

THE PROVINCE OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

# Public Opinion Survey Results: December 2013

---

## Task Force on Land Use Policy



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

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The survey was available online and paper copies were distributed when requested. A total of 778 responses were received. A copy of the survey is included in this report (Appendix 1).

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](mailto: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

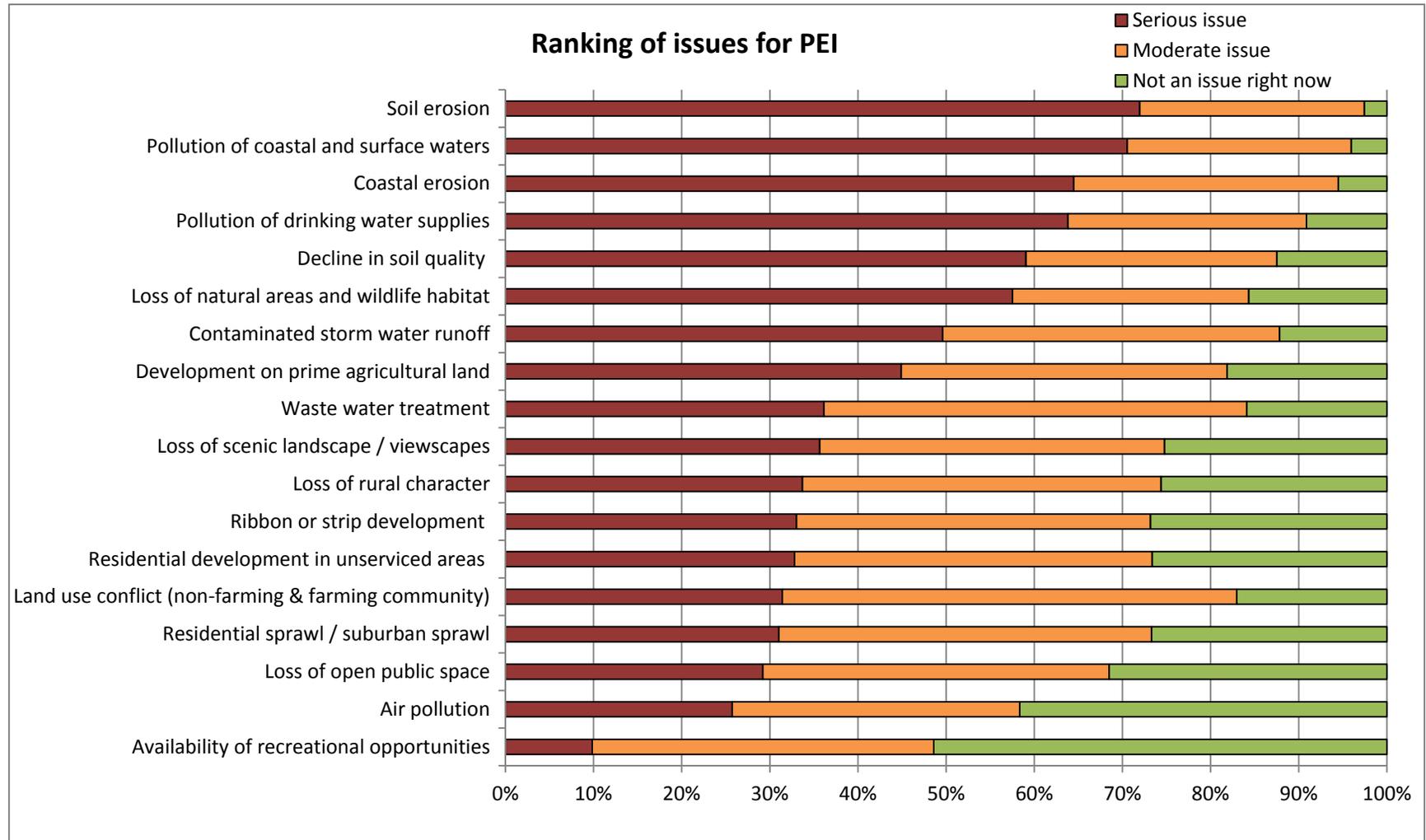
- 90% of respondents believe the best farm land SHOULD be kept in agriculture or related resource uses
- 86% feel that the best farm land SHOULD NOT be open for any kind of development
- 90% of respondents believe more effective soil conservation regulations are required
- 41% of respondents cited pesticides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

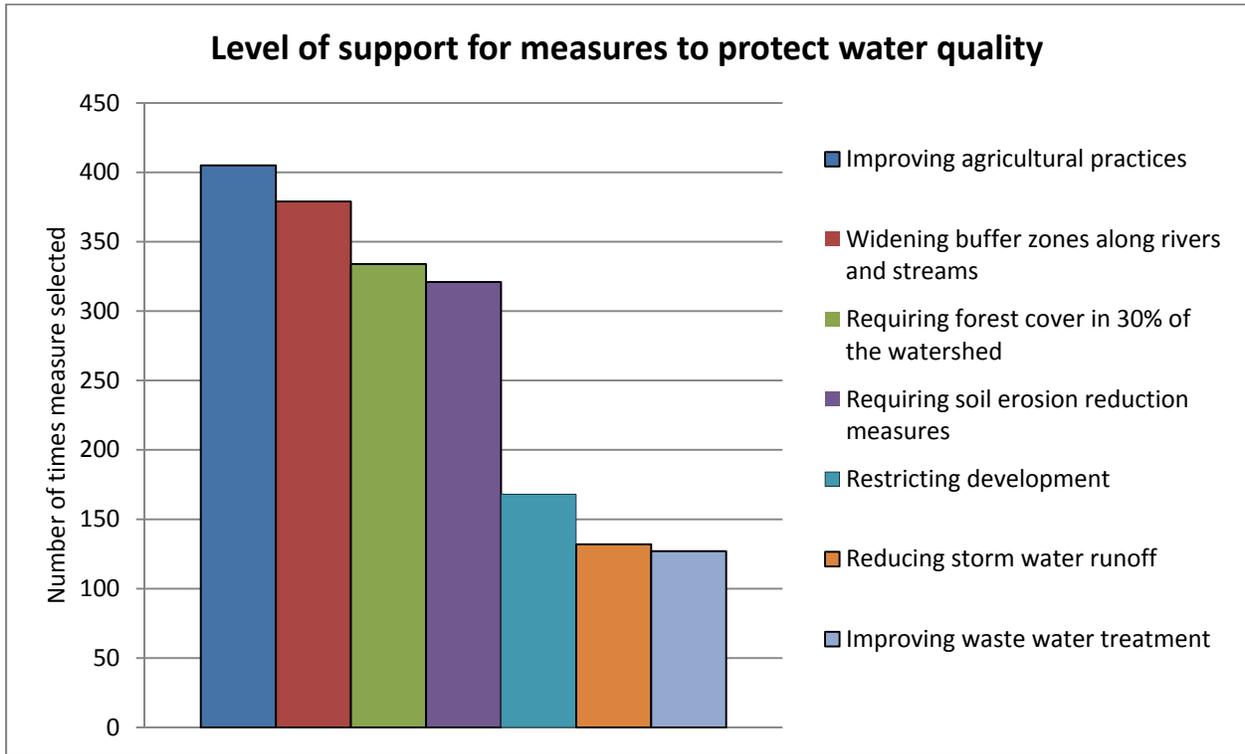
## AREAS OF CONCERN

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

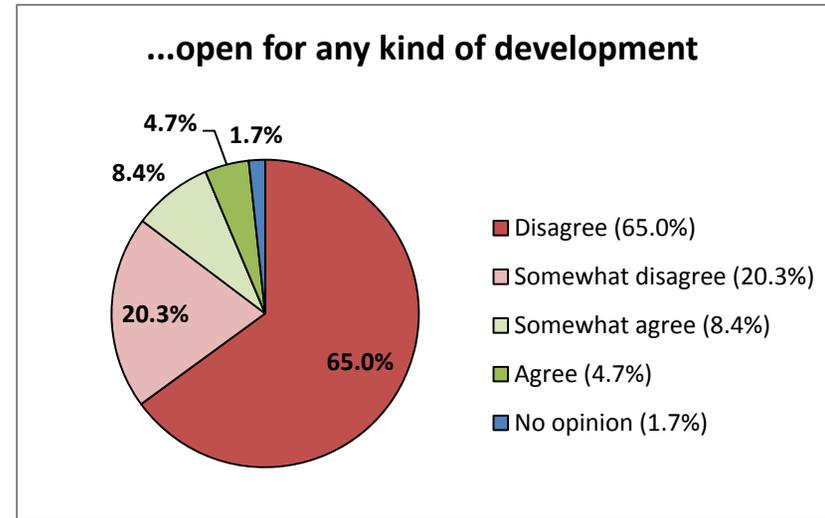
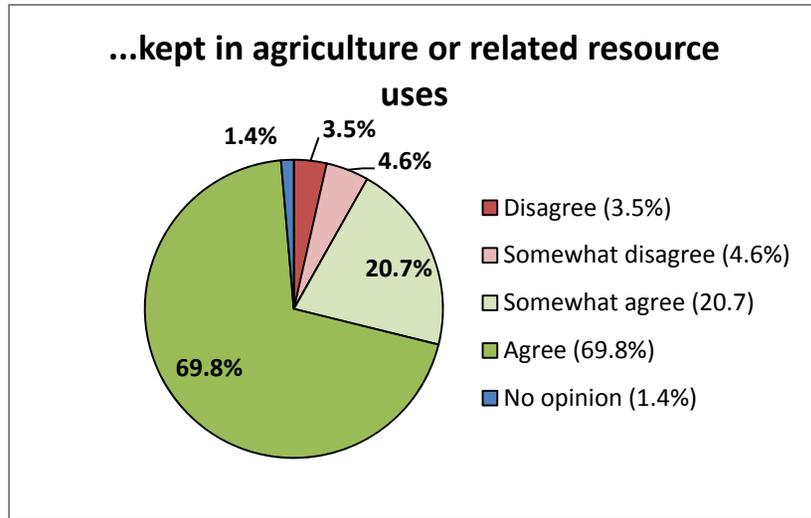
Water quality is affected by many factors including: land cover, the natural environment, land use practices, and development. Respondents were asked to select three measures that they would most likely support to protect water quality in some areas.



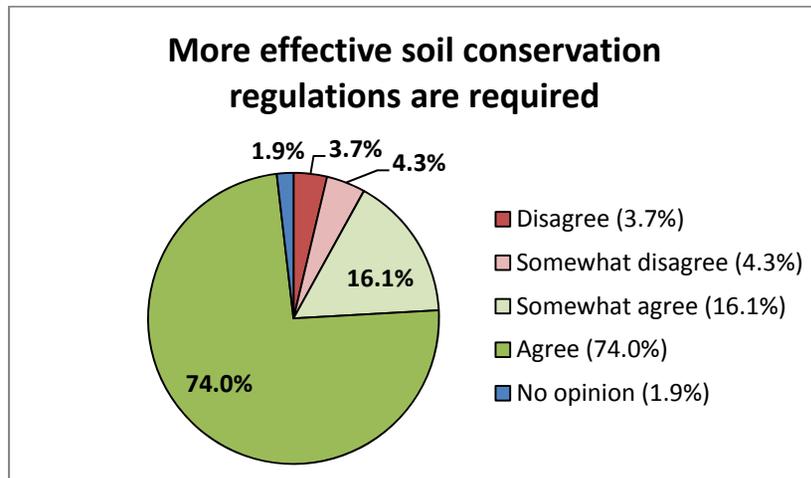
## AGRICULTURE

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

### The best farm land should be:

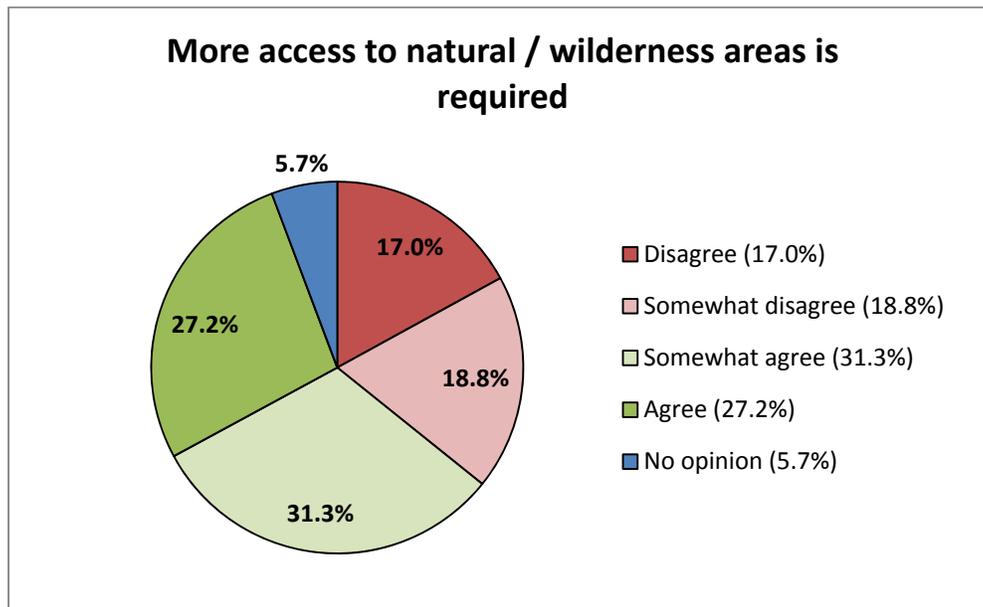
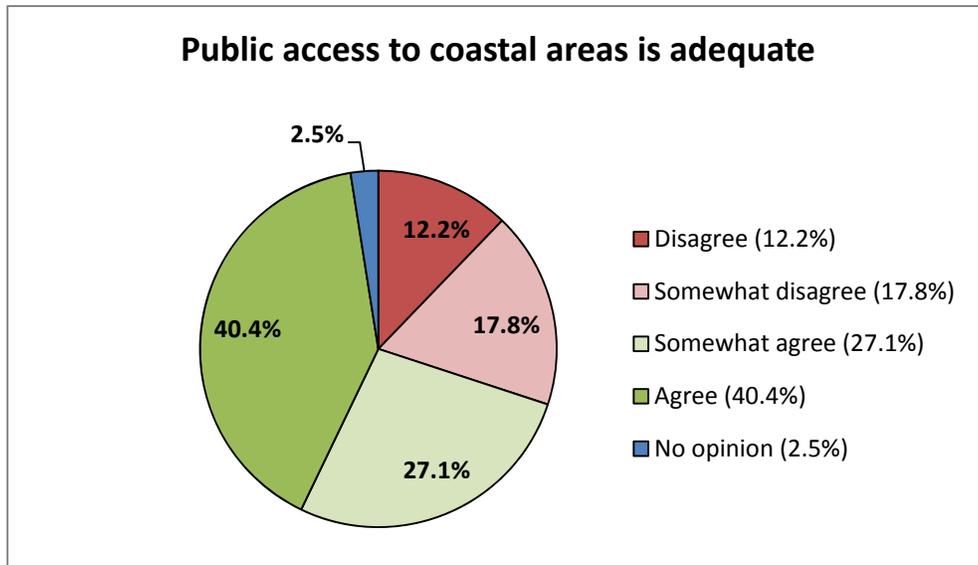


Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statement -



## PUBLIC ACCESS

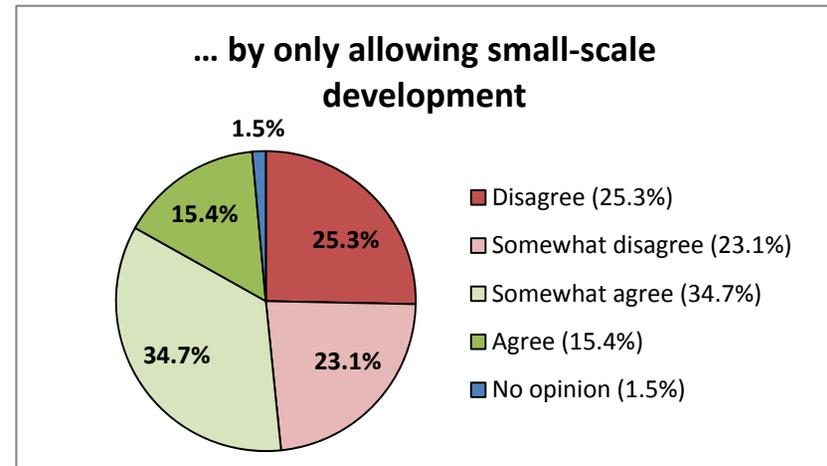
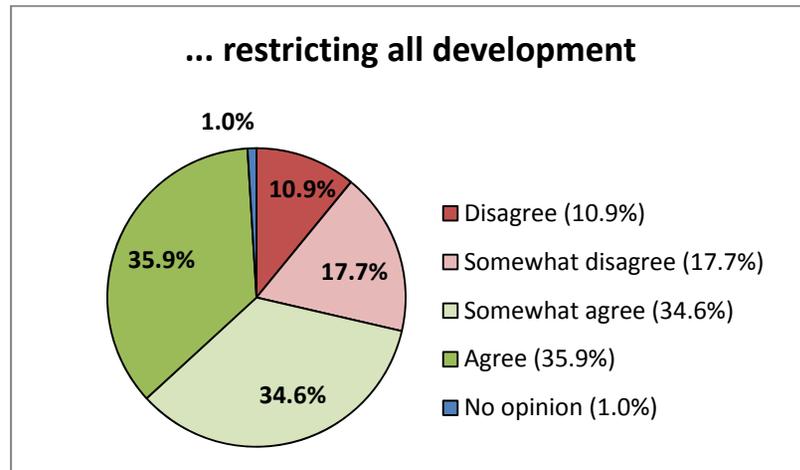
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -



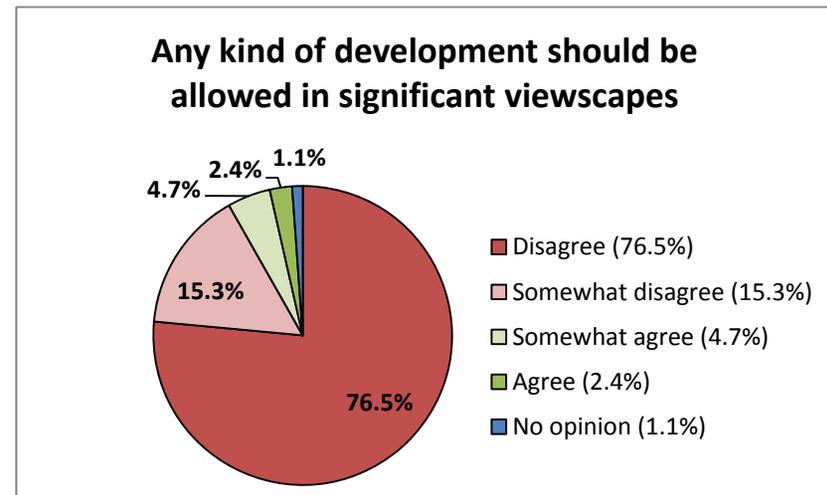
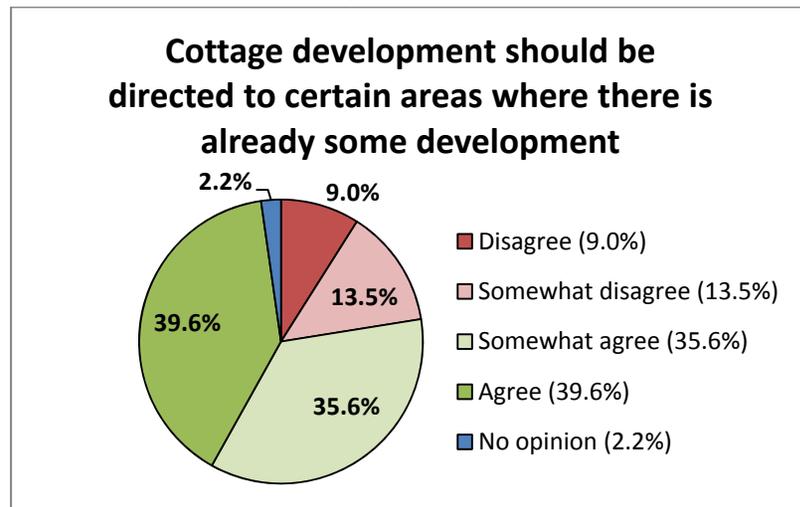
## LANDSCAPES / VIEWSCAPES

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

**Significant viewscales and landscapes should be protected by:**



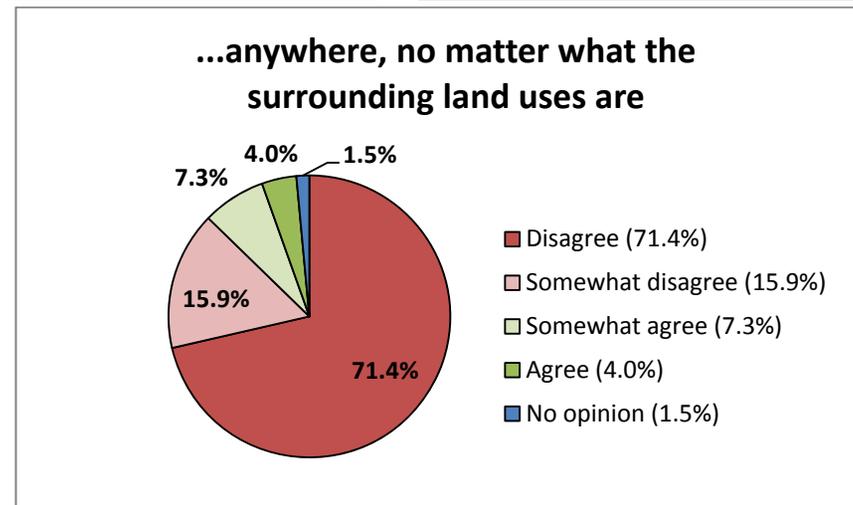
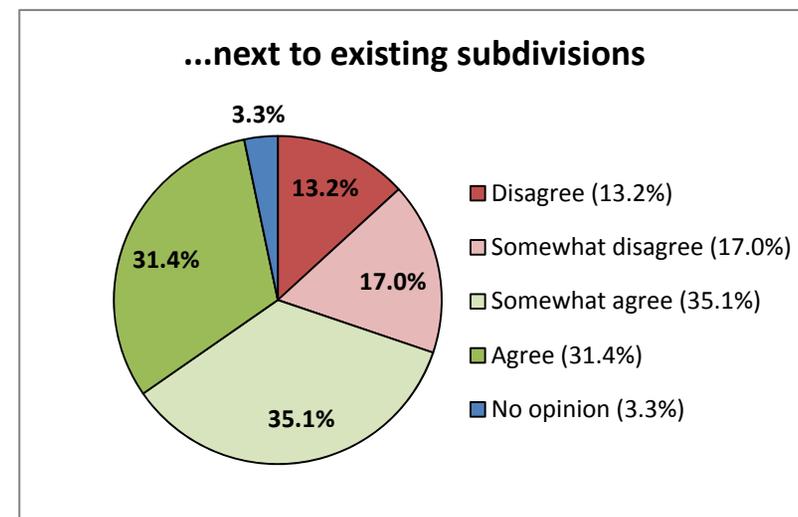
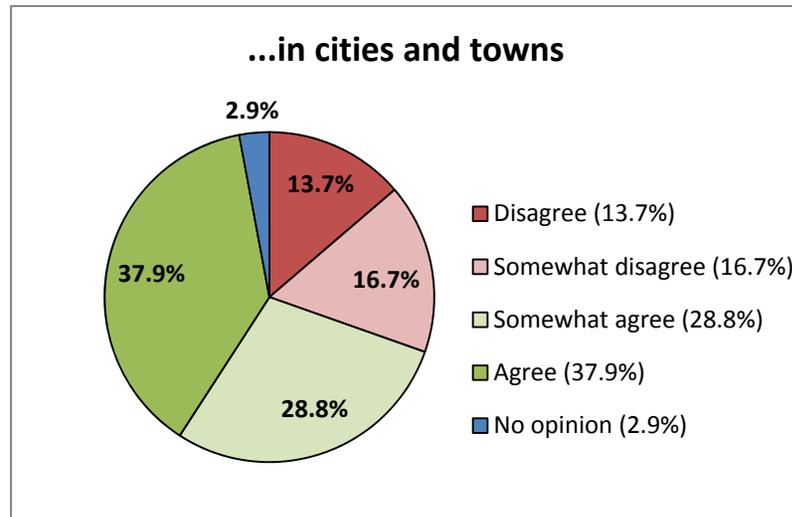
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements -



## DEVELOPMENT

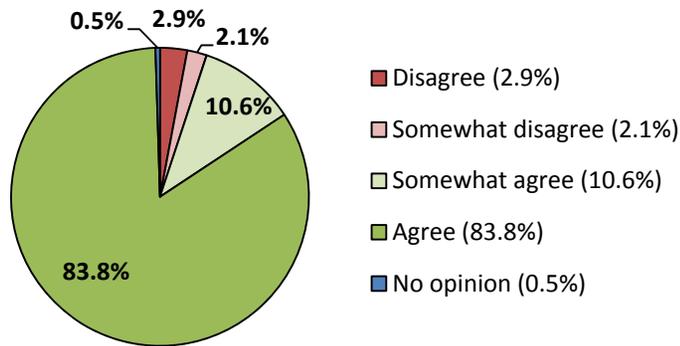
### SITING OF NEW HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS

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 ....**

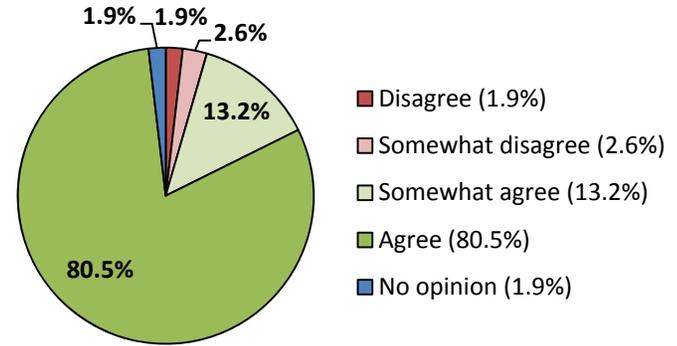


Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the following statements:

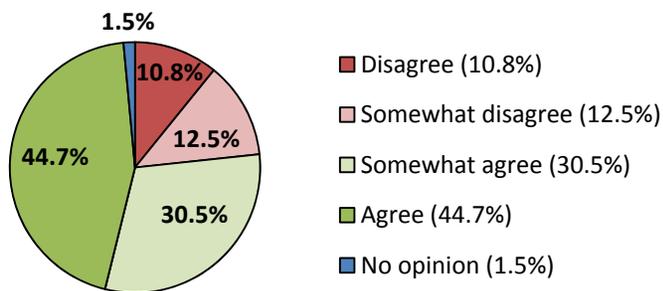
**New developments must be restricted in or near wetlands and critical habitat areas**



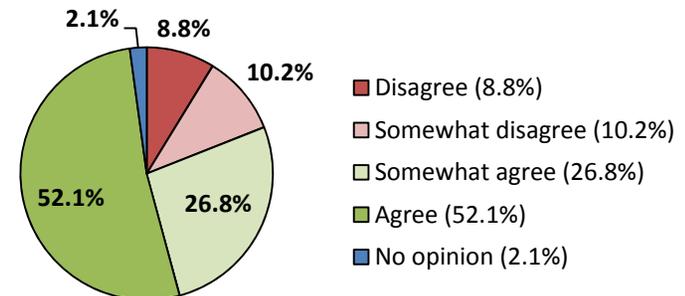
**Restrict building in areas that are in danger of flooding or bank erosion**



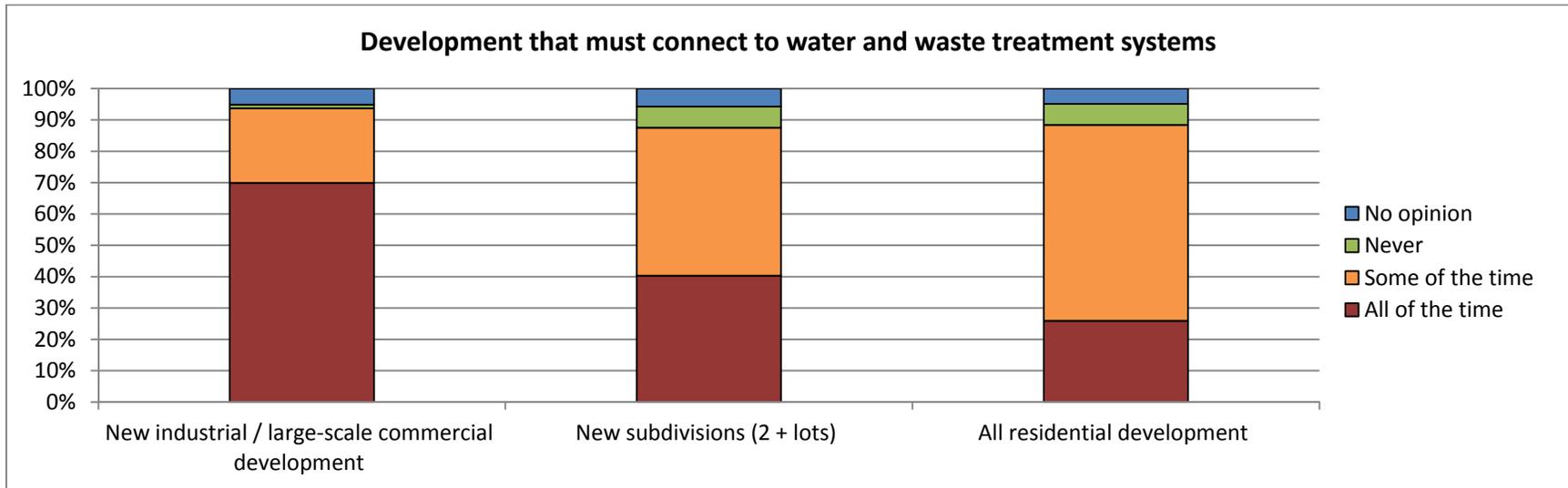
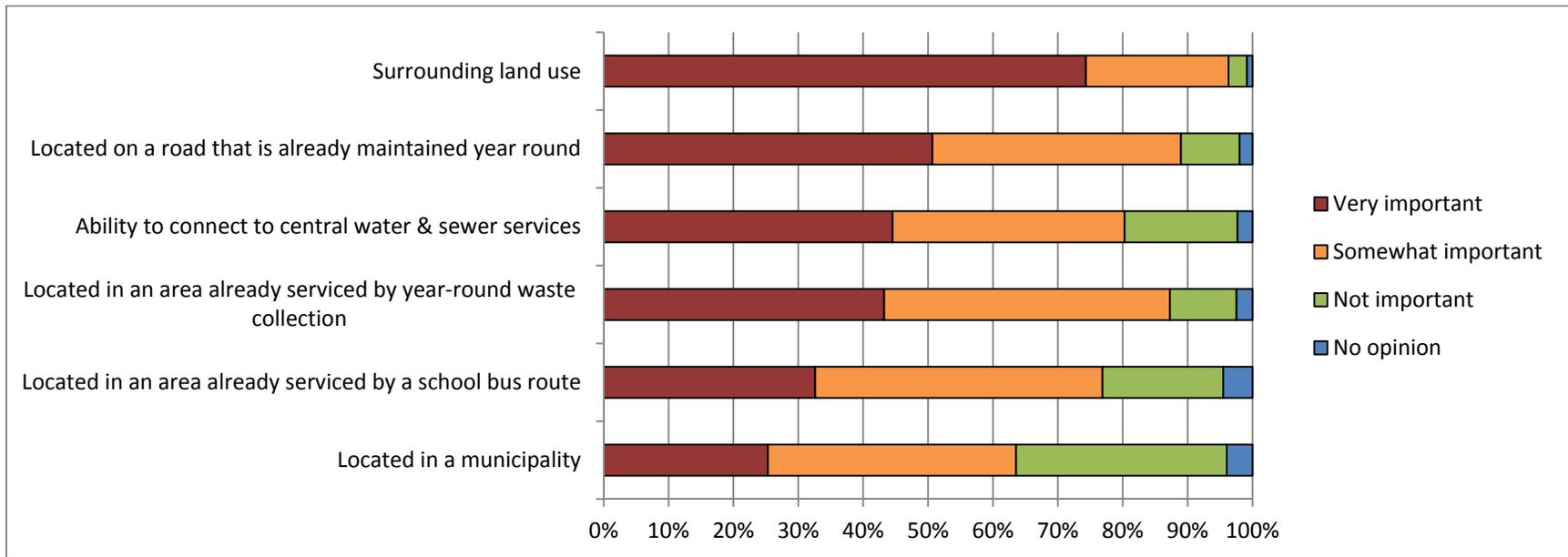
**There should be standards for new housing developments to protect rural character and landscapes**



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

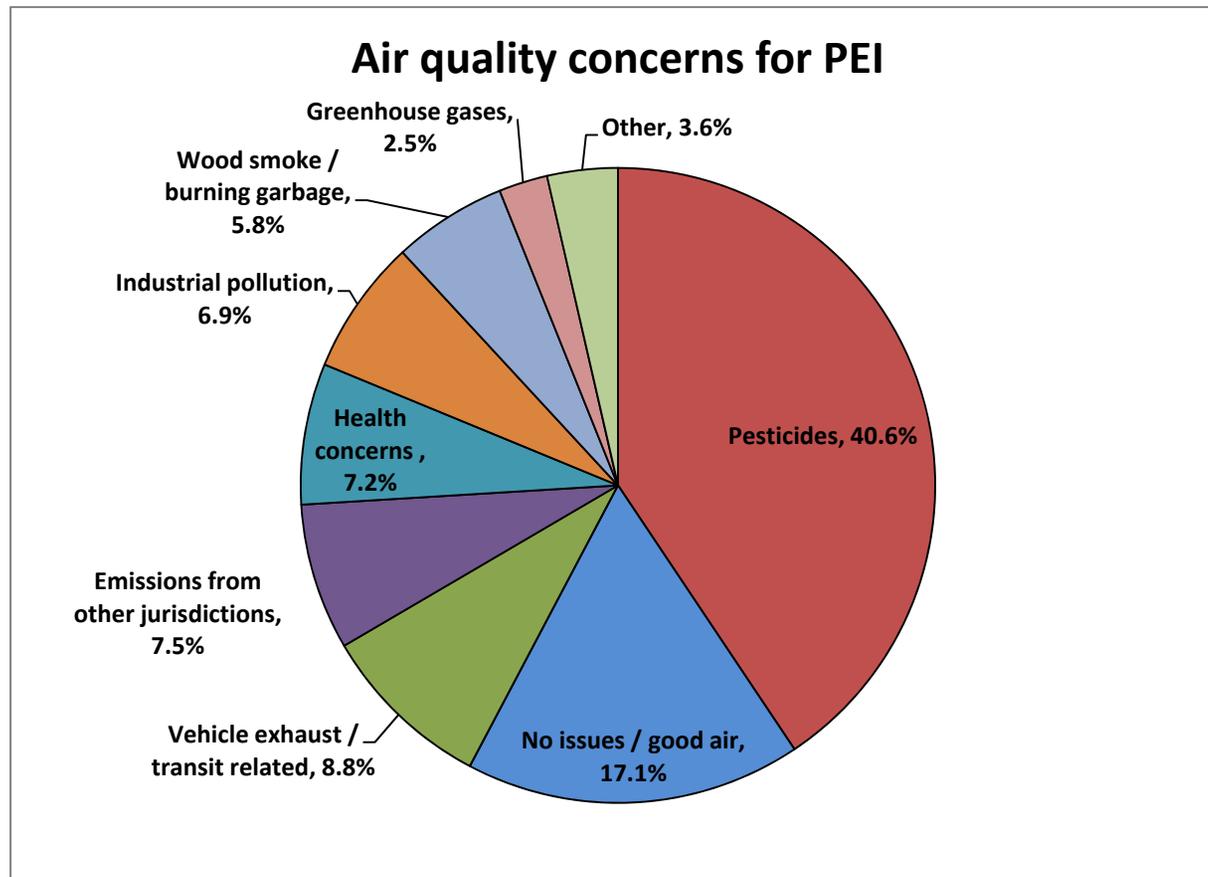


Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following factors in determining where new homes are built:



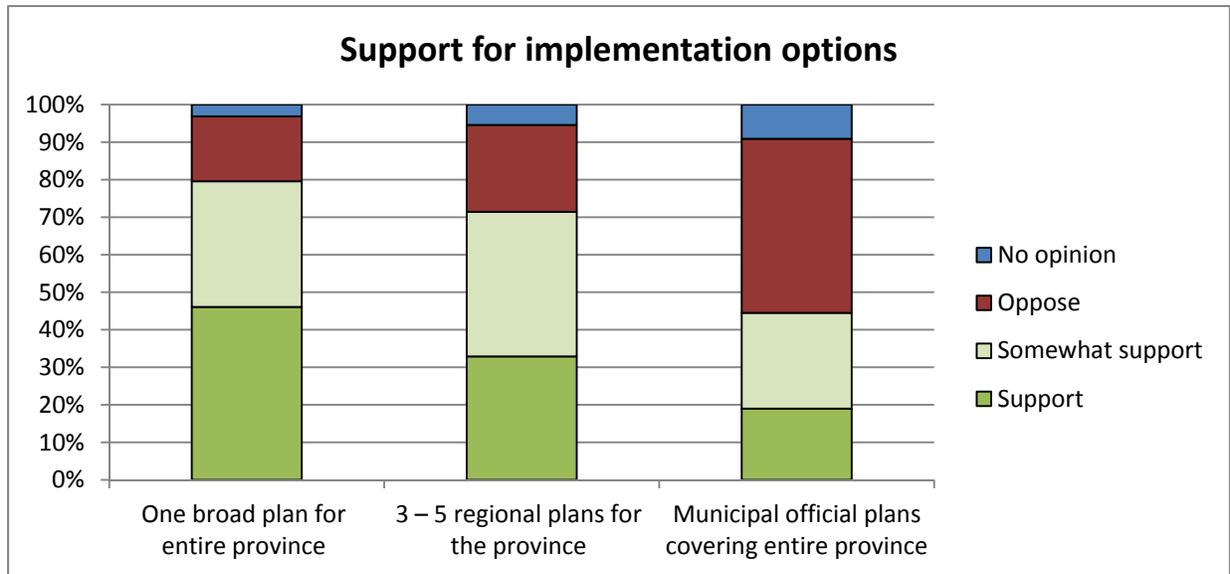
## AIR QUALITY

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

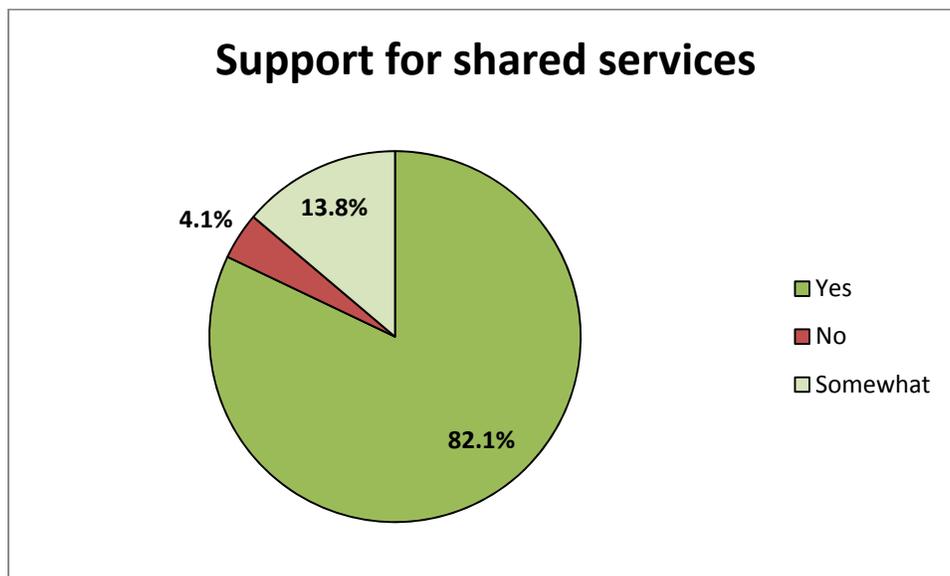


## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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?”

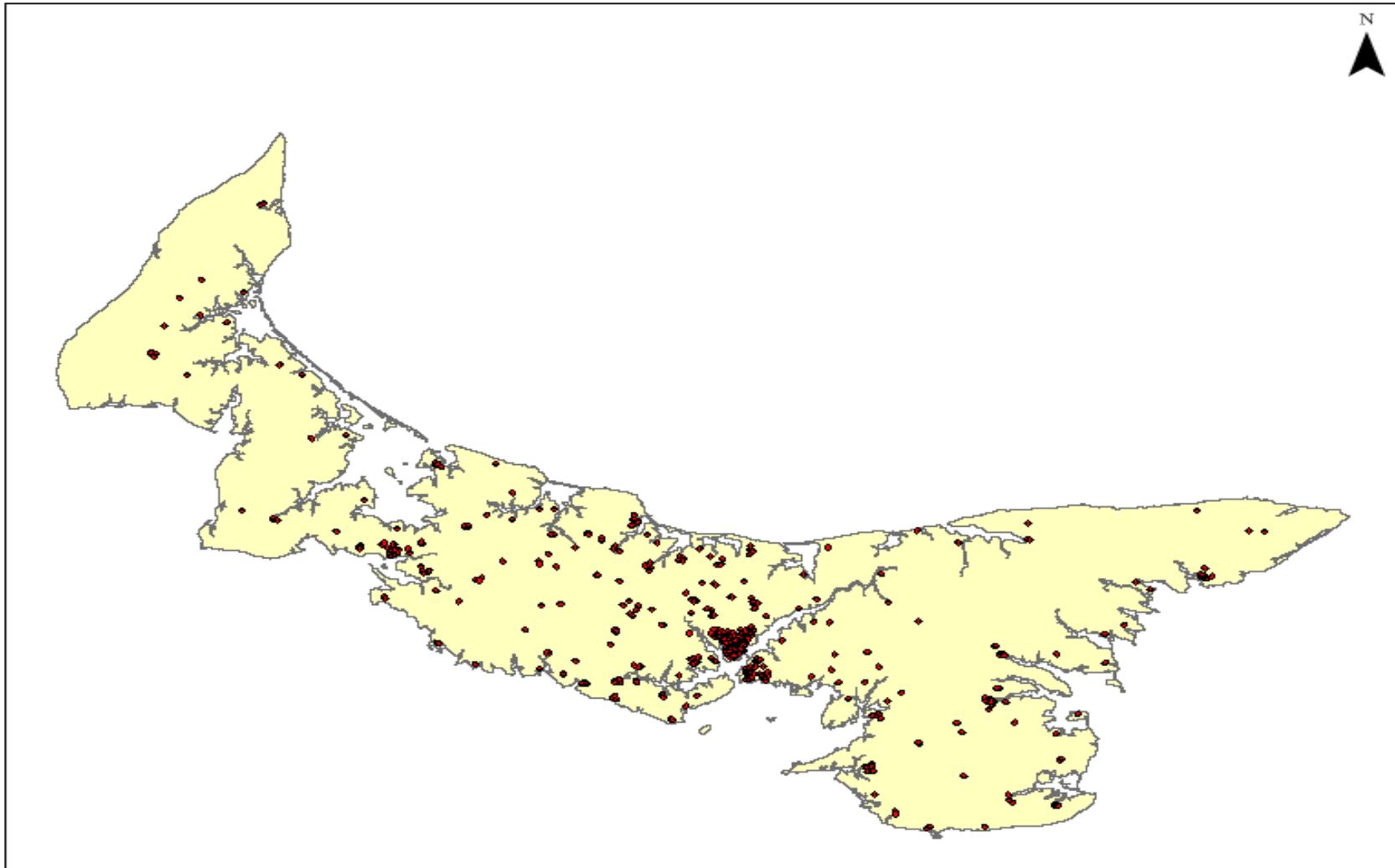
A total of **408** people took the time to answer this question. Many people answered in great detail – clearly passionate about the many special places on PEI.

This illustration represents the common themes in the responses:

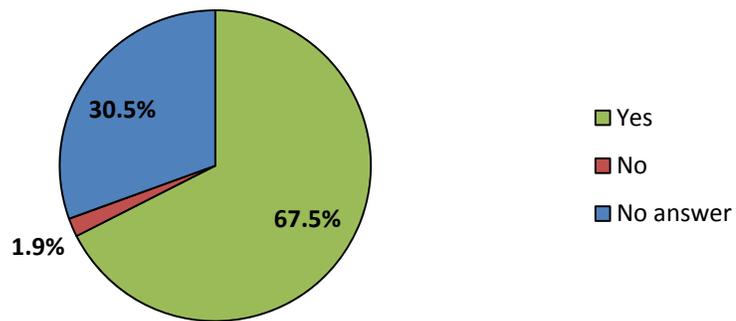


## DEMOGRAPHICS

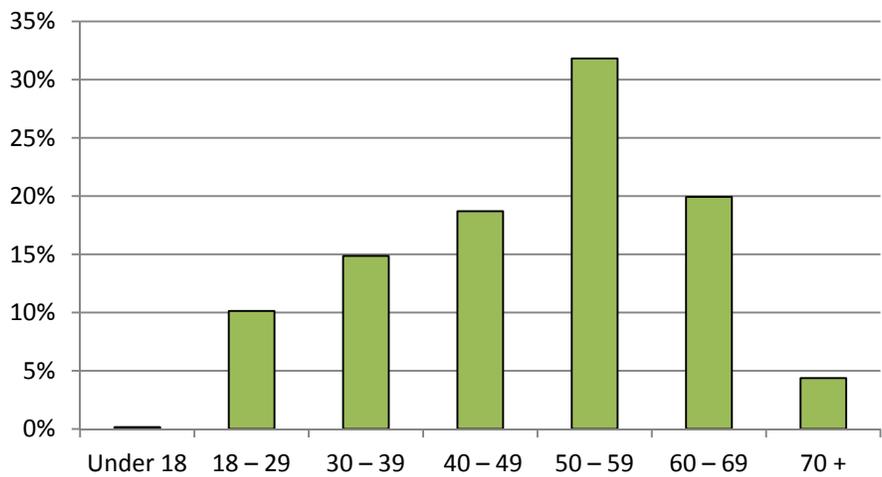
The red dot on the map indicates where a respondent lives:



### Is your primary residence located in PEI?



### Age distribution of respondents



## Appendix 1

### Task Force on Land Use Policy



#### Provincial Land Use Policies – public opinion survey

Public input and dialogue are important for a successful land use planning process. The Task Force will use your input and ideas to develop provincial land use policies and make recommendations to the provincial government. This survey can be completed in 10 – 20 minutes.

*Deciding on the future of land use on PEI is the shared responsibility of all islanders! Thank you for taking the time to do this survey.*

As you complete this survey, please think about the land and its features that you want to pass onto the next generation of Islanders. Imagine how PEI will look if we do not develop land use policies that protect our environment, economy and communities. How do you want PEI to look in the next 50 years?

#### **Statement of Confidentiality**

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of **Section 31(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act** and will be used for the purpose of gauging public opinion relating to provincial land use policy. Your identity will not be revealed as a result of your participation. Please direct questions on the collection and use of this information to Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning at 1-902-620-3558.

**778 TOTAL RESPONSES**

1. Consider the following issues listed below for PEI. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is **currently** a serious problem, a moderate problem, or not a problem right now:

ISSUE		Serious problem	Moderate problem	Not a problem right now
a	Pollution of drinking water supplies	63.8%	27.1%	9.1%
b	Pollution of coastal waters and surface water (streams, ponds, etc.)	70.6%	25.4%	4.0%
c	Development on the best (prime) agricultural land	45.0%	37.0%	18.0%
d	Land use conflict between non-farming and farming community	31.4%	51.6%	17.0%
e	Soil erosion	72.0%	25.5%	2.5%
f	Decline in soil quality (fertility, organic matter)	59.1%	28.5%	12.5%
g	Loss of rural character	33.7%	40.7%	25.6%
h	Residential sprawl / suburban sprawl	31.0%	42.3%	26.7%
i	Ribbon or strip development (the continuous row of houses or business along the roads)	33.0%	40.2%	26.8%
j	Loss of scenic landscape / viewsapes	35.7%	39.1%	25.2%
k	Loss of natural areas and wildlife habitat	57.5%	26.8%	15.7%
l	Loss of open public space	29.2%	39.3%	31.5%
m	Coastal erosion	64.5%	30.0%	5.5%
n	Residential development (new housing) in areas that do not have adequate services (central water, central sewer, year round road maintenance, limited emergency vehicle accessibility)	32.8%	40.6%	26.6%
o	Air pollution	25.7%	32.6%	41.7%
p	Waste water treatment	36.1%	48.0%	15.9%
q	Contaminated storm water runoff	49.6%	38.2%	12.2%
r	Availability of recreational opportunities	9.8%	38.8%	51.4%
	Other (please specify): <b>99 ANSWERS (12.8%)</b>			

2. Water quality is affected by a number of factors including: land cover, the natural environment, land use practices, and development. In order to protect water quality in some areas, certain measures may have to be undertaken. Please select up to three measures that you are most likely to support: (check at most 3 answers)

Requiring forest cover in 30% of the watershed (an area of land that drains surface water and groundwater into a river or stream)	<b>334</b>
Requiring soil erosion reduction measures	<b>321</b>
Reducing storm water runoff	<b>132</b>
Improving waste water treatment	<b>127</b>
Restricting development	<b>168</b>
Widening buffer zones along rivers and streams	<b>379</b>
Improving agricultural practices	<b>405</b>

2.1 Are there other measures to protect water quality that should be considered?

**208 ANSWERS (26.80%)**

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	No opinion
The best farm land should be kept in agriculture or related resource uses.	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
The best agricultural land should be open for any kind of development	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
More effective soil conservation regulations are required	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
In areas that are in danger of flooding or bank erosion, new building should be restricted (increase distance from coast)	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Public access to coastal areas in PEI is adequate	<b>12.2%%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
I think more access should be provided to natural areas (wilderness areas) in PEI	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

4. In PEI there are many beautiful places along the shores and in the countryside. To determine how to best protect **significant viewscares and landscapes**, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	No opinion
These areas should be protected by restricting all development	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>35.9%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
These areas should be protected by only allowing small-scale development (e.g. cottages)	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Cottage development should be directed to certain areas where there is already some development	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>35.6%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Any kind of development should be allowed in these areas	<b>76.5%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

5. How can we protect our viewscares and landscapes?

**224 ANSWERS (28.9%)**

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	No opinion
New housing subdivisions (developments with two or more homes) should be located in cities and towns	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
New housing subdivisions should be located next to existing subdivisions	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
New housing subdivisions should be located anywhere, no matter what the surrounding land uses are	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

7. In PEI there are almost 67,000 houses and cottages. In addition to these homes, there are approximately 30,000 vacant building lots available to be developed throughout all of PEI. How important are the following factors in determining where new homes are built?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	No opinion
Surrounding land use	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Ability to connect to central water & sewer services	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Located on a road that is already maintained year round	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
Located in a municipality	<b>32.45%</b>	<b>38.25%</b>	<b>25.33%</b>	<b>3.97%</b>
Located in an area already serviced by a school bus route	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Located in an area already serviced by year-round waste collection	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	No opinion
There should be standards for new housing developments (e.g. size, style, landscaping requirements) to protect rural character and landscapes	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
People should not be allowed to create subdivisions in areas that have limited or no access to services (services can include: drinking water systems, sewer facilities, year-round or public road access, etc.)	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
New developments must be restricted in or near wetlands and critical habitat areas	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

9. Please indicate your support for the following statements

	Never	Some of the time	All of the time	No opinion
New industrial and large-scale commercial development must connect to central water and waste treatment systems	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>69.9%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
All residential development must connect to central water and waste treatment systems	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
New subdivisions (2 lots and greater) must connect to central water and waste treatment systems	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

10. What are your concerns about air quality for PEI?

**276 ANSWERS (35.57%)**

11. Provincial land use policies will need to be implemented through more detailed planning documents. Please indicate your level of support for the following processes:

	Oppose	Somewhat support	Support	No opinion
One broad plan for the entire province (municipalities can still create their own official plans)	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>46.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
3 – 5 regional plans for the province (municipalities can still create their own official plans)	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>33.0%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
Municipal official plans that cover the entire province	<b>46.4%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>

11.1 Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about implementing the provincial land use policies?

**204 ANSWERS (26.3%)**

12. Would you support your community working together with another community in order to provide shared services (e.g. planning, bylaw enforcement, recreation, public safety, economic development, etc.)?

- a) Yes – **82.1%**
- b) No – **4.1%**
- c) Somewhat – **13.8%**

13. 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?

**408 ANSWERS (52.6%)**

14. If you have any comments relating to land use in PEI or comments that would help us understand your responses, please leave them below.

**292 ANSWERS (37.6%)**

15. The following questions are voluntary, but they will help us analyze the survey results.

- a) What community do you live in? 65.98% provided a response
- b) Is your primary residence located in PEI? 69.85% provided a response
- c) How old are you?
  - a) Under 18 (**0.1%**)
  - b) 18 – 29 (**7.5%**)
  - c) 30 – 39 (**11.0%**)
  - d) 40 – 49 (**13.8%**)
  - e) 50 – 59 (**23.5%**)
  - f) 60 – 69 (**14.7%**)
  - g) 70 + (**3.2%**)
  - no answer / not complete (**26.3%**)

Thank you for your feedback!