

# Redmond's Housing Action Plan

*Public Involvement Update to  
Redmond City Council*



Prepared by Broadview Planning

August 2020



Questions for Council to consider:

*What stands out?*

*Did anything surprise you?*

*What questions do you wish we'd asked or answered?*

*What goals should be our focus moving forward?*

# What we did

*Methodology + process overview*

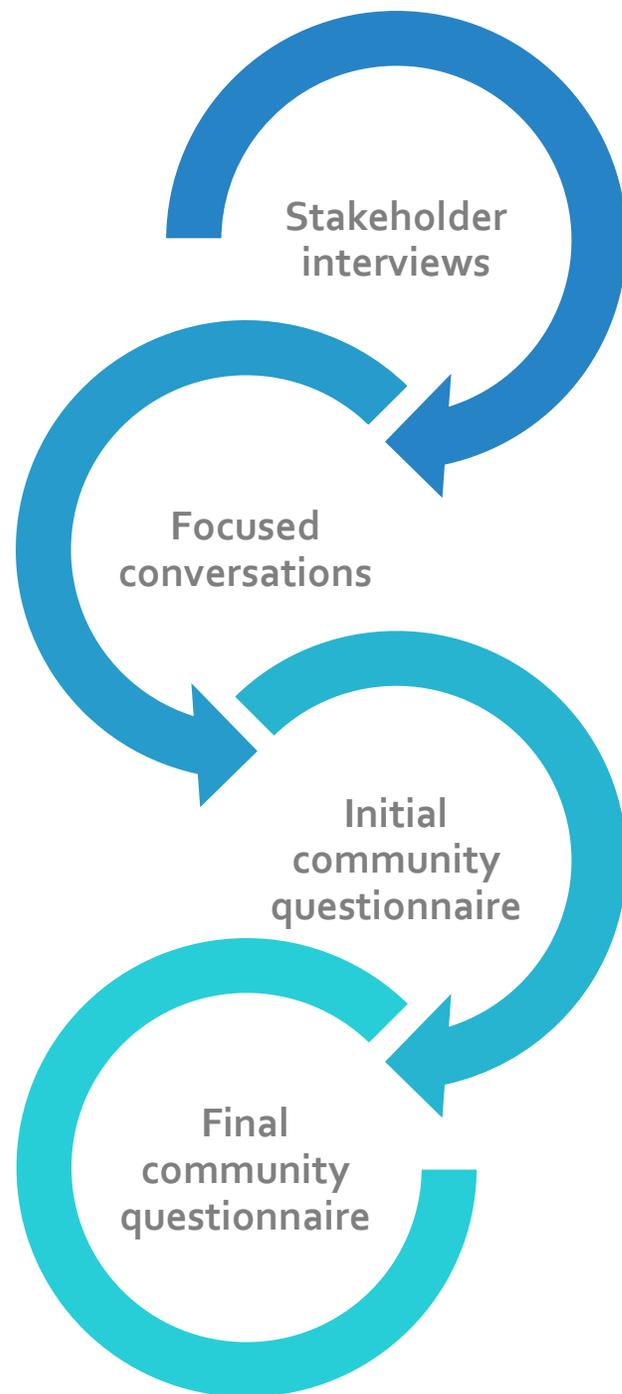
1. Collect **qualitative data** and **community stories**.
2. Solicit different **stakeholder perspectives** and **subject matter expertise**.
3. Remain focused, yet flexible, on **authentic public involvement** given the challenges of the pandemic.
4. Build **long-term buy-in for future action**.

**Foundational value:**

*Seek out populations that are historically underrepresented in traditional planning processes, and ensure that input represents Redmond's rich diversity.*

# Goals of public involvement





# Methodology



- 14 stakeholder interviews with 16 people
- Broad representation across organizations, residents, City staff.
- Critical first step in the process:
  - Raises awareness, ownership, and enthusiasm.
  - Forges connections to create meaningful focus groups.
  - Helps distribute questionnaire to constituents.

## Stakeholder interviews





- Six focused conversations with 27 people
- Recruited participants thematically:
  - People experiencing homelessness
  - Spanish-speaking recent immigrants
  - Senior residents
  - IAWW Staff
  - Non-profit housing + service providers
  - Private sector developers

## Focused conversations





- Open from June 29 – July 20, 2020.
- 928 responses with 82% completion rate.
- Used relationships built during interviews and conversations to distribute far and wide.
- Advertised in City newsletter, social media, various stakeholder networks.
- Posted on [www.LetsConnectRedmond.com](http://www.LetsConnectRedmond.com)

# Initial community questionnaire

# Let's Connect Redmond

Home » Housing Action Plan

## Housing Action Plan



In Washington, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to plan for and manage population growth with goals focused on how we can encourage development in urban areas, meet transportation needs, and increase affordable housing. King County policies also require that urban cities like Redmond plan for a greater share of the region's housing to accommodate future growth.

In 2019, Redmond received a grant to develop a Housing Action Plan. The Plan will include an analysis of the existing housing stock, current and projected housing needs, and opportunities for housing. The City will also connect and engage with the public on this topic to bring the community's vision into the plan.

This information will help us develop strategies to meet current and future housing needs. Providing for affordable housing in Redmond, with a variety of housing types is a priority for the City as outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.



### STAY INFORMED

Subscribe for project updates

**Subscribe**

23 members of your community are following this project.

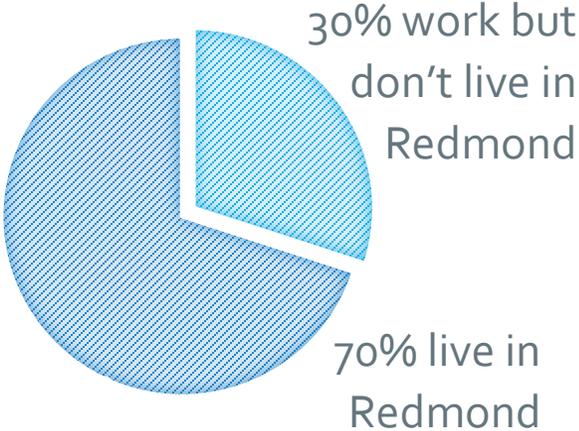
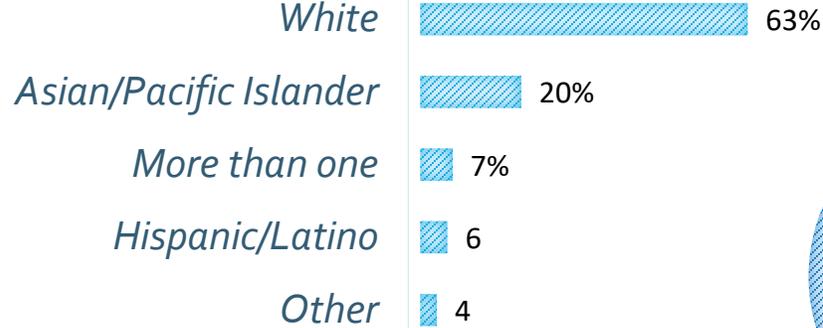
### Who's Listening

Brooke Buckingham

Project Manager  
City of Redmond



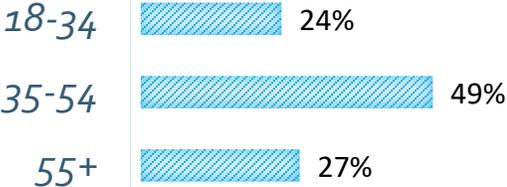
**Race/ethnicity**



**Household income**



**Age**



**Questionnaire:  
who did  
we hear from?**



# What we heard

*Findings + what they mean in context*

- 1 • Public involvement affirms that housing affordability is an issue for many.
- 2 • Redmond is a highly desirable place to live, contributing to lack of affordability.
- 3 • Homeownership is out-of-reach for many.
- 4 • Businesses have concerns over employee retention without affordable housing.
- 5 • New housing types could better reflect Redmond's rich cultural diversity.
- 6 • People face stigmas about their housing that are real, pervasive, and dehumanizing.

## Key Themes



- Redmond lacks affordable housing.
- People want to stay close to family, or have family move back, but it's unaffordable.
- Engaged stakeholders had many ideas for ways in which the City may address affordability. For example:
  - Build heavily around transit – and set aside units for seniors and low income.
  - Build more cottage/small housing.
  - Revise downtown parking requirements.
  - Lack of available land and high construction costs limits affordability.
  - Make zoning changes to diversify housing options.

**Perception 1.  
Public involvement  
affirms that housing  
affordability is an  
issue for many.**



*"The two biggest barriers to providing affordable housing in East King County are funding and political will."*

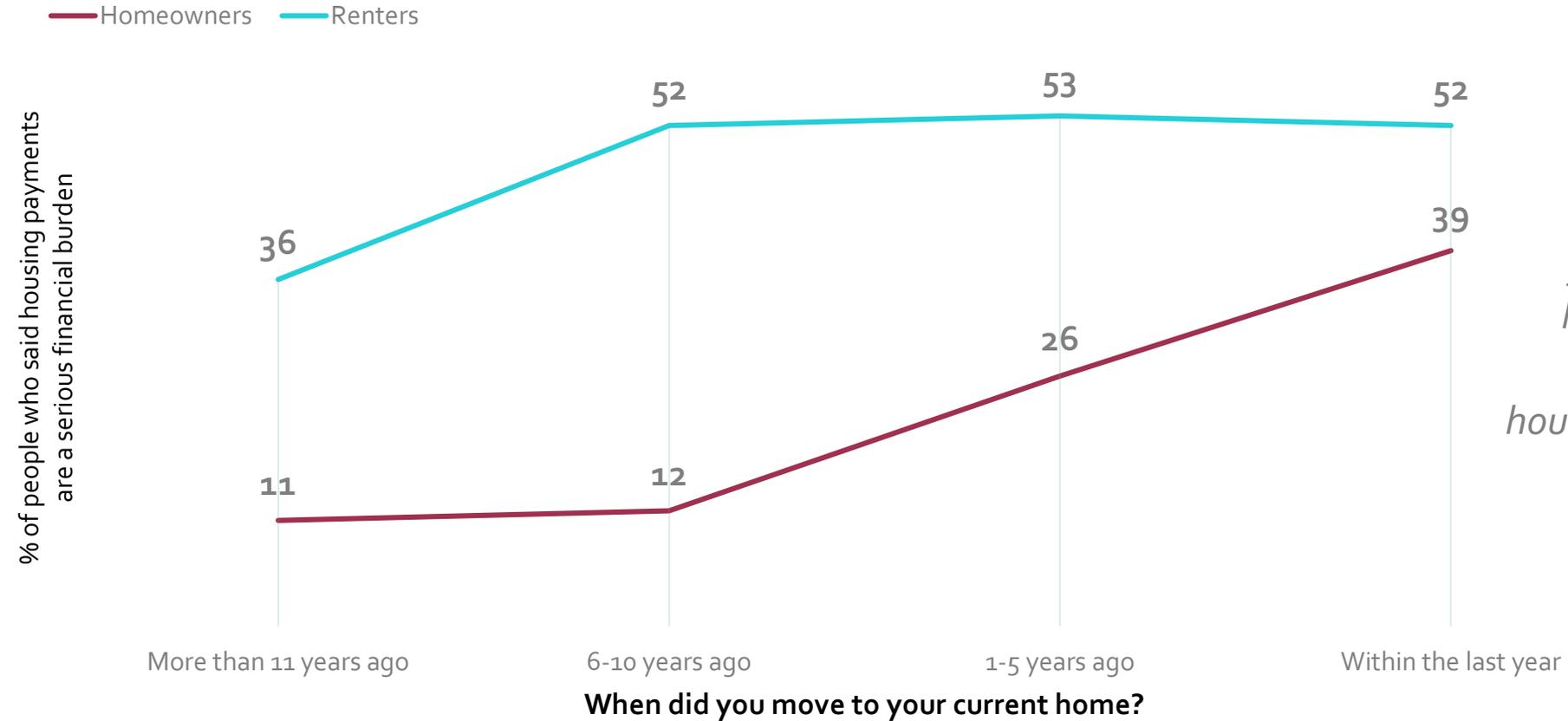
*"We no longer feel like we can afford to retire here, and that speaks volumes about how we have turned a blind eye to ensuring this city is and remains an inclusive, affordable community."*

*"We bought our house 40 years ago, but I can't imagine being in this housing market. I always think about all the young teachers and nurses and City employees who have to commute to work because they can't afford to live here."*

# Q: Are housing payments a serious financial burden?

A: That seems to depend on when someone moved to their current home.

When someone moved to their current home is a significant determinant of financial hardship.



*These hardships are particularly true for younger respondents, households that make < \$100,000/year, and households with children.*

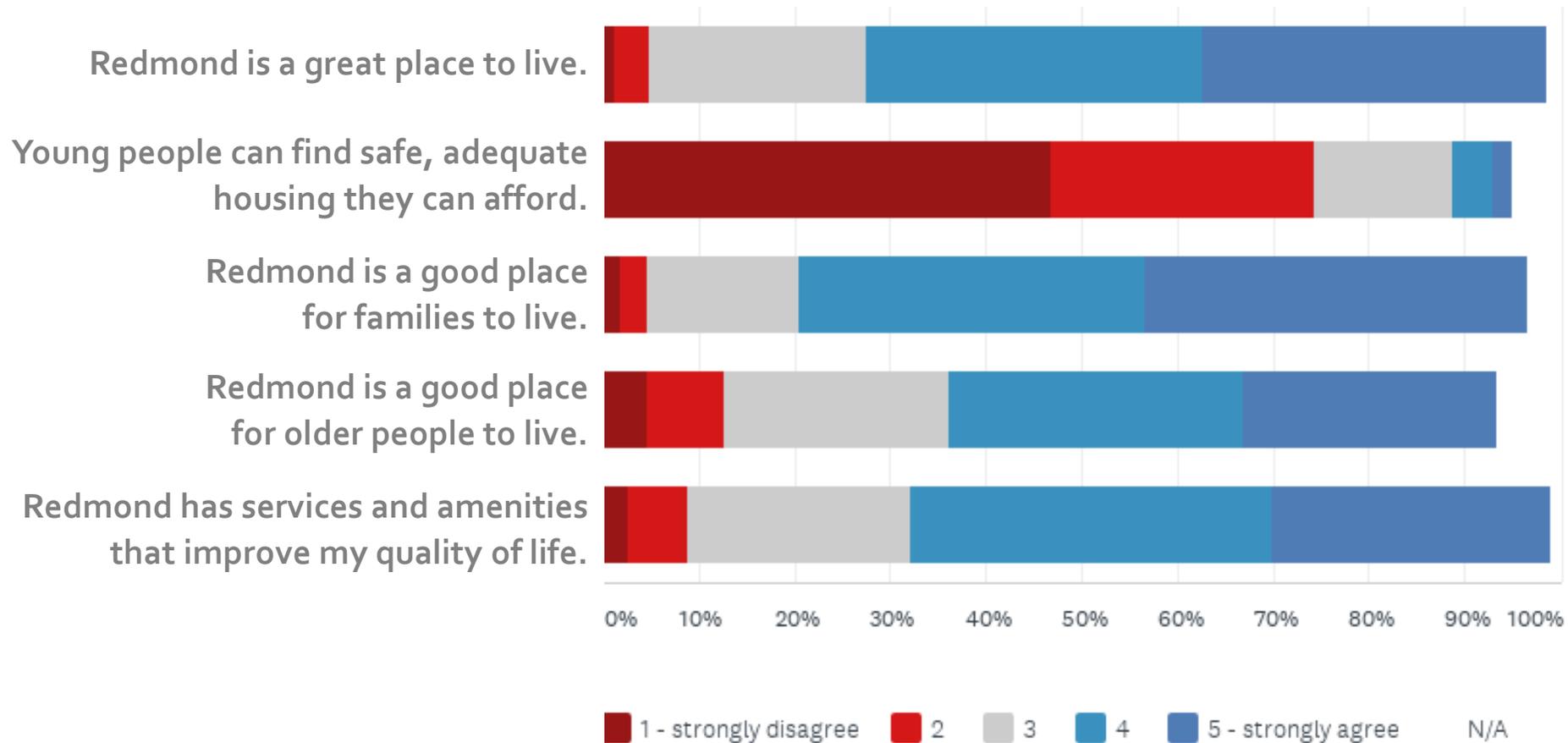
- Good schools, strong community connections, great access to green/open space.
- Change + growth brought vibrancy to downtown.
- Need to develop reasonable transportation options to support housing and increase walkability.
- Community centers are natural gathering spaces and should include housing.

Perception 2.  
**Redmond is a highly desirable place to live, contributing to lack of affordability.**



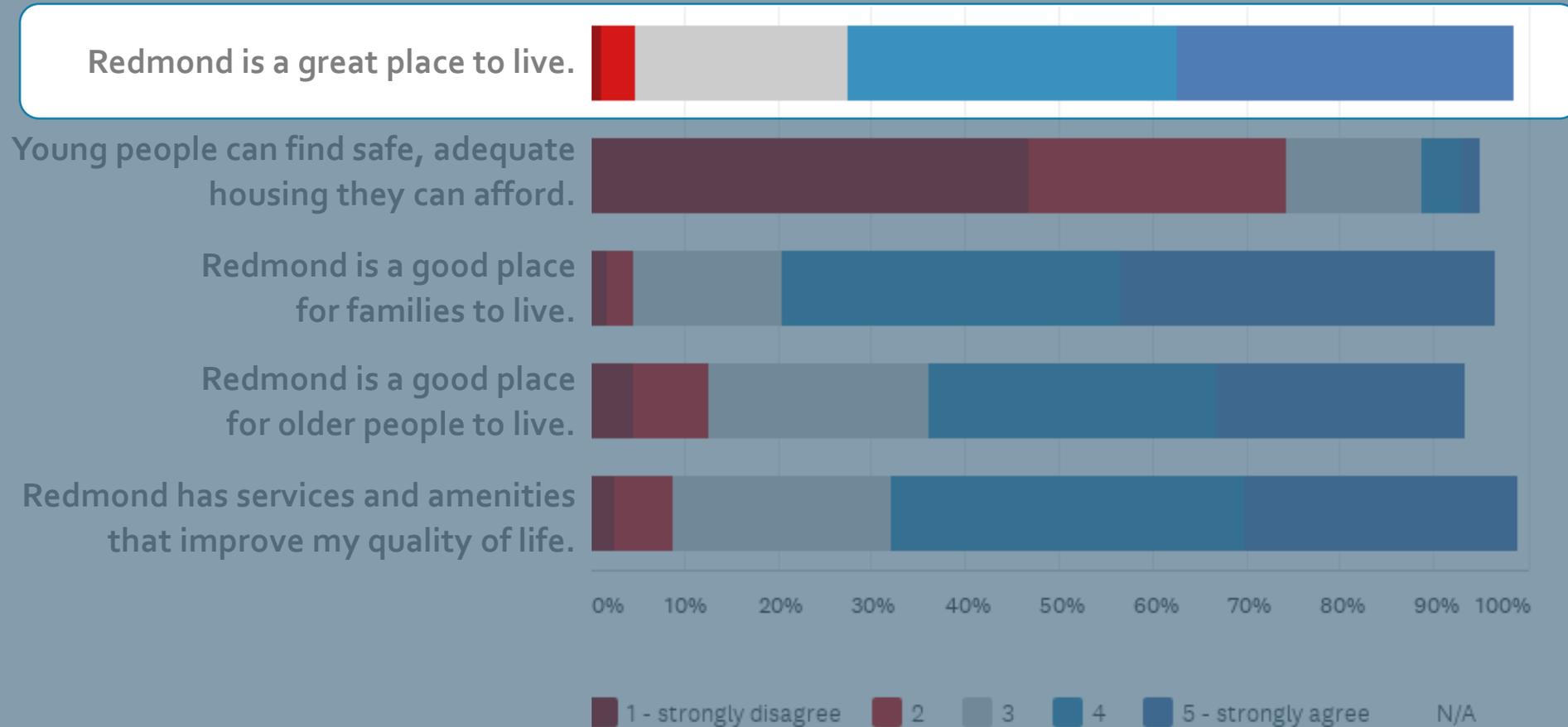
*"Housing is the lynchpin of a sustainable community. The three-legged stool of sustainability balances Environment, Economy, and Equity. Effectively-planned housing does all of that. It cuts carbon emissions and preserves the environment, it helps maintain an economy through prudent investment and accessible jobs while building equity by providing housing choices for a range of incomes."*

## Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?



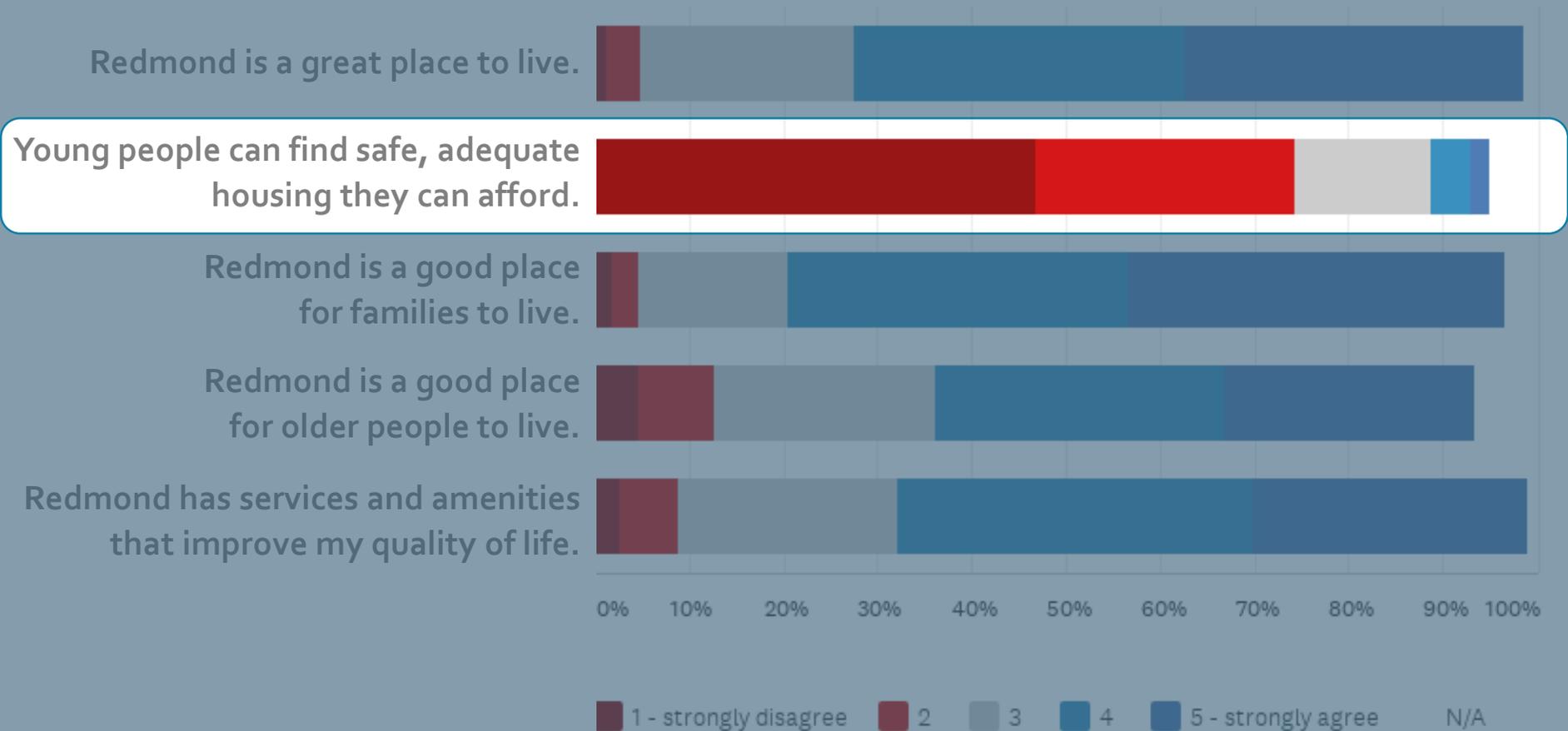
# Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?

Of those who responded, Redmond homeowners are three times as likely to agree compared to Redmond renters.

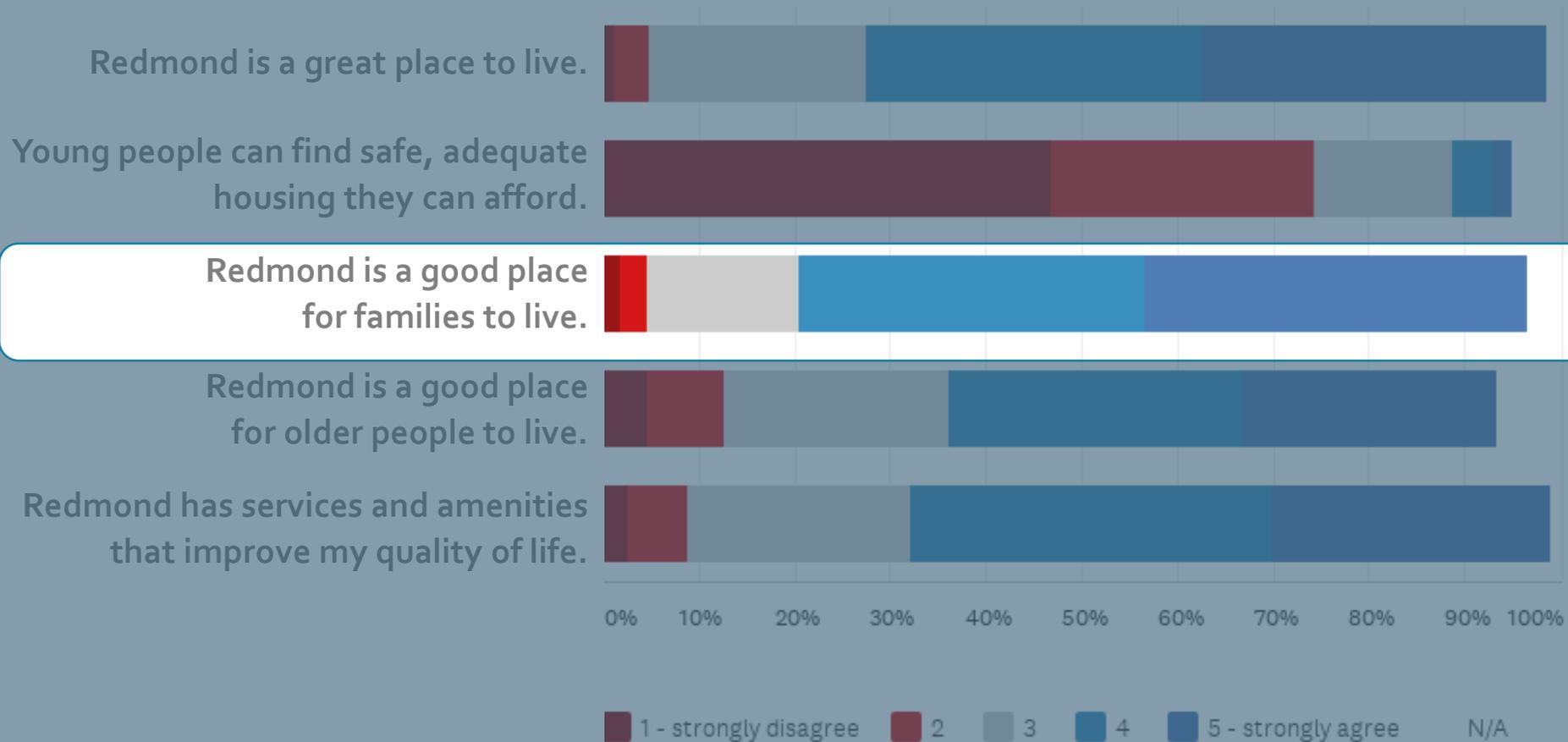


# Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents who make more than \$100,000/year are twice as likely to agree compared to respondents who make less than \$100,000/year, and this perception is expressed consistently regardless of age.



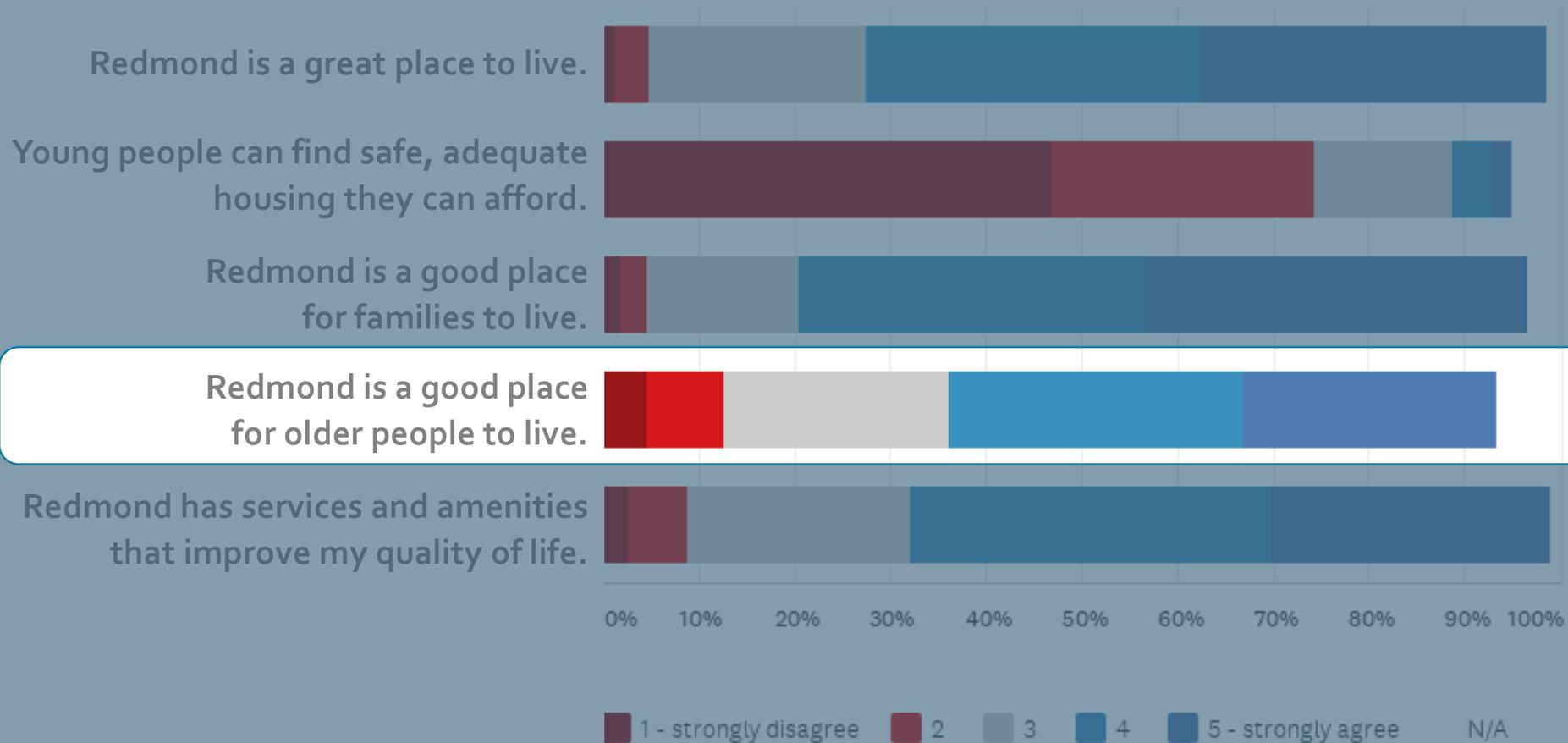
# Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?



Families with more than 1 child are more likely to say that they couldn't find a home whose size/structure fit their needs.

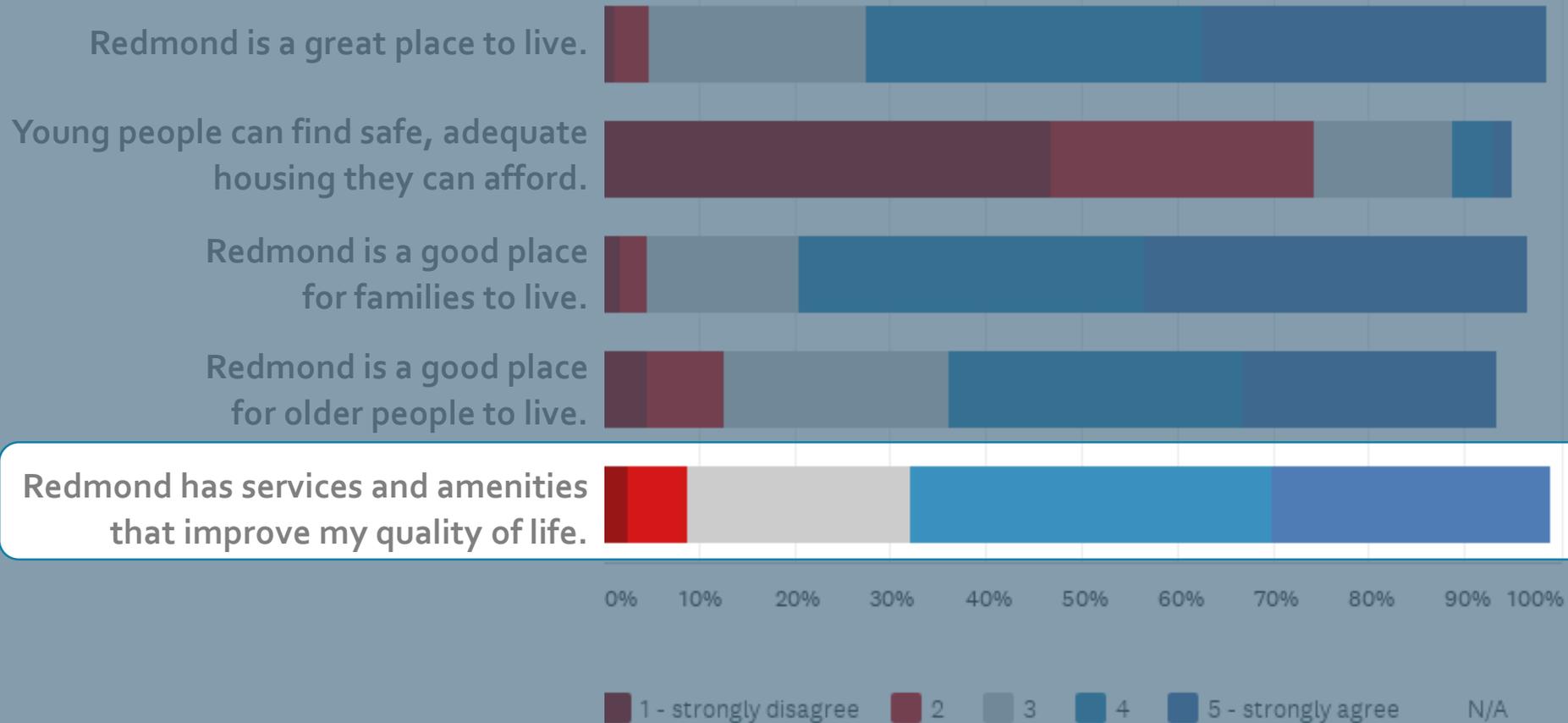
# Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?

Of those who responded, older people who make more than \$100,000/year are three times as likely to agree compared to older people who make less than \$100,000/year .



# Q: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statements?

Results indicate that Redmond residents and people who work but don't live in Redmond are equally likely to agree, suggesting that both groups derive value from the services and amenities offered by Redmond.



- Would love options for smaller living with some outdoor space.
- Renters face risks and need more protection.
- Good schools can be a code for wealth, and people shop for homes based on schools.
- Much of the townhouse development has remained as (expensive) rentals.

Perception 3.  
**Homeownership  
is preferred over  
renting but seems  
out-of-reach  
for many.**



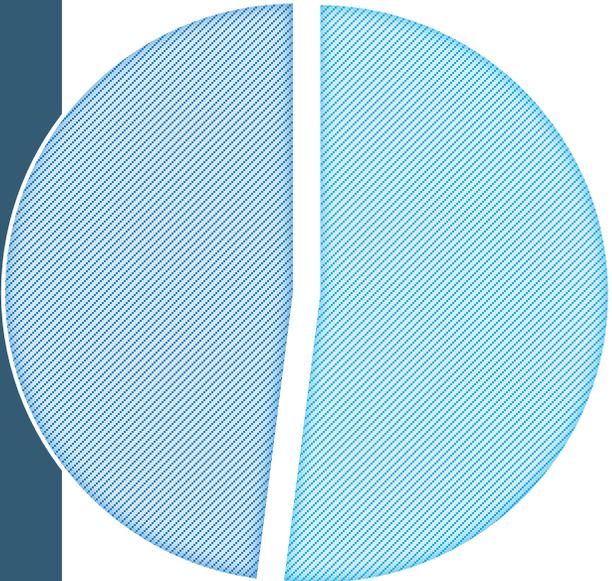
*"Mortgages bring predictability and stability in a way that renting doesn't."*

*"We are only able to stay in our home because we aren't at the mercy of rents being raised year after year."*

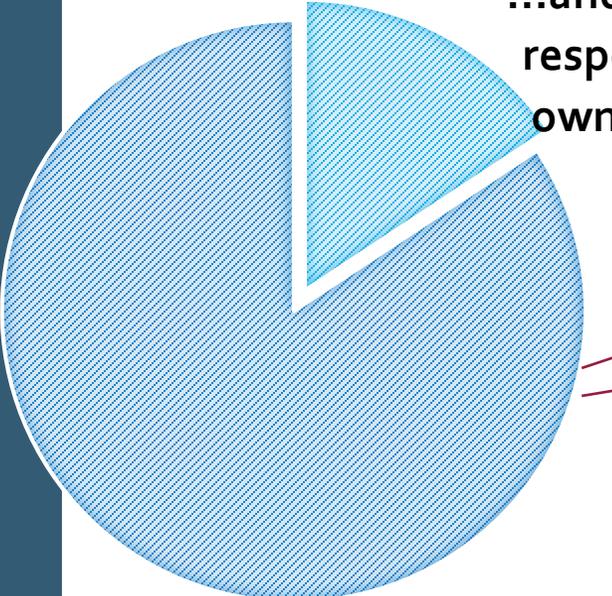
*"I would love to live in Redmond. I would save so much time and money on gas, but the security of homeownership is more important than location, and I simply can't afford to buy a house in – or close to – Redmond."*

**Q: Are housing payments a serious financial burden?**

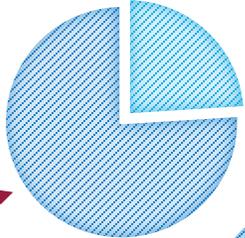
**A: Redmond renters are significantly more likely than Redmond homeowners to agree.**



More than half of respondents that rent (52%) said rent payments are a serious financial burden



...and only 16% of respondents that own a home said the same.



But that represents nearly 1 in 4 respondents who own a home (24%) who pay a mortgage each month

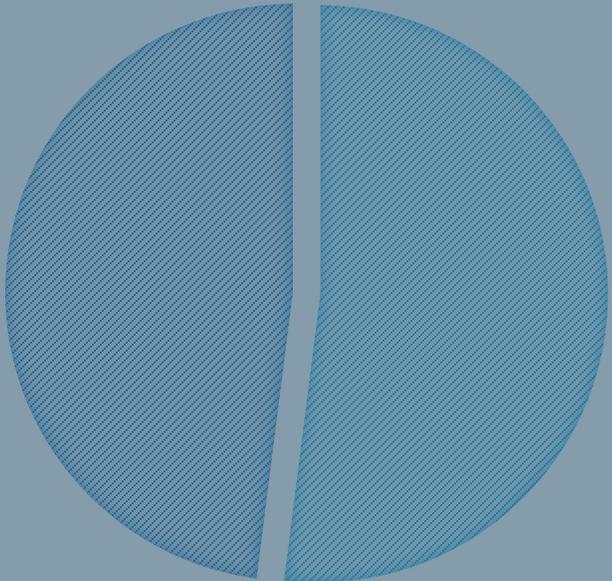


...compared to just 1% of homeowners who own their homes free and clear.

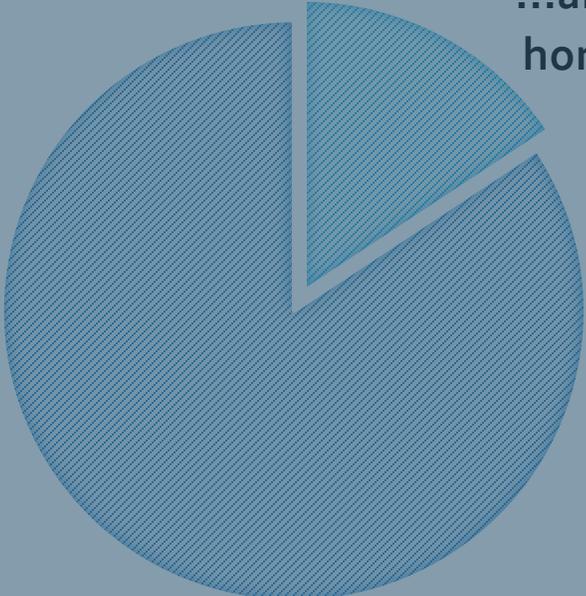
Source: Questionnaire

Q: Are housing payments a serious financial burden?

A: Respondents that rent were significantly more likely than Redmond homeowners to agree.



More than half of renters (52%) said rent payments are a serious financial burden



...and only 16% of homeowners said the same.

**Much higher than we saw with the Housing Needs Assessment:**

**REDMOND - RENTER**

Cost Burdened	Severely Cost Burdened
<b>13.8%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

*\*Cost burden: Paying more than 30% of household income for housing (rent or mortgage, plus utilities).*

**REDMOND - HOMEOWNER**

Cost Burdened	Severely Cost Burdened
<b>9.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

*\*Severe cost burden: Paying more than 50% of household income for housing (rent or mortgage, plus utilities).*

Likely for two reasons:

- Who answered the questionnaire?
- Not based on cost-burden methodology.

Still significant qualitative data point, because people *feel* burdened by the housing payments.

Data from the needs assessment may also obscure the hardship faced by different types of homeowners.

**REDMOND - RENTER**

Cost Burdened	Severely Cost Burdened
<b>13.8%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

*\*Cost burden: Paying more than 30% of household income for housing (rent or mortgage, plus utilities).*

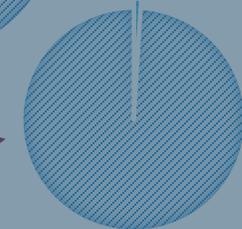
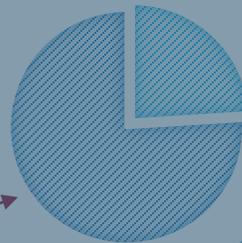
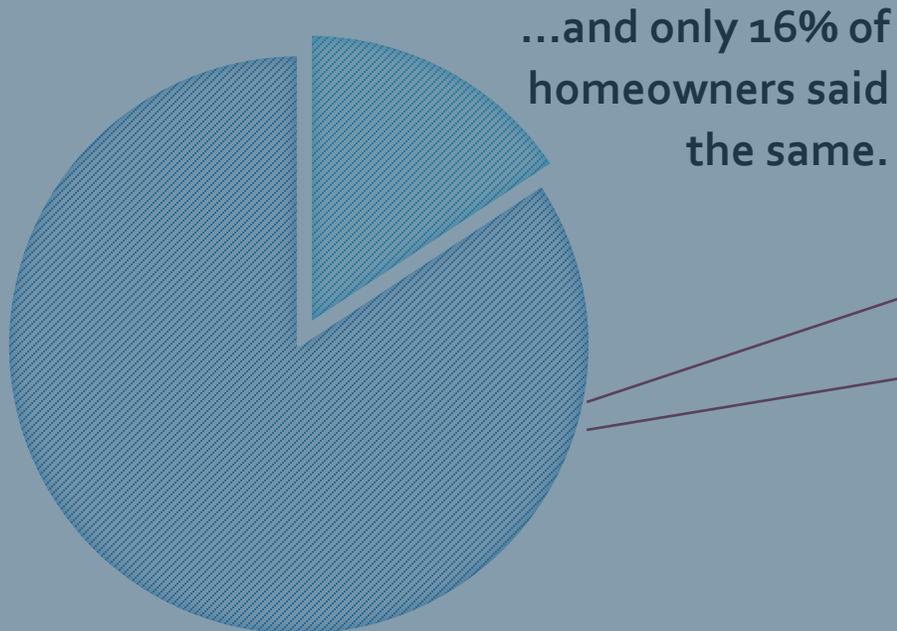
**REDMOND - HOMEOWNER**

Cost Burdened	Severely Cost Burdened
<b>9.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

*\*Severe cost burden: Paying more than 50% of household income for housing (rent or mortgage, plus utilities).*

Q: Are housing payments a serious financial burden?

A: Respondents that rent are significantly more likely than respondents that own a home to agree.



- Housing is an economic development issue.
  - Some employees commute up to 5 hours a day to work in Redmond; district is losing staff.
  - School district is losing people to Snohomish and Monroe because people want to work where they live.
- For some businesses, a primary concern is workforce housing and this has been a perpetual problem in Redmond.
  - Affordable rental housing is also hard to find.
- Based on COVID-19, the ability to work from home may change the need for office space.

**Perception 4.  
Businesses have  
concerns over  
employee retention  
without affordable  
housing.**

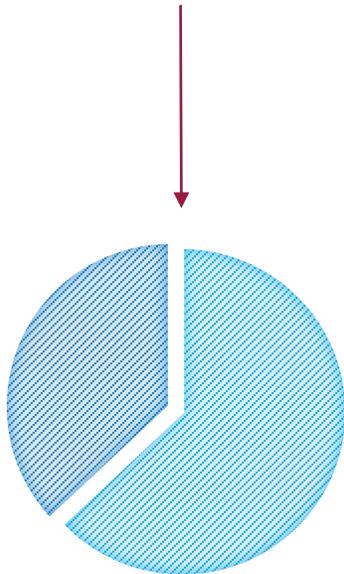


*"The missing middle, workforce housing, cottage housing, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quads, ADU/DADUs – we need such diversity of housing, and there's nothing readily available at a range of price points."*

*"Mostly it's high-priced cottages and high-end condos; no entry-level homeownership and availability for young people, families, and seniors to age in place."*

**Q: Why don't people who work in Redmond live here?**  
**A: Many have tried, and affordability is the top barrier.**

**One in three respondents who work but don't live in Redmond have tried to rent a home (30%) and/or buy a home (37%) here.**



Of those respondents who tried to rent, 63% said they couldn't find a place they could afford.

This is the most commonly cited barrier to renting and buying a home in Redmond *across all income brackets*, though low income people who responded cited it as a barrier much more often.

Source: Questionnaire

- If you're building studio/1 bedroom, you're building for white households.
  - Family-sized units are needed, with space for multigenerational living.
- Design homes and developments with vastu and feng shui in mind.
- Build housing with a sense of community and space for recreation + activities.
  - Have outdoor gathering spaces.
  - Homes need large communal spaces for cooking and eating together
- Moms with strollers need places to go, and sidewalks to take them there.
- Host financial literacy and planning classes for first generation homeownership and non-native English speakers.

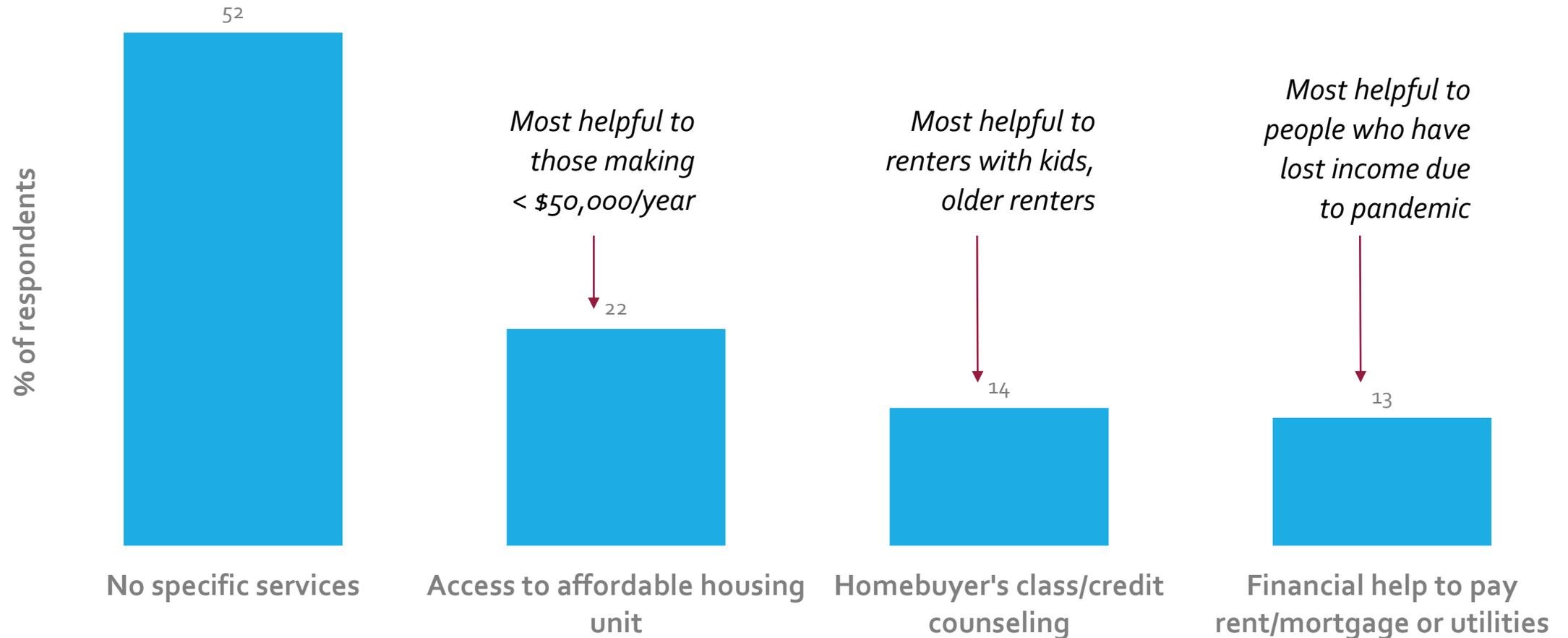
Perception 5.  
**New housing types  
could better reflect  
Redmond's rich  
cultural diversity.**



*"Latinx cultures prize intergenerational families. I want a place, but I want it for my children and my mom and my uncle. It's not home without my family."*

*"Rental assistance is becoming a bigger and bigger issue – especially for non-English speaking communities."*

**Q: What services can the City of Redmond provide to help you?**  
**A: Affordable housing units, homebuyer's class, credit counseling, and financial help rank among top services requested by respondents.**



- People experiencing homelessness shared:
  - They often lost housing through unanticipated circumstances like losing a job.
  - Mix of populations and needs of individuals (e.g., severe mental illness) accessing shelter can be challenging and stressful for individuals who are trying to find stability and housing.
  - Almost impossible to feel a part of a community if you don't have a home.
  - Want to be viewed as individuals – real people – with creativity and the ability to contribute.
  - Credit checks, first/last rent + associated fees for rentals are burdens.
  - Lack of housing is real challenge for people with disabilities (i.e., earning SSI only).
- Stigmas about housing and privilege show up in school settings and affect children.
- Families of color sometimes feel disparaged as neighbors.

Perception 6.  
People face  
stigmas about  
their housing that  
are real, pervasive,  
and dehumanizing.



*"Homelessness is not a resource issue, but rather a relationship issue. Can the city help build a more helpful network of services or help the faith-based community play a more active role in support services?"*

*"We must think about how housing impacts the fabric of communities, especially the children living there. Where do they hang out, play, get to school safely? What is our role in better integrating our communities?"*

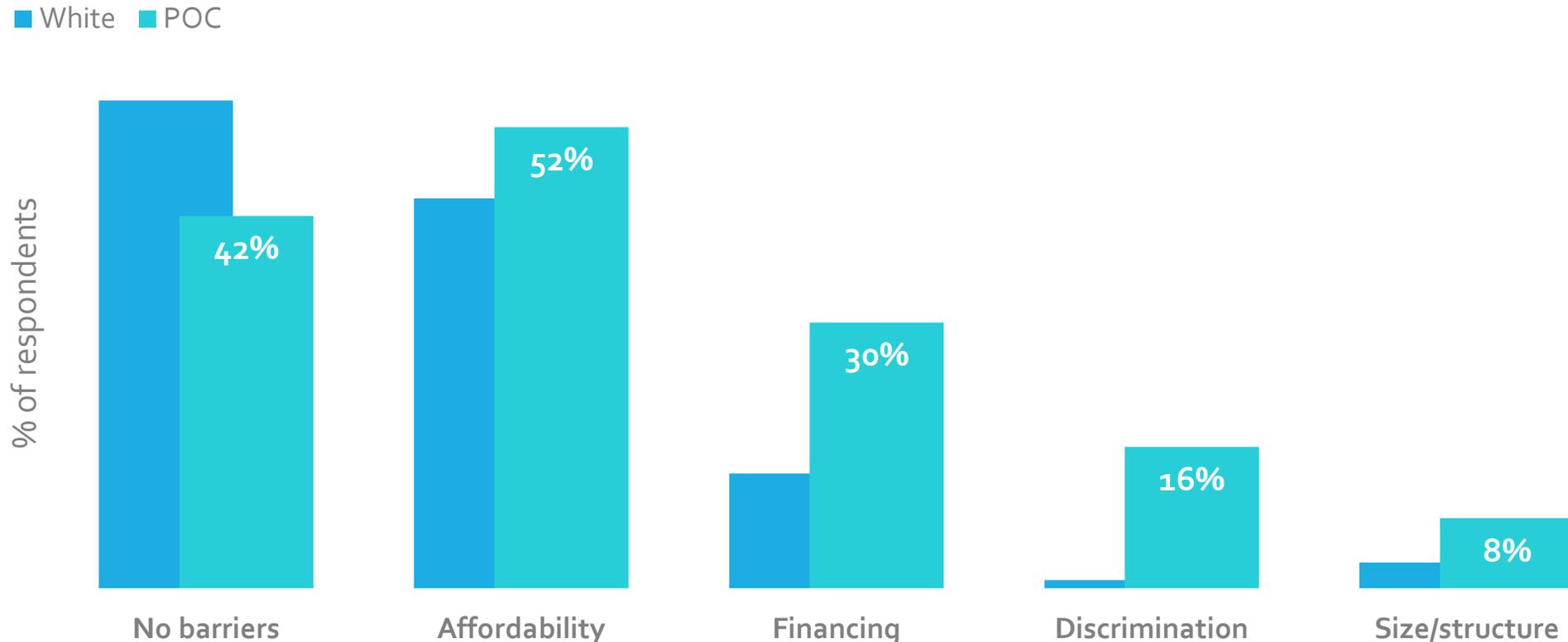
*"The impacts of Covid-19 on housing are all the more reason to change land use code and design requirements so that affordable housing can be built quickly."*

## Q: Do people encounter barriers to renting/buying based on race/ethnicity?

A: Respondents of color were more likely to cite barriers.

**Affordability was the top-cited barrier to buying and renting among all respondents.**

Respondents of color were more likely to say they encountered barriers to renting or buying in Redmond: more than half said they couldn't find a place they could afford, nearly one-third said they had trouble with down payments/financing, 16% cited discrimination, and 8% couldn't find a place that fit their needs.



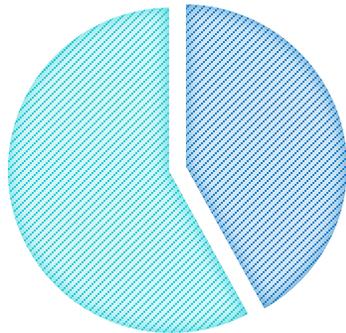
**Q: How has the pandemic affected Redmond residents?**

**A: Respondents indicated that they have lost household income, and this has made housing precarious, especially for renters.**

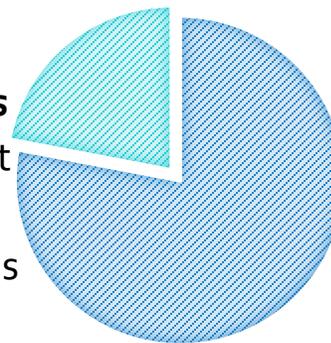
One in three Redmond residents who responded to the questionnaire have lost or expect to lose income because of the pandemic.

Among renters, 58% of respondents who have suffered income loss said their housing was made less stable by the pandemic, nearly three times the rate homeowners said the same.

**3 in 5**  
renters who  
have lost  
income say  
housing is  
less stable



**1 in 5**  
homeowners  
who have lost  
income say  
housing is less  
stable



53% of Redmond renters who lost income are likely to move from their current location, and households with children are twice as likely as those without children.

Source: Questionnaire

# What's next?

*Tentative schedule + next steps*

- Discussion of Housing Action Plan affordable housing tools with Council in September
- Additional conversations with staff and Council through the Fall
- Final community questionnaire in Fall
- Draft and final Housing Action Plan
- Implementation Plan

***Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their stories!***

**Next  
steps**

Questions or concerns?

Contact [andrea@broadviewplanning.com](mailto:andrea@broadviewplanning.com)

# NEXT STEPS

WE ARE HERE

June 9, 2020  
City Council  
Committee  
of the  
Whole/PPW

July 21, 2020  
City Council  
Staff presentation  
Needs Assessment  
Methodology

August 25, 2020  
Study Session  
Public  
Involvement  
Plan

November 2, 2020  
City Council Staff  
Report – Draft  
Housing Strategies

City Council Special  
Meeting  
Housing Programs  
Overview and GIS  
Maps Demonstration

June 23, 2020

City Council  
Study Session  
Housing Action Plan/  
Housing Needs  
Assessment

July 28, 2020

City Council  
Study Session  
Housing Policy Tools  
and Key  
Programmatic  
Options

September 22, 2020

