

Background

As part of the process of an ongoing a workforce housing initiative Nakusp and Area Development Board (NADB) distributed a Workforce Housing Survey to gather quantitative data to support the anecdotal information they had received from upper Arrow Lakes residents regarding needs for housing. Through the survey it was NADB’s goal to collect background information about workforce housing needs, gauge interested in defined opportunities and to better inform NADB how to move forward with comprehensive workforce housing solutions that aligned with the regions needs. The survey was developed utilizing methods being used successfully in other communities exploring workforce housing strategies.

Method for Communication and Promotion

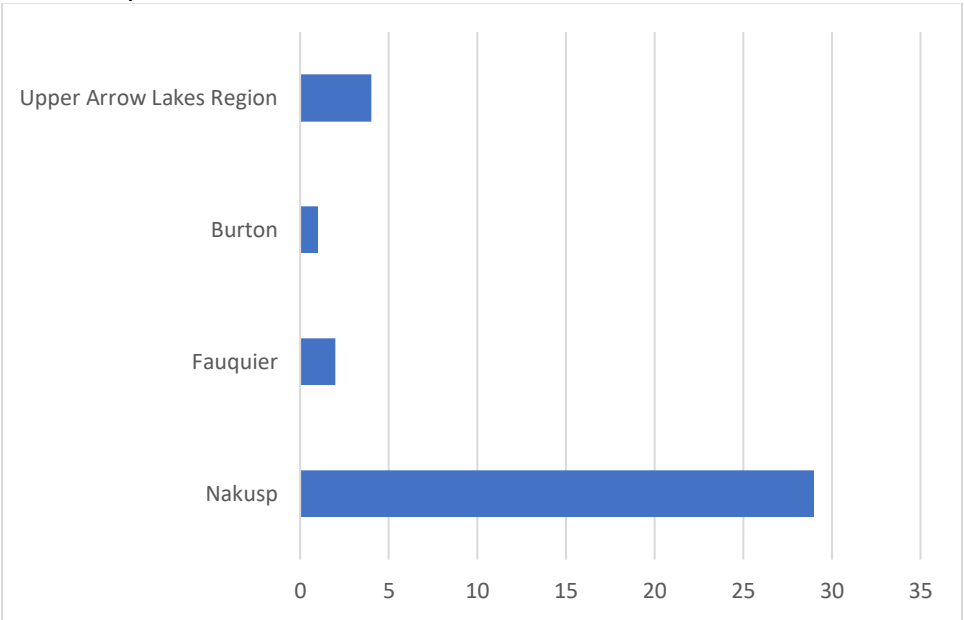
This survey was distributed starting January 10, 2024 and the opportunity to reply closed January 31, 2024. Two versions of the survey were distributed, one for employees in the area, and one specific to employers. The Workforce Housing Survey was promoted via the NADB mailing list to 139 emails, via Facebook and Instagram and printed copies of both employee and employer versions were distributed to (978) PO boxes at through Canada Post in Nakusp.

Response

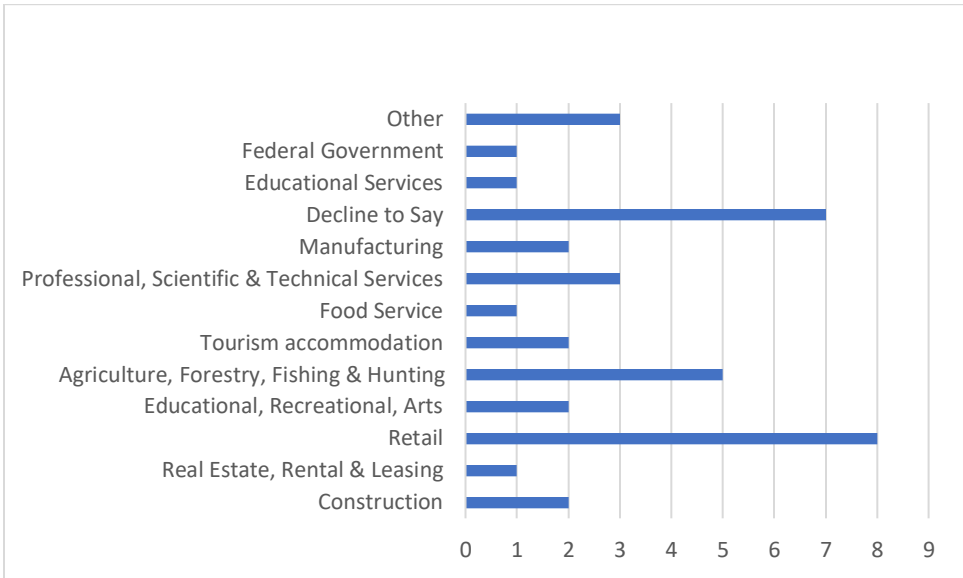
The Workforce Housing Survey saw the following responses: A total of 38 employers and 107 employees (including former employees and potential employees) submitted responses. The surveys were created in a way that did not require respondents to reply to every question. It is for this reason that respondent rates do not always equal the total number of respondents.

Results – Workforce Housing Employers

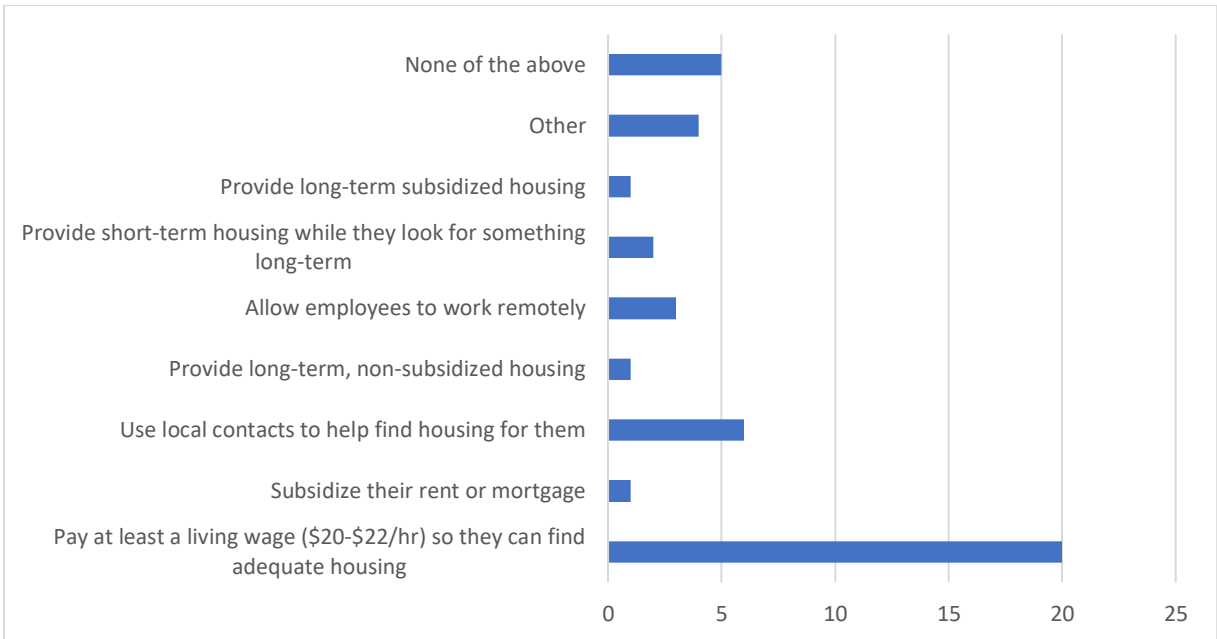
- 1. Where is your business located?



2. Which of the following best describes your business sector

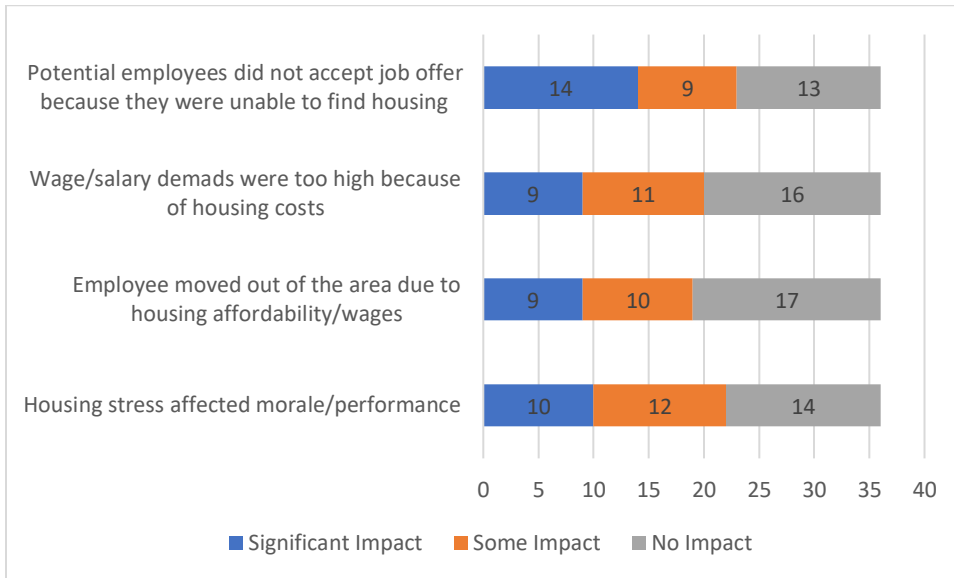


3. How does your business help employees access housing?

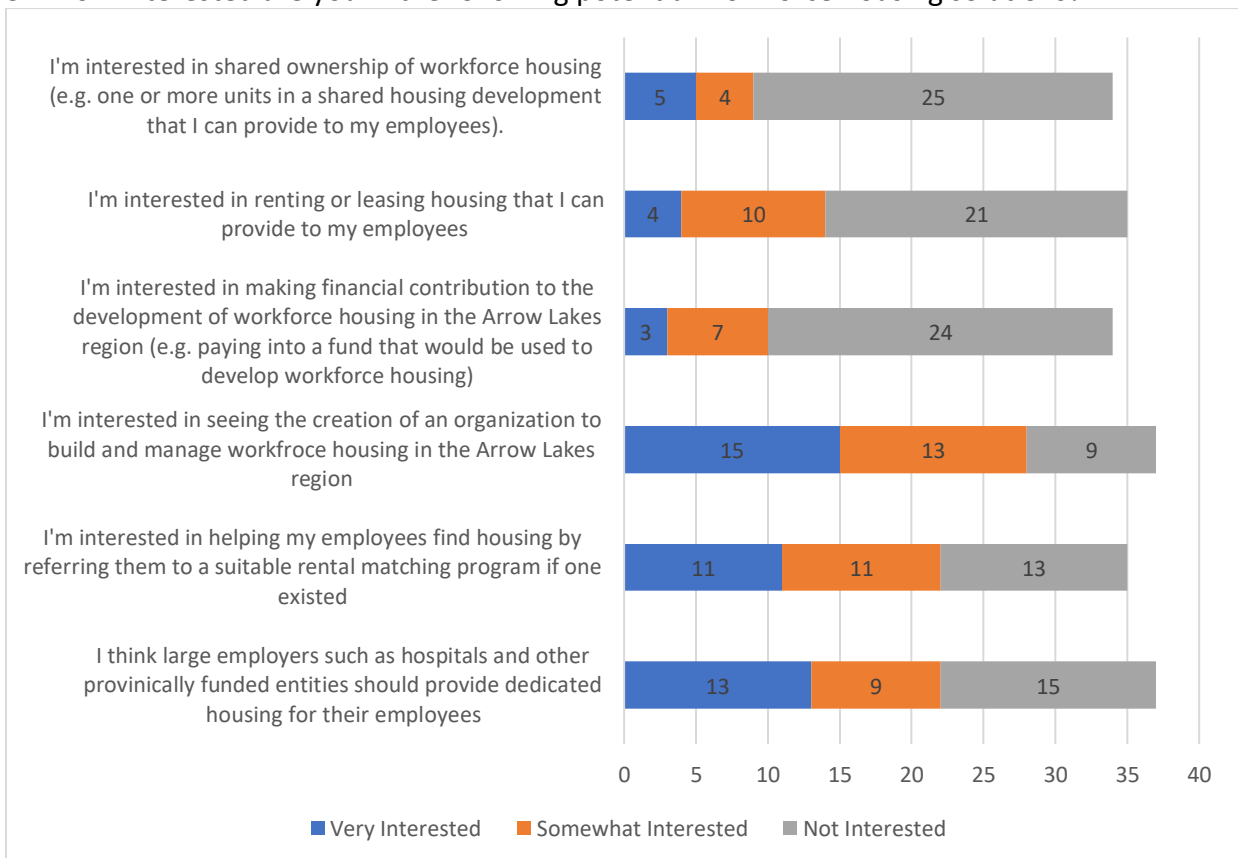


Respondents were allowed to select more than one option for this question. Some of the comments we received in the “other” category include: “We try to pay a living wage”, “they commute from home or an accommodation is secured prior to starting a shift”, “We pay less than living wage and there’s no housing available” and “I don’t think \$22/hr will secure housing in this area.”

4. What level of impact have the following employee housing issues had on your business or organization?



5. How interested are you in the following potential workforce housing solutions?

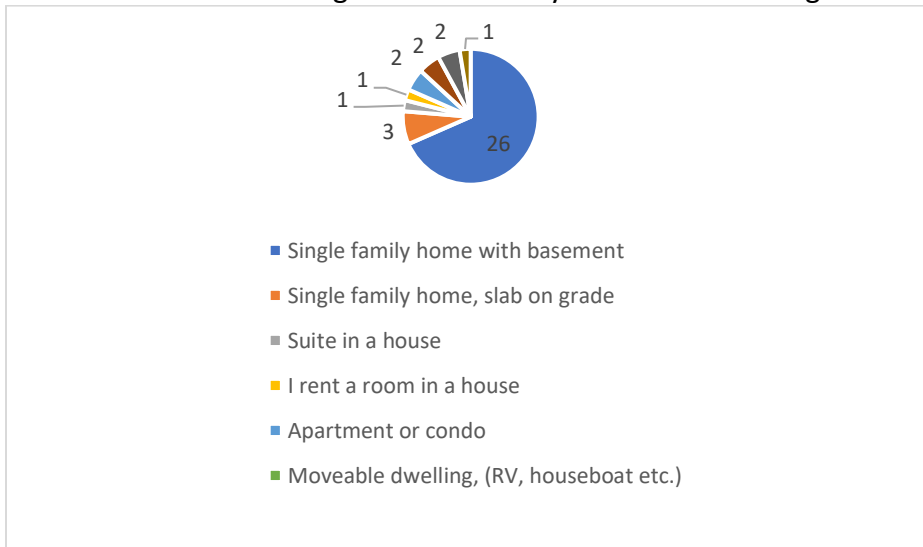


6. How could local government play a greater role in supporting the provision of workforce housing?



Comments in the “other” category included: “Promote industry and better paying jobs so workers can afford the housing that is here”, “The Province sits on vast amounts of desirable land around Nakusp. The Village should annex property and sell lots for development. More development brings more money to the Village”, “All of the above”, “More flexibility with zoning, offer incentives to people with property that could be developed, opposed to scrutinizing land owners for not building what non-contributing individuals think should be designed”, “Cross government collaboration”, “Open up land for sale/purchase”, and “do not allow air BnB’s”.

7. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?



8. If you own your own home would you be interested in the concept of putting a carriage home on your primary residence as a rental unit?

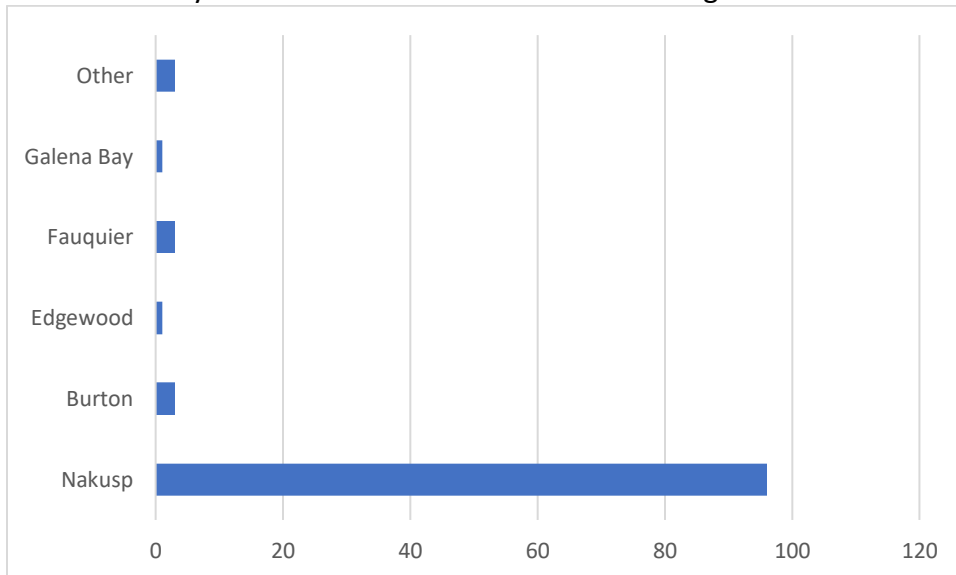
47% of respondents indicated they were interested in the concept of a secondary dwelling on their existing property. Various comments were given for both yes and no answers including the following statements; “Some of the older homes in the area are not necessarily located in a suitable location for ideal use of space, creating undesirable unforeseen circumstances”, “poor access and lack of services available”, “Yes, but having had a rental property before, lost rent, damages, bad attitude renters are a big issue”, “zoning bylaws are too restrictive”, and “There are too many bureaucratic restrictions”, “Yes, but the ALR only allows a secondary dwelling under 50 sq M”. Financial restrictions were a common response in both yes and no responses.

9. Please provide any additional ideas or feedback you think would be value-added in regards to a workforce housing strategy.

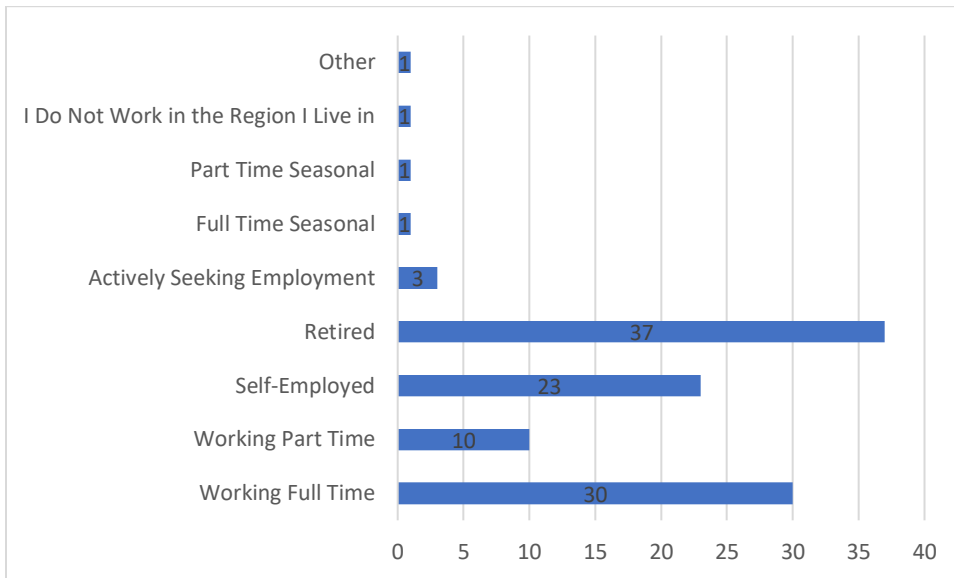
When asked an open-ended question about other ideas for workforce housing respondents indicated various ideas regarding appropriate land opportunities in the area and there were multiple comments indicating there is a need for affordable units and the overall sentiment that homeownership should be realistic and attainable for all. Additional comments included an indication for more involvement from the Village in these types of initiatives, that employers would struggle to find the extra finances to support housing for their employees and that there should be encouragement for land owners to sell/rent their lot for housing needs.

Results – Employee Workforce Housing Survey

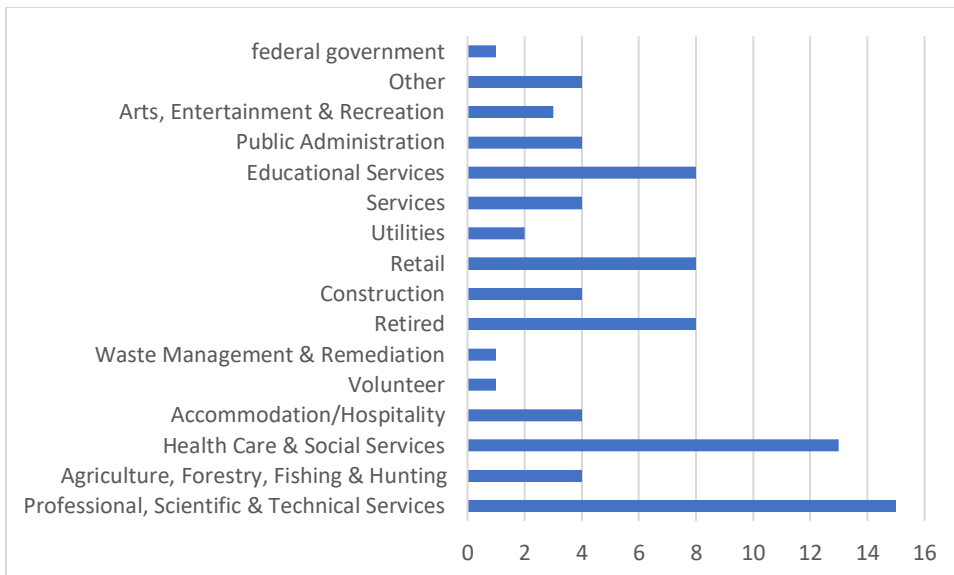
1. Where do you live and work in the Arrow Lakes region?



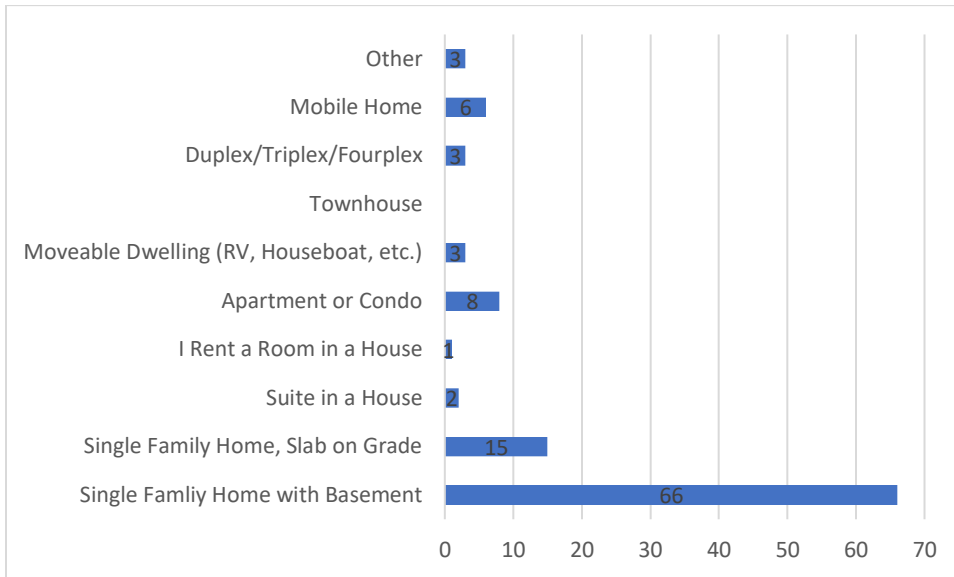
2. What is your employment status?



3. Which of the following best describes the sector you work in?



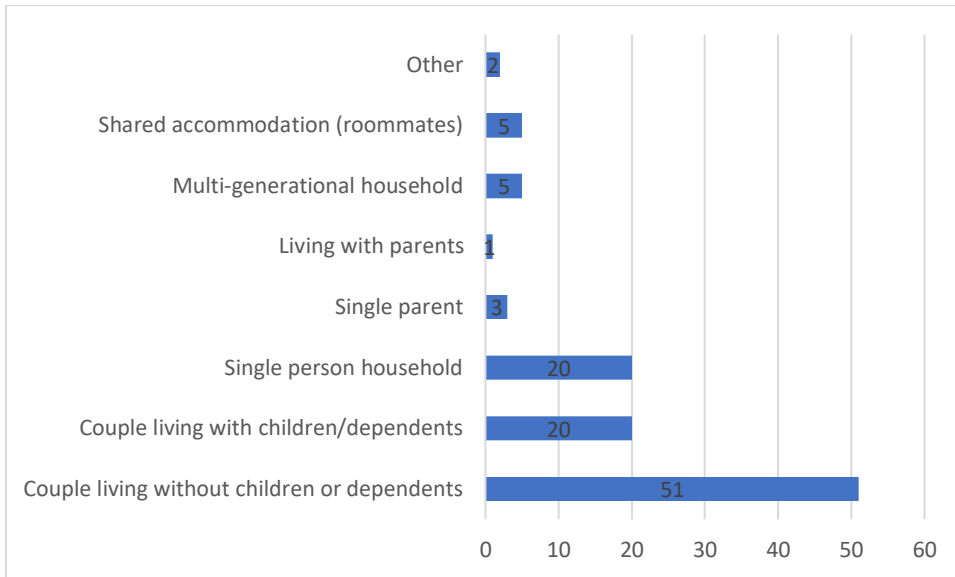
4. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?



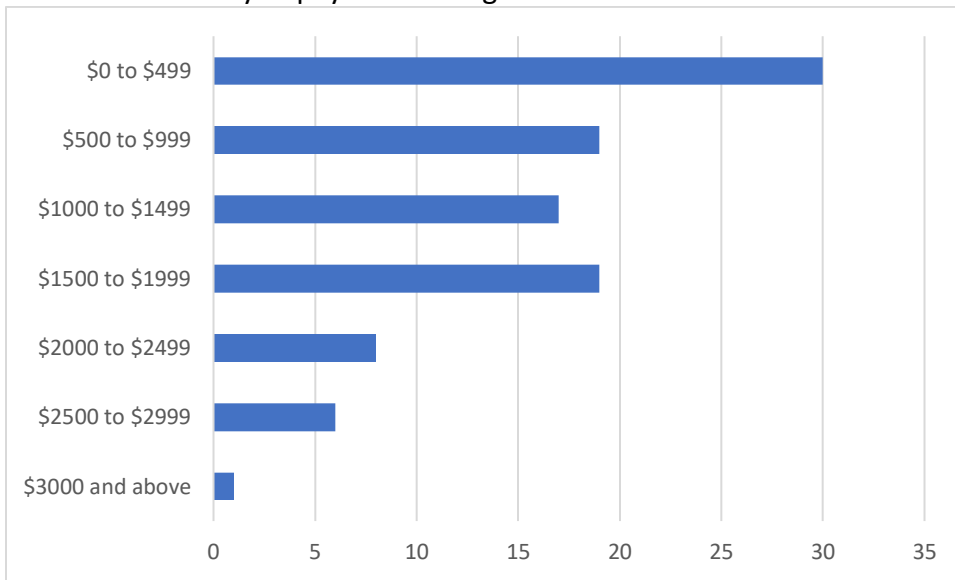
5. If you own your own home would you be interested in the concept of putting a carriage home on your primary residence as a rental unit?

37% of respondents indicated they were interested in the concept of a secondary dwelling on their existing property. Various comments were given for both yes and no answers including the following statements; “Yes, I was definitely considering it. It would allow us to have a smaller dwelling and rent out our big house to family and non-family”, “Yes, I would like to upgrade our shed into a full car garage with a carriage house above, and use that carriage house as a “mortgage helper” and to provide some much-needed housing”, “Yes, but issues with bad renters, damage, collecting rent reliably are real issues”, “No because the Village has denied us vehicle access to our backyard via their access lane, would be impossible”, “Yes, restrictions on ALR and BC Hydro need to change”, “No, having considered it a few times, we value our privacy and are afraid of bad tenants and rules that favour tenants no matter how bad they are”, and “No, zoning doesn’t allow and would be expensive”. There was an overall sentiment of finances being a concern and some individuals indicating they are retired and wouldn’t consider investing money in additions at this stage of their life.

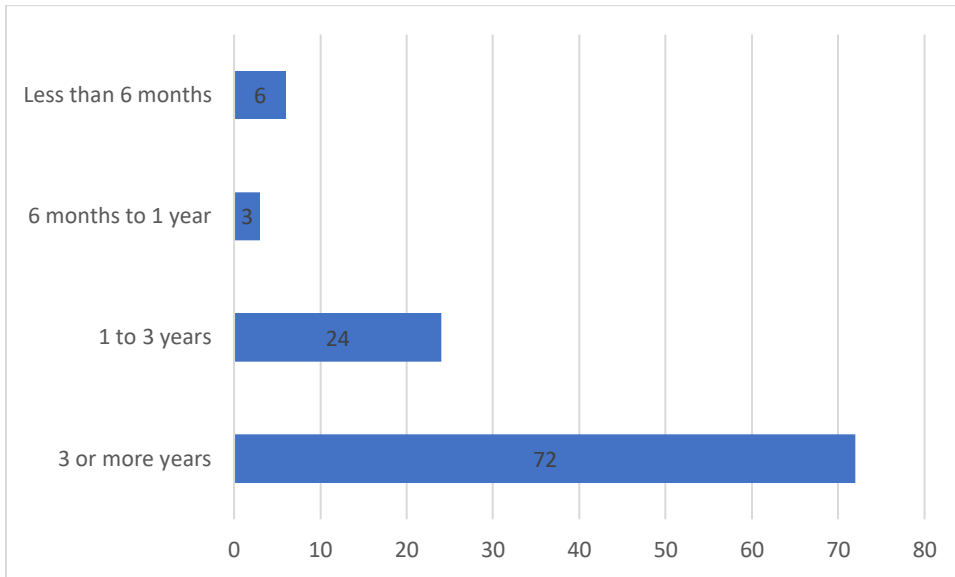
6. Which of the following best describes your household?



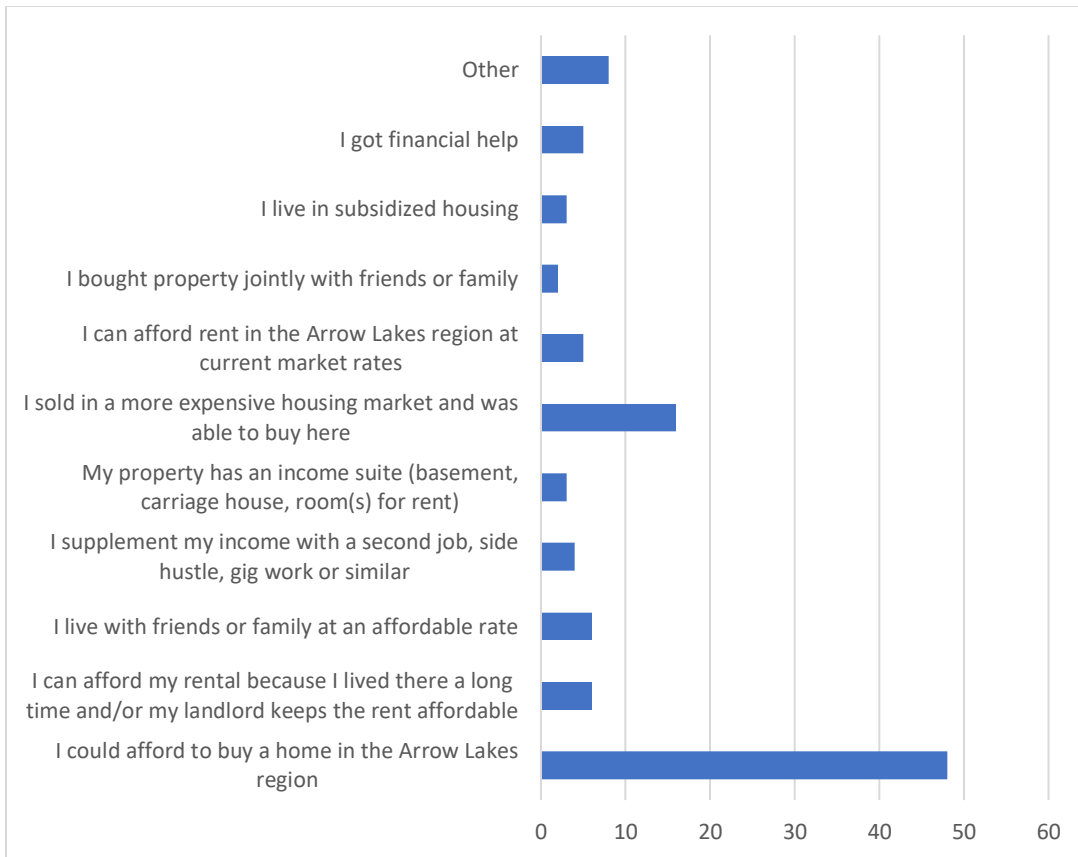
7. How much do you pay for housing each month?



8. How long have you lived at your current residence?

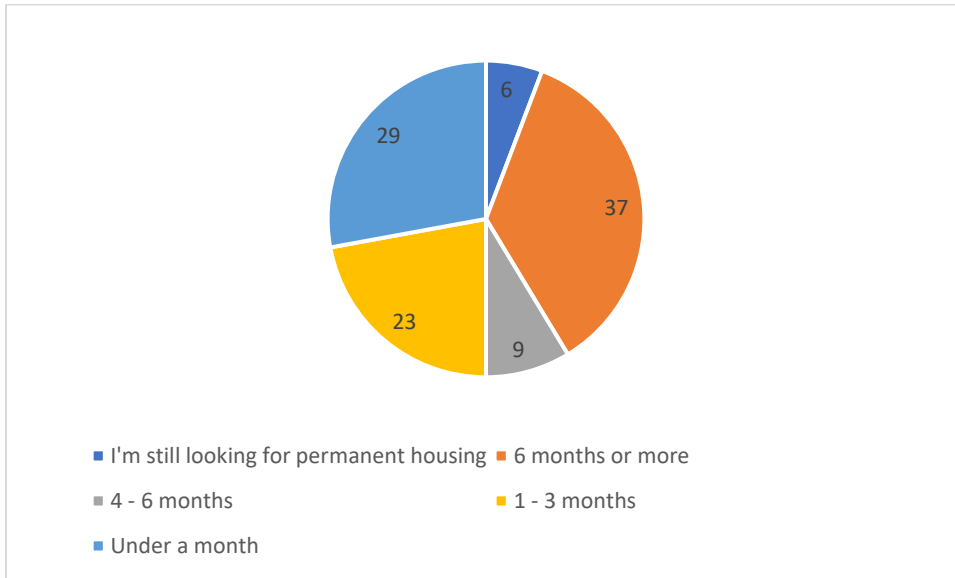


9. How did you achieve stable housing?

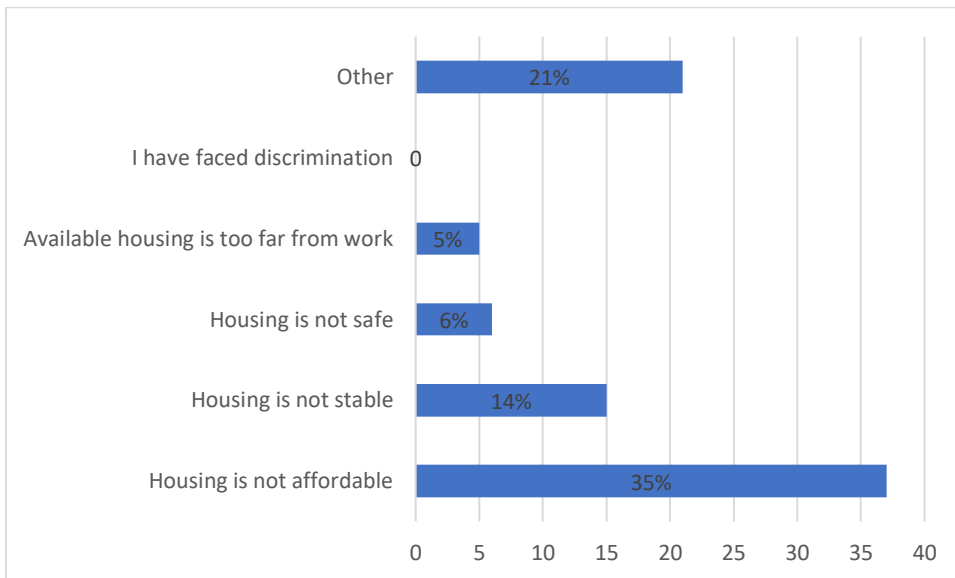


Comments in the other section included: “I sold in a comparable market and used retirement savings to supplement my home purchase”, “I purchased a home that was neglected and have puts in lots of work in renos”, “I haven’t [achieved stable housing]”, “I don’t have stable housing”, and “Homeless, friend cabin in summer, house sit in winter”.

10. How long did it take you to find the place where you currently reside?



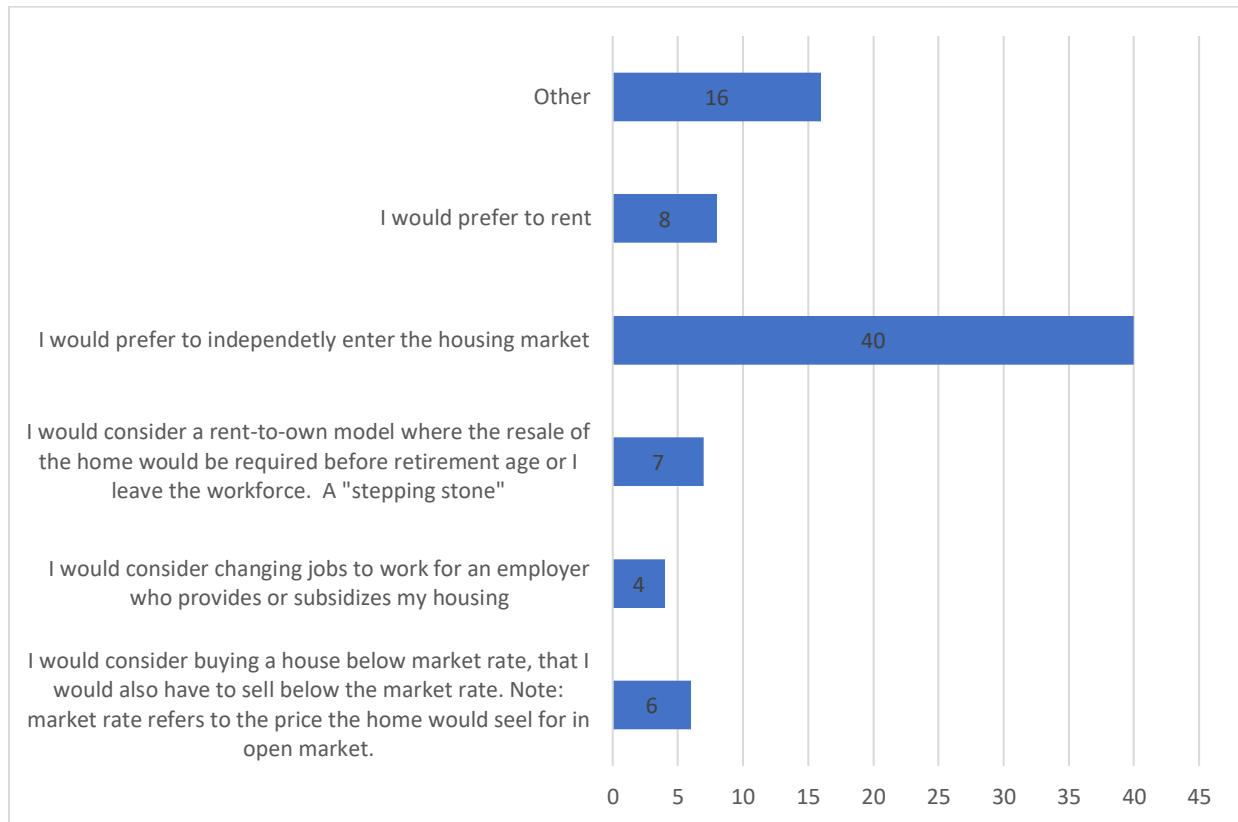
11. What challenges have you experienced over the past three years?



There were a number of “other” replies for this questions which included the following replies: “Difficulties getting contractors”, “Slum-lord style landlords (prior to buying our home)”, “Overall cost of living”, “Lack of supply”, “Pensions are not keeping up to taxes and

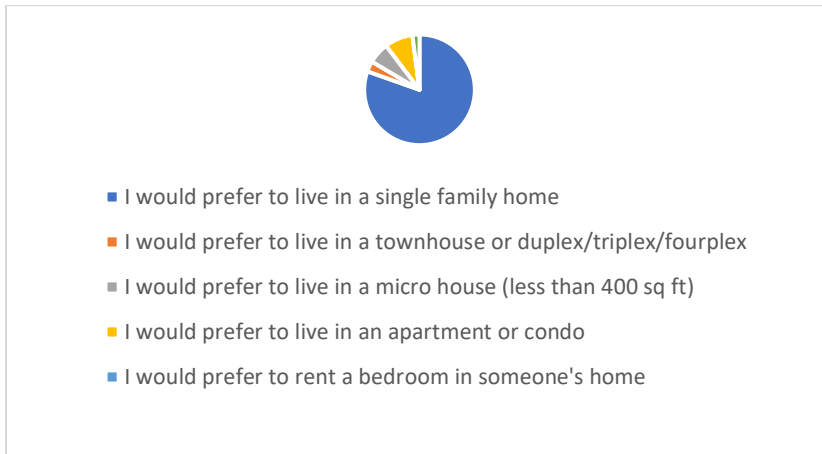
utilities, insurance”, Too much red tape and regulatory requirements are far too onerous to build anything new”, “Housing is super expensive here and very hard to find homes that don’t need to be completely redone”, “I built a suite and offered 1 bedroom housing; however tenants have historically been low income with substance abuse issues...short term rentals through Air Bnb have been much easier to manage”, “Work is not stable and large reduction in income”, “Young families who can work here, but can’t find housing”, and “Local contractors make repairs/maintenance/improvements difficult”.

12. What are your ownership model preferences?

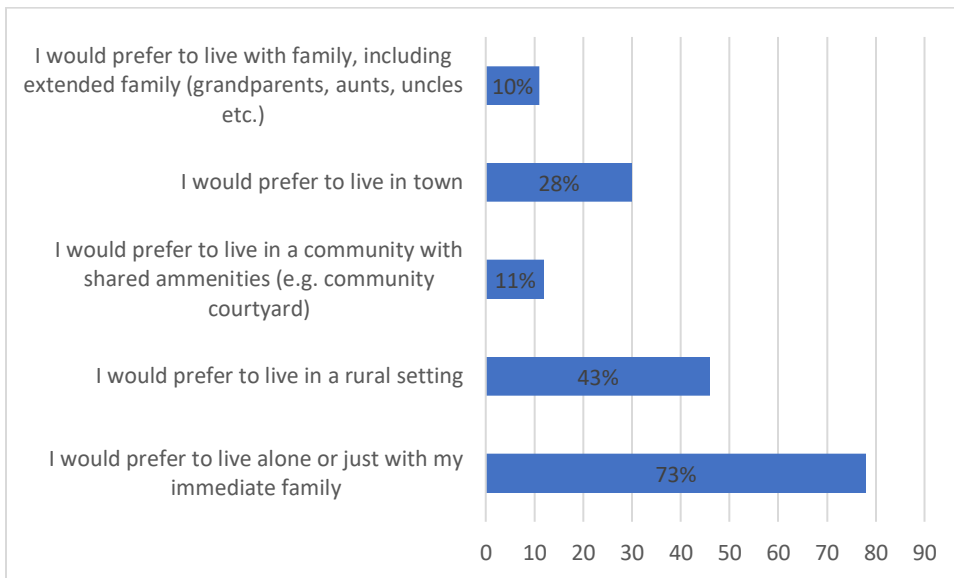


The majority of “other” comments were that respondents already owned their own homes so therefore did not have a preference when it came to an ownership model.

13. What are your building type preferences?

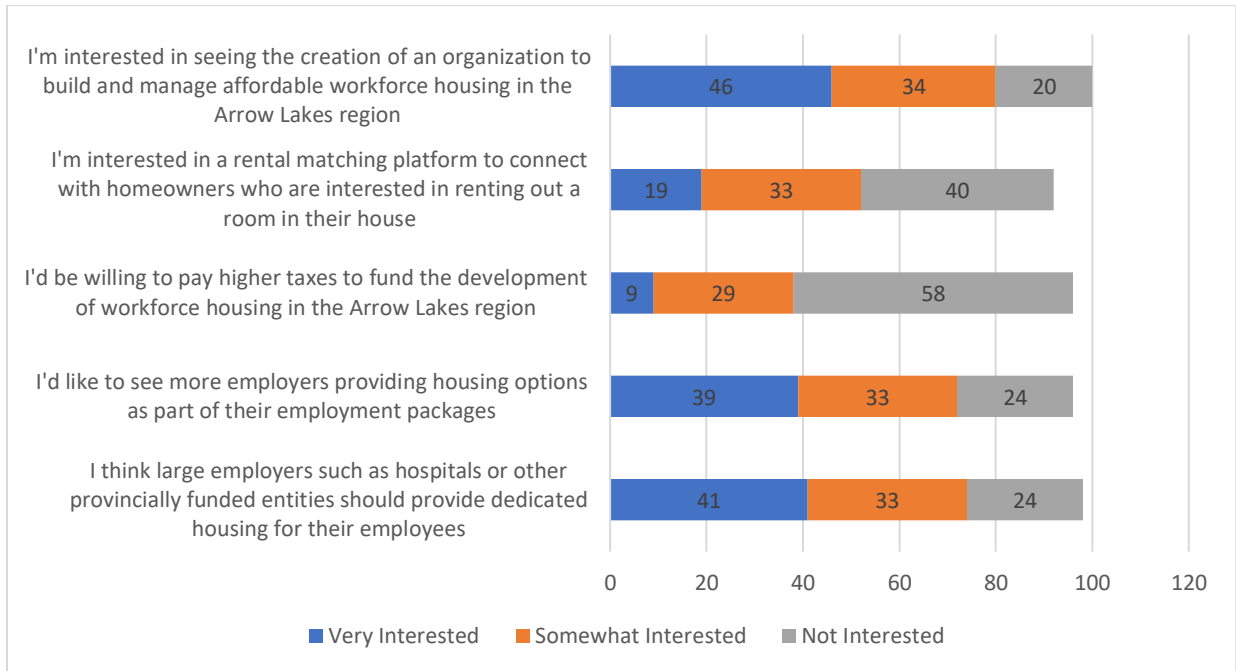


14. What is your living situation preference?

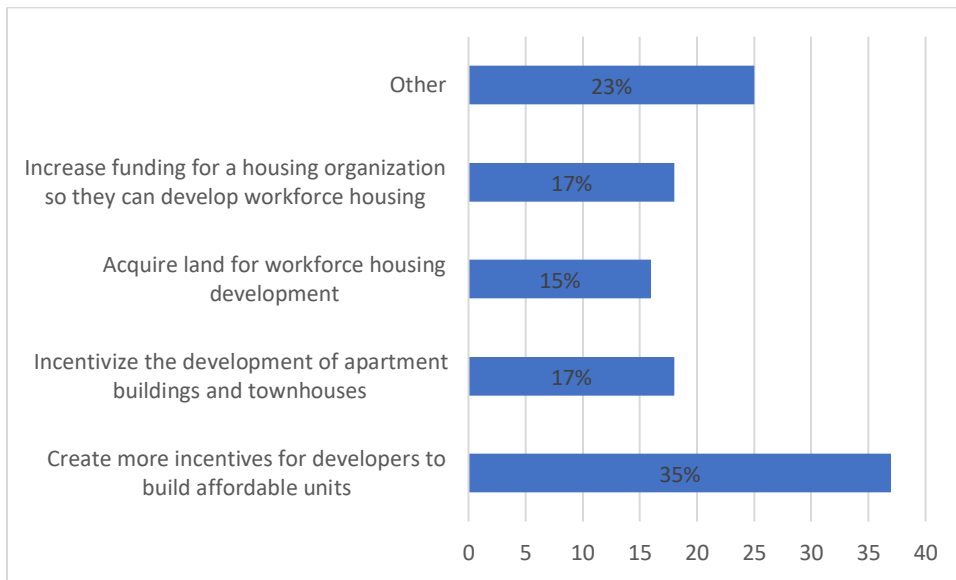


It is important to note that this question was a 'check all that apply' format. Many respondents chose multiple answers that in some eyes may contradict each other; for example, many people chose a preference to live both rurally and in town. Similarly, respondents sometimes chose both living alone with immediate family and living with extended family. This question ended up being flawed due to unexpected multiple answers, but still demonstrated a large majority of people prefer a more private living situation with and in a rural setting.

15. How interested are you in the following potential workforce housing solutions?



16. How could local government play a greater role in supporting the provision of workforce housing?



Respondent comments for the “other” section include: “All of the above, and most of all local government needs to engage in a supportive relationship with ALL residents regarding housing. A more flexible attitude is imperative in Nakusp”, “Provide a fast-track route for those wanting to add carriage homes”, “Create jobs that pay well”, “Increase zoning and regulatory flexibility”, “Financial assistance for homeowners to provide rentals”, “Incentives

for carriage house rentals”, “Encouraging employers to create a benefit package that includes housing and strategize with local homeowners to provide incentives to rent rooms or convert basements into live-in suites”, and “Not local government responsibility”.

17. Please provide any additional ideas or feedback you think would be value-added in regards to a workforce housing strategy.

When asked an open-ended question about other ideas for workforce housing respondents indicated various ideas including a number of suggestions for various incentives for building rental housing and all levels of government to offer more flexibility for zoning, and permitting requirements. Additional comments include: “We moved to Nakusp because funding was available from our employer for a down payment. Otherwise, we could not have considered Nakusp as a feasible community to rent in”, “Research other jurisdictions that have implemented successful strategies”, “Create incentive for owners to want to rent to workforce people”, “Provide the land with infrastructure (ie: water, sewer, roads and hydro) and let developers/people build”, “Make it easier to develop rentals on existing properties. Monetary incentives to develop rental suites”, and “After many years of offering housing to locals who have ended up being shady tenants, I no longer feel I can offer long term solutions, unless they are vetted through a professional employer (such as hospital, Drs, nurses, paramedics).