

CLIMATE EQUITY BY DESIGN **SAANICH**

What we heard – climate impacts,
adaptation, and resilience in Saanich



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
Insights · Dialogue · Solutions



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This report shares insights gathered through engagement sessions with equity-deserving communities in Saanich, British Columbia. It explores their experiences with climate change, how they are adapting, and what support they need to build resilience.

We are especially thankful to the representatives of organizations that helped connect CSPC with the communities they support, and to everyone who shared their time and stories, whether in public spaces, at events, or within their communities, including members of local First Nations.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

Saanich's Climate Equity by Design Project was conducted to support the District of Saanich's 2020 Climate Plan update by centering the lived experiences of equity-deserving populations. Led by the Community Social Planning Council (CSPC), this work builds on CSPC's Climate Equity by Design (CEbD) framework, an established approach that integrates equity into climate planning through community-led engagement, culturally responsive outreach, and applied research that translates lived experience into actionable planning insights. By applying this framework locally, the project aimed to strengthen the District's understanding of how climate change is experienced across diverse communities and to ensure future climate actions reflect equity, accessibility, and community realities.

Local Context

Saanich's varied landscapes, including coastal areas, watersheds, agricultural lands, and dense urban neighbourhoods, create highly localized climate vulnerabilities. Residents experience climate impacts differently depending on geographic location, socioeconomic conditions, and access to resources. Increasing extreme heat, wildfire smoke, heavy precipitation, and long-term seasonal changes are affecting health, housing, mobility, affordability, and environmental wellbeing across the municipality. Understanding these differences is essential for developing equitable, place-based climate planning.

Approach and Engagement

Using CSPC's CEbD framework, the project combined survey data with targeted community engagement. CSPC analyzed responses from Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey submitted by 412 individuals who self-identified as belonging to equity-deserving groups, including, but not limited to, low-income households, people living with disabilities, unhoused residents, youth, seniors, visible minorities, newcomers or immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, and Indigenous peoples (see Section 3 for more detail).

In addition, approximately 120 participants were engaged through in-person sessions, and about 60 participants contributed through an online survey developed by CSPC to expand the reach of engagement efforts. Engagement methods were intentionally designed to be accessible and inclusive by offering flexible participation formats, incorporating arts-based activities, and providing compensation for participants' time and expertise.

Together, these approaches provided both quantitative insights and a deeper qualitative understanding of participants' lived experiences.

Key Themes

Extreme heat and wildfire smoke were identified as the most reported climate hazards, impacting physical health, mental wellbeing, daily routines, and access to outdoor spaces. Heavy precipitation and flooding were also widely reported, contributing to mobility challenges, property damage, and economic stress. Participants described experiences of rising food costs, utilities, and insurance expenses linked to climate change which disproportionately impacts low-income households. Climate anxiety and concern for future generations were common across equity deserving groups. Engagement findings also highlighted a need for adaptive strategies, including reliance on community networks, behavioural adjustments, and sustainable lifestyle practices, as Saanich residents navigate ongoing climate impacts.

Overarching Recommendations

1. Embed equity into climate planning and policy
2. Strengthen partnerships with local change-makers
3. Prioritize emergency preparedness
4. Improve public-transit accessibility and affordability of energy-saving upgrades
5. Emphasize evidence-based knowledge translation
6. Continue investing in social, health, and community services

More details can be found in Section 8.0 Recommendations.

Overall Significance

By applying CSPC's Climate Equity by Design framework, this project demonstrates the value of embedding equity-centered engagement and analysis into municipal climate planning. The findings provide a clearer understanding of how climate change is shaping daily life for equity-deserving populations in Saanich and offers insight to inform the continued evolution of the District's Climate Plan in a way that is inclusive, responsive, and community-driven.

BACKGROUND

Climate Change Impacts in Saanich

The District of Saanich spans several distinct bioregions, watersheds, and coastal environments, each of which experiences climate change impacts differently. Saanich sits within the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone, one of the most biodiverse yet most at-risk ecological zones in British Columbia. It also intersects with Garry oak meadow ecosystems, wetland and riparian areas, and significant portions of the Saanich Peninsula agricultural reserve. These overlapping landscapes create a patchwork of ecological conditions, from mature forests to sensitive shorelines, that respond uniquely to changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level. Hydrologically, Saanich contains parts of several major watersheds, including the Colquitz River watershed, Tod Creek watershed, Elk/Beaver Lake watershed, and multiple nearshore marine catchments draining into the Salish Sea. Each watershed faces different vulnerabilities such as increased flood risk during heavy rainfall events, declining summer streamflows due to drought, and heightened stress on aquatic habitats.

Overlaying these natural systems is a mix of urban, suburban, rural, and Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) areas. The way residents live, work, commute, and access services within these varied land uses shapes how climate impacts are felt at the neighbourhood level. For example, denser urban areas tend to experience more severe heat-island effects, while rural and agricultural areas face ecological stresses related to drought, wildfire risk, and changing water availability.

The intersection of these diverse ecosystems and land uses produces highly localized climate vulnerabilities. As climate extremes like heat waves, wildfire smoke, heavy precipitation, and long-term shifts in seasonal patterns intensify, the impacts are unevenly distributed across Saanich's communities. Understanding these variations is essential for developing effective climate actions that are place-based, equitable, and aligned with the lived experiences of residents.

Updating the 2020 Climate Plan

The District of Saanich's 2020 Climate Plan is a foundational policy document that guides municipal decision-making, funding priorities, and climate action across the community. As the Plan continues to evolve, it is critical that its updates reflect the lived experiences of residents, particularly those from equity-deserving populations who are disproportionately affected by climate impacts but historically under-represented in formal policy processes. Public engagement is a central component of municipal policy development, yet traditional channels for participation are often inaccessible, unfamiliar, or uninviting for many community members. This results in important perspectives being absent from the evidence base that informs Council decisions.

The purpose of this engagement was to help bridge that gap by creating opportunities for community members to share their experiences in ways that were accessible, culturally relevant, and reciprocal, in addition to conventional municipal formats such as open houses or technical consultations. By tailoring the sessions to the needs and strengths of equity-deserving groups,

the project aimed to ensure that the Climate Plan update is informed by a wide representation of Saanich residents, which is essential for building a climate-resilient and equitable Saanich.

Project Objectives

The primary objective of this project was to support the District of Saanich in better understanding how climate change impacts are experienced by equity-deserving populations, and how climate actions can be designed to strengthen resilience across the community. The engagement focused on climate hazards identified by the District as priority areas of concern, including both acute climate events and slow, cumulative impacts.

The first part of this project involved a detailed analysis of the responses from equity deserving populations who participated in the Climate Plan Update Survey conducted by the District of Saanich. Drawing on the CSPC's expertise in equity-focused data analysis, CSPC was uniquely positioned to interpret the survey findings and identify how climate impacts are experienced among equity-deserving populations.

The second component of the project involved targeted community engagement sessions designed to gather qualitative insights directly from equity deserving communities. These sessions were structured to ensure that individuals who may be underrepresented in municipal engagement processes had meaningful opportunities to share their input and lived experiences of climate change.

Equity-Deserving Populations

Equity-deserving populations are groups that experience systemic barriers to participation, access to services, and protection from climate-related risks due to historical, social, economic, and structural inequities. In the context of climate change, these barriers can increase exposure to hazards, limit adaptive capacity, and compound the impacts of both extreme events and long-term environmental change.

Integrating equity into climate change adaptation planning is essential for several reasons:

- Climate change disproportionately affects low-income and marginalized populations, who are often more exposed to risks and have fewer resources to adapt. The World Resources Institute¹ (WRI) highlights that those least responsible for climate change, such as low-income communities, racialized populations, and seniors, are frequently the most vulnerable to its impacts.
- Addressing historical injustices is critical. WRI also emphasizes the importance of transparent and inclusive climate policies that empower marginalized communities and ensure the benefits of climate action are shared equitably. The inequitable distribution of benefits are rooted in a history of colonialism and the ongoing impacts of colonial policies, as well as systemic discrimination, including racism, sexism, and ableism, which continue to drive persistent social and economic inequalities.

In Saanich, these inequities are reflected in key local statistics that illustrate the lived realities of equity-seeking communities

¹World Resources Institute. 2025-. Climate equity. [ehttps://www.wri.org/initiative](https://www.wri.org/initiative)

(see Appendix 1 for a detailed background). As climate change intensifies, there is a risk that disparities are deepened and progress toward equitable climate action is undermined.

The following groups are examples of populations that may be disproportionately affected by climate impacts or face barriers to accessing municipal programs, information, and decision-making processes:

- **Seniors**, particularly those living alone, on fixed incomes, or with health or mobility limitations
- **Indigenous Peoples**, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members, whose relationships to land, water, and ecosystems are uniquely affected by climate change
- **Youth**, who will experience the long-term consequences of climate change and may face barriers to meaningful participation in policy and decision-making processes
- **Visible minorities and newcomers**, including individuals who may encounter

language barriers, social isolation, or limited access to information and services

- **Low-income households**, who may have limited control over housing conditions and fewer financial resources to adapt to climate impacts
- **People with disabilities and diverse abilities**, including those who may face accessibility challenges during extreme weather events or disruptions to essential services

This list is not intended to be exhaustive or mutually exclusive. Many individuals may identify with more than one group, reflecting the intersectional nature of climate vulnerability. By centring equity-deserving populations in engagement efforts, the goal is to better understand how climate change is experienced across diverse lived realities and to inform climate actions that are inclusive, responsive, and equitable. Embedding equity at the core of climate planning not only promotes fairness but also strengthens Saanich's overall resilience by ensuring that no one is left behind in the face of environmental and social challenges.



RESEARCH APPROACH

Section 4.1 outlines the analysis process used to interpret the data from the District of Saanich Climate Plan Update Survey, while Section 4.2 describes the engagement methods and data analysis conducted through direct community engagement sessions facilitated by CSPC. Together, these methods form the foundation of the report's evidence base, integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights to support an equity-focused understanding of climate impacts in Saanich.

4.1

Saanich Climate Plan Update Survey Analysis

In 2025, the District of Saanich invited individuals to complete the Climate Plan Update Survey to capture perceptions and experiences of climate change. The CSPC analyzed and interpreted the results of those individuals who self-identified with an equity-deserving group as defined earlier in this report. The following groups were included in the equity analysis based on the available data that was able to be extracted from the survey results:

- Youth (under 15-25)
- Seniors (66+)
- Low-income households (\$0-50,000 yearly household total income before tax)
- People with disabilities
- Visible Minorities
- Newcomers or Immigrants
- 2SLGBTQ+ people
- Indigenous people
- Non-binary people

After sorting through the data using these filters, 412 individuals were identified

as equity-deserving. The level of concern surrounding climate change, lived experiences, and other valuable insights from equity-deserving groups were quantified and can be found in detail below (see section 6.0).

4.2

Engagement with Equity-Deserving Groups

4.2.1

Recruitment

Based on the definition provided of equity-deserving populations, an environmental scan was conducted to identify organizations located within Saanich, or those serving Saanich residents, who may serve equity-deserving groups.

Engagement requests were sent via email and included an overview of the project along with multiple participation options to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. This included options for in-person engagement, online engagement, a survey option, and arts-based engagement while maintaining flexibility to accommodate participants' needs.

Where possible, engagements were scheduled alongside existing programs to meet participants at convenient times and locations. In recognition of their time and expertise, honoraria were provided

to participants who completed the survey questions while refreshments were provided to participants at in-person engagements where appropriate.

A range of organizations and groups serving equity-deserving populations within the District of Saanich were engaged. The table below describes who was engaged and how each engagement was facilitated.

Table 1. Summary of engagement with groups serving equity-deserving populations

Organization/Group Name	About Organization/Group	How They Were Engaged
Victoria Native Friendship Society (VNFC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants 	VNFC is a non-profit organization serving Indigenous Individuals and is located in Saanich. VNFC provides a range of supportive, as well as cultural programs and events.	CSPC hosted a table at one of the regularly held soup lunches located at VNFC. People were able to stop by the table to answer question and engage voluntarily through this approach in a relaxed environment.
Silver Threads Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants 	Silver Threads Service is a charitable, not-for-profit society that enhances social connections and well-being for individuals age 55+ by providing accessible programs and services.	A facilitated engagement session was held at one of their Dynamic Discussions, which is an educational, interactive, and facilitated social group. Questions were asked openly to the group, allowing people to contribute as they saw fit.
UVIC, Community Engaged Learning Program (CEL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 participants 	CEL students hosted a community event showcasing their course projects exploring climate equity and climate justice. This event included students, faculty, community partners, non-profit organizations, and community members.	Facilitators hosted a table at the engagement and had open-ended conversations with people who stopped by the table regarding their lived experience with climate change. Responses were captured by participants recording their answers on a large paper in the center of the table.
UVIC, Community Cabbage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 participants 	The Community Cabbage is a student organization at the University of Victoria. They serve a free weekly hot meal to the campus community which is prepared from reclaimed food that is collected and cooked by a team of volunteers. Anyone is welcome to come and get a free meal at their scheduled dinners, along with free groceries.	Facilitators set up a table during one of the community dinners where people could stop by to answer questions related to their lived experiences of climate change and participate in an art activity as a form of feedback and expression.
Albina Supportive Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 participants 	Albina is a permanent supportive housing site operated by Our Place and serves a diverse community of individuals who have on-site access to security, life-skills training, employment assistance and counselling, physical and mental-health resources, meals, and referrals to addiction treatment and recovery services.	Facilitators set up at a table in the common area space where residents were able to stop by and contribute their experiences in a way that worked best for them. The engagement was casual and conversational in nature.

<p>Gordon Head Community Centre – The Backdoor Teen Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 participants 	<p>The Backdoor Teen Centre serves youth aged 11-17 and welcomes people of all genders, sexualities, bodies, ancestries, cultures, and abilities.</p>	<p>An art-based activity was the primary mode of engagement where students were welcome to write, draw, or collage their thoughts and experiences with climate change.</p>
<p>Saanich Centennial Library Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 participants 	<p>The Saanich Centennial Library is located by GR Pearkes recreation centre and along with standard offerings, the library offers programs to the community.</p>	<p>A table was set up at the front entrance with the engagement questions written on a posterboard so library goers could share their thought in a conversational manner.</p>
<p>1 UP Single Parent Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 participants 	<p>1 UP Single Parent Resource Centre is a non-profit which empowers single parents through strengthening relationships, growing confidence, and building lasting stability through free access to programs, coaching and community.</p>	<p>For accessibility reasons, an online survey was distributed to 1UP members to provide feedback on their experiences with climate change.</p>
<p>Intercultural Association (ICA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants 	<p>ICA offers a variety of services that help newcomers access housing, healthcare, and employment as well as English language instruction and mentorship.</p>	<p>ICA is located in Victoria but serves the whole region. An online survey was shared to clients in the English classes ICA holds to facilitate engagement with immigrants, refugees, and newcomers to Canada.</p>
<p>Greater Victoria Rent Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 participants 	<p>The Greater Victoria Rent Bank is a homelessness prevention program delivered by CSPC which provides interest free loans to support people with paying rent, as well as utility costs. They also provide referrals to services and benefits to help support people for longer term assistance.</p>	<p>The Greater Victoria Rent Bank team sent emails to clients that live in Saanich to seek their input and lived experience with climate change.</p>
<p>Diverse Abilities Programs Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 participant 	<p>Diverse Abilities Programs Inc. provides essential education and hands-on training to foster understanding and empower individuals with best practices for communicating with, interacting with, and assisting people of all abilities. The team is led by a group of individuals with diverse abilities.</p>	<p>An email was sent to members of the Diverse Abilities community to seek their input and lived experience with climate change.</p>

4.2.2

Engagement Methods

To ensure that the engagement generated meaningful input aligned with municipal climate risk assessment needs, the discussion questions were intentionally designed to surface information across four key dimensions identified by the District: vulnerabilities, adaptive capacity, consequences, and potential actions to reduce risk.

The first two questions: “What is your lived experience of climate change?” and “What are your worries or concerns for the future?” were designed to identify climate-related vulnerabilities and perceived risks, including impacts on health, housing, mobility, affordability, and daily life. These questions provided insight into how climate hazards are unevenly experienced across different populations and neighbourhood contexts. The third question: “How do you cope with climate change?” focused on adaptive capacity, capturing both the strategies participants currently use to manage climate impacts and the supports they feel are missing. This included household-level actions, community supports, and interactions with municipal services or infrastructure. Finally, the fourth question: “What does a climate-resilient Saanich look like?” invited participants to envision future conditions and solutions. This question supported discussion of potential actions to reduce risk, spanning municipal responsibilities, community and household actions, and the role of public institutions and critical infrastructure.

These questions created a flexible yet structured framework that allowed participants to share lived experience while generating insights directly relevant to climate hazard assessment, equity considerations, and policy development. To receive feedback on the above questions, two complementary engagement methods were used: an online survey and in-person engagement sessions. Engagement approaches were adapted for different participant groups

and contexts, with guiding questions to still provide structure. This approach centered equity-deserving populations, acknowledged intersectional experiences of climate vulnerability, and ensured that community input could meaningfully inform the District of Saanich’s Climate Plan.

In-Person Engagements

In-person engagement sessions were designed to create a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment responsive to the needs of equity-deserving community members. Approximately 120 people were engaged with across the 7 in-person engagement sessions held, contributing to a well-rounded picture of climate change impacts and experiences to residents of Saanich. These sessions took the form of community conversations supported by semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to engage at their own comfort level and in ways that reflected their lived realities.

Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to share experiences related to priority climate hazards identified by the District, including extreme heat and wildfire smoke, heavy precipitation and flooding, long-term climate impacts, and climate-related economic pressures. Facilitators prioritized flexibility, allowing for follow-up questions and deeper discussion to better understand participants’ vulnerabilities, coping strategies, and visions for a climate-resilient Saanich.

In some cases when appropriate, particularly in youth-centered engagements, art-based methods were incorporated to support creativity and diverse forms of expression. A variety of art supplies were provided alongside prompting questions, enabling participants to communicate experiences and ideas in non-verbal or visual ways.

Online Survey

To increase accessibility and support participation from organizations and community members unable to host or attend in-person engagement sessions, an online survey was developed. The survey consisted of eight short questions, using a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer formats to capture both quantitative trends and qualitative experiences related to climate impacts (see Appendix 2 for survey questions).

Participants who completed the survey were compensated for their time with a \$25 e-transfer, recognizing the value of their lived experience and reducing barriers to participation. The survey was distributed only to organizations that could not participate in in-person sessions, helping to broaden participation while mitigating duplication of responses across engagement methods. This effort resulted in approximately 60 participants providing feedback through the online survey and receiving an honorarium.

4.2.3

Thematic Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to translate the lived experiences of equity-deserving populations into climate risk language that can meaningfully inform municipal planning and decision-making. It aims to identify patterns across community groups and climate hazards, and to create a clear bridge between what was heard through engagement and the recommendations for policy and action. This analysis is grounded in qualitative data collected through facilitated conversations, participant-written reflections, and an art-making activity designed to support accessible and expressive engagement. All responses were transcribed and compiled into an Excel database, where they were coded and reviewed to identify recurring themes, vulnerabilities, adaptive capacities, and

priorities across hazards and populations. Recommended actions draw directly from participant insights, complemented by contextual knowledge and applied research from the project team to ensure alignment with municipal policy frameworks and best practices in climate equity and adaptation planning.

4.2.4

Limitations

While a broad range of individuals were engaged through the various methods employed, several limitations affected the scope and depth of feedback collected, particularly for in-person engagement activities. One key limitation was the relatively small number of organizations and community groups in Saanich that specifically serve the equity-deserving populations targeted for engagement. As a result, some populations, including 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and visible minorities, were not reached directly through targeted in-person engagement. The limited presence of organizations serving these communities contributed to a smaller overall sample size of participants with lived experience from these groups. The condensed project timeline further constrained engagement efforts. The short timeframe limited the ability to coordinate in-person sessions that aligned with existing programs or drop-in services offered by local organizations. Consequently, some organizations chose instead to share an online survey with their clients. While this approach was valuable in gathering targeted responses related to lived experiences of climate change, it did not allow for the same depth of discussion and qualitative insight that in-person engagements provided.

Additionally, the engagement period, from December 2025 to mid-January 2026 coincided with a particularly busy time of year for many individuals and organizations. This period often includes reduced capacity due to holidays, staff vacations, and year-end workload pressures. These challenges were compounded by the broader capacity constraints faced by many non-profit organizations, which are frequently overburdened and limited in their ability to support activities beyond their core mandates².

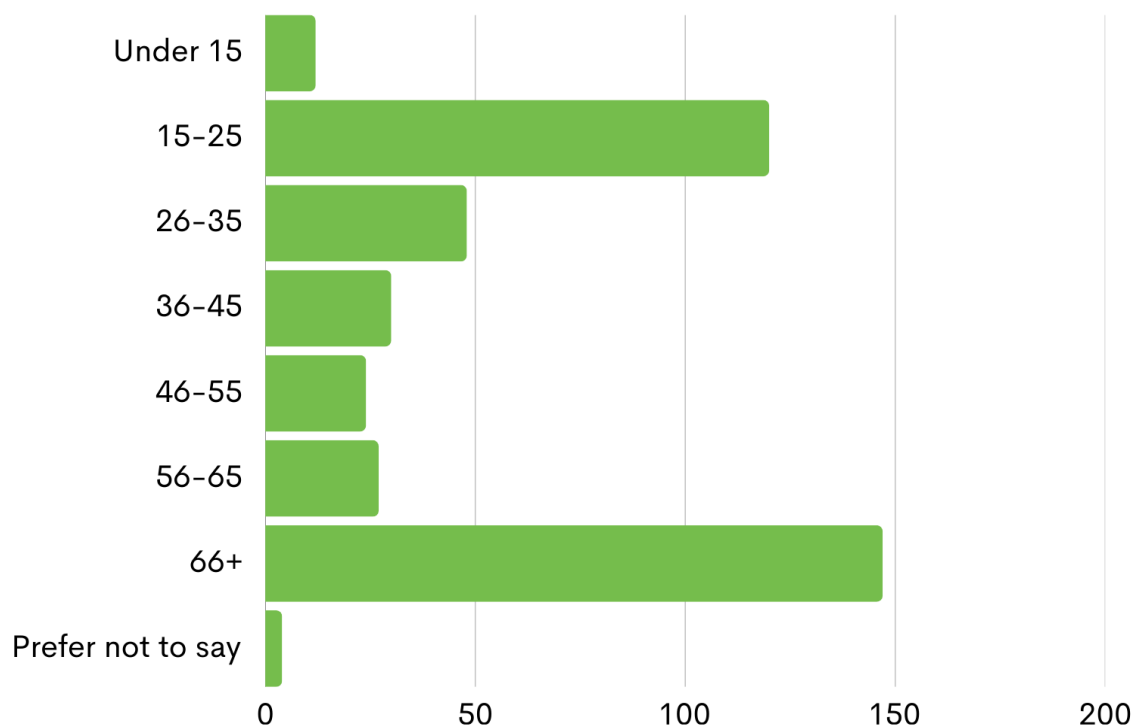


²Victoria Foundation, 2025 State of the Sector Report (Victoria, BC: Victoria Foundation, 2025), accessed January 13, 2026, <https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-State-of-the-Sector-Report.pdf>

SAANICH CLIMATE PLAN UPDATE SURVEY FINDINGS

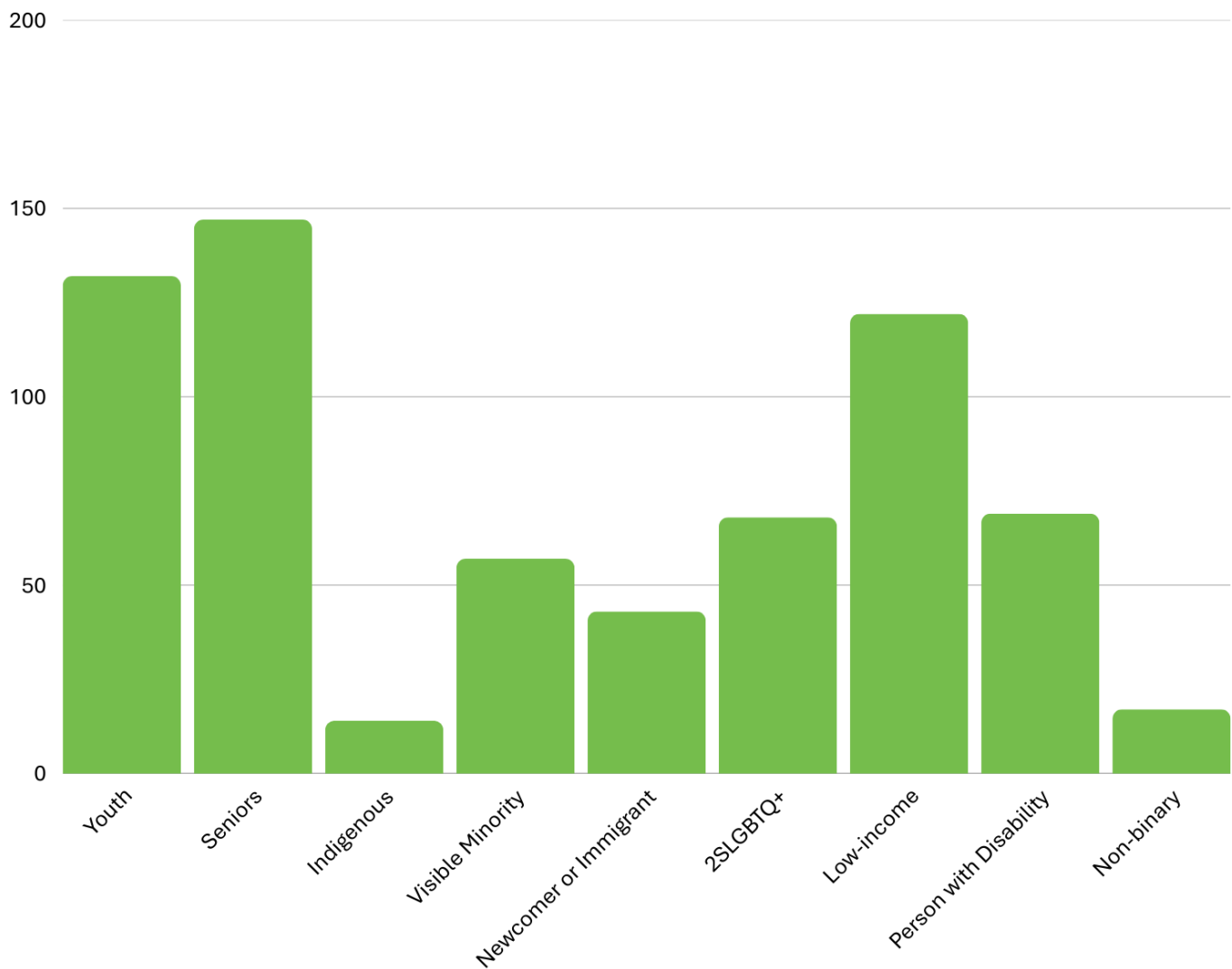
The figures below present findings from the District of Saanich Climate Plan Update Survey, with a specific focus on respondents who self-identified as part of an equity-deserving population. These groups may experience disproportionate climate impacts or systemic barriers, making them a priority for understanding lived experiences and concerns that can inform equity-based climate planning. Viewing the survey results through an equity lens, this section provides insight on demographic information alongside highlighting how climate change is perceived and experienced across equity-deserving communities. Of the 643 fully completed survey responses, 412 individuals identified with at least one equity-deserving group. The analysis presented below reflects feedback from these 412 respondents. Notably, 168 self-identified with two or more equity-deserving populations, highlighting the importance of considering intersectionality in climate planning. The quantitative insights presented here complement the qualitative themes emerging from community engagement sessions. Together these findings help build a more complete picture of how climate change is currently affecting equity-deserving populations in Saanich and where targeted climate action may be most needed.

Figure 5.1 Age of respondents



- Youth and seniors appear as overrepresented in this figure as both are considered an equity-deserving population and therefore all responses from those respective groups were included in this analysis.

Figure 5.2 Respondents who identified with an equity-deserving community



- Only 13.8% of respondents identified as a visible minority compared to 25% of the total population in Saanich and are therefore underrepresented in the survey results³.
- 22.5% of Saanich residents are Immigrants while 10.4% of survey respondents identified as a newcomer or immigrant⁴.

³ Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed January 27, 2026).

⁴ Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed January 27, 2026).

Figure 5.3 Gender identification from equity-deserving survey responses

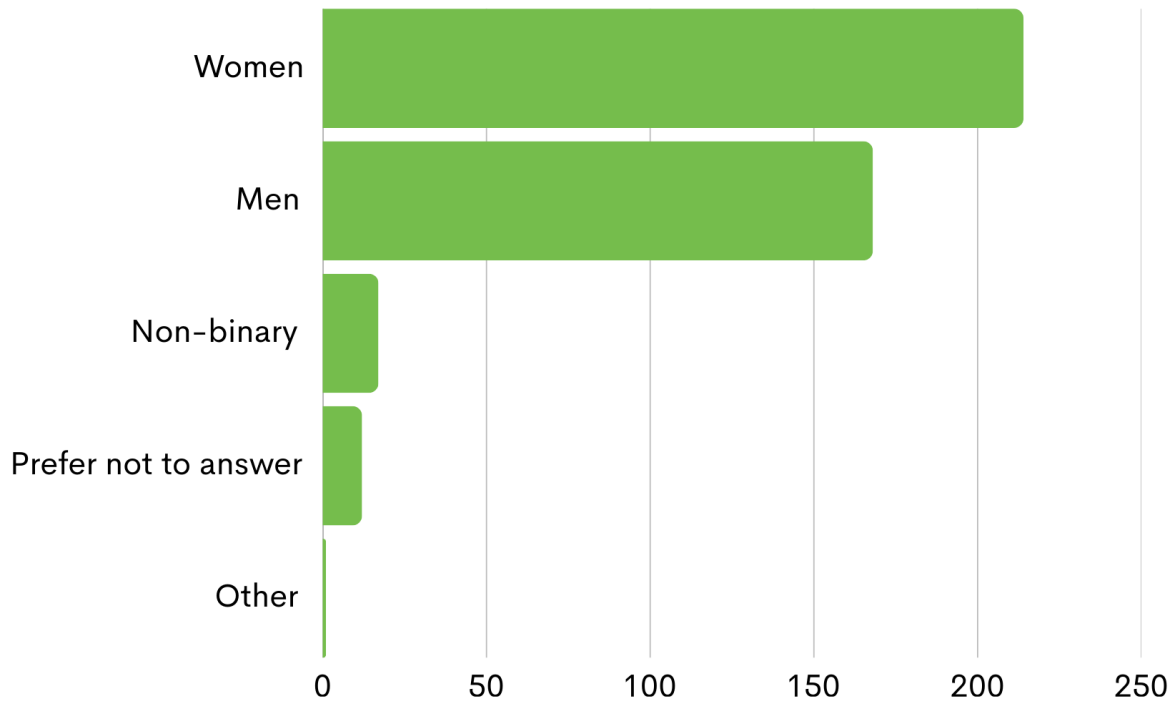
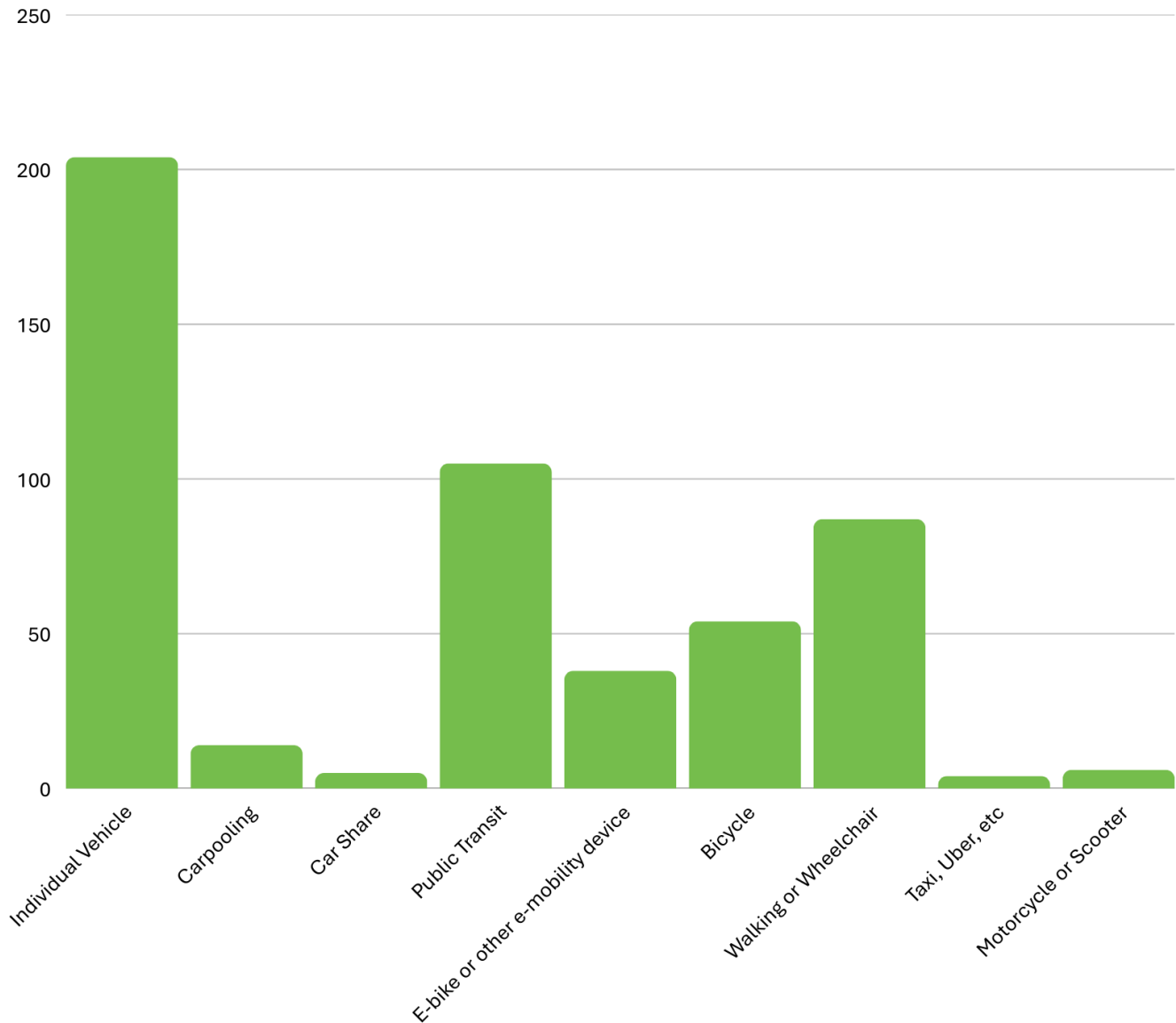


Figure 5.4 Household total income before tax of respondents

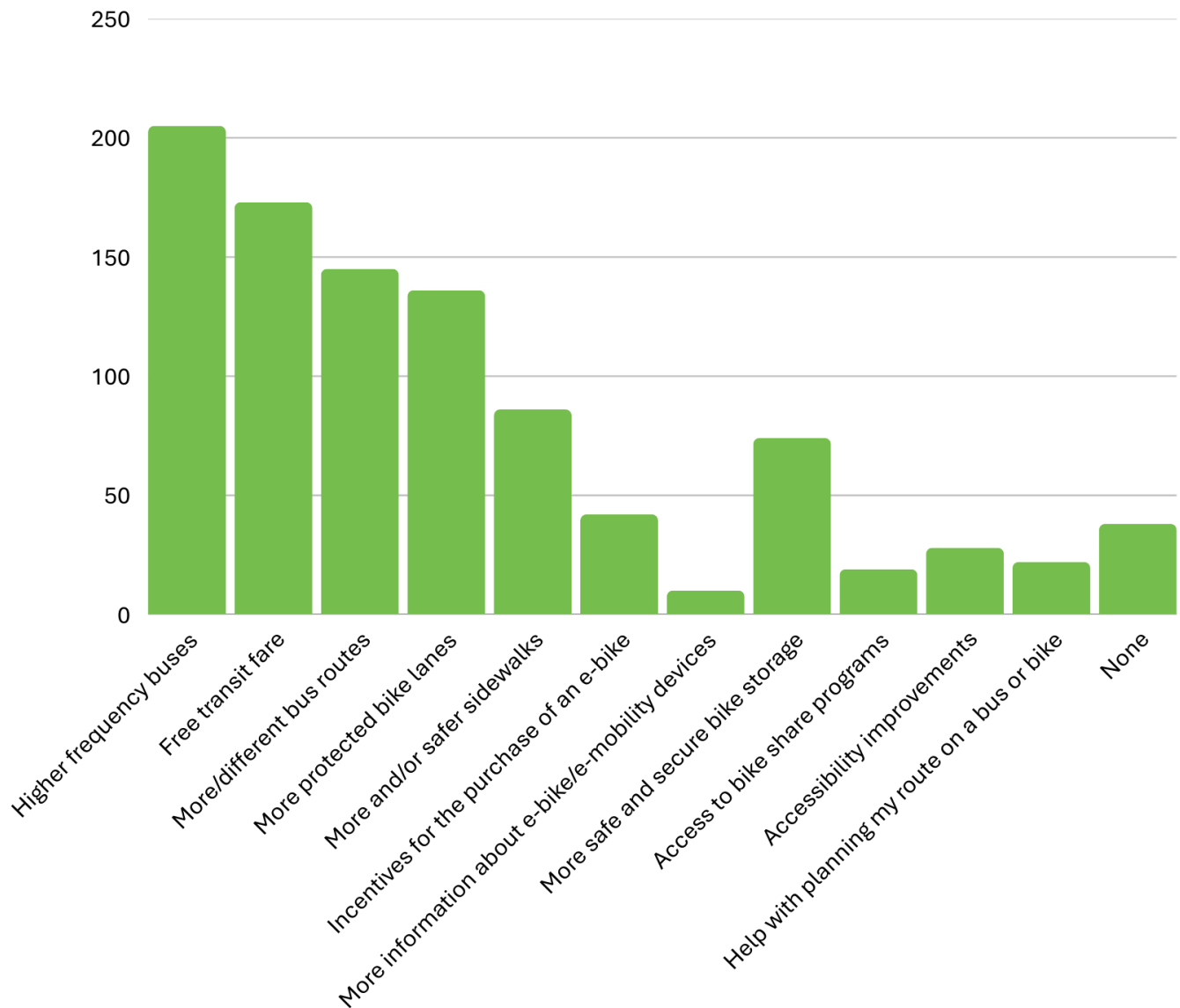


Figure 5.5 Primary mode of transportation



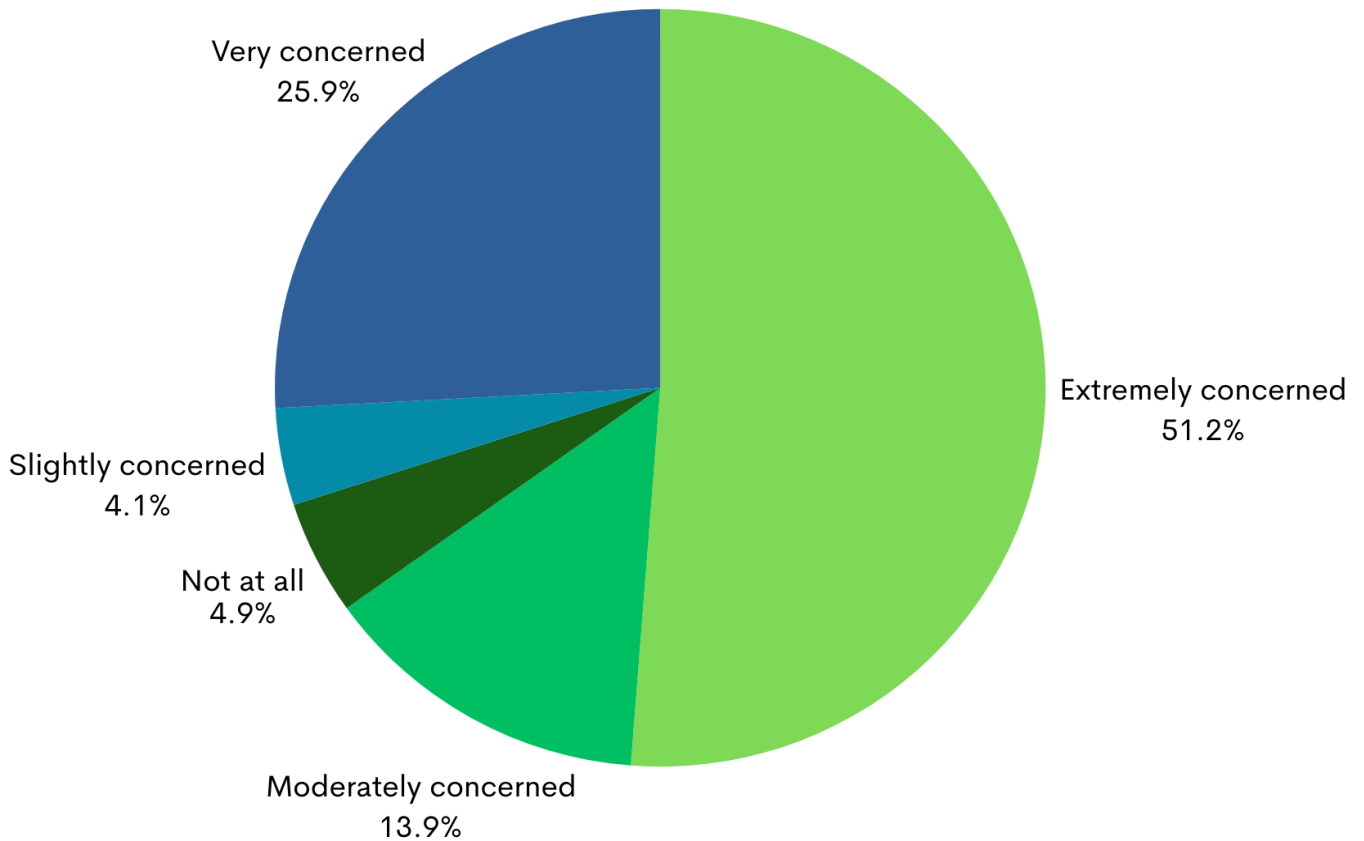
- Figure 5.5 shows how frequently respondents utilize a particular mode of transportation. Respondents had the option to select more than one primary mode of transportation.
- that 49.5% of respondents rely on individual vehicles as their primary mode of transportation, highlighting a continued dependence on private transportation.
- Public transit is the primary mode of transportation for 25.5% of respondents. Public transit is a reliable form of transportation for youth and individuals who may face cost or accessibility barriers to car ownership.
- Active forms of transportation, such as biking and walking, make up 34.6% of responses. Those who utilize these forms of transportation are more vulnerable to facing climate-related disruptions such as heat, smoke, or heavy rainfall.

Figure 5.6 What do you think would help you choose active modes of transportation more often?



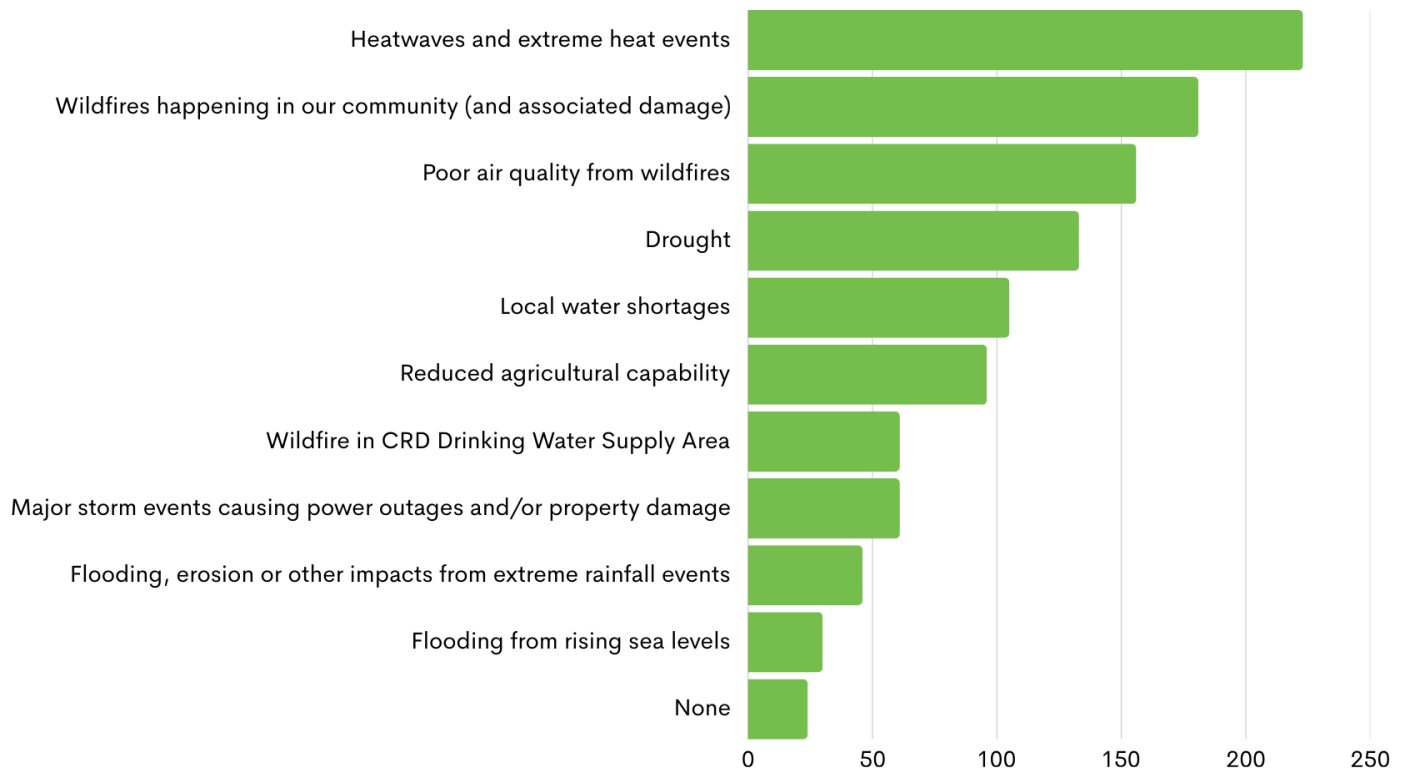
- Higher frequency buses and free transit fare were of most interest when considering increasing active modes of transportation.
- More/different bus routes along with more protected bike lanes were also of interest. Access and safety are important factors to choosing more active forms of transportation.
- Investing in timely and accessible public transit and biking are of greatest interest to equity-deserving individuals. Timely and low-cost access to transportation is an important aspect of connecting individuals to support and services throughout the region.

Figure 5.7 Level of concern about climate change



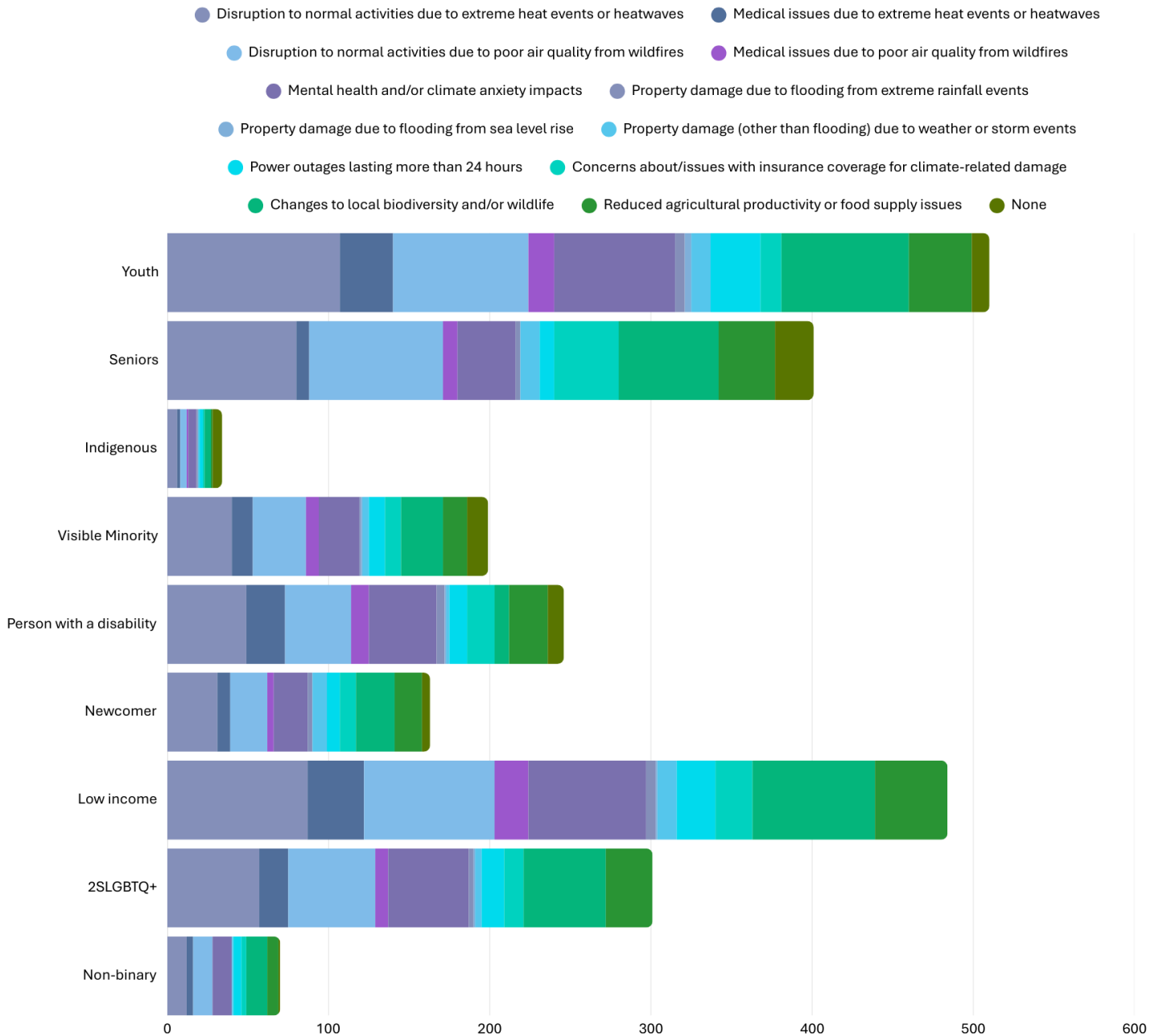
- 51.2% of survey respondents expressed extreme concern regarding climate change and another 25.9% of respondents indicated they were very concerned
- This equates to 77.1% of all respondents showing high levels of concern regarding climate change, highlighting the importance of taking action to address community concerns.
- This indicates the need for educational communications and supports as part of a robust climate strategy to address high levels of community concern.

Figure 5.8 Most concerning climate change-related hazards and/or risks



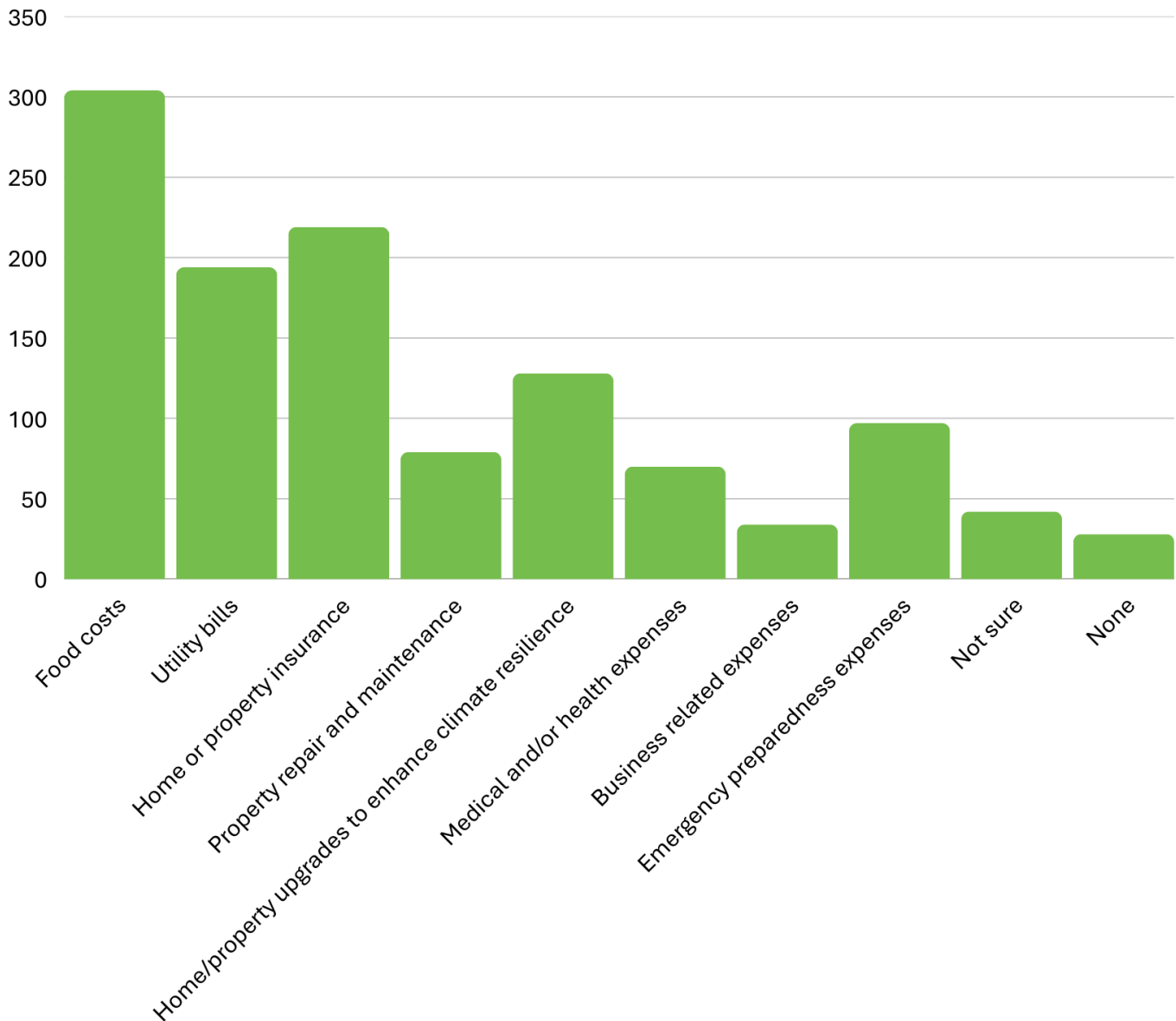
- Heatwaves and extreme heat events were the most concerning climate change-related hazards followed by wildfires happening in the community and poor air quality from wildfires.
- Upon closer evaluation, seniors were the one population group to differ in that their main concern is wildfires happening in the community followed by drought.
- These top concerns are consistent with our findings from in-person engagement sessions (see section 6.1)

Figure 5.9 Personal experience of climate-related impacts in the last 5 years by population



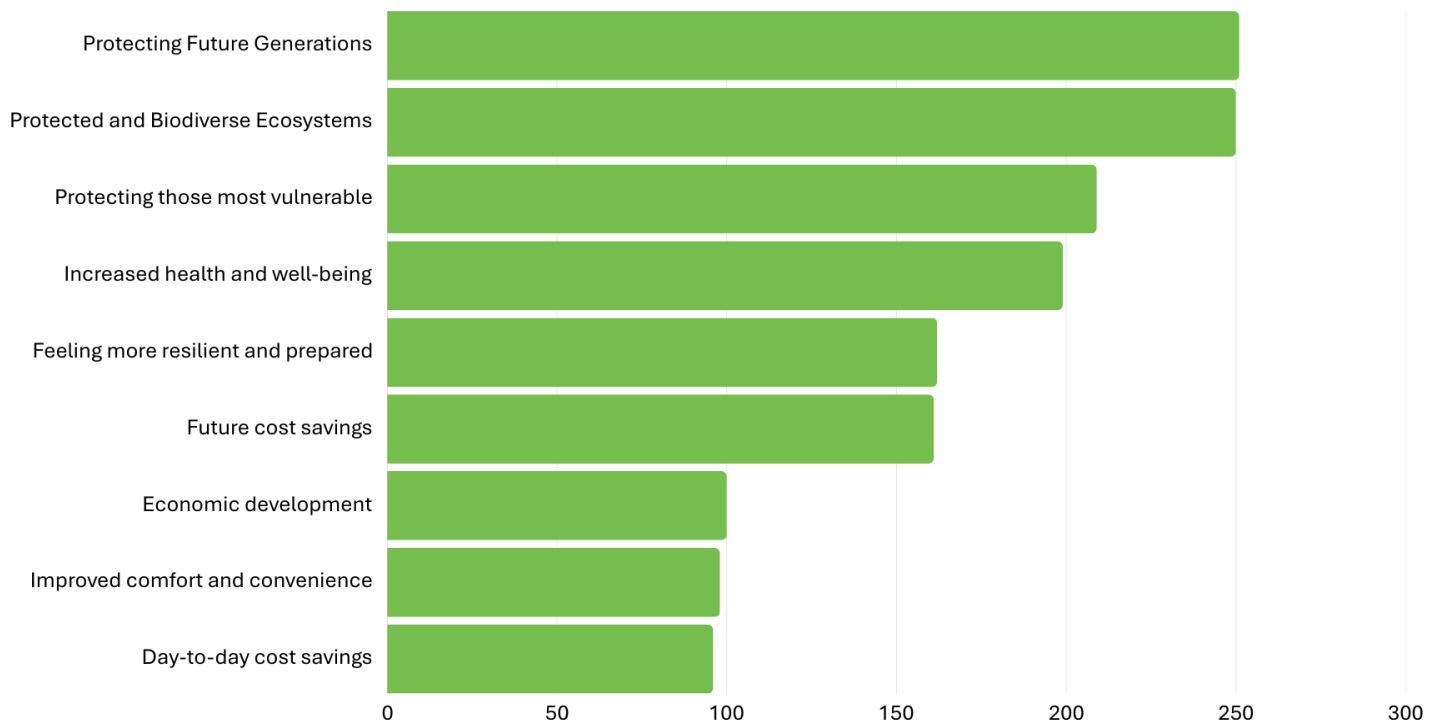
- It was reported that disruption to normal activities due to heatwaves or poor air quality from wildfires was the most experienced impact by all groups.
- Mental health and/or climate anxiety as well as changes to local biodiversity and/or wildlife were also reported as frequently experienced climate-related impacts.
- This figure illustrates how climate hazards are significantly impacting individuals' physical and mental health and day-to-day functioning. The shared emphasis of disruptions to everyday life highlights the need for equity-focused climate adaptation measures that protect health and address increasing mental health stressors.

Figure 5.10 Personal experience of increased expenses due to climate-related factors



- Figure 5.10 reveals rising food costs as the most experienced expense increase due to climate-related factors. This aligns with broader concerns shared throughout the engagements surrounding affordability and rising cost of living, particularly among equity deserving populations.
- Increases in home or property insurance and utility bills were also frequently experienced, both of which reflect how climate impacts are being felt across a range of personal expenses.
- Climate change contributes to an increasing economic burden, especially for low-income households who have limited ability to absorb rising costs.

Figure 5.11 Level of importance of climate change action benefits



- Protecting future generations followed closely by protected and biodiverse ecosystems were of most importance to survey respondents.
- The top three reported benefits focus on protecting people and planet, suggesting an interest in investing in holistic community wellbeing initiatives that consider long-term implications.
- Considering Figure 5.10 highlights the overall felt impact of increasing expenses, it is worth noting that day-to-day cost savings were reported as a least important when it comes to level of importance of climate action benefits (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.12 Most important actions to support climate action for existing buildings in Saanich



- Actions of most interest focus on cost and energy saving initiatives such as installation rebates, incentives, and maintaining low hydro-electricity rates.
- These findings compliment figure 5.10 which shows individual experiences of increasing expenses and a strong interest in cost-saving initiatives, where cost remains a barrier to engaging in climate-friendly actions.
- Future climate strategizing could benefit from prioritizing affordability to maximize accessibility for equity-deserving groups who are often marginalized.

6.0

WHAT WE HEARD- ENGAGEMENT WITH EQUITY DESERVING GROUPS

This section summarizes the lived experiences, priorities, and concerns shared by equity-deserving community members throughout the engagement process. Through both in-person conversations and online surveys, participants described how climate change is shaping their daily lives. Insights reveal the immediate challenges but also future concerns of equity-deserving populations. These findings provide essential context for understanding climate vulnerabilities in Saanich. The findings resulted from the questions listed below:

1. What is your lived experience of climate change?
 2. What are your worries/concerns for the future?
 3. How do you cope with climate change?
 4. What does a climate resilient Saanich look like?
 5. Are you familiar with/ interested in learning about the Corsi-Rosenthal air filter box?
-

6.1

Lived Experience & Impacts of Climate Change

Table 2. Key insights from participants on their lived experience with climate change

Extreme Heat and Access to Safe Living Conditions
Key Insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heat was the number one reported climate change related hazard by community members.• Extreme heat has altered daily life for many individuals during the summer months and has led to questions about accessibility from a space and cost standpoint for cooling and air conditioning.• Concerns regarding health impacts and changes to family routines were expressed.

Quotes

- “During periods of intense summer heat, there is a heightened risk of forest fires, particularly in the island’s more heavily wooded regions, which can significantly affect the air quality for residents.”
- “Hot days in summer are challenging as it is impossible to keep the apartment cool, it is especially difficult for pets who cannot go with us to spend the day at an air-conditioned mall.”
- “Extreme weather events often mean that I can’t work. The house gets so hot in the summer that my autistic child cannot sleep, which is a huge trigger for meltdowns. Air conditioning is too expensive.”
- “It affects my everyday life because I love being outdoors and the weather has changed drastically because of it. The intense heat has been the hardest.”
- “Climate change impacts my life to the point of frustration in the summertime. When we get heat waves combined with smoke from forest fires, it makes it difficult to feel like myself. I feel groggy and it’s hard to be active at all. It’s hard to get sleep which impacts the rest of my life.”

Flooding and Heavy Precipitation

Key Insights

- Impacts of flooding and increased precipitation, especially in winter were the second most reported climate change related experience.
- Flooding and atmospheric rivers increase barriers to transportation and mobility.
- Damage to property further contributes to economic stress.

Quotes

- “In the winter when we get massive rain falls my basement always floods and many things get ruined.”
- “Flooding into the carport, some items destroyed.”
- “During the rainy season, specific areas are susceptible to flooding, which subsequently impedes essential daily activities such as commuting to my child’s school and accessing grocery stores.”
- “More extreme weather events, atmospheric rivers, impact to mental health.”

Climate-Related Anxiety and Emotional Well-Being

Key Insights

- Climate change has led to reports of anxiety and concern for future generations.
- A sense of hopelessness accompanies some respondents climate concerns which contributes to further negative mental health impacts.
- Mental health can intersect with other climate stressors which compounds vulnerabilities for those experiencing social isolation or housing instability.

Quotes

- “There is climate anxiety and stigma associated with talking about climate change which makes conversation difficult. I’m concerned for how climate change will impact younger generations.”
- “The longer dark colder/wetter weather during the winter months, heavily impacts my mental health.”
- “Sad existential dread, hard time breathing (from forest fires).”
- “I notice an increase in anxiety in youth.”

Transportation and Outdoor Activity

Key Insights

- Those who rely on public transit or active modes of transportation face further barriers to safely reaching their destination.
- This disproportionately impacts youth and low-income community members who rely on public transit.
- The ability to spend time outdoors, whether commuting or for pleasure, is increasingly impacted by extreme weather.

Quotes

- “Hotter in the summers now and more atmospheric river rain storms causing flooding on roads.”
- “I bus everywhere so the hotter summers and extreme storms make it hard to travel to and from work.”
- “The winters when we do get heavy snow, it makes commuting difficult and the roads becomes very slippery due to black ice and then of course when it melts there’s flooding which the island doesn’t seem equipped or prepared to deal with.”
- “Unpredictable weather makes outings difficult with my family.”
- “It affects my everyday life because I love being outdoors and the weather has changed drastically because of it. The intense heat has been the hardest.”

Table 3. Primary worries/concerns for the future

Extreme Weather and Natural Hazards
<p>Key Insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wildfire and smoke is overwhelmingly the top concern experienced by all groups. People are concerned about the impacts it has to our natural environment on Vancouver Island, as well as the health of their loved ones and themselves.• Heat is a major concern experienced by all groups, but especially seniors. Some are concerned about not feeling prepared to deal with rising temperatures, especially as many rentals aren't equipped with air conditioning.• Flooding was another worry, particularly concerning potential damage to homes.• Participants also expressed concern for extreme weather events more broadly, including wildfires, flooding, and temperature shifts, as well as unforeseen climate disasters such as earthquakes.• The multitude of ways the climate is shifting worries people.
<p>Quotes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I worry that they'll be flooding or forest fires that will destroy our beautiful city. That our children will have to deal with things that are the fault of their parents."• "The Earth's temperature is rising to levels higher than at any other point in history, and I'm concerned because my parents live on the coast of South Korea. I worry that their home might be submerged and lost as a result."• "The floods have already impacted many around me, and heat domes make me fearful for myself, kids and our neighbours. To ensure that comfortable temps are actually happening, we must invest in expensive air conditioners or heat pumps."• "Wildfires are scarier every year! Heat domes are challenging especially for our pets, and flooding has impacted our housing cooperative this year and last year."
Human Health, Safety and Wellbeing
<p>Key Insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is lots of concern for how climate change will impact the health and safety of future generations. People are concerned for their children's lives, as well as how it will impact an aging demographic.• Particularly smoke and rising temperatures are causing negative impacts on people with existing health conditions such as asthma.• People are facing a lot of anxiety related to climate change, and associated uncertainties which can be very overwhelming, especially as they compound.• Food security is a concern

Quotes

- “Wildfires and the subsequent smoke present a considerable concern for my household, as there are individuals with asthma residing here. When air quality has been compromised due to wildfire smoke, our usual practice is to remain indoors, ensure windows and doors are closed, and continuously operate the stove fan to assist with air circulation.
- Heat waves also pose a significant concern, as some members of our household are susceptible to nosebleeds and fainting from an overheating body.”
- “All climate hazards worry me. I worry about quality of life for my children. Whether they will get to experience peaceful summer seasons without threat of wildfire and heat domes. And fall and winters without flooding threats.”
- “My concerns are that climate change causes extreme events that put human life at risk, and the lack of infrastructure in cities increases the risk to life. For example, extremely hot weather can cause fire. It’s the worst for the environment, including people”.

Economic Security and Cost of Living

Key Insights

- Participants are worried about job uncertainty; this was specifically seen among students that were engaged at UVIC both through the Community Cabbage and CEL Program
- Housing is another concern, related to both housing affordability, as well as the effects of extreme weather to housing, causing damage and expenses, including increases in utility bills
- There is also concern about the general rise of costs and inflation people are experiencing, especially for those with lower incomes.

Quotes

- “For someone who lives paycheck to paycheck I worry about my longevity in the future due to accessibility and costs”

Planning Gaps

Key Insights

- There is concern surrounding the effectiveness of current climate related solutions that are being implemented.
- Some participants feel that climate change is not being taken seriously, it is not being made a priority and requires collective action to make any meaningful change.
- Existing infrastructure is not set up to withstand the effects of climate change and extreme weather events.

Quotes

- “For someone who lives paycheck to paycheck I worry about my longevity in the future due to accessibility and costs”

Loss of Land and Biodiversity

Key Insights

- Participants are concerned for the safety of animals, and how they are affected by climate change. There are worries about species being endangered, as well as being displaced and forced into more urban environments.
- Deforestation and loss of trees, particularly old growth
- Loss of land, and ability to regenerate ecosystems after they are damaged or destroyed
- Worsening water quality, which impacts available drinking water, and ability to swim in natural bodies of water.
- Concerns about resource scarcity and impacts on the ability to maintain local agriculture and home gardening.

Quotes

- “I believe as we keep destroying our planet, we are taking away homes of wildlife, forcing them into urban areas”
- “A Wildfire burning down the area’s trees, the death of trees (cedar)”
- “The need to salvage Indigenous plants from lands being developed”

6.3 Adaptive Capacity and Resilience

How do you cope with climate change?



To understand how individuals are managing climate changes, CSPC asked how people cope with climate change and what actions they take. In response, it was heard how making individual adaptations was often a coping mechanism. This includes actions such as seeking out air-conditioned buildings, spending time near cool bodies of water, or avoiding the sun by staying indoors. Many people are also choosing to make conscious choices to reduce individual waste and prioritize energy conservation. Examples given were driving hybrid vehicles, consuming less, and engaging in proper recycling practices. There was also an expressed interest in community engagement initiatives. Working together on land restoration projects, investing in groups like Community Cabbage, and spending time with people in nature were all a part of peoples coping strategies.

Table 4. Most common coping mechanisms and adaptations with climate change

Physical Cooling, Shelter, and Daily Comfort
Key Insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many participants described staying indoors as a coping strategy in response to climate change–related conditions. This was particularly related to managing heat by staying cool and avoiding sun exposure, as well as seeking shelter during climate events such as heavy rainfall and storms. • Cooling was a major concern, and participants reported using a range of strategies to prevent overheating. Common approaches included spending time near bodies of water and swimming, using air conditioning or visiting indoor public spaces with air conditioning (such as malls or libraries), staying hydrated with cold beverages, and creating shade when spending time outdoors. • Participants also described coping strategies for very cold conditions, including wearing additional layers, using portable space heaters, and adding extra blankets for sleeping.
Quotes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On hot days we try to strategically use shade and air flow to keep the apartment as cool as possible. We cannot just spend the day at an air conditioned venue because we cannot leave our dog home alone if the place is too hot. In cold weather we tape up our windows with plastic and dress warm to try to avoid spending too much on hydro, but it is very expensive”. • “We mostly stay indoors have the air-conditioning running we did the BC Hydro air-conditioning program for a free air conditioner and that was amazing”. • “I use 3 fans in my room and take cold showers when needed. I’ll spend time at the mall or library or just outside in the shade as it’s cooler than inside my place”. • “During cold weather and heavy rain, I stay indoors, wear warm clothing and plan activities carefully. I also follow weather warnings to keep my family safe”.

Behavioral Adaptation/ Lifestyle Shifts

Key Insights

- Some participants described coping with climate change by adopting an attitude of acceptance toward factors beyond their control.
- Others reported coping by adjusting daily habits and lifestyles, such as planning ahead, completing tasks earlier in the day when temperatures are cooler, avoiding sun exposure due to associated health risks, and continually adapting as new conditions arise.
- Educating oneself about emerging climate-related changes was also identified as a key coping mechanism, supporting preparedness and informed decision-making.

Quotes

- “Adjusting to change, acceptance and adjusting to the environment.”
- “Stay indoors during extreme heat times; limit commutes during extreme weather events, be heat smart: wear natural fabrics and clear colours in the heat. Check wildfire map for traveling.”

Environmental Impact Reduction & Sustainable Living

Key Insights

- Many participants described efforts to adopt more sustainable daily lifestyles. These included choosing active modes of transportation such as walking and cycling, reducing carbon emissions, growing food at home, recycling, and using collected rainwater to water plants.
- Conscious consumer choices were also identified as a way of living more sustainably. Examples included buying fewer clothing items, purchasing second-hand when possible, and investing in reusable products such as cloth shopping bags and reusable straws. A small number of participants also reported making larger investments to reduce their carbon footprint, including purchasing electric/hybrid vehicles, installing solar panels, or upgrading to heat pumps.
- Some participants engaged in additional personal environmental actions, such as donating to environmental causes and picking up litter in their neighbourhoods.

Quotes

- “I recycle bottles properly, I use reusable or paper bags and paper or reusable straws”.
- “I am a low income single mother on disabilities so financially I cannot do much. But I never litter, and I try to be as mindful as I can in regards to the environment”.
- “Save energy and reduce carbon emissions”.

Community, Collective Action & Care

Key Insights

- Participants emphasized the importance of collective coping through community action. This included involvement in letter writing, protests, and other forms of activism.
- Engagement in organized groups and community service was described as helping individuals cope with climate-related distress.
- Land restoration work was viewed as a meaningful community-based coping strategy. Participants also highlighted the importance of Land Back initiatives and Indigenous sovereignty actions as part of collective healing and the response to climate change.

Quotes

- “Healing the land; restoration work with community”
- “People are going to have to live and work collectively”

Emotional/ Psychological coping

Key Insights

- Participants described a range of coping strategies to manage the negative mental health impacts of climate change–related worries, including spending time with friends, engaging in artmaking, practicing mindfulness, and spending time in nature.
- Some participants also reported avoidance as a coping strategy, deliberately trying not to think about climate change because it felt overwhelming or too stressful.

Quotes

- “It feels over whelming, so I avoid it”
- “Art, activist art, learning about art”

6.4 Climate Action



Table 5. What does a climate resilient Saanich look like?

Collective Care and Community Power

- "People are going to have to live and work collectively (shared resilience model)"
- "I believe we are all capable of change and impacting the beautiful planet we live on."
- "I believe there is still time to change and I believe everyone is capable to do at least something to change how they do things as much as they can."
- "I feel like if we want to change the way things are going we need to come together as a community and work together unfortunately there are some people who won't do things to change the way things are heading."
- "Collective action is needed. This includes all levels of government working together as well as engaging community members."

Climate Leadership, Consistency, and Political Will

- “Saanich keeps halting development; there is a desire for more consistent action”
- “Plans to develop co-op green spaces being halted – want trees and more green space”
- “I think it’s more of a systemic issue. I think BC as a province could contribute to a more climate resilient future but I don’t think Saanich itself will fix the climate crisis. However, it could better prepare its residents for climate impacts.”
- “I think whatever they are doing in our community is working because I have lived in Saanich the last 15 years and it’s been nothing but positive all around.”
- “Saanich has proven to be reliable in the past with a lot of other issues and I believe Saanich will do their best to fix this to. I love Saanich.”

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Stewardship

- “Growing food collectively (though doubtful in cities – still part of visioning)”
- “Strong push for smaller housing development with heat pumps”
- Youth voiced the need to care for trees

Valuing Diverse Ways of Knowing and Doing

- “Valuing Indigenous land-based knowledge”
- “Engage local nations”
- Participants noted that creativity, making art, and continuous education are important to mitigate impacts of climate anxiety. This includes having balance and knowing when to disengage (for mental health reasons)
- Landfill harmonic orchestra (implied artistic environmental intervention)

Continued Education and Learning Opportunities

- “I think by providing people/families more information and opportunities for involvement in reducing our environment impact you’re educating people who aren’t aware”
- “I am not sure how much can be done at the city level about these issues. I admit that I have not done any research about whether any programs are available to help us at the household level, but I have not seen anything advertised, or heard of anything by word of mouth”
- “I don’t have enough information about Saanich’s climate change plans and how they complement the work done at other levels of government”

More than half of the participants CSPC engaged with reported that they believe that Saanich is somewhat equipped to respond to climate change. Reasons given were that actions and initiatives require collective action and are not the sole responsibility of one party. Many people also reported they do believe Saanich is equipped to deal with climate change for reasons such as observing persistent action and response to climate related concerns. Those who reported that they do not believe Saanich is equipped mentioned a feeling of hopelessness related to climate change action or a lack of awareness of current actions that are being taken by the District of Saanich.

It was heard that there is interest yet confusion regarding the most effective individual measures people can take to combat climate change. Providing evidence-based, accessible information can help community members make informed decisions on recycling protocols, energy saving home upgrades, and other climate friendly choices.

Corsi-Rosenthal Air Filter

54% of survey respondents answered 'yes' when asked if they would be interested in learning how to make a Corsi-Rosenthal air filter box and 32% answered 'maybe'. Based on these results, there is potential value in pursuing further education opportunities surrounding low-cost, accessible climate adaptation initiatives.

Furthermore, It was heard from one respondent who shared a previous lived experience of homelessness who was familiar with and had previously used the Corsi-Rosenthal air filter in their tent. They expressed that with access to resources, this would be helpful support for individuals who are more susceptible to harmful wildfire smoke exposure due to current living conditions. However, based on community conversations, there is a strong interest for accessing air cooling over air filtration.

DISCUSSION

The following section bridges the findings from both the District of Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey and the CSPC's community engagement sessions with equity-deserving populations. Here, lived experiences, concerns for the future, and adaptive capacities are explored in further detail to meaningfully inform future climate planning. Remarkable continuity with both online and in-person engagement was observed. Any discrepancies noted will be addressed below. Together, these perspectives provide a deeper understanding of how climate change is currently shaping daily life in Saanich and highlights the barriers, resilience practices, and community-driven priorities for consideration in the development of an equitable, responsive climate plan.

Lived Experience: Direct Climate Impacts

Heat was overwhelmingly the main concern reported from both the Saanich Climate Update Survey and the engagements conducted by CSPC. Many participants described extreme heat as something that is now expected during the summer months, noting that summers are becoming noticeably hotter. This suggests that extreme heat is no longer perceived as an occasional or future risk, but as a normalized feature of seasonal life in Saanich.

At the same time, many responses moved beyond observation into adaptation. Participants described improvised strategies to manage heat, such as hanging shades or curtains on balconies to reduce indoor temperatures and protect plants from heat stress. These actions point to an emerging form of household-level adaptive capacity, where residents are adjusting their living spaces in response to rising temperatures. Notably, these adaptations intersect with food security and self-sufficiency, as small-scale efforts to grow

food are being challenged by increasing heat. Several participants also noted that summer months are becoming drier, with less consistent rainfall than in the past. This shift was experienced not only as an environmental change, but a practical challenge for growing food at the household level, particularly for those relying on small gardens, balconies, or community plots. Together, these responses show that extreme heat is both a lived reality and a catalyst for everyday resilience practices, particularly in constrained spaces such as apartments and rental housing. Increasing intensity and persistence of heat places strain on comfort and sense of safety particularly for seniors, people with health conditions, and those living in housing without adequate cooling.

Participants across all types of engagements identified wildfire smoke as both a lived experience of climate change and a significant concern for the future. Many described smoke events as increasingly frequent and disruptive, shaping how they think about health, safety, and the usability of outdoor and indoor spaces. However, when asked about interest in the Corsi-Rosenthal DIY air filter, several participants expressed that they were currently more concerned with air cooling than air filtering. This suggests that extreme heat is perceived as the more immediate and pressing threat in daily life. This distinction points to how different climate hazards are prioritized based on felt urgency and immediacy. While wildfire smoke is recognized as harmful, its impacts, particularly long-term respiratory consequences, may be perceived as more gradual or delayed.

In contrast, extreme heat is experienced as an immediate stressor that directly affects comfort, mobility, sleep, and the ability to remain safely inside one's home. As a result, participants' attention and coping strategies appear to be oriented toward cooling and temperature regulation, even as they acknowledge that air quality

degradation is becoming a more common and serious issue over time. This highlights the need for climate responses that address both short-term, high-intensity risks like extreme heat and longer-term health risks associated with increasing wildfire smoke exposure. Participants seem to distinguish between what inconveniences or harms them currently (heat, flooding, transportation disruption) and what they fear might cause large-scale damage in the future (wildfires, ecosystem loss, food insecurity). In other words, lived experience captures the everyday climate, while concerns reflect potential future disasters. This cognitive split is common in climate risk perception as individuals normalize recurring stressors but are more anxious about high-intensity events. Wildfire smoke often feels harder to control or avoid, especially for individuals with health conditions, limited mobility, or inadequate housing ventilation.

Flooding, atmospheric rivers, and storm events emerged as both an experienced climate impact, and concern for the future during CSPC's community engagements. These were often linked to secondary effects such as cost of damage to property, disruption to active transportation and commuting, and the inability to access services. This indicates that for many equity-deserving populations, flooding and storm events are understood through tangible, place-based experiences that shape perceptions of vulnerability.

This emphasis contrasts with the findings from the Saanich Climate Plan Update Survey where flooding and storm-related impacts ranked lower than heat, wildfire, and air quality concerns (See Figure 5.7). This discrepancy suggests that while flooding and storm events are consequential for those who have directly experienced the impacts, they may not be perceived as the most immediate risk. Survey results describe how many individuals may be concerned about a particular risk while community conversations allow for elaboration, revealing the intersectional nature of

climate-related concerns. Together, these findings suggest that communication around flood and storm risks may need to be strengthened. Participants' experiences indicate that these hazards already affect community well-being, yet their lower ranking in the survey implies that these risks are less visible to those who have not personally experienced them.

Lived Experience: Indirect Climate Impacts

In addition to the direct effects of climate change, participants described a range of indirect and cumulative impacts affecting their physical and mental health, daily routines, and financial stability. Many individuals expressed ongoing anxiety and uncertainty about the future, highlighting how gradual environmental and economic changes are shaping lived experiences across populations.

Youth and seniors were particularly affected. Many youth voiced concern about long-term environmental uncertainty and its impact on future employment opportunities, housing stability, and overall ability to build secure lives. As many youth are renters, low vacancy rates and rising rental costs further contributed to feelings of instability and stress. Housing affordability was a concern shared broadly across participants. Seniors described a different form of stress, often centred on confusion and unanswered questions about how to adopt sustainable practices and stay informed about climate initiatives and responses. This uncertainty contributed to feelings of isolation and anxiety. Across all engagements, participants with children also expressed concern for future generations. For some, the accumulation of stress and uncertainty led to feelings of helplessness and avoidance when thinking about climate change.

Participants also described gradual changes to daily routines and lifestyles. Many reported restructuring summer schedules to avoid peak heat, such as

completing activities earlier in the day. Families noted shifts in how they spend time together during hotter months and periods of wildfire smoke, often staying indoors more frequently or seeking air-conditioned public spaces when homes become unsafe or uncomfortable. Individuals who rely on public transit or active transportation particularly youth and low-income residents reported additional challenges navigating extreme weather conditions safely.

Financial pressures were another significant indirect impact. Rising utility costs, including increased summer cooling and winter heating expenses, were frequently noted. Analysis from the District of Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey indicated that rising grocery costs were the most significant climate-related expense among equity-deserving groups. While grocery costs were less prominently discussed during CSPC engagement, participants did raise broader concerns about affordability, food security, and the ability to grow their own food. Both Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey and CSPC engagement highlighted the financial burden of home damage resulting from extreme weather events. These impacts disproportionately affect equity-deserving groups, many of whom fall within lower-income brackets.

Systemic barriers to climate action/ adaptation barriers

Findings from the Saanich Climate Plan Update Survey and community engagement efforts conducted by CSPC demonstrate that equity-deserving populations face disproportionate barriers to climate action and adaptation, despite reporting high levels of concern about climate change. Financial constraints, housing conditions, transportation limitations, health vulnerabilities, and gaps in accessible information all influence how individuals experience climate impacts and their ability to respond. These barriers are systemic rather than individual, reflecting broader structural

inequities that shape access to resources, safe living environments, and participation in climate initiatives.

Affordability emerged as a central challenge. Nearly one-third of equity-deserving respondents reported household incomes of \$50,000 or less, which increases their vulnerability to rising food costs, utilities, insurance, and expenses related to extreme weather events. Participants expressed strong interest in climate-friendly actions such as home energy upgrades, cooling solutions, and sustainable transportation, yet identified upfront costs and limited financial supports as primary barriers. Housing conditions further limited adaptive capacity, particularly among renters, seniors, and low-income households living in buildings without adequate cooling, insulation, or climate-resilient infrastructure. It is a privilege to be able to afford energy conservation technology, and not something people who already experience challenges related to affordability can prioritize. These systemic constraints reduce individuals' ability to protect themselves during extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding events.

Transportation and mobility challenges also create inequitable climate risks. Many equity-deserving residents rely on public transit or active transportation due to financial or accessibility factors; however, these modes are more vulnerable to extreme weather, poor air quality, and infrastructure gaps. Survey respondents from Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey indicated that more frequent transit, affordable fares, and safer cycling infrastructure would enable greater participation in sustainable transportation.

Additionally, climate impacts intersect strongly with physical and mental health, with participants reporting disruptions to daily life, climate anxiety, and increased caregiving demands. For individuals with pre-existing health conditions, disabilities, or limited social supports, these impacts

compound existing vulnerabilities and can limit engagement in climate action.

Finally, participants identified barriers related to access to information and systemic planning gaps. Many expressed confusion about available climate programs, uncertainty about effective individual actions, and a lack of awareness of municipal initiatives. This was specifically seen among seniors who may experience accessibility issues in accessing this information. Underrepresentation of visible minorities, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and Indigenous peoples in survey participation also highlights broader engagement barriers that must be addressed to ensure inclusive climate planning. Overall, the findings underscore that equity-deserving populations are highly motivated to support climate action but require accessible resources, affordable solutions, inclusive communication, and systemic policy changes to fully participate in and benefit from climate adaptation efforts.

Equity-Deserving Populations & Climate Resilience

By asking “what does a climate-resilient Saanich look like?” we heard direct insight into how equity-deserving populations understand resilience in relation to climate action. Table 5 shows that residents envision climate resilience as both social and structural, requiring not only physical adaptation but also strong community networks, consistent leadership, and inclusive decision-making. Their responses highlight that resilience is grounded in relationships, trust, shared responsibility, and access to resources and information.

Effective governance was described as coordinated action across all levels of government, supported by sustained political will to prioritize climate action. Participants emphasized investments in energy-efficient green infrastructure, the need for ongoing learning opportunities, and clear communication about

best practices. These forms of institutional support were seen as essential for enabling community-level action and leveraging existing community power.

The high level of concern surrounding climate change indicates broad acceptance of the need for action, which is a foundational component of resilience (see Figure 5.6). While major concerns were centered on immediate risks, participants framed resilience as action that has lasting, intergenerational impact. This aligns with the priority of protecting future generations seen in Figure 5.1. Many highlighted how individual behaviour change becomes more powerful when the broader community is engaged, and how creativity and collective care can support problem-solving.

Participants also emphasized the importance of engaging local Nations, not only in planning but in integrating Indigenous land-based knowledge into action. Resilience is strengthened when communities with deep relationships to the land are provided space to contribute their expertise and leadership.

Overall, feedback suggests that Saanich has a strong foundation of trust and civic engagement on which to build, however, residents also identified areas for improvement; particularly the need for clear communication, visible leadership, and meaningful pathways for participation in collective climate action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are a direct result of the findings from both Saanich's Climate Plan Update Survey, the in-person engagement sessions, and CSPC's previous experience and knowledge using the CEbD framework in previous engagement work. The recommendations are intended to support the District of Saanich in pursuing equity and diversity as they update the 2020 Climate Plan, ensuring community voices and concerns are heard and integrated into the strategy. In addition to the recommendations CSPC has suggested based off the engagement findings, this section also includes recommendations that were provided directly from equity-deserving individuals that were engaged.

1. Embed Equity into All Climate Planning, Policy, and Implementation

Ensure equity considerations are integrated throughout climate planning. This includes:

- Centering those most impacted in decision-making.
- Prioritizing affordability in all climate programs.
- Removing procedural barriers that prevent underrepresented groups from participating.

Prioritizing equity also includes directly responding to the most pressing climate hazards experienced by equity-deserving groups including extreme heat, wildfire smoke, flooding, and rising costs.

Examples include:

- Expanding cooling supports (cooling centres, community AC loan programs, shade infrastructure).
- Improving public information during acute events (e.g., heat warnings, wildfire smoke updates).
- Supporting residents facing increasing climate-related costs (utilities, insurance, food).

2. Partner with Community Organizations and Established Mutual Aid Networks to Strengthen Collective Action

Community groups already act as hubs of trust, social connection, and resilience. Strengthening these partnerships will:

- Improve engagement reach and participation.
- Support culturally relevant, community-led climate action.
- Leverage existing networks such as youth groups, Indigenous-led organizations, cultural associations, senior services, and mutual aid groups.

Recognizing that many participants emphasized collective care and community power, Saanich can support:

- Local land stewardship programs.
- Indigenous-led climate initiatives and knowledge-sharing.
- Community gardening and food security networks.
- Volunteer-led cooling and care initiatives (e.g., heat check-ins, neighbourhood preparedness programs).

3. Strengthen Emergency Preparedness and Climate Response for Equity-Deserving Populations

Equity-deserving populations face disproportionate risks and barriers to preparedness.

Supportive actions include:

- Tailored emergency communication strategies (plain language, multiple formats, multilingual materials).
- Accessible evacuation and shelter planning.
- Supports for people relying on active transportation or living in housing without proper cooling/ventilation.
- Partnerships with organizations already supporting unhoused or precariously housed residents.

4. Improve and Expand Access to Affordable Public Transportation and Energy-Saving Upgrades

Transportation and housing affordability are core barriers to climate resilience.

Actions include:

- Advocating for or subsidizing transit fare reductions, improving frequency, and expanding bus routes.
- Increasing incentives for heat pumps, weatherization, and home energy upgrades, especially for renters and low-income households.
- Developing renter-accessible programs (portable cooling, incentives that don't require property ownership).

5. Provide Clear, Accessible, Evidence-Based Climate Information

Residents want to take climate action, but need trustworthy, accessible information.

Recommendations include:

- A central, accessible hub for climate information.
- Clear guidance on recycling, emergency preparedness, sustainable transportation, home retrofits, and cooling options.
- Materials available in multiple languages, formats, and channels (print, digital, radio, community workshops).
- Accessible formats (offline materials, telephone hotlines, printed guides).

6. Invest in Local Social, Health, and Community Services

Climate resilience is fundamentally connected to the strength of social infrastructure.

Investments should support:

- Mental health resources for climate anxiety.
- Programs reducing social isolation (especially for seniors, newcomers, and people with disabilities).
- Community centres, libraries, and nonprofits that serve as informal cooling/clean-air hubs.
- Youth programs addressing climate distress and future uncertainty.

Examples of specific recommendations requested by equity-deserving individuals:

- “People with e-bikes/scooters/trailers can assist neighbours in picking-up non garbage and other recyclable items. The people who already collect cans can be incentivized to collect other items for proper recycling”
- “Focus on glass collection and reimbursement. Accessible glass disposal with consideration for folks who have mobility challenges”
- “Increase the availability of garbage cans for proper waste disposal”
- “Similar to the book nook libraries in communities, but instead people have little garbage cans that can be picked up by garbage trucks ”
- “Support green infrastructure”
- “Value Indigenous land-based knowledge”
- “Ensure increases in housing density doesn’t undermine the tree canopy and other natural assets ”

Conclusion

Engagement findings highlight that climate change is already shaping the daily lives, health, and wellbeing of equity-deserving populations. Extreme heat, wildfire smoke, flooding, and rising costs were consistently identified as the most pressing concerns, demonstrating that climate impacts are not experienced equally across the community. Participants described disruptions to work, mobility, housing comfort, and mental health, reinforcing the need for climate planning that prioritizes lived experience and recognizes the compounding nature of social and environmental vulnerability.

Systemic barriers such as affordability, housing conditions, transportation access, and limited access to clear information continue to constrain equitable participation in climate action and adaptation. While there is strong interest in sustainable practices and energy-saving upgrades, financial limitations and infrastructure gaps reduce the ability of many residents to implement such changes. Underrepresentation of some equity-deserving groups in the survey also highlights the importance of continued outreach and relationship building to ensure that future planning processes reflect the full diversity of community voices.

Despite these challenges, findings show a strong sense of collective responsibility, hope, and a desire for inclusive, community-driven climate solutions. Participants emphasized the importance of accessible education, affordable supports, resilient infrastructure, and collaboration across governments and communities. These insights reinforce the need for climate strategies that move beyond individual responsibility and address systemic inequities that shape vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

Overall, the engagement process demonstrates that building a climate-resilient Saanich requires an equity-centred approach that prioritizes affordability, accessibility, health, and community connection. Integrating these perspectives into future policies and programs will help ensure that climate action not only reduces emissions and prepares for hazards but also strengthens social resilience and improves quality of life for all residents.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

This section provides supplemental data to accompany the qualitative insights gathered through community engagement. It offers context on the structural and systemic factors that impact equity-deserving populations and situates the findings within broader demographic, economic, and social conditions. Where possible, data specific to Saanich has been provided. When data was unavailable, national-level data was used to supplement the analysis.

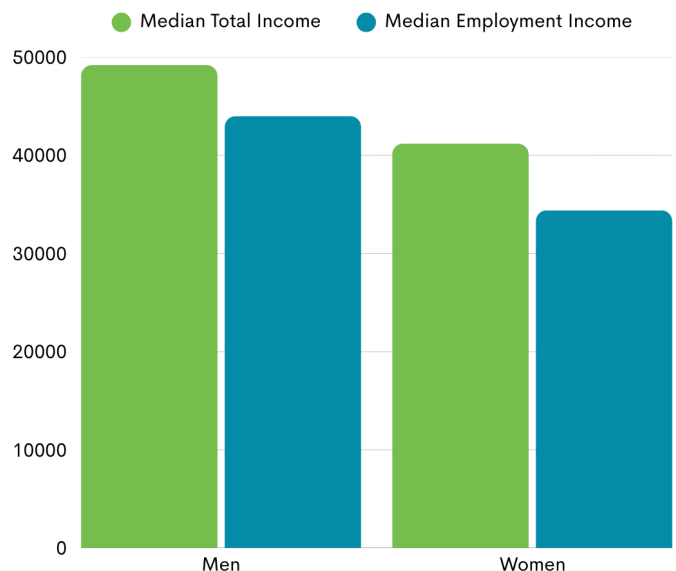
1.1 GENDER INEQUITY

Figure A1 shows that in Saanich in 2020, the median total income for men was \$49,200 and \$41,200 for women and the median employment income in 2020 among those 15 years and older was \$44,000 for men and \$34,000 for women. *Data is based on the 2021 census and given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses provided.

1. Persistent gender income gap

- Persistent gender income gap
Media total income: 44,800
Men: \$49,200
Women: \$41,200
Gap: \$8,000 (approximately 18% less for women)
- Median employment income:
\$38,800
Men: \$44,000
Women: \$34,400
Gap: \$10,000 (approximately 26% difference)

Figure A1: Saanich Median total Income and Median Employment Income for Men and Women in 2020⁵



These disparities reflect systemic gender inequities in the labour market, including occupational segregation, wage discrimination, and unequal access to full-time or high-paying jobs. The gender income gap is a phenomenon across Canada. In 2021, women aged 25 to 54 earned an average of \$0.89 for every dollar earned by men in the same age group—an hourly wage gap of \$3.79, or 11.1%⁶.

⁵ Statistics Canada. 2024. Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-re-censement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0&D-GUIDlist=2021A00055917034>

⁶ Statistics Canada. 2022. Quality of Employment in Canada, Pay gap, 1998 to 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/14-28-0001/2020001/article/00003-eng.htm>

2. Wider Income gaps for women

- Women make almost 1/5 less than their male counterparts in Saanich.
- The employment income gap is higher than the total income gap, suggesting that women may rely more on non-employment income (e.g., pensions, social assistance, or spousal income) to close the gap.
- This may also reflect barriers to full-time or stable employment, such as caregiving responsibilities or lack of access to affordable childcare.

3. Implications for climate adaptation

- Lower income limits women's ability to invest in climate adaptation measures (e.g., home retrofits, air conditioning, insurance).
- Women, especially single mothers or seniors may face greater vulnerability during climate events due to financial constraints and caregiving roles.
- Programs that require upfront investment or homeownership may inadvertently exclude women.

1.2 LOW-INCOME INEQUITY

The median after-tax income distribution data for Canada, British Columbia, and the Capital Regional District (Census Metropolitan Area [CMA]) and Saanich Census Subdivision [CSD]:

Figure A2: Median after-tax income of households, Canada, BC, CMA, and Saanich CSD, 2020

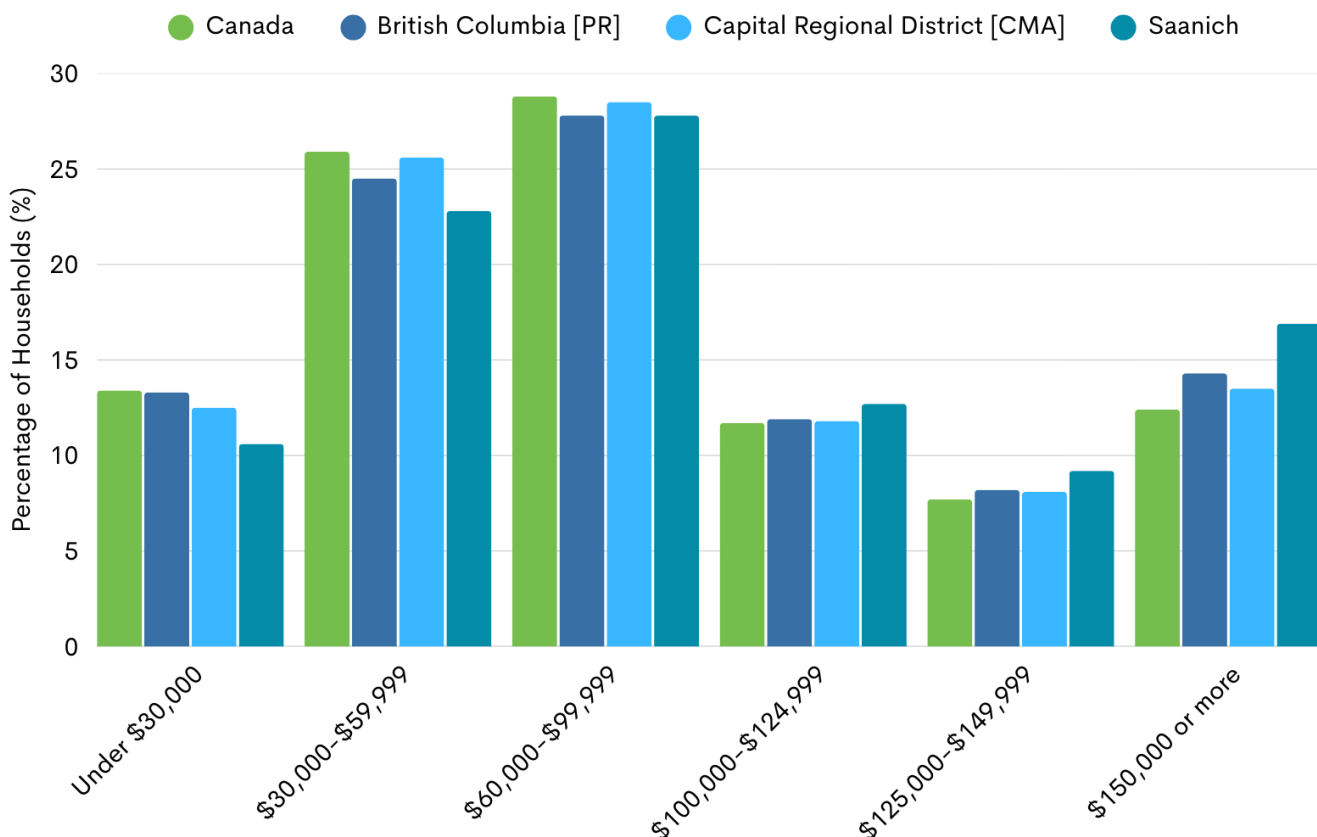


Figure A1 shows that in Saanich in 2020, the median total income for men was \$49,200 and \$41,200 for women and the median employment income in 2020 among those 15 years and older was \$44,000 for men and \$34,000 for women. *Data is based on the 2021 census and given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses provided.

1. Over 33% of Saanich's population has a median household income under \$59,999 and over 10% is under \$30,000. Although this is lower than the median household income for Canada, BC, and CRD, it still represents a significant population of lower income households residing in Saanich.

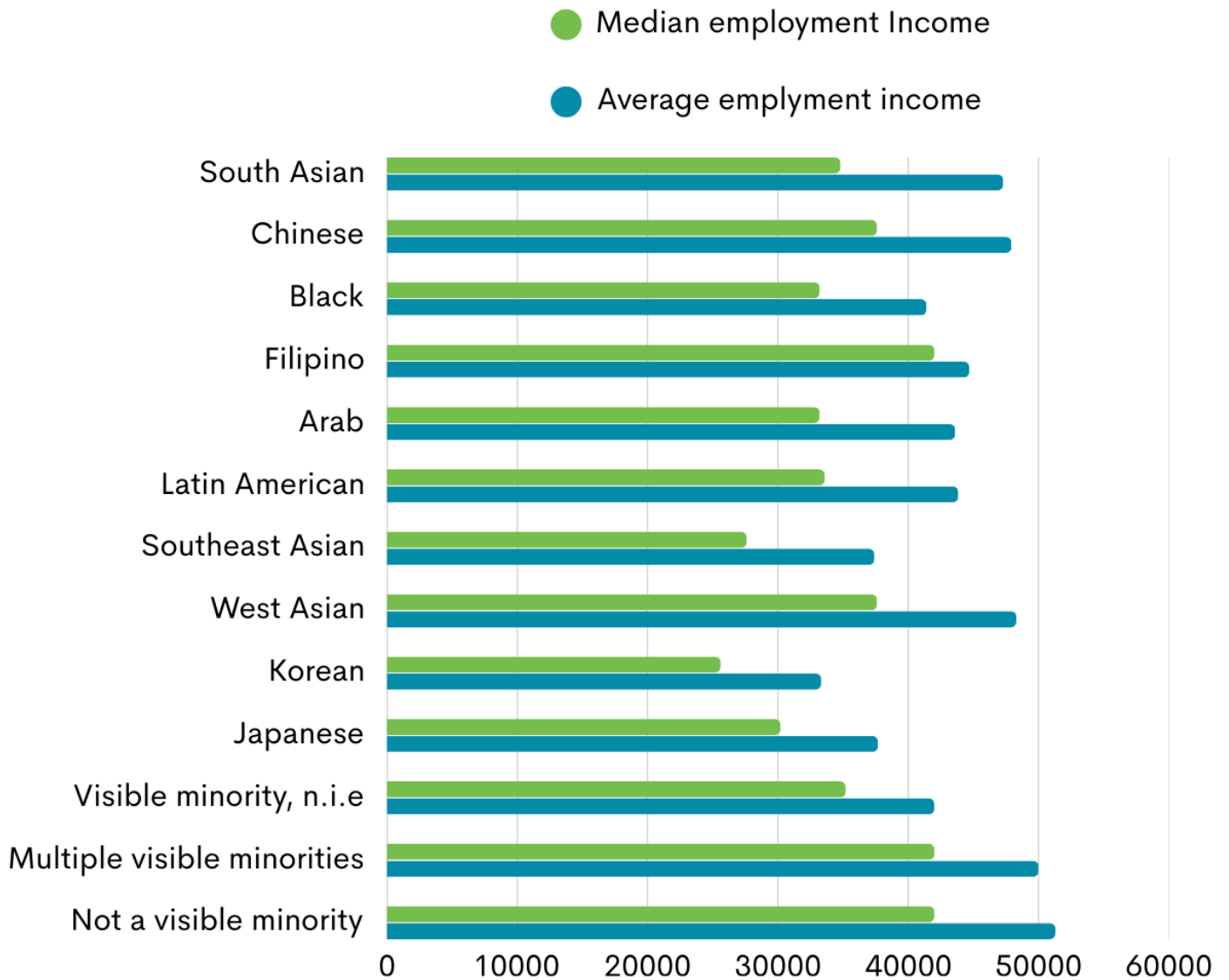
Equity Implication: These households are more vulnerable to climate impacts (e.g., heatwaves, extreme precipitation, wildfire smoke events) and often face barriers to accessing adaptation resources like home retrofits or clean energy incentives (e.g., a solar-powered microgrid in a flood-prone Indigenous community increases resilience by ensuring energy access during emergencies).

2. Middle-income stability but limited growth

The \$60,000 – \$99,999 bracket is consistent across all regions (approximately 27 – 28%), but Saanich (CSD) shows a decrease in the \$100,000 – \$149,999 income range, particularly \$100,000 - \$149,999. This may reflect missing middle households that are not low-income but still struggle with affordability in a high-cost area like Saanich.

VISIBLE MINORITY INEQUITY

Figure A3: Median and average employment income by visible and nonvisible minorities, Victoria (CMA)⁷



⁷Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0642-01. Average and median employment income by visible minority, selected sociodemographic characteristics and the census year: Canada, geographical regions of Canada, provinces and territories and census metropolitan areas with parts. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.25318/9810064201-eng>

1. Systemic income gaps by racial identity

- Non-visible minorities (i.e., those not identifying as a visible minority) have the highest median employment income (approximately \$42,000), significantly higher than most visible minority groups.
- Korean, West Asian, and Southeast Asian groups show the lowest median incomes, with Korean workers earning a median of just \$25,600, a stark contrast to the non-visible minority median.
- This data reflects systemic inequities in access to well-paying, stable employment for racialized communities, often rooted in discrimination, credential recognition barriers, and occupational segregation.

2. Median versus average income gaps reveal inequality within groups

- For various groups, the average income is significantly higher than the median, suggesting that a few high earners are skewing the average.
- This is especially important for equity analysis: median income better reflects the typical experience, while average income can mask disparities.

3. Implications for climate adaptation

Racialized communities with lower median incomes may face:

- Greater exposure to climate risks (e.g., living in less resilient housing or urban heat islands).
- Fewer resources to invest in adaptation (e.g., retrofits, insurance, emergency preparedness).
- Barriers to accessing programs that require upfront costs or homeownership.



SENIORS AND YOUTH INEQUITY

Seniors

As the District of Saanich's population grows and ages, with Saanich's population aging faster than the rest of Canada (23.1% of Saanich residents are over the age of 65 years versus 19% for Canada⁹), adaptation strategies must account for the unique needs of older adults.

Figure A4: Proportion of households spending 30% and 50% of income on rent and utilities by age in Saanich¹⁰

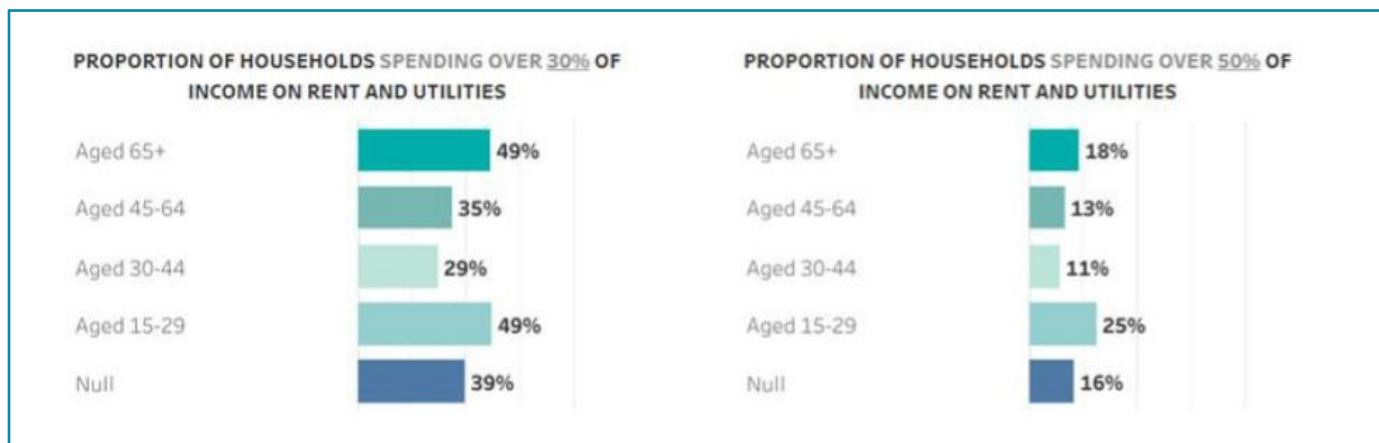


Figure A4 shows that in 2023, 49% of seniors in Saanich were living in unaffordable housing (meaning that they spent more than one-third of their income on housing), and 18% were precariously housed. It also shows that in 2023, 49% of youth in Saanich were living in unaffordable housing and 25% in extreme core housing need.

1. Seniors and youth face disproportionate housing burdens:

- Unaffordable housing puts senior-led renter households in Saanich at risk of housing instability or homelessness.
- This reflects a critical equity issue, as seniors often live on fixed or limited incomes (e.g., pensions, retirement savings) that do not keep pace with rising housing costs.

2. Structural vulnerabilities:

- Seniors who are renters are more vulnerable to evictions, renovictions, and redevelopment¹¹.
- Seniors are more likely to have mobility or health challenges, making relocation or poor housing conditions especially harmful.

⁸ Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2021. Accessed February 9, 2026. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?LANG=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&DGUIDlist=2021A00055917021&HEADERlist=0&SearchText=saanich>

⁹ BC Non-Profit Housing Association. Canadian Rental Housing Index. 2023. Accessed December 8, 2025. https://www.rentalhousingindex.ca/en/#age_csd

¹⁰ Sheppard, Christine L., Seong-gee Um, and Brenda Roche. Enhancing Eviction Prevention Supports for Older Adults in Social Housing. Toronto: Wellesley Institute, March 2023.

- Seniors face barriers to accessing support programs, especially if they are digitally excluded or socially isolated.
- Youth are more likely to experience hidden homelessness¹².
- Youth have a greater likelihood of staying with friends or being technically housed but in an unsafe environment¹³.
- Housing instability and barriers to affordability impact youths

3. Climate risk amplification – Seniors and youth in unaffordable or precarious housing are less able to adapt to climate impacts such as:

- Extreme heat (e.g., lack of air conditioning or cooling infrastructure).
- Poor air quality (e.g., wildfire smoke).
- Flooding or power outages (e.g., limited mobility or emergency preparedness).



¹¹ Gaetz, S., Schwan, K., Redman, M., French, D., & Dej, E. (2018). Report 1: Structural Prevention of Youth Homelessness. A. Buchnea (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

¹² Gaetz, S., Schwan, K., Redman, M., French, D., & Dej, E. (2018). Report 1: Structural Prevention of Youth Homelessness. A. Buchnea (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

1.5 DISABILITY INEQUITY

In 2022, British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) found that respondents with disabilities were less likely to be employed than other groups¹³. They also tended to earn lower wages, with a greater proportion making under \$50,000 annually and fewer earning over \$100,000 compared to the average response.

Figures A5 and A6 illustrate disparities in employment status and earnings between people with and without disabilities:

Figure A5: Workforce representation of people with disabilities in Victoria¹⁴

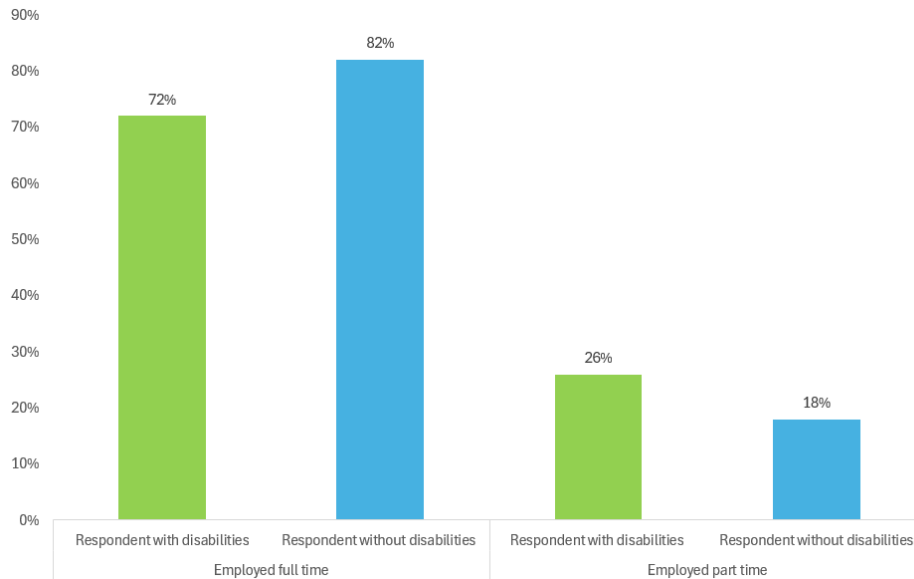
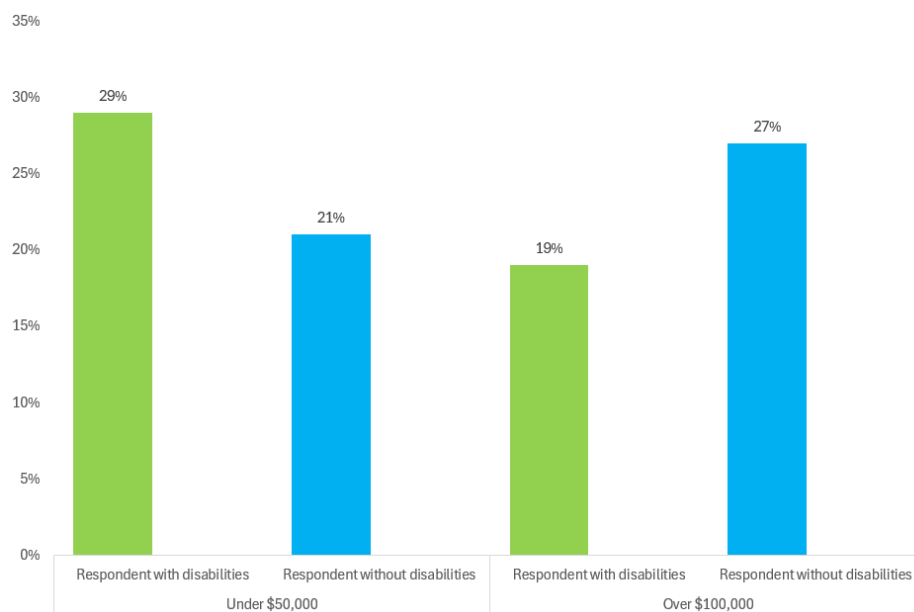


Figure A6: Average earnings of people with disabilities



¹³ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC). Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in BC. 2024. https://baseline.bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/BCOHRC_Aug2024_Rights-in-focus.pdf

¹⁴ City of Victoria. Accessibility Framework. Victoria, BC: City of Victoria, 2020. PDF. <https://www.victoria.ca/media/file/accessibility-framework>

Equity lens analysis: disability, employment, and climate vulnerability

1. Employment disparities

- Only 72% of respondents with disabilities are employed full-time, compared to 82% of those without disabilities.
- 26% of people with disabilities are employed part-time, versus 18% of those without disabilities.

2. Income inequities

People with disabilities are more likely to earn under \$50,000; therefore, their lower earnings limit access to:

- Stable housing, which is critical during extreme weather events.
- Transportation options, which are essential for evacuation or accessing cooling centers.

3. Compounded climate risk

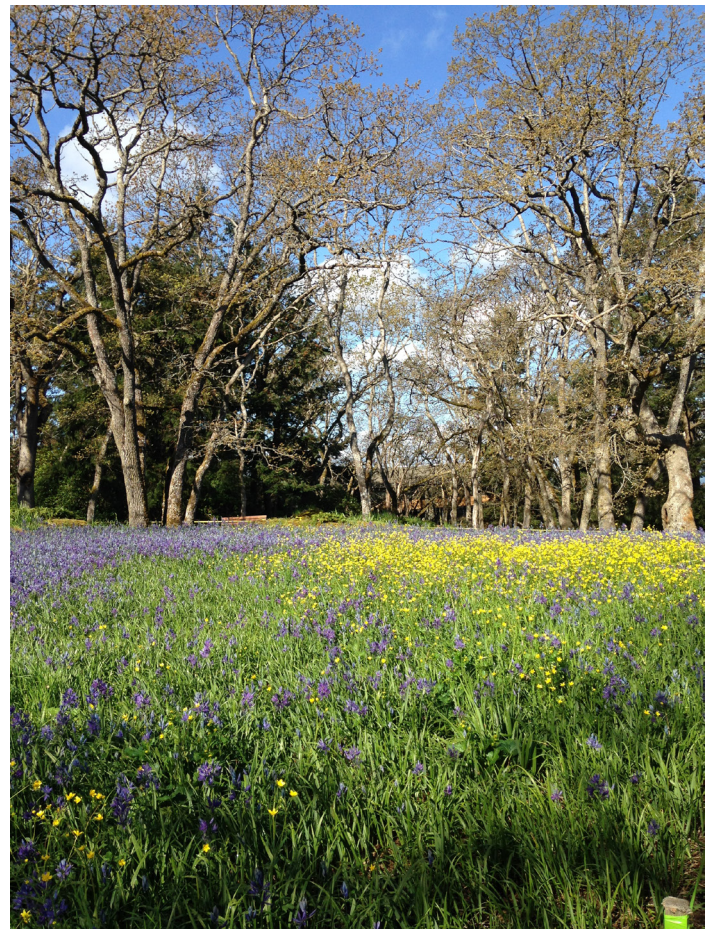
People with disabilities may face multiple, intersecting barriers during climate events:

- Mobility, cognitive, or sensory impairments can make evacuation or accessing services more difficult.
- Health conditions may be worsened by heat, poor air quality, and/or power outages.
- Social isolation can reduce access to timely information or community support.

Impact in Saanich

Based on the findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability completed in 2017, Statistics Canada found that one in five (22%) Canadians aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities.¹⁵

The District of Saanich used this percentage in their Accessibility Plan (2023-2026)¹⁶ to estimate the number of residents over the age of 15 with a disability to be approximately 22,557 based on a population of 102,535.¹⁷ The disabilities range from mild or moderate to severe and very severe, significantly impacting people's ability to participate in employment.



¹⁵ Statistics Canada. 2022. Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD). <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3251>

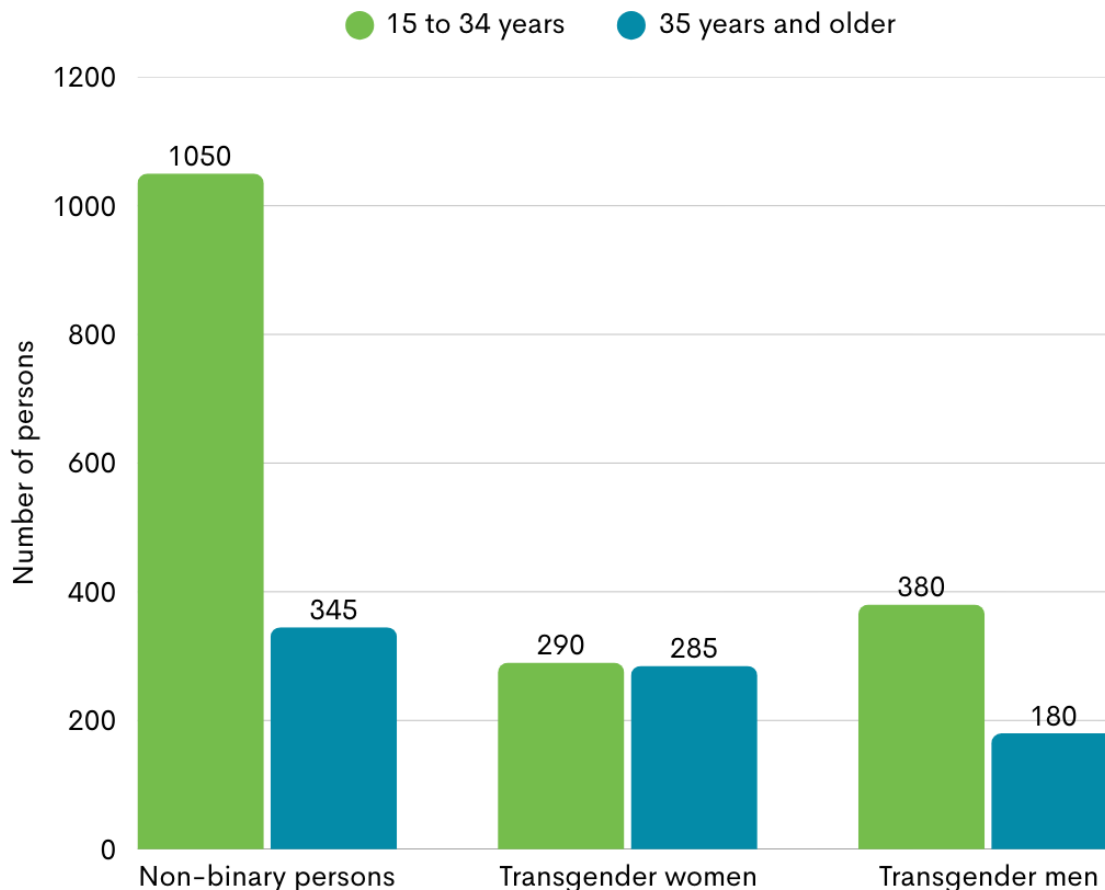
¹⁶ District of Saanich Accessibility Plan 2023-2026. Retrieved from: Accessibility Plan | District of Saanich (December 11th, 2025).

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, "Census Profile", 2023, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=>

1.6 TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY POPULATIONS INEQUITY

A climate equity analysis for the transgender and non-binary populations in Victoria (CMA) must consider how climate change disproportionately affects gender-diverse communities and how these populations intersect with age and housing status.

Figure A7: Transgender and non-binary populations, aged 15 and over living in a private household, Victoria (CMA), 2021¹⁸



1. Overview of the population

- Non-binary persons: 1,395 total (1,050 aged 15–34; 345 aged 35+)
- Transgender women: 575 total (290 aged 15–34; 285 aged 35+)
- Transgender men: 540 total (360 aged 15–34; 180 aged 35+)

These populations are small, less than 1% of the total population of 337,875, aged fifteen and over in Victoria CMA in 2021, but highly vulnerable due to systemic barriers and social marginalization.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada. 2023. Canada's Transgender and Non-Binary Population: Data Visualization Tool. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2022021-eng.htm>

2. These groups often face:

- Housing insecurity: Discrimination in housing markets can lead to unstable or unsafe living conditions, making it harder to shelter from extreme weather.
- Healthcare access barriers: Climate-related disruptions (e.g., smoke from wildfires, floods) can further limit access to gender-affirming and general healthcare.
- Economic marginalization: Higher rates of unemployment or underemployment, and therefore, low-income, reduce access to climate adaptation resources (e.g., air conditioning, emergency supplies).
- Social isolation: Discrimination and stigma can reduce access to community support during climate emergencies.

3. Age-specific considerations

- Youth (15 – 34 years): This group makes up most of the trans and non-binary population in Victoria. They may be more mobile, but also more precariously housed or economically insecure.
- Older adults (35+ years): Though fewer in number, they may face compounded health risks and social isolation, especially if estranged from family or lacking community support.

Transgender and non-binary populations, aged 15 and over living in a private household, Victoria (CMA):

Non-binary persons 15-34 years: **1050**
non-binary 35 years and over: **345**
transgender women 15-34 years: **290**
transgender women 35 years & over: **285**
transgender men 15-34 years: **380**
transgender men 35 years and over: **180**



1.7 HOMELESSNESS INEQUITY

The District of Saanich recognizes that while provincial and federal governments are primarily responsible for funding homelessness solutions, access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is a fundamental right. To support this, the District of Saanich collaborates with regional partners and other orders of government.

The 2025 Point-in-Time count found 1,749 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Capital Region.¹⁹ Saanich was the second most cited home community in the Capital Region after Victoria.

Climate change disproportionately affects unhoused populations, and systemic barriers can exacerbate these impacts, despite well-intentioned municipal efforts.

1. Climate Vulnerabilities of the Unhoused Population

The 2025 Point-in-Time Found identified:

- 1749 people experiencing homelessness
- 811 unsheltered or emergency sheltered
- 935 provisionally accommodated

These individuals may face acute climate risks, including:

- Exposure to extreme weather (e.g., heatwaves, cold snaps, wildfire smoke).
- Lack of access to clean water, cooling, and/or heating.

- Limited mobility during climate emergencies.
- Higher rates of chronic illness, worsened by environmental stressors.

2. Structural inequities

Climate inequities persist due to:

- Underfunding the provincial and federal levels, leaving municipalities to fill critical gaps.
- Insufficient emergency shelter capacity, especially during climate events.
- Barriers to accessing healthcare and addiction services, which are essential for resilience.

3. Intersectional considerations

This analysis should be integrated with previous findings on:

- Persons with disabilities: Many unhoused individuals also live with disabilities (87% have at least 1 disability; 56% have 3 or more disabilities).
- Gender diversity: Trans and non-binary individuals face higher rates of homelessness and discrimination in shelters.
- Age: Youth and seniors are especially vulnerable to both homelessness and climate impacts.

¹⁹Oosthoek, J., S. Cook, D. Turenne, E. Bosdachin and B. Pauly (2025). 2025 Greater Victoria Point in Time Homelessness Count and Survey. Victoria, BC, Community Social Planning Council. <https://www.crd.ca/media/file/2025-greater-victoria-point-time-homelessness-count-and-survey-reportpdf>

1.8 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The District of Saanich operates within the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the WSÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations. Additionally, Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit) from other places in Canada live in Saanich. In 2021, the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was home to 19,455 Indigenous people, representing approximately 5% of the CMA's total population. This proportion is slightly lower than the provincial average of 5.9%.²⁰

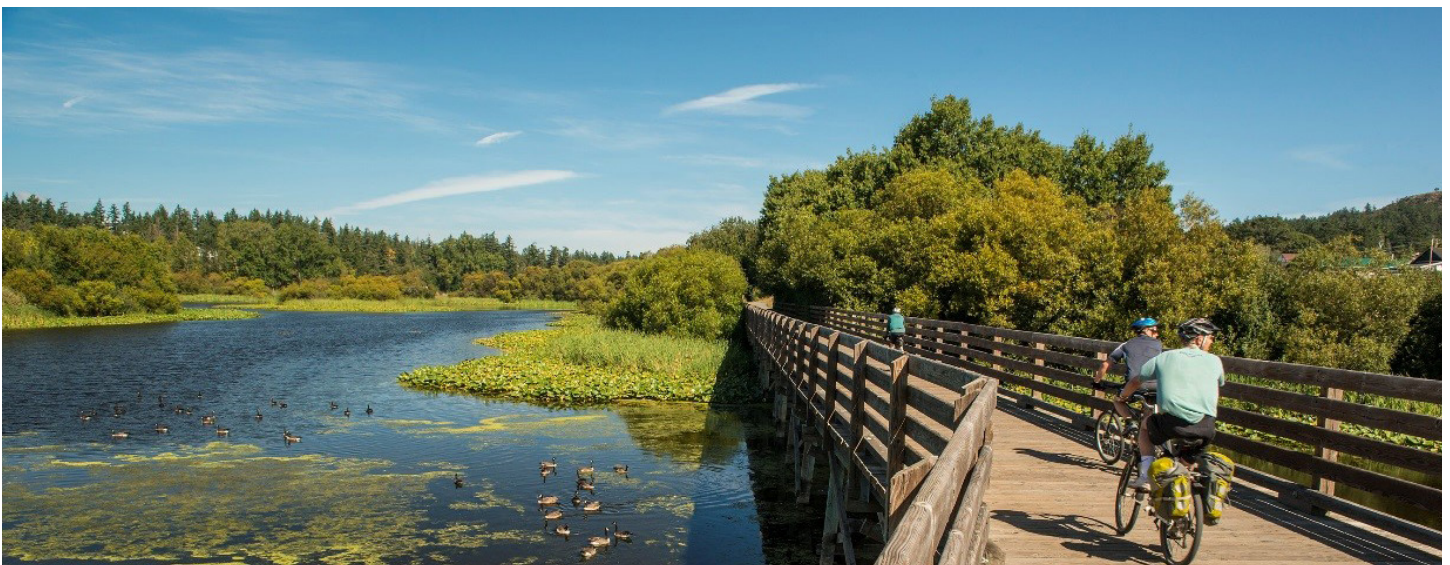
Although Indigenous People in Canada are leading the way in climate action,²¹ the difficult socio-economic and environmental conditions that most Indigenous communities in Canada face limits their adaptation capacities. These conditions are the result of:

Cultural and historical contexts

- Indigenous peoples have deep relationships with the land and are often the first to experience environmental changes.²²
- Colonial legacies and ongoing systemic inequities have undermined and excluded the adaptive capacity of Indigenous peoples and excluded them from decision-making.

Structural and geographic barriers

- Many Indigenous communities, particularly those on reserve, face geographic isolation, barriers to education, underfunded infrastructure, and limited access to services. These conditions increase exposure and sensitivity to climate hazards such as wildfires, flooding, and extreme heat.



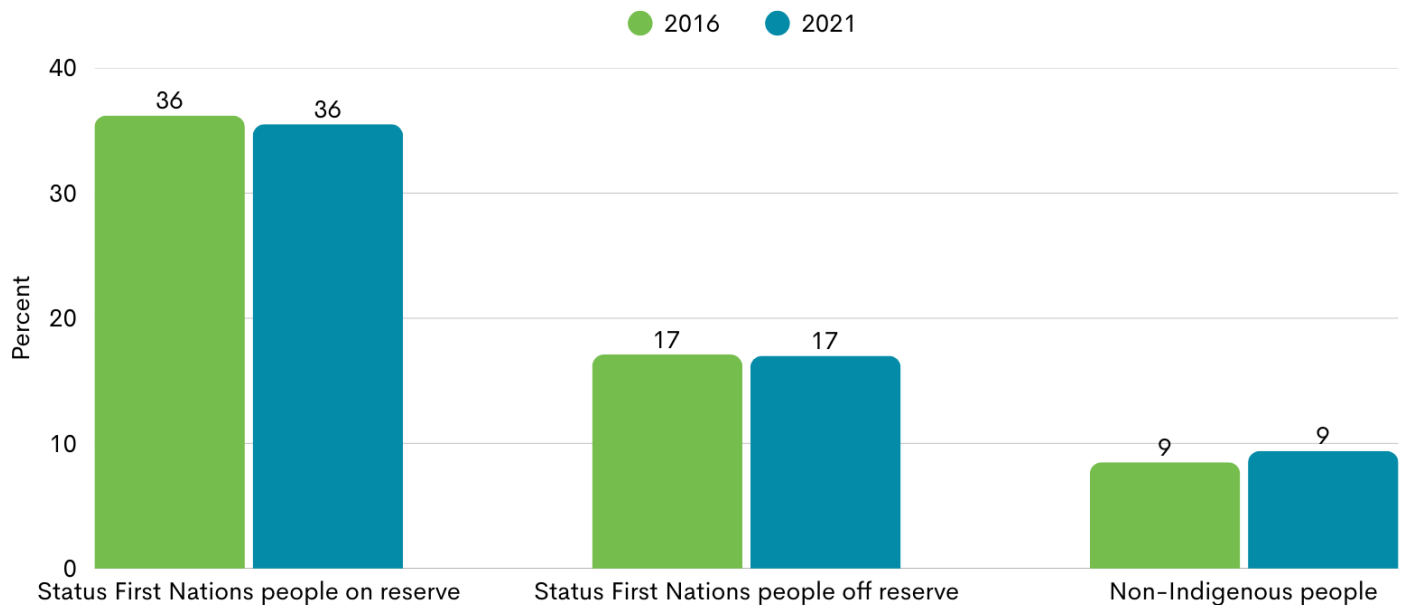
²⁰ Statistics Canada. Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?lang=E&topic=8&d-guid=2021S0503935>

²¹ Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canada's Partnership with Indigenous Peoples on Climate, Government of Canada, last modified May 21, 2025. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/indigenous-partnership.html>.

²² Government of Canada. Canada's National Adaptation Strategy. Environment and Climate Change Canada. Last modified 2023. Accessed February 17, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/national-adaptation-strategy/full-strategy.html>

CROWDED DWELLINGS

Figure A10: Percentage of the Indigenous population living in crowded dwellings in Canada in 2016 and 2021²³



- Status First Nations on reserve: 36.2% (2016) → 35.5% (2021).
- Status First Nations off reserve: 17.1% → 17%.
- Non-Indigenous population: 8.5% → 9.4%.
- Over one-third of Status First Nations people living on reserve reside in crowded dwellings, a rate nearly four times higher than the non-Indigenous population.
- While there was a slight decrease from 2016 to 2021, the rate remains alarmingly high, especially when compared to the modest increase among non-Indigenous populations.

Climate equity analysis: housing crowding and Indigenous climate vulnerability

1. Persistent overcrowding in Indigenous communities

- The proportion of Status First Nations people living off reserve in crowded dwellings is 7.6% higher than non-Indigenous people.

2. Structural housing inequities

- Overcrowding is often a result of chronic housing shortages, underfunded infrastructure, and jurisdictional gaps in housing policy for First Nations communities.
- These conditions reflect systemic neglect and colonial legacies that continue to shape Indigenous housing outcomes.

²³ Statistics Canada. Statistics on Indigenous People. 2025. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/indigenous_peopleshttps://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?lang=E&topic=8&dguid=2021S0503935

3. Intersection with other vulnerabilities

- Crowded dwellings are often older, poorly insulated, and less energy-efficient, compounding exposure to climate hazards.
- Crowded dwellings limit the ability to self-isolate during health emergencies or to safely shelter in place during extreme weather.

Climate implication: Crowded housing increases vulnerability to climate impacts by:

- Reducing thermal comfort and increasing exposure to extreme heat or cold.
- Making evacuation and emergency response more difficult.
- Increasing the risk of health issues during climate-related events (e.g., heatwaves, poor air quality).



DWELLINGS IN NEED OF REPAIR

Figure A11: Percentage of the population living in a dwelling in need of repair, Canada, 2016 and 2021²⁴

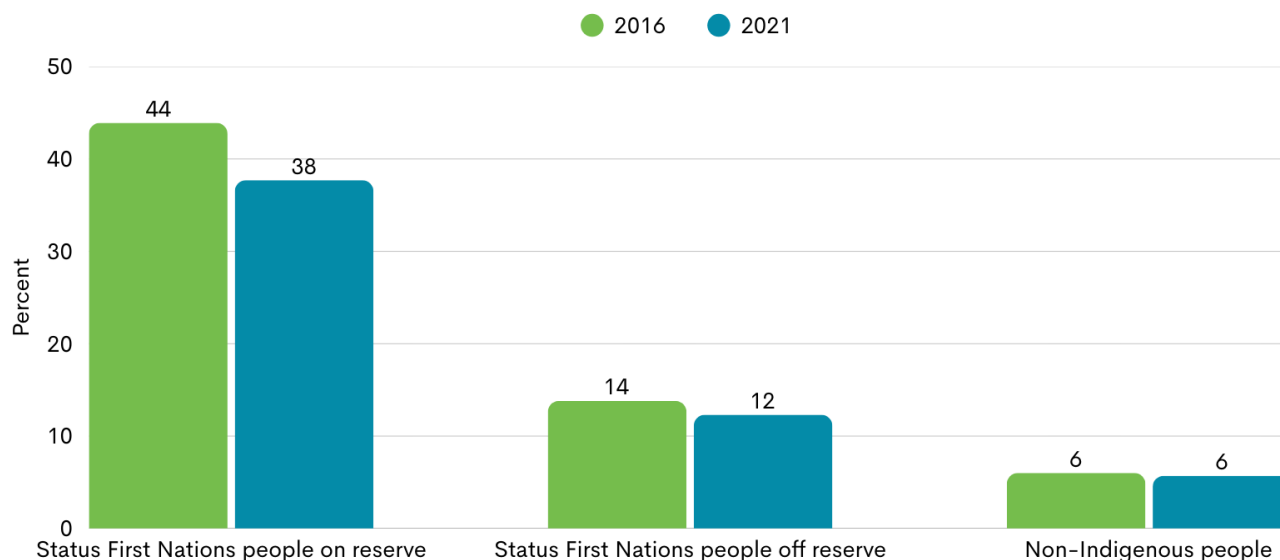


Figure A11 shows the percentage of the population living in dwellings in need of repair in Canada in 2016 and 2021:

- Status First Nations on reserve:
43.9% (2016) → 37.3% (2021)
- Status First Nations off reserve:
13.8% → 12.3%
- Non-Indigenous population:
6% → 5.7%

Climate equity analysis: housing conditions and indigenous climate resilience

1. Disproportionate housing disrepair in Indigenous communities

- 12.3% of Status First Nations people off reserve reside in a dwelling in need of repair compared to 5.7% of non-Indigenous people.
- Over one-third of Status First Nations people on reserve live in homes needing major repairs, more than six times the rate of non-Indigenous populations.
- While there has been some improvement since 2016, the gap remains stark and reflects long-standing infrastructure inequities.

²⁴ Statistics Canada. Statistics on Indigenous People. 2025.
https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/indigenous_peoples

2. Structural and systemic barriers

The high rate of disrepair is linked to:

- Chronic underfunding of on-reserve housing.
- Jurisdictional fragmentation between federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments.
- Limited access to skilled trades and materials in remote communities.

Poor housing conditions are associated with:

- Respiratory illnesses, mould exposure, and injury risks.
- Reduced thermal comfort, increasing vulnerability during heatwaves or cold spells.
- Mental health stress, especially when combined with overcrowding.

Climate implications: Homes in poor condition are more vulnerable to:

- Extreme weather (e.g., heatwaves, cold snaps, storms).
- Water damage from flooding or heavy rainfall.
- Poor indoor air quality, which can worsen during wildfire smoke events.

APPENDIX 2 :

CSPC CLIMATE EQUITY ENGAGEMENT ONLINE SURVEY

1. My Identity Includes:

- Person with a disability
- Visible minority
- 2SLGBTQ+
- Indigenous
- Youth (15-29)
- Senior
- None of the above
- Other

2. Do you live or work in Saanich:

- Yes
- No

3. How does climate change impact your life? Please provide examples (e.g., hotter in summer, more snow in the winter, more extreme weather events).

4. What are your worries/concerns for the future related to climate change? Please provide examples (e.g., wildfire smoke, floods, heat domes/waves).

5. How do you cope with climate change? What do you do? Please provide examples (e.g., go to air-conditioned venues, stay indoors).

6. Do you believe Saanich is able to respond to climate change:

Yes

No

7. Why do you believe this?

8. Would you want to learn how to make a DIY air filter (see links below)

Yes

No

9. Please provide your first and last name and email to be eligible for the e-transfer honorarium