

ST. JOHN'S

October 7, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Virtual

Pages

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
 - 3.1. Adoption of the Agenda
- 4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**
 - 4.1. Adoption of Minutes - September 29, 2020 1
- 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
 - 5.1. Sidewalk Snow Clearing - Concerns from Citizen 11

Background "What We Heard Document" is attached. Please refer to page 28-31 in WWH Sidewalk Snow Clearing 2020 for specific reference to Inclusion.
 - 5.2. Pedestrian Mall Presentation & Discussion 61
- 6. OTHER BUSINESS**
 - 6.1. Member Updates
- 7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**



Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes

September 29, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Virtual

Present:

Taylor Stocks, Chair - LGBTQ2S
Councillor Deanne Stapleton, Council Representative
Debbie Ryan, CNIB
Donna Power, Metrobus/GoBus, Accessible Transit
Kim Pratt Baker, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Megan McGie, NL Association for the Deaf
Sarah White, Autism Society
Joby Fleming, Empower NL
Nancy Reid, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
Trevor Freeborn, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
Duane Morgan, CNIB
Natalie Godden, Manager of Family & Leisure Services
Vanessa Bambrick, Acting Inclusive Services Coordinator
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

Regrets:

Heidi Dixon, First Light NL
Margaret Tibbo, Public Representative
Grant Genova, NL Association of Architects, Universal Design
Kimberly Yetman-Dawson, Empower NL
Brittany Hiscock, CHHA NL
Tess Hemeon, Autism Society
Hope Colbourne, NL Association for Community Living
Renata Lang, Association for New Canadians
Trisha Rose, Fieldworker III, Inclusion Services

Others: Meaghan Philpott, Manager of Diversity & Public Education - ANC
Tonya Knopp, Manager Facility Engineering
Patrick McDonald, Supervisor - Capital Works
Victoria Etchegary, Manager of Organizational Performance and Strategy
Garrett Donaher, Manager of Transportation Engineering
Christa Norman, Special Events Coordinator

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Moved By Debbie Ryan
Seconded By Joby Fleming

That the agenda be adopted with the addition of a statement from Councillor Stapleton.

MOTION CARRIED

3. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**
 - 3.1 **Adoption of Minutes - June 3, 2020**

Moved By Kim Pratt Baker
Seconded By Debbie Ryan

That the minutes of June 3, 2020 be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4. **DELEGATION**
5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
6. **OTHER BUSINESS**
 - 6.1 **Statement from Councillor Stapleton**

Councillor Stapleton addressed the Committee and read the following statement that was presented at the Regular Council meeting on September 28, 2020:

Over the past week, the Inclusion Advisory Committee has taken some criticism publicly for not advocating on behalf of the inclusion community on this issue. This could not be farther from the truth. In fact, the committee was involved in the public engagement process and did submit a number of recommendations that are included in the final report – the “What We Heard” document.

We conducted a focus group with 25 users of services from Empower and they told us that lack of safe sidewalks in winter significantly impacts quality of life. They talked about the challenges of not being able to use Metrobus accessible routes due to sidewalk snow clearing issues. They told us about the importance of having clear crosswalk push button areas and safe cross walks.

We do value the role of our Inclusion Advisory Committee is assisting us to make decisions that consider their unique concerns and challenges, and this group has been instrumental in influencing a number of decisions of Council.

The Key2Access pilot - a new technology that does not require a pedestrian reach for a button on a pole at a crosswalk – would not have been possible without them; we consulted with the IAC on the size of garbage containers for the automated garbage program and developed an exemption process with their suggestions; they have offered invaluable guidance on blue zone parking areas; accessibility enhancements in city parks; an improved intake process and new reception desk at the Access Centre; and much more.

The Inclusion Advisory Committee are strong advocates for change at City Hall; and they are making a significant difference in the way we do things.

Council has advisory committees in place, like this one and the Seniors Advisory Committee (who also made recommendations in this particular engagement process) to give us their perspective on the difficult decisions before Council. They certainly did that, and the advice we received is part of what makes this decision so difficult for me, and I'm sure for all of us on Council.

6.2 Vacant IAC Positions – Verbal Update

The Manager of Family & Leisure Services gave a brief update on the vacant positions on the Inclusion Advisory Committee. The selection committee has been reviewing all applications and there are two candidates shortlisted for the anti-racism position. A recommendation will be formulated for Council to appoint the new members in the coming weeks.

6.3 Paratransit Update for September 29, 2020

Donna Power of GoBus gave an update to the Committee:

Service Levels

Customers have been slowly getting back to their travel with GoBus. Ridership at approximately 50-55% of regular service levels. Bus capacity was reinstated to 100% when masks were made mandatory, though MVT is still making effort to promote physical distancing where possible. Enhanced cleaning/disinfecting protocols are still in place.

Eligibility Assessments

Assessments resumed in June after a period of closure due to COVID-19. GoBus are now exploring options to increase the volume of assessments being done each month so that they can get through ridership without too much extra delay. The goal of completing assessments for all existing customers within one year will not be met.

To date 178 assessments have been completed (121 existing customers; 57 new applicants). There were 143 unconditional and 25 conditional approvals. 8 individuals were denied eligibility (5 existing; 3 new). 29 people requested to close their accounts. And one formal appeal has been completed.

GoBus Contract

The current contract for GoBus service will expire December 2021. Preliminary work on developing a new RFP has begun and input from stakeholders will be sought in the near future. A draft RFP is expected.

6.4 Pedestrian Mall Presentation & Discussion

Victoria Etchegary, Manager of Organizational Performance and Strategy; Christa Norman, Special Events Coordinator; and Garrett Donaher, Manager of Transportation Engineering joined the Committee to discuss

the downtown pedestrian mall and request feedback from the group. The members were provided the following background:

- The pedestrian mall was developed in response to, and as a means of, stimulating the downtown economy and to create space for residents to enjoy the outdoors in a safe, public health guided way.
- Timelines were tight; there was feedback from the business community prior to and throughout the process facilitated by the City and Downtown St. John's.
- A section of Water Street was closed to traffic to create the Pedestrian Mall and included four blocks from Adelaide to Prescott St.
- Deliveries and essential traffic were allowed at key times.
- Some downtown businesses were not supportive/depending on sector/location.
- Accessibility concerns were raised early on in relation to access to sidewalks and patios.
- Businesses within the Mall were able to extend their footprint to increase capacity.
- Businesses outside the Mall were able to avail of parkettes.
- Pedestrian Mall was one of few actual "events" happening in and around St. John's in summer 2020, there was little competition.

Questions put forward to the Committee included:

Planning for the mall

Thinking about the process to establish the Pedestrian mall, this year:

- What feedback would you provide to the city to be included in the planning process?

While the mall was in operation/future malls

Thinking about the period of time the mall was in operation this year:

- What worked well for you/your client group?
- What was challenging for you/your client group?
- What needs to change for future malls to ensure better inclusion?

Discussion took place with the following points from members summarized:

- Concern was raised about the process in general regarding the way the City consults with the Committee. There was a lack of appropriate opportunity to be a part of and provide feedback in the initial planning stages.
- The Committee were not adequately consulted in the planning process for the Downtown Pedestrian Mall. Input was limited to the change in the accessible parking via email.
- A trial run of the map showed that the accessible parking was barricaded. When IAC members visited the mall they noted that it was not easy to get in past the barricades, there was not adequate signage and there was no one to direct traffic upon entering or to facilitate parking. This was not clear on the map presented to the Committee.
- There was not an adequate amount of consultation or conversation about the impacts within the Inclusion Committee and what the event was like once it was up and running.
- Service NL was involved in the planning of the mall within the Special Events Regulatory Committee, but IAC members felt that did not provide enough insight into the diverse inclusion needs.
- There should be collaboration/training with downtown businesses so they can understand inclusion more broadly which in turn could improve inclusion downtown.
- The Ramps Up working group comprised of City Staff, Downtown St. John's, Service NL, and designated IAC members will explore the possible solutions to the unique accessibility concerns in the downtown neighborhood.
- Putting down a ramp brings immense responsibility as there needs to be consideration beyond just the outside of a building. There are major issues downtown with the curb cuts and limited accessibility inside the venues.
- With the placement of the ramps there was a false sense created that things were more accessible than they were (i.e. ramps may have allowed access to the outside decks but no access to washrooms was

provided making the decks inaccessible for some persons with disabilities.)

- Creating the pedestrian mall so quickly with limited consultation made some citizens with disabilities feel that their needs were not considered and resulted in feelings of exclusion.
- There was concern of safety and significant barriers for those with vision loss during the pedestrian mall event. Serious barriers already exist on Water Street which were more evident during the event.
- City staff noted that there is a review from a regulatory and permitting perspective as part of the evaluation process for the downtown pedestrian mall.

The Panel concluded that more detailed feedback will be provided at follow up meeting to be scheduled for next week. A working group will be formed to discuss and produce specific issues to bring back to the next meeting for discussion.

6.5 New Mews Centre Presentation & Discussion

Tonya Knopp, Manager Facility Engineering and Patrick McDonald, Supervisor of Capital Works, were in attendance for this portion of the meeting to present the new concept design of the H.G.R. Mews Community Centre replacement facility which will be constructed at Mundy Pond Park starting in 2021.

The City has been planning for the replacement of the H. G. R. Mews Community Centre for the past two years. To date, site reviews have been completed and public engagement has taken place on both the location of the new facility and the needs of the community in relation to amenities and programming. On Monday, August 19, 2019, City Council voted to locate the new facility in Mundy Pond Park adjacent to other recreation facilities in the area which will also include the new Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities Accessible playground. Members reviewed visuals including an aerial view showing the placement of both the building and the playground in Mundy Pond Park and the floor plans. A Mews Centre Walkthrough video was shared with the group which was emailed out to the members for their personal review.

Discussion took place with the following points noted:

- It was recommended that the City use the National Standard of Canada, B651-18, which can be found online on www.csagroup.org.

The standard can provide information that will aid in ensuring the building is fully accessible.

- Cultural inclusion is important as user groups at the Mews Centre come from different cultural backgrounds and privacy is important. Viewing areas in design need to meet privacy accommodations. Public engagement provided feedback and the new building will have dedicated male and female washrooms as well as an all-inclusive family washroom with private changing areas. The aquatic viewing area will be reviewed and outfitted with a possible blind or curtain system. There are no direct lines of sight onto the second floor where the pool is located, and the glazing used on the exterior windows will limit view of the inside.
- As the design goes forward the elements incorporated will be provided to the IAC for their feedback.
- Reception area should include barrier free counter space with knee space to accommodate persons who use wheelchairs. It was noted that it has been included in the design.
- With the use of so much glass in the design, wayfinding may be of concern for people with vision loss. Staff advised that the rendering does show glass, but the material has not yet been decided.
- The importance of contrast between walls and floors and colored nosing on stairs was noted by the committee.
- There will be space for buses to stop directly in front of the main entrance in a layby area.

This project will come back to the Committee as there is more progress made on the design.

6.6 Sidewalk Snow Clearing - Concerns from Citizen

Background "What We Heard Document" is attached. Please refer to page 28-31 in WWH Sidewalk Snow Clearing 2020 for specific reference to Inclusion.

The Committee reviewed a letter submitted via email to members of Council and the Inclusion Advisory Committee from Anne Malone, Disability Rights Activist. A letter was also received from Lisa Walters of AccessYYT. The Chair read both letters to the Committee.

Clarity was requested from Councillor Stapleton regarding Council's decision not to further invest in the sidewalk snow clearing services at this time. The public engagement showed immense concern for the conditions of sidewalks in the winter and the ability to navigate them in the winter months. Councillor Stapleton expressed that sidewalk snow clearing engagement will be used for the long-term goal of improving snow clearing and given the serious financial situation the City finds itself in at the end of the 2020 fiscal year there were other considerations at present. In the spring, 1.5 million dollars of new sidewalk snow clearing equipment was purchased to improve the sidewalks for the coming year. The financial crisis of snowmagedon and the pandemic have caused considerable issues for the City which may result in tax increases, service reductions or a combination of both. It was expressed that raising taxes may cause hardship for those already in financial distress due to the pandemic. Given anticipated budget challenges going into 2021, sidewalk snow clearing was referred to the 2021 budget process for consideration.

Considerable discussion took place with the following points from members summarized:

- Concern was raised that the City has developed to the degree that they can no longer provide essential services like snow clearing to the people who live in it. Development of the City should be slowed down until those that live within the City can be cared for.
- Essential services like snow clearing should be provided to the people who live within the City regardless if it results in increased taxes.
- Empower held consultations and the message was clear that snow clearing needed significant improvement for accessibility.
- People with disabilities will not have the same support they had last year as home support, income support and community supports and health will face cuts under the new Provincial budget.
- The long-term impact of COVID and snowmagedon has caused a considerable increase to medical care. During the pandemic people were encouraged to get out and move. If there is a snow event and people are unable to do that there will be increased need for mental health support and healthcare. The effect that COVID had on people and being confined for a long period of time is what people with disabilities are faced with in the winter months when they do not have the access to go outside.

- Individuals need to be able to access their community and lives on a daily basis.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that persons with disabilities are to have full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Barriers created by the inability of the City to enable access to the streets are against the Human Rights Act.
- It was recommended that the City try a one-year pilot project and review the economic impact of raising taxes by \$25-50 to explore sidewalk snow clearing under an increased budget.
- It was proposed that the Committee meet once a month to have frequent discussions surrounding inclusion.

The Chair requested guidance on the best way to speak on behalf of the Committee. A public statement will be drafted by the Chair and sent out to the Committee for feedback over the next 48 hours. This item will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Inclusion Committee next week.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

A meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2020 11:30 am - 1:00 pm to further discuss the matters of the Pedestrian Mall and Sidewalk Snow Clearing.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:47 pm.

CHAIRPERSON, TAYLOR STOCKS

From: [Anne Malone](#)
To: [Shanna Fitzgerald](#)
Subject: (EXT) Inclusion Advisory Committee
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 12:10:36 AM

An OPEN LETTER to:
The City Council of St. John's
The Inclusion Advisory Committee (City of St. John's)
The Citizens of St. John's
While the past year has b

been extremely difficult on all of us, the conditions and extended period of social isolation arising from the ever-increasing proliferation of accessibility barriers that we experience at the hands of our municipal government has become intolerable for people in St. John's who live with disabilities

.
Without question, the annual five to six months of enforced confinement to our homes during winter has become the source of undue and unjust suffering and hardship for those of us who have no choice but to endure it.

Those of us who have disabilities are hanging by a thread – economically, socially, physically, and psychologically. We simply do not have the capacity to cope with or overcome the devastating consequences of the discrimination we experience due to the City's adamant denial of their duty to accommodate ALL citizens in this City, regardless of their socio-economic status, age, or physiological and/or neurological realities. We REQUIRE safe, accessible sidewalks, year-round. We can no longer endure long stretches of winter captivity, a state in which we spend virtually half of our lives.

During the past week alone, we have learned that the majority of our municipal leaders have voted to maintain the discriminatory inattention to winter safety for pedestrians, that stories of the inadequacy of our paratransit system are finding their way into the media, and that Metrobus drivers are poised to strike. All of these factors intensify the chronic state of emergency that People with disabilities have experienced, long before Snowmageddon or the COVID19 pandemic occurred.

.
To exacerbate the immense burdens that marginalization imposes upon us, it is both devastating and infuriating that the only instrument of influence we have within City Hall - the Inclusion Advisory Committee, has been unable or unwilling to strenuously and publicly protest the injustices that are rife within the City's discriminatory practices as they relate to people with disabilities. Councilor Deanne Stapleton, the Team Lead for Inclusion at the City of St. John's voted AGAINST the rights and interests of people with disabilities - a stunning display of duplicity and betrayal of the most vulnerable and inarguably the most excluded people in our city.

While dozens of concerned citizens, including disability rights activists, social justice activists, student activists, and a host of other allies have invested hundreds of volunteer person-hours over the past week to coordinate a

forceful, multi-faceted response to the infringement of the rights of people with disabilities, not a single publicly funded disability organization has uttered a word of protest or support in the public arena.

Committee members, whatever the reasons for your silence, I strongly urge you to reconsider them, as your silence is an enabling factor in what you know to be an historical pattern of discrimination against people with disabilities in this city and in this province. Your silence is not neutral, it is complicit with institutional ableist discrimination that has forced people with disabilities into an invisible ghetto of socio-economic deprivation and marginalization. You cannot plead ignorance of this reality. Make no mistake, your silence is complicity with the ableism that holds the people with disabilities hostage, not to disability, but to discrimination.

To all organizations represented on the Inclusion Advisory Committee, I urge you to raise your voices on the behalf of people who have disabilities in our city. Disability does not discriminate, and there are people within EVERY community who have disabilities, and those who are BIPOC ,LGBTQ2S+, and people of diverse faiths who also have disabilities find themselves at the intersection of multiple layers of marginalization.

I urge you to stand with them, out loud and in public, for we need the support of the voting public in an escalating inclusion emergency.

Citizens of St. John's, we need your support. Time and time again the institutional biases and discriminatory approach on the part of Council to the disabilities community has been expressed without apology or correction by various people in municipal government. The institutional, systemic ableism that infects our municipal government has been obvious in exclusionary language, exclusionary public spaces, and exclusionary investment and accommodation. The one thing that people with disabilities are not excluded from, however, is the requirement to pay taxes.

Please voice your support of our efforts to force our City to provide us with safe accessible winter sidewalks. You can do this by emailing or calling our Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or your Ward Councilor. You can also support us by participating in the public protest that will be announced later today, Wed. Sept.23.

Our most persistent and unchallenged accessibility barriers are people of privilege who hold positions of power, who repeatedly use their platforms to invalidate, dismiss, and silence the just and righteous advocacy of and for the most vulnerable and marginalized people among us. They must be removed from office. Please support people with disabilities with your vote in the 2021 municipal election.

Accessibility is a RIGHT, not a privilege.

Anne Malone

Disability Rights Activist

Citizen of St. John's

From: [Inclusion](#)
To: [Shanna Fitzgerald](#)
Subject: FW: (EXT) Fwd: Letter to City Council re: sidewalk snow clearing
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 11:43:47 AM

This just came in this morning.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 10:37 AM
To: Inclusion <inclusion@stjohns.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: (EXT) Fwd: Letter to City Council re: sidewalk snow clearing

Good morning,

In the email I sent to you yesterday I forgot to request that my letter be included in Tuesday's meeting.

Thank you,

Lisa Walters

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lisa Walters [REDACTED]
Date: September 29, 2020 at 12:59:17 AM NDT
To: "inclusion@stjohns.ca" <inclusion@stjohns.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Letter to City Council re: sidewalk snow clearing

Below is an email that I sent to the City of St. John's that I would also like to share with the Inclusion Advisory Committee:

Hi,

My name is Lisa Walters and I'm a disabled resident of St. John's who advocates for better accessibility in our city on my social media accounts called Access YYT. I missed out on the rally outside City Hall today because I wasn't feeling well, but I just wanted to send along a message to let you know how upset and scared I am for my future (and the future of every disabled resident and every pedestrian) in this city if you don't start taking sidewalk snow clearing seriously. This is absolutely an issue that NEEDS some of those millions from your rainy day fund.

Access to safe sidewalks isn't some sort of luxury. It's a right. I'm a wheelchair user and

if you don't put more money and effort into clearing sidewalks I'm legitimately going to be trapped in my home for MONTHS. Could you imagine not being able to go anywhere within the city you live in whenever there is snow on the ground? Could you imagine how isolating, depressing and dangerous that could be for you? If you could no longer navigate the city well enough to get groceries, go to doctors appointments, take part in city events, visit friends and family?

I am one of the lucky ones in that I have a husband and friends with cars who will help me get to the car and will drive me where I need to go. But even as one of the lucky ones I can be stopped in my tracks when I get to my destination and there is no accessible curb cuts or sidewalk for me to get into the building. I have experienced instances of parking in an accessible parking spot downtown but being blocked in by icy snowbanks and then having no way to get anywhere because the sidewalks were a dangerous obstacle course. Imagine how much harder it is for disabled residents of our city who have to rely on public transportation or who are also pedestrians? It's near impossible. It's so incredibly dangerous. And it's so very disrespectful.

And it's not just about residents of St. John's with disabilities. It's about every pedestrian in this city who is being forced out into the middle of busy streets in stormy conditions due to your inaction here. People are being injured and killed because of this.

Show us that you're actually committed to making this city accessible. Show us some real life examples of that dedication to accessibility that you claimed to have while talking to local media outlets following my post about the pedestrian mall going viral. You can't just put effort into accessibility when it's trending. And it's more than a few ramps being put down when someone complains. This has to be a lifelong commitment, and let's be real, this city is failing miserably at it.

I want to be able to focus on the positives and to celebrate accessibility rather than needing to be negative, but there isn't much to praise here. Thank you to Ian Froude, Maggie Burton and Sheilagh O'Leary for caring about accessibility. But to the rest of council, do better. You owe safe and clear sidewalks to all residents of St. John's. It's honestly a bare minimum.

Sincerely,

Lisa Walters
AccessYYT

Disclaimer: This email may contain confidential and/or privileged information intended only for the individual(s) addressed in the message. If you are not the intended recipient, any other distribution, copying, or disclosure is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please notify me immediately by return email and delete the original message.

Any correspondence with employees, agents, or elected officials of the City of St. John's may be subject to disclosure under the provisions of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015, S.N.L. 2015, c.A-1.2.

Sidewalk Snow Clearing Public Engagement

What We Heard (Detailed
Report)

August 2020

ST. JOHN'S



Disclaimer

- **This document aims to provide a detailed summary of what was heard from participants during the engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word.**
- **The City produces a What we Heard document for every city-lead project that has public engagement to share back with the community the commentary collected and to ensure we heard you correctly.**
- **The full scope of commentary is used by the project team, city staff, and Council to help inform recommendations and decisions.**

Context and Background

- Council directed staff to undertake public engagement on sidewalk snow clearing.
- This has been a topic of much discussion especially considering the 2019-20 winter and unprecedented snow events.
- There were several facebook groups established, petitions created, and a protest at City Hall related to this topic in 2020.
- Previous engagement took place in 2014 as part of the broader winter maintenance review and a pilot program for sidewalk snow clearing was launched in 2015 which was positively received.
- Budget reductions brought changes to the pilot in 2016-17.
- Any decisions related to changes in service would need to be considered in the context of the 2021 budget planning process and current constraints due to the pandemic. Recommendations coming from this engagement process will likely need to consider quick wins in the short term and an implementation plan for the longer term.

Purpose of Public Engagement

- Council and staff recognize there is a voice within the community advocating for improved service in sidewalk snow clearing. Messages have focused on the importance of sidewalks for those who rely primarily on active transportation and those who use public transit to get around.
- The key decision point for Council to consider through the engagement process was how to improve the service levels in a way that is effective, i.e. there is a recognition of improvement, and the cost of making the improvements.
 - To make these decisions it will be imperative that the city understand what the issues are, and for whom, in the current level of service and where the improvements will have the greatest impact.

Public Engagement Goals

- **Create space where residents and key stakeholders can learn more about the current sidewalk snow clearing program and provide their perspectives on current, and potential future service levels using tools that are easy to use and accessible.**
- **Gather feedback in such a way that Public Works staff can use the information to inform recommendations to Council who will ultimately make decisions around service levels and budgets.**

Public Engagement Tools

Engagement Activity	Target group	Notes
Virtual meeting with Advisory committees and Youth Engagement Action Team	Representatives of various sub- groups such as inclusion, youth, seniors	These meetings were designed to seek feedback from various segments on the population on the engagement approach and survey questions
Virtual meeting with Board of Trade and Downtown St. John's	Business Community	Seek feedback on the best approach to use to get feedback from the business community
Launch engage project page	All stakeholders	Page designed to provide information about current program, links to surveys for public and business community and a mapping tool
Key stakeholder meetings	Inclusion Advisory committee Metrobus NL English School District Seniors' Advisory Committee Empower Local Immigration Partnership (newcomers)	Meetings tailored and focused on specific stakeholder communities, their concerns and issues.
Virtual Public Sessions	All residents	Two sessions planned for different times of day to accommodate various needs. Registration required and test sessions conducted to increase comfort.
Social Media campaign	All residents	Used standard social media to use polls/questions and then direct users to survey, engage page
Email and 311	All residents (especially those not comfortable with virtual/online)	Promotion of 311 and email – calls to 311, took name and contact and staff followed up with one-on-one

Promotion of Public Engagement Opportunities

- City Guide – full page advertisement Spring issue
- Social media
 - 13 posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter reaching nearly 100,000
- Engage – newsletters
 - Three newsletters sent to more than 2400 registered users of engagestjohns.ca
- Paid advertising
- Promotion through business associations, i.e. Downtown St. John's, Board of Trade
- Council interviews/media coverage
- City's Calendar of events
- E-updates News and news release
- City's Economic Update e-newsletter, sent to 2400 subscribers



Points of engagement

- More than 3,000 engagement touch points through engagestjohns.ca, online surveys, virtual meetings, social media, calls to 311 or emails



What we Heard From E-mail and 311


- **311 (three calls)**
 - Major concerns with winter access, safety, priority street without priority service, downtown and limited access off street to connector streets, increase use of Go Bus in winter, less physical activity in winter, mail service impacted
- **Emails (14 received)**
 - Intersections/sight lines are issues
 - Staff need to experience the sidewalks to better understand user needs
 - Areas in and around MUN – need connectivity
 - Area around WestView Village needs improvement
 - Comfortable with current level of service given the weather (Georgetown)
 - Snow being pushed onto sidewalks and other obstacles such as garbage bins
 - New sidewalks added in the city – are they being considered within the program?
 - Need improvements/service in and around Doyles Rd/Schools in Goulds
 - Quality of service/contractors who currently provide the service. i.e. Queen's Rd
 - Bus stops need clearing
 - Change street design to allow for boulevards for snow storage
 - Agreement with Telegram article referenced [here](#).

Feedback from engagestjohns.ca

- 2,300 visits to the project page

Aware	Informed	Used the mapping tool
1,900 (unique user who visited at least one page)	815 (unique user who visited multiple pages)	<p>76 separate accounts left feedback using the mapping tool</p> <p>Note: Site Admin1 added pins for callers to 311, during virtual events, and meetings with stakeholder groups so the actual number of individual pieces of feedback is higher.</p>

Featured Projects - open for your input



Sidewalk Snow Clearing
 26 May 2020

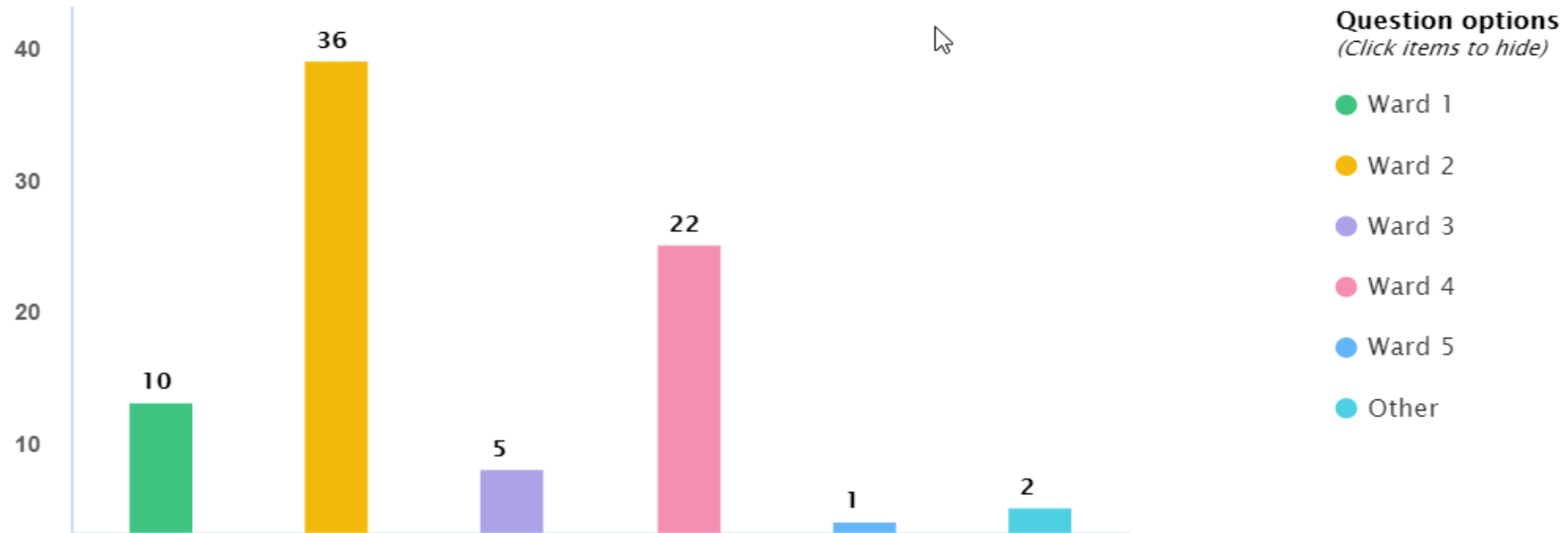
Provide your feedback - deadline June 19. Take a survey, attend a virtual meeting, map your feedback, e-mail or call.

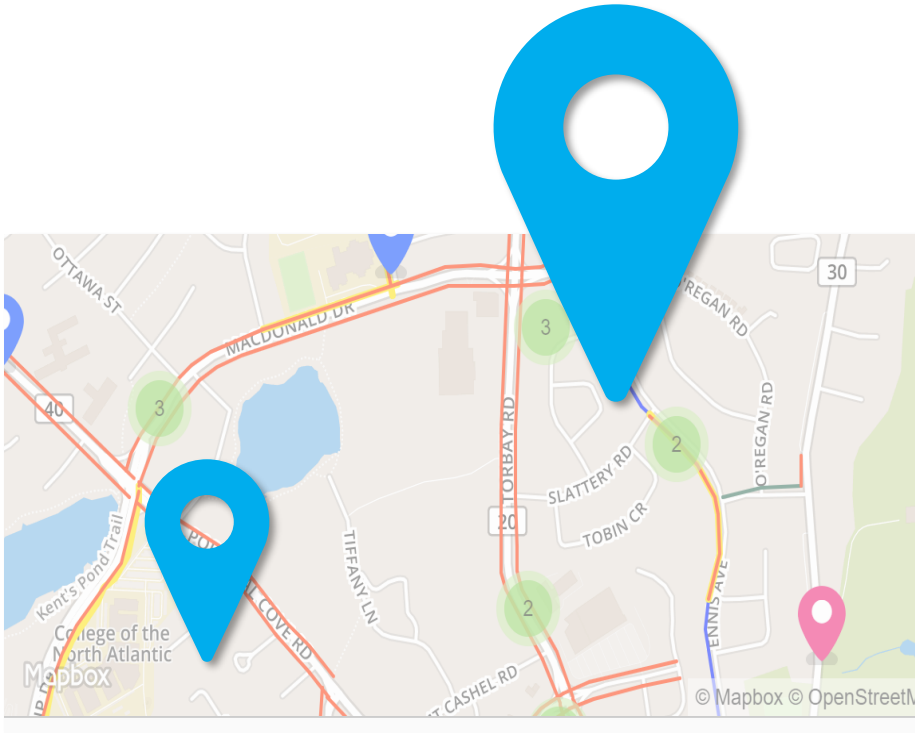
Visit the [project page](#) to learn more and have your say

A discussion about
Sidewalk Snow Clearing

Note: Visitors could also access both the public and business surveys from this site.

Demographics of engagestjohns.ca participants

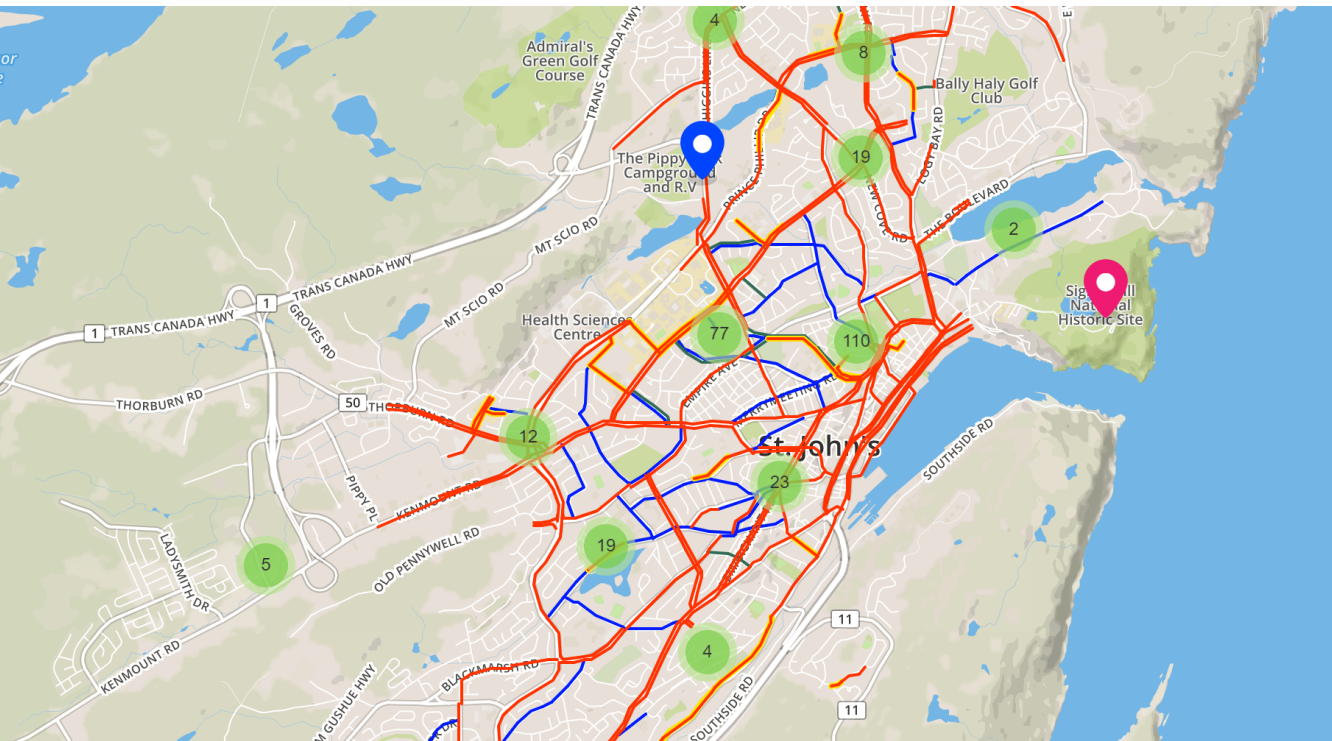




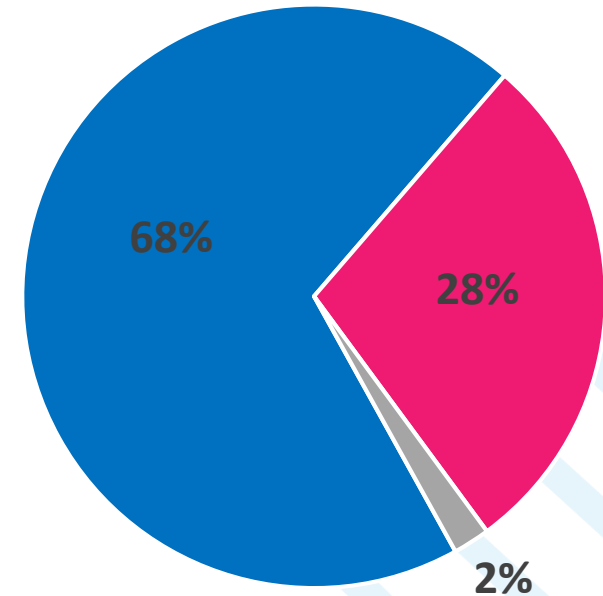
Mapping feedback

- Residents were provided with a map of the city overlaid with the sidewalk snow clearing routes and their priority.
- On engagestohns.ca, registered users could place pins using the following categories:
 - Area of concern/improvement needed
 - Need sidewalk snow clearing here
 - Sidewalk snow clearing not necessary here

Mapping feedback 305 pins placed on map



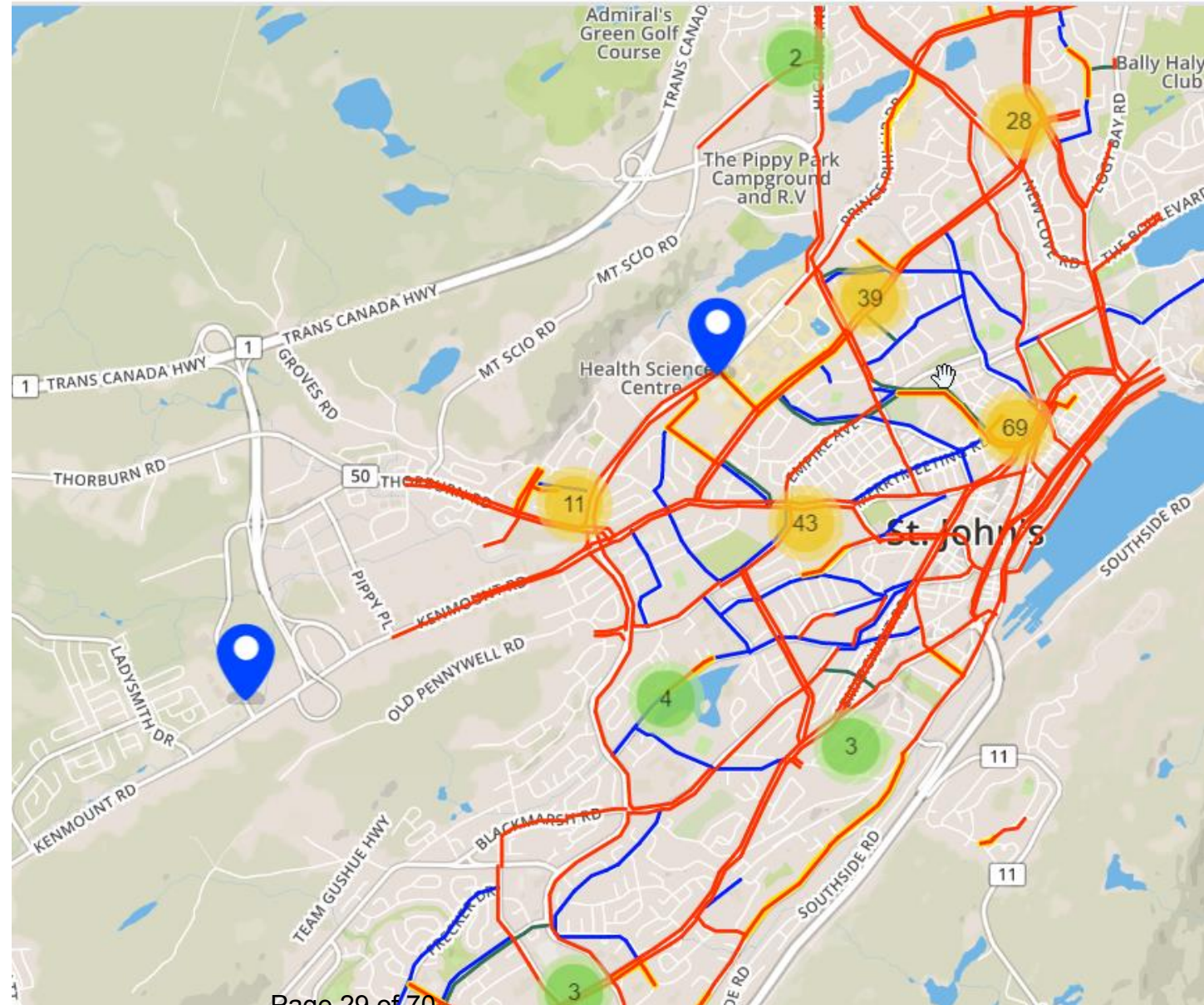
Percentage of pins placed by type



- Area needing improvement
- Area needing sidewalk clearing
- Area that could be removed



Area of concern/
improvement needed
200+ pins placed



Areas noted for improvement - locations

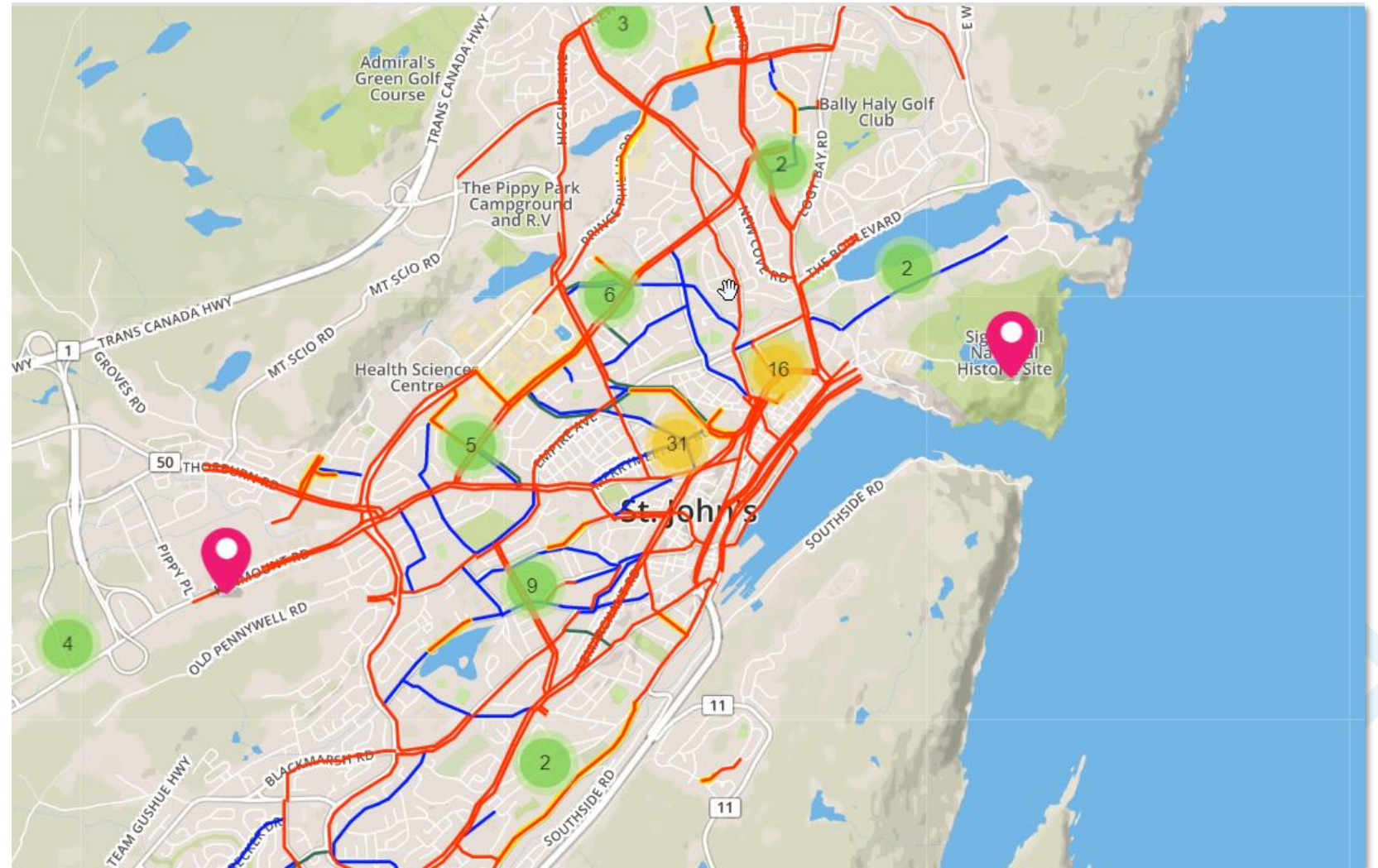
- Bonaventure area – connectivity from downtown to MUN – need clear path with minimal cross over – also a school zone with hundreds of students and in a walkable neighbourhood
- Merrymeeting area – grocery/connectivity
- Wherever there are box stores and bus stops, i.e. Stavanger drive/Aberdeen Ave, Kelsey Drive area
- Elizabeth Avenue – high pedestrian and bus traffic
- Freshwater Rd - connectivity
- Rawlins Cross area – Queens, Military, -high foot traffic and connectivity
- Harvey Rd
- Torbay Rd
- Allandale Rd from Higgins Line to Prince Philip
- Monkstown Rd – narrow streets, cars parked on street and high foot traffic area
- Hills into and out of downtown – i.e. Prescott
- Streets with bridges where bridge is narrow and full of snow/pushing pedestrians into busy streets
- In and around Memorial – many students walking/taking bus

Areas Noted for Improvement/Key Concerns

- Crossing buttons/push buttons/cross walks - access
- Bus stops – both Metrobus and school bus stops need to be free from snow, sight lines improved, intersections and access to these stops free from snow
- Safety and Consistency – full streets need to be cleared not just partial – help people get where they are going without having to go out into street, reach dead ends
- Co-ordination between road and sidewalk plows to improve service and consistency
- Blind corners – intersections build up issues, sight lines
- Not all Priority 1 streets are cleared well enough – if a Priority 1 then make it priority
- School zones generally – need bigger areas not just sections in front of schools as school zone
- Areas around poles – ensure path around the pole is clear
- Salting – more required and at same time as clearing
- Steps/connectivity issues – sidewalks leading to and from steps and steps themselves especially in downtown
- Downtown overall needs to be walkable as many services are in Downtown, people bus there, tourists/visitors, business community and their employees need to get around barrier free
- Dangerous – cited frequently as an issue for people who walk in the city in winter. Blind curves, snow mounds/hills, sight lines
- Contractors pushing snow into the street/sidewalk
- Connectivity



Need sidewalk snow
clearing here
85 pins placed



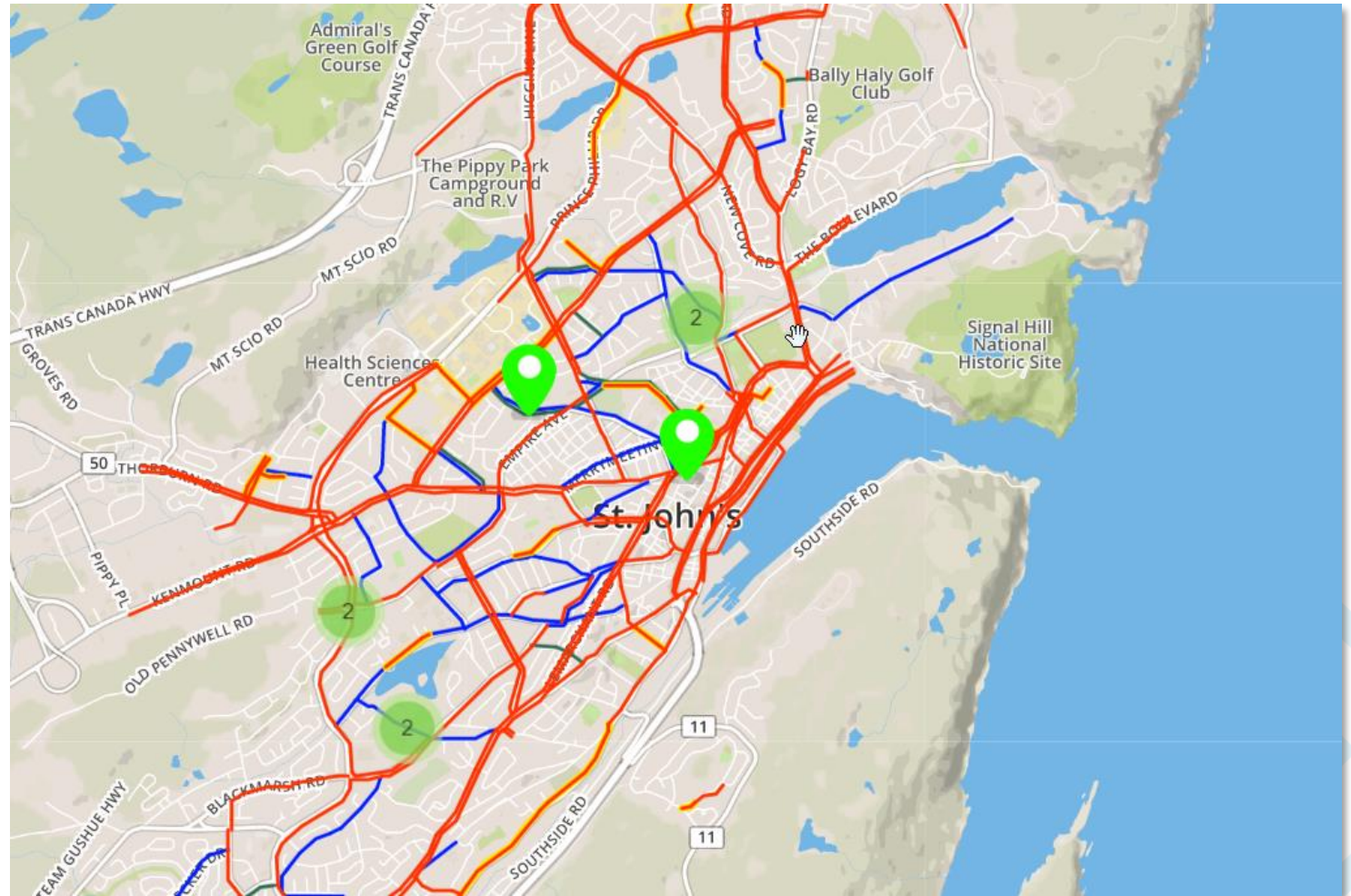
Areas Needing Sidewalk Snow Clearing

Key locations noted as needing sidewalk clearing or an increase in priority level

- **Locations included:**
 - Mundy Pond Rd area and Ropewalk Lane – school zones and bus stops
 - Pennywell Rd – connectivity – high foot traffic
 - Logy Bay Rd - connectivity
 - Circular Rd between King's Bridge and Empire - connectivity
 - Hayward Avenue
 - Escasoni Place – Empower located here, wheelchair users
 - Jasper Street – school connection
 - Portugal Cove Rd North – connector to Airport Heights
 - Wicklow Street– high foot traffic
 - Craigmiller Avenue– high foot traffic/bus stops
 - Topsail Rd South – disconnected leading to Downtown
 - Bay Bulls Rd
 - Waterford Bridge Rd – gaps- connections
 - Della Drive area – Goulds – School zones – high foot traffic
 - All streets with bus stops/walking to schools including private schools – post-secondary



Sidewalk snow clearing
not necessary here
8 pins placed



Sidewalk Snow Clearing Not Needed Here

- Comments about whether both sides of Columbus Drive are necessary
- Steps connecting streets where sidewalks are not connected –e.g. Sycamore Place – dead end
- Bannerman Street – lower priority
- Newtown Rd, Sections of Blackmarsh Rd – lower priority if fewer pedestrians

Feedback From Socials

- Social media used to promote engagement and to solicit feedback through a series of polls/questions
- 54 comments provided through social media during promotional posts and include such items as:
 - Comments about quality of sidewalk snow clearing/looking for feedback
 - Comparisons to other cities such as Mount Pearl
 - Importance of school zones and need to increase radius
 - Specific reference to lack of sidewalk clearing in Southlands
 - Need for snow removal to improve service
 - Change in type of equipment to be used
 - Impact of poles in sidewalk and consistency of clearing
 - Importance of clearing intersections
 - Need for salting/safety
- 1195 engaged directly with quick polls on socials - Top poll noted below:

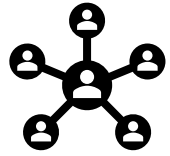


What we Heard from Public Sessions

- Two sessions – 32 people registered for the virtual sessions
- Participation from cross section of City geographies – Downtown/Signal Hill, East end, West end, Goulds, University area, Centre City, Georgestown
- One of the pedestrians also wrote a piece in the Telegram ([link to that](#))
- Key messages included:
 - Sidewalks are essential in all seasons
 - Challenging winters do not have to mean inaccessible sidewalks
 - We need consistent ice control so people can feel confident the sidewalks are safe
 - Better sidewalk snow clearing would be a convenience for many but is clearly vital for a significant and often marginalized minority
 - Ice control/salting major concern
 - Priorities are ok but more consistency needed
 - Accessibility for all users of sidewalks
 - We need a walkable city – pedestrians have rights, not everyone needs or can afford a car

Public Sessions – Key Concerns

- Snow being placed/pushed into sidewalk by contractors/residents
- Need to look at walking paths for school-aged children and where they get buses to increase safety including connector streets to priority 1/school zones
- Push buttons/intersections need to be cleared
- Consider clearing highly used trails to create connectivity; some expressed concerns with lighting on trails
- Steps/hilly streets need more priority/consistency/ice control, especially Downtown
- It's scary being a pedestrian, people should not need to walk in the street
- Need ice control – would improve safety
- Need salt when cleared not afterwards, and frequently
- Improve staff knowledge of pedestrian experience and increase training
- Willing to pay more for better/increased service levels - \$25 a year seems reasonable but want to see prioritization of sidewalks through that investment
- Better communications/ dedicated 311 call line for snow related issues
- Poles are impediments to clearing creating “roadblocks” and inconsistency
- Coordination of road and sidewalk plow to prevent “pushing snow” back on sidewalk after it is cleared
- Do not use road plows to clear sidewalks – creates unevenness and makes sidewalk unsafe and therefore not usable



Key Stakeholder Groups

- Virtual meetings with key stakeholder groups included:
 - Metrobus
 - Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD)
 - Newcomers
 - Seniors
 - Inclusion/Empower

What we Heard from Metrobus

Public transit review completed in 2019 identified sidewalk snow clearing and safety concerns and recommended the following:

Strategy 4A – Bus Stop Snow Clearing - The current snow clearing policy does not prioritize the clearing of transit stops. Furthermore, the priority for snow clearing is for the road surface itself, with little regard for the clearing of transit stop areas so passengers can board buses without climbing over snowbanks. To address bus stop access during winter conditions, the existing snow clearing policy should be updated to further prioritize the transit network and include specific provisions for stop access. Stops on the network should be prioritized based on usage, with all stops on the Frequent Transit Network given the highest priority.

This recommendation was based on feedback from the public which noted: Lack of coordination with the city over snow clearing, construction, and parking enforcement

- At present there are 800-900 bus stops and 65 shelters
- Frequent routes with most traffic – 1, 2, 3, 10
- Calls/complaints about sidewalks directed back to 311
- Bus shelters are cleared by Metrobus and they are generally done about 48 hours after a snow event and in coordination with city roads clearing once push back is done – this is very much subject to the type of snow event and volume of snow

What we Heard from NLESD

- Usually when there is feedback related to sidewalk snow clearing they direct people to the City
- Most feedback would relate to line of sight, where bus stops are located, walking on road where there are multi-lanes
- May not be clear to parents what gets cleared and when
- Some parents drive their kids to bus stops and create congestion/unsafe situations
- Decision on closing schools based on road safety mainly
- The more we clear of the 1.6 KM “walking” zone the better it will be for walkers

What we Heard from the Seniors' Advisory Committee (SAC)

- Seniors need to know what to expect when there is a weather event
- Prioritize sidewalks as important as many seniors use them to get around
- Downtown important to seniors
- Crosswalks important
- Training for operators to improve service
- Access to certain facilities like health care facilities – trying to get to certain locations
- Consider it in context of 'Complete' streets – all ages, connectivity
- Access to city buildings is important, should be clear
- SAC also provided feedback on the engagement process

What we Heard from the Inclusion Advisory Committee (IAC)

- A session with the IAC provided feedback on how best to use engagement tools effectively to include voices to be heard in this community. City staff provided options to allow groups to have separate surveys or focus groups. This led to a focus group with 25 users of services from Empower – the disability resource centre. What we heard from this group follows.

What we Heard from Empower Users

- Lack of safe sidewalks in winter significantly impacts quality of life - isolation, depression, people stay in more, rely on others more, use Go Bus more
- Need to know when and what sidewalks are done – to plan or alter route
- Would use Metrobus accessible routes but cannot get to stops due to sidewalk clearing
- Getting to mailboxes, putting out garbage a challenge
- GoBus challenges with dropping ramps and providing access
- Ice control – safety is important
- Snow needs to be cleared off and sidewalks need to be level with curb cuts to get to road
- No snow on outer edge of sidewalk – some sidewalks clear but the edge not, so can't get off and on
- Clear crosswalk push button areas and have safe cross walks

What we heard from Newcomers and Organizations

Supporting Newcomers

Local Immigration Partnership organized two focus groups which included both newcomers and organizations that support or work with newcomers including post-secondary institutions, government agencies, Association for New Canadians.

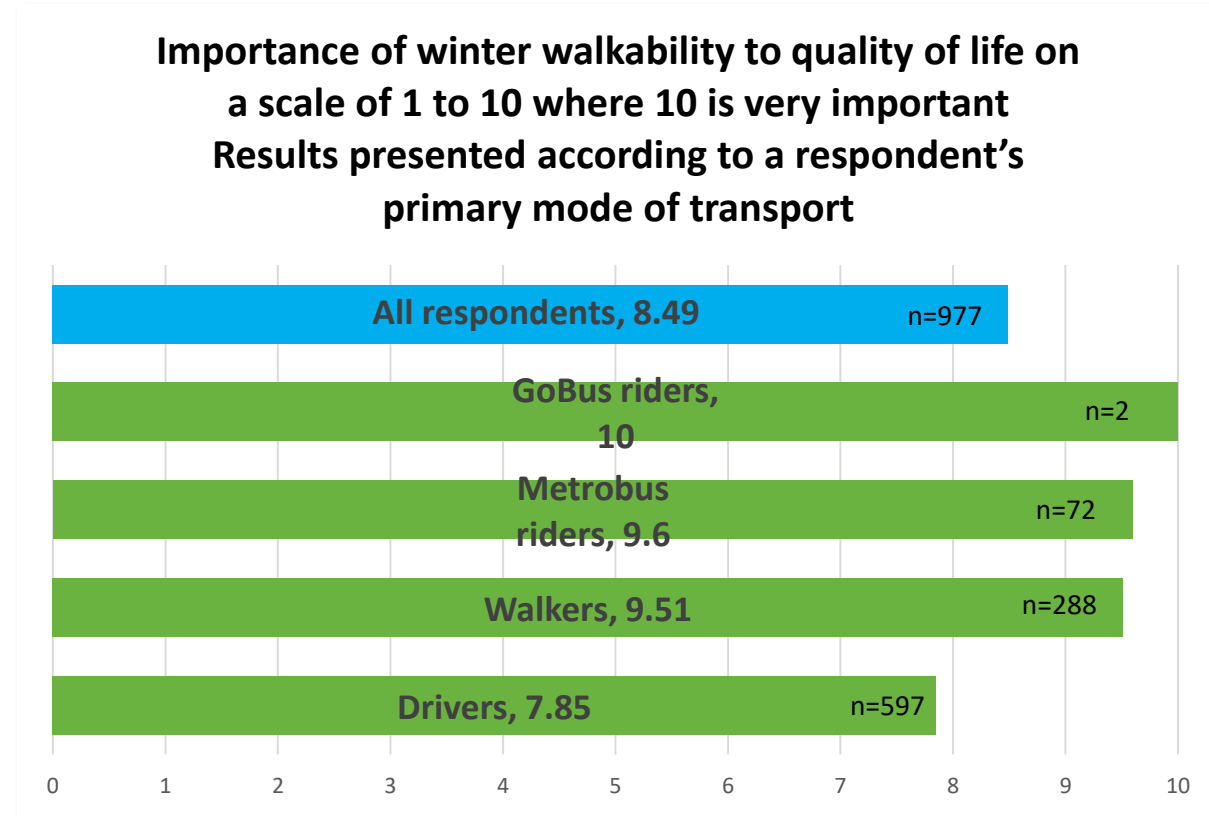
- Significant concerns about fear of falling, afraid of getting hurt, difficult to get around, scary in winter especially with children
- Accessibility is a necessity, accessibility is equality
- Downtown important for newcomers, many services there and bus stops/routes they need to access
- If sidewalks are not clear, the city is not safe
- Sidewalk snow clearing important anywhere that population density is high and there is potential for lower income earners. Apartment buildings, locations with NL Housing units. Many occupants in these residences are without vehicle access.
- Coordinate with NLESD – walkable to schools, many newcomers in walking zones. Particular note about elementary schools and walk zones – some newcomers houses at apartment buildings on Crosby Rd and Torbay Rd, for example, and are in walk zones for schools – safety concerns – noted St. Andrews and Virginia Park, Mundy Pond – issue is not just sidewalks for walking, but school bus stops where kids in the street and not safe due to accumulation of snow on sidewalks and roads.
- Routes to grocery stores important.
- Need to see both sides clearly –in trouble areas – Elizabeth Ave and Thorbourn Rd. Main Rds – 24 hours – highest traffic and pedestrian feeders
- Bus routes connected – where are people getting off and where are they going – i.e Churchill Sq. MUN, most popular/stops plowing and salting – tandem approach/teamwork

Newcomers Continued

- **The newcomer experience is an important one:**
 - They are bus users and taking the bus is challenging in the best of times, winter makes it that much harder
 - People are waiting in the street
 - People who are economically disadvantaged are even more so due to not having a car, forced into street, least likely to call councillor or complain
 - If they do not have a positive experience they do not stay – bigger issue and concern
- **Hiring a few extra people/new machine – a little extra to make a difference**
- **Consider impact of service on lower income residents**
- **Do we need a conversation with housing? Hold landlords accountable.**
- **Procedures/knowledge/education on process and requirements**
- **We are losing our immigrants due to weather and experience – bigger implications for newcomers**
- **Neighbourhoods focused – landlords responsible for rentals in other cities**
 - Some people take it on themselves to clear – make it neighbourhood focused
 - May not be realistic for some people
- **Have seen improvement and need to continue to improve; Keep investing in improving the service**
- **If you want better service, you have to pay- other cities pay for that.**

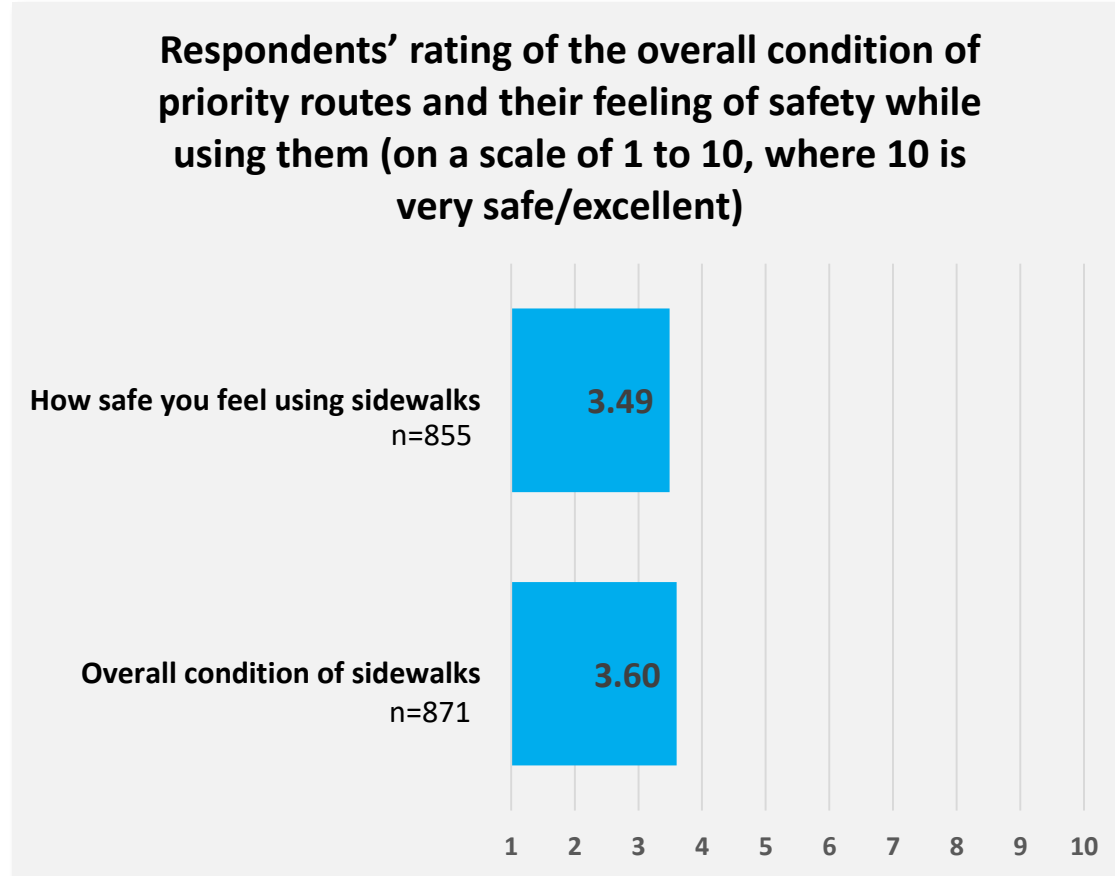
What We Heard from the Public Survey

- Online survey
- 1,019 total responses
- Detailed results available here ([link to detailed report](#)):
- Winter walkability is very important to the quality of life of all citizens surveyed, rating 8.49 out of 10 (where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important).
- While drivers rated the importance of winter walkability slightly lower than respondents using other modes of transportation, their rating of 7.85 out of 10 indicates the important role walking plays in their quality of life in winter.
- The importance of winter walkability was rated higher than average by those aged 18-24 (8.85 out of 10) and those aged 25-44 (8.72 out of 10), and by post-secondary students (9.04 out of 10), newcomers who had relocated to St. John's from another country in last five years (9.45 out of 10), and visible minorities (9.43 out of 10). Note, however, that these samples were generally quite small.



Public Survey Results Continued

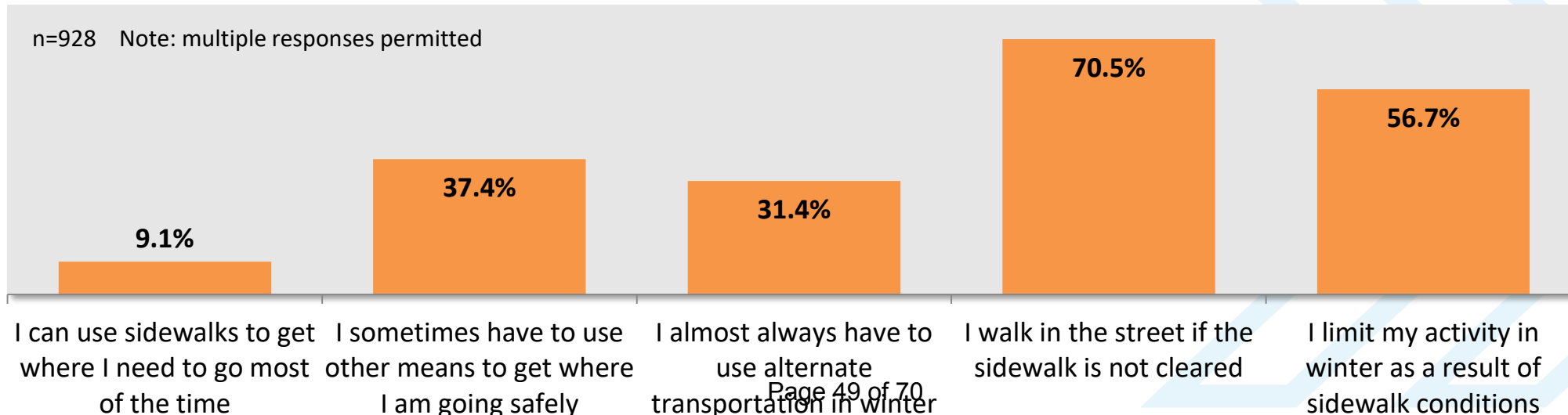
- In the past two winters, 92% of citizens surveyed have wanted to use, or used, the City's priority sidewalk routes. Those who did not use the sidewalks cited safety concerns, and lack of snow clearing and ice control as reasons. Others indicated they were primarily drivers, did not live near or walk in the priority areas, or had mobility challenges.
- Safety is a significant concern for pedestrians using the priority sidewalk routes. When asked to rate how safe they felt using the priority sidewalk routes in winter, respondents' average rating was 3.49 out of 10 (where 1 was not at all safe and 10 was very safe). Respondents who indicated their primary mode of transportation was Metrobus, rated their feeling of safety lower than average (2.95 out of 10), as did post-secondary students (2.79 out of 10).
- When asked to rate the overall condition of the priority sidewalks in winter, respondents gave an average rating of 3.6 out of 10 (where 1 was poor and 10 was excellent). Post-secondary students rated the condition at 2.99.



Public Survey Results Continued

- Using the priority sidewalk routes in winter was challenging for most citizens surveyed. When asked about their experiences using the routes, the most frequently cited response (71%) was “I walk in the street if the sidewalk is not cleared.” Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they limited their activity in winter as a result of sidewalk conditions. Respondents also turned to using alternate transportation either “almost always” (31%) or “sometimes” (37%). Only 9% indicated they could use sidewalks to get where they were going most of the time.
- Eighty-five percent of citizens who used either walking or Metrobus as their primary mode of transport, indicated they “walk in the street if the sidewalk is not cleared.” Sixty-six percent of those using Metrobus as their primary method of transport indicated they limited their activity in winter as a result of sidewalk conditions.

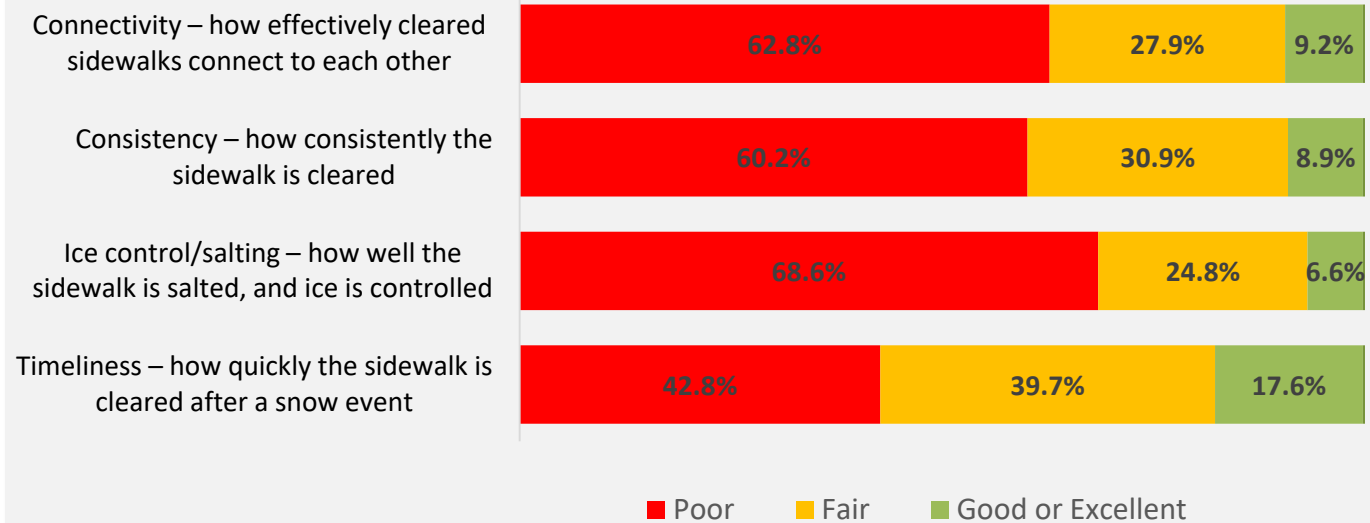
Respondents' experience using the priority sidewalk routes in winter



Public Survey Results Continued

- Views of specific aspects of the sidewalk snow clearing program were generally noting areas needing improvement. **Ice control/salting** was perceived as being poor by almost 70% of respondents. **Connectivity** – how effectively cleared sidewalks connect to each other, and consistency – how consistently the sidewalk is cleared, were also rated as poor by about 60% of respondents. **Timeliness** – how quickly the sidewalk is cleared after a snow event, was rated somewhat more positively than the other queried aspects, receiving the following ratings: good or excellent (17.6%), fair (39.7%), and poor (42.8%). Those who used walking as their primary mode of transportation, were more likely to rate ice control/salting and connectivity as poor (75% and 70% respectively) than those who used other modes.

Respondents' rating of various aspects of the current priority sidewalk snow clearing program

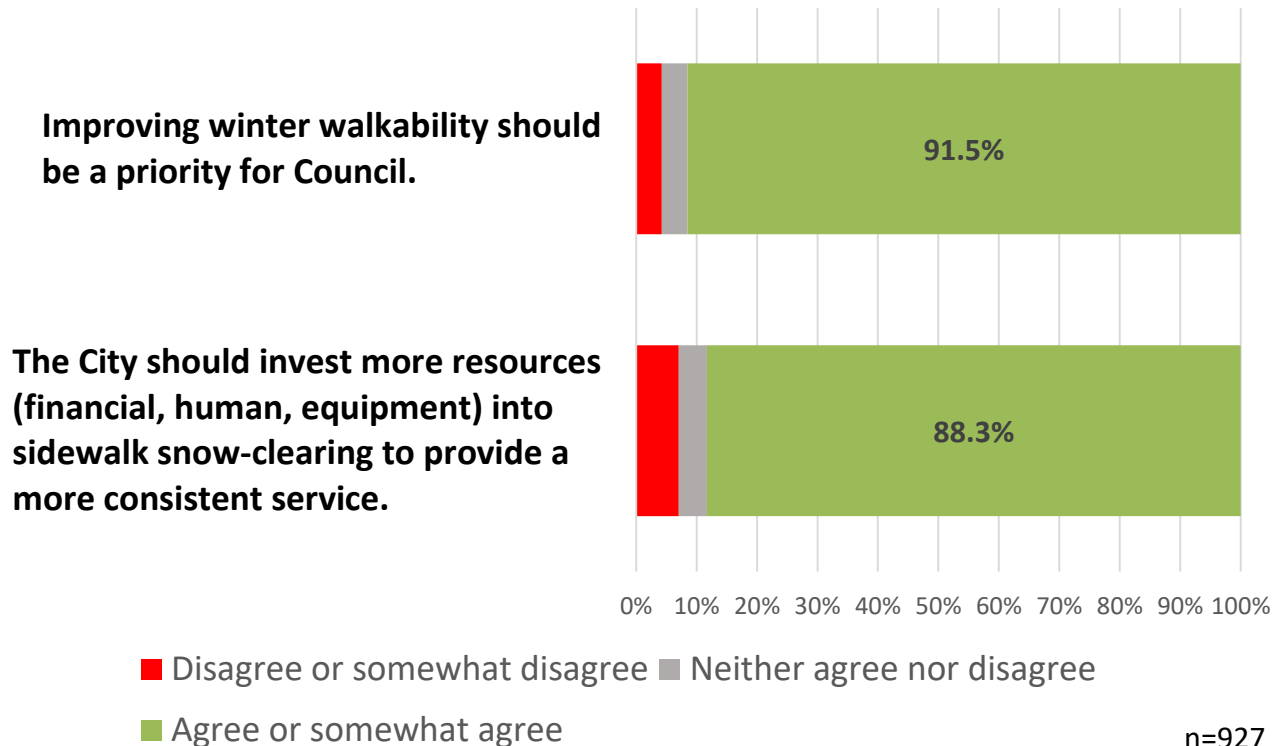


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Public Survey Results Continued

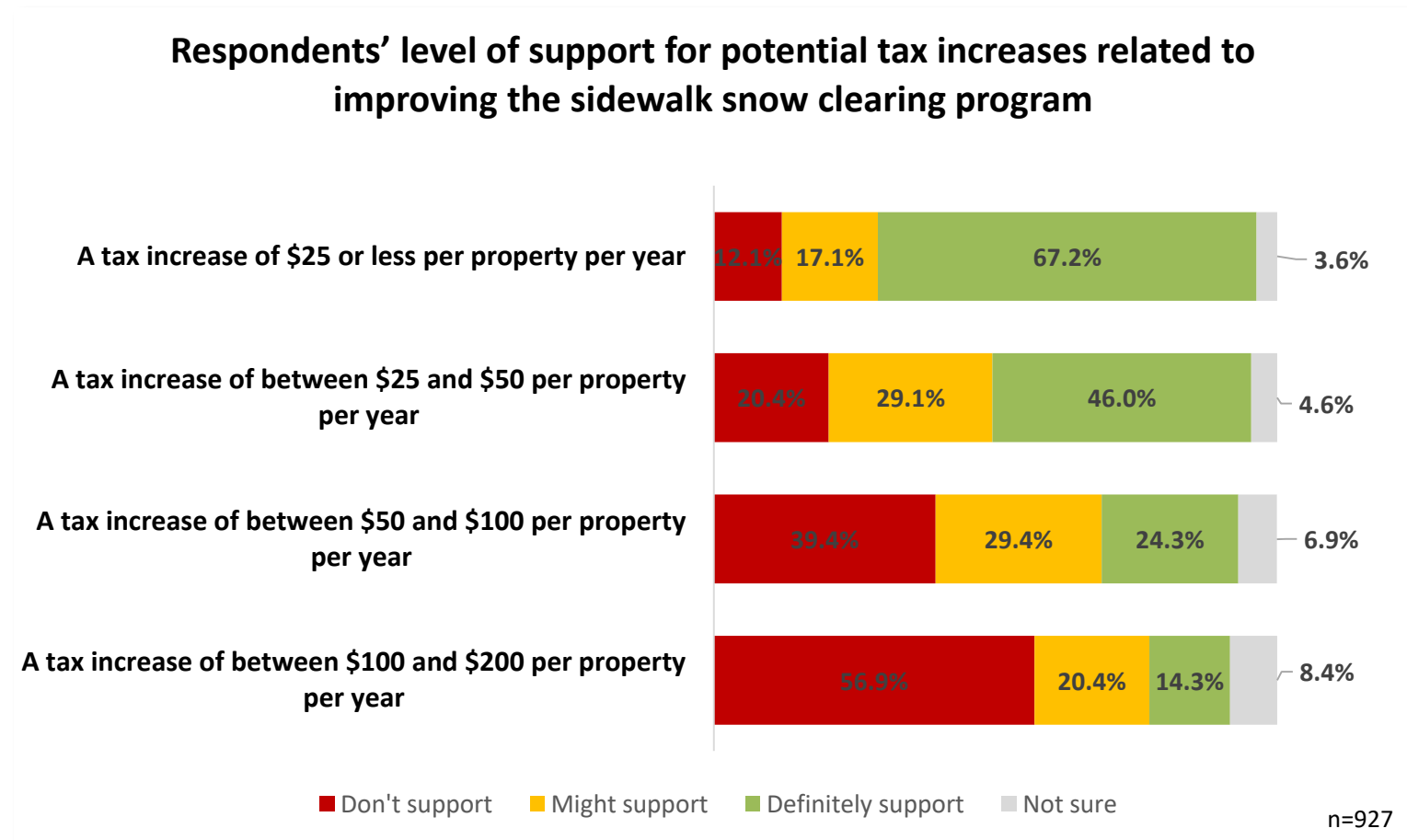
- A significant majority of citizens surveyed were supportive of Council making winter walkability a priority (92% agree or somewhat agree), and of the City investing more resources in sidewalk snow clearing (88% agree or somewhat agree).
- **Support for both statements was high regardless of a respondents' primary mode of transport, though drivers were somewhat less supportive than those who used walking or Metrobus as their primary mode (a comparison is provided in the table below).**

Respondents' level of agreement on Council priorities and investment in sidewalk snow clearing



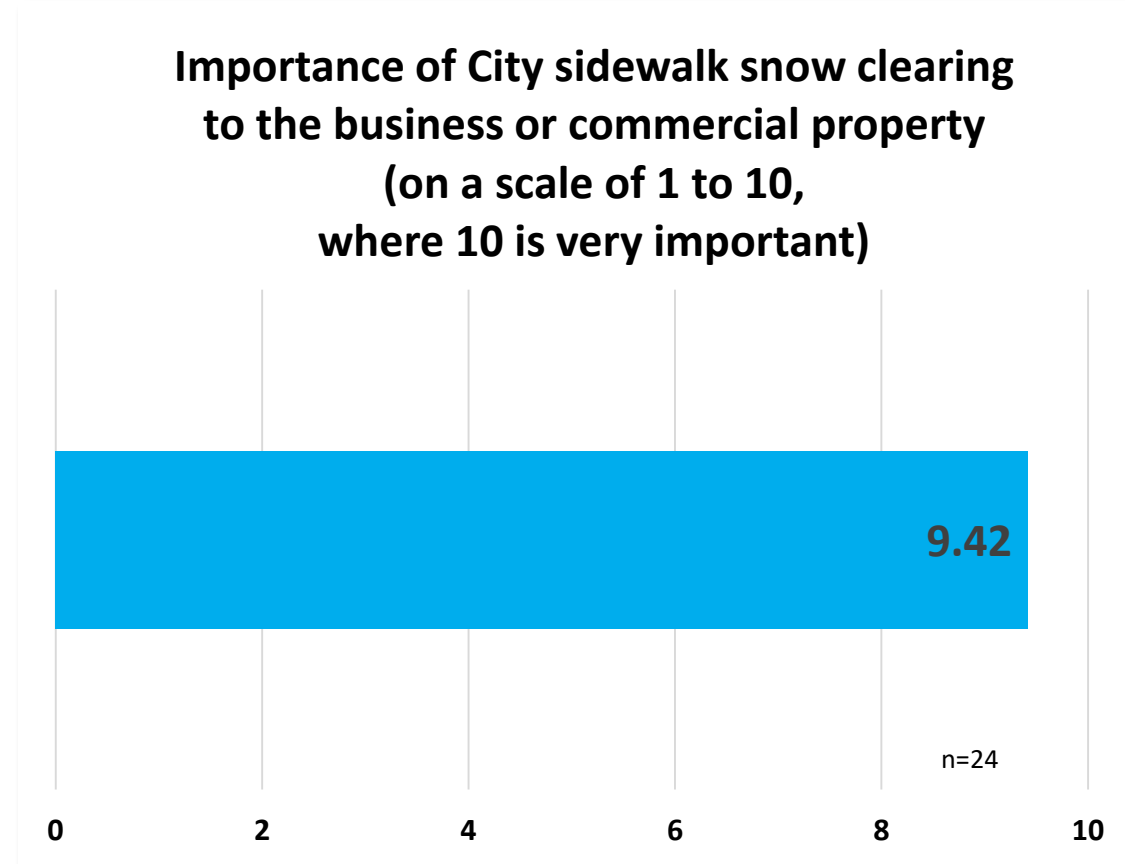
Public Survey Results Continued

- Support for potential tax increases related to improving the sidewalk snow clearing program weakened as the amount of tax increased. A clear majority (67%) of citizens surveyed 'definitely support' an increase of \$25 or less, with a further 17% indicating they 'might support' it.
- Forty-six percent of respondents 'definitely support' an increase of between \$25 and \$50.
- A tax increase of between \$50 and \$100 had the most mixed support with 40% of respondents not supporting it, while 29% 'might support' it, and 24% 'definitely support' it.
- Fifty-seven percent of respondents did not support a tax increase of between \$100 and \$200.



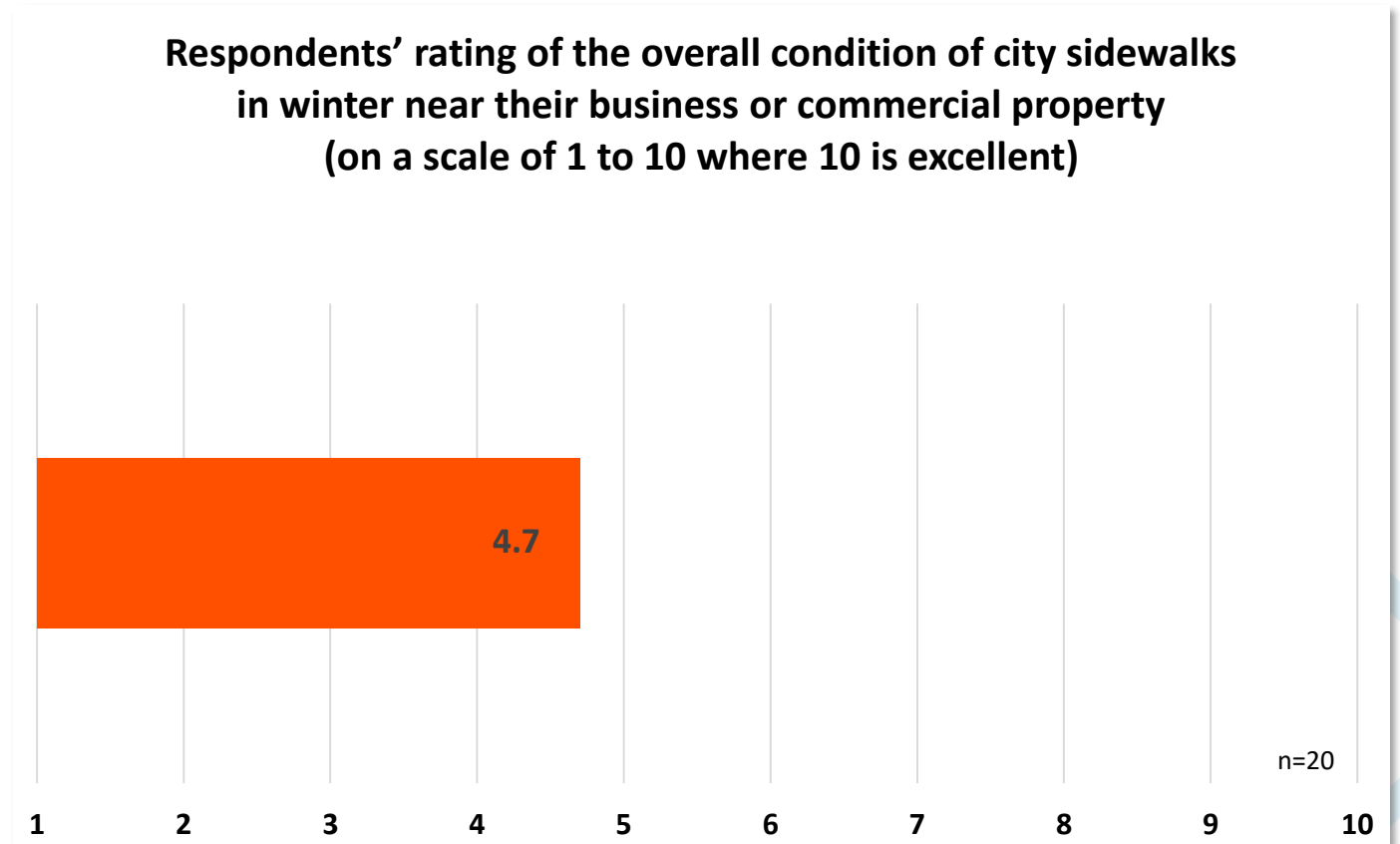
What We Heard from the Business Survey

- Online survey
- 24 responses
- Detailed results available here ([link to detailed document](#)):
- Businesses surveyed rated the importance of City sidewalk snow clearing as a 9.42 on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important.
- 78% of businesses surveyed arrange for their own sidewalk snow clearing (this is likely reflective of the large number of respondents whose businesses or commercial properties are located in the downtown along Water or Duckworth streets).



Business Survey Results Continued

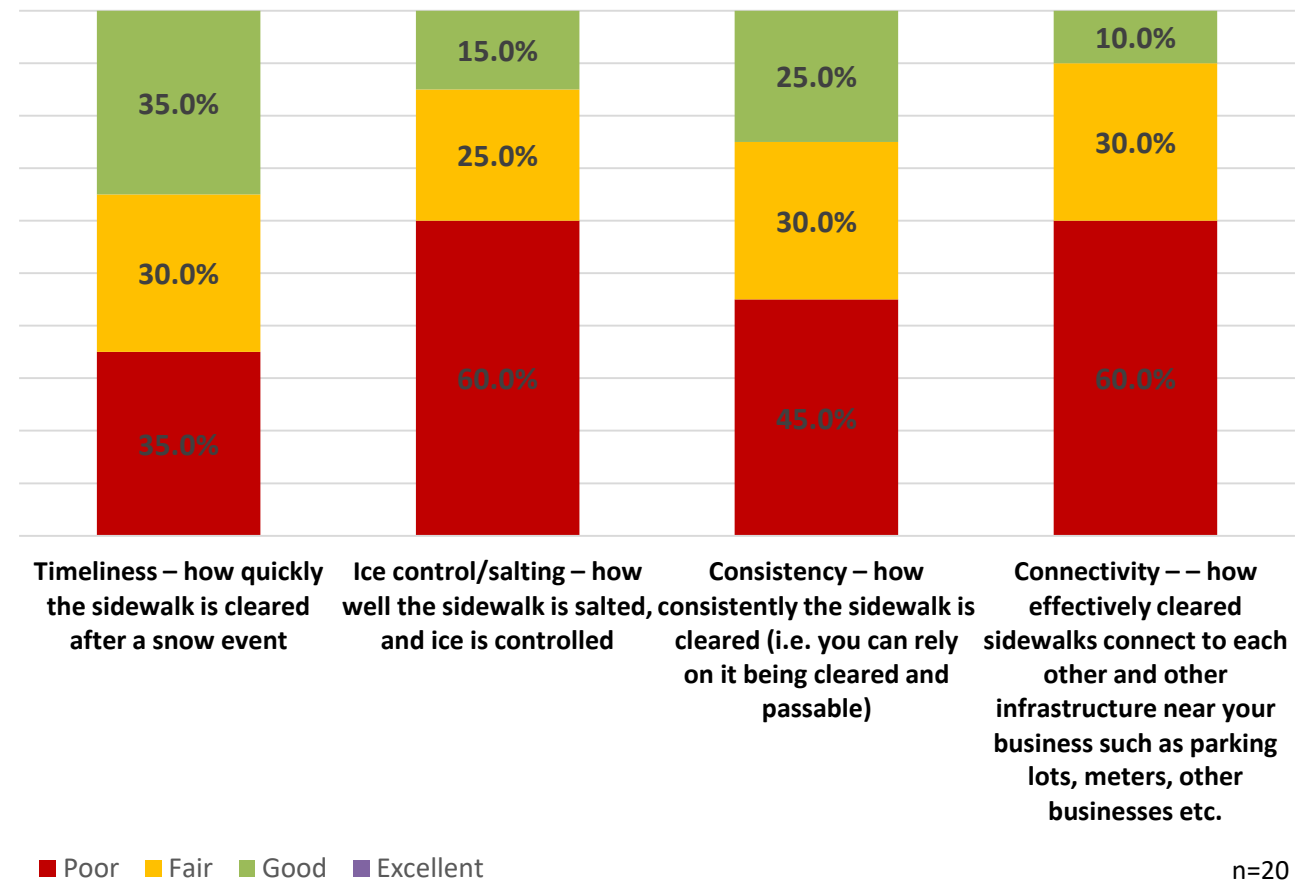
- When asked to rate the overall condition of city sidewalks near their business in winter, survey respondents gave a 4.7 rating out of 10 (where 1 was poor and 10 was excellent).



Business Survey Results Continued

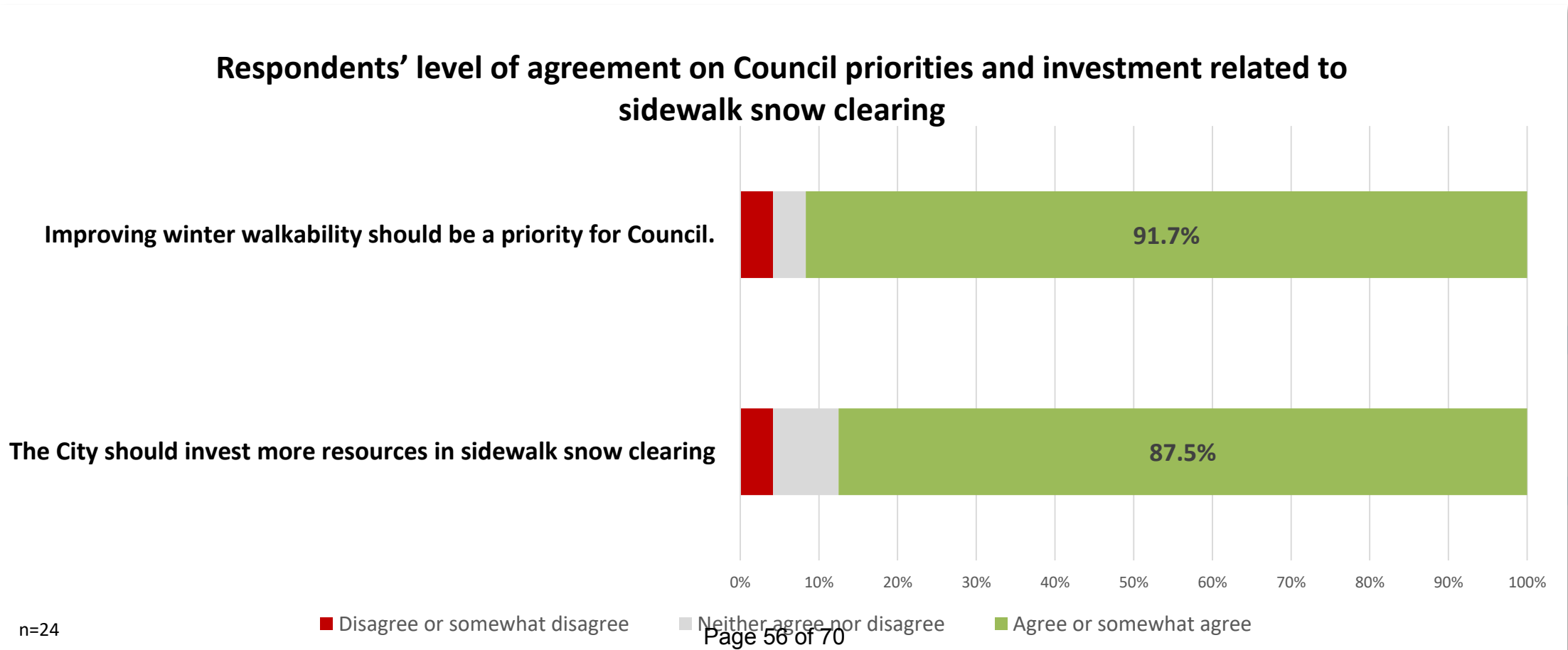
- When queried on the quality of various aspects of the current priority sidewalk snow clearing program, 60% of the businesses surveyed cited **ice control/salting**, and **connectivity** as being poor. **Consistency** was rated as poor by 45% of respondents. **Timeliness** received the most mixed ratings, with about one third of respondents rating it as either poor, fair or good.
- Some respondents expressed specific concerns about snow clearing including: safety concerns related to ice buildup on sidewalks, the timeliness of clearing on main streets in the downtown, the inconsistency with which businesses clear sidewalks in the downtown and whether this was enforced, concerns about vacant properties in the downtown and the lack of sidewalk clearing that results, concerns about access to stairs, and concerns about street plows pushing snow onto cleared sidewalks. In addition, access to sidewalks in the downtown was cited as problematic when cuts were not made in snowbanks to allow pedestrian access at various points along a block

Respondents' rating on the quality of various aspects of the current priority sidewalk snow clearing system



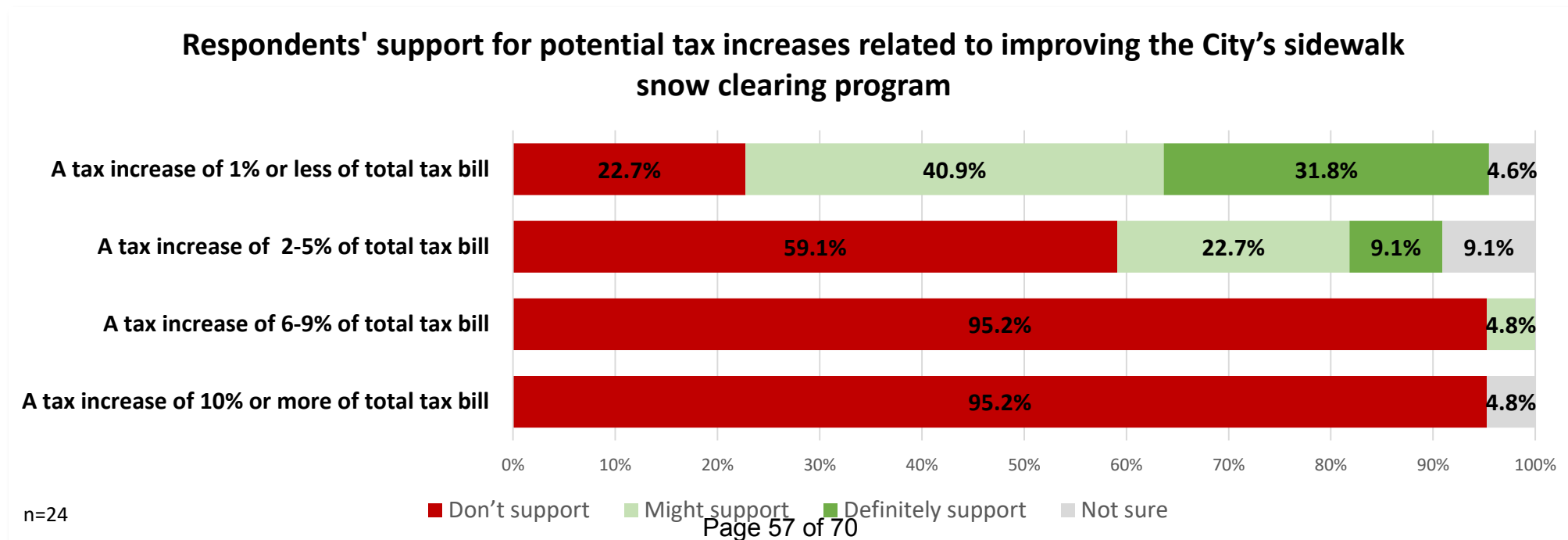
Business Survey Results Continued

- Surveyed businesses were very supportive of Council making winter walkability a priority (91.7% agree or somewhat agree) and of the City investing more resources in sidewalk snow clearing to provide a more consistent service (87.5% agree or somewhat agree).



Business Survey Results Continued


- Support for potential tax increases related to improving sidewalk snow clearing declined as the amount of tax increased. The only tax increase that received substantive support was an increase of 1% or less, with 32% of surveyed businesses definitely supportive, and 41% indicating they might support it.
- Sixty percent of respondents opposed a tax increase of between 2% and 5% and there was effectively no support for tax increases above 5%, with 95% of respondents being opposed.



Common Themes Across all Stakeholders and Engagement Platforms

- A desire for sidewalk service levels to be at the level of road service
- Connectivity and safety are key – walking in the street should not have to be an option for people
- Sidewalks that are cleared need to be consistently accessible and safe (ice free)
- Need walkable paths to key locations – where do people walk most frequently
- Accessibility is an important consideration – quality of life, livability of city
- Improve infrastructure/equipment and more training
- Invest in the service/money and resources
- Priority 1 needs to be a priority
- Focus on school zone/Metrobus/Downtown – connectivity of routes

Next Steps

- **Share detailed reports and what we heard documents with city staff and Council**
 - **Share What we Heard document with public and those who participated**
 - **Develop recommendations for Council consideration**
 - **Council decision making and budget process**
 - **Potential Implementation of improvements/changes**
- 

To Stay Up to Date

- Visit engagestjohns.ca

Home » Sidewalk Snow Clearing

Sidewalk Snow Clearing



Consultation has concluded - Check back for a What we Heard document soon.

Winter sidewalk maintenance activities are an important component of an active transportation network. The City has designated 161 km of sidewalk to be cleared during the winter season. These have varying

levels of priority. Visit the map [here](#) to see which streets are currently within the program area. Priority details can be found [here](#).

Council has requested feedback on the current service levels and what they could be in the future. As Council considers service levels it must also consider the cost of any potential changes.



Water Street Pedestrian Mall

Public Engagement
Stakeholder Sessions (Inclusion)



Context

- Pedestrian mall developed in response to, and as a means of, providing stimulant to downtown economy and to create space for residents to enjoy the outdoors in a safe, public health guided way.
- Timelines were tight; feedback from the business community prior to and throughout the process facilitated by the City and Downtown St. John's
- Section of Water Street closed to traffic to create the Pedestrian Mall included four blocks from Adelaide to Prescott St.
- Deliveries and essential traffic allowed at key times
- Some downtown businesses not supportive/depending on sector/location
- Accessibility concerns raised early on in relation to access to sidewalks and patios
- Businesses within the Mall able to extend footprint to increase capacity
- Businesses outside the Mall able to avail of parkettes
- Pedestrian Mall was one of few actual "events" happening in and around St. John's in summer 2020, little competition

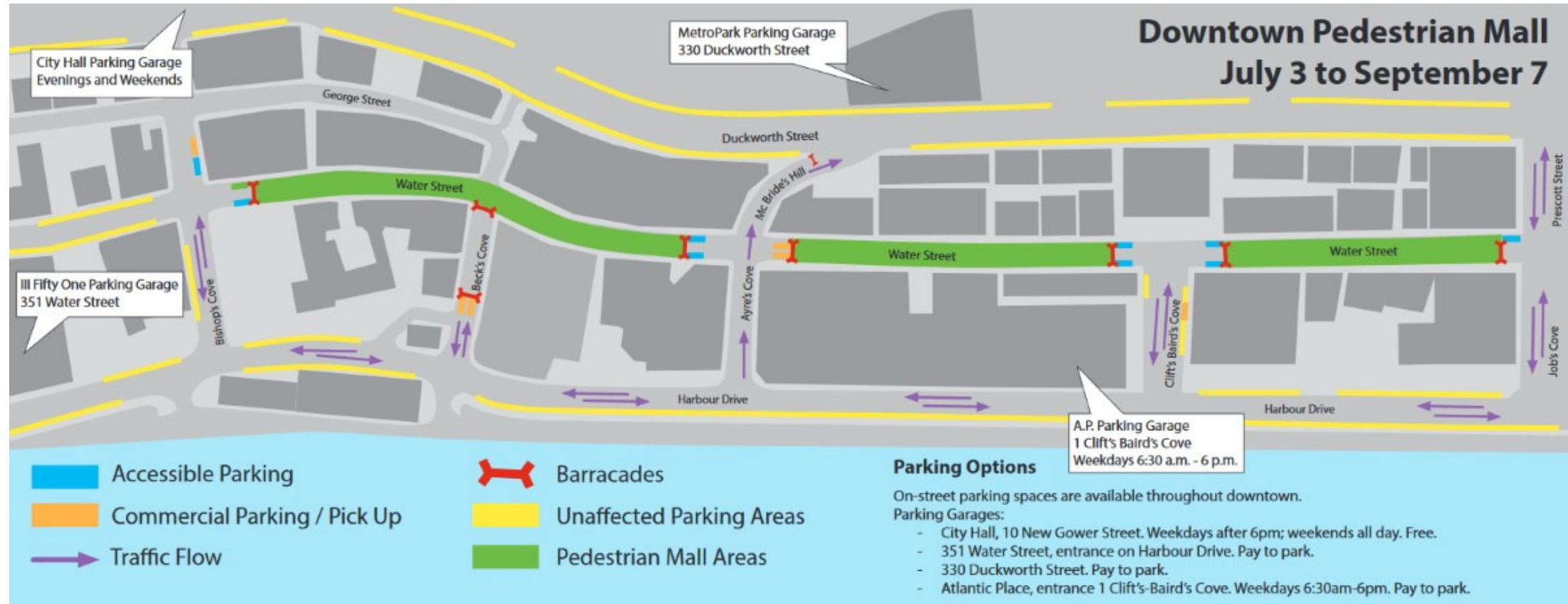


Stakeholders

- **Businesses within the Mall**
 - Restaurants/pubs
 - Retail
 - Service/experience
 - Hospitality
 - Professional business such as lawyers' offices, dental, etc..
 - Employees of businesses in the footprint
- **Businesses in the DT BIA but outside the mall and those on the periphery of BIA**
 - Industrial businesses
 - Duckworth Street, Harbour Drive, Water Street West and Water Street, east of Prescott, Fortis Building,
- **Business Associations**
 - Downtown St. John's, Destination St. John's, Board of Trade, BOMA, George Street Association
- **Visitors/users of the Pedestrian Mall**
- **Non-visitors of the pedestrian Mall**
- **Transit services – Public transit, Go Bus/Accessible taxi, taxis, couriers, delivery**
- **Private parking garages**
- **Inclusion community**
- **Security staff**
- **Vulnerable populations**



Map





Questions

- **Planning for the mall**

Thinking about the process to establish the Pedestrian mall, this year:

- What feedback would you provide to the city to be included in the planning process?

While the mall was in operation/future malls

- Thinking about the period of time the mall was in operation this year:
- What worked well for you/your client group?
- What was challenging for you/your client group?
- What needs to change for future malls to ensure better inclusion?



Questions? Anything else?

In Attendance: Debbie, Trevor, Joby, Duane, Grant, Nancy, Taylor

Issues:

- Vision loss:
 - No indicators about decks on sidewalks or extending to street
 - Multiple obstacles on sidewalks
 - Lack of universal design standard
 - E.g. one deck is very different from another, so no way to learn about decks broadly through the experience as one
 - Restaurants not well-illuminated: going from extreme light to dark
 - E.g. when using a washroom
 - How does someone with low vision maintain social distancing? Identify the 6ft apart?
 - No indication to travel on one side to maintain
- Ramps have implications of dignity
 - Why have the ramp if you can't access the washroom?
 - E.g. on the second floor, way in the back, not accessible
 - Reflects lack of understanding
 - Decks were small- wheelchair users can't turn around, maneuver, or sit around the tables
- General issues with social distancing + crowd control
 - more like the regatta than a pandemic activity
 - Problems with navigating streets
 - Lack of calm areas
- No universal design around any of the pedestrian mall
 - Decks completely different
 - Ropes, rope lighting for decoration but dangerous as to where they actually are
 - Problems with safety
- Lack of assistance for people with any kinds of disability
 - Security not trained to be of useful assistance
 - Lack of safety and guidance
- Bikes at fast speeds, riding dangerously
 - Heightened safety issues with persons for disabilities
 - Other kinds of traffic caused issues
- Line-ups of different stores on sidewalks
 - Preventing people from getting back
 - No communication of line ups, numbers in stores
- Reactionary, not designed
- Standard imposed don't necessarily produce the intended outcomes
 - And no by-laws being followed
 - 'Extended event' allowed circumvention
- Problems with accessible parking
 - Appeared as separate from Mall, but actually embedded

- PDF not representative of actualities
 - No visible accessible parking spaces
- The area identified as accessible parking on a hill and had no parking spaces
- Need to drive INTO mall, like parking in a playground
- Required someone to move barriers
- No direction for individual- only verbal interaction with security guard
- Vehicles in front of the courthouse?
- Driving is very anxiety producing already, this makes it worse
- Navigating in the space
 - Few ramps appropriately designed
 - Ad hoc
 - Made out of plywood- didn't account for slip resistance
 - Not up to code
 - One ramp that looked accessible: Lack of space beyond ramp to get actually onto deck
- Emergency egress?
 - How to identify to folks with disability where emergency egress actually is and how to get there?
- A scary place to try and navigate
- Know that Ped Mall won't fix access issues on Water St., but still missed opportunity to increase access
 - Possibilities for improvement especially if IAC involved
 - Opportunity next year to have a space that works for people- human dynamic
- Saw the creation of new barriers but not the removal of old ones
 - Still lack of curb cuts
- Lack of colour consistency
 - Blue and yellow and wood and various colours
 - Needs to be consistent for wayfinding
- Few curb cuts in along the sidewalk. An accessible picnic table blocked the curb cut preventing access to the sidewalk
- Lack of bathroom signage +public bathrooms
- No indications of what changes were made
 - Trip hazards
 - Don't know what you're missing
 - It was like you took a bunch of stuff and threw it all over the place

Solutions:

Application of Universal design

- Simplify Mall: no need for raised decks

Technology called

- Blind Square
- Used in Toronto, Ottawa for directional purposes
- Uses GPS to lead people through mall area

- Beacon technology
 - Can be loaded by different types and layers of information
 - E.g. “in three metres is the entrance to get around the barricade”; shake your phone for more information- what’s coming up next, 3 businesses on left and what’s in front of them
 - Could include specials and menu options if working with businesses
- Charge for geosheet to enter basic info, then business can opt into with minimal charge
- IRA- some free versions
 - Connect to trained professional in wayfined that would talk to you through glasses, phone, earbuds to guide through places
 - Find washrooms, exits
 - Used in Ottawa to be geofenced (part of plan from City)

Adopt + Apply CSA Standards

- Addresses broad spectrum of persons with disabilities

Educate business community downtown

- Possibilities for training by those who are most affected
- About responsibilities of adding ramps

Better timelines for communication and engagement

- To inclusion stakeholders
- To broader public
- Need a discussion off the bat about what the accessibility needs actually are and how to address them
- Include Inclusion NL in consultation

Develop modular pieces by the city for synthesis of design

- See how ‘mall’ is total system and treat it like that
- Influence standards on the streets of design with capacity for some aesthetic flexibility
- Can take it apart and store it
 - E.g. like kitchens

Focus on performance and evaluation of Water St. generally

- Know what standards will be altered
- Come up with comprehensive recipe to address needs and wants
- Involve design professionals

Develop colour consistency for throughout mall

- Colour contrasting and cohesion

Have people around to ask for help who are well-marked and trained in inclusion issues

- Like at the mall or festivals

Have virtual town hall with business owners and City

Questions:

- Possibilities to spread through downtown?
 - Duckworth St felt left out/hurt by Ped Mall
 - Support small business more broadly
- What are the actual benefits of built structures? Especially if they are simply creating more barriers?

- E.g. wayfinding, lack of access once on platform
 - Could just have spread out coffee tables on streets
- What are the rules and regulations around other types of traffic in the mall?
- Would there be any option to amend by-laws or permitting processes to include accessibility requirements or, at the very least, provide information to vendors?
- Other municipalities across Canada have these. Is there potential to do a review of others so we don't try to reinvent the wheel? (especially when it comes to accessibility and inclusion issues)