



# WDO ROUND THREE PROJECTS

## FINAL REPORT



**Project Name:** Earth's 911 Project

**Municipality/Organization:** Region of Peel

**Municipal Project Manager:** Dwayne Cromwell/Brenda Blain/Joe Vieira

**Total Funding Provided by WDO:** \$ 6,000

**Total Project Costs:** \$ 6,000

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Earth's 911 empowers the public through community specific resources to improve their quality of life and to ensure the preservation of our natural resources for future generations. Earth's 911 provides universally accepted environmental resources through multiple mediums to ensure access by all citizens. Earth's 911 is committed to maintaining the integrity of its Public and Private Sector partnership which support and facilitate this national/international mission.

As with many municipalities that concern themselves with waste management, the Region of Peel has a customer service line, or hotline, for its residents to voice their concerns, their kudos and to ask for information on the various programs made available to them by the municipality. Understanding how valuable a customer service line is, Earth's 911 is a centralized information depository for waste related topics. Residents of Peel, Ontario and eventually Canada will have an alternative option to explore waste related and other environmental information that is of concern to them locally, provincially and nationally.

Simply put, the more information out there, in as many mediums as possible, the larger the audience we can capture and deliver the message of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, environmentally safe disposal of solid and hazardous special waste and composting. To test this theory, PMG Consulting was contracted to conduct a post Earth's 911-launch telephone survey. In total, 458 residents of Brampton were randomly interviewed by telephone between March 23 and April 9, 2001 in order to gain a better understanding of the awareness and participation in recycling programs. In particular, the Region was interested in learning how well residents were aware of the Earth's 911 program.

Based on the findings of the interviews, Brampton residents consider themselves "environmentally conscious". Almost a quarter rated themselves to be "extremely conscious" and 55% stated they were "fairly environmentally conscious". Their awareness and usage of recycling programs verified this expressed commitment to the environment.

Overall, awareness of Brampton's current environmental initiatives is very high. Virtually all (97%) of the respondents had some knowledge of the curbside recycling program, almost all of these (92%) stated they were fully aware of the program. Almost nine in ten had knowledge of the backyard composting program and yard waste initiative (86 % and 84% respectively). Slightly fewer (81%) knew of the household hazardous waste program, while just over two thirds of respondents (69%) had at least some knowledge about the upcoming bag limit initiative.

In all, less than 8% of Brampton residents have any level of knowledge of Earth's 911. Awareness of the program came mainly from newspapers and word of mouth. Of those that are aware of the program, the majority feels it is an extremely useful program for helping people help protect the environment. Once a description of the Earth's 911 program was read to those respondents not aware of the program, it was clearly determined that the program can help protect human health and natural resources.



# WDO ROUND Three PROJECTS

## FINAL REPORT

Secretariat to WDO:



### FINAL REPORT GUIDELINES

#### RECOMMENDED SECTIONS FOR THE FINAL REPORT

##### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Using template provided.

##### 2. INTRODUCTION

- Summarizing goals, methodology and geographic scope of the project.

##### 3. METHODOLOGY

- A thorough description of the methodology utilized to complete the project, including an overview of data collection and analysis procedures.

##### 4. RESULTS

- Presentation of project results in table format (where appropriate) and a thorough analysis of project impacts and implications, lessons learned and suggestions for other programs.

##### 5. TRANSFERABILITY TO OTHER REGIONS/MUNICIPALITIES IN ONTARIO

- Indicating how the project results could be used by other Ontario municipalities to increase diversion of residential organic waste.

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Appendix A Survey Questions

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In April 2001, four hundred fifty eight telephone interviews were conducted with residents of Brampton. The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the awareness and participation in recycling programs. In particular, the Region was interested in learning the awareness of “Earth’s 911” – an informational service introduced by Peel in November 2000 that partners the public and private sectors to promote environmentally conscious behaviour regarding household hazardous waste, recycling, water and air quality, composting, and other general “environmentally friendly” activities.

This sample size of 458 surveys renders a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 4.8\%$ , at a .95 confidence level. This means that, if you were to survey every household in Brampton, the responses would not vary from these findings by more than 4.8%, 19 times out of 20.

### **1.1 Objectives**

The following research objectives were used to create the survey vehicle.

- To determine the awareness of current environmental initiatives
- To determine the relative importance of current environmental initiatives
- To determine the relative importance of environmental issues
- To determine the impact of corporate sponsorship to Region of Peel residents
- To determine what environmental initiatives Region of Peel residents would find useful to them
- To determine how Region of Peel residents would like environmental information delivered to them

### **1.2 Geographic Scope**

The City of Brampton is situated in the central portion of the Region of Peel, just northwest of the City of Toronto in the Greater Toronto Area. Brampton’s neighbouring communities include Mississauga to the south, Vaughan to the east, Caledon to the north and Halton Hills to the west. The City of Brampton covers 265 square kilometres (102 square miles) and stretches from Mayfield Road (Regional Road # 14) in the north, to just south of Highway 407. Brampton includes a diverse mixture of urban, suburban, rural and agricultural landscapes. As of 2001, Brampton has an estimated population of over 300,000 persons with over 93,000 households.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

The nature of the study was a quantitative survey that was administered to a random sample of Brampton residents. In total, 458 residents were interviewed by telephone between March 23, and April 9, 2001. Respondents to the survey were qualified by being the main owner or renter of the residence. A copy of the survey questions can be viewed in Appendix A.

Overall, data collection went well as over 65% of households contacted agreed to participate in the survey.

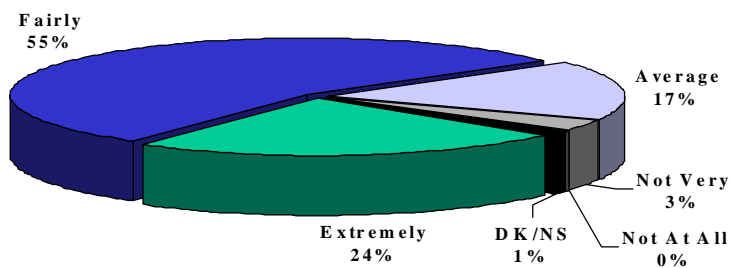
### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Attitudes and Behaviours

Based on the findings of these interviews, the citizens of Brampton generally consider themselves “environmentally conscious”. Almost one-quarter rated themselves as “extremely conscious”, and their awareness and usage of recycling programs verified this expressed commitment to the environment.

Another 55% stated they were “fairly environmentally conscious”, while another 17% considered themselves “average”.

Figure 1: Environmental Consciousness



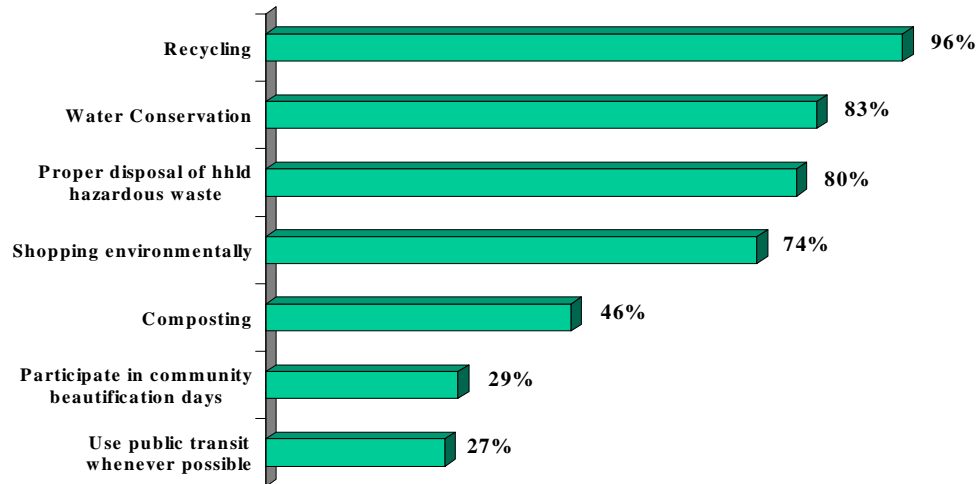
Q.20

Of some concern is the lack of commitment from young residents in Brampton. The survey found that only 10% of those aged 18 to 34 considered themselves “extremely environmentally conscious”, and they were consistently much less knowledgeable of, and much less active in, all of the programs set up in the Region.

Overall, almost all respondents (96%) said they currently practice recycling, while 83% practice water conservation. A full eight in ten (80%) noted they properly dispose of household hazardous waste (only 64% of those aged 18 to 34), while almost three quarters (75%) do their shopping with the environment in mind.

Less than half (46%) practice composting, while just over one in four (29%) participate in community beautification days. Slightly fewer (27%) say they use public transportation whenever possible to help the environment.

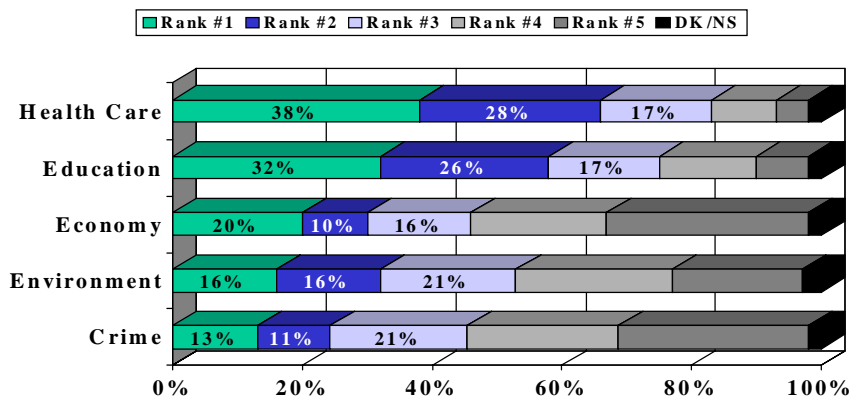
Figure 2: Current Environmental Initiatives



Q.19

When Brampton residents were asked to rank social issues that were important to them, the environment was not among the top of concerns. Other social issues such as the economy, education and health care preceded the environment. Just over half (53%) ranked the environment in the top 3, with 16% giving it the highest ranking of these issues. However, one in five (20%) gave it the lowest ranking. Even those residents who consider themselves to be extremely environmentally conscious were not significantly more likely to rank the issue higher.

Figure 3: Ranking of Social Issues

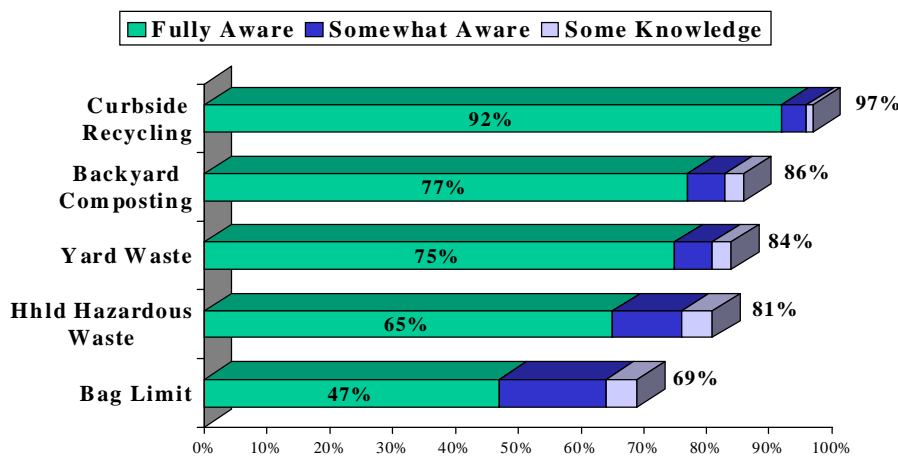


Q.21

### 3.2 Awareness and Participation in Programs

Overall, awareness of Brampton's current environmental initiatives is very high. Virtually all (97%) of the respondents had some knowledge of the curbside recycling program and almost all of these (92%) stated they felt fully aware of the program. Almost nine in ten had knowledge of the backyard composting program, and yard waste initiative (86% and 84% respectively). Slightly fewer (81%) knew of the household hazardous waste program, while just over two thirds of respondents (69%) had at least some knowledge about the upcoming bag limit initiative.

Figure 4: Awareness of Region Programs



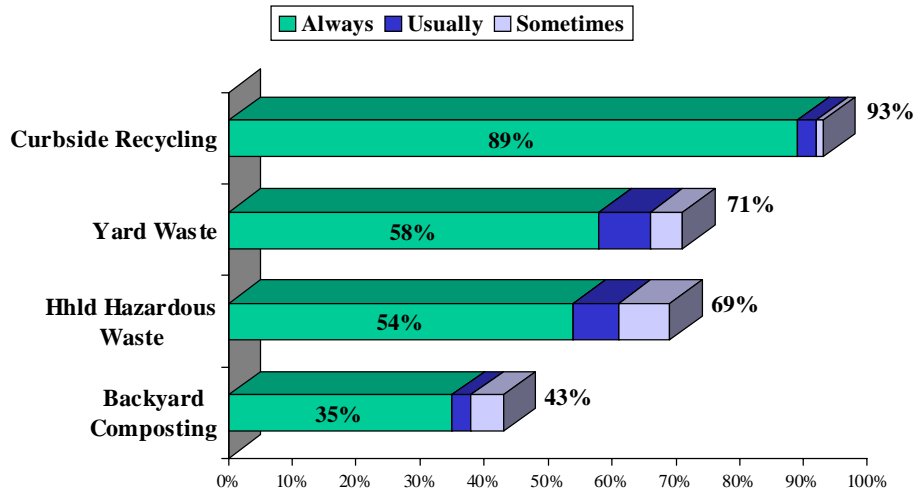
Q.1.3.5.7.9

Unfortunately, participation in these programs does not match these awareness figures.

While 92% of respondents say they are fully aware of the curbside recycling program, only 89% say they always participate (Overall, 93% claim they participate at least sometimes). Similarly, while 86% say they have at least some knowledge about the yard waste program, only 71% participate at least sometimes (58% say they always participate), and 65% are fully aware of the household hazardous waste program, but only 54% properly dispose of these wastes on a regular basis.

Backyard composting is not a priority for Brampton residents. Just over one third (35%) regularly compost, with a total of 43% expressing they compost at least sometimes.

Figure 5: Participation in Region Programs

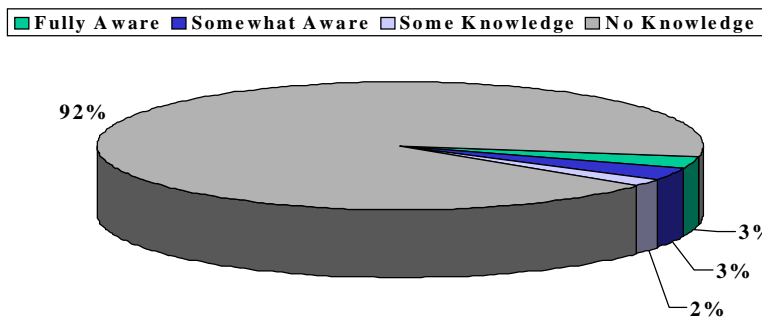


Q.2,4,6,8

### 3.3 Earth's 911

Overall, less than one out of ten (8%) Brampton residents have any level of knowledge of "Earth's 911". Three percent feel they are fully aware of the program, while another 3% feel they are aware somewhat. While triple the average, only 9% of those who consider themselves extremely environmentally conscious are fully aware of the "Earth's 911" program, and 88% of these advocates have no knowledge of the program. Knowledge of the initiative does not vary among gender and age groupings.

Figure 6: Awareness of Earth's 911



Q.11

Awareness of the program came mainly from newspapers and word of mouth and, of those that are aware of the program, the majority feels it is an extremely useful program for helping people help protect the environment.

Once a description of the “Earth’s 911” program was read to those respondents not aware of the program, it was clearly determined to be extremely important in helping to accomplish two of the Region of Peel’s important objectives – being to “preserve Peel’s natural areas and resources, and protecting human health”. In fact, almost two thirds (63%) gave it an importance rating of “10 out of 10”, while 9% gave a rating of “5” or less.

When asked “Assuming that all other factors were equal, if a company were to sponsor a service like Earth’s 911, how likely would you be to purchase their products compared to a company’s products that didn’t sponsor a service like Earth’s 911?”, a full six in ten (60%) stated the sponsorship would definitely impact their purchasing decision, while another 31% noted it would probably impact their decision. The remaining 9% stated that sponsorship would have little or no influence on their purchasing decision.

Women were more likely to show strong support for these sponsors, as were younger and more educated consumers. Almost half (45%) of those who live in the Brampton area who do not consider themselves very environmentally conscious stated they would be extremely likely to purchase from a business sponsoring Earth’s 911, over a business which did not support the program.

### 3.4 Learning More About Earth’s 911

When asked about specific information that could be included in an informational service like Earth’s 911, information about where and how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste was at the top of the list, with 68% rating this “10 out of 10” in importance. This was followed closely by the desire for information about how to prevent pollution of streams and waterways (66%), tips on how to keep air clean and healthy (65%), and information about where to recycle and how to reduce and reuse (65%).

	<b>IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING ...</b>			
	<b>10 out of 10</b>	<b>8 or 9</b>	<b>6 or 7</b>	<b>5 or less</b>
Where and how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste	68%	17%	3%	5%
How to prevent pollution of streams and waterways	66%	17%	6%	3%
Tips on how to keep air clean and healthy	65%	18%	6%	4%
Where to recycle / How to reduce and reuse	65%	19%	5%	5%
Information about water savings	61%	17%	8%	5%
Phone and internet addresses	54%	20%	9%	9%
Energy conservation tips	53%	21%	10%	9%
Environmental games and activities for children	53%	19%	10%	11%
How to shop to help the environment	49%	23%	10%	10%
Programs, events and environmental agencies	48%	21%	14%	9%

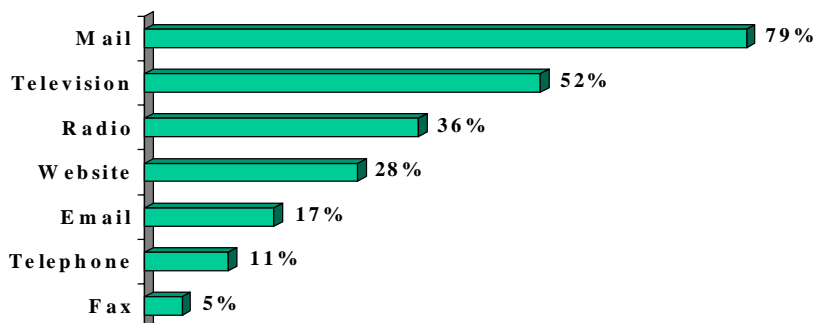
Over half rated great importance to information about water savings (61% rating “10 out of 10”), phone numbers and internet addresses for the area (54%), information about energy conservation tips for consumers, businesses, teachers and students (53%), and information on environmental games and activities for children (53%).

Slightly fewer gave vital importance to information about how to shop to help the environment, and information about programs, events and environmental agencies (49% and 48% respectively).

While not many respondents could think of other information programs that would be useful for a service like Earth’s 911 to offer, most of those who did offer suggestions requested a refrigerator magnet with phone numbers and internet addresses for quick access to information.

When asked how they would like to receive information regarding environmentally related programs and services, over three quarters (79%) requested a mailing (oddly, not very environmentally friendly!), while 52% stated they would like to see something on television, and 36% felt the radio would be a good mode of communication. Slightly more than one quarter (28%) requested a web site for information, while 17% were comfortable receiving an email, 11% wished to receive information by telephone, and 5% requested information be sent by fax.

Figure 7: Preferred Methods for Receiving Environment-Related Information



Q-18

As one might expect, younger residents were more likely to request information via a website (42% of those aged 18 to 34) or email (25%).

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Brampton residents consider themselves to be good environmental citizens. A quarter of these surveyed classified themselves as being “extremely environmentally conscious”. Almost all say that they practice at least some form of environmental initiative currently being offered by the Region of Peel. They are aware of all Regional environmental programs including the upcoming bag limit program. These same residents said that the current environmental programs offered by the Region of Peel are important to help meet Regional objectives.

Although people seem to consider the environment important as well as practice current initiatives, there may be some cause for concern. Of the five measured criteria, the environment ranked fourth in importance. Although most people participate in Regional recycling programs, if you exclude curbside recycling, participation drops significantly. Almost eight in ten people who consider themselves to be “environmentally friendly” citizens would prefer information sent to them regarding the environment by mail, a not very environmentally friendly form of communication.

As would be expected of a program in its infancy, awareness of Earth’s 911 was extremely low. Although people were not aware of the program, when read a description, the concept was considered to be of importance to Brampton residents. When asked if a company were to sponsor a service like Earth’s 911, how likely would it impact their buying decision, most said sponsorship would definitely impact their purchasing decision.

The Earth’s 911 program has the potential to be a valuable information source for residents. With the type of information Earth’s 911 makes available, residents can make an educated decision on how to handle their household wastes, composting, recycling and other environmental concerns. Since the public Launch of Earth’s 911 by the Region of Peel and its partners in November, 2000, the Region has made the Earth’s 911 database accessible to residents from its web site. Earth’s 911 has the potential to improve the areas of concern previously mentioned, namely the lowered than hoped for participation in Peel’s programs outside the curbside recycling program and the ambivalence of the 18 to 34 target group.

## **5.0 TRANSFERABILITY TO OTHER REGIONS/MUNICIPALITIES IN ONTARIO**

The Region of Peel and other municipalities should consider these results with cautious optimism. Although people like to consider themselves as solid environmental citizens, perceptions don’t necessarily match reality. It is important to remember that these results measure a self-assessment of perceptions rather than a measure of actual practice.

Appendix A  
Survey Questions

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from PMG Consulting, a public opinion research company. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Region of Peel to understand people's opinions on a range of issues involving the environment. May I speak to the main owner or renter of the residence?

[IF RIGHT PERSON, CONTINUE, OR REINTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE MAIN OWNER OR RENTER OF THE RESIDENCE]

Your answers will remain anonymous. IF NECESSARY, The interview will take about 12 to 15 minutes.

I would now like to start by getting an understanding of your level of awareness and participation of the Region of Peel's current environmental initiatives. Could you please indicate how aware you are of the following environmental programs? If aware, could you indicate how often you participate in these programs. The first program is:

1. Curbside recycling program (Blue and Grey Box programs)

- Fully aware of the program
- Somewhat aware of the program
- Have some knowledge of the program
- Have little or no knowledge of the program

2. Do you participate in this program..

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely/Never

3. Household Hazardous Waste program

- Fully aware of the program
- Somewhat aware of the program
- Have some knowledge of the program
- Have little or no knowledge of the program

4. Do you participate in this program..

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely/Never

5. Backyard Composting program

- Fully aware of the program
- Somewhat aware of the program
- Have some knowledge of the program
- Have little or no knowledge of the program

6. Do you participate in this program..

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes

- Rarely/Never
7. Yard Waste program
- Fully aware of the program
  - Somewhat aware of the program
  - Have some knowledge of the program
  - Have little or no knowledge of the program
8. Do you participate in this program..
- Always
  - Usually
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely/Never
9. Region of Peel's upcoming Bag Limit program
- Fully aware of the program
  - Somewhat aware of the program
  - Have some knowledge of the program
  - Have little or no knowledge of the program
10. I would now like to get an understanding of how important you believe these programs are in helping the Region of Peel meet its environmental objectives. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you believe the program not at all important and 10 means you believe the program is extremely important in helping to accomplish two of the Region of Peel's most important objectives being to "preserve Peel's natural areas and resources, and protecting human health." The first program is..
- \_\_\_ Curbside recycling Program (Blue and Grey Box programs)
  - \_\_\_ Household Hazardous Waste program
  - \_\_\_ Backyard Composting program
  - \_\_\_ Yard Waste program
11. We would like to determine the awareness of a program introduced by Peel in November, 2000 called Earth's 911. Which of the following statements best describes your awareness of this program, called Earth's 911?
- Am fully aware of the program
  - Am somewhat aware of the program
  - Have some knowledge of the program
  - Have little or no knowledge of the program [SKIP TO "READ" BEFORE #14]
12. How did you first become aware of Earth's 911?
- \_\_\_\_\_
13. How useful do you believe Earth's 911 is in assisting people to help protect the environment?
- Extremely useful
  - Somewhat useful
  - Not very useful
  - Not at all useful

[READ] Earth's 911 is an informational service that partners the public and private sectors to promote specific information including; household hazardous waste, recycling, water and air quality, composting, and other general environmental information. Earth's 911 is accessible 24 hours a day by phone or the internet. The mission of Earth's 911 is "to empower the public with community-specific resources for recycling, pollution prevention and how we can all do our part in protecting the environment."

14. Could you please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you believe an informational service like Earth's 911 is not at all important and 10 means you believe a service like Earth's 911 is extremely important in helping to accomplish two of the Region of Peel's important objectives being to "preserve Peel's natural areas and resources, and protecting human health."

\_\_\_\_\_

15. I would now like to ask you about specific information that could be included in an informational service like Earth's 911. Could you please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you believe this information should not be included and 10 means you strongly believe this information should be included in an informational source like Earth's 911. The first informational program is..

\_\_\_ Information about where to recycle and how to reduce and reuse.

\_\_\_ Information about where and how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste

\_\_\_ Information about programs, events and environmental agencies \_\_\_ information including phone and internet addresses for your area

\_\_\_ Information about energy conservation tips for consumers, businesses, teachers and students.

\_\_\_ Information about how to prevent pollution of your streams and waterways

\_\_\_ Information about water savings.

\_\_\_ Tips on how to keep your air clean and healthy.

\_\_\_ Information of how to shop to help the environment.

\_\_\_ Information on environmental games and activities for children

16. Are there any other informational programs that you believe would be useful for a service like Earth's 911 to offer?

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Assuming that all other factors were equal, if a company were to sponsor a service like Earth's 911, how likely would you be to purchase their products compared to a company's products that didn't sponsor a service like Earth's 911?

Extremely likely - would definitely impact purchasing decision

Somewhat likely - would probably impact purchasing decision

Not too likely - would make little impact on purchasing decision

Not at all likely - would make no impact on purchasing decision

18. How would you like to receive information regarding environmentally related programs and services? [READ LIST – CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Mail
- Telephone
- Fax
- Email
- Television
- Radio
- Website

19. Which of the following environmental initiatives do you currently practice? [READ LIST – CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Water conservation
- Recycling
- Participate in community beautification days
- Proper disposal of household hazardous waste
- Use public transit whenever possible
- Composting
- Practice shopping environmentally

20. How would you rate yourself as an environmental citizen?

- Extremely environmentally conscious
- Fairly environmentally conscious
- As environmentally conscious as the next person
- Not very environmentally conscious
- Not at all environmentally conscious

21. Could you please rank the following social issues from most to least on what you believe is their order of importance to society.

- \_\_\_ Economy
- \_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_ Health care
- \_\_\_ Crime
- \_\_\_ Environment

**And finally, this last series of questions is to classify your responses with those of others in the survey.**

22. Gender [Record only, do not ask]

- Male
- Female

23. In what year were you born?

\_\_\_\_\_

24. What is the highest level of education you have completed ? [Read list if necessary]

- High School or less
- Some college/university
- Completed college/university
- Post graduate degree
- Refused

25. What is your marital status? [Read list if necessary]

- Married
- Single
- Divorced/Separated
- Widow
- Refused

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2001