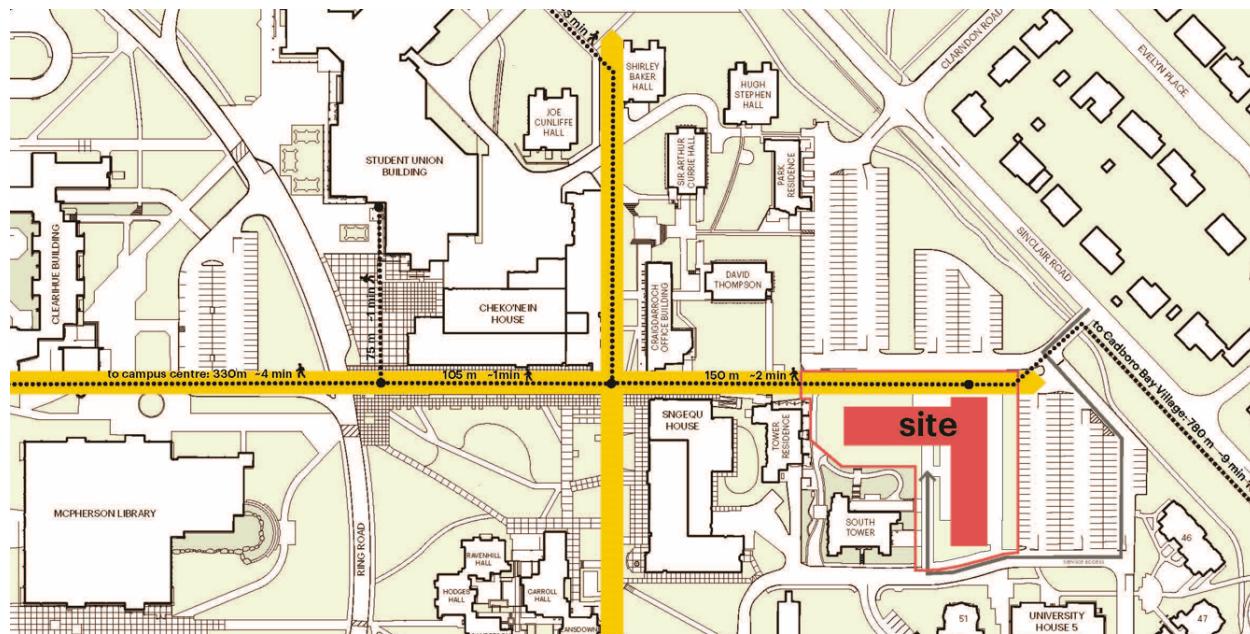


**University of Victoria  
New On-Campus Student Housing  
Phase 2 Engagement Summary Report  
(September – October 2025)**



## 1.0 Overview

The University of Victoria is proposing the development of a new, 510 bed residence dedicated to upper year undergraduate and graduate students. The proposed new housing would be located next to Sinclair Road, behind the Tower Residences, on part of what is now Parking Lot 5.



In spring 2025, we sought community feedback on the proposed design. The purpose of this engagement was to gather input on the building design, transportation features, and public-realm amenities.

This engagement summary shares the process and findings from Phase 2 of community engagement.

IN TOTAL,

**431+ COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
PARTICIPATED IN THIS AROUND OF  
ENGAGEMENT**



**100  
OPEN HOUSE**

Attendees at the University of Victoria McPherson Library and Gordon Head Recreation Centre on September 23<sup>rd</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

**331  
ONLINE SURVEY**

Responses between September 23<sup>rd</sup> to October 13<sup>th</sup>

**4  
COMMUNITY PRESENTATION**

Presentations given between September 21<sup>st</sup> to October 29<sup>th</sup>

## 2.0 Engagement Activities

### **2.1 Promotion**

Project information and community engagement events were promoted through UVic's communication channels, including the UVic.ca homepage and events calendar, social media posts and the Alumni monthly newsletter. Local media also featured engagement opportunities through stories in the *Times Colonist* and *Saanich News*. All promotional materials directed audiences to the project webpage, where they could learn more about the project, complete the survey, and stay informed about the open house events.

Engagement opportunities were also shared with UVic's Community Association Liaison Committee (CALC), who promoted the opportunities with their members.

### **2.2 Presentations and Community Events**

Throughout the fall, the project team met with a variety of campus and community groups to share information about the proposed development and gather early feedback.

#### **Mount Tolmie Community Association Picnic (September 21):**

Staff engaged with approximately 50 residents and provided information about the proposed development.

#### **Cadboro Bay Community Pop-Up (September 24)**

Staff hosted an informal community pop-up at Moka House in Cadboro Bay to meet people where they were already gathering and promote the engagement opportunities. Representatives from the Cadboro Bay Residents Association promoted the pop-up through their networks and social media.

#### **Presentations (September and October)**

The project team presented to the Community Association Liaison Committee (CALC) the Graduate Students' Society (GSS), and the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS). These presentations served as an opportunity to introduce the project, promote upcoming engagement opportunities, and gather initial feedback on the conceptual design.

#### **Cadboro Bay Residents' Association – AGM (October 29)**

Staff shared project information and responded to resident questions related to housing demand and on-campus development.

### **2.3 Open Houses**

Two public open houses were held where people could ask questions, share feedback, and talk with the project team.

- September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11a.m.-1p.m. at the at McPherson Library
- September 25th from 3:30pm-6:30pm at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre.



Informational poster boards were displayed, showcasing key project details including the project site, building design features, municipal approval process and project timeline, ensuring that attendees had access to clear and comprehensive information.



## **2.4 Survey**

To ensure broad participation and gather feedback from those unable to attend the in-person open houses, an online survey mirroring the open house questions was made available online from September 23 to October 14.

## **2.5 Media**

Local media promoted the project and opportunities for engagement (Oak Bay News and CTV).

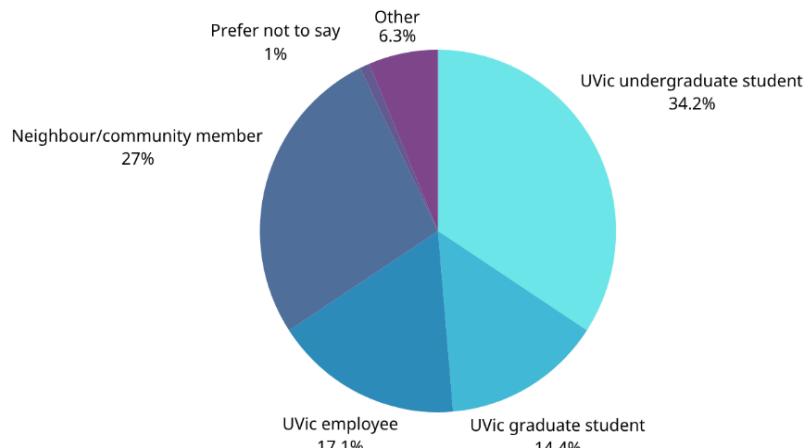
In addition, On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, the Province announced their \$121 million in funding support for the project. This announcement was picked up by media outlets across the province and created an increase in project awareness in the community. With the online survey still open, there was an increase in survey responses attributed to the announcement and related media coverage.

## **3.0 Who Participated**

Through the engagement opportunities, the project team engaged with 100 community members at the open houses. Attendees included students and staff/faculty and nearby residents.

The survey had 331 respondents with a diversity of demographics, including 38% undergraduate students, 30% neighbour/community member 15% graduate students, 19% UVic employees, 7% of people who did not identify with the provided categories.

When asked where respondents live, 45% said near campus (e.g. Gordon Head, Cadboro Bay), 40% elsewhere in Victoria, 7% live on campus, and 6% live outside of the region.



## **4.0 What We Heard**

### **Key themes**

Feedback from the open houses and online survey was analyzed and grouped into key themes.

This section summarizes the common themes that emerged across all engagement activities, highlighting the perspectives and insights that will inform the next steps of the project's development.

## 1. On-Campus Housing

Participants expressed strong support for more on-campus housing, particularly for upper year and graduate students, noting that additional campus housing could also benefit the regional rental market. When asked about the potential benefits from this housing project, 89% of respondents (289 people) expressed reducing pressure on nearby rental housing as the primary benefit for the community.

*“The project looks incredible! Love the idea of helping upper years w/ housing concerns”*

*“I think it would work very well where it is located. More students should be housed on campus, relieving the local community of rentals” “Yay grad housing! Much needed!”*

*“Looks great; I’m glad we’re finally going ahead with building more student housing for graduate students. As the Director of a PhD program, finding suitable and nearby housing is one of my students primary concerns”*

*“I like the design concept, specifically that the proposed building is designed towards housing upper-year and graduate students” “We need more student housing. Period”*

## 2. Parking

Participants shared concerns about the removal of parking and its potential impact on the community. While some members expressed support in building on top of an existing parking lot, we also heard concern and need for sufficient vehicle parking on campus.

*“I like the location. Also, I appreciate the design team recognizing that losing 150 parking spaces is a great trade-off for housing 500+ students on-campus instead of off-campus!”*

*“Great use [of] ground space instead of parking”*

*“Like the design, wish there was a true parking solution”*

*“Consider parking options for commuter students from Victoria”*

*“I am very concerned about the impact this may have on the parking situation”*

*“It is a common complaint that it is hard to find parking mid-day (10am-2pm) during the week. The loss of 150 parking spaces will exacerbate this problem”*

*“Please build this, the loss of parking is more than offset by the number of people that will be able to live on campus and it will reduce pressure on the local housing which is undergoing a huge availability crisis”*

### 3. Building Height

Many community members expressed support for the proposed height of the building. When asked how they felt the shape and size of the building fits with the context of the university campus, 80% of respondents (270 people) said fits very well, or generally well. Comments were shared in support of taller building forms, recognizing it as necessary to meet current and long-term housing demands.

In the open-ended feedback, contrasting opinions emerged on the proposed design. Some respondents expressed strong support, noting the need for additional height, while others raised concerns about how the building would fit within the existing campus context and surrounding neighbourhood.

*“I like the use of the downhill. I think the building will fit well with the overall campus look despite its height because of the downhill”*

*“Love building up, reducing the loss of surrounding space”*

*“I love the design concept. I wish the height and density was even higher. In this housing crisis there is no reason to build student housing that doesn’t meet demand”*

*“UVic needs more housing for sure. But 17 stories is excessive and out of scale with the surrounding neighbourhoods” “Too tall for neighbourhood”*

*“It’ll be a very tall building with nothing tall nearby. Might stick out”*

*“I don’t think that the height of the building will fit well with the flow of campus”*

### 4. Building Appearance

Community members were also invited to comment on what they liked and didn’t like about the building design, as well as what UVic should keep in mind moving forward in the design process.

Many comments addressed the overall aesthetic of the building, including the colour, shape, and exterior features, which have been grouped under the theme Building Appearance.

Much of the feedback noted that the preliminary design appeared dull. It is important to note that the image shared reflected an early conceptual stage of the design, which was not communicated clearly. Additional refinement and development of the building’s form and character will occur as the project progresses.

*“I like that it doesn’t look as grey as the other recently constructed housing” “Design fits in with the school’s existing architecture”*

*“It’s fine but there’s nothing exciting about the design” “The design seems very modular, the old residence buildings had more variation in their outer designs adding to the uniqueness of each building.”*

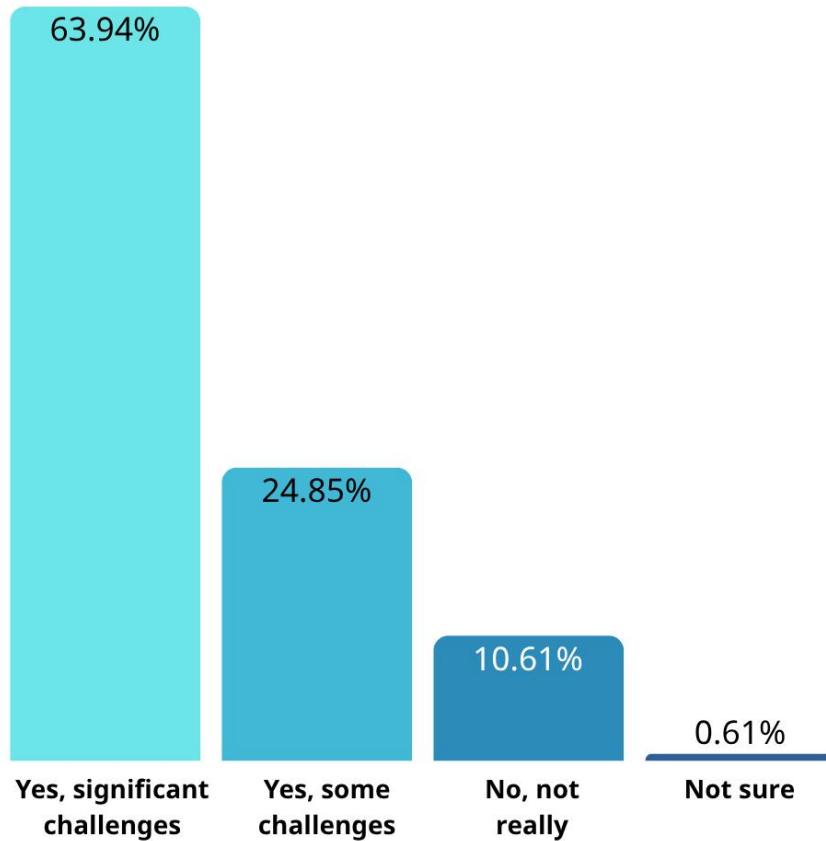
*“It is incredibly bland, boring and uninspiring. I was really hoping for something much more architecturally interesting” “No grey and black - use colours from nature.”*

*“I like how it adds many new dorms, however, I feel like the building lacks personality and color”*

## 5.0 Survey Results

Through both closed and open-ended questions, the online survey gathered feedback on the building design and project priorities, mirroring the input sought at the open houses. The responses to the survey questions are summarized in this section.

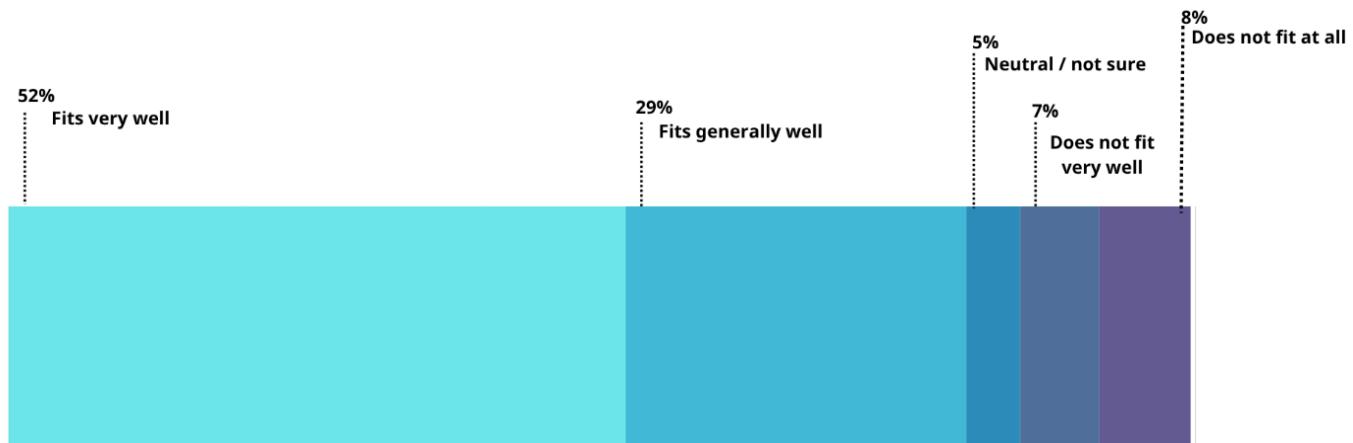
**Question 3: Have you or someone you know experienced challenges finding suitable housing in Greater Victoria?**



**Question 4: UVic's Campus Plan guides new growth toward the housing precinct, where taller buildings are located close to the campus core. The proposed residence includes a 17-storey high-rise with a 7-storey mid-rise, designed with setbacks, landscaping, and outdoor gathering areas to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Thinking about the building's overall design, how do you feel the proposed building design fits in with the context of the university campus?**

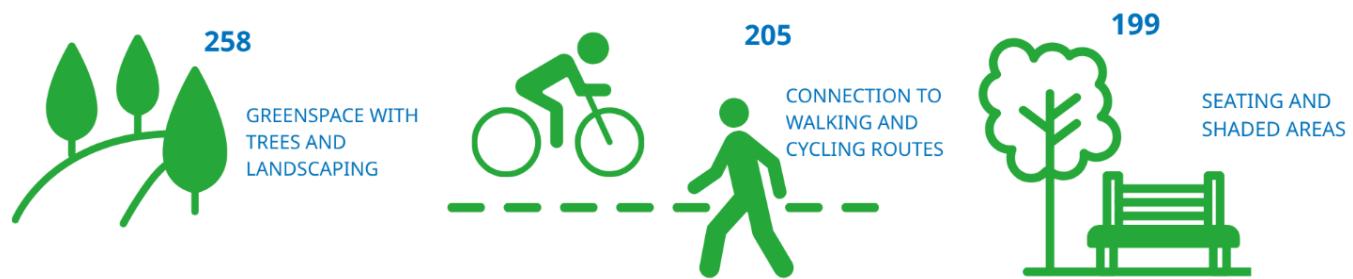
Survey respondents were given the option to assess how well the building design fits with context of the university campus based on five metrics:

- Fits very well,
- Fits generally well,
- Neutral / not sure,
- Does not fit very well,
- Does not fit at all.



**Question 5: The project will add new outdoor spaces along the Campus Greenway, including seating areas, landscaping, and improved connections for walking and cycling and bike storage. What outdoor features are most important to you? (select all that apply)**

Respondents indicated the following 3 as their most important outdoor features:

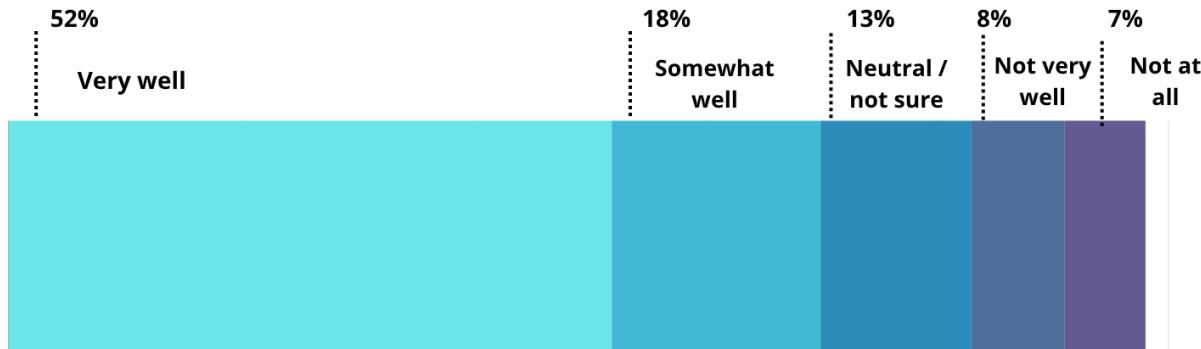


**Question 6: Sustainability is a key goal for this project. Guided by UVic's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan (CSAP) 2030, the building is being designed to achieve LEED Gold certification, reduce carbon emissions, and support climate resilience. The project also emphasizes sustainable transportation by improving walking and cycling connections, expanding bike parking, and strengthening links to transit. Which aspects of sustainability are most important to you for this project? (Select all that apply)**

Respondents indicated the following 3 as the most important aspects of sustainability for this project:



**Question 7: How well does the project support sustainable travel choices?**



**Question 8: What sustainable transportation options are most important to you? Select all that apply.**

Respondents were given the option to select from:

- Secure long-term bike parking,
- Convenient short-term bike parking (including covered racks),
- Access to transit and the bus exchange,
- Walking and cycling connections (Greenway, Sinclair Road), Car-share or shared mobility options, or

- Other.

The following three were indicated as their most important options for sustainable transportation:

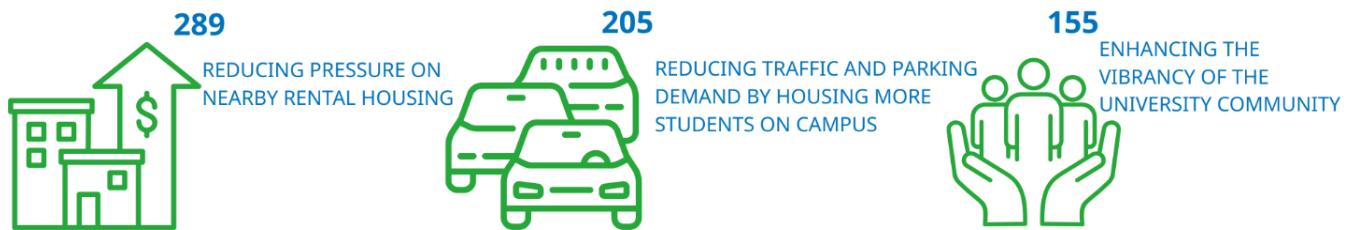


**Question 9: What potential benefits do you see for the community from this housing project? (Select all that apply)**

Respondents were given the option to select from:

- Reducing pressure on nearby rental housing,
- Reducing traffic and parking demand by housing more students on campus,
- Advancing campus sustainability and climate goals,
- Enhancing the vibrancy of the university community
- Supporting local businesses and services, or
- Other.

The following three were indicated as their top viewed potential benefits for the community from this housing project:



**Question 10: What potential concerns do you have about this project on the community? (Select all that apply)**

Respondents were given the option to select from:

- Building height and scale,
- Parking loss,
- Traffic impacts on surrounding streets, or
- Construction noise or disruption.

The following three were indicated as their top potential concerns about this project:



Respondents were given the opportunity to provide unstructured feedback within Question 11 and 12. The responses are summarized below and accounted for under Key Themes.

**Question 11: Overall, what do you think about the design concept? What do you like? What do you dislike?**

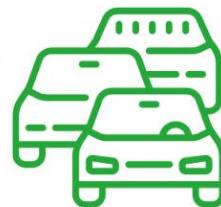


*"I love the scale -- 500 beds are greatly needed"*



*"Shopping at Cadboro Bay would be easy with a walking connection. But the 26/39 are too busy and don't run often enough for getting groceries from Tuscany to be very convenient"*

*"Design looks good except for the lack of parking close to the building as this may house students from all over the province".*



*"I like that it is LEED, great to see that it will be an energy efficient design"*

*"The design looks like it will support and promote active transportation as a primary means of mobility. Please make sure there is sufficient long-term and short-term bike storage for all residents and visitors."*

*"I think on-campus housing is an excellent plan for reducing travel costs and traffic overall"*

*"One 17 and one 7 is too big. Also the building is not aesthetically pleasing. Some colour or differentiations of shape would be welcome. Two 12 stores better than one 17 and one 7. Or do 14/10"*

*"Need an underground parkade or multi-level parkade"*

**Question 12: Is there anything else you'd like us to consider as we continue refining the building's design?**

*"I think it's a good design and will always support more student housing. Seeing the rental prices and issues so many of my friends and I have experienced with trying to find off campus housing, the more options at an affordable price the better imo."*



*"It looks nice, hopefully it will be affordable"*

*"An on campus grocery store could easily fit on the main level. It wouldn't need to be a full grocery store but have produce and dairy on campus would be huge"*



*"Consider the negative impact of increased heavy construction vehicles on busy surrounding roads. The street surfacing is already damaged"*

*"You can't keep adding more housing but not parking to keep up with the amount of students, staff and admin incoming every year. Transit, walking, and cycling are not practical for everyone"*

*"More kitchen access in housing for students"*

*"If there were larger conference-style rooms on the first floor for students to reserve, a communal lobby area would create useful study space and a meeting place for upper-year students. thanks :)"*

*"Designating greenspace for native plants and pollinator garden space. Perhaps a space close to this building for students living inside to garden and farm their own produce and food"*

## 6.0 Next Steps

UVic is appreciative of all participants who gave their time and feedback in this phase of engagement. The input received will help to inform the next phase of design and be used to support the District of Saanich in their review of our Development Variance Permit application.

A third and final phase of engagement is anticipated to take place in Spring 2026 to share the final design and communicate construction impacts.

For updates on the project visit: [www.uvic.ca/new-student-housing](http://www.uvic.ca/new-student-housing)