

Picture Port Elgin

Resident Survey Report

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1.0 Introduction

In January 2010, the Port Elgin Village Council invited EOS Eco-Energy and the Tantramar Planning District Commission (TPDC) to submit an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund to support the Village's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan process. In May 2010, the project received approval of Part A funding and work commenced. The project was named Picture Port Elgin. A workplan was set out including a preliminary phase meant to establish baseline information on economic, social and environmental realities in the community, as well as gauge initial community thoughts on the topic of sustainability.

Then under the direction of the Deputy-Mayor, TPDC and EOS prepared a one-page resident survey. The purpose of the survey was twofold: 1) to gather certain baseline information from the community, and 2) to engage the community and provide a first opportunity for participation in the process.

It should be noted, that the intent of the survey was not to achieve a statistically significant response rate, but to encourage dialogue and discussion from the outset of this project on the issues of sustainability.

2.0 Methodology

The survey included 23 questions and was one page in length (double-sided). It was printed on white paper and copies were delivered to all mailboxes within Village limits in early April 2010. Drop boxes for the survey were placed at the Village Office, the Post Office, and Cole's Grocery Store. The survey closed on April 30th, 2010, at which time the drop boxes were collected. Following the inaugural meeting of the **Picture Port Elgin** Steering Committee, it was decided to keep a few copies at the Village office until May 31st, to allow for other responses. During the month of May, an article was published in the Tribune-Post introducing the Picture Port Elgin initiative and advertising the survey.

3.0 Survey Returns

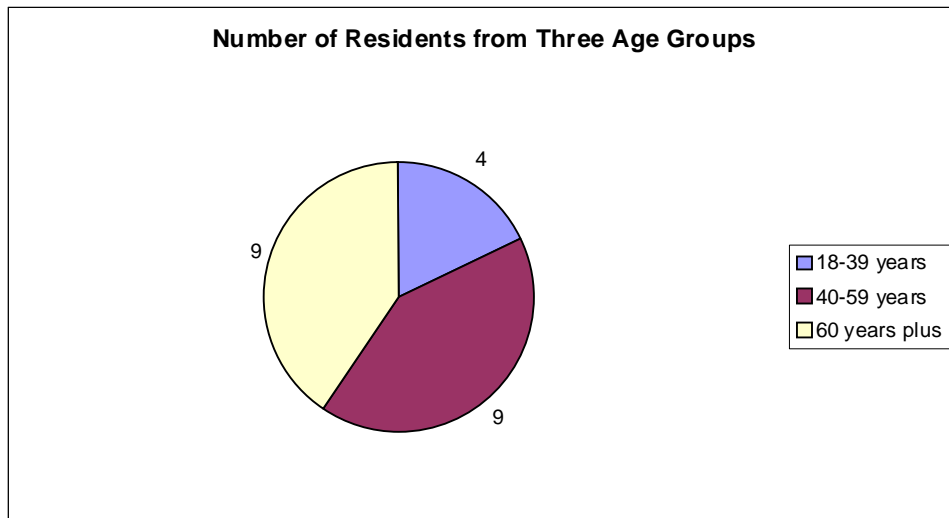
There were a total of 22 surveys completed. While this is only a 5% response rate, the survey responses give the Steering Committee direct input from 22 people who might not have otherwise participated in the process.

4.0 Survey Responses

The following section includes an analysis of results from the survey. A copy of the survey is presented in Appendix A of this report for reference. Corresponding questions are noted following the subtitle to each section of this report.

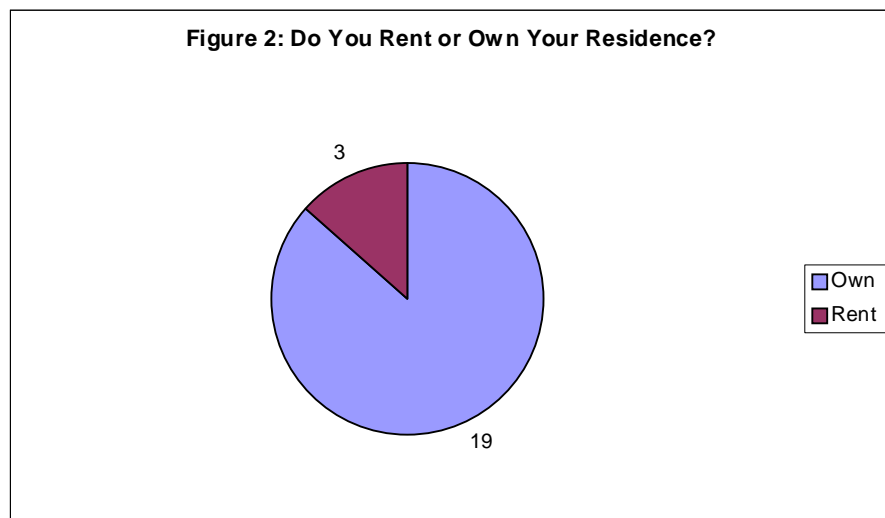
4.1 Who responded to the survey? (Qu. 6, 7, 10, 11, 21)

The majority of survey responses represented the age groups 40-59 years and > 60 years (41% for each category). The remaining 18% of respondents came from those aged 18-39 years. There were zero survey responses from those aged 17 years and under. Figure 1 outlines the response distribution by age group.



Only 4 people who responded to the survey (18% of respondents) had children under the age of 12 years in their household. The average number of children in the household for those respondents was 2. The average number of people per respondent household was 2.45. The majority of respondents lives or works in the serviced area of the village (with water and/or sewer). Less than 10% of respondents were from the unserviced area of the village.

Respondents were also asked about home ownership. The majority (86%) owned their own homes, with 14% renting,



4.2 What do you like most about Port Elgin? (Qu. 1)

The most popular response from the surveys was the friendliness of Port Elgin. Survey respondents stated the friendliness of the people and the peacefulness of the village as the most important characteristic of the region. Geographical characteristics were also very popular amongst respondents, with a large portion stating the location of the village and the nearby river as valuable traits. The amenity value of the region and the services which were available to citizens also ranked high among respondents.

Table 1 highlights the overall responses from 22 survey respondents

Table 1: Responses to What People like most about Port Elgin	Number of Responses
Friendliness	11
Geographic Location	7
Amenities	5
Quiet/Peaceful	5
Services	5
River	4
Small Town	4
Safe Community	3
Beauty	2
Government	2
Cleanliness	1
Port Elgin Regional School	1
Simplicity	1
Spacious	1
It is Walkable	1

4.3 What would you change about the town? (Qu. 2)

While positive characteristics of Port Elgin were relatively consistent in survey responses (as above), the recommended changes to the village varied considerably. From a sustainability perspective, many of these responses reflect what is needed in a sustainable community. The most frequent response was the need for more activities for children and youth. Increased recreational and academic opportunities for children and youth would make the village more appealing for families. Infrastructure improvements were also a common concern among respondents. Some believe that in order to make the village more aesthetically pleasing, Port Elgin should focus on town beautification through flower pots and public area maintenance as well as repairs made on local signage and streetlighting. A few respondents also believe that improved road quality could also help to improve the town. An environmental theme could be seen from survey results, as one respondent suggested that more attention should be put on improving the natural environment and developing carbon-reducing strategies. Survey respondents also called for changes in local governance, suggesting increased community involvement, speed limit reductions and a law on pet waste disposal. Other structural recommendations from the surveys include an increase in the variety of businesses in the area and the construction of a town hockey rink, marina, shopping centre, and horse stable.

Table 2 outlines the overall responses from 22 survey respondents.

Table 2: Responses to What People would Change about Port Elgin	Number of Responses
More activities for children and youth	5
Improve Infrastructure	4
Improve natural environment	4
Improve road quality	4
Better governance	3
Increase amenities	3
More Restaurants/Businesses	3

Table 2: Responses to What People would Change about Port Elgin	Number of Responses
Decrease drug/alcohol consumption	2
Improve options for energy reduction	2
Community Attitude	1
Higher Community Involvement in Decisions	1
Housing Affordability	1
Increase Policing	1
More Festivals/Activities	1
Public transportation service to surround area	1

4.4 What does sustainable living mean to you? (Qu. 3)

Respondents were asked to check off what “sustainable living” meant to them. A range of responses were provided, meaning that community members have different ideas of what sustainability refers to. In the *Picture Port Elgin* project, it is important to note that the town has adopted a balanced approach to sustainability – which includes environmental, economic, social, AND cultural components. In essence, all the definitions listed on the survey, except for the last two, (see table 3), are components of a sustainable community. The last two (“Allow all kinds of development if it provides jobs,” and “Use land and resources to benefit the economy first”) do not fit within the sustainability mandate because they consider the economy more important than social, cultural or environmental items. Table 3 outlines the most frequent responses (with 1 being the response more people gave than any other; and 11 being the response that was given the fewest times).

Table 3 – Order of Responses to Defining Sustainable Living – from highest to lowest	
1	Make sure our grandchildren have a healthy environment
1	Make sure we don't make the environment worse
1	Reduce, reuse, recycle
4	Buy local products
4	Ensure all children have a chance for a good education
4	Local businesses providing local employment
7	Ensure all residents have equal access to health care
8	Reduce poverty in our community
9	Provide access to affordable housing to all residents
10	Allow all kinds of development if it provides jobs
11	Use land and resources to benefit the economy first

Respondents were also given the opportunity to include their own definition of Sustainable Living in the survey. Following are some of those definitions:

- Education for all ages about self-sufficiency (ie, alternative energy, agriculture and investing locally).
- Conserve as much of the local history and historical property as possible
- Assume both individual and collective responsibility for how we function in Port Elgin

4.5 What issues are of greatest concern in Port Elgin? (Qu. 4)

Surveyed residents were asked to rate their level of concern for sixteen topics in Port Elgin. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being topics of greatest concern and five being those of least concern. Rankings were tabulated using the percentages of surveyed residents which rated each topic as either 1 or 2. Table 4 illustrates the issues which are of strongest concern for those who responded to the survey. The availability of different recreational opportunities for children and youth was the highest ranked topic of concern among respondents (77%). The desire by the respondents for a greater number of recreational opportunities in the region is additionally supported by the 55% of respondents who expressed concern over the lack of opportunities for adults. Adequate road maintenance was rated high among respondents (64%). Three of the highest ranked topics of concern among respondents expressed the respondents' concern over the impacts of climate change on the Port Elgin Community. Rising sea levels along the coastline, flooding, and increases in severe storms were listed as a concern by 64%, 55% and 55% of respondents respectively.

1	Availability of different recreational opportunities for children and youth
2	Adequate road maintenance
2	Rising sea levels along coastline
4	Flooding
4	Increase in severe storms (hurricanes, storm surge, etc.)
4	Lack of variety of recreational opportunities for adults and seniors
7	How well local government is working
7	Quality education system for Port Elgin
7	Unstable and rising fuel prices
7	Water quality
7	Youth leaving Port Elgin area for employment
12	Availability of child care options
12	Availability of services for seniors (e.g., health, recreation, housing)
12	Lack of variety in businesses
12	Security of local jobs
16	Lack of affordable housing

4.6 How could Port Elgin become more sustainable? (Qu. 5)

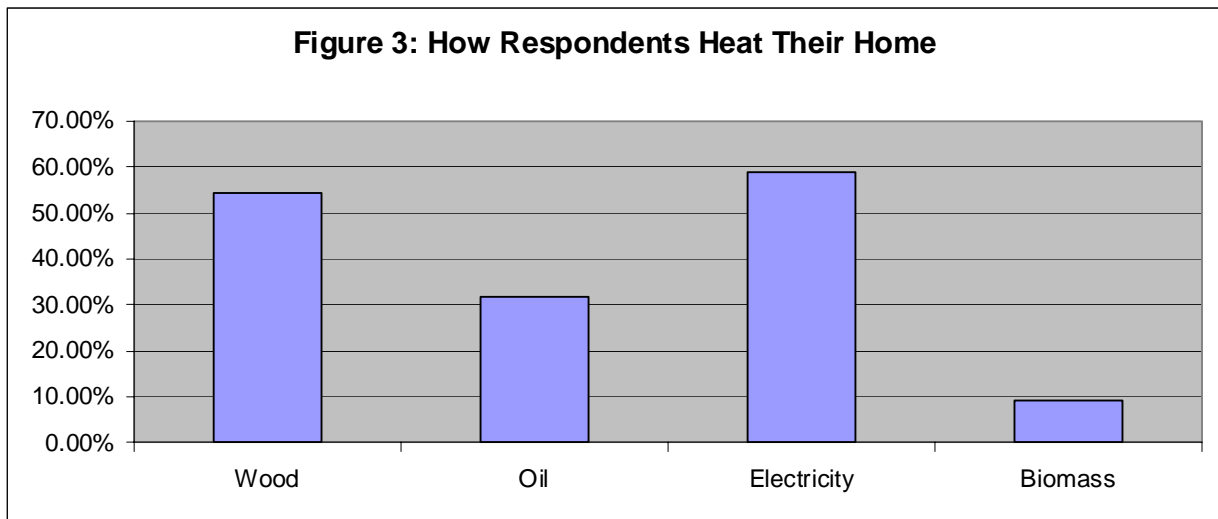
This question asked what approaches would have the greatest impact on making the community more sustainable. Again, those surveyed were asked to rate the importance of each topic from 1 -5, with 1 being most important and 5 being the least important. Those topics which received ratings of 1 or 2 for importance were used in tabulating the rankings shown in Table 5. The most important issue rated by respondents was for the creation of more local jobs; however, the responses suggested that the majority of the issues rated were equally important to creating a sustainable community in Port Elgin. Those issues ranked between 1 and 7 differed by only three votes (13%). While the importance of these seven topics ranged from 77%-64%, the importance of a range of housing options to those surveyed was rated only 41%.

Table 5 – Order of Responses to the Topics that are Most Important for Port Elgin to Become a Sustainable Community– from highest to lowest

1	Creation of more local jobs
2	Municipality to lead by example
2	Using “green” alternatives at home(e.g. eco-friendly detergent, clothes lines, compact fluorescent bulbs, etc.)
4	Individual/family efforts to reduce energy use
4	Locally produced foods
4	More opportunities to use renewable energy sources
7	Municipal by-laws to enforce sustainable options
8	Range of housing options (houses, duplexes, apartments)

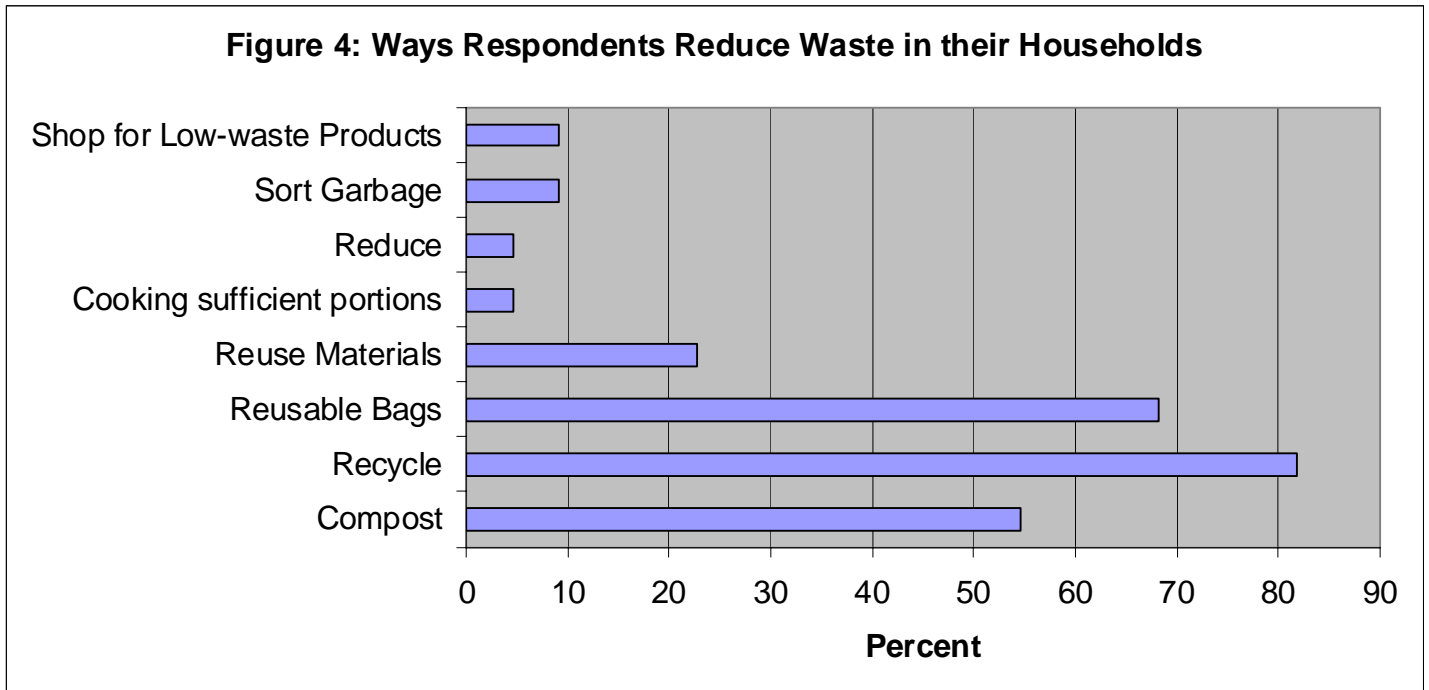
4.7 How do you heat your home? (Qu 12)

In half of the cases, respondents identified two or more sources of heat for their homes. These choices almost always included electricity as either a main source or supplemental source (almost 60%), and with oil (32%) and wood (55%) as the most common heating sources used at the present time. Two respondents listed biomass as a heat source (9%). No other types of heating sources were recorded from the survey results. As illustrated in Figure 3, renewable sources are still far outnumbered by traditional fossil fuels as home heating choices.



4.8 Activities to Reduce Waste in Respondent Households (Qu. 13)

Respondents were asked what types of things they did to reduce waste in their households and they responded with a wide range of activities. Figure 4 shows that of the 22 responses, 82% recycle (use blue bags) and 68% use reusable grocery bags. Just over half of all respondents also compost (green bags or backyard system).

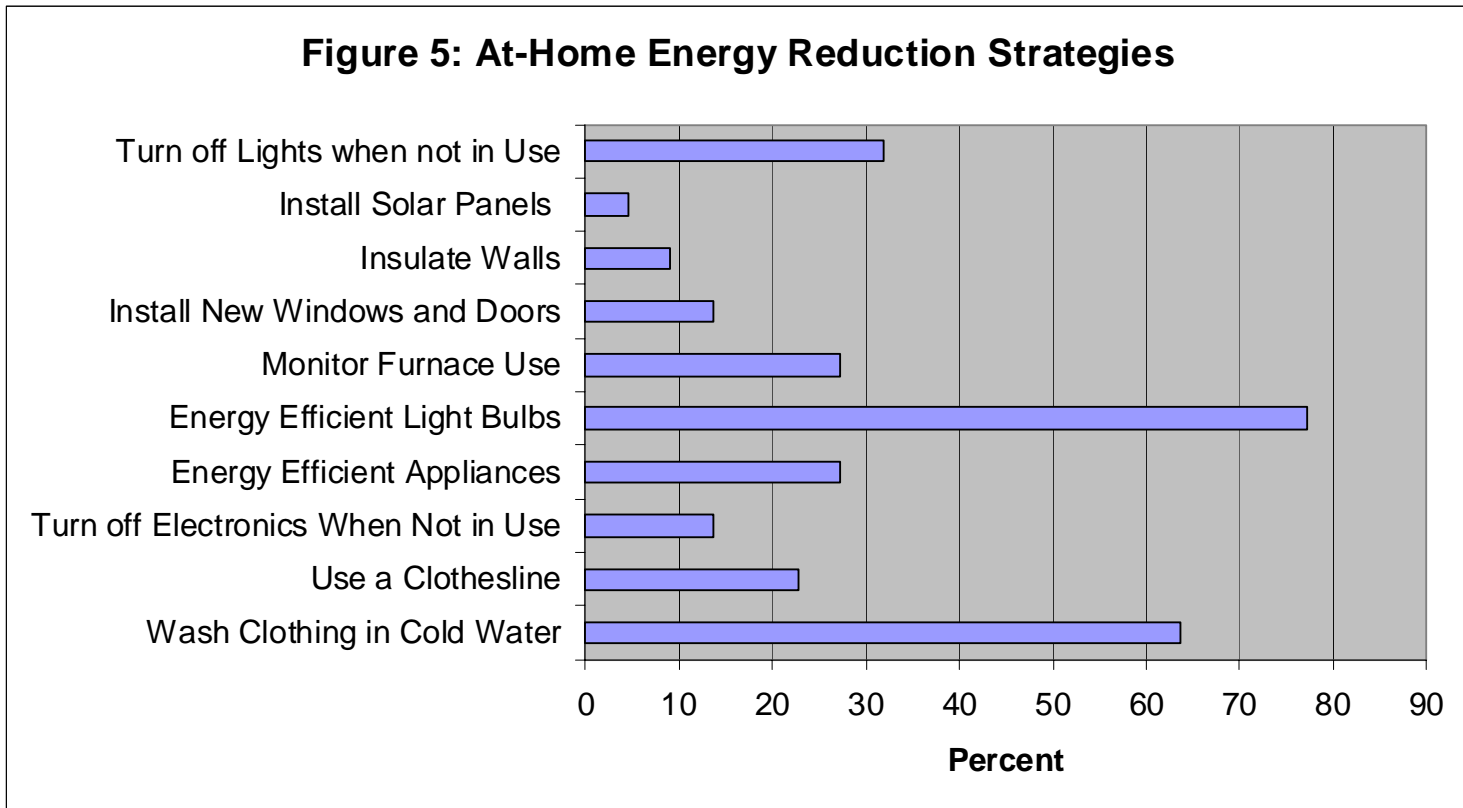


Some respondents listed “other” activities that they do to reduce waste such as:

- Use reusable containers (not baggies or plastic wrap)
- Re-use plastic containers
- Donate clothes and other items to charities
- Use natural cleaning products

4.9 Activities to Reduce Energy in Respondent Households (Qu. 14)

In their efforts to reduce energy use at home, 22 respondents undertook a number of different energy-reducing activities. The most popular energy saving activities were buying energy efficient light bulbs and washing laundry in cold water. Many respondents also turn lights off when not in use, use energy efficient appliances, dry their clothes on a clothesline and reduce their thermostats, particularly at night time. Figure 5 illustrates the range of activities.

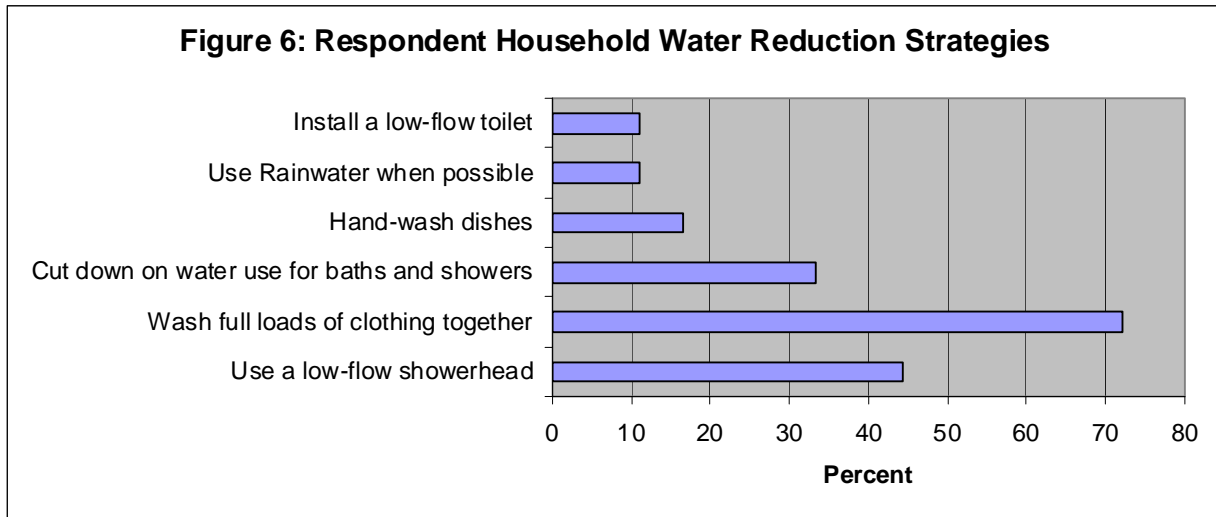


Respondents also undertook “other” activities which were identified as:

- Unplugging small appliances when not in use
- Use geothermal heat pump to heat house
- Put on extra clothes or long underwear instead of cranking the heat
- Using a tank-less hot water heater
- Using LED Christmas lights
- Driving a low-emission vehicle

4.10 Activities to Reduce Water in Respondent Households (Qu. 15)

18 people responded to this question providing a handful ways they reduce water use in their homes. 72% of respondents only wash full loads of laundry and a further 33% of respondents take short showers. 44% have installed a low-flow shower head, and 11% invested in a low flush toilet. Figure 6 outlines the frequency the types of strategies were reported by survey respondents.



Respondents also identified “other” water use reduction strategies, and they are as follows:

- Do not water the lawn or garden
- Share bath water or shower time
- Use efficient dishwashers, which uses less water than washing by hand
- Reduce flushing - if it's yellow let it mellow, if its brown flush it down
- Turn off taps when brushing your teeth
- Use energy efficient washing machine

4.11 Activities to Reduce Use of Motorized Transportation by Respondents (Qu. 8, 9, 16)

Survey respondents in the Port Elgin region varied dramatically in the distance they travelled each day, ranging from 0-170km. The median¹ “commute” to work or school for respondents was 5.5 km; however the average commute was 37.9.0km per day. Figure 7 summarizes respondents’ preferred method of transportation. Respondents most frequently used a personal vehicle (82%), followed by walking (55%), Bicycling (23%), Carpooling (18%), and bussing (5%).

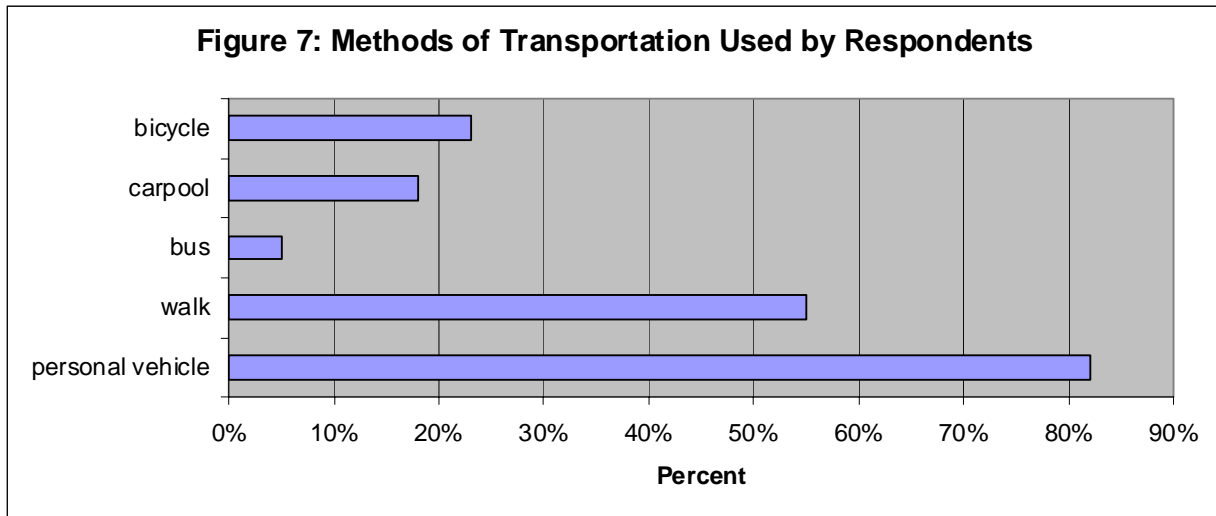
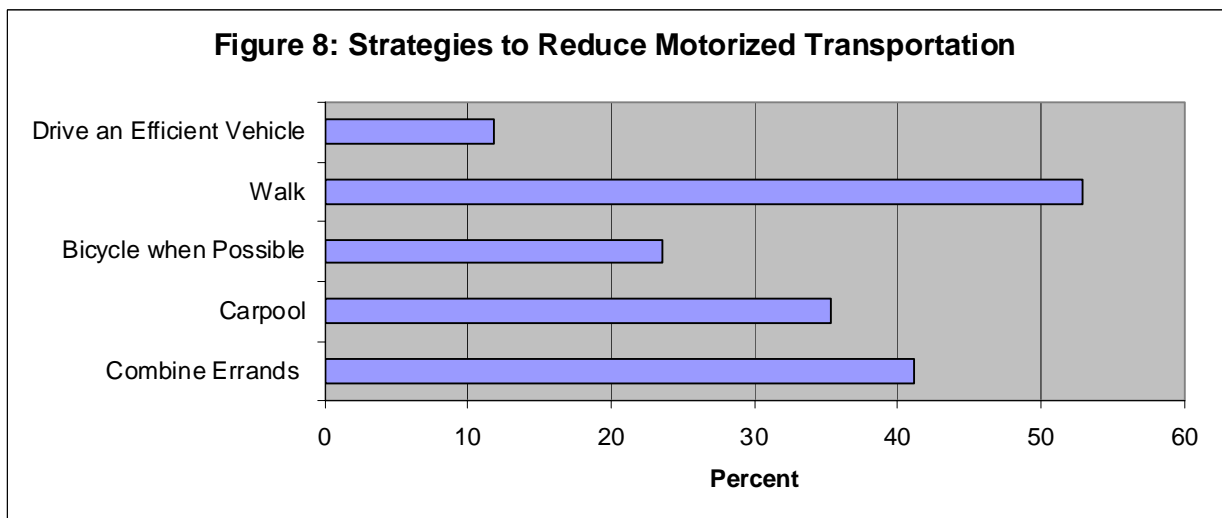


Figure 8 illustrates various strategies used by survey respondents to reduce their dependence on motorized vehicle use. 17 respondents provided strategies they use in this matter. 53% of respondents choose to walk to their destination, while only 24% chose to bicycle. 41% combine errands in a single trip. 35% of respondents carpool to their various destinations and 12% have switched to more fuel-efficient vehicles.

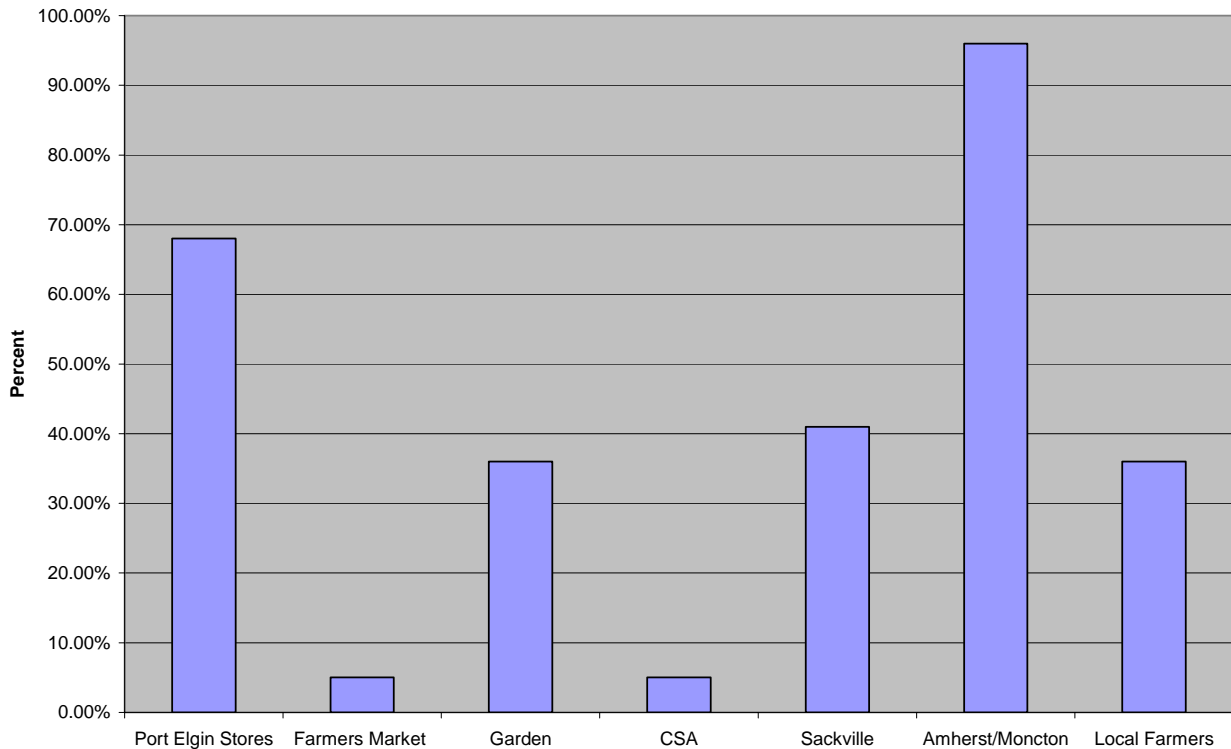


¹ The “median” takes out the very high and very low numbers and arrives at the middle value.

4.12 Where Respondents Get Their Food (Qu. 17)

One of the principles of sustainability is related to food – where it comes from and how far it travels to get to your plate from the plant/animal is something many of us rarely consider. The other question related to sustainability and food, is how far we travel to buy our food. Respondents were asked where they purchased their food. As shown in Figure 9, 96% of all survey respondents buy some of their groceries from Moncton/Amherst grocery stores and 41% from Sackville stores, while only 68% purchased some of their groceries in Port Elgin on a regular basis. The reasons for going to these stores outside of town include better selection, more and better quality organic produce, and better prices. Respondents also grow their own food in private gardens (36%), or purchase directly from local farmers (36%).

Figure 9: Where Survey Respondents Get their Food

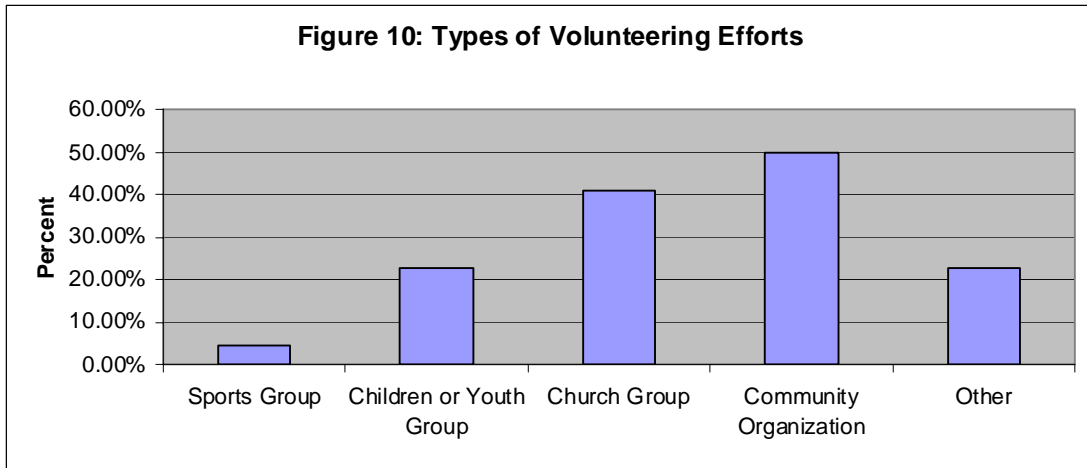


4.13 Volunteerism (Qu. 18, 19)

Volunteerism is an important indicator for community engagement. Port Elgin citizens have a long history of community involvement. The survey results show that the vast majority (73%) of survey respondents volunteer in some way in the community.

Figure 10 identifies the specific types of volunteer activities undertaken by survey respondents. 50% of respondents volunteer for various community organizations, including groups related to health, food, families, and the environment. 41% volunteer for church-related organizations, 22.7% for children and youth organizations, 4.5% with sports groups, and a further 23% for other organizations. Some of these other organizations include: school groups, music/radio, cultural events, political organizations, humanitarian groups, seniors services, and Town committees.

Figure 10: Types of Volunteering Efforts



4.14 Active Living (Qu. 20)

Active living is a key indicator of a healthy population and therefore a sustainable community. One of the most basic indicators is how much activity people take part in regularly. Survey respondents were asked: “What types of recreational activities do you or your family members take part in on a regular basis?” 73% of respondents identified that they regularly participated in unorganized activities (including such things as running, skiing, walking, canoeing/kayaking, biking, and swimming). 18% of respondents said they participated in organized activities (including such things as martial arts, dancing (lessons), hockey, volleyball, ice skating, basketball, soccer, curling, etc). 18% of respondents indicated that they did no kind of activity at all.

4.15 Making Port Elgin a More Sustainable Place to Live (Qu. 22)

There were 18 responses provided to this question. In summary, respondents suggest the following:

- Community Education is key to the success of any sustainability plan – to build support for the direction, and to show residents why it is so important to change our old ways of doing things. There is a cost both to action and non-action (economically, environmentally, and socially). Respondents suggested the following specific topics for education: garbage separation, supporting local businesses, renewable energy, and climate change. Respondents also expressed a desire to ensure that all residents are able to receive at least a high school education.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of addressing unsustainable issues within Port Elgin as a community, rather than relaying responsibility onto a select group of individuals. The respondents believe that everyone must work together to achieve many of the outcomes listed in this report while at the same time continuing to support the leadership of the Mayor and Councilors in their current and future initiatives.
- Those residents which responded to the survey additionally stressed the importance of improving the current social sustainability of the community. They described the need for youth and children opportunities to improve the quality of life for the town’s younger population. They also mentioned the need for a greater effort to integrate the village’s elderly population into the community. Many survey respondents believe that improving the number of recreational, academic and social opportunities for Port Elgin residents of all ages is crucial to developing a sustainable community.

Examples of specific recommendations were:

- Provide regular bus service to major shopping destinations 1-2 times per week, possibly combined with surrounding communities
- Take steps to promote adult learning through GED programs (etc.), and celebrate steps that have been taken
- Take additional steps to educate children on issues that will affect their future.
- Work together as a community on proposed plans
- Community investment in local resources to develop a local renewable energy source and to support local farmers and businesses
- Increase the level of low-income housing provided in the area
- Increase the public knowledge of environmental issues through public education
- Make the commercial area of the town more appealing to residents and outside markets
- Establish and acknowledge a community effort to select green options over convenient ones
- Establish a local and weekly community farmers market for the region
- Subsidize compost bins for residents and continue with tree purchasing program
- Increase recreational opportunities for children and youth in order to provide a healthy living environment for the town's youth and to make the area is more appealing for new families
- Increase law enforcement in the area to crack down on substance abuse to make the Port Elgin safer for the residents who live here
- Increase public awareness of the importance of proper waste disposal in our community
- Increase the number of town festivals and activities
- Attempt to draw even more artists to the region to make the village more visually appealing with the creation of an art gallery
- Address communication and transportation issues which prevent Port Elgin's large senior population from engaging in the community
- Educate residents on the value of alternative energy sources

4.16 Other Comments (Qu. 23)

The final question of the survey asked people to provide any other comments they have on life in Sackville. The 11 responses were far ranging. The following is a representative sample:

- Open village office on Fridays, dredge river to allow larger boats through passage, repair tennis court
- Keep ditches and streets clean, sand or dirt should not be gathered on streets and then left there
- Very concerned about sustainability and interested in programs (education or otherwise), which promotes sustainable living
- Water meters, encourage co-operatives of all types, promote entrepreneurial enterprises with youth, promote using alternative energy for homes, businesses, institutions
- Port Elgin should be marketed as a small watercraft destination, a floating dock built at park on Shemogue Rd.
- More info promoting Port Elgin to residents, more public gardens for people to take in the view, summer businesses in Port Elgin to enhance tourism and economy (ie, ice cream booth)
- Mayor and Councilors are doing a very good job, we should do our best to help
- Centre traffic circle could use a welcome with flowers, flags, etc.
- More law enforcement, increased presence of RCMP, racing on streets and drugs = bad publicity, make residents aware of by-laws concerning property appearance and garbage

5.0 Summary and Next Steps

This survey resulted in a wide range of contributions from community members for the Picture Port Elgin initiative. While there is not 100% agreement about what sustainability means, it is apparent that community members are interested in maintaining and/or improving the quality of life in our small town for decades to come. The local economy, range of human services and amenities, and the natural environment all play key roles in our quality of life in Port Elgin – if any of them fail, our community members will feel the impact. Many thanks go to the Port Elgin residents who took the time to respond to the survey, and to the many others who read through the survey and are still thinking about the questions.

The next step in the *Picture Port Elgin* process is for community members to participate in Sustainabili-TEAS with neighbours, family, business associates and others. These Sustainabili-TEAS will be hosted by members of the Steering Committee and will focus an informal discussion on the following 4 questions:

- 1) Why do you live in Port Elgin? What keeps you here?
- 2) When you think about the future, what concerns you?
- 3) Imagine you are 30 years in the future and you are telling your grandchildren why Port Elgin is a great place to live. What do you tell them to prove it? What do you see in your vision?
- 4) As a member of this community, what do you think is your responsibility in achieving this vision?

Talk to your colleagues at work, your volunteer groups, or your neighbours over tea about these questions. Take some brief notes and let us know what you think! As well there will be other unique initiatives for Port Elgin folks to have their say and help define what the Picture of Port Elgin will look like in 2040.

Stay tuned to the Tribune Post for details.