

# Survey Summary

## Region of Halton Solid Waste Management Strategy

What We Heard: A summary of the survey on the Region's Proposed Medium-Long-Term Solid Waste Management Strategy!

February 2022





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# 1.0 Introduction

Halton Region (Region) has been developing its next Solid Waste Management Strategy (Strategy) that will enhance the waste management system. The Strategy aims to reduce waste, extend the lifespan of the Region's landfill and lower carbon emissions.

The Strategy identifies medium (4-10 years) and long-term (11+ years) key initiatives that would be implemented to:

- Divert between two per cent and 10 per cent more waste from landfill by 2035;
- Extend the landfill capacity from 2044 to between 2050–2054 (on the lower end of predictions) and 2070 (on the higher end of predictions); and
- Have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 13,020 tonnes per year.

Waste management practices at home, at work, and in the community are an important part of the waste management system. Hearing from a wide range of voices through community engagement was an important component of the Strategy. Engagement activities were designed to educate the community about current waste management practices, the key initiatives and the overall proposed Strategy in order to collect feedback. Feedback and input collected was reviewed and will help inform the key initiatives outlined in the final Strategy.

The key activity to collect feedback and input for the Strategy was an online survey that was available from November 8 to December 10, 2021 on the Solid Waste Management Strategy webpage ([halton.ca/waste](http://halton.ca/waste)). A comprehensive Communication Plan promoted the survey with the following tactics:

- the Region's website,
- organic and promoted social media content (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram),
- a media release,
- Regional Councillor Toolkit
- emails to current waste collection subscribers,
- mail-out postcards to rural residents,
- ads in local newspapers, and

- at Zoom-based Public Information Centers held on November 23, 24 and 30, 2021.

The survey sought feedback on the proposed key initiatives that will help reduce community waste, extend the life of the Region's landfill and protect the natural environment in the Region. The survey asked participants to identify their level of support for the Strategy, six key initiatives that will impact the waste management services provided to the public, and to provide additional feedback on the proposed Strategy, including if there was anything else the Region should consider.

Overall, 6,970 people responded to the survey. Feedback will help the Region understand perspectives on the key initiatives, and if there was anything missing that should be considered.

Survey responses are summarized by question number below. Responses to open ended questions were reviewed and categorized into themes. A summary of the key themes, ideas, and feedback received in the survey is outlined below.

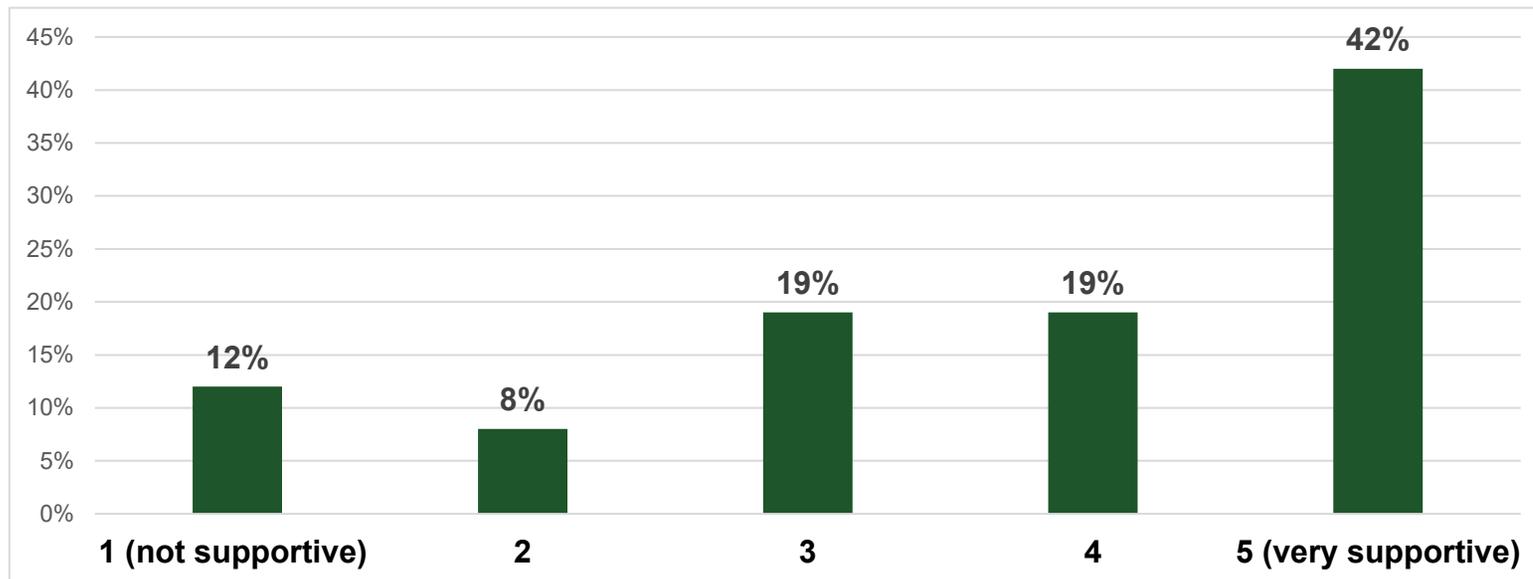
## 2.0 Response Summary

The following section provides the responses to questions relating to the key initiatives, the proposed Strategy and demographics of the respondents.

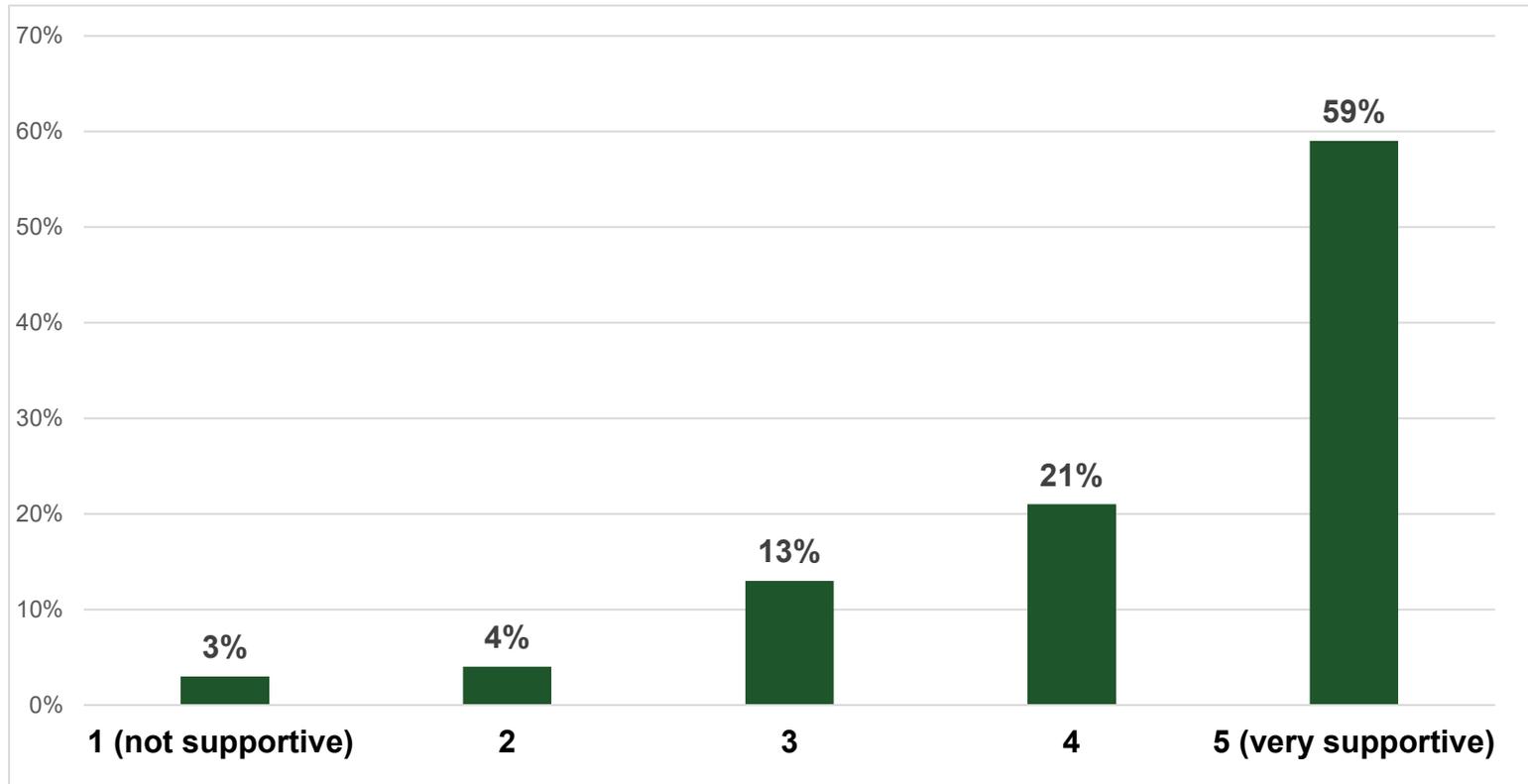
### 2.1 Proposed Key Initiatives

Questions 1 through 6 sought feedback by asking respondents to indicate their level of support for some of the key initiatives on a scale of 1 (not supportive) to 5 (very supportive). The results are provided in the figures below.

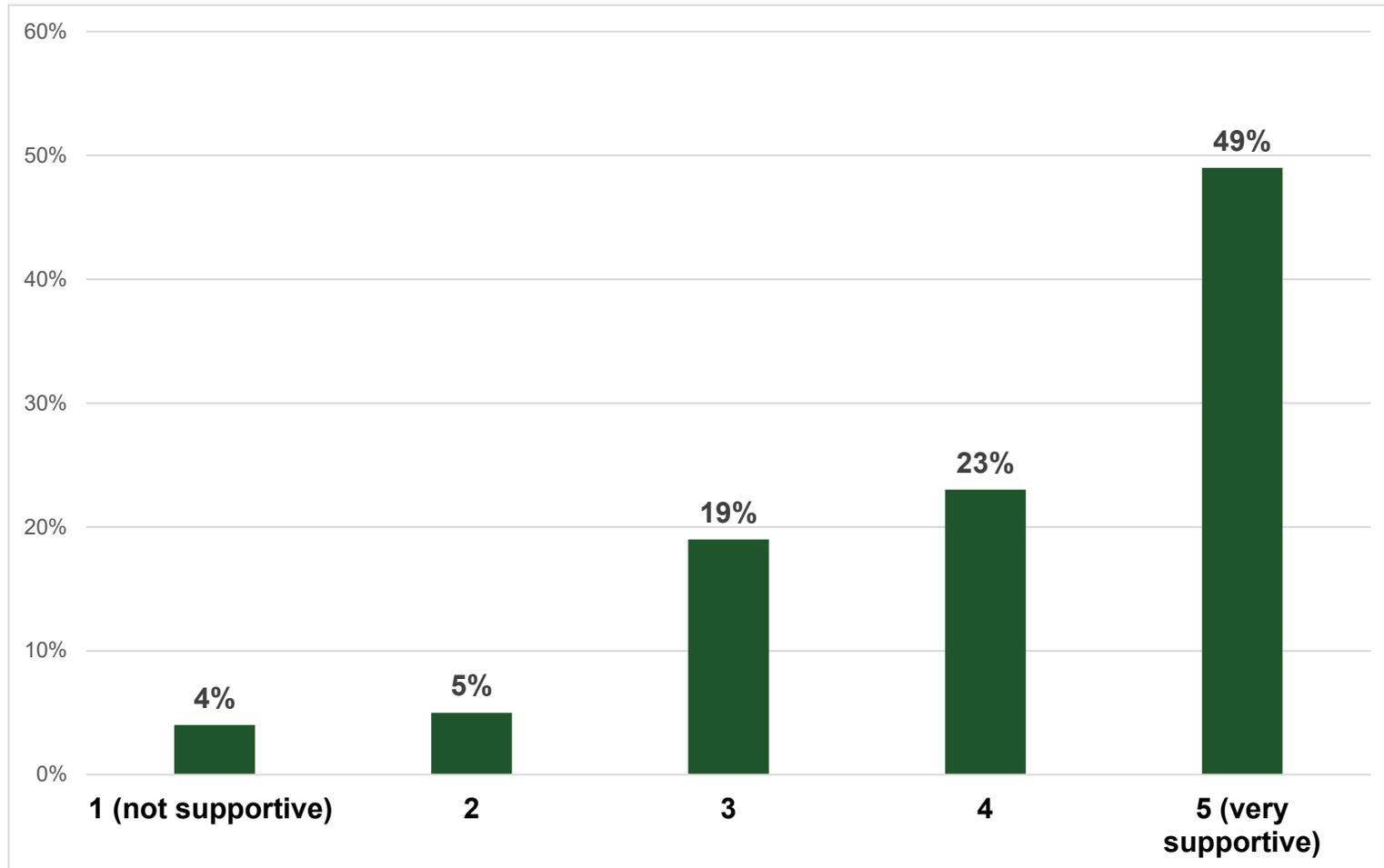
**Q1: Additional public waste drop-off depots to reduce resident's travel time to the Halton Waste Management Site. (6,960 responses)**



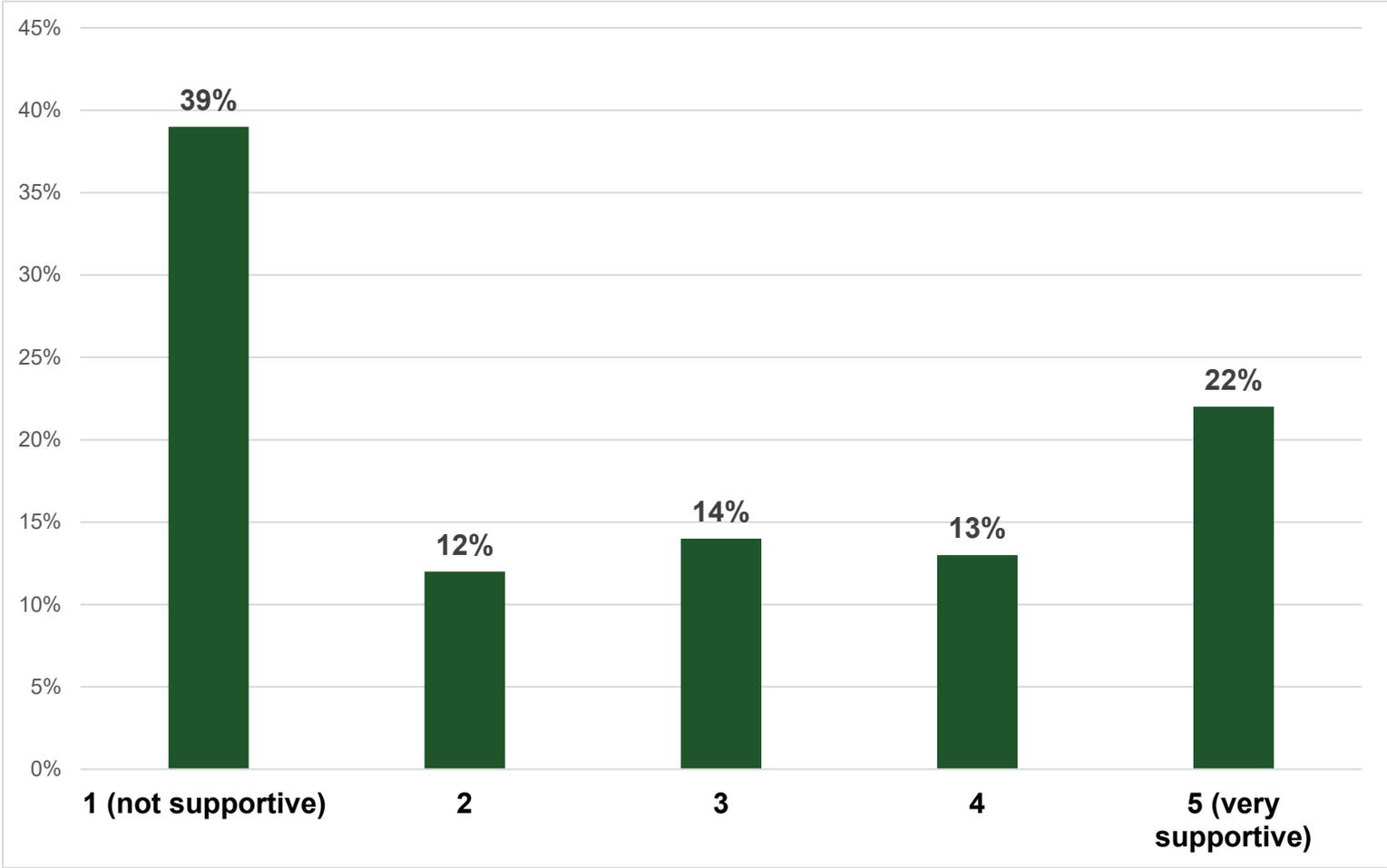
**Q2: Expand existing community waste collection services by including more designated materials, such as fabrics (textiles) to divert from landfill. (6,949 responses)**



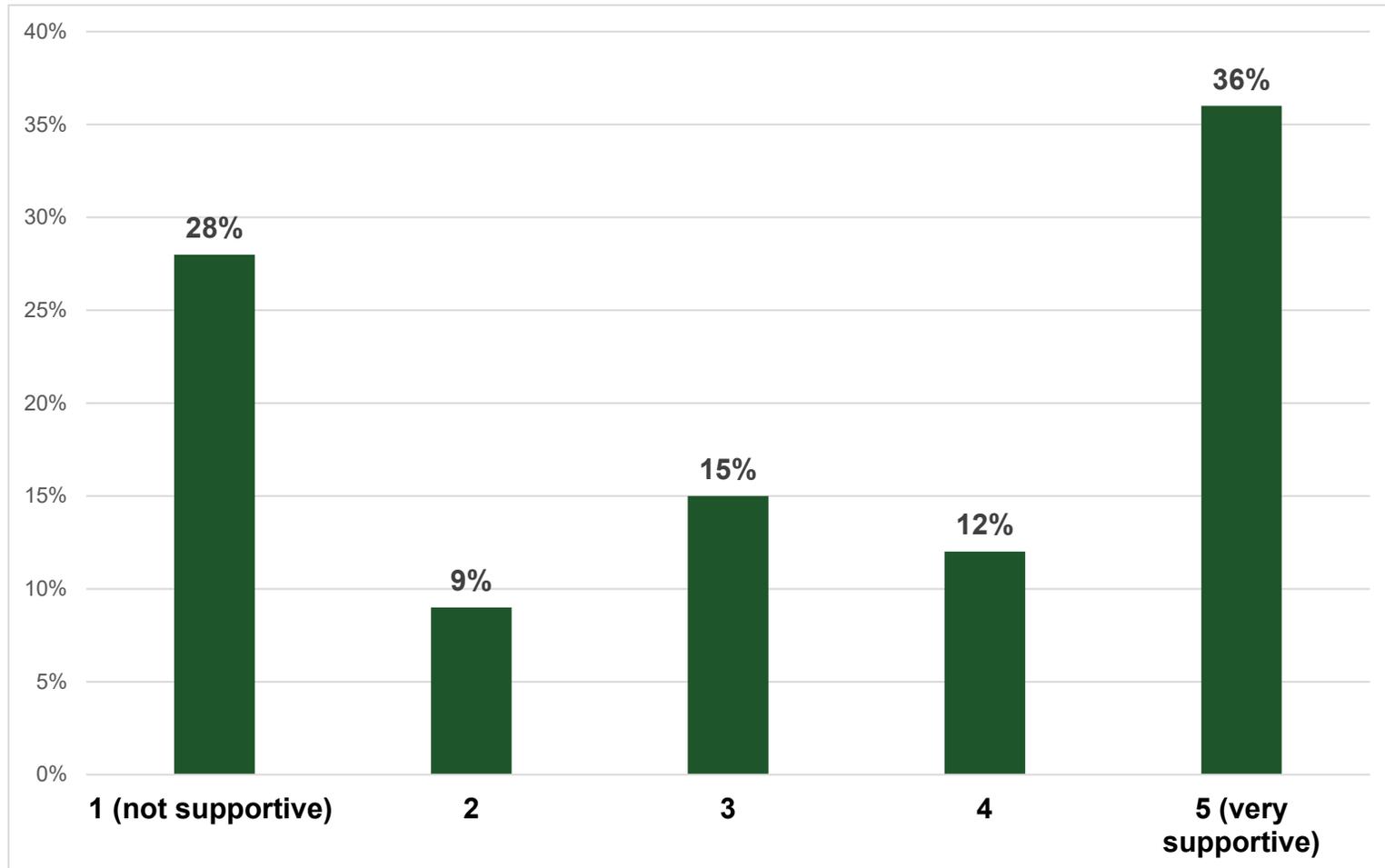
**Q3: Support the circular and sharing economy by providing support for local innovators and/or organizations that design for the environment and/or reduce, reuse, and reclaim waste. (6,911 responses)**



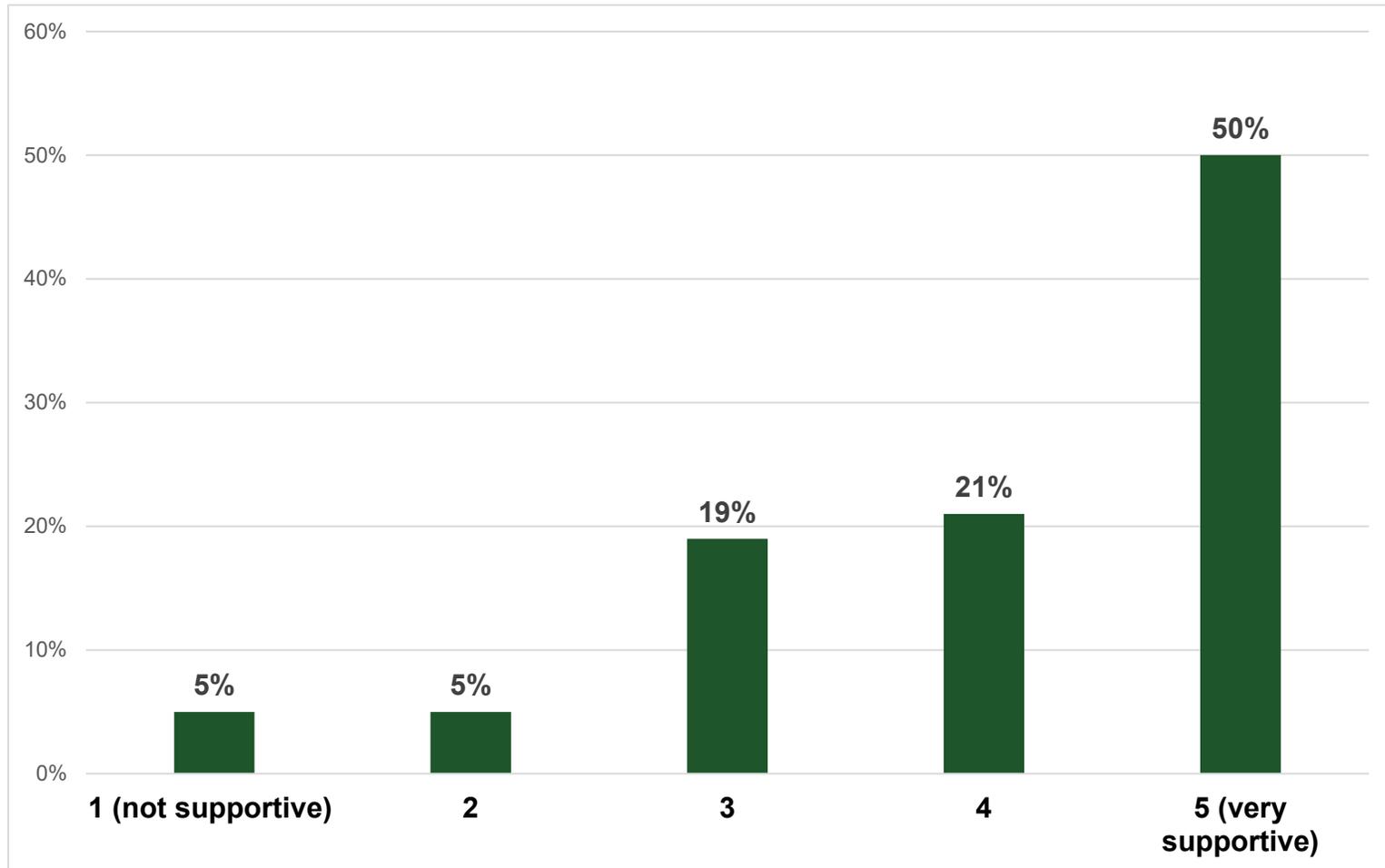
**Q4: Decrease garbage bag limits to a 2-bag limit in 2023, and then a 1-bag limit for garbage in 2031. (6,973 responses)**



**Q5: Provide wheeled-carts for automated curbside collection of garbage, recyclable material and household organic waste. (6,968 responses)**



**Q6: Improve waste diversion in multi-residential buildings (apartment buildings) through increased and targeted promotion and education as well as limits on amount of garbage to be collected. (6,936 responses)**

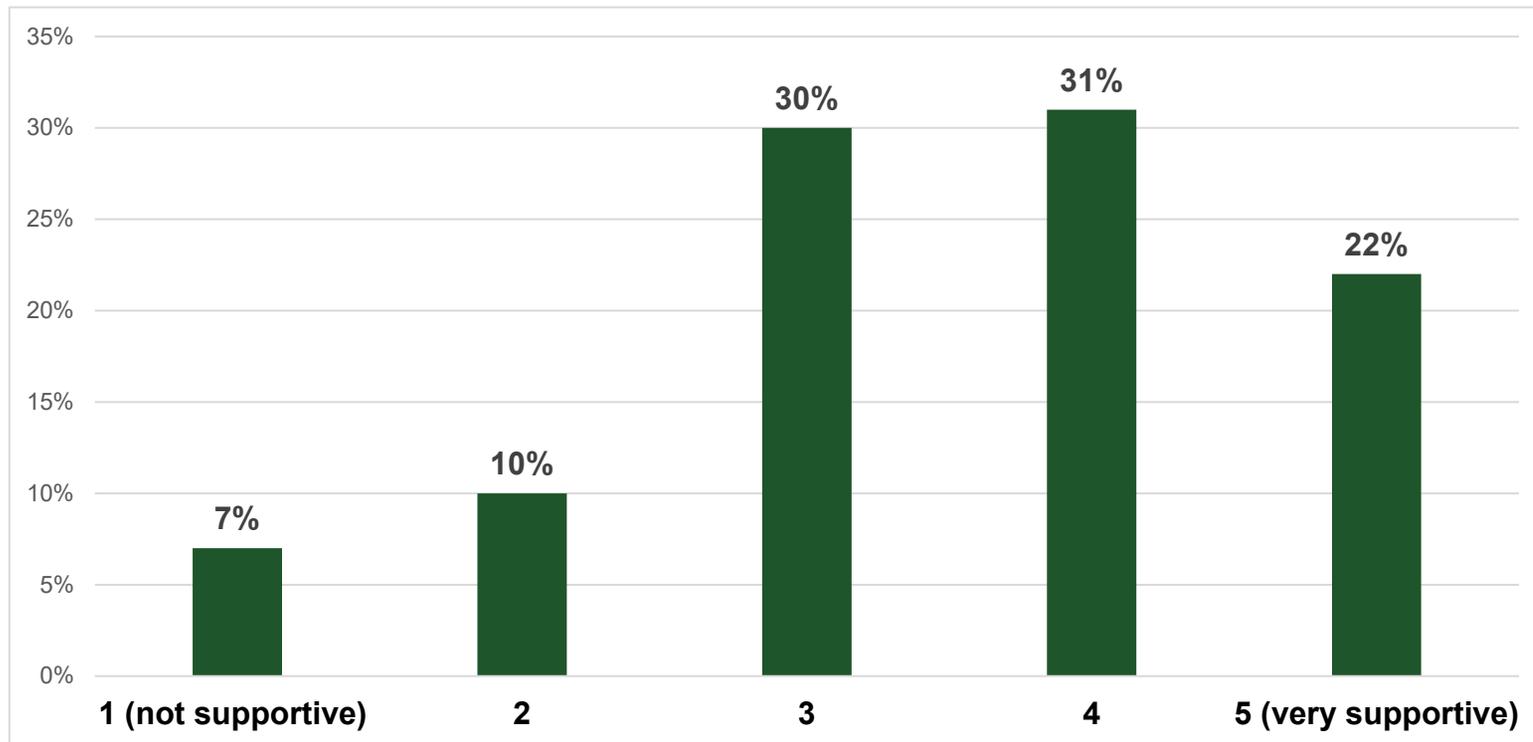


## 2.2 Draft Solid Waste Management Strategy

Questions 7 through 10 sought feedback on the proposed Medium-Long Term Solid Waste Management Strategy. Question 7 used the same level of support scale (1 – not supportive to 5 – very supportive) and Questions 8 through

10 were open ended questions. The main themes in the comments received for Questions 8 through 10 were themed and a summary of the key themes are provided below.

**Q7: After reviewing the proposed Medium-Long Term Solid Waste Management Strategy, please check the number that best represents your level of overall support using a five-point scale from not supportive (1) to very supportive (5). (5156 responses)**



**Q8: Please highlight what parts of the proposed Medium-Long Term Solid Waste Management Strategy were a factor in determining your level of support? (2,546 responses)**

Of the 2,546 responses provided to the open ended question, the most common factor for determining levels of support are outlined below:

**Very supportive (score of 5) and supportive (score of 4)** make up 53% of the total responses. Residents were supportive of the following key initiatives:

- Provide wheeled-carts for automated curbside collection of garbage, recyclable material and household organic waste. Many residents felt that Halton Region was overdue for wheeled carts. There were comparisons to other municipalities that have a successful wheeled cart program such as the Region of Peel and the City of Toronto. Residents noted that wheeled carts will prevent litter as the lids will protect waste from weather elements. There was concern around the cost of the new wheeled carts and the disposal of the old recycling bins.
- Decrease garbage bag limits to a 2-bag limit in 2023, and then a 1-bag limit for garbage in 2031. Residents who selected supportive of the overall strategy were also in favour of the reduction in garbage bag limits. Some residents felt that they do not need three bags a week and that having a lower bag limit will force them to rethink about the amount of waste they generate at home.
- Expand existing community waste collection services by including more designated materials, such as fabrics (textiles) to divert from landfill. Many residents supported the key initiative to designate more materials into the recycling stream including textiles and Styrofoam. Resident comments indicated that more recycling options will help reduce the amount of waste in the garbage stream which would help them comply to a bag reduction limit.

**Neutral support (score of 3)** made up 30% of the total responses. Residents who gave an overall score of 3 were supportive of most of the initiatives, with the exception of wheeled carts and garbage bag reductions. Residents expressed concerns with the following:

- Residents who were not supportive of the wheeled carts indicated that they do not have space to store them, they can be an eyesore for the community and that there could be accessibility issues.
- Residents who were not supportive of the bag reduction limit mentioned that large families cannot generate less than three bags of garbage per week. There were concerns from residents who had young children as they need more room to dispose of diapers and those with pets as they need disposal for pet waste as it is not accepted in the green bin.

**Very unsupportive (1) and unsupportive (2)** make up 17% of the total responses.

- Residents who indicated they were unsupportive of the key initiatives identified the similar concerns as the residents who indicated neutral support as outlined above. These concerns focused on the accessibility and size of the carts, potential loss of jobs from automated trucks and concerns with family size and the limits to garbage bag limits.

**Q9: Are there other strategies or waste diversion initiatives that you want the Region to review in order to reduce waste and extend the lifespan of the landfill site? (2,127 responses)**

Of the 2,127 responses provided to the open-ended question, the most common strategies or waste diversion initiatives suggested to extend the lifespan on the landfill site include:

- Increase promotion and education:
  - To make it easier for residents to properly sort material at home and divert waste from the landfill.
  - To encourage residents to use the green cart.
  - Aimed at youth and children to promote more sustainable practices at a younger age.
  - with the use of social media, apps, and websites to make information more accessible
  - On how to sort packaging materials.
  - With language translation services or graphic friendly outreach tactics to help newcomers understand recycling rules.
- Recycle more materials:
  - Include more materials, particularly Styrofoam, in the recycling program to make sure more material is diverted from the landfill.
- Collect more items:
  - Include special pick up days on a regular basis to collect hard to dispose of materials such as electronics, hazardous waste, and large items.
- Incentivize change:
  - Use incentives or reward programs to encourage residents and businesses to properly sort their waste, reuse items, reduce, and divert waste from the landfill.
- Reduce single-use items:

- Work with businesses to reduce waste from the source, specifically encourage businesses to reduce packaging.
- Encourage the use of reusable items over single-use items for commonly used things such as takeout containers, coffee cups, and shopping bags.
- Target businesses
  - The Region should target businesses rather than the individual to reduce the amount of waste they produce, improve how they dispose of their materials to ensure they are diverting materials from the landfill, and ensure that businesses are using more sustainable practices overall.
- Public space receptacles
  - Include more public receptacles in places like retail centres, malls, main streets, parks, and ensure that garbage, recycling, and compost are available in these places.
- Innovation:
  - Explore innovative solutions to waste management including using waste for energy, exploring new technologies, and researching what other countries are doing for inspiration.

**Q10: Do you have any comments about the proposed initiatives included in the draft Solid Waste Management Strategy? (1,558 responses)**

Of the 1,558 responses provided to the open-ended question, the most common comments about the proposed initiatives include:

- Support for the implementation of wheeled carts
  - Paired with the automated collection system, participants noted it would help garbage bag reduction, is easier to manage and would encourage recycling and bi-weekly pick-ups.
  - Having secure lids with a sturdy design would ensure waste material does not fall out onto the streets and is not accessible to pests.
  - An assortment of sizes and design choices to choose from would help different size households and those of differing abilities.
- Concerns related to wheeled carts
  - Some participants expressed concerns over how cumbersome the wheeled carts may be; their size making it challenging to maneuver for those with accessibility needs.
  - Some participants also expressed concerns over space available in townhomes and homes with smaller driveways and often finding them visually not pleasing.
  - Some participants indicated concerns with the potential for the lids not being secure, and allowing waste material to pollute the neighborhood and allow pests to gain access.
- Support for garbage bag reduction
  - Education, support and incentives would help encourage residents to recycle more and aim to reduce personal waste.
  - Providing opportunities for diversion (electronics, textiles, animal waste, and hazardous waste), more recycling options and materials would garner greater support in reducing bags.
- Concerns with garbage bag reduction
  - Participants with larger families noted concerns with reducing the number of bags they are currently disposing of. In particular, concerns with diapers, hygienic products and pet waste were noted.

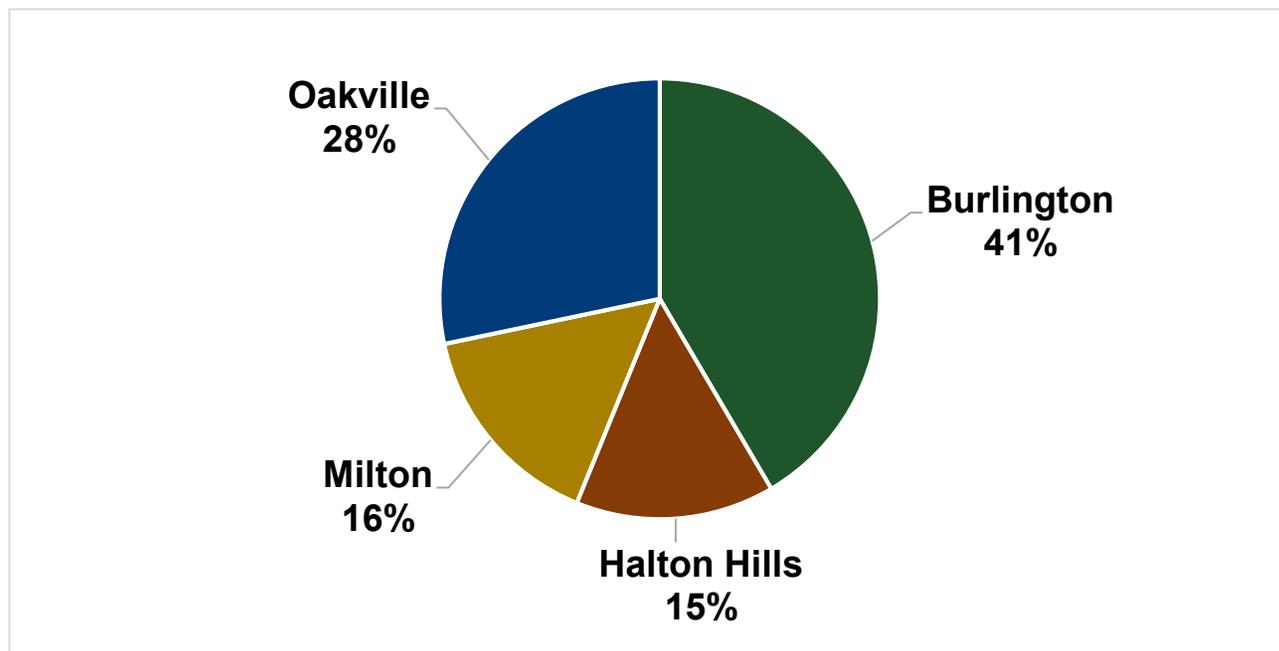
- Some participants noted there may be residents unable to reduce the number of garbage bags, paired with a bi-weekly pick up schedule, and may choose to illegally dump on rural streets or in public receptacles. Increased public drop-off sites would be helpful to curb this behavior.
- Producers and businesses should be held accountable to ensure packaging is minimized and that single-use plastics and Styrofoam are limited if not recyclable.
- Overall Support for the Strategy Initiatives
  - Increasing enforcement, innovation and awareness along with looking to others towards better practices to help move the initiatives along.
  - Allowing products to be reusable again through circular economy and right to repair initiatives.
  - Ensuring multi-residential buildings are held accountable and improving their sorting practices.
  - In general, providing residents an ease of use, different recycling options, greater collection opportunities and accepting more materials.
  - To extend the lifespan of the landfill by diverting waste, converting waste to energy through incineration or capturing landfill gas from the waste.
  - Trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by using alternative energy in trucks.

## 2.3 Demographic Questions

The last four questions (Questions 11 through 14) asked for information about the respondents demographics. Generally, the demographics of the survey respondents is representative of Halton Region residents' demographic profile, with the exception of Burlington being slightly overrepresented and Milton slightly underrepresented. Since the level and type of waste management services differ for the various demographic areas in the Region, for example single-family, multi-residential buildings and rural areas, it was important to ensure survey responses were received from residents that live in each of these sectors.

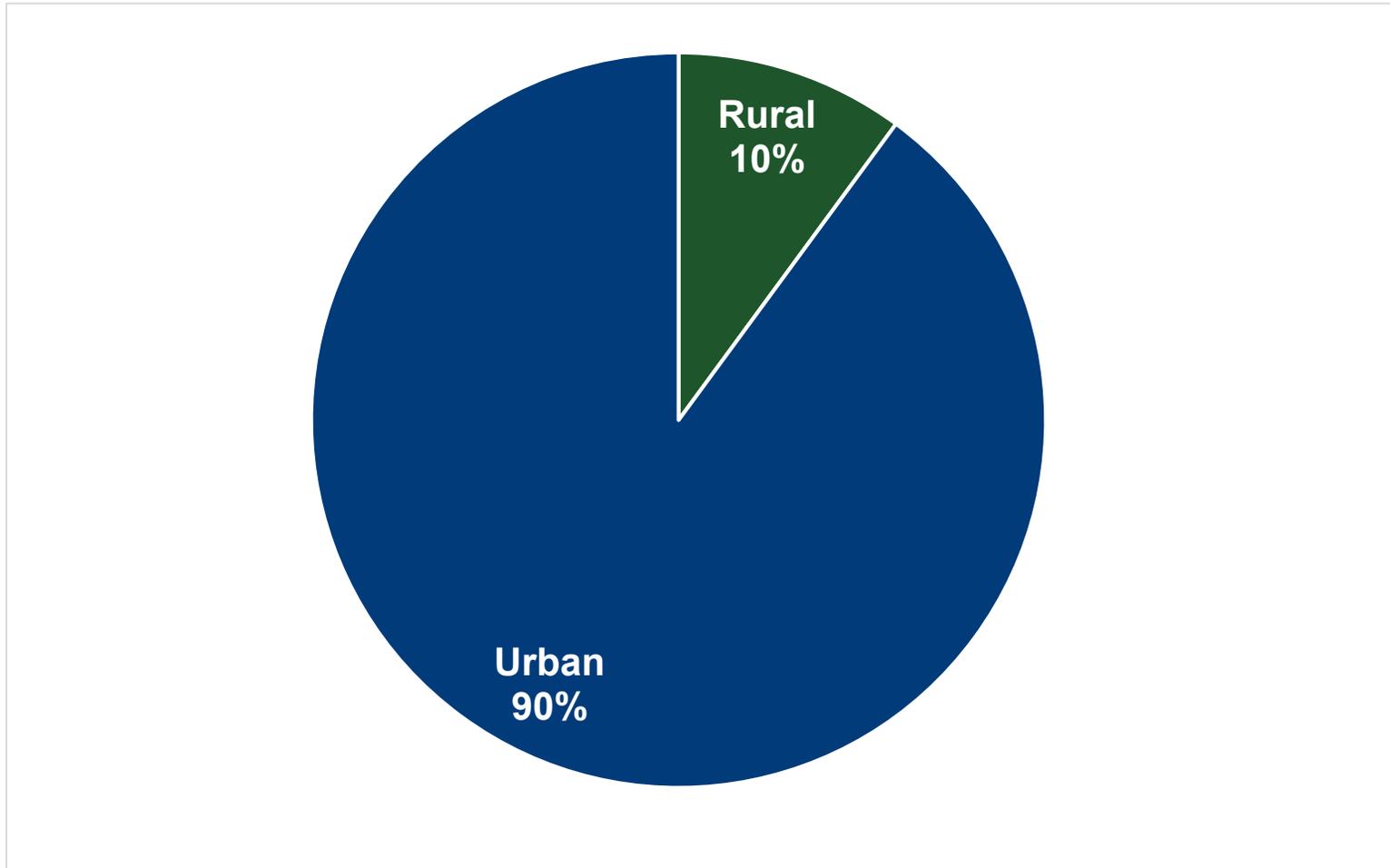
### Q11: In which municipality to you live?

Participants in the survey came from all four local municipalities with the highest representation from Burlington residents (2,159 respondents), followed by Oakville (1,470 respondents), Milton (809 respondents total), and Halton Hills (759 respondents total).



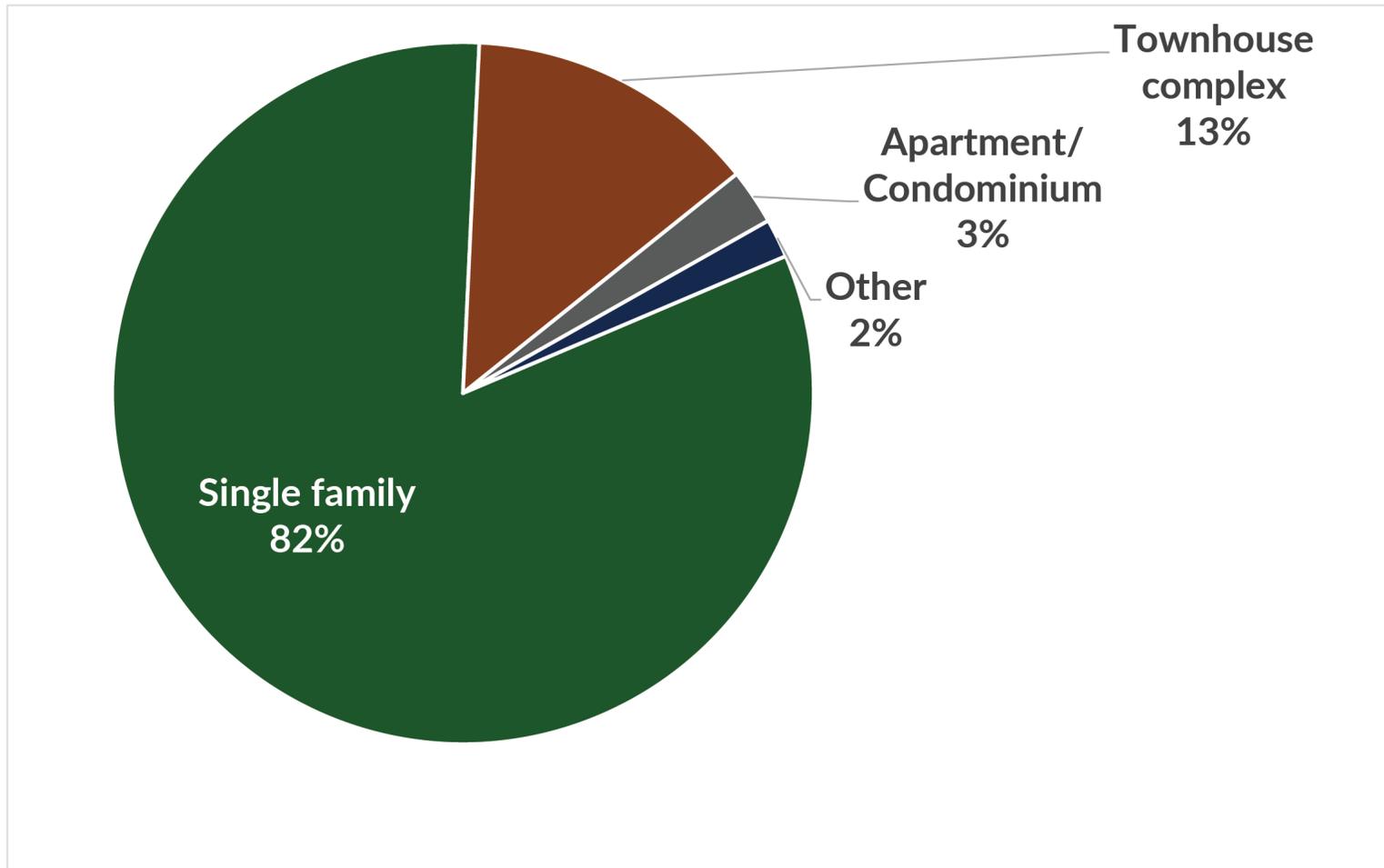
**Q12: Do you live in a rural or urban area?**

Overall, the majority of participants (4,662) live in an urban area (523 live in a rural area). It was important to hear from rural residents as there are differences in waste collection service levels that are delivered to the rural households in the Region. This response rate of 10% indicates that the survey successfully engaged this demographic.



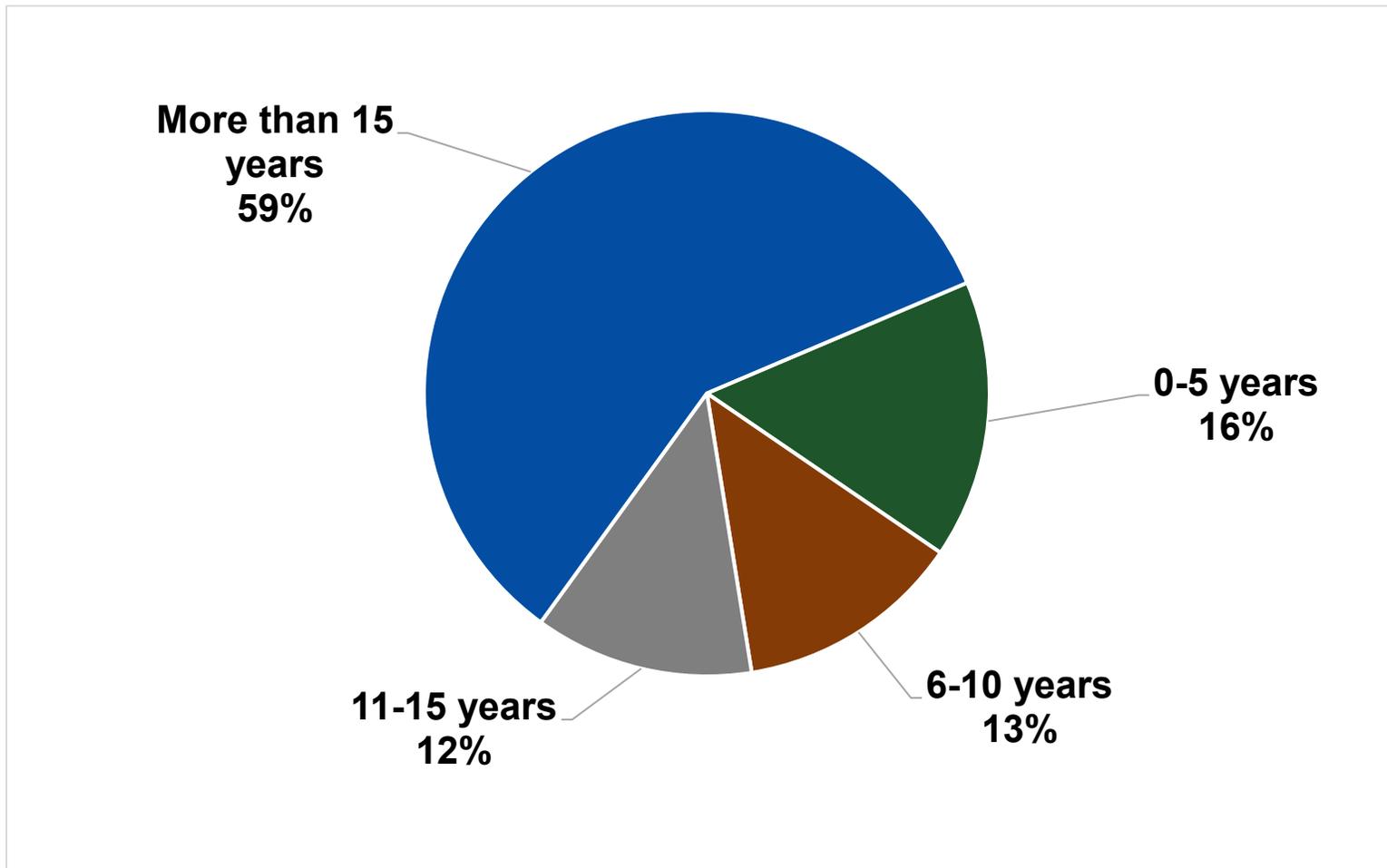
**Q13: What type of household do you live in?**

Overall, the majority of participants (4,226) live in single-family homes, followed by townhouse complex (702) and apartment / condominium (133).



**Q14: How long have you lived in the Halton Region?**

The majority of participants (3,050) have lived in Halton Region for more than 15 years. The distribution of how long respondents have lived in the Region indicates that we heard from both residents that have a good knowledge and familiarity with the history of waste management services provided in Halton Region as well as hearing from newcomers to the Region. This is also important as Halton Region is a fast growing community in Ontario.



## 3.0 Conclusion

Almost 7,000 residents within Halton participated in the online survey and have provided the Region with feedback that will help inform the key initiatives outlined in the final Strategy. Overall, respondents were supportive of the proposed key initiatives with additional public waste drop-off depots, expanding existing community waste collection services, the sharing economy and improvements to waste diversion in multi-residential buildings being the most supported initiatives. There was mixed levels of support for the proposed decreased bag limits and implementation of wheeled carts. Some participants noted that the automated collection system would help garbage bag reduction and be easier to manage, while some participants expressed concerns over the size and accessibility of the carts. Some participants also noted that a garbage bag limit would help encourage residents to recycle more and reduce personal waste while others expressed concerns with their ability to reduce waste because of their family size, and concerns with disposing of certain materials such as diapers and pet waste.