  - Restaurants with seating must be commercial
  - Businesses with parking requirements must be commercial
  - Reduction in licensing fees
  - Annual stickers for renewals to be placed on license
  - Easy application process for new businesses
- b. Upcoming Projects – Diane advised that the Housing Plan Advisory Board put out a survey where over 200 surveys were completed, and that the board would be meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup> to review next steps, objectives and to have a visioning session. She noted that next steps would be to find gaps in data from the survey process and perform focus group interviews.

Kevin asked for an update on the number of undeveloped lots in Fort Smith. Diane replied that available lots are now listed on the website. Linda advised that the Chamber of Commerce would like this information. Diane advised that Housing NWT is also reviewing their undeveloped lots and vacant housing.

Diane advised that the Town is moving forward with engineering designs for Conibear Park and that the Town would be applying to CanNor for funding. Further, she advised that Canada Day is planned to move back to Conibear Park.

Mike advised that there was recently a survey being done in the community on drugs, alcohol, and gambling. Diane replied that the GNWT was working on a Regional Economic Development Plan in the fall, but she has not heard back on the status of the plan.

**E. Excusing of Members**

EDAB excused Pierre Emmanuel-Chaillon and Helena Katz from the meeting.

**F. Date of Next Meeting**

The next EDAB meeting will be on Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 12:00pm in Council Chambers.

Linda advised that she does not wish to renew her term appointment on EDAB.

**G. Adjournment**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Alyssa Etsell**

**Seconded by: Mike Keizer**

**The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



## **Fort Smith Housing Plan Advisory Board**

Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 12:00pm  
Town Hall Council Chambers

### **Present**

Karen Scott, Community Member  
Mary Pat Short, Seniors' Society  
Sujata Ganguli, COO FSHC  
Kathy Lepine, GNWT  
Laura Aubrey, Aurora College  
Jeremy Beamish, Landlord/Business Owner

### **Absent**

Anna Kikoak, Landlord/Business Owner  
Claire Lehman, PWK High School  
Linh Nguyen, Landlord  
Dvonne Paulette, GNWT Human Resources  
Ray Tourangeau, SRFN  
Allan Heron, FSMC President  
Blaine Walterhouse, FSMC Vice President  
Adam Bathe, SDAB/Landlord/Business Owner

### **Administration:**

Chris Van Dyke – Housing NWT  
Diane Seals – Economic Development Officer  
Emily Prescott – Economic Development Assistant  
Katie Reid – Executive Secretary

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm.

### **Discussion**

Diane was pleased that over 200 individuals participated in the housing survey in efforts to obtain data for the Fort Smith Housing Plan. She advised that the purpose of the meeting was to review the initial survey results and to look ahead to the next meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Chris reviewed a Power Point presentation of the survey results and advised that they would review charts and graphs, then written responses to questions. He advised that the initial public engagement is complete through the survey process and compiling data to combine facts and guide planning.

Chris noted that 208 surveys were completed, approximately 8% of the population, and felt this was a good response rate and indicated that there were good cross-section responses from the community including different age groups, income levels, homeowners and renters, and people experiencing risk of homelessness. He advised that most responses were from ages 25 and older and suggested more targeted engagement with ages under 25 and in consideration that they would soon be entering the housing market.

Chris advised that there were even responses from individuals with different income levels, and most individuals making under \$100k annually were either renting or living with family. He noted that two-thirds of the responses were from females, two-thirds of the respondents lived in Fort Smith for more than 10-years, and most homeowners rented prior to buying. Chris advised that over 60% of respondents were homeowners, 25% rented student or public housing, 10% live in a home rented by someone else and a small amount were underhoused or at risk of homelessness. He noted that of half the respondents, aged 35-60, half were renting, and half were living with someone else not renting.

Chris advised that the next slides relate to homeowners and the physical aspects of homes. He noted that most homes are single detached stick-built houses, approximately 10% were single detached modulars, and a few townhouse respondents. Most homes, approximately 70%, are over 30-years old. Most homes are two-levels, more than 80% have a basement, and nearly half are 3-bedroom houses, followed by 4-bedroom, then 2-bedroom. The survey asked how satisfied homeowners were with the size of their homes and 80% felt the current size was appropriate, 10% felt their homes were too large, and 10% felt their homes were too small. Approximately 50% rated their homes in good condition, followed by fair condition, great condition, and poor condition.

Chris reviewed home affordability and advised that almost 80% of respondents felt their home was affordable and 20% unaffordable. It was also asked what the biggest challenges are for people who own homes or would like to own homes, and the top two ranking responses were affordability of a mortgage and affordability of utilities, followed by cost of upkeep of repairs, access to skilled tradespeople for upkeep, diversity of housing supply, and adapting homes for changing climate. He recognized affordability as a challenge and a financial barrier in becoming a homeowner.

He reviewed the next chart that asked if individuals current homes would meet their needs over the next 5 to 10-years. Half indicated their current homes would meet their needs, a third indicated modifications would be required to meet needs, 8% indicated they would look for a smaller home, and similar would look for a home outside of Fort Smith.

Chris reviewed responses from renters and advised that a third of renters are renting an apartment or duplex, a quarter are renting single detached home and a smaller portion of respondents were renting a room. Additionally, he advised that there were good responses from individuals living in public housing which will be useful statistics for Housing NWT. He noted that there was a small portion of respondents living in staff housing and a large amount living in public rentals or neither.

Chris advised that renters were asked to describe their experience and approximately 80% said it was very difficult to find a rental in Fort Smith. He noted that approximately 65% found their rentals affordable, and no respondents noted their rental in great condition, but some in good condition, most in fair condition, and 15% in poor condition. He indicated from the survey results showed that affordability and availability are the top two barriers for renters. He noted the barriers for purchasing a home are not being able to save enough for a down payment, the cost of a mortgage and maintenance, and the lack of available homes that meets needs.

Chris noted that renters were asked about housing needs in the next 5-10 years and that most were happy with their current situation, that slightly more respondents indicated they would prefer to own a home but cannot afford it right now, and that 15% are reviewing option in other communities. He noted that of 56 renters that completed surveys, only 30 answered this question.

Chris reviewed the next response from the under-housed population regarding barriers experienced to accessing safe and affordable housing, and that most responses were lack of option, public housing waitlist, or other. He noted that there are currently 39 households on the waitlist for public housing and acknowledged this as a significant barrier.

Chris reviewed answers for areas of Fort Smith that should be a priority for new housing development in future years and locations that were ranked in top order were the west, then central/downtown, east, and rural/country such as Bell Rock. He noted comments indicating that the east side of town is too dense with limited room for new development, but that Kid City area was a desirable location and that rural areas are nice but expensive to service.

Chris advised that three top housing challenges in Fort Smith were identified respectively as the need for more homes, diversity of housing options, and affordability, followed by the need for appropriate housing for seniors and housing to counter homelessness.

Chris reviewed quotes from survey respondents in response to questions including:

- What made you want to buy your current home;
- Affordability;
- What other challenges have you experienced or observed;
- Ideas of actions to help homeowners;
- What made you want to rent your current home;
- How would you describe your experience trying to find a place to rent;
- As a renter, what barriers do you see to becoming a homeowner;
- What challenges have you experienced as a renter;
- Where to prioritize new housing;
- What are the gaps in existing Housing programs and services; and
- Any other comments.

Chris reviewed next steps and advised that the next meeting would be in-person on May 29<sup>th</sup> for a visioning session and strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis. He advised that targeted engagement sessions would follow.

Mary Pat asked where land is available on the westside and who the land is owned by. Chris replied that the Town has lots for sale and that he hopes to bring information to the May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting including a map to review vacant land and limitations such as with the Zoning Bylaw. Kathy replied that the GNWT's online mapping system, Atlas GIS, shows Town land in yellow and that there is a lot of vacant Town owned and Commissioner's land. Diane replied that available lots are listed on the Town website and advised that she would send out the list.

An update was requested on what Housing NWT is doing with vacant units and noted many duplexes and buildings sitting empty that could fill a large portion of the waitlist for public housing. Chris replied that if a Housing unit is sitting empty there is reason for it and that units are back in service once repaired. He was unsure of specifics but would gather data on which units are vacant, the reasoning, and plans in short-term for the workshop session.

It was asked if Housing NWT has difficulties with the Rental Act and if they get pushback as a result of the Act. Chris replied that Housing NWT is not required to follow the Act but everyone else must. He noted that Housing NWT's goal is not to compete with the rental market and recognized that improvements could be made to the Rental Act. It was felt that the act may be a barrier in developing rental units. It was noted that there are limitations in annual rent increases as per the Act and that the owner has no controls. Chris replied that it is tough to balance to support developers while protecting tenants from larger corporations. Additionally, he doesn't think the rental cap has been implemented.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting date is Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 6:30-8:30pm in Town Hall Council Chambers.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:05PM.



# Fort Smith Housing Plan

Advisory Board Meeting #3

May 17, 2023

# Meeting objectives and agenda

## In today's meeting we will:

- Share initial results from the survey
- Look ahead to next Advisory Board meeting

## Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Where we're at
3. Walk-through of survey feedback
4. Wrap-up and Next Steps

# Where We Are:



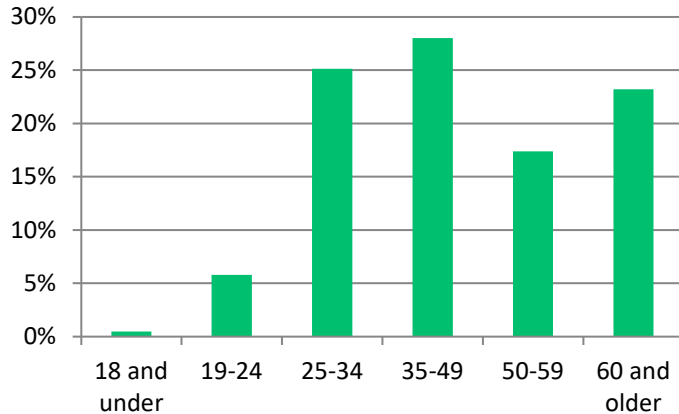
*We are here*

# Survey Overview

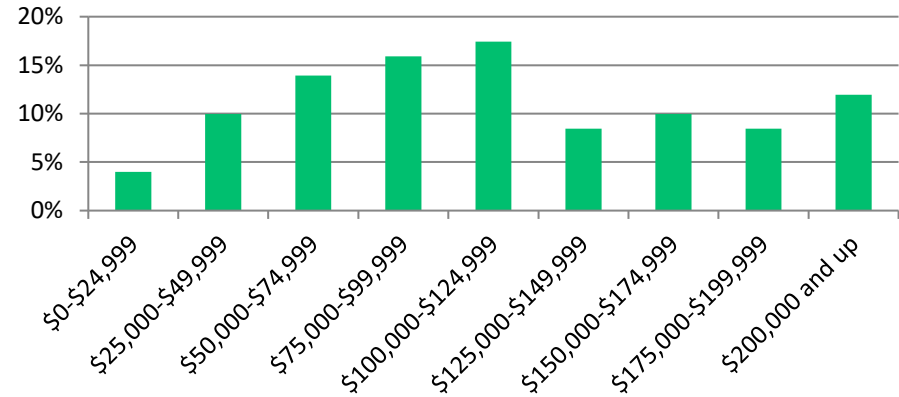
- Open late March throughout April
- Total 208 responses
- Good cross-section of community responded
  - e.g. by age, income, housing status

# Survey Overview - Respondents

What is your age range?

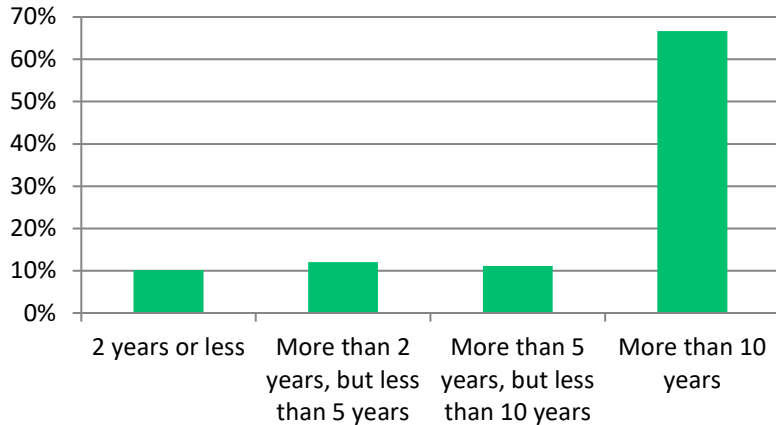


What is your approximate average household income?

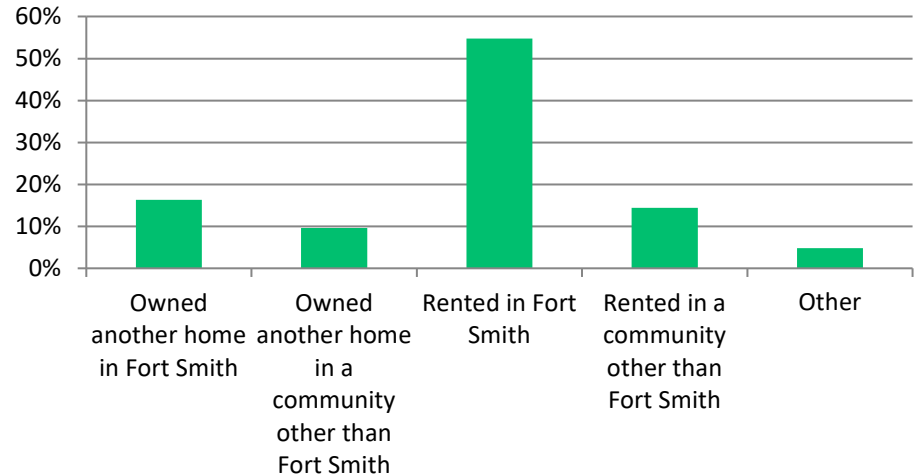


# Survey Overview - Respondents

## How long have you lived in Fort Smith?

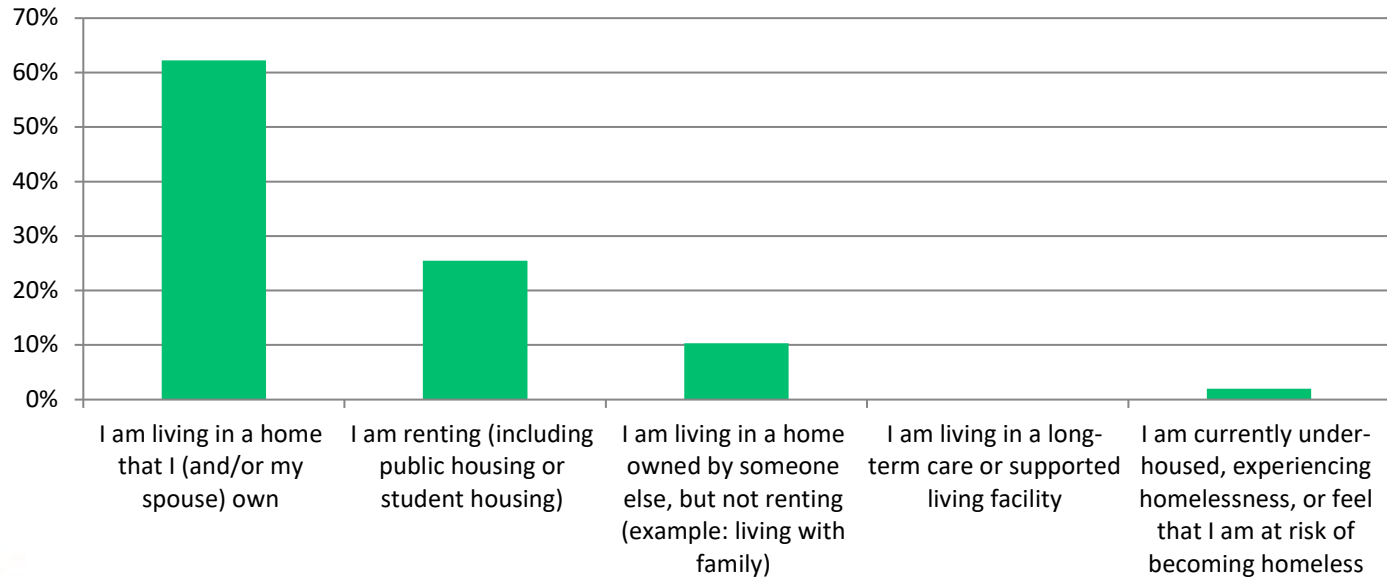


## Where did you live before this home (homeowners)?



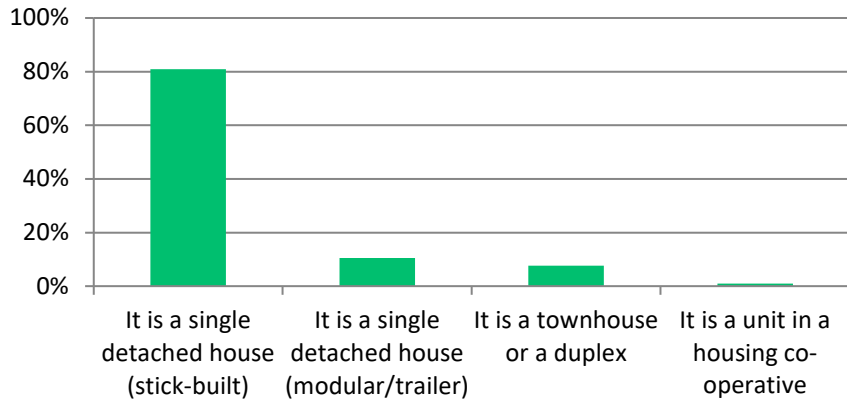
# Survey Overview

What best describes your current housing situation?

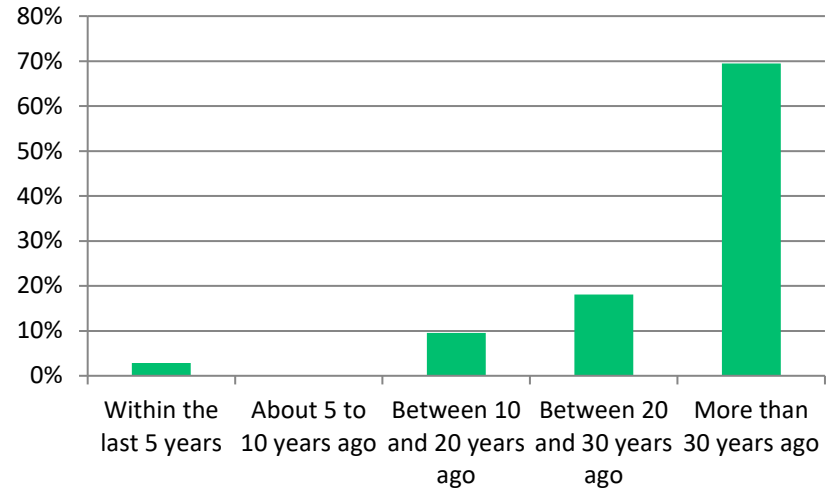


# Homeowners

How would you describe the home you own?

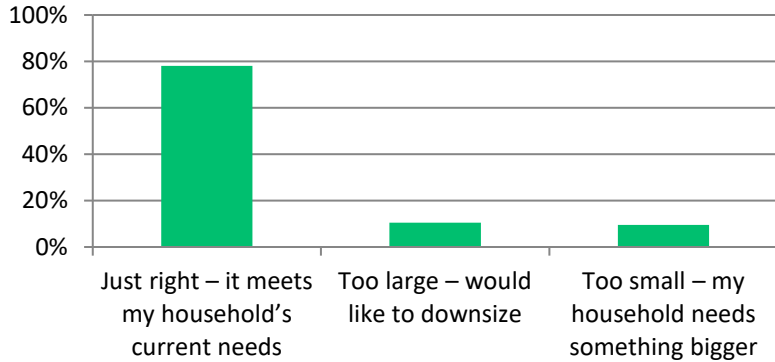


When was your home built?

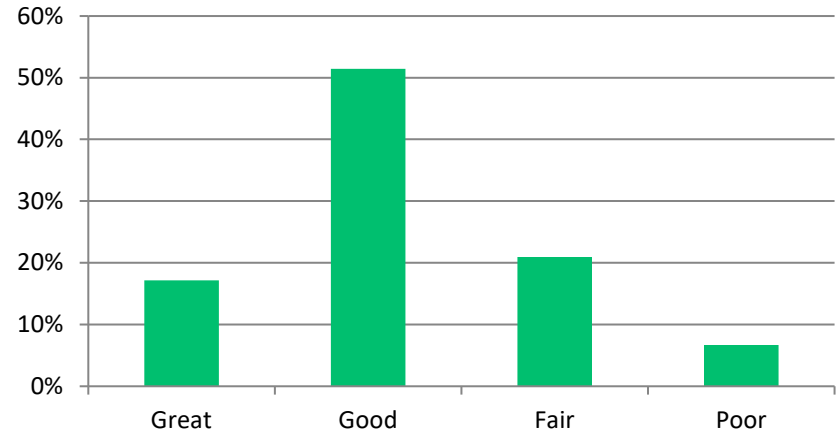


# Homeowners

How satisfied are you with your current home size?

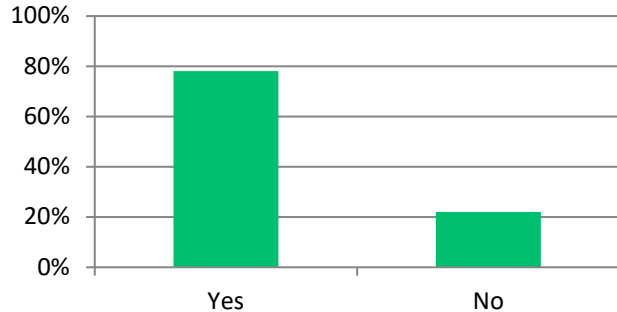


Overall, how would you rate the current condition of your home?\*

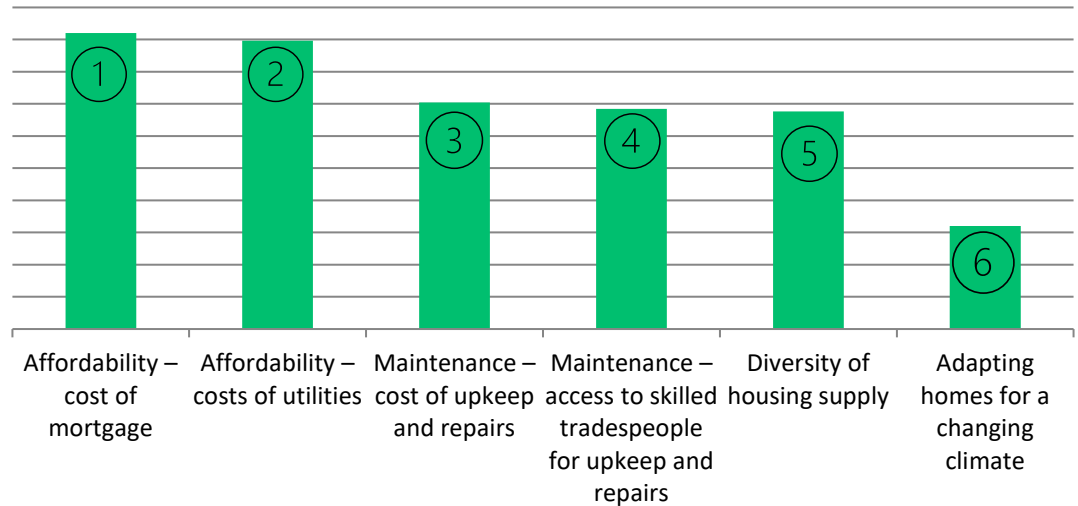


# Homeowners

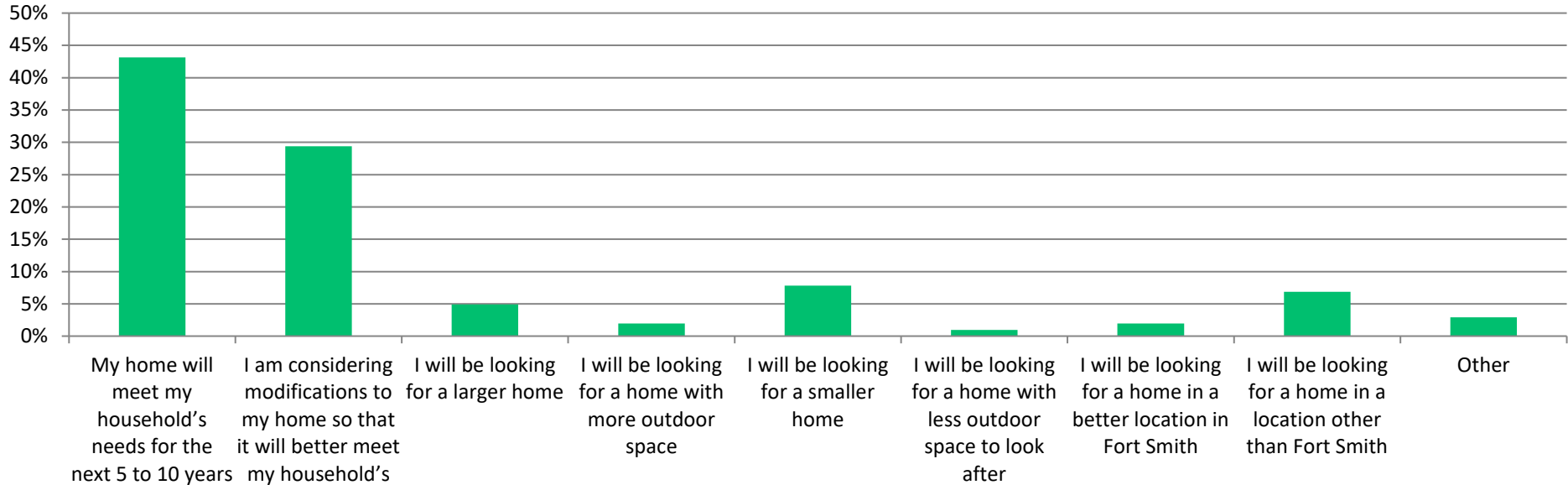
Do you feel that your home is affordable?



In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for people who own homes or would like to own homes in Fort Smith?

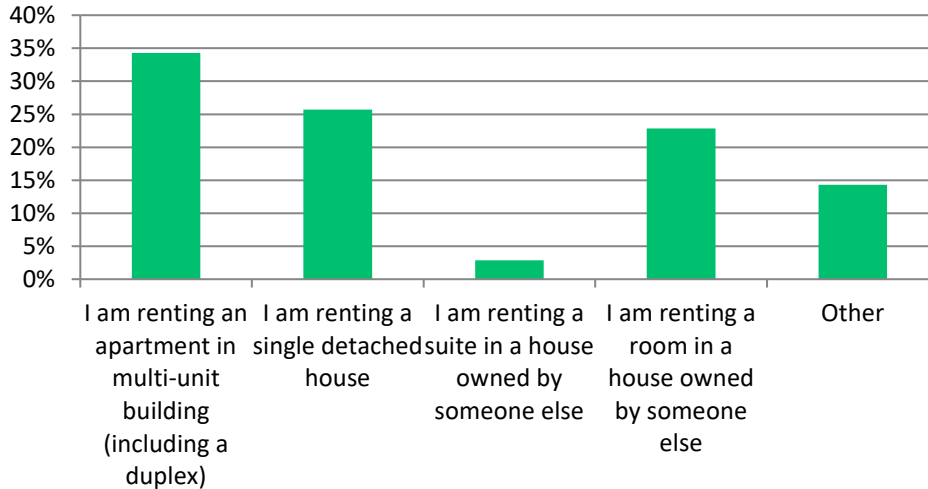


# When thinking about your housing needs for the next 5 to 10 years, what best describes your situation?

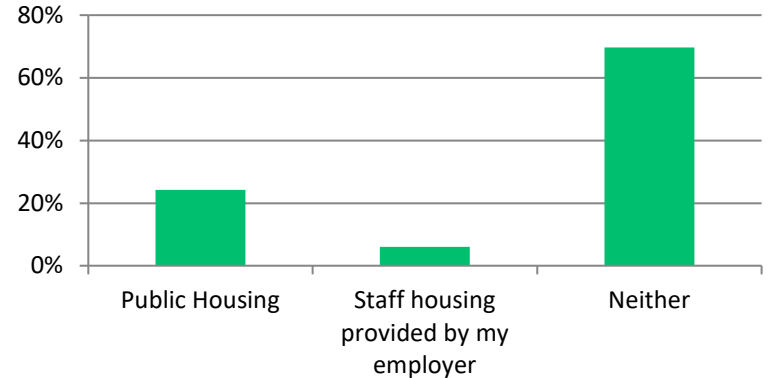


# Renters

How would you best describe your current situation?

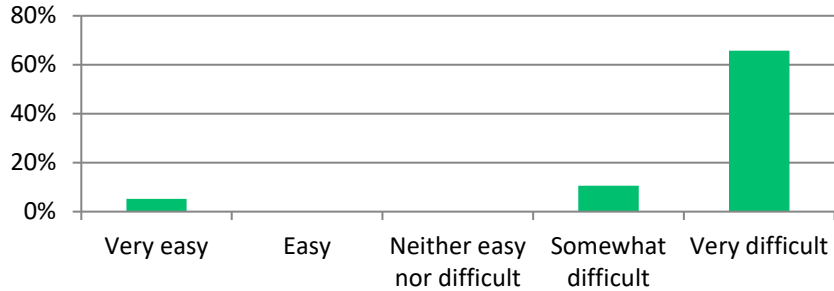


Is the home you are renting public housing or staff housing provided by your employer?

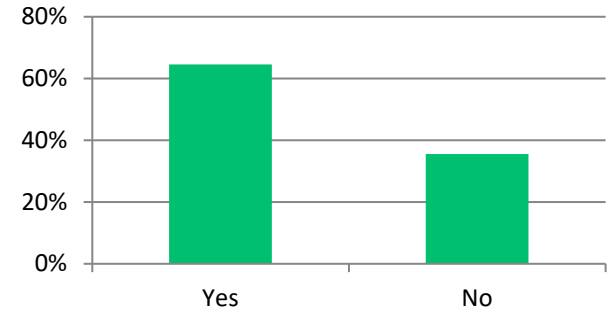


# Renters

How would you describe your experience trying to find a place to rent in Fort Smith?



Do you feel that your home is affordable?

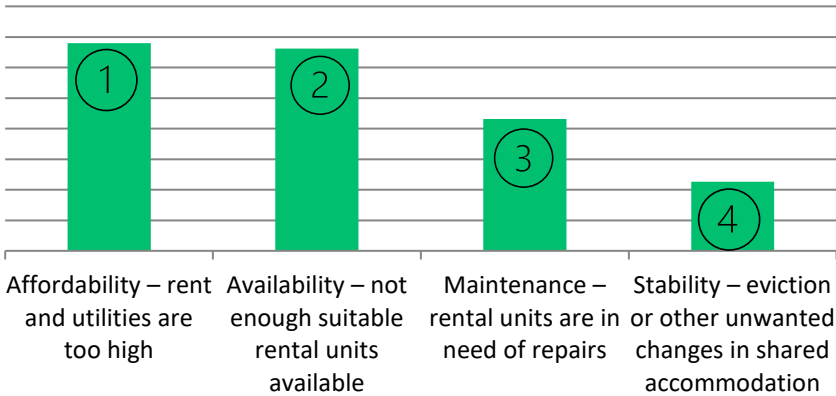


Overall, how would you rate the current condition of your home?

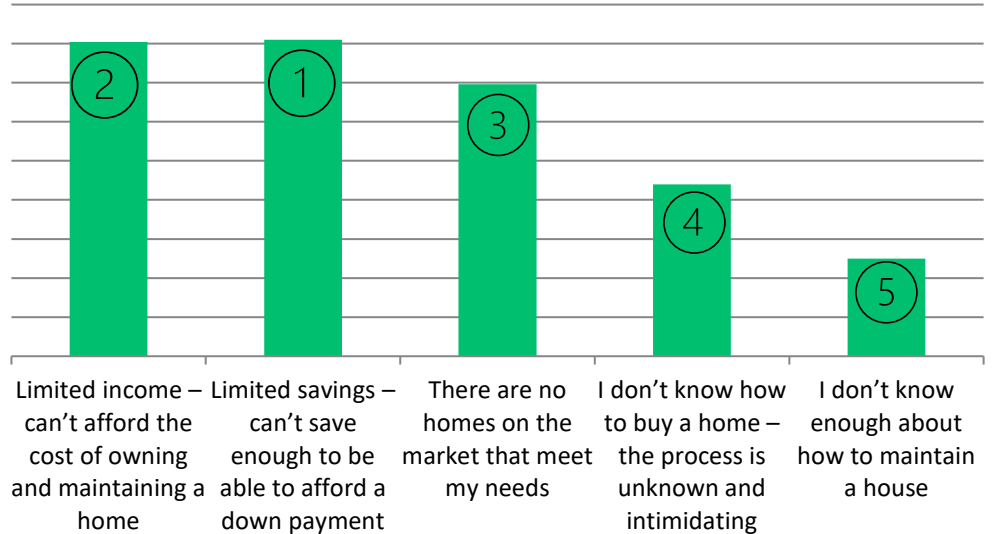


# Renters

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for renters in Fort Smith?

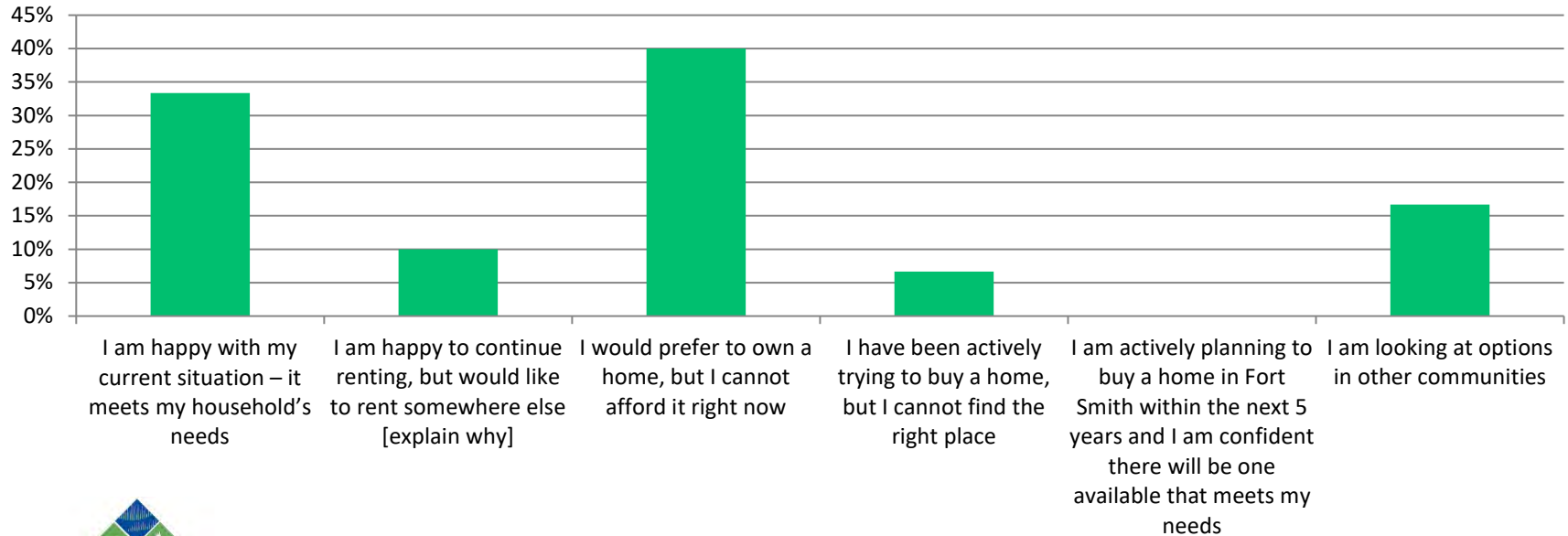


Based on your experience as a renter, what are the top three biggest barriers to becoming a homeowner as a renter in Fort Smith?



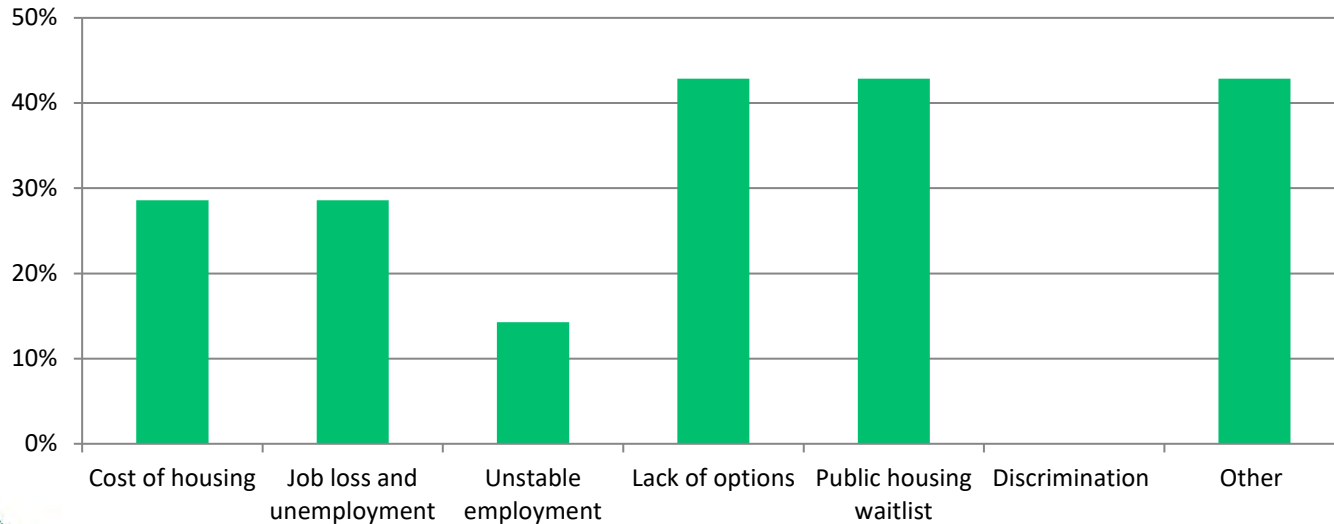
# Renters

When thinking about your housing needs for the next 5 to 10 years, what best describes your situation?



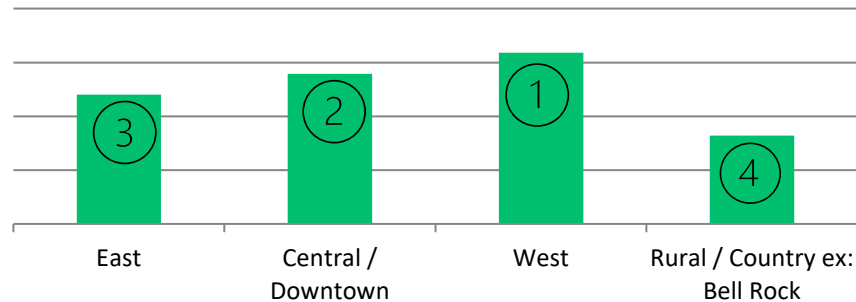
# Under-housed population

What barriers have you experienced to accessing safe and affordable housing in Fort Smith?



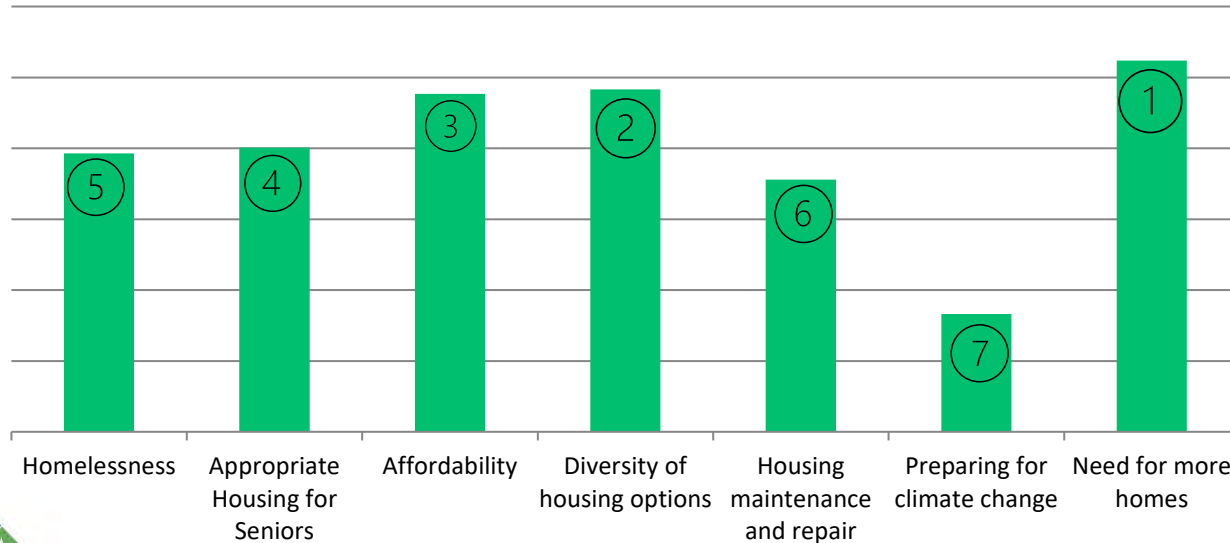
# Areas for new homes

In your opinion, which areas of Fort Smith should be a priority for new housing development in the years to come?



# Housing Challenges

What do you think are the top 3 housing challenges in Fort Smith?



# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What made you want to buy your current home?***

- “Low renting options prompted the purchase of a house, which would have happened eventually”
- “High rental prices and lack of rentals that allow pets”
- “Rent was too high. Wanted to build my own equity”
- “Wanted to own my own home. Rental property in Fort Smith is almost non existent and can be very expensive”
- “Needing enough space for my family”
- “There as nowhere to rent”

## ***Affordability***

- “Insurance costs for heating with wood are outrageous”
- “Heating is getting expensive, property taxes going up is not ideal now”
- “Heating, utilities and taxes have all increased dramatically over the 10+ years since we bought our home”
- “Cost of living/supplies in remote areas are outrageous!”



# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What other challenges have you experienced or observed?***

- “Vacant homes everywhere. Properties lie empty”
- “Difficulty single people have finding rental housing or seniors looking to downsize”
- “Not enough land to build on” | “We need apartment buildings due to land shortages”
- “Not enough people for repairs and issues”
- “Lack of available housing options”
- “Price of homes are too high for the age and quality of the homes. People are forced to buy because of limited availability of other options.”
- “Some people don’t maintain them [homes] to a level that reflects well of the town”
- “No lawyers to do paperwork or inspectors”
- “Too expensive to buy without double income support”
- “We lose skilled professionals because they cannot find appropriate housing”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## *Ideas of actions to help homeowners?*

- “Open more properties for development”
- “Auction off an empty lot periodically to promote housing development”
- “Provide a site for people to bring reusable materials and home furnishings etc. instead of throwing everything out at the dump”
- “Lower taxes, more land available to build on”
- “Allow zoning for Small Homes. Zone/develop additional R2 lots”
- “Fort Smith owns lots that are vacant... The Town should sell those lots so that houses can be built”
- “Quit trying to implement southern property policies”
- “Promote program accessibility from/for all levels of government”
- “I am a senior, there are no programs that I know of to help with snow removal etc. Things that would make it easier to stay in your own home.”
- “Approach developers to build an apartment. Approach government to have temporary housing for staff moving here (like the Yukon). Approach the Bands who have housing to consider offering renting to other than Band members”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What made you want to rent your current home?***

- “Limited available options, decent location”
- “Affordable rent – only one roommate – good sized room”
- “Only place available in town when I moved. Just happened to be a nice place.”
- “It was the only place to rent at the time”

## ***How would you describe your experience trying to find a place to rent?***

- “Impossible, was forced to sleep/live in my office for 2 months, house sit for 3 months and couch surf for 3 months before finding a place”
- “I am not able to find something similar in price and quality [...] that I was enjoying elsewhere before I moved here (even with northern subsidies)”
- “Easy. Provided by employer”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***As a renter, what are barriers do you see to becoming a homeowner?***

- “Costs of owning a home are astronomical”
- “Lack of certainty in employment; many GNWT positions are terms”
- “It isn’t necessarily a priority for everyone to “become a homeowner””
- “Mainly availability, cost and condition of houses currently on the market”
- “There are limited houses for sale, hardly ever any land for sale. Prices are higher than what the houses are worth”
- “I know people who pay upwards of \$10,000 for property tax!! It’s crazy!”

## ***What challenges have you experienced as a renter?***

- “Despite having incredible luck just getting into a public housing unit, the house is quite decrepit”
- “Too many people looking for rentals which makes the cost too expensive for single person renters”
- “It’s impossible to find anything to rent that isn’t a complete house”
- “Fact that there aren’t many suitable rental options for single adult professionals reflects [...] that everyone is expected to ‘settle down’ and shack up. This probably pushes some young people into serious relationships before they’re really ready.”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***Where to prioritize new housing?***

- “More dense housing supply in the Central area so people can walk to access services”
- “West has space and in a school zone that’s closer for families. East is condense enough. Bell Rock is too far out of town and to provide essentials like water and sewage would cost the town a fortune”
- “Need for accessible, single or senior housing close to downtown”
- “Room to grow in the west, just need someone to build”

## ***What are the gaps in existing Housing programs and services?***

- “The stupid rule of being a resident for a year [to access Housing]”
- “Help with maintenance and upkeep”
- “Rentals for single people, young couples”
- “If I am a senior and make over the threshold I’m not eligible. This should be reconsidered”
- “Nothing for people struggling with homelessness, nothing available for people new to the community”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***Any other comments?***

- “My perception is there is an adequate number of dwelling units in the community, but there is not enough *diversity* of units and there is an abundance of abandoned or otherwise unoccupied units”
- “I really hope something actually comes from this survey. Not just all hear and say”
- “The community is in dire need of rental accommodations”
- “Our housing is affordable to own it seems but rentals appear quite high”
- “I like the concept and style/quality of the garden city co-op and more options like that especially including units for individual professionals would be great”
- “The less the government tries to help the better off everyone will be”
- “In speaking with other residents, it seems as if it is an extremely difficult process to develop land”
- “Apartments for people to rent. Not everyone can commit to buying a home and staying”

# Next Steps

- In-person Advisory Board meeting: **Evening of May 29<sup>th</sup>**
  - ❖ Visioning session and Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis
  - ❖ Meeting package to be shared in advance
- Targeted engagement sessions to follow



Any Questions?

# Contact

## Housing NWT:

### **Chris Van Dyke**

Manager, Community Housing Planning

P: (867) 767-9328 ext. 85027

E: [chris\\_vandyke@gov.nt.ca](mailto:chris_vandyke@gov.nt.ca)

## Town of Fort Smith:

### **Diane Seals**

Economic Development Officer

P: (867) 872-8412

E: [dseals@fortsmith.ca](mailto:dseals@fortsmith.ca)





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Thank you



## Fort Smith Housing Plan Advisory Board

Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:30pm  
Town Hall Council Chambers

### Present

Karen Scott, Community Member  
Mary Pat Short, Seniors' Society  
Kathy Lepine, GNWT  
Jeremy Beamish, Landlord/Business Owner  
Ray Tourangeau, SRFN  
Gwen Pischinger, FSMC  
Ann Pischinger, Town Councillor  
Mayor Fred Daniels

### Absent

Anna Kikoak, Landlord/Business Owner  
Claire Lehman, PWK High School  
Linh Nguyen, Landlord  
Dvonne Paulette, GNWT Human Resources  
Allan Heron, FSMC President  
Blaine Walterhouse, FSMC Vice President  
Adam Bathe, SDAB/Landlord/Business Owner  
Sujata Ganguli, COO FSHC  
Laura Aubrey, Aurora College

### Administration:

Chris Van Dyke – Housing NWT  
Emily Prescott – Economic Development Assistant  
Katie Reid – Executive Secretary

### Discussion

Chris reviewed population trends and advised that Fort Smith has a population of approximately 2,600 people, that the population has grown approximately 12% since 2001, the annual population growth rate is 0.58% since 2001, and that there has been a slight decline in the last 7-years, but there are signs of population stabilization. He noted a significant increase in the percentage of population aged 60 and over since 2001 and a notable decline in high school/young adults aged 15-24. He noted that ages 25-44 are the largest percentage of population and showing signs of increase. He noted that the population is split approximately 40% indigenous and 60% non-indigenous. He advised that information is sourced from Statistics Canada and the NWT Bureau of Stats.

Chris reviewed socioeconomics and income and advised that the average family income is slightly below the NWT average and that the percentage of low-income families is consistent with the NWT average. He noted that 2020 data could be skewed by CERB payments.

Chris advised that more than 7% of residents from 2015 and more recently have an apprenticeship certificate, the unemployment rate is consistently below the NWT average, and he reviewed the labour force statistics by industry. He advised that Fort Smith has the third-highest number of GNWT employees, only slightly behind Inuvik, and has the second-highest percentage of its labour force employed by the GNWT, behind only Behchoko, and that approximately 45% of GNWT employees in Fort Smith are indigenous, and about 49% of employees are classified as “other employees” who have not lived in the NWT at least half their life. He noted that numbers include GNWT departments as well as authorities and agencies.

Chris advised that Fort Smith is below the territorial average in each of the household financial security indicators and financial security indicators count both households who “often” and “sometimes” have difficulties. Additionally, he advised that grocery prices have increased and are approximately 20% more than in Yellowknife but are less expensive than all other NWT communities.

Chris noted a steady decline in women and children admitted to shelters in Fort Smith since 2015. Additionally, he noted that there are consistently around 100 monthly income assistance beneficiaries, and that Fort Smith has the second lowest rate of households who have an individuals who would like to, but can't, get their own home.

Chris advised that Fort Smith has a higher rate of homeownership than the NWT average and is slightly below the NWT average percentage of households living in subsidized/public housing. He noted that the most common household size is two people. Chris advised that repairs and affordability are the largest housing challenges, almost half of all homes were built before 1980, and more than three quarters of homes are single detached. He continued to note that three bedrooms are the most common size home in Fort Smith, approximately 18% of current residents within the past 5-years moved to Fort Smith from another community, that the largest segment of migrants to Fort Smith is consistently people from elsewhere in Canada, and that more than 15% of residents have moved within Fort Smith in the past 5-years and about 8% within the last year. Chris advised that many of the bachelor units are in the Seniors Complex and that there is relative lack of 1-bedroom units in Fort Smith. He noted that the vast majority of public housing was constructed before 1980 and that duplexes are the most common type of home.

Chris reviewed Housing NWT/public housing statistics and advised that over the past 10-years there has consistently been 30 and 50 households on the waitlist for public housing in Fort Smith, and that bachelor units have the highest number of applicants, followed by 2-bedroom. Further, he advised that Fort Smith on average has a higher percentage of public housing tenants under the age of 18 than the territorial average, as well as a higher percentage of tenants over the age of 60.

Chris advised that 1 of 3 renters live in public housing and that Fort Smith rent is lower than the territorial average but there are still concerns about repairs and affordability. He noted that most homes were built before 1980 and three-quarters of homes are single detached. He has heard the need for more diversity in house options. Karen advised that there is the need for seniors housing.

The board noted that the combined cost to purchase lots, service, and build is unaffordable for most people. They noted that the cost to purchase lots 10-15 years ago was much more affordable and felt that buying land in the north is an impediment for people looking to build. They also noted that in the past the Town allowed individuals to debenture the purchase of lots.

Jeremy advised that he submitted a letter of interest in purchasing Town lots and that he is waiting for a response from Mayor and Council.

It was noted that there is federal housing in the community sitting vacant and that some RCMP housing has been transferred to WBNP.

It was asked how many public housing units are scheduled for construction in Hay River over the next 5-years. Chris replied that some were planned to be built over the summer, but he was unsure if the fire changed development plans. He also noted that some public housing was lost on the reserve.

An update was requested on Housing NWT's home ownership programs. Chris replied that there are two home ownership programs; down-payment support and the homeowner initiative.

Chris also provided an update on vacant public housing and advised that there are seven vacant Housing NWT units in Fort Smith; two are planned for surplus as they are beyond repair and five are in various states of repair. Mayor Daniels expressed concern about the state of Aurora College housing. It was noted that there are funds allocated for the repairs, and also noted that the expense of the repairs would exceed the allocated funds.

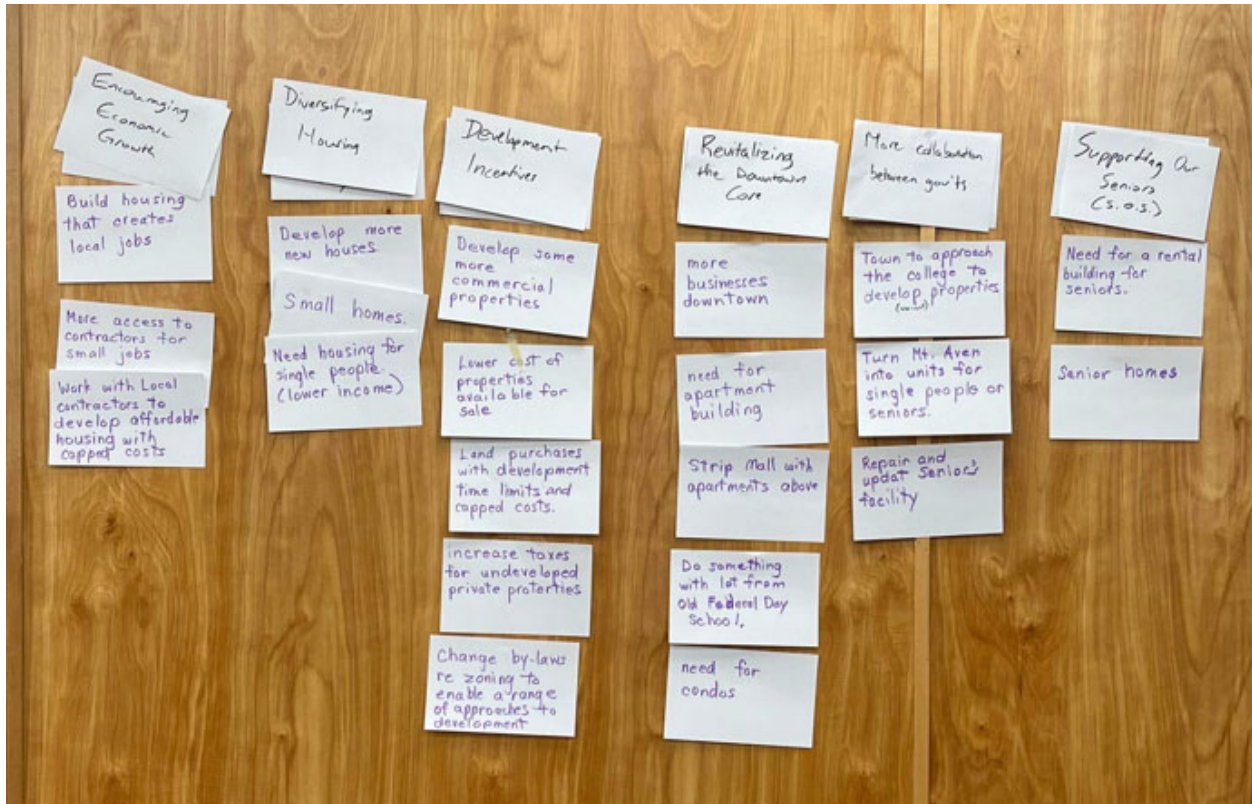
Chris advised that the survey received two-thirds of responses from homeowners and one-third from renters.

Chris started the visioning session and asked what the board would like to see for homes and housing in Fort Smith in the next 5-years.

- Develop more commercial properties and downtown
- Develop an apartment building/condos
- Increase taxes for undeveloped properties
- Repair/update senior's housing/facilities
- Decrease cost of lots for sale
- Work with local contractors to develop affordable housing with capped costs
- Land purchases with development time limits
- Building houses to create local jobs
- Turn Mount Avon into singles/senior housing
- CanNor provides funding opportunities
- Seniors assisted living units/facility
- Singles housing with 1-bedroom
- Financial security for developers with quantified data – Chris advised that buildings in YK have portions leased to NWT Housing and to the Aurora College. Other professionals such as school boards, airports, government may be interested in purchasing/leasing blocks in a building as a secure income source.
- Aurora College Tradespeople could do practicums by repairing housing/Aurora College units

Ann advised that the old Pine Crest building that was located downtown had businesses below and apartments above.

Photo from Visioning Session:



### Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting date is to be determined.

### Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

# FORT SMITH HOUSING PLAN

ADVISORY BOARD WORKSHOP

MAY 29, 2023

## INFO PACKAGE & WORKBOOK





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# Introduction

This workbook is intended to serve as a backgrounder and a guide for the Fort Smith Housing Plan Advisory Board's visioning and SWOT analysis workshop session.

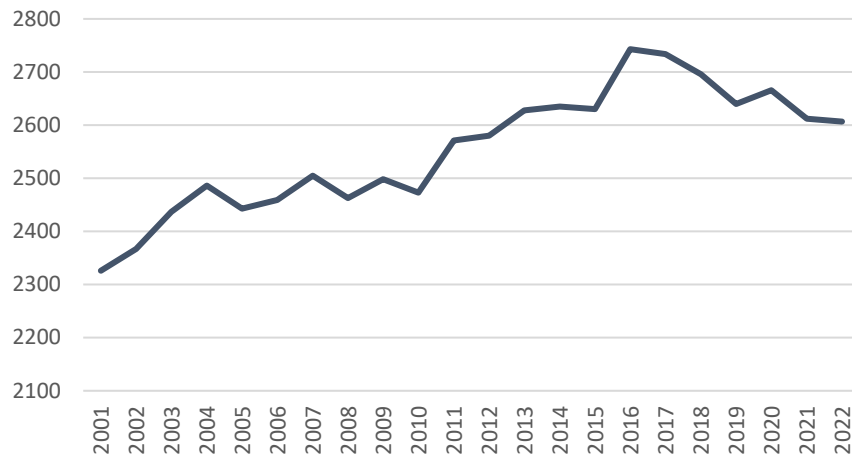
It provides a fact base including various statistics and data related to homes and housing in Fort Smith organized by type, followed by a number of questions for Advisory Board members to consider ahead of and during the workshop.

In the appendices, maps to share data related to land in Fort Smith are provided, followed by an overview of feedback received from the public through the housing survey.

# Demographics

Current Population: 2607 (NWT Bureau of Statistics)

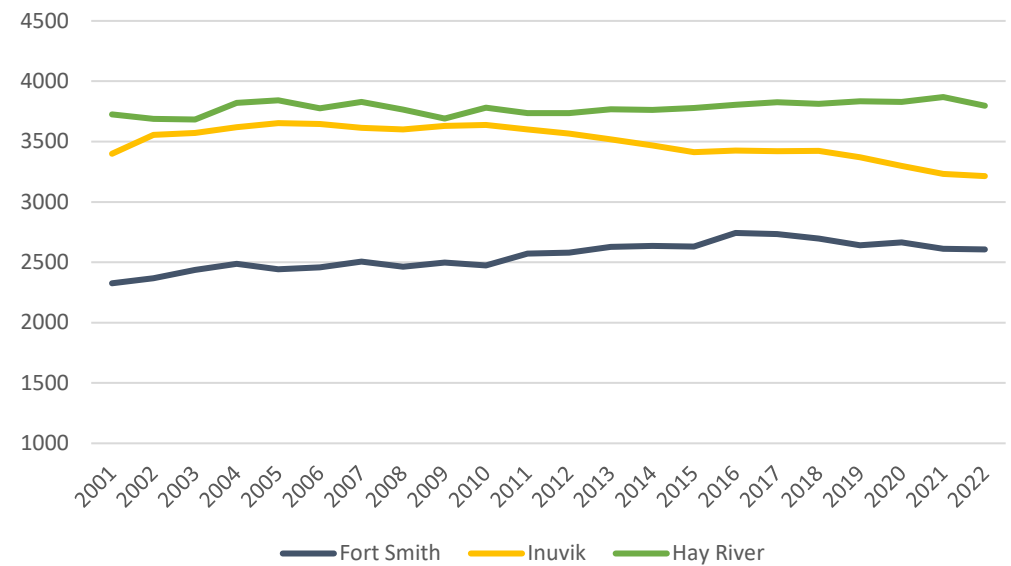
Fort Smith Population, 2001-2022



Notes:

- Population has grown approximately 12% since 2001
- Annual population growth rate of 0.58% since 2001
- Slight decline in last 7 years, but signs of stabilization

Population Comparison, 2001-2022




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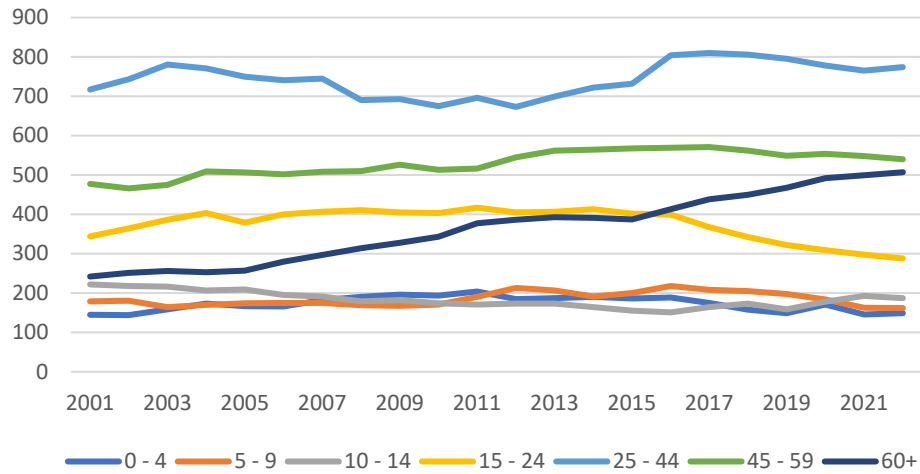
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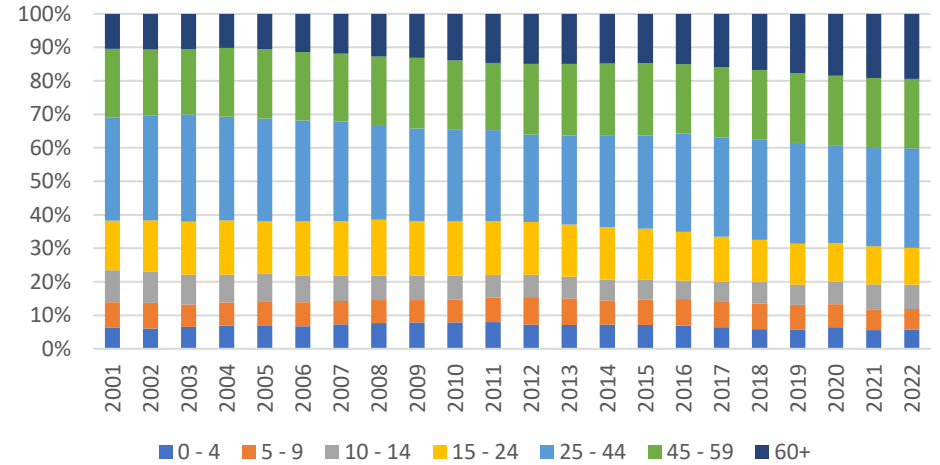
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# Demographics (cont'd.)

Population by Age Cohort



Percentage of Population by Age Cohort

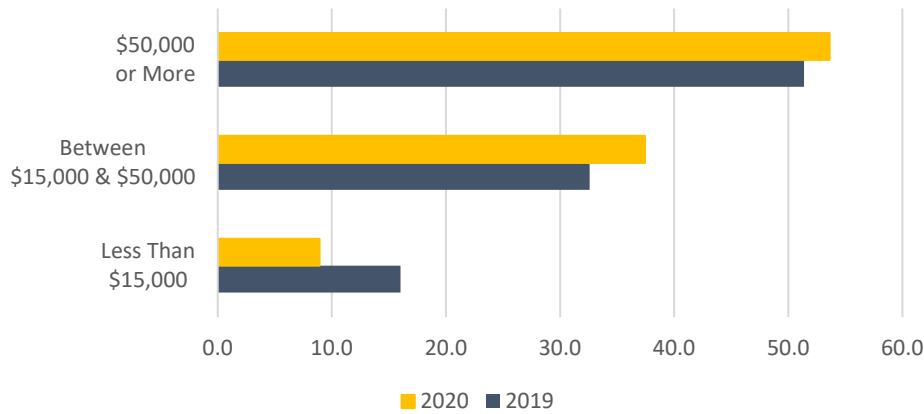


Notes:

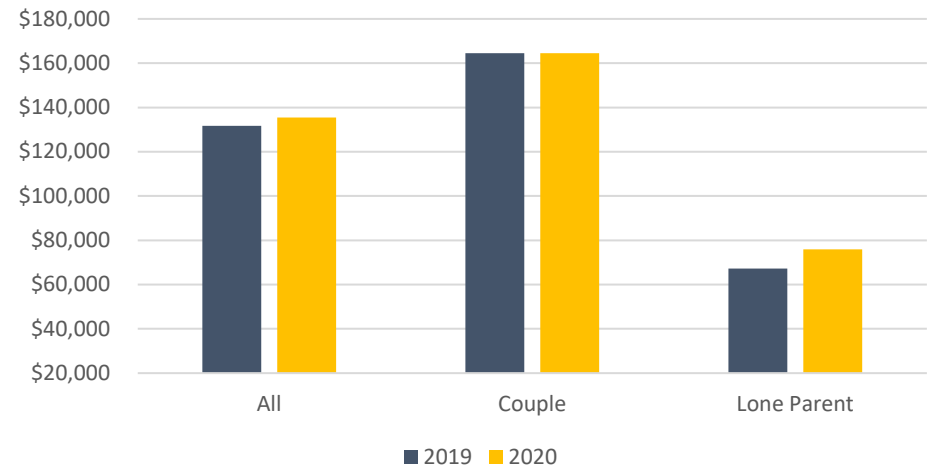
- Significant increase in percentage of population aged 60 and over since 2001
- Notable decline in high-school/young adult (15-24) age cohort
- Ages 25-44 largest percentage of population, and showing signs of increase
- Population split approximately 40% Indigenous, 60% non-Indigenous (NWT Bureau of Stats)

# Socioeconomics - Income

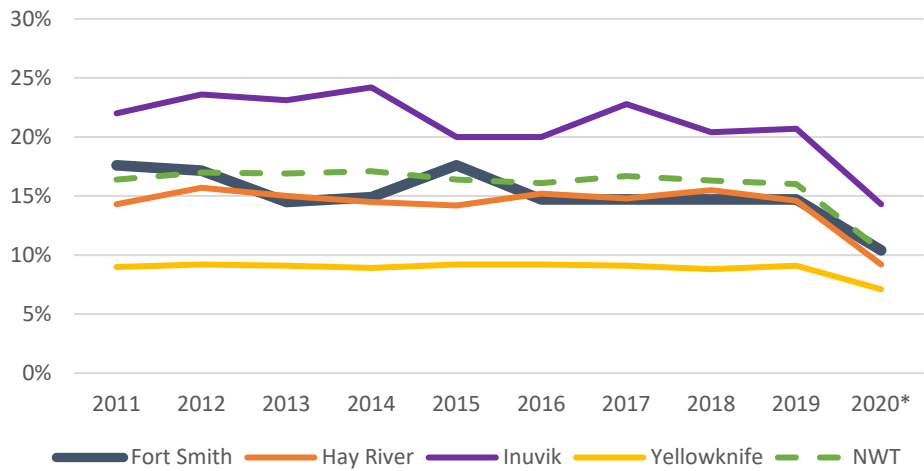
Percentage of taxfilers by personal income bracket



Average Family Income



Percentage of Families in Low Income

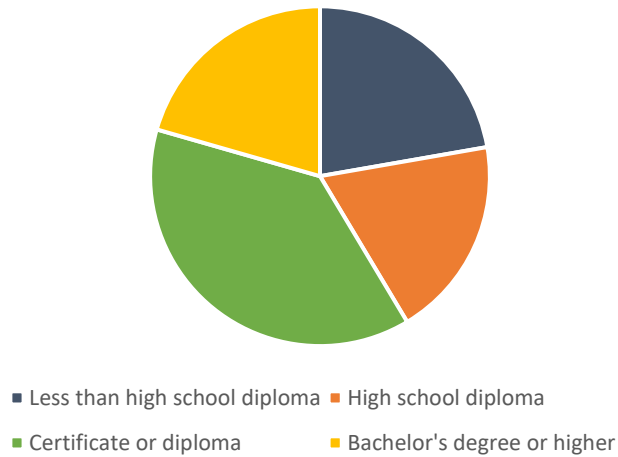


Notes:

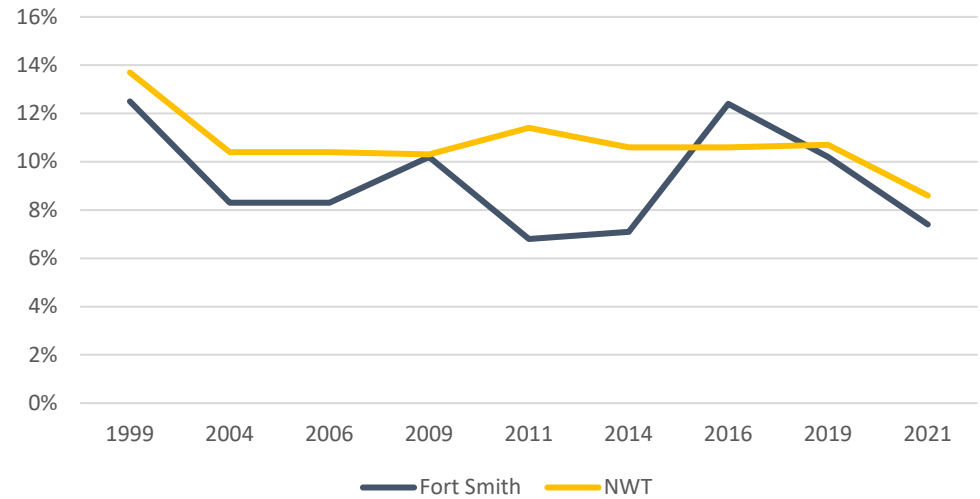
- Average family income slightly below NWT average
- Percentage of families in low income at NWT average
- Note: 2020 data could be skewed by CERB payments

# Socioeconomics – Labour

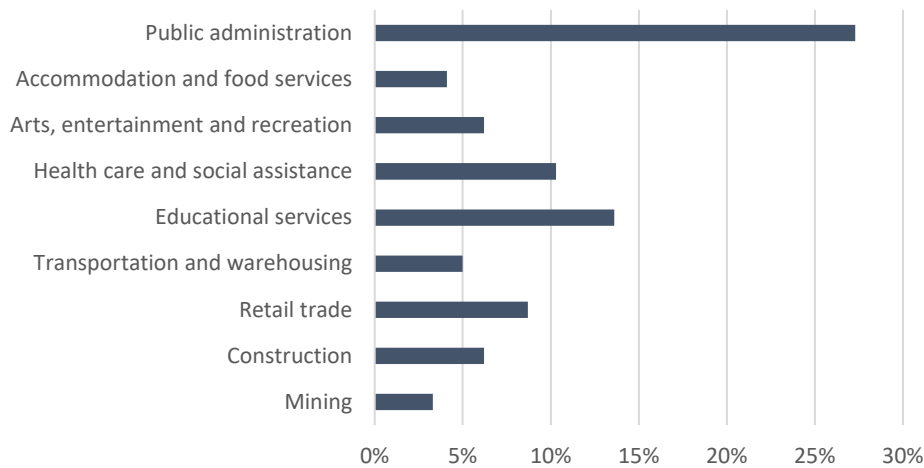
Highest Level of Schooling



Unemployment Rate 1999-2021



% of total labour force by industry



Notes:

- More than 7% of residents 15+ have an apprenticeship certificate (Stats Canada)
- Unemployment rate consistently below the NWT average
- Influence of government, healthcare and education on employment in Fort Smith shown in chart to the left

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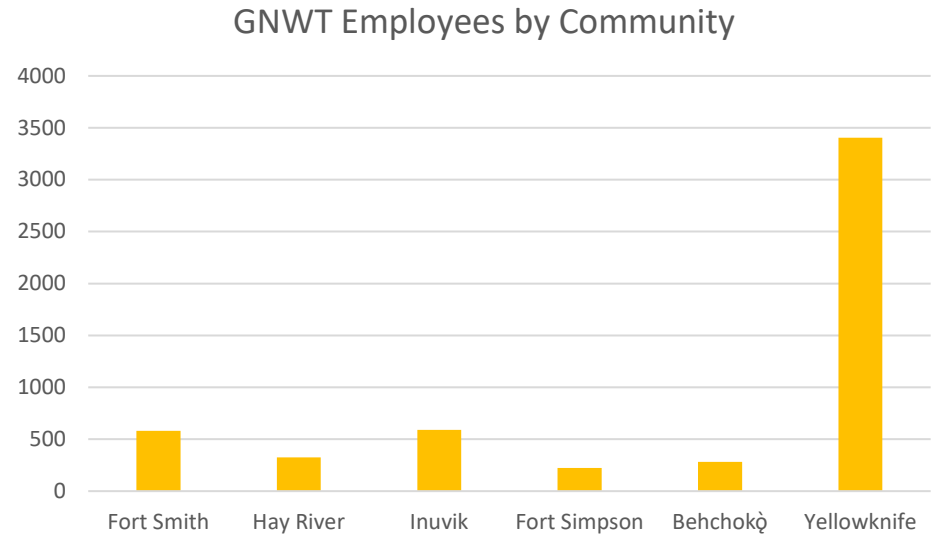
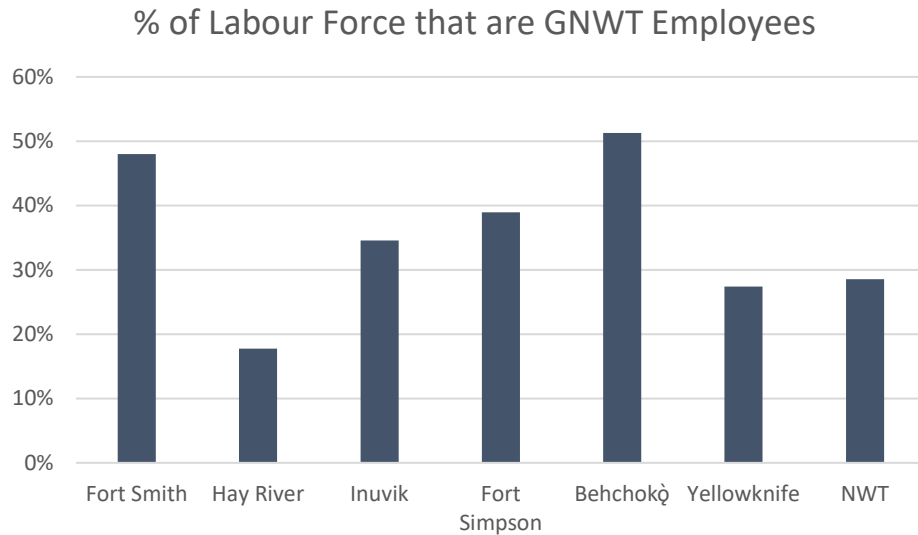


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# Labour – GNWT Employment



## Notes:

- Fort Smith has the third-highest number of GNWT employees, only slightly behind Inuvik, and has the second-highest percentage of its labour force employed by the GNWT, behind only Behchokò
- Approximately 45% of GNWT employees in Fort Smith are Indigenous, and about 49% are classified as “other employees” – those who have not lived in the NWT at least half their life
- Numbers include GNWT departments as well as authorities and agencies

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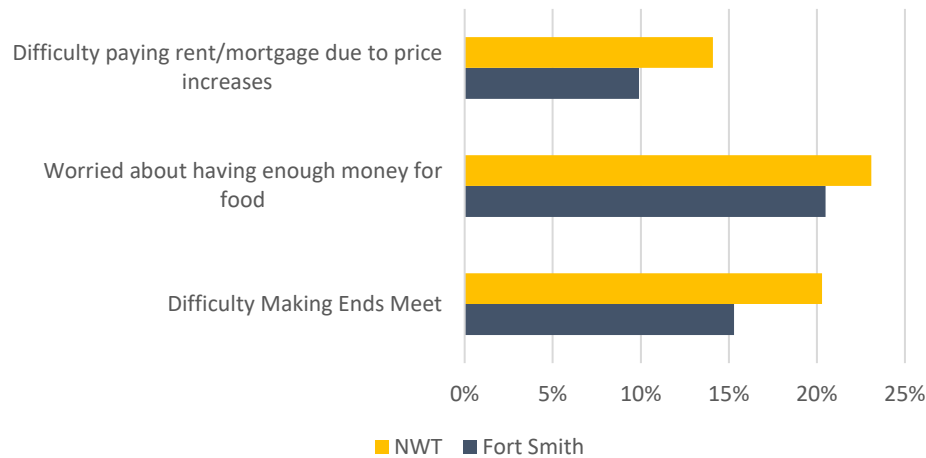
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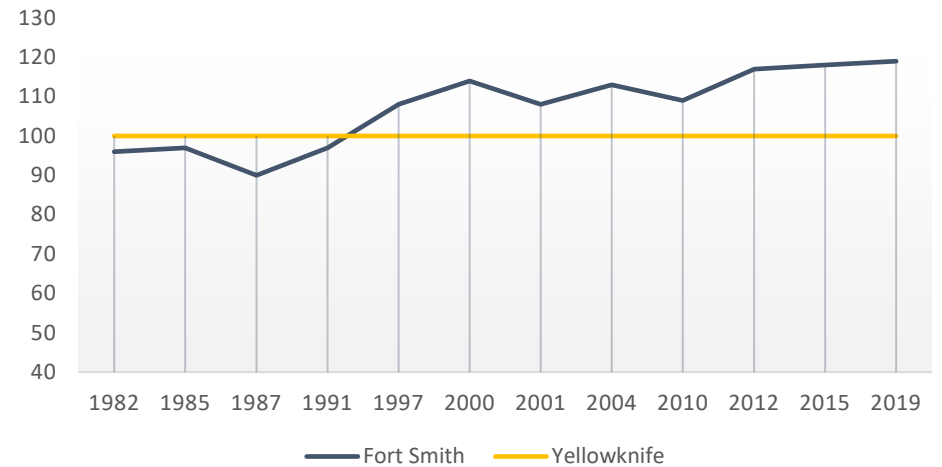
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# Socioeconomics – Cost of Living

Household Financial Security (2018)



Historical Food Price Index (Yellowknife = 100)



Notes:

- Fort Smith is below the territorial average in each of the household financial security indicators
- Financial security indicators count both households who ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ have difficulties
- Food prices approximately 20% higher than the Yellowknife baseline, but worth noting Fort Smith is less expensive than all other NWT communities

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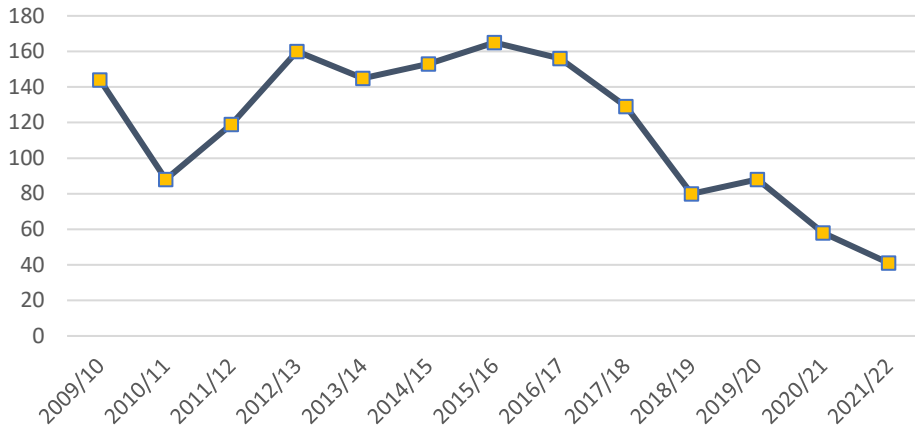
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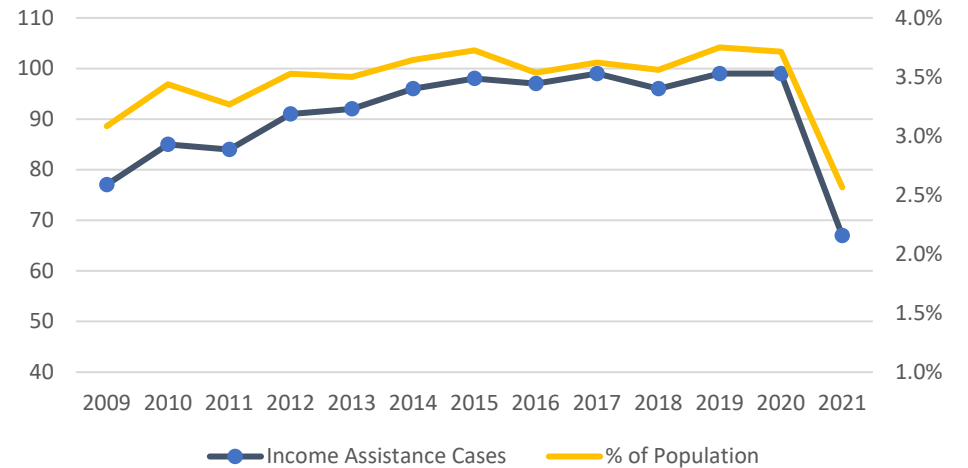
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# Socioeconomics – Shelters and Income

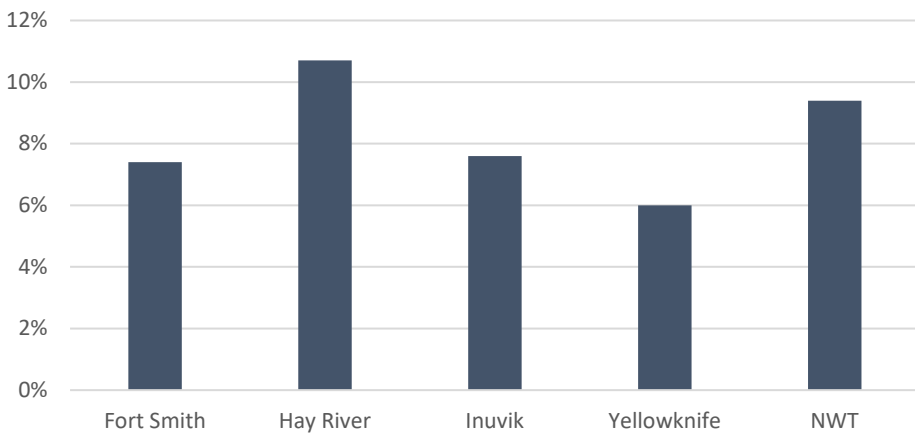
Number of Women & Children Admitted to Shelters in Fort Smith



Average Monthly Income Assistance Cases



Households with an Individual who can't get their own home (2019)



Notes:

- Steady decline in shelter admittance in Fort Smith since 2015
- Monthly income assistance beneficiaries consistently around 100
- Fort Smith has 2<sup>nd</sup>-lowest rate of households who have an individual who would like to, but can't, get their own home

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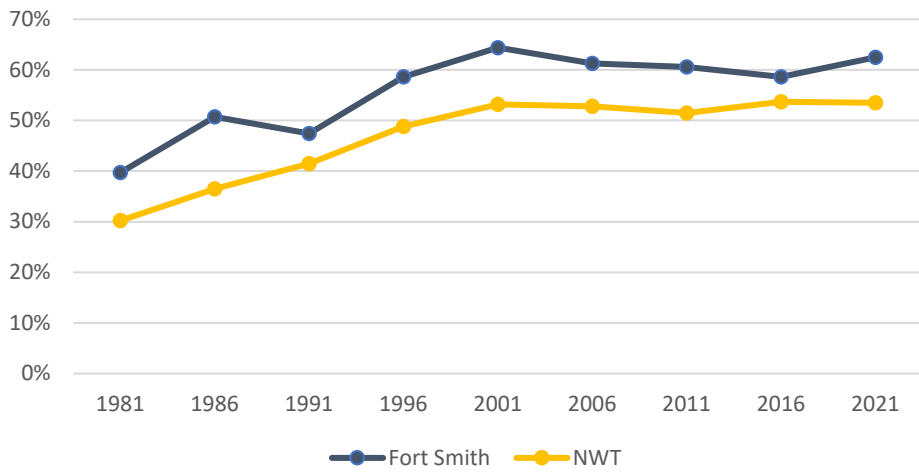
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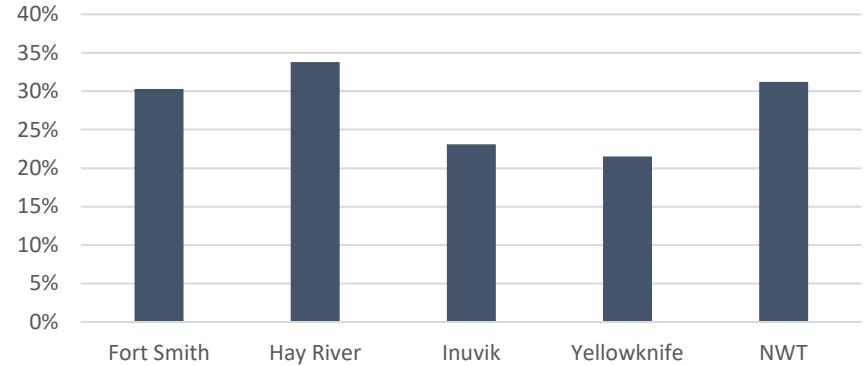
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# Households and Homes

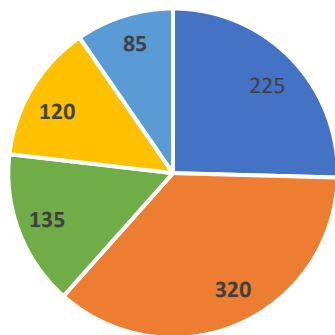
Homeownership Rate, 1981-2021



% of Tenant Households in Subsidized Housing



Fort Smith Household Size



■ 1 person ■ 2 persons ■ 3 persons ■ 4 persons ■ 5 persons +

Notes:

- Higher rate of homeownership than NWT average
- Slightly below NWT average percentage of households living in subsidized/public housing
- Most common household size 2 people (Stats Canada)

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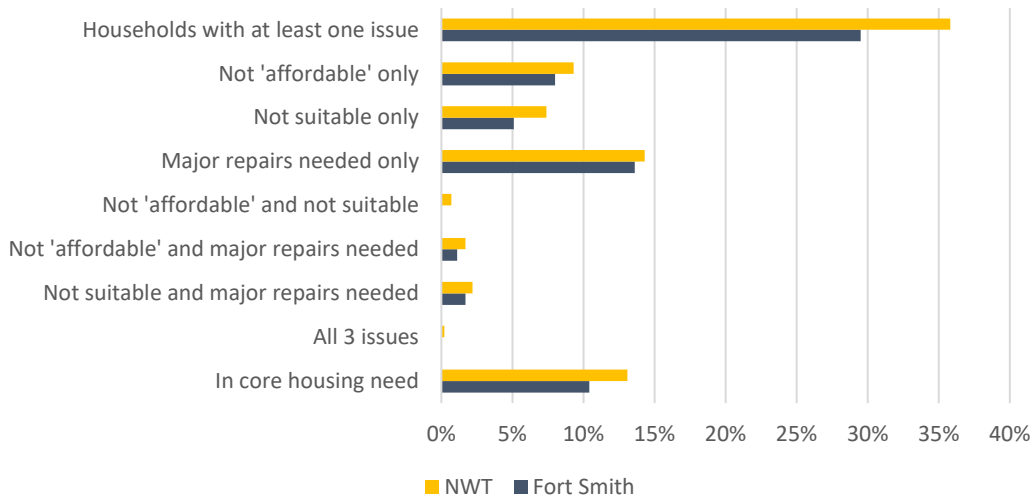
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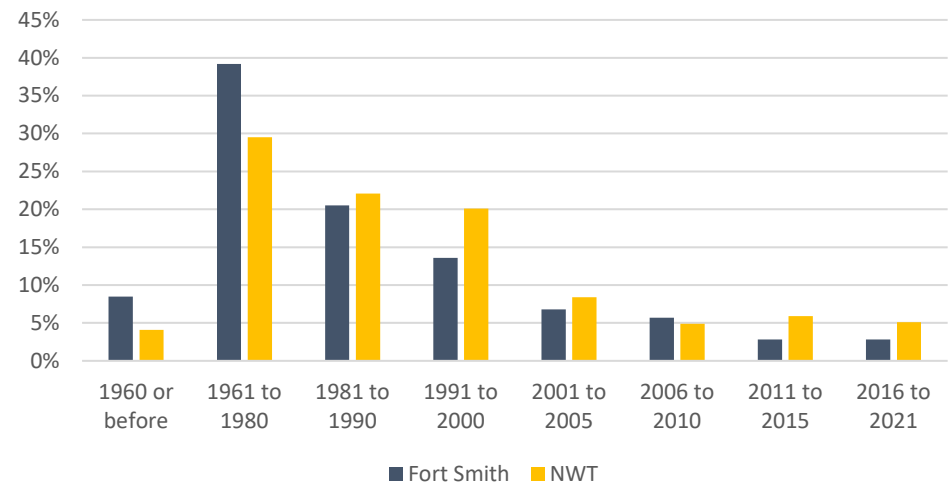
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# Households (cont'd.)

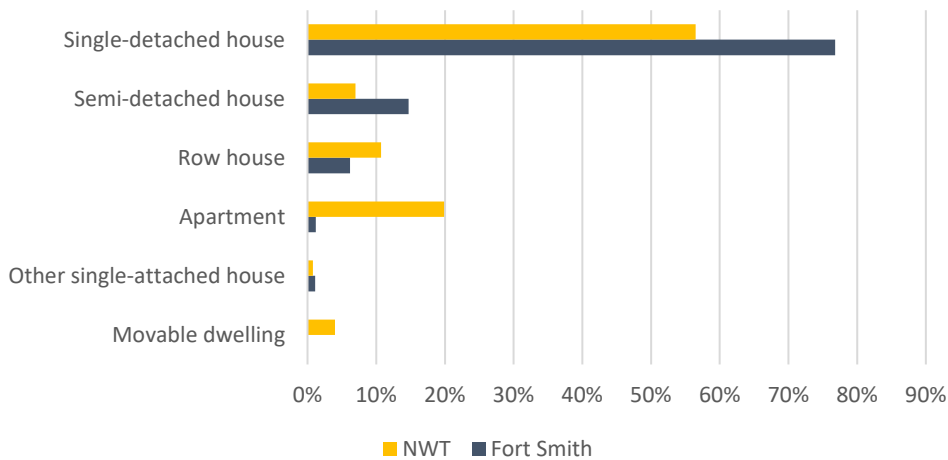
### Housing Issues by Type



### % of Homes by Period of Construction



### Dwellings by Structure Type



### Notes:

- Repairs and affordability the largest housing challenges
- Almost half of all homes built before 1980
- More than three quarters of homes single-detached

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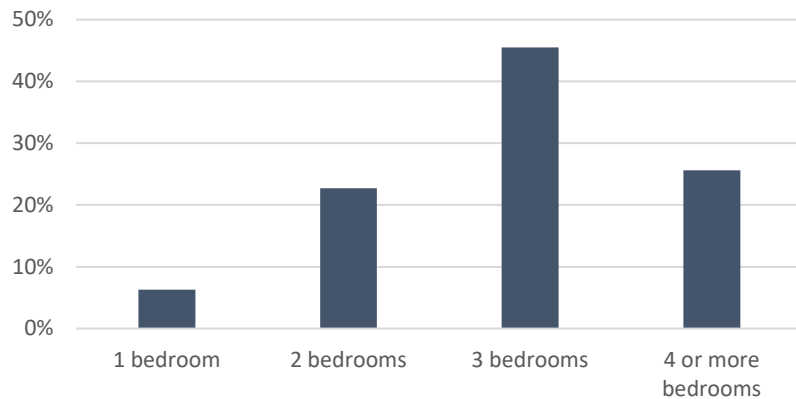
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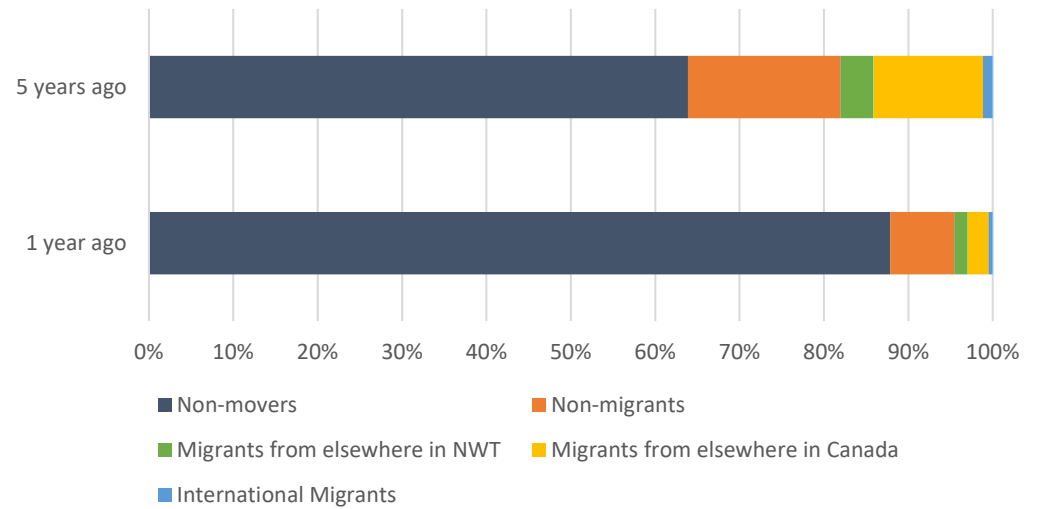
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# Households (cont'd.)

Fort Smith Homes by Number of Bedrooms



Mobility Status of Fort Smith Residents



Notes:

- Three bedrooms by far the most common size of home in Fort Smith
- Over last 5 years, approximately 18% of current residents moved to Fort Smith from another community
- Largest segment of migrants to Fort Smith is consistently people from elsewhere in Canada
- More than 15% of residents have moved *within* Fort Smith in the last 5 years, and about 8% within the last year (according to Statistics Canada)

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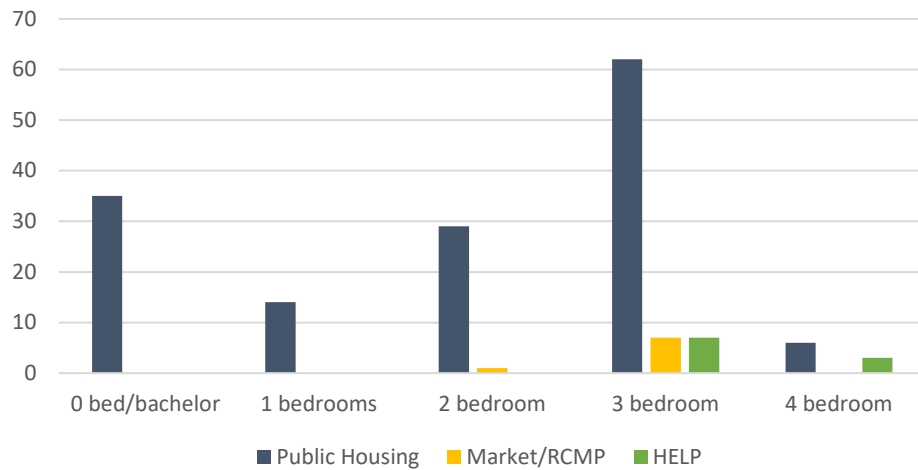
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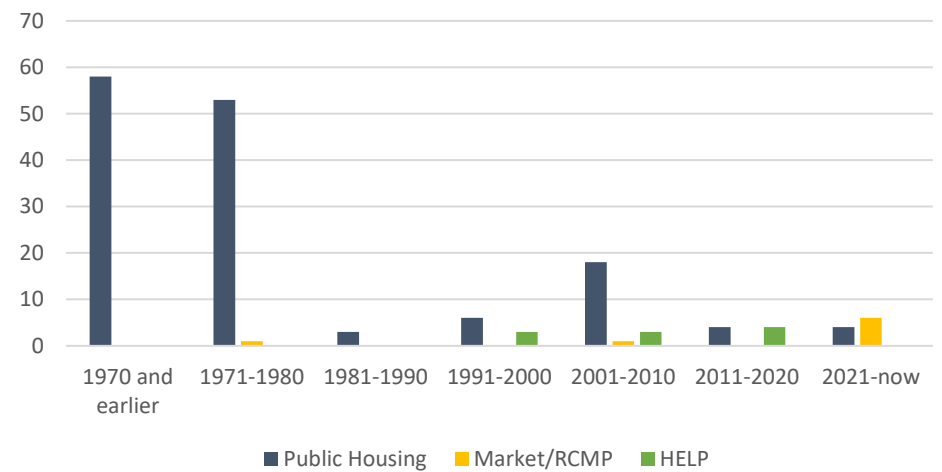
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# Housing NWT

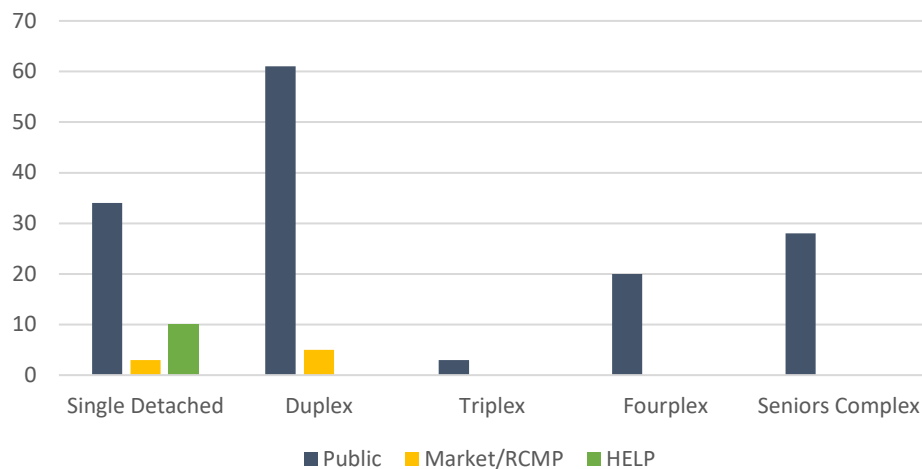
### Housing NWT units in Fort Smith by bedrooms



### Housing NWT homes by Period of Construction



### Housing NWT homes by type

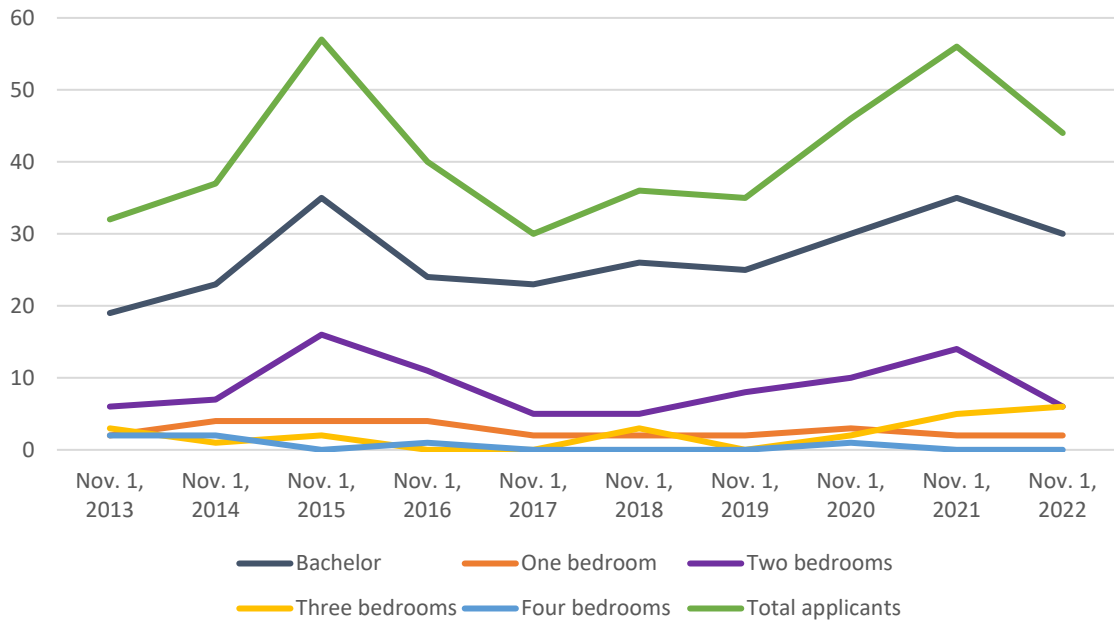


#### Notes:

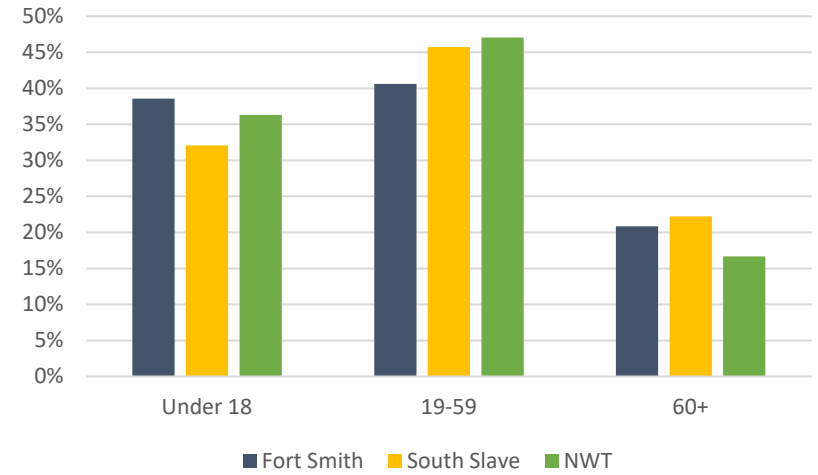
- Three-bedroom the most common size, many of the bachelor units are in the Seniors Complex
- Relative lack of 1-bedroom units
- Vast majority of public housing constructed before 1980
- Duplex the most common type of home

# Housing NWT – Public Housing

Public Housing Waitlist Over Time



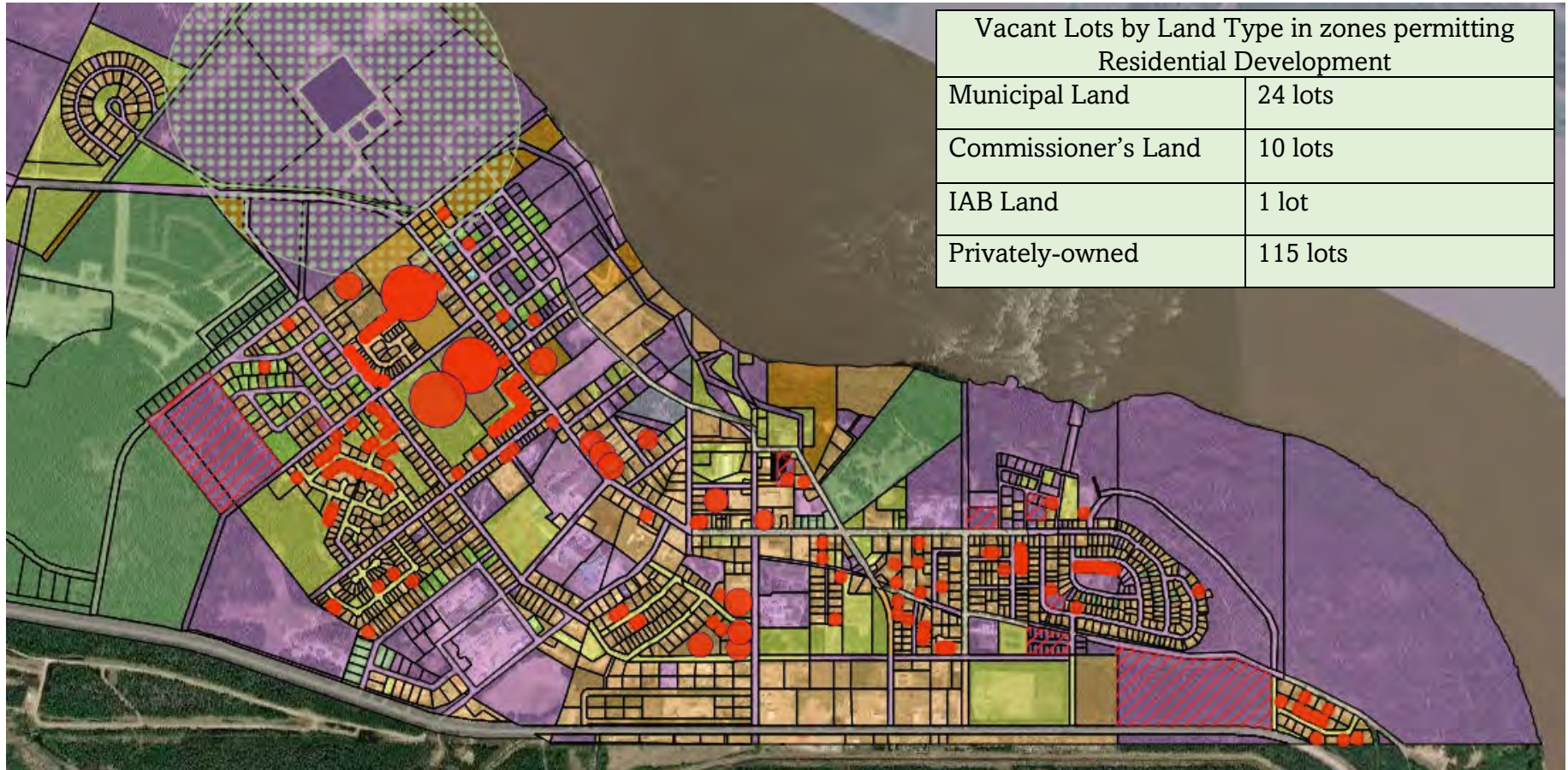
Public Housing Tenants by Age



Notes:

- Over past ten years, consistently between 30 and 50 households on waitlist for public housing in Fort Smith
- Bachelor (0 bedrooms) units have the highest number of applicants, followed by two bedrooms
- Looking at age, Fort Smith on average has a higher percentage of public housing tenants under the age of 18 than the territorial average, as well as a higher percentage of tenants over the age of 60

# Land



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*What are the problems that need to be addressed?*

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*Who has a role to play?*

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## Questions – Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

*Thinking broadly about housing, what are some strengths Fort Smith offers?*

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*What are some current weaknesses or challenges Fort Smith faces around housing?*

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*Looking to the future, what opportunities are there related to housing in Fort Smith?*

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*Are there any threats or external factors that have the potential to impact homes and housing in Fort Smith in the near future?*

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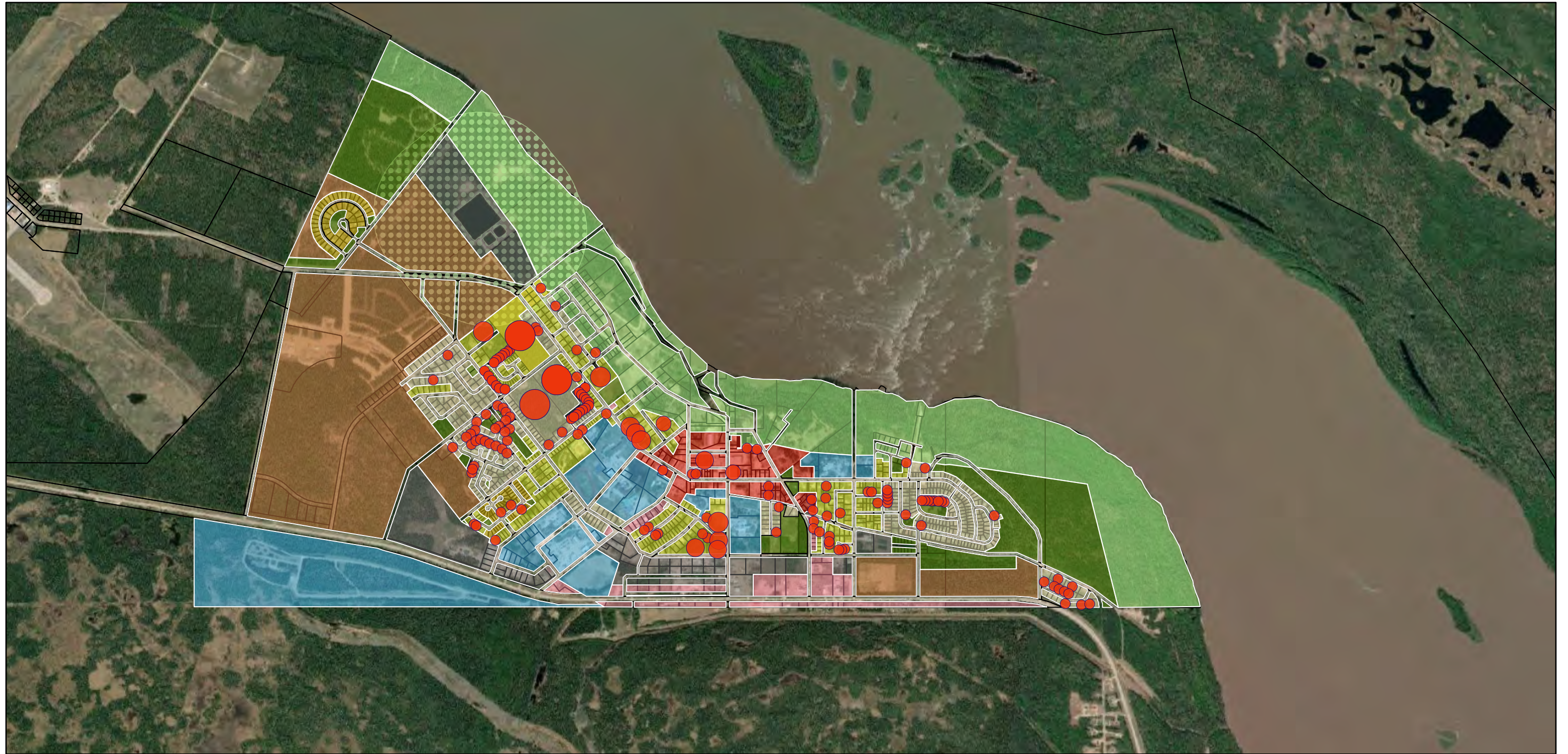
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## Appendix A – Maps

# Potentially Suitable Lots by Zone



5/25/2023

 Lots Excluded from Sewage Lagoon Buffer - Lots Excluded from Sewage Lagoon Buffer

 Sewage Lagoon 450m Public Health Buffer

 Surveyed Lots

World Imagery

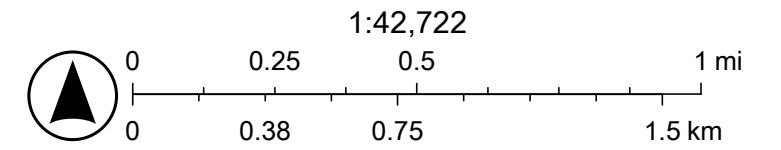
Low Resolution 15m Imagery

High Resolution 60cm Imagery

High Resolution 30cm Imagery

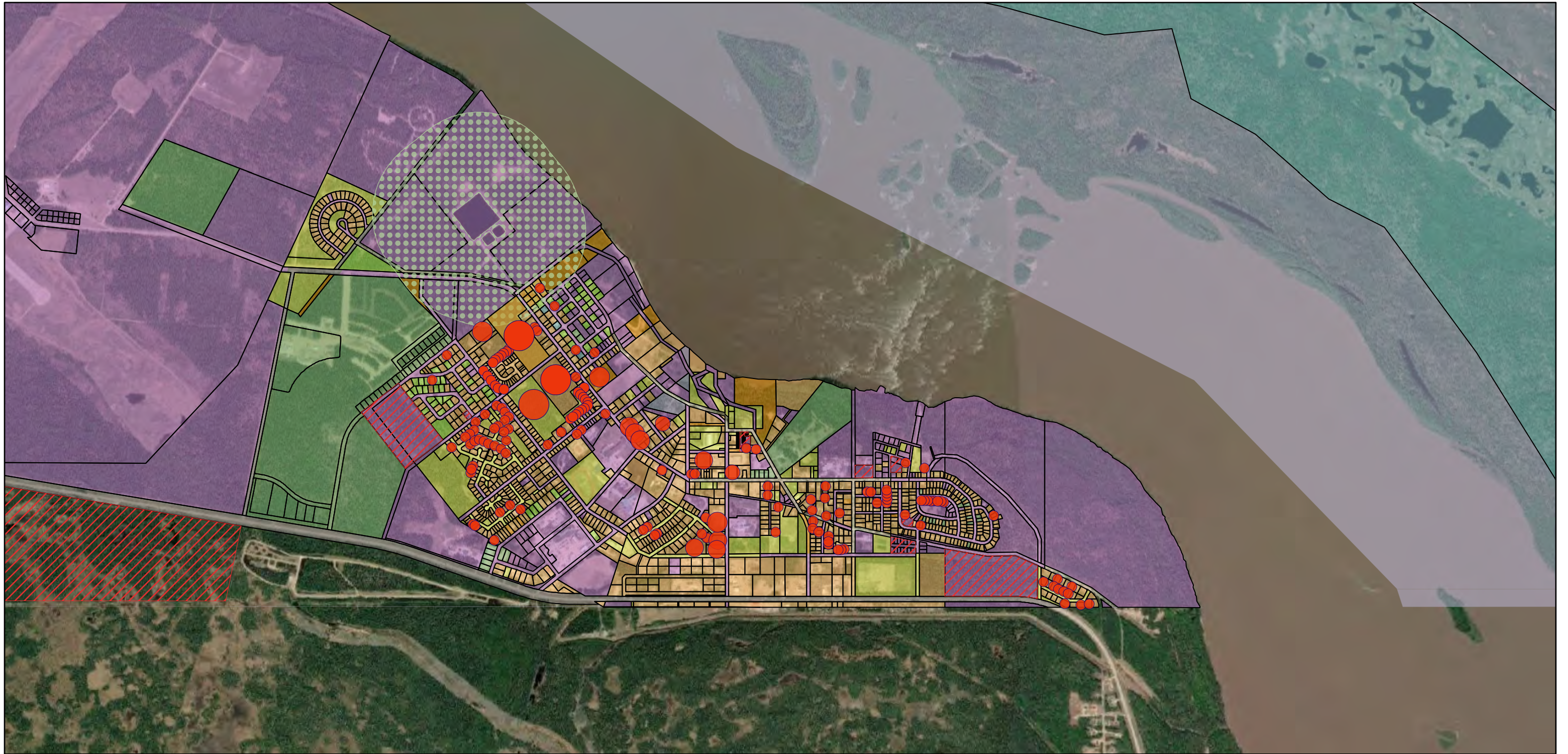
Citations

9.6m Resolution Metadata









Maxar

# Potentially Suitable Lots for Building by Land Ownership

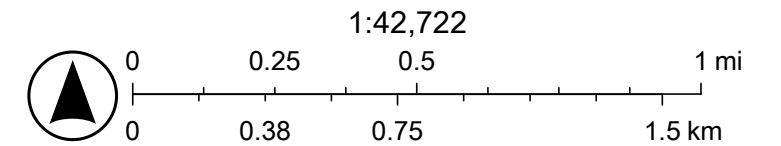


5/25/2023

-  Lots Excluded from Sewage Lagoon Buffer - Lots Excluded from Sewage Lagoon Buffer
-  Sewage Lagoon 450m Public Health Buffer
-  Land Withdrawal - Land Withdrawal
-  Surveyed Lots
- Land Authority - Land Authority
-  Private
-  Commissioner

-  Municipal
-  Federal
-  Indian Affairs Branch
-  Mixed
-  Territorial
-  Public Highway
-  Salt River Reserve

- World Imagery
- Low Resolution 15m Imagery
- High Resolution 60cm Imagery
- High Resolution 30cm Imagery
- Citations
- 9.6m Resolution Metadata



Maxar

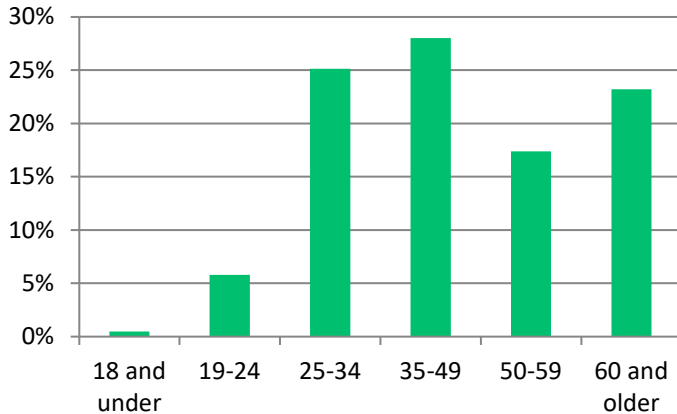
## Appendix B – Presentation on Survey Results

# Survey Overview

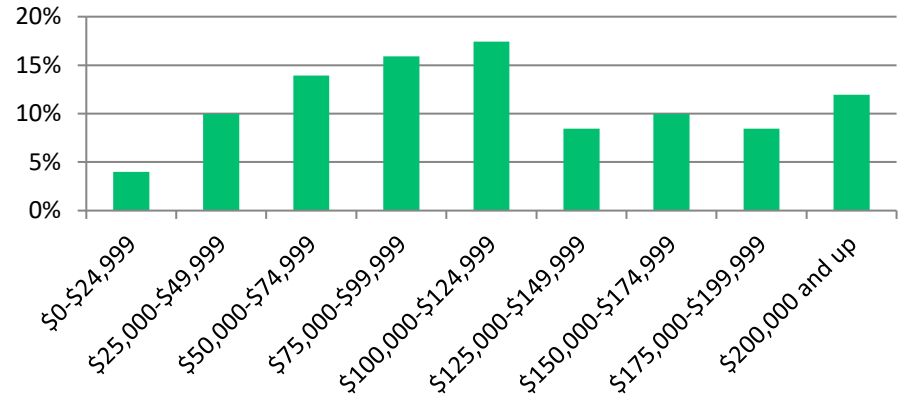
- Open late March throughout April
- Total 208 responses
- Good cross-section of community responded
  - e.g. by age, income, housing status

# Survey Overview - Respondents

## What is your age range?

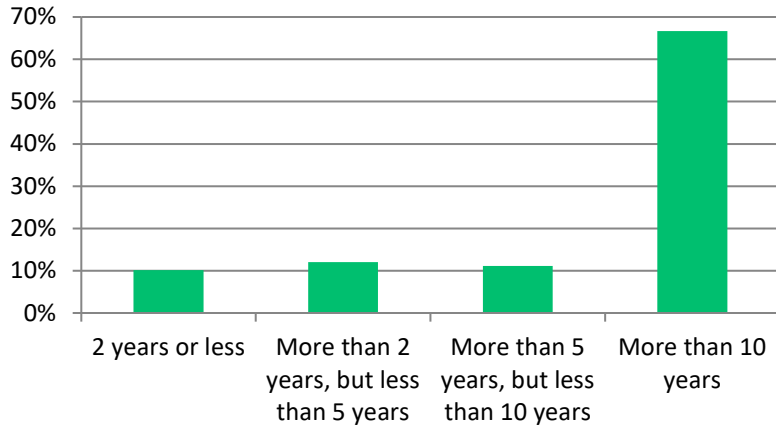


## What is your approximate average household income?

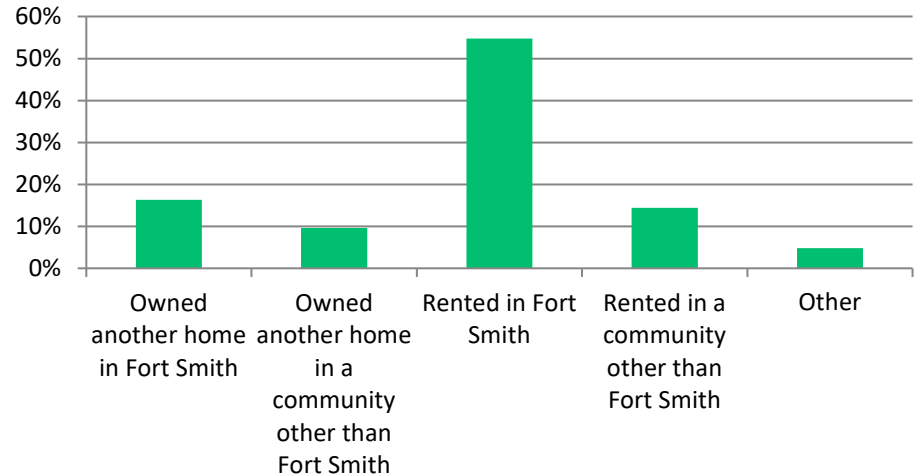


# Survey Overview - Respondents

## How long have you lived in Fort Smith?

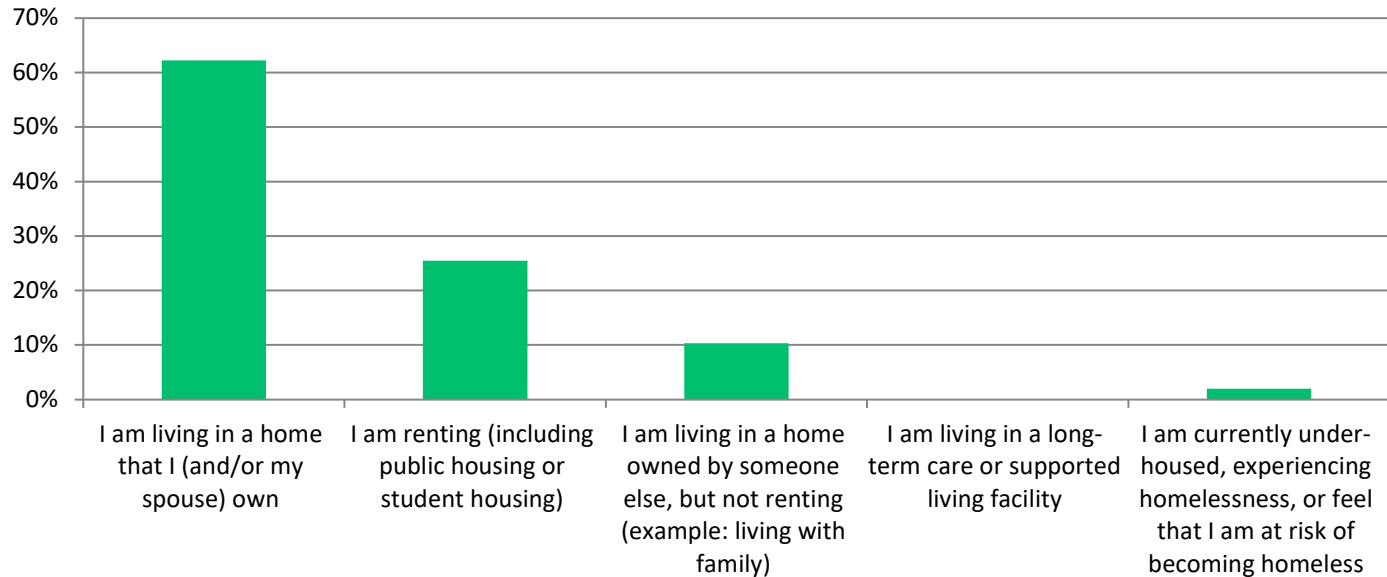


## Where did you live before this home (homeowners)?



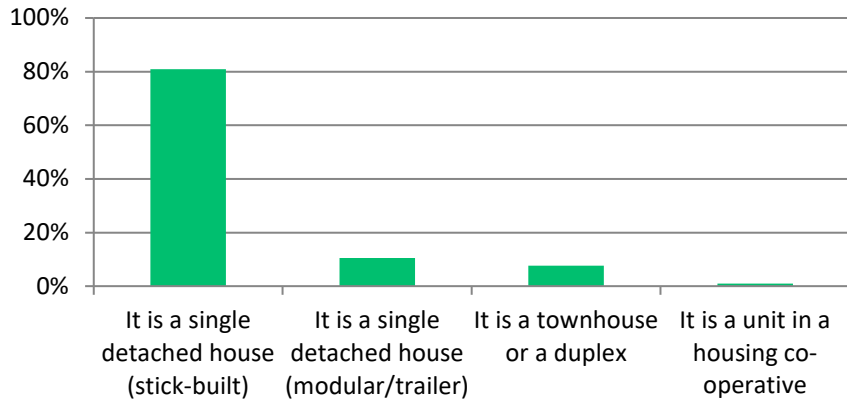
# Survey Overview

What best describes your current housing situation?

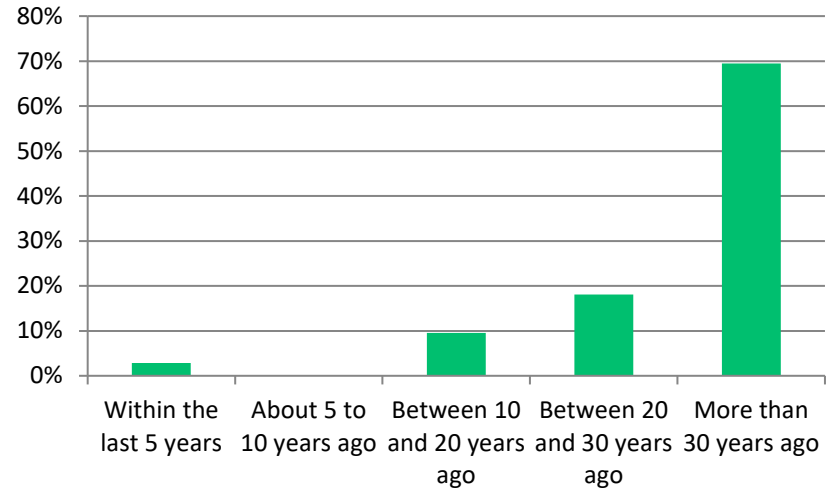


# Homeowners

How would you describe the home you own?

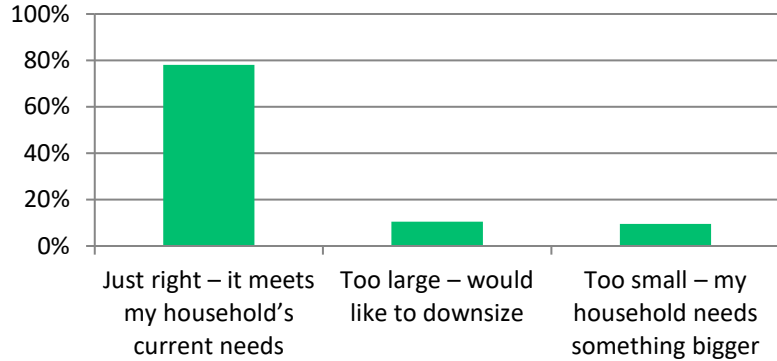


When was your home built?

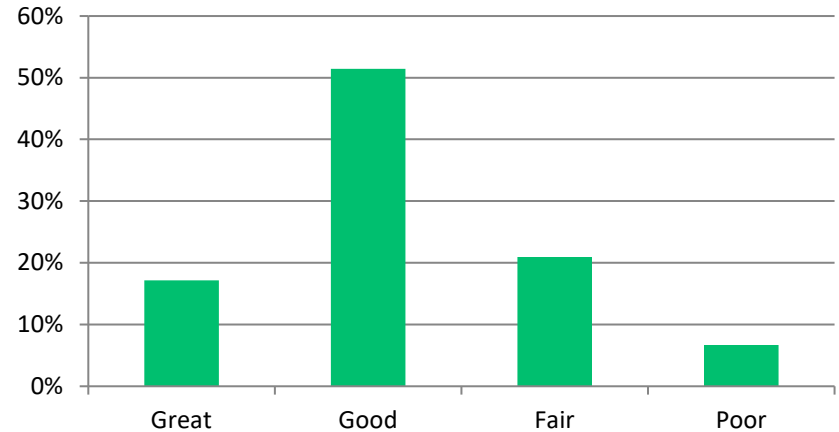


# Homeowners

How satisfied are you with your current home size?

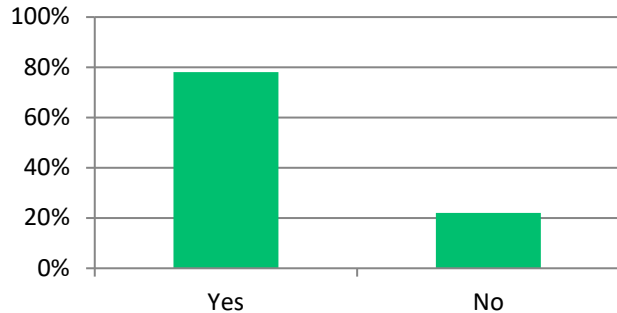


Overall, how would you rate the current condition of your home?\*

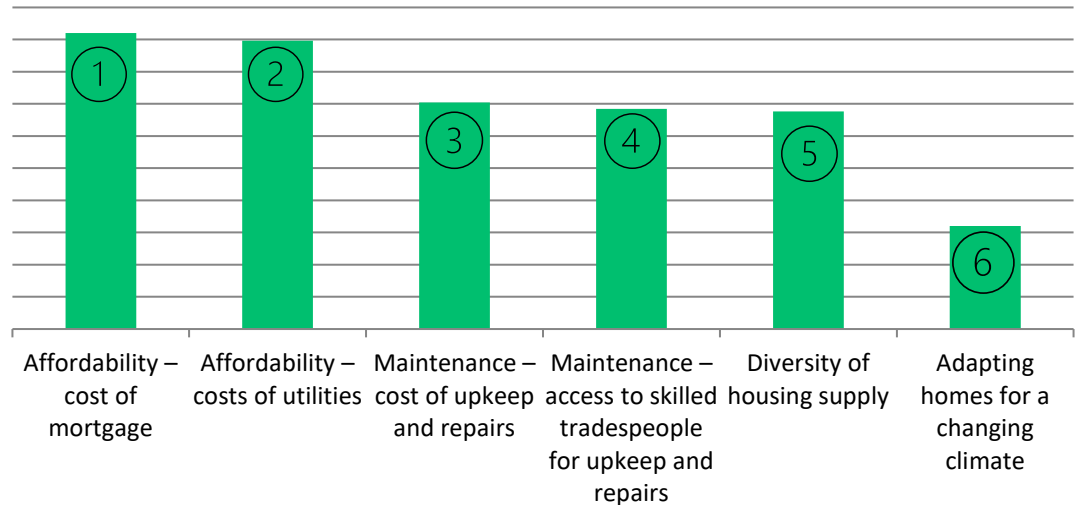


# Homeowners

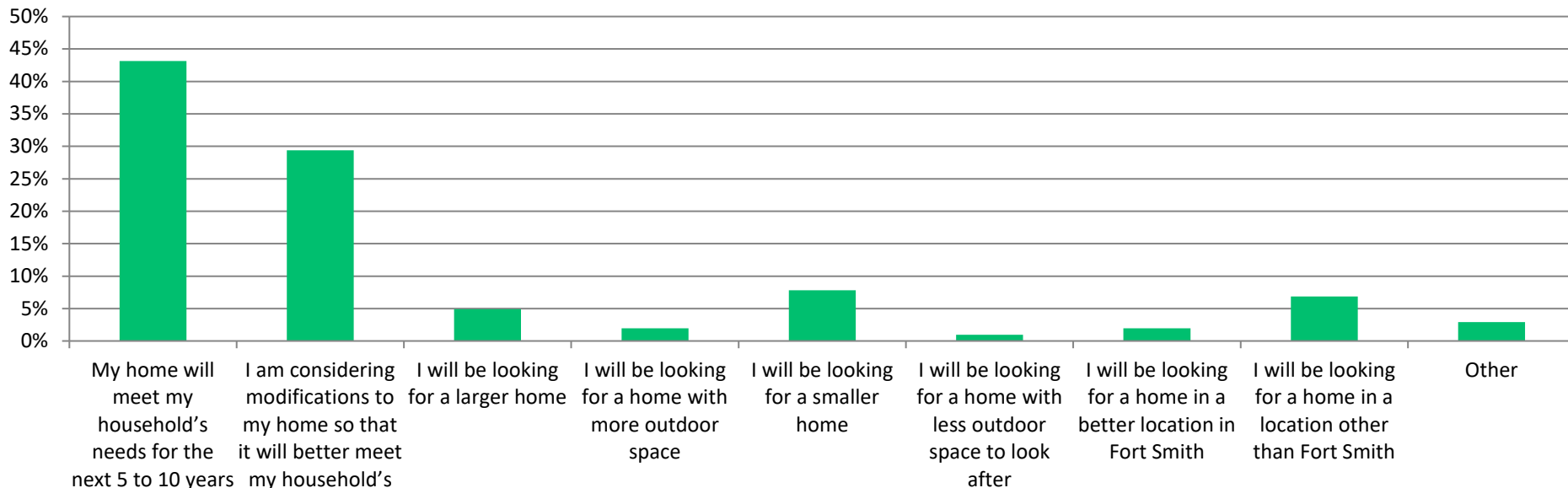
Do you feel that your home is affordable?



In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for people who own homes or would like to own homes in Fort Smith?

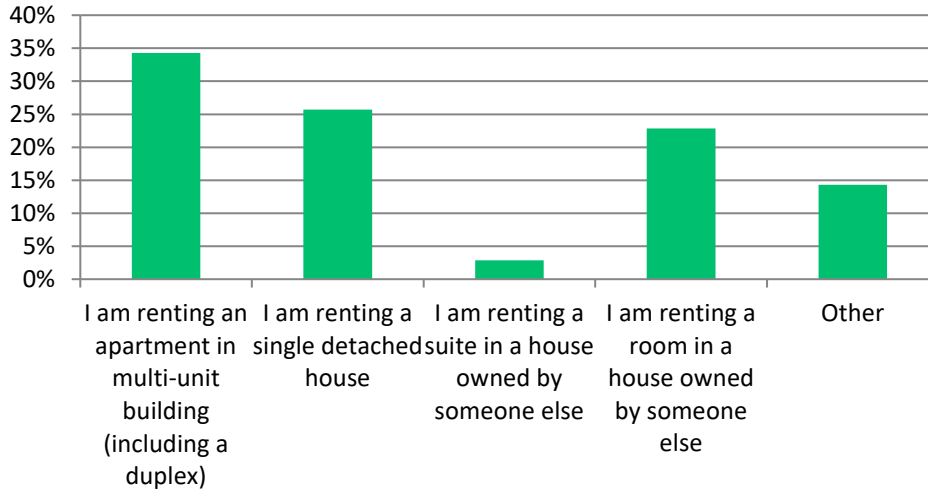


# When thinking about your housing needs for the next 5 to 10 years, what best describes your situation?

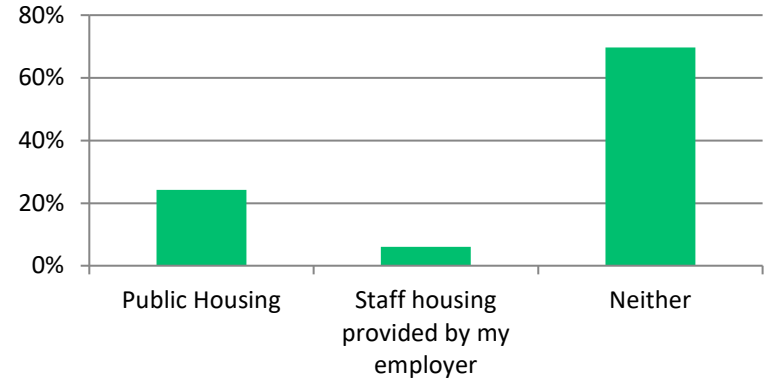


# Renters

How would you best describe your current situation?

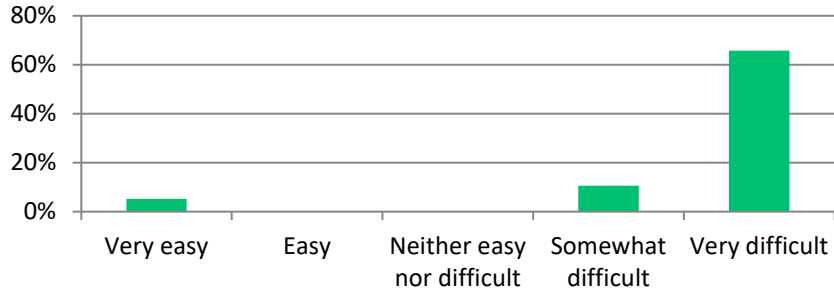


Is the home you are renting public housing or staff housing provided by your employer?

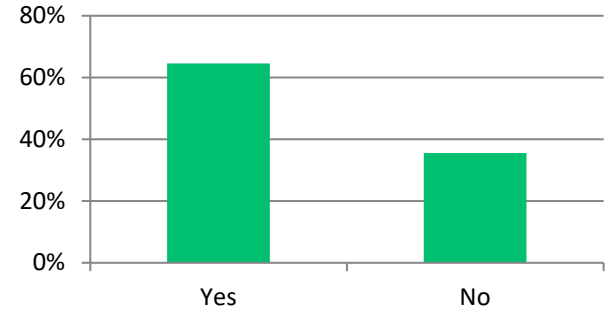


# Renters

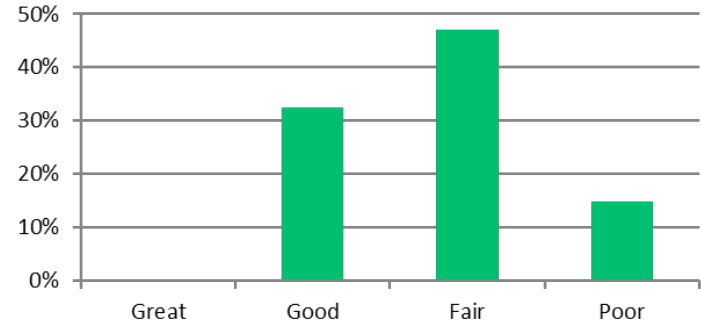
How would you describe your experience trying to find a place to rent in Fort Smith?



Do you feel that your home is affordable?

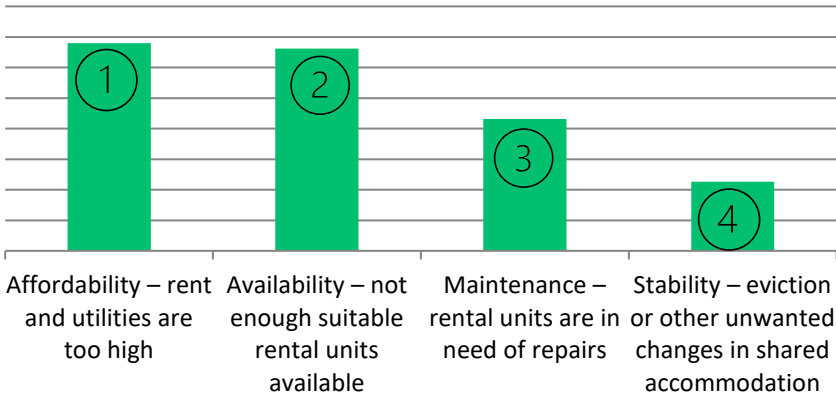


Overall, how would you rate the current condition of your home?

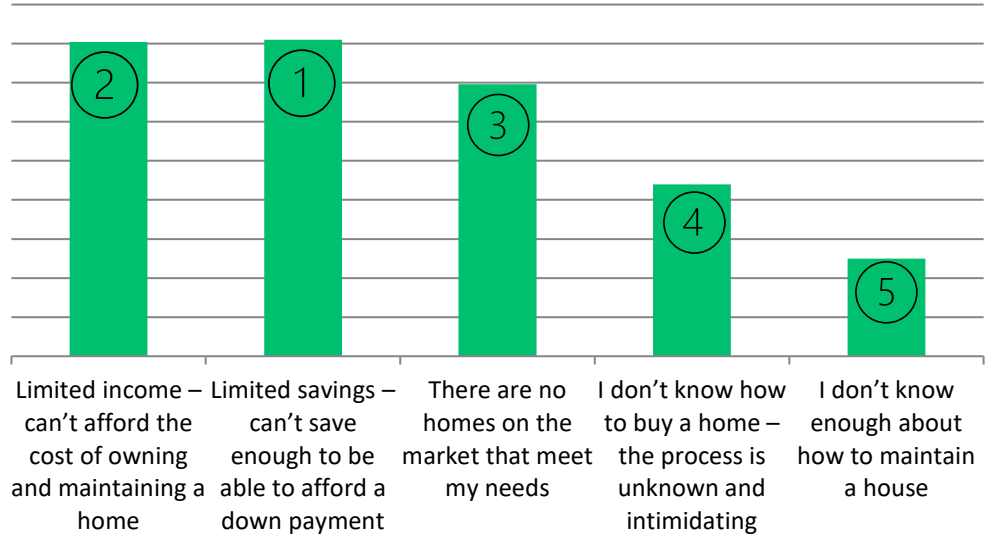


# Renters

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for renters in Fort Smith?

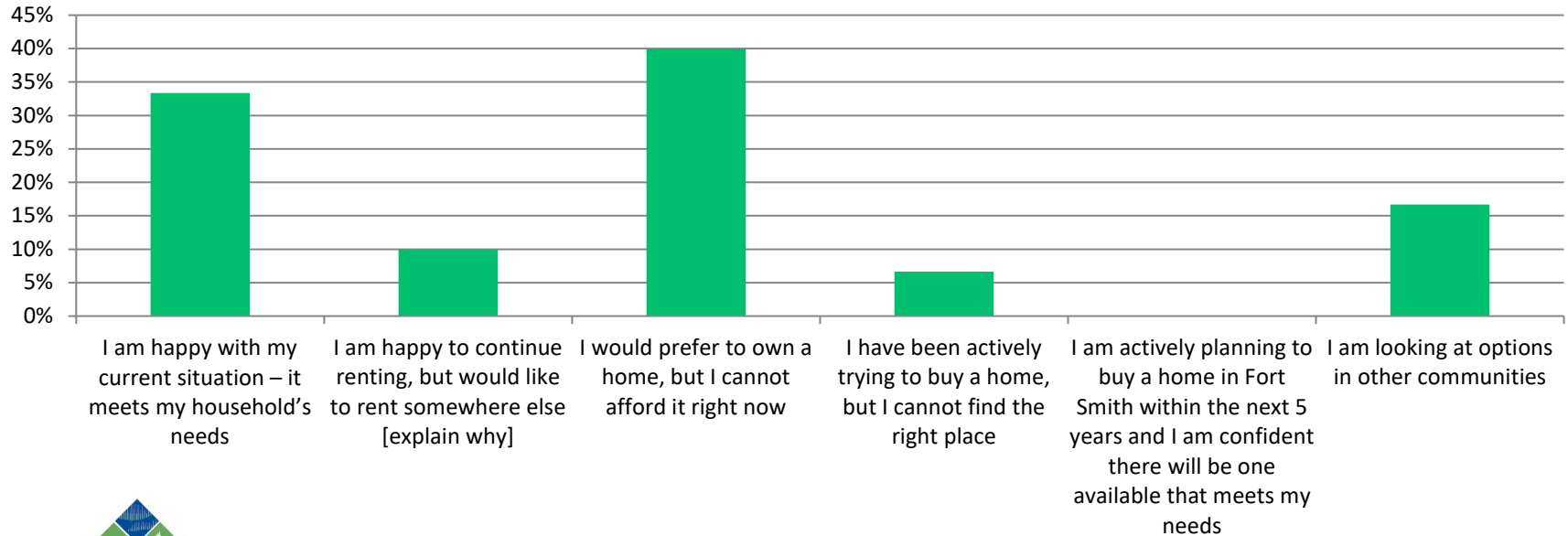


Based on your experience as a renter, what are the top three biggest barriers to becoming a homeowner as a renter in Fort Smith?



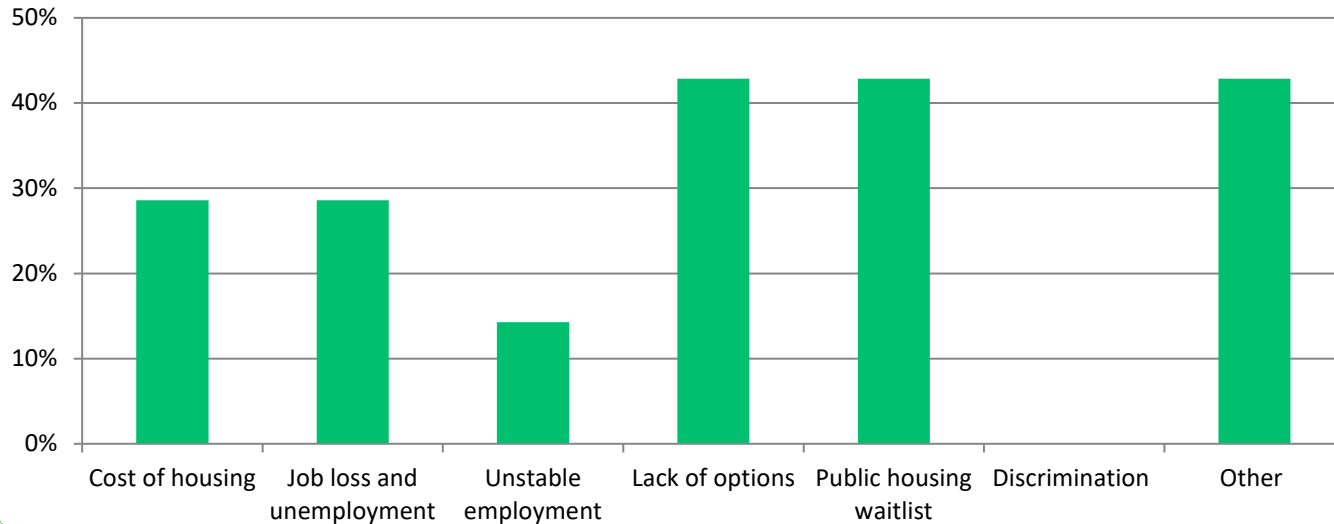
# Renters

When thinking about your housing needs for the next 5 to 10 years, what best describes your situation?



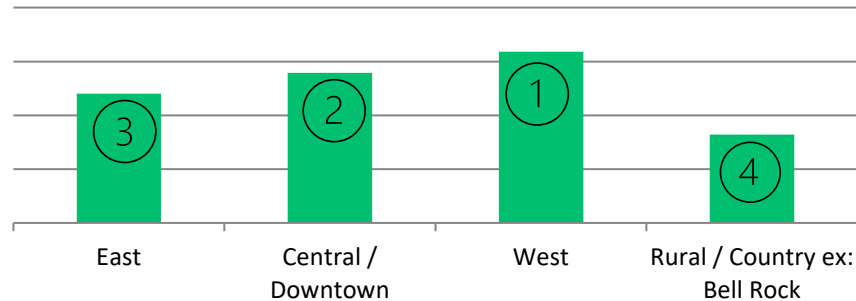
# Under-housed population

What barriers have you experienced to accessing safe and affordable housing in Fort Smith?



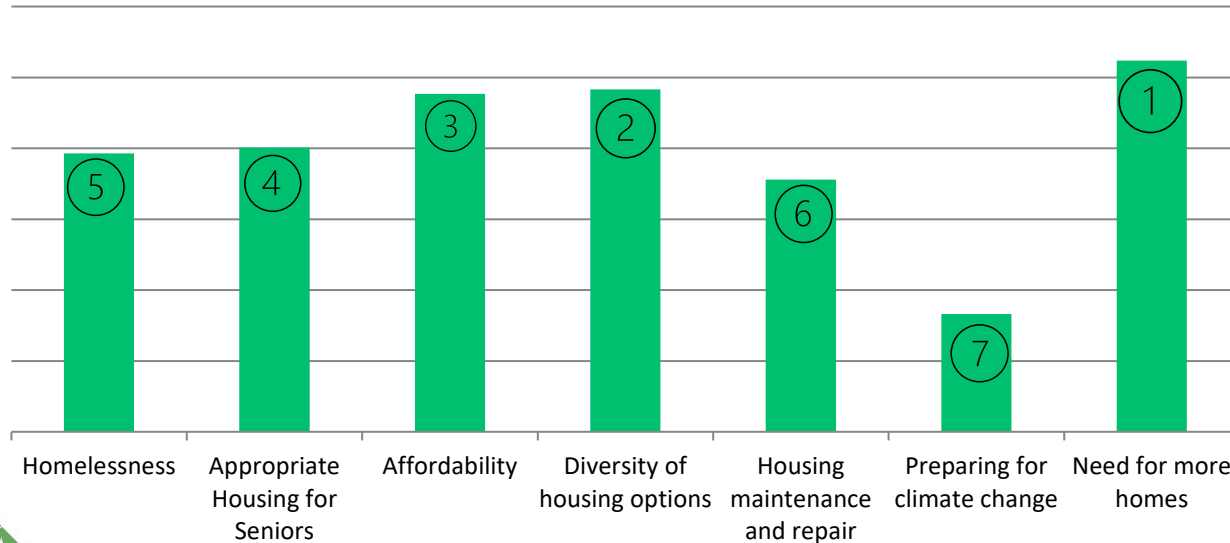
# Areas for new homes

In your opinion, which areas of Fort Smith should be a priority for new housing development in the years to come?



# Housing Challenges

What do you think are the top 3 housing challenges in Fort Smith?



# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What made you want to buy your current home?***

- “Low renting options prompted the purchase of a house, which would have happened eventually”
- “High rental prices and lack of rentals that allow pets”
- “Rent was too high. Wanted to build my own equity”
- “Wanted to own my own home. Rental property in Fort Smith is almost non existent and can be very expensive”
- “Needing enough space for my family”
- “There was nowhere to rent”

## ***Affordability***

- “Insurance costs for heating with wood are outrageous”
- “Heating is getting expensive, property taxes going up is not ideal now”
- “Heating, utilities and taxes have all increased dramatically over the 10+ years since we bought our home”
- “Cost of living/supplies in remote areas are outrageous!”



# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What other challenges have you experienced or observed?***

- “Vacant homes everywhere. Properties lie empty”
- “Difficulty single people have finding rental housing or seniors looking to downsize”
- “Not enough land to build on” | “We need apartment buildings due to land shortages”
- “Not enough people for repairs and issues”
- “Lack of available housing options”
- “Price of homes are too high for the age and quality of the homes. People are forced to buy because of limited availability of other options.”
- “Some people don’t maintain them [homes] to a level that reflects well of the town”
- “No lawyers to do paperwork or inspectors”
- “Too expensive to buy without double income support”
- “We lose skilled professionals because they cannot find appropriate housing”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***Ideas of actions to help homeowners?***

- “Open more properties for development”
- “Auction off an empty lot periodically to promote housing development”
- “Provide a site for people to bring reusable materials and home furnishings etc. instead of throwing everything out at the dump”
- “Lower taxes, more land available to build on”
- “Allow zoning for Small Homes. Zone/develop additional R2 lots”
- “Fort Smith owns lots that are vacant... The Town should sell those lots so that houses can be built”
- “Quit trying to implement southern property policies”
- “Promote program accessibility from/for all levels of government”
- “I am a senior, there are no programs that I know of to help with snow removal etc. Things that would make it easier to stay in your own home.”
- “Approach developers to build an apartment. Approach government to have temporary housing for staff moving here (like the Yukon). Approach the Bands who have housing to consider offering renting to other than Band members”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***What made you want to rent your current home?***

- “Limited available options, decent location”
- “Affordable rent – only one roommate – good sized room”
- “Only place available in town when I moved. Just happened to be a nice place.”
- “It was the only place to rent at the time”

## ***How would you describe your experience trying to find a place to rent?***

- “Impossible, was forced to sleep/live in my office for 2 months, house sit for 3 months and couch surf for 3 months before finding a place”
- “I am not able to find something similar in price and quality [...] that I was enjoying elsewhere before I moved here (even with northern subsidies)”
- “Easy. Provided by employer”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***As a renter, what are barriers do you see to becoming a homeowner?***

- “Costs of owning a home are astronomical”
- “Lack of certainty in employment; many GNWT positions are terms”
- “It isn’t necessarily a priority for everyone to “become a homeowner””
- “Mainly availability, cost and condition of houses currently on the market”
- “There are limited houses for sale, hardly ever any land for sale. Prices are higher than what the houses are worth”
- “I know people who pay upwards of \$10,000 for property tax!! It’s crazy!”

## ***What challenges have you experienced as a renter?***

- “Despite having incredible luck just getting into a public housing unit, the house is quite decrepit”
- “Too many people looking for rentals which makes the cost too expensive for single person renters”
- “It’s impossible to find anything to rent that isn’t a complete house”
- “Fact that there aren’t many suitable rental options for single adult professionals reflects [...] that everyone is expected to ‘settle down’ and shack up. This probably pushes some young people into serious relationships before they’re really ready.”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***Where to prioritize new housing?***

- “More dense housing supply in the Central area so people can walk to access services”
- “West has space and in a school zone that’s closer for families. East is condense enough. Bell Rock is too far out of town and to provide essentials like water and sewage would cost the town a fortune”
- “Need for accessible, single or senior housing close to downtown”
- “Room to grow in the west, just need someone to build”

## ***What are the gaps in existing Housing programs and services?***

- “The stupid rule of being a resident for a year [to access Housing]”
- “Help with maintenance and upkeep”
- “Rentals for single people, young couples”
- “If I am a senior and make over the threshold I’m not eligible. This should be reconsidered”
- “Nothing for people struggling with homelessness, nothing available for people new to the community”

# Some quotes from respondents:

## ***Any other comments?***

- “My perception is there is an adequate number of dwelling units in the community, but there is not enough *diversity* of units and there is an abundance of abandoned or otherwise unoccupied units”
- “I really hope something actually comes from this survey. Not just all hear and say”
- “The community is in dire need of rental accommodations”
- “Our housing is affordable to own it seems but rentals appear quite high”
- “I like the concept and style/quality of the garden city co-op and more options like that especially including units for individual professionals would be great”
- “The less the government tries to help the better off everyone will be”
- “In speaking with other residents, it seems as if it is an extremely difficult process to develop land”
- “Apartments for people to rent. Not everyone can commit to buying a home and staying”

# Contact

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Thank you



## BRIEFING NOTE

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**To:** Community Services Committee

**Date:** June 13, 2023

**Subject:** Canada Day Road Closures

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**Purpose:**

To request road closures for the Canada Day Parade route and celebration.

**Background:**

The Canada Day parade route and celebration road closures require Council's approval.

We will be posting the Canada Day parade route in all our advertising (posters, website, Facebook) to ensure residents know Canada Day is being held at Conibear Park with the corresponding parade route.

**Recommendation:**

That Council approve the following road closures for the 2023 Canada Day Celebrations.

That Portage Avenue adjacent, to Conibear Park, from McDougal Road to the Old Theatre Parking Lot, before Mercredi Avenue, be closed to traffic, and that McDougal Road, adjacent to Conibear Park, from the Post Office Crosswalk to the Anglican Church Parking Lot, be closed to traffic on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for Canada Day Celebrations; and

Furthermore, that the following road closures occur for the Canada Day Parade from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Portage Avenue in front of RCMP compound to the corner of McDougal Road, along McDougal Road from Portage Avenue to Breynat Street, and from Breynat Street to the Community and Recreation Centre.