

Public Response to New Recycling / Litter Bins

A Survey of Torontonians Attitudes Toward the New Eucan Bins



Date: December 7, 2005
Project No. P05-302
Final Report

Project Background



- During the Summer / Fall of 2005, Solid Waste Management Services implemented a **new Eucan bin pilot project**.
- New bins were located at a number of locations across the City. Residents were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the **style, positioning** and **location** of the new bins.
- **Advertisements on the bins** provided residents with information about an **online survey** and a **telephone survey** where they could have their voices heard. In addition to these two survey feedback mechanisms, Solid Waste Management hired students to implement a **street level survey with passers-by**.
- Response to the surveys was **substantial**. In total, approximately **4,300** surveys were completed. This consisted of over 2,300 online surveys, 1,750 telephone surveys, and 200 street levels surveys.
- City of Toronto officials designed the survey instrument and collected all of the data.
- Northstar was asked to assist with data coding, tabulation and analysis.

Understanding the Methodological Issues



- The data from the pilot project was collected between July 29th and October 31st, 2005.
- This report presents the findings for each of the three survey approaches, as well as the total sample of 4,341.
- Although the same questionnaire tool was used for the telephone, on-line and street intercept study, the **results vary significantly depending upon how people registered their opinion.**
- There is no solid methodological rationale to explain this variance. If the three samples were truly representative of the opinion of residents of Toronto – the results would not vary to the degree that they do. This suggests that other factors were at play to influence the results; for example a push by special interests to influence survey results one way or the other.
- **To assign the proper amount of weight given to these results, it is important to understand all of the issues around the survey methodology used.**
- The following page explains the three survey approaches and identifies the various methodological strengths and weaknesses.

Understanding the Methodological Issues (cont'd)



Total Sample Size = 4341
Margin of Error on Total = +/- 1.5 percentage points,
19 out of 20 times.

The total figure is most strongly influenced by on-line survey respondents as they account for 55% of the total figure. Telephone respondents make up 40% of the total sample and street level respondents only 5%.

On-line

- Margin of error = +/- 2.0 (95% confidence)

Strengths

- Very robust sample size. The large sample size creates a small margin of error.

Weaknesses

- The margin of error really only has merit if the sample was drawn randomly, and is reflective of the larger population. This sample was **not random**. Individuals “opted in” to complete the survey.
- Another major weakness is that there were **no controls placed upon participation**. It would have been possible for the same person to complete the survey dozens, even hundreds, of times.
- Finally, there is **no way of telling if survey respondents actually saw the bin** in question before responding to the survey.

Telephone

- Margin of error = +/- 2.4 (95% confidence)

Strengths

- Very robust sample size. The large sample size creates a small margin of error.

Weaknesses

- The same criticisms of the on-line survey hold true for the telephone survey.
- The sample was **not random**. Individuals “opted in” to complete the survey.
- Similarly, there were **no controls placed upon participation**. Individuals could have called in multiple times to complete the survey.
- Again, there is no way of **verifying that the respondents actually saw the new bin format**.

Street Level

- Margin of error = +/- 6.9 (95% confidence)

Strengths

- This sample **was collected in a random manner**. Individuals passing by bins in multiple areas throughout the city were stopped and asked about the bin.
- The **days, hours and locations of interviewing differed**, increasing the likelihood of obtaining “different” people in the sample
- Due to proximity of interviewing close by the new bin, we can say with reliability that **respondents answered based on actually seeing the bin in question**.

Weaknesses

- Only 200 surveys were completed

Understanding the Methodological Issues (cont'd)



- Given the strengths and weaknesses identified on the previous page, we feel that the most credible sample for analysis of public opinion is the street level intercepts.
- This sample is the strongest mainly because there is a degree of **randomness** interjected in this sample. Street level respondents were not motivated one way or the other to register their opinion on the new EUCAN bins. **Their opinion is included by way of circumstance** – they happened to be walking by one of the new bins while interviewers were present.
- Their opinion is likely more in line with that of the average resident of the City of Toronto.
- The methodological limitations of both the on-line and telephone survey should not be discounted. They are significant. When reading the results of this report, the methodological limitations should be kept in mind and used as a lens for interpreting the results.

Reporting Perspective



- Data has been tested for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level.
 - Solid circles indicate significantly higher figures between groups
 - Dotted circles indicate directional higher trends
 - Solid squares indicate significantly lower figures between groups
 - Dotted squares indicate directional lower trends

Executive Summary

Executive Summary



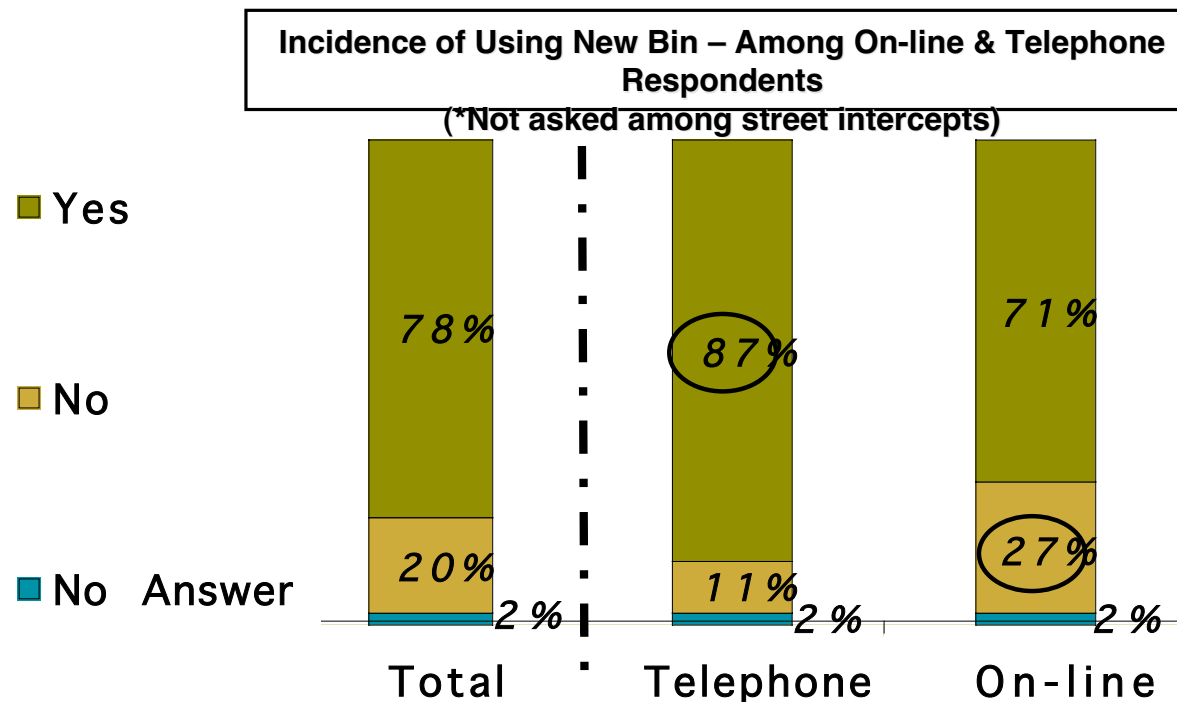
- As mentioned in the methodology section, we feel that the most credible sample for analysis of public opinion is the street level intercepts.
- Taking all things into consideration, the opinions of street level respondents tend to be more balanced when compared to both on-line and telephone respondents. This further strengthens the argument that this is the most reliable data to be examining.
- If the focus is put on the street level responses, we learn that the EUCAN bins are well received. The majority of street level respondents (81%), those who actually have seen the bins, feel that they are practical and easy to use.
- There does appear to be a need to address the two-end collection issue – either via communications initiatives or better instructions on the actual bin. A sizeable minority of street level respondents (40%) say that they did not know that both ends could be used to deposit rubbish.
- Some attention will also need to be paid to positioning if this pilot project is rolled out. Obviously, the bins will need to be positioned in such a way to minimize impact on both motorists and pedestrians.
- The majority of street level respondents feel that the benefits of the bins will outweigh any negative impact. 83% support the initiative citing revenue generation as the primary motivator.

Detailed Findings

Incidence of Using a Newly Designed Garbage / Recycling Bin



- One in ten telephone respondents and almost three in ten on-line respondents say that they have not used one of the new bins.
- While most say that they have used the new bins, as mentioned in the survey methodology section, there is no way to verify this. In an attempt to verify results, respondents were asked to cite where they saw the bin. It was believed that this could be used as a “double-check”. Unfortunately, there were several media stories that reported the location of all pilot bin sites and even urged readers to go on-line or to phone in their opinions; thus making this “test” ineffectual.



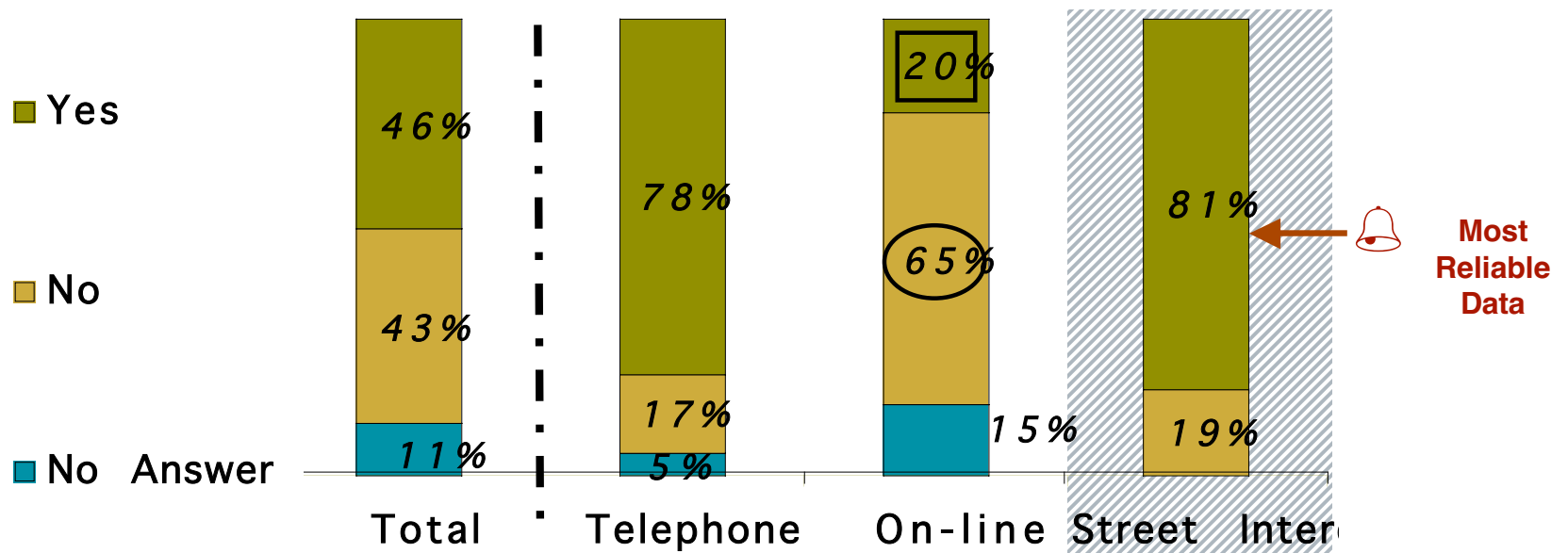
Q1. Have you used one of the newly designed garbage / recycling bins (7' high 5' wide x 2' deep) that are located across

Incidence of Believing Bins are Practical and Easy to Use



- If looking at the total figure, one would surmise that opinion is split regarding the practicality and ease of use of the new bins. However, it should be recalled that the total figure is strongly influenced by the on-line respondents who make up the bulk of the total sample.
- On a sample by sample basis, we see that the responses of telephone and street intercepts are similar. Almost eight in ten individuals who completed the survey by telephone or street intercept find the new bins practical and easy to use.
- The responses of on-line respondents are quite different. Roughly two-thirds of on-line respondents do not find the bins practical and easy to use.

Incidence of Believing Bins are Practical and Easy to Use Among Total Sample

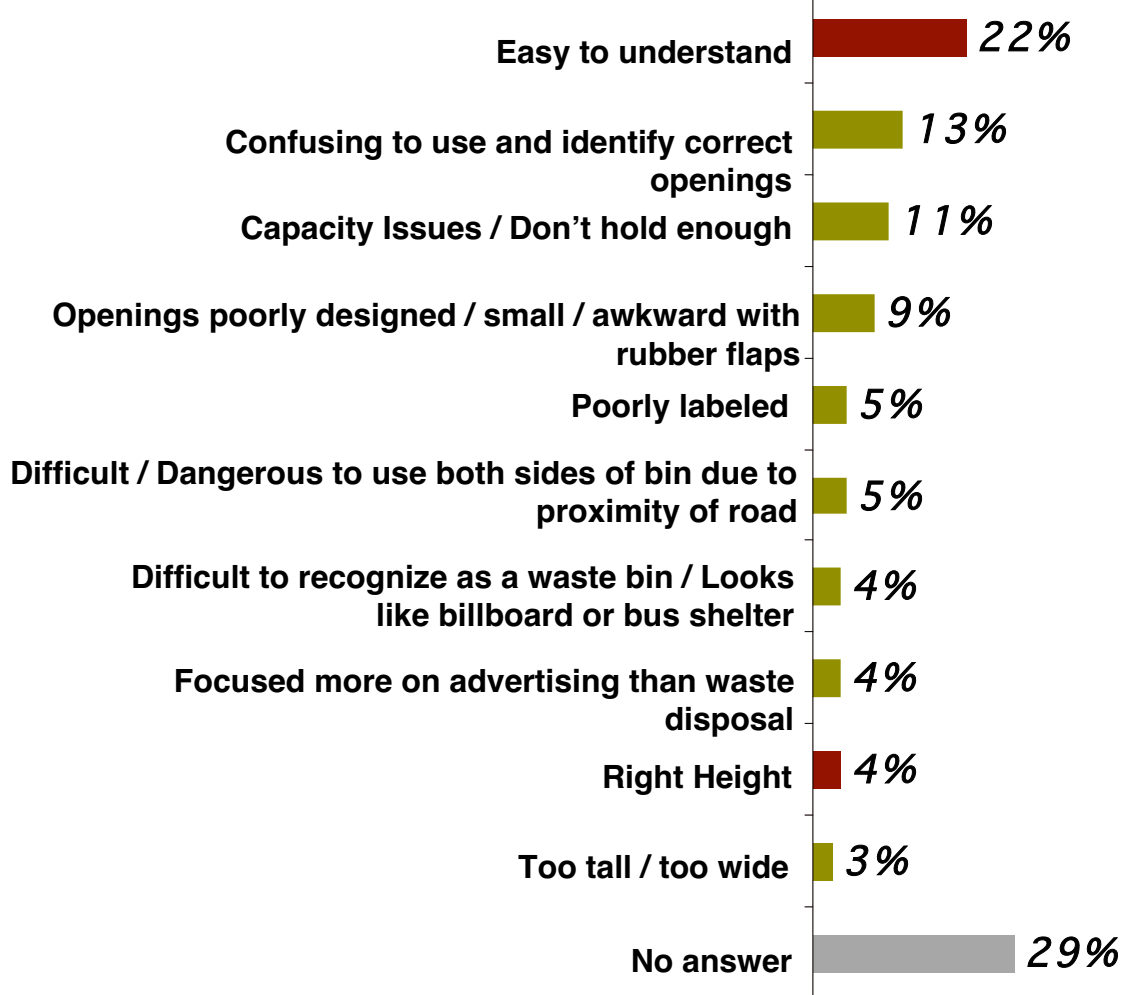


Q2. Was the bin practical and easy to use? For example, were the openings for garbage and recyclables at the right height and easy to understand?

Rationale to Support Opinion on Ease of Use



Top Ten Mentions – Among Total Sample



- Looking at the total sample, two in ten survey respondents say that the bins were easy to understand when asked to explain their overall opinion about ease of use.
- The two biggest usage issues appear to be:
 - Confusion about the correct openings; and
 - Concern that the bins do not hold enough rubbish.

Q2. Please explain.

Rationale to Support Opinion on Ease of Use

– By survey type



Top Ten Mentions – By Survey Type

	Total (4341)	Telephone (1750)	On-line (2391)	Street Intercept (200)
Easy to understand	22%	47%	5%	4%
Confusing to use and identify correct	13%	6%	18%	8%
Capacity issues / Don't hold enough openings	11%	4%	16%	2%
Openings poorly designed / small / awkward with rubber flaps	9%	3%	13%	2%
Poorly labelled	5%	<1%	9%	-
Difficult / Dangerous to use both sides of bin due to proximity of road	5%	1%	8%	1%
Difficult to recognize as a waste bin / looks like billboard or bus shelter	4%	1%	7%	2%
Focused more on advertising that waste disposal	4%	1%	6%	-
Right height	4%	7%	2%	-
Too tall / too wide	3%	1%	5%	1
No answer	29%	12%	37%	78%
NEGATIVE MENTIONS	38%	16%	57%	15%
POSITIVE MENTIONS	33%	71%	8%	5%

□ Clearly, the survey methodology used impacts how respondents answered this particular question.

□ Telephone respondents, who tended to say that the bins were easy to use, explain their rationale by simple stating that the process was easy to understand.

□ It is the on-line respondents who raise the myriad of issues about ease of use.

□ The street level participants, the ones who we know for a fact actually saw the bins, overwhelmingly said they found the bins easy to use (81%). Most of these individuals did not offer an

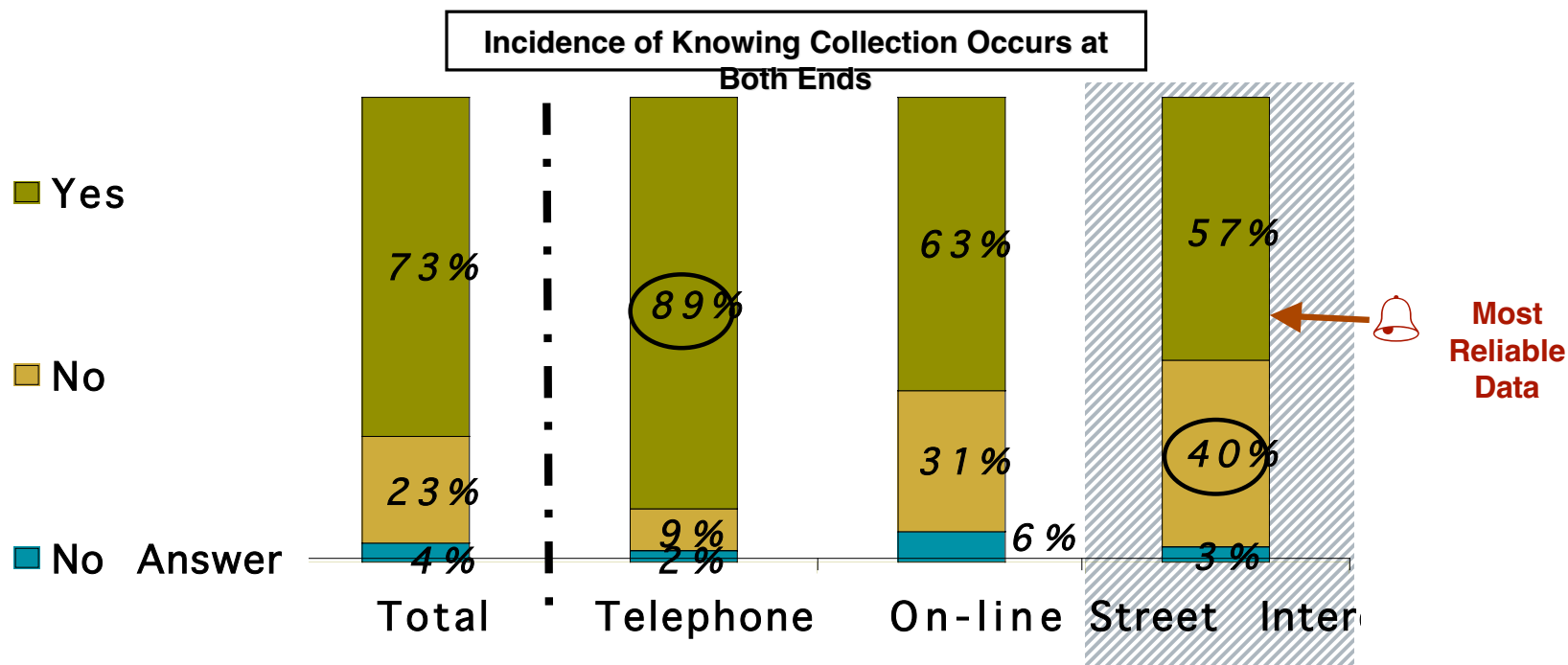
Q2. Please explain.



INCIDENCE OF KNOWING GARBAGE, RECYCLABLES AND CIGARETTE BUTTS ARE COLLECTED AT BOTH ENDS OF THE BIN

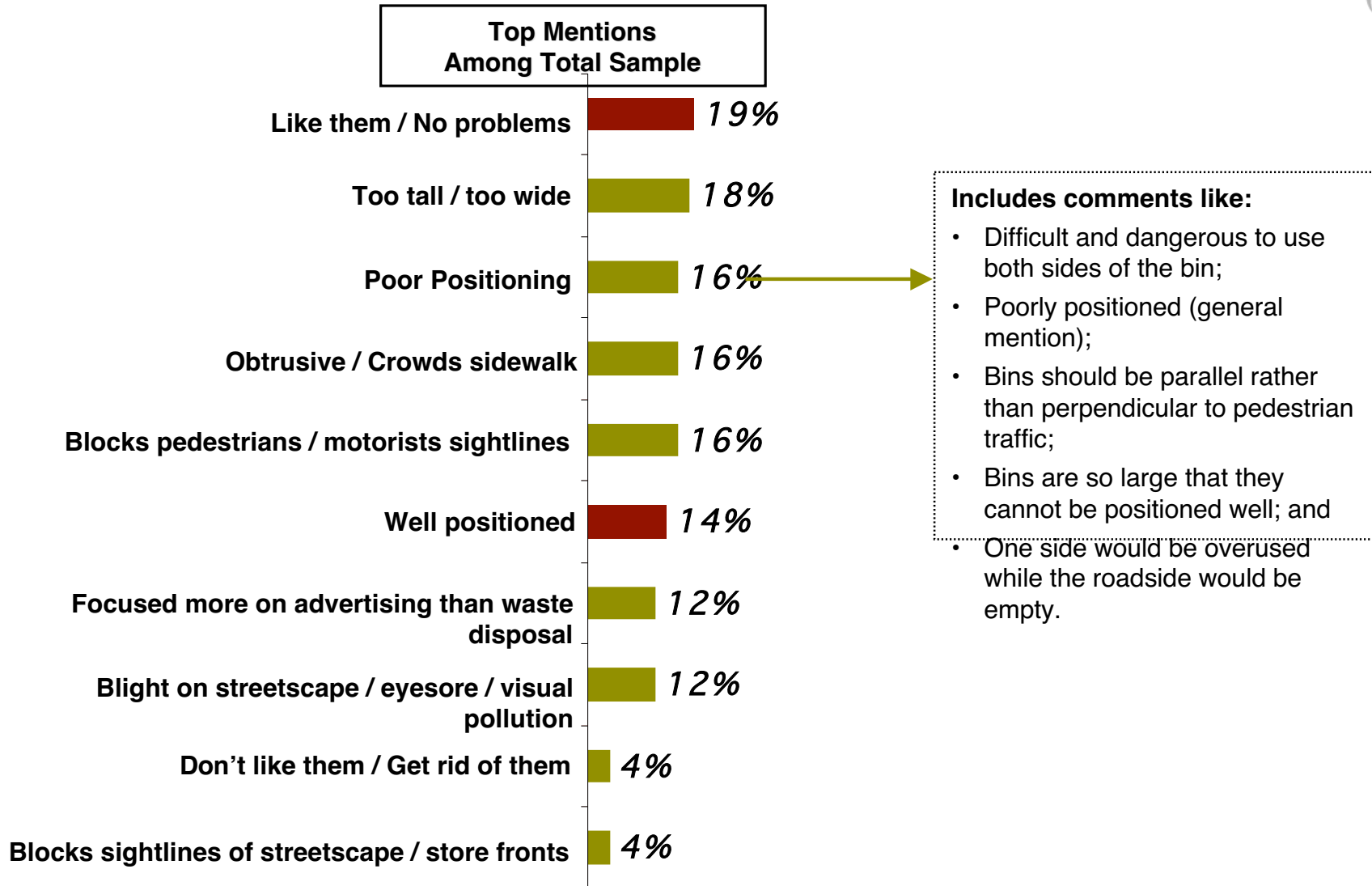


- The ease of recognizing that waste can be deposited in both ends of the bin does appear to be an issue. Four in ten street level respondents indicate that this was not obvious to them. As we know that they were looking at the bin in question, there is added weight to this particular finding.



Q3. Are you aware that garbage, recyclables, and cigarette butts are collected at both ends of the bin?

Opinions on Bin Positioning on the Sidewalk



Q4. Please tell us your thoughts on the way the newly designed garbage / recycling bins are positioned on the sidewalk.

Opinions on Bin Positioning on the Sidewalk

– By survey type



- Again, we see big differences in how people responded to this positioning question based on survey methodology.
- On-line respondents, on the whole, are much more likely to find fault with how the bins are positioned on the sidewalk. The biggest issues for these respondents is size and the impact size has on crowding / obtruding sidewalk space.
- Telephone respondents are overwhelming positive when it comes to positioning.
- Street intercepts are more balanced on the whole. The largest segment of this group feel that the bins are well positioned. Although, a sizeable minority (18%) cite issues relating to poor positioning.

Q4. Please tell us your thoughts on the way the newly designed garbage / recycling bins are positioned on the sidewalk.



Top Ten Mentions – By Survey Type

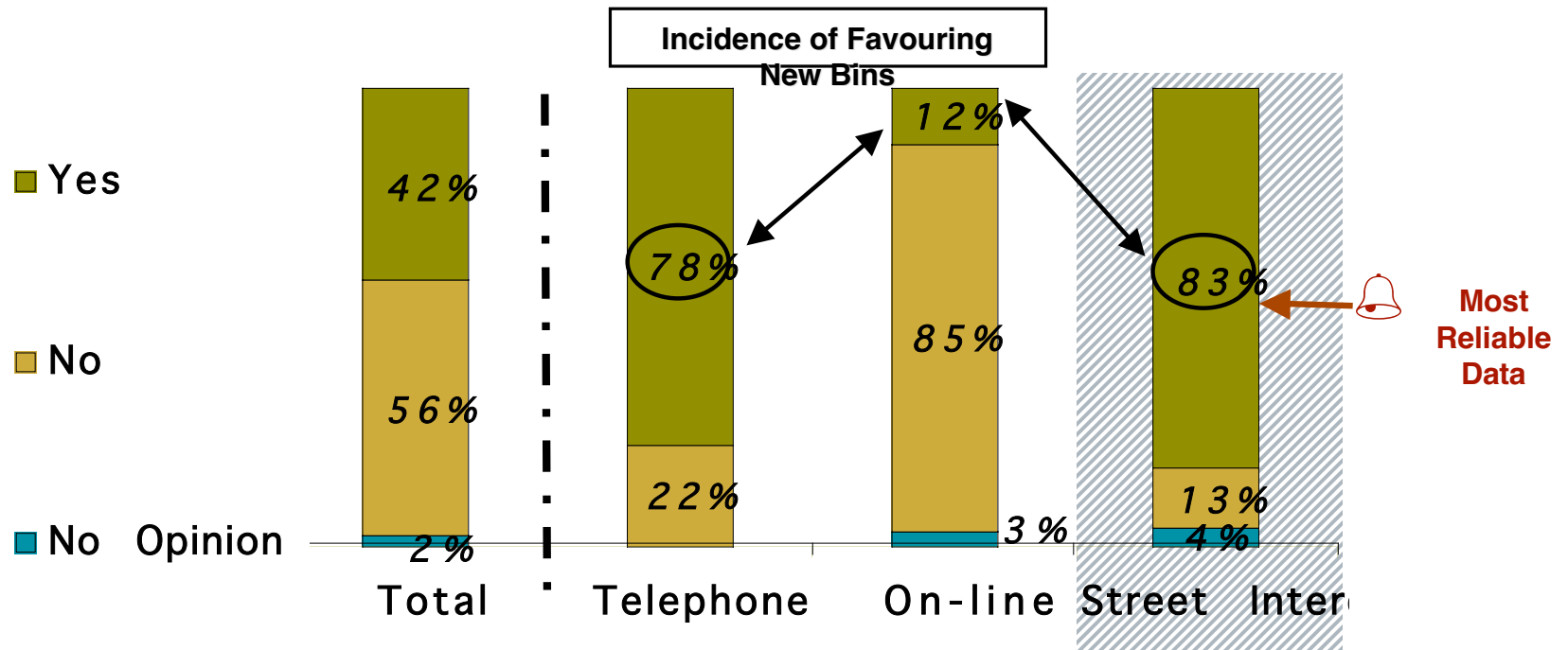
	Total (4341)	Telephone (1750)	On-line (2391)	Street Intercept (200)
Like them / No problems	19%	42%	3%	14%
Too tall / too wide	18%	7%	27%	7%
Poor positioning	16%	7%	23%	18%
Obtrusive / Crowds sidewalk	16%	<1%	29%	1%
Blocks pedestrian / motorist sightlines	16%	10%	22%	11%
Well positioned	14%	26%	3%	45%
Focused more on advertising than waste disposal	12%	5%	18%	3%
Blight on streetscape / eyesore/ visual pollution	12%	5%	18%	3%
Don't like them / Get rid of them	4%	3%	6%	-
Blocks sightlines of streetscape / store fronts	4%	1%	6%	-
NEGATIVE MENTIONS	54%	22%	78%	37%
POSITIVE MENTIONS	35%	71%	7%	56%

Incidence of Favouring New Bins

(With understanding the bins will be free and City will receive revenue from added advertising)

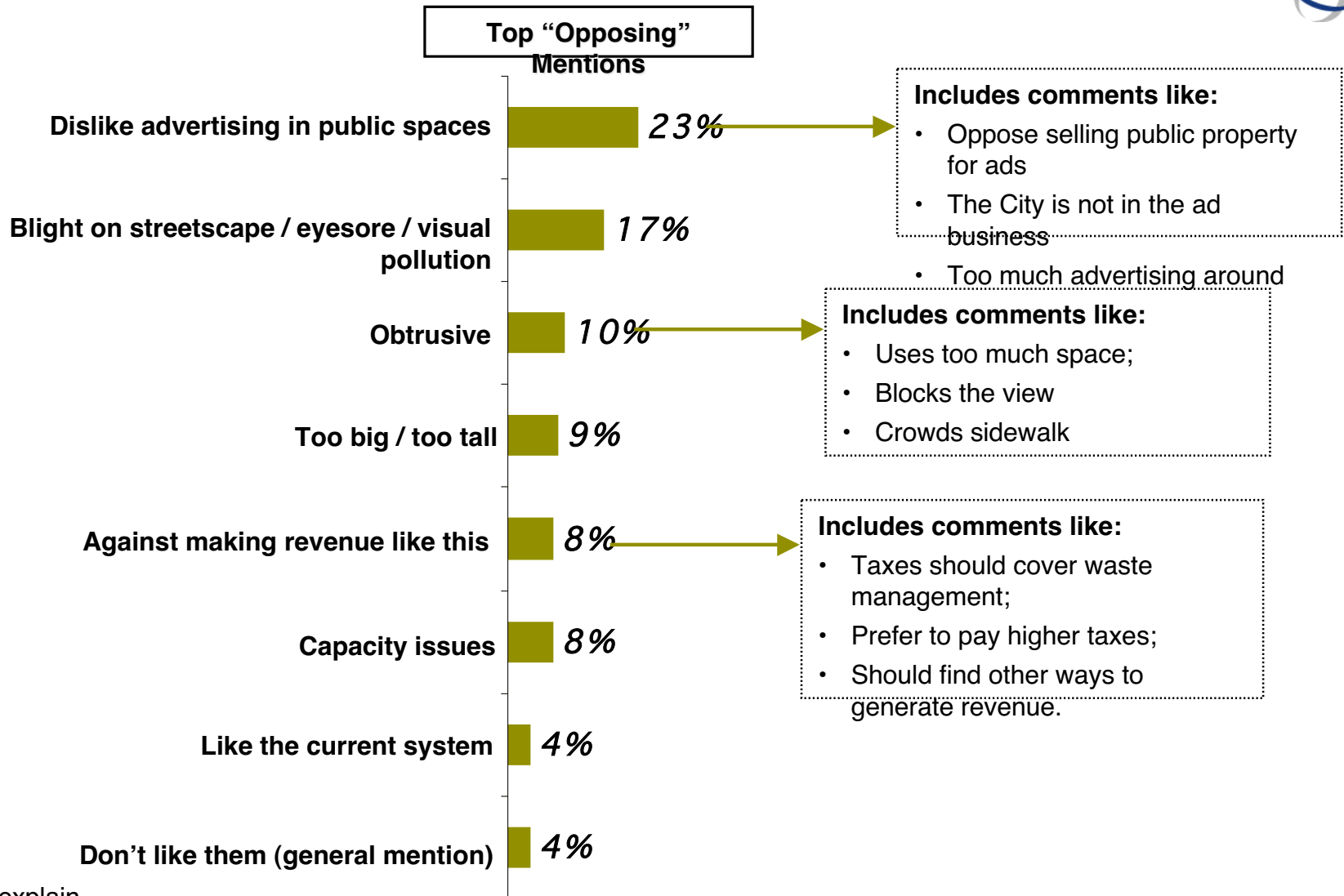


- Strong majorities among both telephone and street intercept respondents, roughly eight in ten, indicate that they support the City installing the free EUCAN bins and receiving some additional advertising revenue.
- That being said, the on-line respondents are clearly opposed to this initiative.



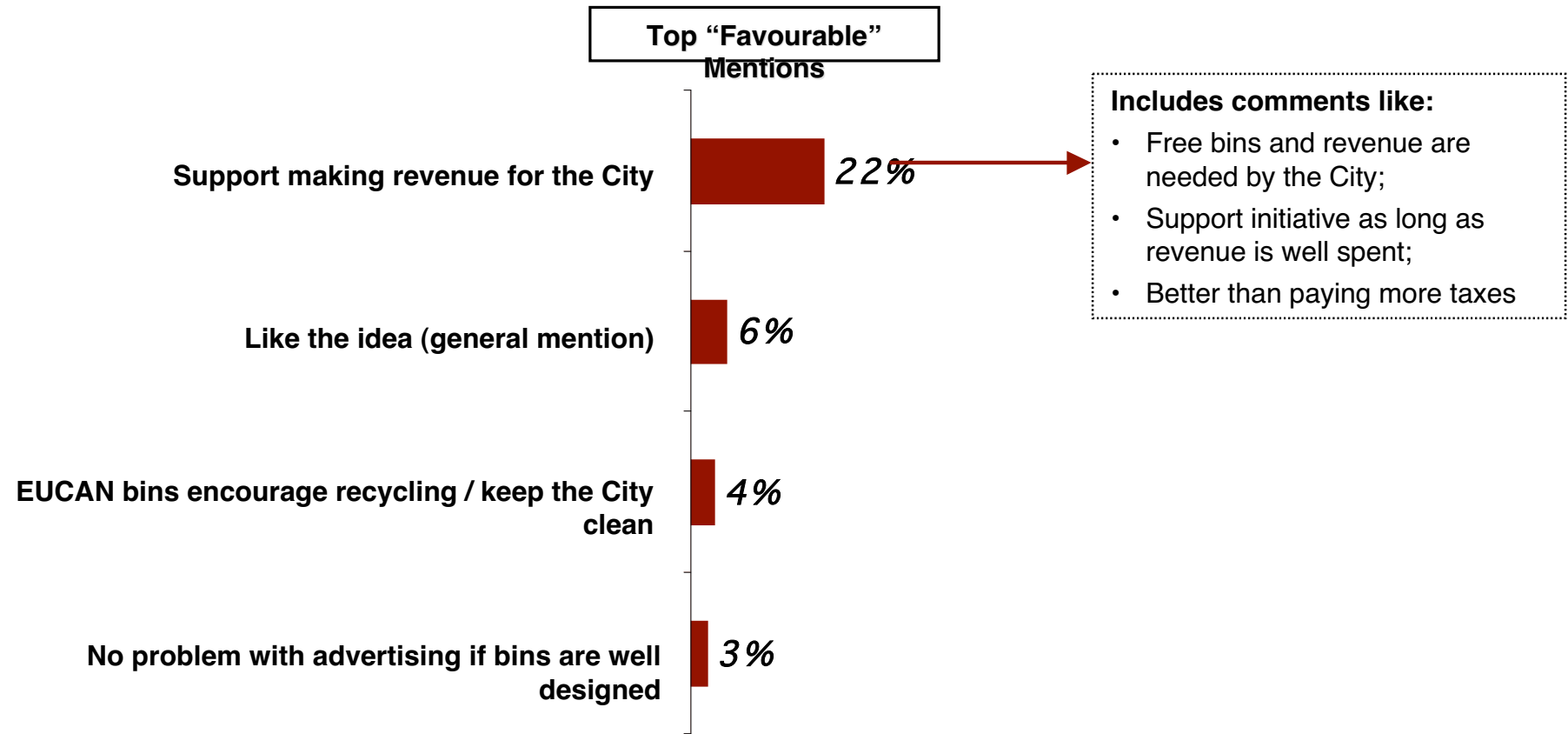
Q5. Are you in favour of the City installing these newly designed garbage / recycling bins with advertising if it meant that the City would receive these bins for free and receive increased revenue from the sale of commercial advertising space?

Rationale for Opposing New Bins



Q5. Please explain

Rationale for Favouring New Bins



Q5. Please explain

Rationale for Favouring / Opposing New Bins

– By survey type



- The on-line opponents are clearly being driven by a dislike of advertising in the public domain.
- Supporters of this initiative among both the telephone and street level intercepts feel that the additional revenue for the City will outweigh the costs.

Top Mentions – By Survey Type

	Total (4341)	Telephone (1750)	On-line (2391)	Street Intercept (200)
Dislike advertising in public spaces	23%	8%	36%	7%
Support making revenue for the City	22%	37%	12%	14%
Blight on streetscape / eyesore / visual pollution	17%	6%	26%	1%
Obtrusive	10%	2%	17%	1%
Too big / Too tall	9%	3%	14%	1%
Against making revenue like this	8%	2%	12%	2%
Capacity issues	8%	10%	6%	1%
Like idea (general mention)	6%	10%	2%	8%

Q5. Please explain

Additional Comments / Suggestions



- Respondents were all given an opportunity to raise any additional comments or make suggestions for the City of Toronto.
- Most of the comments made were already raised at various other points in the survey. A few original comments do, however, surface. These include:
 - The bins should not use electricity (3%)
 - The display space on bins should be used for public announcements / art events (1%)
 - Bins may be subject to vandalism (<1%)
 - Mixed reaction – some positive (1%), some negative (<1%) – to collecting cigarette butt waste.

Q6. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the newly designed garbage bins / re