

DOTMOCRACY SURREY 2025

COMMUNITY TALKS: SURREY BRITISH COLUMBIA



IRON +
EARTH

ironandearth.org

Summary

In 2023 to 2024, Iron & Earth conducted a series of Community Talks events in Surrey, British Columbia, on climate change, energy transition, and relevant solutions. Following the events, Dotmocracy engagement events took place between July and September 2025 to validate the findings with the broader Surrey population. The research was done in partnership with the Zero Emission Innovation Centre (ZEIC)'s Sustainable Workforce Coalition (SWC) and researchers at the University of British Columbia.

The Dotmocracy voting method was used to engage with the Surrey population at ten sessions across five public locations. The statements were created based on findings from the results of Community Talks. 269 community members voted on four statements:

- Easy access to subsidized air-conditioning units
- Functional pedestrian infrastructure exists throughout Surrey
- Regardless of industry, every workplace has a responsibility to contribute to a more sustainable future
- New small-scale solar energy systems are community-owned

The response to these statements were overwhelmingly positive: the dominant rating for all four statements was “very important” (between 60-85%), followed by “somewhat important” (13-29%), and “not important” (2-11%).

These results validate that the issues raised by group discussants at the Community Talks events were relevant to the larger Surrey community.

1. Introduction

About Iron & Earth

Iron & Earth (I&E) is a non-profit organization with roots in the fossil fuel industry that is working toward a future where the workforce is dynamically engaged in a thriving green economy. We envision broad participation in a Just Transition, leading to strengthened economic and climate resilience, expanded accessibility to sustainable energy solutions and meaningful careers. This vision extends beyond workforce mobilization to foster a community-driven transformation, where people actively contribute to a sustainable and equitable future, for their communities and the planet. Its mission is to enable sustainable, community-driven climate solutions and reduce barriers for those seeking a future in the

green economy with programs that support greater job security, social protection, and more training opportunities as we move toward a low-carbon economy.

Iron & Earth believes community engagement is an effective way to influence sustainable participation in a Just Transition, and that community-driven solutions have a greater chance of becoming successful and sustainable in the long-term. Iron & Earth takes the time to build relationships and adapt to individual community needs whenever possible.

Community Talks is Iron and Earth's engagement initiative designed to spark conversations about how environmental, social, and economic changes impact people across Canada. It is committed to meeting communities where they are at, by supporting self-determined, community-driven solutions, and offering non-prescriptive support with programs that are designed by the community and for the community.

About the Sustainable Workforce Coalition (SWC)

The Sustainable Workforce Coalition (SWC) is a regional initiative to help catalyze an equitable transition for workers in Metro Vancouver and BC as part of the clean economy. It is part of the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre which is an independent non-profit and charitable organization and a committed member of the Low Carbon Cities Canada (LC3) network. ZEIC was established by an endowment from the Government of Canada, with support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), and the vision and contributions of many regional and provincial champions.

The SWC is a 40+ cross-sector network of leading organizations from business, labour, Indigenous partners, education, community groups, and government working to ensure that a large number of diverse workers are ready and able to enter the clean economy. The SWC provides coordination and strategic leadership to businesses and people as part of BC's energy transition.

The Coalition delivers its work by creating strategies and programs that focus on:

- Workforce attraction and retention
- Training gaps and opportunities
- Research and data
- Media and communications

About University of British Columbia (UBC) Team

This work was developed in partnership with two research groups at the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Applied Science: Holly Caggiano's Planning for Climate Equity (PLACE) Lab and Alex Tavasoli's Laboratory of Future Industry (LoFi). Along with master's

student Charlotte Taylor, Caggiano and Tavasoli conduct collaborative research that explores opportunities for community ownership of climate infrastructure. Based on their current research, Caggiano, Tavasoli, and Taylor contributed to engagement conceptualization for this report, including development of a prompt to explore perceptions of community solar.

Holly Caggiano is an Assistant Professor in the School of Community and Regional Planning. Alex Tavasoli is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Charlotte Taylor is a Masters student in the School of Community and Regional Planning, co-supervised by Caggiano & Tavasoli.

2. Community Talks: Surrey

Why Surrey?

The Sustainable Workforce Coalition, with guidance from the Surrey Board of Trade, identified Surrey as a crucial city to focus on in the pursuit of securing an equitable transition for British Columbians. As one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse cities in Canada, Surrey, British Columbia, is a prime location for fostering community discussions centered around the interconnected issues of climate change, income security, and sustainability.

Since 2016, Surrey has grown by over 51,000 people and it is on track to become the largest city in British Columbia by 2040.¹ In 2021, 45% of Surrey's population self-identified as immigrants to Canada.² This growth spurt compels deliberate considerations in sustainable development, housing and transportation infrastructure, and community-led planning in response to climate impacts.

While the city comprises a varied landscape ranging from urban precincts to agricultural lands, Surrey's coastal position is of particular concern in relation to climate change. 20% of the city (including significant amounts of farmland, 400 homes, transmission lines, valuable roads and highways, gas pipelines, public parks, beaches, and wildlife habitats) is located on a coastal floodplain, which is at significant risk for flooding due to rising water levels. In fact, it's

¹ Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. n.d. "Surrey Demographics." Accessed November 2023.
<https://www.surreylocalimmigration.ca/research-resources/surrey-demographics/>

² Invest Surrey. n.d. "Economic Overview." Accessed November 2023.
<https://investsurrey.ca/market-data-resources/economic-overview#:~:text=Key%20Sectors&text=Top%20Industries%3A%20Surrey's%20economy%20includes,manufacturing%20centre%20within%20Metro%20Vancouver.>

estimated that Metro Vancouver will need to spend \$9.5 billion on flood protections by 2100.³

In response to these challenges, the municipal government has been proactive in launching local sustainability projects and policies, most prominently the Climate Change Action Strategy, which was adopted by the city council on July 24, 2023.⁴ The Climate Change Action Strategy aims for a zero carbon, climate resilient city by 2050. A city survey from 2021 found that eight of ten Surrey residents are worried about the changing climate.⁵ With a large climate-conscious populace and a government that has indicated a commitment to improving local resilience, Surrey has the potential to lead the country in initiatives aimed at strengthening the community while addressing climate change.

Original Engagement Findings

From 2023 to 2024, Iron & Earth conducted three Community Talks events in Surrey, B.C., in partnership with The Sustainable Workforce Coalition (SWC). These events were small focus group-style conversations where community members met each other and discussed the issues of importance to them. We aimed to meet Surrey community members where they were at, to understand their ideas on climate change, energy transition, and potential solutions to these issues. The events were facilitated and attended by locals, ensuring that each conversation was led by the community, for the community. They began with a presentation about the supporting organizations, followed by group discussions where attendees joined one of three round-table groups to discuss three questions relating to the topics.

³ Johnston, Jesse. 2018. "Farms, homes, roads, wildlife in Surrey, B.C., under threat from rising water levels." CBC, February 22, 2018.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-climate-strange-strategy-1.4546395>

⁴ City of Surrey. n.d. "Climate Change Action Strategy." Accessed November 2023.

<https://engage.surrey.ca/climate-action-now/widgets/91241/faqs#17021>

⁵ *ibid.*



SURREY COMMUNITY TALKS



Participants filled out the demographics survey in the registration forms prior or during the community talks events at Surrey, B.C.

The below figures present the summarized results.

EVENTS OVERVIEW



3
Events



89
Participants

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

3%
LGBTQ

11%
Person with
disability

0%
Indigenous

24%
Newcomers

76%
Ward residents

63%
Person of colour

INCOME LEVELS



2%

High income
over \$106,827

27%

Middle income
\$53,413 - \$106,827

52%

Low income
below \$53,413

19%

Prefer not to say

AGE GROUPS



31 to 54 years

43%

15 to 30 years

29%

55 years and above

28%

GENDER IDENTIFICATION



52% Women

45% Men

2% Other

1% Prefer not to say

Across the three events, a few key themes emerged.⁶ Participants identified the rising cost of living and the mounting impacts of climate change as two important and interconnected issues in Surrey, expressing a desire for the government to do more in addressing these dual crises. The failure of local government during the 2021 heat dome loomed over conversations, fueling an interest in community-based climate solutions. Regarding the role of government in their lives, participants identified several ways for the City of Surrey to address these issues, including: providing subsidized air conditioning units, establishing a centralized climate emergency hotline number, and ensuring all climate and sustainability communications are provided in a wide range of languages.

The future of transportation was also of the utmost importance to community members, with participants conveying a cautious attitude towards the cost of electric vehicles, while expressing enthusiasm about improving walkability and expanding public transportation in Surrey. Participants noted that Surrey's large size compounded with insufficient public transit and pedestrian infrastructure has created a car-dependent culture.

When asked about their visions for the future economy of Surrey, participants expressed that people working in all career paths must view themselves as part of the transition to a more sustainable world, offering an expansive view of the green economy. Despite feeling overwhelmed at what the future holds, they highlighted a desire for expanded access to education on topics relating to the green economy, with a focus on engaging youth in the community. Overall, participants spoke at length about the necessity of meeting basic needs like education, housing, and healthcare as the basis of a thriving green economy in Surrey.

Dotmocracy Prompt Development

From these initial themes, we identified which sub-issues were most strategically viable for our organization to pursue given our understanding of Surrey. We focused on picking themes with the potential to have an impact on the local level, as opposed to issues with a broader scope. A collaboration session with our SWC and UBC partners resulted in a fourth question to address the topics of interest. Following the session, several rounds of revisions with feedback from the larger Iron & Earth team and Surrey project partners improved the clarity, specificity, and bias blind spots of the draft questions. The final list of prompts were:

- **Easy access to subsidized air-conditioning units**
- **Functional pedestrian infrastructure exists throughout Surrey**

⁶ For full reports and summaries of the Community Talks Surrey findings, visit: www.communitytalkscanada.ca/reports

- Regardless of industry, every workplace has a responsibility to contribute to a more sustainable future
- New small-scale solar energy systems are community-owned

3. About Dotmocracy

Dotmocracy or dot-voting commonly uses stickers or marks to facilitate mass voting. For anonymity, and to ensure zero influence from visible accumulating votes, the activity was modified so that participants inserted tokens into covered slots instead of pressing stickers on a public board. To validate whether the findings from the Community Talks sessions in Surrey resonated with the general city population, the Dotmocracy board displayed four statements for voting. The statements were formulated based on prominent findings from the Community Talks sessions. Passersby rated each statement on a scale of “Very Important,” “Somewhat Important,” and “Not Important.” Individuals with further insights submitted written comments into an anonymous suggestion box.



1. City Centre Library

4 events

Holland Park

Mother Language Festival

1 event

Royal Kwantlen Park

Surrey Urban Farmers Market

3 events

2. Semiahmoo Library

1 event

3. Semiahmoo Fish & Game Club

Salmon Festival

1 event

Ten dotmocracy sessions took place at publicly accessible locations and events supplying high attendance and ample space to accommodate the dotmocracy booth. A farmer's market, public libraries, and festivals comprise the list. The sessions elicited engagement from 269 individuals who voted using the board and discussed prompts with the facilitators.

Although the activity aimed for individuals aged 15 or older to participate, facilitators were given discretion to include youth who demonstrated clear understanding of the themes. Meanwhile, children took part in leisurely activities using coloring books, crayons, and stickers. The booth's prominent visibility and engaging interactivity frequently created a ripple effect - a person's participation would prompt passersby to join in. Facilitators noted that this phenomenon of "contagious curiosity" was apparent at events like the Salmon Sessions Music Festival and the Surrey Urban Farmers Market. The voting booth utilized a large board on an easel which displayed the four statements.



Participants cast their votes by inserting provided tokens into colourful paper slots under each statement. The rewards for voting included a range of Iron & Earth branded stationery, apparel, and drinkware. In addition, anyone who provided insights, comments, or reflections at the booth received instant ticket draws for a chance to win one of the grand prizes: a Biolite lantern.

Prior to the sessions, Iron & Earth trained the facilitators to provide them with the necessary knowledge, tools, and confidence to effectively run community engagement booths. The training program covered constant presence at the booth, neutral perspectives in support for prompt interpretation, and oversight of prizes and ticket draw. The complete breakdown

of the training program including statements, event role, event guide, and a frequently asked questions document are attached as Appendices A, B, and C.

4. Dotmocracy Findings

Aggregated Voting

The visual presentation of the Dotmocracy board presented the statements as stand-alone topics, so that participants were not prompted to rank the importance of the four topics. The goal of the activity was to gauge participants' support levels of the topics, allowing for the possibility that all of the issues were of strong importance to them. We found that, after analyzing the aggregated votes from 10 locations for frequency distribution, mode, and median answers, all statements received high "very important" votes, which also make up the median answer and most common answer. The amount of votes are different for each statement, indicating that some people skipped voting for one or more statements.

The results of the voting show that participants strongly supported each topic, as observed in the number of "very important" votes that dominated the results. The workplace sustainability statement received the highest number of "very important" responses at 85%, indicating that participants viewed this topic with stronger importance compared to the other statements. Pedestrian Infrastructure and Community Solar received comparable numbers of "very important" votes at 75% and 71%, positioning these topics at similar levels of importance. Air-Conditioning received the least number of "very important" votes at 60%, indicating that participants did not support this topic as strongly as they did with the three previous statements. While the prompts were not evaluated comparatively by participants, the pattern of responses suggests differing levels of perceived significance among them.

VOTING RESULTS

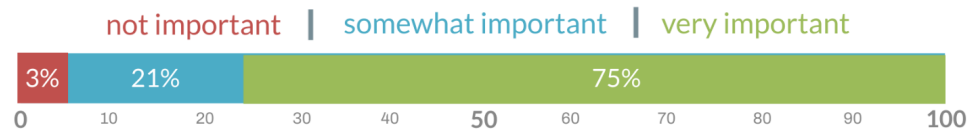
Easy access to subsidized air-conditioning (AC) units

Total Votes
199



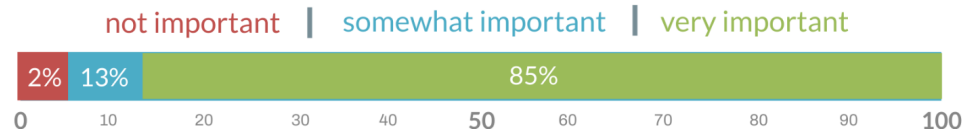
Functional pedestrian infrastructure

Total Votes
201



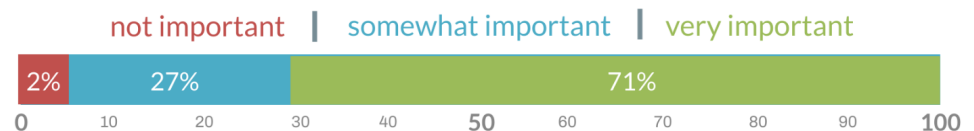
Every workplace has a responsibility to act more sustainably

Total Votes
206



Community-ownership of new solar energy systems

Total Votes
203



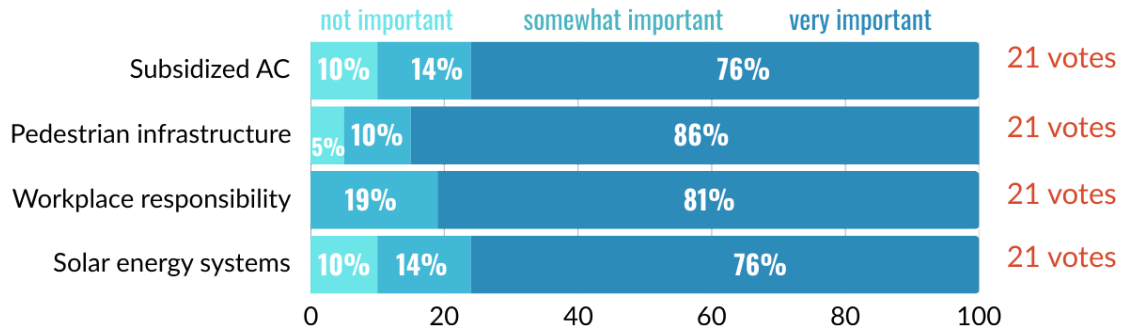
The overwhelmingly positive response to all four statements indicate that the findings from our Community Talks initiative have been successfully validated as relevant to Surrey at-large. The core issues identified by community members who participated in our previous small-group engagement resonated positively with members of the general public passing by our booths at random.

Voting Based Location

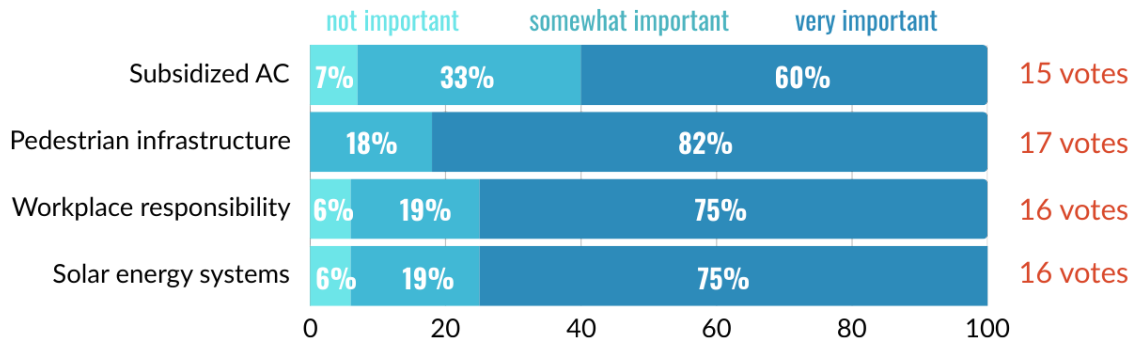
The following charts capture the voting breakdown for each distinct engagement event, showing the variation in preferences between locations. Each graph includes the number of votes for each question, and the breakdown of the votes organized by “not important”, “somewhat important”, and “very important”.

Royal Kwantlen Park

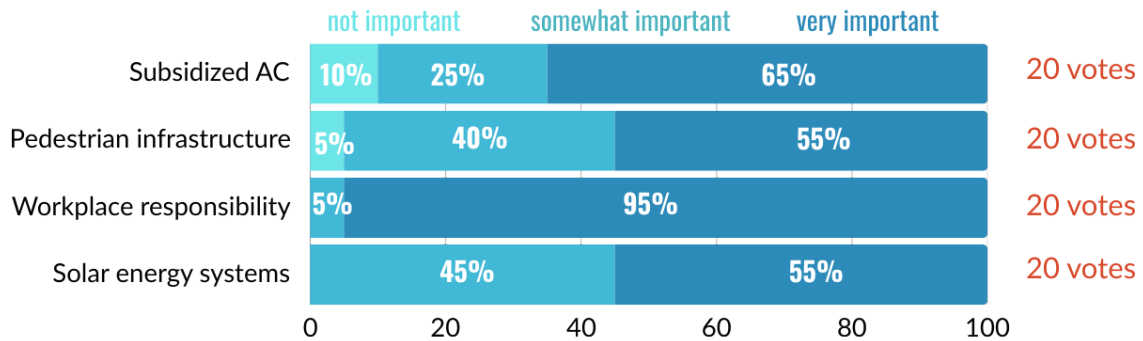
August 16



September 6

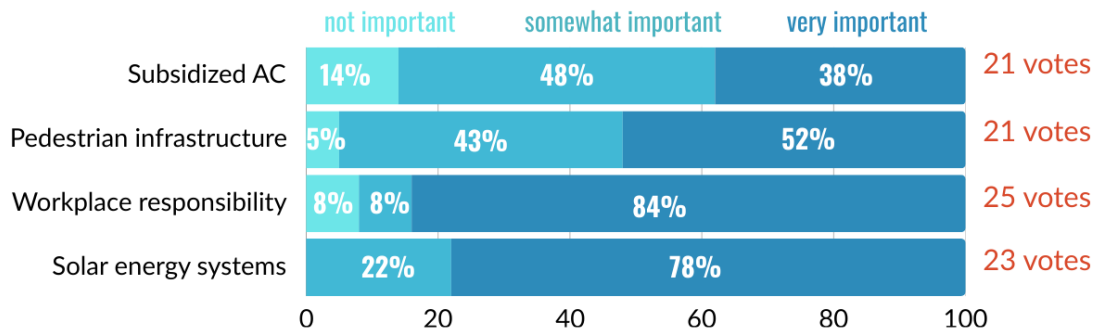


September 13

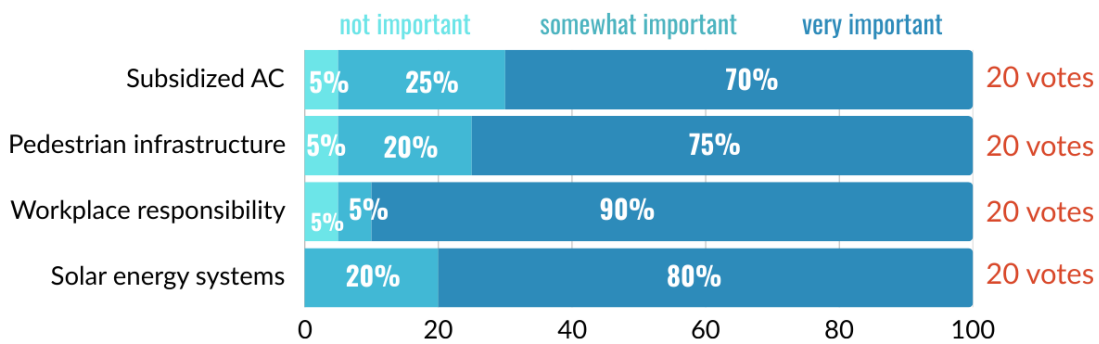


City Centre Library

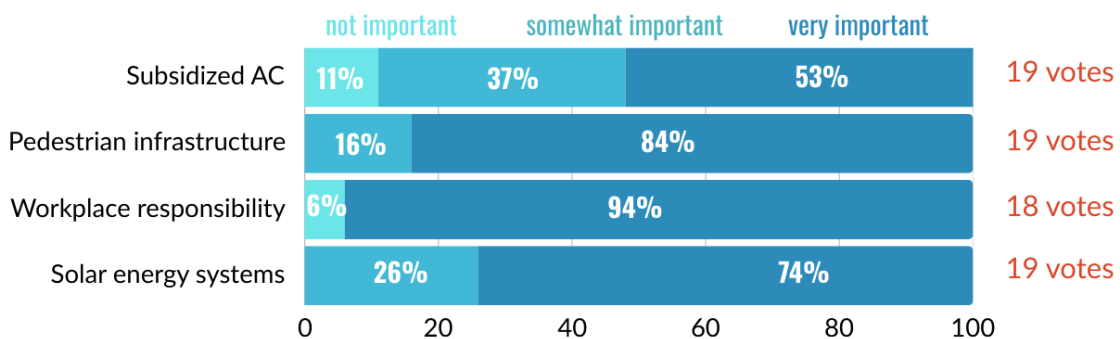
July 14



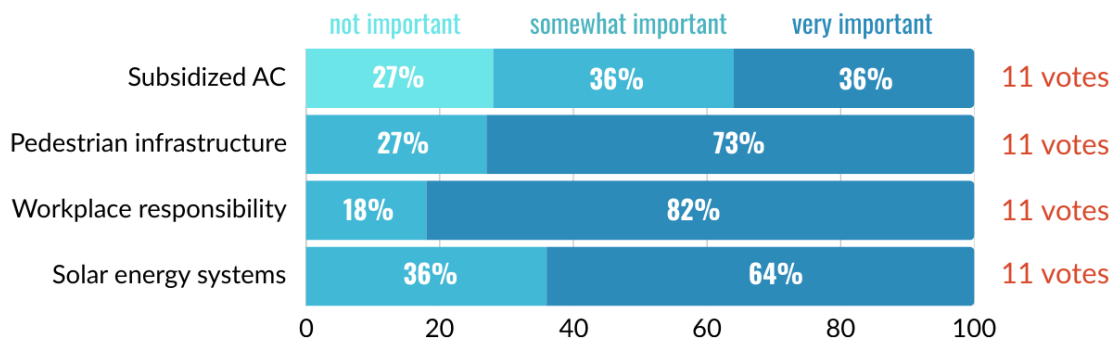
July 20



September 14

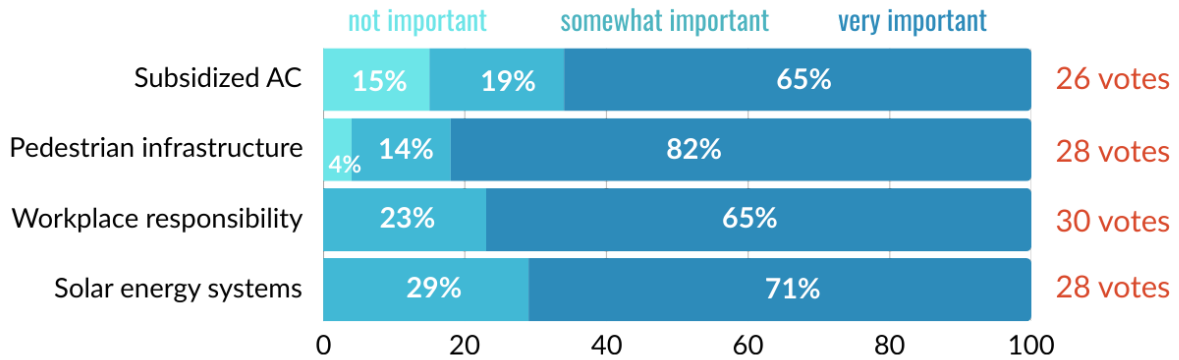


September 21



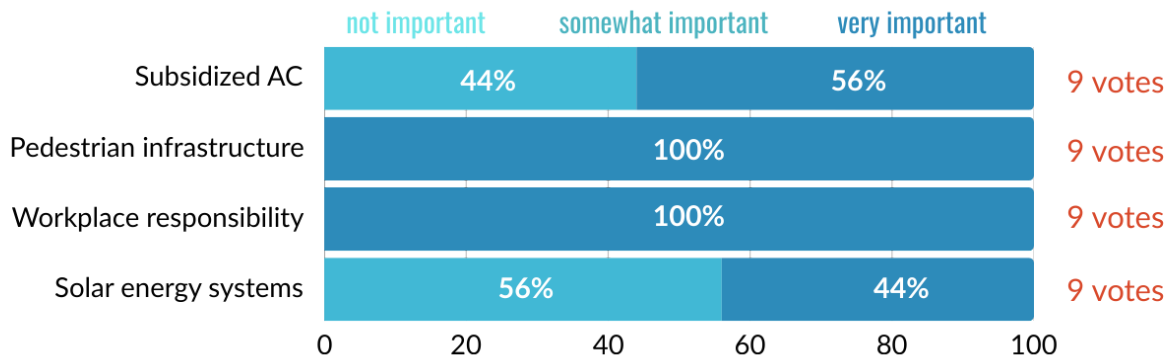
Holland Park

August 10



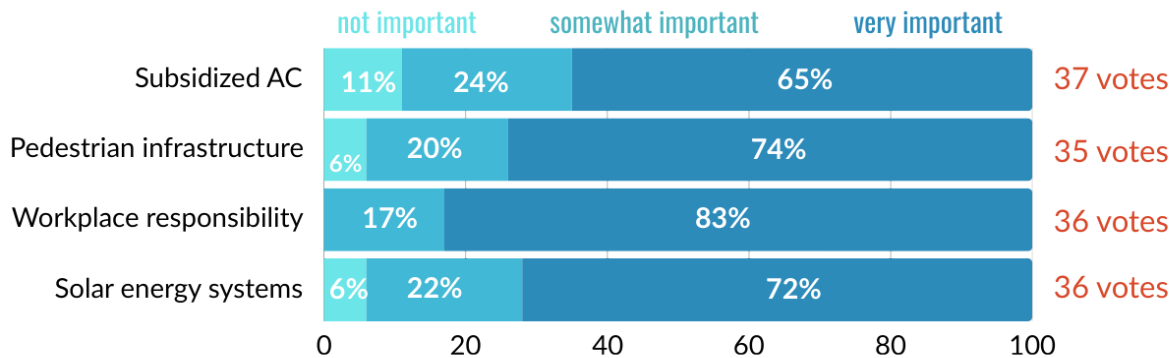
Semiahmoo Library

July 16



Semiahmoo Fish & Game Club

August 23



What We Heard – Comments from Participants

Air-conditioning

By far the most frequently discussed topic of all four was subsidized air-conditioning units, with lots of participants asking follow-up questions and submitting written feedback on this prompt. This feedback was mostly positive. Participants often pointed to the health impacts of exposure to high temperatures as the reason for their preference for this prompt: “I think having A/C is very important because not having an A/C can cause health issues and harm especially due to the increase of the global [temperature].” Another person agreed, referencing the deaths caused by the 2021 heat dome: “I personally found the subsidized air conditioning [to be] the best project since the climate is changing so rapidly and the numerous heat waves have impacted many people and some have actually died over not having readily available A/C’s.” One participant identified the importance of effective communication in disseminating information about A/C:

Easy access to subsidized A/C units is big for me! Finding ways to communicate this option to the public that don’t rely on a website/app could help too (e.g., community engagement in person). Most populations who are more susceptible to the impacts of the heat waves may not have the internet access or internet literacy to navigate webpages.

In terms of negative and mixed feedback, a few participants argued that air-conditioning is a luxury and not a necessity, saying things like, “There are more important things than A/C.” More often, participants raised questions about the impact of air-conditioning units on the environment, as captured in this quote: “Providing and subsidizing more A/C units would increase [the] carbon footprint, ultimately adding to the demand due to more frequency in extreme heat events. Thoughts on meeting this need without compromising net zero footprint?” There were a few more questions from participants in this line of questioning, including: “How is air quality impacted by many air conditioners? Do they run on green energy? Can our energy grid support them? Will they impact air quality? How sustainable are A/C units?”

Community Solar

The second most frequently discussed topic by participants was community solar. Discussion on this topic was very mixed, with participants raising many questions about how community energy projects function, making clear that there is a knowledge gap about community solar ownership in Surrey.

In terms of positive feedback, several participants expressed the belief that putting more power in the hands of community members is a necessity. “I believe that people should have more control,” shared one person. “Monopoly corporations are getting greedier,” said another. One participant shared that their family is involved with community energy in Saskatchewan and believes that there are not enough of these kinds of projects happening in British Columbia yet.

Participants raised a range of questions about community energy, including how families maintain their investments if they move out of the community, how these projects impact local businesses, and the specific logistics of installation. One participant was concerned that community ownership could take jobs away from local energy workers, and another stated that, “Community ownership of private assets causes a knee-jerk response.” There were a few comments indicating an ideological aversion to community solar projects, like “That’s pretty socialist, right?” This feedback indicates a need for refined communication for community solar advocates looking to operate in Surrey.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Pedestrian infrastructure was also tied as the second most discussed topic by dotmocracy participants. Discussion on this topic was mixed but mostly positive: the biggest complaint from participants seemed to be that other issues are simply more important.

For participants who ranked this prompt as very important, community was an important value. “Creating sustainable pedestrian-centric infrastructure that later generations will benefit from [is very important],” shared one person. One young person completing the activity with their parents said that pedestrian infrastructure is most important because “homeless people need good sidewalks.” Another person stated that this is most important because “it’s important for seniors.” Someone else highlighted that strong pedestrian infrastructure is critical to the tourism industry in Surrey.

In terms of constructive feedback, there were two comments expressing that the existing infrastructure in Canada is already sufficient to people’s needs. One participant brought their experience raising a disabled child to their ranking of pedestrian infrastructure as low, as captured in the following quote: “All of these ranked choices are important to me personally. However, I ranked ‘pedestrian infrastructure’ somewhat because my son’s disability excludes us from many public spaces.”

Workplace Sustainability

The least discussed topic was workplace sustainability: discussion on this prompt were mixed, but mostly negative. A few participants told our facilitators that environmental responsibility in daily life is very important. However, other feedback indicated that people felt that the framing of the prompt was too vague or broad to be meaningful. One participant spoke at length about this to facilitators, stating that the question should instead be expanded to focus on corporate accountability practices. They proposed including anti-racist training practices as part of a broader sustainability framework for corporations to adopt.

Other topics

Participants identified a range of other topics of importance to them beyond the prompts offered in the dotmocracy exercise. As identified in our previous engagement, transportation was a top priority for participants. Passersby frequently discussed a desire for better cycling and public transit infrastructure in Surrey and one participant shared an interest in electric vehicles. The next most frequently discussed topics were housing, accessibility to retrofitting subsidies and rebates, and a desire for more publicly accessible greenspaces in Surrey. The following topics were also submitted by Dotmocracy participants — these topics were all discussed in our Community Talks initiative, indicating that our sessions accurately captured the concerns of local community members:

- Desired engagement practices in Surrey
- The experiences of youth and seniors
- Accessibility to government services
- Access to information on sustainability and recycling
- Road safety
- Climate change impacts in the community
- Disability accessibility
- Mental healthcare access
- An interest in 15 minute cities
- The growing population of Surrey
- The impacts of global political events on local energy access
- A need for transparency from local government
- A need for a change in our political systems

Event Feedback

At every dotmocracy event, participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to discuss these issues in their community, with Facilitators taking note of verbatim feedback offered from participants as well as submissions to the suggestion box. “Thanks for this program. It’s important to get community involvement in greener measures so that everyone participates,” shared one person. “The activity is informative and I learned something new about what you do,” wrote another. One passerby had participated in our Community Talks series and was happy to see the next phase of engagement underway.

The booths were particularly well-received by participants looking for work. Several people approached our facilitators and stated they were looking for work in the climate field and were excited to see Iron & Earth starting these conversations. One participant had discovered Iron & Earth from an online career fair during the pandemic and expressed excitement that we were expanding to a physical presence in Surrey, their home.

The most common piece of constructive feedback was a need for clarification about the meaning of the prompts, followed by a desire for clarification about Iron & Earth’s mission and funding structure. A few participants shared that they felt as though Canada is already handling environmental issues better than in their home countries. As one person said, “[Compared to] where I’m from in India, Canada does all of this really well and it’s great we even get this chance to discuss.”

The wide range of the conversations initiated by participants indicates that Surrey community members are open to and deeply interested in continued engagement.

5. Conclusion

The Dotmocracy data collected from July-September 2025 successfully validated our 2023-2024 Community Talks engagement findings. The responses from members of the general public indicate that the themes identified in Community Talks accurately capture the needs and concerns of Surrey community members. In addition, community members welcomed the Dotmocracy booth and activity enthusiastically. Following the success of the Dotmocracy as a validating method in Surrey, we will continue to use Dotmocracy to validate future Community Talks findings from other locations.

6. Next Steps

This validation of our initial engagement findings represents the second step of our long-term engagement plan for Surrey. Having confirmed that the topics identified by

community members resonate with the general public, we will now be conducting a systematic policy scan of municipal-level policies in Surrey related to these themes. This scan will identify the gaps between what people want and what legislation pertaining to these issues exists. Depending on what gaps are found, I&E will initiate advocacy with local government and relevant community organizations to move policy closer in the direction of community desires and concerns. We will also be launching an amplification campaign to bring these findings to the attention of local decisionmakers, community organizations, and the participants who attended our Community Talks sessions.

Appendix A

The following appendix provides the general script outline used by facilitators during the Dotmocracy events conducted by Iron & Earth. While each script was individually populated with event-specific details, this outline serves as a consistent guide across all sessions.

Script for Facilitating an Iron and Earth Dotmocracy Session - Surrey
Event Location

EVENT TIME BREAKDOWN:

1. Setup: *Time Entered*
2. Event: *Event Title*
3. Wrap-up and cleaning: *Time Entered*

TOTAL TIME: *Time Entered*

START TIME: *Time Entered*

END TIME: *Time Entered*

SETUP START TIME: At the booth location, no later than *Time Entered* , ready to set up at *Time Entered* sharp or sooner.

DATE: *Date Entered*

LOCATION: *Address of Event Entered*

EVENT CONTACT: *Name and Phone Number of Event Contact*

IRON AND EARTH CONTACT: *Name and Phone Number of On Call Iron & Earth Contact*

MATERIALS PICK UP & DROP OFF: *Assigned Facilitators*

(BOOTH LOCATION): *Details of booth location*

SETUP:

- Set up dotmocracy board and ballots
- Setup table with suggestion box, pens and paper, printouts and the free giveaways (Color sheets/crayons, pens, stickers, T-shirts)
- Please take pictures of the setup before any participants arrive. We would love to have facilitators in them, as long as they are comfortable with it and sign our consent form
- Have one facilitator by the dotmocracy board and one by the table at all times. Both should be comfortable handling each side of the script as we can't predict how people will approach the booth
- Count number of people that approach the table and number of people that vote please use pen and paper and count each set of participants
- Provide only 4 tokens for participants, one for each of the statements presented. Only provide extra if someone drops one/makes a mistake If someone makes a mistake please ask

where box the person voted and make a note on our counting tally sheet (i.e., -1 from mistake in statement 1 very important)

- Once a participant has voted provide them an opportunity to pick a participation prize (T-shirt/Tumbler/cross bag/Bucket hat/coffee cup)
 - Invite them to share feedback or insights for a chance to enter a raffle—right after they participate, they'll draw a ticket that instantly reveals whether they've won.
-

Reminder for facilitators:

Be proactive in encouraging participation.

Invite people warmly. Walk them through the process. Answer questions thoughtfully.

Facilitator at the Table

Hi, my name is ____ and [optional] my pronouns are _____. I'd really appreciate a few minutes of your time to participate in this event hosted by Iron & Earth featuring Surrey.

In 2023 and 2024, Iron & Earth held three community engagement sessions in Surrey to learn how extreme weather events and the energy transition have affected residents—and to gather ideas for potential solutions.

You can see our findings in these summary reports. (*Show printed reports.*)

If you're interested, I can give a quick overview of what we heard during those sessions.

We at Iron & Earth believe that community-driven sustainability is key to addressing today's challenges. We recognize that meaningful change should be led by the community and made for the community.

Today, we're hoping to validate 4 key findings from those sessions. We want to make sure what we heard then still reflects what the community values now—through a fun and interactive process.

Are you interested in participating?

If they are interested

We're using a method called dotmocracy (or dot voting).

You'll place a token or ballot to show how important each statement feels to you—on a scale from:

- Very Important
- Important
- Not Important

This activity is completely anonymous, and we'll measure the results cumulatively.

If none of the statements reflect your views or priorities, feel free to write your thoughts using pen and paper and drop them into our Suggestion Box—also anonymous.

After the event, we'll publish a short report summarizing the results and comparing them to our previous findings. That report will be available at communitytalkscanada.ca.

Please note: We kindly ask that attendees do not photograph or record the event.

(Pass the participant to the facilitator at the dotmocracy board.)

If they are not interested

On behalf of Iron & Earth, thank you again for listening!

If you'd like to get in touch later, you can reach us through one of the methods in this brochure. *(Hand brochure.)*

Have a wonderful rest of your day!

Facilitator at the Dotmocracy Board

Hi, my name is ____ and [optional] my pronouns are _____. I really appreciate your time.

We're using dotmocracy—also known as dot voting. You'll place a ballot to show how important each statement is to you, using the scale: Very Important, Important, or Not Important.

This activity is completely anonymous, and results are measured cumulatively.

If none of these statements reflect your opinions or priorities, please use pen and paper and add your thoughts to our Suggestion Box—also anonymous.

If the participant is interested in voting:

Easy access to subsidized air-conditioning units	very important	important	not important
Functional pedestrian infrastructure	very important	important	not important
Every workplace has a responsibility to act more sustainably	very important	important	not important
Community-ownership of new solar energy systems	very important	important	not important

Facilitator: Please read each statement and place your vote using the scale provided.

- You're given 4 tokens
- You can only vote once per each statement. A maximum of 4 votes per participant
- We ask you to review all options and plan your token before voting

After the event, we'll create a brief report that shows our tallying and how they fare compared to our reports that will be available on our website communitytalkscanada.ca.

[Provide giveaway]

On behalf of Iron & Earth, I'd like to thank you for participating. *Offer them one of the participation prizes (If they voted) and offer them to provide feedback or insights via the feedback box to be entered into a raffle for the biolite lights.*

If you would like to reach us at a later time please use one of these methods [pass them the brochure]. Have a wonderful rest of your day!

FAQ

General

- Who or what is Iron & Earth? We are a registered non-profit that enables sustainable, community-driven climate solutions and reduces barriers for those seeking a future in the clean economy. We started in 2016 by Canadian fossil fuel workers wanting to ensure a prosperous future for their colleagues and communities. Since then, we've evolved to become a voice for those who will weather the changing energy sector.
- What do we do? We provide direct community engagement, short term trainings for Indigenous Communities and have a climate job portal that offers one on one mentorship and helps plan out the next steps to a career in the sustainability field
- Who's funding this? Funding for this event is generously provided by Future Skills Centre
- Are you against oil & gas? Oil, gas and coal have built prosperity for Alberta and we are grateful for the hard work of the people that have contributed to the wellbeing of our community. However, the climate has become increasingly uncertain and it has taken a toll on our economy. We want to see what other futures are available and bring our community together, while understanding that there are diverse opinions on the subject

Dotmocracy

- What are you doing with the data? We will collect and process it and create a report that will be found on our website communitytalkscanada.ca
- I don't agree with any of these statements. That's totally OK and thank you for your candor. Please feel free to write your thoughts and input them in our Suggestion Box anonymously
- What are energy-saving technologies? These refer to technologies that help make homes stay cozy in the winter and cool in the summer (High-efficiency home heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, insulation)

- What do you mean by sustainability legislation? These refer to policies that will become law that consider the current extreme weather events, protects the environment and offer economic opportunities for Edmontonians that does support these efforts

WRAP-UP AND CLEANING

Venue

- Take a picture of the set up event, and any facilitators who would feel comfortable in photos
- Clean up booth and gather materials
- Put tokens on respective bags

Afterwards

- Count each box independently and thoroughly
- Take pictures of the suggestion box notes for digitalization
- Submit results: The vote count, suggestion box images and participant count

Appendix B:

This appendix outlines the four core questions used during Iron & Earth's Dotmocracy events. Each question was broken down and expanded to help facilitators understand its intent, guide discussions, and adapt delivery for different audiences.

STATEMENT ONE: Easy Access to Subsidized Air-Conditioning Units

This refers to programs that help people get air-conditioning units such as window ACs, portable coolers, or heat pumps—for free or at a much lower cost than usual. These units can make a huge difference during hot weather, especially for seniors, people with health conditions, or those living in homes without proper cooling.

Air conditioning: Any kind of cooling system that you can use at home to lower indoor temperatures. This might include:

- Window-mounted AC units
- Portable air conditioners
- Heat pumps (which can cool and heat)
- Fans with cooling features

Subsidized: “Subsidized” means the cost is covered or reduced through a program—often run by governments, nonprofits, or utility companies. These programs aim to make cooling systems affordable and accessible, especially for:

- Low-income households
- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Families living in older or poorly insulated homes

Why is this important?

- Health & safety: Extreme heat can be dangerous. Access to cooling helps prevent heat-related illness.
- Energy equity: Not everyone can afford AC, and these programs help close that gap.
- Preparedness for hotter summers: As summers get hotter, cooling becomes a necessity—not a luxury.

STATEMENT TWO: Functional Pedestrian Infrastructure

Functional pedestrian infrastructure refers to the systems and spaces that make it safe, easy, and comfortable for people to move around on foot—or using mobility devices—without relying on a car, bike, or public transit. It's about creating walkable communities where everyone can access essential services, public spaces, and social opportunities.

Pedestrian infrastructure: Accessible, easy-to-use sidewalks and crosswalks for people to access when not in a car, bike, or public transit (includes mobility devices).

What does pedestrian infrastructure include?

- Sidewalks: Wide, smooth, and well-maintained paths that are accessible to strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers.
- Crosswalks: Clearly marked and safely placed crossings, often with signals or signage to protect pedestrians.
- Curb cuts and ramps: Sloped transitions between sidewalks and streets that make navigation easier for mobility devices.
- Lighting and signage: Well-lit paths and clear signs that improve safety and wayfinding.
- Benches and rest areas: Places to sit and rest, especially important for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Shade and shelter: Trees, awnings, or covered areas that protect pedestrians from sun, rain, or snow.

Why does it matter?

- Accessibility: Everyone—regardless of age or ability—should be able to move safely through their community.
- Health & wellness: Walkable areas encourage physical activity and reduce reliance on vehicles.
- Safety: Well-designed pedestrian spaces reduce accidents and improve traffic flow.
- Community connection: Walkable neighborhoods foster social interaction and support local businesses.

STATEMENT THREE: Every Workplace Has a Responsibility to Act More Sustainably

Sustainability isn't just for environmental organizations—it's something every workplace can contribute to. Acting sustainably means making choices that reduce the negative impact a business or organization has on the environment. This can be done in many ways, depending on the type of workplace and its resources.

Sustainability: Reducing the impact that the workplace has on the environment, whether it be through reducing waste, utilizing energy-saving technologies on-site, or encouraging remote work.

What does sustainability look like at work?

- Reducing waste: Using less paper, switching to reusable supplies, and improving recycling practices.
- Energy-saving technologies: Installing LED lighting, smart thermostats, or solar panels to cut down on energy use.

- Remote or hybrid work options: Encouraging flexible work arrangements can reduce commuting emissions and office energy consumption.
- Sustainable purchasing: Choosing suppliers and products that prioritize environmental responsibility.
- Green spaces and wellness: Creating healthier work environments with plants, natural light, and eco-friendly materials.

Why does it matter?

- Environmental impact: Workplaces are major contributors to energy use and waste—small changes can add up.
- Employee engagement: Many workers value sustainability and feel more connected to employers who take it seriously.
- Cost savings: Energy-efficient practices often reduce operating costs over time.
- Community leadership: Businesses that act sustainably set an example and inspire others to do the same.

STATEMENT FOUR: Community Ownership of New Solar Energy Systems

Community solar allows members to invest in a shared solar project—similar to buying stock in a company—giving them partial ownership of the system. While there's an upfront cost to invest, subscribers benefit from reduced energy bills and may also have a voice in how the project is managed.

Community-owned energy projects: Projects that are owned by and in service of communities, whether it be a neighborhood, a co-op, or an organization. Details of each project vary, but the guiding idea is that these systems are local, typically small-scale, and produce power that can service the community that owns the project.

Community solar puts the power—literally and figuratively—into the hands of the community. By investing in a shared solar project, members not only reduce their energy costs but also gain a stake in shaping their local energy future. Community ownership means decisions about the project—such as where it's built, who can participate, and how savings are distributed—can reflect the values and needs of the people it serves.

Similar Example: A community might choose to prioritize access for low-income households, ensuring that those who need affordable housing are included in community development plans and this decision comes right from the community members.

Helpful link: [SolShare](#)

Real-world example: [Salay Prayzaan: Métis Crossing Solar Project](#)

Appendix C:

Facilitation FAQ:

Who is the intended audience and what exactly will be done with this report once it is created and published? (e.g., how will it be used to influence local policy decisions?)

Dotmocracy offers an opportunity to continue the conversation, stay present in the community, and ensure that our insights resonate with the lived experiences and priorities of Surrey residents.

We aim to move beyond traditional consultation or “superficial engagement” by:

- Maintaining a consistent presence in the community
- Building on previous input, not starting from scratch
- Ensuring that the findings reflect real community voices, not organizational assumptions

The Dotmocracy statements are directly pulled from past engagements — they are not based on our internal ideas, but on what the community has already shared.

This process reinforces our model: we listen first, and then invite the community to validate, refine, or challenge what’s been heard.

Purpose of the Report:

- Showcase community needs and priorities
- Highlight the work being done in response
- Serve as an advocacy tool for future action

It is intended for public viewing, but we also actively share the findings with:

- Local government
- Community organizations
- Industry partners
- Relevant stakeholders

Next Steps After Engagement

Specific actions from this engagement are not predetermined — to avoid making assumptions — we are committed to being guided by what the community tells us. Once the Dotmocracy phase of this project is wrapped, we will analyze the data to see which priorities are most meaningful to Surrey participants, and use that information to determine which policy solutions we want to advocate for.

Outcomes could include:

- Presenting findings to local city councillors
- Advocating for policy changes in partnership with other local organizations aligned with community interests

- Conducting a city-wide survey to further verify and disseminate findings
- Informing and adapting Iron & Earth's programs to better meet local needs

This flexible, responsive approach ensures that our work remains community-driven and impactful. This is just the beginning of our advocacy in this community and while we don't know exactly where it will take us, we will provide continually updates on our work – you can always go to our website (communitytalkscanada.ca) for updates.

How should we engage individuals who are not Surrey residents, but maybe spend time in the city for leisure, work, or family commitments?

While our primary focus is on Surrey residents, there is room for flexibility when it comes to participants from surrounding areas – especially those who:

- Work in Surrey
- Commute through the city regularly
- Spend time here for leisure or family reasons
- Vacation in the area consistently

These individuals often have meaningful experiences and perspectives related to the community, and their input can still be valuable.

To maintain the integrity of the findings:

- Facilitators can note when a participant is not a Surrey resident (keeping all responses anonymous).
- These notes are anecdotal and not linked to specific individuals, but they help us better understand the context of our engagement and add nuance to the final report.

Ultimately, community engagement can extend beyond strict residency, and capturing these insights – even informally – enriches the overall understanding of public sentiment.

How should we engage with children, especially those who may be too young to understand the purpose of our engagement or the Dotmocracy prompts? Young children eager to participate – mostly drawn by the more appealing prizes.

We typically engage with individuals aged 15 and older, as it's important that participants understand the purpose of the activity and the choices they're making.

However, if a participant is a mature adolescent close to the age threshold – for example, under 15 but demonstrating clear interest and comprehension, or accompanied by an engaged parent who is guiding their participation – facilitators are encouraged to use their discretion.

Participation may be permitted in these cases, provided the individual shows a genuine understanding of the activity and the Dotmocracy prompts.

To maintain the integrity of the Dotmocracy results:

- Avoid guiding younger children through the voting process, even if they're enthusiastic.
- If tokens are placed by children who didn't understand the activity, it's appropriate to exclude those tokens from the final count
- This is a research-based initiative, so while it's valuable to engage with young people, they need to be at an appropriate age to comprehend the activity and the prompts provided to ensure findings are accurate

General approach to engagement (i.e. a passive approach where we simply sit or stand by the table and only interact with folks who show intentional interest, or a more active approach where we try to purposefully promote our activity and bring in interest from passerbyers?)

- The engagement approach should be tailored to the type of event, as some settings lend themselves to more passive interaction than others. For example, at an independent library booth, a more active strategy may be needed since visitors aren't typically expecting interactive activities — we may need to proactively invite them to participate. In contrast, busier events like farmers markets or festivals naturally attract people who are already looking to engage with booths and vendors, making a more passive approach both effective and manageable. Our goal is to maintain a steady flow of participants at the booth without overwhelming facilitators, ensuring each person receives meaningful engagement.

General FAQ Information:

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- Who's funding this? Funding for this event is generously provided by Future Skills Centre
- Are you against oil & gas? Oil, gas and coal have built prosperity for Alberta and we are grateful for the hard work of the people that have contributed to the wellbeing of our community. However, the climate has become increasingly uncertain and it has taken a toll on our economy. We want to see what other futures are available and bring our community together, while understanding that there are diverse opinions on the subject

Dotmocracy:

- I don't agree with any of these statements. That's totally OK and thank you for your candor. Please feel free to write your thoughts and input them in our Suggestion Box anonymously
- What are energy-saving technologies? These refer to technologies that use energy efficiently to help keep spaces comfortable (High-efficiency home heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, insulation), and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (renewable energy like solar panels, small-scale wind energy, among others).
- Does "Interacted with Table/Booth" also include "Participated in Dotmocracy" or are they mutually exclusive? This is important as Isabela, and I had been counting anyone who approached our table at all in the former and then tallied if someone additionally participated in Dotmocracy; We refer to "interacted," it includes everyone who engaged with the booth in any way—whether they participated in the dotmocracy or simply approached the table. We want to tally all forms of interaction and then a separate tally is someone does the voting.