GREY COUNTY CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS AND INSIGHTS

ICLEI
Local Governments for Sustainability

Grey County
Colour It Your Way
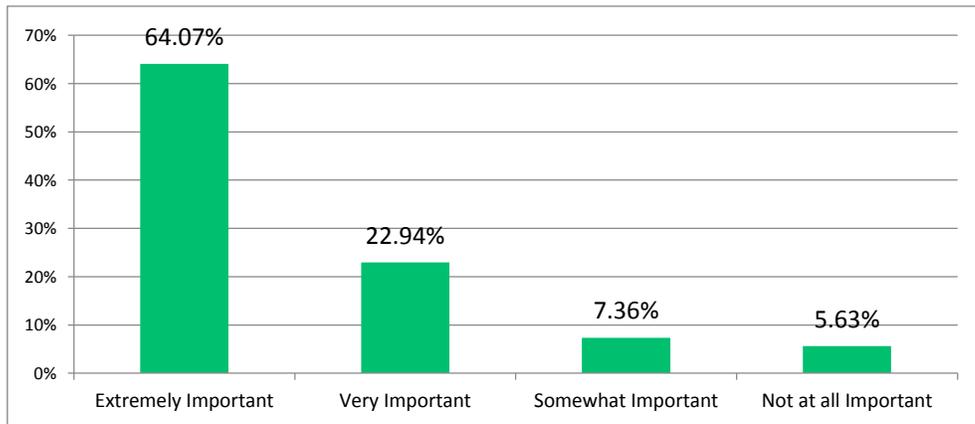
AUGUST 2020

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Overview

The survey was made available to residents on Survey Monkey through Grey County's website between June 15th, 2020 and July 10th, 2020. A total of 232 people responded to the survey. This document summarizes and showcases the general sentiments found in the survey on a question by question basis using graphics to summarize the results. Where respondents were given space to provide written responses a short summary of the emergent themes is given, highlighting supporting and opposing views. Open-ended responses reflected a wide variety of ideas and therefore not all responses are captured in this document. Please see survey results for full answers.

1. Community Climate Change Planning

Q1) Overall, how concerned are you about climate change and sustainability in Grey County?

Bar chart:
- Very Concerned: 62.77%
- Concerned: 23.38%
- Somewhat Concerned: 7.79%
- Not at all Concerned: 6.06%
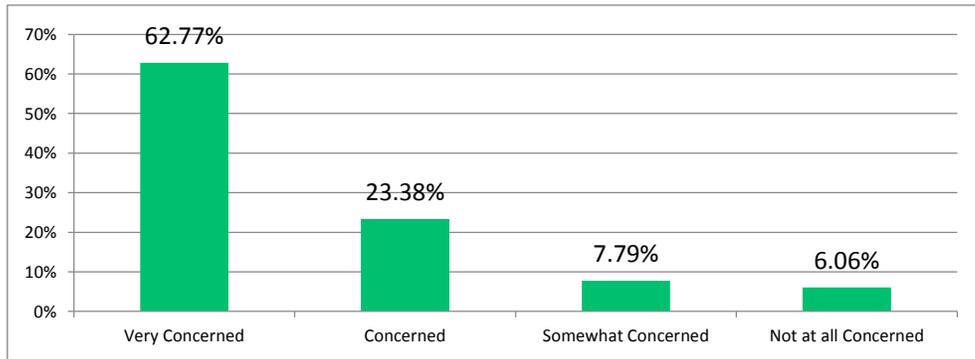
Q2) Overall, how important is it to you that Grey County take leadership on climate change locally?

Bar chart:
- Extremely Important: 64.07%
- Very Important: 22.94%
- Somewhat Important: 7.36%
- Not at all Important: 5.63%

Q3) In your view, what are the most important issues and opportunities for Grey County to include in the Climate Change Action Plan? Select up to three.
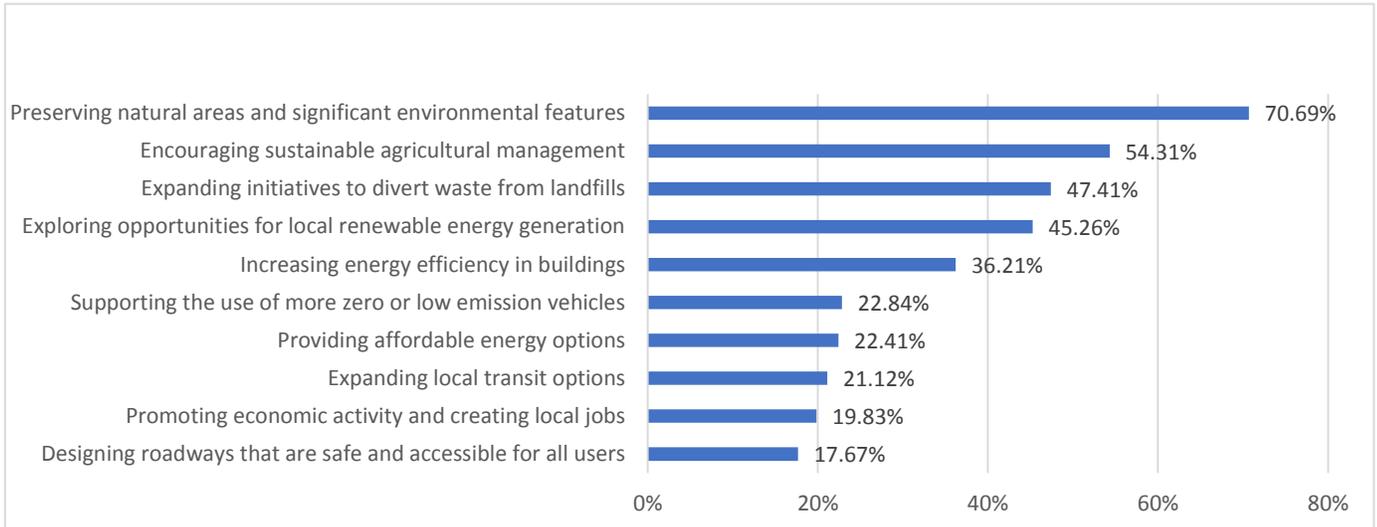

2. Buildings

The majority of respondents (70%, n=224)) are concerned about the growing costs of energy, and most would participate in an energy efficiency rebate (77% 'extremely likely' and 'very likely', n=223) and/or behavioural change program (79% 'extremely likely' and 'very likely', n=222).

In order to encourage and support developers to build more energy efficiency in new buildings, respondents favoured the use of regulatory measures to increase building code requirements (69%, n=222). However, financial incentives and education and guidance were also supported (59% and 57% respectively). 'Other' responses returned a wide range of answers. More common answers included the use of mandatory standards (8 respondents), and the use of financial incentives (4 respondents). 4 respondents suggested that tax payers and/or the municipality should not be paying to incentivize this.

In existing buildings, respondents showed a relatively even split of support for the 4 options presented with the development of a retrofit funding mechanism (65%), facilitation and education programs about energy efficiency benefits (62%), and advocating with higher levels of government (59%) being slightly higher than facilitating education and awareness to the local construction industry (51%). Similarly, 'Other' responses depict a wide range of answers with no clear theme emerging. However, more common responses included public education, financial incentives, prioritization and promotion of indoor health benefits, as well as preference for energy efficiency before renewable energy.

**Q4) Is the growing cost of energy a concern to your household?**
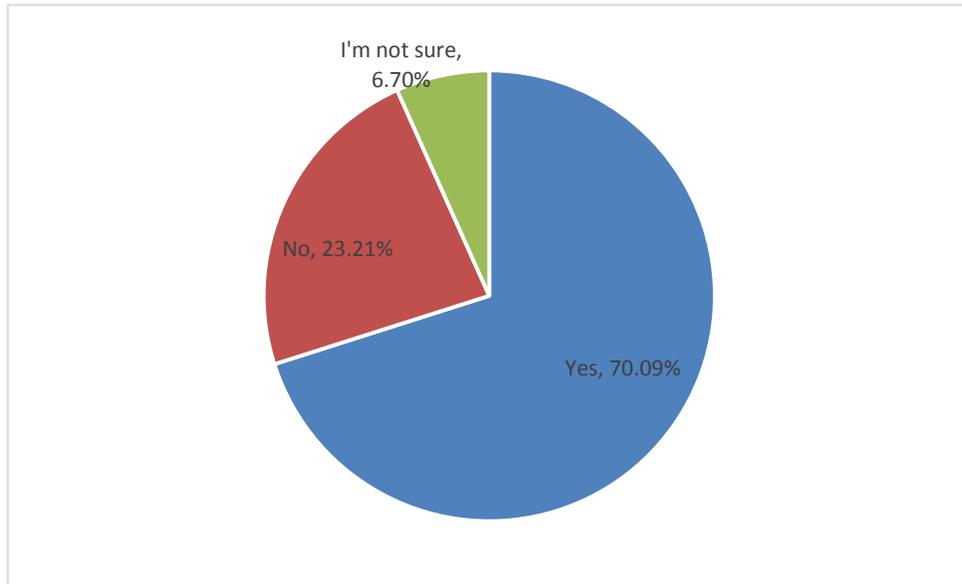
Q5) How likely are you to implement energy saving recommendations (replacing old appliances, installing energy efficient windows and doors, smart thermostats, heat pumps, etc.) in your household if a rebate program were available?
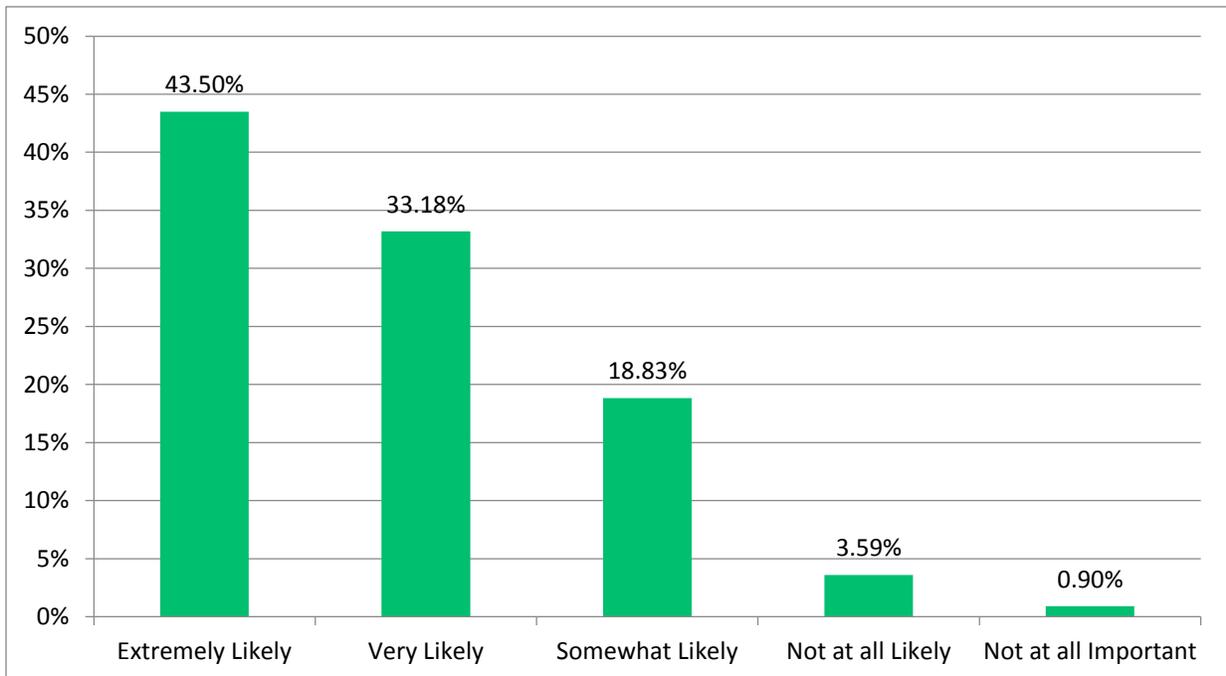
**Q6) If Grey County developed a program to encourage homeowners to conserve energy in their households through behavioural changes (switching off lights, lowering thermostat, turning off appliances when not in use, etc.), how likely is your household to participate?**
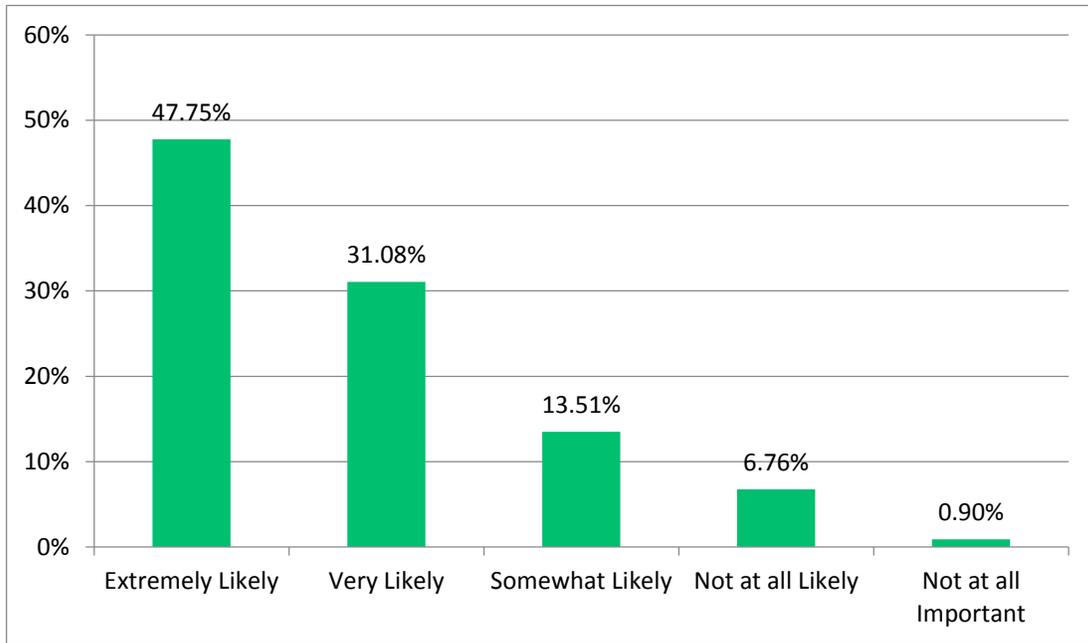
Q7) How can Grey County best encourage and support building developers to increase energy efficiency in new buildings? (check all that apply)
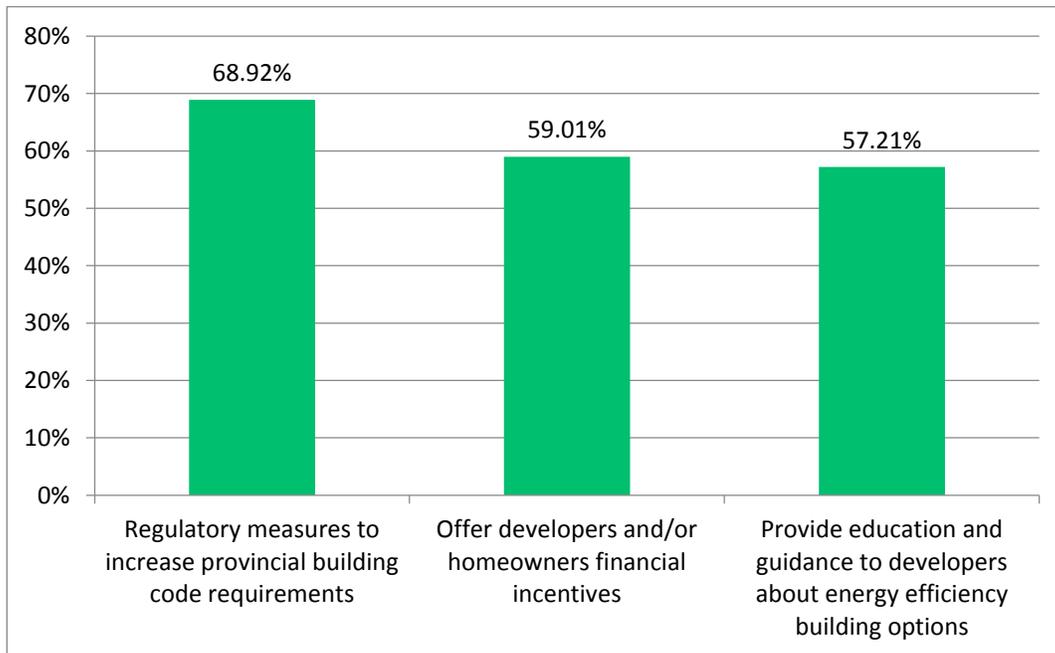
Q8) How can Grey County best encourage and support building owners to undertake energy efficiency projects to reduce energy consumption in existing buildings? (check all that apply)
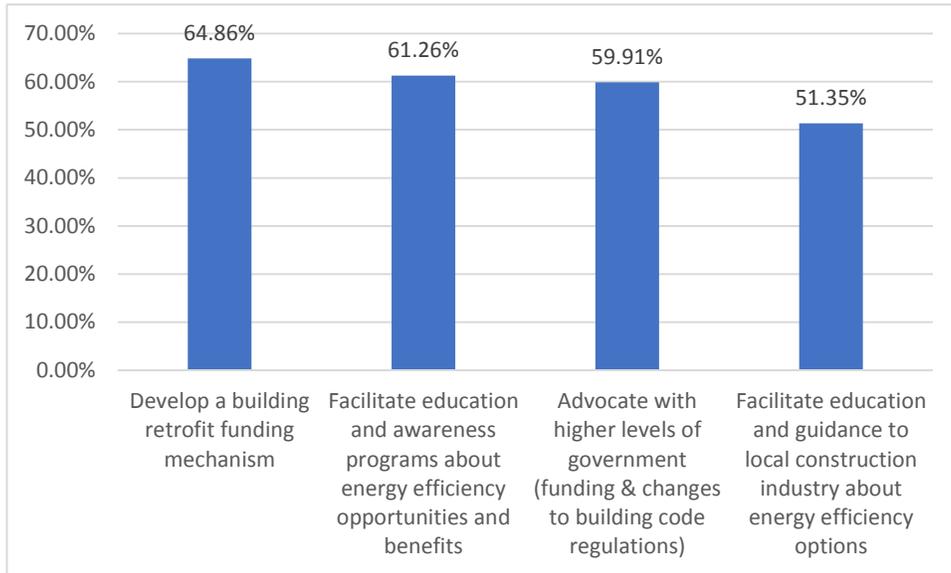

3. Land-Use

Overall, the majority of respondents (61% 'extremely important' and 'very important', n=217) indicated that more mixed-use developments are important to include in Grey County. Similarly, 61% (n=211) believe that higher density residential and commercial zoning should be in place and 95% (n=217) supported policies for the adaptive re-use of buildings and brownfields. 72% (n=220) of respondents were also 'very concerned' or 'concerned' about safety while walking or cycling on shared roadways with other vehicles.

Q9) In your opinion, how important is it that the housing make-up in Grey County include more mixed-use (i.e. a building with space for multiple purposes such as residential, commercial, business/office-use, entertainment, etc.) and multi-unit residential buildings (e.g. apartment buildings, condominiums, townhouses, etc.)?
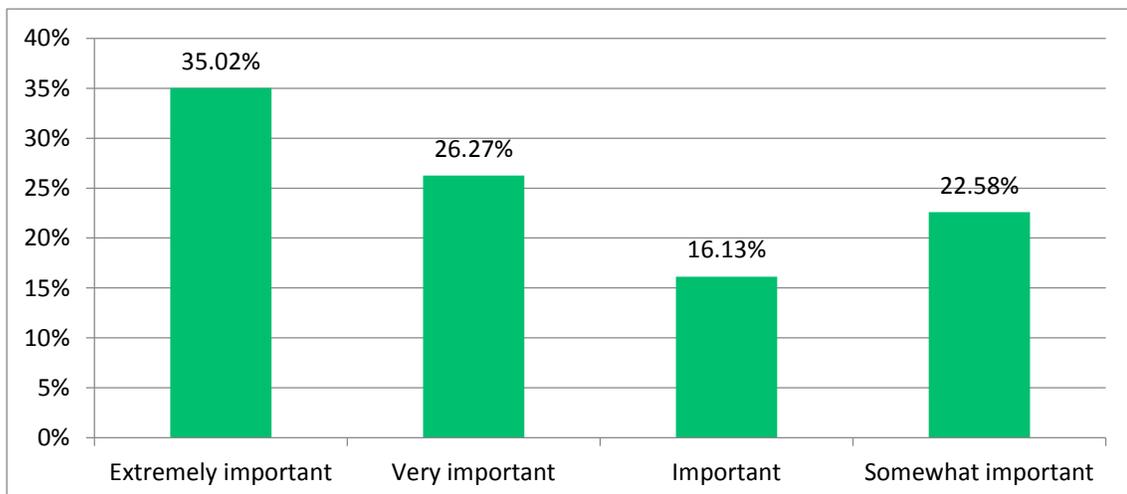
Q10) Should the County develop policies that better support the adaptive re-use of buildings (i.e. taking an old building or site and converting it for a different purpose to reduce unnecessary waste of materials)?

No, 5.07%

Yes, 94.93%
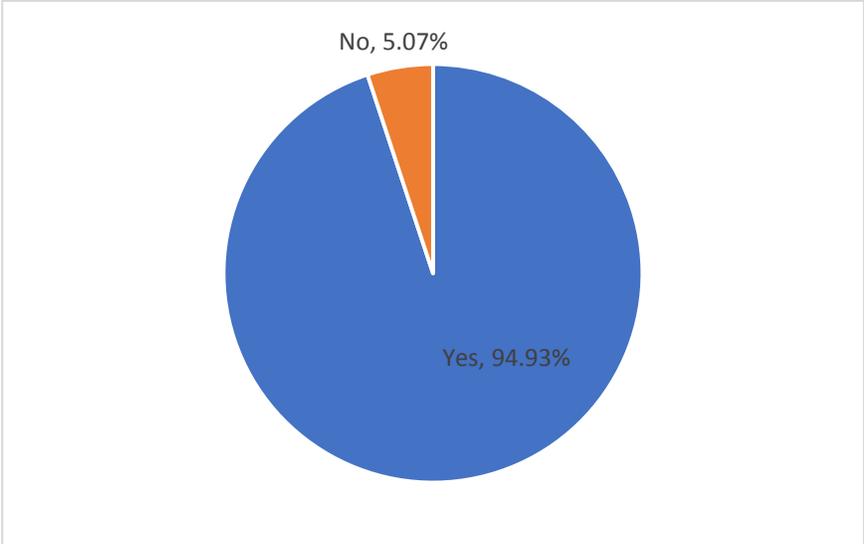
Q11) Should the County be promoting higher density zoning for residential and commercial spaces?

No, 38.39%

Yes, 61.61%
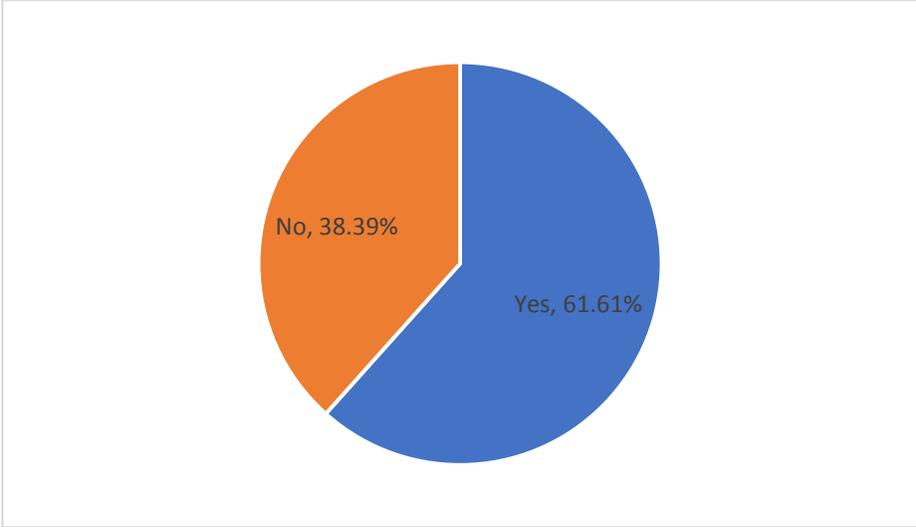
Q12) When walking or biking throughout Grey County, how concerned are you with your safety or the safety of your family if sharing roadways with other vehicles (cars, trucks, buses)?
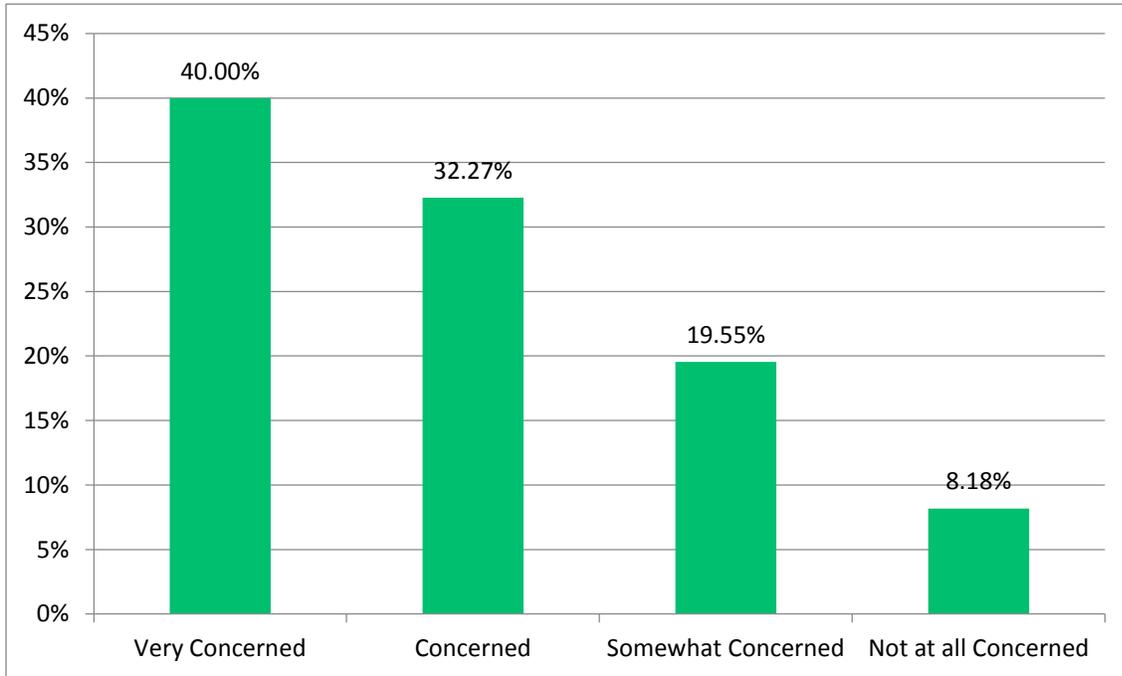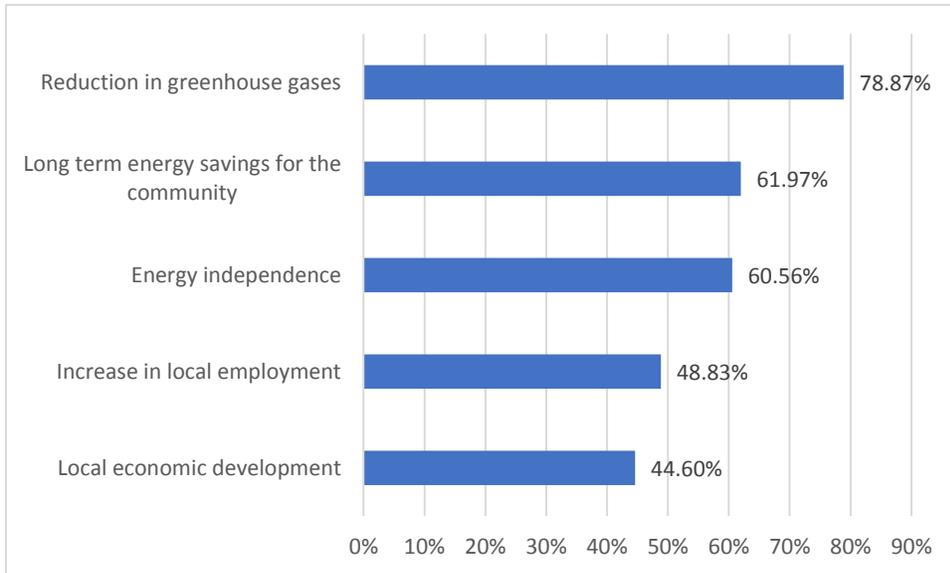

4. Energy

Respondents see reduced greenhouse gases (79%), long-term energy savings (62%) and energy independence (61%) as the greatest opportunities that renewable energy can offer in their community (n=213). However, 'other' responses indicated opposition to renewable energy, in particular, large-scale wind farm projects. Out of the 34 'Other' responses, 8 believe there should be no renewable energy in the County, and 3 indicated opposition to industrial scale projects. 4 respondents expressed a need for local ownership of renewable energy projects, while 3 respondents specified for residential and commercial-scale solar.

The biggest concern in regards to renewable energy amongst respondents was the upfront capital costs required (65%), followed by aesthetics (36%), impact on property values (33%), reliability (32%), and absence of the Feed-in Tariff (26%) (n=209). 'Other' responses reflected the opposition to wind energy, in particular indicated by respondents in the previous section. Out of 47 'other' responses, 8 were concerned about the health and environmental impacts of wind energy and 8 were concerned about the environmental impacts of renewable energy in general.

Nevertheless, 86% (n=214) indicated it is 'extremely likely', 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' that they would participate in a rooftop/ground mounted solar financing program if offered by Grey County.

Q13) In your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities that renewable energy (i.e. energy collected from renewable sources such as wind and solar) could offer your community? (Check all that apply)

Reduction in greenhouse gases: 78.87%
Long term energy savings for the community: 61.97%
Energy independence: 60.56%
Increase in local employment: 48.83%
Local economic development: 44.60%

Q14) In your opinion, what are the greatest concerns that a community scale renewable energy project could pose to your community? (check all that apply)

Upfront capital costs required: 65.07%
Aesthetic considerations: 35.89%
Impact on local property values: 33.49%
Technological reliability: 31.58%
Absence of provincial Feed-in Tariff Program: 26.32%
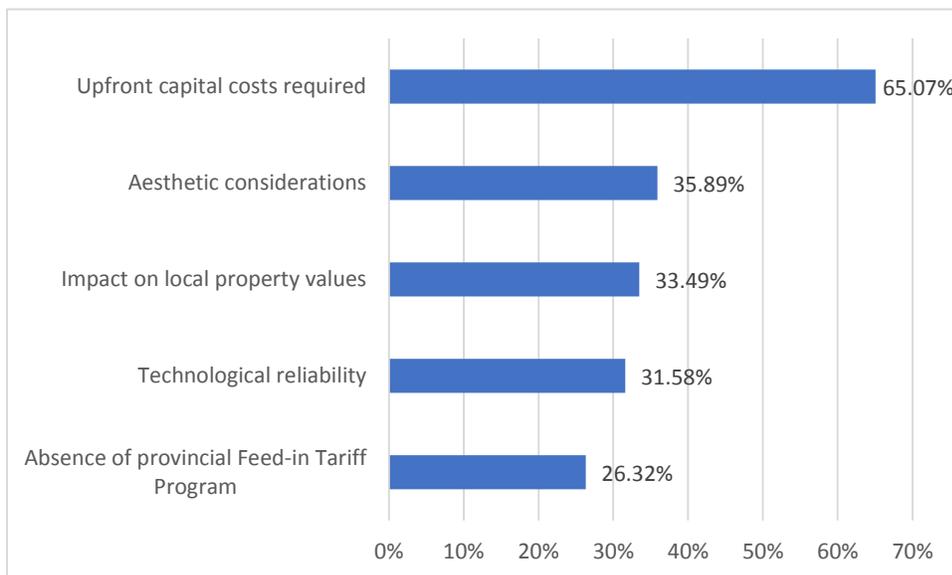
Q15) If Grey County implemented a program to assist property owners to finance rooftop solar, solar thermal, and/or ground mounted solar photovoltaic systems on residential and commercial properties, how likely are you to participate?
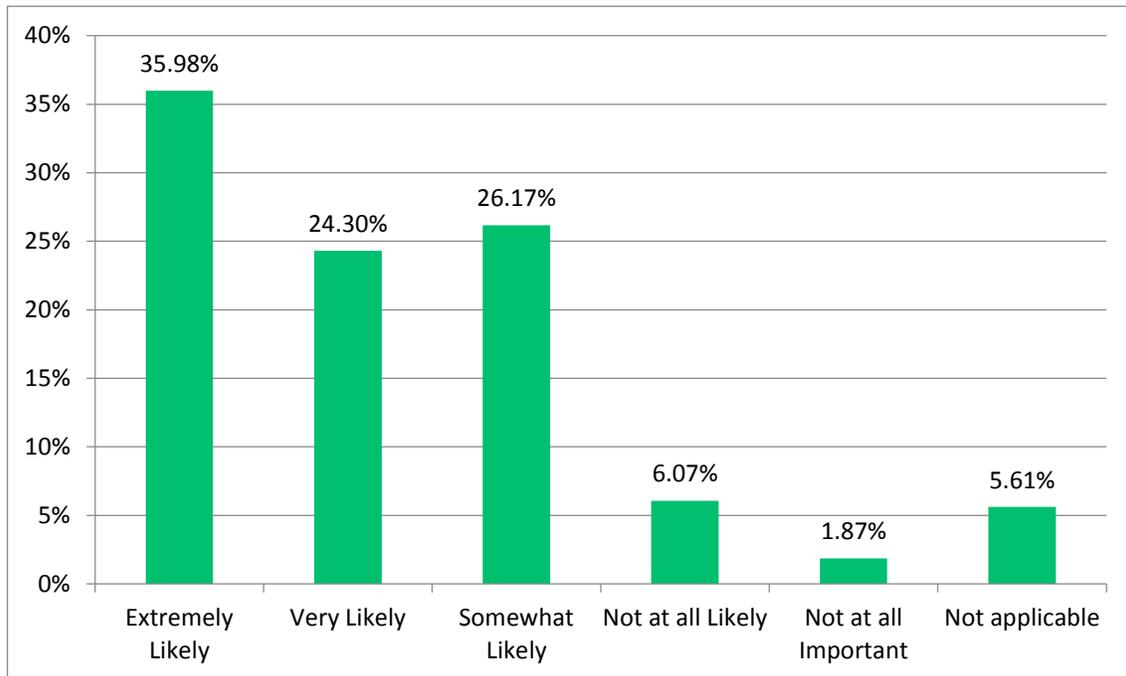

5. Transportation

Regarding electric vehicles (EVs), most respondents (70%, n=212) would consider purchasing one. The top factors influencing their decision to purchase were cost (67%), lack of charging infrastructure (67%), and vehicle range limitations (57%) (n=212). Those that responded 'other' (20%) indicated concerns over the lifecycle environmental impact of EVs, particularly around the creation and disposal of lithium batteries. 'Other' responses also raised concerns over the limitations on the types of EVs available (e.g. pickup trucks are not available, and suitability for rural roads), cold weather impacting performance, as well as indicating a preference for hydrogen cars. Additional reasons for not taking transit were convenience (9 respondents), need for material transport (7 respondents), flexibility (7 respondents), and limited transit schedule (4 respondents).

The most common reasons for not taking public transit are departure and destination location not being serviced (60% and 50% respectively, n=212). 33% of respondents responded 'other' with 24 respondents indicating that transit is not an option due to the rural nature of County. The most common reasons for choosing to drive over walking or biking was distance to destination (57%) and weather (13.5%) (n=214). Reasons listed under 'other' (13.5%) included physical limitations such as age, health or disability (8 respondents), and the need for material

transport (3 respondents). While 23% of respondents indicated they would use an expanded trail network for commuting more than 3 times per week, and 20% indicated 1-2 times per week, a majority (27%) indicated that trails are not available to them.
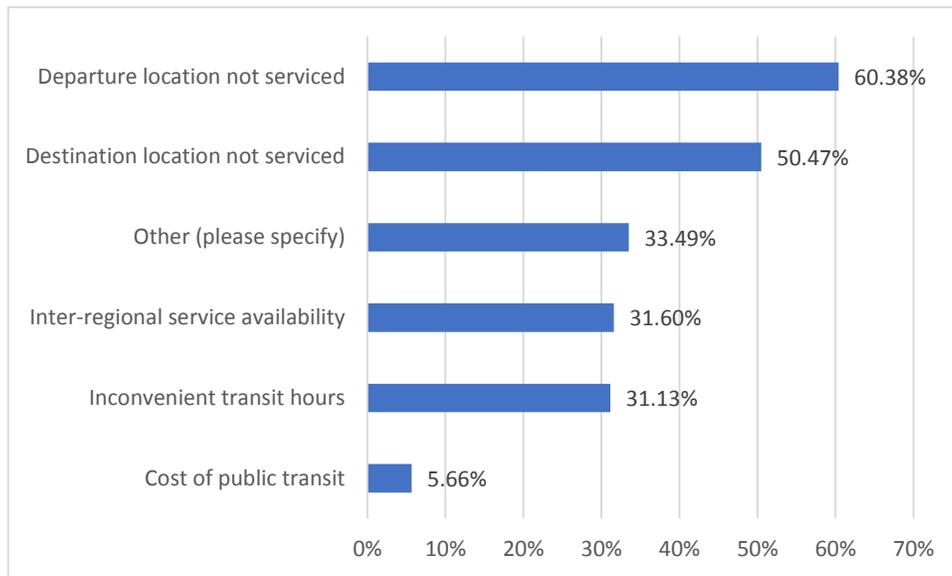
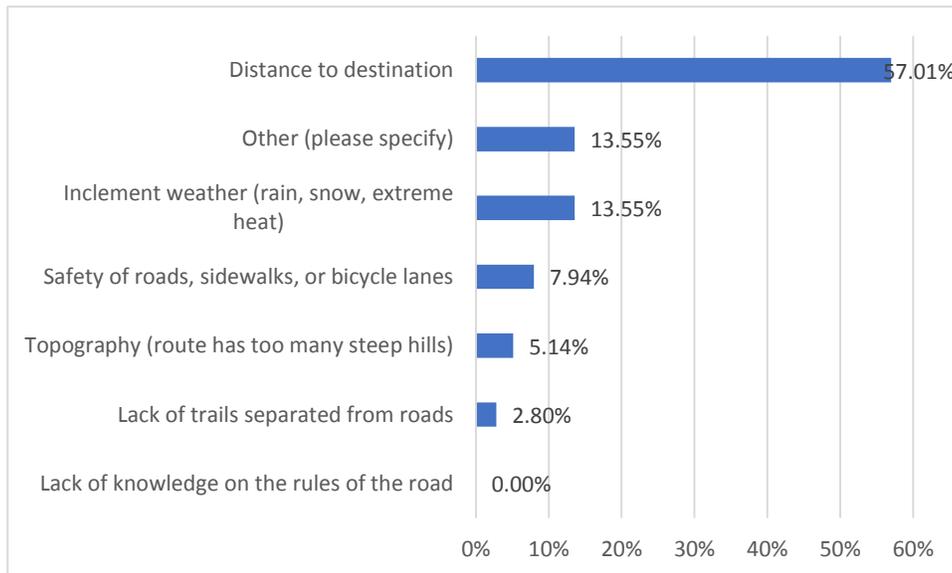**Q16) Would you consider purchasing an electric vehicle?**
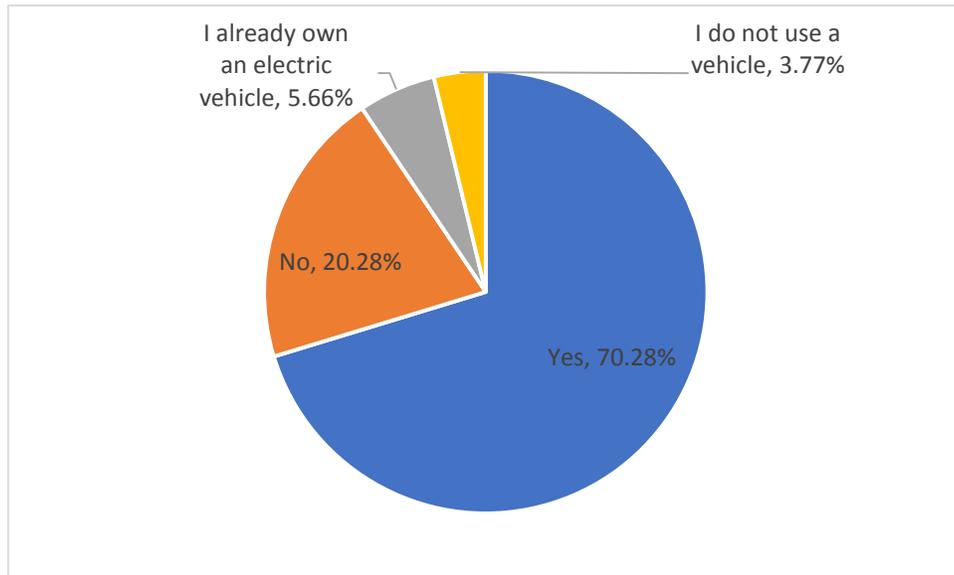
Q17) In your view, what are the most significant reasons that influence whether or not you would consider purchasing an electric vehicle? (Check all that apply)
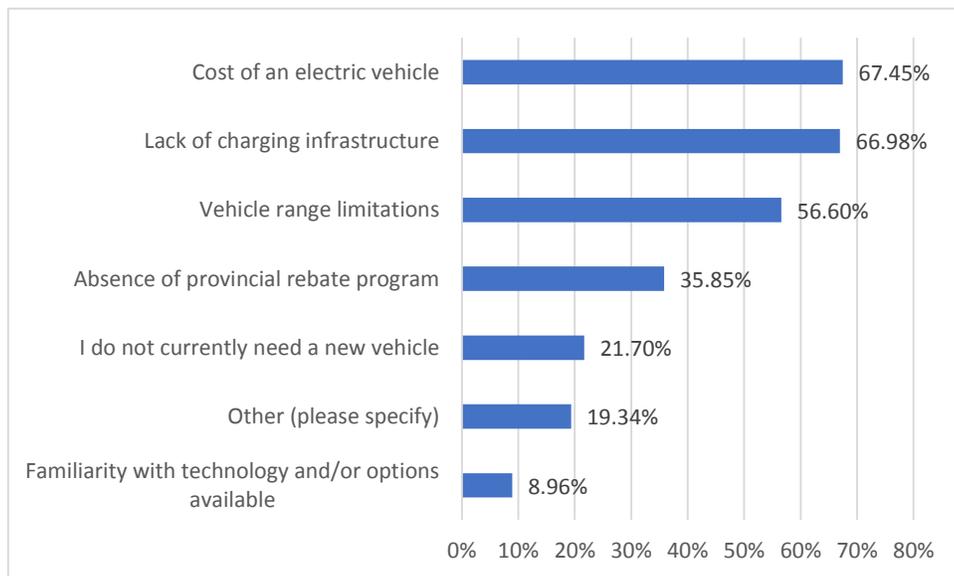
Q18) What are the most significant reasons you choose to drive over taking public transit?

Reason	Percentage
Departure location not serviced	60.38%
Destination location not serviced	50.47%
Other (please specify)	33.49%
Inter-regional service availability	31.60%
Inconvenient transit hours	31.13%
Cost of public transit	5.66%

Q19) What is the most significant reason you choose to drive over walking or biking?

Reason	Percentage
Distance to destination	57.01%
Other (please specify)	13.55%
Inclement weather (rain, snow, extreme heat)	13.55%
Safety of roads, sidewalks, or bicycle lanes	7.94%
Topography (route has too many steep hills)	5.14%
Lack of trails separated from roads	2.80%
Lack of knowledge on the rules of the road	0.00%

Q20) How often would you or someone in your household use the trail network (Georgian Trail, CP Rail Trail, or bike lanes/paved shoulders) to commute if the network were expanded and connected to your school or workplace?
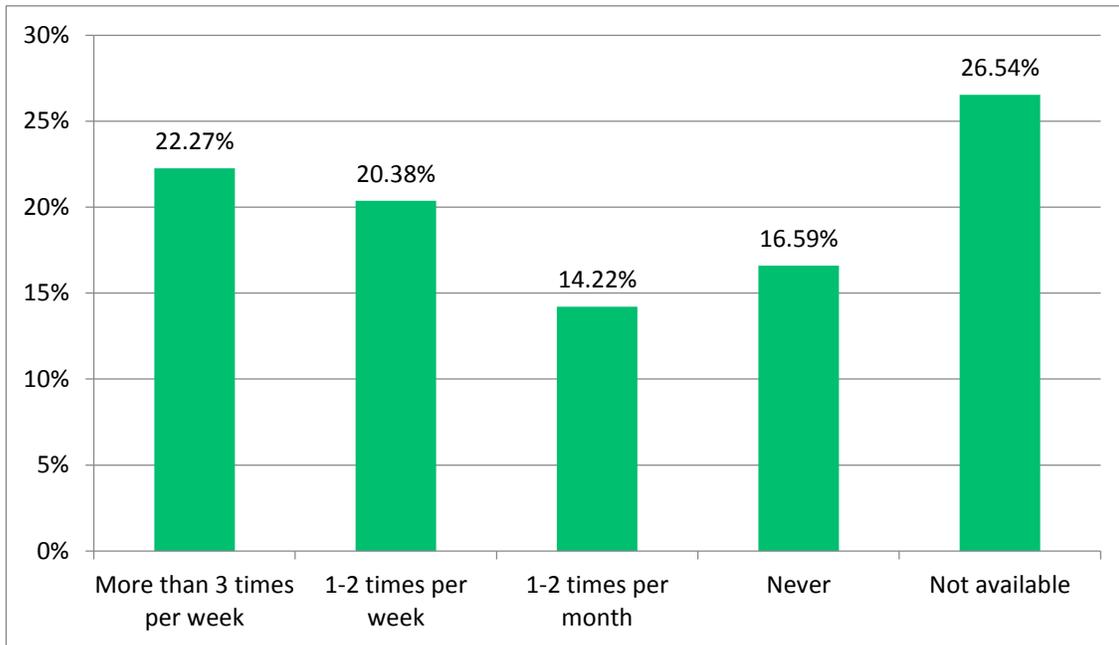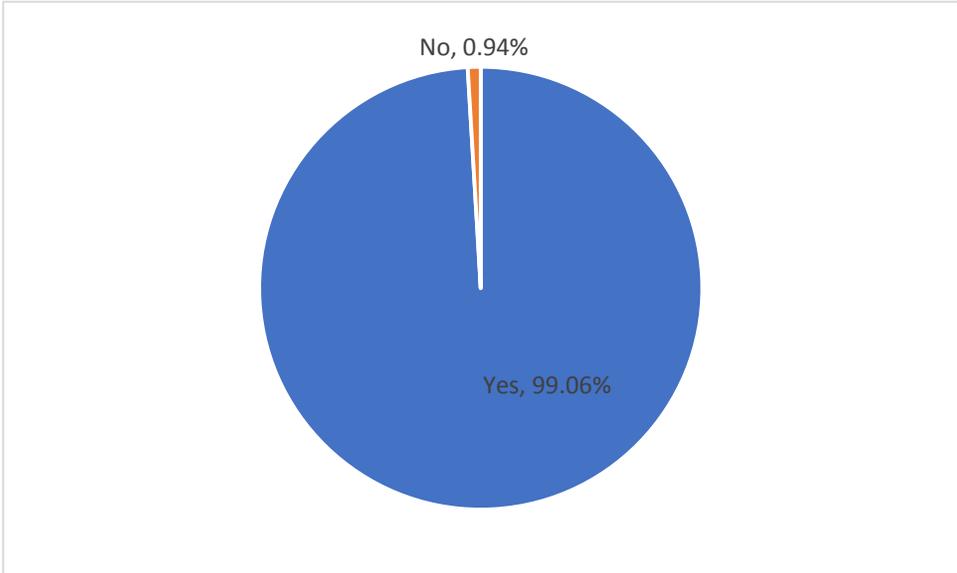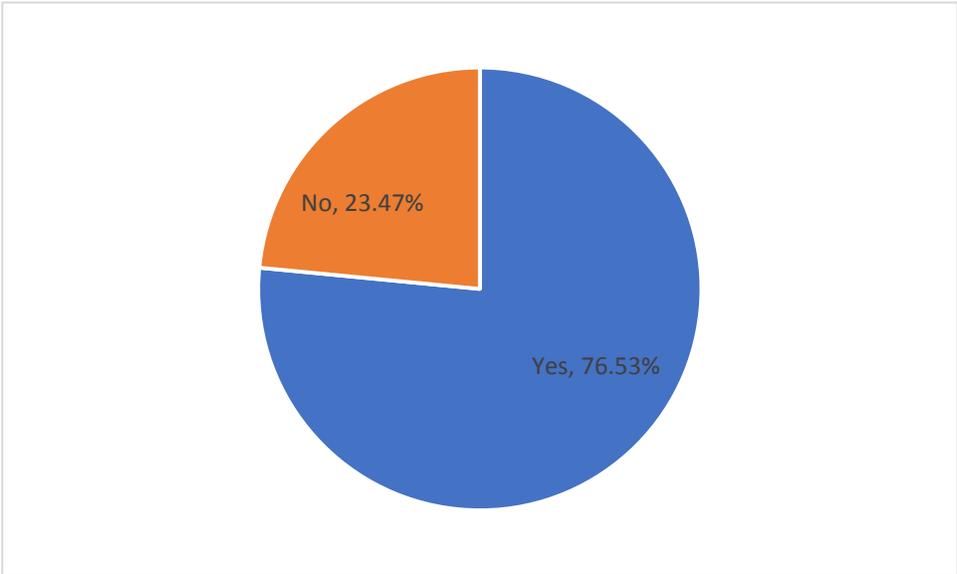

6. Waste

Only 1% (n=213) of residents do not separate recyclables for landfill waste, and 77% (n=213) of respondents compost food waste. However, most respondents (71%, n=210) indicated that they do not have access to food waste/organics curbside collection. Provision of an organics curbside collection program was the most desired option (36%, n=211) in terms of helping to reduce waste, followed by a local re-use/re-build center (28%), and increased education and awareness (15%). Implementation of a fee for waste was not supported by survey respondents.

Themes that emerged from 'Other' responses (20%) included increasing producer and business responsibility for waste (10 respondents) by producing less, changing packaging, taking back recyclable items such as bags or styrofoam/blister packs, promotion and encouragement of selling bulk and use of refillable containers. 6 respondents identified increased regulation of business to divert waste from the landfill such as through a single-use plastics or plastic bag ban. 7 respondents indicated a need for an expanded recycling system that is able to accept more types of plastics such plastic films. 5 respondents indicated a need for an overall better organized, standardized and more cohesive approach to waste management at the County level.
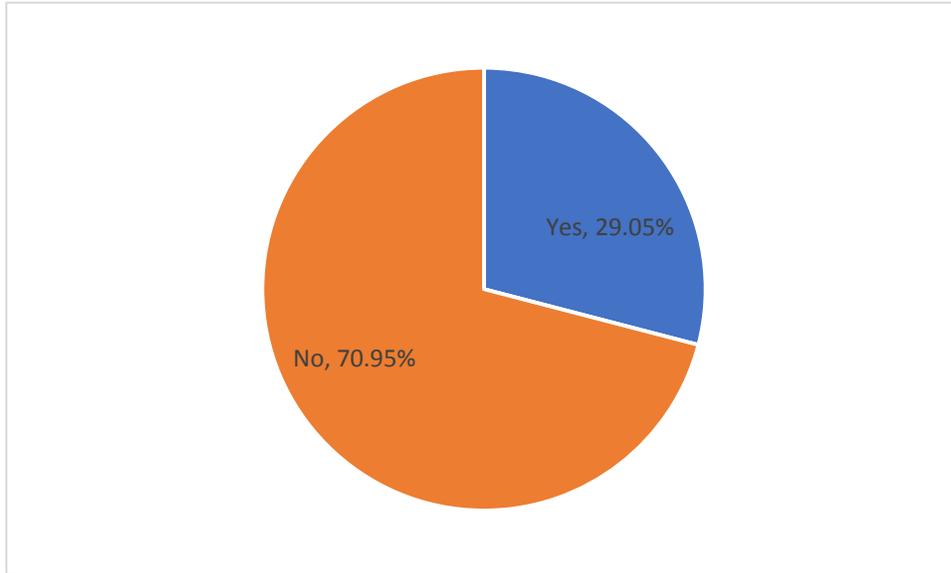
Q21) Does your household currently separate recyclables from landfill waste?

No, 0.94%

Yes, 99.06%

Q22) Does your household currently compost food waste?

No, 23.47%

Yes, 76.53%

Q23) Is food waste/organics curbside collection currently available in your municipality?

Q24) Which of the following options would assist your household or business in reducing waste?
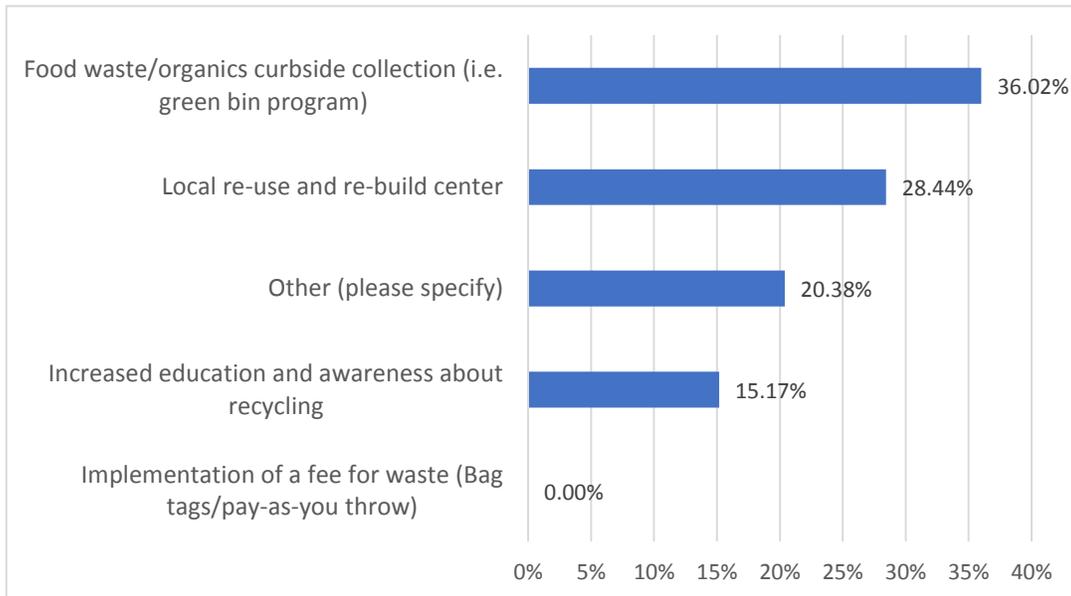
7. Food Systems

The majority of respondents (63%, n=212) indicated that they purchased local food more than 3 times per month. Most make their purchases at local farmers' markets (63%, n=207), directly from farmers (49%), and in grocery stores (45%). Of the 33 respondents who selected 'Other', 14 indicated they use *Eat Local Grey Bruce*, 5 indicated they grow their own food, 8 use small local and family-owned businesses, and 3 use the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

When asked about community gardens, most respondents (56% 'Not at All Likely', and 21% 'Somewhat Likely', n=211) indicated that they would not use one even if it were available. The primary reason indicated was the availability of residential garden space (50%, n=211). 'Other' responses indicated age/physical limitations, fear of theft, and lack of organization as barriers to having a community garden.

Key themes that emerged from the open-ended **"In your opinion what is needed in Grey County to improve access to local food?"** included a need for grocers to make local products available (27 respondents) and education for consumers on where to find local food (23 participants). Other themes included supporting and expanding farmers' markets (11 respondents), web-based farmers' markets that consolidate local options and allow consumers to order online (11 respondents). Please see tally below for the full summary and tally of responses.
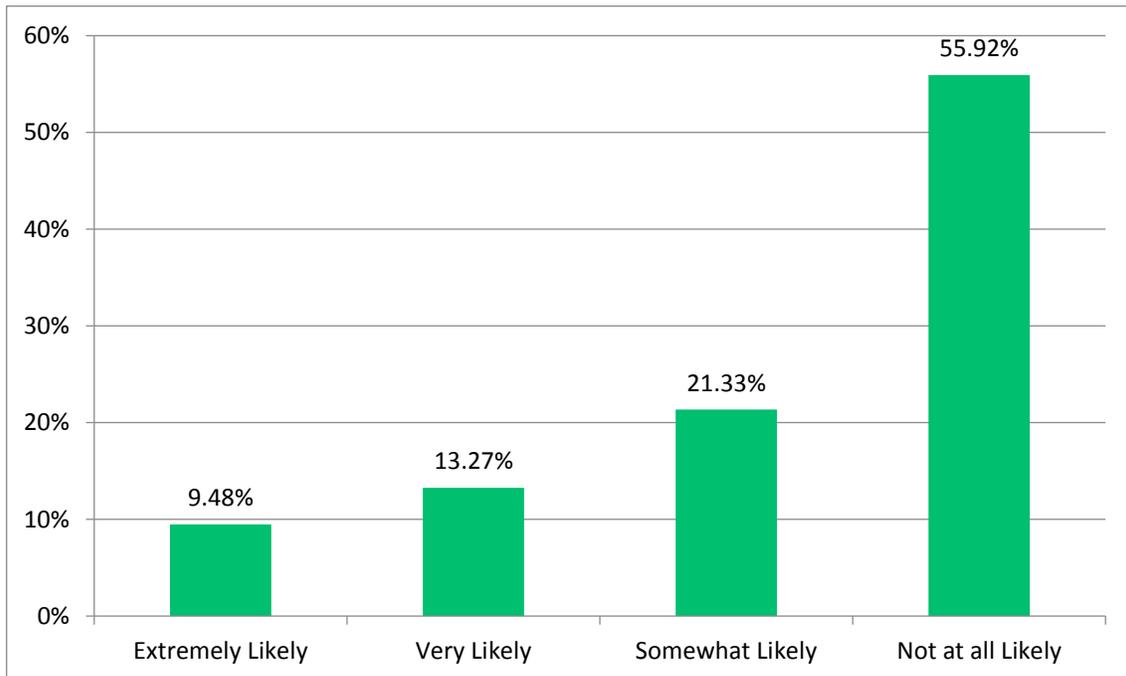
Q25) In a typical month, how often do you purchase produce that has been grown locally, within the County?
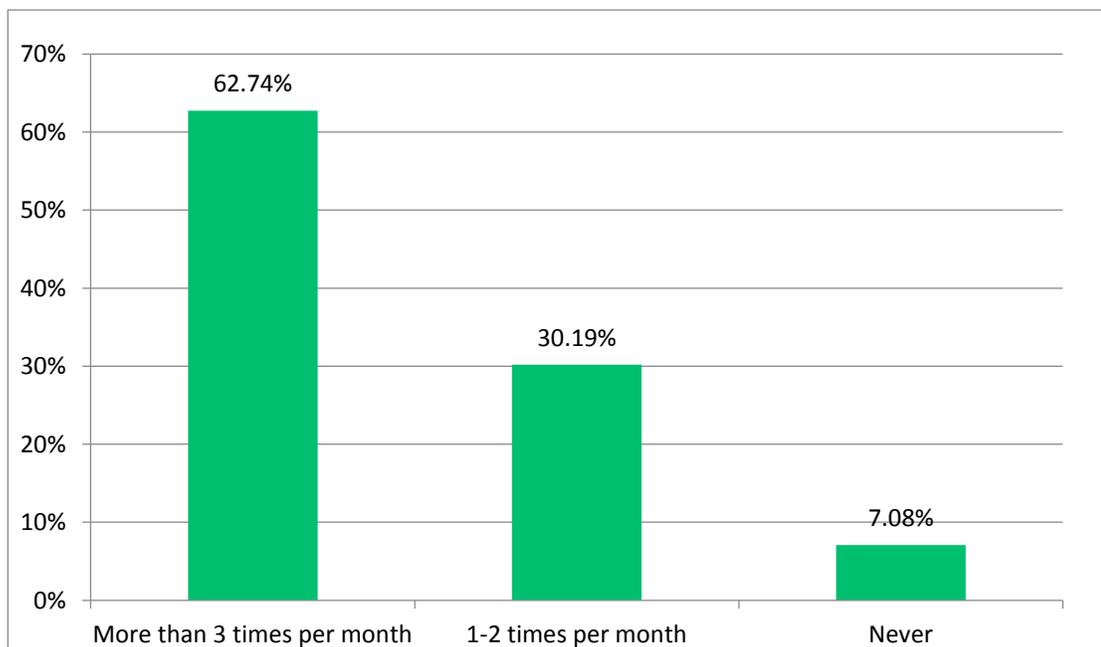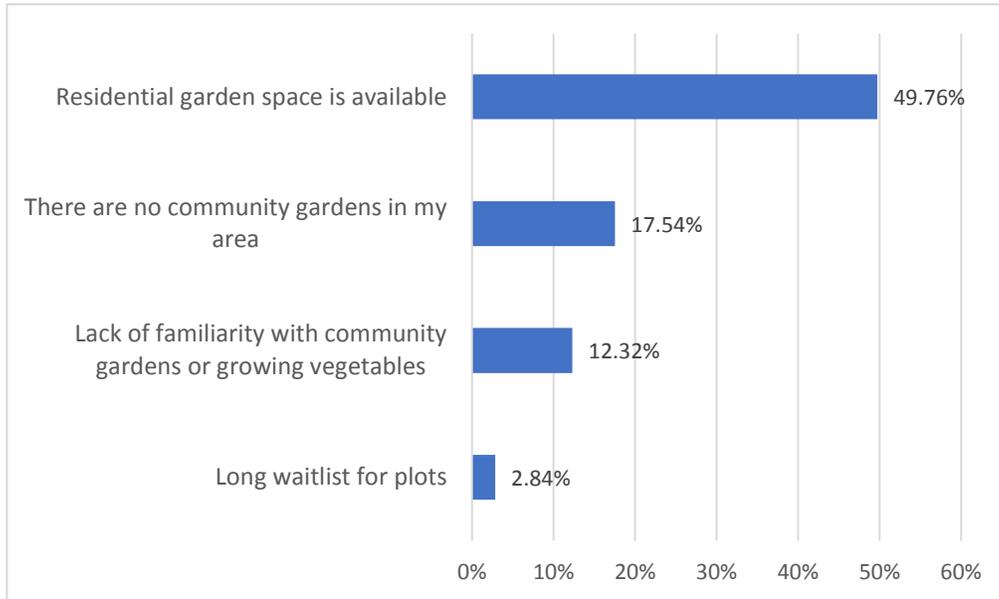
Q26) If you buy locally grown products, where do you typically purchase these goods?
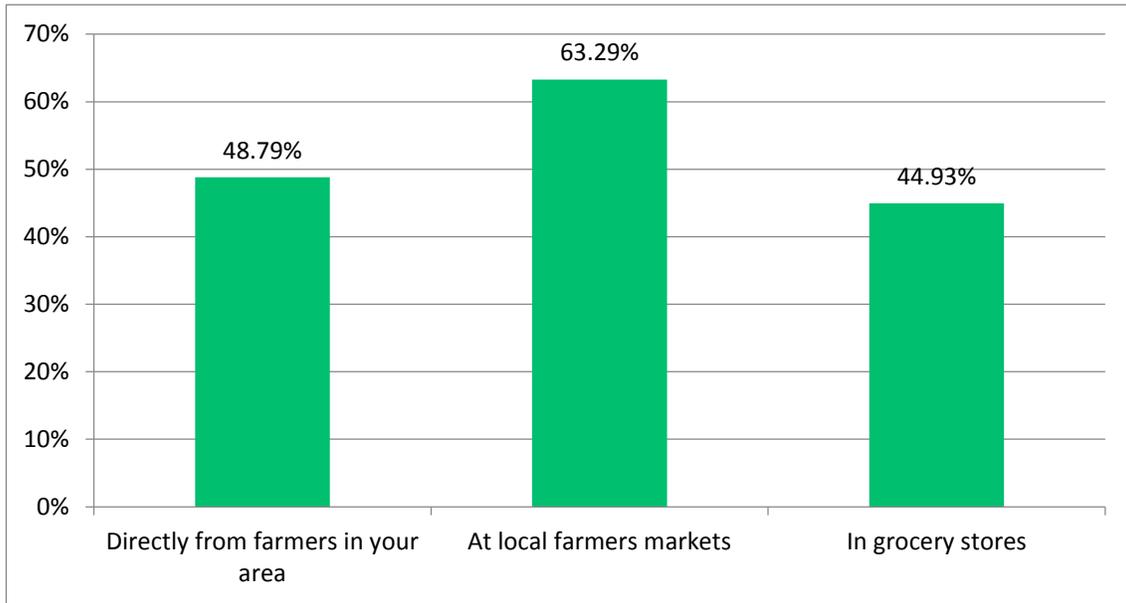
Q27) How likely are you or someone in your household to use a community garden, if one were available?

Q28) What do you think is the number one reason or barrier for why you or someone in your household would not use a community garden in Grey County?

Q29) In your opinion what is needed in Grey County to improve access to local food?

1. Grocers should make local products available (27 participants)
2. More local stores for local products (2 participants)
3. Support and expand farmers' markets (11 participants)
4. Reasonable cost year-round (2 participants)
5. Incentives for those looking to create local
6. Support local organization and initiatives already in place (3 participants) Eat Local Grey Bruce (5 participants)
7. Web based farmers market consolidated local option (11 participants)
8. Education for consumers on where to find local food (23 participants)
9. Community gardens (5 participants)
10. Encourage farmers to grow food products over cash crops, and practice regenerative/sustainable farming (8 participants)
11. Farmers markets in the evenings and on Saturdays/expanded hours (10 participants)
12. Single informational source, perhaps on County website (8 participants)
13. Regional Hub for distribution and sales
14. Affordability (9 participants)
15. Education to land owners on creating a garden (2 participants)
16. Promotion (10 participants)
17. Better labelling (6 participants)
18. Cohesive infrastructure, one place (2 participants)
19. Leadership from the county – do they buy local food for their events?
20. Assistance for young farmers and organic farmers with affordable land (3 participants)

8. Conservation and Natural Areas

Overall, most of respondents (90%) indicated that conservation of natural areas was extremely important or very important to them (n=211). Most (82%, n=210) indicated that they would consider restoring or preserving parts of their property to a natural state. Key barriers to doing so included lack of money or funding (29%), lack of knowledge (25%), and unsuitable land (22%)(n=204).

32% of respondents selected 'Other'. Of these 66 respondents, 31 indicated that they are already conducting naturalization to some extent or have already completed naturalization on their property. 11 respondents specified that their property is unsuitable for naturalization due to its size. 7 respondents indicated that they would like to undertake naturalization however are limited by time and need more support and/or resources to do so. 8 respondents indicated that there are no barriers to naturalization for them. 2 respondents indicated a need for more education on the benefits of naturalization, and 2 respondents identified a need for regulatory measures to prevent tree removal. 4 respondents identified their neighbours as a barrier to undertaking naturalization on their property.

97% of respondents (n=210) support a tree planting program across Grey County.
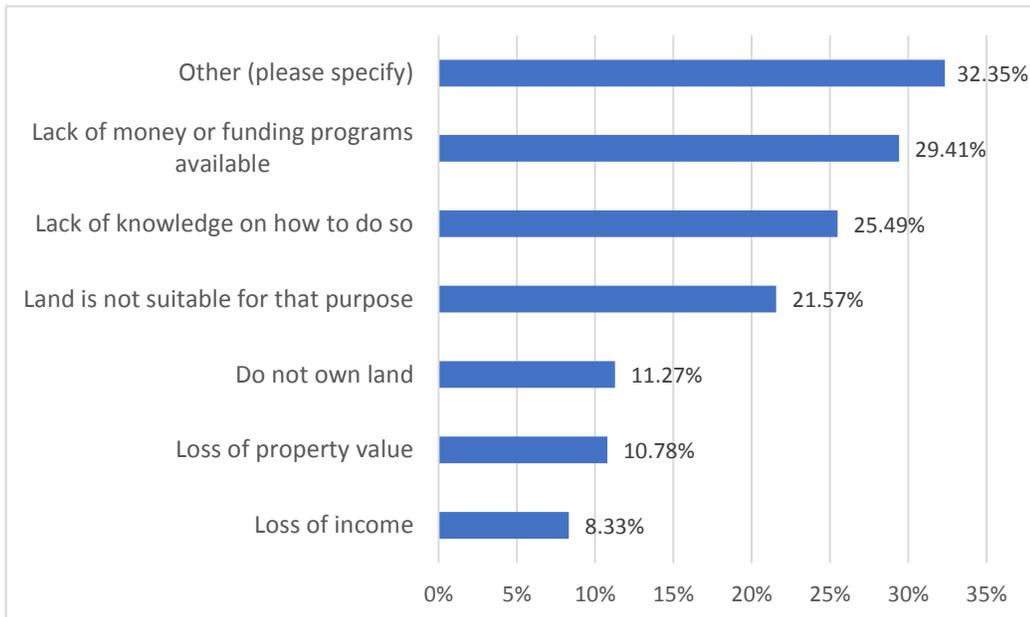
Q30) How important is the conservation of natural areas to you and your family?
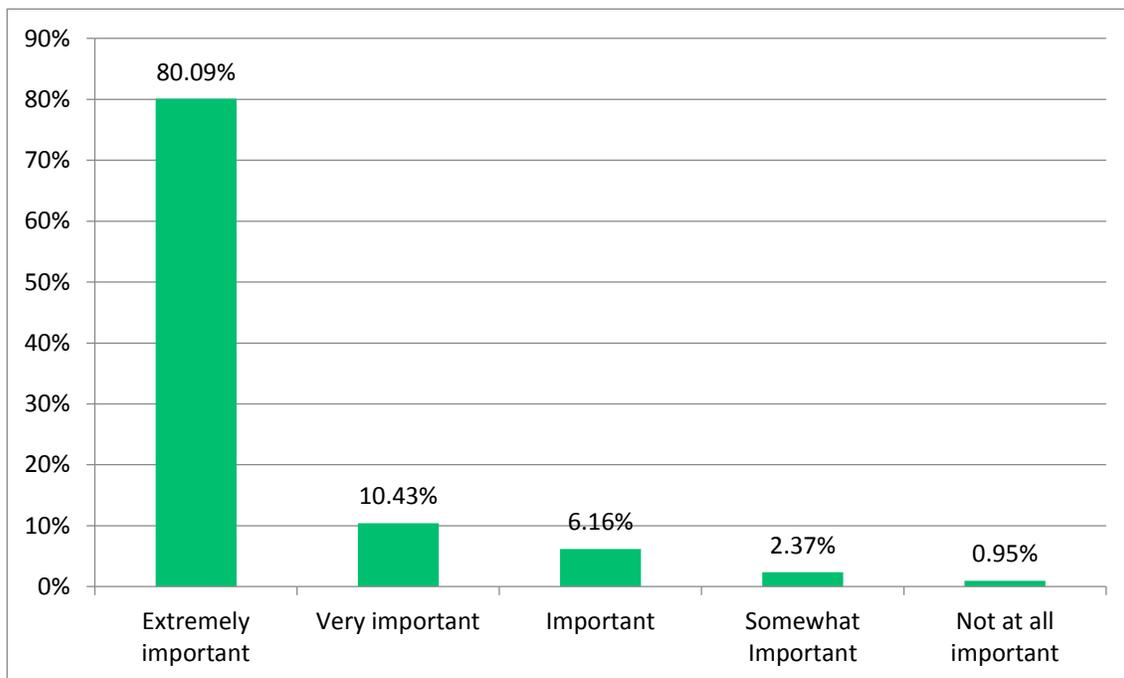
Q31) Would you consider restoring or preserving parts of your own property to a naturalized state?
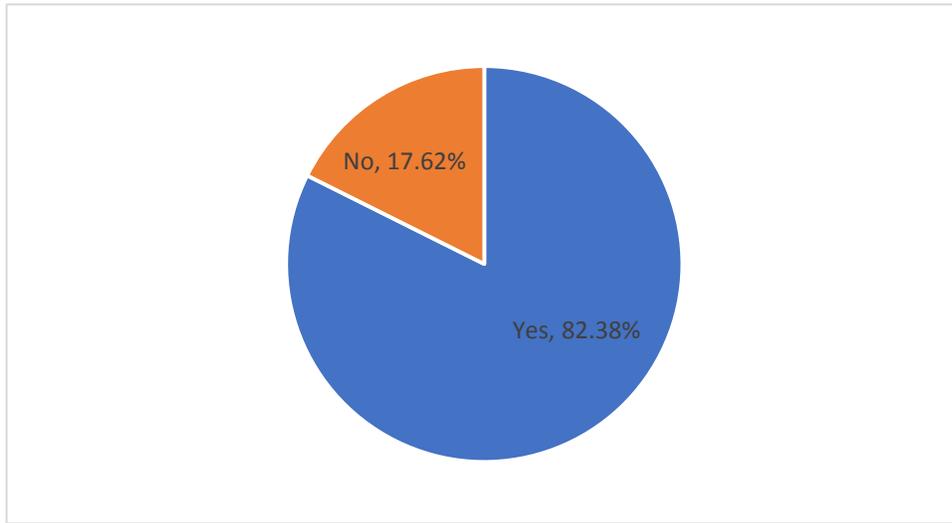
Q32) What are some of the barriers to restoring or preserving parts of your own property to a naturalized state?

Q33) Would you support the implementation of a tree planting program to revitalize urban and suburban areas, lands adjacent to agricultural fields, and other suitable spaces across Grey County?

No, 3.33%

Yes, 96.67%
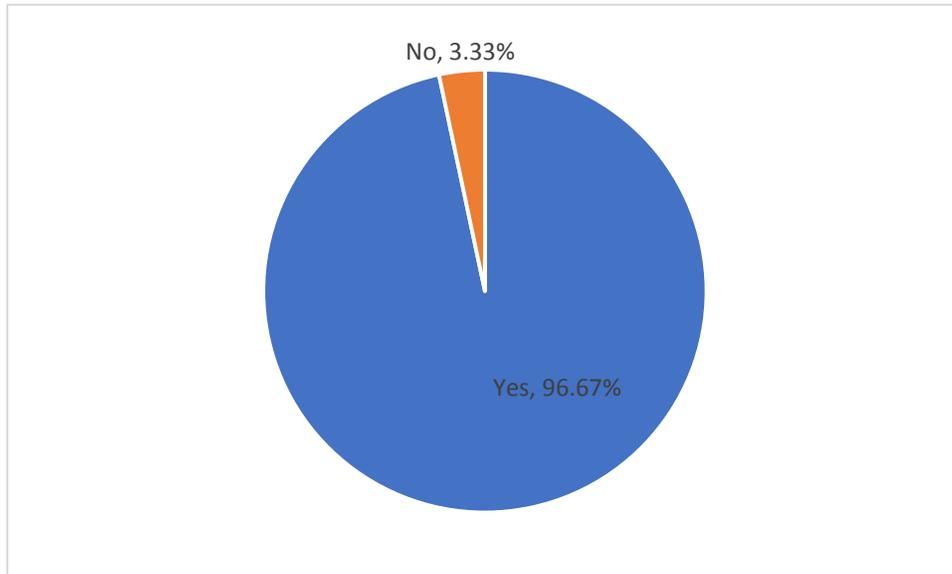
9. Open-ended Questions

Q34) Do you have any further comments or questions about Grey County's Climate Change Action Plan? (Open-ended)

Respondents had a wide variety of responses and many used this space to simply express their thanks or support for the Climate Change Action Plan or their opposition to it. The themes that emerged from this question were around partnerships, conservation, agriculture, public engagement and systemic change. Respondents identified partnerships with local climate community groups and municipalities as important. Continuous public engagement and public tracking of progress was also identified. Some respondents saw the action plan as not going far enough and wish to see more systemic change or paradigm shift to an overall sustainable way of life.

Q35) What policies or areas of focus would you like to see in the Grey County Climate Change Action Plan? (Open-ended)

The top three policies or areas of focus identified by respondents were for agriculture, waste management and conservation (n=115). Key themes emerging echoed the themes in question 34 and included agriculture, more support for soil health, regeneration and conservation practices, reducing use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, educating on and supporting

regenerative farming and organic farming. Regarding waste management, respondents indicated a need for a more standardized and cohesive approach at the county level, more awareness and education on waste reduction and recycling, and a green bin program in all municipalities within the County. On Conservation, respondents emphasized increased protection for natural environments and habitats from development. A strong support for tree planting and green space development both in urban, rural and farm environments was also identified in this section.
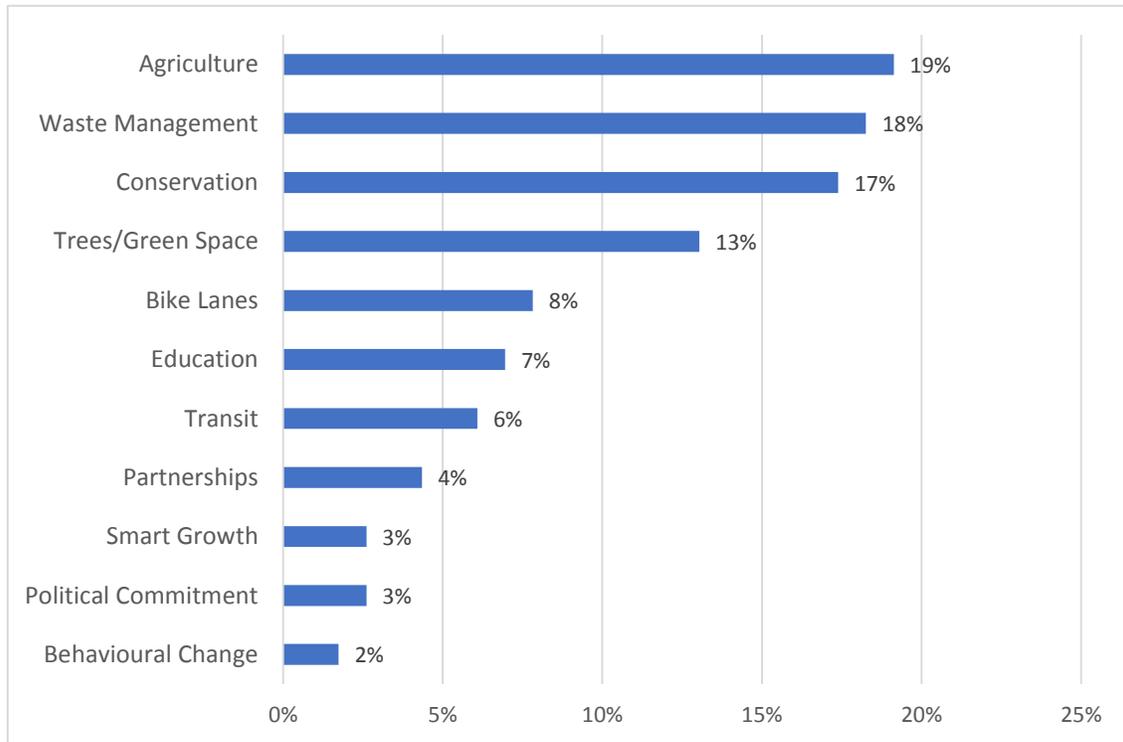
10. Action Suggestions Based On General Survey Results

10.1 Buildings (Q4 – 8)

1. Develop and implement a voluntary energy efficiency retrofit program for existing residential and commercial buildings.

2. Host annual workshops to educate residents and businesses about the numerous energy savings programs available from local utilities.

3. Implement green building standards, checklists, and/or guides for new developments.

10.2 Land-Use (Q9 – 12)

1. Review, update, and develop land use planning policies that encourage complete streets, compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented growth and development to prevent urban sprawl.

2. Identify and prioritize brownfield and/or vacant buildings/lots for redevelopment.

3. Implement a sustainability metrics tool to measure the sustainability performance of proposed developments focusing on the built environment, mobility, natural environment, and infrastructure and buildings (e.g. Richmond Hill/Vaughan/Brampton).

10.3 Energy (Q13 – 15)

1. Establish a local improvement charge (LIC) program to assist residents to make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes.

2. Conduct a study to identify opportunities for local community-owned renewable energy generation (e.g. wind, solar, hydro, micro-hydro, biomass, biogas).

3. Consider mandating new buildings to be solar ready through building bylaws and publishing solar ready building guidelines for developers.

10.4 Transportation (Q16 – 20)

1. Install electric vehicle charging stations for public use in Grey County including at municipal facilities and central parking lots, new developments, and in partnership with local institutions and businesses.

2. Explore the feasibility of establishing a rural, demand responsive public transit option such as a taxi-bus or fixed route on-demand bus service.

3. Identify opportunities to expand and improve the connectivity of the existing trail network and establish a policy to pave road shoulders to increase active transportation options in the County.

10.5 Waste (Q21 – 24)

1. Explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a standardized County-wide waste management system with expanded curbside organic waste collection.

2. Establish a local re-use it/ re-build it centre that accepts donations of unwanted household items and building supplies for resale, with all proceeds used to fund social service programs or other community needs.

3. Work with producers and retailers to reduce packaging and increase take-back initiatives.

10.6 Food Systems (Q25 – 29)

1. Establish a community food hub to support the local food economy and facilitate collaboration and coordination between agri-food industry stakeholders (growers, processors, buyers, distributors & retailers).

2. Expand and promote farmers' markets across the County.

3. Implement institutional purchasing policies amongst the Municipalities, Universities, Schools and Hospitals (MUSH) sector to increase the availability of local food in schools and other public buildings.

10.7 Conservation and Natural Areas (Q30 – 33)

1. Work with local community groups and organizations to undertake community-based outreach and education to develop an understanding of the significance of Grey County's natural assets.

2. Implement a tree planting campaign to encourage planting trees on private property.

3. Implement by-laws to restrict cutting down trees.