

**Research Surrounding The Proposed "Foodbelt" in Markham:  
Study Of Support/Opposition To Current Proposal**

**Presented To: The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance**

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**POLLARA** 

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# Methodology

## Survey Instrument

- 6 minute telephone survey

## Scope

- 501 adult residents of Markham

## Fielding Window

- January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 to January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## Statistical Reliability

- In total, 501 Markham residents completed the survey. This provides a margin of error is  $\pm 4.4\%$ , nineteen times out of twenty. Data was weighted according to current available local census data.

# Key Findings

## Top-of-Mind Issues:

- Overall, growth, development and transportation issues are seen as the most important issues currently facing Markham.
- Thirty six per cent of respondents report that they are familiar with the proposed "foodbelt", however only 9% reported that they are very familiar with it.

## Support For The "Foodbelt":

- When read a brief synopsis of the proposed "foodbelt" in Markham, there is noticeable support for the idea. In total, 83% of respondents support the creation of a "foodbelt" in Markham with 51% of respondents strongly supporting the idea.
- Women are slightly more supportive of the "foodbelt" than men are, 87% women vs. 79% men. Opposition is slightly higher among men at 11% compared to women at 6%.
- The highest levels of support for the "foodbelt" are found among women aged 35-54 with 88% supporting. The idea of a "foodbelt" in Markham received the lowest levels of support among men aged 18-34 with 10% opposing it.

# Key Findings

## Message Testing/Communications:

- Respondents in Markham are noticeably concerned about the availability of locally grown food (71% concerned), controlling urban sprawl (73% concerned), and providing a good balance between protecting local agriculture and building new homes (81% concerned).
- Protecting local farmland and greenspace was seen as very important.
- Nearly eight-in-ten respondents indicate that they are somewhat/much more likely to buy food that was locally grown in Markham and similarly eight-in-ten respondents feel that it is important to protect local farmland and greenspace.

## Potential Impact On Vote:

- Support for councillors who support the "foodbelt" is strong (total 67% more likely), with little negative reaction against those who would support the proposal.
- Women are more likely than men to support councillors who support the "foodbelt" (72% and 62% respectively).

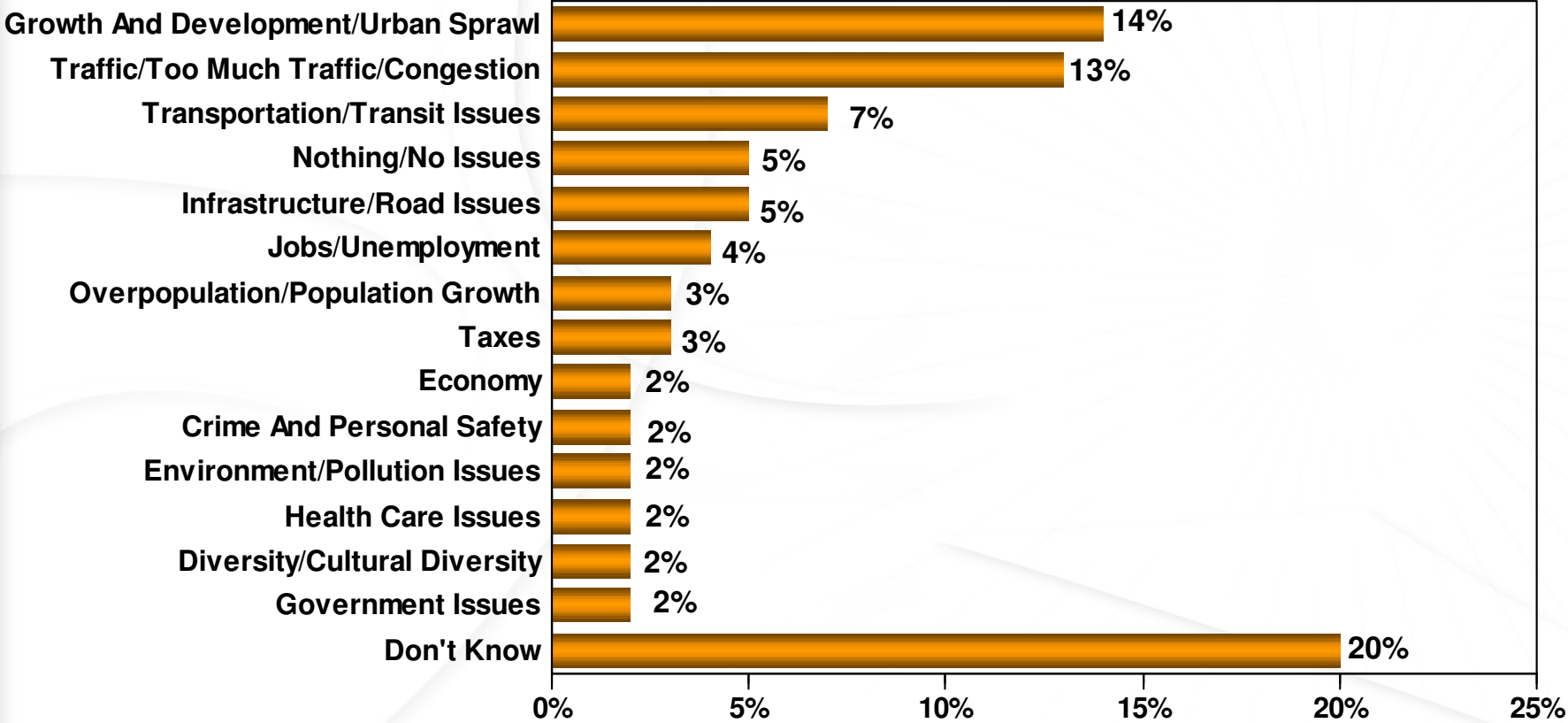
## Real Estate Developer Influence:

- Real estate developers are seen by 41% of respondents to have a great deal of influence over local municipal politicians, a further 35% feel they have a fair amount of influence.
- 65% of respondents feel that real estate developers should have less influence over local municipal politicians.

# Issue Awareness

# Most Important Issue Facing Markham: *Growth/Development and Transit/Transportation*

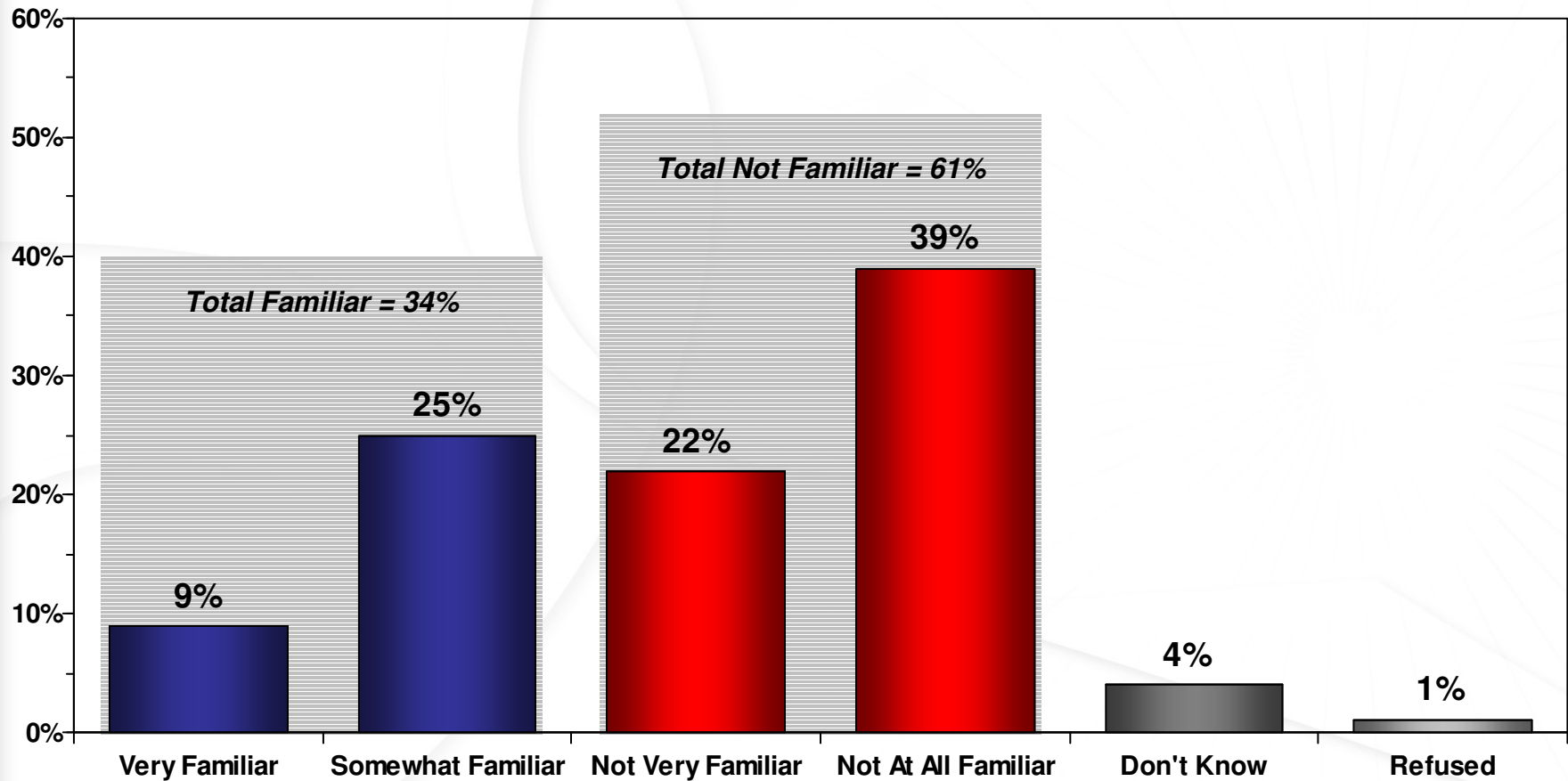
- Growth, development and transit/transportation issues were the top-of-mind issues for respondents in Markham.
- A further 3% of respondents cited overpopulation/population growth as the number one issue in Markham.



Q1: In your opinion, what is the single most important issue facing Markham today? (n=501)

# Familiarity With Proposed “Foodbelt” In Markham: *Low Awareness*

- The majority of respondents are not familiar with the proposal to designate a “foodbelt” in Markham.
- For those who are familiar with the proposal only 9% report that they are very familiar with it.

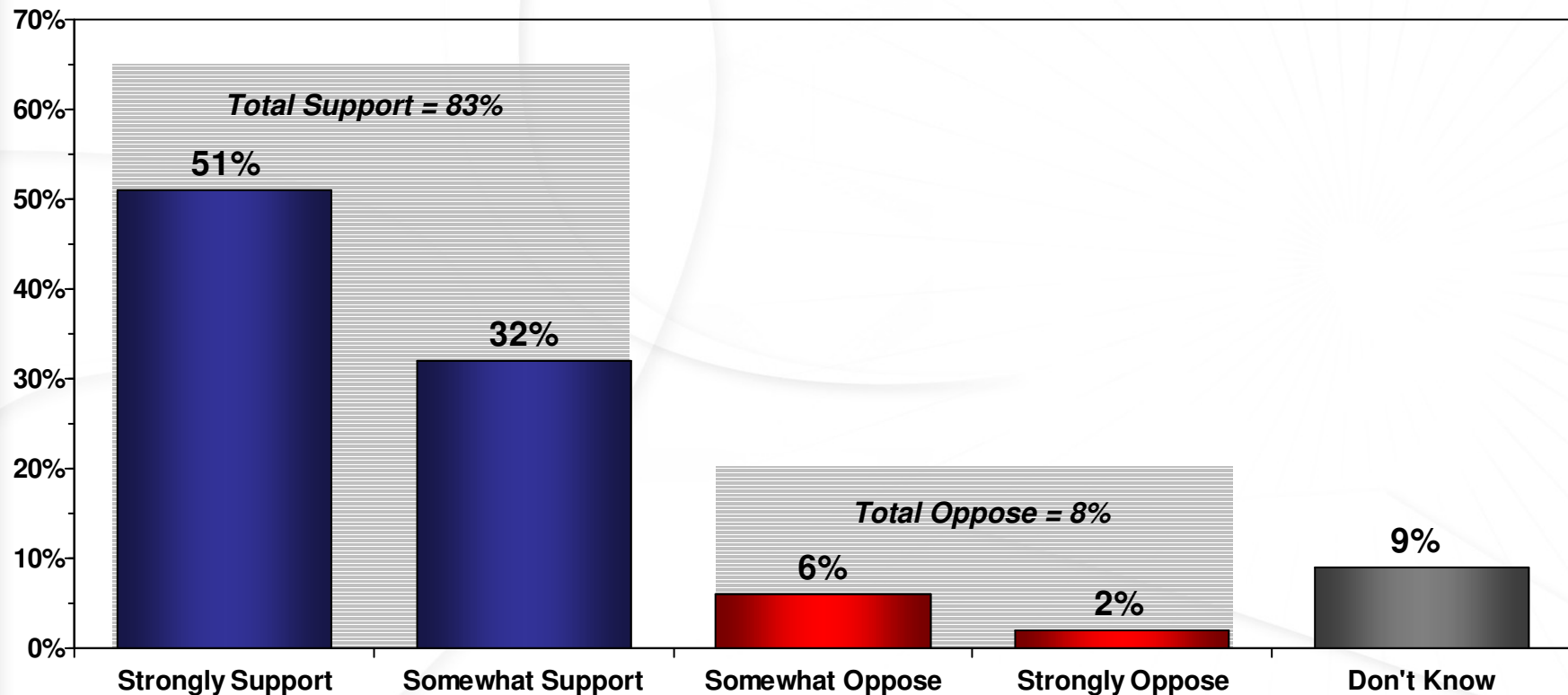


Q7: How familiar are you with a proposal to designate a "foodbelt" in Markham? (n=501)

## **Support/Opposition To Proposal**

# Support For "Foodbelt" In Markham: *Strong Support, 83% Support Proposal*

- After being read a brief summary of the proposal, 83% of respondents support the creation of a "foodbelt" in Markham
- Opposition to the proposal is low with only 8% of respondents indicating that they do not support the creation of a "foodbelt".

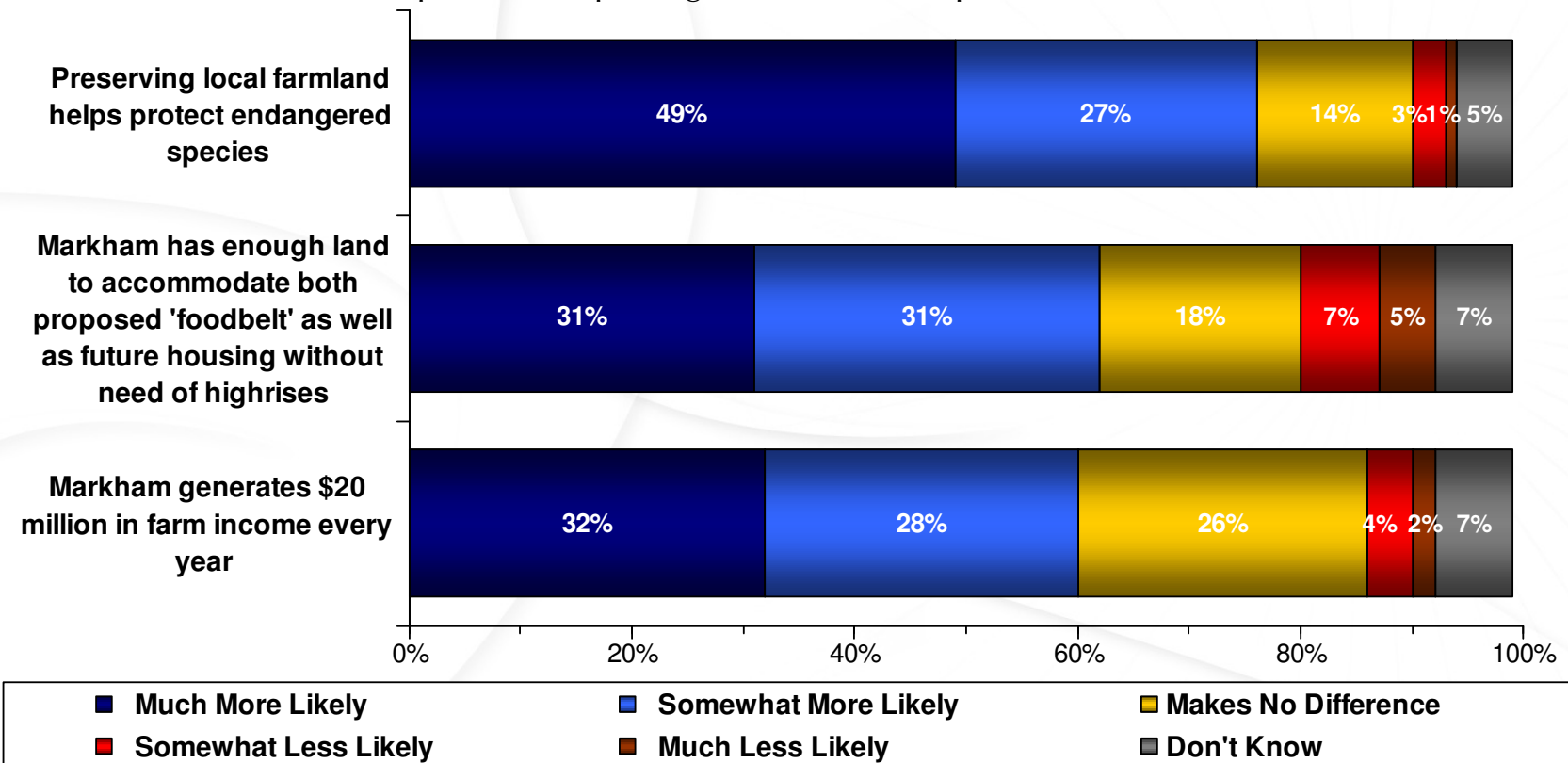


Q8N: As you may know.... Markham council is considering the creation of a "foodbelt" ...that is an area in the northern part of Markham, just beyond the developed areas that would be protected for agricultural uses, and focus development growth in Markham to existing developed areas. Now thinking about this, do you support or oppose the creation of a "foodbelt" in Markham. Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose? (n=501)

# **Message Bank And Communications**

# Likelihood To Support “Foodbelt”: *Little Downside to Supporting Statements*

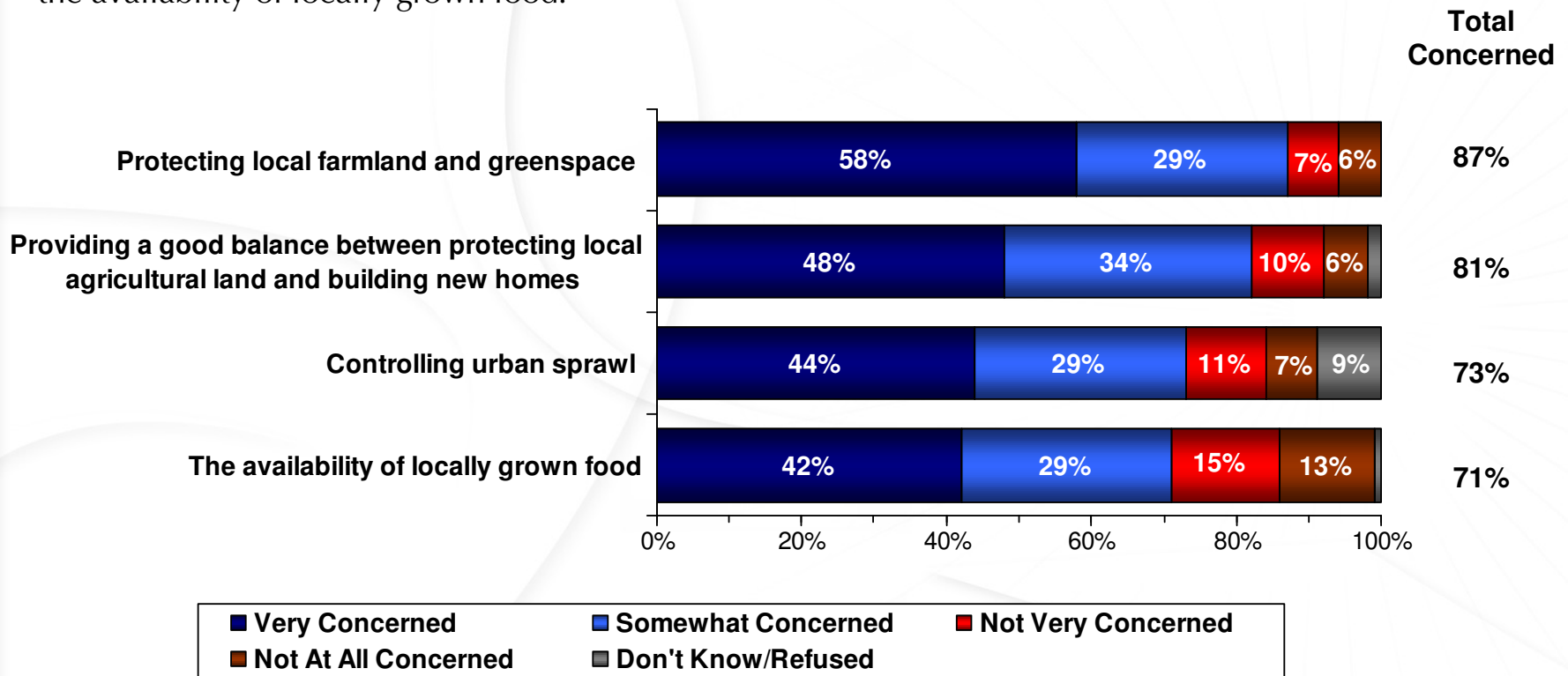
- Statements are seen as neutral to positive with little downside.
- Endangered species protection is the strongest argument with nearly half of all respondents citing it as a something that would make them much more likely to support the “foodbelt”.
- The amount of farm revenue generated in the area is seen as the weakest of the supporting statements with 26% of respondents reporting that it has no impact on them.



Q9N-Q11N: Now would you be more or less likely to support the creation of a "foodbelt" if you knew...  
(n=501, each)

# Concern With Supporting Arguments: *Very Concerned*

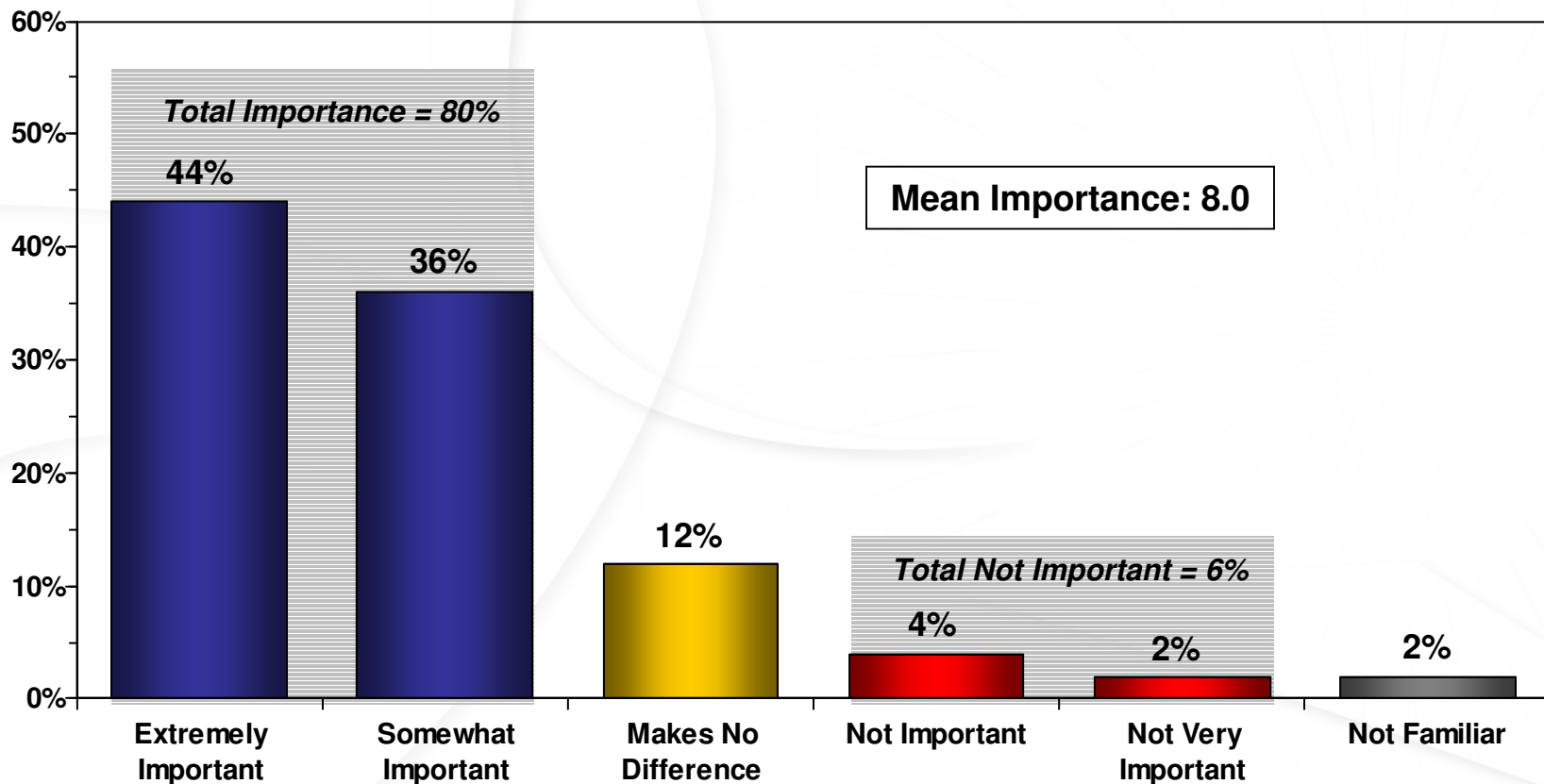
- There is a high level of concern with many of the arguments that advocates use to promote the adoption of a "foodbelt" in Markham, especially with the protection of local farmland and greenspace.
- Few report that they are not concerned with these arguments, the least amount of concern being over the availability of locally grown food.



Q2N-Q5N: Now thinking about your local community, how concerned would you say you are about (READ HIGHLIGHTED ITEM)...? Would that be very or somewhat? (n=501, each)

# Importance Of Protecting Local Farmland And Greenspace: *Protection Seen As Very Important*

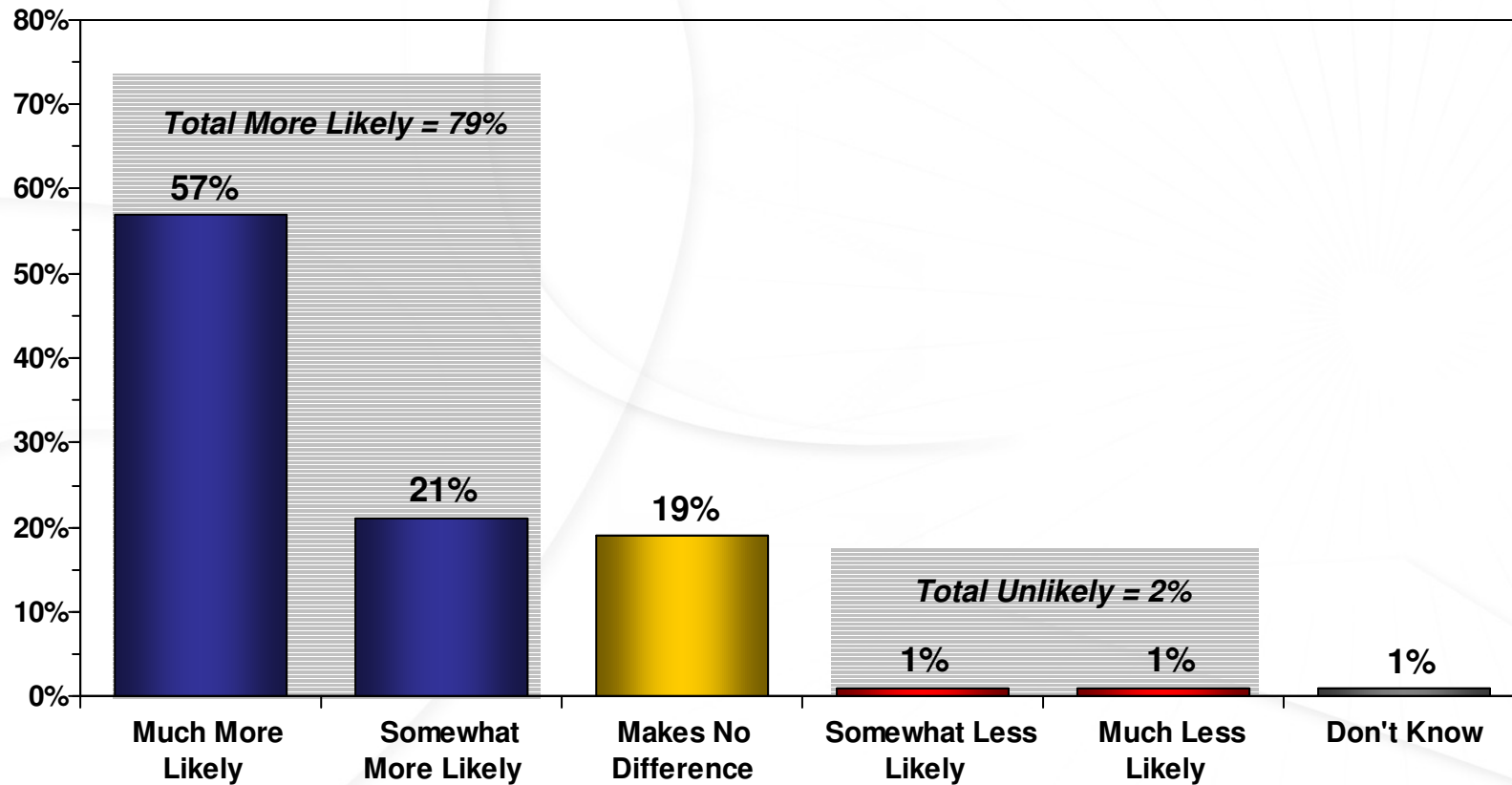
- Eight-in-ten respondents reported that it is either somewhat or extremely important to protect local farmland and greenspace with a high proportion (44%) reporting that they feel it is extremely important.
- Levels of opposition are low with only of 6% stating that protecting local farmland and greenspace is not/not very important.



Q6: On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not very important at all and 10 is extremely important, how important do you feel it is to protect local farmland and greenspace? (n=501)

# Likelihood To Buy Locally Grown Food: *Very Likely*

- Eight-in-ten respondents are likely to purchase food that is locally grown in Markham.
- Nearly 6-in-ten are much more likely to do so with very few respondents reporting that that they are unlikely to purchase locally grown food.

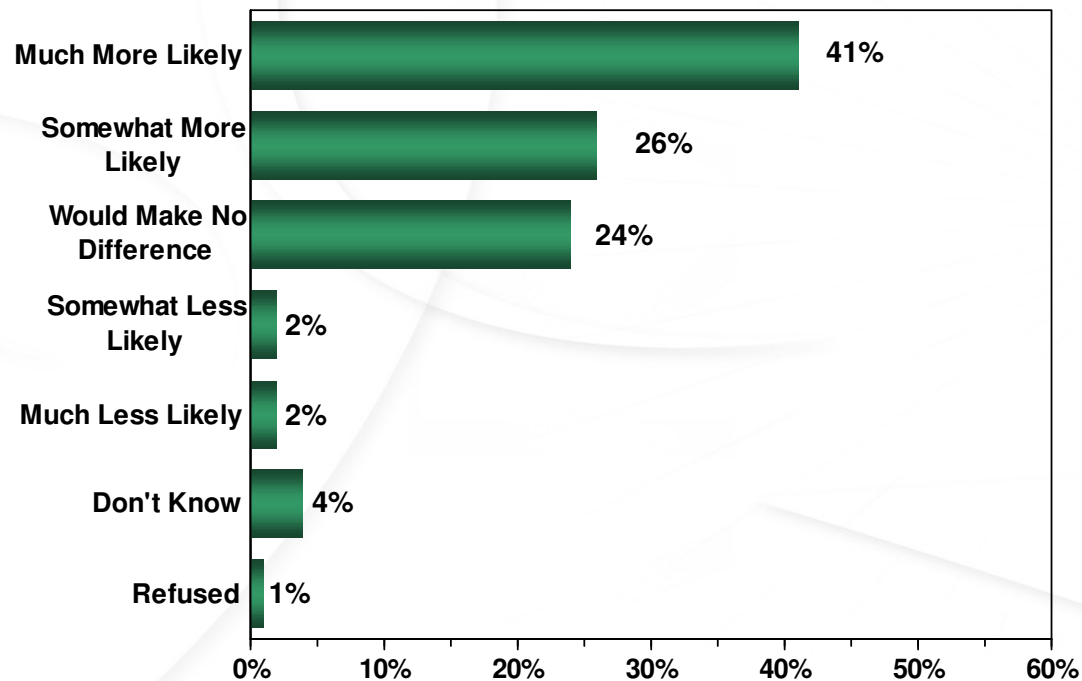


Q12N: Would you be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely or much less likely to buy food that was grown locally in Markham? If it would make no difference please say so.  
(n=501)

## Potential Impact On Vote

## Likelihood To Vote For Councillor Who Supports “Foodbelt”: *Strong Likelihood With Little Negative Reaction*

- The overall likelihood of supporting councillors who support the "foodbelt" is strong (total 67% more likely), with little negative reaction against those who would support the proposal.
- There is however a good proportion of individuals who feel that it would make no difference in their support for a specific councillor in Markham (24%).
- Women are more likely than men to support councillors who support the "foodbelt" (72% and 62% respectively).



Q13: Now thinking about the upcoming municipal election in 2010, would you be more or less likely to vote for a councillor if he/she supported the creation of a "foodbelt" in Markham. Is that somewhat or much more/less likely. If it would make no difference to you please say so. (n=501)

# Likelihood To Vote For Councillor Who Supports “Foodbelt” By Genderation: *Females More Supportive*

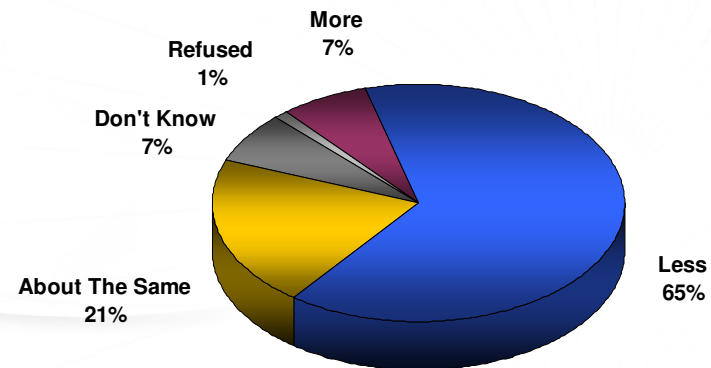
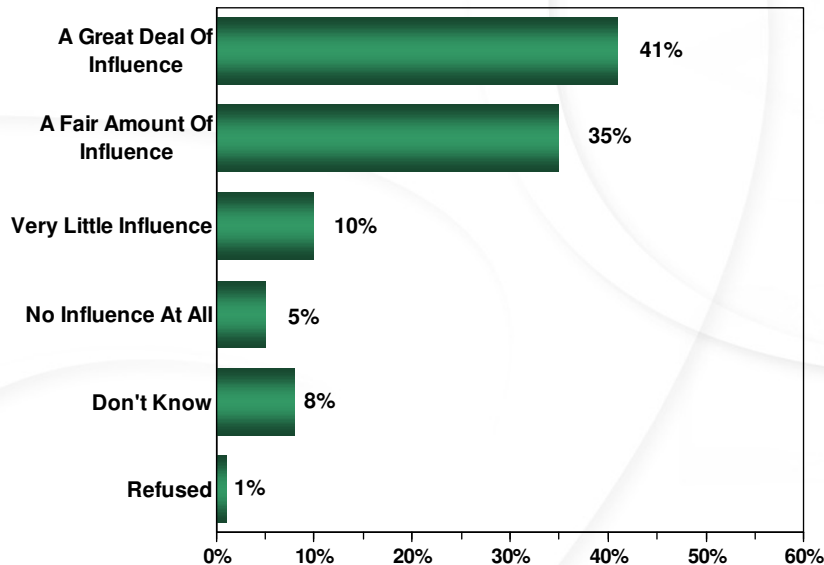
	Much More Likely	Somewhat More Likely	Would Make No Difference	Somewhat Less Likely	Much Less Likely	Don't Know	Refused
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Male 18 to 34</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Male 35 to 54</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Male 55+</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Female 18 to 34</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Female 35 to 54</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Female 55+</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>

Q13: Now thinking about the upcoming municipal election in 2010, would you be more or less likely to vote for a councillor if he/she supported the creation of a "foodbelt" in Markham. Is that somewhat or much more/less likely. If it would make no difference to you please say so. (n=501)

# **Real Estate Developer Influence**

# Real Estate Developer Influence Over Municipal Politicians: *Too Much Influence*

- Real estate developers are seen to have a great deal of influence with Markham Municipal politicians (41% of respondents).
- 65% of respondents feel that developers should have less influence.



Q14: How much influence to you feel that real estate developers have over your municipal politicians? ? Would that be a great deal of influence, a fair amount of influence, very little influence or no influence at all. (n=501)  
Q15: Do you feel that real estate developers should have more, less or about the same amount of influence over your municipal politicians? (n=501)

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