



DATE: October 13, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 3

**TO:** Environmental Commission  
**FROM:** J. Logan, Staff Liaison  
**SUBJECT:** Environmental public information forums

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and discuss opportunities, topics and methodology for public education and outreach

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Environmental Commission 2014/15 Work Plan, Goal 1, is to provide environmentally relevant information to the community to improve sustainability in accordance with the Council goals to advance natural resource conservation and environmental quality in Los Altos.

The Commission determines topics and opportunities for approved public forums related to sustainability. An example of public outreach activities were public forums held prior to the award of the waste disposal contract and a study to determine both Municipal and Community Green House Gas emissions for the City. Current outreach efforts include the design and analysis of a survey to the community to facilitate and gain public input for the Los Altos Climate Action Plan in coordination with the Climate Action Plan consultant firm and with the Community Development Department. An additional topic is single-use bags and issues involved with polystyrene products.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Environmental Commission held a public forum on recycling, diversion and composting on February 22, 2014. The Commission is continuing discussion regarding community education and outreach activities for the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

To that goal, a Commission subcommittee is exploring topic ideas and approaches on additional ways to engage the public via education and information forums, various outreach mechanisms. In addition, the Commission seeks to explore with the public via a survey which topics would be of interest and ones they would participate in to gather further information.

The subcommittee composed of Commissioner Ardehali, Vice Chair Chris Keller and Chair Gary Hedden presented an update to the public education and information outreach plan. A public interest survey was created by Commissioner Eyre and vetted with Councilwoman Val Carpenter and staff to assess City of Los Altos residents' interest in environmental topics. The survey was conducted at the July 10 and July 24 Farmers' Market and the results were discussed at the August meeting.

Chair Hedden will give update regarding communications with the Chair of the BPAC, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, and the opportunity to study the issues as a joint commission project.

A subcommittee was also appointed at the September meeting composed of Commissioners Ardehali and Eyre to explore opportunities for Cal Water and the Commission to work together on water conservation public education and outreach. The subcommittee will give its report.

Attachments:

- A. Summary of survey results: July 10 & 24, 2014
- B. Results of Survey by Environmental Commission

# ATTACHMENT A

	Bicycle & pedestrian	Water conservation	Native plant landscaping	Eating sustainable food	Saving energy at home	Toxic chemicals in the home and yard	Electric & alternative
Chart 1	29	17	14	13	13	9	14
Chart 2	28	18	14	14	21	9	16
Chart 3	9	11	8	9	4	8	6
Chart 4	15	7	10	8	5	15	3
Total	81	53	46	44	43	41	39
	Graywater plumbing	Growing organic food	Solar energy	Caring for our local creeks	Community environmental	Recycling and waste reduction	Local birds and
Chart 1	10	14	14	13	13	12	11
Chart 2	14	12	10	7	4	11	10
Chart 3	4	2	4	8	6	2	5
Chart 4	10	9	8	6	11	8	6
Total	38	37	36	34	34	33	32
	Composting	Green building	Climate change	Other	Green business certification		
Chart 1	13	10	11	3	3		
Chart 2	9	8	8	4	2		
Chart 3	1	5	5	3	4		
Chart 4	7	3	2	5	2		
Total	30	26	26	15	11		

	Email	Web	Local news	Workshops and	Facebook	Other	Twitter
Chart 1	16	16	6	14	5	2	1
Chart 2	13	16	13	8	4	1	0
Chart 3	5	5	6	4	2	0	1
Chart 4	7	2	11	5	3	1	0
Total	41	39	36	31	14	4	2

	Interested in environmental programs for teenagers	Not interested in environmental programs for children and teenagers
Chart 1	13	3
Chart 2	16	2
Chart 3	2	0
Chart 4	8	0
Total	39	5

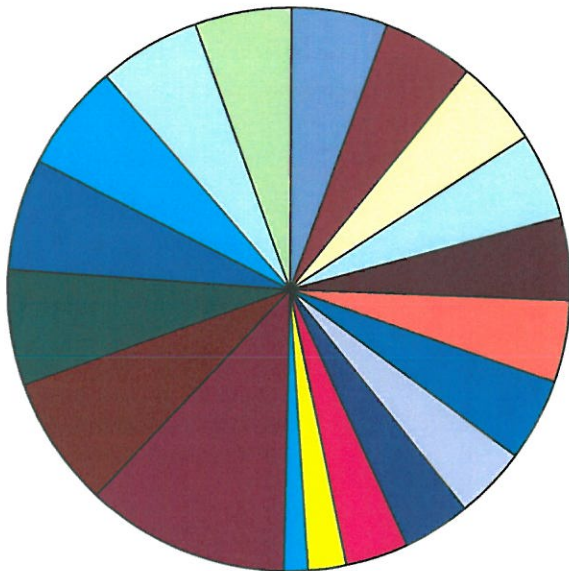
7/10/14 Total Responses	7/24/14 Total Responses
488	249

Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info	81
Water conservation	53
Native plant landscaping	46
Eating sustainable food	44
Saving energy at home	43
Toxic chemicals	41
Electric & alternative fuel powered vehicles	39
Graywater plumbing	38
Growing organic food	37
Solar energy	36
Caring for our local creeks	34
Community environmental metrics	34
Recycling and waste reduction	33
Local birds and wildlife	32
Composting	30
Green building	26
Climate change	26
Other	15
Green business certification	11

Email	41
Web	39
Local news	36
Workshops and events	31
Facebook	14
Other	4
Twitter	2

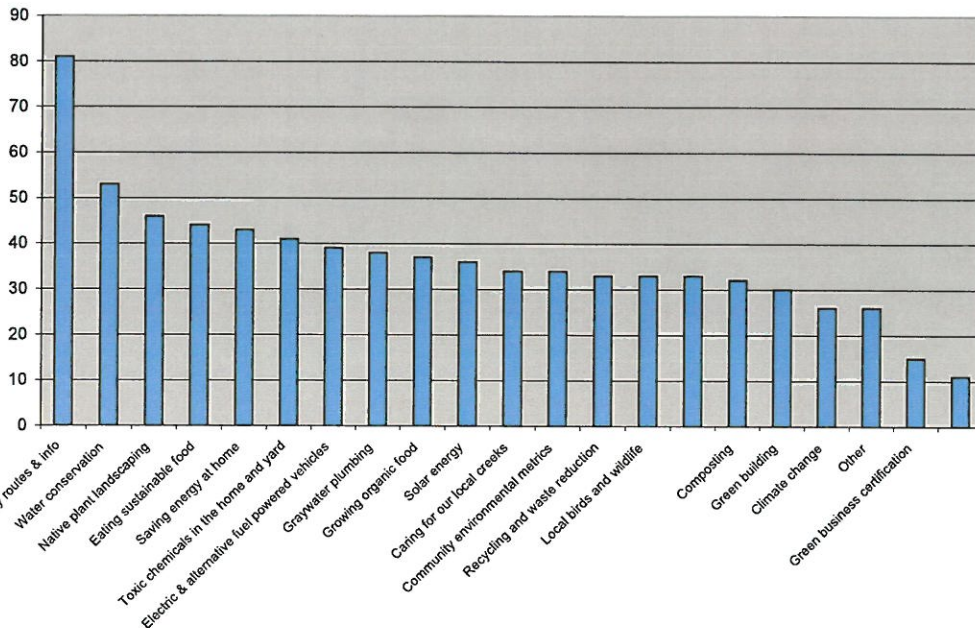
Interested in environmental programs for teenagers	39
Not interested in environmental programs for children and teenagers	5

"Which Topic Would You Like to Know More About?"

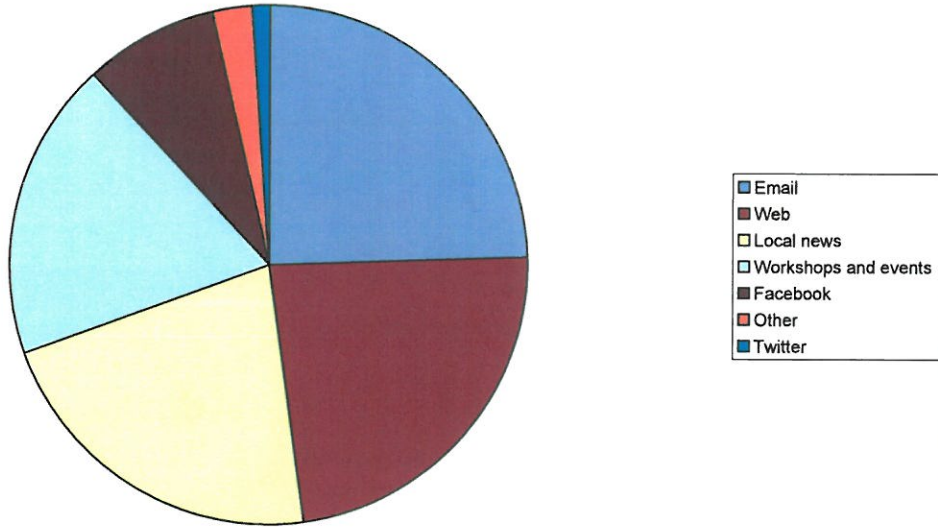


- Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info
- Water conservation
- Native plant landscaping
- Eating sustainable food
- Saving energy at home
- Toxic chemicals in the home and yard
- Electric & alternative fuel powered vehicles
- Graywater plumbing
- Growing organic food
- Solar energy
- Caring for our local creeks
- Community environmental metrics
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Local birds and wildlife
- Composting
- Green building
- Climate change
- Other
- Green business certification

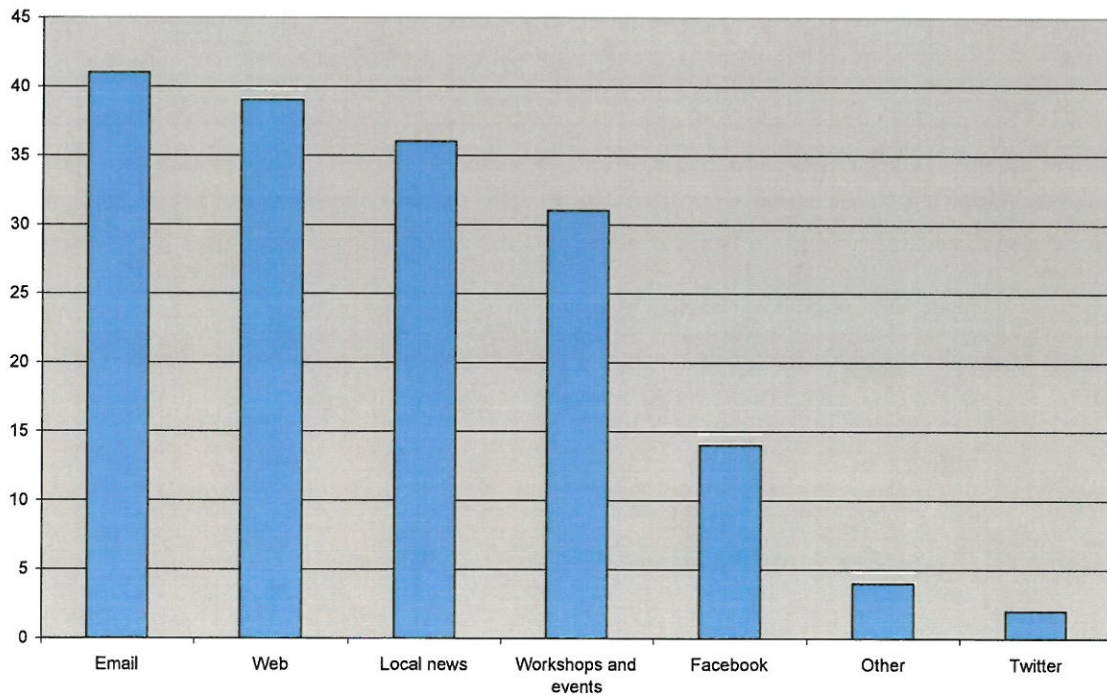
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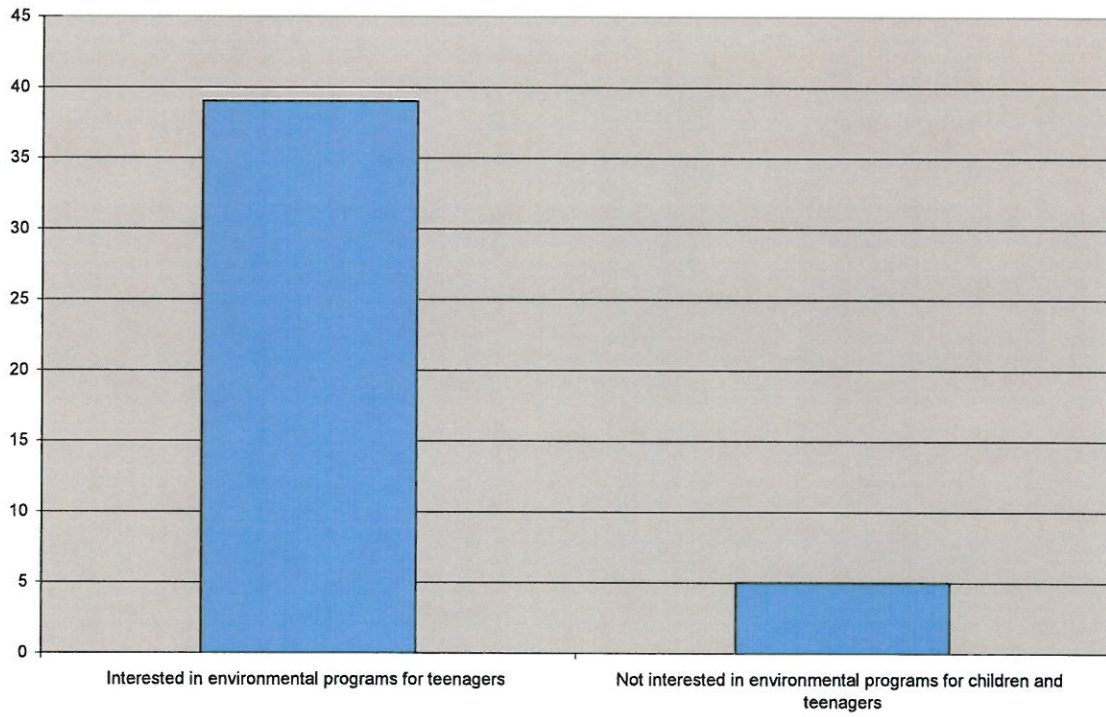
"How Would You Like to Learn About Environmental & Sustainability Information?"



"How Would You Like To Learn About Environmental & Sustainability Information?"



**"Are You Interested In Environmental Programs For Children and Teenagers?"**



## Results of Survey by Environmental Commission

Conducted July 10 and July 21, 2014

**DRAFT**

On July 10 and 24, 2014, members of the City of Los Altos' Environmental Commission tabled a booth at the Los Altos Farmers Market to conduct the survey. The objectives of the survey were to find out 1) what environmentally-related information residents would like to learn about and 2) how they would like to learn it.

At the booth we set up two large posters on easels and asked those passing the booth to put dots on the items of interest. We pre-qualified people to make sure they lived in Los Altos. Each respondent was given small sticky dots. Respondents were allowed to use as many dots as they wanted so they did not need to prioritize.

Two changes were made between the first and second event:

- The order of items was reversed. For example, Bicycle and Pedestrian friendly routes and info was near the top on the 10th and it was near the bottom on the 24th. The following poster images show what was used at each. This was done to see if the order mattered in terms of responses.
- One of the information sources was "The Web" at the first event and changed to the "Environmental Commission Website" at the second.

### Results

Although the results are not "statistically significant, the survey shows that there interest in environmental topics in our community, with the higher demand items being around Climate Action Plan parameters, water conservation, and healthy lifestyle.

Chart 1 shows the total responses of all of the items of interest. For each item, the blue bar represents responses on July 10th and the red represents responses on the 24th. "Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info", for example, was the most requested overall. This is despite the fact that it was near the bottom of the list on the poster in the second event. It was also the top ranked item at both events.



**Chart 1: Total Responses to Survey (higher number is more in demand)**

Note: The July 24th event had fewer respondents so the absolute number cannot be compared between one event and the other.

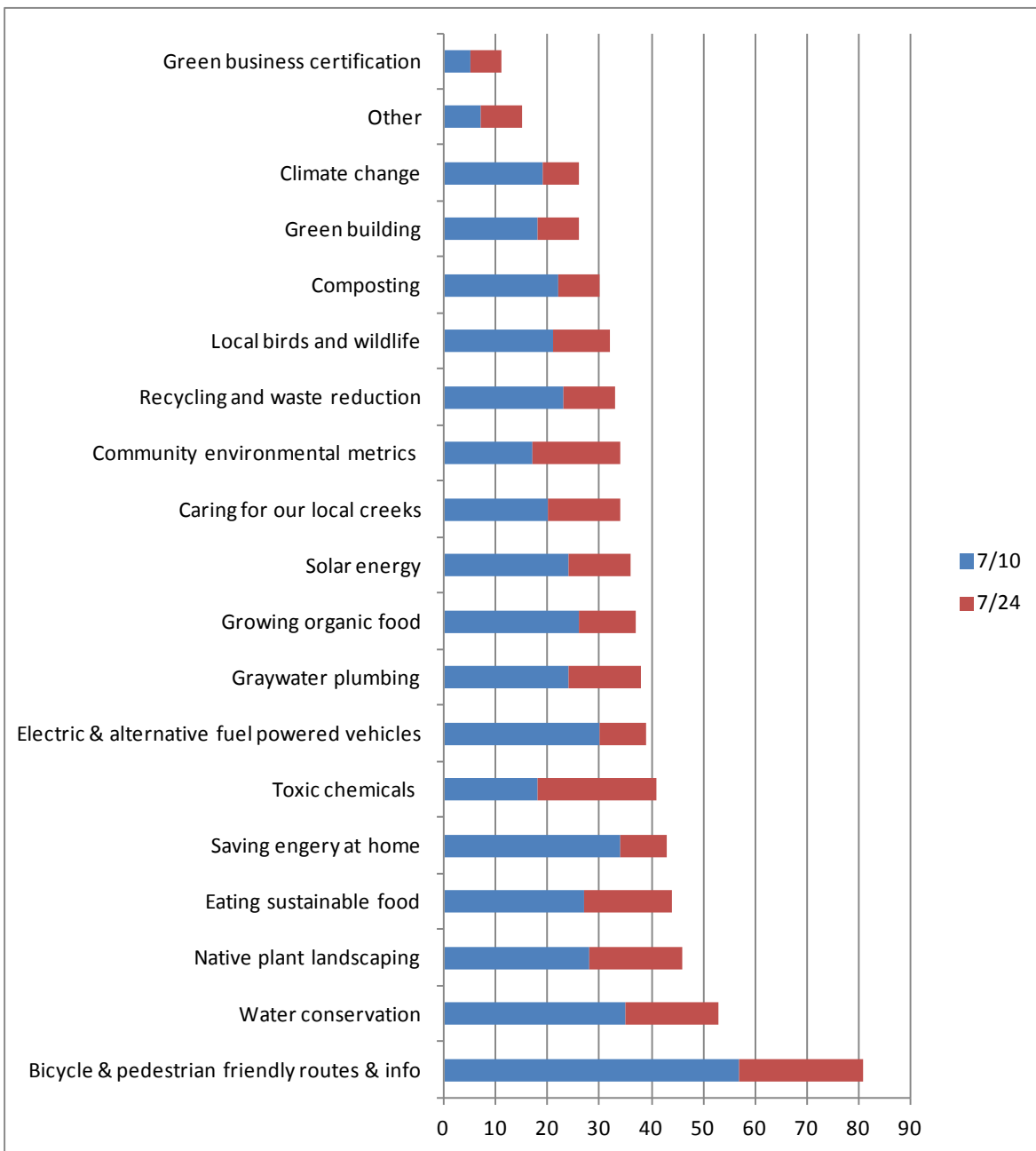
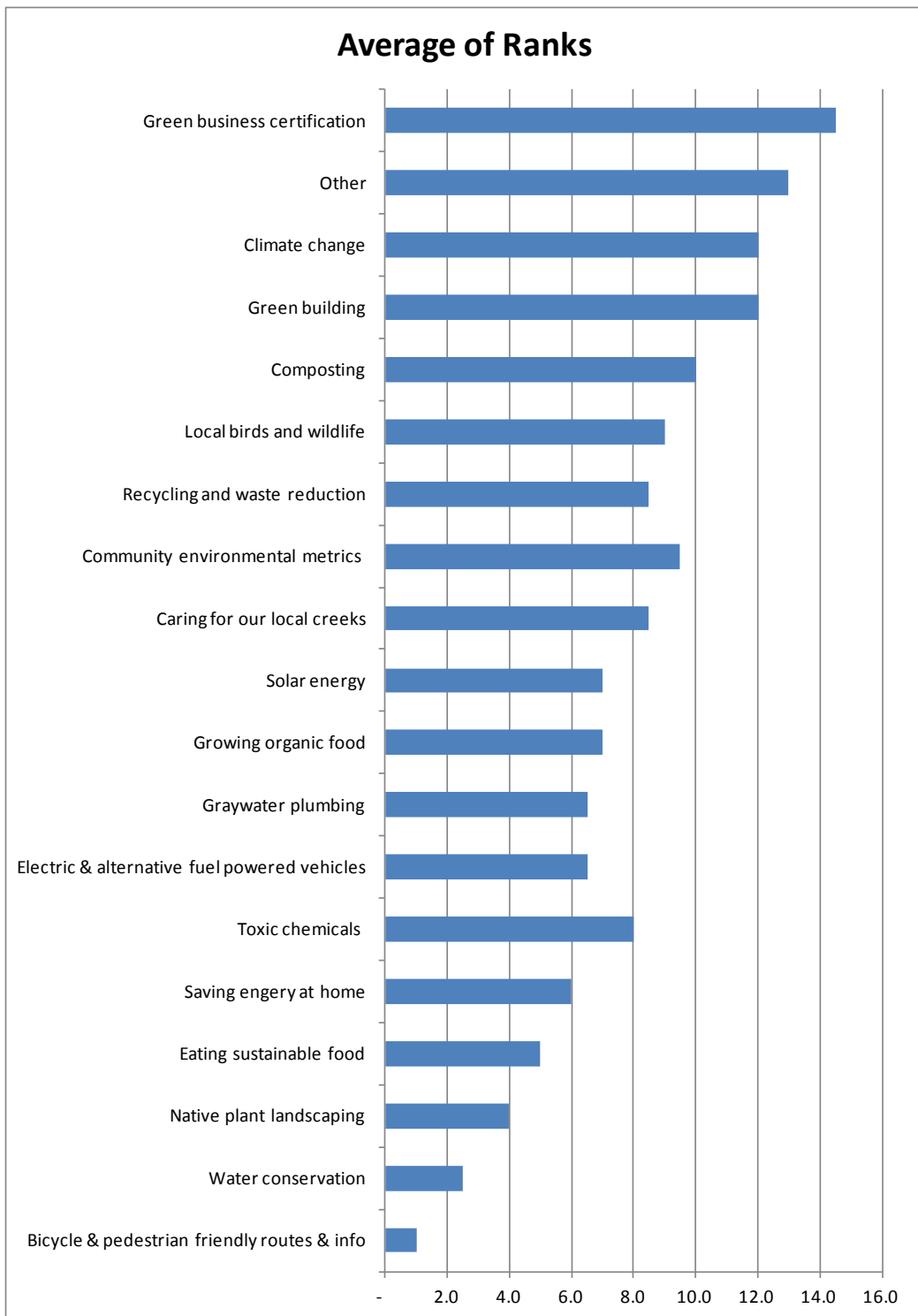


Chart 2 shows the average of rankings. For the most part it is fairly consistent with the absolute number of responses. For example, toxic chemicals and electric and alternative fuel vehicles switched places.

The top items in order, when considering average rankings, are:

1. Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info
2. Water conservation
3. Native plant landscaping
4. Eating sustainable food
5. Saving energy at home
6. Electric & alternative fuel powered vehicles
7. Graywater plumbing
8. Growing organic food
9. Solar energy
10. Toxic chemicals

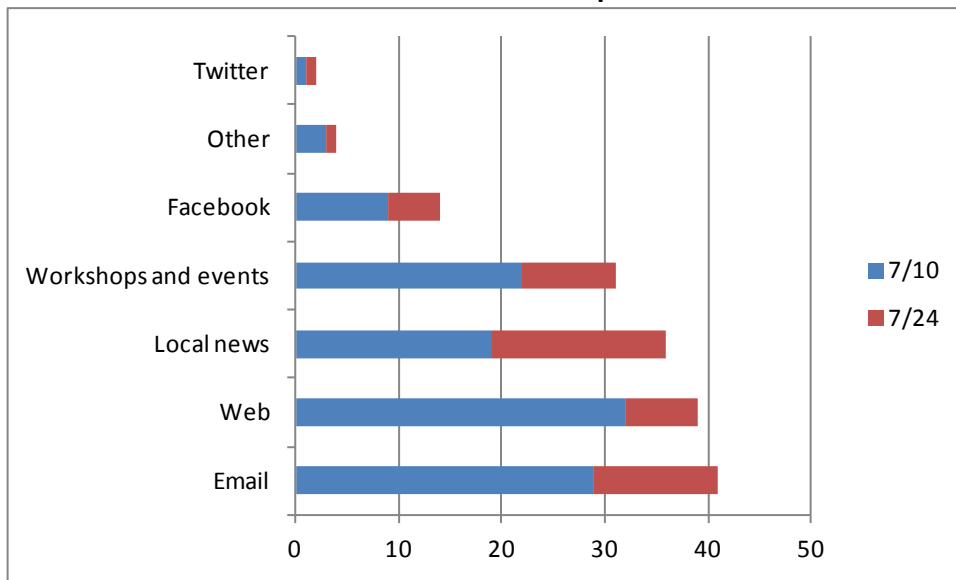
**Chart 2: Average of Ranks between two events (lower number is more in demand)**



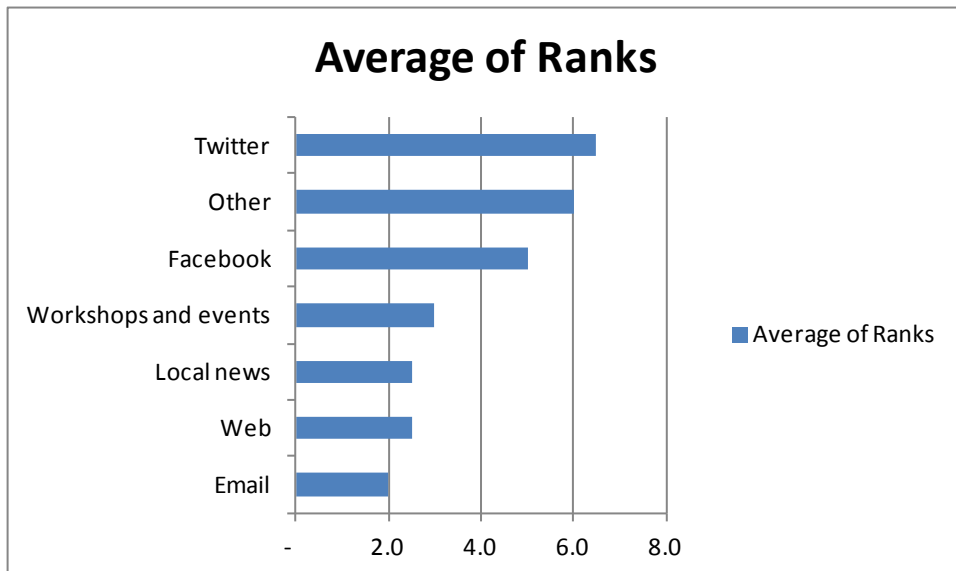
When looking at how people would like to receive this information, email was the preferred absolute and average ranked methods. Note that the on July 10th, the item called web was simply labeled "The Web". On July 24th, it was changed to "Environmental Commission Website". It seems safe to conclude that if it was labeled as the Environmental Commission Website for both events, the number of responses and ranking would have been lower.

Based on this it appears most people would prefer to receive environmental information via emails and the local news, followed by the Environmental Commission website and workshops. Facebook, although lower rated, could be easily done in conjunction with website postings.

**Absolute number of responses**



**Average of Ranks**



Finally, many respondents would like to see environmental programs for teenagers. What these might be would need to be further explored. This could be a topic that a local non-profit like GreenTown or Acterra might look into.

	<b>7/10</b>	<b>7/24</b>	<b>Total of Both Events</b>
Interested in environmental programs for teenagers	29	10	39
Not interested in environmental programs for children and teenagers	5	0	5

## Version 1 of Poster: Used at 7/10 Farmer's Market

City of Los Altos Environmental Commission Survey	
<b>Which topic would you like to know more about?</b>	
Electric & alternative fuel powered vehicles	
Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info	
Saving energy at home	
Green building	
Solar energy	
Caring for our local creeks	
Local birds and wildlife	
Water conservation	
Graywater plumbing	
Eating sustainable food	
Growing organic food	
Composting	
Native plant landscaping	
Recycling and waste reduction	
Toxic chemicals in the home and yard	
Green business certification	
Climate change	
Community environmental metrics (such as community greenhouse gas levels or energy or water usage)	
Other	
<b>How would you like to learn about environmental &amp; sustainability information?</b>	
Web	
Email	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Local news (ex: Town Crier or Patch)	
Workshops and events	
Other	
<b>Are you interested in environmental programs for children and teenagers?</b>	
Yes	
No	

## Version 2 of Poster: Used at 7/24 Farmer's Market

City of Los Altos Environmental Commission Survey	
<b>Which topic would you like to know more about?</b>	
Community environmental metrics (such as energy or water usage)	
Climate change	
Green business certification	
Toxic chemicals in the home and yard	
Recycling and waste reduction	
Native plant landscaping	
Composting	
Growing organic food	
Eating sustainable food	
Graywater plumbing	
Water conservation	
Local birds and wildlife	
Caring for our local creeks	
Solar energy	
Green building	
Saving energy at home	
Bicycle & pedestrian friendly routes & info	
Electric & alternative fuel vehicles	
Other	
<b>How would you like to learn about environmental issues from the Environmental Commission?</b>	
Environmental Commission website	
Email	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Local news (ex: Town Crier or Patch)	
Workshops and events	
Other	
<b>Are you interested in environmental programs for children and teenagers?</b>	
Yes	
No	

