

2021

Missing Middle Housing Project

PHASE 1

Early Engagement Summary

Engagement Snapshot

Engagement opportunities during Phase 1 of the Missing Middle Housing Project included a series of meetings with community and advisory committee members to share information, and a workshop with development industry representatives to gather initial feedback on the perceived challenges and opportunities for missing middle development in Victoria. A virtual community survey was also administered through the “Have Your Say” online engagement platform to gather feedback from the public about preferred design, form, and character elements for new missing middle development.



16

Community and Industry
Information Sessions



191

Virtual Community
Surveys Completed

“ We need to allow flexibility with missing middle -- and high gentle density, without requiring parking. If we continue to build for cars, we'll continue to foster car culture. If we build for families, nature and neighbourhoods, we will foster community. – Survey Respondent ”



Highlights of the Feedback from Community Survey

Design, Form, and Character Considerations:

- Prioritize affordability over luxury designs to make missing middle units attainable
- Make these housing forms work well for families: 2, 3, 4-bedroom units, access to shared outdoor space for kids to play
- Mixed opinions on parking supply – support for detaching the parking from units
- Design for a friendly relationship to the street that supports social interaction
- Commonly heard a preference for pitched roof forms (even with modern interpretation) over flat roofs
- Openness to 3 storey and even 4 storey forms

“It's okay if they are unique, flexible, even unusual, as long as they have integrity, have human scale, lack imitation, and try to be inviting, and are oriented to bring in lots of light in the winter.”

– Survey Respondent

Highlights of the Feedback from Community Groups, Advisory Committees and Housing Builders

Strategies to Support these Housing Forms:

- Consider reducing parking requirements and encouraging Transportation Demand Management strategies like car share vehicle spaces.
- Prezone carefully, increasing density around corridors and existing urban villages and amenities.
- Delegate land use approvals to staff and change the requirement for community consultation on technical aspects.

Key Concerns:

- Missing middle housing forms lack economic viability for developers and are not affordable to the average household.
- Community opposition to density in single-family dwelling neighbourhoods.
- Conflicting policies and bureaucracy reduce predictability for developers and community.
- May encourage widespread change to the neighbourhood fabric, reducing green space and the urban tree canopy and altering streetscapes.
- Infill is not competitive with demolishing and rebuilding, which could lead to the loss of potential heritage housing.
- Missing middle housing might compete with other higher-density mid-rise apartments.

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INTRODUCTION

The City's Strategic Plan 2020-2022 included an action in 2020 to consider a comprehensive amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to permit all "Missing Middle" housing forms as of right without the need for rezoning or development permit. This builds on the Victoria Housing Strategy 2019 Action "Houseplexes and Townhouses: Undertake a city-wide planning exercise to identify suitable locations for townhouses and houseplexes."

In Victoria, we need more ground-oriented housing options that fit well within neighbourhoods and help increase housing choice, affordability, and the achievement of citywide livability and sustainability goals. An understanding of public priorities and preferences for this kind of residential development contributes to a strong foundation for meaningful policies. This summary discusses the initial public engagement activities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Phase 1 public engagement was to raise awareness about the upcoming project within local neighbourhoods and community development groups and solicit initial feedback that will be considered when establishing a framework for the final project phase. The engagement practice was guided by principles of transparency, inclusiveness, welcoming, clear and timely information, commitment, and accessibility.

COVID-19

Although in-person public engagement was initially planned for this project, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020 led to some adaptation of the engagement approach and timing. Engagement activities included mostly virtual outreach opportunities, including virtual information sessions, online surveys, and sitting in on virtual community meetings. Efforts such as online platforms, use of social media advertising, and a user-friendly webpage design were used to accommodate these public health guidelines while still reaching a variety of different community members.

WHAT WE DID

PHASE 1: ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Early public engagement for the Missing Middle Housing Project kicked-off in March 2020 and consultation activities continued into May 2021. Staff attended 14 Community Association and Advisory Committee meetings, hosted a workshop and follow-up meeting with housing builders, and administered a virtual survey to share information and collect initial feedback.

ROADSHOW TO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

- In early March, 2020 (until in-person engagement had to conclude) staff attended seven community association meetings by-invite to provide presentations introducing both the Housing Strategy Phase Two and the Missing Middle Initiative. The main goal was to raise awareness and encourage participation in the early engagement survey. When in-person engagement activities had to conclude, staff posted presentations on the project website and emailed the links to community associations, inviting any questions and encouraging participation in upcoming engagement opportunities.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM AND SURVEY

- From September 21, 2020 to October 19, 2020 a virtual community survey was administered through the *Have Your Say* engagement platform. The survey contained 13 questions regarding demographic information, land use and development, housing choice and preference, and design for missing middle forms.

HOUSING BUILDERS WORKSHOP

- An in-person workshop was held in March 2020, and a follow-up virtual meeting was held in April 2021. The workshop focused on gathering insight about current challenges related to building missing middle housing forms (e.g. townhouses, houseplexes, smaller low-rise apartment buildings), as well as identifying opportunities to make it easier to deliver these housing choices, particularly in ways that forward family and affordable housing goals.

ROADSHOW TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- In late 2020 and early 2021, staff presented initial project information at relevant virtual Advisory Committee meetings and gathered members' feedback:
 - Renters Advisory Committee (RAC) - Nov 17, 2020 and Jan 19, 2021
 - Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) - Nov 24, 2020
 - Heritage Advisory Panel (HAPL) - Dec 8, 2020 and Jan 12, 2021
 - Advisory Design Panel (ADP) - Feb 24, 2021
 - Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) - March 9, 2021

WHERE WE ARE NOW



WHAT WE HEARD

OVERVIEW

This overview provides high-level themes from Phase 1 engagement activities and summarizes key interests, opportunities, and goals of missing middle housing forms according to participants.

THE NEED TO BALANCE COMPETING INTERESTS:

- Parking – reduce or remove minimum requirements
- Height – should increase slightly but be at most three-and-a-half or four storeys
- Density – should increase slightly to allow for more than two units on existing Single Family Dwelling (SFD) lots
- Alternatives to the detached house (especially that work well for families)
- Open Space – should preserve, improve, or increase where possible
- Usable outdoor space (and that shows greater importance than site space for parking)
- Private and shared outdoor space – should encourage flexibility between social interaction and privacy
- Urban Forest – should preserve, improve, or increase where possible
- Indoor storage space

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRESSIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT:

Missing middle housing has the potential to:

- Support a diversity of housing forms while maintaining overall neighbourhood fabric
- Encourage slightly higher density while reducing the effects of land speculation and displacement
- Create sustainable, car-lite, livable, walkable neighbourhoods while maintaining accessibility and choice
- Build developments that house more families without incentivizing the demolition of potential heritage homes



INPUT FROM VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

Between September and October 2020, 191 community members responded to a 13-question online survey about the Missing Middle Housing project. The survey was advertised through local community neighbourhood association networks, by email to all who signed up for project updates, and social media posts that linked to a “Have Your Say” web platform.

The survey included eight questions about participant demographics and five questions related to missing middle housing typologies. Respondents were asked to rank the priorities they feel are most important for missing middle housing, then rank the characteristics they consider most important when searching for a home, and the most important factors when considering the building and location of their home.

There was one open-ended question that asked about the preferential qualities in the design of missing middle housing, and one open-ended question to gather any additional comments. General themes from responses to the question about design included the importance of gentle density, balanced amounts of parking spaces, a variety of shared and private green spaces, and the relationship of ground-oriented development to the street level. Additional themes about the need for defining affordability, securing rental housing, and creating more family-friendly housing were also brought up in response to this question.

Themes from the other open-ended question were similar to themes from the previous questions yet included more emphasis on affordability and rental housing. There was a wider range of topics discussed in these open-ended responses, including questions about the economic viability of missing middle housing, the impacts of widespread pre-zoning, the preferred location of missing middle development, and the need for more co-operative-style missing-middle housing initiatives throughout the city.

EMERGING SURVEY RESPONSE THEMES

AFFORDABILITY, EQUITY, AND URGENCY

- New missing middle housing must be affordable to a variety of people and families, not just the highest income residents.
- It should not privilege homeowners over renters, and it should help address housing supply issues as soon as possible.

FAMILY, SENIOR, CO-HOUSING AND PET-FRIENDLY UNITS

- Two and three-bedroom units should be prioritized
- Housing co-operatives should be encouraged
- A variety of unit sizes to cater to seniors, students, and larger or growing families
- Missing middle rental units should be pet-friendly

SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Relationship of housing to street can help foster more social connection amongst neighbours
- Front stoops, porches, front yards, shared community space, boulevard gardening, and courtyards encourage COVID-19 safe interactions
- Carefully consider front yard setbacks and street-facing front doorways

PRESERVING TREES AND GREENERY

- Preserve mature trees and maintain a healthy urban forest, rather than removing and replacing with new, young trees
- Include other green spaces, like community gardens, boulevard gardens, food forests, and green roofs
- Greenspaces and trees are necessary not only for environmental sustainability and reducing harmful rainwater runoff, but for improving liveability, providing shade and reducing intense heat

PARKING

- Some residents need parking more than others, so flexibility is key
- Removing parking minimums will increase development potential, but may decrease accessibility
- Considerations for a car-light, climate-friendly city in the future

HEIGHT AND SCALE

- Three and a half to four storeys maximum (ground-oriented)
- Sensitive to the existing neighbourhood character and scale patterns
- Support for four or five-storey apartments permitted closer to downtown core

EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Consider trade-offs: Passive, energy efficient houses do not always fit into 'neighbourhood character' but they are better at conserving energy

LOCATION, FORM, AND DENSITY

- Two location options frequently mentioned:
 - 1) Missing middle forms should be permitted anywhere there is currently a single-family dwelling, permeated throughout existing neighbourhoods
 - 2) Missing Middle forms should only concentrate along transit corridors and village centres
- Form and Density: sensitivity to different lot sizes and variety will be most important. Allow for flexibility to create Attached Dwelling Units, garden suites, secondary suites, townhouses, houseplexes, and more, with different combinations on the same lot.
- Consider both outdoor and indoor spaces for suitability and flexibility, prioritizing comfortable and reasonably-sized living spaces.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION

- Consider trade-offs: incentivizing preservation of heritage or potential heritage houses while also encouraging gentle increases in density and disincentivizing demolitions.

PREZONING

- Ambitious zoning amendments are necessary to achieve missing middle outcomes and meet housing needs, whether for one neighbourhood or area, or across every single-family dwelling neighbourhood in the city.

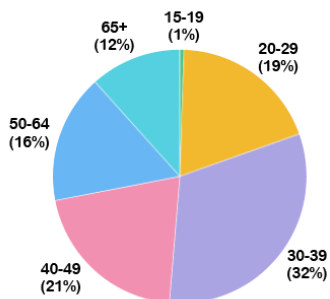
EDUCATION AND INCENTIVES

- Implementing this kind of housing will require creating attractive incentives for doing infill and a comprehensive educational campaign for small-scale, local owners.

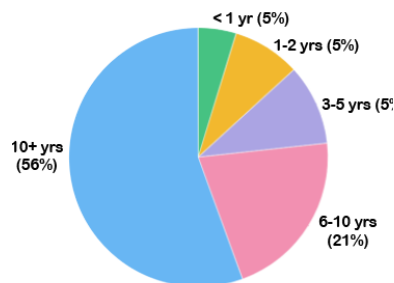


SURVEY PARTICIPATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

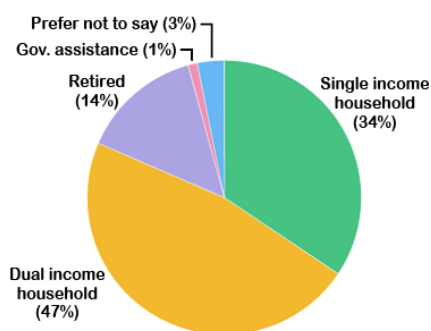
Your age group?



How long have you lived here?



Household income status?



A total of 191 participants completed the survey.

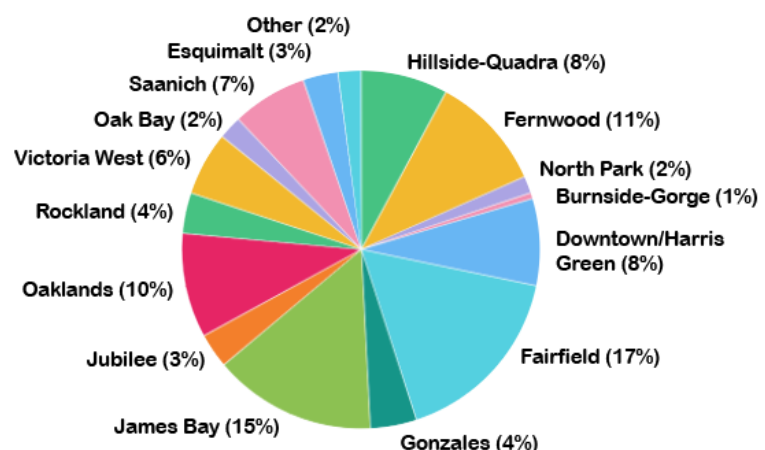
Respondents reside in neighbourhoods all over Victoria, and some regional municipalities such as Esquimalt, Saanich, and Oak Bay.

Respondents varied in age, from 15 to 65+ years old. Over 30% of respondents were between the ages of 30-39 years old. More generally, about half of respondents were below the age of 40, and half of respondents were 40 and above.

Respondents have resided in Victoria for a variety of durations, from less than a year, to over 10 years. Most respondents have resided in Victoria for more than 10 years.

Respondents have a variety of different household incomes, ranging from single income to dual income, retired to receiving government assistance. The largest group of respondents (47%) live in a dual income household, followed closely by those living in single income households (34%).

Where do you live?

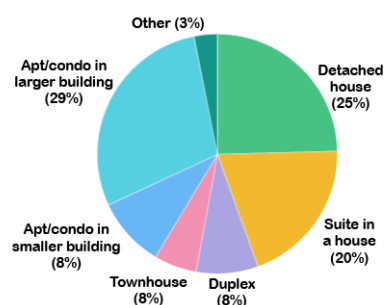


Respondents live in a variety of housing types, from detached single-family homes, apartments in condominium or rental buildings, to attached or detached suites. The largest group of respondents live in apartments or condos in a larger building (4+ storeys) (29%), followed by single-family detached dwellings (25%). Respondents living in existing missing middle housing forms made up the smallest groups, with only 11 (6%) respondents living in townhomes, and 16 (8%) respondents living in duplexes.

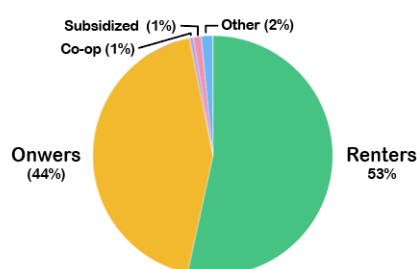
More than half of respondents rent their homes (53%). 44% of respondents own their home, and the rest live in subsidized housing or co-operative housing.

Family size of respondents ranged from single-person (living alone), to two or more families sharing the same home, and multi-generational living situations. Over 38% of respondents, the largest group, live with their spouse in a two-person household. 24% of respondents live with their spouse and one or more children/ dependent(s).

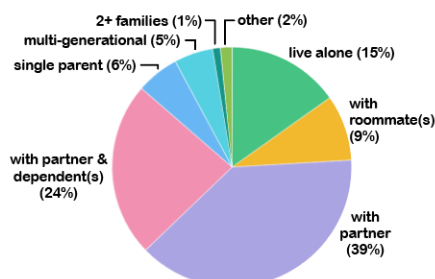
Your building type?



Your housing situation?

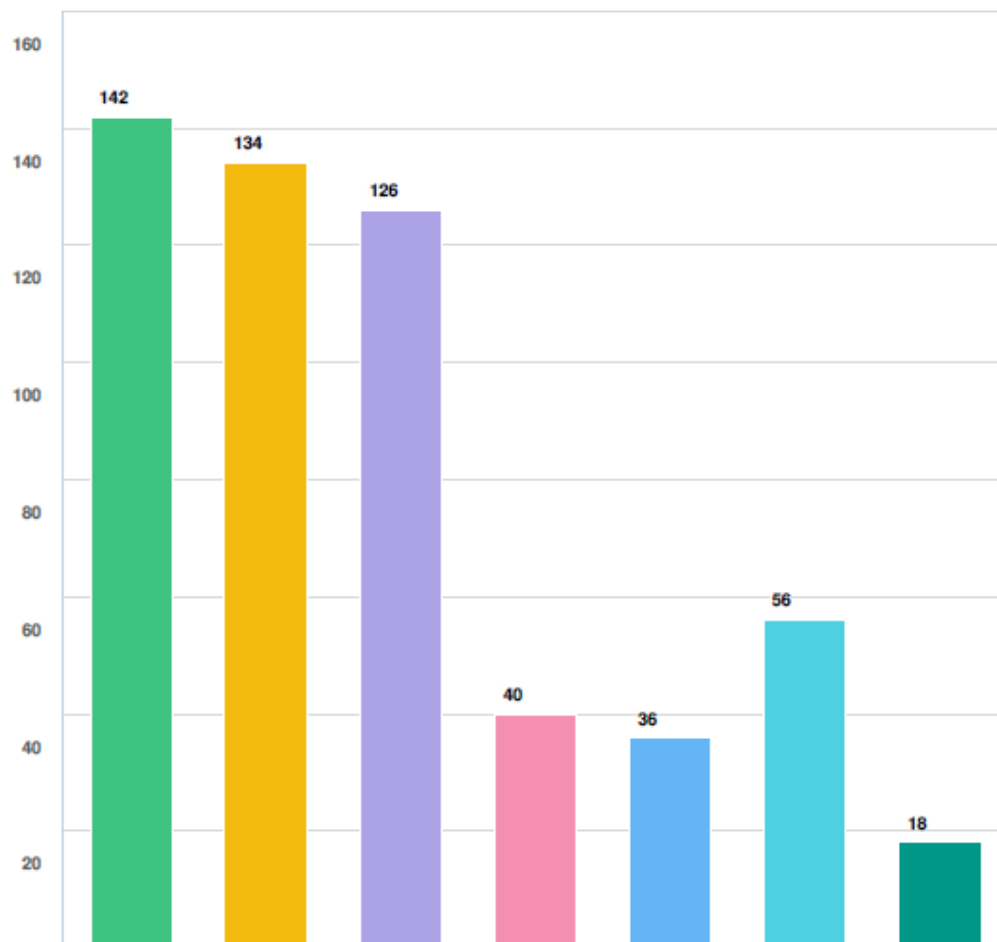


Your family size?



When survey respondents were asked to think about new missing middle housing being built in their community, the top three priorities they feel most important to consider are: 1) creating more housing choice so families and other households can stay in Victoria, 2) creating lower-cost opportunities to own or rent ground-oriented housing, relative to SFD housing, and 3) creating housing near services and transit for a walkable community where people rely less on cars. Another common priority was to support tree preservation, a healthy urban forest, and on-site rainwater infiltration.

Q8 When you think about new 'missing middle' housing being built in your community, please select the top three priorities you feel are MOST important to consider? (select up to 3)

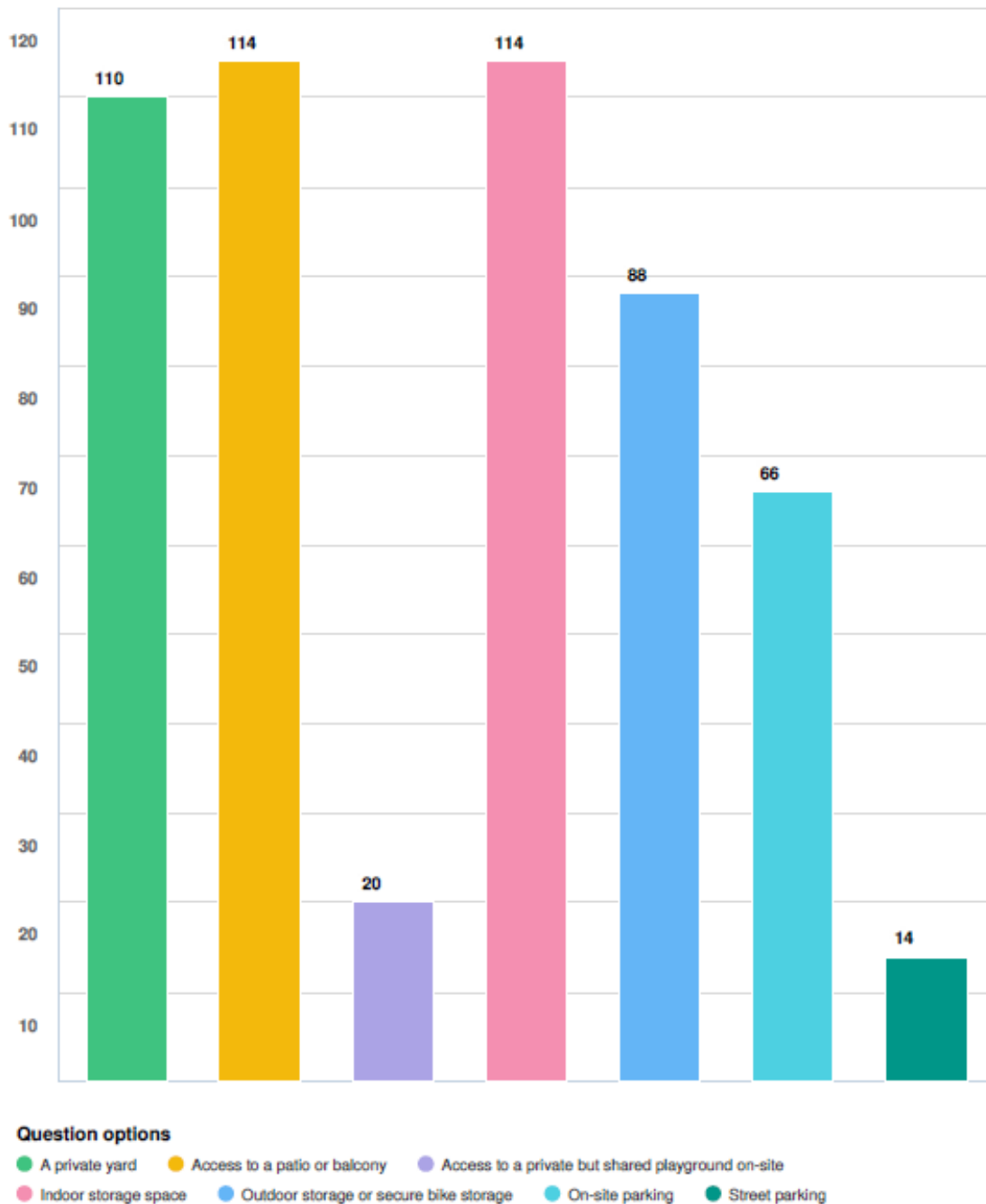


Question options

- Create more housing choice so families and other households can stay in Victoria as their housing needs evolve
- Create lower cost opportunities to own or rent ground-oriented housing, relative to the cost of a new detached house
- Create housing near services and transit for a walkable community where people rely less on cars
- Ensure the look and feel of new development is a good fit for the neighbourhood
- Maintain incentives for heritage conservation and re-use of existing character homes
- Support tree preservation, a healthy urban forest, and on-site rainwater infiltration
- Other (please specify up to three priorities not listed)

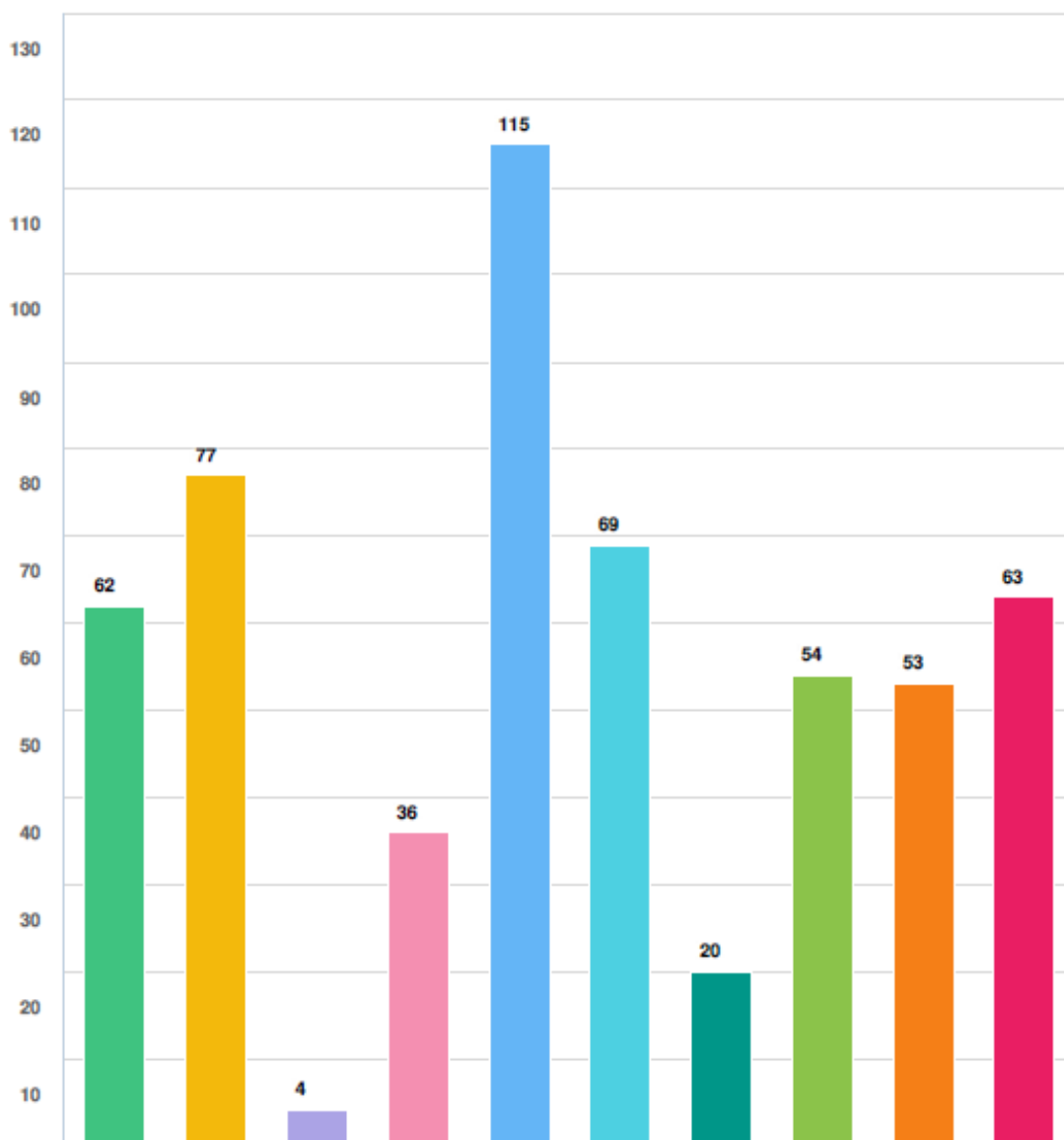
When considering home characteristics, access to a patio or balcony, indoor storage space, a private yard, and outdoor storage or secured bike storage were the most important for survey respondents.

Q9 Which characteristics do you consider **MOST** important to you when considering a home? (select up to 3)



When considering the location for a home, survey respondents listed closeness to a grocery store, bike lanes and bike routes, parks, playgrounds, or a community centre, and transit routes as important factors. Being in their desired neighbourhood was also the third most important factor.

Q10 When considering the location of a home, which factors are MOST important to you?
(select up to 3)

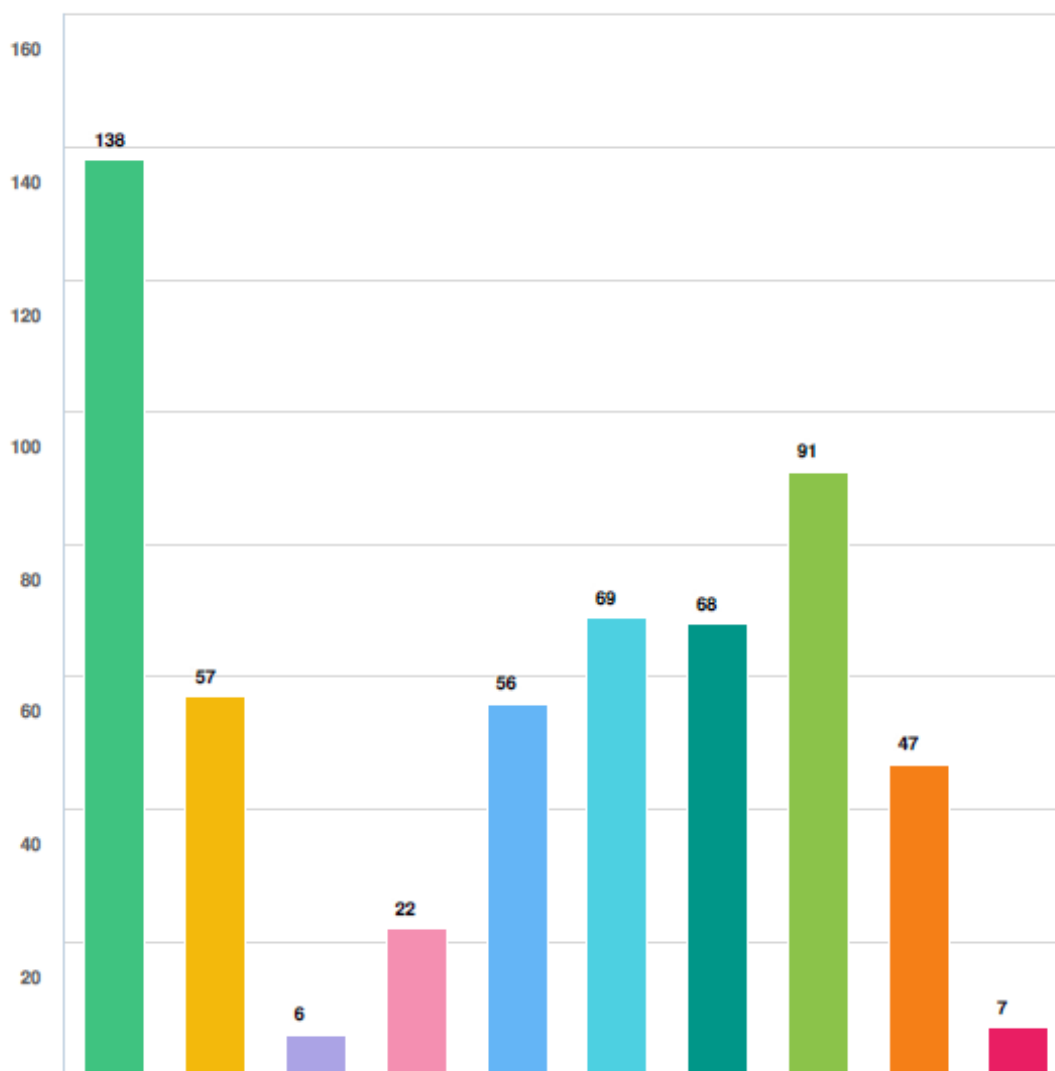


Question options

- Close to transit routes
 ● Close to bike lanes or safe bike routes
 ● Close to childcare
 ● Close to children's school
- Close to a grocery store
 ● In my desired neighbourhood
 ● A location outside of downtown
- A location close to downtown
 ● A quiet neighbourhood
 ● Close to parks, playgrounds or a community centre

When considering a new place to live, affordability, suitability over time, and adequate soundproofing or separation from neighbours were the most important factors.

Q11 When considering a new place to live, which factors about the building are MOST important to you? (select up to 3)



Question options

- Affordability
- The right number of bedrooms
- The size of each bedroom
- Total size of home (square metres/footage)
- Quality of the housing (appliances, flooring, kitchen, bathroom, windows, etc.)
- Adequate soundproofing or separation from neighbours
- Pet-friendly
- Suitability over time (you can see yourself staying there for years to come)
- Housing security (you know you can live there without fear of eviction)
- Other (please specify)

PREFERRED DESIGN ELEMENTS AND PATTERNS

For Question 12, respondents were asked to think about the design of existing residential buildings and properties in Victoria and given an illustration of key patterns and design elements of missing middle typologies (detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, etc.) (See above). They were also asked to provide other patterns or design elements they feel are particularly important. They offered a wide variety of responses and preferences, but certain themes came up many times. Affordability, social interaction, family-oriented units, parking options, efficiency, and green space were all discussed in detail. The themes mentioned most often by respondents will be explored further for subsequent missing middle project engagements.



“Homes, public spaces, almost everything should be oriented towards the street when possible. The street is where life happens. I like the character of old homes, gardens and crops in people’s yards, and many things imperfect.” – Survey Respondent

Figure 1. Design Elements and Neighbourhood Scale Patterns presented in question 12 of the online survey



Design Elements

Height and Scale:

2 - 3 floors of living space above ground, with semi-submerged basement

Roof Forms:

Steeply pitched roofs with dormers incorporating living space are common

Relationship to Street:

Entries and primary living spaces located close to and clearly visible/accessible from street

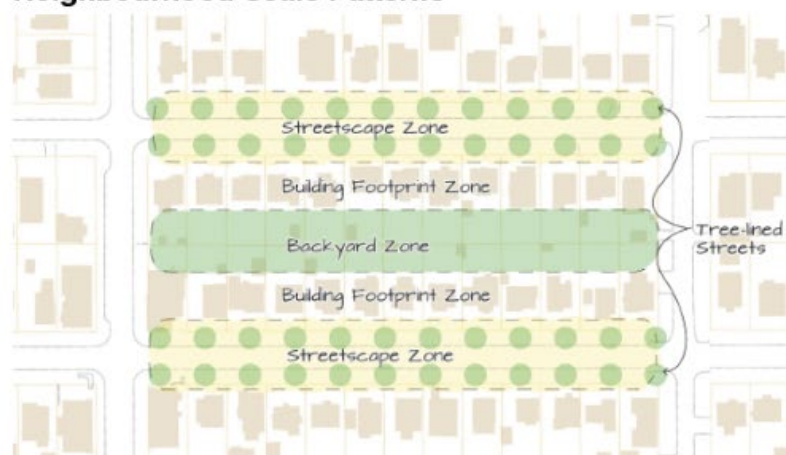
Parking:

Detached, with shared driveways

Case Study: Design Elements Expressed in Townhouse Form



Neighbourhood Scale Patterns



HEIGHT AND SCALE

“For houses, because there are so many basement suites, it’s really nice when the basement is less than half below-grade.” – Survey Respondent

Almost all respondents agreed that missing middle housing should be around 3 to 4 storeys in height, matching the surrounding neighbourhood. A few respondents think that achieve enough affordability and density in the coming years, single-family dwelling neighbourhoods close to downtown should incorporate more 4 to 5 storey stacked townhomes. Some respondents think there should be more 3, 4, or 5 storey apartment buildings with walk-up entryways, which exist in some parts of the city already and are found quite often in places like Montreal (see below). Some prefer to have half-sunk basements, while others prefer not to have basements at all, as they are not universally accessible.



“Second and third floor units need ground orientation as well--this is done well in older Montreal buildings.”

– Survey Respondent

Example of 3-storey walk-up apartments in Montreal with stairs to the second-floor balcony

ROOF FORMS, ARTICULATION, EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Most respondents prefer articulated designs and pitched roof forms, although flat rooftops and garden rooftop patios were also mentioned as an option instead of pitched roofs. Many respondents mentioned that features common in historic housing are preferable (e.g. peaked roofs, eaves, window trim, etc.), but with a modern interpretation, suggesting that there is a middle-ground somewhere between having entirely flat roofs, and steeply pitched roofs. For some respondents, all that matters is that every house does not look exactly the same, so some roofs can be flat, some can be pitched, some slanted, as long as there is variety.

Respondents also mentioned that the existing design of many missing middle buildings in Victoria, although aesthetically desirable, is not as energy efficient or sustainable for the long term as other building types. The "character" described with dormers, steep roof pitches, bay windows, and other design elements that create building articulation, brings larger heating systems and further

greenhouse gas emissions for the long term. As one respondent mentioned, “decorate the envelope; don’t decorate with the envelope.” Others mentioned that if townhomes can be built correctly, they are quite energy efficient. Modern, “boxier” homes use more efficient insulation and materials and generally provide a more sustainable house, and the efficient use of space can lead to energy preservation. Space well utilized (slanted or mansard roofs), multiple unit dwellings, heritage preservation with energy efficient updates and retrofits are also good options. A few respondents mentioned that traditional and heritage designs are very hard to build to meet a higher STEP code for energy efficiency.

RELATIONSHIP TO STREET AND SOCIAL CONNECTION

Many respondents said that good design that enables social interaction in public space is key for missing middle development. Design choices which lower neighbourliness should be avoided, such as separate garages that reduce the opportunity for unplanned interactions. Areas that foster a sense of community and encourage outdoor socializing are an important part of designing for social health. These spaces could look like shared community gardens, courtyards, boulevard gardens, and porches or balconies in townhouses and houseplexes. Private or shared yards are an important part of maintaining mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well. As one respondent said, “I find that spending time outdoors is beneficial to my own mental health, and staves off the feeling of being shut in all the time.”

One respondent took issue with the concept of “Backyard Zones” because they think front yards and street life should be prioritized over backyards and private life. They wrote, “if we create safe and engaging streets, with wide car free or slow-car neighbourhoods and layered and engaging front yards with lots of green space -- people will engage more with their neighbours.”

New missing middle development should encourage a strong relationship to the street, to create better social interactions. Many respondents mentioned that parking or a huge yard or lawn in front of the house should be removed, and detached/shared parking should become normalized, as it makes each house seem more approachable. As one respondent put it, “when walking along the sidewalks, I appreciate how close you feel to these buildings from the street; not being separated by a massive lawn/yard from the front entry makes homes feel more approachable & welcoming.” Some respondents prefer houses that are set back from the street, while others preferred entryways and porches that are close to the sidewalk and visible/ visitable from the street. Some survey respondents are very comfortable with multi-family housing and apartment-style houseplexes with shared entrances and shared parking areas, while others prefer to have separate entrances, private yards and driveways, and one household in all floors of a townhouse (not stacked).

“I’m a big fan of designs that encourage human interaction. When I think of my dream street it’s old school Boston/New York brownstones along tree lined streets and people milling about. Walkability, bikeability and designs that encourage interactions with neighbors and the street. The kind of things that build community and a sense of connection over time.” – Survey Respondent

PARKING

Respondent answers about parking minimums varied. Some respondents offered that residential and visitor parking needs to be maintained for all new developments, and others offered that parking should not exist directly on-site in front of townhouses and houseplexes, but rather should exist separately in laneways and lots at the end of blocks, and through on-street parking. Others said that the option of some off-street parking is necessary, especially for families and people with mobility issues who might prefer single-story and ground-oriented housing. As one respondent mentioned, “It’s important to have adequate, accessible parking--not everyone wants, or is able, to get around by bike or transit!” Some respondents said that as long as cars are the primary mode of transportation, parking should be a priority, as too many areas have become inaccessible to those with mobility challenges and to elders who can only walk so far.

“We need to allow flexibility with missing middle -- and high gentle density, without requiring parking. If we continue to build for cars, we’ll continue to foster car culture. If we build for families, nature and neighbourhoods, we will foster community.” – Survey Respondent

Many others responded that the City should entirely abolish parking minimums and stop expecting new developments to cater to car-owners in downtown and walkable areas. They argue that we should be phasing out personal vehicles, which are considered fossil fuel infrastructure. Parking also carries a higher cost for the development, which can lead to cuts in other areas of the development. On-street parking should be adequate, without requiring further off-street parking spaces in developments. If owners want additional secured parking space, there should be an expensive on-street permitting system in busier neighbourhoods. Respondents also mentioned the desire for adequate, covered bicycle parking instead of or in addition to off-street private vehicle parking spaces.

“Design features that contribute to the social fabric: clustered parking with common pedestrian paths that pass common gathering nodes, areas for people to garden and play. Features that show the vibrancy of the community (painted front doors, bulletin boards, little free libraries).” – Survey Respondent

PRESERVING GREEN SPACE AND MATURE TREES

At least a third of respondents answered that supporting tree preservation, a healthy urban forest, and on-site rainwater infiltration through permeable greenspace is one of the top priorities of new ‘missing middle’ housing. About a third of open-ended survey responses also mentioned trees and green space as an integral part to making these forms of development more successful. Maintaining existing green space is generally preferable, and a few respondents mentioned that they would prefer not to see large buildings with large footprints diminishing existing greenspace and mature trees. Other respondents highlighted the many creative approaches to increasing permeable surfaces and green spaces in residential neighbourhoods by integrating them wherever possible. This might look like creating and maintaining community gardens, fruit tree

and food forests, green roofs, patches of boulevard gardens, small backyards and front yards with native plants and trees, scattered throughout each neighbourhood.

“Trees and greenspace are essential. Site coverage must be reduced to keep and increase our mature tree canopy. Trees on the perimeters of properties, in particular, require immediate protection. Too often, relaxations in setbacks are permitted, which inevitably results in the unnecessary loss of trees.” – Survey Respondent

AFFORDABILITY

Many respondents mentioned that it is less important to discuss aesthetics or housing forms and more important to consider affordability. They expressed concerns over the many people who struggle to find affordable shelter in the city and offered that low-cost apartment buildings near downtown are a larger priority than townhomes now. They mentioned that if people are struggling to find an affordable place to call home, they are not going to be as concerned with how it looks on the outside or how it is built, as long as they can afford it and the inside is nice. One respondent put that “affordability should drive design.”

“Housing should be affordable first, accessible second and life improving third.” – Survey Respondent

FAMILY-SIZED HOUSING

Multiple respondents brought up the need for affordable family-sized housing, with 2, 3, and 4 or more bedrooms, access to shared outdoor yard space and closeness to other families in the neighbourhood. Families are being pushed out of Victoria because they cannot afford space for their children to grow, and options for affordable home ownership are needed. One respondent mentioned the trend toward younger generations generally having less wealth than their parents’ generation during the family formation years, and that there is a strong desire for families to stay in Victoria to raise their children but that it’s generally unattainable with current prices. Families with young children that are currently crowded into smaller apartments will need more space as their children grow and become teenagers in the next 10-15 years. Many respondents mentioned that co-op housing and multi-generational housing projects should be encouraged, to allow multiple families live under one roof or within the same housing complex.

“I think encouraging developers to build condos and townhomes that are 3 bedrooms but part of larger complex would be a good idea. That would allow a family to live comfortably but they could share outdoor space.” – Survey Respondent

OTHER COMMENTS – QUESTION 13

Question 13 asked respondents to mention any other comments they have about future missing middle housing forms in Victoria. Responses varied and many different themes came up, both related to missing middle housing forms and related to housing accessibility and affordability in general. Although responses varied, many similar themes came up as those mentioned in Question 12. The most mentioned themes were about housing inclusivity, including affordable, family-friendly, senior-friendly, pet-friendly, co-op and rental housing options that should be built into future missing middle policies where possible. Other responses included themes about the form, density, location, and size of new missing middle housing, and the need to carefully address parking, upzoning, and mature tree and heritage preservation. There were also some suggestions for how to educate the public about the project and carry out an effective implementation process.

“Missing middle homes need to be affordable, attractive and accessible for a wide range of Victoria families.” – Survey Respondent

AFFORDABILITY, EQUITY, AND URGENCY

Affordability and equity, and the urgent need to address affordable housing shortages as soon as possible were the main themes mentioned for this question. Survey respondents mentioned that long-time residents who grew up in Victoria or have lived here for 20+ years are being priced out of the city and many other residents experience homelessness and remain in Core Housing Need. As one respondent put it, “None of my peers can afford to buy a house here, most will leave Victoria when they no longer wish to sacrifice their money to their landlords and would prefer to buy.” And many pointed out that technically there are units in the city that they could afford, but that most units within financial reach are far too small for their families, with no access to a yard, and no pets allowed, so they are not able to live a full life.

Respondents brought up that it is hard to provide feedback about missing middle housing forms when most housing would not be affordable to median-income residents. It was suggested that the primary focus of the early engagements should be housing affordability instead of housing forms. Many respondents mentioned the difficulty in finding a suitable home or qualifying for a mortgage in the city, even when they feel they have a fair income.

“Affordability is everything. Even with \$100k/year income and rock solid references, getting an affordable 2 bedroom above ground suite was nearly impossible, and incredibly competitive. We had to settle for less than what we wanted.” - Survey Respondent

Others pointed out that it will be impossible for developers to produce affordable homeownership opportunities or affordable rental units without proper public financing. They brought up that if new missing middle housing units do not include progressive affordability policies and regulations, they will further the housing crisis. Some suggest that rezoning for higher densities in existing single-family dwelling zones will simply enrich landowners and eliminate any affordability gains associated with more square footage if developers are not held accountable through covenants and policies. Some respondents mentioned the option of following a model similar to the one in

Portland and Vancouver, where 4-6 units are allowed on single-family dwelling lots, but one or two of the units must be affordable. As one respondent mentioned, “Developers should always have to pay a certain percentage of their earnings towards the public good – whether that goes into housing, greenspaces, etc... A large percentage of new housing should always be social or ACTUALLY affordable housing.” One mentioned that new-build missing middle townhome and condominium units will be more expensive than the older housing stock in Victoria. For older stock, building maintenance and getting up to code is also quite difficult, and it is often preferable for owners to redevelop older buildings rather than maintain them, so perhaps more incentives for existing townhome maintenance are necessary, to keep existing, affordable missing middle housing stock in the housing inventory.

“I think Victoria really needs more townhouse options! I'd prioritize character and affordability over square footage.” - Survey Respondent

Underlying these responses was a sense of urgency. Renters need access to affordable housing right now, not in five years, so the sooner we can address gaps in housing choice and affordability, the better. There was a suggestion that the history of maintaining SFD housing in large areas of the city has been a root cause of escalating housing costs, and the sooner we legalize all missing middle forms, the better. There is urgency for families and residents who feel there is no financially achievable housing option for them within the city. One respondent mentioned, “Affordability is key for us. Not having to move out of my neighborhood to have security would allow us to put down roots.”

“We desperately need more townhomes and duplexes and to shift focus from single detached homes. This is the only sustainable model for my generation's future housing. These homes need to be affordable. Victoria will keep growing and we must plan for it.” – Survey Respondent

FAMILIES, SENIORS, AND CO-OPS

Another theme brought up multiple times was the need for more diverse housing choices, including family-sized, senior friendly, pet-friendly, rental, and co-op housing unit options, all built into missing middle housing. Many respondents asked for a reasonably-sized, affordable rental space for them and their family, including at least three bedrooms and a bit of storage space. Most respondents do not necessarily want large houses, as many mentioned the lack of choice in-between low-cost small units and huge, expensive houses or mansions. One respondent pointed out that the current townhouse zoning Floor Space Ratio is too small for a comfortable 3-bedroom unit, and the bylaw should be updated along with this project. Others pointed out that new multi-family, higher density condominium family units are too small to be comfortable for families, as well.

Families are not the only ones interested in missing middle housing. Rental townhouse and suite apartment options for seniors who do not want to buy or cannot buy a condominium, are also welcome. As one respondent mentions, “More [rental townhouse] options would make it easier

for seniors in family-sized homes [to] make more of these available to young families and at a more affordable price.” It was suggested that missing middle housing units should be of multiple mixed forms and sizes so that families, elders, and students can live near each other, with common outdoor spaces built in.

As more people work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is also a demand for slightly larger units so that families can have home offices. A few respondents mentioned the difficulty in living in small suites since the pandemic started. As one respondent candidly put it, “Families can’t love in micro spaces!”

There were multiple responses suggesting that the City try to encourage more townhouse co-op housing. More than condos or stratified housing, co-ops are perceived by many survey respondents as more secure, stable, community-driven housing that allow families and single people alike to “catch their breath financially,” exactly what middle-income earners need in the city. They are also a way to provide single adult-oriented affordable housing. Other respondents see co-ops and co-housing units as a way to address poverty for the lowest-income folks in the city. But co-ops are competitive, as outlined by one respondent: “I spent 3 years on co-op waitlists before giving up. We need more co-ops!” Respondents wonder if the City can make it easier to redevelop land for affordable co-housing and co-op townhomes and row houses, as those options are currently missing.

“More density is key to create more family friendly neighborhoods that are walkable and enjoyable.” – Survey Respondent



Example of Victoria’s 3-storey ground-oriented units overlooking Franklin Green park.

PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING

Another issue brought up was the need for more pet-friendly missing middle housing options. Often, existing apartments in missing middle forms managed by a landlord who lives on the same property are not pet-friendly, giving tenants with pets very few options for finding suitable and affordable homes in the city. Although this is something the City is not able to directly address (it is regulated through provincial legislation in the Residential Tenancy Act), it is worth considering.

“I would like to see the pet-friendly aspect emphasized as a valued feature of MM housing. As more people are excluded from home ownership and single family homes are less+less sustainable forms of housing, MM renters with pets have v. few options!” – Survey Respondent

LOCATION, FORM, AND DENSITY

Different themes emerged for responses to the location, form, and density of missing middle buildings. For location, some survey respondents stated that missing middle housing should be integrated into neighbourhoods and permeate throughout them, not just exist along busy corridors and larger streets. Other respondents argued for a different approach to dispersing missing middle-style forms across the city, with one stating, “Zoning efforts should be made along 'transit belts' with the goal of eventually upgrading to regional mass transit options as density develops. Lines of midrise connecting islands of high-rise in a sea of parks and low density.” Wherever these missing forms happen, respondents suggested that the process for achieving them should be done slowly, by replacing larger and low-quality SFD homes with multiple units and preserving heritage homes as much as possible. Respondents mentioned the need to consider the whole surrounding area (not just each single lot) when implementing these new developments, including surrounding parks and green space, light and sun impacts, transit access and walkability.

“I am surprised about all the emphasis on 'missing' middle housing. James Bay and Fairfield already have a lot of so-called 'Missing' Middle Housing. What looks like a large single family dwelling is often a 3-plex or 4-plex if you look carefully.” – Survey Respondent

For comments related to form and density, many respondents agree that allowing more townhomes, houseplexes, secondary suites, tiny homes, garden suites, carriage homes, and other developments with multiple smaller homes on the same lot are welcome. Typical missing middle forms are defined as townhomes and houseplexes, but it is useful to understand what types of forms are preferred in traditional single-family detached areas, and how other ground-oriented forms should be included in the discussion. Here, the variety of preferences indicate that flexibility and choice for missing middle typologies may be the key to achieving a variety of suitable and preferable housing forms, and a widespread increase in density in existing single-family dwelling areas.

Many respondents had suggestions for the form that this infill development should take. Some respondents suggested that at first it will be very important to provide examples of good quality missing middle development to guide the project and show that neighbourhood character is not

impacted by this type of development. Many respondents also had suggestions for how to improve the interior and shared spaces of these housing forms, including considerations about letting in light, soundproofing properly between suites, including private and shared outdoor space in the form of a deck, backyard, courtyard, or balcony, and flexibility for studying and working from home.

“It’s okay if they are unique, flexible, even unusual, as long as they have integrity, have human scale, lack imitation, and try to be inviting, and are oriented to bring in lots of light in the winter.” – Survey Respondent

PRESERVATION

Survey respondents mentioned preserving existing buildings, especially those designated heritage or potential heritage. The most sustainable building is one that is already built, and infill development should incentivize the maintenance of existing homes while encouraging gentle density.

Respondents mentioned that larger heritage houseplex conversions are an excellent example of missing middle housing that preserves the existing stock while also creating potential for stable rental units owned and managed by reputable local groups. Another respondent mentioned that Council should reconsider allowing the creation of panhandle lots, to encourage owners to preserve their existing house in the front and build additional dwellings in a separate lot behind it. This is thought to help prevent widespread demolition.

“We must prevent the demolition of existing housing, which will always be more affordable and more environmental than new development. Carting perfectly usable materials off to the landfill, and tearing down housing that is still viable is unacceptable.” – Survey Respondent

Some respondents mentioned that the preservation of heritage homes is overvalued in current regulation, and that the city needs to densify and modernize in order to be more inclusive and equal to all. Some think it is more important to prioritize the building of heritage-style townhomes over the maintenance of heritage homes, especially closer to downtown.

The idea that some ‘sacrifices’ will have to be made to achieve greater accessibility, affordability, and improved housing supply and choice is an important consideration. Some respondents suggested that appeasing the people resisting this type of development is futile, as they are mostly interested in preserving the value of their own real estate investment.

PREZONING

“We should eliminate parking minimums, blanket zone all neighbourhoods to allow forms that provide mixed uses plus 50 people per acre, eliminate the power of the Community Association to deny reasonable developments, remove on street parking entitlements.” – Survey Respondent

Many respondents also discussed the idea of pre-zoning or up-zoning for missing middle housing types. Expanding the regulations for parts of the city to allow carriage houses, Accessory Dwelling Units, garden suites, secondary suites, houseplexes, and townhouses, and allowing owners to use a combination of these forms to achieve up to four or five units on their existing lot would make it easier for middle housing to begin to permeate large parts of mostly single-family dwelling areas.

Those in favour of prezoning argued that if the City continues to listen to “NIMBY” voices and deny this form of medium density housing, suburban sprawl will only continue, and the region will lose more of its forests and natural areas to development pressure. Although not all respondents expressed the same, approximately 20 respondents mentioned the need for the missing middle project to be ambitious about land use planning to create more livable and sustainable communities. One survey respondent suggested that zoning these housing types into every single-family dwelling neighbourhood in Victoria will be the only way to meet our climate strategy goals and stop privileging existing equity-rich homeowners over upcoming homeowners struggling to find housing in their price range.

“I think it is most important to just allow this to happen everywhere throughout the city. Keep it simple and let builders be creative. Then do some post occupancy studies to see if it’s working and adjust!” – Survey Respondent

EDUCATION AND INCENTIVES

Many respondents expressed the desire to learn more and for the City to make information about missing middle development accessible. As one respondent mentioned, “Opportunities to densify lots and housing should be easy to navigate for homeowners, not just developers.” Access to information and help navigating the process is essential to allow families to stay on properties and make changes for long term usability. One respondent mentioned that they will never again attempt to build until the City relaxes its land use planning control. The City will have to consider how to support owners who want to redevelop their land but who are not trained as developers.

*“Would help if the City can delegate or assign a planner on staff to assist homeowners who want to turn their homes into conversions etc.; a dedicated “concierge” or guide to the process and permits.”
– Survey Respondent*

Another respondent highlighted that missing middle development is financially risky and unattractive, in part because of municipal fees, infrastructure requirements, and site upgrades that are not as lucrative as higher density projects. A different respondent asked how the City intends to incentivize this type of development, without allowing developers to cram as many units as possible into a small space to maximize profits.

INPUT FROM HOUSING BUILDERS

One in-person workshop (pre-COVID-19) and another virtual meeting were held to engage local housing builders about the Missing Middle Housing project. The first engagement activity was a three-hour guided workshop, held in early March 2020. The day focused on gathering insight about current challenges related to building missing middle housing forms (e.g. townhouses, houseplexes, smaller low-rise apartment buildings), as well as identifying opportunities to make it easier to deliver these housing choices, particularly in ways that forward family and affordable housing goals. Ten local development representatives attended, and five staff were present to help guide small group discussions based on key questions and associated probing questions:

1. **Why haven't we been seeing more of these forms of housing built in Victoria?**
2. **What are the most promising strategies to make it easier to provide more housing choice through missing middle housing?**
3. **What are the best ways missing middle housing can address Council's priorities for affordable and/or rental housing?**

The second meeting, held virtually in late April 2021, focused on sharing findings and emerging thinking from the initial research and analysis, clarifying information, and answering housing builders' questions. Approximately 6 local housing builders attended. Feedback from this meeting focused on options for parking reductions in amenity-filled neighbourhoods, options for locations and lot sizes for encouraging missing middle forms, and the need to consider the larger housing ecosystem in this discussion, particularly for meeting demand for family-size and rental units.

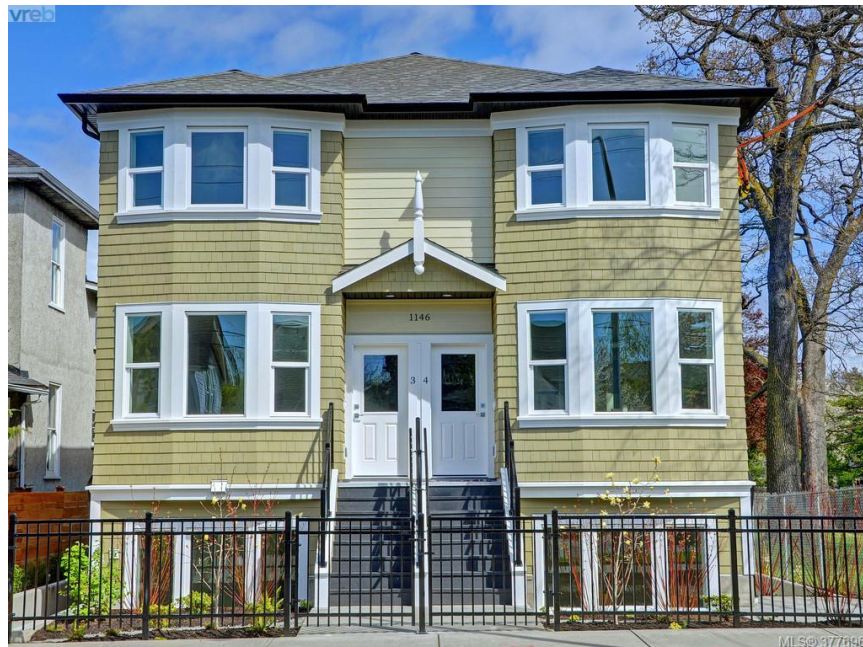
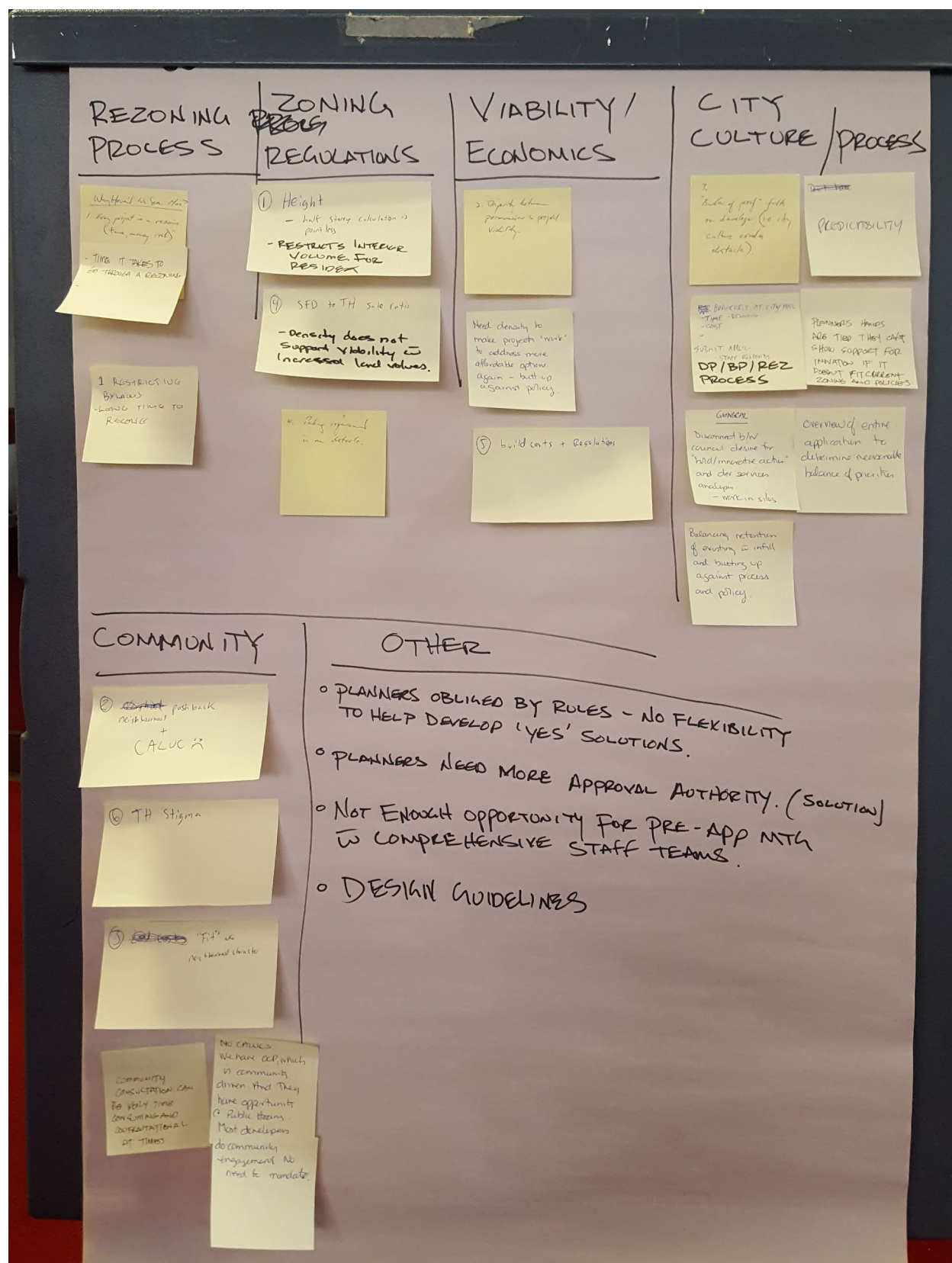


Figure 2. Housing builders workshop feedback board with emerging themes.



EMERGING HOUSING BUILDER THEMES

CURRENT BARRIERS

RESTRICTIVE ZONING & ECONOMIC VIABILITY

- Developers may choose to build in a less restrictive municipality instead
- More height, more density, less parking

REZONING PROCESS & COMMUNITY OPPOSITION

- Time, opposition, CALUCs, stigma about townhouses = higher costs to redevelop

BUREAUCRACY

- Unpredictability about approval and process
 - Planners can't show support for innovation without policy basis
 - Contradicting policies, council desires, or inter-department comments
-

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT MISSING MIDDLE DEVELOPMENT

(PRE)ZONING, LOCATION, AND PROXIMITY

- Prezone corners: 6 Townhouses, 1:1 FSR
- Increase density on corridors.
- Allow Townhouses on minimum (assembly) lot sizes.
- Allow triplexes on single-family dwelling lots.
- Height: Allow 3 storeys, stacked units
- Density: Increase or eliminate to mitigate land value impacts – rely on building footprint, open space requirements, and height to regulate building sizes, rather than Floor Space Ratio
- Parking: Use Transportation Demand Management (TDM), context, and proximity to transit and urban villages to permit reduction or removal of parking requirements. Ex. 5-minute walk from transit corridors and urban villages reduces the need for parking.
- Contextual zoning to allow incremental change (e.g., contextual front setback)
- Do not expect multi-family buildings to behave like SFD dwellings.

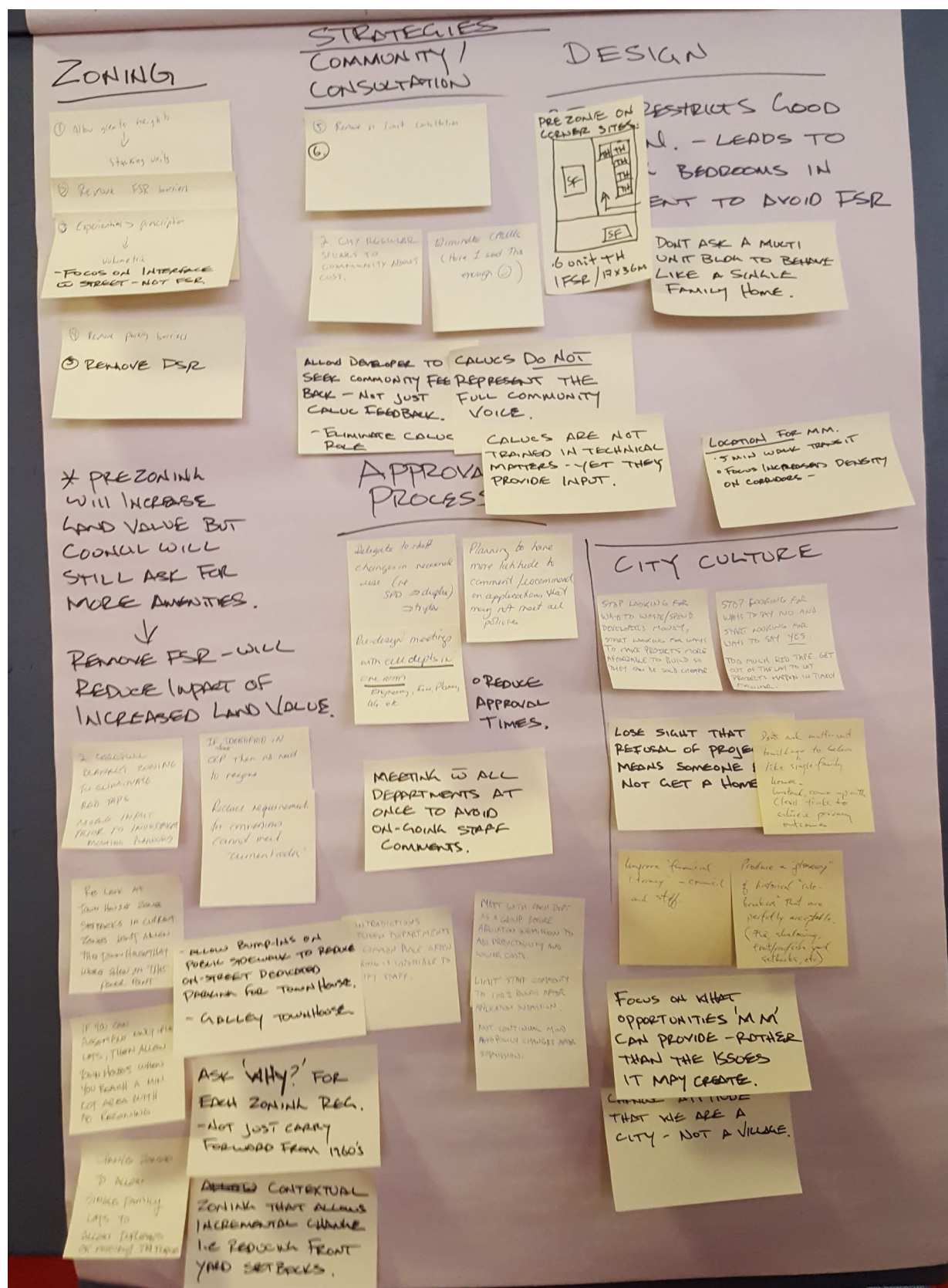
APPROVAL PROCESS AND EDUCATION

- Give Planners more latitude, delegate land use changes.
- Meet all departments at once on pre-design (reduce contradictions)
- Fewer rounds of staff commentary
- Improve developer finance literacy amongst Council and staff.
- Remove or limit consultation, CALUCs not technical advisors.
- Educate the public on why this type of development needs to start happening more.

BALANCE COMPETING OBJECTIVES

- On any existing single-family dwelling zoned lot, balance between parking, open space, urban forest, height, density, affordability, secured rental, and unit size should all be considered.
- Consider the housing ecosystem, as well as commercial and retail in each neighbourhood. Nothing exists in a vacuum.

Figure 3. Housing builders workshop feedback board with emerging themes.



PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Housing builder representatives identified three key barriers to Missing Middle Housing in the city. They perceived that currently, most missing middle development is not as economically viable as higher-density development in other parts of the city zoned or designated for that purpose, and so it carries a perceived increased risk for investors. The same two lot sizes will require similar street upgrades and infrastructure improvements whether the owner is increasing the density to four new homes or twenty new homes. Twenty newly built homes are much more lucrative for the owner than four, so the investment is less risky and guaranteed to make the owner (and investors) a higher profit.

Developers mentioned that zoning is currently too restrictive to make missing middle projects financially viable, because the permitted densities in most SFD zones are too low to make a profit. They end up requiring a rezoning process to ask for higher densities, to build relatively low-density townhouse developments.

This leads to the second perceived barrier: community opposition and long approval processes. When the rezoning process is triggered, developers must consult with CALUCs and go through a rigorous community engagement process. The responsibility falls onto the developer to prove to the City and neighbourhood that the project is needed, and the process sometimes leads to community members expressing fears about neighbourhood impacts. Increasing the number of townhomes and houseplexes in existing SFD neighbourhoods is a Council priority. Local developers pointed out that “Consultation can be confrontational at times. It is painful. A few people take over the entire public meeting. Others are scared to say what they think.”

A third barrier identified by local housing builders is bureaucracy at the City, which fosters unpredictability. The rezoning approval process requires multiple departments at the City to review the development plans, and developers expressed concern that feedback from the inter-departmental review process can sometimes be contradictory to what Council wants, or that different policies overlap in ways that are not always clear.

“Burden is on developer. Why don’t SFD owners have to justify to everyone? Burden of proof should be on single family zoning to justify its existence.” – Housing builders workshop Attendee

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT MISSING MIDDLE DEVELOPMENT

With the barriers to creating more missing middle housing defined, housing builders proposed potential strategies that can be implemented to better support it.

One suggestion was to pre-zone existing single-family dwelling zones to permit higher densities and missing middle forms. Currently, the Zoning Bylaw permits SFD dwelling zones to have one secondary suite or a garden suite, essentially allowing up to two dwelling units. Increasing the permitted height and density to allow existing SFD zones to have even more units per lot will encourage more owners to build houseplexes and townhouses. Prezoning will remove the need to undergo a rezoning process, therefore cutting down on the approval process length and costs for owners and developers. It was suggested that the City should not ask “What do you think we

should do?” and instead say “This is what we have to do” because the demand for this type of housing outweighs the opinion of (sometimes few) neighbouring homeowners.

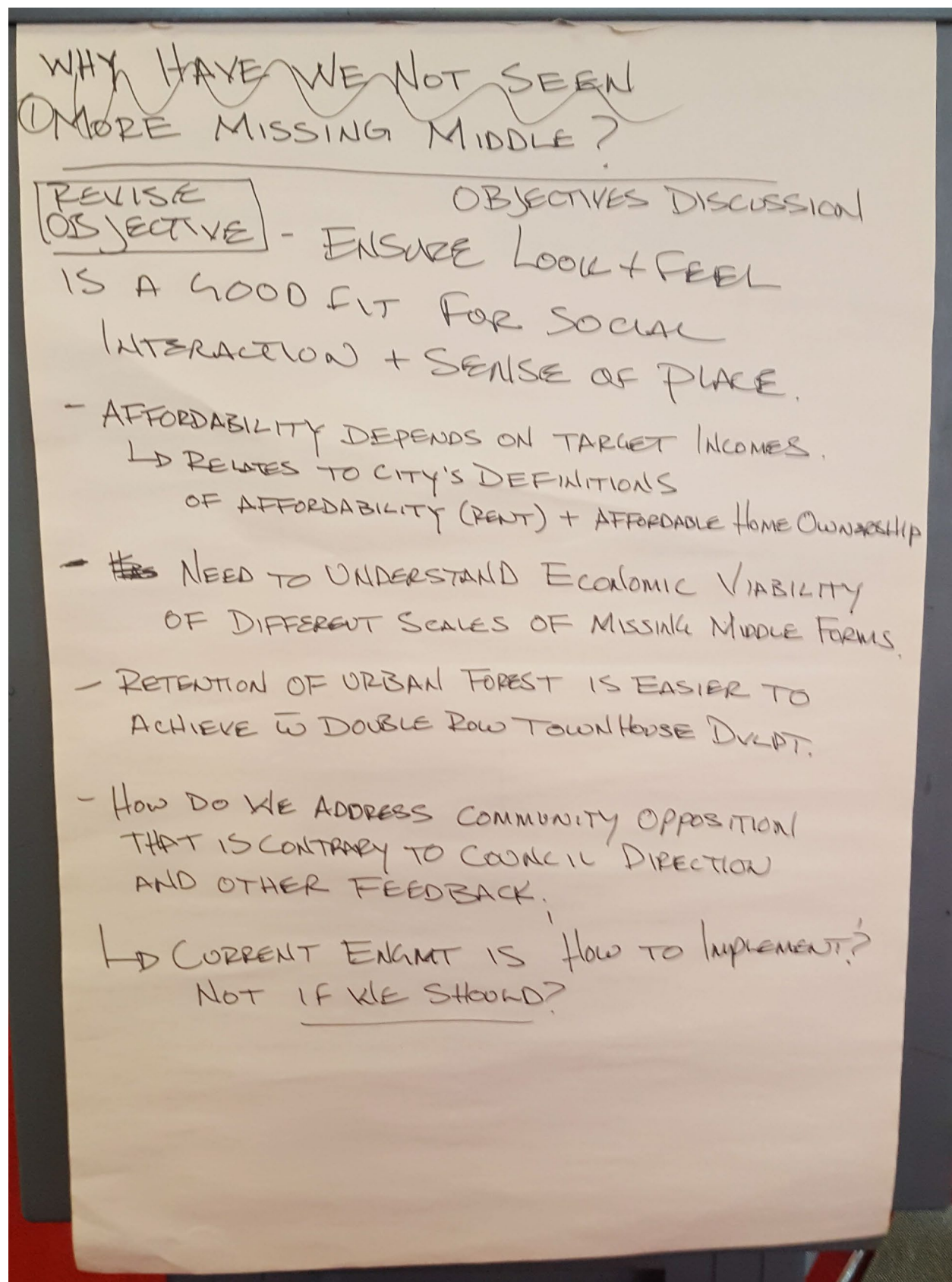
Representatives also mentioned that delegating Development Permit decisions to staff for proposals with up to four units, for example, instead of having them receive approval from Council would encourage more missing middle development. Representatives mentioned that prezoning would remove the requirement to consult Community Association Land Use Committees and therefore potentially reduce opposition, but that educating the community and public about demand for these projects would be more important. These strategies are thought to cut down on approval times, give staff more discretionary power, reduce bureaucracy, and increase certainty.

At the workshop, representatives said that amending the Zoning Bylaw to remove parking minimums is another way to allow for more site plan flexibility, making missing middle forms more viable. Parking requirements (under [Schedule C in the Zoning Bylaw](#)) are often seen as a key turning point in project viability for smaller scale developments. At the follow-up meeting, representatives expanded the discussion and mentioned that reducing or eliminating parking requirements will require a nuanced and well-researched approach. For example, they suggested that off-street parking minimums could be eliminated for every SFD lot within a five-minute walk of key transit corridors and urban villages.

They also discussed market prices and parking requirements, noting some of the nuances. For example, a one-bedroom missing middle unit with or without off-street parking is not priced differently, so reducing parking requirements will make no difference on these types of projects. One representative mentioned that understanding vehicle ownership and use will be key to effectively changing parking requirements, and others discussed the use of Transportation Demand Management tools such as car share to reduce private car ownership in areas close to corridors and urban villages.

Housing builders identified current barriers and potential supportive strategies for missing middle development during the initial workshop, while highlighting the complexity of achieving multiple and sometimes competing objectives when carrying out ground-oriented development.

Figure 3. Housing builders workshop feedback with emerging themes



FOLLOW-UP THEMES

The follow-up meeting expanded on potential barriers and strategies and provided an opportunity for housing builders to raise additional questions and offer insight.

PARKING AND PROXIMITY TO AMENITIES

Housing builders agreed that parking requirements will be one of the most important considerations while implementing liveable missing middle housing. They mentioned that traditionally, SFD dwelling homebuyers expect there to be parking, so the more a missing middle unit looks like an SFD, the higher the expectation of off-street parking. They also echoed similar concerns to survey respondents and advisory committees that there is a tension between parking requirements, outdoor open space and green space, and urban forest. Generally, there needs to be a better understanding of vehicle ownership and use in the city.

A few housing builders agreed that parking requirements should be situational. In walkable areas already close to amenities, urban villages, schools, daycares, parks, street-level retail, and commercial uses, residential off-street parking may not be required at all. It is important to consider the price of these units and whether homebuyers may simply choose to purchase in another municipality that includes parking, though. In areas further out from urban villages, it may make more sense to require off-street parking on a per-unit basis.

An example from Vancouver came up, of an area where they built lots of missing middle housing but did not properly account for an increase in families moving into that housing. Since there were not enough schools and daycares in the area within walking distance, families ended up needing vehicles to drive their children to daycare and school every day. Schools and daycares take longer than retail and commercial to establish in growing neighbourhoods and the response can be slow. In cases where parking may be required for marketability, they suggested looking into Transportation Demand Management tools including carshare memberships for residents.

One housing builder mentioned that increasing densities even gently across the entire city will greatly increase retail and commercial viability along main urban village streets, because it will increase the number of households living within walking distance, reducing the need for both residential and commercial off-street parking spaces. In general, they suggested that new missing middle development could support more neighbourhood retail and commercial development.

LOCATION AND LOT SIZE

Focusing ‘missing middle’ development forms in specific locations within the neighbourhood block pattern was a large part of the discussion, too. Encouraging new townhouse forms on corner lots by increasing development potential could create many opportunities for traditional SFD neighbourhoods. This type of development on corners instead of mid-block areas is thought to retain the urban forest and usable green space, while discouraging ‘orphaned’ lots and larger lot assemblies. Some developers agreed that this is the right approach while others suggested that townhouses and adaptable units should be encouraged all over, including both mid-block and corner lots, depending on lot size.

HOUSING ECOSYSTEM AND AFFORDABILITY

The conversation sometimes focused on the need to balance competing interests within each existing SFD lot, including considering tree preservation, open space, parking, and unit density.

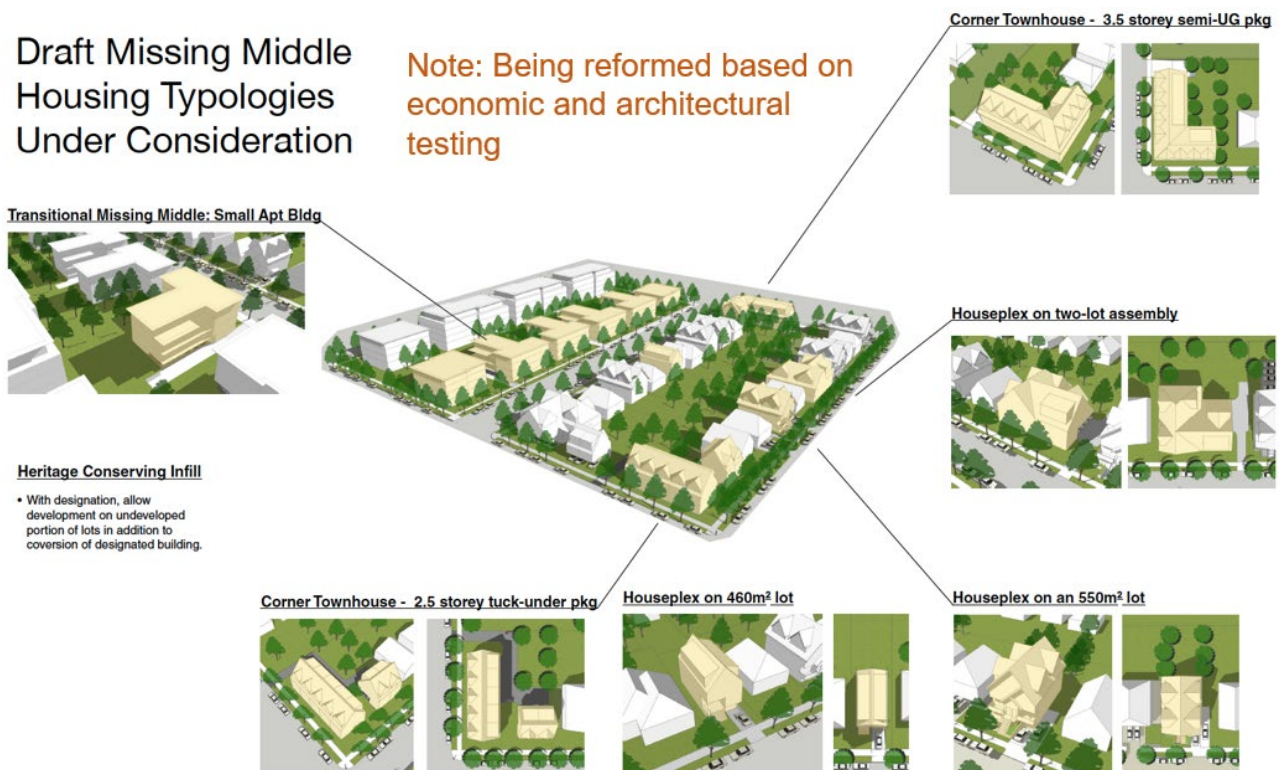
But considerations about the wider housing ecosystem played heavier in the conversation during the second meeting. They brought up questions about how other housing policies like the rental replacement policy will intersect with missing middle policies and made suggestions about how to achieve missing middle goals in other parts of the housing ecosystem. For example, suggestions came up that having tougher requirements in multi-family residential sites could achieve similar objectives, rather than focusing changes solely on missing middle development.

Some participants mentioned that missing middle housing as an alternative to SFDs will never become affordable given the construction costs and current land values. Two attendees suggested that the City should not look at missing middle forms to address affordability, but rather view them as diversifying the housing ecosystem and increasing housing filtering effects as they can encourage households to move beyond existing condo units.

INPUT FROM CITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Staff sat in on one or two meetings for each of the Advisory Committees to share preliminary information and analysis and gather initial feedback. The meetings involved a brief presentation given by staff to present designs for Draft Missing Middle Housing Typologies Under Consideration (see below), followed by a question-and-answer period for committee members to clarify information and offer insight and suggestions for the project as it moves forward. Staff have made tentative plans to reconnect with each of the committees after Council provides feedback on Phase 1 of the project.

Figure 4: Early conceptual massing models illustrating emerging thinking about typologies for architectural and economic testing.



EMERGING ADVISORY COMMITTEE THEMES

RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)

- Access/proximity to amenities is important.
- Usable and food-producing outdoor space is important.
- Support for family sized (3+ bedroom) units – especially townhouses.

The Renters' Advisory Committee discussed proximity to amenities, green space, food security, heritage conservation, family-sized units, affordable rental, redeveloping vacant sites, and exploring co-housing options. Members brought up the need to address access to amenities and encourage car-lite lifestyles through this work. In response to the perceived green space limitations in missing middle housing forms, a member suggested that rooftop patio gardens or green roofs should be encouraged. And in response to the potential for smaller unit sizes with increased density in new missing middle developments, a member highlighted that reasonably sized units offer a higher quality of life and flexibility for families, and townhouse forms are best suited to deliver comfortable 3+-bedroom units for larger households.

Members also expressed concern that secured affordable rental units are not economically viable with new missing middle housing, as most units would be geared towards stratified ownership. Staff confirmed that the preliminary economic analysis showed less viability for secured rental or affordable units but suggested that the City can continue to explore ways to encourage the inclusion of rental tenure and affordability in project outcomes.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATAC)

- Support reduced parking requirements when also requiring TDM strategies including shared vehicle spaces.
- Proximity to transit, and pricing on-street parking also key to less parking.
- Missing middle housing shouldn't compete with locations for mid-rise apartments.
- Want space for wider sidewalks and street tree root zones in boulevard.

Following a presentation on the Missing Middle Project, ATAC members provided their general support for parking modernization. Emphasis was on the need for the City to think creatively – not just about parking minimums or maximums. They concluded that efforts need to be tied to an actual Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program with support from housing builders.

Members supported the creation of parking relaxations in exchange for interventions such as enhanced and additional bike parking, storage, and maintenance stations; sidewalk widening and crosswalk improvements; car share spaces and credits; transit shelter upgrades; new pedestrian-scale lighting; shuttle bus and carpool services; cargo bike and bike share programs and credits; multi-modal wayfinding, signage, and transportation marketing services; monthly and annual transit pass programs; and undergrounding utilities to create more room for pedestrian and bicycle right of ways, among other interventions. Members also discussed that access to frequent and rapid transit is key to supporting missing middle housing across the city, as it will reduce the reliance on private automobiles and therefore reduce the need for off-street parking. One member

also mentioned that new missing middle housing development should only take the place of existing SFD residential housing, not existing mid-sized apartments.

One major focus of the discussion was on how to create a paradigm shift in attitudes about on-street parking and remove or reduce parking requirements in residential developments. On-site parking adds huge costs to housing that make affordable housing unachievable, and Resident Permit Only parking creates a false sense of ownership. Yet members suggested that removing parking requirements in new developments will have to be done carefully, especially in areas outside the downtown core.

There is a desire to regulate and charge for residential parking, but members suggested that this kind of program should apply to everyone, not just immediate residents, to create a more equitable system. As one member mentioned, residents should no longer consider the roadway to be “free” – and a program to collect permitting fees could divert funds to support low-income housing, accessible vehicles, and electric vehicle infrastructure instead. As well, one member suggested that requiring shared vehicle space and membership in all newer redevelopments is one way to reduce private vehicle reliance.

Overall, members agreed that the goals of the missing middle housing project should include ways to educate, support, and reinforce programs for car light and sustainable transportation use.

HERITAGE ADVISORY PANEL (HAPL)

- Major concerns re: widespread change to fabric and character
- Do not see a way designation with infill/addition can be competitive option versus new-build missing middle housing.
- Not worth the disruption if not for affordable housing.

Staff presented and panel members expressed their initial impressions of some of the threats and opportunities of the project. Although they acknowledge the need for more housing choice and the desire for redevelopment, there are still many concerns about the demolition of potential heritage properties for replacement throughout neighbourhoods, leading to widespread changes to the character and fabric of the city and decreasing affordability. Little of the existing housing stock is heritage designated or protected, and many owners oppose the creation of Heritage Conservation Areas in residential areas due to concerns about lowered property values. Members are concerned that this project has the potential to apply to entire SFD residential zoned areas of the city and fast-track demolition rather than preserve or convert existing heritage, which will have far-reaching consequences on future generations.

Therefore, extreme caution must be used, and specific pilot project areas should be tested first to get a sense of the consequences. Members analyzed Wilson Walk as a case study of what might occur should missing middle proceed and noted that the project falls short of the guidelines for attached residential development. Members brought up the fact that they have already witnessed the loss of older housing stock and altered streetscapes throughout residential areas.

One member expressed concern that this project will put existing multi-family heritage apartment buildings at risk of redevelopment, as well. They suggested that most redevelopment does not

increase affordability; it often replaces what is affordable with less affordable options. Older heritage housing stock is often converted into multiple units and rented out at below-market rates, and incentives to redevelop will displace existing low-income renters. Meeting new building code and STEP code requirements adds a disincentive to retain or renovate existing housing and registering or designating heritage is less financially advantageous from a real estate point of view.

Destabilization is also created when the opportunity for redevelopment is visible in the neighbourhood. If this initiative were applied across the city, members are concerned that the land value from redevelopment would impact wider housing affordability as property values could drastically increase. The wider housing ecosystem and neighbourhood demographic must be considered, including rental condominiums, higher-end developments, and maintaining a mixture of different residents. Overall, members suggested that the retention and reuse of buildings, from both an economic and environmental approach, is preferable, and exploration of sensitive infill should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

They also mentioned the need to ensure effective public community consultation processes, and to use these redevelopments as an opportunity to build community. One member mentioned that individual property owners will benefit from this project the most, so there should be a balanced approach with public input, even if it deviates from traditional public consultation processes.

ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL (ADP)

- Echoed some of HAPL's concerns
- Interest in creating accessible units
- Noting lack of missing middle housing supply

Panel members discussed similar topics to the HAPL, including concerns about the risk of increasing the rate of demolition of heritage homes, meeting STEP and building codes, ensuring projects fall within reasonable price ranges identified for missing middle forms, and balancing incentivization without maximizing land lift. Members identified some topics for further exploration, like tools for incentivizing adaptive reuse of existing buildings rather than demolition and redevelopment; and exploring the most recently built ground-oriented housing stock for a balanced understanding of potential missing middle housing stock.

One question emerged about creating additional opportunities for coach and laneway housing in behind heritage housing stock, where demolition should be discouraged; the challenge being that backyard zones provide green open space and urban forests and incentivizing larger building footprints will have to be carefully considered. Members also discussed the potential for missing middle housing forms to create accessible units for residents with mobility challenges, considering adaptable unit layouts. Members want to encourage Victoria to create a mix of housing types that meet inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and affordability goals.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)

Staff presented to committee members and invited follow-up feedback but have not yet received comments.