



To: Climate Protection Working Group  
From: Richard Grant, Planner I  
Date: February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Title: Milestone 2 – Public Engagement Survey Data Results

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**Recommendation: THAT the Climate Protection Working Group receive this report for information on the data results from the Milestone 2 Public Engagement Survey**

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**Purpose:** For the Working Group to receive this report for information on the Milestone 2 Public Engagement Survey.

**Background:** The Milestone 2 Public Engagement Survey was a publicly available survey designed to (1) assess the public’s understanding or general awareness of the climate crisis, (2) general interest in engaging with the development of the Climate Action Plan, and (3) desire to propose any climate change initiatives. The survey, released in the latter part of last year, was open for three months, closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, and received 92 responses. The data results from the Milestone 2 survey will be incorporated into the Climate Action Plan.

#### **Analysis and Options:**

##### *Methodology*

The survey was made available online on the Town’s website, with printed copies at the Town Hall, the Smiths Falls Memorial Centre, the Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute, and the community bulletin. It was also circulated to various organizations and stakeholders for input.

##### *Results Summary*

The data provided below is based on the results from 92 respondents. For a look at the detailed data results, please review Appendix A—Data Results.

- 59% of survey respondents indicated that they had two individuals per household, with 16% of respondents having households with five or more members
- The most responsive age cohort at 44% were respondents between the ages of 65-80 at 40%; age cohort 41-65 was the second most representative age cohort at 40%. Survey data did not have responses from individuals between 0-20 years of age.
- At 68%, most respondents lived in Smiths Falls.
- At 87% of survey respondents drove a vehicle as their primary form of transportation, with 11% of them attested that walking was the main method.
- The most common barrier to taking action against climate change for respondents was identified as “other” at 28%, with the financial barrier at 24%. This suggests that most survey respondents have another unidentified barrier to addressing change beyond financial constraints or a lack of understanding of how to start.

- 32% of survey respondents bought from a farmer’s market/farm gate at least monthly, with 28% shopping at least twice a year.
- 79% of survey respondents felt it was very important for the municipality to reduce its GHG emissions for municipal operations, with only 12% feeling it was unimportant.
- If available, 46% of survey respondents felt they would not take advantage of a community garden, and 31% said they would participate if available.
- 41% of survey respondents felt they would very likely take advantage of a home energy retrofit program, with only 2% indicating they would not support it at all.
- 68% of survey respondents said they would very likely compost kitchen food waste, with only 3% indicating that they would not support it.
- 24% of survey respondents indicated that walking was the most common form of transportation they would use to reduce transportation-related GHG emissions in Smiths Falls. 13% indicated that using electric vehicles was the second most adopted option. 4% of respondents indicated that carpooling and using a bicycle scooter was a viable option.
- 82% of survey respondents indicated they would plant more trees on their property if possible.
- 53% of survey respondents heard about the Climate Protection Working Group (CPWG) for the first time through this public engagement survey, with a near even split from respondents who heard by word of mouth (23%) or the newspaper (24%).
- 55% of survey respondents indicated an interest in receiving future updates on the CAP and other environmental initiatives.

### *Discussion*

Based on the survey results alone, one can assume that the average survey respondent is between 65 and 80 years of age, lives in a household of two or less in Smiths Falls and occasionally goes to a farmers market/farm gate. In addition, based on the results, it may be assumed that most individuals in Smiths Falls have an interest in developing community gardens, participating in municipally subsidized home energy retrofit programs, and using green waste bins. In staff’s opinion, the survey results indicate moderate to great interest in participating in climate change initiatives and engaging on issues related to the climate crisis.

Question 13, “*Are there any other initiatives not mentioned here that you think Smiths Falls should incorporate into our Climate Action Plan? For example, promote the use of solar panels and energy storage systems*”, received at least a 50% response rate, with various suggestions that range from electrifying the Town fleet, planting more community gardens, providing educational workshops on residential retrofitting and home-owner energy conservation. A simplified breakdown of the suggested climate initiatives is available in Appendix A – Data Results.

Staff are of the opinion that the survey results from question #13 indicate a general desire to participate in certain climate change initiatives, suggesting that bold and decisive action is required to take meaningful steps towards a net-zero future.

### **Next Steps**

The Town is working towards completing Milestone 2 of the Milestone framework. The next step is to incorporate the survey responses from question 13 into the list of proposed

sustainability goals that will form part of the Climate Action Plan. These goals are a key component of the Climate Action Plan, as they outline the community's initiatives to reduce GHG emissions and reach any proposed emission reduction target. Currently, the Town is working on employing a consultant to help the Town develop its emission reduction target: a mid-term target year of 2026 and an end-term target year of 2031 with a soon-to-be-released request for quotation (RFQ). Adopting the proposed targets developed in consultation with a consultant will signal the completion of Milestone 2. Milestone 3 deals with developing the Climate Action Plan, including several community and municipal stakeholder consultations and refining the sustainability goals derived from this Milestone 2 Public Engagement Survey.

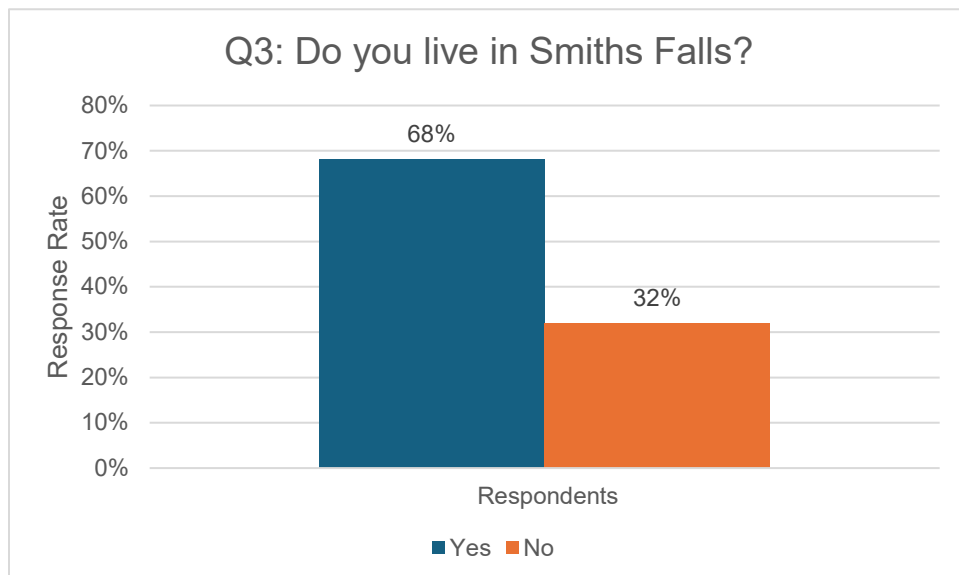
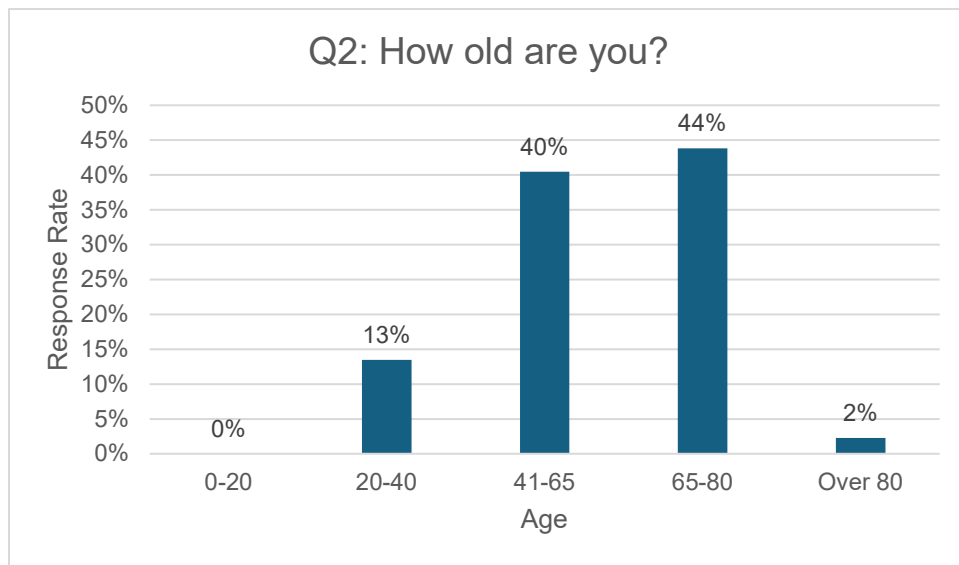
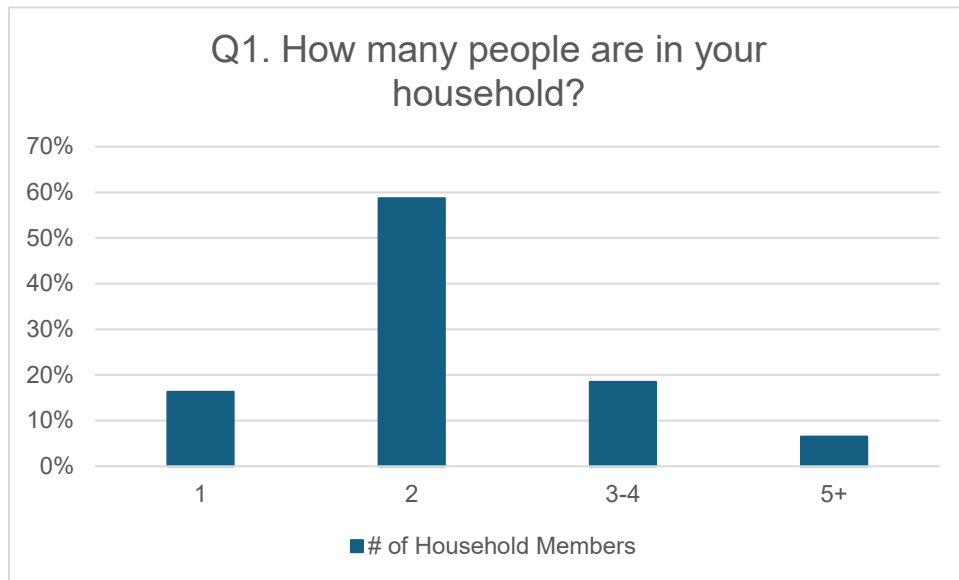
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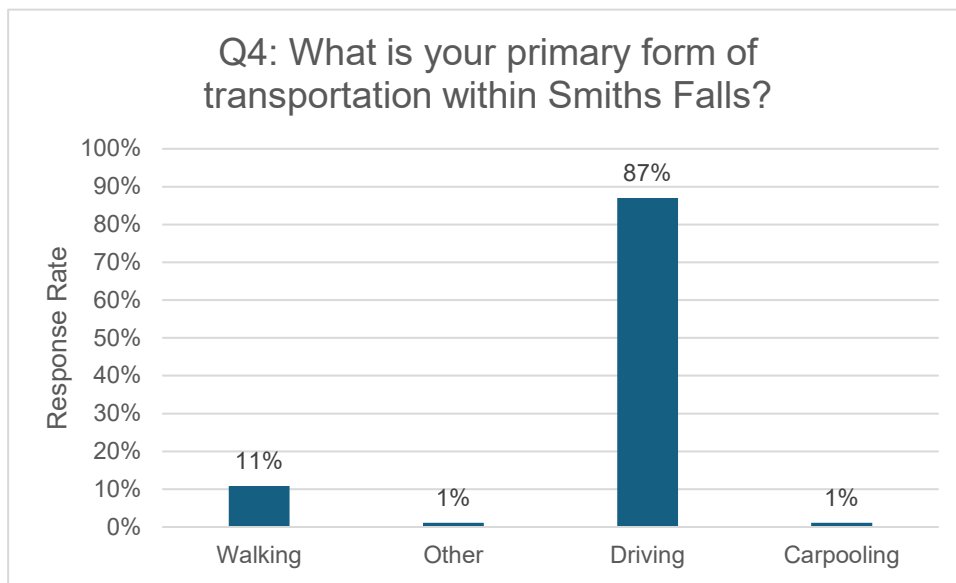
Richard Grant  
Planner I

Reviewed by:  
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Karl Grenke, MCIP, RPP  
Manager, Development Services

## Appendix A – Survey Data Results

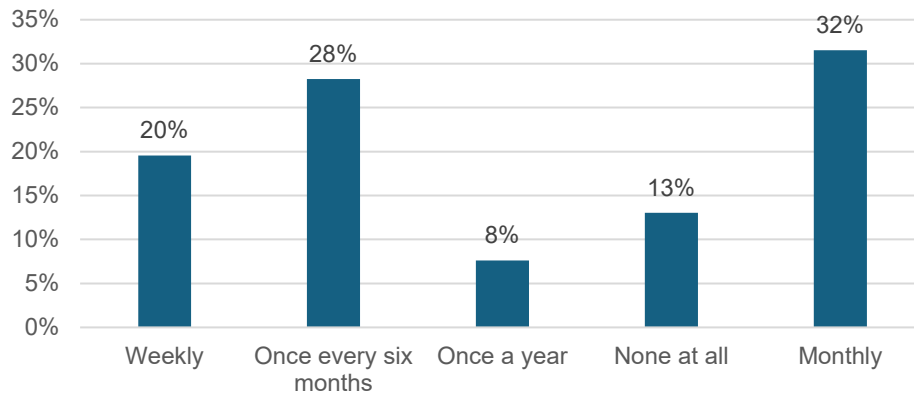




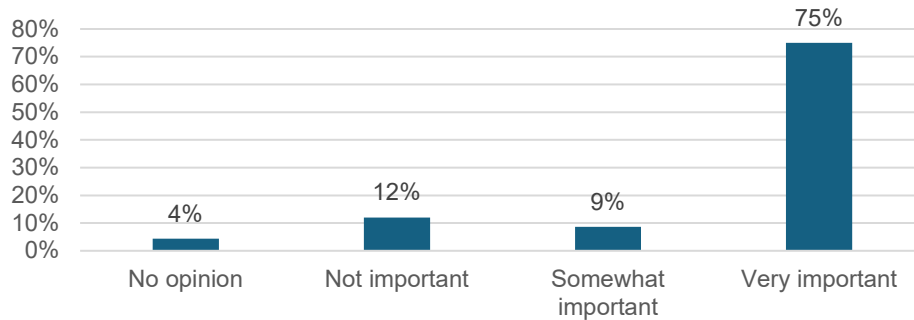
5. What obstacles do you encounter when taking climate action? Check all that apply.	Response Rate
Financing; I don't have the time	1%
Financing; I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action; I don't have the time	1%
Financing; I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action; I don't have the time; Other	1%
Financing; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action; I don't have the time	1%
I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't have the time	1%
I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action; I don't have the time	1%
Financing; Other	2%
Financing; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action	3%
I don't have the time	3%
I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action	4%
Financing; I don't know what to do in my home or on my property	6%
I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action	7%
Financing; I don't know what to do in my home or on my property; I don't know who to contact for more information on taking climate action	8%
I don't know what to do in my home or on my property	8%
Financing	24%
Other	28%

**Note:** Response rates are grouped by frequency of option pairing. I.e., counts the frequency of selected options

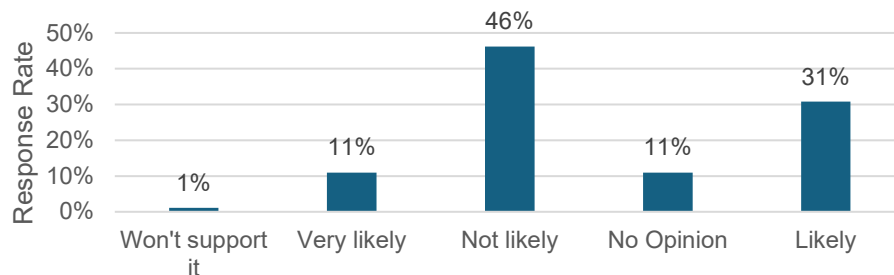
Q6. How often do you buy food directly from a local farmer/producer or shop at a local farmer's market/farm gate?



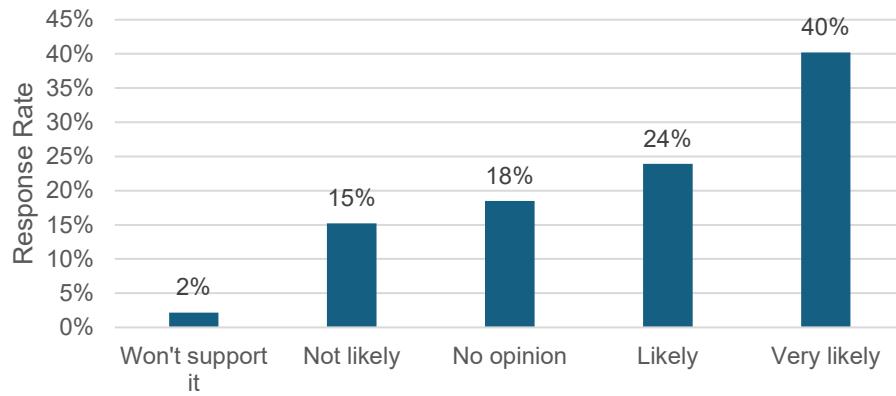
Q7. Municipalities control approximately 44% of national GHG emissions. How important do you think it is for your local municipal government to reduce their GHG emissions for municipal operations?



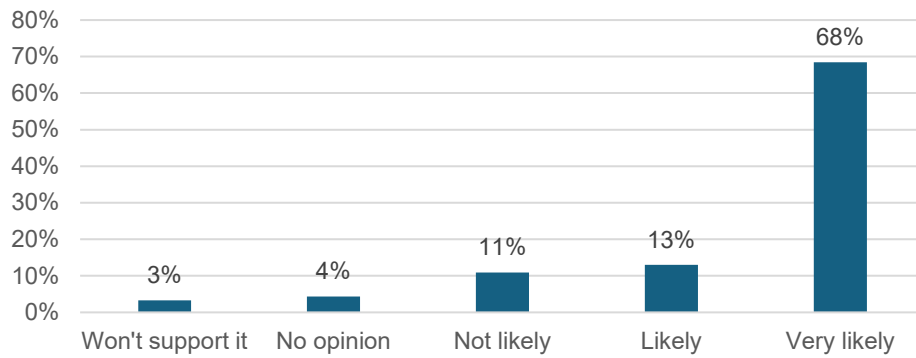
Q8. Cooperative farming and community gardens are an excellent way to reduce GHG emissions by providing an opportunity to produce food locally. How likely are you to take advantage of a community garden if available?



Q9. Home energy retrofitting, including installing heat pumps, is one of the best ways to improve your home's energy efficiency

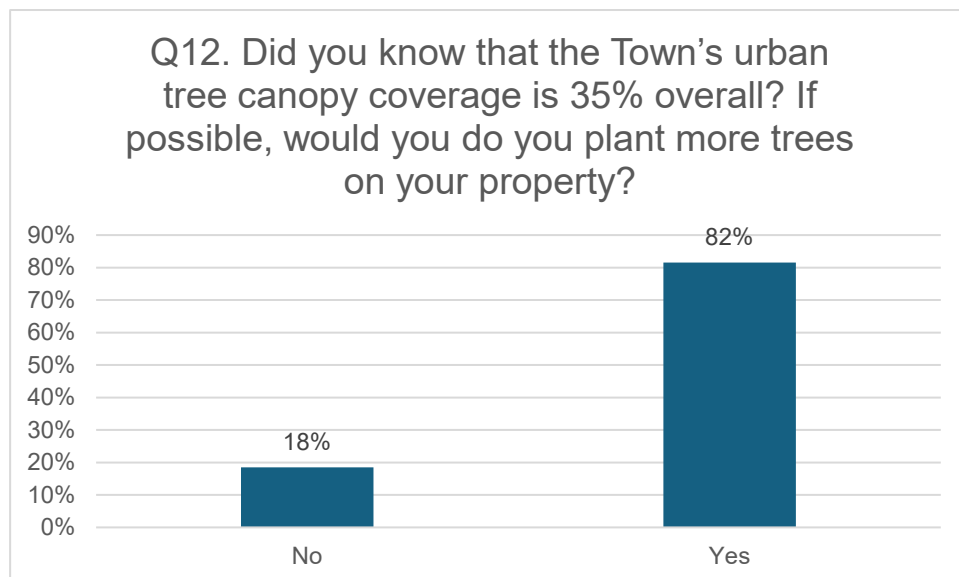


Q10. Did you know that composting kitchen food waste is one of the easiest and cheapest climate actions you can take? How likely



Q11. In 2021, 52% of the Town's GHG emissions were from cars on the road. In town, would you do either of the following to reduce GHG emissions?	Response Rate
Use an electric vehicle; Carpool	1%
Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	1%
Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	1%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use an electric vehicle; Carpool	1%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	1%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	1%
Walk more; Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	1%
Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	2%
Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	2%
Walk more; Use an electric vehicle; Carpool	2%
Walk more; Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	2%
Walk more; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	2%
Carpool	4%
Use a bicycle or scooter	4%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use an electric vehicle	4%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use an electric vehicle; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective; Carpool	4%
Walk more; Use an electric vehicle	4%
Walk more; Carpool	5%
Walk more; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	5%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter	6%
Walk more; Use a bicycle or scooter; Use public transit if timely and cost-effective	7%
Use an electric vehicle	13%
Walk more	24%

**Note:** Response rates are grouped by the frequency of option pairings, meaning it is a tally of the frequency of selected options.



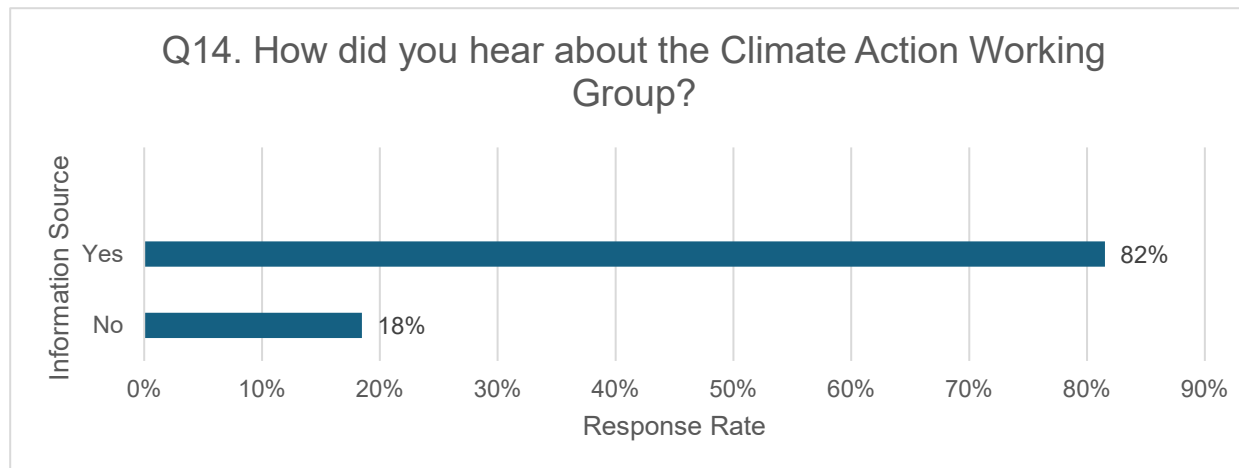


**Q13:** Are there any other initiatives not mentioned here that you think Smiths Falls should incorporate into our Climate Action Plan? For example, promote the use of solar panels and energy storage systems

Sustainability Goals/Ideas						
Energy Reduction	Education	Food	Growth and Development	Natural Infrastructure Improvement	Waste Management	Transportation
LED or solar-powered motion-sensing streetlights	Education program/PSA on dangers of car idling	Backyard chickens	Incorporate green space in new developments	Plant more trees in public areas	Green bin program	affordable, accessible public transit (2)
Electrified Fleet	Broaden public awareness of actions, large, medium or small scale, that can be taken by individuals/households to help reduce GHG emissions and mitigate climate change impact.	Have a school garden to teach kids how to grow food.	Encourage developers to plant a tree in front of every home	mini forests (2)	Improved recycling	More bike lanes and linked bike routes/paths (3)
Invest in hydrogen vehicles (1)	Provide more educational workshops on residential retrofitting and energy conservation (2)		Consider a tree-cutting bylaw on private property	plant Indigenous flowers in the ditches	Subsidized rain barrels	Commuter train
Energy storage systems (2)	Educational PSA about the dangers of invasive species management and removal		"Green focused" CIP programs to incentive development in underdeveloped areas such as business roofs, parking, etc.	Removing invasive species such as buckthorn	Green waste sites	
Construct electric generators at the falls (3)	Supporting& Educating on the benefits of a plant-based diet (4)		Further, develop the SF farmers market	Water safety measures		

- Solar panels on residential homes (13)
- Municipal heat pump program for residents (3)
- Install EV charge stations (3)
- Municipal building retrofit
- Create more collaborative efforts between other municipalities that support a green, circular and reciprocal economy.
- Promote energy conservation
- Tree planting program for property owners (with supplementary education component) (2)
- Municipal petition to the federal government to reduce prices of electric vehicles
- More accountability on developers to not clear-cut woodlots
- Plans for greenhouse permits
- Edible fruit trees and vegetables in more places around Town
- Municipal Park revamp & revitalization

**Note:** Numbers by climate initiative represents the frequency of that suggestion



Q15. Are you interested in subscribing to the Climate Protection Working Group town-page so you can receive information regarding the Climate Action plan in the future?

