

Township of Scugog Strategic Plan

Summary of Speak Up Scugog Survey - **DRAFT**

Introduction

In 2019, the Township developed a strong strategic planning framework that reflects Council and community priorities. Since then, the Township has provided regular progress updates on progress through its Strategic Plan Report Card. The approved Corporate Strategic Plan was developed for the 2019-2022 Council Term, and the intent was to review the Corporate Strategic Plan every four years corresponding with the start of the new term of Council. With the Council term ending in November 2022, the Township of Scugog's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is due for review and refresh. While many elements likely continue to be significant priorities for the community, much has changed since 2019. The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan aims to reflect changing priorities, policies, guidelines, and service demands and respond to emerging pressures. The Township's Strategic Plan is being reviewed and updated to ensure that the community's priorities, needs and aspirations are accurately reflected.

Engagement

Over the fall, the Scugog community was invited to help shape the strategic plan through an online survey on Speak Up Scugog, the Township's engagement platform, by attending coffee chat with the senior staff team or by visiting a pop-up booth at the arena or library. Staff were also engaged in gathering their insights. Approximately 260 community members contributed their perspectives on the strategic plan through the online survey and in-person engagement activities.

What We Heard

The following provides an overview of what we heard from the community . Survey respondents were asked for their opinion on what is most important to them in Scugog, the greatest issues facing the community, and to provide specific input to the strategic directions and major initiatives to be included in the strategic plan. The following captures what we heard.

What is most loved about our community

Survey participants were invited to share what they love most about Scugog today. A summary of the comments received is listed below:

- The small-town feel was the most frequently identified factor that residents love about their community.
- Respondents noted the neighbours' kindness and their community's safety. Respondents noted that this is changing as the population grows.
- Many respondents enjoy the waterfront and downtown area, which provides all the amenities they need.
- Respondents indicated they appreciated the area's natural beauty, access to hiking trails, and proximity to greenspace and farmland. Many respondents specifically noted the downtown walking path as a place of enjoyment.

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- Respondents noted community spirit, culture and local events as something they love about this community

The greatest improvement in Scugog in the past four years

Participants were invited to reflect on the past term of Council to identify what they felt improved most over the four years. A summary of comments is below:

- Many respondents noted the rehabilitation of the downtown, including more businesses and restaurants with outdoor patios
- Many respondents noted improved technological infrastructure, including internet access and Township communications improvements
- Respondents indicated they appreciated the improved transportation infrastructure, including cycling, multi-use trails, and resurfaced roads
- Respondents enjoyed seeing the parks improved and would like further improvements on the recreation side
- Respondents identified that the community's food, culture and population diversity has grown.
- Many respondents noted that COVID had a negative impact on Scugog and delayed improvements overall
- Several respondents noted they had moved to Scugog within the past four years

Considerations when planning for the future

Participants were invited to identify key considerations for the future of the community. A summary of the comments is below:

- Respondents strongly believe that active transportation, including cycling paths and bicycle parking, is key for the future. This includes encouraging a pedestrian-friendly downtown and investing in public transportation
- Many respondents note that transportation infrastructure is a priority, including side roads and neighbourhood sidewalks that need repairs and better traffic management
- Respondents noted that the growing development is not matched by transportation infrastructure. Respondents would like to see affordable housing and housing for seniors being developed
- Greater recreational activities for youth and seniors, including a new pool and pickleball courts, were noted by many respondents
- Many noted that preserving green space and farmland should be a priority as there is concern about development and population growth

The two most important issues facing Scugog today

Participants were invited to identify the two most pressing issues facing the community. A summary of the comments is below:

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- Many respondents indicate that ensuring existing transportation infrastructure is repaired and well maintained and investment in active transportation are priorities
- Many respondents indicated that protecting the environment and Lake Scugog are the most important issues
- Many respondents want to ensure that Township growth is managed responsibly
- Respondents noted that the Township needs to match new housing developments with community resources and infrastructure growth, including new roads and appropriate traffic management
- Respondents would like greater investment in social services such as health care, affordable housing, and fire services
- There is an interest in ensuring taxes are not too high as they contribute to overall affordability

[Important factors in making Scugog a good place to live, work and play](#)

Survey participants were asked to indicate how important several factors are to make the community a good place to live, work and play on a scale of very important to unimportant. Figure 1 shows that most participants identified all factors as very or somewhat important (ranging from 74-95%). Of the factors identified, the highest ranked (over 90% of respondents ranked very or somewhat important) were: (1) The opportunities for recreation, sports, leisure and cultural activities; (2) The amount of green space; (3) Lake Scugog; (4) The ease at which people and businesses can travel; and (5) A vibrant downtown with shopping, restaurants and entertainment areas. The lowest ranked were opportunities to get involved with organizations and local municipal governments and opportunities to acquire affordable housing and/or rental accommodation, with 68% and 69% of respondents noting these factors as very or somewhat important, respectively.

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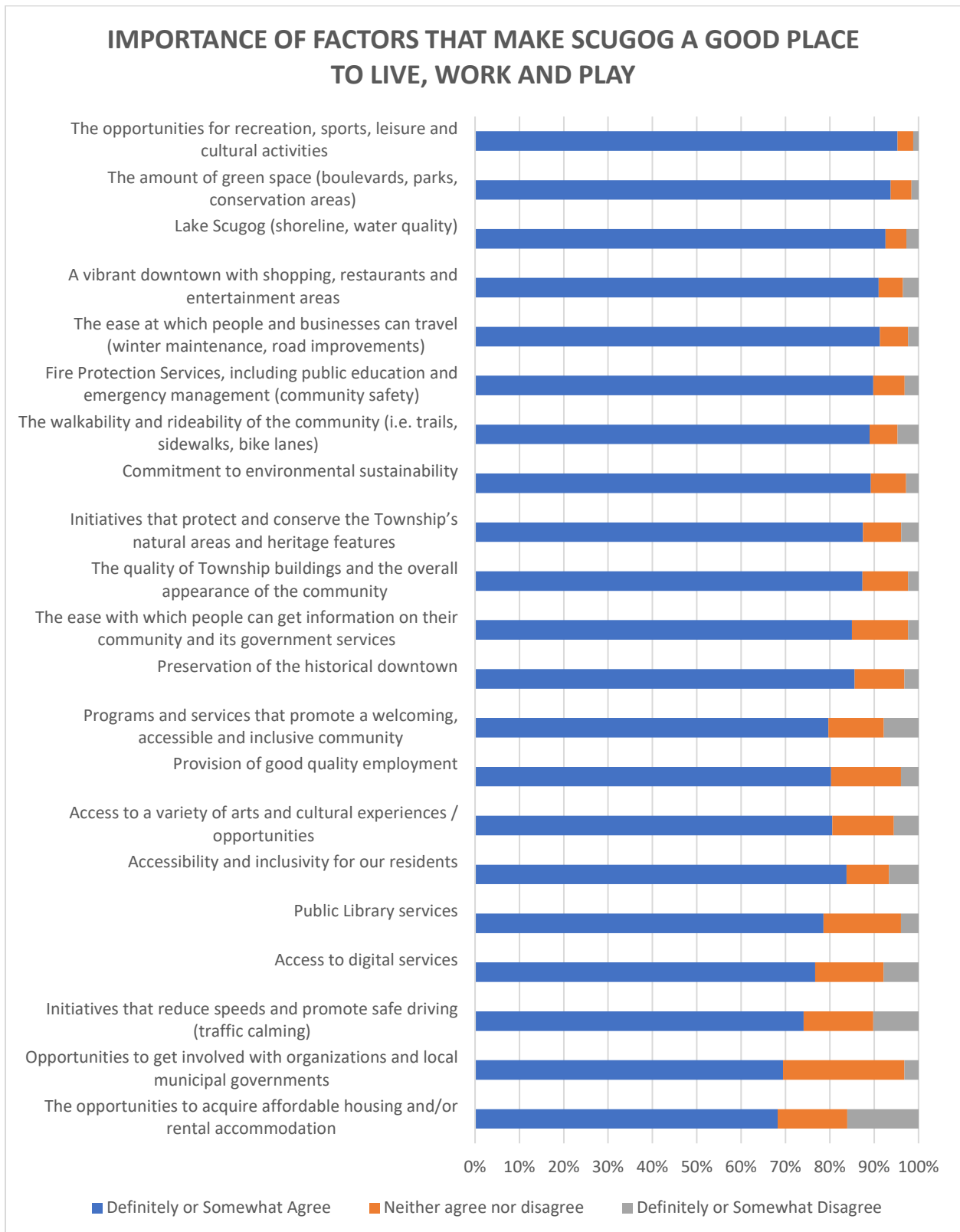


Figure 1: Most important factors for living, working, and playing in Scugog, n=256

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Level of satisfaction with the quality of service provided

Survey participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the Township's service in various areas. Figure 2 shows participants were most satisfied (with over 80% of respondents indicating they were very or somewhat satisfied) with (1) Community events, (2) Public Library services, (3) access to online and digital services; (4) Township parks; and (5) firefighting and fire prevention services. Plans, policies, regulations, and programs related to climate change and services for seniors had the lowest satisfaction rankings at 38 and 44%, respectively.

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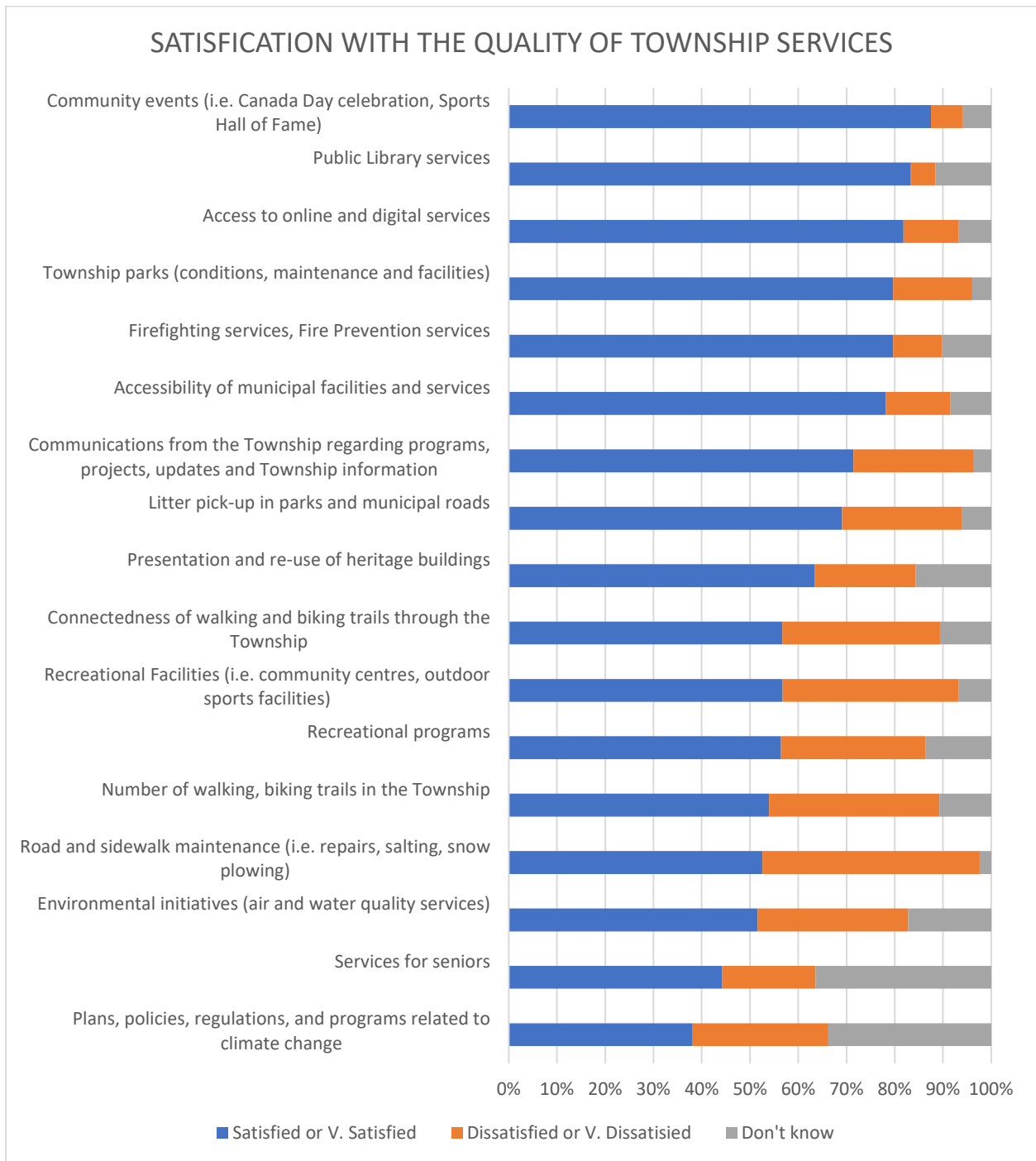


Figure 2: Satisfaction with Township Services, n=257

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Main Strategic Direction Priorities for this term of Council

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three strategic direction priorities. Figure 3 shows roads and municipal infrastructure, natural environment, and financial sustainability as most important, followed by municipal services, economic development and tourism, and community engagement.

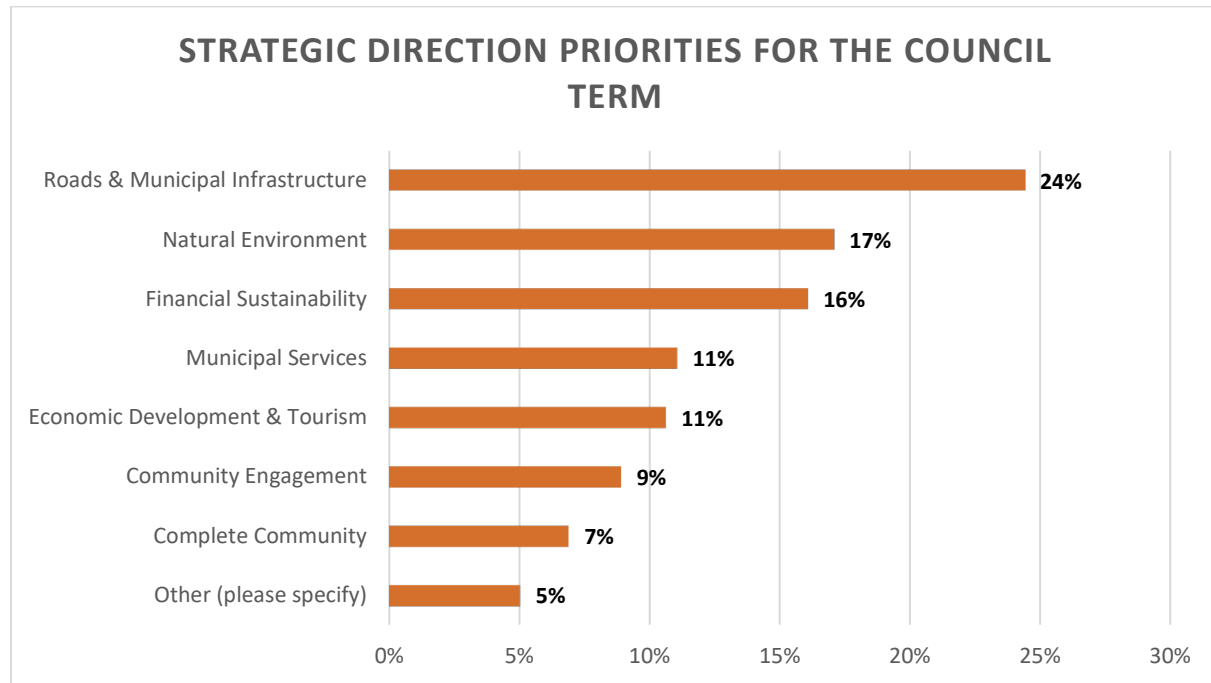


Figure 3: Priorities for this term of Council, n=255

Some respondents identified other priorities of importance. A summary of individual suggested priorities is included in each subsequent section.

Durham Regional priorities to advocate for at the municipal government level

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three Durham Regional priorities that the municipality should advocate for this council term. Figure 4 shows community safety and well-being, housing and social services and economic development and tourism as most important, followed by climate change mitigation and adaptation, regional roads, and addressing speeding.

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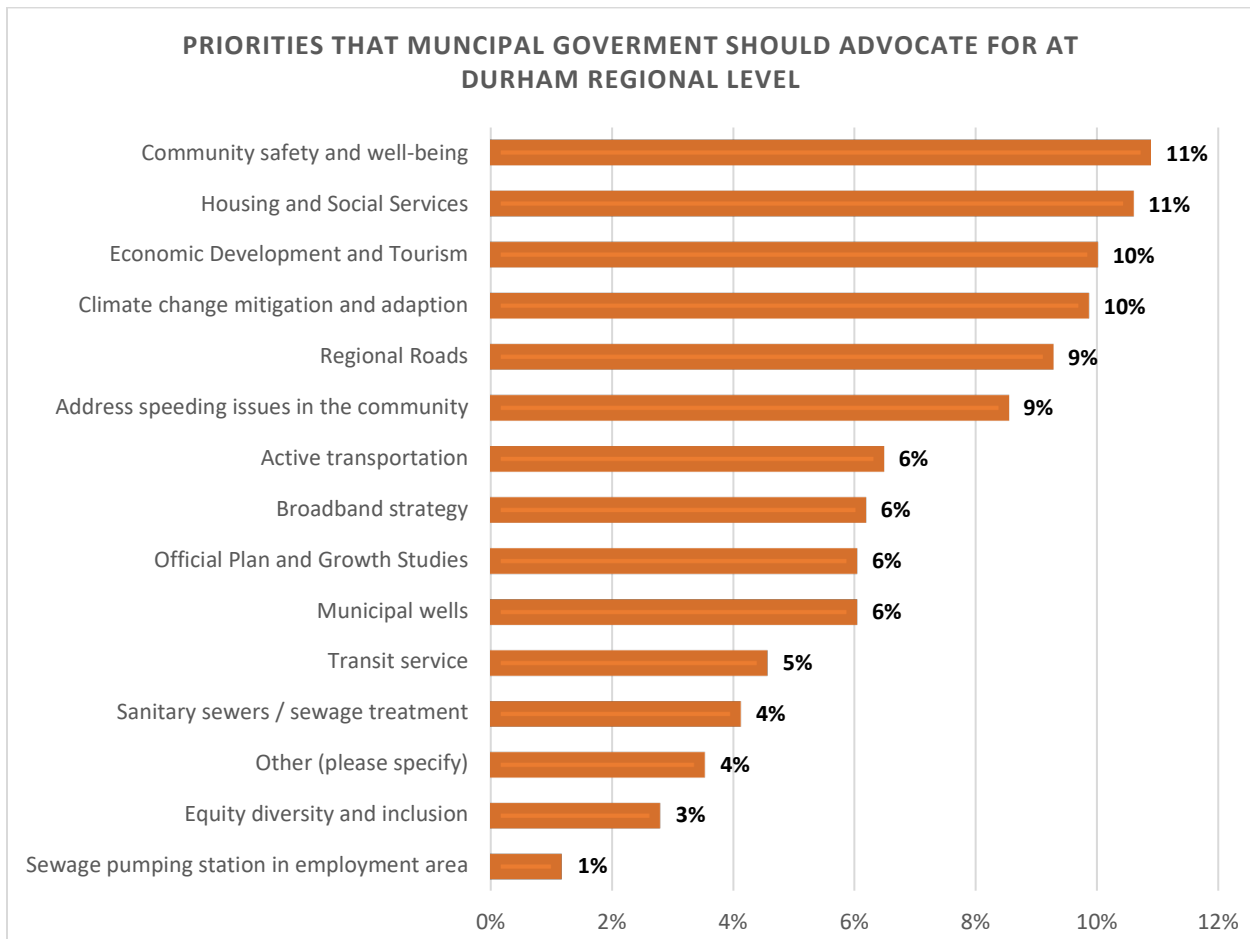


Figure 4: Top areas for advocacy to Durham Region, n=246

Some respondents identified other priorities of importance. A summary of priorities suggested by individuals includes:

- Advancing community safety initiatives, including establishing a community policing station with support from the Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation
- Adjusting transit vehicles to ridership
- Enhanced waste management services (weekly garbage pick-up in summer months)
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation, including acting on climate change and reducing our overall carbon footprint
- Affordable housing, housing and social services
- Official plan and growth studies and associated environmental stewardship to maintain the security of the water supply, farmland/food supply, wetlands and forested areas
- Protecting Scugog from urban sprawl

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- Advancing sanitary sewer/sewage treatment and sewage pumping station in the employment area
- Advancing Regional Road maintenance and traffic management, including more traffic lights
- Healthcare and the hospital

Priorities to improve local roads

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three areas to improve local roads. Figure 5 shows reconstructing or rehabilitating paved roads as the most important, followed by adding sidewalk connections, implementing safe road initiatives and resurfacing gravel roads.

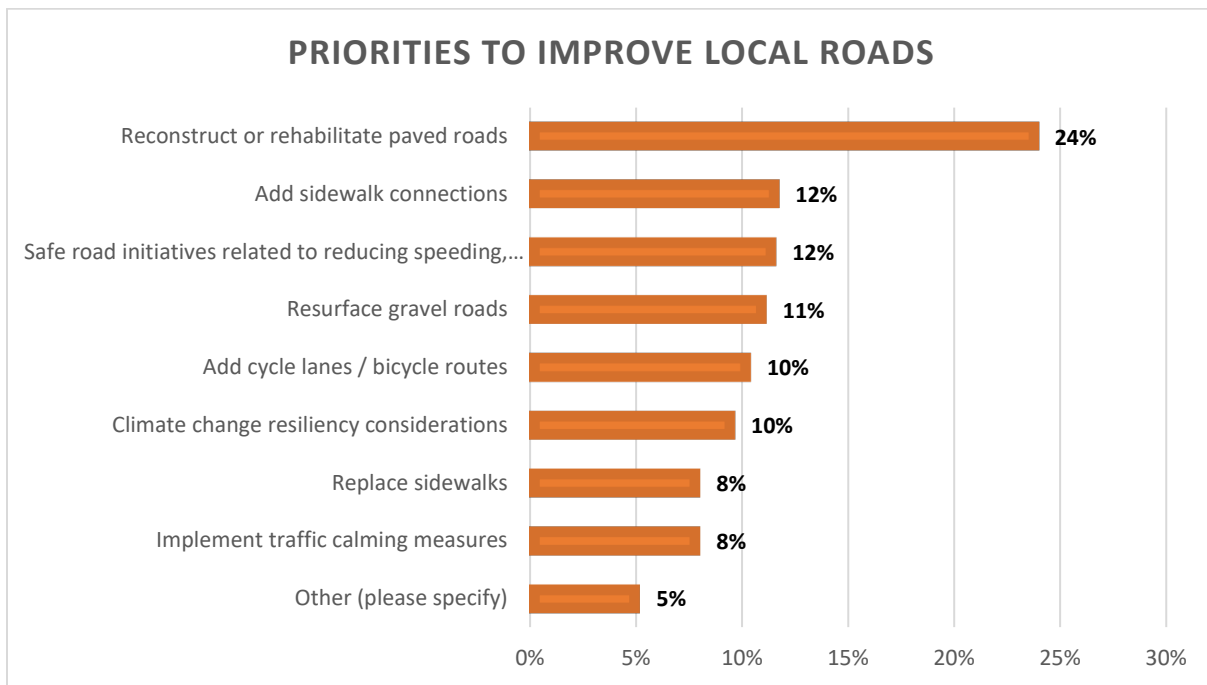


Figure 5: Priorities for local roads, n=251

Some respondents identified other priorities to improve local roads. Several respondents indicated that road maintenance (i.e. fixing potholes, salting, snow plowing) and continued resurfacing are priorities. In addition, individuals suggested the following:

- Address bike trails, walking trails, youth recreation, and accessibility are part of roads or municipal infrastructure
- Implement traffic calming, speeding reduction and road safety measures and enforce speed limits
- Provide second access to the Island
- Repair culverts and ditches
- Improve roads with the environment and wildlife in mind

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- Ensure growth considers infrastructure needs, including roads
- Install more traffic lights, adding signalled crosswalks near schools/playgrounds and pedestrian crossings at various locations
- Manage road disruption (i.e. construction and closures)
- Reduce salt use both in winter and in dust suppressants in summer
- Link multi-use pathways for recreation and commuting
- Increase accessibility on Queen Street in the downtown area
- Enhance snow removal on Queen & Water streets
- Concentrate reconstruction or rehabilitation on both roads and sidewalks

Priorities for municipal infrastructure (buildings, fleet, stormwater, parks)

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three areas to address municipal infrastructure for this council term. Figure 6 shows implementing the Waterfront Action Plan and constructing new indoor recreation facilities as the most important, followed by enhancing parks and green space, better connecting walking and bicycling facilities and increasing the number of walking and bicycling facilities.

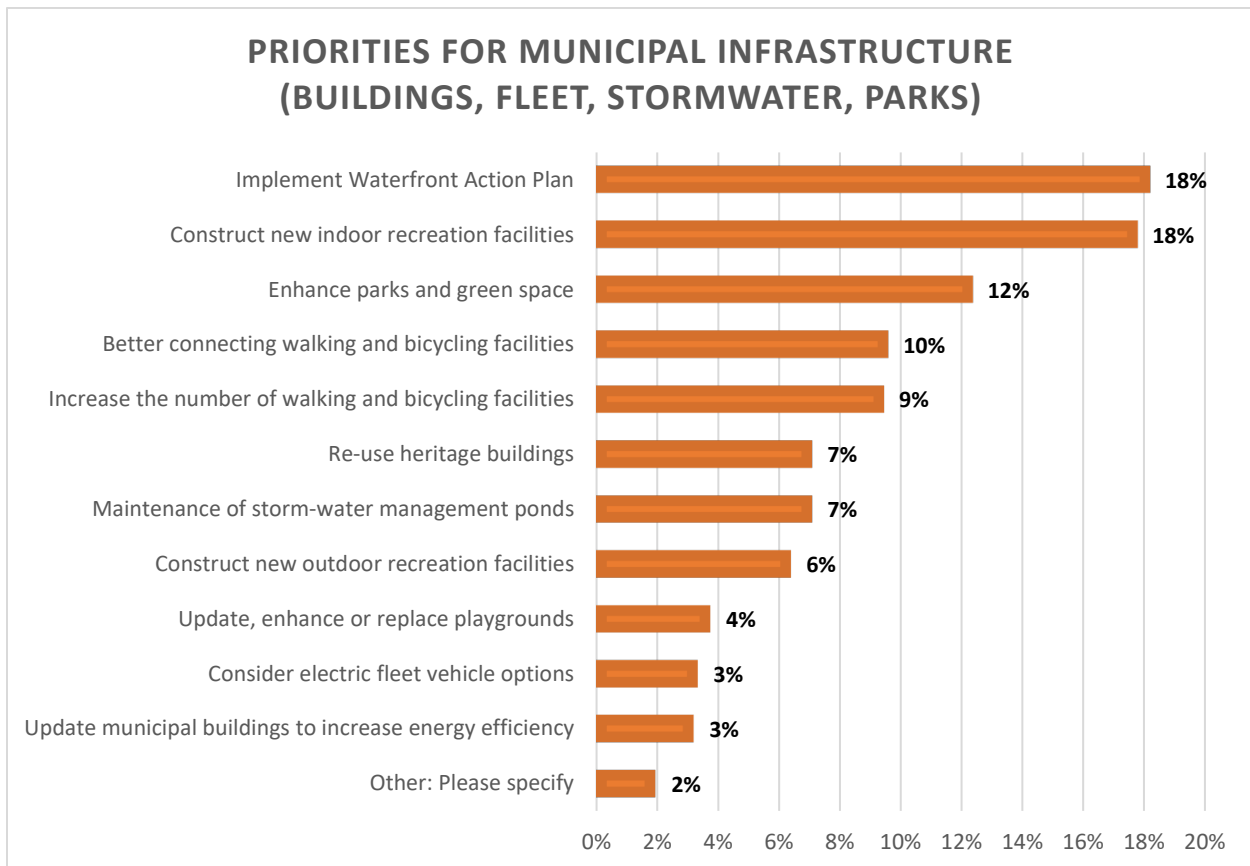


Figure 6: Priorities for municipal infrastructure, n= 254

Some respondents identified other priorities for municipal infrastructure. There is an interest in building recreational facilities for everyone of all ages to respond to the increasing population. A recreational center could include a gym, walking track and/or an indoor pool. Several respondents also identified pickleball courts as important. Respondents were also supportive of completing improvements to outdoor recreational facilities (new washroom Palmer Park, outdoor Pickleball courts). In addition, individuals suggested the following:

- Consider amenities such as racket ball courts, bowling alley, BMX park/skateboard park
- Consider additional swimming lessons/fitness classes
- Maintain industrial area roads, ditching and drainage, with a budget for water and sewer and connectivity and hydrant connection for fire prevention
- Prioritize maintenance and/or replacement of current facilities before adding additional facilities

Priorities for social, cultural, and recreation opportunities

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three areas to address social, cultural, and recreational opportunities. Figure 7 shows respondents noted hosting community events and fostering relationships with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation as most important. These were followed by continuing to find partnerships to implement programs, offering additional, new or enhanced programs for youth and additional, new or enhanced recreational programs.

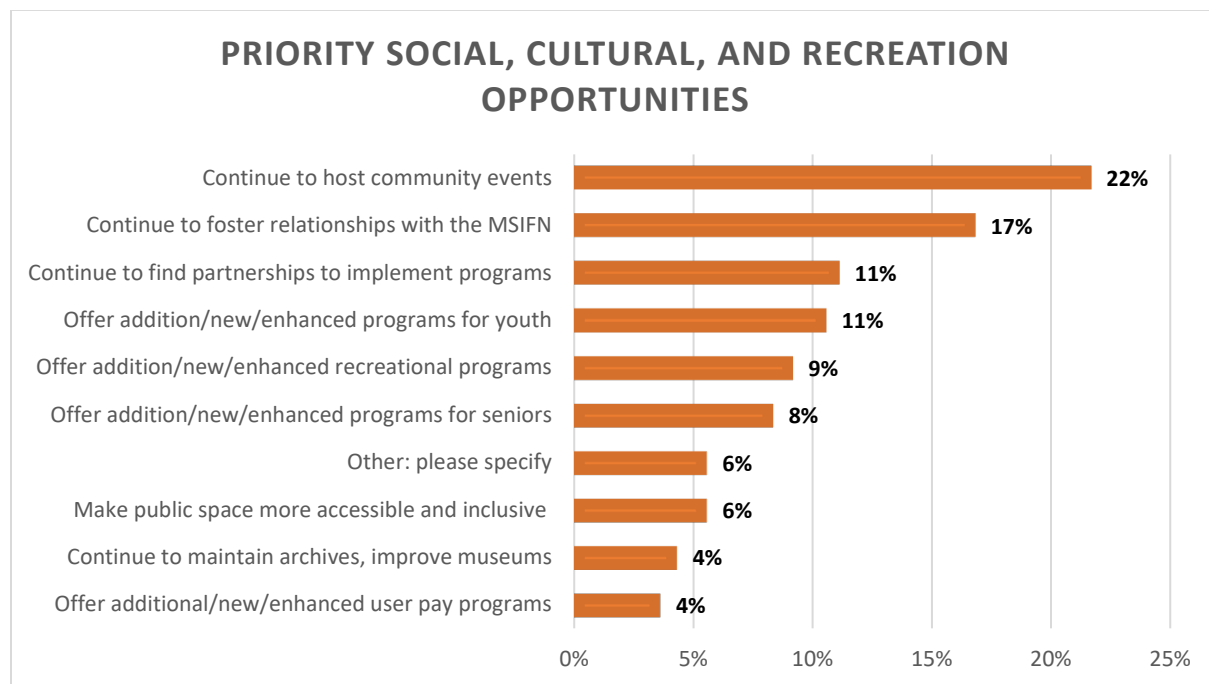


Figure 7: Priorities for social, cultural, and recreation, n=250

Some respondents identified other priorities for social, cultural and recreation opportunities. Several respondents indicated a need to offer opportunities and activities for youth and seniors. In addition, individuals suggested the following:

- Make any recreation or cultural activities physically and financially accessible
- Develop an overdose prevention strategy
- Reduce poverty
- Support Indigenous community members under their leadership and direction
- Provide more direct resources and support for tourism, arts and culture programs/non-profits/facilities and arts organizations such as the Arts Council
- Continue to maintain heritage archives, improve museum facilities, enhance library services, offer additional/new/enhanced recreational programs and reinstate the Arts Advisory Committee
- Consider paid parking model for visitors to Port Perry, where businesses validate parking based on a set purchase amount
- Could partnerships with UOIT, Fleming College, Durham College, etc., to bring programs for adults and seniors during the day
- Consider using the fairgrounds for enhanced programs
- Work with farmers to ensure food security and safety

Priorities for Economic Development and Tourism

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three areas to address economic development and tourism. Figure 8 shows attracting new businesses, retaining existing businesses and continuing to work with business partners in the community as most important, followed by providing additional support for businesses, promoting agri-tourism initiatives and broadband access in the community.

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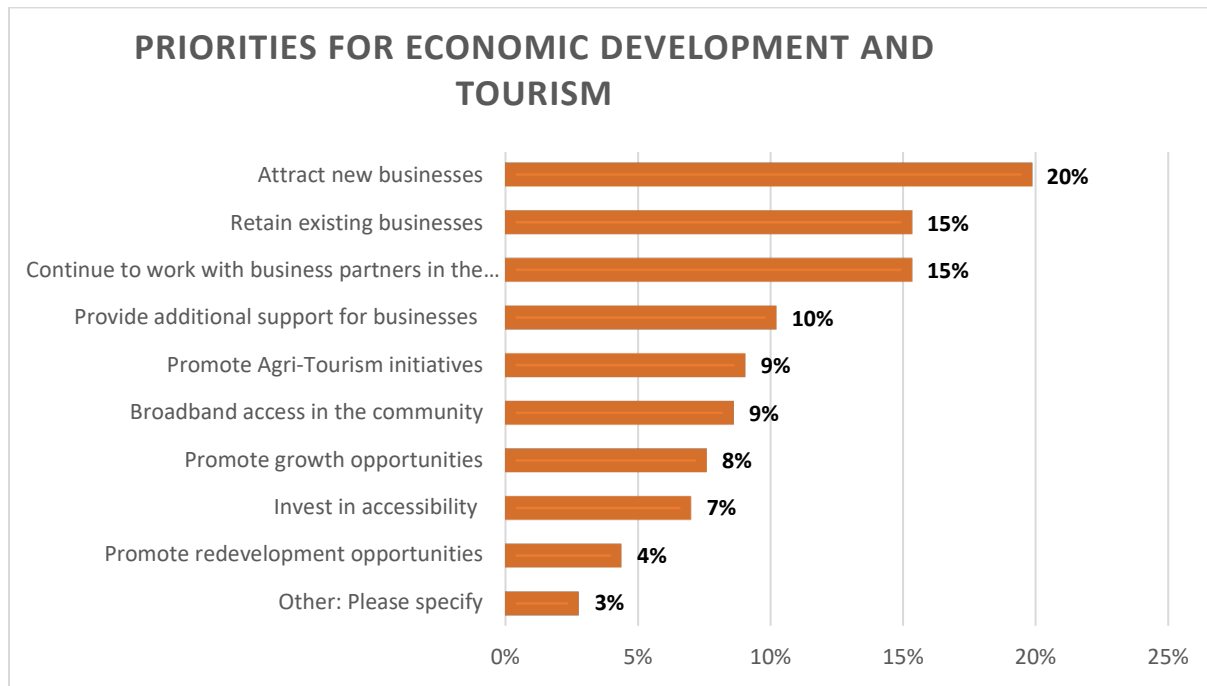


Figure 8: Priorities for economic development and tourism, n= 251

Some respondents identified other priorities for economic development and tourism. Individuals suggested the following:

- Focus on arts & culture as many existing non-profits could be supported and generate more tourism
- Support a sense of community and support the existing community by showing value for tax money through infrastructure upgrades
- Focus on retaining and attracting businesses. This could include the Farmers Market, young entrepreneurs, climate-friendly businesses to provide long-term, full-time employment
- Ensure new development is consistent with the historic design of the downtown
- Provide water, sewer, connectivity and fire hydrants, ditching and drainage, and road maintenance
- Support small businesses and economic development of the Township as a whole
- Improve Downtown parking
- Support green infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging
- Retain tourism staff to support and implement a Tourism Action Plan
- Eliminate Cannabis stores, or restrict them to a specific industrial area
- Promote redevelopment opportunities
- Renovate the Mill on the Lake to be a destination

Priorities for the natural environment and green spaces

Survey participants were asked to pick their top three areas to address the natural environment and green spaces. Figure 9 shows continuing to protect environmentally significant areas in the Township, constructing the Lake Scugog Enhancement Project and working with government agencies and partners to ensure fish habitat is protected and maintained as most important. These were followed by taking action to prepare for extreme climate events, continuing to work with LEAF and enhancing the natural environment for passive recreational activities.

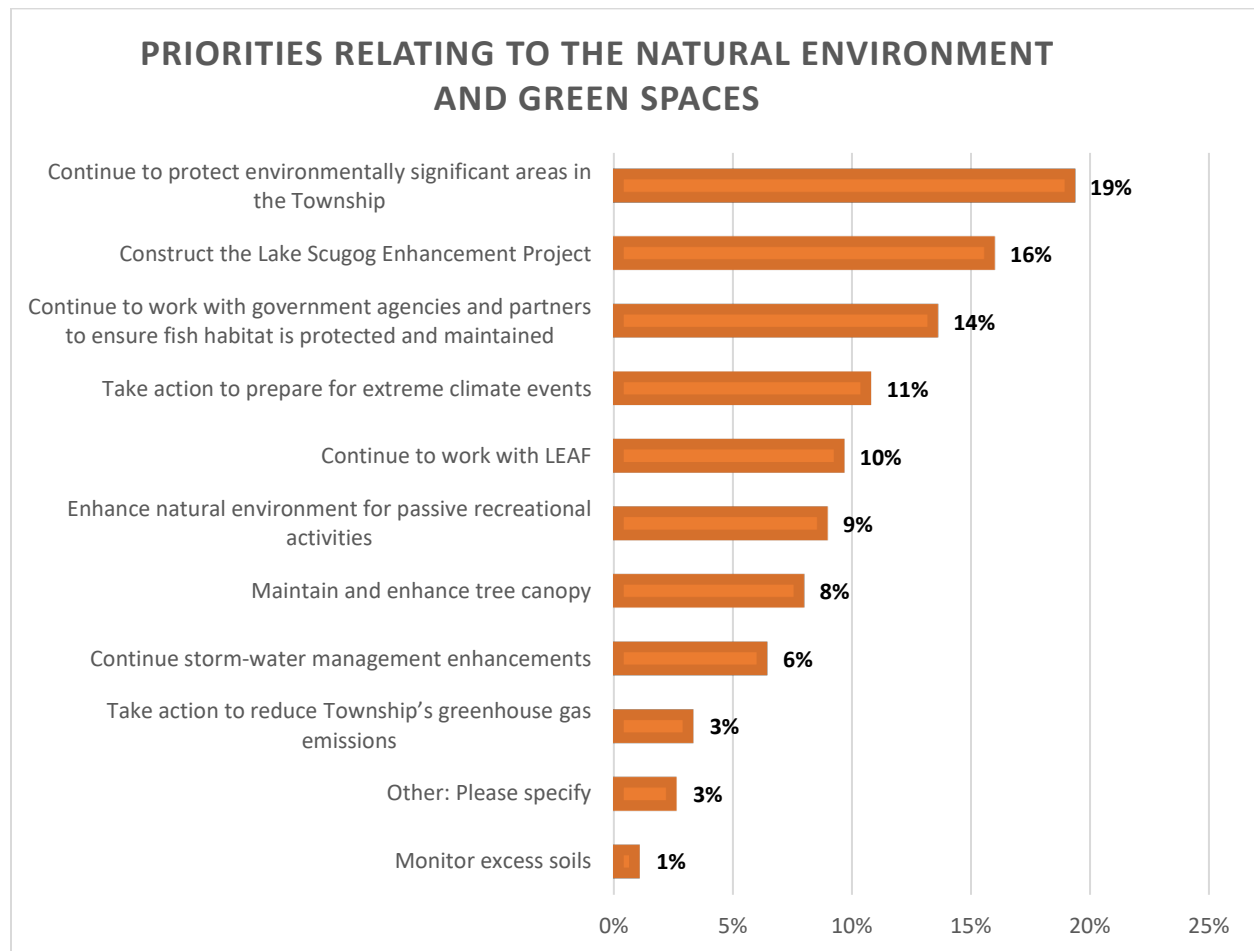


Figure 9: Priorities for the natural environment and green space, n=250

Some respondents identified other priorities of for the natural environment and green space. Several respondents indicated that protecting and enhancing the health of Lake Scugog is important, including eliminating weeds. There is a need to balance growth with environmental protection and advocate for environmental protection during the development process. Individuals suggested the following:

- Prioritize climate action and demonstrate leadership for Durham Region Climate Action

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- Protect the Oak Ridges Moraine, water supply, wetlands, farmlands and designated forested/park areas and the Greenbelt
- Ensuring water quality is reflected and protected
- Enhance available green spaces, including maintaining planted areas and gardens
- maintain and enhance tree canopy and consider a tree protection bylaw
- Finish the Perryview Stormwater project
- Work with farmers on regenerative farming
- Consider alternatives to the electrification of the Township fleet

[The relative importance of factors to manage Township operations, services and finances](#)

Survey participants were asked to indicate how important each of the following initiatives is to managing Township operations, services and finances on a scale of very important to unimportant. Figure 10 shows following as the most important initiatives: (1) advocating for funding for infrastructure / sustainable funding; (2) responding to significant weather events; seeking partnership opportunities to enhance programs and initiatives; (3) working with community groups to implement focused fundraising campaigns for large capital projects; (4) maintaining current service levels; (6) ensuring the long term financial planning and sustainability of assets; and (7) continuing /enhancing programs to support those in most need. The least important initiatives were investigating options for Public-Private Partnerships in small rural municipalities and implementing new user fees to offset the cost of programs/services targeted to specific activities.

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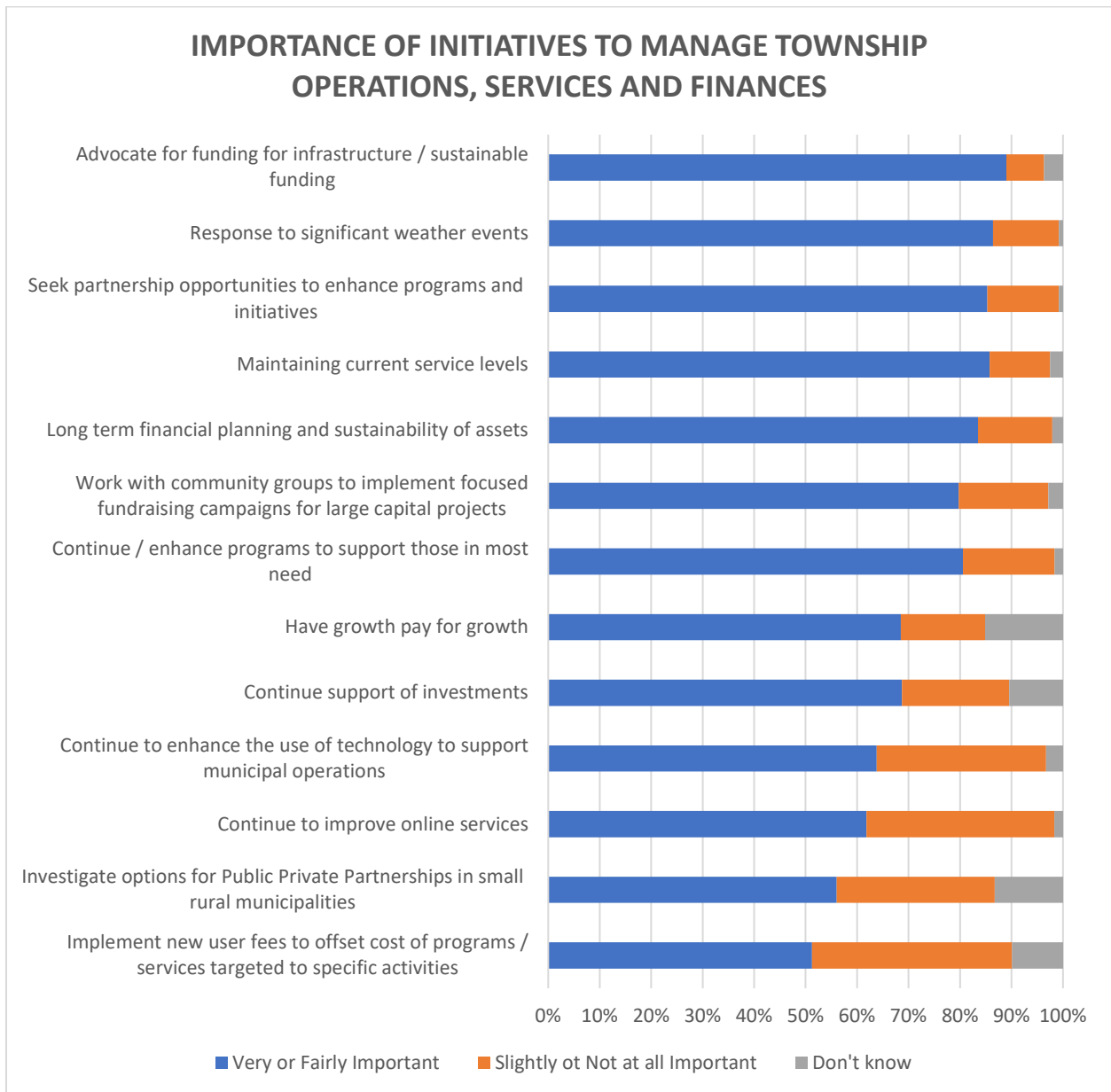


Figure 10: Importance of initiative to manage Township operations, services and finances, n=252

Some respondents identified other important initiatives for Township operation, services and finance. Individuals suggested the following:

- Employing more full-time firefighters
- Ensuring that community engagement is centred on the customer
- Considering Township hiring practices that prioritize local Scugog community
- Trying to keep property tax increases affordable
- Preserving and enhancing community identity and history

Impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued roll-out of municipal services

Participants were invited to reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on their way of life in Scugog. They noted the following as the most significant impacts:

- Respondents noted that Covid was generally hard on their lives but are glad to see the Township opening up again
- Several respondents noted they moved to Scugog after COVID and could not comment
- The transition to online services, including virtual municipal meetings and the ability to watch council online, was noted by many as something to continue
- Many respondents enjoyed the addition of outdoor patios in the downtown area and the growth of e-commerce. The introduction of contactless library book pick-up was also noted
- Several respondents did note that they were unaware of any services that were rolled out during the pandemic

Additional advice to inform the Strategic Plan

A number of individuals shared the following additional advice to support the development of the Strategic Plan:

- Respondents strongly believe that growth in the area needs to be responsible and appropriate, and many are concerned about the loss of the small-town feel
- Many respondents would like to see an emphasis on improving existing roads and sidewalks and developing a more robust active transportation network
- Respondents noted that a focus should be on bettering the recreational activities and local services, including programs for youth, arts and culture, and emergency services
- Responses were mixed on the topic of taxes. A few who commented believe raising taxes allows the Township to provide better services, while most responded that taxes should be managed.

Respondent Demographics

There were 261 survey respondents, which are within the following demographics:

- Approximately 55% are from Port Perry, 12% from other communities in Scugog, 2% from other Durham Region municipalities, 2% from outside of Durham Region and 25% did not include their postal code information
- 94% own their home, 4% rent, and 2% have other accommodation
- 35% have children under the age of 18 living in your household
- 41% work full-time, 40% are retired, 8% work part-time, 7% work full-time or part-time from home and 3% stay at home full-time
- 33% are 65 years old or older, 19% are 55-64, 19% are 35-44, and 17% are 45-54, while 4% prefer not to disclose their age

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- 62% identify as female, 31% identify as male, and 8% prefer not to disclose
- 73% of respondents have lived or worked in Scugog for more than five years. At the same time, 13% have lived or worked in Scugog for 1-3 years, 8% for 3-5 years, and 6% for less than one year.

Next Steps

The feedback received from the online survey, coffee chat, pop-ups, community conversations and discussions with Township staff will inform the development of the strategic plan. The draft Strategic Plan will be presented to Council for endorsement in early 2023.