Peterborough
10-year housing & homelessness plan

"What We Heard" at Community Consultations, 2018-19

A companion document to "A Home for All" (2019), Housing and Homelessness Plan for the City and County of Peterborough

City of Peterborough,

Social Services Division

D b 2019

This is an accompanying document to the 5-year review of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan "A Home for All" (2019).

You can contact the Social Services Division at housing@peterborough.ca or 705-748-8830 to request reference tables with expanded results and a spreadsheet with the detailed community consultation comments.

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Introduction

In 2014, the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan ("the Plan") for Peterborough City and County was launched. At a local and provincial level, we know that the Plan needs to be reviewed at least every 5 years to make sure that it is current and continues to reflect local priorities. An important part of the review process is going back to the community to hear the voices of people who live in the City and County.

The needs assessment of the original Plan included 173 stakeholders that offered their insights into housing and homelessness issues. A large portion of these participants were employees of local organizations and agencies who work in the housing and homelessness sector.

The focus of the 2018/19 consultation was to hear from the community. Staff committed time and resources to connect with people in the City and County of Peterborough. We met people in the community where they were gathered in order to hear the voices of people that may not be heard otherwise. We made ourselves available to people who may not come to our scheduled meetings and who we may not hear from in other ways.

Method

Consultations took place from August 2018 to December 2018.

Diverse ways to provide feedback were offered rather than focusing on one method that may only work for one group of people. Methods included:

- **1:1 interviews**
- **booths or guided sessions at organized events**
- **online surveys**
- **2 public consultation sessions**

In the case of 1:1 interviews and surveys, respondents either filled out responses to open-ended questions in the survey or an interactive conversation took place with the question being asked by a City employee who took notes (if the participant preferred).

Results were grouped into themes. All feedback has been saved and may be further sorted according to themes for further analysis. In the case of consultations with groups of people (e.g. the Social Services staff meeting) feedback was counted as if all participants agreed with the feedback. **As a result, numbers may be higher if large groups were included in the response.**

In all cases, people were able to give more than one response to each question. This means that numbers of people don't always add up to the number of responses.

Purpose

The purposes of the 2018 consultation process included:

1. **Having people in the City and County of Peterborough share their views on:**
    - **What is needed for successful housing;**
    - **Feedback on local challenges to finding and keeping housing in our community;**
    - **Meaningful housing priorities; and**
    - **Innovative housing solutions and approaches.**
2. **Helping the Service Manager update the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the City and County of Peterborough.**
3. **Providing relevant work plan material for the Housing and Homelessness Plan Steering Committee and Working Groups.**

Participant Summary

In total 576 people contributed feedback for the Review using different methods.

City staff talked with 291 (or 50%) of these participants in a 1:1 format, in the community. This included visiting local foodbanks, community events and emergency shelters. Feedback related to housing from the Community Wellbeing Plan consultations was also incorporated.

Online or hardcopy surveys represented 16% of the feedback gathered. 21% of the feedback was at meetings of key community stakeholders (e.g. the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Housing Roundtable). Thirteen percent of the feedback came through large public consultation sessions. Questions received minor revisions in how they were worded depending on the audience.

Communication Methods

Communication with people is a key piece of the work in the housing and homelessness sector. Going out to people gave us the opportunity to ask them what communication methods work for them. It also helped us have conversations about alternate methods of communication if they are limited in the ability to use technology.

265 people responded to the communication questions. Just over 50% of the respondents said that email was the best method of communication for them. This was the number one response. Different methods of using the internet and public spaces were the next two most popular methods identified with 40% of respondent identifying these two areas. There were 36 people that provided suggestions on the best methods to use when composing communications e.g. face to face conversations and posters.

Listening to Many Voices

In the housing and homelessness sectors, there are different demographic groups that have a broad range of housing needs. We are committed to service delivery that is based on inclusive and culturally appropriate responses to those needs.

In the planning stage, it was clear to the review team that the voices of people with unique needs are often the quietest. To hear these voices we need to go to where people are, not wait for them to come to us. It has been our experience that some focused sessions can lead to low response rates from some populations.

To make sure that we heard the voices of people with a broad range of community needs, we included a checklist of areas where people may have unique feedback. We asked them to check any areas where they (or their clients if answering on behalf of others) identified themselves. People could check multiple areas; as many as they felt represented themselves or their clients.

Confidentiality in responses was prioritized over sorting responses according to demographics. Completed checklists were separated from completed surveys that included identifying information and they were counted separately. All participants that completed the checklists were explained the purpose of the checklist and given contact information for further questions if they requested it.

203 people completed checklists and selected 1,010 areas where they identify. Some people only selected one area and in other they identified with five or more areas. They did this in one-on-one settings and online.

We know that we heard some of the voices of people in our community who may have unique needs, who may struggle or who may be over-represented in the housing and homelessness system. We also recognize that the numbers of people who gave feedback are small compared to the greater population. What is also valuable are the lessons learned on how to continue capturing those unique voices as we work through the complex challenges we face in housing and homelessness in our community.

Table 1 – Occurrences of Vulnerability Factors Related to People Completing Surveys
(Self-Identified) N=203

Factor Identified	Occurrence
Having a low income	178
Struggling with the costs of housing	141
Indigenous, Metis or Inuit	42
Fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking (or would like to)	39
A senior (over age 65)	40
A youth (under age 25)	42
A veteran	6
A Francophone (i.e. French Canadian)	10
Someone who has been released from a hospital stay in the last 3 months	27
Someone in the LGBTQ2S community	44
A person with a mental health concern	112
A person who struggles with substance use/ addictions	67
An immigrant or refugee	15
A person with physical disabilities	81
A student	32
Being homeless (now or in the past)	91
Someone who was discharged from a correctional facility in the last 3 months	22
Other (please list)	21

Demographic Results

Breaking information down by some factors related to demographics was important in order to make sure that a variety of perspectives was captured.

A priority of the consultation process was to make sure to ask people for feedback based on their own experience while including others who have extensive experience working with others. 63% of respondents gave feedback on behalf of themselves, while 37% gave their perspective based on their experience with others.

Another priority was to identify whether people were giving feedback based on experiences in Peterborough City, County or both.

- **44% of respondents gave feedback based on experiences in the City of Peterborough**
- **28% represented both City and County of Peterborough**
- **10% of respondents identified their responses as County of Peterborough only**
- **17% of responses were unknown**

Including a range of living situations also became a priority to ensure a balanced perspective in feedback. This question was asked in a variety of consultation methods used, but not all. Participants could check multiple responses if they applied.

In total we were aware of 392 living situations of people giving feedback for themselves or others.

- **77 people lived in dwellings where they paid market rent**
- **62 people received rental assistance in some form**
- **52 people were homeowners**
- **37 were currently homeless**
- **31 lived in a shared living situation**
- **121 responses were given on behalf of others and those people lived in a variety of situations. An example of a respondent giving this feedback would be a Social Services Division employee.**

What We Heard

NEEDS FOR SUCCESSFUL HOUSING

One of the opportunities presented by going out to speak to the community was to get unique perspectives on what is working well and not working well, where people live or where their clients live.

This question was asked in most methods of consultation, but not all. The most common wording for the question was **"Are you getting what you need where you live? What is working well? What is not working well?"**

375 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency.

1. **Community and Location**
   The highest number of comments given (365) were related to community or location. This feedback included positive (208) or negative (157) reflections on the location or communities where people live or feedback on the importance of these factors. Because of its high occurrence and varied responses, community and location was broken down further into themes and is fully detailed in the Community and Location section.
2. **Affordability**
   In the case of affordability, 157 respondents expressed positive comments about the affordability of where they live or the importance of affordability in meeting peoples' needs where they live. A similar number of respondents,151, gave negative feedback about the affordability where they live or where their clients live.
3. **Occupancy**
   Reflections on appropriate sizes of units for the people living there were themed under occupancy. Negative comments about the sizes of units meeting peoples' needs were more frequent than positive comments (144 versus 114).
4. **Unit Quality, Manageable Debt and Landlords**
   Negative feedback about the quality of units where people live, barriers related to debt and issues related to landlords were greater than positive comments (143 versus 119). A further breakdown of these barriers is included in further sections to sections.
5. **Unique Needs Associated with Culture, Living in Peterborough County or Accessibility**
   The 5th highest rate of responses were themed according to unique needs of the three factors detailed above. Because of the unique and varied nature of these responses all three factors are broken down in further sections.

"Rents are unstable, fear of losing rent controls, rising cost of real estate, fear of being unable to afford living downtown due to the boom in luxury condos and high-end conversion of heritage buildings, loss of affordable downtown workspaces. Lack of income and support and lack of early interventions for precariously housed families and youth which leads to inter-generational street entrenchment." Online respondent

CHALLENGES

We also asked participants **"What stops people from finding and keeping housing in Peterborough City and County?"**

379 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency.

1. **Housing is unaffordable**
   73% of respondents identified this challenge in a very clear way.

2. **There are barriers related to income, employment and the costs of living**
   Over half of the respondents (55%) identified this challenge particularly focusing on low incomes in Peterborough and the lack of jobs.

3. **There are barriers related to the community and location of homes**
   This theme is broken down in a further section.

4. **There is not enough housing stock**
   50% of respondents identified this as a barrier.

5. **There are barriers related to landlords, debt or the quality of units**
   A further breakdown of these barriers is included in a section below.

6. **There are challenges related to culture, living in Peterborough County and/or with accessibility**
   Because of the unique and varied nature of these responses all three factors are broken down in sections below.

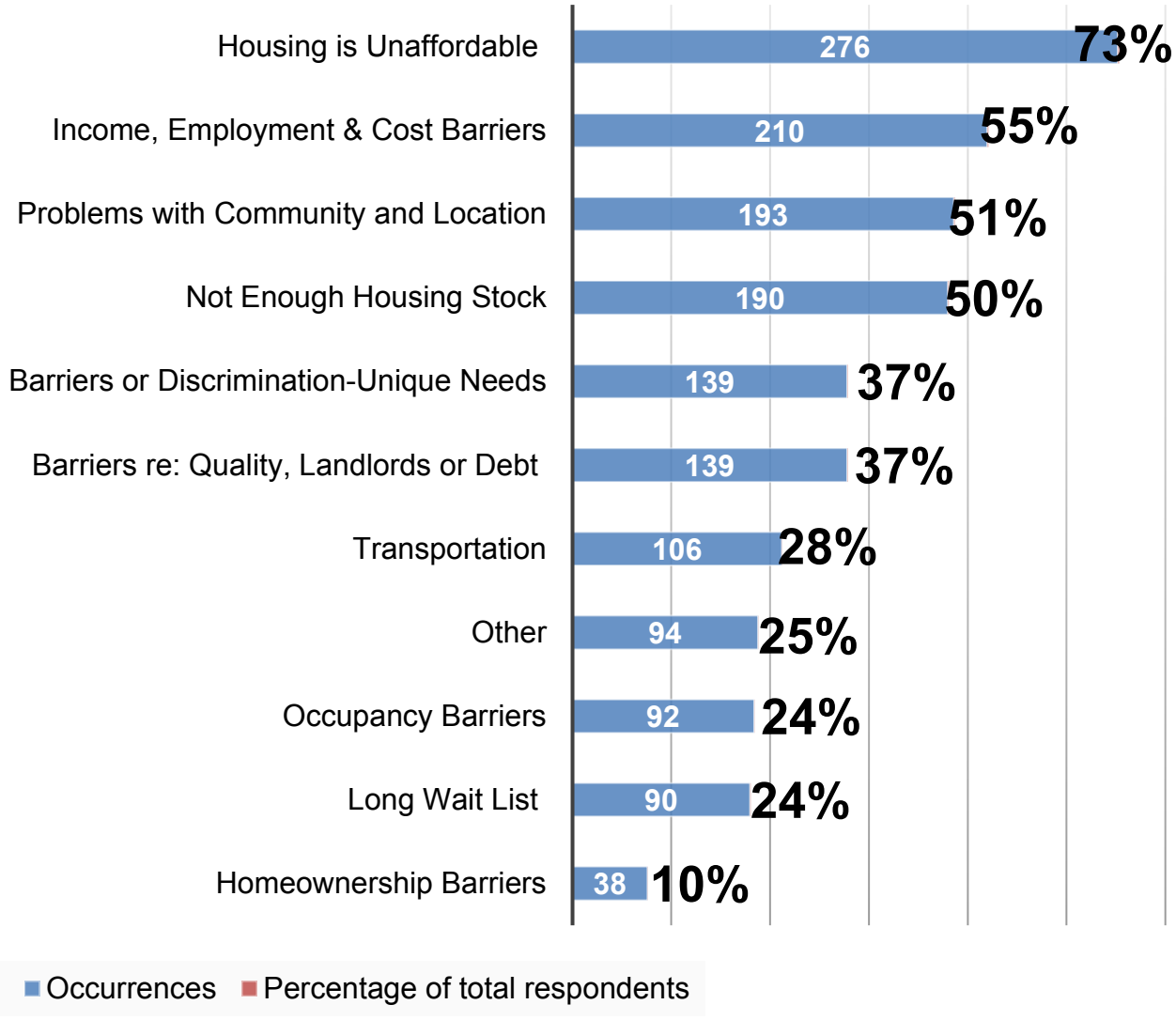
7. **There are barriers related to transportation**
   28% of respondents felt that this was an issue when finding or keeping housing.

8. **Occupancy**
   24% reflected on units that are too small or too large for the people living in them.

9. **Long wait list**
   Almost a quarter of people (24%) felt that the long wait list for housing was a barrier to finding and keeping housing.

10. **Homeownership concerns**
    10% of people reflected on the challenges of home ownership in Peterborough City and County, especially in the areas of homeownership costs rising and young people finding it challenging to enter the homeownership market.

Table 2 – Challenges in City and County



"I have been looking for a place for 2 years and can't find anything in my price range." Community Participant

"Peterborough is definitely difficult to find housing- I would call 100 times per day and call back. It took 4 months. Apartments get snapped up. There are long applications. The landlord will say I can't afford it." Participant

PRIORITIES

A clear area where we wanted the community to weigh in during the Review was by identifying their priorities for planning for the next 5 years.

The question asked to most participants was **"What do you think is most important for us to know for the Housing and Homelessness Plan? What's the most important thing for you?"**

Feedback from Community Wellbeing Plan consultations that included reflections on housing were also included in this area.

464 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency.

1. **Make more affordable housing and/or improve its availability**
   63% of respondents felt that this was a priority.

2. **Supports and programming**
   55% of people identified this topic as a priority and provided feedback and/or ideas. Responses in this area are further broken down by theme below.

3. **Location and occupancy of units**
   46% of people identified this as a priority and provided feedback and/or ideas on where they think that units should go and who should live there. An example of the theme of responses was identifying an area of Peterborough City or County that they felt would be appropriate and populations of people they felt should reside in developed units.

4. **Planning and development**
   40% of people identified their priority in areas that fall into this category. Examples of ideas included: incorporating greenspace into developed housing, allowing basement apartments and feedback related to parking.

5. **Income, employment and costs of living**
   36% of responses identified their priority as addressing these concerns and highlighted their role as barriers to successful housing.

6. **Homelessness and/or shelters**
   31% of responses wanted these areas addressed as a priority for planning. Ideas in this area are further broken down by theme in further sections.

7. **Unique needs related to culture, living in Peterborough County and/or with accessibility**
   26% of responses followed these themes as priorities. All three factors are broken down in further sections.

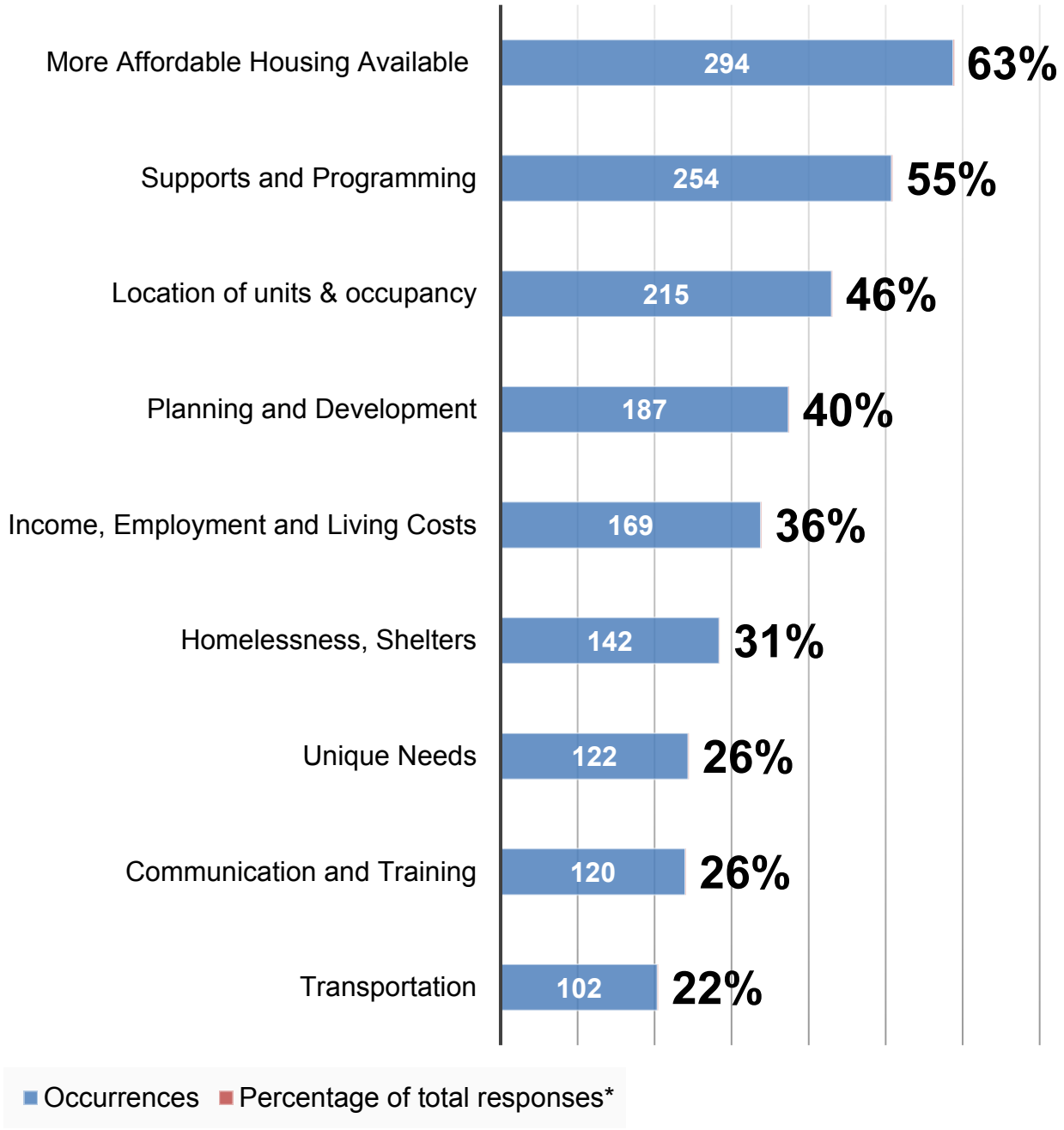
8. Communication and/or training

26% of respondents wanted to see these areas highlighted as priorities. Some areas identified were communication programs for people who are struggling and training for tenants and landlords.

9. Effective transportation systems

22% of responses prioritized the importance of transportation and successful housing.

Table 3 – Housing and Homelessness Plan Priorities



COMMUNITY AND LOCATION

Community and location was the most frequent theme identified when asked about what is working well or not working well where people live. Of the people surveyed, this ranked even higher than affordability. Since community and location can take many forms, this theme was further broken down into sub-themes.

Most reflections came from the survey question about needs but other responses were included from other questions if applicable. Occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency of responses. Only responses that fit these categories and that ranked above 10% of responses are included below.

309 people responded with positive and negative aspects of community and location where they live or where their clients live.

1. **Transportation**
   200 people gave feedback on negative or positive aspects of where people live as it related to how easy or hard it was to get where they needed to go. Negative comments were greater than positive ones (114 versus 91).

2. **Supports or programming**
   152 people talked about this as a positive component of where they live, where their clients live or the importance of this for successful housing. This theme is further broken down in the next section.

3. **Unsafe or poor living conditions**
   123 people gave feedback on poor conditions that they were living in, or that their clients were living in.

4. **Unit quality, safety and/or quality of life**
   119 gave optimistic information about their experiences in these areas.

5. **Location**
   114 people told us in a positive way about how they like the location where they live or where their clients live.

6. **Pets**
   Barriers related to pets were a common theme with 81 people speaking about this difficulty as it related to housing and homelessness.

7. **Roommates, neighbours, neighbourhood and/or the community**
   Negative feedback was greater than positive feedback in this area (57 versus 46 occurrences)

8. **Drugs and/or substance use**
   This was talked about by 39 people as a negative part about where they or where their clients live.

SUPPORTS AND PROGRAMMING

The importance of supports and programming ran through all areas, methods and questions during the consultation process.

Some of the areas directly relate to housing and homelessness and feedback will be valuable additions to working groups as they develop their workplans. Others are outside of the scope of the Housing and Homelessness Plan but may be forwarded to other groups who may be looking for community voices and ideas for their initiatives.

298 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency.

1. **Community programs**
   230 ideas on community programs were shared. Examples included: foodbanks, community events and programs.

2. **Homelessness, mental health, addictions**
   198 people shared their ideas on supports and programming for people experiencing these difficulties.

3. **Subsidized housing**
   105 people had thoughts on subsidized housing such as rent supplements or programs they felt worked or did not work in Peterborough or other communities.

4. **Income and employment**
   101 people had thoughts about the difficulties of income and employment in Peterborough and some gave suggestions on programs that may improve the situation.

5. **Wait list**
   87 spoke about the long wait list for subsidized housing and the need for improvements. Some ideas were shared e.g. seeking for advice from people in subsidized housing who have navigated the wait list and application process.

6. **Seniors**
   27 people highlighted the need for supports for seniors and some offered suggestions of ideas e.g. include food service in senior's places where they can pay what they can afford.

7. **Homeshare programs**
   24 people had ideas on homeshare programs including home ownership with shared mortgages.

8. Youth

15 people prioritized youth supports especially in the areas of mental health and homelessness prevention.

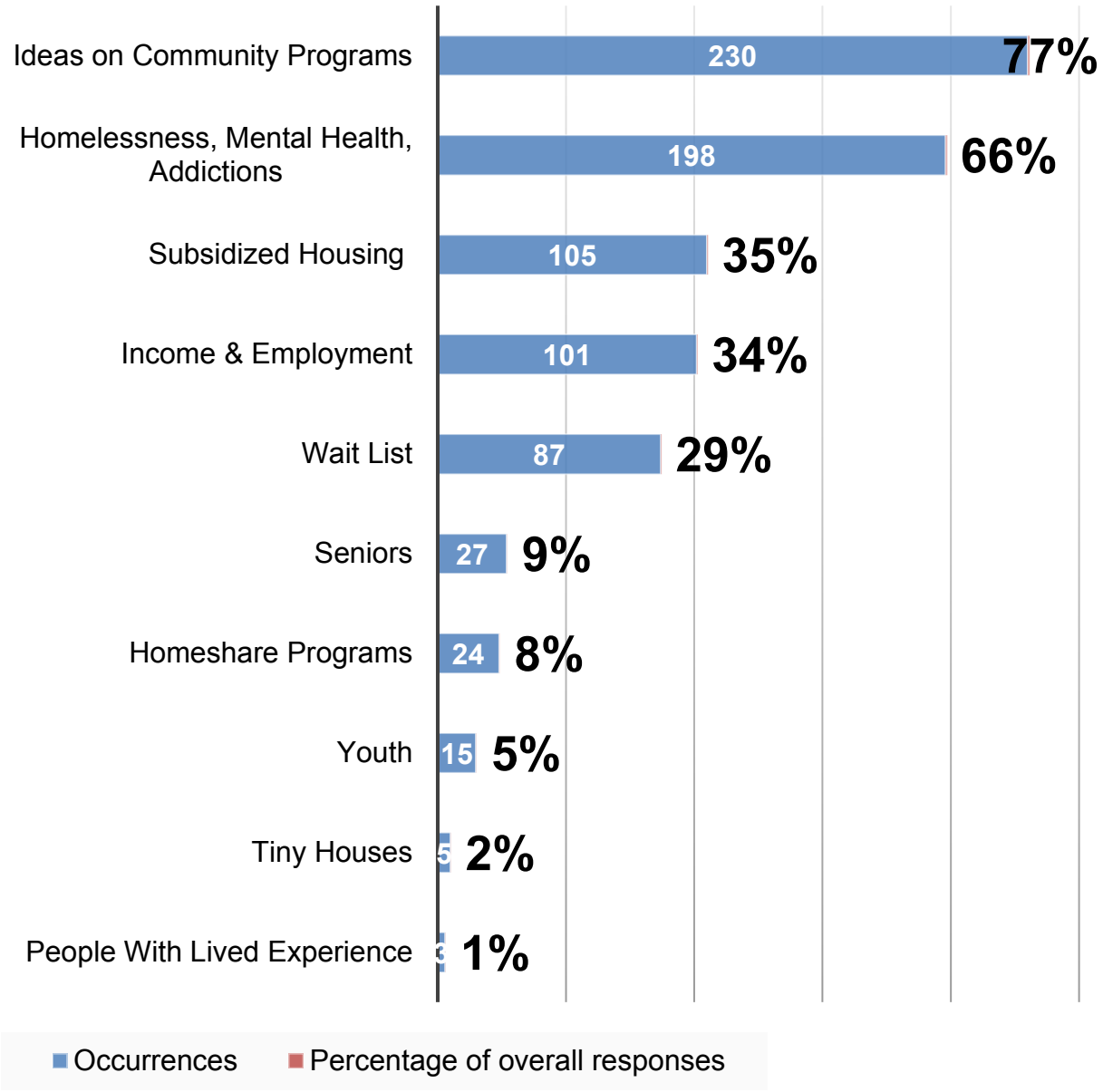
9. Tiny Houses

5 people encouraged the development of tiny homes as an affordable housing option.

10. People with Lived Experience

3 people gave ideas on the importance of input from people with lived experience in the areas of homelessness and youth programming.

Table 4 – Supports and Programming



LANDLORDS, DEBT OR UNIT QUALITY

By speaking with people living in the City and County of Peterborough, we heard many barriers related to landlords, insurmountable debt and the quality of units. Most feedback was given while discussing what is not working well in housing, but this theme ran through other questions as well and were counted into the results.

185 people spoke about these barriers. Included in total responses are 117 barriers that are widely varied in their descriptions and do not fit into the categories below.

1. **Poor repair**
   72% of respondents described the poor repair that they (or their clients) were living with.

2. **Poor landlords**
   59% of people spoke about some of the negative behaviours and actions exhibited by landlords. Many responses included descriptions about landlords not completing repairs in a timely or effective way. Another common theme was landlords showing discrimination in who they choose to rent to.

3. **Debt**
   46% of people described debt as a barrier to getting ahead.

4. **Poor heating and/or hydro**
   45% of people described heat and hydro as a negative factor in housing success (including cost or the lack of services).

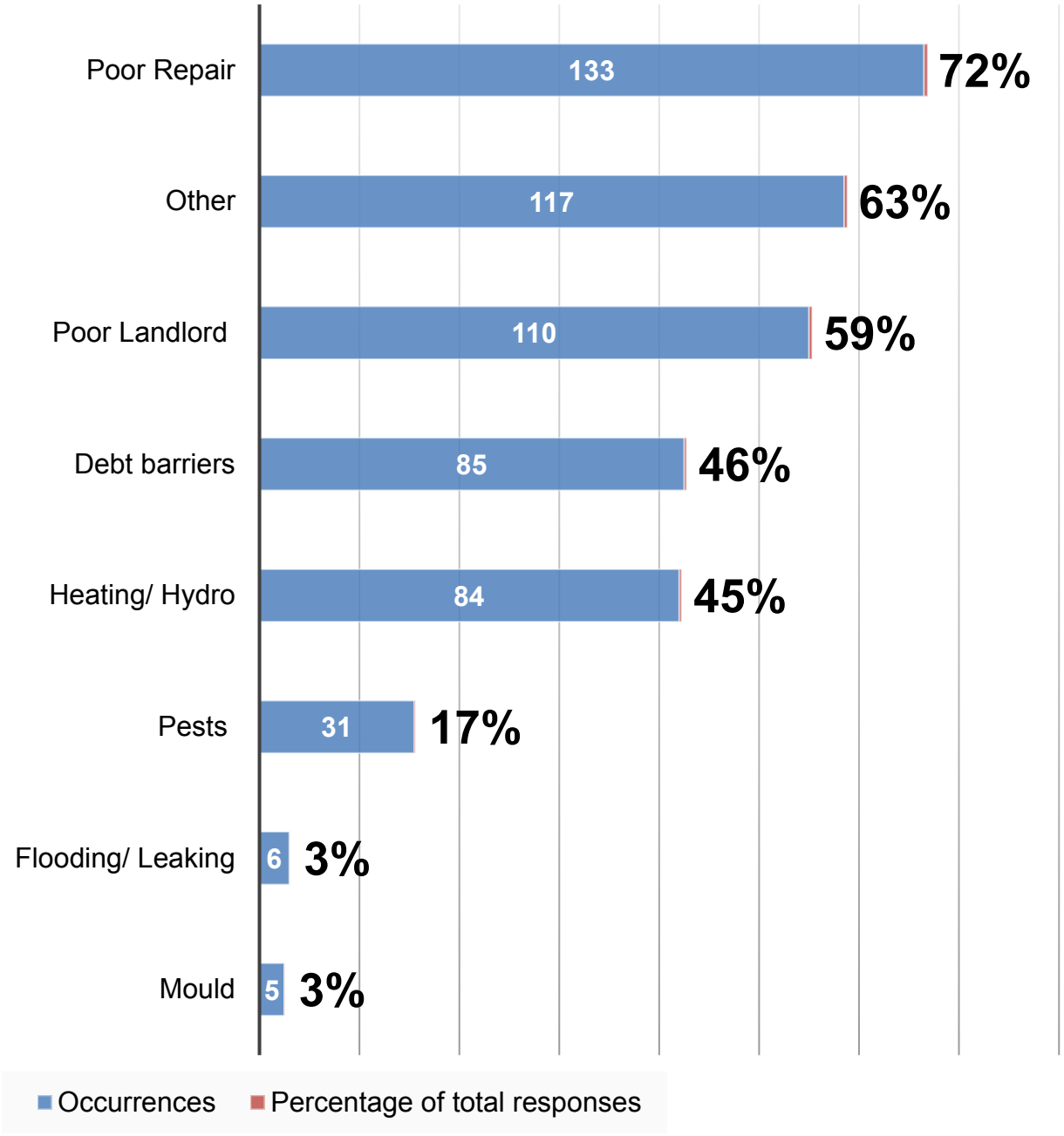
5. **Pests**
   17% of people spoke about the barriers of pests in units, especially bedbugs.

6. **Flooding/leaking**
   3% of people had feedback that included descriptions of flooding or leaking.

7. **Mould**
   3% of people described their challenges with mould in their units.

"Was homeless- in shelters from ages 13-24. Couldn't find an apartment. Found a rooming house- there was a break and enter. It may be condemned by the City- repairs are needed and the landlord won't do them. I will be homeless again." Community Resident

Table 5 – Debit, Quality and Landlord Issues



UNIQUE NEEDS RELATED TO CULTURE

Specific questions were asked about whether people had experienced barriers related to their culture, ethnicity, or religion. Response rates to these targeted questions were low, however other forms of barriers related to specialized cultures emerged in other general questions.

155 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency.

1. **Religion, culture and/or ethnic origin**
   120 people spoke about themselves or their clients experiencing discrimination as a result of these factors. Common themes included landlords not renting to them as a result of their culture or ethnicity or landlords showing preference to New Canadians when renting units.

2. **Poverty, social assistance and/or homelessness**
   112 people described discrimination they or their clients had experienced mainly in the form of landlords not renting units because of applicants being homeless, of low income or receiving social assistance.

3. **Age**
   93 people identified age discrimination when they or their clients tried to secure housing. This was especially described in the case of landlords not wanting to rent to youth.

4. **Gender and sexual orientation**
   93 people identified gender and sexual orientation as a barrier to people accessing housing and landlords discriminating against these applications.

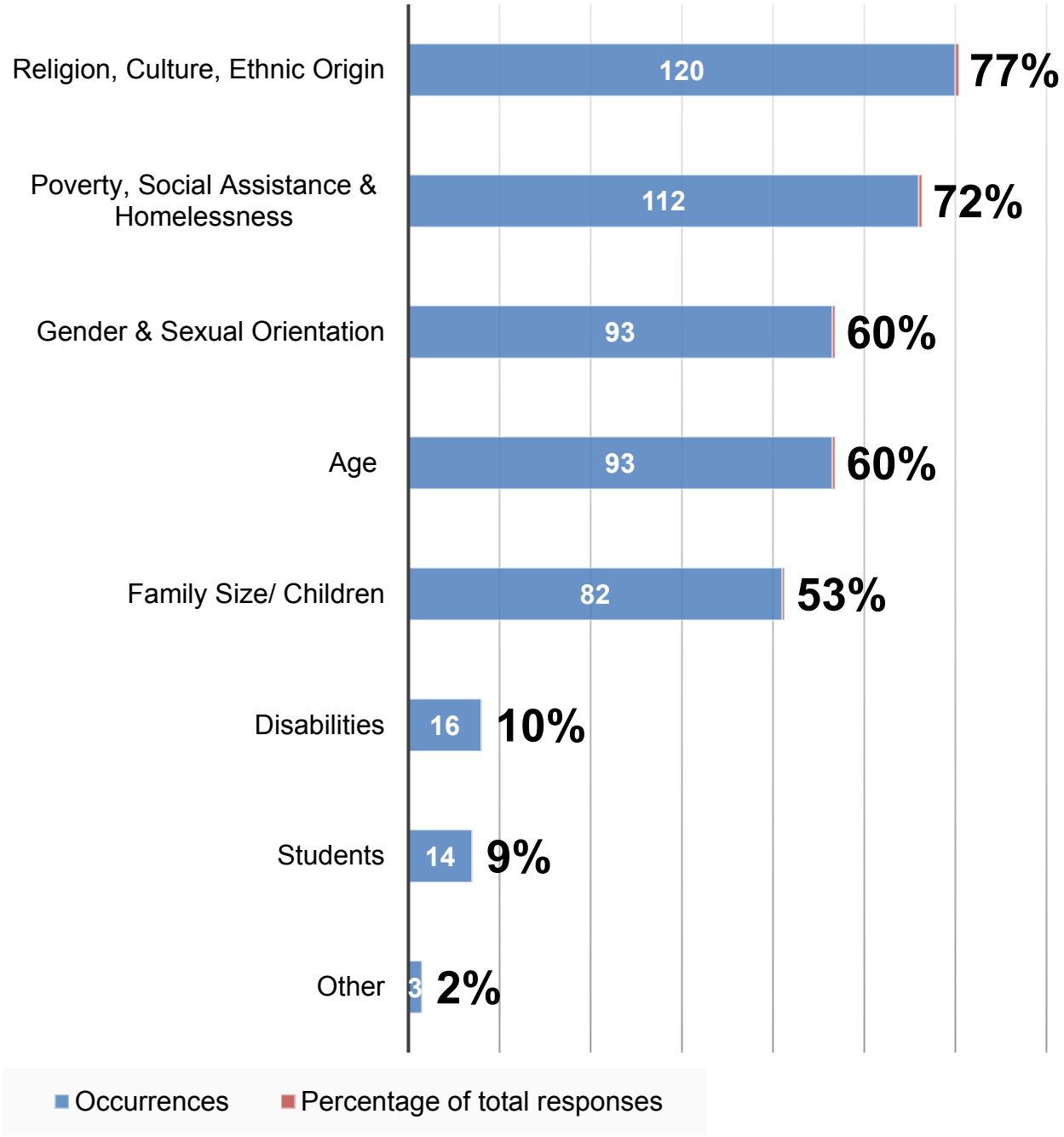
5. **Family size and/or number of children**
   82 people spoke about landlords not wanting to rent to families with children.

6. **Disabilities**
   16 people identified disabilities as a reason why people were discriminated against securing housing.

7. **Students**
   14 people spoke about experiencing competition in the rental market as a result of landlords showing preference to students.

"I want to break the cycle of poverty." Community Consultation Participant

Table 6 – Unique Needs Related to Culture



UNIQUE NEEDS RELATED TO LIVING IN PETERBOROUGH COUNTY

Responses to special considerations related to living in Peterborough County were prioritized in sessions that were conducted in the various townships. Scattered responses were also given during general feedback methods such as online surveys.

151 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below and in Appendix 12 ordered by frequency. Included in total response numbers are 104 comments that were widely varied in their descriptions and do not fit into the categories below.

1. **Transportation considerations**
   128 people spoke about the challenges of convenient, accessible and effective transportation in the County especially as it related to accessing amenities.

2. **More affordable housing needed**
   124 people identified this as a need in Peterborough County.

3. **Lack of services and/or amenities**
   106 people identified that this is a challenge in Peterborough County. Examples of amenities identified included: counselling and medical services, parks, splashpads and funding.

4. **Ideas or feedback on planning and development**
   40 people had ideas in these areas. Examples included the inclusion of secondary suites and financial breaks for home builders.

5. **Mismatch of what is needed versus what it is being built or available**
   This observation was identified by 29 people.

6. **Homeownership barriers**
   24 people spoke about these barriers especially as it related to rising housing costs, difficulties for people to get into the home ownership market and the effect this can have on communities and families.

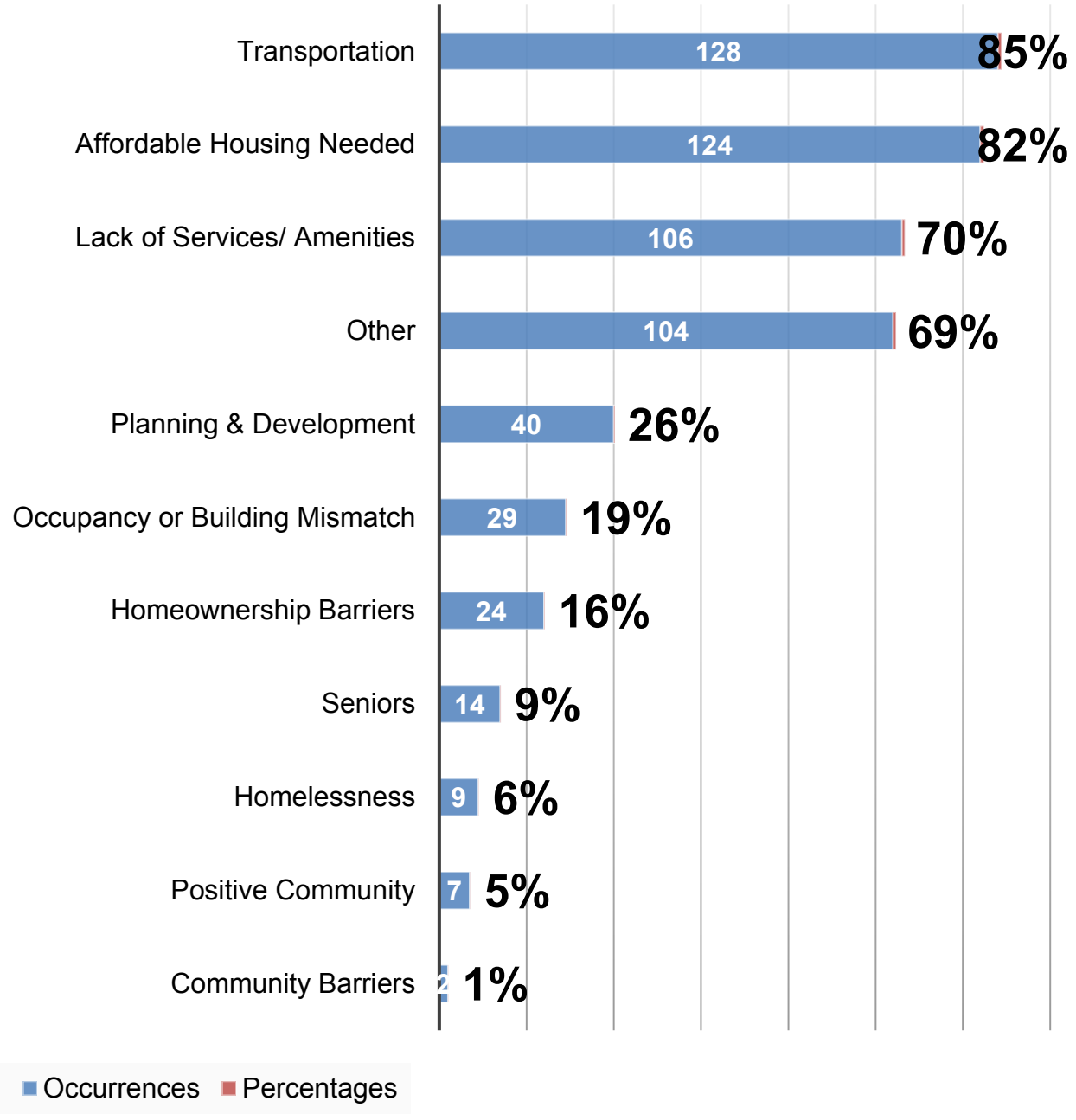
7. **Seniors**
   14 people spoke about seniors and the need for housing and amenities for this population.

8. **Homelessness**
   9 people gave feedback on the complexities of homelessness as it looks in the County.

9. Community

9 people shared their positive and negative experiences with community in the County. Positive experiences included the supportive residents in smaller communities. Negative experiences included the lack of businesses.

Table 7 – Unique Needs Related to Living in Peterborough County



UNIQUE NEEDS RELATED TO ACCESSIBILITY

Specific questions were asked about whether people had experienced barriers related to accessibility. Response rates to these targeted questions were low, however feedback was gathered in other general questions and targeted sessions with key groups e.g. the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

174 people responded to this question; occurrences are detailed below ordered by frequency. Included in total response numbers are 35 comments that were widely varied in their descriptions and do not fit into the categories below.

1. **Income, Employment and Funding**
   86 people spoke about these barriers including the challenges of income and employment when one has accessibility needs and how this carries over to problems in housing.

2. **Unit Modifications**
   49 people described unit modifications that they (or their clients) required to accommodate their needs and which may or may not have been completed.

3. **Stairs**
   43 people talked about the need for a lack of stairs in units existing now or in the future.

4. **Supports and Services**
   36 people described support services needed for people with accessibility needs that they (or their clients) required or were receiving.

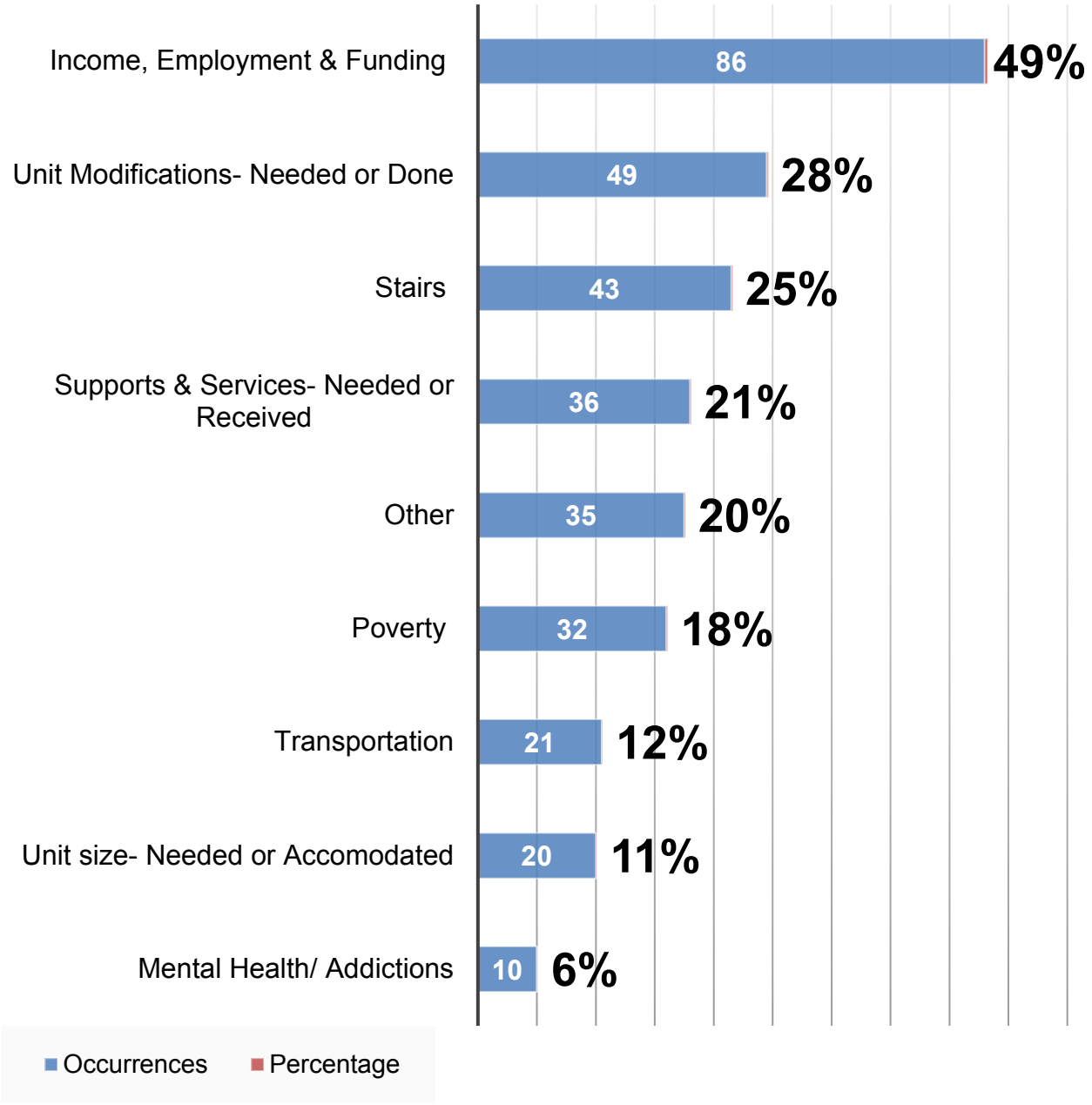
5. **Poverty**
   32 people talked about the challenges of poverty when accessibility needs are present.

6. **Transportation**.
   21 people expressed their thoughts about barriers related to transportation and accessibility needs. Examples included the cost and challenges with transit (including getting to the bus stop in winter).

7. **Unit size**
   20 people described challenges or successes with unit sizes meeting the needs of the people with accessibility considerations who live there. This included extra rooms for mobility devices.

8. **Mental Health and/or Addictions**
   10 people talked about the accessibility needs of people struggling with mental health concerns and/or addictions.

Table 8 – Unique Needs Related to Accessibility



"[my current housing needs are met] but not affordable. I have needs [related to my wheelchair]. Accessible to get in and out but I have to get out of my wheelchair when I go in there…When my daughter moves out, I can't afford it. 8 years on the waitlist - shortage of accessible units." Community Resident

Public Consultation Sessions

On November 23 and 28, 2018 two public consultations sessions were held at Peterborough Square (360 George Street N Peterborough). Both a daytime and evening session was offered to accommodate the schedules of different community members. **72 people (or 13% of total feedback) was using this public consultation method.**

Feedback was requested in a different format than the surveys and questions described above. Feedback was given by theme according to titles of the possible Housing and Homelessness Plan Working Groups: Building Housing Affordability, Emergency Housing Responses and Housing Subsidies and Support Services. An "Other" category was also added and explored for feedback.

Since the consultation sessions, Working Groups have been re-aligned under the following 2 Strategic Directions of the Housing and Homelessness Plan:

- **Ending Homelessness and Staying Housing; and**
- **Building Housing.**

Summaries of themes are included in the following sections. Detailed comments are available by contacting housing@peterborough.ca.

BUILDING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - PRIORITY

Feedback in this category was categorized into the following themes, ranked by frequency of responses.

1. **Supply**
   19 responses including building housing for youth and increasing rent supplements.

2. **Systems Relationships**
   11 responses including more representation from the business community and involvement with the Provincial and Federal governments.

3. **Renovation and Rehabilitation**
   4 responses including funding for energy efficiency upgrades.

4. **Data Assessment and Reporting**
   3 responses including accurate reporting of the cost to rent a new unit.

5. **Influencing the Market**
   1 response suggesting a rent cap be implemented.

EMERGENCY HOUSING RESPONSES - PRIORITY

Feedback in this category was categorized into the following themes, ranked by frequency of responses.

1. **Services and Systems Gaps**
   29 responses including the need for trauma informed services and outreach.

2. **Prevention and Diversion**
   15 responses including ideas on the importance of prevention and areas where this would be effective e.g. conflict resolution pre-crisis.

3. **Frontline Capacity**
   6 responses including unsafe levels of staffing at the Warming Room and pooling resources at shelters.

4 **Shelter System and Housing First**
   6 responses including a Housing First program for youth and housing based evidenced shelter practices

5 **Coordinated Entry System**
   5 responses including implementing the coordinated entry system and by name list.

HOUSING SUBSIDIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES - PRIORITY

Feedback in this category was categorized into the following themes, ranked by frequency of responses.

1. **Needs-based Supports System**
   29 responses including implementing a system of right sized services based on need (from light to intensive)

2. **Landlord Support and Eviction Prevention**
   18 responses including increasing the amount of proactive support services for tenants and landlords.

3. **Subsidized Housing, Financial Assistance and Community Programs**
   7 responses including using portable money intentionally to target high needs people first.

4. **Wait List**
   3 responses including consultation with people on the (community housing) Centralized Wait List and creating a priority for homelessness on the wait list.

OTHER PRIORITIES

Feedback in this category was categorized into the following themes, ranked by frequency of responses.

1. **Communication and Education**
   5 responses including public education and a "trade fair" for people who need a home.

2. **Employment and Income**
   4 responses including stable full-time jobs and guaranteed income.

3. **Funding**
   2 responses including auditing the municipal budget and ensuring that the 20,000 Homes Campaign is well funded.

4. **Advocacy**
   1 response advising of the importance of advocacy this in the system.

5. **Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived Experience**
   1 response including in-depth advice and research on how to properly implement meaningful engagement of people with lived experience.

6. **Fostering Collaboration**
   1 response including the time required to effectively implement this and concerns about ongoing sustainability of collaboration efforts.

Responses in the Other category will be added to the established Housing and Homelessness Plan Steering Committee or related Working Groups when workplans are developed.

Lessons Learned

Overall, providing varied methods of feedback was an effective tool during the consultation process. We believe that we met the purposes that we identified.

City staff meeting people where they were gathered was also an effective tool for consultation, which resulted in powerful messages and feedback that will influence information sharing and decision making going forward. In many cases, the stories rang louder than the rolled-up numbers and listening was a powerful tool to more fully understanding the challenges and successes of the housing and homelessness sector in our community.

The discussion format of these face-to-face interactions will be taken into account in future planning where the experience of people with lived experience would bring rich input. For sensitive subjects, this intimate format was a better method to gather meaningful feedback rather than larger townhall-type meetings where many people with many experiences are present and conversations may take a less productive turn.

Open-ended questions for consultation were not the most effective method for large numbers of responses. With online surveys, for example, 6 to 7 times the number of people would skip the question than answer it. However, for the purposes of this consultation where 50% of the information was gathered in 1:1 interviews, the open-ended question was the right tool; answering questions that we didn't think to ask and providing opportunities for real dialogue about the realities of housing and homelessness in Peterborough City and County.

Next Steps

Information gathered will be shared with the Housing and Homelessness Plan Steering Committee to inform them as they help us, the Service Manager, identify new goals and targets.

We will also try to close the loop and communicate back to the people who gave us such rich and insightful feedback. Even in this endeavor, we have the opportunity to put their feedback into practice - we will use the communication methods that they identified were most useful.

Lessons learned, information in this companion document and the longer spreadsheet that contains the actual words of participants will be made available to the Housing and Homelessness Plan Working Groups when they start work-planning. This will ensure their work planning will be impacted by the voices of people in our community.

Acknowledgments

This consultation with the community for the 5-year review of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is not the end of engagement with people; it is a foundation for moving forward. This commitment has been identified by the newly formed Housing and Homelessness Plan Steering Committee who has entrenched engaging people with lived experience in their guiding values.

Thank you to all the individuals that offered their insights on housing and homelessness in both the City and the County of Peterborough, including the 8 townships. In particular, thank you to the people who have experienced precarious housing and kindly shared their stories and perspectives.