

Official Community Plan

What We Heard Report: Phase 4



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We acknowledge the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh.

The City of Prince George respectfully acknowledges the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh, on whose land we live, work, and play.

Introduction

Background

In June 2023, the City of Prince George initiated the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review process to set a new long-term vision for the community. The City’s existing OCP was adopted in 2011, and much has changed within the community since that time. This review process will develop a new vision for the community, with input from as many groups of people as possible with the resources available. Figure 1 below outlines the OCP Review process timeline.

We are currently in phase 4 of the OCP Review process, which began in October 2024 and will continue to January/February 2025. Phase 4 includes consultation on the draft OCP, and finalization of the OCP through the approval process.

Where are we in the planning process?



Figure 1. OCP Review Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community input is essential to the OCP planning process. This What We Heard Report summarizes the feedback on the draft OCP received through all engagement sources between October and November 2024. The engagement process was voluntary. The results summarized in this report do not reflect the views of the entire community.

FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The OCP Review is an opportunity to advance truth and reconciliation with the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation and Urban Indigenous members of the community. Engagement with the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation is being conducted through a separate but parallel government-to-government process.

Our Approach

How We Informed

PROJECT WEBPAGE

A [dedicated project webpage for the Prince George OCP Review](#) was launched on September 18, 2023. The webpage provided the community with an overview of the OCP planning process and opportunities to get involved. The project webpage was updated throughout the planning process. In Phase 4, the project webpage received **3,042 views from 1,873 visitors** between April 12 and November 27, 2024. In this time, the draft plan was **downloaded 846 times**.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media posts were shared across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, announcing and promoting the pop-up sessions and community survey. In total, there were more than **74,000 impressions** across all platforms.

NEWSLETTERS AND PRESS RELEASES

Information about the final phase of the OCP Review process, the community survey, and the pop-up sessions was included in **two (2) newsletters** distributed to Super Citizens subscribers on October 29 and November 15, 2024. This information was also broadcast in **34 radio ads** on both Country 97FM and 94.3 the Goat, from November 6 to 12, 2024. The pop-up sessions were also advertised in the Prince George Citizen (**approximately 17,500 copies printed**) on November 7 and 14, 2024.

How We Engaged

COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online survey was conducted to gather specific feedback on the draft plan, to understand whether it accurately captured the feedback provided throughout earlier phases of the project. The survey was available from October 30 to November 22, 2024. A total of **152 survey responses** were submitted.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

A dedicated email address was provided so the community could share their thoughts on the draft OCP with municipal staff and the consultant team. Between October 30 to November 29, 2024 **79 written submissions** were received.

POP-UP SESSIONS

Municipal staff held two (2) pop-up sessions at the Pine Centre Mall, attended by approximately 124 community members. Details of the pop-up sessions are in the table below. The pop-up sessions gave the community an opportunity to meet the planning team, learn more about the draft plan, and take the survey.

Table 1. Pop-up sessions

Date	Time	Location	# Attendees
Nov 7, 2024	10:00am – 4:00pm	Pine Centre Mall	60
Nov 14, 2024	10:00am – 4:00pm	Pine Centre Mall	64

Engagement by the numbers

How We Engaged

124 pop-up attendees

An illustration of two people, a man and a woman, standing in front of a large white presentation board. The board is filled with various icons representing different types of digital content: a profile card, a list, a play button, a document with a checklist, a document with a bar chart, and a document with a play button. The man is pointing at one of the icons, and the woman is pointing at another. The background is a dark blue gradient.

152 survey responses

An illustration of three speech bubbles in green and purple, arranged around the number 152. The background is a dark blue gradient.

79 written submissions

An illustration of a hand holding a blue pencil, positioned over the number 79. The background is a dark blue gradient.

How We Informed



3,042 Views from
1,873 webpage visitors

846 downloads
of the draft plan



4 social
media posts
across
4 platforms
(+**74,000**
impressions)



2 *Super Citizens*
e-newsletters
(**559** impressions across
both editions)

34 radio ads on
2 stations

2 print ads
in the *Prince George Citizen*

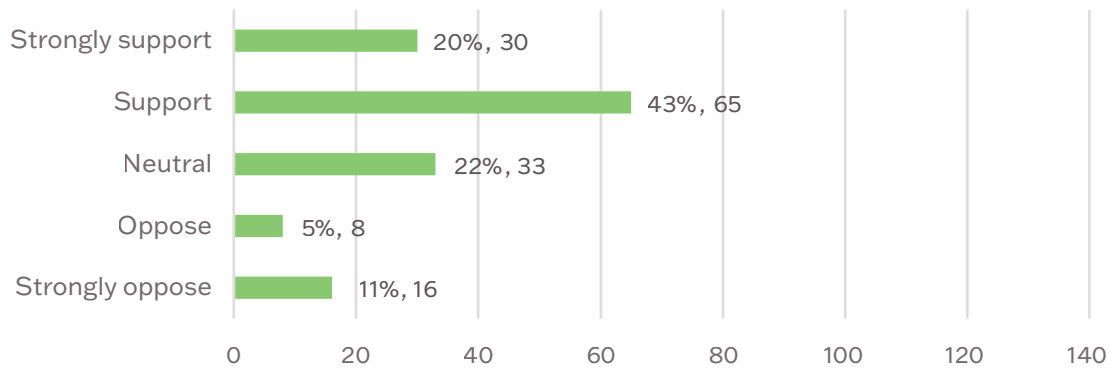
What We Heard

What We Heard:

Community Survey

An online survey was conducted to gather specific feedback on the draft plan, to understand whether it accurately captured the feedback provided throughout earlier phases of the project. The survey was available from October 30 to November 22, 2024. A total of **152 survey responses** were submitted. Not every respondent answered every question.

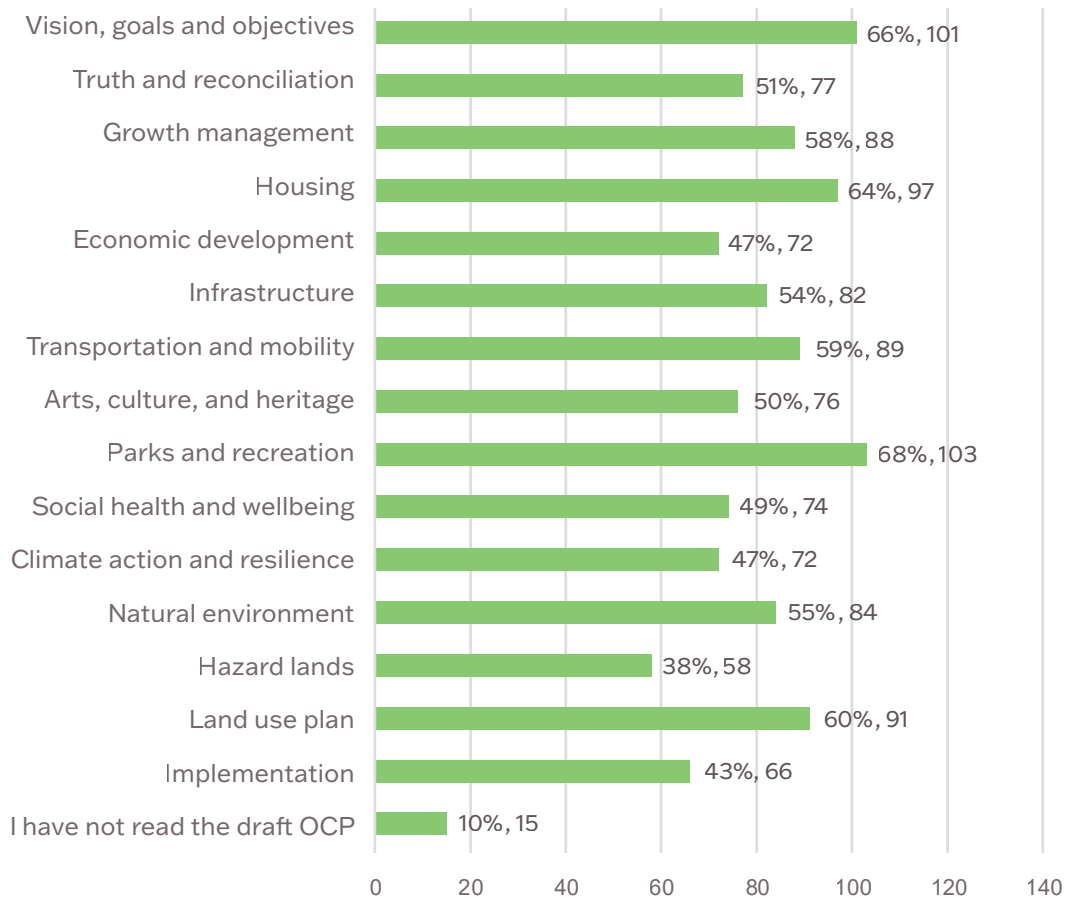
Please indicate your level of support for the new vision statement. (152 responses)



The majority of respondents (63%) indicated they supported or strongly supported the new vision statement, while another 22 per cent indicated they were neutral. The remaining 16 per cent of respondents opposed or strongly opposed the vision statement.

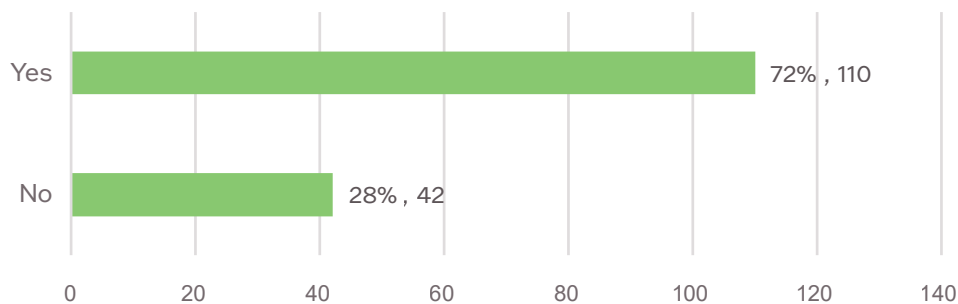
Which sections of the draft OCP have you read in their entirety?

(152 responses)



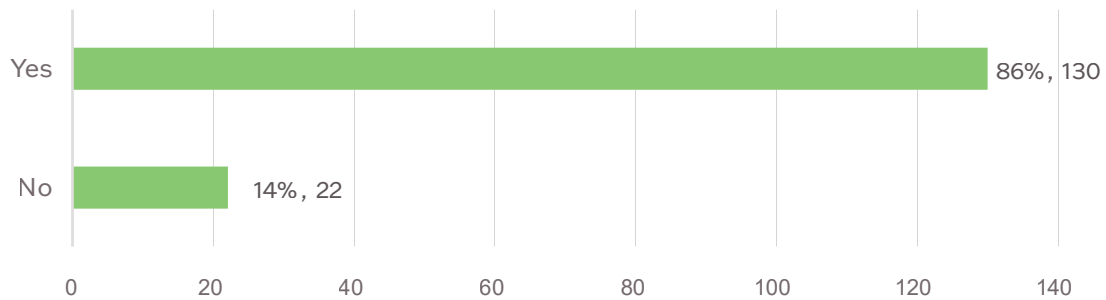
Did the OCP Review process increase your understanding of OCPs, what they are, and how they work?

(152 responses)



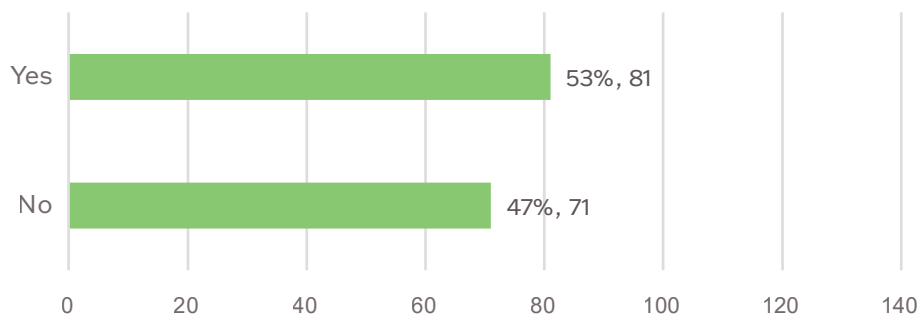
Almost three-quarters of respondents (72%) indicated that participating in the OCP Review Process increased their understanding of Official Community Plans, with the remaining 28 per cent saying it did not.

In general, do you understand the new OCP, its purpose, what it says, and how it will inform decision making? (152 responses)



A large majority of respondents (86%) understood the new OCP, its contents and how it informs decision making in Prince George. Twenty-two respondents (14%) indicated they still did not understand the OCP or its use.

Residents, landowners, business owners, community organizations, and special interest groups should consider the OCP when making property and investment decisions. Does the draft OCP provide clear direction on what you can or cannot do with your property? (152 responses)



Just over half of respondents (53%) agreed that the OCP provides clear direction for people making property decisions, while a similar number of respondents (47%) indicated that the OCP was not clear in this respect.

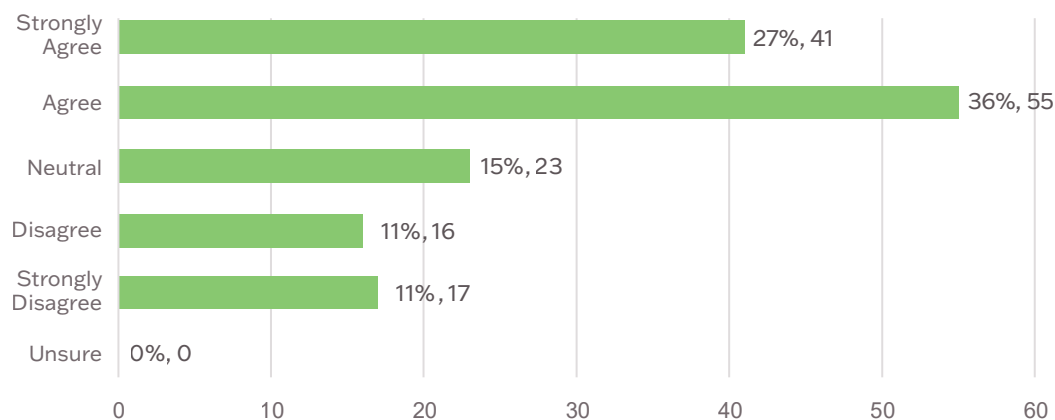
The OCP seeks to achieve five (5) big picture, long-term goals for Prince George. The OCP identifies objectives and policies to support the City in achieving these goals.

Goal #1: We have created complete communities that meet the daily needs of our residents and include a range and mix of housing options for all.

Objectives:

- Land use changes enable more complete communities where households within the Urban Containment Boundary are within a 15-20 minute walk (or 2 km) of key amenities that support daily living.
- Urban streets are attractive to live, work and shop on.
- Diverse housing types and tenures create inclusive, affordable and complete communities.

To what extent do you agree that the objectives above align with goal #1? (152 responses)



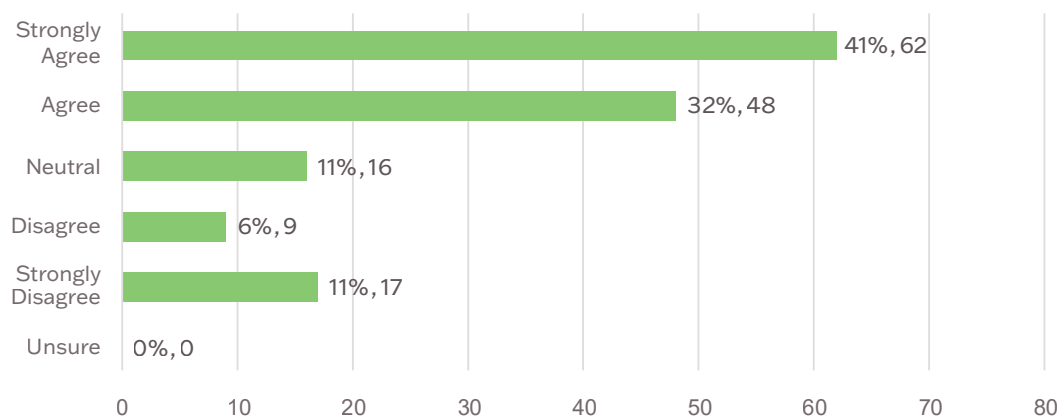
The majority of survey respondents (63%) agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives align with goal #1. Fifteen per cent of respondents indicated they were neutral, and the remaining respondents (22%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Goal #2: Our parks and open spaces are protected, enhanced and well connected by trails so they can be safely and comfortably enjoyed by all.

Objectives:

- Parks, open spaces and wildlife corridors are protected, enhanced, and connected.
- Investments in parks and recreation infrastructure support active and healthy living objectives.
- Riparian areas, green corridors, and tree cover are protected and enhanced.

To what extent do you agree that the objectives above align with goal #2? (152 responses)



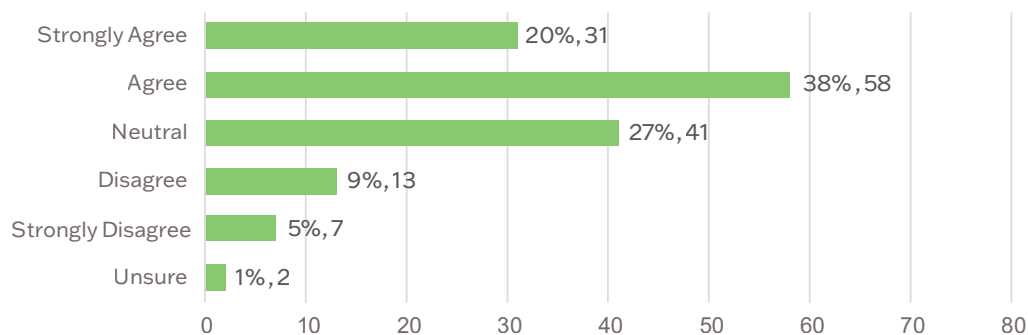
Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) agreed with the objectives to support goal #2, while eleven per cent of respondents showed they were neutral. Seventeen per cent of respondents disagreed in some way with the objectives.

Goal #3: We strategically invest in existing and cost-effective infrastructure, to best serve current and future generations as the city grows and develops.

Objectives:

- A sustainable service delivery approach is applied to reduce the lifecycle cost of designing, maintaining and renewing infrastructure through strategic and cost-effective investments.
- Infrastructure investment targeting Growth Priority Areas is prioritized.
- Natural assets are integrated into the City's approach to infrastructure management.

To what extent do you agree that the objectives above align with goal #3? (152 responses)



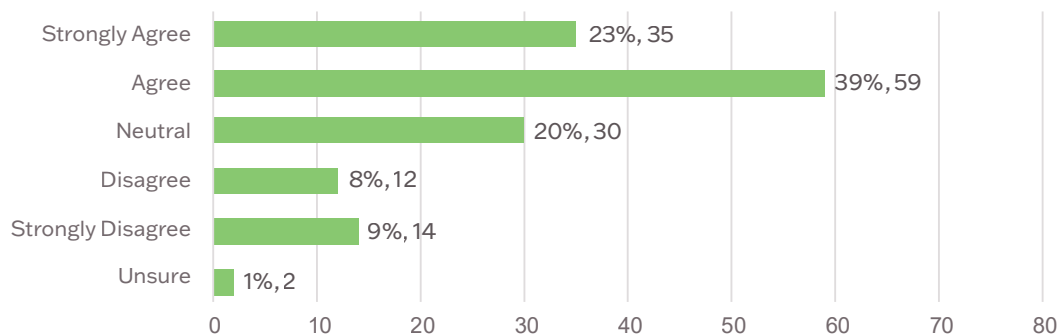
Over half of respondents (58%) agreed with the objectives developed for goal #3, while more than a quarter (27%) indicated they were neutral. The remaining respondents disagreed (9%), strongly disagreed (5%) or said they were unsure (1%) about the stated objectives.

Goal #4: The economy is strong and diverse, with flexible, mixed-use development supporting a range of thriving businesses.

Objectives:

- Become a catalyst for a thriving economy in northern British Columbia.
- Achieve a vibrant and strong economy with a diverse mix of businesses and industries.

To what extent do you agree that the objectives above align with goal #4?



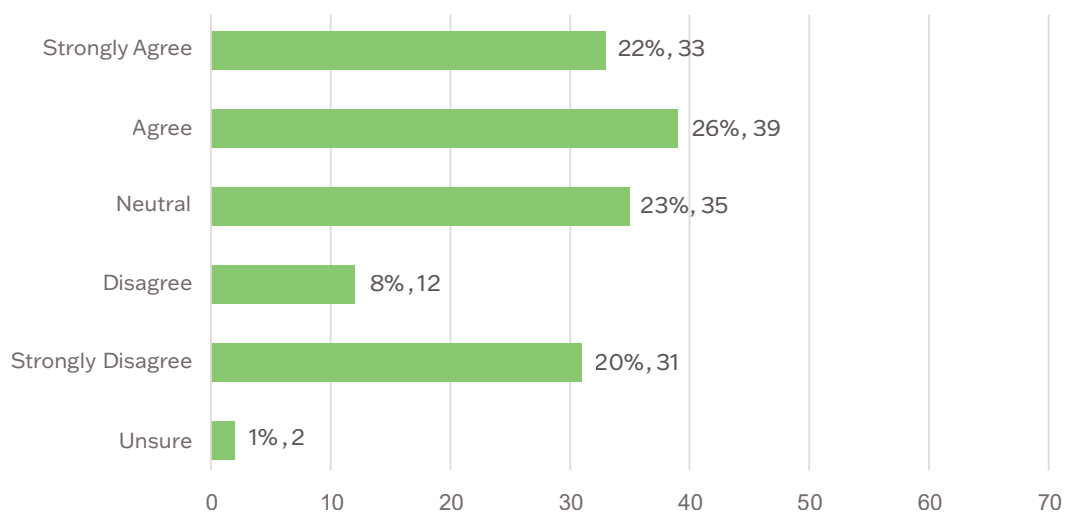
Over three-fifths of respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed with goal #4's objectives, with an additional 20 per cent of respondents indicating they were neutral. Seventeen per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the objectives, and two respondents (1%) selected they were unsure.

Goal #5: We are an environmentally conscious and responsible City, with climate protection, mitigation and adaptation integrated into our approach to land use, servicing, development and transportation.

Objectives:

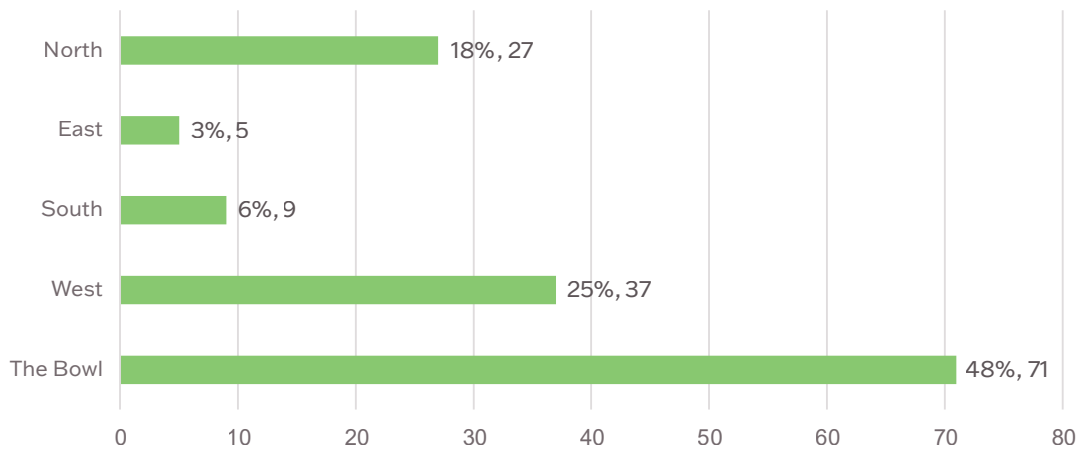
- Climate change adaptation minimizes negative climate-related impacts on human safety, health and wellbeing.
- There is collective awareness and understanding of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

To what extent do you agree that the objectives above align with goal #5? (152 responses)



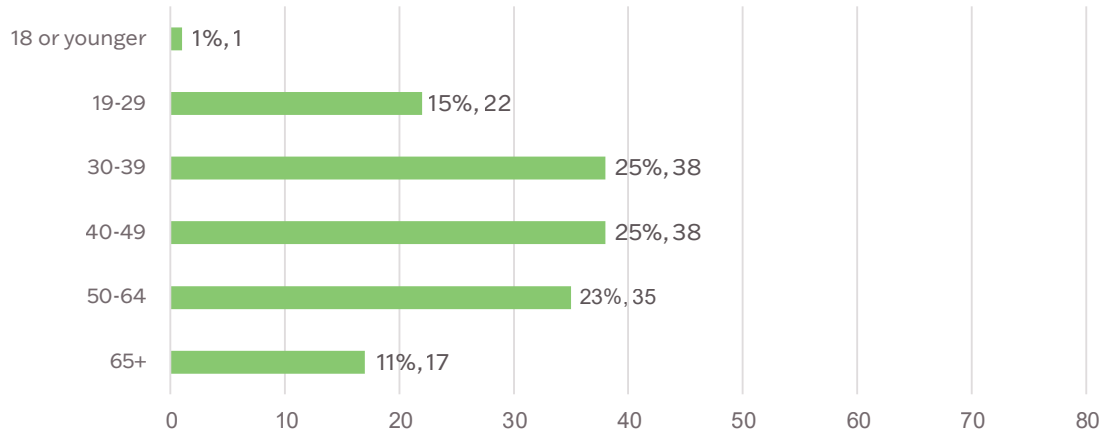
Almost half of respondents (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives align with goal #5. Thirty-five respondents (23%) indicated they were neutral, while a combined 28 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the alignment of objectives.

Which region of Prince George do you live in? (149 responses)



The highest number of respondents (48%) live in The Bowl area of Prince George, followed by West (25%), North (18%), South (6%) and then East (3%).

What age group do you belong to? (151 responses)



Half of survey respondents (50%) indicated they were between the ages of 30 and 49. Respondents aged 50 to 64 represented almost a quarter of all participants (23%), followed by people aged 19 to 29 (15%). Seventeen respondents (11%) were over the age of 65, and only one respondent (<1%) was 18 or younger.

What We Heard:

Written Submissions

A dedicated email address was provided so the community could share their thoughts on the project with municipal staff. Between October 30 to November 29, 2024, 79 written submissions were received.

City staff have read and considered all written submissions. For reporting purposes, the key themes heard throughout these written submissions are summarized below.

More protection and consideration for greenspaces is needed.

There is a desire to see greater protection for Ginter's Green as an important gathering place for the Prince George community. Over 30 written submissions expressed concern with continuing to include part of the road expansion plans in the OCP. Additionally, several submissions expressed the desire to see more greenspaces and trails integrated into the Growth Priority areas and additional subdivisions overall.

Submissions noted that greenspaces contribute to the well-being of the community, provide opportunities for the tourism sector, help manage stormwater runoff, and provide important habitat for wildlife. Riparian areas were of specific concern, noting the desire to see more Riparian Protection Development Permit Areas (DPA) and additional areas classified as riparian such as the Otway Ski Centre, Shane Creek, and the area between Tyner Boulevard and the Greenway.

The OCP needs to carefully manage growth.

A significant theme across written submissions were concerns with the Growth Priority Boundary and the lack of servicing, lack of access to transit/active transportation networks, and development impacts to current forested/riparian areas and floodplains. Some responses highlighted that this development would not meet the definition of true infill. Some submissions expressed that there could be an even greater focus on mixed-use development and densification to avoid urban sprawl. Overall, there was a desire to invest more into improving existing infrastructure before expanding low density development.

There are additional opportunities to improve our transportation system.

Several written submissions were supportive of the increased priority of active transportation in Prince George. There were additional suggestions to further enhance the transportation system for all modes, including ensuring that subdivisions have more than one access route, improving signage to and in transportation hubs, creating more routes to connect the airport and other amenities. Multiple responses also suggested moving the second pedestrian/cyclist overpass over Highway 97 N to be closer to the College of New Caledonia.

Some were concerned that the draft OCP does not identify enough new cycling and pedestrian routes to reflect the active transportation priority, and that designating arterial roads as “walkable urban places” is contradictory.

Four submissions were in support of the Foothill’s extension through Ginter’s Green to relieve current traffic congestion.

The OCP should prioritize agriculture and food systems.

Several submissions were concerned with the removal of food security policies from the 2011 OCP. Additionally, several submissions expressed opposition to the policies that discourage planting fruit bearing trees and vegetation. Some respondents wanted to see increased food security as a higher priority.

There is support for expanding efforts in Truth and Reconciliation.

Written responses highlighted additional opportunities for advancing Truth and Reconciliation through creating culturally authentic tourism experiences that showcase the histories of the Lheidli T’enneh people, supporting Lheidli T’enneh-owned and operated tourism businesses, Acknowledging Lheidli T’enneh as a Host Nation, and including plans and monitoring mechanisms for advancing reconciliation.

There are additional opportunities for climate-friendly planning practices.

Written submissions provided several suggestions for climate-forward policies including promoting new green technologies in new and existing industry, exploring requirements for indoor air quality in new buildings, prioritizing energy efficiency in all construction or renovations, and encouraging businesses and residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The OCP should broaden the focus on the local economy to include additional sectors.

Written submissions noted the importance of the tourism sector and the arts and culture sectors as economic drivers. Both the tourism and arts and culture sectors should be considered a priority for a diversified local economy.

There are some concerns with the proposed land use designations.

Several written submissions highlighted concerns with certain designation in the draft OCP. These include the lack of policy flexibility in small-scale and medium residential where "up to 8 units" is referenced and its hindrance on private medium density developments, the desire for more Rural land use designations in areas that are currently designated as Rural Resource, and the lack of reference to the MOU for the Airport Light Industrial Neighbourhood Plan with the additional Rural designations.

Ensure the plan reflects other studies and reports.

Submissions suggested that the OCP may be improved by more accurately reflecting the need for housing or road classifications determined by other municipal studies and reports.



Next Steps

The feedback provided through this phase of engagement will be used to finalize the OCP. The final version of the OCP will be presented to Council for their consideration in January/February 2025. Council consideration of the final OCP will be a public process – community members will have the opportunity to provide feedback to council.

