

City of Medicine Hat

# Food Waste Processing and Collection Pilot

Phase 3 Engagement Summary

April 17, 2025



## Summary of Engagement

### Phase 1

#### Pilot Intiation

586 City-Wide Survey Responses

430 Pilot Participant Survey Responses

Municipal Mingle & Trade Show

Commercial & Media Interviews

4 Facebook Posts & Instagram Stories

### Phase 2

#### Pilot Midpoint

221 Pilot Participant Responses

City-Wide Open House

Municipal Mingle

8 Facebook Posts

### Phase 3

#### Pilot End Review

852 Survey Responses

- 353 Pilot Participants
- 499 Public Respondents

Newspaper Advertisement

Online Newsletter

4 Facebook Posts





## Phase 3 Engagement Key Learnings

In Phase 3, pilot participants' food waste habits continued to trend in a positive direction, which can largely be attributed to the convenient pickup schedule and an overall better understanding of why it is important to divert food waste from the landfill. The general public's support of a city-wide food waste collection program also increased when there was more education on the importance of managing food waste properly, rather than disposing it as garbage.

**Willingness to participate in a future food waste program for the public and pilot participants in Phase 3 was 83% and 94%, respectively.**

Although respondents noted tremendous support for the pilot and future food waste program, similar concerns remained throughout all phases, specifically additional costs of a new program, mess and odour, pest attraction during the warmer months and freezing food waste in the winter months. In the event a city-wide food waste collection program is implemented, respondents would like to see solutions that make the program more accessible and convenient. Recommendations include building capacity to allow compostable bag use, access to people living in multi-unit buildings (e.g. apartments), and using multiple media to communicate updates related to food waste management.

While concerns are noted, the majority of respondents stated that they would participate in a future food waste collection program and would like to see the City explore other methods of reducing and utilizing waste to make the community's waste management more sustainable. In future food waste initiatives, being able to demonstrate the impact, how that impact translates into savings for the community and remain consistent over time can help maintain support among food waste management advocates and build trust with those who currently do not.

### Phase 1 Overview

The Phase 1 engagement results revealed a generally positive reception towards the initiative. The digital communication efforts, including website content and social media, successfully reached a broad audience. The distribution of kitchen buckets was met with enthusiasm, as many participants eagerly received the buckets and engaged with the distribution team to understand the program better.

The Phase 1 city-wide survey indicated strong support for a food waste collection program, with **76% of respondents likely to use it if implemented**. Key benefits identified by respondents included environmental responsibility and landfill space maximization, though concerns about additional costs and potential messiness were prevalent.

The Phase 1 pilot participant survey echoed similar sentiments, with **87% of participants expressing a likelihood to engage in a future food waste program**. Participants valued the environmental benefits and compost generation, while concerns mirrored those of the city-wide survey, focusing on cost and cleanliness. Both



surveys highlighted a need for effective communication and education, with preferences for learning through 'how to' sheets and digital platforms.

## Phase 2 Overview

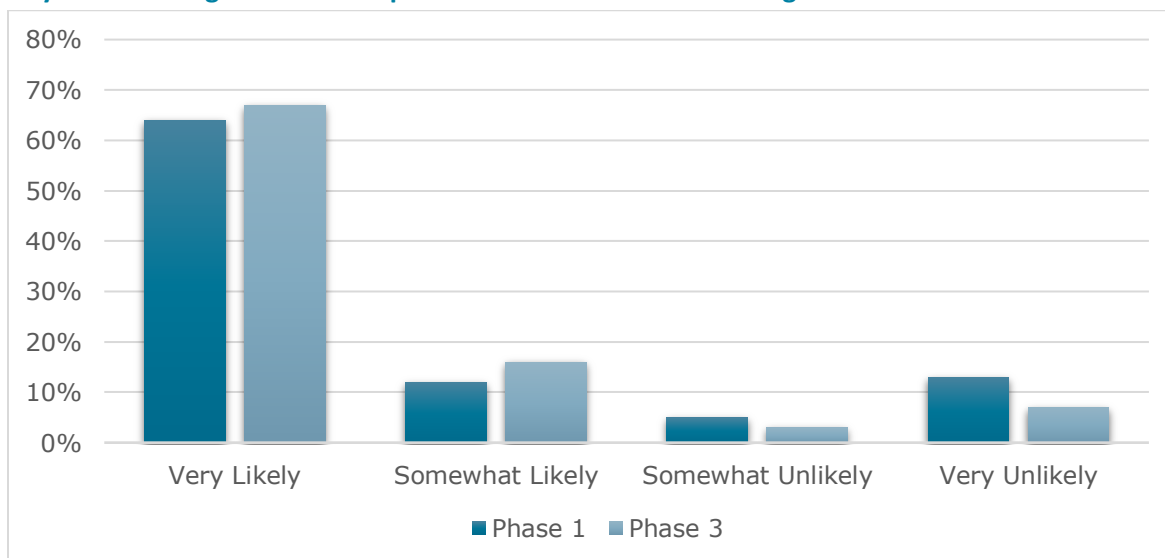
The Phase 2 engagement activities revealed mixed but generally positive results regarding public support for a future food waste program. Digital communication saw a decline in engagement, with website visits dropping significantly from Phase 1, indicating a need for more engaging content. The Open House event attracted 28 attendees, who expressed support for the pilot and interest in a future food waste program. A survey of pilot participants revealed that **82% of respondents use their kitchen bucket for food waste disposal**, indicating a positive shift in behaviour. Satisfaction was high regarding the kitchen bucket size, pickup schedule and educational materials; however, concerns highlighted remained consistent with Phase 1. The results in the survey demonstrate a growing acceptance of the food waste pilot, with **83% of respondents likely to participate in a future food waste program**. While there is strong support for the environmental benefits of composting, concerns about program costs and effective communication remain. Participants also highlighted the importance of convenience in future initiatives.

## Phase 3 Overview

The Phase 3 survey results demonstrated a positive shift in food waste disposal habits among pilot participants, as **85% of pilot participants always or almost always used their kitchen buckets** by the end of the pilot. Survey responses also revealed areas for improvement, such as addressing similar concerns from Phases 1 and 2. Despite these concerns, **pilot participants and the public indicated a 94% and 83% likelihood, respectively, to participate in a city-wide food waste program**, if implemented.

## Comparison of Survey Results

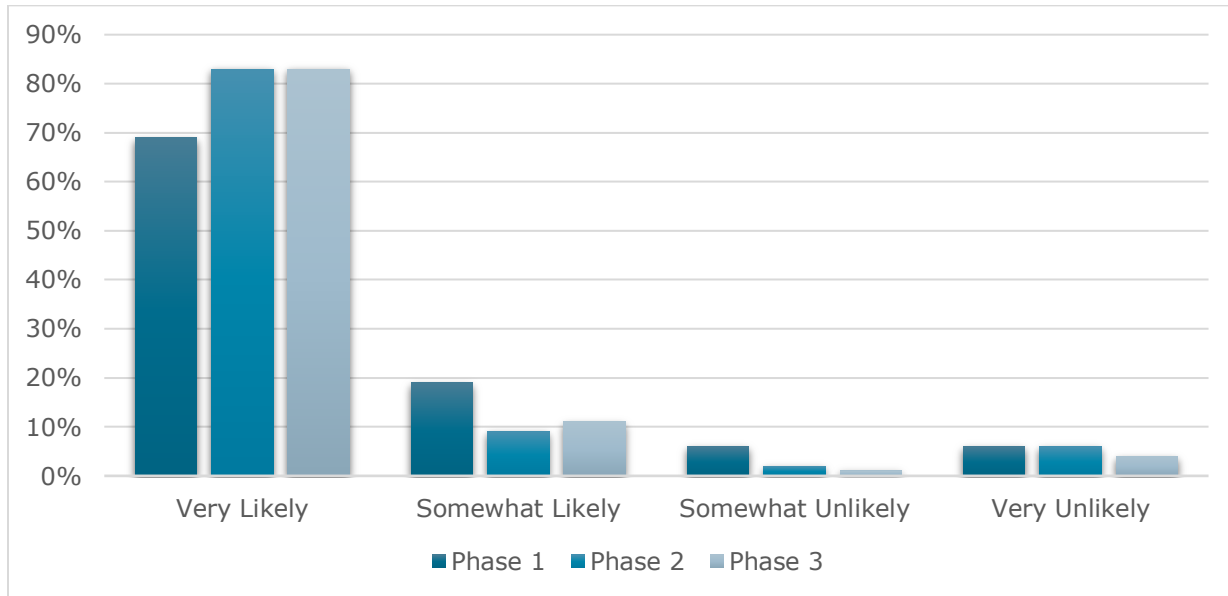
City-Wide Willingness to Participate in a Future Food Waste Program\*



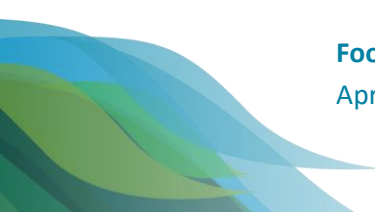
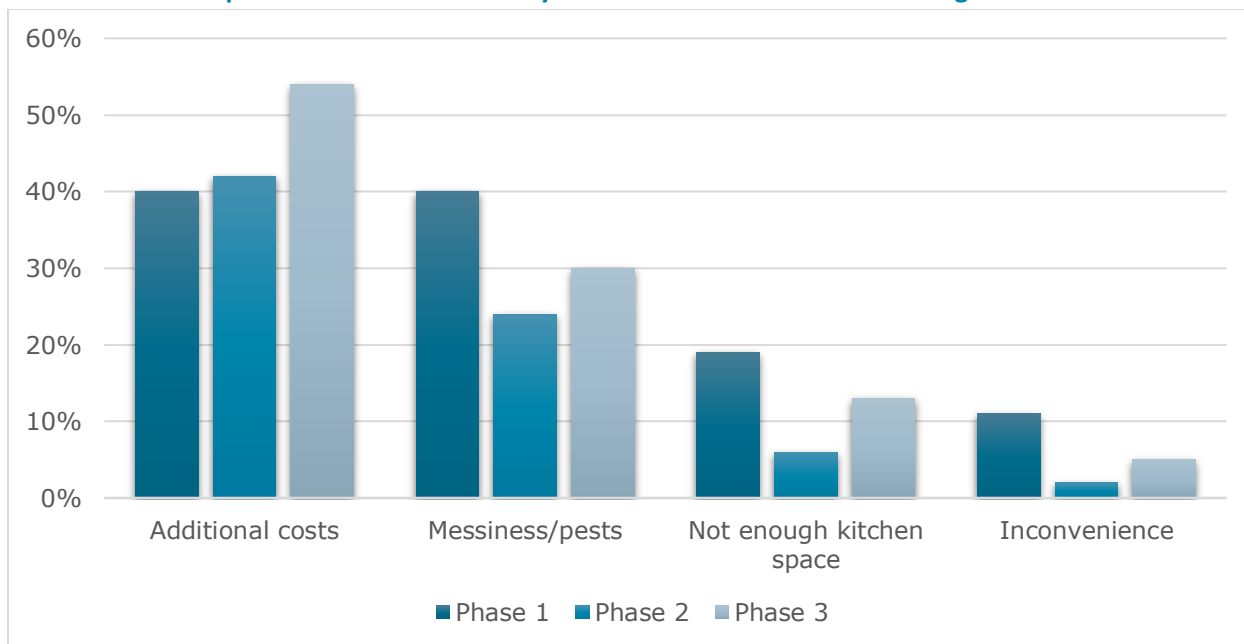
\*City-wide surveys were only conducted in Phase 1 and 3 of the project.



**Pilot Participant Willingness to Participate in a Future Food Waste Program**



**What Are Your Top Three Concerns for a City-Wide Food Waste Collection Program?**

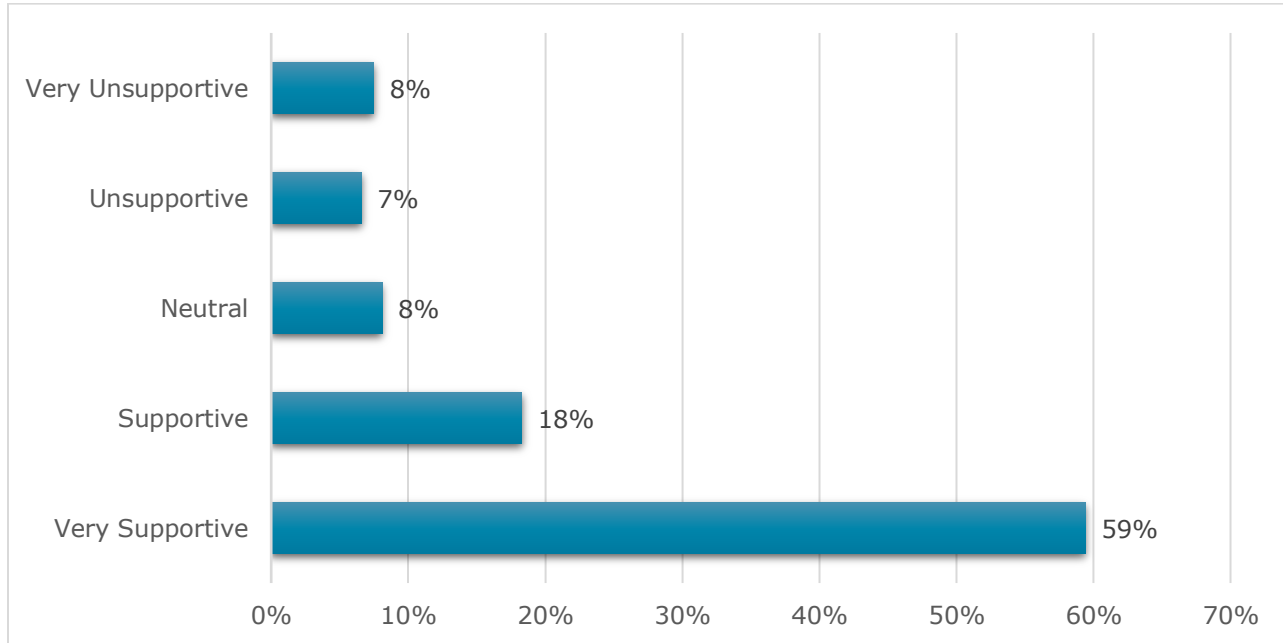




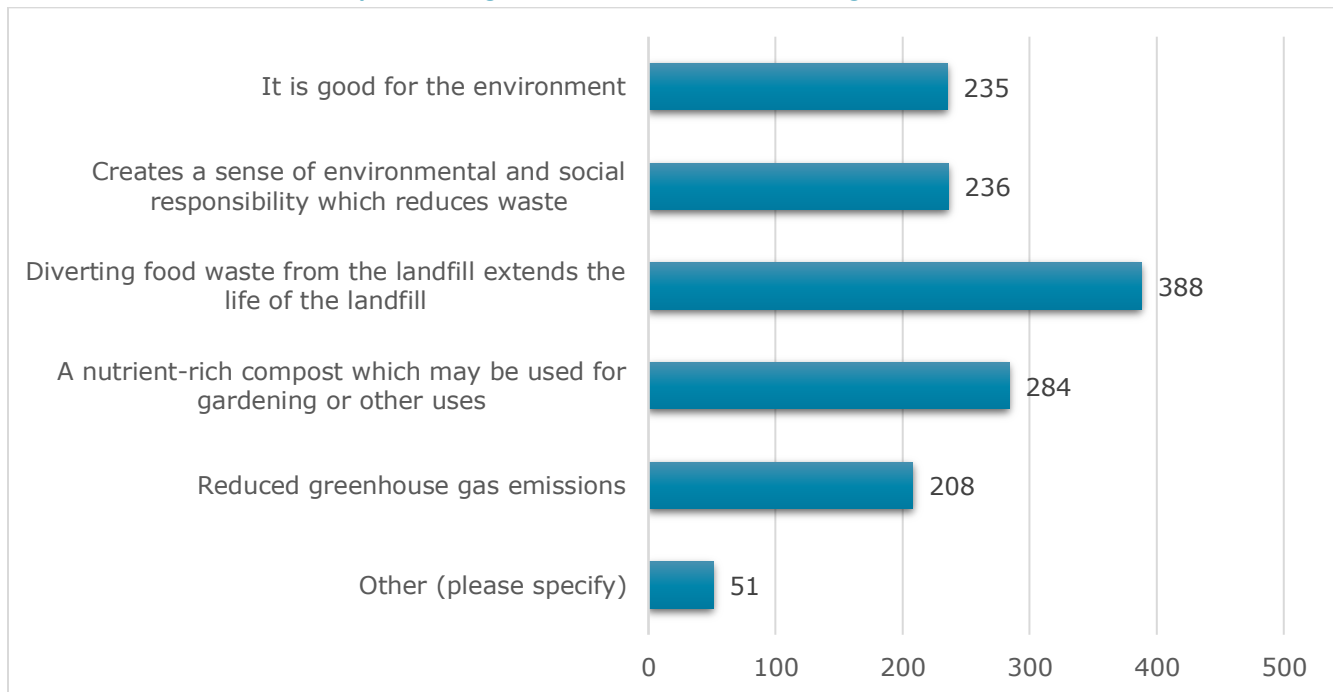
## Survey Responses

### Phase 1: City-Wide Survey

#### What is Your Level of Support for Implementing a Food Waste Collection Program?

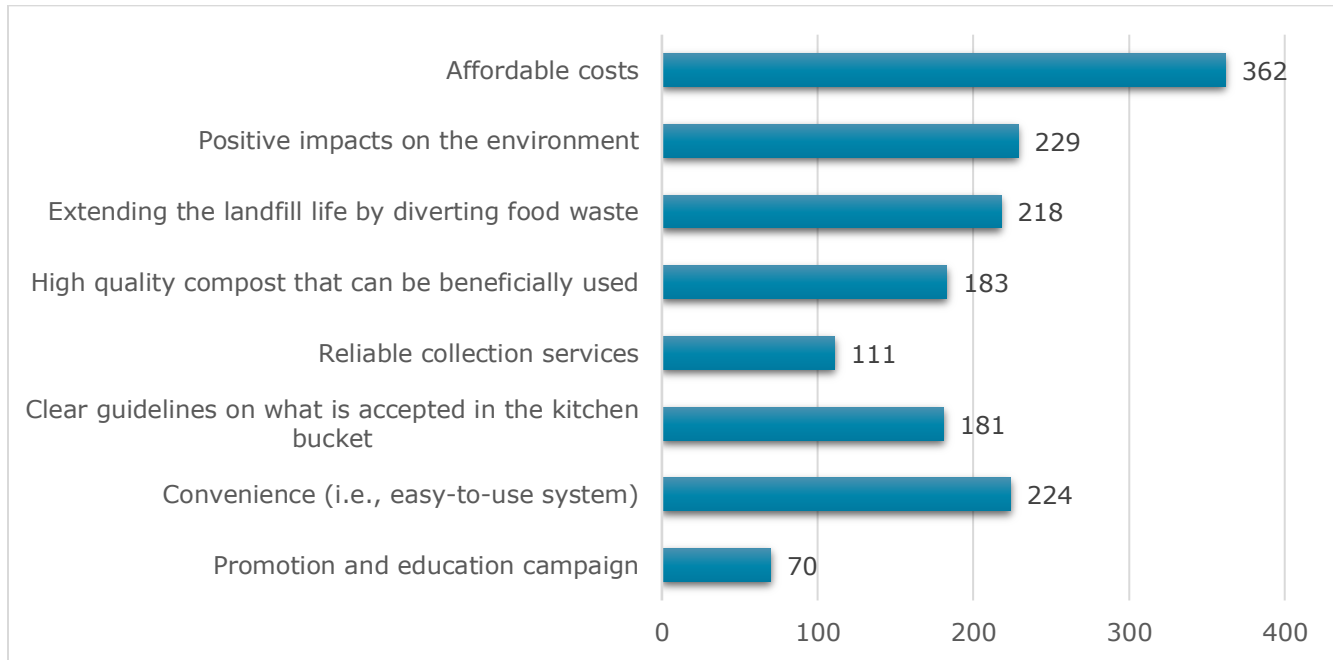


#### What Are the Benefits for Implementing a Food Waste Collection Program?



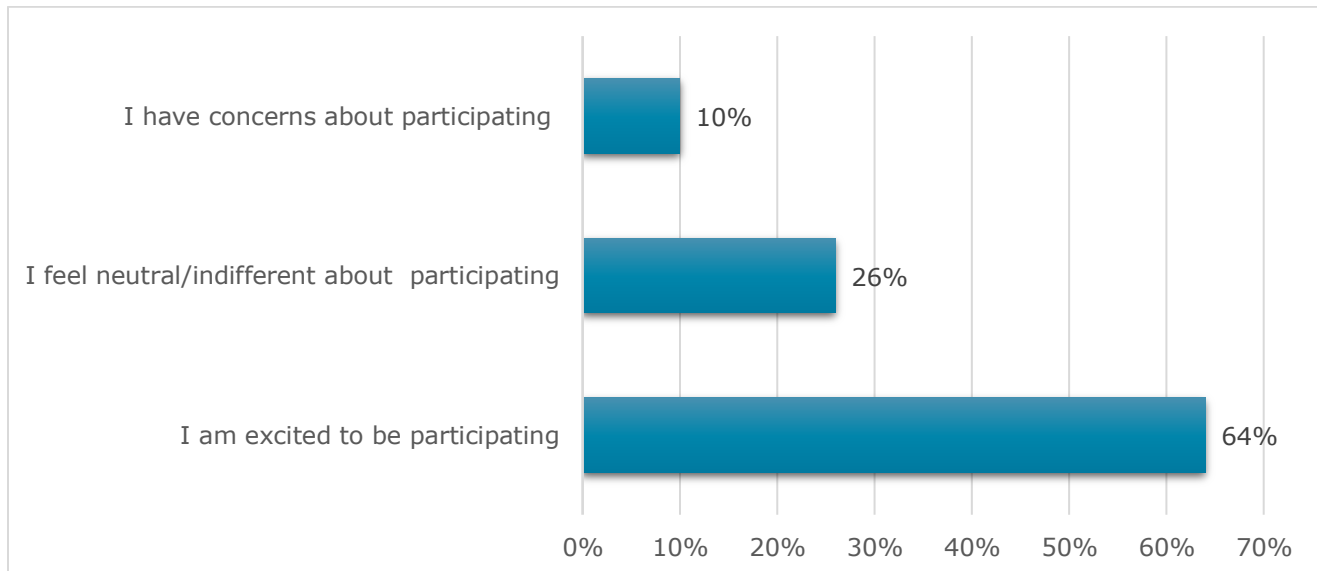


### What Are Your Top Priorities for a Food Waste Collection Program?



### Phase 1: Pilot Participant Survey

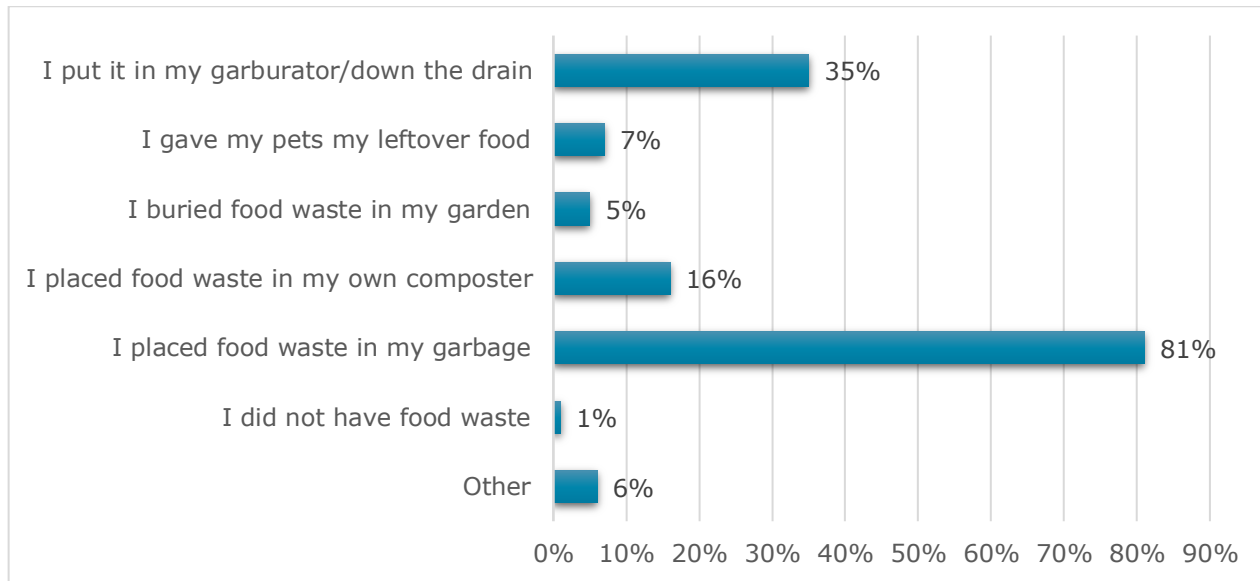
#### What Are Your Feelings About Participating in the Food Waste Pilot?



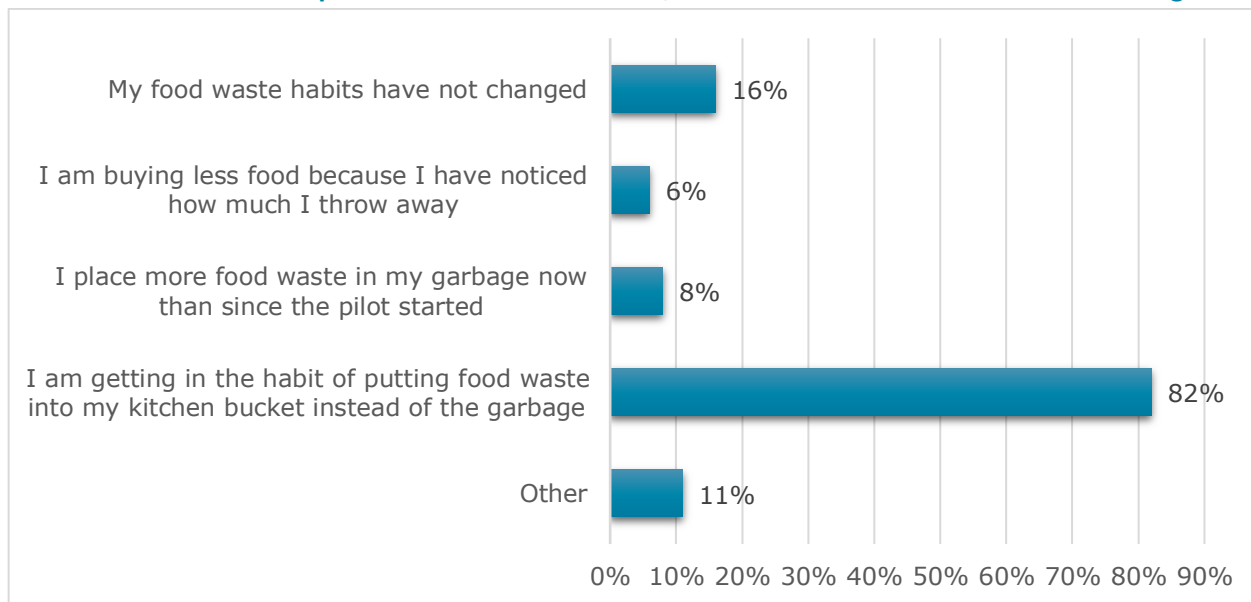


## Phase 2: Pilot Participant Survey

### Before the Food Waste Pilot, What Did You Normally Do With Your Food Waste?



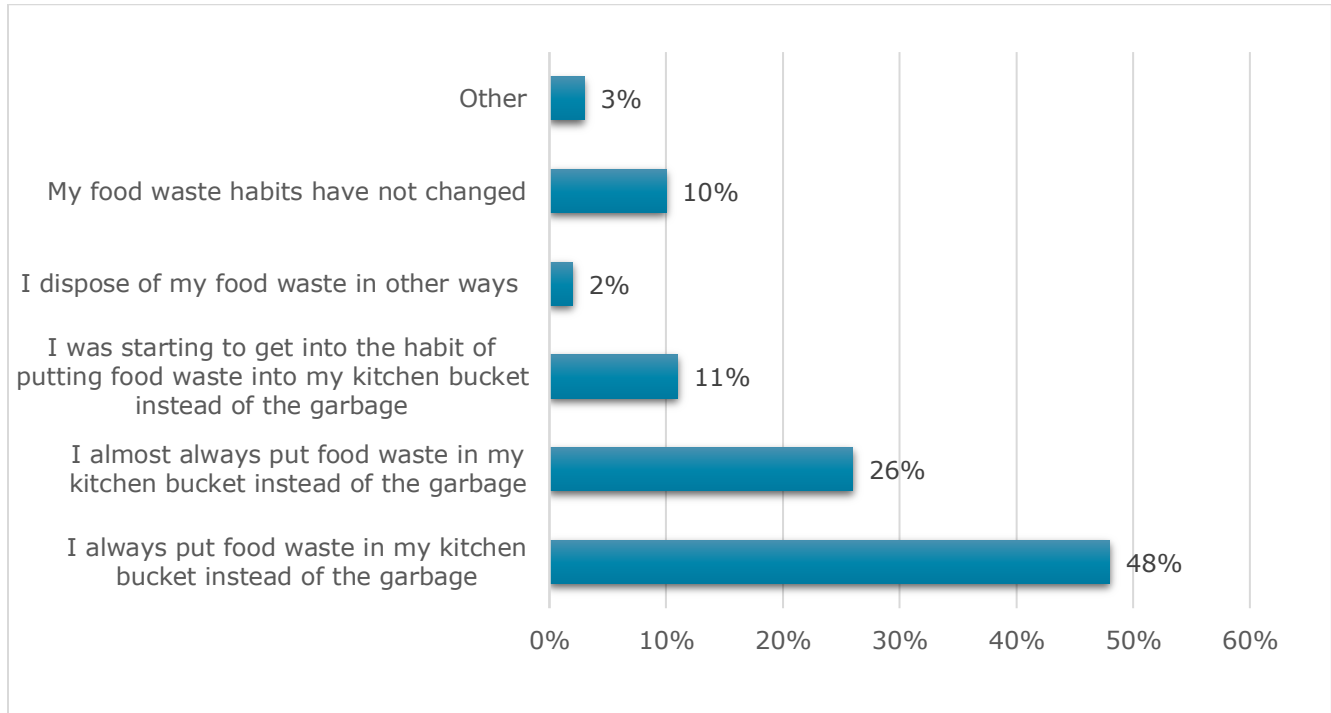
### As You Continue to Participate in the Food Waste Pilot, How Have Your Food Waste Habits Changed?



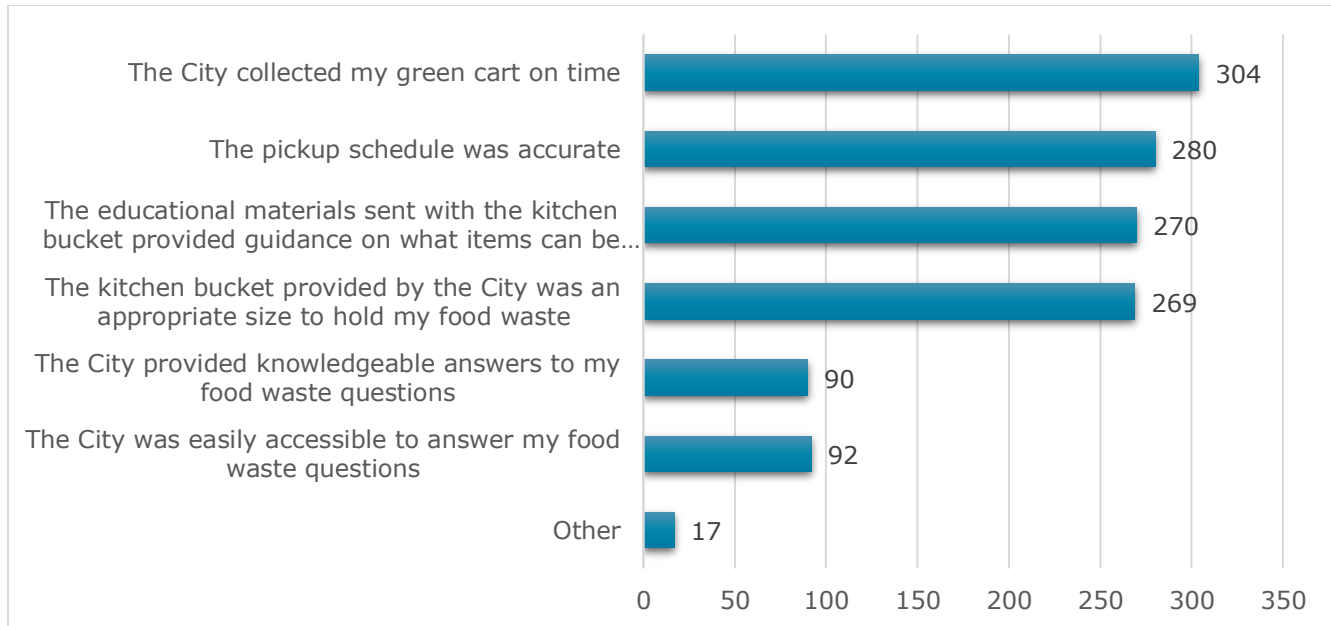


## Phase 3: Pilot Participant Survey<sup>1</sup>

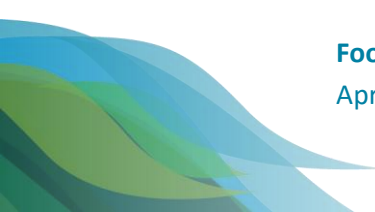
### As You Continue to Participate in the Food Waste Pilot, How Have Your Food Waste Habits Changed?



### What Aspects of the Food Waste Pilot Are Working Well?



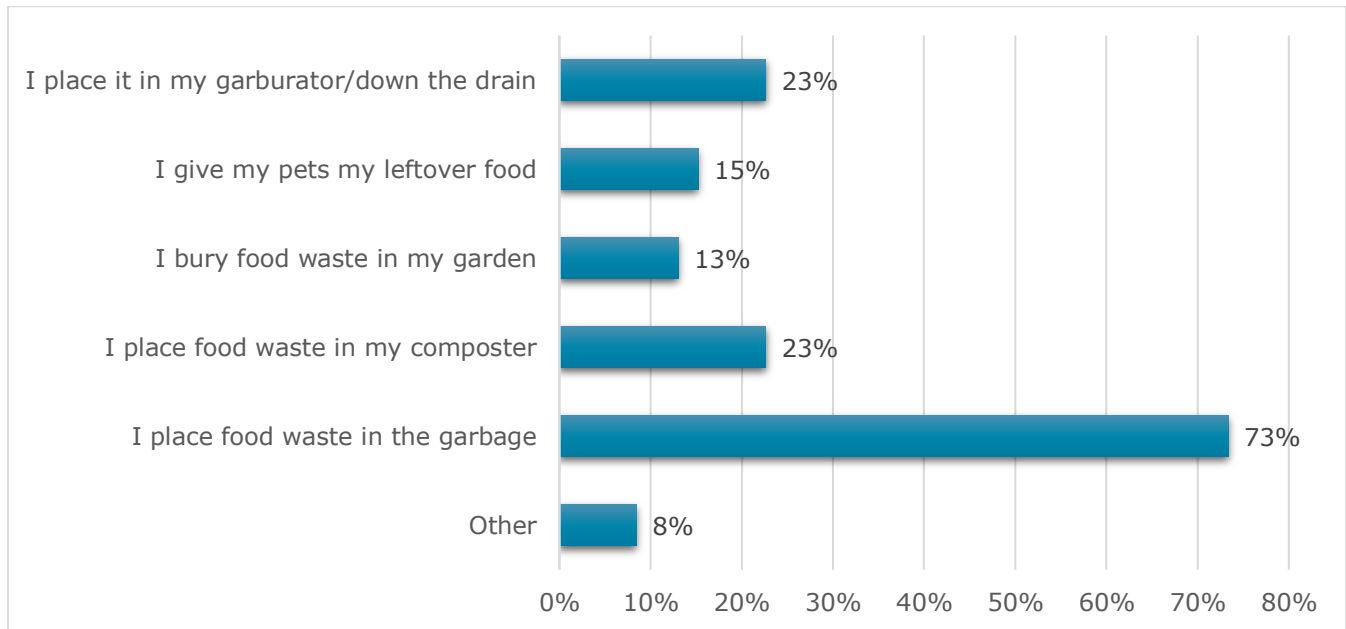
<sup>1</sup> Due to the 2024 Canada Post Strike, the Phase 3 Survey was combined to allow for both general public and pilot participants to answer questions. Results are divided into pilot participant and city-wide responses.



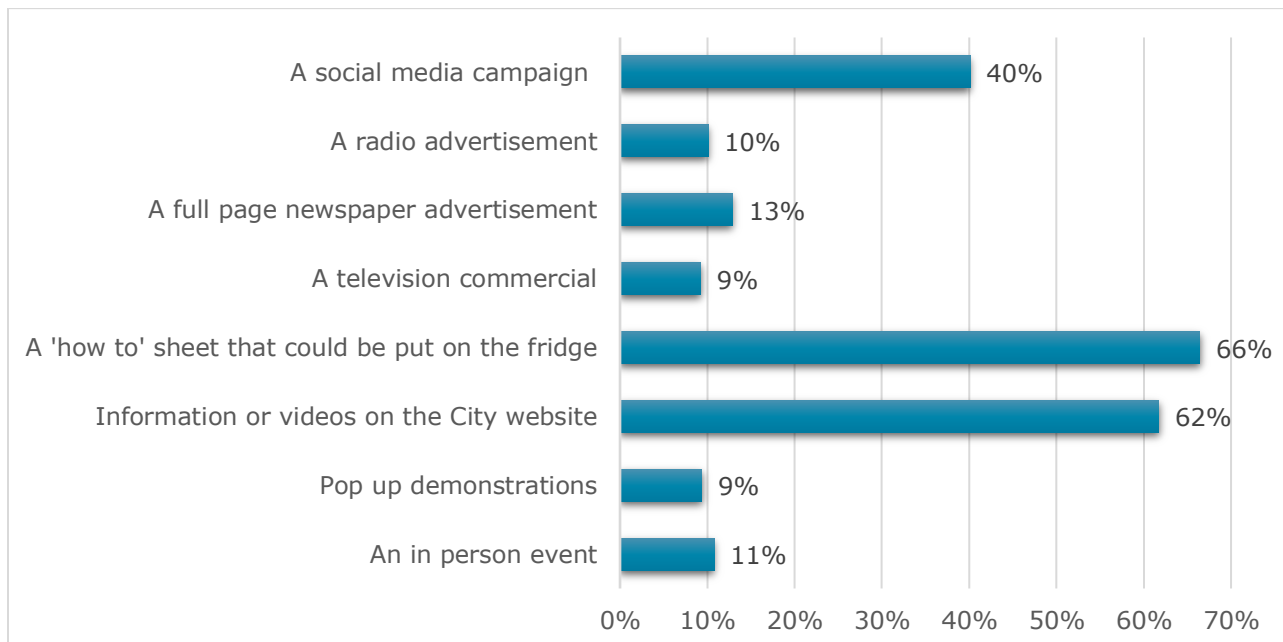


## Phase 3: City-Wide Survey<sup>2</sup>

### What Do You Usually Do With Your Food Waste?



### How Do You Want to Learn About the Implementation of a City-Wide Food Waste Collection Program in the Future?



<sup>2</sup> Due to the 2024 Canada Post Strike, the Phase 3 Survey was combined to allow for both general public and pilot participants to answer questions. Results are divided into pilot participant and city-wide responses.