

Simcoe County Survey Report

Prepared for

Campaign Lake Simcoe

By



June 2005

T a b l e o f C o n t e n t s

<i>Methodology & Logistics</i>	3
<i>Executive Summary</i>	4
<i>Results by Question</i>	12

M e t h o d o l o g y & L o g i s t i c s

Overview

- Oraclepoll Research Ltd. was commissioned by Campaign Lake Simcoe to conduct independent public opinion research among Simcoe County, Ontario residents on issues related to development and Lake Simcoe.

Study Sample

- A total of 501 randomly selected voting age residents of Simcoe County, Ontario, 18 years of age and older were interviewed.

Survey Method

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Ltd. supervised 100%.

Logistics

- The survey was conducted between the days of May 30th and June 5th 2005. Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent callbacks of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 7 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the seventh attempt, the number was discarded.

Confidence

- The margin of error for results from the entire 501-person survey is $\pm 4.4\%$, 19/20 times.

E x e c u t i v e S u m m a r y

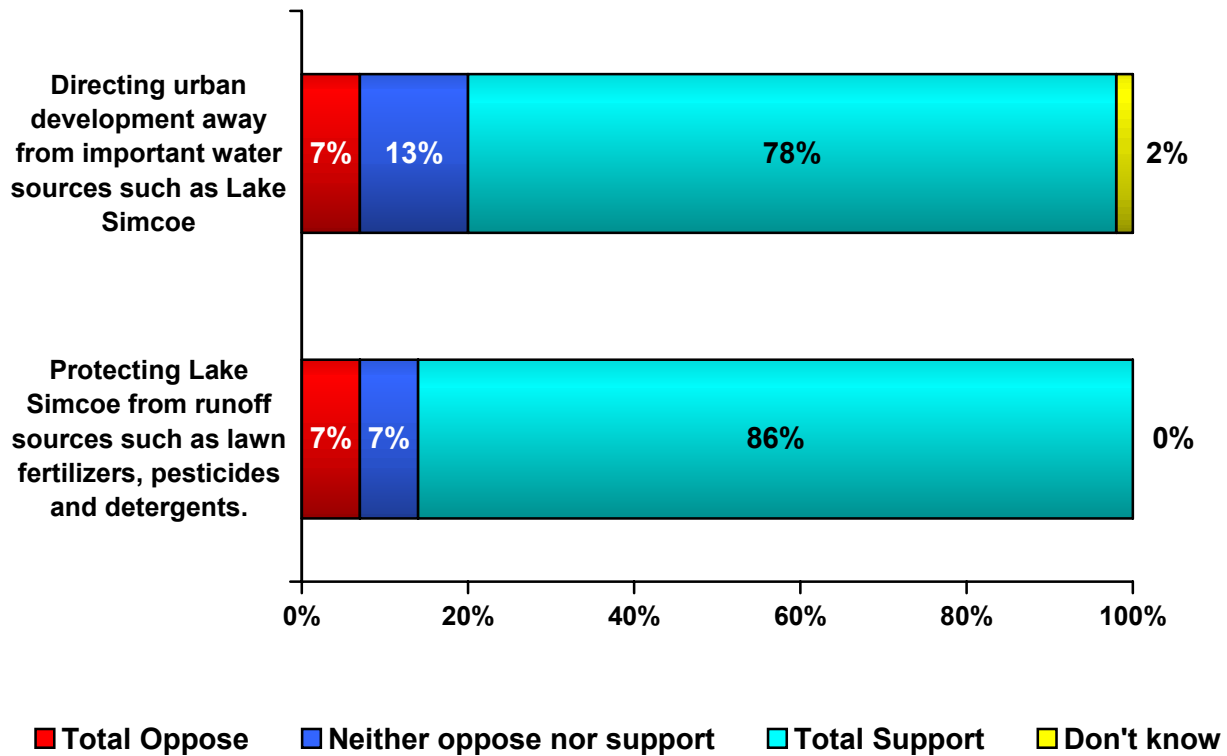
T o p o f M i n d

Respondents were first asked what they felt was the most important issue facing Simcoe County, with the issue of health care being the single most named by 12% of residents. However, infrastructure related and development themes dominated the top of mind concerns and they included waste management (9%), sprawl (8%), roads (5%), infrastructure (3%), affordable housing (2%) and traffic congestion (1%).

When asked about the most important environmental matter facing Simcoe County, water quality was the most named by 28% of respondents, closely followed by waste issues (27%). A total of 10% of those interviewed cited pollution, including air and vehicle pollution, while sprawl or rapid growth was named by 6%.

Support / Opposition

Respondents were asked about their support or opposition to each of the following.



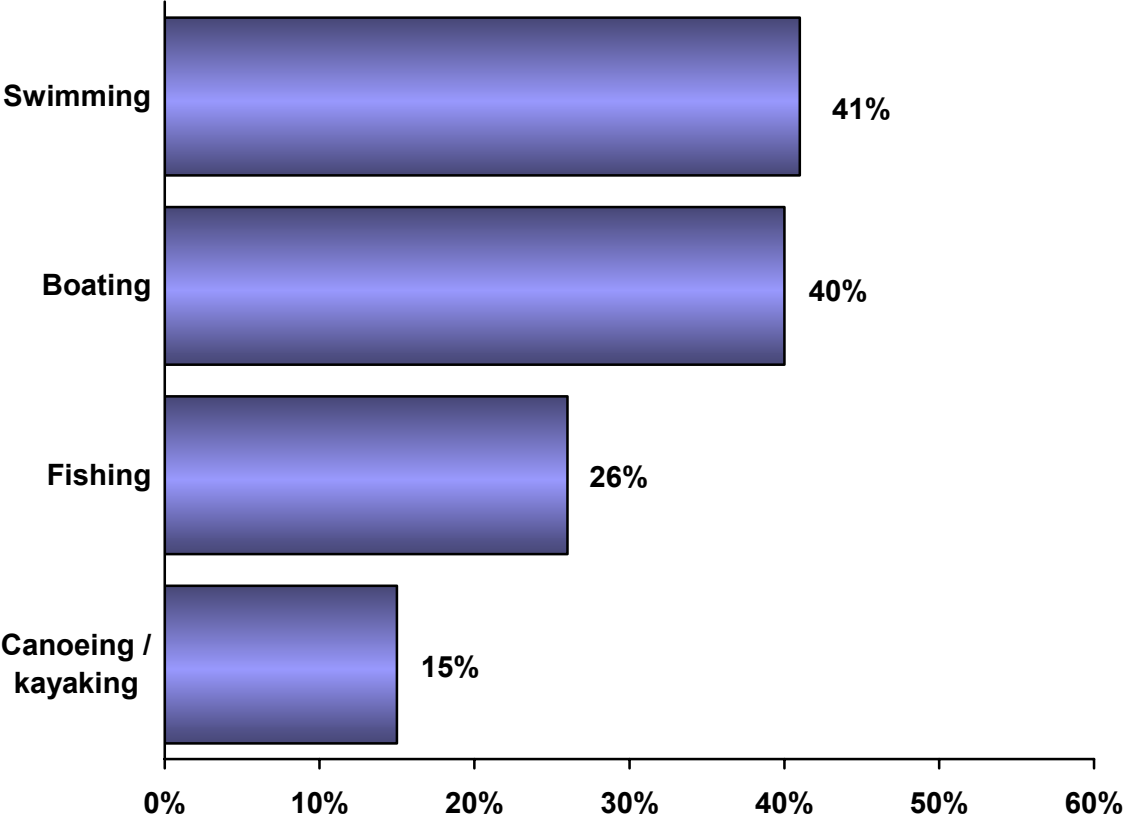
Simcoe County voters strongly endorse protecting Lake Simcoe from runoff sources and directing development away from that body of water.

More than six in ten respondents (61%) also agreed that poorly planned growth is the main reason for the declining health of Lake Simcoe, while only 15% disagreed. The remaining 24% either did not know (5%) or had a neutral opinion (19%) on the topic.

Recreation in Simcoe County

Respondents were asked about recreational uses Lake Simcoe.

“Within the past 5 years have you used Lake Simcoe for any of the following purposes?”



A significant number of Simcoe County residents use Lake Simcoe for recreational purposes, primarily swimming and boating.

C o n c e r n s

Those interviewed were also asked to rate their level of concern with a series of seven issues.

“Using a scale from one not at all concerned to five very concerned, please rate your concern with each of the following.”

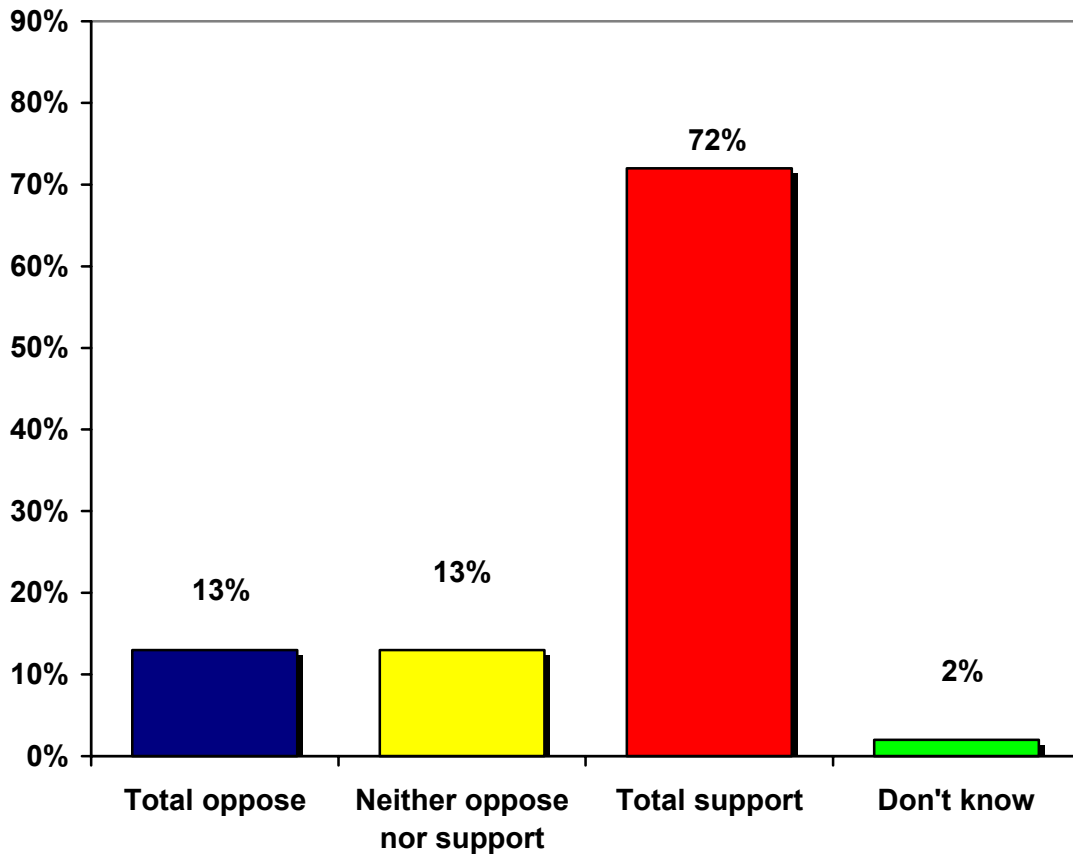
	Total Concerned	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	Total Unconcerned	Don't know
Environmental condition of Lake Simcoe	89%	8%	3%	0%
Quality of the drinking water	85%	4%	9%	2%
Air quality in Simcoe County	74%	14%	12%	0%
Poorly planned development	70%	20%	8%	3%
Traffic congestion / gridlock	64%	22%	13%	1%
Quality of municipal infrastructure	59%	24%	15%	2%
Quality of general municipal services	41%	30%	27%	2%

Of most concern to Country residents were issues related to water sources, including the environmental condition of Lake Simcoe and the quality of their drinking water. A significant number of those surveyed also expressed concern over the quality of their air and how development has been planned in the area.

The Greenbelt Plan

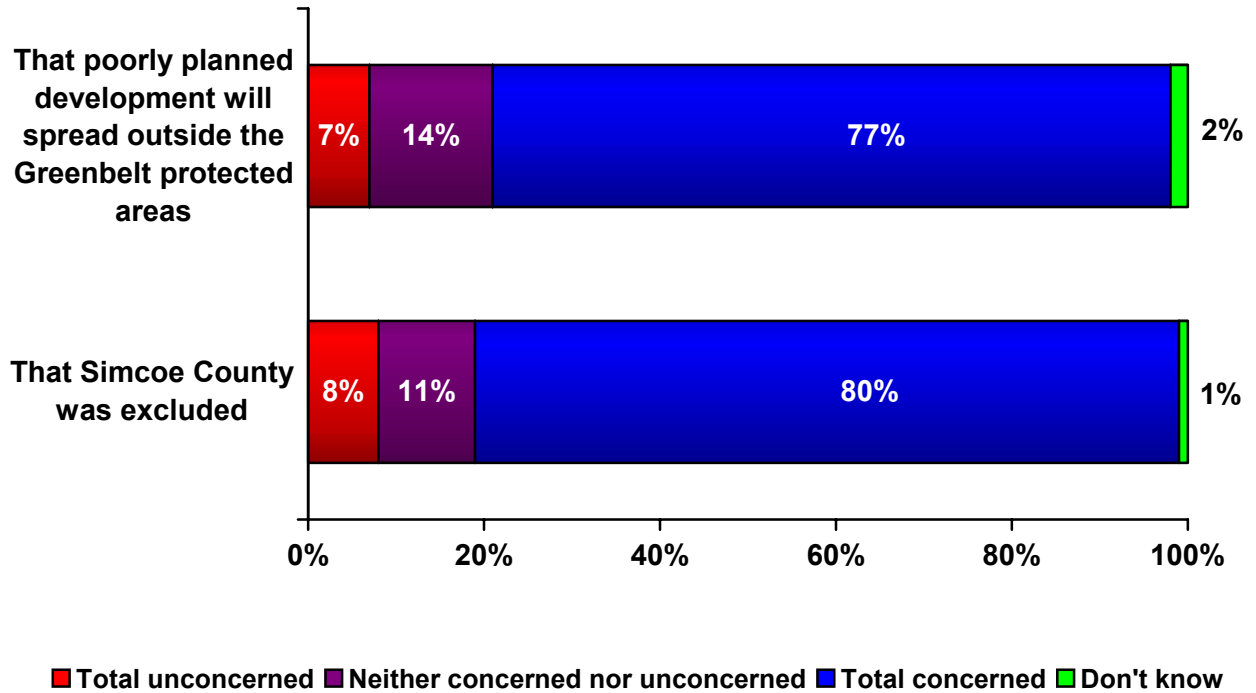
After being read a brief preamble outlining the McGuinty Liberal Greenbelt Plan, respondents were asked a series of questions.

“Using the same scale from one strongly oppose to five strongly support, please rate your level of opposition or support for this Greenbelt Plan?”



A 72% majority support the Liberal governments Greenbelt Plan in principle, including 75% of undecided voters, 77% of Green Party voters, 76% of Liberal supporters, 66% of PC's and 65% of NDP backers.

Respondents were then asked to rate their level of concern with the following.



Eight in ten residents are concerned over the fact that much of Simcoe County was excluded from the Greenbelt Plan and more than two-thirds of those surveyed are concerned that poorly planned development will spread outside of the Greenbelt protected areas.

The Growth Plan

After being read the following statement, respondents were then asked to agree or disagree with five statements.

“In addition to the Greenbelt Plan, the provincial government is also developing a strategy to manage urban growth. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe will promote more compact development, better use of urban land, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure, in order to counter sprawling development and declining air quality.”

“Please respond to each of the following statements using a scale from one strongly disagree to five strongly agree.”

	Total Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Total Disagree	Don't know
Ensuring healthy drinking water quality means protecting this water at its source such as Lake Simcoe	95%	2%	2%	1%
Declining air quality in southern Ontario will have a negative impact on the health of myself and my family	85%	8%	6%	0%
Increasing traffic congestion and gridlock will have a negative impact on the quality of life in Simcoe County	78%	13%	9%	1%
Increasing traffic congestion and gridlock will have a negative impact on my quality of life	67%	18%	15%	0%
If existing communities that have infrastructure in place such as public transit, are able to accommodate increased population growth, new housing developments should take place in these areas	56%	27%	15%	1%

The strongest buy-in was with respect to protecting drinking water at its source. A very high number of residents were also of the opinion that declining air quality will impact negatively on their health and that of their family, as well as the belief that traffic gridlock is impacting on the quality of life in Simcoe County.

S u m m a r y

Simcoe County residents echo the concerns of their Greater Toronto Area neighbors when it comes to urban sprawl and their desire to control excessive development. There is apprehension with respect to the side effects of rapid development such as traffic congestion, air and water pollution and how it will impact on their quality of life and their health.

As a result, most of those interviewed support the Greenbelt Plan and appear to want most of Simcoe County included within it.

Survey results also indicate that water quality issues were the dominant concerns among respondents. A large majority were concerned about the environmental integrity of the lake. Furthermore, like a majority of other Ontarians, those living in Simcoe County have concern over the quality of their drinking water and would like the source of their drinking water protected.

Results by Question

Q1.What do feel is the most important issue facing Simcoe County at this time?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Don't know	100	20.0
Health care	61	12.2
Waste management / disposal	43	8.6
Growing too fast / over developement / urban sprawl	41	8.2
Education	39	7.8
Jobs / employment / unemployment	24	4.8
Roads	23	4.6
Water quality	22	4.4
Environment	20	4.0
Doctor shortages	19	3.8
Taxes	18	3.6
Developement / infrastructure	15	3.0
Politicians / government	13	2.6
Affordable housing	10	2.0
Poverty / homelessness	9	1.8
More recreational areas	9	1.8
Deficit / finances	8	1.6
Youth	5	1.0
Traffic / congestion	5	1.0
Public transportation	5	1.0
Economy	4	.8
Air quality	3	.6
Same sex marriage	3	.6
Tourism / tourists	2	.4
Total	501	100.0

Q2.And what would you consider to be the most important environmental issue facing Simcoe County at this time?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Water quality	142	28.3
Waste / waste disposal	137	27.3
Don't know	98	19.6
Growing too fast / over developement / urban sprawl	28	5.6
Pollution	22	4.4
Air pollution	20	4.0
Vehicle pollution	11	2.2
Lack of trees / tree cutting	10	2.0
Protecting green space	9	1.8
Pesticide use	8	1.6
Farmlands	6	1.2
Mosquitos / West Nile	4	.8
Wildlife	3	.6
The Moraine	3	.6
Total	501	100.0

Vote Intent. If a provincial election were held today in Ontario, which party's candidate would you vote most likely vote for?

READ:

- Green Party (go to Q3)
- Liberal Party (go to Q3)
- New Democratic Party (NDP) (go to Q3)
- PC (go to Q3)

DO NOT READ

- Will not/do not vote (go to Q3)
- **Don't know (go to Leaning Towards)**

Leaning Towards. If a provincial election were held today in Ontario, which party's candidate would you most likely lean towards?

READ:

- Green Party
- Liberal Party
- New Democratic Party (NDP)
- PC

DO NOT READ

- Don't know

Decided & Leaning Vote Intent

		Vote Intent	Excluding Undecided's
Valid	Conservative Party	38.0	46.0
	Liberal Party	29.4	35.6
	Green Party	7.7	9.3
	New Democratic Party	7.4	9.0
	Don't know	17.4	

Over the past 10 years, surface runoff of phosphorous and other nutrients into Lake Simcoe as a result of urbanization has more than doubled. This increased contamination has resulted in beach closures, the decline of cold water fish species, and excessive weed and algae growth. This has an impact on the health of the Lake itself, the surrounding area as well as the recreational industry, which contributes over \$200 million to the local economy.

Please rate your level of opposition or support for each of the following, using a scale from one strongly oppose to five strongly support.

Q3. Protecting Lake Simcoe from runoff sources such as lawn fertilizers, pesticides and detergents

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly oppose	24	4.8
	Oppose	10	2.0
	Neither support nor oppose	37	7.4
	Support	63	12.6
	Strongly support	366	73.1
	Don't know	1	.2
	Total	501	100.0

Q4. Directing urban development away from important water sources such as Lake Simcoe

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly oppose	16	3.2
	Oppose	20	4.0
	Neither support nor oppose	67	13.4
	Support	74	14.8
	Strongly support	316	63.1
	Don't know	8	1.6
	Total	501	100.0

Q5.Using the scale where one is strongly disagree up to five you strongly agree with poorly planned growth is the main reason for the declining health of Lake Simcoe

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	30	6.0
	Disagree	46	9.2
	Neither disagree nor agree	97	19.4
	Agree	96	19.2
	Strongly agree	208	41.5
	Don't know	24	4.8
	Total	501	100.0

Q7.Within the past 5 years have you used Lake Simcoe for any of the following recreational purposes? Fishing

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	128	25.5
	No	373	74.5
	Total	501	100.0

Q7b. Swimming

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	204	40.7
	No	296	59.1
	Don't know	1	.2
	Total	501	100.0

Q7c Boating

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	201	40.1
	No	298	59.5
	Don't know	2	.4
	Total	501	100.0

Q7d. Canoeing / kayaking

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	73	14.6
	No	428	85.4
	Total	501	100.0

Using a scale from one not at all concerned to five very concerned, please rate your concern with each of the following.

Q8.The environmental condition of Lake Simcoe (such as weed growth, beach closings and the loss of fish habitat)

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	6	1.2
	Not concerned	7	1.4
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	42	8.4
	Concerned	115	23.0
	Very concerned	329	65.7
	Don't know	2	.4
	Total	501	100.0

Q9.The quality of your drinking water

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	29	5.8
	Not concerned	18	3.6
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	21	4.2
	Concerned	57	11.4
	Very concerned	366	73.1
	Don't know	10	2.0
	Total	501	100.0

Q10.Air quality in Simcoe County

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	20	4.0
	Not concerned	42	8.4
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	69	13.8
	Concerned	83	16.6
	Very concerned	287	57.3
	Total	501	100.0

Q11.Traffic congestion or gridlock in Simcoe County

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	21	4.2
	Not concerned	45	9.0
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	108	21.6
	Concerned	91	18.2
	Very concerned	231	46.1
	Don't know	5	1.0
	Total	501	100.0

Q12.Poorly Planned development in Simcoe County

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	13	2.6
	Not concerned	25	5.0
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	101	20.2
	Concerned	133	26.5
	Very concerned	216	43.1
	Don't know	13	2.6
	Total	501	100.0

Q13.How would you rate your level of concern with the quality of your municipal infrastructure and public works services such as sewer and water, road etc?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	26	5.2
	Not concerned	47	9.4
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	120	24.0
	Concerned	138	27.5
	Very concerned	159	31.7
	Don't know	11	2.2
	Total	501	100.0

Q14.And how would you rate your level of concern with the quality of general municipal services such as libraries, parks and recreational services, arts and cultural facilities etc?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Not at all concerned	55	11.0
	Not concerned	79	15.8
	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	150	29.9
	Concerned	119	23.8
	Very concerned	87	17.4
	Don't know	11	2.2
	Total	501	100.0

The Provincial government of Dalton McGuinty recently announced a plan that will protect 400,000 hectares of green space across southern Ontario. The new Greenbelt Protection Plan will limit housing subdivision development and poorly planned growth in an area from Niagara Falls, along the Niagara escarpment past Hamilton, north of the Oak Ridges Moraine up to Lake Simcoe, over to Rice Lake near Peterborough.

As you may know, THE VAST MAJORITY OF Simcoe County was not included in the McGuinty Liberal Greenbelt Plan.

Q16. Using the same scale from one strongly oppose to five strongly support, please rate your level of opposition or support for this Greenbelt Plan?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Strongly oppose	38	7.6
Oppose	27	5.4
Neither oppose nor support	66	13.2
Support	95	19.0
Stongly support	265	52.9
Don't know	10	2.0
Total	501	100.0

Q17. That because Simcoe County was excluded

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Not at all concerned	18	3.6
Not concerned	23	4.6
Neither concerned nor unconcerned	55	11.0
Concerned	108	21.6
Very concerned	291	58.1
Don't know	6	1.2
Total	501	100.0

Q18. That poorly planned development will spread across outside the Greenbelt protected areas

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Not at all concerned	15	3.0
Not concerned	21	4.2
Neither concerned nor unconcerned	72	14.4
Concerned	123	24.6
Very concerned	260	51.9
Don't know	10	2.0
Total	501	100.0

In addition to the Greenbelt Plan, the provincial government is also developing a strategy to manage urban growth. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe will promote more compact development, better use of urban land, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure, in order to counter sprawling development and declining air quality.

Please respond to each of the following statements using a scale from one strongly disagree to five strongly agree.

Q19. If existing communities that have infrastructure in place such as public transit, are able to accommodate increased population growth, new housing developments should take place in these areas

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	43	8.6
	Disagree	33	6.6
	Neither disagree nor agree	137	27.3
	Agree	149	29.7
	Strongly agree	134	26.7
	Don't know	5	1.0
	Total	501	100.0

Q20. Ensuring healthy drinking water quality means protecting this water at its source such as Lake Simcoe

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	.6
	Disagree	5	1.0
	Neither disagree nor agree	11	2.2
	Agree	79	15.8
	Strongly agree	396	79.0
	Don't know	7	1.4
	Total	501	100.0

Q21. Increasing traffic congestion and gridlock will have a negative impact on the quality of life in Simcoe County

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	3.0
	Disagree	28	5.6
	Neither disagree nor agree	63	12.6
	Agree	139	27.7
	Strongly agree	251	50.1
	Don't know	5	1.0
	Total	501	100.0

Q22. Increasing traffic congestion and gridlock will have a negative impact on my quality of life

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	29	5.8
	Disagree	46	9.2
	Neither disagree nor agree	89	17.8
	Agree	126	25.1
	Strongly agree	211	42.1
	Total	501	100.0

Q23. Declining air quality in southern Ontario will have a negative impact on the health of myself and my family

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	2.0
	Disagree	21	4.2
	Neither disagree nor agree	42	8.4
	Agree	85	17.0
	Strongly agree	342	68.3
	Don't know	1	.2
	Total	501	100.0

We are nearing the end of our survey and we would just like to remind you that all information will remain confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only.

Q24. How many kilometers do you commute to and from work or school on an average day?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Do not commute	160	31.9
Less than 1 kilometer	25	5.0
Under 5 kilometers	48	9.6
5 -10 kilometers	70	14.0
More than 10 kilometers	196	39.1
Don't know	2	.4
Total	501	100.0

Q25.What type of dwelling do you live in?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Detached, single-family home	408	81.4
A condominium townhouse	12	2.4
Row house or apartment	24	4.8
A freehold townhouse	8	1.6
Row house or semi detached home	25	5.0
An apartment building	22	4.4
Don't know / refused	2	.4
Total	501	100.0

Q26.How many years have you lived in Simcoe County?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 1-5	115	23.0
6-10	71	14.2
11-15	61	12.2
16-20	56	11.2
21-25	33	6.6
26-30	36	7.2
Over 30	123	24.6
Don't know / refused	6	1.2
Total	501	100.0

Q27.Do you consider yourself the resident of a rural or urban community?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Rural	265	52.9
Urban	226	45.1
Don't know / refused	10	2.0
Total	501	100.0

Q28.Which of the following age groups may I place you in?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 18-34	120	24.0
35-54	208	41.5
55 and older	168	33.5
Don't know / refused	5	1.0
Total	501	100.0

Q29n.You don't have to answer this question, however we would like to ask what is your combined family income?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Under \$35,000	83	16.6
Under \$75,000	170	33.9
Over \$75,000	152	30.3
Don't know / refused	96	19.2
Total	501	100.0

Q30.Gender

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Male	243	48.5
Female	258	51.5
Total	501	100.0

