

Salt Spring Island Community Services 2015 Family Housing Survey

Draft Summary

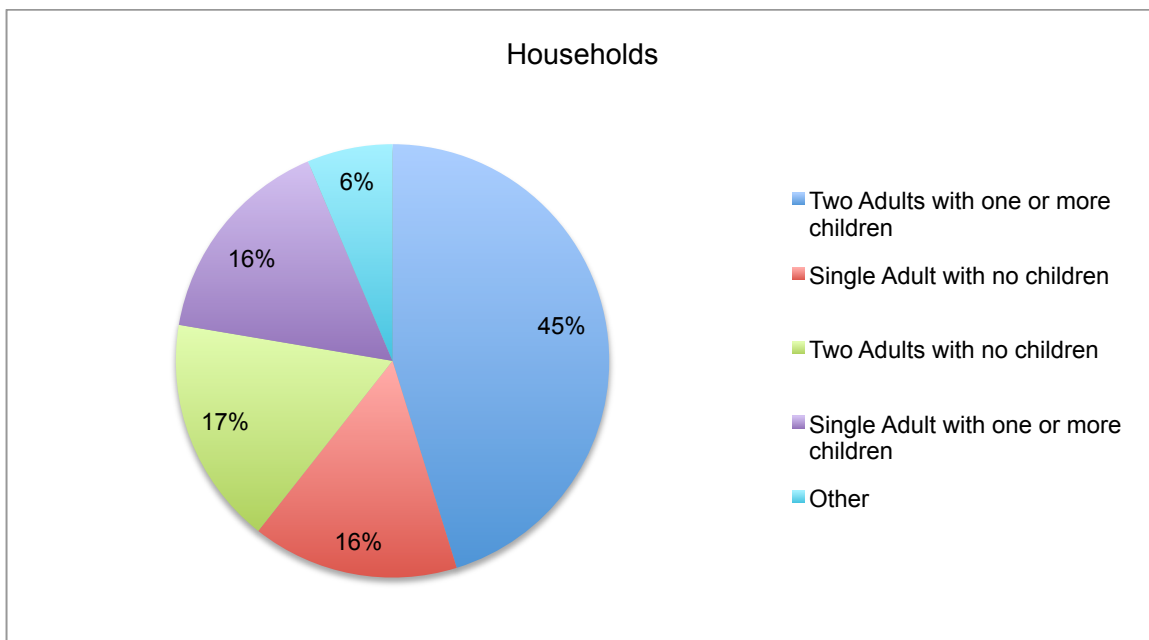
Salt Spring Island Community Services (SSICS) conducted a Family Housing Survey between February 01 and March 15, 2015 to gather detailed information about Salt Spring Island households and housing preferences. The anonymous survey was conducted online and through paper forms made available at several public locations. Information about the survey was shared through local media, email lists, newsletters, Facebook, posters and the SSICS website.

All Salt Spring Island residents were invited to participate in the survey. Families with minors were especially encouraged to respond, and targeted publicity was conducted through the local schools, preschools, daycares, ELF programs and Family Place. It is important to review the results of the survey within the context of this focused solicitation. The respondent pool is not intended to be proportionately representative of all households on Salt Spring Island.

A total of 188 completed surveys were received. Following is a summary of the responses and key findings. SSICS will use this information and further analysis of the data set to inform current and further housing initiatives, and related social programs. The full data set will also be shared upon request with other organizations working on local housing and social issues.

Households

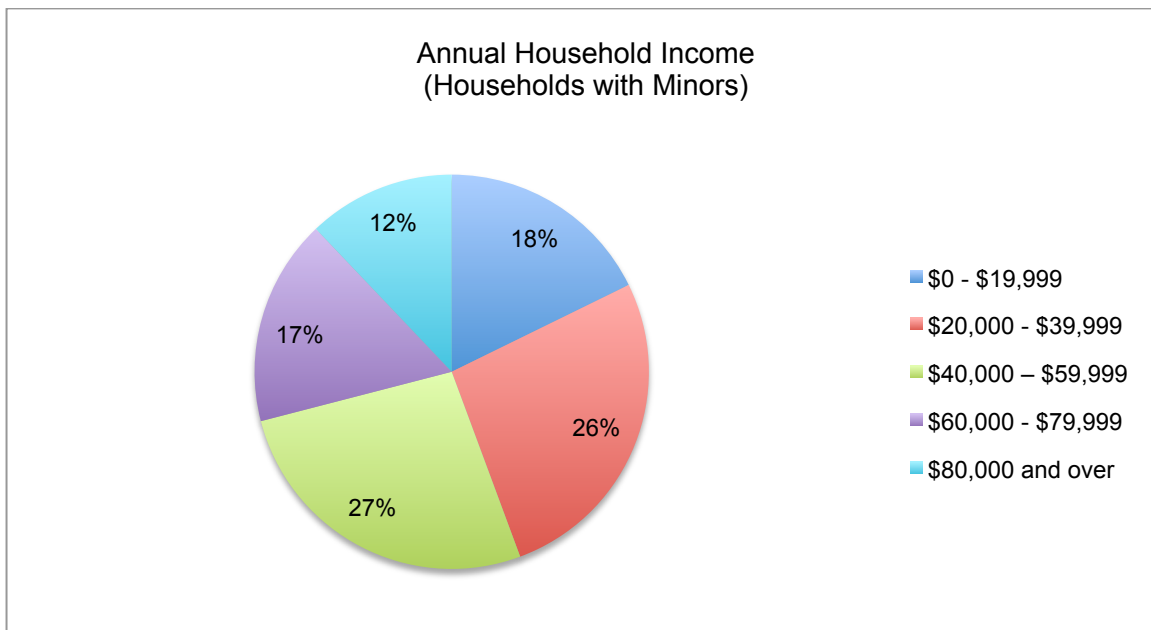
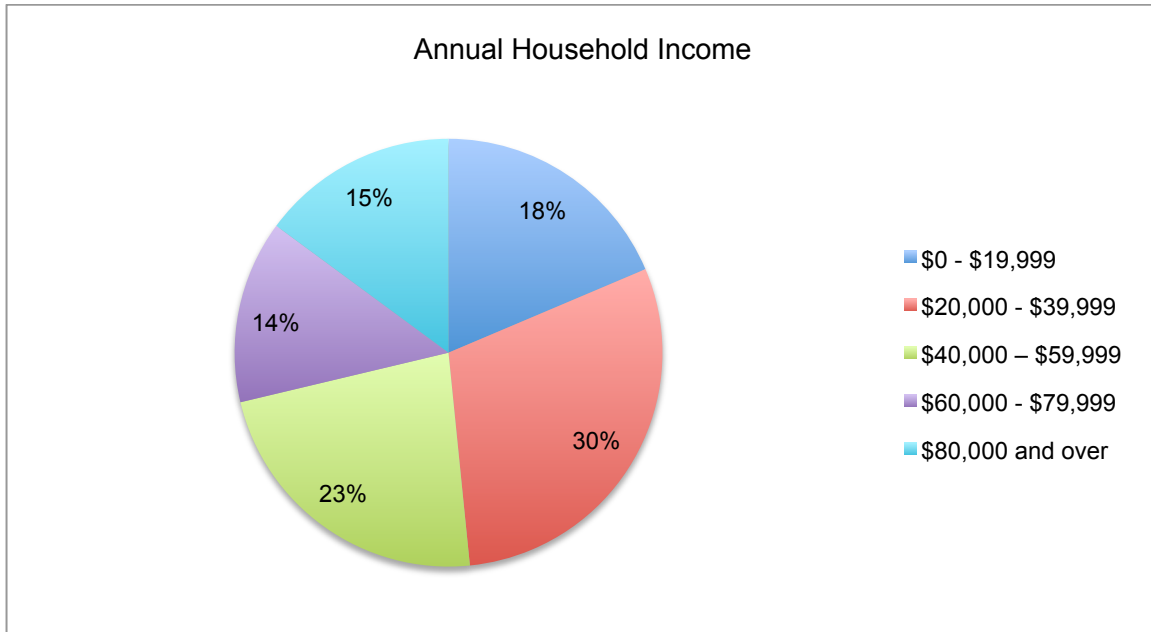
Of the 188 total respondents, 124 were households with minors (66%). The largest group represented were households with two adults with one or more children living at home (45%).



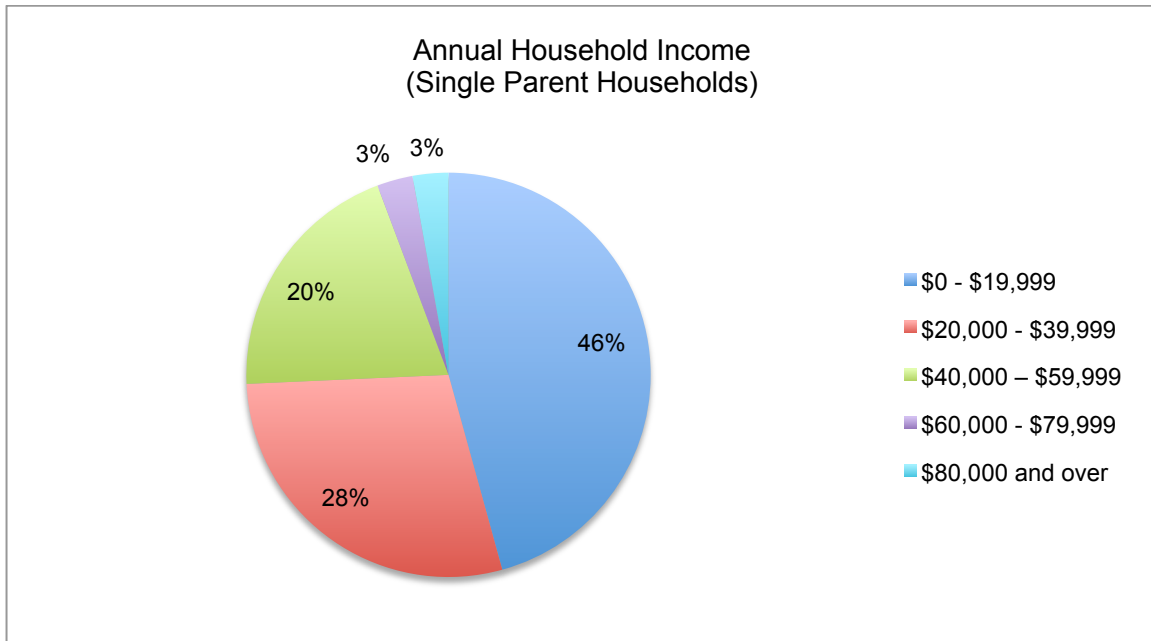
Annual Household Income

Respondents were asked to select an income range that best represented the total combined annual income of all working adults in their household.

The majority of survey respondents reported annual household incomes of less than \$60,000. The largest income group was households earning between \$20,000 and \$39,000 (30%).

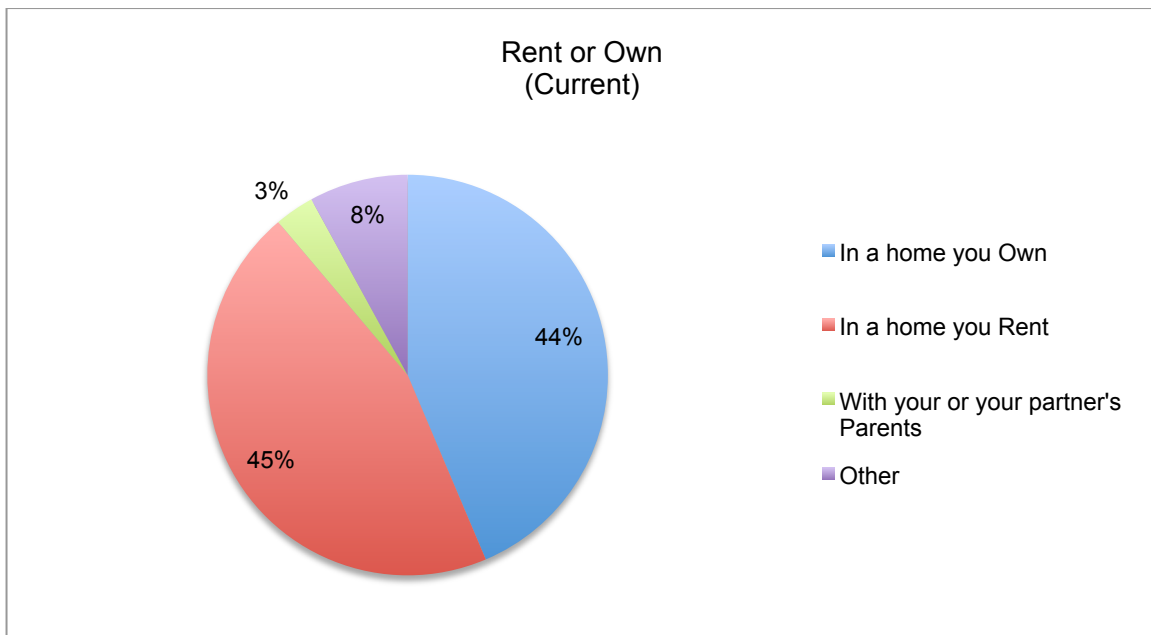


On average, single parent households reported smaller annual incomes than any other household type, with nearly 75% earning less than \$40,000 annually and a striking number earning less \$20,000 annually.

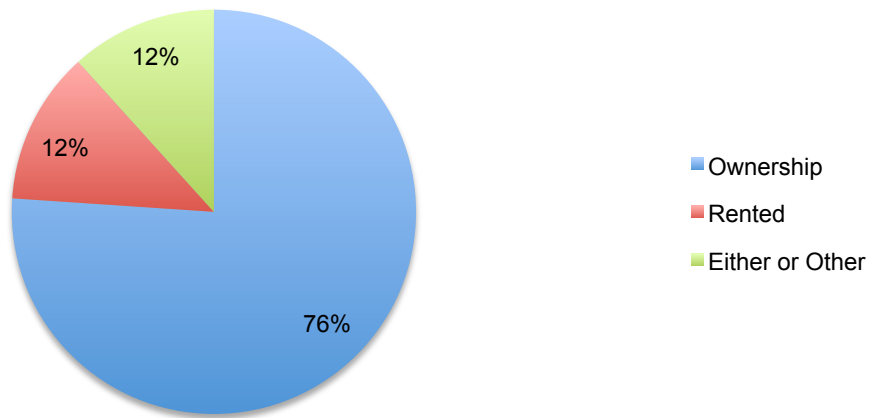


Rent or Own

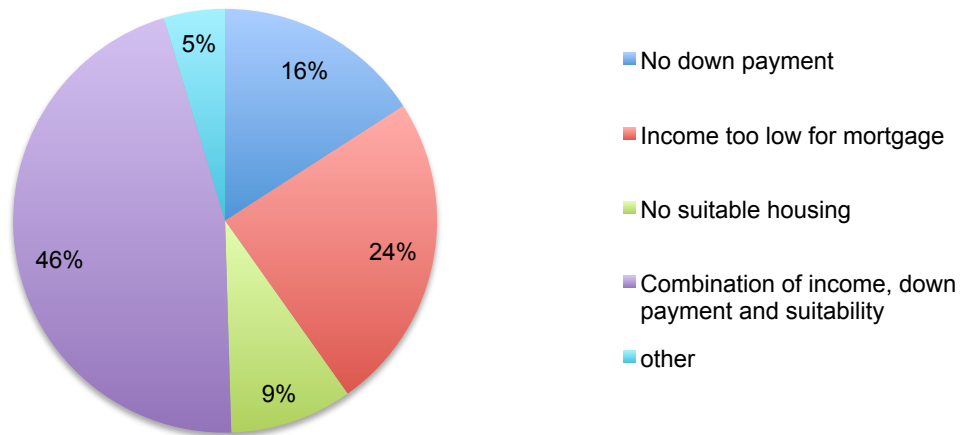
While similar numbers of respondents currently rent and own their homes, 75% stated a preference to own. Barriers to homeownership include producing a down payments, qualifying for a mortgage and finding suitable housing.



Rent or Own (Preferred)



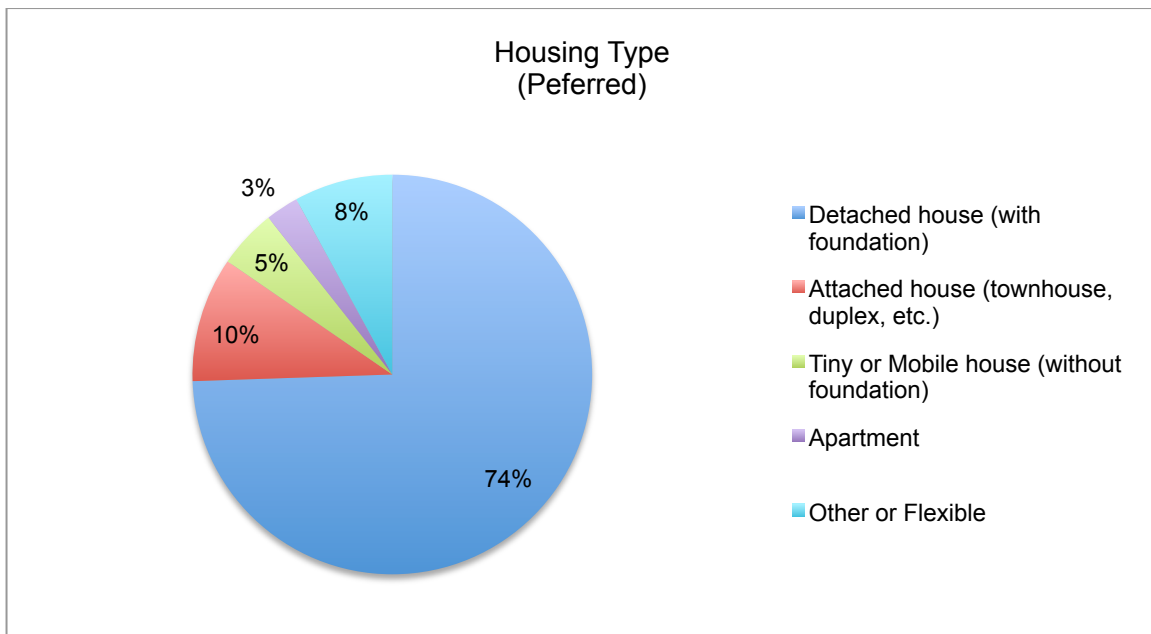
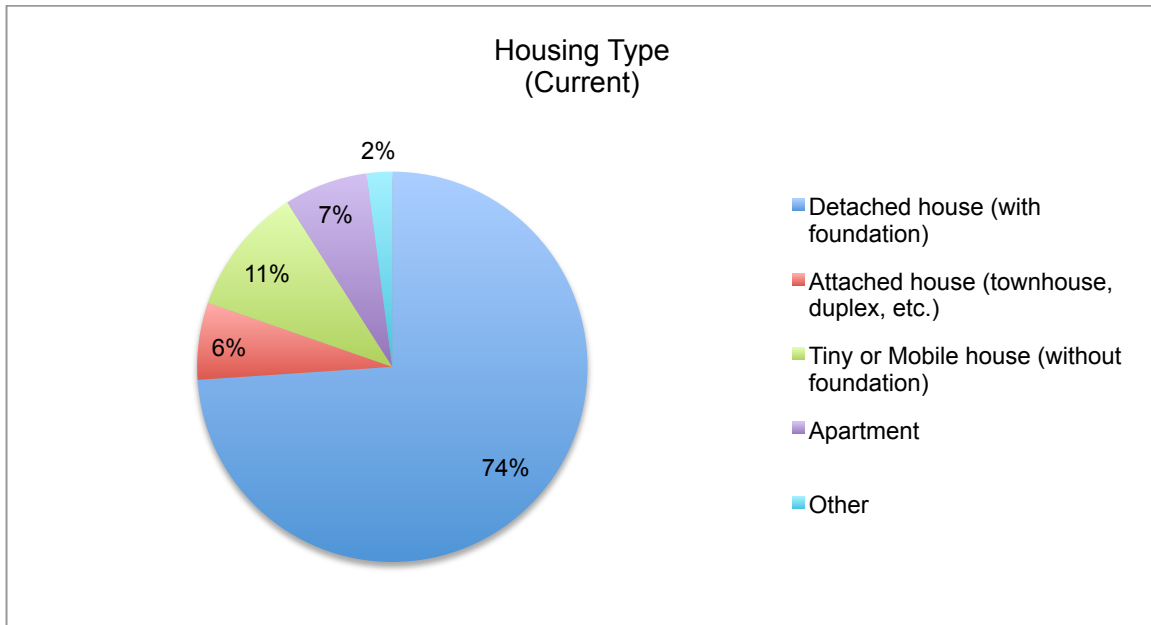
Barriers to Homeownership



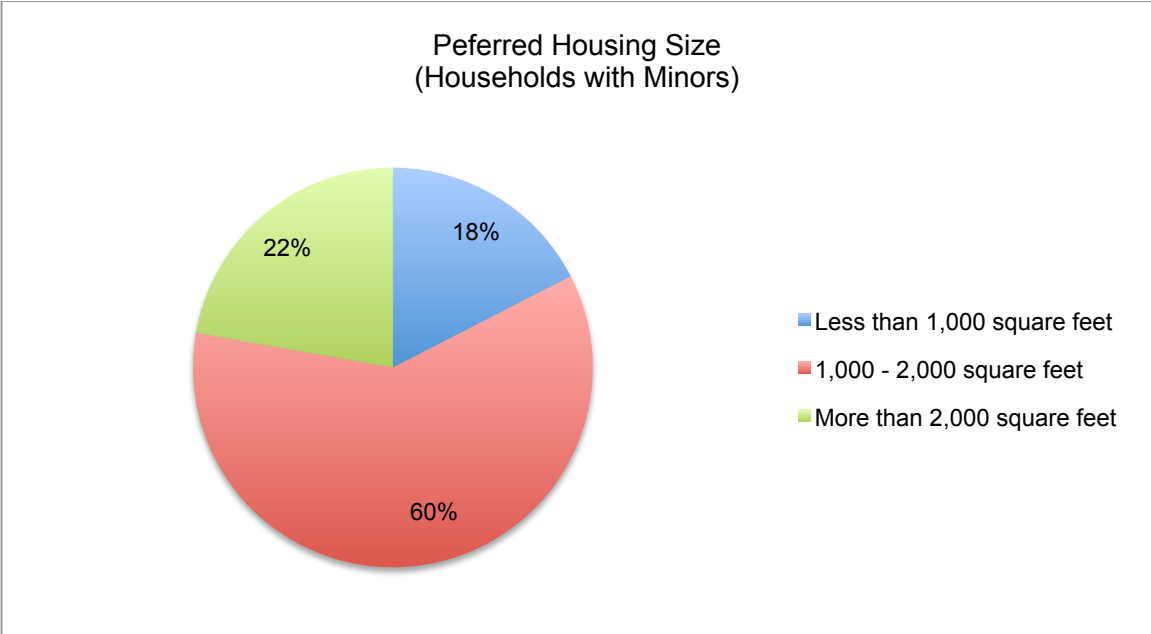
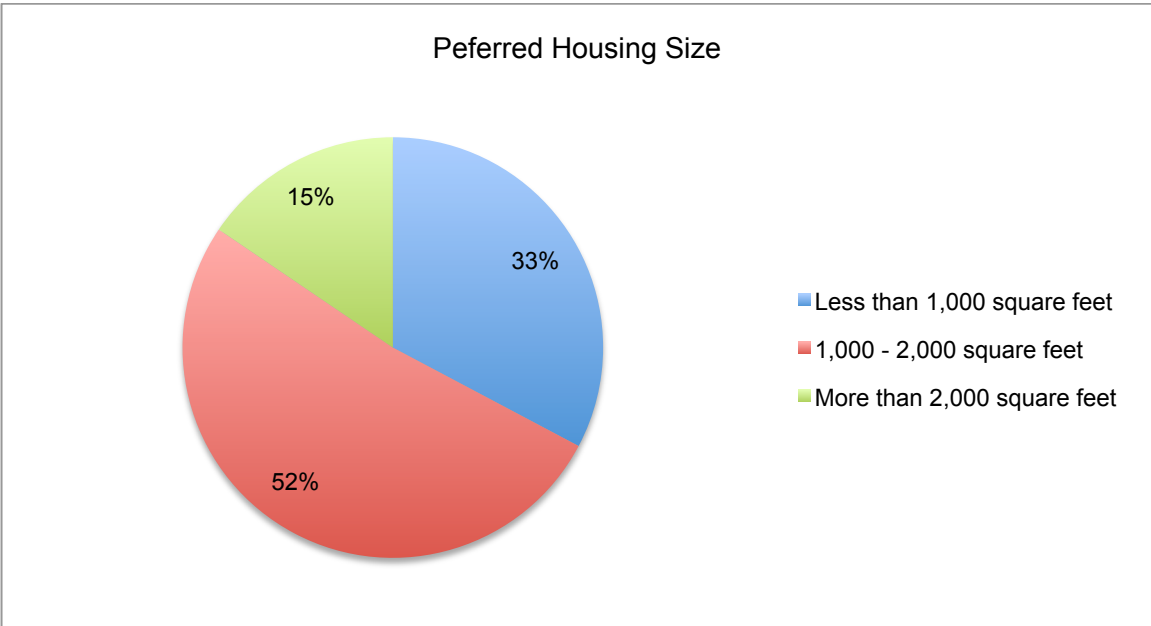
Housing Type

The majority of respondents (74%) were living in a detached house with a foundation. The same amount of respondents identified this as their preferred housing type.

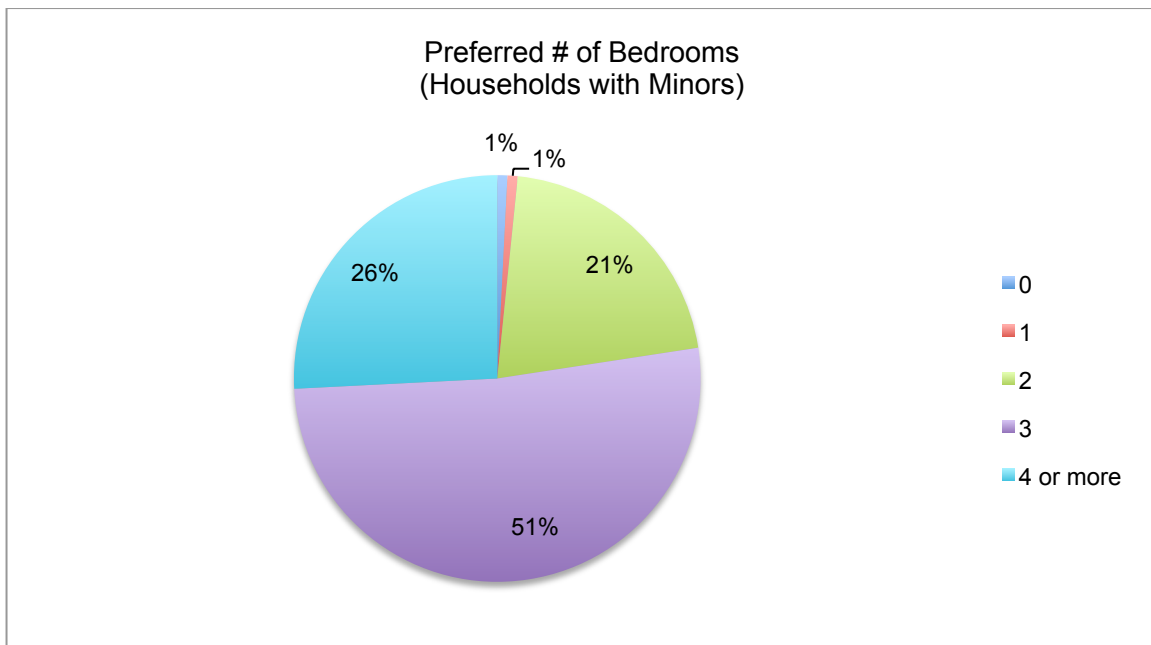
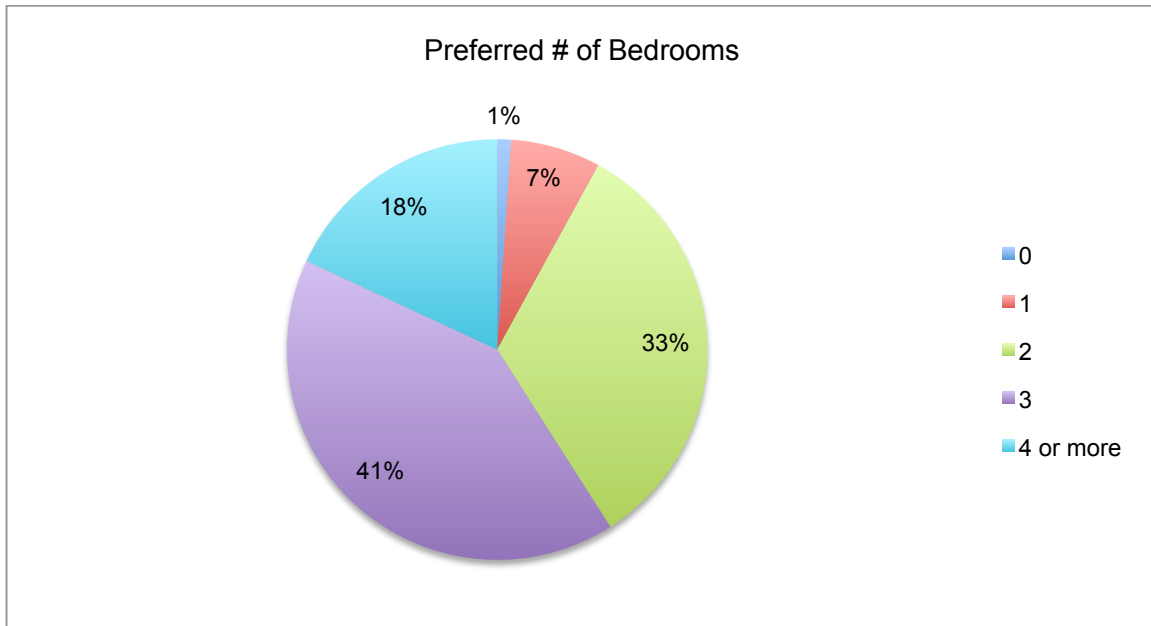
Interestingly, 10% of respondents identified attached housing as their preferred housing type and 8% stated no preference or wrote in other options. These included less common housing types with both private and shared spaces.



About half of all respondents selected 1,000 – 2,000 square feet as their preferred housing size. 60% of households with preferred this housing size.



The majority of respondents preferred a home with 3 or more bedrooms. This included 59% of all respondents and 77% of respondents living in households with minors.



Housing Characteristics

Respondents were asked to rank the level of importance of several housing characteristics they would consider when choosing their next home.

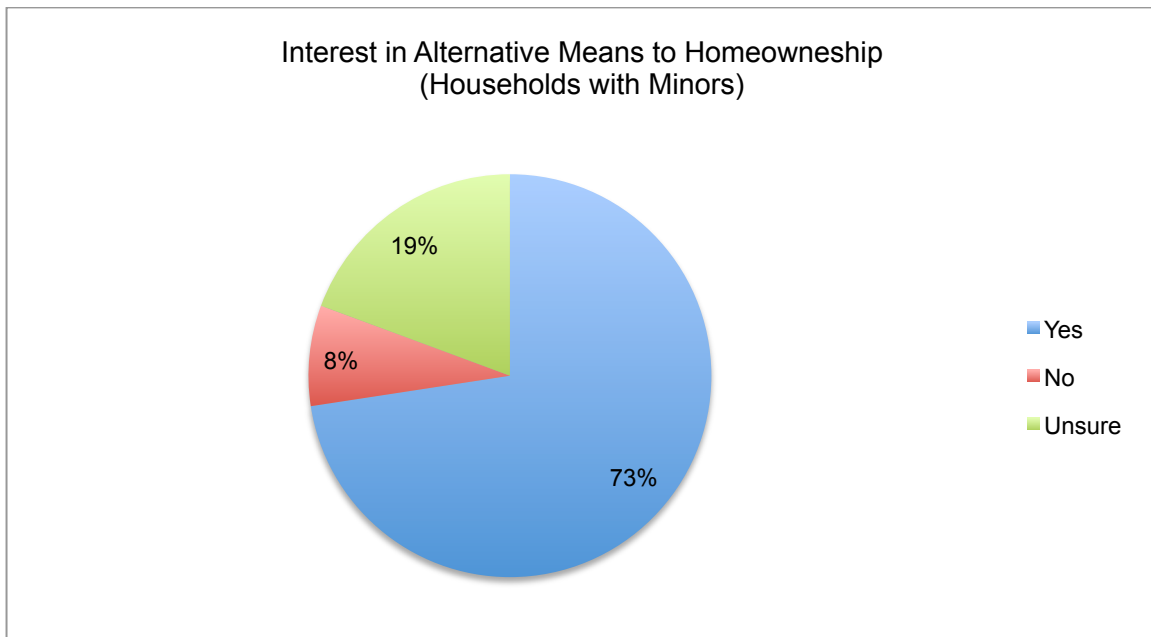
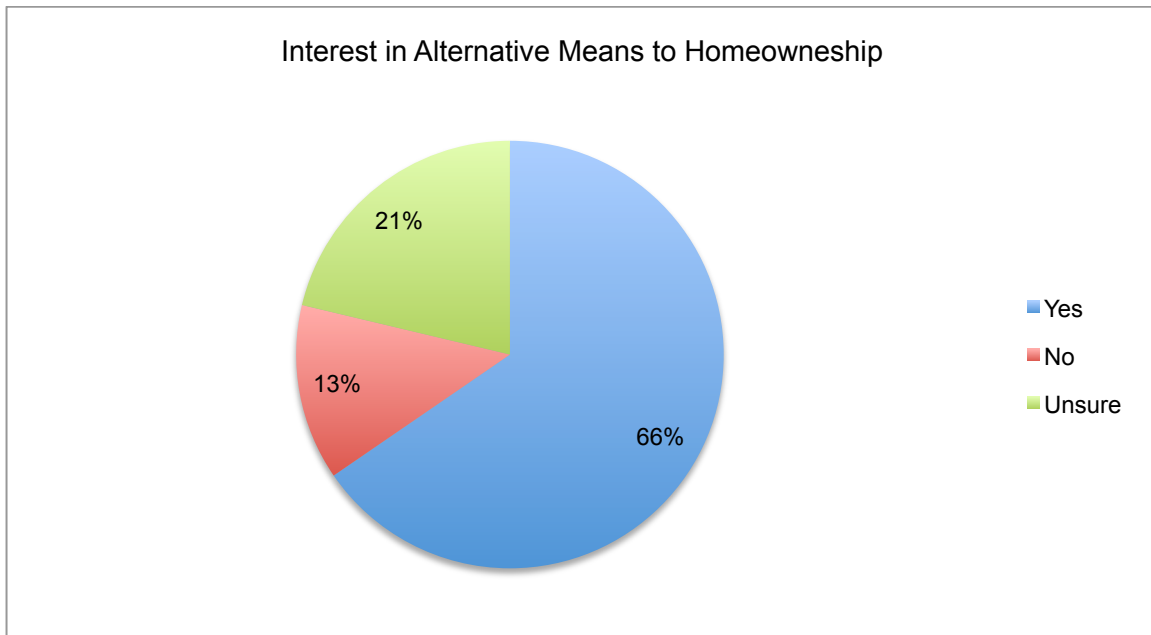
Approximately 75% of all respondents identified affordability, long term occupancy, and quality and condition as very important considerations.

More than half of respondents identified private yards, proximity to nature, ability to grow their food and homeownership as very important. Being pet friendly and including play spaces for children were ranked as very important considerations by just under half of all respondents.

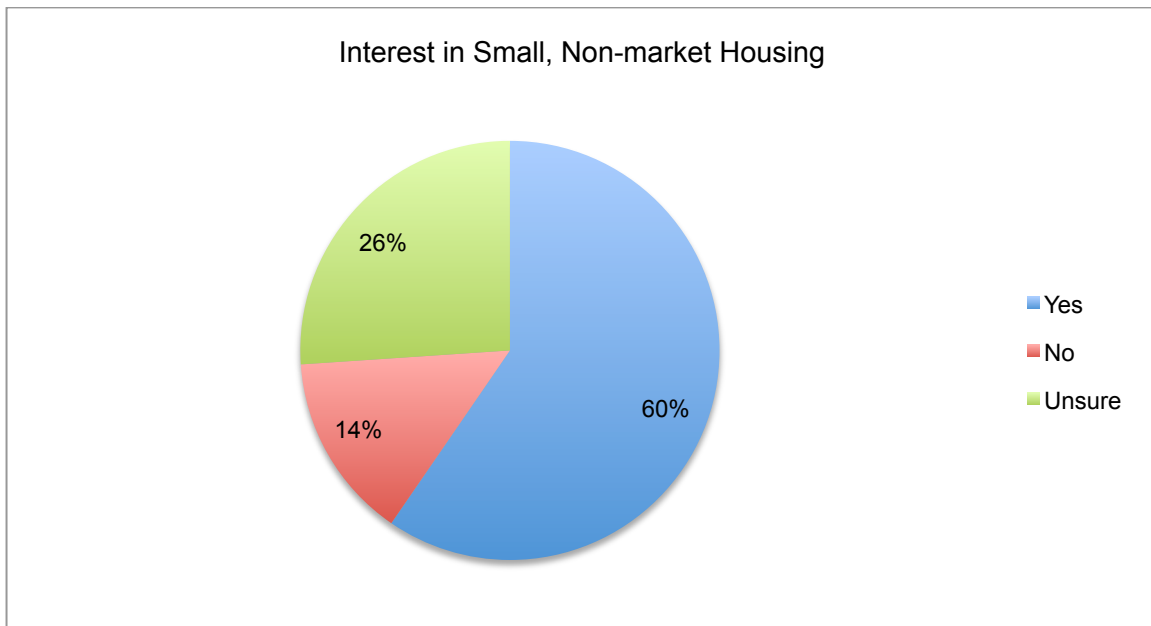
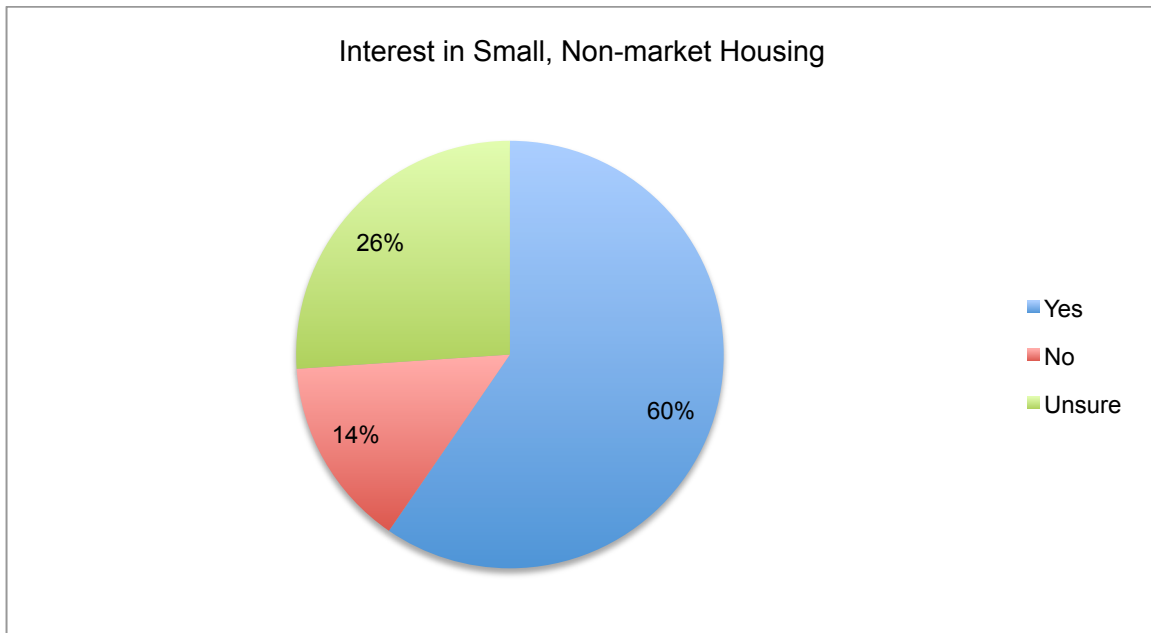
About one third of all respondents identified house size, number of bedrooms, proximity to amenities and equity building as very important considerations

Alternative Means to Homeownership

Respondents were asked to respond to two questions regarding less common approaches to homeownership. The first question simply asked if they were interested in alternative means such as rent-to-own or housing land trusts. 66% of all respondents and 73% respondents living in households with minors replied yes. 21% of all respondents replied unsure.



The second question regarding less common approaches to homeownership asked if the respondent would consider compact or attached housing if it was offered at below market pricing. The majority of all respondents (60%) and respondents living in households with minors (70%) answered yes despite earlier responses that indicated an overall preference for larger detached housing.



Conclusions

The survey results support other data and discussions indicating that many Salt Spring Island households are challenged to find suitable and secure housing within their financial means. This includes the full range of long term housing needs from very low-income households looking for rentals to dual income households wishing to buy.

Despite preferences for larger, detached homes, respondents placed greater importance on affordability, long-term occupancy and quality and condition than on housing form. The majority of respondents indicated an interest in alternative means to homeownership and more compact housing forms to achieve greater affordability. This suggests a willingness to explore less common housing solutions that still provide the characteristics respondents considered very important.