



**Port Hope Project
Public Attitude Survey
Research Report**

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Prepared by:



1. Summary

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

As part of the Port Hope Project, the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) has commissioned periodic public attitude research to: monitor area residents' level of knowledge and awareness about historic, low-level radioactive waste and PHAI projects, 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 Hope Project Public Attitude Survey in the Fall of 2014 was conducted by CCI Research Inc. A survey was administered by telephone to Ward 1 and Ward 2 residents of Port Hope, who were 18 years of age or older. In an effort to achieve a sample that was representative of the population, age and gender quotas were set within each ward. The 2014 survey contained 36 questions, including six open-ended questions, and took an average of approximately 18 minutes to complete. A total of 466 telephone interviews were completed in Port Hope during the period of October 30th, to November 28th, 2014 (Table 3-1). In addition, the survey introduction offered the option of completing the questionnaire online, and an additional five surveys were completed in this manner, for a total of 471 Port Hope surveys. The confidence interval for the overall Port Hope sample is +/-4.5%, 19 times out of 20 (at the 95% confidence level, assuming a random and representative sample) (Table 3-3).

This report presents the findings for the 2014 Port Hope Project Public Attitude Survey, and where applicable, compares the results to those from similar previous studies conducted from 2002-2012.

KEY FINDINGS

Satisfaction with Living in the Community

Overall satisfaction with living in the community has remained high over time, with 94% of respondents indicating they are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” (Table 6-2). Although overall satisfaction with living in the community has remained similar to the previous year, there has been a notable decline in the proportion of respondents who indicate they are “very satisfied” with living in their community, which is partially attributable to a decline in “very satisfied” responses from respondents in Ward 2 (Table 6-3).

Important Community Issues

The current findings show that “taxes, property taxes, and the use of tax money” was the top issue in the community in 2014, with 36% of respondents identifying this topic, likely attributable to the recent municipal election being top-of-mind for residents (Table 6-4). Additionally, the “relocation, clean up, transfer of low-level radioactive waste to the PHAI facility” was identified by about one-fifth of respondents (21%), in an open-ended format as one of the most important issues facing their community. A greater proportion of respondents from Ward 1 compared to Ward 2 identified this as one of the most important issues facing their community (25% vs. 13%) (Table 6-5).

Compared to the previous survey wave in 2012, “taxes, property taxes, and the use of tax money”, “town council decisions, mayor, issues between Ward 1 and Ward 2”, and

unemployment, lack of steady employment” were mentioned as top community issues by a greater proportion of respondents in 2014, while “crime, drugs, vandalism, policing” was mentioned by a smaller proportion of respondents in 2014 compared to 2012.

Although many topics were top-of-mind for respondents, the cleanup of the low-level radioactive waste appears to be even more important when survey respondents are asked about it more directly, as 84% of respondents overall indicated that the cleanup of low-level radioactive waste was “very important” or “somewhat important” (Table 6-7).

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, over three-quarters of respondents (78%) think about it “not very often” or “never” (Table 6-10).

Self-assessed knowledge about the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste in the community is somewhat lower than in the previous year, with 79% of respondents indicating that they are “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about this topic (compared to 85% in 2012) (Table 6-13). Correspondingly, a larger proportion of respondents reported that they are “not very knowledgeable” in 2014 compared to 2012.

Familiarity with the Port Hope Project

Greater than nine out of ten Port Hope residents reported awareness of the Port Hope Area Initiative (96%), while about three-quarters reported awareness of the Port Hope Project (76%), and 69% reported awareness of the future engineered aboveground storage mound (Table 6-16).

Since 2012, familiarity with the Port Hope Project has declined from 84% to 76% and is now back in-line with awareness levels reported in 2010 and 2011. Respondents from Ward 1 report greater overall familiarity in the PHAI compared to those in Ward 2 (98% vs. 91%) (Table 6-17).

At least nine out of ten respondents reported awareness of the plans to clean up some residences and other sites contaminated with the historic low-level radioactive waste (93%) and the plans to transport contaminated soil to the new long-term waste management facility along designated routes (90%), with a smaller proportion of residents aware of the radiological surveys in Port Hope of every Ward 1 property and some Ward 2 properties (83%) (Table 6-19). With respect to awareness of the radiological surveys, respondent awareness in 2014 remains much higher than that reported in 2011 (83% vs. 38%).

A greater awareness of the plans to transport the contaminated soil and to undertake the radiological surveys was expressed by residents of Ward 1 compared to residents of Ward 2 (92% vs. 84%) (Table 6-19).

Confidence and Concerns Regarding the Port Hope Project

Over three-quarters of the survey respondents overall (78%) expressed confidence that the waste can be safely managed at the new long-term waste management facility, with 34% indicating they were “very confident” and 45% indicating they were “somewhat confident” (Table 6-21). However, it appears that overall confidence has declined since

the 2011 and 2012 results (largely attributable to a decline in confidence for residents of Ward 1) although the wording of this survey question changed in 2014, thus the results should be interpreted with caution.

There were a wide range of diverse issues or concerns about the Port Hope Project identified by respondents, the most common of which were: “transporting/waste removal spills, accidents, traffic” (25%), “length of time it will take/taking too long” (21%), “using tax payer’s money/cost” (14%), and “public and worker safety/protection/health” (11%) (Table 6-23). The length of time the project is taking and using tax payer’s money/cost both increased in frequency of mentions compared to 2012.

When asked to indicate whether they have been affected, or anyone in their household has been affected by the Port Hope Project, either positively or negatively, the large majority of respondents (80%) indicated they have not been affected, while 8% indicated they had been positively affected and 10% indicated they had been negatively affected by the Port Hope Project (Table 6-26). Respondents living in Ward 1 were more likely to report some type of effect than respondents living in Ward 2 (20% vs. 11%).

Overall, similar proportions of respondents expressed confidence that the project can minimize the effects of dust, traffic, and noise (65%, 69%, and 69%, respectively), although confidence that the project can minimize the effects of dust has declined since 2011 (from 73%), and confidence that the effects of traffic can be minimized has also declined since the 2011 and 2012 results (result in both years was 79%) (Table 6-28).

When asked “how concerned are you about the project’s impact on the natural environment,” just under two-thirds of respondents (64%) expressed concern (“very concerned” or “somewhat concerned”), while the remaining 36% reported that they were “not very concerned” or “not at all concerned.” Those living in Ward 2 expressed greater overall concern than those living in Ward 1 (71% vs. 61%) (Table 6-30). Those expressing concern were then asked to specify what they were concerned about in an open-ended format. The most common response was related to the effects on “water/run-off/groundwater/leaching into water”, which was expressed by 32% of respondents (Table 6-31). This theme was identified by a greater proportion of Ward 2 respondents compared to Ward 1 respondents (44% vs. 27%). The next most common themes related to specific concerns were “the environment (general)” (17%), “trees” (15%), and “pollution from transportation (smoke, spills, fallout)” (14%).

When asked to identify the benefits of the Port Hope Project, the most common response was the “cleanup and containment of the radioactive waste” (32%) and the “improvement of the town image/removing the stigma” (26%) (Table 6-32). Ward 1 respondents were more likely to specify “improving the town image/removing the stigma” compared to Ward 2 respondents (29% vs. 18%). In total, 13% of respondents believed there to be “no benefit” to the project, while 9% indicated they don’t know or otherwise did not provide a response.

Property Value Protection Program

About three out of five respondents (62%) reported that they own property within the Property Value Protection (PVP) Program zone (Table 6-34). A total of 52% reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the PVP program, which appears to be a decline from the previous 2012 result (Table 6-36) (note that the number of response options and some of the option names changed in the current year, which may have

contributed to this observed difference). Respondents from Ward 1 and Ward 2 were similarly likely to indicate they were familiar with the PVP Program (Table 6-37).

Similar to the findings in 2012, 58% 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 6-39).

Communications

Independent qualified scientists (45%), and PHAI staff (44%) were the top two trusted sources for providing accurate and complete information about the PHAI (Table 6-41). In addition, one-third (32%) of respondents chose the Municipality of Port Hope, 28% identified local media, and 23% indicated local community groups as their trusted sources to provide accurate and complete information about the PHAI.

With respect to PHAI communication, three-quarters (75%) respondents reported being satisfied overall with the PHAI’s efforts to provide information about the Port Hope Project, although satisfaction has declined since 2012 and is now similar to 2010 and 2011 results (Table 6-45). A greater proportion of respondents in Ward 1 indicated satisfaction compared to respondents from Ward 2 (76% vs. 71%) (Table 6-46).

About three-quarters of respondents (74%) indicated they were “very confident” or “confident” that the PHAI will respond to any concerns they may have, which was similar between the two wards (Table 6-48). About four out of five respondents (82%) felt that the Port Hope Project Citizen Liaison Group is important in helping with communication between the community and the project (Table 6-50).

“Brochures or newsletters through the regular mail” was the top choice of respondents for receiving information about the Port Hope Project (68%), followed by “public meetings or open houses involving PHAI staff” (35%) and “articles or advertising by your local media” (32%) (Table 6-52). A larger proportion of respondents in 2014 selected “newsletters or brochures by regular mail” and “public meetings or open houses with PHAI staff” compared to the previous year.

With respect to primary sources of local news, the survey respondents most often relied on the Northumberland News (51%), followed by Northumberland Today (41%) (Table 6-54). Northumberland News was more often cited by Ward 2 residents than Ward 1 residents as a primary source of local news (60% vs. 47%).