



Thunder Bay's Community Energy and Emissions Plan: Crowdsourcing Survey 1 Summary

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Introduction

The City of Thunder Bay kicked off the design of its Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) with a public survey launched on January 9, 2020 during a film screening of [Anthropocene](#), a documentary that explores how humans are changing the planet. This Phase 1 Survey identified key challenges and opportunities that residents of Thunder Bay feel are critical for the CEEP, which will lay out a roadmap for Thunder Bay to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions towards 2050. The City is aiming to reduce emissions by 37% by 2010 and by 80% by 2050, relative to 1990 levels.

Purpose

This document summarizes the main findings of the Phase 1 Crowdsourcing Survey: Opportunities and Challenges, and to be put into Thunder Bay's "Earthcare Newsletter" (monthly newsletter summarizing the work on environmental initiatives).

Key Findings

The survey respondents expressed broad support for climate action. About 8 out of 10 of the respondents said they believe Thunder Bay should prioritize climate change. The respondents' top concerns included the impact of climate change on future generations (66%); the major and unpredictable effects of climate change on water systems, including floods and droughts (57%); extreme weather conditions and events related to climate change (48%); and the impact of climate change on food and agriculture (43%).

The respondents identified a number of challenges facing Thunder Bay in lowering emissions. Nearly half of respondents (47%) expressed concerns that Thunder Bay would struggle to obtain widespread public support or muster sufficient political will for climate action. Several respondents (35%) also identified challenges related to transportation and urban design, saying that Thunder Bay's "car culture" and urban sprawl could make it hard for residents to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. Some respondents (22%) also expressed concerns about the cost of climate action and economic challenges related to it.

At the same time, the respondents identified opportunities for Thunder Bay in lowering emissions. Almost half (46%) described one of Thunder Bay's biggest challenges — its transportation infrastructure and urban sprawl — as an opportunity to make Thunder Bay more walkable and bikeable, as well as to build a better transit system.

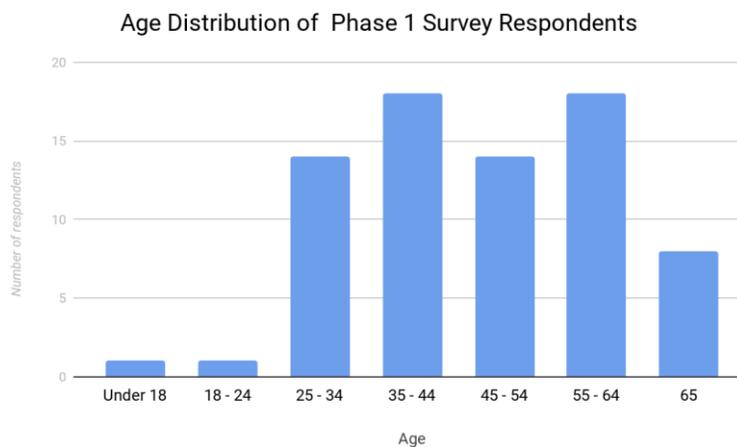
Many respondents (39%) also said climate action provides an opportunity for Thunder Bay to build green infrastructure, ranging from green buildings to efficient heating systems to renewable energy, especially solar and wind. Some respondents (16%) also highlighted how such investments could create jobs, reduce energy costs, and result in other economic benefits. Others discussed how Thunder Bay could use climate action as an opportunity to reinvent itself and grow its economy through building green industries. Finally, respondents highlighted opportunities to improve the city's recycling and waste management, expand greenspace and plant trees.

The majority of respondents expressed an interest in remaining engaged with the development of the CEEP in some form. They also identified areas of the CEEP they wanted to learn more about with the highest numbers of respondents expressing an interest in

learning more about transportation (68%), followed closely by new low-carbon technologies (66%).

Survey Participation

Seventy-nine people of different ages from across Thunder Bay responded to the Phase 1 Survey. Respondents hailed from Current River, McIntyre, McKellar, Neebing, Northwood, Red River, and Westfort. Thirty of them identified as female, while 34 identified as male. The remainder did not share their gender. The respondents were also spread across a range of age groups, with the majority being between the ages of 25 and 64.

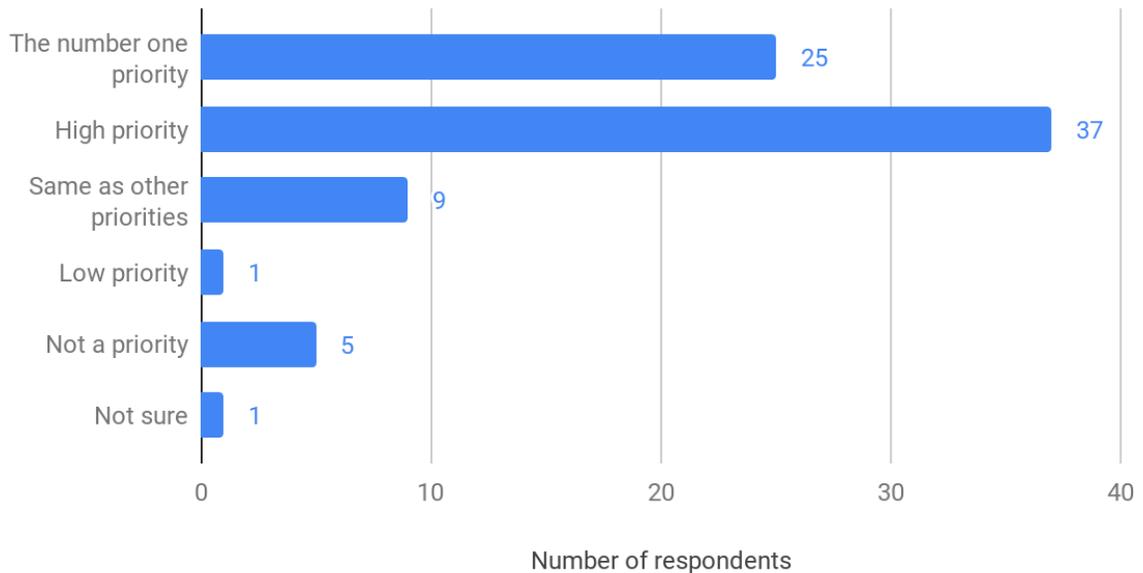


The majority of respondents were highly engaged with the subject and concerned about climate action. They expressed a high level of interest in remaining engaged with the development of the CEEP with 63% saying they would like to stay in touch with the process via an e-newsletter. In addition, 42% expressed an interest in being involved with the working group for the CEEP.

How should climate change initiatives be ranked?

The survey indicated there is broad support for climate action. About 8 out of 10 of the respondents said they believe Thunder Bay should prioritize climate change with 32% saying it should be the number one priority and 47% saying it should be a high priority.

In your opinion, how high of a priority should climate change be for the community?



The respondents also identified their top three concerns related to climate change. More than half said they were concerned about the impact of climate change on future generations (66%), as well as the major and unpredictable effects of climate change on water systems, including floods and droughts (57%). A significant portion of respondents also expressed concerns about extreme weather conditions and events related to climate change (48%) and the impact of climate change on food and agriculture (43%). Some respondents were also concerned about the negative impact of climate change on general well-being (18%); important features of Thunder Bay like parks, forests and trails (15%) and economic development (9%). Just 8% of respondents said they had no concerns.

there is an opportunity to make Thunder Bay more walkable and bikeable, as well as to build a better transit system that provides efficient service to more areas of the cities. Some also suggested the transit system could be powered by electricity, rather than fossil fuel, and recommended improving accessibility for low-income residents. Respondents also discussed the potential for uptake of electric vehicles.

In many cases, the respondents' descriptions of the challenges and the opportunities related to transportation overlapped. "Our transit system needs to be revamped so that we are not such a car-dependent city," one respondent wrote in response to the question on challenges. "There are a lot of excuses (urban sprawl), but this is the city we have, and we need to have a transit system that reaches all of the areas in a timely fashion so that we can reduce emissions."

Many respondents (39%) also said climate action provides an opportunity for Thunder Bay to build green infrastructure, ranging from carbon-capture technology to efficient heating systems to greener buildings. Several (23%) focused on the opportunity for Thunder Bay to pursue renewable energy, especially solar and wind, and to retrofit buildings to make them more energy efficient. Some respondents (16%) also highlight how such investments could create jobs, reduce energy costs, and result in other economic benefits like the creation of new industries.

"Solar power and dream big!" one respondent wrote before pitching the idea of a solar-powered train between Current River and Westfort, and suggesting the city consider neighbourhood energy cooperatives. "I think the city may become a major name known for good use of solar power for the benefit of the citizens and the climate," the respondent explained.

There were a variety of other hopeful responses. Various respondents suggested Thunder Bay use climate action as an opportunity to reinvent itself and grow its economy through building green industries. "We could be the shining star for northern development in a sustainable, climate-friendly way," wrote one respondent. "With a university, a college, and all of the talented people that live here, surely we can design better housing that consumes less energy."

Some respondents highlighted opportunities to improve the city's recycling and waste management; support local industries that could enhance sustainability; and expand greenspace and plant trees. "Most of us live here because we are attached to the natural

environment, so I think that is where you begin. You start planting trees, lots of them,” one respondent explained. “This could be a great opportunity for Thunder Bay to become even more beautiful,” wrote another.

What respondents want to learn more about

The survey asked respondents to identify the areas of the CEEP they wanted to learn more about. They had questions about a number of topics. The highest share of respondents was interested in learning more about transportation (68%), followed by new low-carbon technologies (66%), home and building solutions (59%), innovative ideas applied by other cities (54%), local job creation opportunities (44%), community equity (41%), the cost of implementing a CEEP vs. not implementing a CEEP (41%), and associated health benefits (32%).