

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN & LAND USE BYLAW ENGAGEMENT WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

TOWN OF OLDS

 AUGUST 2025

Town of Olds

Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw Update

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1.0 Introduction

The Town of Olds is working with ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. (ISL) to review and update the Town’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The Town’s MDP was approved in 2020, but some updates were needed to make sure it addresses community needs and considers current development trends.

The Town’s LUB was originally adopted in 2001 but has been updated numerous times since. The updated LUB will make regulations easier to understand and confirm that they follow provincial legislation.

These two important documents help shape how our community grows and develops:

The MDP	The LUB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides how our community will grow in the future. • Includes goals about how we move around the community, how land will be used in the future, and how we will protect the environment. • Applies to the entire community. Policies are broad and aspirational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes rules about how land can be used that decide where things like homes, stores, and parks can go. These rules determine the size of properties, the size and height of buildings, and the distance that buildings need to be from roads or other buildings. • Outlines the process for how the community makes decisions on proposed developments. • Applies to the entire community. Regulations are site-specific.

2.0 Engagement Process

Public feedback is an important part of the MDP and LUB update process. Throughout this project, residents and interest holders provided feedback with a targeted engagement campaign occurring in July 2025 wherein drafts of the MDP and LUB were shared publicly.

The engagement process included the following:

- A public survey was available from July 9 – 27, 2025. Respondents could complete surveys online or submit paper copies at the in-person open house that was hosted on July 22, 2025, or at the Town Office. **In total, 62 survey responses were received.**
- A virtual open house was hosted from July 9 – 27, 2025, following a similar format to the in-person open house event. People could navigate a virtual space and read about the project through informative display boards and access the draft MDP and LUB documents. **The virtual open house received 73 webpage visits and 95 views.**
- An in-person open house event was held on July 22, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Community Connection Centre (4911 51 Avenue). **Approximately 15 people provided feedback at the event.**
- In addition to the above opportunities, the project team notified external interest holders of the draft MDP and LUB. The targeted notification invited interest holders to review the draft documents, participate in the in-person/virtual open houses and provide their feedback through the online survey.

3.0 Summary of What We Heard

The following is a summary of key themes that emerged from the public feedback gathered through the engagement process.

3.1 Municipal Development Plan

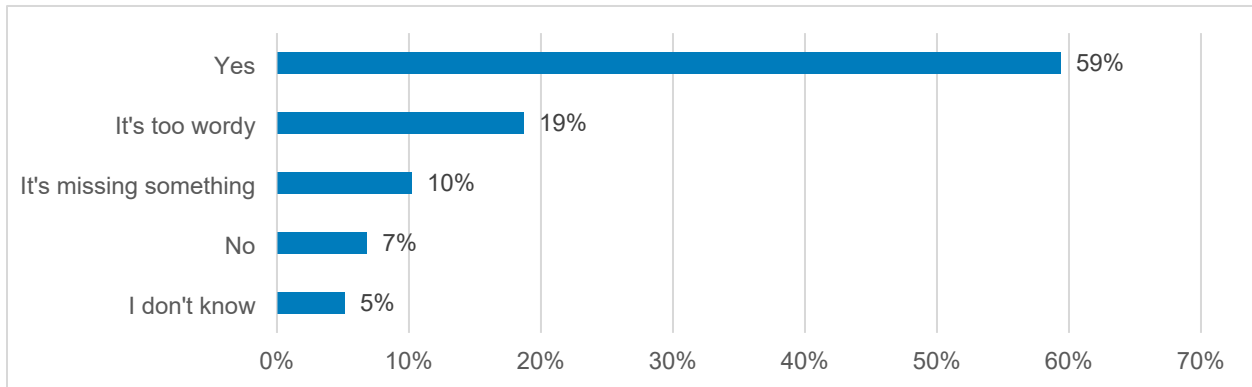
Vision

The following is the draft MDP vision statement:

“The Town of Olds is a vibrant community hub that embraces its agricultural roots, while looking towards a prosperous future. Maintaining its welcoming small-town feel through intentional growth management, Olds is a catalyst for agricultural and economic innovation, cultural diversity, and social connections, that is supported by a renowned education system.

Remaining committed to environmental management, recreational opportunities, and attainable housing, Olds provides key services and amenities for an active, engaged, and healthy lifestyle that fosters a strong sense of belonging for all.”

We asked people whether they felt the vision statement captured the essence of Olds and what they want the community to be like in the future. 59% of respondents agreed that the vision statement captured the essence of the town and what they want for the community.



59 responses

We further asked people to share if there was anything they would like to see added, changed or removed from the vision statement. The following details were shared:

Topics	Feedback
Add to the vision statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A couple individuals responded that the vision should recognize the Olds rural history and value. • Another respondent suggested adding that Olds is a vibrant and inclusive community.
Changes to the vision statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A couple people noted that the vision statement is too wordy and could be made more concise. • Another respondent said that the statement should be in future tense instead of present tense.
Remove from the vision statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A couple respondents did not think the vision statement needed to include cultural diversity. • One individual noted that “hub” should be removed.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people noted that growth needs to be responsible in order to maintain the “small town feel” of Olds and prevent community sprawl. However, people also said that responsible growth could improve access to services like hospitals. • Other respondents thought that “small town feel” would hinder the potential growth of the town and prevent the town from progressing or being inclusive of newcomers. • Many shared their support of attainable housing in the vision statement, emphasizing increasing density and increasing affordable and safe housing options (for rent or to own) for seniors and low-income households.

21 responses

Policy Areas

After sharing the proposed policy areas, we asked people to share if any concepts or topics are missing from the policy areas and subcategories. The following details were shared:

- One individual thought that areas of education as well as recreation should be their own policy area.
- Another individual did not understand the purpose of “celebrating [...] cultural identity and representation” under the Community Livability & Resiliency policy area.

Most comments shared did not address topics that were missing from the policy areas. Rather, people provided feedback on the actions they would like the Town to take regarding select policy areas:

- Community Development policy area

- There were a couple people concerned with increasing density and its impact on parking, traffic, the value of surrounding homes and the overall stress placed on existing infrastructure as a town grows.
- A few respondents emphasized that affordable housing for future homeowners is needed and another individual reiterated the importance of seniors housing.
- One respondent advocated for mandatory minimum requirements for below-market housing in new developments to help with affordability. Another said that incentives for developers could also support more affordable housing in Olds.
- Regarding parks and recreation, a few respondents noted that budget for parks, arts and culture, and youth sports are important areas to invest.
- Another individual would like to see lower maintenance green spaces in new developments.
- Community Infrastructure policy area
 - A few people highlighted that Town should continue to invest in trails/pathways to increase walkability in town, not only for recreation but also for commuting and connectivity. People stated that this would help with affordability as car ownership would not be a necessity.
 - One respondent said that roads need to be improved in the town.

15 responses

After sharing the proposed MDP policies, we asked people to share if there was anything they would like to see added, changed or removed from the policies. The following details were shared:

- Responsible increase in density
 - A couple of respondents continued to emphasize the need for affordable seniors housing in town.
 - One individual suggested a phased approach of implementing higher density, starting with building lower density options and gradually progressing to higher density builds.
 - A few people were opposed to higher density, sharing that there would be negative impacts on community character and housing values.
 - Another respondent would like to see that Land Use Districts are flexible in different residential home classes, allowing the town to better respond to residents' changing housing needs. They also raised concerns that future developments may result in housing options that do not align with community needs.



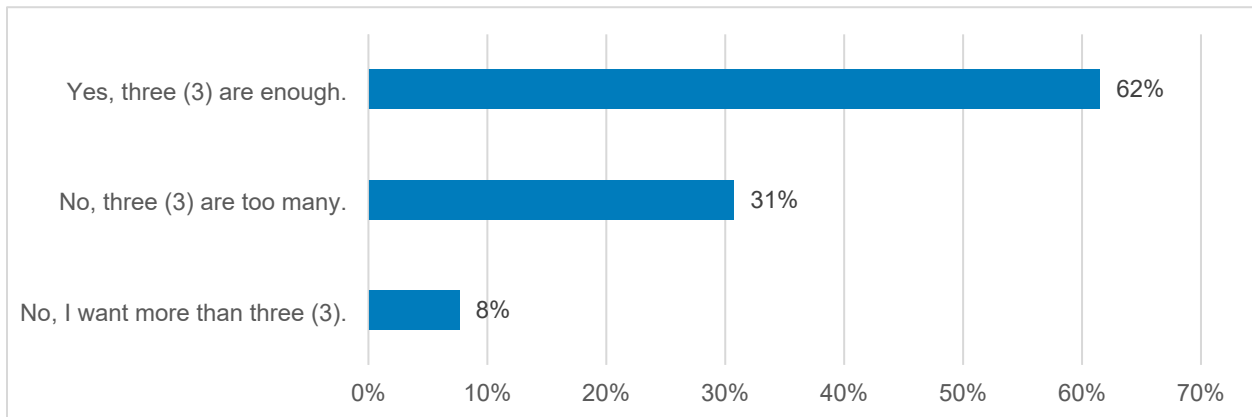
- Private and public spaces
 - A couple of respondents wanted to see more policies tackling nuisance on vacant/unkept lots and private properties (e.g. policies on reducing the number of pets per dwelling and regulating urban chickens/hens).
 - Another individual wanted to see restrictions in small business signages in public spaces.
- Other comments
 - One respondent was concerned about policies around climate adaptation and would like to see that outlined further.
 - One individual shared their support for the heritage focus in the policies but wanted to see more on economic development.
 - Another individual shared that policies should improve public transportation options across the town (especially in areas of new developments) and ensure options are safe and efficient.
 - Lastly, one individual was confused with the allowable parking spaces being fractional/decimal in the policies and suggested that the allowable parking spaces should be whole numbers.

14 responses

3.2 Land Use Bylaw

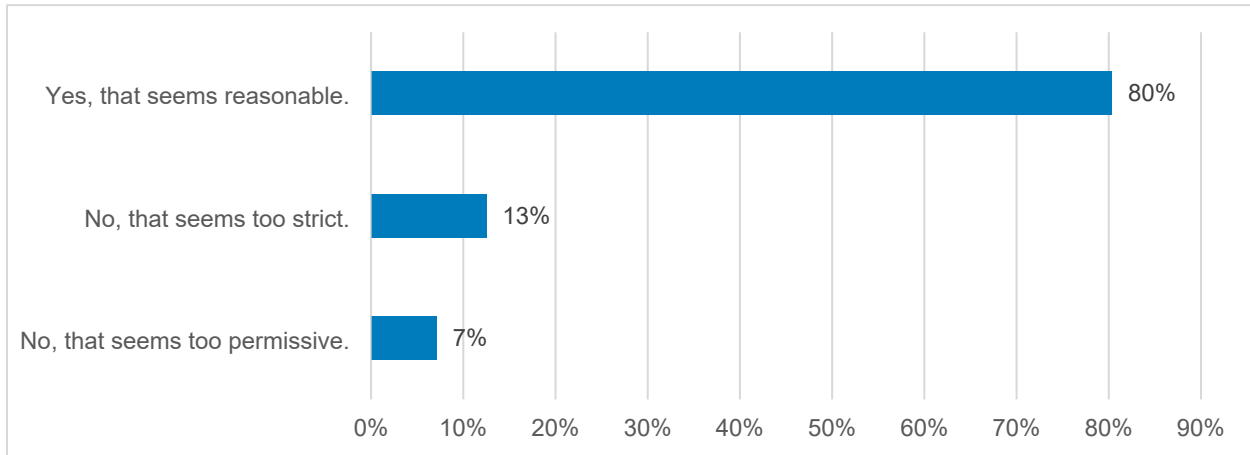
Accessory Buildings/Structures

After sharing the updated regulations on Buildings and Structures, we asked people if they agree with allowing three (3) Accessory Buildings/ Structures per parcel. 62% of people stated that three per parcel is sufficient.



52 responses

We asked people if they agree with a Development Permit requirement for Accessory Buildings / Structures over 10 m². 80% of respondents stated that this is reasonable.



56 responses

We asked people to provide any additional thoughts for this section of the LUB. The following details were shared:

- **Permitting and regulation**
 - Many comments support requiring permits for all structures.
 - One individual suggested a sliding scale permit fee depending on the size of structure, with smaller structures having a smaller permit fee.
 - A couple people wanted to see rules that are case-by-case depending on the type of building and structure (e.g. the structures that are permitted as well as the building limits should be dependent on the parcel size).
 - Another individual noted that garden suites should have very clear guidelines surrounding parking, water usage, and its impact on neighbourhood character.
- **Structures**
 - Some people raised questions about what counts as a structure (e.g., gazebos, pergolas, RVs, car shelters, and sea cans) and what requires a permit.
 - One individual sees no issue with front yard sheds or greenhouses, especially when compared to large driveways with many parked cars.
- **Enforcement**
 - There were also a couple comments expressing frustration that permits and regulations need to be better enforced in order to be effective.

16 responses

Signs

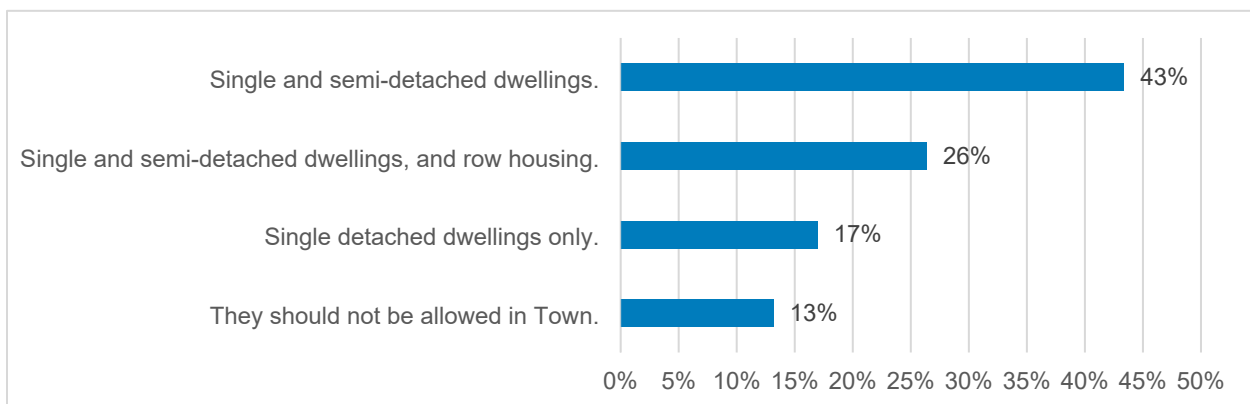
We asked people for their feedback on the updated regulations on signage - including signage that do not require a development permit, prohibited signs and types of signs. The following details were shared:

- There were a few suggestions to regulate signage and issue permit fees for all signage in town.
- Conversely, a couple people noted that non-intrusive signage is a necessary and cost-effective way to promote local businesses. One individual wanted to see overhanging signage be allowed for businesses (i.e. signage overhanging from businesses over the sidewalk).
- A couple respondents called for better enforcement of signage placement and removal.
- Some people said that more clarity is needed on:
 - What is considered signage (e.g. are signs on vehicles considered signage?);
 - What signage would be considered in conflict with streetscape character;
 - What rules exist for sign removal and who is responsible; and
 - What would be considered hate speech or offensive signage.

17 responses

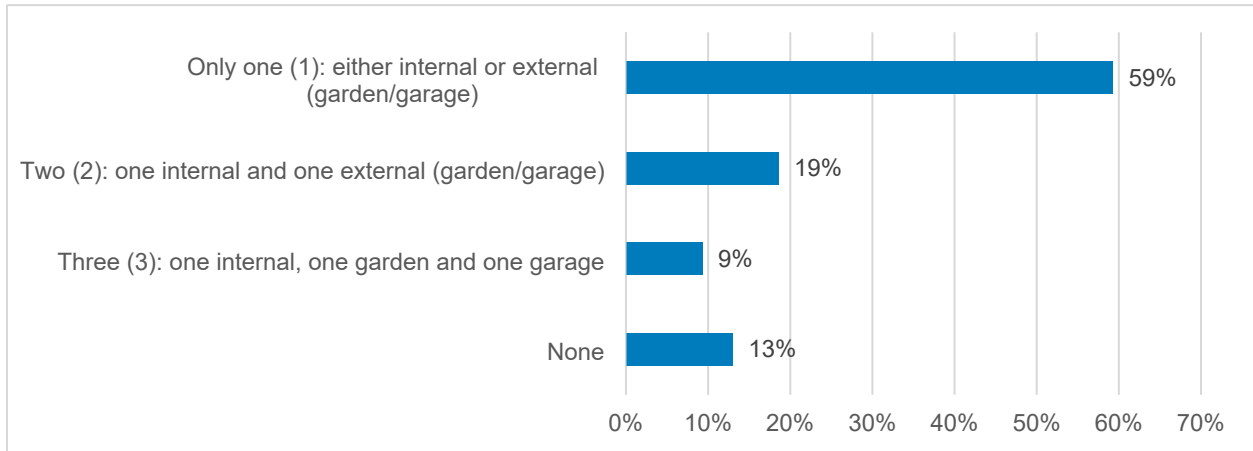
Secondary Suites

After sharing the updated regulations on Secondary Suites, we asked people where they think Secondary Suites should be allowed. 43% believe they should only be allowed on single and semi-detached dwellings.



53 responses

We asked how many Secondary Suites should be allowed on the same parcel. The majority (59%) think only one should be allowed on the same parcel.



54 responses

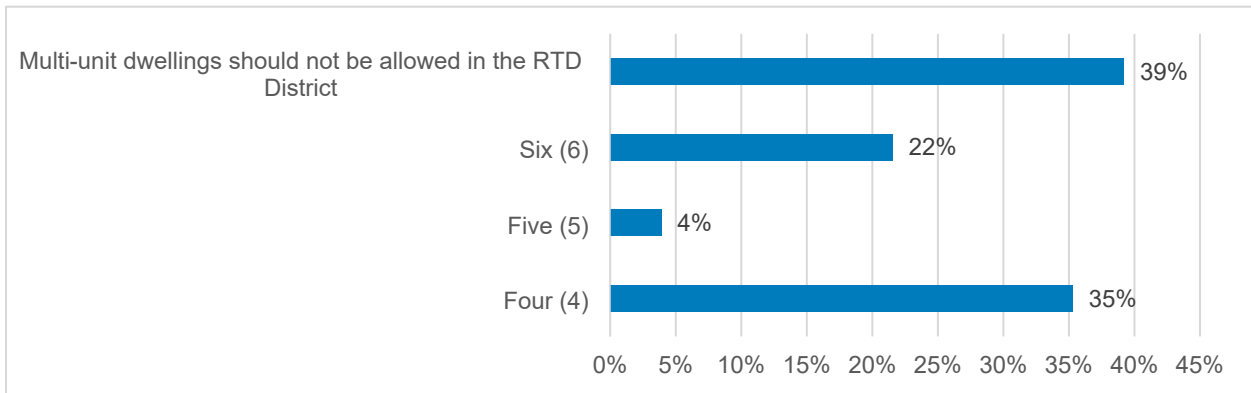
We asked if people had any feedback or additional thoughts on Secondary Suites in the community. The following details were shared:

- People were generally supportive of some secondary suites being implemented in the Town. However, respondents communicated key concerns that will need to be addressed such as:
 - Issues around parking and limited spacing for current residents as density increases.
 - Secondary suites impacting the character of neighbourhoods and maintaining the “small-town” feel.
 - Overcrowding and the increasing number of pets per dwelling.
 - Increase in noise and traffic.
 - Enforcement of illegal suites and unsafe housing.
- A couple of individuals only wanted to see secondary suites in new neighbourhoods and have them be limited in existing neighbourhoods.
- A couple others stated that the number of secondary suites should be based on the size of the parcel of land and the amount of parking.
- One respondent wanted to limit the size of garage/garden suites to a maximum of 40% of the size of the principal dwelling 40% in large lot homes.
- Another respondent thought that vehicles, trailers and boats pose more of an issue.

28 responses

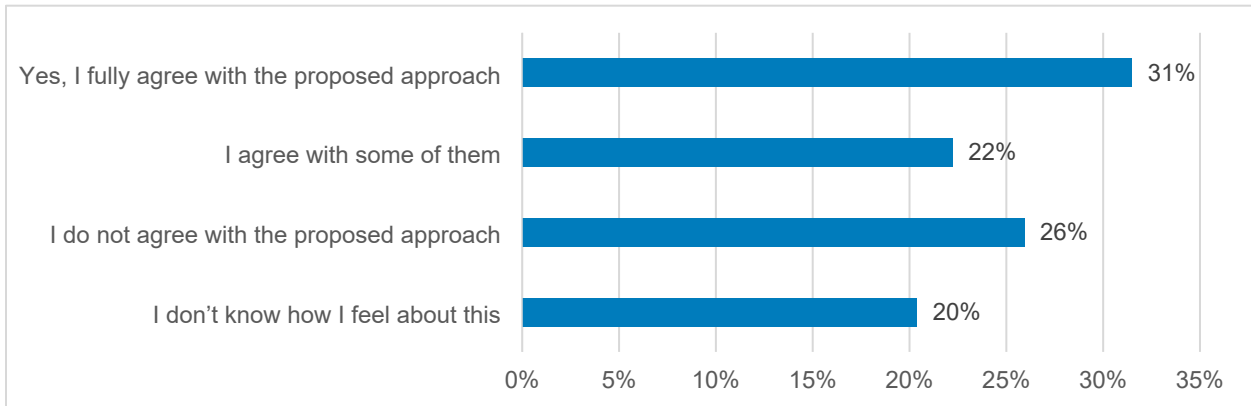
Districts

After sharing the updated changes to Residential and Mixed-Use Districts, we asked people what is the maximum number of units that a multi-unit development should be allowed to have in the RTD District. The majority of respondents (65%) thought that multi-unit developments should be allowed, with 35% of those respondents stating that four units should be allowed.



51 responses

We asked people if they agree with the proposed consolidation of residential and mixed-use districts. 31% fully agree and 22% agree with some of them.



54 responses

We asked if people had any feedback or additional thoughts on Land Use Districts in the community. The following details were shared:

- One respondent would like to see more clarity and definitions for the different types of Districts.
- Concerns were raised with proposed RTD and potential blanket zoning which could potentially negatively impact the character, space and value of the neighborhood

- Concerns were raised with multi-unit dwellings being in the RTD. The respondent indicated that 4, 6 and 8-plexes should not be next to a single-family home and indicated that these proposed changes are not needed because of the small size of the Town.
- One respondent indicated they would like to see an expansion of uses in each district.
- Respondents indicated they would like to see more opportunities for affordable ownership in neighborhoods.
- One respondent indicated that existing multi-unit structures may be in disrepair or may need maintenance.
- One respondent indicated that they would like to see an increase in mixed use developments where there are commercial/business opportunities on the lower level with residential on top.
- One respondent indicated that parking and height regulations need to be followed to allow for flexibility and gentle density.
- One respondent indicated that they would like to see more acreage style developments with lots that are 3+ acres.

19 responses

3.3 Additional Comments

At the end of the survey, there was an opportunity for people to provide additional comments related to the Town's MDP and LUB update. In this section, many reiterated their responses to questions asked in the previous section of the survey. Some new additional comments include:

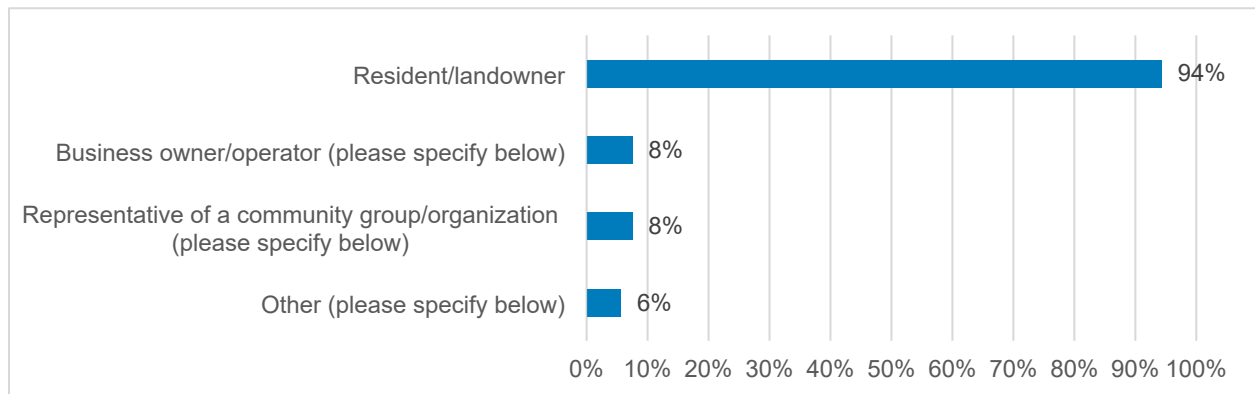
- Regarding housing, one respondent encouraged the town to consider housing in brownfield developments and retrofitting current non-residential buildings into housing. Another individual wanted to see more investments in basement suites. One individual would like larger lots in new subdivisions.
- One respondent commented that they are interested in seeing how the MDP and LUB will be executed, noting that the town taking action and being transparent in their execution will build trust with residents.
- Another resident would like to see more supports for local businesses and making rental more affordable for local businesses.
- A couple respondents noted they wanted the town to invest in more sidewalks, protected bike lanes and/or paths.
- One individual also shared the importance of trees, shrubs and overall greenery to improve the town.

19 responses

4.0 Who We Heard From

The following section details who we heard from through the survey.

Who are we hearing from?

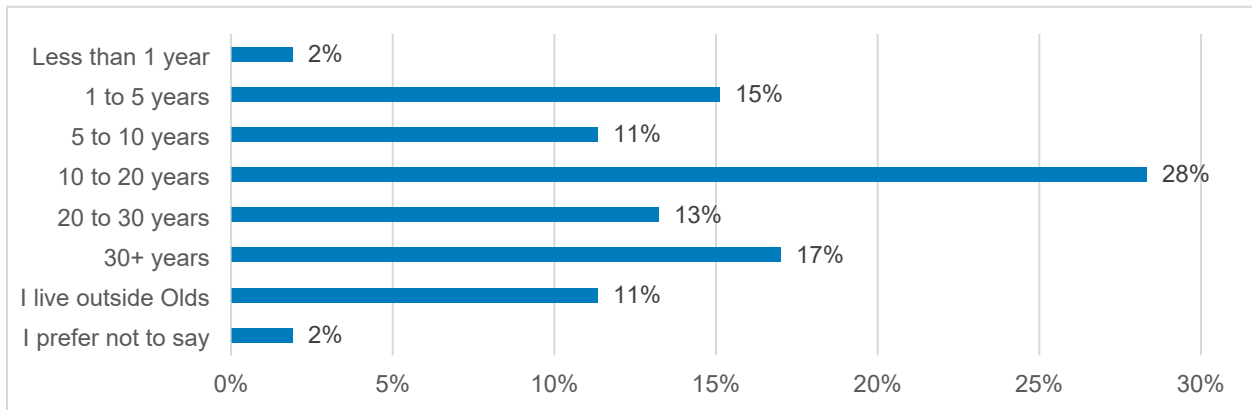


53 responses

Representatives of community groups/organizations and other responses:

- Elks
- Former resident of Olds, but planning on moving back within the next 5 years
- Representatives of a community hall.
- Home business owner/operator.
- I lead the Growing Roots food entrepreneurship/research project, as well as have my own business providing admin support.
- Member of Olds Historical Society
- Olds College
- Work in Olds
- Landlord

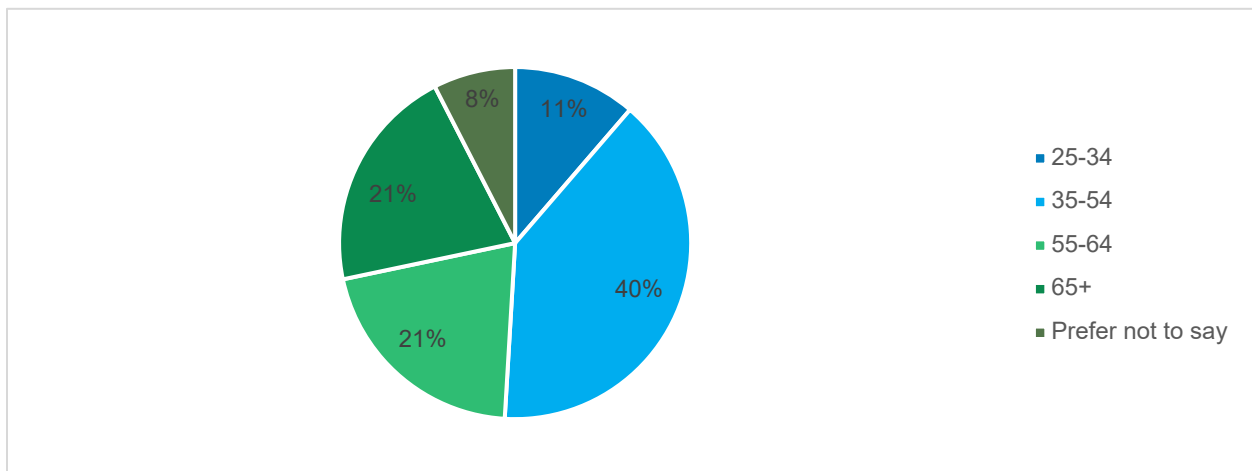
How long have respondents lived in the Town of Olds?



53 responses

What is the age group of respondents?

We did not hear from respondents below the ages of 25 years.



53 responses

5.0 Next Steps

Thank you to all community members who participated in the engagement! Input from town residents, interest holders, administration and Council will be used to inform the final changes to the MDP and LUB.

Your feedback will ensure these documents meet current and future community needs and reflect what's important to residents and businesses in Olds.

To stay up to date on the project by visiting: <https://www.olds.ca/LUB2025>