



Causewave Community Partners Ontario County Recycling/Waste Diversion

Summary

May 2017



HOW CHANGE GETS GOING

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Background and Objectives

- Ontario County is developing a recycling/waste diversion initiative. Community input is essential to the development of the County's plan for waste management and diversion.
- Causewave Community Partners has been commissioned to help Ontario County develop and communicate this initiative to residents.
- As an initial step, Causewave developed a county-wide survey to help learn more about resident attitudes and current behaviors (by municipality) regarding recycling.
- Crux Research has worked with Causewave as a research partner and helped develop the survey, program and host it, and create an analysis of results.

Methodology

- Design and analysis were developed and prepared by Crux Research Inc. in consultation with Causewave and Ontario County.
- This wave was conducted online from March 13 to April 28, 2017.
- 867 respondents completed the questionnaire.
- The study included Ontario County residents, aged 18 or older. While most surveys were gathered online (n=775), written copies of questionnaires (n=92) were made available to residents.
- Study data were balanced to census targets for age, gender, and geography. The resulting data are representative of Ontario County's adult population.
- The median length of individual interviews was 14 minutes.

Executive Summary



Current Attitudes Towards Waste Management/Recycling

- Ontario County residents are highly concerned about waste management issues – particularly in effectively managing landfill waste and hazardous waste.
- These concerns are most apparent among residents aged 50 or higher.
- Those living in the two Ontario County cities (Canandaigua and Geneva) tend to be a bit more concerned about waste/garbage issues than those living in the Villages or Towns. But, residents from all areas of the county are concerned.
- About half of residents say they always or usually look to buy items that are made from recyclable materials.
- Most know that they should rinse food containers before recycling them. But, some recycling issues are confusing to residents, such as how to recycle aluminum foil, light bulbs, or plastic bags.

Current Waste Management/Recycling Behaviors

- Residents are likely to say that they always recycle items such as cans, glass containers, cardboard, plastic containers, and paper items. They are less likely to say they recycle some items, notably light bulbs, Styrofoam, paints, clothing, and unused medication.
- Food scraps are most commonly disposed of in the regular trash, although many residents compost or use garbage disposals.

Executive Summary

Key Findings (Continued)

- Grass clippings tend to stay on the lawn or are dispersed on a property or in a compost pile.
- Hazardous waste disposal tends to occur at a drop off site or at an event, but many respondents say hazardous waste is stored in the home. Some also mention disposing hazardous waste in the regular trash. There appears to be some lack of knowledge as to when waste collection events are and what constitutes hazardous waste.
- Electronics tend to be brought to an electronics recycler or donated/given away. Few respondents dispose of them in the curbside trash.
- Automotive waste (batteries, oil, tires) tend to be taken to an automotive repair shop or an auto parts store.
- Appliances are most likely to be traded in when buying new.

Barriers and Enablers to Recycling

- Some residents feel they don't recycle more because their bin is too small and fills quickly. Others report they aren't sure which items are recyclable.
- For items that can't be recycled in the curbside bins, the biggest barrier to recycling is a lack of knowledge of how and where to recycle them.
- Many residents don't want to pay to recycle electronics items. Just 10% are willing to pay \$10 or more to recycle electronics, so the current fee may be acting as a barrier.

Executive Summary

Key Findings (Continued)

- Residents recycle because they feel it is good for the environment and they want to be good role models. Many also say they would feel guilty if they didn't.
- While most residents currently say they are doing a good job at recycling, they are less likely to say they are going a good job of “reducing” or “reusing.” In particular, they feel they could improve upon “reducing” the number of resources they are using. This is especially true for residents aged 50+.
- Residents say that they would do more if they knew more about where to take non-standard items, if there were more recycling events, and if they had a better sense of what was recyclable.
- Saving landfill space is seen as a key benefit of recycling.
- Residents want to learn more about recycling topics such as hazardous waste collection events, recycling drop-off sites, and disposal of hazardous waste.

Communications and Marketing

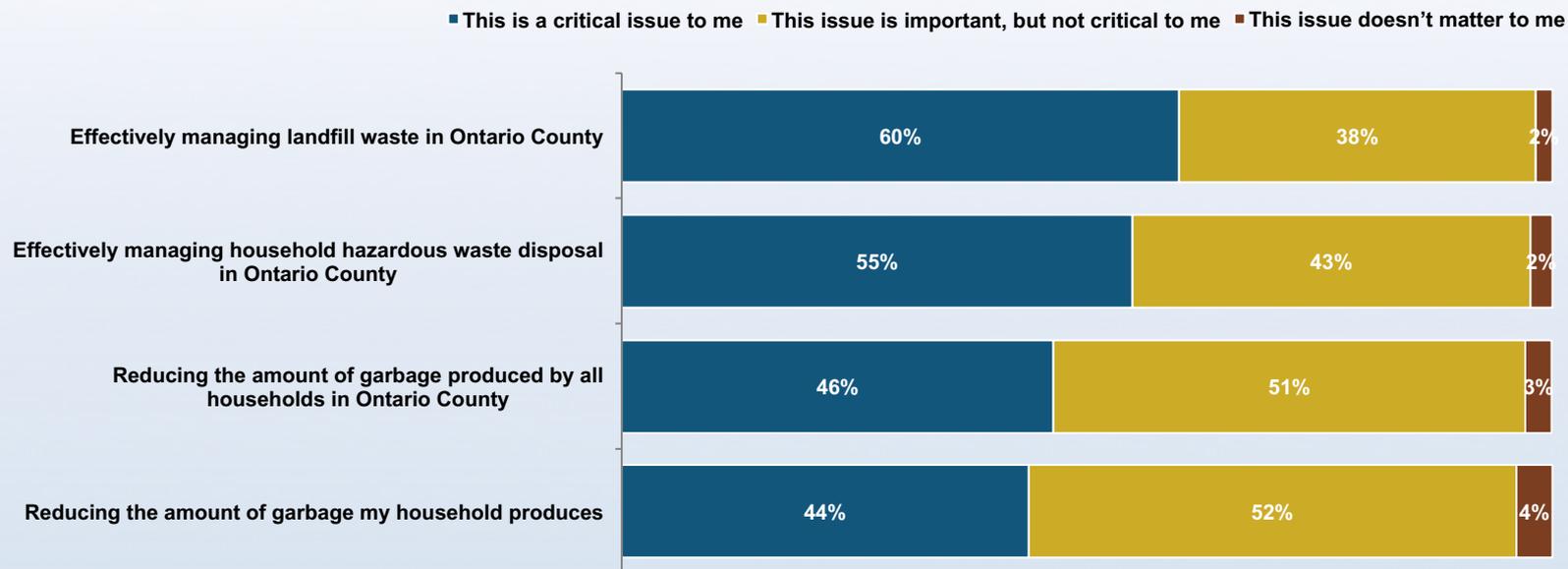
- “Social” is the key way that Ontario County residents currently learn about issues affecting the County. In particular, they learn about issues via social media and from their friends and neighbors. However, “social” media is far more important to residents under the age of 50 than those over the age of 50.
- The Messenger Post is the key publication for Ontario County issues.
- The Ontario County website is particular important for issues surrounding recycling. Currently, about a third of respondents had gone to the website for recycling information.

Current Attitudes Towards Waste Management/Recycling



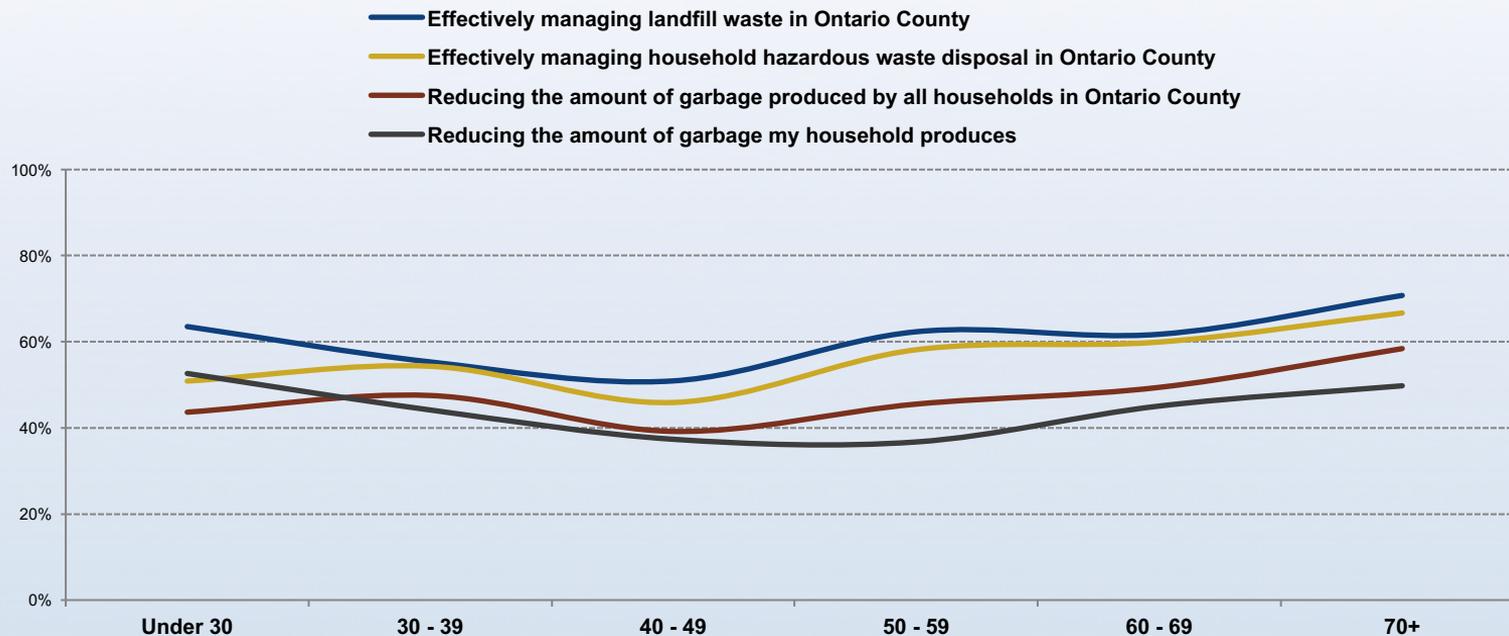
Many residents are concerned with effectively Ontario County landfill waste

Below is a list of environmental issues.
How much does each concern you personally?



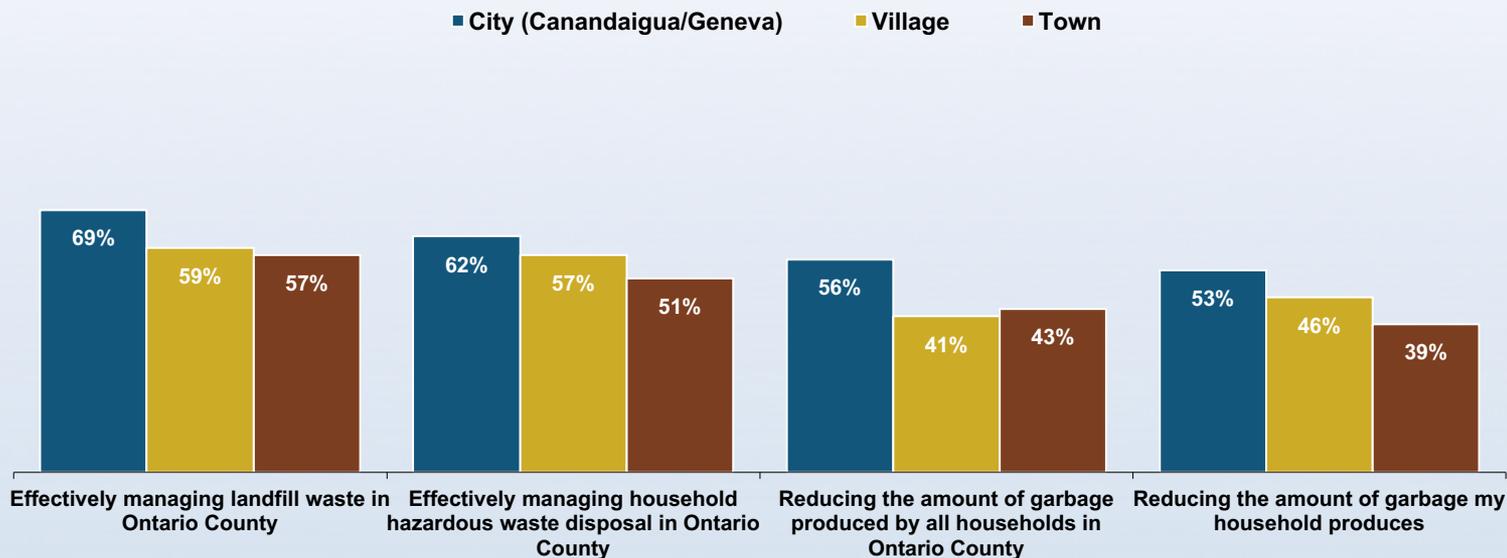
Older Ontario County residents (50+) are most likely to feel that managing waste is a critical issue

Below is a list of environmental issues.
How much does each concern you personally?
% Responding "This is a critical issue to me" by age



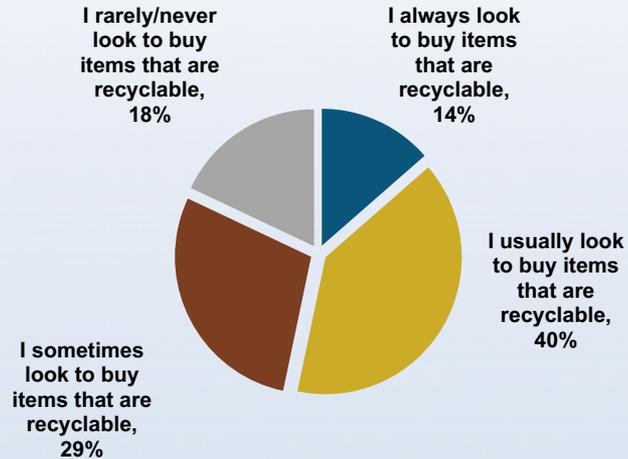
City residents are more concerned than village and town residents on environmental issues

Below is a list of environmental issues.
How much does each concern you personally?
% Responding "This is a critical issue to me" by City/Village/Town



54% of residents always or usually look to purchase recyclable items

When you are shopping, how much do you focus on buying items made with recyclable materials?

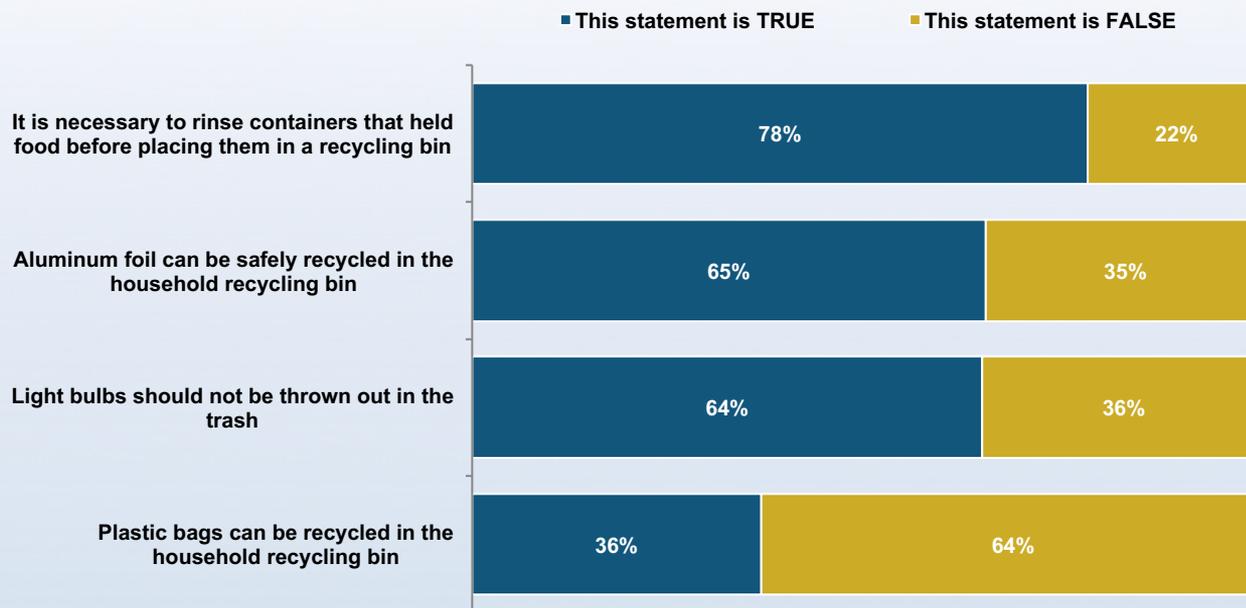


% Always/Usually look by age:

Under 30: 47%
30-39: 53%
40-49: 53%
50-59: 54%
60-69: 55%
70+: 57%

Most believe that food containers should be rinsed before placing in a recycling bin

Please indicate if you feel the following statements are true or false?



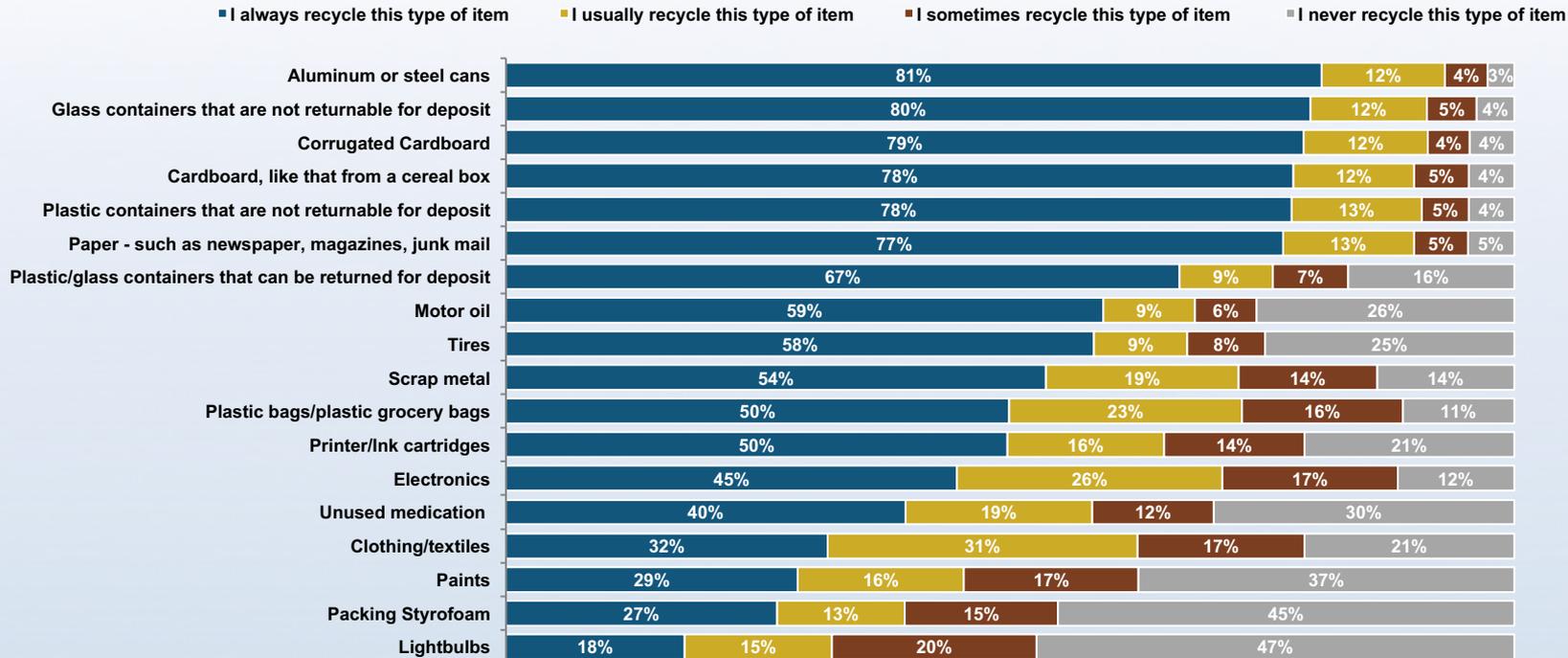
Current Waste Management/Recycling Behaviors



Items most likely to be frequently recycled are aluminum cans, glass containers, cardboard, plastic, and paper

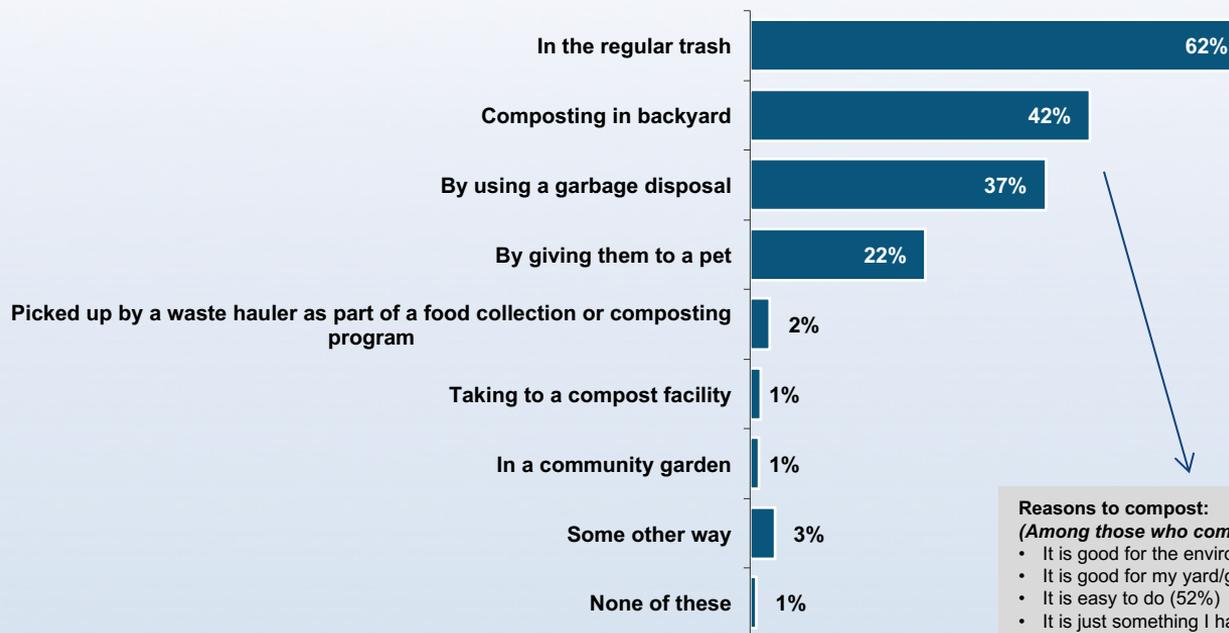
Light bulbs are rarely recycled

How frequently do you recycle the following types of items?



Most residents typically dispose of food scraps in the regular trash

How do you typically dispose of food scraps in your household?



By location:

In the regular trash:

City: 64%
Village: 56%
Town: 62%

Composting in backyard:

City: 36%
Village: 44%
Town: 44%

By using garbage disposal:

City: 41%
Village: 31%
Town: 36%

Reasons to compost:

(Among those who compost)

- It is good for the environment (78%)
- It is good for my yard/garden (74%)
- It is easy to do (52%)
- It is just something I have always done (36%)
- Some other reason (6%)

Most residents leave grass clippings on their lawn

What do you typically do with your grass clippings?



9% put household hazardous waste in the regular trash

Many of these respondents don't know where hazardous waste collection events are

What do you typically do with household hazardous waste, such as paint and chemicals?

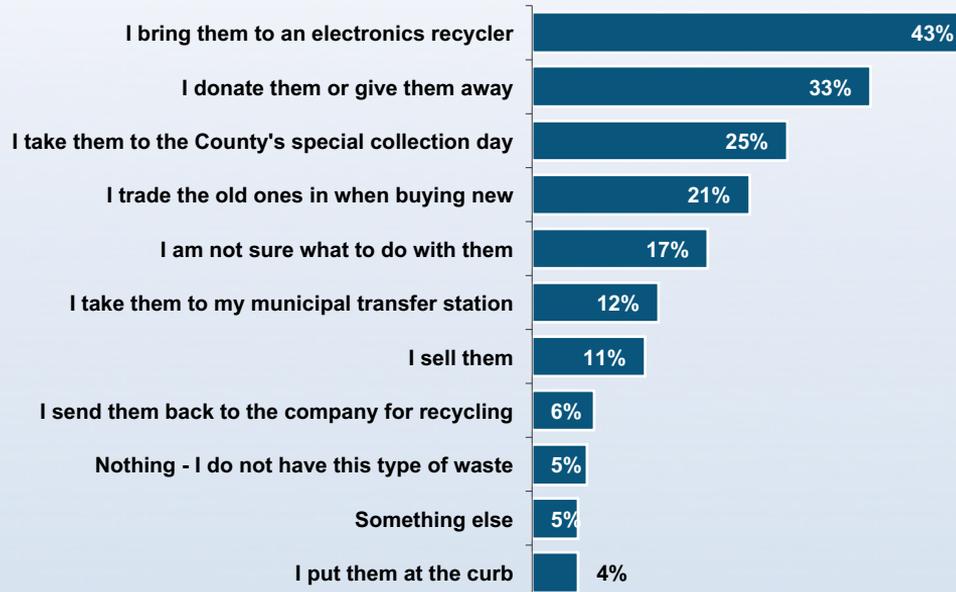


Why do you put your household hazardous waste in the regular trash?

- I don't know where the hazardous waste collection events are (64%)
- I am not always sure what household hazardous waste is (50%)
- I only produce a small amount of this type of waste (42%)
- It is easier to just put it in the trash (33%)
- The hours of the hazardous waste collection events don't work for me (27%)
- I don't have the time to go to hazardous waste collection events (16%)
- Some other reason (9%)
- It is safe to do so (8%)

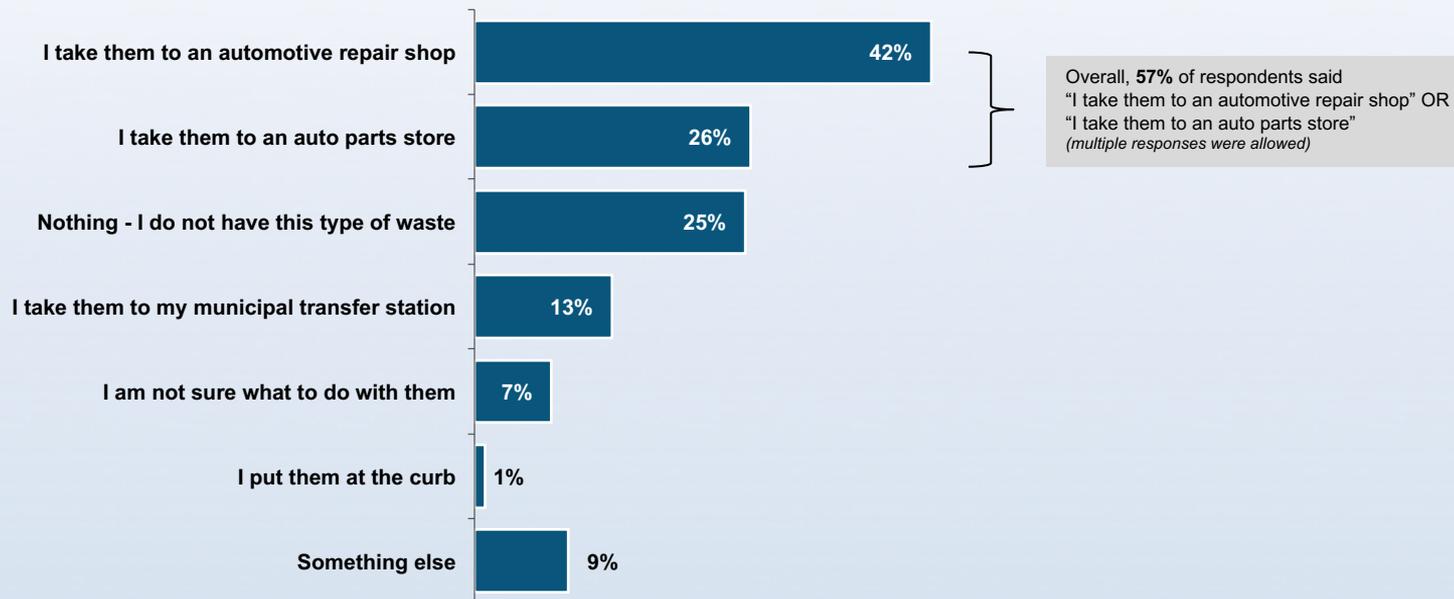
43% dispose of electronics by bringing to an electronics recycler; another one-third donate or give them away

How do you dispose of electronics, such as telephones, cell phones, and computers?



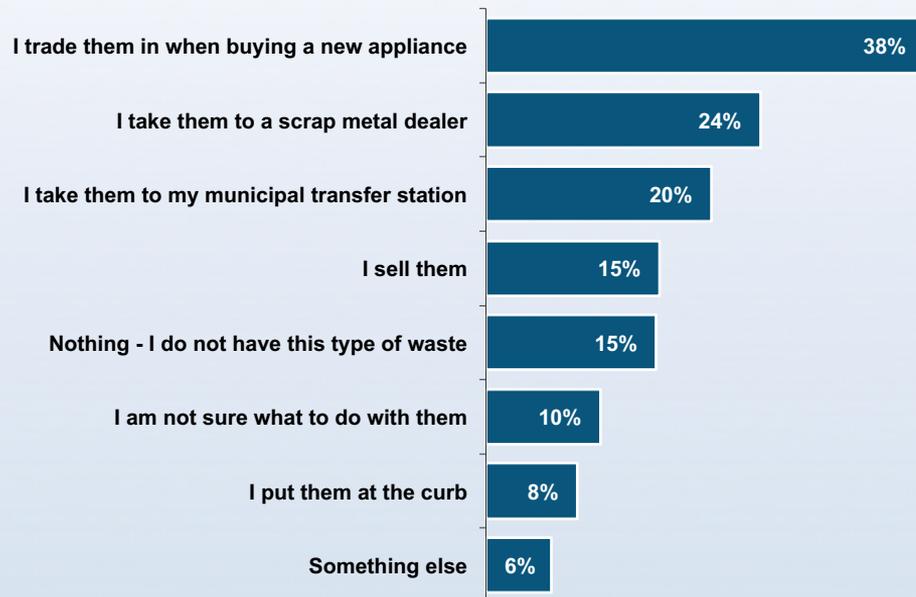
57% dispose of automotive batteries, motor oil, and tires by bringing to an automotive repair shop or store

How do you dispose of, automotive batteries, motor oil, and tires?



Appliances are typically traded in or taken to a scrap metal dealer *10% are not sure how to dispose of appliances*

How do you dispose of appliances?



Barriers and Enablers to Recycling

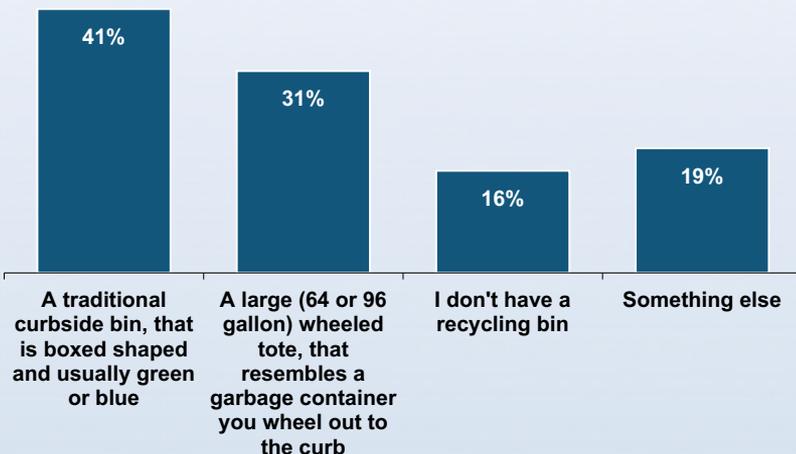


4 in 10 respondents use a traditional curbside recycling bin

Among those who have a bin, 31% say their bin is too small and gets full quickly

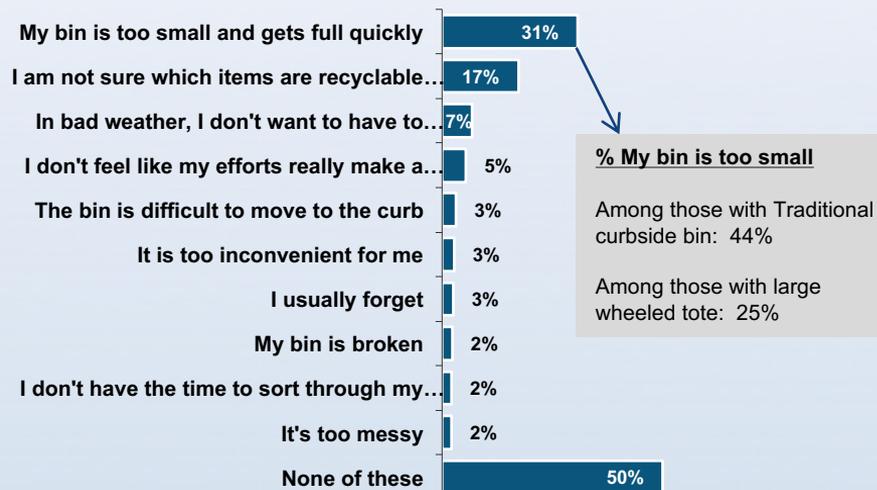
Think about your use of recycling bins that you put out with your weekly trash collection....

Which of the following type of bin(s) do you use?



Which of the following prevents you from recycling more in these bins than you do?

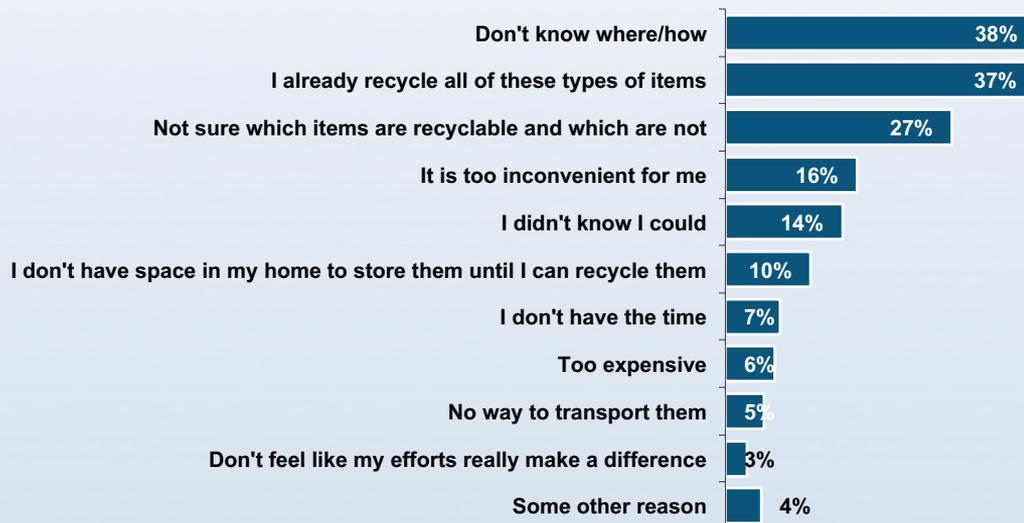
Among those who have a recycling bin



Many respondents do not know where or how to recycle items that are not allowed in curbside bins

Think about items that you can recycle, but not in the curbside recycling bins (electronics, medications*, chemicals, paint, oil, etc.)

Which of the following prevents you from recycling more of these items than you do?

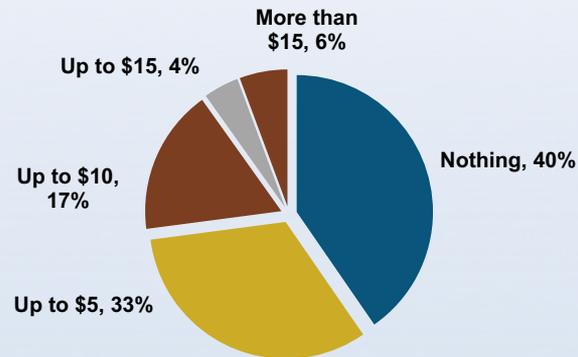


**In the context of this survey, the term "recycling medication" implies appropriate disposal of pharmaceuticals at a special collection event.*

60% of respondents are willing to pay to recycle electronic devices; among them, most prefer to pay less than \$10

Recycling centers tend to charge residents to recycle electronic devices,
in order to defray the costs of recycling them.

How much are you willing to pay to recycle electronic devices?



Average \$ amount respondents
are willing to pay: \$4

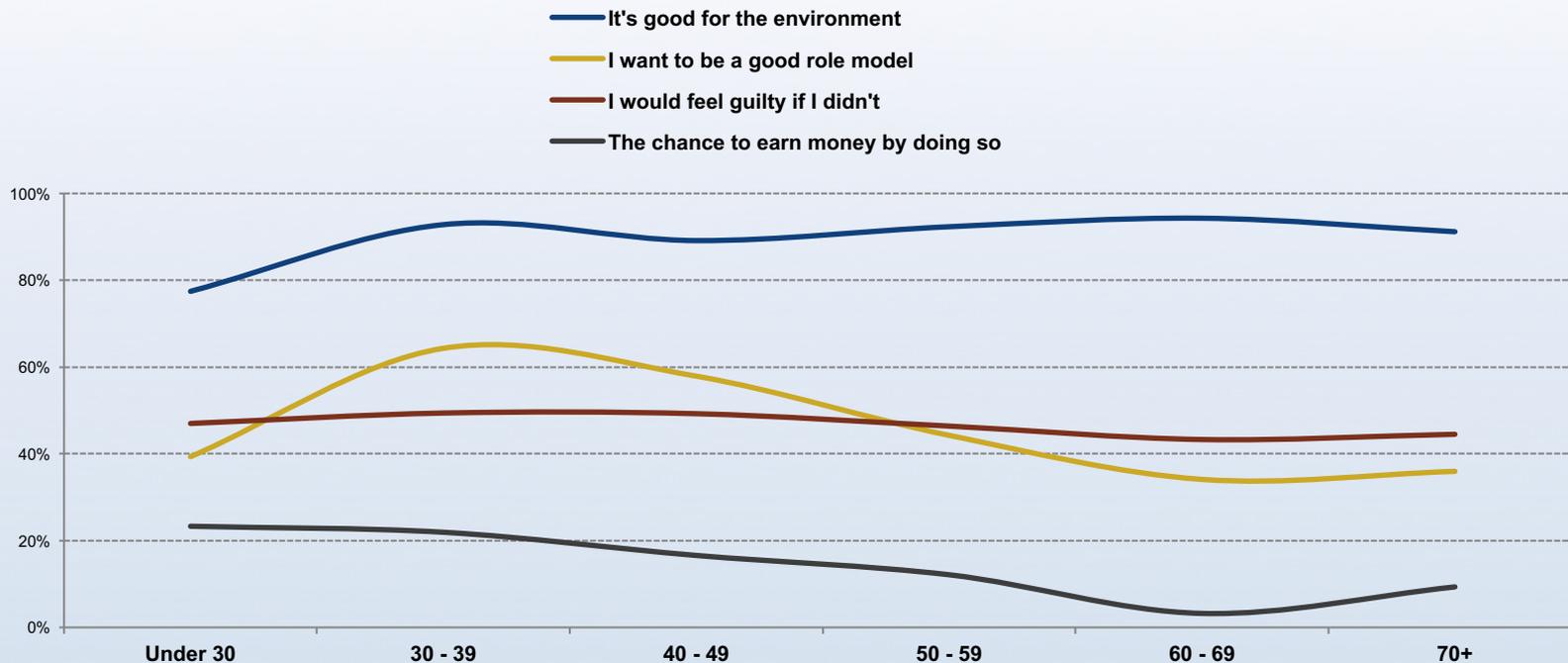
Respondents recycle because it is good for the environment – but also because they want to set a good example

Which of the following really motivates you to want to recycle?



All ages feel that recycling is good for the environment – middle-aged respondents (30-49) are more likely to recycle to be a good role model

Which of the following really motivates you to want to recycle?



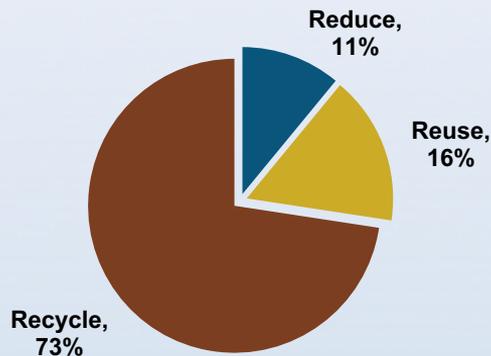
While the majority of residents feel they are currently doing a good job with recycling – many feel they can improve with reducing waste

The three Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle - all help to cut down on the amount of waste we throw away. They conserve natural resources, landfill space and energy.

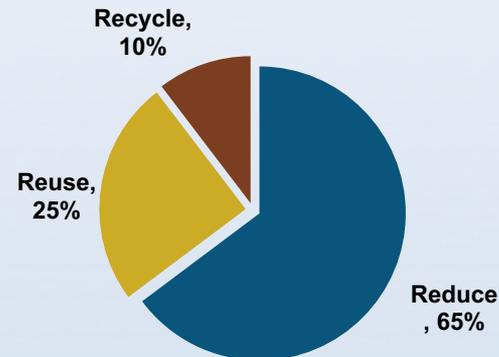
The three Rs are:

- **REDUCE:** A key part of waste reduction is using natural resources wisely and using less than usual in order to avoid waste.
- **REUSE:** You can reuse materials in their original form instead of throwing them away.
- **RECYCLE:** Not throwing away things that can be recycled.

Which of these three Rs do you feel you are currently doing the best job at?

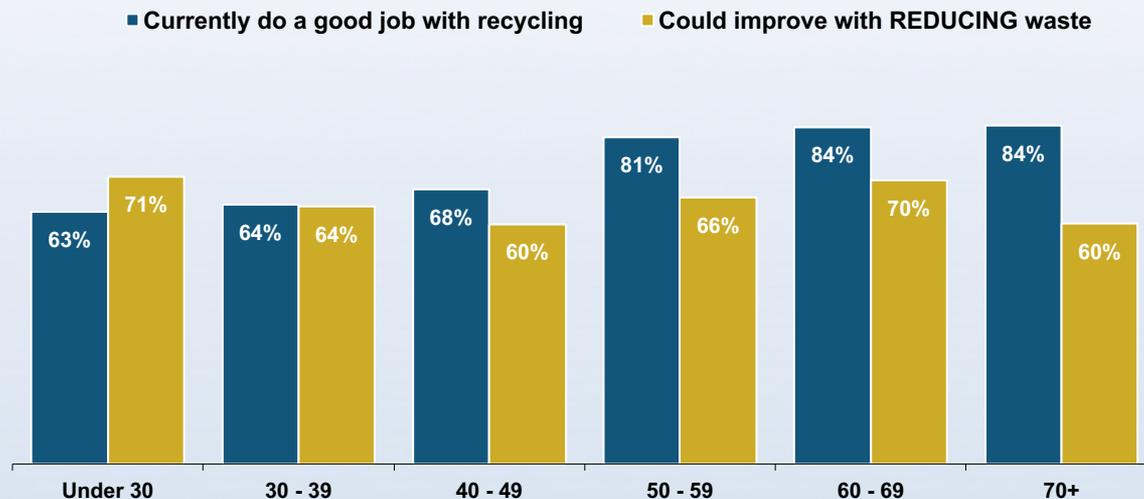


Which of these three Rs do you feel you could personally improve upon the most?



Older age groups are more likely to feel they are doing a good job with recycling, but all age groups feel they could improve with reducing waste

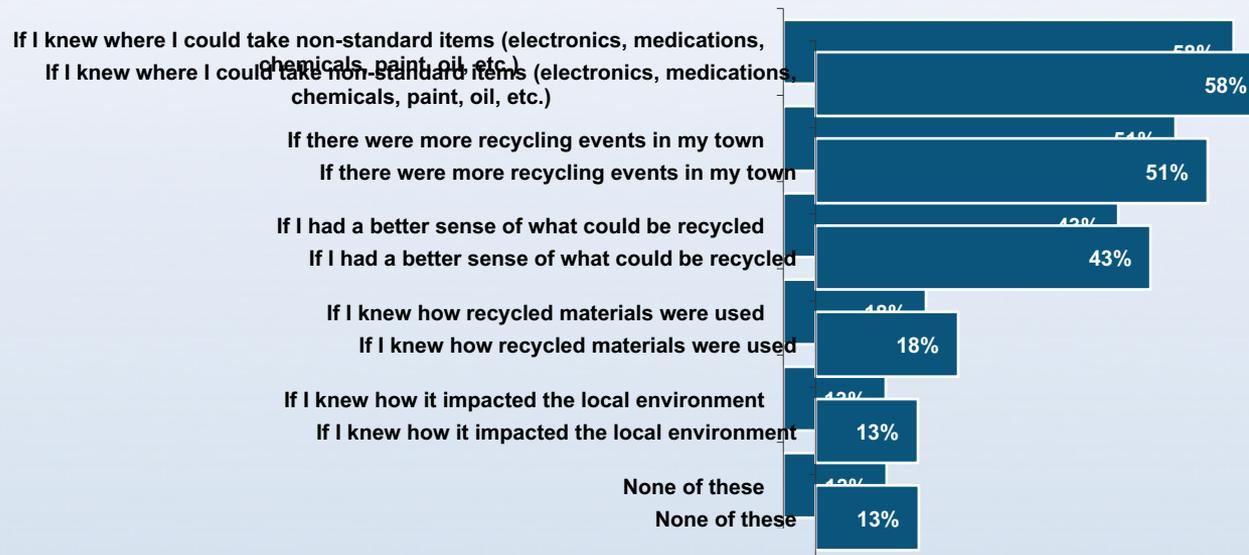
Which of these three Rs do you feel you are currently doing the best job at? /
Which of these three Rs do you feel you could personally improve upon the most?



Residents would be encouraged to “reduce, reuse and recycle” more if they knew where to take non-standard items or if there were more recycling events

Many need a better sense of what can be recycled

Which of these would encourage you to “reduce, reuse, and recycle” more?

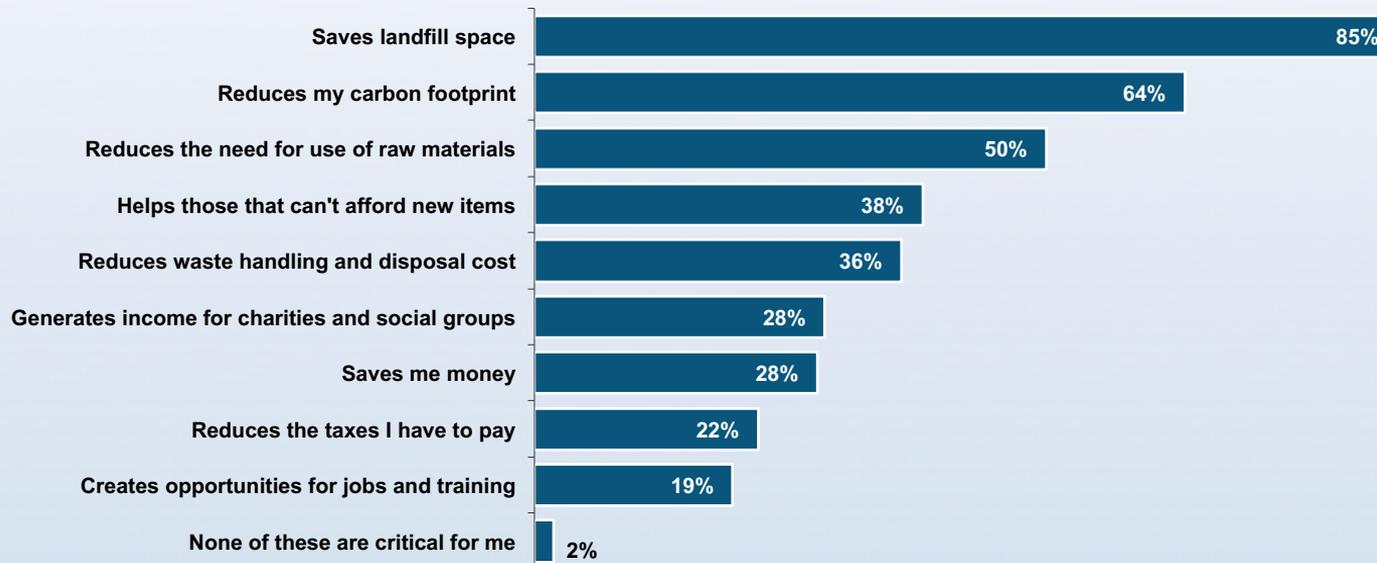


A majority of respondents feel that saving landfill space is a major benefit in reducing, reusing and recycling products

Reducing carbon footprint is also a key benefit

Below are some benefits of reducing, reusing, and recycling products.

Please select the ones that are critical for you – major reasons why you try to reduce, reuse, and recycle?



Respondents want to learn more about recycling topics such as hazardous waste collection events, recycling drop-off sites, and disposal of hazardous waste

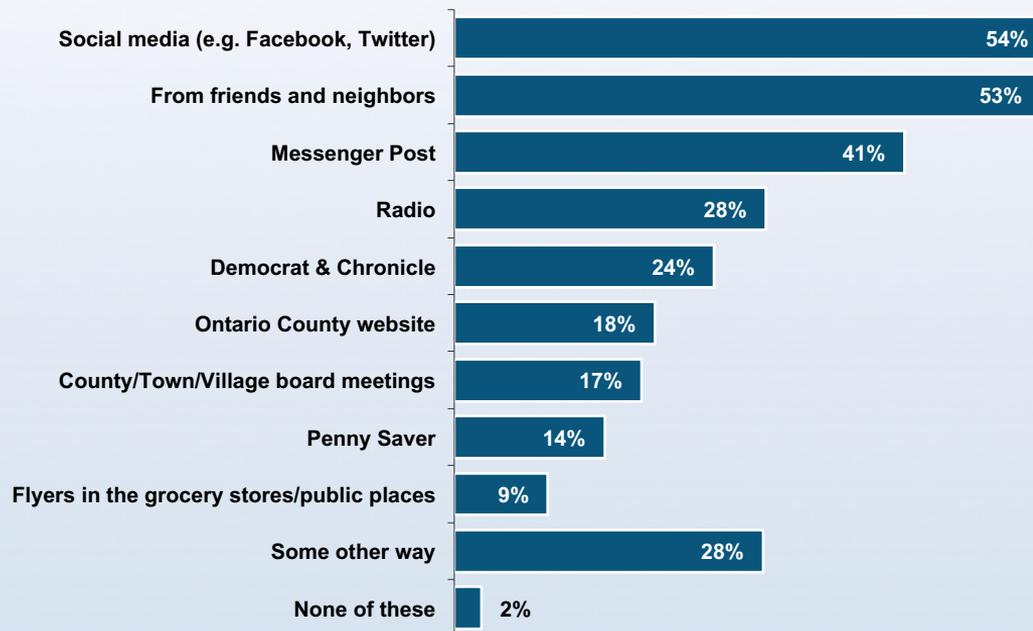
Which of these topics relating to recycling and waste diversion do you feel you should know more about?



Communications and Marketing

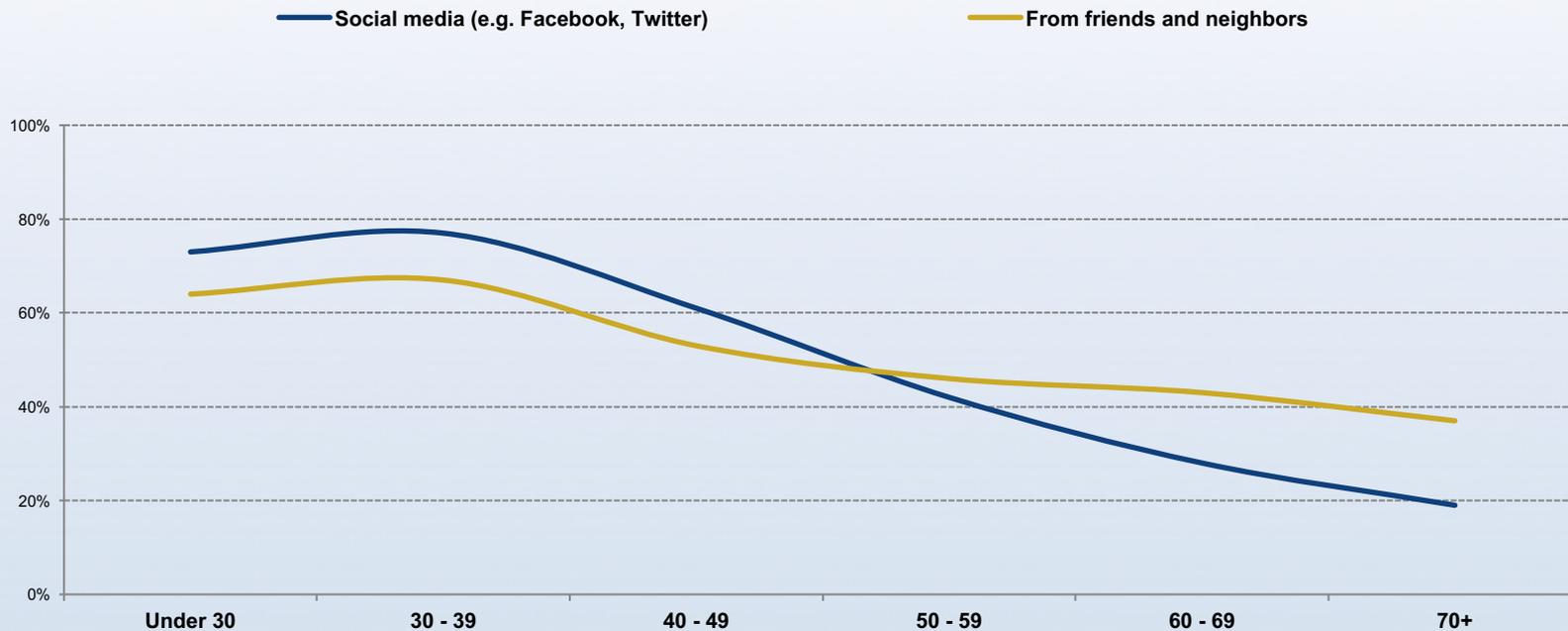
Social media and word-of-mouth are key means of communication regarding issues affecting Ontario County

How do you typically learn about issues affecting Ontario County?



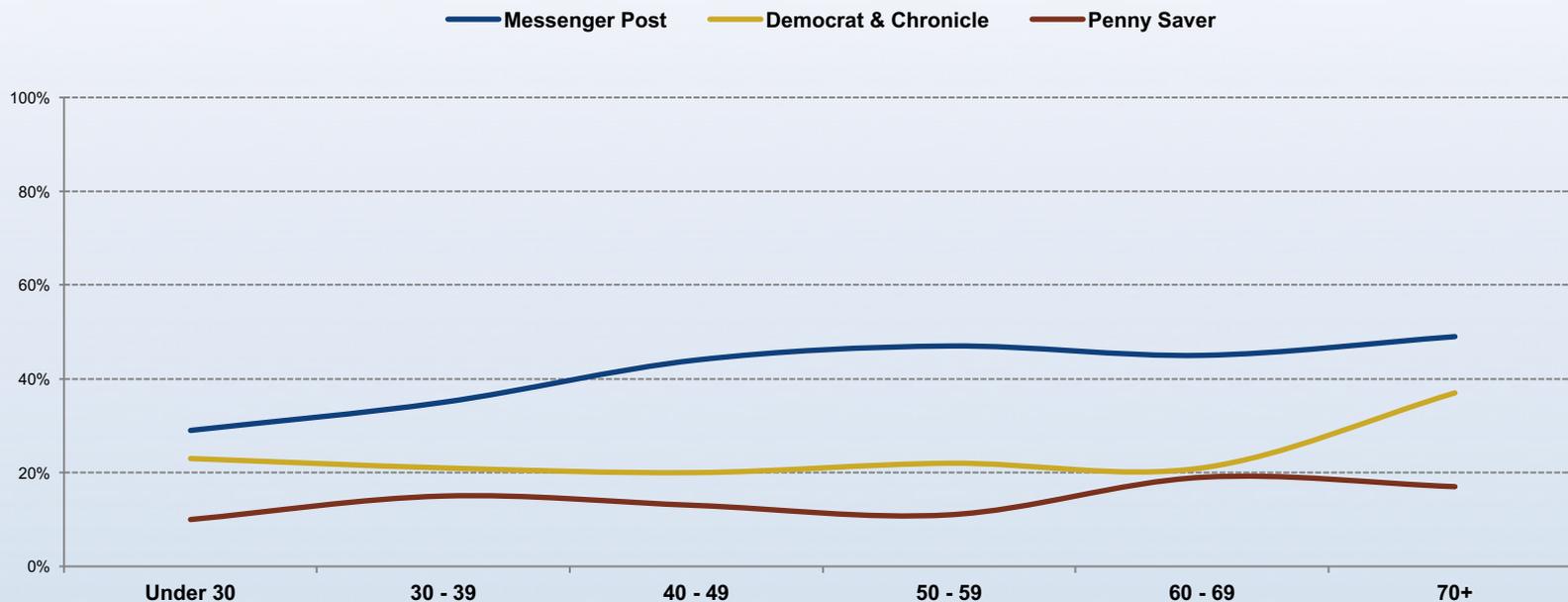
Younger residents are more likely to learn about issues affecting Ontario County through social media and word-of-mouth

How do you typically learn about issues affecting Ontario County?



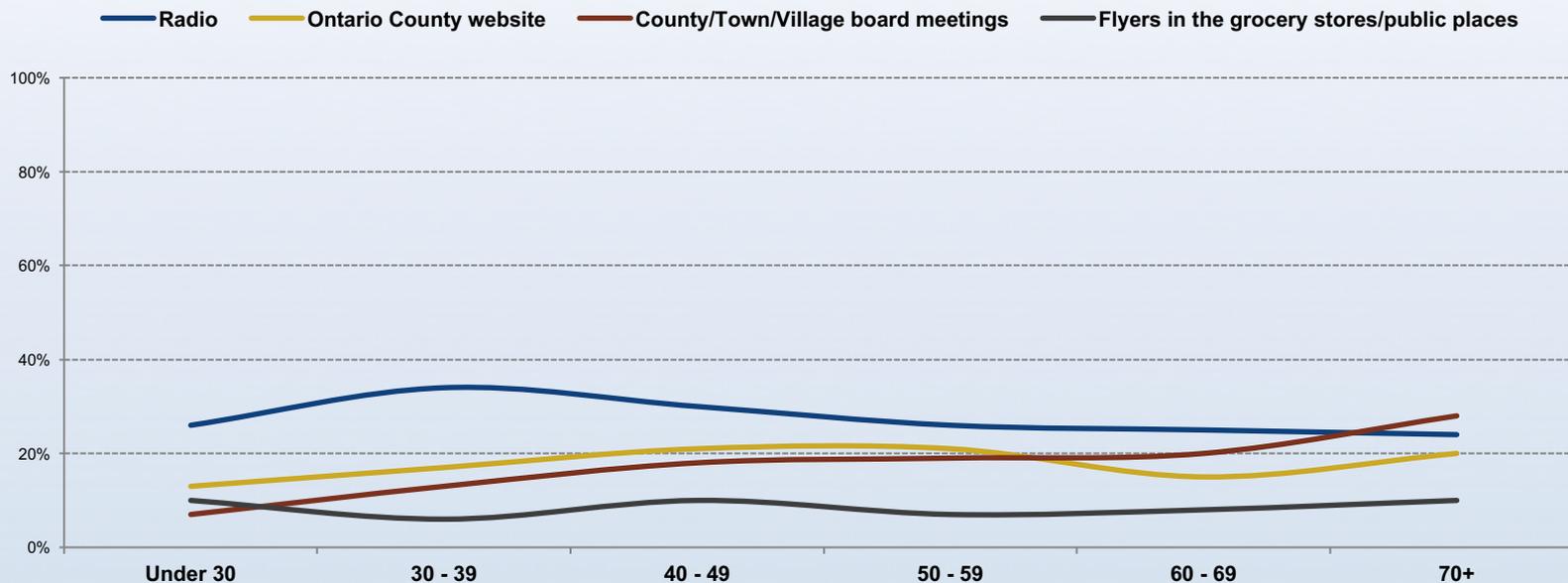
Messenger Post is the most important print medium for Ontario County issues

How do you typically learn about issues affecting Ontario County?



Other media are not as frequently used to learn about issues affecting the County

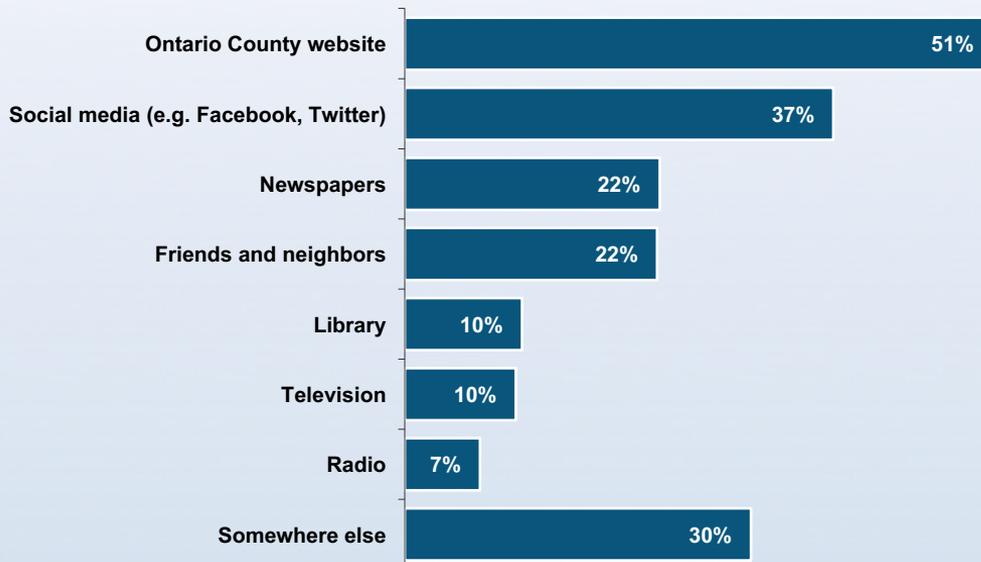
How do you typically learn about issues affecting Ontario County?



The Ontario County website is a key tool for communicating information about recycling procedures

Social media is a valuable means of communication, particularly among younger age groups

If you wanted to learn more about recycling, where would you go?



% OC website by age:

Under 30:	35%
30-39:	57%
40-49:	55%
50-59:	51%
60-69:	58%
70+:	52%

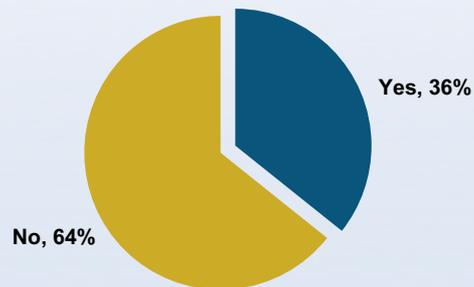
% Social media by age:

Under 30:	57%
30-39:	47%
40-49:	48%
50-59:	28%
60-69:	17%
70+:	10%

Just over one-third of respondents have visited the Ontario County website to look for information on recycling

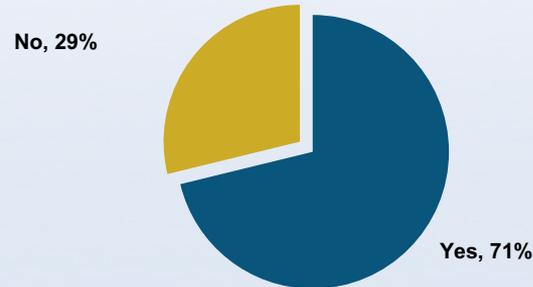
Most were able to find the information they were seeking

Have you ever gone to Ontario County's website to look for information on recycling?



Were you able to find the information you needed when you went to Ontario County's website to look for information on recycling?

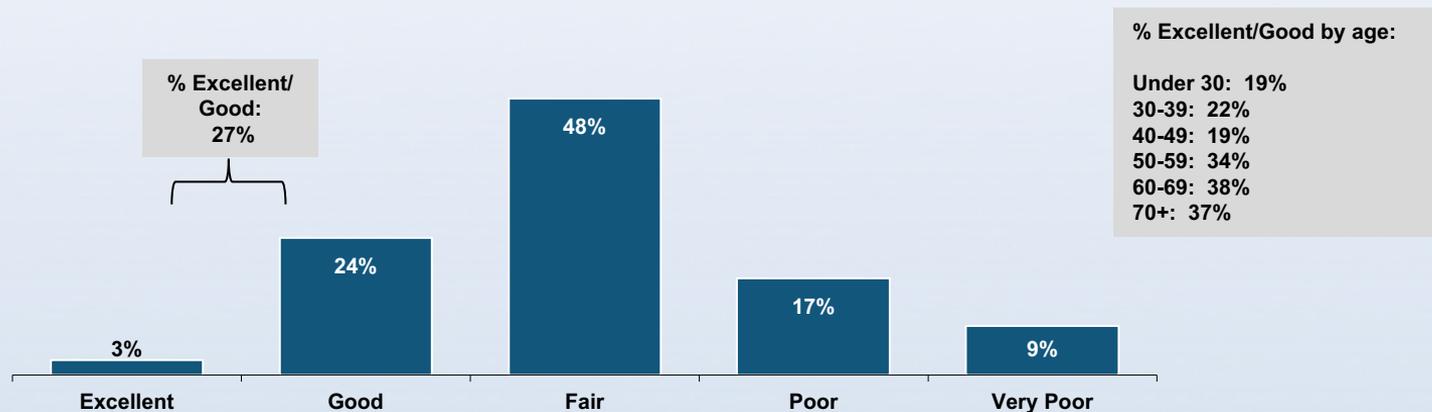
Among those who visited Ontario County website



48% of respondents rate Ontario County as “Fair” for how well they communicate what can and cannot be recycled

There is significant room for improvement with recycling communications, particularly with younger age groups

How would you rate Ontario County for how well they communicate what can and cannot be recycled?



Improvements Suggested by Residents



Many respondents want more information on recycling and more opportunities to recycle

If I could improve one thing about recycling and waste diversion in Ontario County, it would be ...

Provide detailed information on recycling

- *Send out flier or print information every once in a while about what can be recycled in the bins.*
- *More readily available information on what's recyclable in the bin and where to take specific recyclables that don't belong in the bin.*
- *A place to ask questions about what is recyclable.*
- *Learning more about what I can recycle. I throw things out sometimes because I don't know if they belong in recycling,*

More opportunities for recycling

- *Provide more opportunities to recycle hard to recycle items at local transfer stations.*
- *Offer more opportunities for local recycling events. More often not just once a year.*
- *Pick up weekly. Our recycling overflows and we have the large bin. I wish it was picked up every week, or if I knew a place to drop off recycling on off- weeks.*
- *Have a single site available for dropping off hazardous materials of all types and that it be open all the time, during regular business hours and weekends.*

More convenience with drop-off sites

- *Better access to drop off sites. In Farmington there is no way for me to get rid of large items like mattresses. box springs, an old tub. Canandaigua at least used to have the Transfer station.. now that is Solar power. I cant even use the Town of Canandaigua's transfer station as I am not a resident*
- *Make it easier for residents to bring recyclables to a convenient location and advertise that fact with a mailing to all households.*
- *More places to drop off materials more open hours.*

Communicating the benefits of recycling could help improve the process

If I could improve one thing about recycling and waste diversion in Ontario County, it would be ... (Cont'd)

Educate / Inform public on benefits of recycling

- *Recycling needs a higher profile and more "publicity"... I see recycling as critical we also need ways to reduce our trash stream.*
- *Better communications throughout the community. Not everyone goes to the website for information. How about speaking at local Rotary groups, libraries, etc*
- *To educate more and more people on how important it is to recycle. Even though they know it's important, many are lazy and do not make a big enough effort.*
- *Develop and implement a branded marketing program regarding recycling, (billboards, etc.), collaborate with local businesses and distribute posters, tear-offs, etc. that can be placed at the checkouts.*

Better landfill management

- *I would stop bring in trash into our landfill from other counties, cities, states and countries. Who is monitoring that waste to see if they are recycling?*
- *Reduce the residential footprint at the Ontario County Landfill.*
- *Stop the landfill that is polluting the air and the water and the soil in Ontario County. Use the landfill only for our residents' waste items. Make major changes to eliminate the terrible smell!*

Assurance that recycled items are properly recycled

- *I wish I knew if the things in my recycling bin were really recycled and not just thrown in the same truck as the garbage and taken to the dump.*
- *What happens to the items after they are put in the recycling? Where do they go? Is recycling cost efficient?*

Other

- *A county-wide composting initiative.*
- *Municipal sites to drop off good items that can be used by others less fortunate in the community.*

Recycling and Waste Management Advice Suggested by Residents



Many suggested to look at successful recycling operations of other communities

What advice would you give the County as we plan for the future of recycling and waste management?...

Promote and educate about the benefits of recycling

- *Moving here from another county that actively promoted recycling, I was surprised at how little the county does to promote recycling. There needs to be a much more active campaign to educate the public about what can and cannot be recycled and to provide more opportunities for electronics and hazmat recycling. The county needs to make these events more convenient as well.*
- *How we manage the trash /recycling issues in this county are critical to our future. No more time can be wasted. Long term management of the landfill is a big concern to many taxpayers and voters. We are paying attention and look to OC Boards for leadership. We all appreciate the Boards hard work and encourage them to step up to the issues of recycling an solid waste management. Thank you.*
- *Most people are of the opinion that recycling is a big scam and does not help. They do not see the benefit of taking the time to sort and recycle because of that*

Follow best practices of other communities

- *I live in Syracuse (Onondaga Co.). OCRRA is and consistently is at the top of the list for counties nationwide at recycling rates. They have excellent resources. I highly suggest you model your program after OCRRA.*
- *Could look into Ithaca's recycling /composting program and see if doable here.*
- *Contact Rockland County, NY to see how recycling is done adjacent to the fire training center in Pomona. What they collect and their hours of operation are outstanding. We were long time residents in Rockland County and frequented the facility all the time.*
- *Make recycling as easy and available as Monroe county does with their Ecopark.*

Limit waste from outside areas

- *Limit the amount of waste coming in from neighboring states and communities.*
- *Ontario County should limit the many sources of waste coming into the county and join with other existing landfills in adjoining counties to concentrate on local or at least regional sources. A transport limit of 100 or so miles would allow a large enough landfill to operate without stressing the environment locally.*

Many residents would like to see improvements with the landfill

What advice would you give the County as we plan for the future of recycling and waste management?...

Improve landfill operations

- *Get a handle on the smell emanating from the landfill! I feel terribly for people who live nearby. I don't even like driving by the landfill, due to the methane stink!*
- *The landfill is a health hazard and we need to address the health issues of clean air water and land. It's a big policy issue and that needs transformation.*
- *Mandate that all trash dumped into the Ontario County landfill come from communities where recycling is mandatory and penalties are filled and enforced for those not recycling their waste.*
- *Get the Supervisors out of their chamber, make them take a weekly tour of the area to the east of the landfill. Look at all the trash blowing around, make them sit and eat lunch outside while breathing the toxic fumes and the stench. Then the "city guys" might have a different opinion about what the landfill is really like. They have only thought about the \$\$ that is coming to the county, not the destruction to the environment, the roads, and the beauty of the Finger Lakes. Stench city on scenic 5 & 20.*
- *Diversify landfill operations to include large scale composting, a hazardous waste collection and storage facility, all operating same hours as landfill does now.....charge for the service----people will pay a reasonable amount....*

Provide information/education on recycling

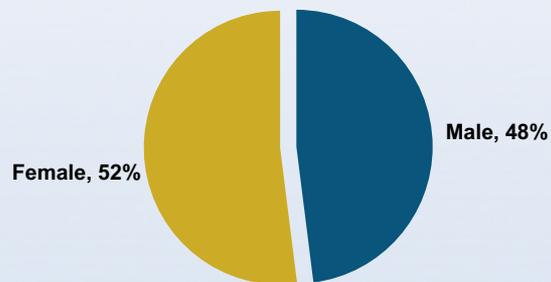
- *Provide education on what can and cannot be recycled. Do outreach at popular events. I saw a great YouTube video at a fair that had people try to guess what items went in the trash vs. recycled. Most people failed. More advertisement about collection days and mailings about what can and cannot be recycled would be appreciated. Collaborate with workplaces to encourage recycling.*
- *I would make it clearer and more well known as to where the recycling facilities are and what their hours of operation are as well as what the community can do if they either can't get to the facilities due to no transportation or not being able to afford the recycling costs at the facilities.*
- *Make it easily accessible and communicate using multiple media platforms.*

Appendix: Respondent Characteristics

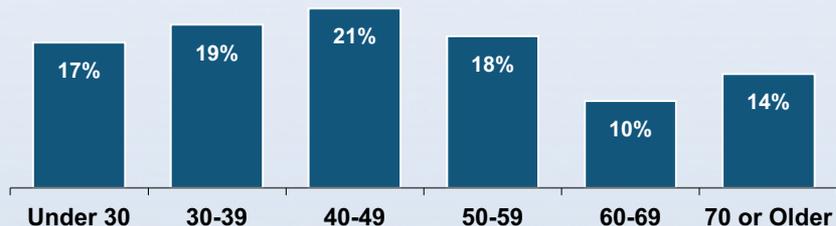


52% of survey respondents were female, and 47% were under 50 years of age

Are you... ?



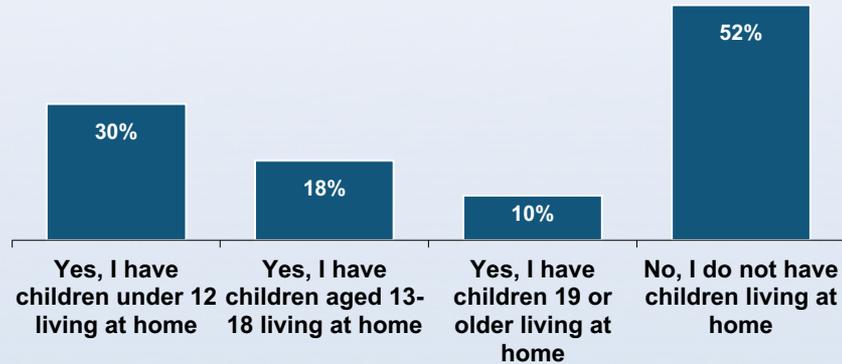
Which category includes your age?



Note: Study data were balanced to Census targets for this measure

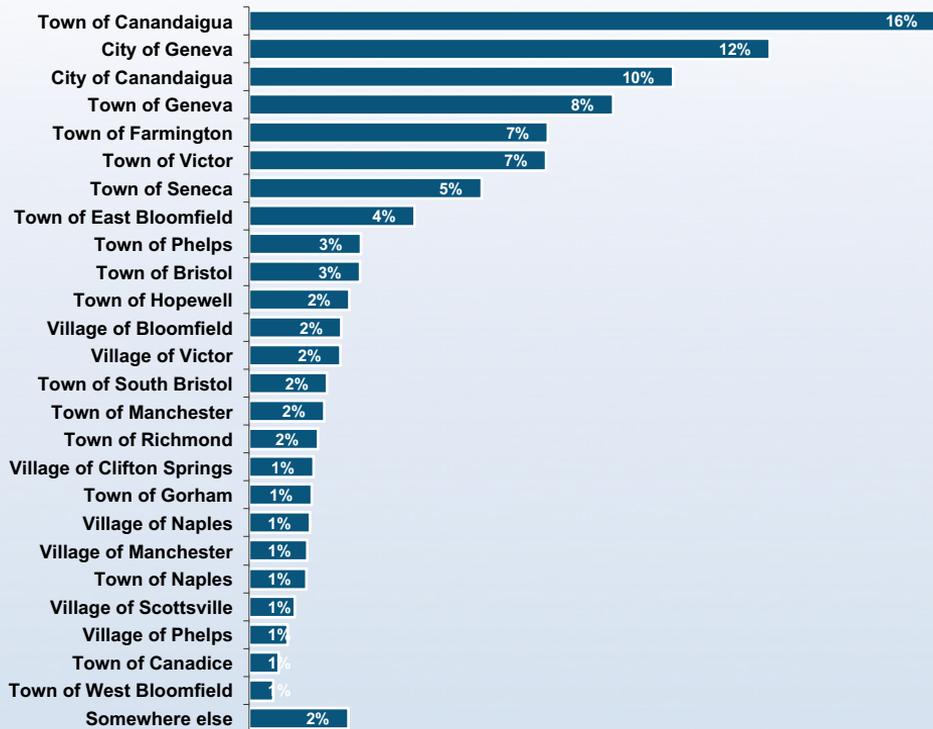
48% of respondents indicated they had children living at home

Do you currently have children living at home?



16% of respondents live in the town of Canandaigua; 10% in the city of Canandaigua

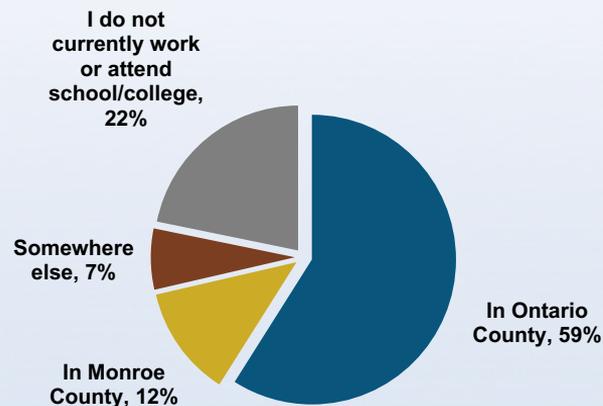
Which area Town(s) do you live in for at least part of the year?



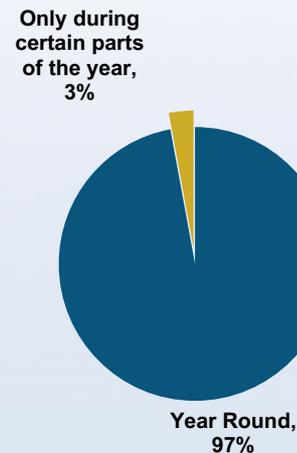
Note: Study data were balanced to Census targets for this measure

59% of respondents work in Ontario County and almost all live in Ontario County year-round

Where do you primarily work (or attend school/college, if you are a student)?



Do you live in Ontario County...?



Average number of years lived in Ontario County: 25 years