

Urban Indigenous Housing Engagement

Urban Indigenous Housing Dialogue Committee
Robron Community Centre
November 25th, 2019

M'AKOLA
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Urban Indigenous Housing Dialogue Committee would like to acknowledge the territory of the Ligwilda'xw peoples. The Urban Indigenous Housing Dialogue Committee is made up of and works alongside a variety of Indigenous organizations and community groups.

The Laichwiltach Family Life Society, Sasamans Society, KDC Health, Strathcona Community Health Network, The City of Campbell River, M'akola Development Services, and many other individuals have been regularly participating in meaningful dialogue to formulate a plan to tackle the complex issue of providing affordable housing options for the urban indigenous population in Campbell River. In response, they came together to form the Urban Indigenous Housing Dialogue Committee to better understand current housing issues and help develop solutions.

The City of Campbell River has a population of 35,138 (Statistics Canada, 2016) with a large and diverse urban Indigenous population. The City's population increased 5.1% from 2011-2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Campbell River is the nearest urban centre for many northern Vancouver Island Indigenous groups. Members of these communities rely on medical care and other services in Campbell River. The lack of affordable family sized rentals is making it extremely challenging for these, and all families, to relocate or remain in the City.

For the past several decades, Campbell River has attracted prospective buyers and renters with its affordability. The last few years have seen significant price increases in the local rental and real estate market. 1-Bedroom suite rental rates have risen from \$651 in 2015 to \$768 per month in 2018. 3+ Bedroom suites have risen from \$887 to \$1120 per month over the same timeframe which equates to a 26% increase over the last 4 years. As of October 2018, there was a vacancy rate of 0.4% for all apartments in Campbell River and the benchmark price for a single-family home was \$446,300 (Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, 2018).

The last National Household Survey was completed in 2011. At this time, 64% of dwellings in Campbell River were single family homes. Family sized dwellings are becoming increasingly unaffordable. Many families are struggling to find suitable, affordable housing options, that allow them to also pay for necessary additional services like daycare and everyday life expenses.

On Monday November 25th, 2019 the Urban Indigenous Housing Dialogue committee hosted an engagement event for all Nations and Indigenous communities. This engagement was designed with the intention to connect with the community and help inform the potential development of an affordable housing project in Campbell River. Members from the committee, volunteers, and students from the Master of Community Planning program at Vancouver Island University helped facilitate the table activities.

The event was broken into two separate events. The first event was a two-hour youth (1130am-1:30pm) engagement for approximately 20-25 Indigenous youth from Campbell River and surrounding region. The youth participated in interactive activities including the creation of the “perfect home” collages, a mapping exercise, a housing feature ranking survey, and an interactive iClicker activity.

The second half of the day was an Open House format (2-5pm), where anyone was welcome to join a table and discuss a range of table topics including:

1. What does your perfect home look like?
2. Where would you like to live in Campbell River?
3. What amenities would you like to see in Campbell River?
4. What does community mean to you?



Figure 1 Describing Rationale Behind the Creation of Collages

The number of Open House participants ebbed and flowed throughout its duration, but the room regularly had between 30-40 participants in it. There was steady, meaningful conversations occurring at each table. Participants provided critical feedback that will help inform the planning process for a new affordable housing development in Campbell River.

Attached is a summary of what we heard from participants. The intent of this report is to both to guide the planning process of the committee as well as serve as a supporting document for funding proposals and grant applications.

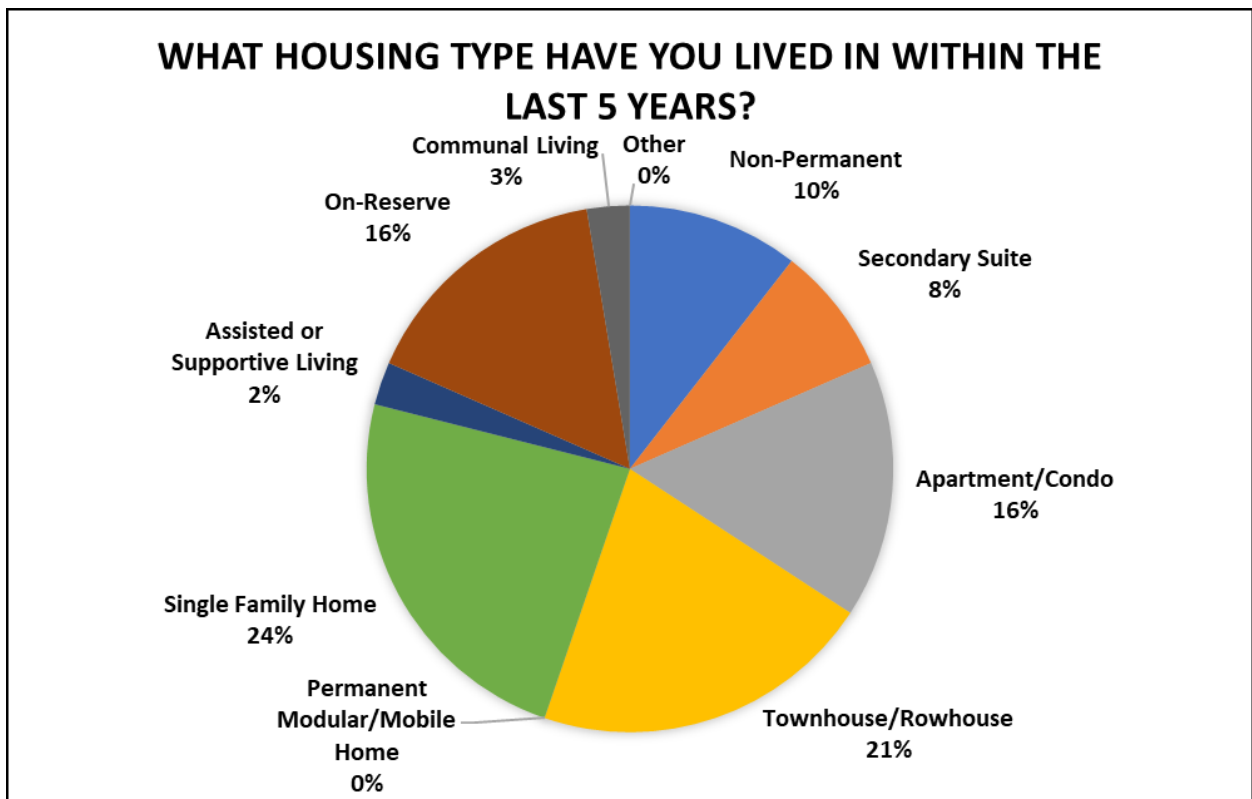
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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

Approximately 25 youth from local middle schools took part in the engagement. They were asked the following questions to ensure that any proposed housing development is responding to current and projected needs.

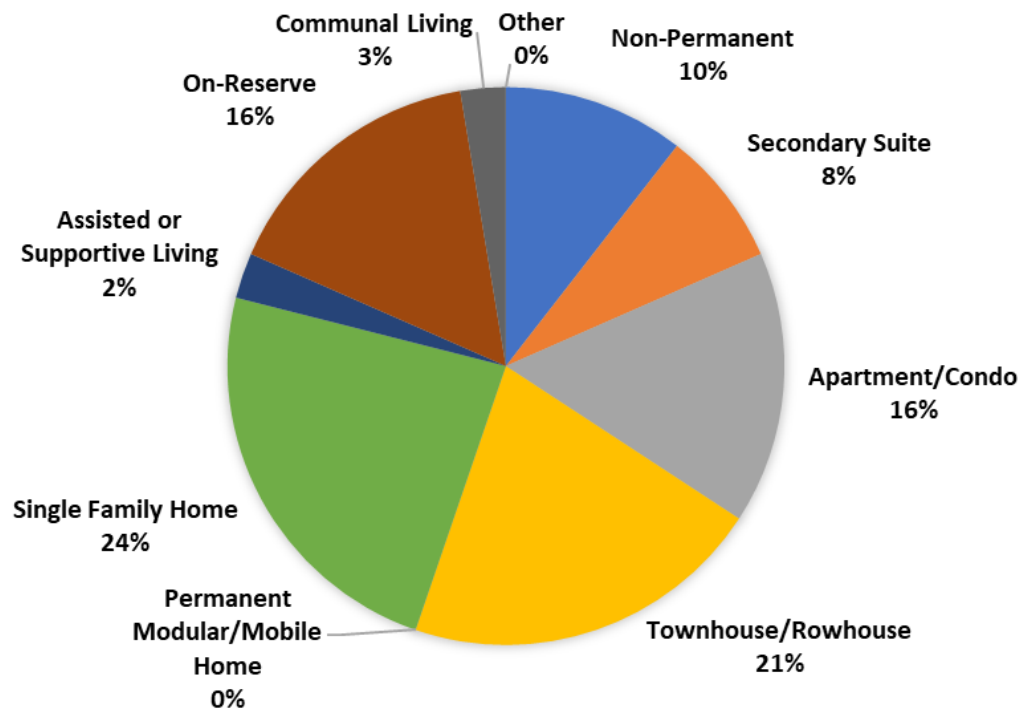
1. What does your perfect home look like?
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HIGHLIGHTS:

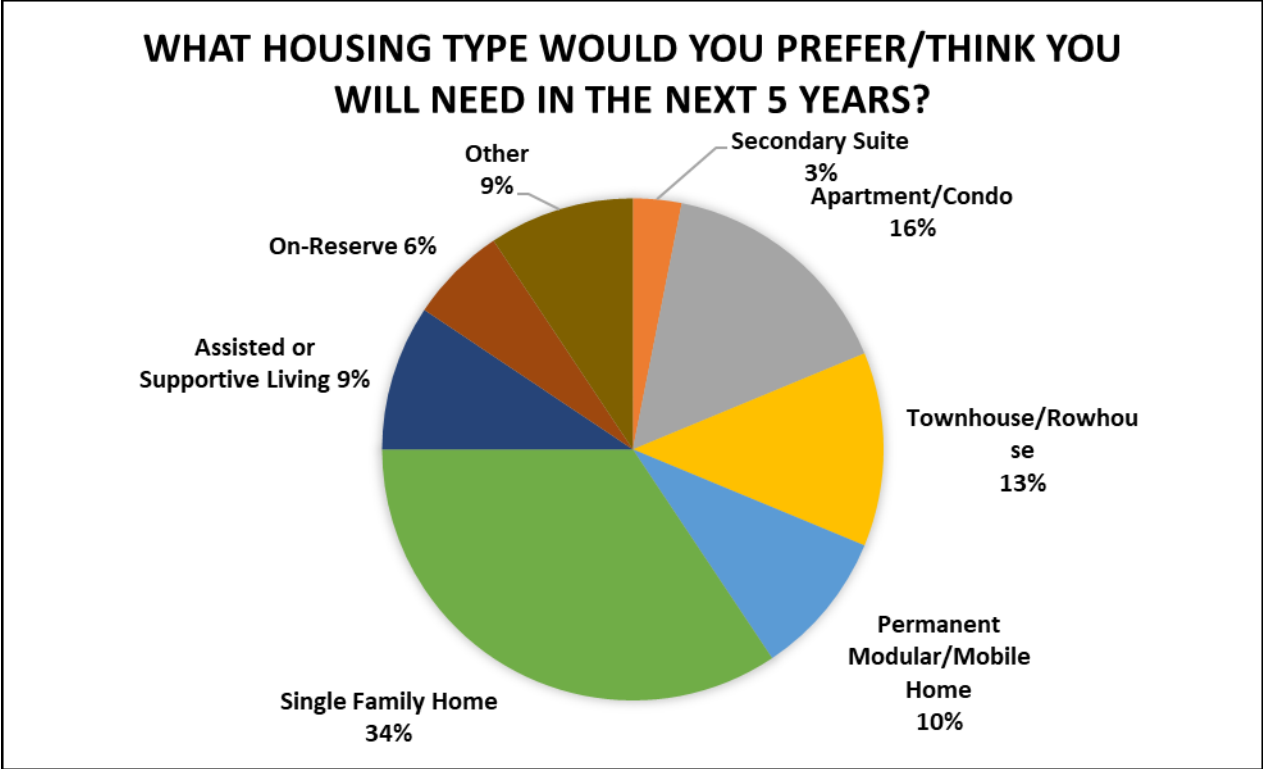
- A majority of participants are currently living in single-family homes in Campbell River
- Over 80% of the youth reported living in either a single-family home or Townhouse/Rowhouse
- 11% of participants are currently living on-reserve
- Only 7% of participants reported living in a condo or apartment

WHAT HOUSING TYPE HAVE YOU LIVED IN WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS?



HIGHLIGHTS:

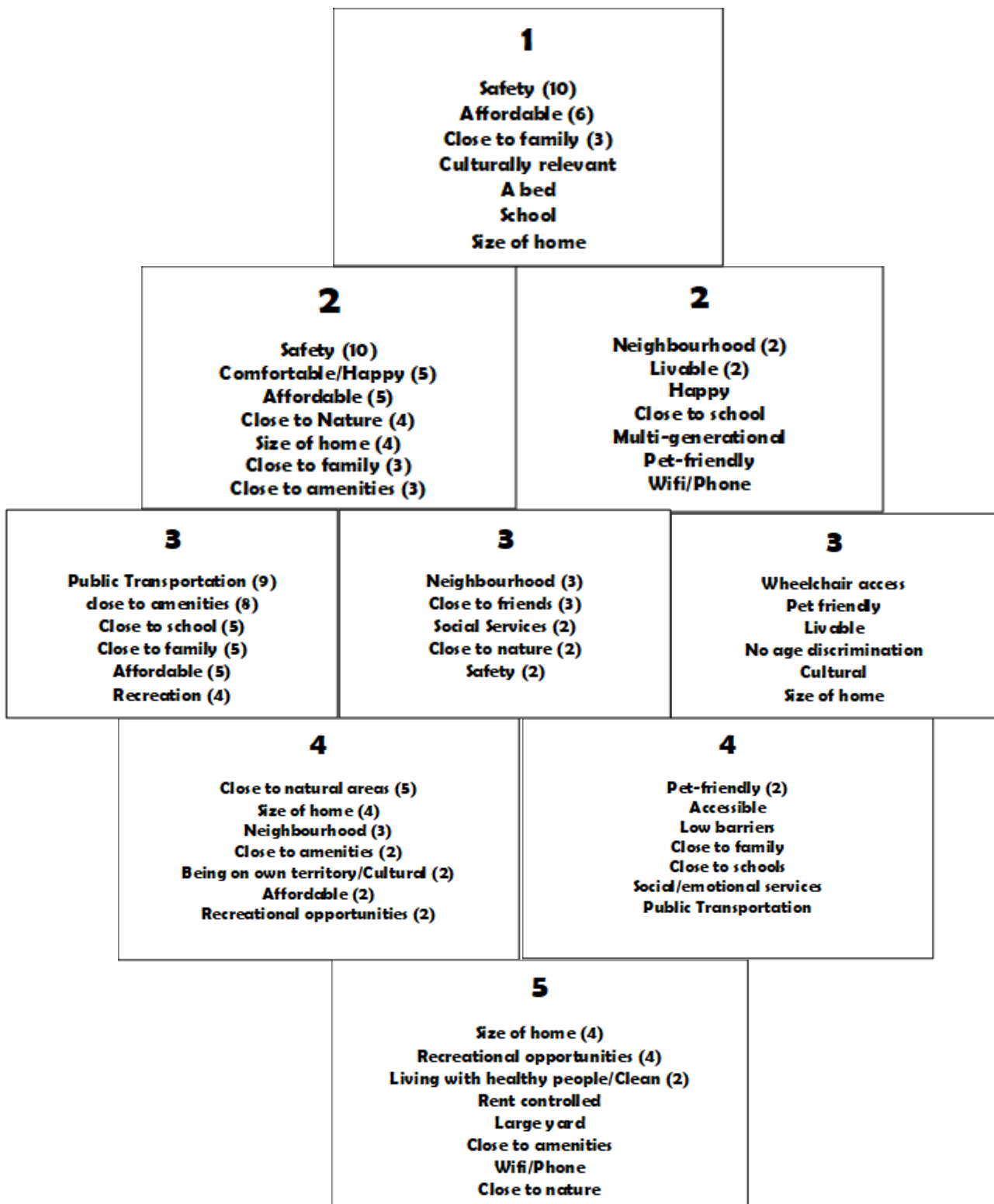
- Single-family homes and townhouse/rowhouse equate to nearly half of all housing types lived in within the last 5 years
- 10% of participants reported living in non-permanent housing (tent, car, friends' home, shelter, couch) . This was more prevalent among the youth population
- A majority of open house participants had lived in apartment/condos or townhouse/rowhouse's in the past 5 years
- 16% of participants have lived On-Reserve in the past 5 year



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Single family homes and townhomes/rowhouses were identified as a need for Campbell River
- Secondary suites were recognized as a need for the community despite not being selected as a preferred housing type in the next 5 years
- There was a diversity of housing types identified as preferred/needed outside of single-family homes

YOUTH HOUSING FEATURES RANKING: – MOST IMPORTANT (TOP SQUARE) TO LEAST IMPORTANT (BOTTOM SQUARE)



HOUSING FEATURES RANKING SUMMARY:

- Safety was the most important housing feature stated by participants
- Affordability was the second most important feature
- Homes that provided a general sense of comfort and happiness were desired
- Being close to family and friends was considered desirable
- The size of home was an important feature for some, but also much less important to others
- Proximity to public transportation and amenities were seen as neutral features
- Recreational opportunities were noted as a neutral or less important feature



Figure 2 Acknowledgment and Welcome

MAPPING EXERCISE SUMMARY

At both the youth and Open House sessions each table was provided a large map of Campbell River. Participants were asked to identify where they would like to live in Campbell River and why. The sticky dots have been consolidated on to one map to show potential clustering.

Participants stated the following or a similar variation when describing why they selected their preferred place to live in Campbell River:

- A large proportion of participants chose locations that were within a 2.5-kilometer radius of downtown
- Areas that had easy access to public transit were preferred
- Safety
- Familiarity of area
- Close to school/parks
- Connectivity
- Family & friends
- Affordable
- Amenities
- Low income housing options
- View of the ocean
- Because it's my current home/area

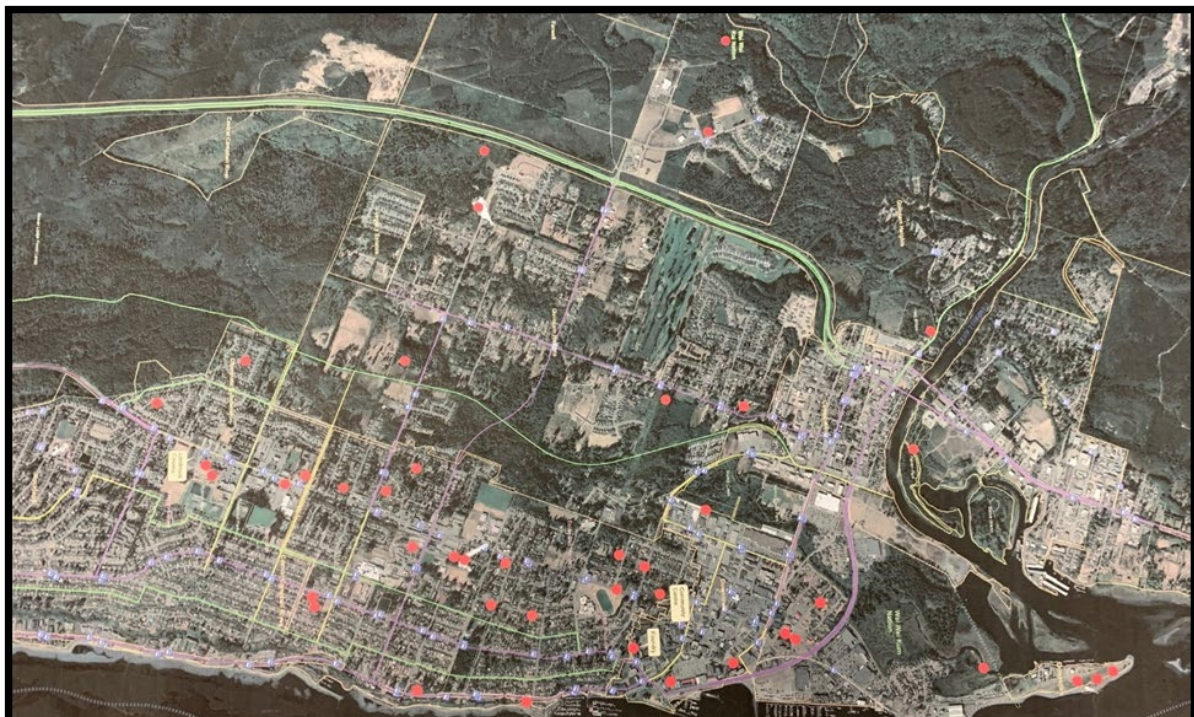


Figure 4 Preferred Places to Live in Campbell River as Identified by Participants



Figure 5 Preferred Places to Live in Campbell River as Identified by Participants

TRADITIONAL TERRITORY MAP

Participants were invited to place a sticky dot on their traditional territory. Individuals were generally eager to share details about their traditional territory.



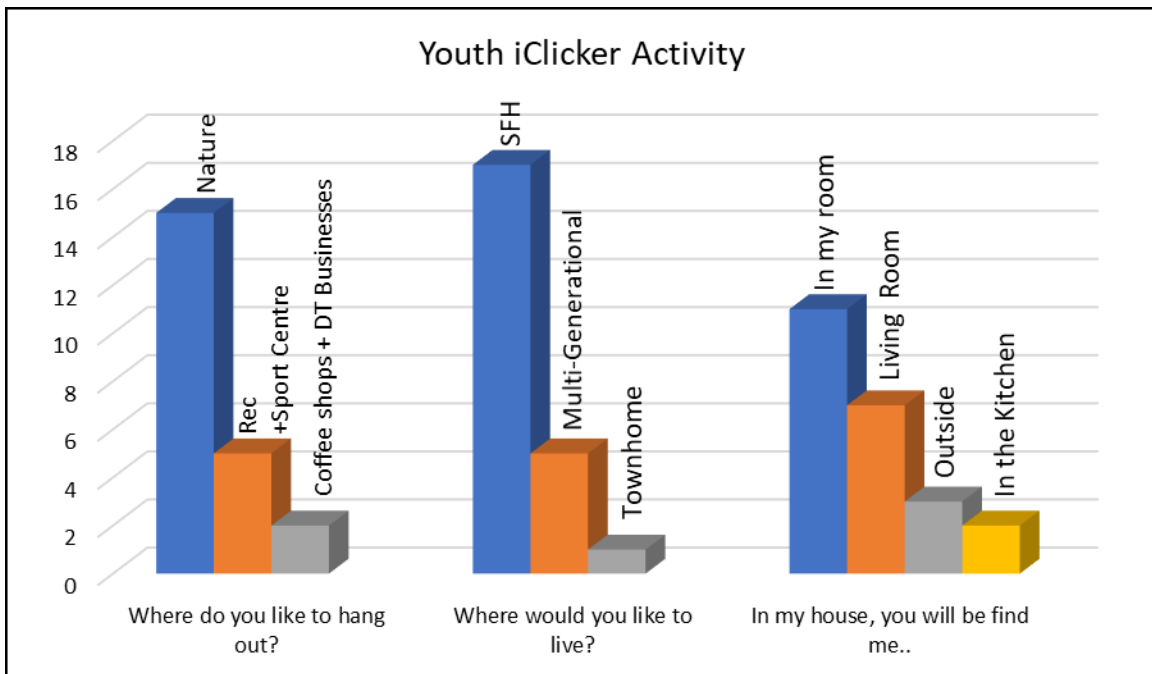
Figure 6 Traditional Territory of Participants

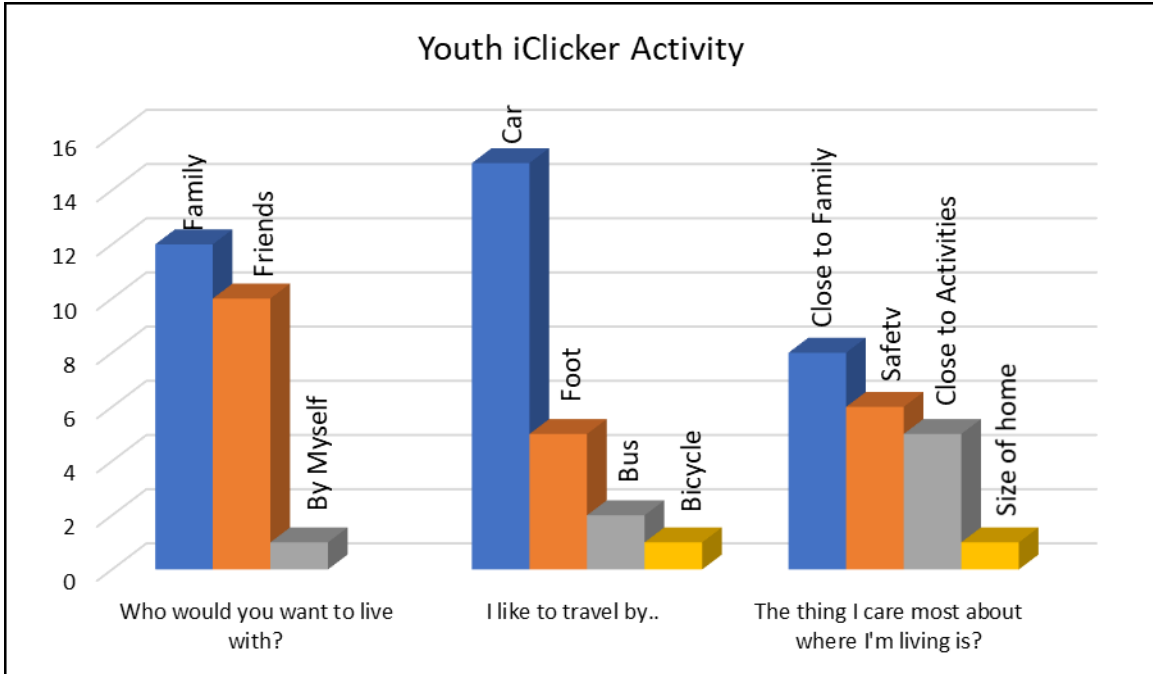
YOUTH ICLICKER ACTIVITY RESULTS

IClicker ACTIVITY SUMMARY

The youth engagement included an interactive iClicker activity. The youth were presented with different questions via a PowerPoint presentation and were asked to answer by clicking the corresponding letter on their iClicker remote. There were a few fun questions that asked their favorite dessert and whether they preferred iced coffee or hot chocolate to increase the enjoyment and participation in the activity. The following six questions were analyzed for this report.

1. Where do you like to hang out?
2. Where would you like to live?
3. In my house you will find me..?
4. Who would you want to live with?
5. I like to travel by..?
6. The thing I care most about where I'm living is?





KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The youth heavily favored being in nature compared to the sport and recreation centre or downtown coffee shops and businesses
- Single-family homes were considered preferential over townhomes and apartments; however size of home was least important compared to close to family, safety, and close to activities. This can be seen as a willingness to consider diversity of housing type
- Over 20% of the youth want to live in a multi-generational home
- A majority of youth regularly travelled by car with on-foot being second most popular
- Living with family in a safe environment is considered most important



TABLE TOPIC DISCUSSIONS

Youth Participants were invited to create a personal collage using pictures or words that they thought would help create the “perfect home”. Magazines were provided to cut out pictures and words to create the collages. Participants were also given markers and pens to draw or write whatever they wished on their collage. They were challenged to not only think of physical objects but to consider their senses and memories and the role they play in determining “perfect home” features. Table facilitators conversed with the youth and questioned why they chose the items they did for their collage. Some of the participants even presented their collages in front of the entire group.



Figure 7 Collage Creation

The collages were each unique, yet a few key themes emerged. The youth gravitated toward indoor spaces that looked cozy and comforting. There were also several pictures of natural spaces and animals. The other key theme that emerged was material goods such as indoor and outdoor furnishings and toys.



Figure 8 Completed Youth Collages

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT CONCLUSION:

Overall, the youth engagement was considered a success. Participation levels exceeded expectations; the activities were well received, and feedback was generally positive. Some of the youth group were interested in continuing engagement in the future to ensure their voice is heard in the shaping of their community. A copy of the engagement summary will be provided to schools.

OPEN HOUSE SESSION

The second half of the day was an Open House format (2-5pm), where anyone was welcome to join a table and discuss a range of table topics. There were informal conversations led by the facilitators and guided by the following questions:

1. What does your perfect home look like?
2. Where would you like to live in Campbell River?
3. What amenities would you like to see in Campbell River?
4. What does community mean to you?

WHAT DOES YOUR PERFECT HOME LOOK LIKE?

We asked the same question during the Open House session without the collage creation component. A Word Art depiction is used to ensure each participants thoughts and ideas of the “perfect home” are clearly presented in this report. Participants consistently identified the need for more larger sized family homes in Campbell River.



WHAT DOES COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?

Participants were given the opportunity to discuss what community meant to them. They were able to present their thoughts verbally, written, or confidentially through private written submissions or private discussions with committee members or facilitators. There are a significant number of participants who viewed their desired community as a safe and social space where they were able to express their cultural values and beliefs. A number



of people noted the importance of having their family with them or nearby and a sense of belonging. The affordability and livability of housing and community was discussed throughout.

WHAT AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

The youth engagement and Open House participants both identified family-oriented amenities as an important component for creating a complete community. Affordable childcare and after school centres were considered to be a crucial component as well. Many participants wanted to see more prescribed outdoor spaces like basketball courts, skateboard parks, outdoor markets, and outdoor swimming pools. A clear need for social supports were evidenced by the request of resource centres, life skills centres, friendship centres, and trauma crisis support centres.



CONCLUSION

The youth engagement and Open House event had great turnouts and participation. It was obvious that the community wanted their voices to be heard to help provide direction for the development of affordable housing in Campbell River for the urban Indigenous population. There is a clear need for the development of affordable family-sized units in the region. The current housing market has a large proportion of single-family homes that are steadily increasing in price as the region continues to grow in population and popularity. The local market housing continuum would benefit from the addition of townhomes and multi-bedroom apartments to help provide more affordable options for the urban Indigenous population.

NEXT STEPS

- Identify and secure land for development
- Explore the public's appetite for larger apartments (3-4 Bedroom) as an alternative to Townhomes and Single-Family Homes
- Submit funding applications to BC Housing/CMHC
- Explore alternative funding sources
- Ongoing engagement with the community to help inform the process