

Garden Suite Study



Community Survey #2 Results

June-August 2018

Table of contents

1. Survey Results5

Appendix A - Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents15

Appendix B - [Community Survey #2 Tool](#)

Appendix C - [Written comments](#)



Survey results

Between June and August, 2018 a total of 711 surveys were completed online and in hard copy. The results of this survey are summarized in the pages below. For open-ended questions, key themes and related sample comments are outlined to highlight topics where the most responses were received.

Overview of what we heard

Survey responses indicated the following:

- Support for allowing larger garden suites on larger lots.
- Strong support for on-site parking for garden suites.
- A strong desire to ensure garden suite regulations are enforced.
- Support for neighbour input on garden suite applications.
- Support for a fast approval process.
- Strong support for the owner living on the property.
- Support for an owner living on site.

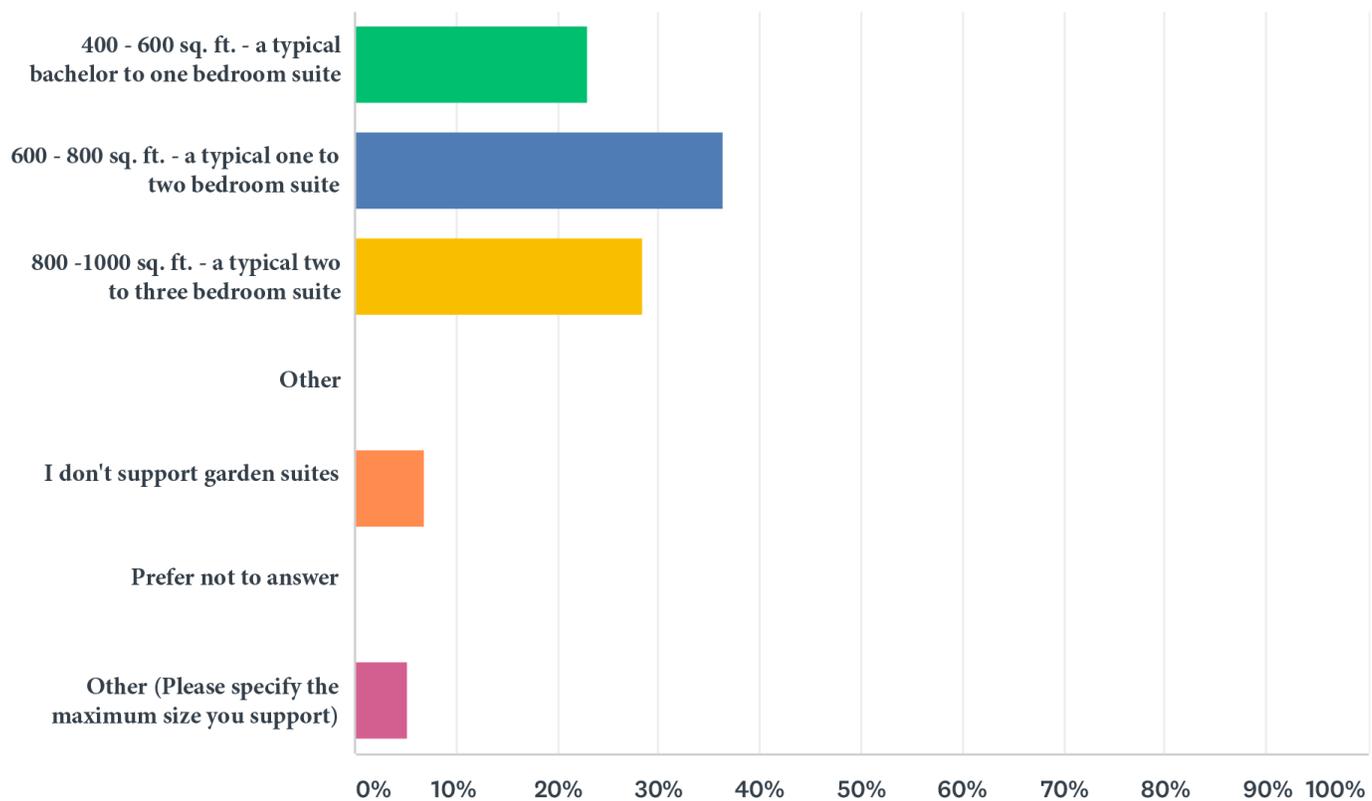
How input will be used

The information gathered will help to inform the draft regulations for garden suites. While decision making ultimately rests with Council, the District is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for the public to provide input that will ultimately help shape a potential regulatory framework for garden suites in Saanich.

The draft regulatory framework will be available for public review and comment later this fall.

Q1: If garden suites were permitted, what size maximum would you support?

Answered: 693 Skipped: 18



Answer choices	Responses	
400 - 600 square feet - a typical bachelor to one bedroom suite	22.94%	159
600 - 800 square feet - a typical one to two bedroom suite	36.22%	251
800 - 1000 square feet - a typical two to three bedroom suite	28.28%	196
I don't support garden suites	6.93%	48
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0
Other (Please specify the maximum size you support)	5.63%	39
Total	100%	693

Q1: Continued - Other (please specify the maximum size you would support)

Common themes include:

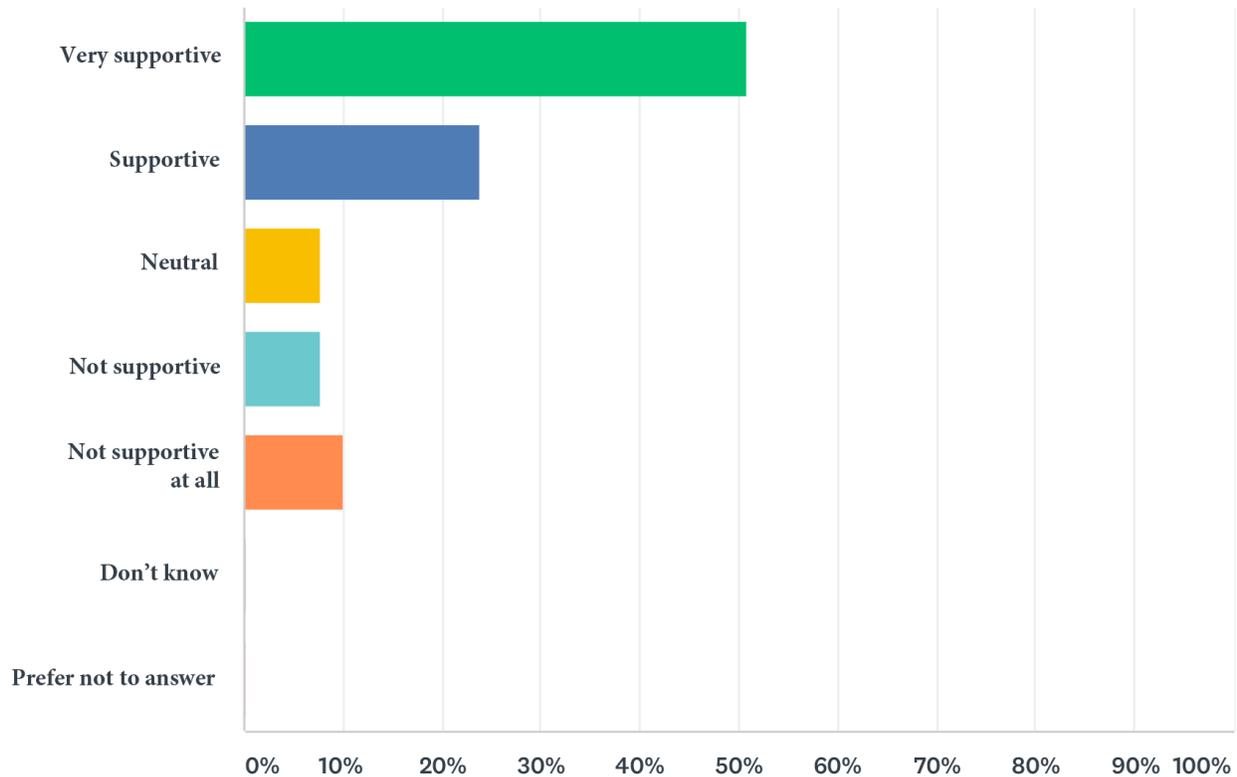
- The building size and height should correspond to the size of the lot. A larger lot can accommodate a larger suite.
- Specific buildings sizes recommended based on lot size.
- Size of the garden suite should correspond to the size of the main dwelling. For example, some respondents believe that the garden suite should not be bigger than the main dwelling.
- The regulations should account for total lot coverage, including the garden suite and the main dwelling.
- Size should be sensitive to neighbouring properties.

Comments that highlight some of these themes are outlined below:

- *“Should be based on the size of the lot and the existing house, so you can have a maximum combined percentage coverage, with a maximum of 1,000 sq ft.”*
- *“Depends on size of lot and distance to next neighbours home.”*

Q2: If garden suites were permitted, how supportive would you be of allowing larger garden suites on larger lots?

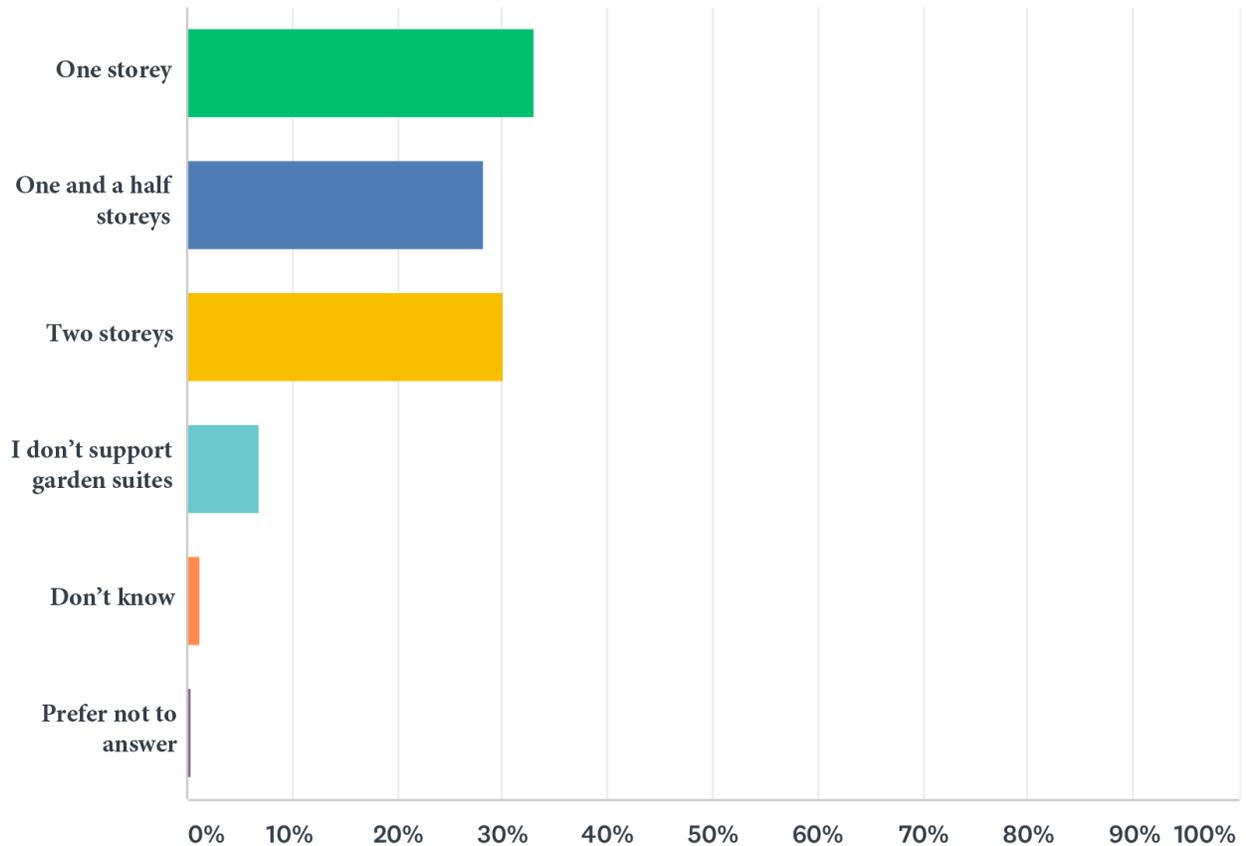
Answered: 707 Skipped: 4



Answer choices	Responses	
Very supportive	51.06%	361
Supportive	23.76%	168
Neutral	7.65%	54
Not supportive	7.78%	55
Not supportive at all	10.04%	71
Don't know	0.28%	2
Prefer not to answer	0.28%	2
Total	100%	707

Q3: Keeping in mind the maximum size you support, if garden suites were permitted in Saanich what is the maximum height that you would support?

Answered: 706 Skipped: 5



Answer choices	Responses	
One storey	32.86%	232
One and a half storeys	28.33%	200
Two storeys	30.31%	214
I don't support garden suites	6.80%	48
Don't know	1.27%	9
Prefer not to answer	0.42%	3
Total	100%	706

Q4: Do you have any comments on the size and height of garden suites?

Common themes include:

Building height and size

- The size and height of the garden suite should fit within the neighbourhood context. Garden suites should match, or be smaller than the surrounding houses.
- The size of garden suites should coordinate with the size of the principal dwelling.
- Specific recommendations for height.
- Recommendation to follow the current height regulations for accessory buildings.
- Request that Saanich consider the cost of construction when adopting building size and height regulations.
- Size and height regulations should consider setbacks, as well as design guidelines.
- Support for two-storey garden suites that are constructed over a garage.

Lot Size

- The size of garden suites should be proportional to the size of the lot.

Neighbourhood impacts

- Recommendation that the size and height of garden suites should consider potential impacts on adjacent properties such as loss of privacy and views, and shading.

Additional housing supply

- Support garden suites as a way to add needed housing supply in Saanich.
- Support additional housing supply, but want to ensure that neighbours are not impacted negatively.
- Do not support garden suites as a way to provide additional housing. Garden suites will only create more problems in neighbourhoods.

Parking

- Onsite parking should be a requirement for garden suites.

Comments that highlight some of these themes are outlined below:

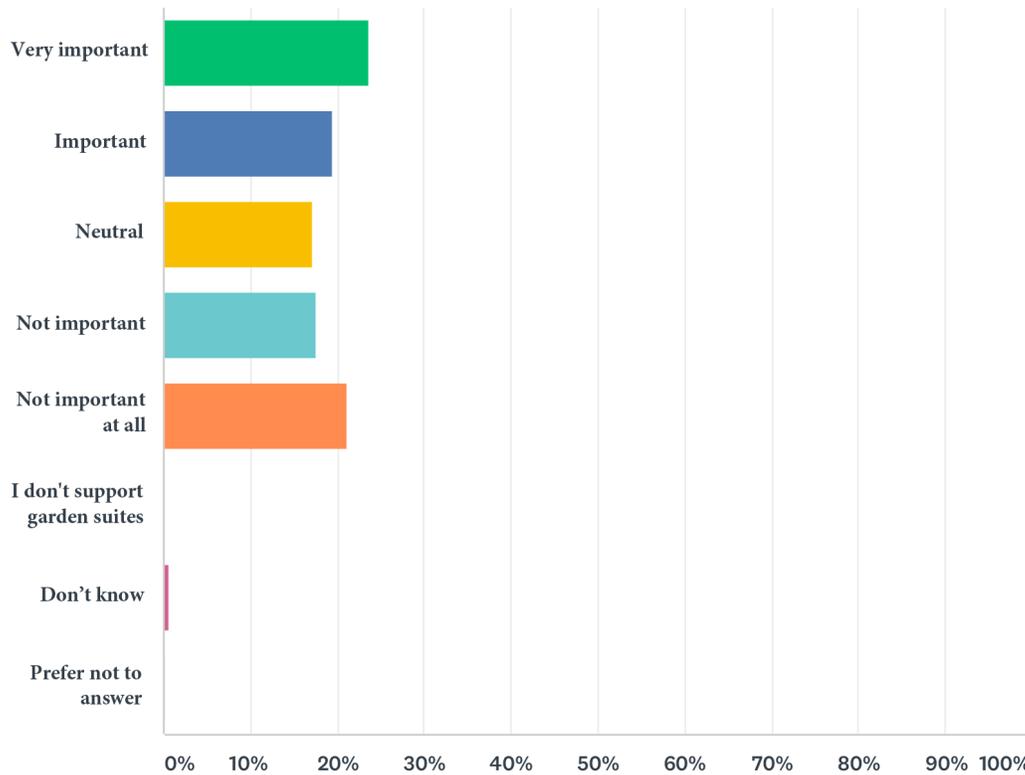
- *“Suite height should not exceed that of the nearest neighbours. Suite size, together with main house size, should be proportional to lot size. Suite size should not exceed 1/2 the size of the main house.”*
- *“I think the height should be determined by the nearby houses, where the suite is located on the lot, and how the height will impact neighbours privacy and light.”*
- *“I suggest height should be tied to setback – the further from the property line, the greater the height permitted.”*

Q4: Continued

- *“Maximum size should be variable based on lot size and should be at least as large as permitted for accessory buildings under current zoning bylaw. I support some provision for increased height over 1 storey depending on the situation (suites over a detached garage seem like a natural and reasonable idea).”*
- *“I would like to see garden suites kept on the smaller size. The larger the suite the more people that can live there which impacts noise, parking and traffic in neighbourhoods. I think there has to be balance between giving home owners financial help, more housing for people and the right for neighbours to enjoy their homes.”*
- *“With so many people struggling to find accommodation, I feel that as long as the size of the garden suite is reasonable for the neighbourhood, it should not be a problem. I understand that parking may be a concern for some people, so provided that the landlord can provide onsite parking for the tenants' car (s), then I believe the suite size shouldn't negatively impact any neighbours.”*
- *“The maximum height and size should be limited as required to protect the privacy and impact on neighboring properties. This should also include onsite parking and ensure that any development fit the character of the community.”*

Q5: If garden suites were permitted, how important is it to you to have an opportunity for neighbour input on individual garden suite applications?

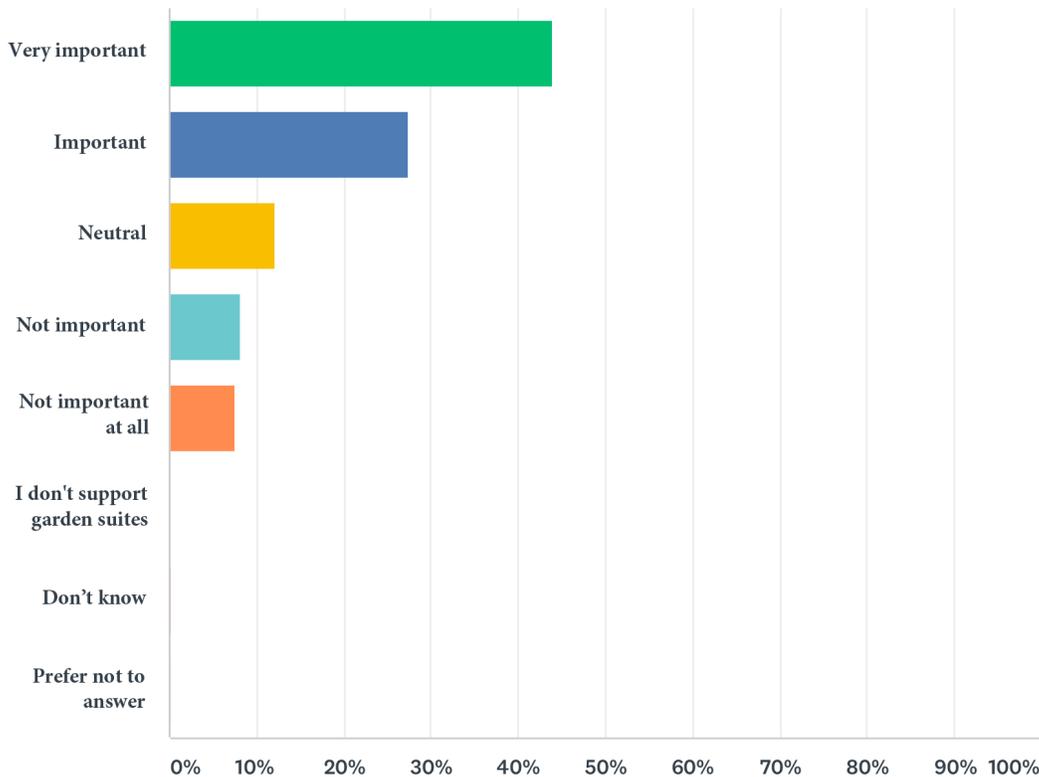
Answered: 699 Skipped: 12



Answer choices	Responses	
Very important	23.46%	164
Important	19.46%	136
Neutral	17.31%	121
Not important	17.60%	123
Not important at all	21.32%	149
I don't support garden suites	0.00%	0
Don't know	0.72%	5
Prefer not to answer	0.14	1
Total	100%	699

Q6: If garden suites were permitted, how important is it to you to have a fast approval process?

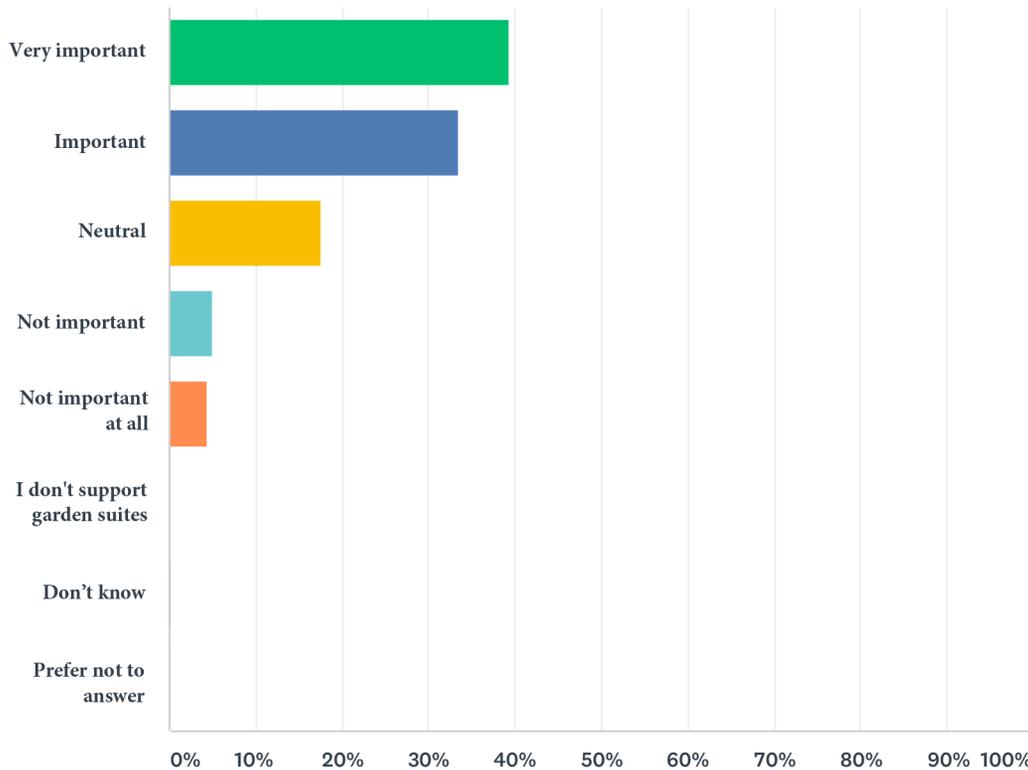
Answered: 698 Skipped: 13



Answer choices	Responses	
Very important	44.13%	308
Important	27.36%	191
Neutral	12.18%	85
Not important	8.17%	57
Not important at all	7.59%	53
I don't support garden suites	0.00%	0
Don't know	0.29%	2
Prefer not to answer	0.29%	2
Total	100%	699

Q7: How important is enforcement of the regulations to your support for garden suites?

Answered: 695 Skipped: 16



Answer choices	Responses	
Very important	39.14%	272
Important	33.38%	232
Neutral	17.55%	122
Not important	5.04%	35
Not important at all	4.46%	31
I don't support garden suites	0.00%	0
Don't know	0.29%	2
Prefer not to answer	0.14%	1
Total	100%	695

Q8: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the potential legalization of garden suites in Saanich?

Common themes include:

Parking

- On-site parking should be a requirement.
- Concerns with cars parking on boulevards.
- Concerns about crowding on the street and a lack of space for cars to park. Also concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety when the streets are lined with parked cars.
- Limited availability of parking may encourage more people to choose other modes of transportation such as biking or public transit.

Enforcement

- Enforcement is necessary to address neighbourhood impacts such as crowded streets (due to parking), parking conflicts, and noise.
- Regulations should be enforceable. If the regulations and guidelines are clear, then enforcement won't be necessary.
- Saanich should be enforcing its bylaws. Many respondents believe that the regulations for secondary suites are not being enforced.
- Consider a different enforcement process. For example, create a process that doesn't rely on complaints. Alternatively, allow complaints from residents who are not neighbours.

Approval Process

- Review garden suite applications on a case-by-case basis. Allow for neighbour input.
- Create a fast approval process. If the regulations and guidelines are clear, then neighbour input isn't necessary.

Support for Garden Suites

- Support for regulations.
- A desire to have the regulations implemented quickly to allow owners to proceed with their development plans.
- Garden suites can contribute to housing affordability in Saanich. For example, they can provide rental income to an owner.

Additional Housing Supply

- Garden suites can create a greater supply of housing

Not Supportive of Garden Suites

- Garden suites will add value to properties, thus helping owners, but hurting potential buyers.
- Some respondents believe that Saanich does not enforce its bylaws. These people argue that the issue of high cost of housing could be addressed through enforcement of existing regulations (e.g. for secondary suites).
- Changes to the regulations for accessory buildings should be made before garden suite regulations are implemented.

Q8: Continued...

Comments that highlight some of the above themes include:

- *“I am very concerned about parking and street safety, we have no sidewalks on our street. Where are extra garden suite cars parking on already congested parts of the street?”*
- *“Enforcement is very important because there is no point in making rules and regulations if you don't enforce them. I also believe the rules around garden suites should be simple to understand. Finally, I support garden suites but would like to see them limited in size to keep the maximum number of tenants to a small size such as 2. The reason is that if many houses on a street have suites and the suites are large and accommodate 3 or 4 people, then the traffic and parking issues could really lower the quality of life on some streets. By keeping the number of tenants per suite low, then the quality of life can be kept higher in the neighborhood.”*
- *“My primary concern is one of parking - off street parking should be provided for the inhabitants of the Garden Suite. This would go hand in hand when the overall design/placement is being considered.”*
- *“Providing additional parking spaces should not be a major factor. Lack of available parking spaces, will encourage the use of bicycles and public transport as an alternative.”*
- *“Approval should be a case by case basis with surrounding properties input a consideration along with viability to not look out of place and suitable parking addressed.”*
- *“I think it's a great idea to have garden suites and secondary suites and important to create regulations that are flexible, respectful of privacy, current residents/owners and a reasonable and responsive / fast review and enforcement process at all stages.”*
- *“Neighbour input on design/DP can be very valuable as they know the context, site-specific concerns, etc. Build into the process a chance for neighbours to comment early (perhaps via the applicant to the planner who processes the DP) and limit comments to DP issues. Neighbour comment on whether a garden suite should be approved / requiring a rezoning is not a good policy as it limits uptake, creates unnecessary risks and burden for homeowners, and become arbitrary.”*
- *“We need more housing, they should be allowed. Also, it is a great benefit to homeowners as a mortgage helper.”*

Q8: Continued...

- *“Hopefully this process will at least indirectly make it clear to Council and staff that enforcement of existing bylaws pertaining to secondary suites, onstreet parking, etc. is absolutely critical. Until we see some evidence of this, I would be reluctant to support the legalization of garden suites in the near future.”*

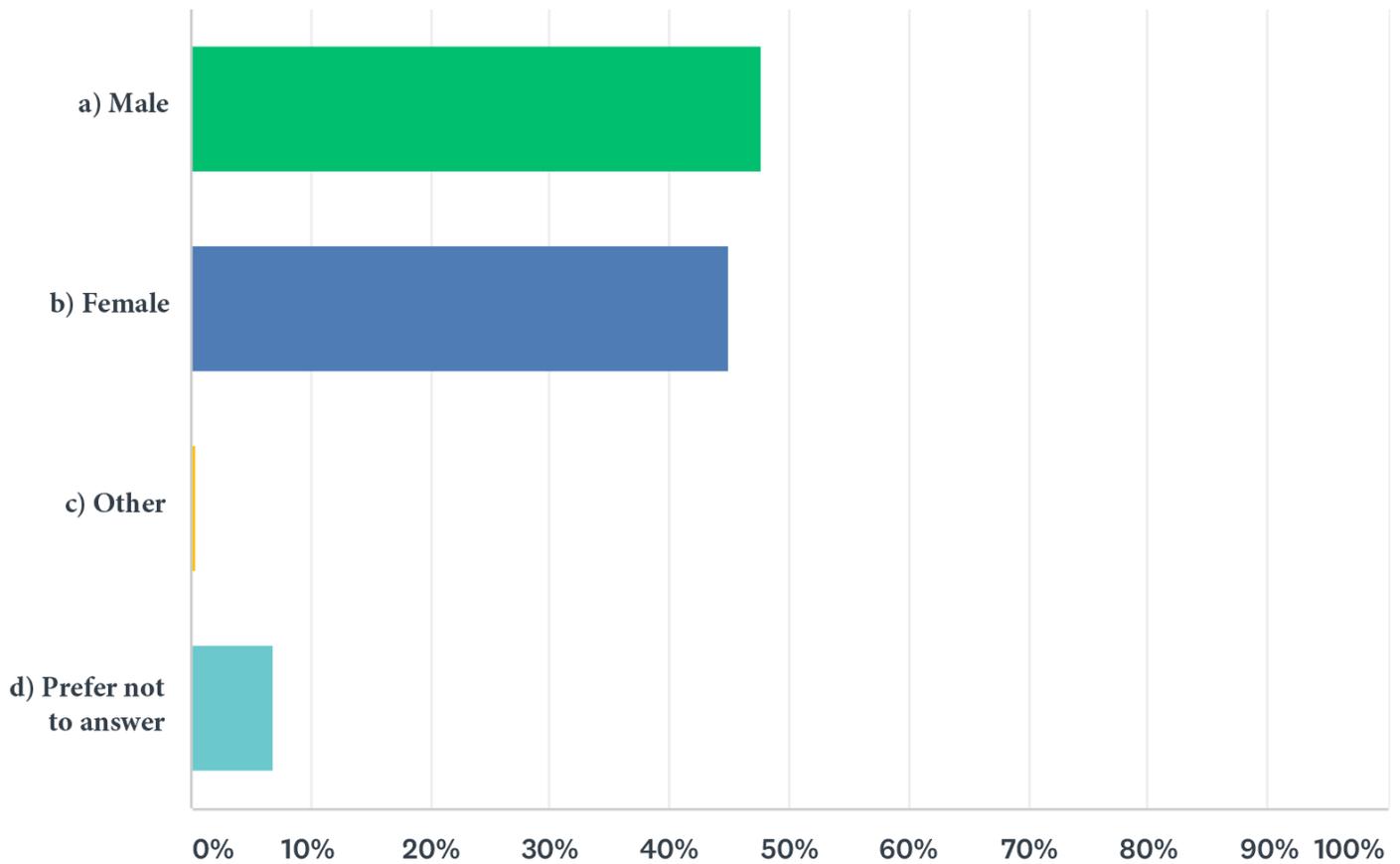
Other Issues

A range of other issues were identified by survey respondents. These include a desire to allow garden suites on rural properties, concerns about property values and taxation, vacation rentals, owner occupation, and a desire to preserve trees and green space.

- *“Should be allowed in all of Saanich and not just permitted in urban areas. We in rural areas need these too.”*
- *“I have no issue with garden suites as long as they are legal. This will ensure that the owners are paying appropriate property taxes to cover the overall increased infrastructure impact of more people living on the property.”*
- *“The landlord should live on the property. They should not be allowed a suite in the house AND a gardens suite. There should be an off street parking bylaw. And all this should be enforced properly. They should not be allowed to rent as short term Air BnBs.”*
- *“It's important to have a balance of the housing needed for our community to fit into the existing neighbourhoods. This can be achieved with good design reviews and follow through to ensure compliance with the garden suite regulations. If done well then it will be a great tool to add invisible density to the municipality. Maintain the urban tree strategy and enforce the need to keep existing large trees and vegetation for screening. Green space on properties are a huge draw in Saanich and we should value what we currently have and only enhance it with the garden suites.”*

Gender

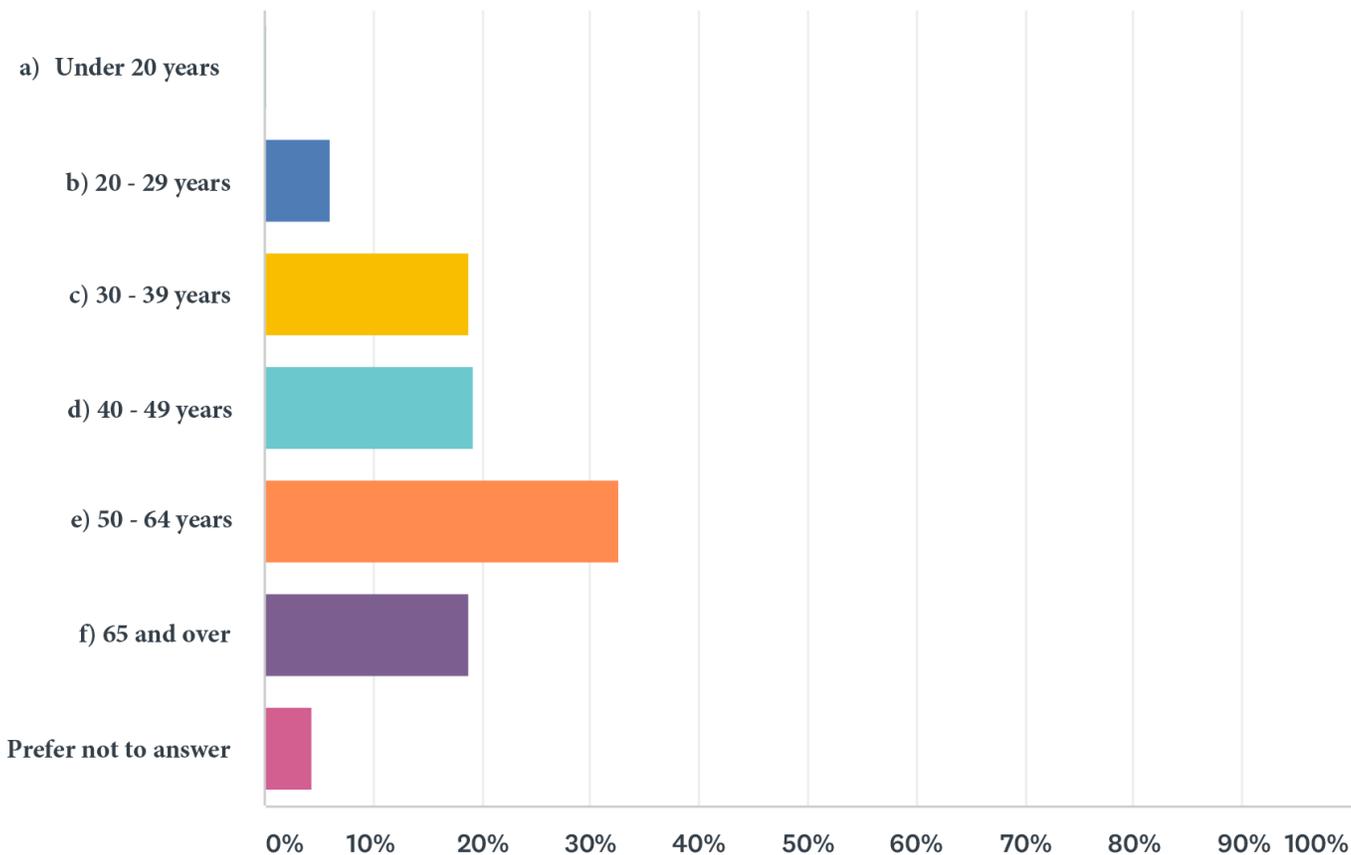
Answered: 626 Skipped: 85



Answer choices	Responses	
a) Male	47.76%	299
b) Female	44.89%	281
c) Other	0.48%	3
d) Prefer not to answer	6.87%	43
Total	100%	626

Age

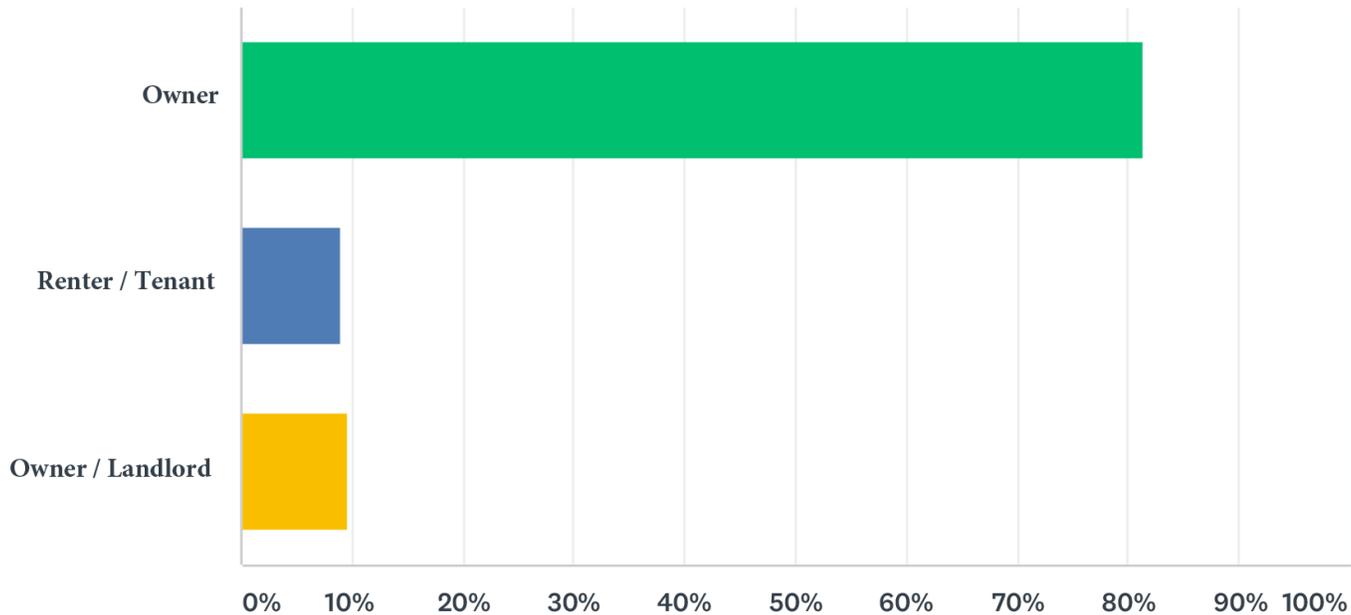
Answered: 697 Skipped: 14



Answer choices	Responses	
a) Under 20 years	0.14%	1
b) 20-29 years	6.17%	43
c) 30-39 years	18.79%	131
d) 40-49 years	19.23%	134
e) 50-64 years	32.71%	228
f) 65 and over	18.65%	130
Prefer not to answer	4.30%	30
Total	100%	697

Housing situation of respondents

Answered: 696 Skipped: 15



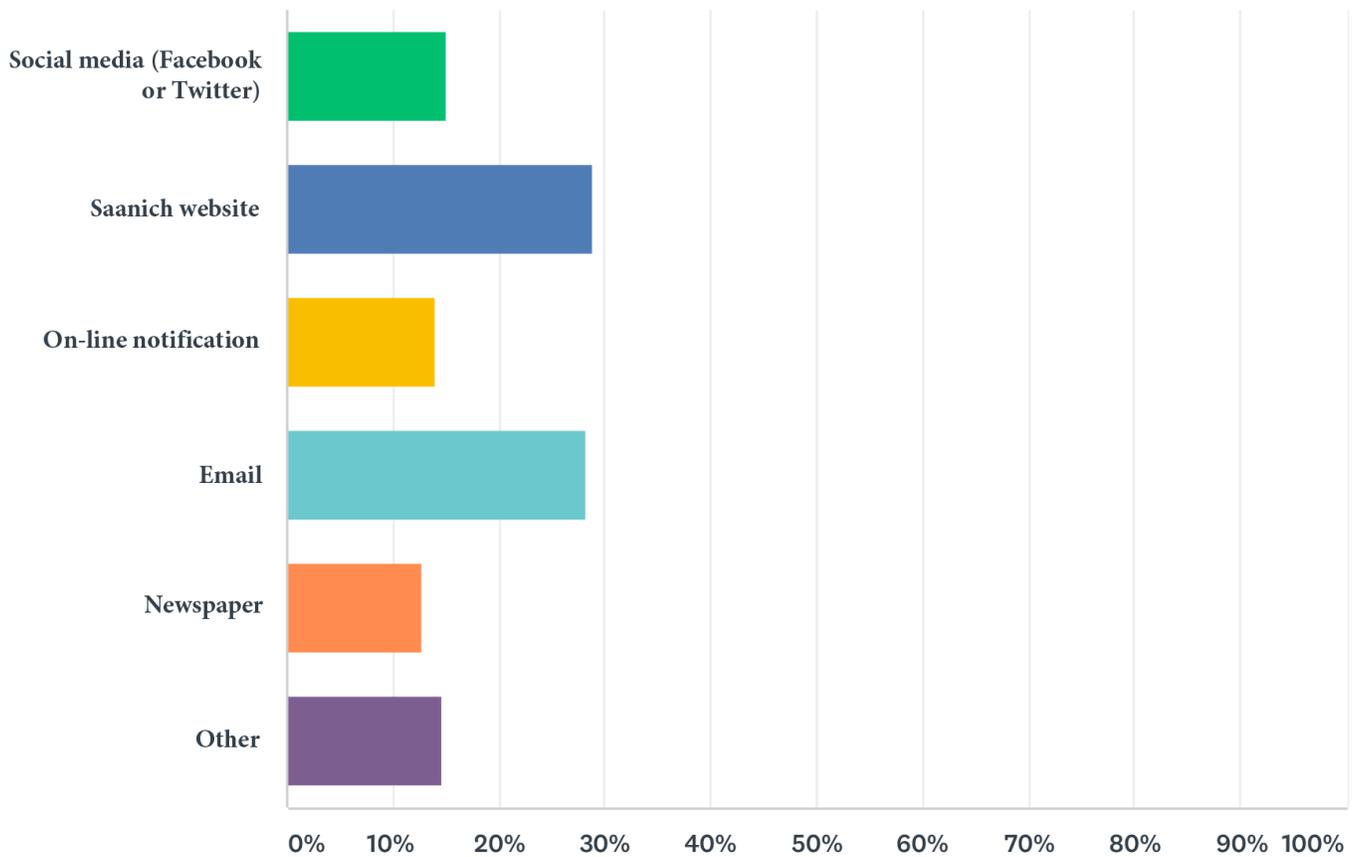
Answer choices	Responses	
Owner	81.18%	565
Renter / tenant	9.20%	64
Owner / Landlord	9.63%	67
Total	100.00%	696



How residents heard about this public engagement

*Choose all that apply from the list below?

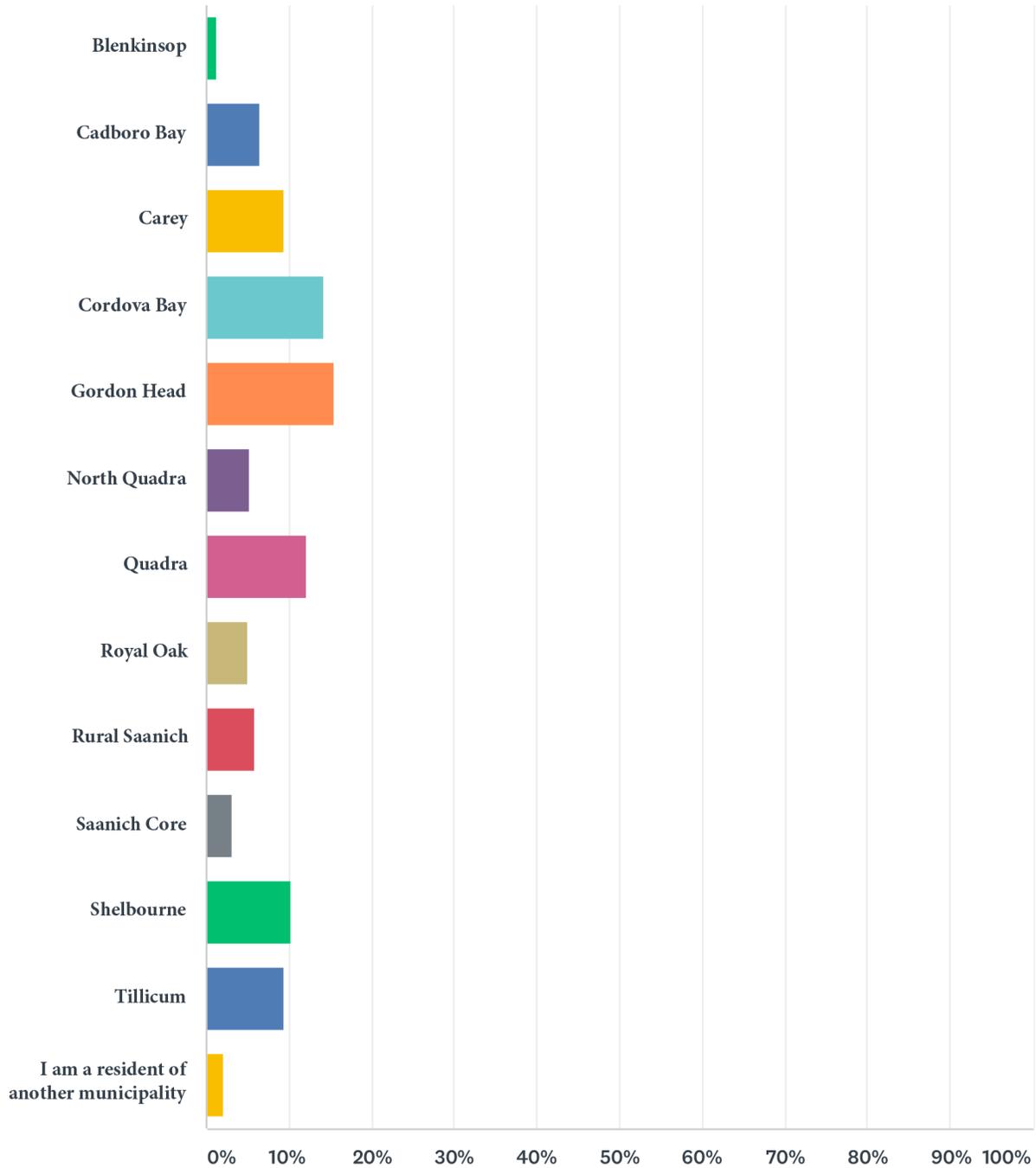
Answered: 697 Skipped: 14



Answer choices	Responses	
Social media (FaceBook or Twitter)	15.06%	105
Saanich website	28.84%	201
On-line notification	13.92%	97
Email	28.12%	196
Newspaper	12.77%	89
Other	14.78%	103
Total		697

Housing location of respondents

Answered: 689 Skipped: 22



Housing location of respondents

Answer choices	Responses	
Blenkinsop	1.31%	9
Cadboro Bay	6.53%	45
Carey	9.43%	65
Cordova Bay	14.08%	97
Gordon Head	15.38%	106
North Quadra	5.22%	36
Quadra	12.05%	83
Royal Oak	5.22%	36
Rural Saanich	5.81%	40
Saanich Core	3.05%	21
Shelbourne	10.45%	72
Tillicum	9.43%	65
I am a resident of another municipality	2.03%	14
Total	100.00%	689