



# **Community Engagement Summary – Phase 2**

## **Phase Two**

Regional Municipality of Niagara

4 April 2025

<b>Project name</b>		Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan					
<b>Document title</b>		Community Engagement Summary – Phase 2   Phase Two					
<b>Project number</b>		12628447					
<b>File name</b>		12628447 Niagara Region Community Engagement Summary Report - Phase Two					
Status code	Revision	Author	Reviewer		Approved for issue		
			Name	Signature	Name	Signature	Date
S3	00	Katrina McCullough	Vince Cooney	On file			
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# Executive Summary

Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan) will provide a framework and direction for waste management over the next 25 years and beyond. The Plan is being developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Assessment of system – where we are now
- Phase Two – Development of direction and system options – where we want to go
- Phase Three – Selection of the preferred system – how we're getting there

Public engagement in Phase Two gathered feedback from a diverse range of interested parties, including residents, public sector organizations, community service groups, social enterprises, Indigenous organizations, Region staff and Council, Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) staff, and business and advocacy groups. Feedback was gathered through two online open houses, attended by 26 participants, and an online survey, which received over 1,100 responses. This feedback was crucial in refining the mission, vision, goals, and guiding principles for the Plan, as well as shaping proposed programs, services and initiatives.

Key findings:

- The proposed vision for the Plan aligns with the community's direction for waste management, though a small number of participants had concerns about its clarity and length.
- When asked to rank the importance of waste management goals, increasing waste diversion, increasing reuse, and system optimization were prioritized.
- Programs targeting food waste reduction, minimizing single-use plastics, and promoting reuse received strong support. Suggestions included innovative community-focused programs, partnerships with community services and local businesses, as well as educational workshops and volunteer opportunities.
- Ease of participation was identified as the most influential factor influencing engagement with waste management programs, followed by accessibility, affordability, and waste reduction effectiveness.
- The most helpful strategies for providing information and promoting sustainable waste management were a progress dashboard on Niagara Region's website, partnerships with local organizations, and prioritizing digital communication.
- There was general support for topic-specific education, particularly on how to use the waste management system (i.e. proper waste sorting and where to donate items) and education on how the Niagara Region waste management system works.

- Challenges identified included simplifying waste diversion processes, increasing waste reduction and enhancing diversion. There was a strong emphasis on increasing the responsibility of producers to reduce waste, while issues like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, illegal dumping, sustainable funding, and compliance were seen as less critical.
- Expanding reuse centres, offering more services, adding new locations, and reviewing service levels were identified as key improvements needed for waste and recycling drop-off depots. Additional suggestions included increasing accessibility, reducing wait times, and setting up reuse centres at landfills.

The proposed programs, services, and initiatives received overall positive sentiment, with strong agreement that they will position Niagara Region as a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management. In Phase Three, these programs, services and initiatives will undergo further analysis and a draft Plan will be developed. The community will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Plan before it is presented to Regional Council for approval.

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# **1. Introduction**

This report summarizes the community engagement activities conducted during Phase Two of the development of the Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan). It provides an overview of the project (Section 2), describes who was engaged and how (Section 3), summarizes the feedback received from the public (Section 4), and describes how the feedback will inform the development of the Plan (Section 5).

## **2. Project overview**

Niagara Region (the Region) is developing the Plan to guide waste management practices for the next 25 years and beyond. The Region delivers a variety of waste management services and programs to Niagara's 12 Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) to meet community needs while also promoting waste diversion, reduction and reuse.

The Plan aims to align with Regional Council's goal of net-zero corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, and with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario.

The Plan is being developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Assessment of system – where we are now
- Phase Two – Development of direction and system options – where we want to go
- Phase Three – Selection of the preferred system – how we're getting there

This report documents the public engagement activities undertaken during Phase Two.

## **3. Community engagement overview**

Community engagement is integral to building trust and enabling informed, sustainable decisions. While not mandatory for developing the Plan, it ensures the Plan reflects the needs, aspirations and values of those who live, work and study in Niagara. It also includes diverse perspectives, and ensures the Region understands how interested parties view waste management practices and potential waste reduction, diversion and disposal options.

### **3.1 Who we engaged**

Engagement during Phase Two built on efforts from Phase One and included the following key audiences:

- Community members (residents)
- Local Urban Indigenous organizations
- Region staff and Council
- LAM staff
- Local and provincial agricultural committees
- Business alliances, associations and organizations, such as Business Improvement Area (BIA) groups and Downtown Associations
- Charities, not-for-profit groups and local environmental advocacy groups
- Public sector organizations such as school boards, colleges and universities
- Community service groups and clubs
- Social enterprises

### **3.2 What we asked**

During Phase One, interested parties were asked to provide input to help lay the groundwork for the strategic direction of the Plan and inform the Plan's mission, vision, guiding principles and goal. Engagement during Phase Two built on this by asking for feedback to inform the development of programs, services and initiatives. Specifically, input was sought on:

- The proposed mission, vision, guiding principles and goals; and
- Existing and potential new waste management programs, services and initiatives.

This feedback will be used to finalize the mission, vision, guiding principles and goals, and to assess the proposed programs, services and initiatives for the Plan.

### **3.3 How we informed the community**

The Region used a range of communication tactics to inform interested parties about Phase Two and invite participation. These included letters to interested parties, a social media campaign, public notices and advertisements.

A description of the various methods used to reach our interested parties is included in Table 3.1. Examples of these communications are included in the appendices.

In addition to the communication tactics implemented directly by the Region, several LAMs, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and media outlets also promoted the online open houses. Links to these webpages are included in Table 3.2.



**Table 3.1 Communication tactics**

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Deployment Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Public Open House invitation letter circulated to the list of interested parties	July 15, 2024	Email sent to 284 recipients
Newsletter content for LAMs	N/A	Content shared with Public Work Officials and communications specialists at the LAMs
Green Scene (Public Works Newsletter) article	September 9, 2024	Newsletter sent to 1,533 recipients
<u>Niagara Region website</u> ( <a href="https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/">https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/</a> )	N/A	2,831 webpage views as of September 2024
Newspaper ads	August 26, 2024	Digital ads posted through Metroland resulting in 67,344 impressions across seven (7) municipalities: Welland, St. Catharines, Port Colborne, Fenwick (Pelham), Thorold, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie  Print ads in five newspapers: Welland Tribune, St. Catharines Standard, Niagara Falls Review, Niagara News Now, and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Report
Paid and organic social media Facebook X (formerly Twitter) Instagram Nextdoor	September 1 - 30, 2024	13 organic social media posts across all platforms  Average reach of 3,283 per post
Waste App campaign	September 1 - 27, 2024	Campaign received by all users signed up to receive notifications  73,859 reminders set for 46,316 addresses

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Deployment Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Public notice/media release	August 19, 2024	Posted on September 4: <b><a href="https://createsend.com/t/t-046434CF477E64AC2540EF23F30FEDED">https://createsend.com/t/t-046434CF477E64AC2540EF23F30FEDED</a></b> . No analytics available
Posters and postcards	August 26, 2024	About 500 postcards picked up About 50 posters hung up in municipal buildings
Digital screen slide	September 1 - 30, 2024	Niagara Region Headquarters
Radio ads	September 3 – 30, 2024	Ads played across seven stations
Community booths at customer service areas, libraries, and other public facilities	September 3 – 25, 2024	Booths in six (6) municipalities: Also promoted the survey and open houses during: – Thorold Market – Niagara College Carnival – Brock University Orientation – Mayor Jim Diodati's Community Charity BBQ
The Plan's contact mailing list	September 5, 2024	Email sent to 183 recipients

**Table 3.2 Additional coverage**

<b>Organization and/or Local Media Outlet</b>	<b>Website Link</b>
NewsTalk 610 CKTB	Interview with Dave Yousif, Manager, Waste Policy & Planning. No link available
<u><a href="https://niagaraatlarge.com/2024/09/05/niagara-region-seeking-public-input-for-next-phase-of-future-waste-management-plan/">Niagara at Large</a></u>	<b><a href="https://niagaraatlarge.com/2024/09/05/niagara-region-seeking-public-input-for-next-phase-of-future-waste-management-plan/">https://niagaraatlarge.com/2024/09/05/niagara-region-seeking-public-input-for-next-phase-of-future-waste-management-plan/</a></b>

<b>Organization and/or Local Media Outlet</b>	<b>Website Link</b>
<u>Thorold News</u>	<a href="https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474287">https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474287</a>
<u>Pelham Today</u>	<a href="https://www.pelhamtoday.ca/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474305">https://www.pelhamtoday.ca/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474305</a>
<u>NOTL Local</u>	<a href="https://www.notllocal.com/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474298">https://www.notllocal.com/local-news/have-your-say-on-phase-2-of-niagara-regions-waste-management-strategic-plan-9474298</a>

### 3.4 How we engaged the community

To make engagement as convenient and accessible as possible, the Region deployed one online public survey and hosted two online public open houses. These engagement methods were launched in September 2024.

#### 3.4.1 Online public open houses

Two evening online open houses were held on September 10 and September 16, 2024, with a total attendance of 26 participants. Each online open house included a presentation followed by a question-and-answer period. Poll questions were also used throughout the online open houses to elicit input on specific topics. A copy of the presentation is included in Appendix C. Input received during the online open houses is summarized in Section 4.

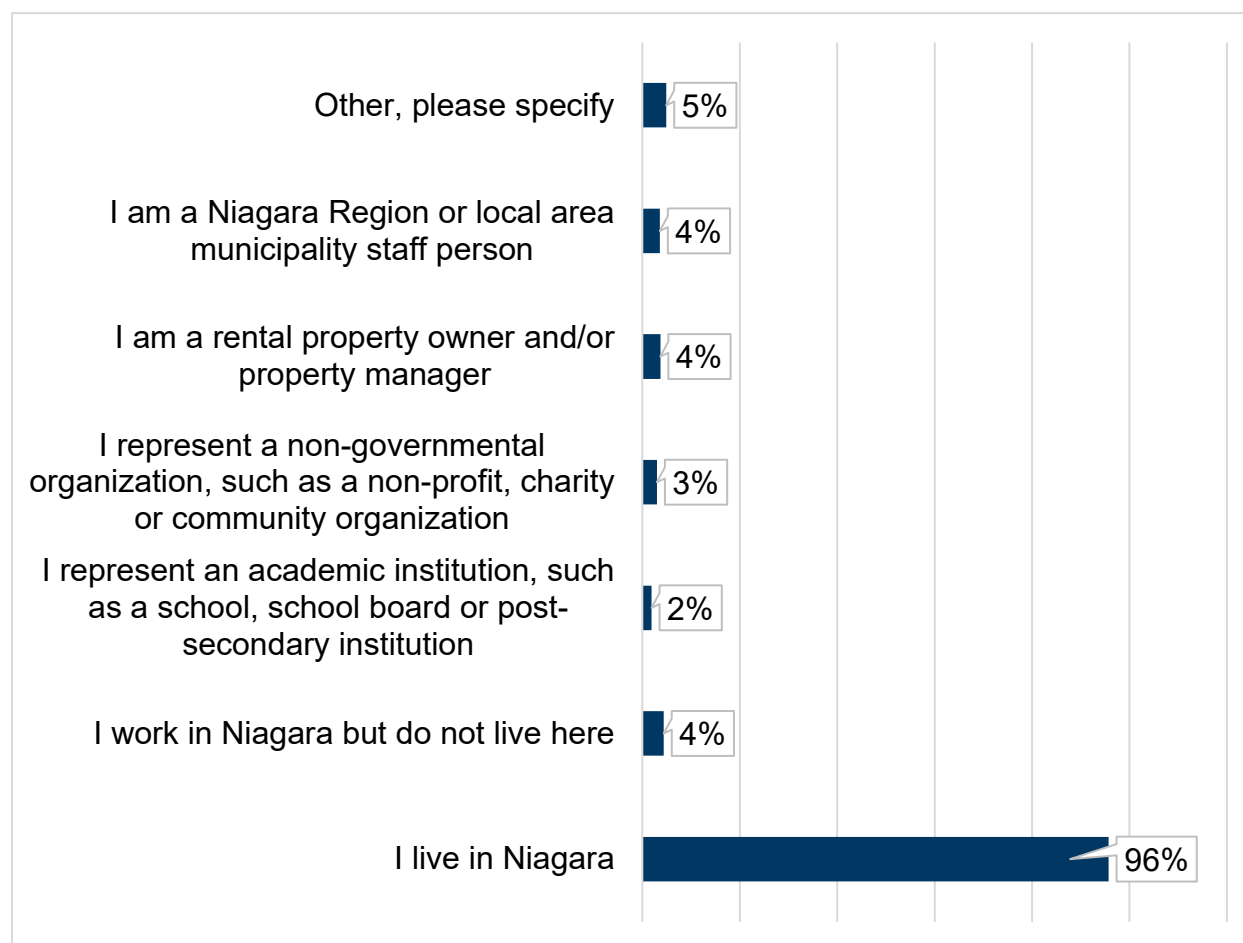
#### 3.4.2 Online public survey

The online public survey was conducted between September 10 and 30, 2024 and received over 1,100 responses. Questions asked participants to provide input on the proposed vision and goals and proposed programs, services and initiatives. Demographic questions were also included to assess how representative the respondents were of the regional population. A summary of the results from these questions is included in Sections 3.4.2.1 to 3.4.2.4 below.

A copy of the survey questions is included in Appendix D. Survey results are summarized in Section 4.

### 3.4.2.1 Survey respondent description

Respondents were asked to select from a list of options that described how they interact with the waste management system. Almost all respondents indicated they were residents of Niagara (see Figure 3.1). Of the respondents who selected ‘Other’, most indicated they are retired.



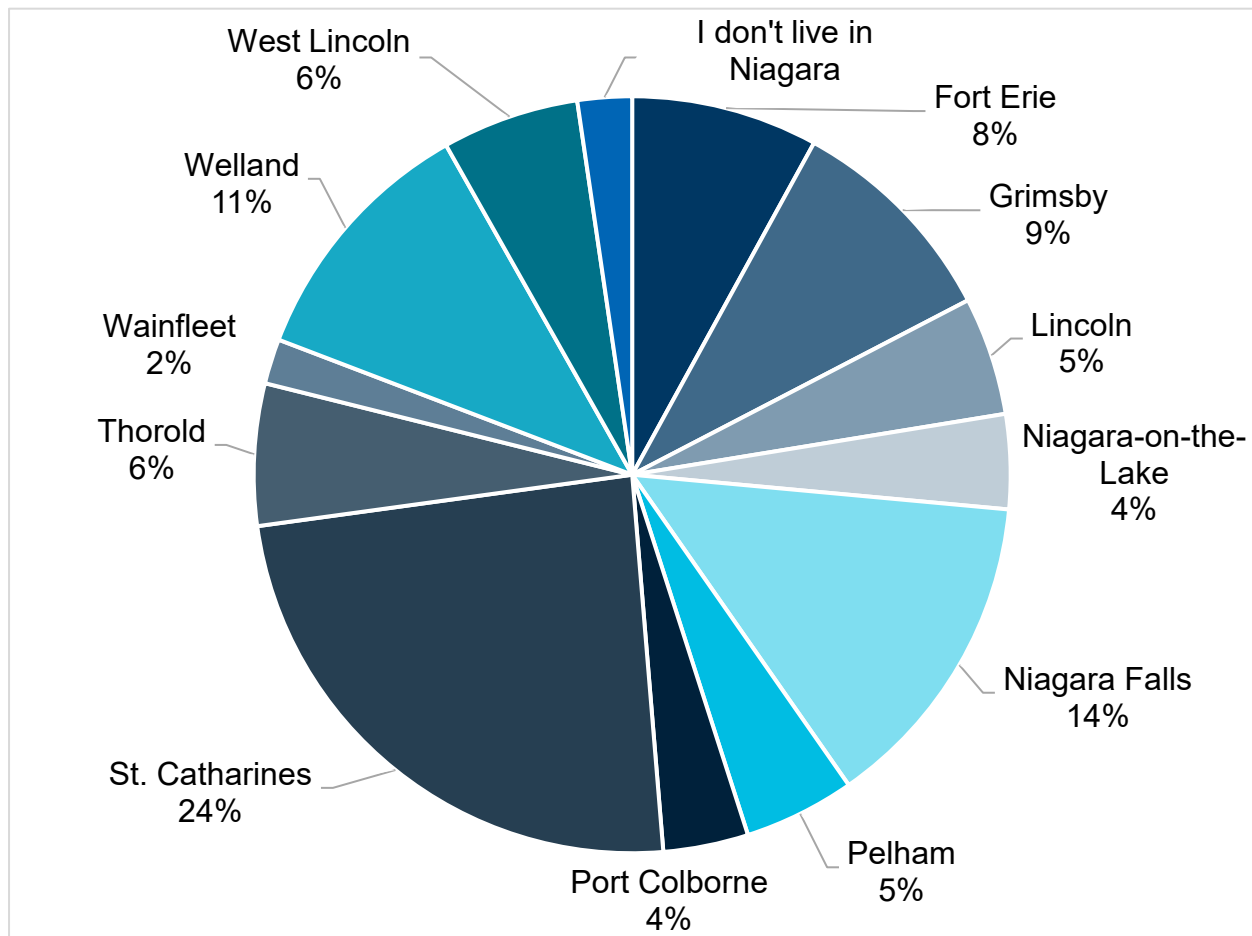
**Figure 3.1 Online survey question #1: How would you describe yourself?**

### 3.4.2.2 Survey respondent location

Similar to the survey undertaken during Phase One engagement, respondents were asked which LAM they live in. The distribution of survey respondents by LAM is shown in Figure 3.2 and is similar to the distribution of survey respondents to the Phase One survey. The survey was representative of the broader Niagara population, within a one per cent margin, with the following exceptions:

- Niagara Falls was slightly underrepresented (14 per cent of survey respondents vs. 21 per cent of the population).
- St. Catharines was slightly underrepresented (24 per cent of survey respondents vs. 31 per cent of the population)

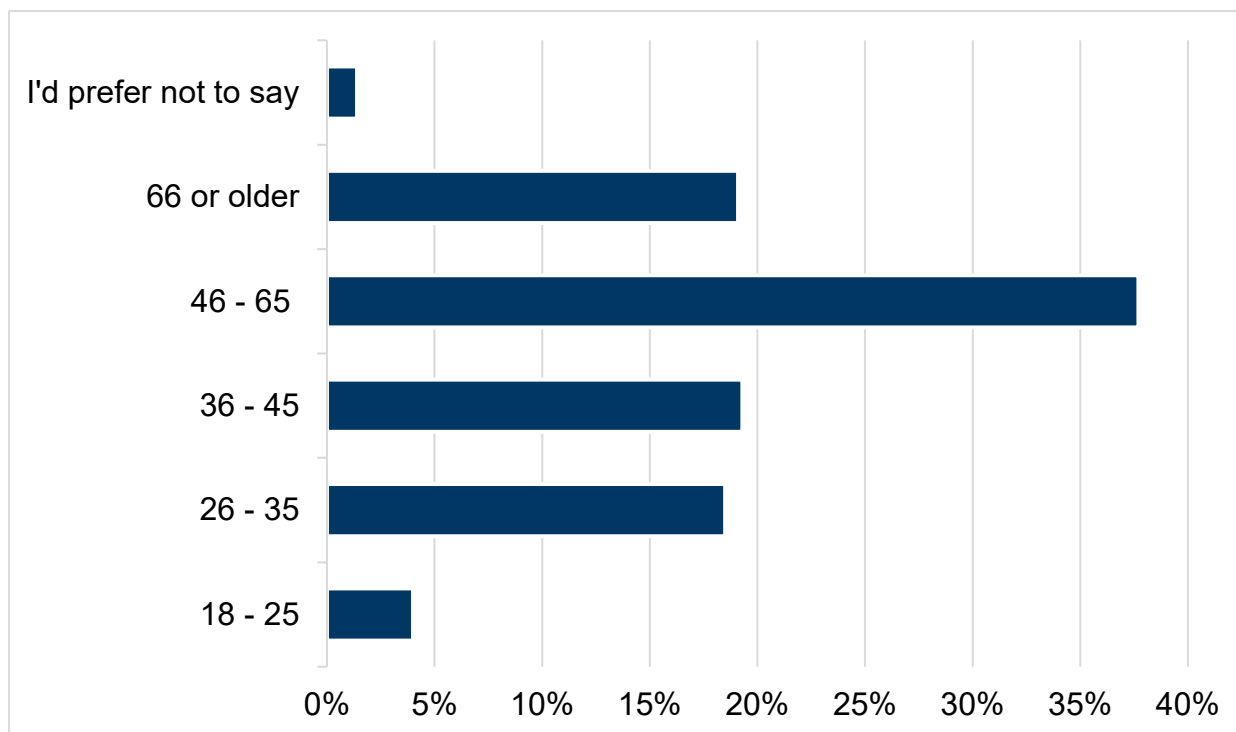
- Grimsby was slightly overrepresented (9 per cent of survey respondents vs. 6 per cent of the population)<sup>i</sup>



**Figure 3.2 Online survey question #15: Responses by per cent in each LAM**

### 3.4.2.3 Survey respondent age ranges

The age ranges of the survey respondents are shown in Figure 3.3, with most respondents falling within the 46 to 65 years of age category.



**Figure 3.3 Online survey question #16: Respondents' age ranges**

#### **3.4.2.4 Survey respondents' time living in Niagara**

Survey respondents were asked to share how long they have lived in Niagara. The breakdown is shown in Figure 3.4. Approximately 70 per cent of respondents indicated they have lived in Niagara for at least 10 years.

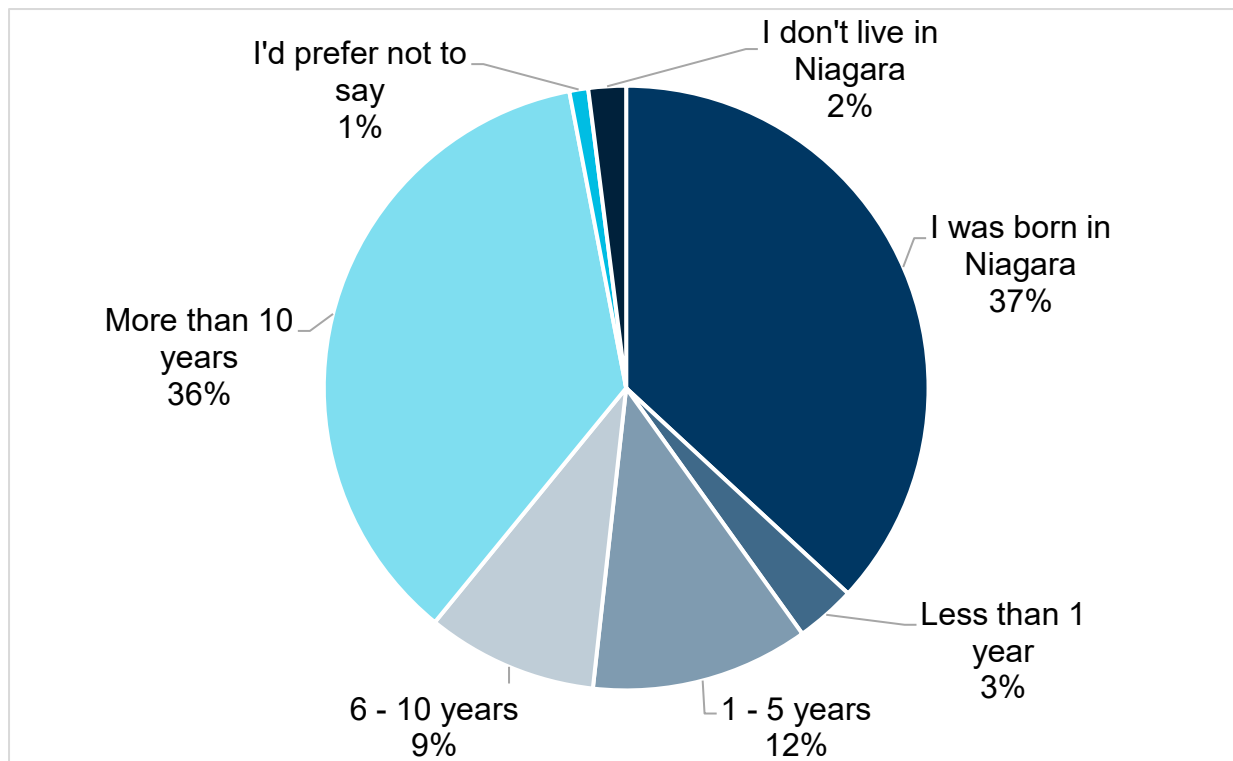


Figure 3.4 Online survey question #17: Length of time living in Niagara

## 4. Feedback from the public

### 4.1 Vision, goals and challenges

The proposed vision for the Plan is “Leading the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services, to support a thriving community for generations to come.”

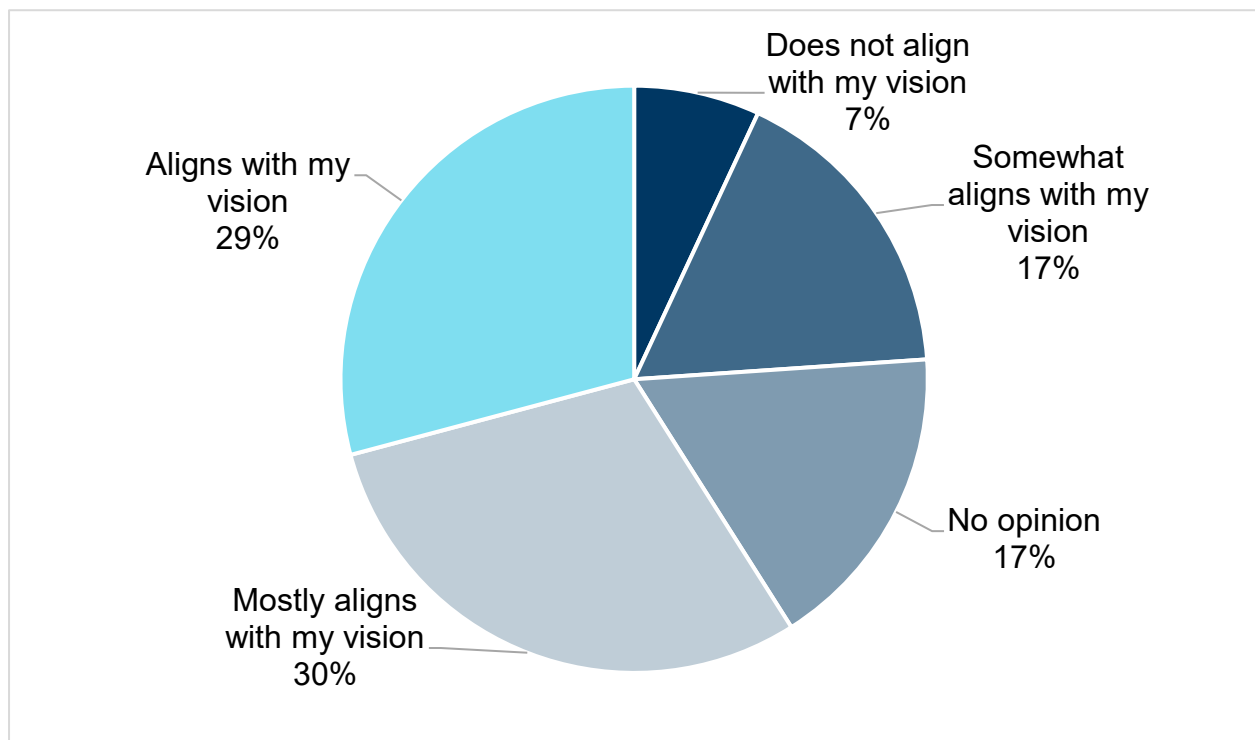
As shown in Figure 4.1, approximately 76 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the vision aligns, mostly aligns or somewhat aligns with the direction they think of for waste management in Niagara. Approximately 7 per cent responded that it does not align with their vision and 17 per cent had no opinion.

Respondents used the open-ended questions to share the following comments about the vision statement and the overall direction of waste management in Niagara:

- “There is a clear vision that aligns with my own”
- “There is no better time then now to start reducing waste in our landfills. Choose any of your future visions and you will be making a difference.”
- “I see Niagara as a leader in waste management, and the fact that you are developing a strategic plan means that you plan to take this success even further.”

- “The things being discussed & the plans for the future sound great!”
- Efforts are paying off if we can continue increase diversion
- “Seems well thought out and pointed in the right direction”
- “Looks as an ambitious plan and it will be beneficial in the long term”
- “The vision statement is too long to remember”
- “Very poor vision on some aspects”
- “The vision is vague”
- “You are on the front lines of the environmental crisis, please do as your vision statement claims and protect future generations, protect the lives of the kids who don’t fill out online surveys to their municipal waste system.”

During the online public open houses, some attendees shared concerns about the word ‘innovative’ in the vision statement, suggesting it could be interpreted as support for energy from waste technologies, which they did not support.

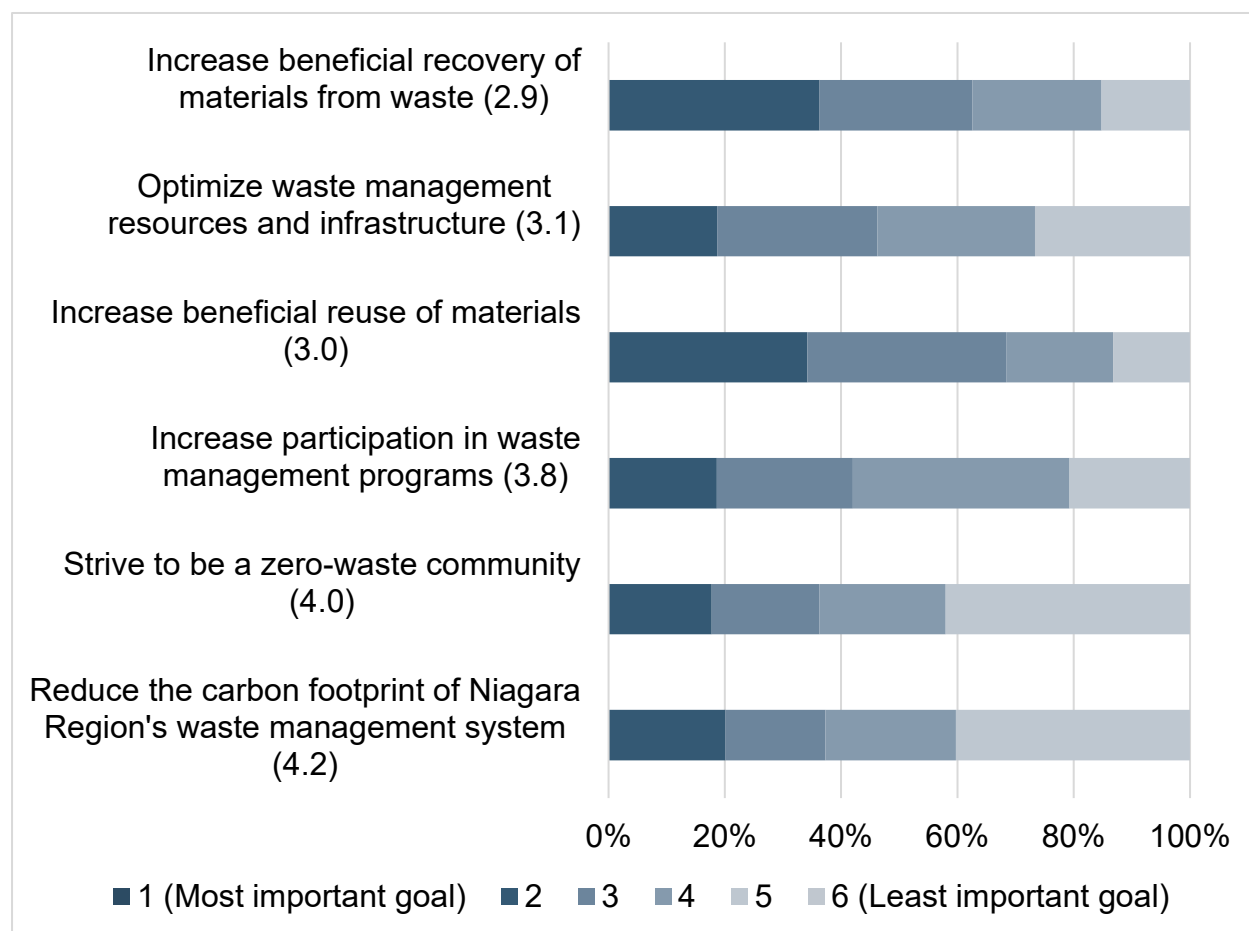


**Figure 4.1 Online survey question #2: How closely does the vision statement align with the direction you think of for waste management in Niagara?**

Survey respondents were also asked to rank the proposed waste management goals based on importance. The goals relating to waste diversion (beneficial recovery) and reuse, as well as optimizing the waste management system, ranked highest. Conversely, the goals focusing on increasing participation (by making waste management programs simple and convenient to participate in), reducing the carbon



footprint and waste reduction were ranked the lowest. The distribution of ranking for each goal, along with their average ranking out of six is shown in Figure 4.2. A lower number indicates a higher relative rank.



**Figure 4.2 Online survey question #3: Rank the goals based on how important they are to you.**

## 4.2 Waste reduction and reuse programs

Survey respondents were asked whether they currently participate in or would consider participating in waste reduction and reuse programs and what factors influence their participation.

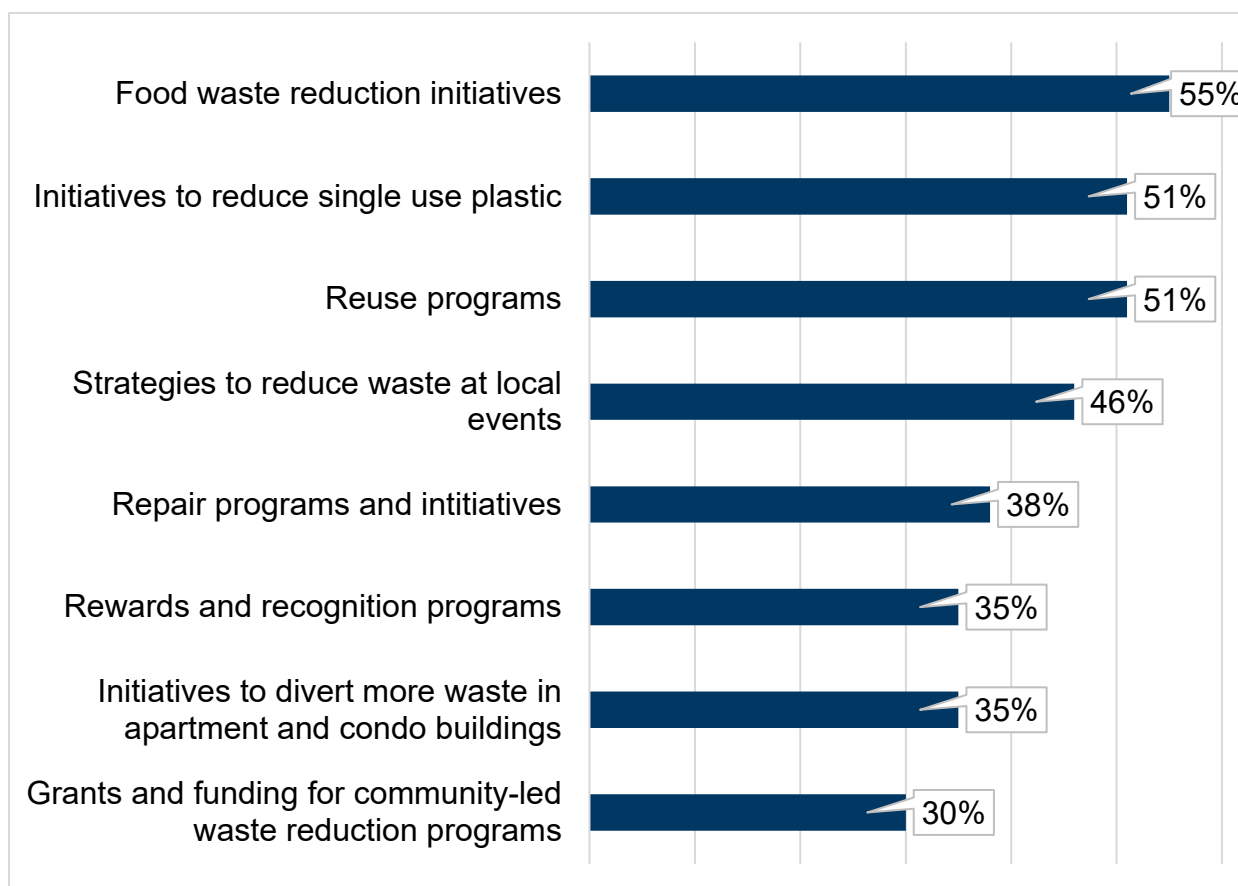
Programs that received majority support were:

- Food waste reduction initiatives (55 per cent)
- Initiatives to reduce single use plastics (51 per cent)
- Reuse programs such as the Broken Spoke program, 'lendery', free markets and curbside give-away days (51 per cent) (see Figure 4.3).

Respondents and attendees also suggested additional programs for consideration:

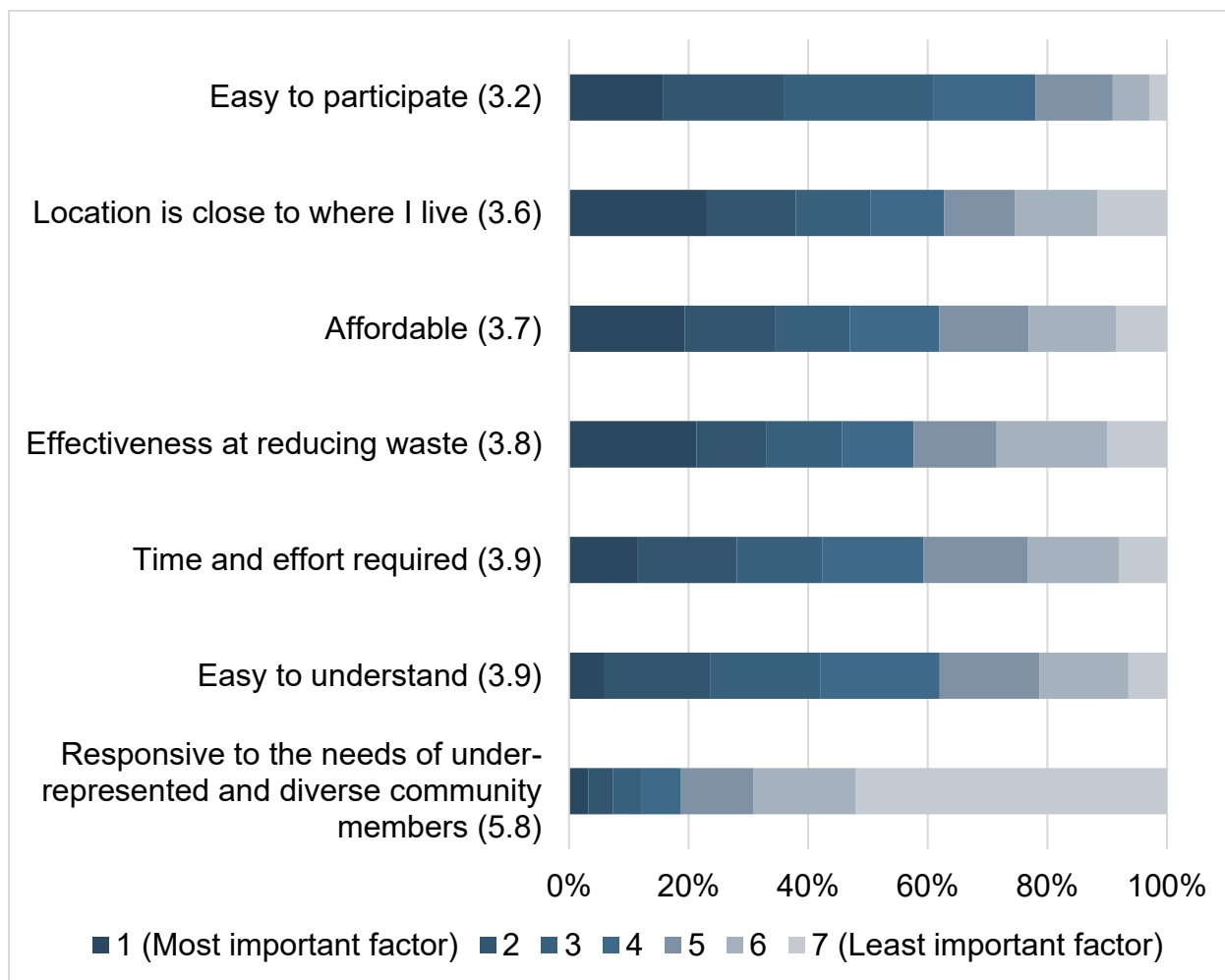
- Partnering with community services to host cooking workshops using food nearing expiration
- Offering workshops on reusing household waste
- Introducing waste challenges where individuals or groups compete to track waste reduction progress
- Creating volunteer opportunities for citizens to participate in waste management initiatives
- Partnering with local businesses to serve as additional drop-off locations for batteries, light bulbs, etc.

When asked what factors influenced their participation in programs and services, the most important factor was ease of participation, with an average ranking of 3.2 out of 7 (see Figure 4.4). Other factors, such as convenience, affordability, and effectiveness, followed closely, while responsiveness to the needs of under-represented and diverse community members ranked lowest (see last row of Figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.3 Online survey question #4: Which of these activities do you currently participate in or would consider participating in at some point in the future?<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Results only include 913 surveys that were completed past question #1



**Figure 4.4 Online survey question #5: Rank what would influence your participation in these activities most.**

## 4.3 Promotion and Education

Survey respondents were asked what types of information and communication strategies they would find helpful for understanding waste management services and promoting sustainable waste management. As shown in Figure 4.5, the three options that received the most support are:

- A dashboard on Niagara Region's website showing progress on waste management goals
- Building partnerships with local organizations to promote sustainable waste management
- Prioritizing digital communication

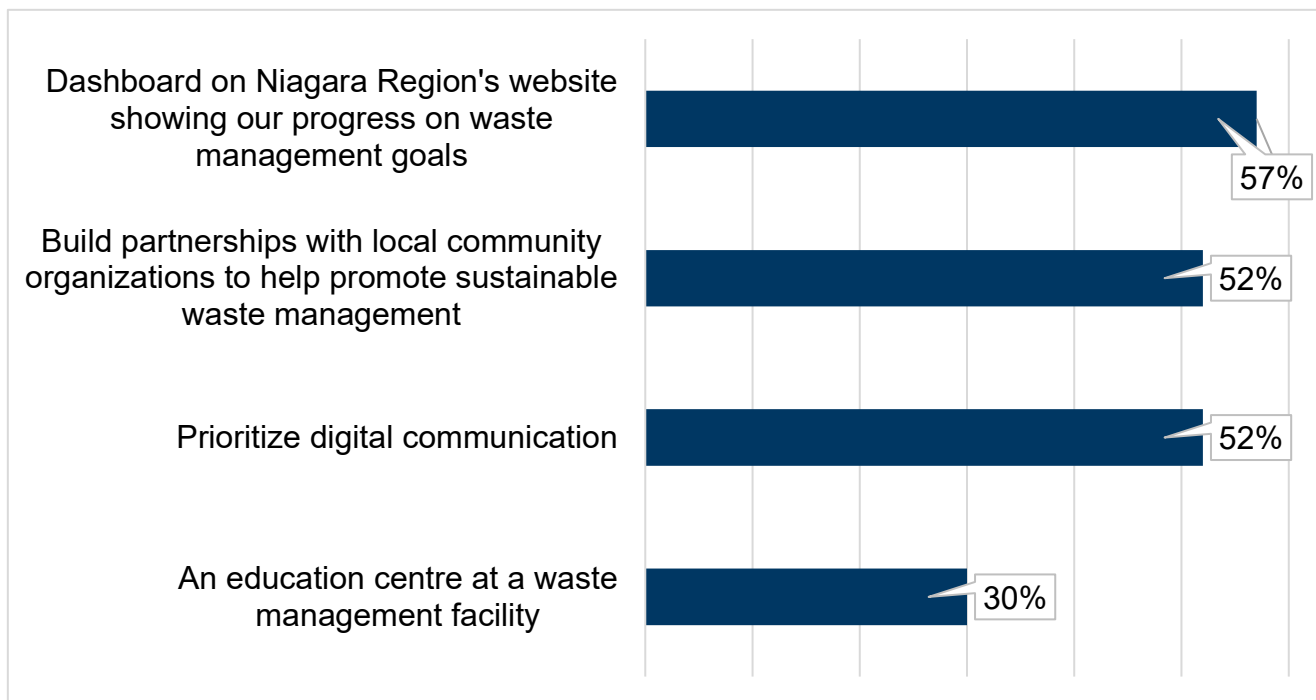
When asked to select from a list of topic-specific education campaigns, respondents chose proper sorting of garbage, recyclables and food waste (51 per cent), and how the Niagara Region waste management system is managed (49 per cent) as their top choices. They were followed by reducing food waste (43 per cent) and reducing single-use plastics (41 per cent) (see Figure 4.6). These results reinforce the importance of food waste and single-use plastics as the highest priority reduction and reuse programs, as discussed in Section 4.2.

Some respondents used the “other” option or other open-ended questions to share additional priorities related to promotion and education, including:

- Educating the community on recycling and how to reuse and/or donate items
- Educating students about waste management
- Explaining how individuals benefit from participating in waste management programs and initiatives

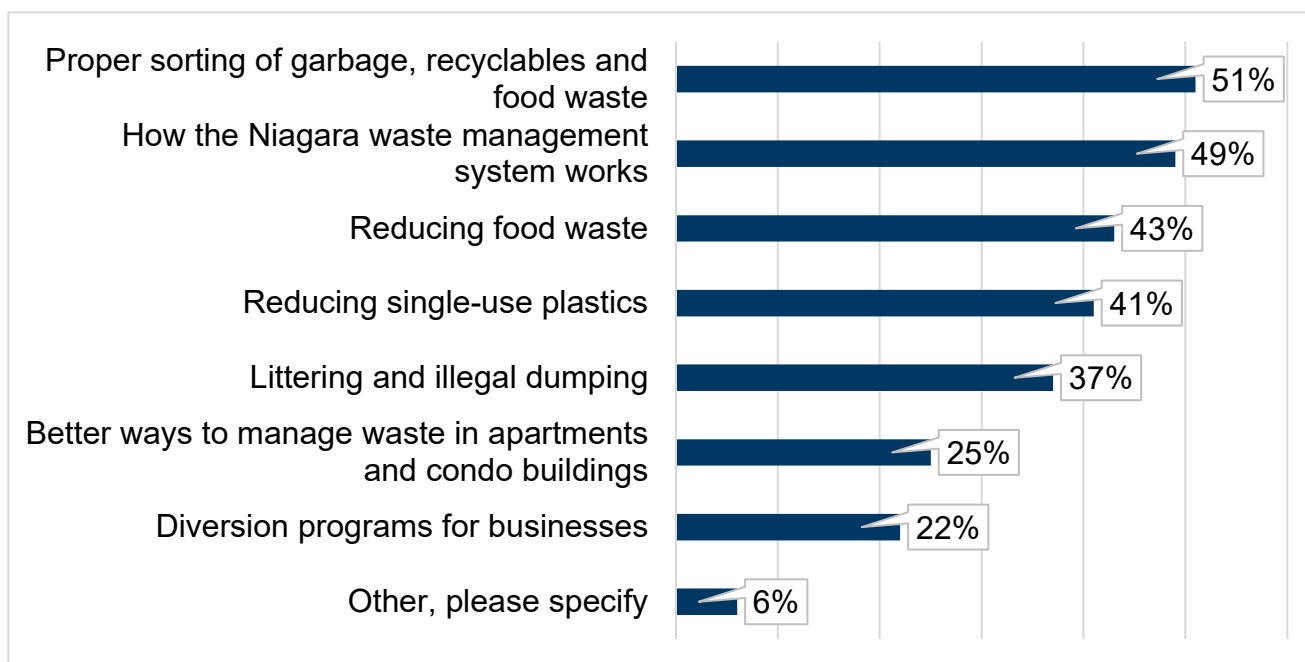
Some promotion and education related comments were received through the survey and public open houses relating to reporting and transparency. Suggestions included:

- Tracking progress on a dashboard using a traffic light system
- Increase transparency about the costs associated with waste management services
- Addressing misconceptions, such as the belief that recyclables go directly to landfills



**Figure 4.5 Online survey question #6: Which of these options would you find helpful for providing information about waste management services and promoting sustainable waste management?<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Results only include 913 surveys that were completed past question #1



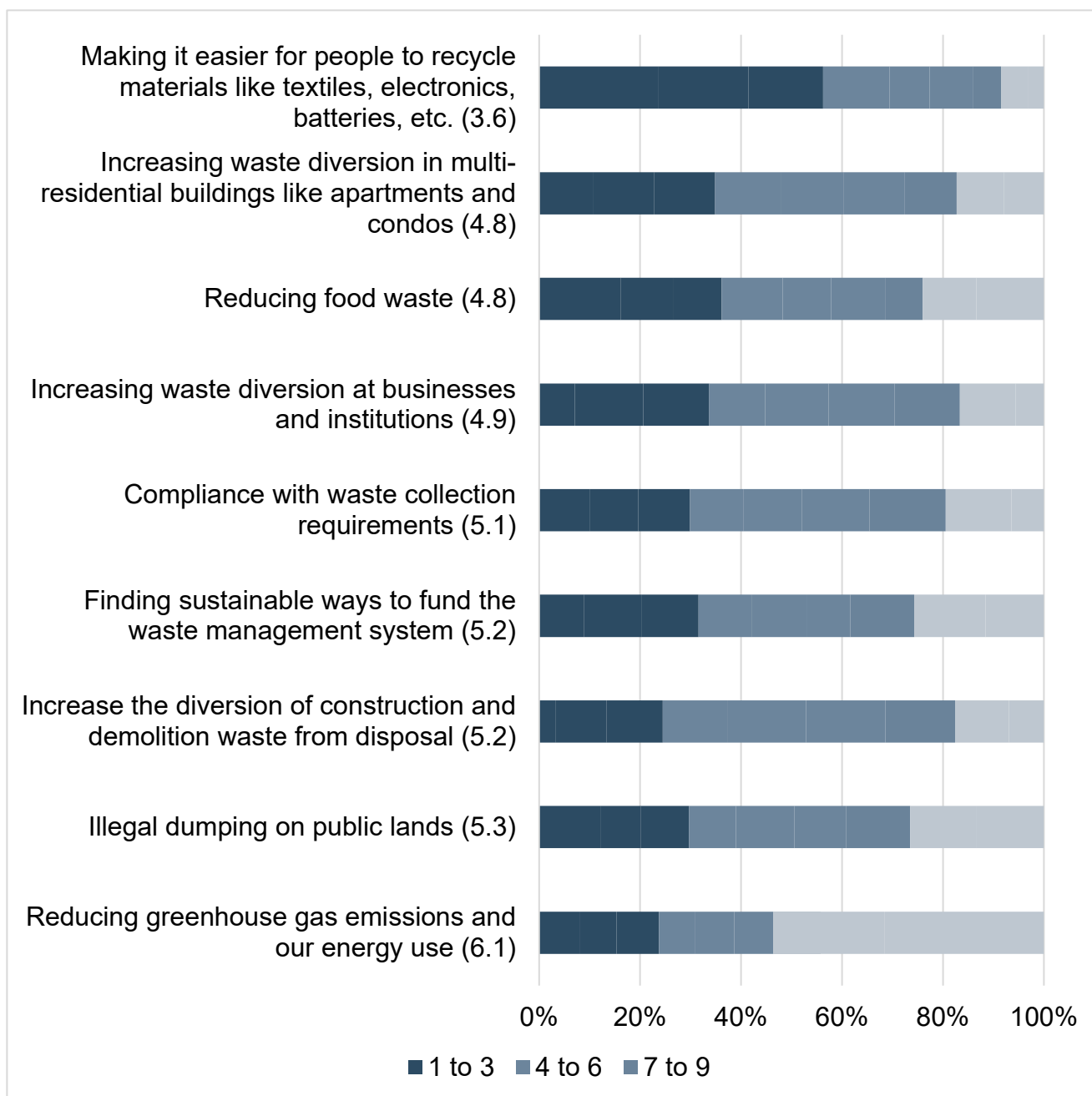
**Figure 4.6 Online survey question #7: Which topic-specific education campaign(s) are you most interested in learning about? <sup>3</sup>**

## 4.4 Waste-related challenges

Survey respondents were asked to rank nine waste-related challenges based on importance. Challenges were ranked on a scale from 1 (most important challenge) to 7 (least important challenge). Making it easier for people to recycle was ranked as the top challenge. Other challenges related to waste reduction and diversion were also ranked highly; while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, illegal dumping, sustainable funding and compliance were among the lower ranked challenges (see Figure 4.7). These results are consistent with how survey respondents ranked the goals described in Section 4.1 and programs described in Section 4.3.

An additional challenge highlighted in the open-ended responses related to producer responsibility. Some respondents suggested the Region should be involved in getting businesses and retailers to reduce packaging waste and use more biodegradable packaging materials. Suggestions included providing economic incentives such as tax breaks or subsidies to encourage businesses to contribute more meaningfully to waste management efforts; and returning boxes and bags in good condition to the original manufacturer or company (e.g., Amazon) to be recycled. During one of the public online open houses, an attendee suggested that large businesses and companies need to recycle more and reduce food waste like homeowners do.

<sup>3</sup> Results only include 913 surveys that were completed past question #1



**Figure 4.7 Online survey question #8: Rank the following issues facing our community when it comes to our waste management system.**

## 4.5 Collection, Processing and Disposal

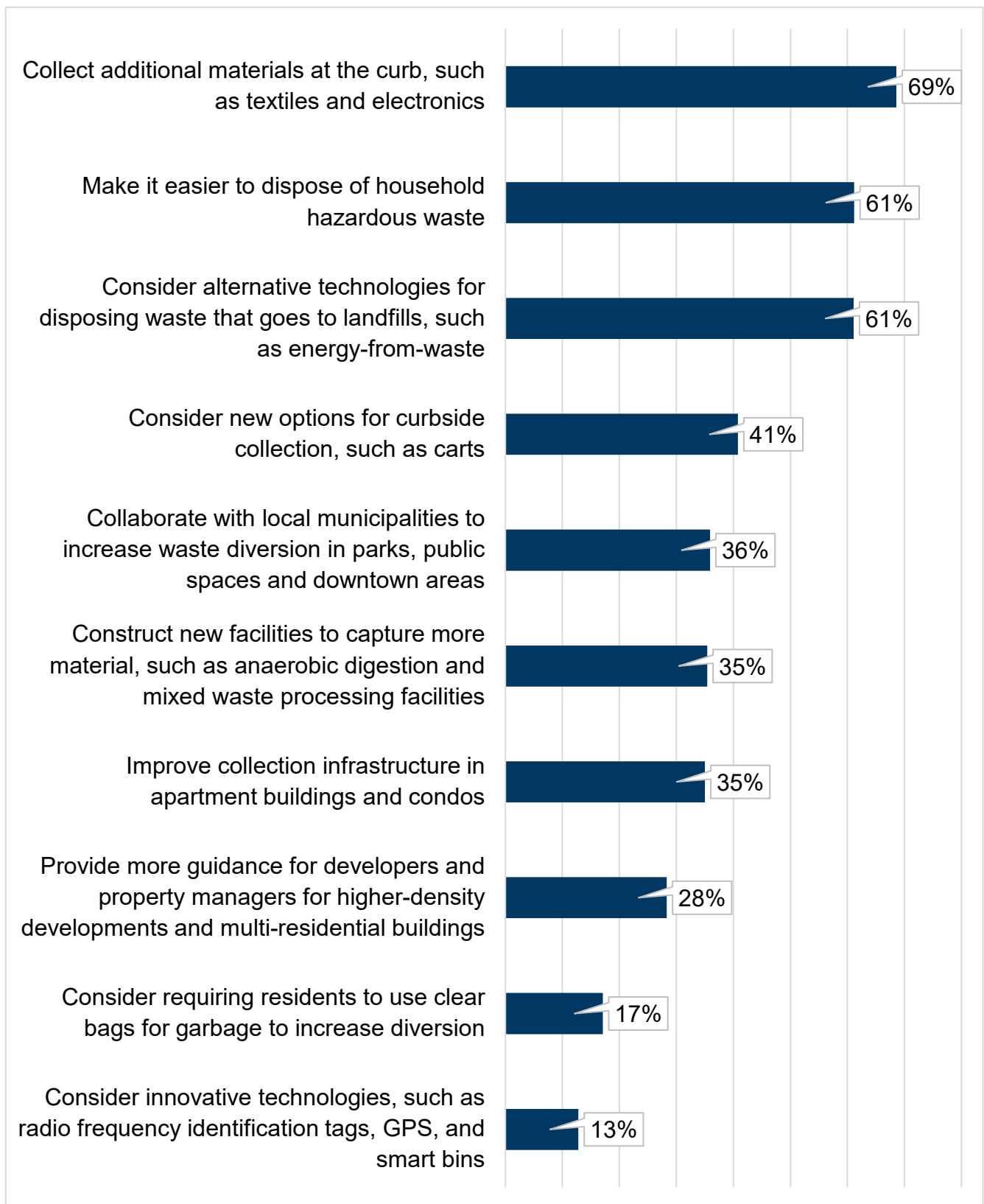
Survey respondents were asked about their perspectives on different ways to collect, process and dispose of waste to increase efficiency and waste diversion. Collecting additional materials at the curb was the top ranked option (69 per cent), followed by making it easier to dispose of household hazardous waste (61 per cent) and consideration of alternative technologies, such as waste-to-energy (61 per cent). Similar to Phase One consultation, some survey respondents and open house participants expressed strong opinions about waste-to-energy, either in favour or in opposition.



Consideration of innovative technologies to track missed collections and contamination rates at a household level, and clear bags were the two lowest ranked options (17 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). Some survey respondents and open house participants used the open-ended questions to share concerns about clear bags.

Similar to Phase One engagement, the survey did not include any questions about collection frequency since the Region is not proposing any changes to collection frequency.

Notwithstanding, several respondents used open-ended questions to express support for reverting to weekly garbage collection. The main reasons cited were similar to the concerns raised during Phase One, including odours, bugs, pests, and rodents.



**Figure 4.8 Online survey question #9: Which of the following options would you consider to be the most important to increase efficiency and waste diversion?**

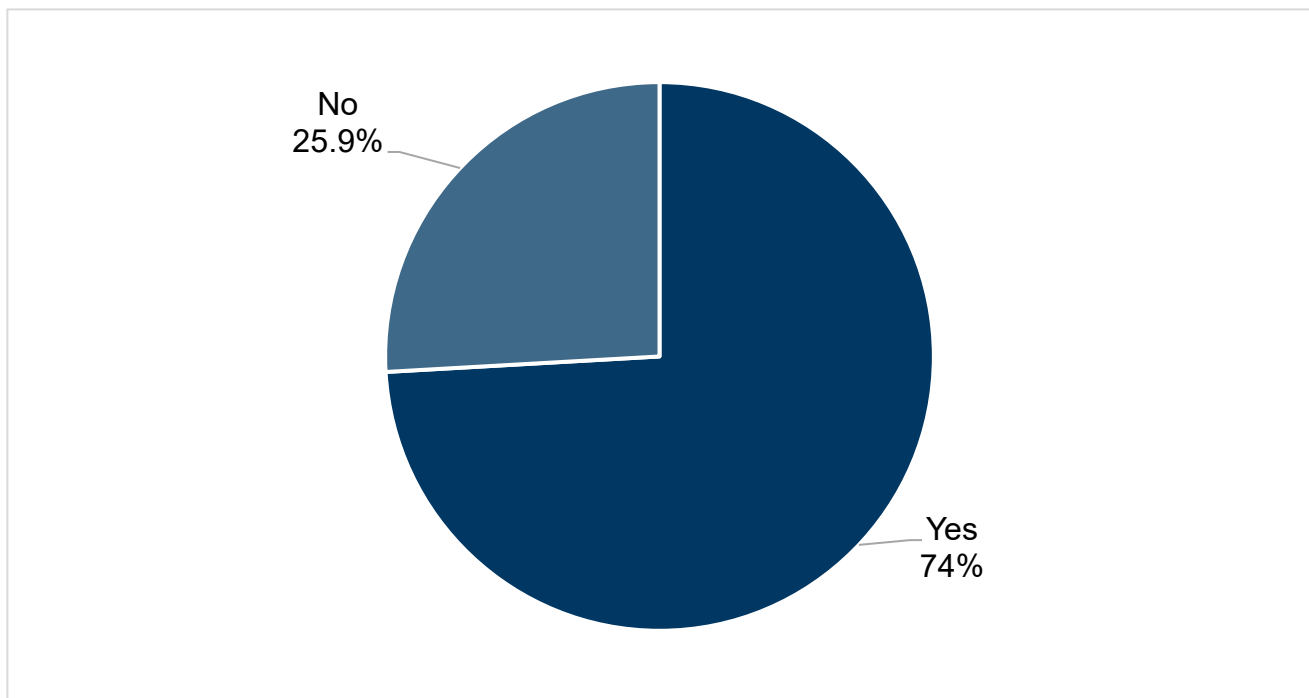
## 4.6 Drop off Depots

Almost three-quarters of survey respondents (74 per cent) reported using the Region's waste and recycling drop-off depots (see Figure 4.9). These respondents were asked to select up to three ways the drop-off depots could be improved. The most popular option was to expand reuse centres at drop-off depots, either by expanding the materials accepted or making reuse centres available at more sites (see Figure 4.10).

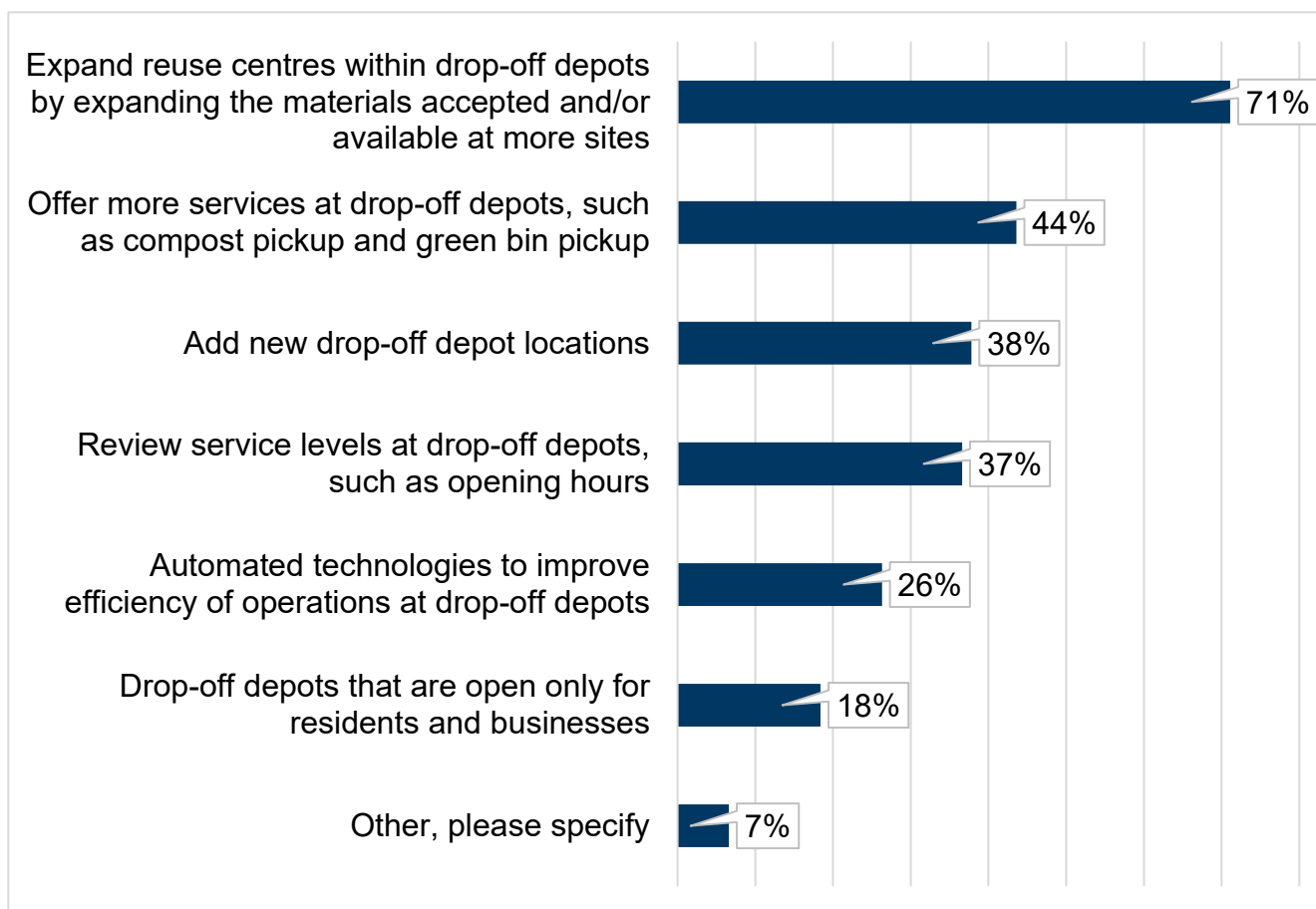
The next most popular options were to offer more services at drop-off depots, such as compost pickup and Green Bin pickup (44 per cent), add new locations (38 per cent), and review service levels such as opening hours (37 per cent).

Suggestions provided in the open-ended questions and at the open house included:

- Opening seven days a week
- Include more staff or use of automation to reduce wait times
- Make it easier to find the drop-off locations
- Make drop-off free of charge
- Set up a reuse centre at the landfills where people can donate and pick up new or lightly damaged, but still usable items



**Figure 4.9 Online survey question #10: Do you use Niagara Region's waste and recycling drop-off depots?**



**Figure 4.10 Online survey question #11: Which of these options to improve our drop-off depots would you be most excited about?**

## 4.7 Overall sentiment on programs and services

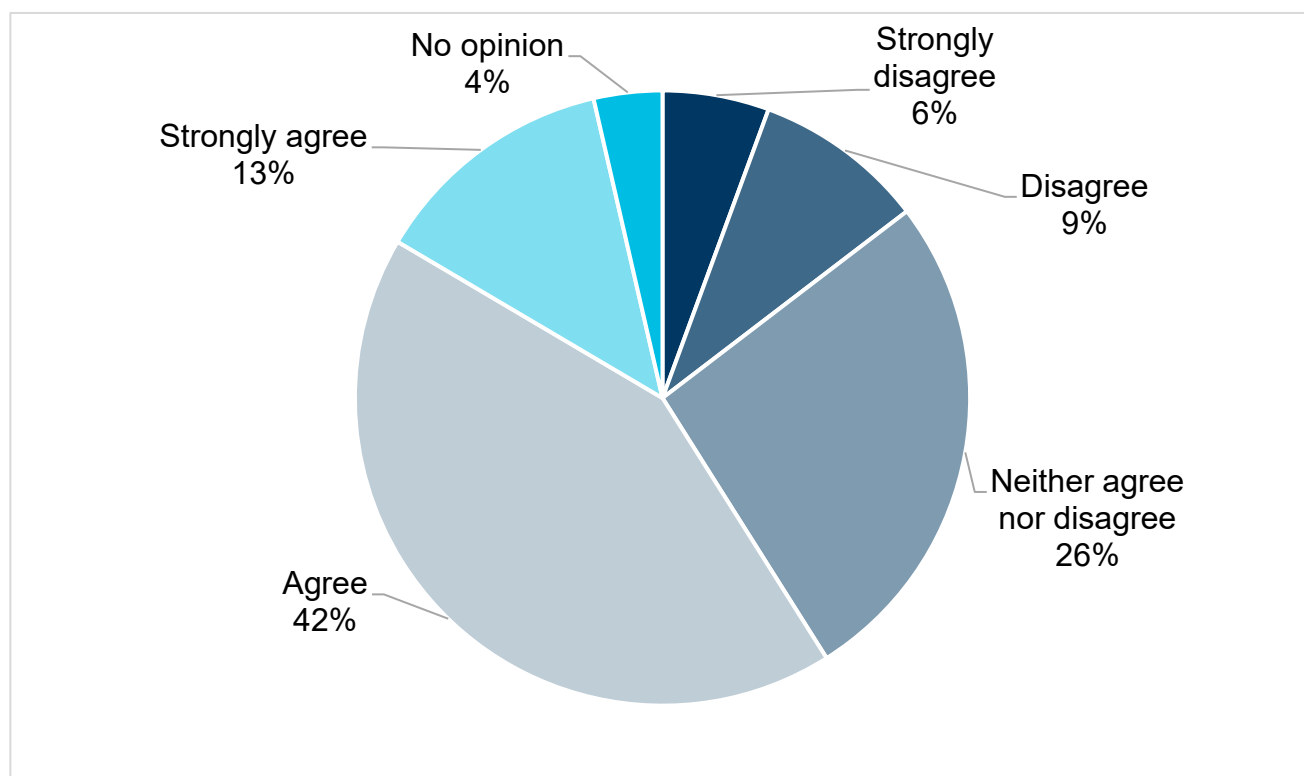
To assess overall agreement with the proposed programs, services, and initiatives, the last survey question (see Figure 4.11) asked respondents whether these initiatives were setting Niagara Region on the right course to becoming a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management.

More than 55 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the programs, services and initiatives described in the survey would position the Region as a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management. Supportive comments from respondents included:

- “The fact that you are developing a strategic plan means that you plan to take this success even further”
- “Seems well thought out and pointed in the right direction”
- “The options provided clearly demonstrate the determination and commitment to improve our current waste management system”
- “Looks like you have some great ideas.”

However, 15 per cent of survey respondents disagreed with the statement. Survey comments included:

- “I haven’t seen much change except pick up frequency in the last decade”
- “it’s a lot of positive ideas but are you going to actually implement them?”
- “More transparency and accountability are needed to track their success”
- “there’s not enough concrete evidence on how effectively they’re being implemented and whether they address all waste management challenges in the region.”



**Figure 4.11** Online survey question #12: Rate your level of agreement that the programs, services and initiatives described in the survey are setting Niagara Region on the right course to being a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management.

## 5. Summary of community feedback

During the second phase of community engagement, input from the over 1,100 online survey responses and 26 online open house attendees provided a clear picture of the programs, services and initiatives the community believes the Region should consider to achieve its waste management and diversion goals.

The input received from interested parties described in Section 4 reflected a broad range of values, perspectives and considerations including:

- Broad support for the proposed vision statement and goals, as well as programs, services and initiatives

- Goals and programs related to waste reduction and diversion resonated more with the community compared to goals related reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the ambitious goal of zero-waste
- Affordability, accessibility and ease of use were identified as key themes during Phase One engagement and continued to be raised as key considerations
- While there is support for alternative technologies, such as waste-to-energy, differing views remain on the use of waste-to-energy
- While none of the survey questions asked about producer responsibility, many community members highlighted the importance of reducing waste generation at its source and holding producers of waste more accountable
- While promotion and education should continue to provide foundational information such as proper waste sorting, there was recognition that more work needs to be done on key issues such as reducing food waste and single-use plastics

As noted throughout this report, community input will inform the detailed analysis of the proposed programs, services and initiatives. This feedback will guide further refinement and development into actionable plans, ultimately leading to the creation of the final Plan.

## 6. Next steps

The programs, services and initiatives that received community input during Phase One and Two will undergo further analysis in Technical Memorandum 3, Analysis of Recommendations. This feedback will further inform refinement and development into actionable plans, leading to the preparation of the draft Plan.

A draft version of the Plan will then be prepared, with the community invited to review and provide additional comments before it is presented to Regional Council for approval.

Phase Three of community engagement is anticipated to take place in Spring 2025.

# Appendices

# **Appendix A**

**Letter to Interested Parties**



July 15, 2024

**Subject:** Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan Phase One Update and Upcoming Phase Two Engagement Opportunities

Niagara Region has completed the first phase of its Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan) which involved assessing the existing system and understanding how the community views our current programs. The valuable input from the phase one survey and open houses laid the groundwork for establishing the Plan's mission, vision, goals and guiding principles, as well as new programs and initiatives for consideration.

We are excited to let you know about upcoming phase two engagement opportunities where we present the final vision, mission, goals and guiding principles and seek the community's feedback on proposed waste management options. Public engagement begins September 10, 2024, through another survey and two virtual public open houses led by our Consultants from GHD:

- Public Open House on Tuesday **September 10, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
- Public Open House on Monday **September 16, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Please visit [the Niagara Region Future of Waste website](http://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste) (<http://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste>) for more information on the Plan, to register for one of the open houses, and to take the survey.

We would be very appreciative if you could share the above public engagement opportunities with other staff in your organization. We look forward to your insights into waste management in Niagara as we plan for the next 25 years.

Sincerely,

Catherine Habermebl (she/her)  
Director, Waste Management Services  
Public Works, Niagara Region  
Phone: 905.980.6000, ext. 3204  
Email: [catherine.habermebl@niagararegion.ca](mailto:catherine.habermebl@niagararegion.ca)

*Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The Regional Municipality of Niagara stands with all Indigenous peoples, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.*

# **Appendix B**

## **Communication Tactics**



The future of waste is in our hands!

# Are we headed in the right direction?

We heard your feedback and have a vision for  
our Waste Management Strategic Plan.  
Tell us the options you see for our future.

Turn over for more information





## The Waste Management Strategic Plan will provide a framework and direction for waste management over the next 25 years.

Join one of our phase two online open houses and tell us if our plan is headed in the right direction and the future waste options you want for Niagara.

### Complete our phase two online survey

You can also share your ideas and feedback with us by using the QR code below to access our online survey available September 10 - 30.

### Online Open Houses:

Tuesday, Sept. 10 | 7 - 8 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 16 | 7 - 8 p.m.

**Questions?** [wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca](mailto:wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca)

**Niagara**  **Region**

Use the QR code or visit  
[niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste)  
to access the online open houses  
and online survey.





**The future of waste is in our hands!**

# Are we headed in the right direction?

**We heard your feedback and have a vision for our Waste Management Strategic Plan. Tell us the options you see for our future.**

Join one of our phase two online open houses and tell us if our plan is headed in the right direction.

## **Complete our phase two online survey**

You can also share your ideas and feedback by using the QR code below to access our online survey available September 10 - 30.

**Take our survey!**

You could win one of three \$50 Visa giftcards

## **Online Open Houses:**

**Tuesday, Sept. 10 | 7 - 8 p.m.**

**Monday, Sept. 16 | 7 - 8 p.m.**

Use the QR code or visit [niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste) to access the virtual open houses and online survey.



**Niagara Region**

**Questions?**  
[wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca](mailto:wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca)

# **Appendix C**

**Public Open House Presentation**

# Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan

Phase Two Online Public Open House  
September 16, 2024

# Land Acknowledgement

Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

There are many First Nations, Métis and Inuit from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The Regional Municipality of Niagara stands with all Indigenous peoples, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.



# Niagara Region's Project Partners



# Agenda

- Why Niagara Region is preparing a Waste Management Strategic Plan
- What we heard during Phase One
- Vision, guiding principles and goals
- Options for programs, services and initiatives
- Q&A

# Poll question #1

**How would you describe yourself?**

**Please choose one option.**

1. I live in Niagara
2. I work in Niagara but I don't live here
3. I represent an academic institution, such as school, school board or post-secondary institution
4. I represent a non-governmental organization, such as non-profit, charity or community organization
5. I represent a business or an organization within the industrial, commercial and institutional sector
6. I am a rental property owner and/or property manager
7. I am a Niagara Region or local area Municipality staff person
8. Other

# Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan

- What is it, and why do we need it?
- What we heard during Phase One
- Vision, guiding principles and goals

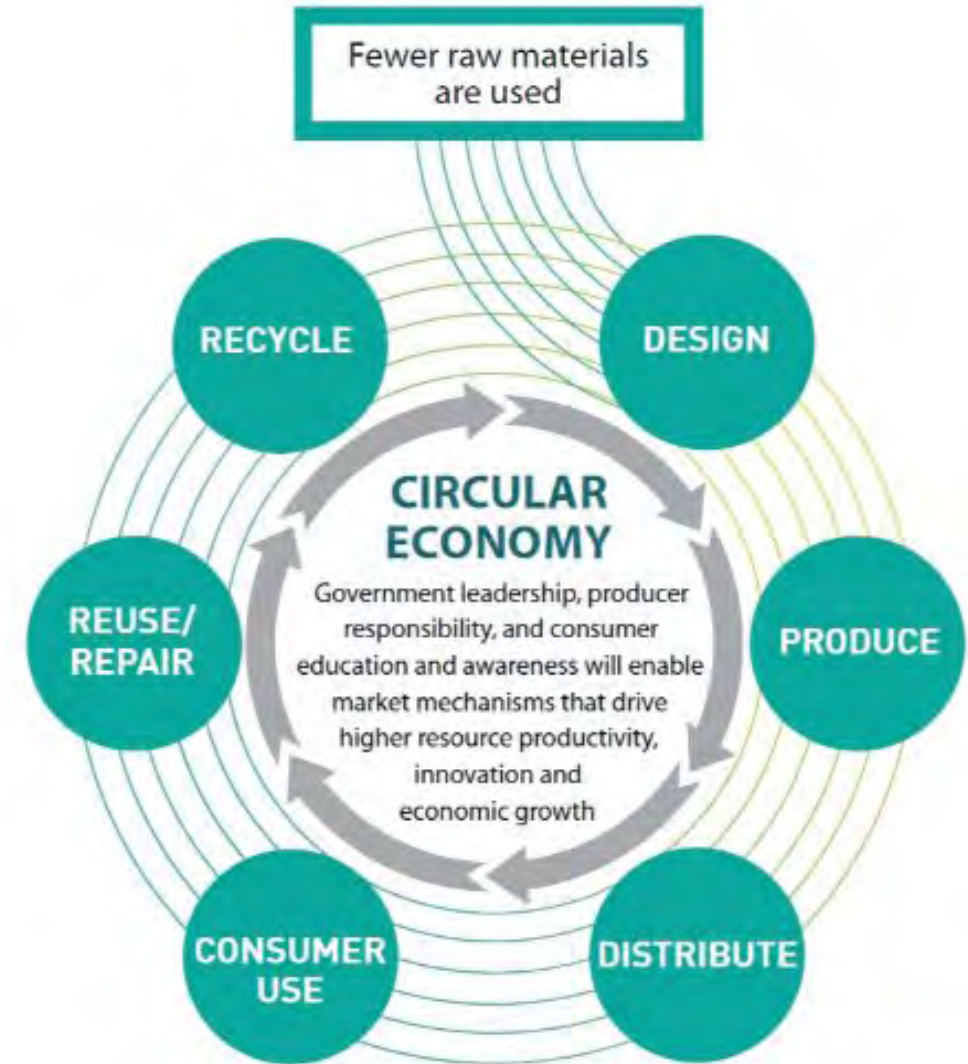
# The Waste Management Strategic Plan

- Guides Niagara Region waste management system over the next 25 years
- Helps identify new and different ways to use waste as a resource
- Ensures Niagara Region demonstrates leadership in sustainability and reduces environmental impacts

## What are the project objectives?

- Meet the needs of the community today and into the future
- Reduce the environmental footprint of the community and waste management operations
- Contribute to Niagara Region Council's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050

For more information, [visit the Government of Ontario webpage for the Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy](http://www.ontario.ca/page/strategy-waste-free-ontario-building-circular-economy) (www.ontario.ca/page/strategy-waste-free-ontario-building-circular-economy)



# What We Heard During Phase One

- Ensure the system is affordable
- Consider impacts on public health
- Be customer-focused
- Use innovative and emerging technology to improve operations
- Encourage behaviour change
- Eliminate food waste entering landfill
- 75% satisfied/very satisfied with level of waste collection service received
- Less packaging – particularly plastics
- Differing views on using waste as a resource
- 37% supportive/very supportive of accepting waste from other municipalities and cities
- Focus on reducing waste, diverting from landfill, incentives for behaviour change
- More and better promotion and education, and by-law enforcement

# Vision

Leading the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services,  
to support a thriving community for generations to come.

# Poll question #2

## Vision statement:

**“Leading the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services, to support a thriving community for generations to come.”**

**How closely does this vision statement align with the direction you think of for waste management in Niagara?**

**Please choose one option.**

1. Does not align with my vision
2. Somewhat aligns with my vision
3. No opinion
4. Mostly aligns with my vision
5. Aligns with my vision



# Guiding Principles

Customer  
Focused

Financially  
Responsible

Environmentally  
Considerate

Future-Thinking

Innovative and  
Optimized

Collaborative and  
Engaged

Inclusive

Adaptive

Transparent

# Goals

Optimize waste  
management resources  
and infrastructure

Increase beneficial  
recovery of material from  
waste

Increase beneficial reuse  
of materials

Increase participation in  
waste management  
programs

Strive to be a  
zero-waste community

Reduce the carbon  
footprint of Niagara  
Region's waste  
management system

# Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan

- Options for programs, services and initiatives

# Options Development and Evaluation

**Review of existing system, industry priorities/trends, regulatory framework, programs in other municipalities and community input**

## **Long List of Options**

### **Screening and Triple Bottom Line Analysis**

Options to be refined and evaluated in more detail

Options carried forward, but deferred to future iterations of the Strategic Plan

# Options to Achieve Waste Management Goals

## Seven categories of focus



Waste  
Reduction and  
Reuse



Drop-off  
Depots



Community  
Engagement  
and Education



Policies and  
By-laws



Waste Collection  
and Operations



Processing and  
Disposal Infrastructure



Innovation

# Waste Reduction and Reuse

- Repair programs like repair cafés, where you can learn to repair items to increase their lifespan
- Reuse programs like the Broken Spoke bicycle program, lenderies for borrowing items, free markets, curbside give-away days
- Strategies to reduce waste at local events
- Food waste reduction initiatives
- Initiatives to divert more waste in apartment and condo buildings
- Initiatives to reduce single use plastic
- Grants and funding for community-led waste reduction programs
- Rewards and recognition programs

# Community Engagement and Education

- Digital communication as a priority
- An education centre at a waste management facility
- A dashboard on Niagara Region's website showing our progress on waste management goals
- Partnerships with local community organizations to help promote sustainable waste management

## Policies and By-Laws

- Options for User Fee and Cost Recovery (full or partial)
- Enhanced enforcement program (e.g., green bin participation)
- Modification to existing waste collection guidelines for new developments
- Review and review Service Level Agreements with LAMs
- Provincial Advocacy campaigns, particularly around EPR (post-transition), landfill ban of organics, and IC&I diversion targets



# **Waste Collection and Operations**

- Collect additional materials at the curb such as textiles
- Improve collection infrastructure in apartments and condo buildings
- Provide more guidance for developers and property managers for higher-density developments and multi-residential buildings
- Consider new options for curbside collection such as carts and/or clear bags
- Collaborate with Local Area Municipalities to increase waste diversion in parks, public spaces and downtown areas

## Drop-off Depots

- Automated technologies to improve the efficiency of operations at drop-off depots
- Expand reuse centres within drop-off depots by expanding the materials accepted and/or available at more sites
- Offer more services at drop-off depots, such as compost pickup and green bin pickup
- Add new drop-off depot locations
- Drop-off depots that are open only for residents and businesses
- Review service levels at drop-off depots, such as opening hours

# Waste Processing and Disposal

- Construct new facilities to capture more material such as a mixed waste processing facility
- Shift organics processing from composting to anaerobic digestion
- Develop a leaf and yard waste processing facility
- Undertake landfill mining at existing regional landfills to remove future liabilities
- Review waste management infrastructure for potential adjustments in response to climate change (adaptation)

# Innovation

- Scale-house software review to improve data collection
- Dispose of residual waste using alternative technology, including thermal treatment and/or mechanical biological treatment
- Smart-collection technologies such as radio frequency identification tags, GPS, and smart bins to track things like missed collections and contamination rates at a household level
- Opportunities to integrate with the Region's wastewater strategy, such as co-digestion
- AI advancement and Innovation Labs – partnering with academic institutions

# Poll question #3

**“The programs, services and initiatives described today are setting Niagara Region on the right course to being a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management.”**

Please rate your level of agreement with that statement.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree
6. No opinion

# Next steps

## Phase Two

- Sept – Oct 2024: Public and local municipal consultation on recommendations

## Phase Three

- Nov 2024 – Mar 2025: Prepare draft Waste Management Strategic Plan
- Mar – May 2025: Consultation with the community, staff and Council on draft Waste Management Strategic Plan and finalization

# Q&A

- Are we on track?
- Have we missed anything?
- Which of the options for waste collection, processing and disposal do you consider to be the most important?

**Take our online survey to help  
Niagara Region meet its waste  
management goals.**



**Survey closes September 30!**

Visit [Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste) (niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste)

# Tell us how we did!

## How would you rate this open house?





# Thank you!



For more information, please visit

Visit [Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan](#)

([niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste))

# Discussion question #1

**Which topic-specific campaign are you most interested in learning about?**

**Please check all that apply.**

1. Reducing food waste
2. Reducing single-use plastics
3. Better ways to manage waste in apartments and condo buildings
4. Proper sorting of garbage, recyclables and food waste
5. Littering and illegal dumping
6. Diversion programs for businesses
7. How the Niagara Region waste management system works
8. Other

# Discussion question #2

**Which is the most important challenge you see facing our waste management system today?**

**Please rank in order of importance.**

1. Reducing food waste
2. Increasing waste diversion in multi-residential buildings like apartments and condos
3. Increasing waste diversion at businesses and institutions
4. Compliance with waste collection requirements
5. Making it easier to recycle materials like textiles, electronics and batteries, etc.
6. Increase the diversion of construction and demolition waste from disposal
7. Illegal dumping on public lands
8. Finding sustainable ways to fund the waste management system
9. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our energy use

# **Appendix D**

## **Online Survey Questions**

## Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan – Phase Two Online Survey Questions

1. How would you describe yourself? Check all that apply.
  - a. I live in Niagara
  - b. I work in Niagara but do not live here
  - c. I represent an academic institution, such as school, school board or post-secondary institution
  - d. I represent a non-governmental organization, such as non-profit, charity or community organization
  - e. I represent a business or an organization within the industrial, commercial and institutional sector
  - f. I am a rent property owner and/or property manager
  - g. I am a Niagara Region or local area municipality staff person
  - h. Other, please specify
2. On a scale of one to five, how closely does this vision statement align with the direction you think for waste management in Niagara?
  - a. Aligns with my vision
  - b. Mostly aligns with my vision
  - c. Somewhat aligns with my vision
  - d. Does not align with my vision
  - e. No opinion
3. We have developed goals that will guide waste management planning in Niagara for the next 25 years. Please rank the goals based on how important they are to you. One is most important while six is least important.
  - a. **Reduce the carbon footprint of Niagara Region's waste management system:** Programs and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated from the waste management system, including new/improved infrastructure, changes to operations and advocacy. Increase beneficial reuse of materials: Promote programs and initiatives that encourage the reuse of materials, reducing the amount entering the waste stream.
  - b. **Increase beneficial recovery of material from waste:** Programs and initiatives to divert materials away from Niagara landfills for beneficial recovery.
  - c. **Strive to be a zero-waste community:** Programs and initiatives that reduce waste generation, so fewer resources are needed to manage waste disposal.
  - d. **Increase beneficial reuse of materials:** Programs and initiatives to reuse materials and reduce the amount of material entering the waste stream.

- e. **Increase participation in waste management programs:** Programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing community engagement in waste management efforts.
  - f. **Optimize waste management resources and infrastructure:** Programs and initiatives to maximize the efficiency of Niagara Region's waste management system, and effectively use financial resources to deliver services.
4. We are considering expanding or adding programs that encourage residents and businesses to reduce waste and reuse items. Which of these activities do you currently participate in, or would consider participating in at some point in the future? Check all that apply.
- a. Repair programs and initiatives such as repair cafés, where you can learn to repair your own items to increase their lifespan
  - b. Reuse programs like the Broken Spoke bicycle program, and others such as a 'lendery', where you can borrow different items for free and return them when you're finished using them, free markets, and curbside give-away days
  - c. Strategies to reduce waste at local events
  - d. Food waste reduction initiatives
  - e. Initiatives to divert more waste in apartment and condo buildings
  - f. Initiatives to reduce single-use plastic
  - g. Grants and funding for community-led waste reduction programs
  - h. Rewards and recognition programs
5. Rank what would influence your participation in these activities most. One is the most influential and eight is the least influential.
- a. Location is close to where I live
  - b. Time and effort required
  - c. Easy to participate
  - d. Easy to understand
  - e. Responsive to the needs of under-represented and diverse community members
  - f. Affordable
  - g. Effectiveness at reducing waste
  - h. Other, please specify
6. We are always exploring new ways to provide information about waste management services and promote sustainable waste management. Which of these options would you find helpful? Check all that apply.
- a. Prioritize digital communication
  - b. An education centre at a waste management facility
  - c. Dashboard on Niagara Region's website showing our progress on waste management goals
  - d. Building partnerships with local community organizations to help promote sustainable waste management

7. We are exploring topic-specific education campaigns. Which topic(s) are you most interested in learning about? Check all that apply.
  - a. Reducing food waste
  - b. Reducing single-use plastics
  - c. Better ways to manage waste in apartments and condo buildings
  - d. Proper sorting of garbage, recyclables and food waste
  - e. Littering and illegal dumping
  - f. Diversion programs for businesses
  - g. How the Niagara waste management system works
  - h. Other, please specify
8. Rank the following issues facing our community when it comes to our waste management system. One is most important and nine is least important.
  - a. Reducing food waste
  - b. Increasing waste diversion in multi-residential buildings like apartments and condos
  - c. Increasing waste diversion at businesses and institutions
  - d. Compliance with waste collection requirements
  - e. Making it easier for people to recycle materials like textiles, electronics, batteries, etc.
  - f. Increase the diversion of construction and demolition waste from disposal
  - g. Illegal dumping on public lands
  - h. Finding sustainable ways to fund the waste management system
  - i. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our energy use
9. We are looking at different ways to collect, process and dispose of waste to increase efficiency and waste diversion. Which of the following options would you consider to be the most important? You can choose up to five options.
  - a. We are looking at different ways to collect, process and dispose of waste. Which of the following options would you consider to be the most important? You can choose up to five options.
  - b. Collect additional materials at the curb such as textiles and electronics
  - c. Make it easier to dispose of household hazardous waste
  - d. Improve collection infrastructure in apartment buildings and condos
  - e. Provide more guidance for developers and property managers for higher-density developments and multi-residential buildings
  - f. Consider new options for curbside collection such as carts
  - g. Consider requiring residents to use clear bags for garbage to increase diversion
  - h. Collaborate with local municipalities to increase waste diversion in parks, public spaces and downtown areas.

- i. Consider innovative technologies such as radio frequency identification tags, GPS, and smart bins to track things like missed collections and contamination rates at a household level
  - j. Construct new facilities to capture more material such as anaerobic digestion and mixed waste processing facilities
  - k. Consider alternative technologies for disposing waste that goes to landfills such as energy from waste
10. We have four drop-off depots: Bridge Street Drop-Off Depot, Humberstone Landfill, Niagara Road 12 Landfill and Thorold Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Depot. Do you use Niagara Region's waste and recycling drop-off depots?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
11. We are exploring options to improve our drop-off depots. Which of these options would you be most excited about? Select your top three.
- a. Automated technologies to improve the efficiency of operations at drop-off depots
  - b. Expand reuse centres within drop-off depots by expanding the materials accepted and/or available at more sites
  - c. Offer more services at drop-off depots, such as compost pickup and green bin pickup
  - d. Add new drop-off depot locations
  - e. Drop-off depots that are open only for residents and businesses
  - f. Review service levels at drop-off depots, such as opening hours
  - g. Other, please specify
12. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: The programs, services and initiatives described in this survey are setting Niagara Region on the right course to being a leader in sustainable and innovative waste management.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  - f. No opinion
13. Please tell us more about why you agree or disagree with this statement.
- a. Open-ended response
14. Do you have any other comments you would like to share with Niagara Region?
- a. Open-ended response
15. Where do you live?
- a. Fort Erie
  - b. Grimsby



- c. Lincoln
  - d. Niagara Falls
  - e. Niagara-on-the-Lake
  - f. Pelham
  - g. Port Colborne
  - h. St. Catharines
  - i. Thorold
  - j. Wainfleet
  - k. Welland
  - l. West Lincoln
16. What is your age?
- a. 18-25
  - b. 26-35
  - c. 36-45
  - d. 46-65
  - e. 66 or older
  - f. I'd prefer not to say
17. How long have you lived in Niagara?
- a. I was born in Niagara
  - b. Less than 1 year
  - c. 1-5 years
  - d. 6-10 years
  - e. More than 10 years
  - f. I'd prefer not to say
  - g. I don't live in Niagara
18. How did you hear about this survey? Check all that apply.
- a. City/Town newsletter
  - b. Community booth
  - c. Digital screen ad
  - d. Letter
  - e. My local service group/club
  - f. Newspaper ad
  - g. Niagara Region Green Scene newsletter
  - h. Niagara Region Waste App
  - i. Niagara Region website
  - j. Postcard
  - k. Poster

- l. Public notice/media release
- m. Radio ad
- n. Social media
- o. Other, please specify



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<sup>i</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. Census Profile. 2021 Census. **Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa.** Released February 8 2023.  
**<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>**