

CALGARIANS AT A CROSSROADS

Calgarians want an economic recovery that tackles climate change

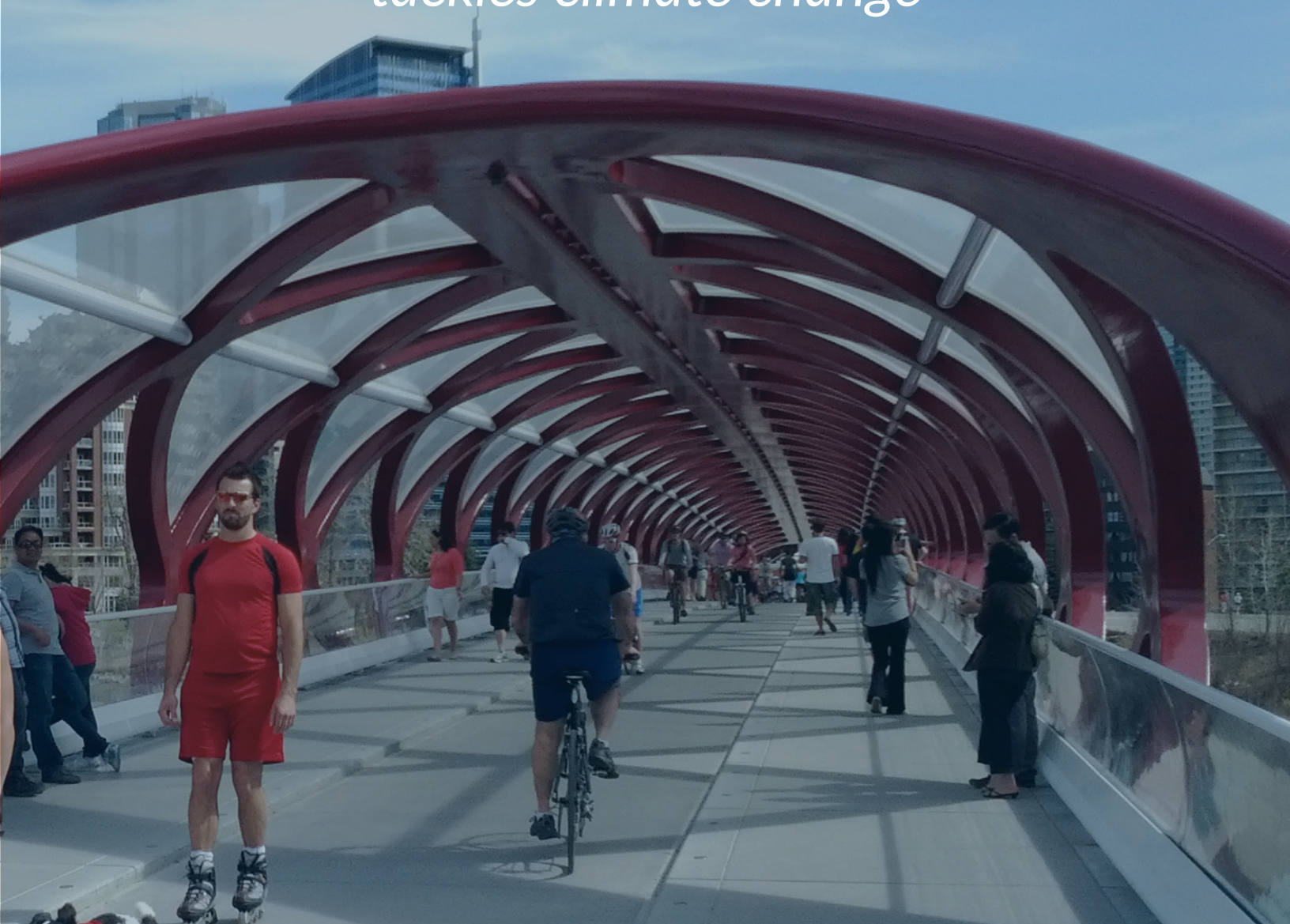



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Executive Summary

In August 2021, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Calgary Climate Hub and Clean Energy Canada, asked 1,000 Calgarians to share their opinions on Calgary's economy, climate change, and what they would like to see from municipal candidates heading into a civic election. ZincTank was contracted by the consortium to conduct this poll.

Calgarians want investment in the economy to include environmental solutions. Overall, the data shows well over half (69 percent) of Calgary's citizens are concerned about climate change impacts and how they will impact their jobs, families, and the future of their communities.

Key findings

1. Climate solutions are good for individuals, families and the community.

Calgarians are worried about the future of their city, as 53 percent are uncertain that Calgary is on the right track to be a better city 10 years from now. Over half (57 percent) want Calgary to chart a course for a more sustainable and resilient city by investing in the transition toward clean energy.

Seven in ten believe the transition to renewable energy will ultimately improve the health and well-being of themselves and their families. If Alberta does not seriously tackle climate change, 53 percent believe that more youth will leave Calgary, which may expose the community to more social and economic risks.

2. Calgary's future economic plans need to include climate action.

Almost three quarters (73 percent) believe that investing in climate change is an investment in long-term economic sustainability and prosperity. Overall, Calgary's citizens (56 percent) agree that tackling climate change will be good for their family's economic prospects.

Individuals across all sectors need to be supported through the transition, as 70 percent of Calgarians believe addressing climate change will be a challenge for small business owners, and 73 percent believe it is important to invest in transitioning oil and gas workers to other roles in a changing energy industry.

3. Voters care about building a resilient, diversified economy.

More than 70 percent of Calgarians want candidates to have clear environmental policies that protect our natural systems and diversify the economy in their election platforms.

As we transition to a low-carbon economy, 80 percent of Calgarians believe that with the province's experience in the oil and gas industry, Calgary has the resources to become a global leader in renewable energy. After a long economic downturn, 72 percent of Calgary's citizens think it is important for candidates to have a clear environmental policy to address climate change that also focuses on diversifying Calgary's economy.

4. Calgarians support measures to get more electric vehicles on roads

A considerable majority of Calgarians support policy measures that would help grow electric vehicle adoption in the city. Three-quarters (76 percent) support more electric vehicle charging stations along major roads and shopping centres, while two-thirds (65 percent) support electric vehicle incentives. Electrifying buses is particularly popular, with 78 percent supporting updating public buses to electric or hydrogen versions, while a similar number (76 percent) favour the idea of replacing conventional school buses with electric ones.

5. Environmental impacts are affecting Calgary

With increasing extreme weather events, such as this summer's record heatwaves and wildfires, two-thirds of Calgarians (66 percent) recognize, some now more than ever, that the city needs to do more to address climate change. Some families (43 percent) say they are already being financially and emotionally affected by climate impacts.

Conclusion

Calgarians are ready to embrace a more diverse economy—an economy that addresses the realities of today and their concerns for tomorrow. While some citizens oppose climate action, their numbers are small compared to the 66 percent of Calgarians who believe any further delays in addressing climate change will be detrimental to Alberta's economic future.

The three project partners hope that the responses to this survey encourage candidates in the upcoming election to include climate action as a priority and also to inform municipal policies and programs in the months and years to come for Calgary.

Pat Letizia
President and CEO
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

Trevor Melanson
Communications Director
Clean Energy Canada

Dr. Joe Vipond
Co-chair
Calgary Climate Hub



Methods

In Spring 2021, the consortium of Calgary Climate Hub, Alberta Ecotrust and Clean Energy Canada contracted zinc tank to conduct a poll on climate change and what Calgarians are seeking on climate action in the October's municipal election and in City Council's agenda for the next term.

- The survey covered topics on perceptions of Calgary (using some questions from the City's Citizen Satisfaction Survey, vision for the city, economic matters, environmental concerns, actions to address climate change and what respondents were seeking in candidates on climate action related matters.
- Mode of data collection: online (Internet panel, self complete) respondents.
- 1,000 respondents:
 - Respondent quotas established to ensure data are population representative.
 - Data presented are weighted to reflect population of adults 18 years and older. Data obtained was rebalanced by age, gender and quadrant as per the 2019 City of Calgary Civic Census (the most recent available).
 - Those eligible to vote represented over 98% of respondents.
 - Internet panel was selected as a means for data collection given the length of the survey, and that 90%+ of Calgarians are online (higher than landlines).
 - Field Dates: August 5 - 15, 2021.
 - Incidence rate: 84%. Total contacts - 1,704. Breakoff (Incomplete) - 291. Termination (Out of Calgary, Under 18, Over quota) - 413.
- Length of interview: Average - 25 minutes, Median - 22 minutes.

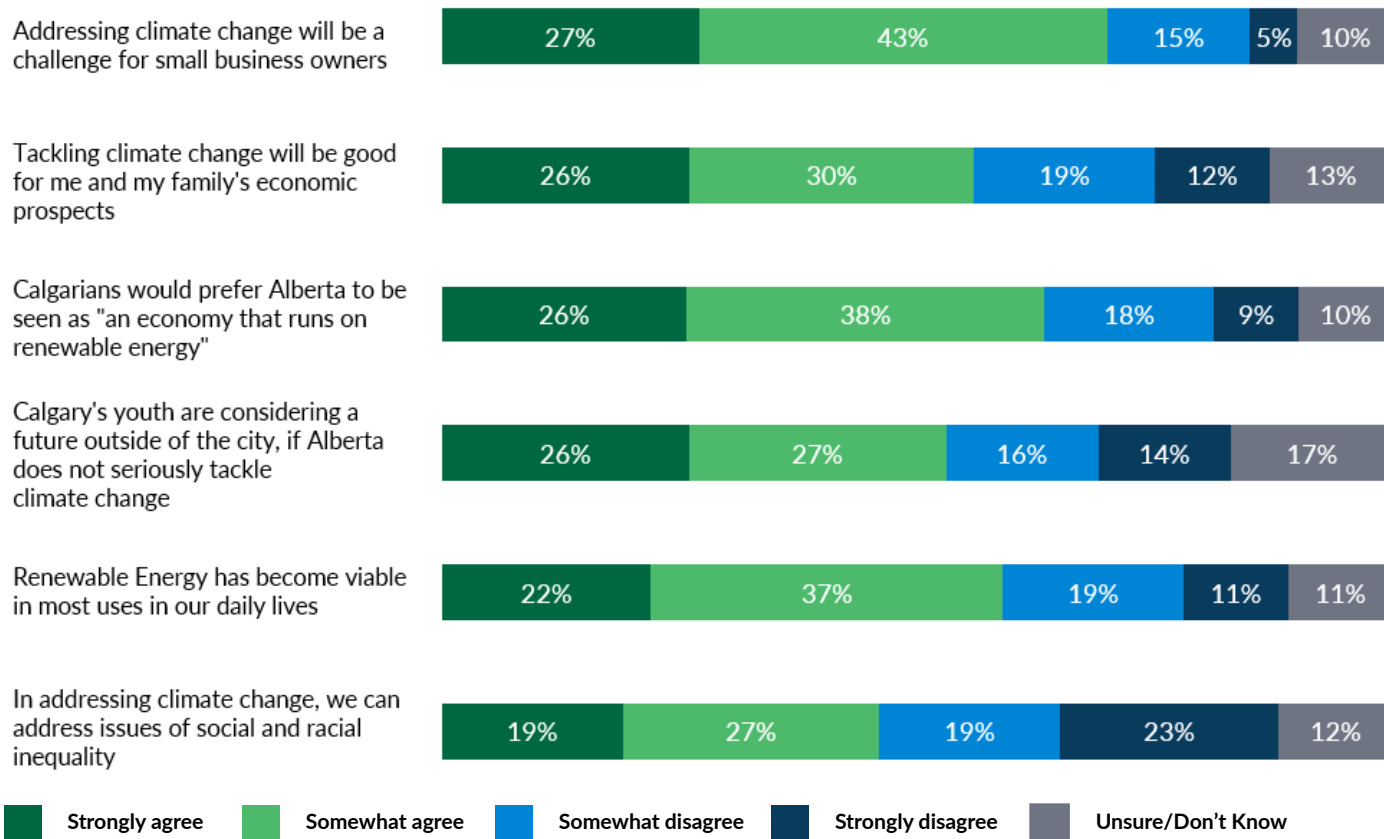


Review the full breakout of polling data at
<https://www.albertaecotrust.com/calgarians-at-a-crossroads/>

1. Climate solutions are good for individuals, families and the community

Calgarians are worried about the future of their city. They want Calgary to be a vibrant city that future generations call home and believe that climate solutions will be good for individuals, families and communities.

“Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements,”



“ It is clear that seven in ten Calgarians believe the transition to renewable energy will ultimately improve the health and well-being of themselves and their families. Calgary’s municipal candidates must include bold climate change plans in their election platforms to protect the health of Albertans.

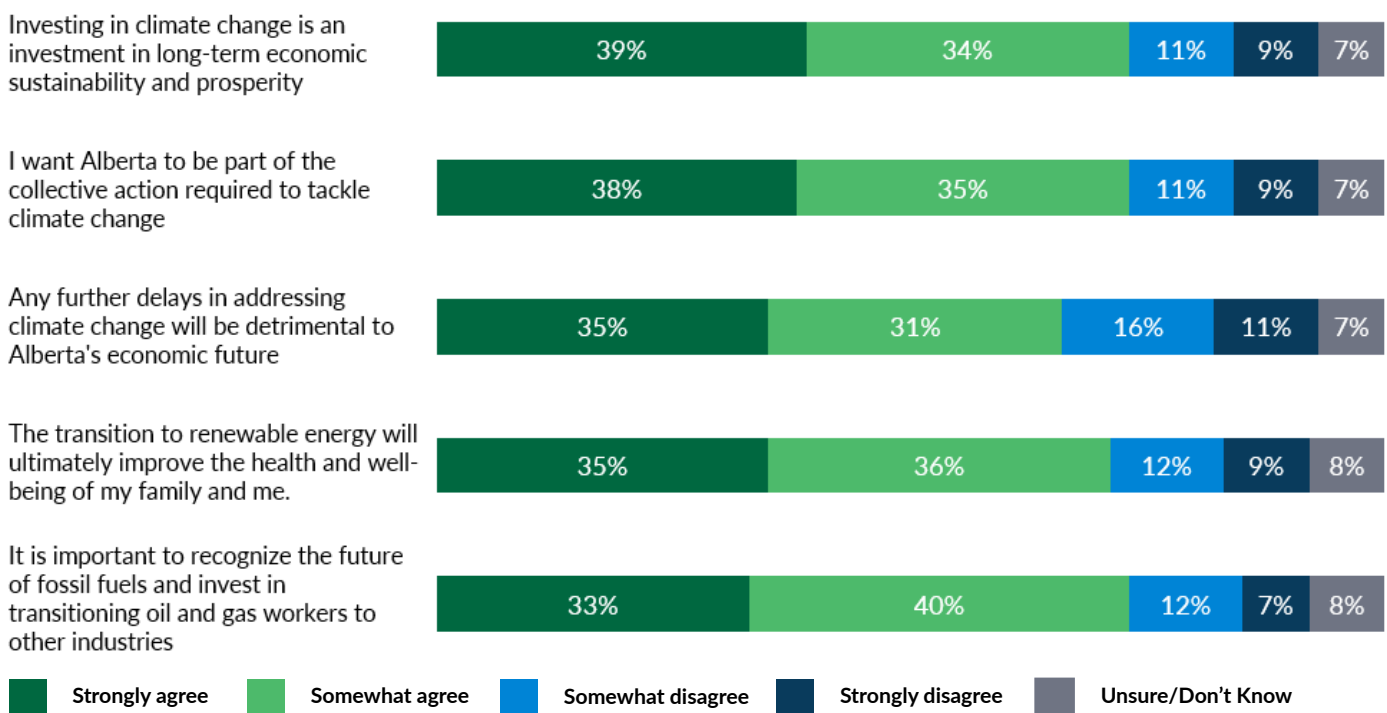
Joe Vipond, co-chair of Calgary Climate Hub and emergency physician at the Rockyview General Hospital.



2. Calgary's future economic plans need to include climate action.

Cities around the world are evolving so they can get the economic benefits of environmental actions. Calgary's citizens have evolved with the world, but are nervous about being left behind in the transition to a low-carbon global economy. That is why they want future economic recovery plans to solve climate change's multiple challenges. This means supporting individuals, families, small businesses, and communities through the transition.

"Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements,"



“ Calgary is Canada's energy capital, and that doesn't need to change. Alberta is home to many skilled workers, the best wind and solar resources in the country, and a number of other clean energy opportunities such as geothermal and hydrogen.

But in order to turn this promising potential into a resilient reality, action needs to be taken today at every political level. Calgarians are ready for it.



Trevor Melanson, communications director, Clean Energy Canada

Calgary is at a crossroads

“Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements,”

It is Alberta's benefit to go it alone and address climate change in a manner it sees appropriate



I have been personally affected, financially and emotionally, by extreme weather events in Calgary



Increasing taxes on carbon-based fuels is an effective tool in addressing climate change



It is worth opposing climate change actions at any expense



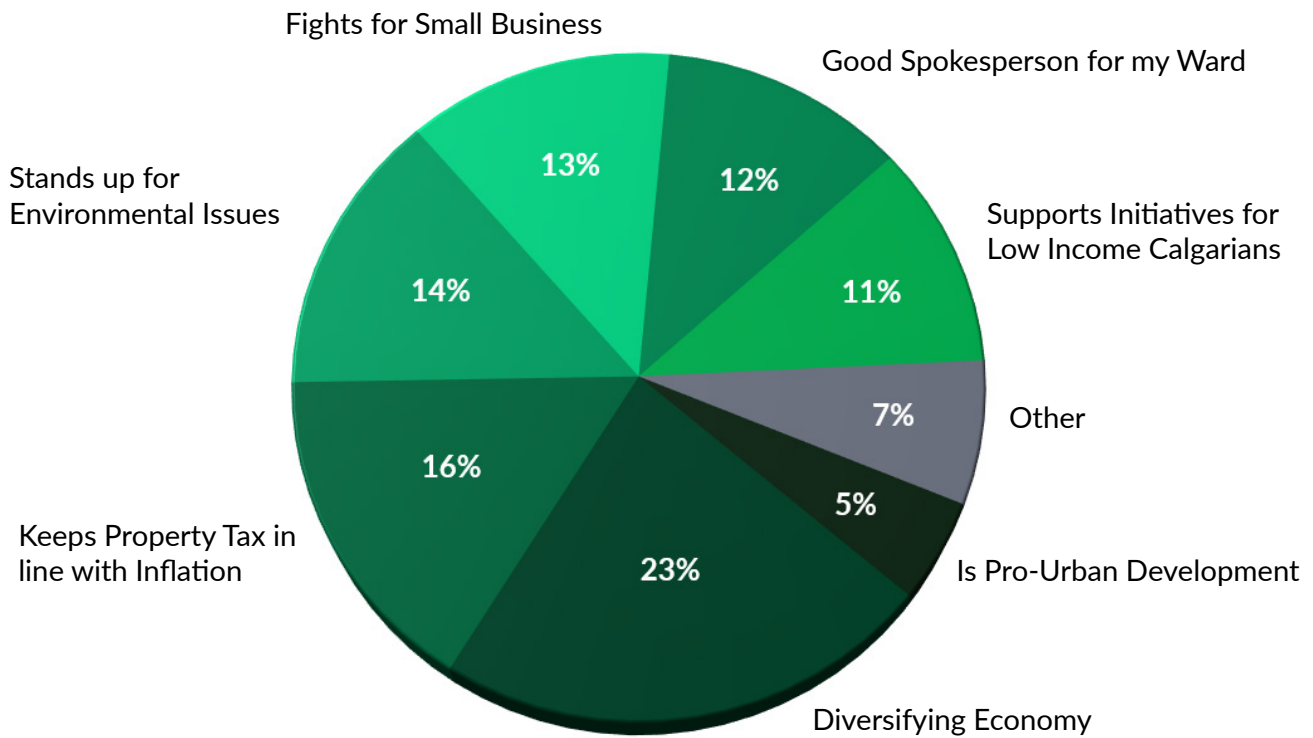
I am happy to accept extreme weather events as the new normal



Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Unsure/Don't Know

3. Voters care about building a resilient, diversified economy.

Calgary is long known for its central role in Canada’s oil and gas industry. We now sit at a crossroads. Most Calgarians see the value in diversifying the economy to build a better and more resilient city. Calgary voters want municipal leaders to address climate change to ensure economic sustainability and prosperity.



“ Calgarians are looking toward diversification and renewal, at which climate action needs to be integral to any strategy.

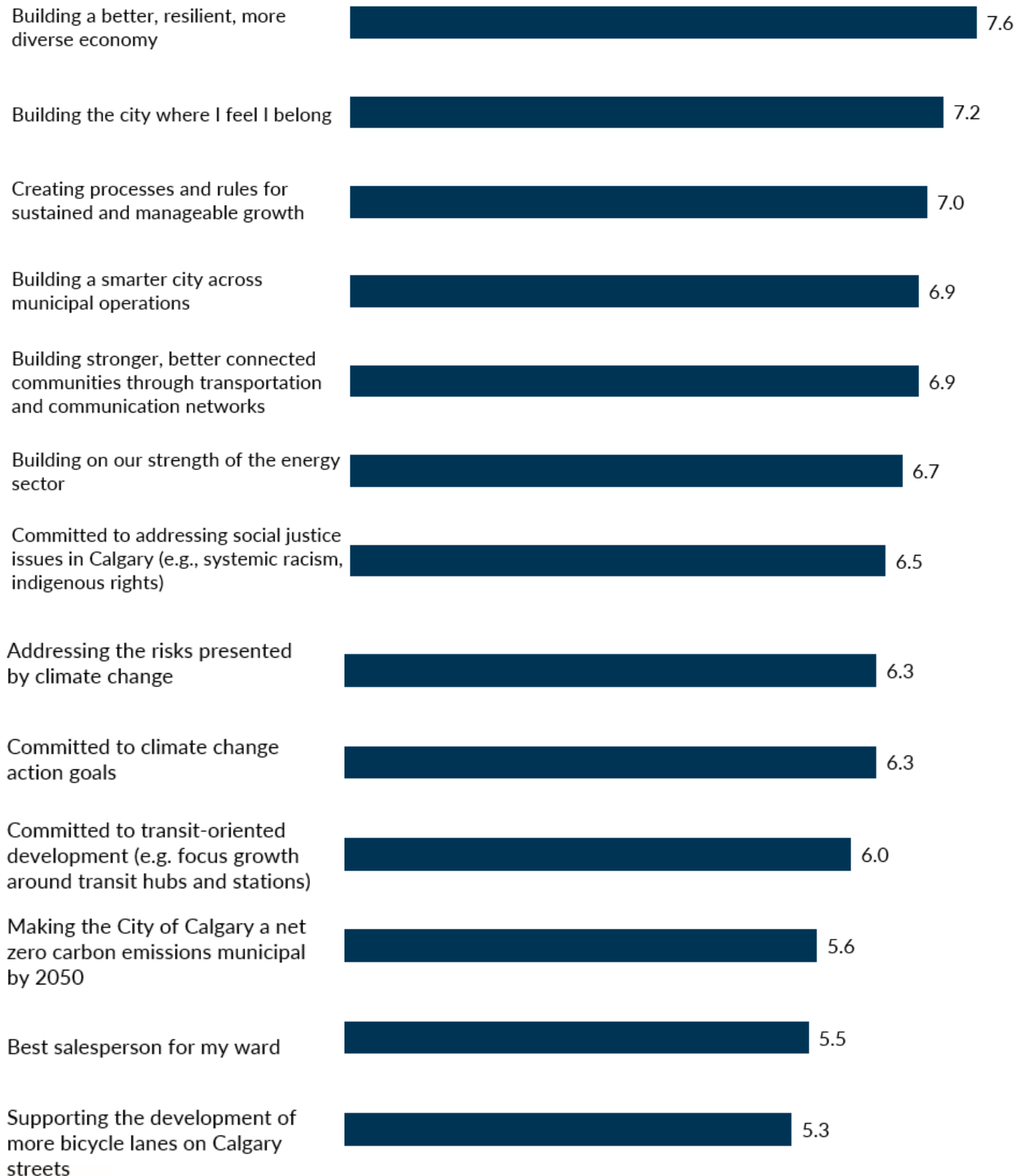
There is a desire to transition from fossil fuels with support from all levels of government. There is a need for any economic plan to have climate action embedded in and at the forefront of it.



Brian Singh, data science and behavioural economist of ZincTank.

Calgary is at a crossroads

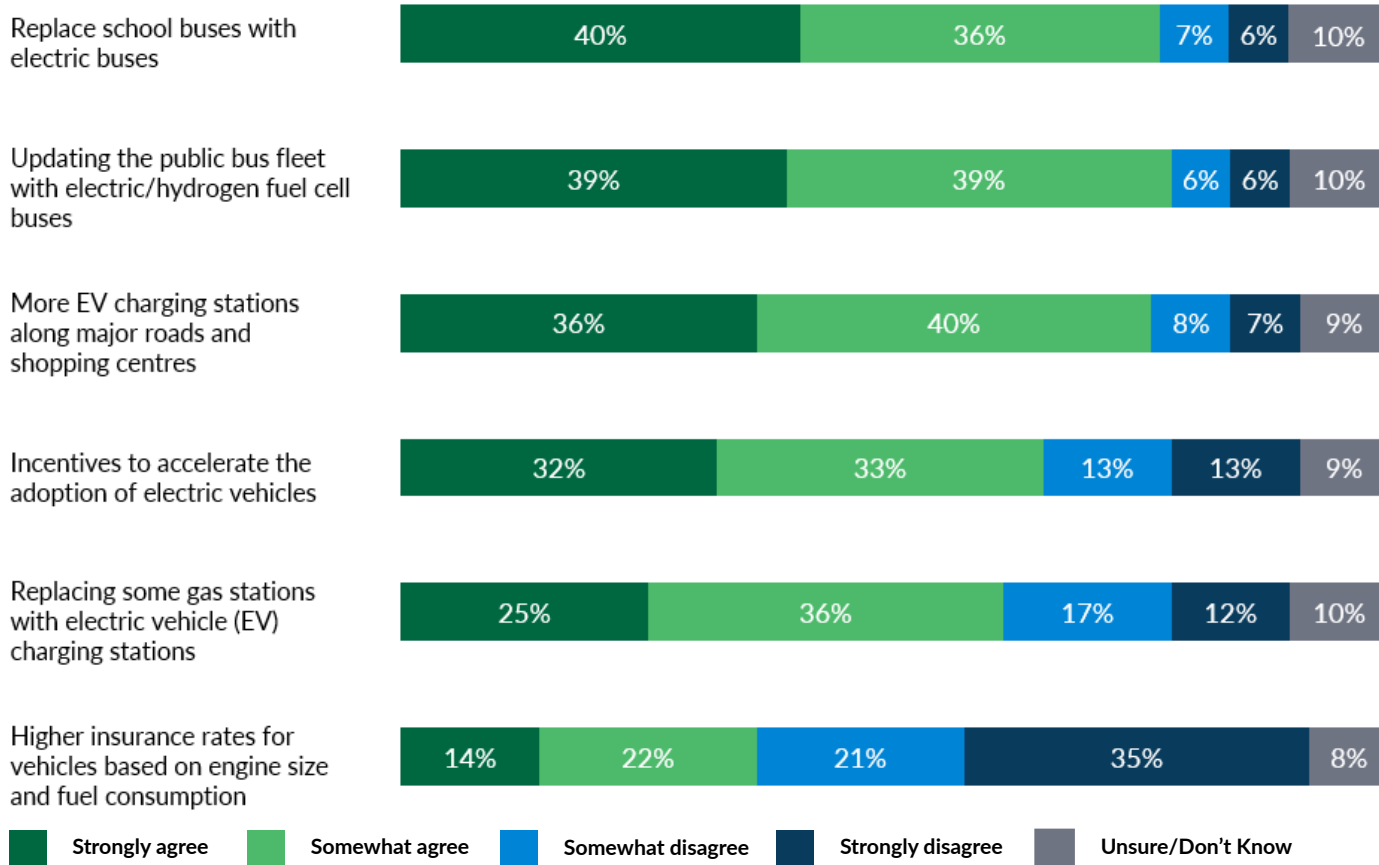
“In voting for a ward candidate, voters have to consider their qualities, platform and positions on various issues. How important are the following in considering who you intend on voting for as the representative of the ward where you live?” (Rating Scale: 0 to 10)



4. Calgarians support measures to get more electric vehicles on roads

A considerable majority of Calgarians support policy measures that would help grow electric vehicle adoption in the city. Three-quarters (76 percent) support more electric vehicle charging stations along major roads and shopping centres, while two-thirds (65 percent) support electric vehicle incentives.

“Which of the following would you support as Calgary considers the future of its transportation choices and infrastructure?”



“ A majority of Calgarians do not want to continually choose between the environment and long-term economic sustainability and prosperity. They want environmental actions that solve multiple challenges at once.

That’s why our [Climate Innovation Fund](#) will support the City of Calgary’s leadership on climate action with programs that focus on retrofitting existing buildings, installing solar, and electrifying transportation; both creating jobs and accelerating emissions reductions.

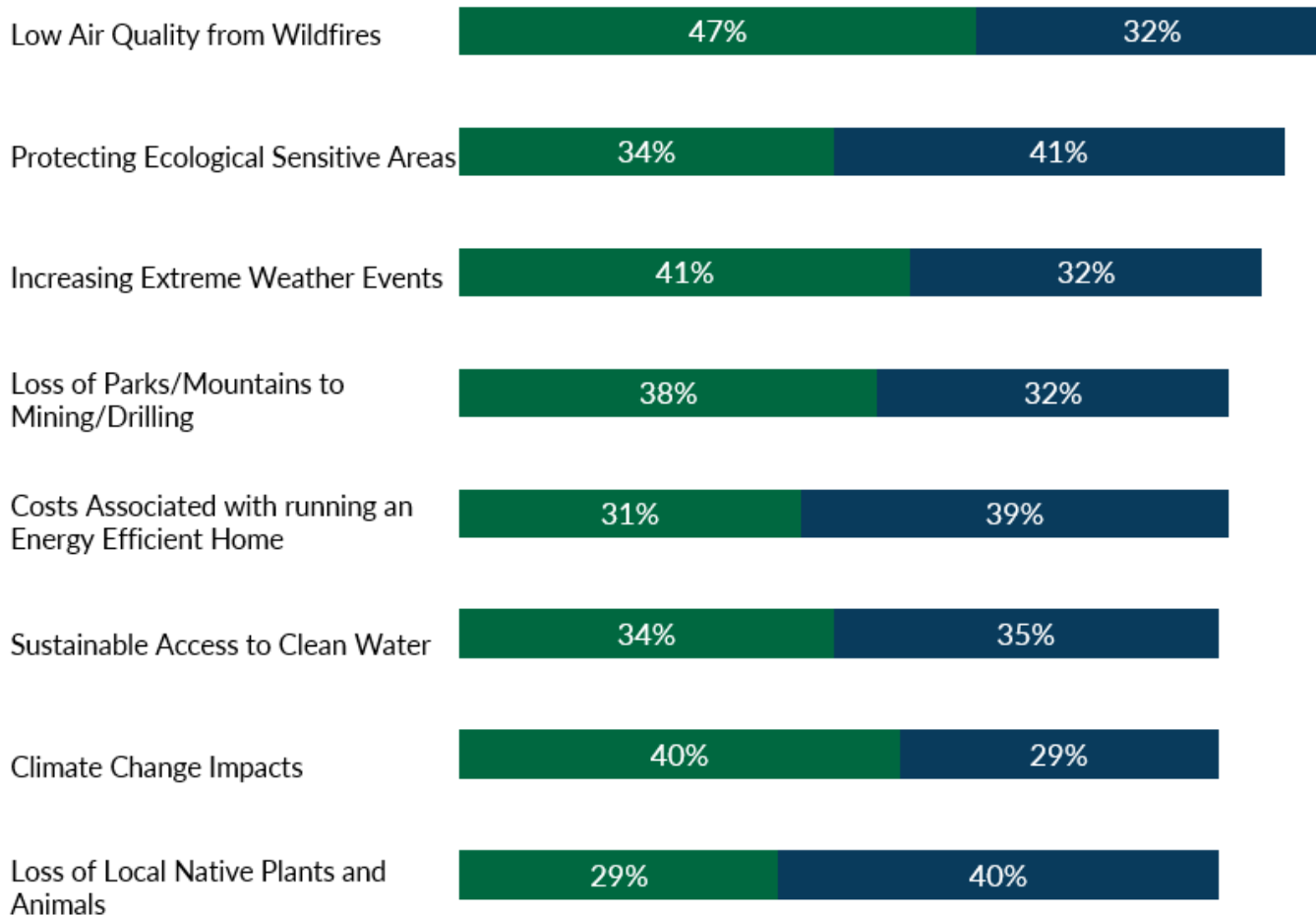


Pat Letizia, President and CEO, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

5. Environmental impacts are affecting Calgary

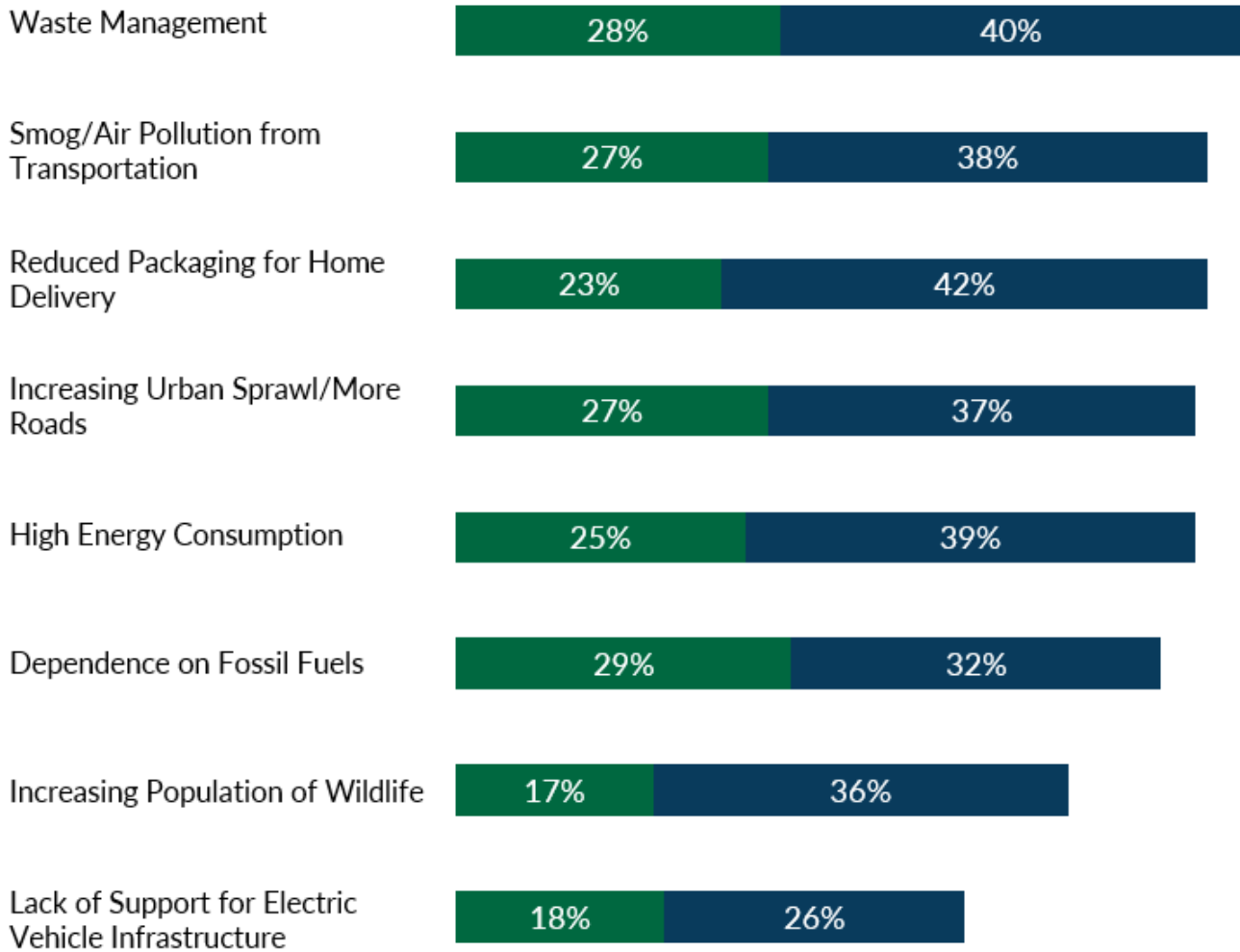
Calgary has proven time and time again that it is a resilient city. Calgary has experienced extreme natural disasters caused by climate change, such as floods, intense hail storms, tornadoes, and most recently, a heat dome. Calgarians recognize, some now more than ever, that Calgary needs to do more to address climate change to avoid more of these, and worse, environmental impacts.

At this time, how concerned are you about the following environmental issues in and affecting Calgary?



Calgary is at a crossroads

“At this time, how concerned are you about the following environmental issues in and affecting Calgary?”



Conclusion

Calgary sits at a crossroads. Do we continue to slowly tackle climate change, or do we take an integrated approach to solve the multiple challenges we face all at once? The future could be a low-carbon, resilient economy that also takes care of our environment and our people. The climate emergency is a complex problem, affecting the environment, the economy, our health and wellbeing —every aspect of human society.

What path do the citizens of Calgary want to embark on? This central question formed the basis of the polling that Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Calgary Climate Hub, and Clean Energy Canada embarked on.

People are constantly being bombarded with increasingly dire stories about climate-related floods, fires, and crop disasters. Some governments, organizations, and companies are starting to take strong action on mitigating and adapting to the climate emergency, but we need more.

It is clear that Calgary is ready to embrace economic diversification to secure a prosperous future for themselves, their families, and communities. They see addressing climate change as an opportunity to secure a better future for everyone.

It is the consortium's hope that the responses to the survey inform economic and environmental priorities, practices and policies of municipal, provincial and federal policy makers and electoral candidates in the months and years to come for Calgary.



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