

# RESIDENT SURVEY FINDINGS | 2025



**METRO  
WATER  
RECOVERY®**

*Prepared by* CORONA INSIGHTS



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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



Corona Insights was retained by Metro Water Recovery to assess the awareness, attitudes, and values of residents they serve. These results will inform future community engagement and communications and may serve as a baseline to track changes in awareness and perceptions over time. To help with these goals, we collected the following information:

- > Awareness and perceptions of Metro Water Recovery
- > Knowledge, interests, and values around environment and water-related issues
- > Communication preferences

Surveys were completed in April and May of 2025. A total of 693 usable responses were received, including 581 complete and 112 partial responses. Sample sizes varied by question due to skip logic and attrition and are thus noted throughout the detailed findings.

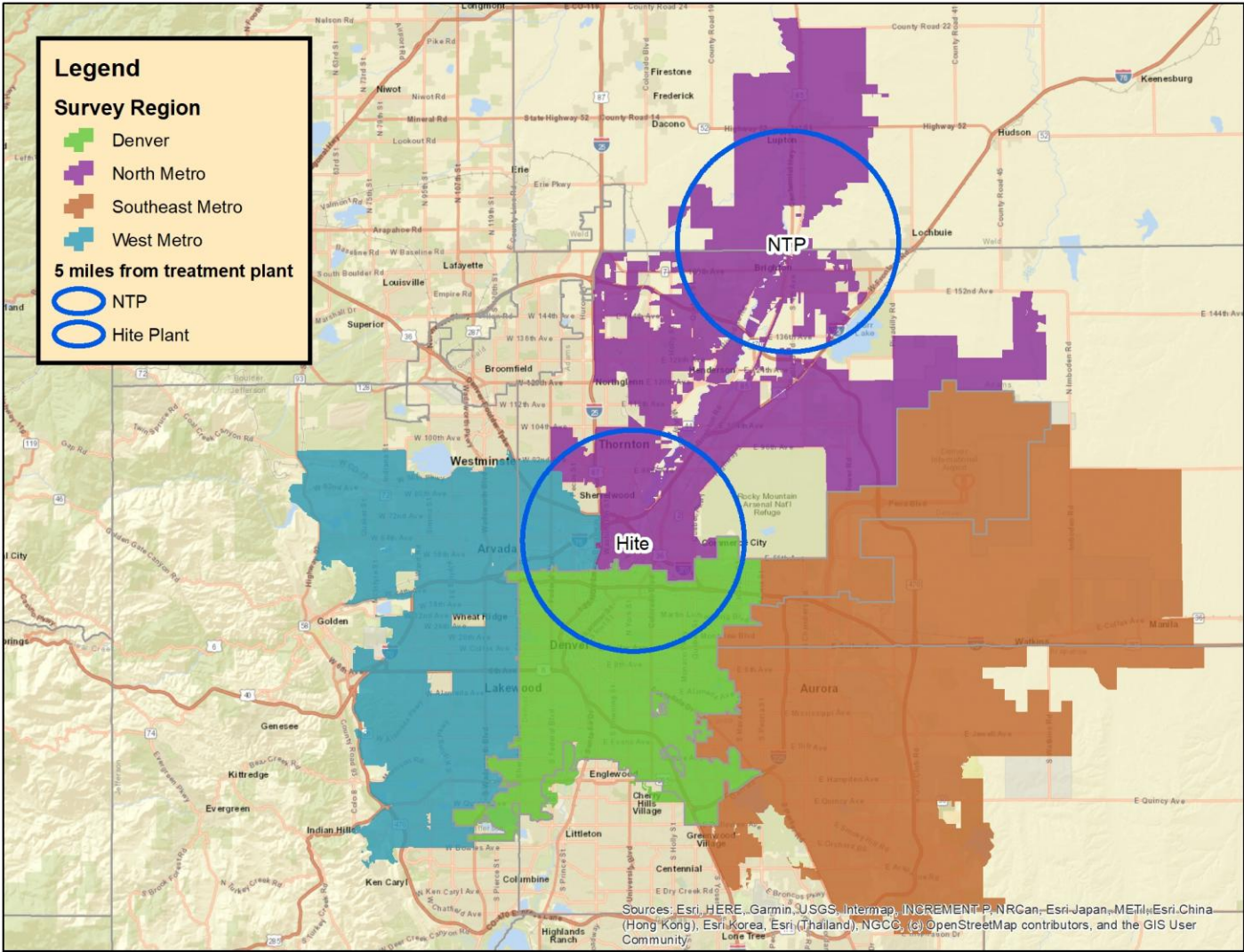
## Methodology

- > Survey invitations were mailed to 15,000 residents in the Metro Water Recovery service area (535 undelivered/returned). Invitation letters provided a link and QR code to access the survey online.
- > We received 693 usable responses in total, representing a 5% response rate.
- > The survey took a median of 10 minutes and was offered and taken in both English (94%) and Spanish (6%).

For more details on survey methodology, see the [Appendix](#).

# SURVEY REGIONS AND PLANT PROXIMITY

The map at right shows the various region definitions used in this study for both sampling and reporting.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

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The summary of resident demographics below provides context to the findings herein by describing who was included in this study.

Total responses: 693

Plant Proximity		Race and Ethnicity		Age	
Within 5 miles of NTP Plant	9%	White or European American	66%	18-34	27%
Within 5 miles of Hite Plant	11%	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	25%	35-49	32%
Outside 5 miles of either plant	80%	Black or African American	7%	50-64	17%
Region		American Indian, Alaska Native or Native American	5%	65+	23%
Denver	23%	Asian	3%	Education	
North Metro	21%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	High School or less	24%
Southeast Metro	33%	Other	2%	Some college or Associate degree	33%
West Metro	23%	Language Spoken at Home		Bachelor's degree or higher	42%
Gender		English	90%	Annual Household Income	
Female	51%	Spanish	16%	\$0 to \$49,999	28%
Male	47%	Other	5%	\$50,000 to \$99,999	31%
Nonbinary/ prefer to self-describe	2%	Number of Adults (18+) in Home		\$100,000 to \$149,999	19%
Years in Current Home		1	12%	\$150,000 or more	22%
Under 5	40%	2	47%	Children in Home (Under 18)	
5-20	41%	3	13%	Yes (one or more)	63%
21+	19%	4+	18%	No	37%

# 01

**Awareness of Metro Water Recovery was similar if not higher compared to 2021.** About a fifth of residents in the Metro service area (18%) had heard of Metro and under 5% knew more than “a little.” Awareness was about the same as in 2021 (15% had heard of Metro). Those in North Metro and those living within a 5-mile radius of either plant had higher awareness.

*Read more on pages [16](#) and [17](#).*



Among the fifth of residents who had heard of Metro Water Recovery, opinions were roughly half positive and half neutral. Encouragingly, positive opinions of Metro tended to go along with more familiarity with Metro, suggesting that the main barrier to positivity is simply awareness, rather than any substantive concerns. Accordingly, associations with Metro were also positive or neutral with key words like “water,” “conservation,” and “clean.”

*Read more on pages [18](#), [19](#), [20](#), and [21](#).*





**Across domains, trust and positivity were moderate to high.** Among those who knew enough about Metro to comment, most residents trusted Metro at least moderately in all domains (e.g., to make sound, scientific decisions and properly maintain infrastructure) and had at least somewhat positive beliefs about Metro (e.g., that Metro protects public health and does the right thing for the community). The least positive response was to Metro providing accurate information to the community (slightly more disagreement – 9%) and being a good employer (most did not know enough to comment).

*Read more on pages [22](#) and [24](#).*



**Residents in the Metro service area had strong values and concerns related to water.** Most residents believed efficient water use is important (91%) and that they have a personal responsibility to protect our water (84%). In addition, their top priority for Metro was to “protect and enhance the environment.” Moreover, most were at least moderately concerned about local river/stream water quality (67%), water availability (62%), and drinking water quality (60%). A greater proportion were “highly” concerned about each of these water concerns than about the local economy or crime.

*Read more on pages [26](#), [30](#), and [31](#).*





**Self-reported knowledge about wastewater was varied.** Most residents thought they knew a lot about what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet (64%) and almost all thought they knew at least some about these rules (90%). Most residents also thought at least some about what happens to wastewater (70%) and reported knowing at least a little about what happens (73%). Fewer reported knowing at least some (44%) or a lot (10%) about what happens to wastewater.

*Read more on pages [31](#) and [32](#).*



Promising forms of outreach depend on the groups you intend to target, but may include online channels like articles, advertisements, and social media posts (e.g., Facebook), as well as events like parks and recreation events, neighborhood events, and county fairs. The online channels above were the most common forms of past interaction with Metro (each 8-9%). The community events above were the most attended (31-37%). That said, for non-emergency updates and information, residents prefer direct mailing or flyers (41%) or email (31%).

*Read more on pages [35](#), [36](#), [37](#), and [38](#).*





Outreach to young (under 35), lower-income (under \$50K), and Hispanic residents appears to have been particularly **effective**. Each of these groups was more likely to have interacted with Metro in the past (young 35%, lower-income 35%, Hispanic 37%, vs. 25% overall), most often through seeing a social media post or online advertisement. Each of these groups also reported more positive beliefs and trust in Metro across domains (e.g., to be transparent, protect public health, provide reliable service and information). Compared to other segments, these groups also had fewer water-related concerns. Notably, this was not just a generalized optimism or trust, as these groups had similar or lower trust in other sources (e.g., scientific publications).

*Read more on pages [23](#), [25](#), [29](#), [30](#), [35](#), and [37](#).*





## DETAILED FINDINGS



## SECTION 1

# **AWARENESS & PERCEPTIONS**

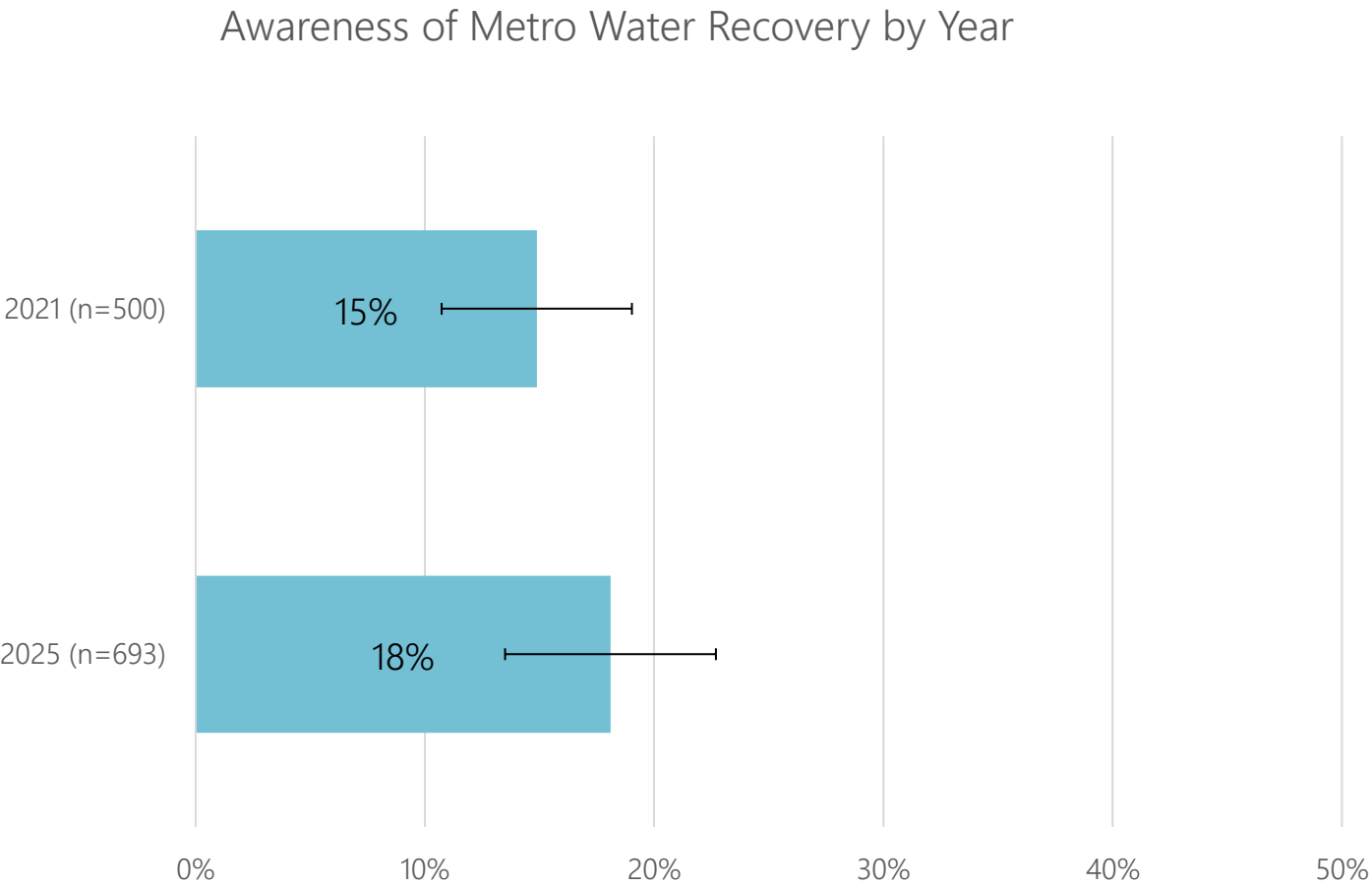
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# Awareness levels were similar from 2021 to 2025.

- > The proportion who had heard of Metro Water Recovery in 2025 (18.10% ± 4.60%) was trending in a positive direction but not statistically different compared to awareness in 2021 (14.88% ± 4.15%).

*Note:* Statistics above are estimated with 99% confidence (same as in 2021). 2021 estimates were provided by Metro Water Recovery from research administered by 9thWonder.

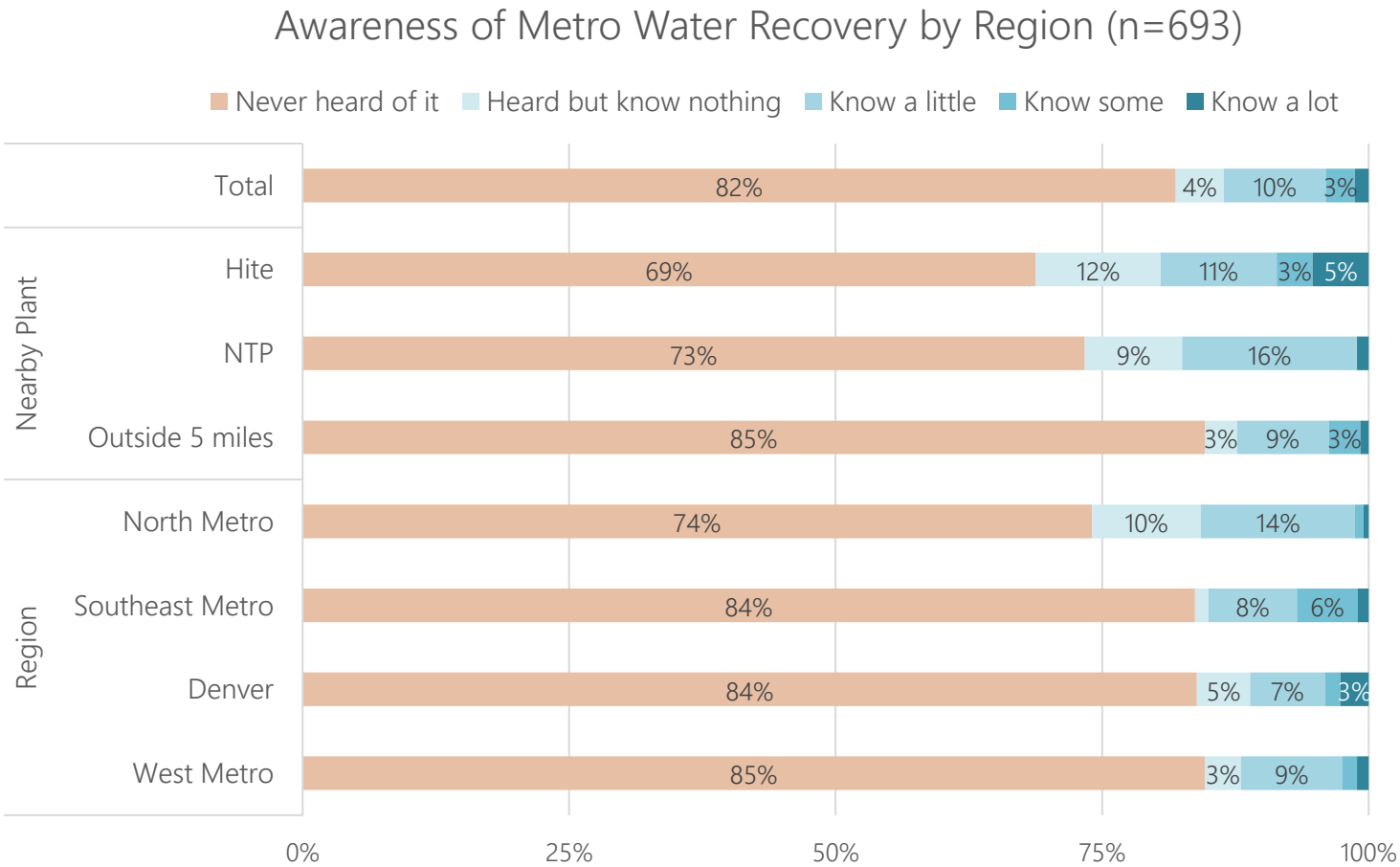
*Error bars:* The bars on the graph represent the variability in the measurement of awareness. They show how much awareness might fluctuate around the estimated value. In other words, the error bars help to show the range within which the true value of awareness might lie.





# Awareness was higher in North Metro and near either plant.

- > As seen in the top bar to the right, 82% of service area residents had never heard of Metro Water Recovery. About a fifth (18%) had some awareness, as depicted in shades of blue, with 1% reporting they know “a lot.”
- > Awareness differed by region, however, with greater awareness within a 5-mile radius of either Hite plant (31%) or NTP plant (27%). Those near Hite plant were especially likely to know a lot (5%) compared to others (1%). Awareness was also greater in North Metro (26%) compared to other regions (16%).



Q1. Prior to today, had you heard of Metro Water Recovery?

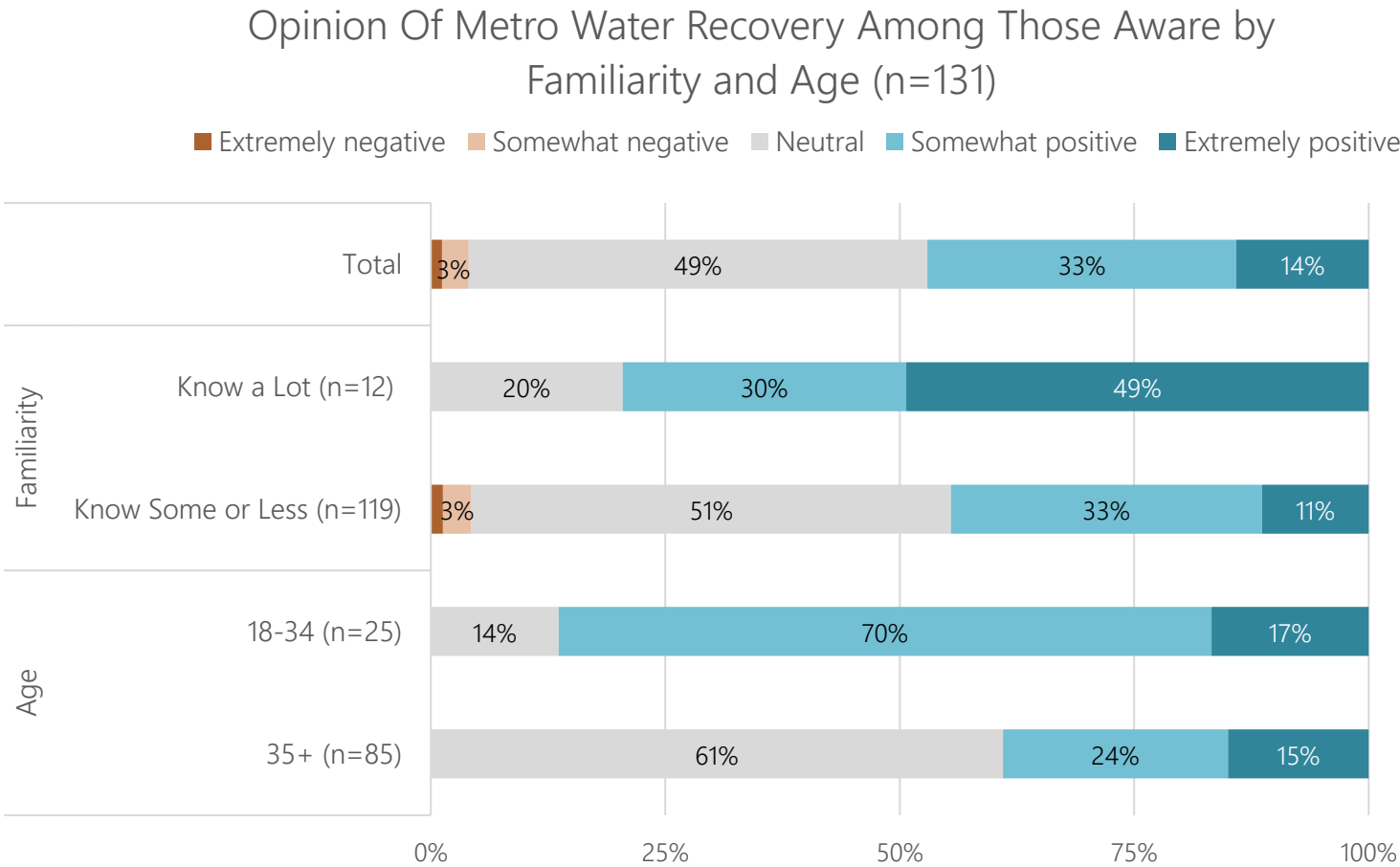
Q2. [Among those aware] How much would you say you know about Metro Water Recovery?

Among those aware, about half of residents had a positive opinion and half had a neutral opinion.

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- > As seen in the top bar to the right, 47% of residents who were aware of Metro Water Recovery had a positive opinion and 49% had a neutral opinion. Only 4% (n=2) had a negative opinion.
- > Greater familiarity with Metro Water Recovery was associated with more positive opinions. Among those who knew a lot about Metro Water Recovery, 80% had a positive opinion, compared to 44% of others.
- > Opinion also varied by age, with those under 35 having more positive opinions (87%) compared those 35 and older (39%).



# Among those aware, residents appreciated the clean water and positive environmental impact.

Respondents were asked to explain their opinion of Metro Water Recovery. Responses were coded into thematic categories, as seen to the right.

- > Most residents had a positive opinion due to appreciating clean water (42%) or the environmental impact (32%). Other common responses were good service and positive personal experiences. A few sample positive responses are included below.
- > Only one person responded with a negative opinion, noting the smell nearby the facility.



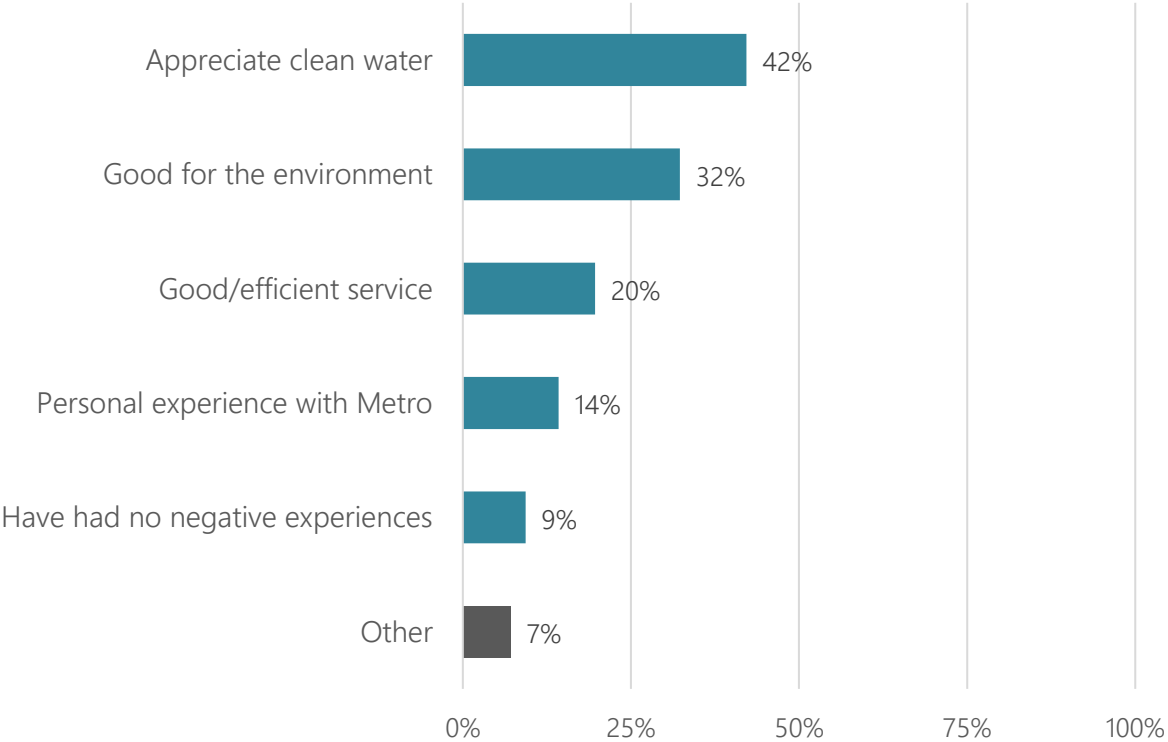
*Because I hear they do great work and take care of the environment.*  
—North Metro resident, near NTP plant

*Municipal water recycling is pretty much a necessity in a world where freshwater reserves are depleting, so any effort towards that is good news to me.*  
—West Metro resident, outside 5 miles of either plant

*I think that water treatment facilities are highly important for the health and well being of the communities that they serve.*  
—West Metro resident, outside 5 miles of either plant



Reasons for Positive Opinions of Metro Water Recovery - Open-End, Coded (n=48)







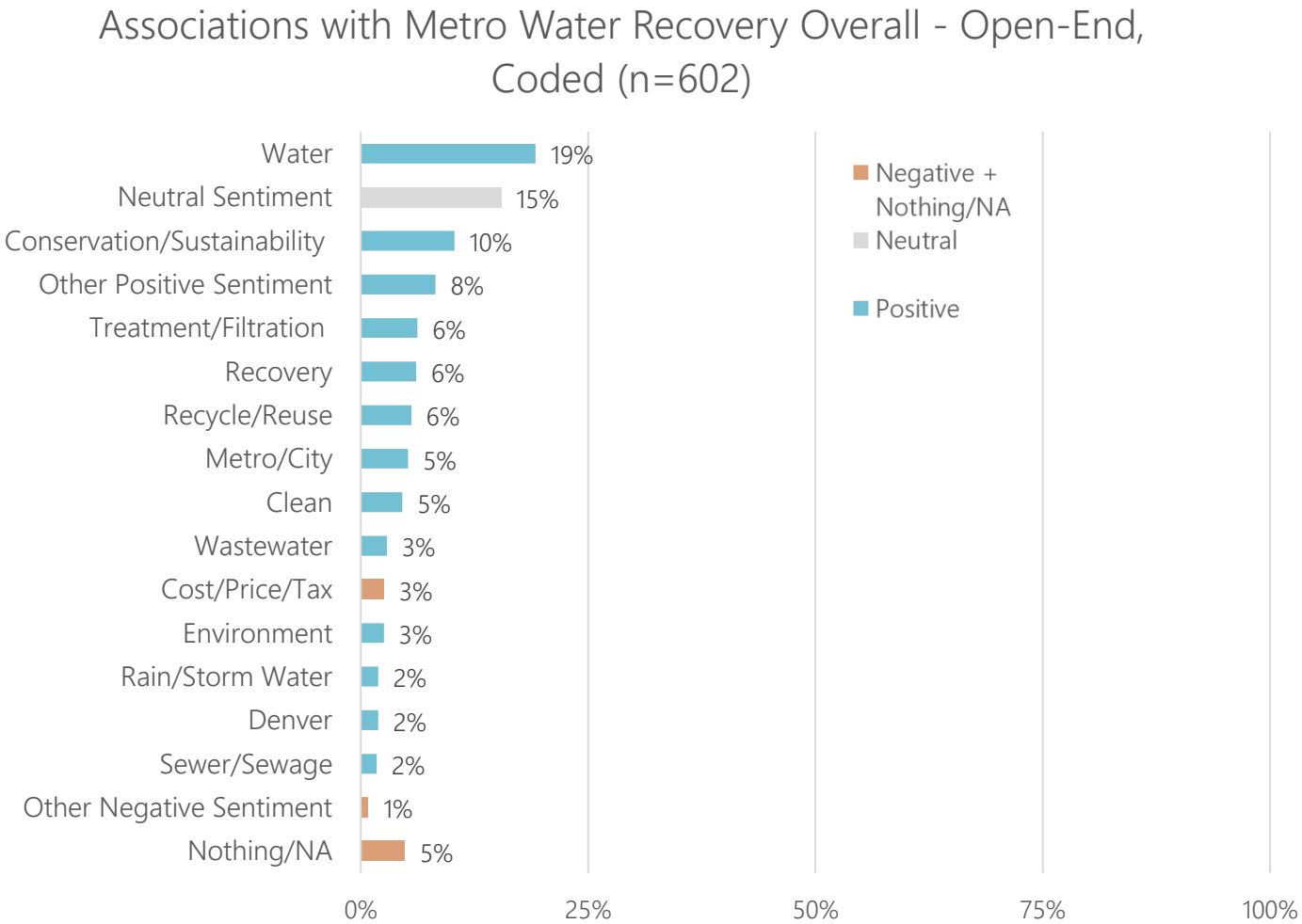
# Further analysis of associations also revealed mostly positive themes.

Respondents were asked for three words that “Metro Water Recovery” calls to mind. Responses were coded into thematic categories, as seen to the right.

- > As seen to the right, the most common themes were words related to water (19%), neutral sentiments (15%), words related to conservation or sustainability (10%), other positive sentiments (8%), and words related to treatment or filtration (6%). Negative sentiments, such as words related to cost or taxes were uncommon (2%).

Not shown:

- > Those more familiar with Metro Water Recovery were more likely to list other positive sentiments (15%) compared to those less familiar (2%).
- > Hispanic residents were also more likely to list other positive sentiments (14%) compared to other residents (3%).



Among those who knew enough to say, most trusted Metro Water Recovery at least moderately across domains.

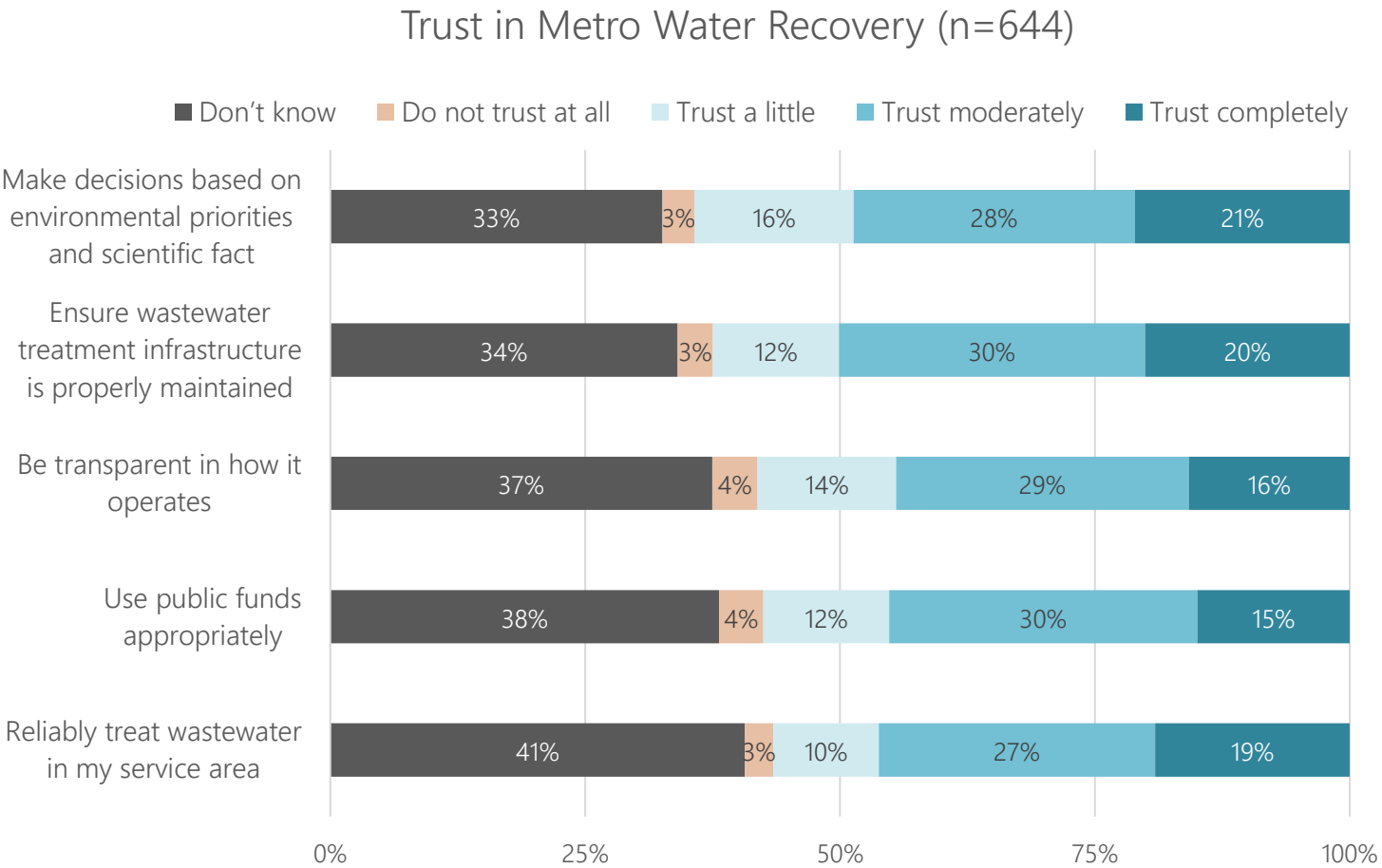
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- > Aside from those who reported not knowing (33-41%), the most common level of trust across domains was moderate (27-30%) followed by complete (15-21%). Relatively few trusted a little (10-16%) or not at all (3-4%).
- > Trust was very similar across domains, but was slightly higher for making decisions based on environment/science and ensuring wastewater treatment infrastructure is properly maintained.

Not shown:

- > West Metro residents were more likely to trust Metro Water Recovery “not at all” to make decisions based on environmental priorities and scientific fact (8%) compared to residents of other regions (2%).

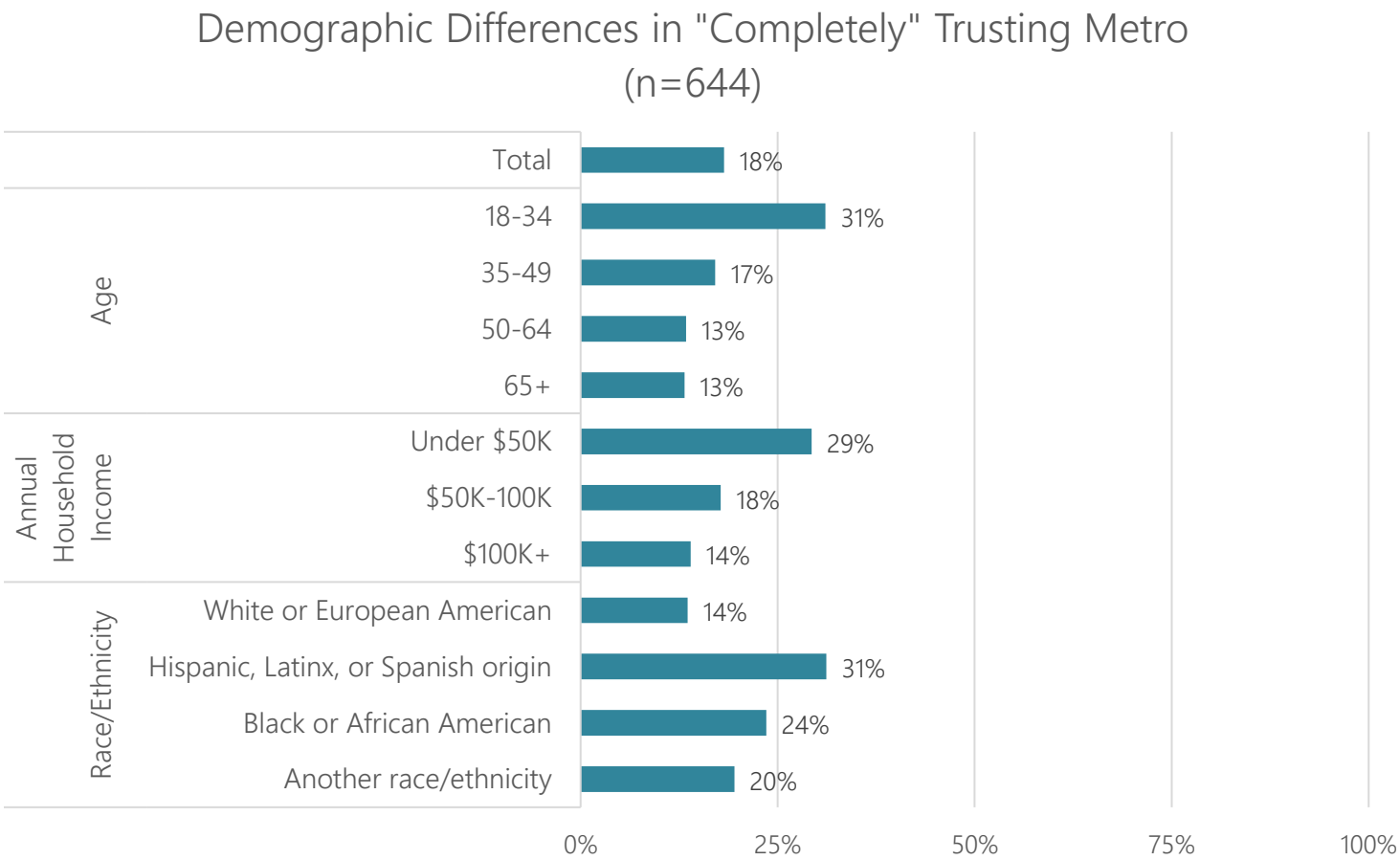




Younger, lower-income, and Hispanic residents reported greater trust in Metro across domains.

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- > Younger (under 35), lower-income (under \$50K), and Hispanic residents had greater trust in Metro across each domain of trust (e.g., making sound, scientific decisions, properly maintaining infrastructure—see previous slide for full domain details). As seen to the right, when averaging across domains, the proportion who “completely” trusted Metro was around 30% for each of these groups compared to the overall average of 18%.
- > Those who were more familiar with Metro (knew at least “a little”) were also more likely to completely trust Metro (averaging 33%) compared to those who were less familiar (averaging 16%).



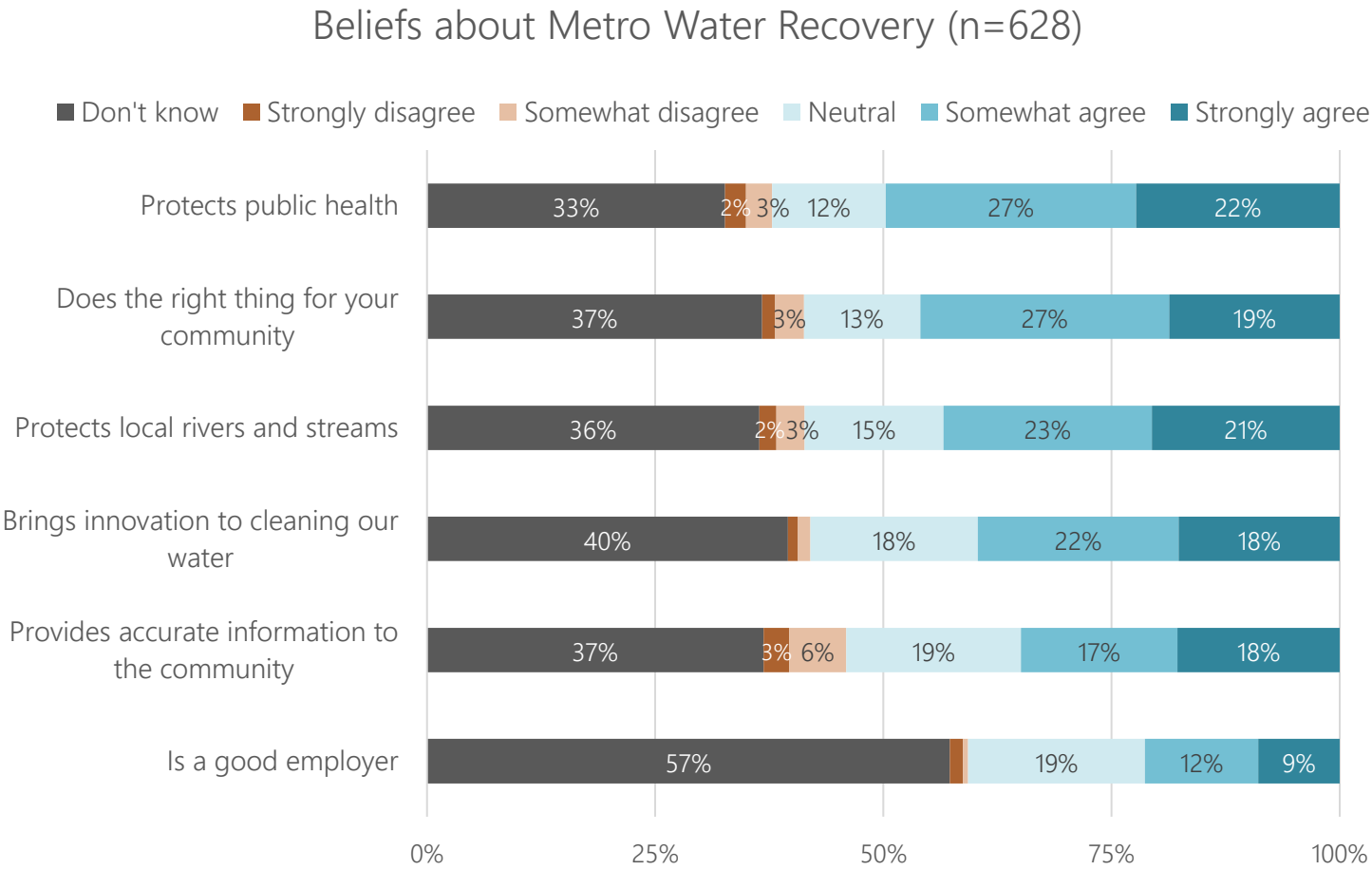
# Residents most believed that Metro Water Recovery protects public health.

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- > Half of residents (49%) agreed that Metro protects public health and most others (33%) didn't know. Similar but slightly lower proportions agreed to other positive statements about Metro—except for Metro being a good employer. To this statement, most residents simply did not know enough to comment (57%).
- > In most cases, very few actively disagreed with the statements (5% or less). A slightly larger proportion, however, disagreed that Metro provides accurate information to the community (9%).

Not shown:

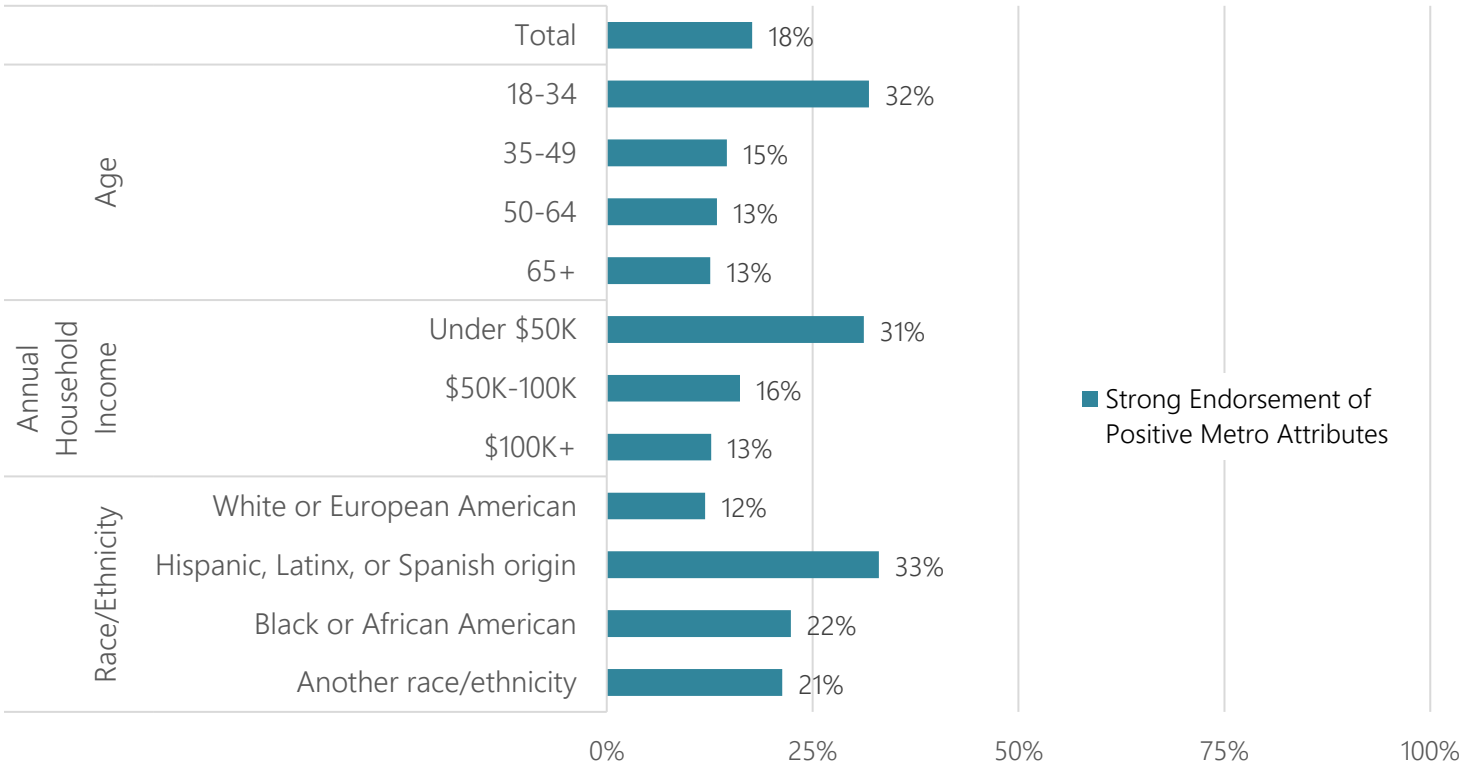
- > Strong disagreement that Metro provides accurate information to the community was more common among West Metro residents (7%) than residents of other regions (2%).



# Again, younger, lower-income, and Hispanic residents showed greater positivity toward Metro across domains.

- > As with trust, younger (under 35), lower-income (under \$50K), and Hispanic residents endorsed more positive attributes of Metro across nearly all domains, (e.g., protects public health, does the right thing—see previous slide for full domain details). As seen to the right, when averaging across domains, the proportion who “strongly” endorsed each positive Metro attribute was just over 30% for each of these groups compared to the overall average of 18%.
- > Those who were more familiar with Metro (knew at least “a little”) were also more likely to strongly endorse positive Metro attributes (averaging 31%) compared to those who were less familiar (averaging 16%).

Demographic Differences in Strongly Endorsing Positive Metro Attributes (n=628)



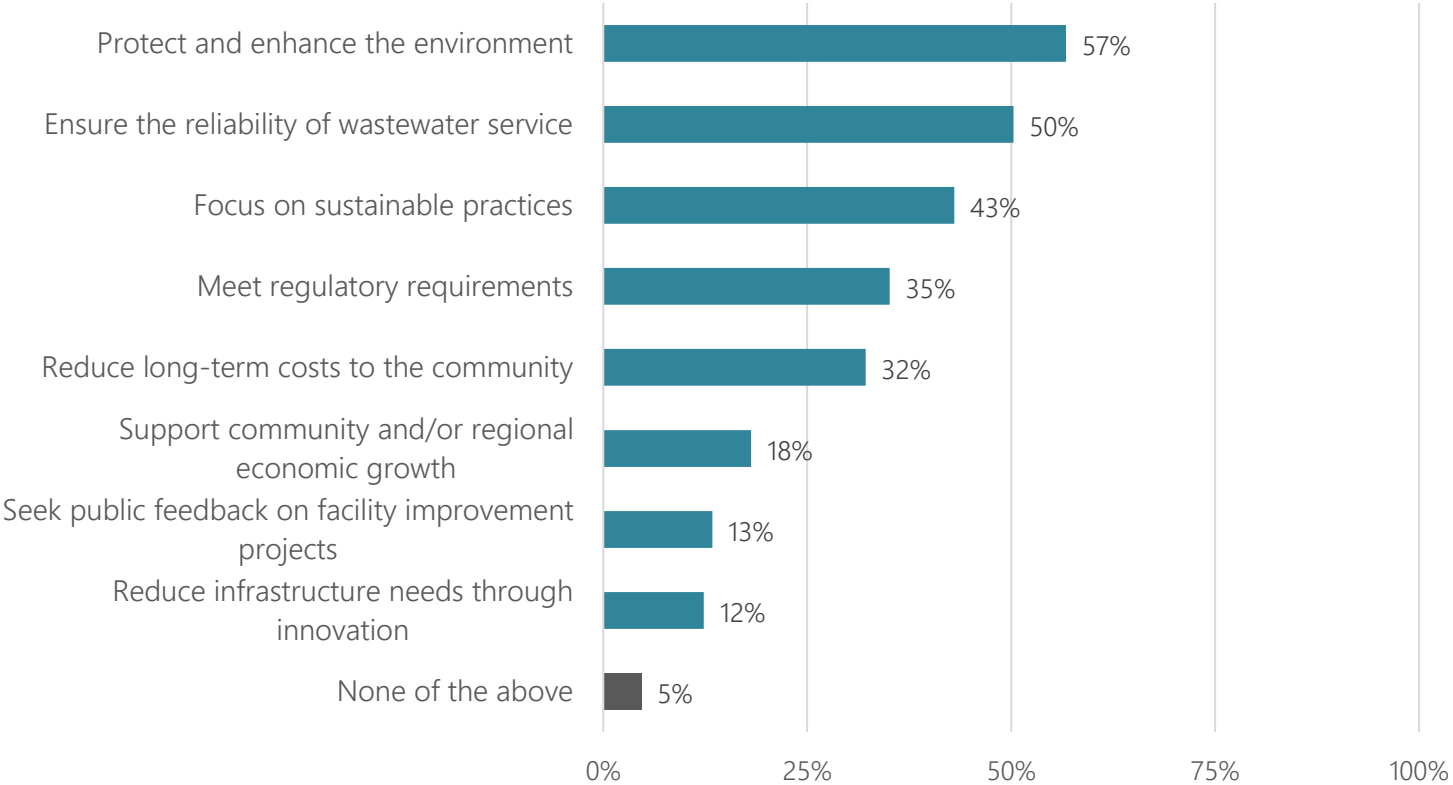
# Most residents saw protecting the environment as a top priority for Metro Water Recovery. CORONA INSIGHTS

- > In their top three priorities, most residents selected protecting the environment (57%) and ensuring the reliability of wastewater service (50%). Focusing on sustainable practices was a close third (43%), e.g., investing in green energy and reducing energy consumption.
- > Seeking public feedback and reducing infrastructure needs were least commonly selected (13% and 12% respectively).

Not shown:

- > Women were more likely to identify sustainable practices as a top priority (55%) compared to men (35%).

Perceived Priorities for the Next Twenty Years (n=618)



Q8. Based on what you know about Metro Water Recovery today, what do you think Metro Water Recovery's priorities should be in the next 20 years? Please select up to three that you feel should be their top priorities.



## SECTION 2

# **INFORMATION & VALUES**

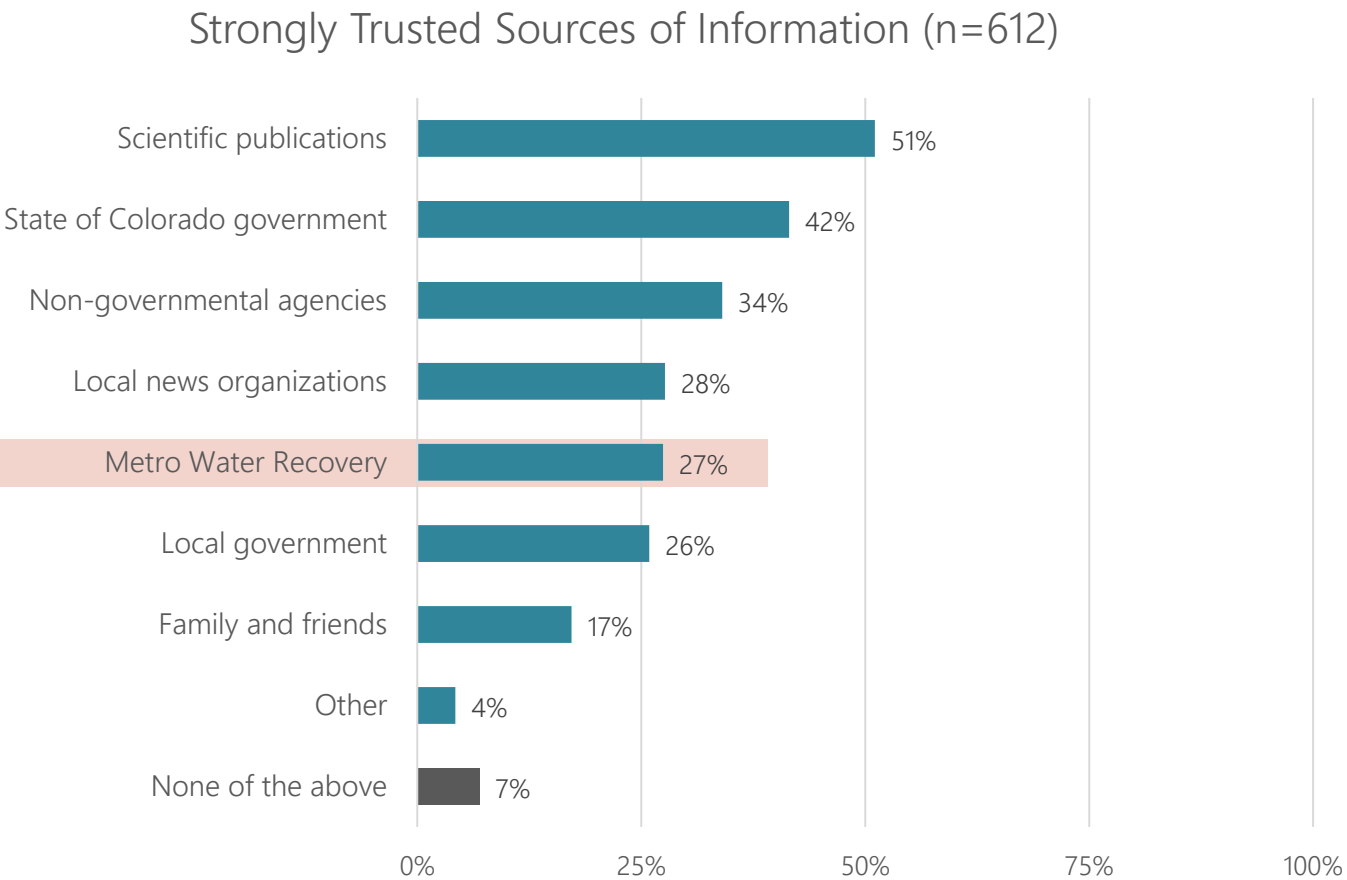
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# As a source of information, trust in Metro Water Recovery was on par with local news organizations and local government.

- > The top three most trusted sources of information about water and environmental issues were scientific publications (51%), State of Colorado government (42%), and non-governmental agencies, such as Sierra Club or the Environmental Defense Fund (34%). Trust in Metro Water Recovery was lower, on average (27%), although this was largely accounted for by low awareness.

Not shown:

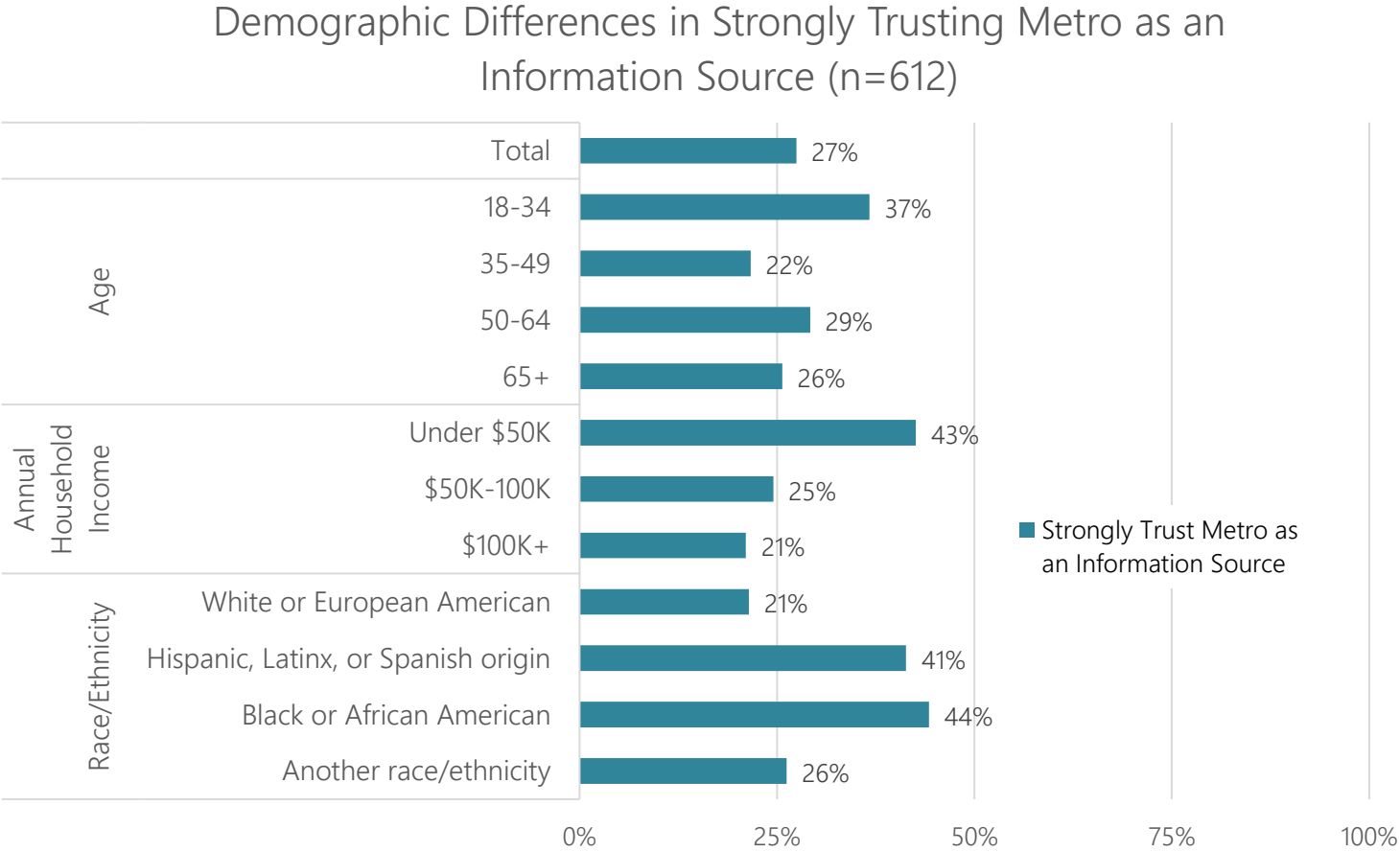
- > Indeed, trust of Metro Water Recovery was higher among those who knew at least “a little” about Metro (40%) compared to those less familiar (26%).



Q9. Which of the following sources of information do you strongly trust for information about water and environmental issues in your community?  
Please select all that apply.

# Younger, lower-income, Hispanic, and Black residents also trusted Metro more as an information source.

- > Strong trust of Metro Water Recovery as an information source was higher among younger (37%), lower-income (43%), Hispanic (41%), and Black (44%) residents, compared to 27% overall.
- > Notably, these groups were not generally more trusting. In fact, some had lower-than-average trust of certain sources, such as of scientific publications.



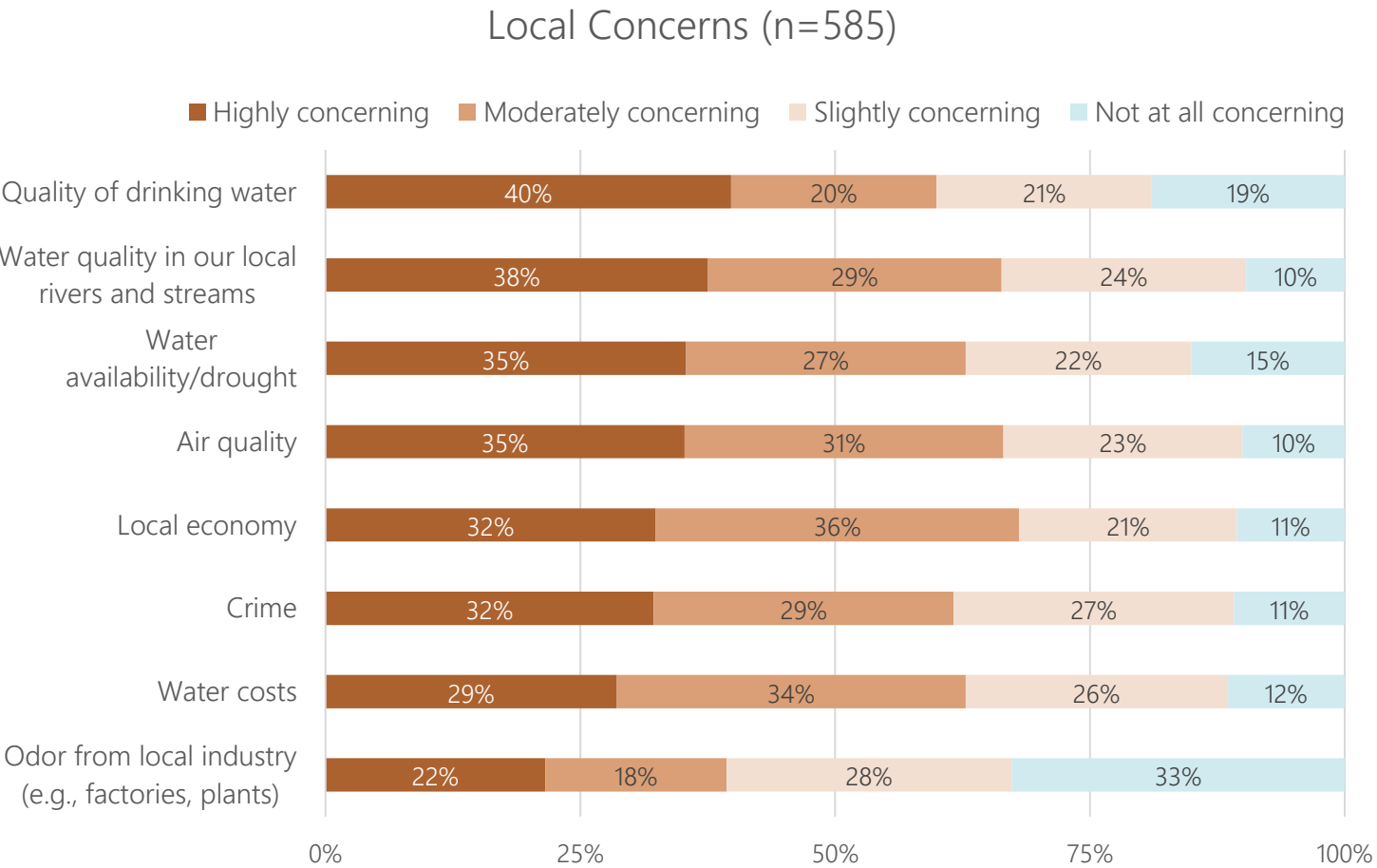


# Quality of drinking water was most often identified as “highly concerning.”

- > Water quality and availability were slightly more commonly considered “highly” concerning (35-40%) than the local economy (32%) or crime (32%). That said, local economy and water costs were most often considered “moderately” concerning (34-36%).
- > Odor was the least concerning (22% highly and 18% moderately concerned).

Not shown:

- > Hispanic and younger residents (under 35) found all water-related topics less concerning. Lower-income residents (under \$50K) were less concerned about local rivers and streams and water availability.
- > Those in North Metro (vs. other regions) were more concerned about the quality of drinking water and those outside of Denver (vs. within) were more concerned about water costs.



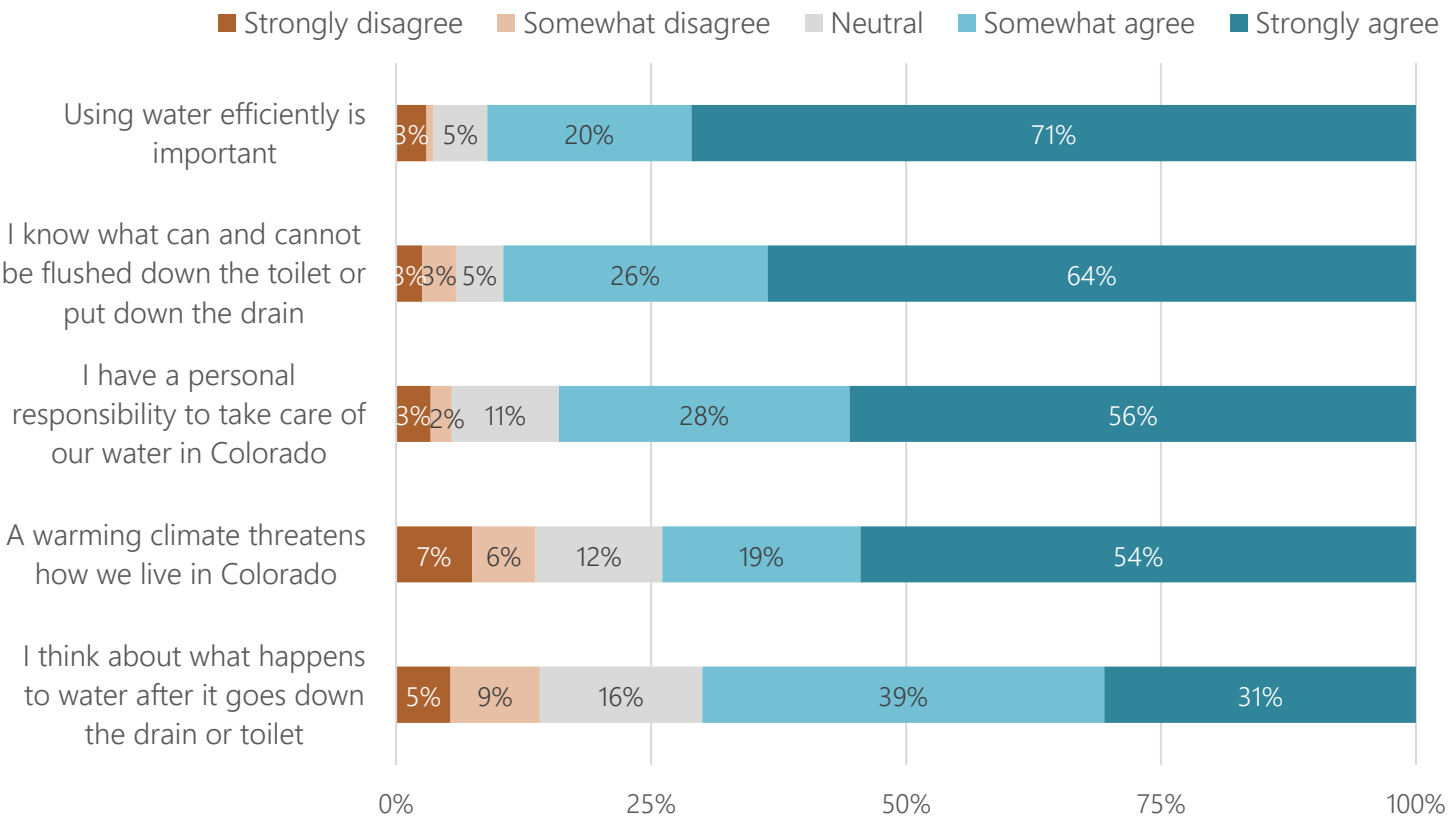
# Most residents strongly value water efficiency and protection.

- > Almost all residents believe efficient water use is at least somewhat important (91%), most strongly agreeing (71%). Relatedly, most feel strongly responsible for Colorado water (56%) and feel strongly threatened by a warming climate (54%).
- > Almost all residents report knowing at least somewhat about what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet or put down the drain (90%). Fewer but still most residents think at least somewhat about what happens to that water (70%).

Not shown:

- > Women and those with higher education (Bachelor’s or above) were more likely to feel Colorado is threatened by a warming climate.

Water-Related Beliefs and Awareness (n=597)



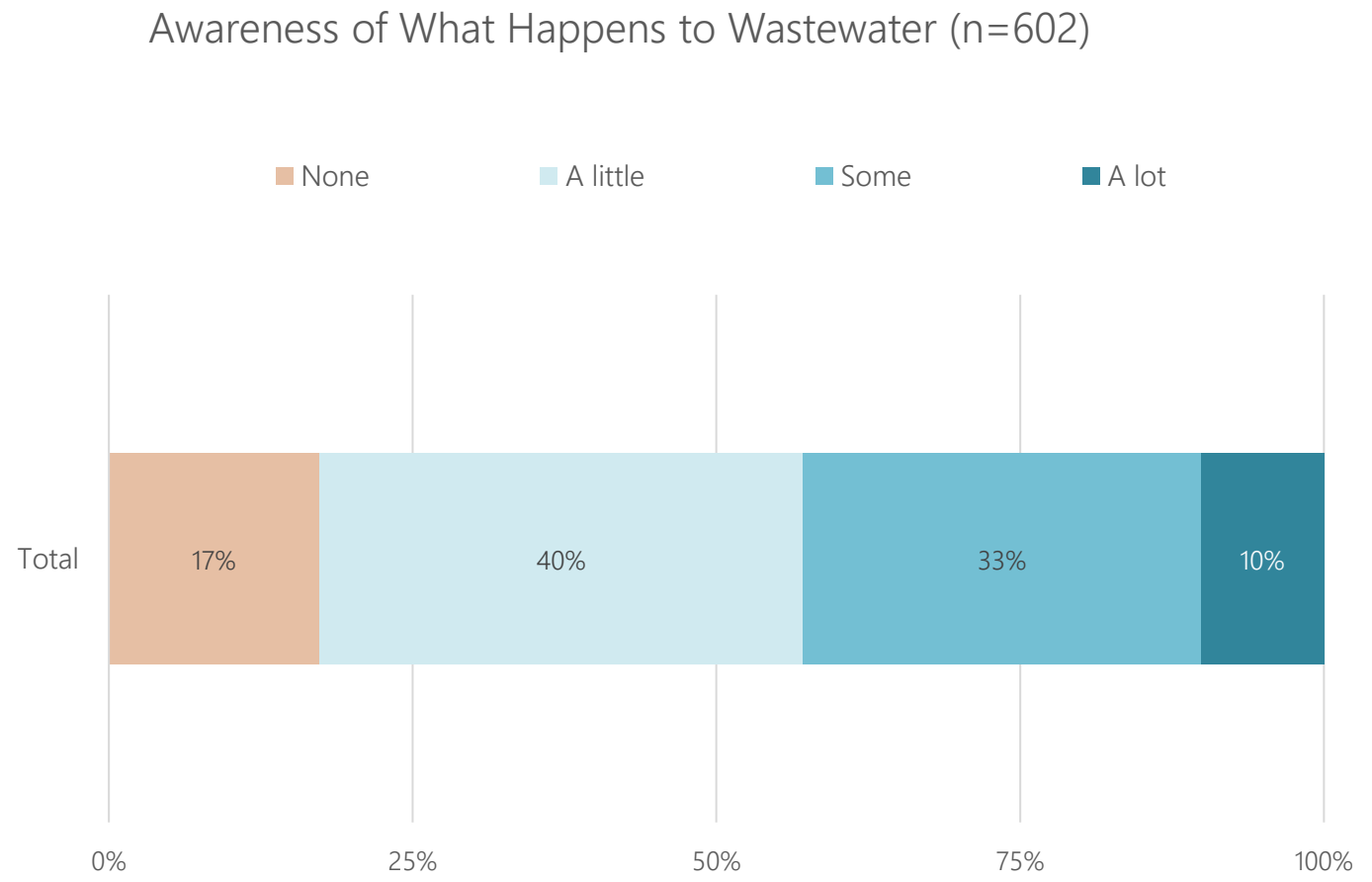
Residents reported varied levels of knowledge about what happens to wastewater.

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- > Most residents self-reported knowing at least “a little” about what happens to water after it goes down the drain or toilet (73%), fewer knew at least “some” (43%), and only 10% knew “a lot.”

Not shown:

- > Those who were more (vs. less) familiar with Metro Water Recovery and those who live close to the NTP Plant (vs. other regions) reported greater awareness about what happens to wastewater.
- > When asked simply as a yes/no question in 2021 (are you aware of what happens to water after...?), 50% said “yes”—which may be consistent with the present findings, but direct comparison is not possible.



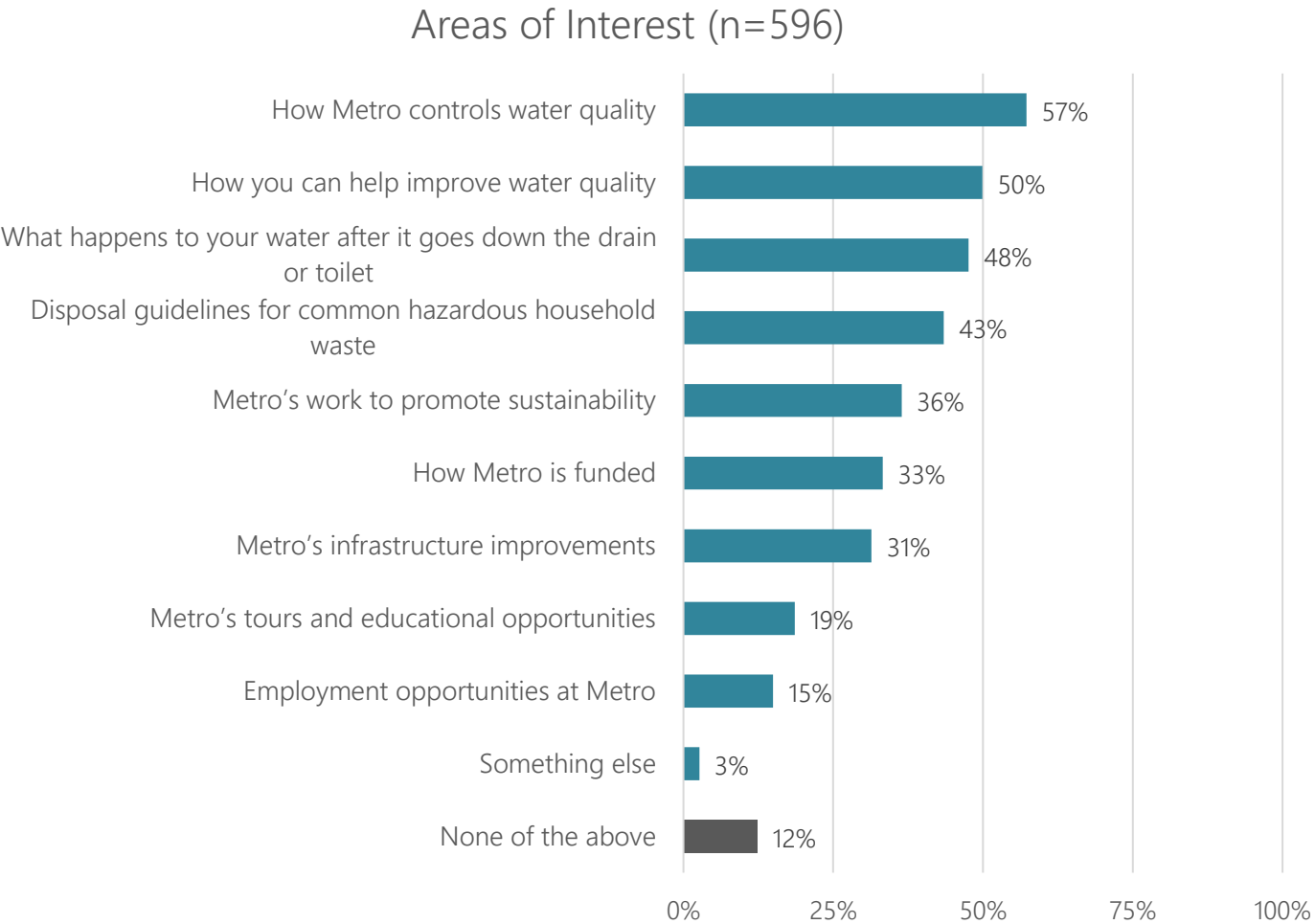
Residents were most interested in water quality topics, followed by disposal and operations topics.

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- > Residents were most interested in learning about water quality (how Metro controls water quality and how they can help) and disposal (what happens to wastewater and how to dispose of hazardous household waste). Residents were less interested in areas specific to Metro’s operations.
- > There was lower but still substantial interest in tours and educational opportunities (19%) and employment opportunities (15%).

Not shown:

- > Younger residents (under 35) were more interested in employment opportunities at Metro (28%), compared to older residents (11%).
- > White residents were more interested in disposal guidelines (52%) compared to residents of color (31%).





## SECTION 3

# COMMUNICATIONS

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The most common interactions with Metro were seeing an article,  
an online advertisement, or a social media post.

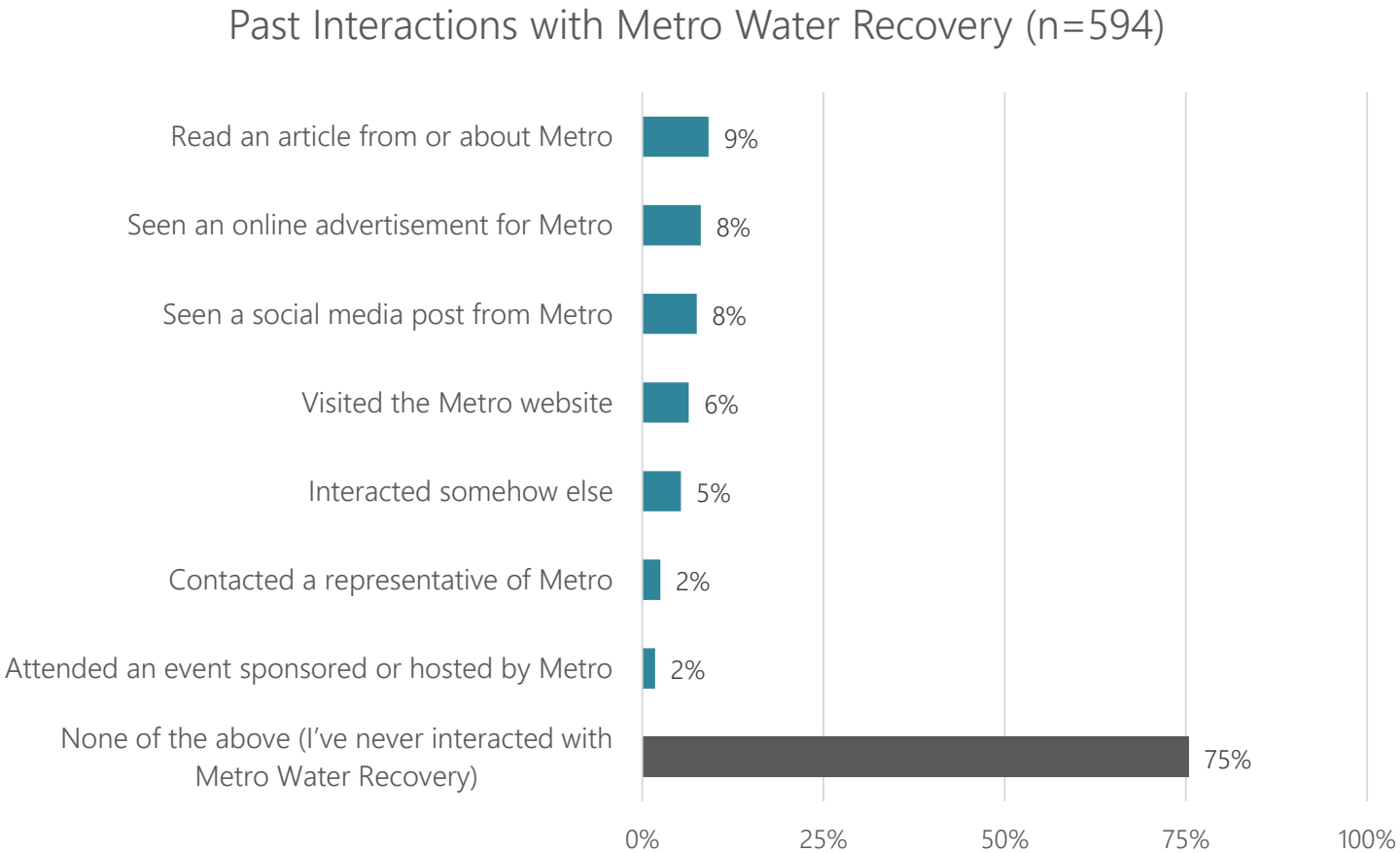
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- > Nearly one in ten had read an article from or about Metro (9%), seen an online ad (8%), and seen a social media post (8%).
- > Few had directly contacted a representative (2%) or attended a Metro event (2%).

Not shown:

- > Younger residents (under 35) and residents of color were much more likely to have seen a social media post (18% and 17% respectively) compared to older and White residents (3% and 2% respectively).
- > Residents of color were also much more likely to have seen an online advertisement for Metro (14%) compared to White residents (3%).

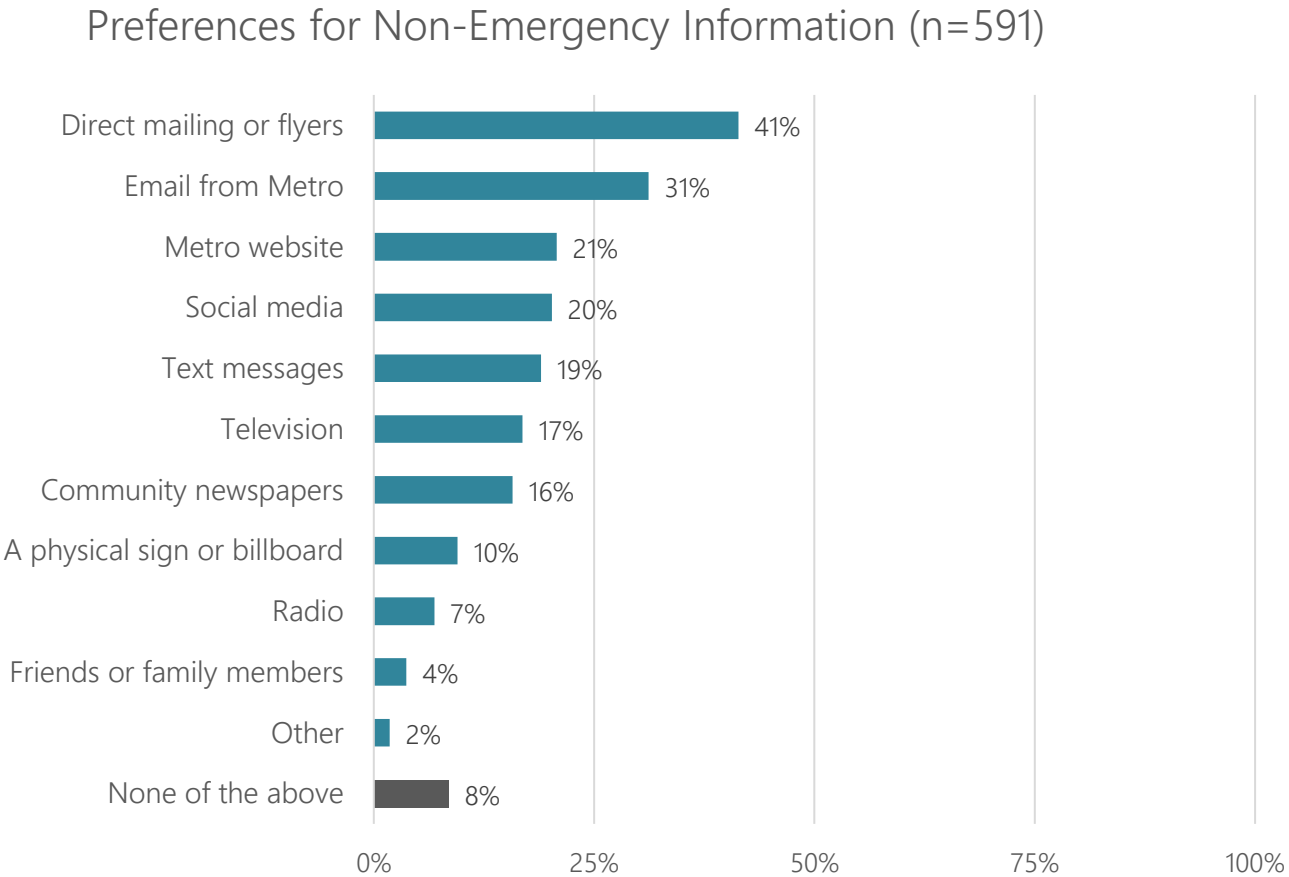


Residents most preferred to receive information through direct mail or email.

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- > The most popular option for non-emergency information was direct mailing or flyers (41%), followed by email (31%) and Metro website (21%).
- > There were few notable differences by demographic groups.



Following a utility provider on social media was most common via Facebook and among lower-income and Hispanic residents.

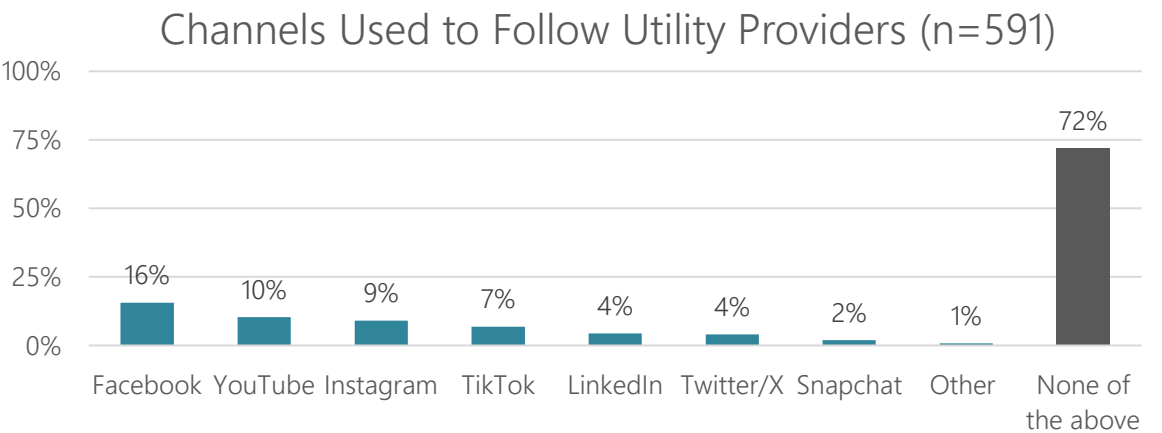
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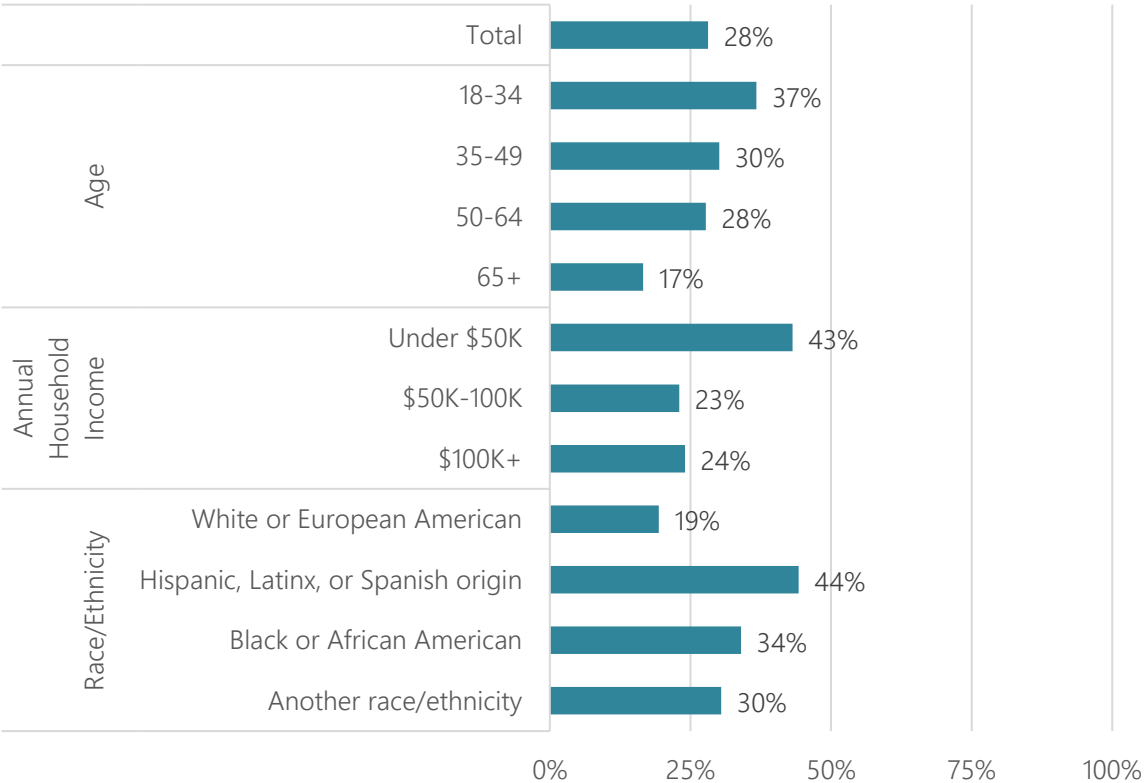
- > As seen below, most residents did not follow any utility providers on social media (72%). Those who did most often followed via Facebook (16%), YouTube (10%), or Instagram (9%).
- > As seen to the right, younger, lower-income, and residents of color were more likely to follow a utility provider on social media.

Not shown:

- > Lower-income and Hispanic residents were especially likely to follow via Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. Those who are more familiar with Metro were more likely to follow a utility provider via LinkedIn.



Demographic Differences in Following a Utility Provider Via a Social Media Channel (n=591)





Parks and recreation events and neighborhood events were each attended by over a third of residents.

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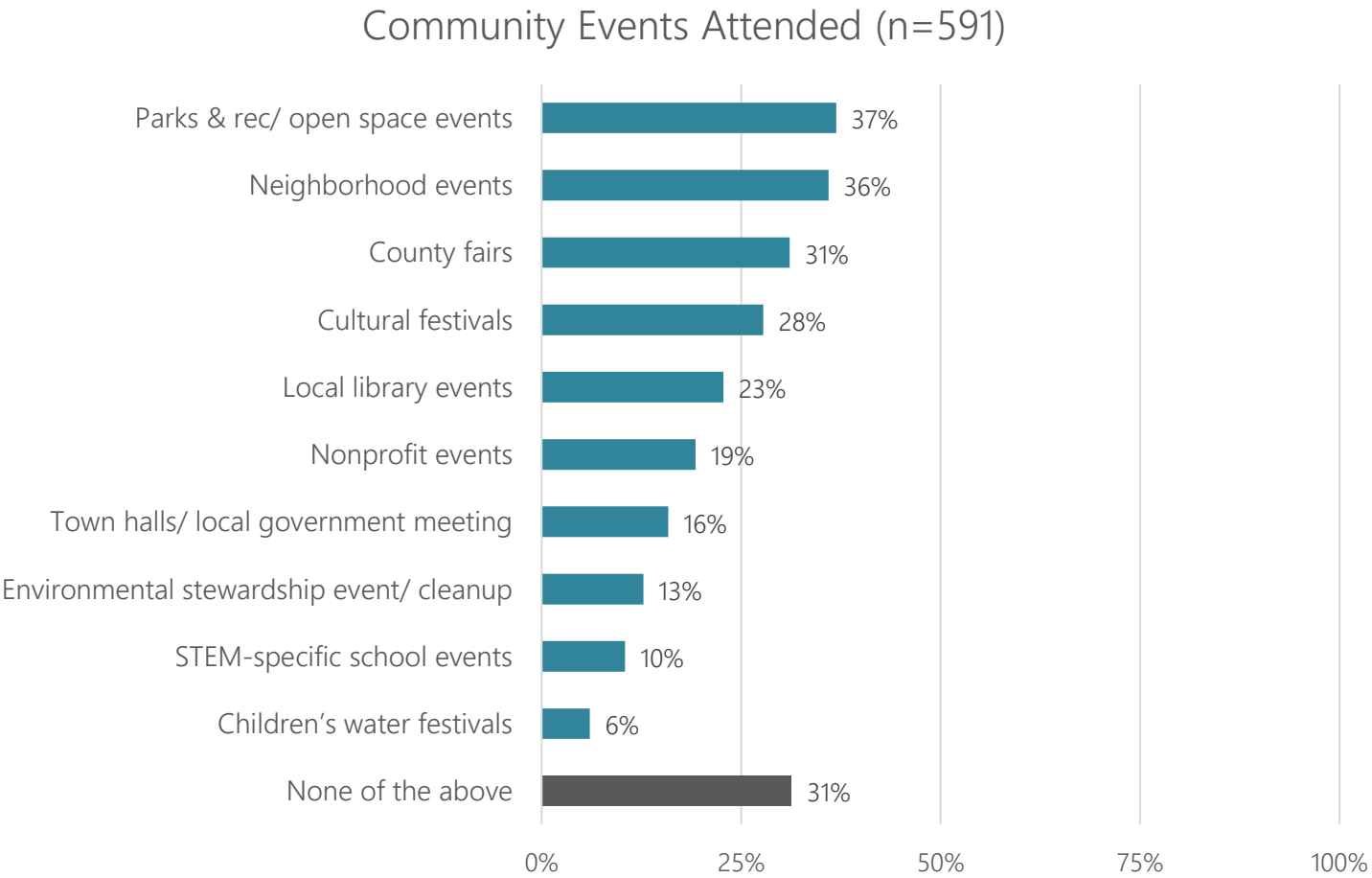
INSIGHTS

- > The most attended events were parks and recreation/ open space events (37%), neighborhood events (36%), county fairs (31%), and cultural festivals (28%).

Not shown:

- > Events attended varied in many ways across demographic groups. For example:
  - Women were more likely to attend local library events. Residents with children at home were more likely to attend children’s water festivals.
  - White and higher-income (\$100K+) residents were more likely to attend environmental stewardship events and neighborhood events.
  - Those who speak English at home (vs. do not) were more likely to attend county fairs and nonprofit events.
  - Older (65+), White, and more highly educated (Bachelor’s+) residents were more likely to attend town halls/ local government meetings.

Note: For more details on demographic breakdowns, see the analysis tables (file shared separately).



# APPENDIX

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Research mode	The survey was administered as push-to-web, i.e., survey invitations were sent in the mail, providing a link and QR code to access the survey online.	Incentives	As incentive, respondents had a chance to win one of five \$200 Visa gift cards.
Survey instrument	Corona Insights designed the survey instrument in collaboration with Metro Water Recovery.	Time frame	All surveys were completed in April or May of 2025.
Sample	Survey invitations were mailed to 15,000 residents in the Metro Water Recovery service area (535 undelivered/returned). We intentionally oversampled within a 5-mile radius of either plant to allow large enough sample sizes for segmenting.	Response rate	A total of 693 usable responses were received, including 581 complete and 112 partial responses, representing a 5% response rate.
Weighting	We applied numeric weights to align the sample demographics to the population demographics. Using population estimates for all Census Tracts in the Metro service area from the 2021 American Community Survey (5 Year PUMS data), the sample data were weighted by 2 region categories (within 5 miles of either plant, outside), 2 education categories (less than Bachelor's, Bachelor's or above), and 2 age categories (18-44, 45 or older).	Survey length	Surveys took a median time of 10 minutes to complete.
		Analysis	Data were cleaned, weighted, analyzed, and reported as percentages and averages. Results were tabulated overall and by key segments. All analyses was conducted on the weighted survey data. Open-ended responses were reviewed, and if appropriate, coded.

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