

Character Home Retention Incentives



VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
ACTION
PLAN

CHARACTER
HOME ZONING
REVIEW

Consultation Overview

Background

The *Character Home Zoning Review* explores ways to encourage the retention of pre-1940 character homes in single-family (RS zoned) neighbourhoods. City Council requested this work as part of the Heritage Action Plan (HAP), a comprehensive review of the City's Heritage Conservation Program. In this phase, we proposed optional retention incentives for character homes in all single-family (RS zoned) neighbourhoods across the city. We sought public feedback on these incentives to inform and shape directions and recommendations to City Council.

Public Engagement

To help inform the review, we held three public open houses in various parts of the city in May 2017. These consultation events were well attended, attracting over a 300 people that generated hundreds of conversations. We invited members of the public to complete a questionnaire to share their thoughts and attitudes on ideas to encourage greater retention of character homes. The questionnaire was available for a three week period between May 27 and June 18, 2017. It was broadly promoted with four newspaper advertisements, and posters in local community centres and libraries. There was an extensive social media campaign that generated over 960 webpage views. A practitioner round-table discussion was also held with architects, designers, home builders and small-scale developers, as well as many conversations and meetings were held with interested stakeholder.

The questionnaire was widely available, including:

- At three consultation open houses (May 2017)
- Through the Heritage Action Plan list-serv
- On the *Character Home Zoning Review* webpage (vancouver.ca/characterhomereview)
- Through social media links (Facebook, Twitter)

Quick Stats

- 220 completed questionnaires
- 76% previously participated in the *Character Home Zoning Review*
- 96% of respondents live in Vancouver
- 87% heard about the *Character Home Zoning Review* online
- 82% are home owners and 16% are renters (2% other)
- 58% over 50 years of age

Questionnaire Summary

Executive Summary

The following is a high-level overview of findings of the *Character Home Retention Incentives* questionnaire.



Support providing **incentives overall** as an approach to encourage character home retention in single-family zones across the city.



Support for **increasing floor area** to encourage character home retention in all single family zones across the city.



Support for **allowing multiple conversion dwellings** in all single-family zones across the city to encourage character home retention.



Support for **allowing infill** in all single-family zones across the city when an existing character home is retained.



Support for **allowing strata-titling of multiple conversion dwellings** when an existing character home is retained.



Support for **allowing strata-titling of infill** when an existing character home is retained.



Support the **draft design guidelines** for existing character homes, multiple conversion dwellings, and infill.

Please note: As a result of rounding, percentages may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Character Home Retention Incentives

Question 1

Floor area can be a factor in whether a character home is retained or demolished. Increasing allowable floor area for sites with a character home encourages retention by providing opportunities to add more living space, such as an addition, and/or build a second dwelling.

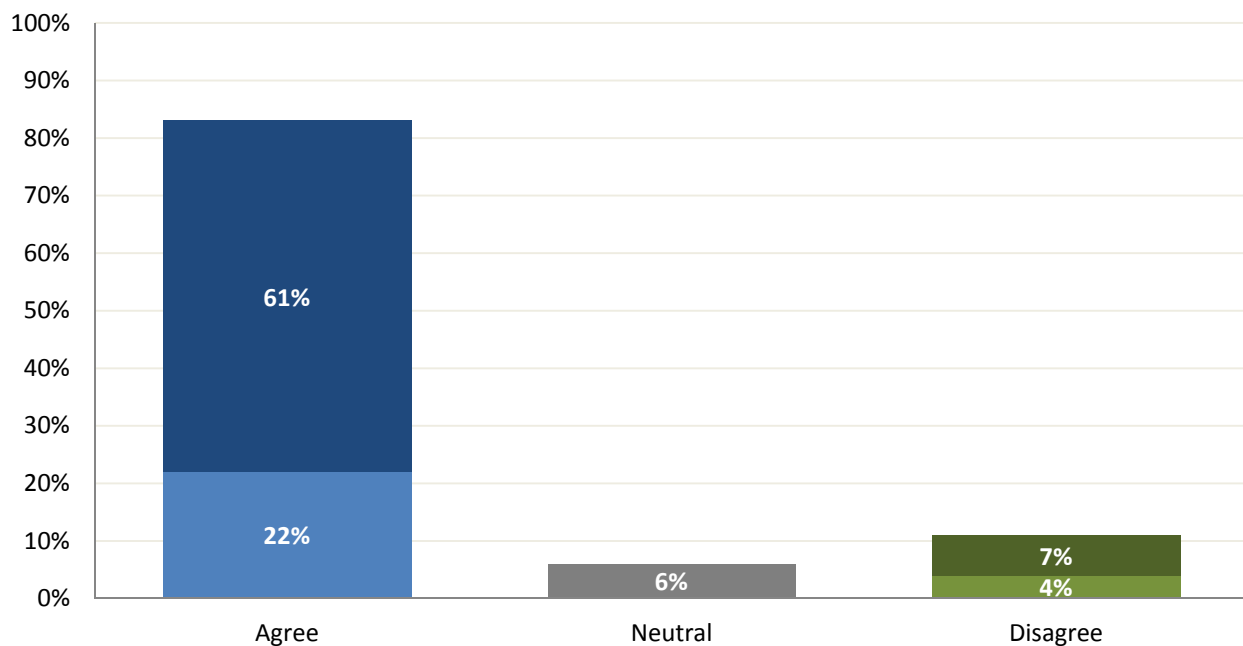
Do you agree or disagree with increasing allowable floor area to encourage character home retention in all single-family RS zones across the city?

Snapshot

- Over three-quarters (83 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with increasing floor area to encourage character home retention in all single family zones across the city, with almost two-thirds (61 percent) strongly agreeing.

Results

Total respondents (218)



Character Home Retention Incentives

Question 2

A multiple conversion dwelling is an existing house that has been divided into two or more dwelling units. The units can be strata-titled. This allows an owner of a character home to renovate and convert their house into multiple units that can be sold separately or kept as rental units.

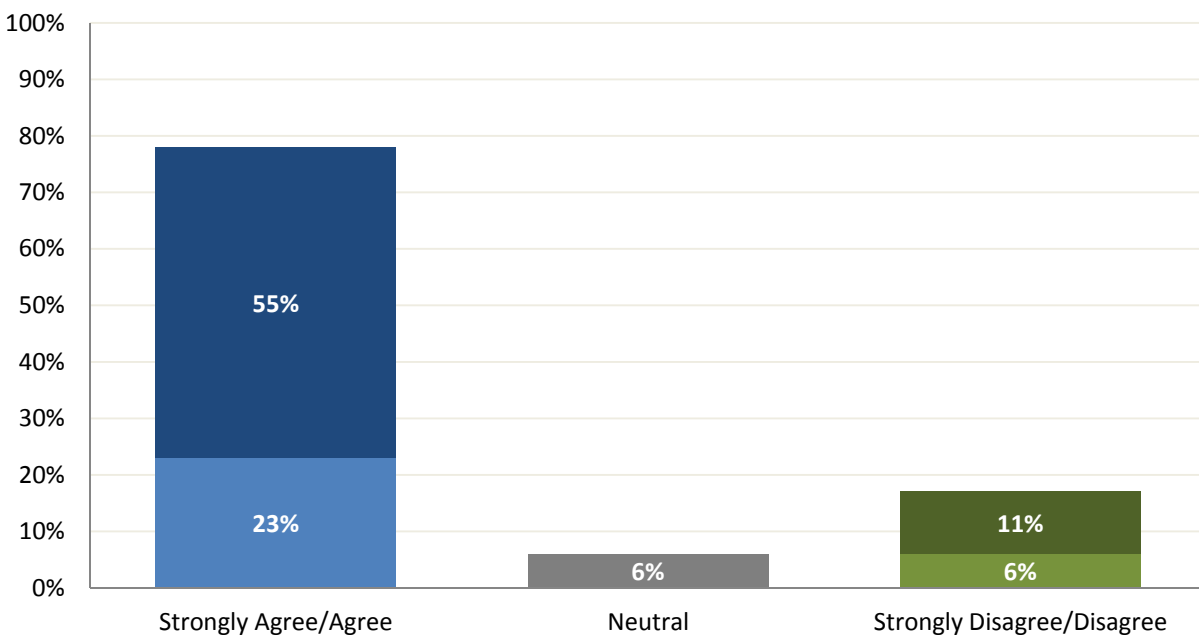
Do you agree or disagree with allowing multiple conversion dwellings in all single-family RS zones to encourage character home retention?

Snapshot

- Three-quarters (78 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with allowing multiple conversion dwellings in all single-family zones across the city to encourage character home retention, with over half (55 percent) strongly agreeing.

Results

Total respondents (218 responses)



Character Home Retention Incentives

Question 3

An infill is a second house with one or more units built on a property with an existing house. An infill is typically larger than a laneway house, and would only be allowed when the existing character home is retained. Infill can be strata-titled. This allows an owner of a character home to build an infill that can be sold separately from the existing house or kept as rental units.

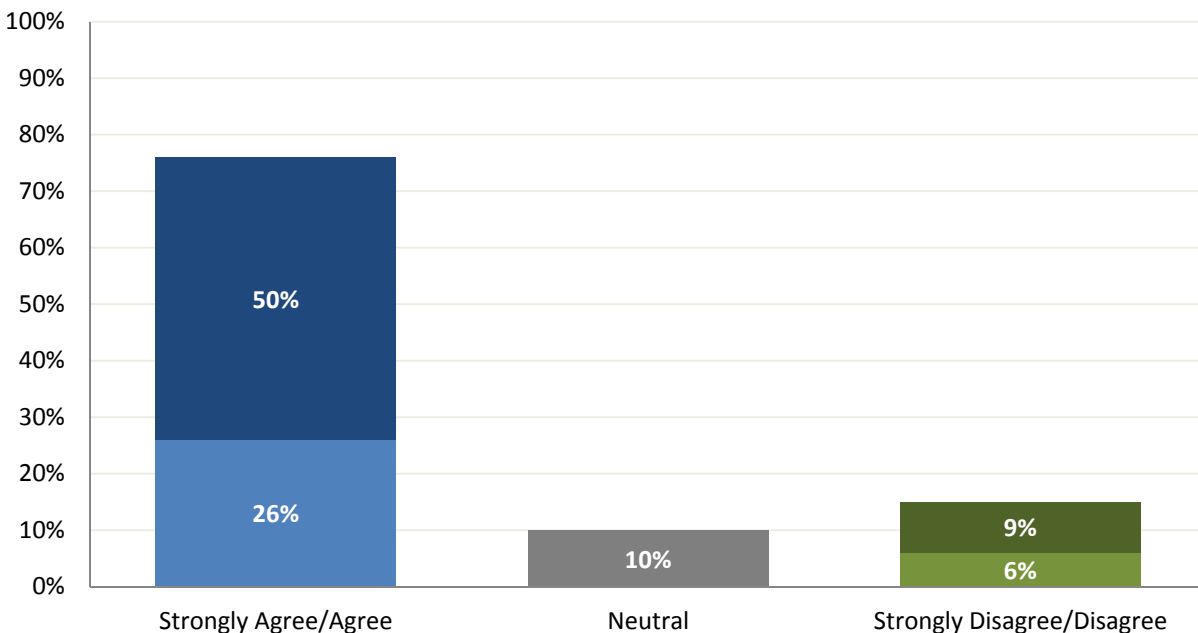
Do you agree or disagree with allowing infill in all single-family RS zones across the city when an existing character home is retained?

Snapshot

- Three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with allowing infill in all single-family zones across the city when an existing character home is retained, with half (50 percent) strongly agreeing.

Results

Total respondents (218 responses)



Character Home Retention Incentives

Question 4

Currently in single-family RS zones, only single-title ownership is permitted. This means a site, regardless of the number of units, can only be sold as a whole. The proposed new housing types (infill and multiple conversion dwellings) can be strata-titled. Strata-titling allows home owners to sell these dwelling units separately or keep them as rental units.

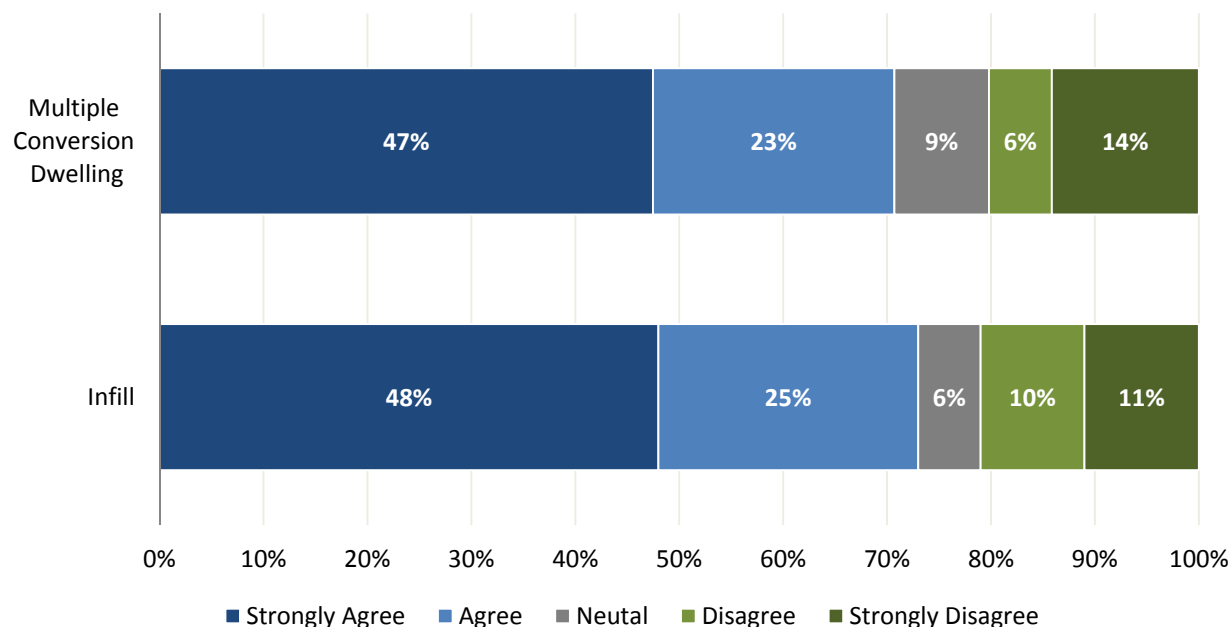
- a) Do you agree or disagree with allowing strata-titling of multiple conversion dwellings in all single-family RS zones across the city when an existing character home is retained?
- b) Do you agree or disagree with allowing strata-titling of infill in all single-family RS zones across the city when an existing character home is retained?

Snapshot

- Over two-thirds (70 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with allowing strata-titling of **multiple conversion dwellings** when an existing character home is retained.
- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with allowing strata-titling of **infill** when an existing character home is retained.

Results

Total respondents (219 responses)



Character Home Retention Incentives

Question 5

To summarize, the following zoning incentives are being proposed to encourage the retention of character homes: increasing allowable floor area, introducing new housing types (multiple conversion dwellings and infill), and providing the option to strata-title these new housing types.

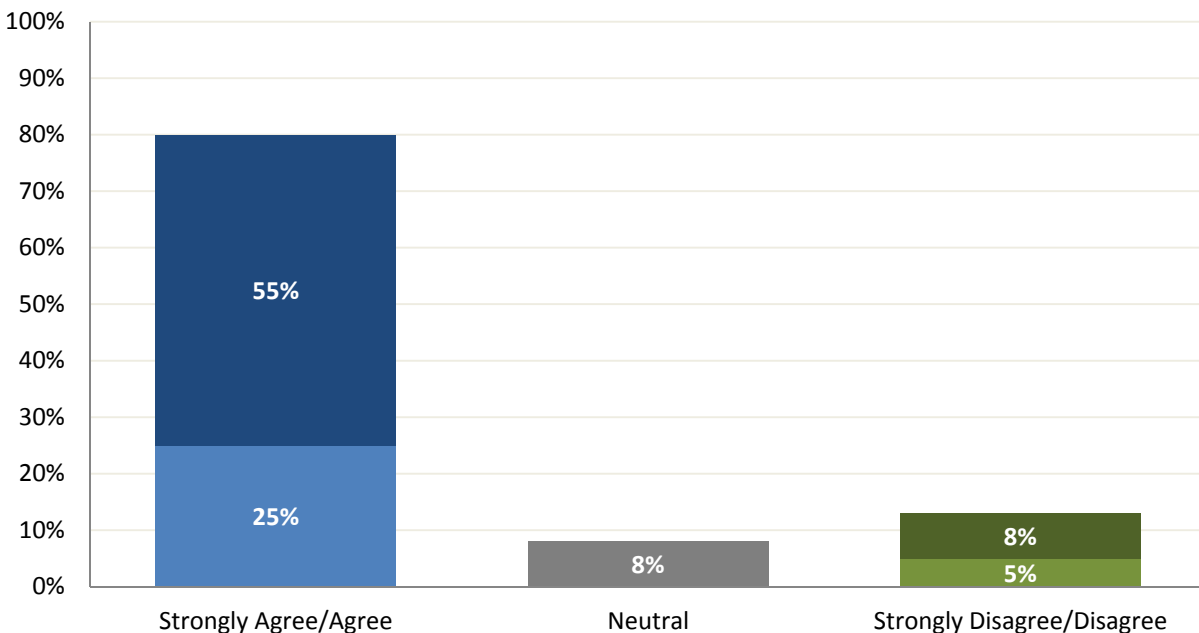
Overall, do you agree or disagree with the approach of providing incentives to encourage character home retention in all single-family RS zones across the city?

Snapshot

- Over three-quarters (80 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the approach of providing incentives to encourage character home retention in single-family zones across the city, with more than half (55 percent) strongly agreeing.

Results

Total respondents (218 responses)



Draft Design Guidelines

Question 6

Design guidelines are a companion to zoning regulations and provide direction to applicants proposing developments, and City staff in evaluating these projects. Design guidelines help enhance the character of a neighbourhood, and focus on the aesthetics and function of a building, such as size, height, etc.

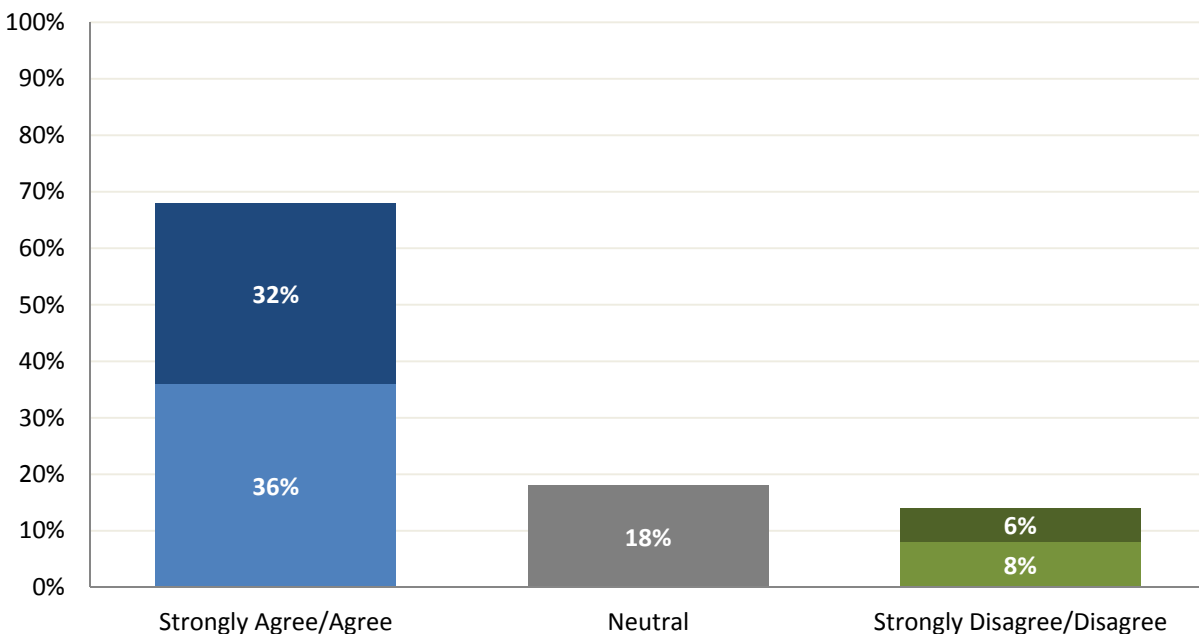
Overall, do you agree or disagree with the draft design guidelines?

Snapshot

- Two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the draft design guidelines.

Results

Total respondents (217 responses)



Other comments

Other thoughts we heard

Main themes:

- Support for incentives with some suggesting that incentives should only be considered with disincentives to discourage the demolition of character homes.
- Concerns about the loss of neighbourhood character, as well as the pace and amount of change in established neighbourhoods.
- Desire for faster processing times, particularly for developments retaining character homes.
- Mixed responses to the role of single family neighbourhoods with support for maintaining single-family neighbourhoods as low-density areas as well as concerns about housing affordability, particularly the need for high density housing types.
- Concerns about vacant and unoccupied homes, and lack of building maintenance.
- Desire for incentives to be provided for new homes built to look like character homes.

Sample comments:

- “I think there should be disincentives to deter the demolition of character homes.”
- “I am pleased as a non-character home owner that restrictions on new construction’s FSR have been removed from the proposed zoning change.”
- “Well-built, renovated homes should not be demolished to feed the growing greed of the spec builders and property flippers. We have many, many empty homes - all to the detriment of the neighbourhoods. Again, we fill out questionnaire and write letters but the neighbourhood is a war zone of demolition and noise and more unpleasantness. Less and less the neighbourhood and city I love.”
- “No more demolition permits are to be given out until every renovation permit which is retaining a character house or even better creating more housing units within a character home have been approved.”
- “No. 1 incentive to retain is fast track permit process for renovations. Make it simpler. Allowances and relaxations. Right now it is faster, cheaper to build new.”
- “The idea of cramming more dwellings onto single family lots will destroy the single family zones in Vancouver and will do nothing to increase affordability of homes. These units will simply be purchased for investment with no one living in them. Exactly as what has already occurred with Vancouver homes and condos.”
- “A better priority would be to rezone these neighbourhoods to allow for duplexes, row houses and low-rises.”
- “Increasing allowable FSR is a good idea, the rest of your suggestions are not as you will ruin the character of single family neighbourhoods.”
- “The new houses that are being built fit in nicely with the neighbourhood so why keep a decaying “character” house. The new houses have character.”

Demographics

Question

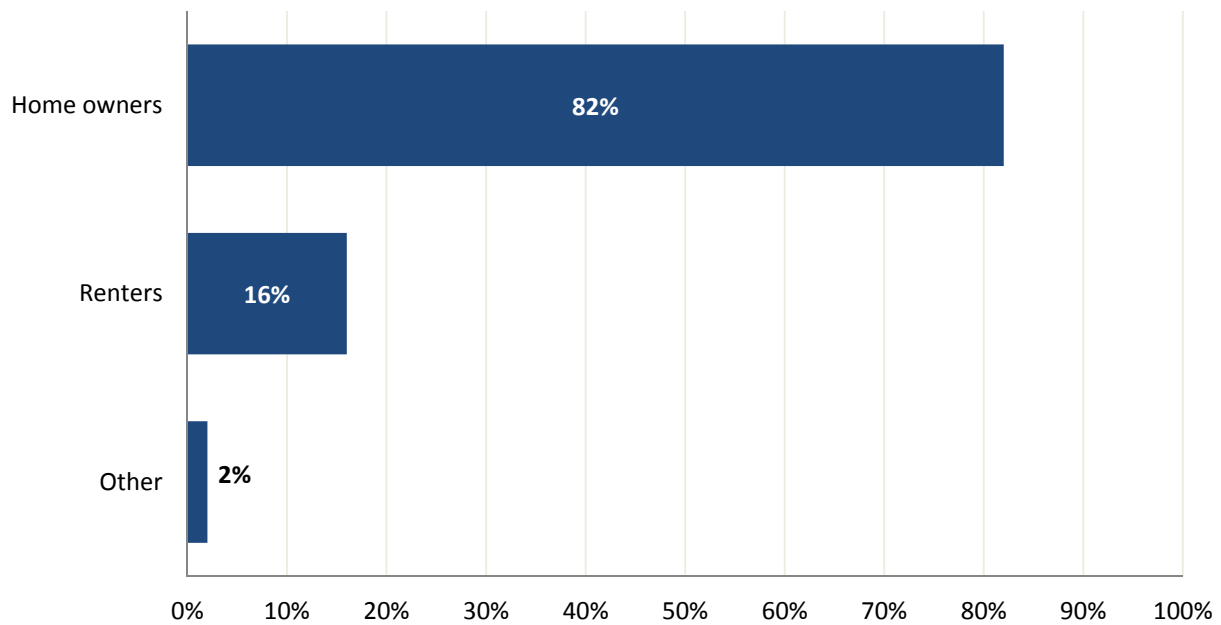
Do you own or rent your home?

Snapshot

- Over three-quarters (82 percent) of respondents were home owners.

Results

Total respondents (217)



Demographics

Question

Where do you live?

Snapshot

- The majority of respondents (96 percent) live in Vancouver.
- Three-quarters (75 percent) live in single-family zone that share similar zoning regulations (RS-1, RS-1A, RS-1B, RS-2, RS-4, RS-5, RS-6, and RS-7).

Results

Total respondents (217 responses)

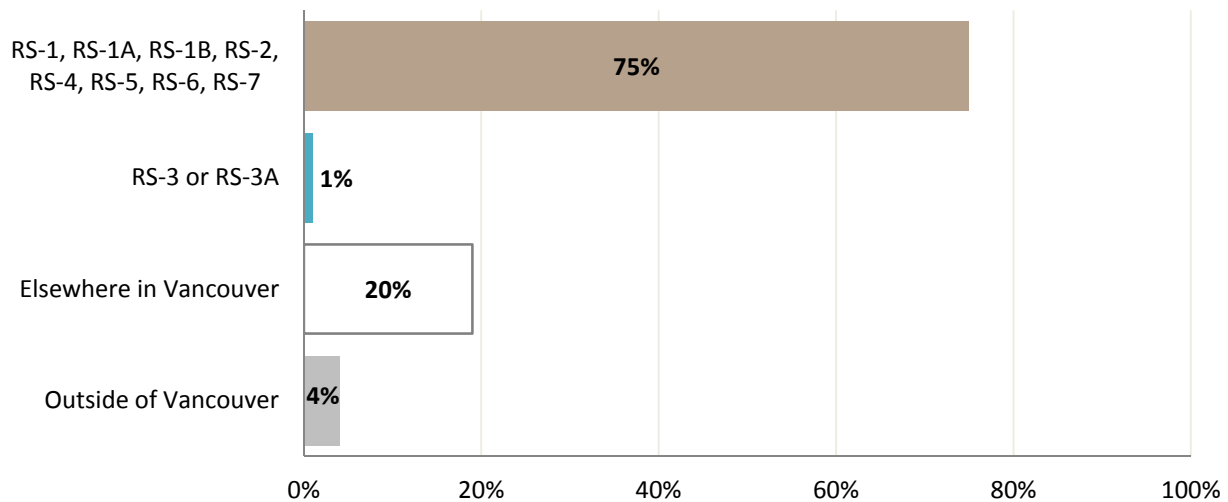


Figure 1: Map of single-family RS zones



Demographics

Question

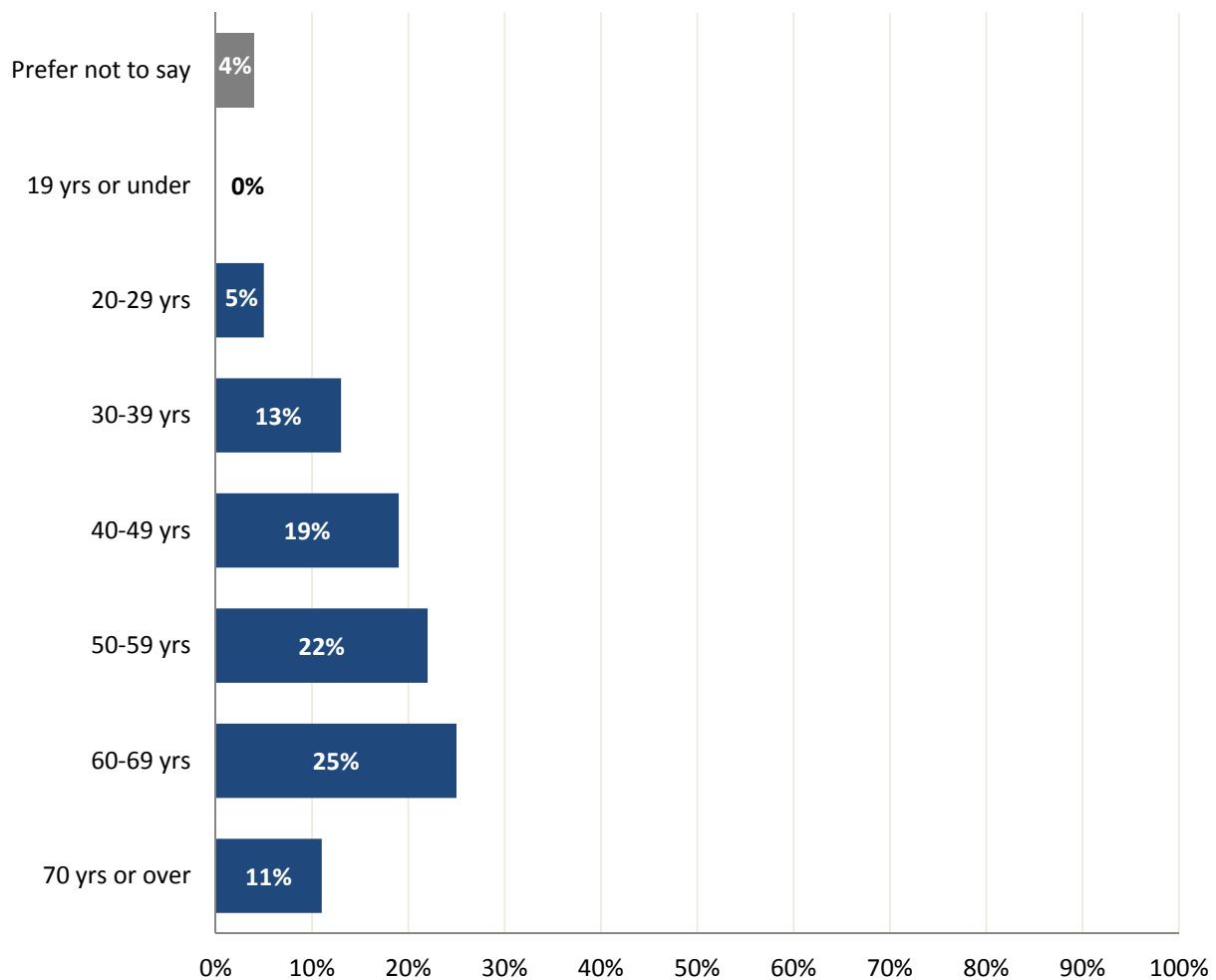
What is your age category?

Snapshot

- More than half (58 percent) of respondents were over 50 years of age.
- Less than a quarter (18 percent) of respondents were under the age of 40.

Results

Total respondents (218 responses)



Demographics

Question

How did you hear about the *Character Home Zoning Review* consultation?
Choose all that apply.

Snapshot

- Over two-thirds (76 percent) of respondents previously participated in the *Character Home Zoning Review*
- Over two-thirds (87 percent) heard about the *Character Home Zoning Review* consultation through an online source.

Results

Total respondents (219 responses)

