

# What We Heard Report 2025-2029 Corporate Accessibility Plan

CREATE

[barrierfreeyeg@edmonton.ca](mailto:barrierfreeyeg@edmonton.ca)  
[edmonton.ca/accessibilitypolicy](https://edmonton.ca/accessibilitypolicy)

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE  
**SHAPE** OUR CITY

**Edmonton**

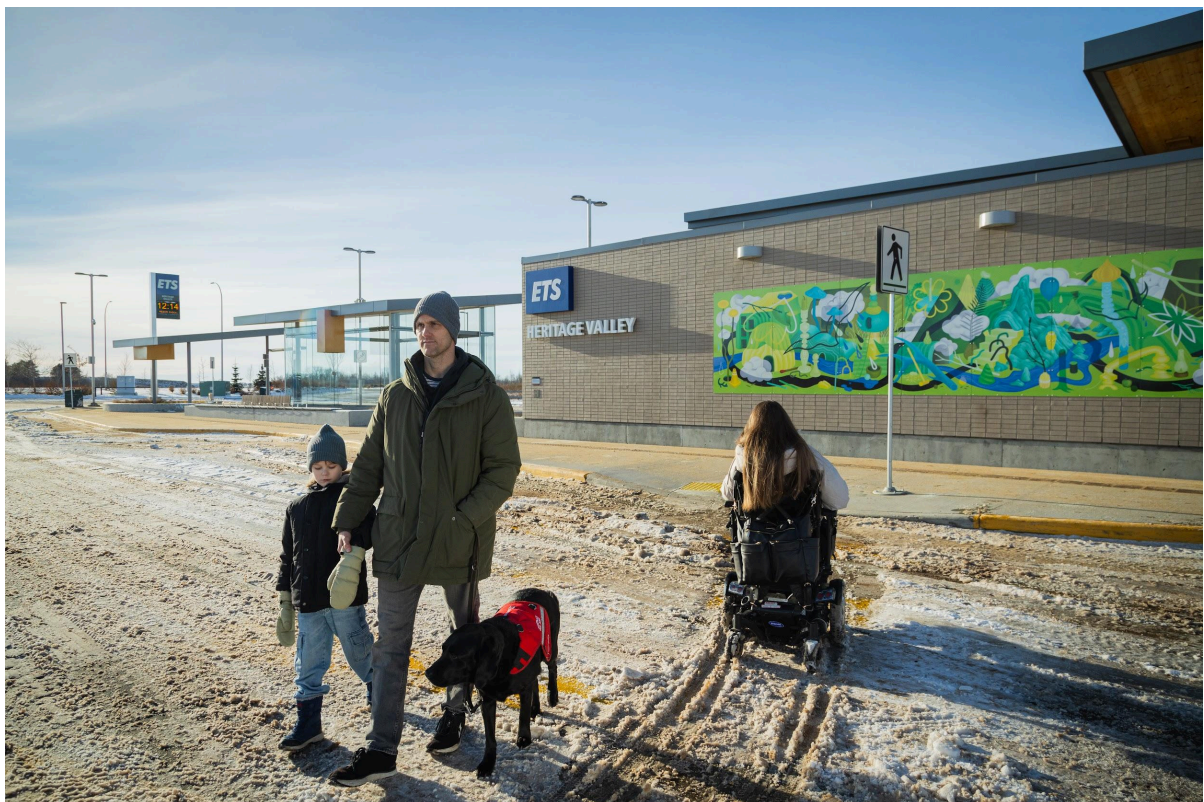
## Table of Contents

<b>Project Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Public Engagement.....</b>	<b>4</b>
How We Engaged (CREATE).....	4
Who Was Engaged.....	5
Engagement Participation.....	6
What we asked.....	6
What We Heard.....	8
City Programs.....	8
Infrastructure.....	10
Public Streets or Open Spaces.....	10
Public Transit.....	13
City Facilities.....	16
Communication.....	18
Employment Opportunities and City's Hiring Process.....	19
Elections.....	21
Other Barriers.....	22
<b>General Feedback.....</b>	<b>22</b>
What Happens Next.....	24

## Project Overview

The City of Edmonton is committed to ensuring people with disabilities have equitable opportunities by removing barriers that make it difficult to access City programs, services and public spaces. The [Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy](#) guides our work and enables us to take action to improve equality and inclusion for all. Through this policy, the City aims to be a role model in accessibility for businesses, organizations and the community.

The Corporate Accessibility Plan supports the Policy through actions. The 2021-2024 Corporate Accessibility Plan included 70 accessibility actions and ended in June, 2024. A new 2025-2029 Corporate Accessibility Plan will help us continue our efforts to make Edmonton more accessible.



## Public Engagement

Public engagement was conducted to understand the barriers people with disabilities experience when accessing City programs, services and public spaces. We also asked for suggestions on actions the City can take to improve accessibility.

This 'What We Heard Report' contains feedback received from the community, including people with disabilities and their caregivers, as well as Edmontonians as a whole. The feedback will help us create the next Corporate Accessibility Plan (2025-2029).

## How We Engaged (CREATE)



*CREATE - The public collaborates with the City to develop and build solutions regarding policies, programs, projects, or services.*

The City consulted with the public to gather feedback that will be used to **create** the next Corporate Accessibility Plan.

### Engagement opportunities:

- Online survey from July 23 to August 13, 2024
- Six facilitated workshops between April and July 2024

The survey opportunity was communicated through:

- Email invitation to stakeholders
- Email invitation to 18,000+ Edmonton Insight Community members
- Social media advertisements on Instagram and Facebook
- City of Edmonton website (edmonton.ca)
- Digital screens at City Hall and City recreation centres
- The City's weekly Public Service Announcement
- Stakeholder promotion (e.g., Accessibility Advisory Committee sharing among their networks)

## Who Was Engaged

- People with visible and invisible disabilities (including physical, sensory and developmental disabilities)
- Family members and caregivers of a person with a disability
- The general public
- Organizations that advocate for and/or provide services or programs to people with disabilities
  - Emails with survey invitations were sent to more than 100 organizations, including Voices of Albertans with Disabilities, Excel Society, Skills Society, Inclusion Alberta, CNIB, Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.
- Facilitated workshops included participants from:
  - Edmonton Association of the Deaf

- Canadian Council of the Blind GTT (Get together with technology) Edmonton Team
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Chrysalis
- Centre for Autism Services Alberta
  - Staff and members
  - Parents and caregivers

### Engagement Participation

- **1,746 respondents** to the online survey (including Edmonton Insight Community members & members of the general public)
  - 1,722 respondents completed the survey themselves or on behalf of someone they know with a disability
  - 24 respondents completed the survey as representatives of organizations for people with disabilities
- **Over 100 participants** attended the facilitated workshops

### What we asked

Questions addressed:

1. Awareness of the City of Edmonton's commitment to accessibility
2. Perspectives on barriers faced by people with disabilities when:
  - i. Accessing City programs
  - ii. Using public streets, open spaces or public transit
  - iii. Accessing city facilities

- iv. Accessing City information, interacting with the City, or participating in public engagement events
  - v. Applying for a job with the City
  - vi. Voting in the last municipal elections
3. Suggestions for improving the accessibility of:
- i. City programs
  - ii. Public streets, open spaces, public transit, and City facilities
  - iii. City communication and public engagement
  - iv. The City's hiring process
  - v. Municipal elections

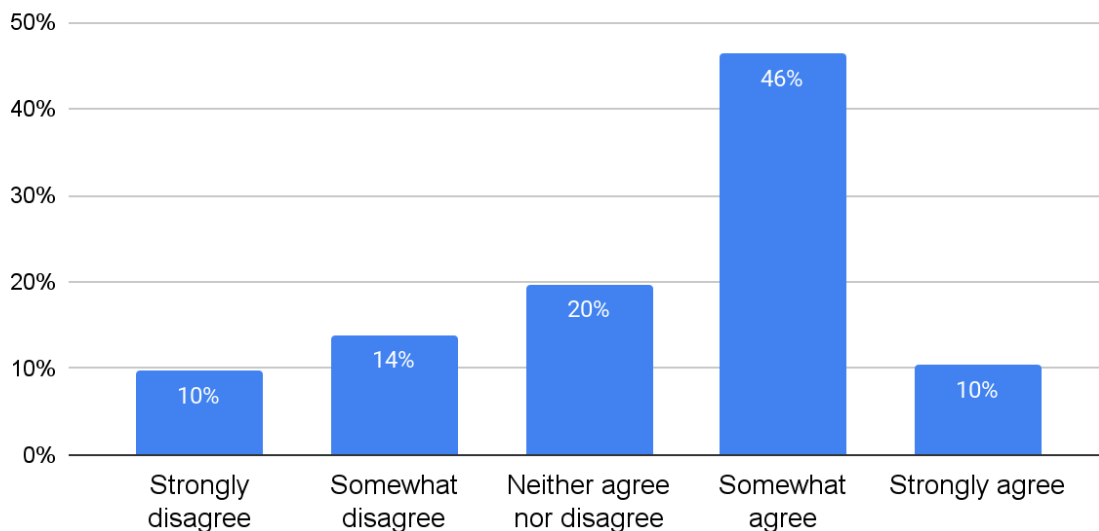
## What We Heard

Feedback on all barriers received during the engagement will be reviewed as part of the 2025-2029 Corporate Accessibility Plan development. This section highlights common barriers shared by survey and engagement participants.

Out of 1,746 survey respondents, 56% were aware of the City of Edmonton's commitment towards accessibility.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Before today, I was aware of the City of Edmonton's commitment towards accessibility.

Number of respondents = 1,746



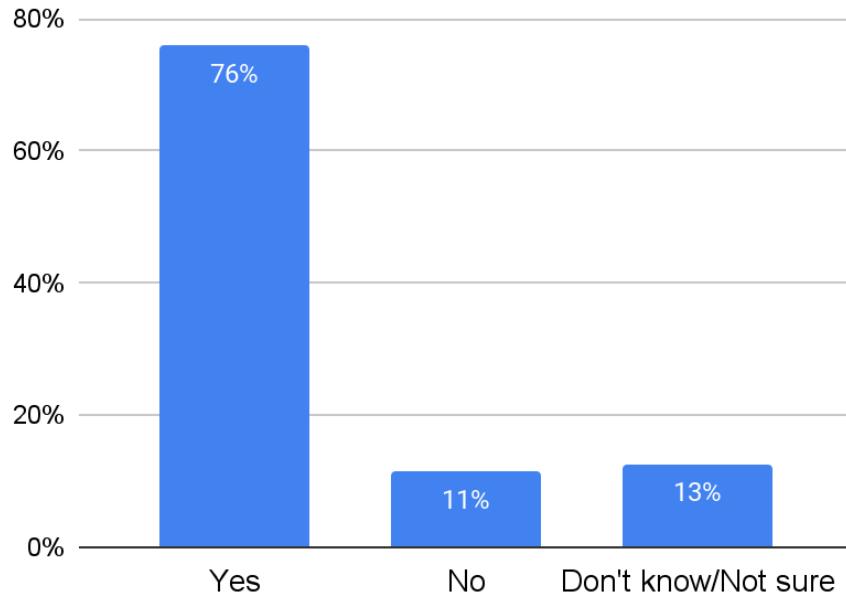
## City Programs

Some examples of City programs include recreation programs, Assisted Waste Collection, Leisure Access Program (LAP), Ride Transit Program, Mobility Choices Travel Training, Community Safety, etc. **76% of the 324 survey respondents who identify as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, and have used a City program, indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when accessing City programs.**



Have you, or someone you know with a disability, experienced barriers or challenges when accessing City programs?

Number of respondents = 324



What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experience when accessing City programs are listed below:

- **Lack of information**
  - Unable to find information about adapted/inclusive City programs or available support
  - Unsure which programs or activities are accessible (e.g. for neurodivergent/intellectual disabilities)
- **Limited adaptable/inclusive programs**
  - Not enough adapted programs or programming limiting choices (e.g. performing arts)
  - General programming or activity is not inclusive for people with disabilities
- **Negative experience**

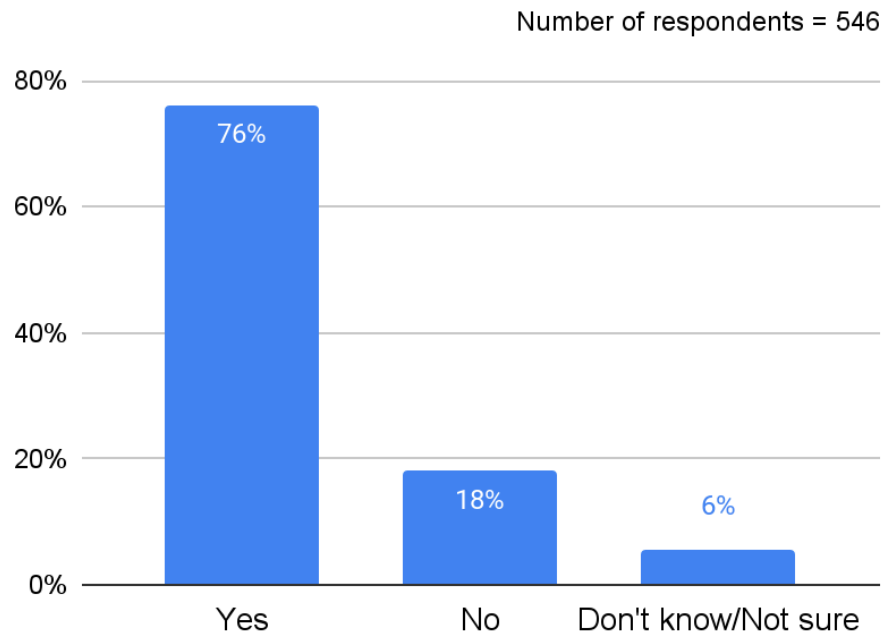
- Feeling unwelcome or excluded because of a disability
- Staff unsure about how to treat someone with a disability, assist, or answer questions related to accessibility
- **Affordability**
  - Cannot afford City programs
  - Did not qualify for Leisure Access Pass
- **Clarity on accommodations**
  - Worried about accommodations (i.e. how to ask for accommodations and who pays for accommodations)

## Infrastructure

### Public Streets or Open Spaces

Public streets include sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and bike lanes. Open spaces include parks, sportsfields and green spaces. **Among 546 survey respondents who identified as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, 76% indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when using public streets or open spaces.**

Have you, or someone you know with a disability, experienced barriers or challenges when using public streets or open spaces?



What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experience when accessing public streets and open spaces are listed below:

- **Lack of access to amenities**
  - No places to rest (i.e. benches)
  - Limited accessible public washrooms
- **Inaccessible sidewalks**
  - Missing (i.e. no sidewalk or only on one side of the street) or unsafe sidewalks (i.e. cracks, uneven)
  - Narrow or obstructed sidewalks (e.g. pole or signage)
  - Lack of accessible curb ramps

- **Snow and ice concerns**
  - Snowy or icy sidewalks, windrows and snow on curb ramps
  - Snow and ice in regular and accessible on-street parking
  - Neighbourhood sidewalks not cleared by residents in a timely manner
  
- **E-scooters and Bike lanes creating barriers**
  - E-scooters left laying around obstructing accessible paths of travel
  - Negative impact of bike lanes in pick-up and drop-off zones adjacent to buildings
  - Difficulty in crossing bike lanes (especially people with low vision vs. fast cyclists)
  
- **Insufficient parking**
  - Lack of parking enforcement for accessible stalls
  - Not enough on-street accessible parking stalls
  - Lack of available technology to use QR codes for payment
  - Lack of places to rest (i.e. benches) when accessible parking stalls are too far away
  
- **Street safety concerns**
  - Not enough time to cross the street
  - Not feeling safe at street crossings (e.g. careless drivers and speeding cyclists in bike lanes)
  - Poor lighting

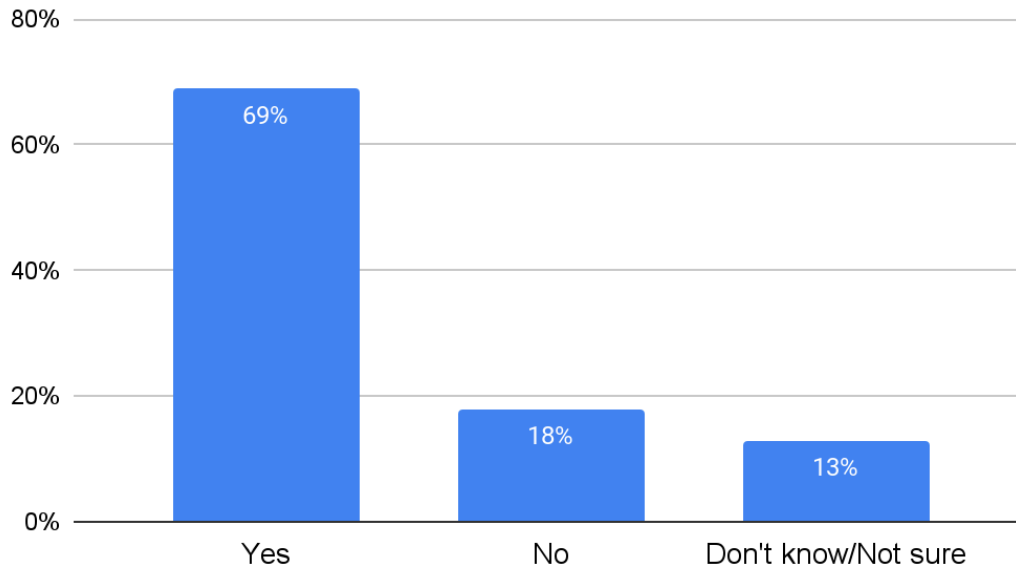
- Lack of audible pedestrian signals
- **Some inaccessible playgrounds**
  - Some playgrounds are not accessible (e.g. surface, play equipment)
  - Lack of washrooms that are close by
  - Insufficient wayfinding signage to accessible amenities
- **Construction barriers**
  - Poor accommodation during construction projects; detours not safe or accessible (e.g. temporary ramps)
  - Lack of notice of closed access (e.g. signage) requiring backtracking
  - Construction signs and barriers creating hazards

## **Public Transit**

Public transit includes transit service, bus stops, LRT stations, transit centres and transit vehicles. **69% of the 416 survey respondents who identify as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, and have used public transit, indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when using transit.**

Do you, or someone you know with a disability, experience barriers or challenges when using public transit?

Number of respondents = 416



What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experience when using public transit are listed below:

- **Insufficient transit service**

- Not enough service, poorly connected routes; trips requiring multiple transfers (People with disabilities on lower incomes cannot afford alternate transportation)
- Some City facilities are harder to get to with available transit services, or sites too far away from transit stops

- **Inaccessible transit stops**

- Insufficient space for mobility aids in bus stops or shelters
- Lack of connecting sidewalks or existing sidewalks too narrow or uneven

- Transit stops are too far away, requiring excessive walking or rolling
- Lack of seating at bus stops
- Sidewalks leading to transit stops not maintained or cleared of snow and ice; windrows
- **Paratransit (DATS) concerns**
  - Long rides creating late arrivals at destinations (expensive when caregivers need to be paid for the extra time)
  - DATS needs to be booked ahead of time, not flexible for people with episodic disabilities
  - Lack of service to neighbouring communities
- **Transit safety concerns**
  - Lack of feeling of safety to use public transit (people with disabilities feels more vulnerable)
  - Blocked elevators due to loitering creating barriers
- **Bus/train accessibility issues**
  - Hard to find and push train door buttons (e.g. inconsistent location of buttons on trains)
  - Train doors closes fast for slow moving passengers and mobility device users
  - Previous bad experiences riding transit (e.g. lack of patience and disability awareness by operators, inappropriate use of priority seating)

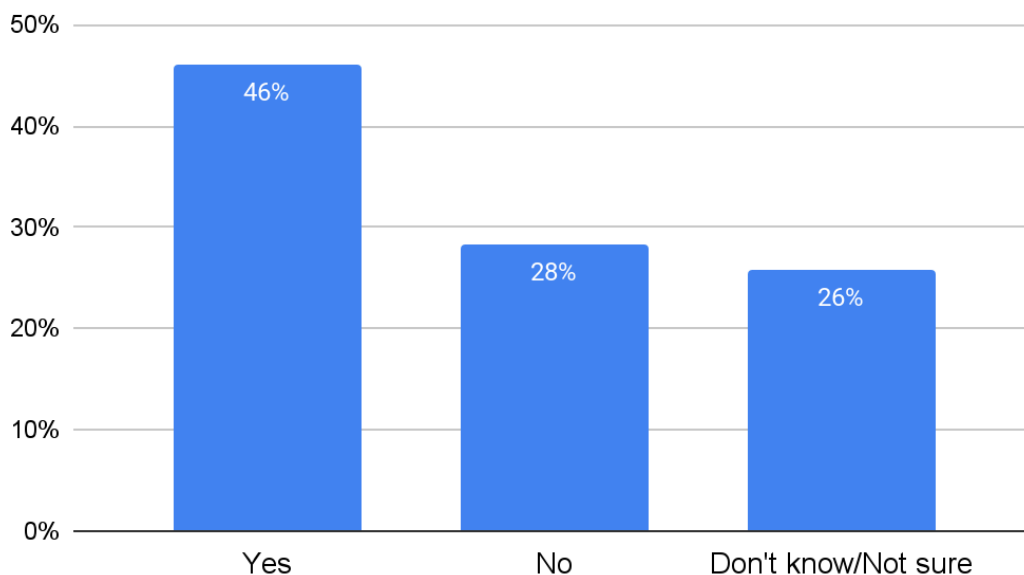
- **Inconsistent announcements**
  - Audible and visual announcements not working, unclear, incorrect or inconsistent (i.e. bus, train, LRT platform)
- **Elevator and escalator outages**
  - Elevator and escalator outages in facilities (e.g. LRT/transit centres) and no alternative route or clear direction/signage

## City Facilities

Facilities include City owned and operated buildings like Clareview Recreation Centre, Bonnie Doon Leisure Centre, Confederation Arena, Fred Broadstock outdoor pool, Edmonton Valley Zoo, Muttart Conservatory. **Among 478 survey respondents who identified as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, and has used City facilities, 46% indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when accessing City facilities.**

Do you, or someone you know with a disability, experience barriers when accessing City facilities?

Number of respondents = 478





What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experience when accessing City facilities are listed below:

- **Accessibility issues in transit facilities**
  - Poor placement of elevators in LRT stations requiring walking or rolling long distances
  - Not all LRT station entrances are accessible
- **Facility accessibility issues**
  - Lack of elevators or elevator is broken
  - Some spaces in facilities are only accessible by stairs
  - Lack of sensor friendly (quiet) spaces
  - No ramps to enter aquatic pools; broken pool lifts
- **Inadequate accessible washrooms and changerooms**
  - Not big enough for comfortable wheelchair/scooter access
  - Lack of large inclusive accessible changerooms where a caregiver of another gender can help out
  - Lack of adult change tables in recreation centres
- **Insufficient parking**
  - Not enough parking close to the facility
  - Accessible parking too far away from the entrance
  - Poor curb ramps from accessible parking stalls

## Communication

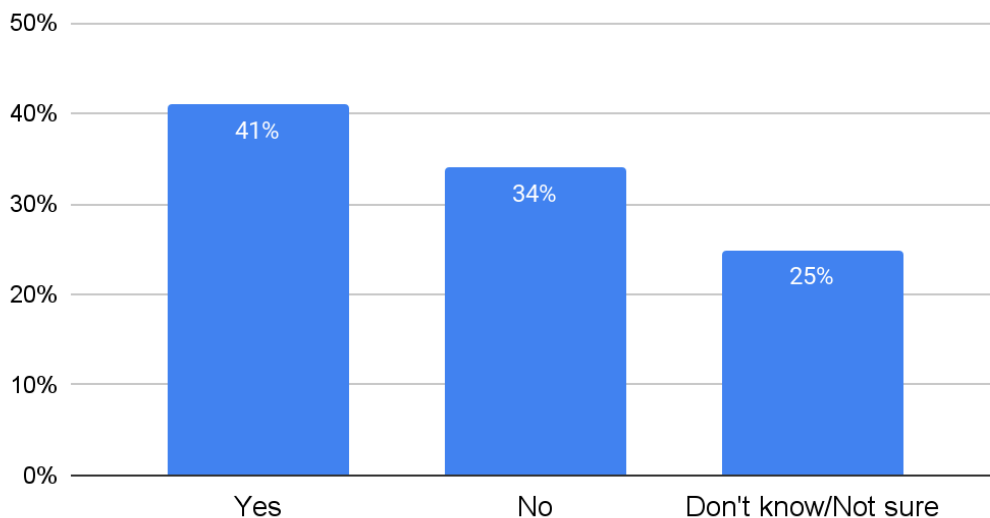
Communication and technology used by the City to share information and engage with Edmontonians include webpages (edmonton.ca, Engaged Edmonton), 311, in-person or virtual customer service, council meetings, public engagement events, etc.

**Among 546 survey respondents who identified as having a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, 41% indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when accessing City information, interacting with the City, or participating in public engagement events.**

Barriers are anything that makes it difficult to access or understand information or share feedback.

Do you, or someone you know with a disability, experience barriers or challenges when accessing City information, interacting with the City, or participating in public engagement events?

Number of respondents = 546



What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experience when accessing City information, engaging and providing feedback or interacting with the City are listed below:

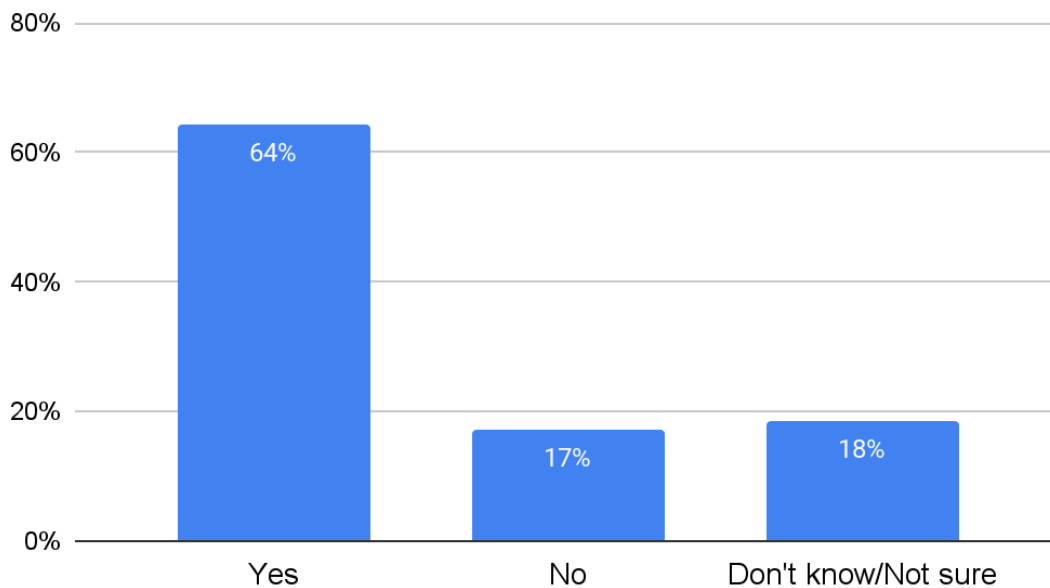
- **Lack of technology**
  - Digital information is not accessible (e.g. not familiar with technology or online information, lack of personal devices to access digital information)
- **Inaccessible website**
  - Not easy to find information on City website
  - Text is too small, links are not visually obvious
- **Lacking plain language**
  - City information is hard to understand (i.e. not plain/clear language)
- **City event accessibility**
  - Closed captioning is poor, inaccurate or not available at City events
  - American Sign Language (ASL) not provided at engagement events
- **311 concerns**
  - Lack of follow up on 311 tickets (no response or takes too long)
  - 311 directs to online information (lack of technology to access online information)

## Employment Opportunities and City's Hiring Process

**Among 157 survey respondents who identified as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, and have applied for a job with the City, 64% indicated experiencing barriers or challenges when applying for a job with the City.**

Did you, or someone you know with a disability, experience barriers or challenges when applying for the job with the City?

Number of respondents = 157)



What we heard about the common barriers that people with disabilities experienced when applying for a job with the City are listed below:

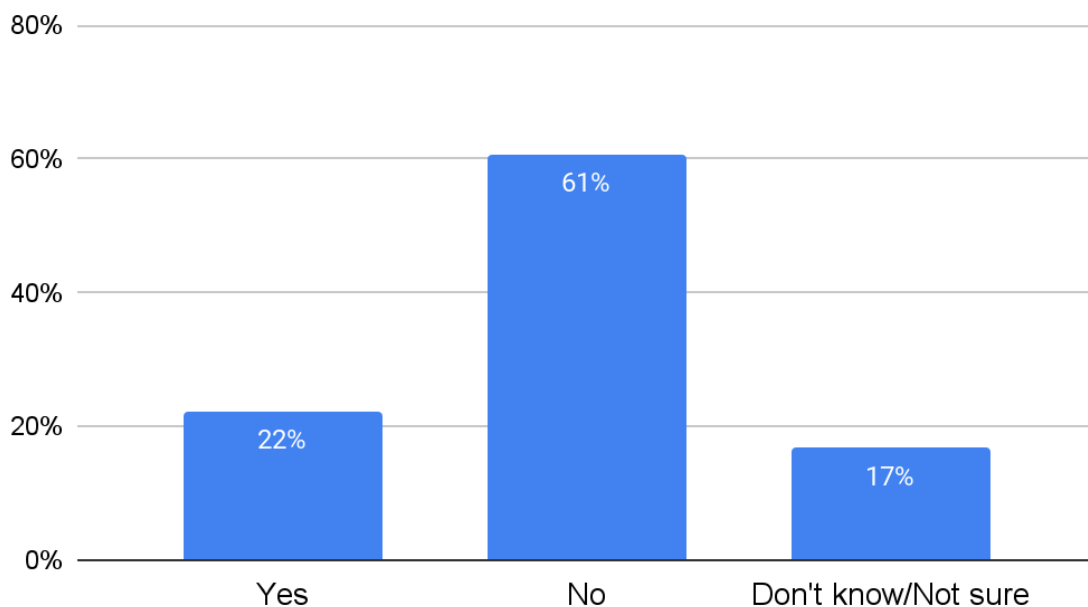
- Job posting was difficult to understand (e.g. not plain language)
- Application process was too difficult
- Not sure when to disclose disability or uncomfortable disclosing
- Could not find information about available accommodations or how to request one (unclear about accommodations for invisible disabilities)
- Lack of or unclear response from City to questions (e.g. criteria for someone with autism applying for a job)
- The City's job board (online portal) was hard to use (limited technology skills or access to technology)

## Elections

**Among 546 survey respondents who identified as a person with a disability or responded on behalf of someone with a disability, 22% indicated they experienced barriers to voting in the last municipal elections.**

Have you, or someone you know with a disability, experienced barriers to voting in the last municipal elections?

Number of respondents = 546



What we heard about the barriers to voting are listed below:

- **Getting to the voting station**
  - Lack of public transit availability to the voting station
  - Missing or inaccessible sidewalks
  - Lack of accessible parking stalls or parking close by
  - No option to vote online or by mail (e.g. difficult to travel to voting stations)

- **Accessibility of the voting station**

- Lack of accessibility of the voting station (inaccessible entrance, elevator access, narrow doorway, cables/wires on the floor that are difficult to roll over (wheelchair), not enough space for mobility devices)
- Lack of seating for people who have difficulty standing for long periods of time, no priority line for seniors or people with disabilities

## Other Barriers

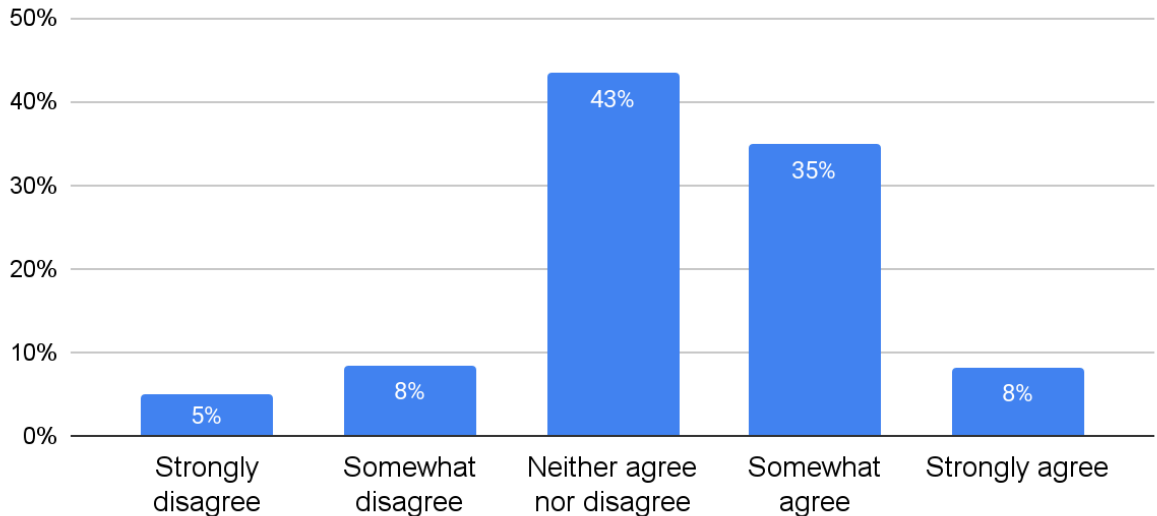
- No mandated masking in public spaces like transit or recreation facilities (e.g. immunocompromised)
- Not feeling safe in public streets and facilities (loitering, drug use)
- Lack of accessibility consideration in private developments

## General Feedback

**Out of 1,746 survey respondents, 43% agreed (Strongly + Somewhat) that accessibility for people with disabilities in City programs, services and spaces has improved in the past few years.**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Accessibility for people with disabilities of City programs, services and spaces have improved in the past few years.

Number of respondents = 1,746



There was general support and appreciation from stakeholders on the steps the City is taking to improve accessibility. Some of the positive feedback that was shared includes appreciation for staff at City recreation centres, the ACT Aquatic and Recreation Centre being inclusive and welcoming, and the Leisure Access Pass helping to make recreation more affordable to people with disabilities on low income.

Assisted Waste Collection Program, ETS travel training for seniors and riders with disabilities, and DATS service also received positive feedback. There was appreciation for the helpfulness of 311 and providing information on programs.

Improvements in accessibility of infrastructure were shared, including adding more curb ramps, repairing neighbourhood sidewalks, providing accessible playgrounds and sensory play areas, and improving accessibility of new public facilities.

## What Happens Next

- Feedback from the public engagement will inform the development of draft accessibility actions for the next Corporate Accessibility Plan.
- The Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy is being reviewed and updated to ensure it meets the needs of Edmontonians with Disabilities.
- Public engagement on the draft accessibility actions will occur in **2025**.
- Based on the feedback, the draft actions will be refined and finalized.
- Following approvals, the next Corporate Accessibility Plan will be implemented.