

Housing & Neighbourhood Character Preliminary Discussion Paper

Survey Result Summary

May – July 2022

Housing & Neighbourhood Character Review - Project Overview

Banyule's **Community Vision 2041** places a strong emphasis on meeting not just our current needs, but those of our emerging communities. It includes a desire to **provide more diverse, affordable and sustainable housing** to 'meet the mixed needs of our diverse community'. Liveability and enhancing our local character are also integral objectives.

Council adopted the current Banyule Housing Strategy in 2009 to manage the City's population and housing growth to 2030. The Neighbourhood Character Strategy was prepared in 2012 to ensure this housing growth was balanced with the protection of the valued character of Banyule's neighbourhoods. Since that time, metropolitan Melbourne has seen significant changes to population growth and projections, while Banyule will see major transport projects, such as North East link, bring greater regional accessibility to our doorstep.

As Banyule continues to attract more residents, its existing residents choose to age in place and new household needs begin to emerge, it is time for Council to revisit that work and start planning for the city's changing housing needs. This means building suitable homes as well as communities. Affordability, housing choice, rental housing, social connectivity and sustainability are important considerations, and we need to revisit how we **balance the need for housing growth and diversity, whilst respecting neighbourhood character** and our suburbs' identities

The Housing and Neighbourhood Character Review is a significant piece of strategic work that will be progressed over a number of years. It will include extensive **community consultation at each stage** that will ensure all sectors of our community are involved.



Preliminary Discussion Paper Survey

The [Housing & Neighbourhood Character Preliminary Discussion Paper](#) is background work to start the conversation and consider how the housing and policy landscape has changed since 2009. It's important that together with the community, we consider whether our housing aims are being achieved, and how we can adapt our thinking and approach to our current needs.

The Discussion Paper Survey was available on Council's engagement website Shaping Banyule from 13 May – 15 July 2022. The Housing and Neighbourhood Character Shaping Banyule page received 1,819 visits from 1,618 visitors during this time and the Preliminary Discussion Paper was downloaded 246 times.

The survey included four questions on neighbourhood character and eight on housing. A total of 365 surveys were completed online via Shaping Banyule and 5 email submissions were received. As the email submissions do not necessarily correspond with the survey questions, they are discussed separately on page 20.

Community insights on this Preliminary Discussion Paper will help inform the focus of a fully detailed Housing Discussion Paper.

Overview of Key Themes

Survey comments for each question were manually coded into one or more recurring themes. A summary of the key themes is provided below.

Neighbourhood Character

It is noted that respondents' comments on questions of neighbourhood character encompass all aspects of their neighbourhood including the people who live there and access to services/facilities. This is a broader understanding than the planning scheme where neighbourhood character is generally considered. Future consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Character Strategy will need to take this into consideration.

Respondents told us the following:

- Existing neighbourhood character is valued
- Concern that new development does not respect existing character
- Trees, gardens and the habitat they provide are highly valued
- Access to parks, playgrounds and open space is highly valued
- Concerns with overdevelopment, excessive site coverage, too many dwellings on a block
- Concern with removal of vegetation and lack of new plantings
- Concerns with increased traffic and lack of adequate off-street parking
- Some support for higher density development in activity centres close to public transport and shops
- Access to facilities and services such as shops, public transport, sporting facilities, cafes, medical services and libraries are important
- Need to retain older period homes
- Low density housing, detached homes and having space around a house are valued
- Housing should be of good quality design and materials
- Infrastructure needs to keep pace with housing growth
- Need for a variety of housing that suits different needs including accessible housing¹, social housing and shared housing

Housing

Respondents told us the following:

- Key issues are lack of affordability, lack of housing choice and poor-quality design, build and amenity
- Housing choice in the future is felt to be compromised by affordability and increasing high density
- Slightly over half of respondents felt that Banyule's housing provides sufficient choice and would meet their housing needs 5-15 years in the future
- Most respondents who would move to apartment or townhouse would do so to downsize
- Those who wouldn't move to an apartment or townhouse often cited wanting a garden/outdoor space/room for pets or because the dwellings are too small or wouldn't suit family needs
- Most respondents feel it is very important to have housing choices that will allow people to live in the area they like, close to family and friends
- Good examples of housing include: 1-2 storey houses, single dwellings, house with gardens/ backyards/ landscaping, townhouses, villas, dual occupancies, housing that is environmentally sustainable, well designed and has adequate parking
- Poor examples of housing include: multi-unit, multi-storey, crowded developments, poor design, lack of vegetation/garden/outdoor space, overly large dwellings, dwellings built to boundaries

¹ Accessible to residents living with a disability or with restricted mobility.

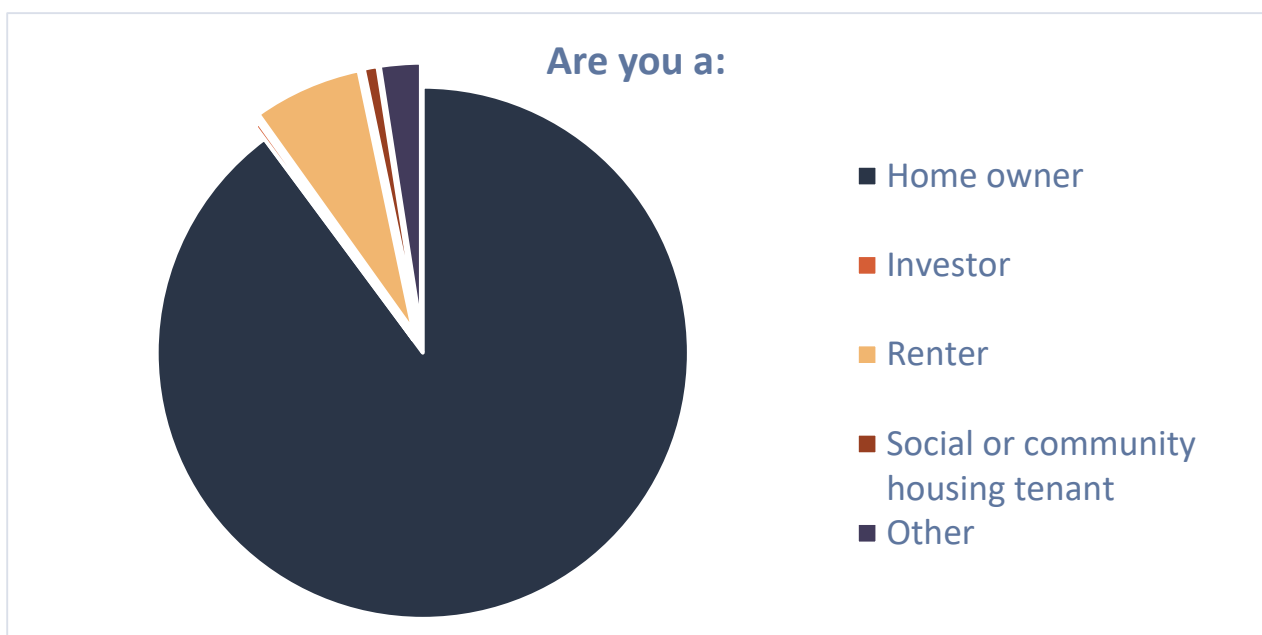
Participation

The survey on Shaping Banyule was completed by 365 people. The first two questions related to housing tenure and suburb. Other demographic information such as age, gender etc. was not collected for this survey.

Q.1 Housing Tenure

Skipped: 0 - Answered: 365 (100%)

Homeowners were the dominant group that responded to the survey. In comparison to Banyule's overall population homeowners are overrepresented in the survey at 90% compared with 72% of households in Banyule that are purchasing or fully own their home. Renters are under-represented in the survey at 6.6% compared to 21.5% who are renting privately, and 3.6% are in social housing. Future consultation with the project will seek to address this imbalance.



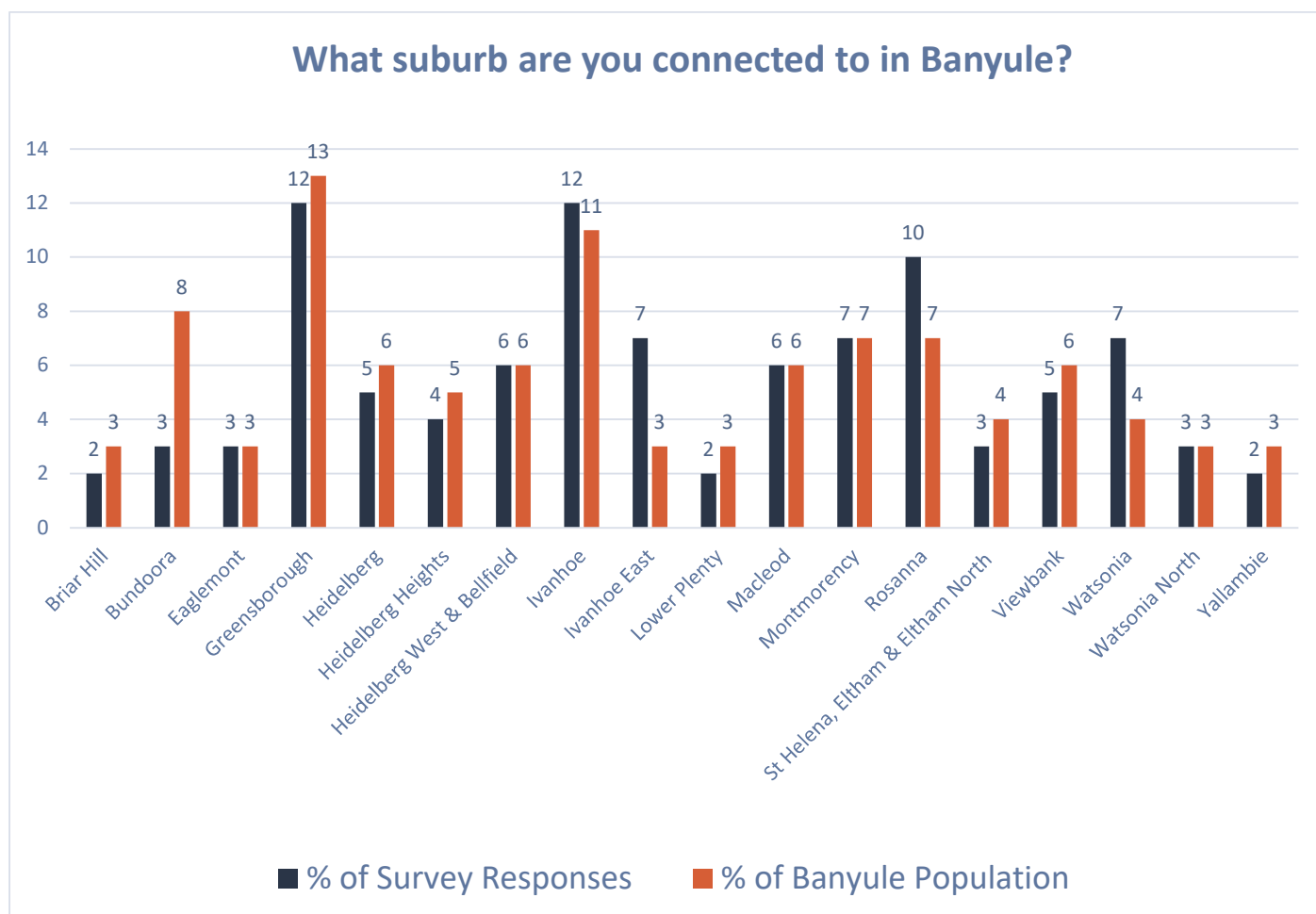
Housing Tenure	Survey responses	Banyule population ²
Homeowner	89.9%	72%
Investor	0.3%	n/a
Renter	6.6%	22.5%
Social or community housing tenant	0.8%	3.6%
Other (& not stated)	2.5%	4.7%

² City of Banyule, housing tenure, 2021 <https://profile.id.com.au/banyule/tenure>

Q.2 Suburb

Skipped: 36 - Answered: 329 (90.1%)

The question “**What suburb are you connected to in Banyule?**” was answered by 329 people. The question was optional and added to the survey after the first few surveys were received. The spread of responses closely matches the representative population of suburbs within Banyule, with only Bundoora under-represented and Ivanhoe East, Rosanna and Watsonia moderately over-represented in the survey responses³.



³ Percentage of Banyule population by suburb based on ABS 2021 Census data.

Q.3a How would you rate the neighbourhood character in your area and the way new developments fit in?

Skipped: 37 - Answered: 328 (89.9%)

Some concerns were expressed regarding the format of this question as it effectively asks two questions yet allows for only one rating. The comments provided under “Why did you choose this rating?” allow for more detailed and meaningful feedback to the question.

The most popular ratings were mid-range between poor and excellent or slightly above with 5-7 the highest ratings. A significant number chose poor ratings of 1-3 and a low number of respondents chose excellent at 9 or 10.



Q.3b Why did you choose this rating?

Skipped: 4 - Answered: 361 (98.9%)

Comments varied greatly in length and complexity. The two dominant themes of ‘valuing existing character’ and ‘new development does not respect existing character’ are closely related. For example:

“It used to be excellent. The ball is moving left towards poor due to inappropriate development.”

Other common comments related to overdevelopment, parking/traffic concerns and the loss of vegetation. For example:

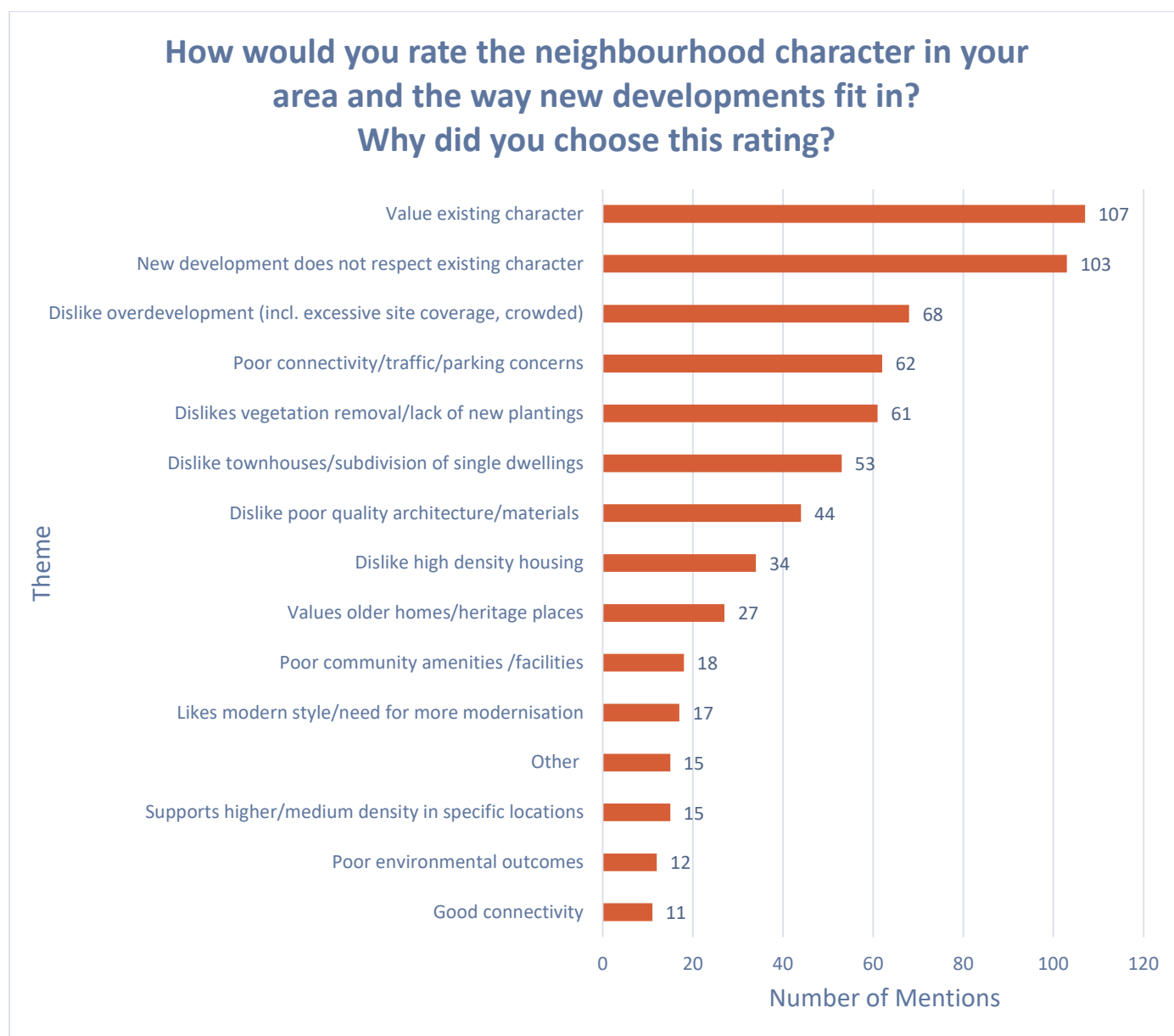
Far too many multiple dwelling units being built on small blocks. They are not in keeping with single dwelling character of area ... Area has become too congested and way too many cars parked on the roads.”

There was also support for quality new development that added to the amenity of the area and which suited the streetscape. For example:

“I think the new developments as a whole are becoming better quality. I prefer new houses and for people to maintain a tree filled garden.”

The ‘other’ theme was used for comments that were not applicable to the question or if they didn’t fit with the common themes identified.

A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q.4 What is it about your local area that is important to you and the overall character, amenity and feel of your neighbourhood?

Skipped: 5 - Answered: 360 (98.6%)

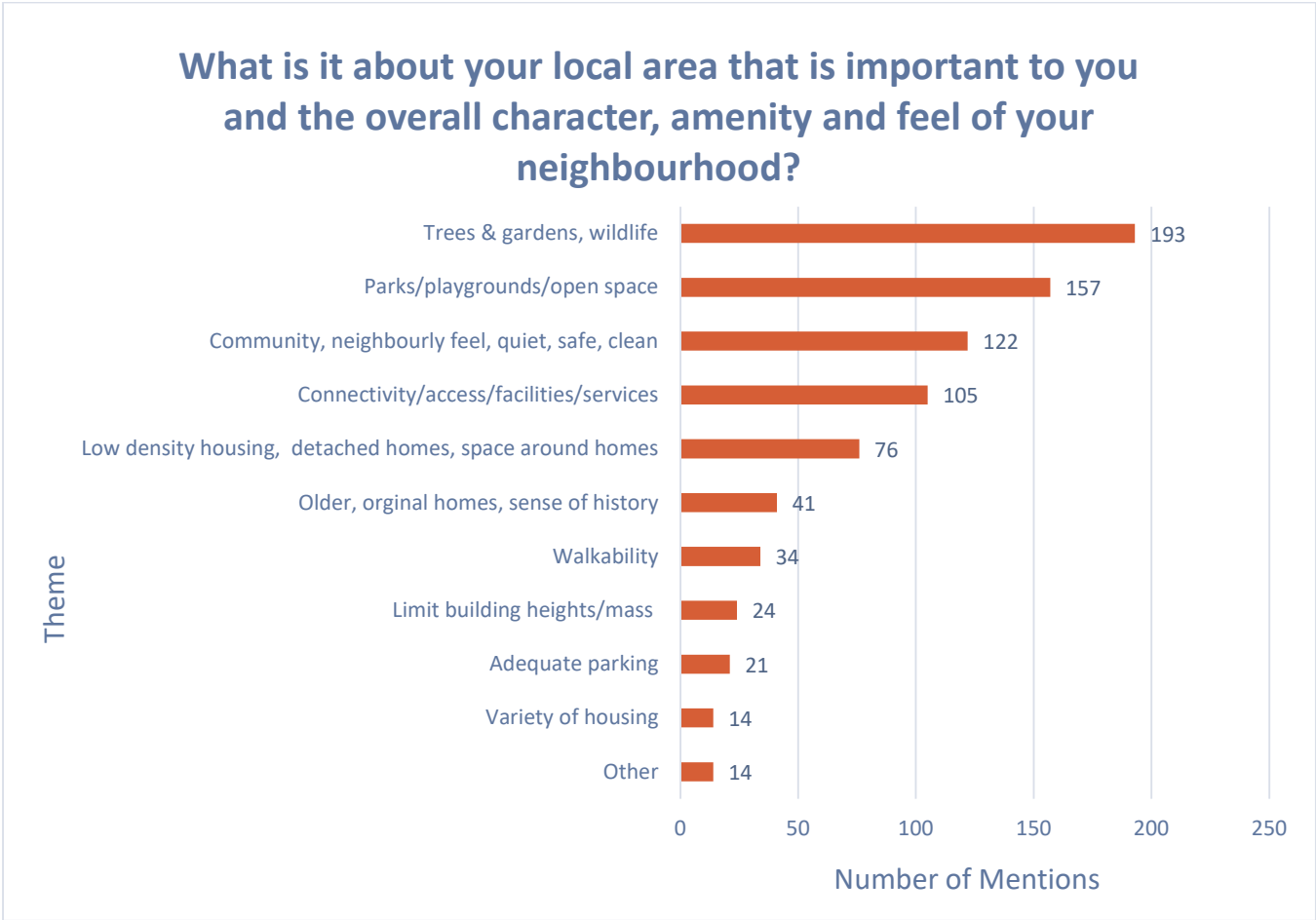
Comments on trees, gardens, parks and open space were the most popular responses, followed by community and neighbourly feel. Access to services and facilities such as public transport, shops and cafes also rated highly. Examples include:

Walkability, good public transport, variety of housing styles. A very green neighbourhood with lots of trees on properties & council land along the streets.

The low density and abundance of green areas is very important

The architectural heritage, the leafy streets and gardens, community feel, ease of access to amenities

A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q.5 What are some examples of neighbourhood character you would like to see more of in Banyule?

Skipped: 24 - Answered: 341 (93.4%)

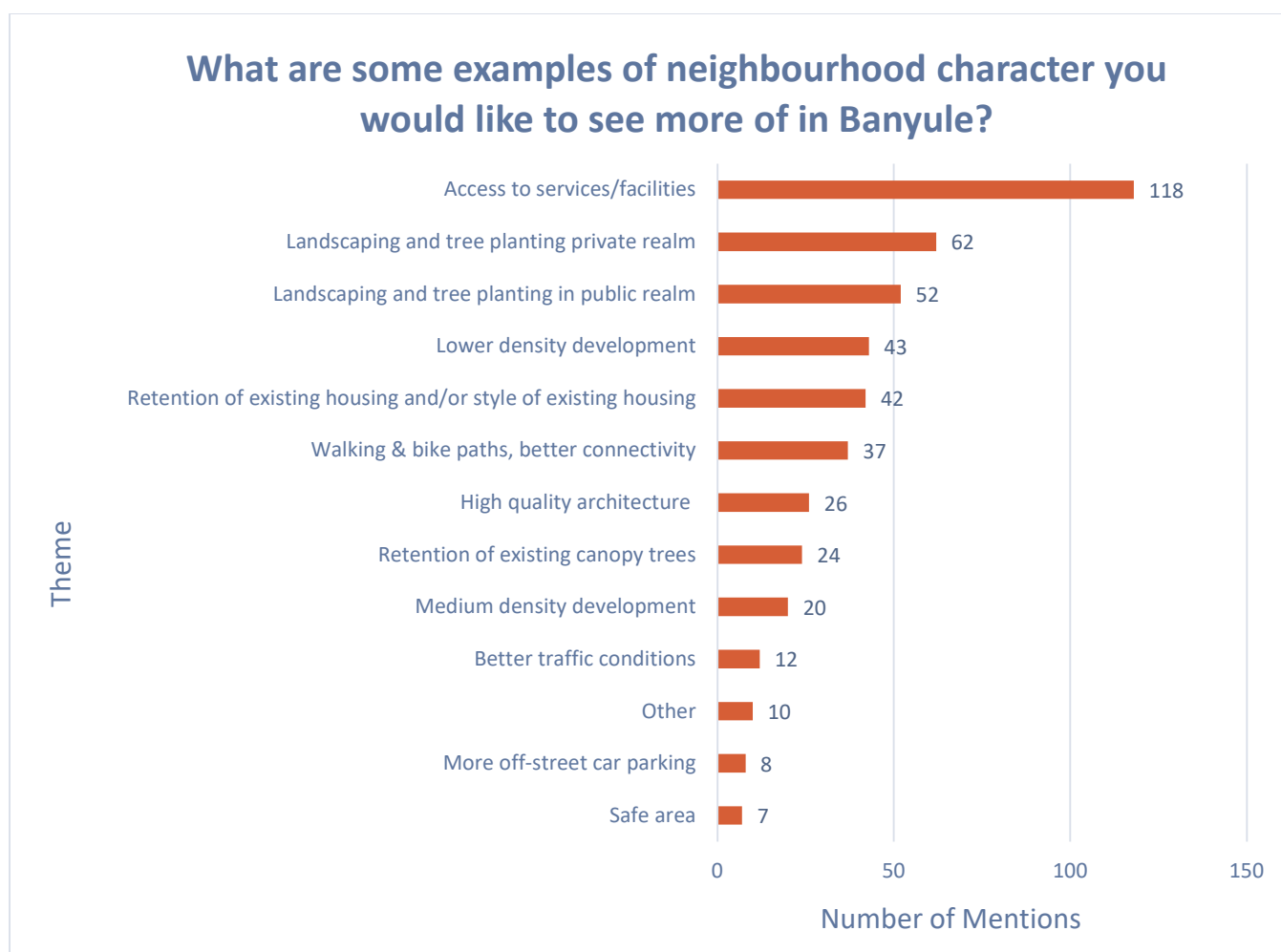
The most common response was access to local services and facilities such as parks, playgrounds, shops, cafes, public transport, libraries etc. Landscaping and tree planting on private properties and on public land (e.g. street trees), were frequently mentioned. Examples include:

More small, local shops, events in parklands, more amenities in parklands

More gardens, more parks, more open space. Encouraging our birdlife, respecting our residents and existing housing stock and not knocking down homes for a cheap build.

Leafy, spacious, clean, transport easy and walkable

A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q.6 What is it about your local area that is important to you when it comes to housing change?

Skipped: 10 - Answered: 355 (97.3%)

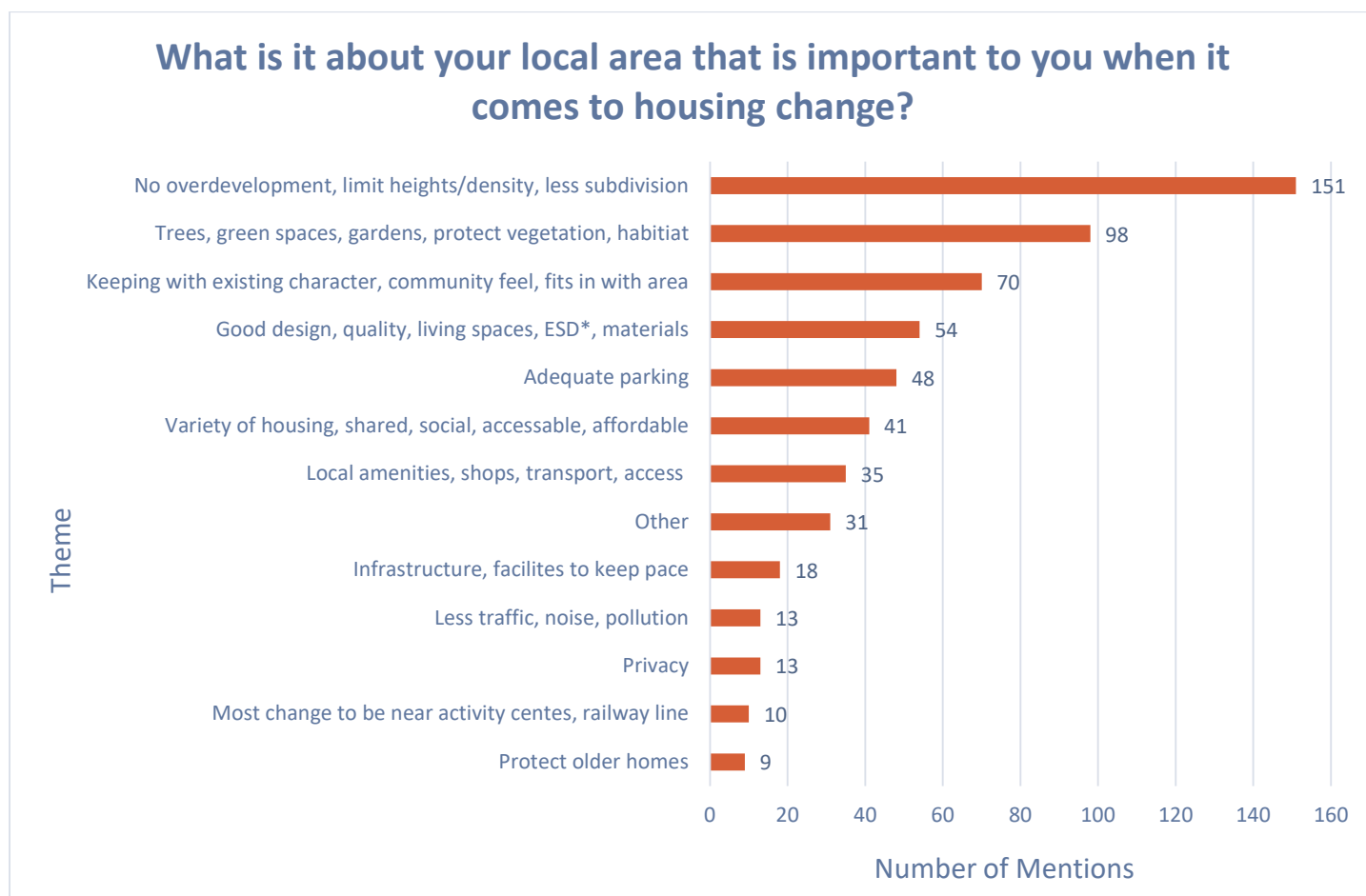
The most common theme was concern about overdevelopment. This included limiting heights and density, areas not being too built up, less subdivision and a preference for single storey dwellings. The importance of trees, greens spaces, gardens and the need to protect vegetation was the next common theme. Keeping the existing character of the area, good design, providing adequate parking and a variety of housing were also important. Examples include:

No over developments eg: blocks of apartments, flats.

A variety of housing stock that always respects neighborhood character

Limit high density housing to targeted areas around transport hubs, supported by quality open space

A summary of results is provided in the chart below:

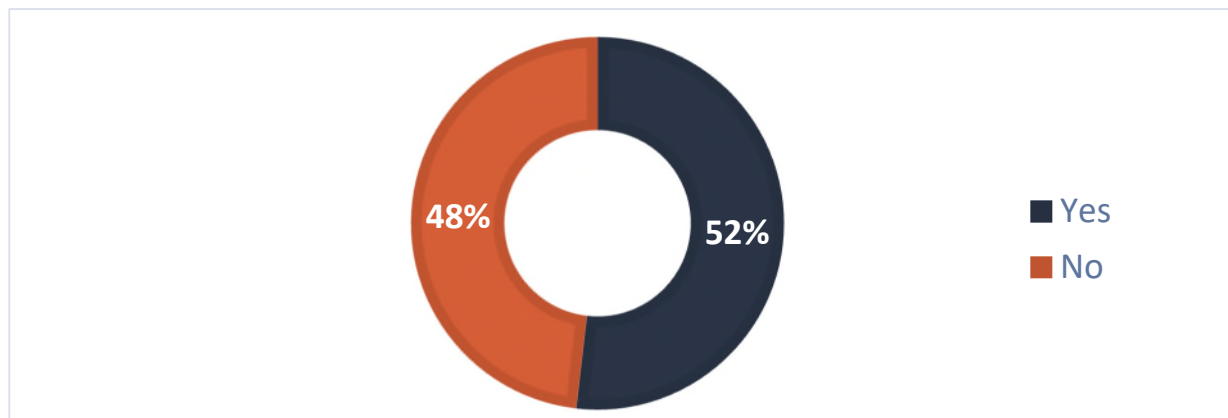


*ESD = Environmentally Sustainable Development

Q.7a Do you feel that Banyule's housing provides sufficient choice, affordability, design quality and options to meet the needs of all of our people?

Skipped: 10 - Answered: 355 (97.3%)

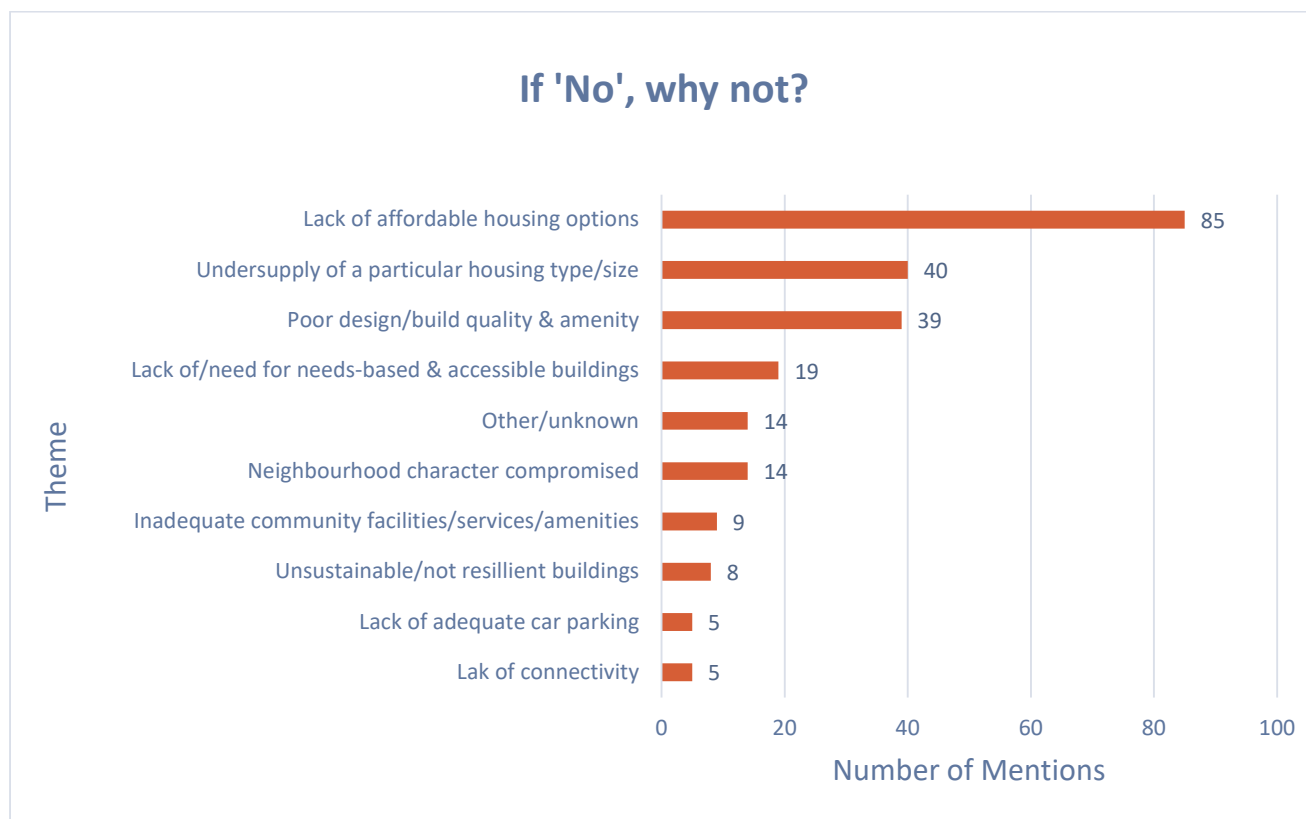
52% of respondents felt that Banyule's housing provides sufficient choice, affordability, design quality and options to meet the needs of the community.



Q.7b If No, why not?

Skipped: 206 - Answered: 159 (43.6%)

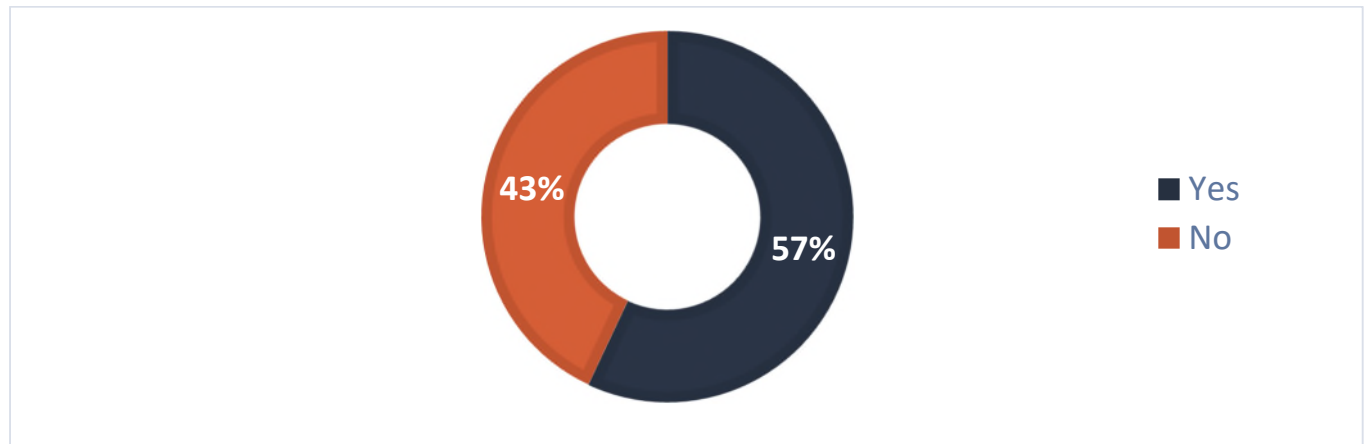
This option was provided to people who responded 'No'. For the 48% who answered no, the most common responses were lack of affordability, lack of housing choice and poor-quality design, build and amenity. A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q.8a If you think forward five, ten or 15 years, do you think your housing needs, or those of your family, will be met in Banyule?

Skipped: 7 - Answered: 358 (98.1%)

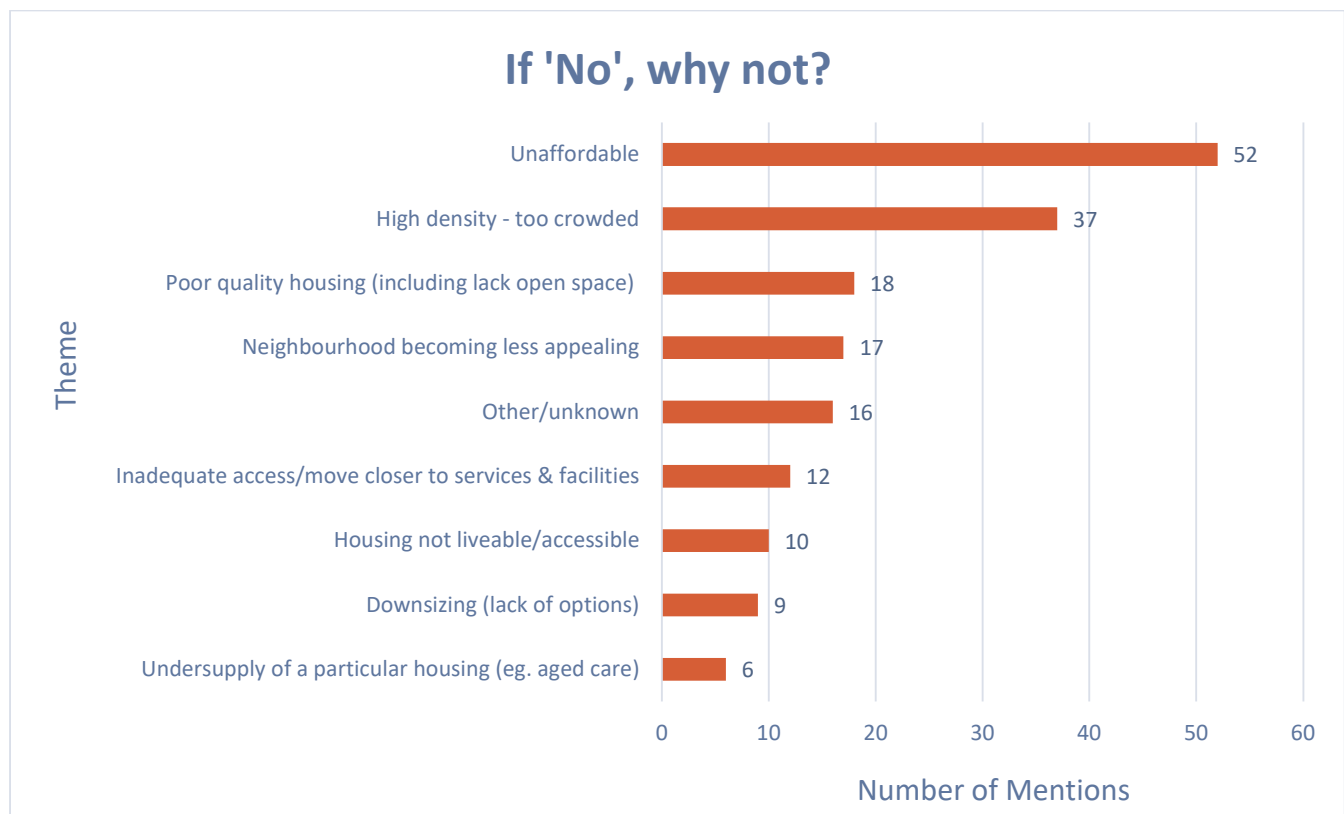
57% of respondents thought their housing needs would be met in Banyule, 5-15 years in the future.



Q.8b If No, why not?

Skipped: 221 - Answered: 144 (39.5%)

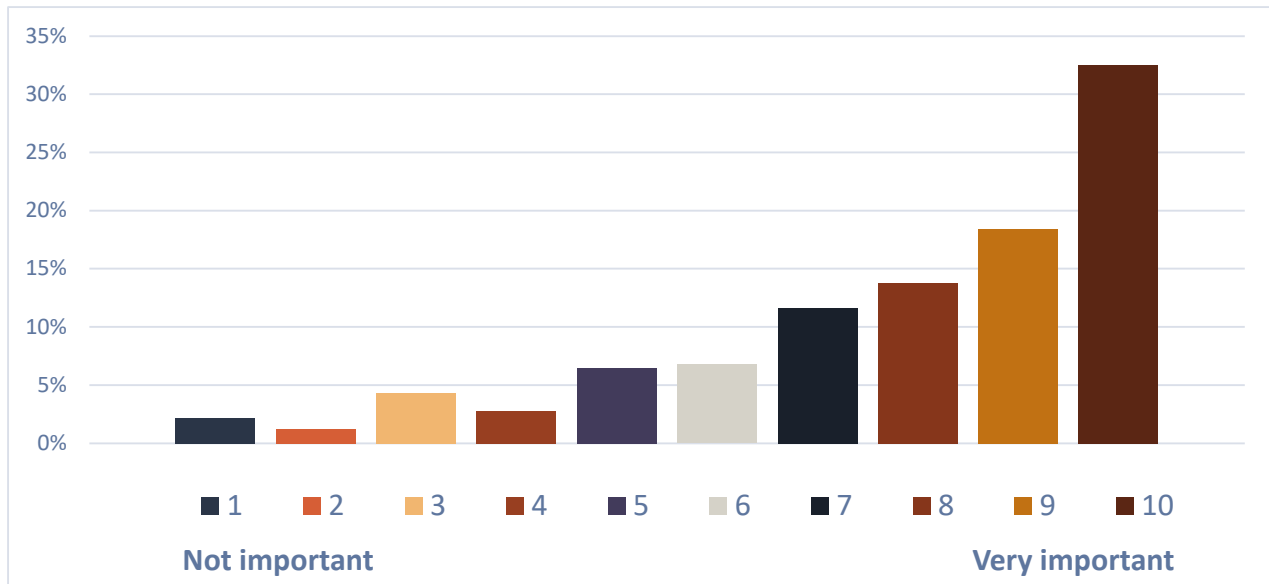
This option was provided to people who responded 'No'. For the 43% who answered 'no' the most common reasons were affordability and housing becoming high density and too crowded. A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q. 9a How important is it for you to have future housing choices (including rental) that will allow you to continue to live in your local area and close to family and friends?

Skipped: 39 - Answered: 326 (89.3%)

A high proportion of respondents feel it is very important to have housing choices that will allow them to live in their local area close to family and friends, as indicated on the chart below.

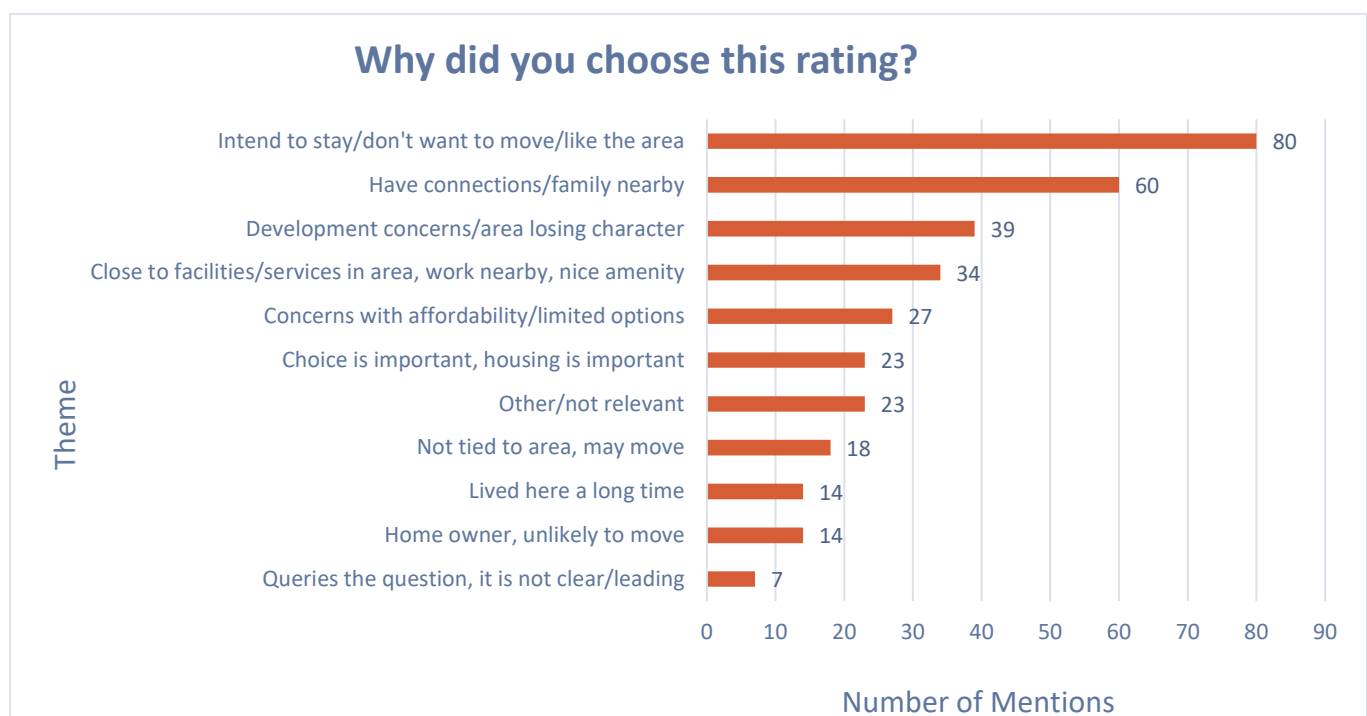


Q.9b Why did you choose this rating?

Skipped: 67 Answered: 298 (81.6%)

The most common response was people want to stay in the area where they have friends, family and community connections. Concerns about development in the area and losing neighbourhood character were frequently mentioned. The importance of being close to facilities/services, workplaces and living in an attractive nice area were also frequent mentions.

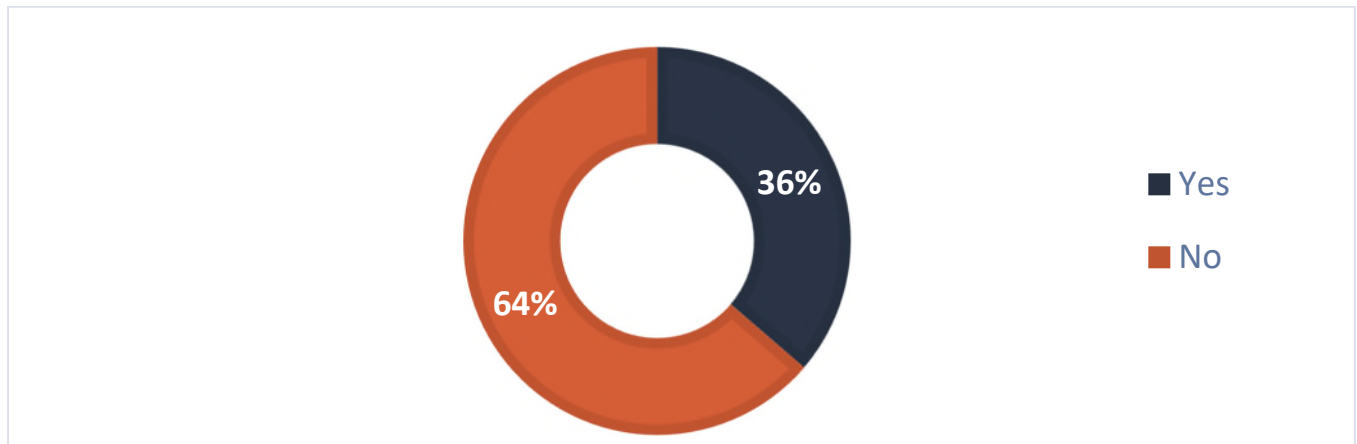
A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q. 10a Would you be open to move from a house into an apartment or townhouse to stay in the area?

Skipped: 7 - Answered: 358 (98.1%)

Most (64%) of respondents indicated they would **not** move to an apartment or townhouse in the future.



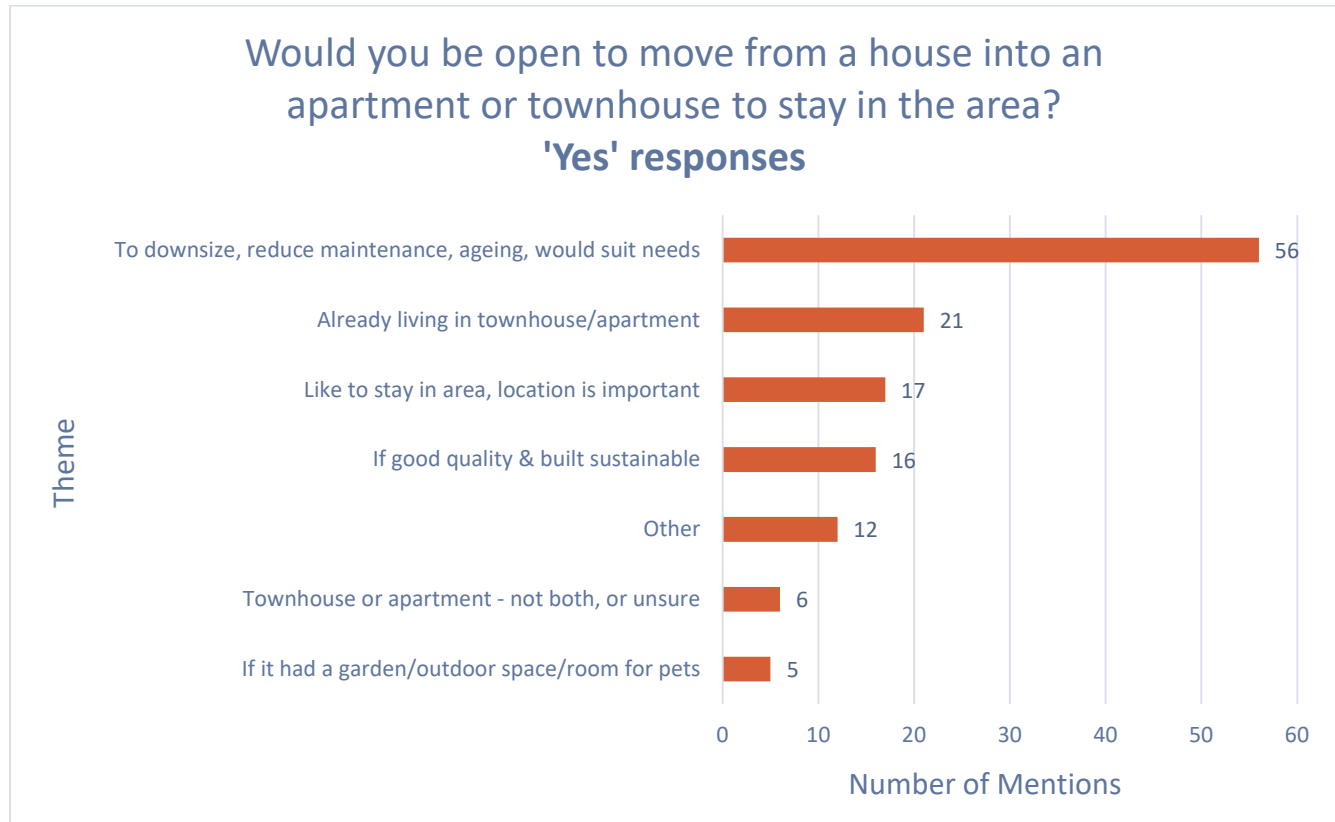
Q.10b Why?

Skipped: 32 - Answered: 333 (91.2%)

The responses to 'Why' were separated into those who responded 'yes' and those who responded 'no'.

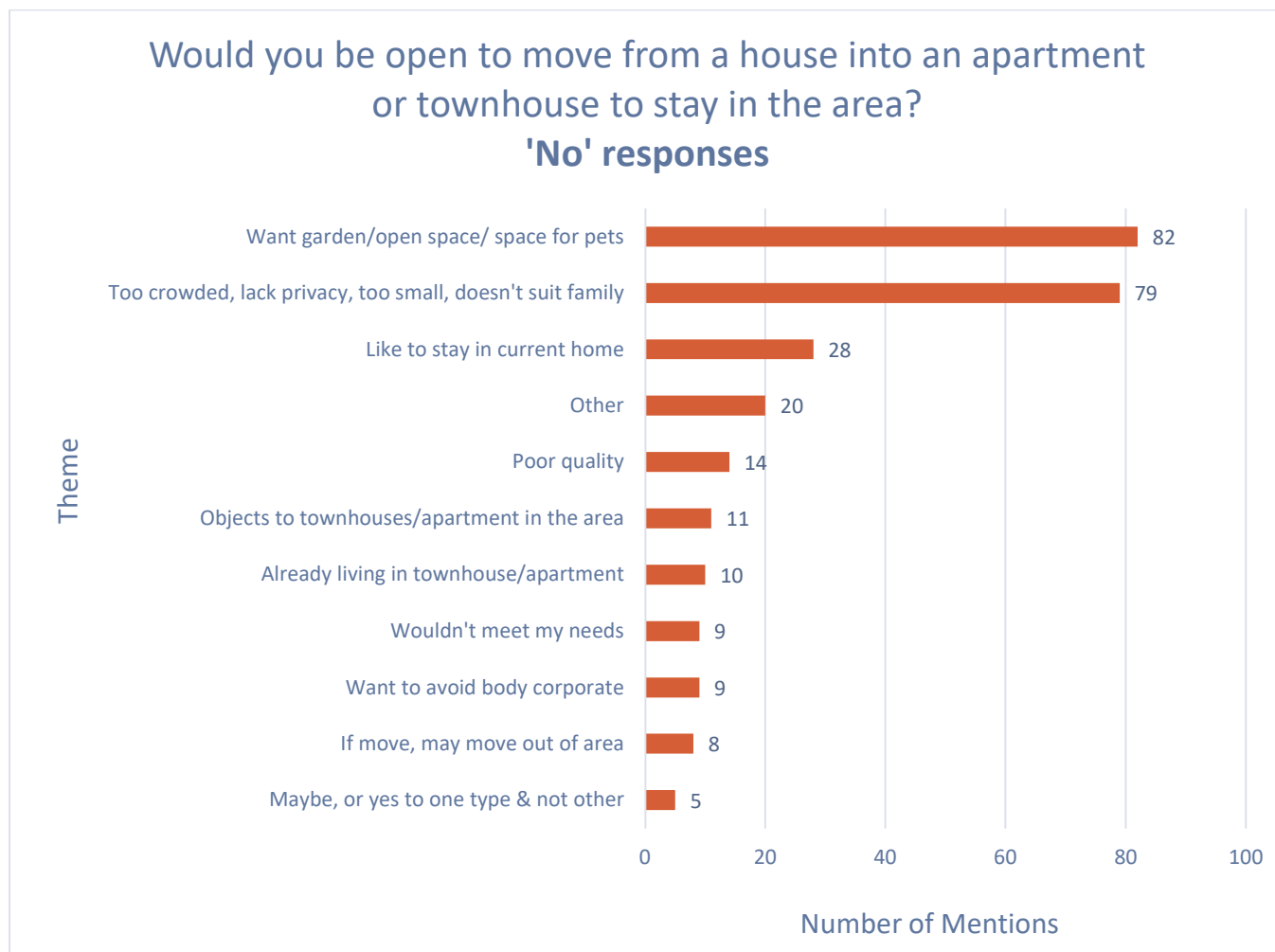
For those who said 'yes', the most popular reason was downsizing, reduced maintenance and ageing.

A summary of the 'yes' responses is provided in the chart below:



For those who said 'no', the most common reasons include they want a garden, open space, room for pets and that they are too crowded, lack privacy and don't suit a family.

A summary of the 'no' responses is provided in the chart below:



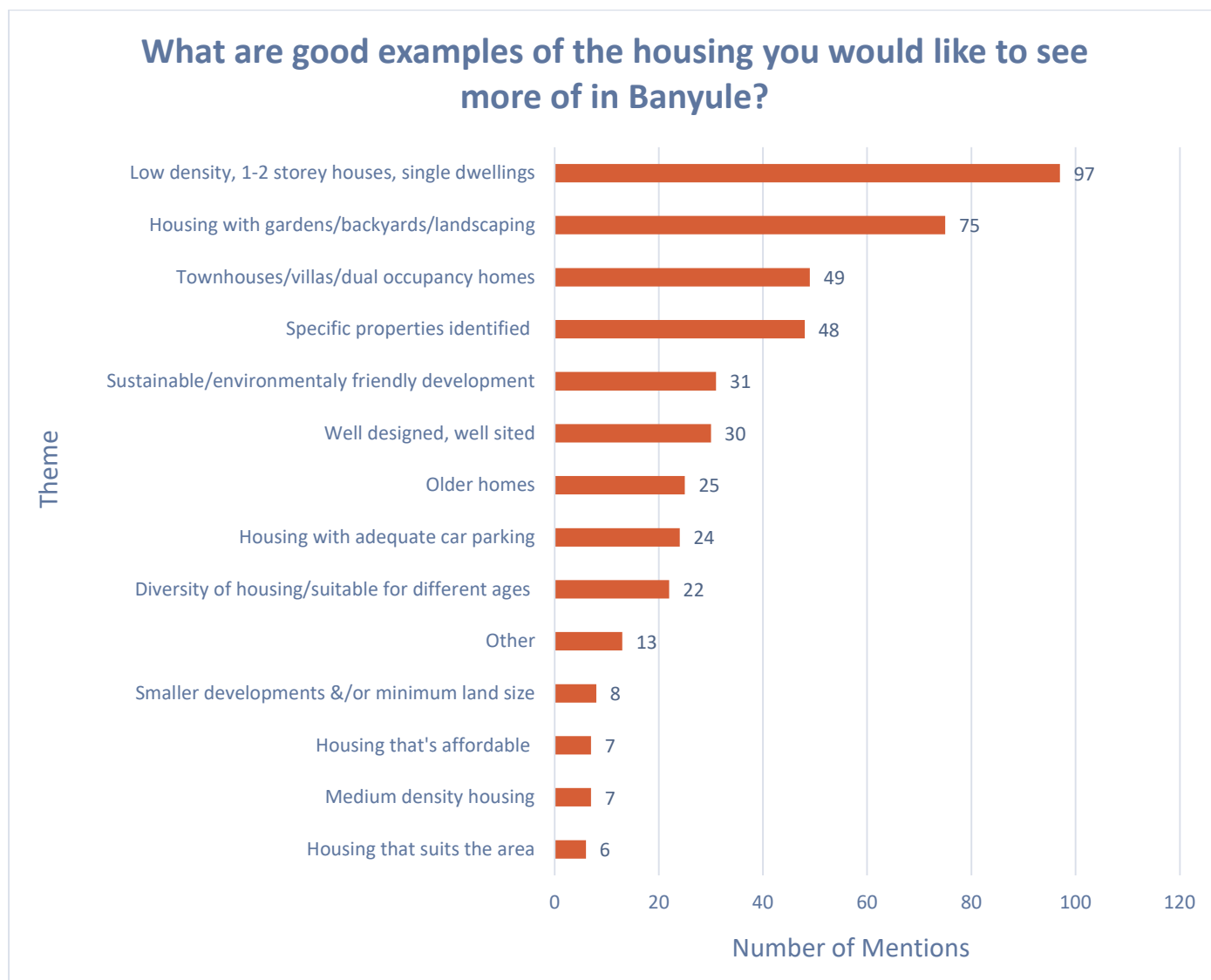
Q.11 What are good examples of the housing you would like to see more of in Banyule?

Skipped: 55 - Answered: 310 (84.9%)

Common responses to good examples of housing include: 1-2 storey houses, single dwellings, house with gardens/ backyards/ landscaping, townhouses, villas, dual occupancies, housing that is environmentally sustainable, well designed and has adequate parking. A variety of housing to suit different needs and housing that is affordable are also noted.

A number of responses identified specific areas or properties as good examples they would like to see more of in Banyule.

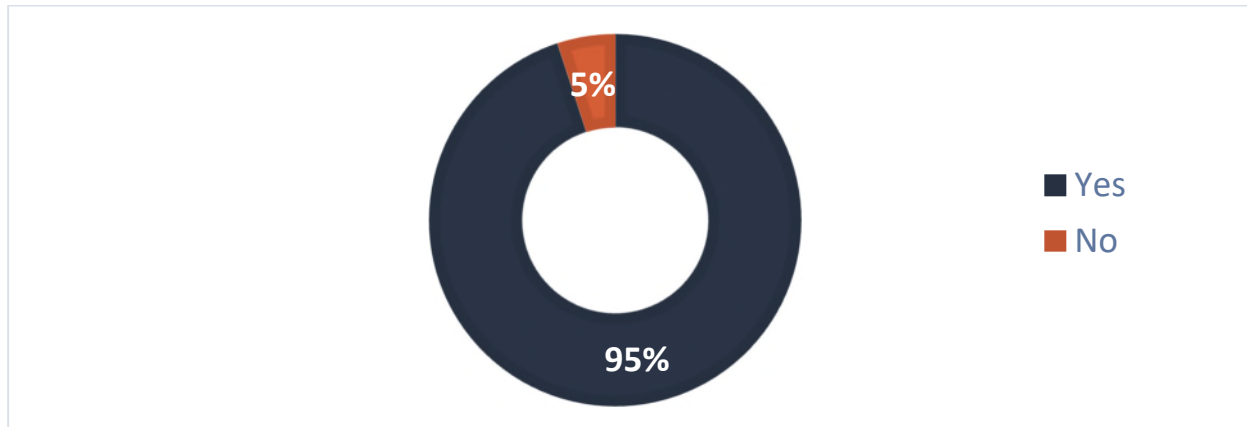
A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Q.12a Are there examples of housing you don't like?

Skipped: 7 - Answered: 358 (98.1%)

95% of respondents answered 'yes' there are examples of housing they don't like.



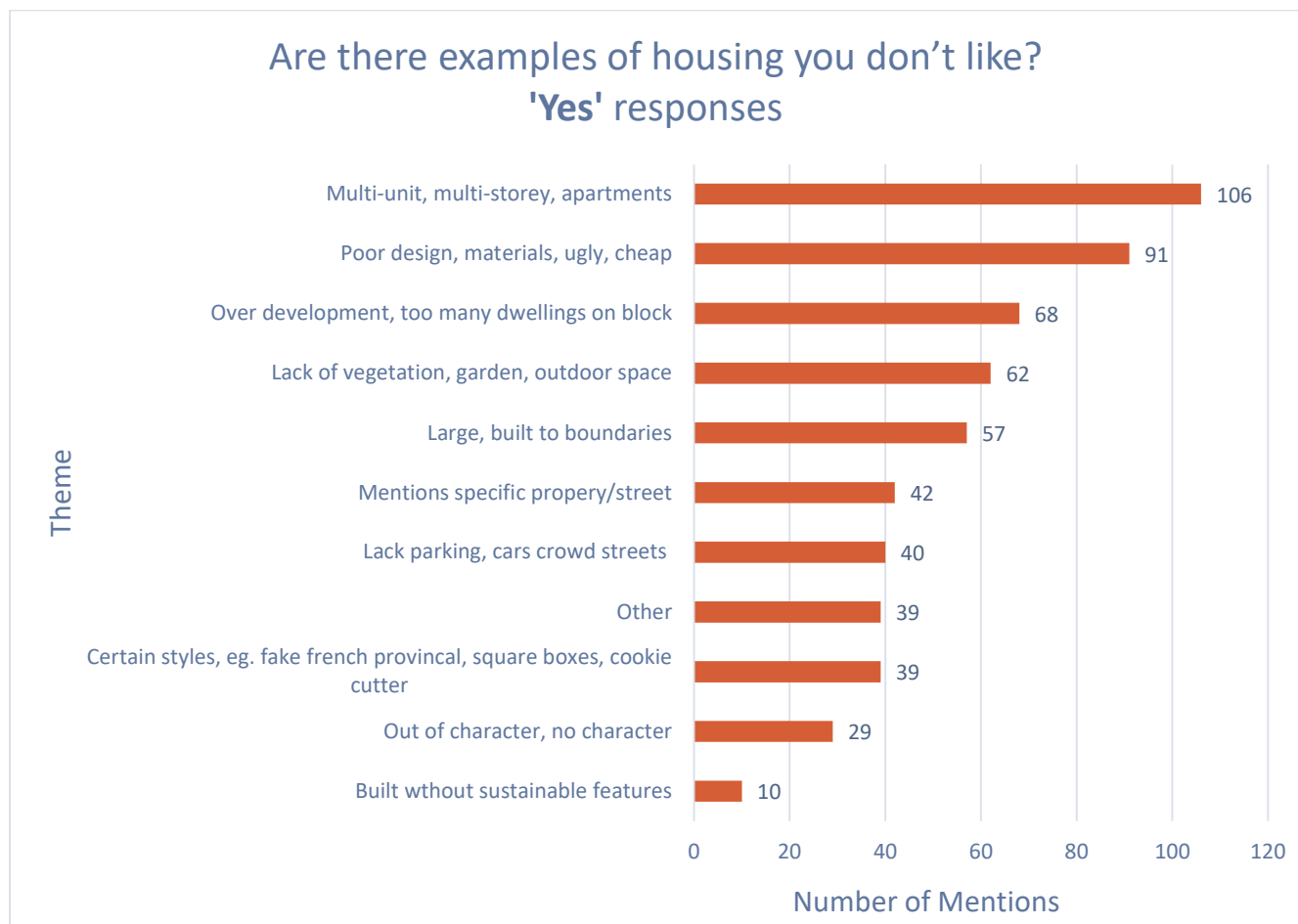
Q.12b Why?

Skipped: 28 - Answered: 337 (92.3%)

The responses to 'Why' were separated into those who responded 'yes' and those who responded 'no'.

Common responses to housing that is not liked include: multi-unit, multi-storey, crowded developments, poor design, lack vegetation/garden/outdoor space, overly large dwellings, dwellings built to boundaries.

A summary of the 'yes' responses is provided in the chart below:



A total of 18 people selected 'no' to the question 'Are there examples of housing you don't like?' and of these 6 made a comment. General comments were that everyone needs a home and that nothing has bothered them.

Q.13 If you own an investment property in Banyule that you plan to redevelop in the future, what are the challenges to development in your area?

Skipped: 364 - Answered: 1 (0.3%)

This question only appeared in the survey if a person identified as an investor at Question 1 - Housing Tenure.

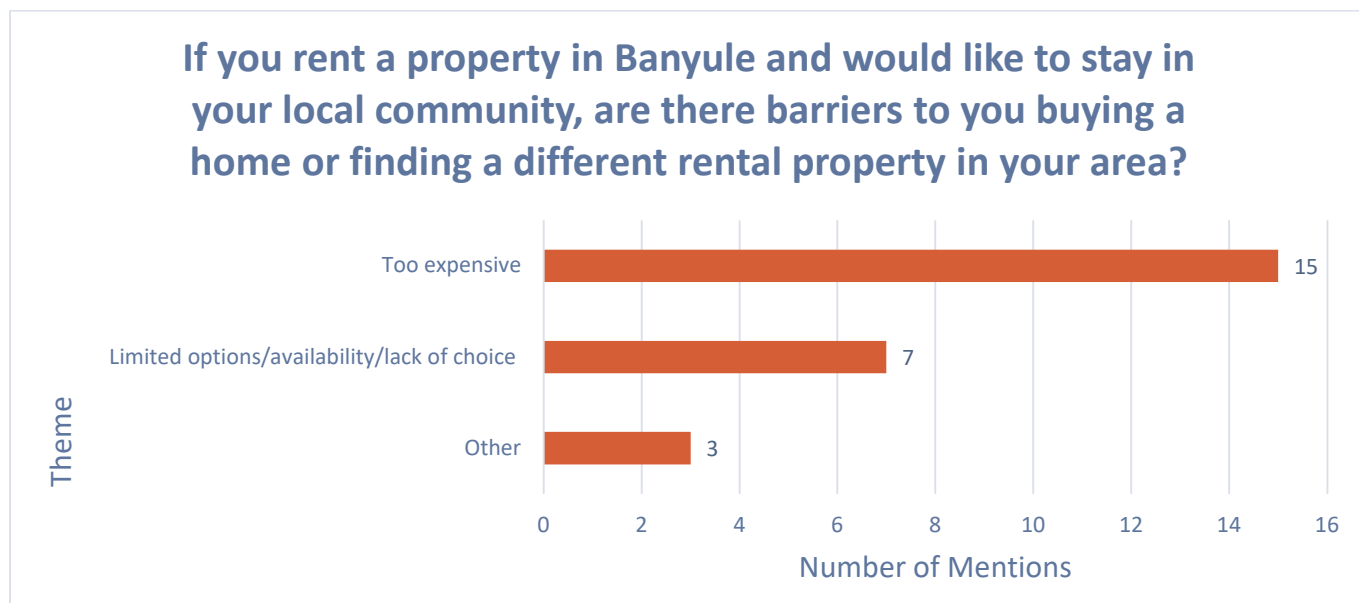
Only one response was received which was not relevant to the survey topic.

Q.14 If you rent a property in Banyule and would like to stay in your local community, are there barriers to you buying a home or finding a different rental property in your area?

Skipped: 342 - Answered: 23 (6.3%)

This question only appeared in the survey if a person identified as a renter at Question 1 - Housing Tenure.

A summary of results is provided in the chart below:



Email Submissions

Five email submissions were received during the consultation period for the Preliminary Discussion Paper. Four from residents in Ivanhoe/Ivanhoe East and one from Macleod. The email submissions were detailed and thoughtful, varying between 2 and 8 pages in length. A wide range of comments were provided and many generally reflected those made in the online submissions. Some email submissions also included information that was outside of the scope for this stage of consultation. This information will be considered as part of the next stage of the project.

A summary of issues raised in the email submissions is provided below:

- Need for more sustainable housing
- Need to consider the link between neighbourhood character and climate change with regards to the impacts of vegetation removal and loss of garden space
- New housing growth should not be at the expense of neighbourhood character
- Concerned with site coverage and dwellings built to the property boundary
- Concern with preferred 'future' neighbourhood character when residents prefer 'existing' character
- Neighbourhood Character Strategy needs to be prescriptive to be effective, eg. setbacks, garden area
- Concerned about vegetation and tree removal
- Need to accommodate an ageing population
- Considers the existing neighbourhood character guidelines are inadequate
- Need to be clear about Council's role in housing and the need for a strategy
- Queries around the consultation process including the survey structure/questions and what future consultation is planned
- Concerns neighbourhood character policy was not given enough weight in planning decisions at Council and VCAT regarding a recent major multi-unit development
- Encourages a statistical analysis of the declining number of single detached houses