



What We Heard Report

Official Community Plan & Zoning Bylaw Update

Village of Fruitvale



VERSION 1.0

DATE August 5, 2026

ROUND Round 1: Community Foundations Week

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Project Overview

The Village of Fruitvale is updating its Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Bylaw, with the first round of public engagement completed between July 14 – 28, 2026. Before public engagement began, the project team identified six key themes for the OCP update through a review of the existing OCP and Zoning Bylaw: housing, transportation, community character, parks & trails, the local economy, and infrastructure. Two new themes emerged throughout the first round of public engagement: taxes and affordability, and community voice and governance. The feedback received on each theme will directly inform the OCP & Zoning Bylaw update, which will guide Fruitvale through 2035 and beyond. Public engagement follows two rounds that bookend the plan drafting work: Round 1 (Community Foundations Week, summarized in this report) and Round 2 (Draft Document Review, planned for fall 2026).

During this round of engagement, several events, workshops, and a community survey were available to collect a variety of feedback. Community pop-up events took place at Ruala Café, Cake Betty, and the Fruitvale Pub. Facilitated workshops took place with the Steering Committee and Village Council and staff. A passive engagement “Vision Tree” installation was available at the library to collect comments from library visitors. The community survey collected feedback online and in paper copy form. In total, more than 164 people took part in person and 75 completed the community survey, equating to involvement from approximately 12% of Fruitvale's population.

In addition to broader public engagement, the project is guided by a ten-member Steering Committee representing local business, industry, schools, housing, youth, recreation, and other community sectors, alongside ongoing input from Village Council and staff. The Steering Committee and Village Council play a key role in this project to ensure the outcomes stay relevant to Fruitvale, act as local champions for the project, and provide local insight into issues and opportunities within the community.

What We Heard for Each Key Theme:

- Housing (raised at every engagement): a wider mix of housing types, and a path forward for the former middle school site
- Transportation & Getting Around (raised at every engagement): safer walking and biking routes, and better transit connections
- Community Character (the most consistently named theme): protecting Fruitvale's small-town, rural feel as the village grows
- Parks, Trails & Outdoor Recreation: expanding the trail network and adding new amenities
- Local Economy & Main Street: more restaurants and shops, and support for local business
- Municipal Services & Infrastructure: keeping water, sewer, and taxes ahead of growth

Engagement confirmed the original six themes as strong community priorities, while also surfacing two additional themes not identified going into engagement: taxes and affordability, the most frequently mentioned concern in the community survey's open-ended responses, and a desire for more responsive Village communication and decision-making.

Project Timeline

This report reflects Phase 3 of the project: Community Foundations Week, the first of two public engagement rounds. The full project timeline is:



Engagement Activities Summary

Rather than hosting a single traditional open house, the project team provided a variety of ways to get involved, including a casual drop-in evening event at Ruala Café, a pop-up morning event at Cake Betty, and an interactive trivia activity over dinner at the Fruitvale Pub.

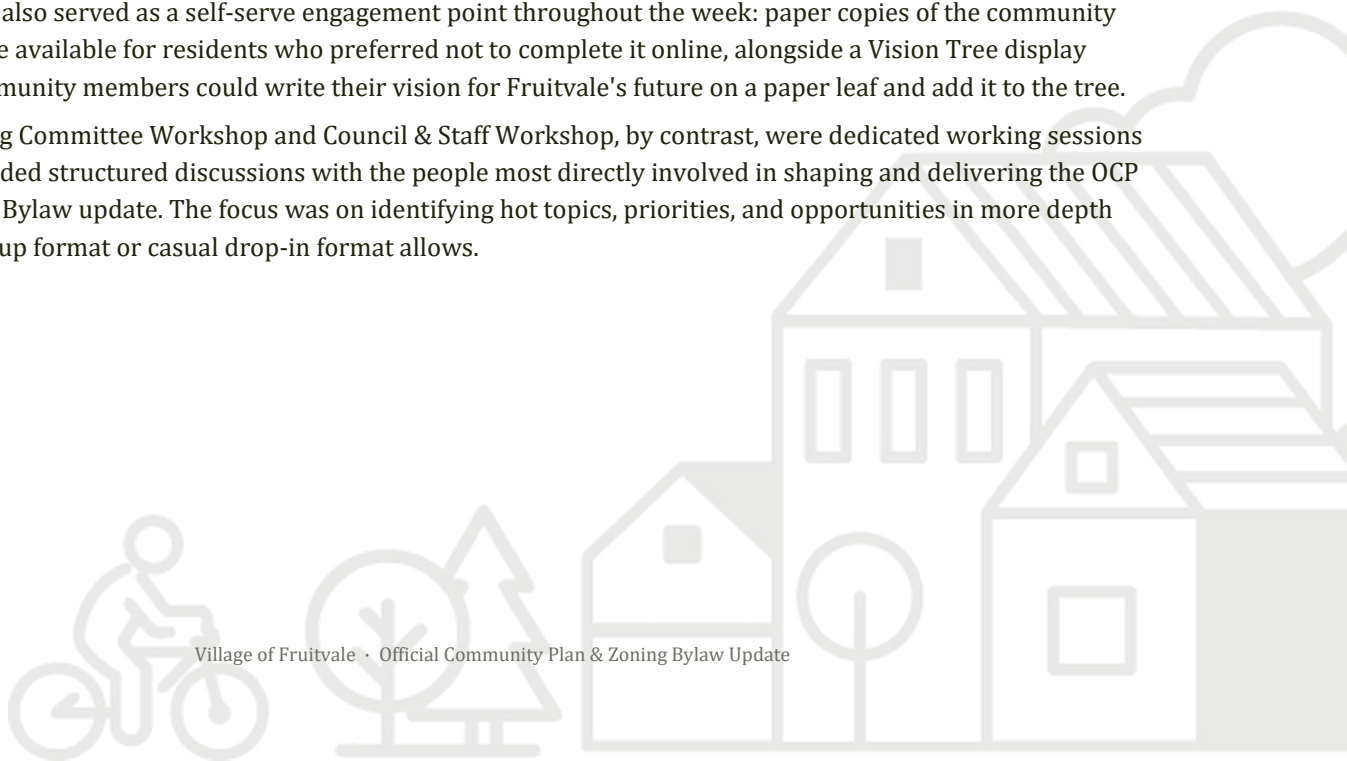
At Ruala Café live music drew a crowd for the evening, and the project team set up project information and feedback boards where attendees could chat with the project team and add their ideas directly to the display boards.

At Cake Betty, the team caught people already out for their morning coffee, along with pedestrians walking by on the street, for quick, casual conversations with residents who might not otherwise attend a scheduled engagement event.

The Pub Night paired casual conversation with a community trivia activity, giving people a low-pressure way to share their thoughts on Fruitvale's future alongside their evening out, while still capturing detailed written feedback from those who wanted to dig in further.

The library also served as a self-serve engagement point throughout the week: paper copies of the community survey were available for residents who preferred not to complete it online, alongside a Vision Tree display where community members could write their vision for Fruitvale's future on a paper leaf and add it to the tree.

The Steering Committee Workshop and Council & Staff Workshop, by contrast, were dedicated working sessions which included structured discussions with the people most directly involved in shaping and delivering the OCP and Zoning Bylaw update. The focus was on identifying hot topics, priorities, and opportunities in more depth than a pop-up format or casual drop-in format allows.



Engagement by the numbers:

- Ruala Café pop-up: approximately 25 participants
- Cake Betty pop-up: approximately 20 participants
- Pub Night, including a community trivia activity: 100+ participants
- Steering Committee Workshop: 10 participants, plus the project team
- Council & Staff Workshop: 9 participants (4 Council members, 5 Village staff)
- Community survey: 75 responses (about 4% of Fruitvale's population), closed July 28, 2026; results are summarized in the Community Survey Results section
- Library Vision Tree and paper surveys: at least 21 written responses added to the Vision Tree display, plus paper survey copies included in the 75 total above
- Total participation: more than 164 people in person (over 8% of Fruitvale's population of approximately 2,000), plus 75 survey responses, for approximately 240 people engaged overall (over 12% of the population)



Key Themes: What We Heard & How We'll Respond

Theme 1: Housing

What We Heard

Housing was raised more than any other topic at every single engagement, from pop-up conversations to the Council & Staff workshop. General feedback included:

- A desire for a wider mix of housing types: Residents consistently asked for options beyond single-detached homes, including duplexes, townhouses, tiny homes, secondary suites, and smaller units for seniors and single-person households.
- Options for the former middle school site: Redeveloping this vacant property came up repeatedly, from the Council & Staff workshop to Pub Night trivia comments naming it directly as a priority.
- Preserving rural character alongside growth: Several participants want more housing without becoming urban or changing the community character too significantly.

How We'll Respond

- The OCP will prioritize development strategies that mix a “many units at once” approach with a balance of infill opportunities including home conversions, Accessory Dwelling Units, and small-scale infill (duplexes, triplexes, etc.). These strategies will consider servicing, impact, and community character.
- The OCP will highlight options for the former middle school property, informed directly by the ideas gathered through this engagement.

Theme 2: Transportation & Getting Around

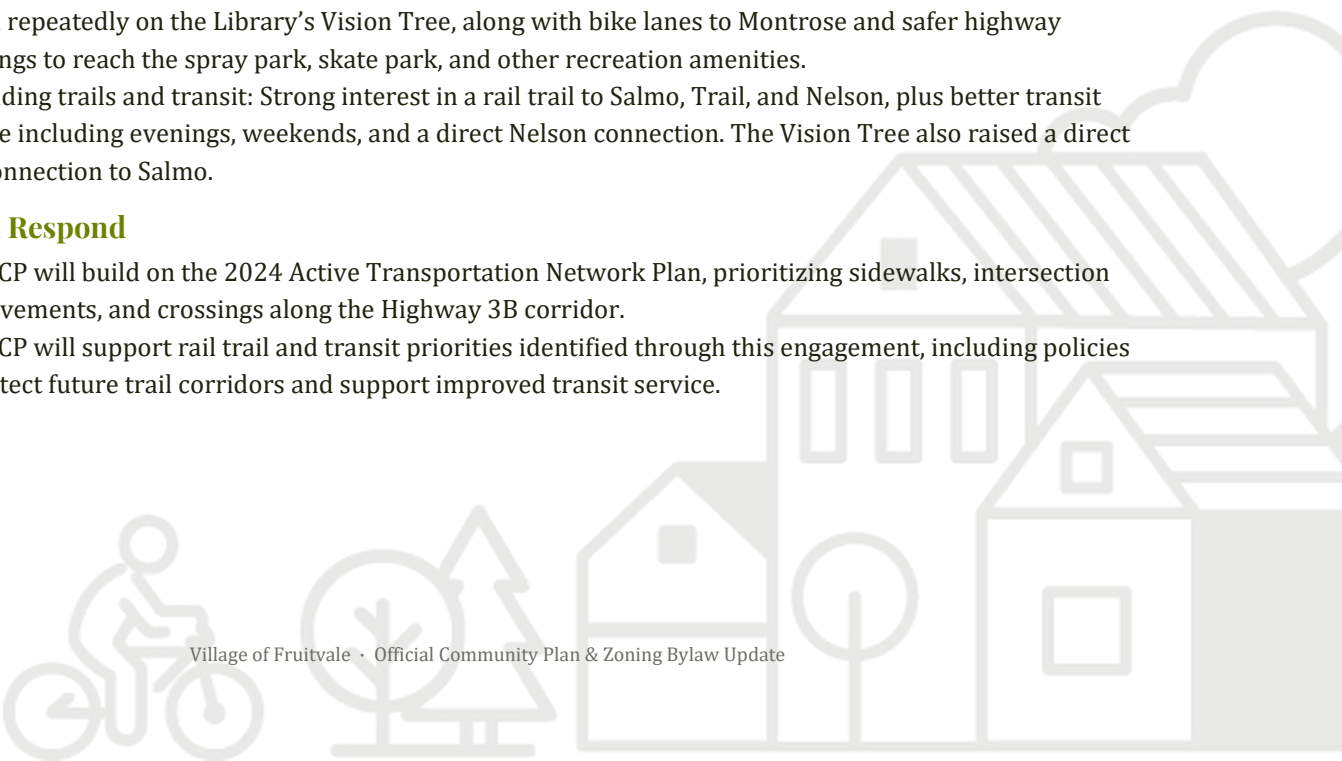
What We Heard

Transportation was the second most repeated theme, raised at every engagement. General feedback included:

- Heavy reliance on vehicles: About 87% of residents commuted by car, and many participants agreed that walking, biking, and transit remain difficult for everyday trips.
- Sidewalks and safer routes: Especially along Highway 3B, this was the single most common request, also raised repeatedly on the Library's Vision Tree, along with bike lanes to Montrose and safer highway crossings to reach the spray park, skate park, and other recreation amenities.
- Expanding trails and transit: Strong interest in a rail trail to Salmo, Trail, and Nelson, plus better transit service including evenings, weekends, and a direct Nelson connection. The Vision Tree also raised a direct bus connection to Salmo.

How We'll Respond

- The OCP will build on the 2024 Active Transportation Network Plan, prioritizing sidewalks, intersection improvements, and crossings along the Highway 3B corridor.
- The OCP will support rail trail and transit priorities identified through this engagement, including policies to protect future trail corridors and support improved transit service.



Theme 3: Community Character & Identity

What We Heard

A consistent theme heard throughout engagement was preserving Fruitvale's small-town, rural character. General feedback included:

- Residents most often named Fruitvale's friendly, small-town, rural feel as what they love most, alongside the forested valley, natural creeks, and surrounding mountains.
- Participants linked urban growth pressures to a risk of losing rural character.
- Requests for more community events, youth programming, and arts and culture, such as concerts at Fruitvale Hall and the creation of an accessible youth centre, reflect a desire to strengthen, not just preserve, community connection. Comments on the Vision Tree included a similar sentiment, where love of the library and its programming, downtown landscaping (hanging baskets, picnic tables), and requests for more community events like flea markets and live music for families were among the most common comments.

How We'll Respond

- The OCP's land use and housing policies will aim to reinforce Fruitvale's rural and small-town character as it responds to growth pressures.
- The OCP will support youth-oriented and cultural spaces through its land use and community facility policies.

Theme 4: Parks, Trails & Outdoor Recreation

What We Heard

Parks and recreation was the top answer when survey respondents were asked for the Village's #1 priority, and parks and trails came up repeatedly at the Council & Staff Workshop and pop-up events as well. General feedback included:

- Valued, well-used existing parks: Mazzocchi, Haines & Lewis, and Creekside parks are all well used, with requests to finish existing parks master plans.
- An expanded trail network: Strong appetite for a connected system, building on informal paths already in use.
- New amenities most requested: pickleball courts, updated playgrounds, a splash park or pool, and covered, all-season gathering space. The Library's Vision Tree added a dog park, a community garden, more dirt bike trails, and outdoor rock-climbing access to this list.

How We'll Respond

The OCP will support completing existing parks master plans and identifying sites for new facilities. The OCP will identify priority trail connections named through this engagement and in the Active Transportation plan for future capital planning.

- The OCP will identify areas currently underserved by parks and develop criteria to “fill in the gaps” to ensure every neighbourhood has access to a variety of park spaces.

Theme 5: Local Economy & Main Street

What We Heard

Growing and diversifying the local economy was the second most common answer to the survey's #1 priority question, and support for local business came up consistently from the Steering Committee's opportunities discussion through to pop-up conversations. General feedback included:

- More restaurants and everyday retail: Cafes, clothing, and hardware stores were the most desired community amenities, with the Vision Tree adding specific requests such as a tabletop game store and general calls for more support for local businesses.
- A vibrant Main Street: Strong support for keeping it the heart of the Village, with interest in commercial tax incentives to fill vacant spaces.
- Support for some growth in tourism: Several participants want to attract more visitors, including more attractions such as bed & breakfasts and hiking opportunities.

How We'll Respond

- The OCP will support a vibrant, walkable Main Street through land use policies, and implementation strategies, such as a downtown "refresh."
- The OCP will include a policy direction supporting the exploration of commercial tax incentives to help fill vacant storefronts.

Theme 6: Municipal Services & Infrastructure

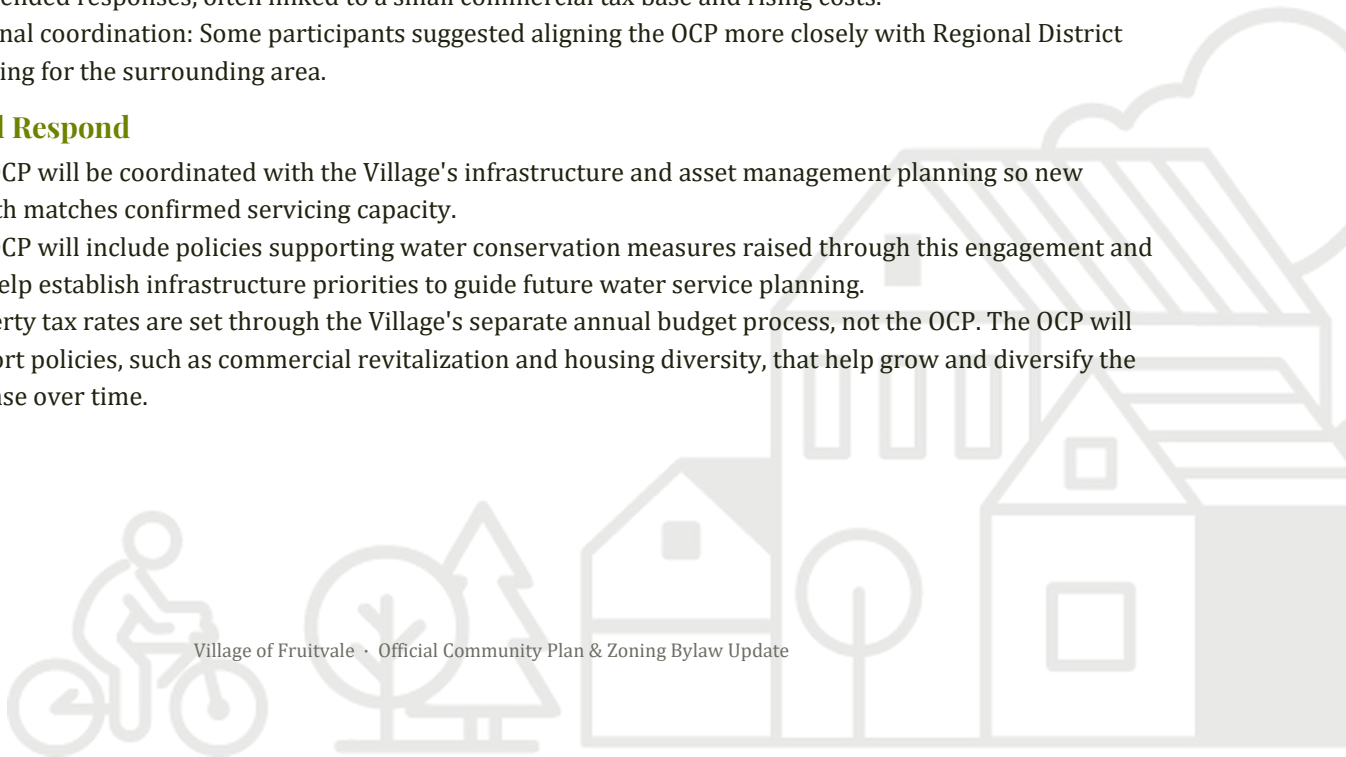
What We Heard

Municipal services and infrastructure came up at both the Steering Committee and Council & Staff Workshops, and taxes and affordability emerged as the single most frequently mentioned issue in the survey's open-ended responses. General feedback included:

- Water and sewer capacity: Concerns about keeping pace with growth came up at multiple engagements, alongside interest in conservation measures like metering and rainwater collection.
- Aging roads and infrastructure: Council & Staff specifically flagged this, along with the need for an updated asset management plan.
- Taxes and affordability: Property taxes were the most frequently raised concern in the community survey's open-ended responses, often linked to a small commercial tax base and rising costs.
- Regional coordination: Some participants suggested aligning the OCP more closely with Regional District planning for the surrounding area.

How We'll Respond

- The OCP will be coordinated with the Village's infrastructure and asset management planning so new growth matches confirmed servicing capacity.
- The OCP will include policies supporting water conservation measures raised through this engagement and will help establish infrastructure priorities to guide future water service planning.
- Property tax rates are set through the Village's separate annual budget process, not the OCP. The OCP will support policies, such as commercial revitalization and housing diversity, that help grow and diversify the tax base over time.



Interest Group Feedback

Steering Committee Workshop

The 10-member Steering Committee met with the project team to discuss the key topics shaping the OCP update. The format was open ended so each member could bring forward the topics that mattered most to them and the sector they represent. Feedback included:

Issues

- Limited youth activities: Not much to do for youth beyond sports and the café; arts activities require leaving town.
- Traffic and truck speeds: Loud trucks travelling fast and using engine brakes along the highway corridor; straightening the highway has been discussed as a long-range option.
- Water supply: Not enough water for what's projected for growth, though enough for modest development.
- Limited active transportation: No dedicated bike or walking path along the highway (cyclists share the road unless mountain biking), plus a few access issues for kids walking to activities like the trail.
- Youth transportation: Older teens get a bus pass for the city bus, but there's no way for younger or non-riding youth to reach the golf course, movies, or other activities.
- Access to medical care: Residents need to leave town for medical services, which is especially challenging for families.

Priorities

- Traffic calming and safer pedestrian infrastructure along the highway corridor, with Rossland's 30 km/h speed limit raised as a reference example.
- A youth centre, potentially at Beaver Elementary School.
- Affordable and workforce housing: smaller homes and workforce-specific units were named directly, alongside a low, fast-moving housing inventory.
- Water conservation measures: encouraging water collection and exploring water meters.

Opportunities

- Using the Community Hall as a venue for bands and other revenue-generating events.
- Promoting art nights, music, and entertainment such as a coffee house open mic night.
- Expanding library programming: more evening hours, family and sewing programs, with Ruala's floated as a possible second host venue.
- Accessible trails and infrastructure to serve the Village's existing affordable housing units as residents age.
- Tourism: multi-night visitors already come to Fruitvale; traffic calming signage could help balance tourism with resident safety.

Council & Staff Workshop

Four members of Council and five Village staff took part in a dedicated workshop covering the Village's priorities, fears, and hopes for the future. Feedback included:

Issues

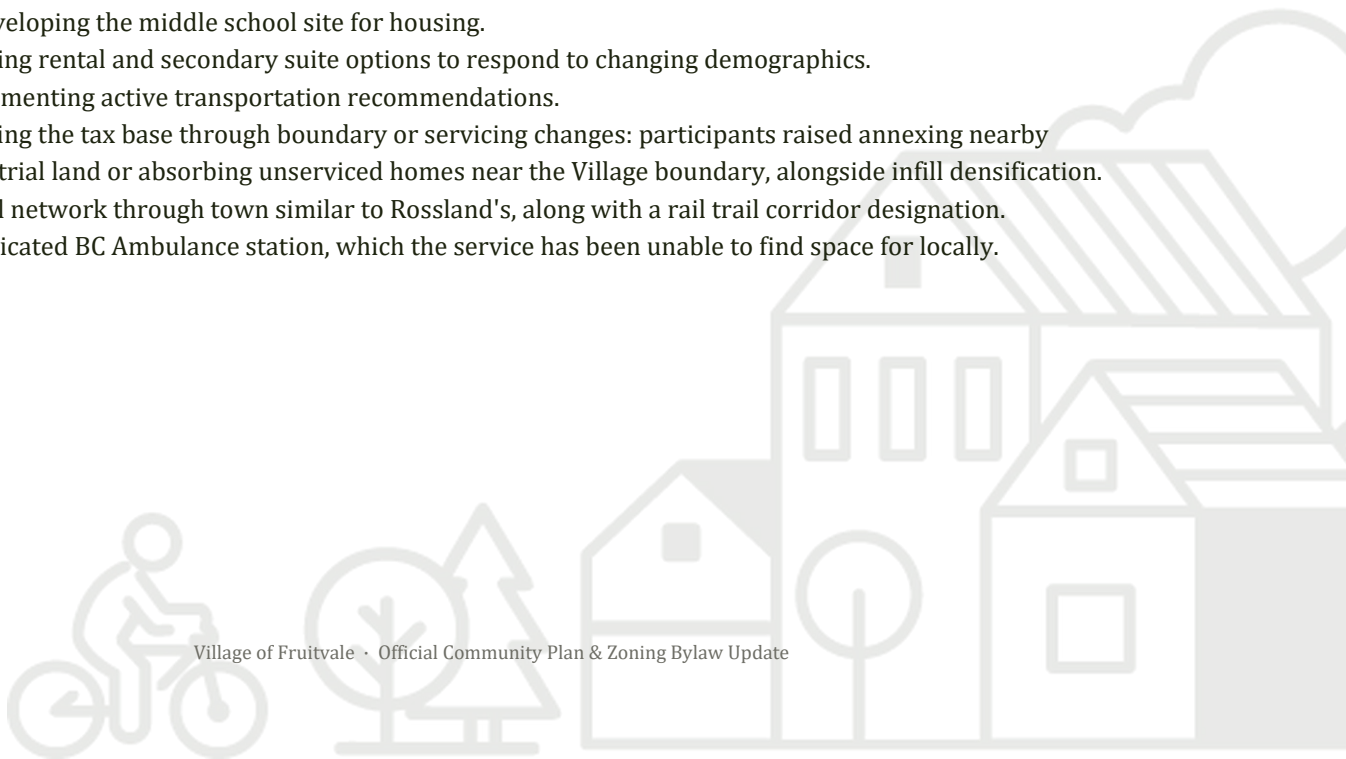
- Fear of losing local businesses, rising taxes, and the Village's operational costs outpacing revenue.
- Aging roads and infrastructure, with a need for an updated asset management plan.
- Housing diversity and affordability, and an aging population in need of downsized housing options.
- Water and sewer capacity: Not enough for what's projected, and no new development can proceed until water availability is addressed; a new reservoir on Kelly Creek was floated as one possible fix.
- Climate and environmental risk: forest fire potential, more severe windstorms, and climate change generally were named as fears for the Village's future.
- An outdated OCP and unclear bylaws: demographics have shifted toward more families since the OCP was written, and both staff and Council want clearer, more consistent language, with the OCP and Zoning Bylaw working together.
- Subdivision and servicing constraints: subdivision rules are prohibitive or cost-ineffective at times, and there's a water connection policy for subdivisions but no equivalent for sewer.
- No incentives currently exist to attract new development or business to the Village.

Priorities

- Securing an adequate water supply and addressing sewer capacity ahead of growth.
- Finishing existing parks development master plans before starting new projects.
- Deciding the future of the former middle school site.
- A wider range of housing options: workforce housing, senior condos/apartments, and multigenerational housing were specifically named, along with more flexibility to support renovations and secondary suites.
- Streamlining the subdivision and density approval process and upgrading utilities to support higher density.
- Preserving community character (green space, large lots, recreation, history) while giving the OCP and Zoning Bylaw clearer, more consistent language.
- Aligning the OCP with the Regional District's plan for the surrounding Area A.

Opportunities

- Redeveloping the middle school site for housing.
- Growing rental and secondary suite options to respond to changing demographics.
- Implementing active transportation recommendations.
- Growing the tax base through boundary or servicing changes: participants raised annexing nearby industrial land or absorbing unserviced homes near the Village boundary, alongside infill densification.
- A trail network through town similar to Rossland's, along with a rail trail corridor designation.
- A dedicated BC Ambulance station, which the service has been unable to find space for locally.



Community Survey Results

The Round 1 community survey ran alongside the in-person engagement from July 14 - 28, 2026, receiving 75 responses.

Who Responded

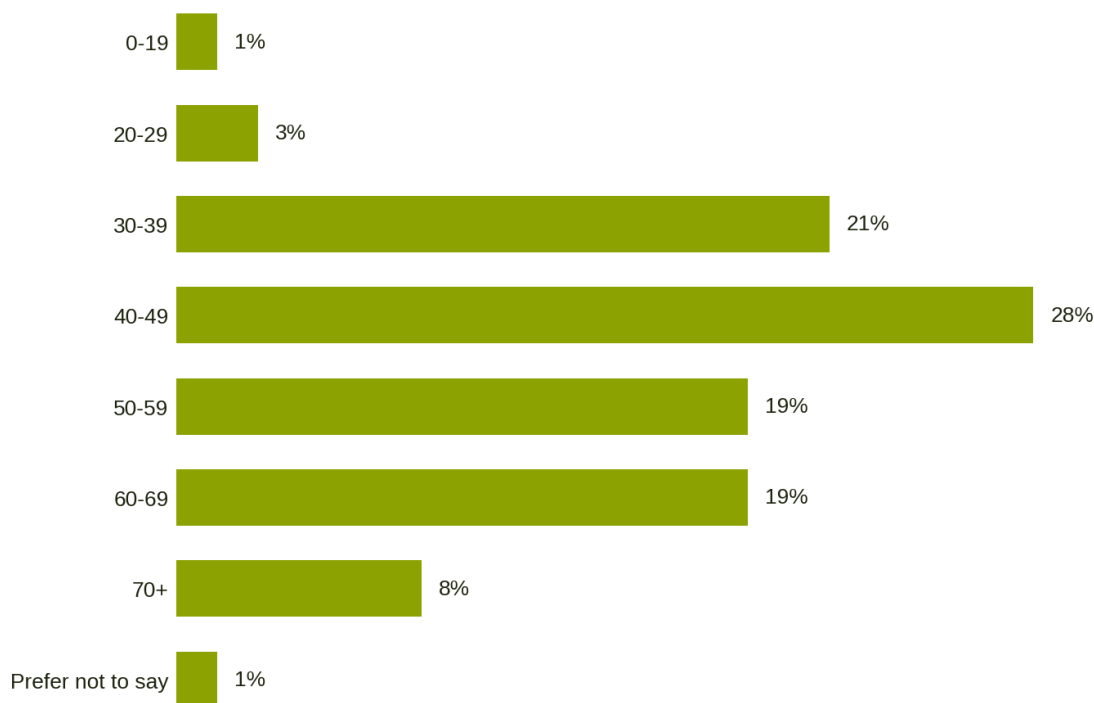
Most respondents (86%) are full-time residents, and two-thirds have lived in Fruitvale more than 10 years. Just under half (48%) said they had not read the Village's current Official Community Plan.

Key Findings

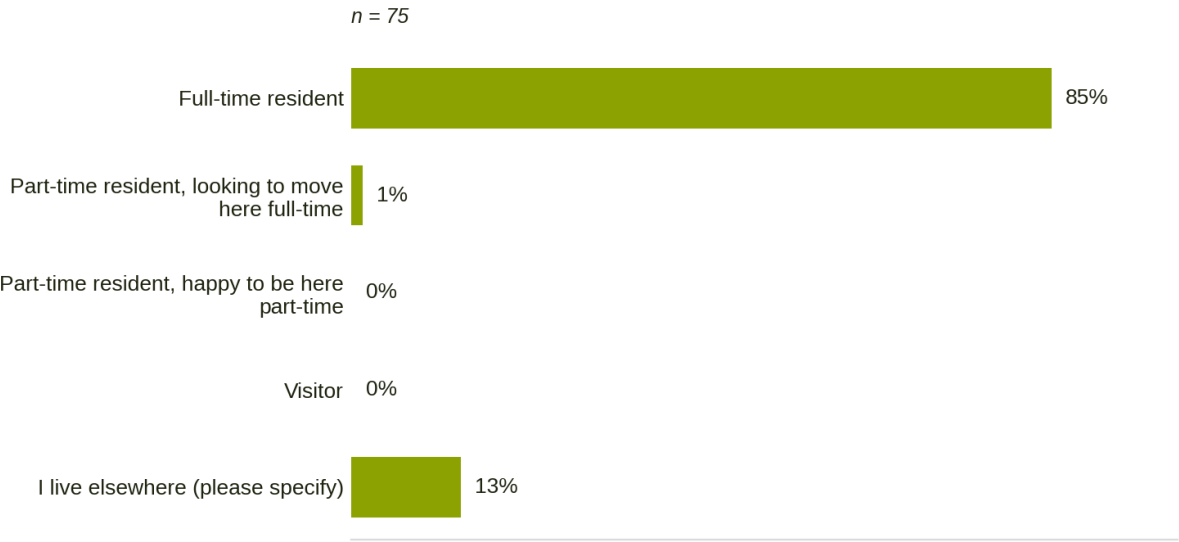
Across the ranking questions, three findings stand out. Parks and recreation was the top pick for the Village's #1 priority (38%), followed by growing and diversifying the local economy (25%). Water and sewer capacity was the clear top infrastructure concern, named by more than two-thirds of respondents, and housing responses consistently balanced a desire for more variety and affordability against a wish to preserve neighbourhood character. Together, these results reinforce the same themes raised through in-person engagement, detailed question by question below.

Age Category of Survey Respondents

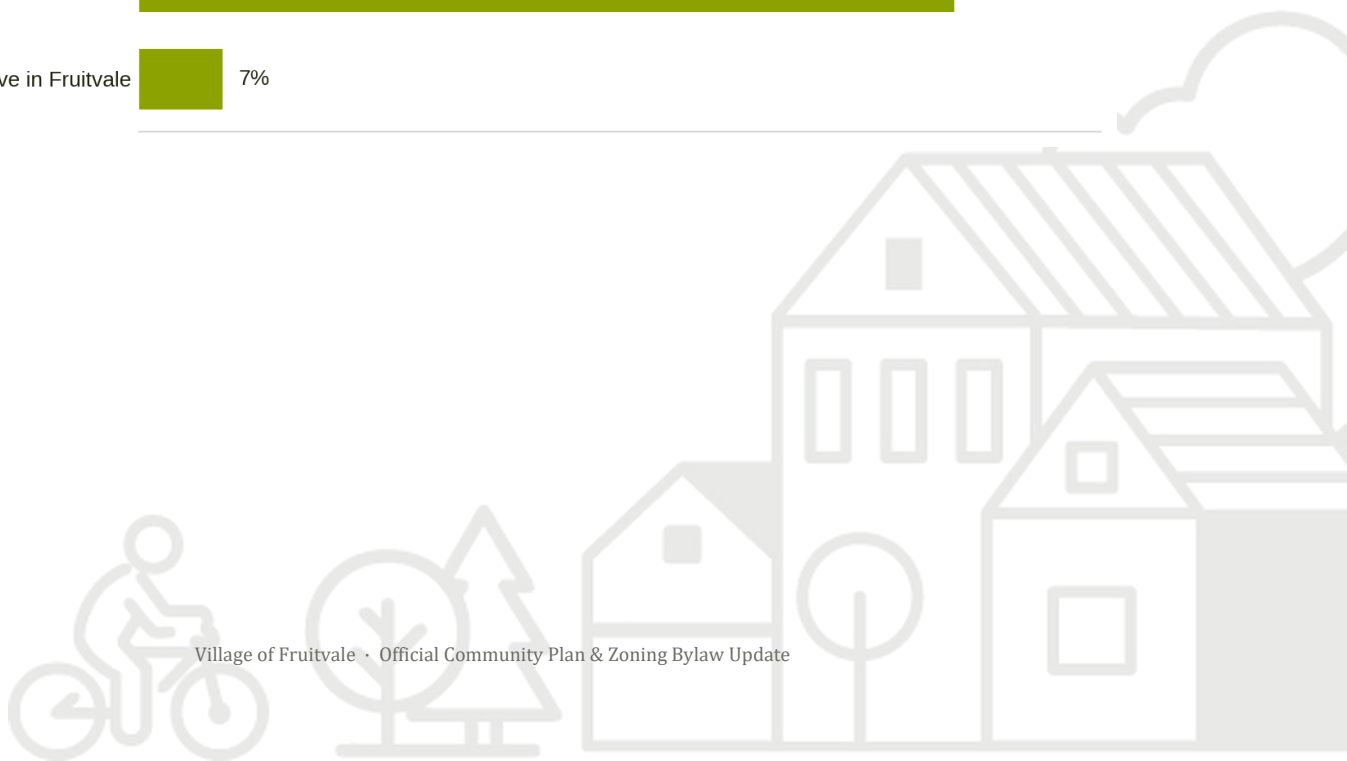
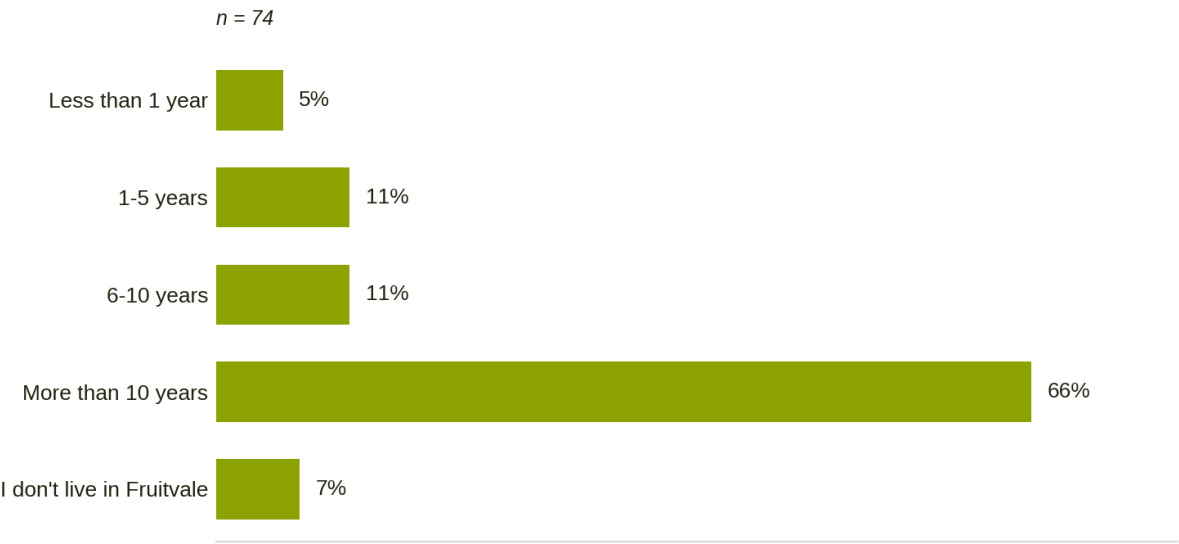
n = 75



Living Situation in Fruitvale

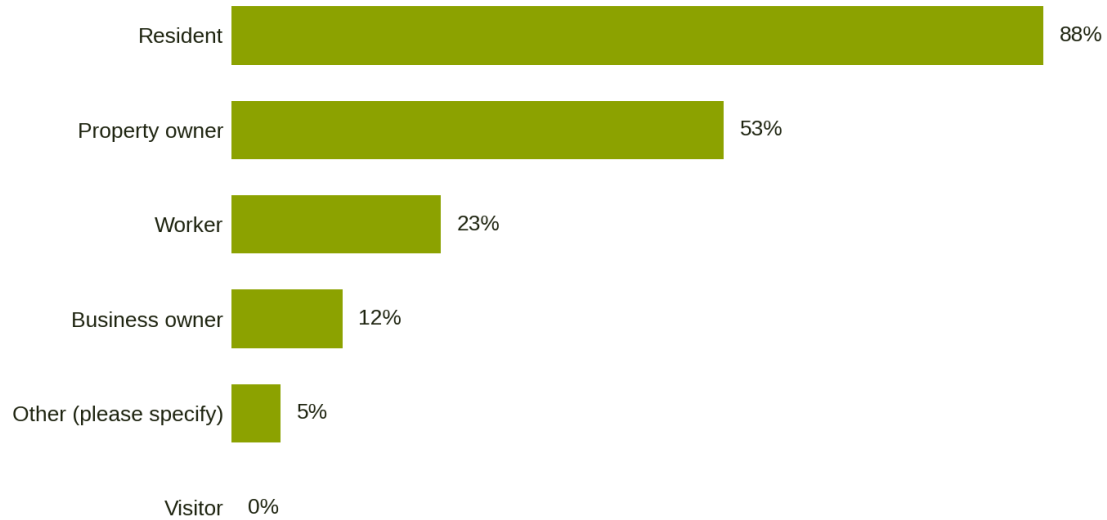


How Long Have You Lived in Fruitvale?



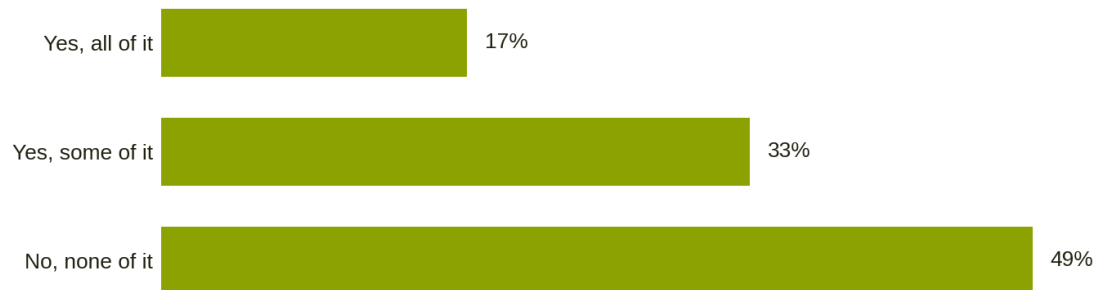
Relationship to the Area

n = 75, choose all that apply



Have You Read the Village's Current OCP?

n = 75



What We Heard: Open-Ended Questions

The survey also asked four open-ended questions. A brief summary of each follows; the themes raised across all four are explored in more depth later in this section.

What do you love most about living in or visiting Fruitvale?

68 answered, 7 skipped

Respondents overwhelmingly pointed to Fruitvale's quiet, friendly, small-town feel and easy access to nature, describing a close-knit community where most day-to-day needs are within reach without leaving town.

Imagine Fruitvale 10 years from now. What would make Fruitvale the best place to live?

68 answered, 7 skipped

The most common requests were more recreation and family amenities (splash parks, dog parks, trails, youth spaces), more restaurants and local businesses, and lower property taxes, alongside repeated comments to keep the small-town feel intact as the Village grows.

What are the top issues or challenges Fruitvale faces today?

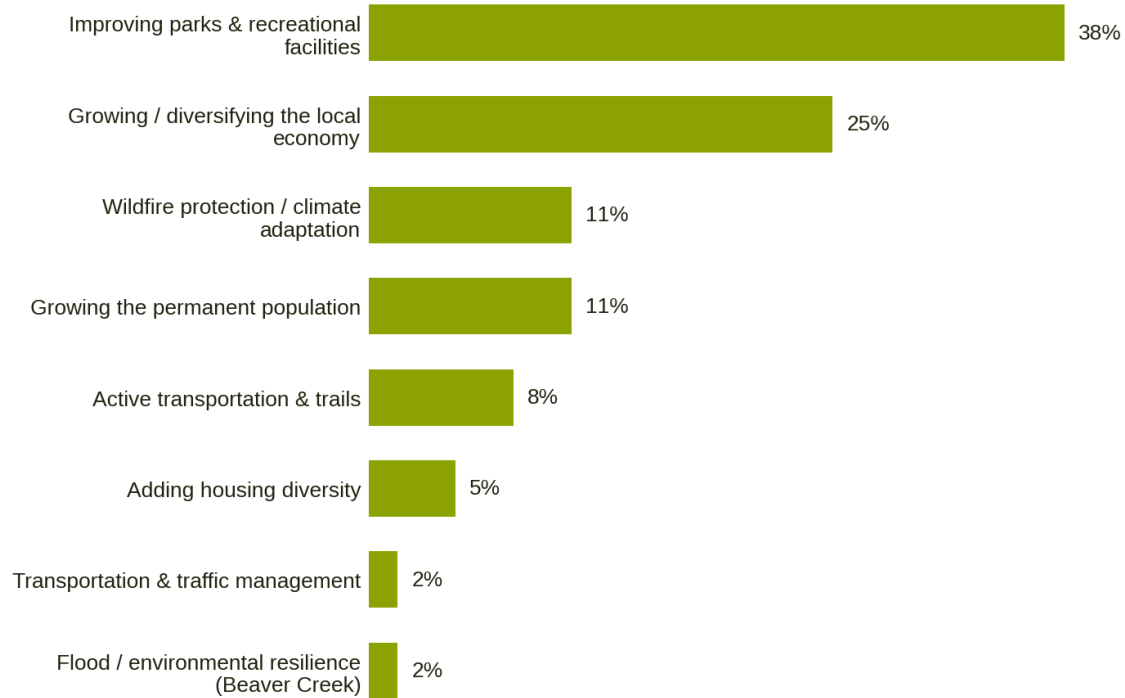
65 answered, 10 skipped

Property taxes were by far the most frequently cited challenge, followed by aging infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) and a desire for more things for youth and families to do. Several respondents also asked for more responsive Village communication.



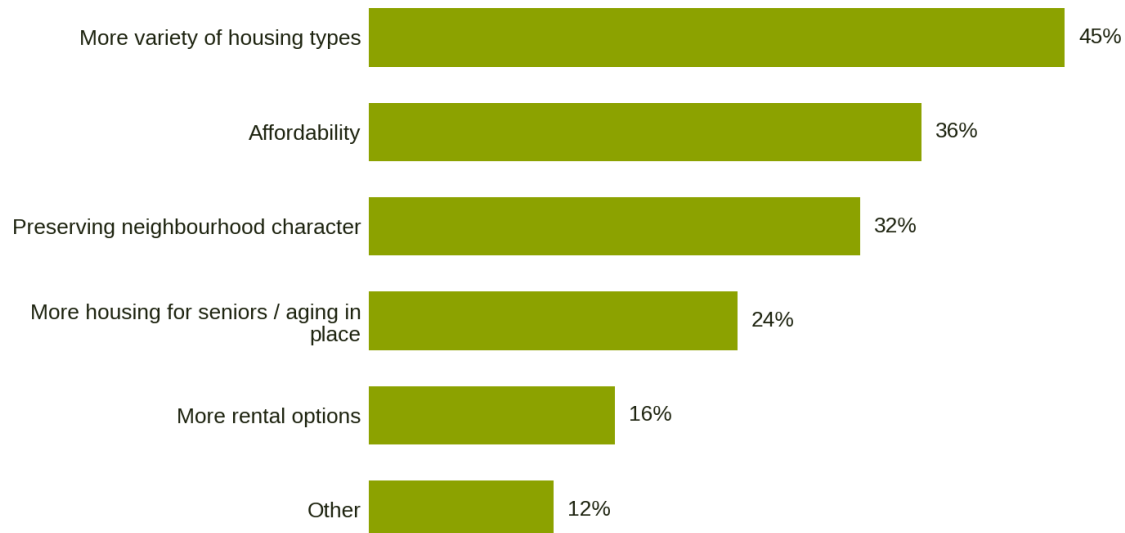
What Should Be the #1 Priority for the Village?

n = 64 (11 skipped)



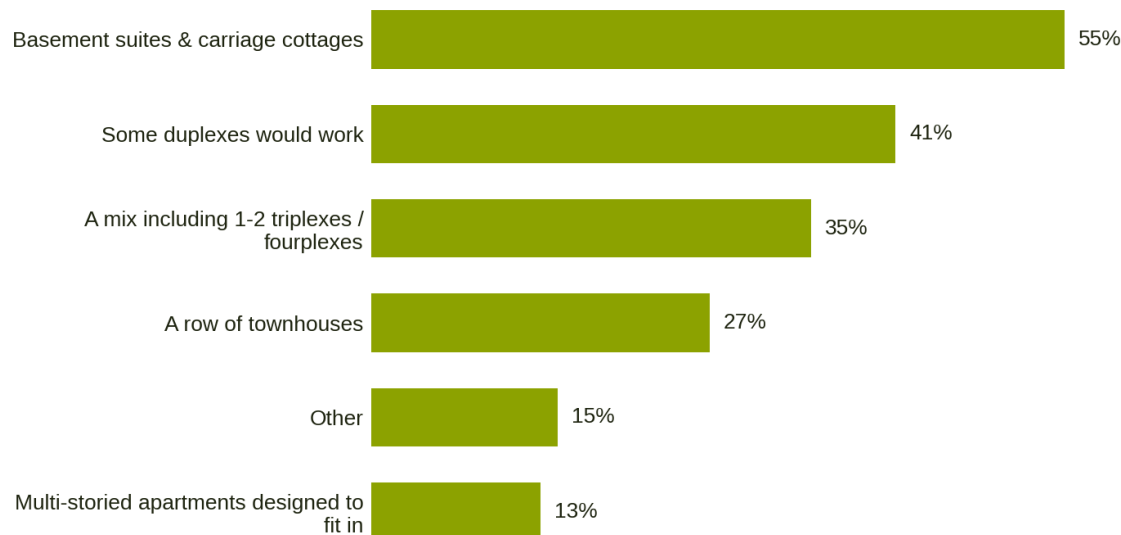
What Should New Housing in Fruitvale Prioritize?

n = 75, choose up to 2



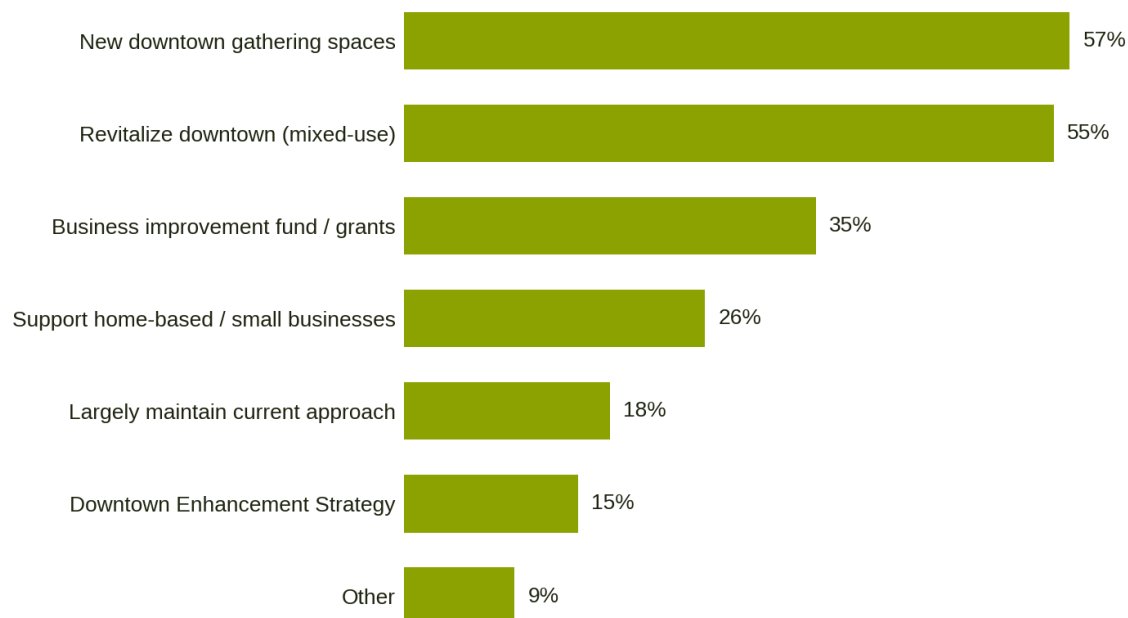
What Housing Types Would Fit Your Neighbourhood?

n = 75, check all that apply



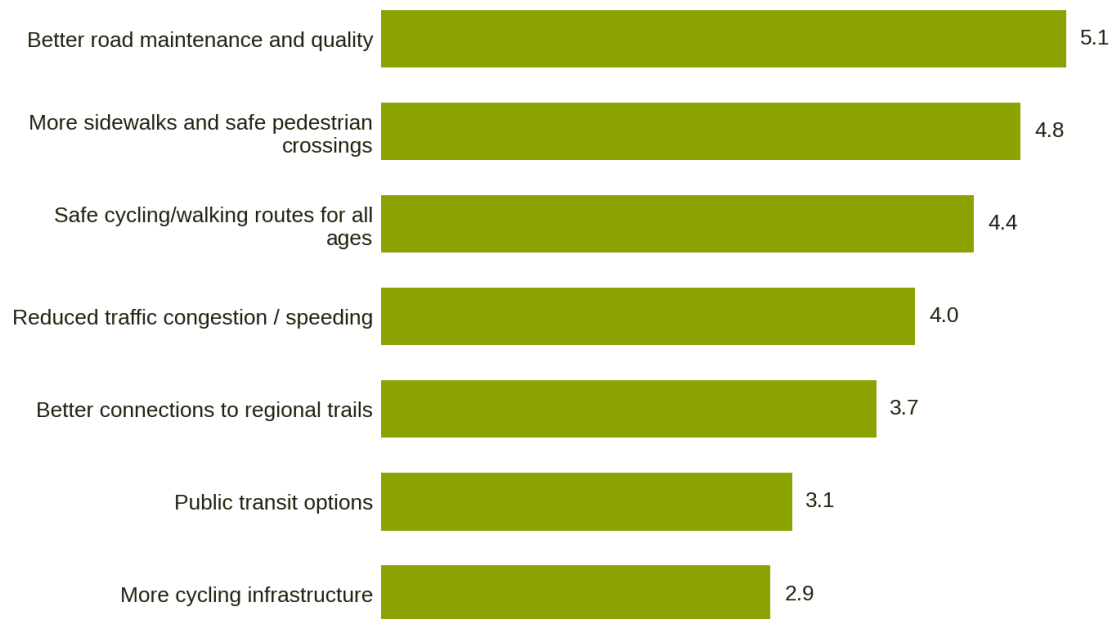
How Should the Village Support Local Business?

n = 74, choose up to 3



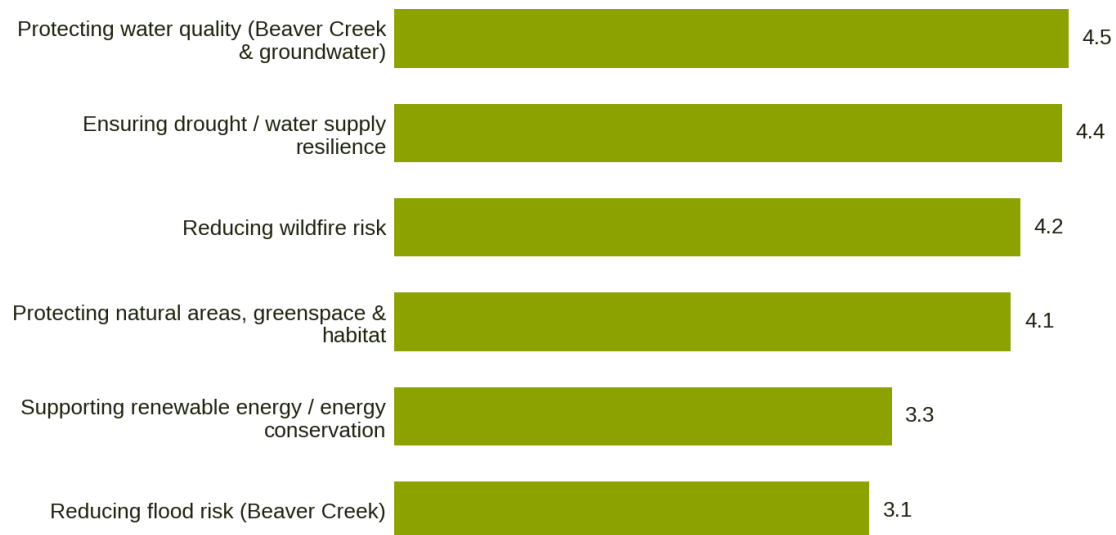
Transportation Improvements Ranked by Importance

n = 74; weighted score, 7 = highest priority



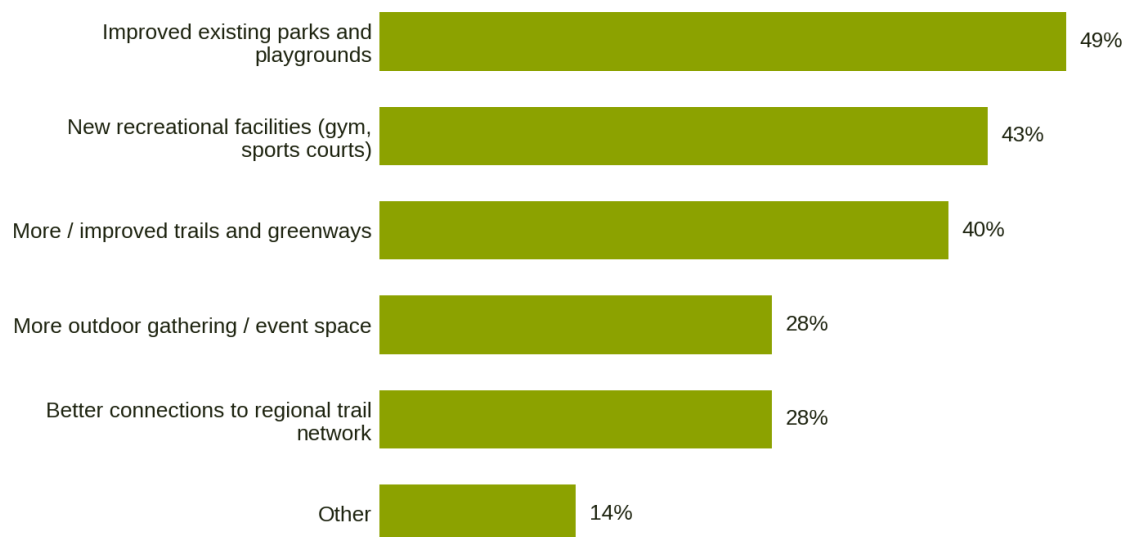
Importance of Community Priorities

n = 74-75; weighted average, 5 = extremely important



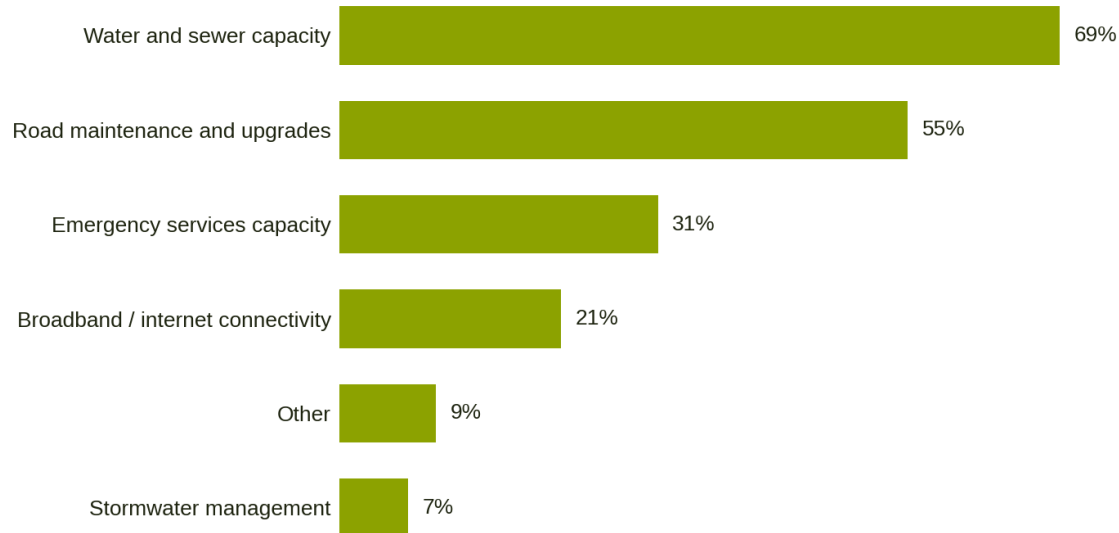
Most Wanted Park, Recreation, or Trail Improvements

n = 72, choose up to 2



Infrastructure Investment Priorities

n = 75, choose up to 2



Any other comments or ideas?

28 answered, 47 skipped

Final comments echoed the same themes raised throughout the survey: property taxes, traffic safety at specific Highway 3B intersections, and preserving Fruitvale's small-town character came up most often, alongside individual suggestions such as traffic circles, an indoor pool, and expanded trail connections.

What We Heard: Open-Ended Responses

The survey also asked four open-ended questions: what people love about Fruitvale, their vision for the next 10 years, the top challenges Fruitvale faces today, and any other comments. The themes below summarize the feedback, which overlap with feedback heard throughout all engagement opportunities.

Community Character and Small-Town Feel

Respondents overwhelmingly described Fruitvale's quiet, friendly, small-town feel, close-knit neighbours, and easy access to nature and the surrounding mountains as what they value most; nearly half of all responses to what people love about Fruitvale touched on this theme. Many want future growth to protect, not erode, that feel, with repeated requests to “keep the village small and charming.”

Recreation, Parks and Family Amenities

A spray or splash park, a skate park, and a dog park were the most frequently requested new amenities, raised repeatedly across both the vision and general comments questions. Respondents also asked for more trails, updated playgrounds for older kids and teens, and indoor or all-season gathering space.

Housing and Growth

Feedback on housing reflected the same tension seen elsewhere in the engagement: strong support for more housing variety and affordability (smaller homes, secondary suites, housing co-ops) alongside repeated concern about losing rural character. Some respondents specifically cautioned against large-scale subdivision, while others encouraged the Village to make it easier for property owners to add secondary suites or infill housing.

Local Economy and Downtown

More restaurants, cafes, and everyday retail were the most common economic requests, alongside support for keeping Main Street the centre of commercial activity. Several respondents, including business owners, asked the Village to make it easier and less costly to start or expand a local business.

Transportation and Safety

Several respondents flagged specific safety concerns, including confusing or dangerous intersections along Highway 3B and speeding near schools, and asked for more sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes.

Taxes and Municipal Services

Property taxes were, by a wide margin, the most frequently mentioned challenge facing Fruitvale today, raised in roughly half of all responses about top issues. Many respondents compared Fruitvale's tax rate unfavourably to neighbouring communities and linked high taxes to a small commercial tax base. Aging roads, water and sewer capacity, and wildfire and water supply resilience were also frequently mentioned service and infrastructure priorities.

Community Voice and Governance

A number of respondents expressed a desire for more responsive communication and a greater sense of influence over Village decisions, particularly around growth, spending, and the future of underused Village assets. Views on this topic varied widely, and the project team will continue to look for ways to keep residents informed and involved as the OCP update progresses.

These open-ended responses overlap the six key themes identified through in-person engagement (Housing, Transportation & Getting Around, Community Character & Identity, Parks/Trails & Outdoor Recreation, Local Economy & Main Street, and Municipal Services & Infrastructure), reinforcing that these are the priorities the OCP and Zoning Bylaw update should address. The survey also surfaced Taxes and Affordability and Community Voice and Governance as themes not captured on its own in the in-person engagement, which has been added as a new key theme in this report.

Lessons Learned & Next Steps

Meeting residents at locations they already frequent (Ruala's, Cake Betty, and the Fruitvale Pub) worked well as a substitute for a traditional open house, drawing well over 150 interactions and a broad cross-section of the community. Passive options, including paper surveys and the library's Vision Tree, also reached residents who might not otherwise have taken part. This mix of approaches will inform how Round 2 engagement is planned in Fall 2026.

