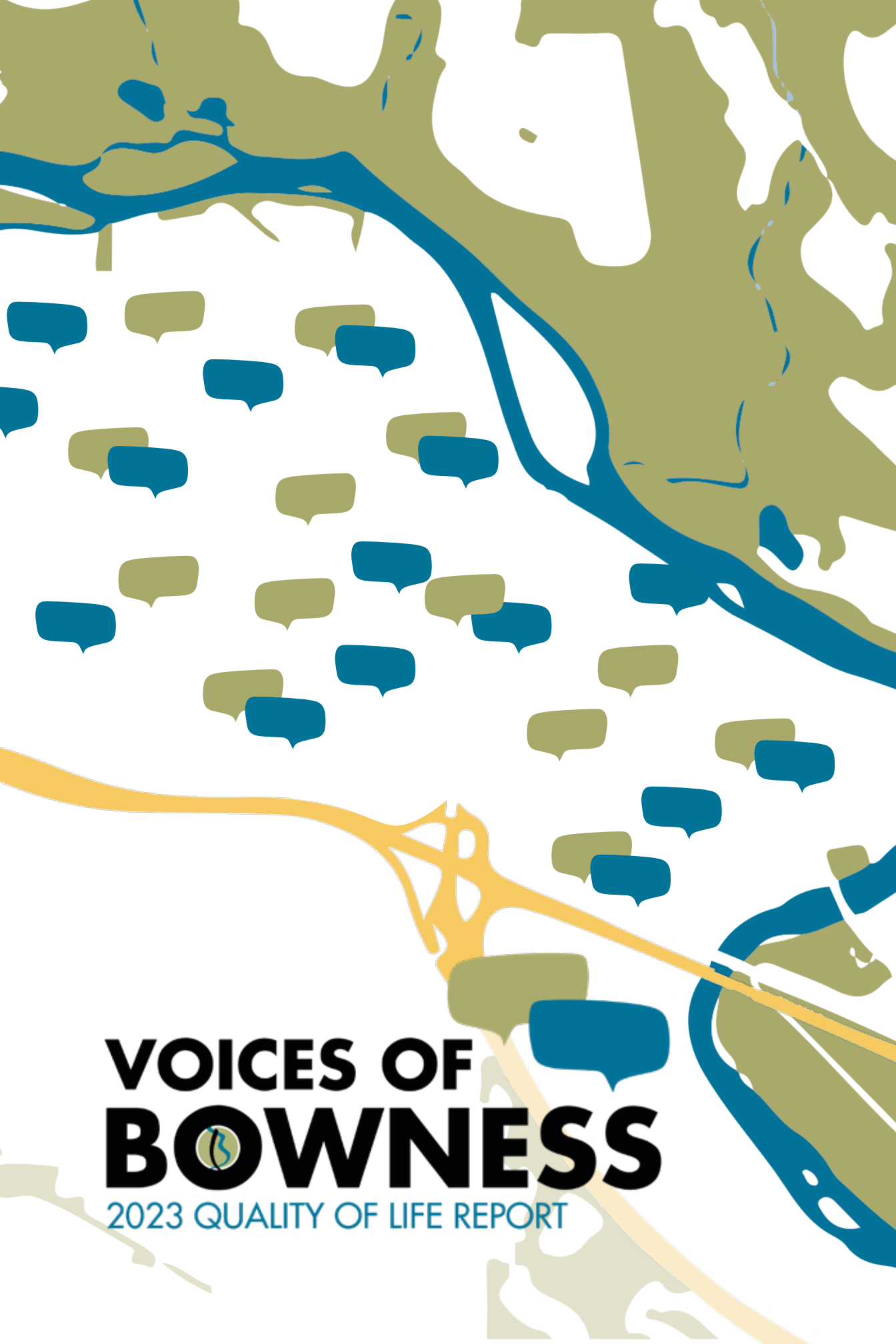


A stylized map of Bowness, featuring a prominent blue river flowing from the top left towards the bottom right. The landmasses are depicted in olive green, and a yellow bridge is shown crossing the river. Numerous speech bubbles in blue and olive green are scattered across the map, representing community voices. The text 'VOICES OF BOWNESS' is prominently displayed in the lower-left quadrant, with a small circular logo containing a stylized 'B' inside the letter 'O'.

VOICES OF BOWNESS

2023 QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT



Land Acknowledgement

Through the first half of the 20th century, our community of Bowness gradually grew from village to small town before a majority vote in 1963 to join The City of Calgary, the same year that our organization was born. Our history goes much further back, however, as for thousands of years this land was a home, wintering site and hunting ground for many diverse Indigenous peoples, many of whom still call our community home today.

This includes those who signed Treaty 7 in 1877, here on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika (Seeg-see-kah), Piikani (Bee-gun-nee), and Kainai (G-ai-nah) First Nations; the Îlethka Nakoda Wîcastabi (ee-YETH'-kah nah-COH'-dah WHISK'-ah-tah-bay) First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki (Chin-ick-ee), Bearspaw (Bears-paw), and Goodstoney (Good Stow-nee) First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina (Sue-tin-ah) First Nation. The City of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis (May-tea) and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

We acknowledge that we are all treaty people who collectively care, share and celebrate Bowness; our village in the valley nestled along the banks of the Bow River as it makes its way to meet the Elbow River, the gathering place known as Moh'kinstsis (Moh-gihn-s-tis), Wîcîspa (Win-cheese-pah), or Guts'ists'i (Goo-tist-see), and which we now also call Calgary. We gratefully hold respect and responsibility in our own work as a community gathering place, and will endeavour to connect and grow together in a good way, honouring our shared histories and embracing our journey of Truth & Reconciliation. We welcome you to join us.

A Message from the BCA

First of all, we would like to thank every single Bownesian who took the time to participate in the 2023 Quality of Life (formerly Vital Signs) survey! Since our last report in 2020, our community, our city, and our world have changed in ways that would have been hard to imagine even a few years ago. While the challenges of the last several years remain ongoing and cannot be understated, we are also in a place that creates opportunity for re-evaluating, rebuilding and reconnecting.

The challenges facing our community and highlighted in this report can seem daunting, and the report itself does not provide answers. However, Bowness is a community with a rich history, and the strength that comes from reflecting on our past also lets us imagine what's possible. Our community is fortunate to have many organizations and individuals working together to support the wellbeing of Bownesians. We hope that this report will help start conversations, inform the direction of future programming and initiatives, and provide a framework for how we can best show up for our community and for each other.

It has been a privilege for the Bowness Community Association to lead this project for nearly 15 years, and we want you, our community, to join us in planning what's next! We are all responsible for creating a thriving and connected community and the Bowness Community Association is here for that journey.

Molly MacRae
Executive Director, Bowness Community Association

Method

This Quality of Life Report seeks to measure the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by residents in Bowness. The findings from this research finds trends and addresses issues that are important to the community and contributes to programs, resources, events, and opportunities brought to Bowness.

**HOW TO
USE
THIS REPORT**

**READ
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ACT**

The survey was conducted via web by market research and analytics company, Leger, using computer-assisted Web interviewing (CAWI) technology. The survey was live from June 1 to July 4, 2023.

The BCA was responsible for all forms of promotion and participant invitations to complete the survey with the support of community partners. A link posted on the Bowness Community Association website was the primary entry point into the survey with the option to complete by paper as well.

Frequencies, means, and other statistics were calculated using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Q Software. The probability sample of 712 respondents have a margin of error of $\pm 3.56\%$, 19 times out of 20, which is standard in social research.

The online survey was based on a “self-selected” respondent population. Therefore, the results should be considered as representative of interested Bownesians’ and may not be representative of the overall Bowness population.

Key Themes

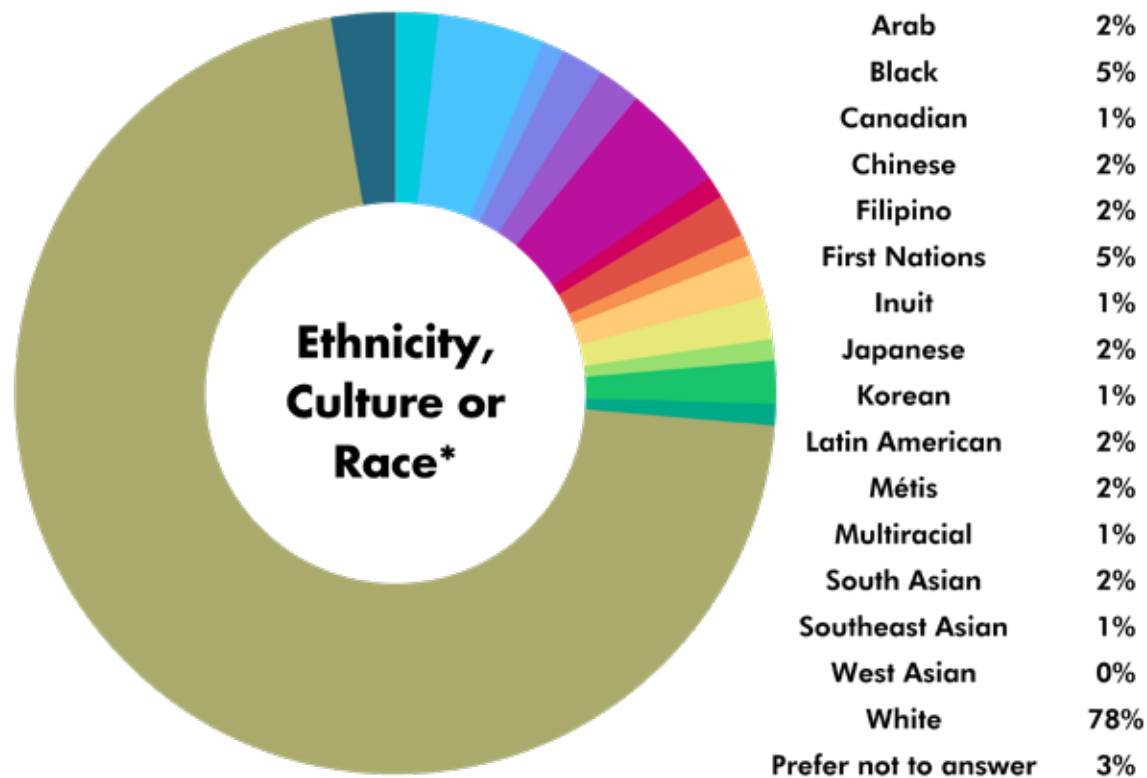
- The majority of residents report having a good **quality of life**, with a small percentage expressing stronger dissatisfaction, particularly younger people.
- The Bowness community demonstrates a strong sense of **belonging and engagement**, with most residents participating in community events and activities.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion** are valued in the community, but there is room for improvement in addressing safety concerns and promoting inclusivity.
- Access to services is generally good, but areas for improvement include affordable **housing** options, access to healthy food, accessibility, and **transportation**, particularly public transportation.
- **Safety** is a significant concern among residents, with neighbourhood safety being a major focus.
- Mental **health and wellness** scores are lower compared to other attributes, including over one third of residents experiencing loneliness, indicating an area that requires attention.
- **Local economy** perceptions vary among different demographics, with men, younger residents, employed residents, and individuals with higher incomes having a more positive outlook.
- The **natural environment** is highly regarded with green spaces and parks being well-appreciated amenities, and a high majority of residents are concerned about climate change.
- Residents show interest in **community-based learning**, and value **arts and culture**, but awareness of programs could be improved.



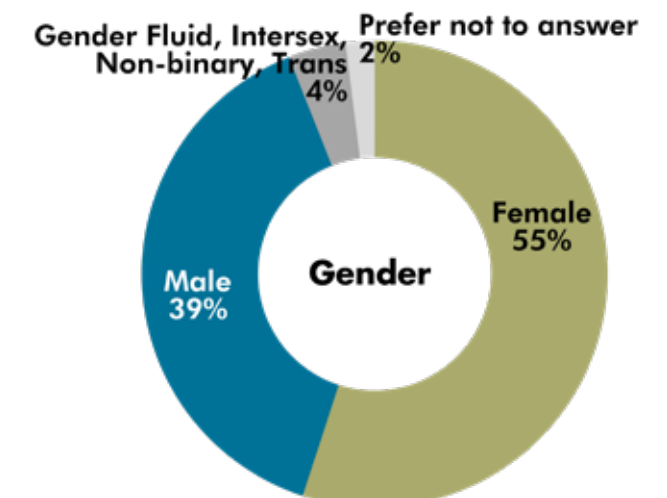
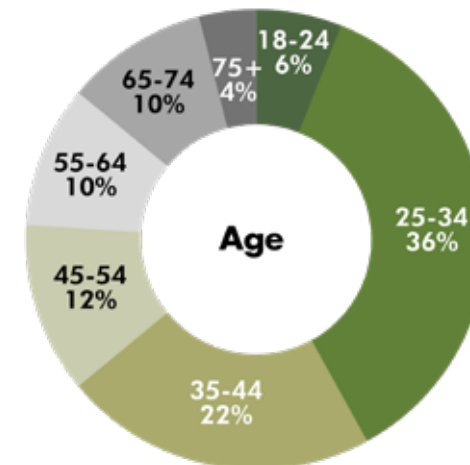
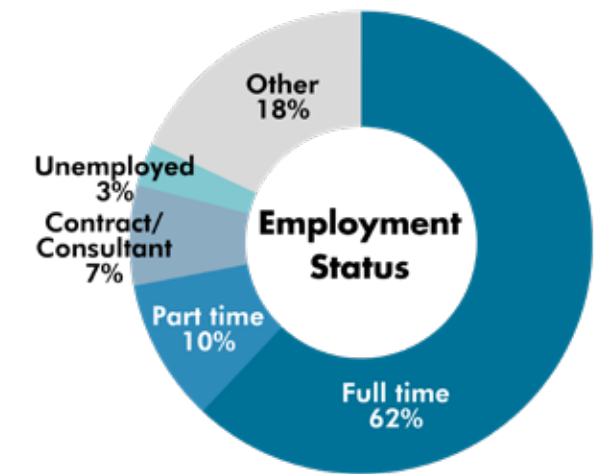
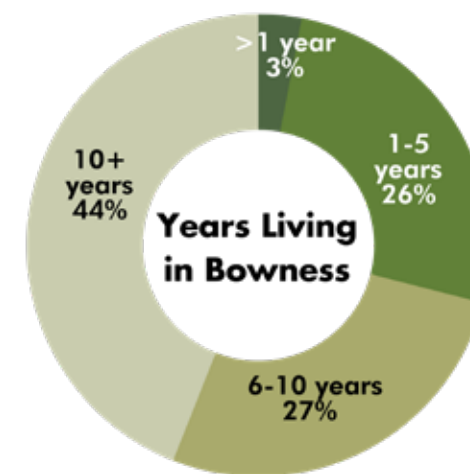
Photo: Adam Fyfe

Who We Heard From

In total, **712** Bowness residents aged 18 years and older participated in the survey. Residents self-identified in the following ways.



*Respondents could indicate identities not listed on the survey, as well as select more than one.



QUALITY OF LIFE IN BOWNESS

“

It's beautiful and quiet. I like it very much. It always makes me feel relaxed. Here, life is simpler, slower, more connected. People know each other.



Quality of life refers to the perception of one's overall wellbeing and happiness as it relates to their goals, expectations, mental health, physical health, opportunities, and concerns.

Overall, most residents feel they have a good quality of life, with younger adults rating theirs lower than other age groups. Bowness is viewed favourably as a living destination. However, there are concerns about long-term affordability, and there is potential to better accommodate those living alone. The majority of Bownesians feel that they can access and afford what they need. However, saving for the future and affordable housing are challenges facing many. Enhancing public safety is also a key focus for the community.

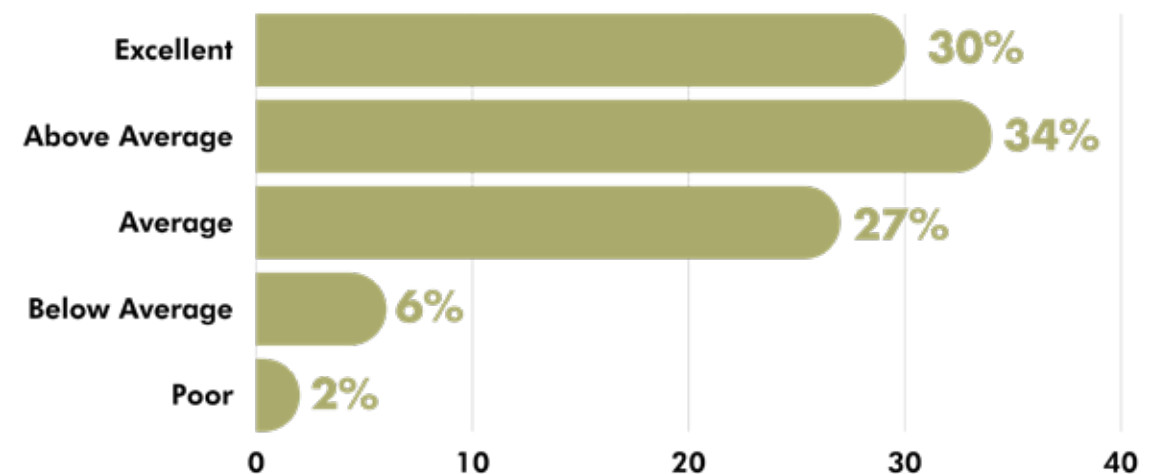
Bownesians love Bowness, and **89%** of residents express various ways that it can also grow as a community.

21% say enhancing public safety remains a key focus for improving Bowness.

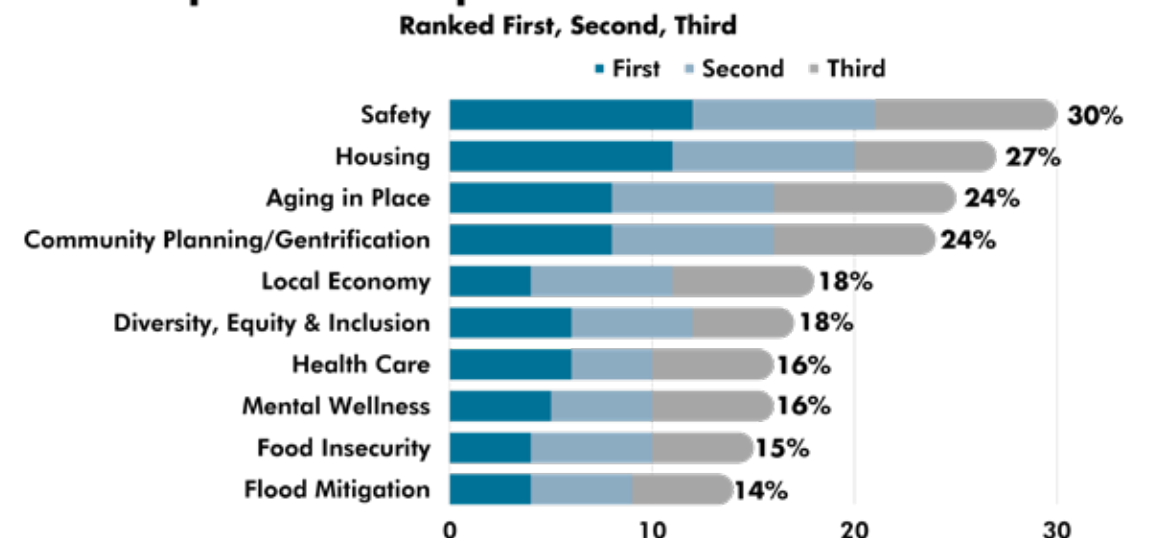
83% of those who require childcare are able to find affordable and accessible childcare in Bowness.

"I already think it is excellent. Any improvement might be in affordability, I think in recent times basics like housing and food are becoming dangerously out of reach for some people."

How folks rate their overall quality of life



Top 10 Most Important Issues to Residents



BELONGING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Since the pandemic, it feels even harder to just connect with the people that live around us. But taking the first step can feel a bit daunting. More casual opportunities to connect would be wonderful.



Bownesians were asked to share their thoughts around Belonging & Community Engagement. Optimally, this would refer to a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity in the community, and whereby there is safety, inclusion, and inspiration to be involved in community life.

The majority of residents in Bowness exhibit a robust sense of belonging in Bowness and connection with their neighbours. Residents have many priorities to balance in life, and though it appears most are interested in volunteering and getting involved in community, many don't have the time or energy. Others worry about a new experience or simply don't know where or how to volunteer. Newsletters (print and electronic), social media and community events are the top reported methods of engagement with the BCA. There are opportunities to improve a growing range of programs and activities, volunteer opportunities, and drop-in spaces.

82% of Bownesians know their neighbours.

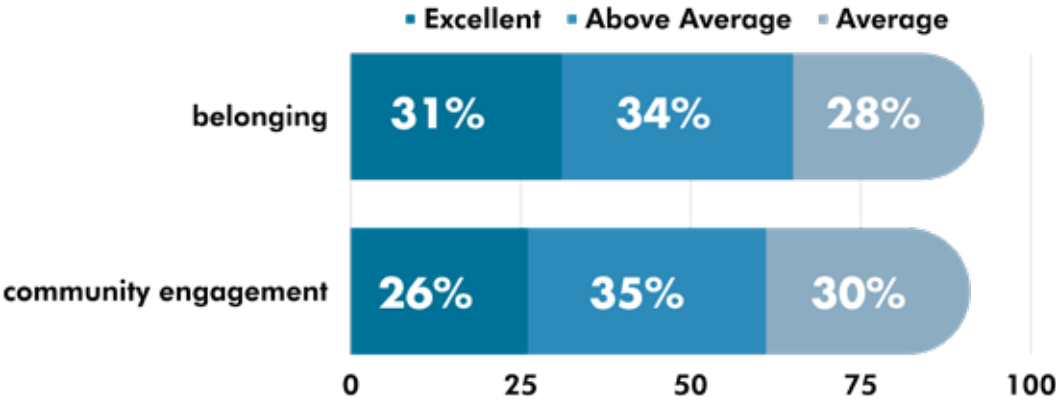
"There is a lot of fear, [disdain] and anger directed toward people in our community who experience poverty or have a history of homelessness. I would like to see initiatives to help change this, as they are members of our community too!"

59% of residents actively volunteer, while **21%** report experiencing no barriers to doing so, with lack of time the most mentioned barrier (**30%**).

72% of residents are concerned about the level of poverty in Bowness.

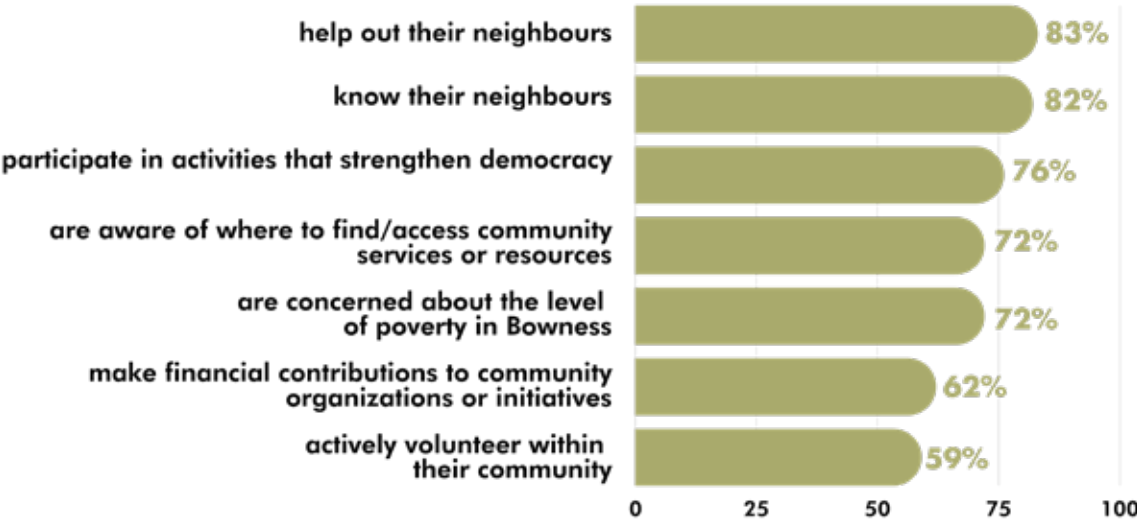
How do residents feel about community connection?

In Bowness, folks feel a strong sense of...



How do residents engage with their community?

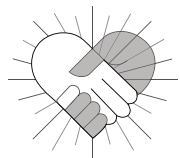
In Bowness, folks strongly or somewhat agree that they...



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

“

Bowness can be a better place to live when racism and racial sentiments is being reduced and being discouraged and to bring about a place where all ethnicity is being appreciated and recognized.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) is described by the University of Michigan in the following way: Diversity means that everyone is invited to the party. Inclusion means that everyone gets to contribute to the playlist. And Equity means that everyone has the opportunity to dance and experience the music.

Ultimately, we asked residents how safe, welcoming, and inclusive Bowness is for folks of diverse backgrounds and attributes like religion, ethnicity, culture, skin colour, language, accent, physical ability, gender identity, and sexual orientation. We also asked people to think about our shared history from an Indigenous perspective and the role DEI plays in Truth & Reconciliation.

72% of Bownesians agree it is important to learn about shared history from an Indigenous perspective.

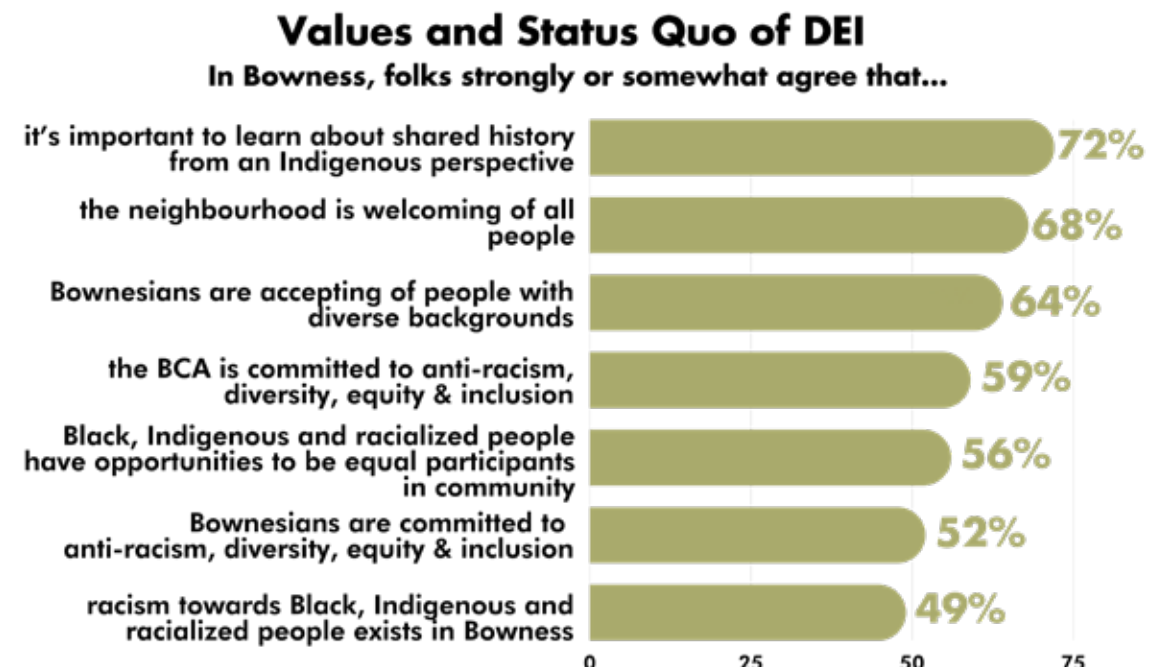
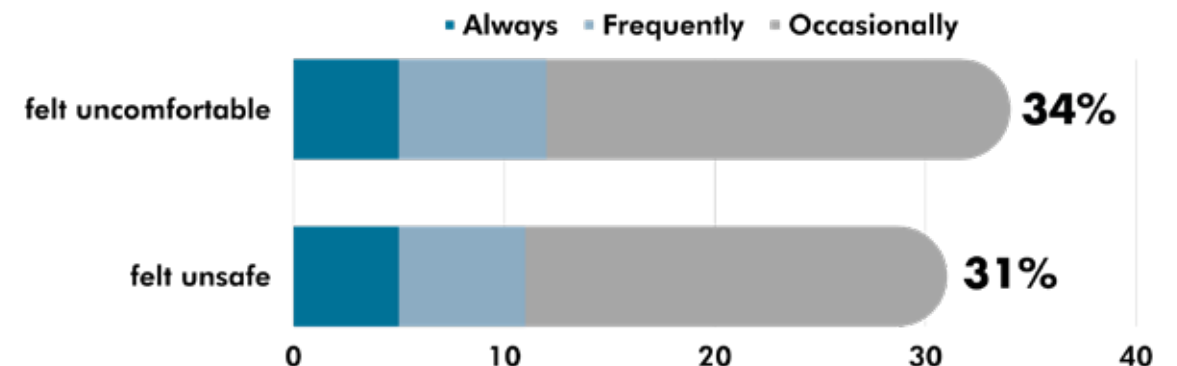
59% of residents believe the BCA is committed to anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. There is room for our organization to continually improve and build on this work.

"Honestly, I wish there were more resources in the neighbourhood for LGBTQ+ people, either services or meetup groups or something like that. I feel a bit isolated within the neighbourhood in that regard."

Only about **half** of residents agree that their community is committed to anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Identity affects how residents feel

Due to one's religion, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, race, language, accent, disability, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, some folks have...





HEALTH AND WELLNESS

“

We need to support wellness and harm reduction, educate the people who look down on others struggling with addiction; this I believe will boost the economy clean up the neighbourhood making a safer place and bring down the crime rate.

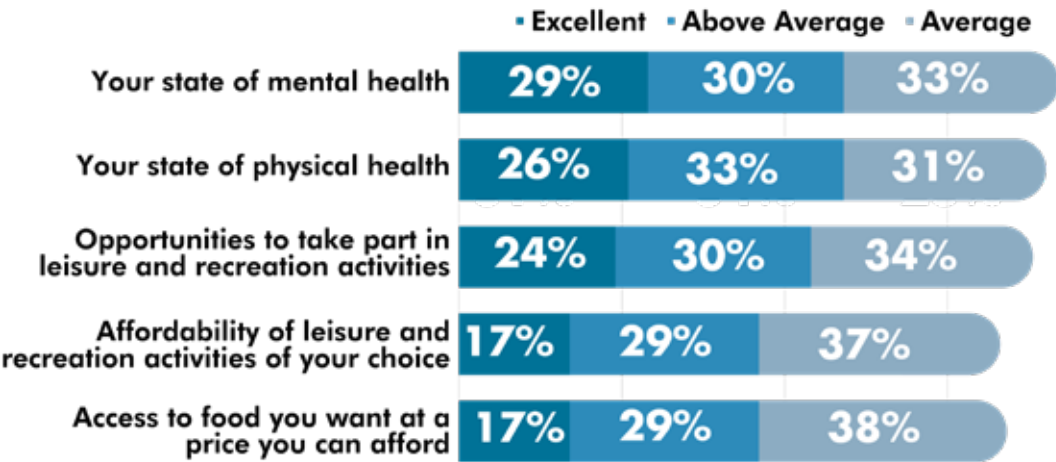


Health & Wellness refers to physical, mental, and social wellbeing and encompasses how to enhance these aspects of life. This includes considerations for access to supports, services, and spaces, as well as how and why people make the decisions they do for their wellbeing. Most Bownesians rate all aspects of their health and wellbeing as average to excellent, with 78% feeling they have a supportive network and for those who need it, most being able to access the services and supports they need. Affordability and availability of leisure and recreation activities in the community, as well as access to food are opportunities for improvement.

Top considerations for improving health and wellness services are better access to healthcare/more doctors (14%), fitness training/classes (13%), gym/recreation facility (13%), sport/sports facilities (11%), health advice/counselling/therapy (10%), as well as affordable/free options (9%). Folks also expressed great displeasure with the closure of both the Shouldice Aquatic Centre and Bowness Park wading pool in the summer of 2023, and a need for a swimming pool/aquatic park.

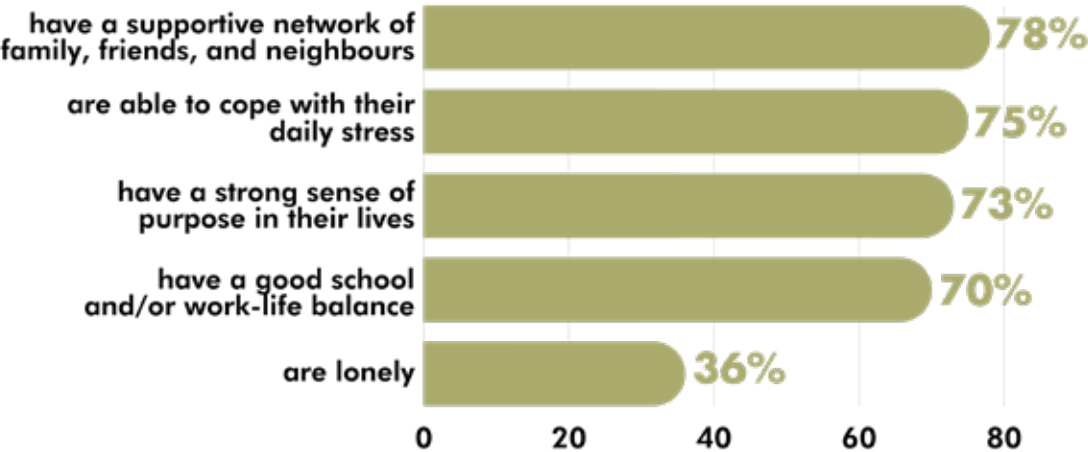
Over 1/3 of residents experience loneliness.	76% of residents participate in physical and recreational activities, with top being walking, bicycling, and gardening.
Only 46% of respondents rate access to food they want at a price they can afford as above average or excellent.	78% of Bownesians feel they have a supportive network of family, friends, and neighbours.

Health and Wellbeing in Bowness



What is the state of mental health?

In Bowness, folks strongly or somewhat feel they...





HOUSING

“More “missing middle” home ownership options. Currently renting and love Bowness, but will likely need to move out of the community to afford a decently-kept property within our anticipated budget.



Housing is a basic human need, and refers to the various forms of shelter or lodging for people to live in while maintaining privacy, safety, and comfort. Housing can be either rented or owned, and it plays a critical role in shaping the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.

Less than half of residents seem to be satisfied with housing in general, with the most significant concern regarding housing in Bowness revolving around affordability. Aging in place is at front of mind for many residents, with concern for variety of housing and affordable options for older adults.

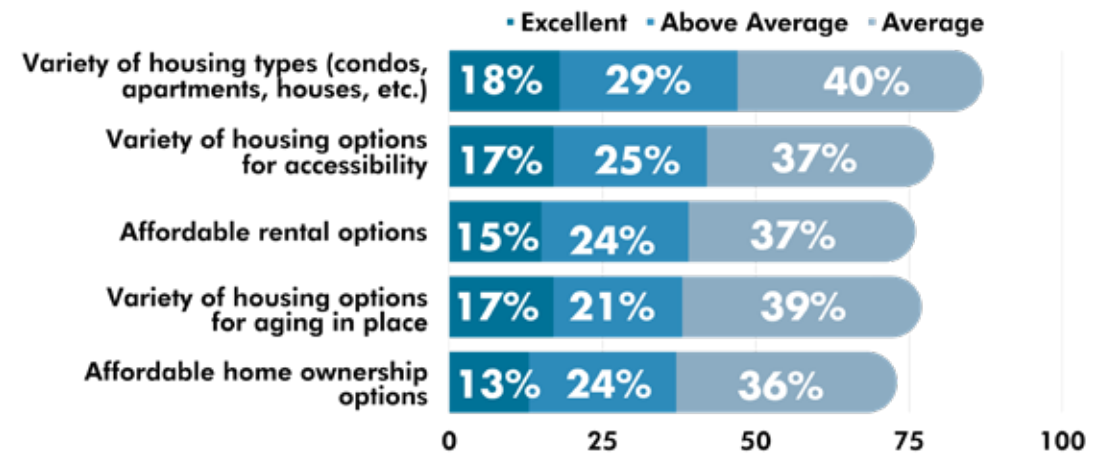
About **1/4** of residents rate rental and home ownership options in Bowness as below average or poor.

Affordable home ownership options is the primary focus (**29%**) for Bownesians in terms of Housing supports.

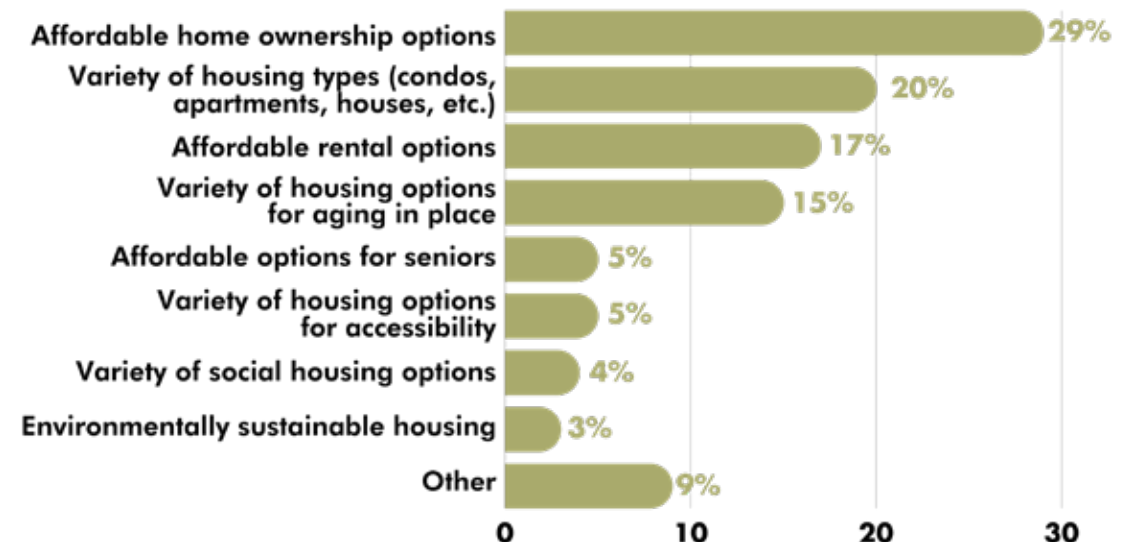
In 2023, **40%** of Calgarians were looking to buy a home but couldn't afford it. **36%** were looking to rent but couldn't afford it. Source: Calgary Foundation 2023 Quality of Life Report.

Only **39%** of Bownesians rate access to a variety of housing options for aging in place as above average or excellent.

Perceptions of Housing Options



What types of housing and/or housing supports would Bowness like to see?



SAFETY



It would be nicer if children could roam freely more often and not worry about cars etc. Maybe a community [initiative] to get kids to school safely...allows for safe independence.



Safety is both the perceived and actual state in which hazards and conditions leading to physical, psychological, or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community. In effect, “safety” means we are protected from harm, including how safe we feel.

While safety ranked as a major concern among Bowness residents, more than half of residents do feel safe in the neighbourhood. Areas of concern cited for safety are often related to mental health and addiction, as well as crimes such as break-ins and theft, marking areas for improvement.

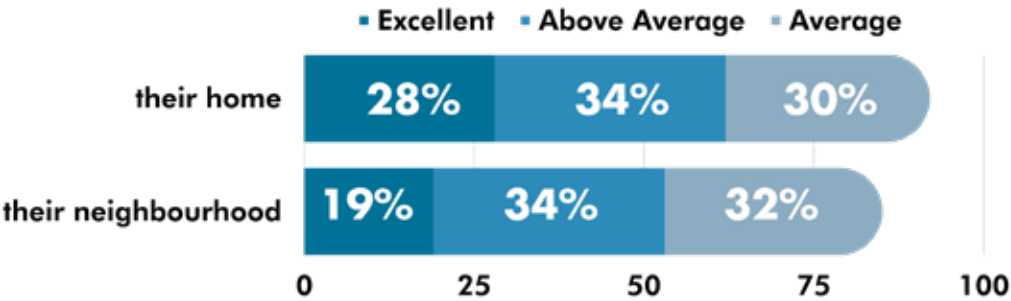
Almost **1/3** of residents have felt unsafe at some point because of their identity.

While **62%** report high feelings of safety in their home, only **53%** report high feelings of safety in the neighbourhood.

In 2023, **80%** of Calgarians reported being concerned about safety. Source: Calgary Foundation's 2023 Quality of Life Report.

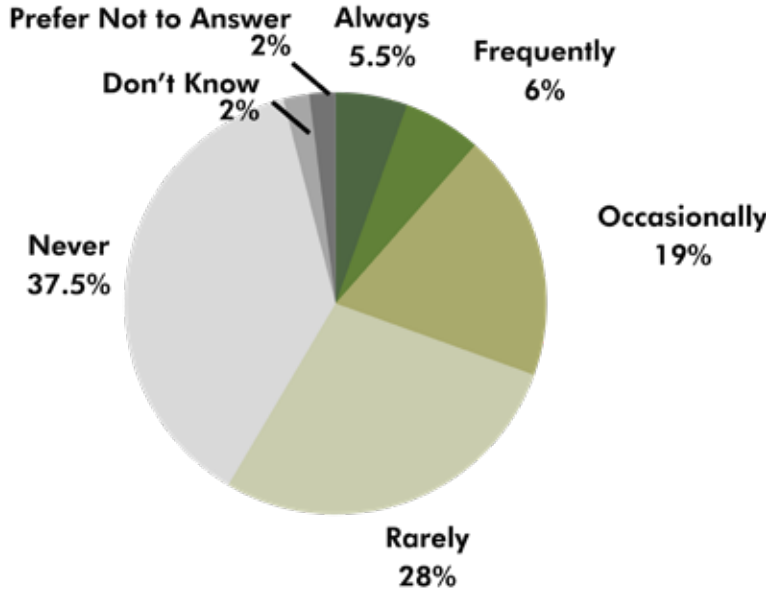
"Safety is a key issue not just for Bowness but also the city and the province. I would suggest ensuring that solutions being sought after at the municipal level are implemented in our community as well."

Do Bownesians feel safe here?
In Bowness, folks indicate their feelings of safety in...



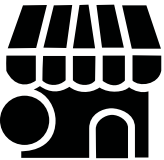
Some folks feel unsafe because of their identity*.

**This includes attributes such as one’s religion, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, race, language, accent, disability, gender identity and/or sexual orientation.*





LOCAL ECONOMY



Local Economy includes the financial and social systems within a particular geographic region, such as a community, and here refers to the businesses, jobs, and services in the Bowness neighbourhood.

The Bowness community shows diverse interests in shops and services, with varying preferences amongst demographic groups. The highest demand for specific shops and services appears to be food-related businesses, followed by healthcare and banking services. Residents are less aware of opportunities to start/operate a business or employment opportunities.

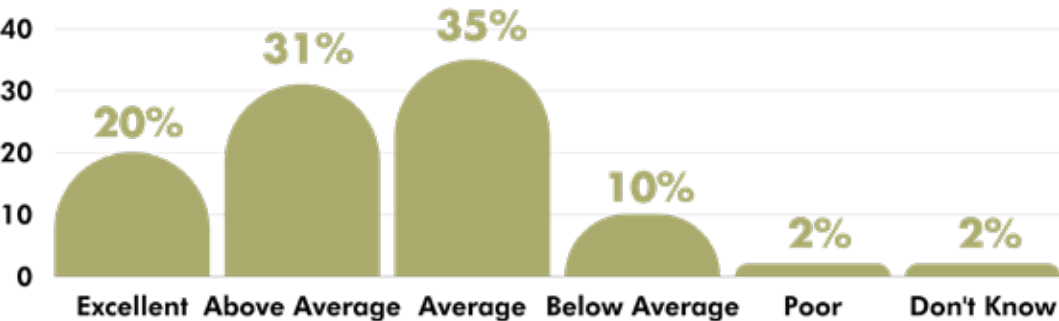
Half of Bowness residents express above average satisfaction with access to shopping services in Bowness.

"Having a variety of grocery stores with fresh produce, organic options, and a range of products would improve convenience and healthy food accessibility for residents."

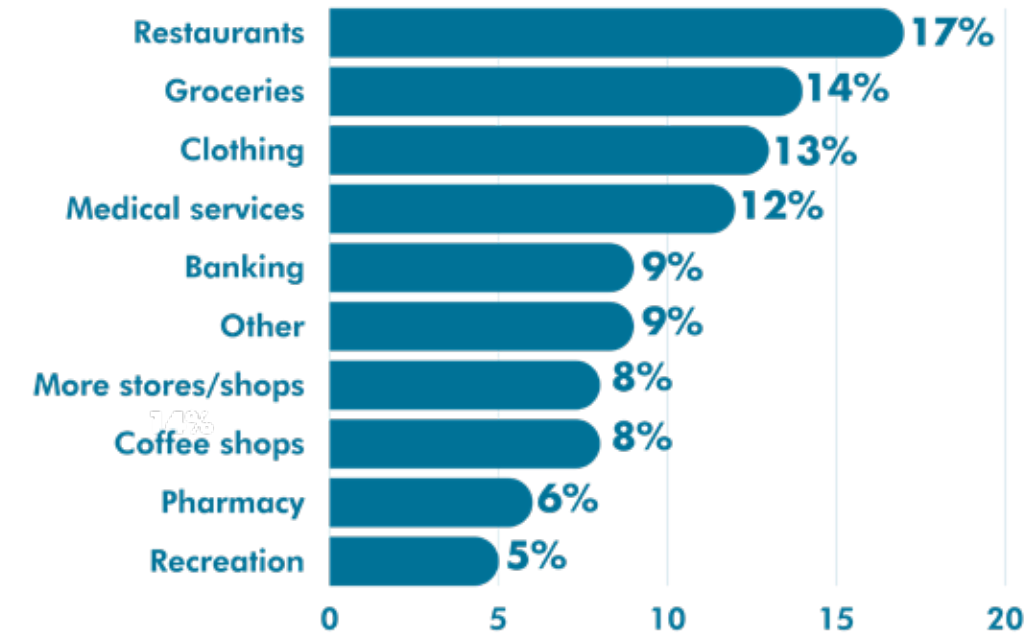
Studies show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between **\$1.50** and **\$2.80** in return. Source: Government of Canada on \$10-a-day child care for families in Alberta.

32% of residents express above average or excellent opportunities to start/operate a small business in Bowness.

Access to Shopping, Services & Supports in Bowness



Top 10 shopping, services, and supports in Bowness that folks indicate would improve their quality of life



TRANSPORTATION & GETTING AROUND

“

Increased variety of services in [the] neighborhood to make me more able to access [services] on foot, better public transport, safer bike lanes.



We asked folks how they get to and around Bowness, as available transport options affect people’s ability to access the services and supports they need and to participate in social and economic activities.

Bownesians use a variety of options to get around. Following private vehicles, walking, cycling, and public transport are the most commonly used modes of transportation. With that, only half of residents are really satisfied with transportation options. The greatest challenges folks seem to face is in getting to places outside Bowness, as well as accessing grocery stores, schools, and shopping centres like Mainstreet.

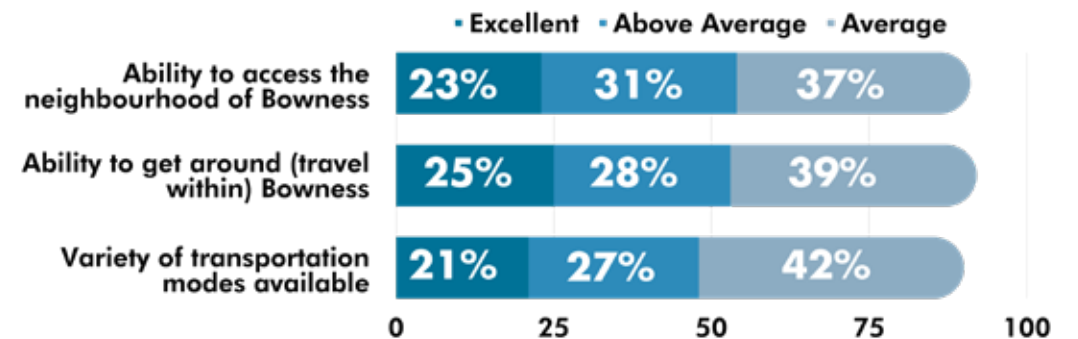
Almost **1 in 5** residents who use public transportation encounter difficulties.

Bowness has a walkscore of **38**, transit score of **44** and bike score of **50**. This means that most outings require the use of a car.
Source: Walk Score.

Only **half** of residents express satisfaction with the variety of transportation options available for Bowness.

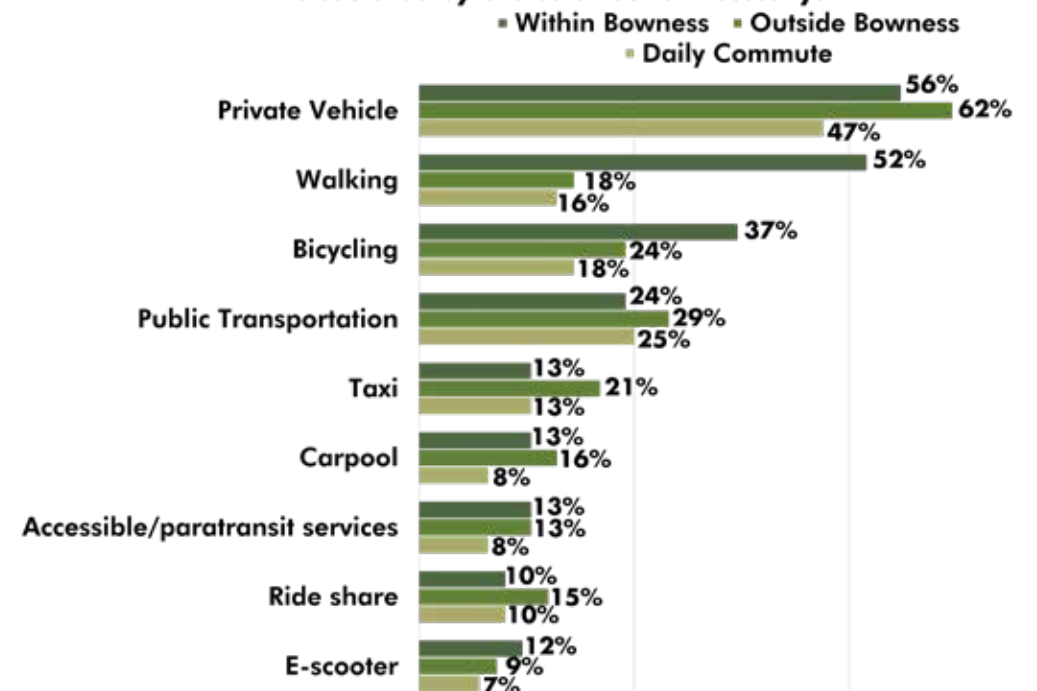
"Better route planning and placing good service stores closer to residential areas."

Transportation in Bowness



Folks get around in a variety of ways

This could be by choice or out of necessity.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

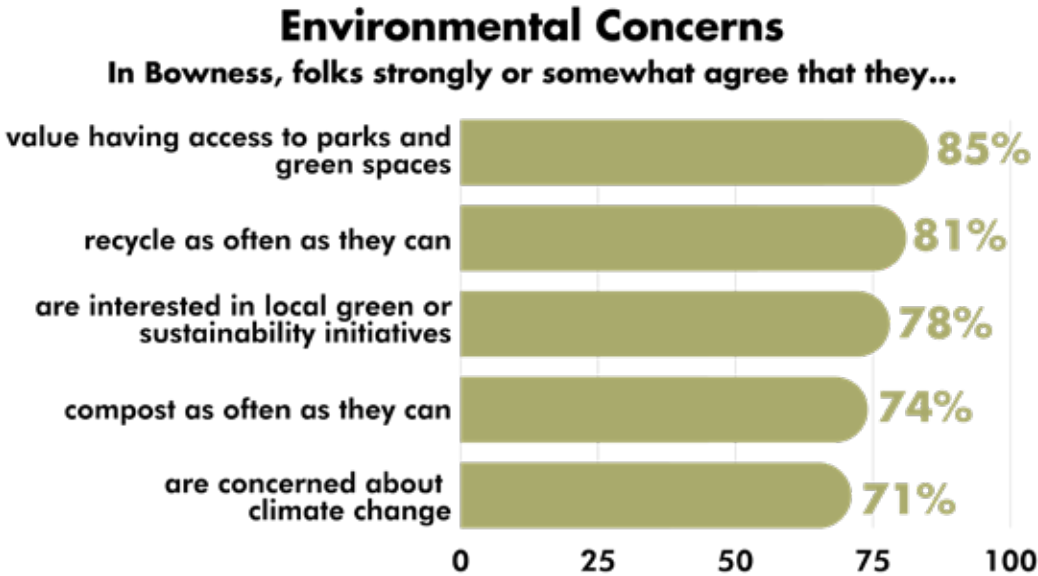
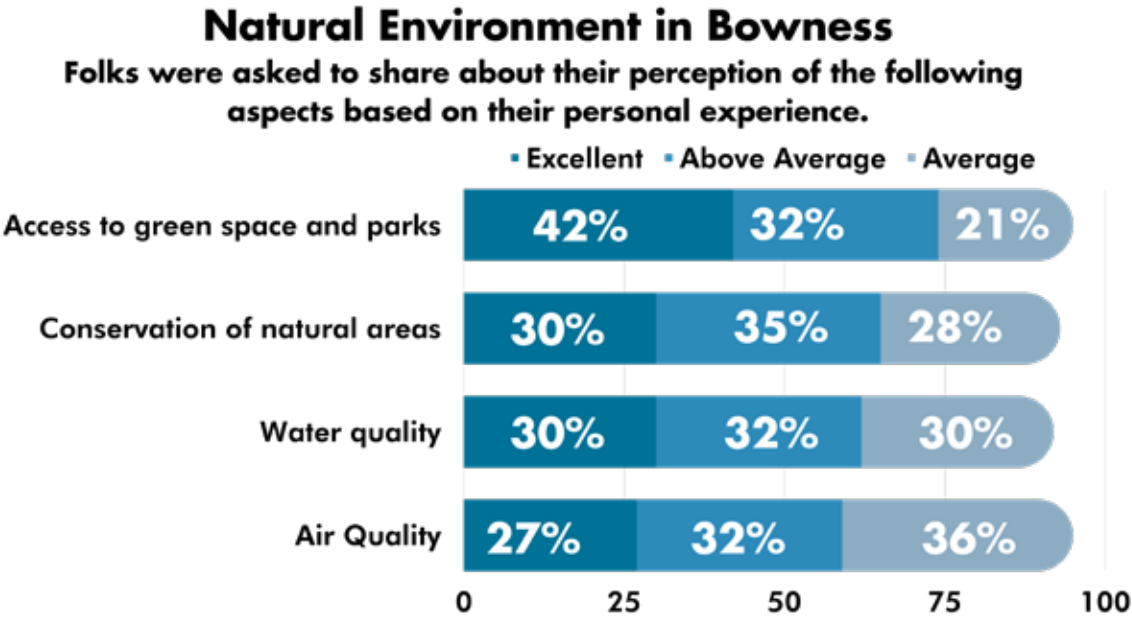
“Protect the environment and natural resources, and encourage people to pay attention to environmental protection and sustainable development.”



Bownesians were asked to consider their experience with the natural environment, which refers to anything living and non-living that is not human-made, as well as considerations for sustainability and climate change.

Residents seem to value the natural environment highly with almost all folks accessing natural spaces, and they also care about the environment and climate change. People seem most concerned about water and air quality, and are also concerned about flood mitigation and the protection of trees.

71% of Bownesians are concerned about climate change.	99% of Bowness residents use natural spaces.
3 out of 4 residents express satisfaction with the accessibility of green spaces and parks.	2/3 of the total greenhouse gas emissions in Calgary are caused by heating, lighting, and power demands in buildings. Source: The City of Calgary.



ARTS & CULTURE

“

Arts and culture initiatives should be created to encourage and heighten the connectivity [of] residents within the neighborhood. Artwork should look forward to the future of Bowness and less on focusing on the past. Indigenous/ racialized artwork should be used to engage the citizens, and bring people together, not to simply check a diversity box.



We asked residents about their thoughts around arts & culture, being the creative expression and application of human activities that indicate a particular skill set and capture the general beliefs, practices, traditions, and values of a group of people.

Residents really seem to value arts and culture, and see its presence here in the community. With that said, they want more of it in Bowness through programs, workshops, cultural events, and activities. Residents also have ideas like an arts and cultural centre and more widely-distributed public art. Many people also seem to be unaware of what’s available, and rely on or may experience barriers to bring or co-create art for the community.

76% of Bownesians believe art helps create a sense of belonging in their community.

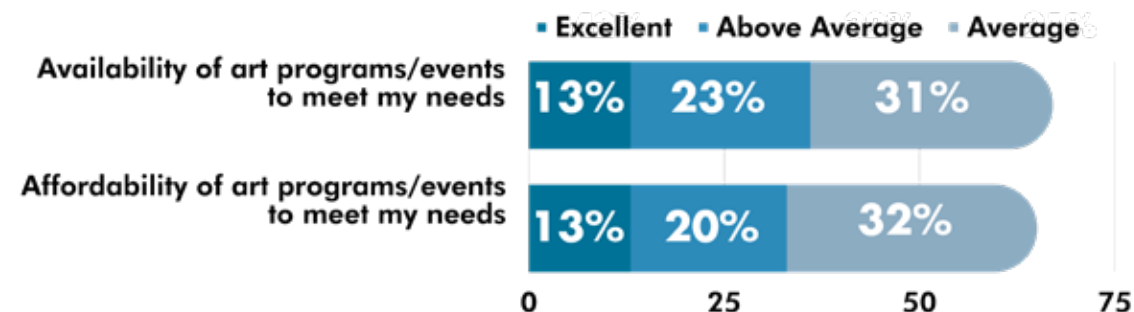
Only **1/3** of residents are satisfied with the accessibility and affordability of art programs and events.

Nearly **3/4** of residents concur with statements highlighting the significance and positive effects of art initiatives in the Bowness community, yet only **59%** express a desire to actively participate in making those initiatives happen.

The BCA has supported over **30** free art-related activities in 2023 bringing together over **800** participants.

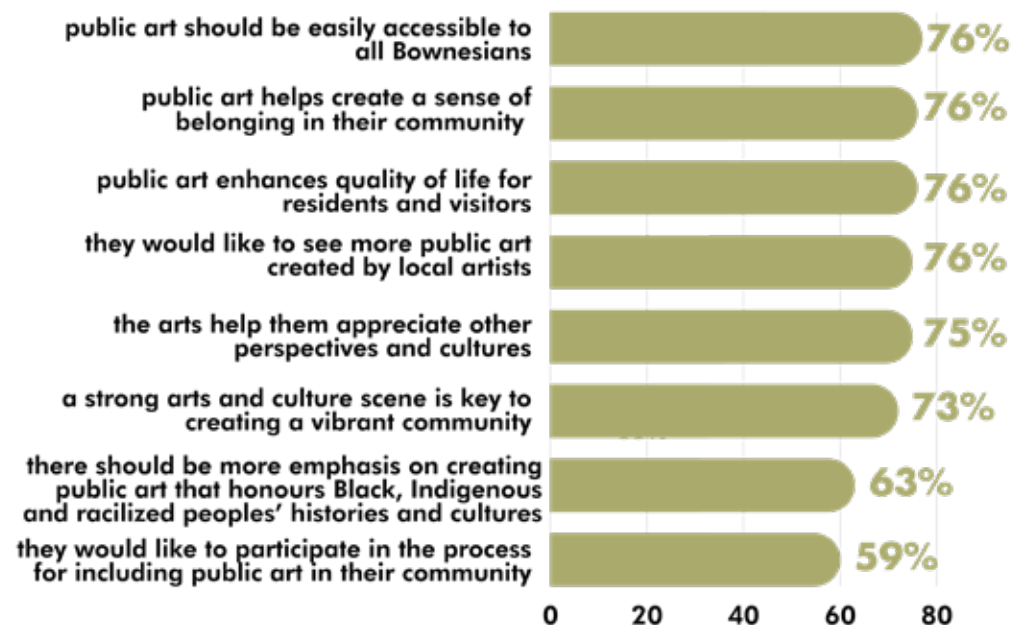
Arts & Culture in Bowness

Residents were asked to share about their perception of the following aspects based on their personal experience.



How do folks feel about local arts & culture?

In Bowness, folks strongly or somewhat feel that...



COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING



Community-based learning refers to activities or programs where you can gain knowledge or skills within the community in which you live.

While many (40%) express satisfaction with above-average or excellent variety and accessibility of community-based learning, there is an opportunity to raise awareness and increase accessibility of these types of activities. The most favoured activities of interest for individuals are DIY (do-it-yourself) projects, crafts, arts, food literacy and preparation skills, and personal development. For families, food preparation skills, food literacy, and safety are more highly requested.

1 in 5 individuals are not aware of the variety or availability of community-based learning opportunities.

Women, older adults (55+) and people with lower household income (less than \$50,000) perceive less variety and lower access to community-based learning.

DIY (do-it-yourself)/crafts are the top activity (**39%**) sought after by Bownesians.

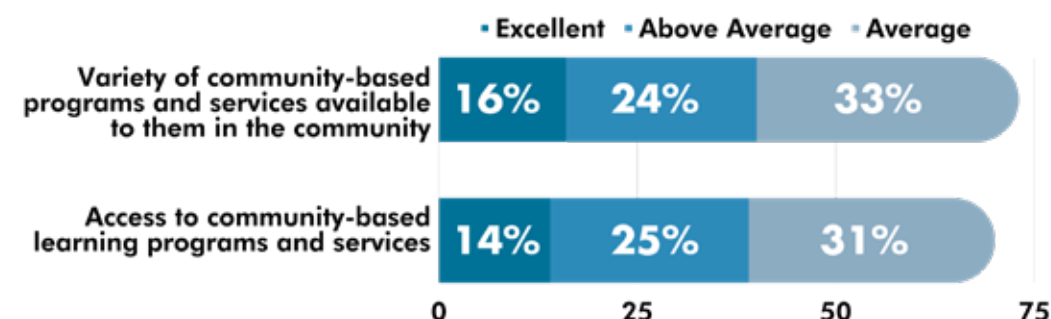
“More activities at the BCA teaching life skills like how to shop for insurance, how to price compare internet providers, healthy food options, places to meet people that is safe.”

“

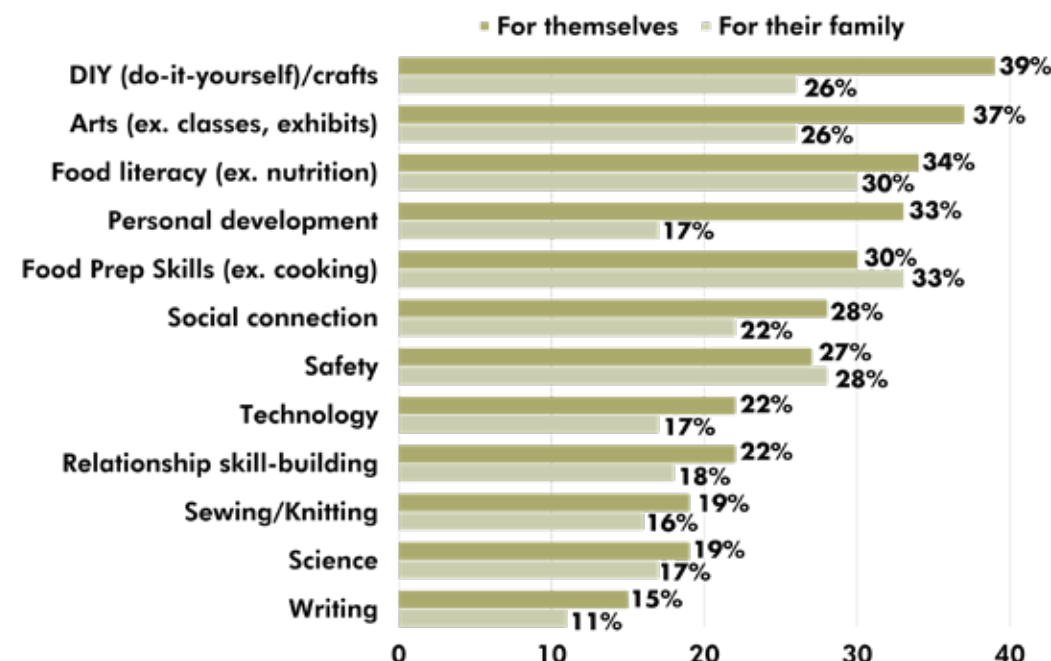
Since the pandemic, it feels even harder to just connect with the people that live around us. But taking the first step can feel a bit daunting. More casual opportunities to connect would be wonderful.

Community-based Learning in Bowness

Residents were asked to share about their perception of the following aspects based on their personal experience.



Residents would like to see a wide variety of community-based learning opportunities.





Thank you!

Thank you to our funders:

Calgary Foundation
Community Hubs Initiative: A collaboration between The City of Calgary and the United Way of Calgary and Area, with Rotary as a founding partner.

To our community partners and supporters:

Bow Centre Place	Network
Bowmont Resource Network	Little Oaks Early Education
Bowness Library	Mainstreet Bowness Business
Bowness Seniors Centre	Improvement Area (BIA)
Calgary Housing	Rise Calgary
carya	Sonya Sharp, Ward 1 City Councillor
CUPS - Longbow	Trellis Society
Children's Cottage/Family Resource	

We would also like to thank each and every survey respondent for their participation, Bowness resident Brad Hays for designing this report, and BCA Community Development Coordinator Tess Van Den Bosch for leading and coordinating the 2023 Quality of Life Survey.

About the Bowness Community Association

The Bowness Community Association was established in 1963, the same year Bowness became part of the City of Calgary. In 2007, the Bowness Community Association was revitalized with a new vision for Bowness as a diverse, engaged, connected, and proud community of choice.

**HOW TO
USE
THIS REPORT**

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ACT**



You're Invited!

Continue to join us in this journey by sharing and caring in taking action. We are all collectively responsible for creating a thriving, resilient, and connected community, and we hope that this report has informed and inspired you. It is also our commitment here at the BCA to provide Action Updates on how we are taking and supporting action in our community through what we heard from the Voices of Bowness.

What: Voices of Bowness Action Updates
When: Every 6 months starting November 2023
Where: Visit mybowness.com/qualityoflife

7904 43 Ave NW | iheartbowness@mybowness.com | 403-288-8300



community hubs
initiative

WHERE COMMUNITY HAPPENS

