



Public Attitudes Toward Food Scrap and Curbside Recycling

Results of Public Opinion Surveys for Stopwaste.org.

*Surveys Conducted:
August 2009*

320-412A/B

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates
Opinion Research & Public Policy Analysis

Santa Monica, CA – Oakland, CA – Madison, WI – Mexico City

Food Scrap Survey Methodology

- Telephone interviews with 600 Alameda County residents who have individual trash and recycling service, conducted August 19-26, 2009, with a margin of sampling error of +/- 4.0%
- Comparisons to:
 - A survey of 603 County residents of communities with food scrap recycling who have individual trash and recycling service, conducted in November 2007 (not including Hayward, Piedmont and San Lorenzo)
 - A baseline survey of 817 residents of Alameda, Castro Valley, Fremont and San Leandro conducted in May 2004.

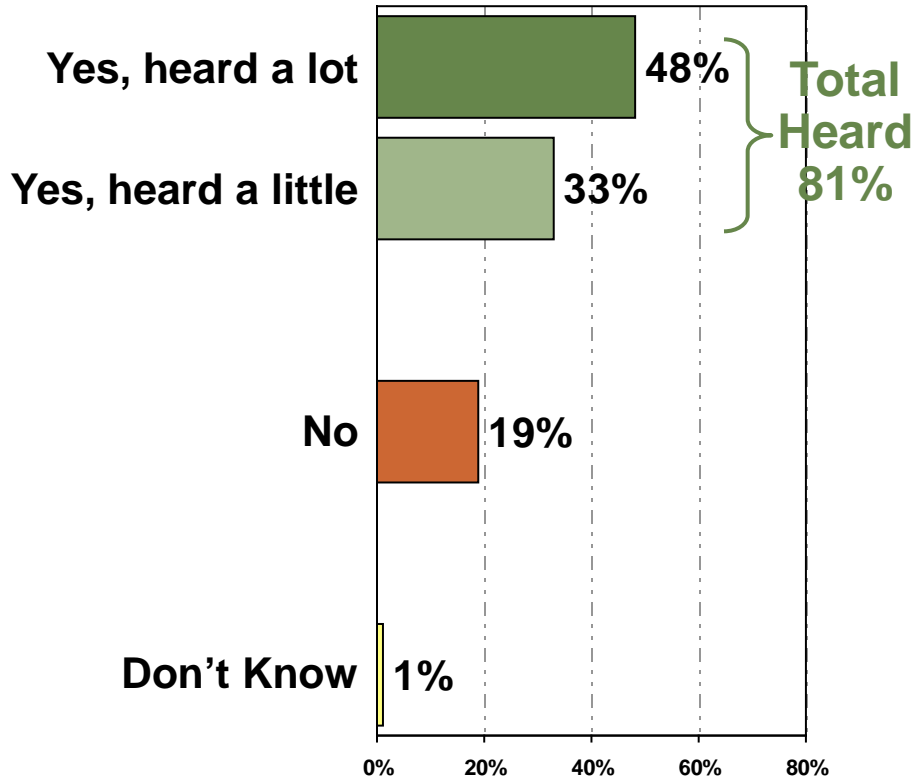
Food Scrap Recycling

Key Findings on Food Scrap Recycling

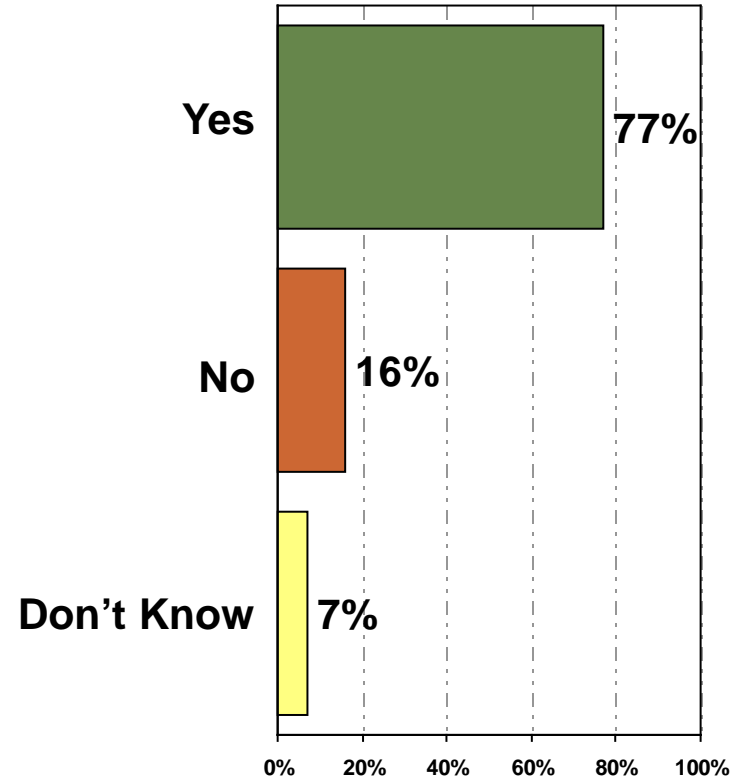
- Overall awareness about recycling food scraps in yard waste carts has increased slightly from 2007.
- Understanding of key aspects of the program has increased significantly.
- Over one-third (38%) claim to recycle as many food scraps as possible, up from 31% in November 2007 and 26% in May 2004.
- Seven in ten (70%) recall hearing or seeing information about the food scrap recycling program, up from 65% in November 2007.
- Residents report recycling more paper products and pizza boxes than they did in 2007.
 - *A majority (52%) now claim to put pizza boxes in their yard waste bins, up from 41% in November 2007.*
- Residents see reducing waste in landfills as the most important reason to recycle food scraps.

Most residents have heard about recycling food scraps and are aware they can be put in their yard waste carts...

Heard about Recycling Food Scraps in Past 2 Years



Aware that Food Scraps Can Be Put in Yard Waste Cart

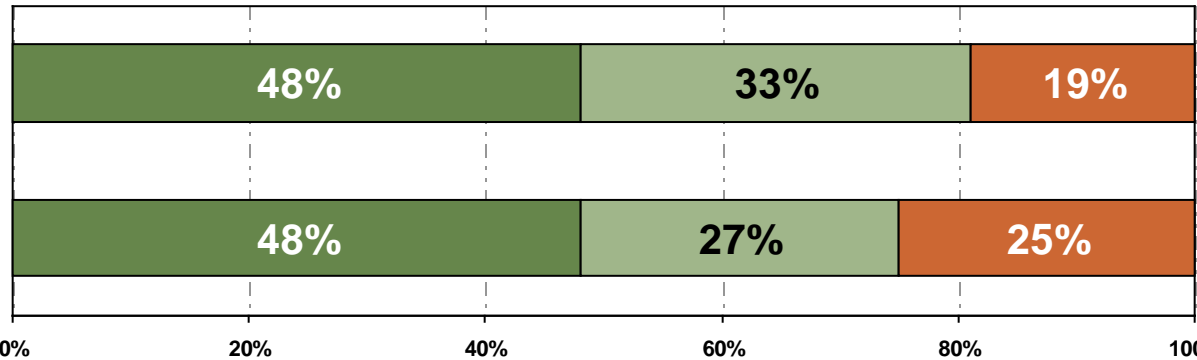


...and overall awareness has increased slightly from 2007.

Heard about Recycling Food Scraps in Past 2 Years

■ Yes, heard a lot ■ Yes, heard a little ■ No ■ DK/NA

August 2009



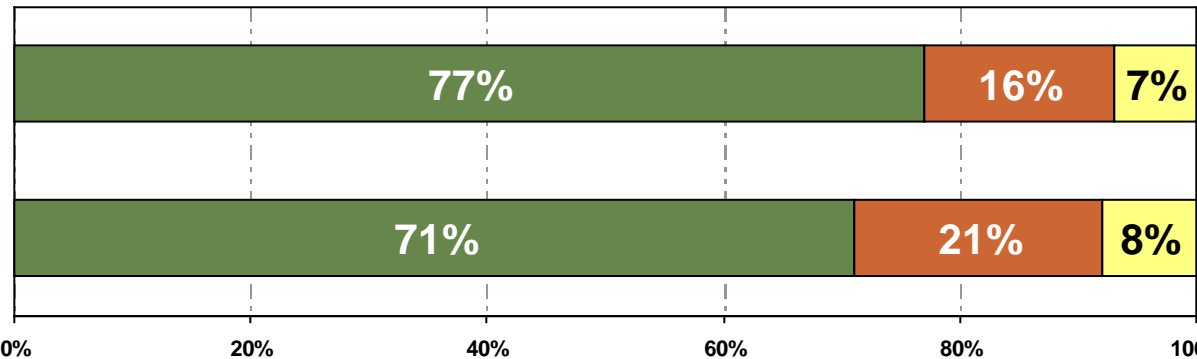
6%
Increase in
Total
Receiving
Info.

Nov 2007

Aware that Food Scraps Can Be Put in Yard Waste Cart

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know

August 2009



6% Increase
in
Awareness

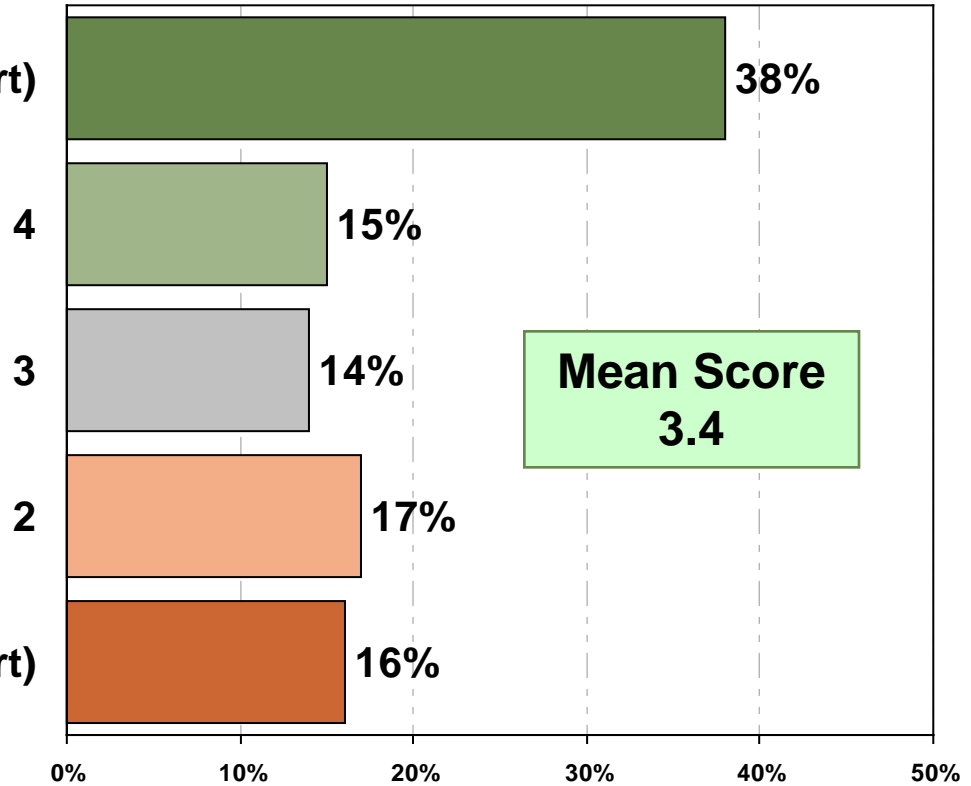
Nov 2007

Over one-third claim to recycle as many food scraps as possible...

(Asked only of 77% aware they can recycle food scraps)

How much of your leftovers or food scraps and food soiled paper would you say you put in your yard waste cart? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means you don't put any food scraps in your yard waste cart, and 5 means you put as many food scraps as you can in your yard waste cart.

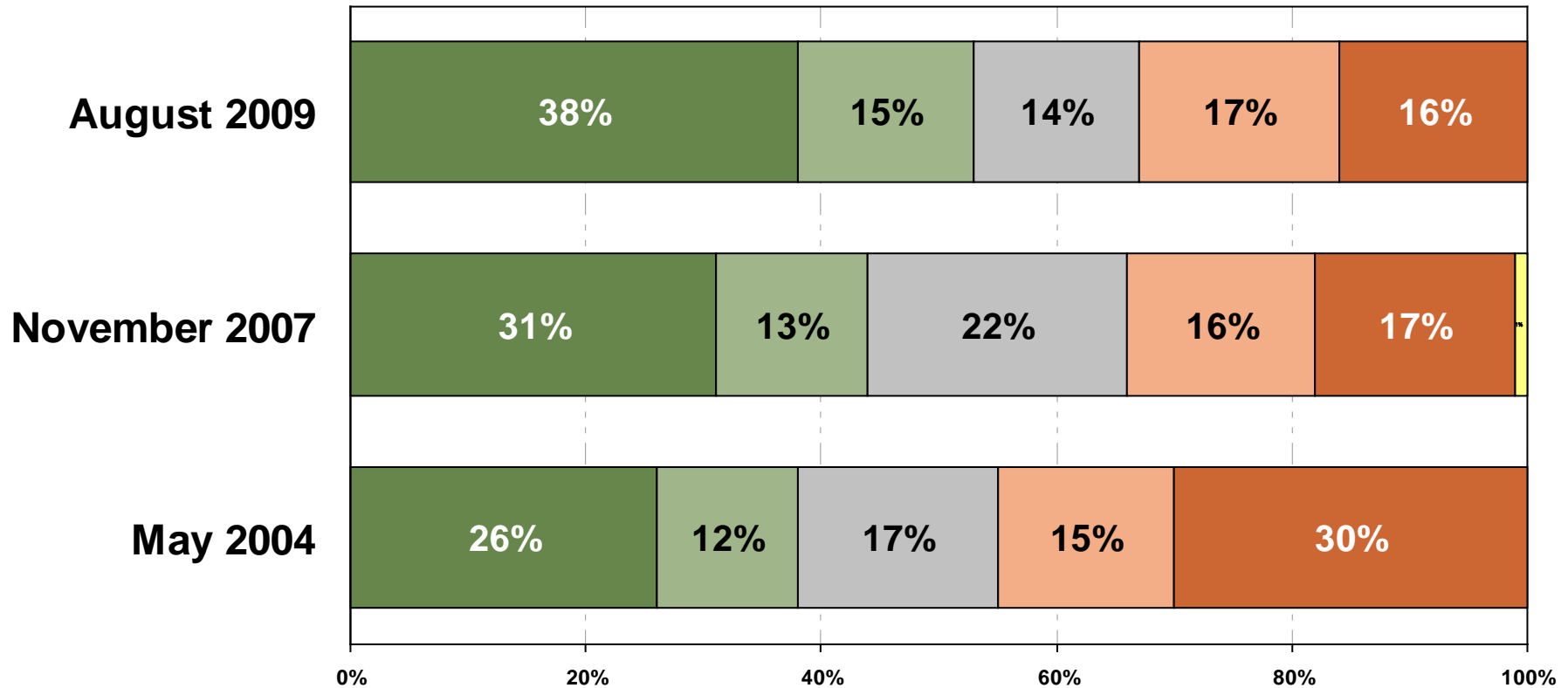
5 (Put as many scraps as I can in the cart)



1 (Don't put any scraps in the cart)

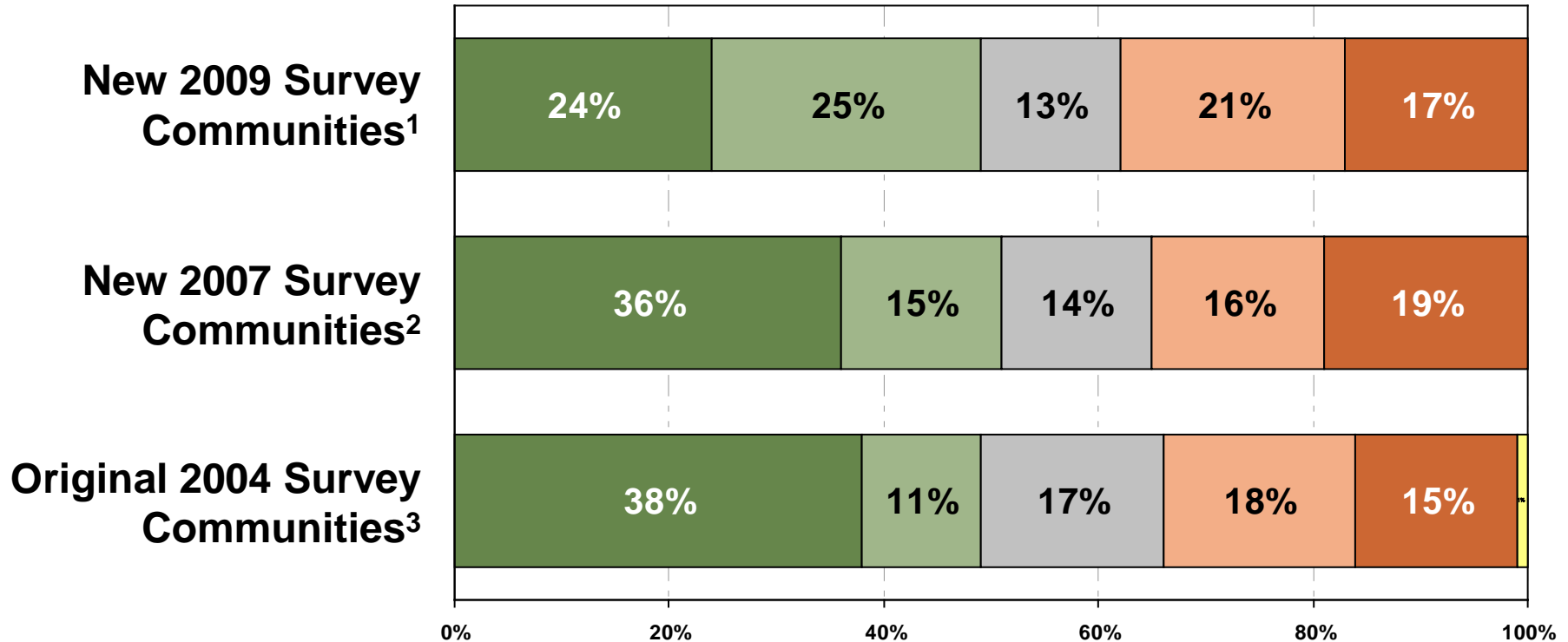
...and this percentage has steadily increased since 2004.

■ 5 (Put as many scraps as I can in the cart) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Don't put any scraps in the cart) ■ Don't Know



Participation rates are higher in communities that have offered food scrap recycling longer...

■ 5 (Put as many scraps as I can in the cart) ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 (Don't put any scraps in the cart) ■ Don't Know



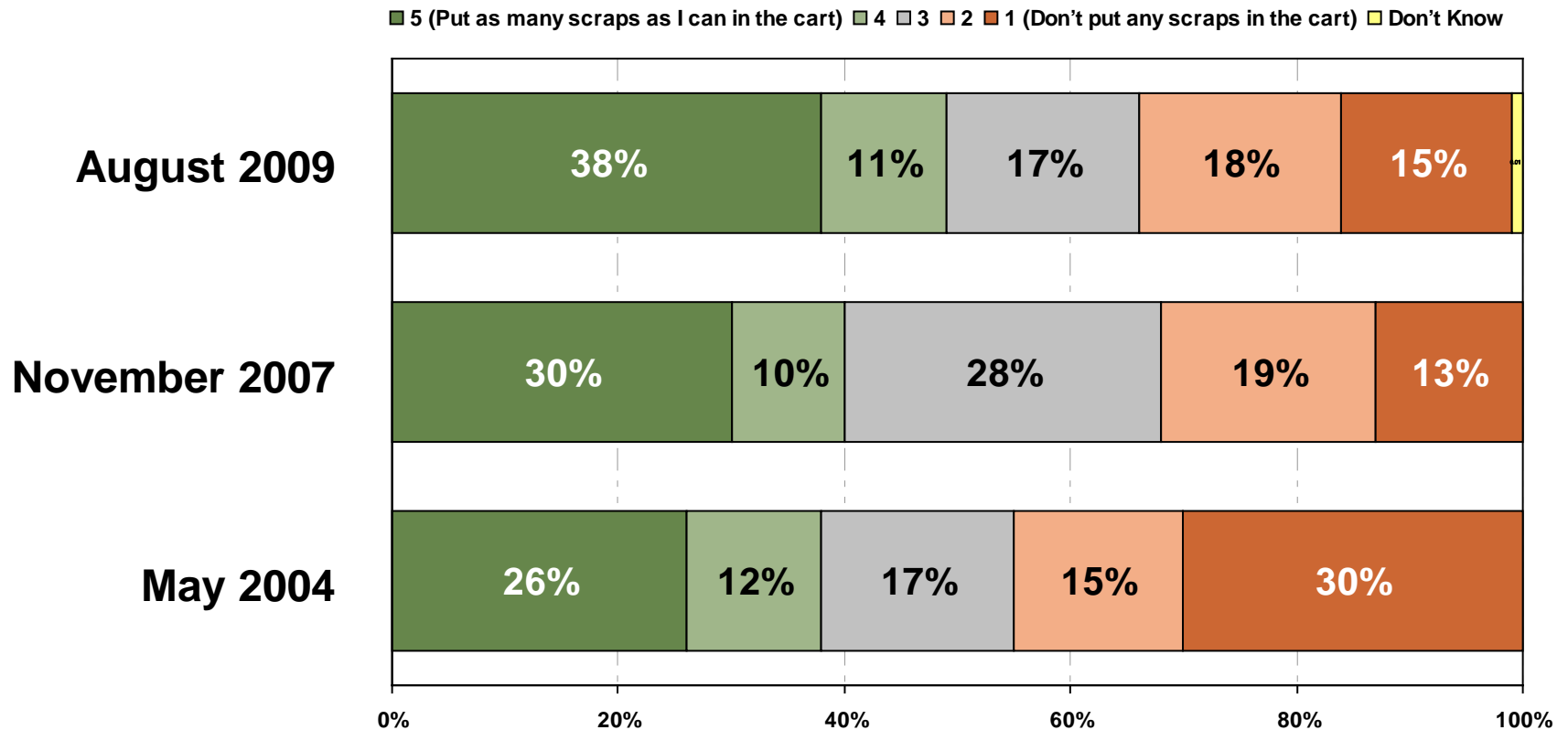
¹ Hayward, Piedmont, San Lorenzo.

² Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Livermore, Oakland, Newark, Pleasanton, Union City

³ Alameda, Castro Valley, Fremont and San Leandro

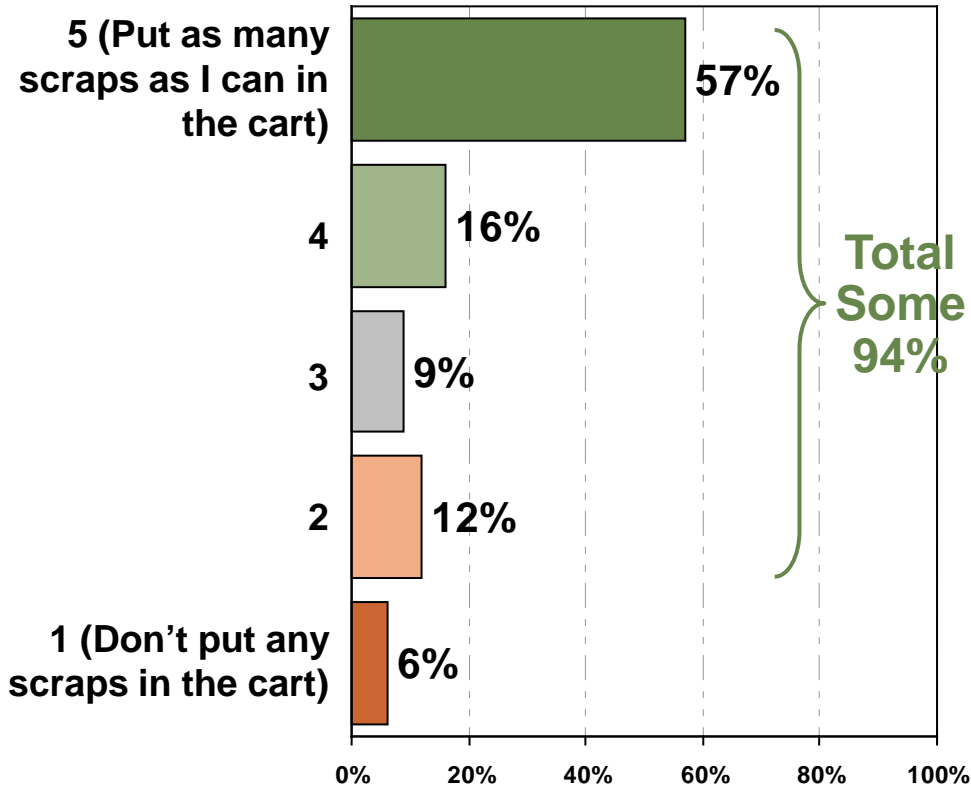
...and in the first communities to offer the service, participation has steadily increased.

Data for Alameda, Castro Valley, Fremont and San Leandro only.

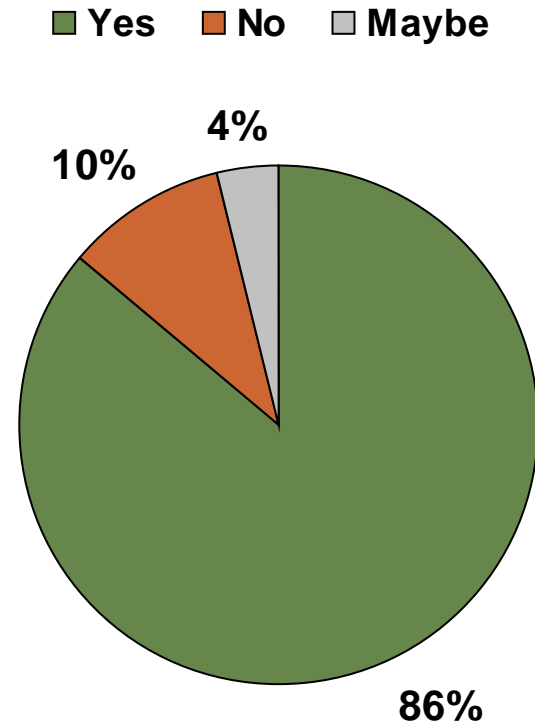


Berkeley participation rates compare similarly to a recent online survey in Berkeley's 8th Council District.

How much of your leftovers or food scraps and food soiled paper would you say you put in your yard waste cart?*



Do you participate in Berkeley's food scrap recycling program? **

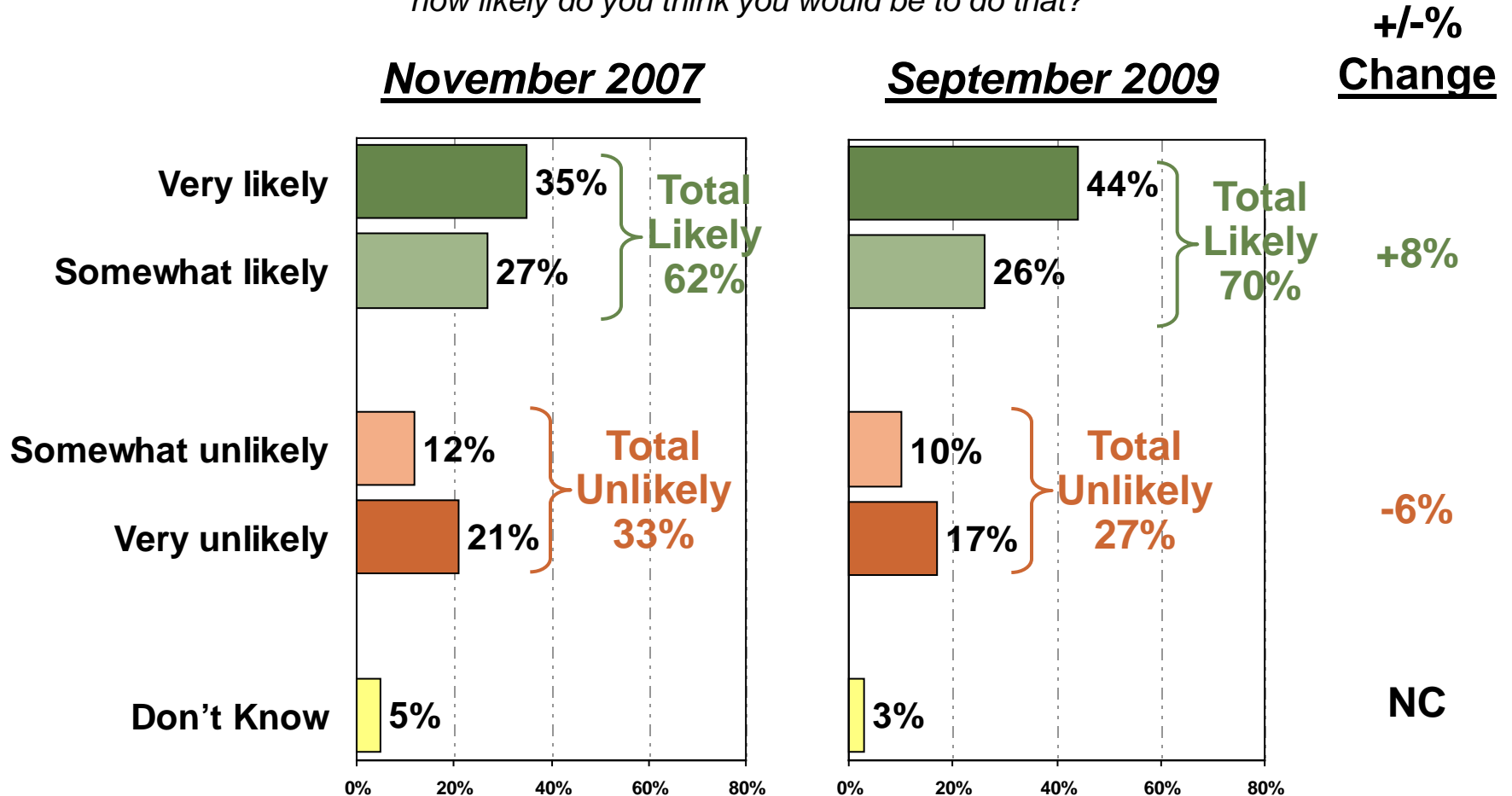


*Note: Q7 responses from 37 Berkeley residents.

**Note: 100 participants in an online survey conducted by Berkeley Councilmember Gordon Wozniak (Council District 8) as of August 2009.

Of those unaware that food scraps can be recycled, an increasing number indicate they *would* recycle if they could.

If you could recycle food scraps and food soiled paper in your yard waste cart, how likely do you think you would be to do that?



Most residents recall seeing messages about food scrap recycling; utility bills continue to be most effective.

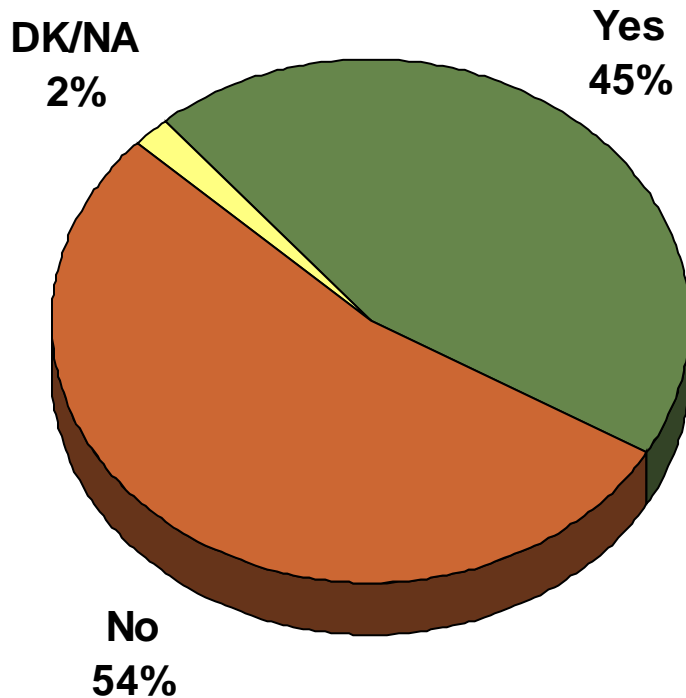
(Multiple Responses Accepted)

Type of Information	2007	2009	Δ
Utility bill inserts	27%	29%	+2%
Outdoor/Transit advertisements	16%	23%	+7%
Newspaper advertisements	20%	18%	-2%
“To-go” containers and shopping carts	9%	12%	+3%
Other (TV, Radio, events, etc.)	33%	36%	+3%
No/DK/NA	35%	31%	-4%

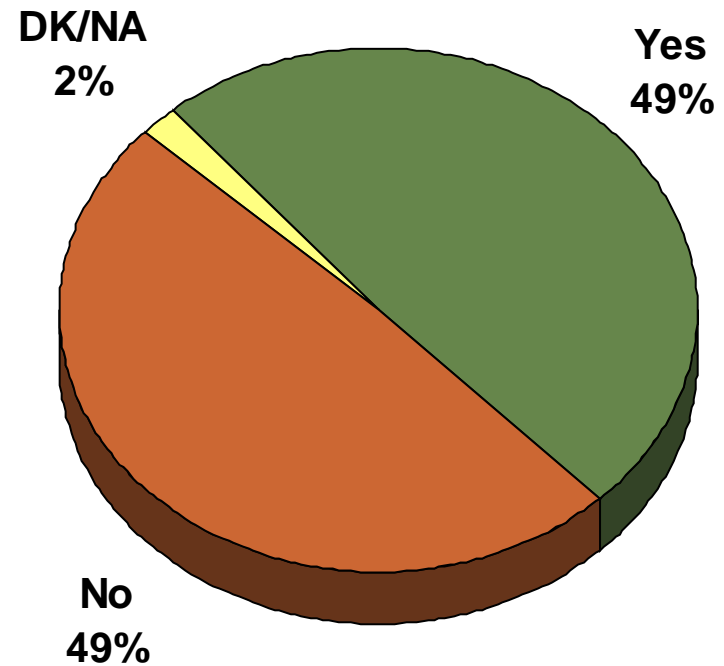
Roughly half of those who recalled seeing ads say they were motivated to *start* recycling food scraps...

(Asked only of those who recalled seeing messages.)

November 2007



September 2009

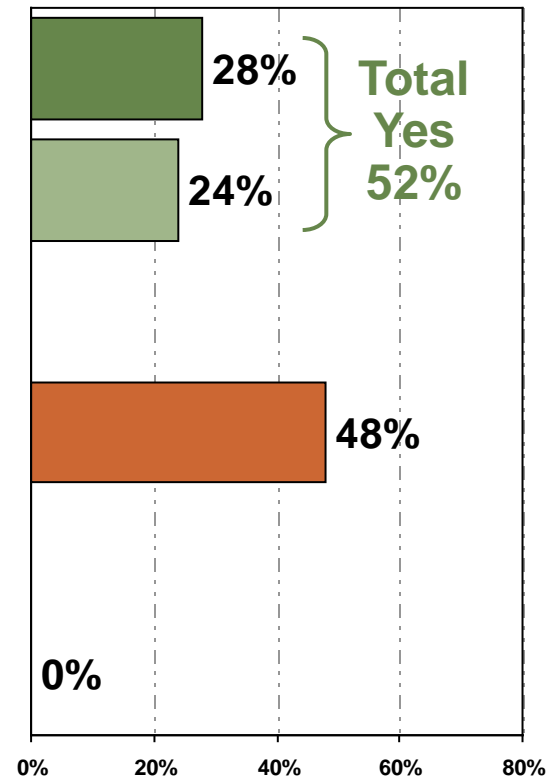
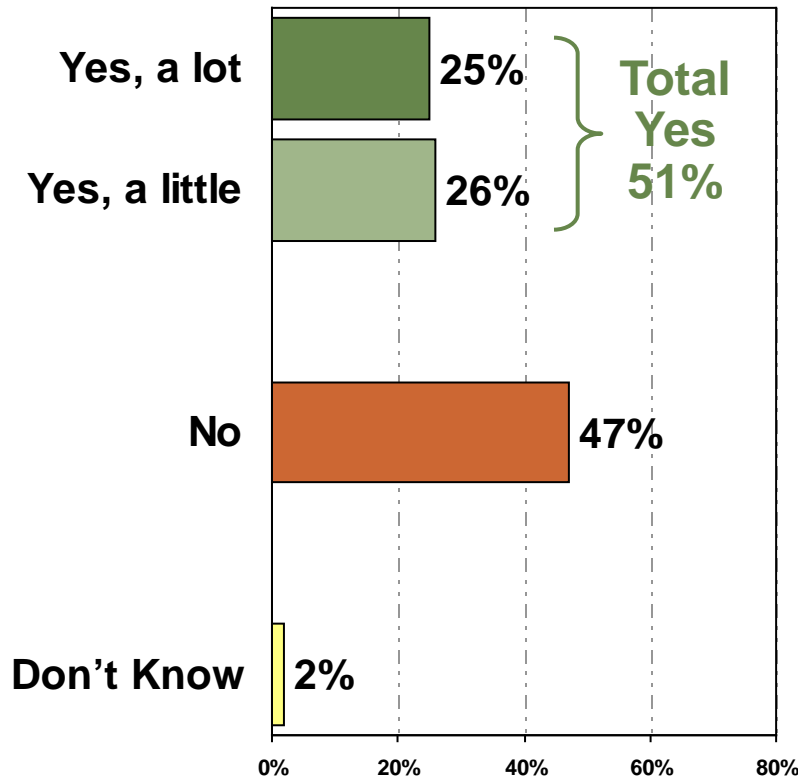


...and as before, half continue to be motivated to *increase* the amount of food scraps they recycle.

(Asked only of those who recalled seeing messages.)

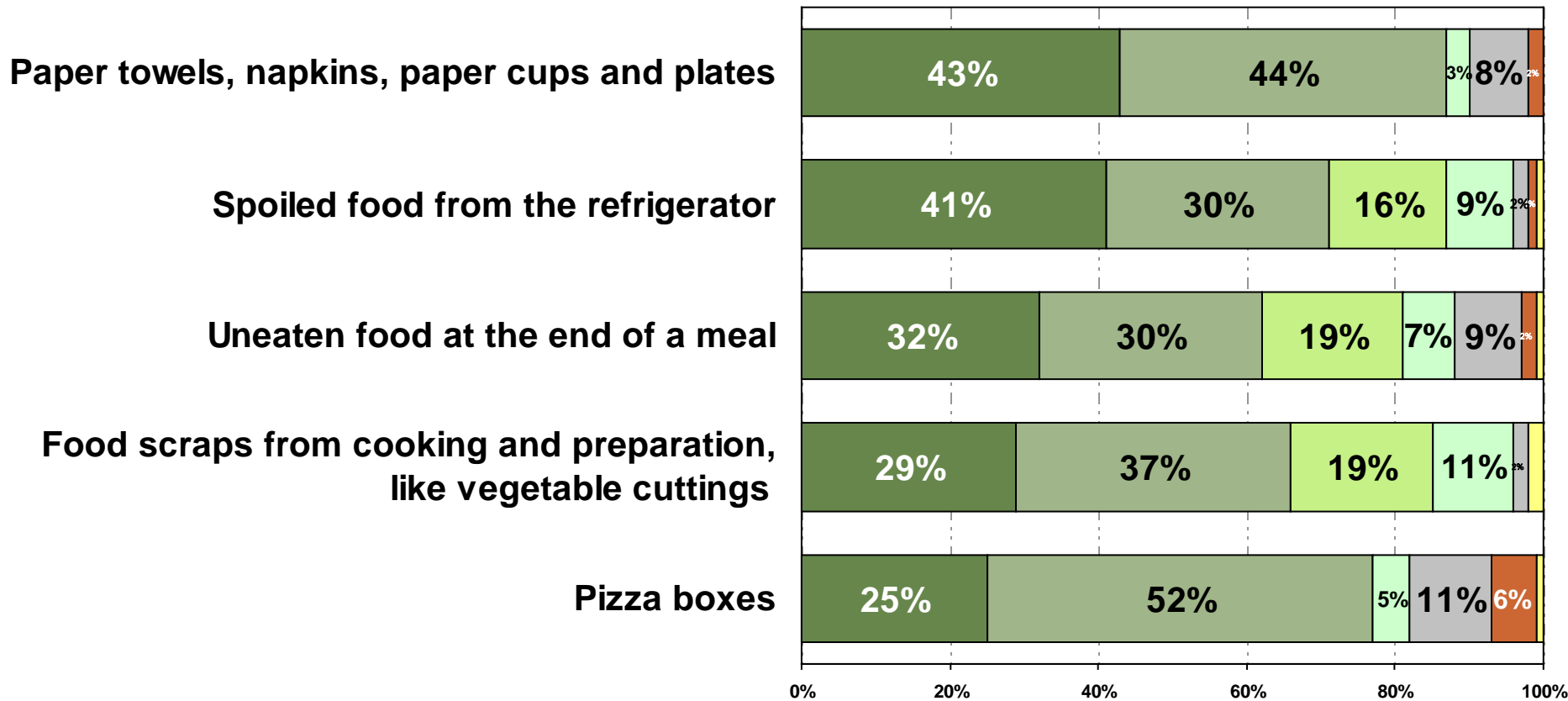
November 2007

September 2009



Residents are more likely to recycle food-soiled paper products than food scraps, although much still gets thrown away.

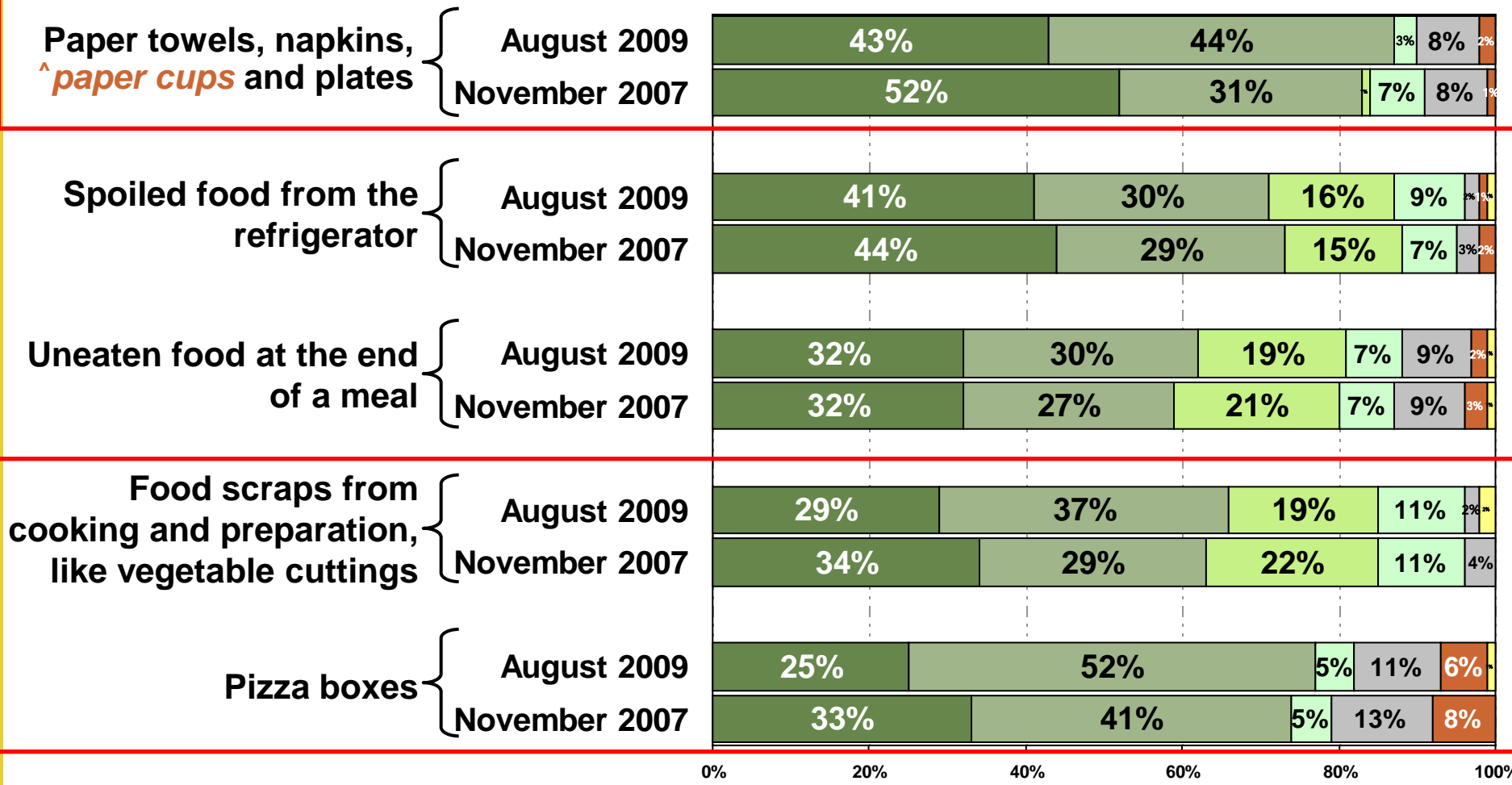
■ Trash Can
 ■ Scrap Pail/Yard Cart
 ■ Sink Disposal
 ■ Compost Pile
 ■ Other
 ■ Don't Use
 ■ DK/NA



16. I am going to read you a list of different waste products you might have to throw away from time to time in your household. please tell me how you MOST OFTEN throw it away in your household: do you put it in your trash can, your food scraps pail or yard waste cart, your sink or garbage disposal, or your compost pile or bin?

Residents recycle paper products, food scraps and pizza boxes more now than in 2007.

■ Trash Can ■ Scrap Pail/Yard Cart ■ Sink Disposal ■ Compost Pile ■ Other ■ Don't Use ■ DK/NA

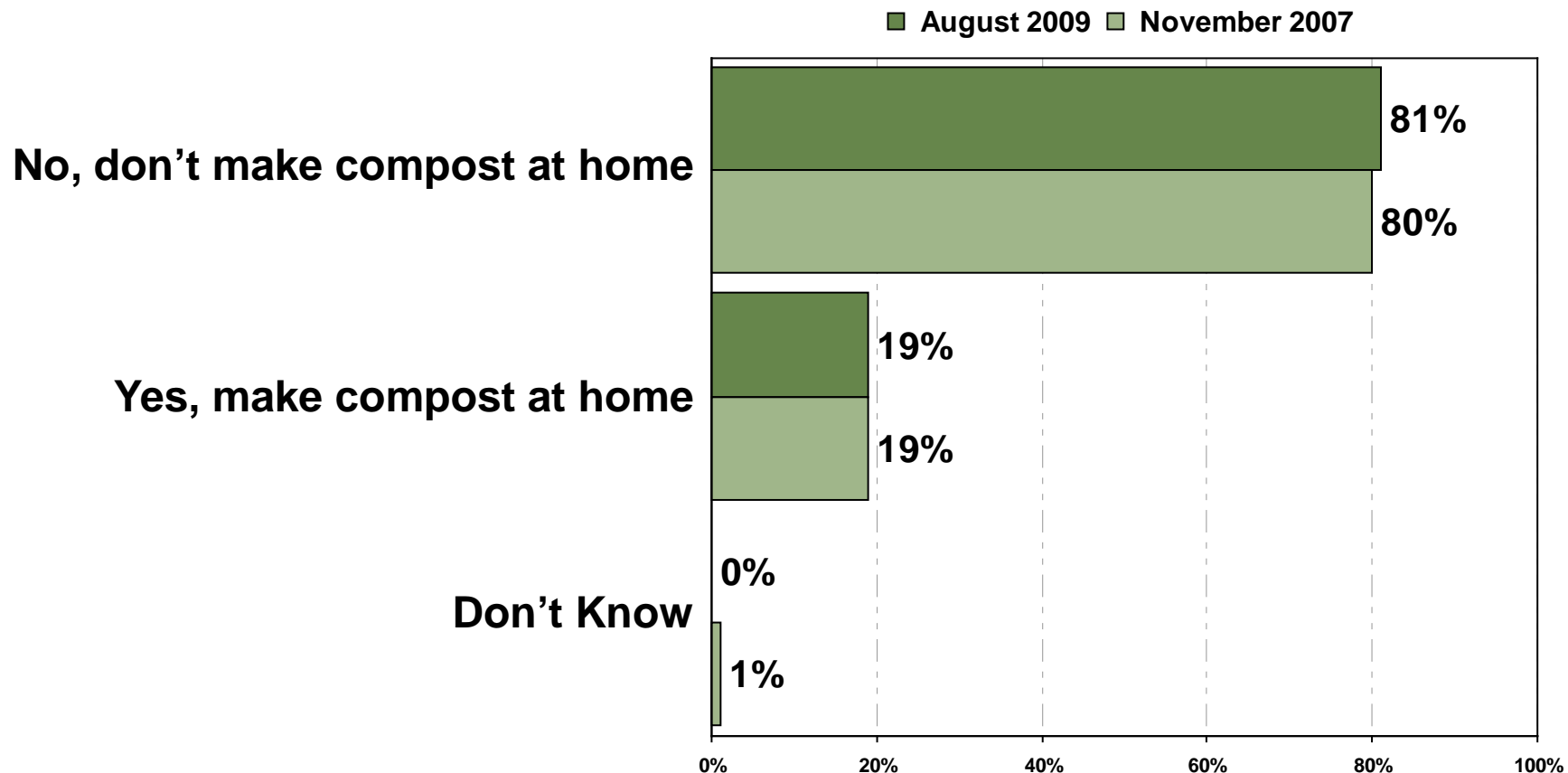


16. I am going to read you a list of different waste products you might have to throw away from time to time in your household. please tell me how you MOST OFTEN throw it away in your household: do you put it in your trash can, your food scraps pail or yard waste cart, your sink or garbage disposal, or your compost pile or bin?

[^]Added in 2009 Survey

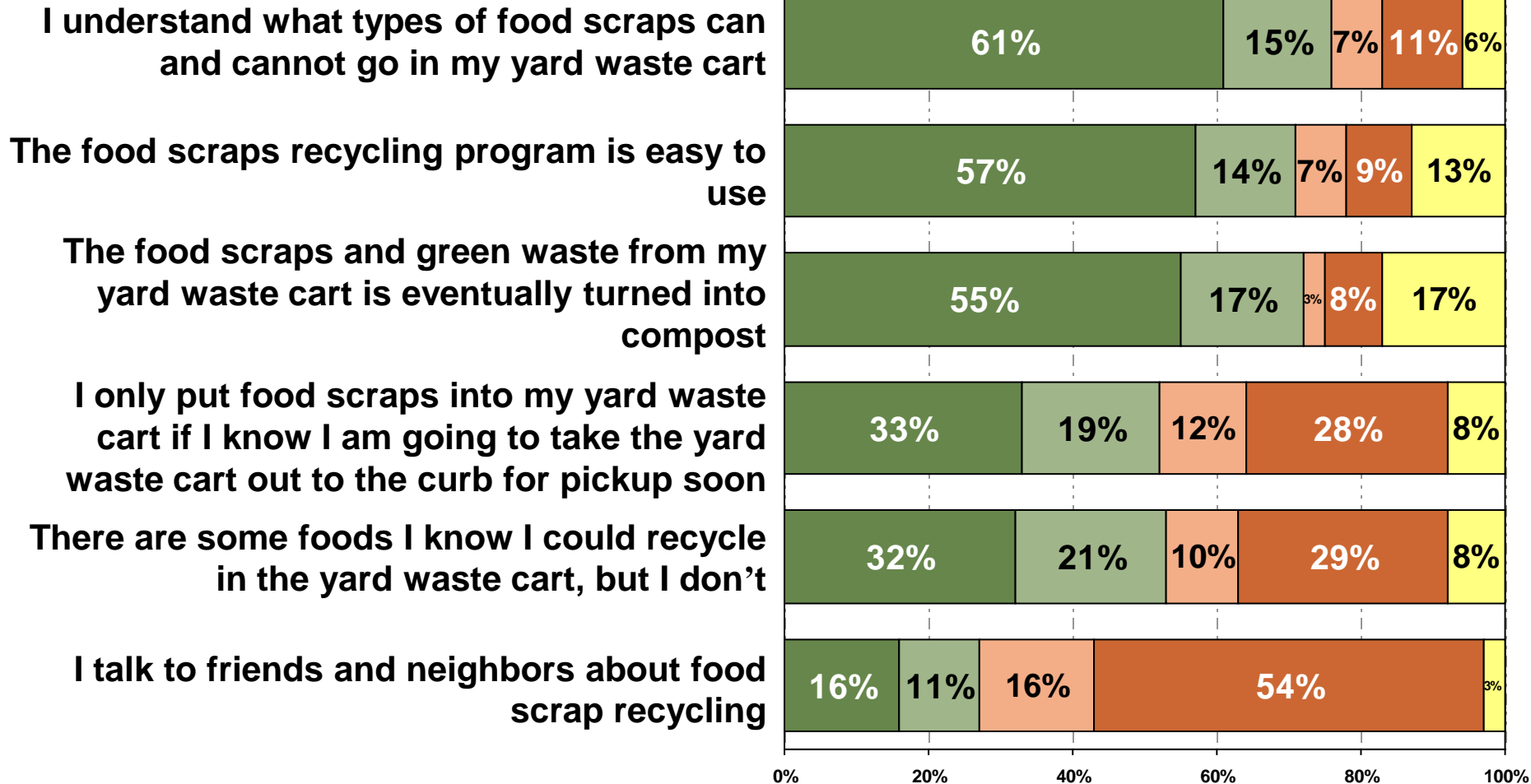
The percentage of those who compost at home is largely unchanged from 2007.

(Asked only of the 64% who currently recycle some food scraps.)



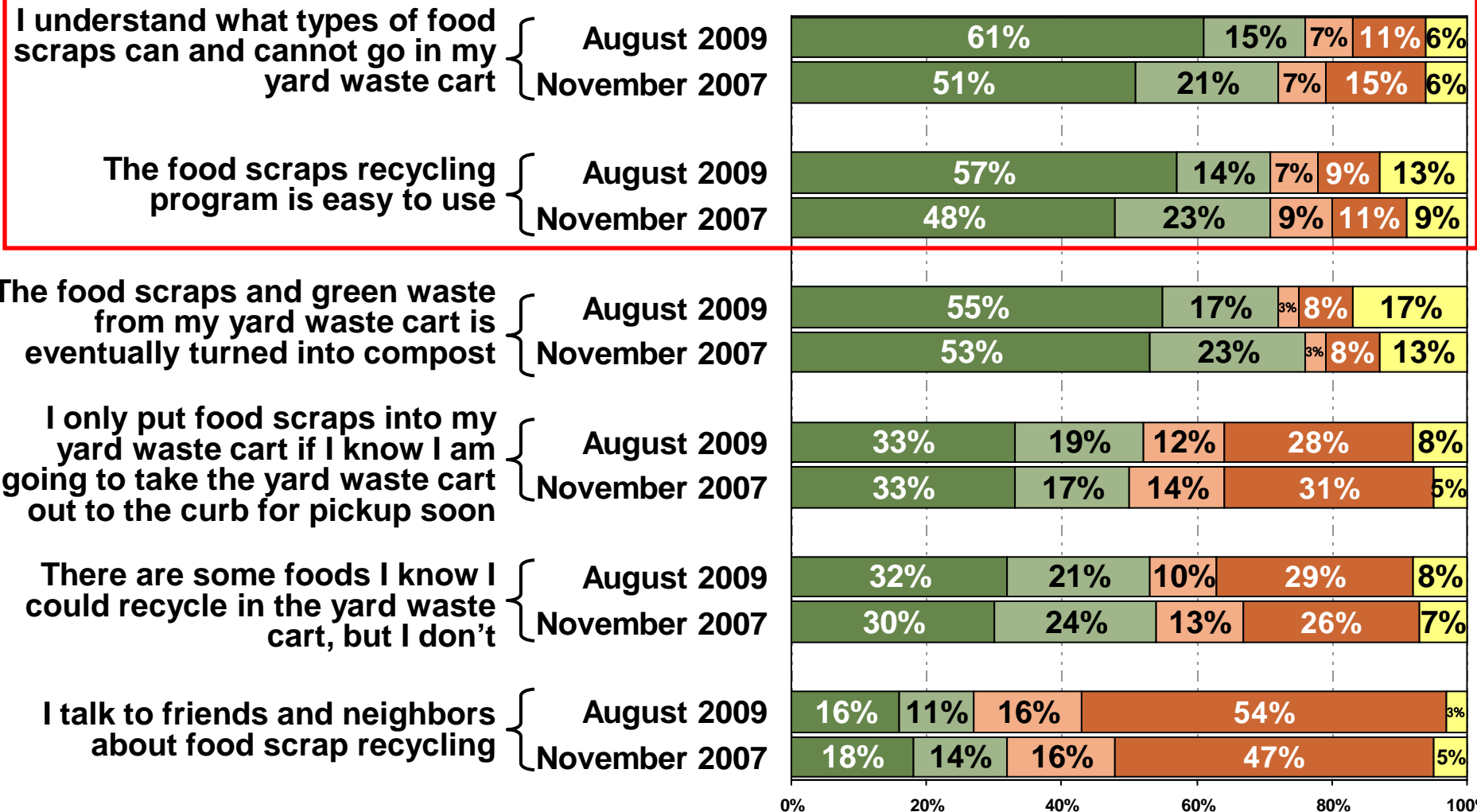
Most understand the program, but do not necessarily participate in it.

■ Strng. Agr. ■ S.W. Agr. ■ S.W. Disagr. ■ Strng. Disagr. ■ DK/NA



Residents have a stronger grasp of how the program works since 2007.

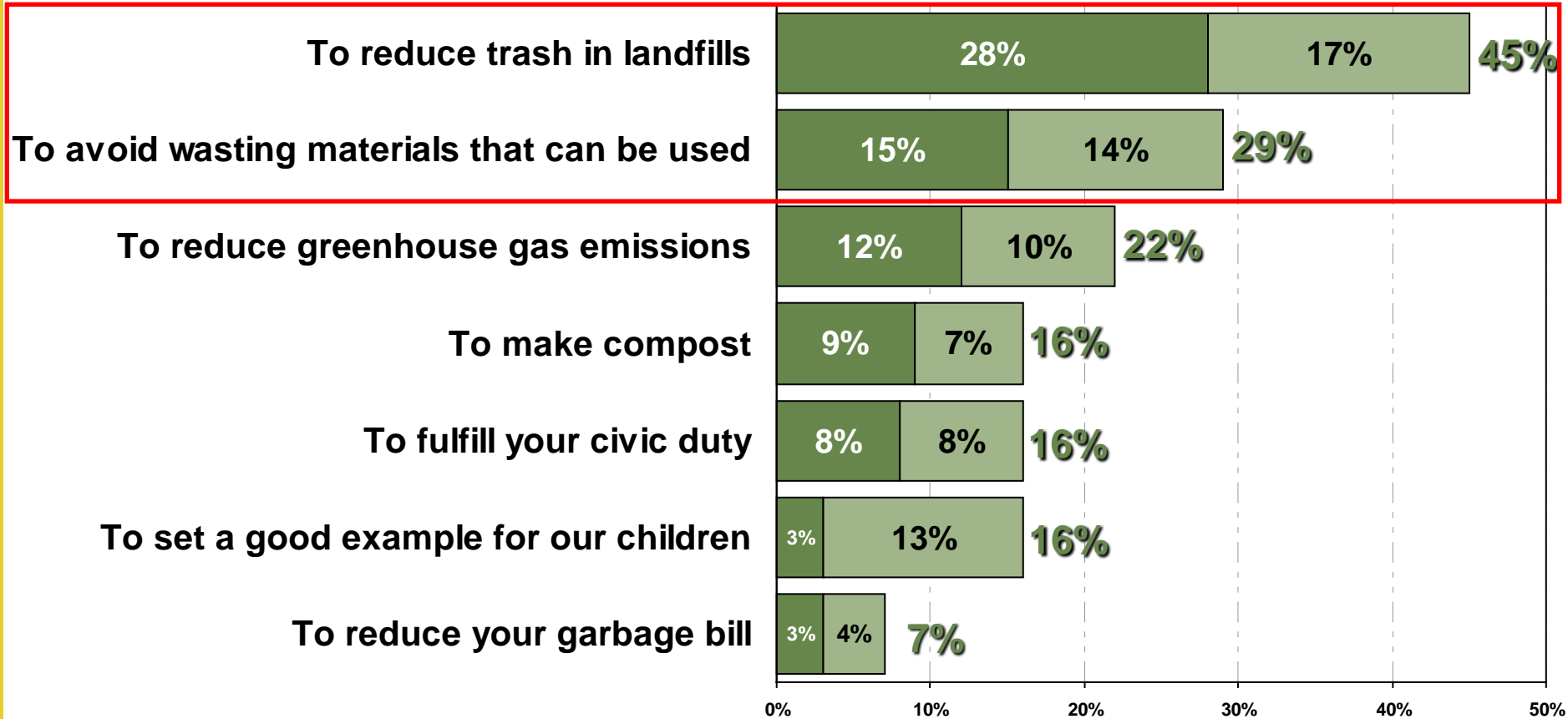
■ Strng. Agr. ■ S.W. Agr. ■ S.W. Disagr. ■ Strng. Disagr. ■ DK/NA



The main motivations cited for recycling food scraps are to reduce the amount of trash in landfills and to avoid waste.

Please tell me which one you view as the most important reason to recycle food scraps.

■ 1st Choice ■ 2nd Choice



19. I am going to read you a list of five different reasons that people have offered to explain why they recycle their food scraps. Please tell me which one you view as the most important reason to recycle food scraps.

Conclusions: Food Scrap Recycling

- **Education and outreach efforts appear to have made an impact.**
- **Overall awareness that food scraps and soiled paper products can be put in yard waste bins has increased since November 2007.**
- **More residents claim to put as much food scraps or food soiled paper in their yard waste bins as possible.**
- **More residents specifically recycle pizza boxes and cooking scraps.**
- **More residents have a clear picture of what can be put in yard waste bins.**

Curbside Recycling

Curbside Recycling Methodology

- Telephone interviews with 600 Alameda County residents, conducted August 20-26, 2009, with a margin of sampling error of +/- 4.0%
- Comparisons to:
 - A survey of 601 County residents conducted in November 2007
 - A baseline survey of 804 County residents conducted in November 2002

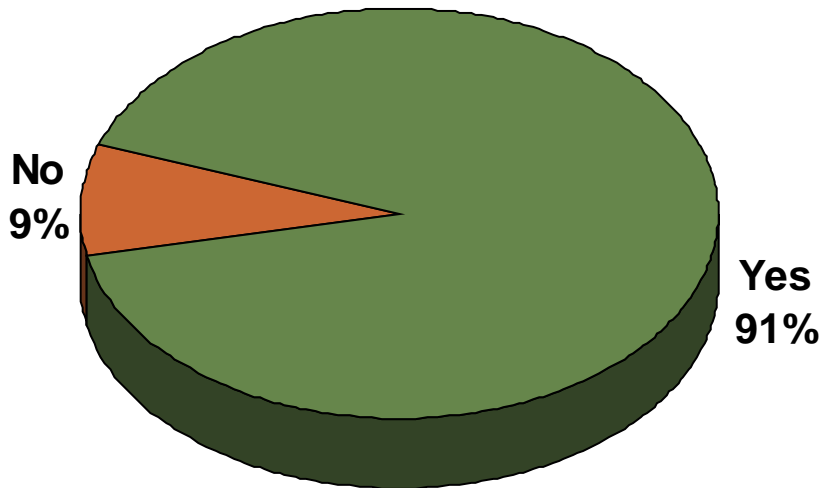
Key Findings on Curbside Recycling

- **93% of residents claim to recycle paper, bottles and cans, essentially the same as in November 2007 (91%).**
- **Of the 5% that do not recycle much mixed paper, many are skeptical that it is actually recycled.**
- **When uncertain that something can be recycled, more residents now try to find out if it can be – rather than putting it directly in the garbage.**
- **A majority (54%) of those surveyed recalled seeing or hearing information about paper recycling.**
- **Caring for the health of our planet is seen as the most important reason to recycle cans, bottles and paper.**

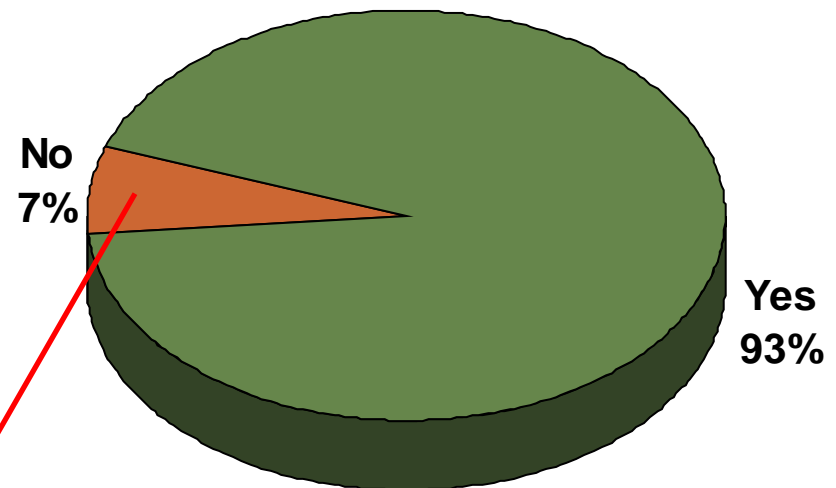
Over nine in ten continue to say they recycle.

Do you recycle paper, bottles and cans in a recycling bin, or not?

November 2007



August 2009

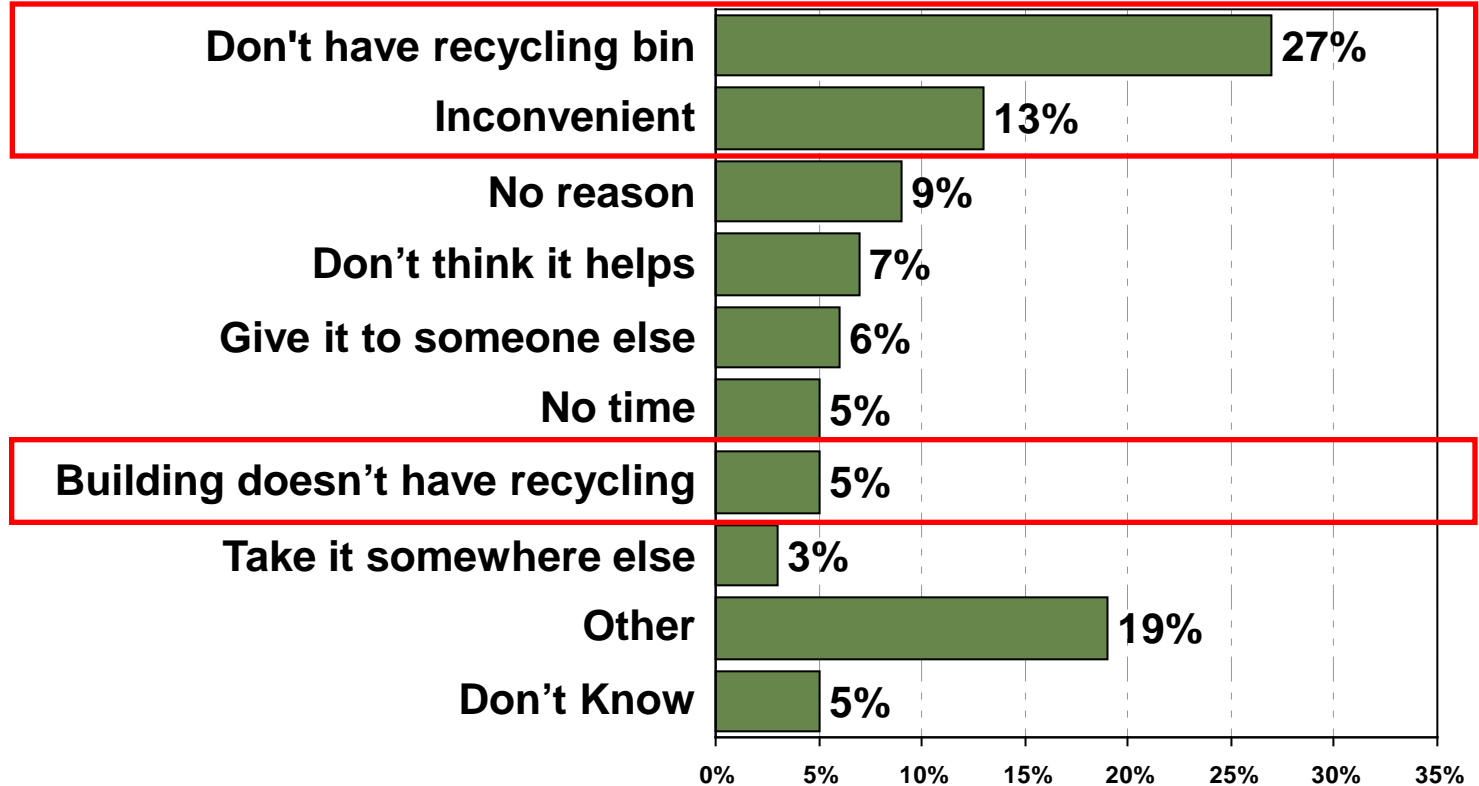


Disproportionately likely to be Valley residents, have household incomes less than \$30K, be African-American, be 75 or older, and have some college education, but not a four-year degree.

Of those who do not recycle, most cite issues of convenience as reasons for not recycling paper.

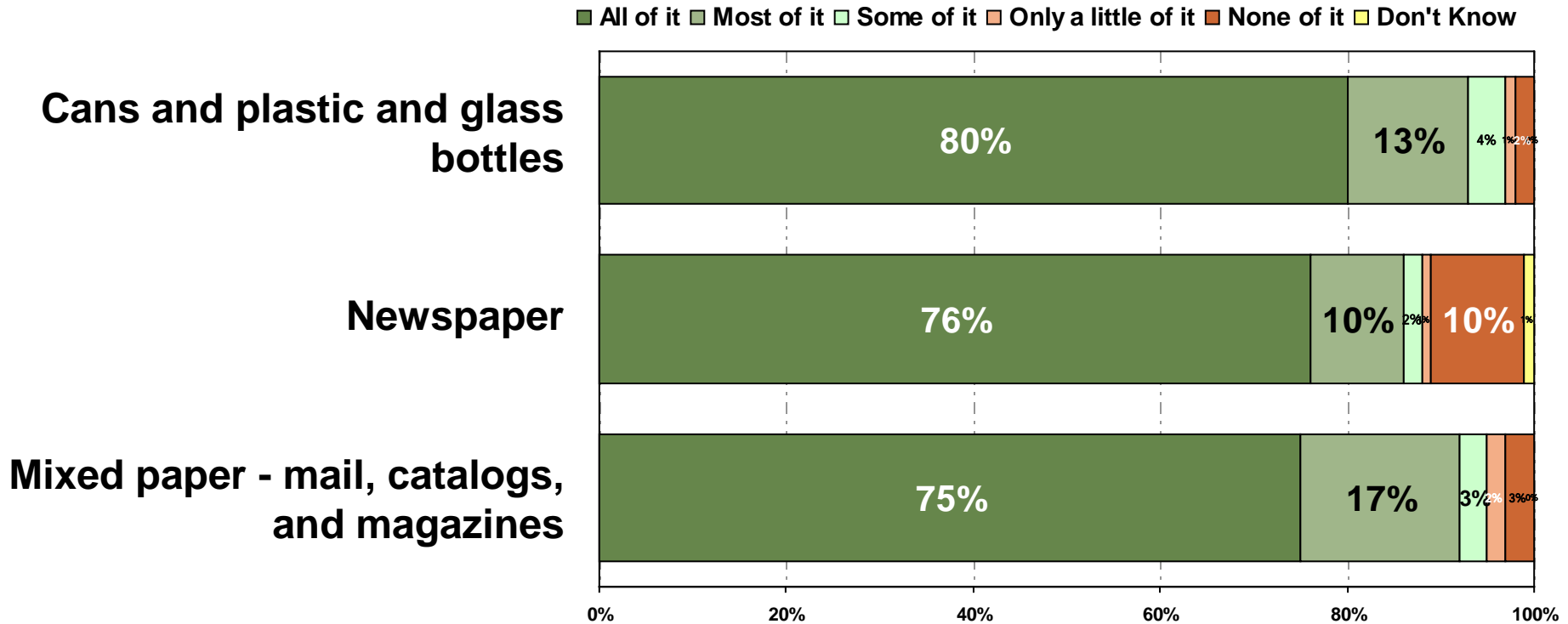
(Open-ended; multiple responses accepted; asked only of the 7% who do not recycle anything.)

Thinking specifically about paper, why don't you recycle paper?



Three out of four residents claim to recycle all of a variety of materials.

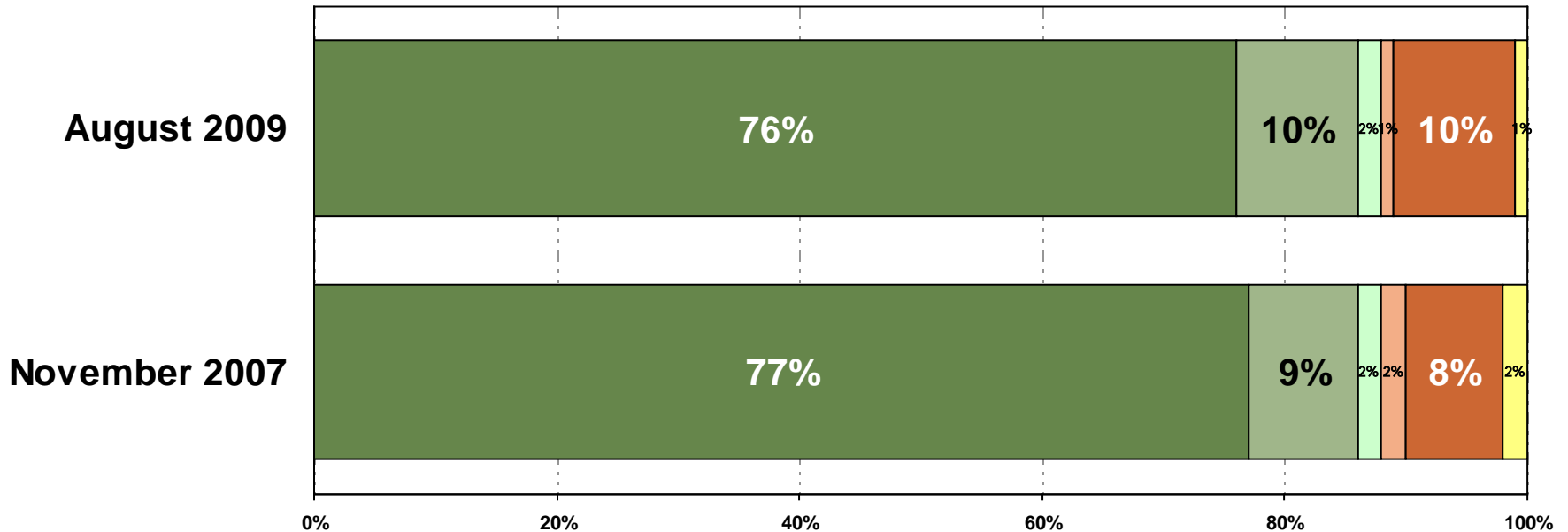
How much of the _____ that you use in your home would you say that you put in the recycling bin:



Newspaper recycling rates remain similar to November 2007.

How much of the newspaper that you use in your home would you say that you put in the recycling bin:

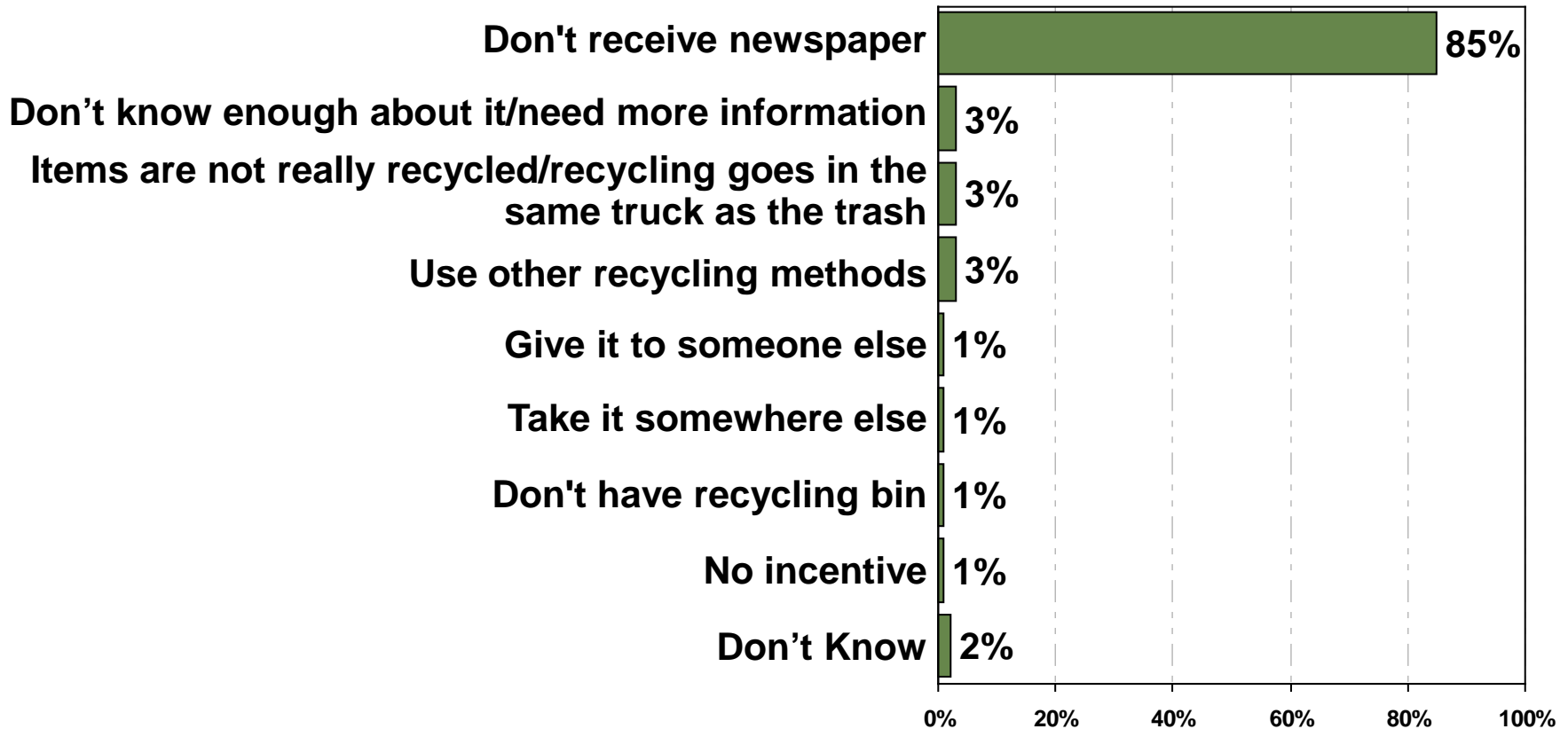
■ All of it ■ Most of it ■ Some of it ■ Only a little of it ■ None of it ■ Don't Know



Residents who do *not* recycle newspapers generally do not receive them.

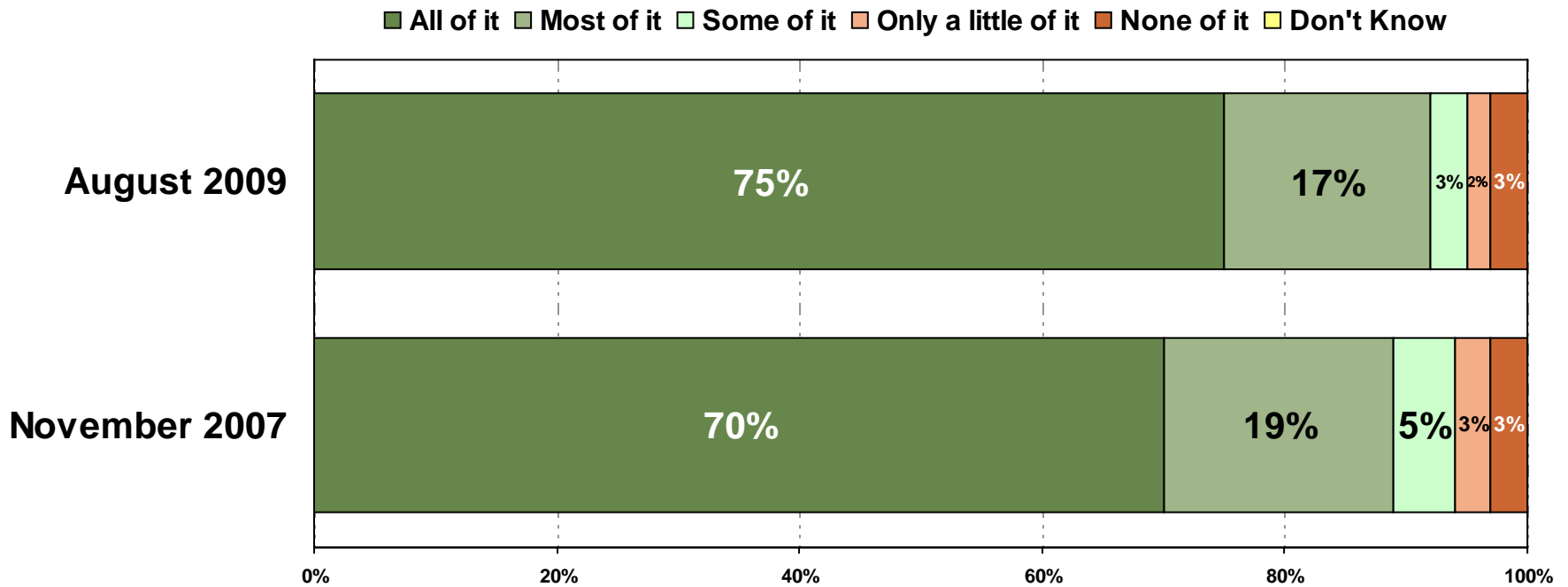
(Open-ended; multiple responses accepted; asked only of those who recycle a little or less newspaper.)

Why don't you recycle more newspaper?



Mixed paper recycling rates have increased slightly since November 2007.

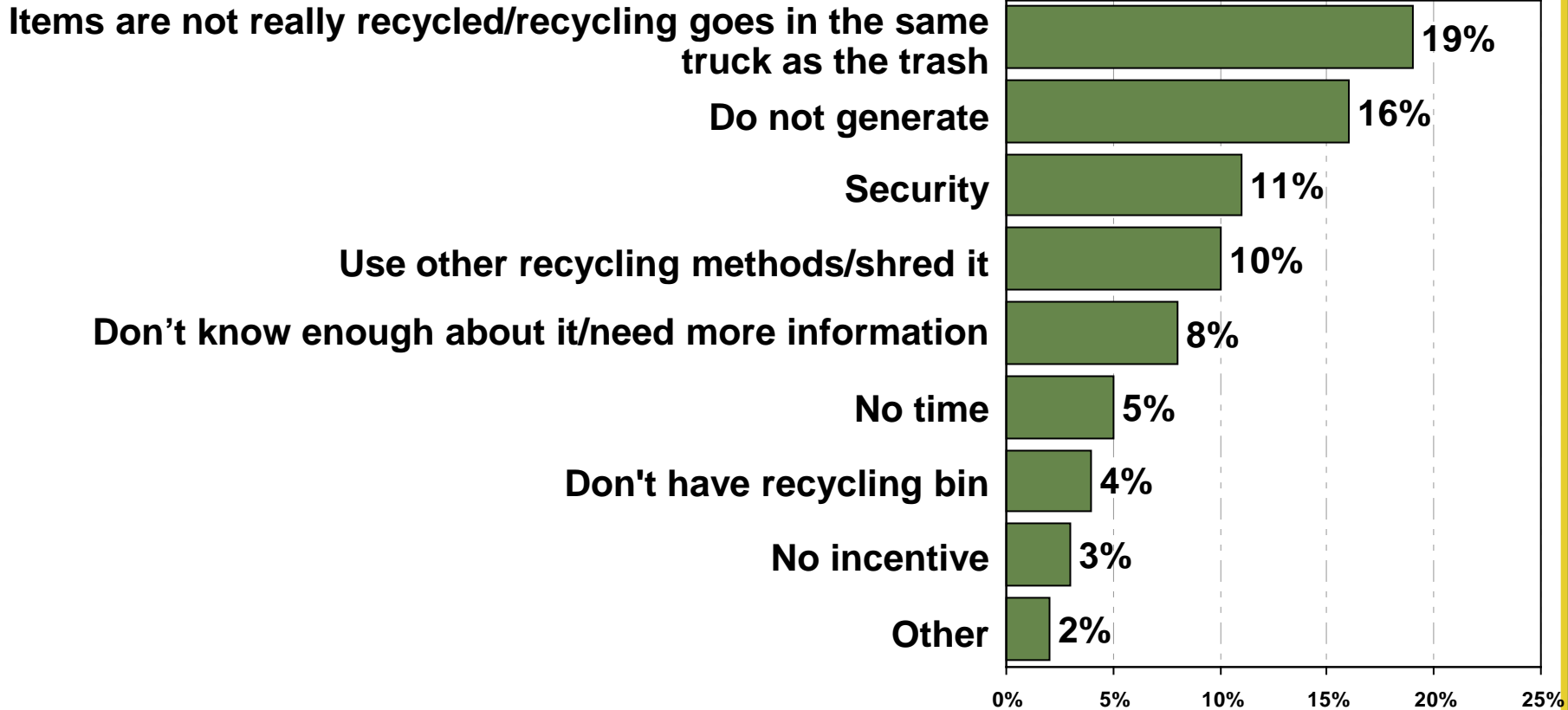
How much of the mixed paper – mail, catalogs, and magazines that you use in your home would you say that you put in the recycling bin:



Many who recycle little mixed paper are skeptical that it actually gets recycled.

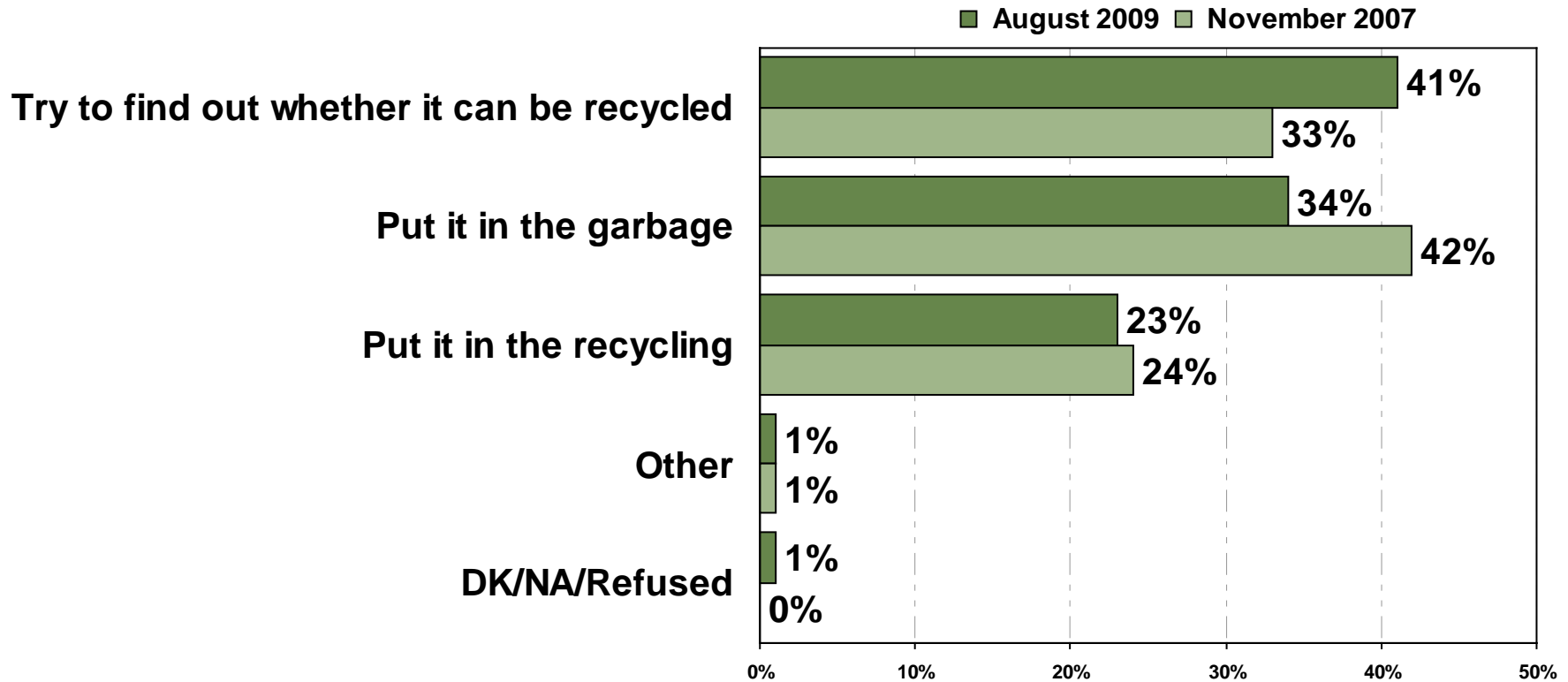
(Open-ended; multiple responses accepted; asked of those who recycle a little or less mixed paper.)

Why don't you recycle more mixed paper?



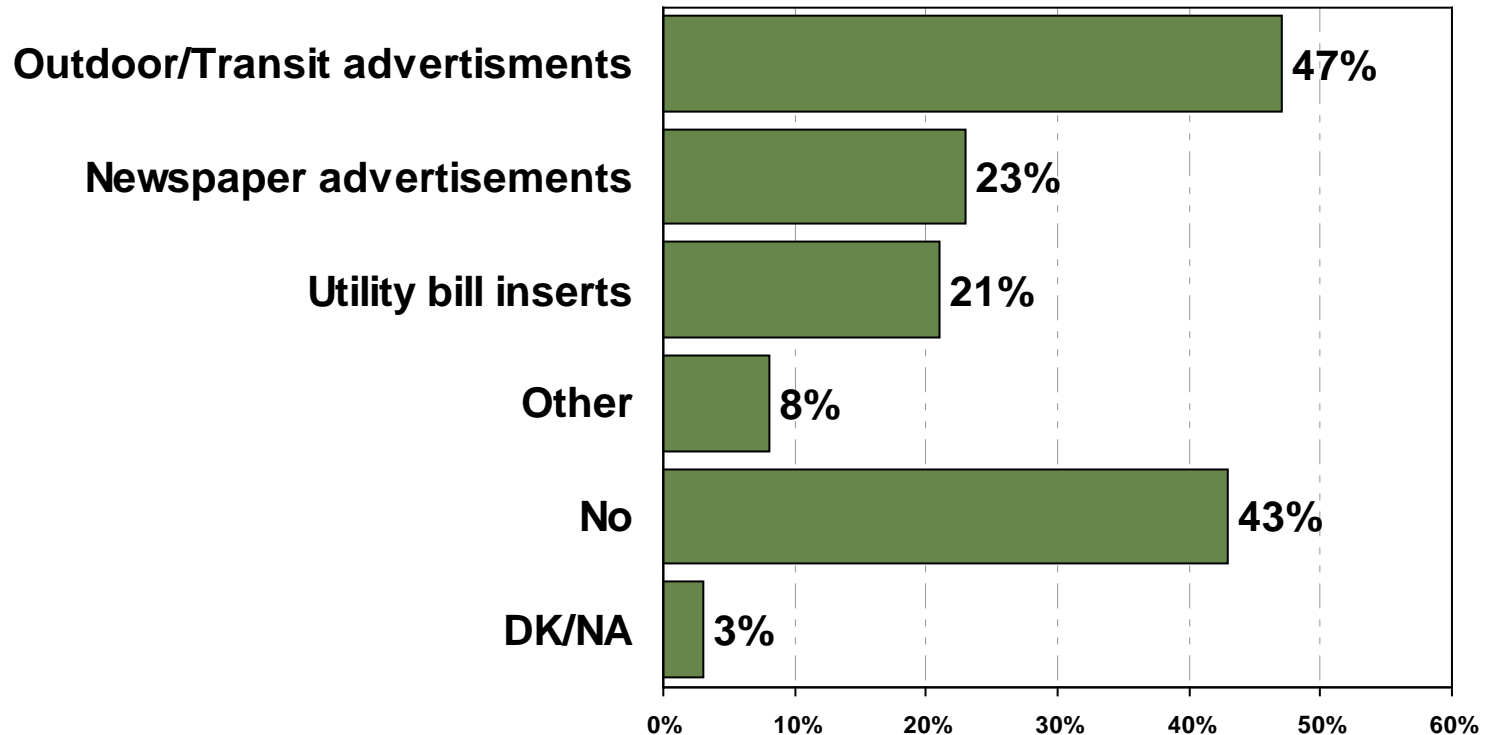
Residents have grown more likely to try to find out whether something is recyclable, rather than just putting it in the garbage.

If you don't know whether an item can be recycled, do you usually:



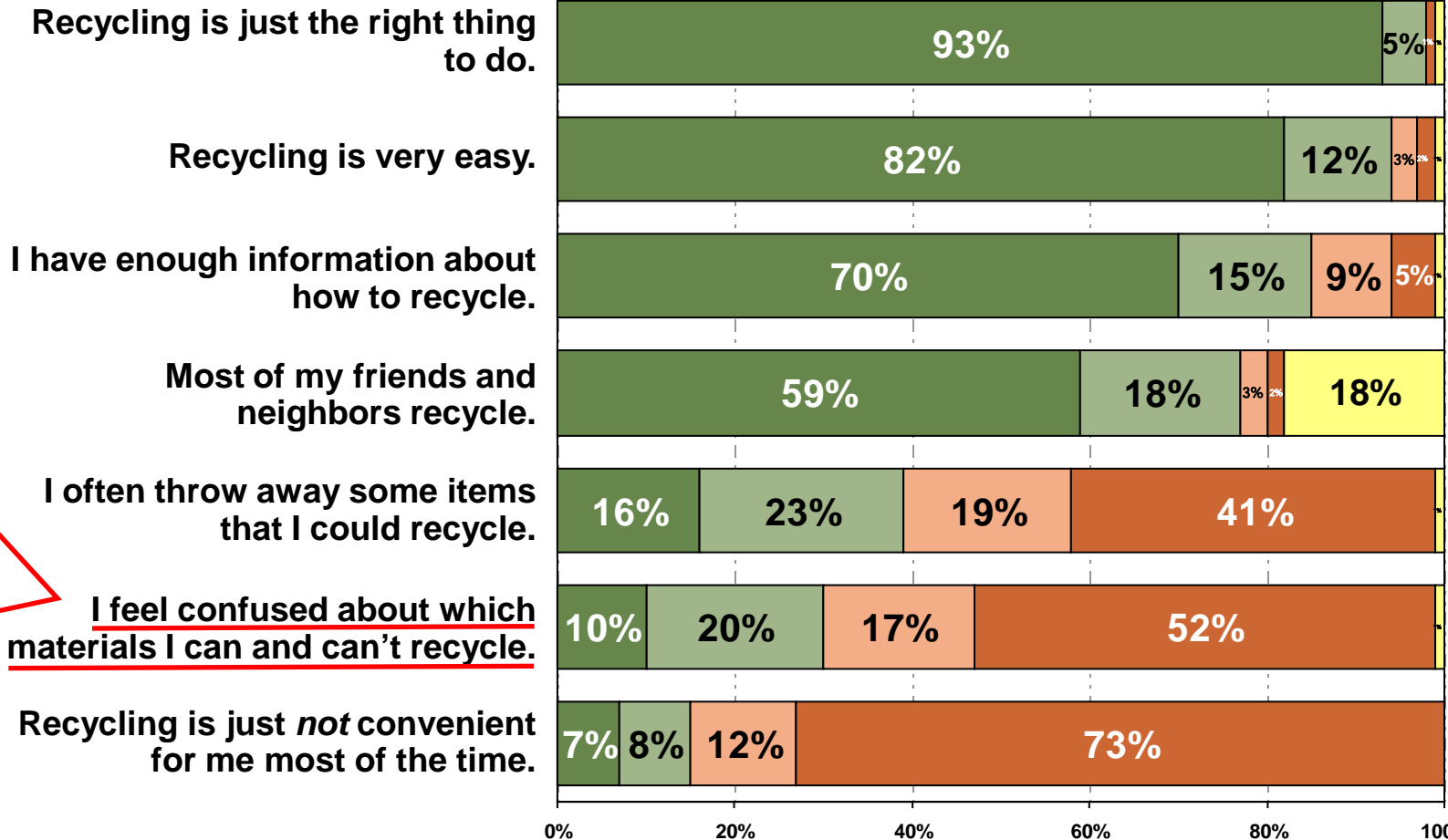
Approximately half recall seeing or hearing some information about paper recycling.

(Multiple Responses Accepted)



Most feel that recycling is convenient, and generally understand what can be recycled.

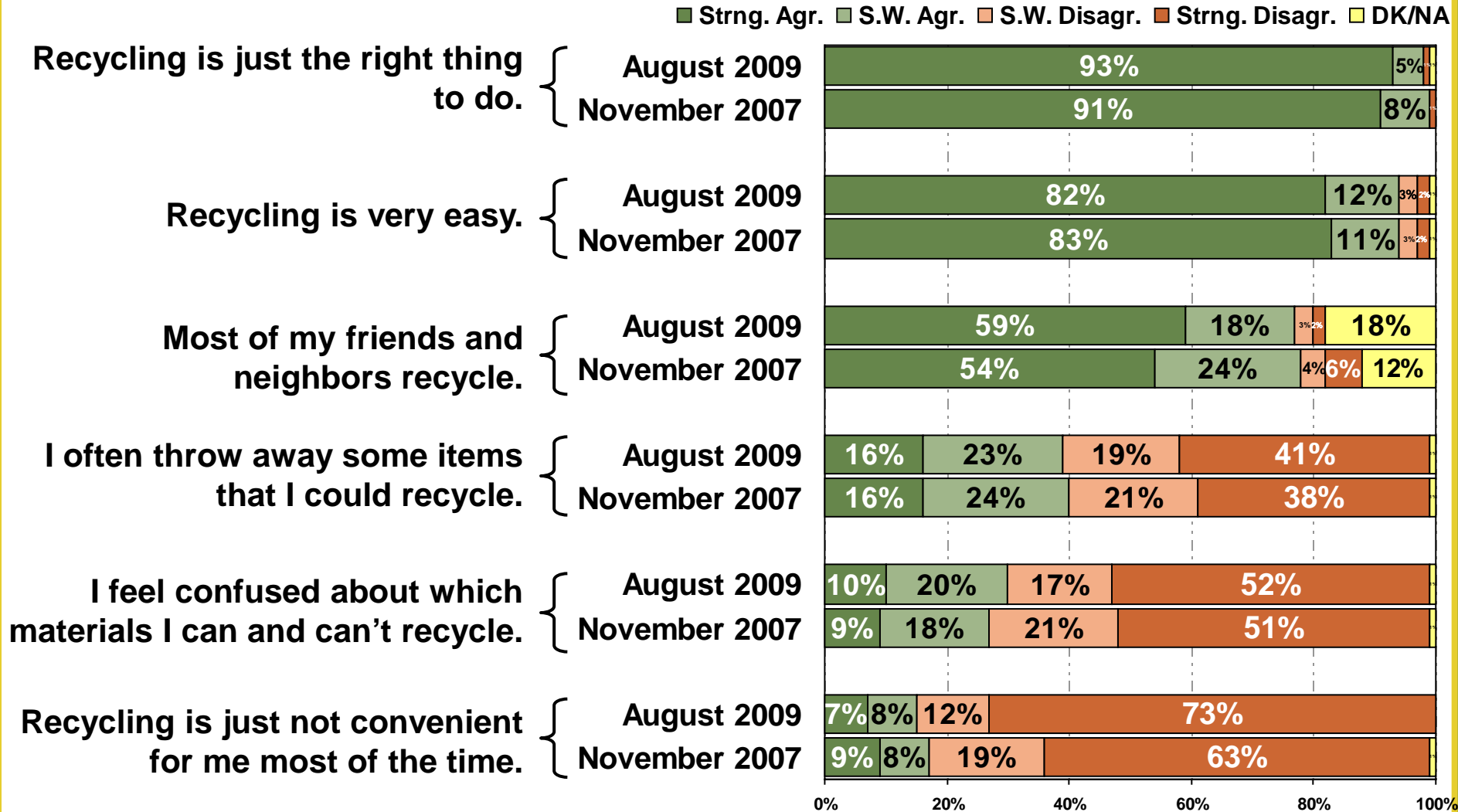
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Those who recycle no more than "some" of their mixed paper are more likely to agree with this statement (60%).

General attitudes toward recycling have not changed dramatically since 2007.

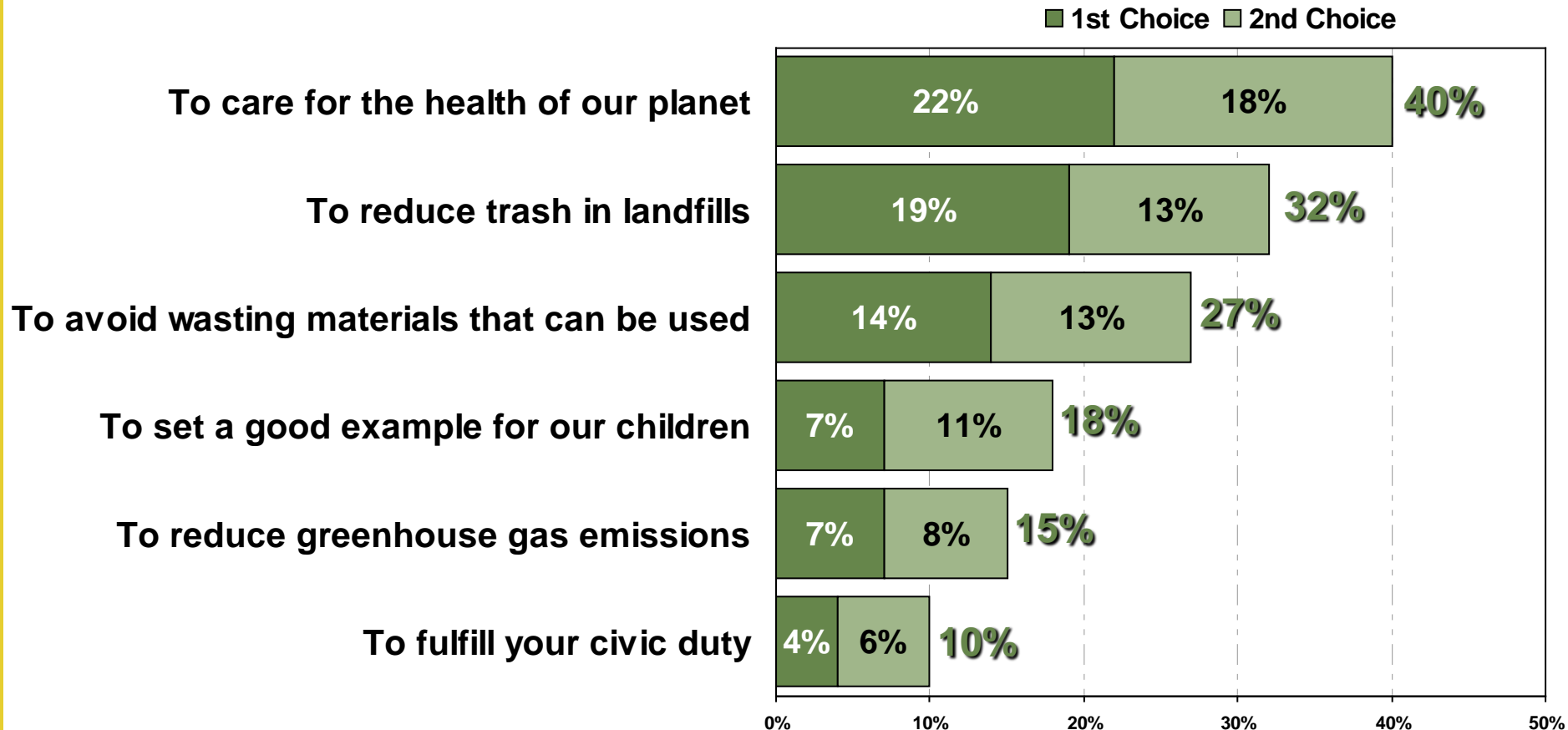
Opinion Research &
Public Policy Analysis



16. Next, for each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. ^2007 wording is slightly different: Recycling can, bottles and paper is very easy.

Caring for the health of our planet is seen as the most important reason to recycle.

Please tell me which one you view as the most important reason to recycle cans, bottles and paper.



Conclusions: Curbside Recycling

- **Nearly all residents (93%) claim to recycle paper, bottles and cans.**
- **The percentage of residents claiming to recycle “all” of their mixed paper has increased slightly (5%) since 2007.**
- **Recycling mentalities appear to be shifting slightly, as more residents are willing to research whether something is recyclable before throwing it away.**
- **Of those who do *not* recycle paper, many still see it as inconvenient or do not recycle paper because they do not have bins.**

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