



Budget Survey Results

Summary Report

Fiscal 2024-25

Highlights

- Budget survey initiative: Launched on February 16, 2024, the budget survey aimed to collect direct community input for the municipal budgeting process for fiscal 2024-25. It was distributed through multiple channels including approximately 3,500 mailed newsletters, the municipal administration building front counter and at community events with municipal staff present. Additionally, an online version was added into the VictoriaCounty.ca website. Promotion efforts included website news posts and the Victoria County Facebook page, as well as individual Councillors' Facebook pages.
- Deadline extension: Initially set for March 1, 2024, the deadline was extended to March 4, 2024, in an effort to encourage a final surge of responses.
- Engagement: A total of **271** responses were received, reflecting a response rate of 4.75%. This is based on the eligible population (based on age) from 2016 census, estimated at 5,700 individuals.

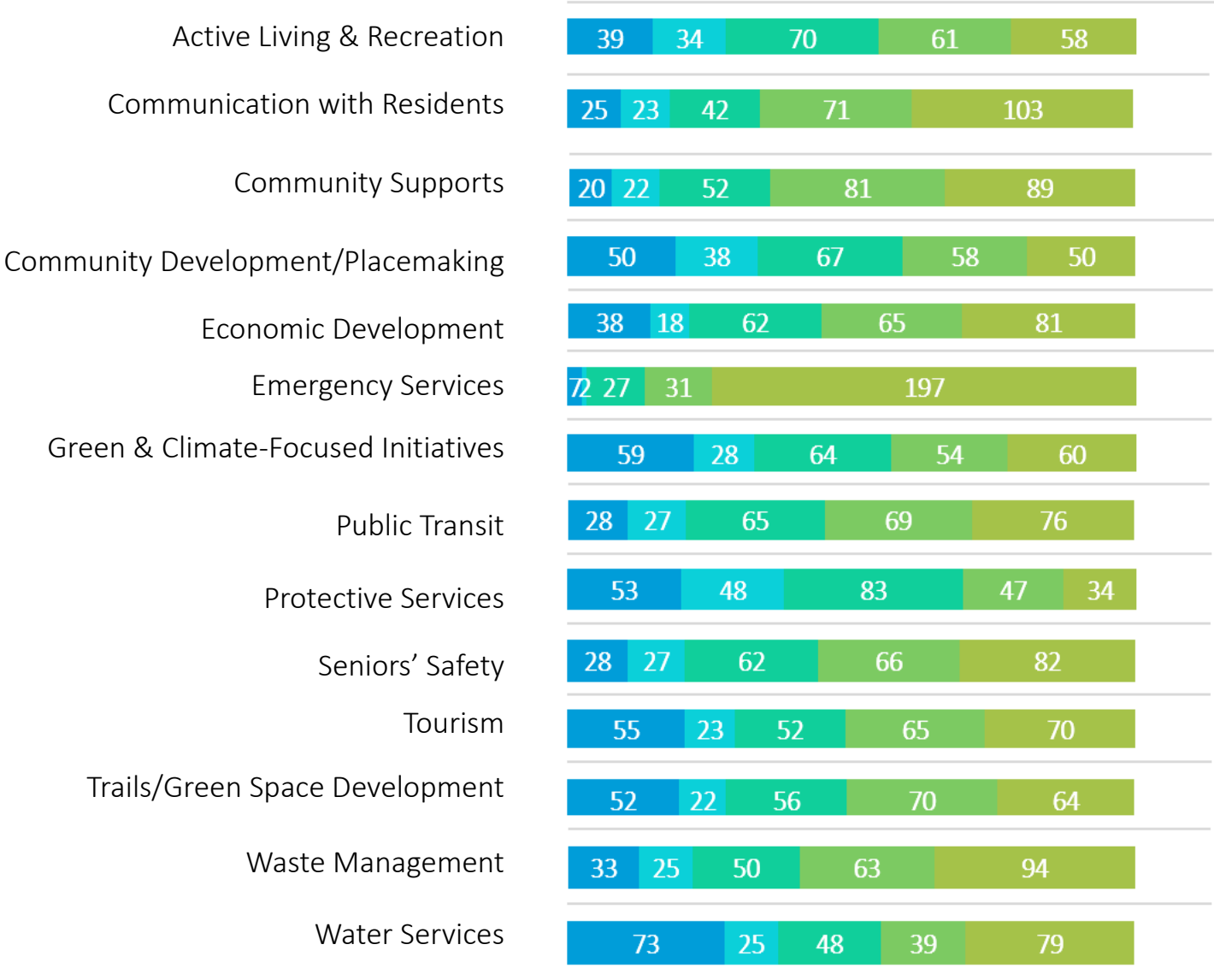
Opportunities for improvement

- Survey design: The survey's transition from a paper-based format to an electronic survey was not ideal. Given the high percentage of online submissions overall (85%), future surveys will prioritize electronic design first to improve usability and minimize conversion errors.
- Version control: Despite efforts, final versions suffered from a few discrepancies such as missing categories or response options. Implementing more rigorous copy checking in future surveys will prevent such errors and improve integrity of responses.
- Clarity in instructions: Switching between a five-point scale and ranking top priority inadvertently caused confusion, particularly within the online format. This led to inconsistencies in respondents' interpretations, necessitating a manual review of each response to ensure accurate summarization of results.
- Additional questions: Feedback indicated a desire for an open field to provide general comments, as well as further demographic questions, such as identifying as having a disability.
- Promotion: There is always opportunity for increased engagement and outreach through greater promotional efforts, such as increasing frequency of reminders and leveraging additional channels such as email and/or radio.
- Representation of population: Future surveys could be more cognizant of ensuring that responses accurately reflect overall Victoria County demographics.

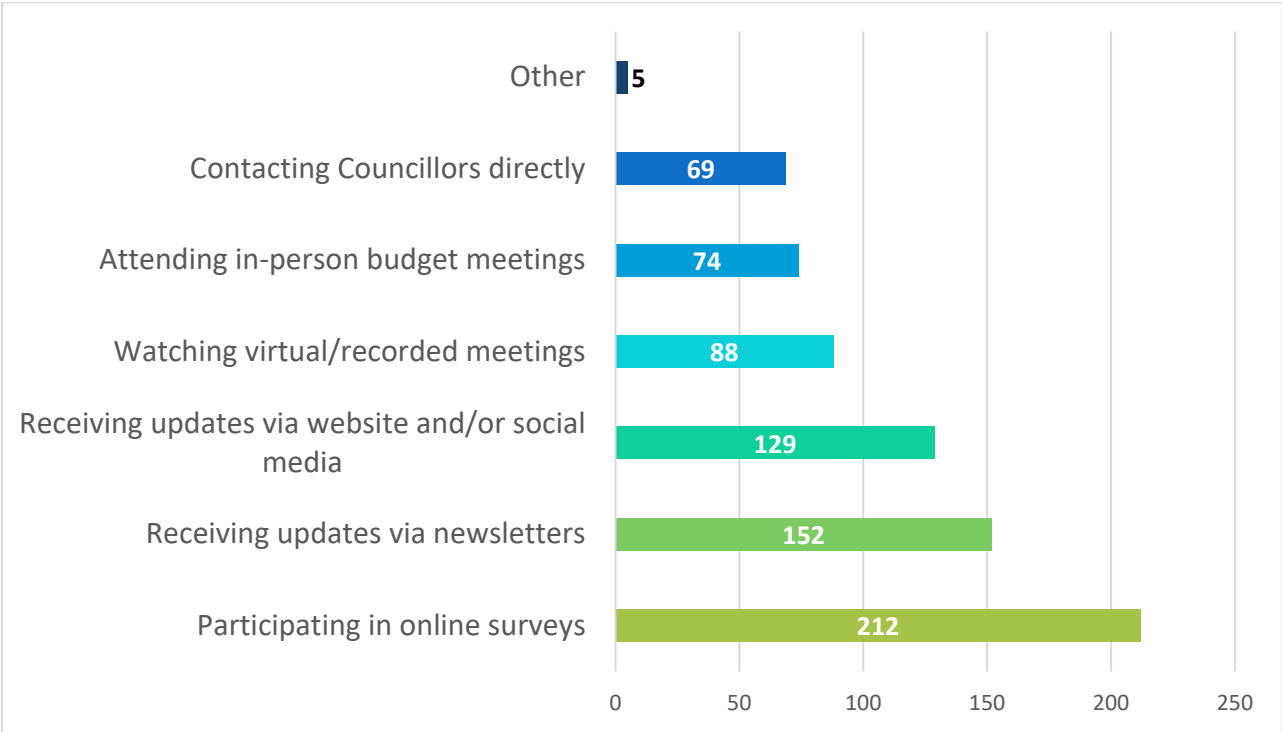
Question 1 – When deciding how to spend budget funds, which services do you think are the most important in Victoria County?

Rate in order of importance:

- 1 - Not important at all
- 2 - Not so important
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Somewhat important
- 5 - Very important



Question 2 – In the future, how would you prefer to provide input in the budget process?

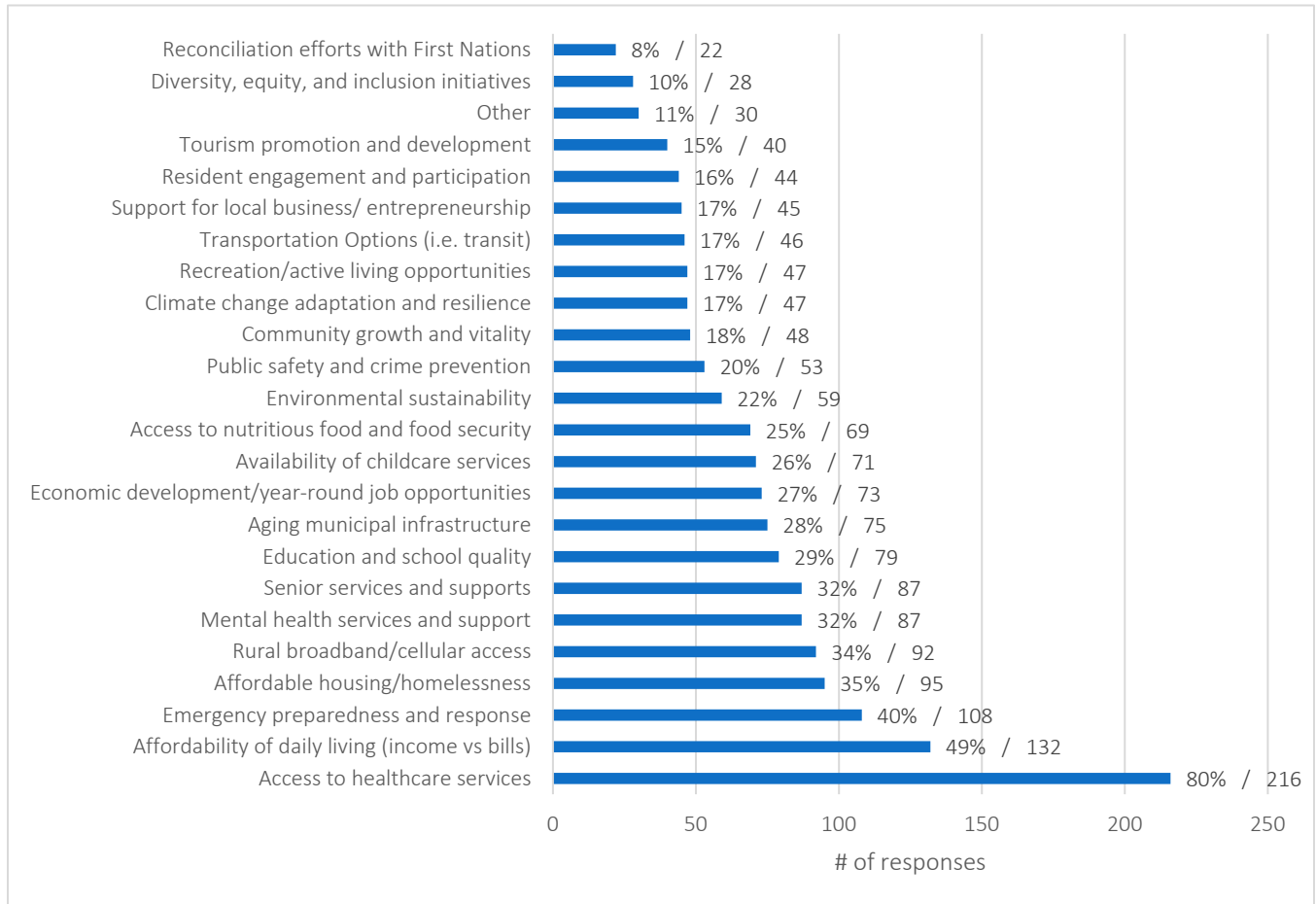


Comments included under “Other”

Note: these are presented as provided and have not been edited in any way.

- The municipality should always ensure our funds are being spent where residents want and need in an open and transparent manner
- Citizen committees (these are appointed by Council and assigned a single task, a budget, a deadline; invented in Ireland, popular in BC); they are a way to obtain broad thinking/consensus.
- Councillor at community meetings
- Events that involve taxation of ANY kind should have mailed notices...social media is NOT inclusive.
- Please provide necessary materials (eg, last year's budget)
- Receiving email. I wouldn't have known about this survey had someone not forwarded a link to me!
- Face to face
- Having direct input with proper public response
- Virtual / email newsletter

Question 3 – What five top concerns do you want Victoria County Council to know? Indicate your top five.



Note: Due to the inconsistencies in responses, some respondents selected more than five as their top concerns. In these instances, all top concerns were included as it proved challenging to determine a definitive top five. Although not ideal, this approach ensured inclusivity and accuracy in representing the varied perspectives of respondents.

Comments included under “Other”

Note: these are presented as provided and have not been edited in any way.

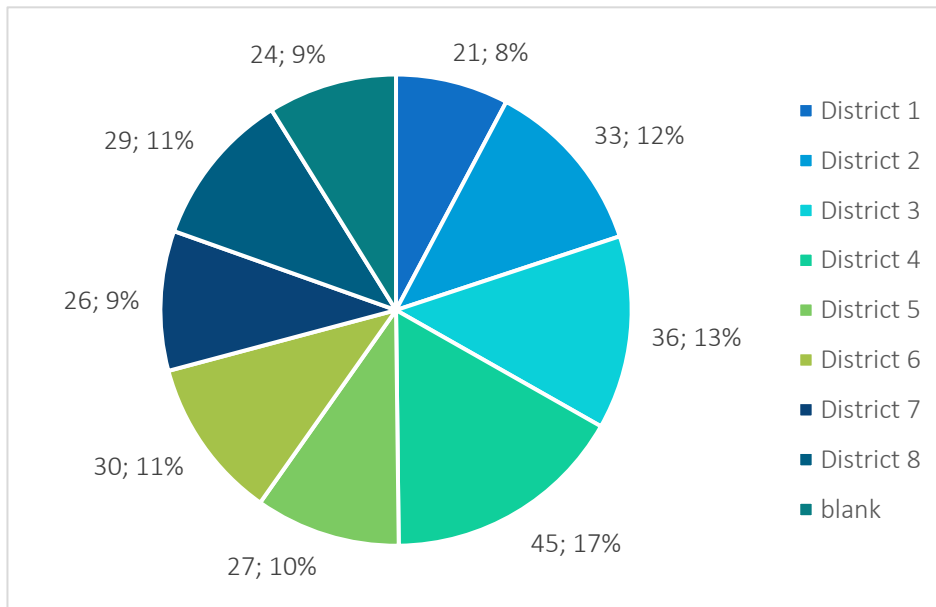
- Too many councillors getting paid too much with little visible impact for residents.
- cleanliness of the water and lakes
- Long term community/environmental planning

1. A functional, informative web site. 2. Genuine public outreach, engagement, hearings, actual consideration of input by Council. 3. Leadership, forward-looking vision, bravery, big dreams, damn it. I'm sick of rubber-stamping, pro forma, and DULL. That's the work of departments and offices; yours is GUIDANCE.

...continued on next page

- Increased Property taxes making owning property unaffordable especially waterfront
- The horrible condition of New Campbellton Road is a safety concern for accessing emergency services and safe driving conditions for vehicles to supplies for residents and seasonal residents and visitors.
- Roads- Eliminate delays in correcting dangerous conditions
- these are all important .I could not pick just 5.
- More funding for Volunteer Fire Departments.
- Blank
- True History Initiatives
- Blank
- Community Planning
- Warning siren for the D7 dam on Indian Brook in the event of dam failure.
- Roads
- Put a cap on property tax. Even lower it. People are going to be taxed out of their homes.
- Our horrible roads. The maintenance of keeping them open., held responsible for lack of roads being plowed.
- Cost of living
- Trails
- This part of the survey does not work for me - more than 5 top concerns
- Too much development, too many part time residents
- The proposed, unjust Draft Land-Use By-Law needs to be eliminated. It's absolutely not in residents' best interest in regards to personal land use, oppresses property owner rights, charges permit fees for most everything, removes freedoms, and dictates what the municipality deems is acceptable, rather than leaving residents in control of what is RIGHTFULLY theirs. The document is ridden with microscopic control mechanisms and broad municipal powers that should absolutely be inherent to the land owners! These by-laws suppress affordable housing options & food security, as well as impose too many taxes imposed through permits, etc.
- Returning our hospital emergency department
- Volunteer fire department funding
- Councillor and Warden salary...very high for little amount of work being done by them.
- Doctors healthcare and ambulance service
- Municipal/county tax relief tied to property taxes for volunteer fire fighters and volunteer first responders
- Rural road maintenance
- a day care
- Coastal Protection Act
- protecting the natural beauty of Cape Breton, huge jump in property assessments, protecting forests, oceans and all waterways, open public washrooms in Baddeck

Question 4 – Which district do you live in?



DISTRICT 1 Iona Peninsula, communities of Bucklaw and Wagmatcook and Nyanza to the Buckwheat Road intersection on the north side of the TCH (Trans Canada Highway) and to the Baddeck River Bridge on the south side of the TCH.

DISTRICT 2 Westside Middle River, Yankee Line and Middle River to county line. Big Baddeck including residents along the Buckwheat Road and along the north side of the TCH from the Buckwheat Road east to the point where districts two, three and four intersect. On the south side of the TCH from the Baddeck River Bridge east to just before civic address 8261.

DISTRICT 3 Starting at civic address 8261 on the TCH east along the shores of the Bras d’Or Lakes to the Bell Museum pond at the eastern end of the Village of Baddeck. Northeast between Mile Brook and the western boundary of Bell Bay Golf to the TCH. From that point west along the southern boundary of TCH to point of beginning.

DISTRICT 4 Beginning at the Bell Museum pond, northeast to TCH along District 3 boundary then both sides of TCH east to Seal Island Bridge including Baddeck Bay, Big Harbour, Englishtown, New Campbellton and New Harris. Exit 11 on TCH north to the foot of Cape Smokey including River Bennet and Jersey Cove.

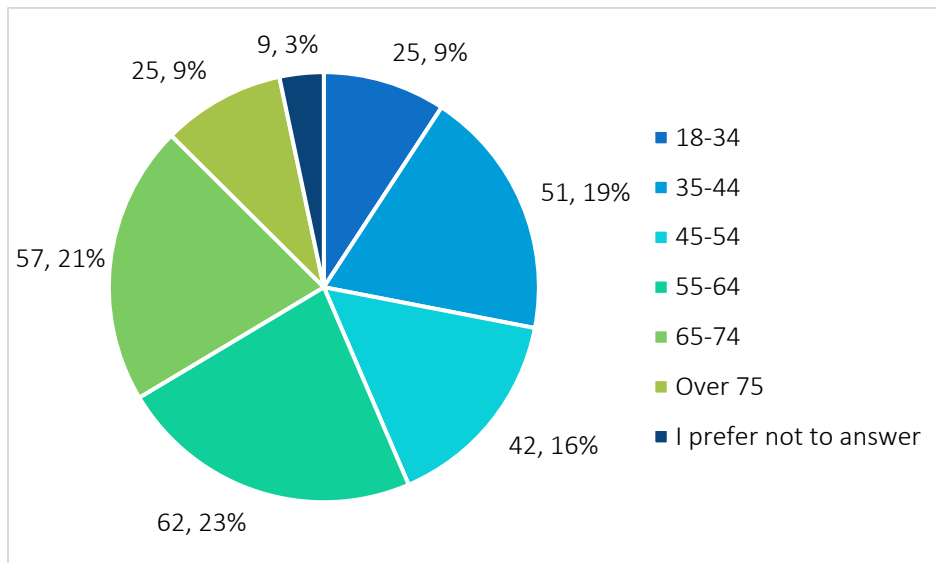
DISTRICT 5 Victoria County portion of Boularderie Island.

DISTRICT 6 Foot of Smokey north along the Cabot Trail to the Ingonish United Church on the north and the Seascapes Cottages on the south.

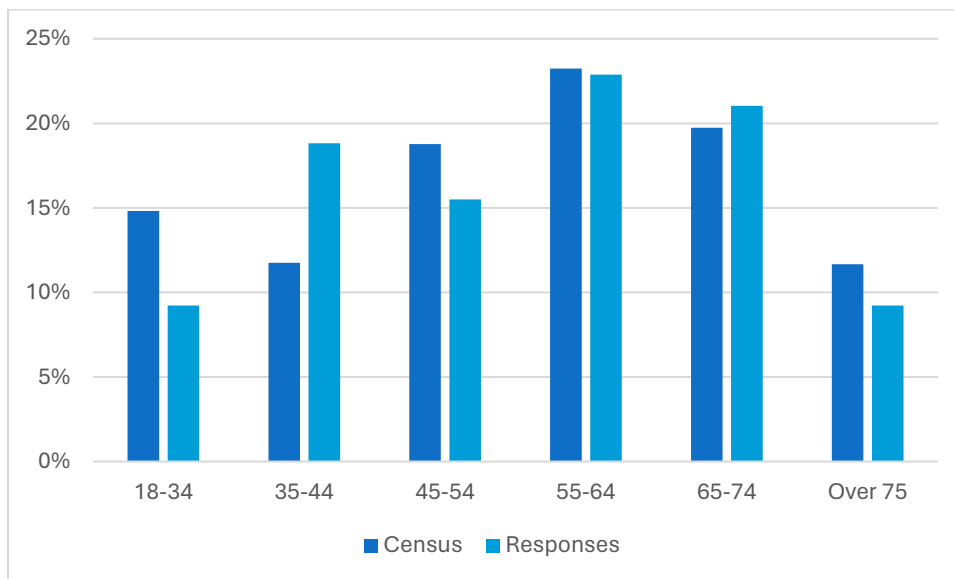
DISTRICT 7 Ingonish United Church north to Effies Brook including Neil’s Harbour, New Haven, White Point, Smelt Brook.

DISTRICT 8 All of Victoria County north of Effies Brook.

Question 5 – Which age range do you fall under?

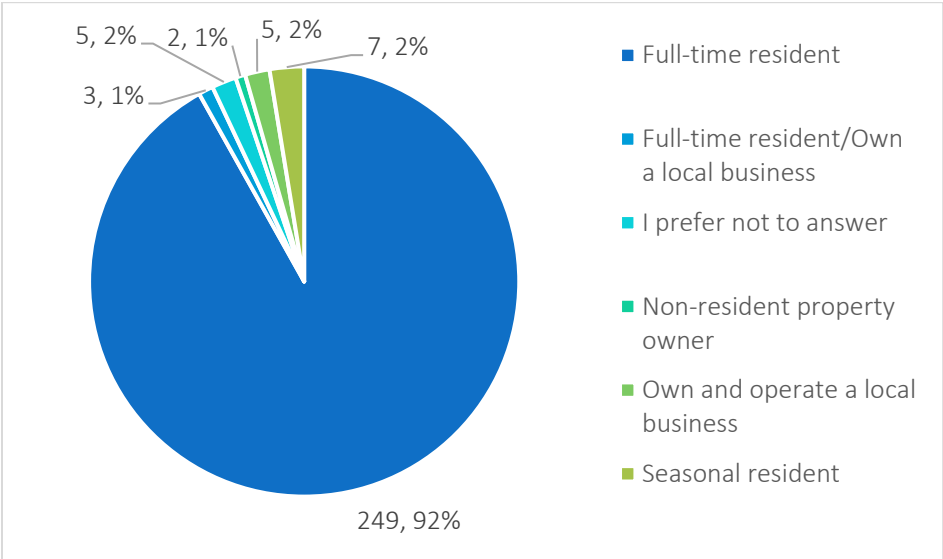


Comparison of respondents by age range to general population per census:



- Under-representation of age ranges 18-34, 45-54 and over 75
- Over-representation of age ranges 35-44
- Accurate representation of 55-64 and 65-74

Question 6 – Which describes your connection to Victoria County?



Note: In the online version respondents were unable to select multiple options, inaccurately necessitating a choice between options that may equally apply to them.

Question 7 – How long have you lived in Victoria County?

