

What We Heard Report

OHV Pilot Project in Abasand

May 07, 2024



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.**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

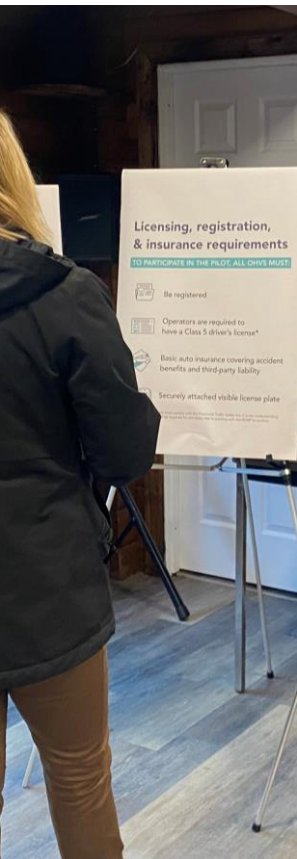
1. Executive Summary
2. Engagement Participants and Tactics
3. Engagement in Numbers
4. Engagement Review
5. Key Findings/Themes
6. Next Steps
7. Appendices
 - A. Survey Responses
 - B. Survey Responses from Abasand Residents
 - C. Targeted Workshop Feedback



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 14, 2023, Council approved a motion directing Administration to develop a pilot project permitting Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) usage on roadways in Abasand. Following Council's approval of the OHV Pilot Project Plan for Abasand, public engagement took place from April 10 to 19, 2024. This engagement encouraged participation from various groups including schools, businesses, community groups, Indigenous Partners and residents of Abasand.

During the targeted workshop and online engagement, individuals had the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, provide suggestions, and prioritize potential benefits and challenges. The feedback gathered will be reviewed as the bylaw is drafted and will serve as a valuable resource in establishing a baseline for measuring future success.



Participants

Who did we invite to participate?

- Urban Wood Buffalo residents
- Urban Indigenous Partners
- McMurray Dirt Riders Association
- Abasand schools
- Abasand businesses
- Fort McMurray community groups
- OHV dealers
- Condo associations
- RCMP & Bylaw
- OHV groups and associations

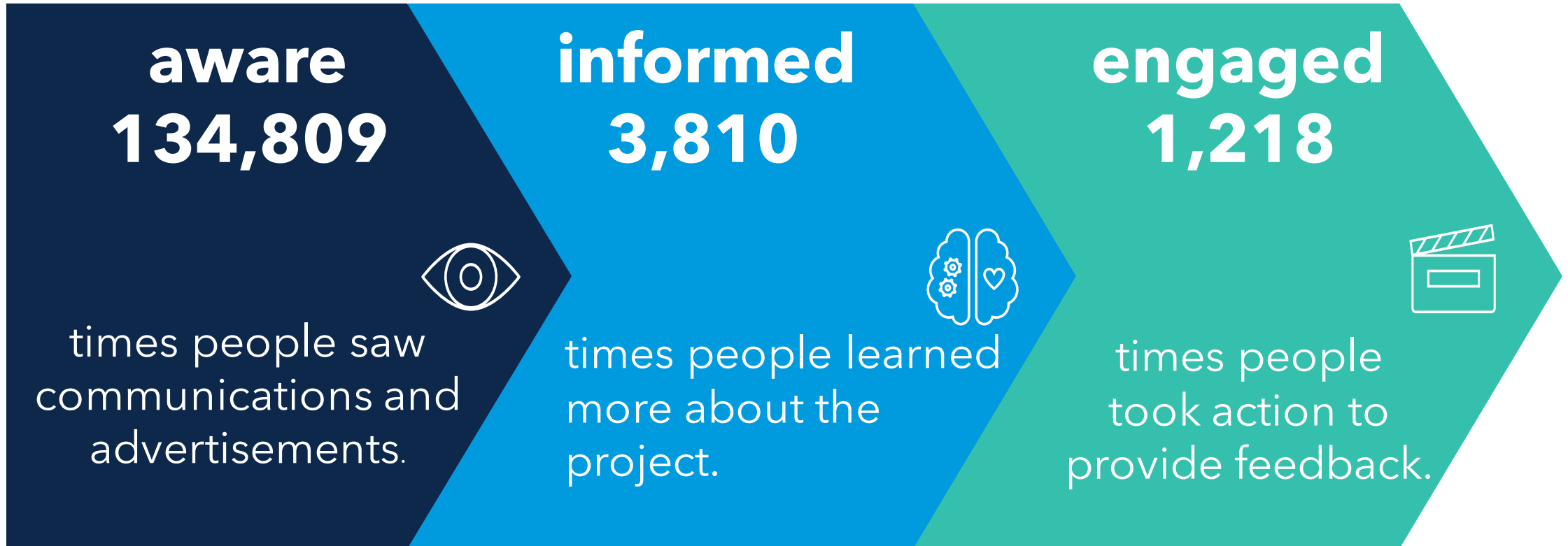
Tactics

How did people participate?

- Online survey
- Online "quick poll"
- In-person targeted workshop



ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS



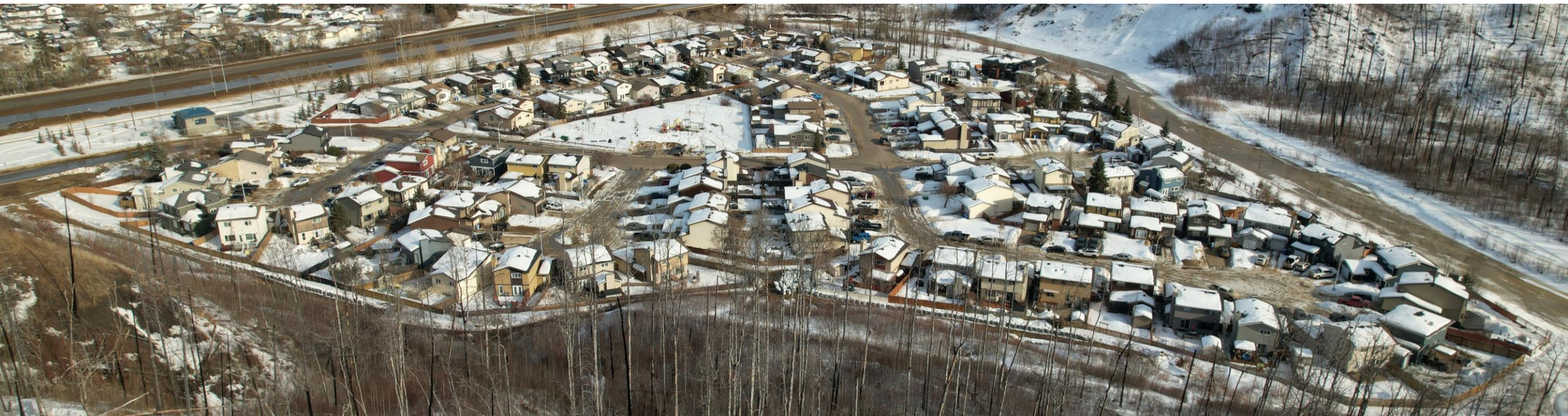
ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Online & In-Person

- 1,052 – Total engagement contributions
- 735 – Completed surveys
- 288 – "Quick poll" responses
- 1,800 – PWB project page views
- 44 – New project page followers
- 1,473 – Unique visitors to Participate Wood Buffalo project page

Communications

- 78,798 – Social media impressions
- 178 – Workshop invitations sent
- 15,752 – Video views



KEY FINDINGS/THEMES



Safety – Pedestrian, driver & OHV user



Enforcement – How will the bylaw be enforced?



Redirecting OHVs off multi-use trails



More convenient OHV user experience

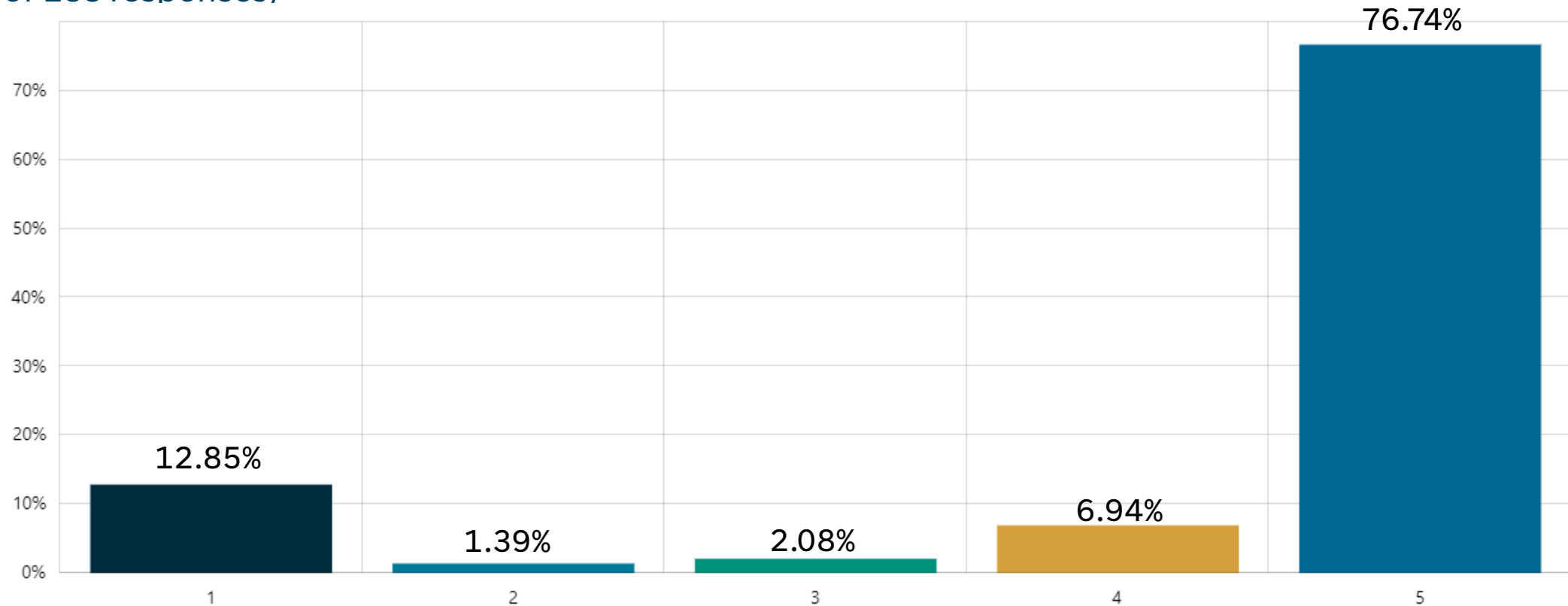


Additional noise on roadways



Online “Quick Poll” results

Are you in favour of OHV's driving on Abasand roads to access the Abasand staging area directly? (Total of 288 responses)



Scale above is between 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest and 5 the highest.



NEXT STEPS

- The Off-Highway Vehicle Pilot Project Bylaw will be read at Council for review and approval.
- Residents can speak as delegates on the OHV Pilot Project, which is expected to be presented to Council for final approval on June 11, 2024

Pending the approval of the bylaw:

- Education campaign
- The Off-Highway Vehicle Pilot Project Bylaw is anticipated to start near the end of June. The start date will be finalized once the Bylaw is approved. Once in effect a new online engagement tool will be available to residents to share feedback.
- 1-year public engagement check in (projected in 2025)
- Re-engage prior to bylaw expiry (projected for 2026)



Thank You

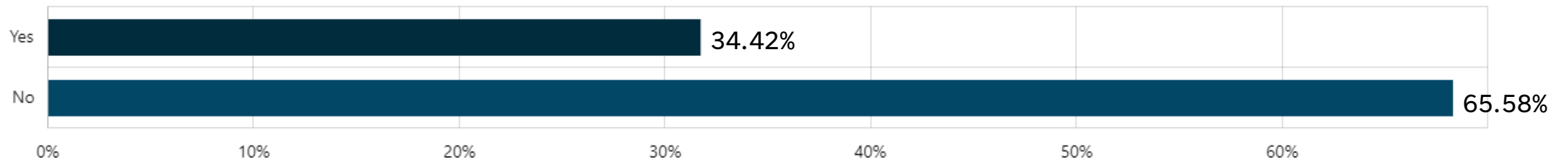
For more information on this report email participate@rmwb.ca.



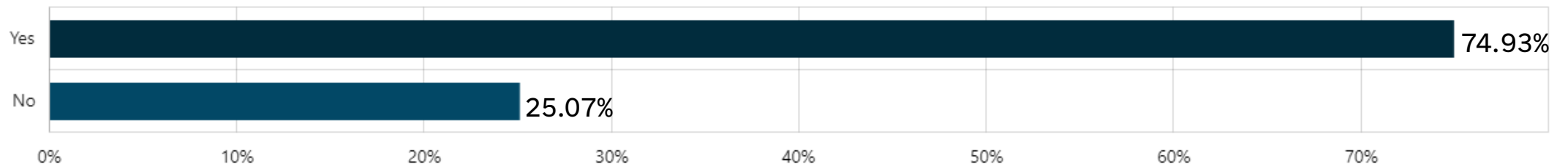
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESPONSES

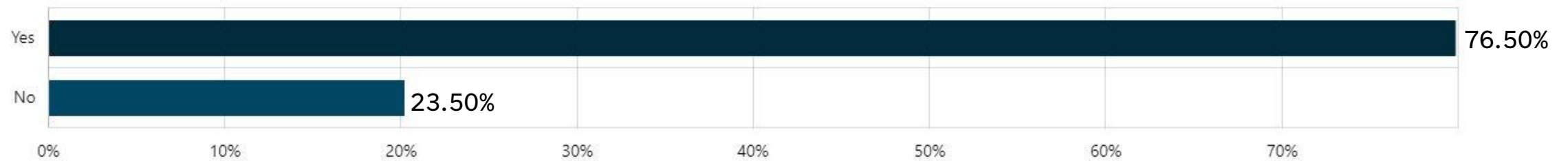
Q1 – Are you an Abasand resident?



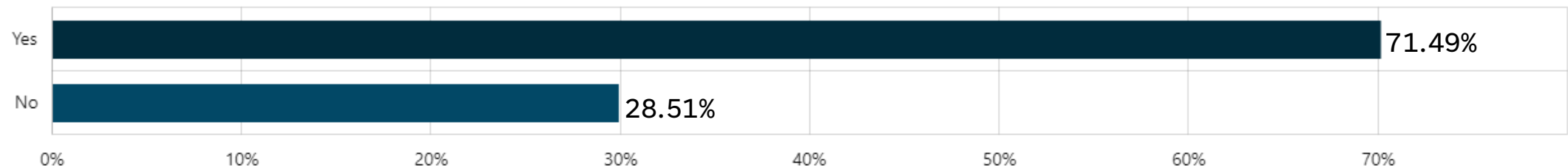
Q2 – Are you an OHV user?



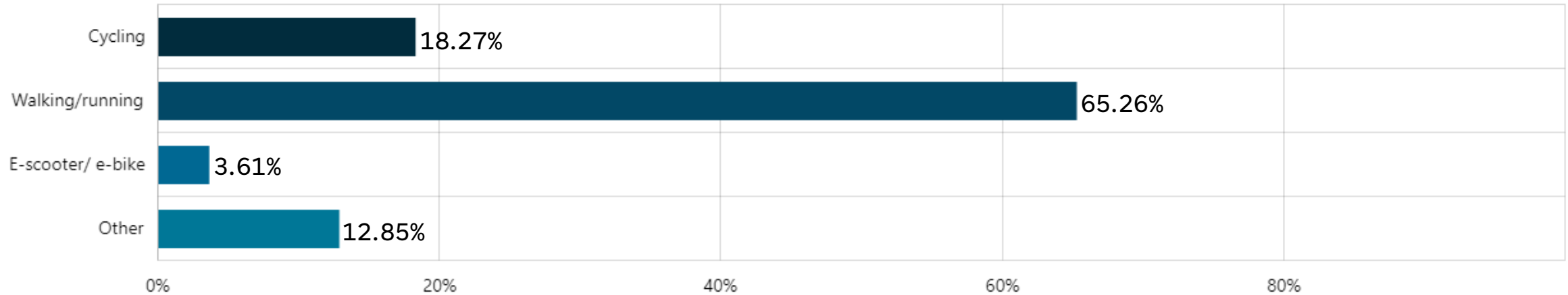
Q3 – Do you access the OHV trails from Abasand?



Q4 – Do you use multi-use trails?



Q5 – How do you use multi-use trails?

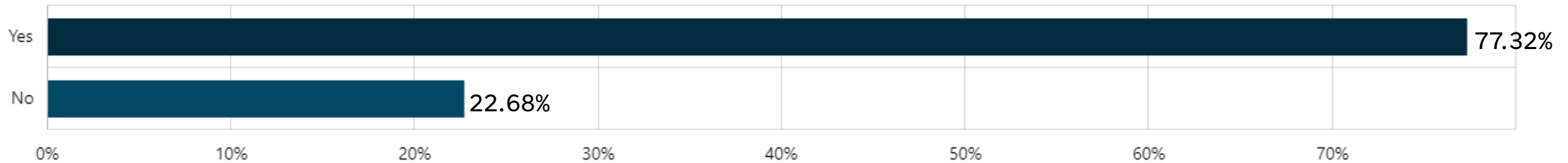


Sample “Other”:

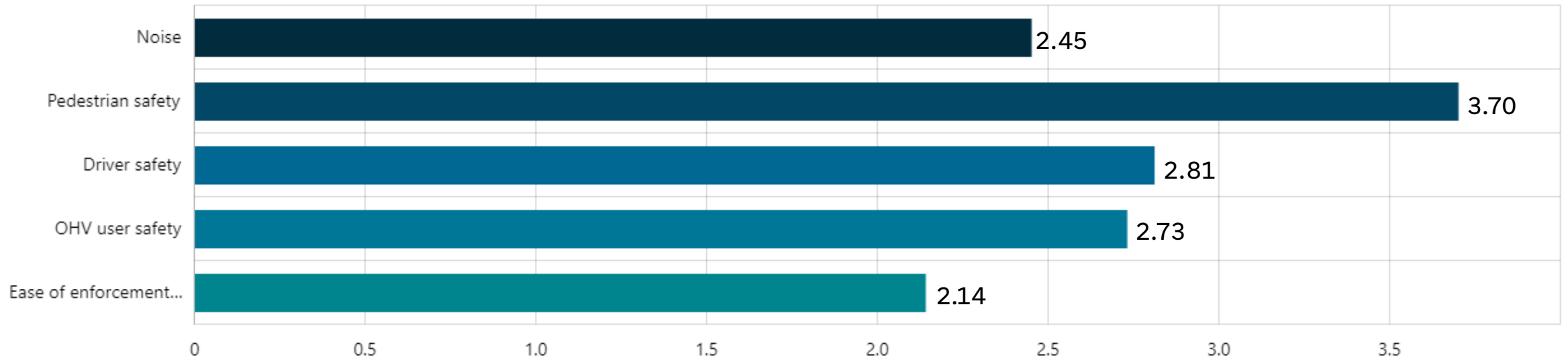
- Cross Country Skiing
- ATV
- Dirt bike
- Ohv
- Side by Side
- Walk run cycle ski
- Snowmobile
- Hiking
- Quad



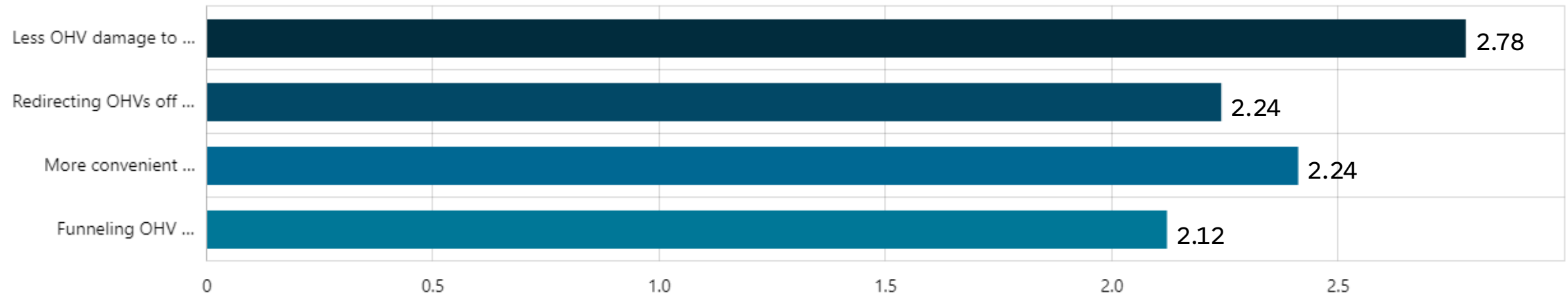
Q6 – Do you see the benefit of OHVs having direct access to the Abasand staging area via Abasand roadways?



Q7 – Rank the potential concerns.

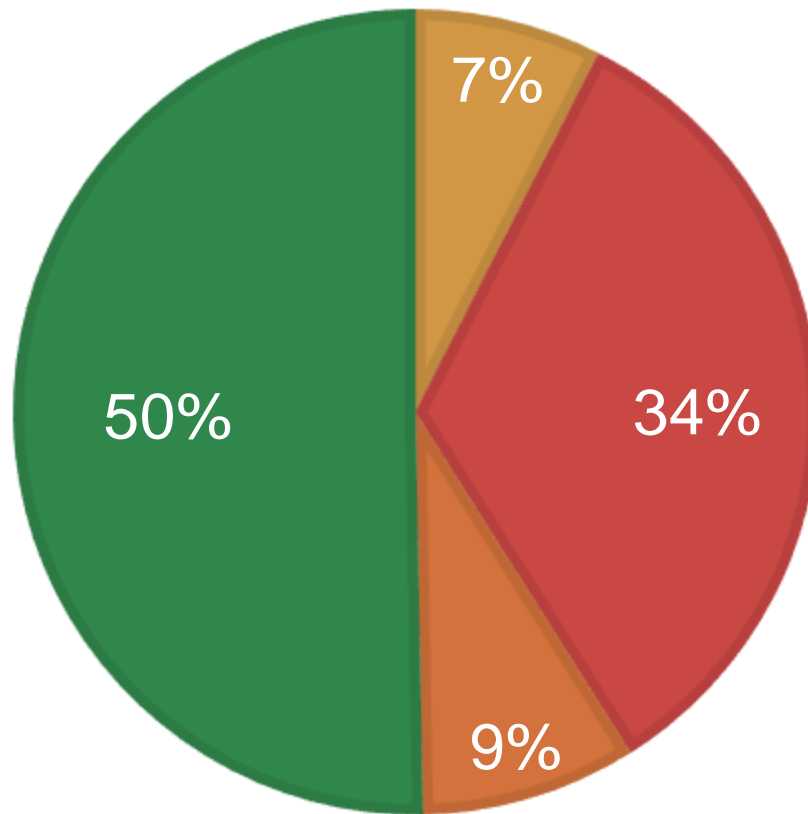


Q8 – Rank the potential benefits.



Q9 – Share your comments or suggestions on the OHV Pilot Project in Abasand. (Overall sentiment* of the 374 responses received)

■ Neutral ■ Negative ■ Mixed ■ Positive



*Data is reviewed by the RMWB Public Engagement and project teams along with Social Pinpoint Analytics.

Sentiment indicates the overall emotional tone or sentiment of a text response, classifying it as positive, negative, neutral or mixed. Social Pinpoint analyses open-ended responses, automatically detecting sentiment, key phrases, official names and language information.



Q9 – Examples of long answer responses received organized by sentiment.

POSITIVE: I think this is a wonderful thing to do. Abasand is a great community where friends and neighbours are respectful to each other. With allowing the OHV on the roads to access trails I think it will cut down on the green space travelling. Which a lot of smaller kids use quite frequently for playing.

MIXED: I think it is a good idea, but the availability hours of the project should not be 24 hour as during later at night the noise levels are gonna be crazy.

NEUTRAL: We need to build separate trails next to the walking trails in other parts of town so everyone can access the trails. Not just Abasand. Thickwood for instance has no access at all.

NEGATIVE: I think it is a terrible idea and no one in city limits should have the expectation to use OHV on residential streets. It is proven unsafe for most OHV types to operate on pavement. I think it's a waste of time and resources. I don't think it will be successful because people push the boundaries and doubtful the rules are going to be followed.



Themes highlighted in comments

- Enforce the current rules
- Statement of support
- Statement of opposition
- Safety concerns
- Noise concerns
- Enforcement
- Signage and education campaign
- OHV's speeding on roadways
- This could lead to more unapproved cabins and firepits in forestry
- Specific suggestions*
- Property damage
- Expand the pilot to other neighbourhoods
- Road maintenance
- Trail maintenance concerns
- Importance to get OHVs off the trails
- This will cause more damage to multi-use trails from OHVs
- Rewarding bad behaviour
- Youth driving on OHVs on roadways
- Safety of children playing near roadways
- Increasing fire risk
- OHV riders do not follow the rules now



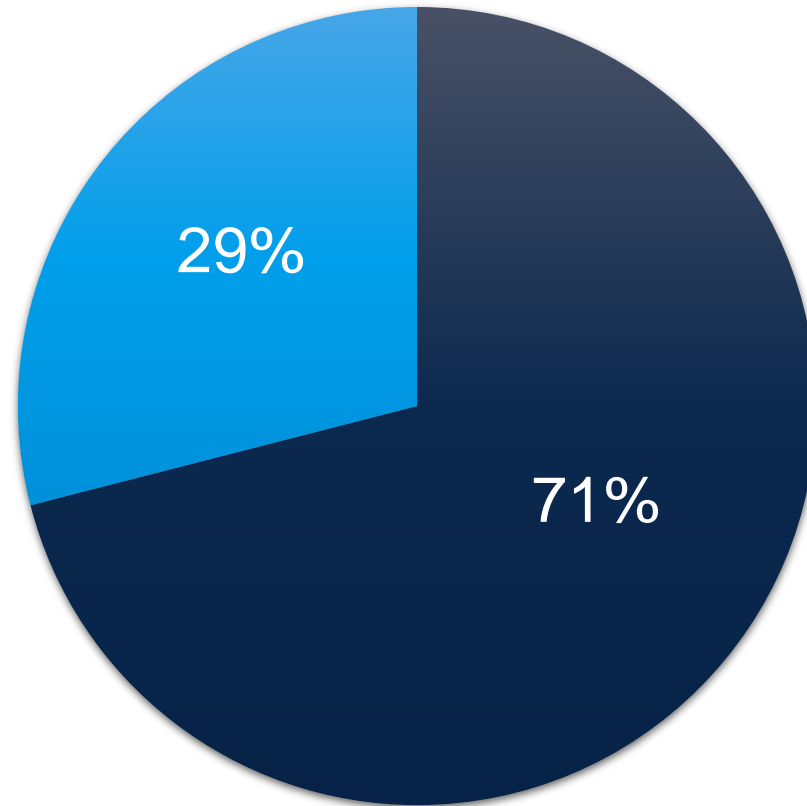
Example of suggestions received for the bylaw*

- There should be a noise restriction.
- Increase fines for OHVs on green spaces.
- Invest in enforcement to ensure this program is a success and that everyone has an enjoyable experience.
- Suggestion to budget for more street cleaning.
- Suggestion to add speed bumps be pit on North Athabasca Ave to slow traffic and OHV too prevent potential collisions as this is already an issue.
- Build ATV trails throughout Fort McMurray connecting the different areas and policed by bylaw to ensure the rules are being followed.
- Have speed limits specifically for OHV 30 km/h max.
- If looking at expanding this to other urban neighbourhoods, suggest shortening their “staging distance”.
- All green spaces and walking trails should have vehicle barriers to stop OHVs from having access to non ohv trails.
- Operational hours should be strictly restricted to 10 am until 6:30pm daily.
- Add a coin wash at staging area.
- Stronger punitive measures for noise offense
- Headlights and blinkers for traveling in the dark should be mandatory.
- Add a fine for OHV's bringing mud onto the roadways
- Build an OHV trail that surrounds Abasand instead of allowing them on the roadways.



APPENDIX B – SURVEY RESPONSES FROM ABASAND RESIDENTS

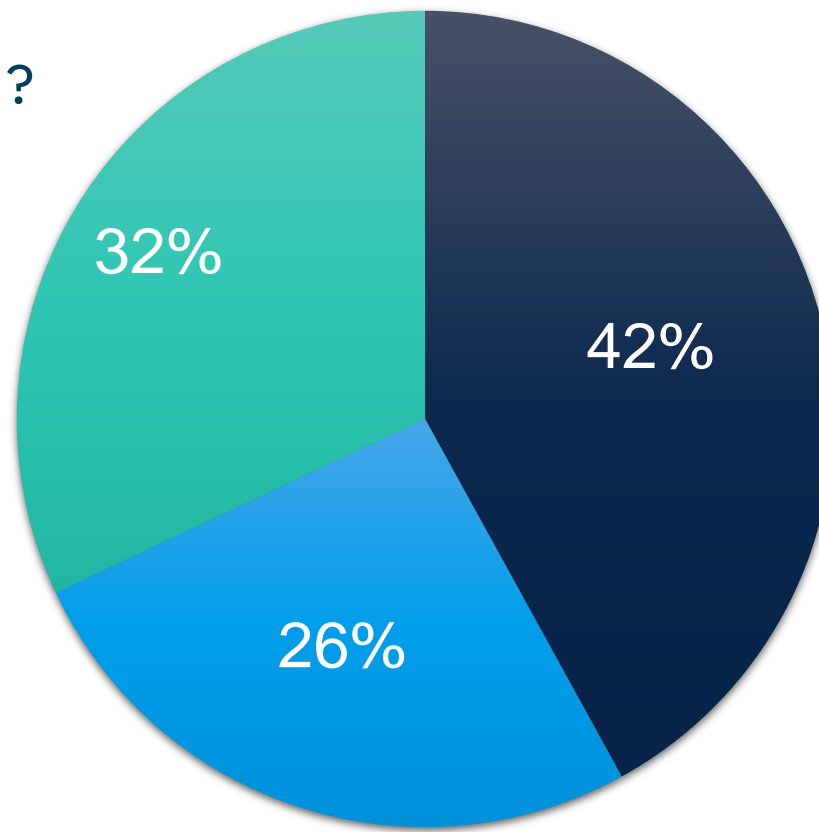
Q2 – Are you an OHV user?



- Abasand residents who participated are OHV users
- Abasand residents that participated are not OHV users



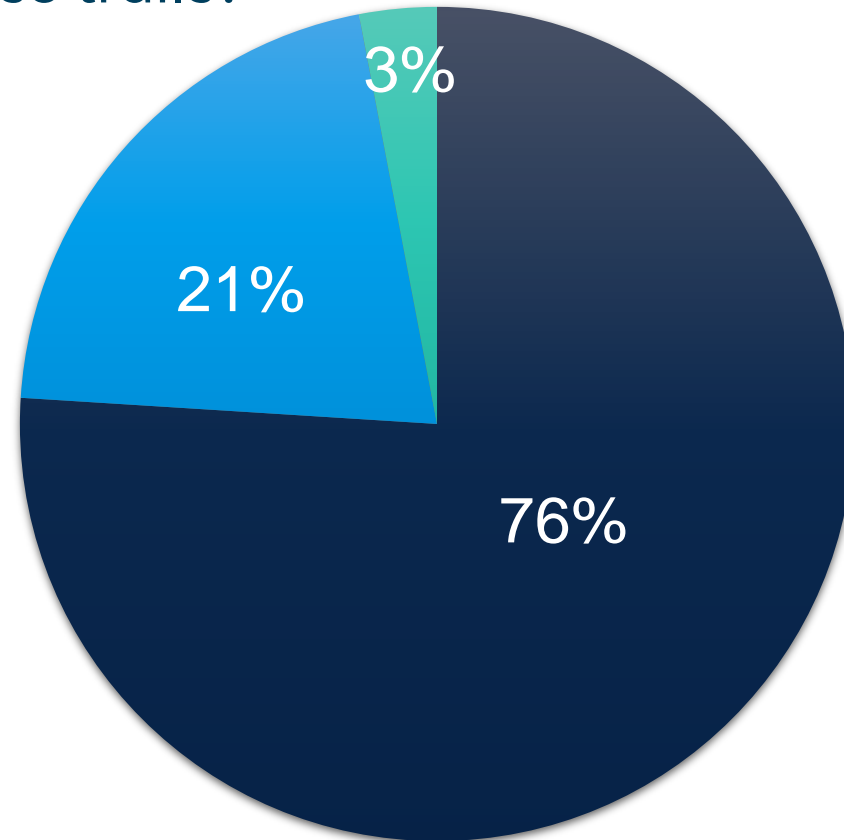
Q3 – Do you access the OHV trails from Abasand?



- Abasand residents who participated access the trails from Abasand
- Abasand residents that participated do not access the trails from Abasand
- Did not identify



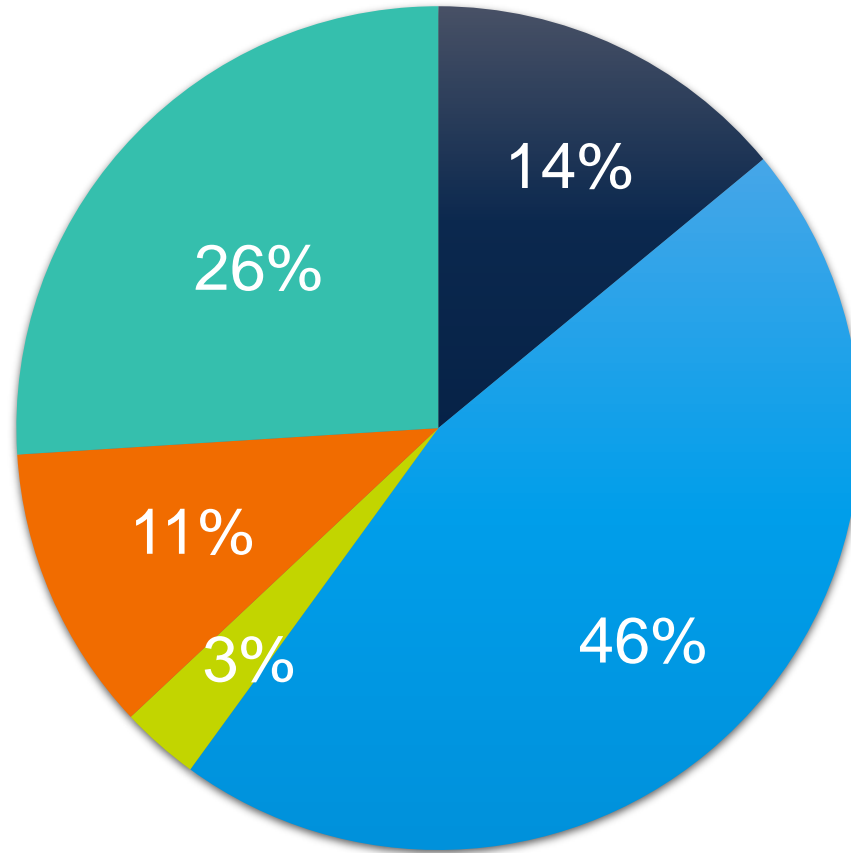
Q4 – Do you use multi-use trails?



- Abasand residents who participated use multi-use trails
- Abasand residents that participated do not use multi-use trails
- Did not identify



Q5 – How do you use multi-use trails?



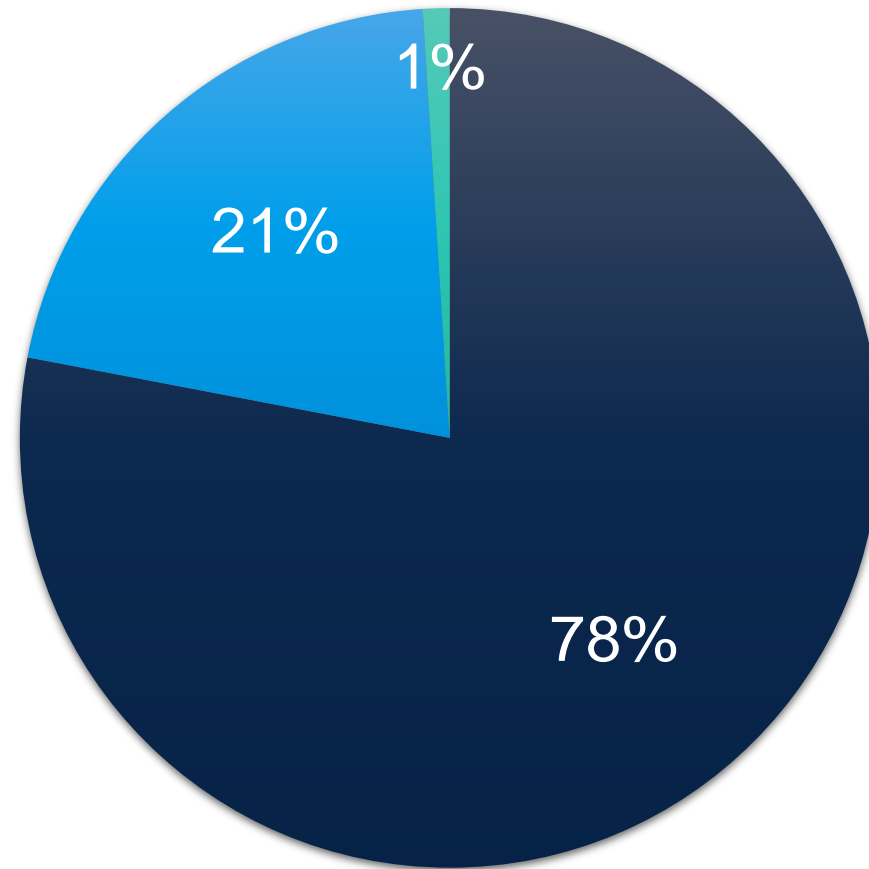
- Abasand residents who participated use the multi-use trails by cycling
- Abasand residents that participated use multi-use trails by walking/running
- Abasand residents that participated use multi-use trails by e-scooter/bike
- Abasand residents that participated use multi-use trails chose "Other"
- Did not identify

Sample "Other":

- Bicycle. SXS, walk. Dirt bikes. Also play RC trucks with the kids
- Walking / biking / ohv
- Cycling, walking, running, and exercising my dog.
- Side by side
- OHV
- ATV
- Quad



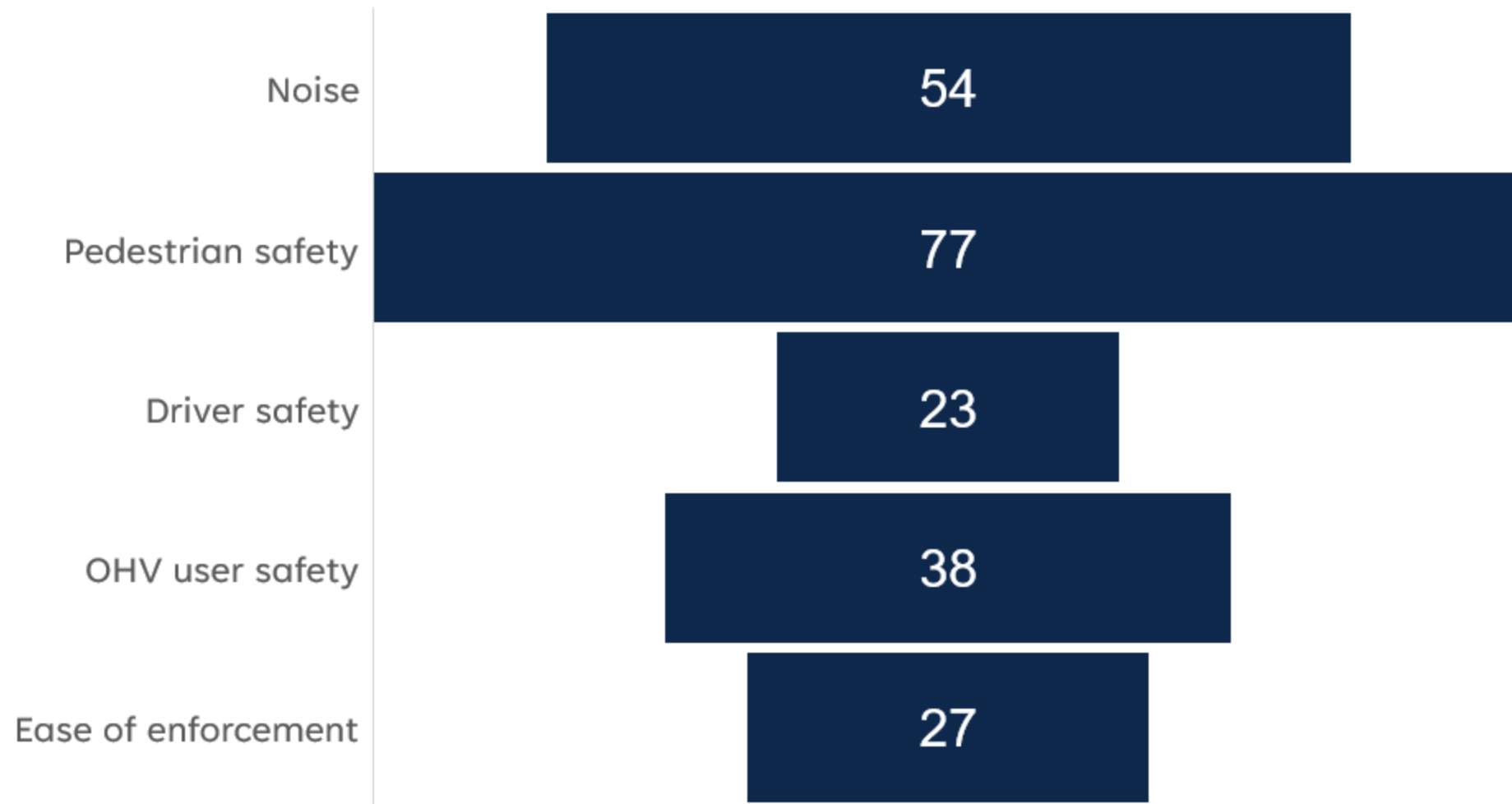
Q6 – Do you see the benefit of OHVs having direct access to the Abasand staging area via Abasand roadways?



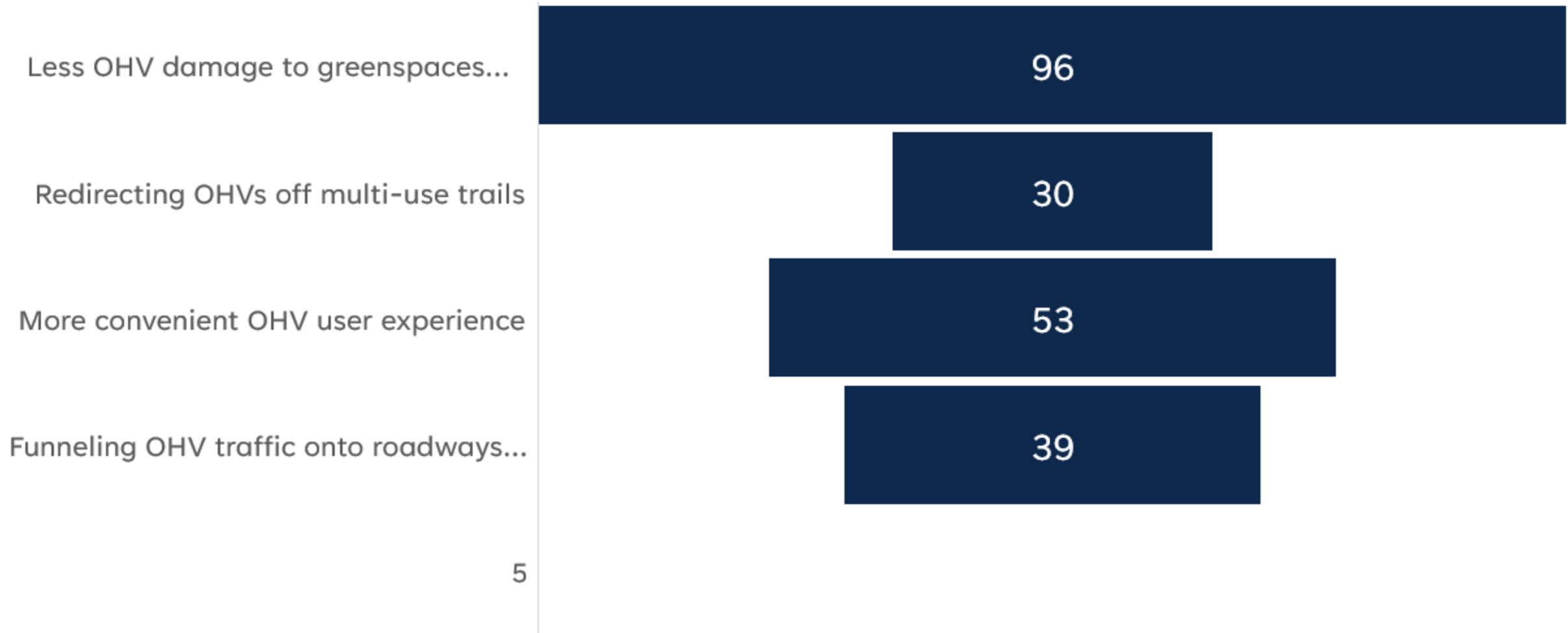
- Abasand residents who participated see the benefit
- Abasand residents that participated do not see the benefit
- Did not reply



Q7 – Rank the potential concerns: Abasand participants

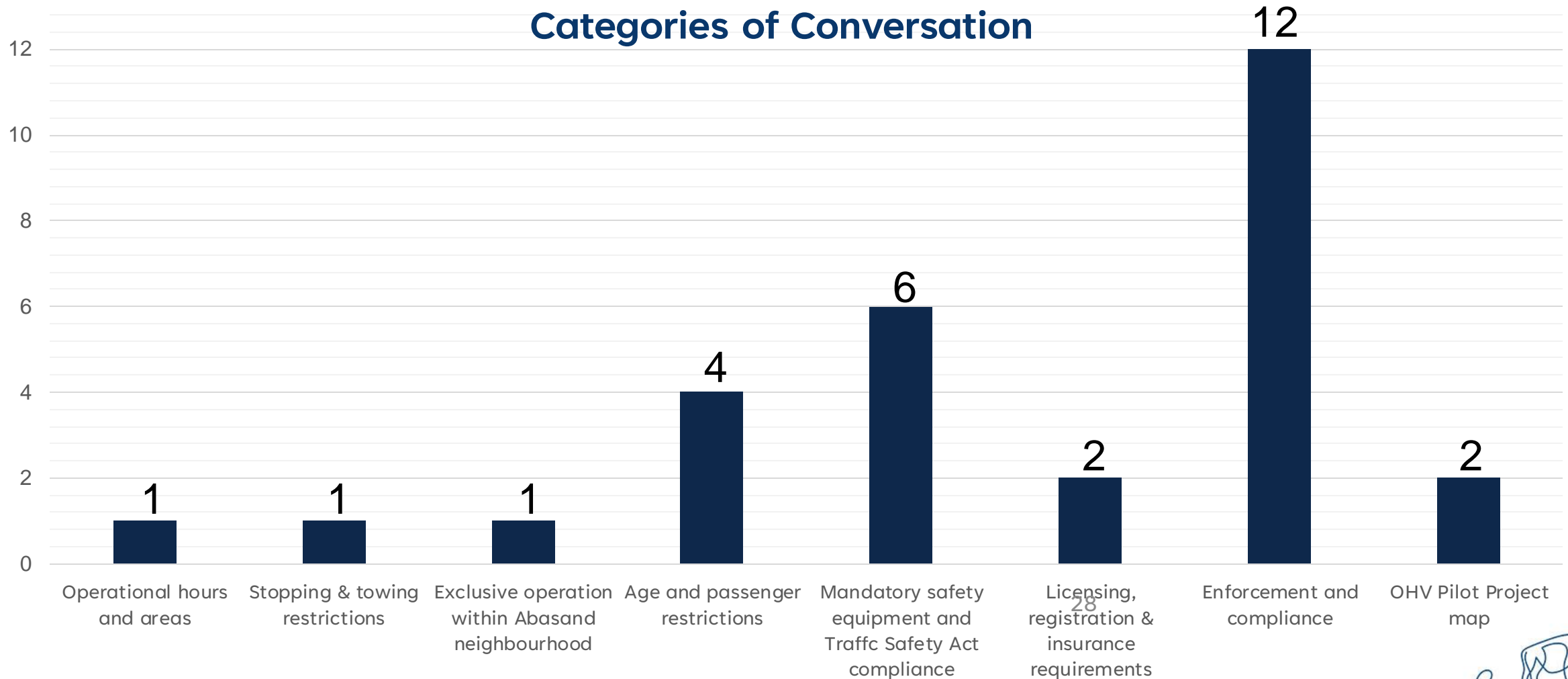


Q8 – Rank the potential benefits: Abasand participants



APPENDIX C – TARGETED WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Categories of Conversation



Sample topics of discussion brought forward by participants:

Mandatory safety equipment and Traffic Safety Act compliance

- Can the RMWB list proper safety equipment for safe operation on roadways?
- Will officers have specific training / education?

Enforcement and compliance

- With the staging area across the street, can we get more enforcement presence in the front of the Ecole Boreal from 8:15-8:30 a.m.?
- Should speed limits be reduced?
- Will Bylaw enforce these rules on private roads? How will the RMWB assist with the enforcement on private roads?

Age and passenger restrictions

- Child passenger safety concerns: Safely transporting children in or on OHVs in traffic. How will this be enforced and is this safe?

Operational hours and areas

- No hour restrictions may result in noise complaints from community residents.

Licensing, registration & insurance requirements

- Will OHV's act like vehicles when on public roads?

