



New Jersey Mayors for Climate Protection: The Challenge of Moving from Talk to Action



Samantha A. McGraw
Millersville University, Millersville, PA 17551

Overview

- Study conducted to determine the status of climate action plans in New Jersey municipalities (cities, towns, etc.) signed onto the United States Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (USMCPA).
- New Jersey is the research state because I am from New Jersey and had a strong curiosity as to what is being done within the state to enact goals of the USMCPA.
- 5 hypotheses explore factors enabling/constraining local governments in completing climate action plans, and if endorsing USMCPA is more talk than action.

USMCPA

- Passed in 2005 by Mayor Greg Nickels of Seattle, WA, with the hope climate policy would be more effectively carried out at the local level instead of federal.
- Goal: Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 7% below 1990 levels by 2012.
- No actual benchmarks/requirements set.
- 965 mayors across USA have signed USMCPA as of June 20, 2009, so New Jersey makes up about 1/9.
- As of May 28, 2009, there are 104 out of 566 New Jersey municipalities signed onto the agreement.



Research Methods

1. Reviewed USMCPA website for New Jersey signatories and developed a list of research questions.
2. Preliminary review of official New Jersey municipal websites.
3. Sent e-mails and conducted phone interviews with municipal officials based off of the questions.
4. Narrowed down the data set into a Data Population (92 municipalities) and Focus Sample (34 municipalities).
5. Conducted a general analysis of the Data Population and an in-depth analysis of the Focus Sample.

New Jersey Municipalities Are Not Making Progress

- Focus Sample consists of 34 municipalities responding to e-mails and phone interviews.
- 5 hypotheses analyzes Focus Sample.
- Figure 1 shows 44% do not have some form of climate action plan.
- Only 9% have completed a climate action plan.

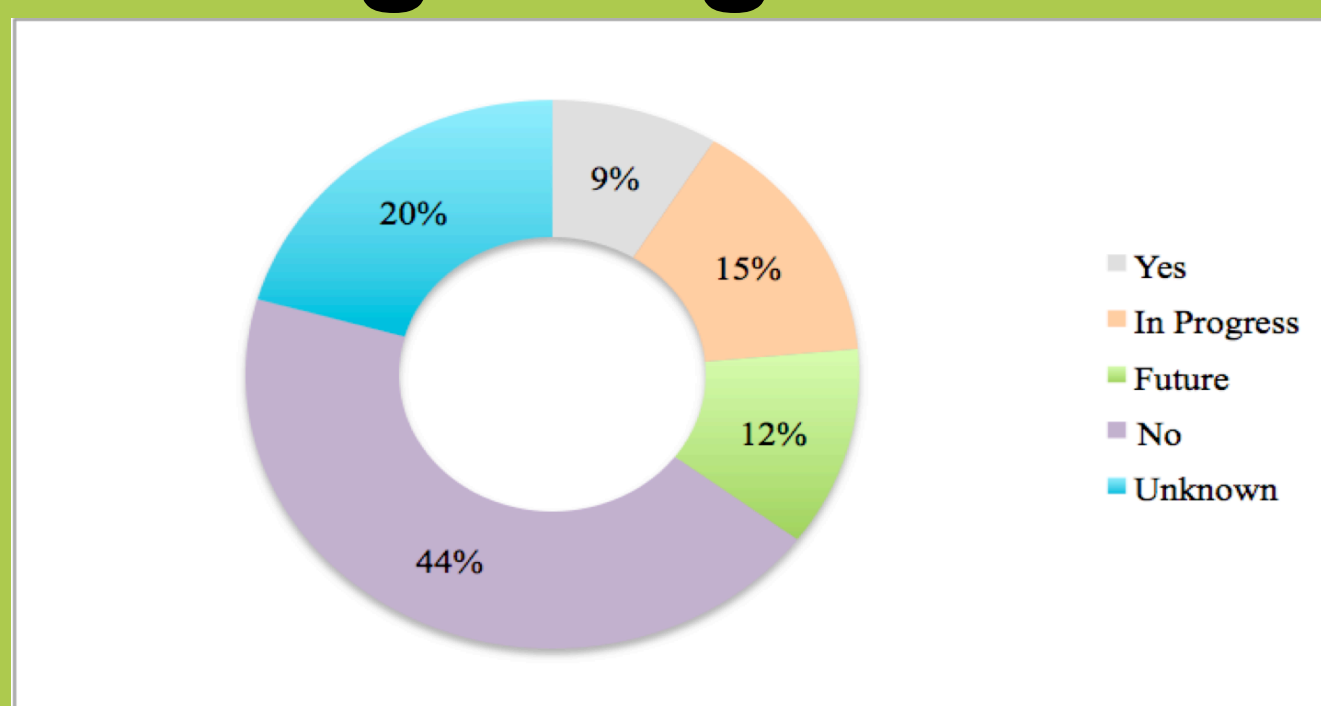


Figure 1 Focus Sample Climate Action Plan Status

Hypothesis #1: Municipalities with a population above 35,000 are more likely to have some form of climate action plan

• Critical value of 35,000 population at which municipality may apply for funding/grants at state level. Important because climate action plans are expensive to complete.

• Figure 2 shows about 40% more municipalities above 35,000 have some form of climate action plan than those below 35,000.

• Trend supports hypothesis and can be applied to Data Population from Table 1 comparison.

	Above 35,000	Below 35,000
Data Population	30%	70%
Focus Sample	24%	76%

Table 1 Critical Value Comparison

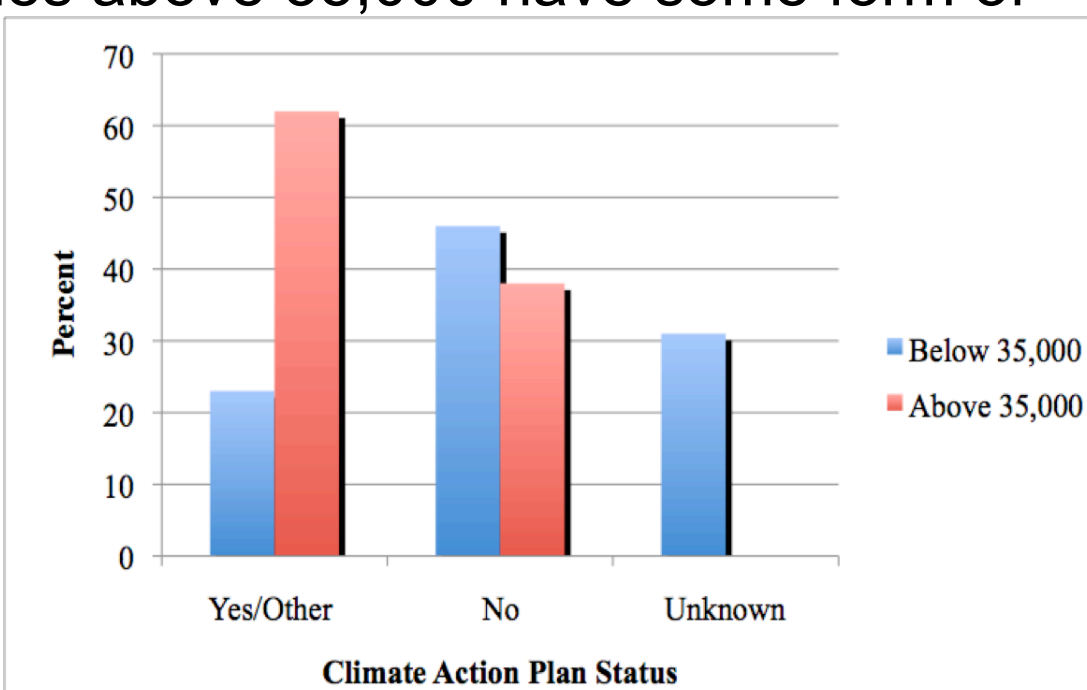


Figure 2 Relation of Critical Value Population to Climate Action Plan Status

Hypothesis #2: Municipalities with an earlier sign date are more likely to have some form of climate action plan than those with a later sign date

• Climate action plans take a lot of time, energy, and organization to complete.

• Earlier sign date should make a municipality farther along in this process.

• Figure 4 shows 2007 sign date slightly more likely to have some form of climate action plan than those in 2008.

• However, 50% of sign dates occurred in 2008 (Figure 3), so no firm conclusion of hypothesis can be drawn. Result applicable to Data Population through Table 2.

	During 2006	Sometime 2007	Sometime 2008	Unknown
Data Population	6%	33%	50%	11%
Focus Sample	9%	35%	50%	6%

Table 2 Correlation of Sign Date with Data Population & Focus Sample

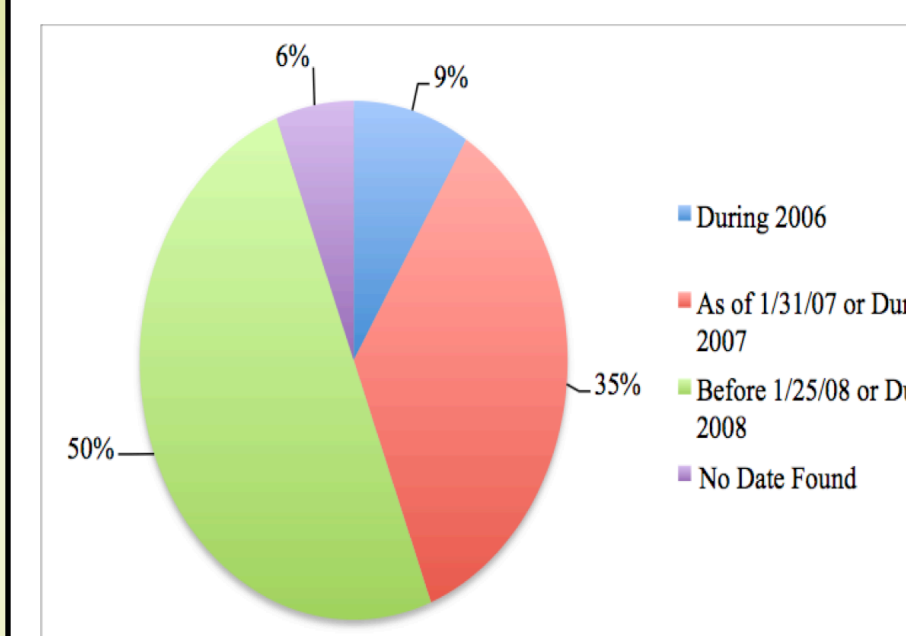


Figure 3 USMCPA Sign Date

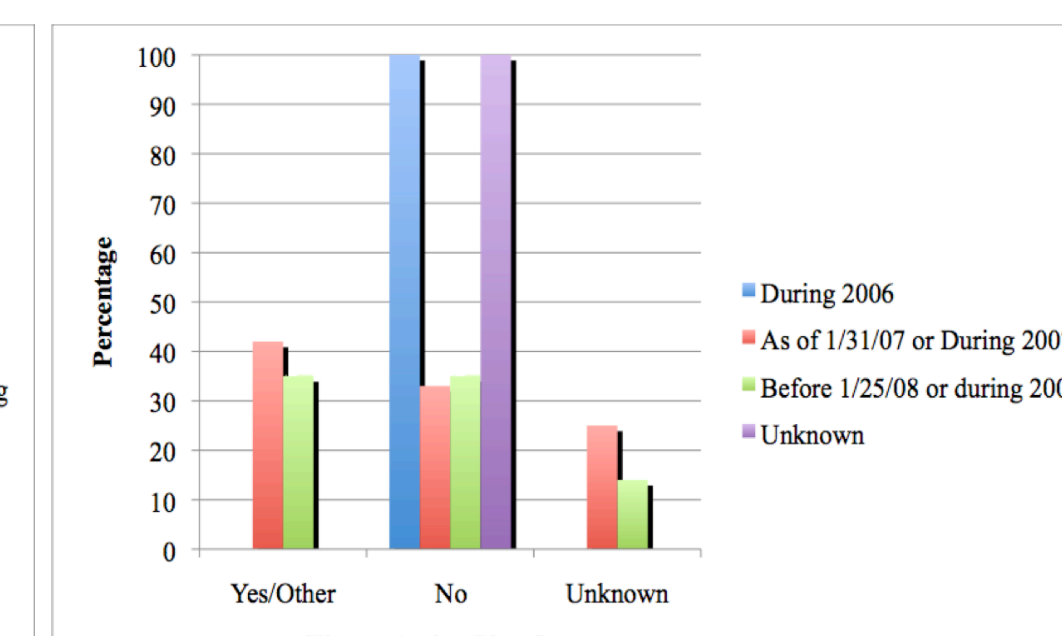


Figure 4 Relation of Sign Date to Climate Action Plan Status

5 HYPOTHESES

- Developed from research questions
- Key**
- “Yes/Other” - completed, in progress, future
- “Unknown” - no information provided

Hypothesis #3: Participation in a climate network (Sierra Club/ICLEI) increases the likelihood of a municipality having some form of climate action plan

• Sierra Club/ICLEI promote energy saving choices & sustainability, 2 things USMCPA covers.

• Figure 5 indicates an inconclusive hypothesis since about same percentage of municipalities with climate network participation have some form of climate action plan as those with no climate action plan.

• Result can be applied to Data Population through Table 3 comparison.

	Sierra Club	ICLEI	Both	None
Data Population	64%	1%	7%	28%
Focus Sample	56%	0%	9%	35%

Table 3 Climate Network Participation

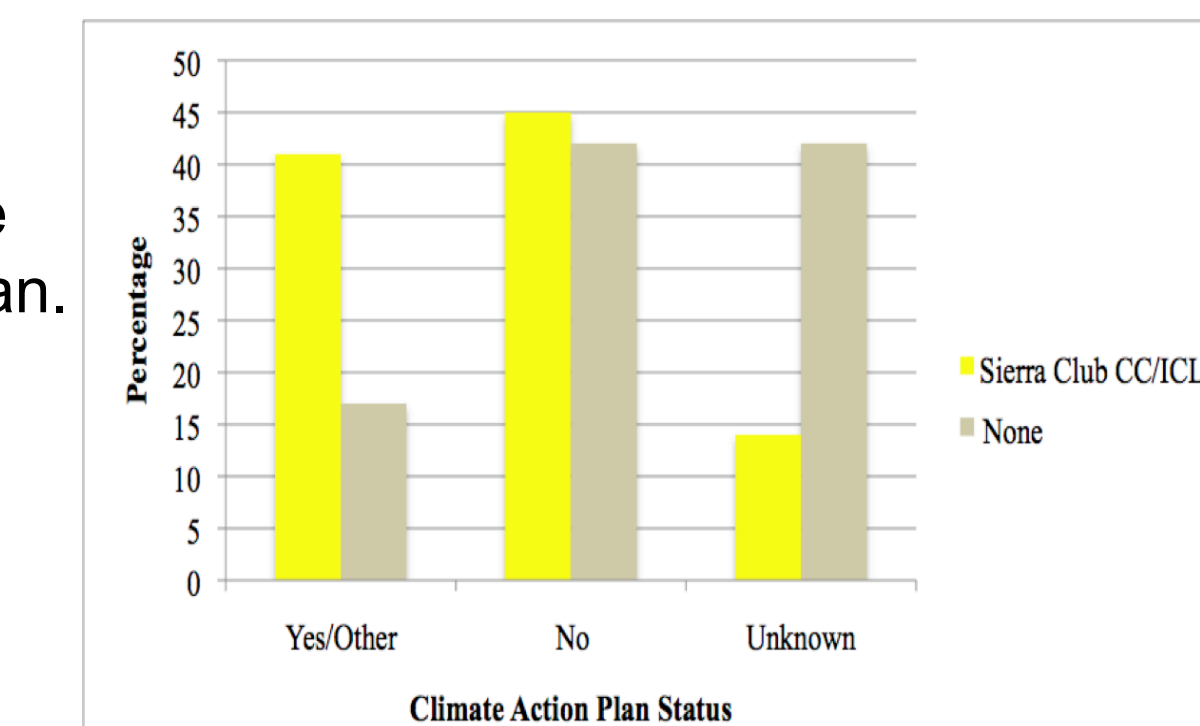


Figure 5 Relation Between Climate Network Participation and Climate Action Plan Status

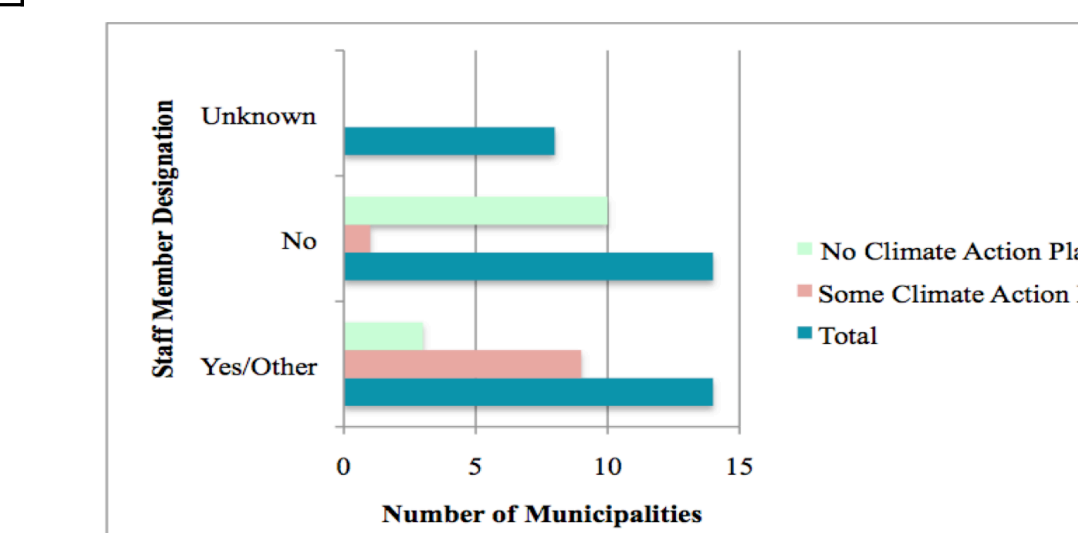
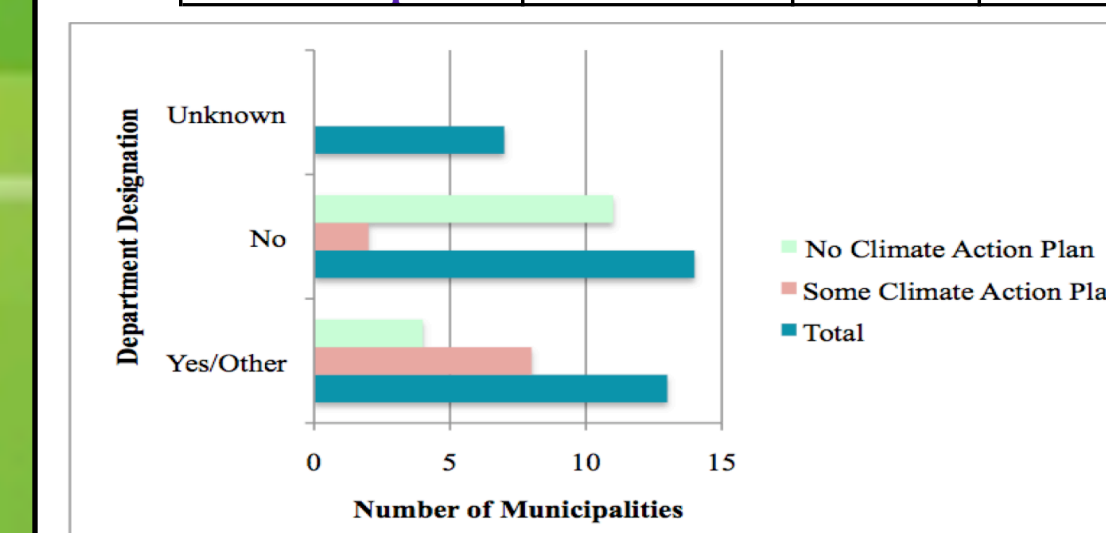
Hypothesis #4: Municipalities that do not designate climate policy to a department or staff member are less likely to have some form of climate action plan

• Concern for climate policy is covered in some area and should increase chance of action.

• Findings in Figures 6 & 7 support hypothesis and show strong relation between not having department/staff member designation and no climate action plan, and is not applicable to the Data Population through Table 4.

	Yes/Other	No	Unknown
Data Population	18%	16%	66%
Focus Sample	38%	41%	21%
Data Population	15%	16%	69%
Focus Sample	38%	41%	21%

Table 4 Designation of Climate Policy to Department (brown)/Staff Member (purple)



Figures 6 & 7 Designation of Department/Staff Member and Climate Action Plan Status

Hypothesis #5: A municipality having an Environmental Commission (EC) or some form of Sustainable Jersey (SJ) participation is more likely to have some form of climate action plan

• EC's tend to be volunteer, & made up of people who care about environment. SJ provides resources for climate action plan completion.

• Figure 8 findings suggest hypothesis false for EC, & Figure 9 findings suggest hypothesis is inconclusive, so overall the hypothesis tends to be false.

• Table 5 shows findings hold true for Data Population with EC but not SJ.

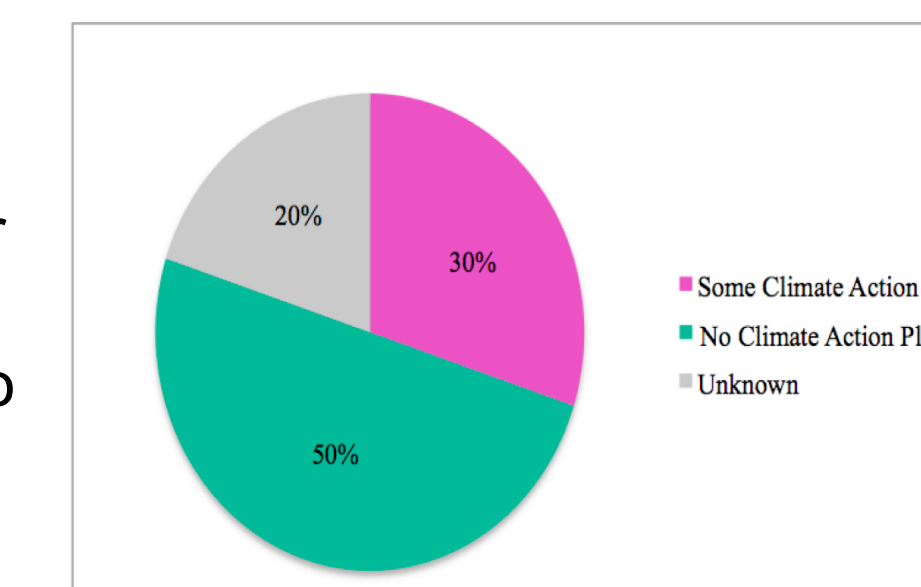


Figure 8 Environmental Commission Climate Action Plan Status

	Yes/Other	No	Unknown
DP Environmental Commission	80%	4%	16%
FS Environmental Commission	88%	3%	9%
DP Sustainable Jersey	53%	2%	45%
FS Sustainable Jersey	76%	6%	18%

Table 5 Data Pop. & Focus Sample EC & SJ Participation

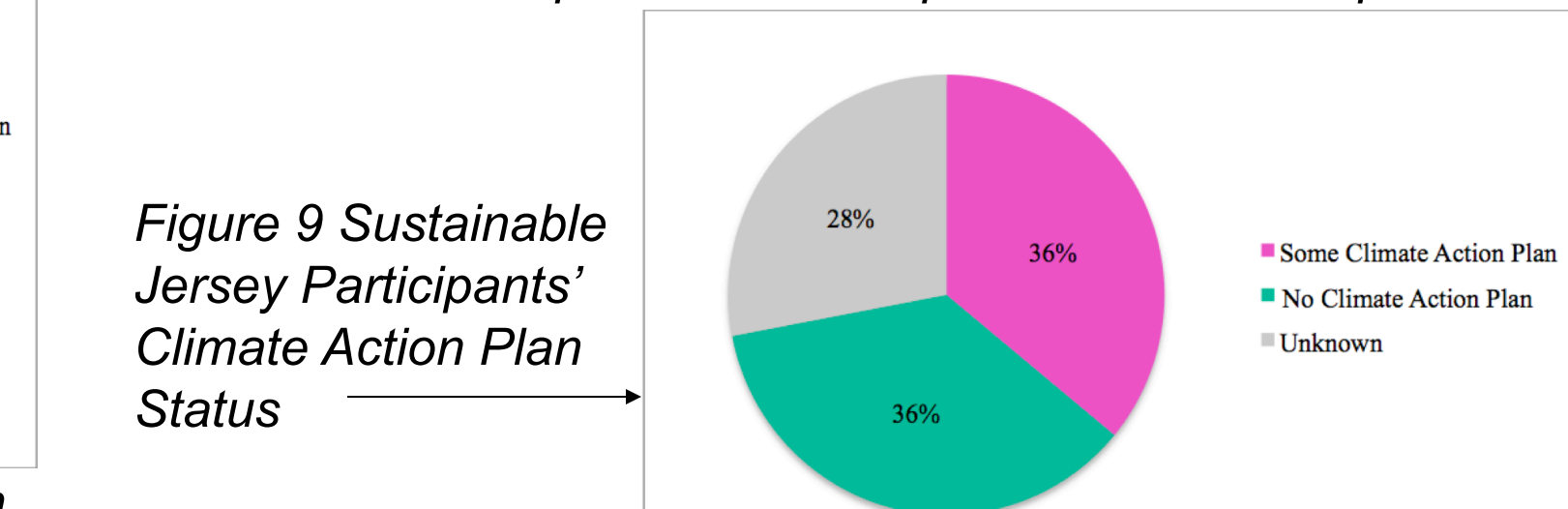


Figure 9 Sustainable Jersey Participants' Climate Action Plan Status

Major Findings

- Most likely factors for some form of climate action plan are population above 35,000 and designation of climate policy to department/staff member.
- Biggest barriers are funding and human resources.
- Standards/benchmarks needed so it's more action than talk.
 - USMCPA needs reporting
 - Sustainable Jersey likely to help local climate action through resources it provides.

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