

Kittery, Maine Climate Survey

Kittery Climate Adaptation Committee
February 2020

Introduction

The Kittery Climate Adaptation Committee (KCAC) surveyed Kittery residents in November and December of 2019 to gauge their concern about climate change and their willingness to take action in response to it.

Respondents had the opportunity to leave comments and questions for CAC. CAC will post responses on its website: www.kitteryme.gov/climate-adaptation-com.

Survey responses will be used by KCAC to inform future projects and initiatives, compile resources for residents, and raise community awareness about climate change, adaptation, and mitigation.

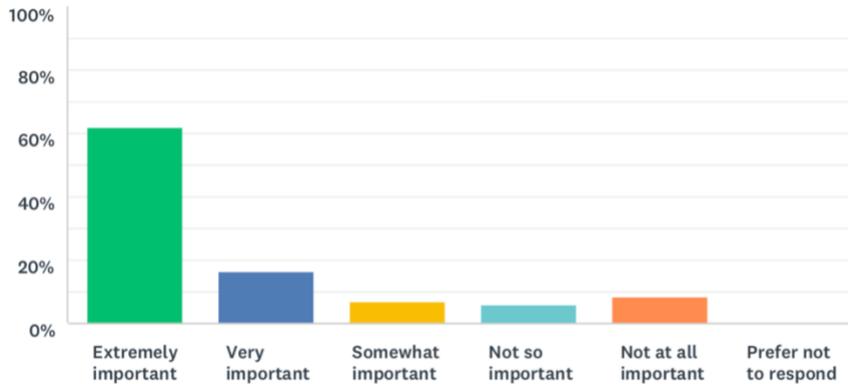
The Committee conducted a similar survey with Traip Academy students, and a summary of this survey is also available on the Climate Adaptation Committee's website.

Summary

- 218 residents participated in the survey
- 50% were aged 60 and above; 33% 40–59; 11% 25-39.
- 95% were full-time residents
- 85% thought it important for the Town to prepare for a warming climate (62% said extremely important)
- 82% said it is important for the Town and individuals to reduce emission of heat-trapping gas (greenhouse gases – GHG)
- 63% were willing to pay more in property taxes to help the Town transition to renewable energy sources.

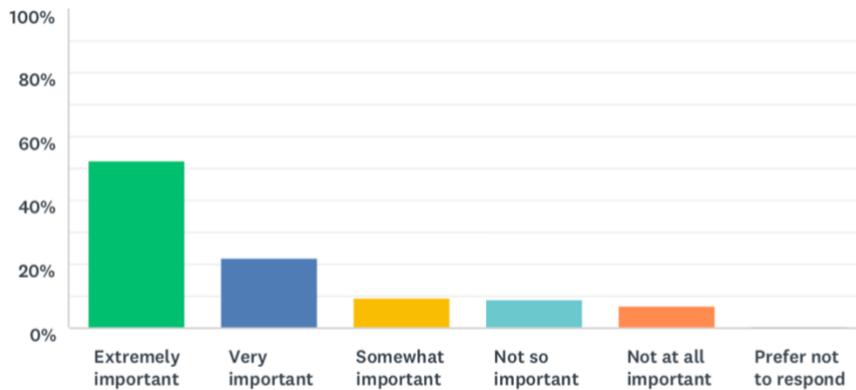
The questions and tallies of responses follow.

Question 1: How IMPORTANT is it to for the Town to PLAN FOR A WARMING CLIMATE with increased extreme weather and rising sea level?



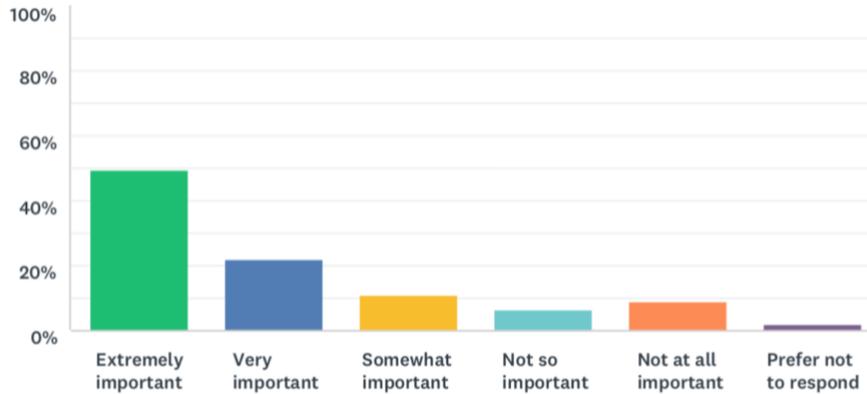
Most (85%) of respondents believe it is important (Extremely Important, 62%; Very Important, 17%; Somewhat Important 7%) for the Town to plan for a warming climate with increased extreme weather and a rising sea level.

Question 2: How IMPORTANT is it for the Town to REDUCE HEAT-TRAPPING GAS EMISSIONS in Town and School BUILDINGS?



Most participants believe Town-led efforts to reduce GHG emissions are important, with 83% responding to Question 2 with extremely important, very important, or somewhat important.

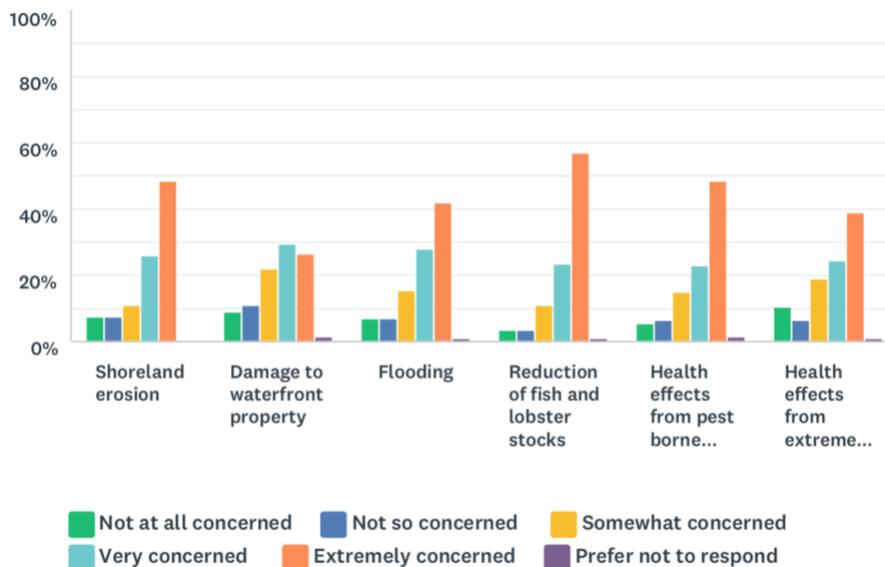
Question 3: How IMPORTANT is it for YOU to REDUCE your HOUSEHOLD HEAT-TRAPPING GAS EMISSIONS?



Most survey participants believe individual residents should be making efforts to reduce their own GHG emissions, with 83% of responses indicating some level of importance.

Responses to Question 2 and Question 3 indicate most residents believe it equally important both for the Town and individual residents to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

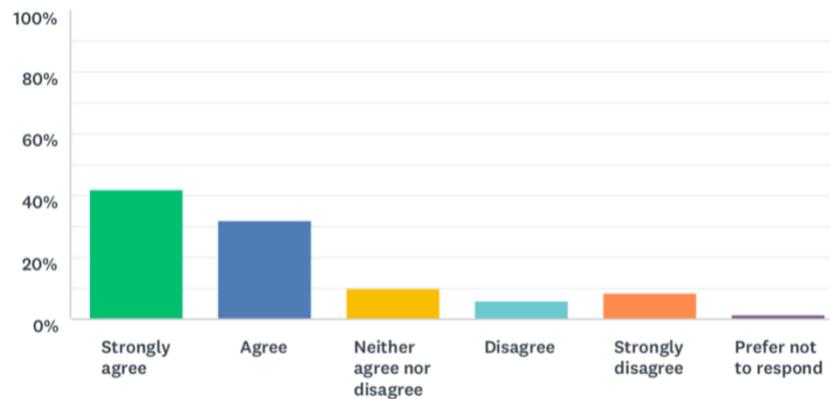
Question 4: Please indicate your CONCERN LEVEL regarding the following projected effects of climate change



The majority of respondents indicate some level of concern for all of the listed potential effects of climate change (shoreland erosion, damage to waterfront property, flooding, reduction of fish and lobster stocks, health effects from pest borne viruses, and health effects from extreme weather).

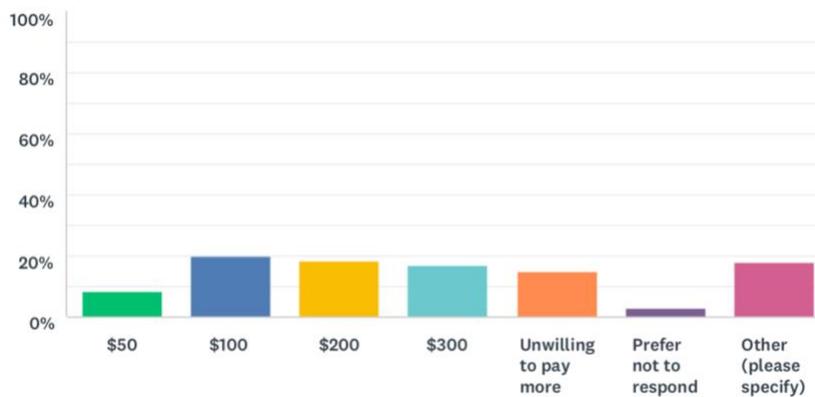
Reduction of fish and lobster stocks is at least somewhat of a concern for 92% of respondents. Health effects from pest borne viruses are a minimum of somewhat concerning for 87% of respondents. Shoreland erosion is also somewhat of a concern for 85% of respondents.

Question 5: Should the Town INVEST NOW in MAKING Town PROPERTIES RESISTANT to extreme weather events and rising sea levels?



Approximately 74% of residents agree the Town should invest now to help make Kittery’s properties more resilient to extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

Question 6: How much MORE A YEAR would you be willing to PAY IN property TAXES to fund the Town transitioning to RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES?



While 63% of respondents are willing to pay a property tax increase to support the Town’s transition to renewable energy, the preferred amount of increase was varied. Many comments revealed residents are skeptical or in complete disagreement with a tax increase to fund a transition to renewable energy sources. Some questions and responses indicate that a better breakdown of how much the proposed tax increase would be and how the money would be spent might provide Town residents the understanding they need to support a tax increase for this purpose.

Resident Questions and Comments

Residents were eager for information on climate change effects specific to Kittery. Many comments and questions indicated a desire for more resources explaining the risks including:

- Maps projecting sea level rise and flood risk in Kittery
- Maps and timelines showing sea level, sea temperature, and/or flood risk change in Kittery from the past few decades
- Simplified resources explaining specific issues and primary threats (i.e. how human-induced increases in GHG affect climate change) and specific ways residents can change their lifestyles/habits to adapt and mitigate
- Vulnerability and resilience assessments for the Town
- Mailings/newsletters providing information (on vulnerability and resilience, the climate action plan, facts, etc.)
- A collection of relevant studies/resources posted on the KCAC website
- Informational meetings/discussions/workshops with residents, local officials, and climate experts
- Movie screenings relating to climate change

Maps were the most mentioned resources respondents wanted to see. Many people wanted more information on what GHGs are, and the measures the Town and residents might take to reduce GHG emissions. Further, they wanted to know what resources were available to them, particularly to offset costs.

A few responses suggested that the Town should be taking more initiative to have “greener” facilities and practices to set an example. Suggestions included:

- Town conversion to solar energy
- Conversion from bottled water in Town offices and schools
- Involvement of Kittery public school students
- Partnerships with businesses and other towns

A small number saw no need to adapt to and/or mitigate the effects of climate change. A few suggested the climate was not warming or that what we are experiencing is no different from past periods of warming and cooling.

In response to the final question, asking for comments, many responded that they were grateful for the attention the topic is now getting and expressed interest in helping Kittery take action on the climate. One respondent noted, “we have already seen impacts at Seapoint and Fort Foster.” Another commented, “this is of paramount importance and requires action on local, state, national and international levels.”

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