



The importance of nature to Chelsea: ACRE Survey 2020 report

ACRE¹ surveyed Chelsea residents between July 13 – August 16, 2020 to better understand how they feel about the importance of nature and what actions can be taken locally to safeguard Chelsea's natural environment. The online survey was available in both English and French through surveyplanet.com and a copy of the survey is now archived on the ACRE website (<http://acrechelsea.qc.ca>). The survey was advertised through Chelsea Folks on Facebook, by direct email using ACRE's contact list and neighbourhood email groups, with posters around Chelsea village, and in the Low Down column Valley Voices.

In total 394 people completed the survey, 346 in English and 48 in French. The survey took approximately 7 minutes to complete, and had 12 questions in total, including questions about ACRE's activities, plus an open comment box for suggestions. Each of the questions reported on here, excluding the question about Chelsea's Master plan, invited respondents to select their top three choices from a list of options. The response to the survey was very positive and encouraging of ACRE's efforts towards an environmentally-healthy and sustainable community. 98 respondents left comments, the majority of which were to thank ACRE and to inquire about how to get involved and support ACRE's work.

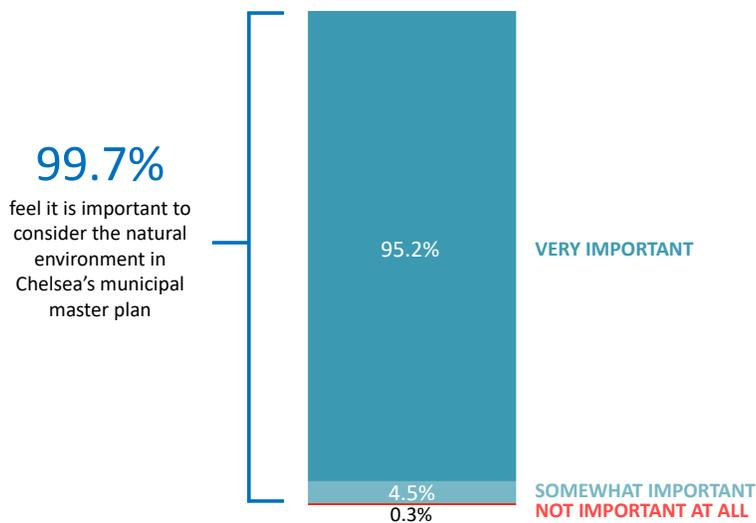
The importance of nature survey was in part motivated by the current review of Chelsea's Master plan. The Master plan review, scheduled to be completed by December 2021, offers an opportunity to update Chelsea's planning by-laws and regulations and to bring these into concordance with the MRC bylaws (by September 2021). Revising and updating Chelsea's Master plan also offers a rare opportunity to move away from business-as-usual development and to instead choose a development path that reflects resident's strong desire to protect natural ecosystems. This sentiment is echoed in our survey findings, where 95% of respondents

¹ ACRE (Action Chelsea for Respect of the Environment) is a non-profit, registered charity and registered land trust made up of concerned citizens working towards an environmentally-healthy & sustainable community. For more information visit <http://acrechelsea.qc.ca>.

felt that it was very important to consider the natural environment in the municipal Master plan.

Chelsea residents value many aspects of the environment and support local initiatives to strengthen nature conservation in Chelsea, to protect the quality and integrity of our ecosystems, and to reduce our carbon footprint. There is strong support for setting and achieving measurable goals such as protecting 30% of the natural environment by 2030 and becoming climate neutral by 2035.

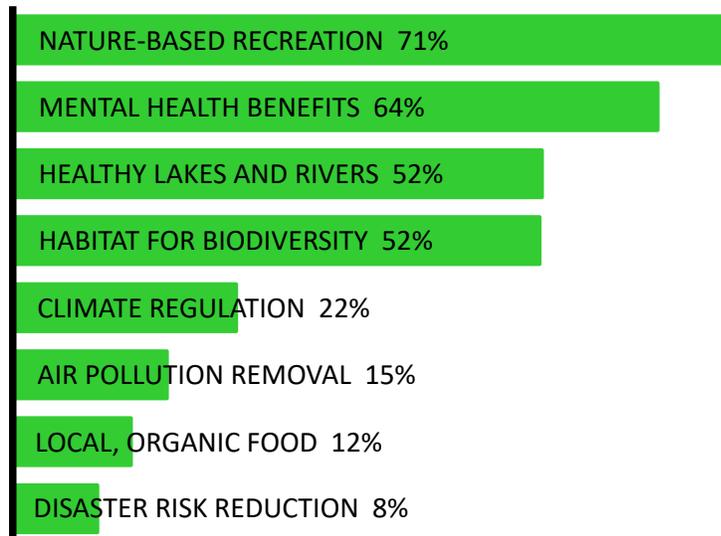
HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO CONSIDER THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN CHELSEA'S MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN?



- 95% of surveyed residents feel it is VERY IMPORTANT to consider the natural environment in Chelsea's long-term planning and in the municipal master plan revision
- 394 people participated in the survey
- Respondents are residents of Chelsea (96%), mostly over the age of 20 (81%), and most (87%) are not involved with ACRE

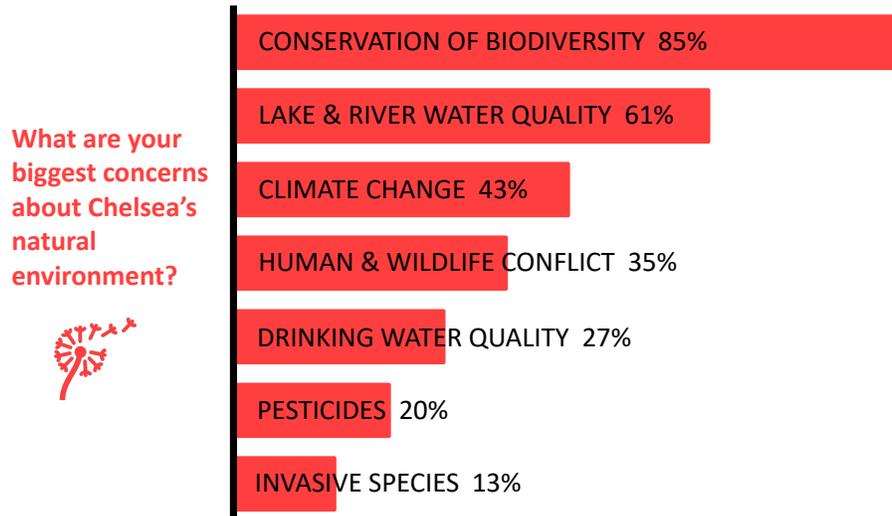
WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE ABOUT CHELSEA'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT?

What do you
most value about
Chelsea's natural
environment?



- 71% of respondents identify nature-based recreation and access to outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming, cycling and skiing, as one of the benefits they value most about Chelsea's natural environment.
- Almost 2/3 of respondents (64%) value the mental health benefits of being surrounded by nature and feeling connected to nature.
- More than half of respondents (52%) rank the healthy state of rivers and lakes as one of their top 3 benefits of Chelsea's natural environment.
- Similarly, 52% of respondents rank habitat for biodiversity and an appreciation of wilderness and wildlife among their top 3 choices for what they value most about Chelsea's environment.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CONCERNS RELATED TO CHELSEA'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT?

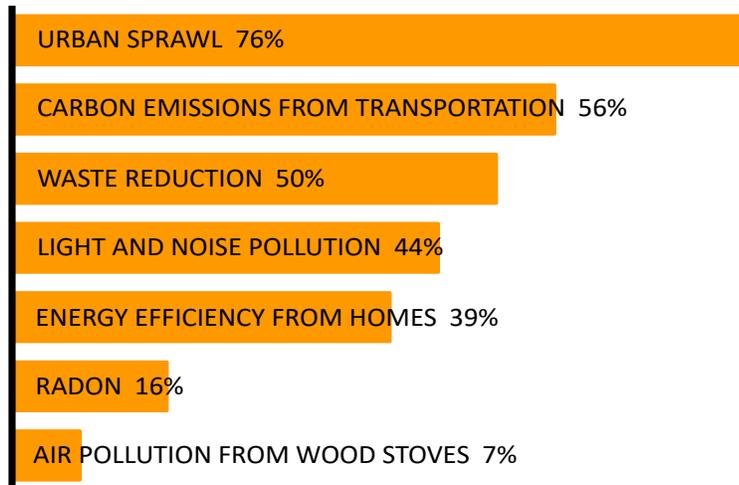


- Most respondents (85%) feel that the conservation of natural areas and biodiversity is one of the most important environmental concerns in Chelsea
- The water quality of lakes and rivers (61%) and climate change impacts (43%) are other key environmental concerns in Chelsea

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CONCERNS RELATED TO CHELSEA'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

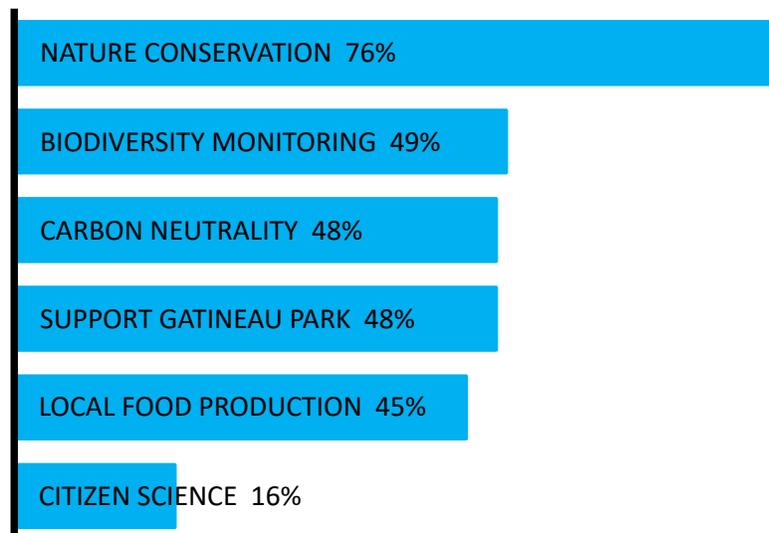
- The most important environmental concern related to Chelsea's built environment is urban sprawl (i.e., large developments outside of the village center); more than 75% of respondents picked this as a top concern.
- Reducing our carbon footprint in Chelsea (56%) and reducing waste (50%) are other top environmental priorities related to Chelsea's built environment, closely followed by light and noise pollution (44%) and energy efficiency in our houses (39%).

What are your biggest concerns about Chelsea's built environment?



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS CHELSEA RESIDENTS CAN TAKE LOCALLY TO ADDRESS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES?

What are the most important local actions to address global environmental problems?



- There is strong support (76%) for local actions to strengthen nature conservation in the municipal plan and to support the goal of protecting 30% of the planet by 2030

