



2020 COVID-19 Face Coverings Survey: Strathcona County Results



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I. Introduction and Purpose of the Study

In late July 2020, Strathcona County conducted an online survey of residents' perceptions toward wearing non-medical face coverings in indoor settings where other people could potentially congregate. This is specifically targeted at indoor facilities such as grocery stores and other indoor shops, restaurants (entry and exits) apart from actual dining, medical facilities and other indoor places. This would also include large convention and sports facilities for those watching an event, should these be open again to the public in the future. One's personal home was exempt, although visitors outside of the household cohort would be encouraged to wear a face covering, but this would be at the homeowner's discretion. The use of face coverings has previously been mandated in County owned facilities.

Obtaining primary data directly from residents provides Strathcona County departments with information and enables County officials to make decisions that accurately reflect the perspectives and attitudes of residents. Although the survey was tailored to residents, those living outside the County could also take part in the study if they wished, as visitors to the County would also be required to wear a face coverings when visiting any indoor facility, be it County owned or otherwise.

This report provides a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

II. Methodology

A. The questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was newly created specifically for this study. The creation of questions was based on published questionnaires from other municipalities and tailored to be answered by residents from both urban and rural parts of Strathcona County. In addition to demographics, up to four questions were asked in this survey:

- At the present time, how often do you wear a face covering in public, while visiting indoor spaces such as grocery stores, businesses, shopping malls and public transit?
- What challenges do you experience while wearing a face covering in public? (Up to 10 options could be selected)
- To what extent do you support or oppose requiring the public to wear a face covering while visiting indoor public spaces such as grocery stores, shopping malls, community facilities etc. in Strathcona County?
- *For business owners only:* A mandatory face covering bylaw would make it easier for me to enforce wearing of face coverings in my place of business.

Due to a quick turn-around of the data analysis, no open-ended questions were asked in this survey.

B. Sampling design and data collection procedure

The survey was made available online on two platforms. The first was through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP). The other was an open online survey where information was gathered with Survey Gizmo, which was geared toward both residents and non-residents who were not members of SCOOP. Citizens who worked in Strathcona County but did not reside here could also take part in the study. In addition, people who did not

work in Strathcona County and did not live here could take part in the survey if they wanted. If a bylaw mandating the wearing of face coverings is passed, those people from outside the County who visit it are also subject to the regulations imposed by the bylaw.

The online survey ran between July 30 and August 4, 2020, during which 7,960 people took part in the survey. Although poll based data is based on people who decide to participate and were not randomly selected, and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is $\pm 1.1\%$, 19 times out of 20. The data was analyzed by Strathcona County's Communications using SPSS for Windows.

III. RESULTS

This section of the report presents a summary of the results associated with the perceptions and awareness of residents. Socio-demographic comparisons, where significant, are also highlighted.

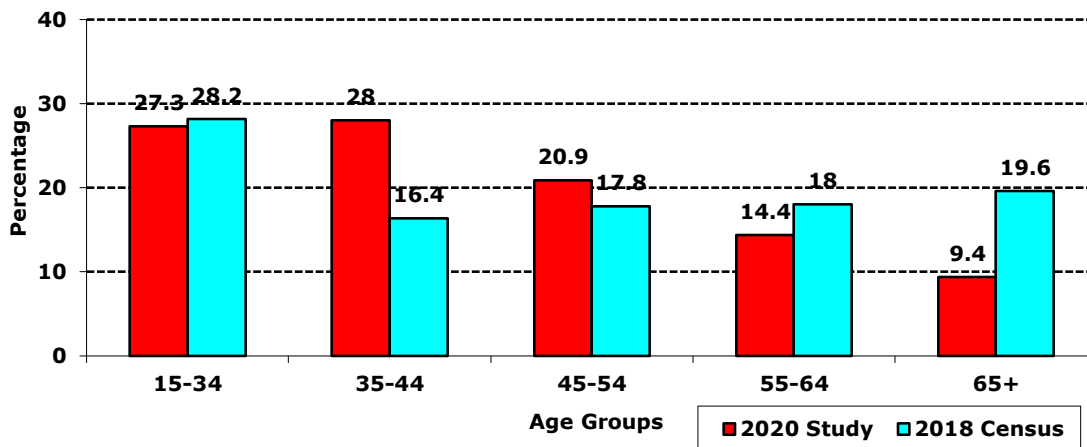
A. Demographic overview

This section of the report presents an overview of the type of people who completed the online survey. The final urban/rural split was fairly close to the actual proportions, with 73.3% (n=5,831) of the respondents being from Sherwood Park, 18.8% (n=1,493) living in rural Strathcona County and the remaining 8.0% (636) residing outside of the County.

A breakdown of the age of respondents is shown in Figure 1¹. There was a relatively good representation from most age groups, though in comparison to the 2018 municipal census, the study data for the 65 and older age group was under-represented.

FIGURE 1

Age of County respondents



On a proportionate basis, considerably more females (69.9%) than males (30.1%) completed the online survey. On a numerical basis, however, there were strong numbers of County males (n=2,171) and County females (n=5,044) who provided their opinions on face coverings usage.

¹ Figure 1 excludes those people who did not live in Strathcona County.

With respect to using the full sample (which included people living outside of the County), the proportion was almost the same. On a numerical basis using all the data there were 2,367 males and 5,473 females who provided their opinions on face coverings usage. An additional 120 people did not disclose their gender.

B. Overall Results (All respondent data used)

The initial question asked respondents to indicate their current use of face coverings when visiting public spaces such as grocery stores, shopping malls and public transit. The overall results are shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that there are more people who choose to wear a face covering than those who do not.

FIGURE 2
How often do you wear a face covering in an indoor space

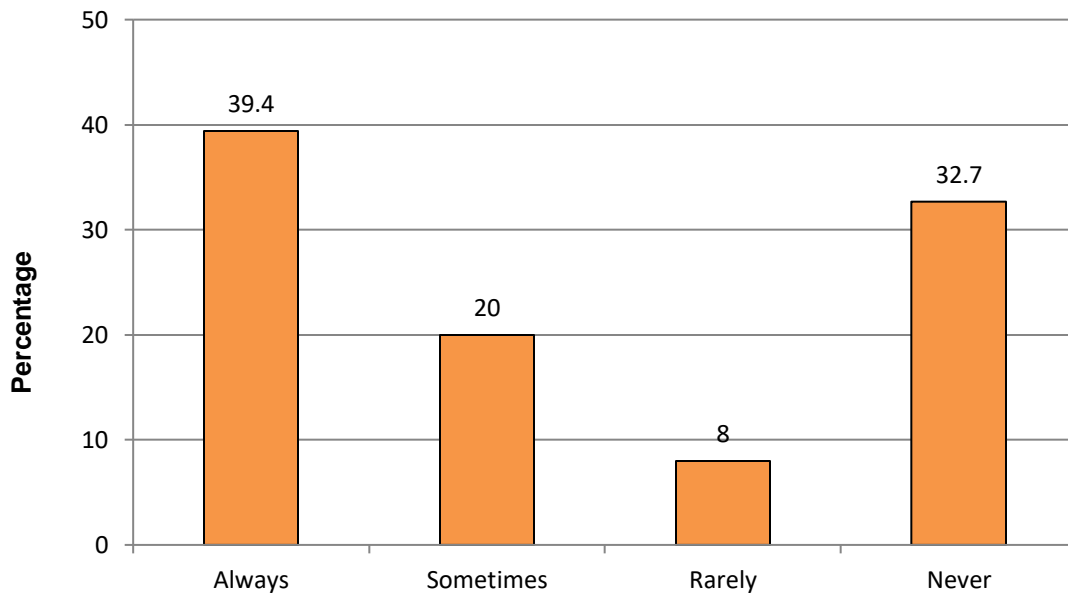
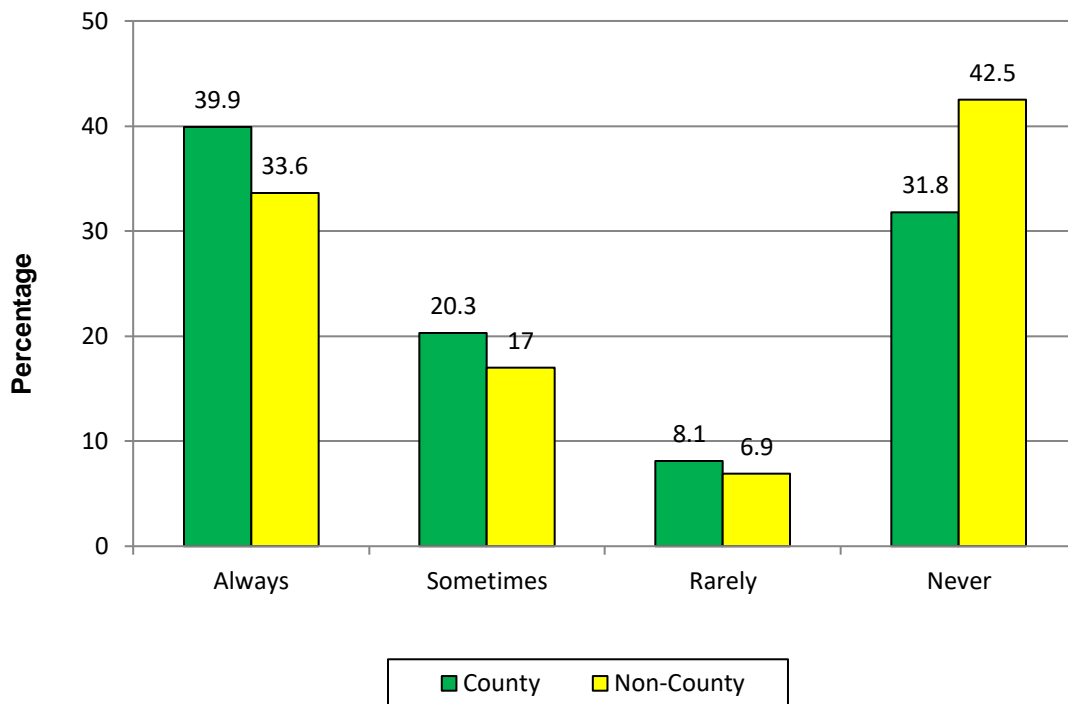


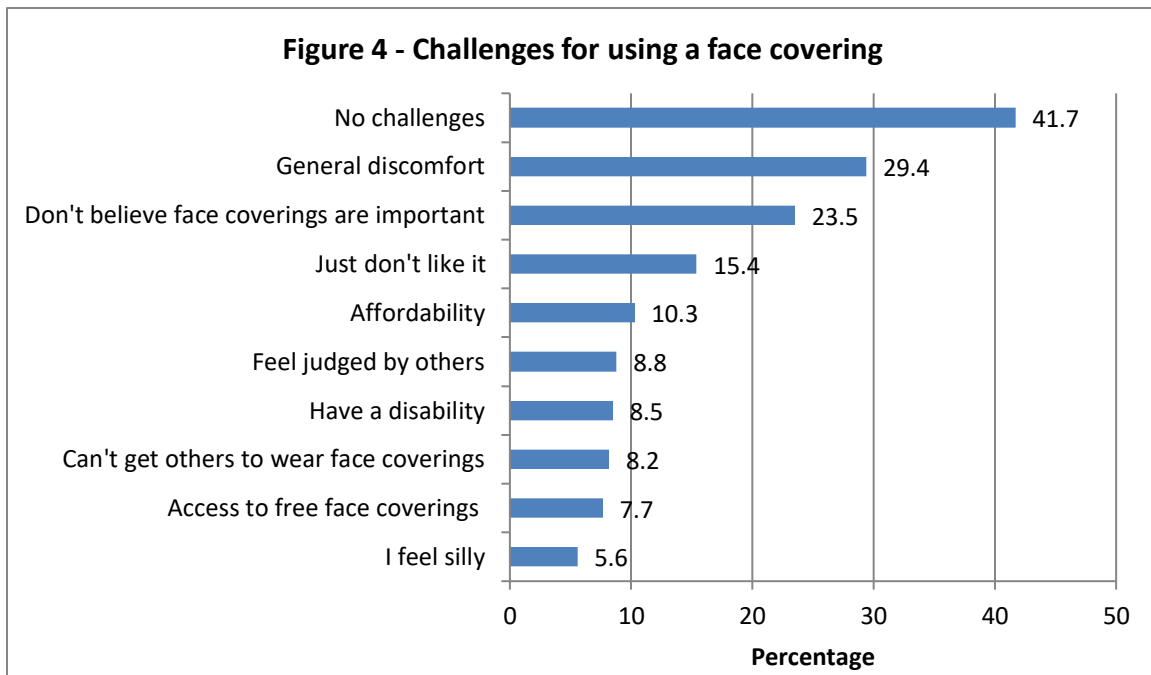
Figure 3 presents a comparison of current face coverings' use between those who live in the County and those who do not. It can be seen that on a proportionate basis, slightly more people living outside the County choose not to wear a face coverings at the present time.

FIGURE 3
How often do you wear a face covering in an indoor space



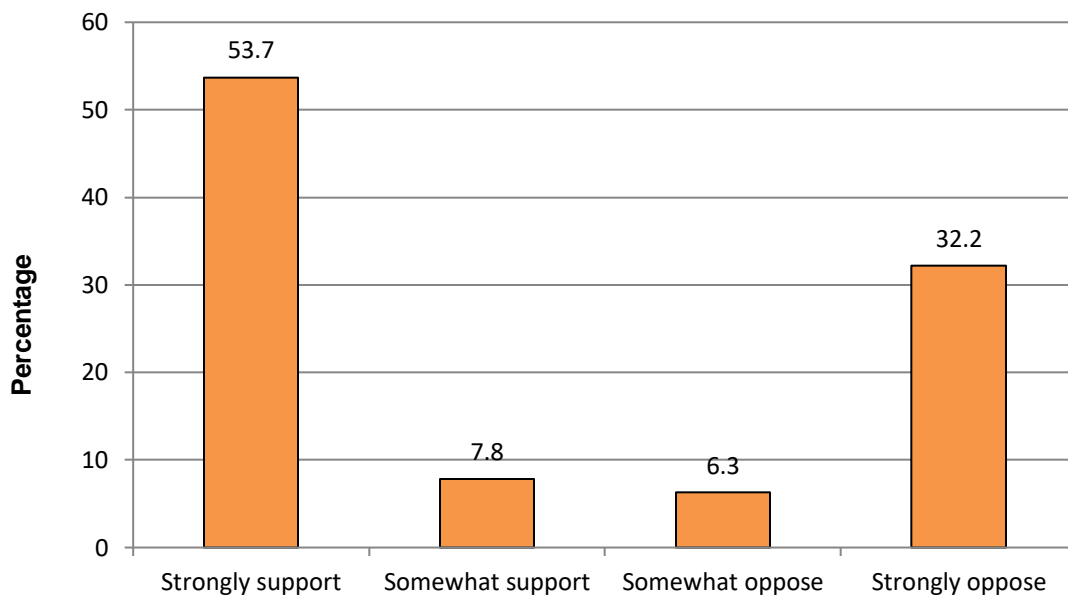
Respondents were then asked what challenges they had (if any) about wearing a face covering in public. Overall, the majority of respondents (41.7% or 3,318 people) did not experience any challenges. Of those who did, the following issues were noted:

- General discomfort – 29.4%
- Don't believe that wearing a face covering is important – 23.5%
- I just don't like it – 15.4%
- Affordability (for purchasing face coverings) – 10.3%
- I feel judged by others – 8.8%
- I have a disability that makes it hard to wear a face covering (such as the need to read lips because of hearing loss, autism, or breathing issues such as COPD) – 8.5%
- Can't get children and/or other members of the family to wear a face covering – 8.2%
- Access to locations where free face coverings were available – 7.7%
- I feel silly – 5.6%



Finally, people were asked to what extent do they support or oppose requiring the public to wear a face covering while visiting indoor public spaces such as grocery stores, shopping malls, community facilities etc. in Strathcona County. The overall results are shown in Figure 5. The majority support a requirement for the public to wear face coverings.

FIGURE 5
Degree of support for the public wearing a face covering



An extra question was added for those in the County who operated or managed a business. Overall, 11.1% of the respondents did. Those people were then asked whether a mandatory face covering bylaw would make it easier for them to enforce wearing of face coverings in their place of business. As seen in Figure 6, the majority did not think a bylaw would make things easier.

FIGURE 6
Would a mandatory help enforce people wearing face coverings at their place of business?

