



# **Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey Research Report**

**February 2015**

**Prepared by:**



# 1. Summary

## BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

As part of the Port Granby Project, the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) has commissioned periodic public attitude research to monitor public awareness of the PHAI, identify issues and concerns, determine the communication needs of the public, and provide data regarding public attitudes and preferences.

The most recent iteration of the Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey in the Fall of 2014 was conducted by CCI Research Inc. Survey packages containing an introduction letter explaining the project, a survey questionnaire booklet, a postage-paid return envelope, and a contact card describing how to receive a summary copy of the survey results, were mailed to 782 area property owners in October. Respondents had the option of completing the questionnaire booklet and returning it by letter mail, completing the survey online, or calling CCI Research Inc. toll-free to complete their survey by telephone. Additionally, subsequent to the initial mailing, a reminder letter and a reminder postcard were mailed to all households encouraging homeowners to complete their questionnaire before the survey deadline in November. In total, 215 respondents completed the survey: 164 questionnaire booklets were returned by mail, 48 were completed online, and three surveys were completed by telephone (Table 3-1). The confidence interval for the overall Port Granby sample is +/-5.7%, 19 times out of 20 (Table 3-2).

The PHAI was particularly interested in examining survey responses from property owners within Zone 3, Clarington, as this is the area that contains the current and proposed historic low level radioactive waste management sites. Therefore, survey findings are presented in this report for the overall Port Granby sample, as well as separately by proximity, where “Close Zone” represents households within Zone 3, Clarington, and “Far Zone” represents households from all other geographical zones combined. In total, 23% of survey respondents were from the Close Zone, and the remaining 77% were from the Far Zone (Table 3-1). All overall Port Granby survey results are weighted by zone to reflect the estimated proportion of households in Zone 3 versus all other zones combined. When comparing the Close Zone to the Far Zone, unweighted data is used (see Methodology for further details).

This report presents the findings for the 2014 Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey, and where applicable, compares the results to those from similar previous studies conducted in 2011 and 2007.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Satisfaction with Living in the Community

Overall satisfaction with living in the community has remained high over time, with 95% of respondents indicating they are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” (Table 6-3). It is interesting to note, however, there has been a notable decline in the proportion of respondents who indicate they are “very satisfied” with living in their community, which is largely attributable to a substantial decline in “very satisfied” responses from respondents in the Close Zone.

## **Important Community Issues**

Similar to the previous study in 2011, the current findings show that the relocation of radioactive waste was the top issue in the community, with about one-quarter of respondents (26%) identifying this in an open-ended format as one of the most important issues facing their community (Table 6-6). A greater proportion of respondents from the Close Zone identified this as one of the most important community issues as compared to respondents from the Far Zone.

Additionally, high property taxes (22%) and wind turbines (14%) were mentioned as top community issues by a greater proportion of respondents in 2014 as compared to previous years.

## **Awareness and Knowledge about Low-Level Radioactive Waste in Area**

Most respondents indicate that they rarely think about living in a community with a low-level radioactive waste management facility; specifically, three-quarters of respondents (75%) think about it “not very often” or “never,” which is an increase over the 2007 result (Table 6-9).

Self-assessed knowledge about the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste in the community is similar to previous years, with 81% of respondents indicating that they are “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about this topic (Table 6-12).

## **Familiarity with the Port Granby Project**

There has been an increase over time in the proportion of respondents who have heard about the Port Hope Area Initiative (84%), the Port Granby Project (87%), and the existing Port Granby waste management facility (85%) (Table 6-15). Additionally, three-quarters of respondents (75%) overall have heard of the future Port Granby long-term waste management facility.

Since 2007, familiarity with the Port Granby Project has increased from about half to about two-thirds of respondents (69%) indicating they are “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the project (Table 6-18). Respondents from the Close Zone report greater overall familiarity compared to those in the Far Zone, and greater familiarity compared to the 2007 result.

## **Confidence and Concerns Regarding the Port Granby Project**

Over half of the survey respondents overall expressed confidence that the waste can be safely managed at the future long-term waste management facility, with 58% indicating they were either “very confident” or “somewhat confident” (Table 6-21). Confidence has increased since the 2007 result; however, respondents from the Close Zone were less likely than those from the Far Zone to express confidence.

When asked to volunteer what concerns they might have about the long-term waste management facility, there were a wide range of diverse issues or concerns identified by respondents, the most common of which were: contamination of the environment (25%), safe transportation of the waste (19%), proper design and operation of the facility (14%), spillage/leakage (13%), and the effect on property values (12%) (Table 6-22).

When asked to specify what actions or decisions would make them more confident about the safety of the facility, the most commonly reported themes were: to have long-term

testing/monitoring (24%), to better inform the public (19%), and to have community involvement/access to information (11%) (Table 6-23).

When asked to identify the benefits of the Port Granby Project, about half of the survey respondents (52%) identified one or more benefits to the project. The most common response was the cleanup and containment of the radioactive waste (28%) and a cleaner environment (15%), although 10% of responses indicated that there is “no benefit” to the project (Table 6-24). In addition, it is important to note that over one-third of respondents (38%) did not know, or otherwise did not provide a response regarding benefits of the project.

About half of respondents indicated that they or someone in their household have not been directly affected by the Port Granby Project (52%), while 23% did not know if they have been directly affected, 22% felt they have been negatively affected, and 7% indicated they had been positively affected (Chart 6-25). Respondents from the Close Zone were more likely than those from the Far Zone to report that they or someone in their household have been negatively affected by the Port Granby Project. The most commonly mentioned negative effect was decreasing property value (either actual or expected), which was mentioned by a total of 19 of the respondents who indicated they had been negatively affected by the Project (Table 6-27).

Overall, survey respondents were more confident that the Port Granby Project can minimize the potential impacts of light pollution (58% “very confident” or “somewhat confident”), compared to minimizing the impacts of traffic (42%), noise (42%), and dust (37%) (Table 6-30).

### **Outdoor Activities**

Over three in five respondents (64%) (Chart 6-31) participate in outdoor activities in the Port Granby Project area, the most common of which were walking/hiking/dog walking and cycling (62% and 43% of those who participate, respectively) (Table 6-33).

### **Property Value Protection Program**

About half of the respondents (54%) reported that they own property within the Property Value Protection (PVP) Program zone (Table 6-36); however, only 30% overall reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the PVP program (Table 6-39). Respondents from the Close Zone were more likely than those from the Far Zone to indicate they were “very familiar” with the PVP Program.

Similar to the findings in 2011, only one-fifth (20%) of respondents in 2014 indicated that they are “very confident” or “somewhat confident” that the PVP Program will compensate for decrease of property value (Table 6-42).

### **Communications**

Independent qualified scientists (37%), and PHAI staff (25%) were the top two “first choice” methods of receiving accurate and complete information about the Port Granby Project (Table 6-43).

With respect to PHAI communication, almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents reported being satisfied overall with the PHAI’s efforts to provide information about the Port Granby Project (Table 6-50), while almost half (47%) expressed confidence that the PHAI would respond to any concerns they may have (Table 6-53). About four out of five respondents (79%) felt that the

Port Granby Project Citizen Liaison Group is important in helping with communication (Table 6-56).

Brochures or newsletters through the mail were the top choice of respondents for receiving information about the Port Granby Project (51% "first choice") (Table 6-57). About two-thirds of respondents (67%) indicated that they read the Port Granby Project Newsletter "always" or "sometimes," while 26% did not recall receiving the newsletter (Table 6-64).

With respect to primary sources of local news, the survey respondents most often relied on Clarington this Week (77%), followed by Orono Weekly Times (29%) and KX 96 FM (21%), both of which appear to have increased since the previous year as primary sources of local news (Table 6-67).