

The background of the slide is a photograph of a calm blue lake. In the upper left quadrant, there is a set of concentric ripples on the water's surface, suggesting a recent disturbance like a dropped pebble. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the ripples are a lighter shade of blue, creating a subtle pattern of light and dark circles.

Spring 2025 Citizen Survey Regarding the Sustainment and Improvement of Delavan Lake

Tuesday, September 09, 2025

Objective & Survey Background

Objective

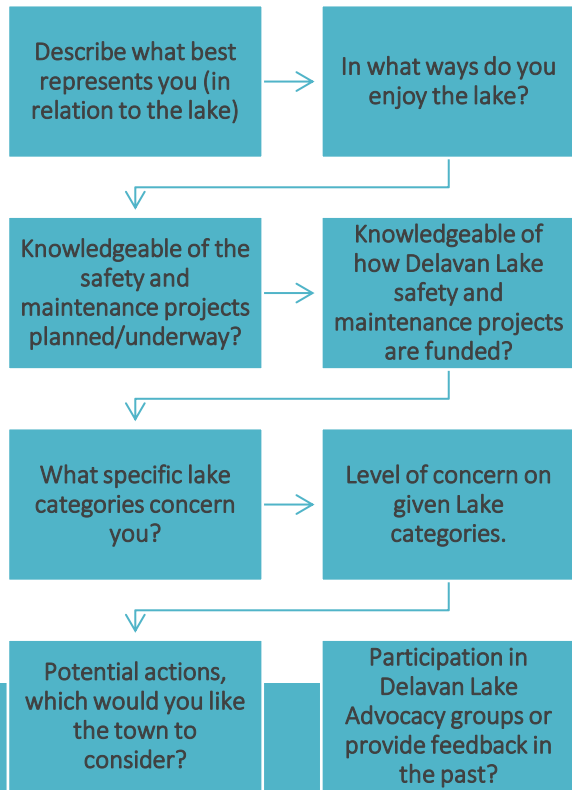
To capture the feedback and thoughts of Delavan Lake stakeholders and to pass on the input to the Town of Delavan (ToD) to encourage and/or accelerate actions that may generate improvements in areas noted.

Background

- The concept of a citizen survey originated in the fall of 2022 through a citizen attending a ToD Lake Committee meeting.
- The intent was to promote *unbiased* feedback from the public. Focusing on Delavan Lake stakeholders (property owners, folks who use the lake, and those who enjoy the lake in other ways).
- This feedback would be provided *unaltered* to the ToD, who is responsible for coordinating the maintenance of the lake.
- The idea of a survey was originally approved by the ToD Lake Committee but subsequently voted down by the ToD Board.
- It was decided by a group of independent citizens to go forward with the survey during the 2025 lake season!
- The survey commenced on July 7th and ended on September 7th.
- Surveys were distributed to citizens directly (US Mail, door-to-door, direct emails) and indirectly through social media links.
- We believe that ~2600 direct contacts were attempted.
- We formally received 354 (14% of those contacted) total respondents!

Survey Structure

THE FOLLOWING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS WERE ASKED



THE FOLLOWING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS WERE ASKED

Survey respondents had opportunities to add their own thoughts/suggestions.

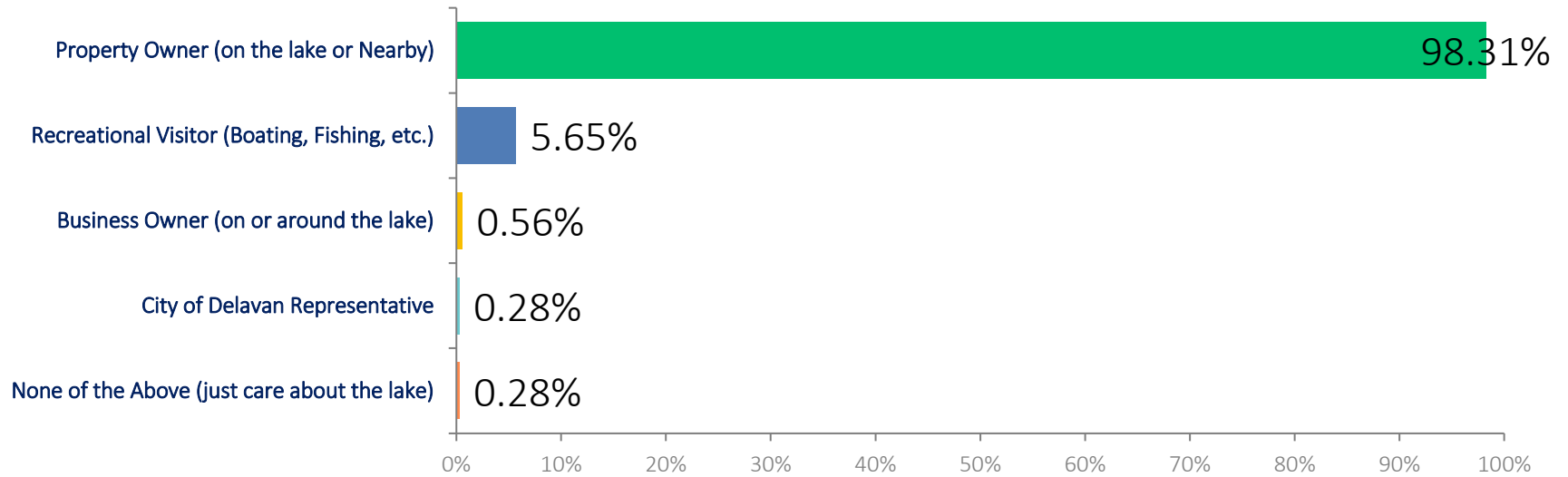
Actions for the town to consider.

If you could change anything on the lake, what would that be, and/or what would you want Delavan Lake to look like?

What other feedback, suggestions, or innovative ideas do you have to offer to improve/preserve the safety and care of Delavan Lake?

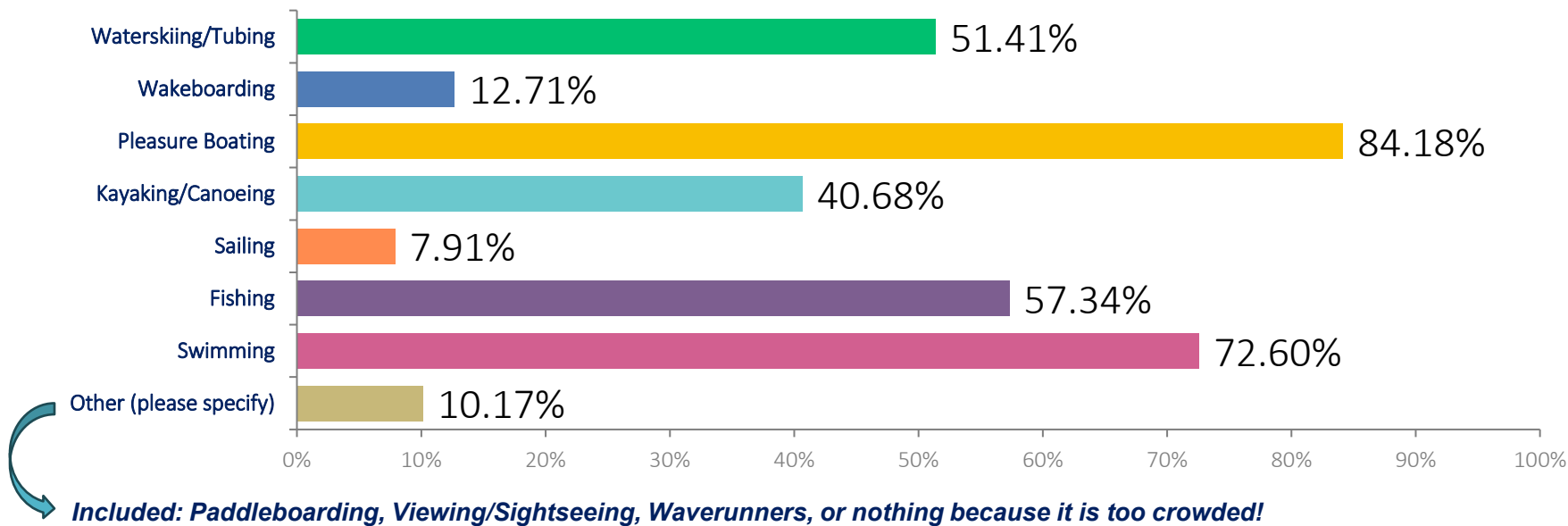
Let's look at the results





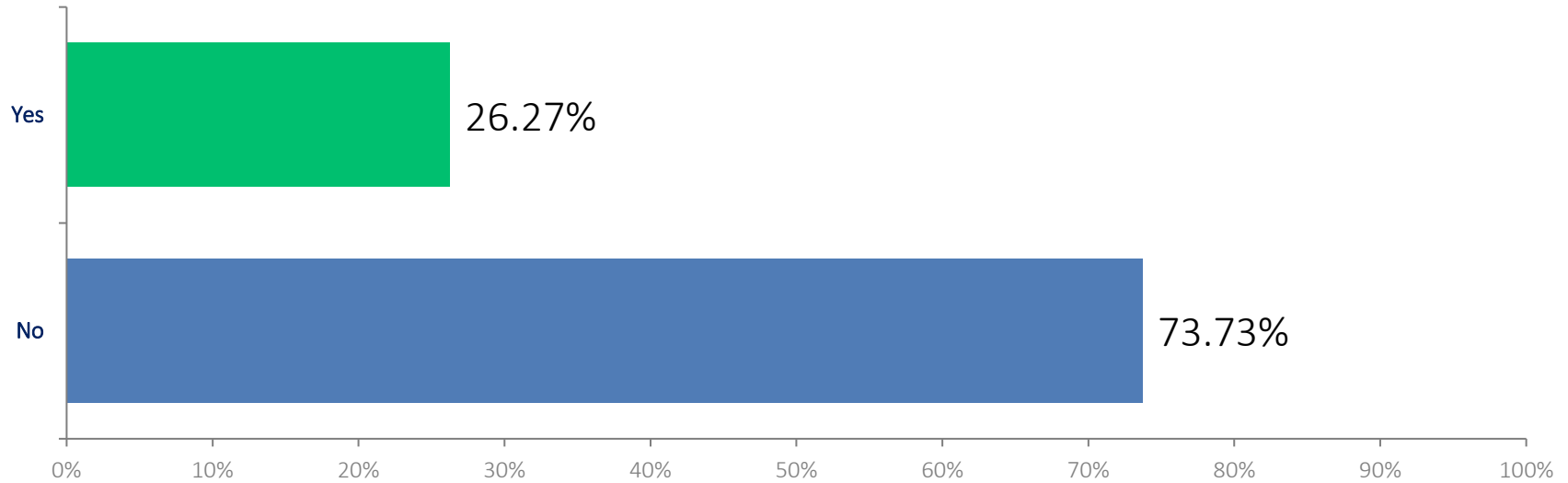
Q1: Describe yourself. Are you a... *(select all that apply)*

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



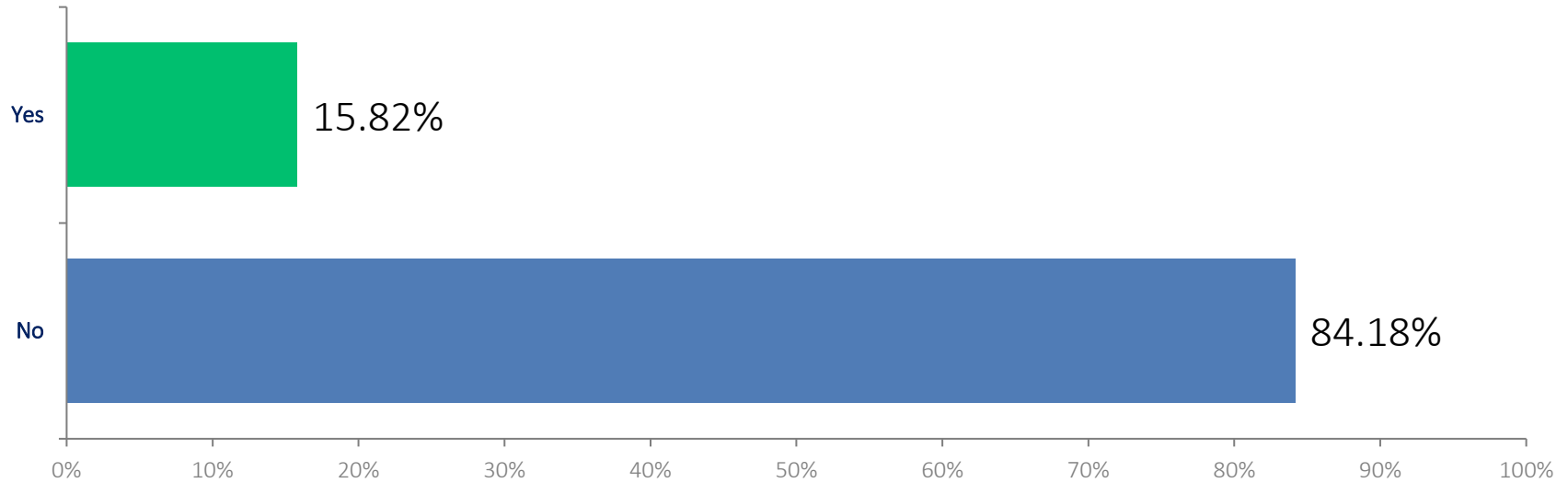
Q2: In what ways do you enjoy the lake? *(select all that apply)*

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



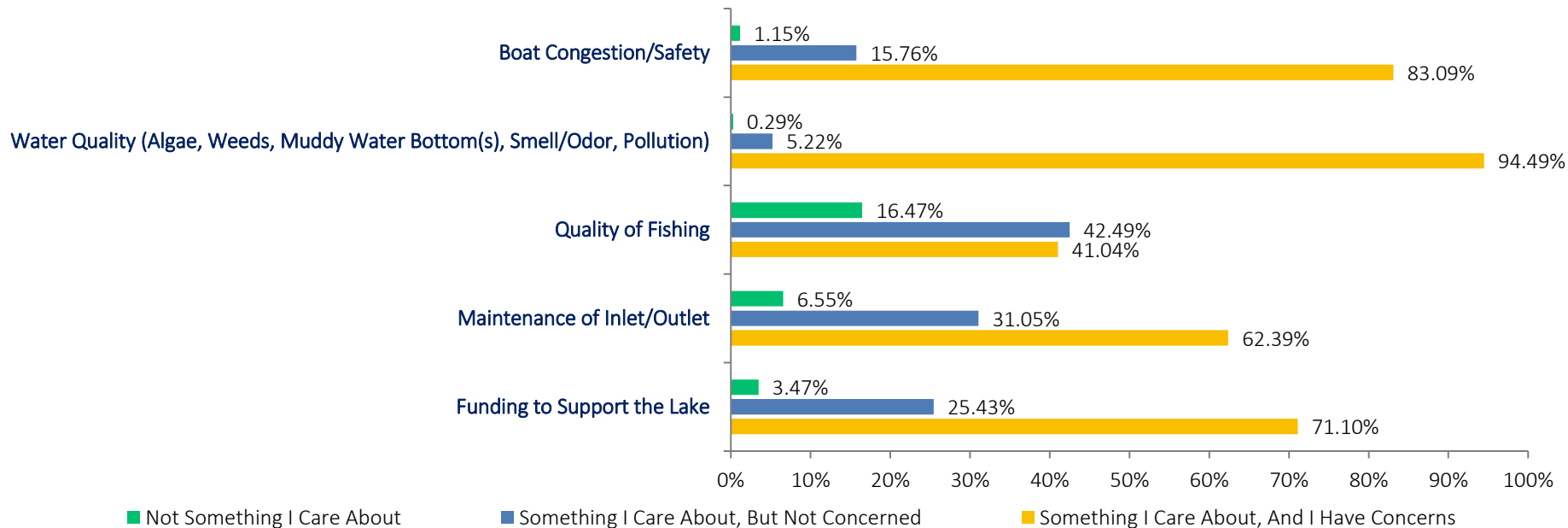
Q3: Do you feel knowledgeable about the Delavan Lake safety and maintenance projects currently planned or underway?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



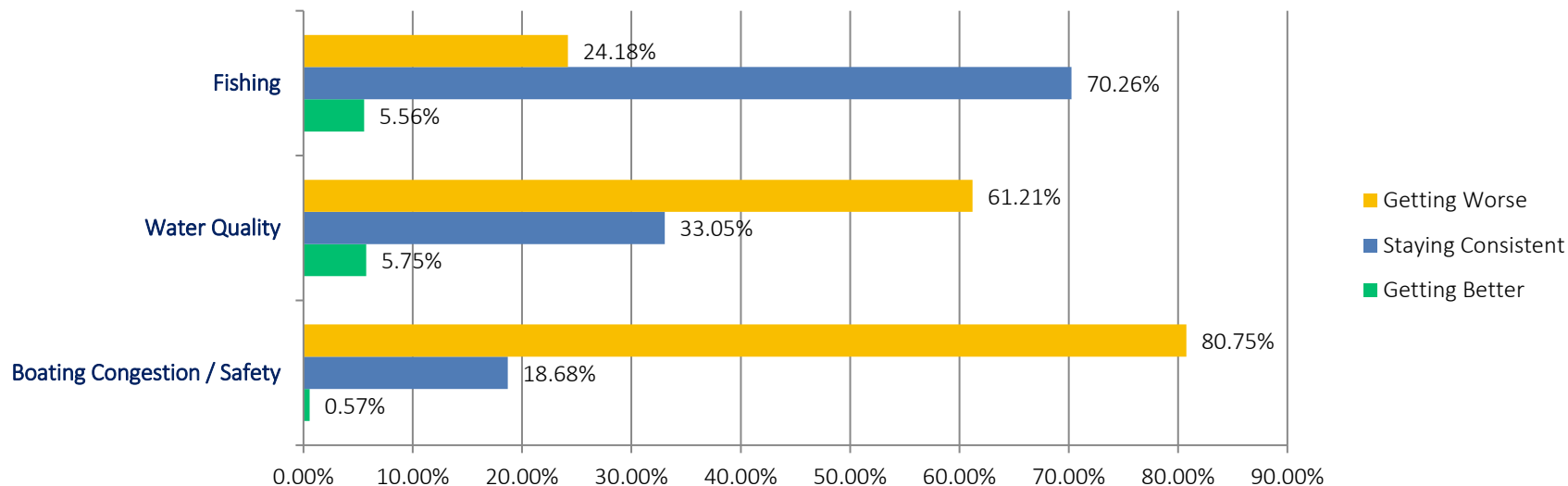
Q4: Do you feel knowledgeable about how Delavan Lake safety and maintenance projects are currently funded?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



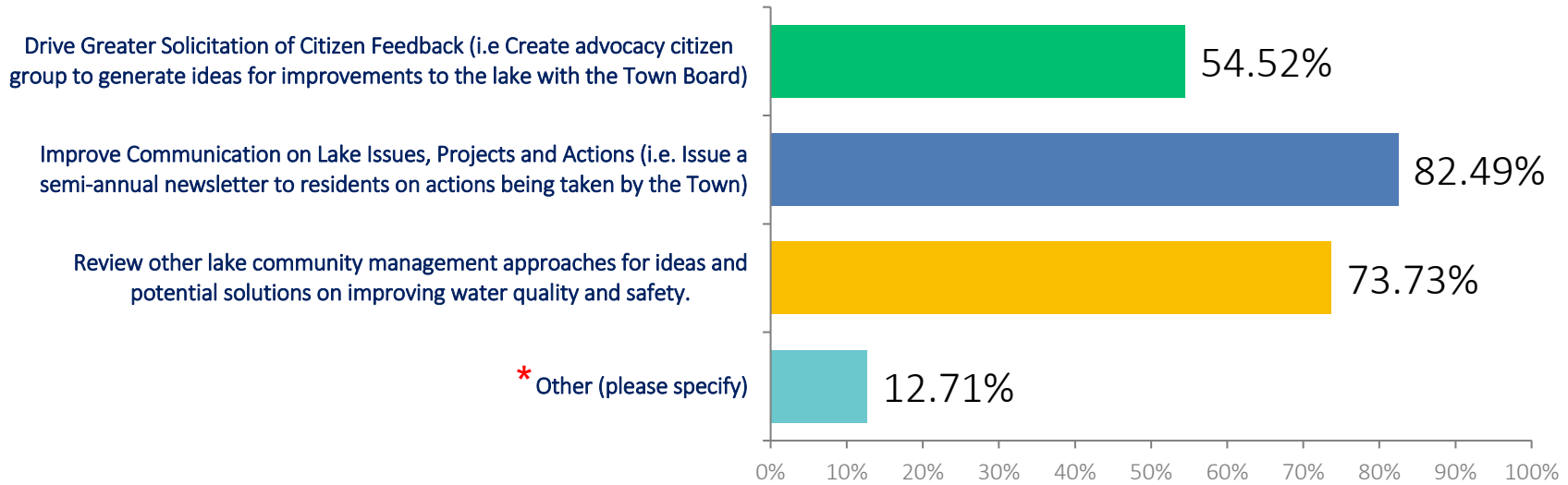
Q5: What are your current concerns about the lake?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



Q6: Of the choices below, how do you think things have been going over the last couple years?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0



*** Details on responses for "Other" on the next slide!**

Q7: Which of the following do you feel the Town should consider? *(select all that apply)*

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0

Q7: Other Responses to: “If you could change anything on the lake, what would that be, and/or what would you want Delavan Lake to look like?”

Water Quality & Environmental Care ~30% of Responses

- Better weed and algae management (move away from mechanical cutting, increase weekday coverage).
- Address muck buildup, dredging inlets/outlets, and shoreline protection.
- Manage algae blooms and educate public that water quality is the top issue.
- Collaborate with DNR, City of Delavan, and Sanitary District.
- Work with local agriculture on runoff control (cover crops, nutrient management).

Boating Safety & Limits ~30% of Responses

- Restrict or ban wake boats/wake boarding (erosion, safety, sediment issues).
- Limit number of boats on the lake (especially public launch and rentals).
- Increase launch fees and cap slips/permits.
- Require boater education/training (especially for renters from Lake Lawn).
- More patrol presence during peak hours; stronger enforcement of speed/no wake rules.

Development & Growth Concerns ~20% of Responses

- Stop or limit new housing and resort developments (especially at Lake Lawn).
- Ensure Lake Lawn contributes fairly to lake maintenance/funding.
- Prevent over-building and high-density subdivisions along the lake.
- Protect open space and control shoreline construction.

Enforcement & Accountability ~10% of Responses

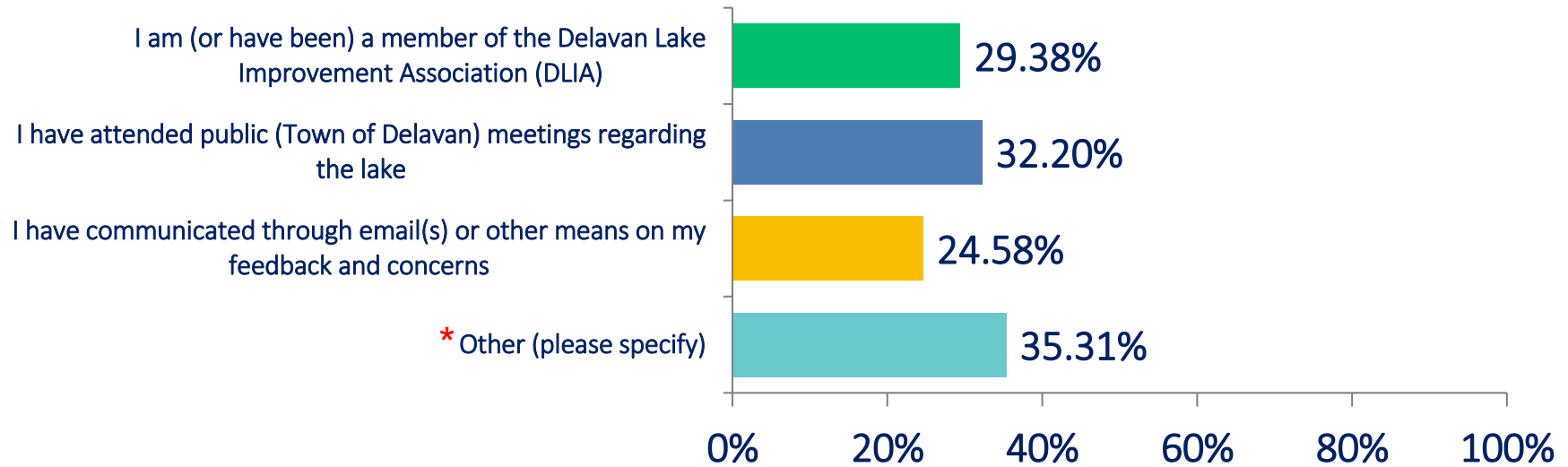
- More police/DNR patrols to enforce boating laws.
- Hold Lake Lawn and developers accountable for their environmental impact and fair funding.
- Implement rules around boat rentals, licensing, and safety.

Community Representation & Communication ~5% of Responses

- Citizen voting committee for lake decisions.
- Better communication systems for safety and water quality alerts.
- Representation for underrepresented shoreline areas (e.g., Ravenswood/South Bay).

Funding & Fair Share ~5% of Responses

- Ensure Lake Lawn and new developments contribute proportionally to lake upkeep.
- Use fees, taxes, and surcharges to fund water quality and safety improvements.
- Secure long-term funding commitments for lake preservation.



** Details on responses for "Other" on the next slide!*

Q8: Have you tried to participate in Delavan Lake Advocacy groups, or provide feedback in the past? *(select all that apply)*

Answered: 354 Skipped: 0

Q8: *Other* responses to:

“Have you tried to participate in Delavan Lake Advocacy groups or provided feedback in the past?”

No Participation ~65%

- Majority said **no** — they haven’t participated.
- Reasons: not aware of groups/meetings, no communication, no interest, or too busy.

Lack of Awareness / Information ~15%

- Didn’t know about DLIA, meetings, or how to get involved.
- Requested better communication/outreach (posting agendas, sending notices, etc.).

Interest in Future Participation ~10%

- Expressed interest in joining DLIA or getting more involved if they had clearer info.
- Some said they “just learned about it” or would like to attend in the future.

Limited / Indirect Participation ~5%

- Engaged via HOAs, subdivision reps, town board/DNR conversations, or occasional DLIA meetings.
- Some are former DLIA members.

Barriers to Participation ~5%

- Issues: being non-residents, inconvenient meeting times, frustration with DLIA effectiveness, and lack of transparency.

Q9: If you could change anything on the lake, what would that be, and/or what would you want Delavan Lake to look like?

Water Quality & Cleanliness ~40% of responses

- Reduce algae, weeds, muck, and sediment.
- Improve water clarity for swimming and boating.
- Address farm runoff, phosphorus, and bacteria.
- Dredge inlets/outlets and bays to reduce buildup.

Boating & Safety ~30% of responses

- Reduce congestion, especially on weekends/holidays.
- Limit public boat launches, slips, and rentals.
- Stricter rules/enforcement (speed limits, no wake zones, noise).
- Concerns about inexperienced renters and unsafe boating practices.
- Calls to ban or restrict wake boats and jet skis.

Development & Overcrowding ~15% of responses

- Stop or slow new housing developments around the lake (especially Lake Lawn).
- Limit additional boat slips and piers.
- Preserve open space and natural shoreline.

Enforcement & Management ~10% of responses

- Increase police/safety patrol presence.
- Require boater education/training, especially for renters.
- More consistent weed removal and shoreline maintenance.
- Hold developers and resorts accountable for lake impacts.

Community & Amenities ~5% of responses

- Cleaner beaches and better swimming areas.
- Improved fishing (stocking programs, access for locals).
- More walking paths, public access, and small-scale dining options.
- Maintain the lake's character, not turn it into another over-commercialized destination.

Answered: 304 Skipped: 50

Q10: What other feedback, suggestions, or innovative ideas do you have to offer to improve/preserve the safety and care of Delavan Lake?

Water Quality & Environmental Care ~35% of responses

- Better weed and algae management (more effective harvesting, chemical/biological options, dredging channels).
- Reduce farm runoff, fertilizer, and pollutants entering the lake.
- Address muck and sediment buildup, especially in bays and channels.
- Improve water circulation in shallow or stagnant areas.
- Stock more fish and manage geese populations
- Put into place measures to capture gas spillage at fuel dispensing points on the lake

Boating Limits & Safety ~30% of responses

- Limit number of boats (daily limits at public launches, cap on slips, reduce rentals).
- Restrict or ban wake/surf boats due to erosion, safety, and environmental impact.
- Stricter enforcement of speed/no wake zones.
- Require boater education or licenses, especially for renters.
- Increase water patrol presence on busy weekends/holidays.

Enforcement & Accountability ~15% of responses

- More consistent police/DNR enforcement on the lake.
- Penalties for unsafe boat operation, alcohol use, and ignoring regulations.
- Require renters and outsiders to contribute more (fees, safety courses, taxes).
- Stronger accountability for Lake Lawn Resort and new developments.

Development & Growth Concerns ~10% of responses

- Stop or slow new housing developments and resort expansion (especially Lake Lawn).
- Limit pier construction and boat slip additions.
- Protect open shoreline and prevent over-commercialization.

Community Involvement & Communication ~5% of responses

- Improve communication about initiatives, meetings, and lake conditions.
- Provide education to shoreline owners on best practices (shore buffers, native plants).
- Greater involvement of residents in decision-making (not just businesses/developers).
- Create task forces or community groups for long-term lake planning.

Funding & Resources ~5% of responses

- Raise funds (fees, taxes on rentals, surcharges on developers) to support maintenance.
- Better allocation of resources (weed cutters, patrol boats, dredging equipment, acquire a smaller weed cutter to access Brown's Channel and between piers)
- Explore state grants and partnerships for lake preservation.

Answered: 162 Skipped: 192

Key Takeaways, Suggestions & Concerns

- ❑ Water Quality & Boating/Safety Capture ~ 65% of the concerns
 - *Water cleanliness/sediment, farm runoff, and weed control seem to dominate responses*
 - *Boating congestion reduction feedback includes... limiting boaters at public ramps and rentals*
 - *Safety on the lake is a big concern, especially due to inexperienced boaters, congestion, and a lack of adequate police presence.*

- ❑ ~62% of respondents cared about the Inlet/Outlet lake areas and had concerns.

- ❑ Recent Impacts from Development/Growth, coupled with Accountability Concerns, accounted for ~25% of direct feedback!

- ❑ ~86% of total respondents have either participated in Lake Advocacy groups or have attempted to provide feedback in the past

- ❑ Most stakeholders want to see better communication from ToD
 - *Only ~26% of respondents felt knowledgeable about current lake projects*
 - *Only ~16% of respondents felt knowledgeable about how current lake projects were funded*
 - *Open-ended questions acquired some responses and ideas that seem very tangible and feasible, which should receive serious consideration by ToD*

- ❑ Share the survey with any of the Residential HOAs on Delavan Lake for further feedback and suggestions.

- ❑ Take this presentation to ToD by the end of 2025.
 - *Notify all Respondents of day/time and encourage participation in that presentation.*
 - *Ask ToD to assess “low-hanging fruit” where impactful changes are reasonable, can happen, and be recognized. Explain why others may not be.*
 - *Ask ToD to explore what other surrounding lake committees are doing.*

- ❑ Consider another survey in 2 years to monitor improvement.

Thank you for your participation!

Next Steps