



# Strategic Planning Survey Results 2020

# *Executive Summary*

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### ***Key Findings***

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#### **Current Attitudes Towards Waste Management/Recycling**

- Concerns remain high about waste management issues which is consistent with 2017 responses.
- 64% of respondents say that increasing the amount of items they recycle at home is a critical issue.
- 83% of respondents say that plastic bags can't be recycled in the household bin, up from 64% in 2017.

#### **Current Waste Management/Recycling Behaviors**

- Food scraps are still most commonly disposed of in the regular trash, with ~40% saying they compost in their backyard.
- Hazardous waste disposal such as paint and chemicals and disposal of electronics are more likely to occur through participation in County/Casella collection events than in 2017.
- When asked why household hazardous waste was put in the regular trash, 16% less people said it was because they are not always sure what household hazardous waste is, and 36% less people said it was because they didn't know where hazardous waste collection events are.



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#### **Barriers and Enablers to Recycling**

- While most residents currently say they are doing a good job at recycling, they are less likely to say they are going a good job of “reducing” or “reusing.” In particular, they feel they could improve upon “reducing” the number of resources they are using.
- Residents say that they would do more if they knew more about where to take non-standard items, if there were more recycling events in their town, and if they had a better sense of what was recyclable.
- Saving landfill space is still seen as the top benefit of reducing, reusing, and recycling products, followed by reducing their individual carbon footprint.
- Residents want to learn more about recycling topics such as how to properly dispose of hazardous waste, and which materials they can put in the recycling bin (up 11% since 2017).
- 93% of respondents say that would be willing to drive to a permanent facility located in Ontario County where they could drop-off Electronic Waste, Household Hazardous Waste, Confidential Paper Shredding or Residential Tires more than twice a year.
- Half of respondents say they’ve participated in one of the county funded/hosted collection events, and of that group, nearly everyone said the event was valuable to them.
- 42% compost in their backyard, citing it being good for their yard and the environment as top motivators. The lack of equipment is the top reason for not composting, and over half would compost if they were provided the necessary equipment.



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#### **Communications and Marketing**

- The Ontario County website is a more popular resource to learn about issues affecting Ontario County than in 2017, and radio and print publications are less likely to be places to learn about issues affecting Ontario County.
- Many people would do an Internet search to look for information on recycling. Nearly a third of respondents would go to Ontario County’s website, up from 50% of respondents in 2017.
  - 21% more people say they’ve gone to Ontario County’s website looking for information on recycling than in 2017 and the majority of people say they were able to find the information they needed.
- Nearly 50% rated Ontario County as “Excellent” or “Good” in terms of how well they communicate what can and cannot be recycled, up from 27% in 2017.

#### **Opinions on Future Planning**

- The majority of respondents believe the County should explore only accepting Ontario County generated waste as the top way to prepare for ongoing and future disposal needs.
- Ideas for improving recycling and waste diversion in Ontario County include making guidelines simple, increasing communications with residents, and limiting the amount of waste accepted from outside the area. Reducing the odor the landfill produces was also noted.

