

Task Force on Land Use Policy – Summary of Work (2012 – 2014)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance](#) recommended that a Task Force be created to lead public consultations on provincial land use policies.

In August 2012, the members of the Task Force on Land Use Policy were selected after a public call for nominations.

The Task Force on Land Use Policy researched the present planning system and led public consultations. They presented their findings to Government in the [Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy](#) in January 2014.

This document provides a summary of the work that was undertaken by the Task Force on Land Use Policy.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

On February 29th, 2012 the provincial government invited interested members of the public to put their names forward to serve on the Task Force on Land Use Policy. The Task Force was asked to research the present planning system and lead public consultations before recommending land use policies to government.

The Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) were available on the government website in both French and English.

MEMBERS

The members of the Task Force on Land Use Policy were announced August 10th, 2012. The members were chair John Handrahan (Tignish), Janice Harper (Charlottetown), Carol Horne (Charlottetown), Paul Gallant (Souris West), and Marvyn Webster (Kelvin Grove).



Right to left: Marvyn Webster, Janice Harper, John Handrahan (Chair), Carol Horne and Paul Gallant

PROVINCIAL LAND USE POLICIES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Task Force released the *Provincial Land Use Policies Consultation Document* in April 2013. The Task Force received feedback on this document during public consultations held in May and June of 2013.

LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Task Force on Land Use Policy held a series of public meetings and focus group presentations to gather input on the Provincial Land Use Policy Consultation Document.

The Task Force was formed to recommend provincial land use policies and public discussion and feedback was an important part of the process. Islanders were encouraged to share their ideas at various public meetings. The meeting format included an open house session, a short presentation and group discussion.

Public consultations were held in May, June and November, 2013. The Task Force heard valuable public feedback that guided the development of the land use policies that are recommended in the [Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy](#).

Public consultation locations		
Charlottetown	Charlottetown Rural High School	May 2, 2013
Wellington	Vanier Centre	May 7, 2013
Montague	Wellness Centre	May 16, 2013
Summerside	The Loyalist Inn	May 21, 2013
Elmsdale	Westisle Composite High School	May 30, 2013
Souris	Access PEI	June 4, 2013
Emerald	Emerald Community Centre	November 23, 2013

SUBMISSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Task Force on Land Use Policy received 25 individual submissions and heard 24 presentations (listed below):

- Catherine Miller (Changing Environs- Exhibition)
- Environment - Department of Environment, Labour & Justice
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Institute of Island Studies Advisory Council, and student session
- Federation of PEI Municipalities
- Aquaculture Alliance
- Natural History Society
- Don't Frack PEI
- Watershed Alliance
- L.M. Montgomery Land Trust
- National Farmers Union
- Citizen's Alliance
- Prince Edward Island Potato Board
- Kensington North Watershed Association
- Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development
- Daryl Guignon (ecosystem health)
- Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning - Department of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs
- Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation
- Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat - Executive Council Office
- Atlantic Planners Institute
- Dr. Mark Lapping, University of South Maine
- Forests, Fish and Wildlife - Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Climate Change and Air Management - Department of Environment, Labour and Justice
- PEI Federation of Agriculture

SURVEY RESULTS

An on-line survey was created by the Task Force on Land Use Policy to better understand public opinion about land use on PEI. The survey was open to the public from September 5th to November 1st, 2013 and 778 responses were received. The Task Force considered this information to develop provincial land use policies (Appendix 2).

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS

The following are a summary of the concerns that were heard at the public meetings.

TOP TEN CONCERNS RAISED AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. Water quality and quantity
2. Protecting prime farmland from subdivision
3. Fertiliser and pesticide use
4. Create a land bank for retiring farmers
5. Soil erosion (from farming and road construction)
6. Reduce strip development by clustering development in areas with services
7. Enforce buffer zones around watercourse; increase buffer zones in some areas
8. Enforce crop rotation legislation
9. Coastal erosion and the cost of maintaining infrastructure
10. Forestry and woodlot management

OTHER CONCERNS

- Air quality
- Climate change
- Greater support for organic farming
- Tax fairness (municipal versus unincorporated)
- Soil should contain 3% organic matter (declining)
- Reduce urban sprawl
- Ban cosmetic pesticides
- Lengthen crop rotation
- Green and alternative energy
- Establish targets for land cover in watersheds (e.g. forested areas)
- Continue to create incentives for sustainable land use practices
- Protect offshore islands
- Reach target of 7% natural areas
- Ban fracking
- Manage land use on a watershed basis
- Ban soil fumigation
- Larger municipalities that have capacity to do planning
- High capacity wells and impact on water ways
- Eliminate bare land over winter
- Minimise impervious surfaces in urban watersheds
- Review effectiveness of Special Planning Area Regulations

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON LAND USE POLICY

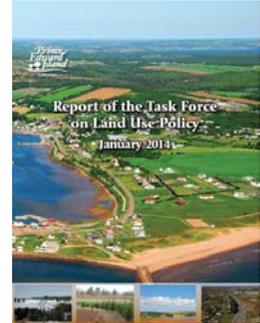
Land use policies are part of the planning framework to make sure that Islanders can continue to develop land and meet today's needs, but do so without threatening our children's ability to meet their needs. Today, there are no comprehensive land use policies that apply to all of PEI.

Public input and dialogue are important for a successful land use planning process. The Task Force on Land Use Policy led public consultations to better understand public opinion about land use on PEI.

The Task Force used the input from public meetings, focus group presentations, and an on-line survey to develop provincial land use policies and make recommendations to the provincial government.

The Task Force on Land Use Policy submitted its final report to Government in January 2014. Government endorsed the general direction of the report.

- Read the Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy ([English](#) / [French](#))
- Read the Press Release announcing Government endorsement of the Task Force recommendations ([English](#) / [French](#))



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Task Force Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE – Task Force on Land Use Policy

Introduction

The Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance was released in January 2010. Following extensive public consultation, Commissioner Ralph Thompson offered 40 recommendations. One of the key recommendations of the Report is to create a provincial land use policy.

The Commissioner recommended: “that the provincial government appoint a task force to develop a public engagement strategy around the land use question, to guide the work of government staff, to lead public consultations, and to report periodically with findings and recommendations.”

Background

Land use policies will respond to people’s concerns for the future and their quality of life. The input and suggestions gathered from public consultation will help shape a comprehensive and thoughtful set of land use policies.

The *White Paper on Governance and Land Use on Prince Edward Island* (issued December 2008) presented the context for the Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance (2009):

While the relatively slow rate of growth in PEI often lulls us into believing that we don't face the same planning pressures as larger jurisdictions, what we face has been described in the past as a death by a thousand cuts. Ribbon development, dispersed settlement patterns, loss of shore access, environmental degradation, loss of traditional character, viewscape erosion, and incompatible economic development will ultimately lead to undesirable and long lasting negative consequences...

Government has signaled a desire to move towards a system of local governance and land use practice that is effective, adequately funded, and appropriately organized. Such a new system would take into account efficiencies of scale, resources and capacity at the local level, and any legislative, financial, and human resource tools required to implement any new models...

Municipal and land use reform appears to follow cycles, with greater or lesser degrees of change at any given point. It is time once again to take a comprehensive look at the structures that govern the day to day life of Island residents, guide our local municipal officials, and direct our use of the land....

The Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance is the latest in a series of reports to recommend comprehensive land use planning. Land use policies are the foundation for economic development, efficient service delivery and infrastructure upgrades.

All Islanders concerned about the future need to question what our guardianship of the province's environment and resources will provide for those who come after us, if we do nothing to change our current direction. We need to question what irreplaceable assets are being lost forever because a comprehensive land use plan is not in place for the entire island...

We need to ask ourselves whether local affairs across the Island could not be better administered at the local level by municipal governments...

Our land, our water, our natural areas, our viewscapes, and our architectural heritage, both inside and outside municipalities, will not look after themselves. If we do not provide responsible stewardship now, we run the risk of losing them as we know them, forever...

"Many of the recommendations put forward by the Commission will require input from the public as a means of achieving successful change through the informed consent and cooperation of those affected..."

We cannot afford to maintain the status quo in a world that is changing all around us...¹

Mandate

The purpose of the Task Force is to carry out research and consultations to develop detailed recommendations for Land Use Policies and their implementation in a comprehensive land use planning framework, as recommended in the Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance.

Task Force members will:

- design a public engagement strategy to seek the views of Islanders on matters related to land use policy;
- lead all public consultation activities;
- recommend comprehensive Provincial Land Use Policies, guided by the Commissioner's report and input from the public;
- examine and make recommendations on restructuring the planning system, including governance structures, mechanisms and processes to implement the Land Use Policies;

¹ Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance. December 2010. *New Foundations*. p. 1

Task Force Members

In the interest of open and broad consultations, there will be a public call for nominations and applications.

The Task Force will be comprised of several people with demonstrated understanding, diverse knowledge and experience in the following areas: resource industries (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism), environment, community planning and development, municipal government, communications and public engagement.

Task Force members bring the following competencies to their task:

- An awareness of the broader policy context of the work and its implications for land and local governance
- Familiarity with land use issues including stakeholder perspectives
- An holistic and integrated approach to problem solving
- Strong communication and public engagement skills
- Strong teamwork and decision-making skills

Resources

The Task Force will be supported by staff of the Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning division and the Land Use Coordinating Committee, as required. In addition, the Task Force may engage outside expertise to assist in fulfilling its mandate, as agreed by the Task Force and Government.

Process and Timeframes

While the Task Force will determine its own detailed work plan and timeframes, it is expected that its work will include the following components:

- **Research:** The Task Force will seek the views of Islanders on matters related to land use policy. The Task Force will develop discussion materials to help Islanders through the consultation phase.
- **Public Engagement:** The Task Force will use multiple approaches to actively engage a wide range of Islanders and seek their views on land use policies and a comprehensive land use framework.
- **Analysis and Recommendations:** Prepare and deliver a comprehensive report to the Minister of Finance, Energy & Municipal Affairs by October 2012.

Tentative Schedule

Call for Task Force members	February 2012
Selection and confirmation	March 2012
Public consultations	March – May 2012
Summary report (“What We Heard”).....	June 2012
Draft land use policies	July 2012 – August 2012
Draft report.....	September 2012
Final report	October 2012

Appendix 2: Public Opinion Survey Results: December 2013

*PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS – Task Force on Land Use Policy
December 2013*

BACKGROUND

The Provincial Land Use Policies Public Opinion Survey (the survey) was created by the Task Force on Land Use Policy (the Task Force) to better understand public opinion about land use on Prince Edward Island. The Task Force used the input from the survey to develop provincial land use policies and make recommendations to the provincial government.

The survey was open to the public from September 5th to November 1st, 2013. The survey was available online and paper copies were distributed when requested. A total of 778 responses were received.

The survey was voluntary and open to all members of the public – therefore the results cannot be considered to be statistically representative. Responses were received from people across the Island as well as from seasonal residents.

Because participation was voluntary, some respondents chose to skip questions or submit incomplete surveys. For each question, the total number of responses reflects the number of individuals who answered that particular question.

The information from this survey supports the feedback that was received by the Task Force at seven public meetings. The survey captured a snapshot of the concerns and perceptions about land use issues on Prince Edward Island.

For more information, please contact Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning:

Aubin-Arsenault Building
3 Brighton Road
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8
Tel: (902) 620-3558
Fax: (902) 569-7545
Email: landuse@gov.pe.ca

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Top areas of concern

1. Soil erosion and soil quality
2. Pollution of water
3. Coastal erosion
4. Loss of natural areas/habitat
5. Development of prime agricultural land

Natural and built landscape

- 94% of respondents feel that new developments SHOULD be restricted on or near wetlands and critical habitat areas
- 92% DISAGREE that any kind of development should be allowed in significant viewsapes
- 75% AGREE that cottage development should be directed to areas where there already is some development
- 75% AGREE there should be standards for new housing development to protect rural character

Resource industries

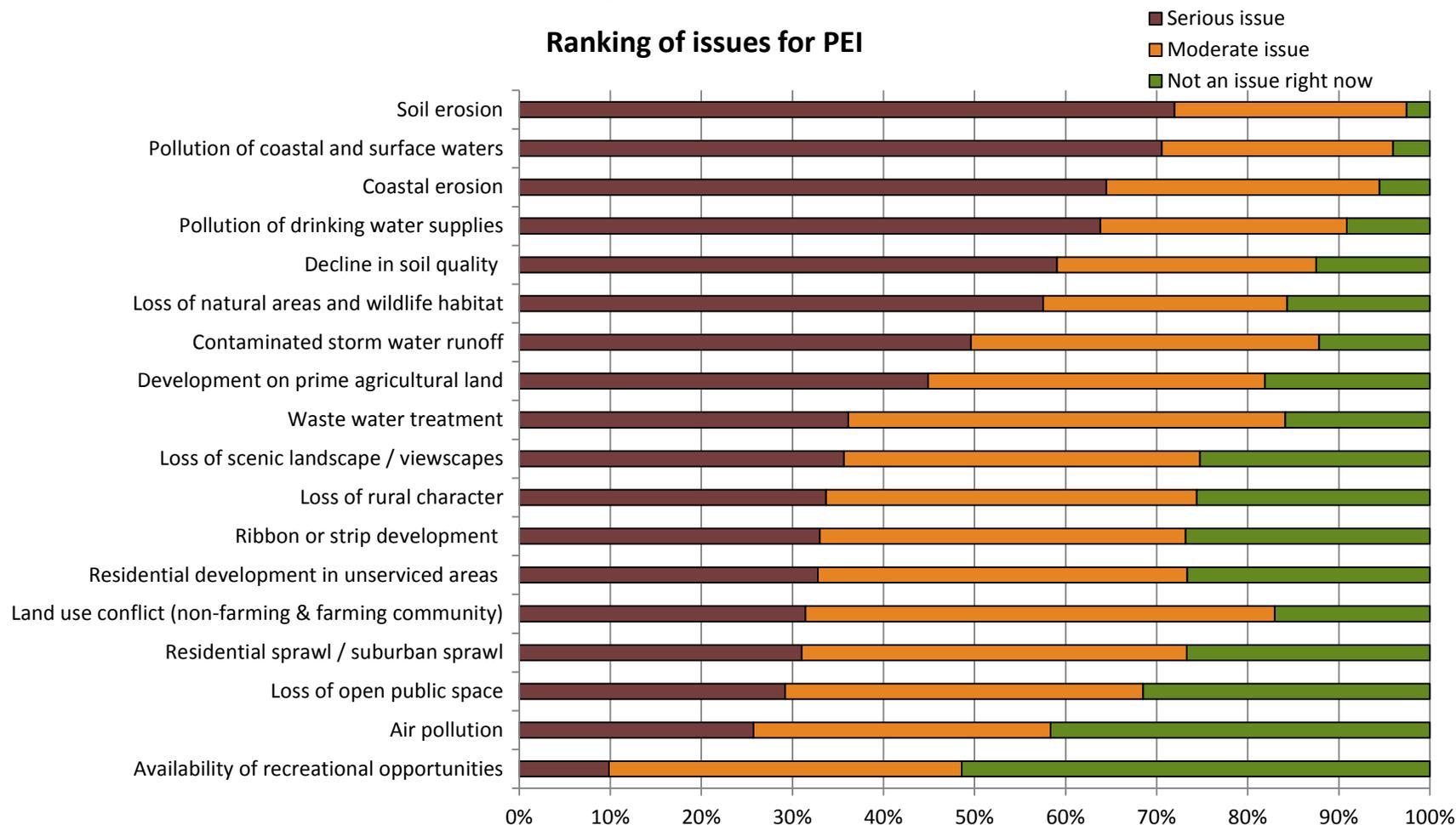
- 90% of respondents believe the best farm land SHOULD be kept in agriculture or related resource uses
- 86% feel that the best farm land SHOULD NOT be open for any kind of development
- 90% of respondents believe more effective soil conservation regulations are required
- 41% of respondents cited pesticides as their top concern for air quality on PEI

Sustainable communities

- 67% of respondents feel that new subdivisions SHOULD be located in cities and towns
- 87% DISAGREE that new subdivisions should be located anywhere, without regard for surrounding land use
- 79% AGREE that people should not be allowed to create subdivisions in areas with limited or no access to services
- 74% felt that surrounding land use was the most important factor to consider in determining where new homes should be built
- 94% AGREE that building should be restricted in areas in danger of flooding or bank erosion

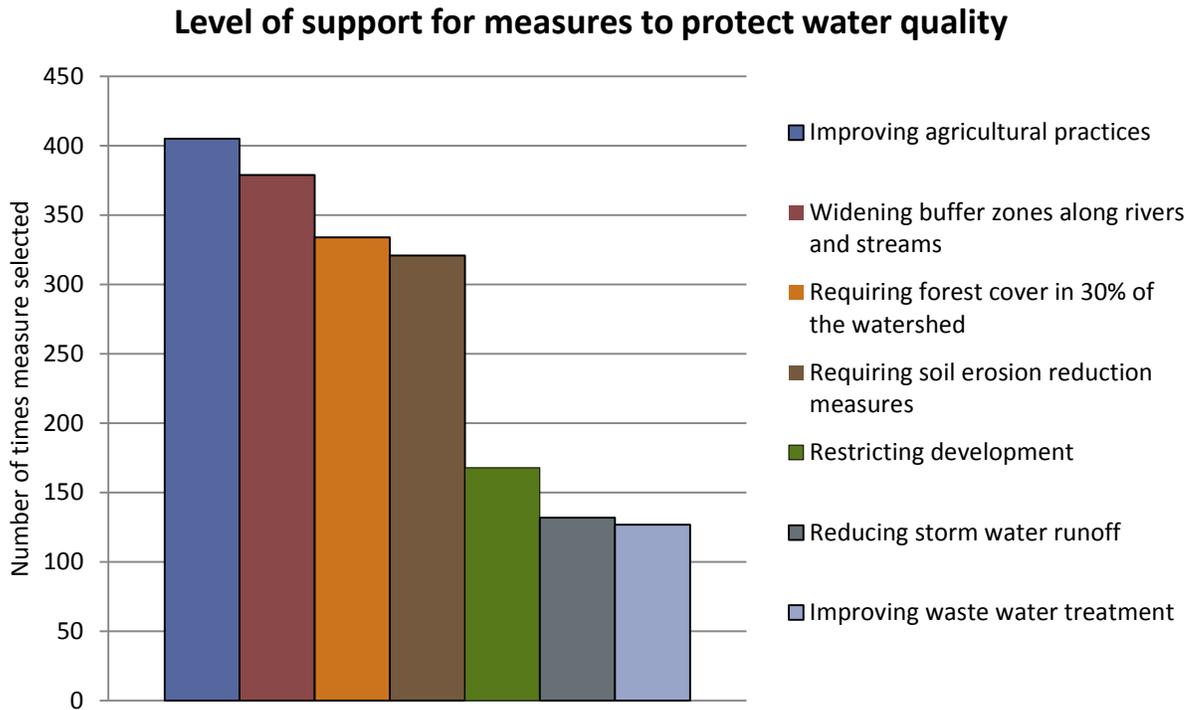
AREAS OF CONCERN

Respondents were asked to consider a list of issues for PEI and to indicate whether they thought that each issue was **currently** a serious problem, a moderate problem, or not a problem right now.



WATER

Water quality is affected by many factors including: land cover, the natural environment, land use practices, and development. Respondents were asked to select three measures that they would most likely support to protect water quality in some areas.

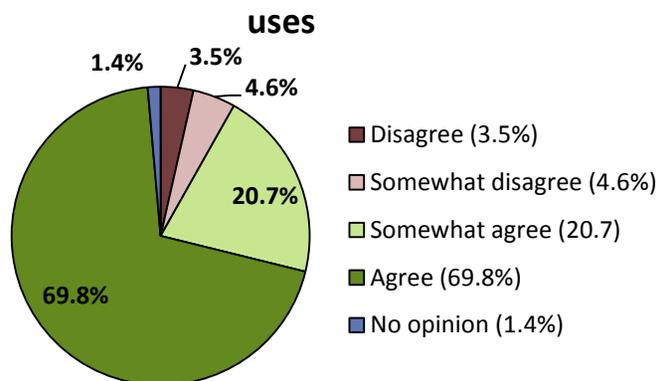


AGRICULTURE

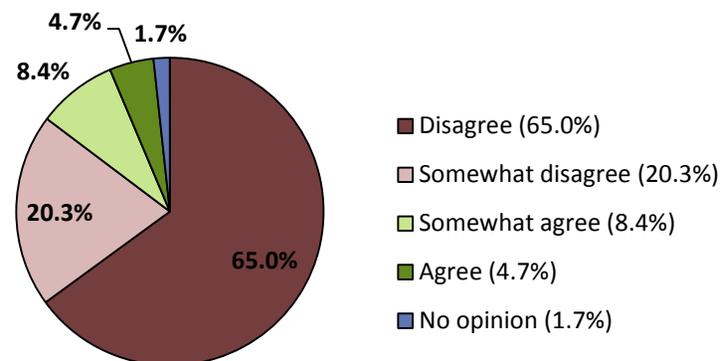
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -

The best farm land should be:

...kept in agriculture or related resource uses

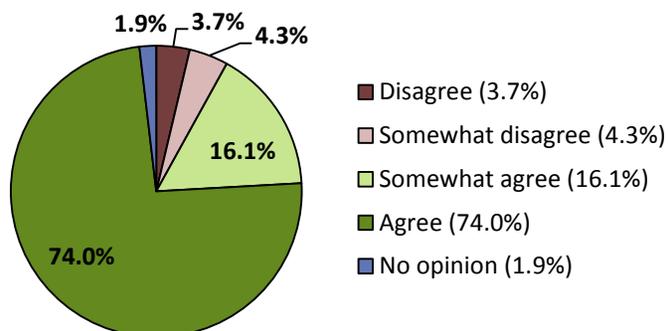


...open for any kind of development



Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statement -

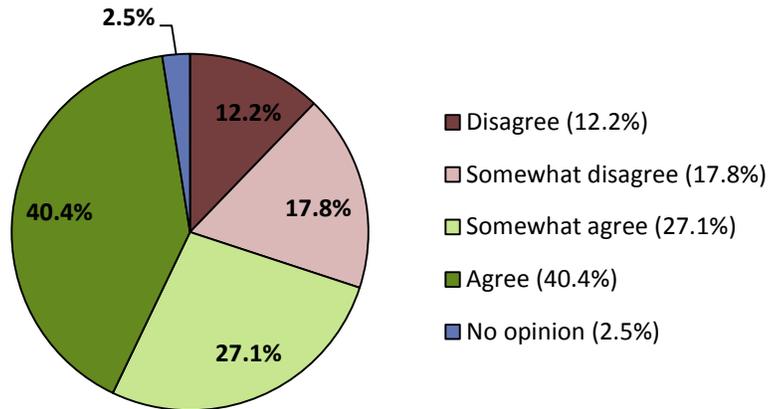
More effective soil conservation regulations are required



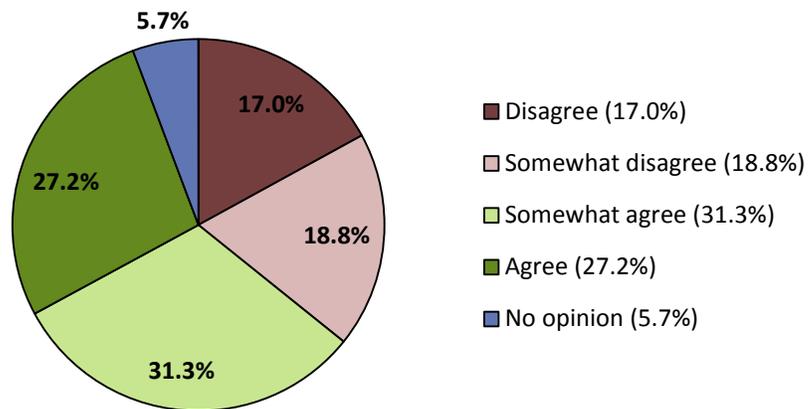
PUBLIC ACCESS

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -

Public access to coastal areas is adequate



More access to natural / wilderness areas is required

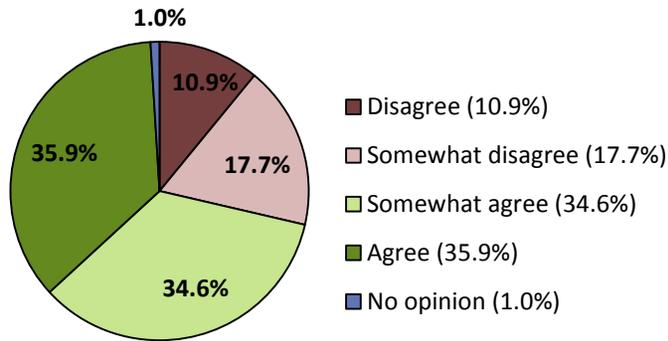


LANDSCAPES / VIEWSCAPES

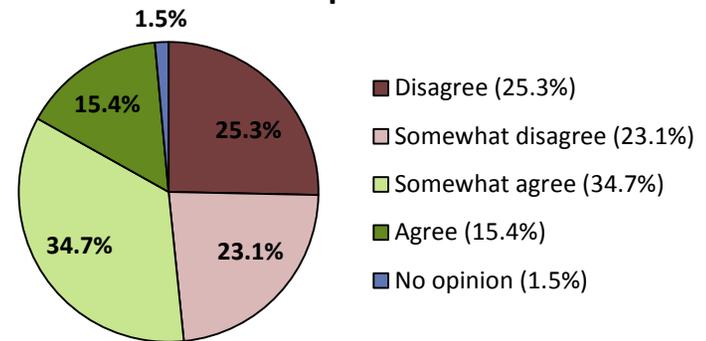
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -

Significant viewscapes and landscapes should be protected by:

... restricting all development

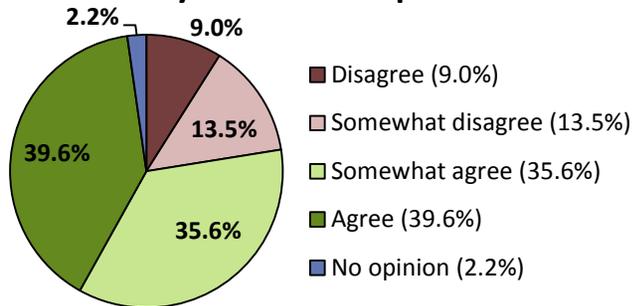


... by only allowing small-scale development

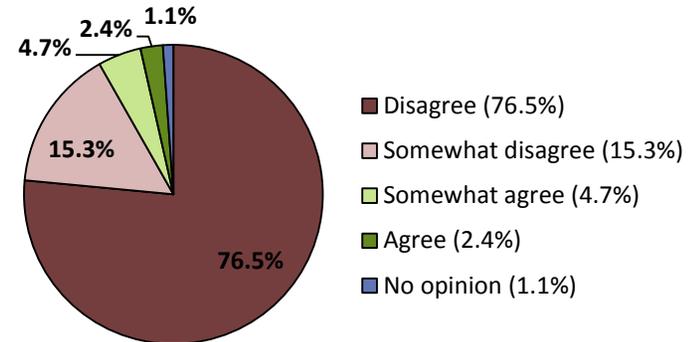


Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -

Cottage development should be directed to certain areas where there is already some development



Any kind of development should be allowed in significant viewscapes

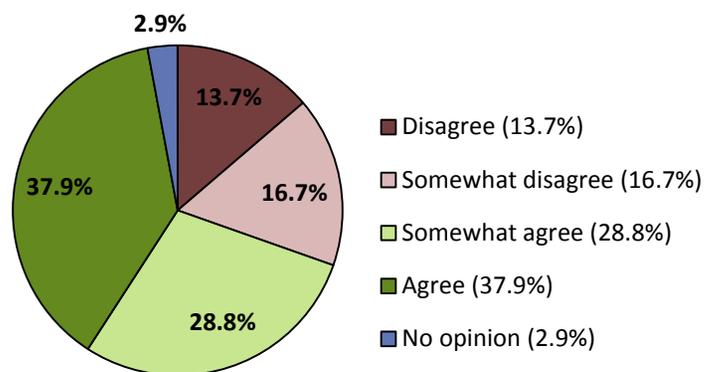


DEVELOPMENT

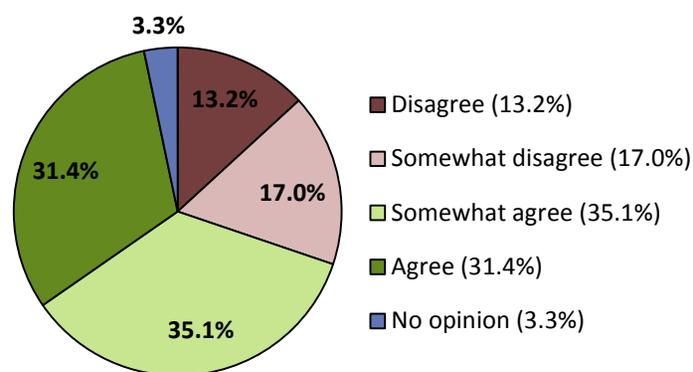
SITING OF NEW HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statement: **New housing subdivisions (developments with two or more homes) should be located**

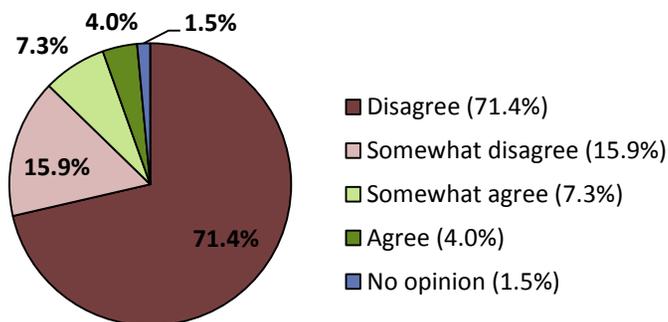
...in cities and towns



...next to existing subdivisions

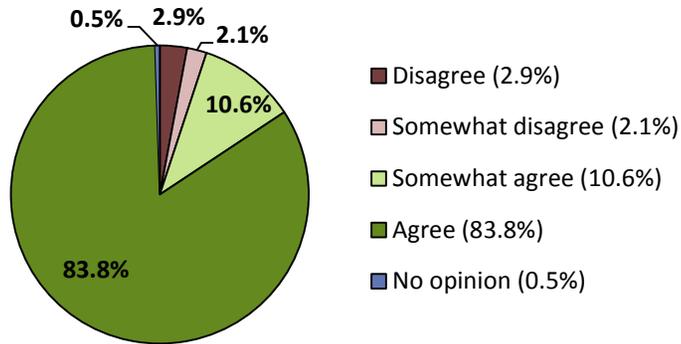


...anywhere, no matter what the surrounding land uses are

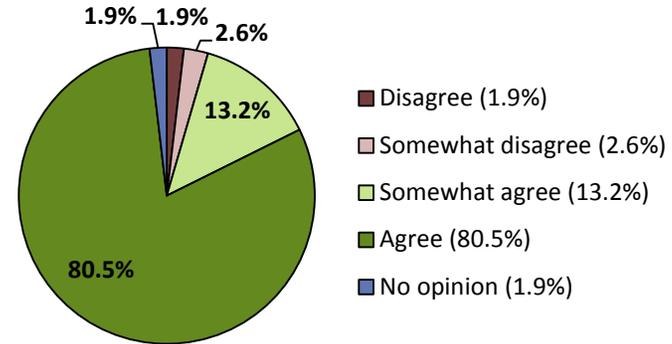


Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements:

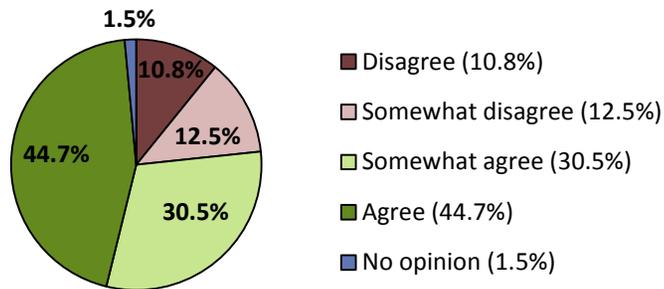
New developments must be restricted in or near wetlands and critical habitat areas



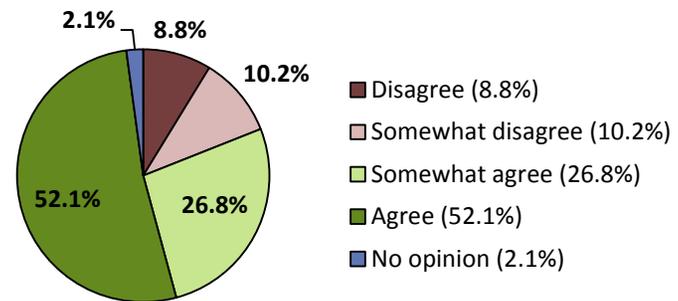
Restrict building in areas that are in danger of flooding or bank erosion



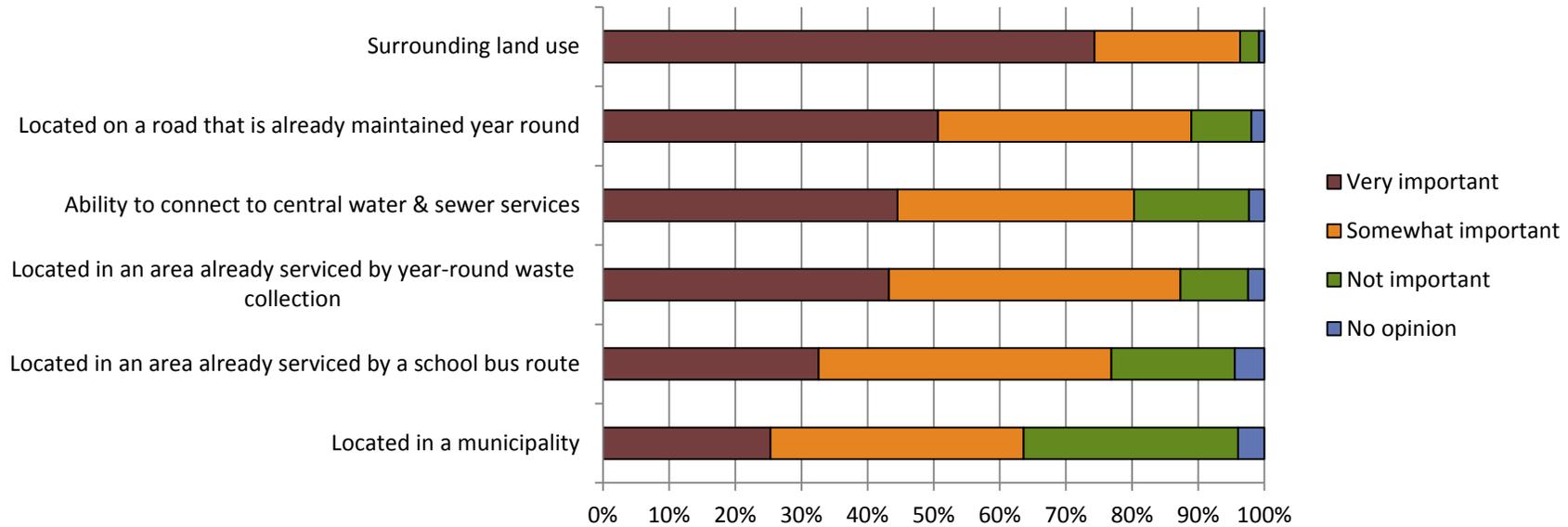
There should be standards for new housing developments to protect rural character and landscapes



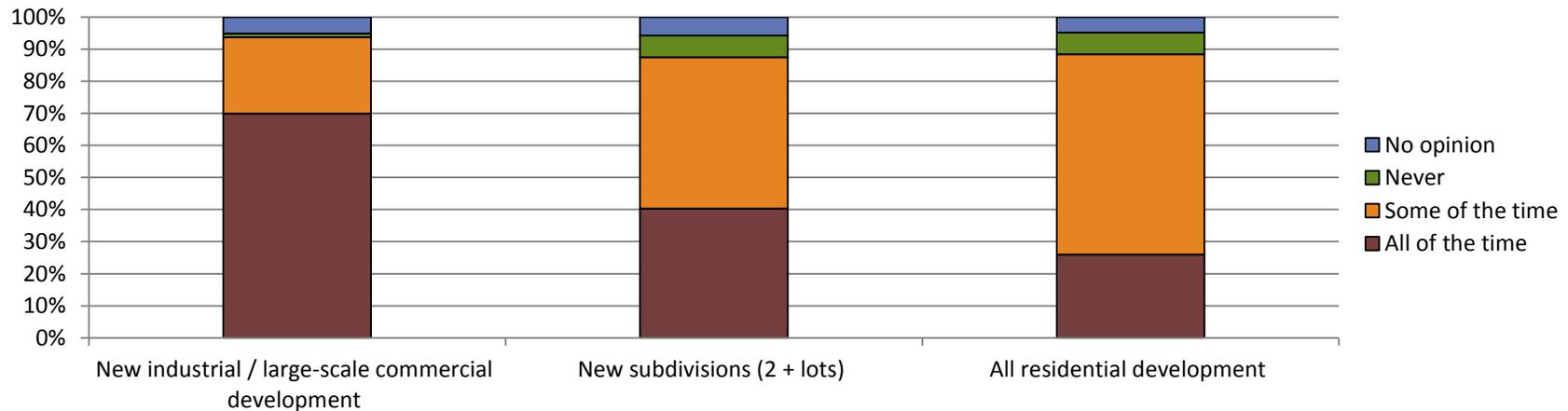
People should not be allowed to create subdivisions in areas that have limited or no access to services



Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following factors in determining where new homes are built:

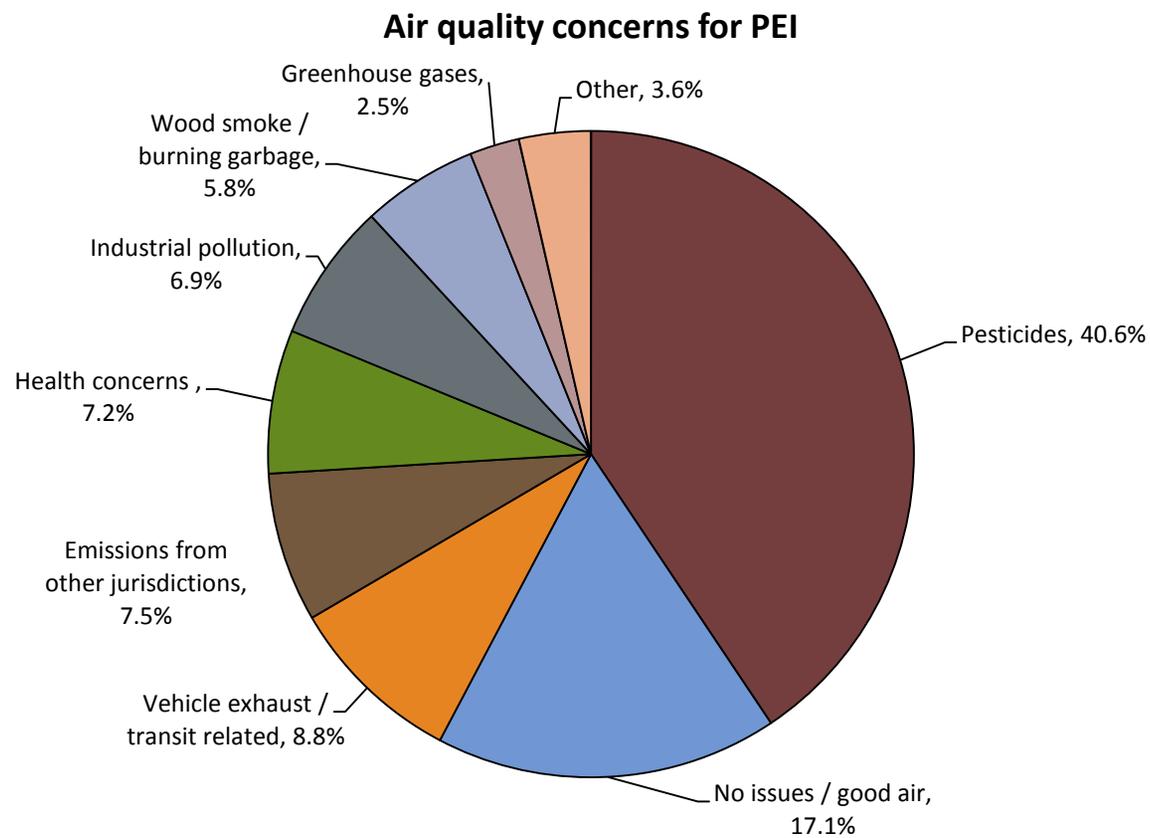


Development that must connect to water and waste treatment systems



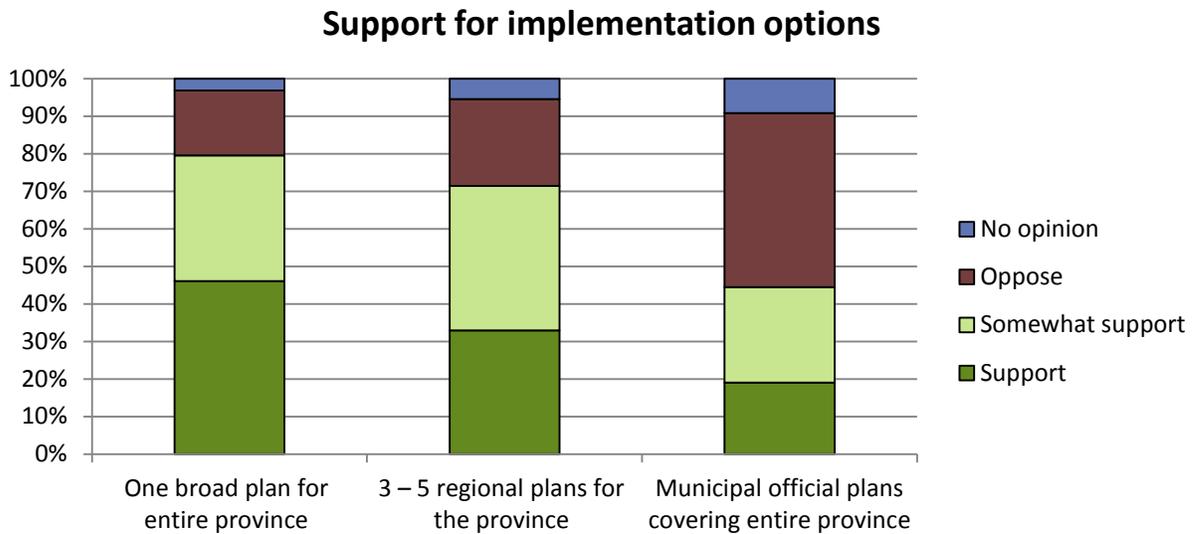
AIR QUALITY

Respondents were asked to list their concerns for air quality in PEI. The following graph represents the most common responses:

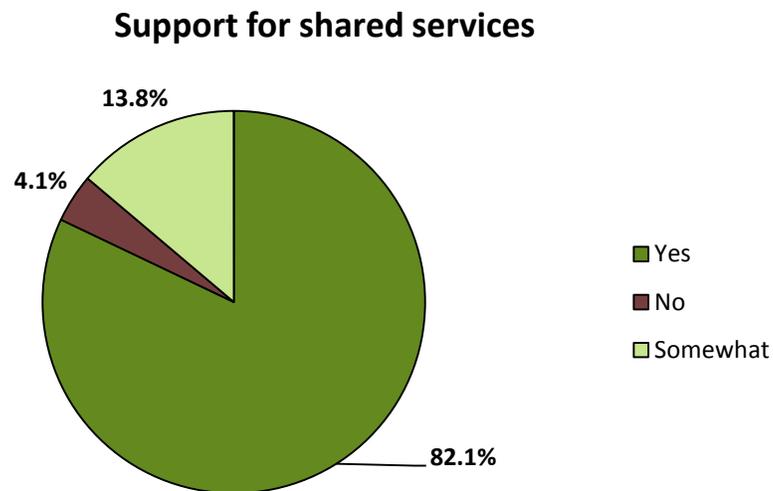


POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Respondents were asked if they would support the following implementation options:



Respondents were asked if they would support their community working together with another community in order to provide shared services.



SPECIAL PLACES

Respondents were asked; “If someone from a big city knocked on your door and you only had 30 minutes to show them how special our community is by taking them to ONE PLACE and telling them why it makes our community special - where would you go? What would you tell them?”

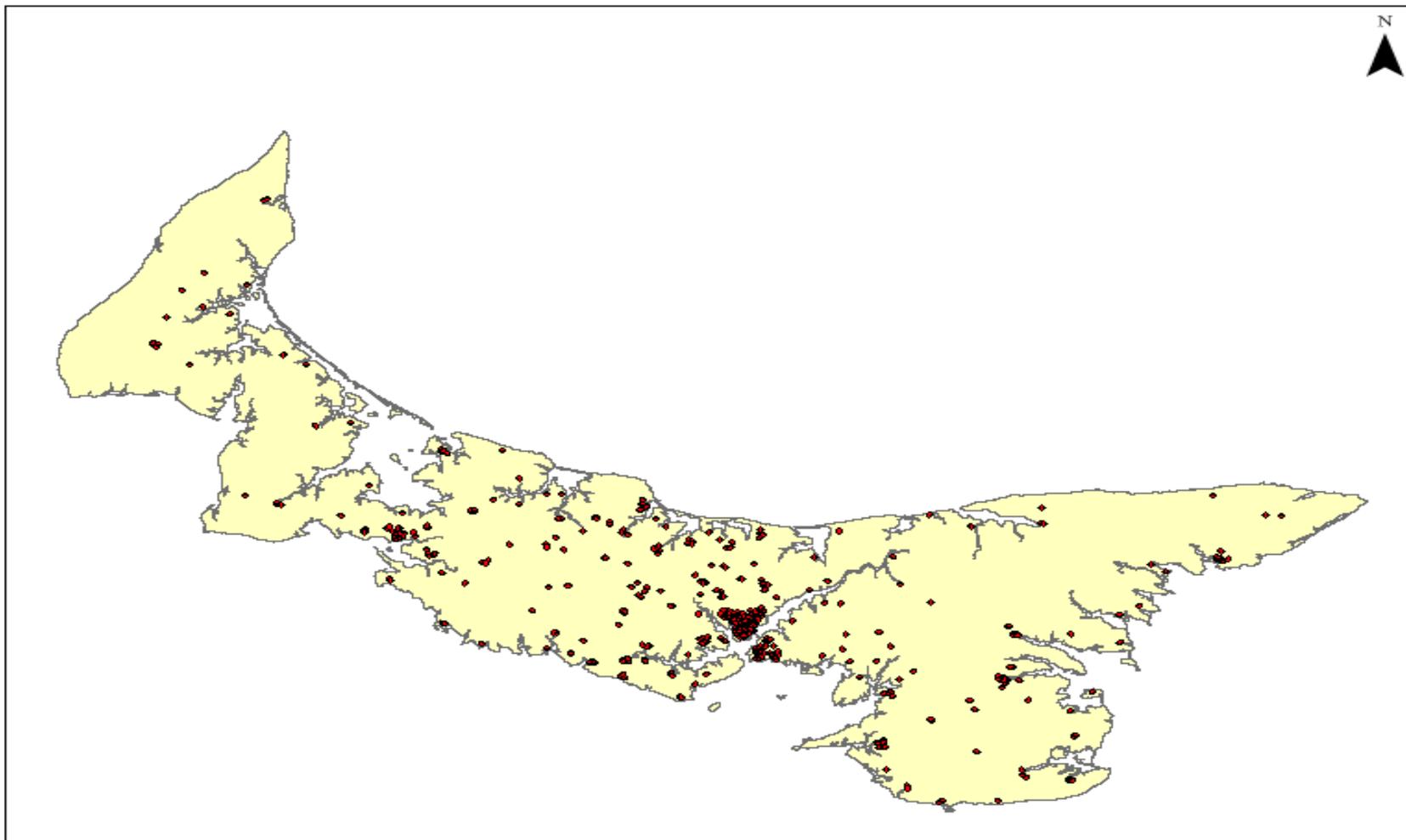
A total of **408** people took the time to answer this question. Many people answered in great detail – clearly passionate about the many special places on PEI.

This illustration represents the common themes in the responses:

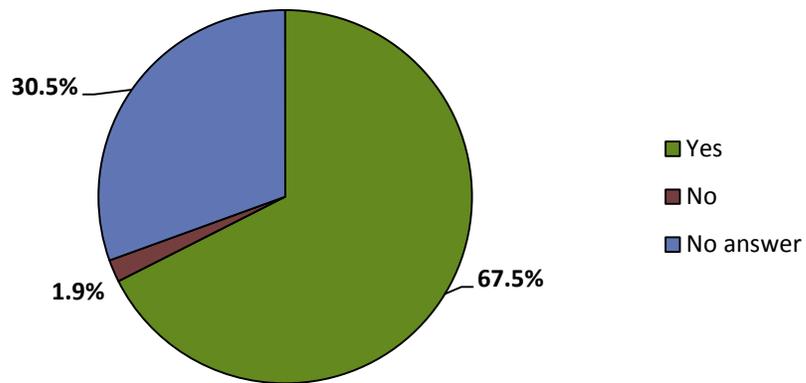


DEMOGRAPHICS

The red dot on the map indicates where a respondent lives:



Is your primary residence located in PEI?



Age distribution of respondents

