

A Confidential Survey of  
Fayette County Residents  
Regarding Recycling

*Conducted on behalf of the*

**LFUCG Division of Waste Management**

*October 2010*

*By*



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# Study of Opinions

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# Survey Design & Methods

## Background & Administration

In September of 2010, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) Division of Waste Management (DWM) commissioned Preston-Osborne to conduct a survey of Fayette Countians' attitudes toward and behaviors regarding recycling. The survey findings will serve as a tool in the development of a marketing campaign plan designed to increase recycling in the community.

The questionnaire used for this survey was developed in conjunction with the Division of Waste Management. The telephone survey of 400 Fayette Countians commenced on September 7 and concluded on September 21. A sample this size results in a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 4.9$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Survey participants were selected at random from a list that was purchased from a sample vendor.

Data collection, tabulation, and analysis were conducted by Preston-Osborne of Lexington, Kentucky. Survey findings in this report are expressed in percentages unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or when multiple responses were permitted. Throughout this report, all "no responses" have been excluded. All data that appear in charts and tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Results at a Glance

## Executive Summary

All survey findings are discussed in this report. Key findings are summarized below.

- When comparing residents' ratings of various City services, those provided by DWM—recycling, garbage collection, and yard waste pickup—all scored quite well, with only the Fire Department receiving higher ratings among the services tested.
- Among all people surveyed, 18 percent don't have/use City *garbage* collection service, 23 percent don't have or use City *recycling* services, and 25 percent said they either don't have or don't use City *yard waste* pickup services.
- Respondents who *have* a Rosie are notably more apt to give high marks to the City's garbage collection services than those who don't have one, yet are served by the City. Nearly 3 out of 4 people who report having a Rosie said they were "very satisfied" with garbage services (72 percent), compared to only 41 percent of those who don't have a Rosie.
- When it comes to recycling, homeowners using the City's service are more likely to report being "very satisfied" with the service when compared to renters who use it (72 percent compared to 61 percent). Although there are a couple of exceptions, generally speaking, as age, income, and education levels increase, so too, does the level of satisfaction expressed with the City's recycling service. In addition, the more passionate a person is about recycling, the greater the likelihood that he or she will be "very satisfied" with the City's service.
- Why do people in Fayette County choose to recycle? According to the survey results, it's because it is good for the environment—9 out of 10 people say that fact plays a major role in their decision to recycle (critical role and big role combined), including 62 percent who deem it a critical reason. In second place is the fact that people don't like to be wasteful, as Figure 11 depicts, with 8 out of 10 people characterizing that reason as a major one in causing them to recycle. Seven out of 10 people say the fact that the City makes it easy for them to recycle plays a major role in their choice to do so.
- When asked which of a series of statements best describes their recycling behaviors, roughly one-third of Fayette Countians say they are avid recyclers, one-third claim to be frequent recyclers, and one-third admit they don't recycle all that much, if at all.

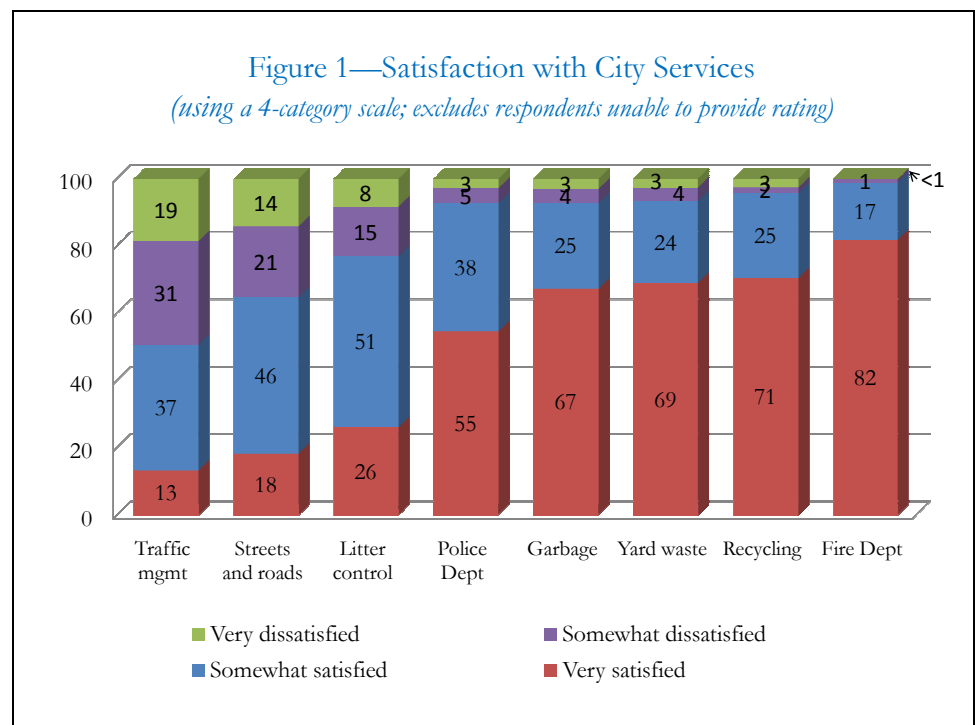
- Survey results strongly suggest that convenience plays a significant role in household recycling habits. For example, among people *without* curbside recycling, the percentage that describes themselves as avid recyclers is half that of those who have a Rosie (21 percent versus 42 percent). Additionally, people without curbside service are more than three times more likely to say they take **only select** items to a drop-off center than are those who have Rosies (18 percent compared to 4 percent).
- Respondents were asked to list all the reasons they don't recycle (or in the case of those who do, the reasons they don't recycle as much as they could). The most common response to this open-ended question—mentioned by 34 percent of all respondents—was, “I already **do** recycle as much as I can” or “I recycle everything that is accepted through curbside recycling.” Actual barriers to recycling fell into 29 different response categories, with the three most commonly cited ones being that it takes too much time or effort to separate things (14 percent), that people are unsure what is and isn't recyclable (11 percent), and that people just forget or get lazy and don't do it (7 percent).
- When presented with a list of 10 reasons that might prevent people from recycling, Fayette Countians say that the biggest issue standing in the way of them recycling more is a lack of awareness of what is and isn't allowed in the recycling bin. This was mentioned as playing a large role in people's recycling efforts by 1 out of 4 people surveyed (critical role and big role combined), and another 30 percent said it plays a minor role. The time and effort it takes to *prepare* items for recycling was the next most significant barrier, followed by the idea that there are too many rules to follow in order to recycle. Given that Lexington's program now requires limited preparation, doesn't require the separation of items inside the Rosie, and accepts more recyclables than ever before, these too, suggest confusion about LFUCG's recycling program.
- When asked to identify whether their garbage is collected by the City or a private company, more than 3 out of 4 people surveyed said they are served by LFUCG.
- Among those served by the City, 88 percent said they have a Rosie. More than half of Fayette County residents who use a private garbage hauler **don't** have curbside recycling (54 percent). It should be noted that the question didn't ask if the service was *available* to them; it asked if they currently *have* curbside recycling service through their garbage hauler.
- Overall, 58 percent of Fayette Countians **without** curbside recycling don't recycle at all, including more than two-thirds of LFUCG's customers who don't have a Rosie.
- Overall, 14 percent of Fayette County residents *don't recycle anything at all*, including nearly 1 out of 10 people who likely have curbside recycling available to them if they wanted it (LFUCG customers).

- The items more people say they recycle regularly are plastic jugs, aluminum cans, and phone books—at least 8 out of 10 recyclers said they recycle these items. The least recycled items among those tested were steel or tin cans, junk mail, and plastic bags.
- Nearly 1 out of 5 people who recycle plastic bags are actually putting them in their recycling bin as opposed to returning them to the grocery store.
- An agree/disagree statement on the survey, designed to determine how effective an incentive might be in increasing participation in the recycling program, was worded as follows: “If, by recycling, I could receive a 20-percent discount on my monthly garbage bill, I would be much more likely to do it.” The notion of an incentive, not surprisingly, appeals to a lot of people. Nearly 8 out of 10 people surveyed agreed with the statement, including more than half who agreed “strongly.”
- Results to another agree/disagree statement found that the environmental impact message resonates strongly with Fayette Countians. It was worded as follows: “Recycling is good for the environment because it reduces the amount of trash sent to the landfill,” to which 97 percent of people surveyed agreed.
- Respondents were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “If there was a ‘Pay as You Throw’ policy that meant the more garbage you had, the more you’d have to pay for trash collection, I would be much more likely to recycle.” Although there was more variance of opinion on the “stick” concept than on the “carrot” approach, still a majority of respondents (64 percent) did agree with the statement.
- Two-thirds of all respondents agreed that they would recycle more if they better understood what can and can’t go in the recycling bin. Those who agree most include those who already recycle frequently (but not avidly) and people who currently recycle on an infrequent basis.
- Overall, Fayette Countians were relatively supportive of the idea of mandatory recycling, with 7 out of 10 agreeing that, if the City decided to make recycling mandatory, they would be very supportive of that initiative.
- More than 2 out of 3 parents with school-age children said their children had come home from school with information about recycling.

# Major Findings

## Satisfaction with City Services

To establish a baseline of satisfaction with the City’s current recycling program, respondents were first asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a variety of City services (as comparison points), including recycling, using a four-category scale (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied). As Figure 1 indicates, services provided by the DWM—recycling, garbage collection, and yard waste pickup—all scored well in the survey, with only the Fire Department receiving higher ratings.



In a survey conducted on behalf of the LFUCG in 2007 designed, in part, to measure satisfaction with City services, similar scores were reported for each of the three DWM services included, with the 2010 scores showing a slight improvement (although within the margin of error) over those earned three years ago.

While the above figure illustrates the findings among those able to provide a rating, it’s important to note that 18 percent of people surveyed don’t have/use City garbage collection service, 23 percent don’t have or

use City recycling services, and 25 percent said they either don't have or use City yard waste pickup services.

When reviewing results of the three DWM services measured in the survey by various demographic subgroups, some interesting trends are found. First, respondents who *have* a Rosie are notably more apt to give high marks to the City's garbage collection services than those who don't have one, yet are served by the City. Nearly 3 out of 4 people who report having a Rosie said they were "very satisfied" with garbage services (72 percent), compared to only 41 percent of those who don't have a Rosie. Further, people who report being "avid" recyclers give higher marks to the City's garbage collection services when compared to those who are less passionate about recycling.

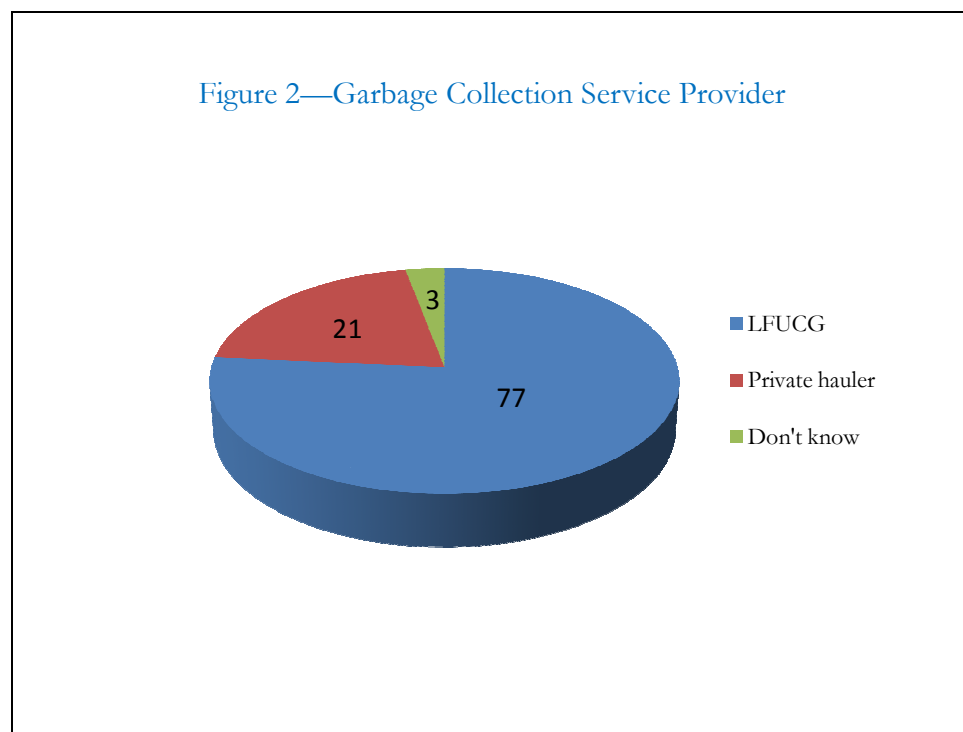
When it comes to recycling, homeowners using the City's service are more likely to report being "very satisfied" with the service when compared to renters who use it (72 percent compared to 61 percent). Although there are a couple of exceptions, generally speaking, as age, income, and education levels increase, so too, does the level of satisfaction expressed with the City's recycling service. In addition, the more passionate a person is about recycling, the greater the likelihood that he or she will be "very satisfied" with the City's service. Satisfaction among "avid" recyclers able to rate the City's service is 80 percent ("very satisfied" only), compared to only 60 percent among those who say they "seldom" recycle.

Although not necessarily a function of DWM, some interesting attitudes are revealed when examining demographic differences with regard to litter control. Most notably, as age *increases*, satisfaction with the City's litter control efforts *decreases*, going from a high of 42 percent among those under the age of 35 to a low of 13 percent among respondents 75 or older.



## Solid Waste & Recycling Service Providers

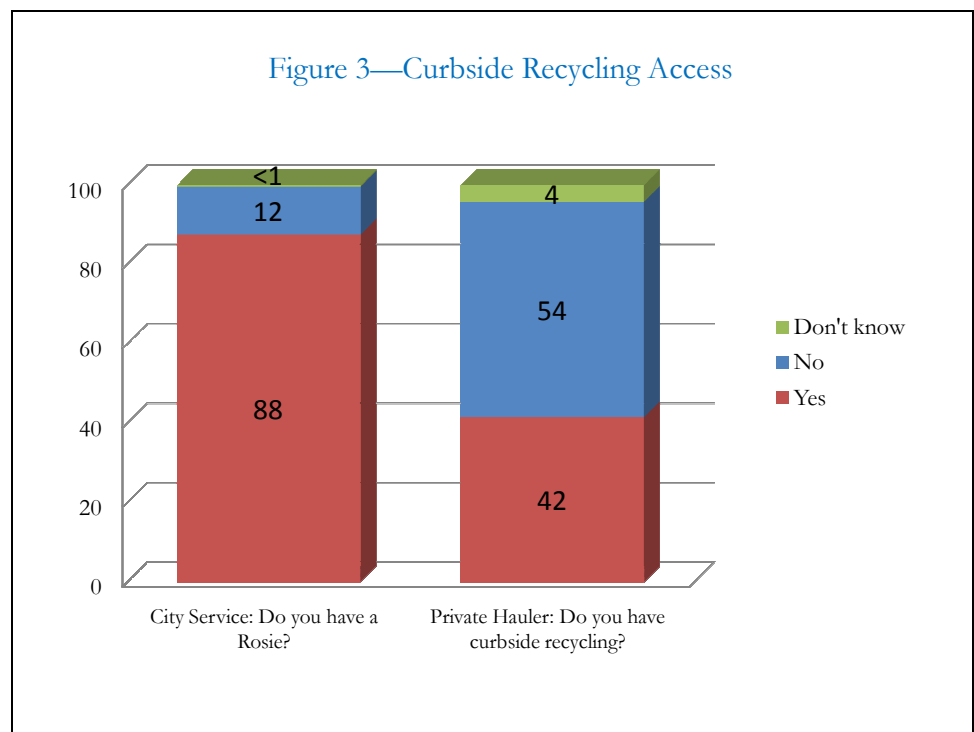
Respondents next were asked to identify whether their garbage is collected by the City or a private company. As Figure 2 shows, more than 3 out of 4 people surveyed are served by LFUCG.



Given the City's garbage collection service area, it should come as no surprise that those served by a private hauler tend to be a bit more educated, have higher incomes, and own the homes they live in when compared to those served by the City. In fact, among respondents with a household income of less than \$25,000, more than 9 out of 10 said their garbage is collected by the City. In contrast, 72 percent of respondents earning more than \$100,000 said the same.

As the above figure demonstrates, 3 percent of people aren't aware of who collects their garbage. These respondents were more likely to be renters and those who live in multi-unit dwellings.

Next, those with City service were asked if they currently have a blue Rosie for recycling, while those who have a private garbage hauler were asked if they currently have curbside recycling service through their garbage collection provider. Figure 3 depicts the findings from these two questions.



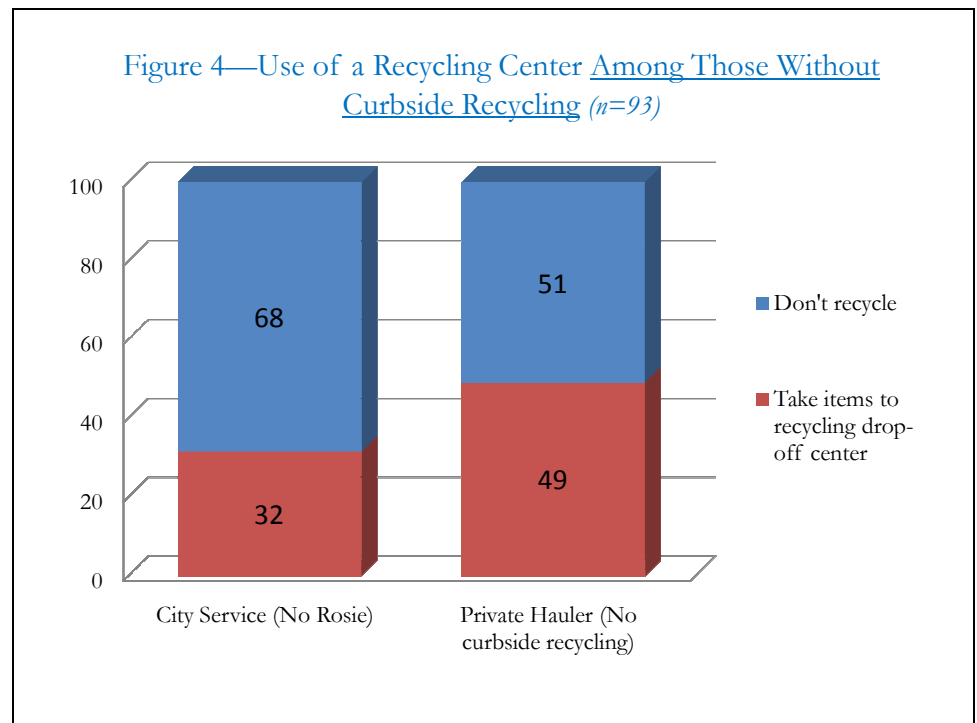
As the above figure demonstrates, more than 1 out of 10 households (12 percent) that have City garbage collection don't currently have a Rosie. Interestingly, when asked later in the survey what LFUCG could do to improve its recycling service and encourage more people to recycle, 8 percent of people who don't currently have a Rosie said the City should provide Rosies for **free**, while another 8 percent said the City should provide bins to allow people to recycle. These results indicate that there is some confusion about the basics of the recycling service among those who don't have a Rosie.

A review of demographic trends finds that people who say that they currently have Rosies are more likely to live in single-family homes, be homeowners, and be in the upper education and upper income brackets.

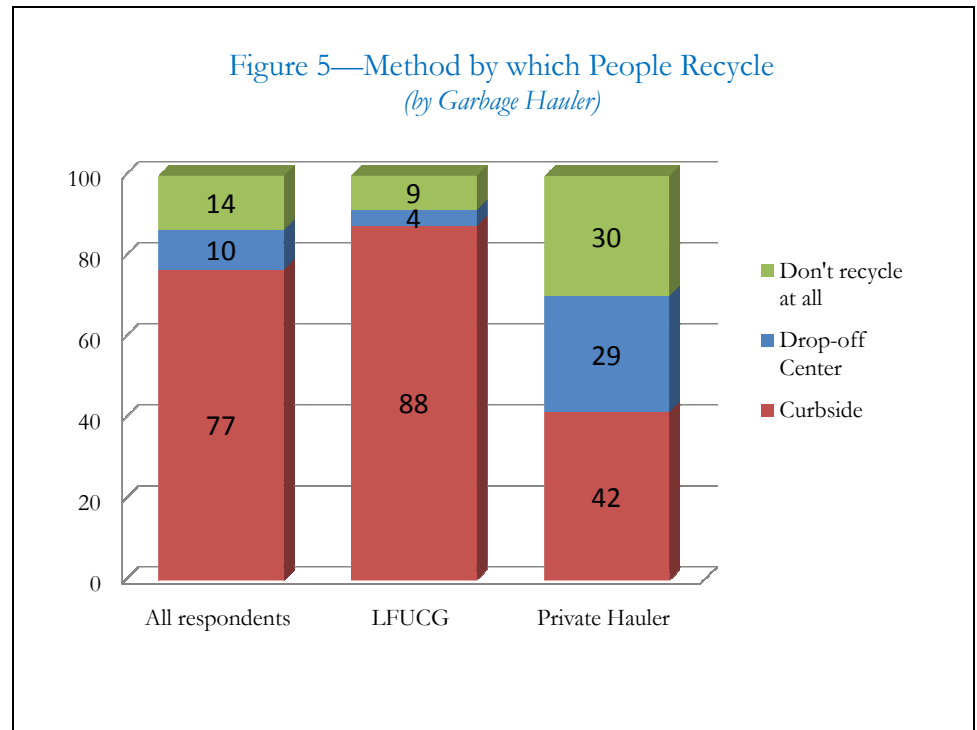
As Figure 3 also shows, more than half of Fayette County residents who use a private garbage hauler don't have curbside recycling (54 percent). It should be noted that the question didn't ask if the service was *available* to them; it asked if they currently *have* curbside recycling service through their garbage hauler. Like City customers who have Rosies, those served by a private hauler who say they have curbside recycling are more apt to live in

single-family homes, own their homes, and be better educated with higher incomes.

Next, all respondents who indicated that they do not have curbside recycling—including those with City service who don't currently have a Rosie—were asked if their household recycles items by taking them to a drop-off center or if they typically do not recycle. Overall, 58 percent of those without curbside recycling don't recycle at all, including more than two-thirds of LFUCG's customers who don't have a Rosie.



When examining the results of the previous series of questions combined together, Figure 5 shows that 14 percent of Fayette County residents *don't recycle anything at all*, including nearly 1 out of 10 people who likely have curbside recycling available to them if they wanted it (LFUCG customers).

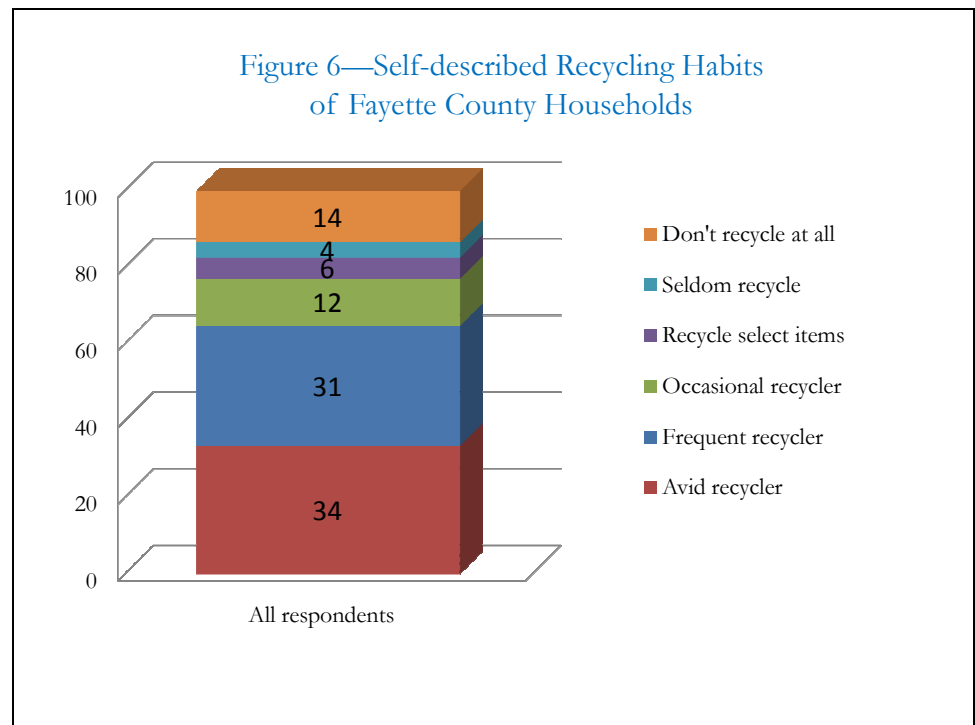


## Household Recycling Behaviors

Next, respondents—excluding those who said they don’t recycle at all—were asked which of five statements best describes the recycling habits of their household. The full text of those statements is listed below, along with the corresponding label used in the figure that appears on the next page.

- We are avid, passionate recyclers, making every effort to recycle any and all items that we can. (Avid)
- We recycle a lot and are believers in it, but don’t always recycle everything that we could. (Frequent)
- We recycle quite a bit, but it’s not always a high priority in our household. (Occasional)
- We recycle some things, but there’s a whole lot more we could be recycling. (Recycle select items)
- We seldom recycle. (Seldom recycle)

In order to paint the full picture of the self-described recycling behavior in Fayette County, Figure 6 illustrates not only how respondents who were asked the question described their household's recycling habits but also factors in the percentage of people who had already indicated they do not recycle at all (and thus weren't asked the question). As the figure shows, roughly one-third of Fayette Countians say they are avid recyclers, one-third claim to be frequent recyclers, and one-third admit they don't recycle all that much, if at all.



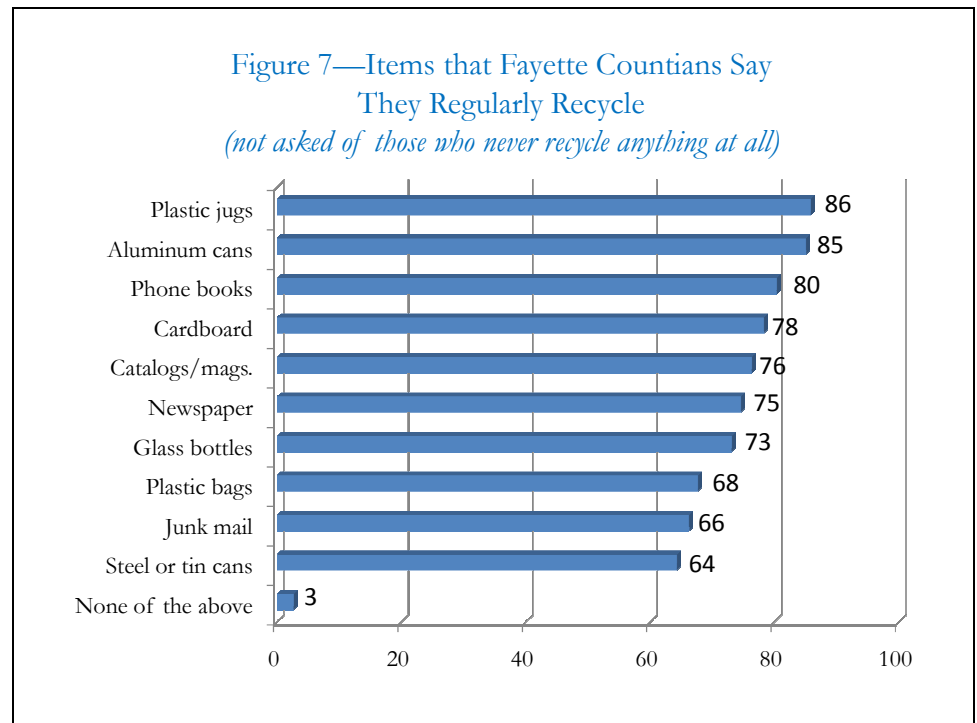
Upon exploring the findings in more detail, survey results strongly suggest that convenience plays a significant role in household recycling habits. For example, among people *without* curbside recycling, the percentage that describes themselves as avid recyclers is half that of those who have a Rosie (21 percent versus 42 percent). Additionally, people without curbside service are more than three times more likely to say they take **only select** items to a drop-off center than are those who have Rosies (18 percent compared to 4 percent).

Demographically speaking, those who reside in single-family homes and those who own their homes are more passionate about recycling than are multi-unit housing dwellers and renters (obviously there is significant overlap within these groups—98 percent of people who **own** their homes live in single-family homes, whereas only 39 percent of renters live in such homes).

The survey also finds that older respondents are more apt to recycle than younger respondents. In fact, respondents 75 years old and older are more than twice as likely to describe themselves as avid recyclers when compared to those under the age of 55 (66 percent compared to 30 percent). By age, among those *least* likely to be avid or frequent recyclers are actually people aged 45-54, with more than 3 out of 10 admitting they could be recycling significantly more than they do.

## What People Recycle

Survey respondents who said that they recycle—even if only occasionally—were read a list of 10 recyclable items and asked to indicate which of the items their household regularly recycles. Respondents were then told that “regularly” meant that 90 percent or more of the time that item would be go into the recycling bin and not the trash. As Figure 7 shows, a majority of respondents claimed to regularly recycle **all** of the items listed, with plastic jugs, aluminum cans, and phone books being the items recycled by at least 8 out of 10 people. The least recycled items among those tested were steel or tin cans, junk mail, and plastic bags.



The percentage of people that recycle each item generally follow the same demographic trends as discussed on the previous question regarding self-reported recycling habits. For example, a lower percentage of renters report recycling nearly all items when compared to homeowners with two exceptions—aluminum cans, which is an item recycled at virtually the same level regardless of whether people own or rent, and plastic bags, which renters report recycling more often than homeowners. Also, younger



respondents report lower levels of recycling on many items when compared to older respondents.

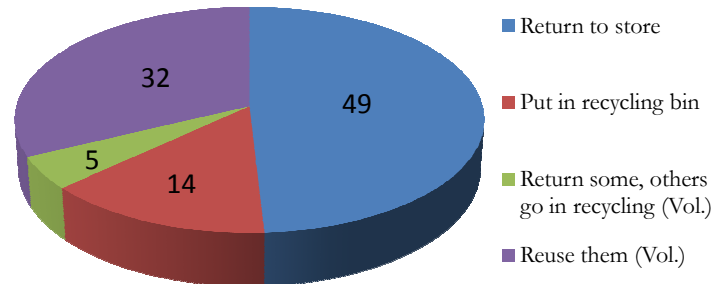
In addition to demographic differences, a couple of other notable differences are evident. Respondents who have a private hauler—even those with curbside recycling through that hauler—don’t recycle at the same rate as do those who have Rosies from the City. Many of those differences are likely explained by the fact that the City accepts more items through their recycling program than many private haulers do, and by the fact that the City’s program no longer requires sorting. For example, 80 percent of recyclers served by LFUCG report that they recycle glass bottles, compared to only 46 percent of recyclers served by a private hauler.

When examining **what** people regularly recycle broken out by how they describe their **recycling habits**, it is found that self-reported **avid** recyclers nearly always recycle all the items on the list. The items most recycled among this group are plastic jugs and cardboard, with 99 percent of avid recyclers regularly recycling these items. At the other end of the spectrum are steel or tin cans at 89 percent and plastic grocery bags at 75 percent, which are still much higher percentages than reported by less passionate recyclers.

What do infrequent recyclers (those who only recycle select items or say they “seldom” recycle) choose to recycle regularly? They recycle plastic grocery bags (55 percent), phone books (42 percent), and aluminum cans (40 percent). And, more than 1 out of 5 acknowledge that they don’t regularly recycle *any* of the items listed.

Next, respondents who indicated that they recycle plastic grocery bags were asked how they do so—whether it is by returning them to the grocery store or putting them in their recycling bin. This question was asked to gauge the extent to which people incorrectly believe that plastic bags are an item accepted by local curbside recycling programs. As Figure 8 shows, nearly 1 out of 5 people who recycle plastic bags are actually putting them in their recycling bin as opposed to returning them to the grocery store.

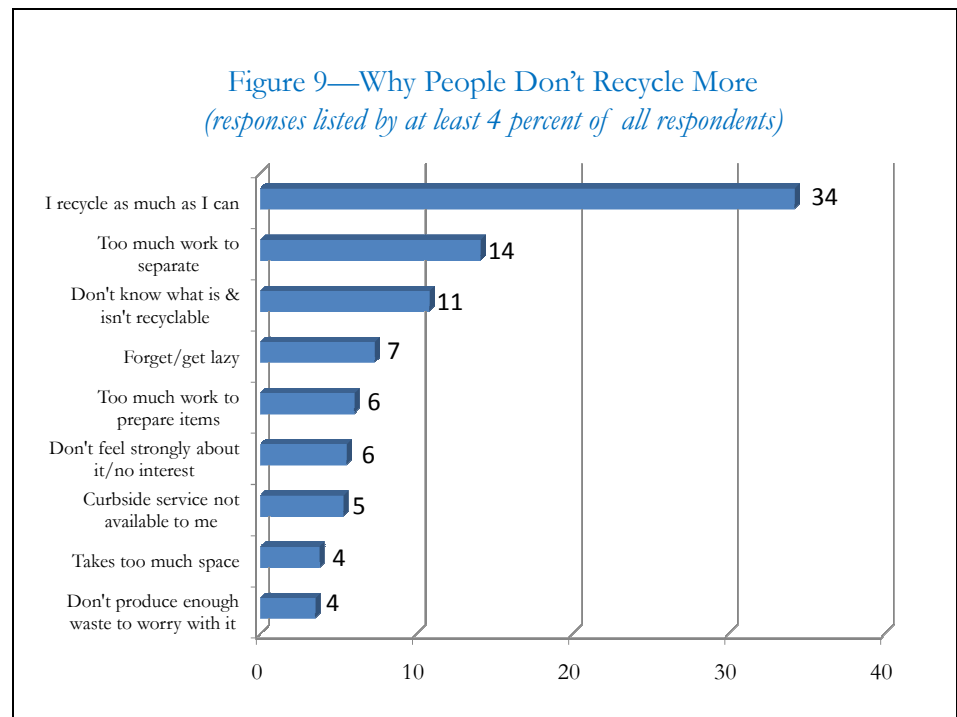
Figure 8—Method by which People Recycle Plastic Bags



Remember those infrequent recyclers, 55 percent of whom say they recycle plastic bags? Interestingly, they are the ones who return them to the store; only 5 percent are putting them in their recycling bin.

## Why People Don't Recycle...or Don't Recycle More

The next series of questions on the survey endeavored to explore what prevents Fayette Countians from recycling more than they do. First, respondents were asked to list all the reasons they don't recycle (or in the case of those who do, the reasons they don't recycle as much as they could). The most common response to this open-ended question—mentioned by 34 percent of all respondents—was, “I already *do* recycle as much as I can” or “I recycle everything that is accepted through curbside recycling.” As one might expect, this was a particularly popular response among self-reported avid recyclers (mentioned by 78 percent of people in this group). Actual barriers to recycling fell into 29 different response categories, with the three most commonly cited ones being that it takes too much time or effort to separate things (14 percent), that people are unsure what is and isn't recyclable (11 percent), and that people just forget or get lazy and don't do it (7 percent), as Figure 9 shows. For a complete list of reasons named, please refer to the data tables that accompany this report.



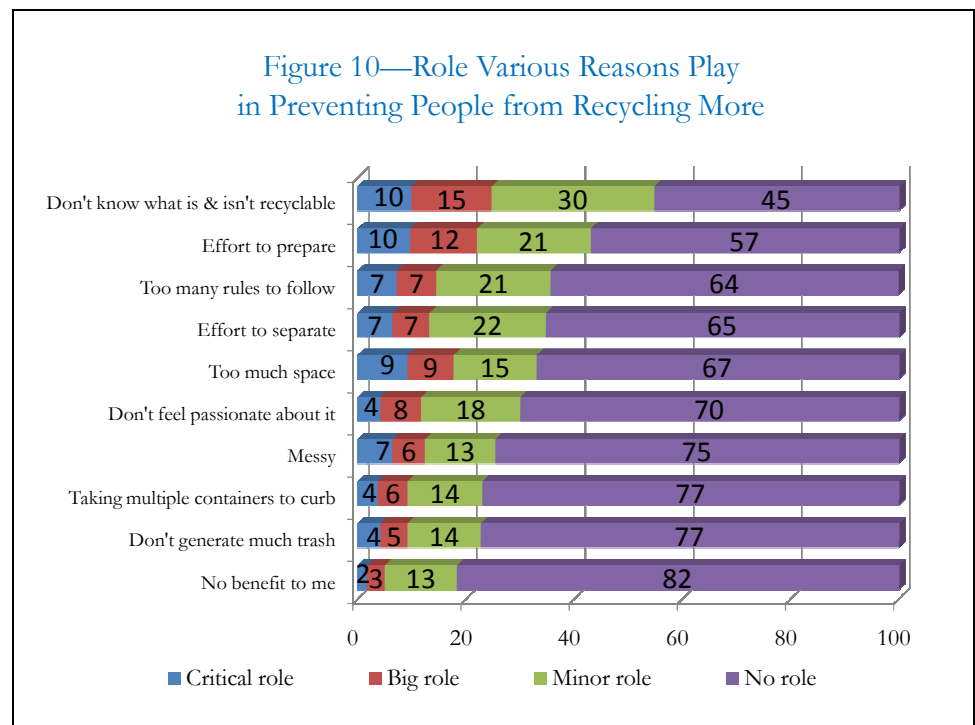
When examining the results by various demographic markers, it is found that certain reasons are more prevalent among particular groups. A few notable variances are listed below.

- Overall, 11 percent of respondents stated that they don't always know what is and isn't recyclable. However, among respondents 35-44 years old, 1 out of 5 mentioned this as being a hindrance to their recycling efforts. Also, 19 percent of people with household incomes in the \$75,000-\$100,000 range cited confusion concerning what is recyclable. Another segment that mentions a lack of awareness of what is recyclable to a greater degree than others is **frequent** recyclers—18 percent of these respondents state they would recycle more if they had a better understanding of what they can and can't put in the recycling bin. And, even among **avid** recyclers, this barrier is cited more than any other for that particular group of people (9 percent).
- Among people ages 65 to 74, 13 percent said they just forget or get lazy and don't always recycle, compared to just 7 percent of all respondents.
- Respondents under the age of 35 mentioned the work it takes to prepare items for recycling at a rate that was nearly three times the average for all respondents (16 percent compared to 6 percent). This was also more of an issue for those in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 income range (mentioned by 11 percent).
- One out of 10 people living in multi-dwelling units cited the fact that a recycling program is not offered in their building or complex as a barrier to their own recycling efforts.
- People who are served by the City **but who don't have Rosies** are more likely to be disinterested in the whole recycling idea—16 percent stated they simply didn't feel strongly about recycling (compared to 4 percent of people with Rosies). Additionally, 29 percent said it takes too much time and effort to separate things, which is nearly three times the percentage of people with Rosies who said the same (10 percent).
- People who seldom recycle mention the amount of work that it takes to separate items as the most significant barrier that prevents them from recycling more (mentioned by 26 percent). That and a general disinterest in recycling altogether, also cited by 26 percent. Similar results are found among those who **never** recycle (amount of work mentioned by 26 percent; disinterest by 15 percent). However, among those who never recycle, one other barrier appears near the top of the list—the lack of curbside recycling, which was mentioned by 20 percent of non-recyclers.

After asking respondents to name, on their own, what keeps them recycling more than what they do, they were next presented with a list of 10 potential barriers to recycling and asked to identify the role each barrier plays in their decision not to recycle more. Ratings were made on a four-category scale: 1—a critical role, 2—a big role, 3—a minor role, or 4—no role at all in preventing the respondent from recycling more. The full text of the 10 reasons, which are abbreviated in the chart on the next page, is listed here. Following each, in parentheses, is the mean score based on the 4-point scale used for the series. Please note that the **lower** the mean, the **more** of a role the reason plays in preventing people from recycling more. Thus, the list is sorted from the most significant barrier to the least based on mean scores.

- I don't always know what is and isn't a recyclable item. (3.11)
- It takes too much time and effort to prepare items for recycling, like removing labels, flattening cans, or removing lid rings. (3.25)
- It takes up too much space to have separate containers for recyclables and trash. (3.40)
- There are too many rules to follow with Lexington's recycling program. (3.42)
- It takes too much time and effort to separate the recyclables from the trash. (3.46)
- I just don't feel all that passionate about recycling. (3.54)
- It makes a mess or looks messy to have multiple containers. (3.56)
- I don't like having to take more than one container out to the curb. (3.64)
- My household generates so little garbage that it's just not worth it to recycle. (3.64)
- I don't get any benefit out of it, so I don't feel like doing it. (3.75)

As the previous list demonstrated and Figure 10 depicts, Fayette Countians say that the biggest issue standing in the way of them recycling more is a lack of awareness of what is and isn't allowed in the recycling bin. This was mentioned as playing a large role in people's recycling efforts by 1 out of 4 people surveyed (critical role and big role combined), and another 30 percent said it plays a minor role. The time and effort it takes to *prepare* items for recycling was the next most significant barrier, followed by the idea that there are too many rules to follow in order to recycle. Given that Lexington's program now requires limited preparation, doesn't require the separation of items inside the Rosie, and accepts more recyclables than ever before, these too, suggest confusion about LFUCG's recycling program.



As with the open-ended question that asked why people don't recycle more, responses to this series of questions varied by demographic segment. Listed below are some general observations regarding demographic variances. For a more complete look at demographic differences, please refer to the data tables that accompany this report.

- Generally speaking, renters, those who live in multi-unit housing, younger respondents, and those in the lower income categories tend

to view most reasons as playing more of a role in preventing them from recycling when compared to other subgroups. In other words, most everything is considered to be more of a barrier to them than it is for other types of people.

- When looking at results broken out by people's self-reported recycling behaviors, avid and frequent recyclers don't consider things to stand in their way of recycling nearly to the extent that infrequent recyclers or non-recyclers do. For example, among avid recyclers, only one reason garnered at least a 5-percent mention in the "critical role" category, that being confusion over what is and isn't recyclable. In contrast, among those who never recycle, for 5 of the 10 reasons tested, at least 20 percent said the reason played a "critical role" in preventing them from recycling, with the highest percentage (30 percent) appearing on the issue of it taking up too much space to recycle.

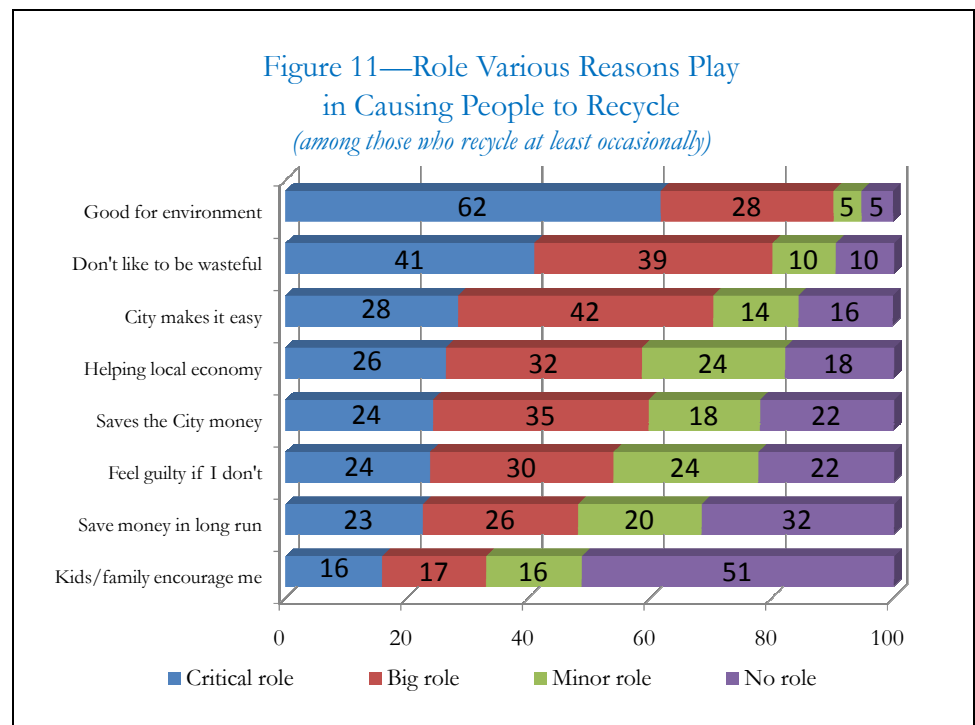
## Why People Choose to Recycle

In addition to examining what **prevents** people from recycling more, the survey also explored what **causes** people to recycle. A series of eight reasons that might lead a person to choose to recycle was tested in the survey among those who recycle, even if just occasionally. Just like the barriers series, respondents were asked to identify the role each reason for recycling plays in their personal decision to recycle. Ratings were made on a four-category scale: 1—a critical role, 2—a big role, 3—a minor role, or 4—no role at all in causing the respondent to recycle. The full text of the eight reasons, which are abbreviated in the chart on the next page, is listed here. Following each, in parentheses, is the mean score based on the 4-point scale used for the series. Please note that the **lower** the mean, the **more** of a role the reason plays in causing people to recycle. Thus, the list is sorted from the most significant reason to recycle to the least based on mean scores.

- It's good for the environment to recycle. (1.53)
- I don't like to be wasteful, so I recycle. (1.89)
- The City of Lexington makes it easy to recycle. (2.17)
- By recycling, I feel like I'm helping our local economy and supporting jobs that are generated as a result of my efforts. (2.33)
- When I recycle, it saves the City money. (2.38)
- I feel guilty if I don't recycle. (2.45)
- It could save me money in the long run by not increasing taxes or garbage collection fees. (2.61)
- My kids or other family members encourage me to recycle. (3.02)



Why do people in Fayette County choose to recycle? According to the survey results, it's because it is good for the environment—9 out of 10 people say that fact plays a major role in their decision to recycle (critical role and big role combined), including 62 percent who deem it a critical reason. In second place is the fact that people don't like to be wasteful, as Figure 11 depicts, with 8 out of 10 people characterizing that reason as a major one in causing them to recycle. Seven out of 10 people say the fact that the City makes it easy for them to recycle plays a major role in their choice to do so. All the remaining reasons tested scored notably lower with the lowest scoring reason being that one's kids or other family members encourage them to recycle.



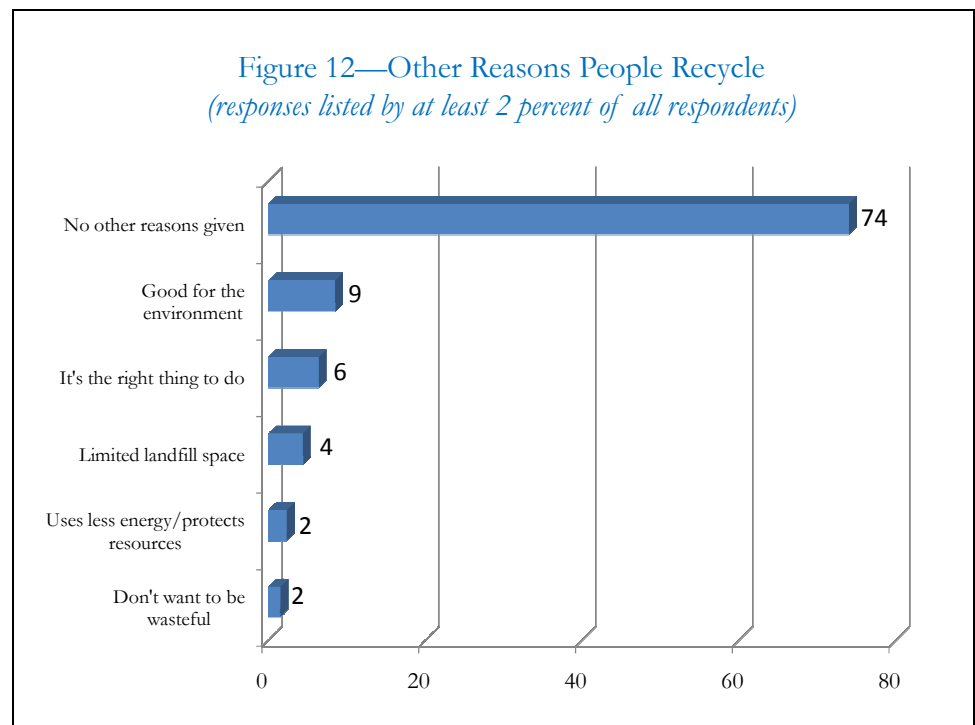
As with the previous series of questions regarding barriers to recycling, responses to this series addressing reasons why people do recycle varied by demographic segment. Listed below are some general observations regarding demographic variances. For a more complete look at demographic differences, please refer to the data tables that accompany this report.

- Overall, women tended to give more weight to the role most all reasons play in causing them to recycle than men did. Most notably, 33 percent of women say “guilt” plays a critical role in causing them

to recycle. In contrast, only 13 percent of men said the same. In a related finding, 20 percent of women say that encouragement from their children or other family members plays a critical role in their recycling habits, while only 11 percent of men said the same.

- When looking at results broken out by people's self-reported recycling behaviors, avid recyclers are more apt to say all the reasons listed play a much more significant role in their decision to recycle when compared to infrequent recyclers. For example, among infrequent recyclers, the reason that captures the highest percentage in the "critical role" category is the environmental impact, yet that percentage is only 32 percent. By comparison, 78 percent of avid recyclers say they recycle for the good of the environment. The bottom line is that infrequent recyclers are simply more apathetic overall and don't have any reason that seems to compel them to recycle.

Following the list of eight reasons that may cause people to recycle that were tested, respondents were asked to identify any other reasons not mentioned that compel them to recycle. The vast majority of respondents (74 percent) were unable to name another reason. Those who did tended to name one of the reasons already discussed in the previous series of questions, as Figure 12 shows.

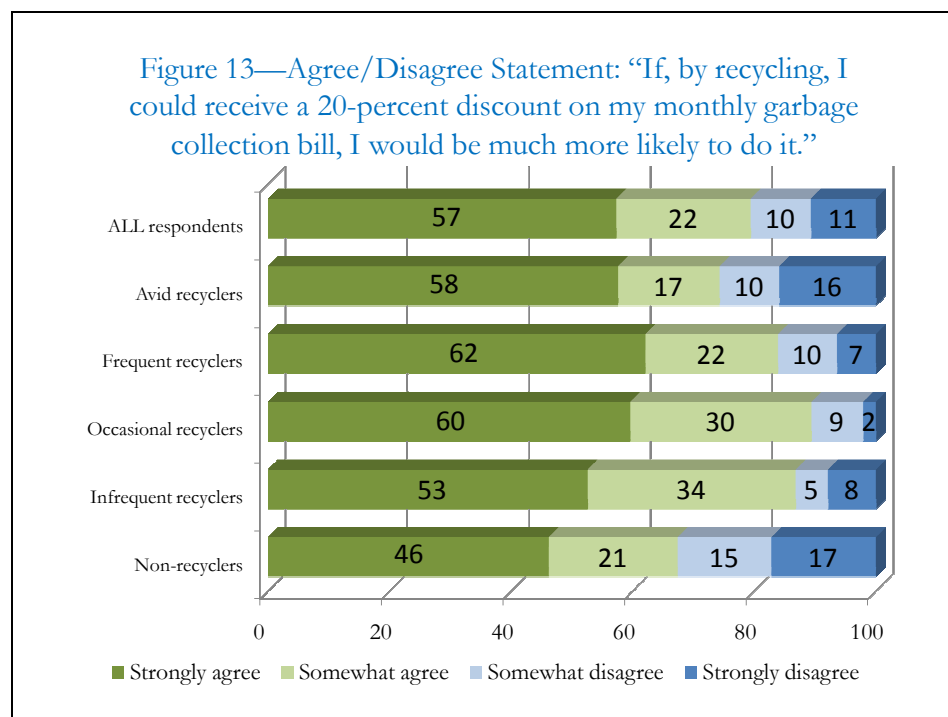


## Marketing Campaign Messaging

To test the potential impact of messages that might be used in a campaign designed to increase recycling in Fayette County, survey participants were read a list of five statements and asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each. Ratings were made on a four-category scale—strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree.

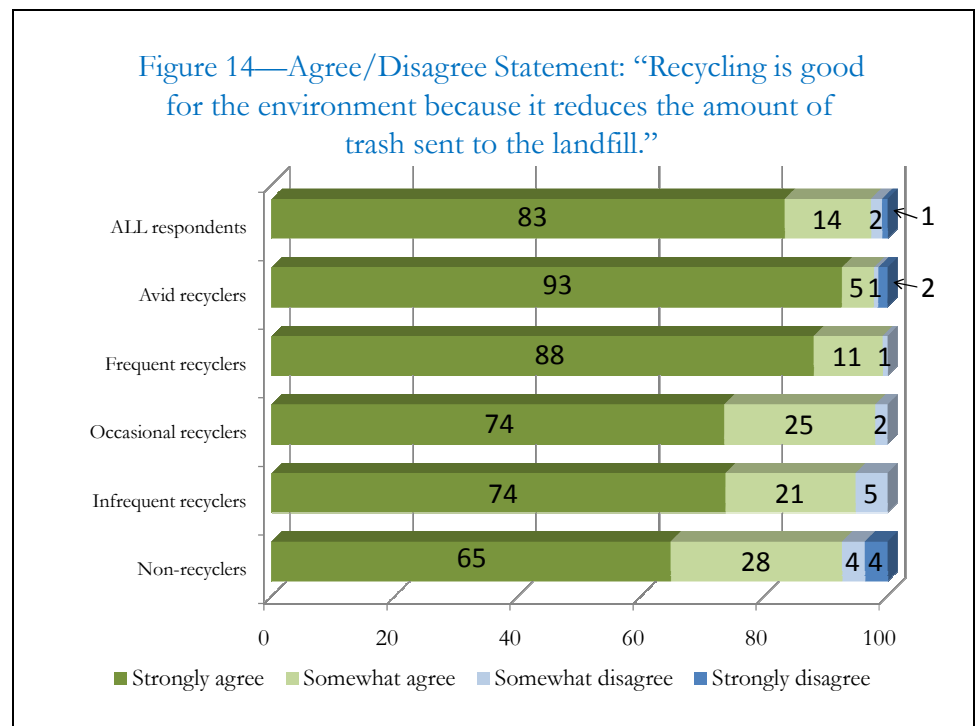
The first statement, designed to determine how effective an incentive might be in increasing participation in the recycling program, was worded as follows: “If, by recycling, I could receive a 20-percent discount on my monthly garbage bill, I would be much more likely to do it.” As Figure 13 shows, the notion of an incentive, not surprisingly, appeals to a lot of people. Nearly 8 out of 10 people surveyed agreed with the statement, including more than half who agreed “strongly.”

As Figure 13 demonstrates, when looking at “strongly” and “somewhat” agree combined, the incentive concept is more appealing to those who already recycle some now, but interest waned among avid recyclers and was lowest among those who never recycle at all.



Demographically speaking, those who viewed an incentive as being particularly appealing are younger residents, those with a household income between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and college graduates. Conversely, it held less appeal for older respondents (especially those over 75) and, surprisingly, those earning less than \$25,000 a year.

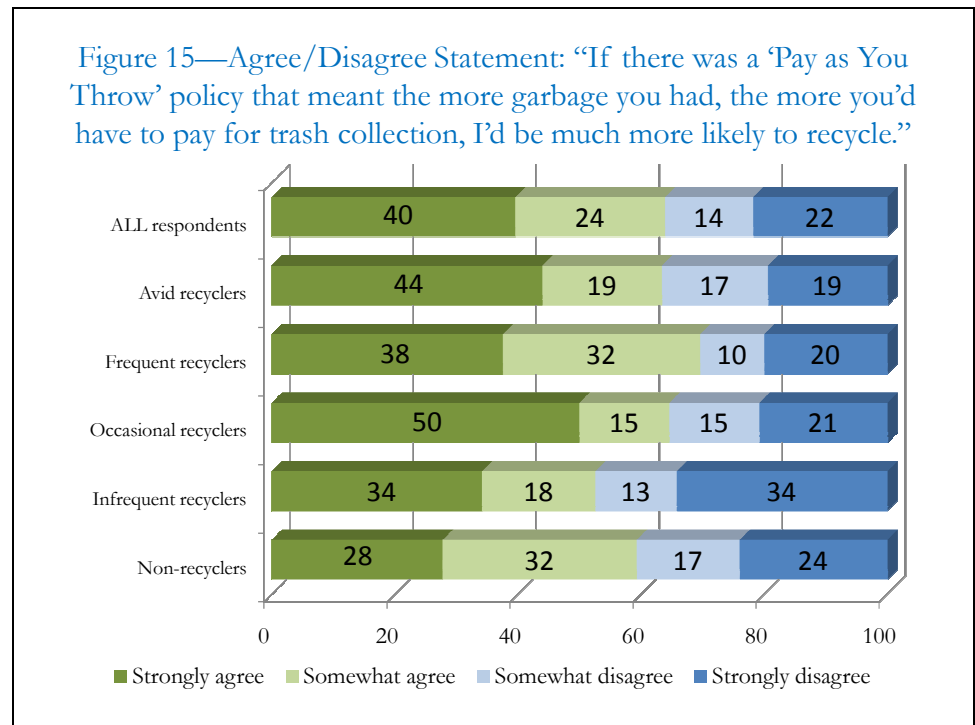
The next statement sought to assess the extent to which the environmental impact message resonates with Fayette Countians. It was worded as follows: “Recycling is good for the environment because it reduces the amount of trash sent to the landfill.” As Figure 14 shows, overwhelmingly, people do recognize that recycling is good for the environment; however, a correlation exists between the extent to which people agree with the statement and their current recycling habits. Whereas 93 percent of avid recyclers “strongly agree” with the statement, less than two-thirds of those who never recycle say the same.



The only demographic difference of note is that women agree that recycling is good for the environment to a greater extent than do men.

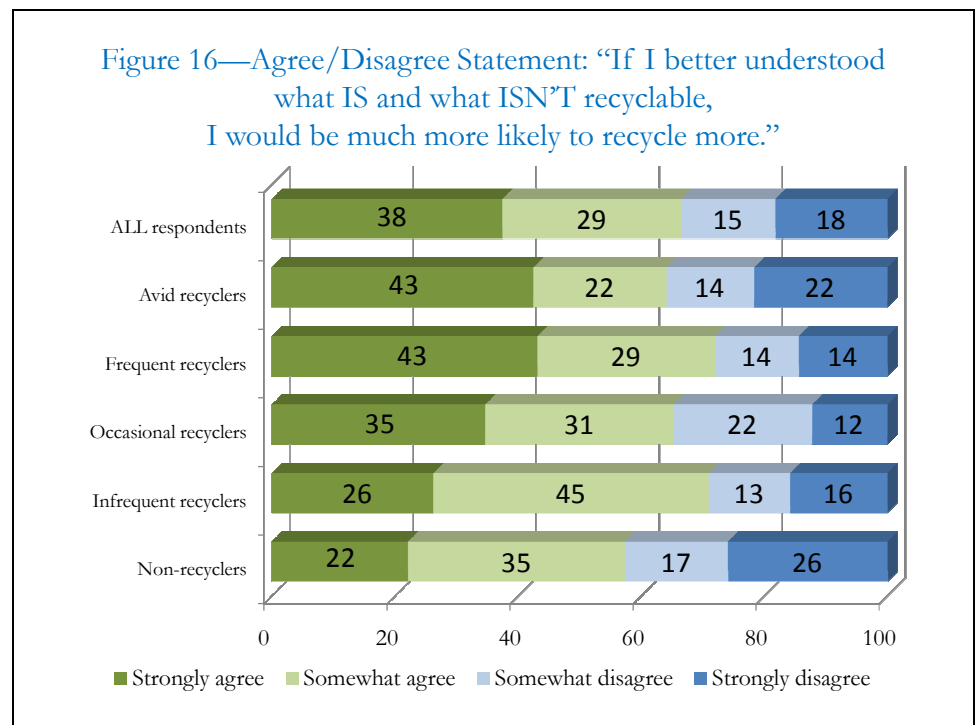
While the first statement in this series measured the potential impact of an incentive (a carrot), the third statement examined the impact of the opposite approach (a stick). Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “If there was a ‘Pay as You Throw’ policy that meant the more garbage you had, the more you’d have to pay for trash collection, I would be much more likely to recycle.” As Figure 15 shows, there is more variance of opinion on the “stick” concept than on the “carrot” approach, although a majority of respondents (64 percent) did agree with the statement (“strongly” and “somewhat” agree combined).

As the figure depicts, those who most fervently agree with the statement are currently recyclers and those who opposed the concept most strongly were those who seldom, if ever, recycle anything.



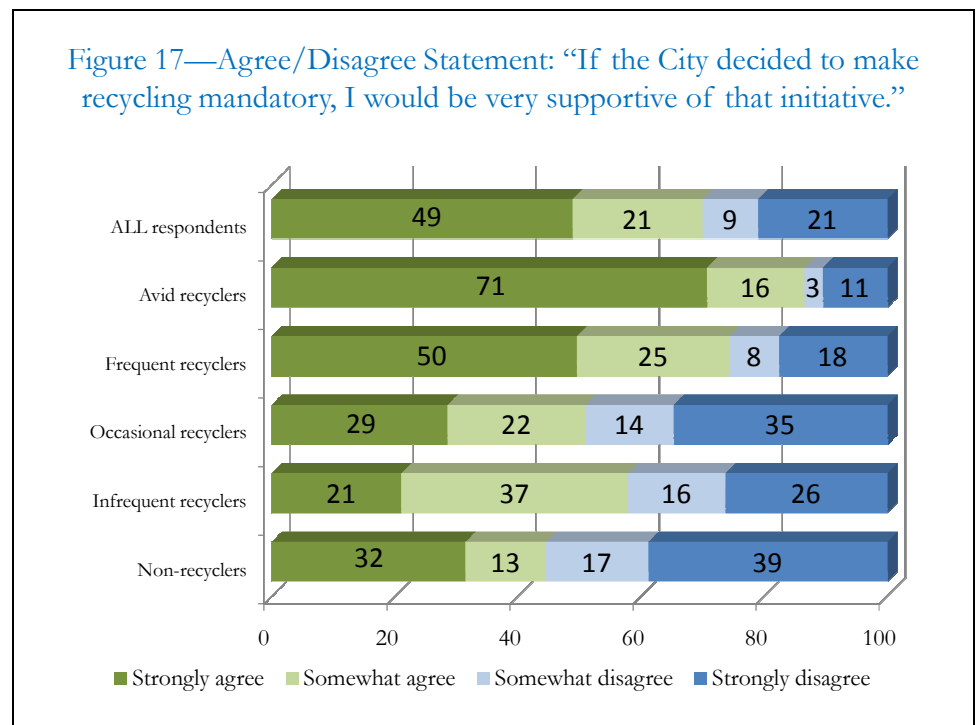
A review of demographic subgroups finds that younger respondents (those under 45) are much more likely to agree “strongly” with this statement when compared to older respondents.

The fourth statement in the agree/disagree series explored whether more education regarding the current recycling program’s “do’s and don’ts” might impact recycling habits. The statement read: “If I better understood what IS and ISN’T recyclable, I would be much more likely to recycle more.” Two-thirds of all respondents agreed that they would recycle more if they better understood what can and can’t go in the recycling bin, as Figure 16 illustrates. Those who agree most include those who already recycle frequently (72 percent with “strongly” and “somewhat” agree combined) and people who currently recycle on an infrequent basis (71 percent agree). Again, we find that non-recyclers are most likely to disagree with the statement.



Among those more likely to agree with this statement are Fayette Countians under the age of 35 and those earning \$25,000 to \$50,000 in household income. Also of note is the fact that people served by the City’s recycling program are more apt to agree with this statement than those participating in a private hauler’s program (70 percent compared to 62 percent).

The final statement in the series looked at the amount of support that might exist if the City opted to mandate recycling. The statement read: “If the City decided to make recycling mandatory, I would be very supportive of that initiative.” Not surprising is the fact that avid recyclers are most in favor of a recycling mandate for Lexington with the vast majority voicing support for it, including more than 7 out of 10 who “strongly” agree with the statement. Overall, Fayette Countians were relatively supportive of the idea of mandatory recycling, as Figure 17 shows; however, those who recycle less often or not at all are not nearly as keen on the idea.



When compared to men, women voiced stronger support for mandatory recycling.

After the five agree/disagree statements were presented to survey participants, they were asked the following open-ended question: “In your opinion, what could the City do to improve curbside recycling and encourage more people to recycle?” Responses were recorded as provided to interviewers and appear in the data tables that accompany this report. All the verbatim comments were also coded into categories to allow for data analysis. The most frequently cited comments are reported in the table below. As it shows, one-third of people surveyed were unable to offer any suggestion at all. The suggestion mentioned by more people was to reward those who recycle through an incentive program (cited by 12 percent of all respondents), followed closely by the suggestion to provide more information about what is and isn’t recyclable (11 percent).

**Table 1—What LFUCG could do to improve recycling service and encourage more people to recycle (*responses mentioned by at least 2 percent of all respondents*)**

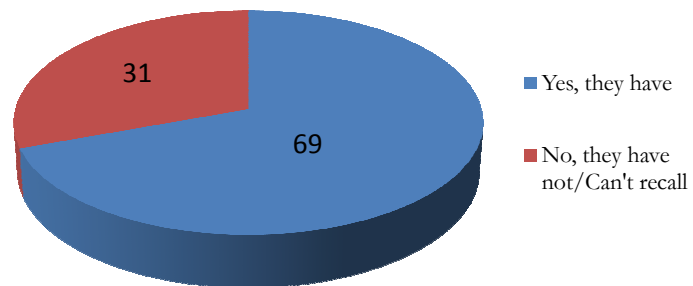
	<b>Percent</b>
Don’t know/I have no suggestions	33%
Reward people who recycle/provide incentives	12
Provide more information about program particulars	11
Advertise more, in general	6
Expand service to cover more households	6
Provide larger bins/more bins	5
More education, in general	4
More convenient recycling of uncommon items	4
The City does a good job already	3
More education about the benefits of recycling	3
Expand to include more items	3
Punish those who don’t recycle	3
Install recycling bins in public places	3
Promote recycling more in businesses and schools	2
Make recycling mandatory	2
Make recycling free/don’t charge for Rosies	2
Have more frequent pickups	2
Make it so you don’t have to separate anything (everything in one bin)	2
Be more efficient with pickups	2
Take bins from the side of houses rather than the curb	2
Educate people on what is done with recyclables	2



## Recycling Message in Schools

Survey respondents were asked if they currently had school-age children living in their homes, to which 1 out of 4 people replied that they did. Those respondents next were asked if their children have ever come home from school and told their parents something that they learned about recycling in class, or if they have encouraged their parents to recycle as a result of something they heard in school. Encouragingly, as Figure 18 shows, more than 2 out of 3 parents surveyed said their children had come home from school with information about recycling.

Figure 18—Whether School-Age Children Have Shared a Recycling Message with Their Parents That They Learned at School



# Participant Profile

## Demographic Breakouts

In addition to measuring various dimensions of Fayette Countians' attitudes and opinions about recycling, the survey collected demographic information on respondents. These findings are included in the tables that follow.

**Table 2—Gender**

	<b>Percent</b>
Male	44%
Female	56

**Table 3—Age**

	<b>Percent</b>
18-34	8%
35-44	14
45-54	23
55-64	24
65-74	17
75 or older	12
Refused	4

**Table 4—Last grade completed in school**

	<b>Percent</b>
Less than high school	3%
High school graduate or equivalent	20
Some college/associate's degree	23
College graduate	31
Post-graduate study	22
Refused	1

**Table 5—Annual household income**

	<b>Percent</b>
Less than \$15,000	8%
\$15,000-\$25,000	5
\$25,000-\$50,000	18
\$50,000-\$75,000	19
\$75,000-\$100,000	13
More than \$100,000	19
Refused	18

**Table 6—Race**

	<b>Percent</b>
White	87%
Black	7
Hispanic	<1
Asian	1
Biracial/multiracial (Vol.)	1
Refused	4

**Table 7—Own or rent home**

	<b>Percent</b>
Own	85%
Rent	15
Refused	1

**Table 8—Housing type**

	<b>Percent</b>
Single-family home	87%
Mobile home	2
Duplex	2
Condominium	2
Apartment	7
Refused	1

**Table 9—Size of multi-unit dwelling (*n=33*)**

	<b>Percent</b>
Fewer than 8 units	12%
8 or more units	88

**Table 10—ZIP code**

	<b>Percent</b>
40502	11
40503	11
40504	8
40505	8
40507	1
40508	5
40509	11
40510	1
40511	9
40513	3
40514	7
40515	15
40516	1
40517	9
Refused	<1