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Public Opinion on the Greenbelt, its Review and Local Food

Poll conducted by:
Environics
August & September 2015



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Executive Summary

Support:

- Consistent with previous public polling, nine out of ten participants support the Greenbelt.
- Protecting the natural water systems that provide clean drinking water to families in the Greater Golden Horseshoe is still the most important benefit of Greenbelt, followed by preserving productive farmland and irreplaceable green spaces that support clean air, according to participants.
- Strong majorities agree that the Greenbelt should be extended to include urban river valleys to protect natural waterways, that the boundaries of Greenbelt should be preserved from future urban development, and that new highways should not be built in the Greenbelt.

Boundaries:

- Three in four Ontarians surveyed believe that the boundaries of the Greenbelt should be preserved forever.

The 2015 Greenbelt Plan Review:

- A majority of respondents were not aware that the Review was occurring this year.

Activities:

- Majorities have taken part in recreational activities within the Greenbelt, with hiking being the most popular activity.

Voting Intentions:

- More than half of respondents would change their vote if protection for the Greenbelt was reduced or eliminated.

Durham Region:

- Six per cent more Durham respondents (80 per cent) believe the boundaries of the Greenbelt should be preserved forever compared to the overall response (74 per cent).
- Seventy-two per cent of Durham respondents oppose the removal of land from Ontario's permanently protected Greenbelt—six per cent above the overall response (66 per cent).



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Methodology

A total of 2,008 interviews were conducted online between August 19 and September 8, 2015. The number of interviews in Durham comprises 14%.

The breakdown of the sample plan appears below:

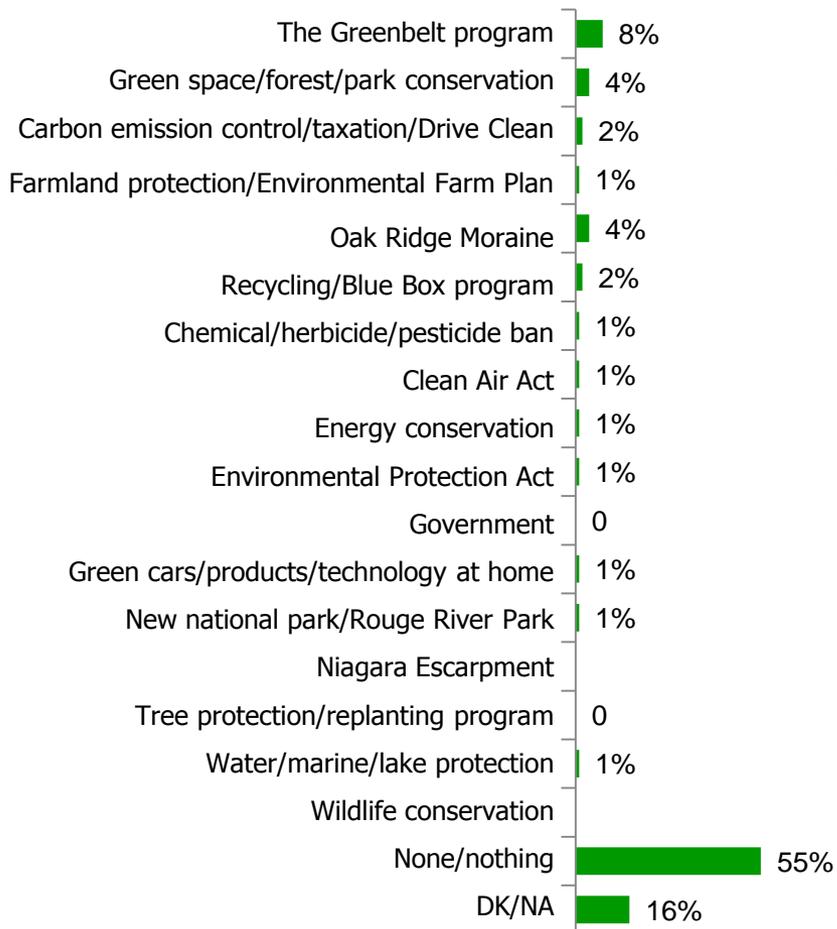
Region:	Sample Size	Urban	Rural
Toronto (416)	287	287	0
York Region	285	245	40
Durham	285	245	40
Peel	291	250	41
Halton	285	245	40
Hamilton	285	245	40
Niagara	290	240	50
TOTAL	2,008	1,757	251

Note: In previous years this survey was conducted via telephone interviews (CATI). For the first time this year, online interviews were used. Lastly, a larger rural sample was employed in this year's study to better capture the voice of Ontarians living in rural regions along the Greenbelt.



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What program, initiatives or government acts have you heard of, if any, that will protect the natural environment....



Findings:

There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall None/nothing: 51% (Durham: 55% or +4%)
- Overall DK/NA: 19% (Durham: 16% or -3%)

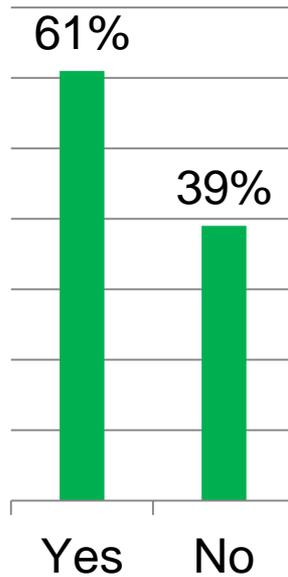


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Before today, have you ever heard of the Greenbelt, the Greenbelt Plan or the Greenbelt Act in Ontario?

Findings:

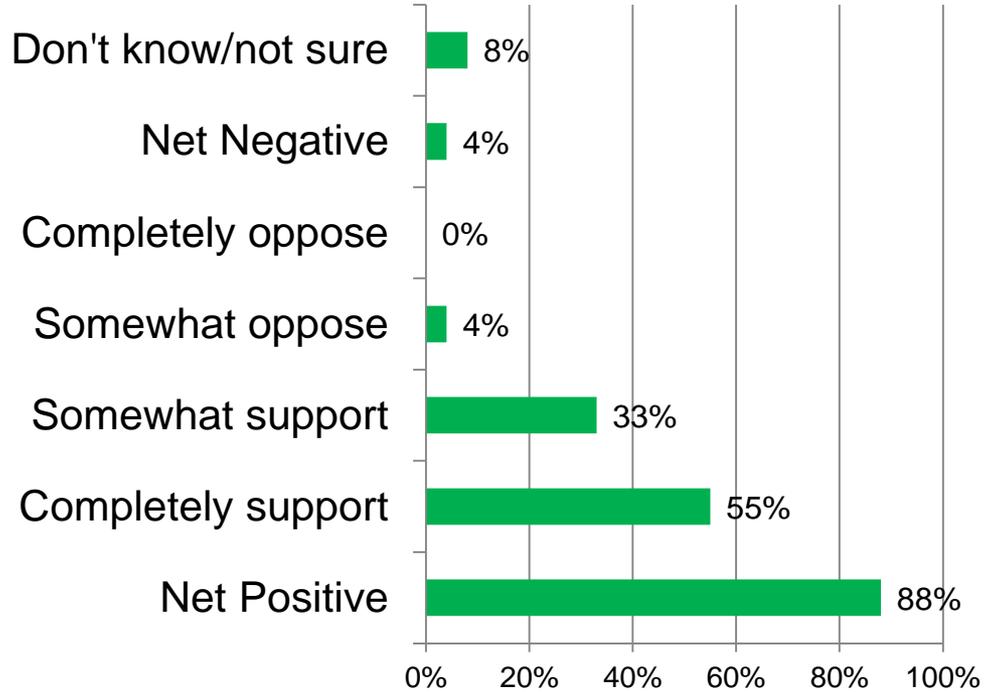
There are no significant differences between Durham region and overall findings.





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Once a description of the Greenbelt was provided, do you completely support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or completely oppose the Greenbelt initiative?



Findings:

There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

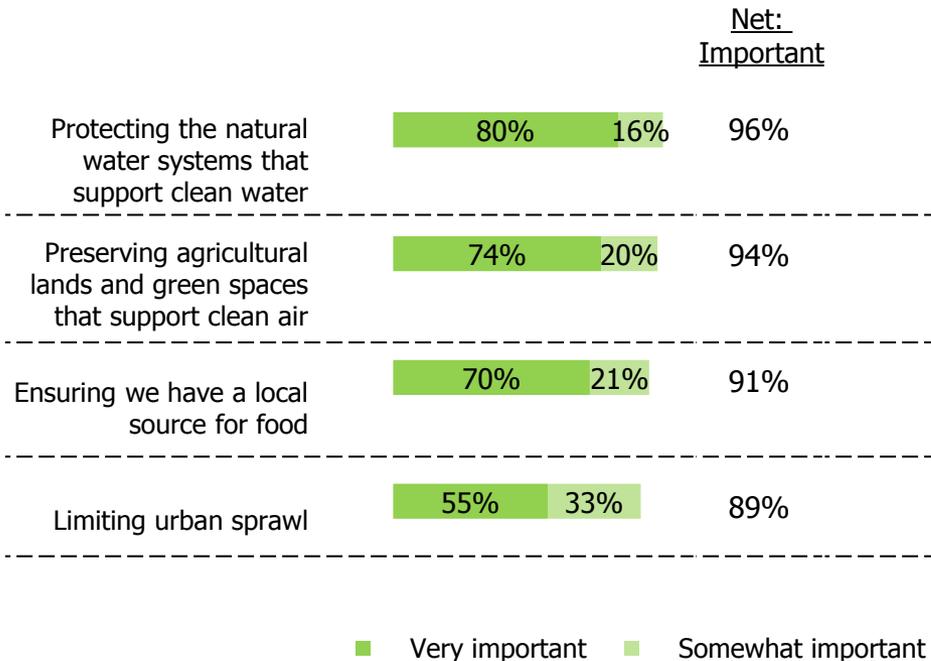
- Overall Somewhat support: 36% (Durham: 33% or -3%)



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Please indicate whether each of the following goals or benefits of the Greenbelt is important to you...

Large majorities continue to say the goals and benefits of the Greenbelt are important to them.



Findings:

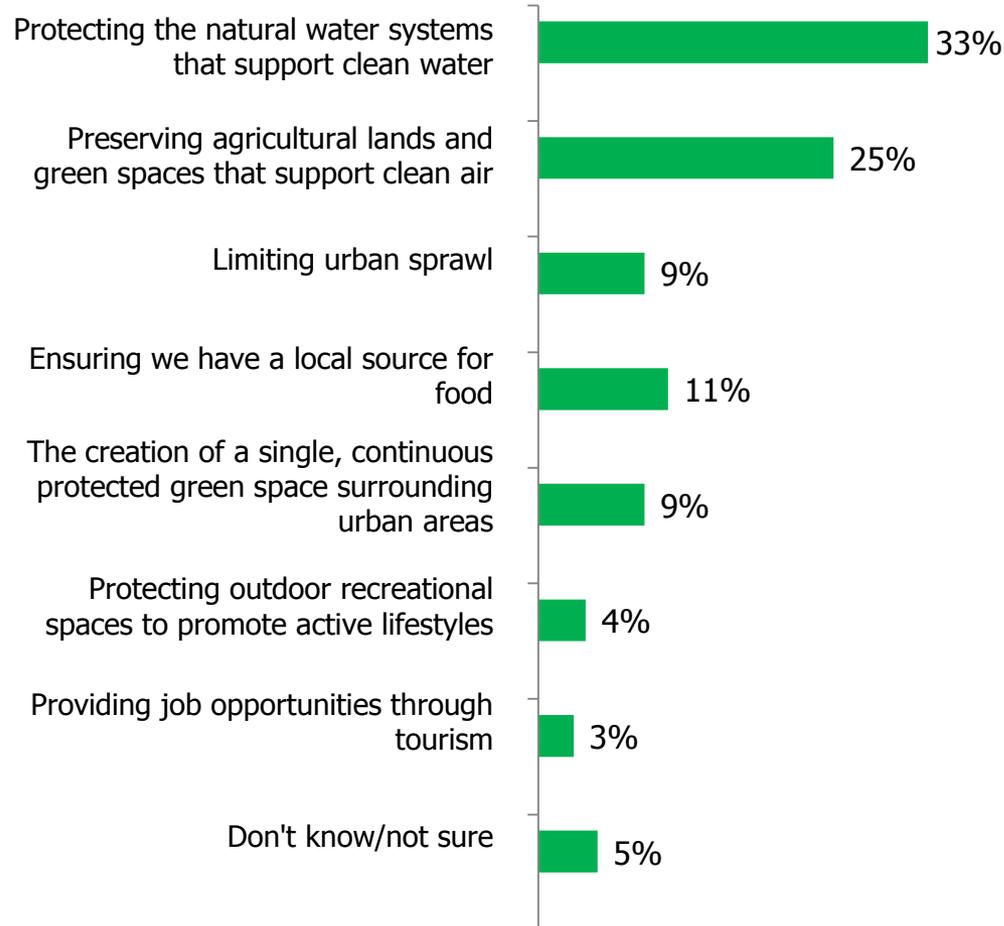
There are some differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Net important – Limiting urban sprawl: 86% (Durham: 89% or +3%)



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For you personally, which of the following is the most important benefit of the Greenbelt?



Findings:

There are no significant differences between Durham region and overall findings



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Is the Greenbelt something that ...?

i) is extremely important to you personally

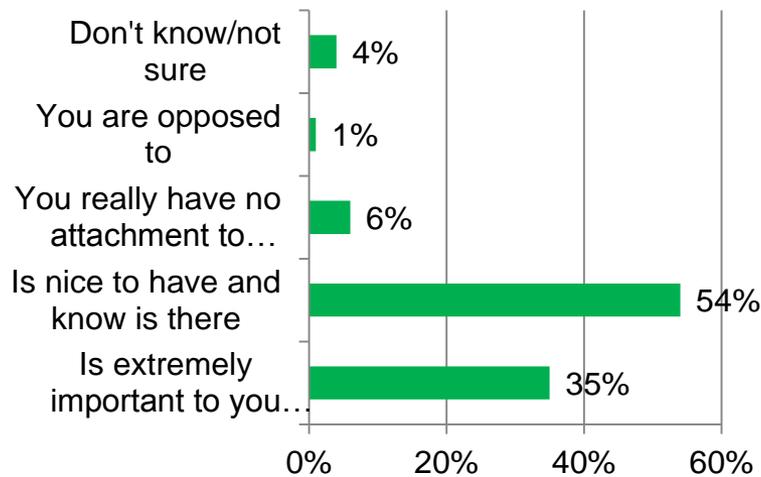
ii) is nice to have and know is there

iii) you really have no attachment to and no opinion about

iv) you are opposed to

Findings:

- There are no significant differences between Durham region and overall findings

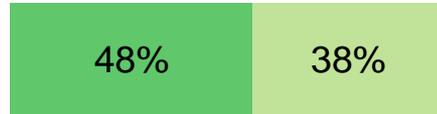




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Please indicate whether you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or completely disagree...

Urban growth can be accommodated by making more efficient use of existing lands rather than allowing encroachment on the Greenbelt lands



Net:
Important

86%

- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree

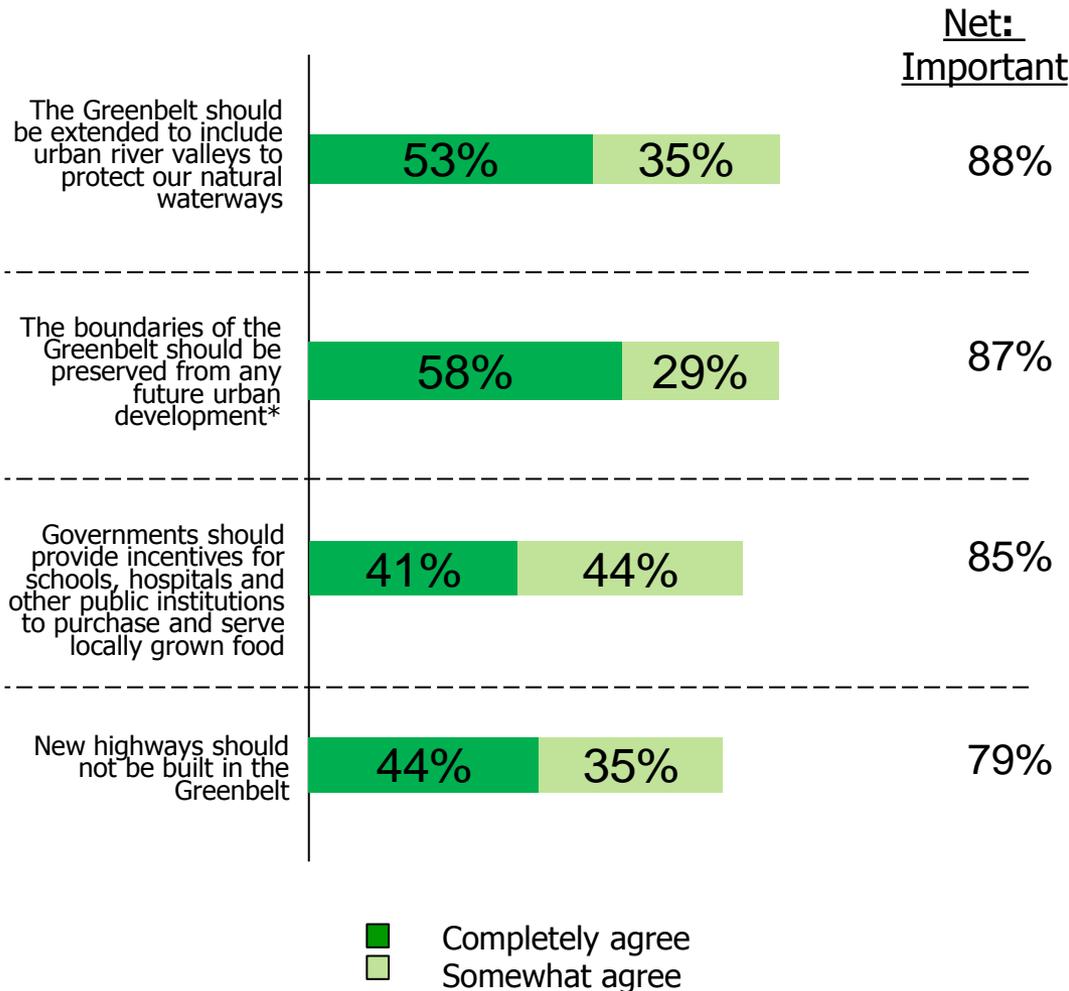
Findings:

- There are no significant differences between Durham region and overall findings



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Please indicate whether you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or completely disagree...



Findings:

There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Government should provide incentives for schools,...

Net important: 81% (Durham: 85% or +4%)

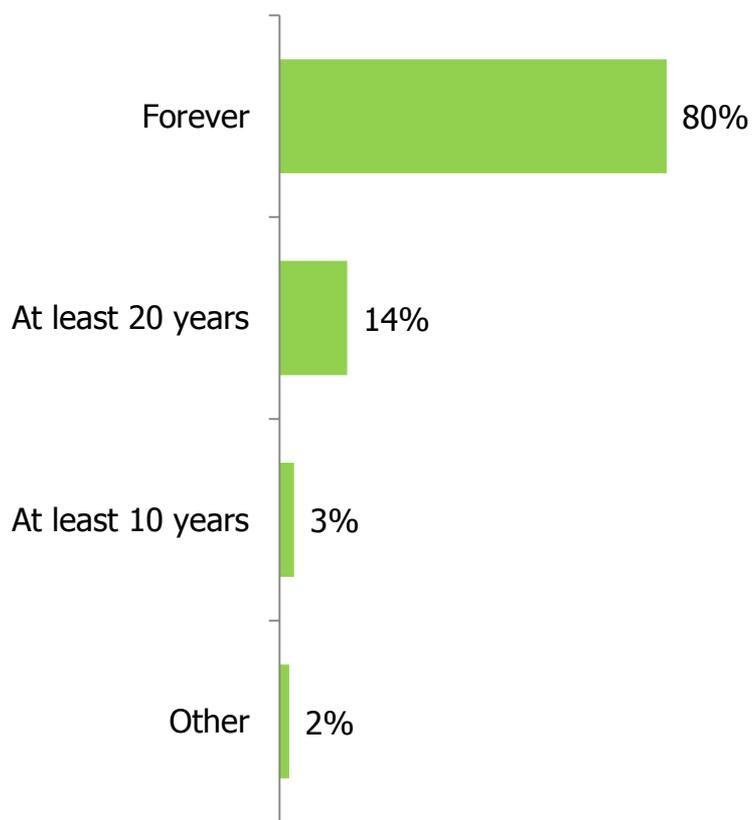
- Overall New highways should not be built...

Net important: 74% (Durham: 79% or +5%)



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For how long do you believe that the boundaries of the Greenbelt should be preserved?



Findings:

There are some differences between Durham region and overall findings:

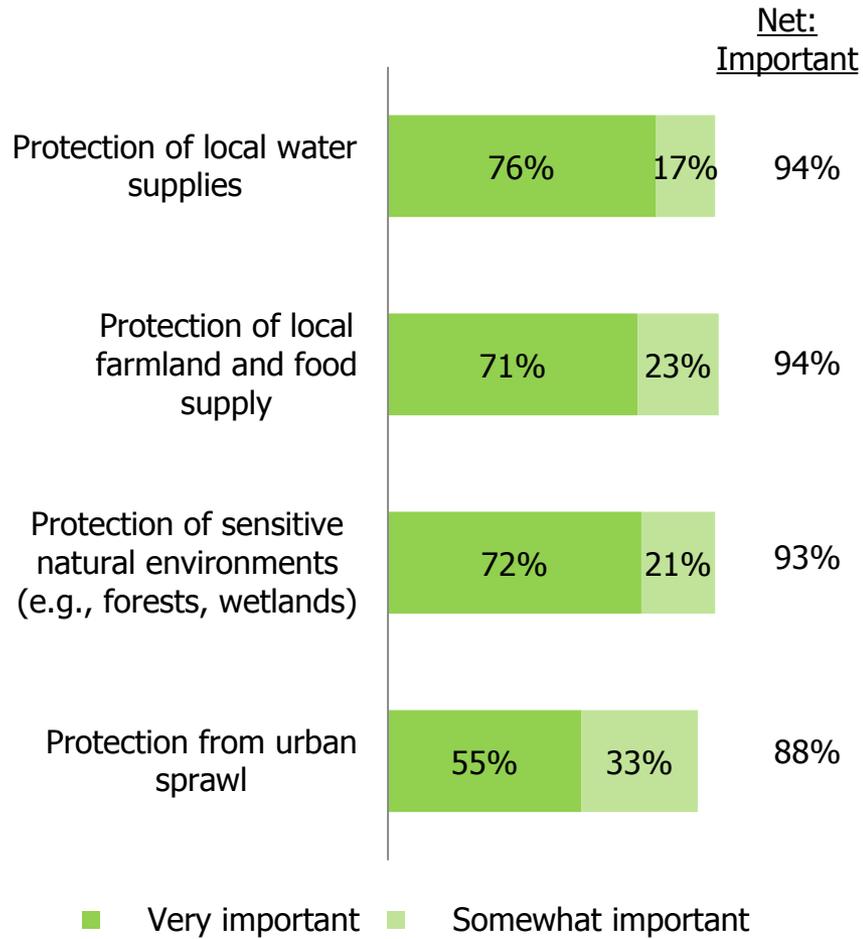
- Overall Forever: 74% (Durham: 80% or +6%)
- Overall At least 20 years: 18% (Durham: 14% or -4%)
- Overall At least 10 years: 6% (Durham: 3% or -3%)

New question this year



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How important do you feel it is to continue to grow Ontario's Greenbelt to provide each of the following:



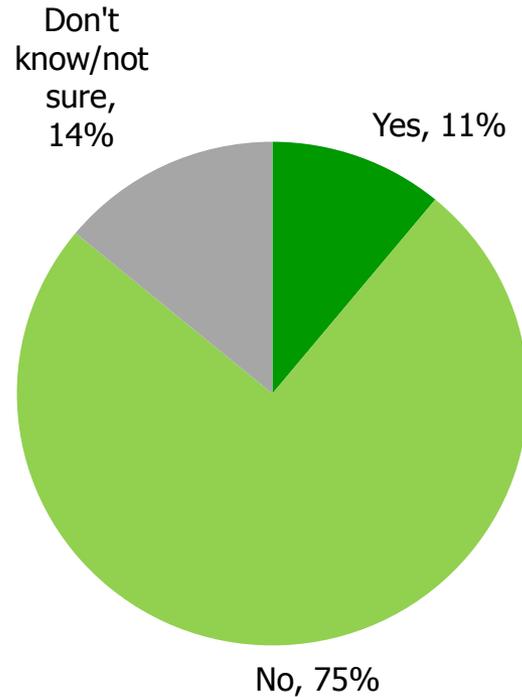
Findings:

- There are no significant differences between Durham region and overall findings



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Are you aware that the Ontario government is in the process of reviewing four provincial land use plans including the Greenbelt?



Findings:

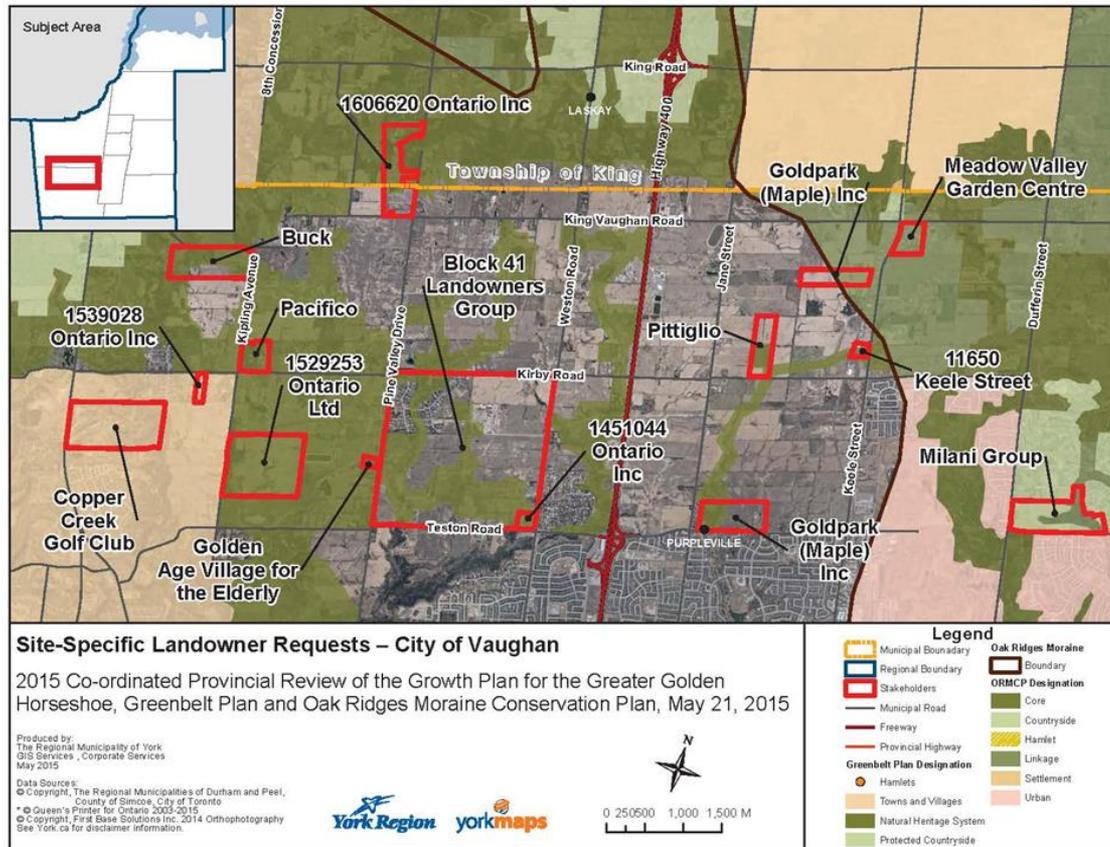
- There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:
- Overall No: 72% (Durham: 75% or +3%)



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The map below accompanied with this description was shown to respondents for the next question:

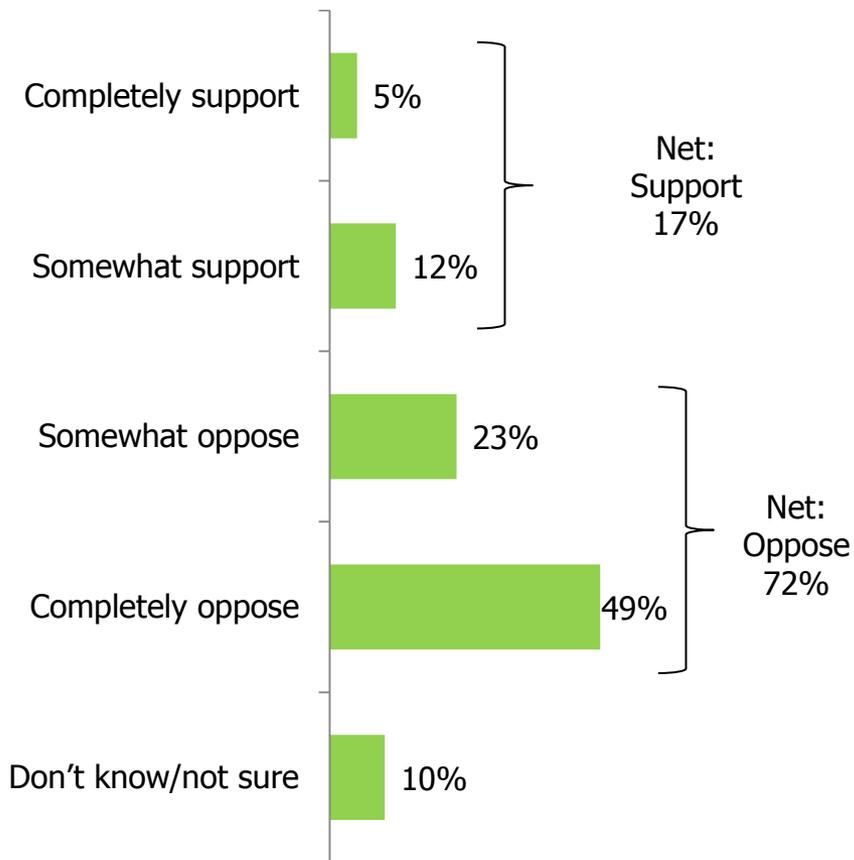
Some landowners have asked to be allowed to develop parcels of land that are now currently protected by the Greenbelt. As an example from York Region, the areas below outlined in red represent some of the land currently protected by Greenbelt that the region is requesting be removed from the Greenbelt's protection and allow development on the land.





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...To what extent do you support the removal of space like this from the Greenbelt's protection?



Findings:

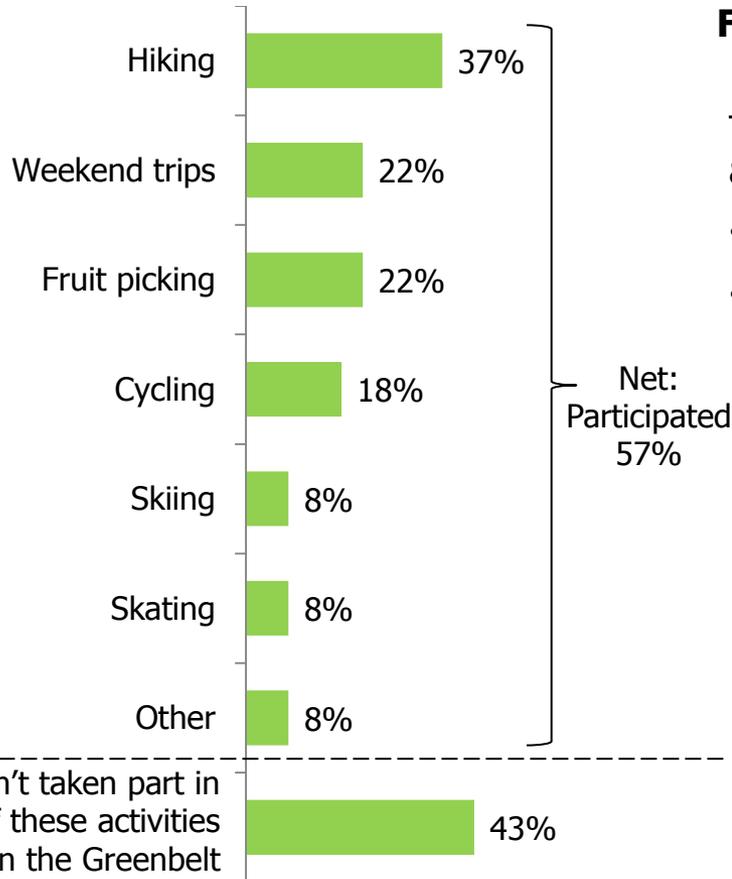
There are differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Net Support the removal: 22% (Durham: 17% or -5%)
- Overall Net Oppose the removal: 66% (Durham: 72% or +6%)



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Have you taken part in any of the following recreational activities within the Greenbelt?



Findings:

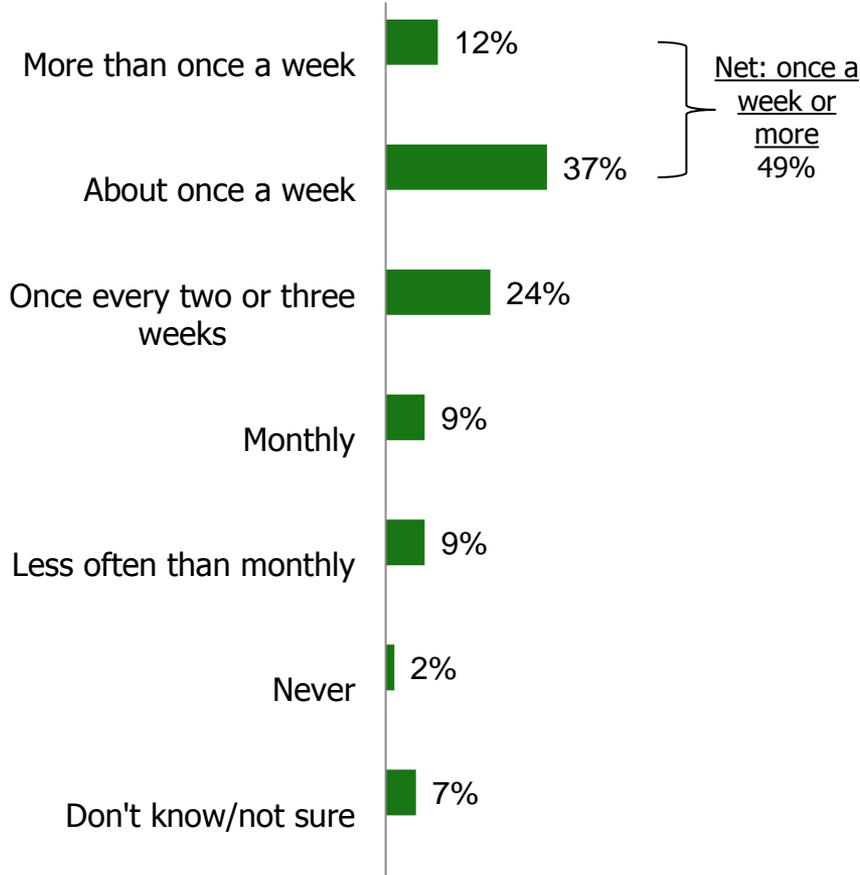
There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Weekend trips: 25% (Durham: 22% or -3%)
- Overall Other: 4% (Durham: 8% or +4%)



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How often do you buy locally-grown fruits, vegetables or meats? Do you buy it...?



Findings:

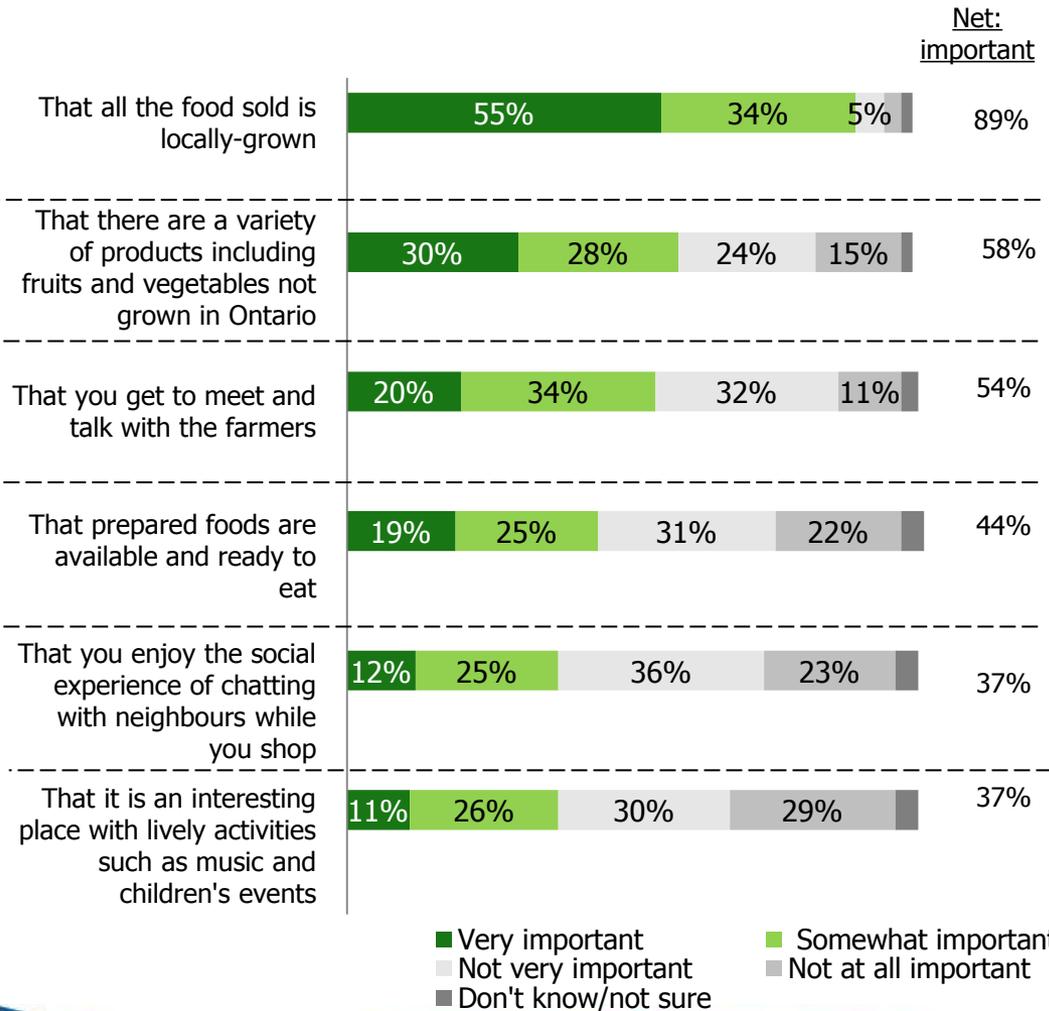
There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Net Once a week or more: 52% (Durham: 49% or -3%)
- Overall Once every two or three weeks: 19% (Durham: 24% or +5%)



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Thinking of farmers' markets, please tell me whether each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to you personally?



Findings:

There are some differences between Durham region and overall findings in Net importance of:

- Overall Variety of products...: 55% (Durham: 58% or +3%)
- Overall Prepared foods...: 50% (Durham: 44% or -6%)
- Overall Enjoy social experience...: 45% (Durham: 37% or -8%)
- Overall Interesting place...: 41% (Durham: 37% or -4%)



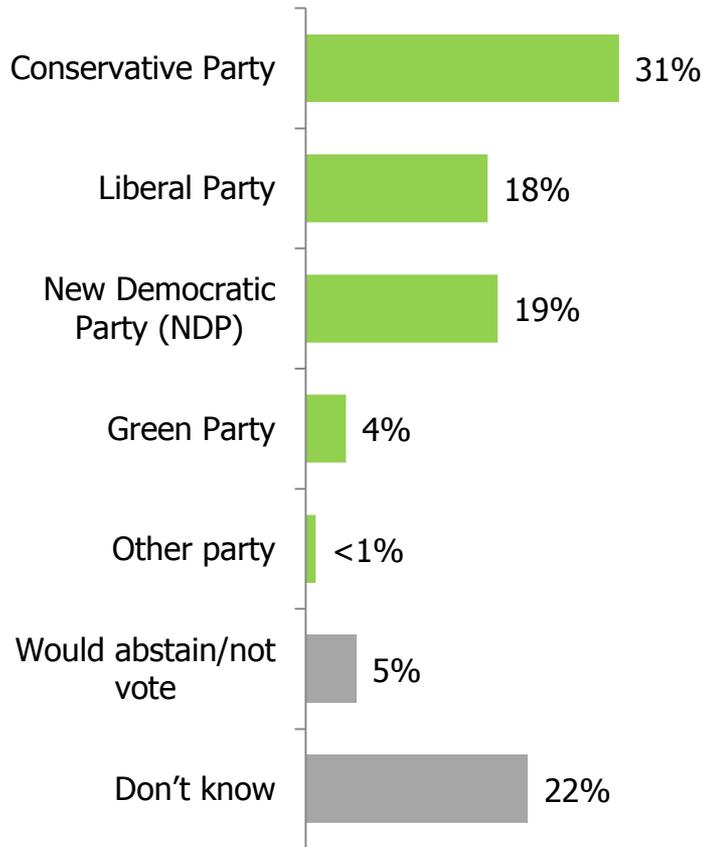
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If a provincial election were held today, which party would you be most likely to vote for?

Findings (all voters):

There are some differences between Durham region and overall findings:

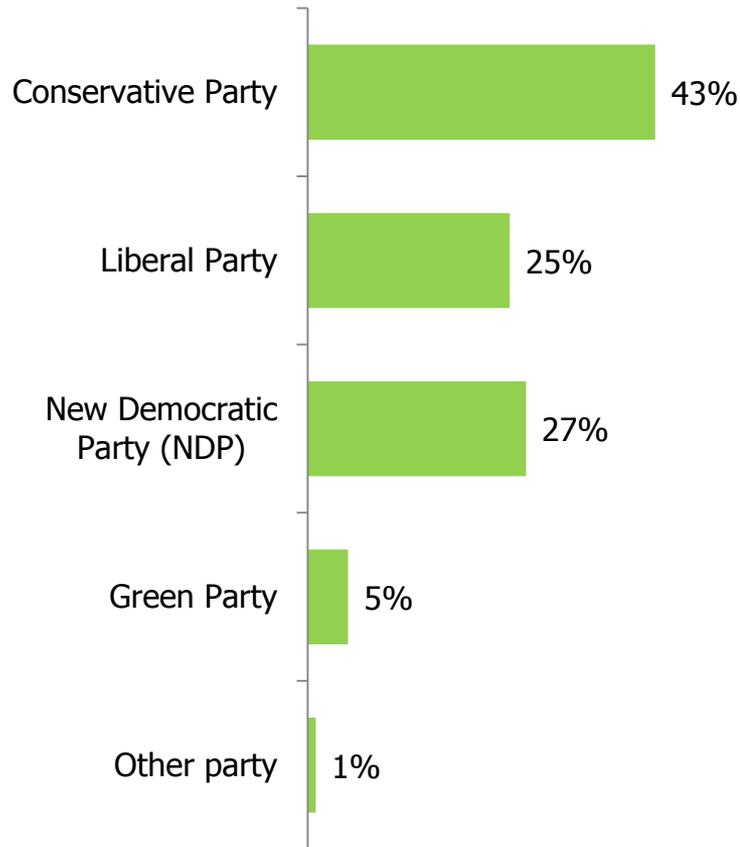
- Overall Conservative party: 26% (Durham: 31% or +5%)
- Overall Don't know: 26% (Durham: 22% or -4%)





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If a provincial election were held today, which party would you be most likely to vote for?



Findings (decided voters):

There are some differences between Durham region and overall findings:

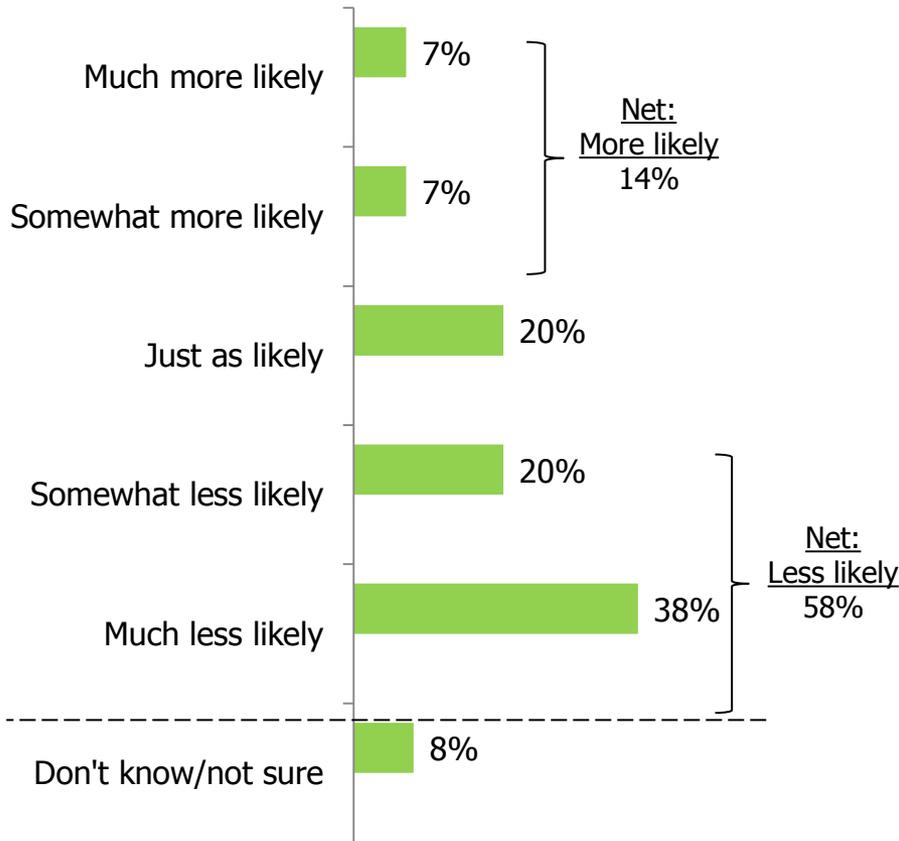
- Overall Conservative party: 38% (Durham: 43% or +5%)
- Overall Liberal party: 28% (Durham: 25% or -3%)



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Would you be...to vote for that party if they were to reduce or eliminate protection for the Greenbelt?

Base: Decided voters who selected one of the four main parties



Findings:

There are small differences between Durham region and overall findings:

- Overall Much less likely: 34% (Durham: 38% or +4%)