



**Attitudes Toward Recycling:
A survey of residents of Sheridan, WY
December 2012**

#122250



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Lori Weigel
Partner

Methodology

- **Public Opinion Strategies conducted a survey of 250 residents of the city of Sheridan, Wyoming.**
- **Interviews conducted December 1-6, 2012.**
- **This survey has a margin of error of $\pm 6.20\%$. Margin of error for sub-groups varies with population size.**
- **Interviews distributed proportionally throughout Sheridan and are demographically representative of the stable populace.**
- **80% of interviews were conducted on traditional land lines with the other 20% conducted on cell phones.**



Key Findings

Key Findings

- **The vast majority of Sheridan residents say they recycle at least some of their waste, with women and older residents most likely to take these actions. That said, many report knowing other people who do not participate in recycling and most say they do not recycle all that they could.**
- **The majority feel recycling is an important personal action – one that they view as important to reduce waste and help the earth. Plastic and newspaper are most commonly cited types of materials to recycle.**
- **Residents give the recycling program high marks and say it is easy to use. If anything, they would like additional information on exactly what they can recycle, as even recyclers say they get confused.**

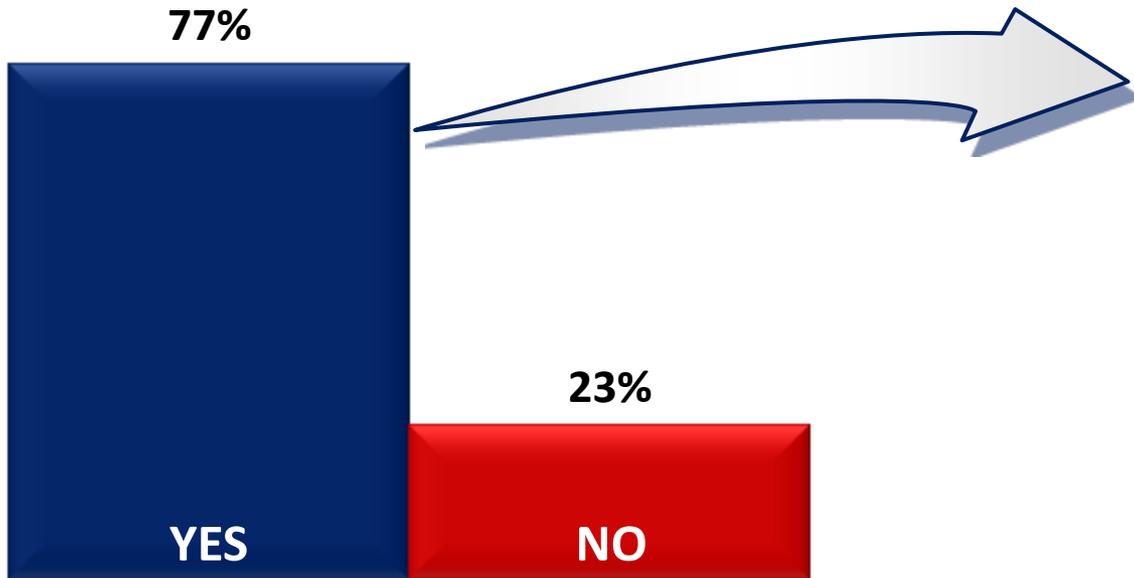
Key Findings

- **There is broad willingness to pay in concept for recycling pick-up among the majority of residents, especially at lower amounts around \$3 per month. It is worth noting though that the minority of residents who do not recycle are less inclined to support some sort of fee, and a minority can often be disproportionately vocal at times.**
- **There is not significant willingness to pay for green waste/composting at this time.**



Reported Recycling Behavior

Women and seniors are most likely to say they recycle.



	% Yes
Women Over \$60K	96%
Women Age 55+	89%
Democrat	89%
Independent/ Democrat Men	88%
Age 65+	85%

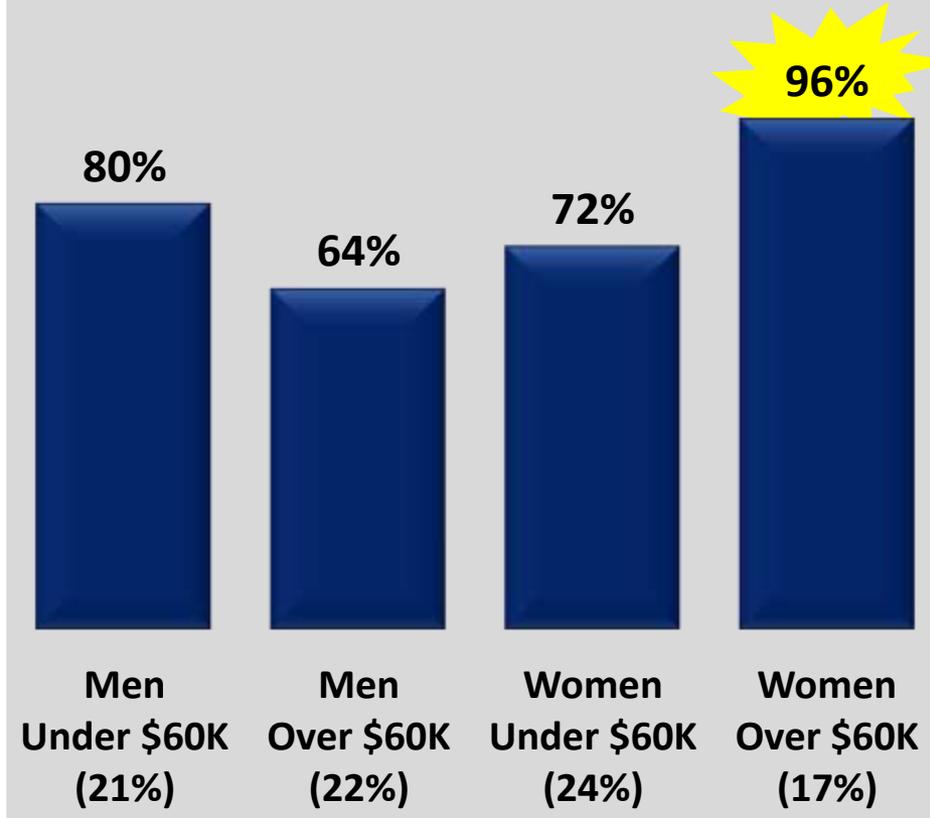
Do you currently recycle at home?

There are significant gender distinctions in reported recycling behavior.

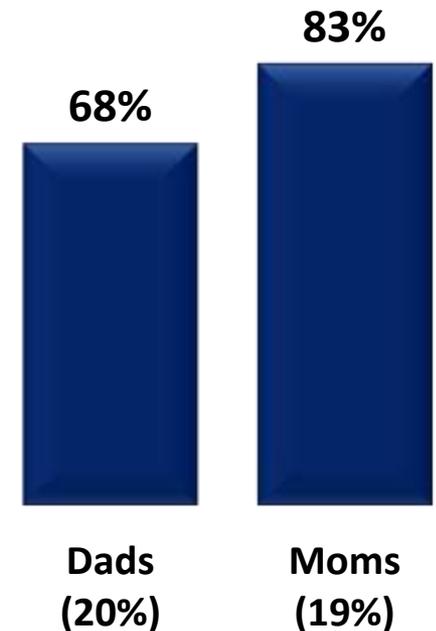
Recycle by Gender



Recycle by Gender/Income



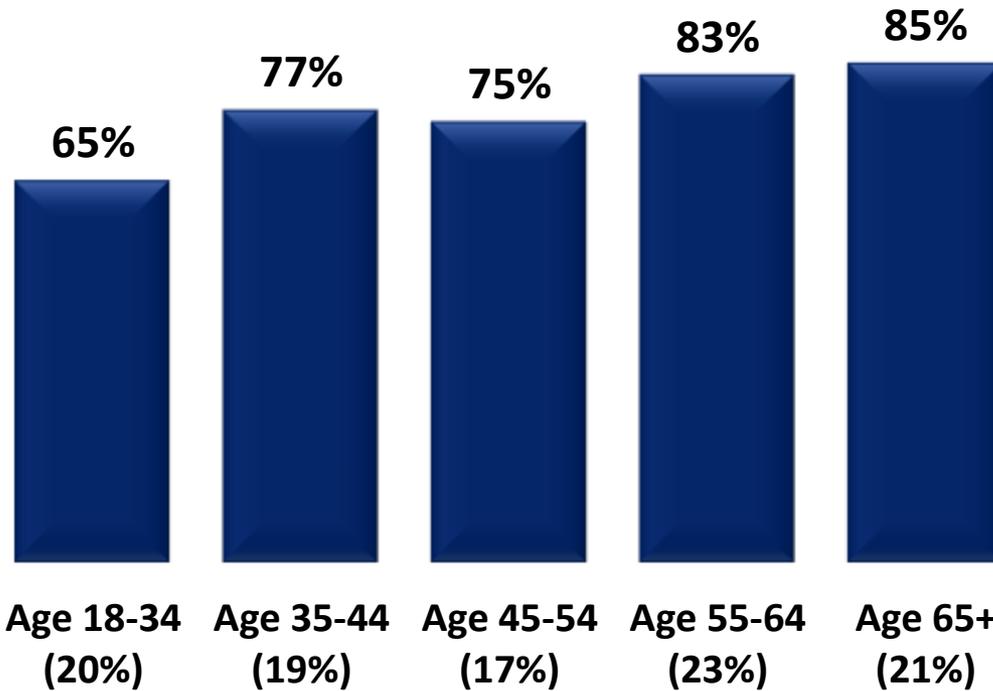
Recycle by Parents



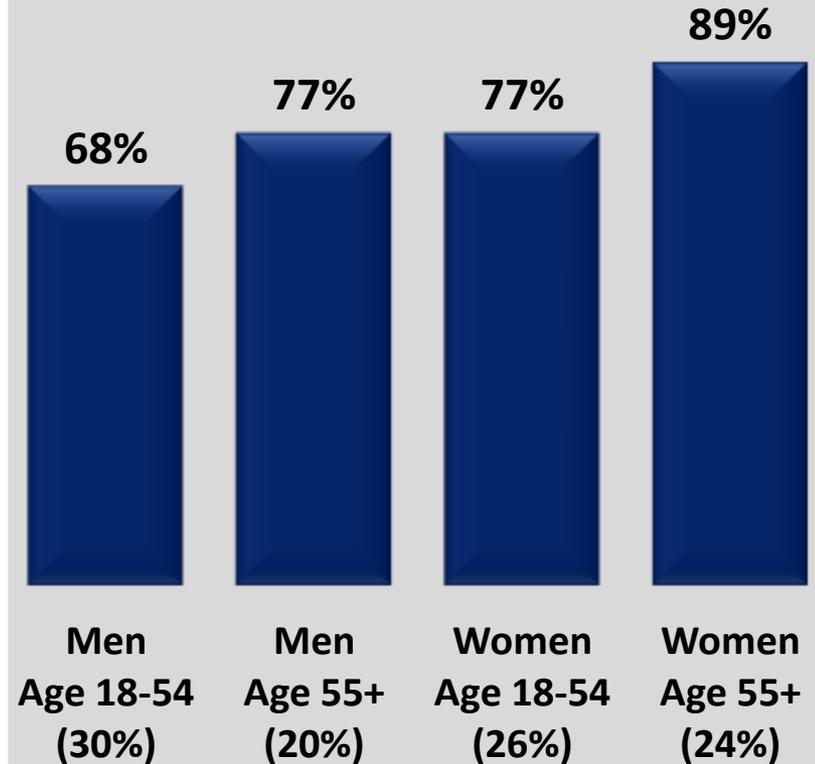
■ % Yes, Recycle

Reported recycling increases with age.

Recycle by Age



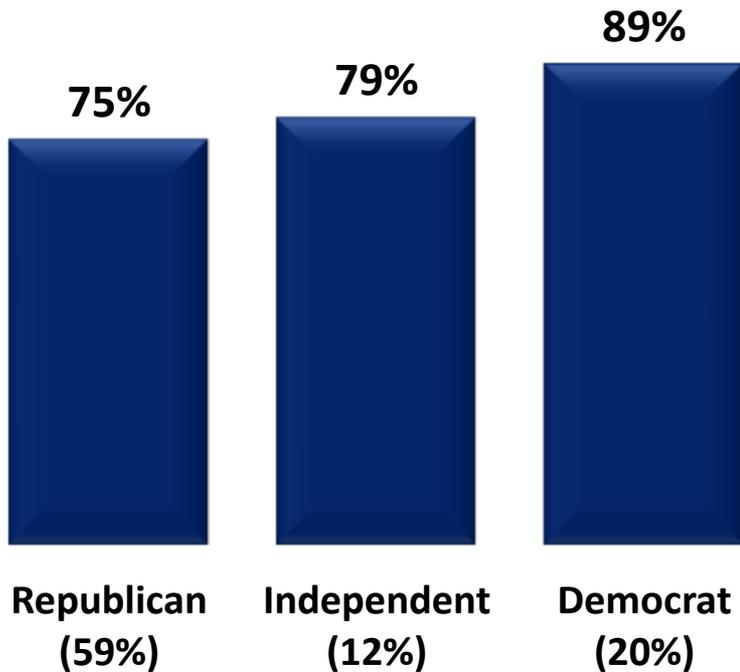
Recycle by Gender/Age



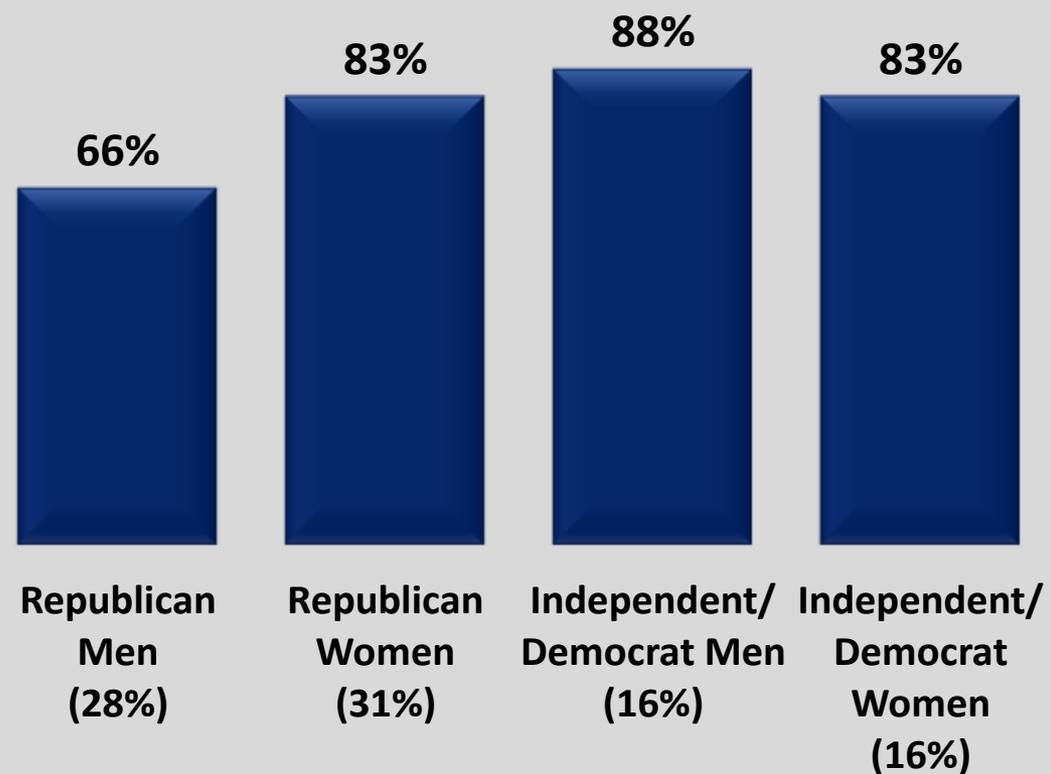
■ % Yes, Recycle

Party does bear a relationship to recycling among men.

Recycle by Party



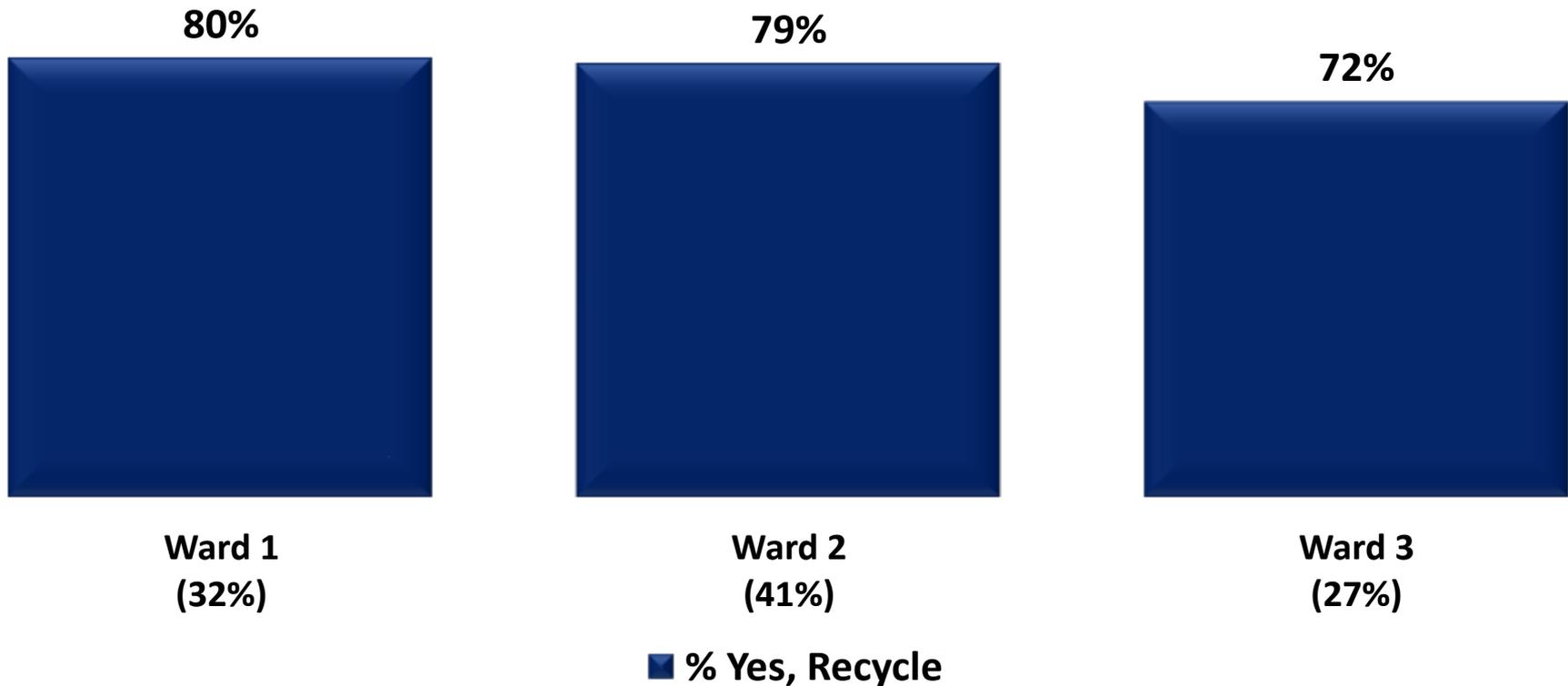
Recycle by Party/Gender



■ % Yes, Recycle

Where one lives in the city bears little relationship to reported recycling behavior.

Recycle by Ward

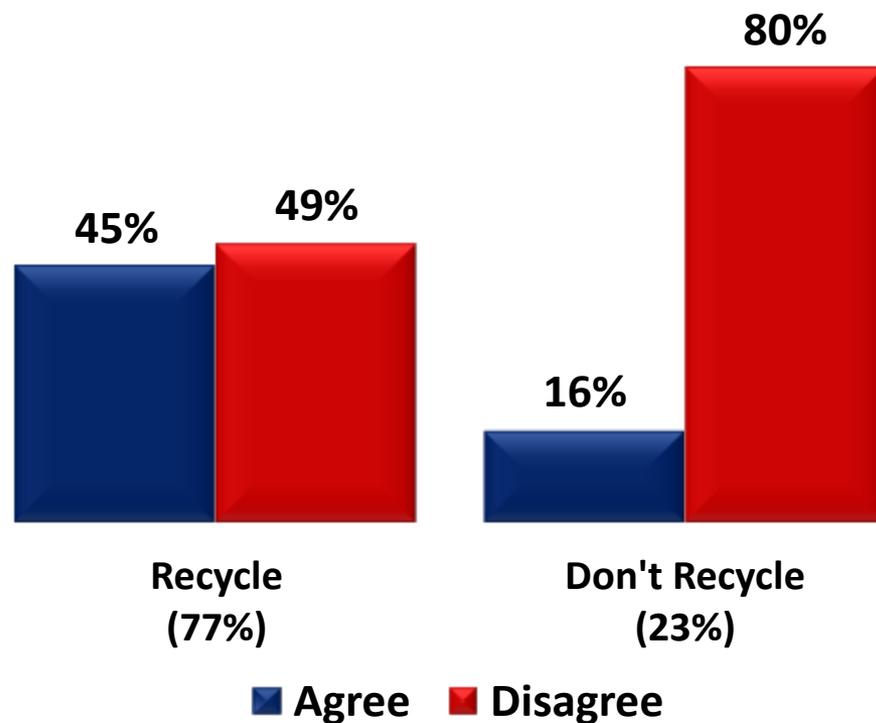


We might take reported behavior with a grain of salt, as fewer than two-in five residents report that most people they know engage in this behavior.

38%
AGREE

56%
DISAGREE

by Recycler vs. Not



Most everyone I know recycles.

Residents who recycle are quite aware of some of the landfill issues, but also generally view recycling as a good thing to do.

What are the one or two main reasons you recycle?

(Size of phrase indicates its prevalence in comments)



Typical Reasons for Recycling

"It saves money and doesn't waste the resources in the long run. You put less in the landfill, and you're not going to spend as much as you would. Just the resources can be used again. Because resources are limited and you shouldn't waste something just because you're going to use it once."

-Independent Male, Ward 2

"To cut down on the landfill. Because we're going to run out of it pretty soon. We're going to run out of areas to make landfills, and some of that stuff doesn't degenerate in the ground. To cut down on my own garbage. Save the environment."

-Republican Female, Ward 2

"To not fill up our landfill and just be better with our resources, limited resources. We pretty much recycle everything. A lot of aluminum, a lot of plastic, and a lot of news papers, and magazines, and paper board, and cardboard, paper board like the stereo boxes. We strongly support the recycling program in town. It's more economical to reuse stuff than to buy more land to fill up with trash."

- Democrat Male, Ward 3

"Just to save resources and not to fill up landfills. It is important because I think landfills are not a good use of space and we could reuse them. I just think it is environmentally responsible."

- Democrat Male, Ward 1

The hassle factor is clearly a major reason people do not recycle.

What are the one or two main reasons you do not recycle?

Inconvenient

A word cloud of reasons for not recycling. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The largest word is 'Inconvenient' at the top. Other prominent words include 'No motivation', 'No pick-up', 'Location', 'Not enough to recycle', 'Sorting', 'Age', 'Apartment', 'No room', 'Haven't thought about it', and 'Too much to recycle'. The words are in various colors including brown, purple, red, green, and orange.

Age Not enough to recycle Apartment
No motivation No pick-up Sorting
No room Haven't thought about it Too much to recycle
Location

Typical Reasons for Not Recycling

"The convenience factor and there is no pick up, with three small children it is hard to load garbage in the car and take it some where. I would be more interested in recycling if I had more pick up information."

- Independent Female, Ward 3

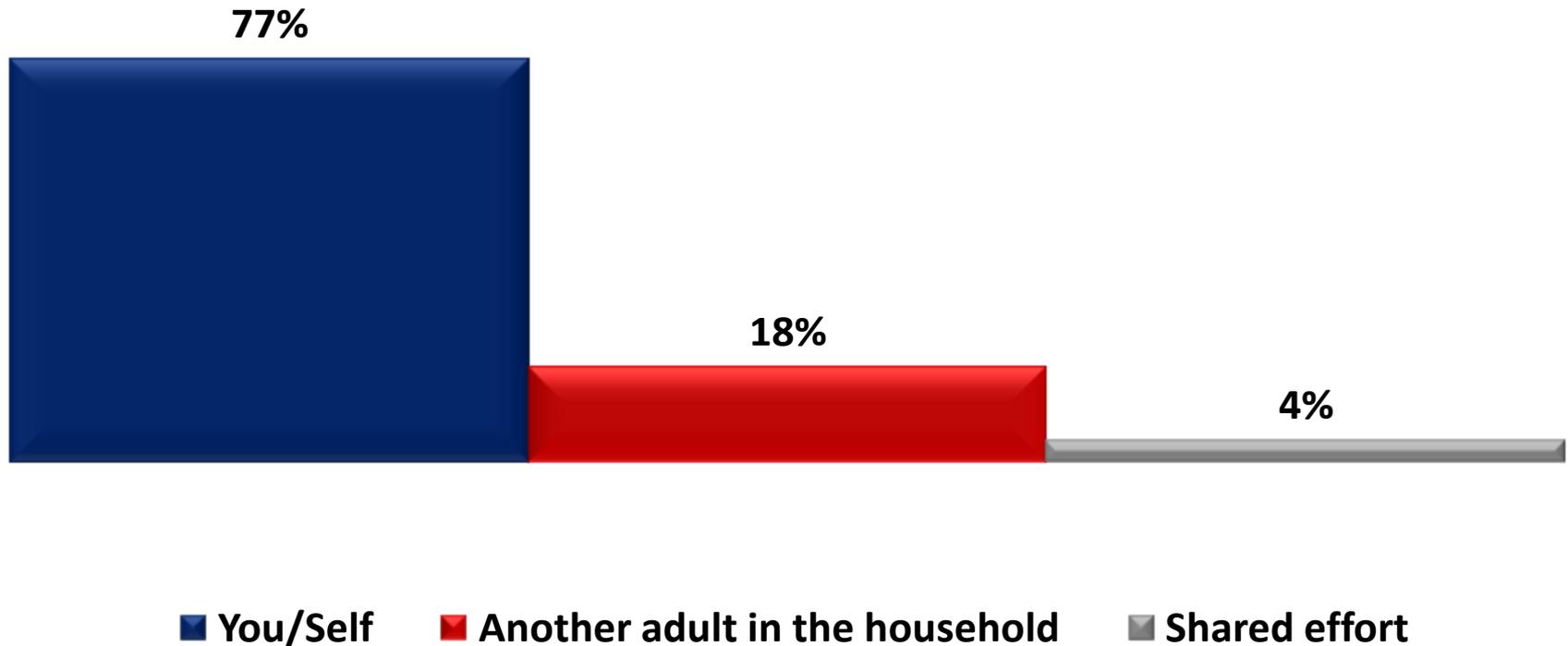
"You don't have recycling receptacles. We would have to separate it and have five piles of garbage in our garage. We would then have to take it down to the areas. I am familiar with other cities that separate it for you. If they would do that then I am all for recycling."

- Republican Male, Ward 2

"It's because it's not a convenient system. Because you have to wash and clean and take labels and they decided not to curbside, the negative is that it does increase the waste, but the positive is that there's more time for our families and don't have room to store all of that. The other positive is I don't have to put it in to my car if there's any kind of smell or residue, that's about it."

- Republican Female, Ward 2

Most self-identified recyclers claim to hold the recycling duties in their household.

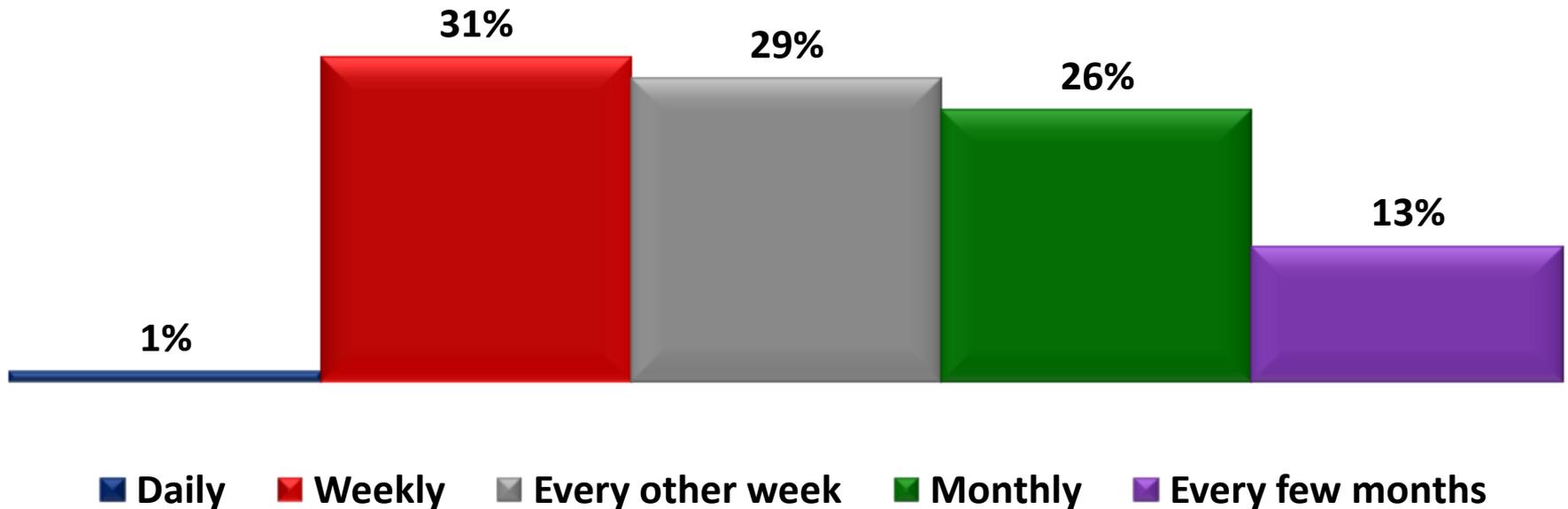


* Say they recycle (N=193)

Who in your household takes primary responsibility for recycling?

But a majority of recyclers only engage in the activity occasionally.

Frequently	31%
Occasionally	55%
Rarely	13%

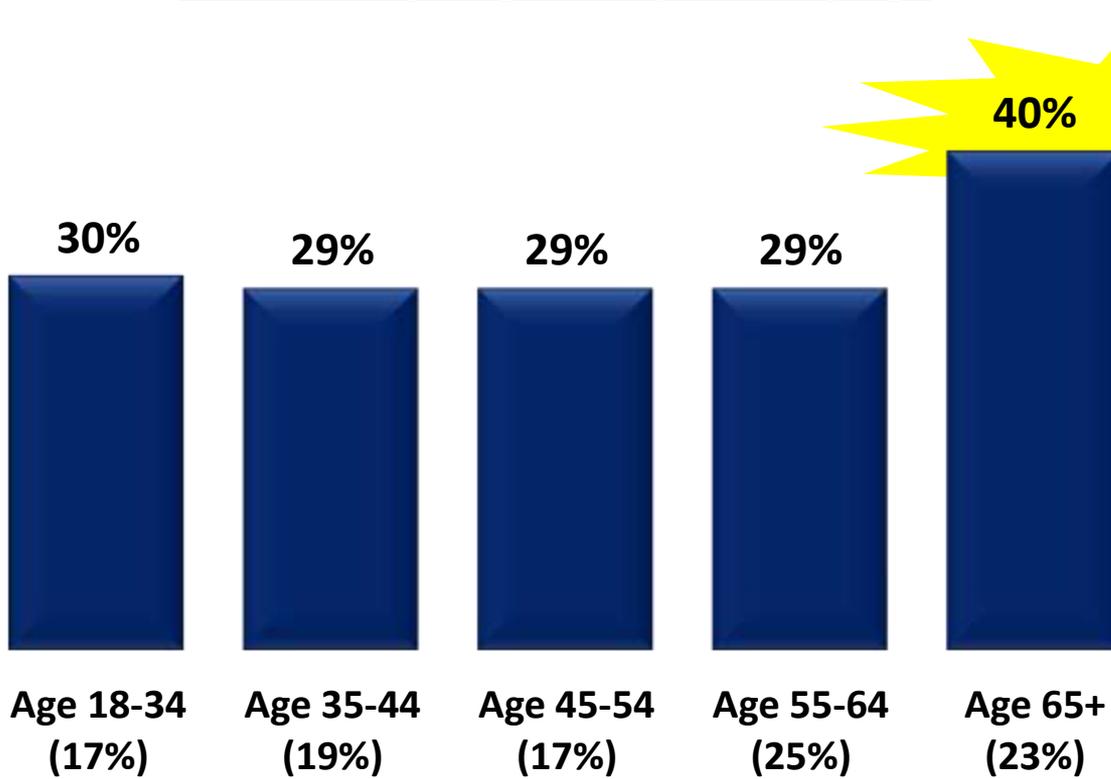


* Say they recycle (N=193)

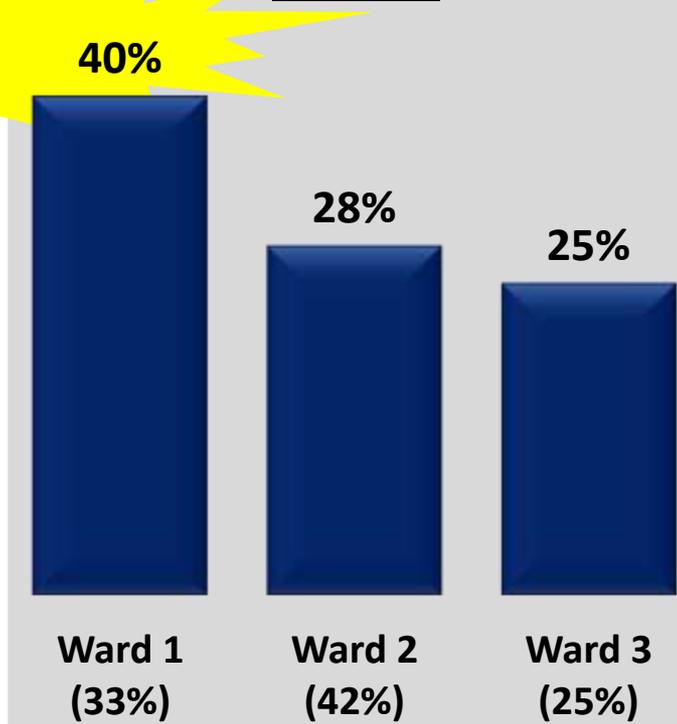
How often do you currently deliver your recycling to drop sites?

Frequent drop-offs occur more among seniors and those living in Ward 1.

Deliver Recycling to Drop Sites by Age



Deliver Recycling to Drop Sites by Ward



■ Frequently

* Say they recycle (N=193)

Even among recyclers, the majority acknowledge that they are not doing everything they can.

**Recycle
Everything Possible**

44%

**Recycle
Some Things**

36%

**Recycle
A Few Things**

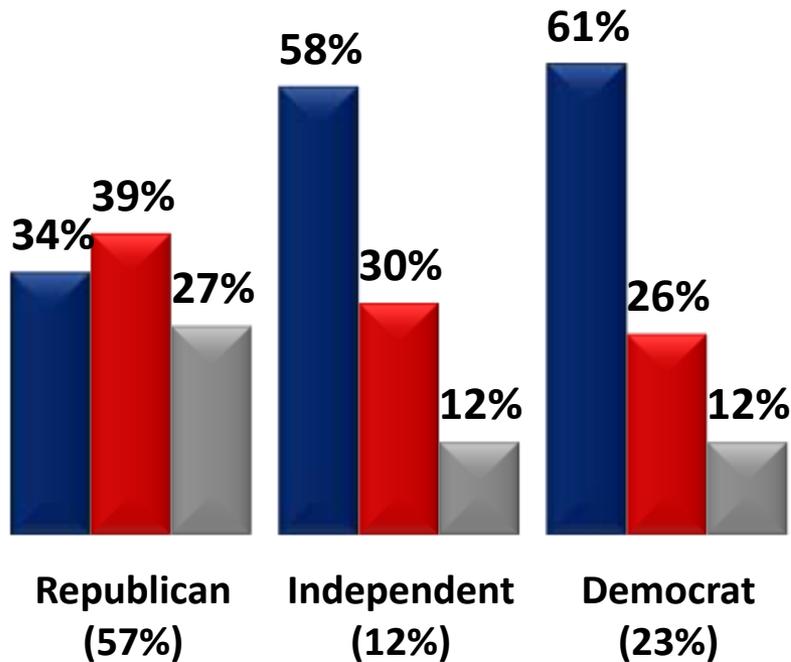
20%

** Say they recycle (N=193)*

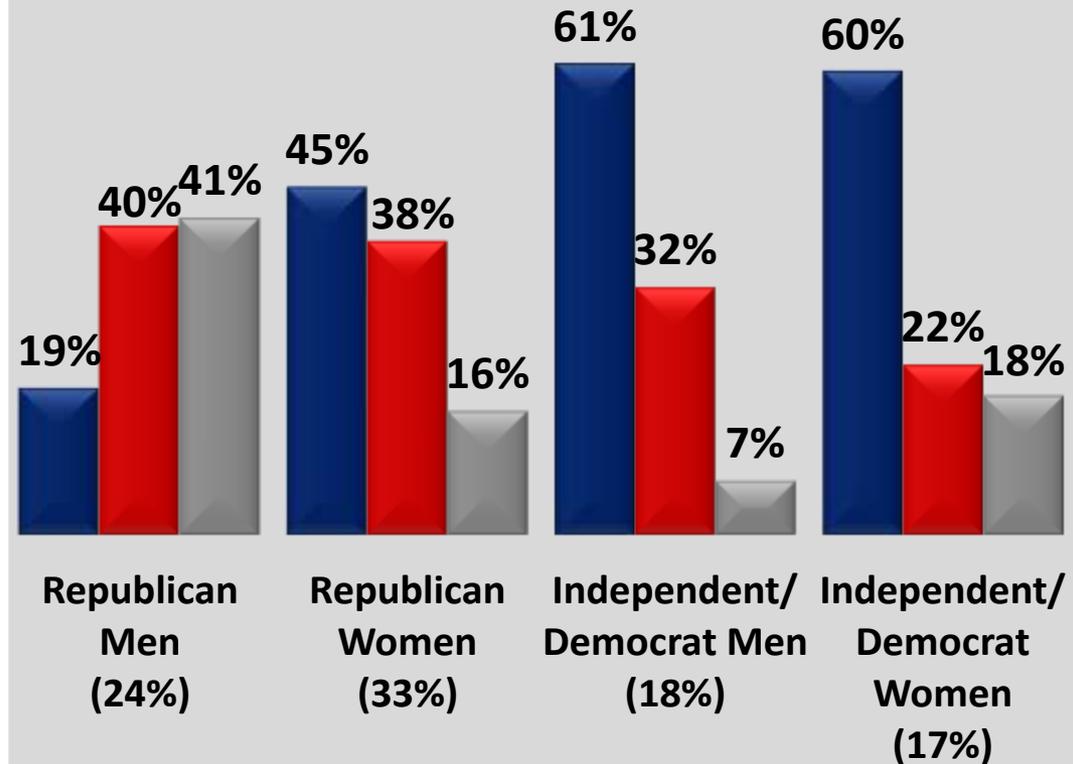
And would you say you ...

There is a partisan difference to the amount of recycling.

Recycling Behavior by Party



Recycling Behavior by Party/Gender

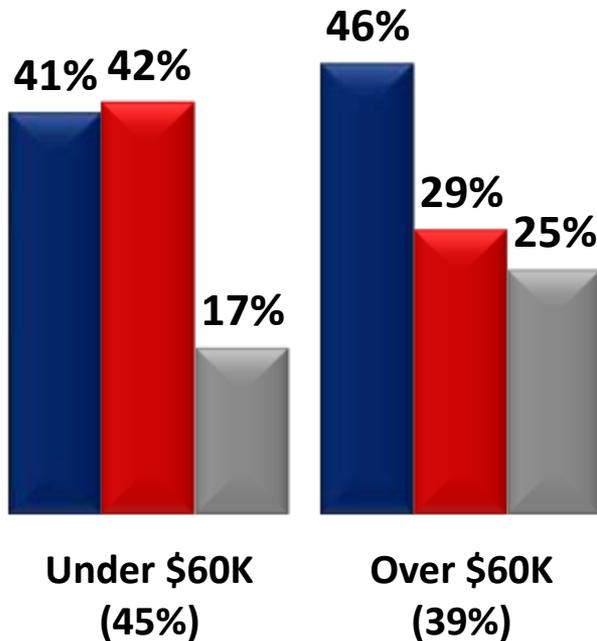


■ Everything
 ■ Some Things
 ■ A Few Things

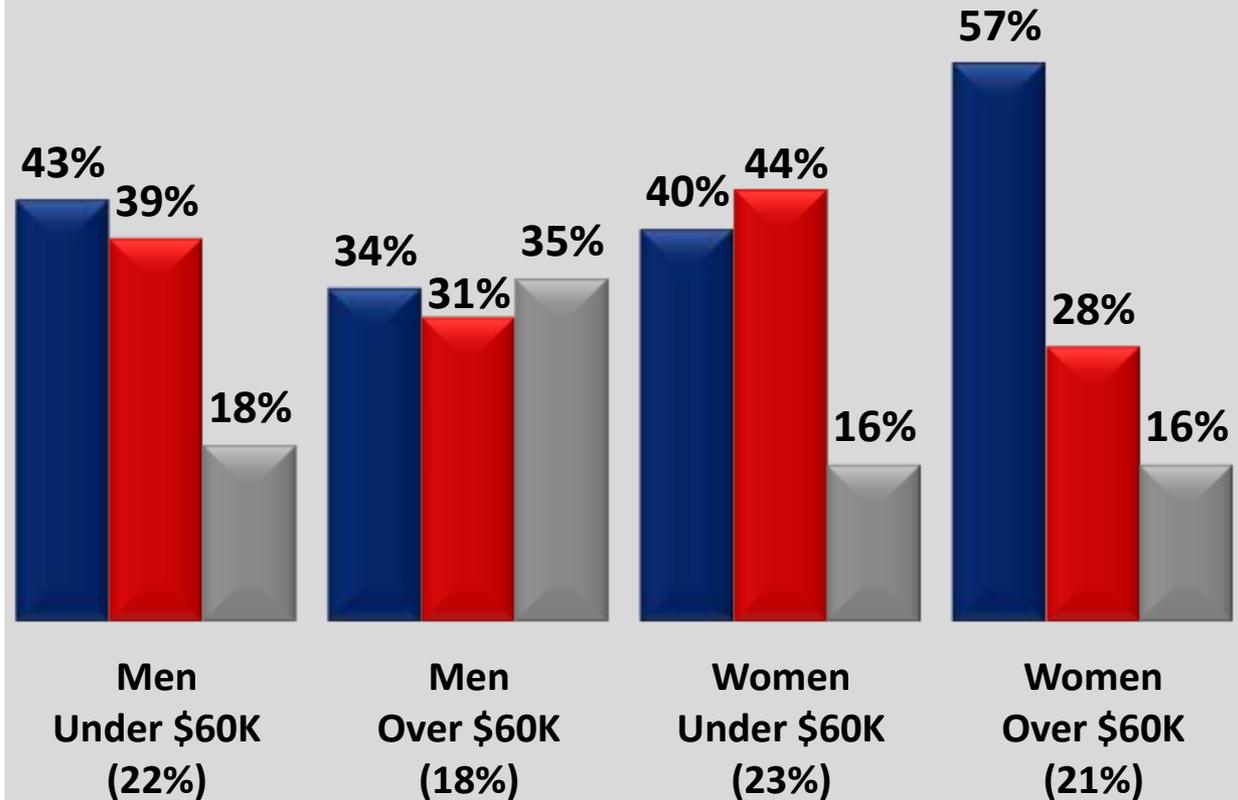
* Say they recycle (N=193)

Higher income women are most likely to say they are recycling everything possible.

Recycling Behavior by Income



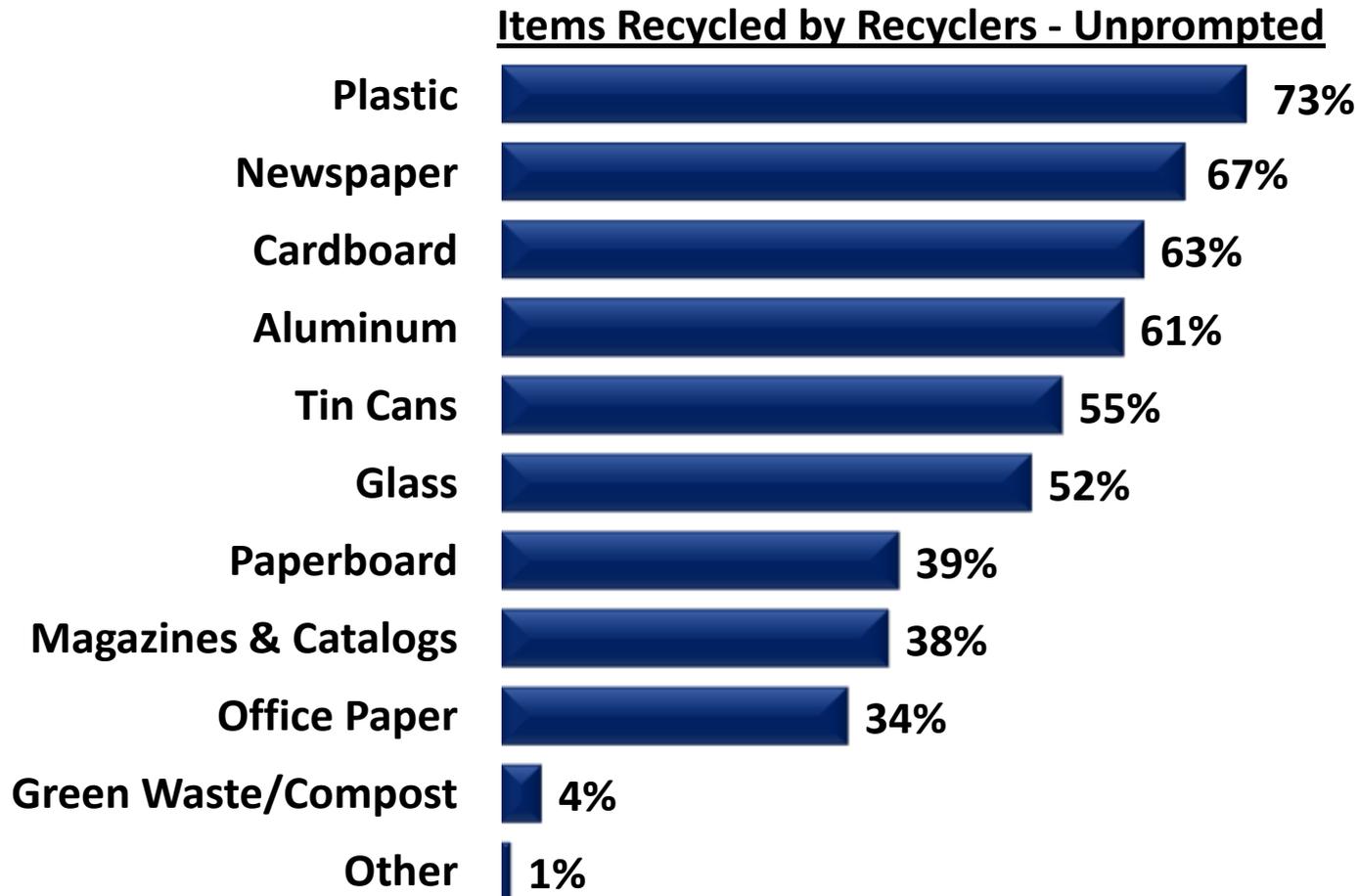
Recycling Behavior by Income/Gender



■ Everything ■ Some Things ■ A Few Things

* Say they recycle (N=193)

Plastic edges out newspaper as the commonly volunteered type of materials to recycle.



Say they recycle (N=193)

What types of items do you currently recycle?

Plastic is far and away the most recycled item of avid recyclers.

Items by Recycling Behavior - Unprompted

	Everything	Some Things	A Few Things
Plastic	90%	73%	35%
Newspaper	73%	66%	55%
Cardboard	74%	59%	45%
Aluminum	72%	56%	47%
Tin Cans	72%	50%	28%
Glass	70%	49%	15%
Paperboard	61%	29%	6%
Magazines & Catalogs	45%	35%	26%
Office Paper	51%	21%	18%
Green Waste/Compost	8%	0%	0%
Other	1%	2%	0%

Say they recycle (N=193)

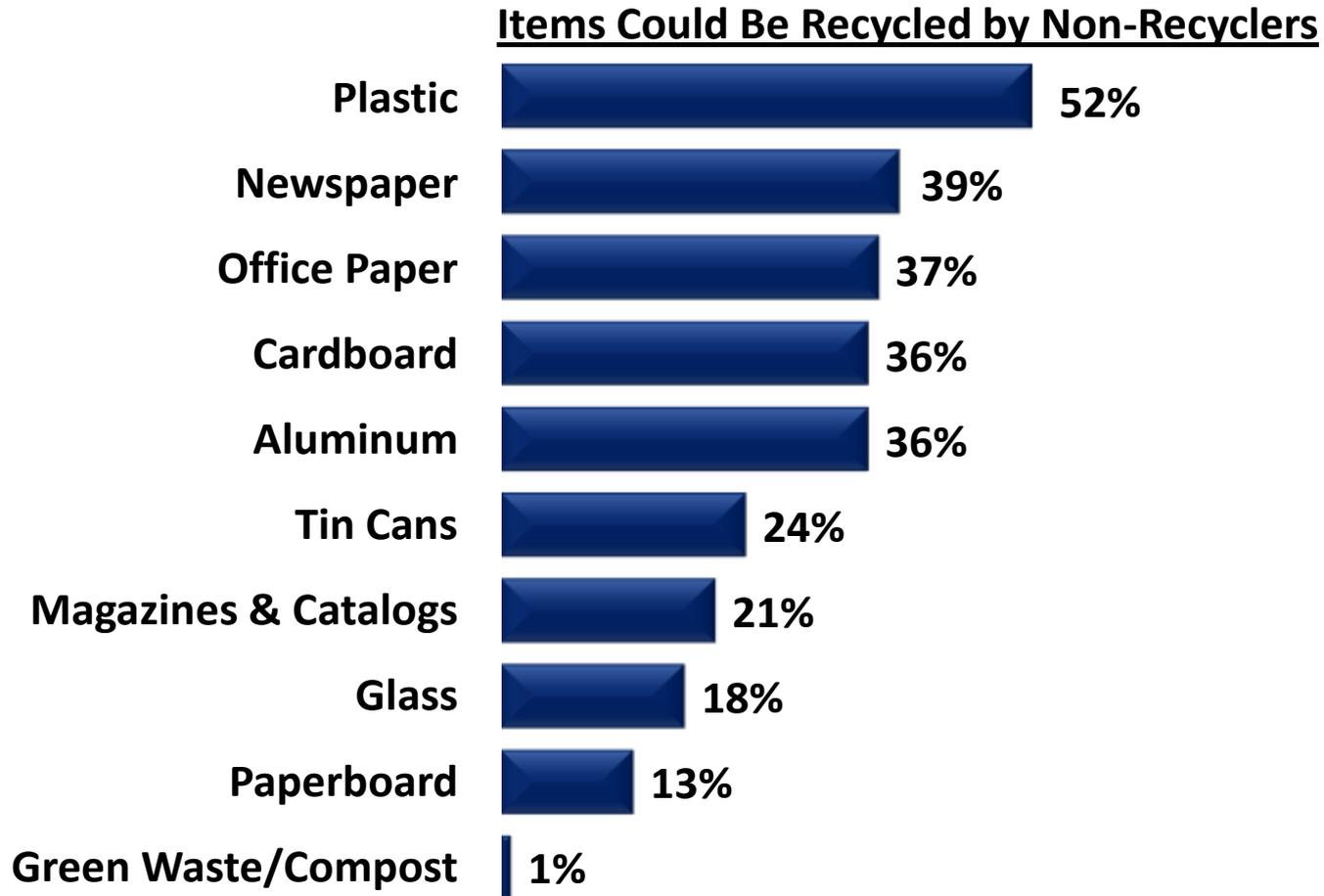
Women are more likely to say they recycle every type of material except yard or green waste.

Items by Gender

	Men	Women	D/S
Cardboard	54%	70%	-16%
Plastic	65%	80%	-15%
Aluminum	53%	68%	-15%
Magazines & Catalogs	30%	45%	-15%
Newspaper	59%	73%	-14%
Tin Cans	49%	61%	-12%
Glass	47%	56%	-9%
Paperboard	34%	43%	-9%
Office Paper	33%	35%	-2%
Green Waste/Compost	4%	3%	+1%
Other	1%	1%	0%

Say they recycle (N=193)

Non-recyclers would also choose plastic as their preferred item.

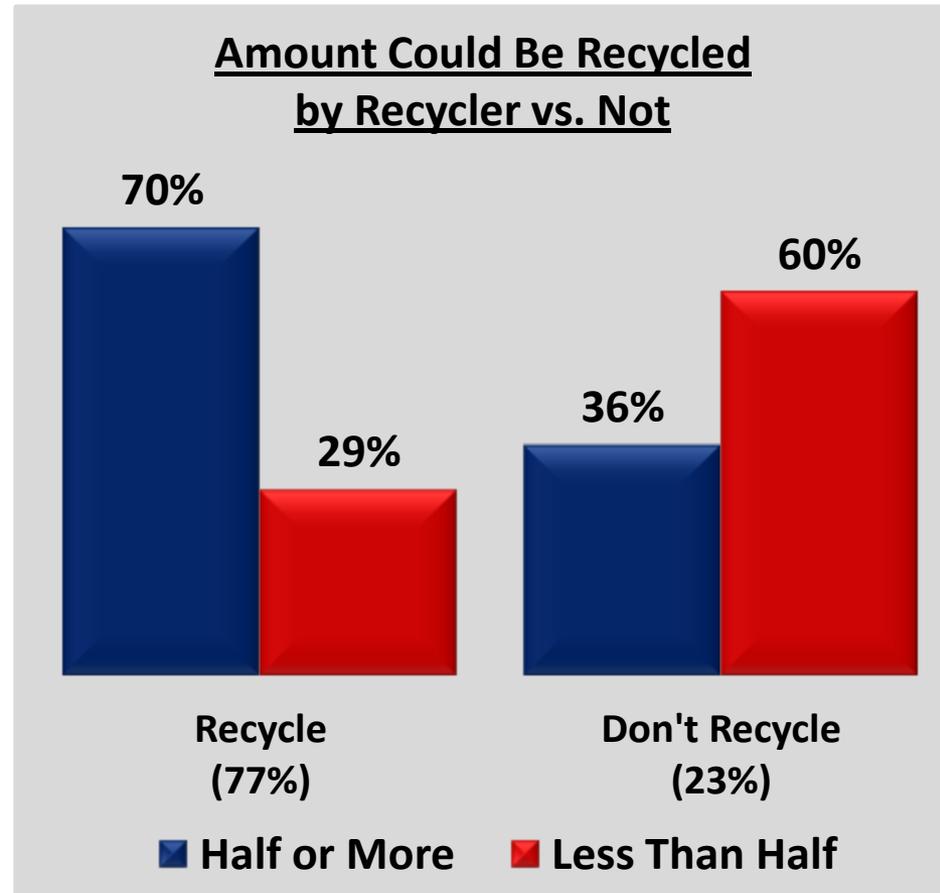
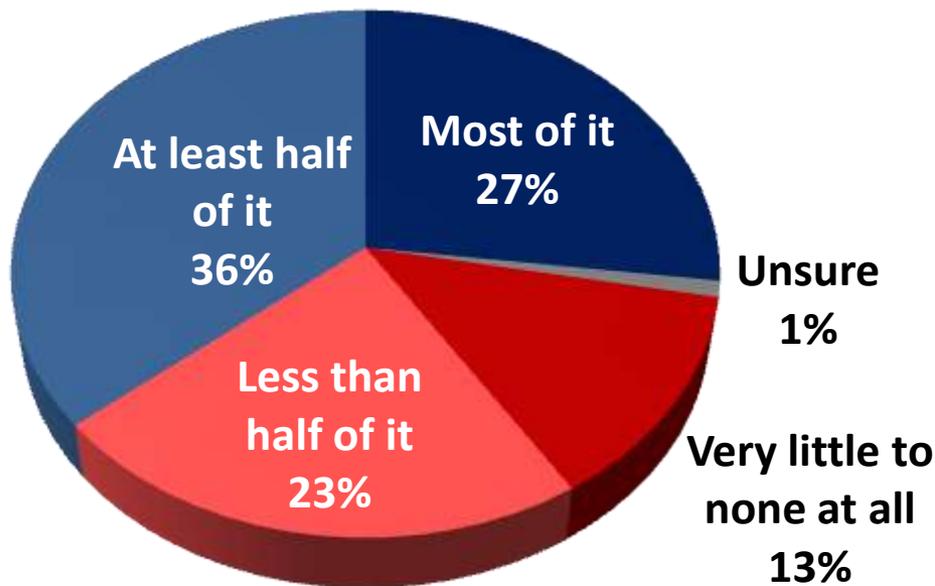


Say they DON'T recycle (N=57)

What types of items do you think you could recycle if you chose to?

Those who recycle currently are most optimistic about the amount of their waste they could recycle.

Half or More	62%
Less Than Half	36%

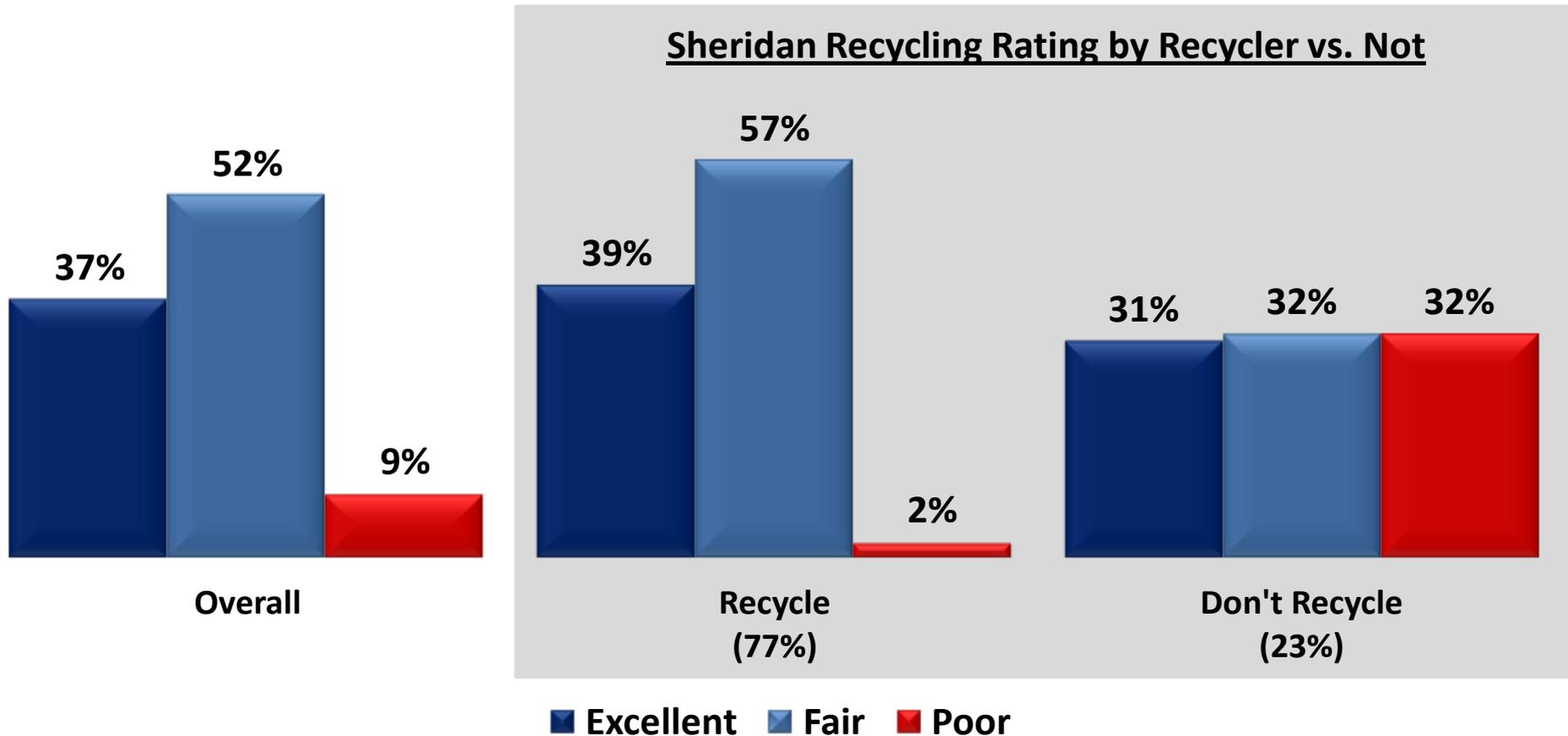


How much of your household waste do you believe could be recycled today if you chose to do so?



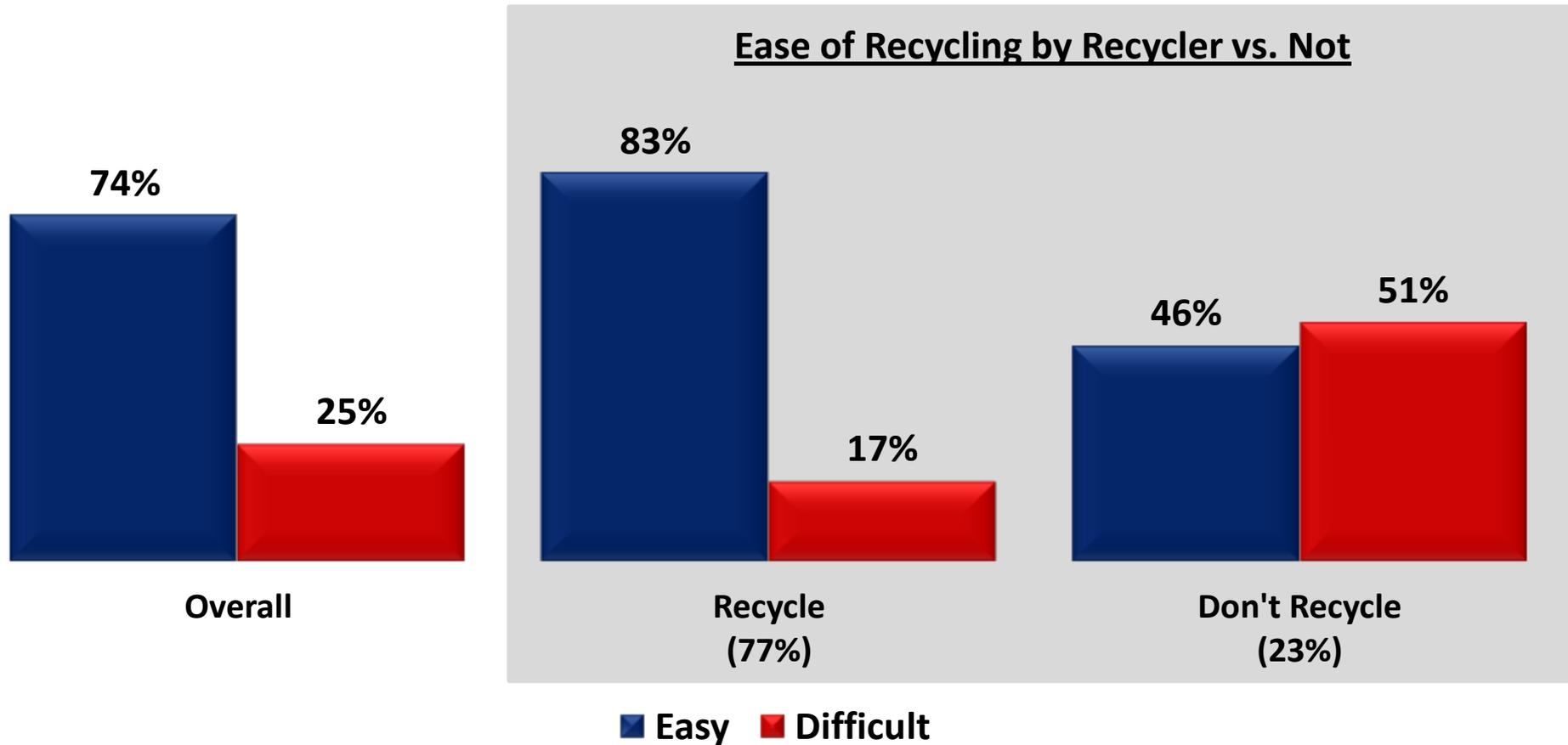
Perceptions of Recycling

Non-recyclers have very mixed feelings about Sheridan's recycling efforts.



How would you rate the City of Sheridan's current recycling program?

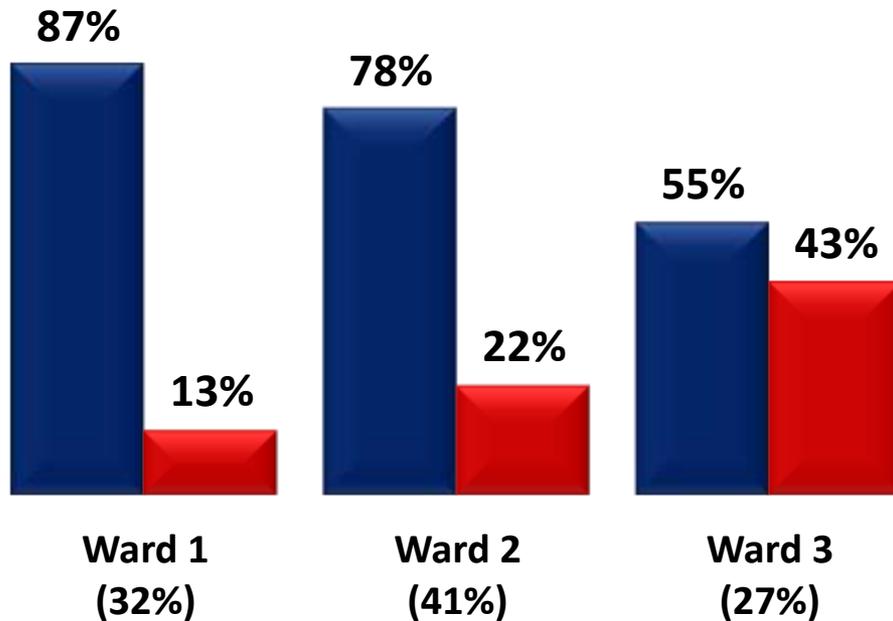
There is a stark difference in perceived ease of use between those who participate in recycling, and those who do not.



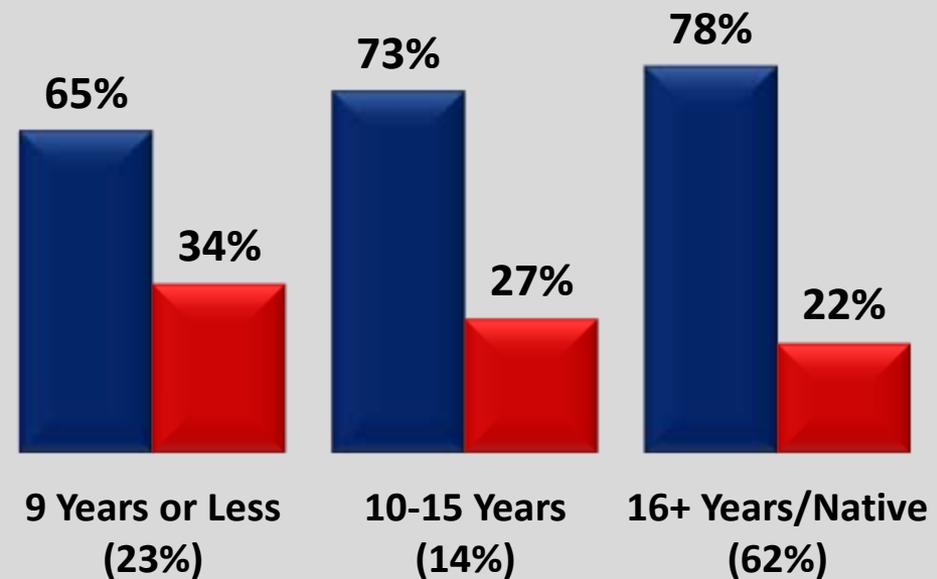
How easy would you say it is to recycle in Sheridan? Is it...

There are interesting differences in perceived ease of recycling based on geography and length of residency.

Ease of Recycling by Ward



Ease of Recycling by Length of Residency



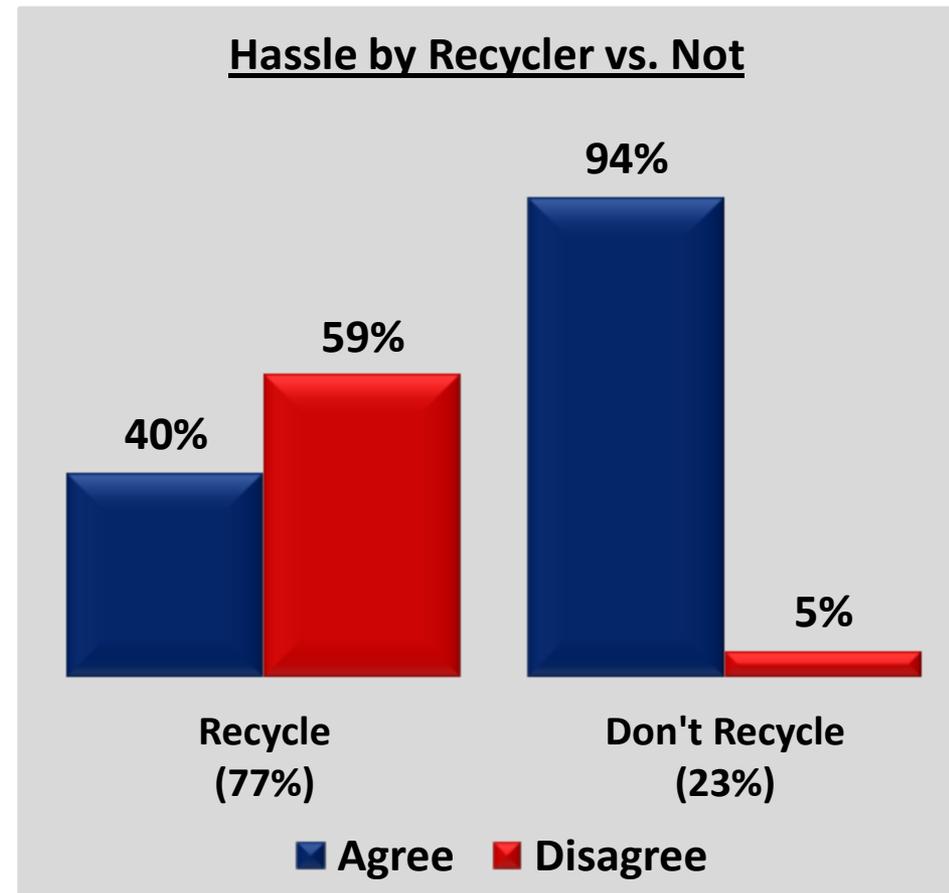
■ Easy ■ Difficult

The “hassle” factor is clearly a major separation between recyclers and those who do not recycle.

Sometimes recycling is just too much of a hassle.

53%
AGREE

47%
DISAGREE

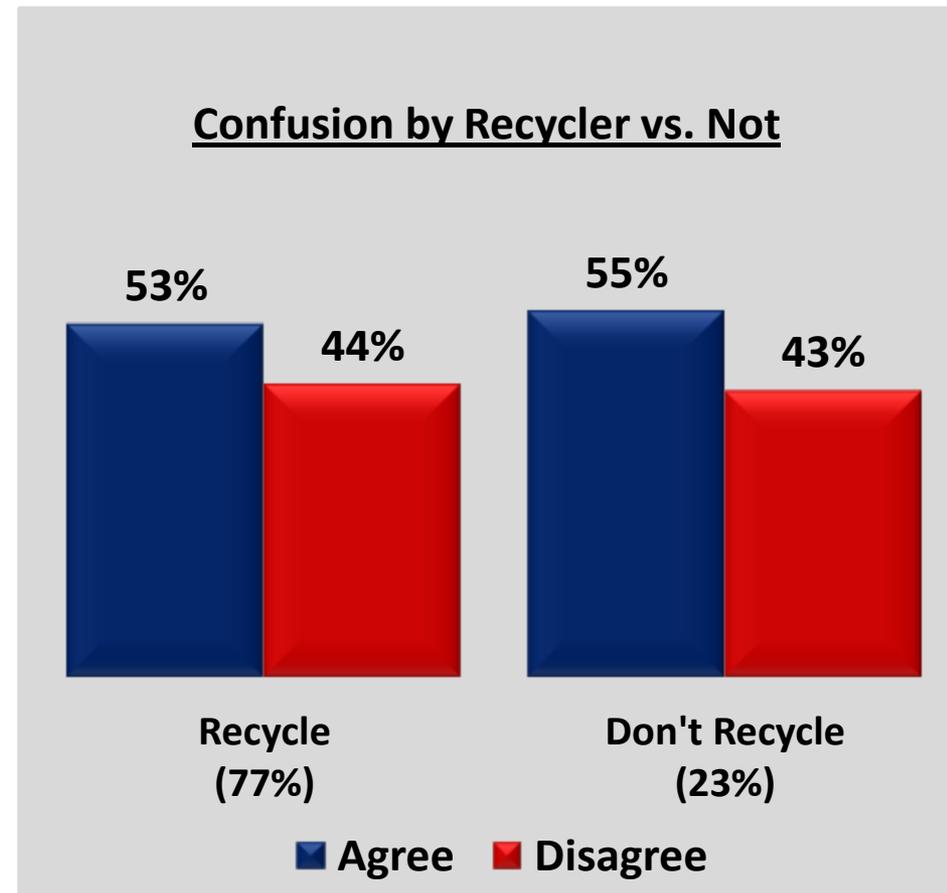


Even those who recycle say they get confused by what can or cannot be recycled.

Sometimes I'm not sure exactly what can or cannot be recycled.

54%
AGREE

44%
DISAGREE

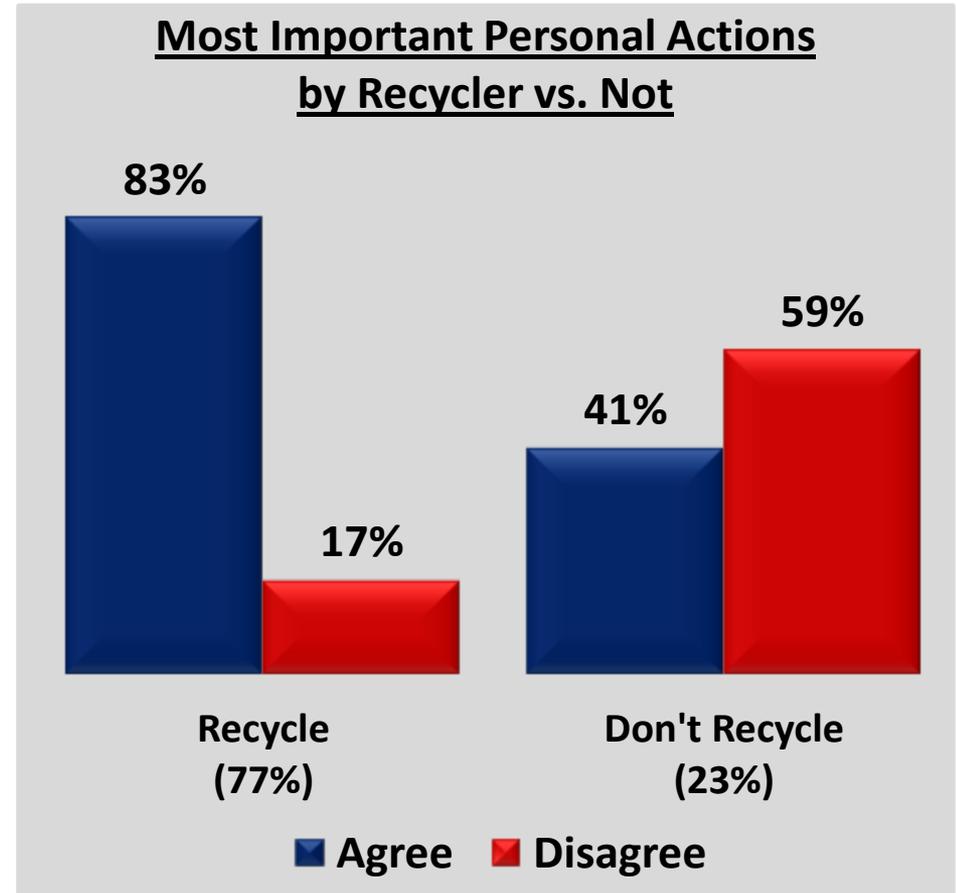


Most people agree that recycling is an important action...

I think recycling is one of the most important personal actions I can take.

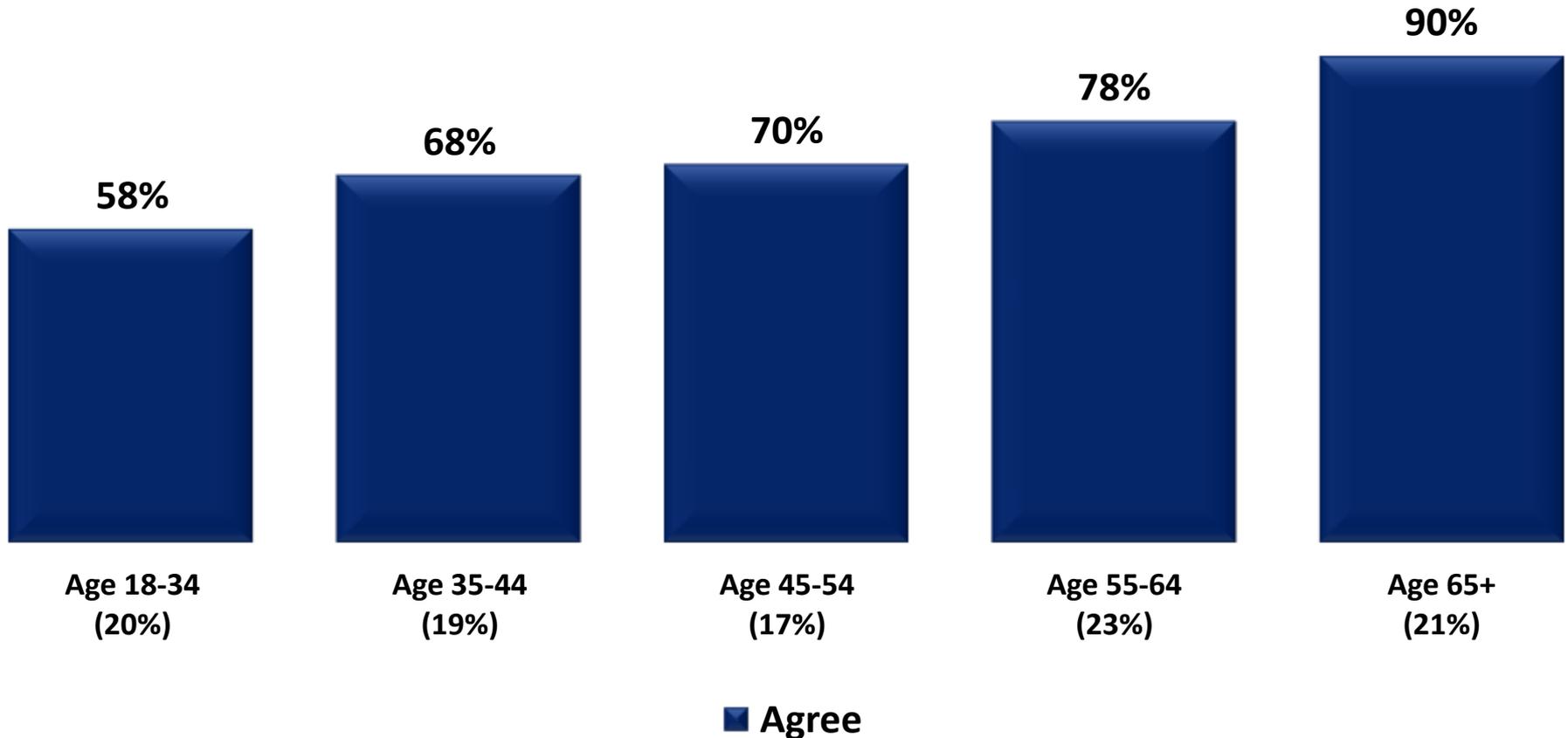
73%
AGREE

27%
DISAGREE



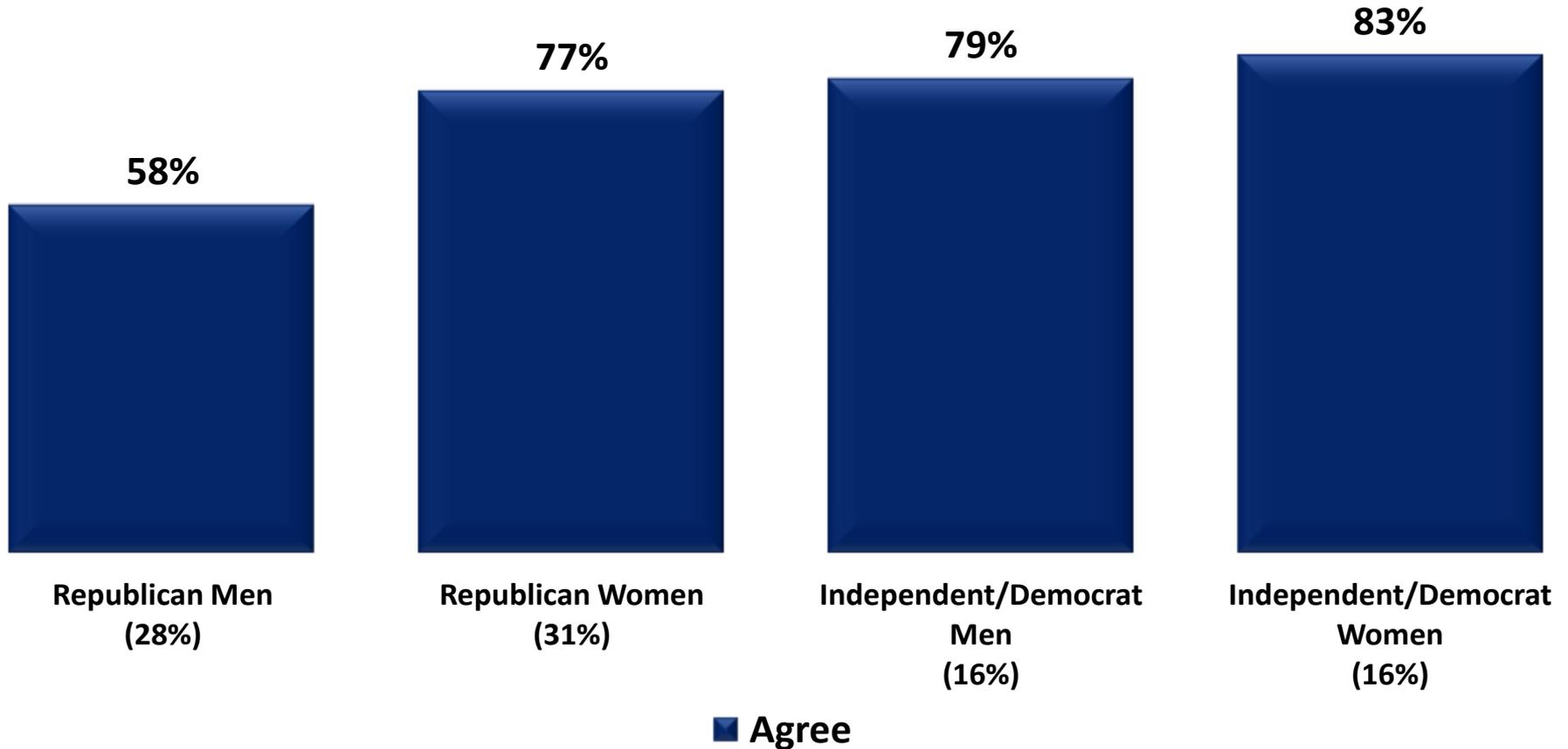
...with age seeming to be an important factor.

Most Important Personal Actions by Age



Republican men do not share the same views of recycling's importance.

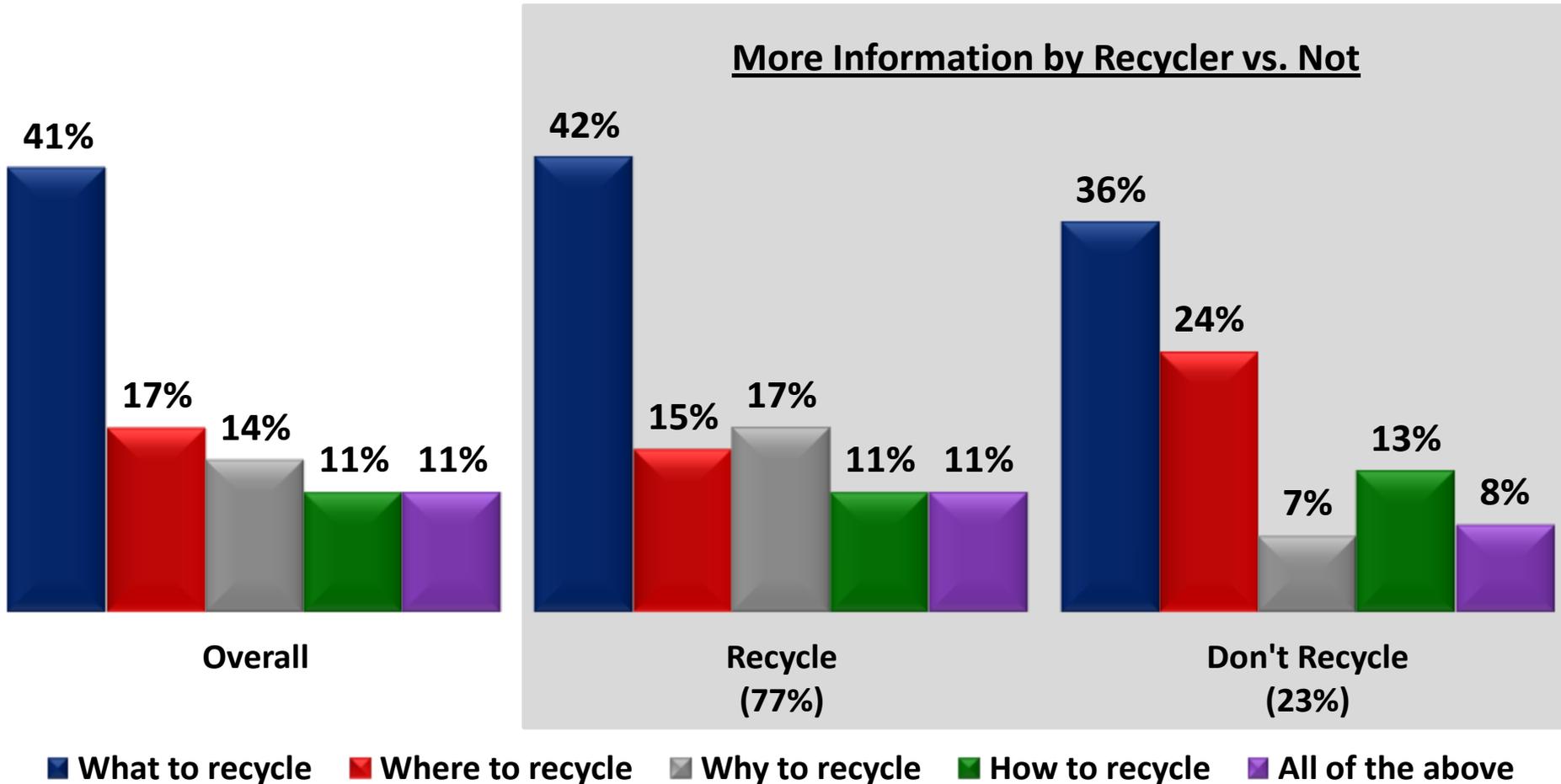
Most Important Personal Actions by Party/Gender





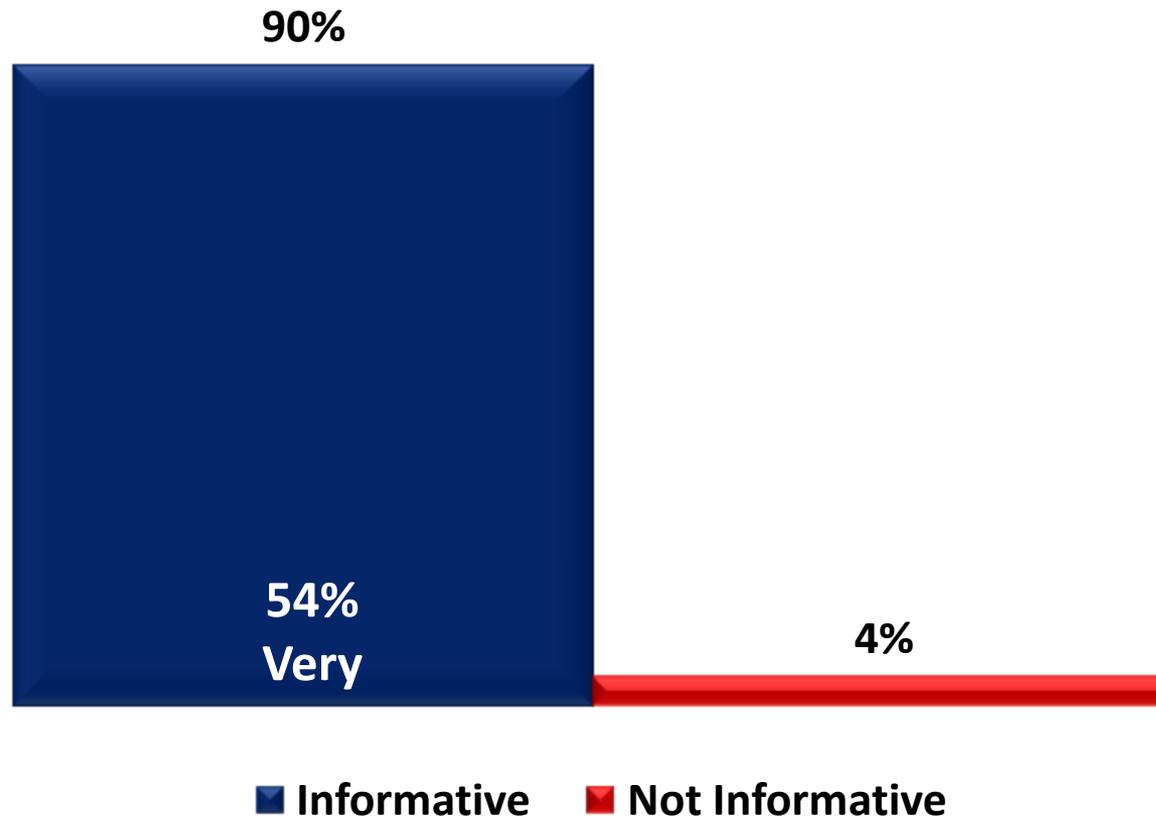
Improving the Recycling Program

Most people still want a clear answer as to what they can and cannot recycle.



If you had to choose, which one of the following do you think the City of Sheridan should provide city residents with more information about?

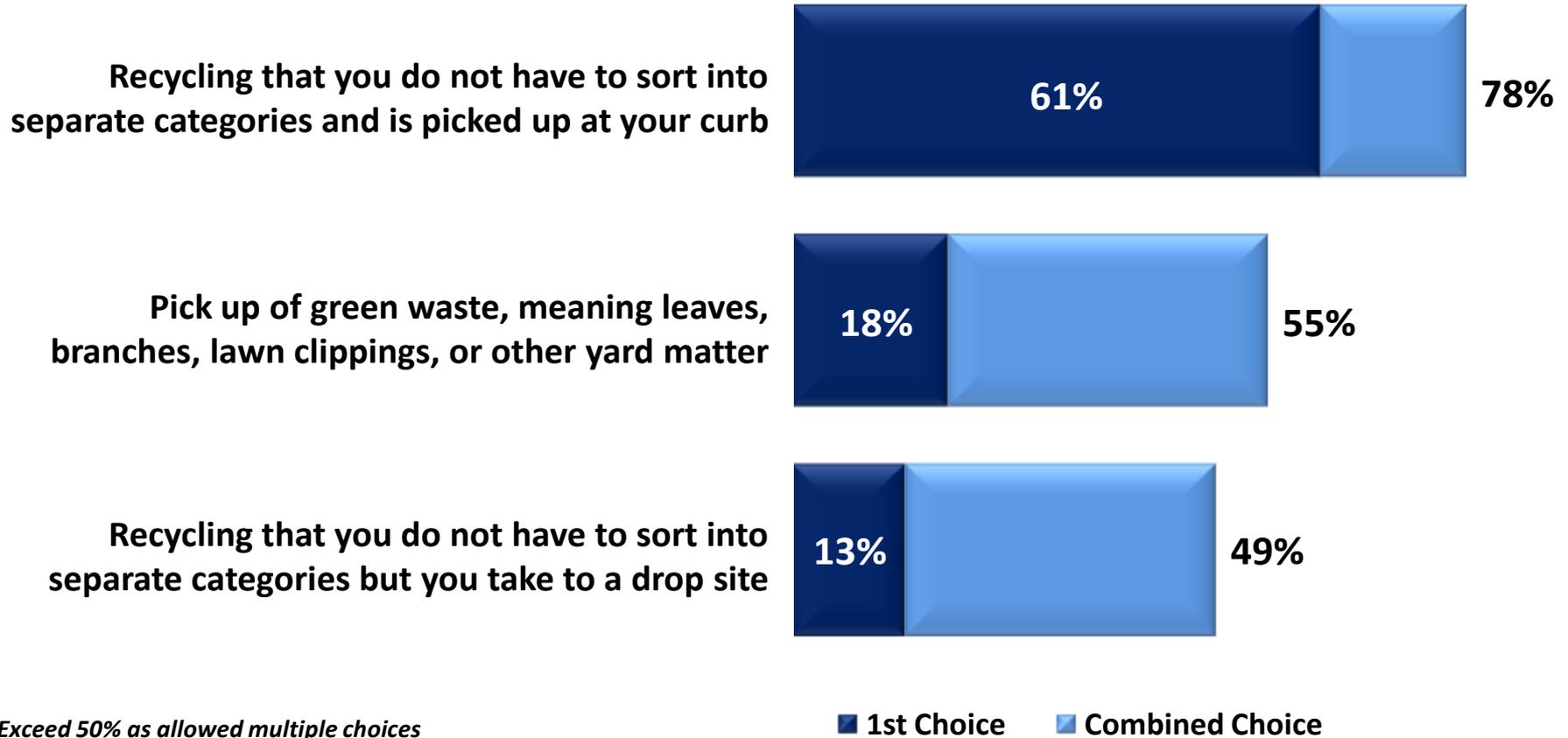
One area which residents say does not need much improvement is signs at drop sites.



How informative do you believe the City of Sheridan's signs are at drop sites?

Residents overwhelmingly would rather have a curbside pickup of unsorted recyclables.

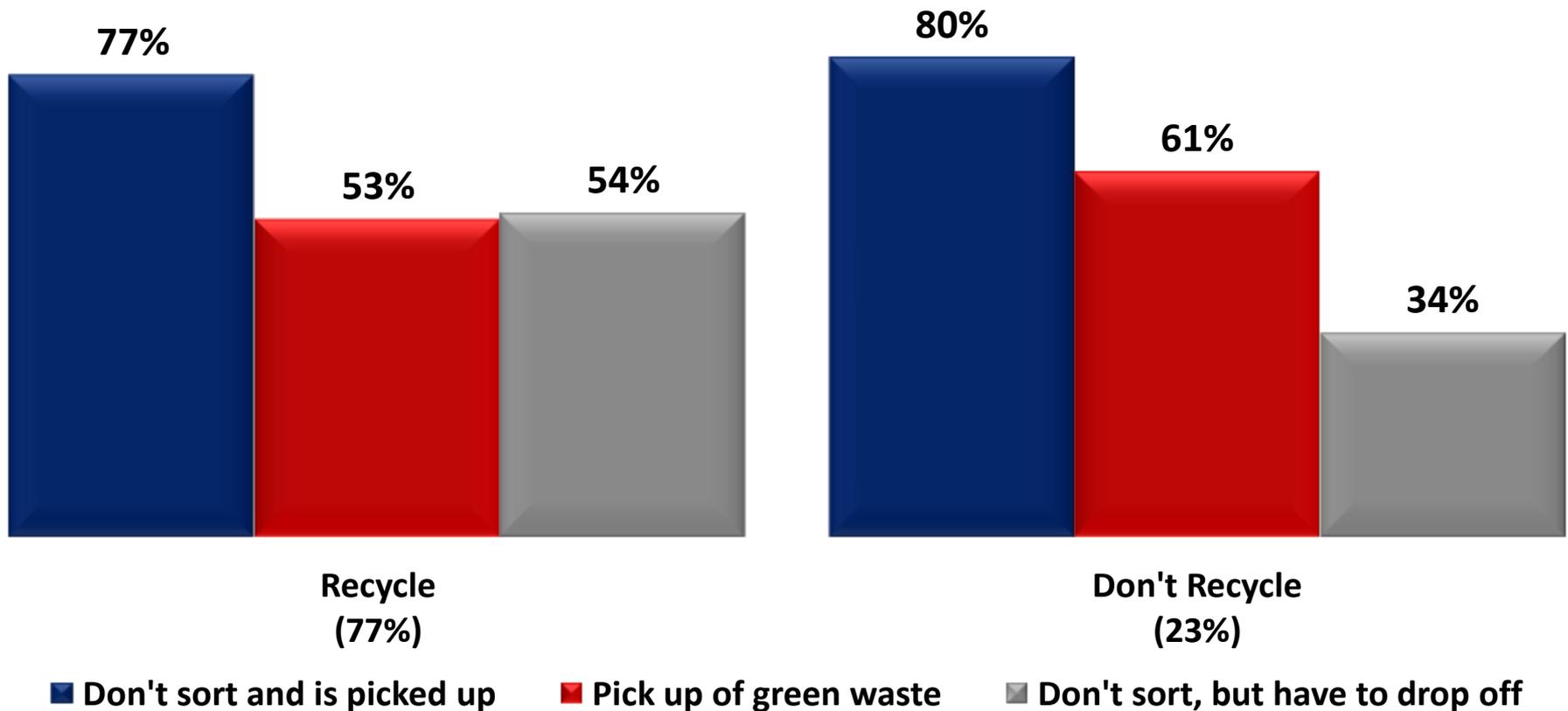
Programs Ranked by % First Choice



Which one of the following programs would you most like to have available in your neighborhood? And which would you like to have next?

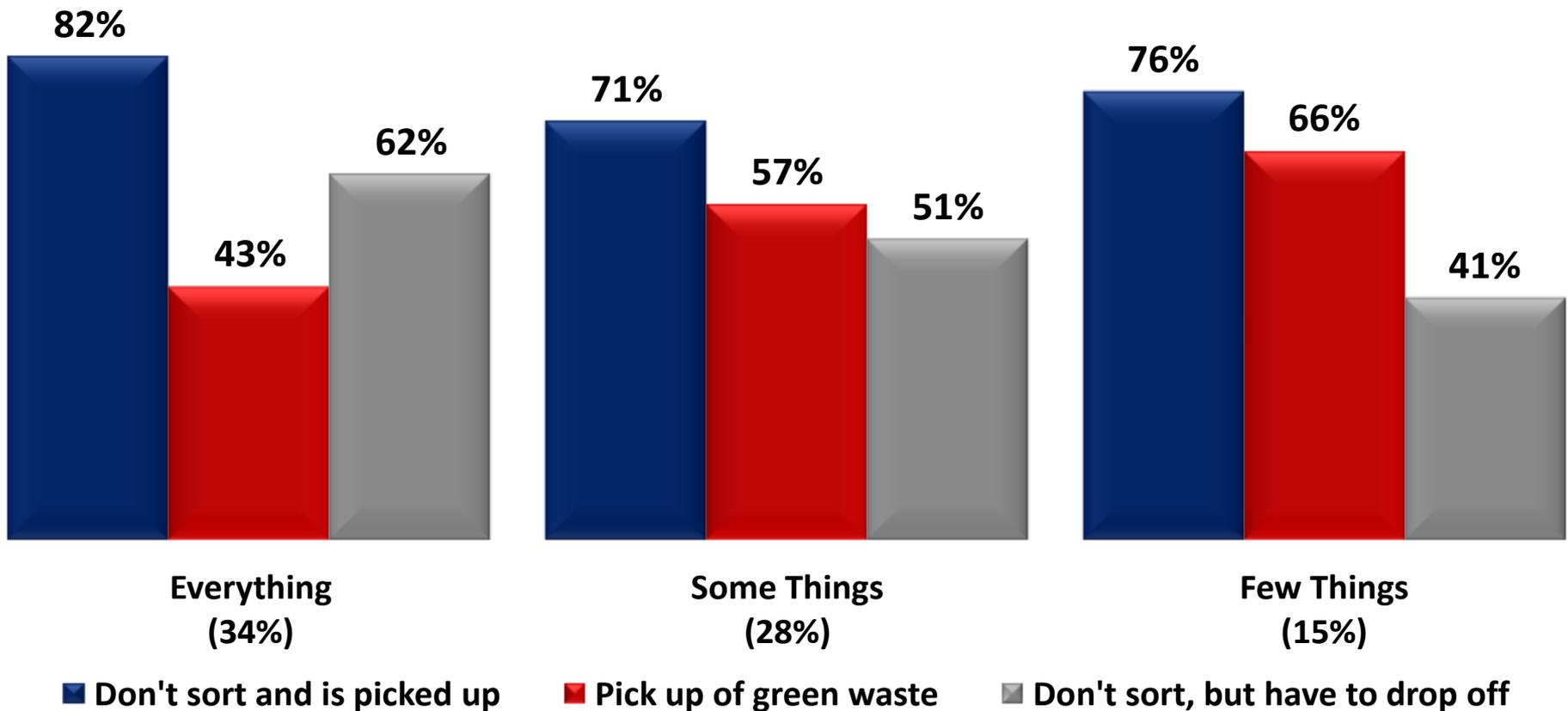
This is one issue where recyclers and those that do not recycle are in agreement.

Programs by Recycle vs. Not

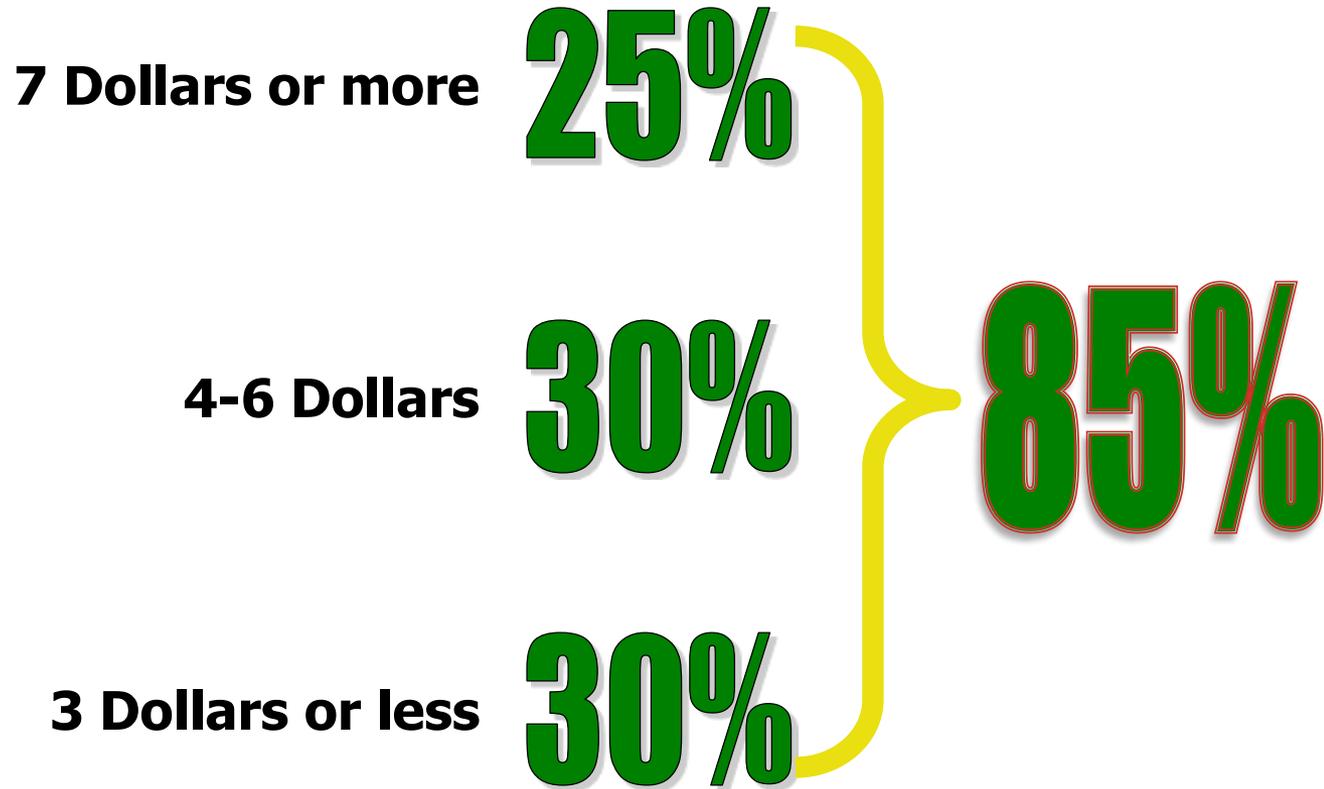


Those who recycle the least like the idea of green waste pick-up the most.

Programs by Recycling Behavior

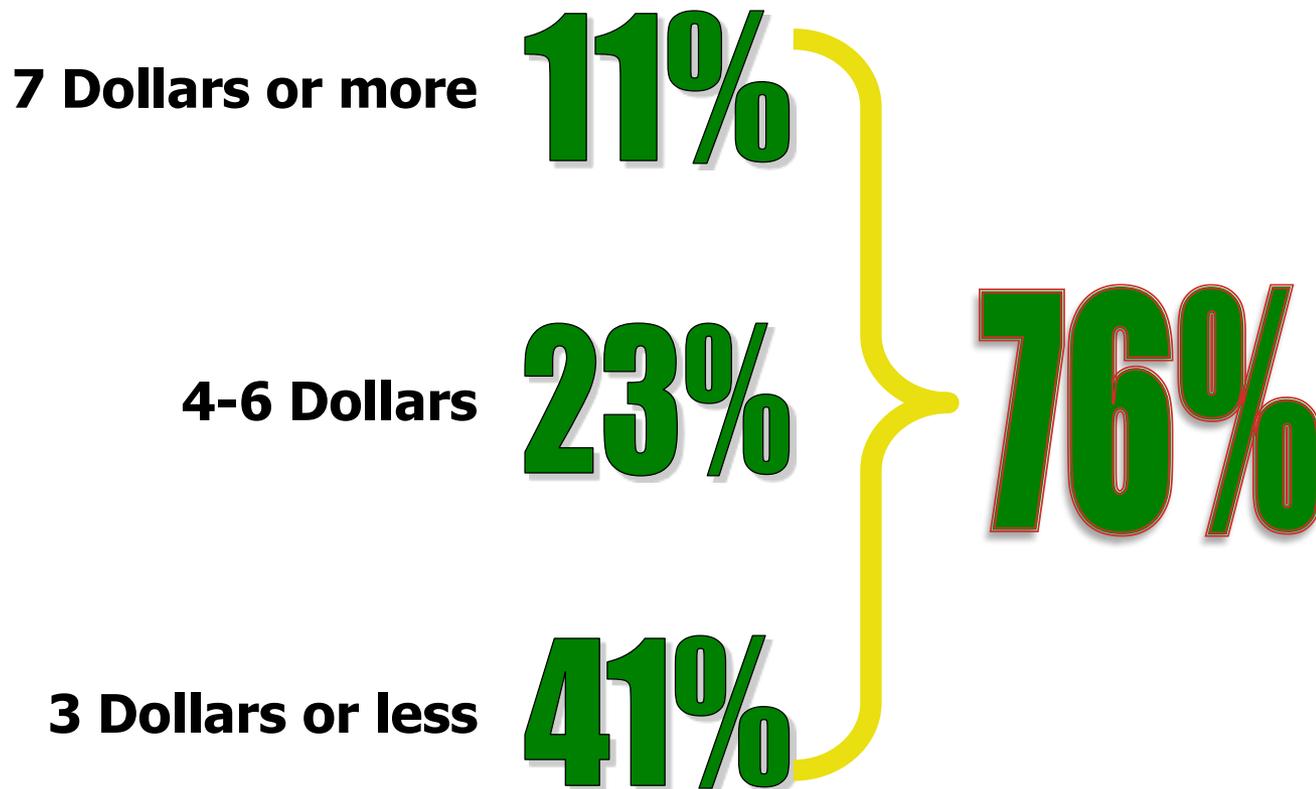


A majority of residents say they are willing to pay \$4 or more monthly to have a service pickup unsorted items.



If it was possible to have your unsorted recycling picked up at your curb, what is the most you would be willing to pay per month to use this service?

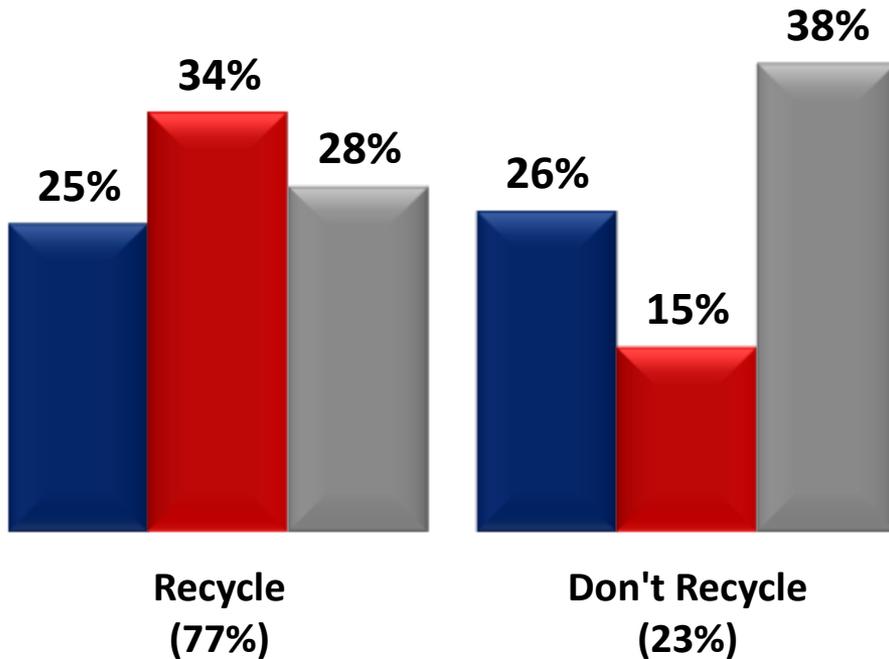
Fewer are willing to pay that much for green waste pickup services.



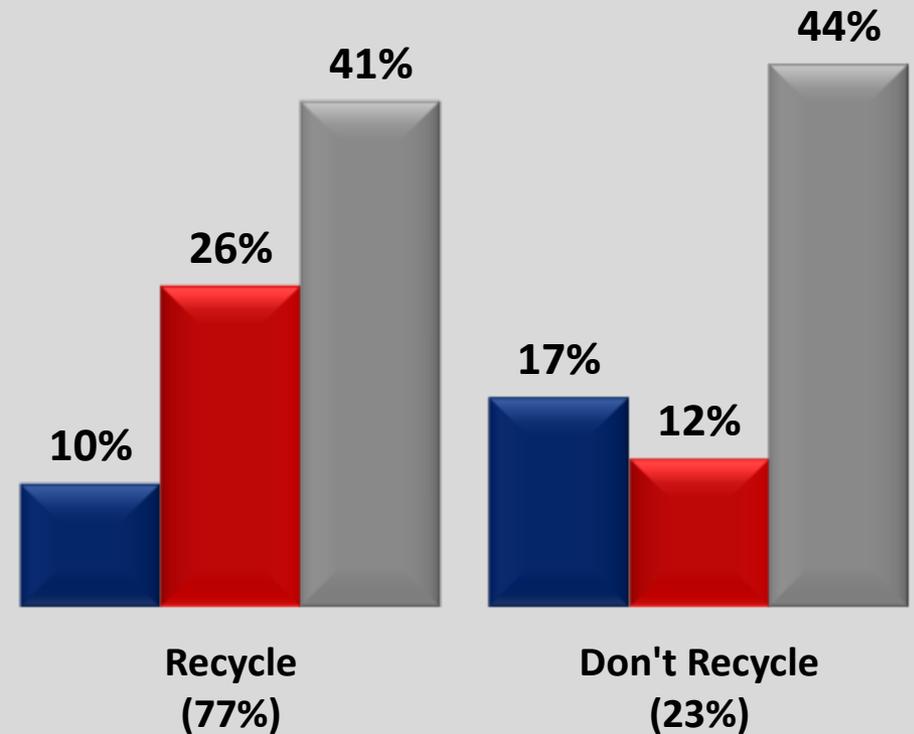
If it was possible to have green waste like lawn clippings and branches picked up at your curb, what is the most you would be willing to pay per month to use just this service?

This distinction is evident even among those who currently recycle.

Unsorted Recycling Pickup by Recycler vs. Not



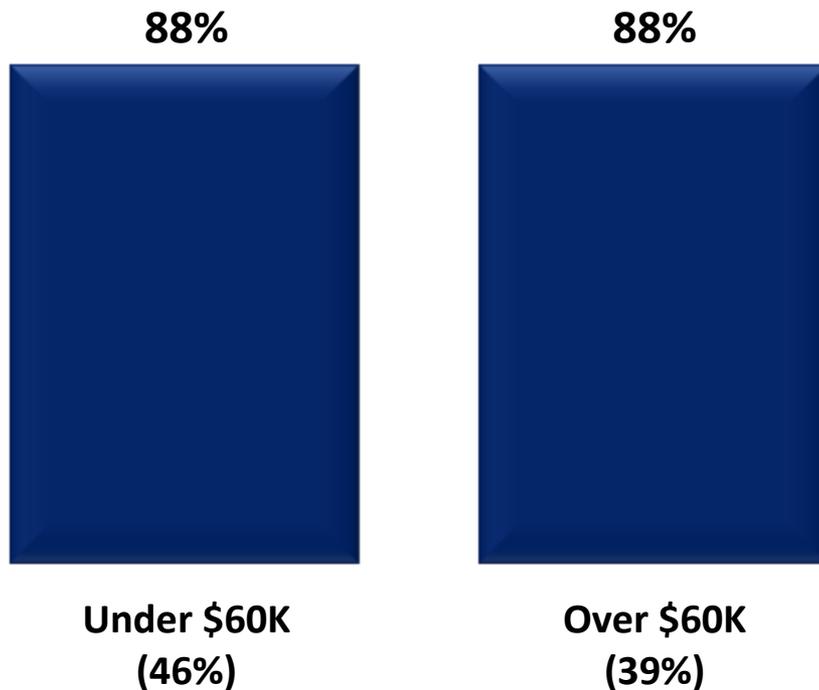
Green Waste Pickup by Recycler vs. Not



■ \$7 or More ■ \$4-6 ■ \$3 or Less

Income is not a major determinant of willingness to pay.

Unsorted Recycling Pickup by Income



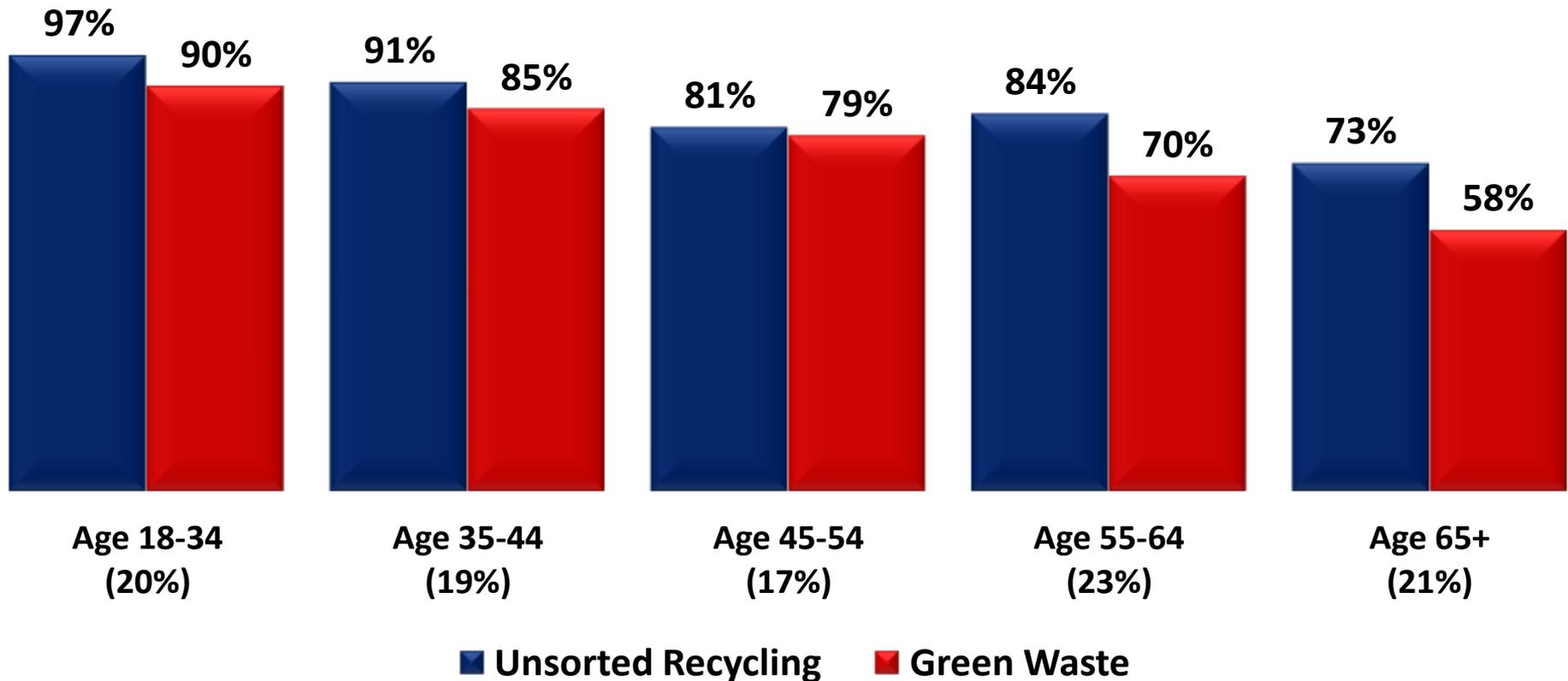
Green Waste Pickup by Income



■ Total Willingness to Pay

Seniors are the least willing to pay anything toward either recycling program.

Total Willingness to Pay by Age





**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Lori Weigel, Partner

**Lori@pos.org
303-433-4424**