

Welcoming Communities Analysis

Resident Integration and Belonging in Thunder Bay.

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

THUNDER BAY
CEDC

CITY OF
Thunder Bay
Superior by Nature

Thunder Bay
Multicultural Association

The Thunder Bay CEDC, TB Multicultural Association and City of TB Community Services Department embarked on a comprehensive ‘Welcoming Communities Analysis’ to understand the City’s current landscape and develop strategies to make Thunder Bay more welcoming and supportive of newcomers.

- Better understand newcomers’ experiences while settling into Thunder Bay;
- Explore the factors that influence sense of welcome, integration and likelihood of staying long-term.
- Focus on key areas: Healthcare, Transit, Housing, Community Services & Childcare

RESEARCH METHODS – INDICATORS

| AREA | INDICATOR |
|---------------------------|---|
| Housing | Determine the rate of unsheltered homelessness |
| | Evidence of discrimination in acquiring and living in housing |
| Healthcare | Assess satisfaction with the healthcare system's approachability, quality of care, and administrative processes, including interpersonal interactions and culturally responsive services. |
| | Review evidence of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety |
| | Check the availability of translation services in healthcare settings. |
| Transportation | Evidence of sense of safety when using public transit |
| | Measure satisfaction with public transit, including service quality, navigation, accessibility, and affordability. |
| | Assess the ease of access to essential services and multi-modal transit options. |
| | Review experiences with transit operators, staff, and other passengers. |
| | Ensure reliable information about public transit is available in official languages and other prevalent languages. |
| Community Services | Evaluate satisfaction with community services including interpersonal treatment and portrayals of newcomers. |
| | Measure the availability, quality, and inclusivity of public spaces, facilities, and programs. |
| | Assess the intercultural competence of community services employees and public space staff |
| Childcare | Assess the availability of childcare services. |
| | Analyze the rate of childcare service usage among newcomer families. |



Our **Approach**: Identifying the Key Drivers of Newcomer Retention

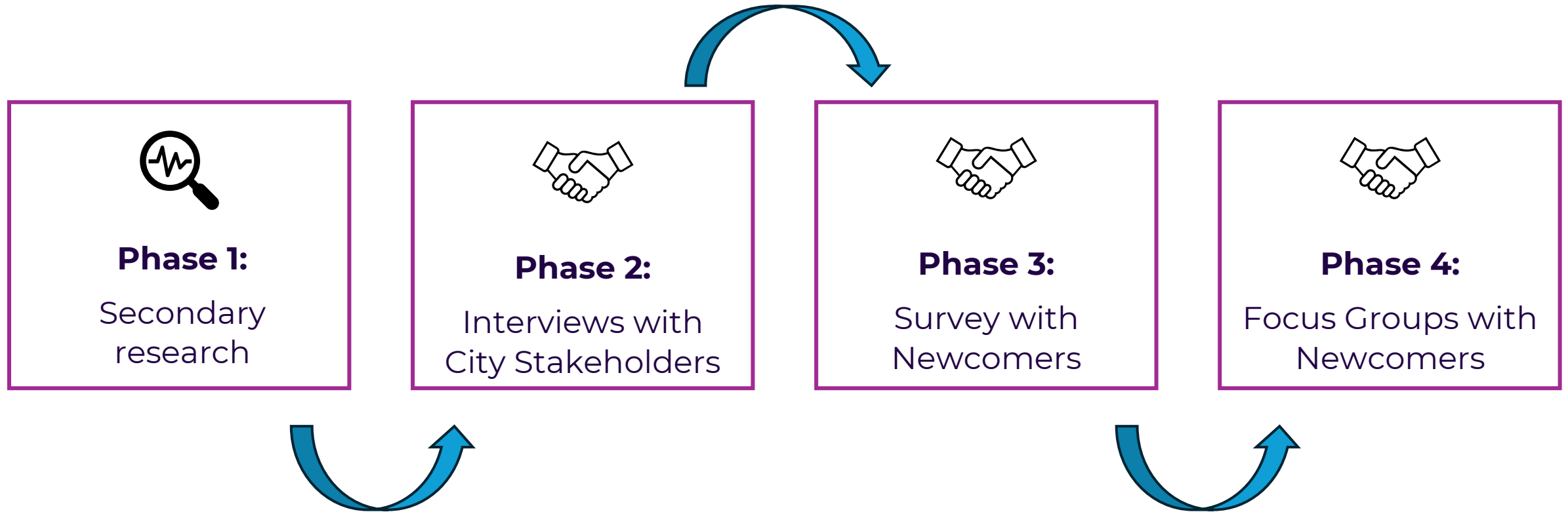
Why this matters?

- Canada debates how many newcomers we can welcome – but how ready are we for the newcomers we already have?
- Attraction gets attention, but retention is the true economic stabilizer, especially in small and mid-sized communities.
- “Stay factors” are not the same as “arrival factors.”

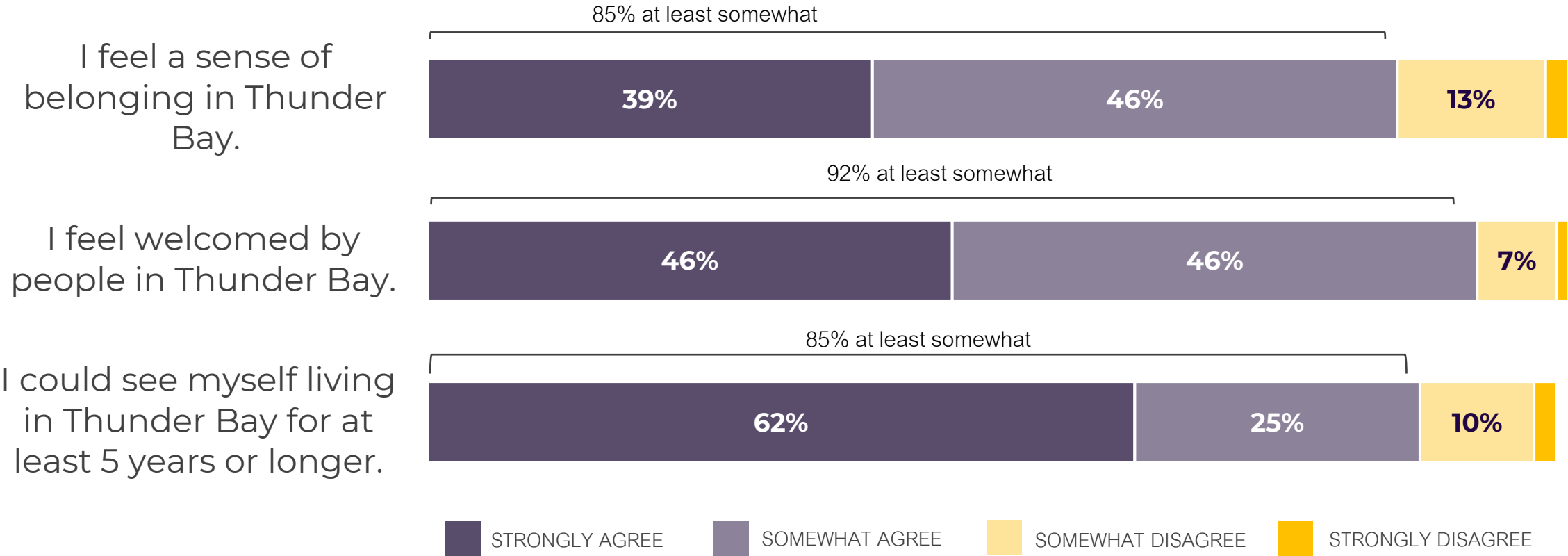
How We Analyzed Retention & Integration in Thunder Bay

- Surveyed newcomers + conducted focus groups and stakeholder interviews.
- Used statistical modelling to identify which settlement experiences may predict belonging and long-term retention.
- Visualized results using a Performance & Impact Matrix which mapped:
 - **Impact** on integration/retention
 - Current **performance** for newcomers

Our Methodology

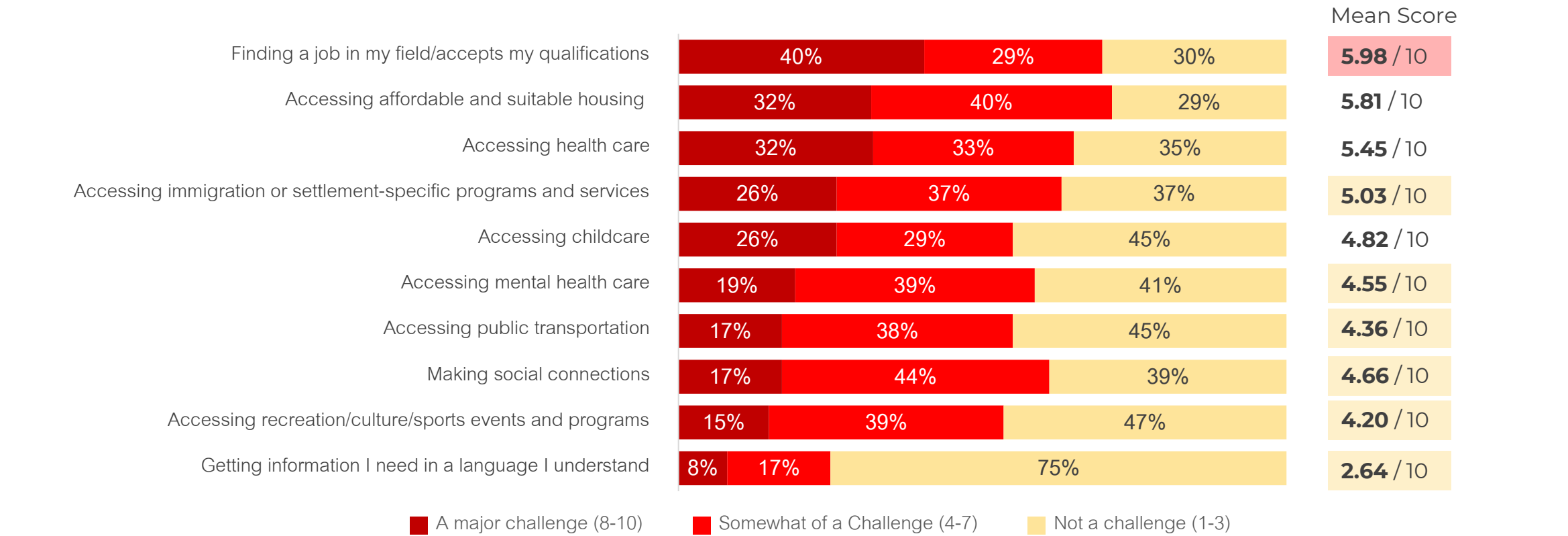


Most newcomers **express positive sentiment about their integration** into Thunder Bay.



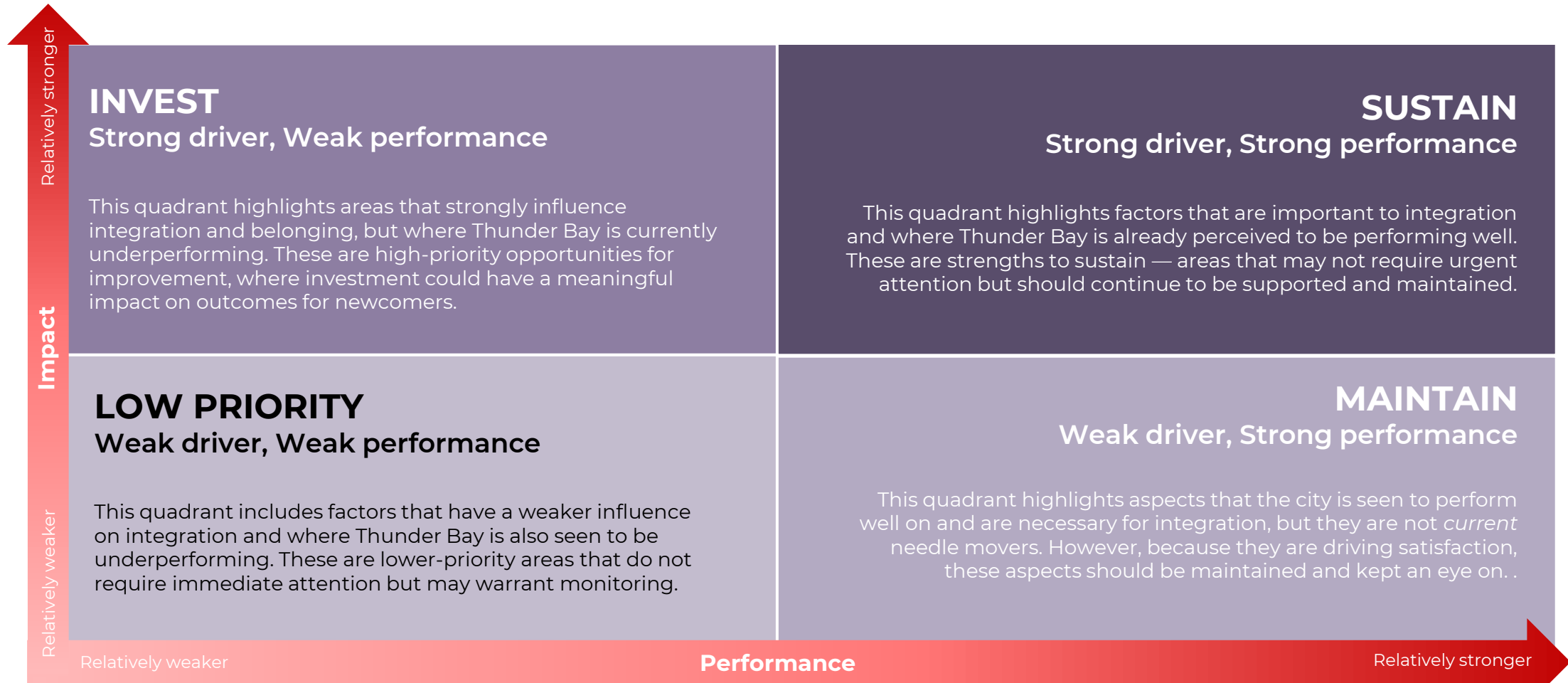
Q15: Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

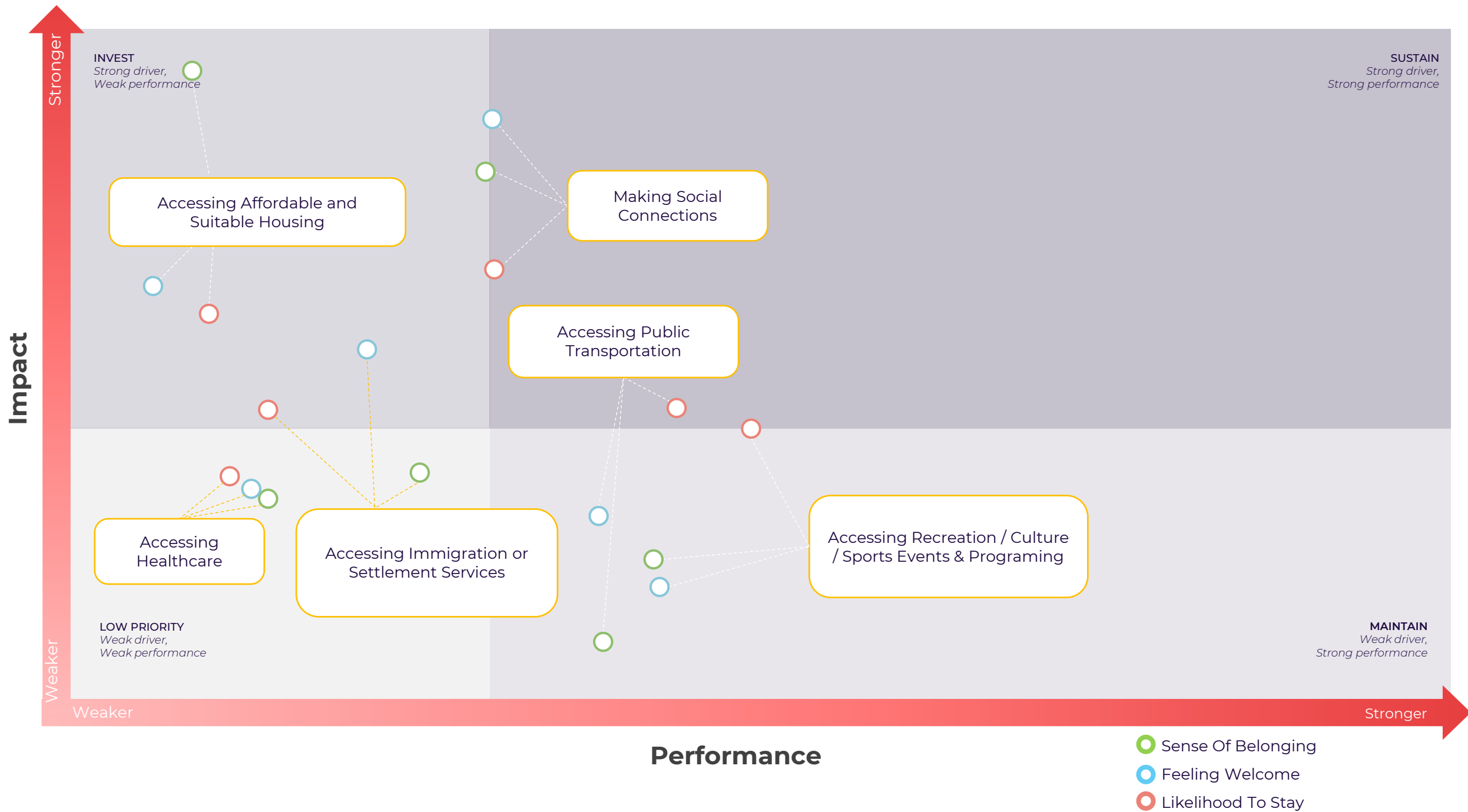
As newcomers settle into Thunder Bay, they consider **finding a job** in their field the **biggest challenge**, as well as **accessing affordable and suitable housing**.



Q16. Please rate the level of challenge you experienced when settling into Thunder Bay, on a scale from (1) "Not a challenge at all" to (10) "A major challenge."

Integration & Retainment | **Performance & Impact**





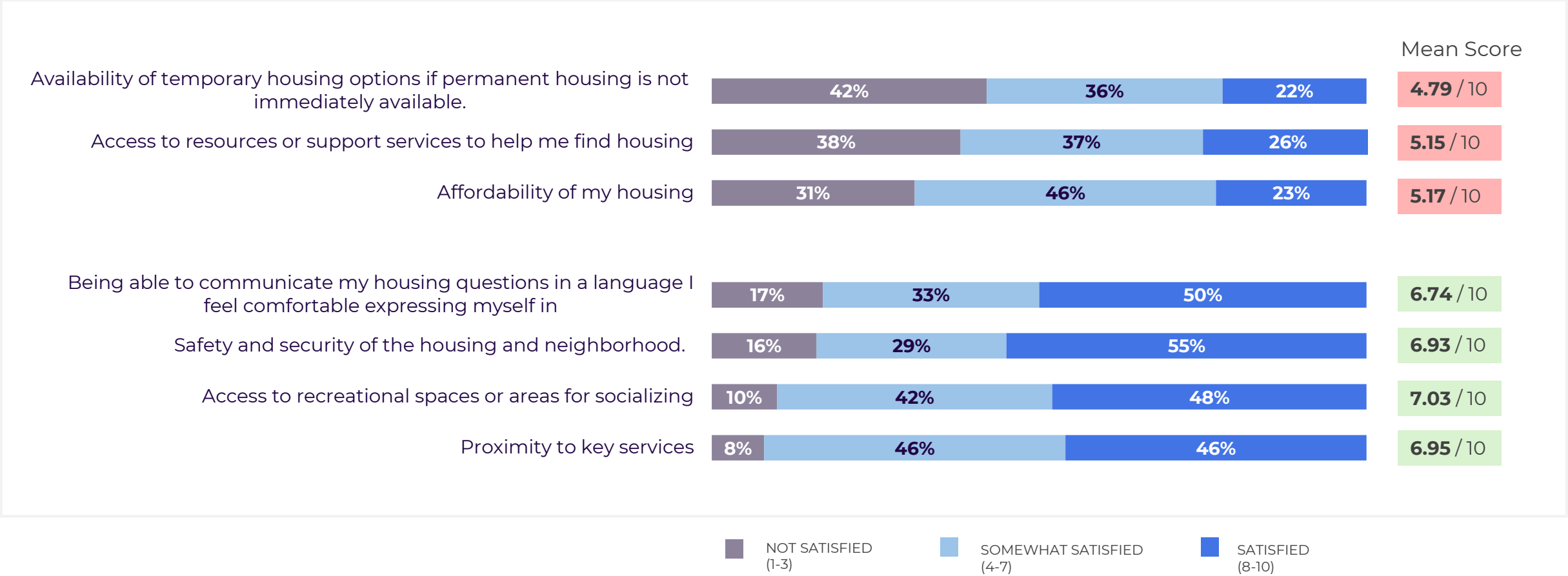


ACCESSING AFFORDABLE & SUITABLE HOUSING



MAKING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

FACTORS AT PLAY IN “FEELING AT HOME”



Satisfaction With Journey To Find A Home & Living Situation

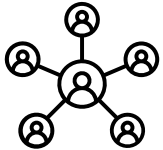
Q24/Q25. When thinking about your journey to find somewhere to live in Thunder Bay or on your current living situation, please evaluate the following aspects on a scale of 1 – Not at all satisfied to 10 – Very satisfied.

Factors/Ideas to Promote Social Connectedness



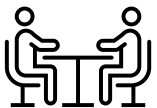
Centralized community hub

- Provide safety guidance and expectations in newcomer orientation materials and services.
- Offer clear orientation on how healthcare works in Canada, including how to prepare for appointments.
- Explanations on tenant rights and what is considered “normal” vs. “abnormal.”



Community programs & events

- Promote events and services through a City-endorsed mobile app with visual-friendly design.
- Ensure broad promotion through schools, settlement agencies, clinics, libraries and bus shelters.
- Expand programming for young adults, single adults and mid-life newcomers (e.g. social mixers, fitness groups, hiking clubs, cultural storytelling nights)
- Co-design programs with newcomers to ensure relevance.



Parent Connections

- Create low-barrier ways for newcomer parents to get involved (e.g. co-led activities, family storytelling to promote belonging and cross-cultural understanding)



Contact us for more insights from
the Thunder Bay **Welcoming
Communities Analysis** Initiative.

A modern office lounge with large windows, brick walls, and indoor plants. The space features a wooden floor, a grey sofa, and several large potted plants. A large window on the right side of the room offers a view of a city street with brick buildings and a tram. The ceiling has exposed ductwork and a large silver air conditioning unit. A framed abstract painting is on the wall to the left.

Thank you.

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