

CN LANDS AREA VISION AND PLAN

COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Town of Spirit River is in the process of developing a vision and plan for new Town-owned lands. The subject lands, with a combined area of 17.89 acres, are located south of Highway 49, are bounded by 50 Street, 52 Street and 47 street from east to west, and 48 Avenue and 47 Avenue from north to south (see figure 1). As part of this process, a public survey was conducted to elicit community input towards the plan process. This report provides a snapshot of the key findings and takeaways from the survey.

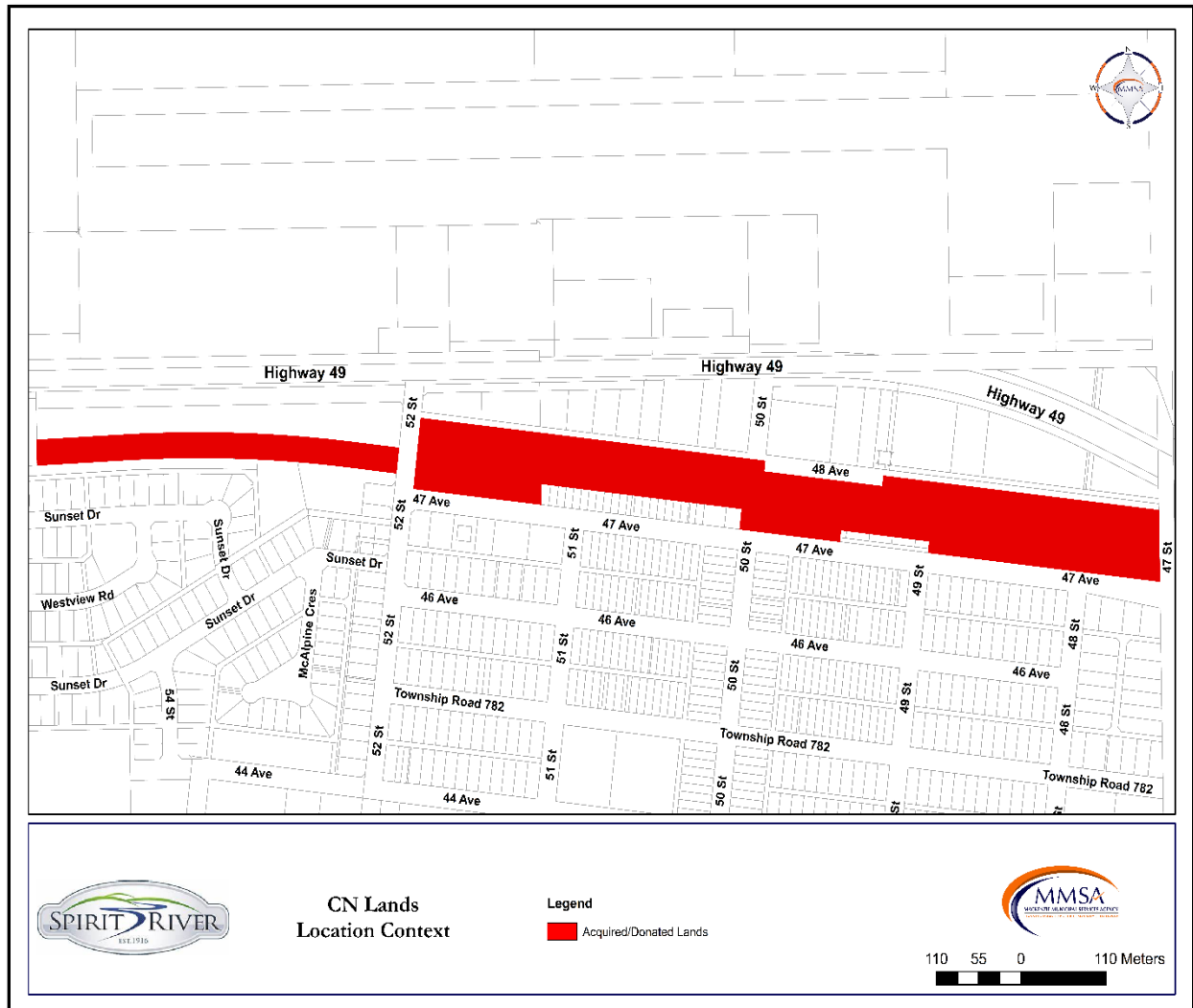


Figure 1: Location Context

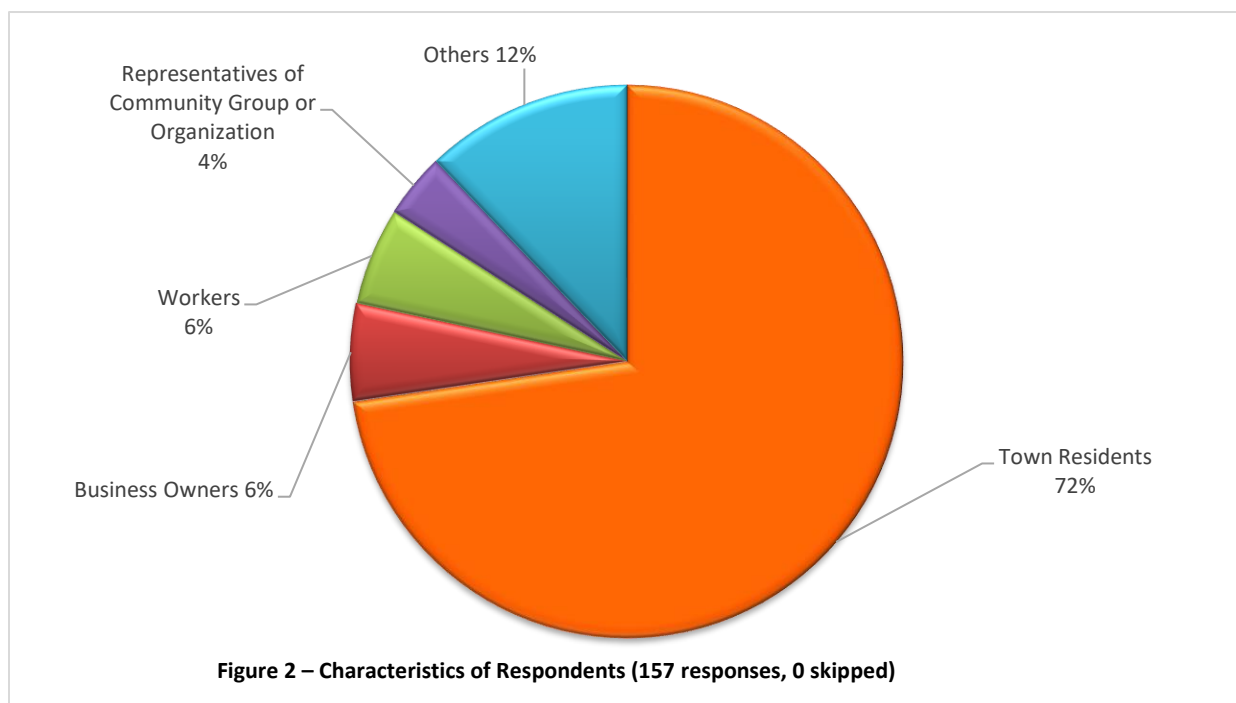
SURVEY DESIGN AND REACH

The survey was launched from March 4, 2024 to April 1, 2024, and administered both online and in print, to provide more options to residents while increasing the response rate. Survey Monkey, an online survey platform, was used to administer the survey online. The link to the online survey was posted on the Town website and social media platform, while the print version was mailed to residents. The survey included a brief overview of the project to provide respondents the necessary background and context, and featured a total of 14 questions. Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency, a planning agency contracted by the Town to assist with this and other planning initiatives, managed the survey and prepared this report.

The survey received a total of one hundred and fifty-seven (157) responses. This represents approximately 16% of the total population of Spirit River¹. Of the 157 responses, 137 were completed online and 20 were completed in print.

Who Responded

The demographic questions in the survey are meant to provide an insight into the characteristics of the respondents, including their age, gender and household structure. Figure 2 shows the characteristics of those who completed the survey. Majority of the respondents (approximately 73%) were Town residents. This is followed by non-residents who have regular presence or connection to the Town either through employment or business ownership, each of which made up 6% of the total responses. Approximately 4% of the respondents were representatives of community groups or organizations. About 12% of the respondents, who considered themselves as “other”, were residents of other municipalities. The responses indicate that while majority of the respondents are Town residents, there are others who have interest in the project.



¹ 2023 Municipal Affairs Population List

Figure 3 shows the age range of the survey responses. The majority of respondents were middle aged adults between 35 and 64 years. By contrast, seniors (65+), young adults (15-34) and children (0-14) were small in comparison.

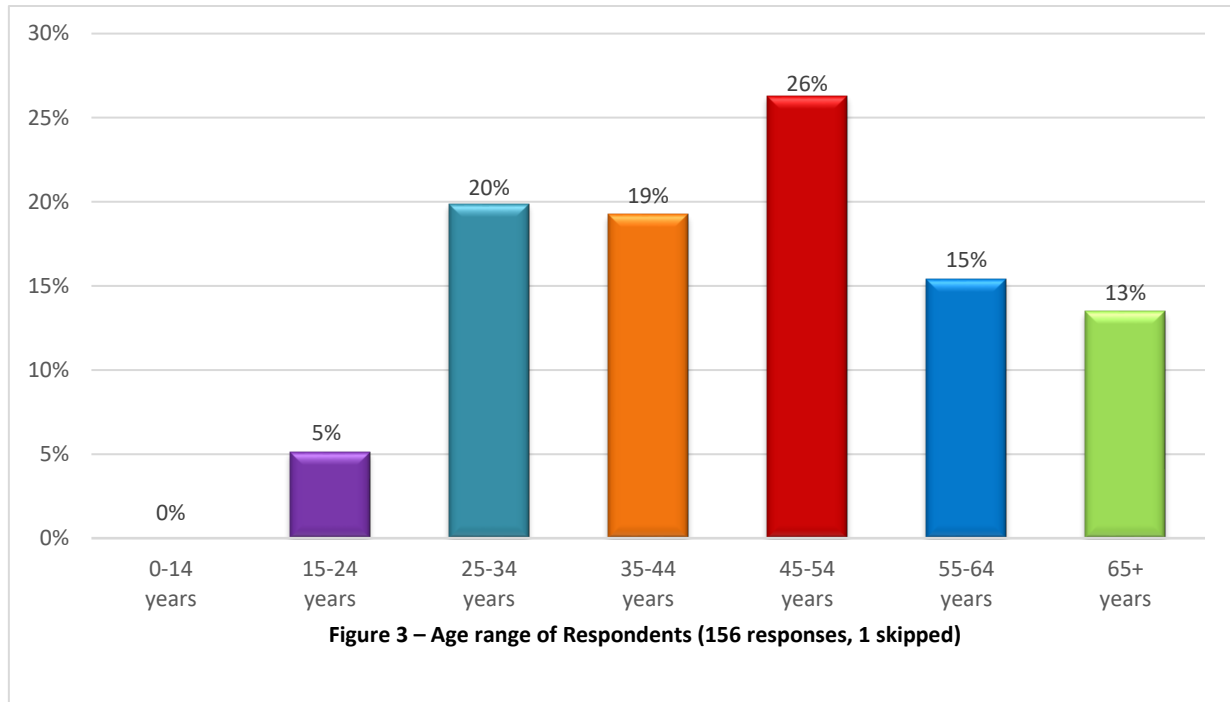


Figure 4 shows the gender composition of the survey responses. Majority of respondents were females (63%) compared to males (34%). However, a small number of respondents preferred not to disclose their gender identity (3%).

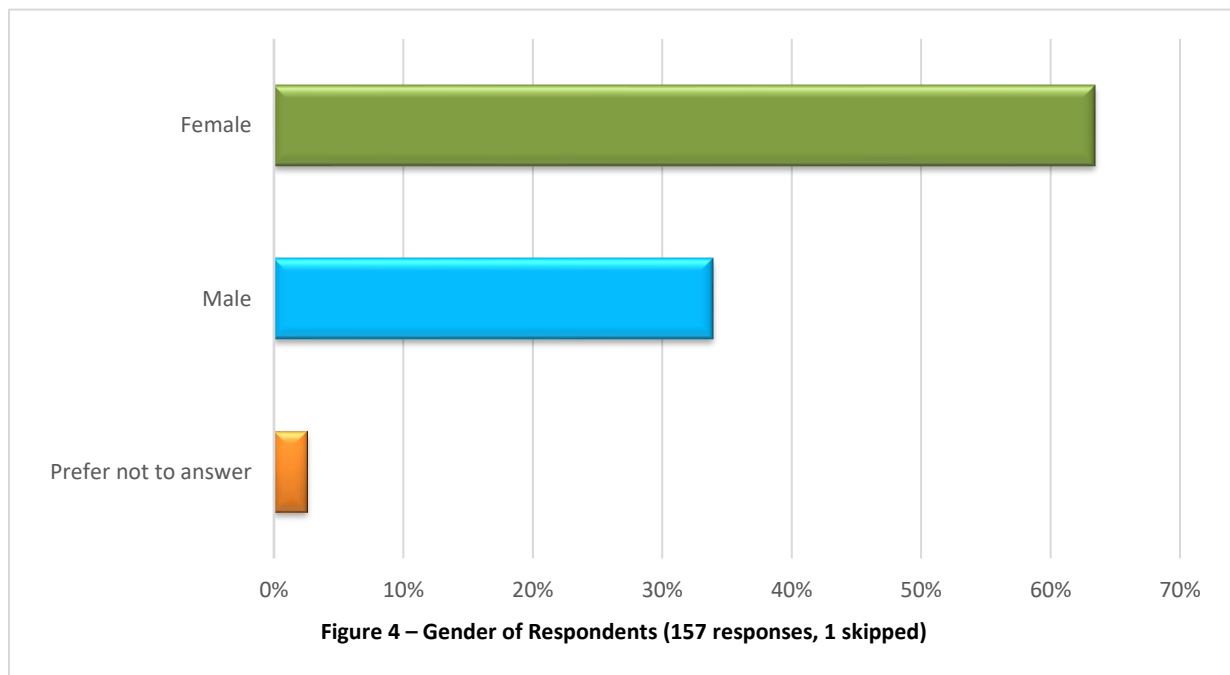
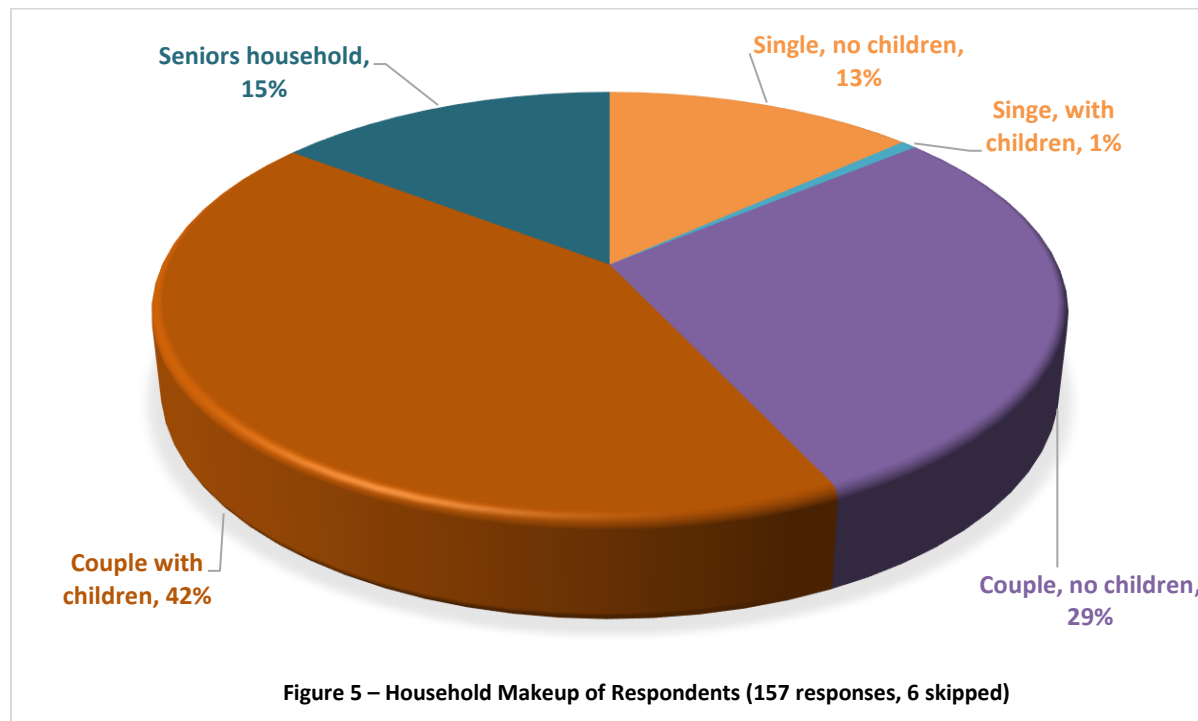


Figure 5 shows the household structure of respondents. The majority of respondents belong to households with children (42%), followed by couples without children (29%). On the other hand, singles and senior households comprised a relatively smaller proportion of the respondents.



The key takeaway from the demographic characteristics is that future development of the lands must be family-oriented, but also diverse enough to meet the needs of other residents.

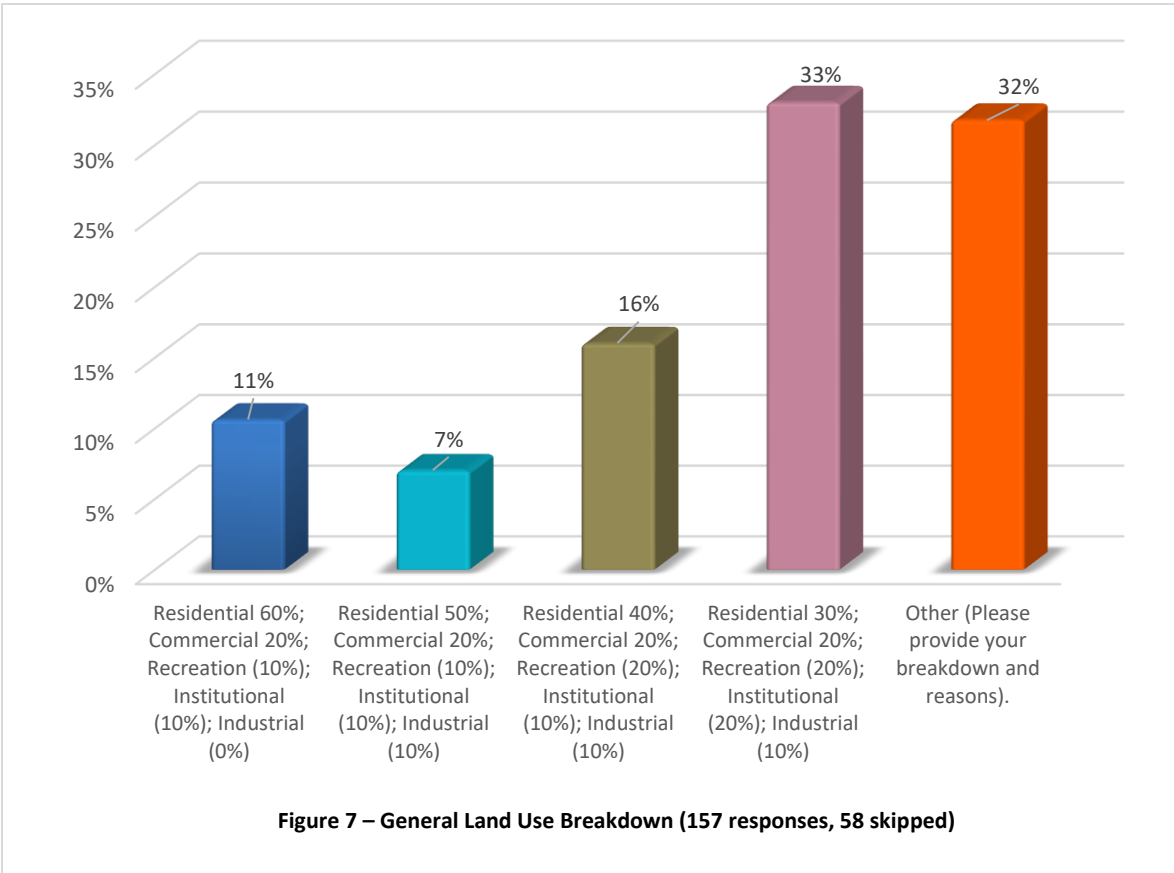
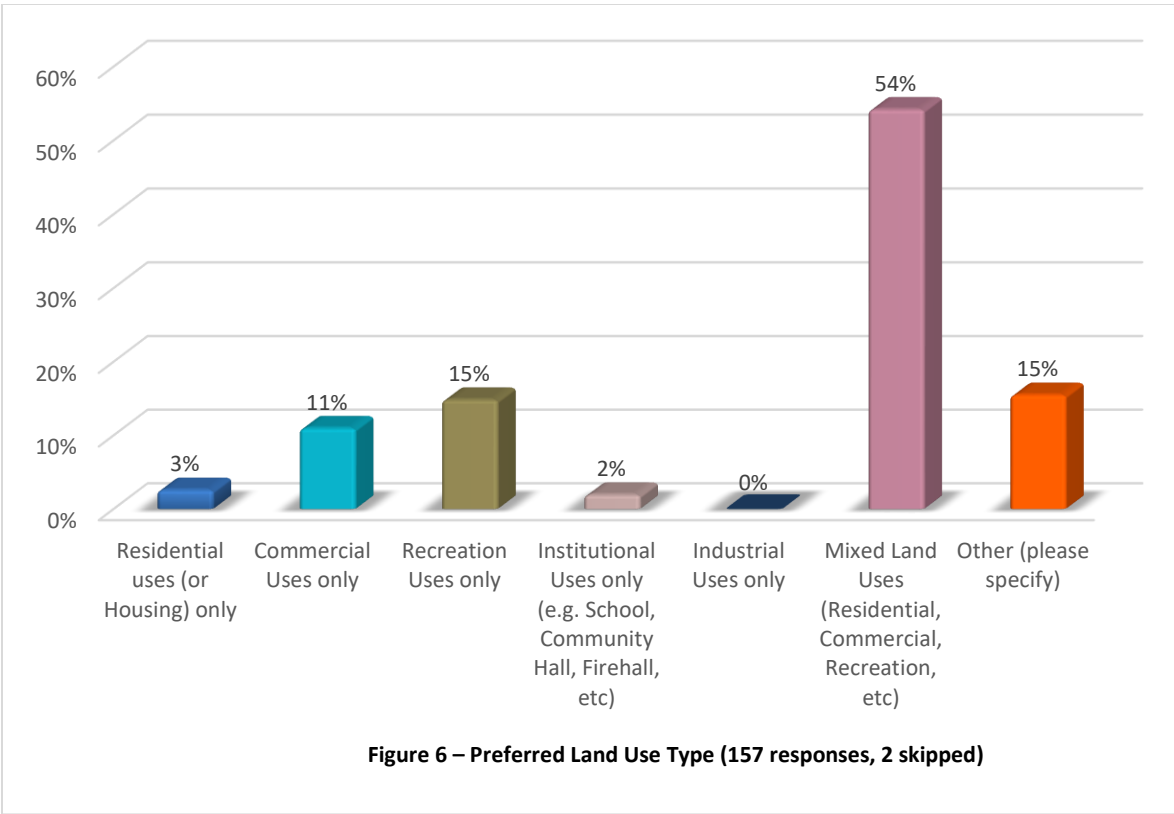
FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

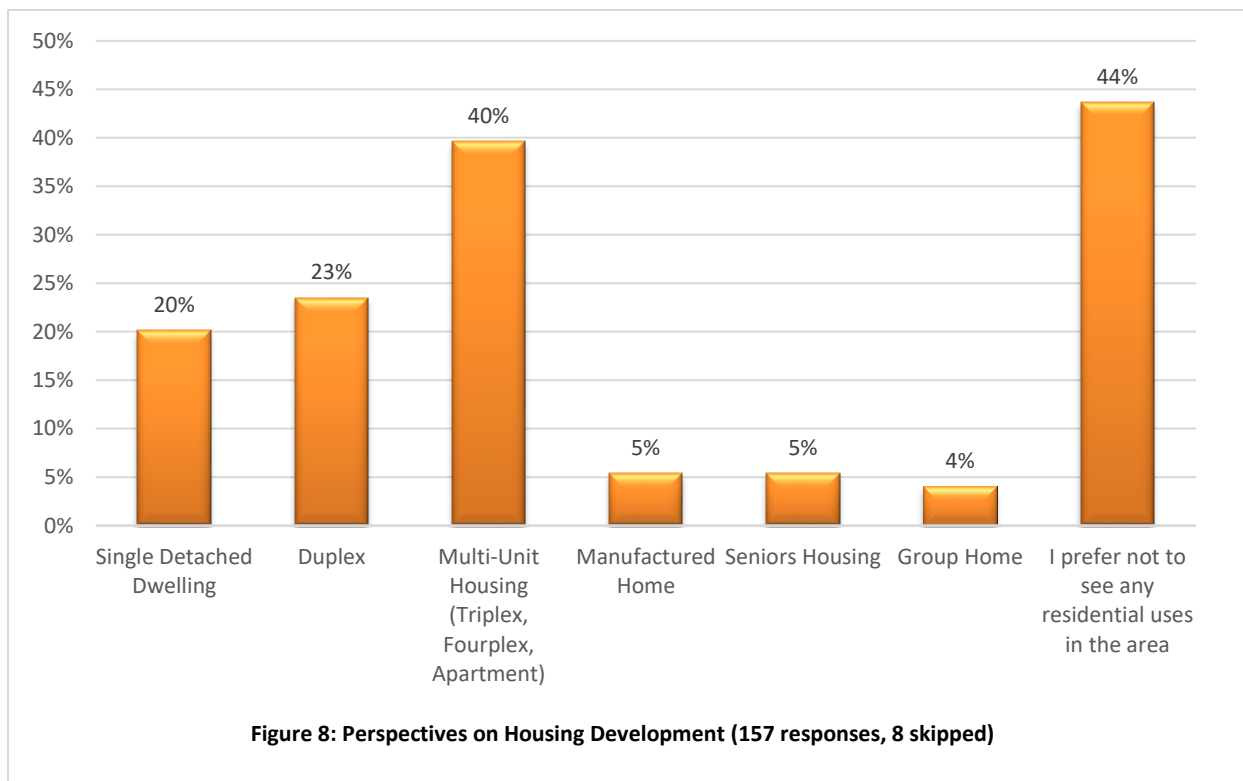
General Land Use Concept and Breakdown

Question 5 and 6 asked respondents what the future land use concept for the area should look like. More specifically, question 5 asked whether they would like the lands to be used exclusively for residential, commercial, recreational or institutional uses or a mixture of land uses. In response to this, the majority of the respondents indicated that they prefer to see a mixture of land uses in the area. At the same time, however, there are some respondents who prefer the lands to be allocated for one of those exclusive land use categories. About 15% indicated specific uses that fall under the categories listed above and included in the answer options. Figure 6 provides a breakdown of the results.

Question 6 asked respondents to provide a general breakdown of the land use combinations they prefer to see in the area, in percentage or proportional terms. The following answer options were included:

- Residential (60%); Commercial (20%); Recreation (10%); Institutional (10%); Industrial (0%);
- Residential (50%); Commercial (20%); Recreation (10%); Institutional (10%); Industrial (10%);
- Residential (40%); Commercial (20%); Recreation (20%); Institutional (10%); Industrial (10%);
- Residential (30%); Commercial (20%); Recreation (20%); Institutional (20%); Industrial (10%); and
- Other (please specify).





As Figure 7 shows, majority of the respondents support option 4, which is: Residential (30%); Commercial (20%); Recreation (20%); Institutional (20%); and Industrial (10%). The other options (that is, 1, 2 and 3) each received less than half the level of support option 4 received. In general, the results imply that most residents prefer to see a more balanced mixture of land use allocations in the area, with limited residential development, compared to the other land use types. This is corroborated by majority of responses provided under the “other” option, some of which included the following:

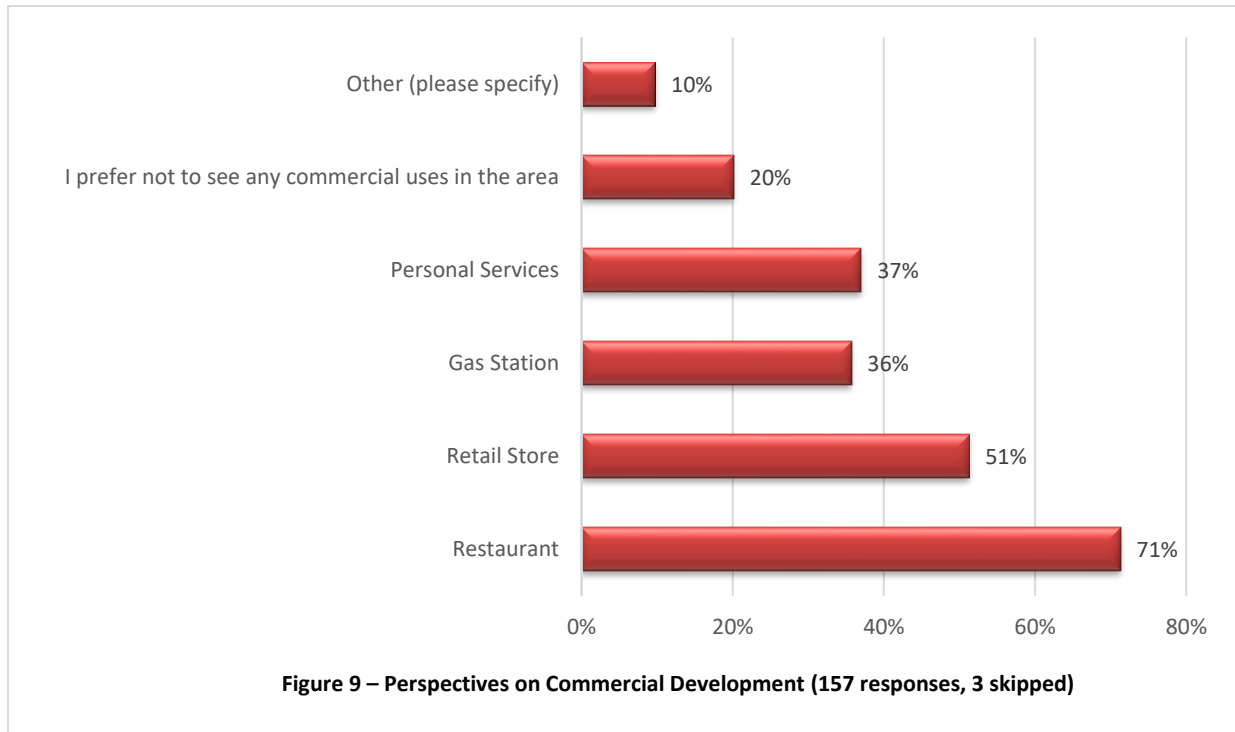
- Commercial (50%); Industrial (20%); Recreational (20%); Institutional (10%);
- Recreation (70%); Commercial (30%);
- Recreational (60%); Residential (20%); Commercial (20%);
- Commercial (60); Recreational (40)
- Commercial (66%), Recreational (33%)

Reasons for the above could include the prevalent residential land use makeup of the Town and current community needs, as perceived by residents.

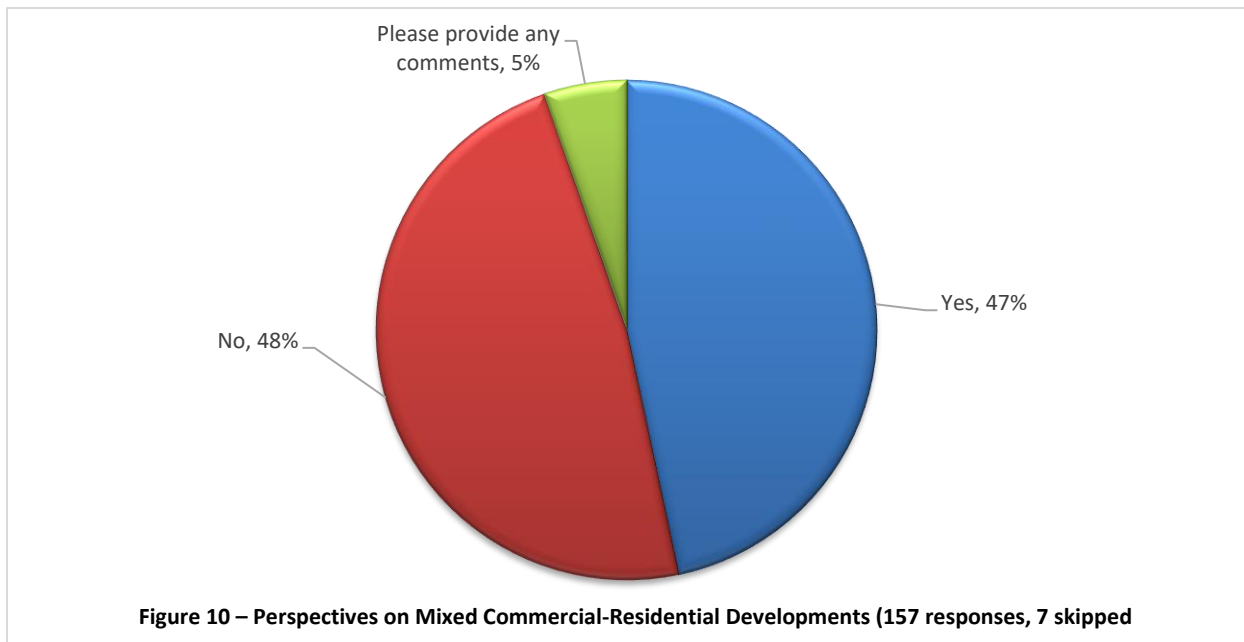
Detailed Land Use Concept

Questions 7 to 12 sought to seek residents’ perspectives regarding the specific types of developments that should be contemplated within each broad land use category. Figure 8 shows the type of residential developments respondents want to see in the area. As is evident, while majority of respondents indicated their preference for no residential development in the area, 40% indicated their preference for multi-unit housing, such as triplexes, fourplexes and apartments. There was comparatively fewer support for single-detached housing, duplex, manufactured home, senior’s housing and group home.

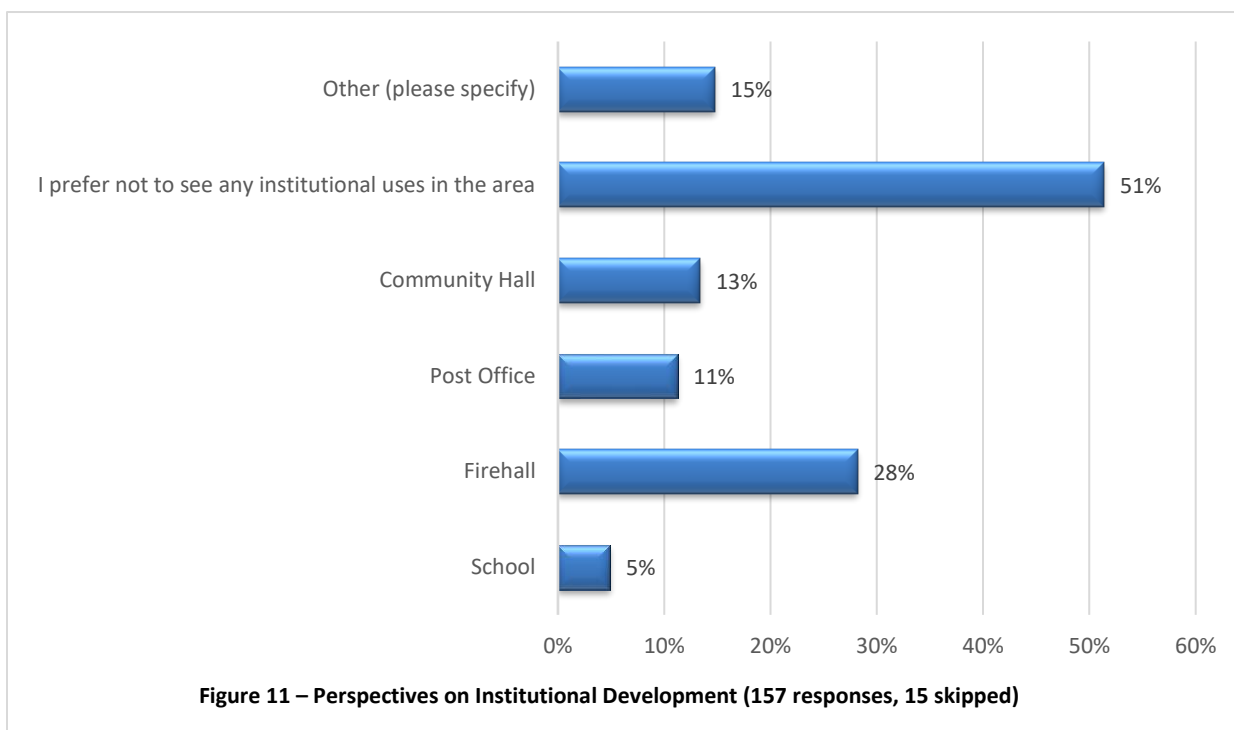
In terms of commercial development, majority of the respondents support restaurant, followed by retail store, personal services and gas station. Other suggestions include hotel, laundromat and bowling alley. On the other hand, 20% indicated their preference for no commercial development in the area (Figure 9).



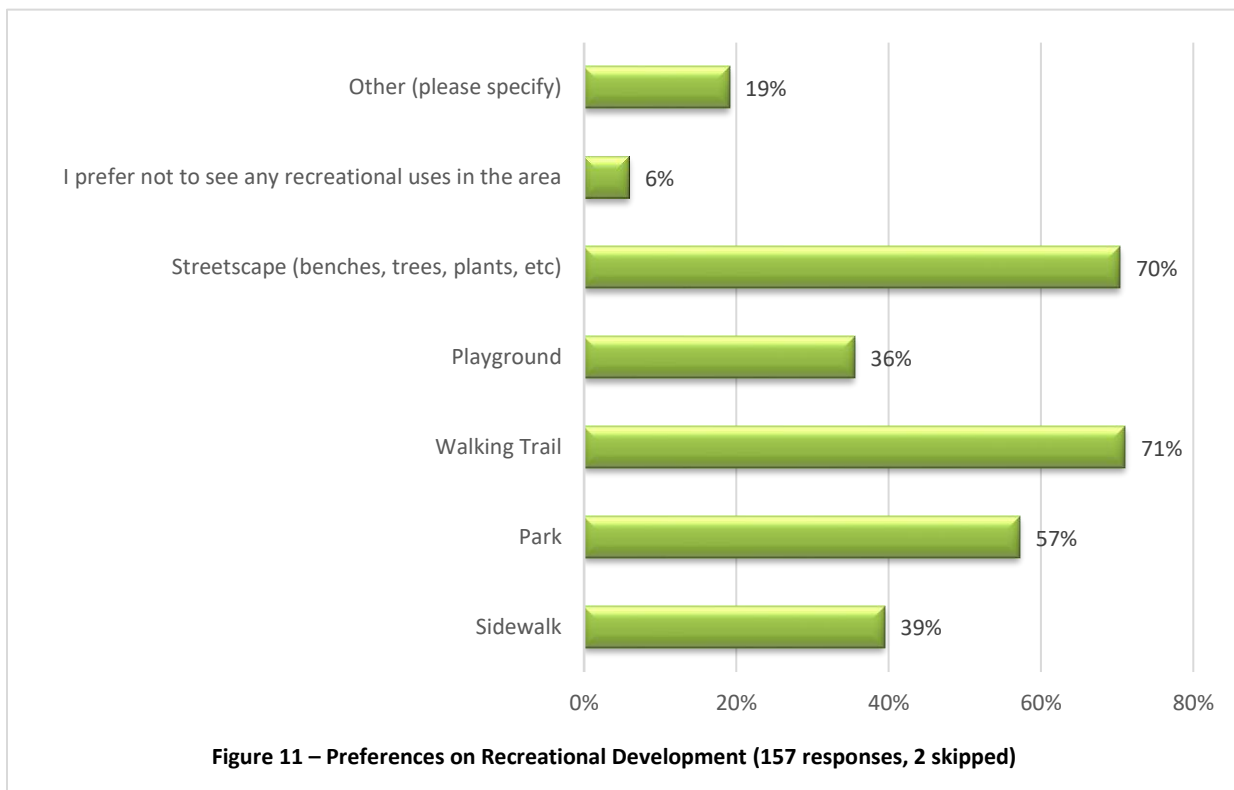
Question 9 asked respondents whether they would support developments that include both residential and commercial components, such as store fronts with apartment at the top, within the area. As Figure 10 illustrates, the results are nearly identical, with 47% being in favour and 48% being opposed to the idea.



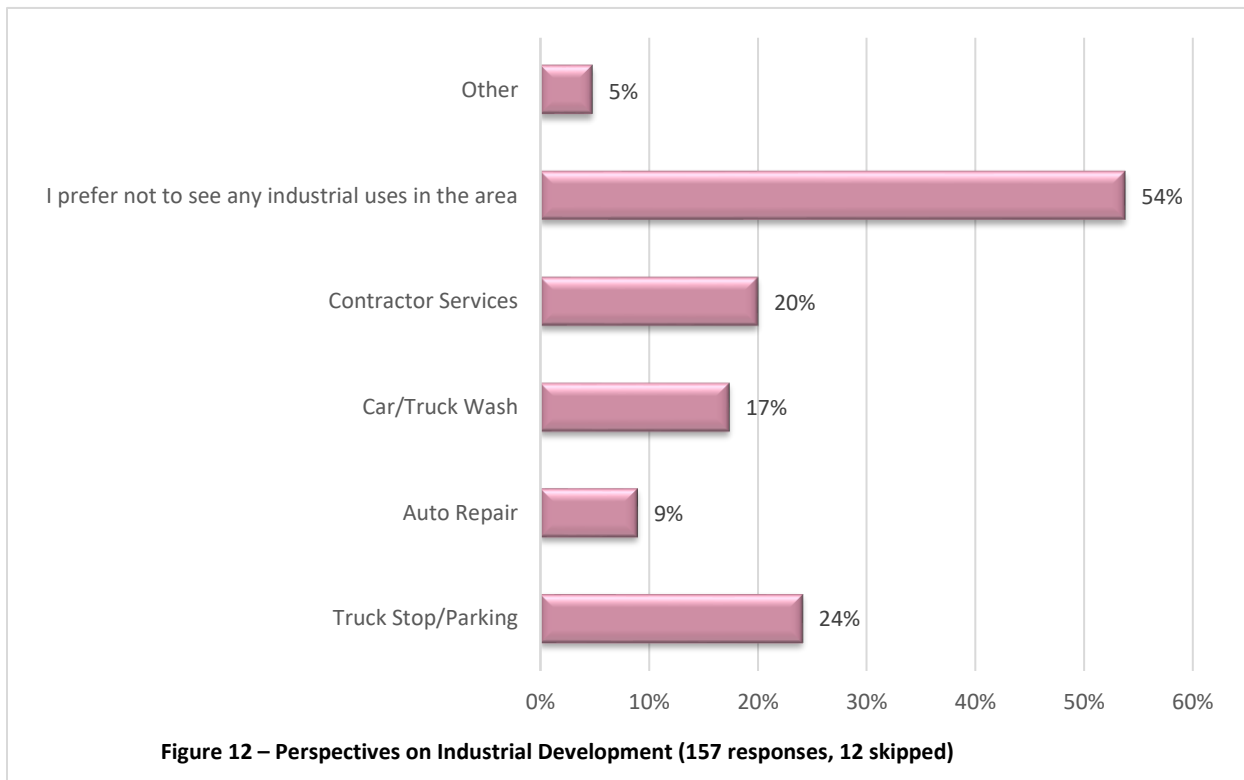
Regarding institutional development, firehall received the highest support, followed by community hall and post office. Majority, however, do not support any institutional uses in the area.



Concerning recreation, walking trail and streetscape were the top two preferences. This is followed by park, sidewalk and playground. Other suggestions include RV parking, youth space, and dog park.



Finally, regarding industrial uses, truck stop/parking, contractor services and car wash were the top three uses supported. Majority of the respondents, however, do not support any industrial uses in the area.



Future Engagement

Question 13 asked respondents if they would be interested in attending a future open house to see the proposed plan for the area. Majority indicated that they are interested (85%), with the remaining 15% indicating otherwise. This shows that majority of the respondents are interested in the project and would like to stay engaged.

Additional Feedback

The last survey question asked respondents if they have additional feedback or comments regarding the project. This question received thirty-eight (38) responses. However, some of the responses reflected ideas and comments expressed in response to previous questions, particularly 7 to 13. Other comments reflect personal concerns about the Town.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This report presents the outcome of a community survey conducted from March 4 to April 1, 2024 as part of the ongoing visioning and planning for new municipal lands in the Town of Spirit River. The survey, which received 157 responses, offered residents an opportunity to provide input regarding key land use elements of the vision and plan for the area. In general, it appears that while majority of the respondents want to see limited residential development in the area, they would support multi-family residential developments over single family and other housing types. Furthermore, there is strong support for commercial and recreational uses, such as restaurant, streetscape, walking trail. Also, the only

institutional use that received significant support is a fire hall. On the question of mixed residential and commercial development, views were split, with slightly more people opposing than supporting it. The implication of the survey results is that planning for the area should take into consideration the views of the community. However, that should not be the sole basis for decision-making around the final vision and plan for the area.