



City of Hamilton

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ADDENDUM

Meeting #: 24-014
Date: October 15, 2024
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Carrie McIntosh, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 2729

	Pages
5. COMMUNICATIONS	
*5.1 Correspondence from Susie Braithwaite, International Village BIA, respecting Item 11.1 - Service Level Change for Hanging Basket Program (PW24064) (City Wide)	2
Recommendation: Be received and referred to the consideration of Item 11.1	
6. DELEGATION REQUESTS	
*6.2 Delegation Requests respecting item 8.1 - Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Fare Policies (PW23024(b)) (City Wide), for today's meeting, from the following individuals:	
*a. James Kemp (Virtually)	3
*b. Brad Evoy, Disability Justice Network of Ontario (In person)	4
*c. Tim Nolan, Accessibility Hamilton Alliance (In person)	5
8. STAFF PRESENTATIONS	
*8.1 Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Fare Policies (PW23024(b)) (City Wide) - REVISED (Presentation attached)	6



5.1

hamiltoninternationalvillage.ca

October 15th, 2024

To: Members of General Issues Committee
 From: Susie Braithwaite, Executive Director - International Village BIA
 CC: Herb Wodehouse, Chair – International Village BIA
 RE: Service Level Change for Hanging Basket Program (PW24064)

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee:

Regarding the proposed changes to the hanging basket program specifically pertaining to Downtown Hamilton, I would like to voice that I am strongly opposed to any changes to this program that would pause or eliminate any beautification efforts from the City of Hamilton. Historically downtown Hamilton has had extra attention from the city to beautification efforts so to create a welcoming environment for everyone invested in the core and to highlight that Downtown Hamilton is a tourism destination.

This year the baskets were exceptionally attractive and appreciated in our area and the BIA received nothing but positive feedback from both businesses and community members. The baskets add a pop of colour to the urban core and a sense of community. By eliminating this program, even for a year, there would be a definite void in the beautification of our streets. The BIA simply does not have the resources to manage hanging baskets and we have already approved our 2025 budget.

In a recent asset management plan done by horticulture, none of the risks they speak to in this report were identified. In recent surveys done by the City of Hamilton, hanging baskets and garden beds were mentioned as very important. Downtown Hamilton is currently facing several challenges that the BIAs are trying to manage on a daily basis. Taking away programs like this will only add to the frustrations that the businesses are facing in the core. If anything, we need extra attention and supports now more than ever. The removal of this program would have a direct negative impact on our BIA.

Please do not allow this program to be postponed or canceled especially in Downtown Hamilton. I encourage you to look at alternative solutions to the issues presented in this report that will keep downtown Hamilton moving forward and beautiful.

Sincerely,

Susie Braithwaite
 Executive Director - International Village BIA

195 Main St, East, Suite 100 Hamilton, ON L8N 1H2

info@hamiltoninternationalvillage.ca • (905) 522-1778

f @internationalvillage.bia t @HamIntlVillage i @internationalvillagebia

Submitted on Thu, 10/10/2024 - 11:35

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Committee Requested

Committee

Public Works Committee

Will you be delegating in-person or virtually?

Virtually

Will you be delegating via a pre-recorded video?

No

Requestor Information

Requestor Information

James Kemp

n/a



Preferred Pronoun

he/him

Reason(s) for delegation request

To Speak to Committee regarding PW23024b

Will you be requesting funds from the City?

No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation?

No

6.2(b)

Submitted on Thu, 10/10/2024 - 17:19

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Committee Requested

Committee
Public Works Committee

Will you be delegating in-person or virtually?
In-person

Will you be delegating via a pre-recorded video?
No

Requestor Information

Requestor Information
Brad Evoy
Disability Justice Network of Ontario
423 King Street East
Hamilton, Ontario. L8N 1C5
brad@djno.ca
289-780-3566

Preferred Pronoun
he/him

Reason(s) for delegation request
Regarding Item 8.1 - Staff Report - Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Fare Policies

Will you be requesting funds from the City?
No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation?
No

6.2(c)

Submitted on Thu, 10/10/2024 - 20:01

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Committee Requested

Committee

Public Works Committee

Will you be delegating in-person or virtually?

In-person

Will you be delegating via a pre-recorded video?

No

Requestor Information

Requestor Information

Tim Nolan

Accessibility Hamilton Alliance



Preferred Pronoun

he/him

Reason(s) for delegation request

sPEAK TO hsr STAFF REPORT 23024

Will you be requesting funds from the City?

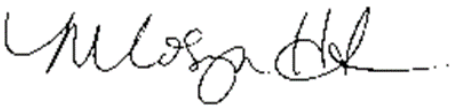
No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation?

No



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 15, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Fare Policies (PW23024(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Nancy Purser (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1876
SUBMITTED BY:	Maureen Cosyn Heath Director, Transit Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

The Fare Assist Pilot Program was unanimously approved by Council on July 14, 2023, per Report PW23024(a). At the December 13, 2023 Council meeting, staff were directed to report back to the Public Works Committee in September 2024 on the findings during a six-month grace period that was instituted for those currently utilizing the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Temporary Transit Fare Special program, which ended on June 30, 2024.

This report provides information on actions taken by HSR to provide customer support through the transition process and activities undertaken to inform, educate and support transit riders and feedback received from those who enrolled in the program during this timeframe.

INFORMATION

Council approved a two-year pilot of the HSR Fare Assist program, for the period of January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026 through Report PW23024(a). During the two-year pilot, the following programs were suspended: the Affordable Transit Pass program and the Temporary Transit Fare Special program effective December 31st, 2023.

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**SUBJECT: Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Fare Policies
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At the December 13, 2023 Council meeting the Temporary Transit Fare Special program was provided an additional 6-month grace period, which ended on June 30, 2024.

The Affordable Transit Pass provided a 50% discount off the Adult Monthly Pass for employed recipients ages 18-64 on either Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support programs, and Low Income individuals. The Temporary Transit Fare Special Program, valid on HSR only, gave people with a Canadian National Institute for the Blind (“CNIB”) card or using a personal mobility device (scooter, walker or wheelchair) a voluntary pay option, meaning they could elect to pay full fare, partial fare or no fare.

Neither of the above programs extend to additional household members. The Temporary Transit Fare program only applies to trips taken on the HSR, with no discount provided on accessible transportation services.

Fare Assist was designed to contribute to fare affordability, freedom to travel by transit and increase ridership through making fares more affordable. It is a means-tested approach which could be consistently applied to all applicants.

Fare Assist offers several benefits over current programs including:

- Applies equally to trips taken on both the HSR and accessible transportation services.
- Applies to qualified applicants based on income and is no longer tied to a limited list of specific disabilities.
- “Pay as you go” format enables eligible participants to load funds as needed on their PRESTO card and pay a reduced fare per trip and eliminates the need to have sufficient cash to buy a monthly pass.
- Applies to all members of the household, including a spouse/partner and children ages 13 to 17.
- Offers greater flexibility to the customer, putting them in control of how much to load on their card at a time.
- HSR loyalty program automatically applies (customers receive free fare faster once they exceed the weekly ride cap for the week travelling Monday to Sunday for both HSR and accessible transportation services trips).

In response to early feedback received through delegations, Council approved the additional six-month grace period to those using the HSR Temporary Transit Fare Special program. This provided additional time for education, outreach, and program on-boarding. The grace period also addressed concerns raised that the application was not made available online until late December 2023 and that people may not be aware

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of the changes coming. Staff undertook multiple activities during the grace period to support the community through the change including:

- Advertising (interior bus ads, Bus News, social media boosts, take-ones at outreach events).
- Digital Media (website, social media)
- Outreach events (focus in the downtown area, and all wards covered) which provided over 10,000 interactions.
- Pamphlets at 23 community organizations and businesses (tax clinics, community organizations, resource centres, city connections).
- Direct mail to 4,600 Accessible Transportation Services customers.
- Emails to 13,792 Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients who had an email on file.

Significant support for program implementation was provided through Transit's Support Services, Customer Experience and Innovation, Accessible Transportation Services, Operations and Fleet Maintenance departments. A comprehensive list of outreach activities is shown in Appendix "A" attached to Report PW23024(b).

Early feedback also raised concerns with the change to front door boarding. Therefore, front door entry training was made available to persons using mobility devices at various bus terminals or by request. Training was provided to 25 individuals. On the ground feedback determined most personal mobility devices users were already aware of how to board at the front door. Transit continues to make this service available at various events or in person upon request.

Applications for Fare Assist have been accepted and processed since January 1, 2024. To the end of June 2024, 4,256 customers had been approved, of these, 694 are children 12 and under who are household members of fare assist customers and ride for free. Of those who were issued the discount, 62% had activated it on their PRESTO card.

As of August 9, 2024, with the end of the grace period, the number of applications received increased by 628 to a total of 4,967 and redemptions increased to 70%. The increase in redemptions suggests that Temporary Transit Special Fare program users had applied, however, chose not to access the Fare Assist program until the grace period ended.

The average time to process an application and issue an approval email or letter is three business days. The demographics of the applicants, including income category, age, and ward are shown in Appendix "B" attached to Report PW23024(b). The proposed program estimated that there would be approximately 9,000 participants as shown in Appendix "A" attached to Report PW23024(a); we have reached 55% of this

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estimate, with applications continuing to be received daily. Outreach will continue throughout the remainder of the pilot program, with continued emphasis on reaching more low-income households.

Feedback about this program is important to its success and to inform potential future program changes. There are two mechanisms being used to gather customer insights: a satisfaction survey and customer feedback collected through the call centre emails or in person at the ticket office.

1. Program Satisfaction Survey Results

An ongoing survey has been created for the Fare Assist Program. The survey seeks to understand the ease of use for the application process and the ease of access to the discount on PRESTO as well as the overall satisfaction with the Fare Assist Program, the details are included in Appendix “D” attached to Report PW23024(b).

2,400 surveys have been issued to households approved for Fare Assist. As of August 9, a total of 534 surveys (22%) have been completed. Of the 534 surveys received to date:

- 69% (366 respondents) applied as a single person household.
- 21% (112 respondents) applied as family of applicants.
- 47% (253 respondents) identified as a person with a disability.
- 25% (133 respondents) previously used the Affordable Transit Pass program.
- 15% (78 respondents) previously used the Temporary Transit Fare Special program.

Application Process:

- 87% (465 respondents) found the application process “relatively easy”, suggesting that the steps are clear and accessible for a large portion of the population.
- 88% (468 respondents) found the PRESTO registration process “easy”, indicating that for most customers, the steps to register their PRESTO cards were clear and accessible.
- 87% (465 respondents) were satisfied with the length of time it took to apply for and start using Fare Assist, suggesting that for most customers, the process is timely and efficient.

Satisfaction with the Program:

- 87% (444 respondents) expressed satisfaction with the Fare Assist program, indicating that it is positively impacting many customers' ability to access public transit.

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- 86% (438 respondents) of respondents appreciate the 30% discount, finding it beneficial in reducing their overall transit costs.
- 90% (460 respondents) would recommend this program to friends and family.
- 8.8% (45 respondents) previously accessed either the Affordable Transit Pass or the Temporary Transit Special Fare program and have responded that they are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “extremely dissatisfied” with the program as the previous discount was better.

Impact on Transit Usage:

The survey asked respondents if it allowed them to travel more frequently because of the price reduction. Responses show that 192 customers now travel daily, versus 162 before the program, an increase of 18%. Similarly, customers who travel 3 to 4 days a week increased to 173 from 144, a 20% improvement.

Prior to the Fare Assist Pilot Program, 31 survey respondents reported they travel by transit only one day a month, while only 9 survey respondents reported one day a month travel with the program in place, a 240% improvement.

These results are encouraging and suggest that this program is directly increasing transit usage.

Appendix “C” attached to Report PW23024(b) displays the monthly ridership for the first 7 months of the Fare Assist program.

Persons with Disabilities:

The Fare Assist Pilot Program received early feedback regarding the potential impact on some persons with disabilities who take the HSR using a scooter, walker or wheelchair, or are Canadian National Institute for the Blind (“CNIB”) cardholders. To collect feedback, the survey requested respondents to self-identify as a person with a disability and/or if they had used either of the suspended programs historically.

Of the 534 total surveys, 47% (253 respondents) identified as a person with a disability. Of these 253 surveys returned to date:

- 85% (215 respondents) found it was easy to apply for the program.
- 85% (216 respondents) found it easy to register their PRESTO card.
- 85% (214 respondents) are “somewhat satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with how quickly they were able to apply and start receiving the discount.

The survey also asked this group of respondents about their use of any suspended programs. Of these 253 respondents, 21% or 54 respondents said they previously utilized the Affordable Transit Pass and 19% or 48 respondents said they previously

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utilized the Temporary Transit Fare Special Program. 60% or 151 respondents did not report using one of the suspended programs. When asked the question “The 30% discount on single-ride PRESTO fares has made a positive impact on you and/or your family's monthly spending”, of the 242 responses:

- 200 (83%) somewhat agreed or agreed
- 17 (7%) neither agree nor disagree
- 25 (10%) somewhat disagree or disagree

Overall, this group reported an 85% satisfaction level with the Fare Assist program.

Of the 239 respondents who responded to the question regarding how often they ride, 49 respondents are riding daily versus 43 respondents prior to the program, a 13% increase. Respondents who travel 3 to 4 days a week reported a 20% increase from 74 to 89. The survey shows that 31 respondents are travelling infrequently, versus 59 respondents previously, a 53% improvement in customers' ability to access transit. Similar to overall survey results, these results suggest this segment is enjoying more frequent transit usage.

245 respondents answered the question, “Do you ride with HSR or DARTS vehicles?”

- 25 respondents utilize both the HSR and Accessible Transportation Services and now receive the 30% discount when travelling both on HSR and ATS.
- 14 respondents use Accessible Transportation Services only and now receive a 30% discount that did not exist before Fare Assist.
- 206 use HSR only.

Survey questions will evolve over the course of the pilot to gain a better understanding of how families travel, as well as other information that may be deemed relevant to the overall analysis of the program. The data shows that there may be only one family member who has set up the discount on their card, therefore, understanding how the remainder of the family travels will provide additional insights for the program analysis.

A separate survey will be sent to our social agencies to learn from their perspective if this program has helped their clients and whether it has created a greater demand for their services.

2. Customer Feedback

Customer feedback is received through the HSR Customer Contact team via phone or email. 83% of the contacts (119 out of 144) received were general inquiries about how the process worked or help to enrol or activate. We used this feedback to strengthen the

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information available for our customers and to simplify our processes. A list of improvements can be found in Appendix “E” attached to Report PW23024(b).

Problems with processing applications occurred during the early stages of the cyber incident as customers could not apply for the program between February 25 – April 9, 2024. This issue generated a number of customer inquiries. During the outage, paper versions of the applications were accepted and were processed as soon as the application was restored.

We heard from customers who are not happy with the changes made to previous programs, specifically those who may have chosen not to pay a fare in the past. A total of 9 (6%) complaints were recorded regarding the removal of the Affordable Transit Pass and Temporary Transit Special Fare Program. Appendix “F” to Report PW23024(b) provides details of HSR Customer Contacts.

Staff at the HSR ticket office began tracking requests for help with the Fare Assist process in mid-April. Those early requests were mostly related to PRESTO card set up and activating their discount. At the end of the additional 6-month grace period, many customers presented themselves in person at the Ticket Office for assistance in setting up their PRESTO card. Of 142 interactions, 72 or 51%, occurred once the grace period ended.

Overall, the results of the first 6 months of the Fare Assist Pilot Program are very promising and provide a strong foundation on which to continue addressing transit affordability for Hamiltonians.

The results of the 6-month grace period show that:

- 90% of survey respondents would recommend Fare Assist to friends and family.
- 87% of respondents find the Fare Assist Program easy to access.
- 87% of respondents are satisfied with the Fare Assist Program overall.

Data gathering will continue for the duration of the pilot, with additional metrics being added to monitor income levels for low-income applicants, as well as gaining insights through focus groups from program participants and the Accessible Transportation Services customer panel consisting of 275 participants and the HSR customer panel with 1,572 participants.

This Information Report fulfils the December 13, 2023 Council motion. Per Report PW23024(a), staff will continue to update the Public Works Committee on the status of the Fare Assist Program no later than March of 2025.

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APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PW23024(b) – Education and Outreach
Appendix "B" to Report PW23024(b) – Fare Assist Demographics
Appendix "C" to Report PW23024(b) – Fare Assist Ridership
Appendix "D" to Report PW23024(b) – Fare Assist Survey Results
Appendix "E" to Report PW23024(b) – Fare Assist Continuous Improvement
Appendix "F" to Report PW23024(b) – Fare Assist Customer Feedback

Fare Assist Education and Outreach

This Appendix lists activities undertaken by the HSR for customer education and outreach.

Promotional Materials: distributed promotional materials including posters, pamphlets, TV images, outreach email templates and social media graphics with accompanying captions to more than 40 organizations detailed below:

City Partners Housing Services	City Housing
Active and Sustainable Travel	Recreation Centers
Hamilton Public Libraries	Municipal Service Centres
HIPC (acronym)	Tourism Hamilton
Hamilton Economic Development Office	Ontario Works Offices
Ontario Disability Support Payments Office	

Tax Clinics

Free Tax Clinic	Restoration House
N2N Advocacy Office	Ibrahim Jame Mosque Tax Clinic
Parkview Church	YWCA Hamilton Newcomer Tax Clinic

Business Improvement Areas

Barton Village	International Village
Concession St.	Downtown
Westdale Village	Dundas

Community Organizations

CityKidz	Boys and Girls Club
YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford	Living Rock Ministries
ACORN	Indwell
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion	St. Charles Adult & Continuing Ed
Salvation Army	Good Shepherd
Mohawk College New Residence	Collège Boréal
PATH Employment Services	Mohawk Newcomers
YMCA	Welcome Inn
Wesley Youth Centre	

Continuous Improvement:

We have continued to respond to customer feedback by:

Providing On-Site Help: Inviting Special Supports to join us at events including the Farmers Market to help customers complete physical application forms.

Enhancing the Environment: Adding a display board, children's activities, and tabletop banners for clearer information.

Upgrading Brochures: Expanding brochures to include more detailed information about the application and redemption process.

Online Access: making information about Fare Assist available through the following websites:

- PRESTO's website - [Transit Agency Fares \(prestocard.ca\)](https://prestocard.ca)
- Hamilton Directory of Services for Newcomers
- Fares page on the City of Hamilton's website

Launching the How to Ride the Bus workshops: providing opportunities for people to learn about our services, fares and to practice front door boarding.

Fare Assist Specific Outreach Events

Our presentations aimed to educate community partner staff on supporting clients with Fare Assist. We explain program details, the application process and available resources. This training was designed to empower staff to help clients navigate the application process effectively and improve overall support.

Customer Interactions Count	Outreach Events	Date
25	Language Training Providers ZOOM Presentation	15-Apr
60	Employment and Language Training at Collège Boréal Presentation	22-Apr
200	Refugee, Newcomer, and Black Heath Symposium	10-May
100	St. Charles Adult and Continuing Education Presentation	15-May
25	YMCA - Employment & Immigrant Services Presentation	5-Jun
30	Mohawk - Programs for Newcomers Presentation	6-Jun
15	Wesley Newcomers Presentation	12-July
25	Welcome Inn Community Centre Presentation	July
10	Hamilton Regional Indian Centre Presentation	July
10	YMCA Presentation	August
500	Total	

Farmers Market – Over **650** interactions from April to August with 20 outreach events. The Hamilton Farmers Market has remained a consistent place to receive support on applications every Thursday 11AM-2PM April-August.

General Outreach Events – This is a partial list of initiatives where we provided information on transit programming and about Fare Assist.

Customer Interactions Count	Outreach Events
250	Bus & Booth at Newcomer Day
200	Dundas Community Services 2024 Senior's Fair
200	Senior Event Kick-off
18	Adults in Motion
41	Health and Wellness Expo at St Elizabeth Village
120	Art Crawl
30	HIPC focus group
22	Video Game Tournament at Westmount REC
18	Basketball Tournament at Montgomery & Woodlands Park
60	Celebration and Job opportunities
12	Ultimate Frisbee with Toronto Rush
13	Resume Review at Norman Pinky Rec center
200	Bike for Mick event
65	Green Ventures
1000	Concession Open St.
25	Indigenous celebration day
300	King St Open Streets
700	Police at the Park
500	Open Streets
100	Bike Day
580	HSR150 Outreach Events
1008	Spring Board Outreach Events
2159	16 Lime Ridge Terminal Construction Outreach Events
2000	Fall Board Outreach Events (approx)
8912	Total

HSR Staff Engagement – **135** interactions with staff at Mountain Transit Center and Frank A Cooke Terminal

Staff Interactions Count	Location	Date
23	Mountain Transit Centre	18-Jun
33	Mountain Transit Centre	19-Jun
28	Mountain Transit Centre	20-Jun

31	Mountain Transit Centre	21-Jun
20	Frank A. Cooke Transit Terminal	June
135	Total	

We ensured that staff were thoroughly prepared to assist customers with Fare Assist by equipping them with detailed information on locating resources and navigating the application process. We dedicated time to address staff questions and clarify any uncertainties, providing them with essential information and guidance to effectively support customers.

How to Ride the Bus Workshops

We provided a series of pop-ups workshops located across the city (see location below). Every Tuesday and Thursday in July, workshops ran from 9 am to 4 pm at the Mountain Transit Centre. Workshops covered information about how to plan trips, get on and off the bus, read bus signs, pay fares and apply for Fare Assist when applicable. We had over **330** people attend our workshops with many quality interactions.

Ward	Location	Date
Ward 2	Hamilton GO Centre, Spot 51	24-Jun
Ward 9	Valley Park Community Centre	24-Jun
Ward 5	Stoney Creek Recreation Centre	25-Jun
Ward 7	Billy Sherring Park	25-Jun
Ward 6	Huntington Park Recreation Centre	26-Jun
Ward 1	Westdale Across from Shoppers	26-Jun
Ward 14	Sir Allan MacNab	27-Jun
Ward 3	Gage Park	28-Jun
Ward 12	Ancaster Library	28-Jun
Ward 13	Dundas Library	3-Jul
Ward 2	Victoria Park Loop	3-Jul
Ward 8	Westmount Recreation Centre	5-Jul
Ward 10	Winona Community Centre	5-Jul

Other events were also held at *various other locations including the Flamborough YMCA, Waterdown Library, Kenilworth Library, Parkdale Park, Dundas Community Centre and more.*

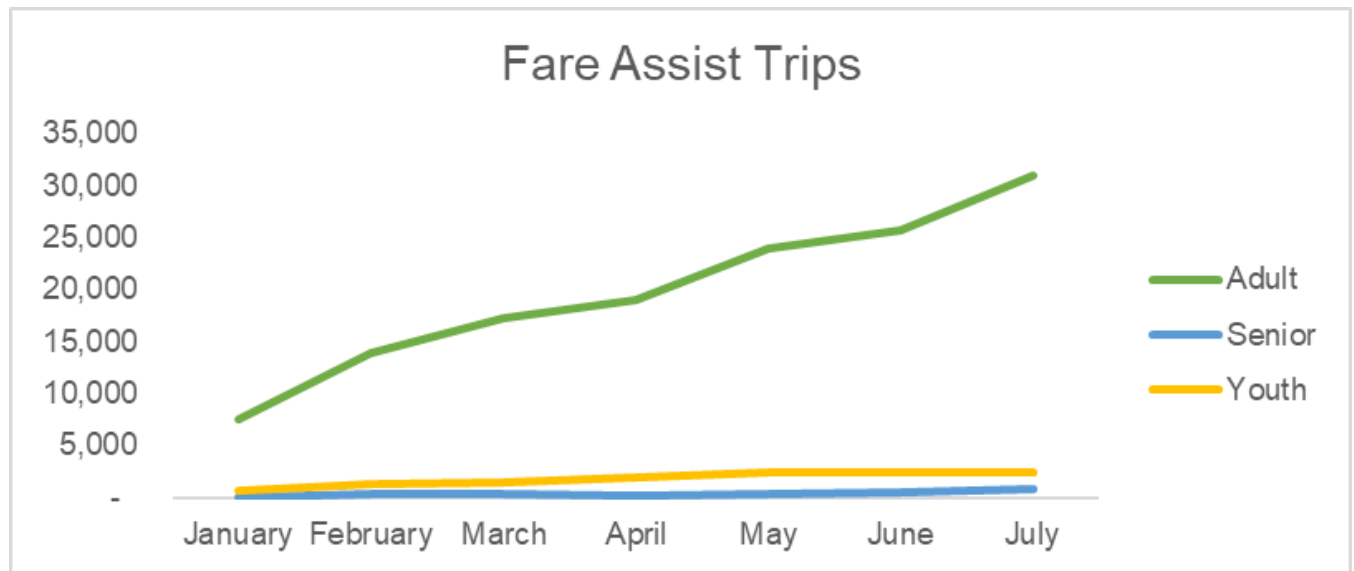
Demographic Breakdown of Applicant Data as of August 9, 2024

Number of Approved Applications by Income Category		
Ontario Works	1442	45%
Ontario Disability Support Program	1280	40%
Low Income	509	15%
Total	3231	100%

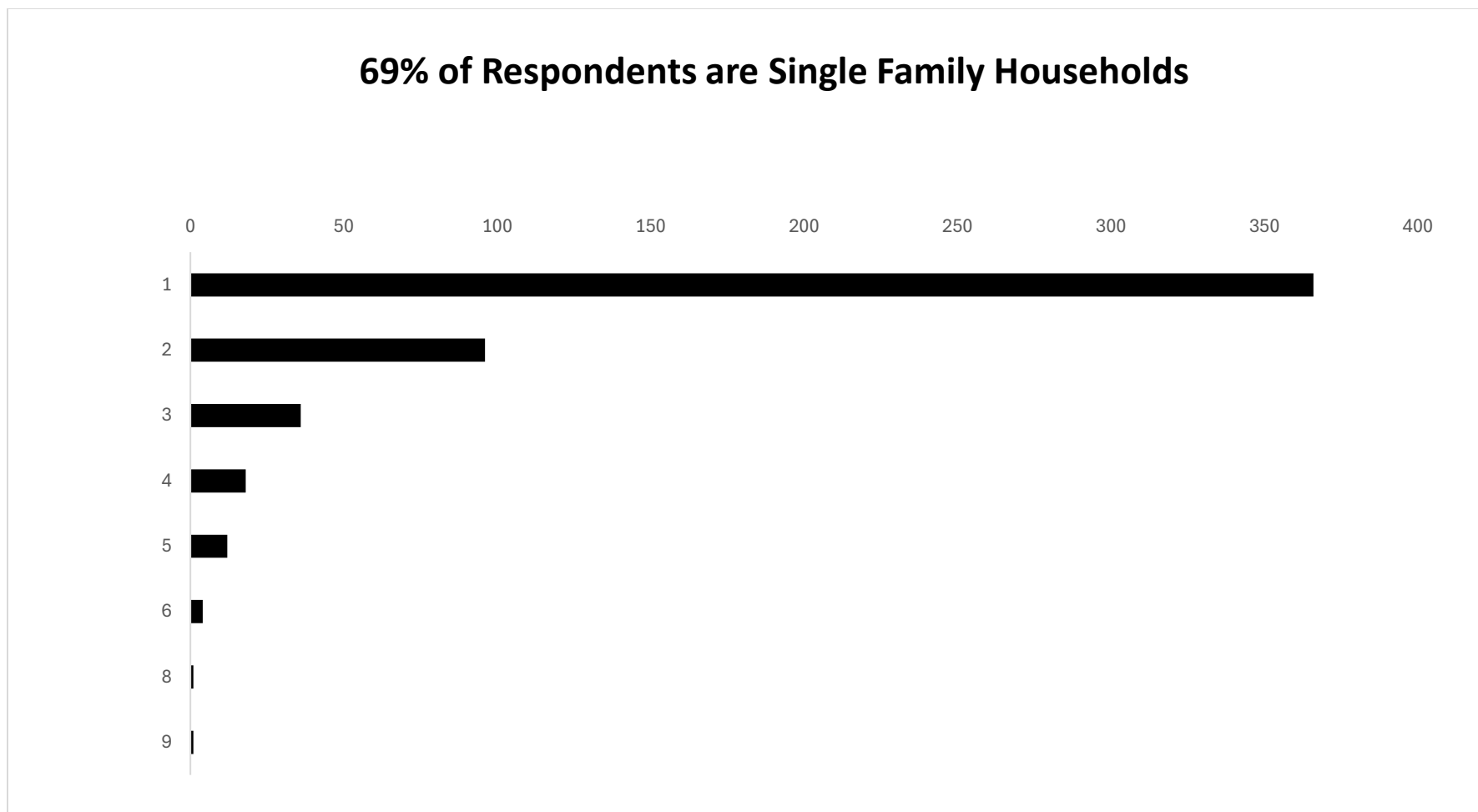
**Each household is considered one application*

Number of Applicants by Age Category		
Adult	3358	68%
Child	777	16%
Senior	224	5%
Youth	608	12%
Total	4967	100%

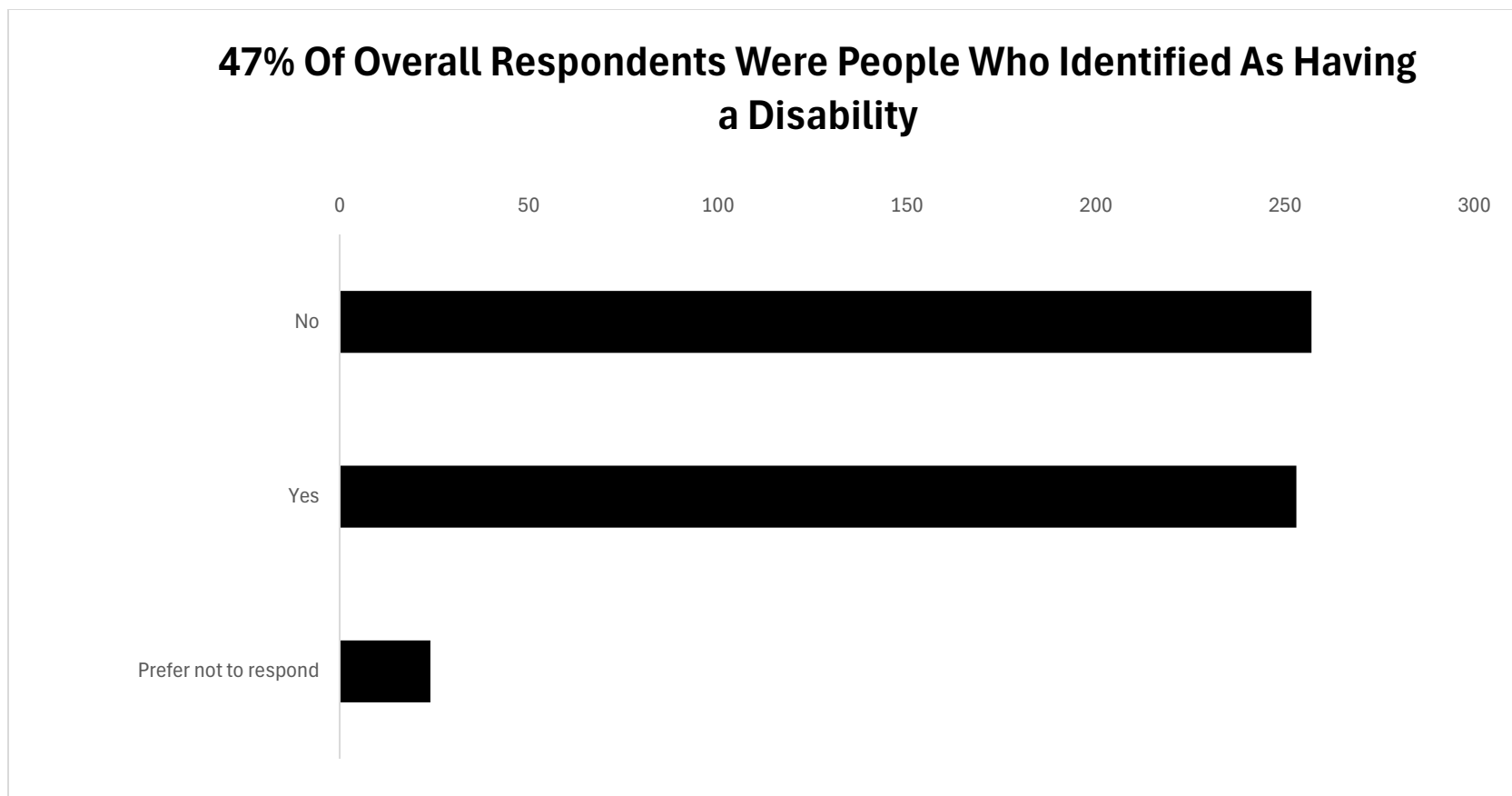
Breakdown of Applicants by Ward				
Ward	Adult	Child	Senior	Youth
1	247	57	27	30
2	591	111	55	70
3	794	179	31	110
4	386	92	18	87
5	241	71	15	53
6	196	49	8	54
7	286	59	35	65
8	216	42	4	42
9	64	29	3	27
10	77	24	4	8
11	37	12	4	14
12	45	5	6	6
13	51	4	7	11
14	112	39	4	29
15	15	4	3	2



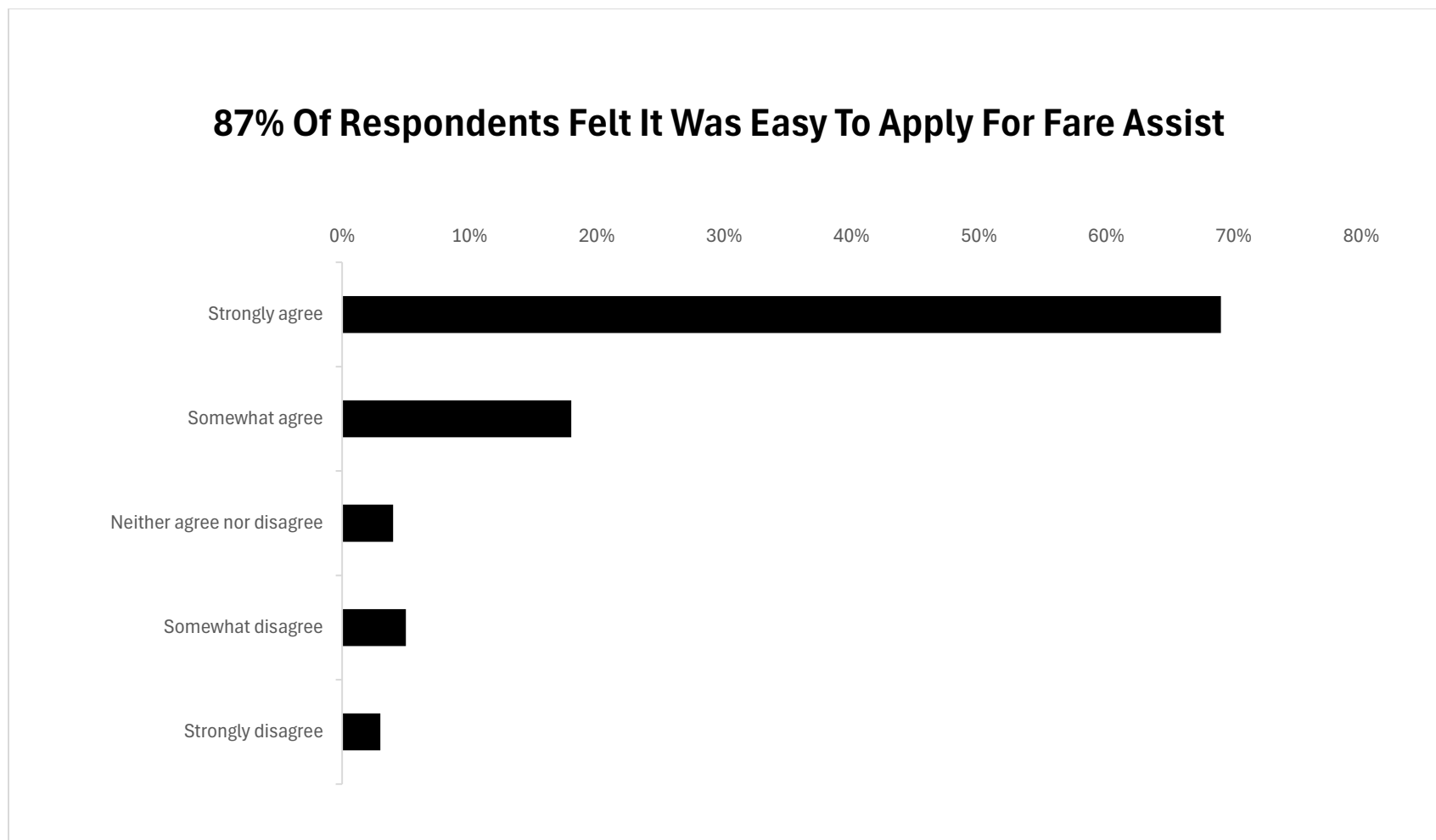
Fare Assist Trips by Concession Type				
2024	Adult	Senior	Youth	Total
January	7,492	110	719	8,321
February	13,859	295	1,328	15,482
March	17,320	305	1,529	19,154
April	18,956	268	1,924	21,148
May	23,976	387	2,478	26,841
June	25,783	545	2,403	28,731
July	30,956	898	2,432	34,286
Grand Total	148,018	3,146	13,489	164,653

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

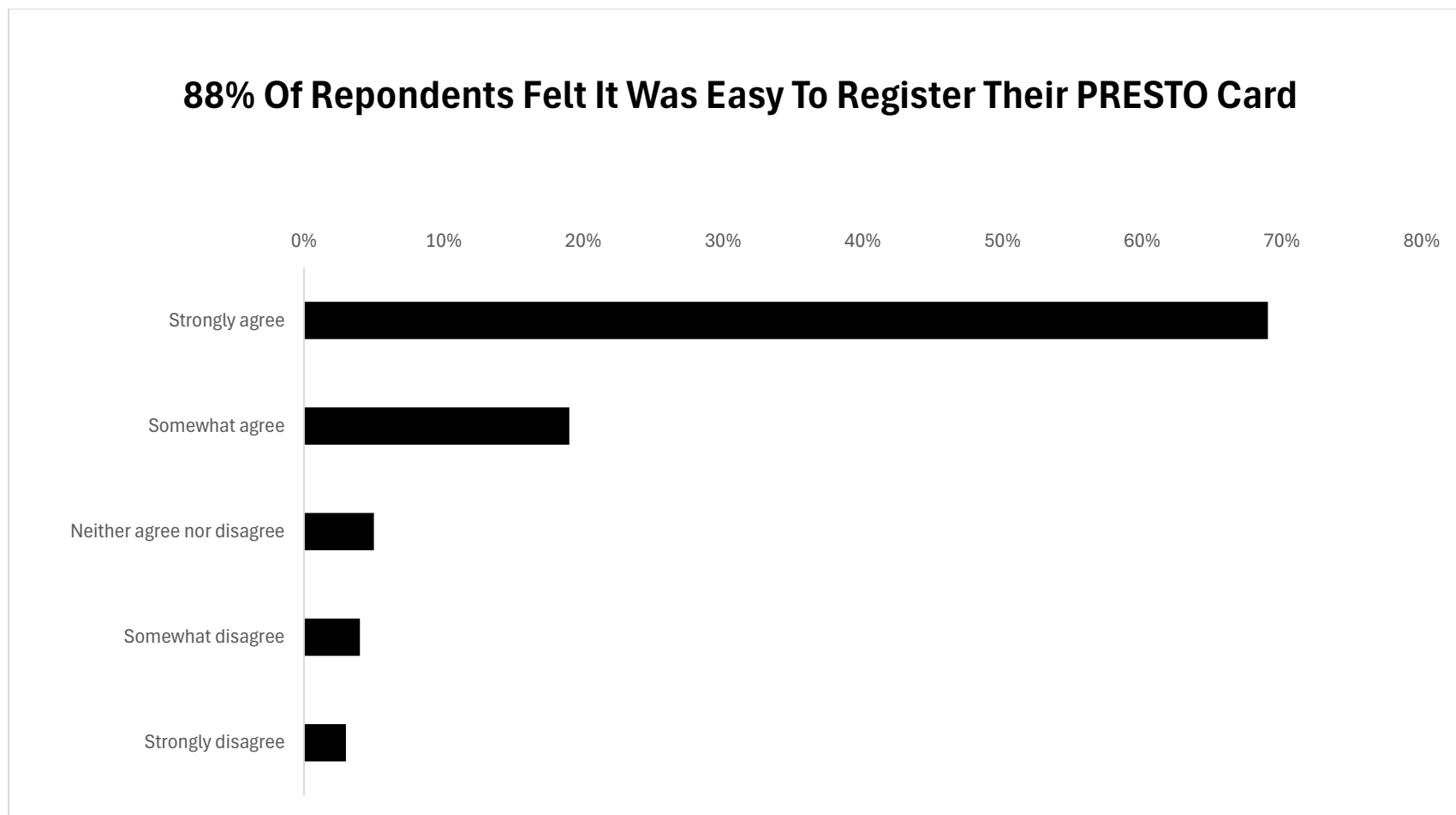
Of the total respondents, 366 out of 534 (69%) indicated that one person in the home was using Fare Assist.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

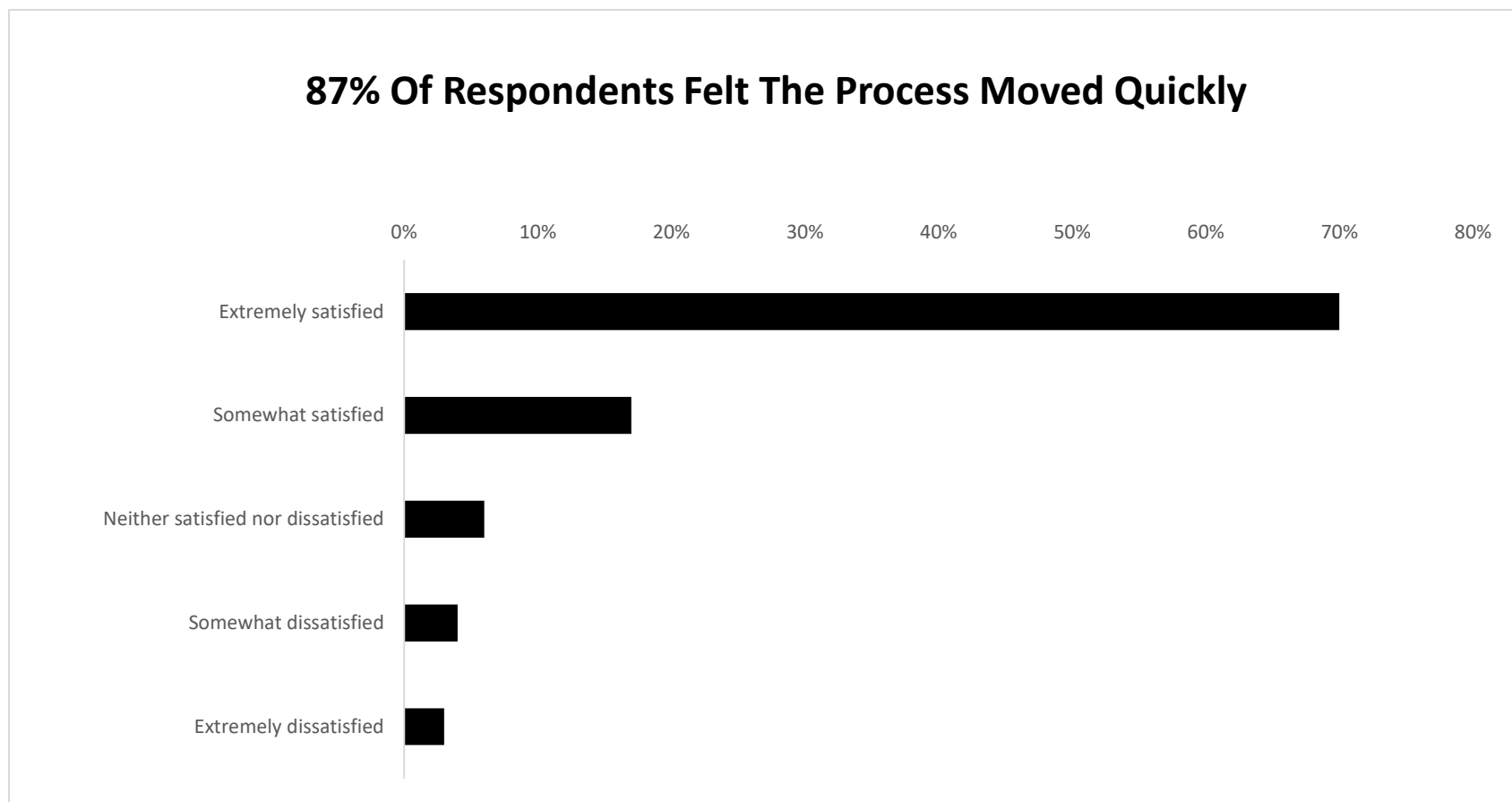
Of the total Respondents, 253 out of 534 (47%) identified as having a disability.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

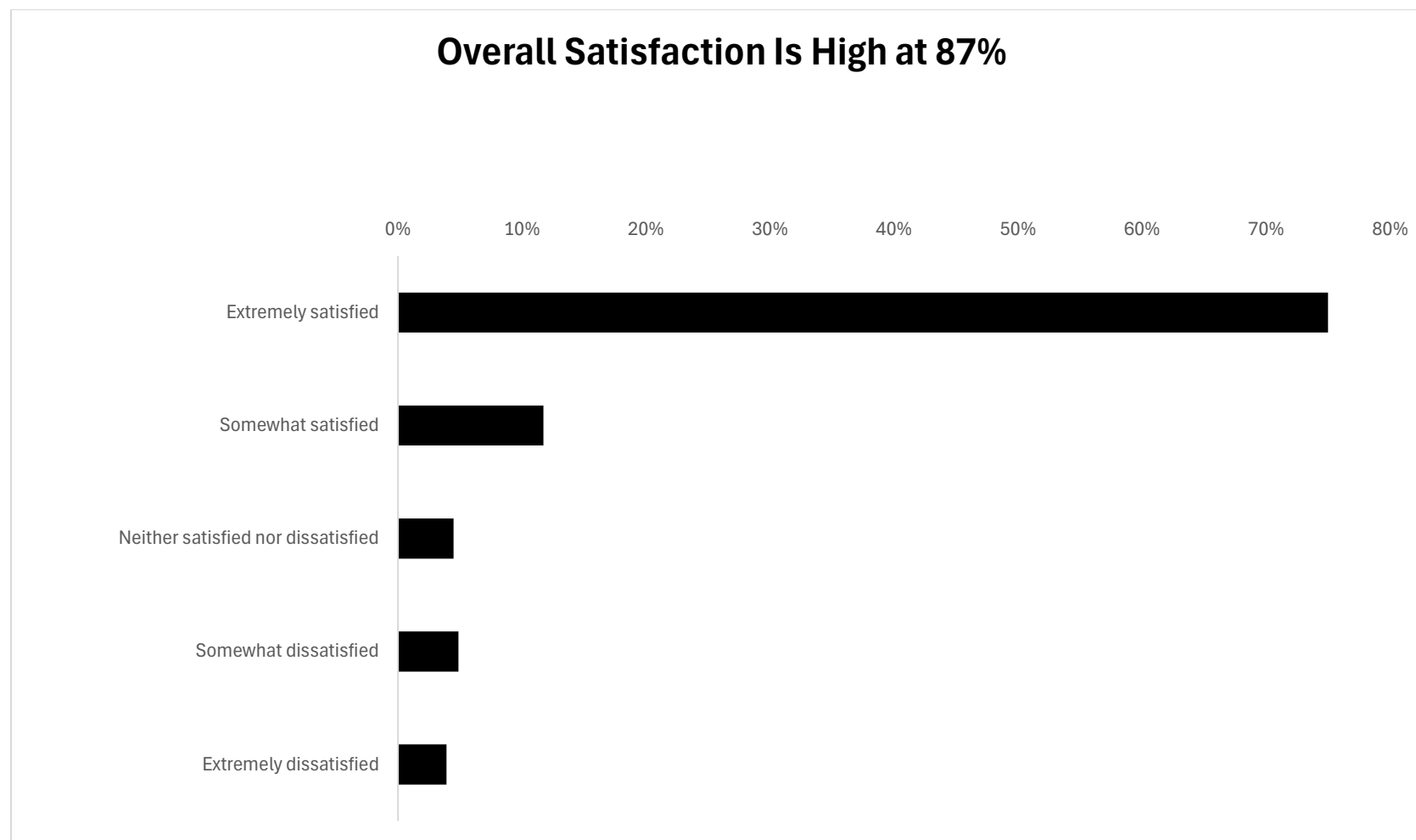
"How easy was it to apply for Fare Assist?" Most respondents (465 out of 534 or 87%) either strongly agree or somewhat agree that the application process was easy. This indicates that for most respondents, the process was straightforward and manageable.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

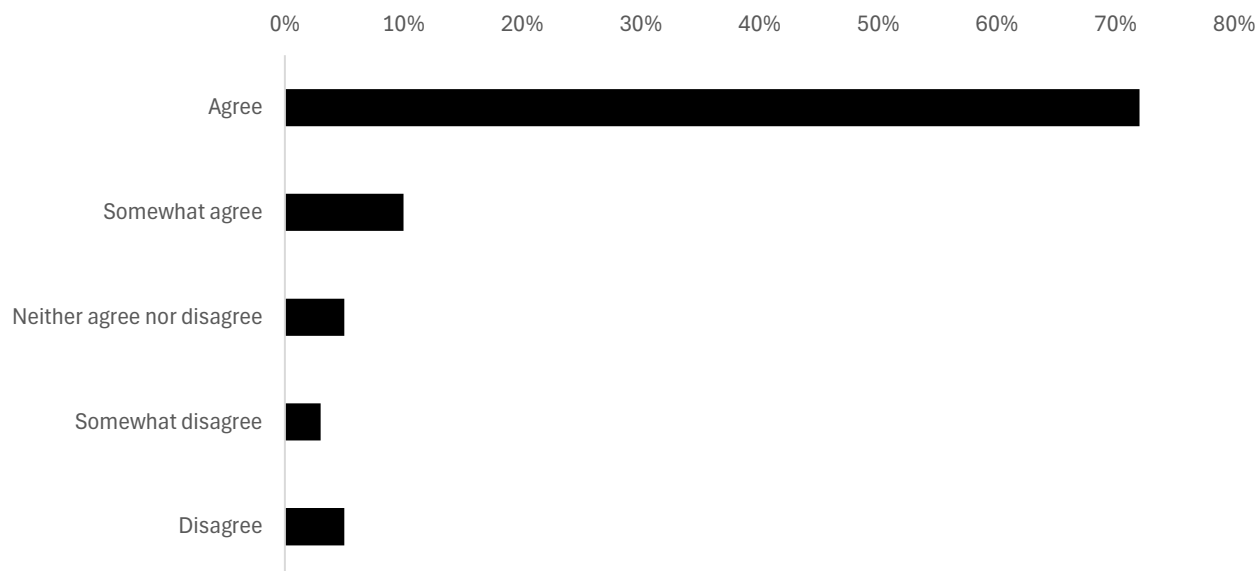
"How easy was it to register your PRESTO Card?" reveals a positive experience, with 468 out of 534 respondents (88%) strongly agreeing or agreeing that the registration process was straightforward and manageable.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

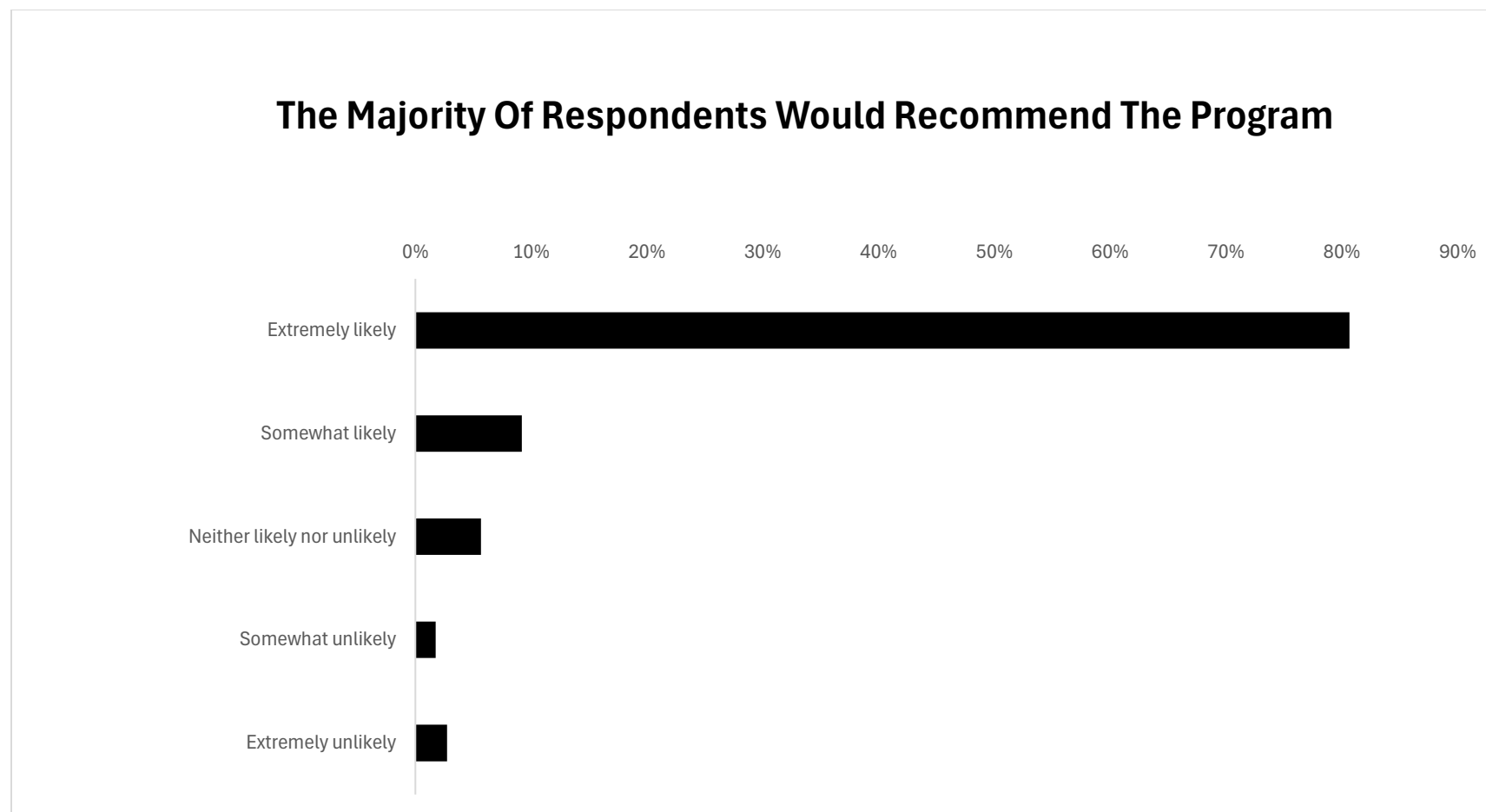
The survey responses for the question "How satisfied are you with the length of time it took to apply for and start using Fare Assist?" shows that most respondents were satisfied with the process, with 465 out of 534 respondents (87%) indicating that they were either somewhat or extremely satisfied, suggesting that for most customers, the process is timely and efficient.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

The survey responses for the question "Overall, how satisfied are you with Fare Assist?" show that a significant majority of customers, 444 out of 512 respondents (87%) are either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the program.

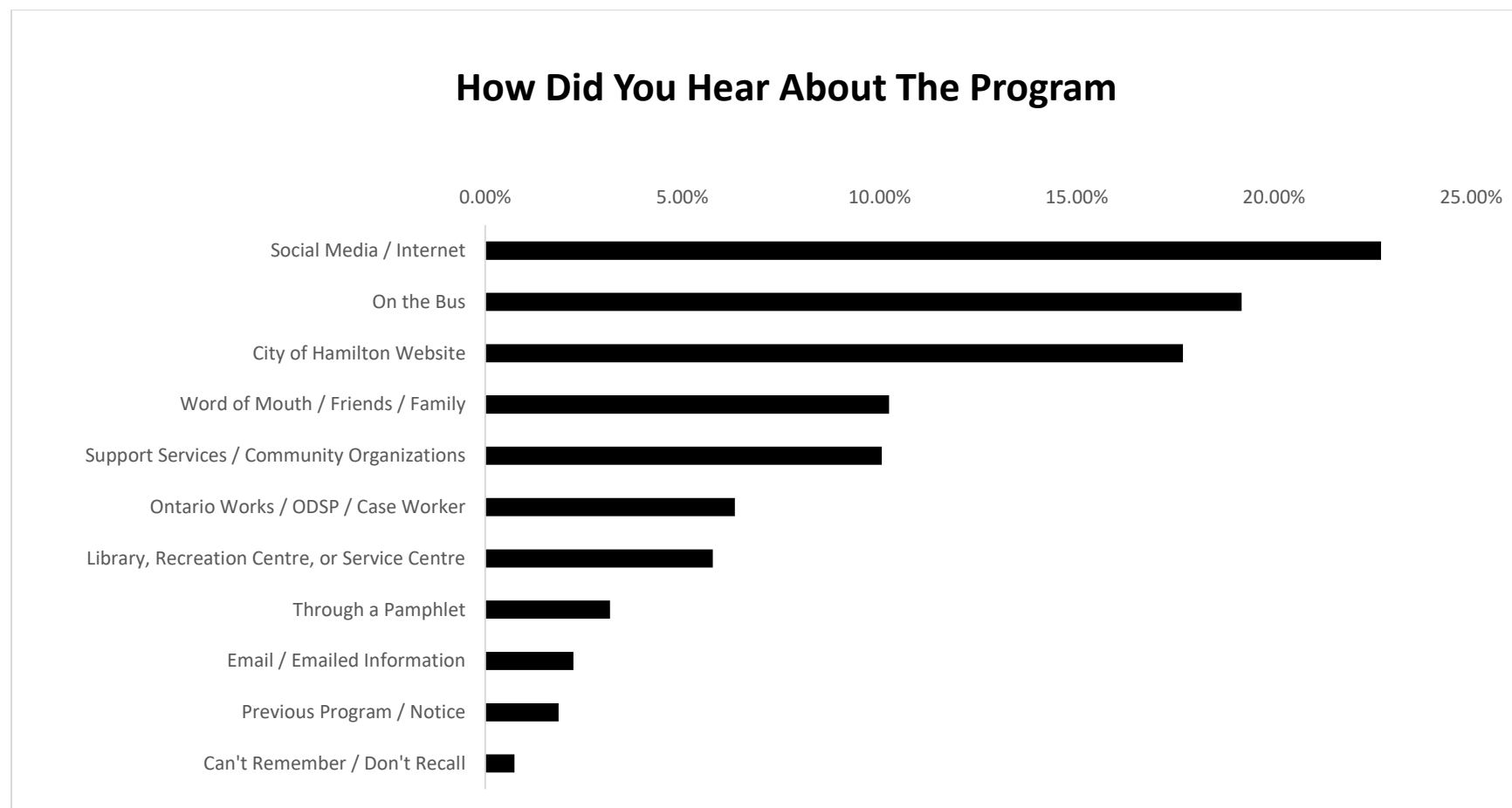
Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024**The Majority Said That Fare Assist Has a Positive Impact On Their Lives**

A large majority (82%) 438 respondents appreciate the reduced fare, finding it beneficial in reducing their overall transit costs. This positive reception suggests that, for most respondents, the Fare Assist program is fulfilling its intended purpose of making public transit more affordable.

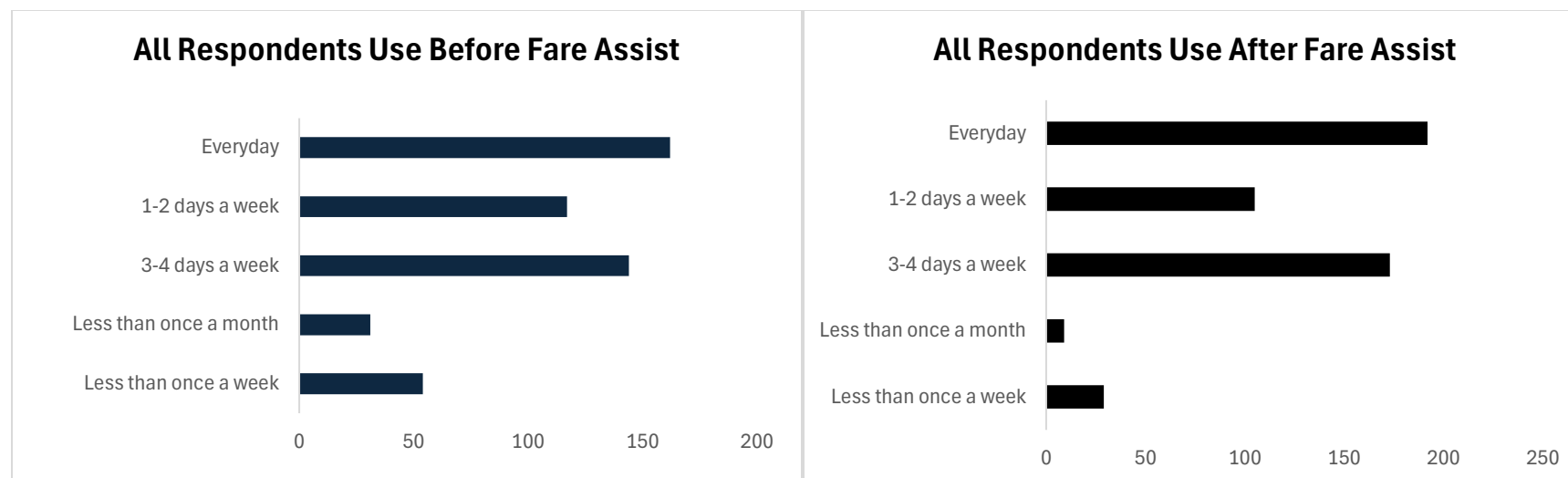
Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

The survey reveals that a substantial majority of respondents (460 out of 512, or 90%) are extremely likely or likely to recommend the Fare Assist program to others. This strong response suggests that overall, the program is perceived positively by most respondents.

Quote *"I have helped several friends apply and they're extremely happy with the service."*

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

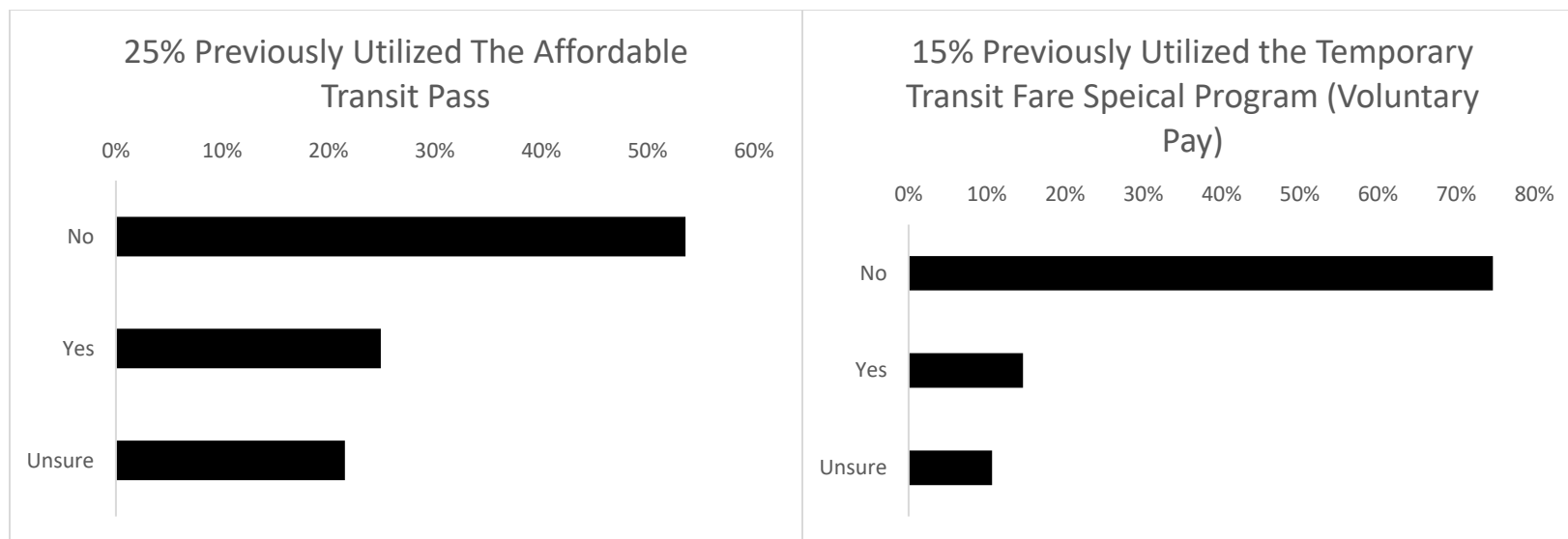
The survey reveals that most respondents (60%) learned about the program either online or while riding the bus, with another 27% learning about it through word of mouth or a case worker.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

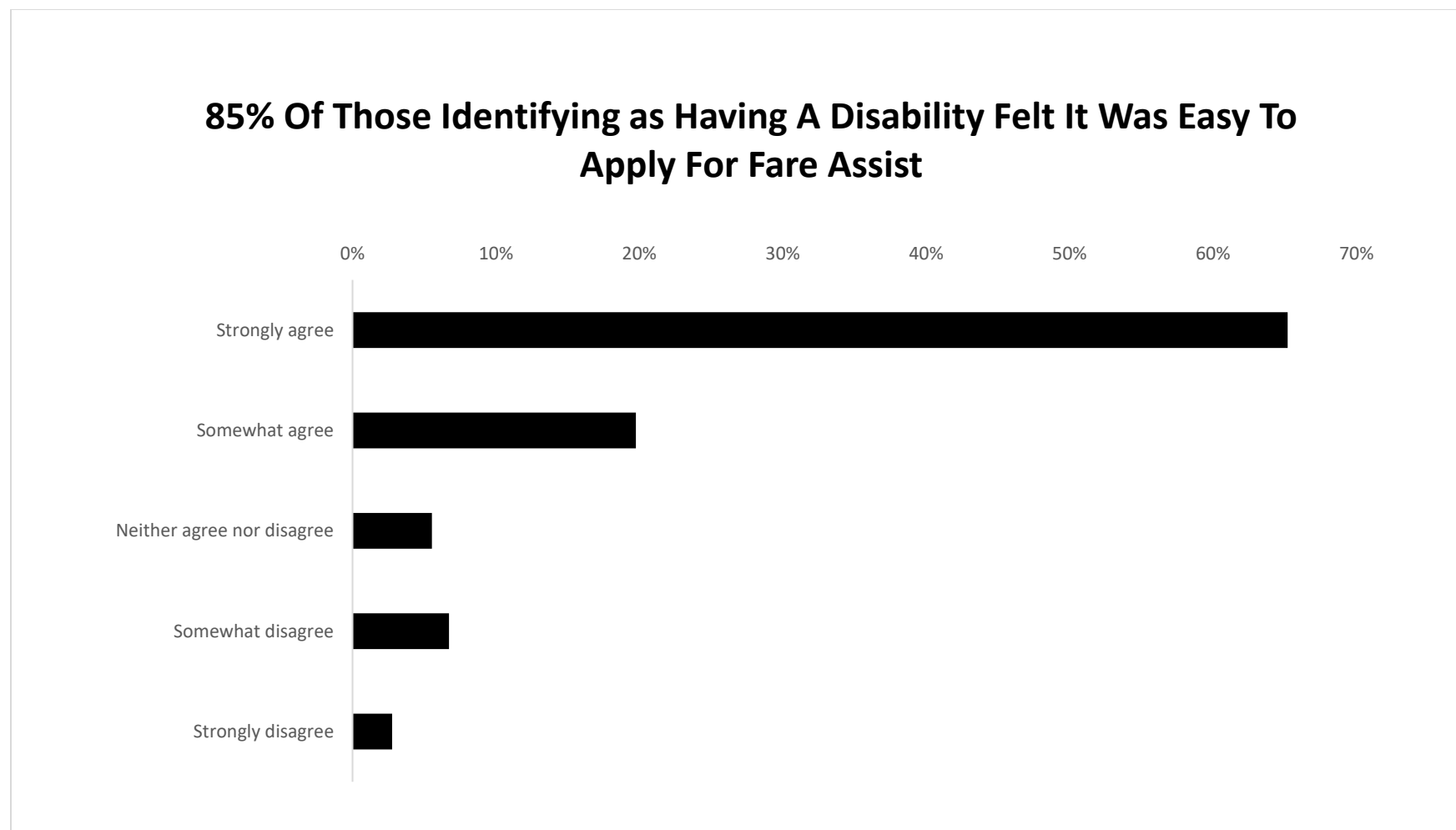
Increased Frequency of Use Everyday Use: There is a notable increase in the number of customers who reported using HSR or DARTS every day, rising from 162 before enrollment to 192 after enrollment. This suggests that Fare Assist may have enabled more frequent use of public transit by making it more affordable, particularly for those who rely on it daily.

3-4 Days a Week:

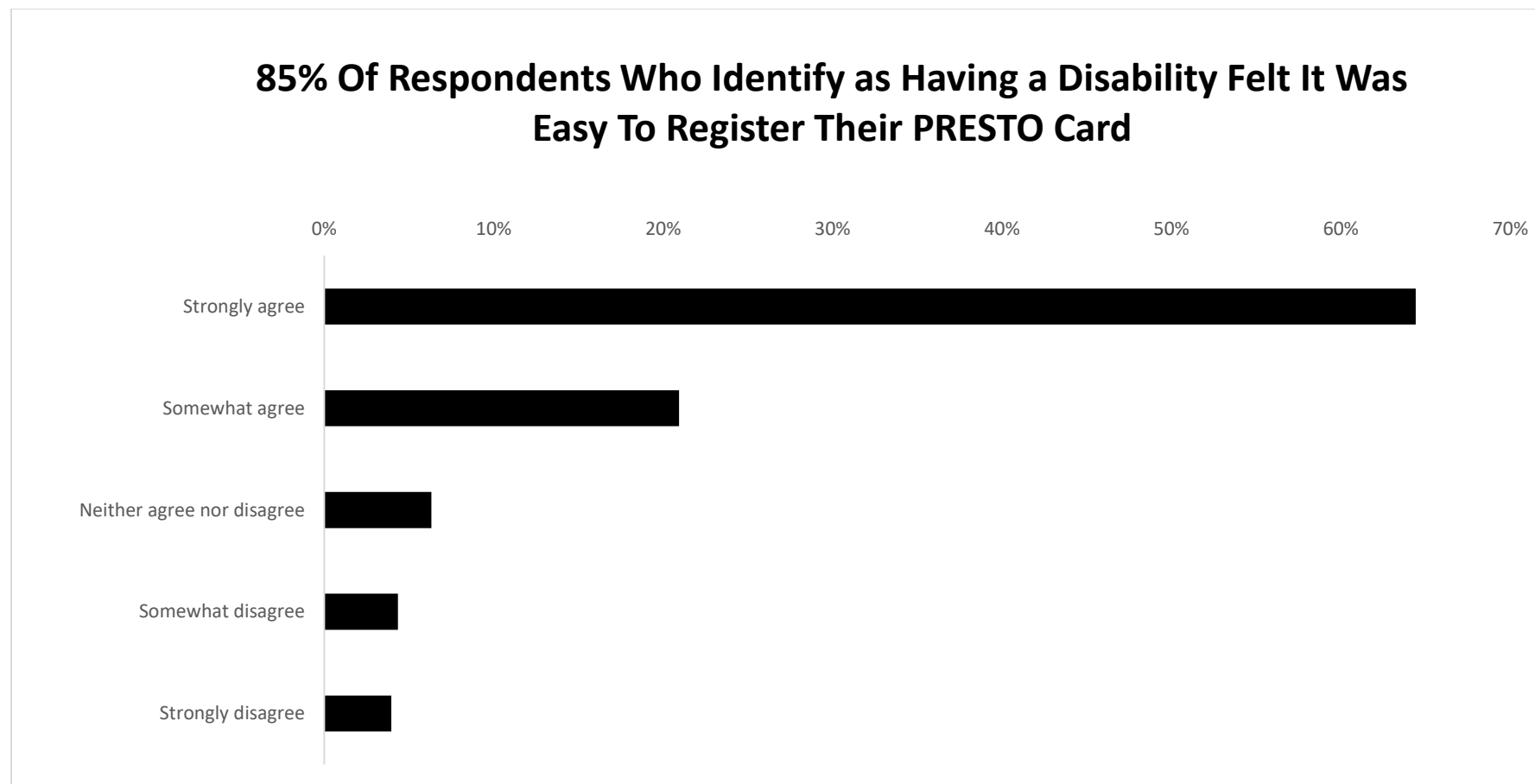
Similarly, the number of customers who reported using transit 3-4 days a week increased from 144 before enrollment to 173 after enrollment. This further supports the idea that Fare Assist is helping respondents integrate public transit more consistently into their routines.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

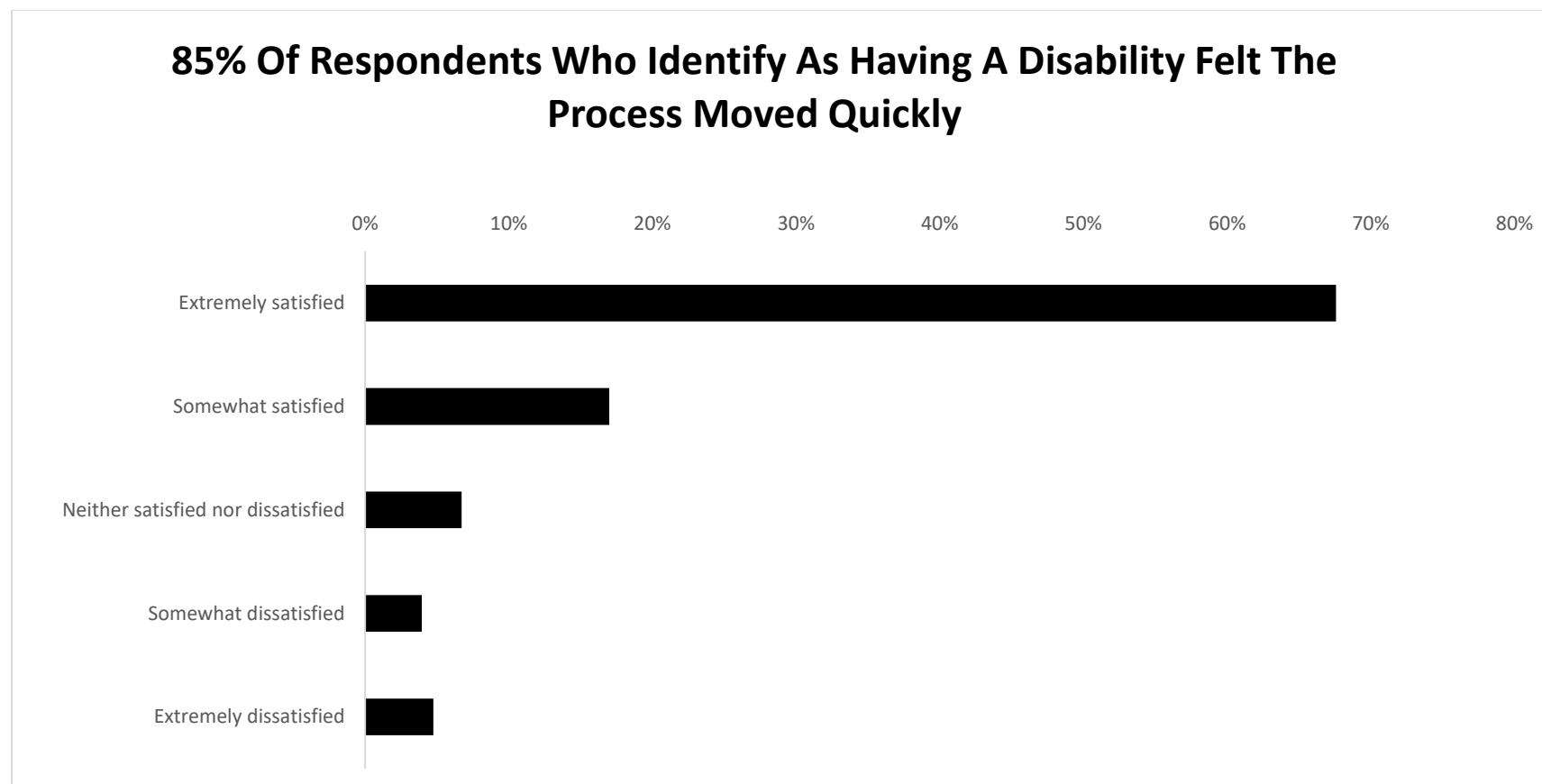
Of the 534 respondents, 133 indicated they had previously utilized the Affordable Transit Program and 78 indicated that they previously utilized the Temporary Transit Fare Special Program (Voluntary Pay).

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

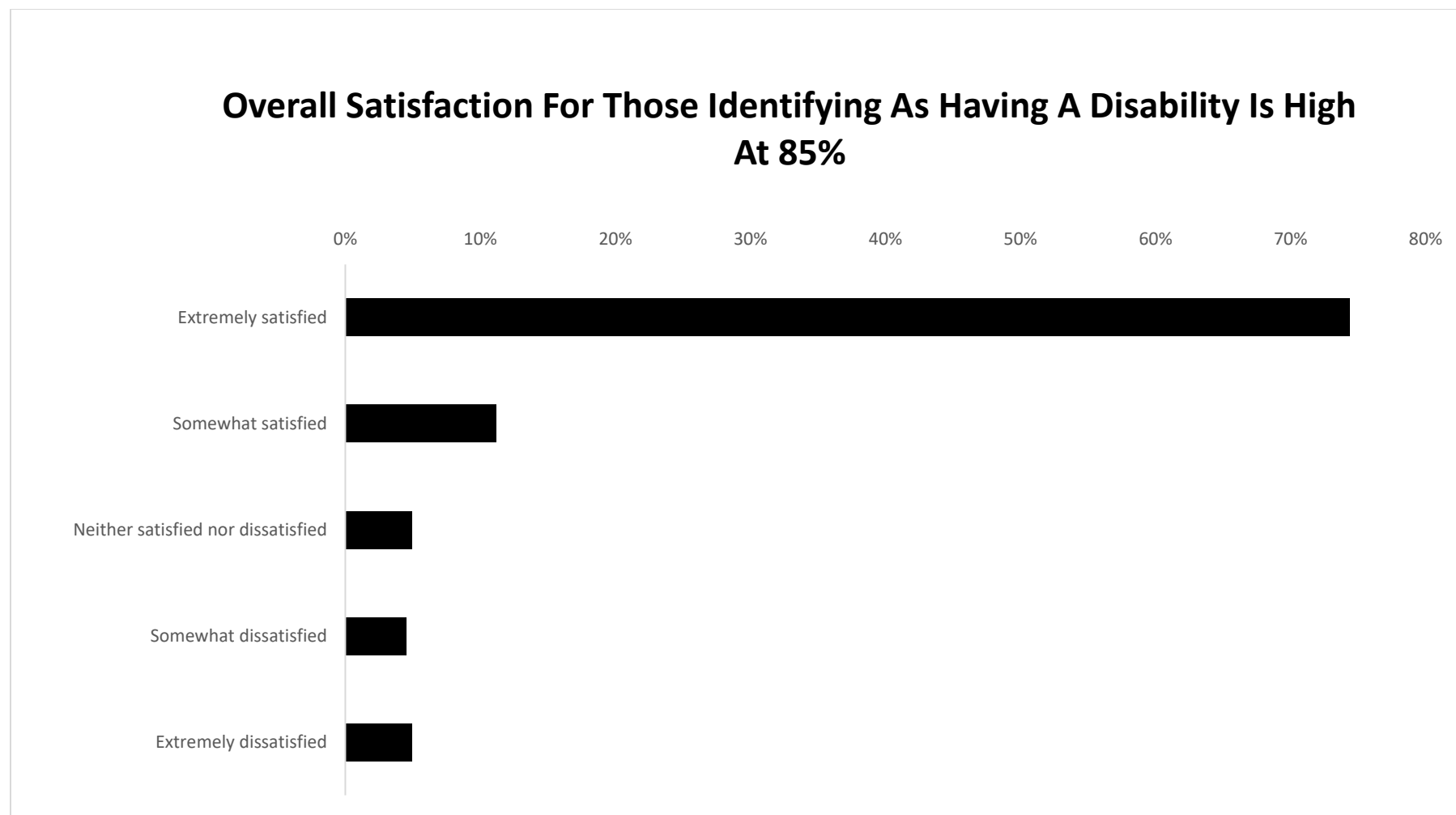
"How easy was it to apply for Fare Assist?" Most respondents (215 out of 258 or 85%) either strongly agree or somewhat agree, that the application process was easy. This indicates that for most respondents, the process was straightforward and manageable.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

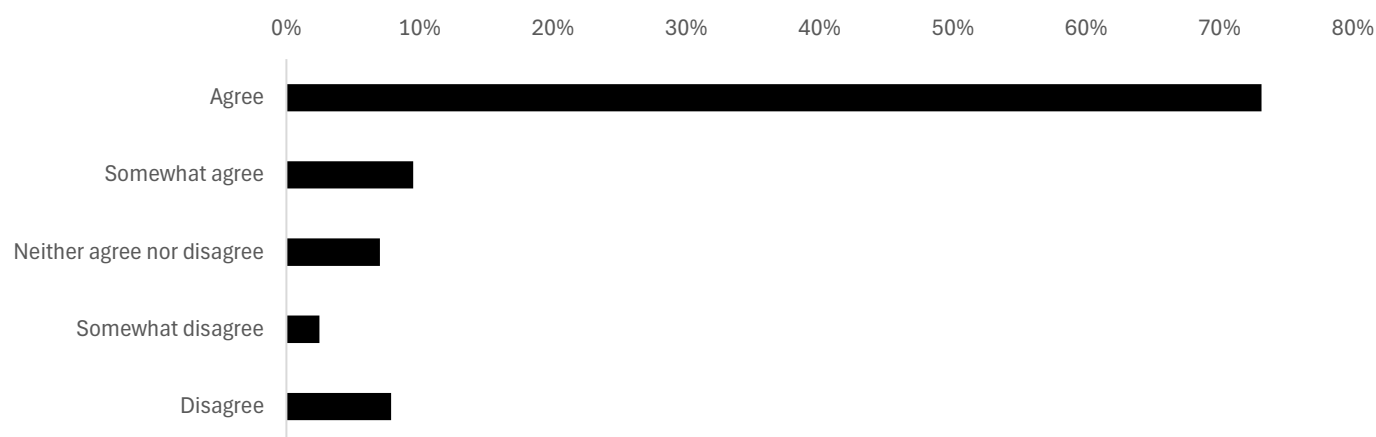
"How easy was it to register your PRESTO Card?" reveals a positive experience, with 216 out of 253 respondents (85%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that the registration process was straightforward and manageable.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

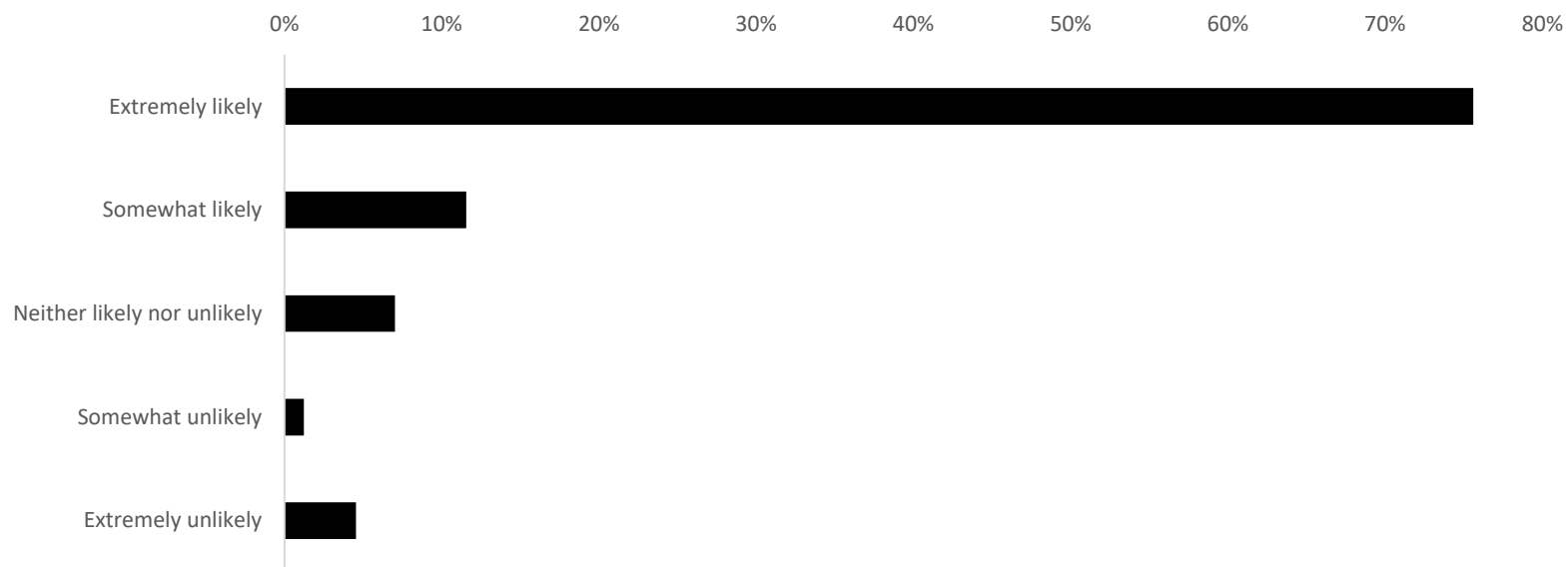
The survey responses for the question "How satisfied are you with the length of time it took to apply for and start using Fare Assist?" shows that most respondents were satisfied with the process, with 214 out of 253 respondents (85%) indicating that they were either somewhat or extremely satisfied, suggesting that for most customers, the process is timely and efficient.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

The survey responses for the question "Overall, how satisfied are you with Fare Assist?" show that a significant majority of customers (207 out of 242 respondents (85%)) are either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the program.

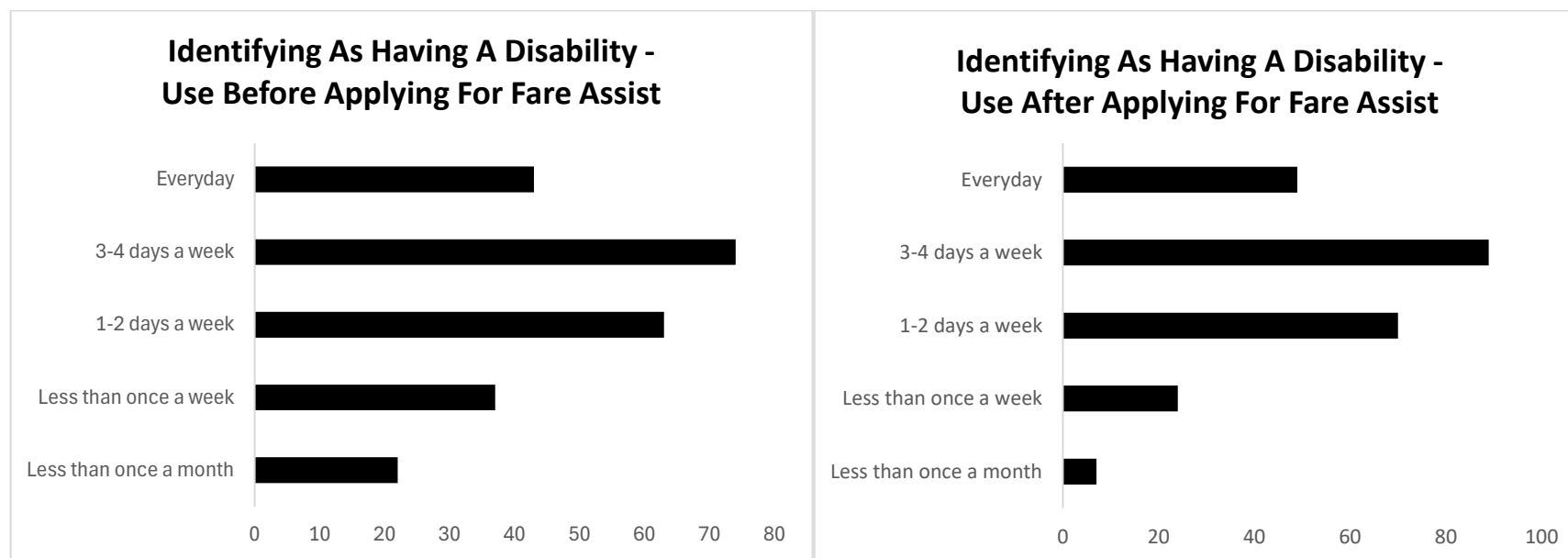
Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024**The Majority Of Respondents Identifying As Having A Disability Said It Had A Positive Impact On Their Life**

A majority (83%) of disabled respondents appreciate the Fare Assist reduced fare, finding it beneficial in reducing their overall transit costs. This positive reception suggests that for most respondents the Fare Assist program is fulfilling its intended purpose of making public transit more affordable.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024**The Majority Of Respondents Who Identify As Having A Disability
Would Recommend The Program**

The survey reveals that a substantial majority of respondents (211 out of 242 or 87%) are either extremely likely or likely to recommend the Fare Assist program to others. This high response suggests that overall, most respondents are happy with the program.

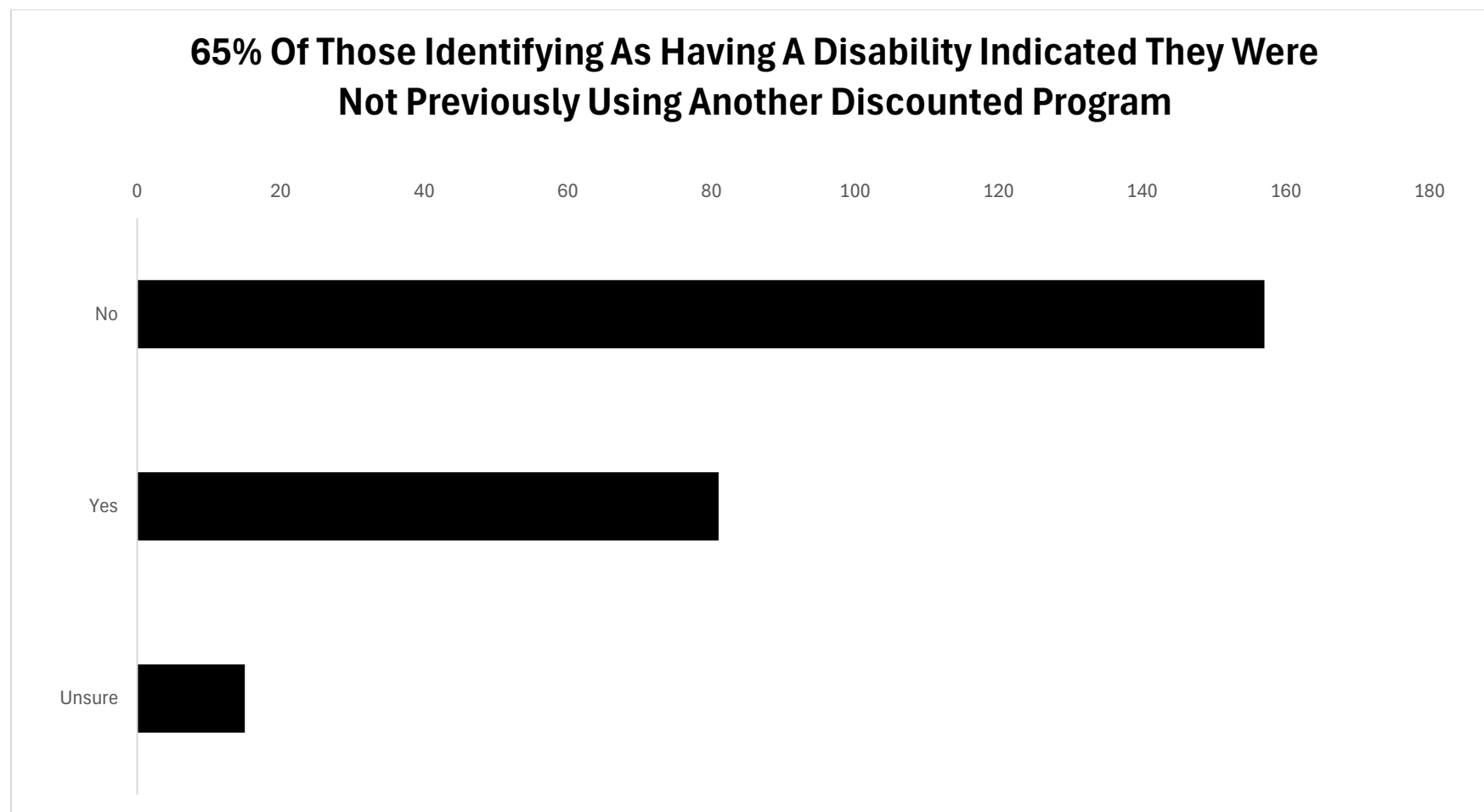
Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024



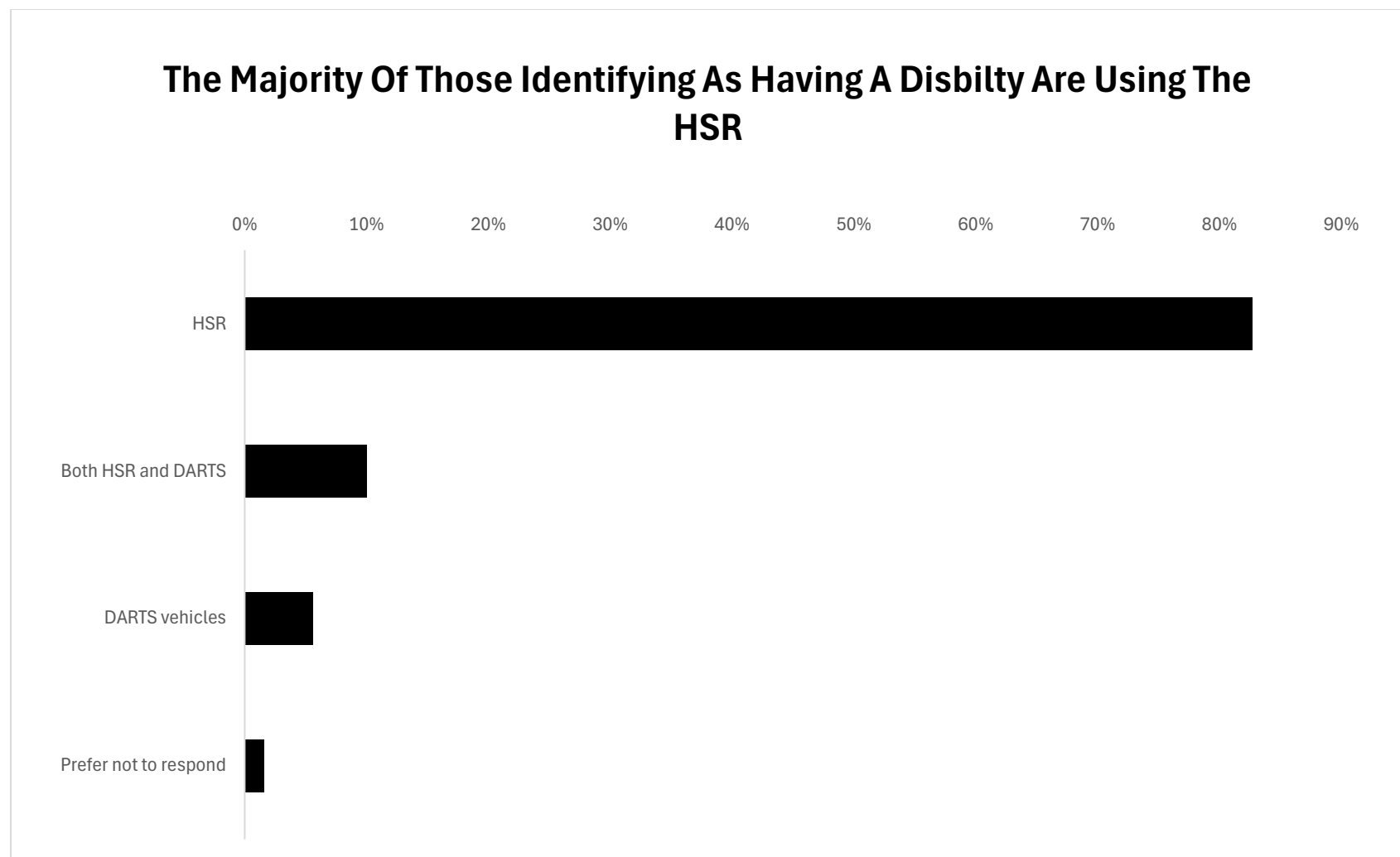
Increased Frequency of Use Everyday Use: There is a notable increase in the number of respondents who reported using HSR or DARTS every day, rising from 43 before enrollment to 49 after enrollment. This suggests that Fare Assist may have enabled more frequent use of public transit by making it more affordable, particularly for those who rely on it daily.

3-4 Days a Week:

Similarly, the number of respondents who reported using transit 3-4 days a week increased from 74 before enrollment to 89 after enrollment. This further supports the idea that Fare Assist is helping customers integrate public transit more consistently into their routines.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

Of the 253 respondents, 157 (62%) of them indicated they were not enrolled in a discount program with the HSR, while another 81 (32%) indicated that they were participating in either the Affordable Transit Pass and/or the Voluntary Pay Program.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

The survey reveals that a substantial majority of respondents, 206 out of 249 (83%) are using the HSR exclusively for their transit needs with an additional 10% using both HSR and DARTS.

Fare Assist Satisfaction Survey as of August 9, 2024

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments or improvements for fare assist, some of the comments provided are shared here:

“I just want to say that im so grateful for the fare assist. It’s helped me a lot financially and im able to take the bus more now and not stress as much about money. Especially since I have chronic pain.”

“No comments just would like to thank the fare assist for helping us. Thank you so much”

“Thank you for making transportation more accessible and cost effective for Hamiltonians. I’ve been riding with HSR for over 15 years and it’s great to see this program give back to the community!”

“No I think the fare assist is great, when I put money on my presto card it lasts longer then it would normally, my whole family really loves the fare assist”

“Great program. Thank you. My children take the bus now instead of walking 45 minutes.”

“It's great as it is. If the discount can be increased better.”

Of the 254 respondents, 201 provided comments or suggestions have been grouped into themes for better analysis.

Theme	# Responses	% of total
Public Education/Knowledge/Process Improvements	38	18.7%
Great Program, Thankful, Greatful, Helpful	93	45.8%
Prefer the original programs Affordable Transit Pass / Temporary Transit Special Fare Program	14	6.9%
Application Duration	6	3.0%
Discount applicable to monthly pass	8	3.9%
Appreciate the program, would welcome a higher discount	31	15.3%
Other	13	6.4%
Total	203	100.0%

Fare Assist - Continuous Improvement

Customer Challenge	Resolution
Difficulty completing application	<p>Step by step video 'How to apply online' added to web</p> <p>Paper copy available online and by contacting HSR customer service or Special Supports</p> <p>Train the trainer sessions held for community partners (see outreach information)</p> <p>In person information sessions (see outreach information)</p> <p>Dedicated email fareassist@hamilton.ca established specifically to support challenges/questions related to Fare Assist</p>
Difficulty activating voucher	Step by step instructions to apply voucher code added to FAQ on web
Does not have Notice of Assessment (NOA)	Exception information added to FAQ on web
Not aware of program	<p>Interior overhead ads installed on all buses</p> <p>Fare Assist pamphlets distributed on Accessible Transportation (ATS) vehicles and HSR buses</p> <p>Fare Assist (How to Apply) included in the below Bus News circulations (available in print, by email, or online):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 2023 • Spring 2024 • Summer 2024 • Fall 2024 <p>Promotional material shared with community partners (including posters, brochures, social media graphics and supporting captions)</p> <p>Regular and continued social media promotion</p> <p>Operators informing customers who board with no/partial payment of -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pause of temporary Transit Fare Special Program (also known as Voluntary Pay) - how to obtain a PRESTO - Fare Assist potential eligibility for persons who express financial hardship/cannot afford to pay <p>QR code created and shared/added to print material to direct customers to Hamilton.ca/FareAssist</p>
Aware of the program but lack of understanding regarding 'who qualifies'/Misinformed that Fare Assist is for persons with disabilities	<p>Fare Assist brochure updated to include who qualifies, how to apply, LIM chart, who to contact for assistance, steps to obtain PRESTO card, and more!</p> <p>Operator in-reach and staff notices (including in-person information sessions), and detailed information shared with HSR Customer Service, HSR Fares, City of Hamilton Customer Service, Municipal Service Centres and ATS Customer Service to ensure consistent and up-to-date information shared with residents. HSR Customer Service provided with a chart to determine the most cost-effective</p>

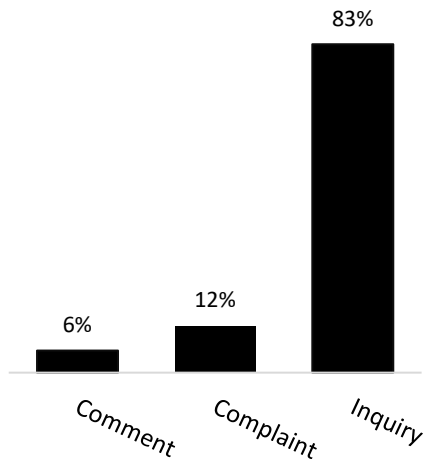
Appendix "E" to Report PW23024(b)

Page 2 of 2

	payment method (Fare Assist or Monthly/Annual) based on # of trips.
Confusion over the Support Person ID Card	Website updated and staff informed that the Support Person ID Card remains valid
Why would I apply now if I can ride for free?	Customers advised of the steps required to apply and approval timelines as well as how to obtain a PRESTO and voucher code, as well as confidently travel with HSR. Encouraged to apply to ensure no delays in qualifying and activating Fare Assist.
Application approved but voucher code not activated	Email reminder with contact information for support + detailed instructions on how to activate the voucher code + accompanying survey sent to all approved applicants via preferred communication method (mail vs. email). Mailed information included <u>pre-paid postage</u> for survey.
Online application – Clarity on application requirements	Additional details added application page based on customer feedback – this included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each approved applicant receives a unique voucher code that needs to be applied to their PRESTO. • Reminder that voucher code is valid for one year following approval. • Add FareAssist@hamilton.ca to safe sender list to avoid emails going to junk folder.

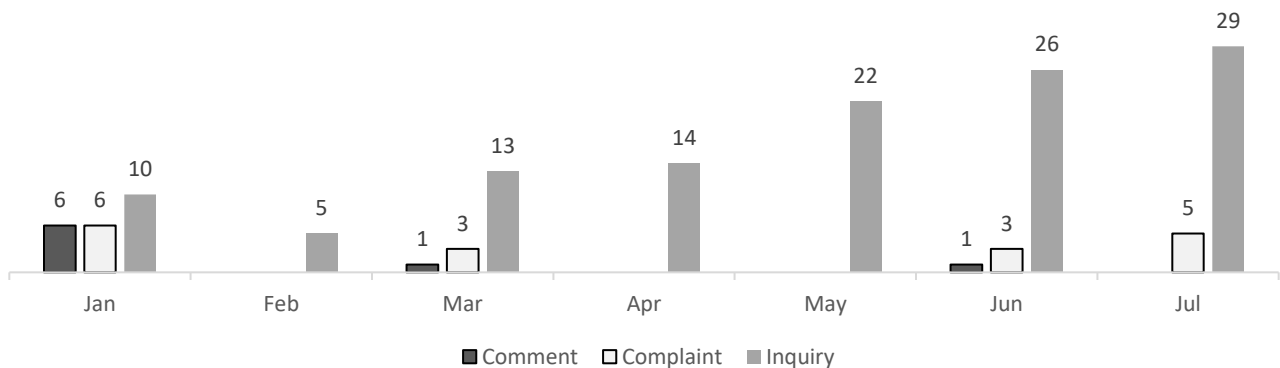
Fare Assist Customer Feedback January 1 – July 30, 2024

83% of Customer Service Log entries were related to Fare Assist Inquiries



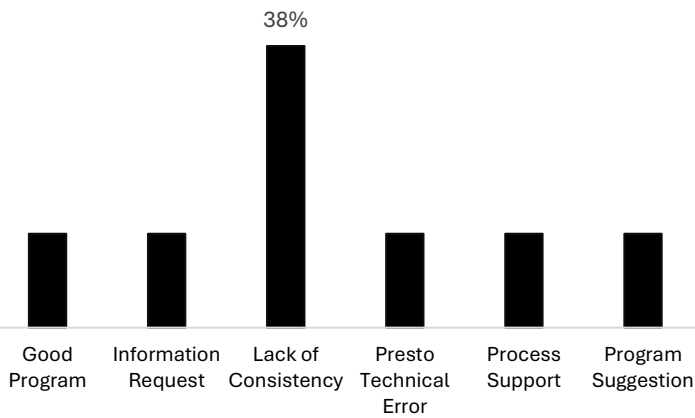
Feedback Type	%
Comment	5%
Complaint	12%
Inquiry	83%
Grand Total	100%

During the month of July inquiries about Fare Assist tripled compared to the start of the program



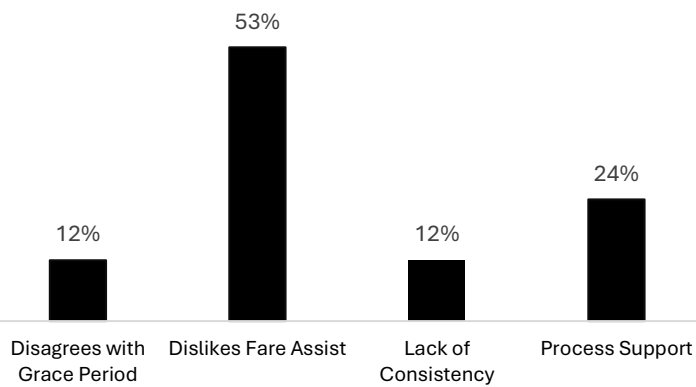
Month	Comment	Complaint	Inquiry
Jan	6	6	10
Feb			5
Mar	1	3	13
Apr			14
May			22
Jun	1	3	26
Jul		5	29
Grand Total	8	17	119

Program Comments



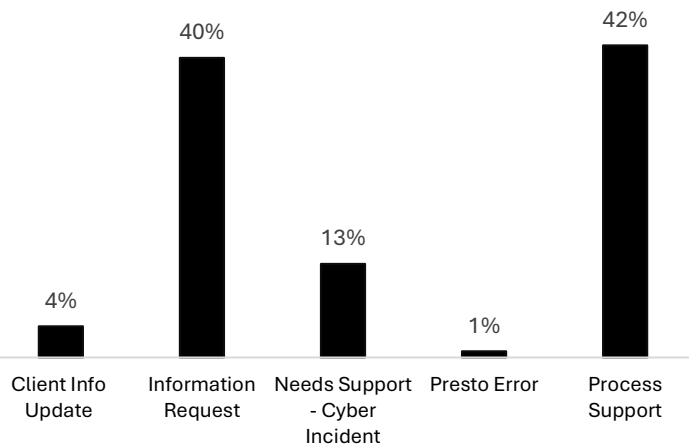
Reason	#	%
Good Program	1	12.5%
Information Request	1	12.5%
Lack of Consistency	3	37.5%
Presto Technical Error	1	12.5%
Process Support	1	12.5%
Program Suggestion	1	12.5%
Grand Total	7	100.0%

Program Complaints



Reason	#	%
Disagrees with Grace Period	2	11.8%
Dislikes Fare Assist	9	52.9%
Lack of Consistency	2	11.8%
Process Support	4	23.5%
Grand Total	17	100.0%

Program Inquiries



Reason	#	%
Client Info Update	5	4.2%
Information Request	48	40.3%
Needs Support - Cyber Incident	15	12.6%
Presto Error	1	0.8%
Process Support	50	42.0%
Grand Total	119	100.0%



HAMILTON STREET RAILWAY (HSR) FARE POLICIES

October 15, 2024

Fare Assist Pricing

The Council Vision to “be the best place to raise a child and age successfully” is a journey considered through fare choice.

0-5 years of age, 6-12 years of age (with Presto) and 80 years + (Golden Age Pass) do not tender a fare.

Fare Choice	Cash Price	13 – 19 Years Youth	20 - 64 Years Adult	65 - 79 Years Senior
Single Ride Fare	\$3.50	\$2.30 18% off Base Price	\$2.80 Base Price	\$2.30 18% off Base Price
Fare with Fare Assist Discount Applied	Not applicable	\$1.61 30% off	\$1.96 30% off	\$1.61 30% off

Did you know? Fare Assist Prices are less than the approved cash fare in 1999.

Goals of Fare Assist

Fare Assist is designed to:

- Respond to community feedback for more affordable fare options;
- Increase the freedom to travel by transit;
- Increase ridership through making fares more affordable; and
- Deliver a means-tested approach for offering discounts.

What Does Fare Assist Do?

Fare Assist:

- Helps entire households;
- Provides discounts for people on both conventional and specialized transit;
- Eliminates the need to buy a monthly pass;
- Offers a "pay as you go" fare choice; and
- Rewards those making more than 11 trips a week with free fare.

Grace Period

- At the December 13, 2023 Council meeting, staff were directed to report back to the Public Works Committee in September 2024 on the results of the six-month grace period for those currently utilizing the HSR Temporary Transit Fare Special program, which ended on June 30, 2024.
- The grace period addressed concerns that the application was not made available online until late December 2023 and to allow more time for education.

Outreach and Education

- Advertising
- Digital Media
- Outreach events (over 10,000 interactions)
- Pamphlets at 23 community organizations and businesses
- Direct mail to 4,600 Accessible Transportation Services customers.
- Emails to 13,792 Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients.
- Front door entry training was made available to persons using mobility devices at various bus terminals or by request.

Applications for Fare Assist

- From July 1 – August 9, applications increased by 15%.
- Redemptions increased from 62% to 70% when the grace period concluded.
- Approval letters are issued in 3 business days.
- Staff originally estimated 9,000 program participants; 55% of that goal has been reached.

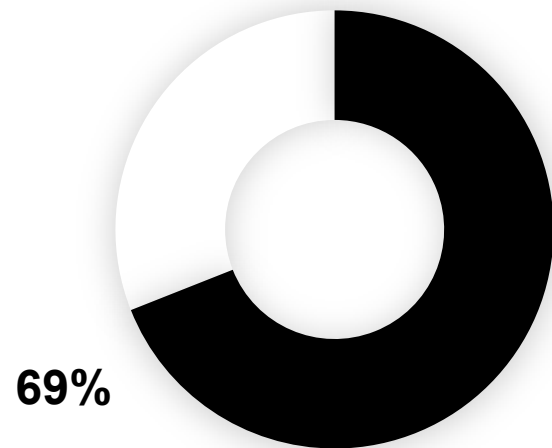
Our Applicants

Number of Approved Applications by Income Category		
Ontario Works	1,442	45%
Ontario Disability Support Program	1,280	40%
Low Income	509	15%
Total	3,231	100%
<i>*Each household is considered one application</i>		
Number of Applicants by Age Category		
Adult	3,358	68%
Child	777	16%
Senior	224	5%
Youth	608	12%
Total	4,967	100%

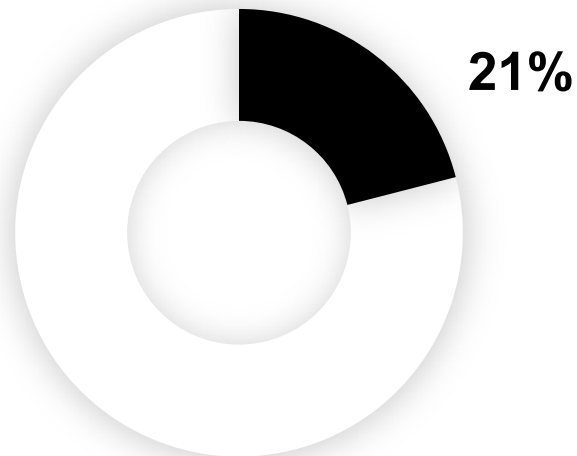
Program Satisfaction Survey

Surveys were provided to all applicants. Respondents shared that they are:

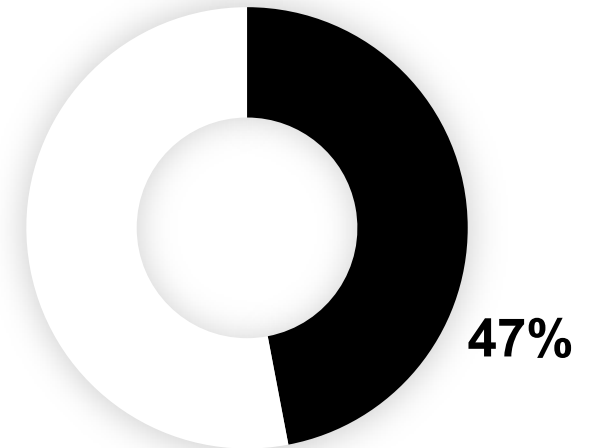
Single Person Household



Family



Identified as a Person with a Disability



Program Satisfaction Survey



- 25% (133 respondents) previously used the Affordable Transit Pass program.
- 15% (78 respondents) previously used the Temporary Transit Fare Special program.

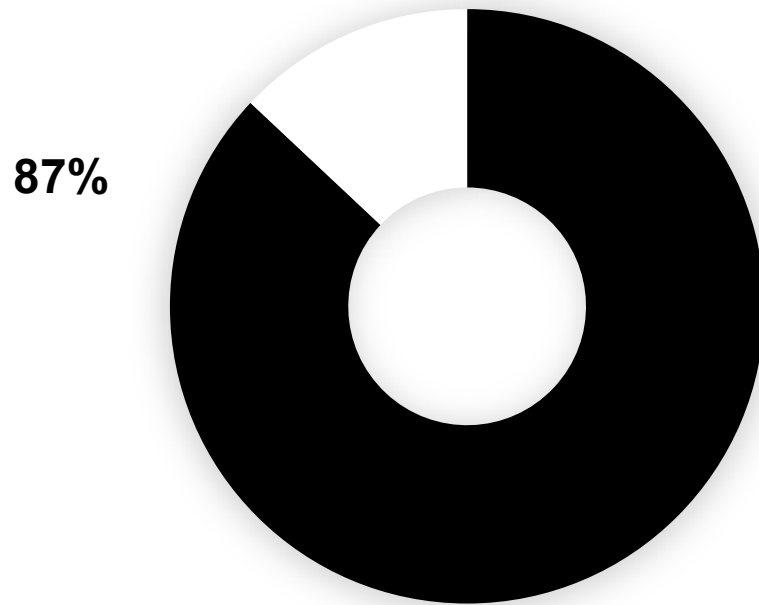
Program Satisfaction Survey

Application Process:

- 87% found the application process “relatively easy”
- 88% found the PRESTO registration process “easy”
- 87% were satisfied with the length of time it took to apply for and start using Fare Assist

Program Satisfaction Survey

Overall Satisfaction with Fare Assist



- 86% of respondents appreciate the 30% discount, finding it beneficial in reducing their overall transit costs.
- 90% would recommend this program to friends and family.

Program Satisfaction Survey

Satisfaction with the Program:

- 8.8% (45 respondents) previously accessed either the Affordable Transit Pass or the Temporary Transit Special Fare program and have responded that they are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “extremely dissatisfied” with the program, preferring the suspended programs instead.

Program Satisfaction Survey

The survey asked respondents if it allowed them to travel more frequently because of the price reduction.

- **18% increase:** 192 customers now travel daily, versus 162 before Fare Assist.
- **20% increase:** 173 customers now travel 3 to 4 days a week versus 144 before Fare Assist.
- **240% increase:** 31 survey respondents reported they travel by transit only one day a month, while only 9 survey respondents reported one day a month travel with Fare Assist in place.

Program Satisfaction Survey

47% (253 respondents) identified as a person with a disability. Of these respondents:

- 85% found it was easy to apply for the program.
- 85% found it easy to register their PRESTO card.
- 85% are “somewhat satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with how quickly they were able to apply and start receiving the discount.

Program Satisfaction Survey

When asked the question “The 30% discount on single-ride PRESTO fares has made a positive impact on you and/or your family's monthly spending”, of the 242 responses from those who identify as having a disability:

- 200 (83%) somewhat agreed or agreed
- 17 (7%) neither agree nor disagree
- 25 (10%) somewhat disagree or disagree

Overall, this group reported an 85% satisfaction level with the Fare Assist program.

Customer Feedback

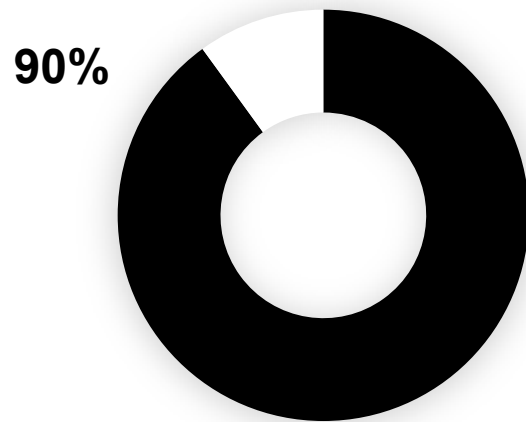
HSR tracks customer contacts received by phone or email. Contacts relating to the grace period were as follows:

- 83% of the contacts received were general inquiries about how the process worked or help to enrol or activate their discount.
- 6% of the contacts were complaints regarding the removal of the Affordable Transit Pass and Temporary Transit Special Fare Program.
- 72 in-person support interactions occurred at 36 Hunter Street after the grace period ended.

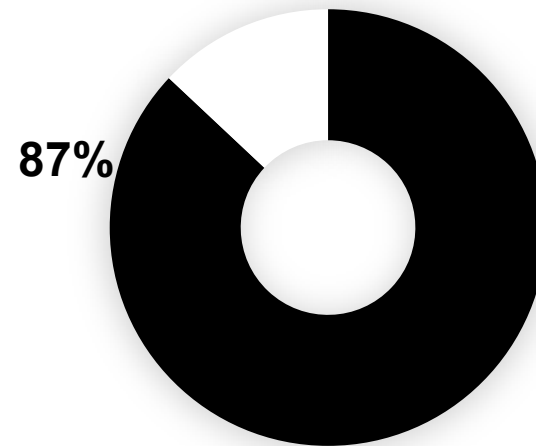
Summary

Overall, the results of the first months of the Fare Assist Pilot Program are promising and provide a strong foundation for transit affordability for Hamiltonians.

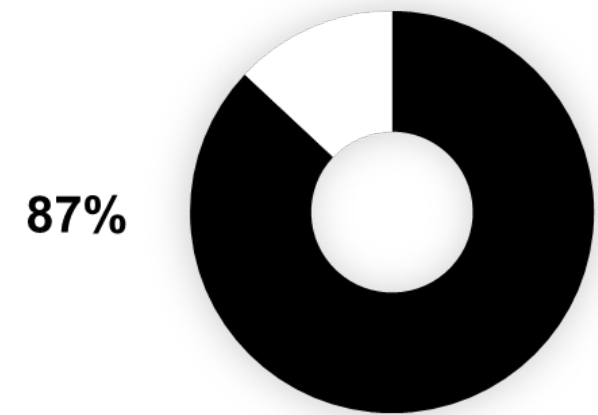
Would Recommend Fare Assist



Easy to Access



Overall Satisfaction with Fare Assist





Hamilton

THANK YOU