

An overview of the quantitative and qualitative findings of public surveys conducted in February and March 2021 in support of the Fairfax County Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan.

# CECAP Winter 2021 Public Engagement Report

---



A publication of Fairfax County, VA.  
To request this document in an alternate format, please call 703-324-7136 TTY 711.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Overview.....	2
The Energy Survey.....	3
Question One: Major Energy-Saving Improvements.....	4
Question Two: DIY Energy-Saving Improvements.....	6
Question Three: Renewable Energy Areas of Interest.....	7
Question Four: Drivers of Renewable Energy Adoption.....	8
Question Five: Motivation for Using Renewable Energy.....	10
The Transportation, Development, and Waste Survey.....	11
Question One: Purchasing an Electric Vehicle.....	12
Question Two: Reducing Personal Vehicle Use.....	14
Question Three: Mixed-Use Development.....	17
Question Four: Creating a Connected and Sustainable Community.....	18
Question Five: Waste Management Pain Points.....	19
The Open-Ended Survey.....	21
Question One: General Comments on the CECAP.....	21
Question Two: Specific Suggestions for the Working Group.....	24
Question Three: Personal Carbon Footprint.....	27
Question Four: Methods of Reducing Personal Carbon Footprint.....	28
Appendix A: Demographics.....	30
Energy Survey Demographics.....	30
Transportation Survey Demographics.....	31
Open-Ended Survey Demographics.....	33
Appendix B: Raw Data from Open-Ended Questions.....	36

## Overview

Between February 1 and March 14, 2021, the Fairfax County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) conducted a public education and engagement campaign specific to the development of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP). The first three weeks of the campaign were devoted to public education and the OEEC worked alongside numerous promotional partners to share digital content designed to raise awareness of climate threats on a local level.

Following this education effort, the OEEC issued three public surveys: one on energy issues, one on transportation, development, and waste issues, and a third with open-ended questions to gather general feedback from the public. The surveys were divided in this manner to keep them short and to match the structure of the two subgroups working to develop the final CECAP plan. Altogether, more than 2,650 people completed the three surveys, providing OEEC staff and the CECAP Working Group with invaluable insight into the priorities and preferences of the public at large.

Two virtual public meetings were also held during this time period to allow for additional interaction and engagement with county residents and stakeholders. These meetings were attended by several dozen individuals and were structured as information sessions with built-in opportunities for attendees to provide opinions and reactions to the content presented.

This report summarizes the findings of the three public surveys. The responses to both the multiple-choice questions and the open-ended questions are described in the pages that follow. At the conclusion of the report are a series of appendices with demographic information and records of the raw comments and data provided in the survey results.

Overall, the findings across all three surveys suggest that one of the greatest barriers to behavior change among the public is cost. In several instances, survey respondents indicate that a financial incentive or rebate would make a difference in their ability to or desire to take voluntary action to curb their greenhouse gas emissions.

A second recurring theme across the surveys was the need for greater public education and outreach efforts from the county to residents, businesses, and other stakeholders regarding climate planning in general, and CECAP specifically.

Any questions about the content of this report or the findings from the public surveys may be directed to the CECAP team at [cecapoutreach@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:cecapoutreach@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## The Energy Survey

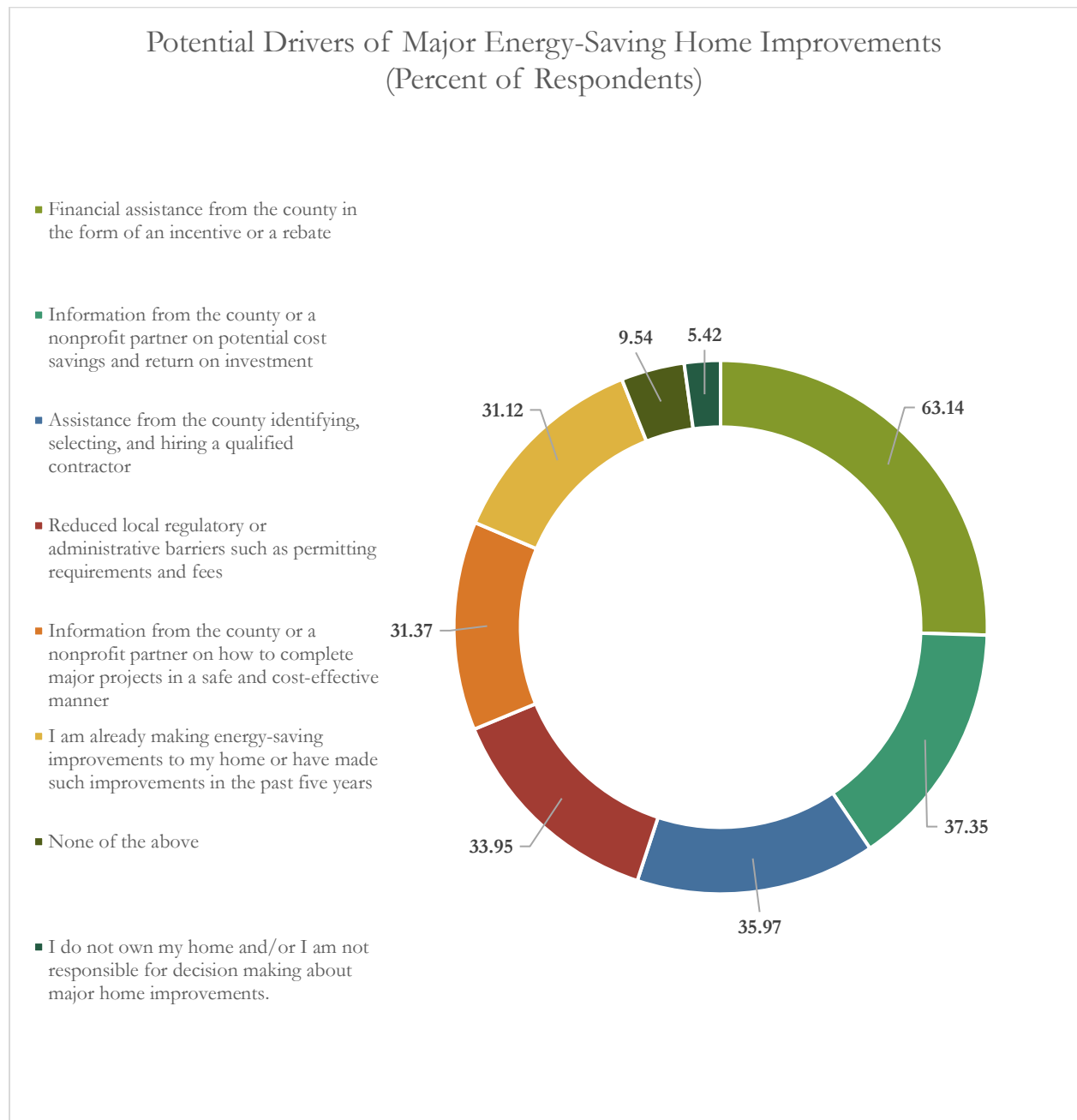
The energy-specific public survey included five multiple choice questions designed to assess potential drivers of behavior change in the community. The greenhouse gas inventory completed in 2020 to inform the CECAP planning process indicates that energy use in buildings is one of the top two sources of emissions in Fairfax County. By identifying and implementing strategies to help members of the community take personal action to address energy use at home, the CECAP may move the needle on overall emissions over time.

A total of 1,240 individuals responded to the energy survey, though not every respondent completed every question. Overall, respondents self-identified as primarily white, affluent (more than \$160,000 per year in household income), female, and over age 55. A full summary of the demographics for all three surveys is available in Appendix A.

This section of the report presents the results of each question asked on the energy survey with a graph and a brief narrative analysis.

## Question One: Major Energy-Saving Improvements

*Which, if any, of the following options would lead you to make a major energy-saving improvement to your home in the next five years? Please select all that apply.*



The largest potential driver of major energy-saving home improvements among survey respondents was financial assistance in the form of an incentive or a rebate. More than 60 percent of respondents indicated that financial assistance would make a difference in their decision making about investments in home energy improvements like increasing insulation, replacing major appliances, or upgrading HVAC systems.

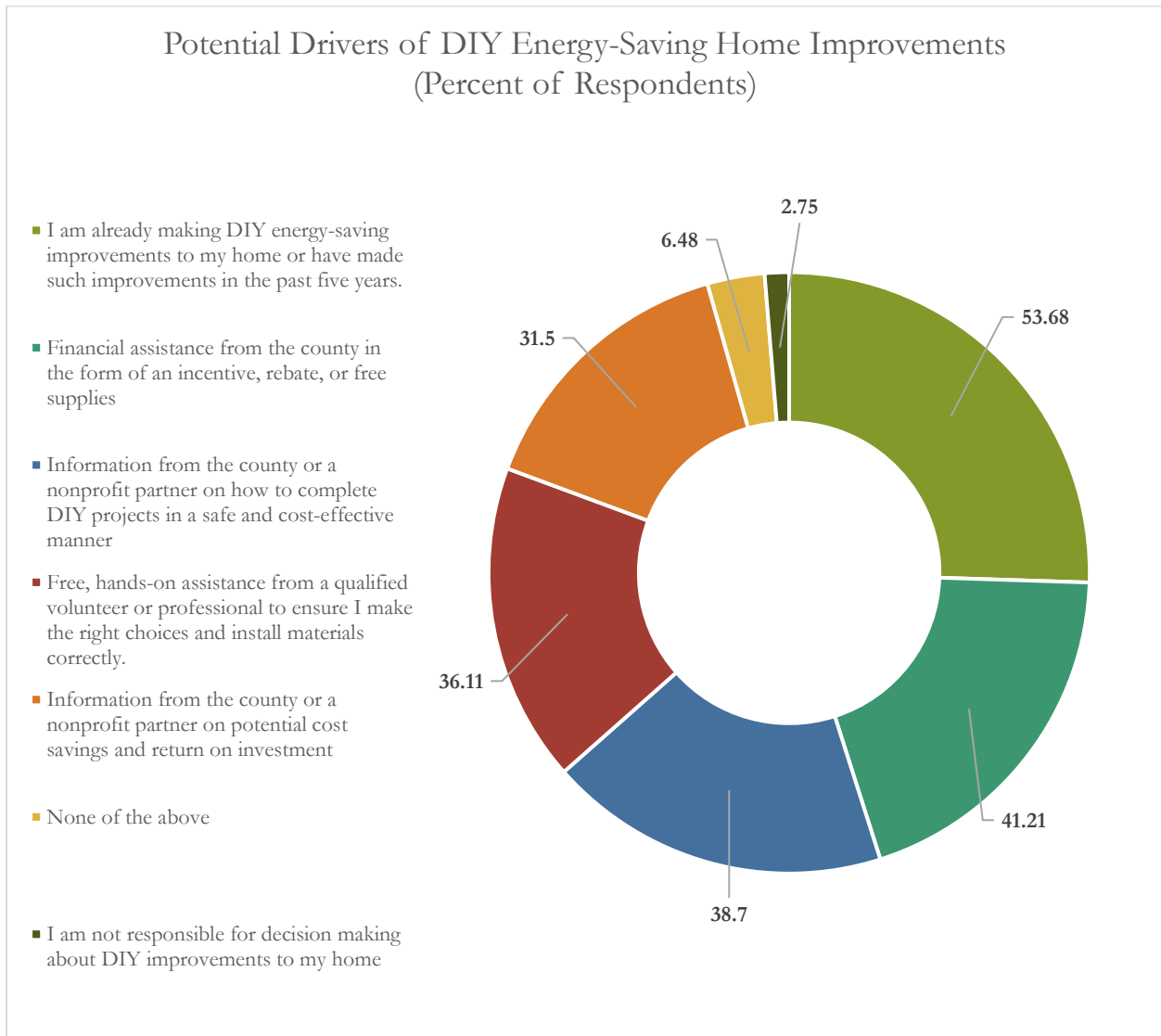
The four other substantive answer options saw relatively equal distribution. Respondents showed a slight preference for information from the county or a trusted partner about potential cost savings and return on investment. This speaks to a need for greater public education around the value of making substantial energy-saving improvements in a residential environment, and especially providing digestible, relevant information about the financial side of the conversation.

Respondents are interested in assistance from the county in identifying, selecting, and hiring a qualified contractor to execute major improvements. There is also significant interest in information on how to complete major projects safely and cost-effectively.

It is notable that more than 30 percent of respondents indicate that they are already taking steps to implement major energy-saving improvements to their homes. When considering this response rate, it is important to take respondent demographics into account. Respondents to this survey were largely affluent. The responses to this question may not be representative of the ability of the majority of Fairfax County residents to engage in these types of improvements in the near term.

## Question Two: DIY Energy-Saving Improvements

*Which, if any, of the following options would lead you to make smaller, DIY energy-saving improvements to your home in the next five years? Please select all that apply.*



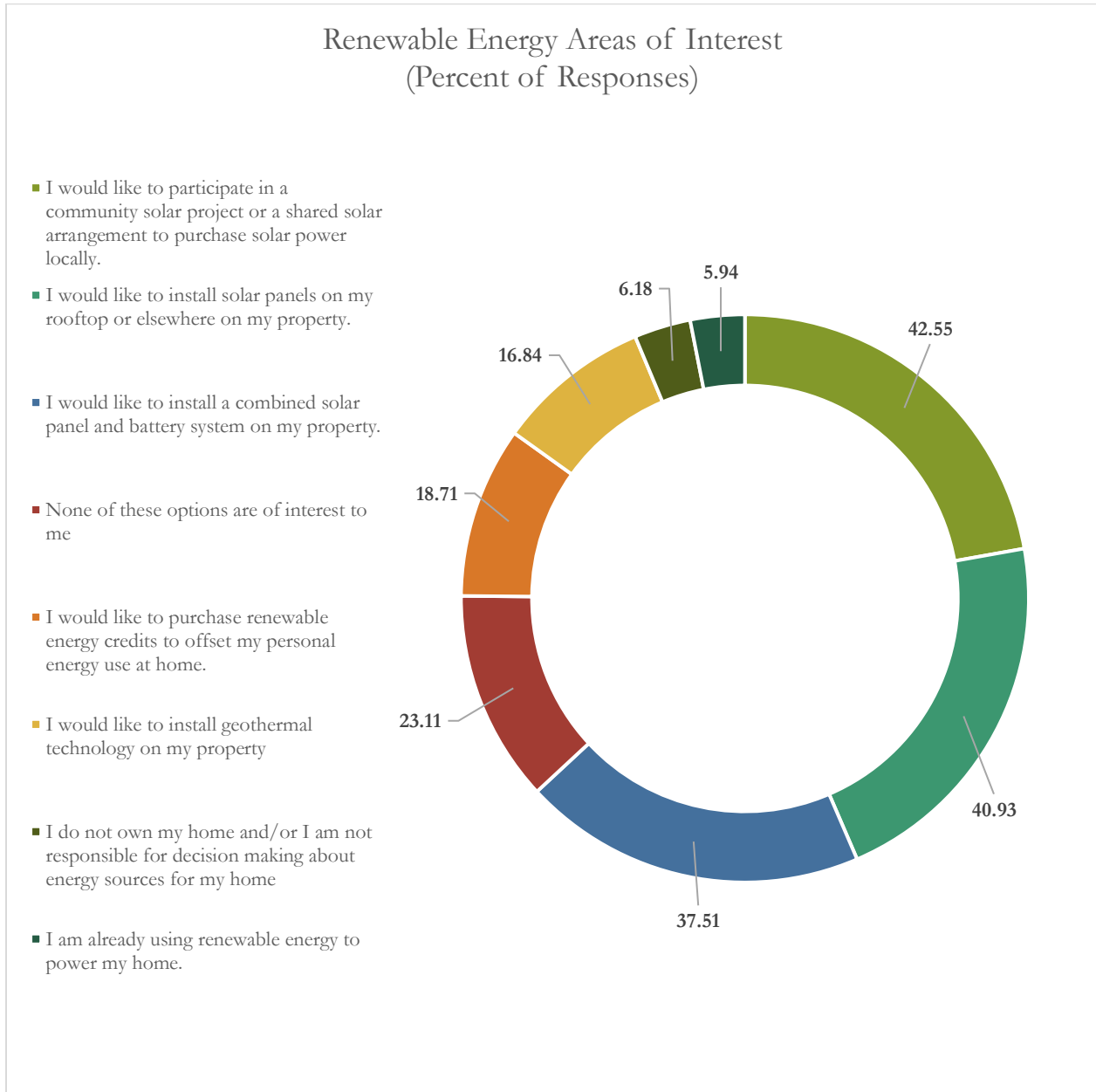
In response to this question, nearly 54 percent of respondents indicated that they are already making or have recently made DIY energy-saving improvements to their homes. As with question one, there is a strong showing for financial support from the county as a potential driver of DIY action at home. This support could come in the form of an incentive, a rebate, or free supplies. This suggests that more public outreach is needed to raise awareness of existing county programs that provide free supplies and guidance on how to make weatherization and other energy-saving improvements in a residential environment.

Respondents indicated nearly equal preference for information from the county or a reputable partner on how to complete DIY projects in a safe and cost-effective manner, and for free hands-on assistance from a qualified volunteer or professional to ensure their improvements are wise and

effective. A smaller percentage of respondents expressed interest in information from the county or a nonprofit partner on potential cost savings and return on investment for these improvements.

### Question Three: Renewable Energy Areas of Interest

*Many Fairfax County residents have expressed interest in using alternative or renewable energy sources to power their homes. Which, if any, of the following options are of interest to you in the near term (within five years)? Please select all that apply.*



When asked about renewable energy options and areas of interest, more than 40 percent of respondents indicated they are interested in participating in a community solar or shared solar arrangement, and/or that they would like to install solar panels on their property. This question did not address the hurdles that stand in the way of many residents taking these steps – namely that

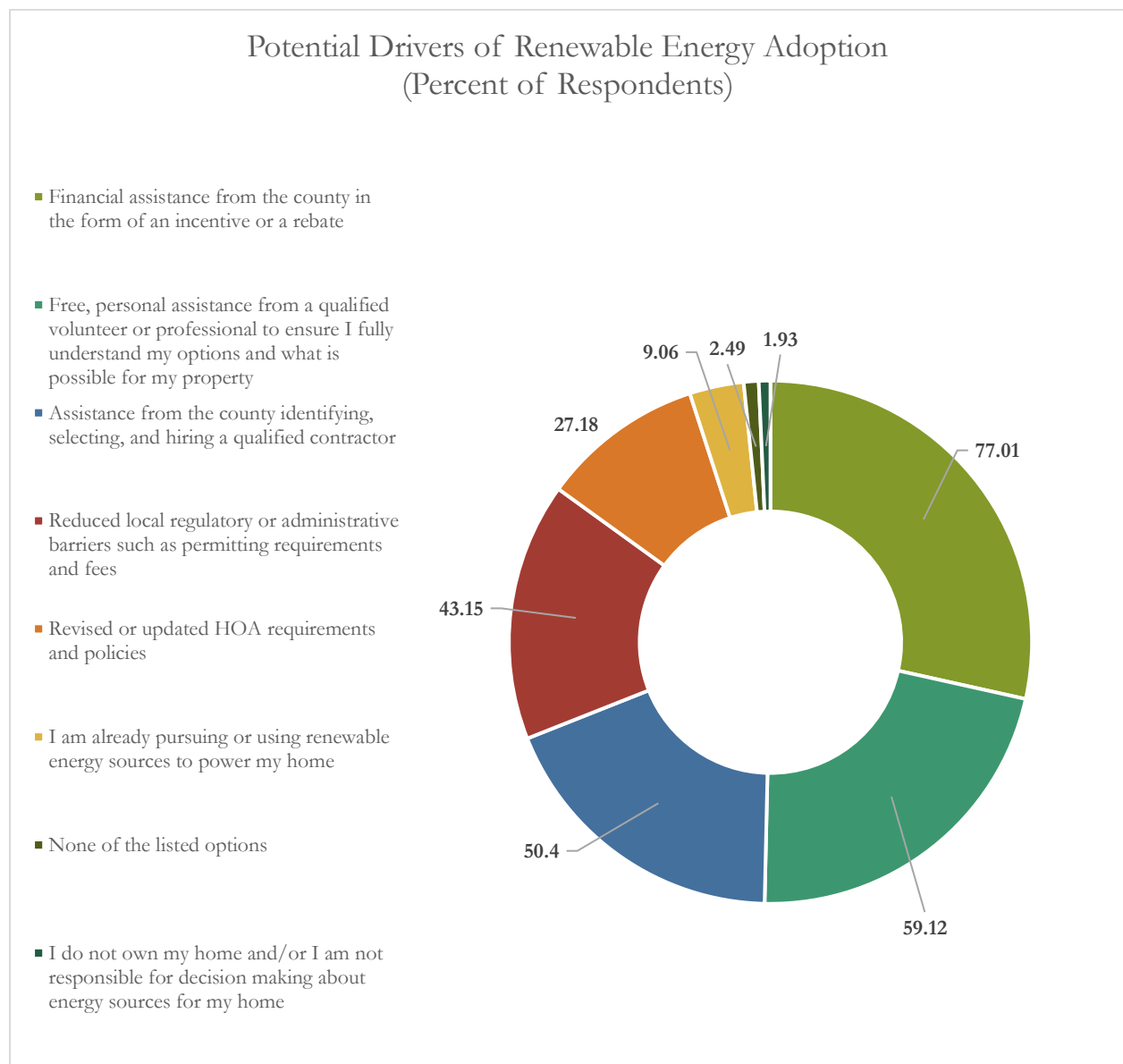


many HOAs or other property associations do not allow for the installation of solar panels on single family homes, townhomes, or condos.

Nearly 40 percent of respondents indicated that they would be interested in installing battery storage on their property to accompany a solar array or system. Respondents were interested in renewable energy credits and geothermal to a lesser extent (18.71 percent and 16.84 percent respectively). More than 23 percent of respondents indicated that none of the renewable energy solutions presented in this question interested them, while nearly six percent of respondents reported that they are already using renewable energy to power their homes.

### Question Four: Drivers of Renewable Energy Adoption

*Which, if any, of the following would make it possible for you to pursue renewable energy sources to power your home in the next five years? Please select all that apply.*



When asked what would make it possible for them to pursue renewable energy solutions for their home, far and away the most popular response was that financial assistance from the county in the form of an incentive or a rebate would make a difference. More than 77 percent of respondents indicated a preference for this option, suggesting that the cost of installing a solar system is prohibitively expensive for the majority of Fairfax County homeowners. The county does participate in the annual Solarize NOVA campaign, making solar arrays and battery storage available to residents and business owners at a discount. Perhaps with more public exposure this initiative can help to address the need for financial assistance expressed by the respondents to this question.

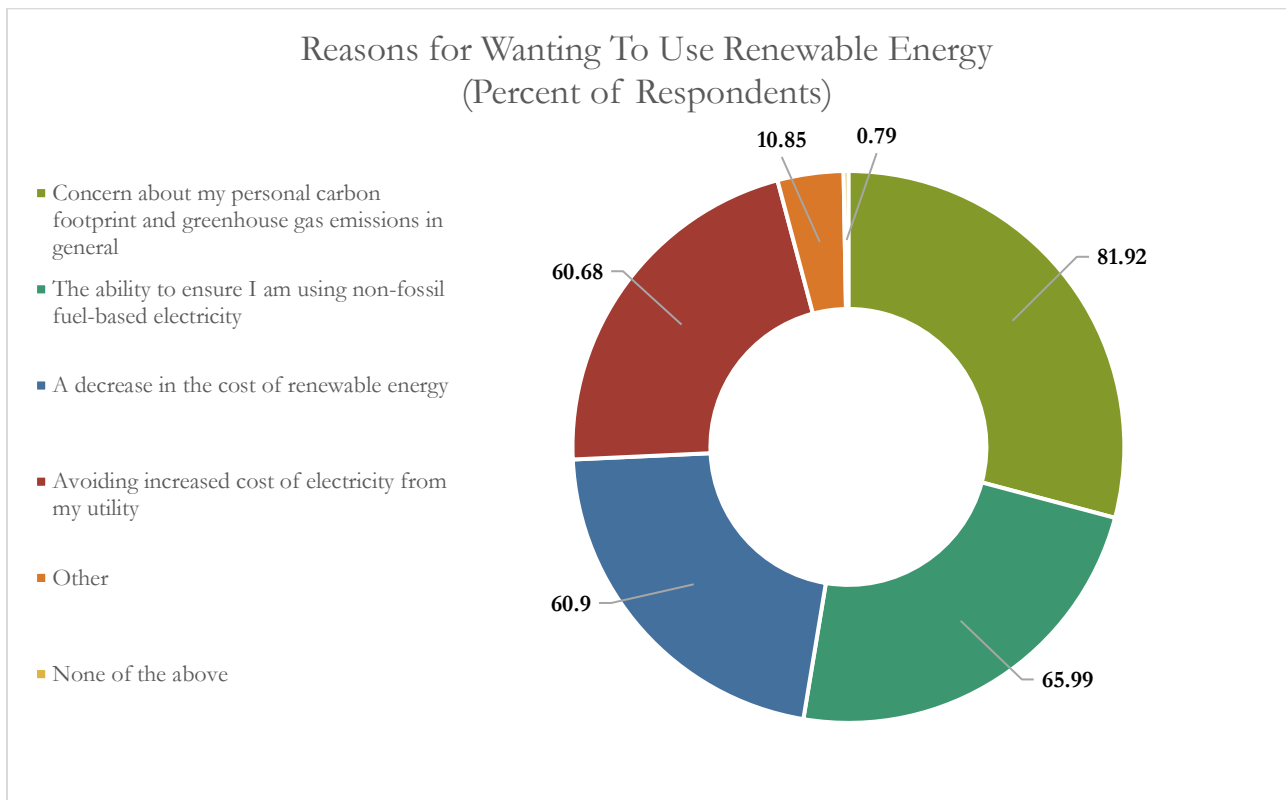
Secondary drivers of renewable energy adoption included assistance from the county or a qualified professional assessing the options for renewable energy installation on a particular property and hiring a qualified contractor. These are two areas of concern also addressed by the existing Solarize initiative.

More than 43 percent of respondents indicated that existing regulatory and administrative requirements and fees are prohibitive and that a change in these requirements would make it possible for them to pursue renewable energy for their homes. Additionally, 27 percent of respondents cited HOA restrictions or requirements as a barrier in their decision making around installing and using renewable energy.

Interestingly, more than nine percent of respondents to this question said they are already using renewable energy to power their homes, in contrast to the six percent who responded similarly to question three. This can be explained by the fact that not every respondent answered every question in the survey.

## Question Five: Motivation for Using Renewable Energy

*Which, if any, of the following reasons would drive your decision to pursue renewable energy sources for your home?  
Please select all that apply.*



The final question in the energy survey looked at the motivation or inspiration behind county residents' desire to pursue renewable energy for their homes. A strong majority of respondents to this question stated that concern for their personal carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions in general would be a motivating factor, were they to use renewable energy at home. A majority also cited the ability to ensure they are not using fossil fuel-based electricity as a contributing factor in their decision making.

Cost concerns also feature prominently in decision making around renewable energy. Nearly 61 percent of respondents indicated that avoiding increased cost of electricity from their incumbent utility and/or the declining cost of renewable energy technology would contribute to a decision to use renewable energy at home.

Nearly 11 percent of respondents selected "other" in response to this question and were given the opportunity to describe their motivations in an open text box. Examples of answers given include wanting to be free of power outages, being more self-reliant, and wanting to be more independent of the grid in general.

## The Transportation, Development, and Waste Survey

The sister of the energy survey described in the previous pages, the transportation, development, and waste survey contained four multiple choice questions and one open-ended question. This survey sought to understand public opinion on key issues relevant to the work of the CECAP subgroup on transportation, development, and waste. The questions asked pertained to potential strategies for addressing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in these sectors. A total of 951 individuals responded to the transportation, development, and waste survey.

From the greenhouse gas inventory developed to support the CECAP planning process, it is clear that transportation sources are a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Fairfax County. The survey included two questions specific to transportation. The first asked respondents about their interest in purchasing an electric vehicle in the near term and what it would take for them to make that step. The second was open-ended and asked respondents to share their opinions about what it would take to reduce personal vehicle use in Fairfax County in general. The comments received from respondents are summarized in this section of the report and are provided in full at the conclusion of the report, in Appendix B.

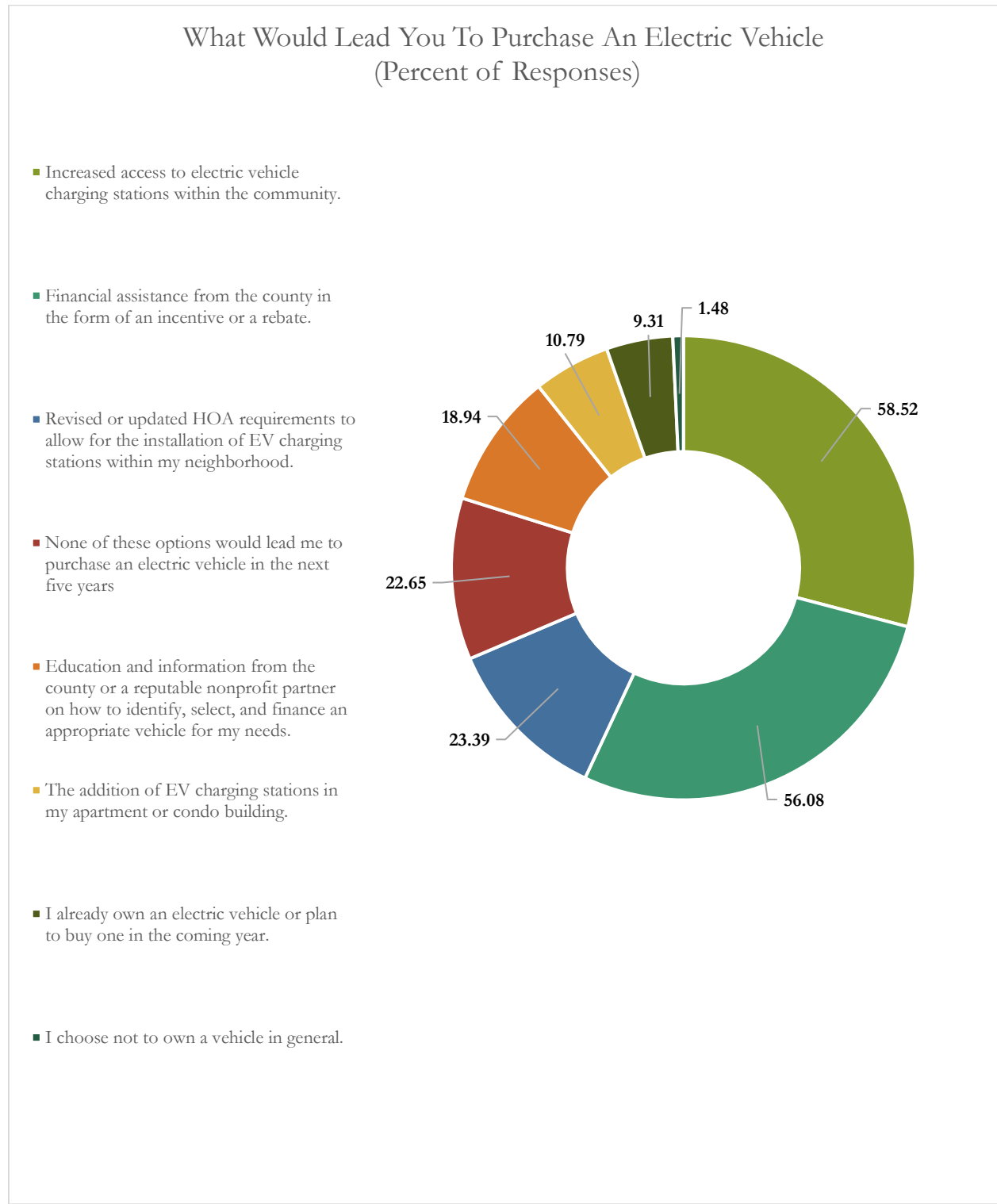
The third and fourth questions in the survey related to development and asked respondents to share their preferences and opinions around creating a more connected, sustainable community within Fairfax County. One question cited examples of existing areas of mixed-use development within the county and asked if this sort of development was appealing to respondents. Another asked respondents to select from a series of sustainable development practices that could, conceivably, make Fairfax County more connected.

Finally, the survey included one question on waste management. This question simply asked respondents about any points of frustration they have with the waste collection and management systems currently in place in the county. Respondents were given the option to indicate that none of the listed possible points of frustration were applicable to them.

While this survey was short and high-level, the results reveal potential paths forward for the CECAP Working Group as they conclude their planning effort. As CECAP moves into its implementation phase, the preferences expressed by respondents to this survey may help to guide the activities and offerings of county offices and various partners.

## Question One: Purchasing an Electric Vehicle

*Which, if any, of the following options would lead you to purchase an electric vehicle in the next five years? Please select all that apply.*



It is widely acknowledged that Fairfax County is a “driving county” with personal vehicle use among the top factors contributing to our collective carbon footprint. This question sought to understand what it would take for individuals to choose to purchase an electric vehicle in the near term. At the top of the list of potential drivers of electric vehicle adoption was increased access to electric vehicle charging stations throughout the community (58.52 percent of respondents). Coming in at a close second was financial assistance from the county in the form of an incentive or a rebate (56.08 percent of respondents).

Nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that revised or updated HOA requirements would make a difference in their decision about whether to purchase an electric vehicle (23.39 percent of respondents). More than 10 percent of respondents said the addition of charging stations at their apartment or condo building would have an impact on their decision. Approximately a fifth of respondents stated that information or education on how to identify, select, and finance an appropriate vehicle for their needs would sway them (18.94 percent).

Finally, nearly 10 percent of respondents stated that they already own an electric vehicle or plan to buy one in the near term (9.31 percent), and a small fraction of respondents (1.48 percent) shared that they choose not to own a vehicle in general.

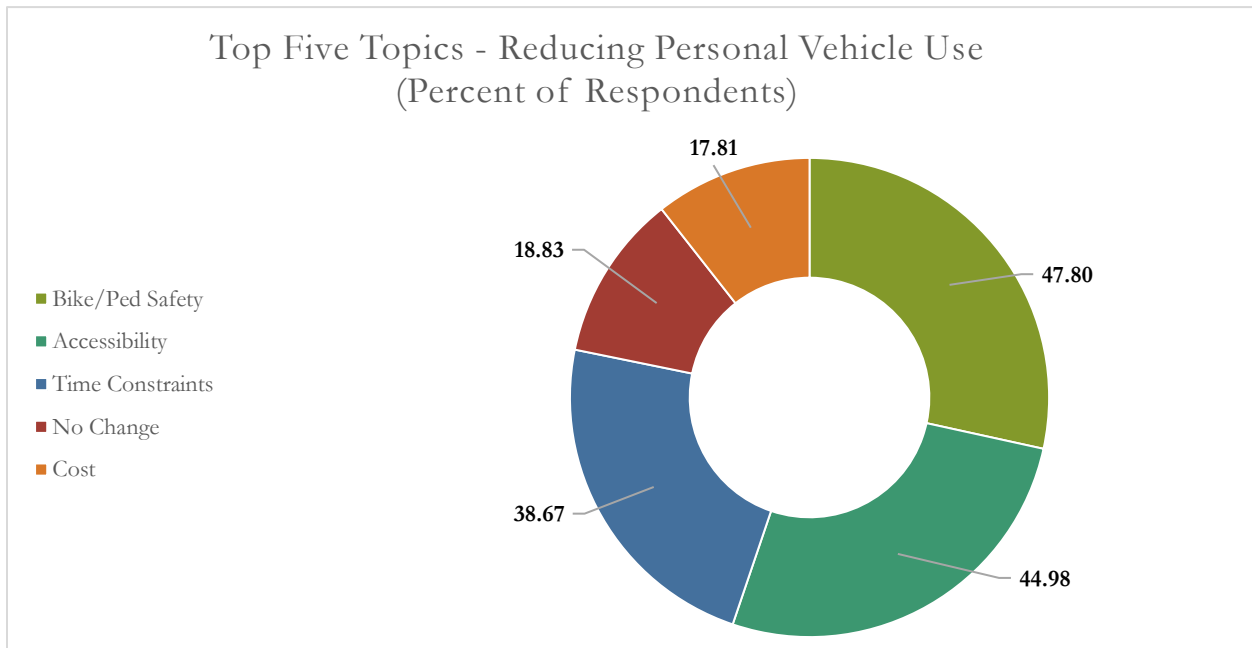
## Question Two: Reducing Personal Vehicle Use

*In your own words, please use the space below to share your thoughts on what it would take to decrease the use of personal vehicles in Fairfax County, and to increase the use of public transportation and other transit options. Please speak from your personal experience – what would it take for you to consider driving less?*

In this round of public engagement for the CECAP, members of the public were asked to identify what it would take to reduce their use of a personal vehicle and increase use of public or alternative modes of transportation. All told, 887 comments on transit and transportation were received and categorized. Individuals identified a number of existing challenges related to the use of public or alternative transportation, while several members of the public offered suggestions to improve transit options throughout the county. In addition, a number of respondents stated that their use of personal vehicles could not decrease, either because they had already achieved significant reductions in vehicle miles traveled, or because they could not or would not adopt alternatives. Overall themes from the transportation survey responses are highlighted and summarized below.

### TOP FIVE COMMENT CATEGORIES

Of the almost 900 comments received on transit and transportation, five major themes emerged regarding existing challenges with the public transit system and what it would take to reduce personal vehicle use. These themes included bicycle and pedestrian safety, access to public transportation, time constraints with existing public transit options, an inability or unwillingness to decrease use of personal vehicles, and cost of public transit.



Of the comments received, members of the public most frequently mentioned bicycle, pedestrian, and general road safety. In particular, in order to reduce personal vehicle use, 228 individuals cited a need for increased safety measures for walkers and bikers. An additional 196 respondents identified a need for sidewalks, trails, or supplementary bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in order to safely and efficiently walk or bike to their destinations.

When it comes to decreasing personal vehicle use and increasing use of public transit, accessibility was the second most referenced challenge by survey takers. Just under 400 respondents identified public transportation accessibility issues of some kind, with many suggesting what it would take to increase their access to and use of public transit. Lack of access to a public transit station or bus stop was mentioned 252 times. Seventy respondents suggested that developing more mixed-use or planned communities and increasing affordable housing options near transit hubs would address some of these accessibility issues. For those just outside of walking or biking distance from a major transit station, 28 individuals expressed a need for first mile/last mile shuttle service, while 13 others indicated a need for transit parking at their local Metro station. Other accessibility issues included those with mobility challenges who felt they could not safely or conveniently use existing transit options, and those that felt route planning information, particularly for buses, was inadequate and impeded their use of public transit.

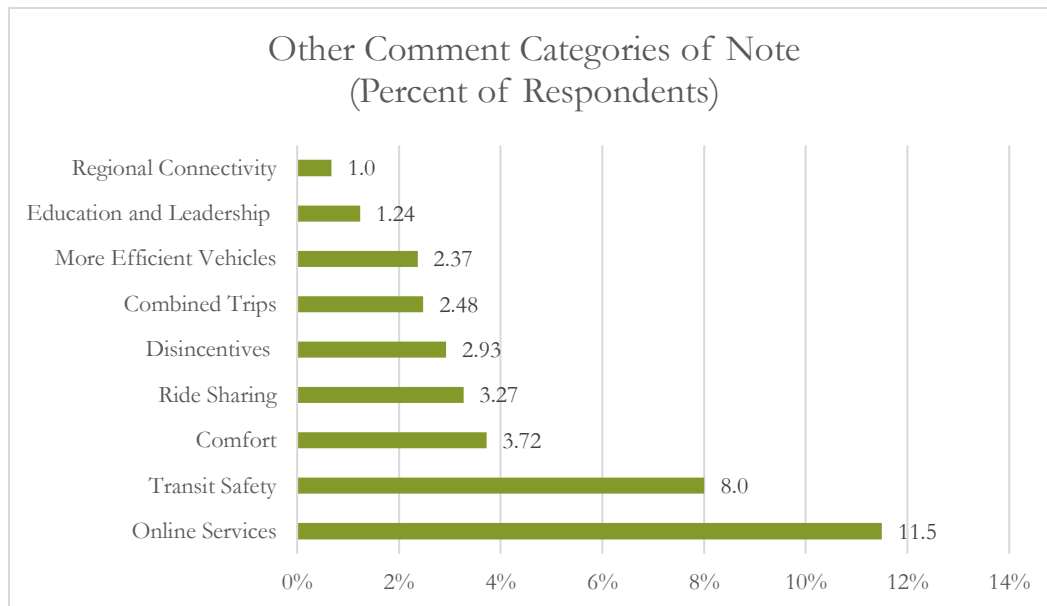
Members of the public, particularly those that identified as commuters, expressed concerns regarding time constraints with public transit. Over 120 individuals noted that taking public transit lengthened the time it took them to get to their intended destination. Four respondents suggested that the county add dedicated bus lanes to reduce some of these commuter times. Ninety-five individuals considered bus and Metrorail too unreliable to use, while 94 respondents stated that bus and Metrorail options at their start or end points did not run frequently enough to make public transit a convenient option. Finally, on this topic, 28 individuals with nontraditional commuter hours expressed a need for more non-peak public transit options.

Several respondents noted that there was nothing they would do to reduce their use of a personal vehicle. One hundred and one respondents stated that they were unable or unwilling to reduce their use of a personal vehicle. Another 66 respondents had already adopted a number of measures to reduce their vehicle miles traveled in a personal vehicle and did not believe further reductions could be made.

Finally, cost was frequently cited as a deterrent to use of public transit. In order to increase use of bus or Metrorail, over 140 individuals cited a need for lower fares and parking fees, particularly when their routes required payment for all three services. Sixteen respondents identified a need for subsidies or rebates to increase their use of alternative transit options.



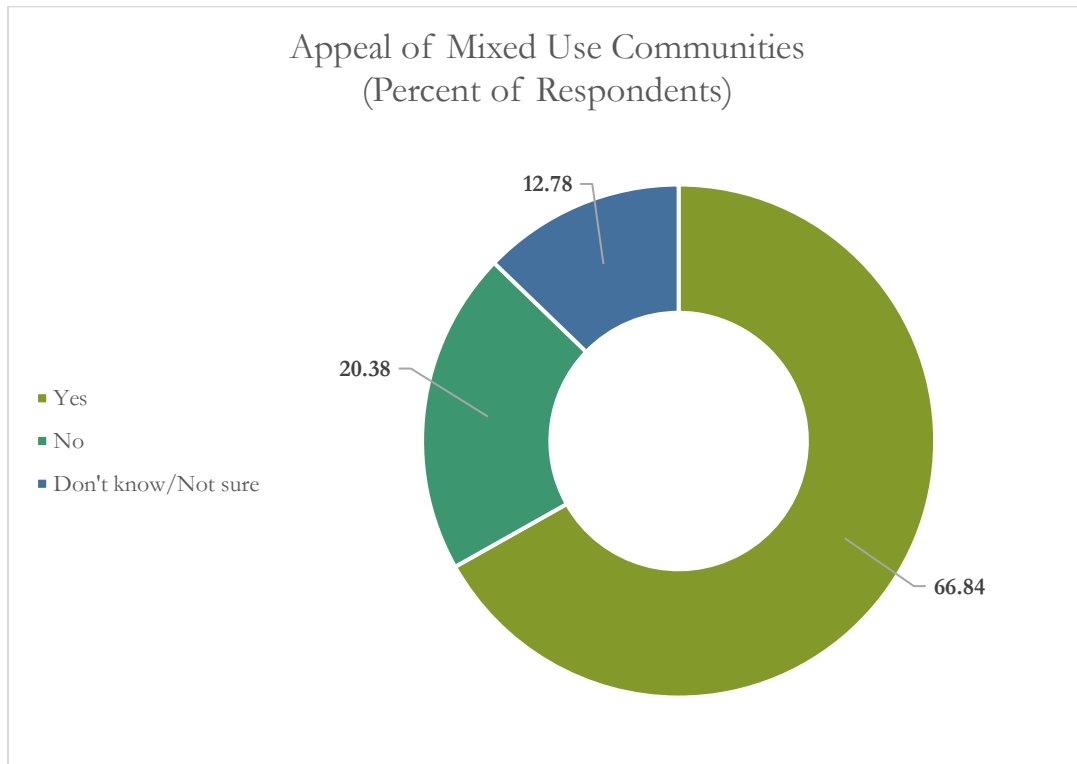
## OTHER COMMENTS OF NOTE



While cited less frequently, respondents identified a number of other challenges and potential solutions regarding alternative transportation options. Notably, 77 respondents suggested more employers offer (or continue to offer following the COVID-19 pandemic) telework or alternative work options. Along the same line, 25 respondents indicated they would like to increase their use of, or continue to take advantage of, home delivery options and online services or activities, services which increased significantly with the onset of the pandemic. Safety on public transit, including public health concerns surrounding the pandemic, was cited over 70 times. Comfort, cleanliness and convenience when shopping (particularly when carrying items in bulk), collectively, was noted as a deterrent to public transit over 30 times. Remaining comments suggested the county and other stakeholders increase ride sharing options; offer more disincentives, including higher gas taxes, for personal vehicles; encourage others to combine trips for needed items or activities; encourage the use of more efficient vehicles, including electric vehicles; increase education and county leadership on public transit use; and increase regional connectivity for existing public transit options.

### Question Three: Mixed-Use Development

*Many Fairfax County residents have expressed an interest in more walkable, connected, mixed use communities, like the Mosaic District and Reston Town Center. Does this sort of development appeal to you?*



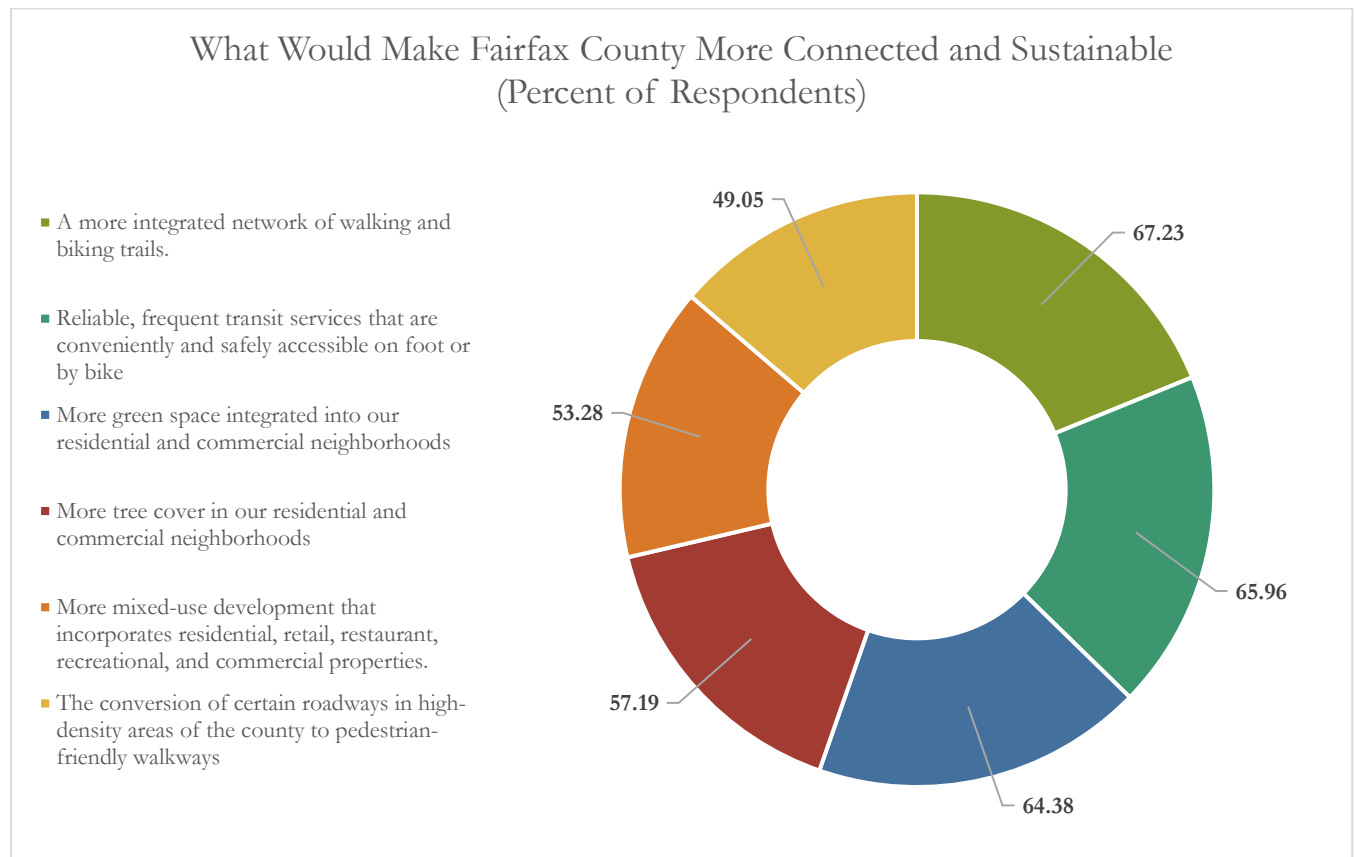
Asked if mixed-use development like the Mosaic District and Reston Town Center is appealing, the majority of respondents said 'yes.' While the transportation, development, and waste survey did not ask for justification for the responses to this question, comments from the open-ended survey related to mixed-use development seem to suggest that those in favor of mixed-use communities find the convenience of these types of developments attractive. Some people also commented on the fact that these developments are inherently more sustainable than suburban sprawl where residential, commercial, and recreational properties are distant from each other.

Those who oppose mixed-use development seem to take issue with the fact that it does not accommodate their preferred lifestyle with access to private green space. Some also mention the fact that these types of communities are sporadic in the county, and therefore people must drive to them to take advantage of their amenities. They feel this defeats the purpose of the mixed-use development.

More than 12 percent of respondents to this question were unsure of their opinion about mixed-use development. This could indicate an opening for public education and outreach about the benefits of more walkable, integrated urban and suburban development.

## Question Four: Creating a Connected and Sustainable Community

*In your opinion, which of the following features would make Fairfax County a more connected and sustainable community? Please select all that apply.*



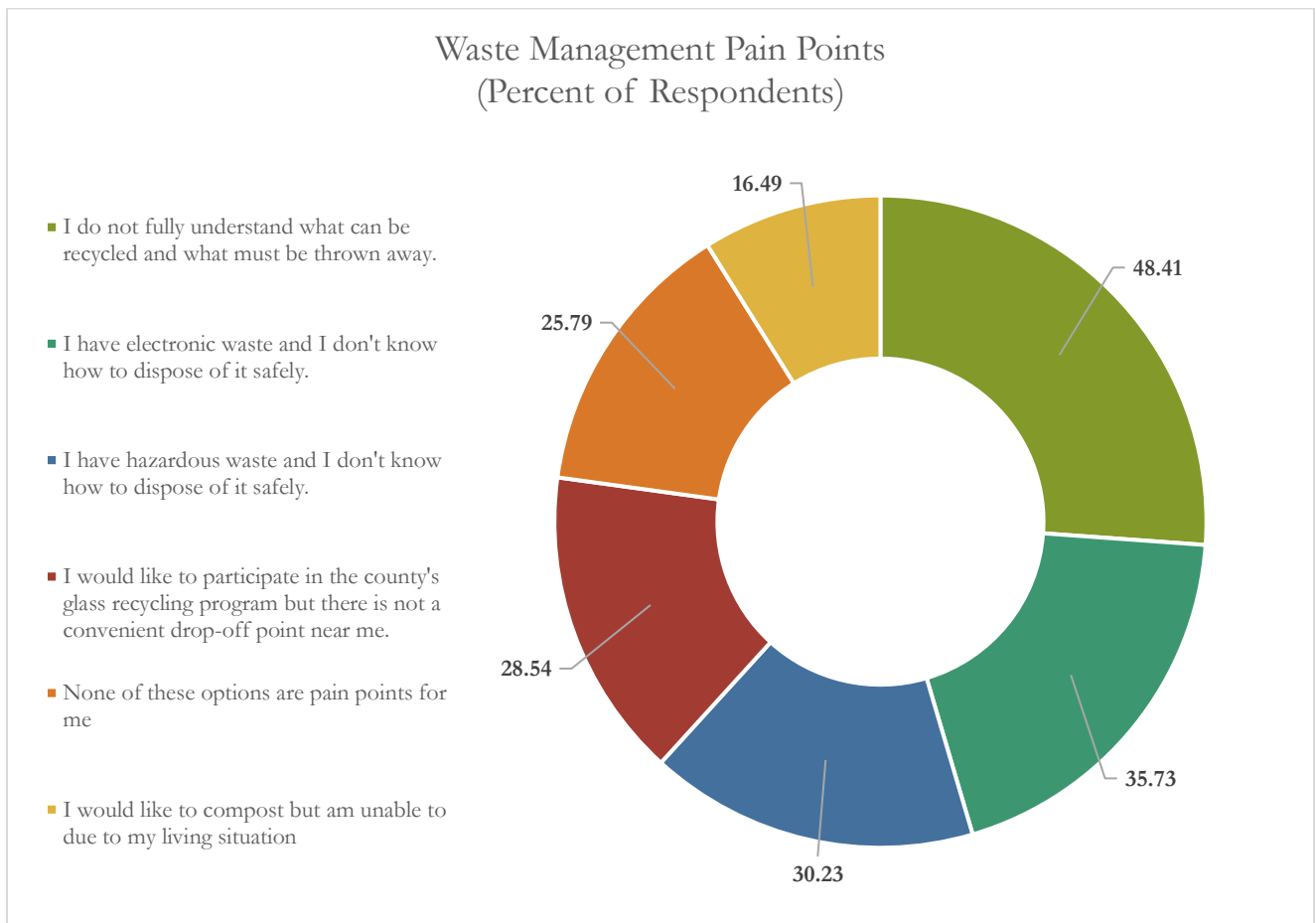
The fourth question in the transportation, development, and waste survey listed six potential sustainable development practices that could lead to the creation of a more connected, integrated community. Respondents were asked to select all of the options they felt would achieve this end. Interestingly, the responses were relatively equally distributed with respondents showing a preference for a more integrated network of walking and biking trails, more green space in residential and commercial neighborhoods, and more reliable and frequent transition services.

Support for mixed-use development was strong with more than 53 percent of respondents indicating a preference for this practice. Just under 50 percent of respondents expressed interest in the conversion of specific roadways to pedestrian-friendly walkways or plazas.

This question was meant to gauge a gut reaction from residents, as not much context or background information on the impact of these practices on community connectedness or sustainability was provided. The results indicate a general interest in more sustainable community development. It's possible that a public education campaign around these practices, their benefits, and the realities of deploying them in Fairfax County, would help to reinforce support and increase public interest over time.

## Question Five: Waste Management Pain Points

*When it comes to waste management in the county, which, if any, of the following represent your greatest points of frustration or concern? Please select all that apply.*



To round out the transportation, development, and waste survey, a final question was posed regarding waste management practices in the county. While we know that waste reduction is generally the most impactful way to address greenhouse gas emissions from waste management, it's important to consider the consumer perspective on the management options currently available so that offerings can be tailored and adjusted in response to residents' needs.

Recycling is an ongoing area of confusion for many members of the Fairfax County community. Residents want to recycle right but struggle to understand what can truly be recycled and what should be tossed in the trash. The fact that nearly 50 percent of respondents indicated a lack of understanding of what should be recycled in their curbside bins is consistent with this trend.

Specialty recycling concerns ranked second to curbside recycling issues; respondents indicated some frustration with proper disposal of hazardous and electronic waste. Nearly a third of respondents expressed interest in participating in the county's successful glass recycling program, but cited lack of convenience as a barrier to entry. A smaller, though not negligible, percentage of respondents selected composting as an area of interest, expressing that their current living situation precludes them from having a personal composting bin.

Public education and outreach are the antidotes to many of the concerns cited by respondents in this question. The county does offer hazardous waste and e-waste recycling programs, and there is information available to residents about what is recyclable versus what must be thrown away. Increasing the reach of this information in the community could help address the issues raised in this question.

## The Open-Ended Survey

In addition to releasing topic-specific surveys on energy, transportation, development, and waste issues, a general, open-ended survey was put in the field in the February/March time frame. This survey sought to capture public opinion on the CECAP at a high level, and to solicit comments and suggestions for the Working Group. The survey also asked respondents to describe any actions they are already taking or are likely to take in the near term to reduce their personal carbon footprint. In total, 460 individuals responded to the open-ended survey, though not every respondent provided answers to every question.

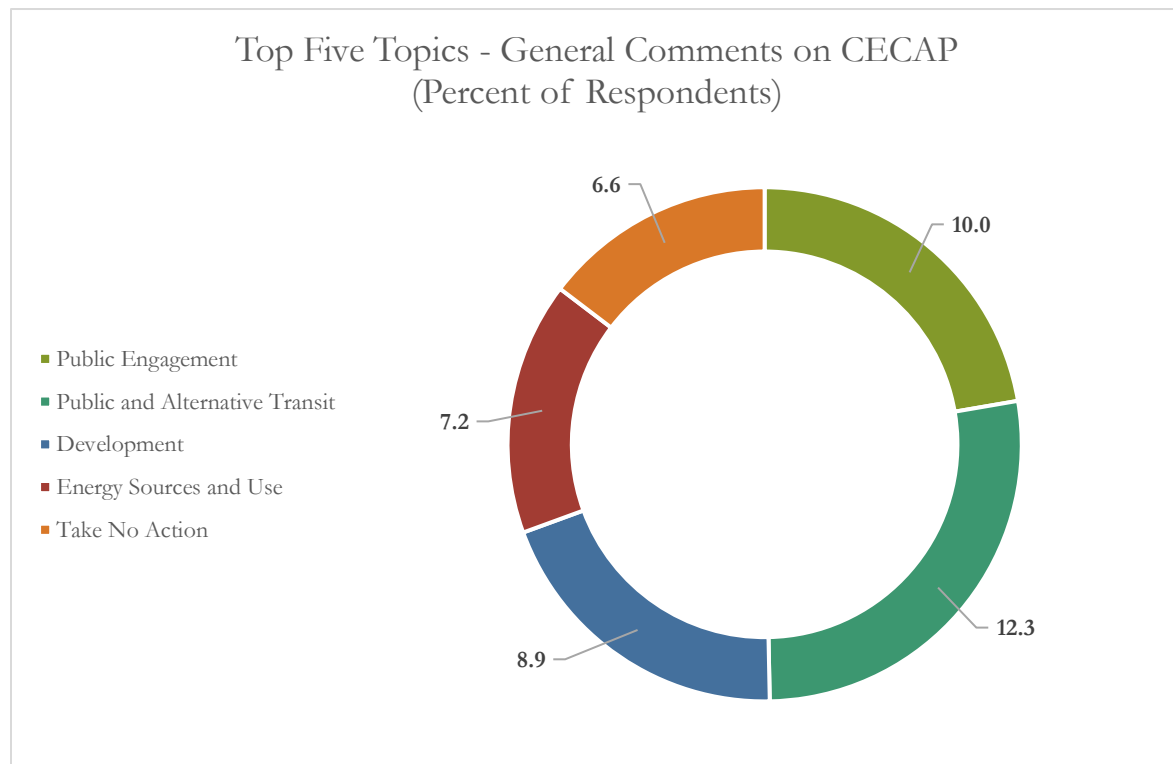
Several themes emerged in the responses to each of the three questions posed in this survey. Those themes are illustrated and described in detail below.

### Question One: General Comments on the CECAP

*Please use the space below to share any general comments you have about the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan.*

The first question in the open-ended survey invited general feedback from the community on the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan. This question was designed to capture responses across a wide range of topics, and to provide a glimpse into the level of familiarity the public has with CECAP and its stated objectives.

### TOP FIVE COMMENT CATEGORIES



Of the nearly 350 comments received in response to this question, five areas of interest rose to the top. Chief among the concerns expressed in the free form comments were items relating to public

and alternative transit. This included comments regarding the availability, affordability, and accessibility of public transit options in the county, specifically bus and Metro service. Also captured in this category were comments on walkability and bikeability in the county, and the need for increased attention to pedestrian safety. Finally, this category of comments included thoughts on the need for more electric vehicle infrastructure throughout the county to facilitate a transition away from fossil fuel-powered cars and trucks.

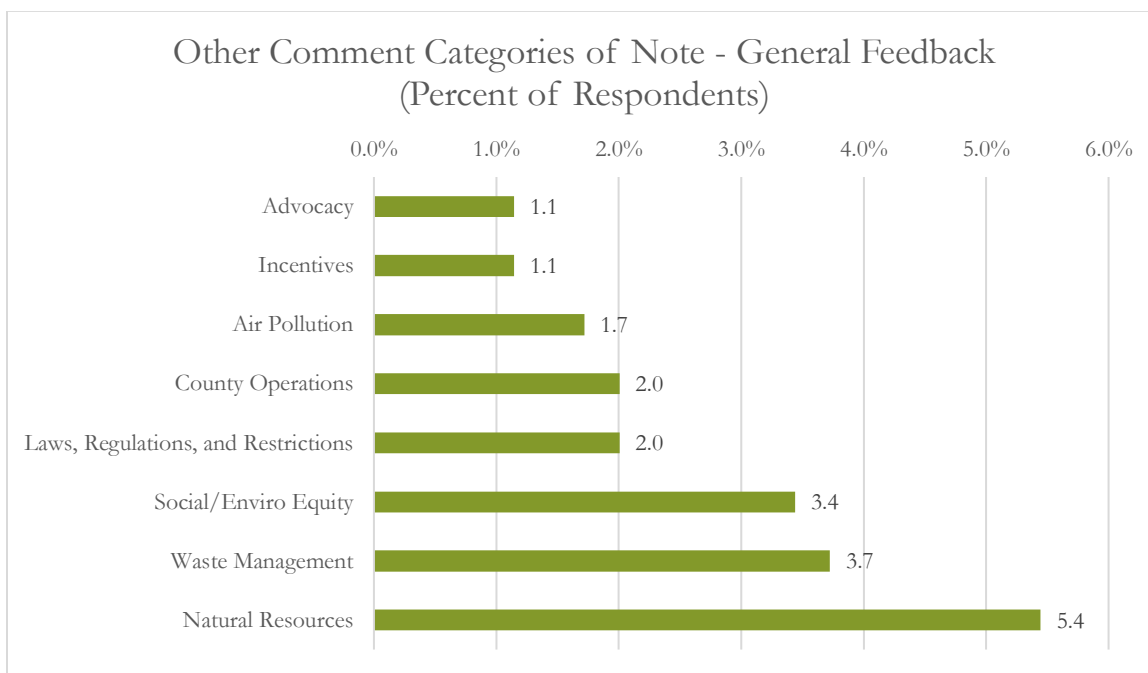
Second to comments on alternative and public transit were calls for greater public education and outreach, both around climate change generally and around CECAP more specifically. Respondents requested more information and offered suggestions for ways to spread the word about the community climate planning effort.

Next up in the top five were comments related to development issues. These comments ran the gamut from land use issues, to calls for more green space, to reactions to mixed use development. A number of respondents called for limits on development in the county, citing concerns about the loss of tree canopy, increased density, and lower quality of life in general.

Comments on energy sources and use came in fourth among the most popular topics. This category encompassed comments on the availability of renewable sources of energy and calls for the county to embrace renewables more aggressively, to expressions of interest in community solar, to concerns about both residential and commercial building energy use.

Finally, the fifth most common topic raised in response to this question was a call for the county to divert resources away from climate planning. This category was a mix of comments about the perceived futility of addressing climate change at a local level, and concerns about taxes increasing due to recommendations that may come out of CECAP.

## OTHER COMMENTS OF NOTE



In addition to the comments reflected in the top five categories, another eight groupings of comments were worth noting. More than five percent of respondents to this question cited concerns about natural resources, such as tree cover, native/invasive species, and watershed management. Also of concern to survey respondents were waste management issues such as recycling, composting, hazardous waste, and litter. While not all of these issue areas pertain directly to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, they do provide a window into the priorities of the community.

A dozen respondents to this question mentioned concerns about social equity and the need for CECAP to be a plan that works for everyone in the county, not just the affluent. A handful of respondents brought forward concerns about local zoning and development ordinances or HOA policies being counterproductive to the aims of CECAP. Some respondents focused their comments on county operations, including building energy and the electrification of the county fleet.

Air pollution issues, including gas powered leaf blowers were raised by half a dozen respondents. A small handful of individuals also shared thoughts on the need for incentives to support CECAP strategies, and a similar number of people registered calls for advocacy at both the state and federal levels.

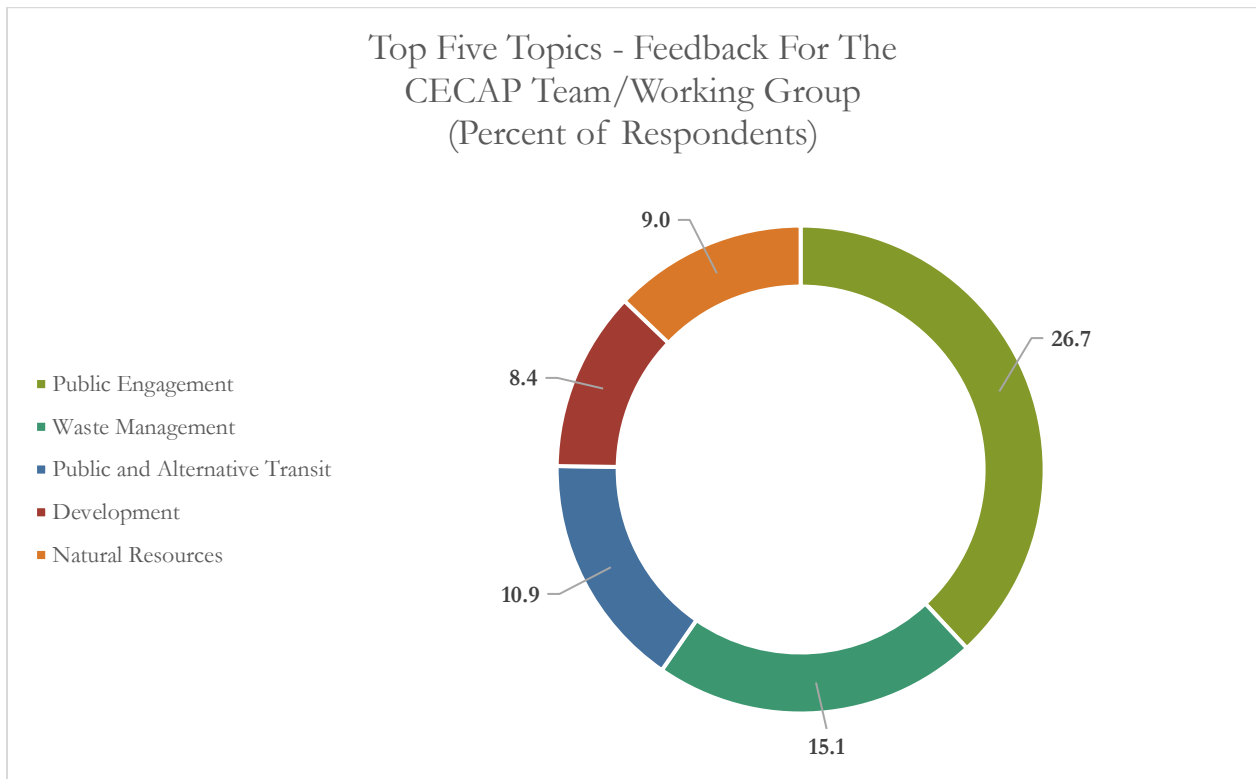


## Question Two: Specific Suggestions for the Working Group

*Please use the space below to share any specific suggestions you have for the CECAP team and Working Group.*

Similar to the first question, the second asked for feedback without prescribing a particular line of thinking or setting a direction for respondents. All told, 311 individuals responded to this question, providing additional insight into the preferences of the public at large. This question provided an additional opportunity for respondents to share their ideas and suggestions for the team developing CECAP. Not surprisingly, the responses to this question largely mirrored the responses to the first, with three of the top five categories matching.

### TOP FIVE COMMENT CATEGORIES



It is notable that the percentage of respondents focused on a need for greater public education and outreach rose from 10 percent in response to the first question, to nearly 27 percent in response to the second. In total, 83 individuals registered comments about their desire to see the county doing more to reach residents, businesses, and other stakeholders with messaging about CECAP and the county's climate goals and objectives.

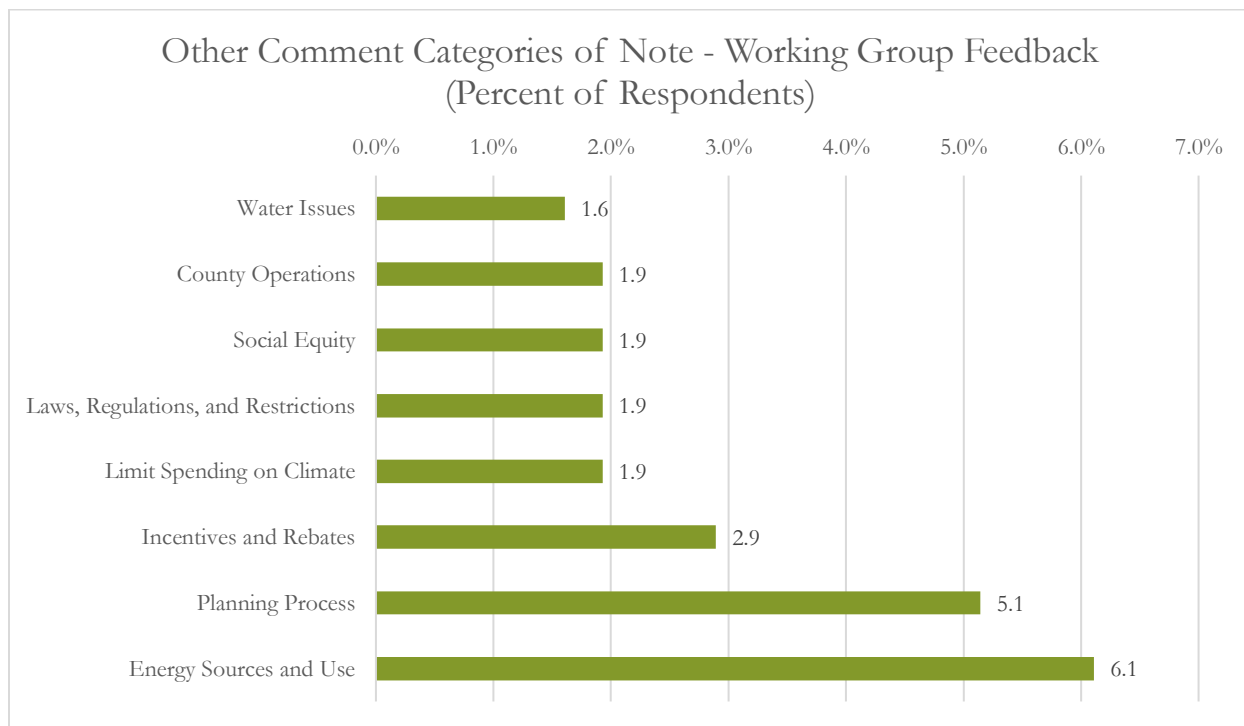
Waste management made the top five for this question with 47 respondents commenting on recycling, plastic bags, composting, waste management practices in the county, and food waste issues. Concerns about what can and cannot be recycled and the need to eliminate the use of plastic bags by county residents were common.

Public and alternative transit made the hit list once again with respondents sharing their concerns about the need to create more and safer opportunities for residents to walk and bike around the county. These comments also included reflections on the need for public transit to be more convenient and affordable across the region.

Development issues were also back for a second time, with concerns similar to those shared in response to the first question. Respondents called for lower density development, limits on development throughout the county, a renewed focus on green space, and a desire to see more mixed-use communities.

Finally, natural resource issues similar to those from question one returned. More than two dozen individuals commented on tree cover, wildlife protection, gardening issues, and invasive species removal. Again, aside from comments about the need for healthy urban forestry practices in the county, many of the comments did not directly relate to greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

### *OTHER COMMENTS OF NOTE*



Once again, in addition to the top five categories of comments, another eight categories were defined as part of the comment analysis. In the case of the specific feedback for the Working Group, commentary on energy sources and use ranked as the sixth most prominent issue. Just over five percent of respondents provided feedback on the planning process itself, making recommendations for sources of information and ways of evaluating options.

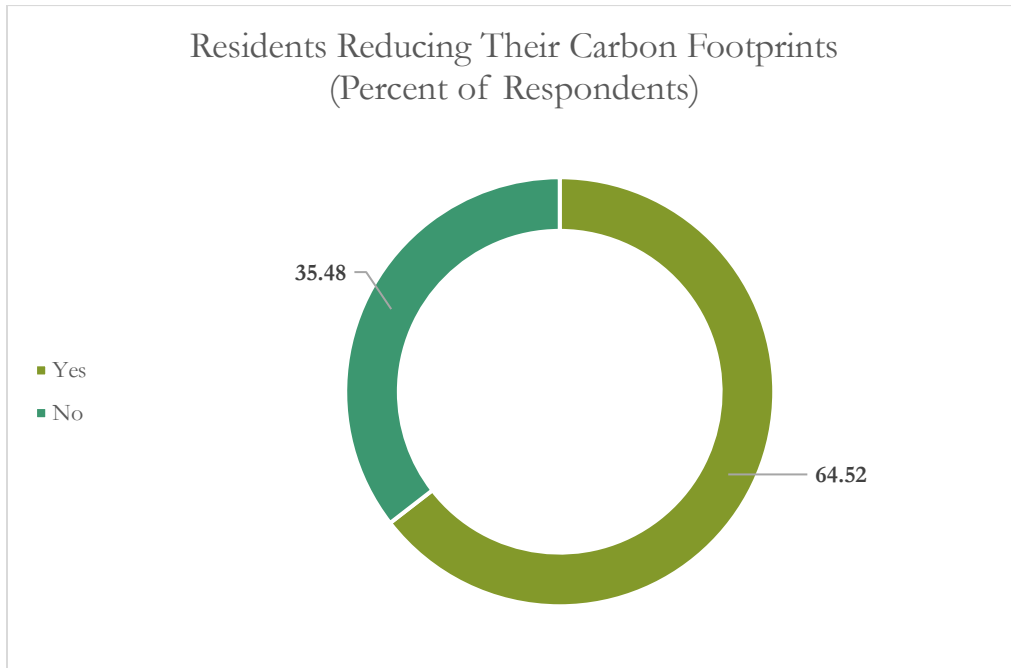
To a lesser extent, respondents mentioned the need for incentives and rebates to encourage voluntary action. A handful of respondents made mention of the need to limit county spending on climate planning and action. The same number mentioned barriers posed by existing county

regulations and restrictions, the need to address social equity with CECAP, and the fact that county operations should also meet aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals. Finally, a few respondents mentioned issues related to water management and planning.

### Question Three: Personal Carbon Footprint

*Are you actively working to reduce your carbon footprint?*

Survey respondents were asked, quite simply, whether they are currently taking any steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their personal decisions and activities. Nearly 65 percent of those who responded to this question indicated that they were consciously making an effort to reduce their personal carbon footprint. Approximately 36 percent stated that they were not taking steps to do so.

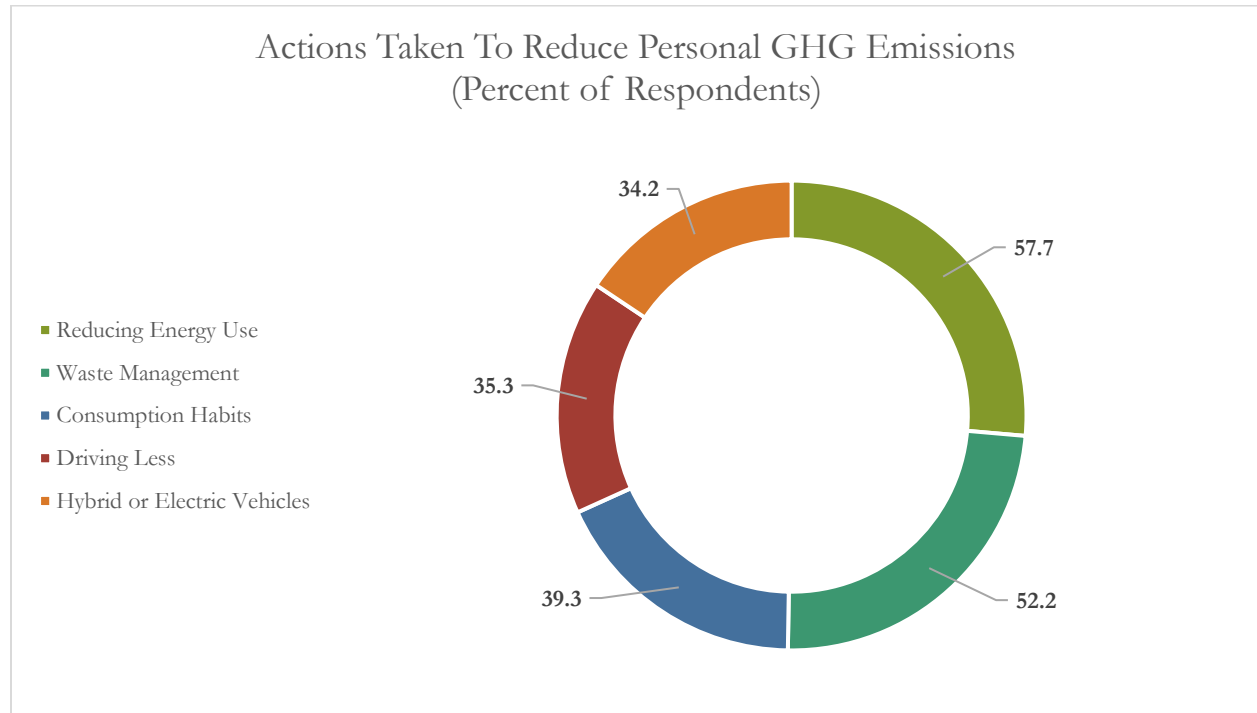


## Question Four: Methods of Reducing Personal Carbon Footprint

*Please describe how you are working to reduce your carbon footprint.*

As a follow up to question three, those who answered “yes” were asked to provide examples of the actions they are currently taking to reduce their personal greenhouse gas emissions. In total, 272 people responded to this question, offering a glimpse of the ways Fairfax County residents are already tackling emissions at the local level.

### TOP FIVE COMMENT CATEGORIES

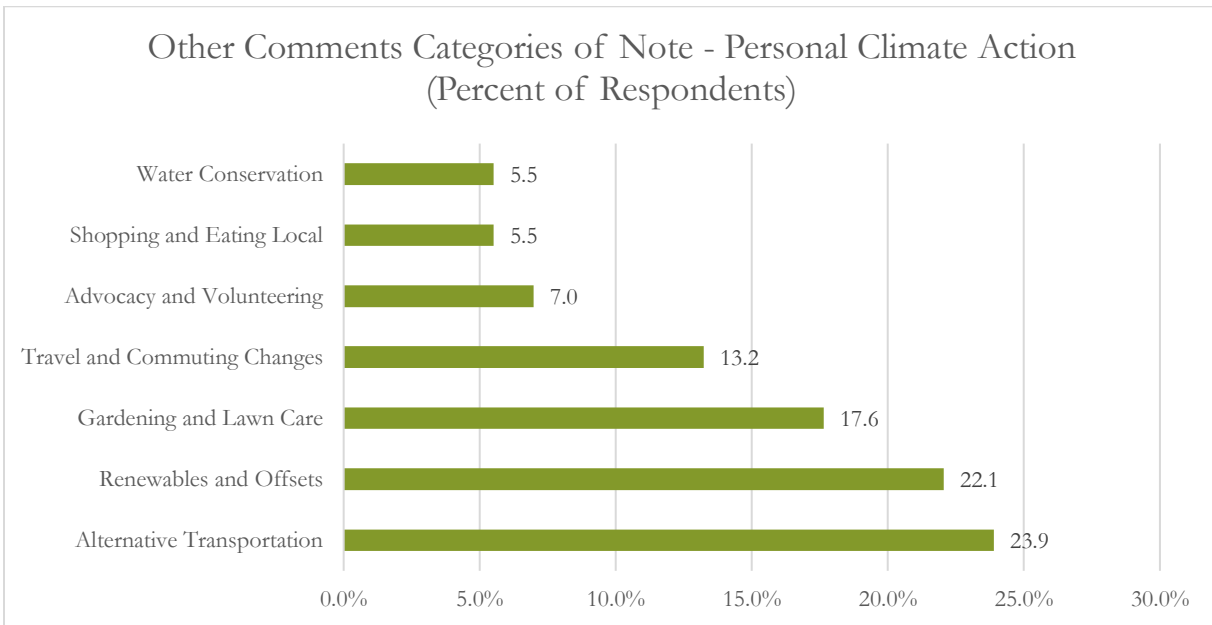


As before, the comments collected in response to this question were categorized and the top five categories are illustrated in the graph above. More than 57 percent of respondents mentioned taking steps to save energy at home. These included both energy efficiency and energy conservation measures, like installing insulation or turning off appliances and electronics when not in use. This category also included replacing lightbulbs with LEDs, using daylighting rather than turning on the lights, and having a home energy audit performed to assess areas for improvement.

Just behind energy savings, over 52 percent of respondents shared that they are consciously addressing waste in their lives by composting, recycling, and reducing food waste. Many of the same individuals mentioned proactively addressing their consumption habits by buying less, buying things used, reusing materials, and reducing their intake of meat or going vegetarian.

Driving less was a popular category as well, with 96 individuals mentioning that they are consciously trying to use their cars minimally to get to work, run errands, or engage in social activities. Electric and hybrid vehicles made the top five with 93 people sharing that they either own or are prepared to purchase a hybrid vehicle or an electric vehicle in the very near term.

## OTHER COMMENTS OF NOTE



In addition to the top five most popular topics, seven additional categories were identified as the responses to this question were analyzed. Nearly 24 percent of respondents shared that they walk, bike, or take public transit whenever possible to get where they need to go. Just over 22 percent of respondents commented about their use of solar or geothermal energy at home, or their purchase of renewable energy credits and carbon offsets.

Nearly 50 people shared thoughts about their efforts to grow their own food, to plant native species on their properties, or to help remove invasive species from the county. This category also included comments about avoiding the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. Three dozen respondents talked about their choice to telework (pandemic aside) and their decisions around travel – namely that they try to minimize or eliminate the need to fly.

To a lesser extent, respondents mentioned advocacy and volunteer activities, consciously shopping and eating local to avoid emissions from shipping and transportation of goods and using rain barrels or other water conservation techniques at home.

## Appendix A: Demographics

### Energy Survey Demographics

*Are you a resident of Fairfax County?*

Yes	98.68%
No	1.32%

*In which district do you live?*

Braddock	19.62%
Dranesville	12.74%
Hunter Mill	14.2%
Lee	6.2%
Mason	12.39%
Mount Vernon	7.23%
Providence	10.15%
Springfield	10.33%
Sully	7.14%

*How did you hear about the CECAP?*

Email from the county	23.96%
Email from another organization	23.44%
News media	6.07%
Social media	16.53%
From a friend or personal connection	17.45%
Other	12.56%

*How would you describe yourself? Please select all answers that apply.*

White	76.83%
Black or African American	1.94%
Hispanic or Latino/a	3.29%
Asian	4.38%
Middle Eastern or Northern African	0.84%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.34%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.67%
Prefer not to answer	12.97%
Other	3.2%

*What is your age?*

18-34	9.76%
35-54	30.7%
55 and older	50.21%
Prefer not to answer	9.34%

*How do you describe yourself?*

As a man	35.61%
As a woman	53.37%
As a non-binary person	0.67%
Another gender identity	0.34%
Don't know/not sure	0.76%
Prefer not to answer	9.26%

*What is your combined household income from all sources?*

Less than \$30,000	0.93%
\$30,000 to less than \$50,000	1.85%
\$50,000 to less than \$70,000	4.21%
\$70,000 to less than \$90,000	5.81%
\$90,000 to less than \$120,000	12.37%
\$120,000 to less than \$140,000	8.5%
\$140,000 to less than \$160,000	6.82%
\$160,000 or more	32.58%
Prefer not to answer	26.94%

## Transportation Survey Demographics

*Are you a resident of Fairfax County?*

Yes	98.52%
No	1.48%



*In which district do you live?*

Braddock	18.17%
Dranesville	13.93%
Hunter Mill	15.02%
Lee	5.33%
Mason	13.49%
Mount Vernon	7.83%
Providence	10.34%
Springfield	8.92%
Sully	6.96%

*How did you hear about the CECAP?*

Email from the county	21.32%
Email from another organization	24.2%
News media	6.82%
Social media	17.91%
From a friend or personal connection	17.06%
Other	12.69%

*How would you describe yourself? Please select all answers that apply.*

White	75.69%
Black or African American	1.71%
Hispanic or Latino/a	3.84%
Asian	4.05%
Middle Eastern or Northern African	0.85%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.32%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.85%
Prefer not to answer	14.61%
Other	2.99%

*What is your age?*

18-34	9.88%
35-54	28.8%
55 and older	51.01%
Prefer not to answer	10.31%

*How do you describe yourself?*

As a man	35.6%
As a woman	52.92%
As a non-binary person	0.64%
Another gender identity	0.43%
Don't know/not sure	0.21%
Prefer not to answer	10.2%

*What is your combined household income from all sources?*

Less than \$30,000	1.38%
\$30,000 to less than \$50,000	1.7%
\$50,000 to less than \$70,000	3.83%
\$70,000 to less than \$90,000	5.64%
\$90,000 to less than \$120,000	12.25%
\$120,000 to less than \$140,000	7.67%
\$140,000 to less than \$160,000	6.92%
\$160,000 or more	32.27%
Prefer not to answer	28.22%

## Open-Ended Survey Demographics

*Are you a resident of Fairfax County?*

Yes	98.59%
No	1.41%

*In which district do you live?*

Braddock	19.22%
Dranesville	15.33%
Hunter Mill	11.19%
Lee	4.14%
Mason	15.57%
Mount Vernon	7.54%
Providence	10.71%
Springfield	9.73%
Sully	6.57%

*How did you hear about the CECAP?*

Email from the county	23.5%
Email from another organization	26.86%
News media	6.95%
Social media	11.99%
From a friend or personal connection	19.18%
Other	11.51%

*How would you describe yourself? Please select all answers that apply.*

White	71.77%
Black or African American	2.15%
Hispanic or Latino/a	3.11%
Asian	3.59%
Middle Eastern or Northern African	0.96%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.24%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.96%
Prefer not to answer	17.22%
Other	4.55%

*What is your age?*

18-34	9.62%
35-54	23.56%
55 and older	53.61%
Prefer not to answer	13.22%

*How do you describe yourself?*

As a man	34.69%
As a woman	49.04%
As a non-binary person	0.96%
Another gender identity	0.72%
Don't know/not sure	0.96%
Prefer not to answer	13.64%

*What is your combined household income from all sources?*

Less than \$30,000	0.72%
\$30,000 to less than \$50,000	1.69%
\$50,000 to less than \$70,000	4.1%
\$70,000 to less than \$90,000	6.02%
\$90,000 to less than \$120,000	13.49%
\$120,000 to less than \$140,000	4.58%
\$140,000 to less than \$160,000	6.51%
\$160,000 or more	32.99%
Prefer not to answer	30.6%

## Appendix B: Raw Data from Open-Ended Questions

A full record of the comments submitted to the open-ended questions in both the transportation, development, and waste survey and to the general survey is [available to download from the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination website here.](#)

