



Engage!
St. John's

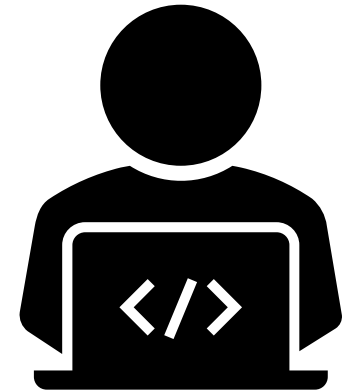
Report of results from the online
CITIZEN survey
on Sidewalk Snow Clearing

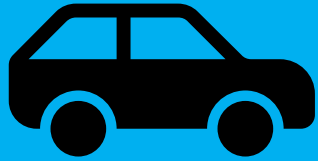
2020

ST. JOHN'S

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

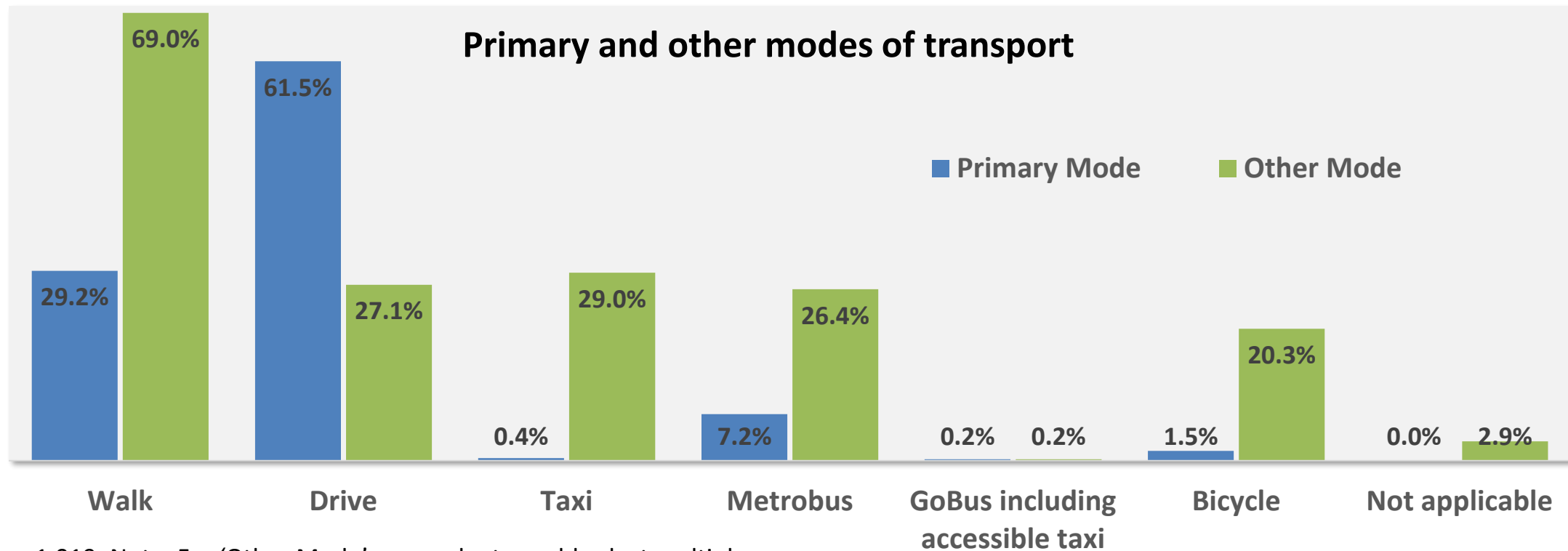
- Online survey
- Responses collected between May 24 and June 19, 2020
- 38 questions
- Average time to complete the survey: 13 minutes
- 1,019 total responses

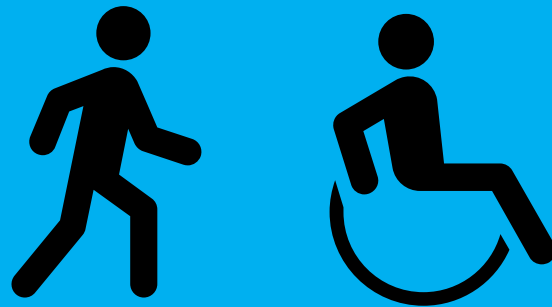




Modes of Transport

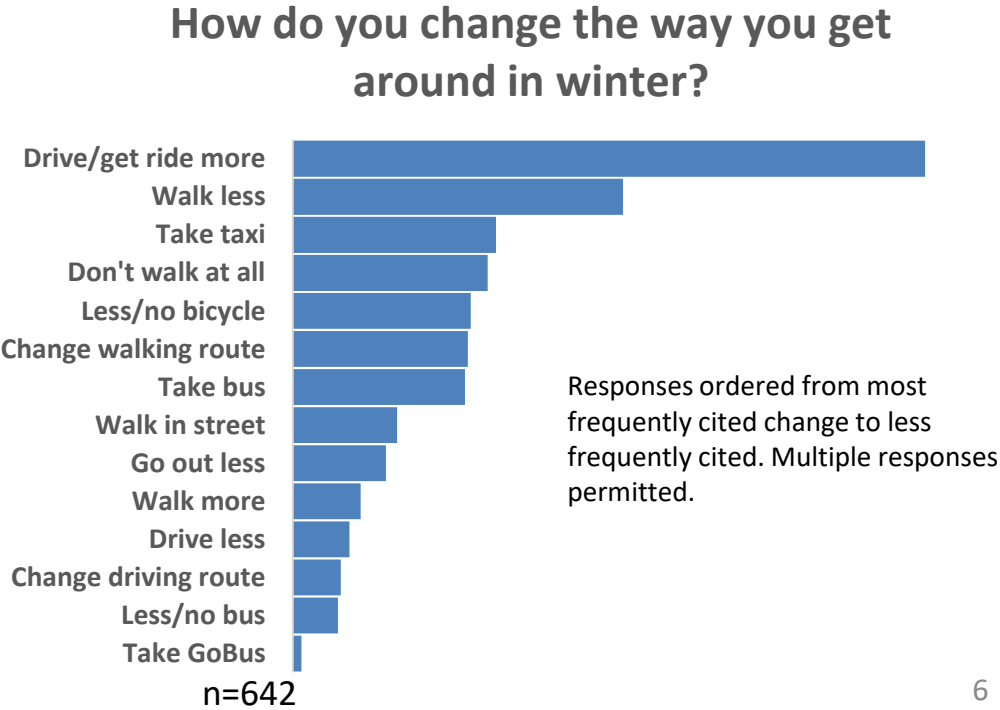
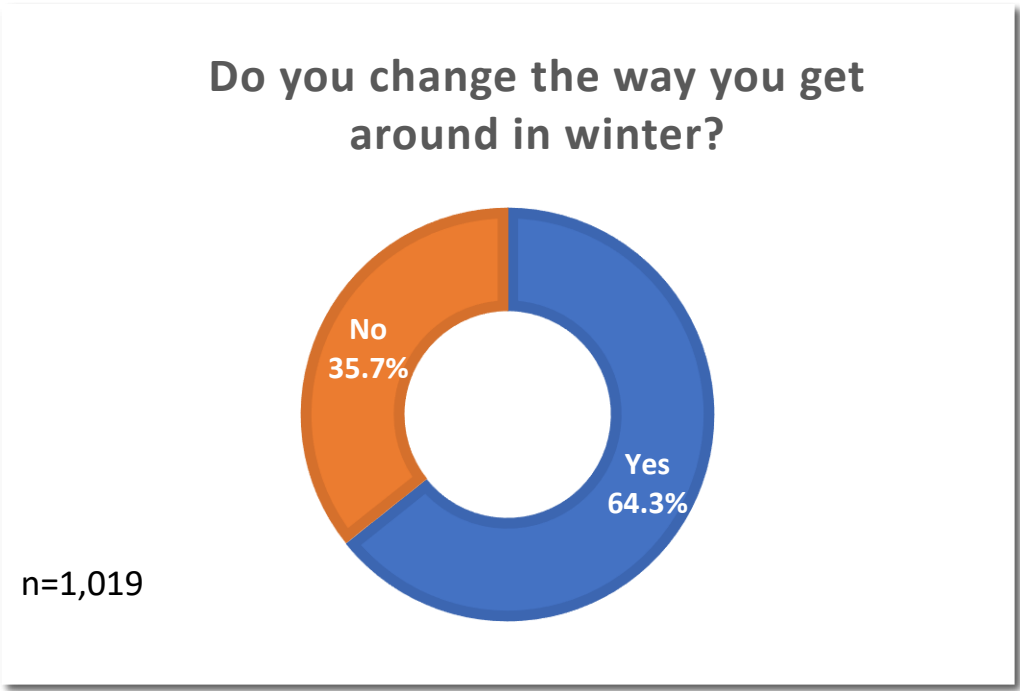
- Walking was the primary mode of transportation for 29% of citizens surveyed. Driving was cited as the primary mode for 61.5% of respondents, and Metrobus 7.2%.
- Walking was more prevalent with newcomers i.e., persons who had relocated to St. John's from another country in last five years, and individuals who identified as LGBTQ2s+, with 39% and 36% respectively citing it as their primary mode of transportation (note however that these samples were small). Post-secondary students were more likely to use Metrobus, with 46% listing it as their primary mode of transport.
- While walking may not be the primary transportation mode for many respondents, it does factor significantly in how they get around the city. When asked to consider all the other transportation modes that they used, walking was cited by 69% of respondents. Taxi, Metrobus, driving and bicycle followed in popularity respectively.



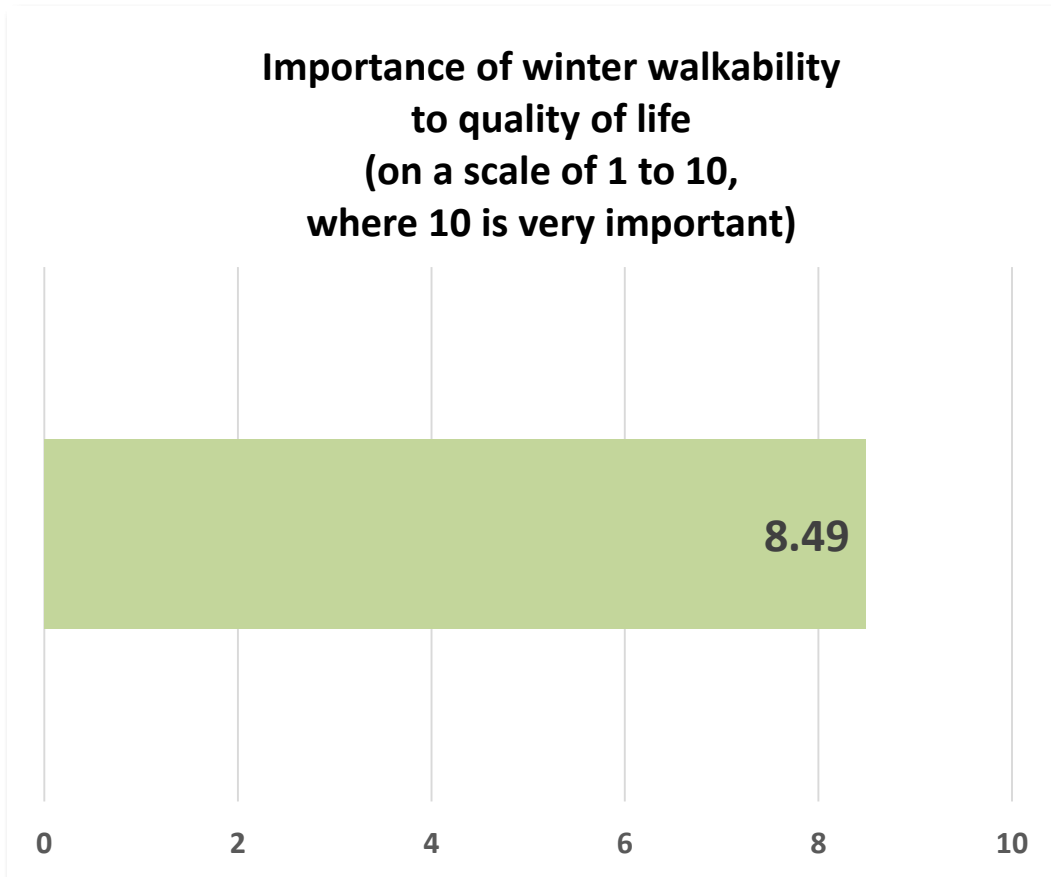


Getting around in winter

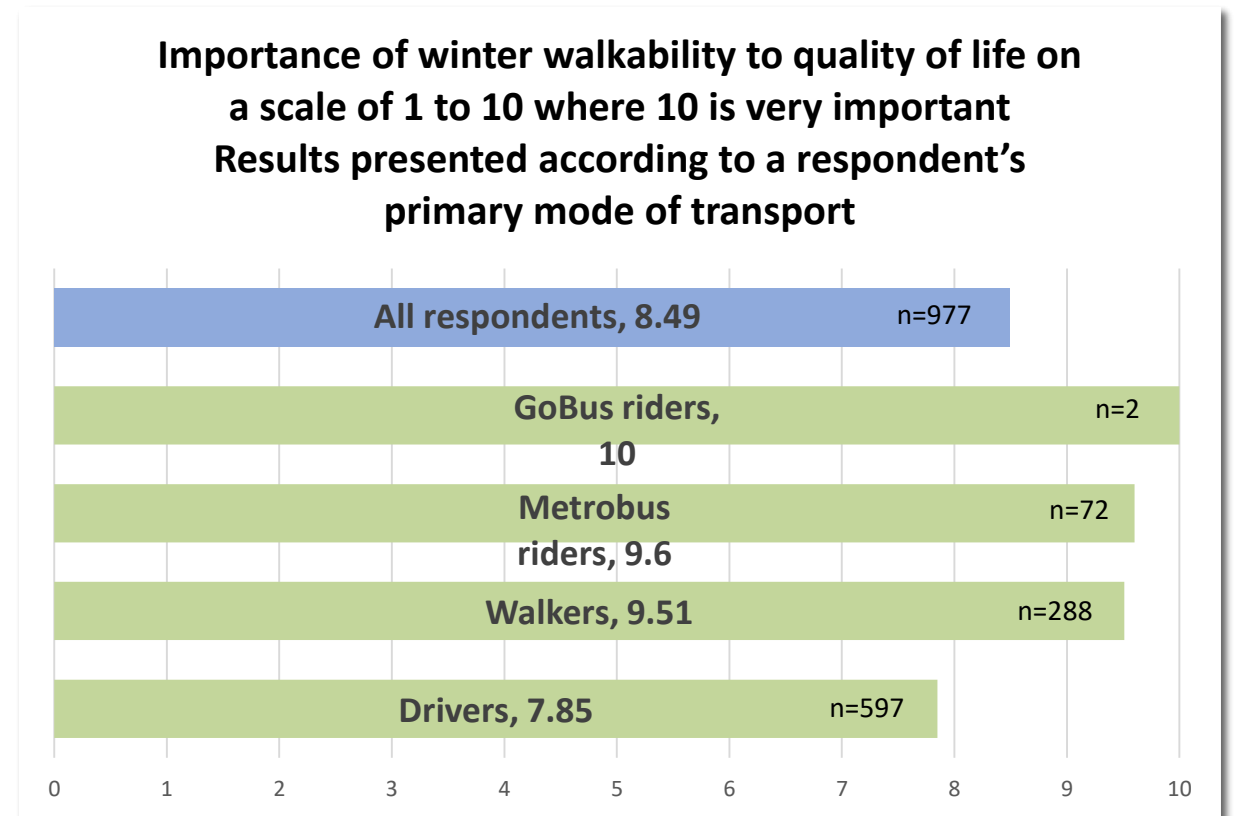
- 64% of citizens surveyed change the way they get around the city in winter. Walkers were slightly more likely to change the way they got around than drivers, 68% versus 64%. Approximately half of respondents using Metrobus as their primary mode of transport, changed the way they got around in winter.
- The most frequently cited change to transportation patterns was driving/getting a ride, followed by walking less, and taking a taxi. Some respondents indicated that they do not walk at all in winter, and those that do frequently change their route to use sidewalks that are cleared or streets that are safer to walk in. Changing walking routes sometimes creates a longer commute.
- Some respondents go out less in winter due to sidewalk conditions.
- Respondents that walked recreationally often indicated they turn to parks and trails in winter or visit indoor walking arenas or gyms.
- Some respondents who cited an increased use of taxis in winter indicated that the added expense negatively impacted their household budgets.
- Some Metrobus riders stop taking the bus in winter due to concerns around uncleared bus stops and having to wait at stops in the street.
- Those with mobility challenges felt more restricted in their winter transportation options due to sidewalk conditions.



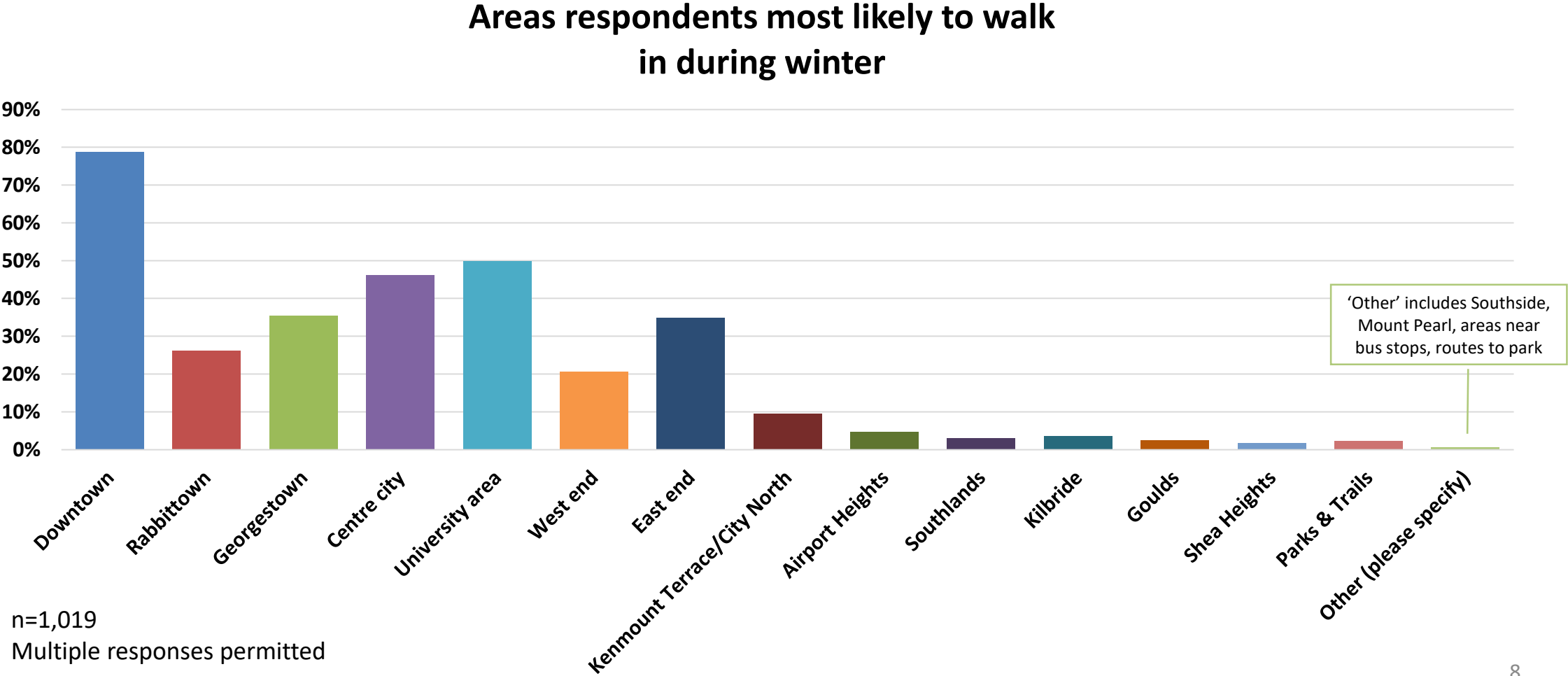
- Winter walkability is very important to the quality of life of citizens surveyed, rating 8.49 out of 10 (where 10 is very important).
- While drivers rated the importance of winter walkability slightly lower than respondents using other modes of transportation, their rating of 7.85 out of 10 indicates 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 sub samples were generally quite small.



n=977

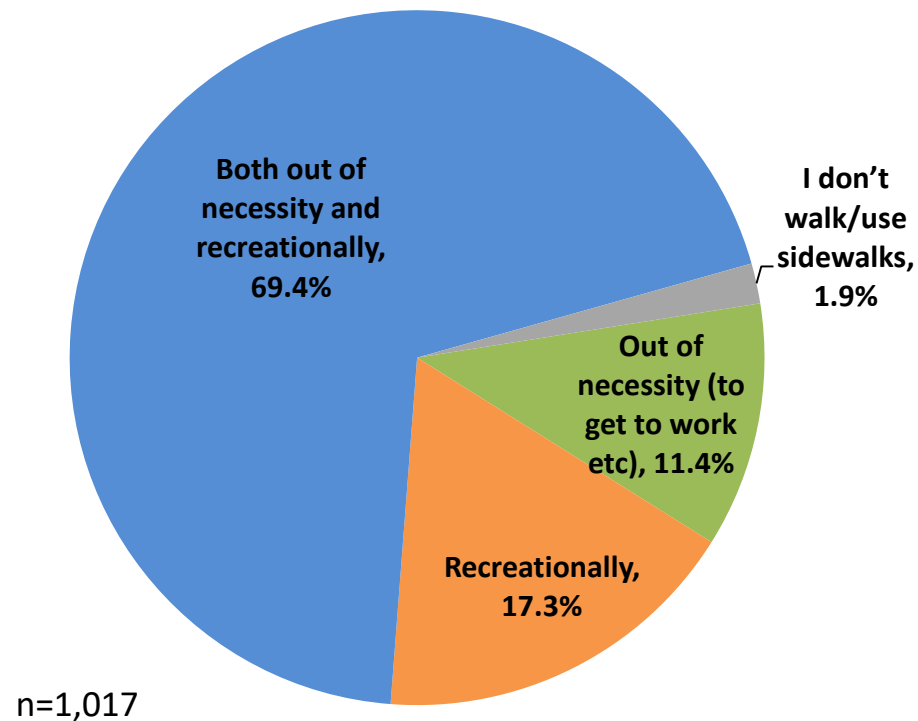


- When asked which areas of the city they were most likely to walk in during the winter, Downtown was cited by almost 80% of citizens surveyed. Other popular areas, in order, were: University Area, Centre City, Georgestown, East End and Rabbittown.



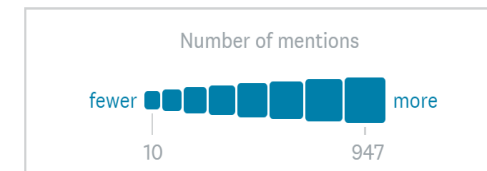
- Approximately 70% of citizens surveyed use city sidewalks both out of necessity (i.e., to get to work, an appointment etc.) and recreationally. Just over 11% of respondents use sidewalks out of necessity. Post-secondary students were more likely to use sidewalks out of necessity (19%).

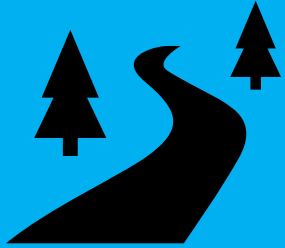
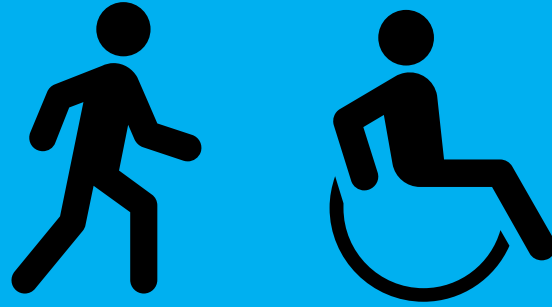
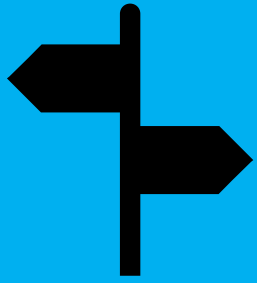
Purpose of using city sidewalks



- When asked what would encourage them to walk more in winter, the most common answers were: better snow clearing, clear sidewalks, safe sidewalks, salt and ice control, and consistent clearing. The word cloud below depicts the most common responses with text size indicating the frequency of response.
- Some citizens surveyed referenced the idea of making trails accessible in winter. Others referenced safety concerns of walking alongside high volumes of fast-moving traffic. Also mentioned was the need to ensure cleared sidewalks were connected so continuous paths could be relied upon.

walk street trails Consistent clearing Better weather
plowed snow ice Better snow clearing crosswalks
Safe sidewalk Knowing Clear sidewalks
dangerous Salt/ice control routes ice icy
Cleared salted sidewalks intersections paths snow

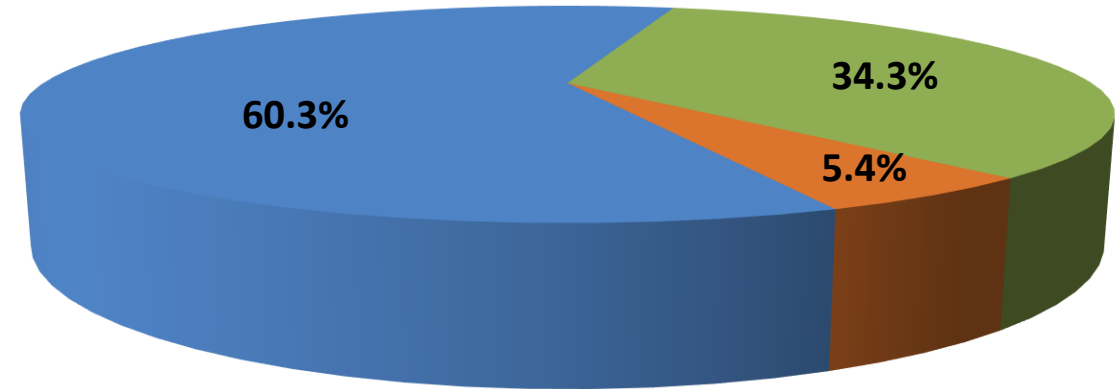




Priority Sidewalk Routes

- Ninety-five percent of citizens surveyed had at least some awareness of the priority system used by the City to clear sidewalks of snow.
- Sixty percent of respondents indicated they were familiar with the priority levels, while 34% knew there was a system but were not aware of the details.

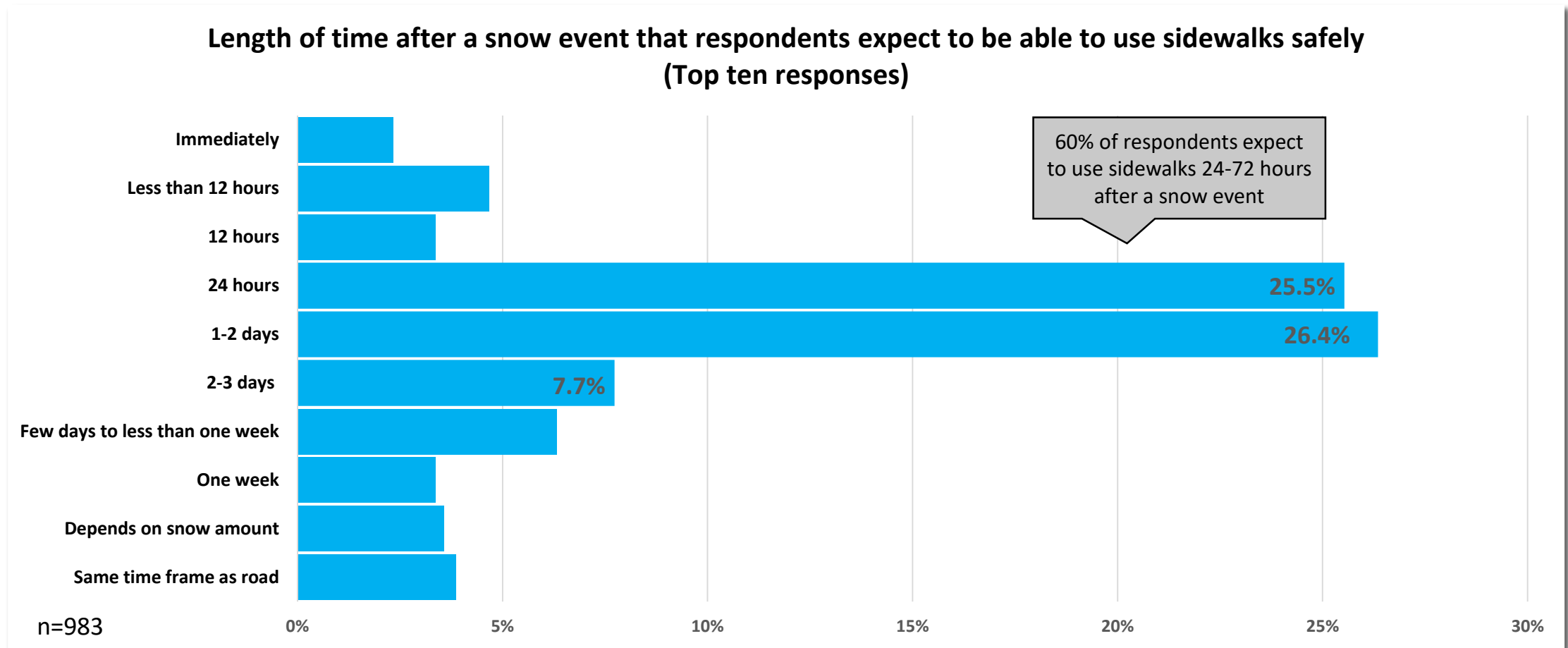
Awareness of sidewalk snow clearing priority system



- Familiar with the priority levels
- Know there is a system, but not aware of the details
- Not aware there is a system

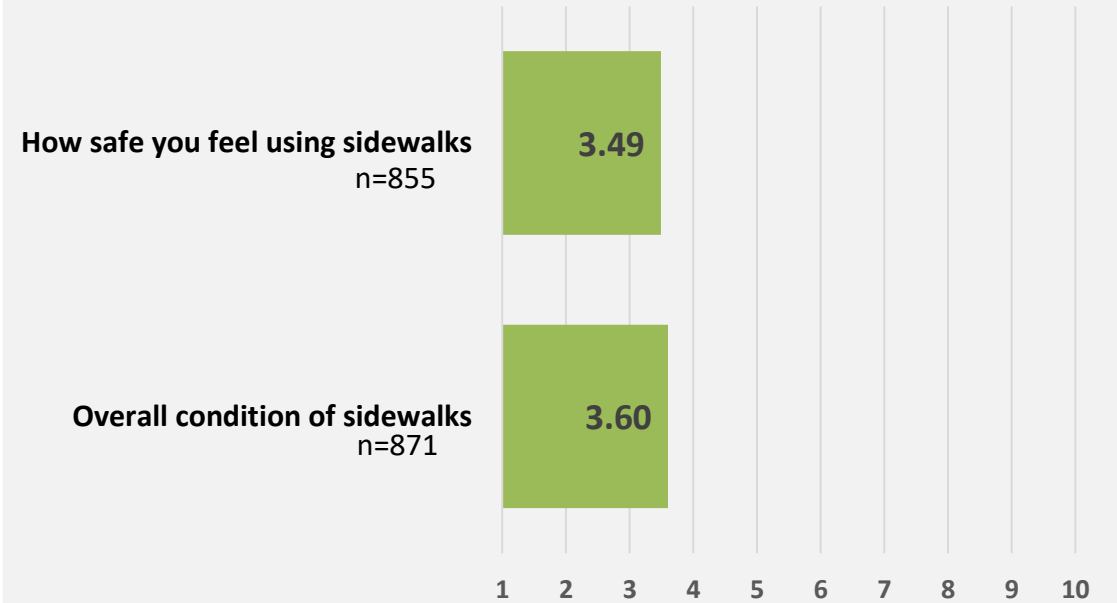
n=1,017

- When asked how long after a snow event they expected to be able to use city sidewalks safely, approximately one quarter of citizens surveyed indicated 24 hours, and an additional one quarter of respondents indicated 1-2 days. Overall, 60% of respondents expect to be able to use sidewalks within 24-72 hours after a snow event.
- When suggesting a time frame, some respondents indicated there was a degree of flexibility in their expectations depending on the severity of the snow event. Others indicated that the time frame would depend on the priority of the street with higher priority streets receiving quicker service.
- Expectations did not vary amongst respondents regardless of whether they were primarily walkers or drivers.



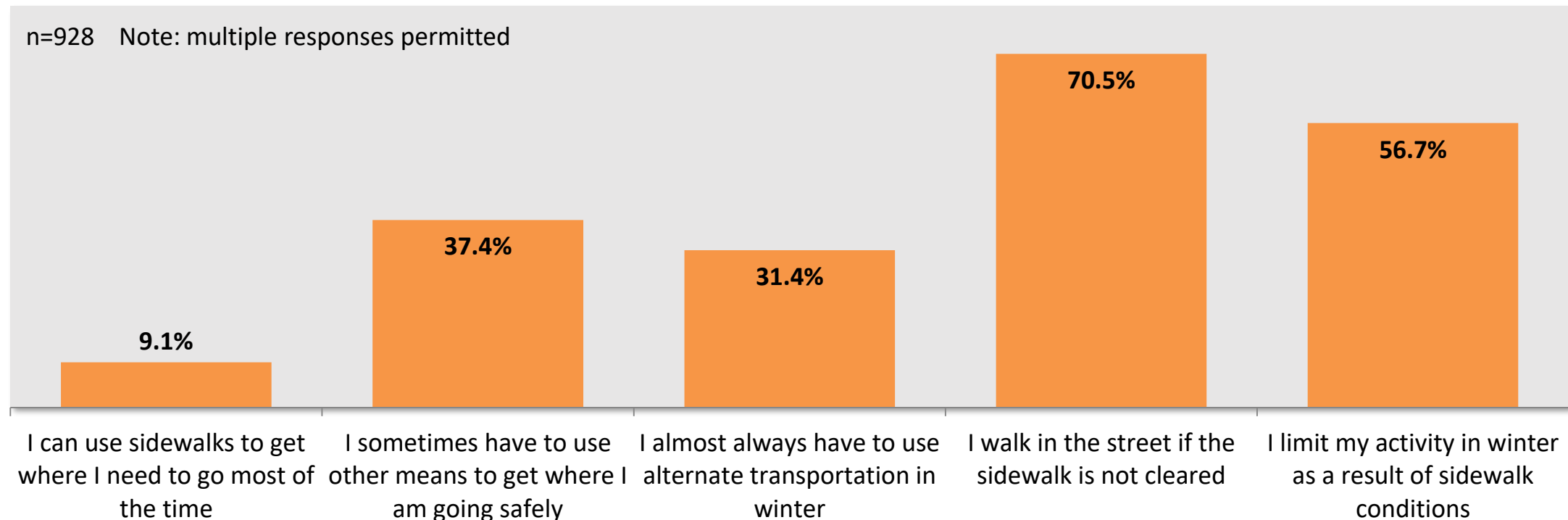
- In the past two winters, 92% of citizens surveyed have wanted to use, or used, the City's priority sidewalk routes. Respondents who did not use the sidewalks cited safety concerns, and lack of snow clearing and ice control as reasons. Others indicated they were primarily drivers, did not live near 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 that 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 lower than average at 2.99.

Respondents' rating of the overall condition of priority routes and their feeling of safety while using them (on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is very safe/excellent)



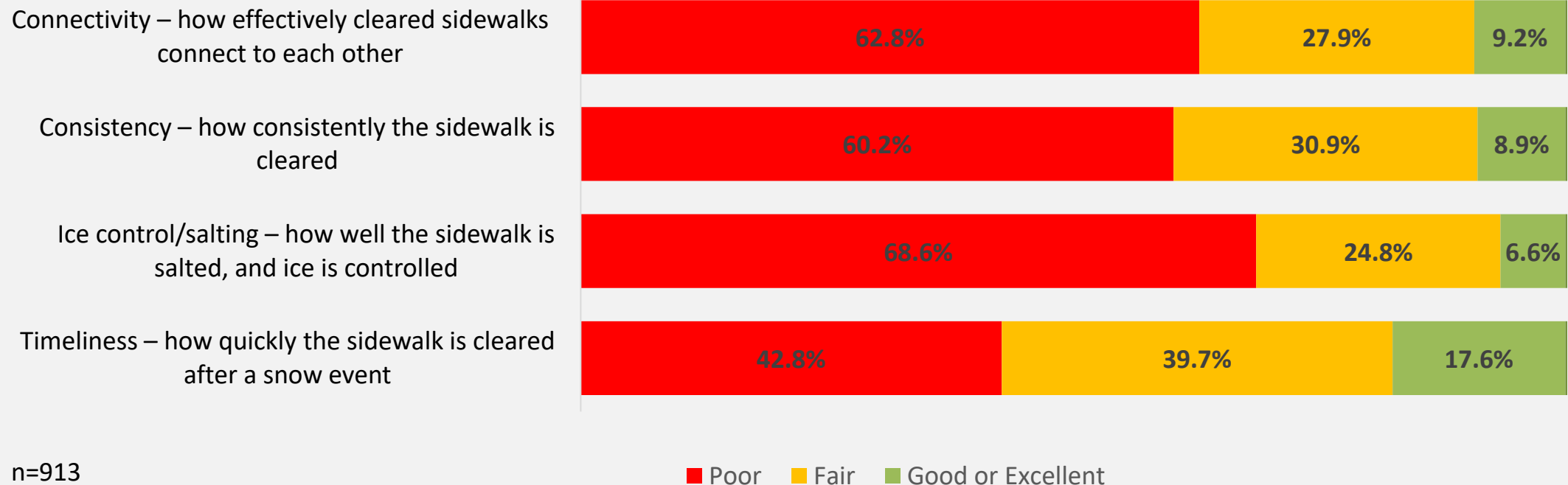
- Using the priority sidewalk routes in winter was challenging for most citizens surveyed. When asked about their experiences using the routes, the most frequently cited response (71%) was “I walk in the street if the sidewalk is not cleared.” Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they limited 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% of respondents indicated they could use sidewalks to get where they were going most of the time.
- Eighty-five percent of respondents 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



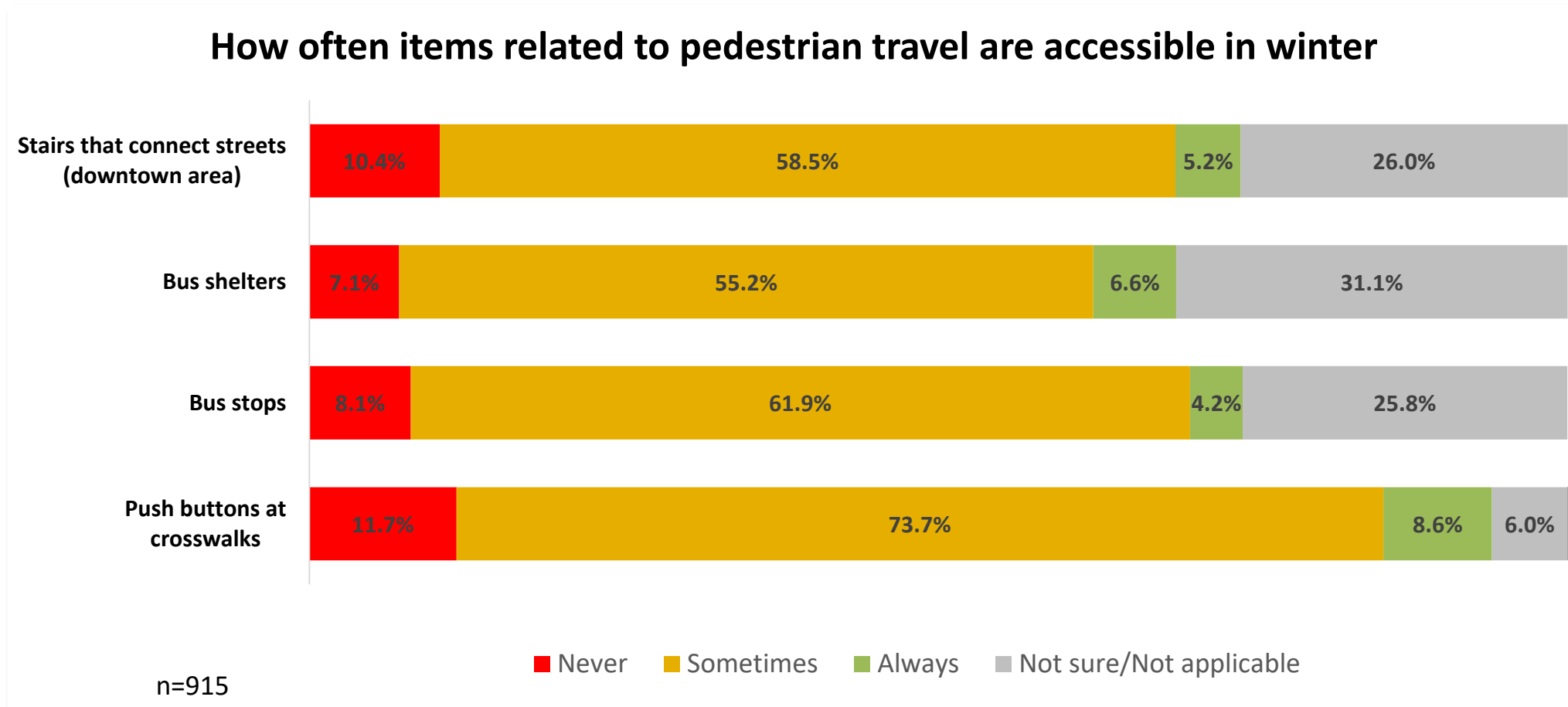
- Views of specific aspects of the sidewalk snow clearing program were generally negative. Ice control/salting was perceived as being poor by almost 70% of citizens surveyed. Connectivity – how effectively cleared sidewalks connect to each other, and consistency – how consistently the sidewalk is cleared, 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



- **Many citizens commented on the timeliness, consistency, connectivity and ice control aspects of the snow clearing program. From the more than 400 comments, some common themes were:**
 - One of the mostly frequently voiced comments was the perceived **conflict between sidewalk snow clearing and street** snow clearing. Many respondents suggested that cleared sidewalks on priority routes were frequently snowed in by street plows.
 - **Consistency and connectivity** of the priority routes were frequently cited as problematic. Respondents commented that cleared sidewalks might end unexpectedly forcing them into the street, or cleared sidewalks often shifted from one side of the street to another forcing pedestrians to cross the street frequently.
 - Many respondents indicated that **intersections and cross-walks** were challenging. Snow piled by street plows at intersections creates barriers that force pedestrians into the street, blocks access to crosswalks and crosswalk buttons, and creates a safety hazard when pedestrian sight lines are obscured.
 - Some respondents suggested that **connectivity in school zones** was a problem as sidewalks in the block around the school were not cleared and these were required for neighbourhood children to walk to school. Snow left behind by sidewalk and street plows also presents obstacles for drop off and pick up in school zones.
 - Some commented that **access to bus stops** often required riders to wait in the street and snowbanks created obstacles when boarding or disembarking a bus.
 - **Snow left behind by sidewalk plows** was also cited as a problem. Respondents suggested that sidewalk plows rarely clear down to the concrete and often leave a layer of snow behind that tends to build up and/or freeze.
 - Some commented that items on or near sidewalks such as light **poles or traffic signal boxes** often require sidewalk plows to detour resulting in a pile of snow being left on the sidewalk that blocks pedestrian access.
 - Concerns were expressed about **private contractors and property owners** pushing snow into previously cleared sidewalks.
 - Inconsistency of salting was referenced – plows dropping large amounts of salt in one area of a sidewalk and then very little.
 - Some comments specific to the **downtown** were referenced. Ice on hilly sidewalks, snow left between the street and the sidewalk creating obstacles and blocking access, the issue of vacant properties and the resulting lack of cleared sidewalks, and access to pedestrian stairs were all identified as challenges.

- Push buttons at crosswalks, bus stops and shelters, and stairs that connect streets (mostly in the downtown) were perceived to be accessible sometimes by most of those surveyed. There was a significant number of respondents that were not familiar or did not use bus stops, bus shelters, or stairs in the downtown and this is reflected in the relatively high number (25-30%) of not sure/not applicable answers in these instances.



When asked what one thing the City could do to improve their experience using sidewalks, citizens cited the following:

Most frequent responses in order of mentions:

- Improve reliability and connectivity
 - Clear and salt /sand– clear to cement, especially hills
 - Make sure priority 1 is treated as priority 1
 - Full streets/no breaks
 - Make it easy to walk from east to west, north to South, downtown to MUN, etc..
 - Include steps that are connectors to sidewalks
 - Improve access for those who must walk/have mobility issues – crossings, buttons, curbs,
 - Make it unnecessary to walk in the street
 - Clear intersections/cross walks
- Timeliness
 - Respect pedestrians – clear at same time as roads and to the same service level, make sidewalks a priority
- Better coordination between road and sidewalk plows as well as bus stop clearing and mailbox clearing
- Clear bus stops/routes/school walking routes/downtown
- Address issues with contractors/residents putting snow back on sidewalk

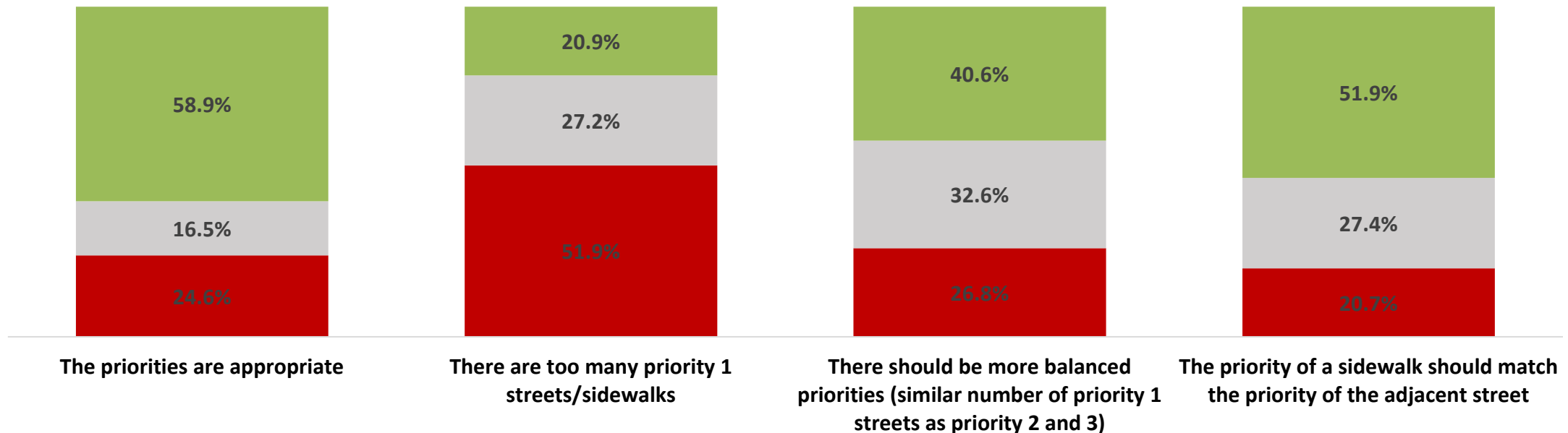
- Address issues of poles which impede clearing and create inconsistent service
- Clear both sides for major thoroughfares where crossing can be unsafe
- Some people suggested clearing one side of Priority streets really well; others suggested both sides of priority 1 streets should be done
- Better understand experience of walkers/pedestrians – improve experiential training for staff
- More/better equipment/more resources generally
- Remove more snow to improve visibility and reduce “blocks”
- Clear storm drains to avoid slush/water build up
- Communicate where the walkable networks are on a timely basis i.e. via an app
- Review frequent pedestrian routes and do them more frequently

Less frequent responses included:

- Do what is currently done and/or focus on roads (3); ask residents to clear in front of their own property, ask commercial property owners to clear in and around their stores and use their parking lots for snow storage

- After being presented with a visual of the sidewalk snow clearing priority route map, survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with four statements. Overall, there was support for the current system with almost 60% of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing that the priority levels for sidewalks were appropriate.
- Fifty-two percent of respondents disagreed or somewhat disagreed that there were too many priority 1 streets/sidewalks.
- Forty-one percent agreed or somewhat agreed that there should be more balanced priorities, however, one third were neutral on the statement, and 27% disagreed or somewhat disagreed.
- Fifty-two percent agreed or somewhat agreed that the priority of a sidewalk should match the priority of a street as is currently the case.

Respondents' level of agreement with statements about priority sidewalk snow clearing system



n=955

■ Disagree or somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree or somewhat agree

- When asked if areas could be removed from the current priority program to allow resources to be used elsewhere, 25% of citizens surveyed indicated yes.
- When asked if areas should be added to the current priority program, 56% of respondents indicated yes.
- As a follow-up, respondents were asked to specify the areas that should be removed from, or added to, the current priority system. Some respondents provided specific suggestions, and these are presented below and on the following page. In some cases the responses to remove or add areas were contradictory.

Of the 162 respondents that provided a suggestion as to which areas could be **REMOVED**, specific ideas were:

- Logy Bay Road (6)
- Columbus Drive/Prince Phillip Drive (5) – not all areas need clearing
- Make Waterford Bridge Road a priority 2/3 or remove from system (3)
- Allendale from Higgins Line to TCH (2)
- White Hills Road
- Hamilton Ave – clear one side only
- Prince Phillip drive from Allendale to Portugal Cove Road
- Bay Bulls Rd to Topsail Rd
- Torbay Road
- Airport Heights
- Mayor Avenue
- Blackmarsh Road
- Top of Portugal Cove Road
- East Meadows,
- Pippy place,
- Past Columbus drive on Topsail Road
- Bay Bulls Road
- Far east end of Water Street, east of Hill 'O Chips
- Empire avenue from Rennes Mill to Carpasian
- Newtown Road – does not require both sides

Notes:

1) Numbers in brackets indicate multiple responses.

2) These questions did not provide a “Do not know” answer option and many respondents indicated they would have selected this option rather than No”.

Of the 441 citizens that provided a suggestion as to which areas could be **ADDED** to the priority sidewalk system, specific ideas were: (continues on next page) Note: Numbers in brackets indicate multiple responses

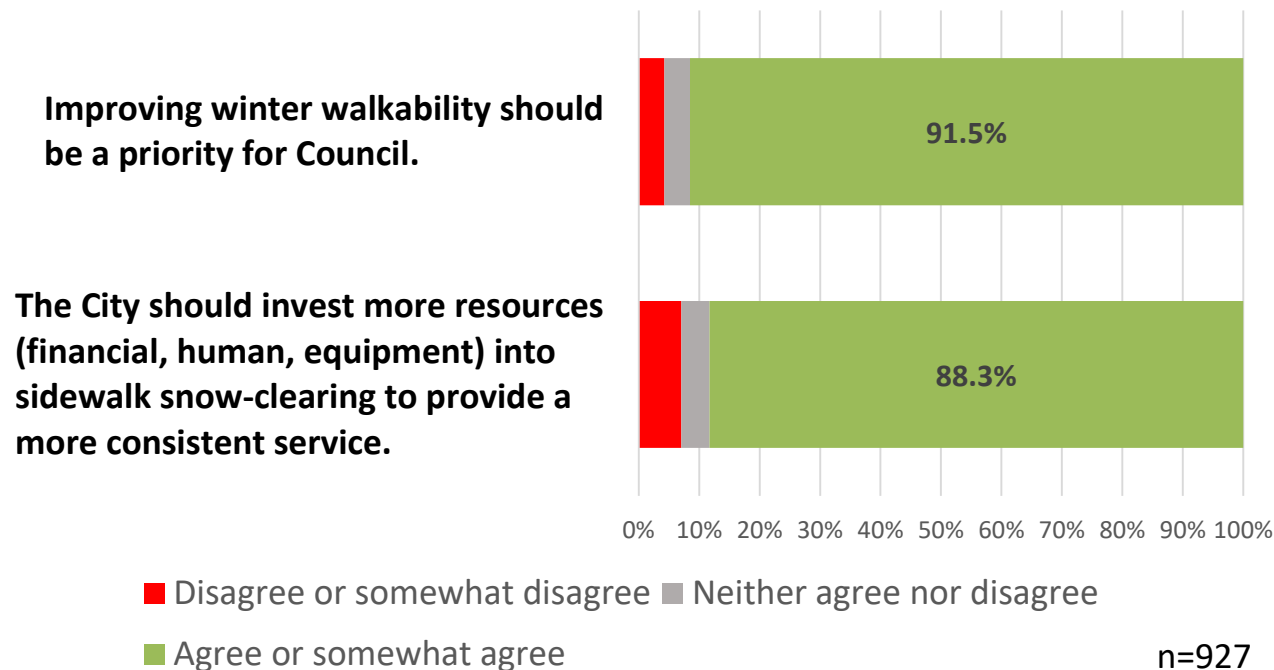
- Kelsey Drive (20) especially from Kenmount to Messenger
- Kenmount Terrace (22) – especially Great Eastern and Ladysmith
- Rabbitown (12)
- Georgetown (10) - Barnes Rd (2), Hawyard Avenue (2), Monkstown Road (6)
- Merrymeeting Rd. (8)
- Empire Ave (8) - full extent, currently there are gaps such as between Carparisan and Bonaventure, Old Penneywell and Columbus, east of Mayor, east and west of Jensencamp, also from Forest Rd. to Quidi Vidi Rd
- Airport Heights (7) - Airport Heights is cut off from City in winter due to a lack of sidewalks connecting via either Majors Path or Portugal Cove Road, more streets near school
- Stavanger Drive (7)
- Thorburn Rd (6) - further north to Goldstone/Seaborn
- Kenmount Road (6) - include north to Kelsey or Kenmount Terrace/Ladysmith
- Major's Path (6)
- Grovesdale Park (5) - Seaborn, Faulkner, Bambrick
- Southlands (5)
- Cowan Heights (4)
- Goulds (4) - also including Back Line, opposite side of street from St. Kevin's High, Doyles Road Extension
- Kilbride (4)
- Newtown Road (4)
- O'Leary Ave. (4) – all of it
- Signal Hill (4) - Signal hill area Forest Rd to Quidi Vidi Rd (2)
- The Boulevard (4)
- Bonaventure Ave (3)- clear both sides near holy heart at the same time, also triangle area formed by Bonaventure avenue, Mayor Avenue and Empire avenue should be priority 1
- Circular Rd (3) – including area between Monkstown and Rennies Mill
- Gower St. (3)
- Hazelwood Crescent (3)– all, currently stops at Blue River Place
- Logy Bay Rd. (3) – all of it
- Rotary Drive (3)
- Airport Heights Dr (2) -. extend clearing to Viscount St.
- Blackmarsh road (3) – including around Marie's Market, Blackmarsh from Mount Pearl boundary to Captain Whelan and then to Columbus Drive
- Newpennywell Road (2), Lions road
- Cabot St. (2)
- Canada Drive (2) & Frecker Drive (2) – currently priority 2 and ends at Burgeo
- Carpasian (2)
- Churchill Park/Square area (2)
- Clinch Cres at HSC (2)
- Cochrane St (2)
- Cowan Ave (2) – increase priority, include other side and lower end
- Craigmillar Ave (2)
- Forest Rd (2) – including between Empire and Kingsbridge
- Leslie St. (2) - including bridge Fleming St. (2)
- Montague Street (2)
- Pleasantville area (2)
- Pennywell Road (2)
- Polina Road connecting to Old Pennywell Road & Kenmount (2)
- Pasadena Crescent and Barachois street (2) area
- Prince Philips Dr (2), Freshwater (2), Elizabeth Ave (2) , and Allandale - all the streets enclosed by
- Quidi Vidi Rd (2)
- Shea Heights (2)
- Torbay Rd. (2) – Torbay Rd to Toronto (1)
- Wicklow (2)

Areas suggested to be **ADDED** to the priority sidewalk system (continued):

- All of Mundy Pond Road
- Anderson Avenue
- Argyle St.
- Baird Place, Vinnicombe Street, Oxen Pond Road area
- Bannerman St.
- Bay Bulls Road - stops at the Old Bay Bulls fork
- Bell's Turn, Buckmaster's Circle, Graves Street and Froude Avenue
- Bishop Abraham area - expand to Pennywell from Freshwater to Cashin and on both sides between Adams Ave & Morris
- Both sides of Prince of Wales St.
- Brier Avenue area
- Cabot Street
- Campbell Ave. – change to priority 1
- Carnell Drive
- Carrick Drive
- Carter Hill, Carters Hill Place
- Casey St.
- Codroy Place
- Columbus Drive
- East end of Topsail Rd connecting to west Water
- Eastbourne Cres.
- Exmouth street
- Fredericton and Ottawa
- George St. West
- Halley Drive
- Harding Road
- Harrington Dr and/ or Cherrington St
- Highland Dr.
- Kenna's Hill
- Kings Road – including between Bond St and Duckworth St
- Kingsbridge
- Lake Ave
- Livingstone St.
- Long Pond Rd South of Elizabeth – need both sides
- Longs Hill
- MacDonald Dr between Torbay Rd & Logy Bay Rd
- MacDonald Drive - Logy bay Road intersection down to Kenna's Hil
- Mayor Ave
- Mount Scio Road
- Newtown Road and Bonaventure – the intersection connecting these along the cemetery should be Priority 1
- Old Petty Harbour Rd.
- Old Topsail Rd.
- Parade St.
- Pearson Street
- Penney Crescent
- Pilots Hill
- Pine Bud Avenue
- Pippy Place
- Pleasantview
- Portugal Cove Road- from Newfoundland Drive to Viscount Street, and to Majors Path
- Ropewalk Lane
- Shaw to Alexander
- Southlands to the Pearlgate area of Mount Pearl
- Springdale St
- St. Clare Ave.
- Stirling Crescent
- Strawberry Marsh Rd.
- Terra Nova Road
- Topsail Road
- University Ave – all of it
- Waterfordbridge RD between Brookfield and Cowan – currently a gap
- Whiteway St from Bonaventure & Rodney

- 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 that 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



Level of agreement on Council priorities and investment in sidewalk snow clearing presented according to a respondent's primary mode of transport

The City should invest more resources (financial, human, equipment) into sidewalk snow-clearing to provide a more consistent service.

Primary mode of transport	DISAGREE OR SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE OR SOMEWHAT AGREE
Walk (n=283)	2.83%	2.47%	94.70%
Drive (n=551)	10.17%	6.17%	83.67%
Metrobus (n=68)	0.00%	1.47%	98.53%
GoBus including accessible taxi (n=1)	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

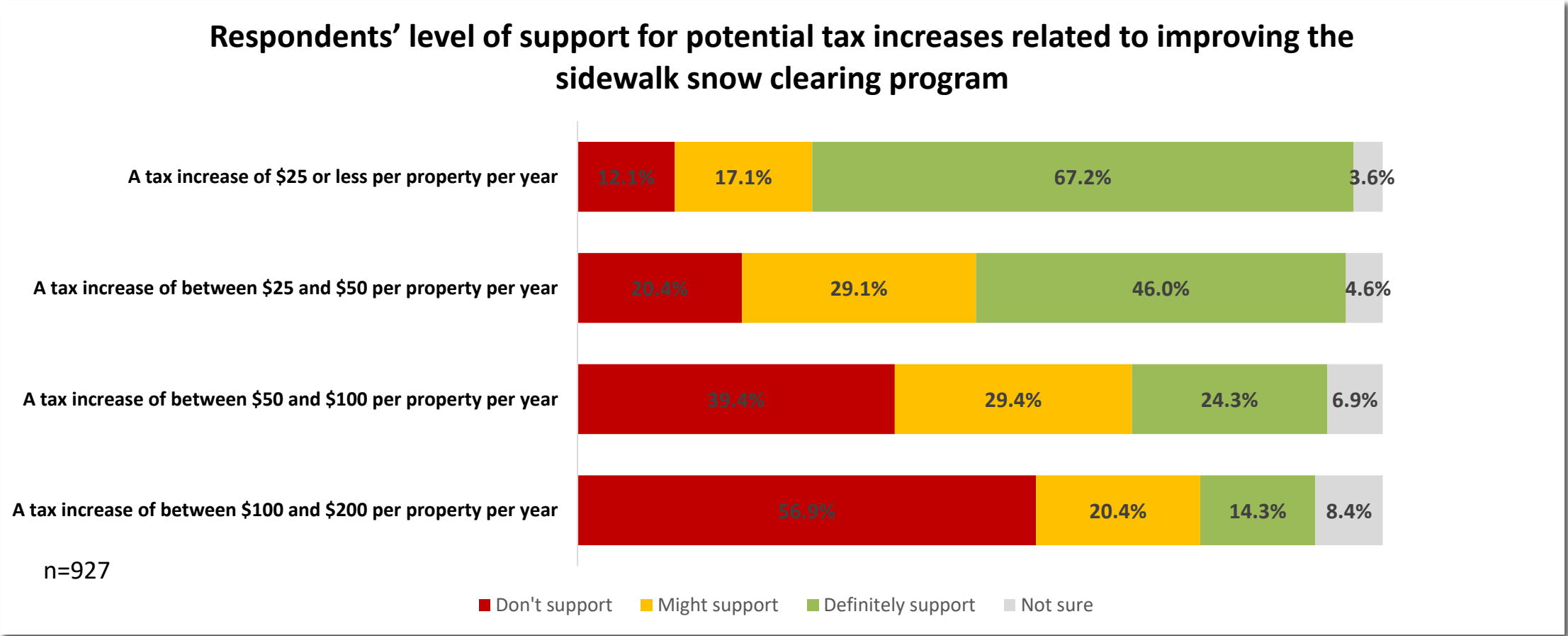
Improving winter walkability should be a priority for Council.

Walk	0.71%	1.77%	97.53%
Drive	6.56%	6.19%	87.25%
Metrobus	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
GoBus including accessible taxi	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

- While property owners (i.e., taxpayers) overall level of agreement on whether winter walkability should be a priority for Council, and if the City should increase investment in the snow clearing program was significant (85% or higher agree or somewhat agree), they were slightly more likely to disagree than respondents that were not property owners. A comparison of respondents' level of agreement with the statements according to their property ownership status is provided in the table below.

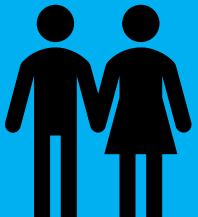
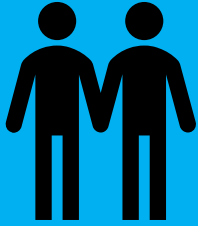
Level of agreement on Council priorities and increased investment in sidewalk snow clearing presented according to a respondent's property ownership status					
The City should invest more resources (financial, human, equipment) into sidewalk snow-clearing to provide a more consistent service.					
	DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	AGREE
Property owner	6.1%	4.0%	5.6%	17.7%	66.7%
Not a property owner	0.9%	0.9%	2.7%	15.1%	80.4%
Improving winter walkability should be a priority for Council.					
Property owner	4.0%	1.9%	5.4%	14.6%	74.1%
Not a property owner	0.3%	0.9%	2.1%	9.1%	87.6%

- 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, and a further 29% indicated they ‘might support’ it.
- 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.



- Property owners (i.e., taxpayers) were somewhat more likely to indicate they did not support a potential tax increase than respondents who were not property owners. A comparison of respondents' support for tax increases according to their property ownership status is provided in the table below.

Support for potential tax increases by respondents' property ownership status				
A tax increase of \$25 or less per property per year	DON'T SUPPORT	MIGHT SUPPORT	DEFINITELY SUPPORT	NOT SURE
Property owner	15.0%	15.5%	67.5%	2.0%
Not a property owner	6.8%	19.1%	67.6%	6.58%
A tax increase of between \$25 and \$50 per property per year				
Property owner	24.3%	26.3%	46.7%	2.8%
Not a property owner	13.3%	34.0%	45.1%	7.7%
A tax increase of between \$50 and \$100 per property per year				
Property owner	43.6%	26.8%	25.7%	3.9%
Not a property owner	31.7%	34.5%	21.6%	12.2%
A tax increase of between \$100 and \$200 per property per year				
Property owner	59.6%	19.7%	15.4%	5.4%
Not a property owner	52.3%	22.2%	11.8%	13.7%

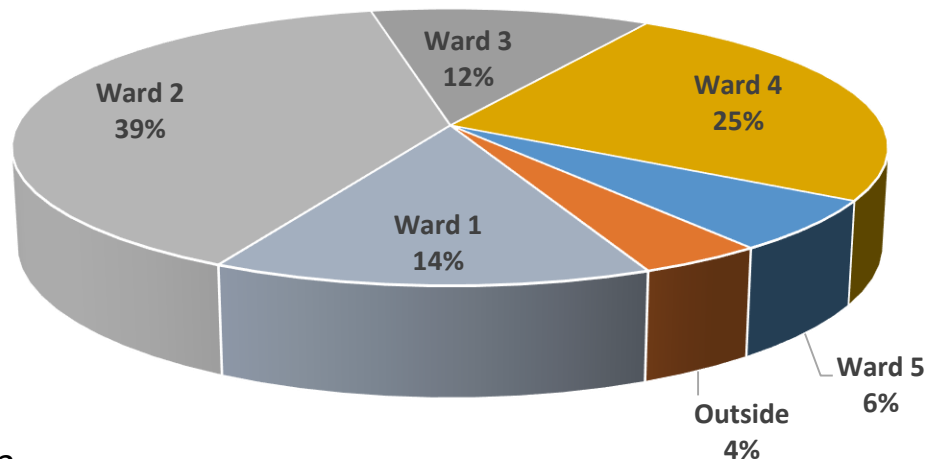


Profile of respondents

Profile of Survey Respondents

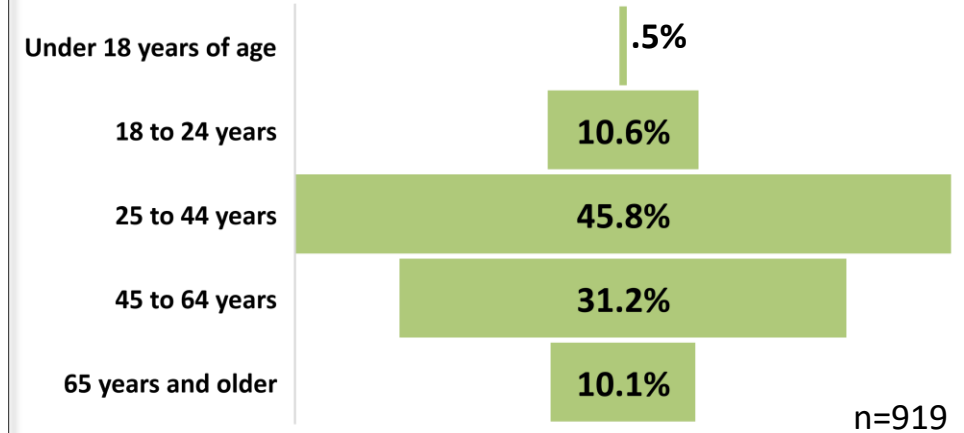
- 96% were residents of St. John's
- 79% worked or attended school in St. John's
- 64% were residential property owners
- 18% were post-secondary students (i.e. Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic or private colleges)
- .8% were K-12 students

Respondents by City Ward



n=923

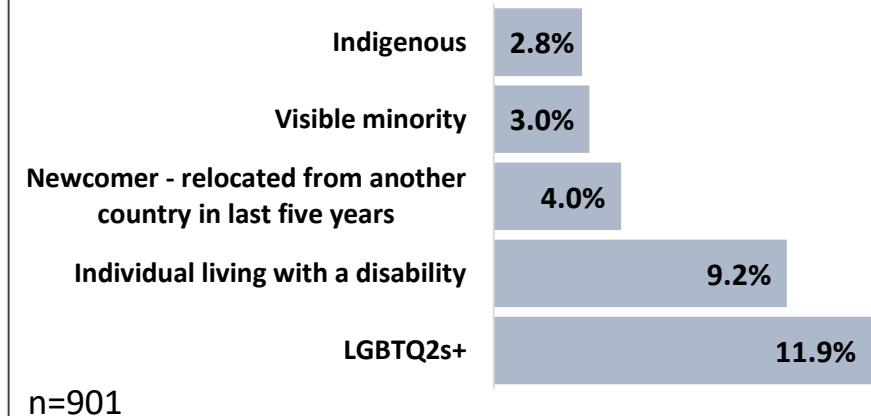
Age of Respondents



n=919

Prefer not to answer 1.7%

Identification with minority groups as a percentage of total respondents



n=901

Prefer not to answer 14%