

City of Côte Saint-Luc Master Plan Revision

Pre-Consultation Part 1: What We Heard
Report

Prepared by H+K Strategies
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Hill+Knowlton
Stratégies



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Key takeaways	1
Overview of Engagement	2
Objectives	2
Methodology	2
Virtual information sessions	2
Survey	3
Open house.....	4
Public hearing	5
What We Heard	6
Participants' Vision for Côte Saint-Luc	6
Connecting to surrounding neighbourhoods	6
Preserving the unique character of Côte Saint-Luc	7
A walkable, bike-friendly city	8
Improved public transit	8
Easy access to businesses and services for everyone	9
Commercial sectors close by	9
Housing affordability and diversity	10
Underground parking	10
More green spaces	11
Places of worship	12
What's Next	13
Appendix	1
Data from quantitative survey questions	1

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Executive Summary

In 2023, the City of Côte Saint-Luc will be revising its Master Plan. The Master Plan is a long-term urban planning document that sets out guidelines for a city's evolution and establishes a vision for its development. It determines where people live, how they get around, where they shop, and how resilient they are in the face of major challenges like climate change.

Côte Saint-Luc's last Master Plan was adopted in 2004 — almost 20 years ago. Since then, the city has changed a lot. The revised Master Plan will need to include solutions for contemporary challenges and needs. The City would also like it to reflect residents' vision for their community.

This is why, on May 19th, 2022, the City launched a pre-consultation on the Master Plan revision. The process was called a “pre-consultation” to distinguish it from the legally required consultation that will take place once a preliminary version of the Master Plan has been drafted.

For the first part of the process, the City partnered with H+K Strategies to design and implement a series of engagement activities. These took place from June to October 2022. They covered the purpose of the Master Plan, issues facing the City, and ideas for the future, with a focus on the revitalization of Côte Saint-Luc's three shopping centre sites.

This report presents the activities that were held during this first stage, and summarizes the feedback gathered from participants. The City of Côte Saint-Luc will continue the pre-consultation process into the new year and present a report on the second stage in the spring.

These reports, along with analyses of best practices, research and data gathering, will serve as major inputs in the Council's decision-making process that will guide the drafting of the Master Plan.

Key takeaways

Throughout the engagement, participants discussed their experiences and their ideas for the future of Côte Saint-Luc. While the exchanges were rich and varied, a few key ideas stood out:

1. The citizens of Côte Saint-Luc care about their city and want to be involved in planning its future. Hundreds of people attended the virtual information sessions, and 1500 people responded to the survey. Participants were eager to share their visions for the community.
2. Participants want to open up Côte Saint-Luc to surrounding neighbourhoods, and make it easier to get in and out of the city—whether by car, public transit, or bicycle.
3. Participants appreciate the unique character of Côte Saint-Luc, the fact that it feels like a small-town even though it's in the centre of Montreal. They don't want to lose that feeling.
4. Improving active and public transit is a priority for many people. They would like to see more cycling infrastructure, and buses that run faster and often. They are also interested in having more transit options in general, like Bixis, ridesharing, or shuttles to metro stations.
5. The challenges of getting around in winter weather should be taken into account in planning new developments. Businesses and services should be easily accessible to everyone, including seniors and people with mobility issues.

Participants also spoke about the importance of affordable housing and green spaces, as well as the need for commercial areas where people can gather and socialize.



Overview of Engagement

Objectives

This stage of the pre-consultation had three objectives:

1. To inform residents about what the Master Plan will cover, some of the issues facing the City, and how the revision process will unfold.
2. To share the owner's visions for the three shopping centre sites and gather feedback from residents.
3. To gather residents' input about how they see the future of Côte Saint-Luc.

Methodology

Engagement activities were held between June and October 2022. Multiple formats were chosen, in order to reach as many residents as possible. They included:

- Two online information sessions
- A survey
- An open house
- A public hearing

A web page was created to share resources and keep residents updated on the process.

Below is a description of the activities.

Virtual information sessions

1. Information session on the Master Plan revision

The [first public information session](#) was held on Wednesday June 8th, 2022, at 7 pm. The session was set up as a Zoom webinar and offered residents the opportunity to learn more about the objectives of the pre-consultation, better understand what is included in a Master Plan and the different steps of the revision process, as well as hear about the City's vision for Côte Saint-Luc.

142 people attended the session, and 60 questions and comments were submitted during the Question-and-Answer Period.

2. Information session on the shopping center revitalization

A [second public information session](#) took place on Tuesday September 13th, 2022, at 7 pm. This session focused on the revitalization of the three shopping centres in Côte Saint-Luc: Quartier Cavendish, Décarie Square and Côte Saint-Luc Shopping Centre. The City spoke about various challenges facing Côte Saint-Luc, and how the development of the shopping centres could offer a solution to some of them. An urban planner from Fahey et associés spoke about current trends in shopping centre redevelopment and presented the characteristics of each of site. Finally, representatives of the owners of each of the shopping centres presented their vision for revitalizing the sites.



During the session, the City also launched the survey, as well as an information document, ["Imagining the Future of Côte Saint-Luc Together: A Guide to the Master Plan Revision Process"](#) available on the City's website.

426 participants joined the webinar over the course of the evening. Nearly 120 questions and comments were submitted during the Question-and-Answer Period.

Both information sessions were recorded and posted on the City's Engage Website.

Survey

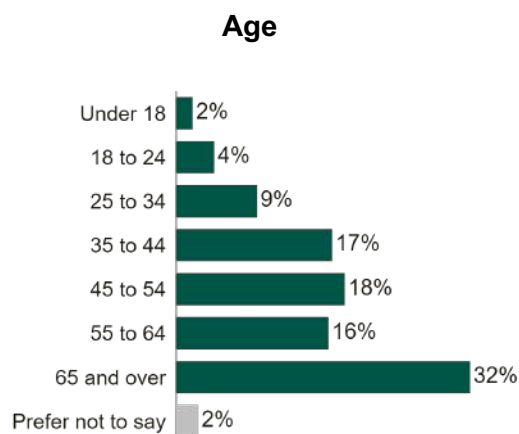
The online survey was conducted from September 13th to October 31st, 2022. It was available in English and French and was open to all residents of Côte Saint-Luc. Hard copies of the survey were also made available for those who preferred to fill it out on paper. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions.

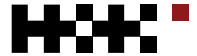
Respondents were asked to share their vision for Côte Saint-Luc and rate a list of priority areas that could be included in the Master Plan. They were also asked for their opinion on a range of topics, including:

- New developments
- Home-based businesses
- Green spaces
- Adding residential units on a property
- Making homes bigger
- Places of worship and religious study

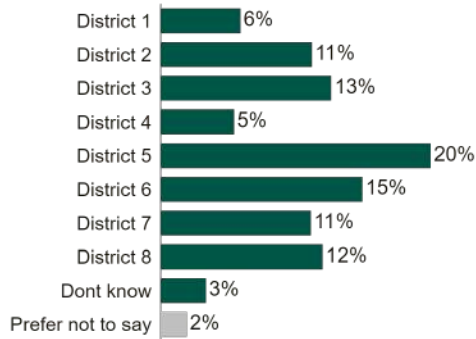
Engagement was high. The City received 1,511 responses, including 1,047 completed questionnaires and 464 partial responses.

People from every district of the City participated. Almost half the respondents (48%) were 55 years old and over. Only 6% of respondents were 24 or under. Below is the full breakdown of respondents by age and district:





District



Open house

The open house was held on the 2nd floor of the Côte Saint-Luc Aquatic and Community Centre on Sunday, September 18th, between 10 am and 4 pm.

The purpose of the open house was to share information about the Master Plan revision and shopping centre site revitalization, and give residents the opportunity to meet the people involved and ask questions.

Stations were set up around the room showcasing various aspects of the Master Plan as well as the owners' vision for each shopping centre site. City officials, urban planners, and representatives of the shopping centre owners were present to answer questions. Hard copies of *"Imagining the Future of Côte Saint-Luc Together: A Guide to the Master Plan Revision Process"* were available for participants to take home.

A large satellite image of Côte Saint-Luc with street names was displayed on a table that visitors and presenters could refer to throughout the day. There were tablets and paper copies of the survey available for visitors to fill out. Children were invited to use crayons and craft paper to draw their vision for the future of Côte Saint-Luc.

Approximately 80 people visited the open house throughout the day.





Public hearing

A public hearing was held at City Hall on Wednesday, October 26th, 2022, at 7 pm, to give citizens and organizations the opportunity to speak on subjects of interest to them. The hearing was moderated by Jacques Bénard, an independent public participation specialist. Four citizens submitted briefs in advance and three of them made presentations to a panel composed of Charles Senekal (Côte Saint-Luc's Director of Urban Development) and Tanya Abramovitch (Associate City Manager – Urban Strategy). Two citizens who had not prepared presentations but asked to share their views also had the opportunity to speak.

10 to 12 people attended the hearing throughout the evening.

The full briefs (from [N. Elberg](#), [M. Aaron](#), [H. Forester](#), [Kehilla Montréal](#)) as well as [minutes](#) from the hearing were posted on the City's Engage Website.



What We Heard

Participants' Vision for Côte Saint-Luc

Citizens had many opportunities to share their ideas for the future of Côte Saint-Luc as well as give their feedback on the City's vision and the site owners' preliminary plans for the shopping centres. They made their views known through the questions they asked at the information sessions, in conversations at the open house, in the briefs presented at the public hearing, through their participation in the thematic workshops, and of course, in the online survey.

The survey was especially rich in terms of feedback because it included open-ended questions that allowed respondents to elaborate on issues of particular interest to them.

Below is a summary of the main themes that emerged across all pre-consultation activities. Sample quotes from participants have been included to illustrate the themes.

Connecting to surrounding neighbourhoods

By far, the most important theme to emerge from the engagement activities was the need to connect Côte Saint-Luc with the rest of Montreal. Participants want to open up Côte Saint-Luc to surrounding neighbourhoods and make it easier to get in and out of the city. In fact, in the survey, 81% of respondents *said "Improving access to other parts of Montreal"* should be the top priority of the revised Master Plan.

Participants spoke of feeling "trapped" and "locked in". For some, opening up Côte Saint-Luc is a matter of convenience, for others, it's a question of safety. People also believe it will ease traffic congestion, a problem that came up frequently throughout the engagement. It's clear that for participants, Côte Saint-Luc's lack of connectivity is a pressing issue and solving it is key to the City's future.

People are also impatient to see the Cavendish extension built.

"The fact that there are only a few ways in and out of the city is problematic."

"I think the main takeaway for my vision is to have CSL be more connected in many different ways and to feel less isolated."

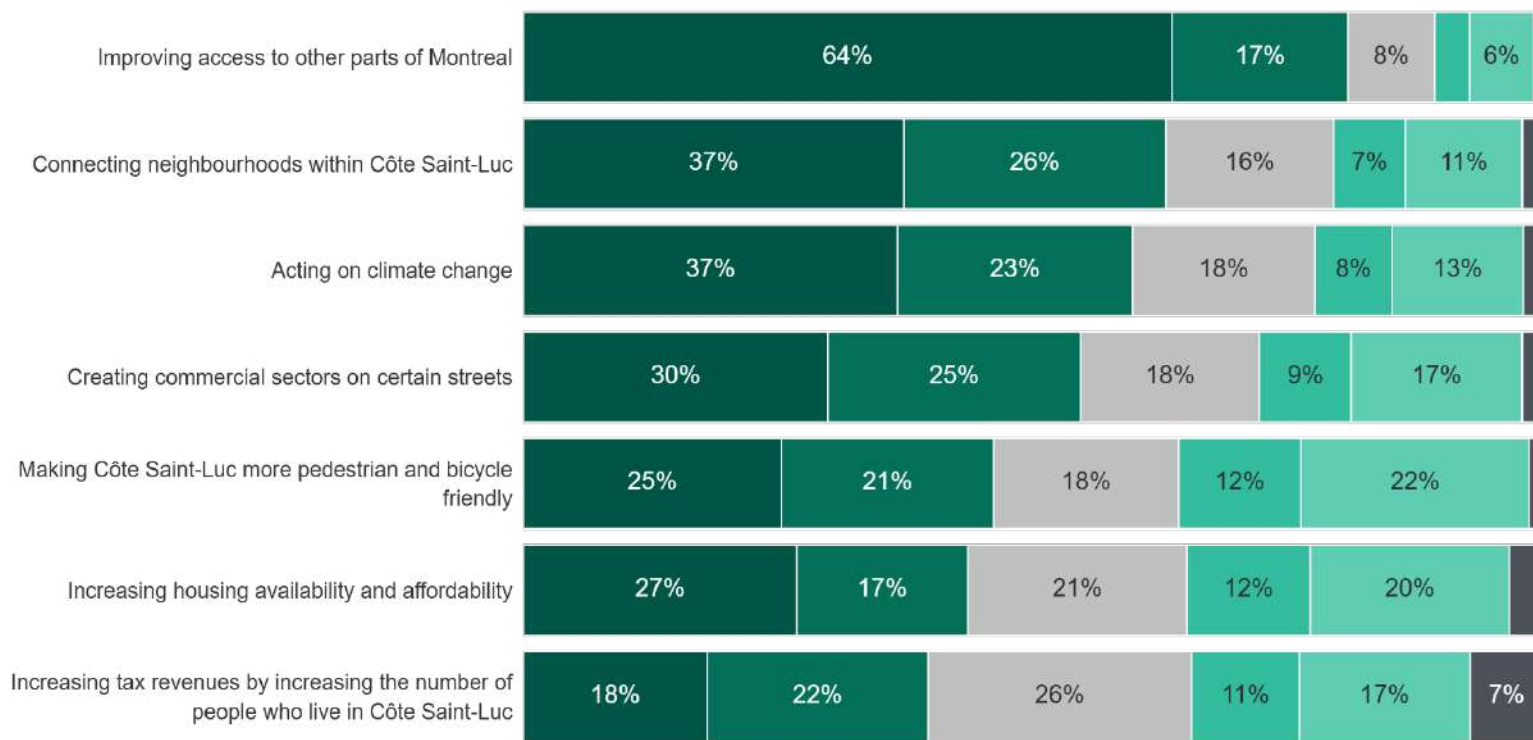
"I envision it as a place that provides ease of access and exit for its residents. That the most stressful part of my day does not have to be figuring out how to get to work or back home."

"CAVENDISH EXTENSION ESSENTIAL"



Please rate the level of priority each area should have in the Master Plan

5 - High priority | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Not at a priority | Don't know



Participants also spoke about the importance of improving connectivity within Côte Saint-Luc. They would like to see walkways for pedestrians and cyclists over the train tracks, as well as underpasses for cars.

Preserving the unique character of Côte Saint-Luc

Another key theme to emerge from the pre-consultation was the idea of Côte Saint-Luc as a quiet, friendly, safe place to live. Participants appreciate the fact that it feels like a suburban community, even though it's close to downtown Montreal. And while for the most part, participants are open to change, they don't want the city to lose its "small-town feeling". It's an important part of their quality of life.

"I love living in the middle of the second biggest city in Canada, while feeling like I live in a small community."

"I hope the city can find a way to explore these new infrastructure projects while still maintaining the city's small and suburban feel that so many appreciate."



A walkable, bike-friendly city

A large portion of participants are in favour of the City's vision for a more walkable, bike-friendly city. Though *"Making Côte Saint-Luc more pedestrian and bicycle friendly"* only came in 5th in the survey question on Master Plan priorities, many respondents spoke of active transit in their vision for Côte Saint-Luc.

Cycling was a particularly popular theme. People want to be able to cycle around the City easily and safely. They would like to see bike lanes on residential streets as well as traffic calming measures. They want children to be able to ride their bicycles to school. There were requests for Bixi stations.

Participants also spoke of the need for infrastructure that allows them to feel safe riding in and out of the city. They suggested building a dedicated bike path on the Cavendish underpass so cyclists would be protected from cars. They would also like a safer cycling route to downtown, and connections to Montreal's cycling network.

Essentially, participants see bike lanes and walking paths as a way to improve connectivity, both within Côte Saint-Luc and to access other parts of Montreal.

"I'd like for Côte Saint-Luc to have more or better bike paths that feel safer, to encourage others to bike places more often."

"Cities need to be built at a scale for people. Neighbourhood streets should be designed so that a 9 year old can safely cycle to school."

"More mobility and less car dependence in total. It should be faster to bike somewhere than to take the car, by adding shortcuts only available to pedestrians and cyclists."

"As a person who hates driving and loves walking, I love hearing about this vision. Makes me excited for the future."

At the same time, participants pointed out that Côte Saint-Luc is a very car-oriented city. Residents are used to getting around by car, and that isn't something that will change overnight.

It was also suggested that active transit options might not be an appropriate solution for senior citizens.

"Cars are still an important mode of transportation."

"Keep in mind that over a third are seniors who want to stay in their home. They may not physically be able to bike or walk."

Improved public transit

Participants would like to see improved public transportation, including buses that run fast and often, and express buses to metro stations. Ideally, they would like Côte Saint-Luc to have its own metro or REM station.



They also mentioned the importance of having more transportation options in general, whether public transit, Bixis, Communauto ride sharing, or shuttles to the metro or between different parts of Côte Saint-Luc. In the survey, 67% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “We need more transportation options, such as rapid bus to the metro station, or car sharing.”

“We would use public transport instead of our cars but it’s simply too inefficient and time consuming.”

“As I get older, my vision is gradually getting worse and I find it more difficult to drive. I have found that buses and cycling are good alternatives, but Cote St-Luc doesn’t have many lanes dedicated to either. Having protected bike lanes and express bus lanes would make my life so much easier as I try to rely less and less on driving.”

Easy access to businesses and services for everyone

Participants want the City to be accessible for people of all ages, including those with mobility issues.

Several participants were concerned about losing parking spaces, both on streets and in the new developments. They also worried that moving shopping areas away from malls and towards commercial streets will make it difficult for people who need cars to access those businesses.

Participants urged the City to keep seniors in mind when designing the Master Plan.

“I would like to see more accessibility in businesses and on the streets for people with disabilities.”

“Please bear in mind accessibility in a universal design.”

“Think of the elderly, the families with young kids, the people with mobility issues or even ‘regular’ people who don’t want to park far from the stores.”

“We seniors matter too!”

Commercial sectors close by

Participants don’t want to have to leave Côte Saint-Luc to do their shopping; they would like to have amenities close by. In fact, many participants said they would like to be able to shop for most of what they need within walking distance from home. They want to have more local depanneurs and grocery stores, and a better variety of retail options.

A key theme that emerged on this topic was the need for commercial areas where people can congregate and socialize. Streets with restaurants, cafés, and terrasses, where people can meet for coffee or a nice meal. Monkland Avenue in N.D.G was put forward as an example more than once.

“A place where you can walk to most services with more opportunities to develop a sense of community - cafes, small shops - where people can congregate.”

“I want CSL to have its own Monkland or Bernard, where people can go for a night out. Where they can take life slowly, eat at a nice restaurant, and sit and people-watch.”

A few people prefer the shopping centres and would like to see them improved instead of redeveloped. They appreciate the convenient parking and see malls as important gathering places for seniors, especially during the cold weather months.

There was concern that some of the ideas presented at the information sessions and open house, particularly the proposals for the shopping centre redevelopments, were geared towards the summer months and ignored the realities of winter.

“The enclosed malls are very important to us due to our extreme climate.”

“Not everyone can walk to neighbourhood amenities in a blizzard, rainstorm, etc. How much is weather being taken into consideration, especially with a population of middle-age or older population or people with strollers?”

Housing affordability and diversity

When participants shared their views on housing, the word that came up most frequently was “affordable”. People would like to see more affordable housing in Côte Saint-Luc, particularly for young families and seniors.

The types of housing suggested were varied. Participants mentioned apartments, cooperatives, townhouses, condominiums, plexes, and single-family homes. The need for units large enough to accommodate families was noted.

Several people said they didn’t want tall towers like the ones Côte Saint-Luc already has.

“With the rise in real estate prices CSL needs to have better options for young families. Whether this takes the form of smaller affordable condos or appropriate rentals, this should be a priority.”

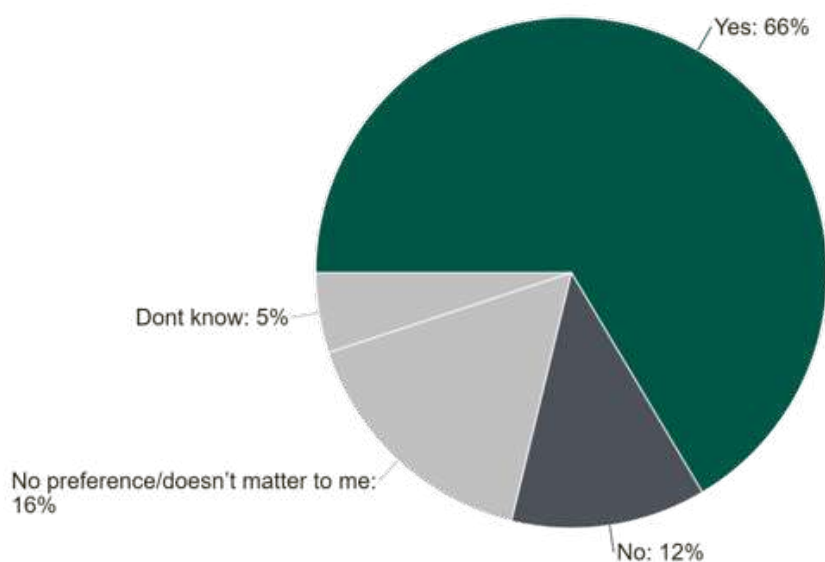
“Having the highest concentration of seniors in our area I believe that more affordable housing with services should be designated for their use.”

It was pointed out that increased density could lead to more traffic. Some suggested the City should not consider building more housing until Côte Saint-Luc’s connectivity and traffic issues are addressed.

Underground parking

Most participants were in favour of requiring underground parking in the new developments. Some people said it would be more convenient in the winter, and allow them to avoid snow and ice buildup on their cars. It was also seen as the best solution for the environment.

Should the City require underground parking in new developments, understanding that it would reduce heat islands but might be less convenient than surface parking?



“Underground parking may seem like an inconvenience but since where we live half the year has snow, this would actually be a convenience! To access buildings and commerce without having to remove snow from a car or heat it to be safe for babies before entering etc. I think it would be good for the environment AND more efficient for the public.”

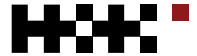
Some participants expressed their support for underground parking but noted that there should still be some surface parking available for short-term visits.

A few participants expressed reservations about underground parking. They were concerned about the safety of underground parking lots and the difficulty of maneuvering cars in tight spaces. They also pointed out that underground parking is more expensive for developers to build.

More green spaces

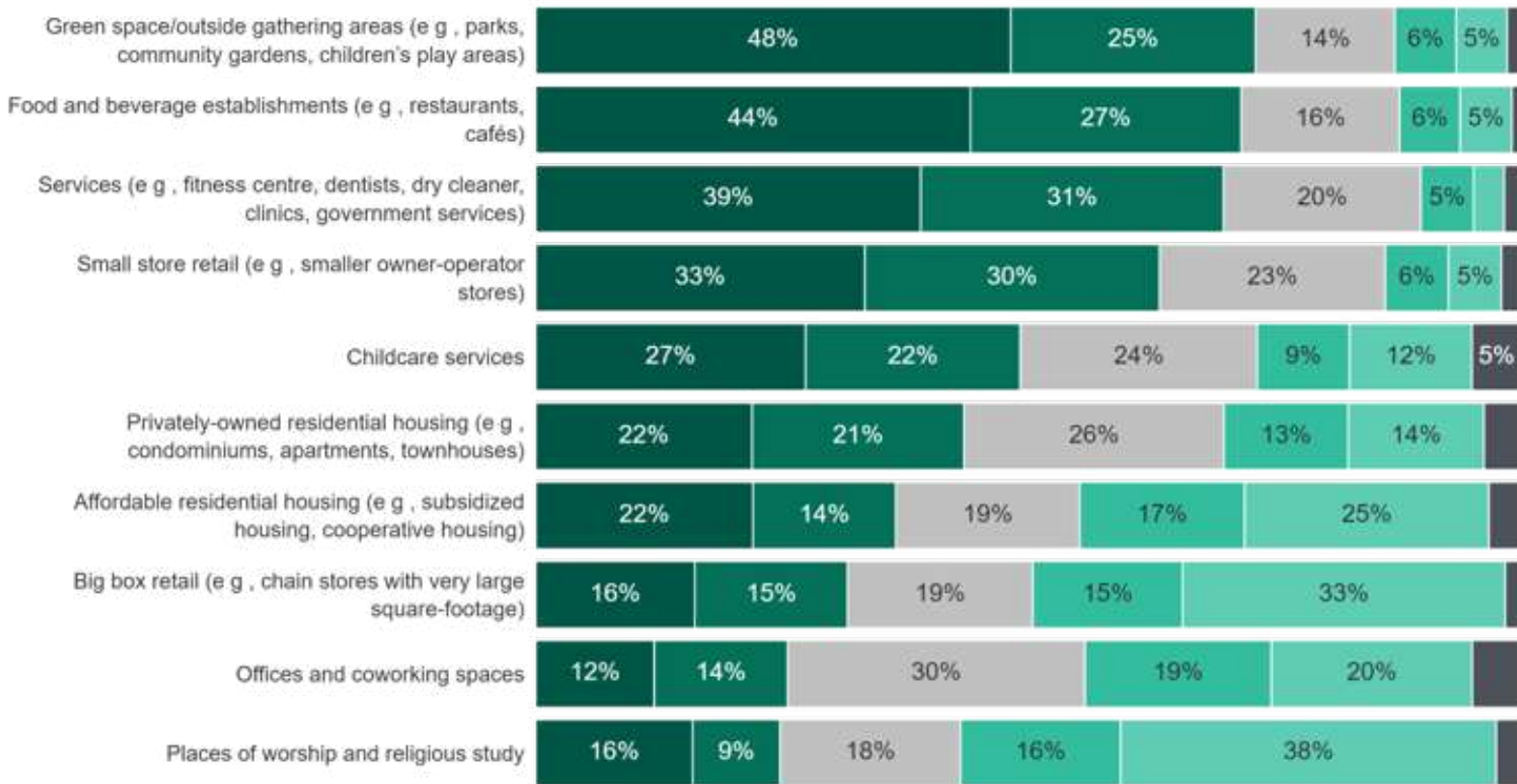
Participants would like to have more parks and green spaces in Côte Saint-Luc, as well as more trees and vegetation. They see increasing greenery in the City as an important measure to counter rising temperatures.

People also appreciate having green spaces that are places to gather, and would like to see more communal areas such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and dog runs. In the survey, “Green spaces/ outside gathering areas” topped the list of amenities that respondents felt were important to include in the new developments.



Below is a list of services that could be included in the new developments. How important is it to you that each one be included in the new developments?

5 - Very Important | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Not at all important | Don't know



“Des arbres, des arbres et des arbres...”

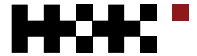
“As many green spaces as possible”

“Better modern parks for families to enjoy”

“I would like to see more trees planted on properties and streets which is good for the environment and keeps areas cooler.”

Places of worship

The issue of places of worship in residential areas was a recurring theme in the survey, though it was not mentioned often during the other engagement activities. Respondents' views on the matter were divided. Some said they wanted fewer religious establishments in residential areas, while others hoped small synagogues wouldn't be forced to close. A few people saw a need to build larger places of worship.



What's Next

In December, the City continued the pre-consultation process with a series of workshops on a variety of themes: home-based business and local commerce, housing, the Westminster corridor, and mobility and connectivity. In the new year, the City will organize focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and other activities. A report on the second stage of the pre-consultation process will be released in the spring.

For more information and updates, please visit cotesaintluc.org/engage. This web page also features a “Feedback” section where you can share your ideas with the City.

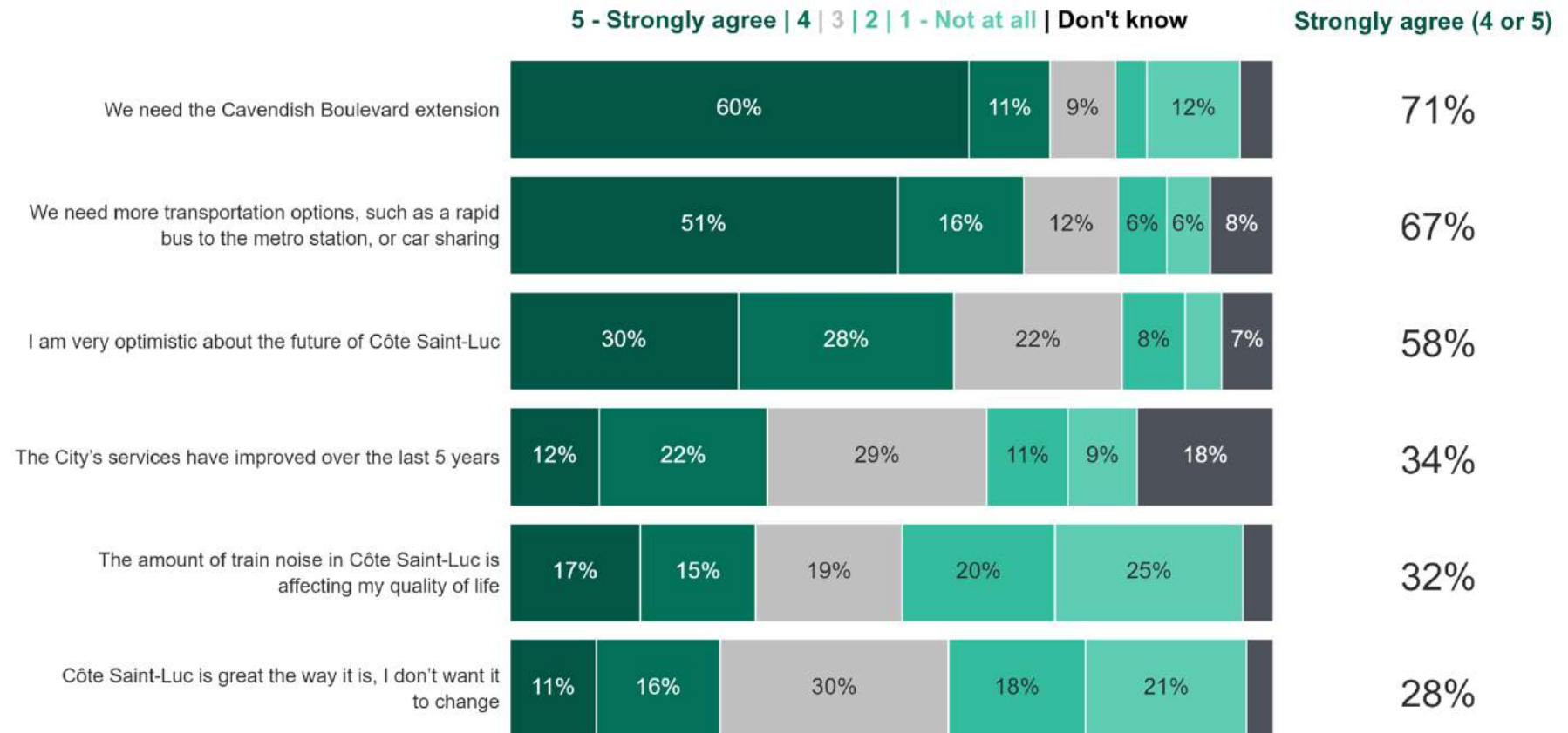


Appendix

Data from quantitative survey questions

Views about Côte Saint-Luc

Q3 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements



Sample base: 1,146-1,161



Master Plan priorities

Q5 Below are some specific areas we can focus on to improve life in Côte Saint-Luc. Please rate the level of priority each area should have in the Master Plan.

5 - High priority | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Not at a priority | Don't know

High priority (4 or 5)

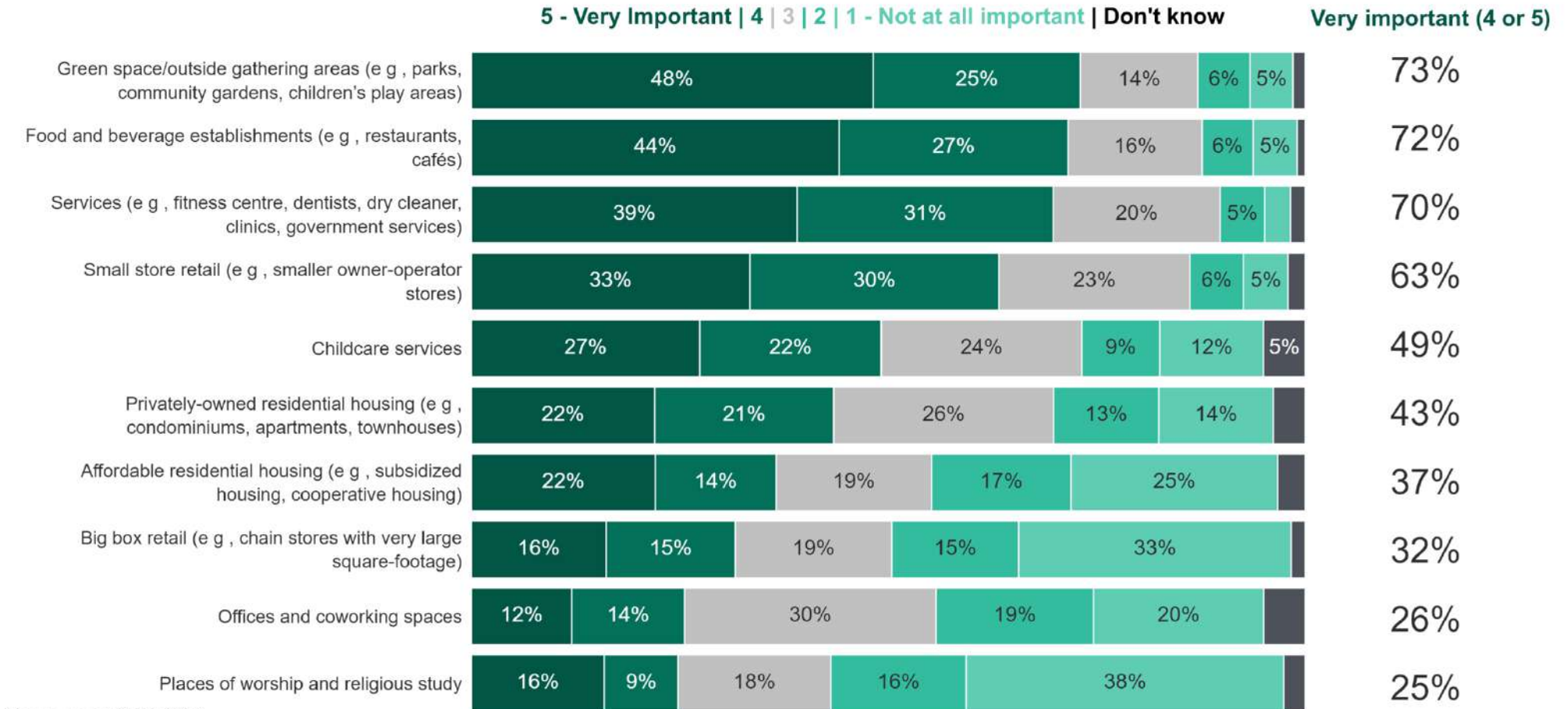


Sample base: 1,021-1,038



New Developments

Q7 Below is a list of services and amenities that could be included in the new developments. How important is it to you that each one be included in the new developments?





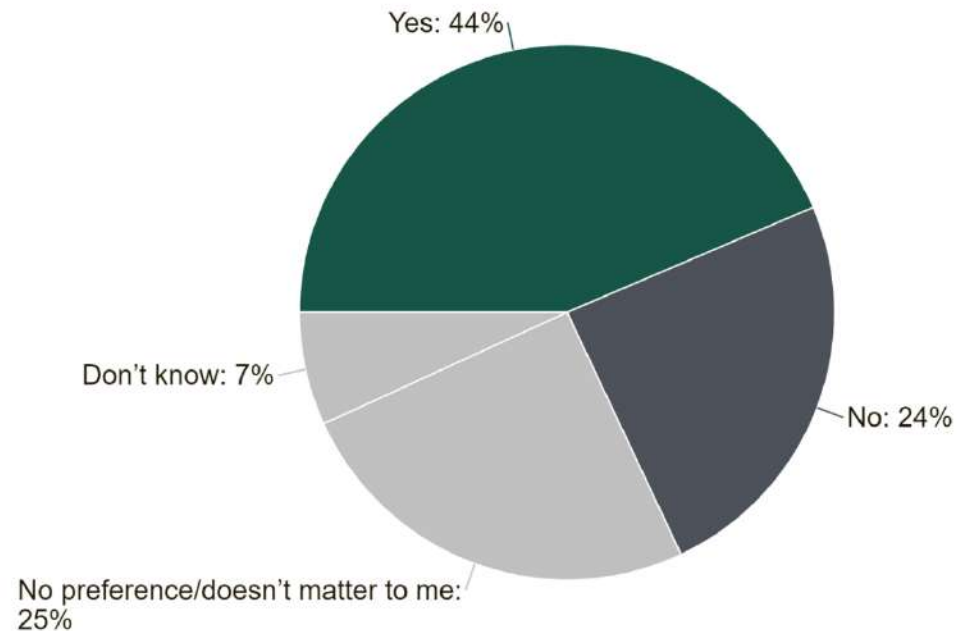
Home-based businesses

Text Shown to the Respondents

Côte Saint-Luc's current Zoning By-law allows people to operate a business from their home if they are a member of a professional order (*the Ordre des psychologues du Québec*, for example). This means people like insurance brokers and accountants can operate their businesses from their homes, but hairdressers and caterers cannot. If the City allows more types of businesses to operate in homes, more residents would be able to make a living without having to pay for a separate business space, and residents wouldn't have to travel so far to access these services. It could, however, inconvenience neighbours (e.g., more traffic and noise).

Q9 What do you think? Should the City allow more types of businesses to operate out of homes?

Sample base: 1,053





Green spaces

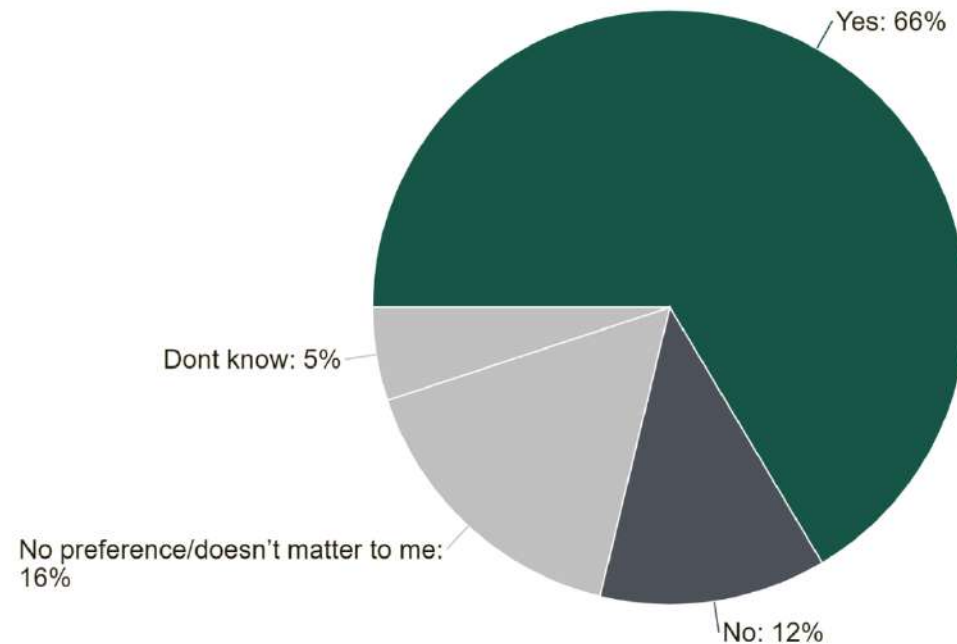
Text Shown to the Respondents

One of the environmental issues the City would like to address is the presence of “heat-islands.” A heat island is a large area covered in asphalt or concrete that generates a large amount of heat, like a road or parking lot. In the summer, heat islands make the city hotter during the day, and reduce the amount of cooling that takes place at night. Because of climate change, the heat island effect will worsen in the coming years.

Large parking lots are some of the worst heat islands in Côte Saint-Luc. The City could address the problem by moving some of them underground and turning the asphalted surfaces into green spaces.

Q10 Should the City require underground parking in new developments, understanding that it would reduce heat islands but might be less convenient than surface parking?

Sample base: 1,046



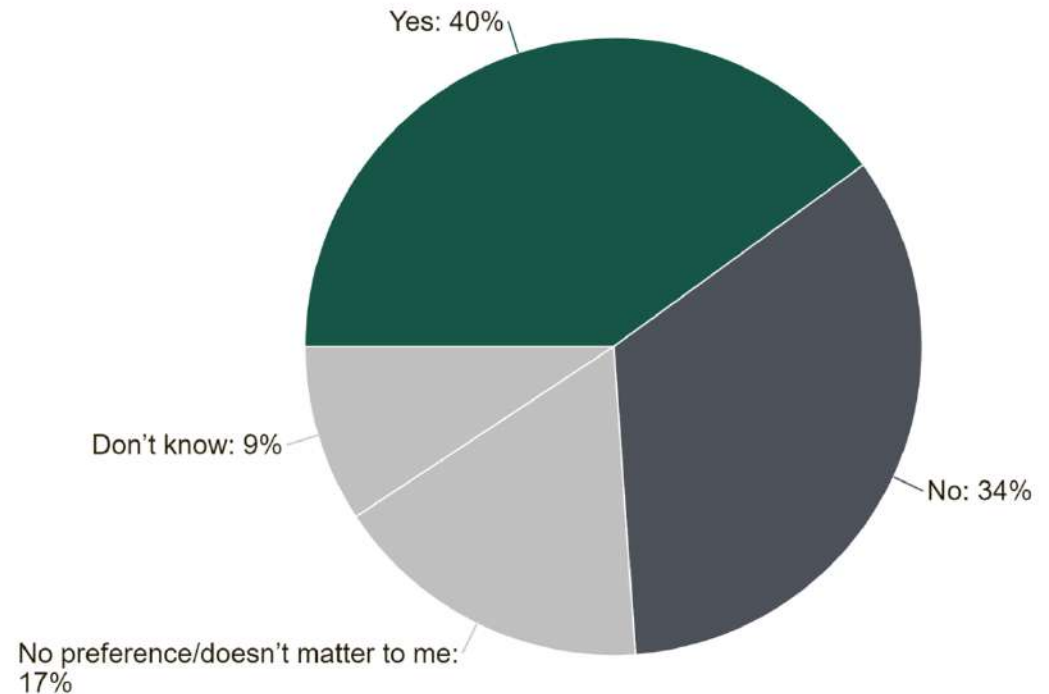


Adding residential units on a property

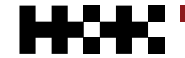
Text Shown to the Respondents

In the future, the City could allow residents who own single-family homes to build additional residential units on their property. For example, by turning a garage into a bungalow, or subdividing one lot into two and building a second house. This could create more affordable housing options in Côte Saint-Luc.

Q11 Should the City make it possible to add residential units or subdivide lots that were originally meant for single-family homes?



Sample base: 1,045

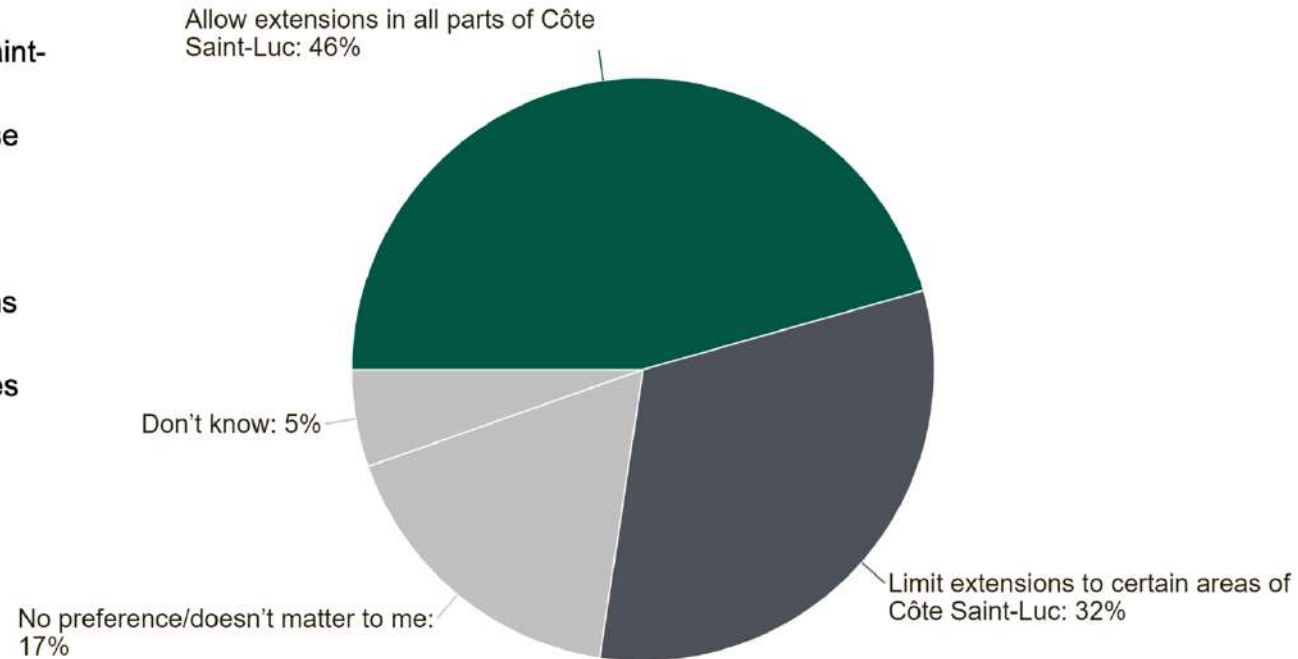


Making homes bigger

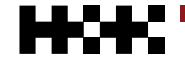
Text Shown to the Respondents

At the moment, a homeowner anywhere in Côte Saint-Luc can apply for a permit to build an extension on their home, and the City tries to accommodate these requests. This can result in houses that differ from other houses in the neighbourhood.

Q12 Should the City keep allowing home extensions anywhere in Côte Saint-Luc, or should it preserve certain sections of Côte Saint-Luc for smaller homes only?



Sample base: 1,039

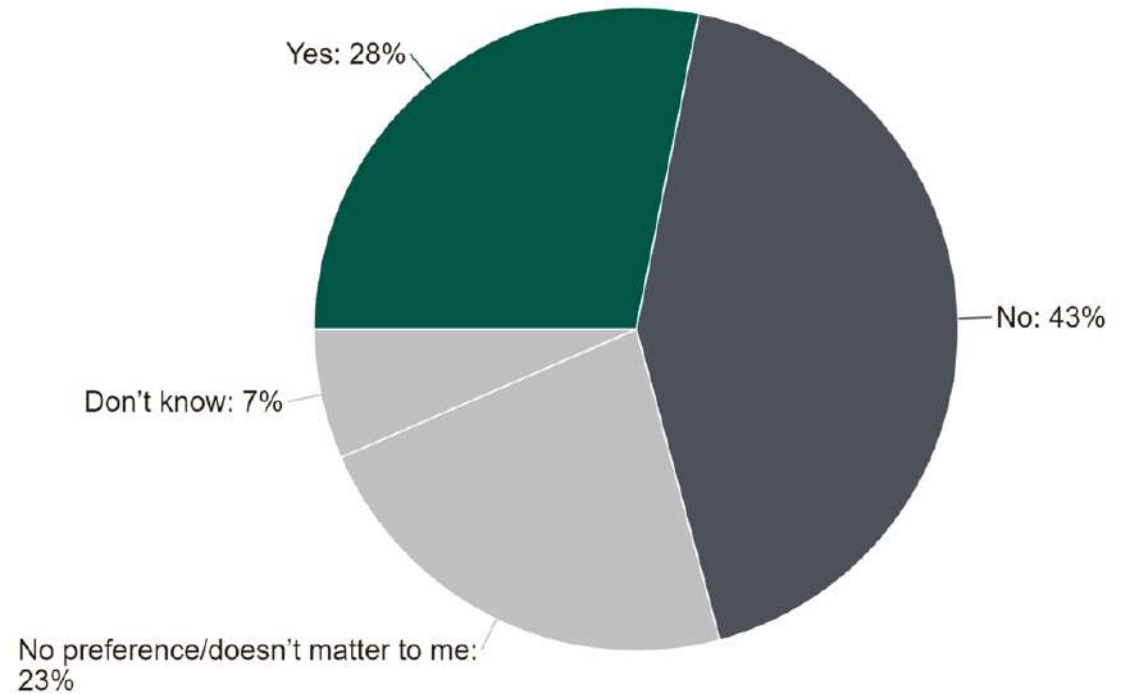


Spaces for worship and religious study

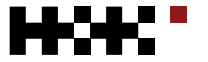
Text Shown to the Respondents

In the last few years, the City has become aware of a growing need for places where people can gather for worship and religious study.

Q13 Generally, do you think that new developments in Côte Saint-Luc of a certain minimum size should include spaces where people can gather for worship and religious study?



Sample base: 1,042





THANK YOU