



PHASE 2 POLLING FOR THE WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

SURVEY RESULTS
August 18, 2025

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH



IMAGE CREDIT: PATRICK TOMASSO ON UNSPLASH

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Toronto (the City) is updating the Long-term Waste Management Strategy (LTWMS) approved by City Council in 2016, for the next implementation period of 2026 to 2036. The Waste Strategy serves as a roadmap for developing and implementing environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable, and cost-effective waste management policies and programs.

The City manages approximately 830,000 tonnes of waste annually. Updating the Waste Strategy is necessary to accurately reflect Toronto's current and future waste management needs and to progress towards the aspirational goal of zero-waste. The City is also implementing the Residual Waste Management Workplan to study, develop and operationalize short-, medium-, and long-term options to manage Toronto's residual waste. The Waste Strategy Update will explore options for reducing, reusing, and diverting waste to minimize the amount of garbage requiring management over the next 30 to 50 years.

The Waste Strategy Update is being developed through a combination of comprehensive waste management research, active engagement with the community, and the application of strategic planning best practices.

The Waste Strategy Update will be developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Build the Foundation (present state)
- Phase Two – Evaluate Possibilities (future direction)
- Phase Three – Create a Roadmap (path forward)

This report documents the findings of the Waste Strategy Update Phase 2 public survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Torontonians are most interested in reducing food waste, and think imposing requirements on businesses would be the most effective way to reduce landfill waste. Nearly two-thirds think Toronto should manage residual waste (garbage) within its own borders.

Residents point to environmental impacts and public health as the most important considerations when making decisions on residual waste disposal; one in three think creating energy from garbage should be the most important consideration.

More than two in five are familiar with energy-from-waste (incineration), but more than seven in ten prefer this over landfilling when given the option. Just over half become more supportive after knowing about the current energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities in the GTA. Residents have indicated that energy-from-waste (incineration) would not decrease their use of the Blue Bin and Green Bin, with half saying that the use of energy-from-waste (incineration) would not make a difference in how they use their bins, and over four in ten would use their bins more knowing waste gets incinerated.

When probed about specific environmental, financial, and social impact considerations, pluralities of Torontonians say these are equally important in assessing waste management impacts. Among those who do pick one type of consideration, they are most likely to say environmental impact is the most important factor.

RESEARCH METHODS

Environics conducted a mixed-mode survey with 1,893 adult Toronto residents. The telephone phase of n=750 was conducted from June 11 to 29, 2025. The online survey of n=1,143 was conducted from June 3 to 27, 2025. Quotas were established for single- and multi-family dwellings, regions of the city, age and gender, and survey language (English, Punjabi, Chinese Simplified and Traditional**). The final data were weighted to ensure the sample is inclusive of the target audience, except for residence type, where single- and multi-family dwellings are kept at 50-50. The table below presents the unweighted sample sizes and proportions by region.

Region	*Population percent (%)	Unweighted counts (n)	Unweighted percent (%)
Scarborough	22%	444	23%
Etobicoke/York	21%	320	17%
North York	24%	523	28%
Old Toronto/East York	32%	606	32%
TOTAL	100%	1893	100%

*NOTE: Population data is based on the 2021 Census.

Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. All results are based on the entire sample unless otherwise noted. **Data labels for values less than 4% may not be shown on some charts.**

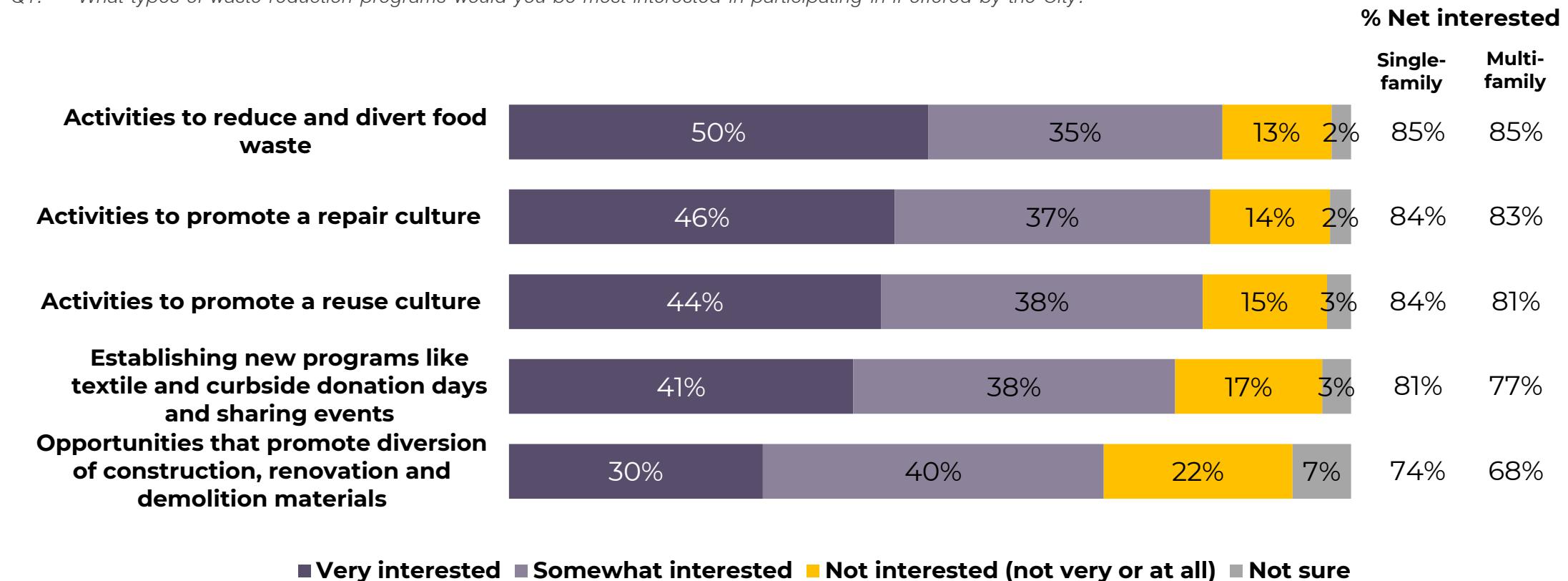
**The three languages were chosen as they are the top non-official languages spoken by City residents.

PROGRAM INTERESTS & PERCEPTIONS

INTERESTS | TYPES OF WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAMS

Over eight in ten residents are interested to some extent in reducing and diverting food waste; half are very interested. At least two in five are very interested in most types of repair and reuse programs being offered.

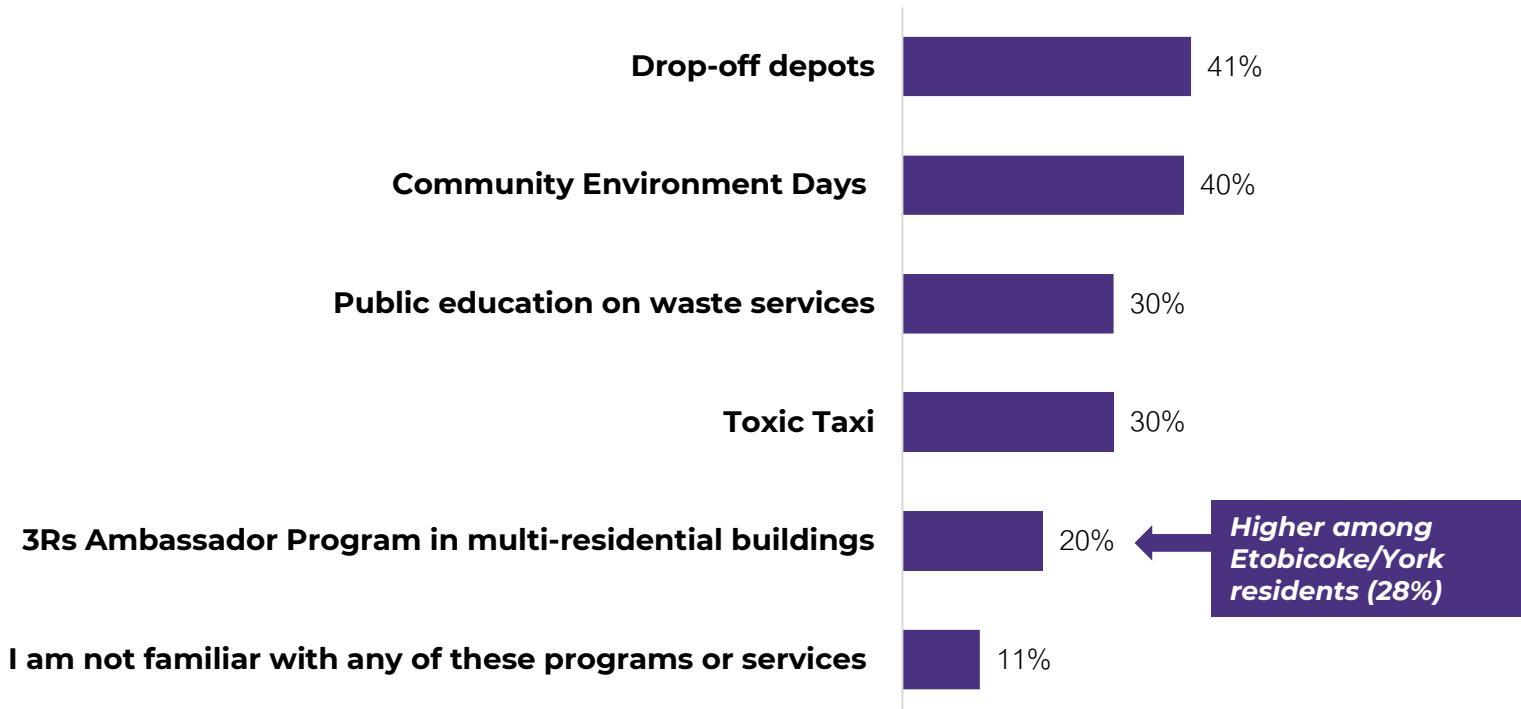
Q1. *What types of waste reduction programs would you be most interested in participating in if offered by the City?*



PERCEPTIONS | CURRENT PROGRAMS NEEDING REVIEW

Two in five say drop-off depots and community environment days need review and improvements, emphasizing service needs beyond regular waste collections.

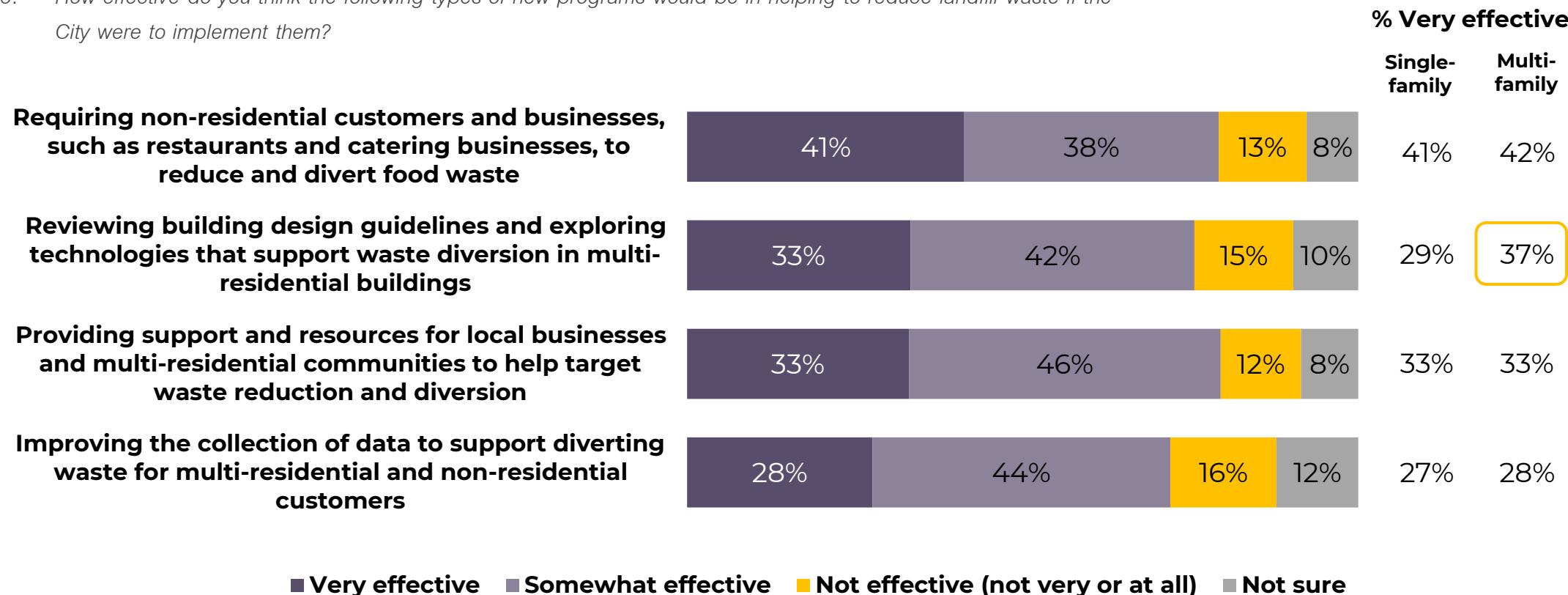
Q2. *Which of the following existing waste management services and programs should be further reviewed to identify potential improvements?*



PERCEPTIONS | EFFECTIVENESS OF POTENTIAL PROGRAMS

Respondents are most likely to indicate that requiring the non-residential sector to reduce food waste would be very effective in reducing waste, and least likely to say this about improving the collection of data.

Q3. *How effective do you think the following types of new programs would be in helping to reduce landfill waste if the City were to implement them?*

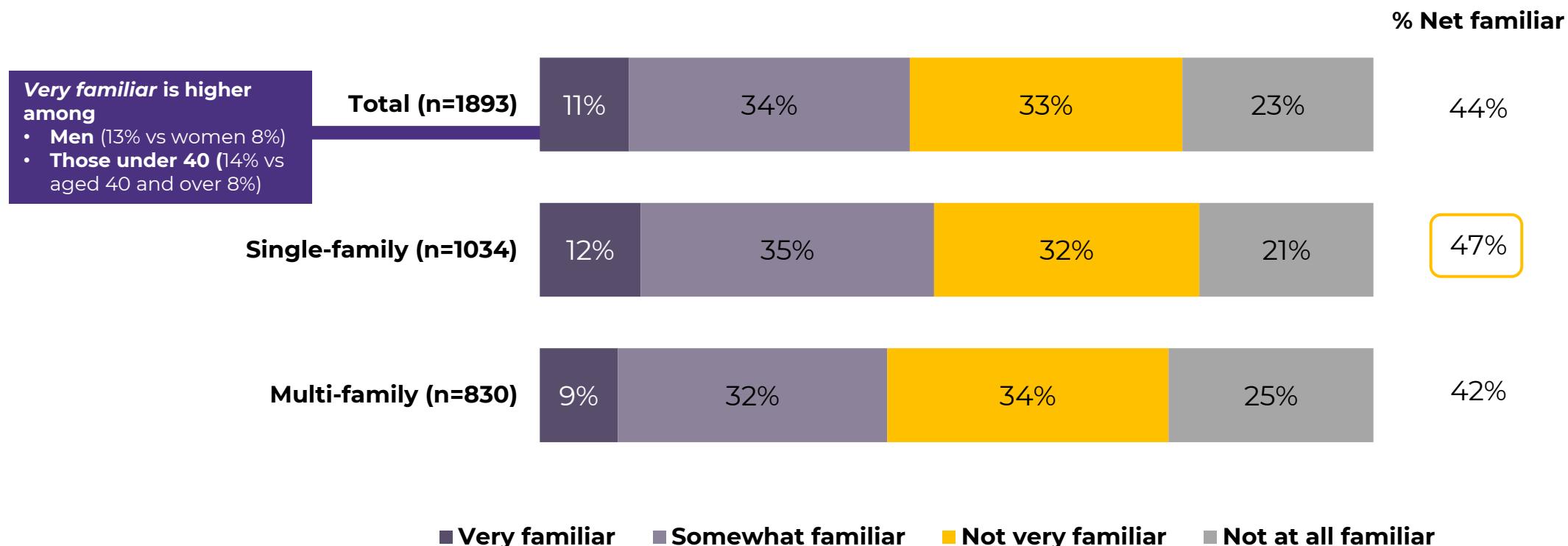


RESIDUAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

AWARENESS | FAMILIARITY WITH ENERGY-FROM-WASTE (INCINERATION)

Over two in five are familiar with energy-from-waste (incineration), with only one in ten saying very familiar. Familiarity is slightly higher among residents of single- than multi-family dwellings.

Q4. *How familiar are you with energy-from-waste (incineration) as a garbage management option?*

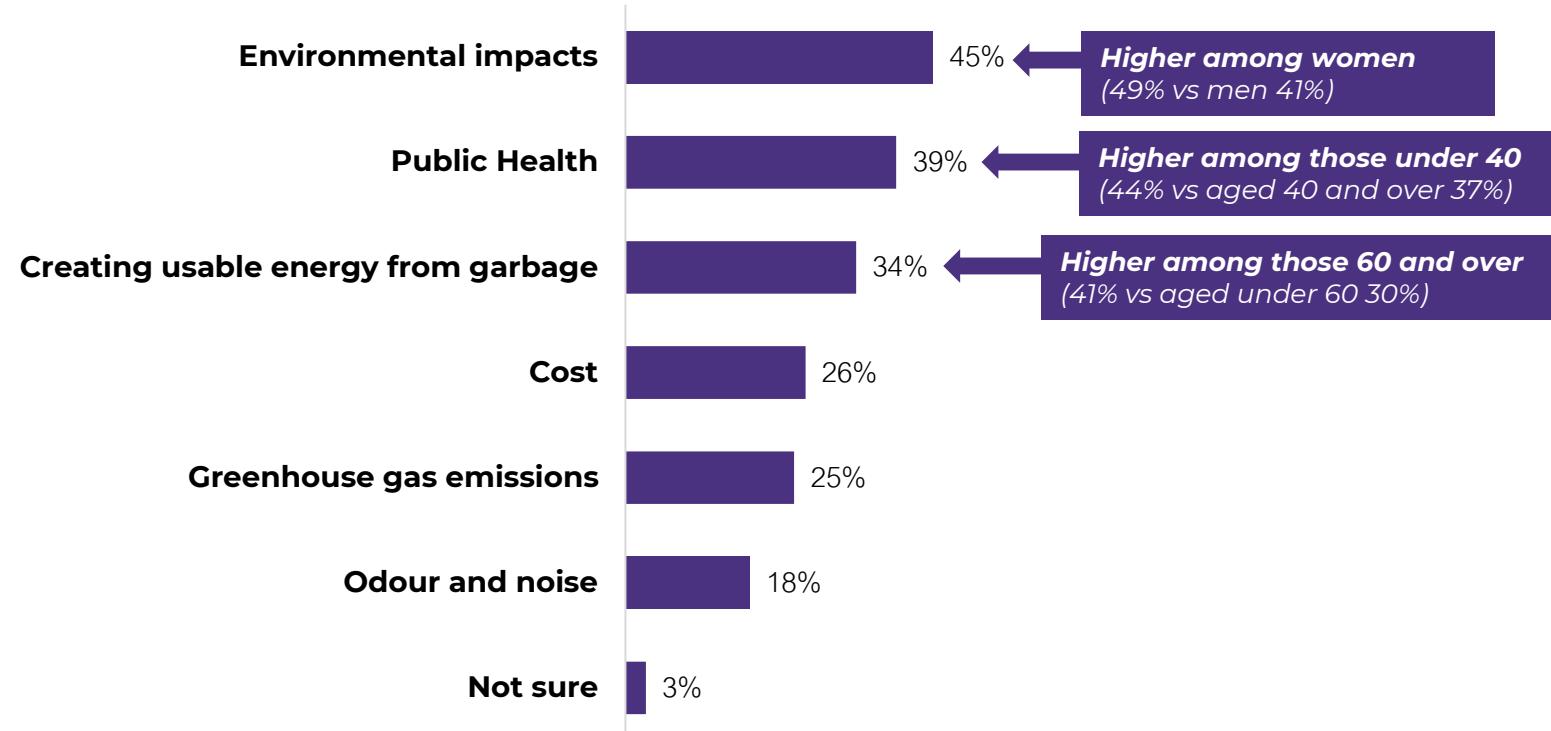


PRIORITIES | TOP WASTE DISPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS

Residents are most likely to identify environmental impacts and public health as top considerations in achieving waste goals. One in three identify creating usable energy from garbage as an important consideration.

Q5. *What do you believe the City should focus on to achieve its waste goals? There are many considerations when the City makes decisions about how to dispose of waste.*

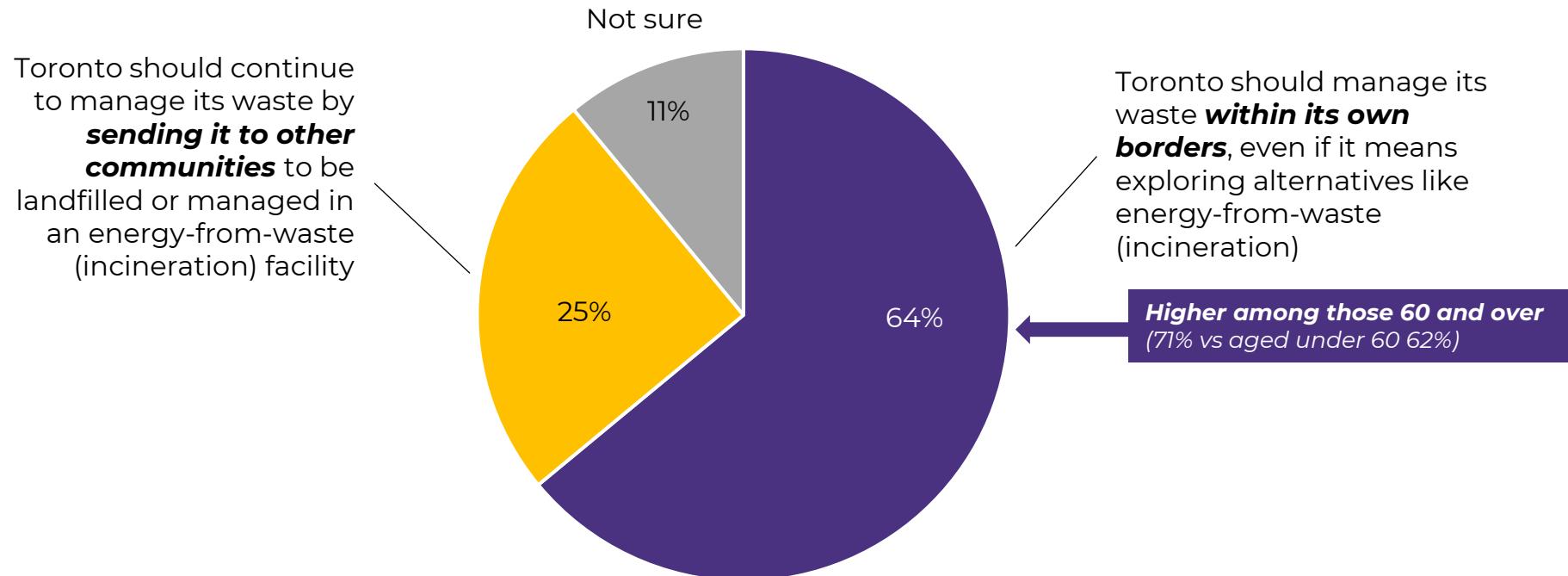
NOTE: Respondents could pick up to two options.



PREFERENCE | LOCATION FOR TORONTO WASTE

Two in three think Toronto should manage residual waste (garbage) within its borders, even if that means exploring alternatives like energy-from-waste (incineration).

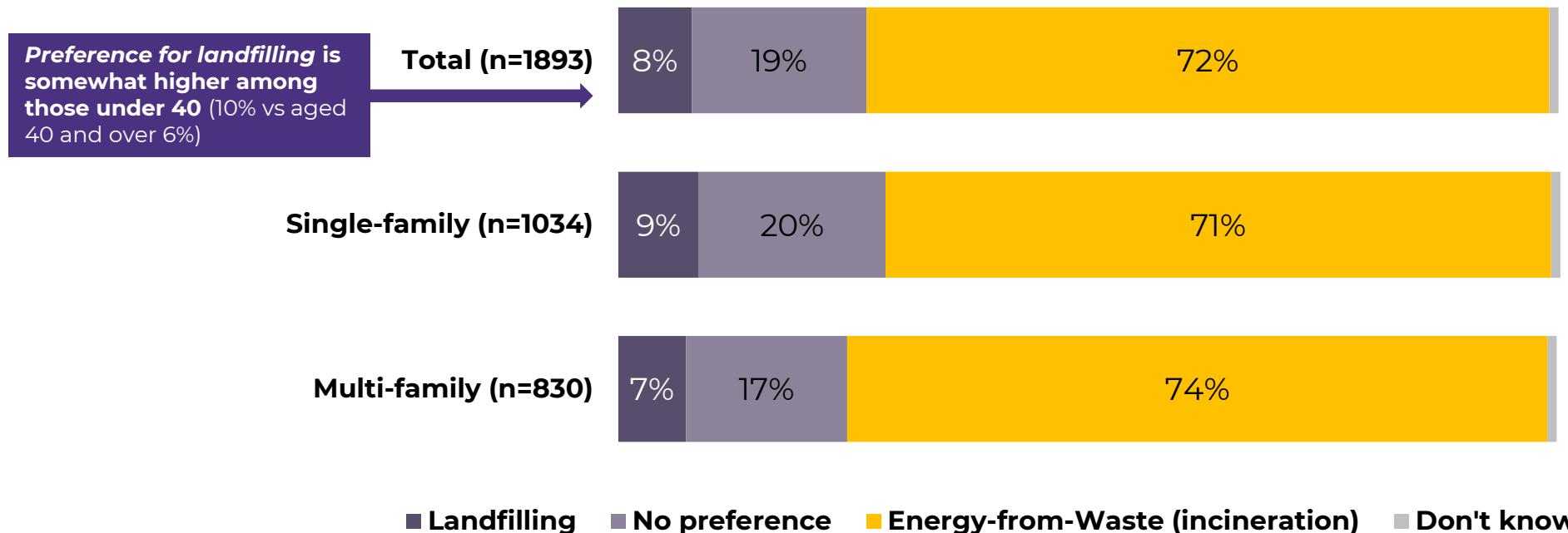
Q6. *Space limitations make it difficult to build a new landfill in Toronto. Energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities require less land and can be built in urban settings. Which option do you prefer for managing Toronto's garbage in the future?*



PREFERENCE | LANDFILLING VS. ENERGY-FROM-WASTE (INCINERATION)

Seven in ten prefer energy-from-waste (incineration) over landfilling. Less than one in ten prefer landfilling. Another one in five has no preference.

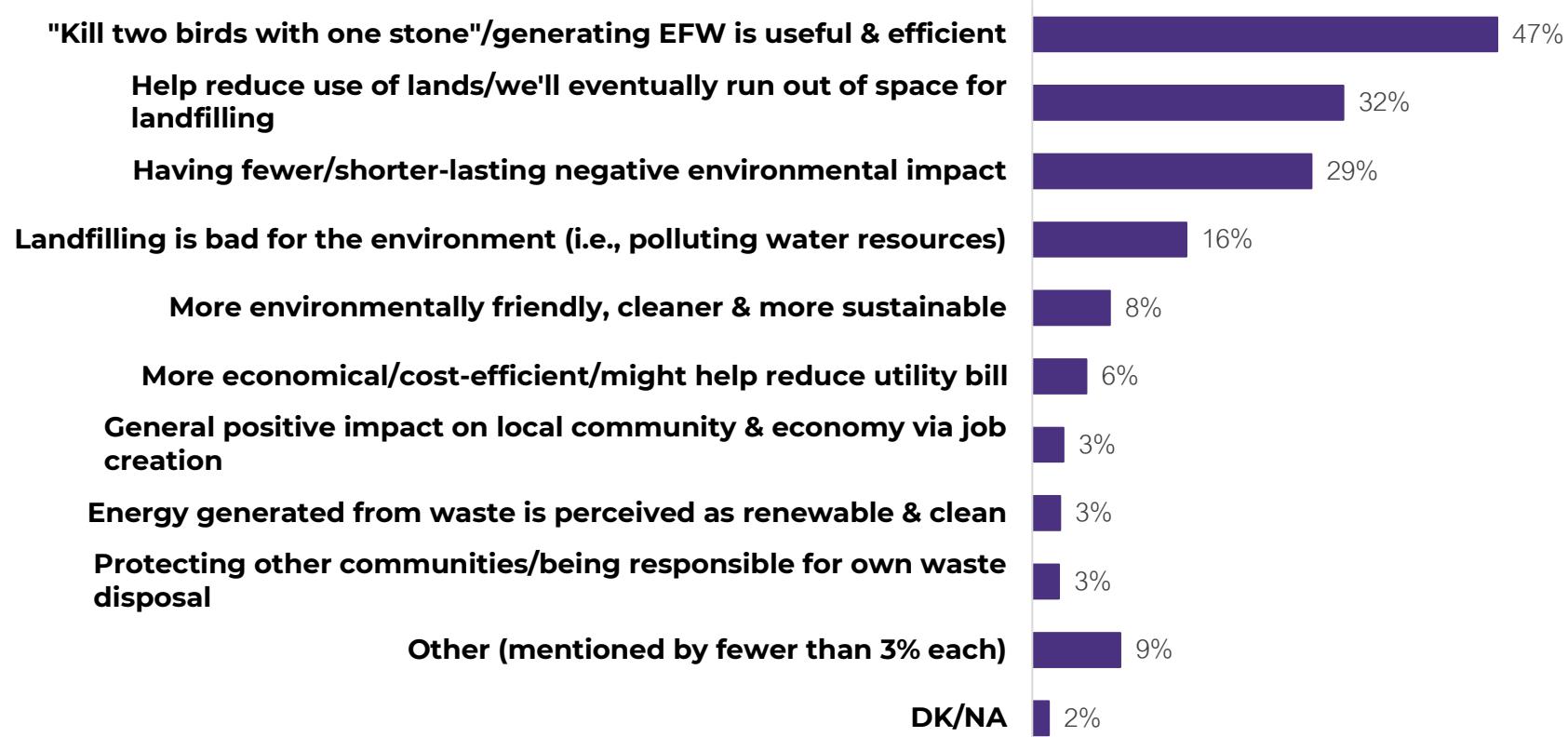
Q8. *If you had to choose between sending garbage to a landfill or to an energy-from-waste (incineration) facility, which would you prefer, or would you have no preference?*
(Note: half of respondents were shown EFW first, to address order bias)



OPINION | REASONS FOR PREFERRING ENERGY-FROM-WASTE (INCINERATION)

Reasons for preferring for energy-from-waste (incineration) over landfilling include creating energy, reducing the need for landfills, followed by environmental considerations.

Q9. *Why do you say energy-from-waste (incineration)? BASE: Those preferring incineration (n=1370)*



OPINION | REASONS FOR PREFERRING LANDFILLING

Concerns about the environmental impacts of burning residual waste (garbage) is a top reason for the minority who prefer landfilling over energy-from-waste (incineration). Landfilling is also thought to be easier, more convenient, and an established practice with some perceived benefits and is cheaper than the alternative, as processes are already in place.

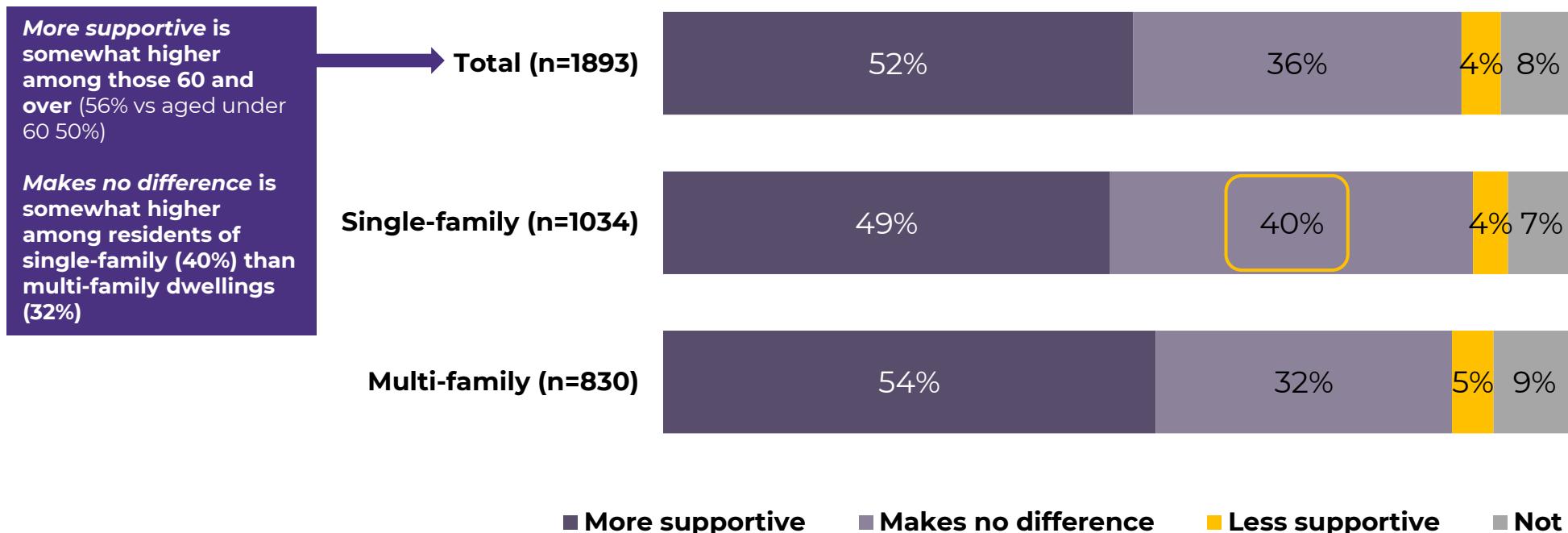
Q9. *Why do you say landfilling? BASE: Those preferring landfilling (n=167)*



OPINION | SUPPORT FOR ENERGY-FROM-WASTE (INCINERATION)

Just over half say they would be more supportive after being told about the current energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities in the GTA; one in three say this makes no difference.

Q7. *There are currently two energy-from-waste (incineration) facilities in the Greater Toronto Area, one in Brampton and one in Clarington, that burn garbage to create usable energy. Does knowing this make you more or less supportive of the City exploring energy-from-waste (incineration), or does it not make a difference?*



OPINION | IMPACT OF ENERGY-FROM-WASTE (INCINERATION) ON SORTING WASTE

Implementing energy-from-waste (incineration) would either increase or have no impact on waste sorting; only a very small proportion (3%) say they would use their Blue and Green bins less.

Q10. *If garbage was sent to an energy-from-waste (incineration) facility, would you be more or less likely to use the Blue Bin for recycling and the Green Bin for organics, or would it make no difference?*

More likely is higher among

- **Those under 40** (54% vs aged 40 and over 38%)
- **Those born outside of Canada** (50% vs born in Canada 38%)

Makes no difference is higher among

- **Those 40 and over** (37% vs aged under 40 35%)
- **Residents of single-family** (52% vs multi-family 45%)

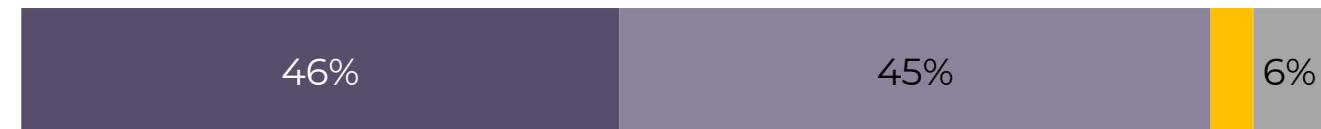
→ **Total (n=1893)**



Single-family (n=1034)



Multi-family (n=830)



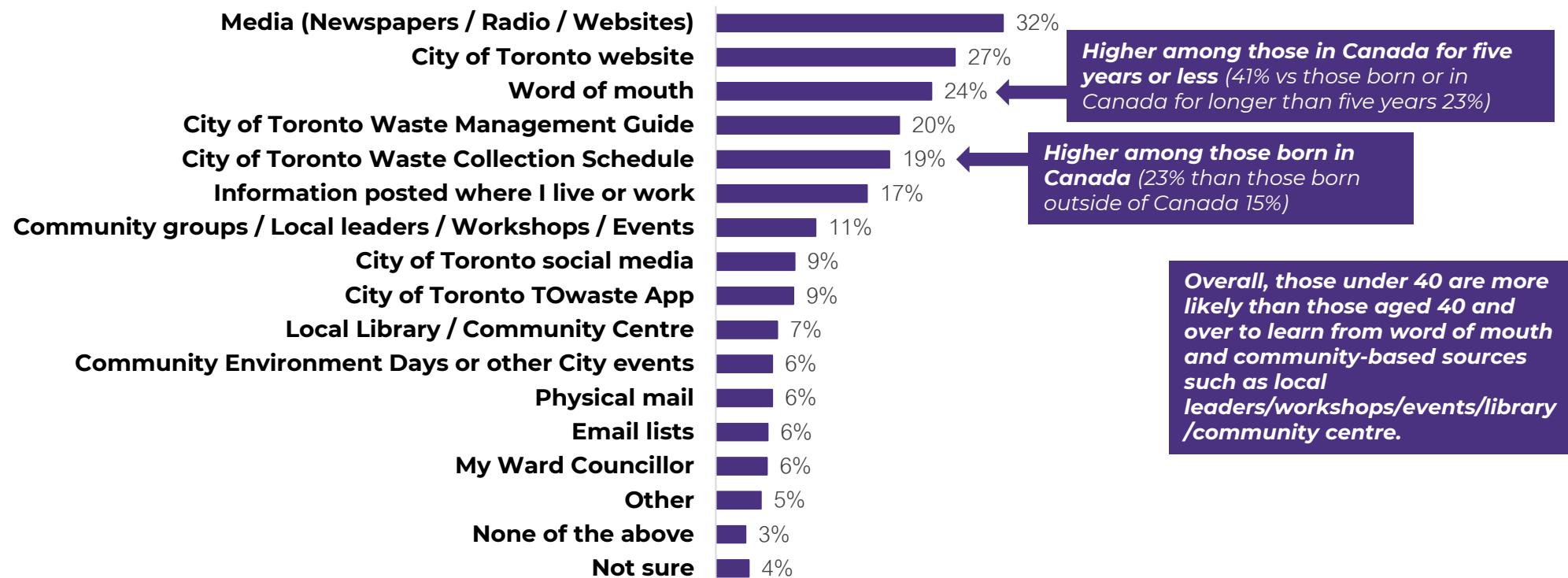
■ **More likely to use bins** ■ **Makes no difference** ■ **Less likely to use bins** ■ **Not sure**

EDUCATION AND EVALUATION

EDUCATION | WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS INFORMATION SOURCES

Torontonians learn from a wide range of sources about waste management programs, with media being the most common, followed by the City of Toronto website and word of mouth.

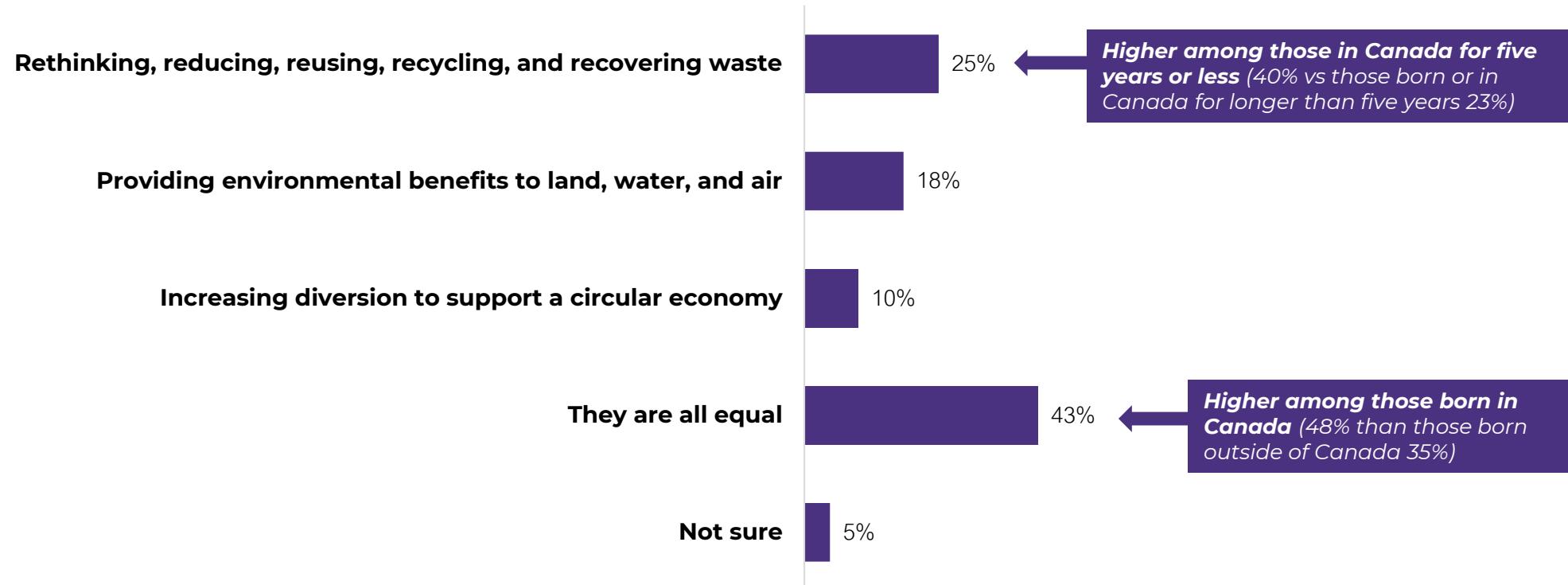
Q11. *How do you currently learn about waste management programs, such as Blue Bin (recycling), Green Bin organics (compost), and Yard Waste in Toronto?*



EVALUATION | ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

Over two in five think the environmental impact considerations being asked are all equal. One quarter say the 5Rs model is the most important.

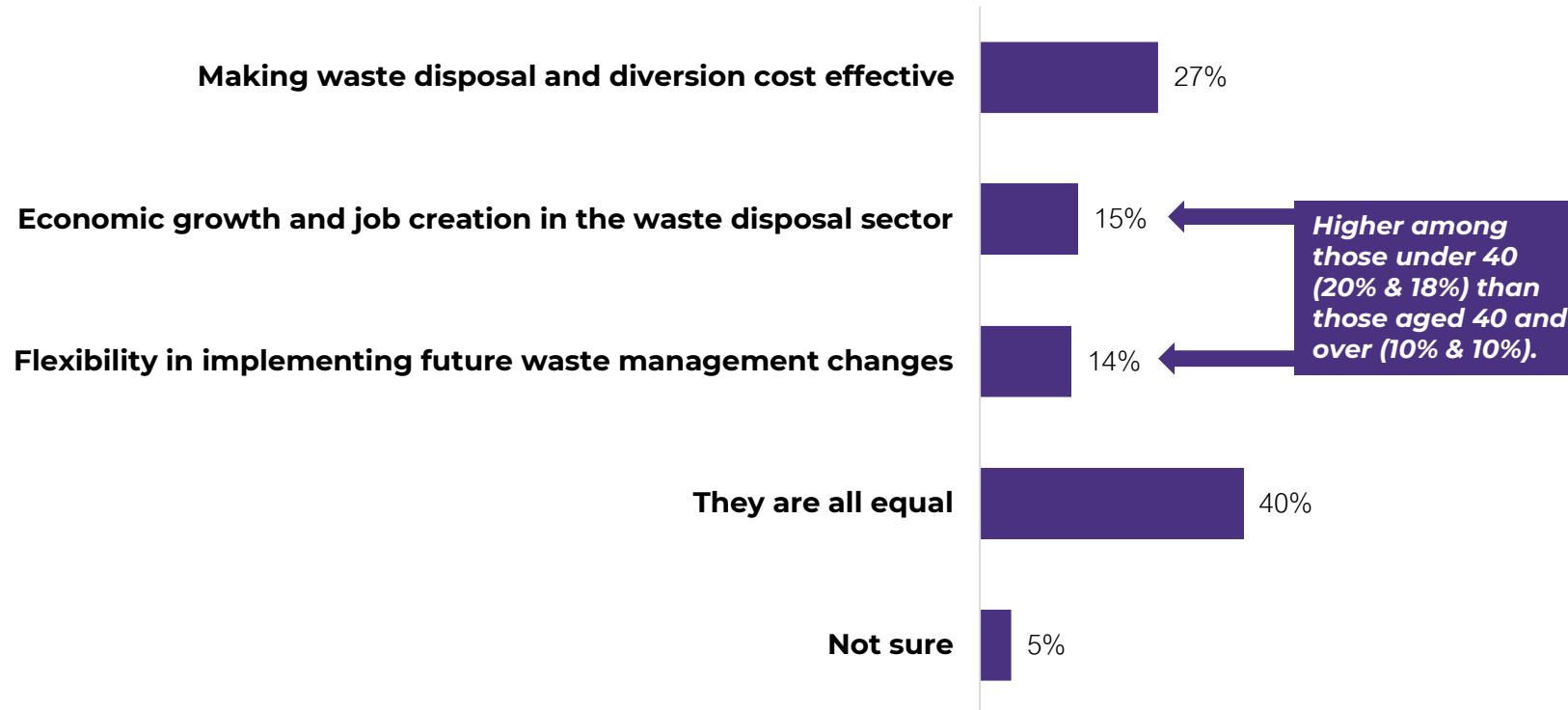
Q12. Which of the following environmental impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? BASE: Online respondents (n=1143)



EVALUATION | FINANCIAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

Two in five think the financial impact considerations being asked are all equal. One quarter say making waste disposal and diversion cost-effective is the most important.

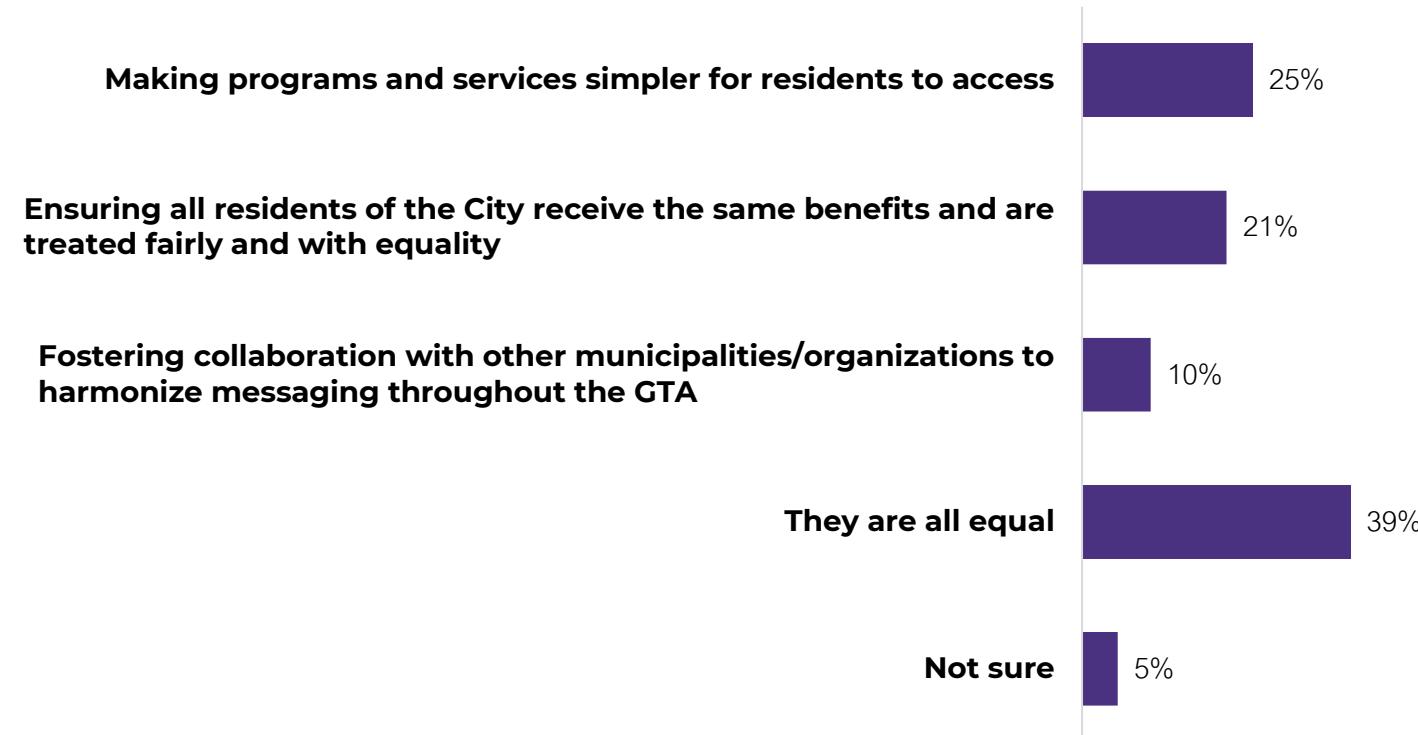
Q14. *Which of the following financial impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? BASE: Online respondents (n=1143)*



EVALUATION | SOCIAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

Two in five think the social impact considerations being asked are all equal. One quarter say making programs and services simpler for residents to access is the most important.

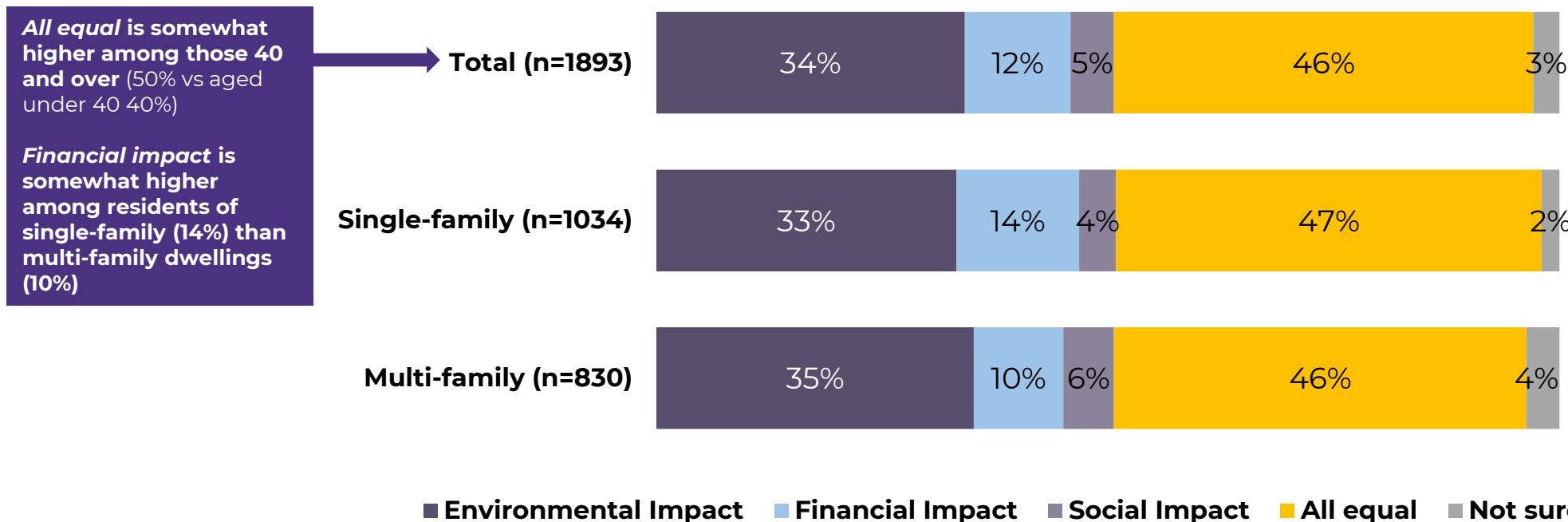
Q13. *Which of the following social impact considerations is the most important, or are they all equal? BASE: Online respondents (n=1143)*



EVALUATION | MOST IMPORTANT IMPACT

Many consider the three types of criteria to be “all equal” in assessing waste management impacts; one in three say environmental impact is the most important, higher than financial and social impacts.

Q15. *Of the three types of criteria, which is the most important, or are they all equal?*



Feedback | IMPROVING WASTE MANAGEMENT IN TORONTO

Feedback largely coincided with Torontonians' support for finding alternative ways to landfill, such as energy-from-waste (incineration) and diversion, and preference for managing waste within its borders. Torontonians are also in favour of reducing/reusing, suggesting multiple ways to educate and motivate residents and businesses, from financial incentives to adopting a community-centred approach.

Q16. Do you have any other feedback to share on how the City can manage its waste?

I would like the **community centers** to offer during either back-to-school or in the winter, **information centers and different ways** to deal with garbage. **More information and pamphlets** to bring it into the public eye, and **more forward management**.

Reusing waste for fertilizer or something useful (e.g, bricks) may be good as well. I **like the idea of incineration** too.

The issue is that there has been Media coverage about **recycling and items ending up in the landfill**. It is a pretty high number. It would **discourage people from recycling** as they would feel that it is going to the same place.

Pay for recycling. There's a recycling program called Terra Cycle, and they basically have **recycling programs where you get paid**.

I would like any **new developments**, particularly high-rise buildings, to **have very aggressive waste reduction programs**. Actual information on the **effectiveness of programs** should be **publicly disclosed**, i.e., how effective the recycling program is.

The **community day events** don't seem to be in the downtown core, making it **difficult to participate**. Make **paint facilities more easily accessible**.

None other than being a big fan of **community environment days**, and the **Waste Wizard app**.

[I] **would not recommend using landfills and burying things**, [but] carefully watching it so it does not go into water. The government should come up with **a different initiative and should not carry it to another city or province**.

I think the **City has been doing all it can to educate** people on how to manage waste. It's just that **people are not disciplined enough to follow directives**.

We offer **free waste audits for local businesses**. This helps to reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill.

Partner with local farms. Use yard waste to make **compost for community gardens**.

I'm glad that you shared the Energy from Waste, but the City can make more effort to **explain the options**, and the **pros and cons of the different options**.

Make it **more costly** for households that have **very big garbage and businesses**. **Explain to people** why it's going to cost more. You can't keep generating garbage and compost and expect it to magically disappear.

I think we need whatever space we have on housing, so unless we can recycle waste to build more buildings, we should be using our space to focus on that. If possible, **finding a use for garbage to build new housing**, and **recycling it for building materials**.

Provide **discounted** waste disposal tags for **small volumes**. **Encourage** residents to **produce less waste**.

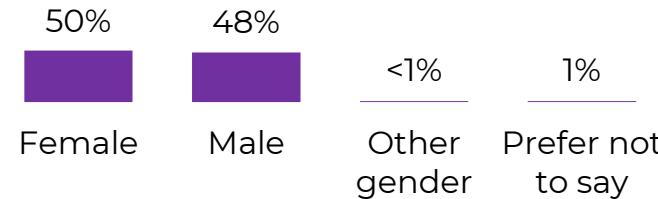
It should be **simple and communicated simply** for everyone to understand. It should probably be local to **avoid the movement of large quantities of waste** far from where it was produced, although **health and environmental considerations** should [count].

DEMOGRAPHICS

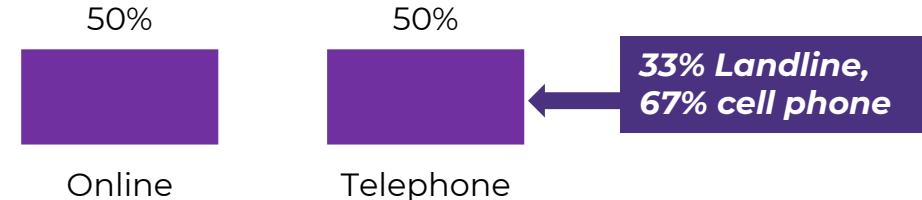
DEMOGRAPHICS – General population



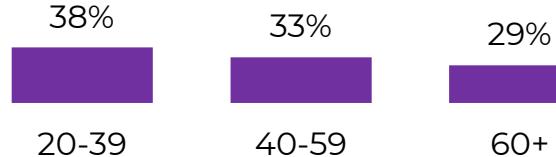
Gender



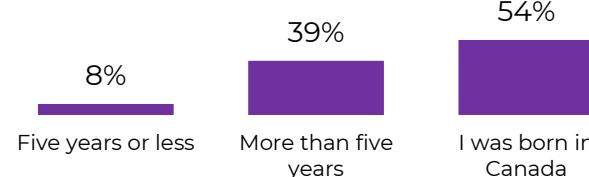
Mode



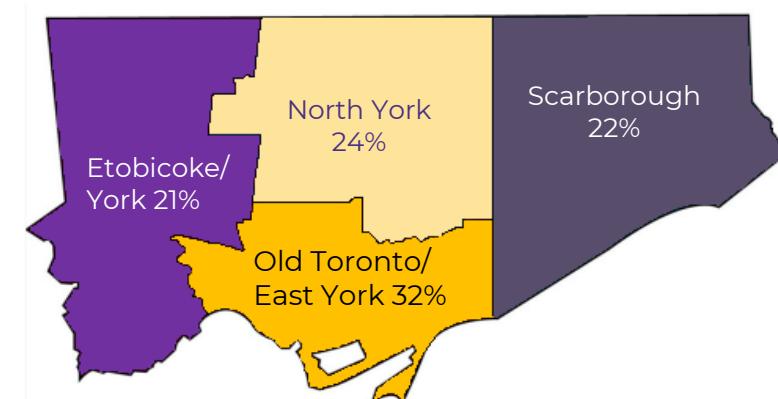
Age



Years in Canada



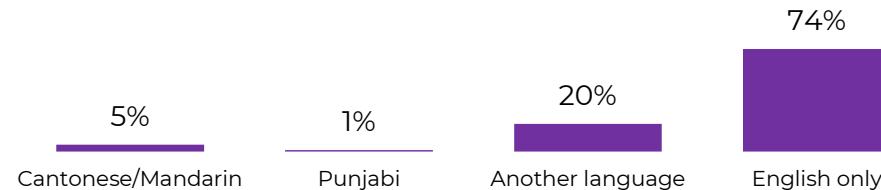
Community



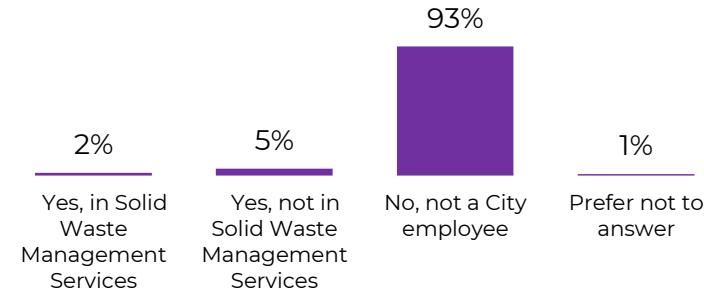
DEMOGRAPHICS – General population



Language Read/Write



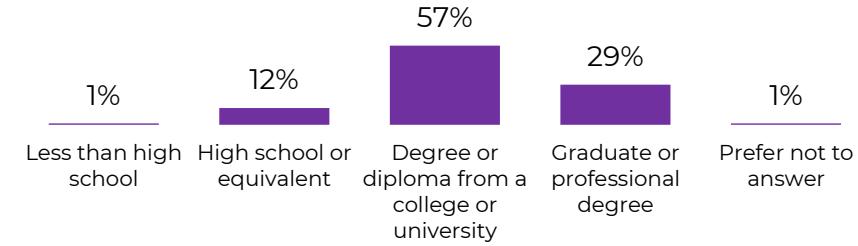
Work for City



Affiliation

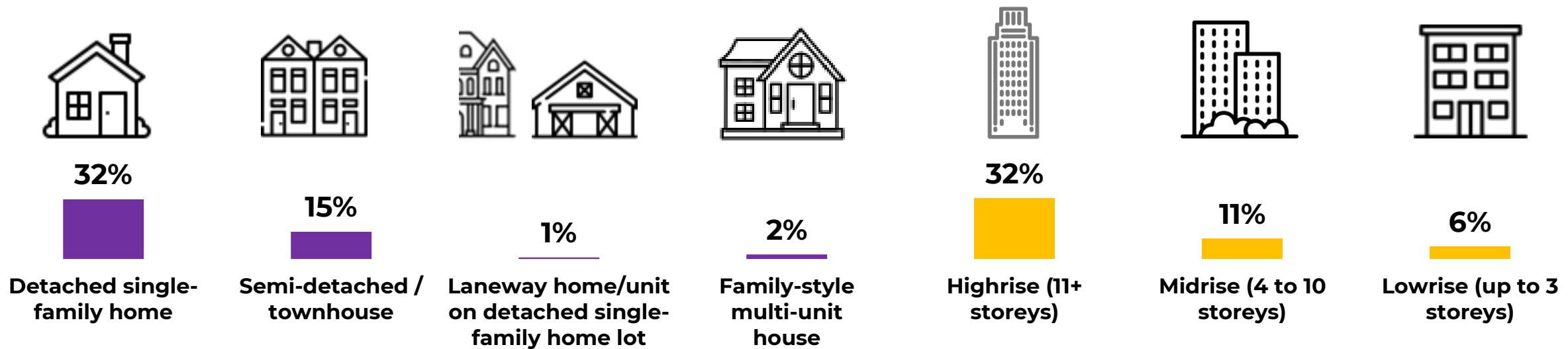


Education



DEMOGRAPHICS – General Population

Residence type



FOR MORE INFORMATION



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