

Webinar series: Alcohol policy in Canadian municipalities
Séries de webinaires : Politique sur l'alcool dans les municipalités canadiennes

Webinar 4: November 26, 2025

Alcohol-related issues in Quebec's municipal environment: findings of consultation

Les enjeux de la consommation d'alcool dans les milieux municipaux au Québec : constats de consultation



**University
of Victoria**

Canadian Institute
for Substance
Use Research

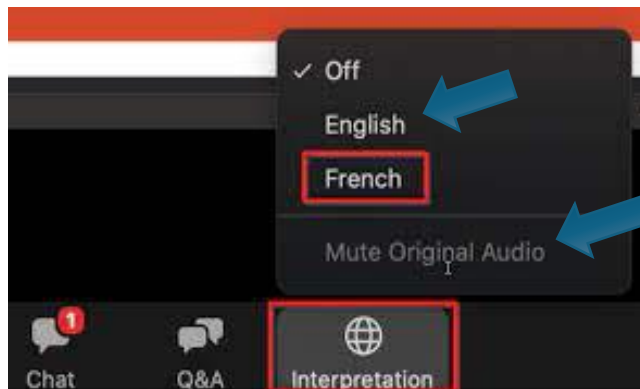
Institut canadien
de recherche sur
l'usage de substances

CA⁺PE
CANADIAN ALCOHOL
POLICY EVALUATION

Interprétation simultanée

Veuillez noter que l'événement sera en anglais / This event will be in French.

Une interprétation simultanée en anglais est disponible sauf pendant la période des questions / Simultaneous English interpretation is available except during the Q&A segment.



Land acknowledgement

As we gather today, we want to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional and ancestral territories of many Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island. We recognize the enduring presence, resilience, and sovereignty of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

We honor the diverse Indigenous Peoples and cultures across what is now called Canada, and we affirm our collective responsibility to learn about the histories of the lands we live and work on and to commit to ongoing reconciliation and respectful relationships.

We offer this land acknowledgement as just one step (of many) toward understanding, respect, learning, unlearning and healing on the path to reconciliation and reconcili-Action.

Adapted from Tamarack Institute

Acknowledgment of funding and support



This webinar series is an initiative of the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) and the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation Community of Practice (CAPE CoP) and is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

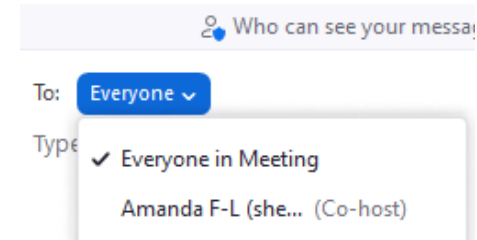
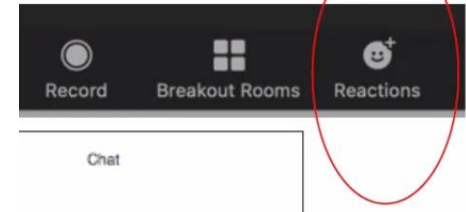
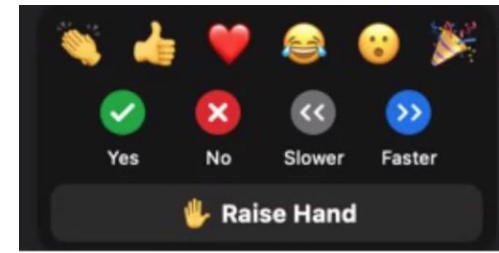
The views and opinions expressed as part of this presentation are those of the presenters and do not necessarily represent those of our funders or other organizations acknowledged.

Today's session

- This webinar includes a presentation with Q&A, 60mins total.
- The presentation component will be recorded, not the Q&A.
Links to the recording and presentation slides will be sent via email.
- We invite your feedback about today's session.
A survey link will be shared at the end of the webinar and via email.
- To receive persons with lived/living experience honorariums, please email **capecopcoord@uvic.ca**

Q&A format

- Use the Q&A tool to submit a question at any time. You can choose to submit anonymously.
- 'raise hand' during Q&A segment. The moderator may ask you to unmute to pose your question.
- Technical difficulties?
Please message us in the chat or 'Ask for Help'



Presenters

Marianne Dessureault

Legal Affairs Attorney and Spokesperson, Public Health Association of Québec (ASPQ)

Laurence Ruel

Project Manager, Psychoactive Substances, Public Health Association of Québec (ASPQ)

Presentation Objectives

1. Present the principal findings of ASPQ's municipal consultation report
2. Describe the issues and the needs of some of Quebec's municipal organizations related to the consumption and sale of alcohol
3. Share initiatives, tools and promising solutions to respond to the issues highlighted

ALCOHOL-RELATED ISSUES IN QUEBEC'S MUNICIPALITIES

Consultation Report - 2023

Marianne Dessureault, lawyer

Director of Legal Affairs

November 26, 2025

•• **Substances**
•• **Psychoactives**

 **ASPQ**
ASSOCIATION POUR LA SANTÉ
PUBLIQUE DU QUÉBEC

About the ASPQ

The Association for Public Health of Québec (ASPQ) is an independent, non-profit organization that brings together nearly 1,000 citizen and organizational partners to make sustainable health—through prevention—a priority.

In the area of psychoactive substances, the team aims to:

- Reposition alcohol as a public health priority in Québec
- Counteract the normalization of alcohol and advocate for responsible alcohol regulation.



Why Focus on Alcohol at the Municipal Level?

- **Social and cultural acceptability**
 - Alcohol consumption in Québec is higher than the Canadian average (84% vs. 79%)
 -
- **Impacts on health, safety, and social cohesion**
 - Social and health-care costs: nearly **\$3 billion** per year in Québec
- **Municipalities play a key role in prevention**
 - WHO (2010) report highlighting the importance of municipal alcohol policies



Role of Municipalities

- **Local governments**
- **Direct influence and authority** over the environment, public spaces, safety, and land-use planning
 - Municipal Powers Act
 - Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development
 - Cities and Towns Act
 - Regional or local policies



Municipal Powers Related to Health and Alcohol in Québec



An underused area of authority

- Few municipalities have incorporated alcohol into their policies (only 10 among respondents)
- **Over 50%** feel they lack the resources or tools to address alcohol-related challenges (especially municipalities under 2,000 residents)



Adopt by-laws and policies that promote health, healthy living, and well-being.

- They do not, however, hold direct public health authority as in some other provinces.



Real but often misunderstood powers:

- Public order and safety
- Land-use planning (zoning, uses, architecture, visual environment)
- Outdoor advertising (billboards, signage, design guidelines)
- Environment (waste management)
- Urban planning tools (conditional uses, density limits, permitting)
- Municipal by-laws
- Policies (health, events, sponsorship, etc.)
- Awareness campaigns



Consultation Objectives



Understand alcohol-related issues experienced by municipalities



Identify municipal needs and document practices



Propose potential actions



Methodology

1 261

- 1,261 organizations contacted (municipalities, MRCs, CMM, boroughs)
- Questionnaire in French

135

- 135 responses
 - 16 regions
 - 5 of Québec's largest cities
- Responses received June 20 to August 19, 2023

5

- 20 online survey questions
- 5 individual interviews with voluntary organizations

Profile of Respondents

16

- 16 administrative regions represented (out of 17)

76 %

- 76% of respondents have populations under 10,000

71 %

- 71% are located in rural settings

5

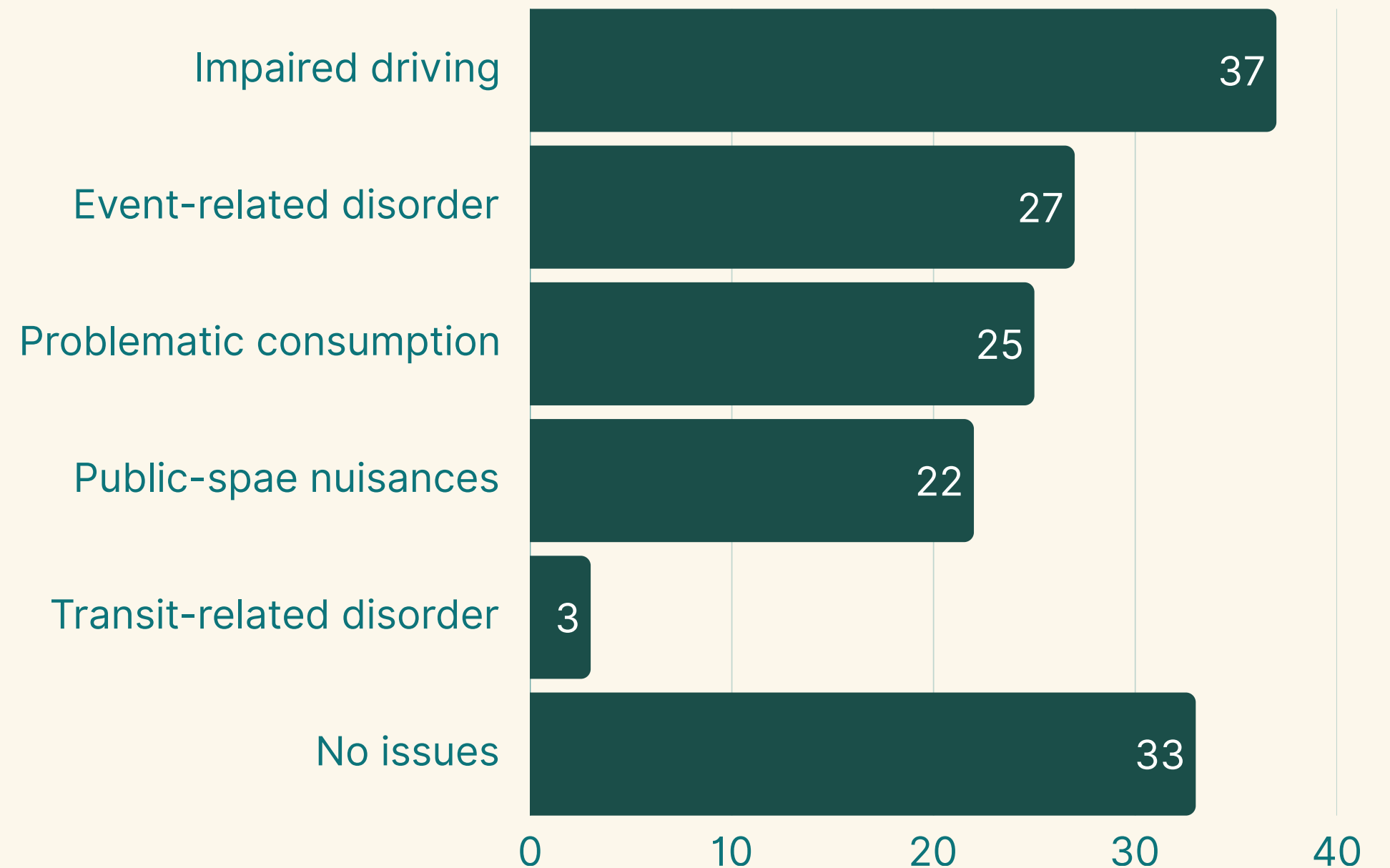
- 5 of Québec's 10 largest cities participated

Key Findings at a Glance

- ✦ **Two-thirds** observe alcohol-related problems
- ✦ **85%** prohibit alcohol consumption on public property
- ✦ **50%** observe disorder or safety concerns, particularly during events
- ✦ **17%** received complaints about alcohol consumption in parks
- ✦ **40 %** identify impaired driving as the top priority
- ✦ **Over 50%** feel insufficiently informed or equipped to address alcohol issues
- ✦ **One-third** have dealt with complaints or issued infractions related to alcohol

Observed Issues

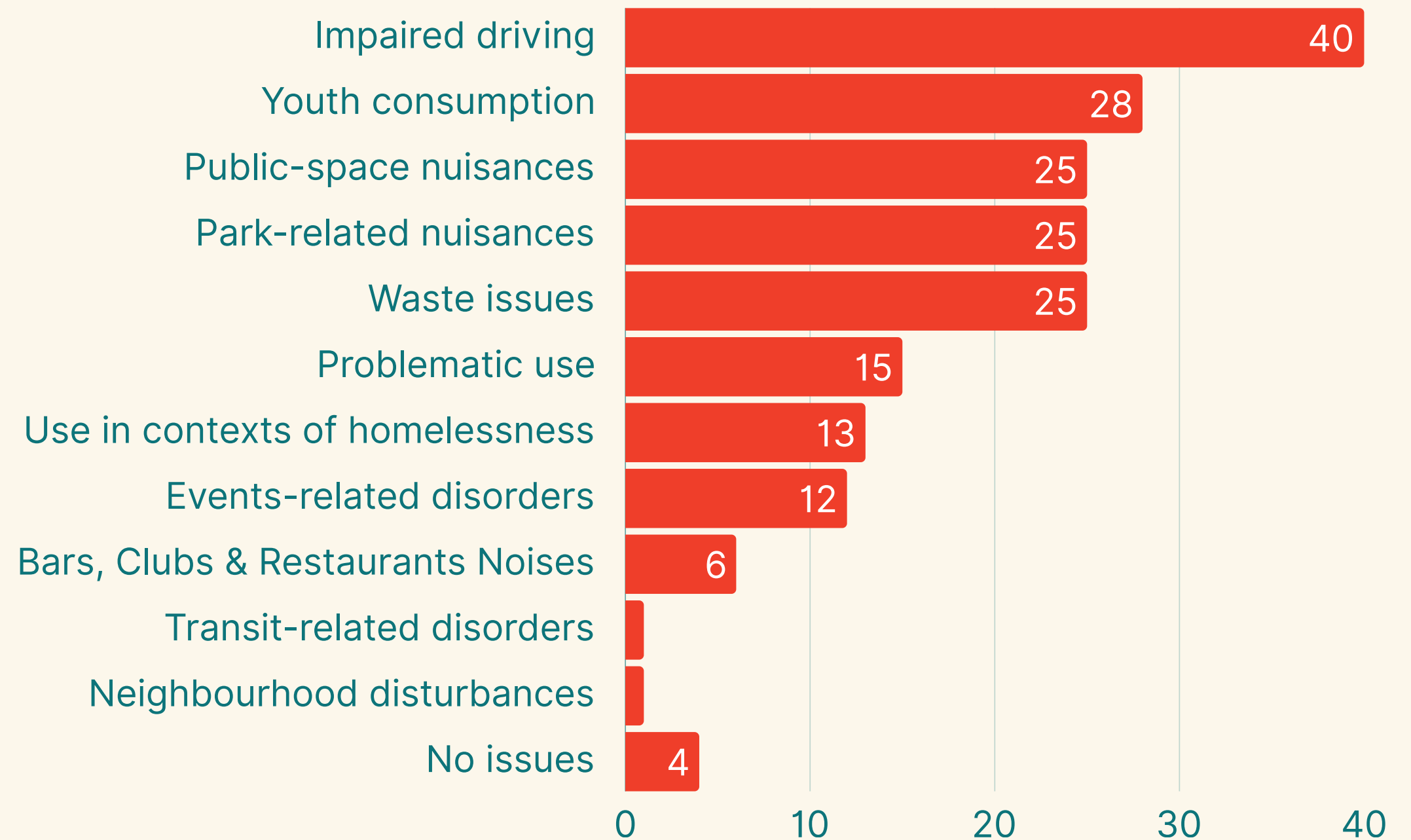
- **Two in three municipalities** observe alcohol-related issues
- **Perceptions vary depending on:**
 - Population size
 - Demographic profile
 - Presence of tourism or student populations



Issues Identified as Priorities

At least one-quarter consider these issues priorities:

- Impaired driving (40%)
- Youth consumption (28%)
- Nuisances in parks and public spaces, including waste issues (34%)



Issue 1 - Impaired Driving

- Observed by **37%**
- Considered a priority by **40%**
- **One-third** would like awareness tools
- **Municipal initiatives:**
 - Terrebonne (2015),
 - Québec City (2020),
 - CoDeBars program



Issue 2 - Youth and Students

- **Prioritized by 28%**
 - Particularly in university and college environments
- **A transversal issue:** safety, hospitalizations, festive settings
- **Municipal initiatives:**
 - Sherbrooke's Alcohol and Youth Strategy (2018)



Issue 3 - Parks and Public Spaces

- **25%** view alcohol consumption in parks as a priority
- **Varied regulatory models:**
 - Permitted with a meal
 - Designated zones
 - Time-based restrictions
- **Key considerations:**
 - Stigmatization
 - Over-policing or ticketing (homelessness)
 - Social acceptability



Issue 4 - Events

- **27%** report nuisances or safety concerns
 - Only 12% consider it a priority
- Waste is an important nuisance factor **(25%)**
- **Inspiring initiatives:**
 - “comfort zones” (e.g., Festif de Baie-Saint-Paul)



Issue 5 - Nuisances and Public Order

- **50%** observe disorder (noise, violence, etc.)
- **85% have a by-law** regulating alcohol consumption in public spaces (mostly prohibitions)



Urban Planning and Land-Use Management

- **Most organizations** regulate points of sale through zoning (**30%** have no specific rules for alcohol points of sale)
- **51%:** specific zoning
- **5%:** conditional use
- **2%:** quota-based limits
- Importance of **outlet density** in relation to health and consumption
- **Advertising restrictions:** e.g., Rosemont–Petite-Patrie and City of New York (public transit)



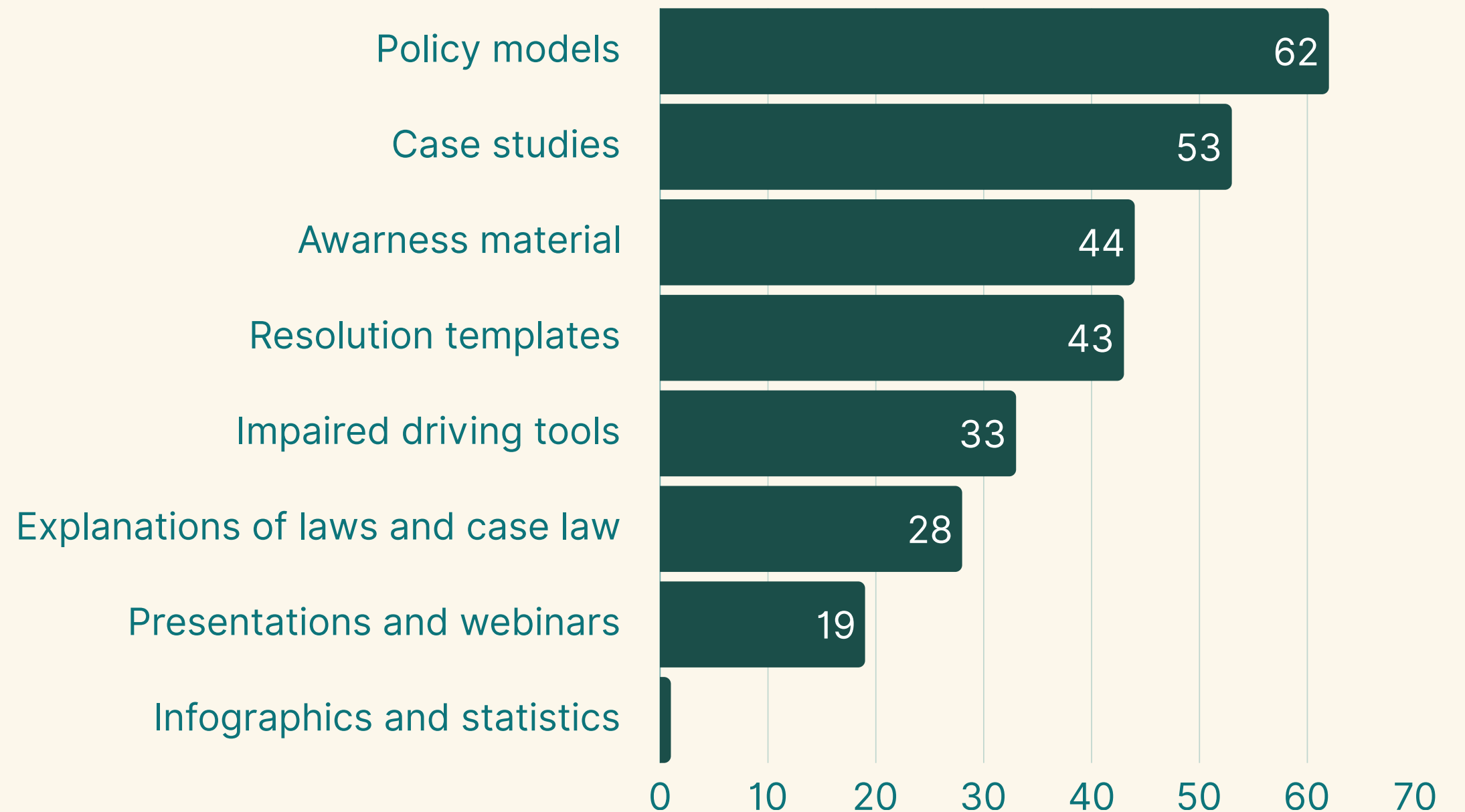
Enforcement Challenges

- Significant issue for municipalities **under 10,000 residents**
 - Limited tools and enforcement capacity
- **83% rely solely** on the Sûreté du Québec
 - **Only 16%** have access to local policing or patrol services
- Importance of **harmonized MRC-level regulations**



Identified Needs

- **77%** want to learn more
- **Strong demand for tools:**
 - Policy models (62%)
 - Case studies (53%)
 - General awareness tools (44%)
 - Resolution templates (43%)



Recommended Strategies

- **Inform:** municipal capacities for action
- **Adopt policies:** public space, advertising, event regulations
- **Support awareness efforts:** impaired driving, youth, festive environments
- **Equip municipalities:** simple tools tailored to local contexts



Conclusion

- Alcohol is a transversal municipal issue (safety, health, social cohesion)
- Municipalities play a key role in creating supportive environments
- Need for support, tools, and training



Discussion



What are the priorities or biggest challenges in your settings?



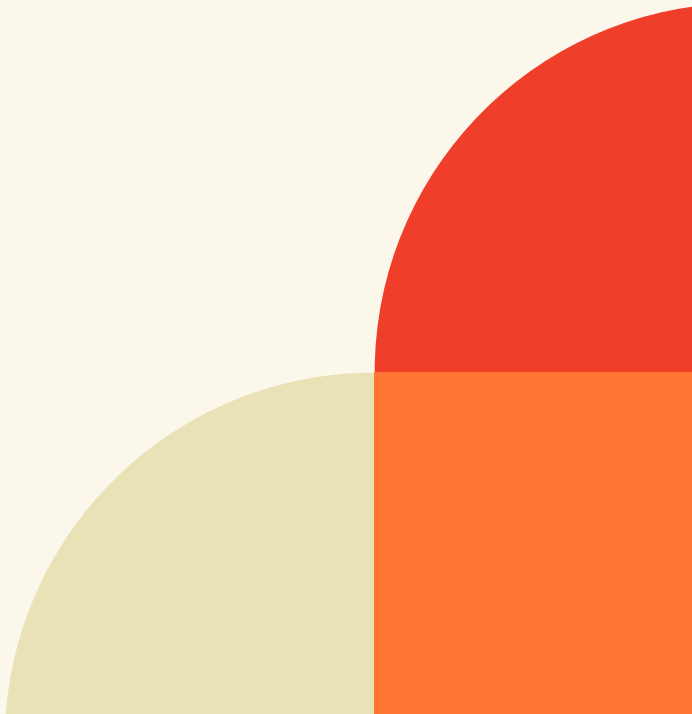
What projects or initiatives already exist in your communities?

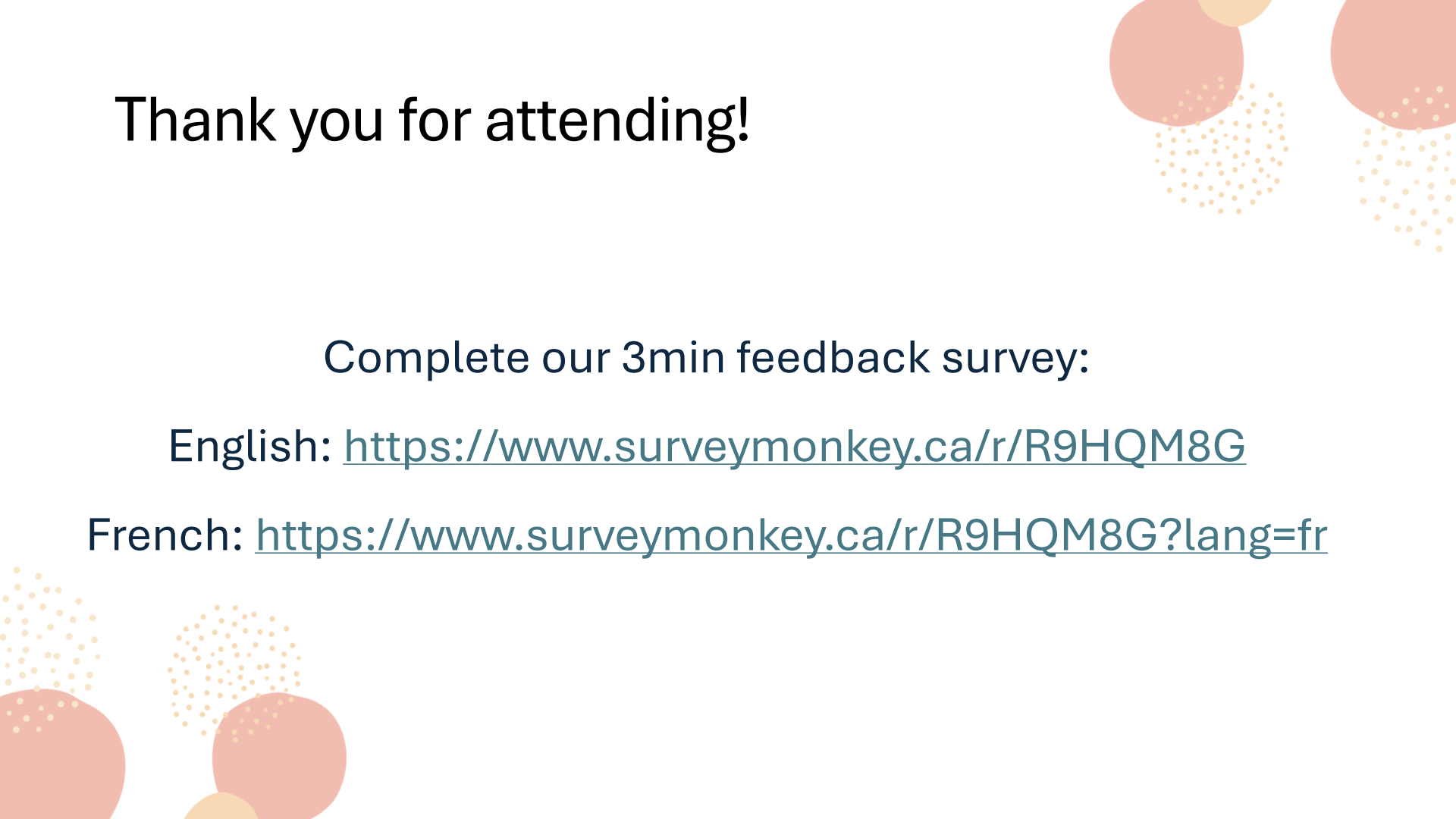


THANK YOU

Marianne Dessureault, mdessureault@aspq.org

Laurence Ruel, lrue@aspq.org





Thank you for attending!

Complete our 3min feedback survey:

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/R9HQM8G>

French: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/R9HQM8G?lang=fr>