

Metrolinx 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation Summary Report

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Metrolinx 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation Summary Report

Background

Metrolinx is continually working to improve accessibility across its transit network and services. Annually an accessibility consultation meeting takes place to reflect on what has been done over the last year and what is being planned in the coming year. The consultation includes discussions relating to universal design, GO rail and bus, new subway projects, Light Rail Transit (LRT), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), PRESTO, and Regional Specialized Transit Coordination.

Meeting Details

On Thursday, September 28, 2023, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., community members joined a virtual meeting for Metrolinx's annual accessibility consultation to learn more about accessibility at Metrolinx and provide feedback on how Metrolinx can improve the accessibility of its transit network and services. The meeting was hosted virtually on Microsoft Teams Webinar and included American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation as well as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) by Canadian Hearing Services.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Provide an update on accessibility achievements.
- Share information on key planned initiatives for next year.
- Seek feedback to ensure services and projects reflect community needs.
- Provide an opportunity for input into accessibility planning efforts.
- Fulfill responsibilities under the AODA IASR: "Every conventional transportation service provider shall annually hold at least one public meeting involving persons with disabilities to ensure that they have an opportunity to participate in a review of the accessibility plan and that they are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the accessibility plan. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 41 (2)."

A 24/7 telephone inquiry services was also available for participants to ensure everyone has an opportunity to provide input in a format that is accessible to them. This service was made available during the meeting for anyone who was experiencing technical difficulties with the virtual platform. This service was also available after the meeting to collect survey responses.

The meeting agenda can be found in Appendix A.

For more information you can visit Metrolinx Accessibility webpage at <https://www.metrolinx.com/en/about-us/accessibility>. The webpage includes the 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation meeting [recording link](#).

'What We Heard' Post Meeting Survey Summary

Following the meeting, participants were invited to participate in a post-meeting survey to gather additional feedback related to built environment accessibility within their transit journeys. The survey was open from September 29 to October 13, 2023. The feedback, advice, and considerations by survey participants are captured in this summary, prepared by LURA Consulting. The summary reflects the main points shared by survey participants and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Transit Journeys

Participants were asked three questions related to their transit journeys. The questions and response summaries are provided below.

Question 1: How often do you look for or use rest areas or seating areas while navigating your transit journeys?

- Option 1 – Very Often
- Option 2 – Sometimes
- Option 3 – Never

Question 1 Response Summary: In total, 8 survey respondents responded to this question. Most respondents (63%) reported that they look for or use rest areas or seating areas while navigating their transit journeys very often. Approximately 25% reported that they sometimes do and 12% reported that they never do. Please refer to Figure 1 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

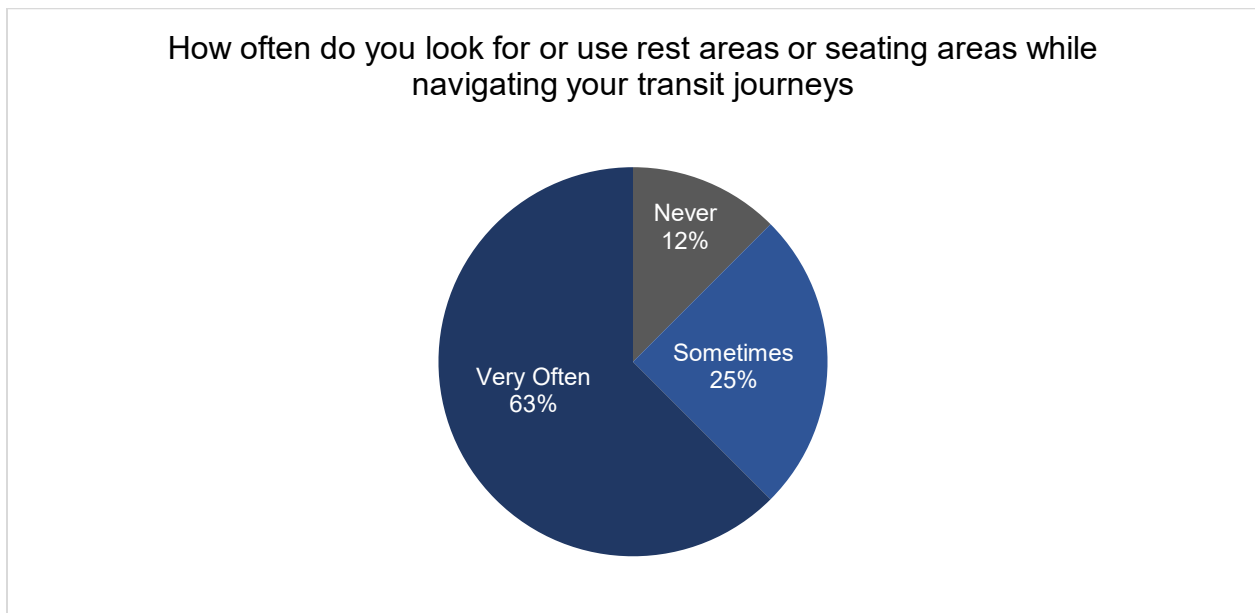


Figure 1: Survey respondents' answer to "How often do you look for or use rest areas or seating areas while navigating your transit journeys?"

Question 2: When navigating up and down a ramp, do you:

- Option 1 – Use one handrail
- Option 2 – Use two handrails
- Option 3 – Do not use any handrails
- Option 4 – I don't know/unsure

Question 2 Response Summary: In total, 9 survey respondents responded to this question. Four respondents indicated that they do not use any handrails, three respondents indicated that they use one handrail, and no respondents indicated that they use two handrails. Please refer to Figure 2 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a bar chart.

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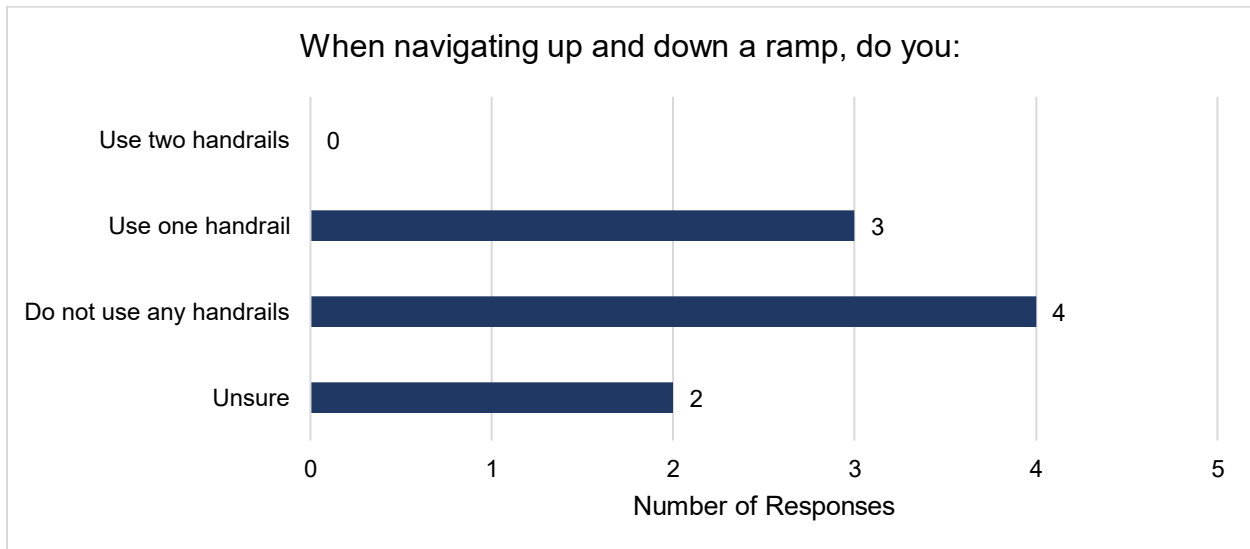


Figure 2: Survey respondents' answer to "When navigating up and down a ramp, do you:"

Question 3: From your perspective, how would you rate the overall accessibility of your transit journeys?

- Option 1 – Very Accessible (I can complete my journey and everything I need is provided along the way)
- Option 2 – Mostly Accessible (I can complete my journey but experience barriers along the way)
- Option 3 – Not Accessible (I cannot complete my journey due to significant barriers)

Question 3 Response Summary: In total, 9 survey respondents responded to this question. All respondents (100%) rated the overall accessibility of their transit journeys as mostly accessible and indicated that they can complete their journey but experience barriers along the way. Please refer to Figure 3 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

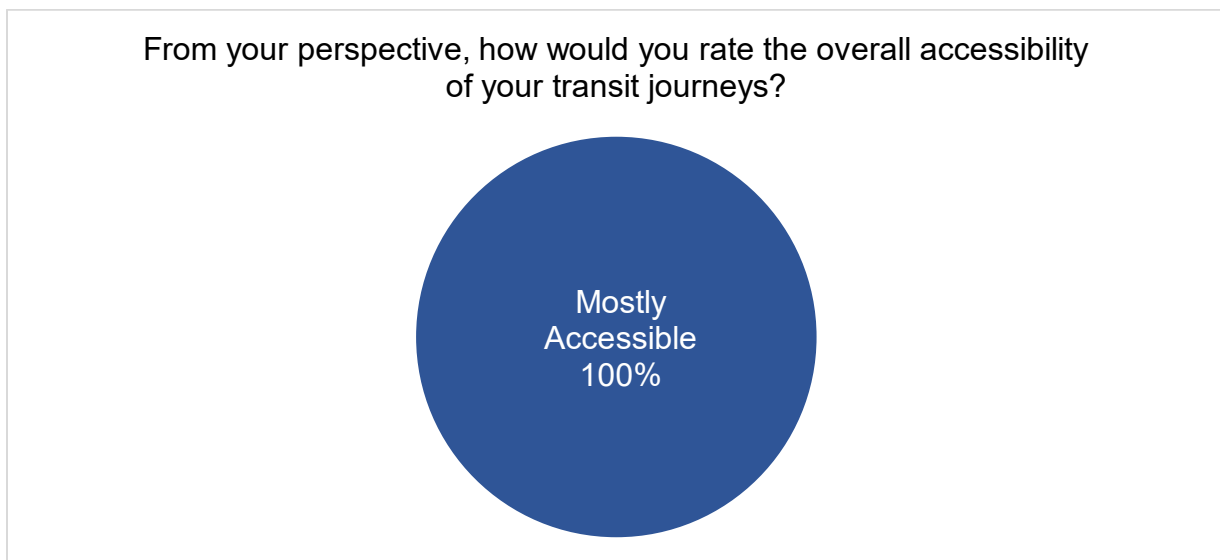


Figure 3: Summary of survey respondents' rating of the overall accessibility of their transit journeys

Design Features

Participants were asked one question related to design features. The question and response summary are provided below.

Question 4: What design features best support access and inclusive use of your transit journeys (i.e., elevators, escalators, ramps, railings, lighting, signage, etc.)?

Question 4 Response Summary: In total, 8 survey respondents provided their comments. Their responses are summarized as follows:

- Ramps, escalators, and elevators with clear and visible signage for accessibility
- Railings for support and safety
- Bus stop schedules for individuals without smartphones or internet access
- Audio announcements for information dissemination
- Adequate lighting for visibility
- Audible aids and tactile guiding strips on train and bus platforms for wayfinding
- Digital signboard for displaying estimated bus arrival times
- Improved signage for GO trains to reduce confusion about track assignments on platforms

Areas of Improvement

Participants were asked one question related to areas of improvement. The question and response summary are provided below.

Question 5: Please provide further details about your experience (positive and/or areas of improvement), including your transit route. (i.e., site conditions, elevators, journey/navigation from station to platform, boarding/alighting, etc.)?

Question 5 Response Summary: In total, 6 survey respondents provided their comments. Their responses are summarized as follows:

- Staff assistance is available, though limited.
- Way-finding assistance is inconsistent from the platform to the local transit, particularly between the Call Centre and on-ground staff.
- Signage is inadequate and poorly located.
- Buses are not always lowered or pulled up to the curb for easy boarding.
- Audio and visual stop announcements and accessibility features are not always functional.
- There are excessive delays and travel times are longer than expected.
- The connection points are not well positioned causing long wait times between connections.
- Elevator issues are common, especially along the Lakeshore West line.
- The seating on TTC buses is inadequate and not compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), causing discomfort for passengers with specific needs.

Participant Demographics

Participants were asked four questions related to demographics including how often they use transit and in what mode of transit as well as their experience travelling with a support person. The responses to the questions are as follows.

Question 6: During any given week, how often do you use transit as your main method of transportation?

- Option 1 – Often (5-7 days)
- Option 2 – Somewhat Often (3-4 Days)
- Option 3 – Not Very Often (1-2 Days)
- Option 4 – Never (0 days)

Question 6 Response Summary: In total, 17 survey respondents responded to this question. Most respondents (47%) use transit three to four days during any given week, as their main method of transportation. Approximately 23% use transit one to two days during any given week and 18% never use transit. Approximately 12% use transit often (five to seven days in a week). Please refer to Figure 4 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

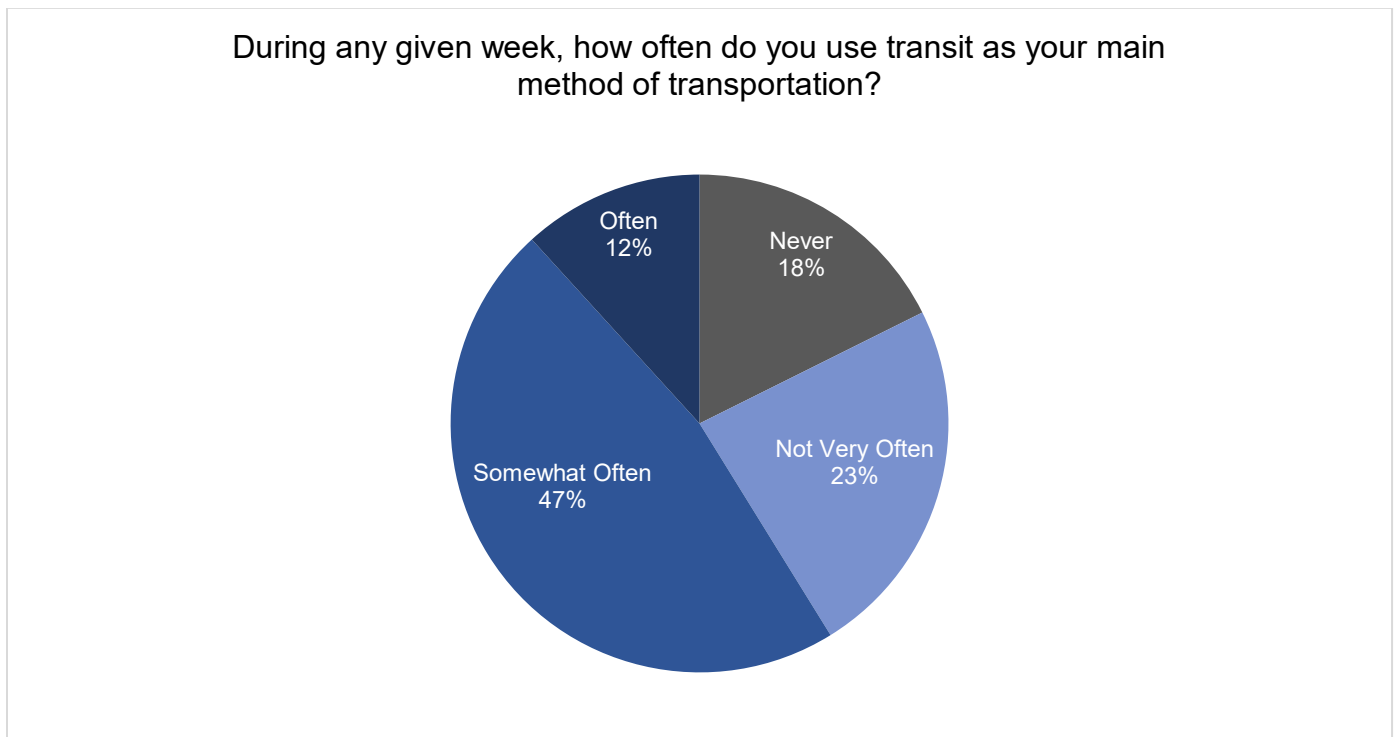


Figure 4: Summary of survey respondents' weekly transit usage.

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Question 7: What mode of transit do you use most often?

- Option 1 – GO Bus
- Option 2 – GO Train
- Option 3 – UP Express
- Option 4 – Municipal Transit (MiWay, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), etc.)
- Option 5 – Specialized Transit (Paratransit)
- Option 6 – Other
- Option 7 – None of the above

Question 7 Response Summary: In total, 17 survey respondents responded to this question. Overall, respondents ranked municipal transit and GO Train as the modes of transit they use most often. This was followed by the GO bus and the UP Express. Only one respondent reported using specialized transit as the mode of transit they use most often. One respondent reported using York Region Transit as a mode of transit they use most often. Please refer to Figure 5 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a bar chart.

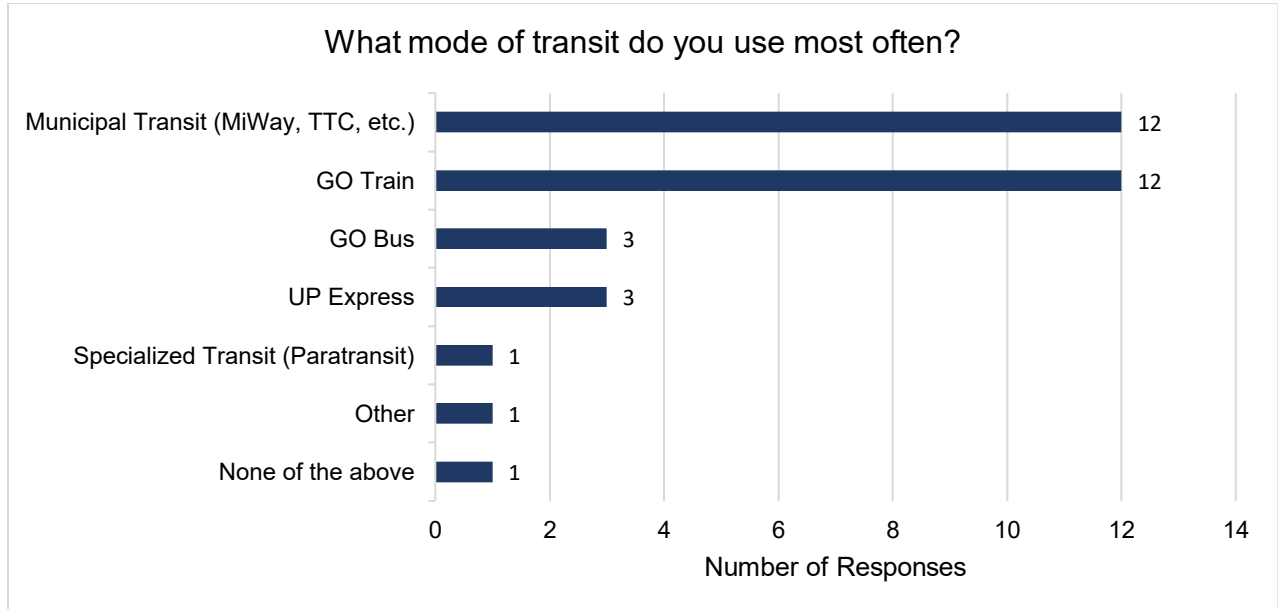


Figure 5: Summary of survey respondents' frequently used mode of transit.

Question 8: What is your preferred method of identifying the support person?

- Option 1 – Sticker on a PRESTO Card
- Option 2 – A separate card from a municipal transit service provider
- Option 3 – Easter Seals Access2 Card
- Option 4 – Other

Question 8 Response Summary: In total, 3 survey respondents responded to this question. Two, respondents selected having a sticker on a PRESTO card and one respondent selected having an Easter Seals Access2 Card as their preferred method of identifying the support person. No respondent selected having a separate card from a municipal transit service provider as a preferred method. Please refer to Figure 6 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a bar chart.

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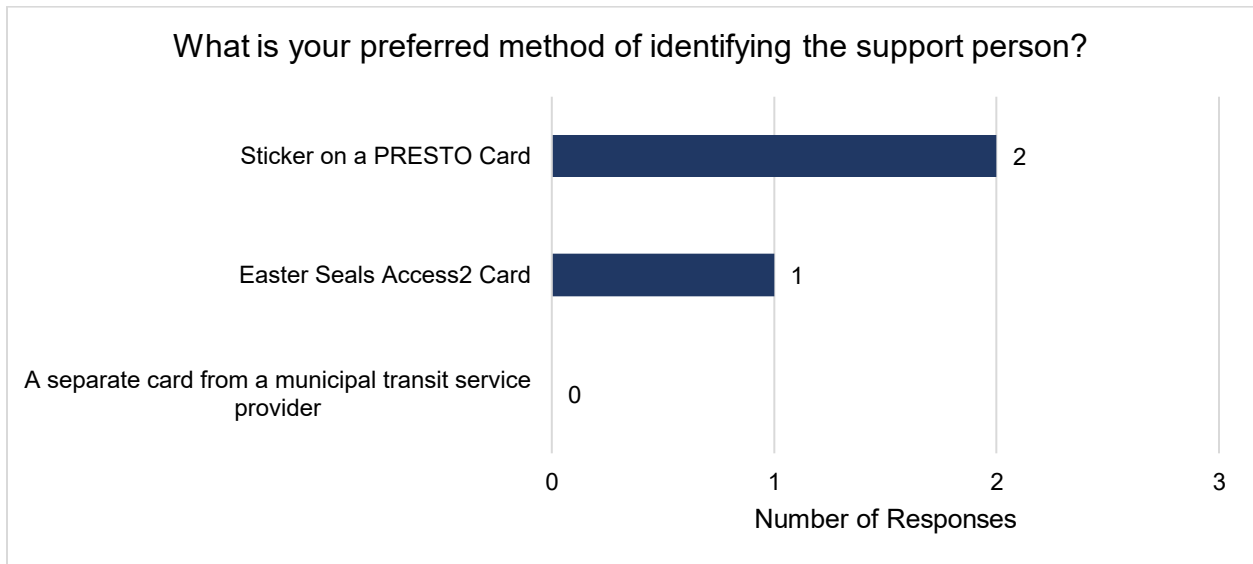


Figure 6: Summary of survey respondents' preferred method of identifying the support person.

Question 9: Do you travel with a support person?

- Option 1 – Yes
- Option 2 – No

Question 9 Response Summary: In total, 18 survey respondents responded to this question. Most respondents (89%) reported that they do not travel with a support person. Approximately 11% reported that they travel with a support person. Please refer to Figure 7 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

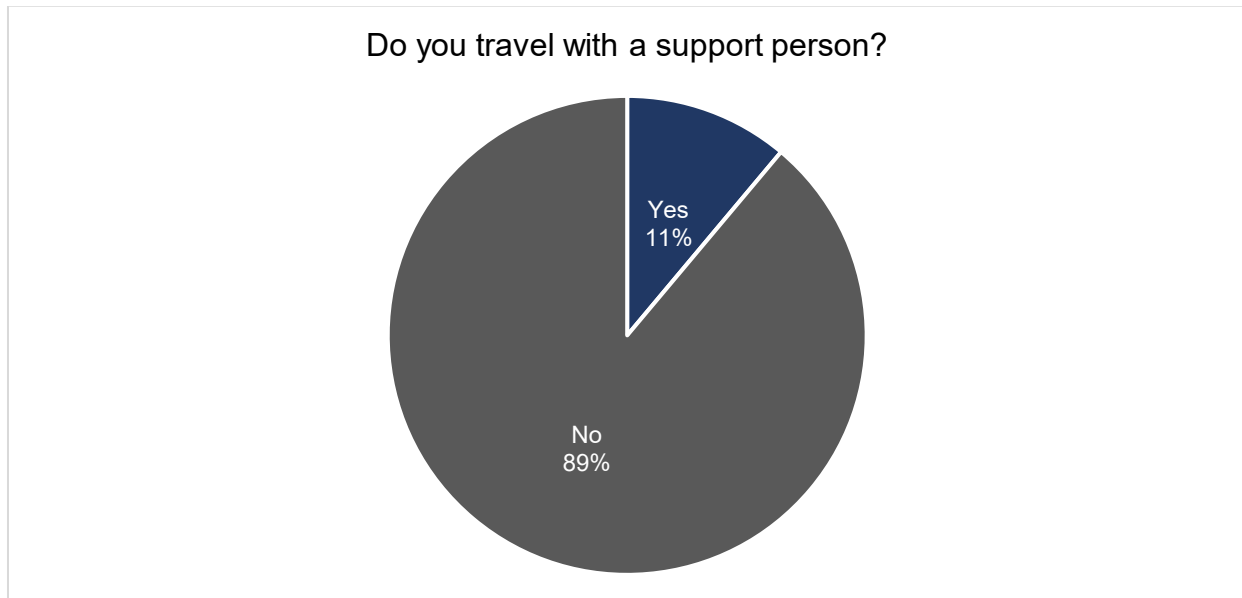


Figure 7: Summary of survey respondents' experience traveling with a support person.

Recommendations

Participants were asked five questions related to recommendations to enhance public transit accessibility and considerations for future consultations. The responses to the questions are as follows.

Question 10: Based on your experiences, what recommendations do you have overall to enhance accessibility of public transit?

Question 10 Response Summary: In total, 8 survey respondents provided their comments. The following section provides a list of recommendations to enhance public transit accessibility based on feedback from the meeting and post-survey results:

- Increase train frequency on the Georgetown line after 6:00 p.m.
- Provide training for staff on communication options and how to assist particularly when there is an issue at a stop due to construction.
- Ensure staff availability for way-finding assistance and service disruption guidance.
- Recognize the need for accessible options for passengers without mobile devices or limited data.
- Implement or enhance driver training on accommodating passengers with disabilities.
- Improve the user-friendliness of transit apps.
- Work towards unifying various transit systems (e.g., MiWay, YRT and TTC) into a single entity.
- Ensure elevator access, proper lighting, clear signage, and audible audio messaging.
- Establish contact points for passengers with accessibility issues during system-wide downtimes.
- Create designated assistance areas at every station instead of having roaming attendants.
- Add padding to accessible designated seating for passengers with hip, back, or spinal cord conditions.
- Provide schedules at all bus stops for easy reference.

Question 11: Do you have any questions, comments, or suggested changes for the project team to consider for future consultations?

Question 11 Response Summary: In total, 6 survey respondents provided their comments. The following section summarizes the questions, comments, or suggested changes that survey respondents would like the project team to consider for future consultations. 6 survey respondents provided their input which is summarized as follows:

- Provide alternative dates for more flexibility.
- Share a video recording of the consultations for those who missed the meeting.
- Inform participants about video and microphone settings to maximize participation.
- Provide clear instructions on how to locate microphone or camera controls and unmute microphones.
- Consider using Zoom instead of Microsoft Teams for virtual consultations.
- Offer an in-person option to allow for written responses.
- Avoid providing pre-scripted responses for unresolved issues.

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Question 12: What meeting format do you prefer?

- Option 1 – I prefer virtual consultations
- Option 2 – I prefer in-person consultations

Question 12 Response Summary: In total, 9 survey respondents responded to this question. Most respondents (67%) reported that they prefer virtual consultations. Approximately 33% reported that they prefer in-person consultations. Please refer to Figure 8 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

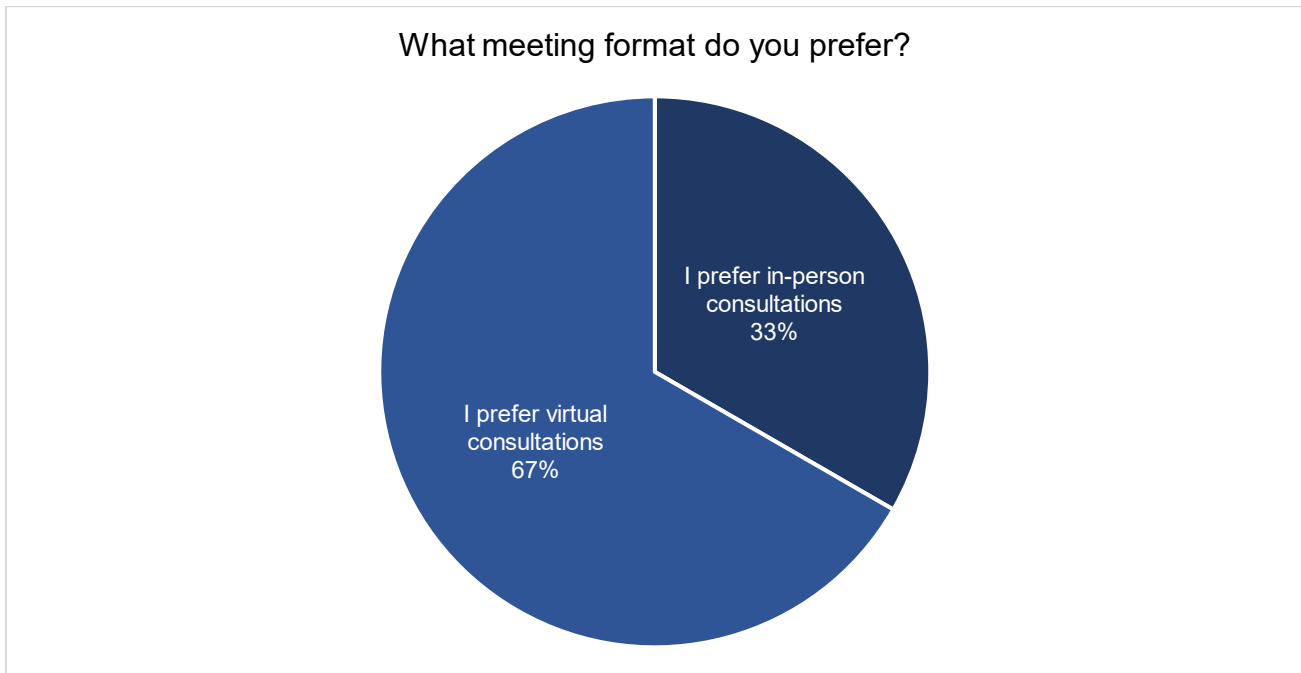


Figure 8: Summary of survey respondents' preference of meeting format.

Question 13: Why do you prefer the meeting format you selected? Explain your choice.

Question 13 Response Summary: In total, 8 survey respondents provided their comments. Their responses are summarized as follows:

- Participants who preferred virtual consultations liked:
 - The convenience of being able to stay at home and not needing to travel to and from a meeting location.
 - Being able to view the presentation slides on their personal devices.
- Participants noted that technical issues such as navigating video and microphone controls can hinder the virtual experience.
- Participants noted that in-person consultations may not always be conveniently located.
 - If the meeting format is in-person, holding the meetings near transit locations was suggested.
- Some participants would like a hybrid approach to be considered or have both in-person and virtual options be offered.
- Some participants suggested having a phone consultation to provide an option to participate via phone.

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Question 14: How satisfied are you with the overall 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation (format, presentation detail, discussion, etc.)?

- Option 1 – Very satisfied
- Option 2 – Somewhat satisfied
- Option 3 – Not satisfied

Question 14 Response Summary: In total, 8 survey respondents responded to this question. Five respondents (63%) indicated that they were very satisfied, two respondents (25%) indicated that they were somewhat satisfied, and one respondent (12%) indicated that they were not satisfied. Please refer to Figure 9 below for a graphic representation of these results in the form of a pie chart.

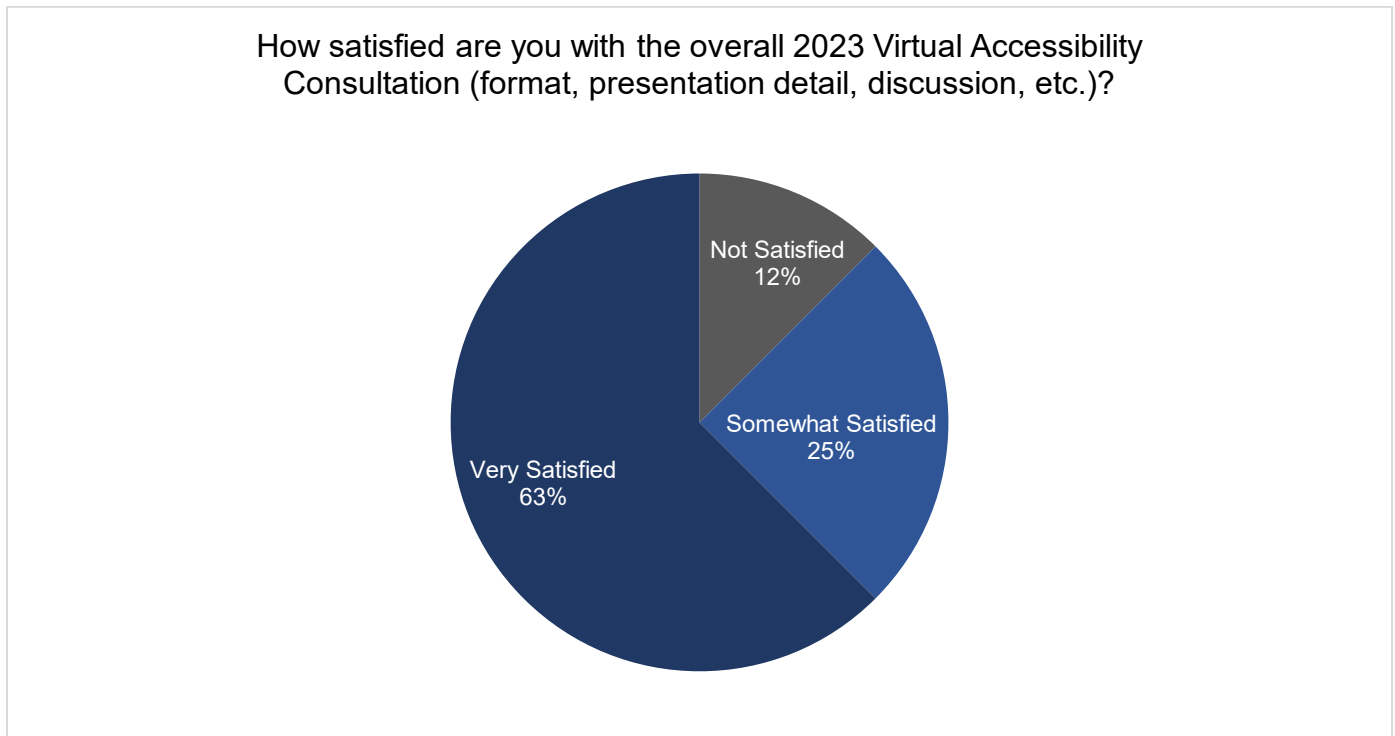


Figure 9: Summary of survey respondents' satisfaction with the overall 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation.

The post-meeting survey respondents demographics can be found in Appendix B.

Next Steps

Consultation information supports the continual improvement of Metrolinx services and learnings, and feedback are shared with staff across the organization. The input provided through this consultation process will be considered during the preparation of the 2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, in planning or policy processes, and in design through updates to Metrolinx design standards.

Appendix A – Meeting Agenda

Metrolinx 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation

Thursday, September 28, 2023

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams Webinar

Time	Agenda Item
6:30 pm	Welcome and Introductions
6:35 pm	Where Are We Currently <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Design at Metrolinx• GO Transit, UP Express• PRESTO• Regional Specialized Transit Working Group
6:45 pm	What's Our Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Built Environment Accessibility Audit• AccessNow Partnership• Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Project
6:55 pm	Where Are We Going Next <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Projects
7:00 pm	Questions and Comments
7:55 pm	Next Steps and Conclusion
8:00 pm	Adjourn

Appendix B – Survey Demographics

The following details the survey participants responses to “Which of the following best describes how you identify?”:

In total, 19 survey participants responded to this question.

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
I identify as a person with a physical disability who uses a mobility device all the time	2	10%
I identify as a person with a physical disability who uses a mobility device some of the time (limited mobility)	0	0%
I identify as a person with a sensory disability (i.e., vision, hearing)	5	26%
I identify as a person with a cognitive or intellectual disability	1	5%
I identify as a person with a mental health condition	0	0%
I identify as a person with multiple disabilities	1	5%
I identify as a person with a hidden disability	3	15%
I do not identify as a person with a disability	3	15%
I do not identify as a person with a disability, but I support someone with a disability	1	5%
I prefer not to answer	4	21%