

INFORMING SEPTIC TO SEWER CONVERSION OUTREACH IN FLORIDA THROUGH COMMUNITY- BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

Springs Coast Steering Committee

November 9, 2022



NEWS

Everyone wants to clean up the lagoon, so why are sewer-conversion grants going unused?

Janet Begley Special to TCPalm

Published 4:07 p.m. ET Jan. 28, 2021

[View Comments](#)



SEBASTIAN—The city's septic-to-sewer conversion program, which provides grants to homeowners and businesses in the community redevelopment area east of U.S. 1 to hook up to the county sewer system, has had few takers.



Sandy Soil And Rising Seas Spell Septic Tank Disaster In Florida

By NPR News

July 17, 2019 Environment

Not everyone accepts reasoning for septic conversions, cost

By ANDREA TRACITZET Assistant Editor | Oct 8, 2016 | Updated: Jun 23, 2020 | 7 min to read



Wekiva septic conversion stinks for homeowners but it may save the springs

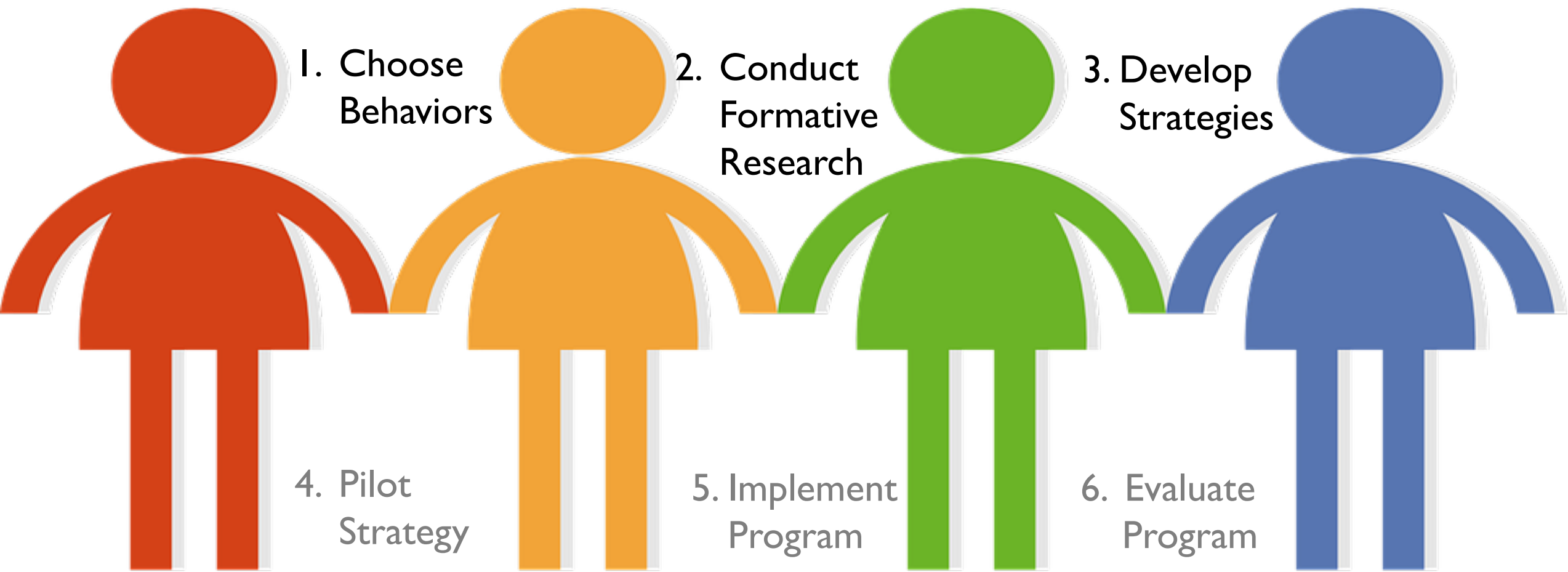
By STEPHEN HUDAK
ORLANDO SENTINEL | NOV 01, 2019 AT 12:29 PM



Ormond Beach suspends septic-to-sewer conversion in unanimous vote



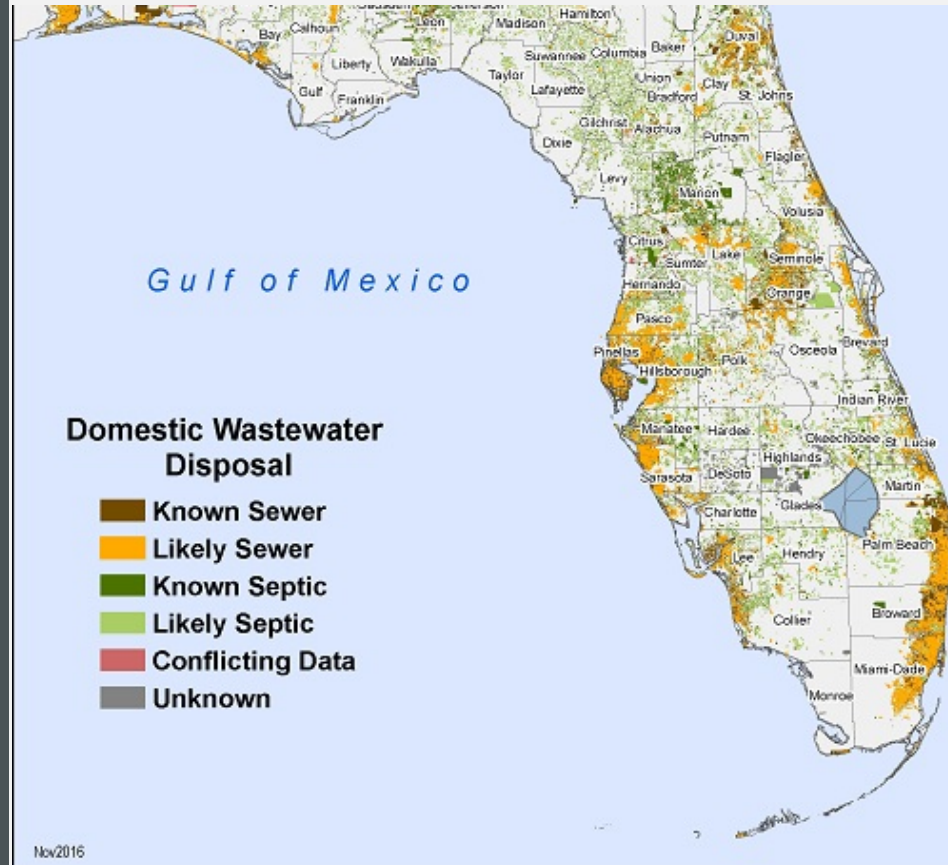
THE TYPICAL APPROACH



COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

METHODS

1. Select behavior
Septic to sewer conversions
2. Identify audience
State septic homeowners
(known and likely)
3. Barrier & benefit
research
Interviews, focus groups,
online survey



Source: FDOH Florida Water Management Inventory Project



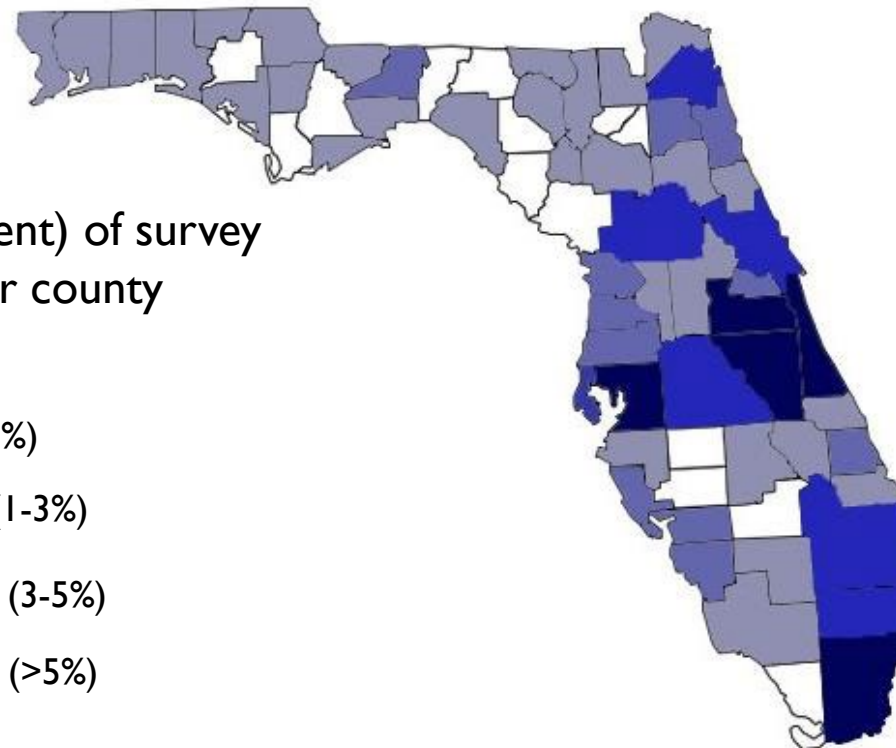
WHO

(N = 517)

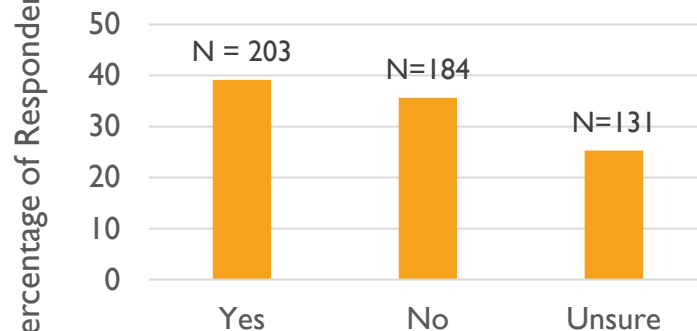
Gender			
Male	294	56.9	
Female	222	42.9	
Other/Non-binary	1	0.2	

Area of Residence			
A farm in a rural area	23	4.4	
Rural area, not a farm	72	13.9	
Urban or suburban area outside of city limits	280	54.2	
Subdivision in a town or city	98	19.0	
Downtown area in a town or city	44	8.5	

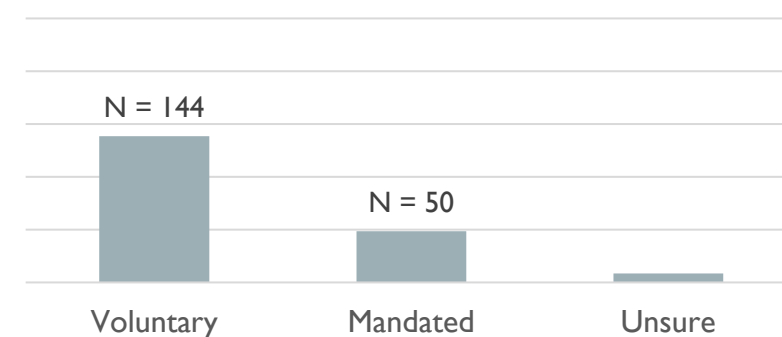
Previously Lived in Home on a Sewer System			
Yes	374	72.3	
No	123	23.8	



Are there current, future, or completed plans for sewer conversion in your community?



Was this conversion voluntary or mandated?



KNOWLEDGE

Respondents' self-perceived knowledge of septic to sewer conversion topics

Overall population (n = 517)

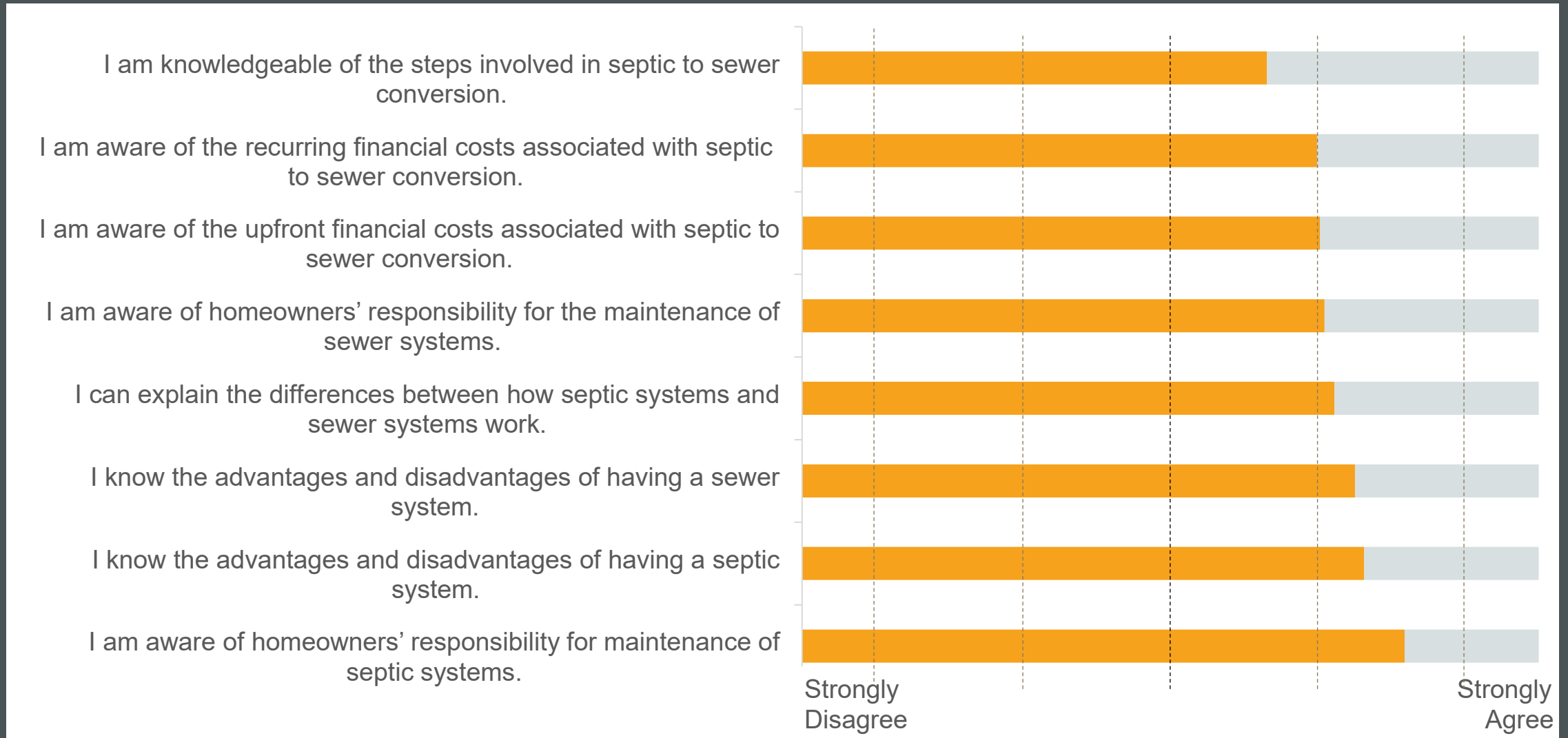
Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

4.62

5.27**

5.07**



Percent correct for respondents' **objective** knowledge assessment

Overall population (n = 517)

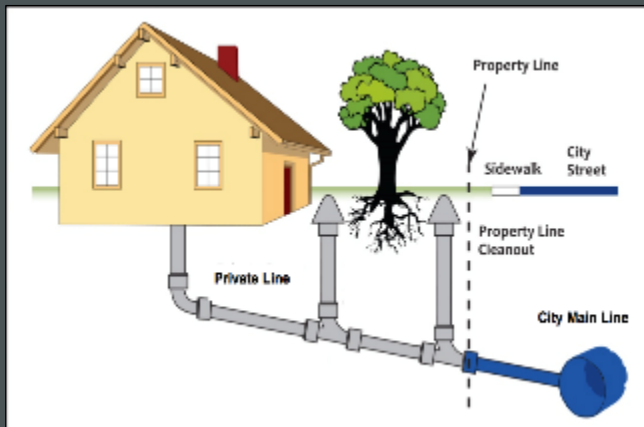
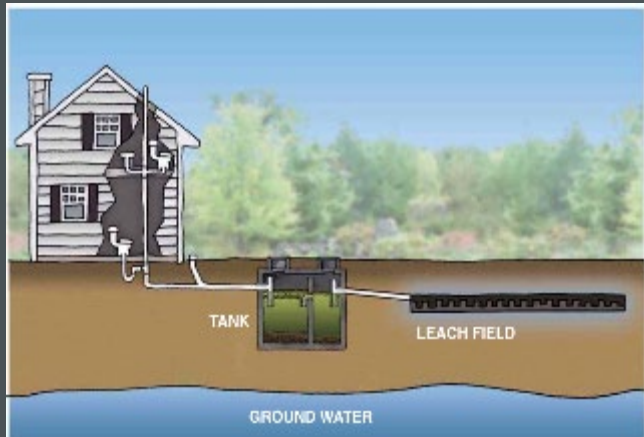
54.7%

Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

31.9%**

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

32%**



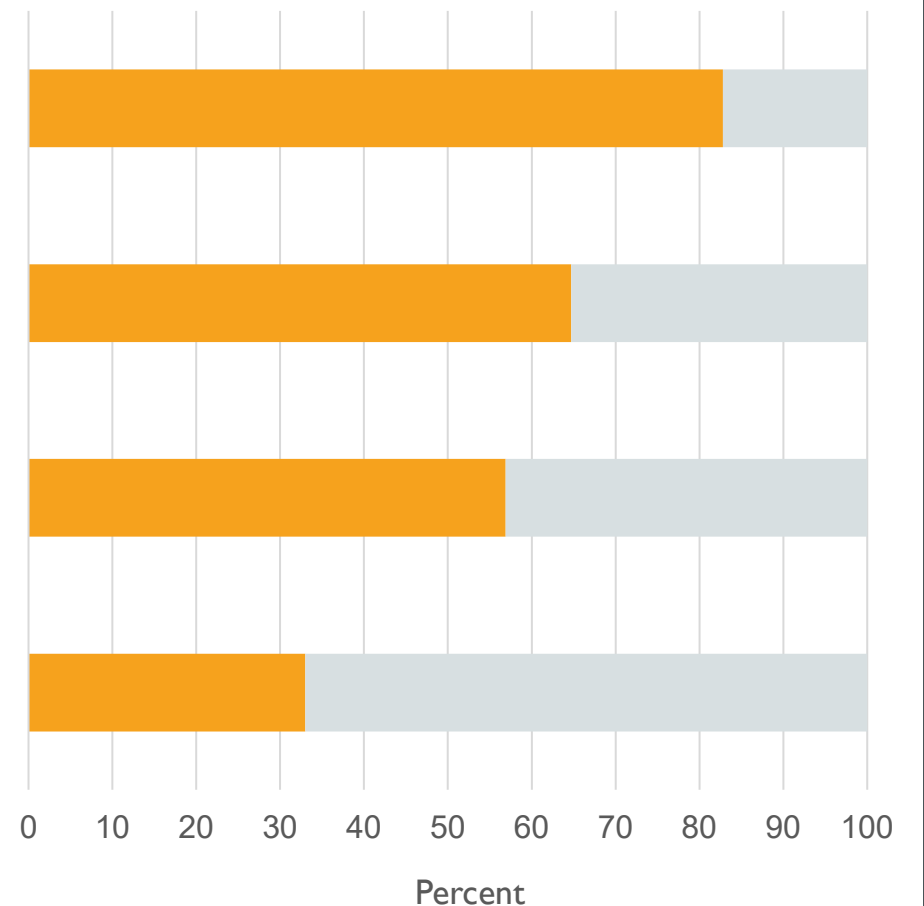
Who is primarily responsible for the maintenance of residential septic systems?

Which type of waste treatment system is depicted in this diagram?

Which type of waste treatment system is depicted in this diagram?

How often does a household septic system typically need to be pumped out?

A. Every 6 months	127	24.6
B. Every 1-2 years	163	31.5
C. Every 3-5 years	171	33.1
D. Every 10 years	56	10.8



ATTITUDES

Respondents' **attitude** towards septic to sewer conversion topics

Overall population (n = 517)

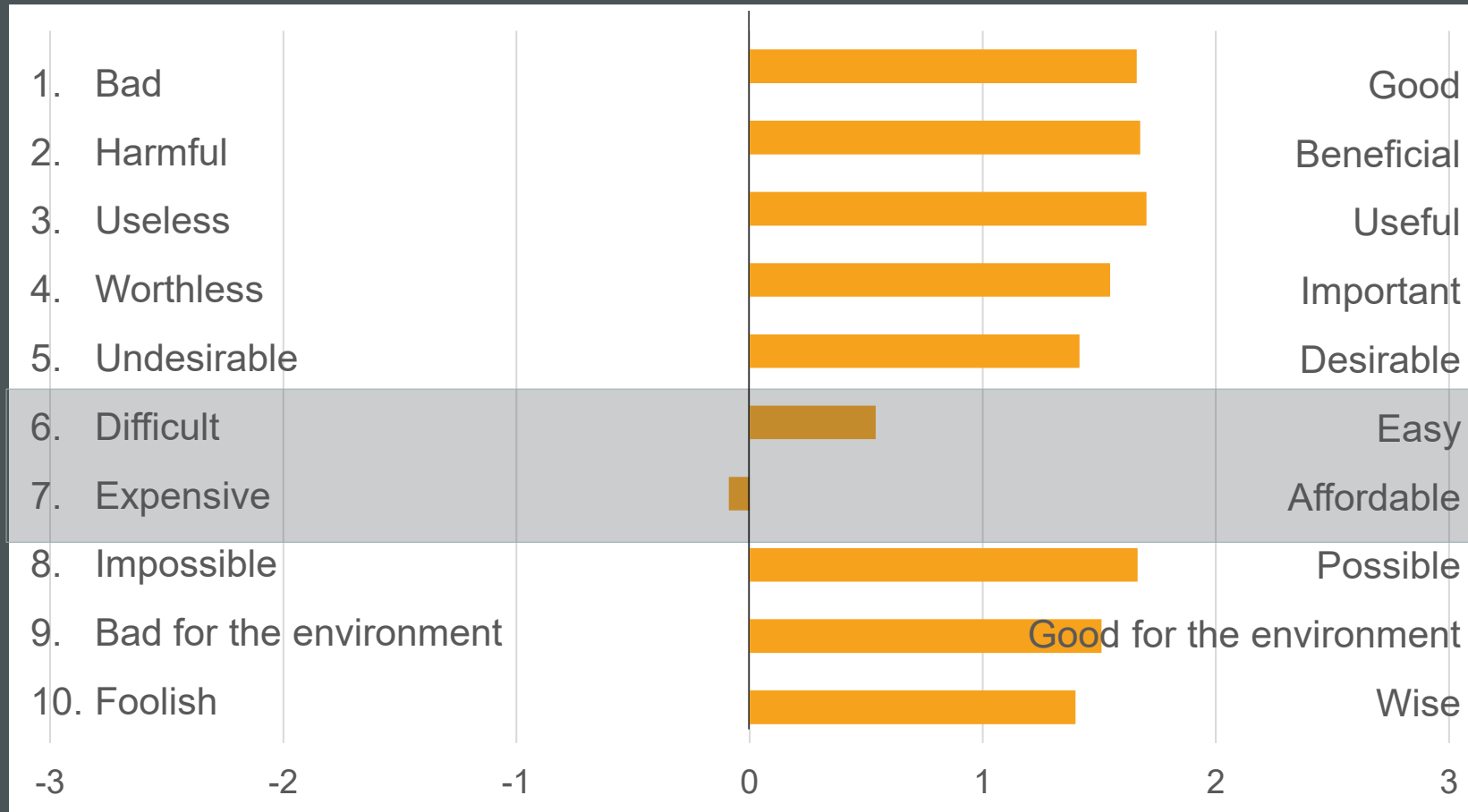
Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

1.30

2.14**

2.13**



PERCEIVED BENEFITS & BARRIERS

Level of agreement - Benefits

Converting from a septic system to a sewer system...

Overall population (n = 517)

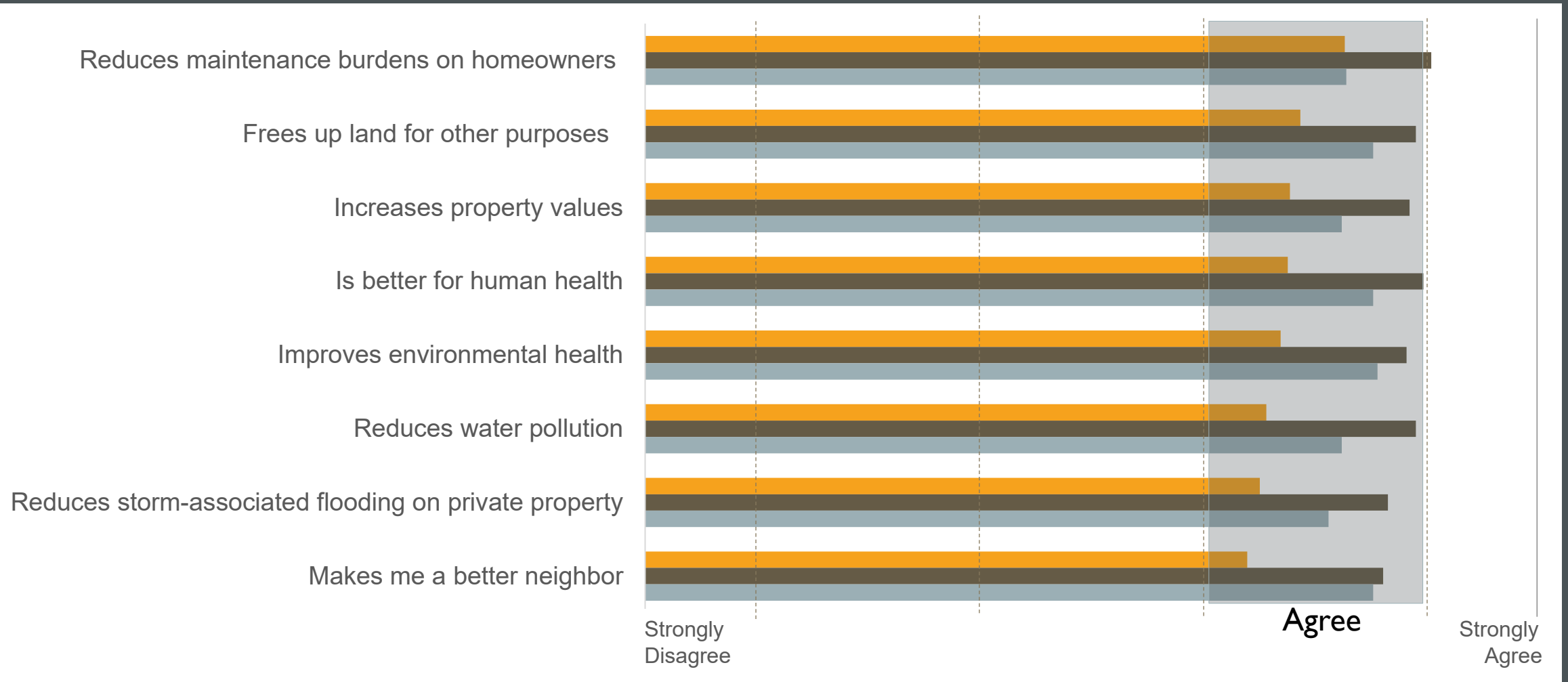
Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

3.86

4.42**

4.12**



Level of agreement – External Barriers

Overall population (n = 517)

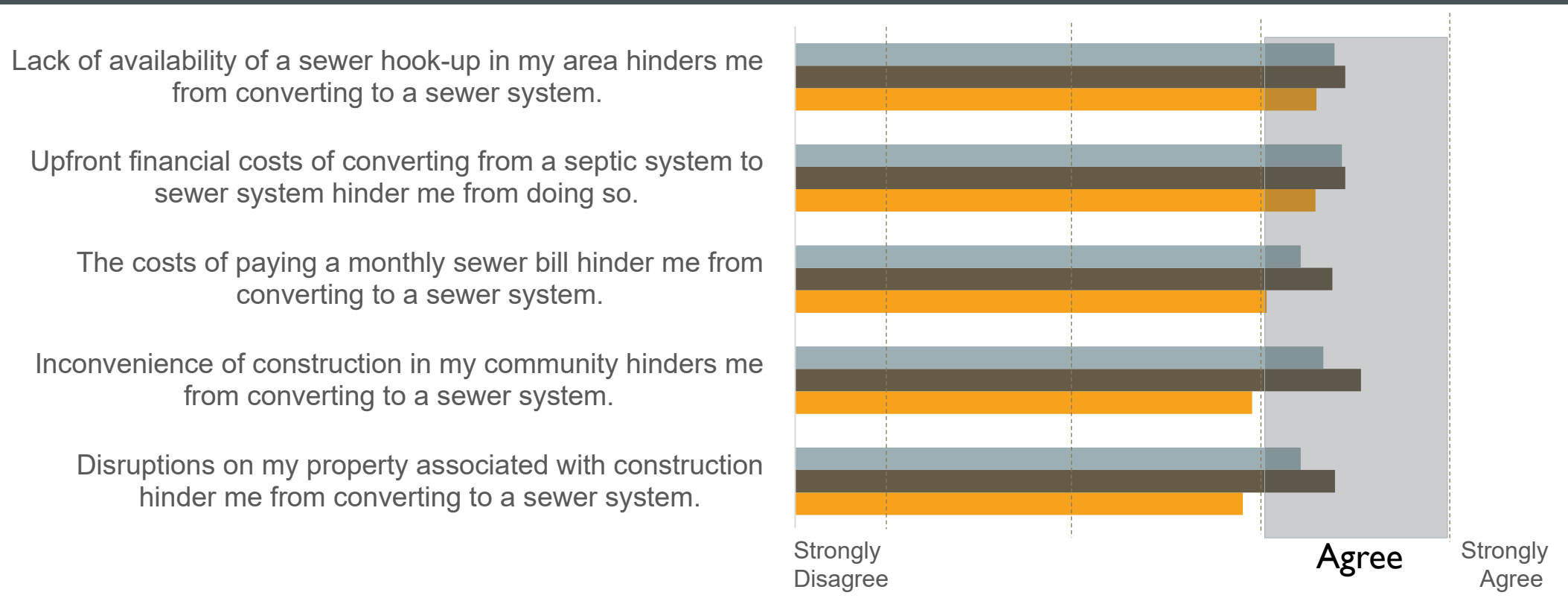
3.58

Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

3.92**

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

3.80**



Level of agreement – Internal Barriers

Overall population (n = 517)

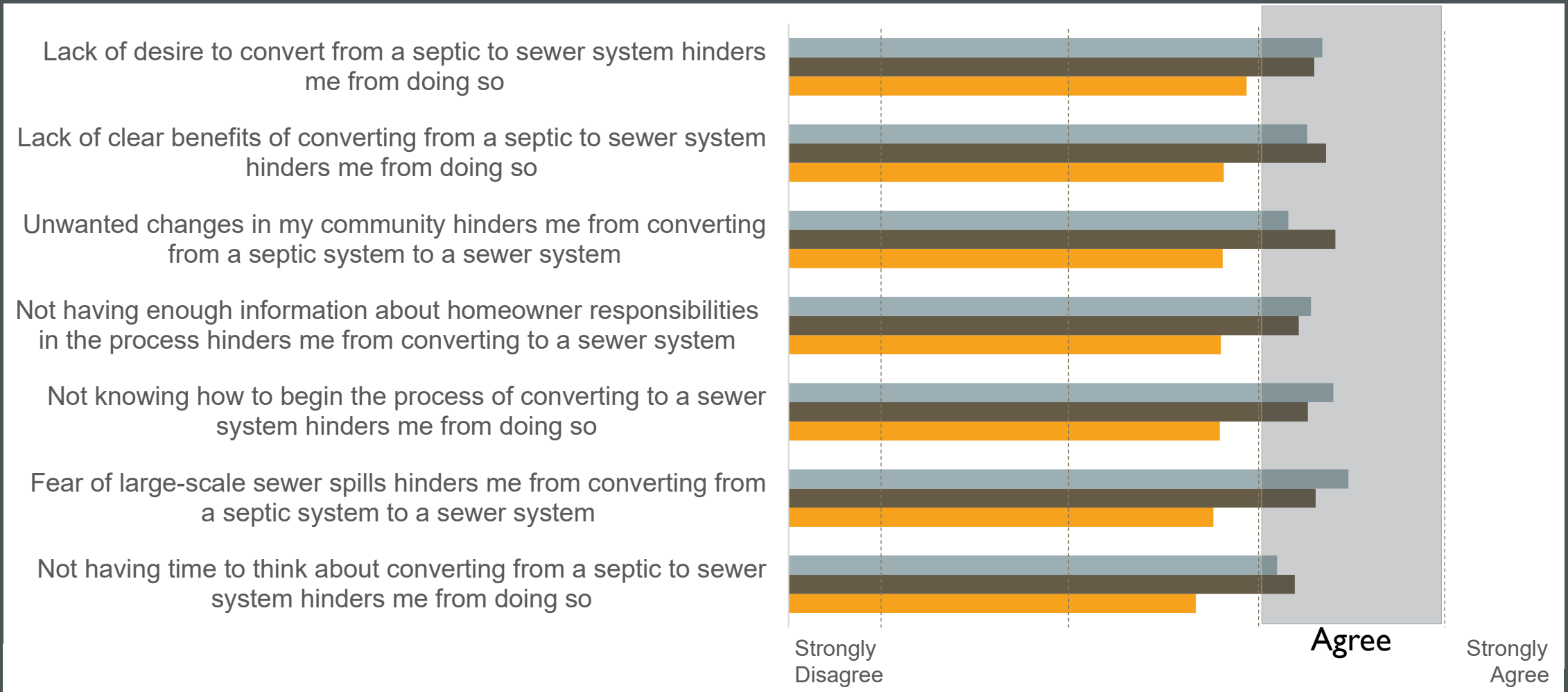
Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

3.29

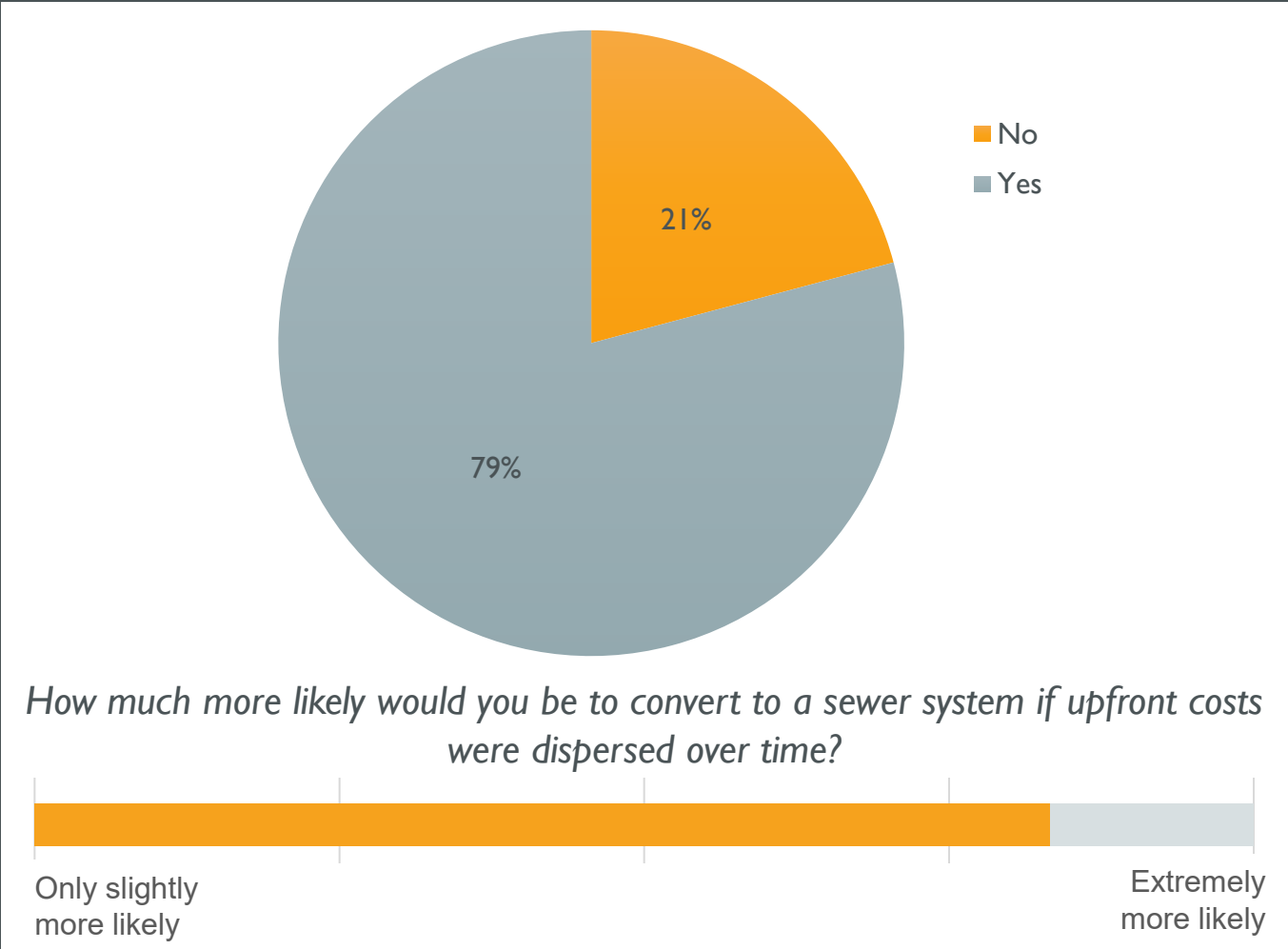
3.79**

3.79**



Level of agreement – Cost

If the upfront costs of converting from a septic system to a sewer system were dispersed over time, would you be more likely to convert to a sewer system?



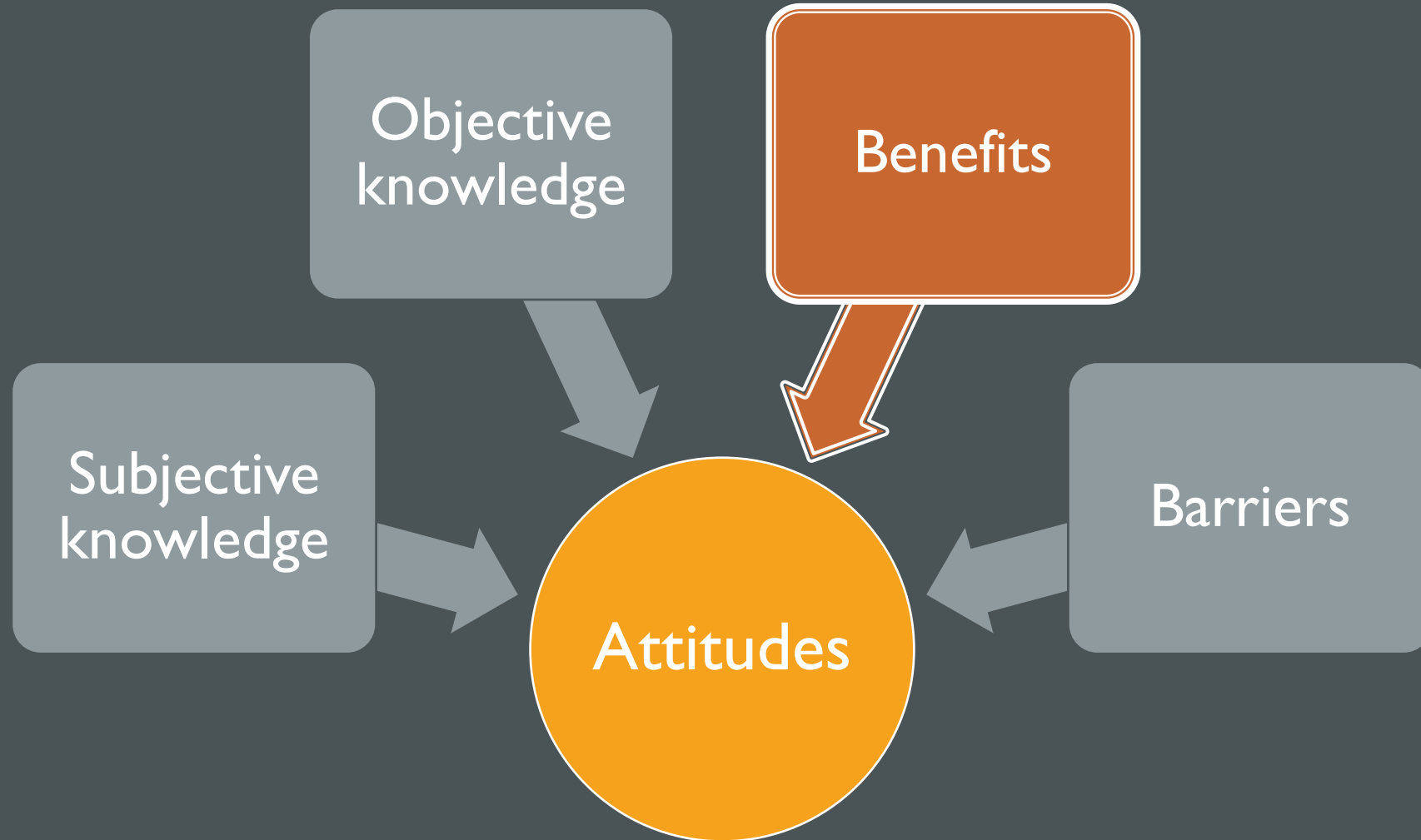
Explanatory model for attitudes

Voluntary conversion (n = 144)

Mandatory conversion (n = 50)

$R^2 = 0.36$

$R^2 = 0.55$



SOCIAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Audience

- A single campaign should include several aligned messages and formats
- Knowledge is not a barrier to acceptance

Removal of Barriers

- If costs can be dispersed overtime, the barrier of upfront financial costs can be eliminated
- Additional barriers need to be recognized once a project is identified

Communication

- Informational materials should emphasize homeowner priorities

Compatibility

Convenience

- Include timely, accurate, and community-specific information

Increase in property values



Free up land for other purposes



Reduce maintenance burdens



Human health



THANK YOU

Lisa Krinsky

Water Resources RSA
UF/IFAS Extension, Florida Sea Grant
lkrimsky@ufl.edu

**This project was been funded by
the US Environmental Protection
Agency**

Journal of Environmental Management
319 (2022) 115651

Laura Warner

UF/IFAS Department of Agricultural
Education and Communication
Center for Landscape Conservation and
Ecology

Shelli Rampold

University of Tennessee

Ricky Telg

UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education



**Center for
Public Issues Education**



**Center for
LANDSCAPE
Conservation & Ecology**

