

City of Guelph -
Water Conservation and
Efficiency Residential Phone
Research Survey

Prepared for



By



Methodology & Logistics

Study Sample

- A total of 400 randomly selected residents from the City of Guelph were interviewed by telephone between the days of June 23rd and June 30th 2008. The margin of error for the survey is $\pm 4.9\%$, 19/20 times.
- All respondents were screened to ensure that they were connected to the municipal water supply of the City of Guelph.

Survey Method

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Limited supervised 100%.

Logistics

- Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 10 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded.

Executive Summary

CONSERVATION

Respondents were asked in an open ended question that allowed multiple responses what came to mind when they thought about conservation or the environment in the City of Guelph. The most named issue with 282 mentions was water, water conservation or water restrictions, followed by waste management or recycling with 103 mentions and energy efficiency or conservation with 51.

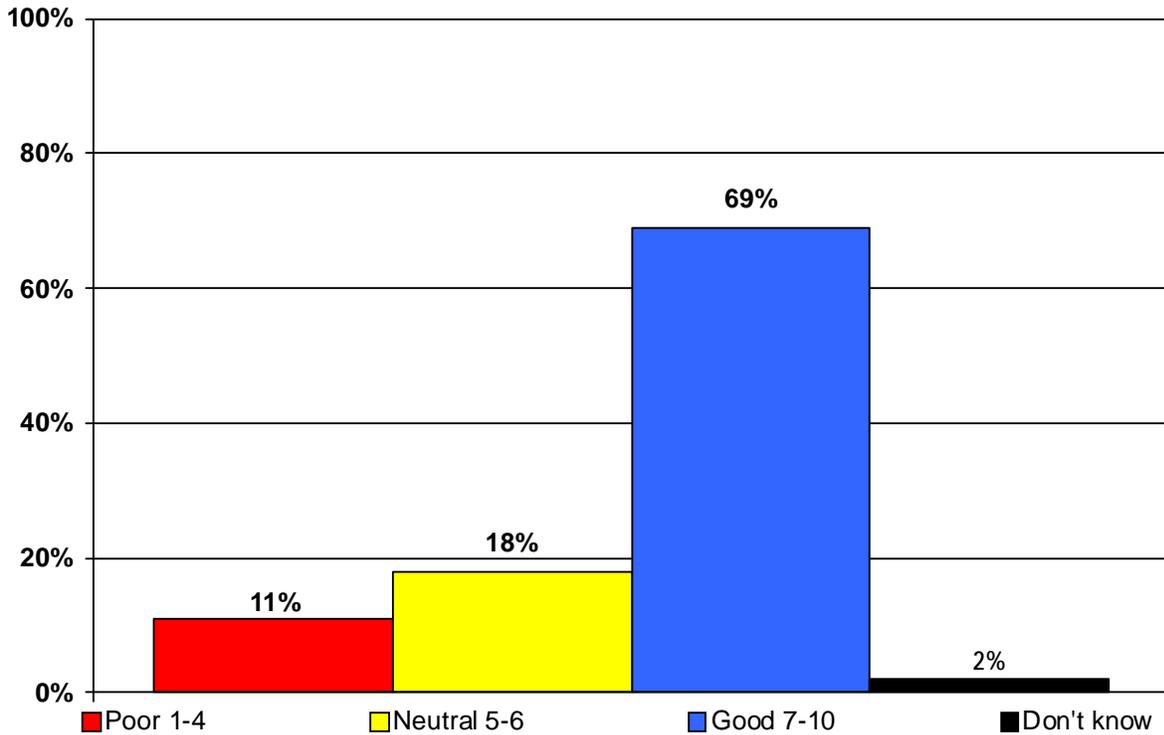
When asked specifically to rate the importance of water conservation to their household, 83% provided a 7-10 importance rating, compared to 4% that gave a 1-4 unimportant score, 12% a neutral response of 5-6, while 1% did not know.

In addition, there is a sense among 85% of Guelph residents that water conservation has increased in importance over the past five years with 61% stating it has become much more important and 24% somewhat more important. Only 1% were of the opinion that the issue is less important, 13% said things have not changed and 1% did not know.

The reasons most named for increased importance related to shortages, droughts, low water levels or a finite supply with 126 mentions, followed by greater media awareness, attention or hype with 99 mentions and growth, development or sprawl with 62.

WATER QUALITY

“Using a scale of 1 to 10, where ‘1’ means “Very Poor”, and ‘10’ means “Excellent” how would you rate the overall quality of the municipal drinking water in Guelph?”



Almost seven in ten or 69% rated the water with a 7-10 positive score, compared to 11% that had a negative 1-4 opinion of it, while 18% were neutral and 2% unsure of its overall quality.

All respondents were asked if their household had each of the following.

“Does your household have or use any of the following?”	Percent
Water softener	72%
Home water treatment system	48%
Water cooler or large water bottles for household drinking	25%
A powered humidifier attached to your furnace	21%
Swimming pool	11%
Backyard skating rink in the winter	2%
Pumped irrigation from a river or pond	0%

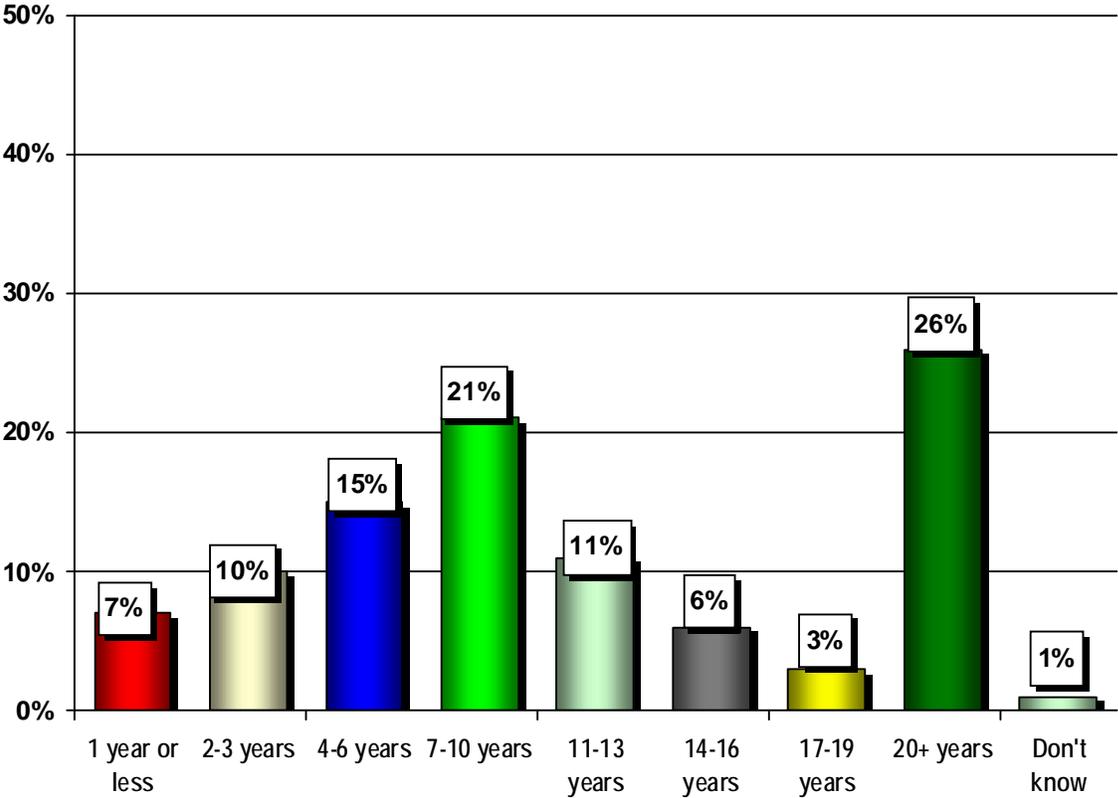
Water softeners are most common, followed by home water treatment systems such as a Brita or a reverse osmosis system, water coolers and a powered humidifier.

BILLING

A total of 88% of respondents were homeowners and 12% renters and among renters, 34% receive and pay their own utility bills.

Homeowners were asked a series of questions about their residence.

"How long have you lived in your home?"

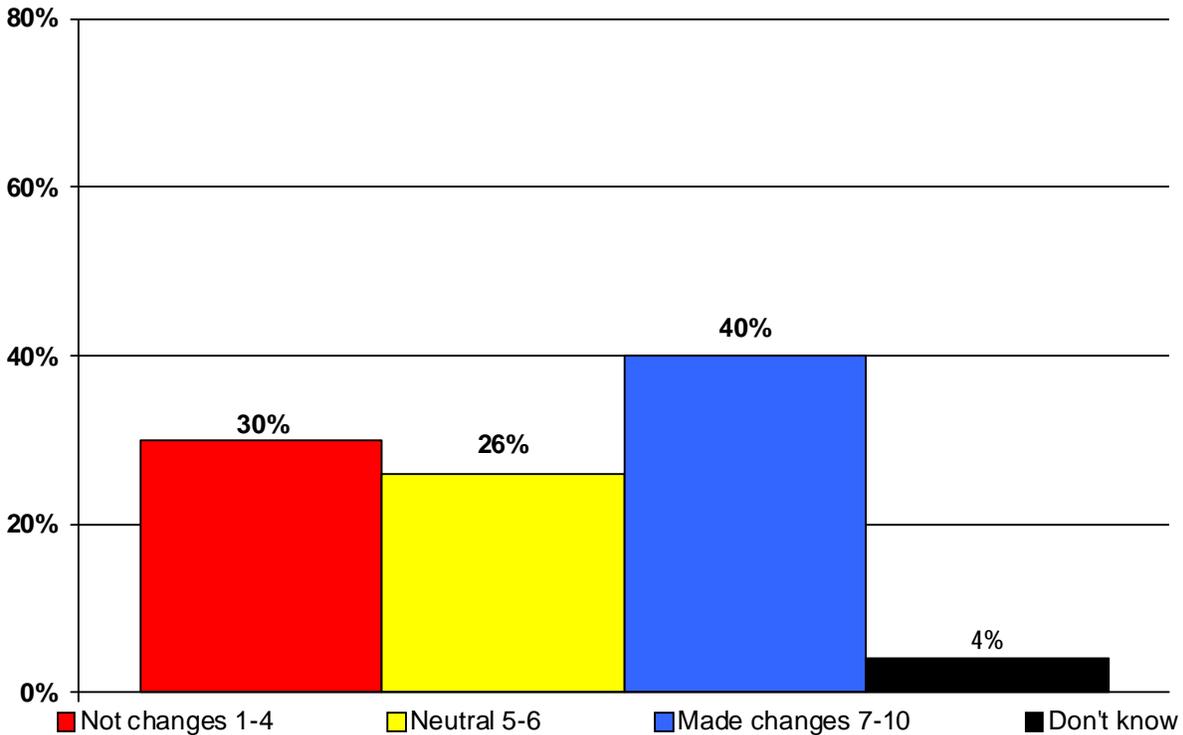


26% have lived in their home 26 plus years, 20% between 11-19 years, 21% 7-10 years, and 32% six years or less. Other survey findings among homeowners revealed that 32% of them purchased new homes and 67% a resale dwelling. In addition, 90% own a detached or a semi-detached home.

Among homeowners and those renters that pay their own utility bills a total of 51% live in homes aged 20 years or older, 30% in homes a year old or newer, followed by 12% in residences 11-19 years old and 5% 2-10 years of age, while 2% did not know.

WATER EFFICIENCY BEHAVIOUR

“Using a scale of 1-10, where ‘1’ means “Not At All”, and ‘10’ means “A Great Deal”, how much has your household changed the way you conserve water in the past five years, if at all?”



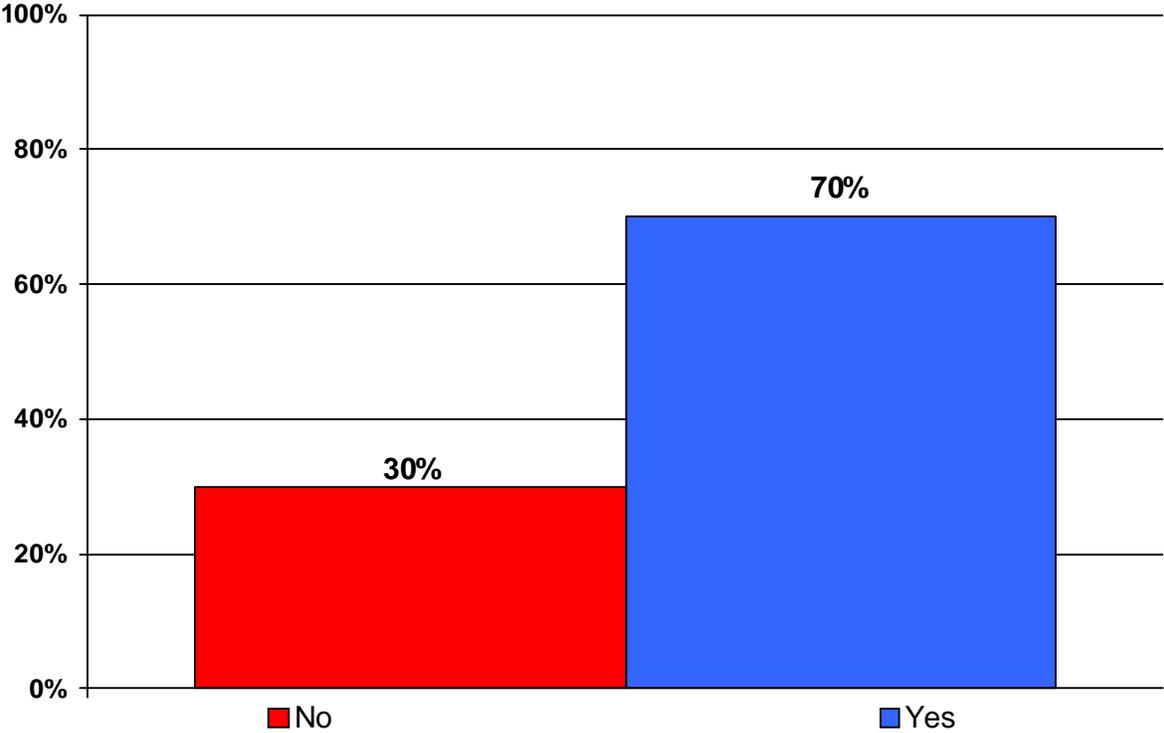
There was a split among those that claim to have changed the way that they conserve water over the past five years (40%), those that have not made changes (30%) and respondents that have neutral (26%) opinion or don't know (4%).

When asked how their household conserves water, there were 355 mentions related to having full loads in their dishwasher/washing machine, 307 mentions of watering less often, 275 installed low flow shower heads, 258 low flush or dual flush toilets and 223 of using water efficient appliances.

ROYAL FLUSH AWARENESS

All respondents were asked the following.

“Are you aware of the ROYAL FLUSH TOILET REBATE PROGRAM where the City provides \$40 or \$60 rebates to residents who replace high-water use toilets with low-flush or dual-flush toilets?”

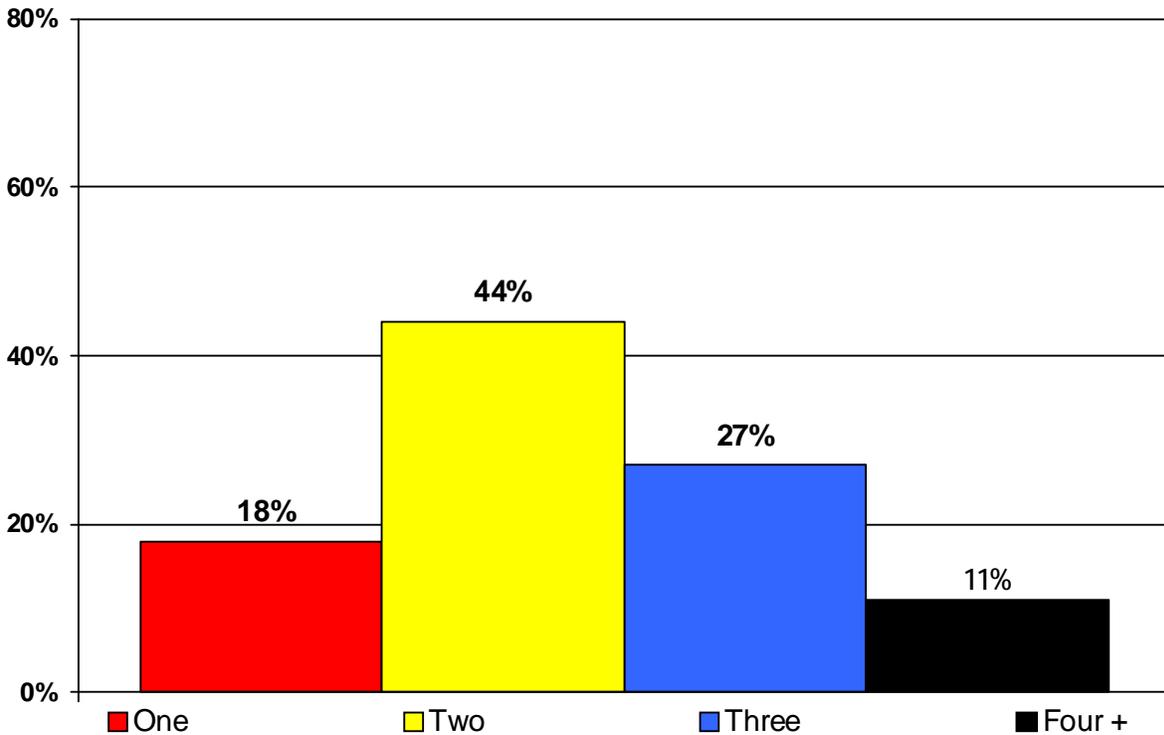


A total of 70% of Guelph residents surveyed were aware of the Royal Flush Toilet Rebate Program.

TOILETS

Respondents were asked a series of questions about toilets at their residences.

“How many toilets are there in your home?”



Most residents have two toilets (44%), followed by three (27%), one (18%) and four or more (11%).

A total of 40% of those interviewed have replaced a toilet at their home with a water efficient model. Among those that have replaced a toilet, 34% have done so in the past 1-2 years, 24% in the past 3-4 years, a total of 20% five years ago or longer, 19% in the past year, while 3% were unsure.

Residents that had an existing low flush/dual flush toilet or have installed one were questioned about who installed them. 29% said themselves or their spouse, 29% a plumber, 20% the developer, 5% a landlord, 5% the previous owner, 3% a contractor, 3% a friend, while 7% were unsure.

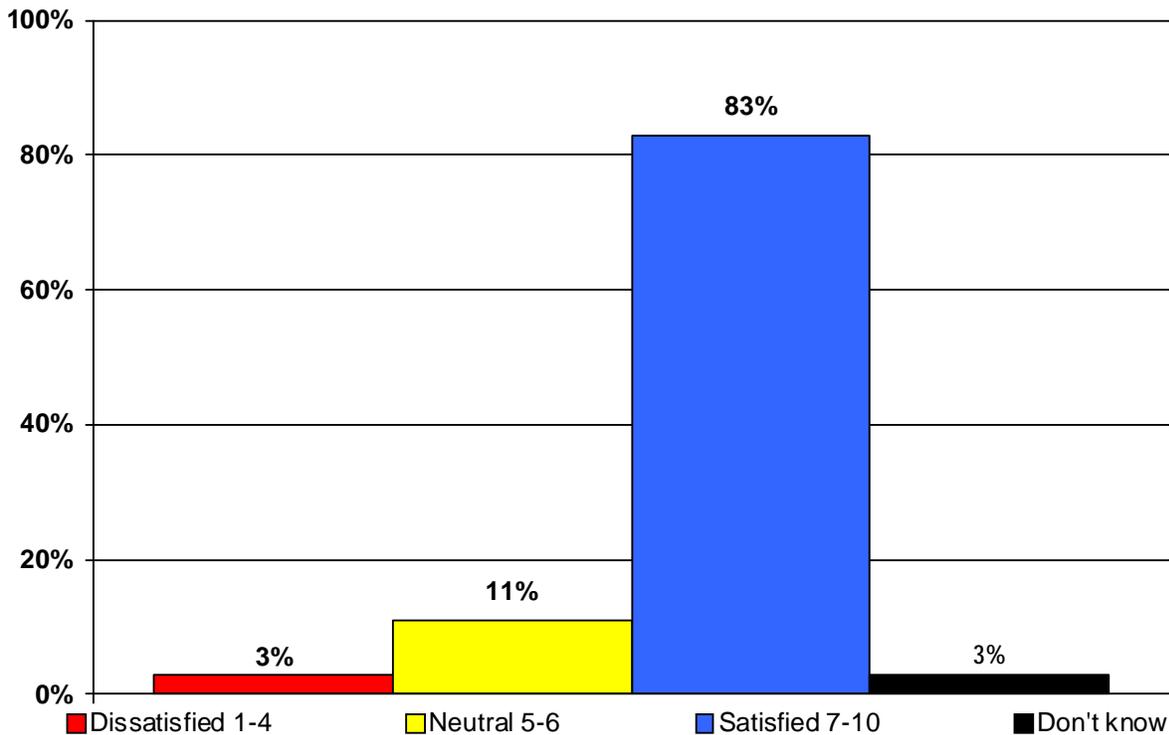
24% of homeowners with low flush/dual flush toilets participated in the Royal Flush Toilet Rebate Program and among those participating almost half or 49% said that the program influenced their decision to replace their toilet. Those participating were satisfied with the program as 84% provided a 7-10 satisfaction rating compared to 4% a 1-4 dissatisfaction score, while 6% did not know and 6% gave a neutral rating of 5-6.

The reasons most named by those homeowners with low flush/dual flush toilets that did not participate in the program when they replaced their toilet were as follows:

- ⇒ *Toilet was already there (30%)*
- ⇒ *They were not aware of the program (27%)*
- ⇒ *Program not in place when they replaced (19%)*
- ⇒ *Forgot/did not think about it (6%)*
- ⇒ *No need (3%)*
- ⇒ *No time (2%)*
- ⇒ *Dislike the toilets (2%)*
- ⇒ *Did not think eligible (1%)*
- ⇒ *Don't know (10%)*

Residents that had existing low flush/dual flush units or have installed one were also asked to rate their satisfaction with these toilets.

“Using a scale of 1-10, where ‘1’ means “not satisfied” and ‘10’ means very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with the toilet that you installed?”



Most or 83% claimed that they were satisfied (7-10 rating) with their low flush/dual flush toilets.

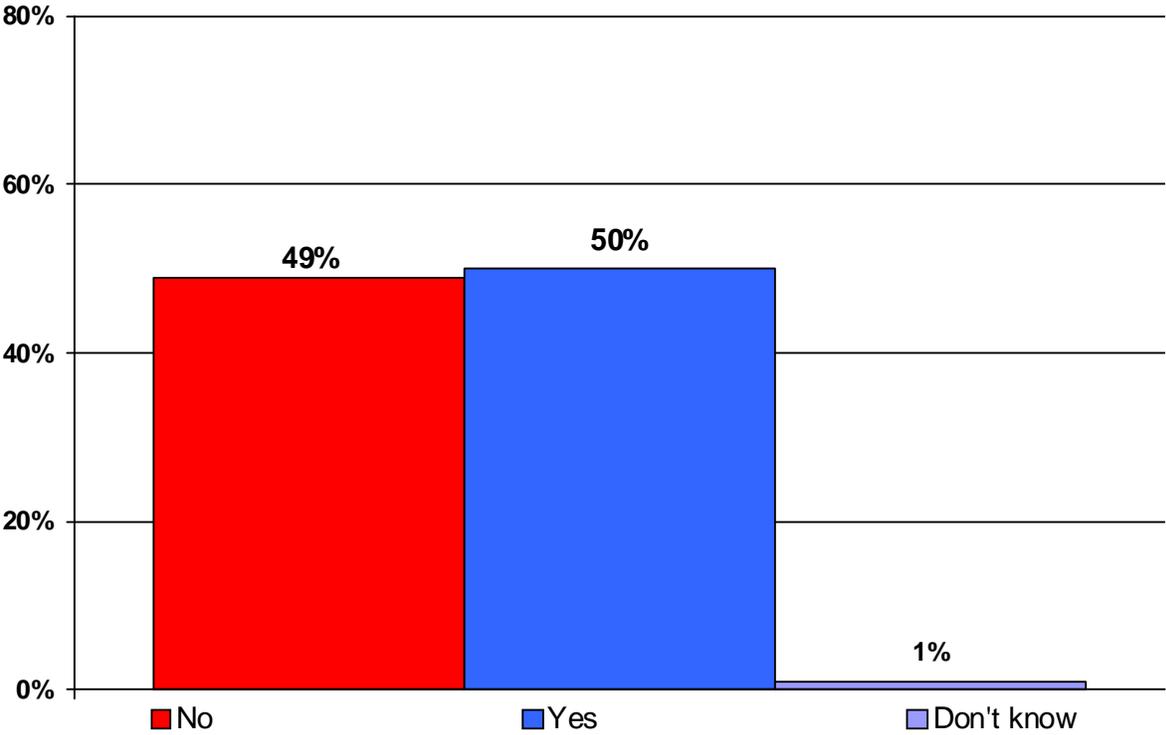
Those respondents that have not installed an efficient toilet were asked if they have any low flush or dual flush toilets of which 32% said that they did. The combined number of residents that have installed new efficient toilets or have existing efficient toilets is 60%.

Residents that do not have a water efficient toilet were asked about the likelihood of them obtaining a new toilet in the next three years. Slightly less than a third (32%) said that they will replace a toilet, 43% will not and one quarter (25%) did not know. Most of those that plan to replace a toilet or 92% will install an efficient low flush or dual flush unit, 3% will not and 2% did not know.

SMART WASH FRONT-LOADING WASHING MACHINE REBATE PROGRAM

All respondents were asked the following.

“Are you aware of the SMART WASH FRONT-LOADING WASHING MACHINE REBATE PROGRAM where the City provides a \$100 rebate to residents who replace their conventional washing machine with a new, front-loading ENERGY STAR rated washing machine?”



Half of residents interviewed were aware of the Smart Wash Front-Loading Washing Machine Rebate Program.

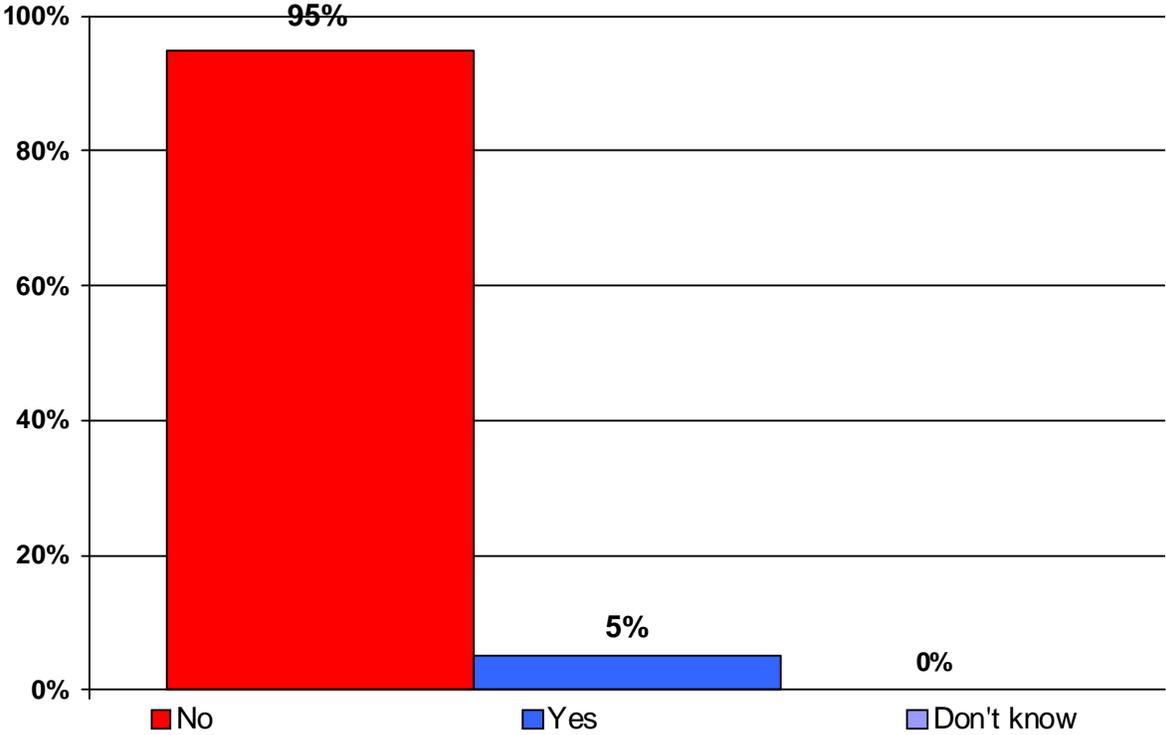
In addition, 37% of residents said that a \$100 rebate would influence their decision to replace an existing washing with a water and energy efficient model.

LEAKS / REPAIRS

Respondents were first asked how they would get a leak repaired if it developed. More than half or 52% said they or their spouse would repair it, 33% would call a plumber, 11% would ask their landlord or condo maintenance, 2% would call a friend and 1% did not know.

All respondents were then asked the following.

“Do you currently have leaks in any plumbing fixtures in your home, such as a kitchen or bathroom faucet, toilet, shower head, etc.?”



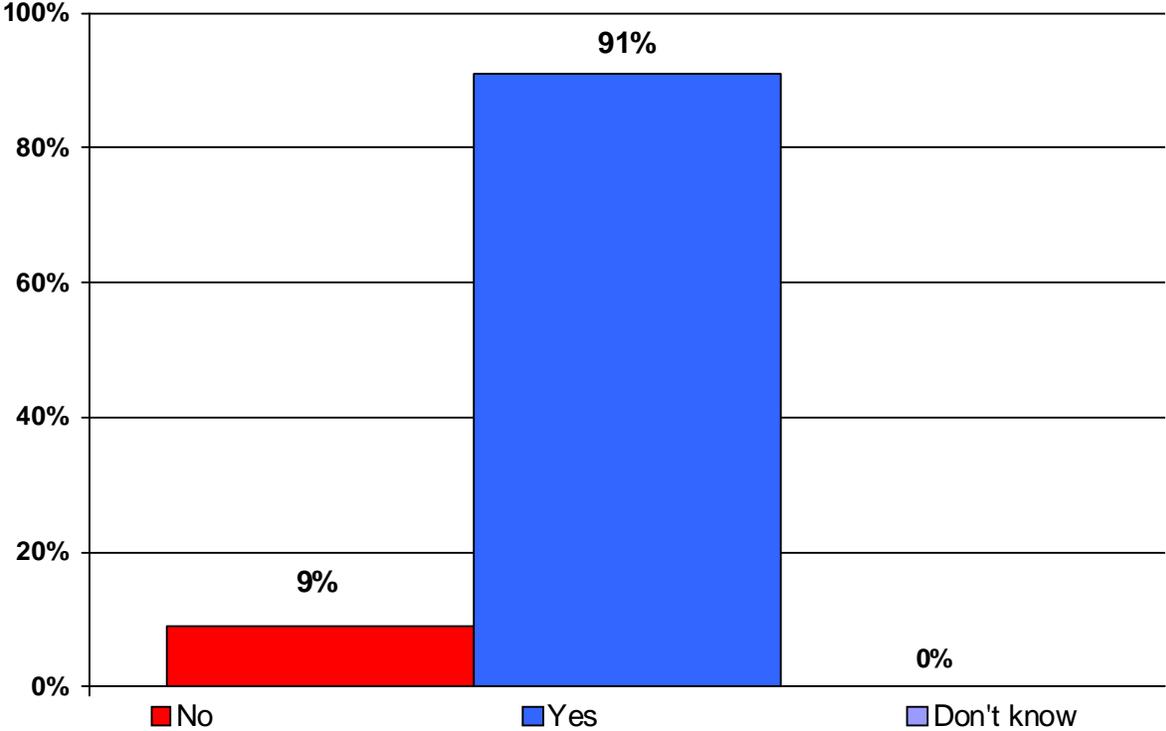
Only 5% of residents claim that they currently have a leak in a plumbing fixture and when asked 44% have had the leak longer than 3 months, 17% 1-3 months, 17% for one month, 6% for several weeks, 11% less than a week and 6% did not know.

Among those with a leak, 28% plan to get it repaired with a week, 33% within a few weeks, 17% in 1-3 months and 22% were unsure.

OUTSIDE WATER USE PROGRAM

All respondents were asked the following.

“Are you aware of the City’s Outside Water Use Program that regulates lawn watering and other outdoor watering activities?”



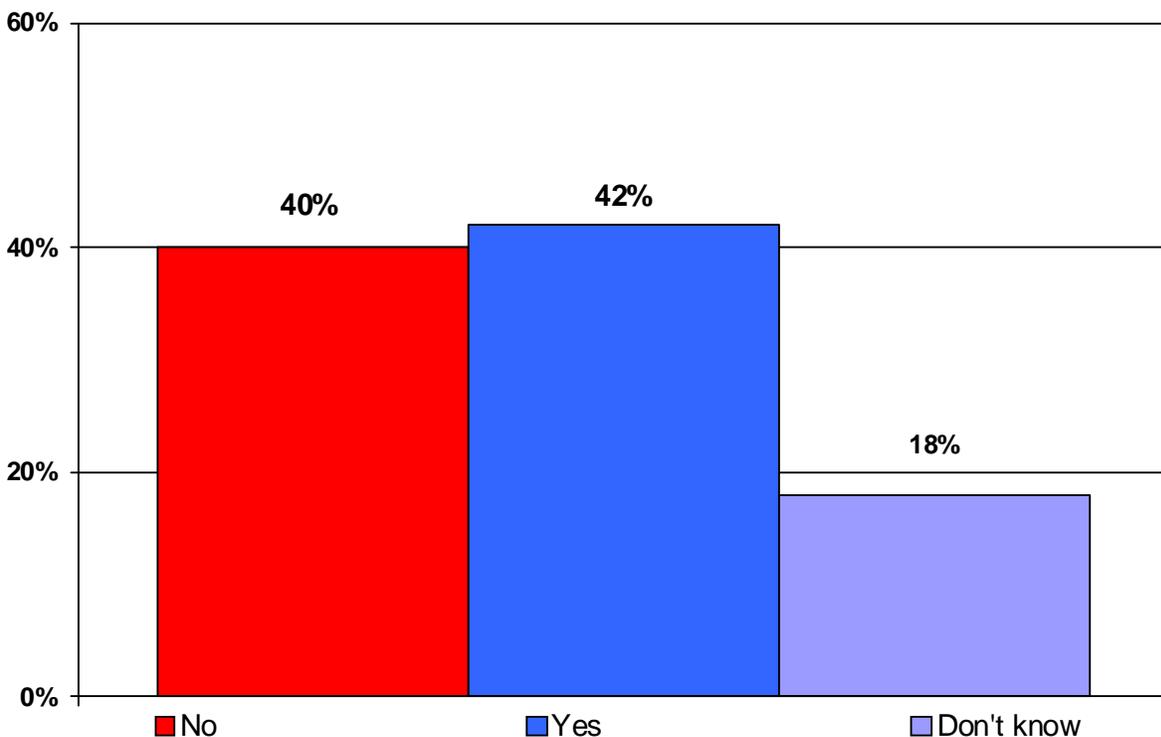
Most or 95% are aware of the City’s Outside Water Use Program. What respondents aware of the program most recall about it were the watering days (250 mentions), followed by watering times (147 mentions), signs posted (115 mentions), and levels tied to river/streams (75 mentions).

WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

All respondents were first asked to describe water efficient landscaping in a few words. 30% said drought resistant plants, 5% mulch, 5% good drainage, 4% rain barrels, 3% less lawn, 3% an irrigation system, 3% watering less and 3% alternative ground cover. A total of 26% could name nothing and a further 16% did not know.

Homeowners were asked the following.

“Do you have any water efficient landscaping on your property?”



42% of Guelph homeowners have water efficient landscaping on their property.

NEW WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES

All respondents were asked if they would be willing to incur or if they have already incurred costs associated with the following series of water conservation measures.

PERCENTAGE THAT HAS OR PLANS TO INCUR COSTS IN AREAS

- ⇒ *Rain barrels (64%)*
- ⇒ *Low water use landscaping (60%)*
- ⇒ *Fixture replacements (60%)*
- ⇒ *Appliance replacement (58%)*
- ⇒ *Rain water harvesting/cisterns (56%)*
- ⇒ *Water reuse/recycling systems (48%)*
- ⇒ *Water audits (36%)*

Respondents that have not incurred costs or do not plan to incur costs with the above noted measures were then asked if they would be willing to do so if the City of Guelph covered part of their costs.

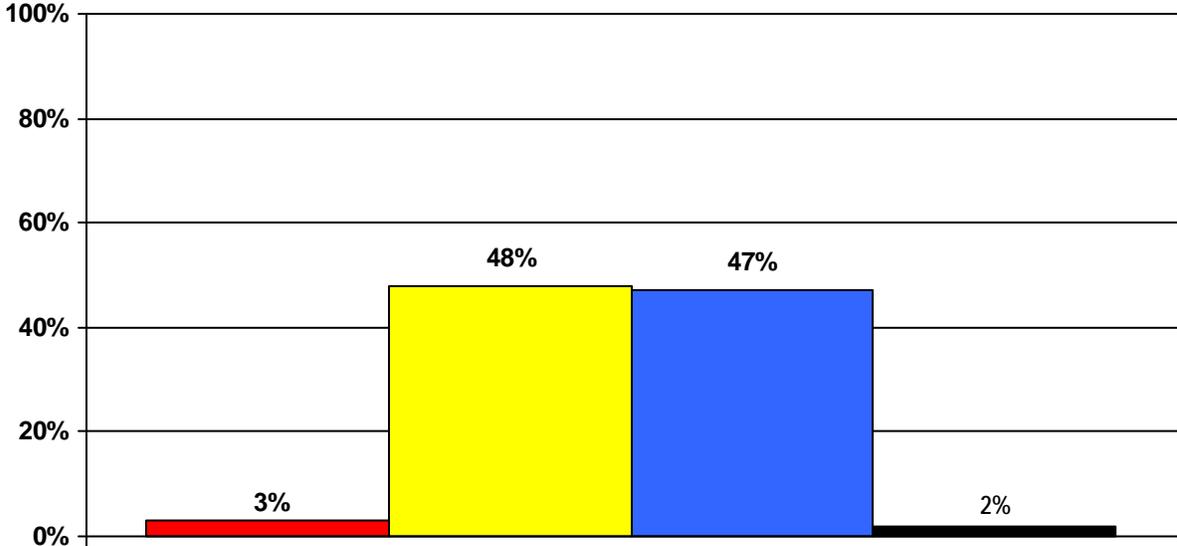
PERCENTAGE WILLING TO INCUR COSTS IF CITY COVERED PART

- ⇒ *Fixture replacements (44%)*
- ⇒ *Water audits (40%)*
- ⇒ *Water reuse/recycling systems (37%)*
- ⇒ *Rain barrels (36%)*
- ⇒ *Rain water harvesting/cisterns (34%)*
- ⇒ *Appliance replacement (33%)*
- ⇒ *Low water use landscaping (27%)*

COMMUNICATION

Respondents were asked a series of questions related to communication issues.

“With regard to the amount of water conservation information that the City of Guelph provides, should the City...?”



■ Provide less info ■ Provide the same amount of info ■ Increase the amount of info ■ Don't know

There is an almost even split among those that want the same amount of information related to water conservation and those that want increased information.

32% of Guelph residents claimed that they use the internet to find information and tips on water conservation, with 64% of these respondents visiting the City of Guelph site to access this data.