



SURVEY RESULTS: GENERAL OVERVIEW

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METHODOLOGY



OBJECTIVES

- Assess baseline awareness and attitudes toward greenhouse gases.
- Identify topic interests for population segments.
- Uncover engagement barriers for specific groups.
- Inform targeted messaging development.
- Facilitate input on the Climate Action Plan (CCAP).
- Collect demographics for analysis.



SAMPLE

Total: This is the primary dataset, combining online surveys from a third-party provider and LIDAC (Low Income / Disadvantaged Communities) surveys (both paper and online). These results are the focus of the report due to the **random sampling methodology**.

- **Online:** Surveys collected from an online panel targeting residents in Knoxville MSA zip codes.
- **LIDAC:** Respondents from EPA-identified low-income/disadvantaged communities, invited by mail with an online completion option.

Open Link: A publicly accessible survey link shared via social media.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from August 5 to September 30, 2024. A total of 1,330 surveys were completed, yielding a margin of error of +/- 2.69% at a 95% confidence level.

SURVEY KEY

SEGMENTS

This report segments results based on household climate change mitigation actions, derived from responses to **Q9: "Which of the following actions have you or members of your household taken to reduce the impacts of climate change on your community?"**

Respondents are categorized into three groups:

LOW: 0-2 ACTIONS

MID: 3-6 ACTIONS

HIGH: 7-13 ACTIONS

TERMINOLOGY

- **EDUCATION:**

- College Graduate = Bachelor's degree or higher
- Non-graduate = Technical degree/ some college/ H.S. GED/ less than H.S.

- **GENERATION:**

- Gen Z = Age 18-27
- Millennials = Age 28-43
- Gen X Age = 44-59
- Baby Boomer Age = 60-78
- Silent = Age 79-95

SMALL SAMPLE SIZES

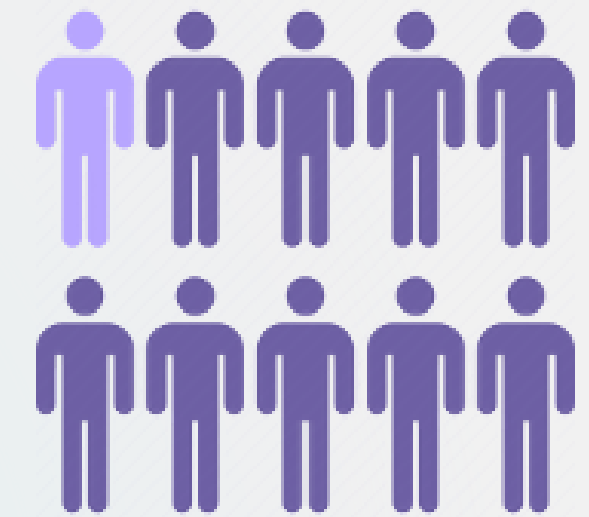
Data is segmented by county throughout this study. Please note the relatively small sample sizes in many counties, especially when results are further broken down by audience.

OVERVIEW



HIGH LEVEL INSIGHTS

- **Familiarity & Experience:** Over half of residents (54%) are familiar with "climate change" and have personally experienced extreme weather.
- **Mitigation Actions:** 54% of residents report taking 3-6 actions to address climate change.
 - Top actions include **reducing home energy use (60%)** and **reducing waste via recycling, reusing, or composting (59%)**.
- **High-Impact Actions:** For those taking 7-13 climate mitigation actions, **installing solar panels (71%)** and **subscribing to green energy (61%)** are top future actions.
- **Top Concerns:** Residents are most concerned about **extreme heat, severe storms, poor air quality, weather-related power outages, and heat/air quality-related health issues**.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Residents strongly agree that **businesses (82%)** and **government (79%)** should do more to protect the planet.
- **Barriers to Action:** **Affordability (54%)** and the belief that **key actions are outside their control (41%)** are significant barriers.
- **Most Beneficial Community Actions:** Residents believe the most beneficial community actions are:
 - **Planting more trees**
 - **Reducing landfill waste**
 - **Promoting land conservation**
 - **Increasing renewable energy (e.g., solar)**



1 in 10 **do not believe**
climate change is real

BUT...

among households
taking little to no
climate action, 86% do
not identify as climate
change deniers.

PEOPLE OF KNOXVILLE MSA

Gender Differences: Women report higher concern for climate issues, greater impact from hazards, and more openness to mitigation actions and a wider variety of future hazards. Men, however, show higher familiarity with specific climate terms.

Socioeconomic Disparities:

- **Less Affluent:** Care more about climate issues, prioritize sustainability, report experiencing food insecurity and heat/air quality health issues, and value community-level climate actions.
- **More Affluent:** More likely to experience weather-related business disruptions.

Education & Age:

- **College Graduates:** More likely to identify climate change as a top community issue.
- **Less Educated & Young Adults:** Strongly agree on building a sustainable future and find community actions beneficial.
- **Gen Z & Baby Boomers:** Both generations are more likely to see climate change as a top community concern.

LIDAC COMMUNITY SAMPLE VIEW

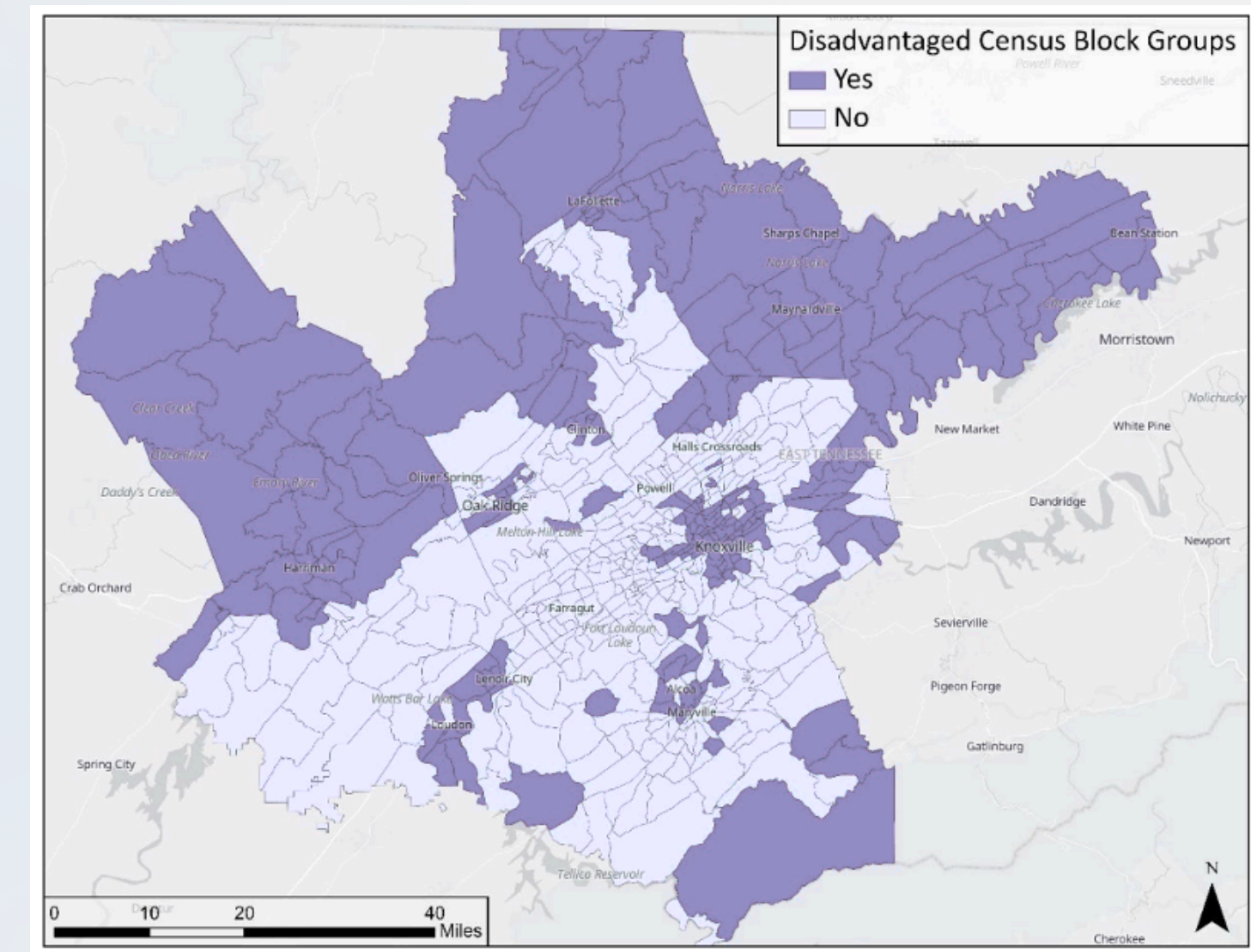
High Awareness & Knowledge: A significant majority of LIDAC respondents (63%) strongly agree climate change threatens future generations, and 71% feel knowledgeable discussing climate change.

Most Impacted by Climate Hazards:

- Damaging winds/tornadoes (78%)
- Extreme heat (70%)
- Weather-related power interruptions (66%)
- Extreme cold/winter weather (59%)
- Flooding (58%)
- Deteriorating infrastructure (56%)
- Drought (56%)
- More severe storms (56%)

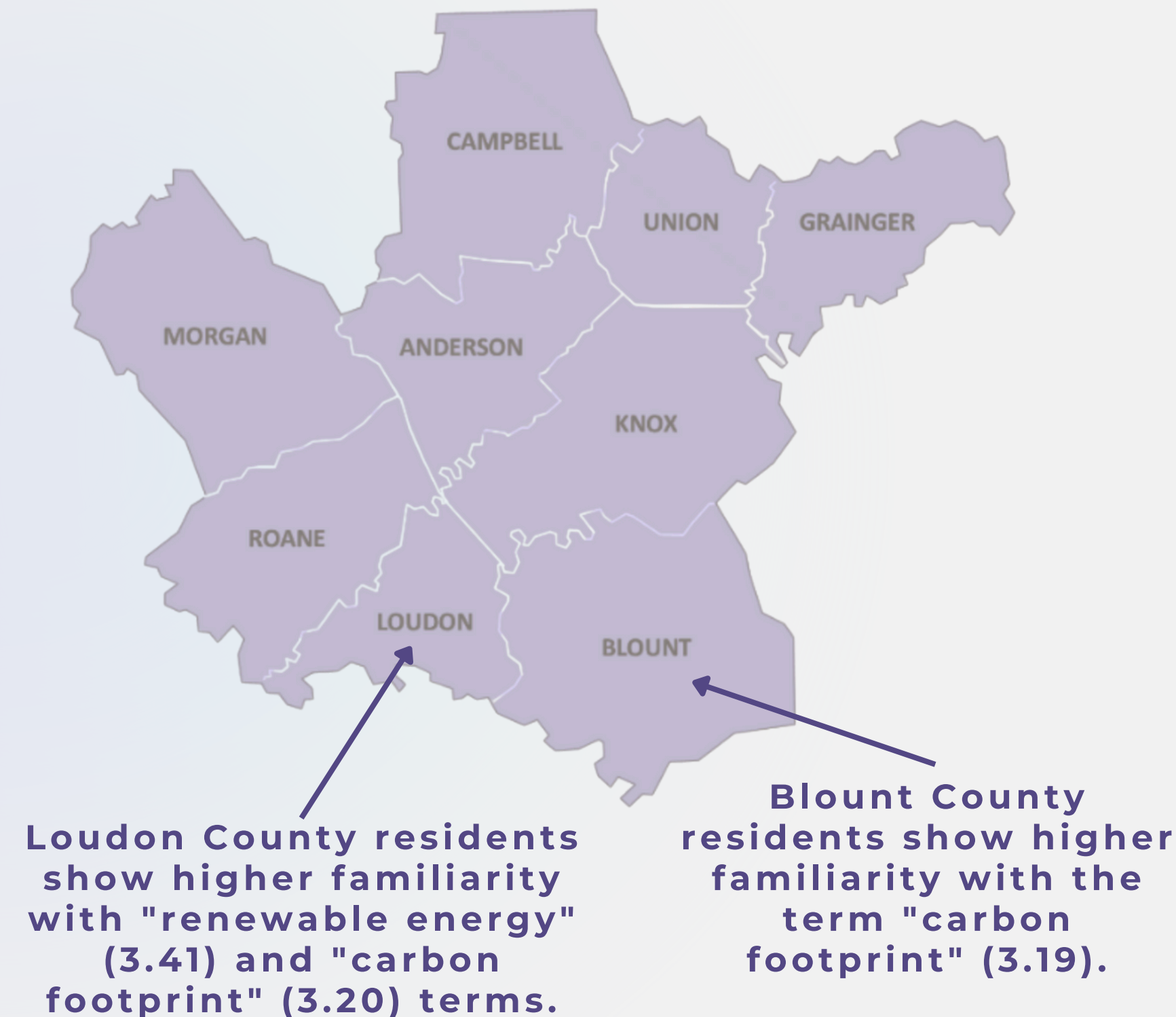
Beneficial Community Actions:

- Planting more trees (76%)
- Promoting land conservation (74%)
- Improving roadway connectivity (58%)
- Reducing energy/water use in commercial/industrial buildings (52%)
- Increasing bike/pedestrian infrastructure (50%)



COUNTY-BY-COUNTY INSIGHTS

- **Top Resident Sustainability Practices:** Residents most commonly reduce home energy use, minimize waste, and adjust thermostats seasonally (higher in summer, lower in winter).
- **Top Concerns Vary by County:**
 - **Homelessness:** Knox and Campbell Counties
 - **Job Availability:** Morgan and Campbell Counties
 - **Education:** Campbell County
 - **Air Pollution:** Grainger County
- **County-Specific Nuances:**
 - **Grainger County:** Prioritizes 'improving public health' for a sustainable future.
 - **Knox County:** Shows higher adoption of climate mitigation actions.
 - **Morgan (20%), Union (17%), Loudon (16%) Counties:** Have a higher percentage of residents who do not believe climate change is real.



CURRENT POSITIONING



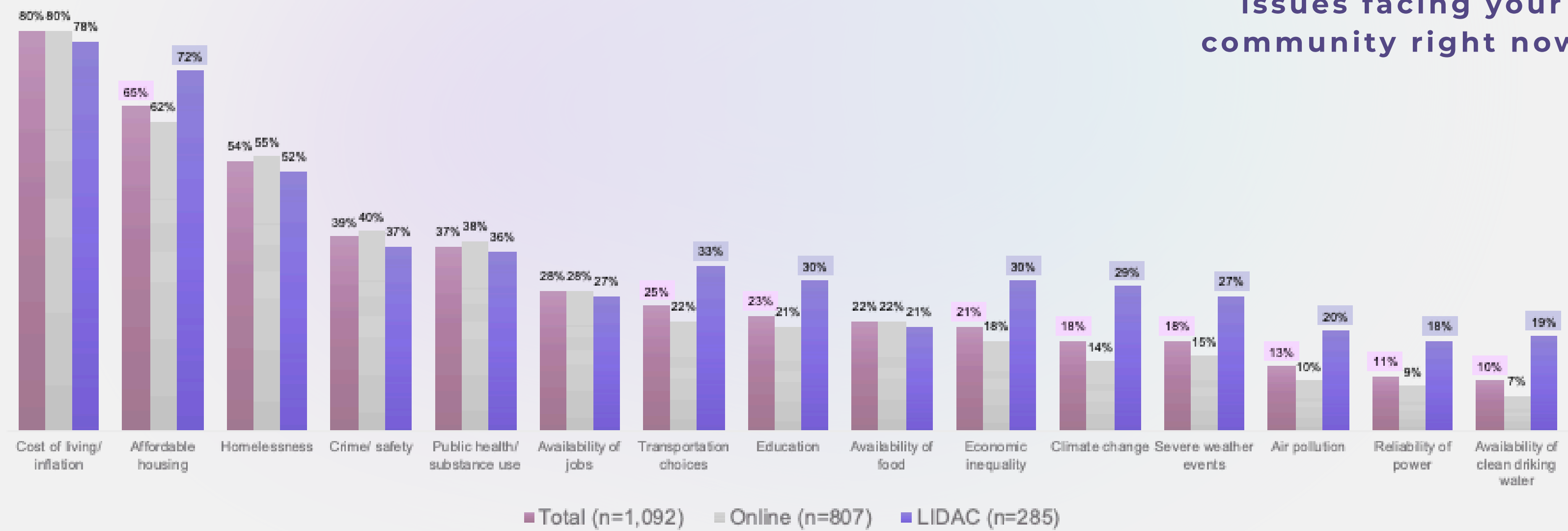
TOP CONCERNS

Climate change ranks **11th out of 15 issues tested**, indicating it is not a top-tier concern for many residents.

The **most pressing concerns** for respondents are:

- **Cost of Living/Inflation**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Homelessness**

In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing your community right now?



PERSONAL IMPACT

Top Climate Hazards Experienced:



Extreme Heat



Damaging
Winds



Flooding



More severe
storms



Weather-related
power interruptions
or blackouts

Top Future Concerns:



Extreme Heat



More severe
storms



Poor air
quality



Weather-related
power interruptions
or blackouts



Poor Health
(Heat/Air Quality-
Related)

Note: Despite these concerns, only 15% of respondents strongly agree that climate change has personally impacted someone in their household.

FAMILIARITY

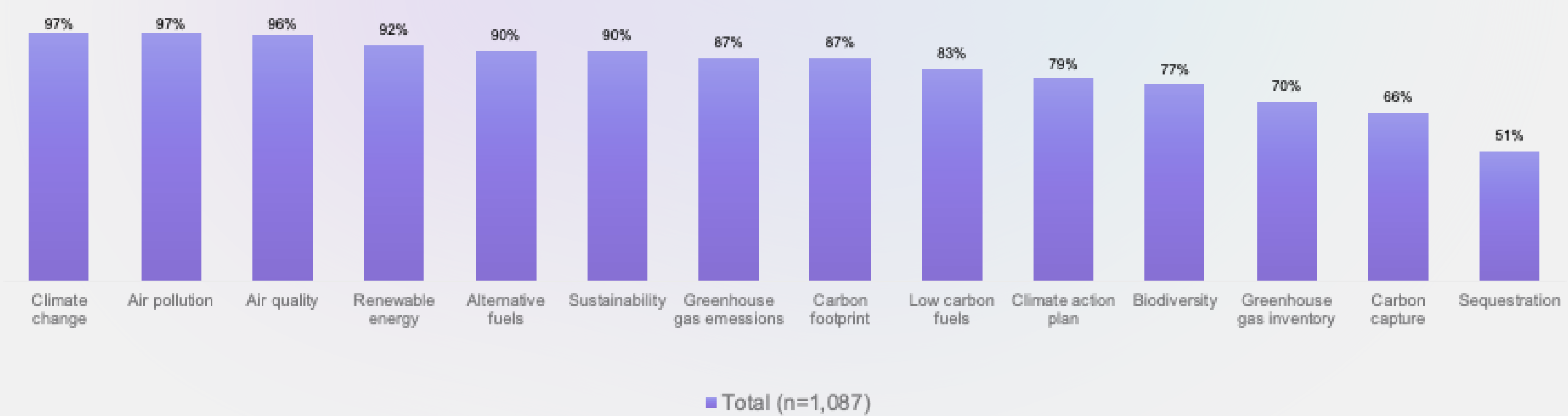
Highest Familiarity:

- 'Air pollution' (58%)
- 'Climate change' (54%)
- 'Air quality' (52%)

Lowest Familiarity (Not at All Familiar):

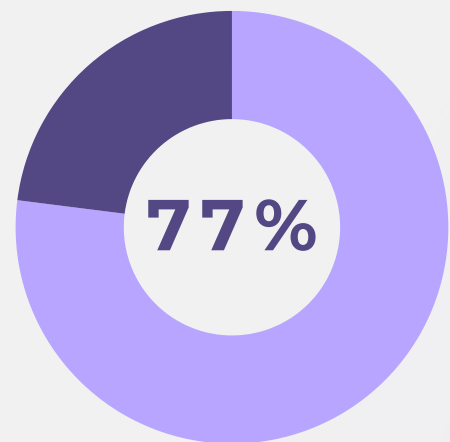
- 'Sequestration' (49%)
- 'Carbon capture' (33%)
- 'Greenhouse gas inventory' (29%)
- 'Climate action plan' (21%)

How familiar are you with the following terms?
Net Familiarity

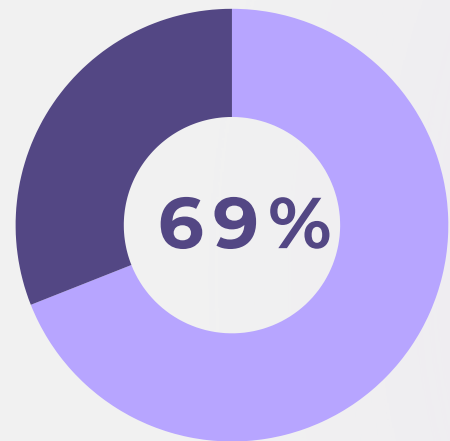


ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION

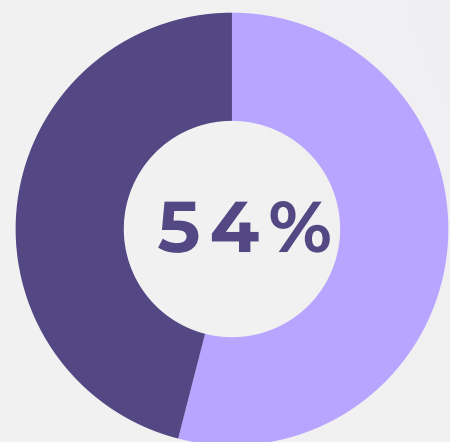
High Agreement:



care about climate change issues.



want to do more to combat climate change.



strongly agree climate change threatens future generations.

Key Reasons for a Sustainable Future (Very Important):

- Reliable food production **(71%)**
- Leaving a healthy planet for future generations **(69%)**
- Improving public health **(67%)**
- Preserving diverse ecosystems & protecting wildlife **(61%)**
- Strengthening local economies **(60%)**
- Ensuring benefits for lower-income/vulnerable communities **(59%)**

PLANNING FUTURE ACTION



CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION ACTIONS

Top actions **currently taken:**

- 1 Reducing home energy use.
- 2 Reducing waste (recycling, reusing, composting).
- 3 Adjusting home temperatures seasonally.

Actions **willing to take in the future:**

- 1 Reducing waste (recycling, reusing, composting).
- 2 Reducing home energy use.
- 3 Installing energy-efficient appliances.

Most beneficial climate change actions for the community:



Planting
more trees



Reducing
landfill waste



Promoting land
conservation

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION ACTIONS

Respondents are segmented into three subcategories based on the number of climate mitigation actions that are adopted:

	LOW (0-2 actions)	MID (3-6 actions)	HIGH (7-13 actions)
Total	29%	54%	17%
Online	34%	55%	11%
LIDAC	14%	49%	36%

A higher proportion of the LIDAC sample have adopted more climate mitigation actions

Top actions currently taken:

Total	Online	LIDAC
Reduce energy use at home		
Reduce waste by recycling, reusing, composting		
Set temperature higher in summer/ lower in winter		
Intentionally drive less	Intentionally drive less	Install energy-efficient appliances at home
Install energy-efficient appliances at home	Install energy-efficient appliances at home	Intentionally drive less

Actions willing to take in the future:

Total	Online	LIDAC
Reduce waste by recycling, reusing, composting	Reduce energy use at home	Install solar panels
Reduce energy use at home	Reduce waste by recycling, reusing, composting	Subscribe to green energy power grid
Install energy-efficient appliances at home	Install energy-efficient appliances at home	Drive high-efficiency/ alt-fuel vehicle
Install solar panels	Intentionally drive less	Use public transportation
Insulate/ weatherize building		

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION ACTIONS

- **Knoxville MSA residents primarily take 3-6 actions.**
 - **Lower Income:** Focus on active transport (walk/bike, public transit), solar, and green energy.
 - **Higher Income:** Prioritize waste reduction, seasonal thermostat adjustments, and energy-efficient appliances.
 - **Generational Trends:**
 - **Younger (Gen Z, Millennial, Gen X):** More likely to carpool.
 - **Older (Gen X, Boomer, Silent):** More likely to weatherize homes and adjust thermostats.
- **Key Trends in Action-Taking:**
 - **LIDAC respondents** show higher engagement in various mitigation actions.
 - **Homeowners** are more active in climate mitigation than renters.
 - **Older generations (especially Baby Boomers)** report taking more actions.
 - **Lower-income respondents** report taking more mitigation actions than higher-income respondents.

Impact of Action: As engagement in climate actions increases, so does the perception of climate change as a critical community issue. Those most active are also more likely to have personally experienced climate hazards.

SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Those who feel personally responsible:

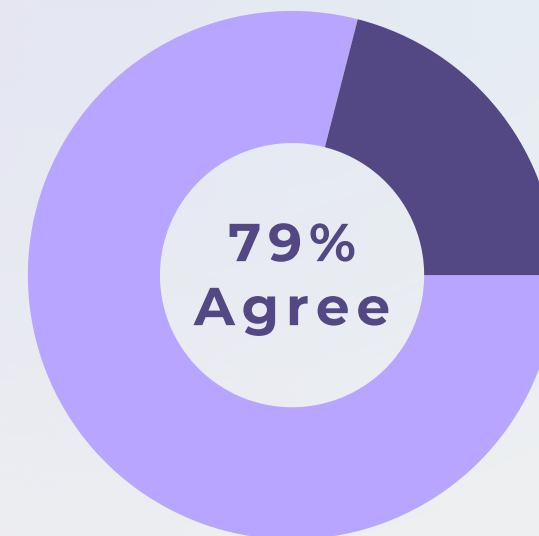
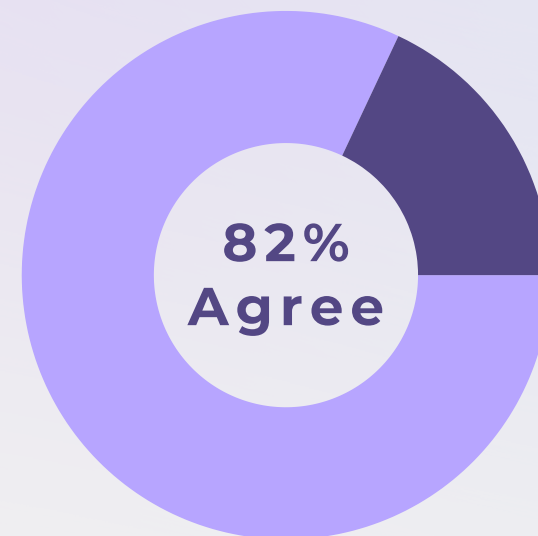
- Take 4-6 climate actions.
- Often live in smaller, older, or parent-headed households.
- More strongly believe climate change has personally impacted their household.

Those who don't feel personally responsible:

- Tend to take fewer actions, but over half still take 4-6 actions.
- Are more likely to agree that government should do more to preserve the planet.

Overall Consensus:

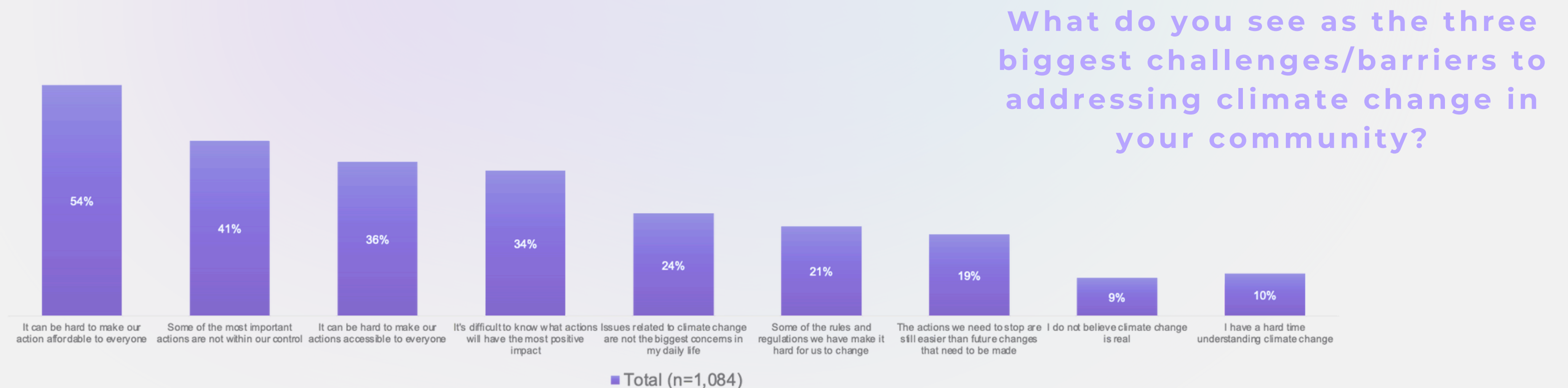
Businesses should do more to preserve the planet.



Governments should do more to preserve the planet.

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- **Low Perceived Importance:** Climate change ranks low (11th) among community issues.
- **Top Barriers Identified:**
 - **Affordability (54%)**
 - **Accessibility (36%)**
 - Belief that **impact is beyond personal control (41%)**
 - Lack of knowledge on **most effective actions (34%)**
- **Low Personal Impact:** Only 15% report direct household impact from climate change.



REACHING KNOXVILLE MSA

- **Local TV News** is the top overall choice (44%).
- **Social media** is a significant source across all ages (35% overall).

Generational Preferences for Climate Information:

- **Gen Z:** Social Media (55%), Podcasts (31%), Website/Web Search (31%)
- **Millennials:** Social Media (42%), Local TV (37%), Website/Web Search (31%)
- **Gen X:** Local TV (50%), Social Media (31%), National TV (31%)
- **Boomers:** Local TV (55%), National TV (42%), Website/Web Search (27%)
- **Silent Generation:** Local TV (63%), National TV (41%), Local Community Meetings (25%), Print Newsletters (25%)

Media Consumption

Preferred News Sources to Learn about Climate Change

Local TV news	44%
Social media	35%
National TV news	44%

Preferred Social Media Used for News

	64%
	49%
	30%

Females are more likely to use Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat. Males are more reliant on X and LinkedIn.

PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

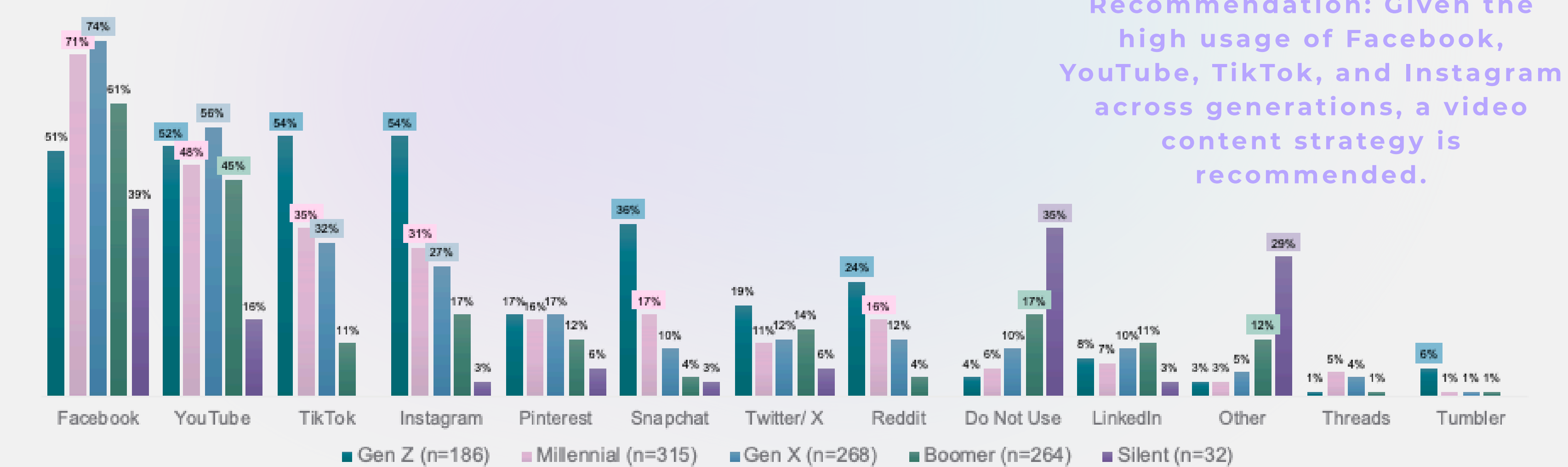
Gen Z: TikTok (54%), Instagram (54%), YouTube (52%)

Millennials: Facebook (71%), YouTube (48%), TikTok (35%)

Gen X: Facebook (74%), YouTube (56%), TikTok (32%)

Boomers: Facebook (61%), YouTube (45%), Instagram (17%), Do Not Use (17%)

Silent Generation: Facebook (39%), Do Not Use (35%)



CURRENT POSITIONING



IMPLICATIONS



Climate Change: A "Lower Priority" Issue

- It ranks lower due to daily concerns overshadowing it, not a lack of awareness.
- Opportunity exists for education as nearly half are unfamiliar with "climate change" as a concept.



Education Drives Action & Perception:

- An educational campaign can increase climate action.
- Messaging should emphasize awareness, education, and personal responsibility.
- Residents are willing to act; promoting more actions increases their view of climate change as important.



Shift Personal Responsibility:

- Few residents feel personally responsible, often deferring to government.
- Educating on the impact of individual actions can drive engagement.
- Address perceived barriers: cost, accessibility, and feeling their actions won't matter.
- Highlighting existing incentives can increase awareness of personal impact.



Effective Messaging Strategy:

- Combine fear/concern-based messaging (extreme heat, severe storms, poor air quality, power outages).
- Integrate incentive-based messaging (reliable food, healthy planet for future generations, improved public health).

THANK YOU!

