

Assessing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Lethbridge's Heritage Inventories Using a System Plan Approach: A Thematic Analysis

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Background & Objective

- The City of Lethbridge has completed 4 Heritage Inventories. This project is in preparation for Heritage Inventory 5.
- In 2023, The City adopted a new Heritage Management Plan (MHP), which identifies the need to prioritize **Indigenous heritage, among other underrepresented groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.**
- System Plan Approach:** Provides a framework for identifying heritage resources through the analysis of the City's heritage resources against demographic and historical profiles of the City to assess whether current designations represent the population and history.
 - Heritage matrix:* an overview of the City's current heritage resources, which will be cross-referenced against research and narrative themes related to underrepresented groups.
 - Gap Analysis:* identifying under-represented narratives in Lethbridge's heritage matrix.

Objective: Perform a thematic analysis to identify representation gaps in the City of Lethbridge's previous Historic Inventories.

Methods

Framework: Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework:

- Become familiar with the data
- Generate initial codes
- Search for themes
- Review themes
- Define themes
- Draft manuscript

Data sources: City of Lethbridge Heritage Inventories 1-4, historic resource designations

- Data on 86 heritage resources were coded.
- Four thematic categories were inductively identified based on Parks Canada's 2000 systems plan.
- Data was also categorized according to the demographic group represented in the heritage resources, as determined by the corresponding Statement of Significance.
- Representation of heritage resources was compared to the HMP's strategic priorities and population data.

References

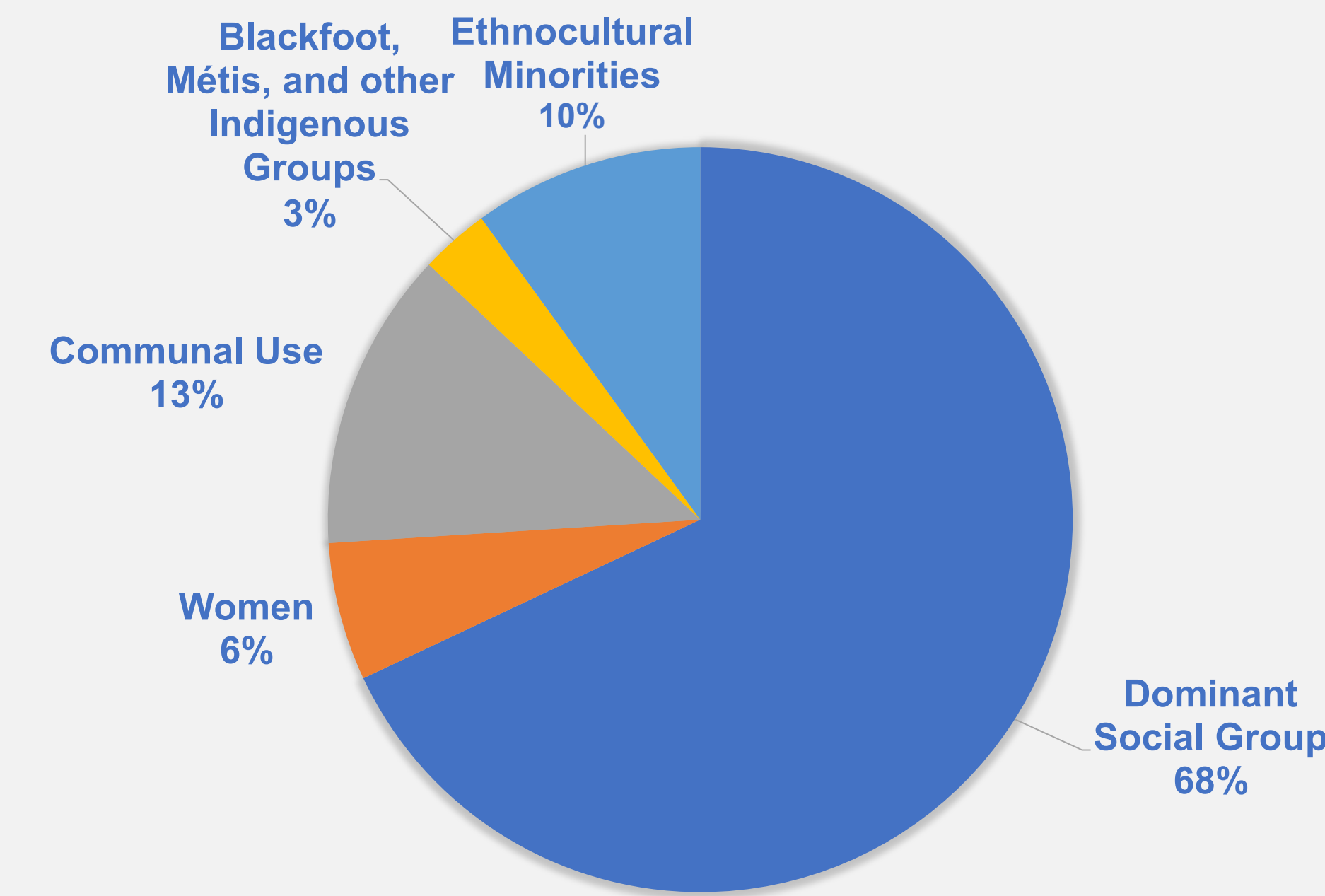
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Results

Figure 1: Representation of Heritage Management Plan strategic priorities in previous Heritage Inventories 1-4



Previous Heritage Inventories primarily celebrate Western cultural and aesthetic values. The 2021 census demonstrates the following:

- 6,395 residents identified as Indigenous, Métis, or Inuit
- 14,490 residents are immigrants
- 15,625 residents are visible minorities
- 50,070 identified as women

Figure 3: Time period represented in Heritage Inventories 1-4

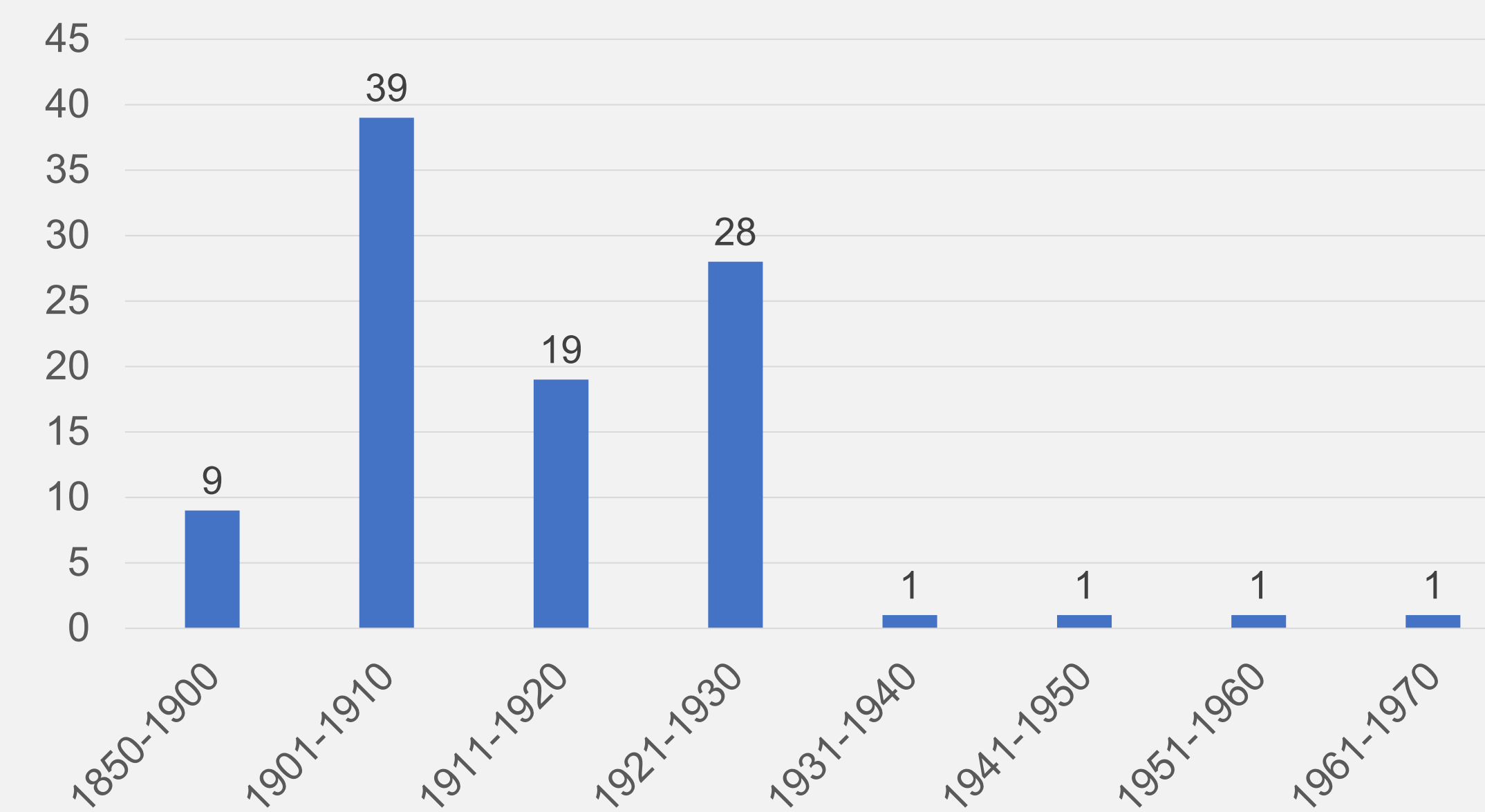
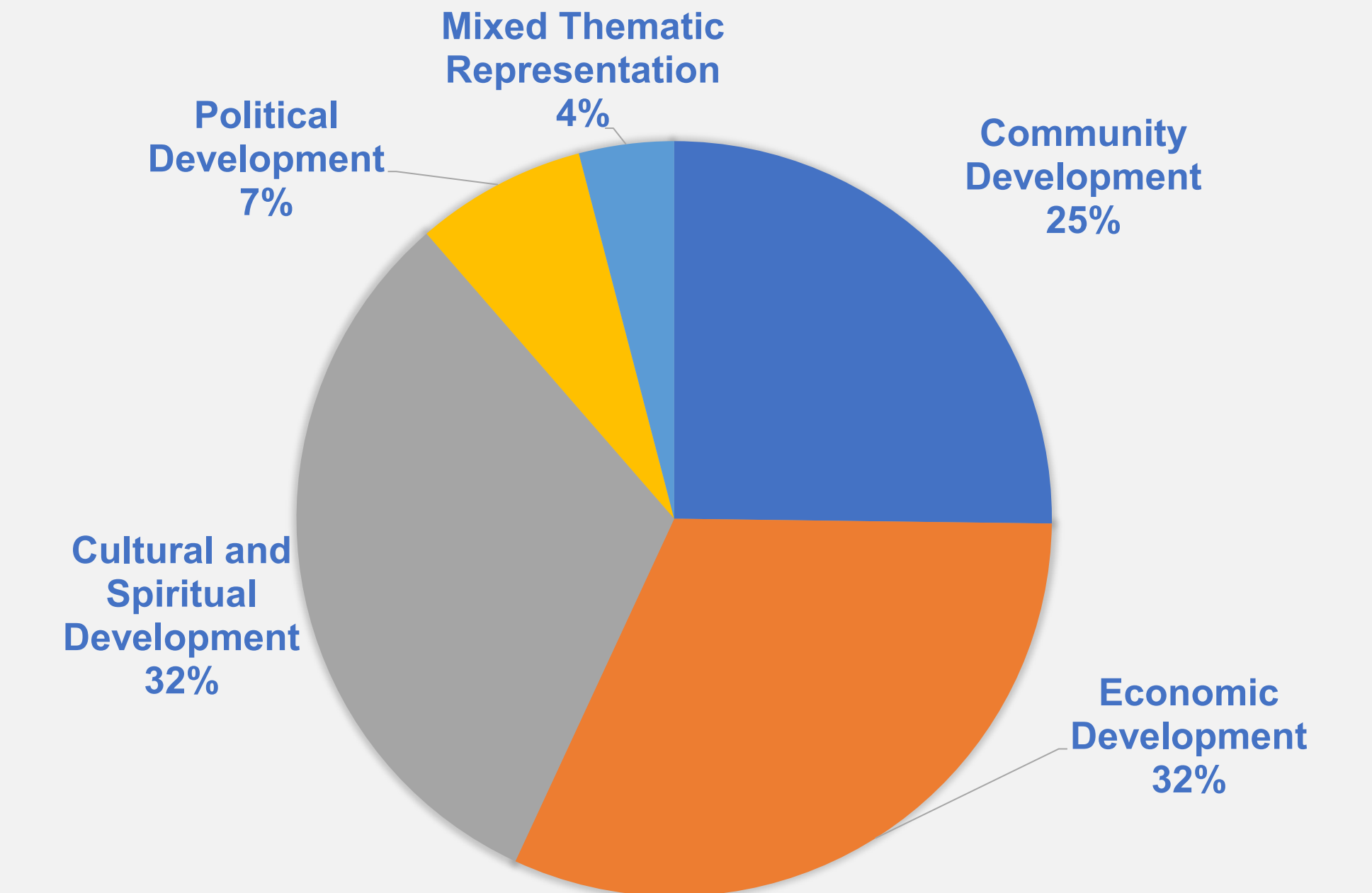


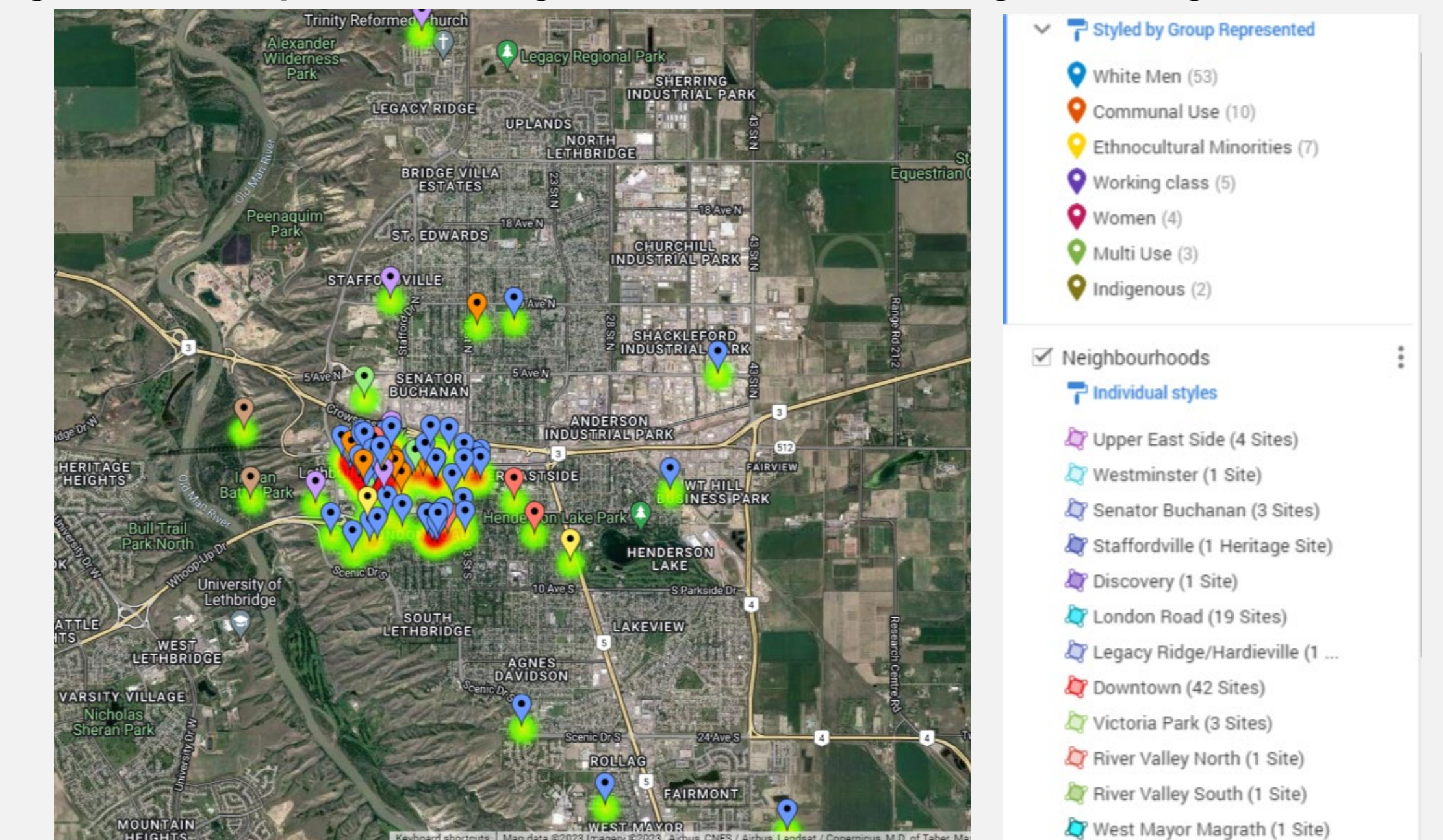
Figure 2: Thematic representation in previous Heritage Inventories 1-4



We propose the following thematic categories to incorporate equity-deserving groups' historical representations into existing narratives:

- Coming together as a community
- Innovation and economic advancement
- Establishing our community
- Celebrating diversity

Figure 4: Map of Heritage Sites in Lethbridge's Neighbourhoods



Discussion

Heritage resources can attract talented individuals (Backman & Nilsson, 2018) and promote community cohesion by co-creating shared narratives (Donaldson, 2017). The co-creation of inclusive heritage may retain post-secondary students, reducing student turnover. A rich historical catalogue may increase tourism, a goal highlighted in the City of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan.

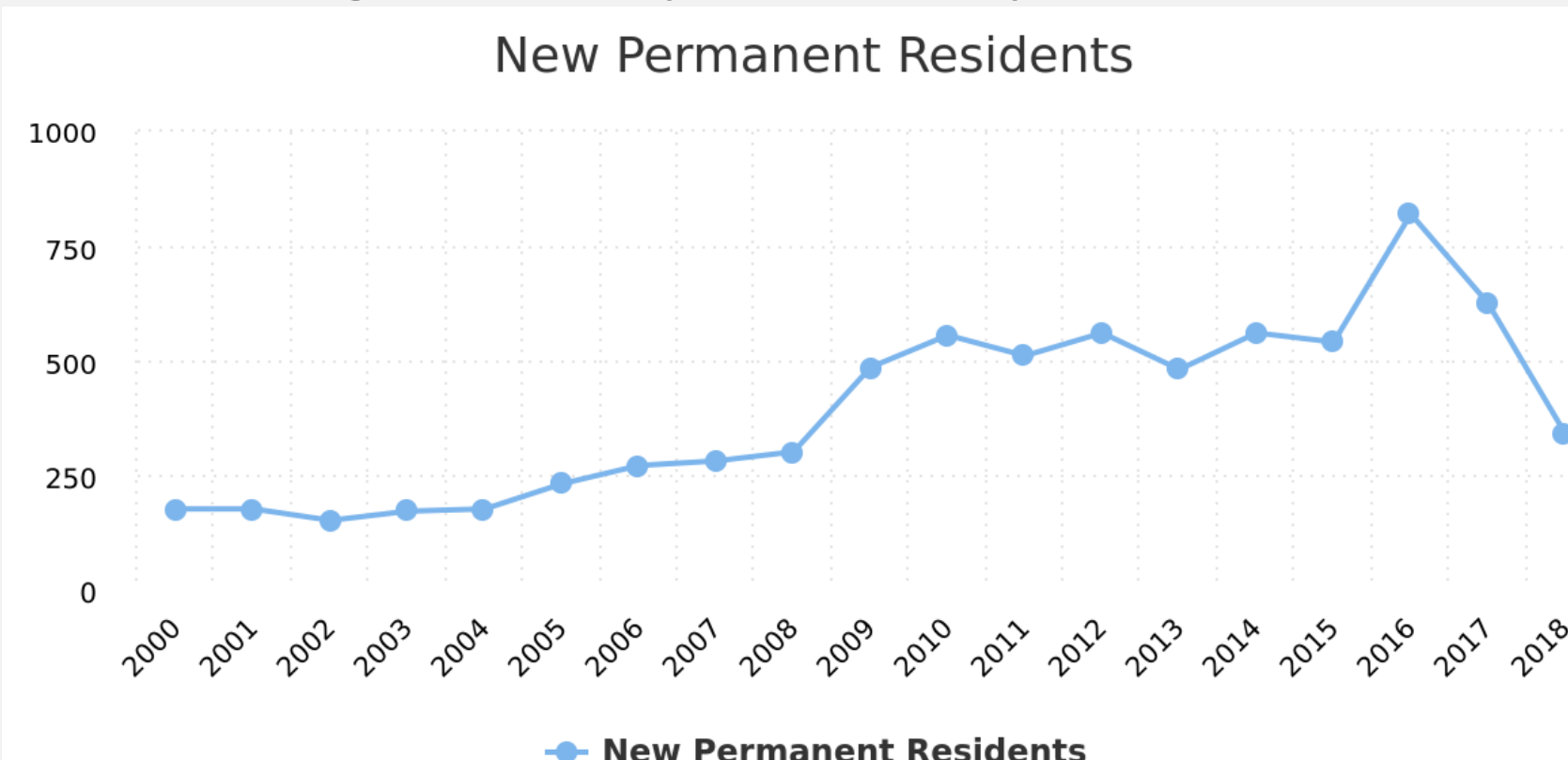


Figure 8: Lethbridge Demographics. Retrieved from <https://townfolio.co/ab/lethbridge/demographics>

Conclusion: Intersectionality in Heritage Management



Figure 6: McKillop United Church. Retrieved from <https://www.faithcommongood.org>

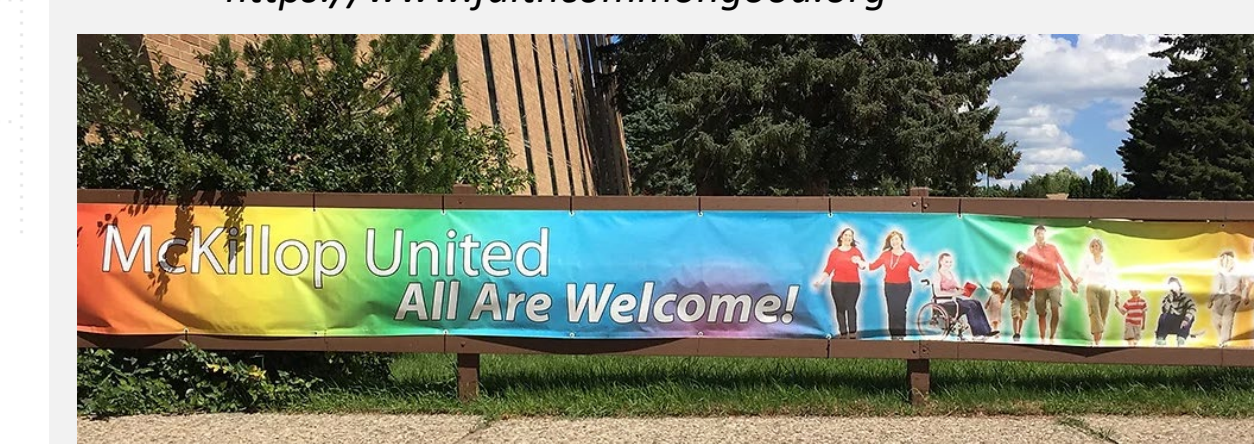


Figure 7: Pride sign at McKillop United Church. Retrieved from <https://www.mckillopunitied.ca>

- Power structures such as colonialism, classism, and heteropatriarchy influence historic preservation.
- Race, class, sexuality, and gender are intersectional forces; depicting each aspect of identity as a separate priority may flatten the historical record.
- The City is tasked with representing equity-deserving groups as complex community members, contributing to various aspects of history. Notably, women are primarily represented as caregivers, thus effacing their economic and political achievements.
- McKillop United Church is a potential historic place exemplary of the strategic priorities. McKillop United Church is representative of 2SLGBTQIA+ community development and a site for intersectional community work, hosting Syrian refugees, an abused women identification program, and services for unhoused populations.