

Municipality of the District of Argyle

Accessibility Plan Update

2025 - 2028



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Message from the Warden

The Municipality of Argyle's Accessibility Plan is a vital step toward creating a community where everyone can thrive. This plan reflects our shared commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment where every resident, regardless of ability, has access to the services, spaces, and opportunities that make our municipality such a wonderful place to live.

Equitable access is more than a goal—it is a responsibility. By identifying and addressing barriers, we ensure that all members of our community can fully participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, and economic life of our region. From improving physical infrastructure to enhancing communication and programming, this plan is designed to create real, tangible change.

I would like to thank the many individuals and organizations who contributed their insights and experiences to the development of this plan. Your voices are at the heart of this initiative.

Nicole Albright,
Warden

Executive Summary

Since early 2019, the Accessibility Advisory Committee has made progress in improving services for all residents and visitors of the Municipality of District of Argyle (hereafter Municipality of Argyle). It's important for us, as a municipality, to recognize and celebrate these achievements and plan for continued improvements in accessibility of our services. The report card shows what we've completed, what's in progress, and what still needs to be done.

In June 2024, the Accessibility Advisory Committee met to plan the next steps for updating the Accessibility Plan. This meeting allowed the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review the progress and accomplishments. Moving forward, the Committee decided to focus on engaging with our senior population, surveying our staff and Council, and gathering insights directly from community members through a few first voice interviews. Thanks to the individuals who took the time to provide the accessibility committee with feedback as we continue to try to improve access for all.

Executive Summary

This plan outlines our priorities for the next three years. We want to build on our success and continue to remove barriers so everyone can participate fully in municipal services. Our priorities include:

1. Education, Training and Awareness both internally and some external.
2. Increased engagement of first voice.
3. Implement priorities from the previous plan.

This proactive approach demonstrates the Municipality's ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive environment. The Municipality is also committed to monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation and monitoring of an accessibility plan are crucial for the Municipality to ensure that its goals of inclusivity and equity are being effectively met. Regular assessment allows the municipality to measure progress, identify any barriers that may still exist, and adapt strategies as needed. Through continuous monitoring, the Municipality can track the impact of accessibility initiatives, ensuring they address the evolving needs of the community. Additionally, it provides opportunities for feedback from residents, especially those with disabilities, ensuring that their voices are heard and that the plan remains relevant and effective.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

The Municipality of Argyle is dedicated to making our community welcoming and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. We believe in equitable and inclusive opportunities and respect the dignity and independence of all people.

We are committed to identifying and removing barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to fully participate in our community. We will work to meet the standards of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act and continuously improve accessibility in Argyle.

Guiding Principles:

Equitable Accessibility

Working towards equitable access for all members of our community means that every individual has an equal opportunity, and everyone is treated fairly. Equitable access acknowledges individual circumstances to removing barriers. Equitable access is different than equal access. Equality means everybody gets the same thing, while equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs.

First Voice

The Municipality of Argyle prioritizes the perspectives and lived experiences of individuals with disabilities. This principle ensures that their insights and expertise play a central role in identifying barriers, shaping policies, and guiding the implementation of accessibility measures. By actively engaging First Voice participants in meaningful consultation and decision-making processes, the Municipality demonstrates its commitment to creating solutions that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the community, fostering equity, dignity, and inclusion for all.

Education and Awareness

The Municipality of Argyle values and fosters a culture of inclusivity through continuous learning and dialogue. This principle seeks to empower residents, community partners and municipal staff, with the knowledge and tools needed to understand accessibility barriers and adopt best practices. By promoting inclusivity through awareness campaigns, training programs, and open conversations, the Municipality aims to build a community where accessibility is not just a compliance measure but a shared value, ensuring all individuals can participate fully and equally in public life.

Monitoring and Evaluation


The Municipality of Argyle ensures accountability and continuous improvement in achieving accessibility goals. This principle emphasizes the importance of regularly assessing progress, measuring the effectiveness of initiatives, and identifying areas for improvement. By establishing clear metrics, engaging community partners, and conducting periodic reviews, the Municipality remains committed to creating a more inclusive community, adapting strategies to address emerging needs, and fostering sustained accessibility for all residents and visitors.

Be Realistic

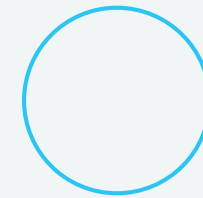
The Municipality of Argyle is committed to building and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and it also understands the need to set achievable and practical goals to reflect the community's unique capabilities and available resources. The Municipality emphasizes a balanced approach that considers financial, logistical and operational realities while striving to make meaningful progress. Adopting an approach of phased implementations means that the Municipality can ensure accessibility improvements can be both impactful and sustainable, to form a strong foundation for a long-term inclusivity.

REPORT CARD AS OF AUGUST 2024

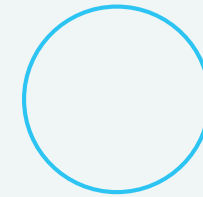
Recommendations - Status Update

 Ongoing

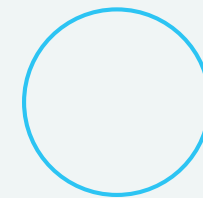
Provide modified paper copies of municipal resources in large and/or plain language – on request



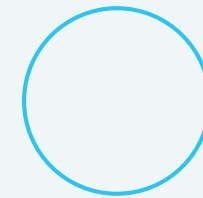
Prioritize close captioning for online meetings and other video communications as an alternate to ASL service not available to us.



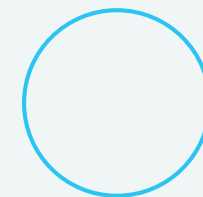
Improve opportunities for people with disabilities to gain employment at MODA by ensuring job postings are open to people with disabilities, accommodations may be available in the workplace and /or advertised job postings across different platforms



Promote and increase the adaptive equipment loan service



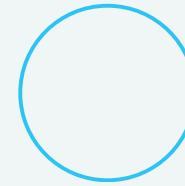
Review and revise the Day Camp staffing and services considerations and services considering the potential limitations of residents – increasing inclusive access of the location and delivery of service



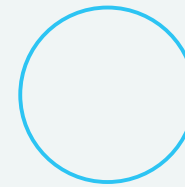
Recommendations - Status Update

Ongoing

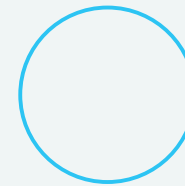
Improve support and flexibility in the workplace by ensuring Mun staff and council have access to adaptive technologies, possible accommodations in the workplace, appropriate and supportive leave practices and return to work plans and a flexible work environment such as the ability to work from home



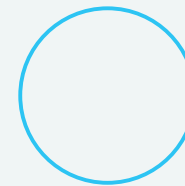
Provide training opportunities for staff on diversity and inclusion such as “Working with Abilities” online training provided by NS Human Right Commission



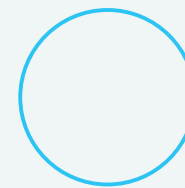
Actively recruit people with disabilities on municipal committees and working groups.



Improve policy and service delivery with a focus on: 1. Dangerous and Unsightly premises where people with a disability are challenged to maintain their property. 2. Tax Rebate and front-end services assisting residents to navigate applications and permits



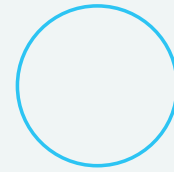
On additional new sidewalk constructions, ensure the inclusion of curb cut outs & crosswalks where needed



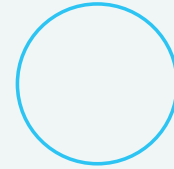
Recommendations - Status Update

Ongoing

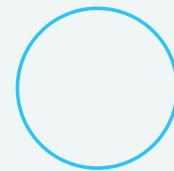
Commit a portion of the annual budget to install, maintain, or improve accessibility in public buildings and spaces.



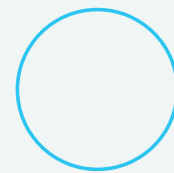
Build capacity among staff and senior leadership to cultivate a culture of inclusion that supports, retains, and provides opportunities for career growth to people with disabilities



Ensure all new policies, bylaws and procedures conform to the recommendations of this document and consider inclusivity in its design. Ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to bylaws and policies, in whatever format needed to meet the individual needs.



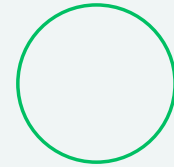
Provide accessibility training to the building and fire inspectors where available.



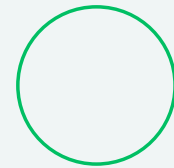
Recommendations - Status Update

 Completed

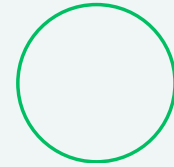
Promote MODA Accessibility Plan



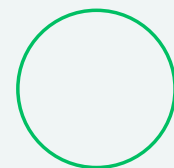
Glenwood Provincial Park Accessible Kayak/Canoe Launch



Parc des Jeunes Playground Project



Train our Communications personnel and/or members of the Office of the Deputy CAO in inclusive and plain language training.



* Improve the accessibility of the Par-En-Bas Track



If crosswalks are installed ensure barrier-free options are considered in its construction





Notes:


** Still work to be done at the Par-en-Bas track. Need an accessible pathway to the track.*


Recommendations - Status Update


 Not Started

* Distribute any Provincial public awareness brochure / handouts to our residents to build awareness around what an accessible community means 

Assess the number of residents from the Municipality of Argyle using the Dial-a-Ride service as part of updating the CDENE led transportation plan 

Explore the option of subsidizing fees or improving local services supporting the HOPE Dial a Ride 

Develop a plan of action with HOPE to ensure barrier-free transportation services are available to our residents 

Identify gaps in the delivery of service and provide financial or administrative support where necessary to ensure inclusive access to the service. For instance, if there is an additional fee to service a resident with a disability, then it would be Argyle's role to ensure an even playing field 

Notes:

**We have not received awareness brochures, we shall use our social media.*

**Leadership met with Gordie Thompson of HOPE to soft launch accessible transportation in Argyle.*

**Waiting for a budget from HOPE to explore the fee options.*

**Soft launch to begin in April 2025*

Recommendations - Status Update

Not Started

Work with Argyle Businesses and Yarmouth and area Chambers of Commerce to inform businesses of the funding available to enable barrier-free businesses



Develop a plan of action for the existing sidewalks and multi-purpose court from the audit's recommendations



Make the necessary repairs to the existing sidewalks to make them accessible.



* Re-examine the option of using Nakile Home for Special Care accessible bus, which was initially refused.



We will ensure that when required we will have an American Sign Language Interpreter at public municipal meetings. This shall only be considered in a major public engagement exercise. Alternative options, including but not limited to, closed captioning, shall be considered and implemented in public meetings where practical.



Notes:

**This is not a feasible option.*

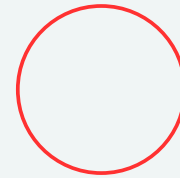
Recommendations - Status Update

Not Started

Promote opportunities for accessibility training to residents and local businesses.



If a new library in Pubnico is approved and funded, ensure accessible design



Take a regional approach in identifying a ballfield that would be accessible for all to play



Perform an accessibility audit on the trails in the municipality and ensure that part of at least one trail meets the accessibility standards for trails



Recommendations - Status Update

In Progress

Ensure digital communications are screen readable



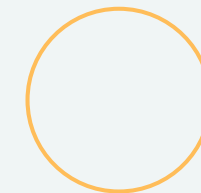
Notes:

**Met with HOPE, GM on January 9 to discuss.*

Waive registration fees for recreation activities for the individual who is supporting a person with a disability



Develop and fund a replacement plan for existing benches and picnic tables, and always purchase/build new barrier-free seating.



* Explore the option of having the Hope Dial-A-Ride co-stationed in the municipality, as they have recently benefitted from a new building construction for their main office.



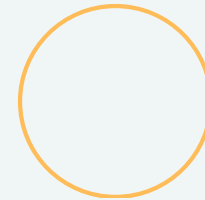
Improve hiring and personnel policies and practices to enable and encourage the recruitment, selection, and advancement at MODA



Recommendations - Status Update

In Progress

Obtain a suggested course of action to ensure our employment at the West Pubnico Treatment plant, as well as the Argyle Archives provide barrier-free employment options, where practical



Notes:

**Audits were done on existing sidewalks and multi-purpose courts in 2024*

* Accessibility Audits: 1.Archives, 2.Fire Departments, 3.Existing parking lots at Recreation Facilities and archives, 4.Multi-purpose courts, 5.Sidewalks



Amend, if applicable, the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw to facilitate the construction and location of barrier-free housing options



Identify roles and responsibilities of improving accessibility to the Pubnico Head Library location and take fiscal responsibility for building improvements on location



Perform a review of existing policies, bylaws and procedures providing recommendations for improvement under an accessibility lens.



Celebrating Our Achievements

- École secondaire Par-en-Bas synthetic track surface completed October 2023
- Glenwood Provincial Park Accessible Kayak/ Canoe Launch completed May 2023
- Accessible Parc des Jeunes playground completed in 2021
- Accessibility audits on existing sidewalks and 3 multi-purpose courts conducted in April 2024
- Automatic door system installed in the municipal office completed in 2023
- Sound panels installed in the Main entrance of the municipal office for better sound Summer 2024, sound panels installed in Council Chambers and board rooms December 2024.
- Staff Training
 - Office of the CAO training in inclusive and plain language 2023
 - All staff trained in “Working with Abilities” Provided by NS Human Rights Commission. 2023
- Draft Recreation Accessibility Policy 2024. Not brought to Council for approval

Celebrating Our Achievements

- Added child-size Hippocamp, adaptive sleds and adaptive kayaking paddles and stabilizers to the equipment loan program in 2023
- Added accessible furniture to our recreation facilities (ongoing)
- Improved the hiring process and practices. Added The Municipality of Argyle is an equal opportunity employer. The Municipality of Argyle is committed to the principles of the Accessibility and of the Equity and Anti Racism Acts. As such, we strive to make our recruitment, assessment, and selection process as inclusive as possible and provide accommodation as required for applicants with disabilities or other specialized needs.
- Some policies have been reviewed with an accessibility lens (ongoing)
- Hiring of an “inclusive staff” to our day camps (2023, 2024)
- A portion of the budget is allocated for accessibility (2023, 2024) Committed to a budget line for Accessibility.

Challenges

- Lack of human resources
- Lack of time
- Lack of standards for accessibility (standards being developed as plans are being developed)
- Lack of funding for human resources.
- Community awareness of accessibility.

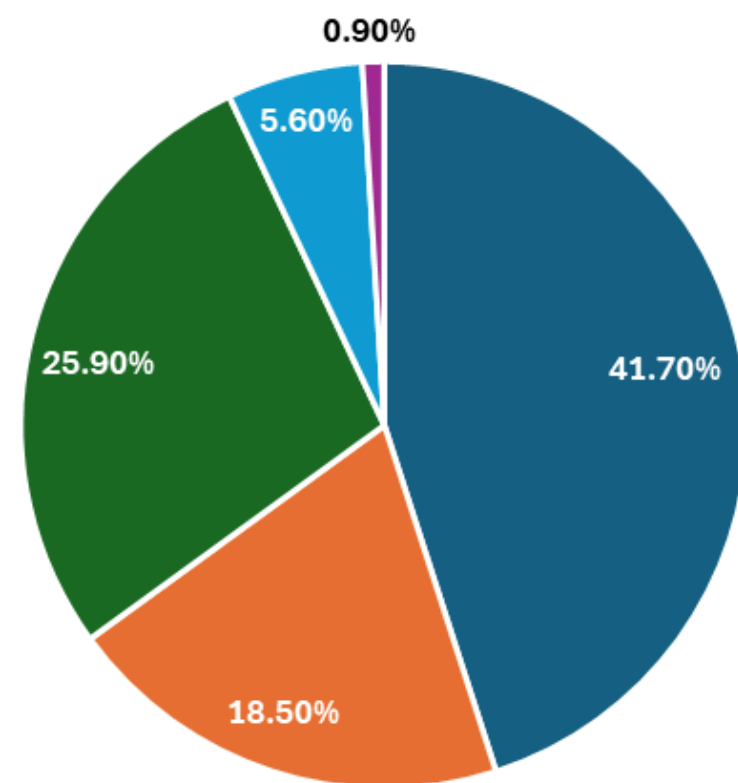
Methodology

The Accessibility Coordinator met with three (3) of seniors group in the community on 3 separate occasions. Surveys were distributed to the senior's group with a brief explanation of what the Municipality was trying to achieve by engaging the residents in improving accessibility by identifying and removing barriers to the municipal services. The survey was also available to the public as an online survey on our website. This survey was promoted through our social media.

109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

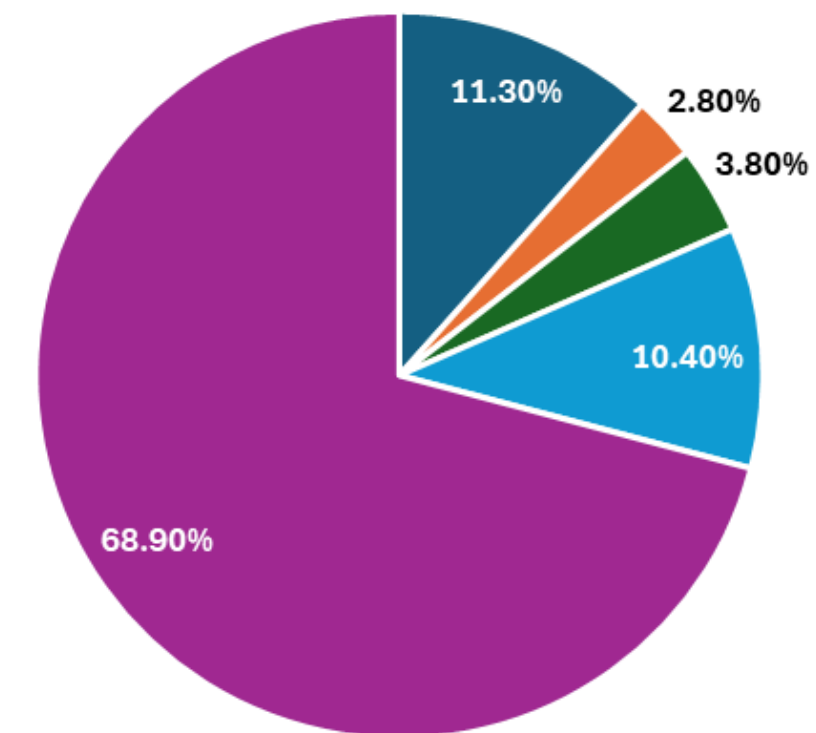
Please indicate how frequently each of the following occur.

I face obstacles with accessibility because of the design or the way the inside and outside of municipal buildings and spaces are set up.



A little over 6% still have barriers to our Municipal building.

I have a method of getting where I need or want to go (e.g., school, work, social activities) that is accessible to me.



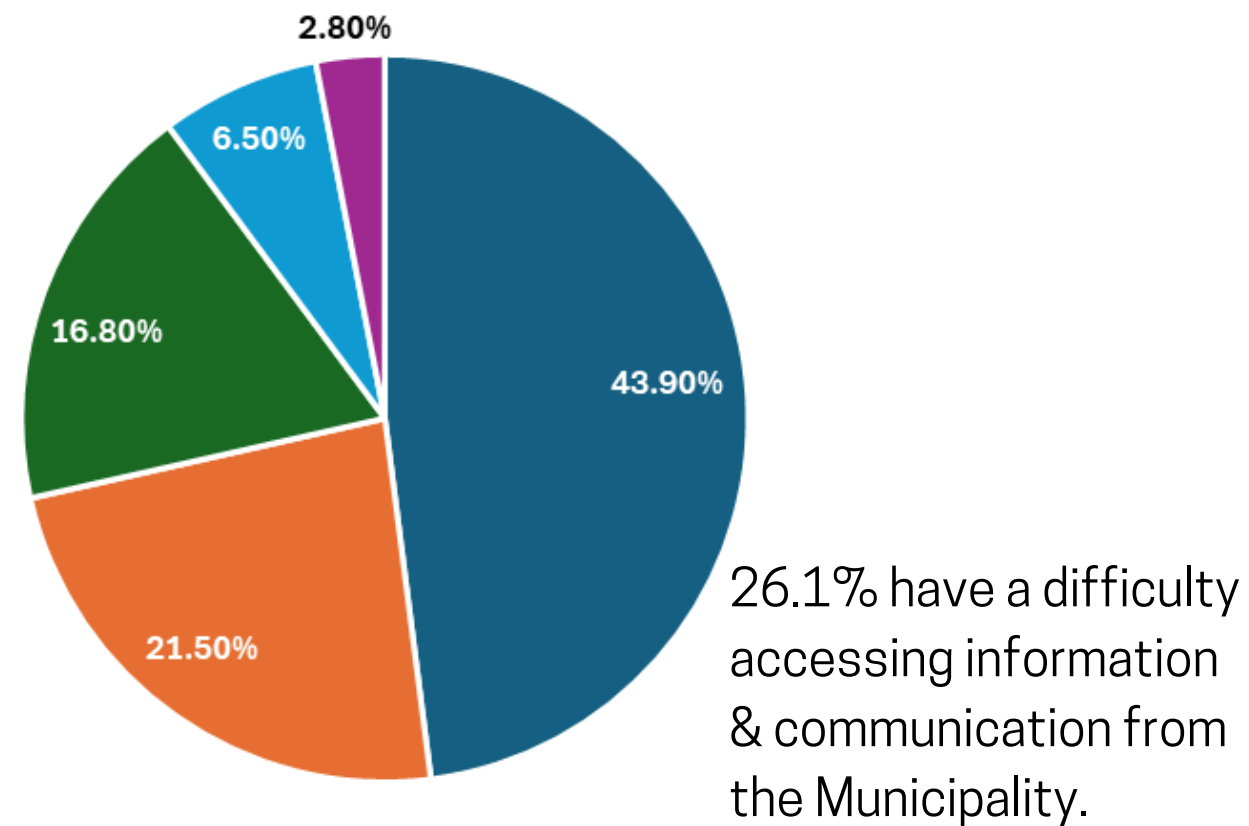
28.3% have barriers to transportation.



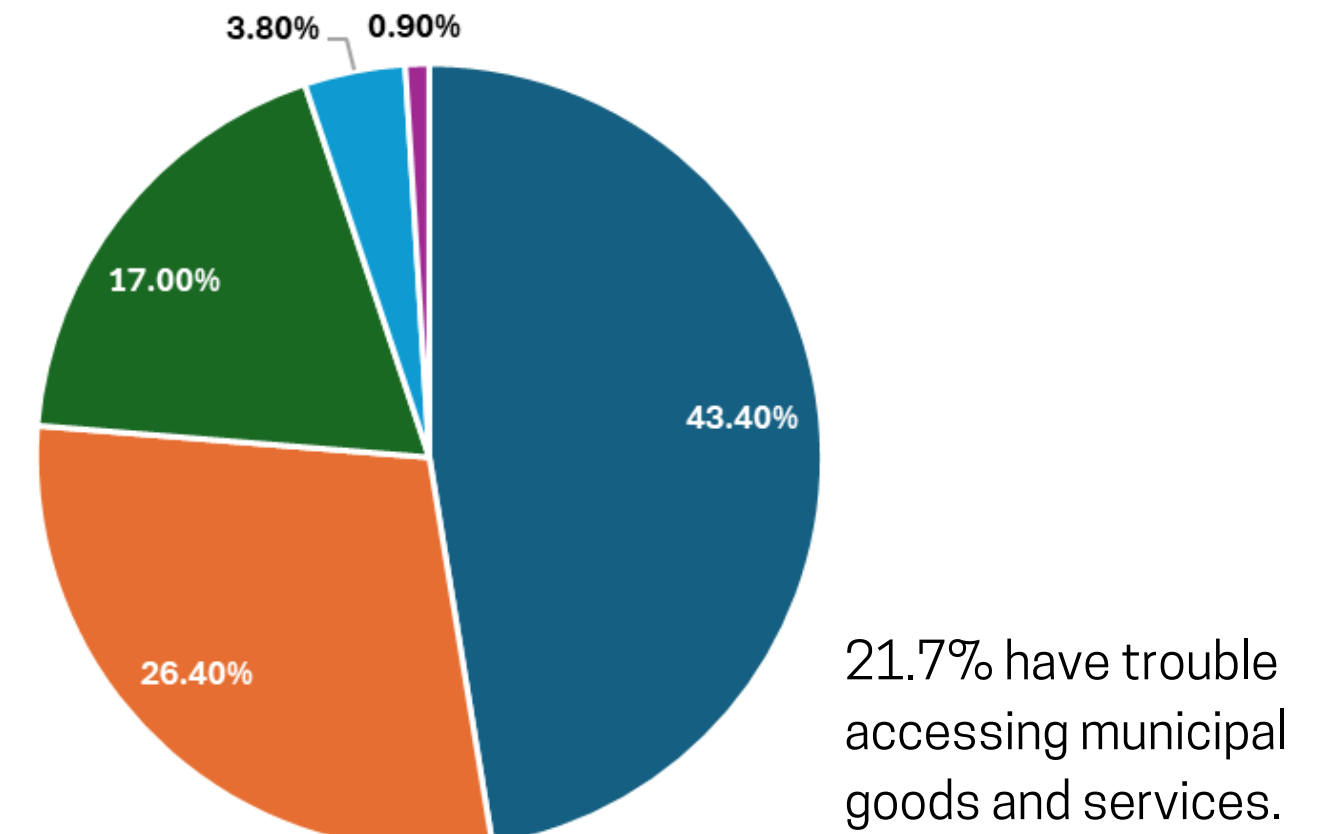
109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please indicate how frequently each of the following occur.

I have difficulty accessing information and communications from the municipality.



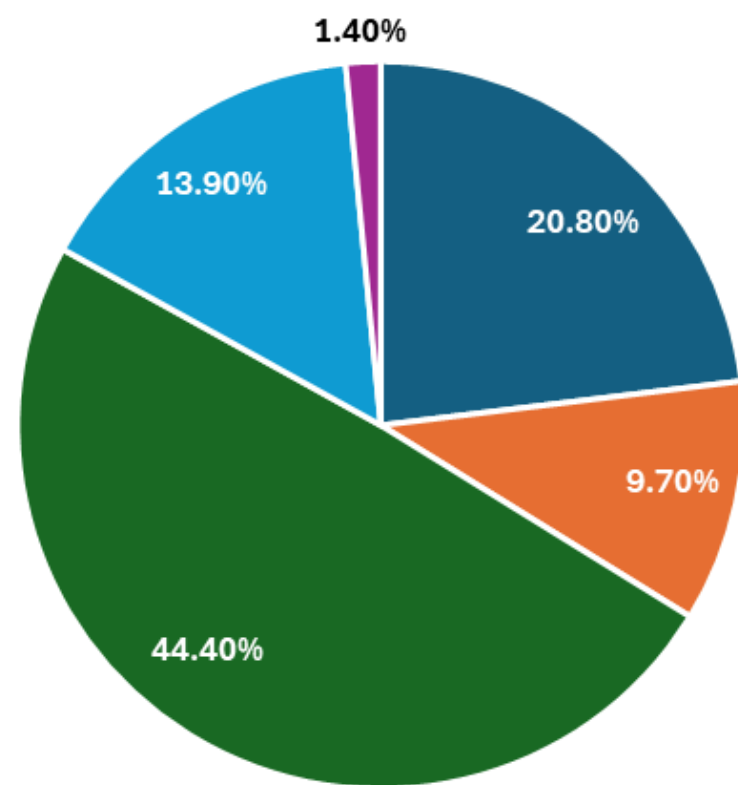
I have trouble accessing municipal goods and services



109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please indicate how frequently each of the following occur.

I notice physical or design features in the community that might make it hard for people with disabilities to get around easily.



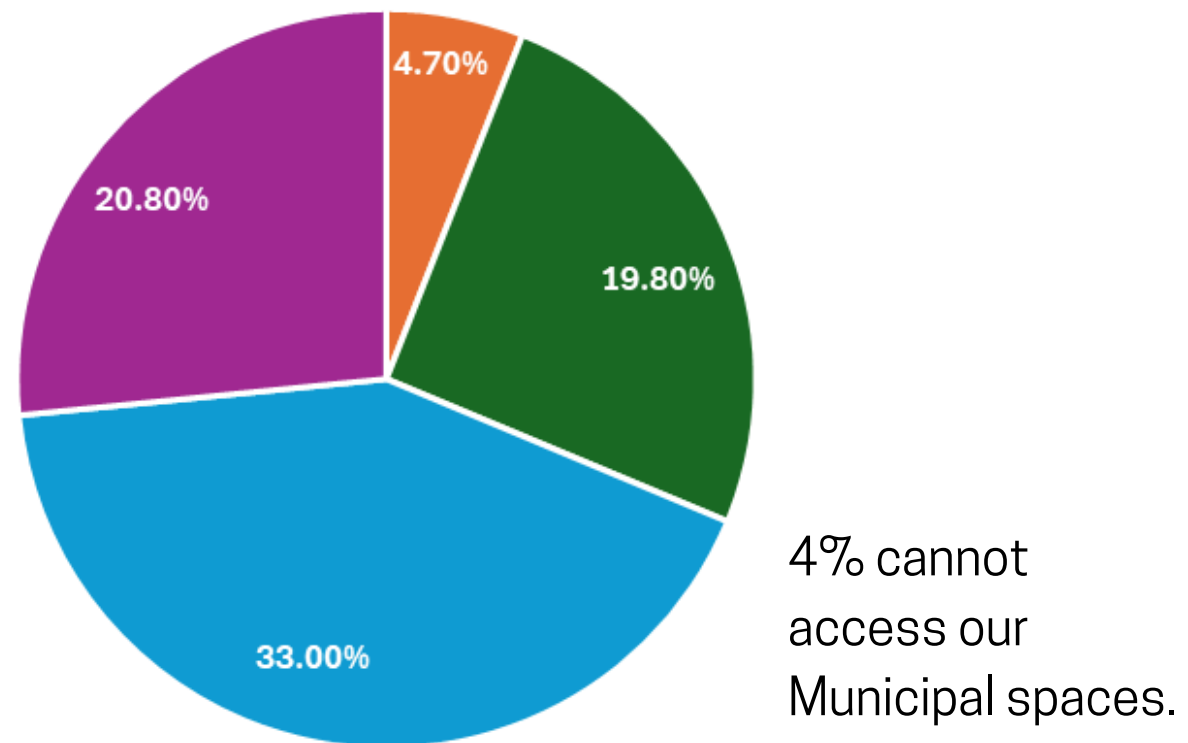
A large majority of respondents see barriers to accessibility in MODA.



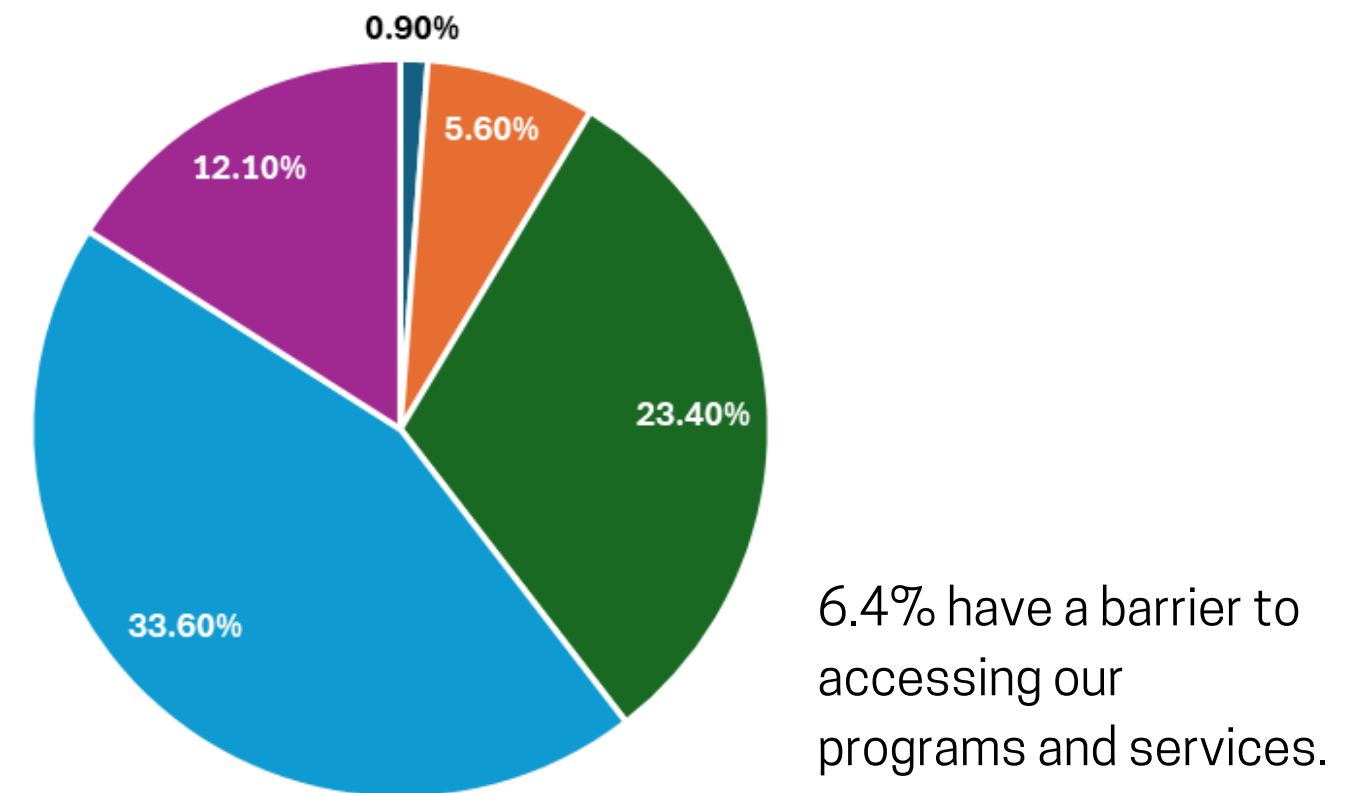
109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please rate how well you think the municipality is doing in each of the following

Accessibility of municipal buildings and spaces, like recreation centers, parks, and trails



Accessibility of municipal programs and services, like sports activities or services for residents.

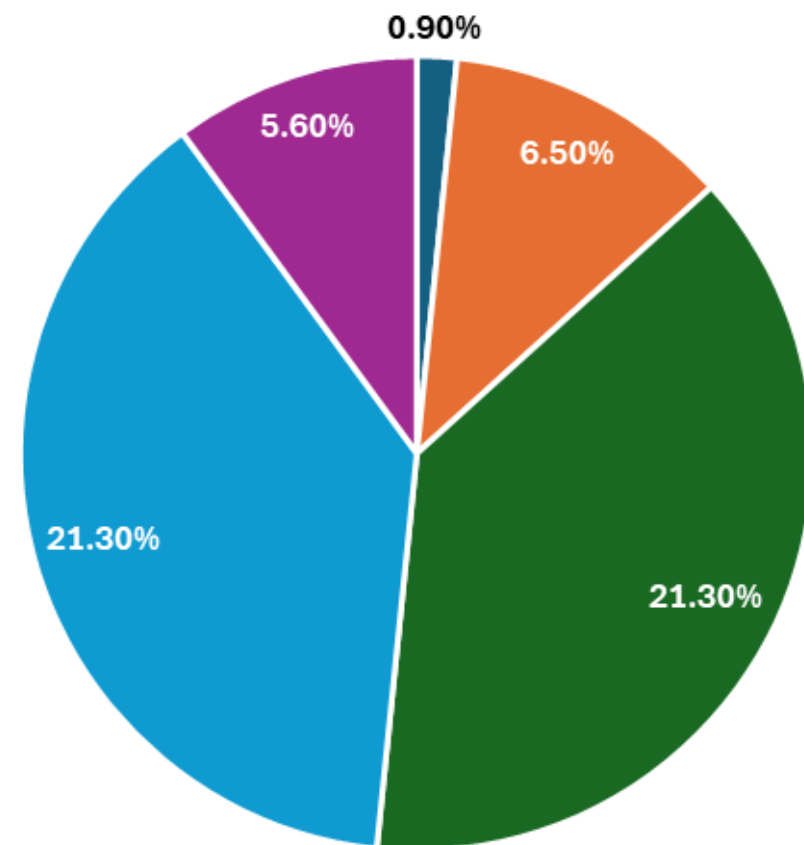


Very Poor Poor Acceptable Good Very Good Don't Know/Not Sure

109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

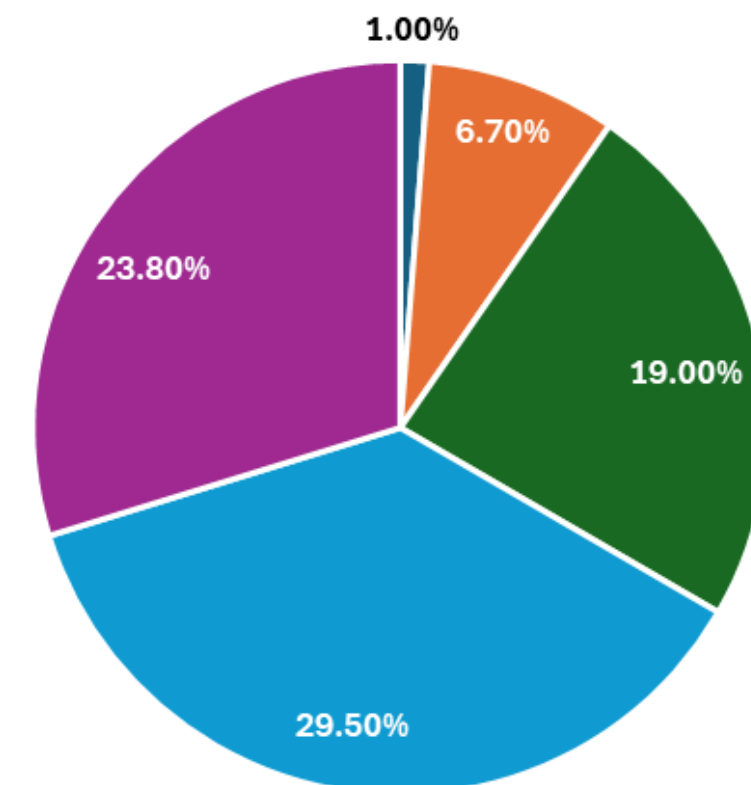
Please rate how well you think the municipality is doing in each of the following

Accessibility of municipal services for people with disabilities.



7.4% believe the Municipality is not meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

Accessibility of municipal communications (e.g., website, social media).



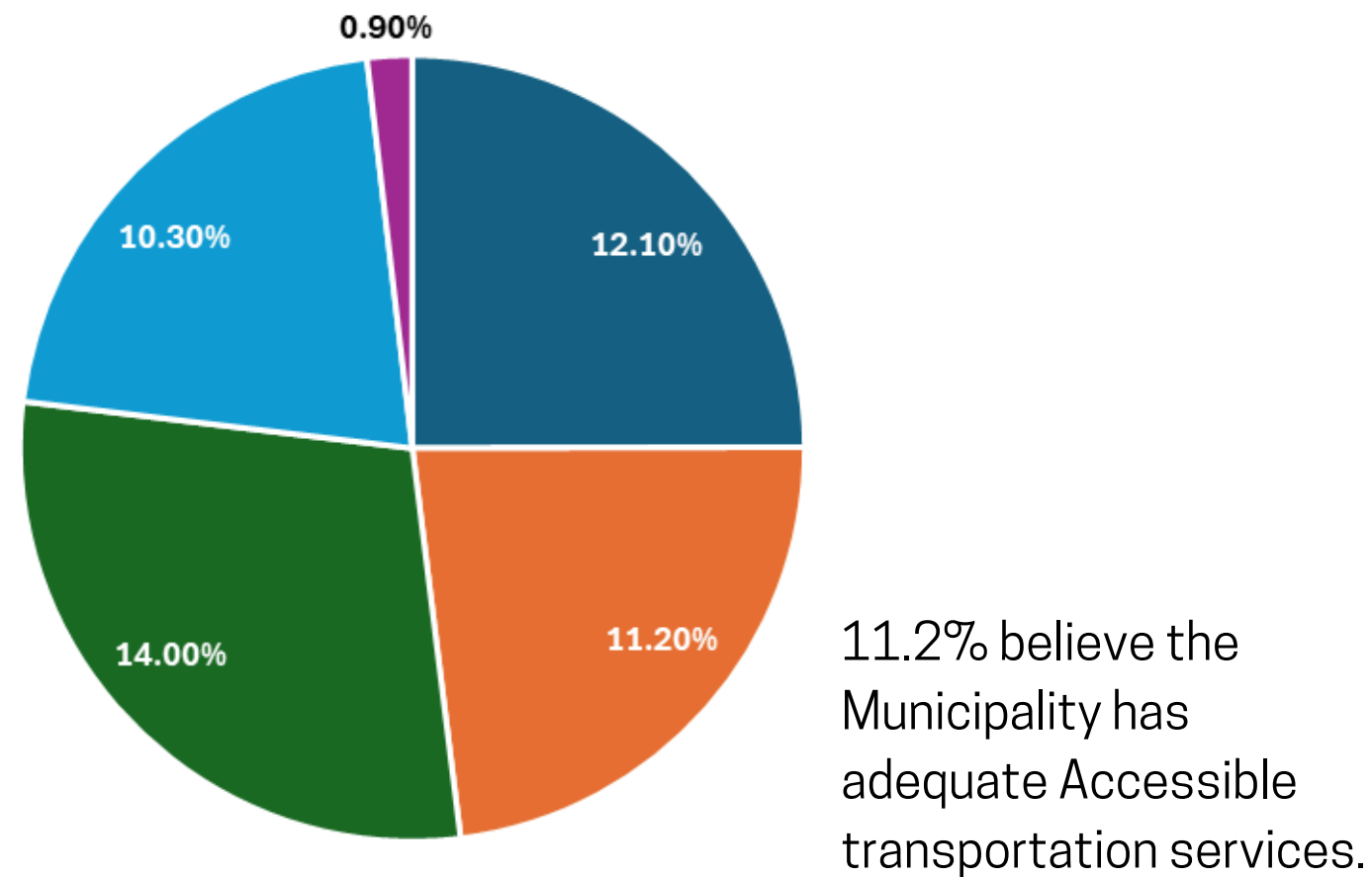
7.7% have a barrier to accessing Municipal communications.



109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please rate how well you think the municipality is doing in each of the following

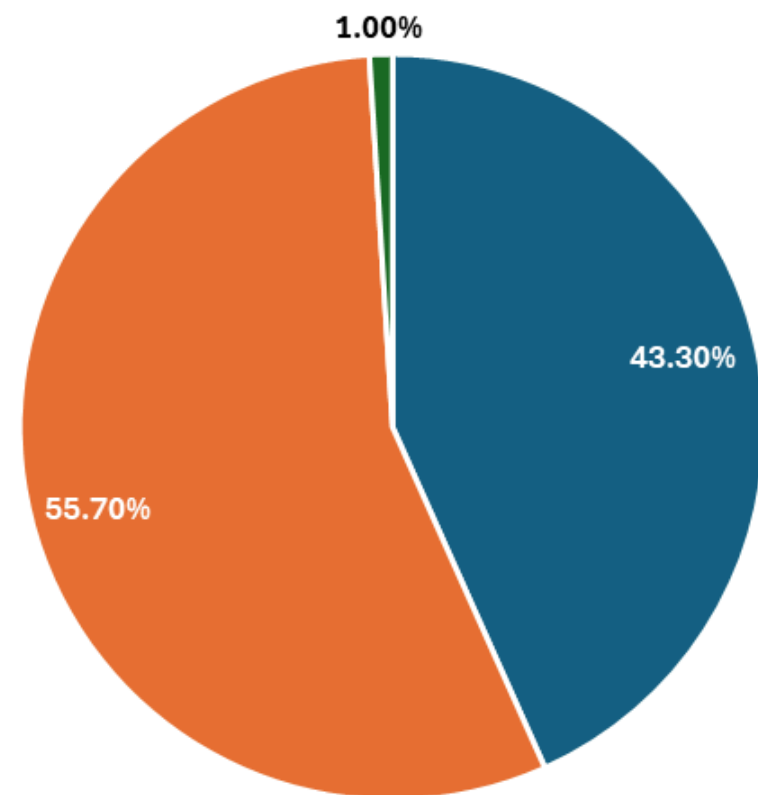
Accessibility of municipal transportation services/supports.



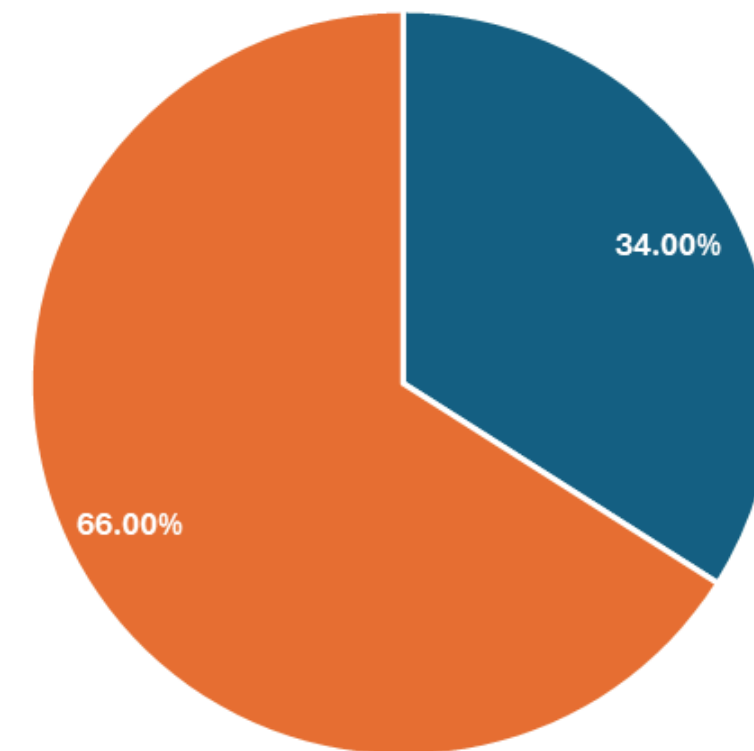
109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please indicate whether each of the following has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the last year

Accessibility of municipal spaces, like recreation centers, parks, trails, and buildings.



Accessibility of municipal services and programs (e.g., sports or other activity programs, services provided to residents).

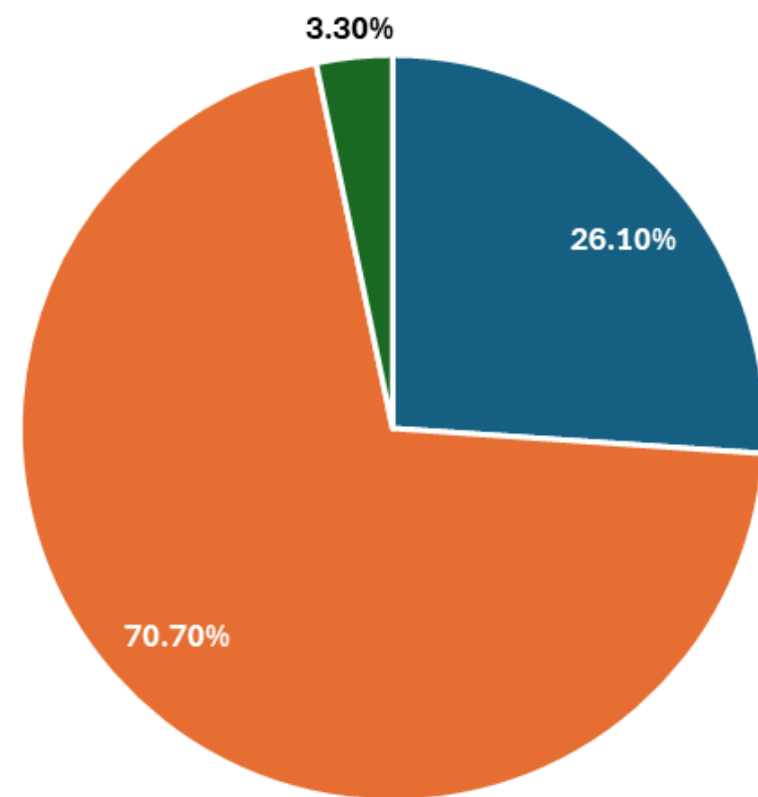


● Improved ● Stayed the Same ● Acceptable

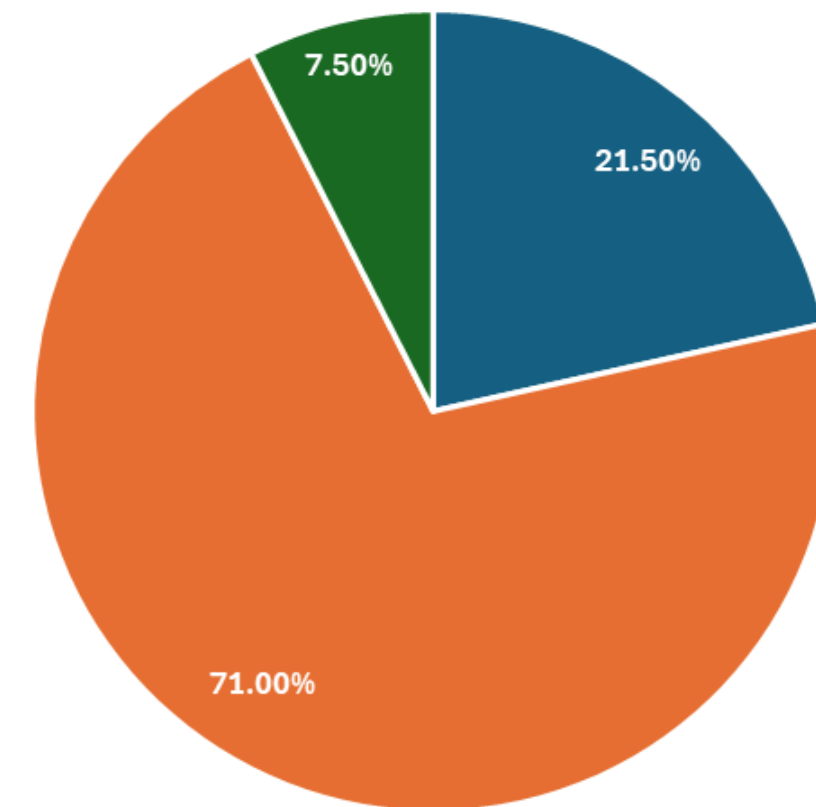
109 surveys were received from the seniors' groups and the public online surveys.
Here is what we heard from the surveys:

Please indicate whether each of the following has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the last year

Accessibility of services and programs offered by private or non-profit organizations.



Accessibility of privately owned or non-profit buildings and spaces.



● Improved ● Stayed the Same ● Acceptable

How could accessibility in our Municipality be improved?

"I find older buildings have steps that are too steep or insufficient handrails to assist."

"Education"

"Have a meeting to discuss the matter"

"Accessible Transportation"

"more accessible trails and beaches"

"Sidewalks to help seniors and disabled; transportation services for seniors and disabled; benches for seniors along sidewalks and in parks; wheelchairs in municipal buildings used to assist frailer residents, who can't afford walking aids, allowing them to participate in events where there may be a challenging walk to get inside; education to staff to help them know best practices in helping differently able persons - no matter the disability; more handicapped parking spaces with encouragement to businesses to have more as well, and to keep the spaces clear of snow"

"More sidewalks"

"More rails installed"

"More street lights in back road"

"More transparency and communication"

"automatic doors for the firehall , make a sidewalk from Richard Rd to the Tuna Wharf"

"I would love to see sidewalks and clearly marked Braille signs everywhere"

"More transparency and communication"

"I don't have social media, and there is no accessible or limited accessible transportation"

"More funding availability"

"More accessibility for seniors Automatic door openers and ramps"

"Awareness and attention to survey results"

"Glenwood Park. Some kind of railing leading into water. I've noted older swimmers having some issues. Also I don't believe the drop off (how quick the water gets deep) is noted. IE as a warning."

"More ramps - no municipal transportation"

"I see lots of vehicles around Barrington that transport seniors/ disabled or those needing to go to appointment."

"Maybe making sure that social services, schools plus, guidance counsellors, and other organizations in our neighborhoods know about these accessible places."

"Easier accessibility to the water at Glenwood park for swimming."

"Making all public buildings, wheel chair assessable and making all public gatherings scent free!"

"More accessible parking."

"More dialog/info sessions/more advertising"

"Encourage businesses to assure their facilities are fully accessible"

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about how our municipality is working on accessibility?

“Yes no sidewalks, the small communities are left out, you do for ones that have more people. It's hard to walk on the side of the road with cars traveling so fast”

“Thank you”

“Chair exercises would be nice”

“Slip and fall awareness for our seniors”

“Public bathrooms to be updated with higher toilets. No public transportation”

“Making residents aware of projects taking place in the Municipality and keeping residents informed about recreational activities!”

“It would be beneficial to have greater presence on social media - newcomers have difficulty finding information”

“Automatic doors openers at the Wedgeport Fire Hall for seniors”

“Street lights, more sidewalks closer recreation facilities”

“Need sidewalks in Amirault’s Hill and Sluice Point”

“Municipality is actively working to improve accessibility”

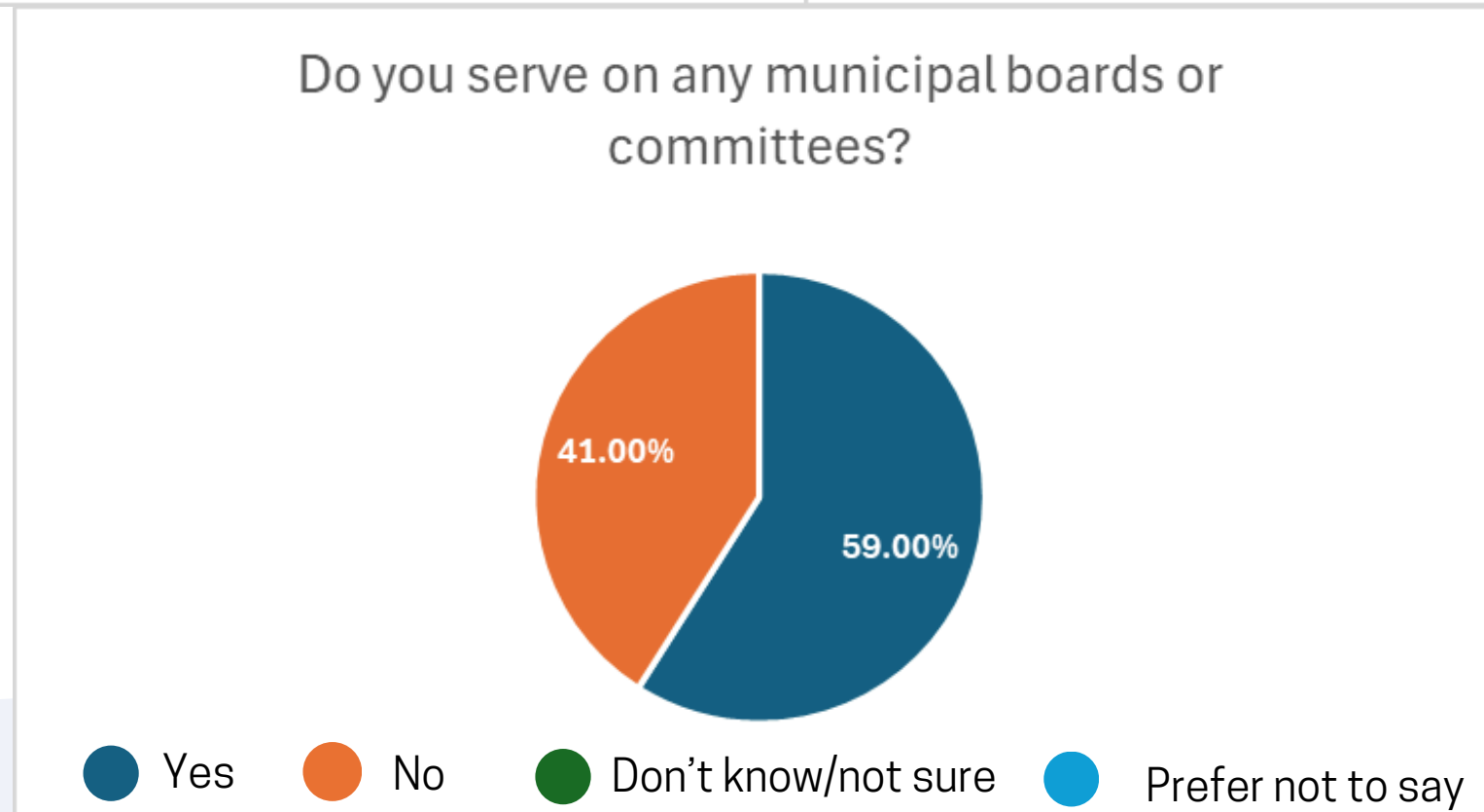
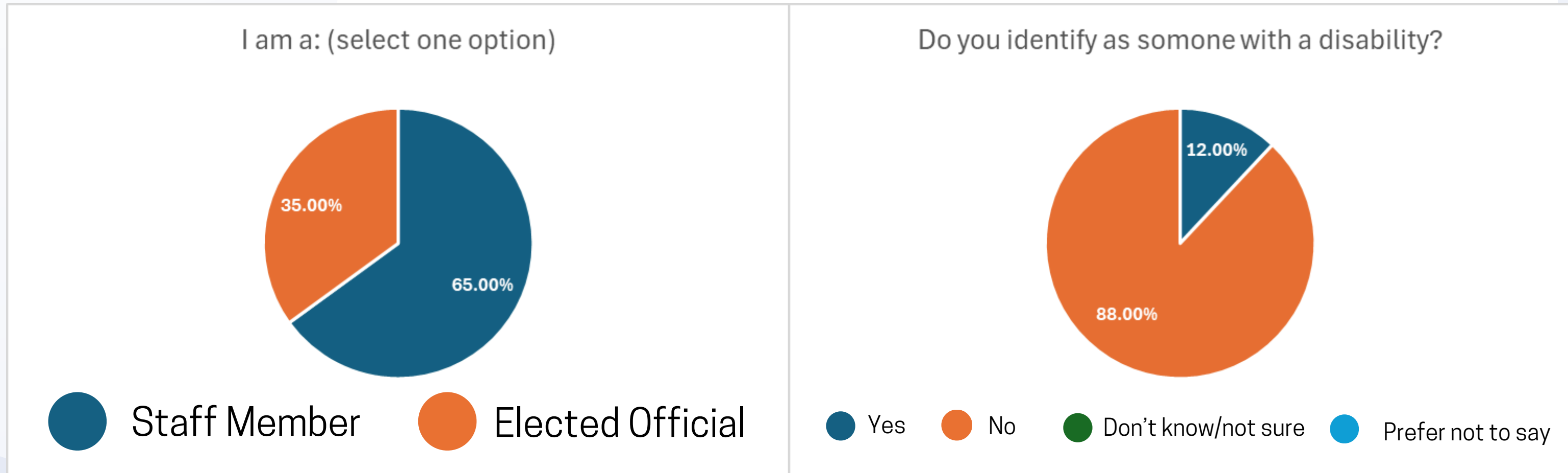
“Work in action (progress)”

“They could check with people who have different levels of disabilities, to identify what needs to be done to make the municipality more assessable for their needs.”

“I think that people should really deep perspective at what living with a disability means before they start judging us because we deserve kindness and respect”

“No accessible transportation”

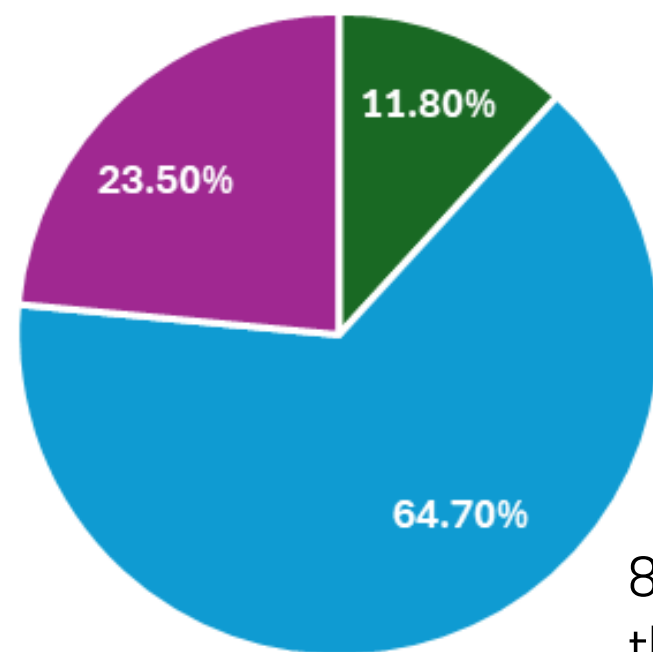
We also surveyed staff and Council. The survey was to gage whether we were making progress and where do we need to concentrate our efforts in the next three years. 17 surveys were received:



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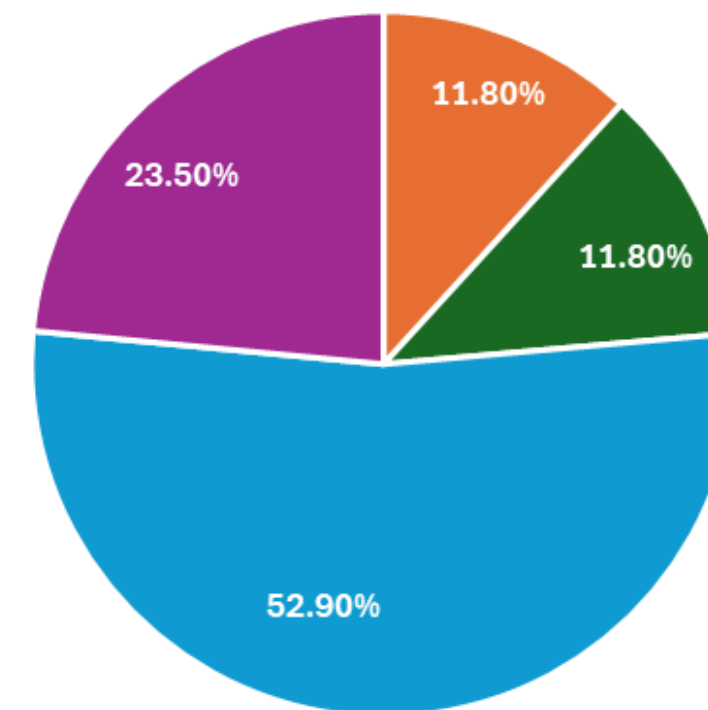
Please rate your level of agreement for each statement about your knowledge and understanding related to accessibility:

Over the past year, my understanding of accessibility as a human right has increased.



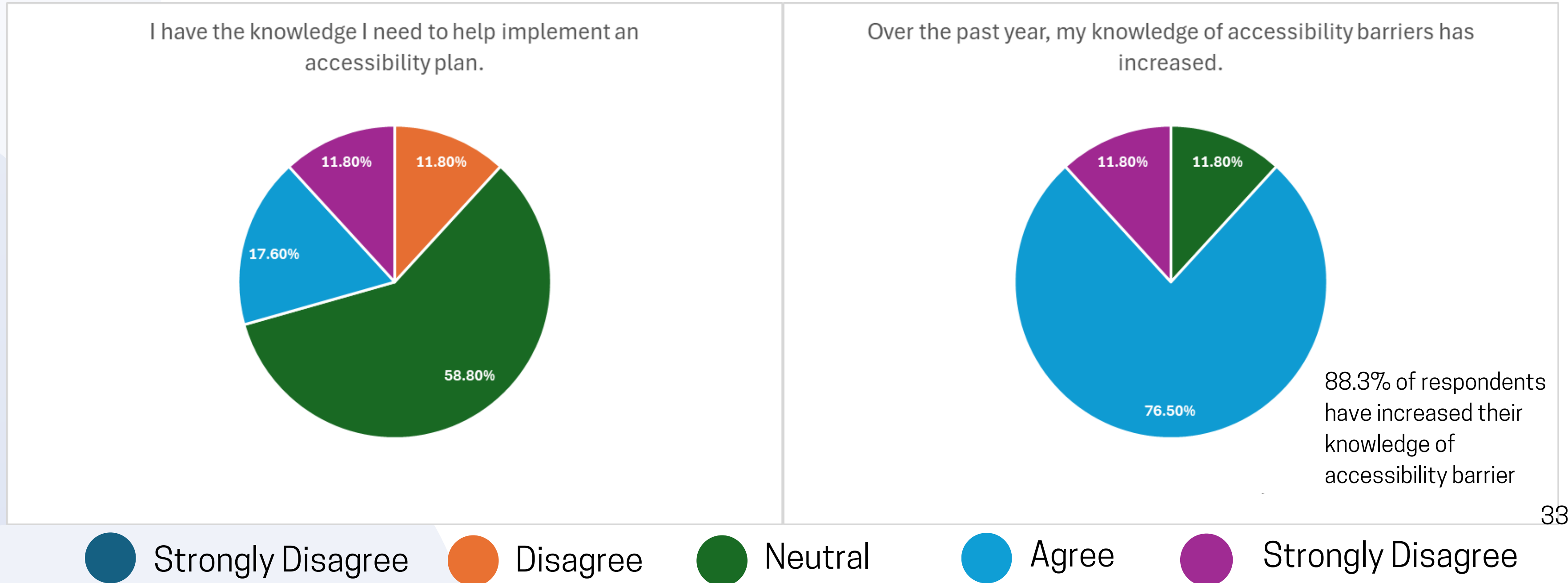
88.2% agree that they have increased understanding.

I understand what my municipality's obligations are under the Accessibility Act.



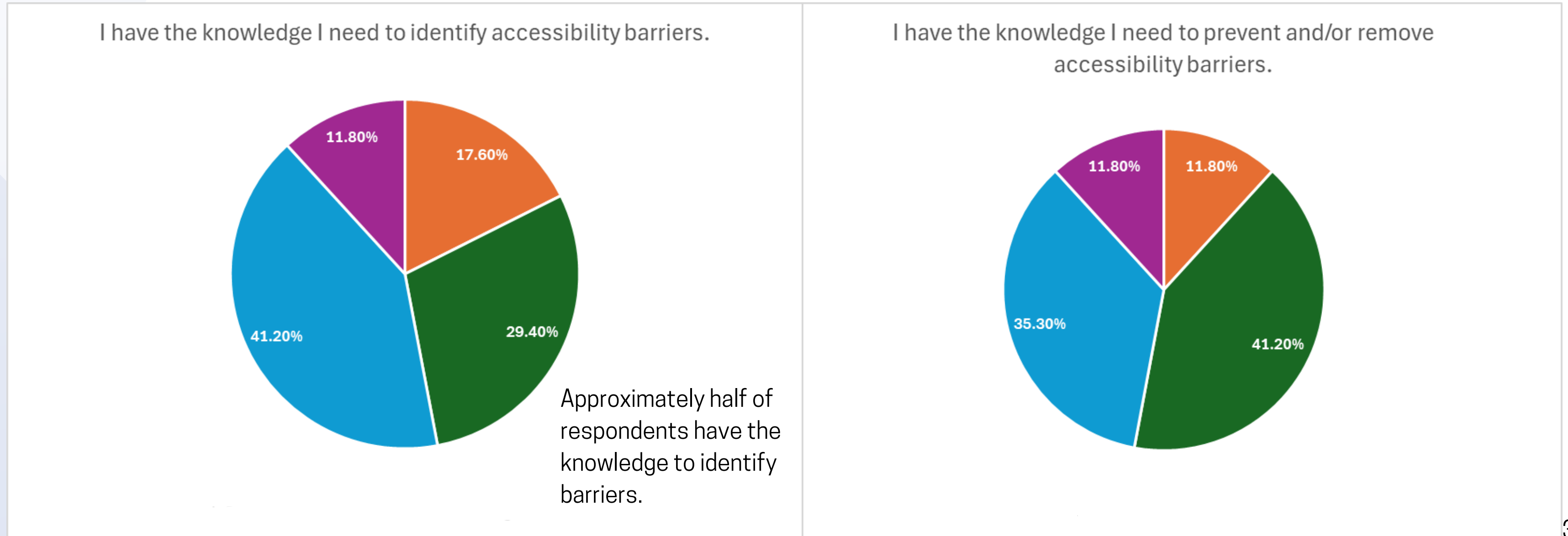
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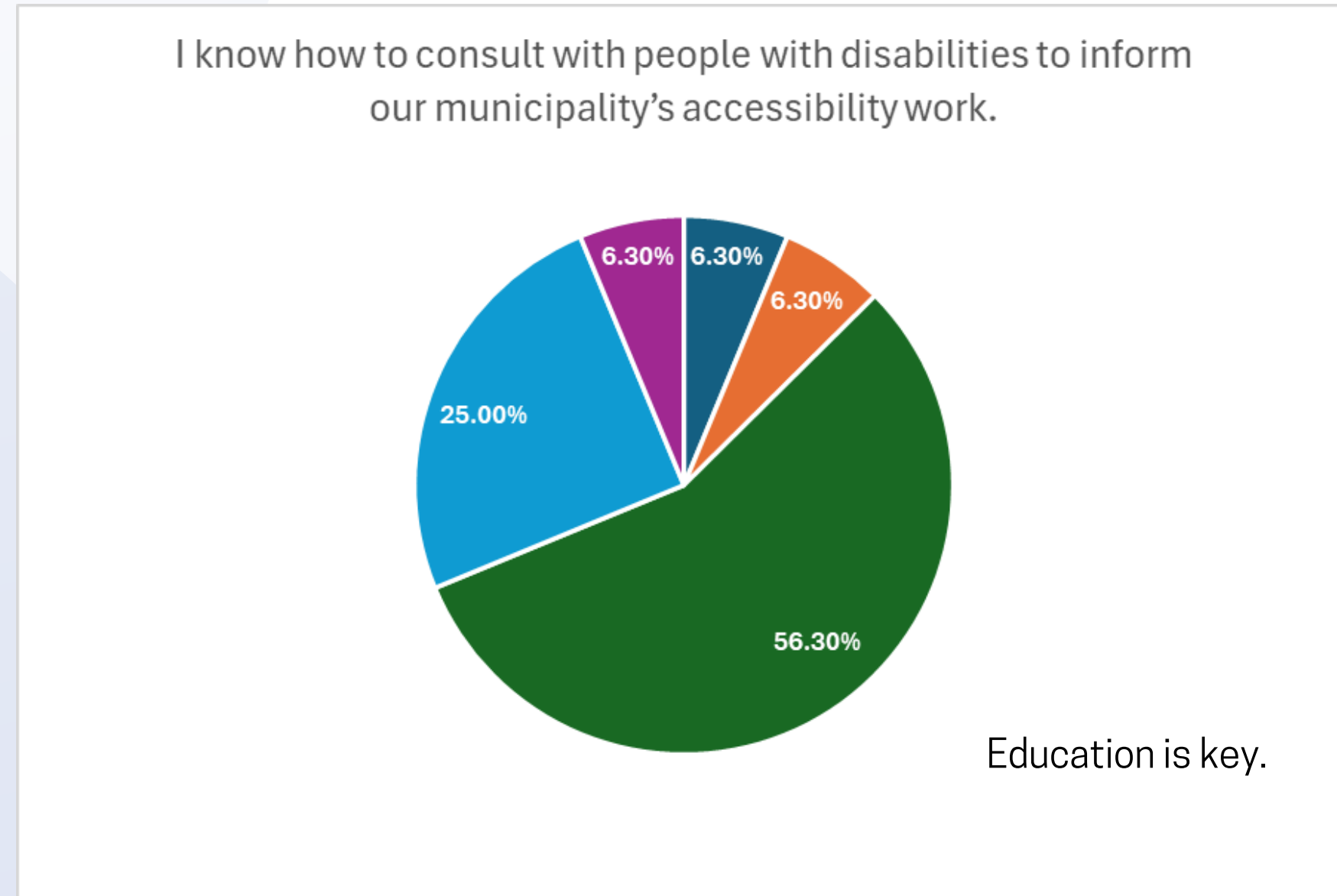
Please rate your level of agreement for each statement about your knowledge and understanding related to accessibility:



● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral ● Agree ● Strongly Disagree

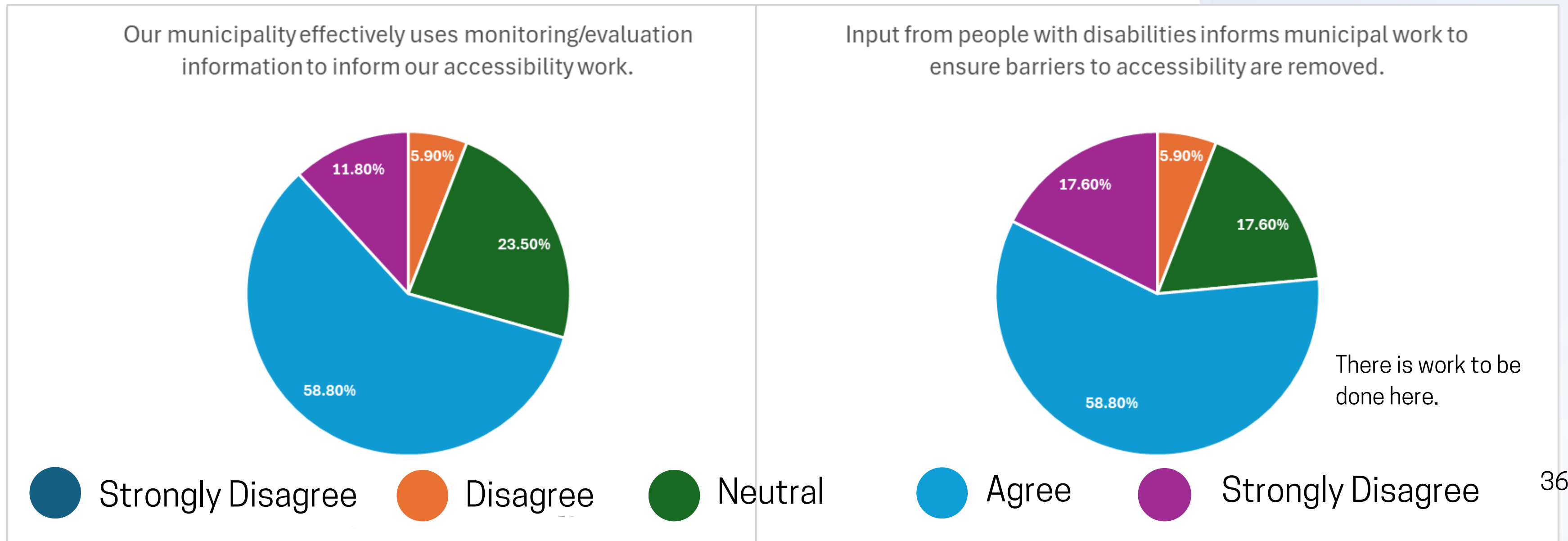
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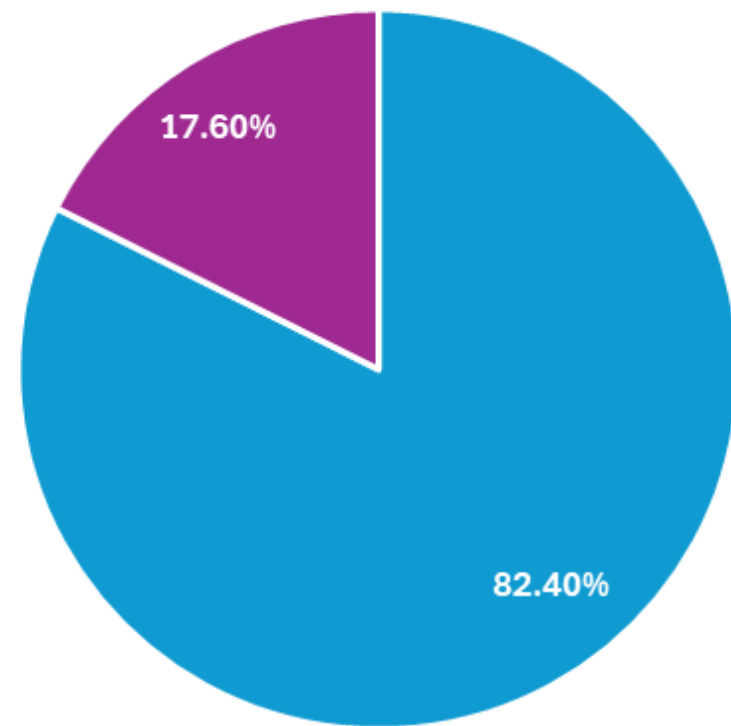
Please rate your level of agreement for each statement about how information from people with disabilities and evaluation/monitoring activities informs the municipality's work related to accessibility:



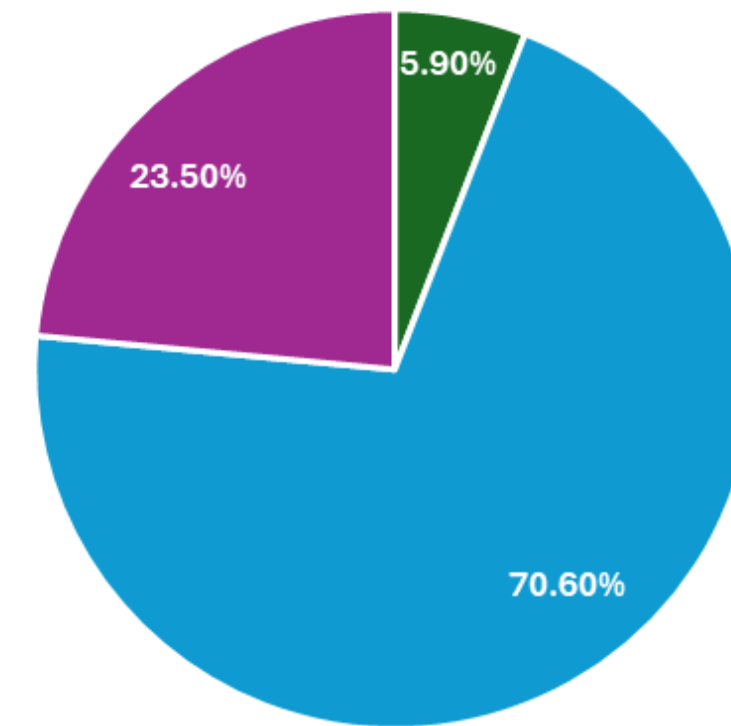
We also surveyed staff and Council. The survey was to gauge whether we were making progress and where do we need to concentrate our efforts in the next three years. 17 surveys were received:

Please rate your level of agreement for each statement about the workplace environment for municipal staff, employees, and elected officials with disabilities:

Our municipal workplace is accessible for staff, and elected officials with disabilities.



Our municipal workplace is inclusive for staff, and elected officials with disabilities.



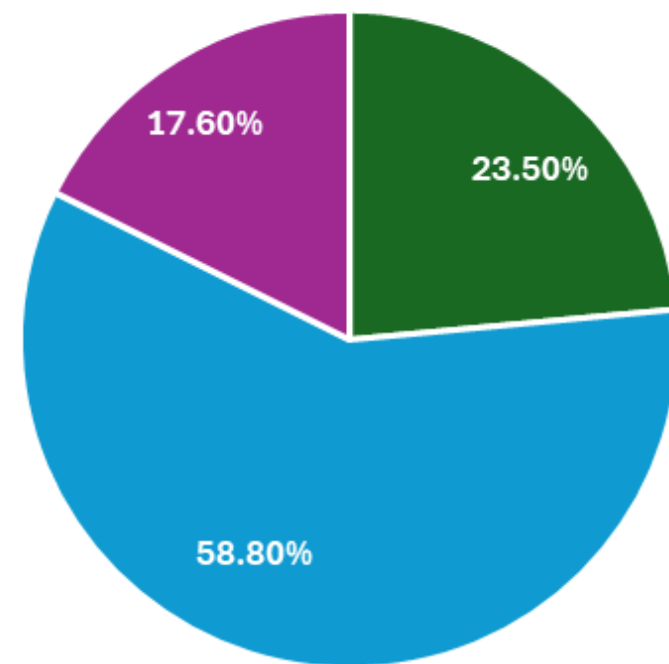
● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral

● Agree ● Strongly Disagree

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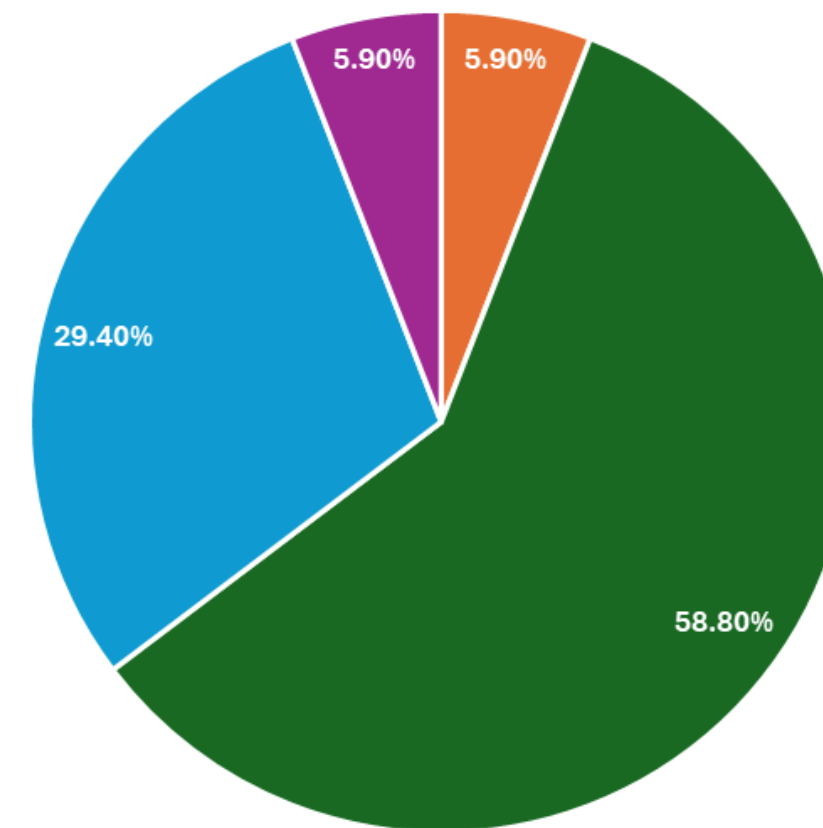
Municipal employees with disabilities have equitable opportunities for advancement compared to employees without disabilities



23.5% are not sure if there is equitable opportunities for advancement.

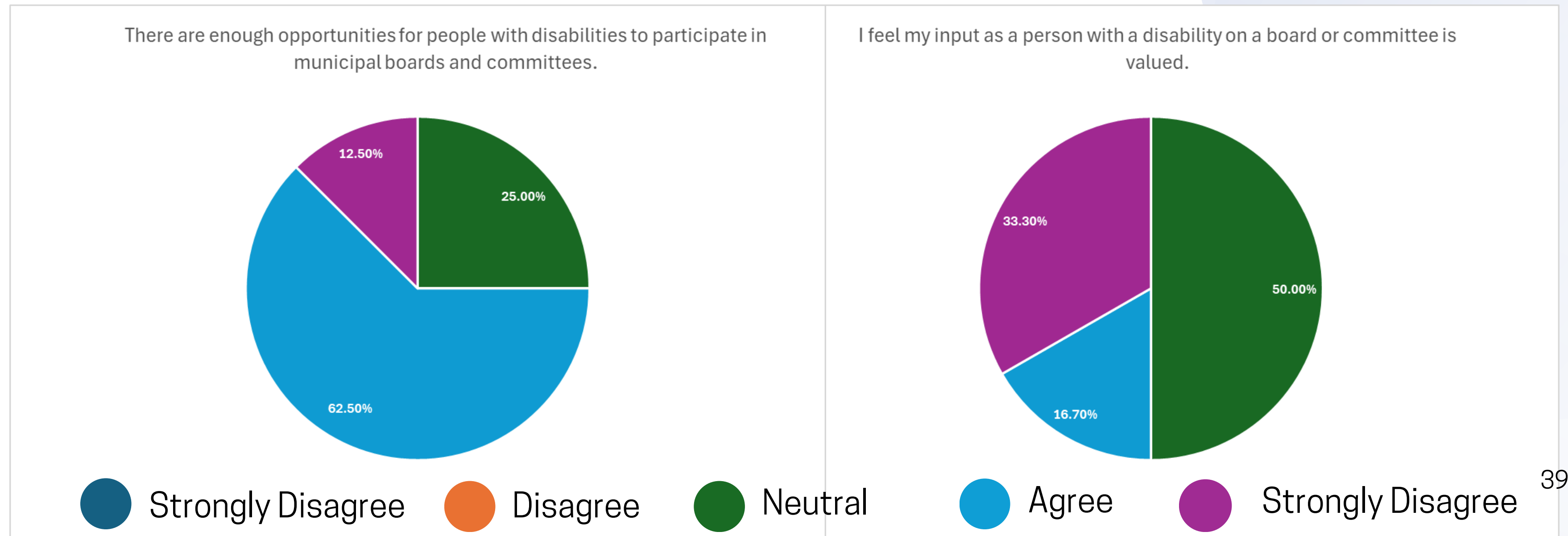


Our municipality makes efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities.



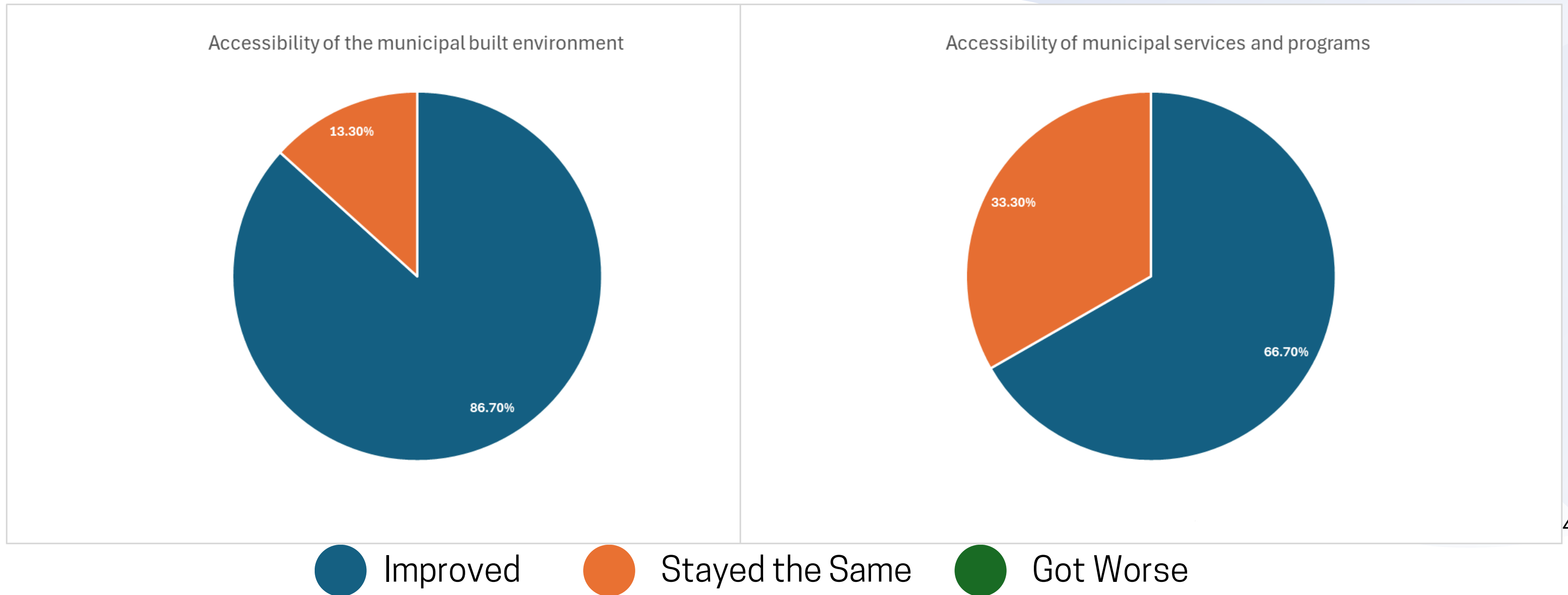
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If you have answered yes to Q2 and yes to Q3 Please rate your level of agreement for each statement about the municipal boards/committees on which you serve:



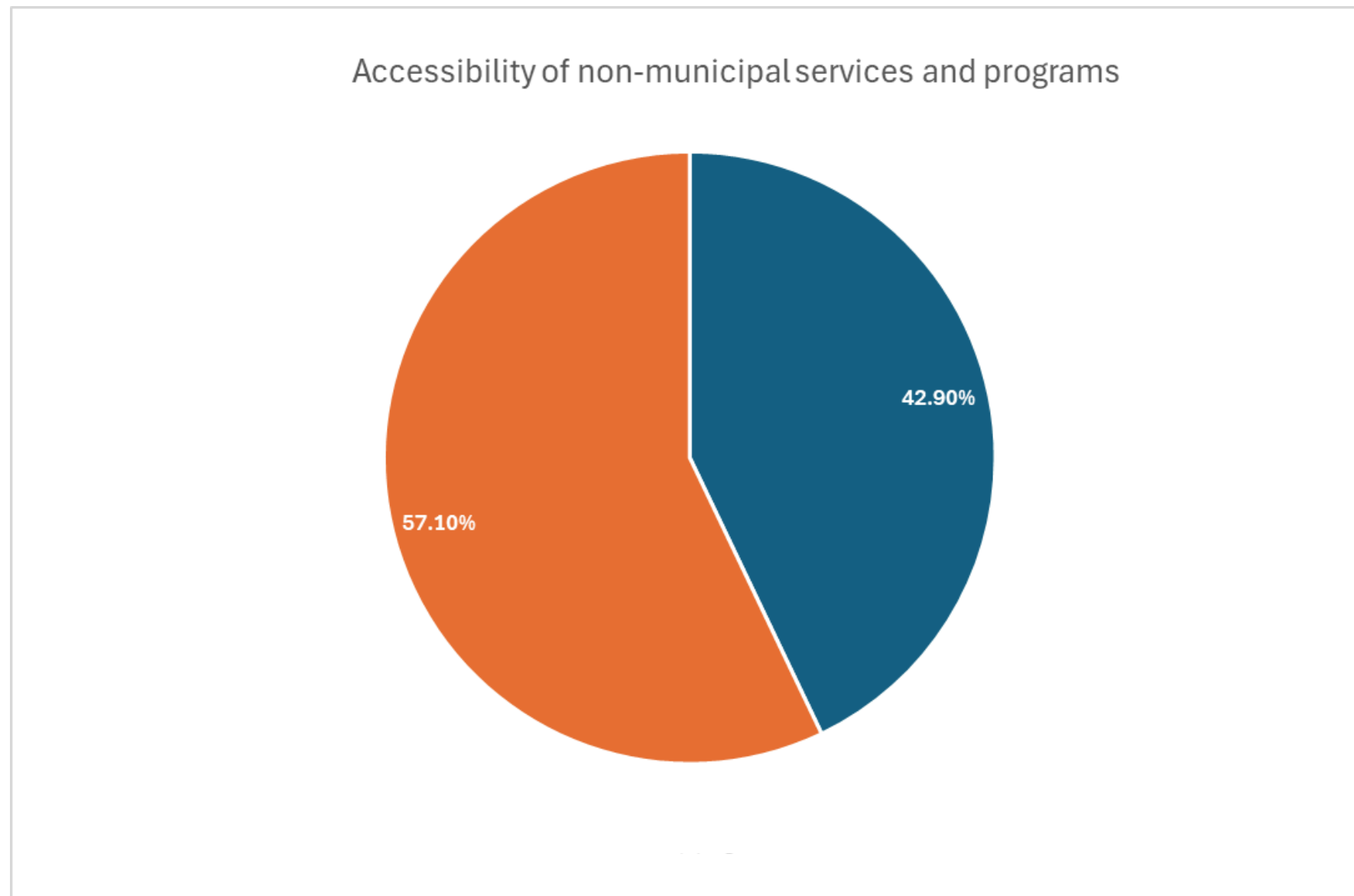
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Please indicate whether each of the following has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the last year:



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Please indicate whether each of the following has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the last year:



● Improved

● Stayed the Same

● Got Worse

How could accessibility in our Municipality be improved?

“At this point, we can improve the type of communication methods to residents, as well we require capital improvements to improve accessibility, and this will take time and money.”

“Acceptance by some will inspire others to follow”

“Need more expertise on staff or from the community to help us identify barriers”

“I would have to say, we should perhaps put out a questionnaire to people that live in our municipality to see if anyone has had an issue with accessibility in our community. Which may have already been done.”

“Have meetings twice per year to evaluate successes”

“We have accessibility concerns at the Court house which is municipal property. We would like guidance as we implement strategies to improve accessibility.”

“By prioritizing audited improvements and allocating funds immediately for taking action on suggested improvements”

“keep working on it”

“Ensure input by people with accessibility challenges. Reach out to other agencies who can offer info. If accessibility is an issue for change makers, it's very difficult to know how to improve.”

Do you have any other feedback or suggestions about our municipality's accessibility work?

“I just wanted to say that our Rec dept. has been doing a great job trying to come up with ways to improve accessibility for our residents”

“With my condition the door openers are a huge help. I'm hearing that other changes for staff with disabilities have been implemented, kudos to that. One item that that could be helpful for myself and others with same condition: As a councillor we have been asked to park in rear parking lot when we come for a meeting in the day, this leaves more room in front parking lot for customers, etc. Summer works a-1 for me, but winter poses quite a challenge due to my balance if there is snow or ice, it is actually not the best, falling is something I am very concerned with. Otherwise, great job by staff towards making our staff and residents barrier free at Municipal sights”

“Excellent work on the many areas. I noticed that MODA is ding to improve accessibility for residents. ATCHA (Courthouse and archives has accessibility committee for both buildings and will need help from MODA”

The Accessibility Coordinator conducted a few first voice one-on-one interviews.

- First voice with hearing loss
- First voice visual impairment
- First voice with a physical disability, using a wheelchair.

The interviews were conducted in the municipal office and one in the homestead.

Questions:

- a) What are some of your biggest challenges?
- b) What can the municipality do to help remove these challenges/barriers?
- c) Are there any other suggestions/ comments/ concerns that you would like the Municipality to know about?

First Voice Interview Common Themes

Education and awareness:

The first voice participants expressed that education, and awareness is greatly needed for all to understand the accessibility needs of people with disabilities of all nature. They expressed that many people just don't know how to remove barriers or even what they barriers are. There is a lack of understanding of accessibility needs.

- Concerns that some ramps may not be to code, especially in residents' home.
- Universal washrooms – Adult change tables
- Unable to commit to serve on a committee due to lack of high-speed internet
- More braille needed to be able to be more independent
- Providing quiet spaces with speakers to be able to listen to a meeting or a group gathering

First Voice Interview Common Themes

Transportation:

Access to public transportation is a significant challenge, especially for individuals with disabilities in rural settings. The lack of accessible or consistent transportation options forces many residents to depend heavily on family and friends for mobility. This reliance highlights the need for enhanced transportation infrastructure and services that prioritize inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring equal opportunities for all to participate in community life and access essential resources.

Automatic doors:

The first voice all expressed the frustration with having automatic doors that are not working. (Seniors also mentioned having no automatic doors in some of the public spaces such as their gathering place at the local firehall). Having automatic doors in working conditions is essential for ensuring accessibility, convenience, and safety in the workplace. Automatic doors allow for seamless entry and exit, benefiting individuals with mobility challenges, such as those using wheelchairs or walkers, by eliminating the need for manual effort. By maintaining automatic doors in good working condition, organizations demonstrate their commitment to creating an inclusive environment for employees, clients, and visitors alike, ensuring that all individuals can navigate the space with ease and independence.

Action Plan

1. Deliver/ Participate in accessibility training, education and awareness

Everyone has different levels of experiences, knowledge and understanding of disability and accessibility. It is important all municipal staff and council have a common baseline of knowledge about the human rights of persons with disabilities, different accessibility barriers, and how barriers can be identified, removed and prevented. This was evident when interviewing first voice people. “People just don’t know. We need more education and awareness”.

Outcome: Increased capacity to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers. People with disability have meaningful, access to municipal built environment, services and employment processes.

ACTIONS:

Public

- a) Promote International Day of Persons with Disabilities. - Social Media
- b) Offer public sessions- Alzheimer’s and related dementia sessions

ACTIONS:

Internal

- a) Adaptive Equipment Loan Program promotion, try it sessions, bring the equipment out to events
- b) Lunch and learn on accessibility & disabilities for staff:
 - a. Digital accessibility
 - b. Plain language session
 - c. Session on human rights
- c) Develop a staff and Council basic orientation to accessibility program with the help of first voice and a small working group, create an accessibility orientation program which includes.
 - i. Review of NS Human Rights Act
 - ii. A review of the Accessibility Act
 - iii. How to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities
 - iv. How to use any assistive devices on premises.
 - v. What to do if a person with a disability finds barriers when accessing our service delivery

Monitoring and Evaluating

INDICATORS

Number of education and training opportunities

Number of staff and Council taking the training

Developed a basic accessibility training program for all staff and council.

Action Plan

2. Engage people with disabilities

Our Accessibility Advisory Committee includes 50% of members who have disabilities. Their input helps guide our work, ensuring we listen to people with first-hand experience. We follow the principle of “Nothing About Us Without Us,” which means people with disabilities should be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

To do this, the Municipality must provide different ways for people to share their feedback that meet their needs. However, in a small rural area like Argyle, it can be hard to find new voices and avoid asking the same people for input too often. There are also only a few local groups or organizations that focus on supporting people with disabilities. To address this, the Accessibility Advisory Committee decided to focus on gathering feedback from seniors by going directly to them.

Outcome: Increased and meaningful participation of people with disabilities at different levels of municipal decision making.

ACTIONS:

1. Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings, ensuring that 50% of the membership are persons with a disability.
2. Actively seek a person with a disability or a person representing a group that represents people with disabilities to sit on different municipal committees as much as possible.
3. When seeking engagement, as much as possible go to them rather than them to you.
4. Provide different options as to how people with a disability can participate in municipal committee work. i.e. zoom, input on the agenda, comments on the minutes.

Monitoring and Evaluating

INDICATORS

- Number of Accessibility Committee meetings
- Number of different accessible formats for engagements
- Number of persons with a disability on municipal committees

Action Plan

3. Implementation of Accessibility Plan

Take action to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in the five focus areas (built environment, information & communication, goods and services, transportation and employment).

Priority Areas:

- **Transportation:** Results of the surveys and interviews show the need for accessible transportation. This was identified in our first plan but will take more work to partner with Hope dial-a ride service.
- **Audits:** Audits were performed on the existing sidewalks and 3 municipally owned multi-purpose courts. Prioritize the projects that need to be completed. Assign projects in a fiscally responsible manner.
- **Recreation Accessibility Policy:** This is in draft form. Has been reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee as well as the Recreation Commission. The final step is the approval from council and the implementation from the Recreation department

ACTIONS:

1. Determine the need in the Municipality for accessible transportation
2. In partnership with HOPE, create a plan to provide accessible transportation to the residents of the municipality of Argyle for a minimal fee.
3. Review audits. Create a priority list. Add cost to the budget.
4. Finalize the Recreation Accessibility policy draft. Present to new council for approval.
5. Recreation staff to implement the policy upon approval from council.

Monitoring and Evaluating

INDICATORS

- Data collected for transportation needs in MODA
- Plan in place to provide accessible transportation by HOPE Dial-a-Ride.
- Priority list from Audits created with cost
- Recreation Accessibility Policy implemented

Responding to questions and Complaints

The Municipality of Argyle has a feedback system in place on their website. This feedback system allows for residents to provide the municipality with both positive and negative feedback. Internally, the staff responsible to respond to the feedback will be assigned by the Director of Operations. This provides the municipality with a trail of how and when the feedback was dealt with.

References and Resources

Sidewalk audits report

Recreation Accessibility Draft Policy

MODA Accessibility Plan 2019 -2022

Municipality of Argyle Accessibility Advisory Committee Members

Ted Saulnier – Councillor

Mona Doucette – Community Member

Yvette LeBlanc – Community member

Francois LaGrandeur – Building Official

Julie Manns- Community Member

Natalie d'Entremont – Director of Recreation Services / Accessibility Coordinator