

City of Royal Oak Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

2021 Community Stakeholder Survey Analysis of Responses



**Royal Oak
SUSTAINABILITY**



**Royal Oak
ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVISORY BOARD**



Executive Summary

In July 2020, the Royal Oak City Commission passed a [climate emergency resolution](#) based on the long-supported scientific consensus that the climate is changing and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions exacerbate the global temperature increase and put the health and vitality of our city, region, state, nation, and planet at risk. This solidified the City of Royal Oak's commitment to provide residents, businesses, and the community at large with the tools and means necessary to make a collective impact in pursuit of sustainability and climate action. The City Commission further directed staff to develop a community wide sustainability plan in partnership with stakeholders. A Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S-CAP) Task Force consisting of City staff, Royal Oak Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) members, and community members, was created to manage this plan's development and completion requirements.

The Sustainability and Climate Action (S-CAP) Task Force sought to integrate community-wide stakeholder input into the plan's development process through various community participation efforts. This survey is one technique of community stakeholder engagement used by the Task Force. Additional outreach included an online Community Forum kickoff (June 29, 2021), in-person engagement events at the Royal Oak Farmer's Market, in-person stakeholder meetings with the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, Royal Oak Schools, Royal Oak Rotary Club, etc., and 24 stakeholder-driven focus topic work group meetings between August and November 2021.

The goal of this survey was three-fold: to better understand community stakeholders' perspectives and knowledge, and current practices related to sustainability and climate issues; to gather input on community stakeholders' priorities related to six sustainability focus topics; and to quantitatively and qualitatively summarize responses to provide data-driven recommendations for the S-CAP objectives, actions, and targets.



Energy & Buildings work group meeting (2021)



Executive Summary

The S-CAP Task Force and the consultant, Smith Group, created the survey with the Survey Monkey software. According to Survey Monkey's sample size calculator—based on the 2020 population of Royal Oak, to achieve a confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error of 5%—the survey required 382 or more responses. The 32-question survey was available from July 19 through September 30, 2021, and received 452 responses, surpassing the required sample size for the desired accuracy.

The City of Royal Oak promoted the survey to stakeholders through several platforms including the City's weekly eblast; a pop-up window on the City's website; the S-CAP-specific email list; a direct mail to resident City employees; the City's Facebook and Nextdoor accounts; and an ad in the quarterly City of Royal Oak Insight Magazine, which is delivered to all households.

It is important to recognize that the survey data is from a self-selecting group of participants who found this topic important enough to take the long survey. Although the required sample size for the desired accuracy was met, accessibility of digital materials to stakeholders must be considered and the City should still provide other forms of engagement in future initiatives. The groups not well represented in this survey include younger age groups, non/homeowners and renters, and low- to mid-income residents.

The key findings from respondents through this survey effort are the following:

General findings:

- When asked about a sustainable and climate-friendly future in Royal Oak, the greatest number of responses related to the focus topics *Energy and Buildings*, *Greenspace*, and *Quality of Life*.
- Natural systems preservation and enhancement, public safety, and personal safety are three important components in the future vision of a sustainable Royal Oak.
- Climate change, future generations, and waste management are the top three motivators to respondents' commitment to sustainability.
- Social media, print media, and the city's website are the three main pathways people use to find information about Royal Oak.



Executive Summary

Respondents' top three priority actions for city support within the specific focus topics:

- **Energy and Buildings (Q11)** - communitywide streetlight conversion to LED (72.9%); energy waste reduction programs for all building sectors (61.5%); and residential and commercial energy waste reduction educational programming (61.1%).
- **Water (Q13)** - education and programming about alternatives to standard lawn and garden chemicals (68.1%); use an alternative to salt and educate community to do the same on their property (67.4%); and facilitate native plant programming (64.7%).
- **Waste (Q15)** - coordination of recycling events for special items (68.4%); education about the City's recycling program to increase understanding and participation (65.8%); and incentivize a food-waste composting program for the commercial and/or institutional sectors (58.2%).
- **Greenspace (Q17)** - increasing Royal Oak's tree canopy (73.9%); maintaining street trees in the public rights-of-way (70.1%); and facilitating education about tree care, native plants, reducing pesticide and herbicide use, etc. (64%).
- **Mobility (Q19)** - encouraging safe routes to schools (63.2%); installing bicycling infrastructure downtown and in parks (61.3%); and converting the municipal fleet to hybrid/electric vehicles as appropriate (61.1%).
- **Quality of Life (Q21)** - integrating sustainability into the master plan update and similar guiding documents (68.4%); supporting community-centric programming (64.7%); and encouraging volunteerism within the community (58.6%).

The following survey summary provides the stakeholder responses and key takeaways in three sections: general information, the six focus topics, and respondents' demographics.

Additionally, the survey responses are anonymous and the survey's raw response data is also available for review by [clicking this link](#).

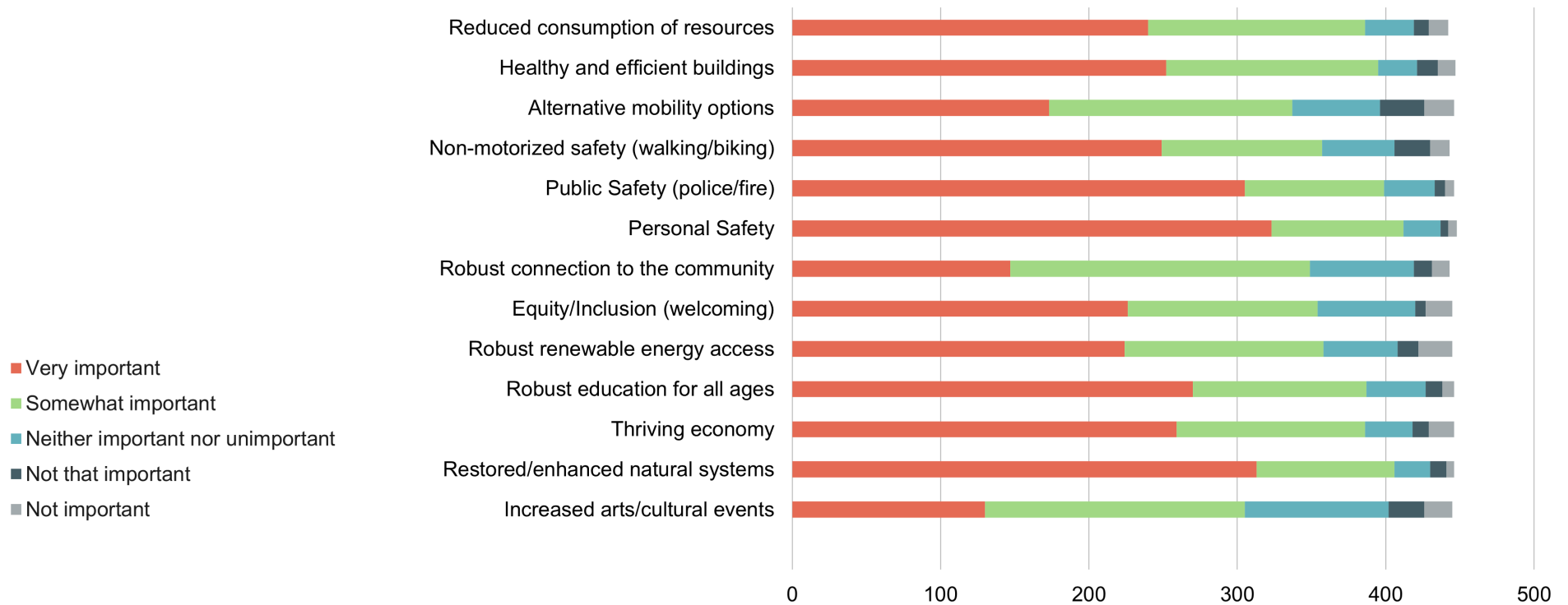
Survey Section #1: General Information

Question 1. How important are the following for the future vision for a more sustainable Royal Oak?

Answered: 448

Skipped: 4

Other: 68



The above graph and main themes from the “Other” responses are summarized on the next page.

Survey Section: General Information

Question 1. How important are the following for the future vision for a more sustainable Royal Oak?

Greenspace	91% of survey respondents indicated that restored, enhanced natural systems through green space, trees, etc. is very important or somewhat important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: Improvements to and preservation of existing green space and trees; restrict or ban pesticide/herbicide use at municipal, commercial, and potentially residential properties; and community gardens
Energy and Buildings	<p>88.4% of survey respondents indicated that healthy and efficient buildings are very important or somewhat important.</p> <p>80.5% of survey respondents voted that robust renewable energy access is very important or somewhat important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: Concerns about high-density buildings in neighborhoods, teardown and rebuilds, historic preservation
Mobility	<p>80.6% of respondents indicated that non-motorized safety is very or somewhat important to them.</p> <p>75.6% of respondents indicated that alternative mobility options are very or somewhat important to them in the future vision of a more sustainable Royal Oak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: Improved non-motorized transportation infrastructure and safety measures; EV charging located downtown
Quality of Life	<p>92% of survey respondents indicated that personal safety is very important or somewhat important.</p> <p>89.5% of survey respondents indicated that public safety is very important or somewhat important.</p> <p>86.8% of survey respondents indicated that robust education for all ages is very important or somewhat important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: Enhancing livability, specifically for senior residents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior mobility services • Increased accessibility to downtown buildings • Senior housing options
Waste	Not applicable due to the range of answer choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: Improved recycling services and expanded community-wide composting program
Water	Not applicable due to the range of answer choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Other”: None submitted.

Survey Section: General Information

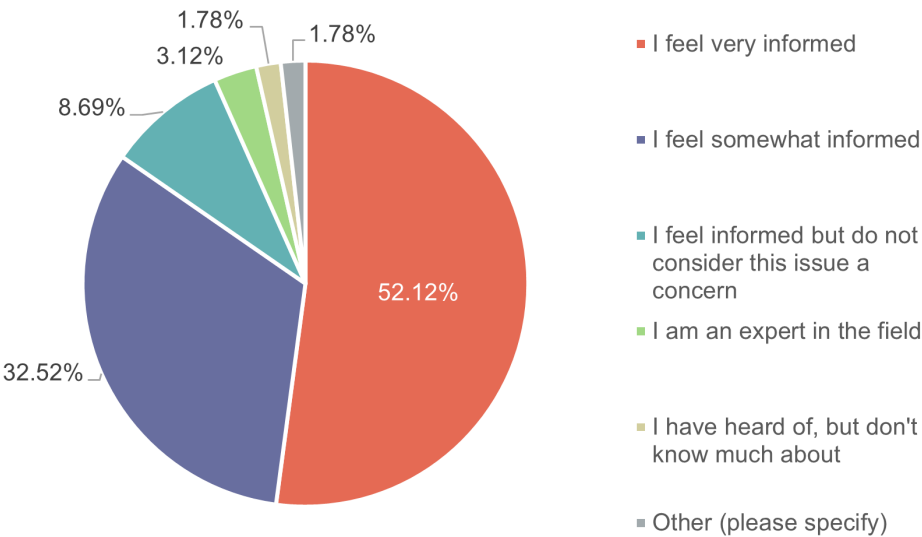
Question 2. What motivates your commitment to sustainability? (check all that apply)

Answered: 448 Skipped: 4 Other: 32

Answer Choices	Percent of respondents who selected as a motivation
Climate change	74.49%
Future generations	62.19%
Waste management/waste reduction	61.96%
Natural systems (green space, trees, etc.)	59.23%
Community	37.81%
Green energy	37.13%
Thriving economy	28.47%
Mobility	25.28%
Green buildings	23.92%
Other	7.29%

Question 3. How would you describe your knowledge about climate change?

Answered: 449 Skipped: 3 Other: 8



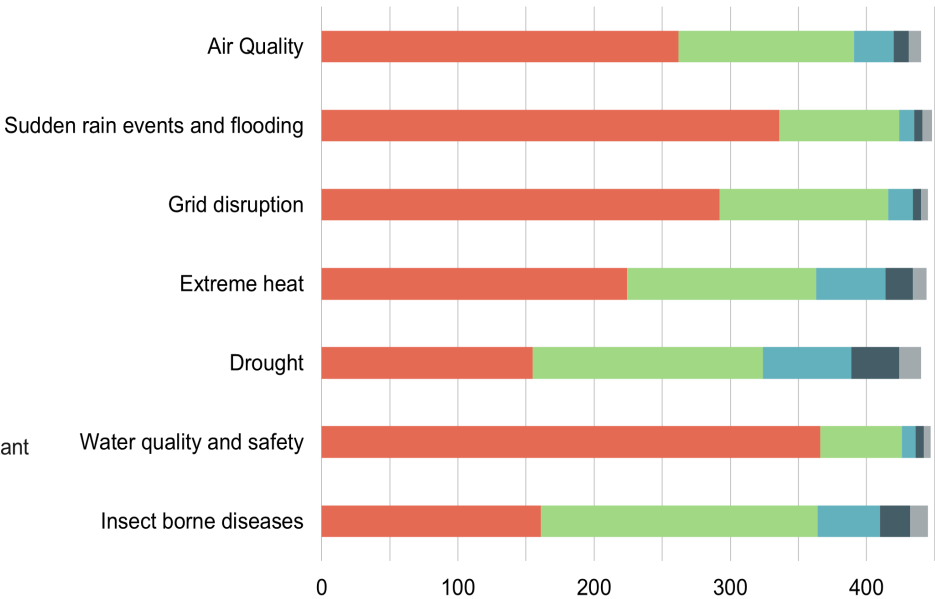
Survey Section: General Information

Question 4.

How important to you are the following climate-related threats facing Royal Oak?

Answered: 448 Skipped: 4 Other: 26

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Not that important
- Not important at all

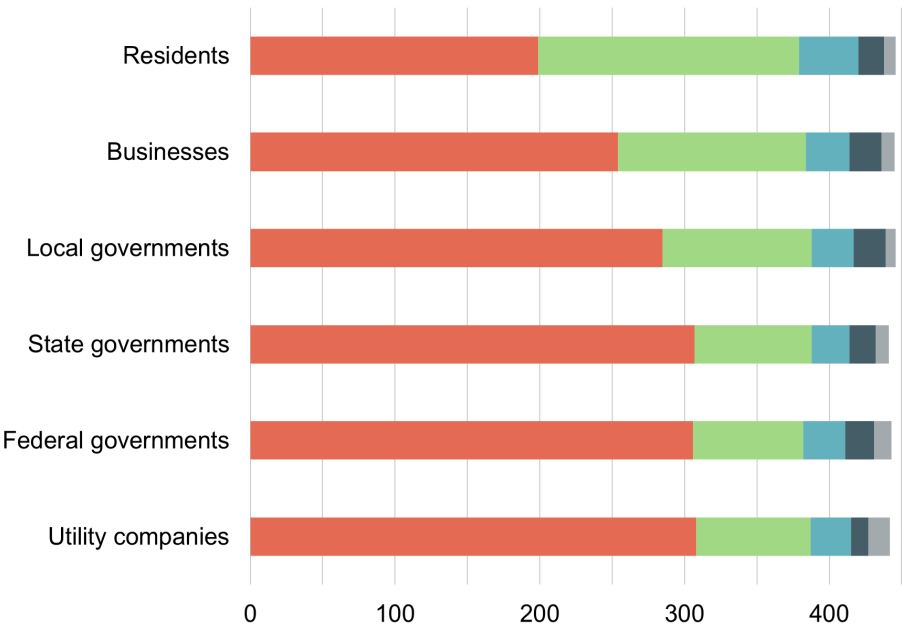


Question 5.

How responsible are the following groups for addressing sustainability and climate change issues?

Answered: 446 Skipped: 6 Other: 36

- Very responsible
- Somewhat responsible
- Neutral
- Not very responsible
- Not responsible at all

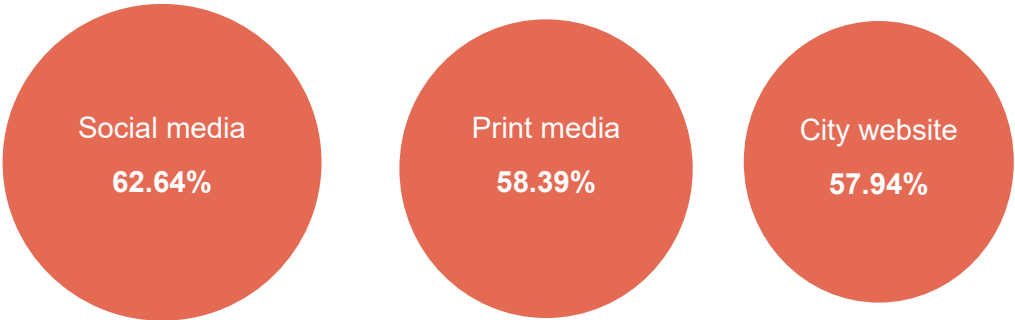


Survey Section: General Information

Question 6.

Where do you receive your information about Royal Oak? (check all that apply)

Answered: 447 Skipped: 5 Other: 33



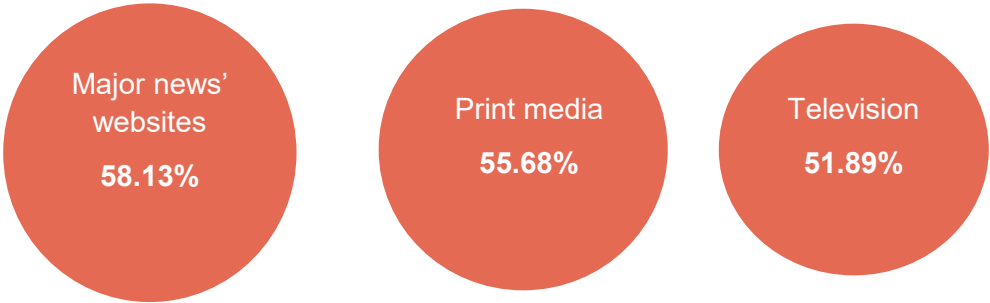
33 survey respondents wrote into the “Other” box. Themes include:

- Commission/committee/board meetings, agendas, and minutes (8);
- Social media sites like Nextdoor, Facebook, and YouTube (6);
- Social Clubs (3);
- Word of mouth from friends and neighbors (3)

Question 7.

Where do you receive your information on climate change? (check all that apply)

Answered: 449 Skipped: 3 Other: 30



30 survey respondents wrote into the “Other” box. Themes include:

- Not interested (7)
- Workplace (3)
- Documentaries (3)

Survey Section: General Information

Question 8. Describe in one or two sentences what a sustainable and climate-friendly Royal Oak means to you.

Answered: 405

Skipped: 47

⇒ Energy and Buildings

- Renewable energy (46)
- Opposed to new high-density builds (22)
- Reduced energy consumption (16)
- Energy efficient buildings (15)

⇒ Green Space

- Green space preservation/expansion (45)
- Increase tree canopy cover (23)
- Tree-planting initiatives (15)
- Rain gardens (14)

⇒ Quality of Life

- Taking action to benefit future generations (32)
- Community is healthy, vibrant, thriving (25)
- Community values should take priority over personal or private interests (17)
- Environmental quality and protections (17)

⇒ Mobility

- Safe connected non-motorized transportation (38)
- EV cars/transit/charging stations (9)
- Public transit (5)

⇒ Waste

- Recycling (37)
- Solid waste reduction (16)

⇒ Water

- Green stormwater infrastructure, rain gardens (15)
- Healthy water quality (11)
- Efficient water usage/consumption (7)
- Water infrastructure/sewer improvements, such as separated stormwater and sewer lines (7)

Analysis:

Energy & Buildings. Responses focus on adding renewable energy infrastructure to Royal Oak and opposition to new high density or large footprint development.

Greenspace. Responses mention preservation and expansion of green space as well as prioritizing the City's tree canopy and planting programs.

Quality of Life. Responses show that respondents think of future generations and the health of the current community when they think of sustainability.

Mobility. Responses focus on non-motorized transportation systems, more than public transit.

Waste. Responses discuss the state of recycling in Royal Oak more than any other solid waste diversion solution.

Water. Responses mentioned green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) (i.e., rain gardens) and water quality.

Survey Section: General Information

Question 9. Do you see any barriers to achieving sustainability goals and addressing climate change in Royal Oak?

Answered: 404

Skipped: 48

Analysis

- Costs, cost-effectiveness, funding (95)
- Community support, participation, motivation, compliance (94)
- Local government, priorities, and actions, balancing population/economic growth with green space preservation and management (62)
- Political division, contention (26)
- Climate change deniers (26)
- Education (23)
- Development, zoning, big foot developments, code exemptions (20)
- Business participation, corporate interests (20)
- Automobile dependence (14)
- Misinformation (13)
- Developers (11)
- Aging/aged infrastructure (11)
- Regional/state support (10)
- Royal Oak does not need to address climate change (9)
- Reliance on fossil fuels (6)
- SOCRRA (7)
- Limited resources (4)
- Time (3)
- Plastics (3)
- Accountability (2)
- Technology (2)

Most respondents shared concerns about the municipal costs and household return-on-investment (ROI) as barriers. Others expressed concerns that despite Royal Oak's stated commitment to sustainability, the City itself may be a barrier to progress in addressing climate change.

Community behavior and sentiment, including emotions of political division and neighborhood contention, as well as climate change denial, present both challenges and opportunities for engagement and education.

Additional barriers include land use patterns, economic development, cleaner and greener transportation options, resilient infrastructure, and cooperation with regional governments and state support. There is opportunity for interdepartmental collaboration to address these barriers.

Survey Section: General Information

Question 22. What else would you like the City of Royal Oak and residents throughout the city to keep in mind when taking action to improve the sustainability and resilience of our community while working to combat climate change?

Answered: 269

Skipped: 183

In the responses to this question, most respondents (75%) agreed that city government and Royal Oak community should act with urgency; set an example or higher standard for sustainability and resilience in the area; foster regional cooperation and local participation; and integrate a comparative analysis of the successes and failures of other similar communities into long-term planning efforts. Fewer respondents (25%) indicated that sustainability should not be a priority for the City; it is not possible for people to control the climate; and that individuals should not be held responsible to take action against climate change when large corporations and complex systems historically have contributed overwhelmingly to carbon emissions and pollution.

Each of the six core topics were addressed in this question's open-ended responses. Some direct quotes from the responses are shared below:

"Transition away from fossil fuels to 100% clean renewable energy as soon as possible."

"Let's be bold and be a leading city in the Metro Detroit area!"

"Often it seems that economic and climate decisions are opposing. They are not."

"Any investment in sustainability is wise."

"I would like people to understand that the city residents need to work with the government for the programs to succeed. We cannot not rely solely on the government. We are all responsible for the success of sustainability."

"This is the single most important issue of our time. As Noam Chomsky, among others, has said: This is the first generation to face this challenge and will likely be the last."

"Education is key."

"Maintaining affordability for all."

"Environmental justice as part of the plan."

"Based on this survey, it sounds like we're focusing on the right things. "

"The danger of climate change is overstated."

Survey Section #2: Focus Topics

Focus Topic Definitions:

The **Energy and Buildings** focus topic encompasses the reduction of energy waste in commercial, residential, and industrial building sectors, and the implementation of renewable energy sources locally and utility-wide. This topic also covers the health and safety of indoor spaces.

The **Water** focus topic concentrates on Royal Oak's water quality, water conservation, and water infrastructure, including green stormwater infrastructure and preventing and reducing flood risk.

The **Waste** focus topic addresses solid waste, recycling, and composting streams, as well as initiatives and practices related to product lifecycles, and waste reduction.

The **Greenspace** focus topic includes Royal Oak's parks, natural habitats, tree canopy, and the landscaping practices to maintain these spaces in a way that is simultaneously sustainable and considerate of human, wildlife, and environmental health.

The **Mobility** focus topic refers to motorized and non-motorized transportation systems, including bicycling and pedestrian use, personal vehicles, the municipal fleet, infrastructure required to support and encourage electric vehicles, and public transit access.

The **Quality of Life** focus topic embraces and advances the characteristics of a community in which residents have the ability to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives. These characteristics include community connectivity (neighborhood associations, volunteerism), weather emergencies, civic participation, and access to life-long learning, arts, and culture.



Survey Section #2: Focus Topics

Quick Overview. The responses to survey questions #10- 21 (slides #16-27) are summarized in the table below and show that Royal Oak stakeholders already participate in multiple sustainability practices and support several potential municipal initiatives. Educational workshops and programming could address the options where the majority of responses are “never heard of”; “would like to but face obstacles”; and “would like to but not sure how to get started.” Additional efforts could help shift others from “don’t think I would ever try this” and “plan to do soon” to actually doing.

The obstacles, opportunities, and open-ended “Other” responses for each focus topic are summarized in slides #16-27, also.

Energy and Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At the beginning of the survey, healthy and efficient buildings scored #4 in importance (Question 1). Grid disruption is the third most important climate threat identified by respondents (Question 4). In the City’s 2018 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions inventory, an estimated 69% of GHG emissions can be attributed to the electricity and natural gas used across residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. The Energy and Buildings focus topic has great potential to reduce Royal Oak’s GHG emissions and improve resilience.Most respondents already practice energy savings through turning off electronics when not in use (93.5%), converting their household lighting to LED (82.7%), and using a programmable thermostat (78.5%). In the future, respondents indicated they plan to seek utility rebates for energy efficiency upgrades (17.3%), install an electric car charger (13.2%), add extra insulation to their home’s walls and ceiling (11.86%), switch to an on-demand water heater (11.51%), and install more energy-efficient windows (11%). Respondents are willing to take action to improve energy efficiency but face obstacles, primarily in adding solar panels to their property (58%). 35.3% of respondents don’t think they will ever convert their heating to geothermal; and 35% of respondents don’t think they will ever convert their stoves from gas to electric.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Of all the climate threats mentioned at the beginning of the survey, water quality and safety are of the highest importance to respondents (95.3%, Question 4). Following the 2014 flood event, stormwater management is a primary focus in the City’s sustainability planning, in addition to increasing environmental and public health educational opportunities and communications related to water quality and conservation.Most respondents already reduce the amount of fats, grease, and oils (FOGs) they dispose of into drains (86.9%) and eliminate flushing prescriptions (81.8%). Respondents are willing to take action to resolve water issues, but face obstacles, primarily in the addition of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) to their properties. 22.7% plan to install a rain barrel soon. 22.1% don’t think they will ever add permeable walkways or driveways to their property.
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At the beginning of the survey, 62% of survey respondents indicated that waste management and waste reduction motivate their commitment to sustainability (Question 2).Most respondents bring special items to SOCRRA to be recycled (70.1%) and consciously avoid unnecessary purchases including single-use items and items with excessive packaging (64.2%). Respondents indicated they are not likely to maintain a compost pile at home (25.9%) or seek a private composting pick-up service (44.7%), but think the City should incentivize an institutional and commercial composting program (58.2%). A number of respondents weren’t aware they can compost fruit and vegetable scraps in their yard waste bags (21.9%) or that private compost pick-up services were available (20.1%). There is a clear need and demand for composting education, as well as improved recycling programs.

Survey Section #2: Focus Topics

Greenspace

- In Question 1, 91% of respondents agree that restored/enhanced natural systems are important for the future vision of a sustainable Royal Oak. Two-thirds of survey respondents also selected natural systems (green space, trees, etc.) as the motivation for their commitment to sustainability. Royal Oak is recognized by the Trust for Public Land as having a high ParkScore (93), and has earned the National Arbor Day Foundation “Tree City USA” distinction every year since 1976. The City is committed to integrating sustainability with its greenspace preservation and maintenance practices and expanding outreach to educate property owners on how to enhance their property’s green space.
- Most respondents already maintain the trees on their property to promote longevity (79.2%) and avoid using herbicides and pesticides whenever possible (64.3%). Respondents are willing to try some of the listed greenspace actions, but face the greatest obstacles in planting additional (native) trees on their property (33.9%) and switching some or all of their property to native plantings to support pollinators (29.7%). 20.2% plan to participate in community greening events (tree-planting, community gardens, and park clean-ups) soon. 16% don’t think they would ever reduce their overall lawn size to create space for a home garden or native plants. About 13% had never heard of avoiding plants treated with neonicotinoids or xeriscaping.

Mobility

- In Question 1, a share of respondents indicate mobility is important to the future vision of a sustainable Royal Oak, including non-motorized safety (55.5%) and alternative mobility options (38.6%). Transportation gasoline and diesel account for almost 25% of Royal Oak’s estimated greenhouse gas emissions. There is opportunity to reduce the City’s dependence on fossil fuels and introduce cleaner, efficient transportation options.
- Of the survey respondents, 62% already walk to complete errands or for entertainment (not for exercise alone), and 62% already bike to complete errands or for entertainment (not for exercise alone). 46% answered they don’t think they would ever try taking public transit to complete errands. Micro-mobility and public transit are underutilized by respondents to complete errands (44% answered they would not try using scooters, skateboards, etc. for errands or entertainment). There is more interest in purchasing a hybrid or electric vehicle (22% plan to do so soon). Most survey respondents are retirees, and Question 18 failed to consider their mobility patterns and needs, which resulted in the high number of N/A responses in this focus topic’s responses.

Quality of Life

- Of the six focus topics, Quality of Life is perhaps the hardest to define and, simultaneously, the most important to promote. An important concept of sustainability is fostering a livable community that meets the needs of all stakeholders. In Question 1, respondents indicated several indicators of quality of life are important for the future vision of a sustainable Royal Oak: personal safety (72%), robust education for all ages (60.2%), and equity and inclusion (50%).
- Respondents’ expectations are met by Royal Oak’s renewable energy access, alternative mobility options, and access to healthy buildings. Respondents’ expectations are partially met or not met by the following: renewable energy access, attainable and accessible housing options for each stage of life, and alternative mobility options. These are elements which cross-cut two other focus topics: Energy and Buildings and Mobility. Identifying these challenges presents the City with an opportunity to eliminate obstacles related to quality of life.

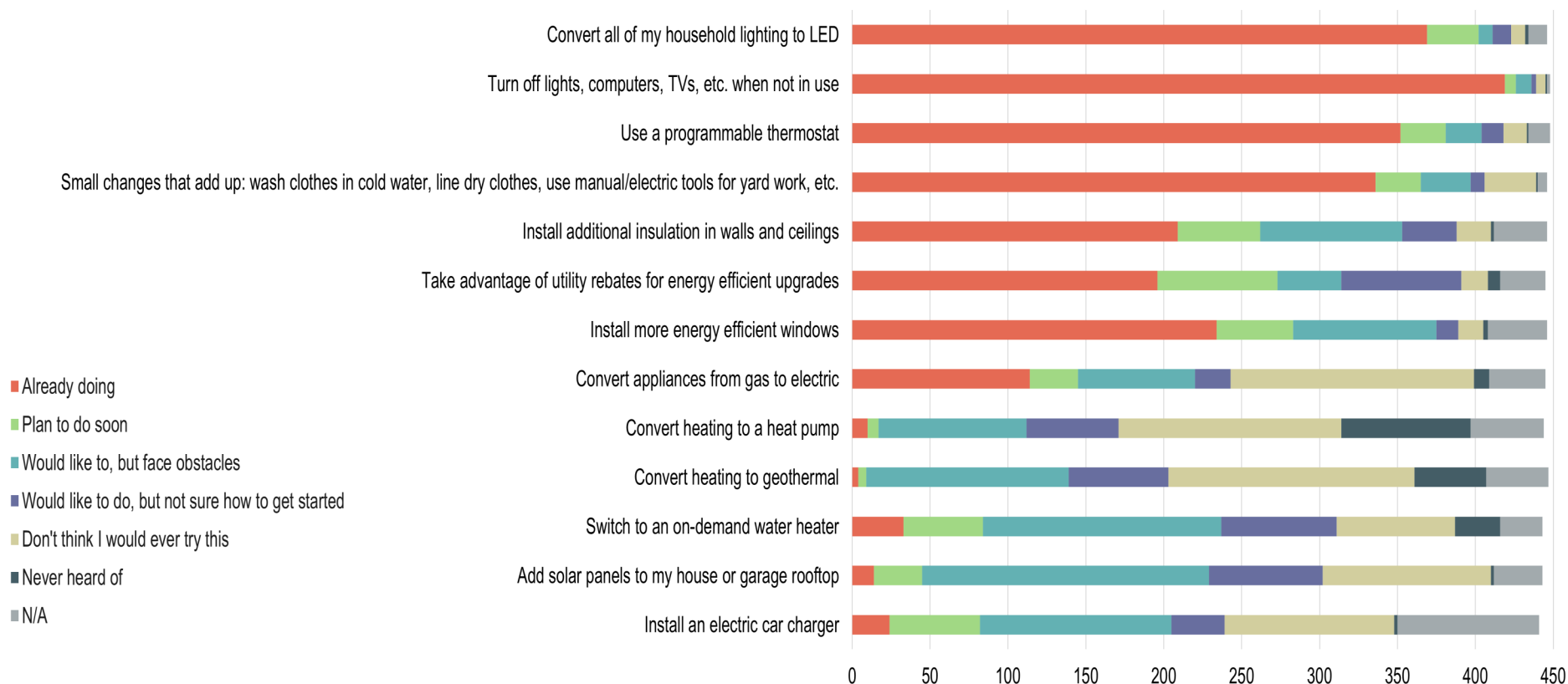
Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 10. Energy and Buildings: Answer for each energy efficiency option below in terms of which you would be most willing to do or already doing, which you are not willing to do, or would not consider doing. You may also indicate in the next question if you think any of these should be a priority for the city to support.

Answered: 448

Skipped: 4

Obstacles: 300



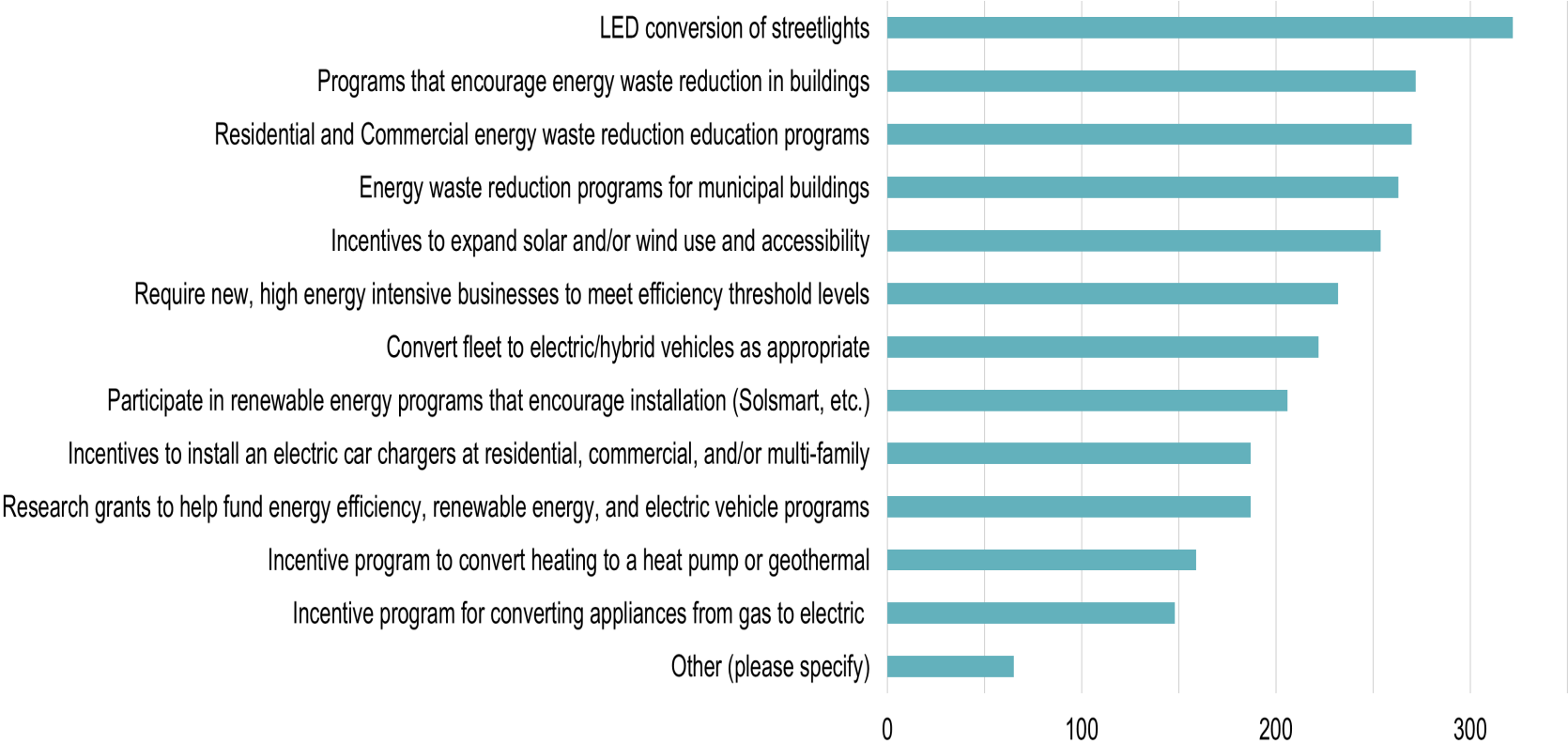
Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents are willing to try some of the listed energy actions, but face obstacles in adding solar panels to their property (58%), switching to an on-demand water heater (51%), converting heating to geothermal (43.4%), and installing an electric car charger (35.6%). Respondents don't think they will ever try converting heating to geothermal (35.4%), converting appliances from gas to electric (35%), or converting their heating to a heat pump (32%). Obstacles identified from open-ended responses include: Initial costs, funding, return on investment; feasibility, and restrictions or limitations based on their housing situation.

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to energy efficiency and healthy buildings.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 11. Energy: Which of the following should be a priority for the city to support? Choose all that apply. **Answered: 442** **Skipped: 10** **Other: 65**



Priorities

Respondents’ top three priorities for the City to support are: communitywide streetlight conversion to LED (72.9%); programs that encourage energy waste reduction across residential, commercial, industrial, and multi-family buildings (61.5%); and residential and commercial energy waste reduction educational programming (61.1%).

“Other”

In Question 11’s open-ended “Other” prompt (above), respondents suggested the establishment and enforcement of energy efficiency building codes specifically for the commercial and industrial sector, expressed concerns about the effects of LED lighting on wildlife and insects, and suggested local and state incentives for energy efficiency improvements.

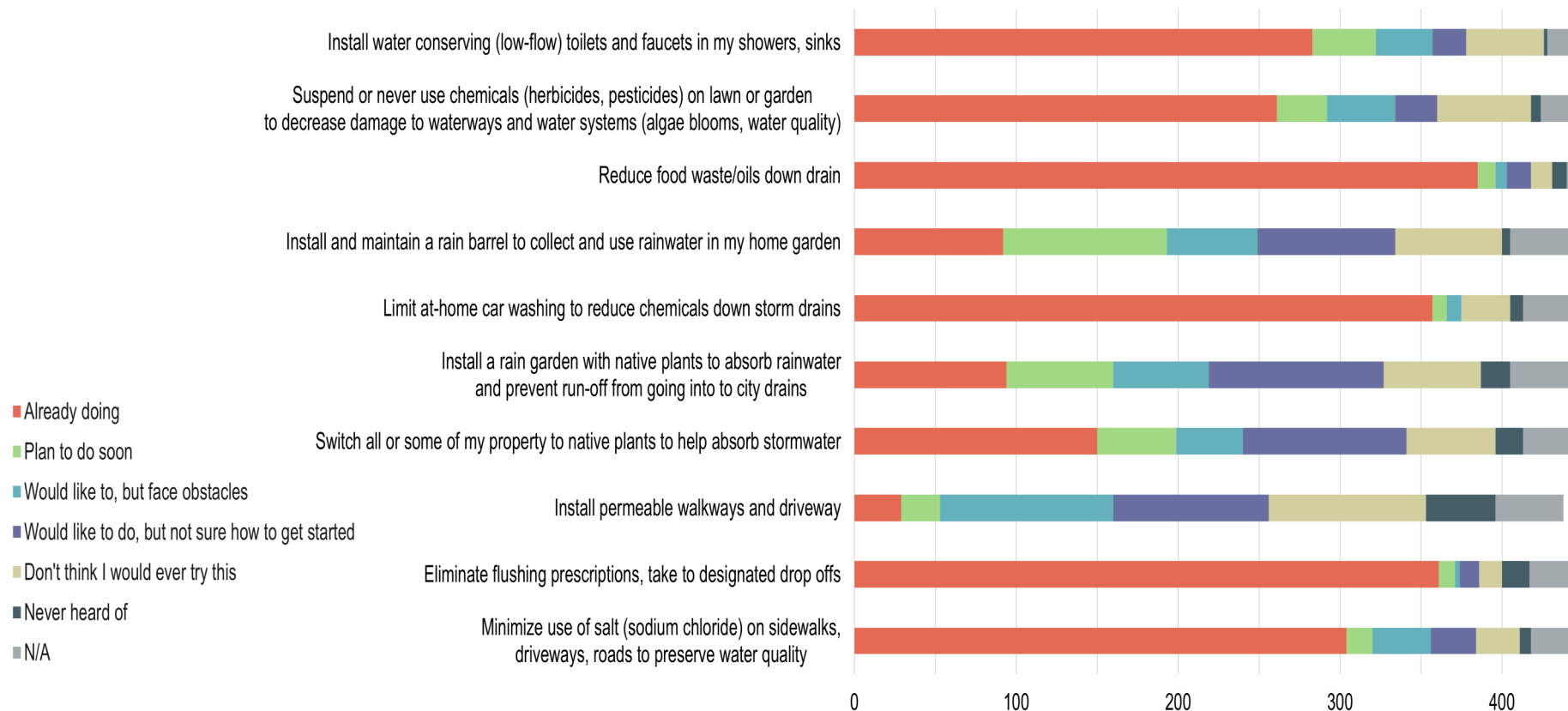
Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 12. Water: Answer for each water option below in terms of which you would be most willing to do or already doing, which you are not willing to do, or would not consider doing. You may also indicate in the next question if you think any of these should be a priority for the city to support.

Answered: 448

Skipped: 4

Obstacles: 168



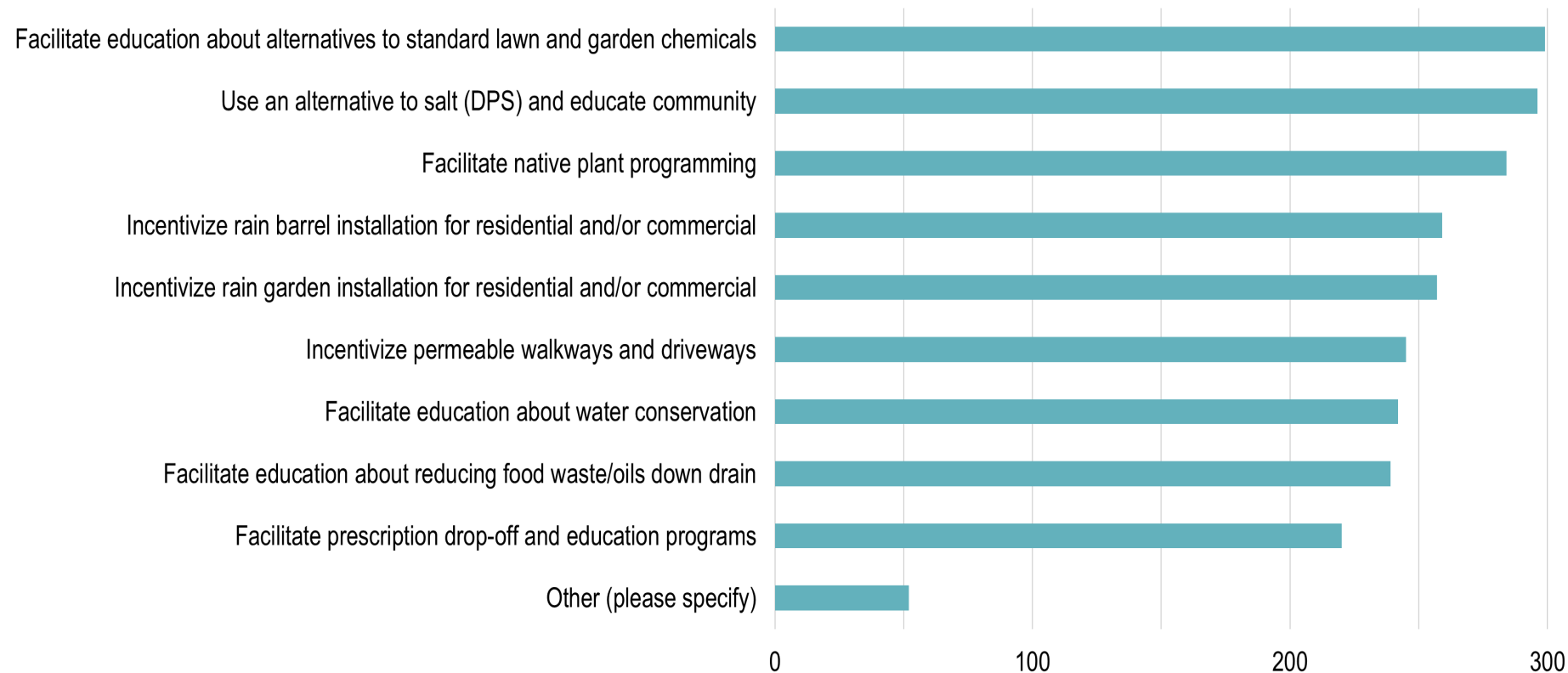
Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents are willing to try some of the listed water actions, but face obstacles in adding green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) to their homes. These GSI updates include: permeable pavements (46.3%), rain gardens (37.7%), and rain barrels (35.4%). Obstacles identified from open-ended responses include costs, knowledge and availability of resources, and housing situation (i.e., renters don't feel empowered to make or demand efficiency updates at the properties where they live).

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to water issues.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 13. Water: Which of the following should be a priority for the city to support? Choose all that apply. Answered: 439 Skipped: 13 Other: 52



Priorities

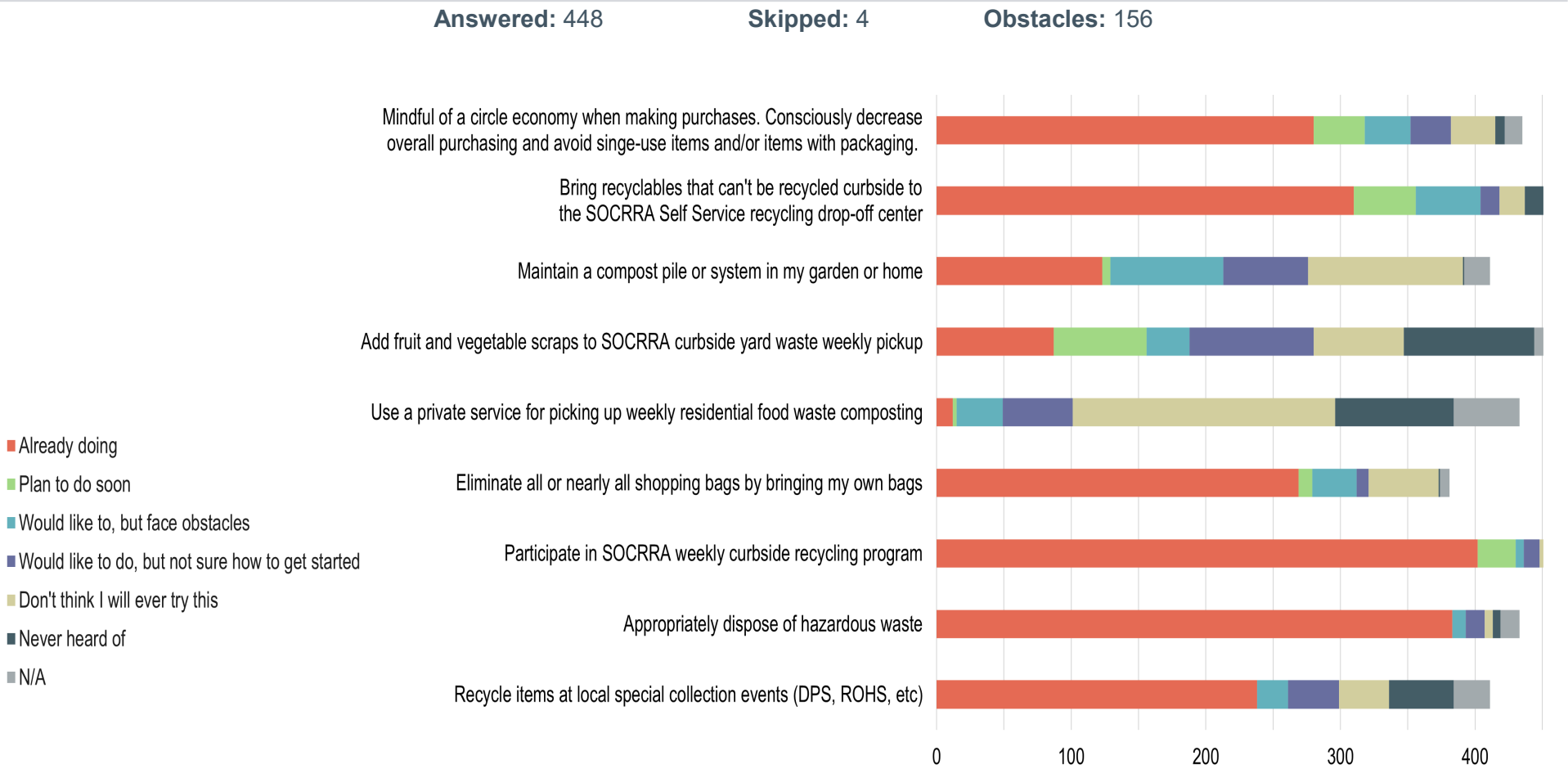
Respondents’ top three priorities for the City to support are: education and programming about alternatives to standard lawn and garden chemicals (68.1%); use an alternative to salt and educate community to do the same on their property (67.4%); and facilitate native plant programming (64.7%).

“Other”

In Question 13’s open-ended “Other” prompt (above), respondents suggested adding more GSI to public property; requiring green infrastructure for new construction/development projects; and updating codes to make private property upgrades easier/more acceptable.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 14. Waste: Answer for each waste option below in terms of which you would be most willing to do or already doing, which you are not willing to do, or would not consider doing. You may also indicate in the next question if you think any of these should be a priority for the city to support.



Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents are willing to try some of the listed waste actions, but face obstacles in maintaining a compost pile or system at home (33.2%) and adding household fruit and vegetable scraps to SOCRRA curbside yard waste weekly pickup (28.1%). Respondents don't think they will ever try to use a private service for picking up weekly residential food waste composting (44.7%) or maintaining a compost pile or system at home (26%). Obstacles identified from open-ended responses include: SOCRRA's appointment-only format and long wait times to drop off special items for recycling, reliance on single-use plastics, lacking knowledge about which materials can be recycled, and the issue of compost systems attracting rats and other pests.

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to waste issues.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

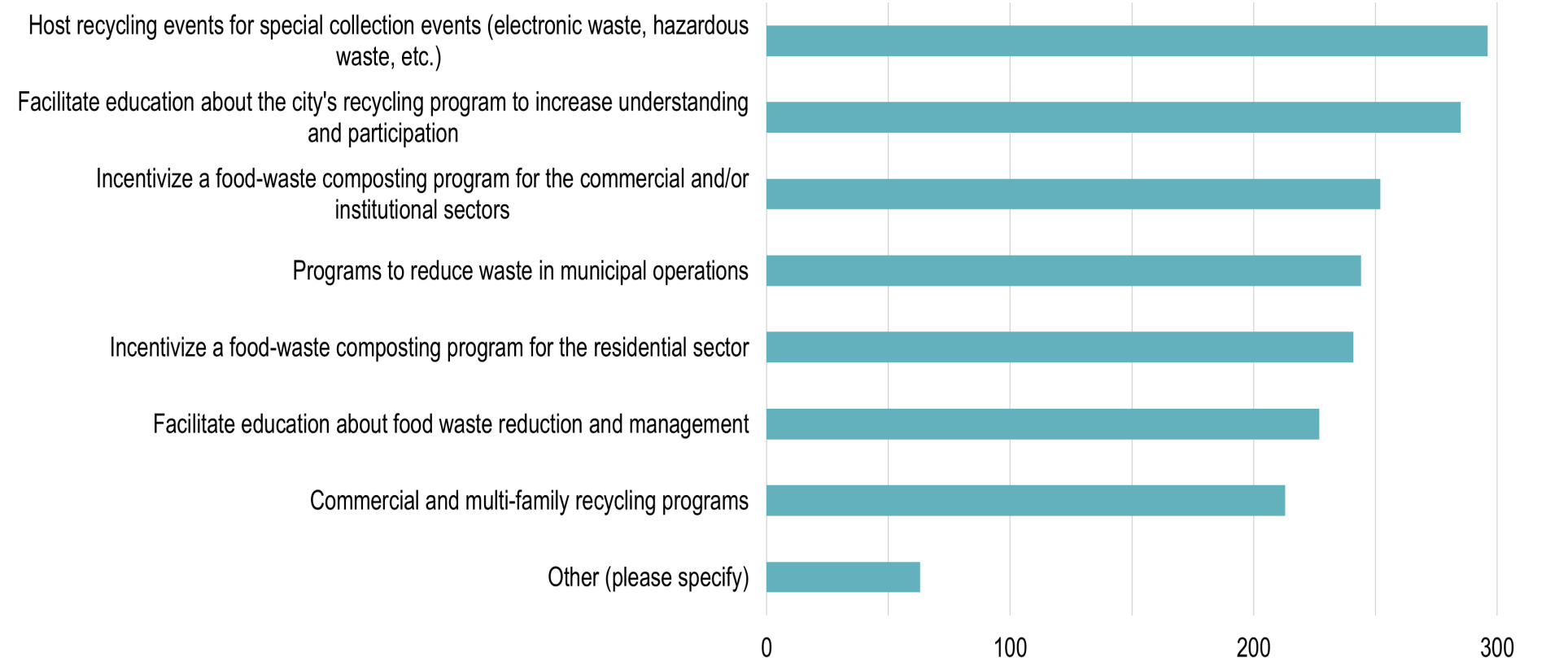
Question 15. Waste: Which of the following should be a priority for the city to support?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 433

Skipped: 19

Other: 63



Priorities

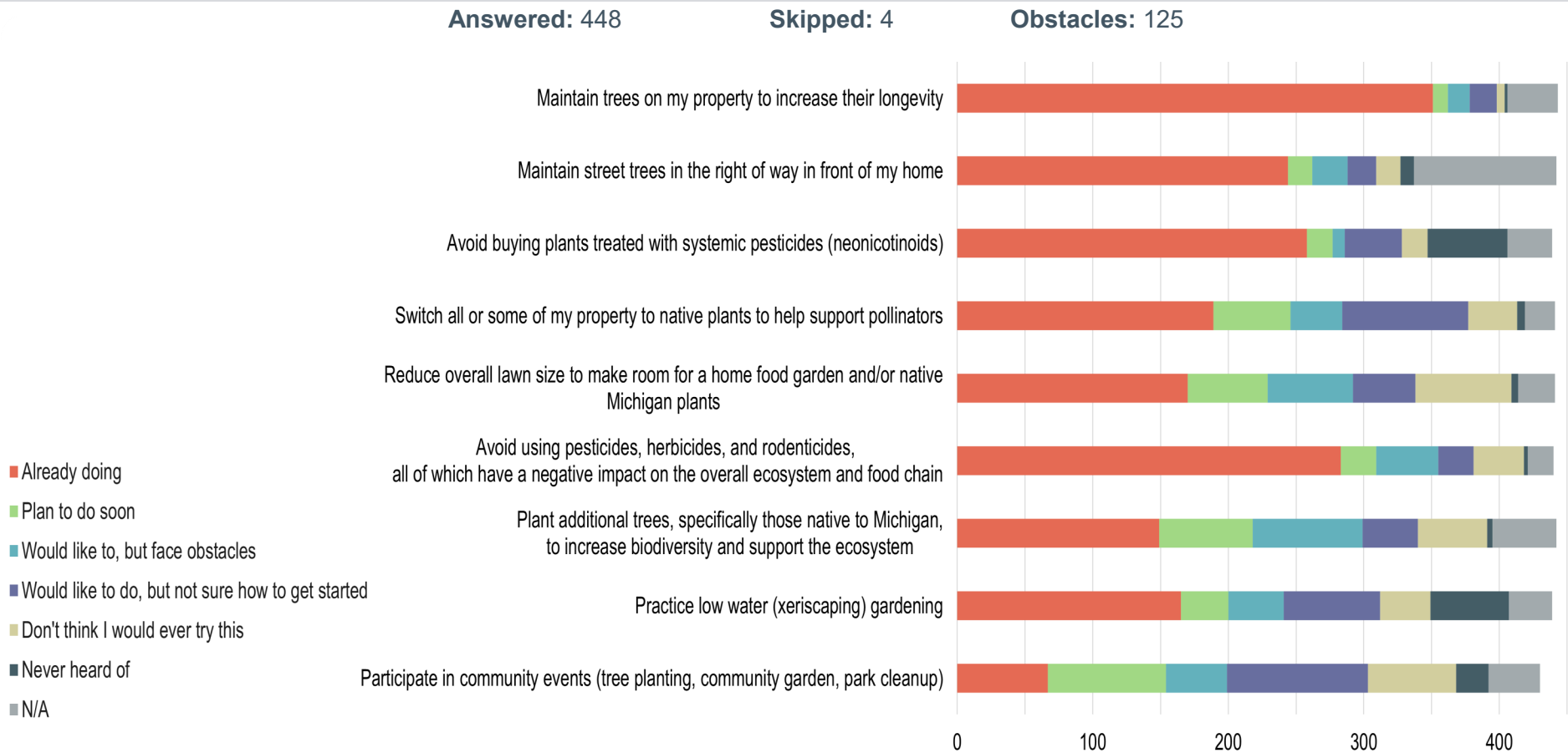
Respondents' top three priorities for the City to support are: coordination of recycling events for special items (68.4%); education about the City's recycling program to increase understanding and participation (65.8%); and incentivize a food-waste composting program for the commercial and/or institutional sectors (58.2%).

"Other"

In Question 15's open-ended "Other" prompt (above), respondents suggested charging for waste by the bag or by the container; a community-wide composting program; and expanding recycling options, including a requirement for recycling services at multi-family housing developments.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 16. Greenspace: Answer for each greenspace option below in terms of which you would be most willing to do or already doing; which you are not willing to do, or would not consider doing. You may also indicate in the next question if you think any of these should be a priority for the city to support.



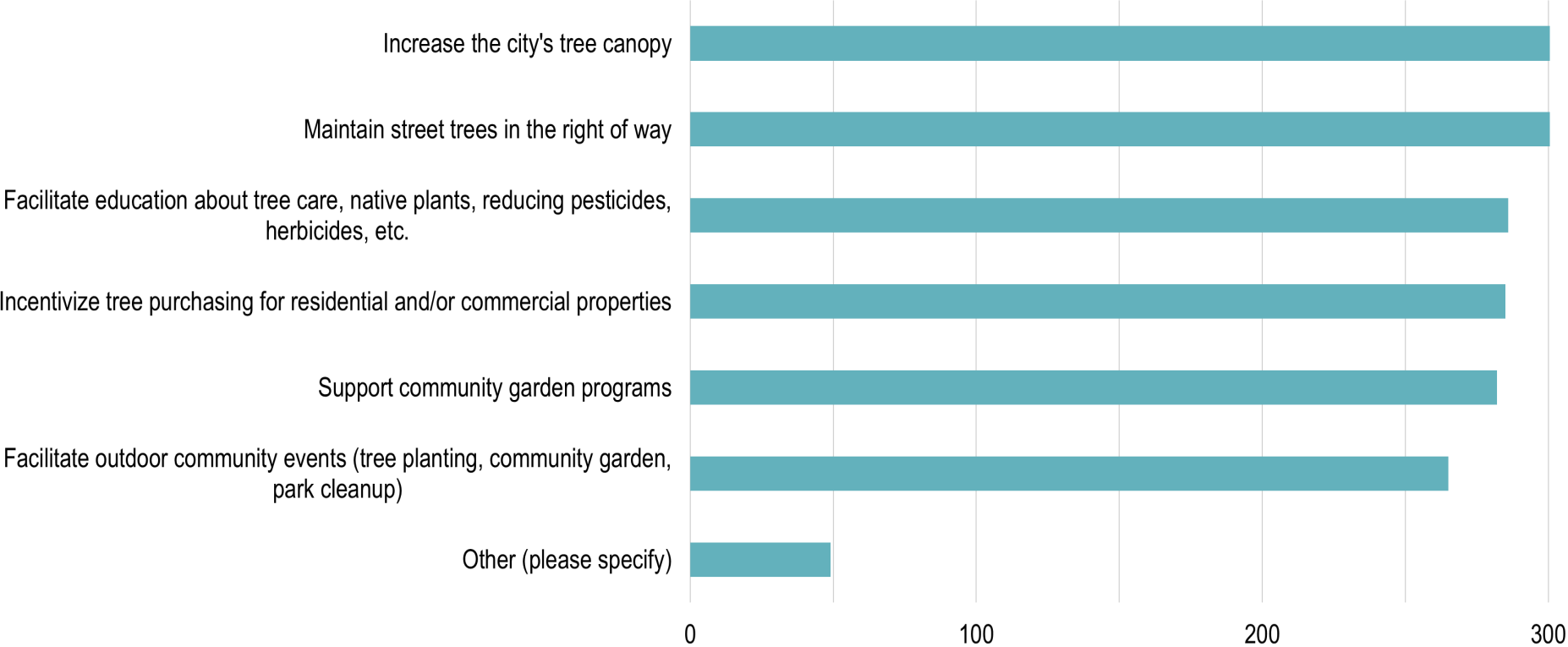
Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents are willing to try some of the listed greenspace actions, but face the greatest obstacles in participating in greenspace-enhancing community events (34.7%), planting additional (native) trees on their property (33.9%), and switching some or all of their property to native plantings to support pollinators (29.7%). Other respondents don't think they will ever try to reduce their property's overall lawn size to make room for a home food garden and/or native Michigan plants (16.1%) or participate in greenspace-enhancing community events (15.1%). Obstacles identified from open-ended responses include: inability to garden due to a lack of space, lacking the time or financial resources, and code enforcement deterring respondents from growing native plants or mowing their lawn less frequently.

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to greenspace issues.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 17. Greenspace: Which of the following should be a priority for the city to support?
Choose all that apply. **Answered: 441** **Skipped: 11** **Other: 49**



Priorities

Respondents’ top three priorities for the City to support are: increasing the City’s tree canopy (73.9%); maintaining street trees in the public rights-of-way (70.1%); and facilitating education about tree care, native plants, reducing pesticide and herbicide use, etc. (64%).

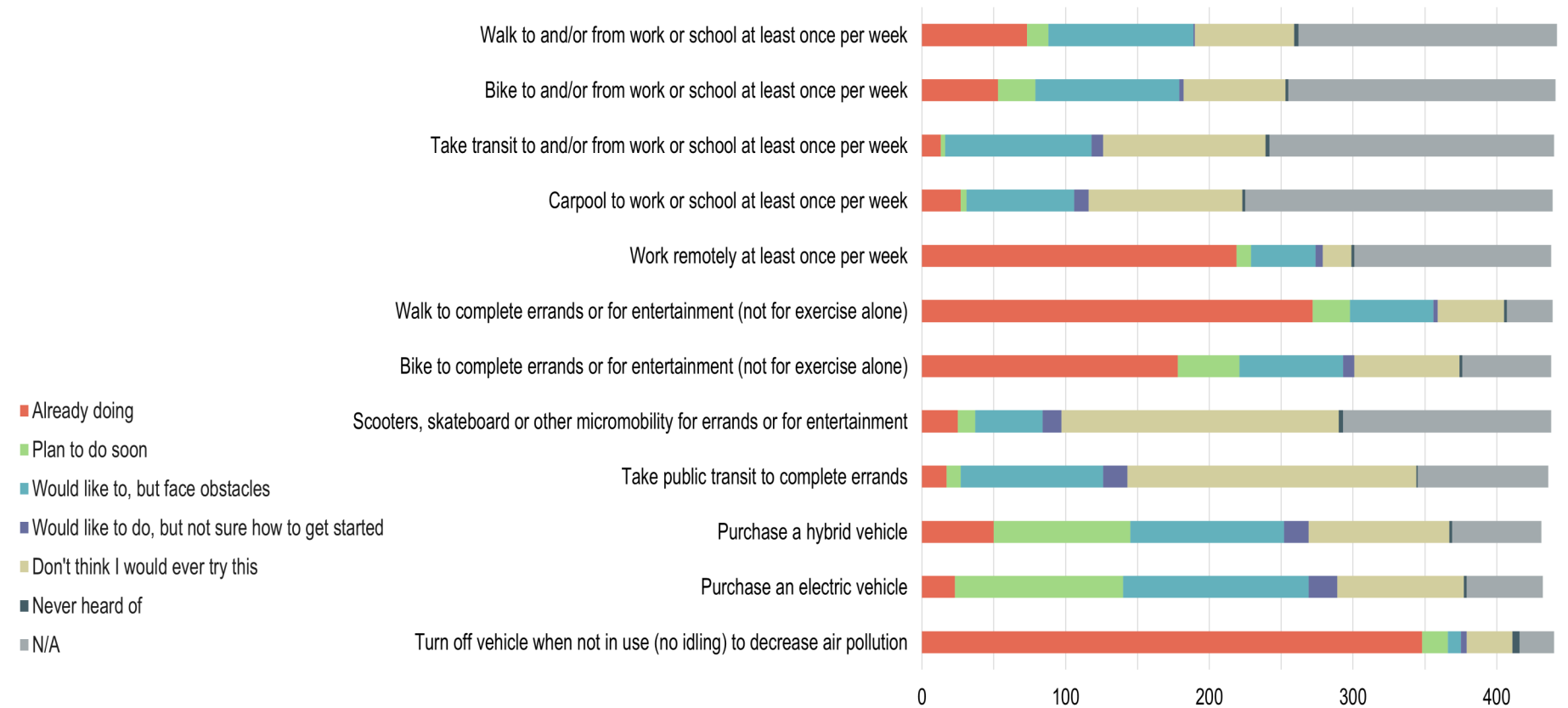
“Other”

In Question 17’s open-ended “Other” prompt (above), respondents advocated for tree replacement requirements; more aggressive tree-planting efforts by the City; establishment of a native landscaping and environmental education program; and exploration of policies to preserve greenspace and permit natural landscaping.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 18. Mobility: Answer for each mobility option below in terms of which you would be most willing to do or already doing, which you are not willing to do, or would not consider doing. You may also indicate in the next question if you think any of these should be a priority for the city to support.

Answered: 443 Skipped: 9 Obstacles: 168



Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents are willing to try some of the listed mobility actions, but face the greatest obstacles in purchasing electric or hybrid vehicles (63.2%), commuting to work or school by walking, biking, or taking public transit (71.3%). Respondents don't think they will ever try to take public transit (46.1%) or "last mile" micromobility options (scooters, skateboards, etc.) to complete errands (44.1%). Obstacles identified in open-ended responses mentioned the availability, convenience, familiarity, and quality of public transit and the distance demanded by day-to-day events (work, school, errands) prevent them from using public transit, walking, or bicycling.

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to mobility issues.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

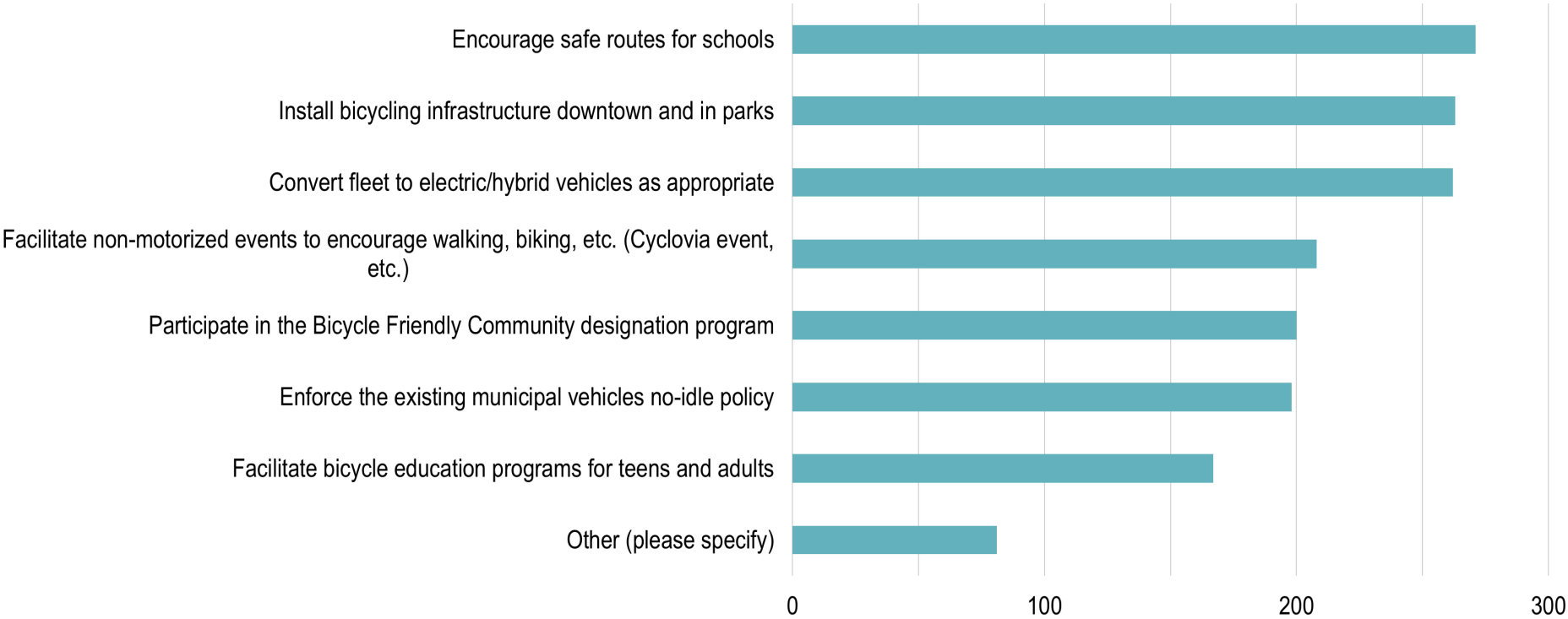
Question 19. Mobility: Which of the following should be a priority for the City to support?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 429

Skipped: 23

Other: 81



Priorities

Respondents’ top three priorities for the City to support are: encouraging safe routes to schools (63.2%); installing bicycling infrastructure downtown and in parks (61.3%); and converting the municipal fleet to hybrid/electric vehicles as appropriate (61.1%).

“Other”

Many responses about mobility choices were N/A due to the number of survey respondents who are retired (approximately 21%). In addition to the top priorities identified above, there is opportunity to better understand this demographic’s movement patterns and transportation needs. Walk audits from neighborhoods or high-rise buildings to key city amenities, within a 15- to 20-minute walk range, could be used to better understand obstacles to walking. Royal Oak’s school system lacks bus service and should explore participation in the Safe Routes to Schools program. The City must plan ahead and establish a timeline to convert municipal fleet to electric/hybrid vehicles when replacement of vehicles is required.

In Question 19’s open-ended “Other” prompt (above) several themes emerged: absence of safe, connected non-motorized transportation infrastructure, enforcement and education to improve safety, initiatives and incentives in coordination with regional government or the State to promote ridesharing, electric vehicle purchases; and municipal policies to reduce transportation-related GHG emissions.

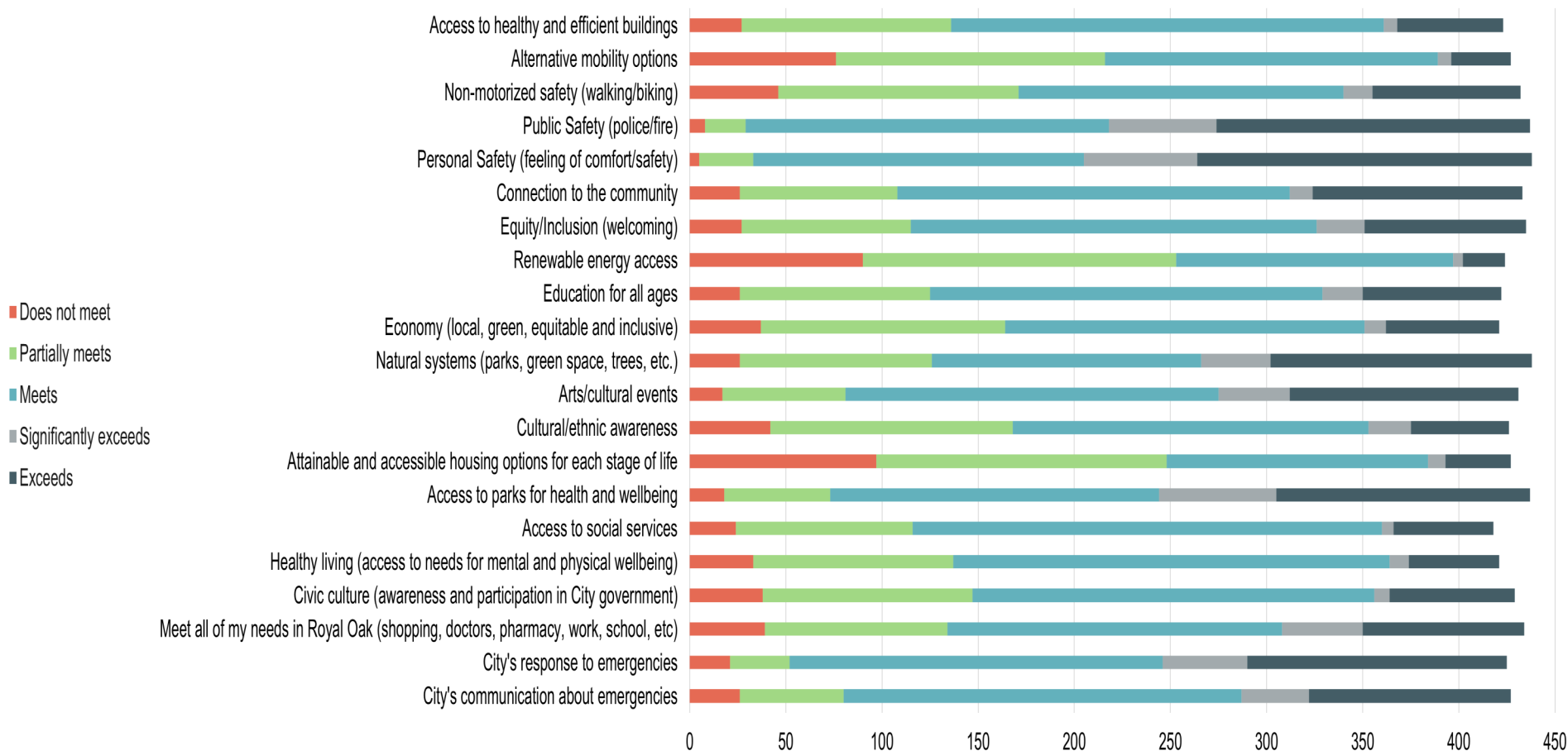
Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 20. Quality of Life: How well is Royal Oak meeting your expectations for the following elements of quality of life today?

Answered: 441

Skipped: 11

Other: 59



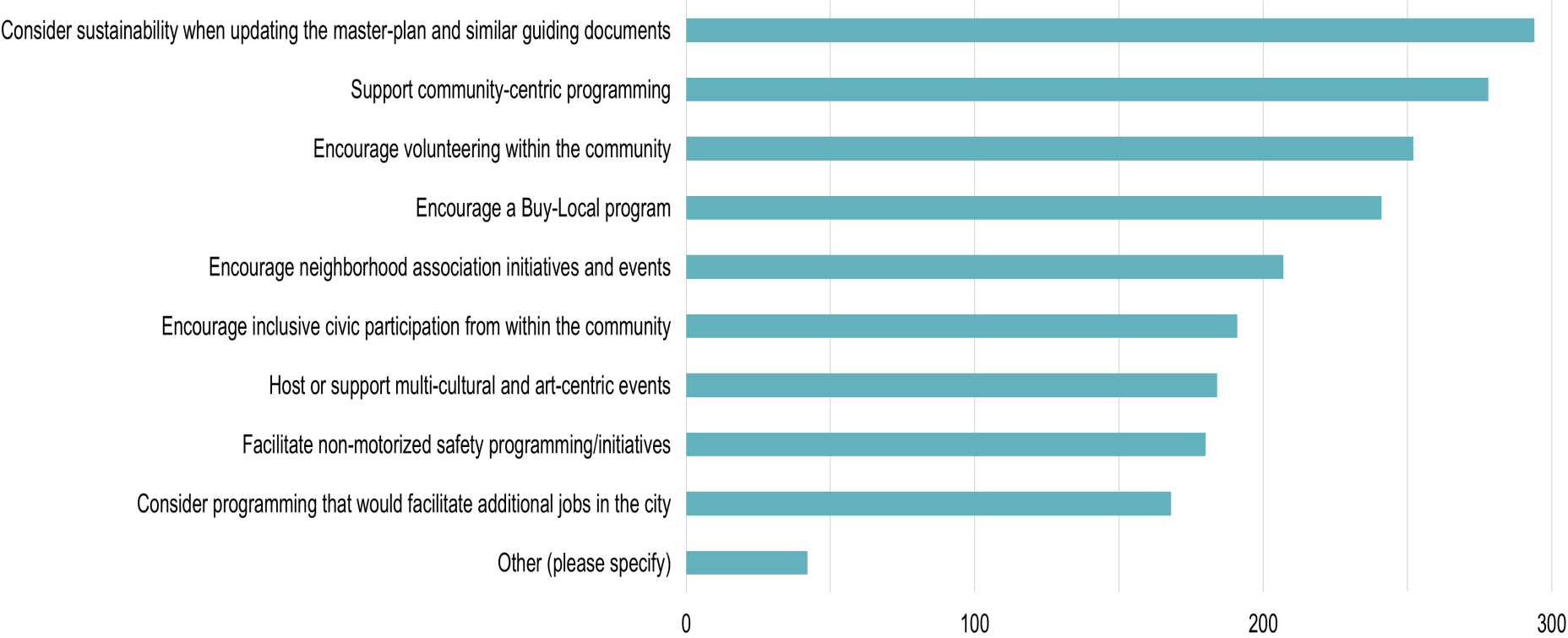
Obstacles and Opportunities

Respondents' expectations are met the most by the City's access to support for healthy living (mental and physical) (86.4%), access to social services (86.1%), and access to healthy buildings (85.3%). Respondents' expectations are partially met or not met by the following: renewable energy access; attainable and accessible housing options for each stage of life; and alternative mobility options. Quality of Life has elements which cross-cut two other focus topics—Energy and Buildings and Mobility.

Identifying these challenges presents the community with an opportunity to explore solutions and reduce obstacles to related to quality of life.

Survey Section: Focus Topics

Question 21. Quality of Life: Which of the following should be a priority for the city to support?
Choose all that apply. **Answered: 430** **Skipped: 22** **Other: 42**



Priorities

Respondents’ top three priorities for the City to support are: integrating sustainability into the master plan update and similar guiding documents (68.4%); supporting community-centric programming (64.7%); and encouraging volunteering within the community (58.6%).

“Other”

In Question 21’s open-ended “Other” prompt (above), several themes emerged related to housing, safety, and lack of inclusion of seniors in civic participation and community engagement; as well as accessibility issues.

Survey Section #3: Respondent Demographics

Question 23. What is your age group?

Answered: 436 Skipped: 16

Answer Choices	Responses	
17 years or under	2	0.46%
18 - 24 years	3	0.69%
25 - 34 years	59	13.53%
35 - 44 years	88	20.18%
45 - 54 years	73	16.74%
55 - 64 years	78	17.89%
65 - 74 years	103	23.62%
75 years+	30	6.88%

The largest share of survey respondents are:

- in the age group 65-74 years (23.6%)
- are homeowners (92.1%)
- identify as Royal Oak residents (98.4%)
- have lived in Royal Oak for 30 years or longer (34.7%)
- have a net annual household income of \$100,000 or greater (43.8%).

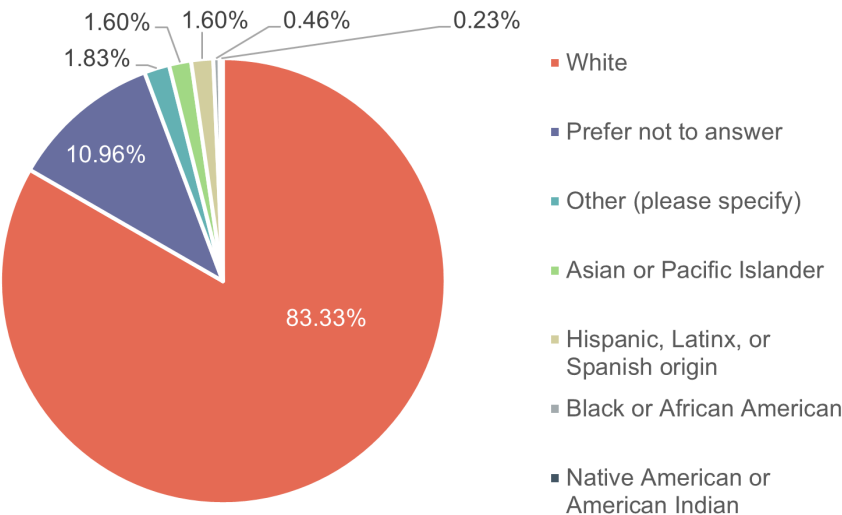
While this demographic group was most engaged by the online survey, it is not representative of Royal Oak’s population. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, Royal Oak residents’ [median age](#) is 35.8 years; the [median household income](#) is approximately \$81,665, and 6.6% of the population lived below the [poverty level in the past 12 months](#).

For future community stakeholder outreach, specific efforts should be made by the city to engage younger age groups and low to mid income residents.

There is also potential to analyze survey responses across age groups or generational groups, as well as potential to analyze responses across respondents’ geographic distribution in Royal Oak. This approach would identify target audiences for specific location-based programming, incentives, and outreach.

Question 24. Which of the following best describes you?

Answered: 438 Skipped: 14 Other: 8

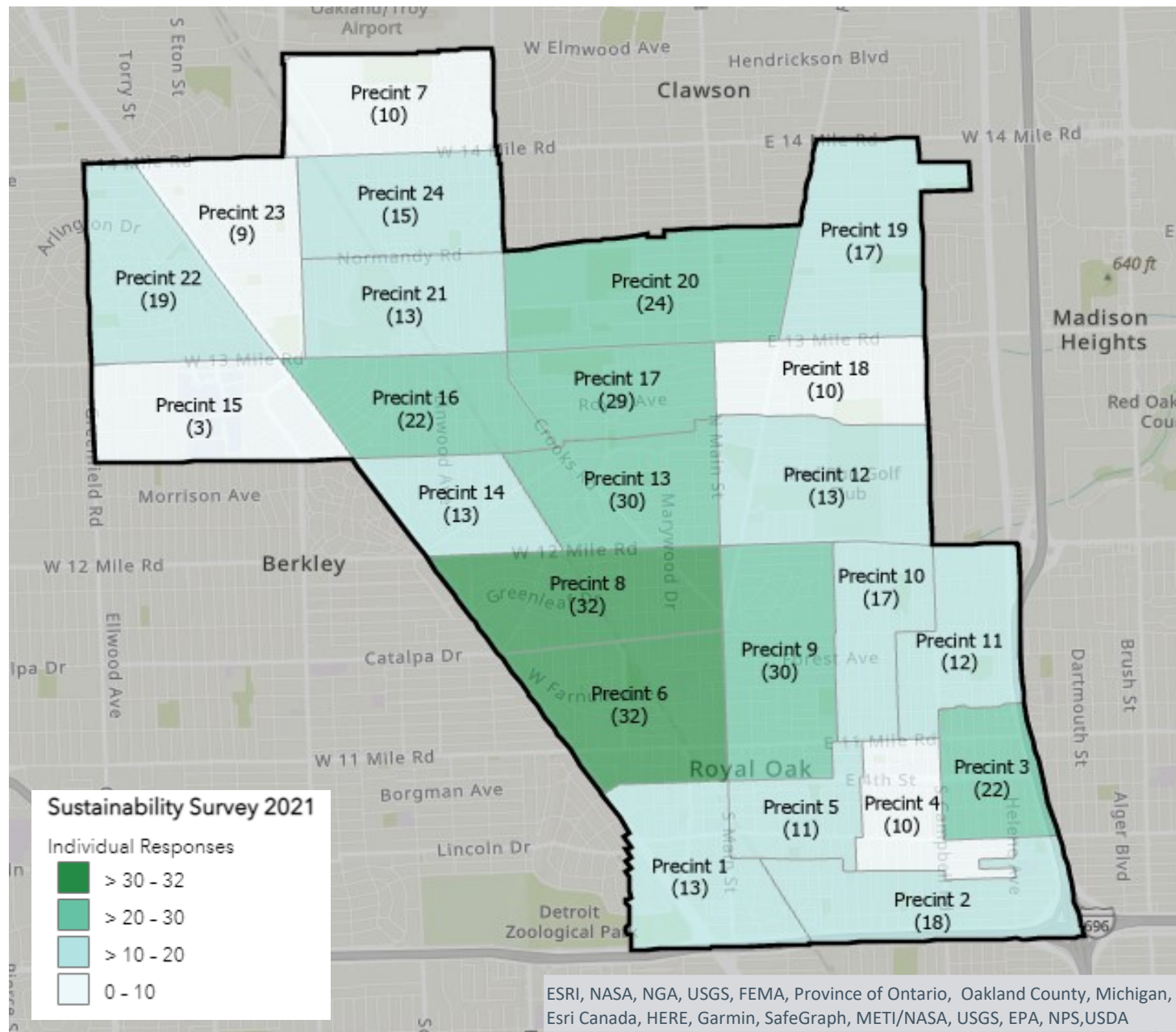


Survey Section #3: Respondent Demographics

Question 31. Using the map, which neighborhood/zone do you live in?

Answered: 428

Skipped: 24



To view the comprehensive raw survey data, [click here](#).