What We Heard

City of St. John’s 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan
November 2026

Alternate formats are available

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Disclaimer

- This document provides a summary of what was heard from participants during this engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word.
- What We Heard documents are not intended to include recommendations. Staff will use the information gathered through public engagement, and other sources as required, to prepare recommendations for senior staff and/or Council to consider.
- The City produces a What We Heard document for every City-led public engagement project. This collected commentary is shared with the community to ensure we heard you correctly.
- The City protects the privacy of those who provide feedback as per Access to Information and Privacy legislation.
- All feedback is shared with City staff to help guide recommendations and decisions.
- If individuals provided specific examples or information that could potentially be identifiable, it is not included in this document but is shared with project staff.

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Additional Information

- A brief summary of What We Heard is available on the project page.
- Additional documents on the project page also include the Charts and Graphs Overview of Survey Results and a summary of feedback received during engagement that is outside the scope of the Accessibility Plan.
- To request an alternate accessible format, please contact engage@stjohns.ca

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Context

- The City of St. John’s is developing its 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility and reduce barriers in programs, services and spaces operated by the City and Metrobus.
- Provincial legislation requires public bodies to review and update an Accessibility Plan every three years which guides priority areas.
- 1 in 3 people in St. John’s, over the age of 15, live with one or more disabilities.
- 1 in 5 people in St. John’s are aged 65 and older.
- The What We Heard presents a wide variety of feedback, as every person's experience is different.
- How people interact with the City, the barriers they face, and what is important to them is unique.

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Background

- Consultations with City staff, previous feedback from engagement about the City's first Accessibility Plan, and meetings with the City's Inclusion Advisory Committee and Metrobus Accessibility Committee were used to develop the draft plan.
- The 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan will support the City in working towards being an accessible, inclusive, healthy and safe community for everyone.

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Engagement Goals

- Create opportunities for persons with disabilities, family, friends, caregivers, and organizations to provide feedback in ways that meet their needs.
- Determine if the identified priorities in proposed draft plan align with community needs.
- Gather feedback on any goals or actions that the community feels may be missing from the draft plan.

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Engagement and Communications

- Public Service Announcement issued on September 29, 2026
- Project page on EngageStJohns.ca published on September 29, 2026
- 3 newsletters to 4,869 registered users of EngageStJohns.ca
- Posts to City social media channels, including a Meta campaign. Posts, which included 4 unique ads, had a reach of 211,272 unique accounts
- Posters advertising on GoBus and City Community Centres.
- Digital sign advertising in City facilities.
- Emails to disability, community organizations and community inclusion email list.
- Engagement information sent to City advisory committees.

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Who Engaged

- 2,377 visits to Engage project page
- 592 downloads of documents on Engage project page, including 303 downloads of draft plan and 48 downloads of plain language version. 27 views of the ASL version of the plan.
- Virtual and In-Person Open house – 11 public participants
- 103 people completed the survey
- 5 submissions through map tool on Engage page and 1 question through Q&A tool
- 8 submissions via email or one-on-one discussions
- 4 City Committee meetings – Inclusion Advisory Committee/Metrobus Accessibility Committee, Youth Engagement Working Group, Seniors Advisory Committee, Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee.

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What We Heard Highlights

- Majority of engagement participants agreed the planned goals will improve accessibility; no engagement event attendees indicated the goals will not improve accessibility however, 9% of people who completed the survey felt the planned goals will not make an improvement.
- Improvements since the start of the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan were noted, with areas identified for continued improvement.
- Priority areas within the Plan most frequently identified for improvement were: Programs and Services, Built Environment, and Public Transportation.
- The importance of improving accessibility for all types of disabilities was noted, particularly for persons with autism, hearing loss, low vision, neurodiversity, and scent sensitivity.

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What We Heard Highlights

- Many commented that improving sidewalk snow clearing was not a goal in the plan.
- Challenges related to lack of sidewalk snow clearing were identified, including inability to access bus stops and shelters, having to walk or wheel in the road, safety concerns, inability to access programs and services in the winter months, and isolation for persons with disabilities.
- The need for keeping curb cuts clear of snow was also mentioned.
- The need for improvements to crosswalks were noted, including the addition of new crosswalks, light beacons, and audible signals.
- Improvements to City buildings and spaces were suggested, including accessible washrooms, automated doors, and painting the edge of steps for persons with low vision.

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What We Heard Highlights

- The need for expanding Metrobus and GoBus fleet was noted, as well as expanding Metrobus routes and frequency.
- For people to feel more comfortable, or be able to use Metrobus instead of GoBus, access to bus stops in all seasons is needed, as well as onboard stop announcements, and expanded bus coverage and frequency.
- Having various seating options, such as high benches and seats through the City and on Metrobus, was noted as important for some with certain mobility challenges.
- The need for ASL and closed captioning at City events and programs was mentioned.
- Clear signage is important for people to navigate City facilities and spaces.

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Public Feedback

The public provided the following feedback through the survey, online engagement tool, email/phone calls, and engagement events.

What We Heard – Programs & Services

General feedback

- Therapeutic pool time at the Paul Reynolds Community Centre has been a great addition to the City's services.
- Locate programs and services close to seniors' homes and seniors' apartments.
- Implement and enforce fragrance-free zones in public spaces.
- The plan should reference that City programs are reflective of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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What We Heard – Programs & Services

Recreation

- Offer evening swims a few times a week at outdoor pools in the summer.
- Agreement on offering more accessible programs for children but would also like the City to offer more daytime programs for seniors and adjust current programs to be more accessible (e.g., gentle exercises).
- Offer more non-physical programs that are more sedentary (e.g., arts, crafts, games).
- Consider integration of various disabilities into City programs.
- Have a clear process for people to request accessibility accommodations for programs (e.g., swimming lessons).
- Recreation is fabulous with inclusion. Staff are knowledgeable and equipment is available for participants.
- The TIME™ Together in Movement and Exercise program is great for adults with balance and mobility issues.

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What We Heard – Programs & Services

Access Centre/311

- To improve immediate information sharing, would like an option to communicate with 311 by text or live digital chat since calling is not accessible to all individuals. Email or submitting online means you don't get available information that you need right away.
- Would like to be able to directly contact the staff organizing an event to request accommodations rather than going through 311.
- When visiting Access Centre, there is no ASL on demand to communicate and everything is communicated through paper and note pads.

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What We Heard – Programs & Services

Garbage Collection

- Should include taking the garbage from your property if you cannot physically bring the bin or garbage bags to the end of the driveway. This is in addition to the current bin exemption offered.

City Events & Elections

- Improve accessibility in the Downtown Pedestrian Mall.
- Improve systems and processes to enable people with disabilities to get elected.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Snow clearing

- Review snow clearing policies and procedures to ensure resident safety and work to improve processes.
- Avoid plowing in driveways - this makes it difficult for the elderly and persons with disabilities to get out in the winter.
- Use surplus revenue to invest in plows with snow gates [attachments that prevent pushing snow in driveways] for residential streets on a bus route.
- Offer programs that help persons with disabilities clear snow from their properties.
- Residents who call Access Centre for snow clearing who have an accessible parking pass must be prioritized.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Sidewalk snow clearing

- Provide more sidewalk snow clearing to improve safety, make it a priority. Lack of sidewalk snow clearing can isolate persons with disabilities during the winter.
- Sidewalks are cleared but snow is pushed back to the curb cut, creating a barrier for getting on and off the sidewalk. This barrier exists for all, particularly those using a mobility aid.
- With lack of sidewalk snow clearing, people have to walk out in the streets. There is no safe place to wait for a bus.
- Difficult to access programs and services because sidewalks are not clear and have to walk in traffic.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- Perform maintenance on trees and shrubs next to sidewalks and those obstructing streetlights.
- Light beacons and audible signals need to be a part of every crosswalk.
- Improve reliability of light signals for pedestrians, ensure they are in working order and cleared of snow.
- Solar lights at crosswalks don't work at night half of the year.
- Improve sidewalks for those using mobility aids and monitoring of sidewalk conditions year-round. Add more crosswalks throughout the City if only plowing sidewalks on one side.
- Add more curb cuts. Maybe paint curb cuts so they stand out.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- Improve sidewalk accessibility near Bowring Park Duck Pond.
- Suggested areas to add or improve crosswalks:
    - Areas where trails cross major roads.
    - East end of Water Street and Rawlins Cross.
    - Cambridge Street area across Logy Bay Rd so people can access the bus stop.
    - Near Topsail Road at Holbrook Avenue
    - Near Topsail Road & Currie Place

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Roads

- Implement measures to slow down traffic in residential areas.
- Improve street lighting to help spend more time outdoors in the winter months.
- Increase safety for bikes without impacting pedestrians.

Seating/Rest Areas

- Have high seats and benches available, not everyone with a mobility issue is in a wheelchair.
- More benches for pedestrians as they move throughout the city.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Accessible Parking

- Not enough accessible parking at Paul Reynolds Community Centre
- Outside Paul Reynolds Community Centre there is an accessible parking sign where the symbol is green and not blue. This is confusing.
- Improve availability of parking at the Downtown Pedestrian Mall.
- Improve accessible parking enforcement.
- Remove parking fees for accessible parking spaces.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Trails and Shared Use Paths

- Appreciate that the trails are lit and open. The City is doing trails better. It was also noted that frequently used trails could use more lighting, such as solar panel lights, to increase safety and walkability.
- Bowring Park Trail has stairs, which is a barrier. Need terrain signage on the trail so people know what is ahead.
- We need bike trails in Bowring Park for the electric bikes.
- There is no vehicle access to Kenmount Terrace Community Centre from the neighbourhood.
- There should never be signs at public walking trails “advising people to enter at their own risk”. Instead, there should be security on the walking trails to enhance the feeling of safety.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

City-Operated Buildings

- Need more accessible buildings with fewer stairs.
- Improve City Hall accessibility (elevators, bathrooms, door buttons, etc.).
- Add high contrast lines on edges of steps to help those with vision loss (e.g. front and side steps at City Hall and Mary Brown's Centre).
- Factor acoustics into the design of buildings; more consideration of those with hearing loss in City buildings.
- Need to improve acoustics in the Paul Reynolds Community Center gymnasium. The sound is very muffled but also very loud and no sound absorbing materials.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

City-Operated Buildings

- Ensure accessible washrooms consider more than just room for a wheelchair (e.g. installing a high toilet of at least 19").
- Upgrade accessible washroom at Bowring Park (e.g. install automated doors); have accessible washrooms at all public venues.
- Update air quality controls, including installing air purification systems and monitor indoor air quality for volatile organic compounds.
- The flashing lights for pedestrians and drivers outside of fire stations when fire trucks are leaving is very helpful for people who have hearing loss.
- The new H.G.R. Mews Centre is great. It makes me feel like we're headed in the right direction.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

City-Owned Housing

- Add more accessible, City-owned housing. The private market isn't doing this.
- Affordable housing rental units need walk-in showers for seniors and persons with disabilities. Those with and without a wheelchair need these accessible features. This was also noted in relation to non-City owned housing.
- Accessibility accommodation requests in City-owned housing should be actioned.
- In some apartment buildings, Accessible doors are locked and tenants cannot re-access the buildings, cannot get in the first door, and cannot let home support in.
- Requiring Option C [proof of income statement] for housing eligibility is a barrier, as many don't understand this or have a CRA account to access the document.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Land Planning

- Review zoning by-laws to ensure new construction in rezoned areas are accessible (e.g., every eighth house or apartment constructed must be fully accessible).
- Improve downtown accessibility. It was noted other cities have older infrastructure and can still provide accessibility in most historic buildings. Heritage status should not be an excuse to allow inaccessibility to be maintained.

Other Feedback

- Offer program to businesses to supply temporary ramps for when needed. It was noted that a motorized wheelchair won't go into many shops and the only accessible way to patios and bars is often blocked.
- Create stricter regulations related to elevator access and repairs.

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What We Heard – Built Environment

Other Feedback

- The City has many buildings and projects related to the built environment. May be opportunity to have an architect with universal design experience on staff, which may also provide cost savings.
- Need more housing for people with disabilities who are outside the income support financial bracket – the working who make a little more than $32,000. This includes housing with accessible washrooms for those who are not wheelchair users.
- The City could develop regulations to ensure all buildings are accessible. Having a ramp with a sign to say use at your own risk should be illegal.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

General Feedback

- Some people noted overall satisfaction with Metrobus and GoBus, including improvements in recent years. For example:
  - “Now more than ever, the GoBus is awesome and the staff are wonderful.”
  - “The people [sic] who drive for GoBus are wonderful people and they do amazing work.”
  - “My experience on both bus systems has been positive and has improved over the last two years.”
  - “I'm very grateful for the bus drivers. Thank you all so much for being patient with me. I'm autistic.”
  - A disability organization representative noted “Metrobus & GoBus improvements are great, not getting as much feedback.”

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

GoBus

- Keep GoBus and improve the overall experience.
- Improve the GoBus no-show policy during the winter.
- Monitor requests and send one bus if multiple requests at a location to better use resources.
- Improve booking flexibility and trip changes, enabling users to react to specific situations such as family emergencies or plan an outing on a nice day.
- After using accessible transportation in another Canadian city one participant noted, “I would choose here. [There] you have to make a request 9 days in advance. At least in St. John’s you can do whatever you want within 24 hours. "

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

GoBus

- Expand GoBus fleet to improve customer service, avoid clients feeling rushed, and increase trip availability. Regular GoBus' still needed for some people but addition of minivans is great.
- Provide more reliable pickup time window thereby reducing wait times. Example given of being without a ride because the service was unexpectedly cancelled or arrived too late or too early. If GoBus arrives early, they should wait until the scheduled pick-up time before leaving.
    - Often have to schedule pickup almost an hour in advance to get to an appointment on time.
- Replace the GoBus vans that have unsafe ramps with ramps used on newer fleet.
- Improve evaluation of who can access GoBus; seniors need a GoBus for their activities.
- Be mindful of the needs of those using GoBus when developing and delivering system changes and improvements, include users.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

GoBus

- Ensure door-to-door service meets accessibility needs. Example was provided of taxi drivers not providing good customer service and not assisting with mobility aid.
- Provide accessible taxis during the same times these services are available to those without accessibility needs. [GoBus vehicles are only available during GoBus hours of operation, which are similar to Metrobus]
- Improve integration with taxis; they don't get all the notes for locations.
- Taxis often come at the beginning of a pickup window and you arrive too early.
- Have repercussions for when customer service expectations are not met by GoBus provider.
- If Metrobus was fully accessible, the demand on GoBus would be reduced, therefore making GoBus better overall.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

GoBus – Digital Communication

- Create a website for GoBus separate from Metrobus.
- Send a reminder text message one hour before pickup time to help avoid no-shows.
- Allow GoBus alerts to be sent to more than one number, so individuals and their support workers can receive notifications.
- Focus on text-based communication.
- Live online chat would also be helpful for GoBus to help with phone wait times.
- If a taxi is dispatched, you can't see them on the app. Would be good to see them.
- To sign-up for GoBus Accessible Transit in the My GoBus App, need to have a non-phone signup option. For those hearing impaired, making a phone call to GoBus team may not be an accessible option.
- Provide alerts through the GoBus app about service disruptions (e.g., service stopping during snowstorm).

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Bus Stops and Bus Shelters – Snow Clearing

- Improve snow clearing of bus stops and bus shelters, including GoBus pickup and dropoff areas. Bus stops are difficult to access in winter due to lack of snow clearing, often no safe place to wait for a bus (e.g., Kelsey Drive stop near Walmart – no easy way to access the store and bus stop if sidewalk is not clear).
- Early snow clearing of bus stops is important.
- Snow left at curb cuts by street plows prevents accessing the sidewalk and bus stops.
- Improve safety of connections between bus stops and destinations. People can't go to the bus stop if the sidewalk is not clear.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Bus Stops and Bus Shelters

- Add more bus shelters and more seating at bus stops, especially near seniors' homes and apartments; many stops have no benches or shelter from the wind.
- Add more seating and shelter at the bus hubs at the malls.
- Add more timetable locations at bus hubs to help persons with disabilities avoid having to walk further than necessary. Small change can be important to persons with disabilities.
- Improve visibility of bus stop locations.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Bus Stops and Bus Shelters

- Suggested locations for new bus shelters:
  - Kelsey Drive
  - Elizabeth Avenue
  - Thorburn Road
  - Kenmount Terrace (particularly need protection from the wind in this area)
  - L'Anse Aux Meadows apartments and nearby seniors home

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Bus Accessibility

- Increase the number of accessible buses.
- Provide drivers with devices to amplify their voices when communicating with riders.
- Provide digital signage and announcement of next stop and when stop is requested.
- Have ASL messaging provided on Metrobus screens.
- Add more seats to buses; add high seat options for people with mobility needs.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Bus Accessibility

- Create new bus hubs at the Village Mall, Avalon Mall, and Memorial University, as not all buses have access to the curb. This means it isn't always wheelchair accessible and being on an incline makes it harder for persons with disabilities to board.
- Buses stopping away from the curb create challenges getting on and off the bus.
- Reduce volume of music played on buses and add signage for riders to use headphones in shared spaces.
- Implement fragrance-free rules and add signage about these rules.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Routes and Bus Schedules

- Increase the frequency of buses.
    - Particularly during rush hour. Crowded buses can make it difficult for persons with disabilities to stand or move safely.
    - Increase the number of buses and bus drivers to increase frequency.
    - Decreasing routes makes it so much harder for people to get around the city.
- Improve bus route efficiency and the reliability of bus schedules.
- Increase bus routes to medical facilities; it is currently limited.
- Increase service in areas with hills.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Routes and Bus Schedules

- Expand Metrobus service to more areas of St. John's (e.g., needing a $10 taxi ride to get to the nearest bus stop).
    - Suggestion for service to Southside Road, including Canadian Coast Guard facility and HMCS Cabot.
- Weekend schedule limits ability of persons with disabilities to participate in some activities in the early mornings and later in the evenings. Extending weekend evening service would greatly improve accessibility.
- Offer public transportation on holidays.
- Increase frequency of buses going to Mount Pearl.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Safety

- Improve safety on buses for passengers and staff by addressing drug use and criminal activity.
- Add security to the buses.

Staff Training

- Provide driver training related to assisting passengers with disabilities respectfully and safely, including for taxi drivers contracted by GoBus.
- Improve driver communication and disability awareness.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Other Feedback

- Improve onboard Metrobus and GoBus payment system to allow debit and credit card payments and card reloads.
- Transit should be a right, and government should not be only focused on the profitability of the routes.
- Other levels of government should be helping to expand GoBus operations.
- Expand the bus service to areas outside of St. John's. This would provide independence to persons with disabilities in other communities and a park and ride for these areas was suggested.
- Some Metrobus drivers go too fast.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

Other Feedback

- Scheduling and riding the bus/GoBus can be difficult for persons with disabilities. For many, especially seniors with disabilities, digital tools do not always mean more accessible and can make things more confusing.
- Support improvement to Metrobus digital tools but should ensure those who do not have access to the internet/smartphones still have access to Metrobus information (e.g. routes).
- Work with large businesses to determine transportation needs of their employees.
- Make Metrobus free for all riders; consider Metrobus funding for low-income individuals.
- Offer similar pilot program as neighbouring community to make accessible transportation via taxi free within the community.

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

45 of 80 people with lived experienced who completed the survey said they don't currently use Metrobus. A variety of feedback was provided related to what would encourage current non-users to use Metrobus.

- More routes/increased bus frequency to help decrease travel time (7)
- More accessible stops, including sidewalk snow clearing to ensure access to stops (4)
- Would use if I couldn't drive (4)
- More routes/stops near my home (3)
- Door to door service like GoBus (2)
- More direct routes/express routes and improved route times (2)
- Digital signage and announcement of next stop (2)
- Safety issues would need to be addressed (2)
- Would use if I lived in St. John's (2)
- Buses with higher seats (1)
- Being able to secure myself without driver help (1)
- Flexible scheduling (1)

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What We Heard – Public Transportation

A variety of feedback was provided related to what would encourage current non-users to use Metrobus (continued from previous page).

- Better access to accessible low floor buses (1)
- Allow more time to transfer (1)
- Clearer system for planning and accessing routes (1)
- Drivers who are trained about positive attitudes towards people with disabilities (1)
- If it was free (1)
- Implementation of fragrance-free policy/use of safe cleaners (1)
- More airflow/air filters (1)
- Meet standards that other provinces have (1)
- Metrobus following through on its commitments (1)
- Unsure what would encourage me to use Metrobus (3)
- Nothing (7)

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What We Heard – Information & Communication

Accessibility Services

- Have ASL and closed captioning at all public City events, including recreational programming.
- Improve communication for people who use lip reading and devices to hear clearly.
- As a person hard of hearing, there can be feelings of exclusion at meetings, public announcements, presentations, etc. as there is little to no effort to ensure everyone can hear.
- Microphone use can be helpful but presenter needs to use it effectively. Walking away from the mic while speaking excludes those with hearing loss and can also be frustrating when presenters assume they speak loud enough and choose not to use the mic.

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What We Heard – Information & Communication

Signage

- Parking signage can be confusing – multiple signs in the same location (e.g., pay by phone, only park between certain times)
- Need better signage at EV parking spaces, create more awareness.
- Install clear signage, ensure public facilities are easy to navigate.
- Appreciation for improving accessibility of City forms but also remember that not everyone is able or has access to use digital forms. Would like to see paper copies of forms still available to those who need them.

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What We Heard – Information & Communication

Information Sharing & Website

- Provide information about what to expect when visiting City buildings, including building layouts and accessibility features.
- The City should be sharing information related to the following to support residents:
  - Education information for persons with disabilities
  - Information about the Registered Disability Savings Plan, Disability Tax Credit, Canada Disability Benefit and the NL Disability Benefit, as well as about Registered Retirement Savings Plan.
- Have a live chat option on City website.
- Use more icons and less text on the website.

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What We Heard – Employment

Recruitment & Conditions of Employment

- For the job profile in Njoyn [the City's recruitment software], have the option available for the user to disclose if accommodations are needed such as ASL.
- Have the option to disclose as a member of Employment Equity group on form.
- Have the option to receive interview questions in advance for those who may need it, to help them present the best version of themselves.
- Having a car and being able to drive seem to be a condition of employment everywhere. This does not support being an equal opportunity employer and should only used as a job requirement when absolutely necessary instead of being used on every job ad.
- Some people in the community still have negative perceptions of Metrobus and GoBus, assuming they're unreliable. When going for an interview, an employer may assume you have unreliable transportation if you use these services and it impacts receiving a job offer.

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What We Heard – Employment

Staff Training

- Provide regular accessibility training for staff. Staff should be trained to provide service to individuals with all impairments, disabilities, limitations, difficulties, and accessibility issues they may encounter. It is especially important to have training in interacting with persons with non-visible disabilities.
- Provide additional learning for staff on Provincial and Federal programs related to disability tax credits and savings plan so they can share information with residents.

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What We Heard – Procurement

- Consider ensuring suppliers have their own policies and practices that align with the City's accessibility goals.

What We Heard – Accommodations

Accommodation Requests

- Determine if the City can document when someone has consistent accommodations they need, so a request is not needed every time.
- Consider if there should be a division for accessibility services so the City would have one point of contact for overall accommodation services.
- Residents who are blind receive important information in a format they cannot read themselves (e.g. housing financial review information is sent by mail).This can create issues for individuals.
- Writing your feedback is not an option for people with learning disabilities. Having staff listen to feedback or take information needs to be applied to all processes and City forms, specifically housing forms.
- Accommodations should be made for instances where a parent has a disability.

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What We Heard – General Feedback

- “As seniors, we appreciate the services and the improvements the City provides. There is more access to make our life easier. As the service providers (the City and volunteers) also show their appreciation of our presence to all events.”
- Appreciation for the work the City is doing to help improve the lives of persons with disabilities and their caregivers. Some people felt accessibility at the city is great.
- The goals address important accessibility challenges. Improving accessibility will help ensure that all residents, including persons with disabilities, can participate fully and independently in city programs, services, and public spaces.
- Ensure the Inclusion Advisory Committee represents a variety of disabilities such as autism, seniors, sight and hearing, etc.
- Strengthen work that will lead to enhancing services for visually, cognitively, and endurance-impaired individuals.

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What We Heard – General Feedback

- Build accessibility into City programs, services, and spaces from the beginning rather than address barriers afterwards.
- Involve persons with disabilities directly in the design, testing, and evaluation of City and Metrobus programs, services, spaces, and transportation changes.
- Concerned about the use of terms such as ‘plan to develop’, ‘investigate ways’, ‘develop standard practices,’ etc.
- Tell residents about progress and what is being done. Set targets, timelines, and report publicly on progress.
- There is not enough access for those using mobility devices to do things.
- Plan doesn’t focus enough on extreme neurodivergence, autism, mental health issues, or developmental disabilities.
- Accessibility is very limited for individuals with severe or moderate autism.

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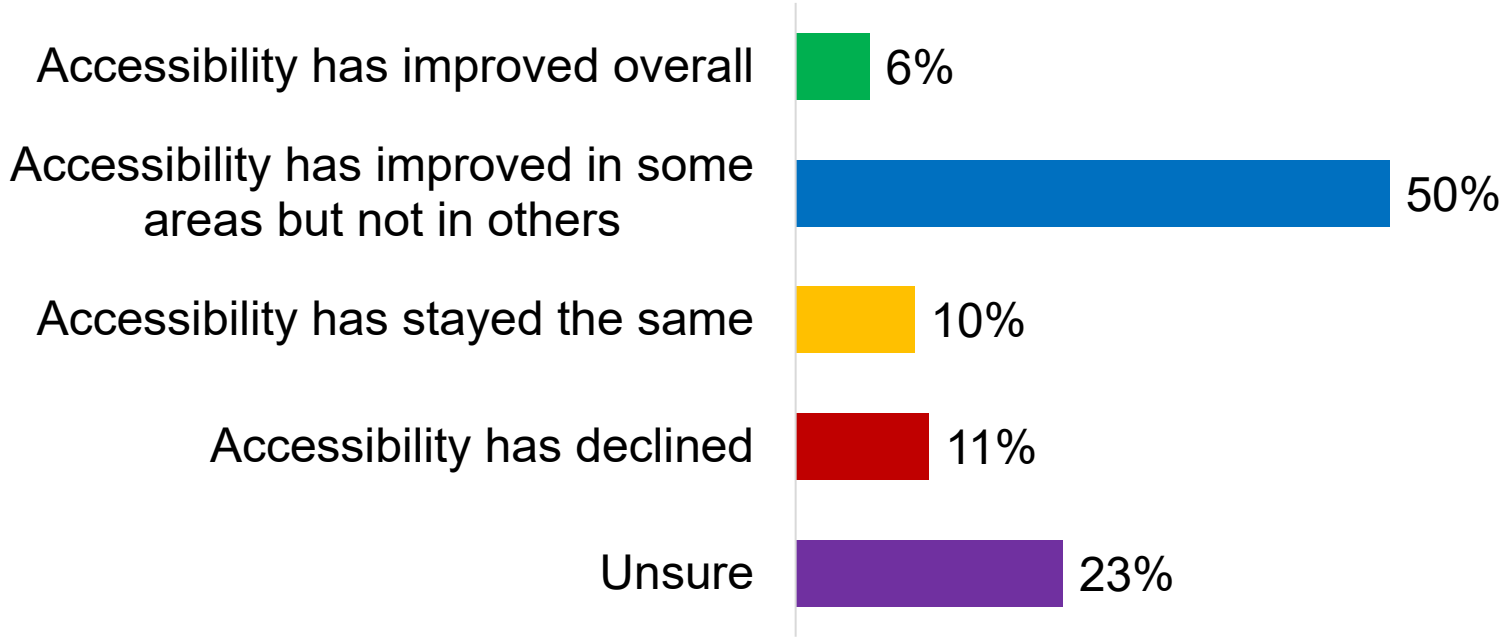
What We Heard – Survey Summary – Persons with lived experience

- 103 people completed the survey, 80 of whom identified as persons with a disability, caregiver or advocates, or workers or volunteers with a disability organization.
- These 80 individuals were asked how accessibility has changed since the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan was implemented.



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What We Heard – Survey Summary – Persons with lived experience

- At least 60% of the 80 people with lived experience think each of the goals will improve accessibility.
- The Procurement priority area generated the most uncertainty about whether its goals will improve accessibility (25% to 33%).

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What We Heard – Accessibility Improvements Since 2024

Those who feel accessibility has improved overall mentioned the following:

- Always notice slight improvements.
- Improvements to GoBus.
- Shared use paths are great.
- Improved access at intersection and street crossings.
- More accessible bus routes.
- Improved sidewalk snow clearing in center city.
- Still have to ask that loud music be addressed at venues.

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What We Heard – Accessibility Improvements Since 2024

Those who feel accessibility has improved in some areas noted the following:

- Improvements are being made but seems mostly focused on mobility barriers. Want to see more focus on other disabilities such as autism, fragrance sensitivities, hearing impaired, low vision, cognition, etc.
- There are resources for deaf people but very little accommodation for hearing impaired people.
- Accessible swimming is great but family and friends must be over 18.
- Signage has improved but still find it difficult to navigate the city because of its size.
- The City should amend by-laws to ensure new buildings in rezoned areas are fully accessible.
- Snow clearing and snow removal still a challenge, particularly in areas with on-street parking only.
- Some of the sidewalks still need improvements but what is being worked on is great.

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What We Heard – Accessibility Improvements Since 2024

Those who feel accessibility has improved in some areas noted the following:

- Buses now have more seating for those who need more space.
- No higher seat options on Metrobus, which is a barrier.
- Decreases in Metrobus service makes it harder to get around the city. Buses need to be on the road later so persons with disabilities can stay out later.
- GoBus stop at the food court would be helpful.
- Would like to see GoBus bring clients to areas outside of the city for appointments.
- Onboard stop announcement sign not working yet and no sign to show when a stop has been requested.
- Not all Metrobus routes are accessible, including routes servicing inner city and Goulds.
- My closest bus stops are not accessible stops, and they are far from my house.
- Drivers do not always notice people who may need help.

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What We Heard – Accessibility Improvements Since 2024

Those who feel accessibility has stayed the same noted the following:

- Need more buses.
- Most stops are not cleared of snow and people have to wait on the road.
- As a shorter person, have to ask for the bus to lower on entry and exit.
- Accessible buses added but the bus hubs are not updated, and not all accessible buses able to line up at the island/curb.
- While the plan is a positive step, I have not seen enough consistent change to say accessibility has improved overall. Barriers still exist in services, transportation, communication, and physical spaces.
- Progress is slow and not well enforced.

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What We Heard – Accessibility Improvements Since 2024

Those who feel accessibility has declined noted the following:

- Banked snow on sidewalks restricts pedestrian mobility and banked snow left by the plows limits seniors' ability to get out of their driveways.
- Lack of sidewalk snow clearing and icy sidewalks. This forces people to drive, which also negatively impacts sensory issues.
- Lack of accessible parking at the Downtown Pedestrian Mall.
- Crosswalk lights have been changed to manual.
- No improvement to Metrobus – difficult to get on and to access in the winter.
- Fewer Metrobus routes and less frequency, long wait times and reduced safety.
- Neighbourhood doesn't have access to accessible, affordable transportation.
- "I find new obstacles every day…much of my problem is that my wheelchair is 33" wide."

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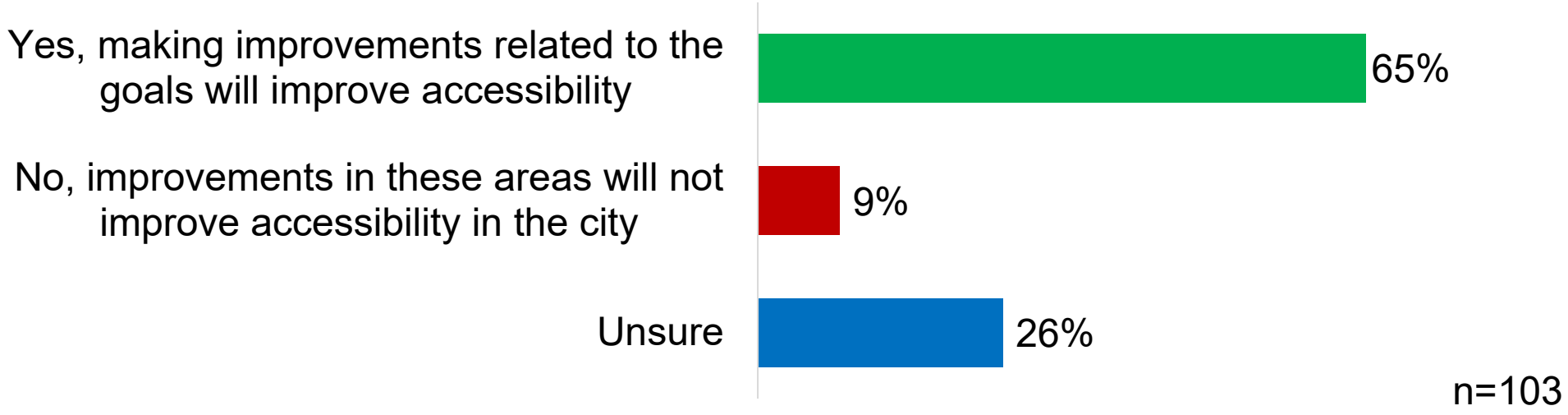
What We Heard – Survey Summary

- 65% of all people who completed the survey indicated that the goals in the draft plan will improve accessibility of City-operated programs, services, and spaces.



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What We Heard – City Committees

- City committee members supported the initiatives in the plan, particularly to public transportation and staff training related to disability awareness.
- Committees noted the importance of training for staff and raising awareness about providing services to persons with disabilities.
- Inclusion Advisory Committee and Metrobus Accessibility Committee would like to see an increase in Metrobus ridership of persons with disabilities, improving how GoBus resources are used. It was noted this will require promotion and user training.
- GoBus digital accessibility is improving but it can still be difficult to make a booking on behalf of someone else.
- Locations for additional bus shelters were suggested.
- Improvements to Metrobus, including the accessibility of route handouts were appreciated.

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What We Heard – City Committees

- Sidewalk snow clearing should continue to be a priority, improving and expanding what is done.
- Accessibility of City forms could be increased by offering them in more languages. This could be achieved through a partnership with organizations such as the Association for New Canadians.
- Inclusion and accessibility of recreation programs and knowledge of staff was mentioned.
- There was appreciation for the focus on the built environment in the plan.
- Include universal design principles when updating or building new facilities.
- Wayfinding for the built environment is needed to help people navigate City-operated buildings and spaces.
- It was noted the plan should reference the UN Convention of Rights for Persons with Disabilities. This was also noted in the general feedback.

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Next Steps

- The information in the What We Heard will be used to finalize the City of St. John's 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan.
- Staff are reviewing the feedback received, discussing opportunities with staff, and modifying the plan where possible based on feedback.
- The final City of St. John's 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan will be brought to Council for review and approval in December 2026.

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Stay Informed

- Register for EngageStJohns.ca to receive notifications.
- Updates will also be posted on the project page.
- What We Heard is available in an alternate format if requested.



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