



## Home-Based Business Modernization Public Engagement Summary Report



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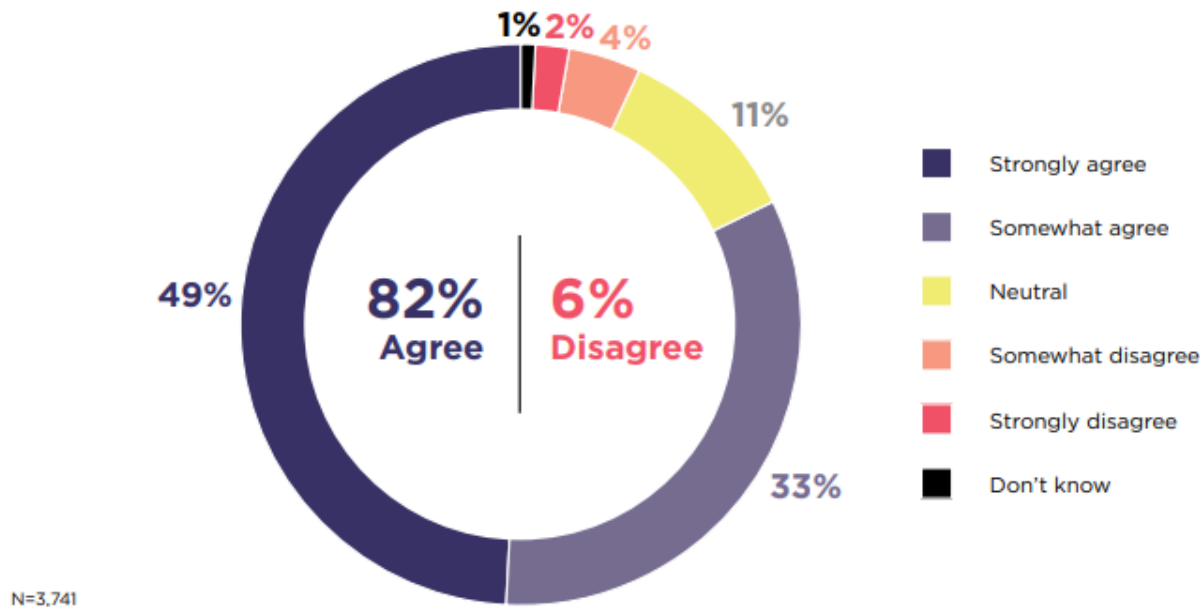
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# Objectives & Connection to Previous Engagement

Through the Vancouver Plan process, the City confirmed strong support for increasing opportunities for people to work throughout the city, including in home based businesses within residential areas (below graph). Building on this direction, the home-based business modernization engagement in 2023 and 2024 focused specifically on collecting targeted input from key stakeholder groups to help shape the refinement of regulations and the creation of implementation resources.

## 10. Vancouver should have more places for people to work throughout the city including within or near residential areas (e.g. home based businesses, offices, and retail).



# How We Engaged

Between January 25 and February 25, 2024 the City engaged residents on proposed updates to home-based business regulations. The engagement focused on collecting feedback from residents who were either already operating a home-based business or who would be interested in operating one in future.

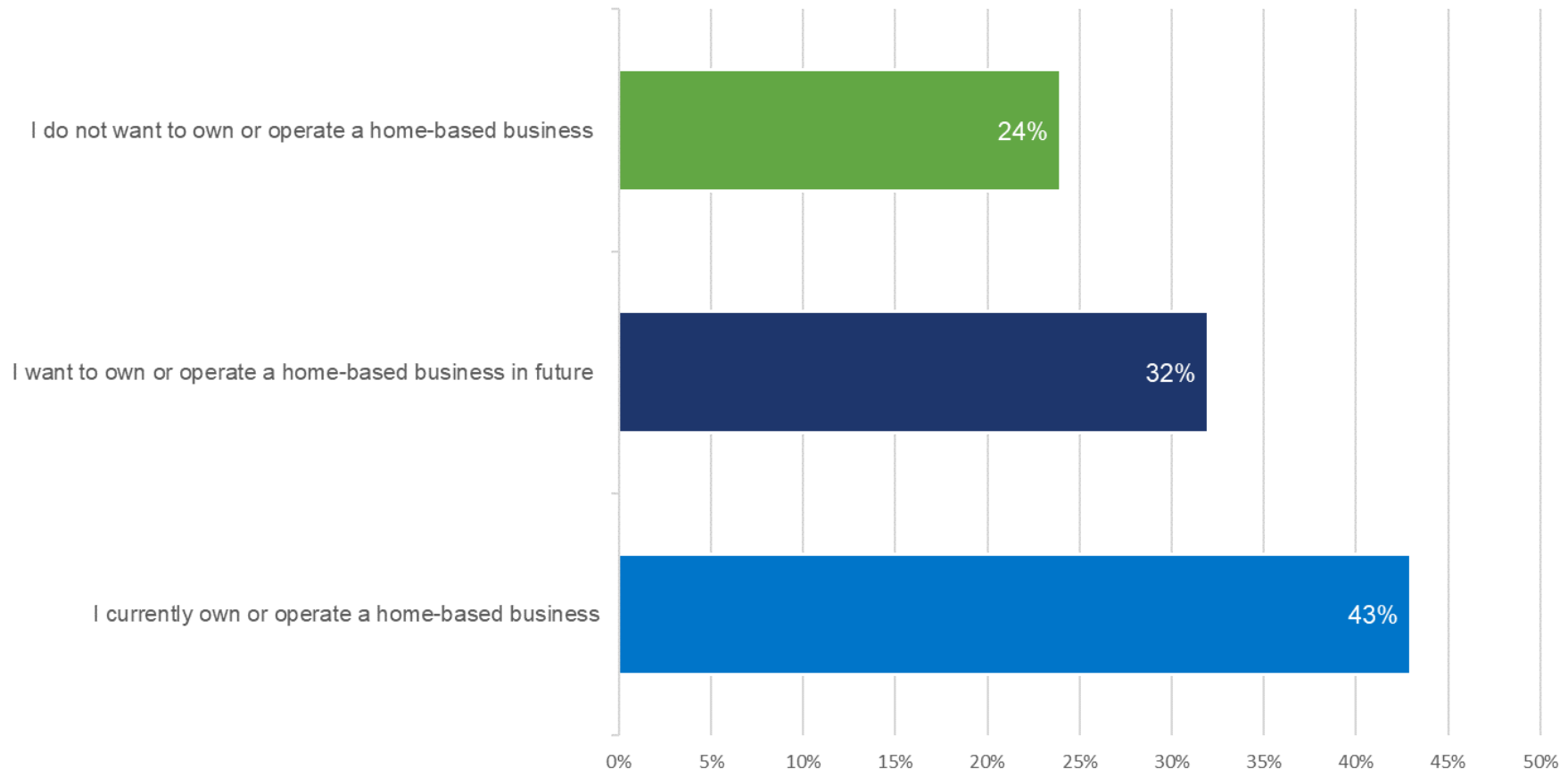
We interacted with over 500 people through an online survey hosted on the City's "Talk Vancouver" engagement platform and included on the City of Vancouver's "Shape Your City" site. Participants provided responses and ideas that were used to refine the proposed home-based business regulation updates.

Staff distributed the survey with the assistance of community partners such as the Vancouver neighbourhood houses, Vancouver Library, Small Business BC, and the Skilled Immigrant Centre.

Feedback received from the home-based business modernization engagement is summarized in this report.

# Who Participated

Relationship to Home-Based Businesses



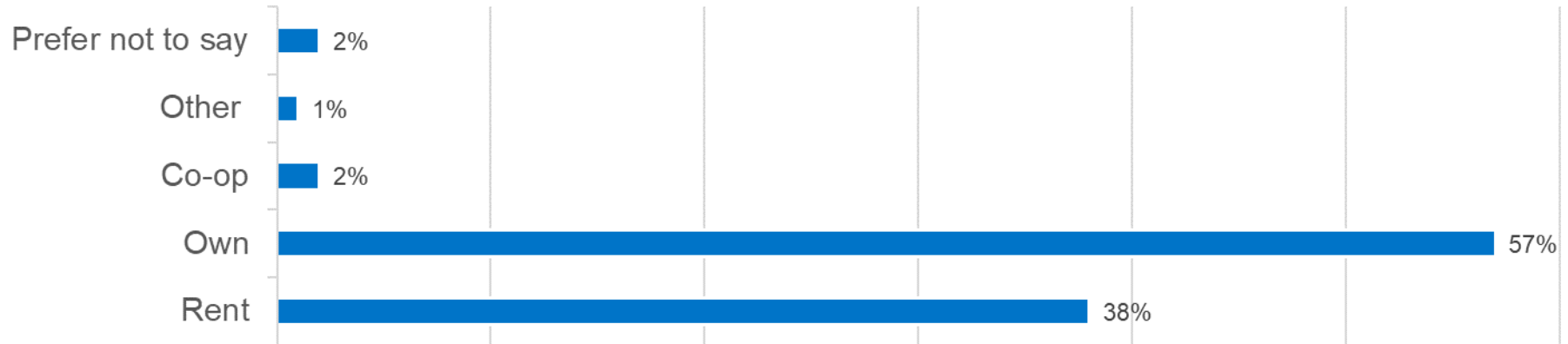
All respondents = 507

## Why is this important?

Previous engagement through the Vancouver Plan process sought feedback from the general public around the potential for increasing opportunities for home-based business. There was strong support for Vancouver to increase opportunities for people to work throughout the city, including home-based businesses within residential areas. Building on this direction, the 2024 Home-Based Business Modernization Survey focused specifically on collecting targeted input to help shape the refinement of regulations and the creation of implementation resources.

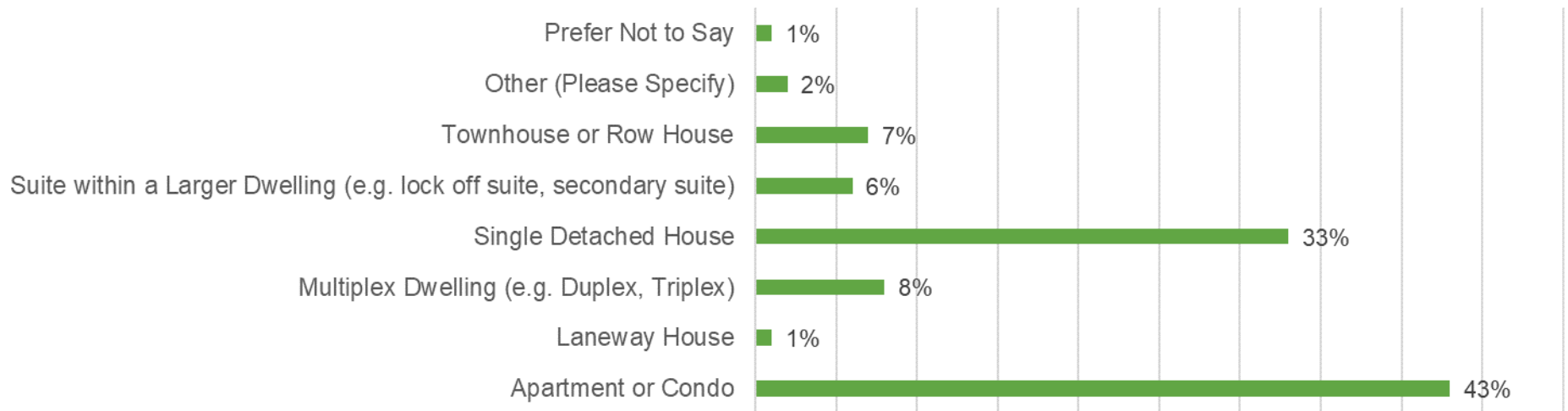
# Who Participated

## What is your housing situation?



All respondents = 504

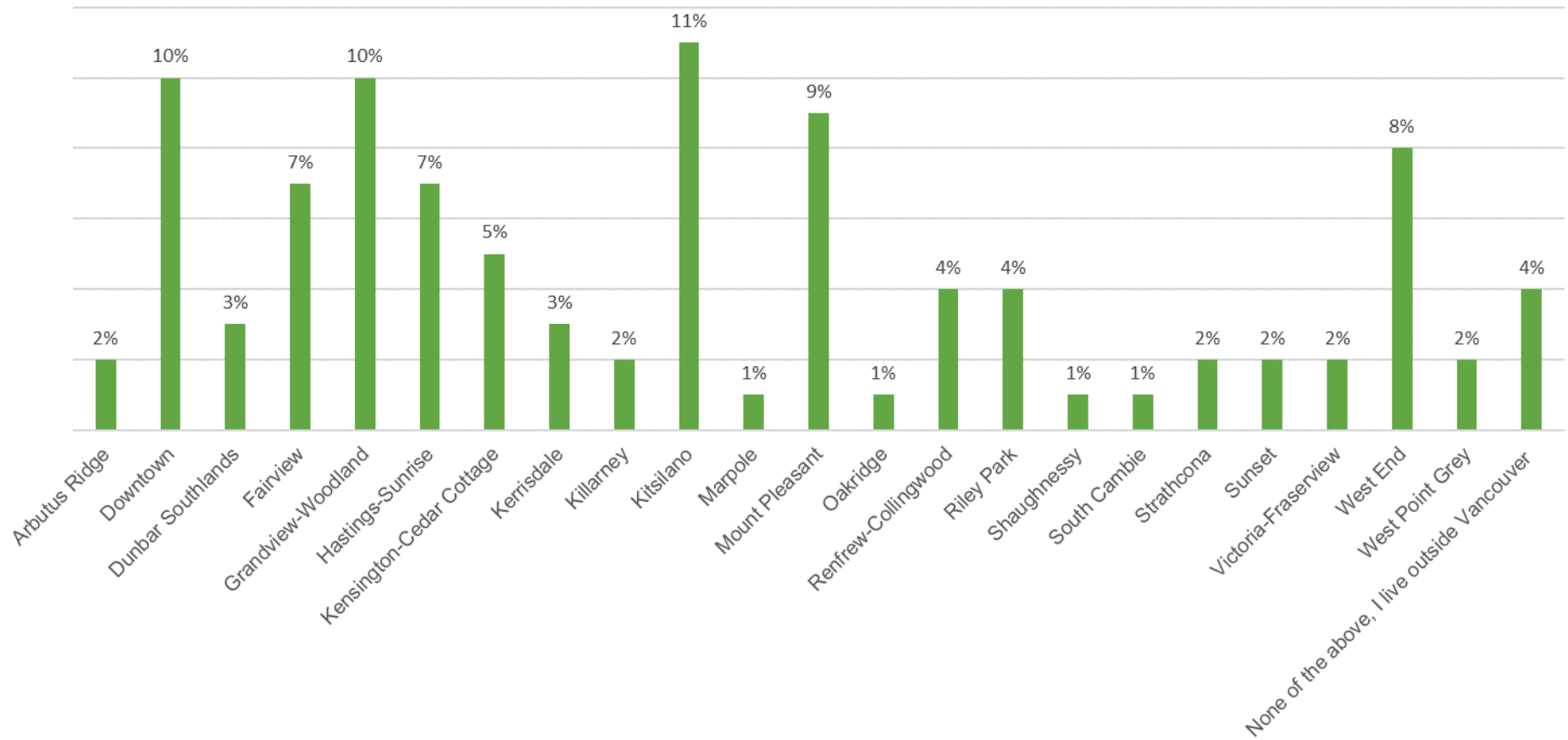
## What kind of housing do you live in?



All respondents = 513

# Who Participated

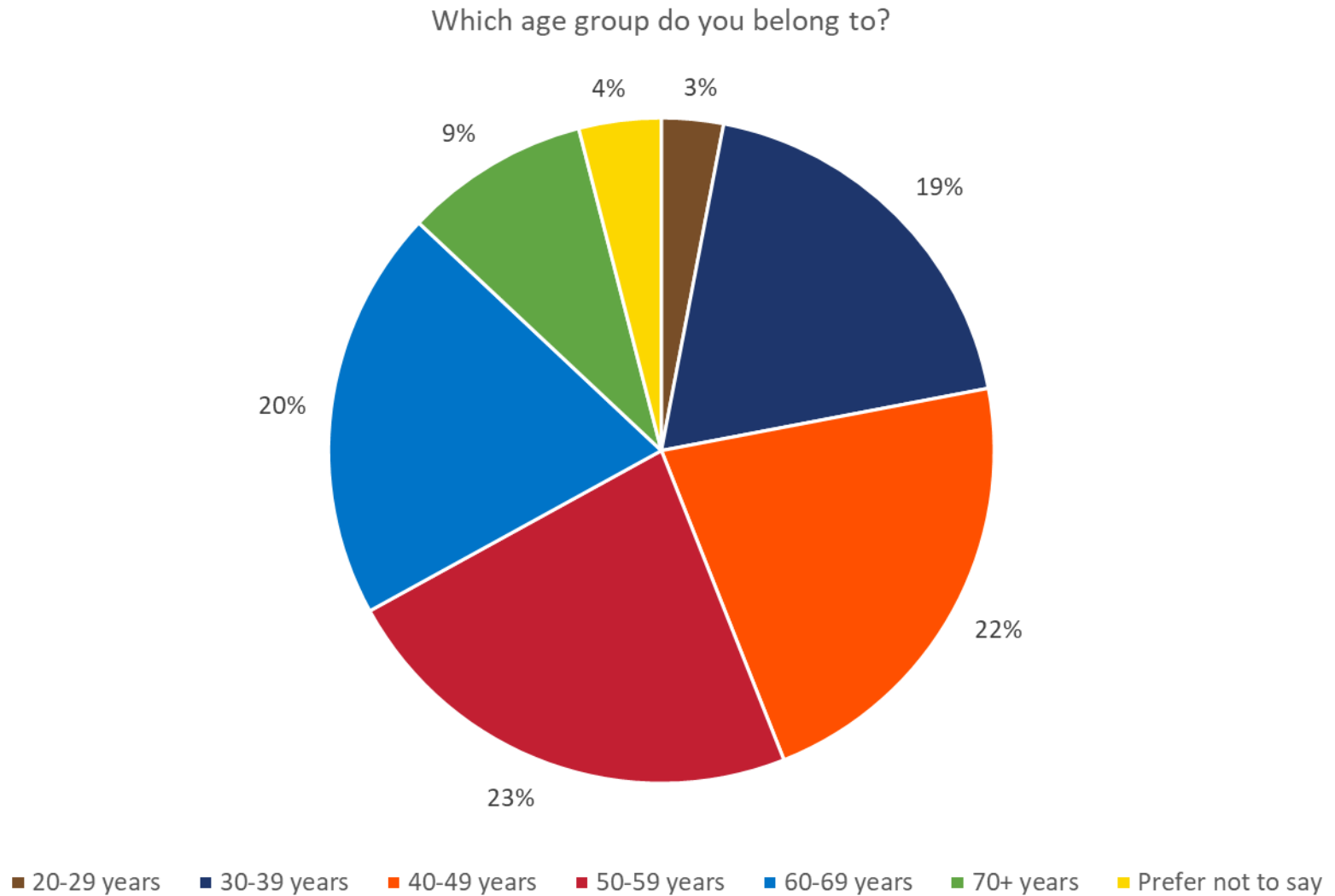
Which neighbourhood in Vancouver do you live in?



All respondents = 512



# Who Participated

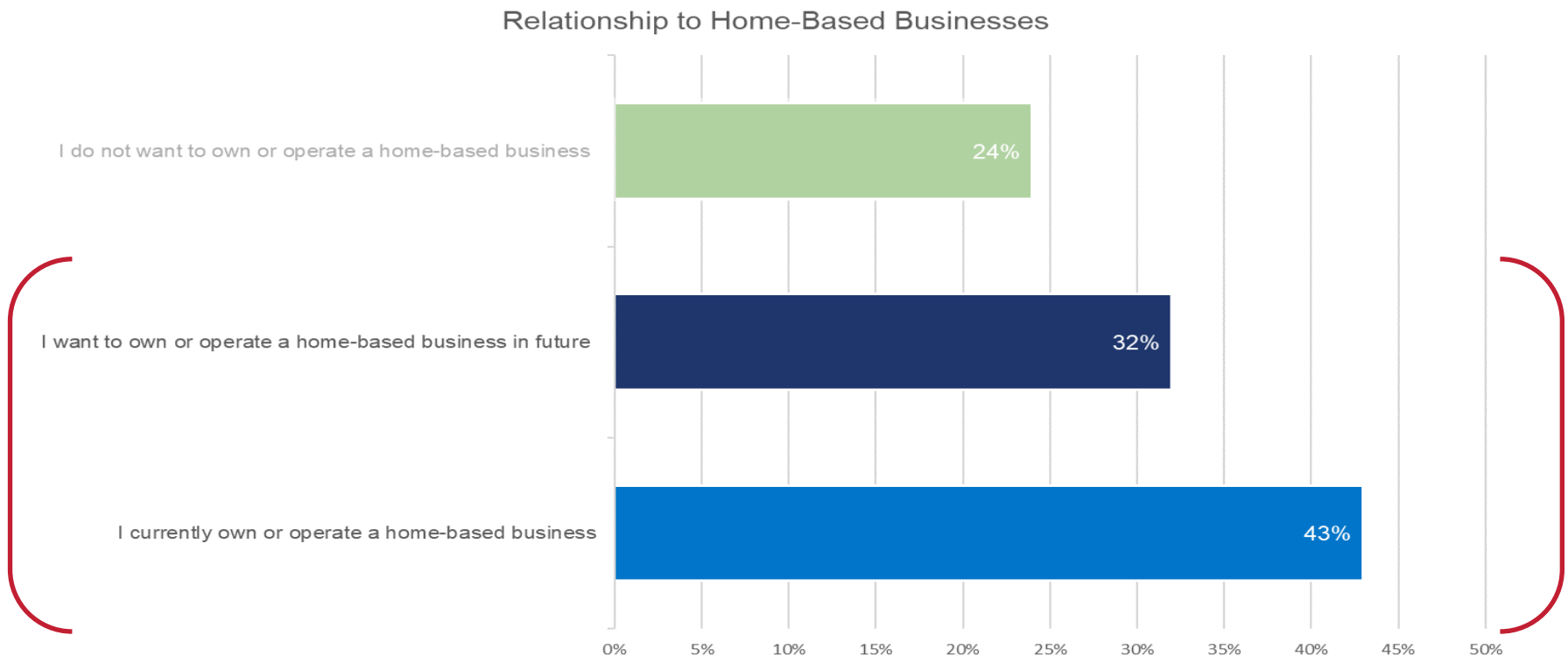


All respondents = 512



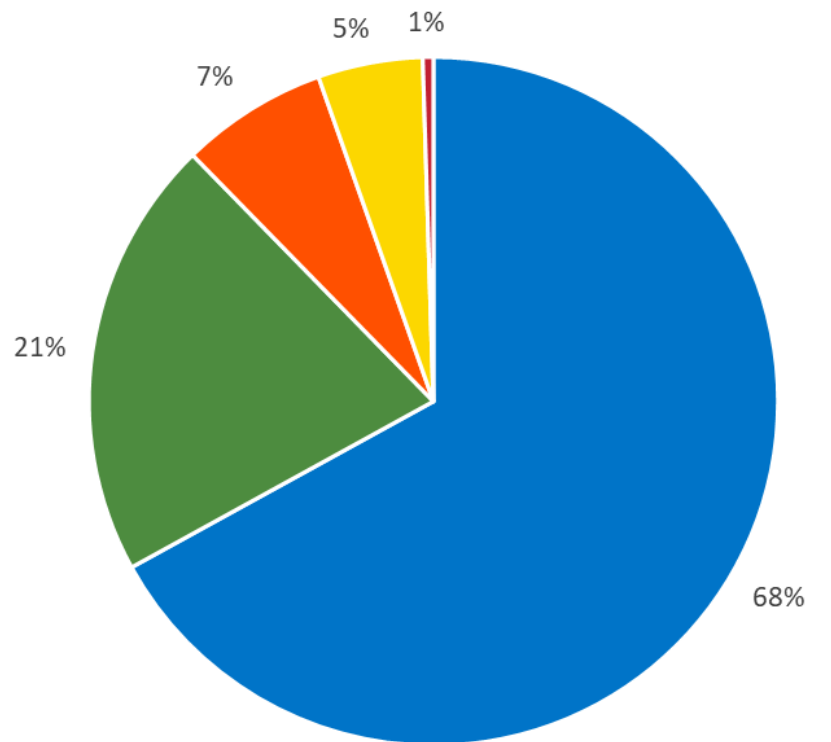
# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

The results shown in the following section focus on respondents who indicated they were either already operating a home-based business or are interested in operating one in future. Because engagement completed as part of the Vancouver Plan process already indicated there was strong support to increase opportunities for people to work in residential areas, the home-based business modernization survey focused on input to help shape the refinement of regulations and the creation of implementation resources. Participants who either operate a home-based business or would be interested in operating one in future were selected for further analysis to gain specific insight into what regulations may or may not be right for home-based businesses modernization.



# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

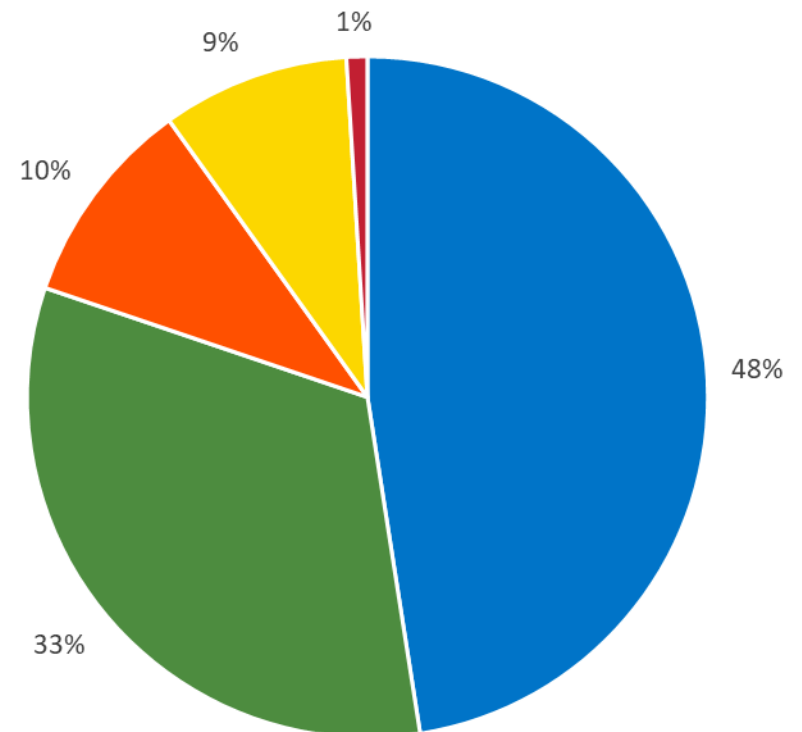
Generally, do you agree or disagree with the proposed change allowing customers and employees on the premises?



■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Somewhat Disagree  
■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Respondents = 382

Generally, do you agree or disagree with the rules to maintain residential character and limit impact to neighbours?



■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Somewhat Disagree  
■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Respondents = 384

# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

....about the proposed change to allow customers and employees on the premises

Comments referencing...	# of responses
...support for the proposed changes as they help reduce costs for small businesses	165
...the proposed customer group size maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	4
...the proposed customer-by-appointment requirement is too restrictive	3
...the proposed “made-on-site” requirement for the sale of goods is too restrictive and hard to understand	9
...the proposed employee maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	2
...the proposed customer visitation hours (8 am to 9 pm) are too permissive, 9 pm is too late to have customers visiting	17
...concern regarding allowing the sale of goods	2
...concern regarding allowing customers	4
...concern regarding allowing non-resident employees	2
...concern that proposed changes would lead to increased traffic and decrease parking availability in neighbourhoods	20
...concern that proposed changes would decrease safety and security	3
...concern that proposed changes would result in increased noise impacts in neighbourhoods	4
...concern that proposed changes would generally negatively impact neighbours	20
...concern that proposed changes would be too difficult to enforce	4
...preference to see different rules for different types of businesses (i.e. business with or without customers)	2
...preference to see different rules for different dwelling types, especially apartments/multi-family dwellings	18
...preference to retain existing home-based business regulations and not make any changes	4

# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

....about the proposed change to allow customers and employees on the premises

Businesses are much more varied in type and operations. More flexibility is needed to support a diverse range of business types.

All of the changes greatly benefit and promote small independent businesses that may not be able to operate profitably if they had to rent commercial premises, with minimal disruption to neighbours.

I somewhat agree but I think the number of hours employees or customers can be on-site is unnecessarily long. I think that 9 am - 5 pm or 6 pm would be more appropriate. As a renter I like being familiar with who is coming and going in the building, and I worry about a lack of accountability for building security at night.

I am a massage therapist and my colleagues all over the province work from home and I am currently not allowed to. I desperately want this.

In general, these changes make some sense to me, however, I can see that in some circumstances a home-based business might become a significant nuisance to the neighbours. If a steady stream of customers arrives all day long, this could create parking problems, noise problems, etc. for the neighbourhood.

I think the proposals will lead to much better uses of space.

I don't know if there is an easy way to do this, but I would prefer regulation that allows even more employees and customers as long as there is no major disruption to the neighborhood.

Generally, the proposed change to allow customers and employees, within certain limits (i.e. by appointment), was well received. Respondents emphasized the need to create a balance between allowing more flexibility for home-based businesses while maintaining neighbourhood character and limiting potential impacts.

# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

....about the rules to maintain residential character and limit impacts to neighbours

Comments referencing...	# of responses
...supporting proposed changes as they balance business and residential needs	45
...the proposed total floor area maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	32
...the proposed customer group size maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	31
...the rules to maintain residential character are too restrictive	4
...the proposed changes are too restrictive and should be more flexible	19
...the proposed sign maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	9
...certain business types should not be excluded, all business types should be allowed as long as there is no impacts	8
...the rules not allowing outdoor storage are too restrictive, outdoor spaces should be available	6
...the restrictions to protect residential neighbourhood character are important	6
...the restrictions limiting impact (noise, odour, vibrations, etc.) on neighbouring dwellings are important	6
...the proposed restrictions on certain types of business would be beneficial	7
...the proposed customer group size is too large	6
...concern that proposed changes would result in increased noise impacts in neighbourhoods	8
...concern that proposed changes would lead to increased traffic and decrease parking availability in neighbourhoods	5
...concern that proposed changes would generally negatively impact neighbours	18
...concern that proposed changes would be too difficult to enforce	9
...preference to see different rules for different dwelling types, especially apartments/multi-family dwellings	4

# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

....about the rules to maintain residential character and limit impacts to neighbours

It's important that home-based businesses don't overly commercialize residential spaces and these rules will help with that.

Agree with the changes but don't think it goes far enough - make it clear that larger groups of customers or employees are acceptable as long as there is no nuisance from noise

The home-based business should be able to use as much of the dwelling as they want as long as it's not disruptive to neighbours nor the character of the neighbourhood

Good mitigation strategies, strikes a nice balance.

I think trying to be respectful to neighbours is a good thing here, but I don't consider "maintaining the residential character" of a neighbourhood to be a very important goal.

I think the limits to customer group size is too restrictive.

People have to rely on some level of privacy in their home - having a home-based business with clientele and employees coming in and out of the building and hallways on your floor would negatively impact the expectation of privacy and security.

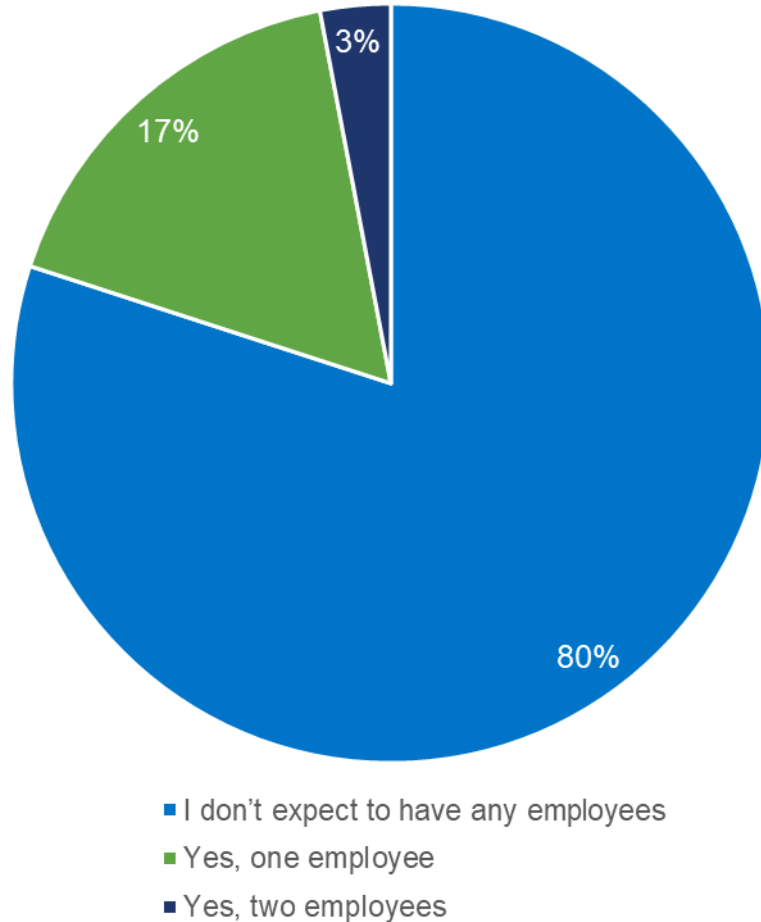
I broadly agree with the direction, but find it too restrictive. I support larger signs, increased space allowance above 500 sf, and larger class sizes for academic/art/dance/music lessons.

I believe home based business should be low profile to maintain the residential aspect of the street it's located on.

Staff received a broader range of feedback regarding keeping existing rules around residential character (i.e. sign limitations) and introduction of new rules to reduce potential impacts on neighbours (i.e. customer group size maximums). Many of the comments noted that the residential character and limiting impacts rules were too restrictive, while others felt these rules were too permissive.

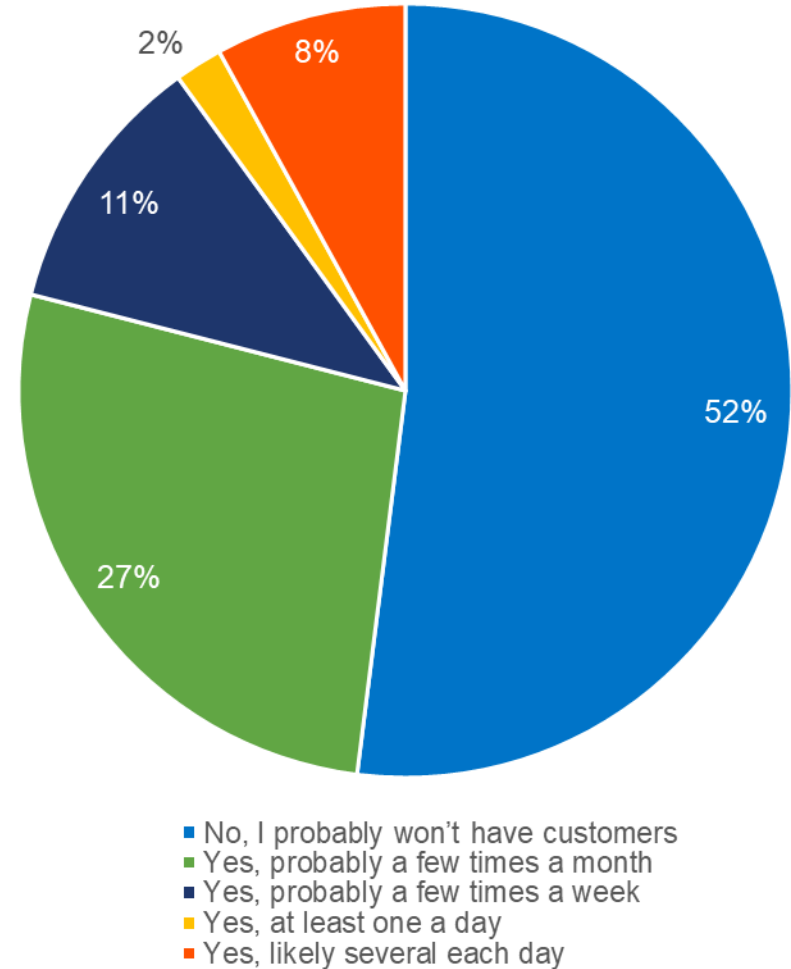
# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

If the proposed changes happen, do you expect to have employees in your home?



All respondents = 382

If the proposed changes happen, do you expect to have customers in your home?

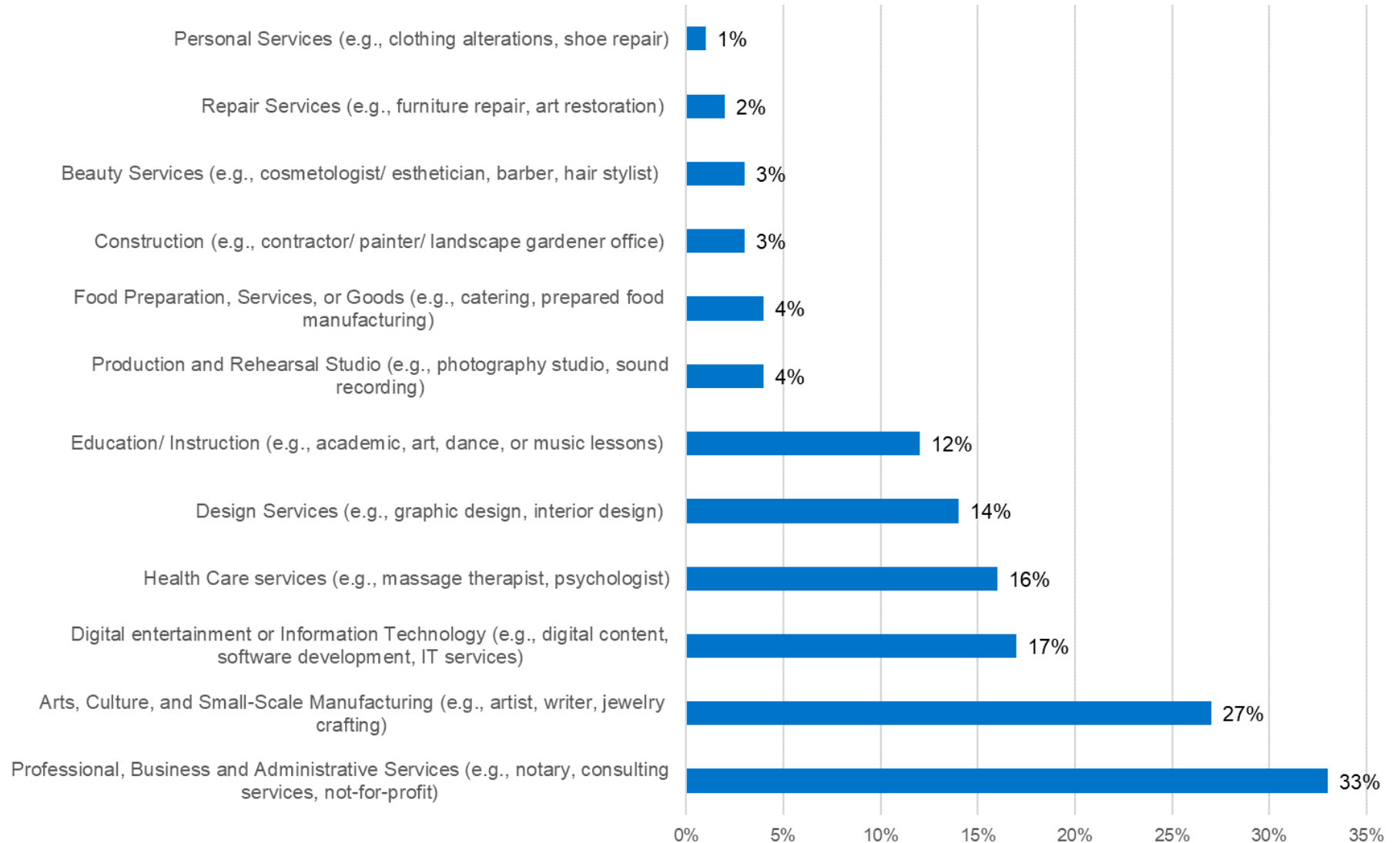


All respondents = 382



# What We Heard—Focused Analysis

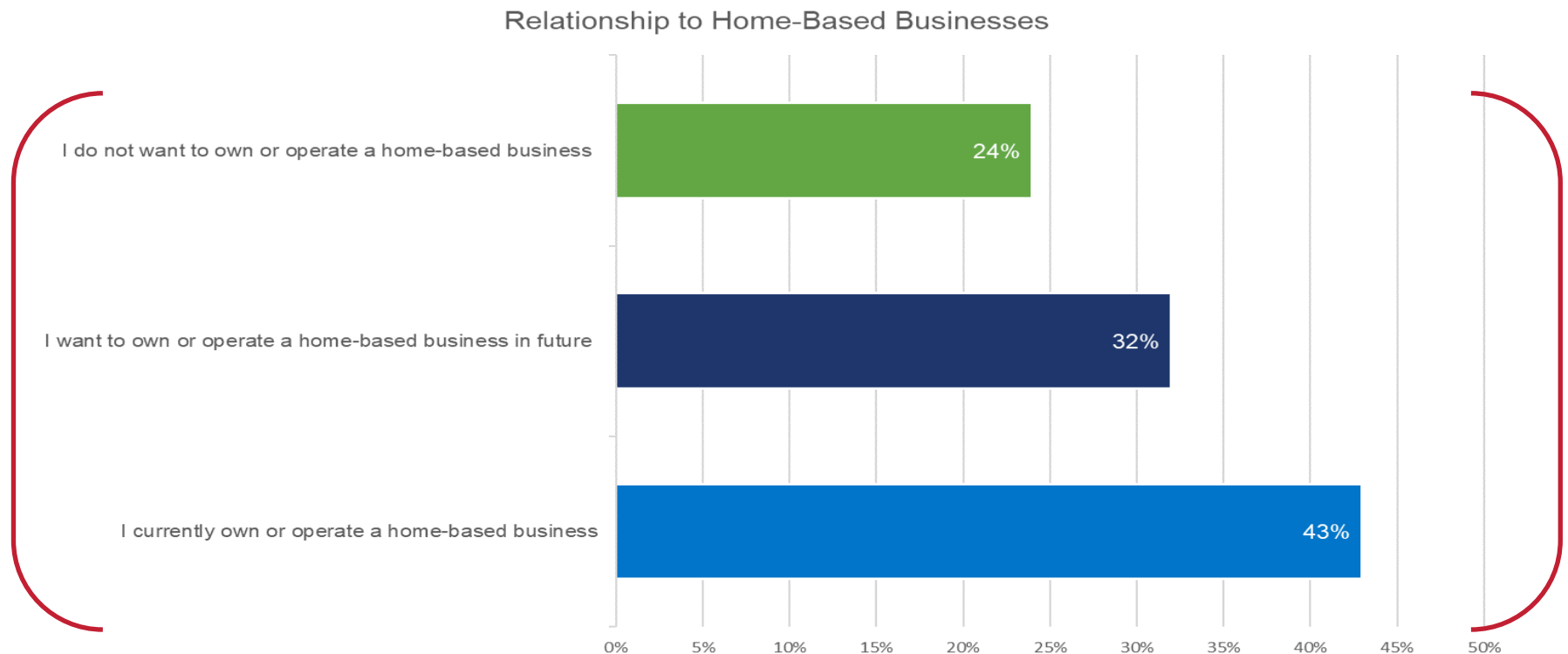
What kind of home-based business do you have or are thinking about starting?



All respondents = 383

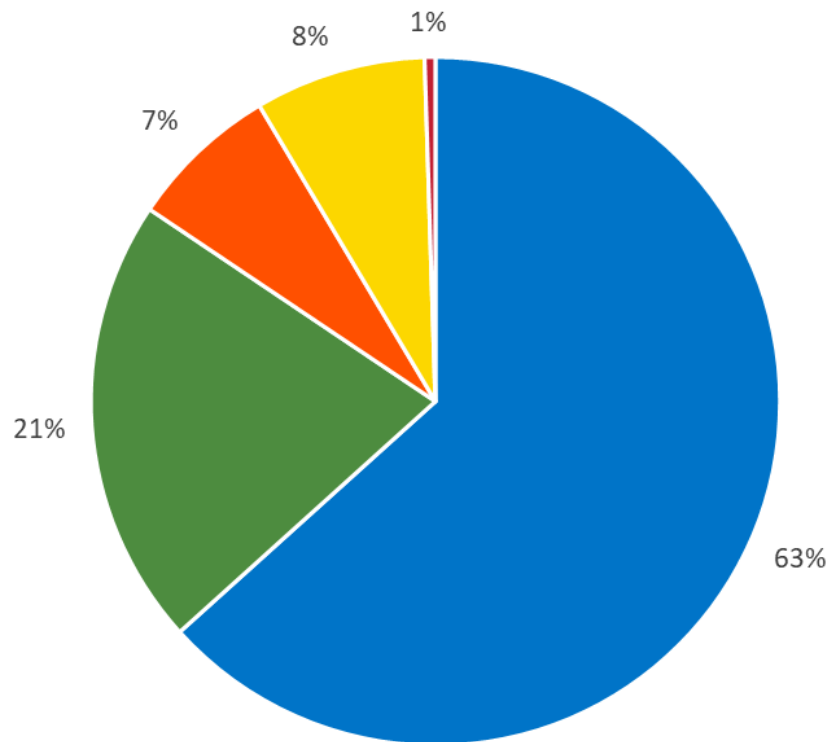
# What We Heard—All Respondents

The following section outlines the results from all respondents that participated in the home-based business modernization survey. It is noted that the survey was “branched”, and only respondents who indicated they either already operated, or were interested in operating, a home-based business were asked additional questions about business activities. These additional questions included how many employees or customers the home-based business expected to have as well as which industry or sector the home-based business would fall under (See “What We Heard—Focused Analysis”). The additional questions were not asked to respondents who indicated they were not interested in operating a home-based business, and therefore are not included in the following section.



# What We Heard—All Respondents

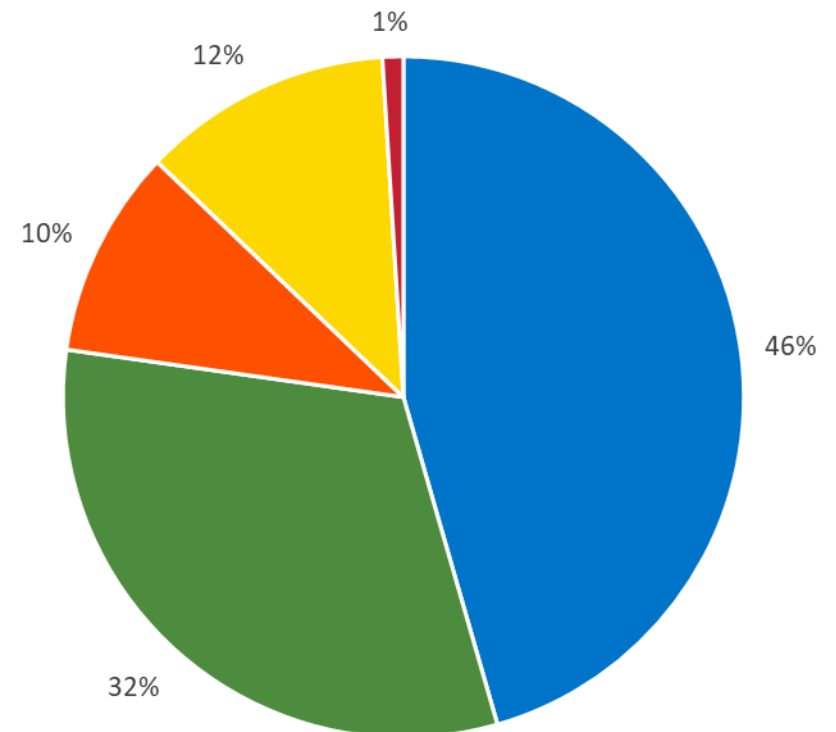
Generally, do you agree or disagree with the proposed change allowing customers and employees on the premises?



■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Somewhat Disagree  
■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Respondents = 513

Generally, do you agree or disagree with the rules to maintain residential character and limit impact to neighbours?



■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Somewhat Disagree  
■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Respondents = 513

# What We Heard—All Respondents

....about the proposed change to allow customers and employees on the premises

Comments referencing...	# of responses
...support for the proposed changes as they help reduce costs for small businesses	199
...the proposed customer group size maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	6
...the proposed customer-by-appointment requirement is too restrictive	9
...the proposed “made-on-site” requirement for the sale of goods is too restrictive and hard to understand	11
...the proposed employee maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	5
...the proposed customer visitation hours (8 am to 9 pm) are too permissive, 9 pm is too late to have customers visiting	24
...concern regarding allowing the sale of goods	6
...concern regarding allowing customers	16
...concern regarding allowing non-resident employees	7
...concern that proposed changes would lead to increased traffic and decrease parking availability in neighbourhoods	32
...concern that proposed changes would decrease safety and security	8
...concern that proposed changes would result in increased noise impacts in neighbourhoods	9
...concern that proposed changes would generally negatively impact neighbours	32
...concern that proposed changes would be too difficult to enforce	5
...preference to see different rules for different types of businesses (i.e. business with or without customers)	3
...preference to see different rules for different dwelling types, especially apartments/multi-family dwellings	18
...preference to retain existing home-based business regulations and not make any changes	7

# What We Heard—All Respondents

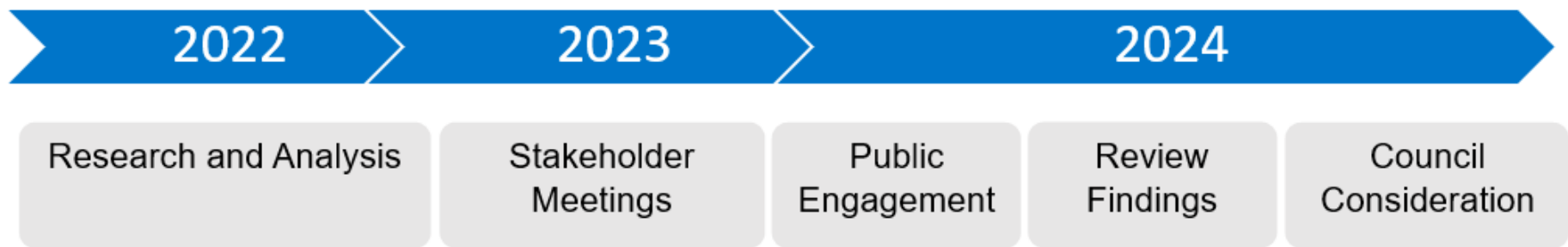
....about the rules to maintain residential character and limit impacts to neighbours

Comments referencing...	# of responses
...supporting proposed changes as they balance business and residential needs	47
...the proposed total floor area maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	38
...the proposed customer group size maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	42
...the rules to maintain residential character are too restrictive	6
...the proposed changes are too restrictive and should be more flexible	20
...the proposed sign maximum is too restrictive, it should be larger or have no limit	21
...certain business types should not be excluded, all business types should be allowed as long as there is no impacts	12
...the rules not allowing outdoor storage are too restrictive, outdoor spaces should be available	11
...the restrictions to protect residential neighbourhood character are important	8
...the restrictions limiting impact (noise, odour, vibrations, etc.) on neighbouring dwellings are important	18
...the proposed restrictions on certain types of business would be beneficial	10
...the proposed customer group size is too large	6
...concern that proposed changes would result in increased noise impacts in neighbourhoods	9
...concern that proposed changes would lead to increased traffic and decrease parking availability in neighbourhoods	15
...concern that proposed changes would generally negatively impact neighbours	27
...concern that proposed changes would be too difficult to enforce	14
...preference to see different rules for different dwelling types, especially apartments/multi-family dwellings	12



# Next Steps

Engagement participants provided a range of feedback on the proposed home-based business regulations. The feedback has informed regulation amendments such as removing the requirement that only items made within the dwelling unit can be sold and reducing the hours which customers can visit.

The project team will be bringing the proposed home-based business regulations to Vancouver City Council for consideration in summer/fall 2024.



## Stay connected to the project!

- Visit the project webpage [shapeyourcity.ca/home-based-businesses](https://shapeyourcity.ca/home-based-businesses)
- Follow us on our socials @cityofvancouver  @CityofVancouver 
- Further questions? Email [homebusiness@vancouver.ca](mailto:homebusiness@vancouver.ca)