

Winter Maintenance 2026

What We Heard Report

May 2026



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Feb. 10, 2026, Council passed a motion directing a review of current winter maintenance operations in Fort McMurray. Public engagement was included in this process to gather community feedback on future service and policy considerations.

From **May 11-24**, opportunities to provide feedback were offered through a variety of engagement activities, including:

- **Survey:** 1,339 surveys were completed online, in person, through Pulse and printed hard copies.
- **Pop-up events:** Two information-sharing pop-ups encouraging conversation and survey participation.

Feedback will be used alongside operational review findings to support feasible updates to service delivery. Proposed changes and options are expected to be presented to Council at a public meeting on June 9.

Input will also help inform updates to the municipal Urban Snow and Ice Control Policy (OPE-150), expected later this fall.



PARTICIPANTS

Who did we talk to?

Opportunities to share input were available to the following audiences:

- All urban residents
 - Those living on priority routes
 - Those living on streets included in the WMZ program



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

aware

ways people saw communications and advertisements.

561,949 Digital impressions (social media posts, Google and social media ads)

96,137 Digital views (social media and website)

3,144 Winter Maintenance Zone update subscribers

2,750 Participate Wood Buffalo newsletter subscribers

542 RMWB internal communications

Additional advertising:

- Radio
- RRC digital screens
- Digital billboards



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

engaged

Times people took action to provide feedback

1,339 Survey responses

*Printed surveys were available at in person events, Jubilee Centre front counter and could be completed over the phone through Pulse.

26 In-person dotmocracy responses

20 In-person Post-It note feedback

81 MacDonald Island Pop-up participants

31 Jubilee Centre Pop-up participants



OVERALL KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



1. Enhancing winter maintenance efficiency

- 93% (1,244/1,339) of survey respondents agree that changes are needed to improve current winter maintenance operations.
- The top two winter maintenance challenges identified by survey participants:
 1. Maintenance does not happen often enough on my street – 73% (984/1,339)
 2. I move my vehicle, but maintenance does not happen – 35% (467/1,339)
- 69% (924/1,338) of survey respondents indicate that quicker, more reliable timelines for winter maintenance through an increase of equipment and resources are *very important*.
- 77% of survey respondents support an increase to the winter maintenance municipal budget if it means that streets are cleared more quickly.
- At in-person events:
 - Participants noted challenges with winter maintenance this winter, dissatisfaction with the frequency of maintenance and a need for a greater focus on priority routes.
 - Appreciation was also shared for operators and staff managing the above average snowfall this season.
 - Suggested improvements include targeting school zones on no-school Fridays and clearly identifying WMZ streets and priority routes in the policy.



OVERALL KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



2. Supporting enforcement and compliance

- 86% (1,150/1,339) of survey respondents agree to increased parking enforcement that leads to more frequent winter maintenance and proper clearing of their street.
- 49% (661/1,338) indicate that increased enforcement is *very important* to ensure plows are not blocked by illegally parked cars.
- 72% (964/1,339) support towing vehicles to nearby streets or municipal parking lots alongside increased ticket fines.
- At in-person events, participants discussed challenges with inconsistent ticketing and suggested several improvements, including allowing lawn parking in winter, waiving fines to allow OHVs to clear sidewalks in residential areas and increase the number of tickets issued to those who shovel snow into the street instead of private property.



3. Building extreme weather capacity

- 78% (1,043/1,339) of survey respondents indicate that improved response and adaptability during major snow falls and extreme weather events as the most important improvement to enhance winter maintenance operations.
- 87% (1,165/1,339) of survey respondents would support short-notice parking bans for faster snow plowing.
- Main roads not being cleared in a timely manner following a snowfall was identified as the third biggest challenge with current winter maintenance operations - 32% (435/1,339).



OVERALL KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



4. Improving communication and transparency

- 48% (641/1,339) of survey respondents feel improved communication and transparency for residents like progress mapping would be *very important* to enhancing winter maintenance operations.
- Survey participants were asked what communication method would improve their experience with the winter maintenance program (multiple answers were permitted):
 1. A public-facing online map showing street-by-street progress – 72% (960/1,339)
 2. SMS/Text message alerts – 62% (826/1,339)
 3. Increased social media updates – 55% (738/1,339)
 4. Faster responses to Pulse inquiries – 36% (476/1,339)
- The top three ways survey respondents receive winter maintenance updates are:
 1. RMWB social media – 56% (748/1,339)
 2. Electronic street signs – 41% (555/1,339)
 3. RMWB website – 34% (450/1,339)





POP-UP DOTMOCRACY

At both in-person events a dotmocracy board was available for participants to share feedback.

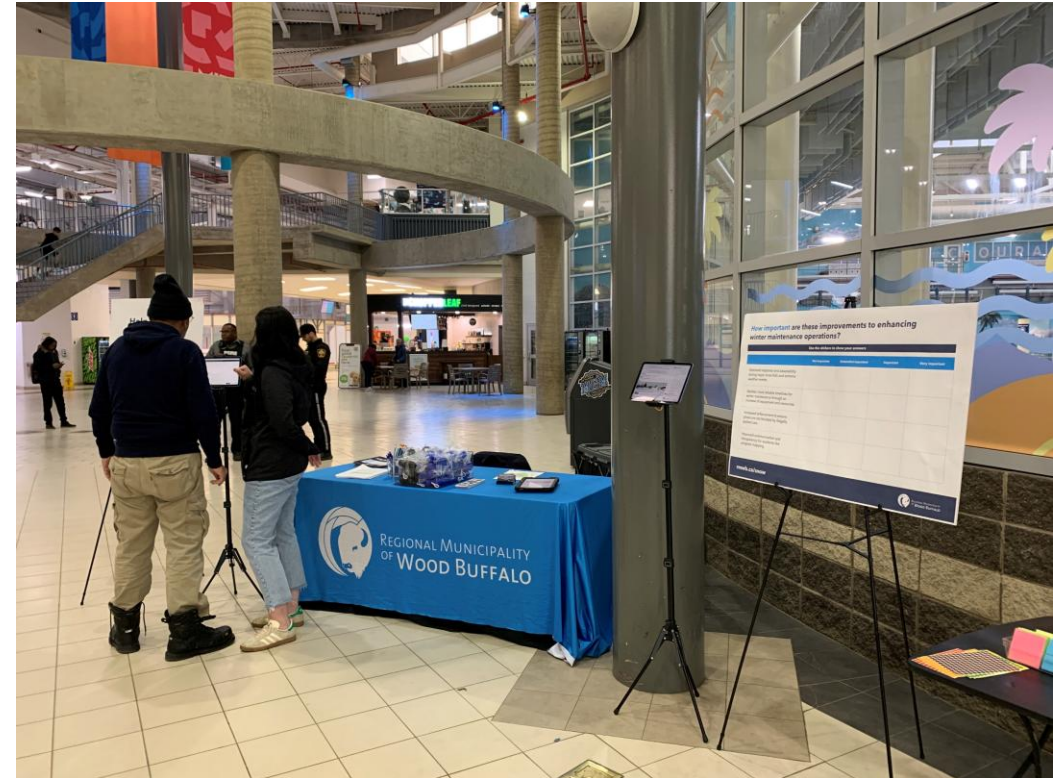
How important are these improvements to enhancing winter maintenance operations? (Total of 26 responses)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Improved response and adaptability during major snow falls and extreme weather events.	0	3	0	3
Quicker, more reliable timelines for winter maintenance through an increase of equipment and resources.	1	4	0	1
Increased enforcement to ensure plows are not blocked by illegally parked cars.	0	0	2	6
Improved communication and transparency for residents like progress mapping.	3	0	1	2



NEXT STEPS

- A presentation of proposed updates and options is expected at the June 9, 2026, council meeting.
- Following Council's direction, feasible updates will be implemented for the 2026-2027 winter maintenance season, while some updates may require more time.
- Updates to the Urban Snow and Ice Control Policy (OPE-150) are expected in the fall of 2026.
- For more information including the Council meeting schedule, agendas and packages visit rmwb.ca/council.



For project updates follow rmwb.ca/snow



Thank You

For more information on this report email participate@rmwb.ca.



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Appendix A

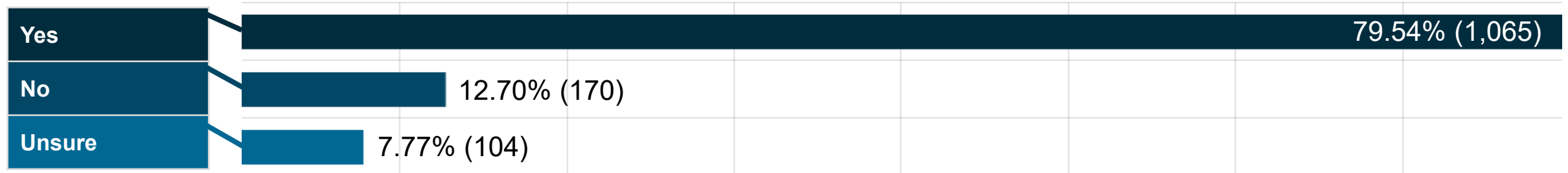
Winter Maintenance Survey

(Total of 1,339 responses)

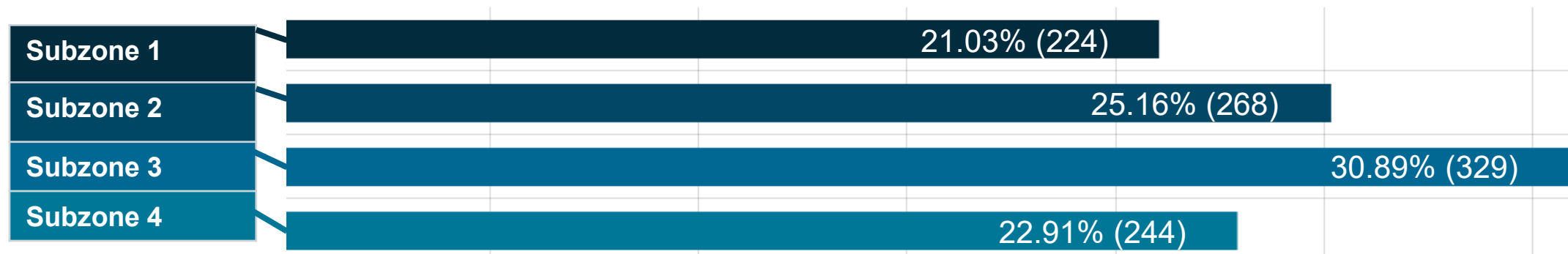


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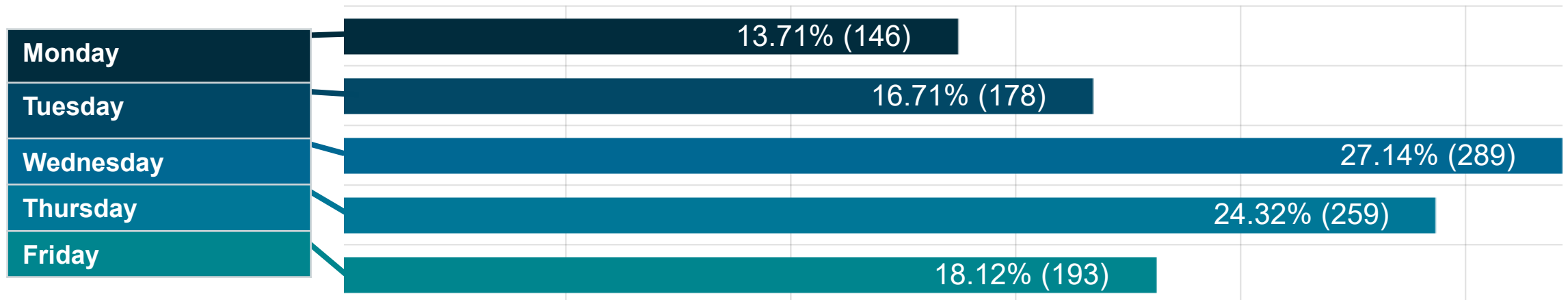
Q1 – Is your street included in the Winter Maintenance Zone Program? (Total of 1,339 responses)



Q2 – What is your subzone? (Total of 1,065 responses)



Q3 – What is your scheduled maintenance day? (Total of 1,065 responses)

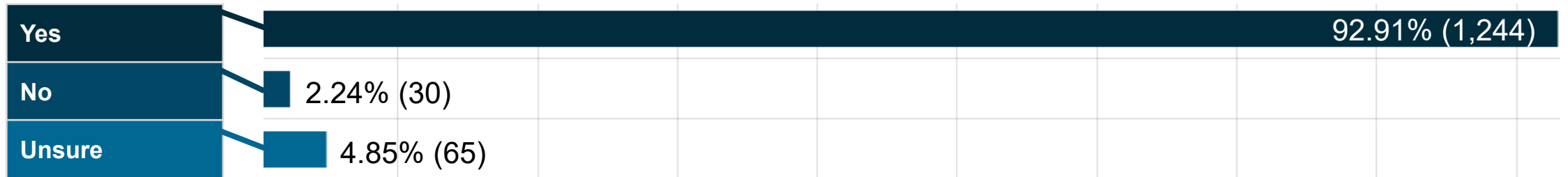


Q4 – In your experience, what are the biggest challenges with current winter maintenance operations? (Choose up to three) (Total of 1,339 responses)

	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Windrows more than 15 cm blocking my street impacting on-street parking	25.02%	335
Windrows more than 15 cm blocking my driveway	17.63%	236
Maintenance does not happen often enough on my street	73.49%	984
It is difficult to find a place to park my vehicle when it needs to be moved	7.09%	95
I move my vehicle, but maintenance does not happen on my street	34.88%	467
Ticketing is not consistent. Sometimes tickets are issued and other times they are not	7.99%	107
Information about winter maintenance (timing, expectations) is unclear	6.42%	86
Municipal sidewalks and pathways are not cleared or maintained	31.22%	418
I do not know when my subzone is active	0.67%	9
Main roads are not cleared in a timely manner following a snowfall	32.49%	435
Temporary no parking signs are placed on my street, but maintenance does not happen	7.92%	106
I have issues accessing my back alley	8.81%	118
I did not have any challenges this year	3.29%	44



Q5 – Do you agree that operational changes are needed to current winter maintenance operations?(Total of 1,339 responses)



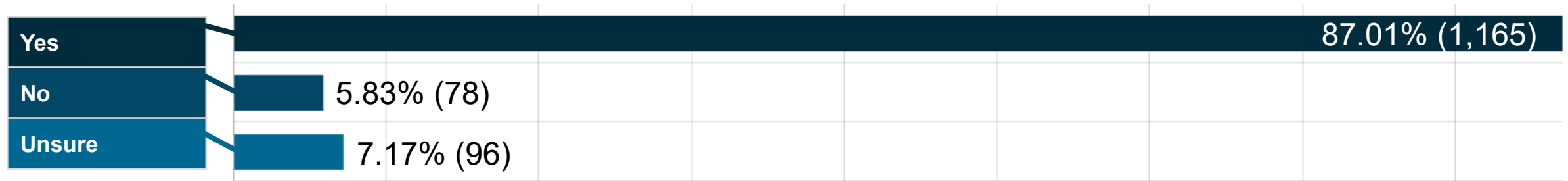
Q6 – How important are these improvements to enhancing winter maintenance operations?

(Total of 1,338 responses)

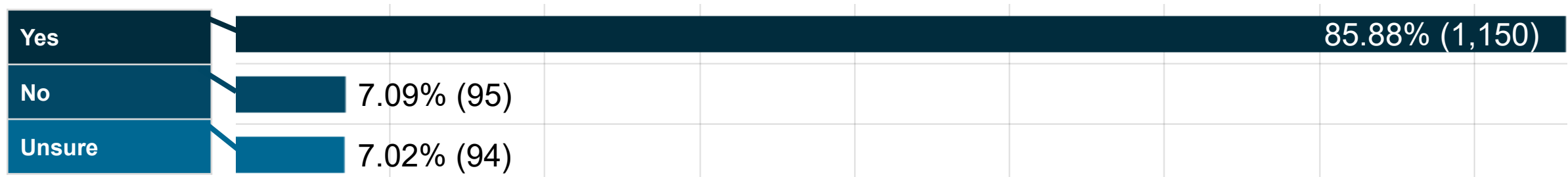
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Improved response and adaptability during major snow falls and extreme weather events.	0.52% 7	3.14% 42	18.39% 246	77.95% 1,043
Quicker, more reliable timelines for winter maintenance through an increase of equipment and resources.	0.90% 12	6.88% 92	23.17% 310	69.06% 924
Increased enforcement to ensure plows are not blocked by illegally parked cars.	4.33% 58	17.49% 234	28.77% 385	49.40% 661
Improved communication and transparency for residents like progress mapping.	4.41% 59	18.91% 253	28.77% 385	47.91% 641



Q7 – During extreme weather events, would you support short-notice parking bans for faster snow plowing? (Total of 1,339 responses)



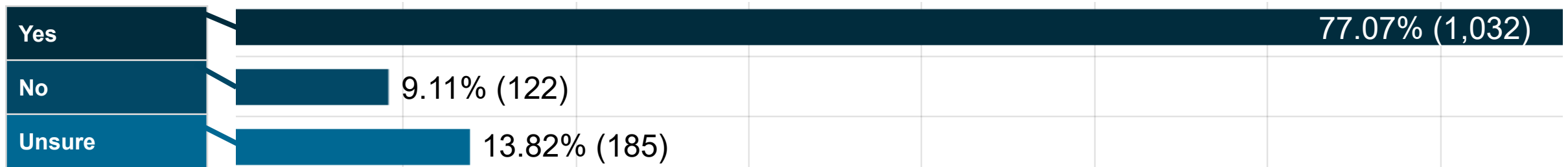
Q8 – Would you agree to increased parking enforcement if it leads to more frequent winter maintenance and ensuring your street is cleared properly? (Total of 1,339 responses)



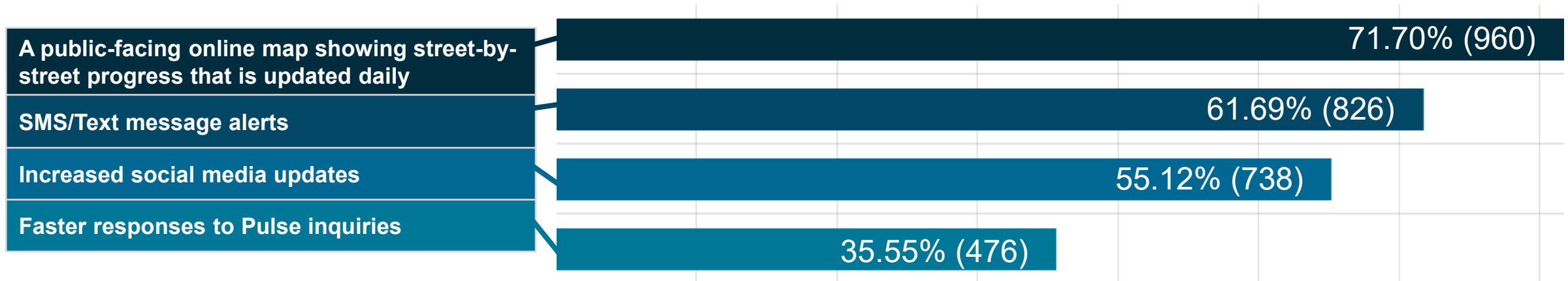
Q9 – Would you support towing vehicles to nearby streets or municipal parking lots with an increase to ticket fines? (Total of 1,339 responses)



Q10 – Would you support an increase to the winter maintenance municipal budget if it means streets are cleared quicker? (Total of 1,339 responses)



Q11 – Which communication method would improve your experience with the winter maintenance program? (Check all that apply) (Total of 1,339 responses)



Q12 – How do you receive updates about winter maintenance? (Check all that apply) (Total of 1,339 responses)

