



# Solid Waste Management

Coffee/Tea Pod Usage and Disposal  
Behaviours

MARCH 2018

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# BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

# Background and Objectives

- This research was commissioned by the City of Toronto to collect feedback from Toronto residents about use, attitudes, and disposal behaviours about disposable coffee pods.
- Specifically, the main objectives of this research are to enable Solid Waste Management to better understand:
  - The incidence and frequency of coffee/tea pod use;
  - Disposal behaviour for used coffee/tea pods;
  - Likelihood to take extra steps to dispose of use coffee/tea pods in through recycling and organics;
  - Knowledge about coffee/tea pod disposal;
  - Sources of information about coffee/tea pod disposal; and,
  - Other sustainability habits and behaviours.

# METHODOLOGY

# Methodology

- Interviewing was conducted online via Ipsos' iSay online panel.
- In total, n=1,001 interviews were conducted with Toronto residents over the age of 18.
- Interviews were conducted between February 20<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- Interviewing quotas were administered and weighting was applied to the data to ensure that the results of the survey are representative of the City of Toronto population according to the 2016 Canadian Census.
- The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points.

# KEY FINDINGS

# Detailed Findings

- Nearly four in ten (37%) Torontonians own and use a coffee/tea pod machine. On average, residents who own and use such a coffee pod machine use 7 coffee pods per week.
- Three in ten (31%) coffee/tea pod machine owners say that they would be 'very likely' to take extra steps to ensure each component of the coffee/tea pod is disposed of properly. A small majority (51%) are currently throwing the entire used pod into the garbage.
- Residents are generally confused about how to properly dispose of coffee/tea pods. A similar proportion of three in ten residents who own and use such a coffee machine believe that coffee/tea pods must be disposed of in the garbage (31%), compared to the same proportion of residents who believe that the pods are actually recyclable (29%). While, 19% believe that coffee pods can go into the green bin / compost.
- Regarding other sustainability behaviours, the vast majority of residents (76%) use reusable shopping bags 'always' or 'most of the time'.
- Also, most dispose of their textiles in a way which allows for them to be repurposed, including: donation to charity, drop off at a donation center, reuse within one's home, give to someone else, or utilize a pick-up service. Only a minority say they throw their used textiles in the garbage.



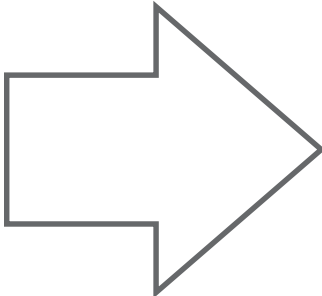
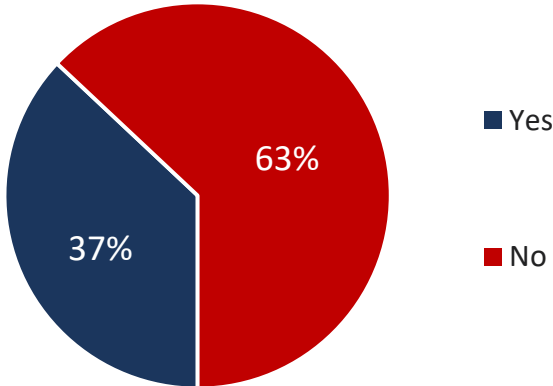
# DETAILED FINDINGS

# COFFEE/TEA POD USAGE AND DISPOSAL

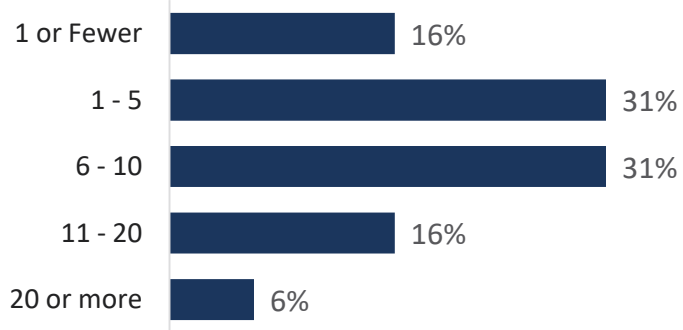
# Coffee/Tea Pod Machine Usage

- Nearly four in ten (37%) Torontonians say that their household owns and uses a coffee/tea pod machine. Torontonians under the age of 55 are more likely to live in a home with a coffee/tea pod machine. Half (50%) of those age 18 to 24 say they live in a home with a coffee/tea pod machine.
- On average, residents who own a coffee/tea pod machine use 7 pods per week.

Have a Coffee/Tea Pod Machine



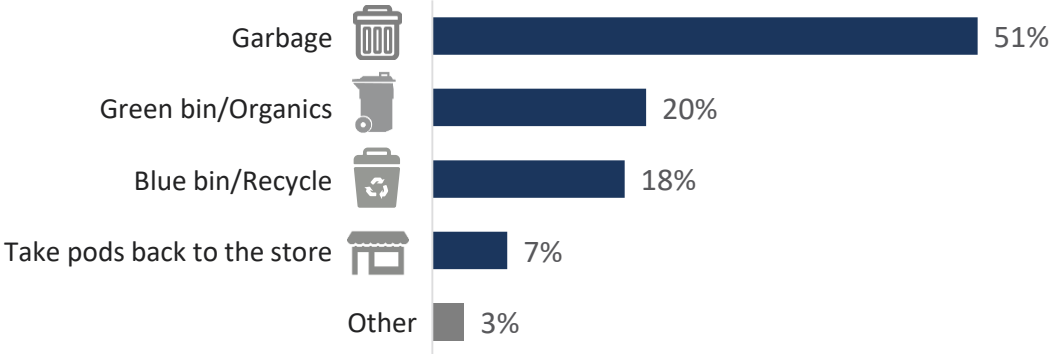
Number of Pods Used per Week



# Coffee/Tea Pod Perceived Disposal Requirements

- Among those who own a coffee/tea pod machine a minority (31%) indicate that they would be 'very likely' to be willing to disassemble their used pods and dispose of the components separately. Currently, most dispose of their used pods in the garbage (51%). Fewer dispose of their used pods in an organics bin (20%), recycling bin (18%), or by taking the pods back to the store (7%).
- Those residents that currently dispose of their coffee pods in the garbage are significantly less likely to take extra disposal steps compared to those that dispose of the pods in the organics or recycling bin (78%, compared to 37%).

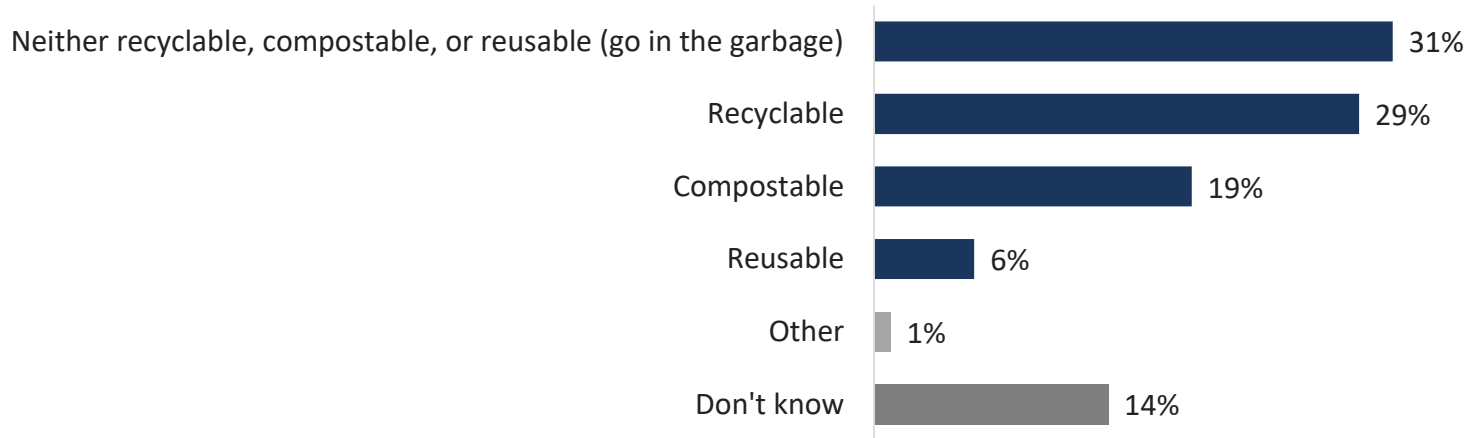
■ Very likely    ■ Somewhat likely    ■ Not very likely    ■ Not at all likely



Q32. How do you dispose of your used coffee/tea pods?  
 Q35. How likely are you to take extra steps to take apart a used coffee/tea pod to ensure that each component (i.e. coffee grounds/tea leaves, pod container and lid) is disposed of separately?  
 Base: Own Coffee/Tea Pod Machine (n=374)

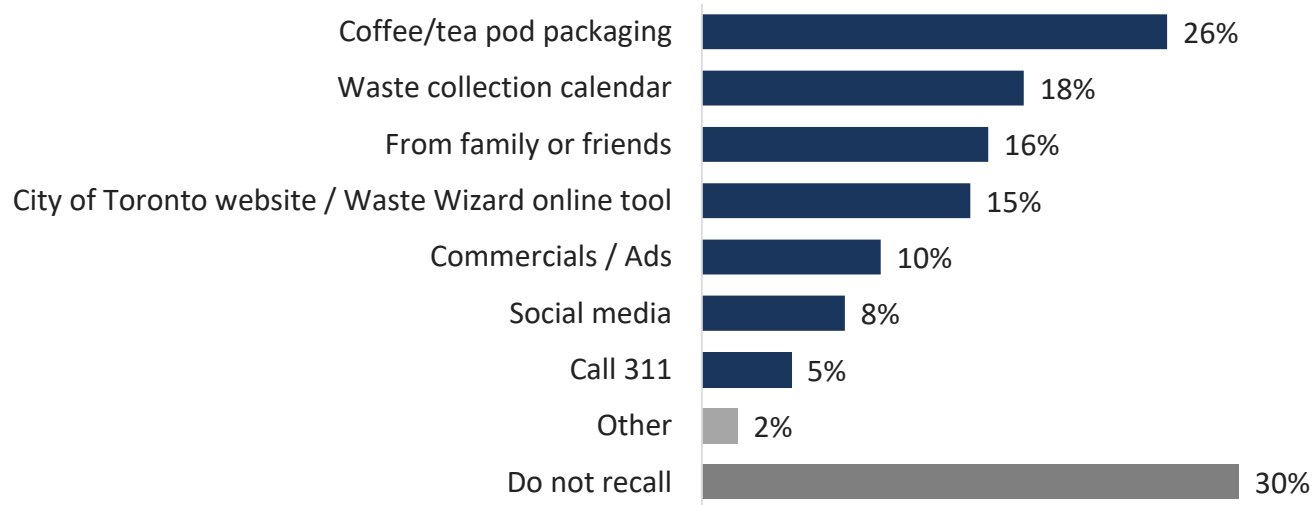
# Coffee/Tea Pod Disposal

- One third (31%) of those who own a coffee/tea pod machine say their used pods must be disposed of in the garbage. A similar proportion of residents believe that their pods are recyclable (29%), while 19% believe that they are compostable (19%), or reusable (6%). More than one in ten (14%) are not sure either way.
- Torontonians over the age of 55 are more likely to believe that their used pods must go in the garbage, while younger respondents are more likely to say that pods can be recycled. Also, women are significantly more likely than men to indicate that coffee pods are neither recyclable, compostable, reusable compared to men (37%, compared to 25%), while men are significantly more likely to indicate that coffee pods are recyclable compared to women (38%, compared to 20%).



# Source of Knowledge for Pod Disposal

- One in four (26%) say they learned about coffee/tea pod disposal from the package that the product came in. Others learned about disposal through their waste collection calendar (18%), through family or friends (16%), or by means of the City of Toronto website (15%).
- Those residents who are likely to take extra steps to dispose of coffee pods are most likely to learn about how to dispose of the pods by word of mouth (21%) or from the City of Toronto website (19%).

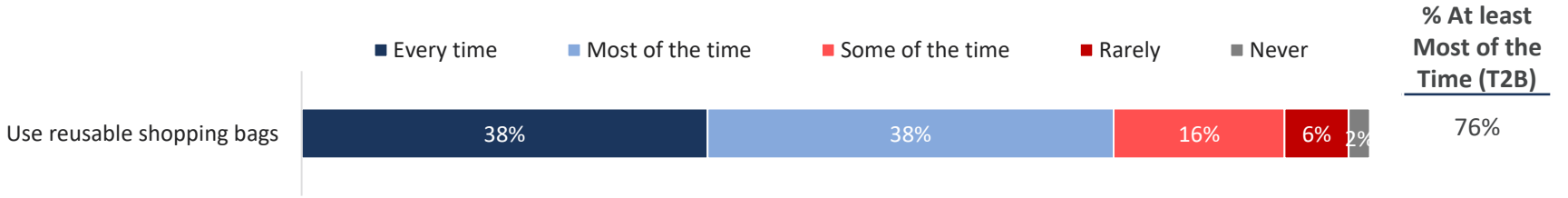


Q34. Where did you learn about how to dispose of used coffee/tea pods?  
Base: Own Coffee/Tea Pod Machine (n=374)

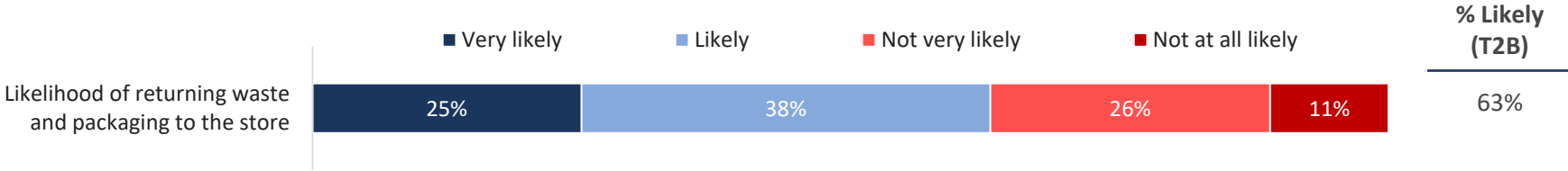
# CONSERVATION BEHAVIOUR

# Other Sustainable Habits

- Nearly two in three (63%) say they would be open to returning waste and packing to the store where they purchased an item if the store offered to help with disposal. When it comes to other sustainable habits, three in four (76%) Torontonians say they regularly use reusable shopping bags, with 38% saying they use them every time.
- Women, as well as Torontonians age 25 and older, are significantly more likely to regularly use reusable shopping bags.



**In 2013, 62% of residents used a disposable shopping bag most of the time or some of the time (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)**



Q36. How often do you use reusable shopping bags?

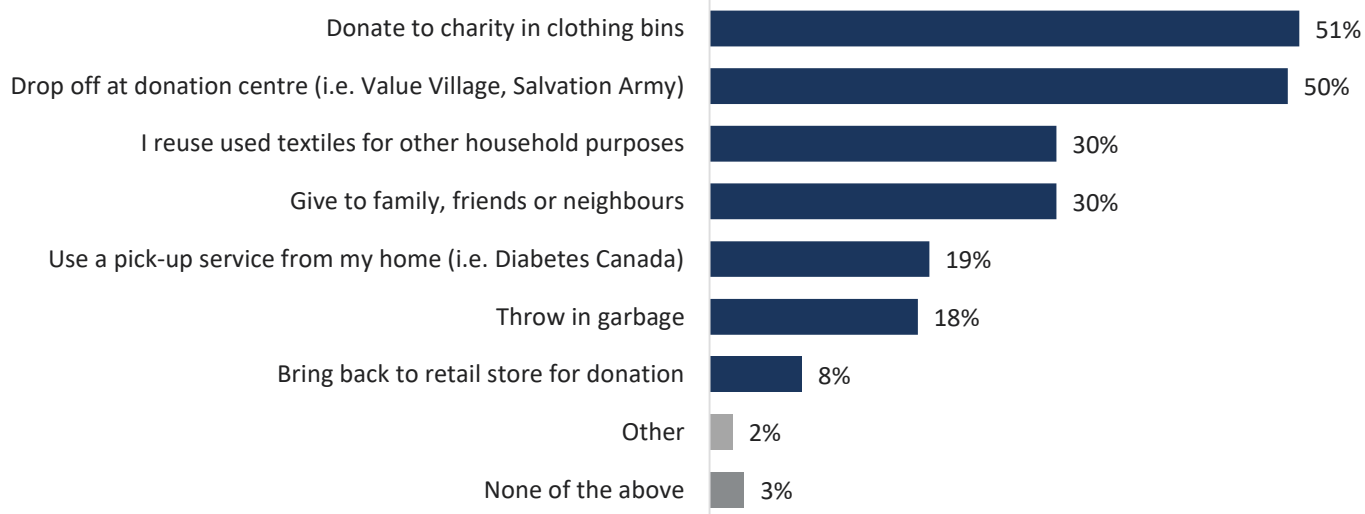
Q38. How likely would you be to return waste and packaging to the store where you purchased an item, if the store disposed or recycled the waste and packaging for you?

Base: All Respondents (n=1001)



# Disposal of Used Textiles

- Most Torontonians dispose of their used textiles, including clothes, shoes, towels, sheets, or other fabrics, in ways that allows for them to be repurposed. Most commonly, Torontonians donate these types of items to charities (51%), or donation centers (50%). Others find ways to repurpose their used textiles within their home (30%), or offer them to family, friends, or neighbours (30%). Just 18% say that they throw their used textiles in the garbage.
- Women are more likely to dispose of their used textiles in ways which allow for them to be repurposed, while men are more likely to throw them away.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

# Demographics

## Gender

Male	47%
Female	53%

## Age

18-34	32%
35-54	34%
55+	34%

## Rent or Own

Rent	35%
Own	65%

## Residence Type

Single family detached	37%
Single family semi-detached	9%
Townhome or rowhouse	8%
Apartment	24%
Condominium	22%
Other	1%

## Income

<\$40K	18%
\$40K-\$60K	18%
\$60K-<\$100K	26%
\$100K+	26%
Prefer not to answer	13%

## Region

Etobicoke & York	18%
North York	24%
Toronto & East York	35%
Scarborough	23%

## Years Living in Toronto

< 1 Year	4%
1 to just under 5 years	11%
5 to just under 10 years	10%
10 to just under 20 years	13%
20 years or more	63%

# Demographics

## Have Children

Yes	24%
No	76%

## Household Composition

1	27%
2	35%
3	19%
4	13%
5	4%
6	1%

## Language

English	90%
Chinese - Cantonese	5%
French	4%
Chinese - Mandarin	3%
Tagalog	3%
Spanish	2%
Chinese - other	1%
Portuguese	1%
Tamil	1%
Russian	1%
Hindo	1%
Greek	1%
Italian	1%
Urdu	1%
Other	3%

## Education

Primary or less	1%
Some high school	2%
Graduated high school	10%
Some college/CEGEP/Trade school	8%
Graduated college/CEGEP/Trade school	16%
Some university, did not finish	9%
University undergraduate degree	35%
University graduate degree	19%

## Born in Canada

Yes	67%
No	33%

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