Appendix 3.

What We Heard



GamePLAN: Reimagining Public Recreation

What We Heard Report

May 2024 | Final

Executive Summary

The City of Calgary is reimagining how public recreation is delivered and will soon put GamePLAN into play as a key strategic document in Calgary. GamePLAN is a long-term vision to shape The City's approach to delivering inclusive, accessible and financially responsible recreation services for the next 10 to 30 years. It will guide future business planning and investment, shape policy and The City's approach to service delivery.

From November 2023 to February 2024, The City engaged with the public to better understand their experiences with and expectations for public recreation in Calgary. Partners (Civic and operating Partners, Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations) were engaged to better understand public recreation's collective impact, and to improve problem-solving capacity and resiliency. This report describes The City's approach to engagement and summarizes feedback according to emergent themes. Engagement with each group revealed distinct perspectives that have been categorized according to the following themes:

Themes from Civic and Operating Partners

- **Service Outcomes:** There is interest among Partners related to shared performance measures and data-tracking, but successful implementation rests on addressing current challenges.
- **Relationship Building:** Partners differ in their needs around their relationship with The City, but there is an overall willingess to collaborate more effectively to support the public recreation sector.
- **Recreation Calgarians Want:** The public recreation sector reaches a broad range of Calgarians through services and there is interest in further supporting equity-denied groups.
- **Operational Needs:** Partners raised their current challenges related to aging facilities, staffing and volunteers, and increased operational expenses.

Themes from Community Partners

- **Supporting Community and Being Active:** Community Partners have common roles they play around building community and promoting physical health and active living.
- **Addressing High Demand:** There is currently a high demand for programming through Community Partners relative to their capacity.
- **Collaborating with The City to Address Challenges:** Community Partners look to The City for support and collaboration around funding, infrastructure, and programming.

Themes from the public

- **Value for Money:** Recreation users value variety, affordability, and the quality of programs and facilities. Respondents shared how they recreate and what aspects of the public recreation system they like.
- **Removing Barriers:** There are opportunities for the public recreation system to better serve new and existing users. Respondents identified barriers to participating in recreation and current challenges for existing users.
- **Embracing Change:** Recreational interests are dynamic and shifting. Respondents suggested a range of ideas for how the public recreation system could be more responsive to the way they prefer to participate in recreation.

Feedback will inform service strategies to ensure the public recreation system is responsive to current and future needs.

Key objectives of GamePLAN:

- Understand current and future recreation needs,
- Formally establish The City's role as a steward of the public recreation system in Calgary, and,
- Identify performance measures to better assess the success of service strategies.

The City heard from:

- Over 2,000 members of the public through pop-up events and a public survey,
- 9 Civic and operating Partners through facilitated sessions, and
- 36 Community Partners through an online survey.

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Engagement Overview

The City conducted a series of public and Partner engagement activities between November 18, 2023 and February 2, 2024. The purpose of engagement was to understand recreation needs, preferences, and priorities, as well as barriers to accessing the public recreation system.

GamePLAN engaged with three groups:

- Public
- Civic and operating Partners
- Community Associations & Social Recreation Organizations

Public Engagement

Public engagement activities were devised to be highly accessible and promoted to a broad audience through a multi-lingual, multi-media marketing campaign. Intercepts and events were conducted in various locations to meet people where they are and to capture a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Feedback mechanisms included:

- A digital survey (collected online and through 'intercepts'),
- Pop-up events at third-party locations (markets, libraries, recreation facilities, shopping malls, etc.),
- In-person 'Post-It' boards for sharing feedback about the impacts of public recreation, and
- In-person conversations with members of the project team.

The survey was housed on The City's Engage Portal and optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability. More than 1,800 responses were received with 36% of respondents identifying as belonging to one more equity-denied group.

Results highlight challenges and opportunities for improving public recreation services in Calgary **(see *Public Engagement Findings*, page 14).**

Partner Engagement

The City facilitated workshops with Partners in spring 2023 to establish a baseline understanding for how The City and Partners can work better together to develop a long-term vision and strategy for public recreation in Calgary. Four themes emerged from these workshops: *service outcomes, relationship building, recreation people want, and operational needs.*

The City facilitated a second phase of discussions in the fall of 2023, which included one-on-one sessions with Partners to brainstorm and troubleshoot topics within each of the themes.

The City also distributed a closed digital survey to Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations **(see *Partner Engagement Findings*, Page 16).**

Engagement Approach

Purpose

The purpose of engagement is to understand:

- Barriers to accessing public recreation.
- Recreation needs and wants.
- Public and Partner expectations for the The City's role as a public service provider and sector leader.

Strategy

Engaged groups have varying levels of influence in decision-making based on The City's Spectrum of Strategies and Promises. The public has been **consulted** to identify themes that will inform future strategies and approaches, while Partners have the opportunity to **collaborate** in decision-making.

Commitment

In alignment with The City's Engage Framework, the project team delivered on the mandatory Inform/Communicate tasks:

- Provide information that is timely, accurate, balanced, objective, and easily understood.
- Respond to questions for clarification and direct members of the public and interested parties to sources of additional information.
- Share with interested parties what we heard from them.
- Share with interested parties if the input cannot be used in making the decision and the reasoning for why it may not be used.
- Share how the input was factored into the decision.

Engagement was guided by The City's Engage Policy and incorporated commitments to:

Accountability

Inclusiveness

Transparency

Commitment

Responsiveness

Who We Engaged

GamePLAN engaged with three groups through various tactics tailored to the interest and involvement of each **(see *How We Engaged*, page 7).**

Public

The public includes those who are not members of a particular organization or who do not have any specific subject matter expertise. For the purpose of engagement, this group is divided into recreation users and recreation non-users.

Over 2,000 Members of the public participated in GamePLAN

- **36 locations (8 pop-ups; 24 additional intercept locations)**
- **Public survey**

Civic and Operating Partners

The public recreation system in Calgary is a network of service providers, facilities and operators. The City's Civic Partners are defined under the Investing in Partnerships Policy. The City invests in these organizations to deliver effective programs and services in targeted areas, develop and advance strategies, and construct and manage assets.

9 Civic and operating Partners participated in GamePLAN

- **Partner engagement sessions**

Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations

The City partners with many community groups, clubs, associations and organizations to deliver public recreation opportunities.

36 Community Partners participated in GamePLAN

- **Online survey for Community Partners and social recreation organizations**

Public Survey Respondent Demographics

97.1% of responses came from Calgary residents

2.3% from non-residents

0.7% prefer not to answer

Equity-Denied Respondents

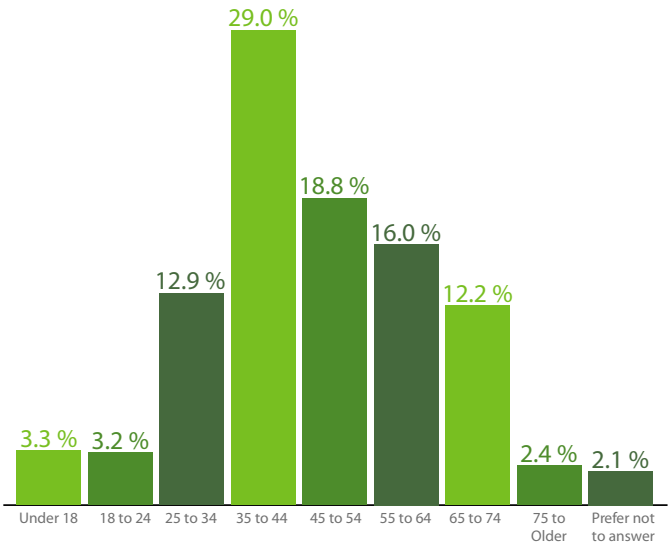
3%	Indigenous persons (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
6%	New Canadians
17%	Immigrants
1%	Refugees
9%	Racialized people, visible minorities
5%	2SLGBTQ+
6%	Persons with disabilities
7%	Neurodiverse individuals

36%

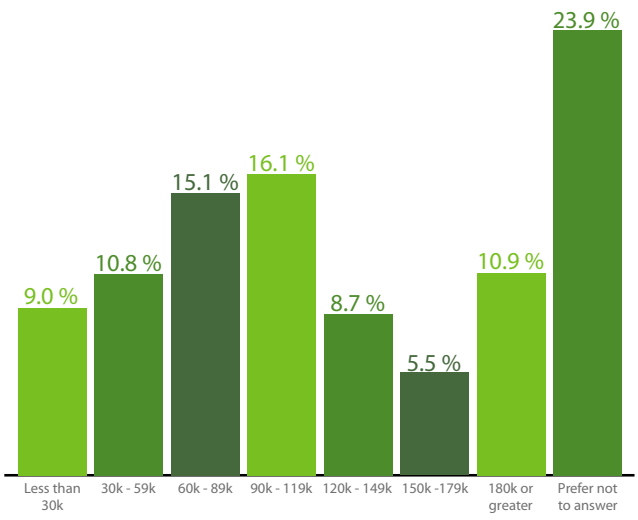
Equity-denied respondents*

*The total number of respondents belonging to one or more equity-denied groups.

Age of Survey Respondents



Household Income of Survey Respondents



How We Engaged

A city-wide marketing campaign raised awareness for engagement opportunities with the goal of reaching as many members of the public as possible. The City engaged directly with Partners.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE
Communications Tactics			
Project webpage	Project information and the survey were available at: **www.calgary.ca/gameplan**	13,054 unique webpage visits	Public
Digital media	Posts on Facebook, Twitter and newsletters directed people to the public events and online survey.	7,650 clicked links	Public
Direct contact	Partners were engaged through direct contact.	N/A	All Partners
Radio, print media, and posters	Posters were installed across the city at recreation centres and Community Associations.	N/A	Public

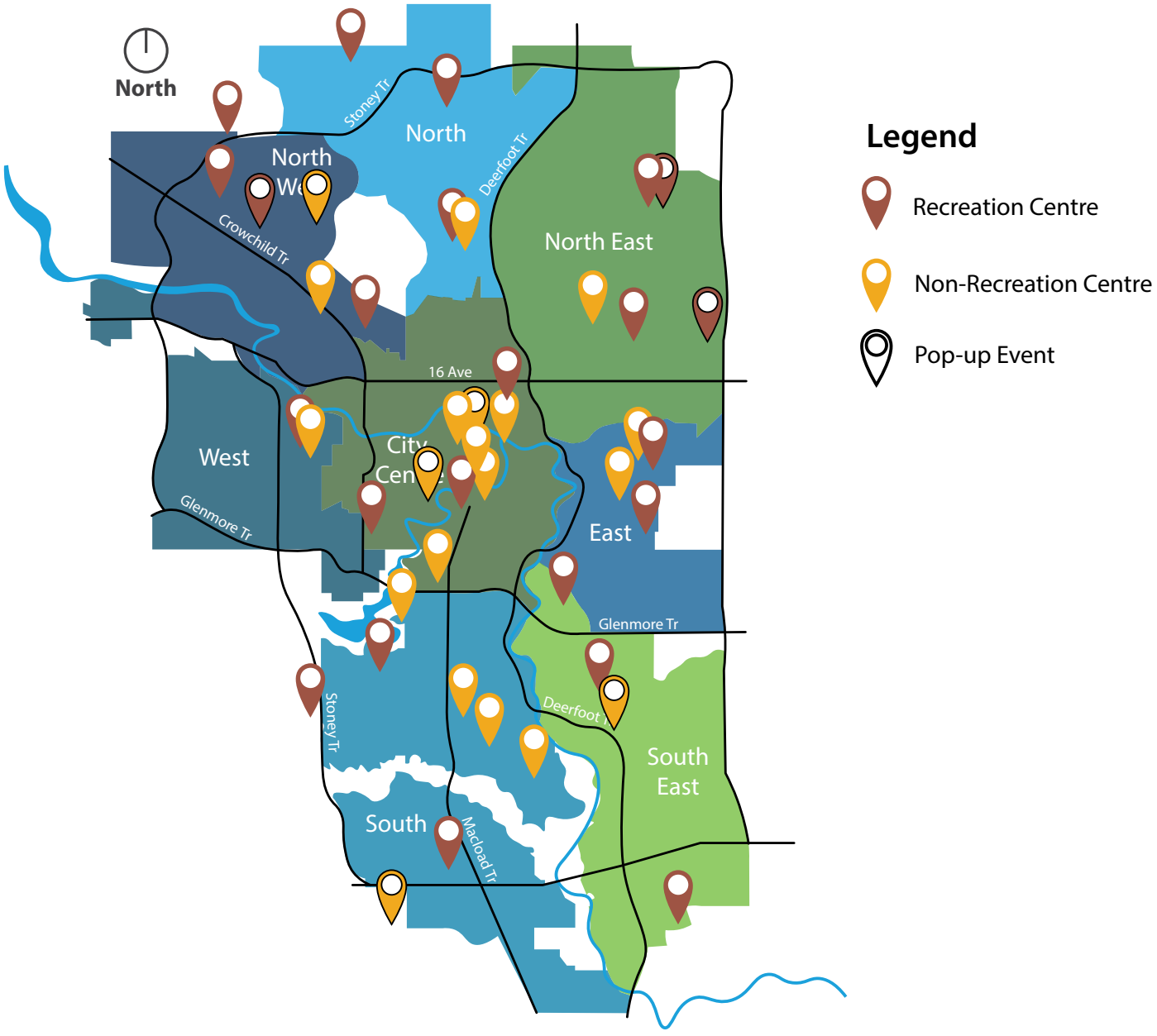
GamePLAN engagement took place between November 13, 2023 and February 2, 2024 and included both in-person and online opportunities to ensure participation was convenient and accessible. The engagement opportunities and their impact are summarized below.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE
Engagement Opportunities			
Intercept survey	Digital intercept surveys were collected across Calgary using tablets.	27 locations 326 survey responses	Public
Online survey	The survey was housed on The City's Engage Portal and optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability.	1,526 survey responses	Public
Pop-up events	The project team attended eight events across Calgary (two in each quadrant) to conduct surveys and engage in conversations with the public. Pop-up booths included free snacks and stickers for kids, mini golf and cornhole.	8 events 210 survey responses	Public
Community Partners survey	A survey was distributed to Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations. Organizations were invited to meet with the project team and The City to discuss challenges, opportunities, and strategies.	36 responses	Community Partners
Partner workshops	Partners met with the project team and City personnel to discuss service outcomes, relationship building, recreation people want and operational needs.	Representatives from 9 organizations	Civic and Operating Partners

Where We Engaged

In-person public engagement activities occurred in locations across Calgary, including recreation locations (e.g., community arenas, swimming pools, and large recreation facilities) and non-recreation locations (e.g., libraries, malls, and community events). At some locations, the project team set up a table as part of a community event (i.e., pop-up event) along with display boards, in addition to the intercept survey.

This approach was used to ensure both recreation users and non-users from each area of the city had an opportunity to participate in GamePLAN engagement.



Engagement Methodology

Public Survey

Over 1,800 respondents shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by completing an online or intercept survey. Based on the sample size, the survey should be considered statistically significant.

Promotion

The GamePLAN survey was promoted though the following:

- The City of Calgary webpage: The survey was live on the Engage Calgary GamePLAN webpage.
- Social Media and Marketing Campaign: The City launched a marketing campaign to direct respondents to the project webpage and to invite them to complete the survey online.
- Pop-ups: During each pop-up, the project team conducted intercept surveys and directed people to the project webpage to complete the survey on their own time.
- Intercept surveys: The project team conducted intercept surveys with respondents at key locations throughout the city.

Methodology

The survey used responsive design and a combination of open and closed question formats to help categorize feedback according to those who currently use public recreation services and those who do not.

Five (5) optional questions were asked at the end of the survey to understand participant socio-demographics. This data is used to understand how respondents' multiple and intersecting identities influence if and how they access and experience Calgary's recreation programs and facilities.

Respondents were also asked standard questions about their demographics, including place of residence, income, and age. For a summary of participant demographics, refer to the section *Who We Engaged*.

For close-ended responses (multiple choice questions), a bar graph has been provided with detailed results. For open-ended responses (open text comment field), a qualitative summary of the common themes and points is provided.

What does the future of public recreation look like to you?

Survey participants were asked to respond to a series of questions across four topic areas, each related to the overarching question "What does the future of public recreation look like to you?"

Definition of recreation
Question 1; Asked to all respondents.

Recreation patterns and preferences
Questions 2-4; Only asked to those who identified as recreation users).

Barriers to participation
Questions 5-6; Only asked to those who identified as recreation non-users).

Future program and service priorities
Questions 7-10; Asked to all respondents.

Methodology for Cross Tabulation Insight

Cross tabulation refers to comparing how different demographics answered a question versus total responses. As an example, the share of participation in recreation may vary by age and level of income. The results of this exercise are visualized through bar graphs to show the comparison across demographics.

Insight (under dark purple text headings) highlights statistically significant differences, which were tested through statistical exercises. The bar graphs highlight far more variations in responses than the selected insight, but not all of the differences in the former are statistically valid (e.g., not enough responses within the sub-group).

Public Survey Results

Public Survey Questions

Definition of Recreation

Q #1: What does recreation mean to you?

Q #2: Do you, or your family, currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?

YES

NO

Recreation users

Recreation patterns and preferences

Q #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

Q #4: What do you feel The City and Partners do well?

Q #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?

Recreation non-users

Barriers to participation

Q #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?

Q #7: Please tell us more about why you or your family don't currently attend a recreation program, facility, or participate in sport.

Future program and service priorities

Q #8: What recreational programs and services would you like to see more of?

Q #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

Q #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?

Q #11: Do you think there are enough public recreation opportunities from The City and Partners for the following groups of Calgarians?

Pop-up Events

The project team hosted pop-ups at a variety of third-party events and locations like markets, libraries, and recreation facilities. At these pop-ups respondents shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by talking with GamePLAN team members and filling out the online survey using tablets.

Methodology

Pop-up events provided additional opportunities for respondents to share their thoughts and feedback depending on their interest level and time available to participate. A poster board was included as a passive activity for respondents to share their feedback.

Project team members provided information about the project and offered respondents the option to:

- engage in conversation about the current state and future of recreation in Calgary,
- place sticky notes with feedback on the engagement panels (poster board), and/or
- complete a survey with a member of the project team or on their own.

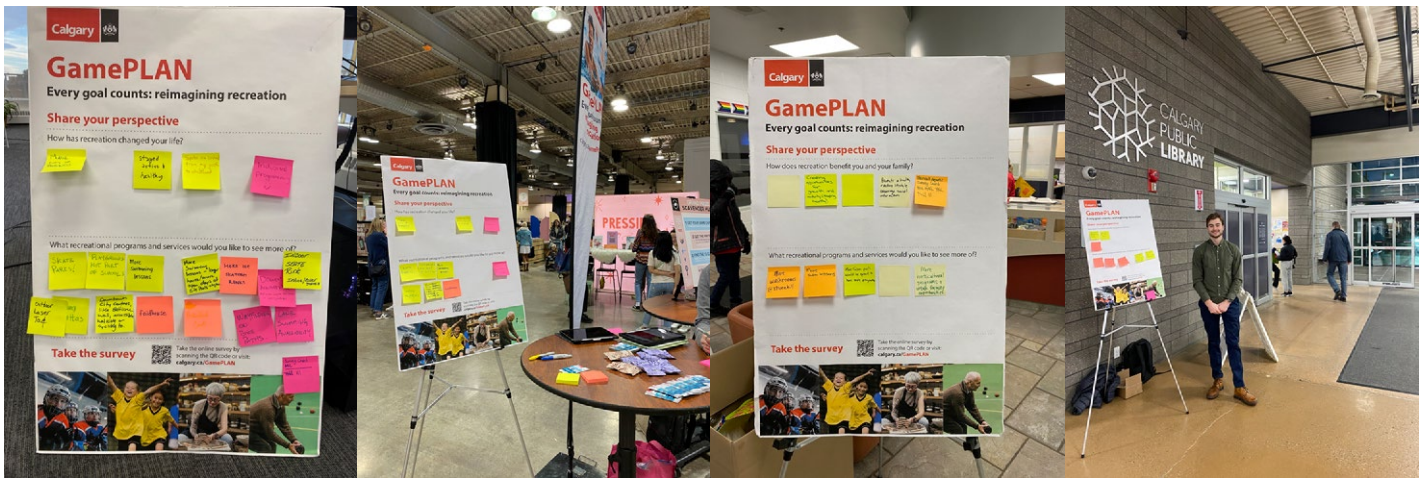
Promotion

The GamePLAN pop-up events were promoted though the following:

- The City of Calgary Webpage: The pop-up event information was live on the Engage Calgary GamePLAN webpage.
- Social Media and Marketing Campaign: The City launched a marketing campaign to direct respondents to the project webpage and to invite them to attend a pop-up event.

LOCATIONS

Edgemont Christmas Market
Calgary Justice Film Festival
Crowfoot Library
Holiday Market at Deerfoot Inn
Don Hartman North East Sportsplex
Christmas Lights at Spruce Meadows
Genesis Centre
Chinook Blast



Civic and Operating Partner Workshops

Facilitated workshops and interviews conducted by The City's Innovation Lab in spring 2023 helped establish a baseline understanding for how The City and Partners can work better together to develop a long-term vision and strategy for public recreation in Calgary.

The following four (4) themes emerged from these sessions:

- **Service Outcomes:** Shared outcomes define service benefits and provide a basis for measuring success and understanding impact. The public recreation system does not currently have a framework for understanding its mandate or progress through shared outcomes.
- **Relationship Building:** Roles are loosely defined, lack clarity and consistency.
- **Recreation People Want:** Residents' needs continue to evolve and diversify. How do recreational providers keep pace?
- **Operational Needs:** The public recreation system faces revenue pressures that can conflict with desired service benefits.

The City facilitated a second phase of discussions in the fall 2023, which included one-on-one sessions with Partners to brainstorm and troubleshoot topics within the four themes above.

These discussions are described in the *Partner Findings Section* on Page 16, and were facilitated with a focus on:

- Brainstorming shared outcomes
- Troubleshooting challenges
- Exploring emerging trends
- Discussing roles and perspectives

Representatives from 9 Organizations

participated in the Civic and operating Partner workshops

Civic and operating Partners that participated in workshops with The City:

- Calgary Outdoor Swimming Pools Association (COPSA)
- Cardel Recreation South
- Genesis Centre
- MNP Community and Sport Centre
- Trico Centre for Family Wellness
- Vecova Centre for Disability Services and Research
- Vivo For Healthier Generations
- Westside Recreation Centre
- YMCA Calgary

Community Partner Survey

Community Partners, consisting of Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations, were invited to participate in a short, invitation-only survey about their experience as part of the public recreation system.

The survey was designed to better understand Community Partners' organizational and operational challenges and aspirations, as well as to identify areas for improved collaboration with The City.

Representatives from 36 Organizations

participated in the Community Partner survey

Methodology

The survey was comprised of six questions:

- Two open field questions
- Four closed field questions

The City distributed the survey directly to Community Partners via The City's Partnership network. The survey was open from October, 2023 to January, 2024 and in-person meetings with City personnel were also offered.

Community Partner Survey Questions

Q #1: How many Calgarians does your organization reach or serve annually?

Q #2: How can we improve collaboration between The City and your organization?

Q #3: How would your organization like to grow or change its service over the next five years?

Q #4: What is your organization trying to achieve with your public recreation services?

Q #5a: How is your organization measuring success towards your outcomes?

Q #5b: If there are opportunities your organization would like to explore or discuss with The City to improve your recreation services, please share them with us.

Q #6: Has your organization observed changing demands or emerging trends that impact service delivery? If so, what priorities has your organization identified to respond to Calgarians' changing needs?

Q #7: How can the public recreation system better serve or remove barriers for the following demographics? Your response can address one or multiple groups: Preschool (0-5), Children (6-12), Youth (13-17), Adults (18-64), Older Seniors (65+), New Canadians (all ages), Equity-denied Calgarians (all ages)

Public Engagement Themes

The following section summarizes the results, themes and key takeaways from GamePLAN public engagement activities (pop-up events and public survey). **See Appendix A for *Detailed Public Survey Results.***

Public Engagement

Throughout public engagement activities, the project team listened to respondents' experiences of Calgary's public recreation system. These experiences are summarized into three (3) themes and eight (8) sub-themes below.

These themes point to how respondents view the current state of the public recreation system and identify priority areas for The City to improve service delivery. These themes will be a key reference when developing strategic actions for GamePLAN.

1. Value for Money: Recreation users wish to see enhanced variety and quality of facilities and programs, while maintaining affordability for all.

Respondents indicated they place value on recreation as a tool for personal development, health and well-being. Current recreation users consider the strengths of the current public recreation system to be the variety, quality, and affordability of facilities and programs. However, users and non-users alike suggest opportunities for The City to prioritize and make public recreation more attractive to all residents.

1a. The way people define recreation is broad and diverse.

When asked what recreation means to them, most respondents indicated recreation is about sport and physical activity. For others, recreation extends to leisure, arts and culture, and community. In open-ended question responses and conversations at pop-ups, participants expressed a perception that Calgary's recreation system favours active recreation over leisure, arts, culture, and community programming.

Respondents shared ways recreation benefits them and their families. Many reported that participation in recreation contributes to their physical and mental health and well-being, as well as a sense of connection to their community.

In conversations with project team members, participants who are parents expressed how recreation promotes skills development and physical activity among children. Older adult participants describe how it can assist them in recovery from illness or injury and supports aging with dignity and grace.

1b. Recreation users value variety, affordability and quality

When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the public recreation system in Calgary, respondents who identified as being current recreation users noted variety as a top strength. This perception of variety includes the range of facility types (e.g., parks, gymnasia, pools, etc.) to the variety of programs available (e.g., sports, art classes, fitness, etc.). The quality of facilities (e.g., cleanliness, renovations, etc.) and the low cost of memberships and registration are considered strengths by recreation users.

In contrast, non-recreation users are more likely to consider variety, affordability and facility upgrades as areas for improvement.

1c. Priorities for The City's role in recreation

When asked about The City's role in recreation, many respondents shared three main areas of focus:

- Investment in community facilities and amenities, including renovating existing facilities and building new facilities to meet demand.
- Providing quality programs and spaces for residents of all ages and abilities to be active and creative.
- Providing low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for residents experiencing vulnerability.

2. Removing Barriers: There are opportunities for the public recreation system to better serve new and existing users.

Recreation and non-recreation users shared feedback about the barriers they experience in accessing the public recreation system, and changes that would better serve their needs and wants. This feedback provides a better understanding of the opportunities for service improvement that would enable The City to draw in new users, while maintaining or improving satisfaction to retain existing users.

2a. Affordability is a barrier

Cost as a barrier to accessing programs and facilities is a common theme that varies between current users and non-users. For example, cost is a common barrier to participation cited by non-users while current users identified affordability as a strength of the public recreation system.

When asked what The City and Partners should prioritize, the most common response among all respondents (both users and non-users) was "providing low- and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for Calgarians experiencing vulnerability."

Affordability is a complex concept, since admission pricing vary by facility and activity. There can also be additional costs associated with participation (e.g., transportation, equipment, childcare). The engagement analysis is limited to the details provided by respondents, and therefore unable to clearly separate admission pricing from other costs.

2b. Frustration with program availability and registration

A lack of program availability is the second most common barrier among non-users while current users expressed frustration with existing program capacity. Respondents consider this is a result of availability not matching demand, program times not meeting their needs, as well as a challenging registration process that is frustrating for many respondents and prevents equitable access to programs. Respondents described that swimming lessons have very high demand and competition for available time slots.

Current recreation users proposed increased hours of operation as one solution to increase program and facility availability.

2c. Lack of awareness about programs and services

Respondents listed a lack of awareness as the third most common barrier to participation. When asked what The City and Partners could do to improve services, respondents cite a lack of awareness about programs and services, where to find information and how to register for opportunities.

3. Embracing Change: Recreation interests are dynamic and shifting.

Respondents shared feedback about the types of amenities and programming that is currently available across the public recreation system. The public survey revealed that while there is still demand for established activities like basketball and swimming, respondents would like to see emerging activities (like pickleball and disc golf), as well as new approaches to how programs and services are delivered.

3a. Demand for a mix of established and emerging activities

The survey asked respondents what they would like to see more of in the public recreation system, allowing for open-ended responses. Respondents also provided feedback through conversations with project team members at pop-up events.

Feedback indicates a need to increase the availability of existing active programming (e.g., swimming, basketball, soccer, etc.) and provide more spaces to accommodate emerging sports (i.e., disc golf and pickleball). Feedback also indicates a desire for increased leisure, arts and community programming (e.g., walking groups, dance classes, cooking classes, nutritional programming, etc.).

3b. Requests for new approaches to program delivery

When asked what they would like to see more of, respondents provided suggestions for how programming is delivered. This included more drop-in and alternative programming times (daytime and evening programs). Another idea is to expand opportunities to provide trials where people can sample programming before committing to full registration. There is also demand for more "Learn to" programs.

Increasing programming for women and girls is frequently cited, as is programming tailored to seniors, teens, and people with disabilities.

When asked if they felt there is sufficient programming in place for different demographic groups, respondents indicated there are not currently enough opportunities for seniors (65+), youth (13-17), and people living with low income. This survey question did not include closed field options for women/girls or people with disabilities.

Partner Engagement Themes

Civic and Operating Partner Workshops

The following four (4) themes and ten (10) key takeaways were generated from the Civic and Operating Partner Workshops.

1. Service outcomes

1a. Interest in shared performance measures and data-tracking

All Partners have some form of tracking to measure performance and operational data, including registration and user numbers, demographics, Fair Entry program uptake, etc. This data is currently collected in various formats using different software. Terminology for reporting is also inconsistent across the system. Partners recognize the importance and benefits of sector-wide data tracking, especially the ability to demonstrate the value and impact of recreation.

There was a specific request for The City to provide a standardized 'apples-to-apples' template for data entry and records. While there is interest in shared performance measurment, The City and Partners recognize steps need to be taken to protect business information and customer privacy. Some ogranizations raised concerns for standarized performance measurement due to the uniqueness of programming and operational requirements from one facility to another.

Overall, Partners indicated a willingess to share, but raised important considerations to preserve and value their unique mandates and visions.

2. Relationship building

2a. Willingness to collaborate

Partners expressed a willingness to collaborate in a variety of ways. One example is sharing operational and demographic data to better understand sector needs, and promoting storytelling around the benefits of public recreation in Calgary. Many organizations currently participate and benefit from the existing 'Recreation Leaders Network' and a recurring meeting between arena managers.

There is interest in sharing information and operational system processes and software; and several hope The City can initiate this work. Some Partners are especially interested in increased communications and collaboration with The City for strategy and program planning to reduce competing or overlapping services.

Partners also expressed they are keen to work with The City to advance advocacy efforts for recreation funding from provincial and federal governments.

As an area for future exploration, some organizations expressed a willingness to explore centralized online registration or point-of-sale interface across all organizations for consistency and simplicity. However, this discussion did not thoroughly assess levels of support or details around implementation.

2b. Organizational brand identity

Partners shared that many members of the public are unaware of Calgary's unique partnership and funding model (City-run and Partner-run). This observation is confirmed by public engagement. For many Partners, this means the public may have misconceptions or misunderstanding about an organization's brand or unique brand identity.

Partners are aware of this gap in public knowledge, but their assessment of this gap varies. While some organizations expressed frustration with the misunderstanding, some indicated they receive positive benefits and additional credibility by 'borrowing' City identity.

Others recognize that an improved public understanding of funding models may encourage support around recreation funding.

2c. Variety of funding and revenue models

Partners shared their overall approaches to funding and revenue. All Partners indicated that they rely on:

1. Admissions and memberships
2. Rentals and events
3. Class registrations

Some Partners also talked about the importance of funding campaigns, private donors, and perspectives on sponsorships. Most Partners have explored federal, provincial and other grant opportunities.

2d. Variety of requests to The City

Some organizations expressed a desire for financial assistance to upgrade aging infrastructure or address rising operational costs. Some Partners also suggested The City could help in providing programming templates, support with marketing, or engage in more sector strategy discussions.

In contrast, other Partners noted their satisfaction with the current system, acknowledged the ease of communication with The City, and were comfortable operating independently.

3. Recreation people want

3a. Diverse sector-wide offerings and demographics

Partners offer diverse programs and services to a growing and changing client base. Some Partners focus on serving specific demographics city-wide, while other Partners focus effort on serving surrounding communities.

There are also variations in offerings, including different combinations of aquatic facilities, arenas, gyms, event spaces, playgrounds, and sport fields. Partners emphasize different values driving their work such as creating community, promoting health and wellbeing, and serving a broad range of recreational and sporting interests.

3b. Interest in supporting equity-denied groups

While inclusion is a priority for Partners, the need for customized programming for specific groups is dependent on current and future demand, which can be difficult to measure and predict.

Currently, there is no consistent approach for collecting demographic data on gender, income, ability, ethnicity, or other intersectional/overlapping social identities.

4. Operational needs

4a. Aging facilities and infrastructure

Nearly every Partner identified aging buildings and infrastructure as a significant challenge. In general, many recreation facilities in Calgary are reaching the later phase of their life cycle and require significant capital investment to maintain, upgrade, renovate, or replace. While revenue from memberships, programs, and rentals may cover the cost of regular operations, capital investments for renovations and repairs are not always possible without outside grants or investment.

4b. Staffing and volunteers

Partners are experiencing challenges with staff and volunteer recruitment and retention. The COVID-19 pandemic had significant labour impacts across all sectors and organizations are still recovering from staff shortages and burnout. A common theme among organizations is staff wages; providing competitive and fair wages is a challenge, especially with unionized wages available to City employees.

4c. Increased operational expenses

Many Partners indicated that operational expenses had significantly increased in the last five years, including for insurance fees and energy utility costs. This has created an additional financial burden and is a growing concern as Partners look to the future.

Community Partner Survey

Between November 18, 2023 to February 2, 2024, 36 Community Partners shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by completing an invitation-only online survey. The following three (3) themes were generated from the Community Partner Survey.

1. Supporting Community and Being Active

While there were unique and varied experiences between Community Partners, there is a common thread in how respondents see their role. When asked what they are trying to achieve based on a set of options, Community Partners most commonly answered that they are supporting community belonging and community cohesion. In open field responses, some respondents identified goals around reaching new members in the community as well as promoting a sense of community (from programming to representation on boards).

The next highest response is encouraging physical health and active living. In open field responses, Community Partners noted goals around promoting active living or retention in a sport (e.g., getting kids outside or seniors to be active).

2. Collaborating with The City to Address Challenges

Community Partners described ways The City could better support their work. Requests for support included:

- Financial support including capital funding for new and improved facilities and amenities (e.g., accessibility of buildings to skateboard parks) as well as to support programming.
- Access to space to support new and expanded programming in the community.
- Increased collaboration between Community Partners and The City. When asked how to improve collaboration, Community Partners most commonly suggested increased networking between other organizations, followed by improved communication channels for specific topics, and greater data sharing. Open field comments includ suggestions such as shared planning and decision making).

Respondents also noted that volunteer retention is a significant challenge, though these comments are not generally tied to issues around collaboration with The City.

3. Addressing Demand

2a. Demand is at an all-time high

Partners noted that, especially after the pandemic, demand for recreation programs and services has increased significantly. Some Community Partners point to COVID impacts while others point to changing demographics and added density as factors. Examples of changes in demand include:

- Demand for facilities for active sports (e.g., pickleball, soccer, and basketball).
- Requests for more availability (e.g., online programming and longer hours).

When describing changing demand, some Community Partners do not feel they are able to meet demand for services with current funding. However, some Community Partners want to increase memberships and increase programmings in the next five years.

2b. Targeted programming to match changing demographics

Community Partners indicated the demographics they serve have changed with an influx of young families, immigrants and new Canadians. As a result, they wish to provide more targeted programs and offerings that support these groups and encourage them to participate in recreation.

Community Partners are often unable to meet demand due to increased financial pressures related to changing demographics.

Concluding Remarks

Engagement provided many avenues for discovery and highlighted areas for further exploration. In general, engagement with both Partners and the public helped the GamePLAN team better understand the environment in which public recreation exists and identify areas for growth, adaptation or overall improvement.

Calgary's population is rapidly growing and changing. Public engagement confirmed that recreation doesn't mean the same thing to all people, and not all people are on the same footing when it comes to accessing public recreation opportunities. Reducing barriers to participation underpins GamePLAN's foundation, which is that recreation is a right.

The public benefit derived from recreation is well known and the value of the sector is reinforced in several related studies, policies and guiding documents at the local (*Sport for Life Policy*), provincial (*Active Alberta: 2011-2021*) and federal (*A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*) levels.

However, despite that public recreation is broadly accepted as a positive force in society, it is currently underinvested, and many providers are struggling to meet demand. Ensuring recreation opportunities are accessible, inclusive and sustainable in the long-term requires a thoughtful, intentional and innovative approach. This requires decision-makers to better understand gaps and explore system-wide solutions. The experiences and perspectives of service delivery Partners are critical for informing how the sector works together in the future to strengthen its collective impact and resilience.

Feedback from engagement will inform the GamePLAN vision and associated strategies. It will help The City and Partners better understand barriers and opportunities for creating positive outcomes for Calgarians. Working with service delivery Partners, The City hopes to find new ways to help individuals and communities meet their goals through public recreation.



Detailed Public Engagement Results

Pop-Up Event Results

For those who did not complete the survey, comments were recorded on stickies or captured in interceptor's notes. Respondents were asked to describe the value that recreation provides and what types of recreation programs and services they would like to see more of.

Responses from these conversations have been summarized below and are included in key themes and takeaways, alongside public survey results.

- Recreation promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being for both individuals and families.
- Recreation encourages healthy lifestyles and positive attitude in families.
- Social benefits of recreation include making friends, accessing a community hub, and getting out of the house.
- Physical health benefits of recreation include staying active and healthy, and boosting energy.
- Seniors appreciate how recreation helps them stay mobile as they age and restore their health after an illness.
- Youth have productive activities to do after school, which helps them learn new skills and keeps them engaged.
- The City and Partners should provide more recreation options for seniors, youth, women, parents and other demographic groups (e.g., art programs for young adults, strength classes for seniors, nutrition classes for parents, and women's self-defense classes).
- The City and Partners should improve outreach to seniors and residents living with low income.
- The City and Partners should improve accessibility of facilities (e.g., accessible to those with mobility challenges and/or seniors).
- The City and Partners should support transportation to recreation facilities with improved bus service and better wayfinding on bike paths.

Public Survey Results

Public Survey Results

Definition of Recreation

Respondents indicated what recreation means to them and the types of activities they consider to be "recreation."

Survey Question #1: What does recreation mean to you?



Physical Health and Wellbeing

For most respondents, their concept of recreation is centred around physical health and wellbeing, with 20.4% indicating that recreation includes participating in sport or other physical activity and 18.8% indicating recreation includes advancing physical health and wellbeing.

Skills Development

For some respondents, recreation means pursuing hobbies and interests (17.4%) or developing new skills (13.8%). Arts programming and lessons were of particular interest throughout the survey.

Connection with Others

Recreation is also seen as a way to build connection with community, friends and family. 14.9% of respondents indicated that spending time with others is part of their recreation experience, as well as experiences that contribute to their family's sense of wellness (13.9%).

Throughout the survey, respondents indicated they do not have access to enough opportunities to practice recreation in a way that is meaningful to them, with some asking for less emphasis on sport and physical activity and others asking for less emphasis on arts and passive recreation.

Recreation Users Vs. Non-Users

Survey respondents indicated whether they attend recreation activities, including physical activity and/or arts programming. A facility includes City- and Partner-operated or privately-run. Sport can include organized sports, individual sports, or self-directed.

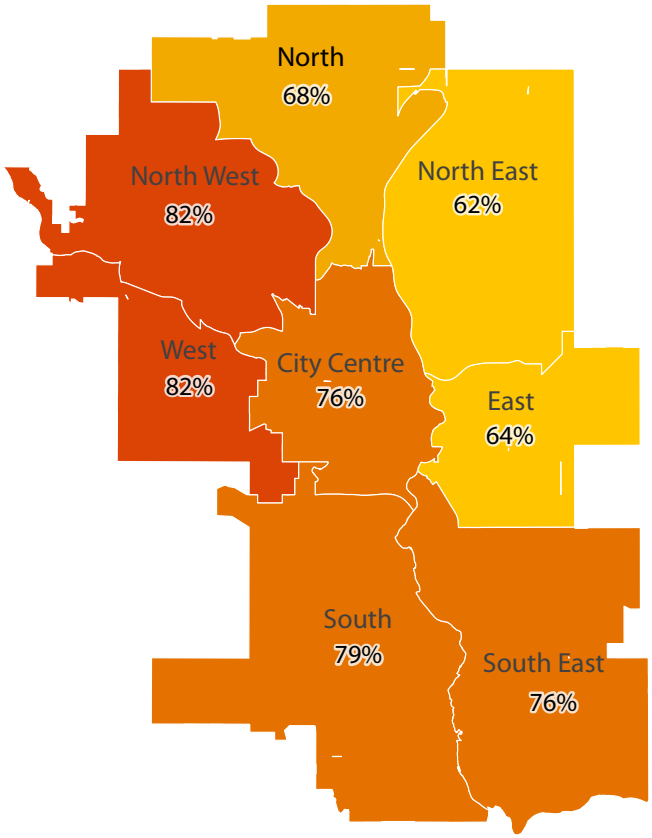
Survey Question #2: Do you, or your family, currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?



1.2% said prefer not to say

Recreation Users by Location

The map shows zones of Calgary, and the percentage of respondents in each zone who participate in recreation.



Cross Tabulation Insight

See Engagement Methodology for how these insights were generated.

More Likely

Less likely

>$120,000 income households

>$60,000 income households

Household incomes

Less likely overall

Equity-deserving respondents

Public Survey Results

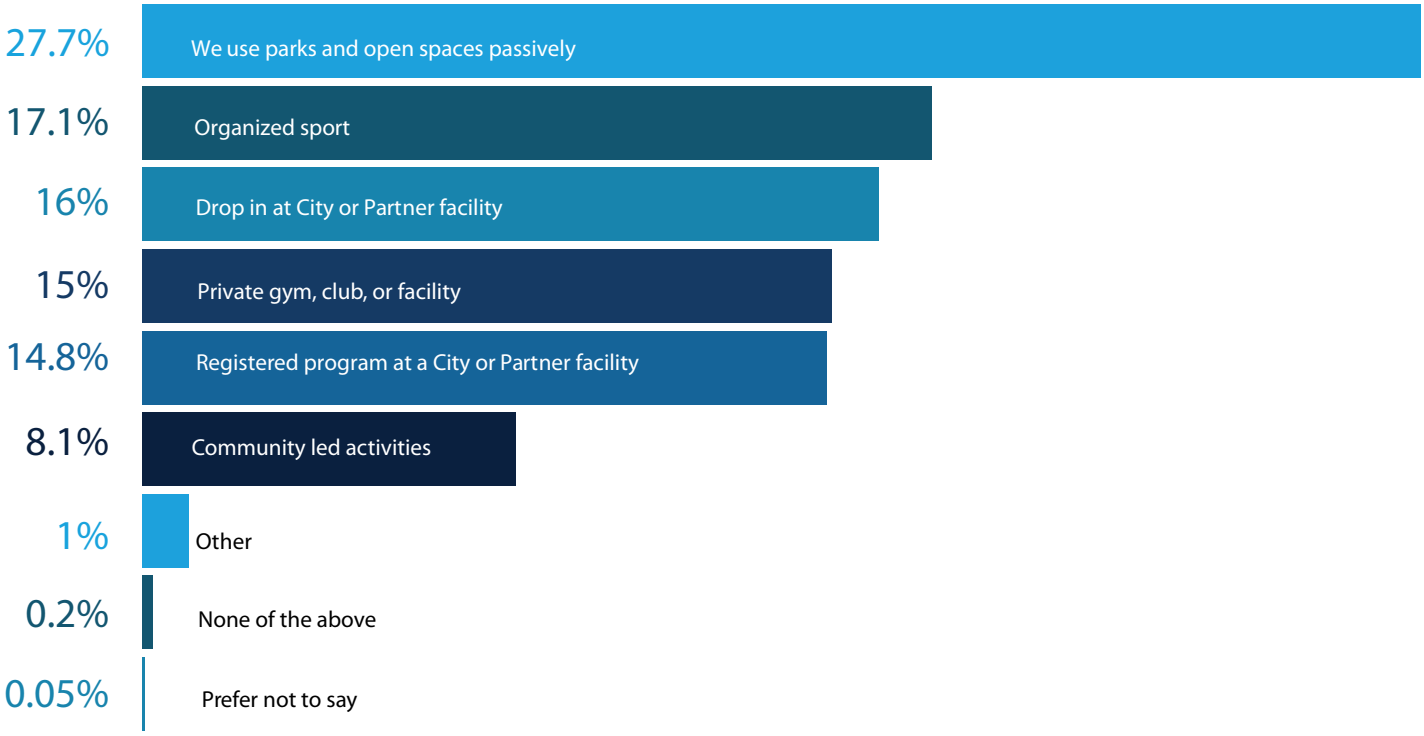
Recreation Patterns and Preferences

Current Recreation Attendance and Participation

Respondents who are recreation users specified which recreation programs or facilities they currently attend.

Survey Question #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.



Spending Time in Parks and Open Spaces

Many survey respondents are passive users of parks and open spaces (27.7%). While many of the comments provided throughout the survey emphasize the role of recreation facilities, respondents garner significant value from The City's network of parks and open spaces. The management and stewarding of parks and recreation facilities by different City departments may not be well understood by respondents.

Organized Sport

17.1% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) currently participate in organized sport.

Accessing Facilities

Generally, respondents are equally likely to have indicated they drop-in at a City or Partner facility (15.9%), participate in a registered program at a City or Partner facility (14.9%) or access a private gym, club or facility (14.8%).

Participation Across Identity, Income and Age

Survey Question #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

Organized Sport

More likely

- 18-64 year olds
- >$120,000 income households

Less likely

- Equity-deserving respondents
- <$60,000 income households
- >65 year olds

Drop-in

More likely

- $60,000-120,000 income households
- <$60,000 income households
- >65 year olds

Less likely

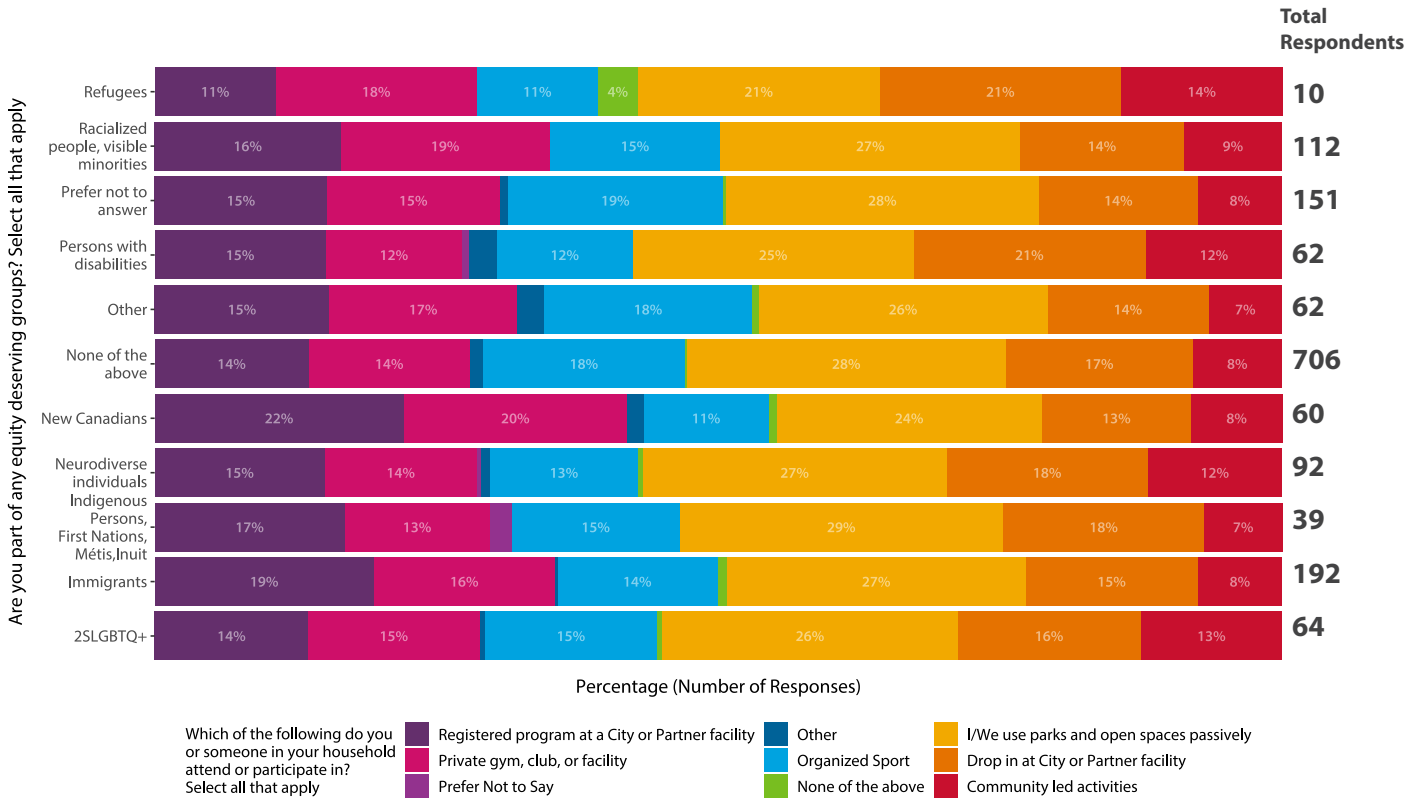
- >$120,000 income households
- 18-64 year olds

Registered Programs

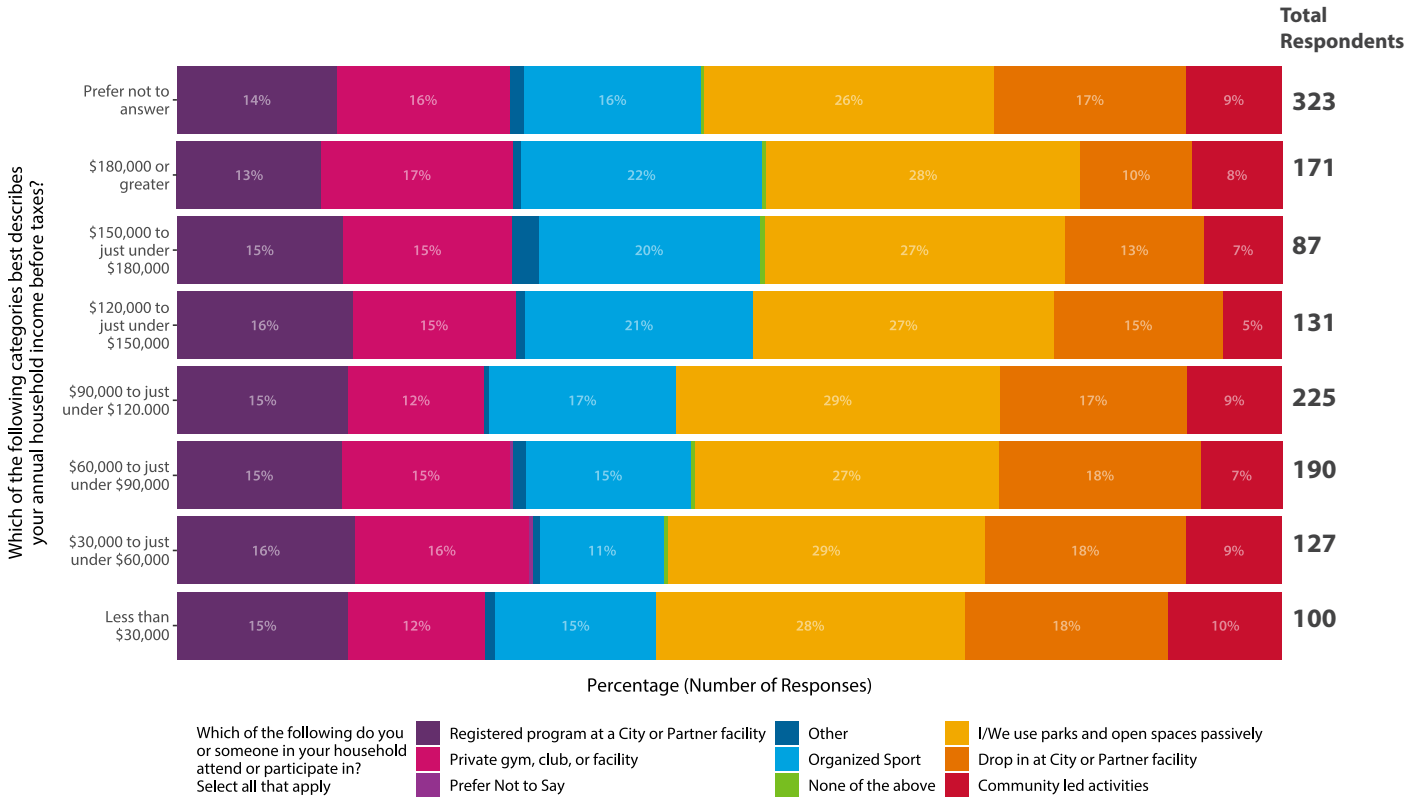
More likely

- Equity-deserving respondents

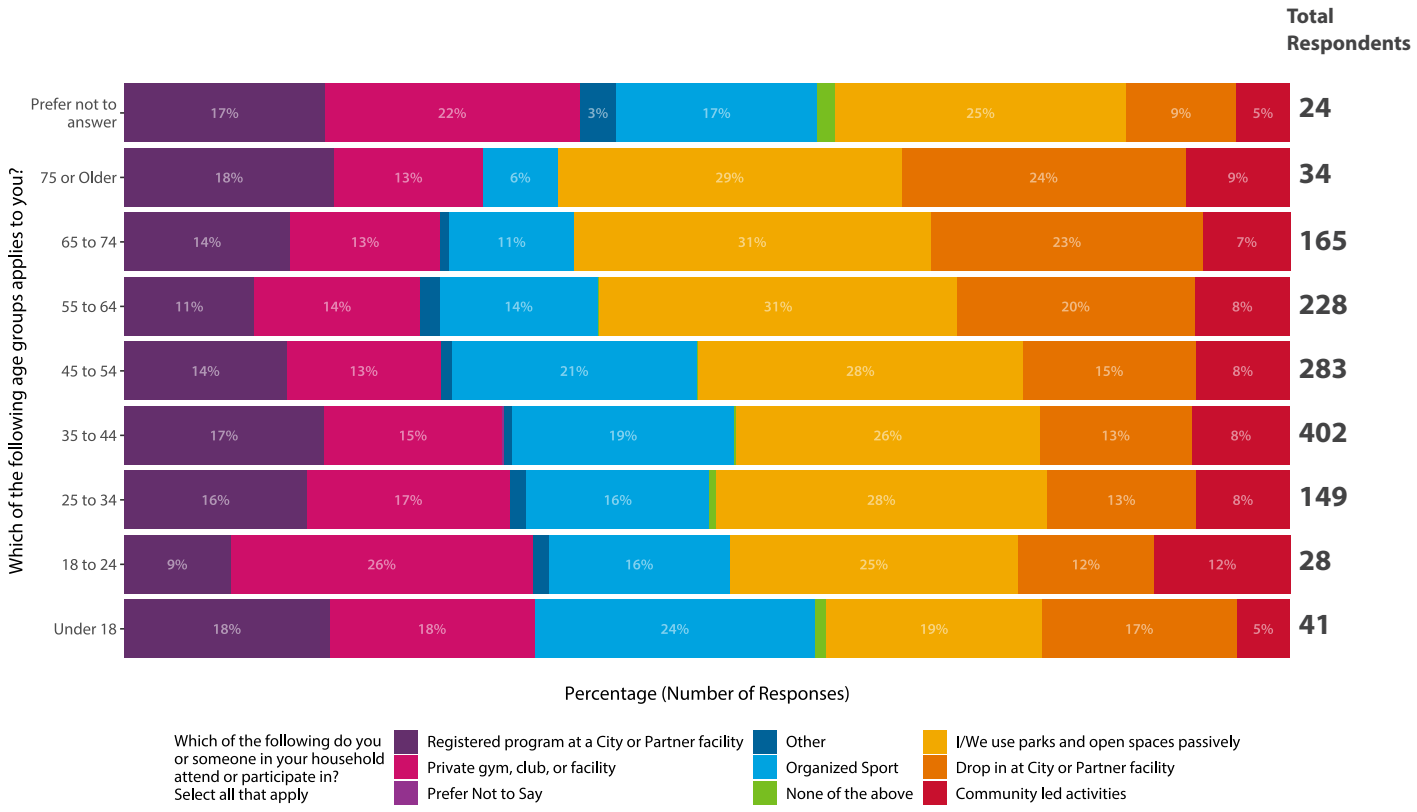
Participation by Equity-Denied Group



Participation by Income



Participation by Age



Strengths of The City and Partners

Respondents who are recreation users described what they feel The City and Partners are doing well.

Survey Question #4: What do you feel The City and Partners do well?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.

The strengths of The City and Partners may conflict with the challenges and barriers reported by non-recreation users. In general, respondents who currently use programs and facilities consider programming variety, value for money, and quality facilities to be areas that The City and Partners do well.

Some respondents also indicated areas where The City and Partners do not do well through this question. For clarity, these responses are combined with responses from *Survey Question #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?*

Program Offerings

Respondents who are users of recreation programs and services in Calgary feel there is a broad variety of programs available to them.

Affordability

Programs, lessons and facilities are considered reasonably priced or affordable by those who are using them. Some respondents appreciate that there are subsidized opportunities provided to individuals and families living with low incomes.

Quality Facilities

For most recreation users, recreation facilities are regarded as clean and well-maintained. These responses are generally limited in detail, though some responses specifically note parks, pools, and gyms.

Some respondents also noted that staff are friendly, welcoming and knowledgeable.

"Great parks, great bike paths, drop-in and registered programs are reasonably priced."

"The Fair Entry Program makes programs very accessible for low income Calgarians."

"Provide quality facilities in neighbourhoods at reasonable rates."

"I think The City has done a great job of creating facilities that offer families and individuals the opportunity to engage in physical activities."

"Variety, multiple locations, inclusivity."

Public Survey Results

Opportunities for The City of Calgary and Partners

Respondents who are recreation users described what they wish to see improved at public recreation facilities.

Survey Question #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.

Improve Operations and Administration

Frustrations around operations and administrative practices and procedures (at both City-run and Partner-run facilities) are evident through responses to this question. Respondents described an inability to register for programs they would like to participate in, with the registration and booking system preventing some respondents from having access to recreation. They described the current registration system as frustrating to use and difficult to navigate.

Increase Affordability

Respondents request improvements to the pricing structure of recreation facilities, including Partner facilities. Requests are made for lower costs or "freezing" costs for a few years, as well as more subsidized membership options.

Improved affordability is often referenced in connection to certain demographic groups, including seniors, families and residents living with low income.

Enhance Communications

Respondents do not always feel they have enough information, or the right information, to access all that the public recreation system has to offer. They wish to see better communication so they are aware of the programs and facilities they can access. Marketing campaigns, including additional messaging around healthy living, were suggested as a way to facilitate information exchange.

Increase Capacity

Program Capacity

The capacity of certain programs appears to prevent many from accessing Calgary's recreation offerings. Respondents negatively described the process of waking up at 6am to sign up for in-demand programs. Challenges around accessing swimming lessons for kids was raised often.

Funding

There are mixed feelings around investment in recreation facilities and programs. On the one hand, respondents express wanting better facilities, more program availability, and affordable membership options; on the other hand, some respondents wish to see The City spend less taxpayer dollars on recreation.

Hours of Operation

Some respondents wish to see facilities open earlier and stay open later, with some responses referencing pre-pandemic service levels that may not have returned.

Public Survey Results

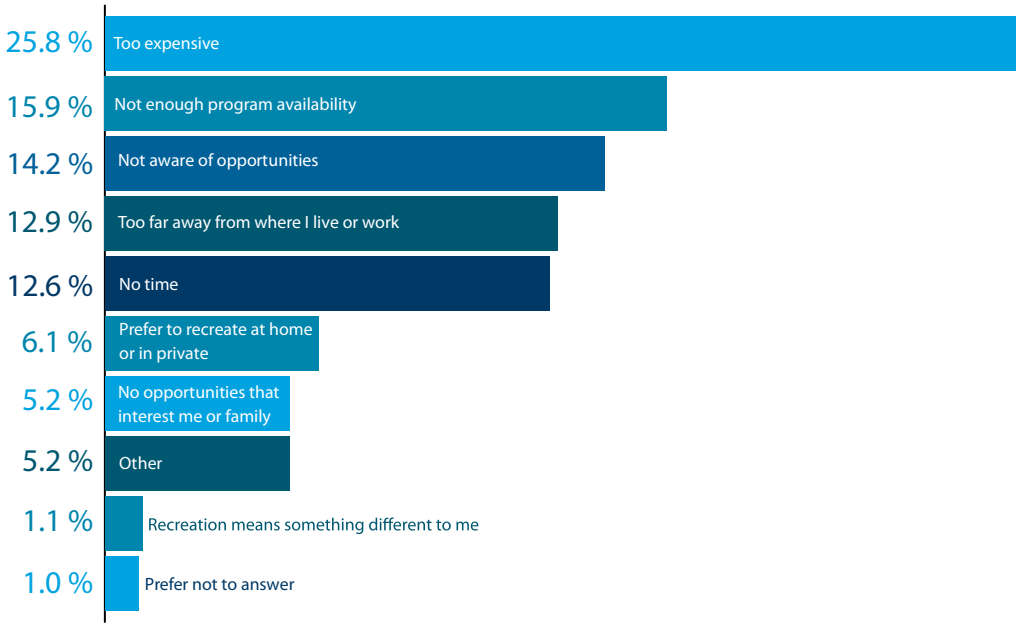
Barriers to Participation

Challenges for Recreation Non-Users

Respondents who do not currently use recreation facilities and programs cited the barriers and challenges they experience at City- or Partner-operated facilities.

Survey Question #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as non-recreation users.



Lack of affordability

25.8% of respondents indicated they do not attend recreation programs or facilities, or participate in sport, because it is too expensive.

Lack of awareness

Many respondents indicated they were not aware of opportunities (14.2%) available to them.

Lack of availability

16% of respondents indicated there is not enough program availability. This theme is reiterated by respondents throughout the survey as a core frustration with current service levels.

12.6% indicated they have no time to participate or recreation is too far away from where they live or work (12.9%).

Barriers Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?*

Cross Tabulation Insights

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

Equity-deserving respondents

More likely to respond,

- Too far away from where I live or work

Less likely to respond,

- Prefer to recreate at home

18-64 year olds

More likely to respond,

- No time
- Not enough program availability

Less likely to respond,

- No opportunities that interest me
- Prefer to recreate at home

>65 year olds

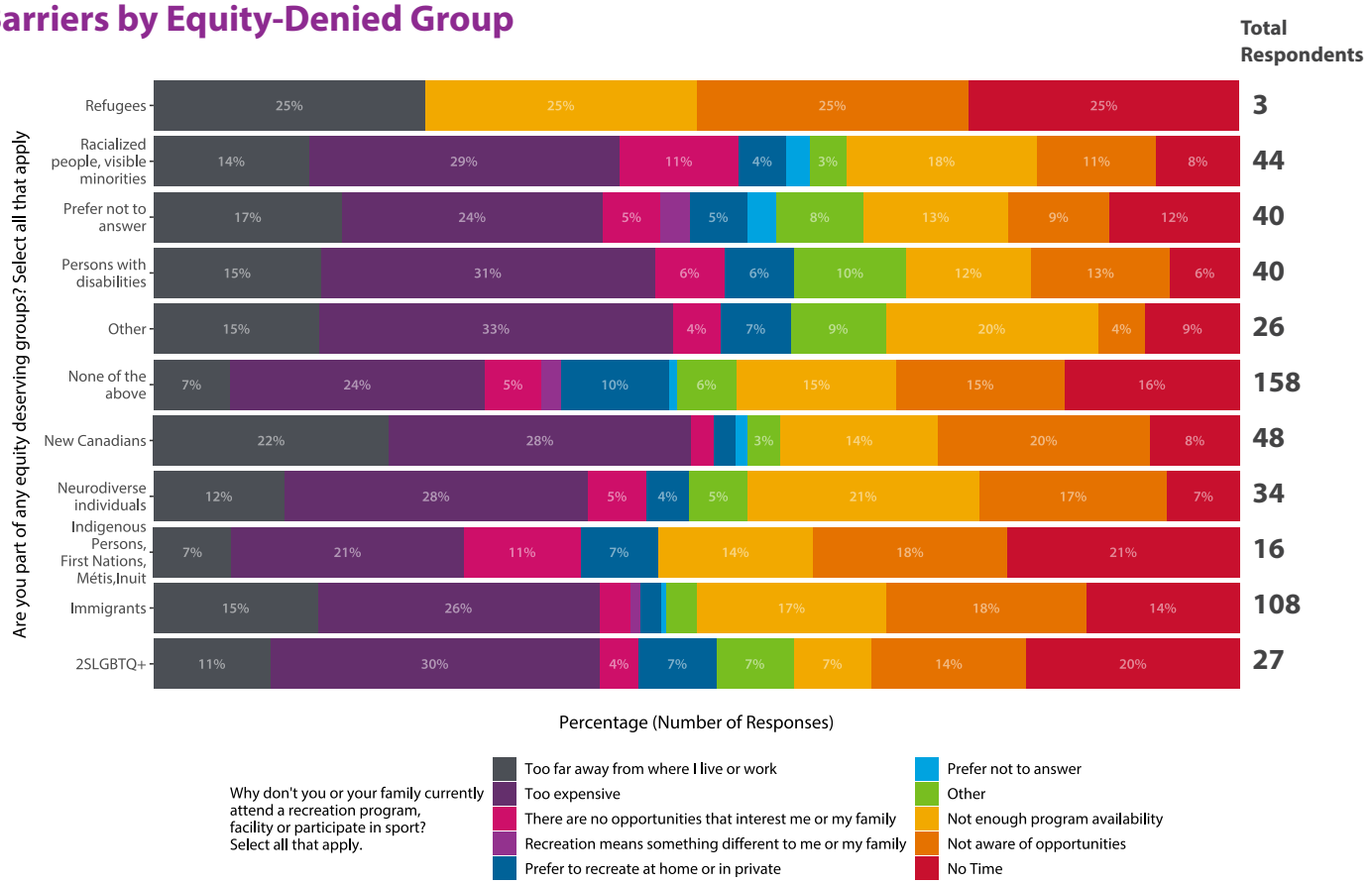
More likely to respond,

- Too expensive
- No opportunities that interest me
- Prefer to recreate at home

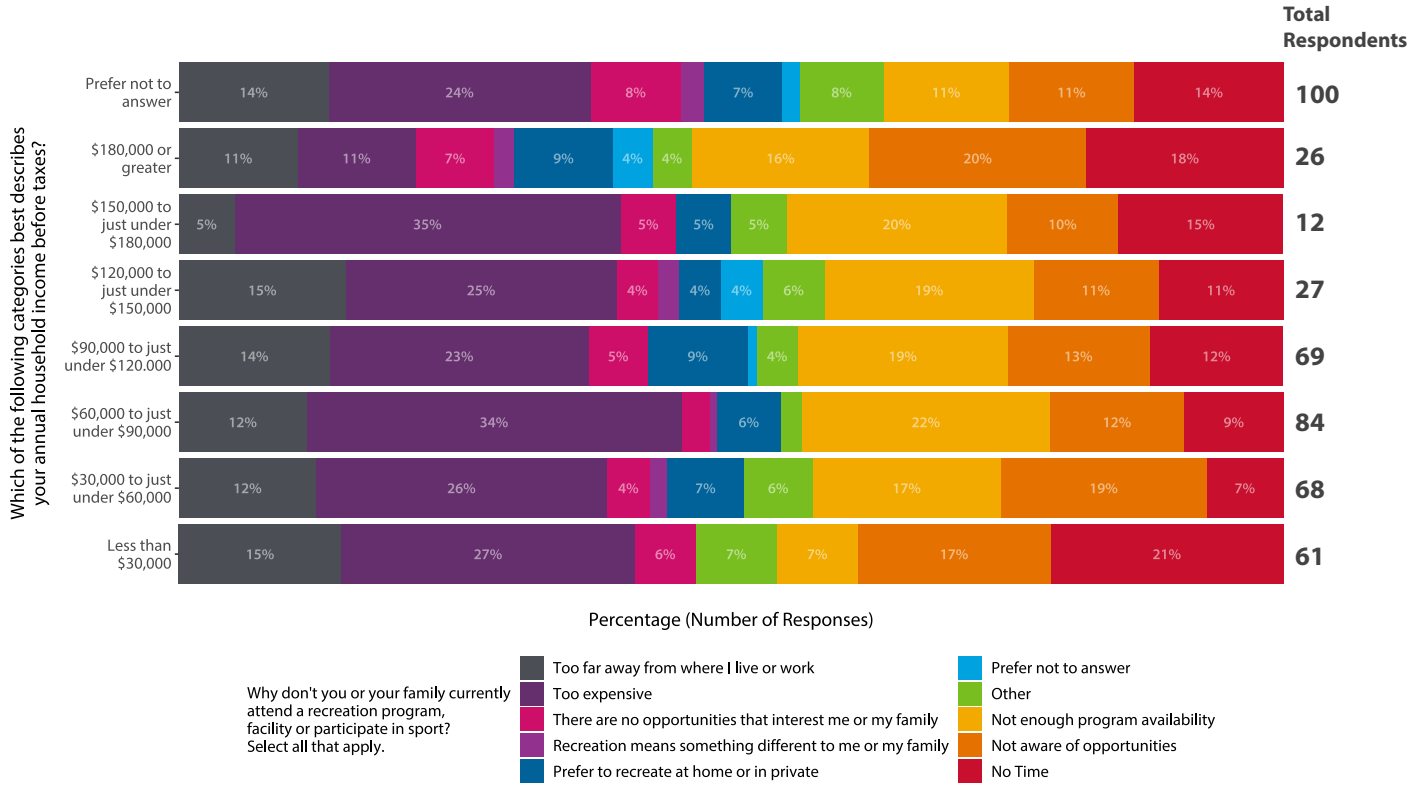
Less likely to respond,

- Not enough program availability
- No time

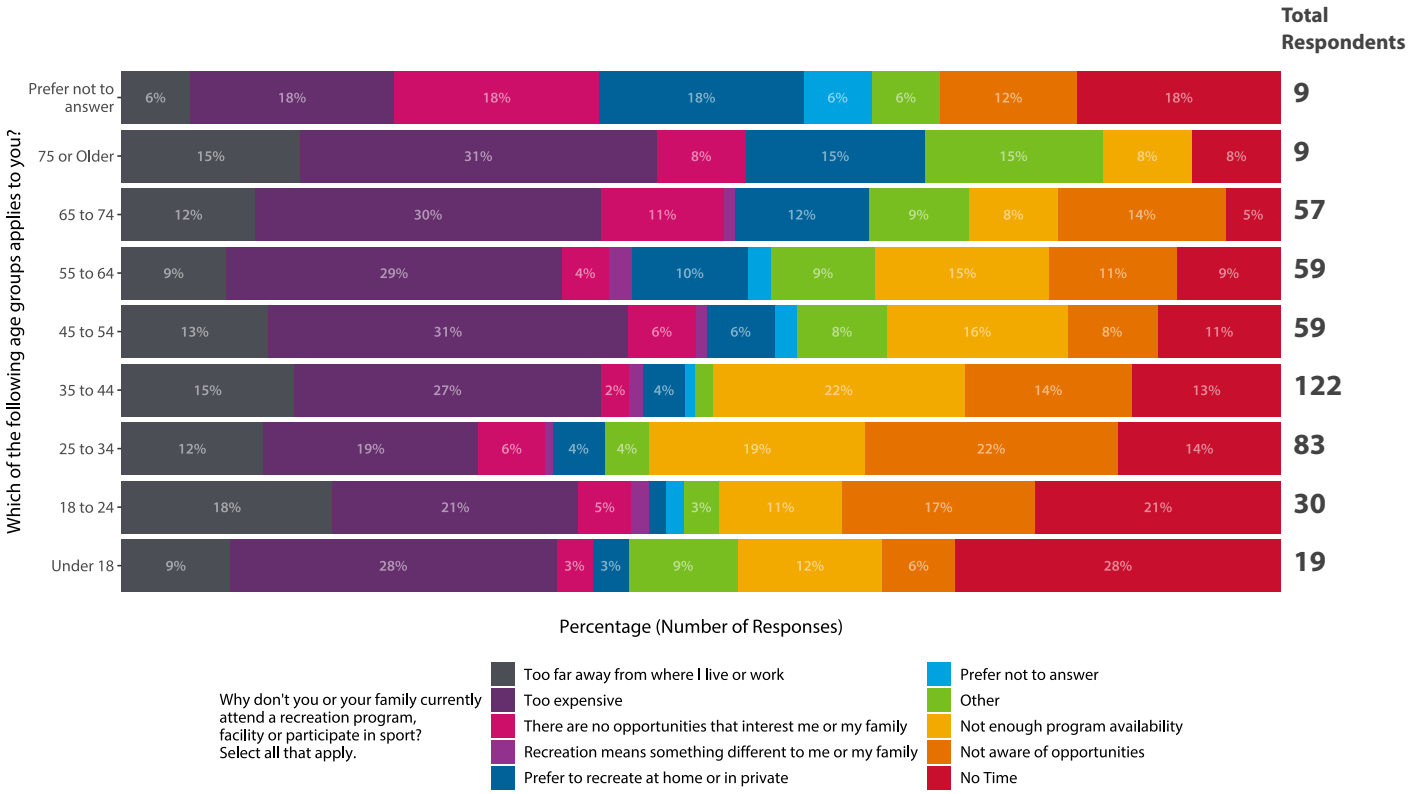
Barriers by Equity-Denied Group



Barriers by Income



Barriers by Age



Factors Preventing Participation

Respondents elaborated on elements of their experience and circumstances that prevent them from participating in Calgary's recreation system, with most comments closely aligned with key themes from the previous question.

Survey Question #7: Please tell us more about why you or your family don't currently attend a recreation program, facility, or participate in sport.*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as non-recreation users.

- There are no facilities nearby / I'm not sure of where my nearest facility is located / Facilities are not accessible without a car
- Facilities are too busy / Programs are full
- Programs are too limited / They do not have what I would like to participate in / I'm not sure what programs are available
- Programming does not meet the needs of me and/or my family (e.g., seniors, children with disabilities)
- Membership options are too expensive
- Registration is difficult
- I do not have enough time to participate
- I am experiencing an injury / I have a disability
- I prefer to workout at a private gym
- Cost of living is too high

Public Survey Results

Future Program and Service Priorities

Recreational Program and Service Ideas

Respondents specified which recreation programs or facilities they would like to see more of in public recreation facilities.

Survey Question #8: What recreational programs and services would you like to see more of?

This question was asked to all respondents. The most frequently mentioned requests are provided below.

Active Recreation Programs

- Swimming (including alternative programs like aquafit or diving)
- Yoga
- Dance (including Zumba)
- Soccer
- Skating
- Pickleball
- Walking groups

Other active recreation programs include: basketball, volleyball, tennis, cricket, hockey, martial arts, spinning, pilates, golf, rock climbing and more.

Active Recreation Facilities and Amenities

- Pools (additional swimming facilities, including outdoor pools)
- Skating rinks (additional arenas, including outdoor rinks)
- Running tracks (allow for running and walking indoors)

Other active recreation facilities include: tennis courts, pickleball courts, gyms and weightlifting amenities, fieldhouses, outdoor exercise equipment, golf courses and more.

Leisure, Arts, and Community Programming

- Arts classes (such as pottery and painting)
- Cooking classes (including nutrition programming)
- Drama / musical theatre
- Music classes

Other leisure programs include: woodworking, paint nights, and community events.

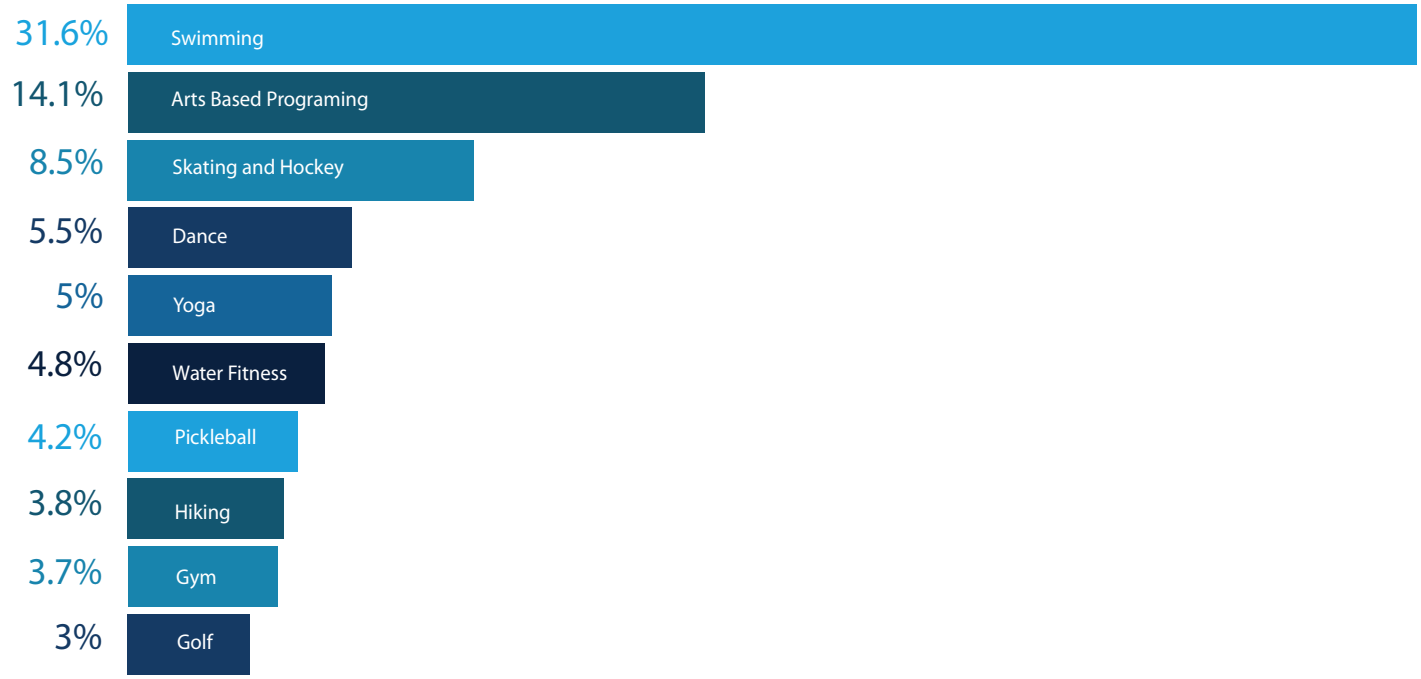
Program Types

- Drop-in program slots (to alleviate challenges with registration and booking)
- Alternative program times (daytime programs, outside of 9-5 hours, evening programs)
- Outdoor programming (sports and active recreation provided outdoors, as well as nature education and outdoor skills)
- Women-only / girls-only programs
- Seniors programs (including older adults, e.g., 50+)
- Teen programs (e.g., learn to lift weights, sport-specific and social activities)
- Disability-friendly programs (including sensory-friendly or physical limitations)
- "Learn to" programs to learn a new sport or skill, including programs for seniors and adults (e.g., learn to swim, learn to skate)
- Trial classes (opportunity to try a class or activity once before deciding whether to commit to a full program)

While many of these programs are currently available, respondents' lack of awareness and difficulty with registration platforms may be contributing to the overlap in existing recreation opportunities and future program requests.

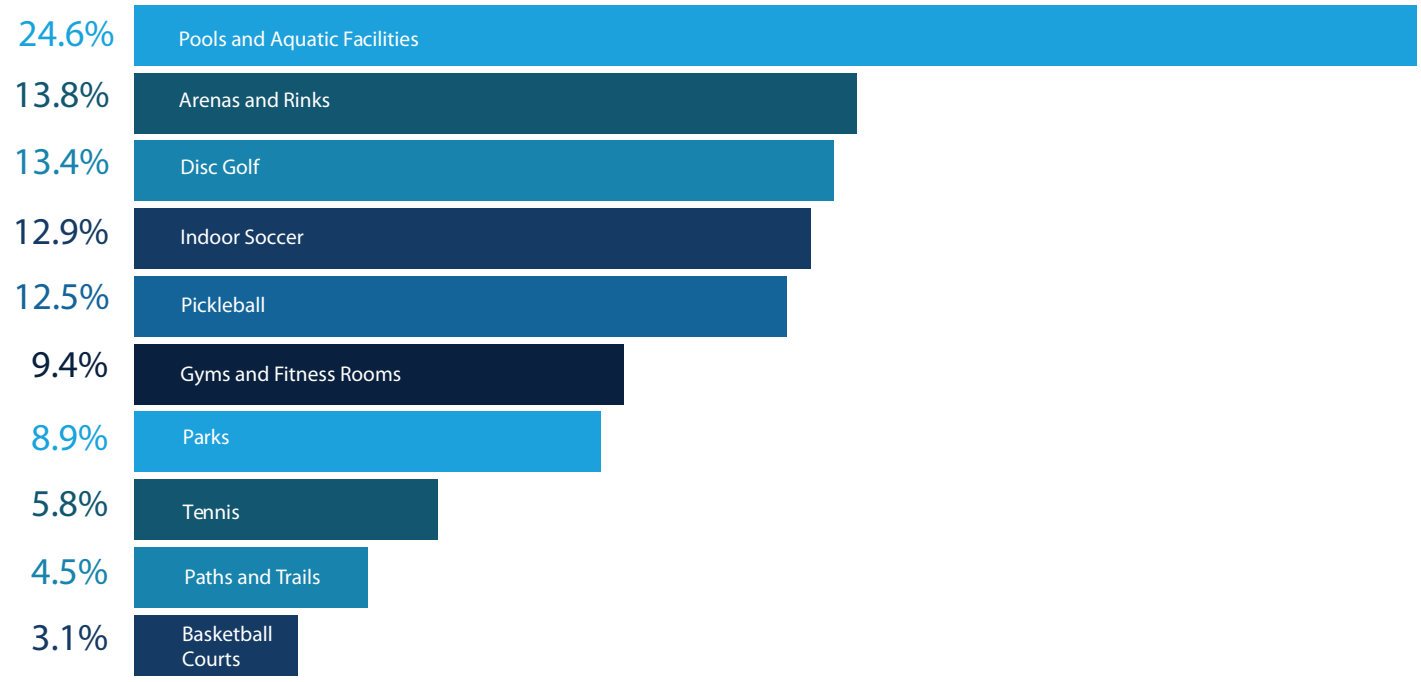
Programming and Activities

Programming and activities mentioned most frequently by respondents.



Facilities and Amenities

Facilities and amenities mentioned most frequently by respondents.



Throughout the public survey, respondents provided ideas for programs and services they would like to see. **The figures above show the types of programs and services respondents would like to see more of, based on their response to Question #8 only.** A comprehensive list of all programs and services mentioned throughout the survey and at pop-up events is provided in Appendix B.

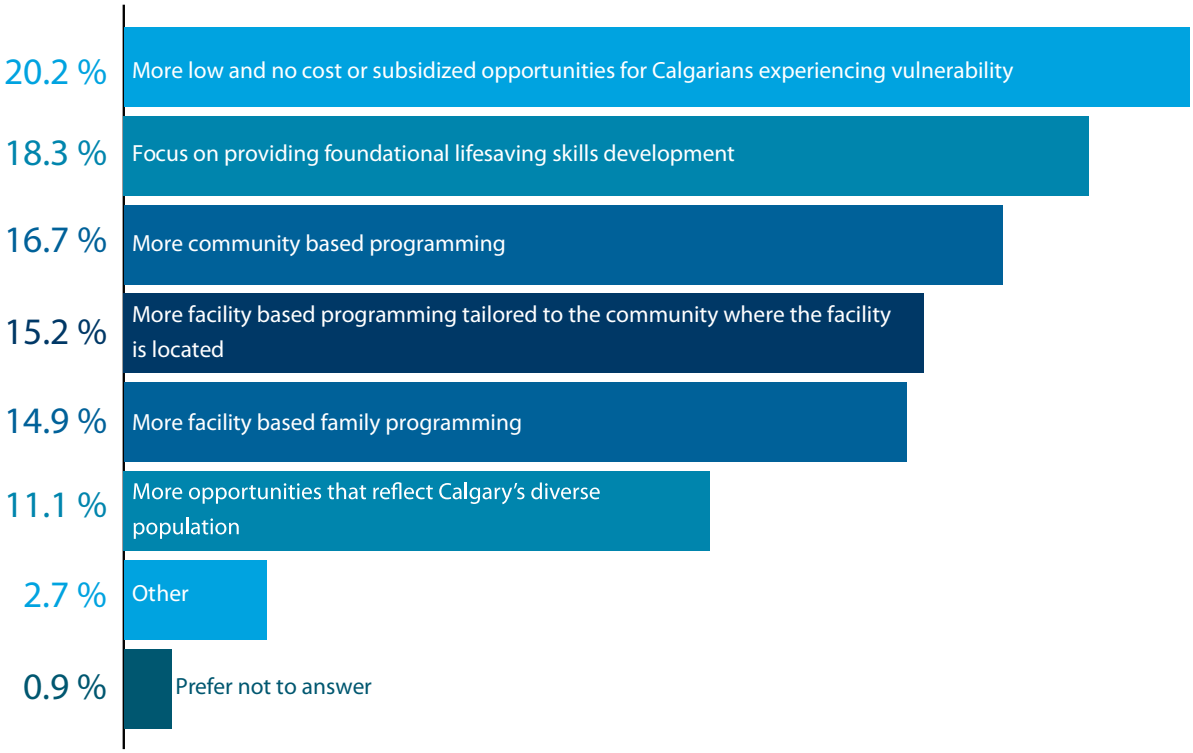
Public Survey Results

Priorities for the Public Recreation System

Respondents indicated which areas of focus they would like to see the public recreation system prioritize.

Survey Question #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

This question was asked to all respondents.



Affordable Opportunities

20.2% of respondents indicated that more low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for members of the public experiencing vulnerability is a priority.

Skill Development Opportunities

18.3% feel that The City and Partners should focus on providing foundational lifesaving skills development, such as swimming, as a core program area.

Programming Opportunities

Respondents would like to see more community-based programming (16.7%), programming tailored to the local community (15.2%), and facility-based family programming (14.9%).

Priorities Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these were findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

Equity-deserving respondents

More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize opportunities to reflect Calgary's diverse population.

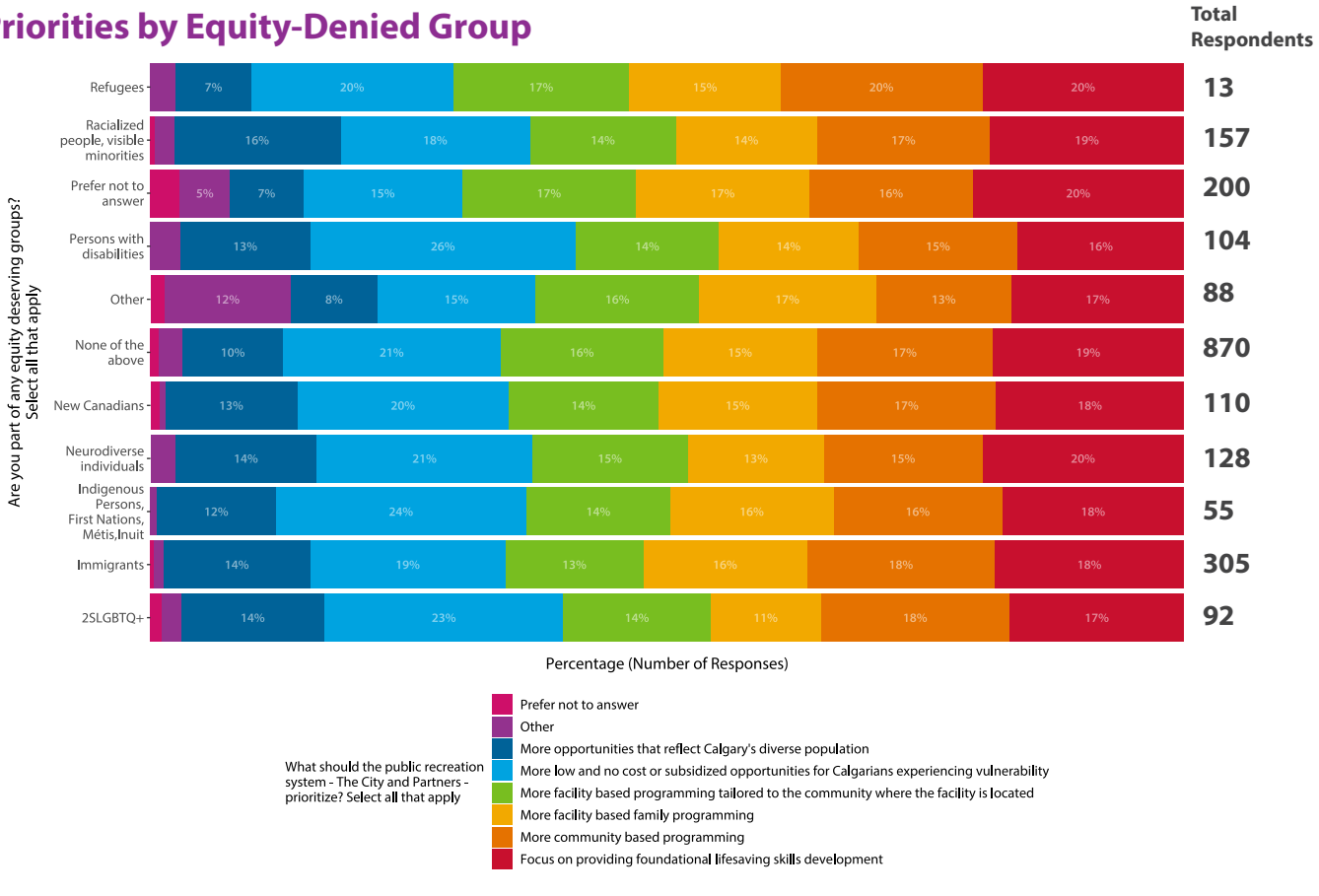
<$60,000 income households

More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize more low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities.

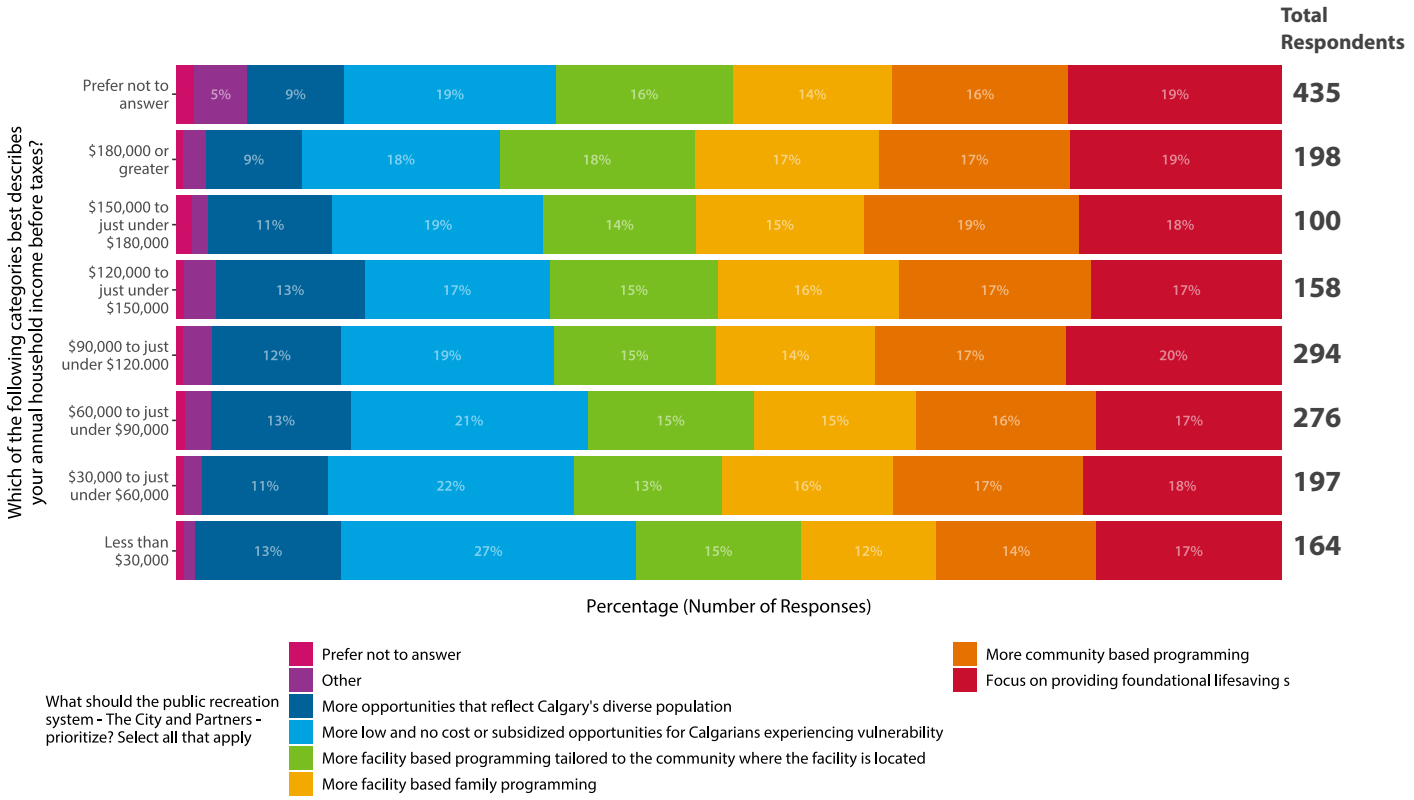
>65 year olds

More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize more low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities and programming tailored to the community.

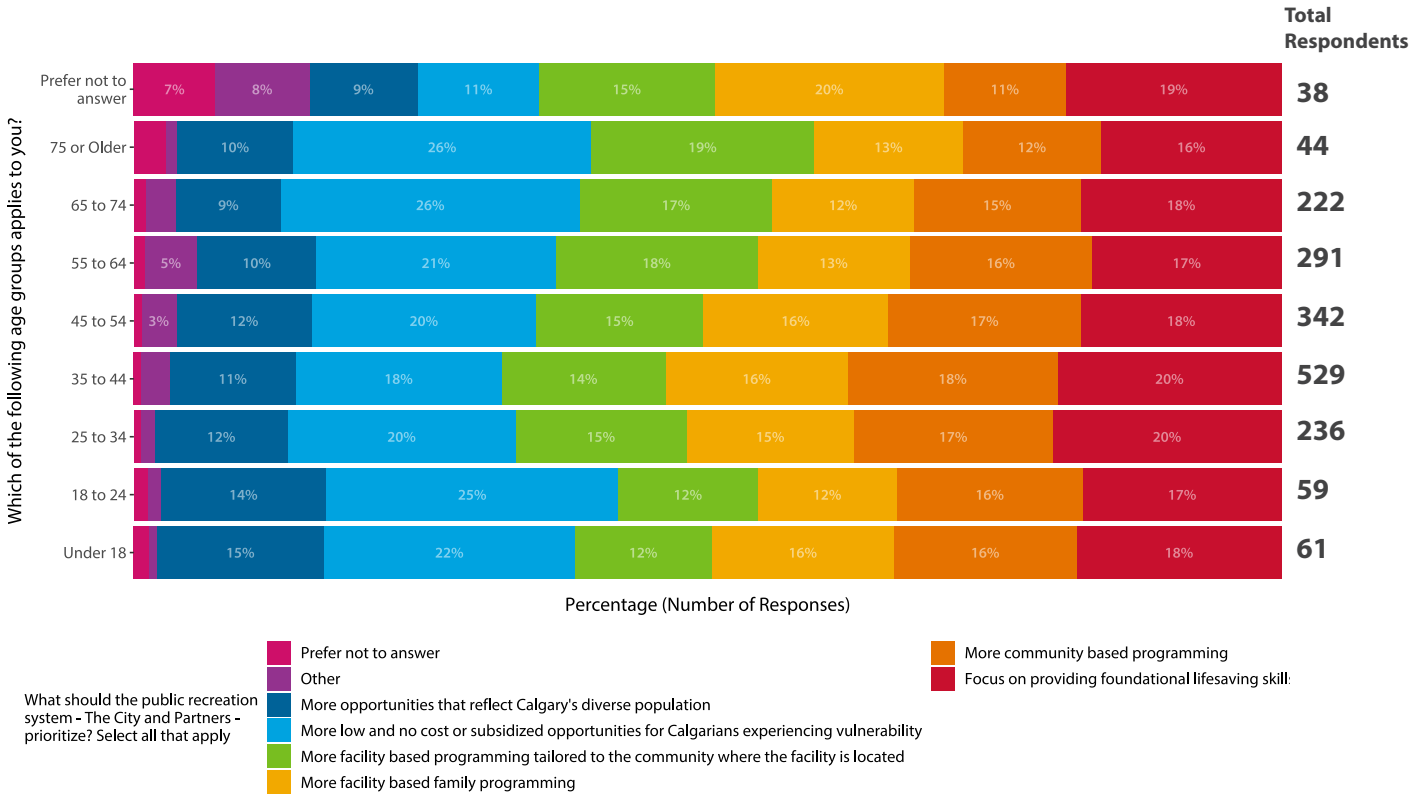
Priorities by Equity-Denied Group



Priorities by Income



Priorities by Age



Public Survey Results

The City's Role in Public Recreation

Respondents indicated what they believe The City's role should be in the public recreation system.

Survey Question #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?

This question was asked to all respondents.



Make Investments

16.6% feel The City should invest in facilities and amenities. In responses to other questions in the survey, this sentiment is expressed as a need to renovate some existing facilities and build new facilities to meet increasing demand.

Offer Quality Programs and Spaces

16.2% of respondents indicated The City should directly provide quality programs and spaces for residents of all ages and abilities to be active and creative.

Provide Affordable Opportunities for All

14.1% of respondents believe The City should play a role in providing low and no-cost opportunities for members of the public experiencing vulnerability and 13.9% believe The City should play a role in poviding affordable life saving skill development.

City's Role Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?

Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these were findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

Equity-deserving respondents

More likely to respond that The City should focus on low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities and opportunities to reflect Calgary's diverse population.

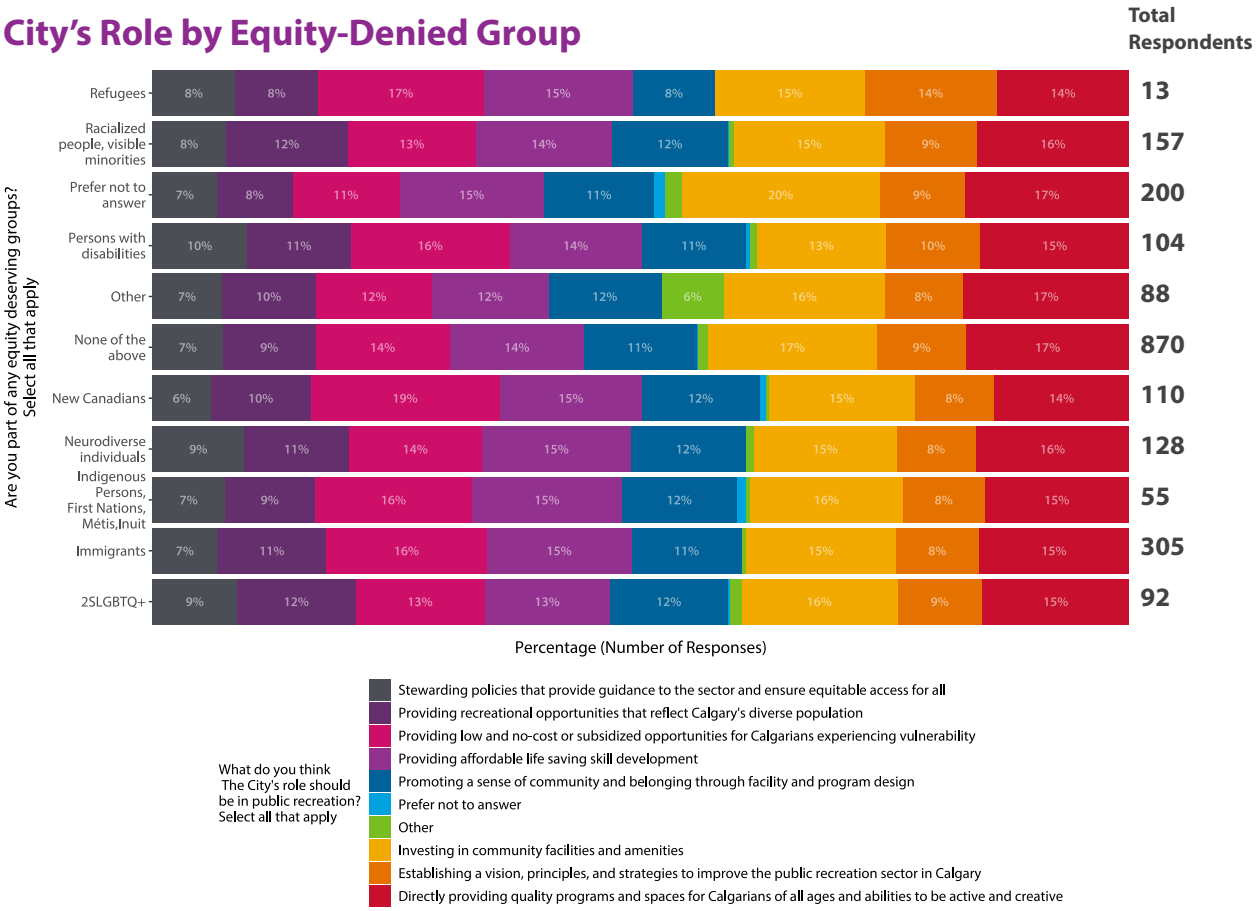
<$60,000 income households

More likely to respond that The City should focus on low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities.

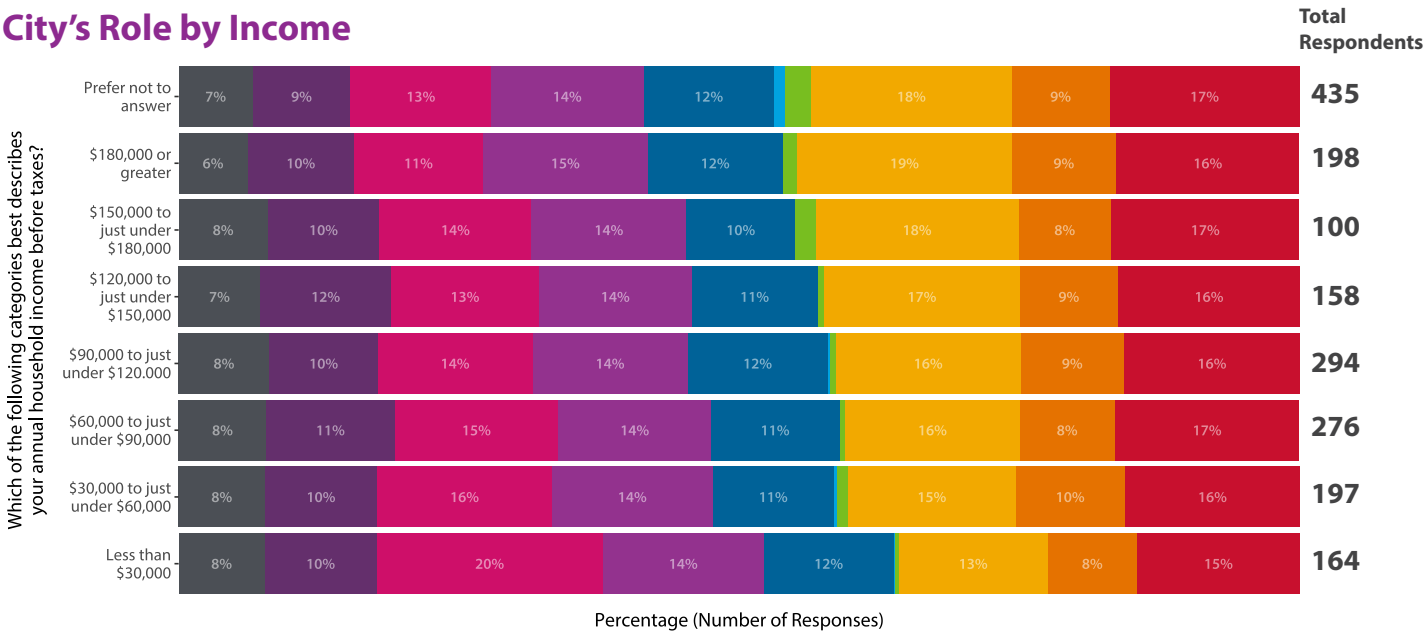
>$120,000 income households

More likely to respond that The City should invest in community facilities and amenities.

City's Role by Equity-Denied Group



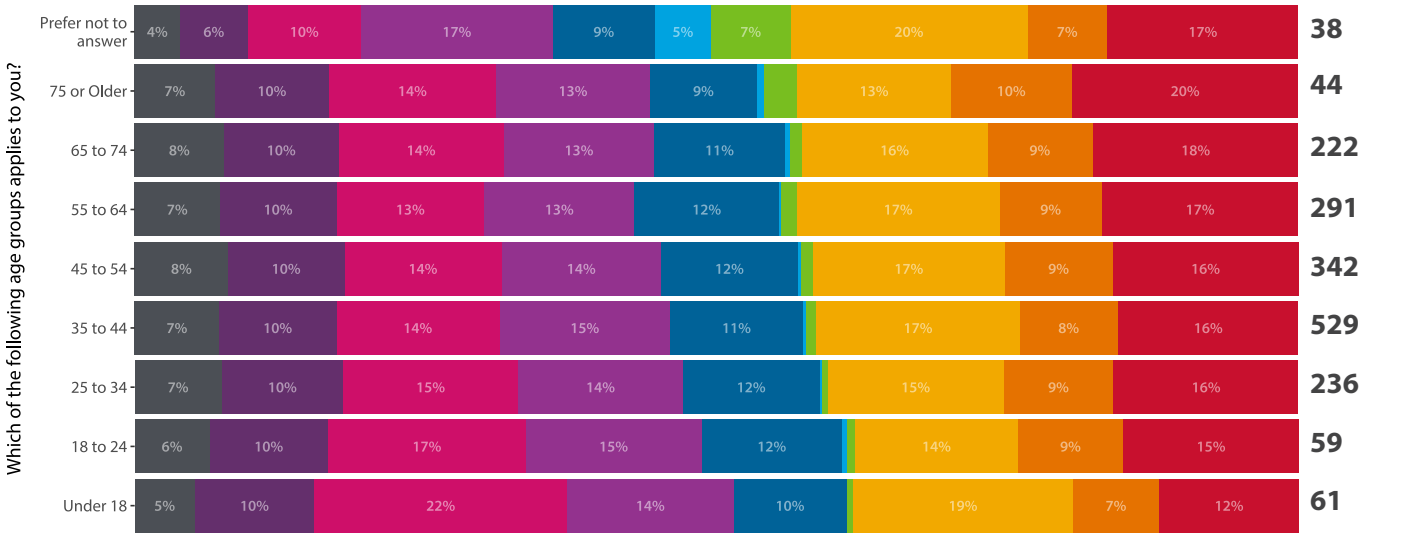
City's Role by Income



What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation? Select all that apply

- Stewarding policies that provide guidance to the sector and ensure equitable access for all
- Providing recreational opportunities that reflect Calgary's diverse population
- Providing low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for Calgarians experiencing vulnerability
- Providing affordable life saving skill development
- Promoting a sense of community and belonging through facility and program design
- Prefer not to answer
- Other
- Investing in community facilities and amenities
- Establishing a vision, principles, and strategies to improve the public recreation sector in Calgary
- Directly providing quality programs and spaces for Calgarians of all ages and abilities to be active and creative

City's Role by Age



What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation? Select all that apply

- Stewarding policies that provide guidance to the sector and ensure equitable access for all
- Providing recreational opportunities that reflect Calgary's diverse population
- Providing low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for Calgarians experiencing vulnerability
- Providing affordable life saving skill development
- Promoting a sense of community and belonging through facility and program design
- Prefer not to answer
- Other
- Investing in community facilities and amenities
- Establishing a vision, principles, and strategies to improve the public recreation sector in Calgary
- Directly providing quality programs and spaces for Calgarians of all ages and abilities to be active and creative

Perceived Service Provision for Key Demographic Groups

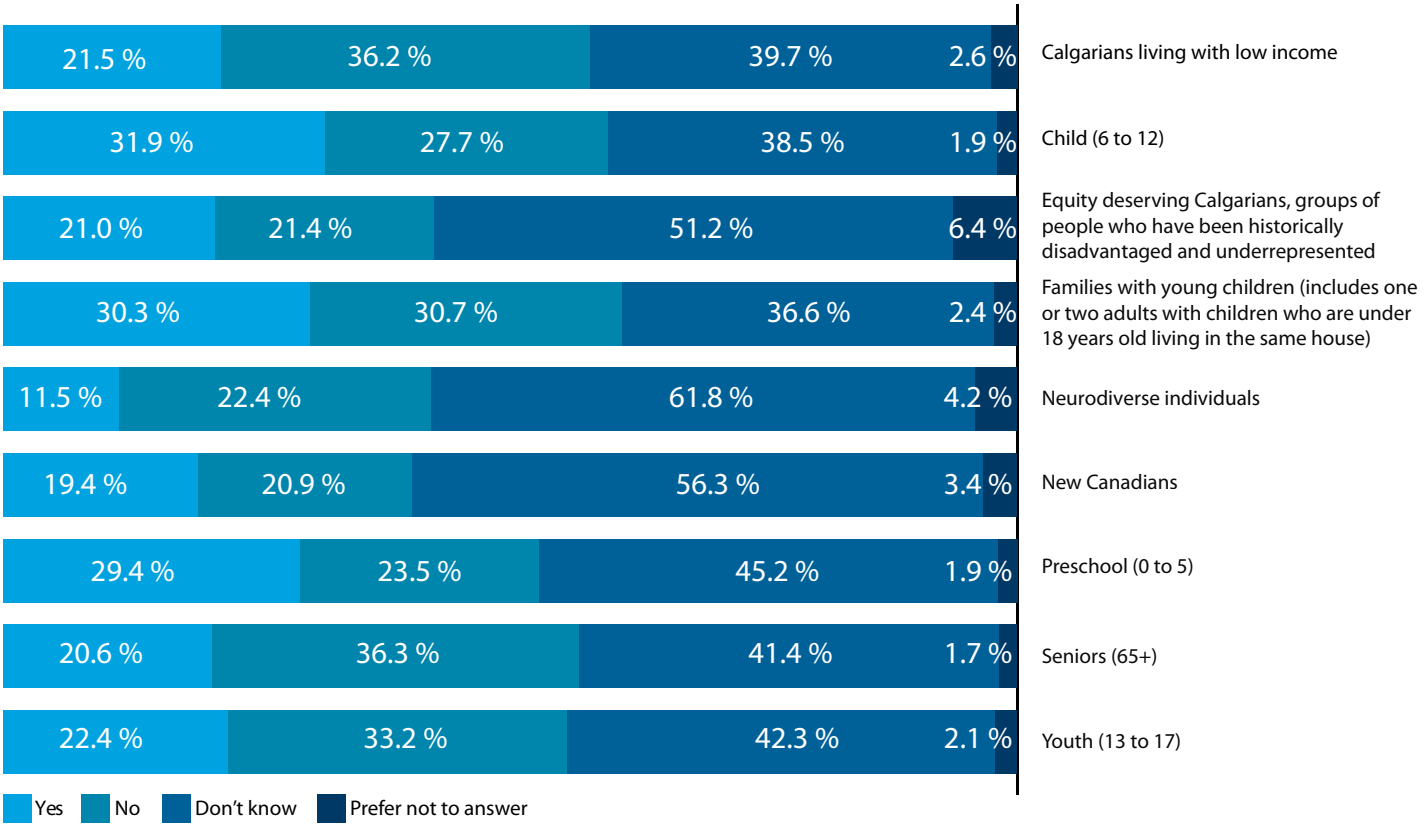
Public Survey Results

In general, respondents wish to see programs, services, facilities and amenities that support a range of user types, including families, seniors, and residents living with low income. When asked about the level of service currently provided to key demographic groups by The City and Partners, respondents indicated there are not enough public recreation opportunities for the following groups:

- Youth (13 to 17)
- Seniors (65+)
- Neurodiverse individuals
- Residents living with low income

Survey Question #11: Do you think there are enough public recreation opportunities from The City and Partners for the following groups of Calgarians?

This question was asked to all respondents.



List of Requests for Programs, Amenities and Facilities

List of Requests for Programs, Amenities and Facilities

The following is a comprehensive list of programs, amenities and facilities requested by survey respondents and pop-up event respondents. The list is not ordered by frequency of comment or mention.

Active Recreation Programs

- Swimming (including lessons and lane swim)
- Yoga
- Dance (including Zumba)
- Soccer (including classes)
- Skating
- Pickleball
- Walking groups
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Cricket (including classes)
- Hockey
- Martial arts (e.g., karate, tai chi)
- Spinning / cycling
- Pilates
- Golf
- Disc golf
- Rock climbing
- Water sports
- Diving
- Aquafit
- Hiking
- Outdoor laser tag
- Inline/roller skating lessons
- Sailing
- Rowing
- Kayaking
- Football
- Curling
- Badminton
- Kickboxing

Active Recreation Facilities

- Pools (additional swimming facilities, including outdoor pools)
- Skating rinks (additional arenas, including outdoor rinks)
- Running Tracks (allow for running and walking indoors)
- Tennis courts
- Pickleball courts
- Squash courts
- Basketball courts
- Lacrosse fields
- Gyms and weightlifting facilities
- Accessible gym facilities
- Cardio machines
- Field houses
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Skate parks
- Golf courses
- Disc golf courses
- Parks
- Paths and trails
- Bike paths
- Playgrounds that are not part of schools

Leisure, Arts, and Community Programming

- Arts classes (such as pottery and painting)
- Cooking classes (including nutrition programming)
- Horticultural programs and urban farming opportunities
- Drama / musical theatre
- Music classes
- Woodworking
- Paint nights
- Community events
- Community groups
- Animal visits (e.g., dogs, cats, rabbits, goats)
- Life skills

Program Types

- Drop-in program slots (to alleviate challenges with registration and booking).
- Alternative program times (daytime programs, outside of 9am-5pm hours, evening programs).
- Outdoor programming (sports and active recreation provided outdoors, as well as nature education and outdoor skills)
- Women-only / girls-only programs.
- Seniors programs (e.g., 50+).
- Teen programs (e.g., learn to lift weights, sport-specific and social activities).
- "Learn to" programs (opportunity to learn a new sport or skill, including programs for seniors and adults such as Learn to Swim, Learn to Skate).
- Trial classes (opportunity to try a class or activity once before deciding whether to commit to a full program).
- Disability-friendly programs (including sensory-friendly or physical limitations).
- After-school programs.
- Family programs.

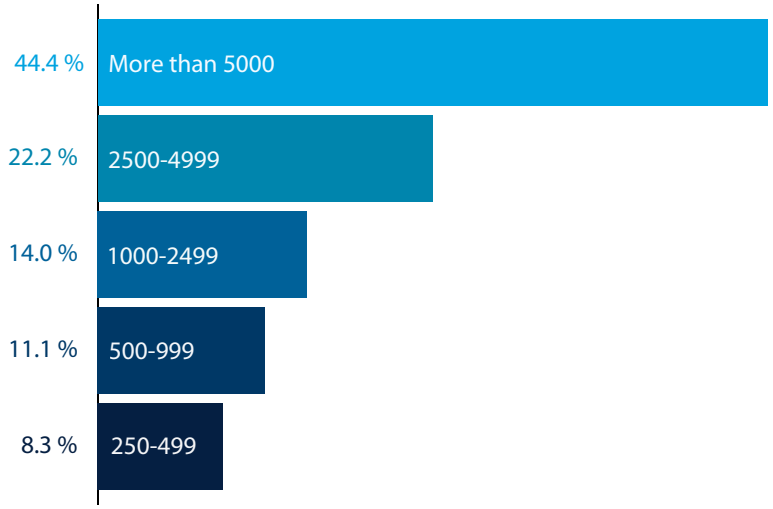
March 2024

Community Partner Detailed Survey Results

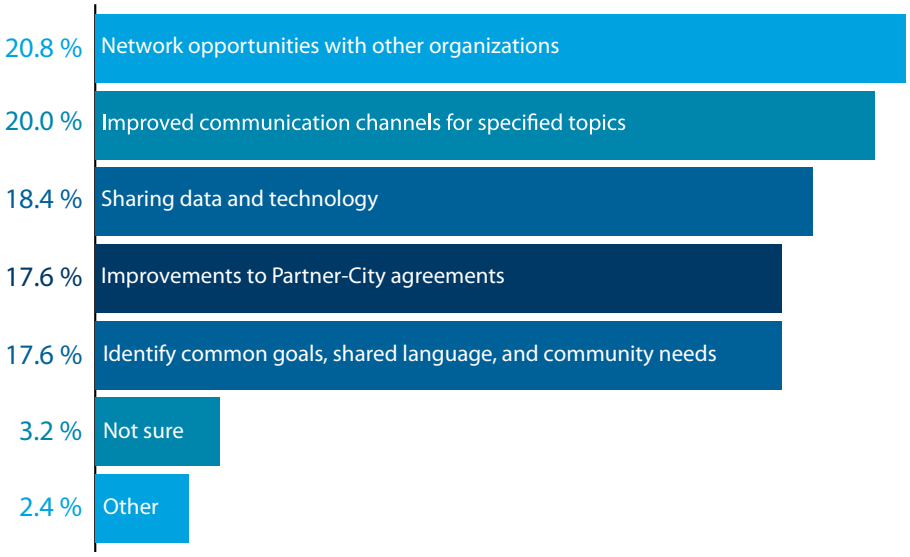
Community Partner Survey Responses

There are two types of questions in the Community Partner Survey: close-ended responses (multiple choice questions) and open-ended responses (open text comment field). For close-ended responses, a bar graph has been provided with detailed results. For open-ended responses, the feedback is summarized in point-form.

Survey Question #1: How many Calgarians does your organization reach or serve annually?



Survey Question #2: How can we improve collaboration between The City and your organization?



Survey Question #3: How would your organization like to grow or change its services over the next five years?

Targeted Programming

- Providing programs for seniors, cultural groups, youth, young families, and more.

Changes to Facilities

- Facility expansions or enhancements.

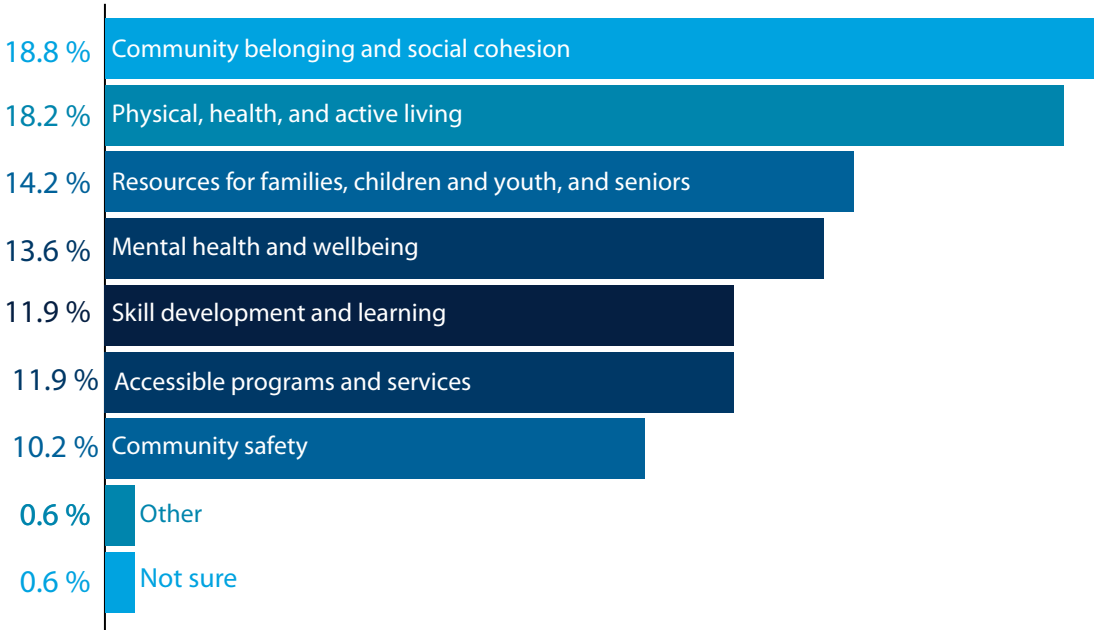
Changes to Operations

- Improvements to membership experience.
- Improved outreach to community members.

New Initiatives

- Develop social programs.
- Increase volunteer base.
- Participate in community events.

Survey Question #4: What is your organization trying to achieve with your public recreation services?



Survey Question #5A: How is your organization measuring success towards your outcomes?



Survey Question #5B: If there are opportunities your organization would like to explore or discuss with The City to improve your recreation services, please share them with us.

Request for New or Improved Amenities and Facilities

- Examples include playgrounds, skateparks, and soccer facilities.
- City to invest in recreation facilities and programs.

Support and Collaboration

- Partnerships and collaboration to support programs.
- Cost-sharing with The City.
- Grant and funding opportunities.
- Exchanging of ideas and best practices between partners.
- Access to space for groups that do not have a physical building.
- Involving Partners in planning conversation.
- Support with volunteer engagement.

Survey Question #6: Has your organization observed changing demands or emerging trends that impact service delivery? If so, what priorities has your organization identified to respond to Calgarians' changing needs?

Changing Demographics

- Influx of young families with children and teenagers.
- More diverse community members.
- More demand for programs overall.

Changing Recreation Trends

- Increased interest in sports like pickleball and cricket.
- Increased demand for recreation post-COVID.
- Increased demand for sports including: watersports, soccer, accessible sailing program.
- Increased participation by girls and women.

Financial Challenges

- Respondents prefer events that are free.
- Food insecurity is prevalent.
- Cuts to funded programs.

Survey Question #7: How can the public recreation system better serve or remove barriers for the following demographics? Your response can address one or multiple groups:

Preschool (0-5)

- Parent and tot groups.

Children (6-12) + Youth (13-17)

- Basketball and cricket.

Adults (18-64)

- Cricket and pickleball.
- Walking paths and skating trails for families.

Older Seniors (65+)

- Plenty of seating options.

New Canadians (all ages)

- Attracting new Canadians who may not feel comfortable.

Equity-denied residents (all ages)

- Accessible playgrounds and sports surfaces.
- Wheelchair accessible activities.
- Low cost activities for seniors.

Other

- Help people find programs, even if they are not offered by The City.
- Conduct surveys and engagement activities regularly to gather feedback.
- Allow organizations to have low- or no-cost access to facilities to host programs.
- Higher fees charged to for-profit service providers.



Appendix 3a

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report

Land Acknowledgment

In the City of Calgary, all recreational activities are experienced and enjoyed on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Siksikaitsitapi, also known as the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, Amskaapipiikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, within Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6). We acknowledge all Indigenous Peoples who have made Calgary their home. Oki, Dadanast'ada, Âba wathtech, Taanishi, Thank you for allowing Calgarians to experience and enjoy recreational activities on your lands.

Giving Thanks

Thank you to Miskanawah Community Services Association, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), and McMan Youth Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area. Thank you to all Indigenous Peoples including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth who led us in blessings and/or smudge, and shared their perspectives, experiences, and wisdom to shape the long-term vision for GamePLAN. Your participation in the Wisdom Seeking Engagement will inform how to increase access and improve recreational services for Indigenous Peoples living in and around Calgary.

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Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Survey Results

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking & GamePLAN

Indigenous Peoples have practiced recreational activities since time immemorial.

Participants who engaged with the City of Calgary (The City) for the GamePLAN Indigenous Wisdom Seeking shared that these recreational activities include powwow dancing, hunting, fishing, picking medicines, cooking Indigenous foods, playing traditional games, sports, art, Elder-led teachings, and other leisure activities that promote Indigenous knowledge, holistic health, and intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Indigenous Peoples understand recreation as a diverse expression of activities that expand upon The City's current delivery of recreational activities and services.

Historically, The City has conducted little research to understand Indigenous Peoples' recreational experiences. In 2006, The City of Calgary researched and wrote the Pimatswin Recreation Report that noted Indigenous Peoples in Calgary face barriers accessing recreation due to lack of transportation options, lack of available childcare, and high program costs. The Pimatswin Recreation Report also found that Indigenous Peoples had a different interpretation of recreation than The City had been offering.

The City acknowledges that it needs to better serve Indigenous Peoples in public recreation. The City's first step was to listen and learn directly from Indigenous Peoples to ensure their needs and perspectives are reflected in The City's recreational services and programs.

The City initiated an Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement strategy with Indigenous serving organizations and Indigenous Peoples to:

- Meaningfully build relationships and support reconciliation,
- Better understand what recreation means to them,
- Encourage participation in public recreation services by increasing access, reducing barriers and improving recreation services and
- Contribute to the reimagining of the public recreation system that would honour and be inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples.

The feedback provided by Indigenous Peoples is contained within this report and has contributed to GamePLAN: Reimagining Public Recreation, The City's long-term vision and strategy to shape the approach to delivering inclusive, accessible and sustainable recreation services for the next 10 to 30 years.



About GamePLAN

GamePLAN is aimed at establishing a vision and actionable strategy for public recreation in Calgary.

Our strategy focuses on the:

» Types of programs and services The City and Partners offer,

» Infrastructure that enables The City and Partners to offer those programs and services and

» How programs and services are offered.

GamePLAN is rooted in three Guiding Principles:

Level the playing field:

This principle focuses on 'levelling the playing field' for underserved, underrepresented or vulnerable individuals. It is about removing barriers so that all people living in and around the city have access to the benefits of public recreation.

Change the game:

The City acknowledges the current recreation system does not adequately serve the needs of Indigenous Peoples. The City is looking to implement solutions and actions to create a more inclusive and impactful service model.

It takes a team:

The City understands there are already many organizations, agencies and communities providing opportunities that support Indigenous Peoples' health and wellness. How can The City collaborate and expand on these opportunities to ensure equitable access and improved programming for public recreation?

Foundational to GamePLAN and the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report is the White Goose Flying Report (2016). The White Goose Flying Report outlines specific Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (2015) for the City to address. The City aims to repair relationships with Indigenous Peoples and ensure their needs and perspectives are reflected in public recreational programs and services.

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking Engagement Overview

The City approached Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement with the goals of being community oriented, collaborative, Elder-led, youth-led, and honouring Indigenous protocols, ways of knowing and gathering.

Participants were asked to reflect on their perspectives, experiences and share wisdom on:

- "Recreation," discussed in the most general way to understand what recreation means to Indigenous Peoples and why it matters,
- Barriers faced when accessing recreation and
- Potential solutions to overcoming those barriers.

Engagement was held from February 2024 until August 2024. A total of three sharing circles were facilitated with Indigenous serving organizations including Miskanawah Community Services Association, USAY, and McMan Youth Family & Community Services.

Indigenous Wisdom

Indigenous Peoples in and around Calgary represent diverse communities rich in history, lands, language, ways of being and recreational practices. The feedback provided represents these vast perspectives, experiences and wisdom gained throughout the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement process. While some participants had limited opportunities to participate in recreation, almost all participants agreed that recreation is important to enhancing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. The linkage between recreation and holistic health is critical to a person's wellbeing and quality of life.

Three themes emerged from engagement, including:

- (1) why recreation matters
- (2) barriers to accessing recreation and
- (3) ways to improve recreation for Indigenous Peoples.

Participants at Sharing Circles

22 people

Miskanawah Community Services Association

12 people

Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

7 people

Mc Man Youth, Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area

27 Indigenous youth

(ages 9-28) participated in the anonymous online survey



"What saved me in being in foster care was recreation. I played basketball all the time. I made sure I was active. It saved me from that part of life."

"Recreation is amazing. I remember being involved in a baseball team in grade six and that was the highlight of my childhood...It was my friends' parents who made it possible for me to go."

1. Why Recreation Matters

Connecting to Culture

Recreational activities that honour indigenous culture were described as important and promote positive self-identity. No single definition of "culture" was offered, however, participants described cultural activities such as powwow dancing, hunting, fishing, picking medicines, cooking traditional foods, playing traditional games, sports, art, and Elder-led teachings. Indigenous youth want more cultural activities as recreation.

Holistic Health, Healing and Reconciliation

Recreation promotes positive mental health, especially for those experiencing anxiety and depression. It provides a positive outlet and coping mechanisms for dealing with challenging circumstances and life experiences. Participants shared stories of overcoming challenges, such as intergenerational poverty, the Sixties Scoop and the Child and Family Services system, through recreation. Indigenous Peoples continue to face traumatic impacts, as a result of colonization, which can be mitigated by recreation.

Youth Support

Participants shared that recreation helps keep youth engaged with their peers and in their communities. This acts as a deterrent to "getting into trouble". Without dedicated spaces and programs, youth noted they may become involved in gangs or crime as a means of releasing energy. Recreation keeps youth included, active and engaged.

Community Connections

Recreation provides pathways to making friendships, connecting with new community members, and being in relationship with the land. Recreation brings families and friends together and contributes to community building and belonging.



"...I had that space and bandwidth to lift weights, but it was also a priority for me. Some folks have groceries as their priorities for them"

2. Barriers

Participants shared that many Indigenous Peoples are challenged to meet their basic needs, making recreation a lower priority. This provides critical context for the barriers below:

Essential Needs

Participants shared that accessing recreation is not a top priority compared to ensuring their essential needs are met. Many Indigenous Peoples talked about struggles with food insecurity, poverty, and the time and resources it takes working to survive, leaving them tired and without the ability to participate in recreation.

Racism, Safety, and Exclusion

Participants described how racism impacts all areas of their lives, including when they access recreation. Indigenous Peoples encounter racism from staff and other recreation facility and transit users making them feel unwelcome and unsafe. Most physical spaces do not have land acknowledgements. Indigenous Peoples want to see themselves visibily reflected in recreational facility signage, art and architecture, staff representation, and in program development.

Affordability & Transportation

Financial costs of recreation programs, sports clubs and facility use is inaccessible. Recreation facilities require fees for day, monthly, and annual passes, which can make a simple outing to the gym or pool unaffordable. The rising costs of living have impacted Indigenous People's ability to pay and have made choices difficult between paying for necessities or paying for recreation and the transportation required to get to a facility. Participants noted facilities are not equitably located throughout the city and cited transportation as a barrier (e.g., cost of fuel, parking availability, cost of transit passes, travel time).

Fair Entry

The thresholds for the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) are artificially low because they do not take into account personal circumstances, inflation, and the rising cost of living. Participants shared that having to apply annually for Fair Entry is burdensome to the point of deterring application. Participants also described literacy and language, interfacing with social workers and eligibility requirements as barriers impacting application accessibility.



Programming

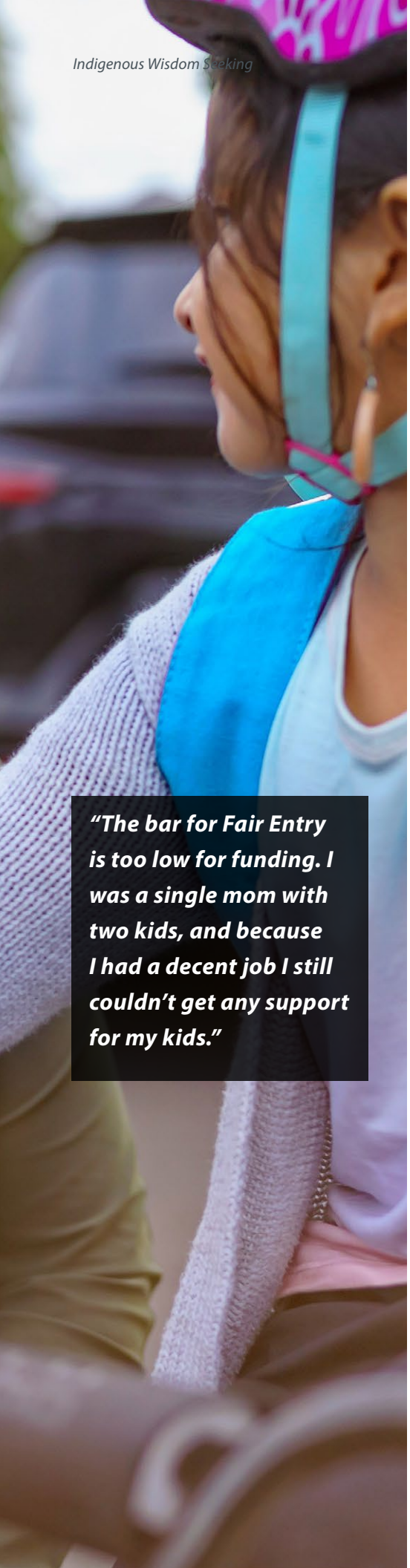
Indigenous Peoples want culturally based programming that affirms their identities. For example, land-based programming, powwow dancing, beading, traditional cooking, arts, and Elder-led teachings. Youth highlighted gaps in programming for youth aged 12-17 years old; Two-Spirit Individuals; Elders and older adults; and mothers and families, specifically single mothers. They described a lack of access to public spaces and age-appropriate programs to gather.

Operations and Smudging

Participants described numerous challenges related to operations including limited recreation facility hours, underutilized spaces, poor conditions of facilities and equipment, and lack of cleanliness especially in bathrooms. Many facilities have not been adapted to serve those with disabilities. Many Indigenous Peoples are prevented from smudging or using smoke in ceremony because of facility design. Allowing Indigenous Peoples to smudge and participate in spiritual practices is an inherent right as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2021).

Advertising

The City of Calgary's marketing strategies are not reaching Indigenous Peoples. Many participants are unaware of what recreation opportunities exist. Participants said The City does not use Indigenous channels to share information. Youth want social media advertisements that are video and image based and on emerging social media platforms. Several participants also noted The City's website is difficult to navigate.



"The bar for Fair Entry is too low for funding. I was a single mom with two kids, and because I had a decent job I still couldn't get any support for my kids."

3. Ways to Improve

When asked about ways to improve the public recreation system, participants provided creative, insightful, and practical solutions:

Relationships

The City should build strong relationships with Indigenous-serving organizations, Indigenous Peoples, and Nations. Indigenous Peoples want opportunities to partner on events, programming and services that support Indigenous communities, families and youth. Indigenous Peoples need access to recreation facilities and other spaces to encourage participation and meaningful involvement.

Culturally Safe Environments

Participants highlighted the need for culturally safe and anti-racist training among all levels of staff. They described how facilities could provide accommodations for traditional activities and practices, including cultural education, smudging, art, and the provision of Indigenous language signage. Indigenous Peoples expressed a desire to see meaningful land acknowledgements within facilities and suggested The City explore partnerships to facilitate Indigenous naming of facilities. All participants expressed a desire to see more Indigenous Peoples represented among facility staff.

Fair Entry

Participants proposed several changes to the Fair Entry Program, including increasing the Fair Entry threshold above LICO, developing Indigenous-specific positions to support Indigenous Fair Entry applicants who may experience language or technology barriers and adding new Fair Entry application locations. Indigenous Peoples also suggested allowing families to continue accessing Fair Entry for five years after surpassing the threshold to ensure they have financial stability before losing Fair Entry benefits.

Affordability

Indigenous Peoples want recreation services for all age groups at low cost or free of cost. One suggestion was establishing an Indigenous specific grant for Indigenous groups to access and develop recreation programs. Another suggestion included no-cost recreation equipment through vouchers, facilitated trading groups/swaps, free rentals, and/or donations. Buddy passes specifically for Indigenous youth would engage more Indigenous youth in recreation. Participants shared that providing childcare for Indigenous families would increase participation.



Effective Marketing Strategies

Participants want to access information on social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, Discord or Snapchat with video-based advertisement. Because The City website is considered difficult to navigate, one central website targeted to Indigenous youth was requested. Participants encouraged The City to leverage Community Associations and Indigenous-serving organizations to market recreation opportunities. Participants would like to be made aware of no-cost and free-play recreation opportunities and locations such as parks, courts, and other unused spaces where youth can gather safely.

Programming

Indigenous Peoples want programming and events that are: Indigenous led, culturally-responsive, multi-generational and land-based for all age groups. Programming that brings families together and re-enforces Indigenous kinship is desired. Programming was requested specifically for Indigenous youth ages 12 to 17, mothers, single mothers, caregivers, Two Spirit and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, older Indigenous adults and Elders, and people with disabilities. Participants want recreation opportunities that support mental health and holistic wellness, and emerging leisure activities like video gaming and mentorship programs. Participants recommended establishing an Indigenous Youth Council to guide program development.

Operations and Maintenance

Participants stated they would welcome improvements to the conditions and cleanliness of The City's recreation facilities, and the ability to smudge in facilities. Participants recommended expanding the geographical reach of Indigenous-specific programming and extending operating hours to increase accessibility of facilities and programming after work and school.

Transportation

Transportation was described as a barrier (travel time, costs, transit crowding, and safety). Participants suggested providing free public transportation (chartered buses, bus tickets) or compensation for travel to and from recreation opportunities.

Conclusion

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement provided The City with perspectives, experiences and wisdom to better understand recreation from Indigenous Peoples, build relationships, support reconciliation, encourage participation in recreation services, and reimagine recreational service delivery in ways that honour and are inclusive of Indigenous Peoples.

The feedback provided from this process will inform GamePLAN and be reflected in the final recommendations. Once again, The City thanks Miskanawah Community Services Association, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area and all Indigenous Peoples who participated in the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement.

"I have a 16.5 year old and I want him one day to be able to take his children to a facility in Calgary or any municipality and be like "we are going to go for a swim, or do this, or smudge, or hear an Elder speak""



Indigenous Wisdom Seeking

Feedback from three Sharing Circles and the Indigenous Youth Survey were coded using NVivo and validated to ensure themes were accurate. The Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report was reviewed by the Indigenous Relations Office, and participants were offered an opportunity to review and validate.

Note: All feedback has been anonymized to protect the privacy of participants.

Overview of Wisdom Seeking Process

Event	Date/Location	Host	Participants
GamePLAN Indigenous-Serving Organizations Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 1	Feb 15, 2024 Miskanawah East	Miskanawah Community Services Association	21 Indigenous-serving organizations 1 Elder 1 Knowledge Keeper
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 2	May 28, 2024 Marlborough Park Community Association	Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth	9 Youth 1 Elder 2 USAY staff
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 3	July 30, 2024 The James House, McMan Calgary	McMan Youth Family & Community Services	3 Youth 1 Elder 1 Knowledge Keeper 2 McMan staff
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Survey	May 22-August 19, 2024	https://engage.calgary.ca/gameplanyouth	27 anonymous survey respondents
GamePLAN Indigenous Games Event	June 21, 2024	Southland Leisure Centre	City project team (including consultants)

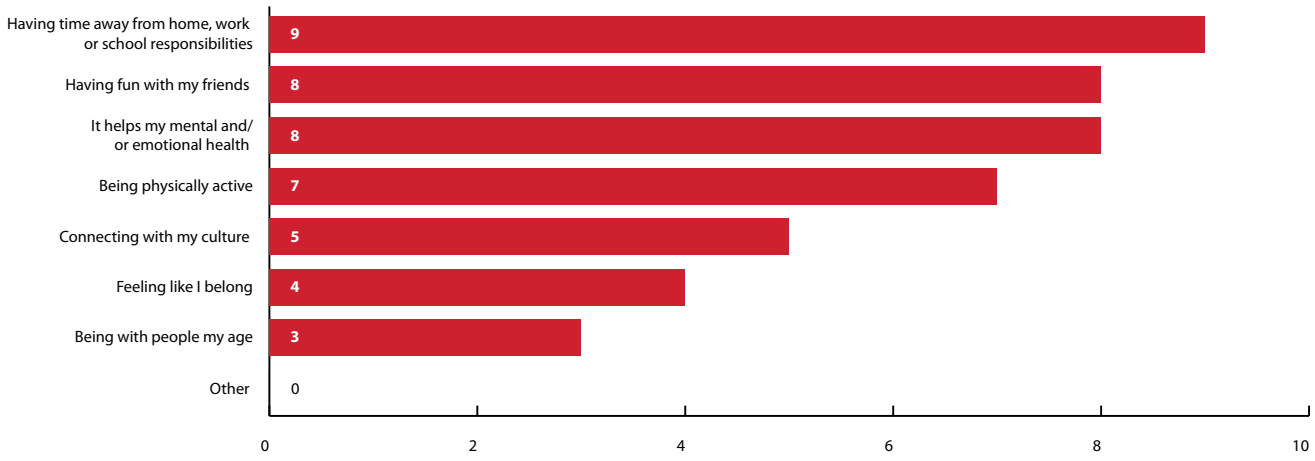
Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Survey Results

In addition to the Sharing Circles, The City collected wisdom from Indigenous youth (ages 9-28) via a digital survey on Calgary.ca/gameplan. In total, the survey received 27 responses from May 22 to August 19, 2024. The survey was shared via the Native Information Exchange, Cultural Advisor Networks, and to relatives of YMCA Calgary, the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), and McMan Youth Family & Community Services.

27 Indigenous youth responded to the survey ranging from ages 9-28. Many (15) respondents identified as Status First Nations, followed by 5 with a combination of Status First Nations, Treaty First Nations, and/or Mixed Indigenous background, 4 Métis, and 3 Non-Status First Nations. Survey participants came from a variety of backgrounds, including Blackfoot, Cree, Métis, Stoney Nakoda, Secwépemc, Oneida, Anishinaabe, and others. This survey is not representative of all Indigenous populations in Calgary, but only of those who participated.

Participants were asked the following questions:

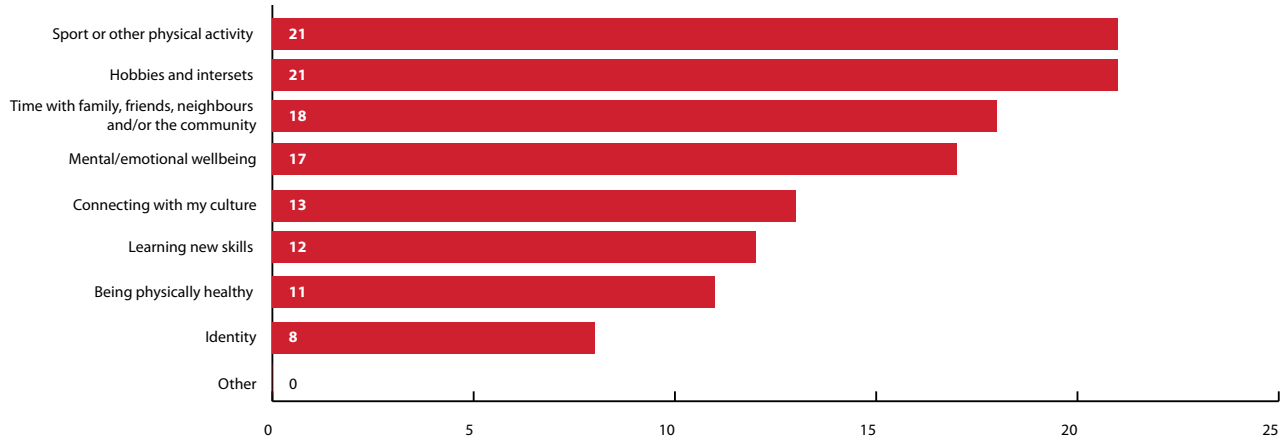
Question 1: What does recreation mean to you? [select all that apply]



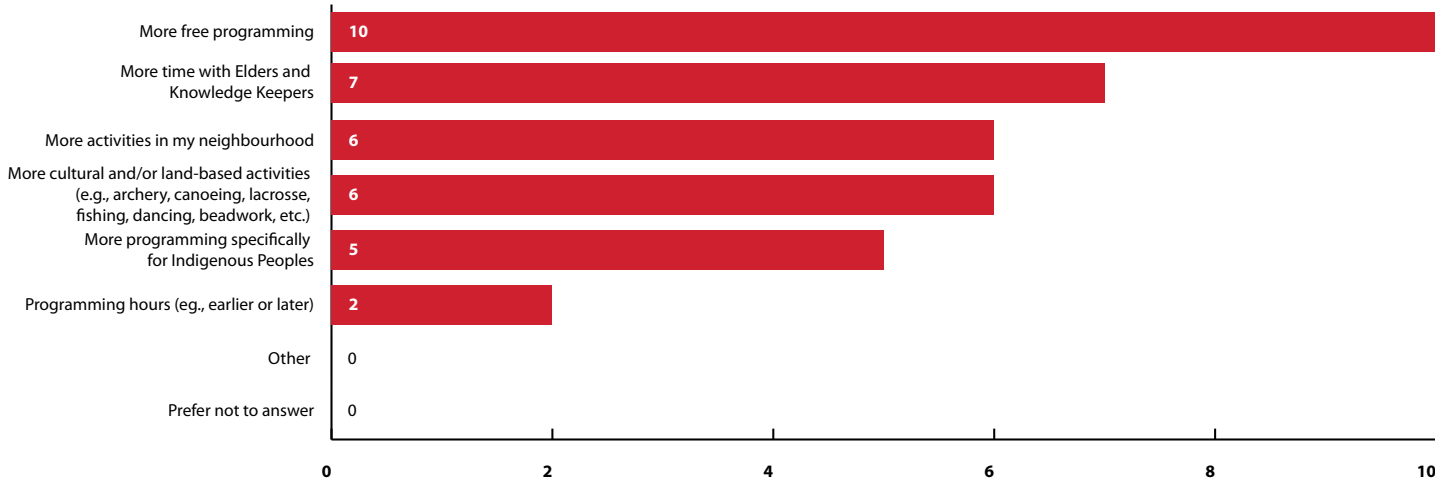
Question 2: Do you currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport (for example, sport, skating, swimming, art classes, dance, or other)? It does not have to be a City offered program. [Yes or No]

For those who answered "Yes" to Question 2:

Question 2a: What do you enjoy about sport or recreation? [select all that apply]

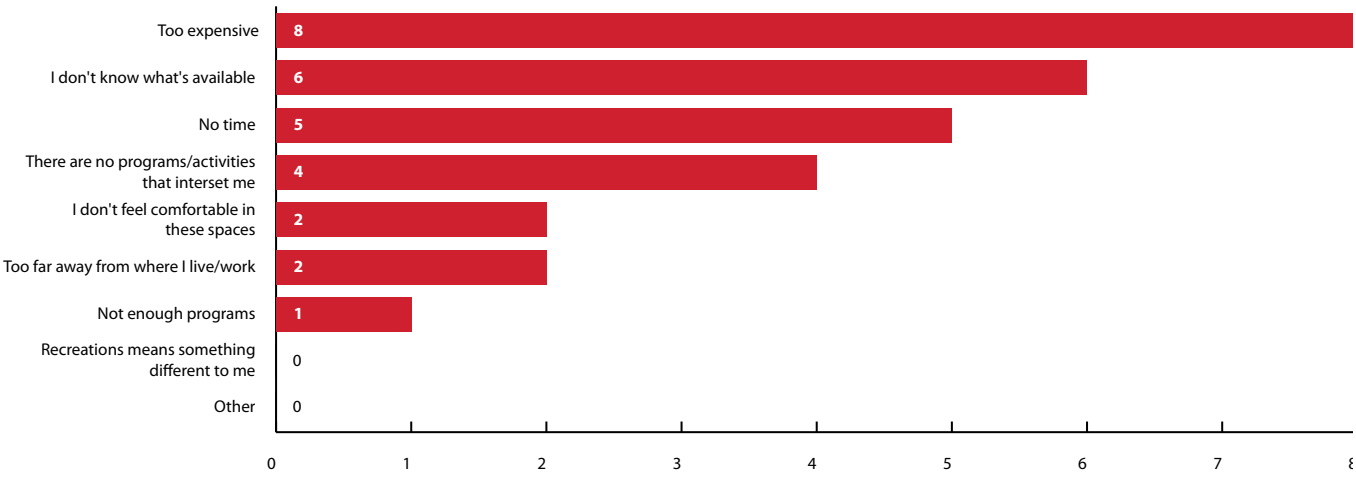


Question 2b: What would make it better? [select all that apply]



For those who answered "No" to Question 2:

Question 2b: Why don't you attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport? [select all that apply]



Question 2c.i: Please tell us more about why you don't participate in or attend public recreation. [short answer]

- The information isn't easily accessible I feel, you have to dig around to find niche recreations.
- I work full time and I can't find anything that interests me.
- Motivation, a friendly invite or something to catch my attention or the attention of those who unaware or more so "shy".
- Because not many programs interest me or there's an age limit.
- Broke.
- A lot of public recreation that is available on my side of the city (SW) requires money. Unfortunately money that I don't have due to how expensive everything is in this day and age.
- Not enough time. I do sports elsewhere.
- At the moment I have a broken leg so I am mobile limited.
- Lack of funding and comfortability asking for this information. Often times the direction to find support is unclear and through this process I am sharing personal information with strangers and it can be humiliating. I'd like to include additional comments as there is no other field to add. I think the City of Calgary needs to have a partnership with Jordans Principle and directly work together on behalf of Indigenous children and youth who want to participate in sports. We need advocacy and support to ensure our kids are able to access sports and wellness programs before it is too late for them. This is extremely urgent and important!

Question 3: What recreational programs would you like to see more of (for example, art, cooking, sport, swimming, skating, basketball, other)? [open field]

- Writing. Art. Gaming development.
- Indigenous Focused sports initiatives.
- Everything so everybody has something to do.
- Rock climbing, swimming, lacrosse, skating, gym access
- Yoga, books clubs, cultural learning activities (ribbon skirt making, beading, etc.)
- More programming for indigenous people and youth, and more public programs like learning to garden.
- More indigenous basketball teams.
- Football, There isn't many football clubs or teams around Calgary.
- Swimming.
- Powwow dancing, Indigenous volleyball teams, lacrosse, caber toss.
- Indigenous art, cooking, and other knowledgeable classes.
- More indigenous based programs.
- I wish there was more community food ball teams for people who do not attend high school or university.
- I would like to see more programs with onsite childcare!



Appendix 3d

GamePLAN

What We Heard Summary

Phase 2

December 2024

Contents

Engagement Overview

Survey Questions

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Concluding Remarks

Survey Results

Engagement Overview

Engagement sought to validate GamePLAN's proposed Principles, Commitments and Actions as well as solicit feedback on the Facility Investment Principles that will guide future development.

The survey was hosted on The City's Engage Portal from October 15 to 29, 2024, and was optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability. The City promoted awareness of the survey through targeted emails and social media channels. This engagement builds on previous touchpoints with members of the public, as well as community associations and social recreation organizations, who provided their input on needs, preferences, priorities, and barriers related to Calgary's public recreation system throughout 2023 and 2024.

Themes

- **Let's get started!**
  - Respondents want to see actionable steps for implementation of GamePLAN.
- **Expanding offerings.**
  - Respondents want to see a broader definition of equity.
  - Respondents want more programming types reflected in GamePLAN Actions.
- **Breaking down barriers.**
  - Respondents continue to experience financial barriers to participating in recreation.
  - Respondents want to see resources allocated to spaces and places that need them most.

Feedback was used to assess how well GamePLAN aligns with public perspectives and those of community associations and social recreation organizations. Results will support refinement of GamePLAN's strategic direction.

573

Total survey responses

20

Respondents representing community recreation organizations

Public Survey Results

Survey Questions

Review GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions

Q #1: What (if anything) do you like about the Actions listed in the tables above?

Q #2: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Actions?

Q #3: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Actions?

Review Facility Investment Principles

Q #4: What (if anything) do you like about the Facility Investment Principles described in the table above?

Q #5: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Facility Investment Principles?

Q #6: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Facility Investment Principles?

Engagement Themes

1. Let's get started!

Respondents want to see actionable steps for implementation of GamePLAN.

Respondents expressed a desire to see actionable steps taken to improve the public recreation system. While there is general agreement with GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions, respondents wondered how and when the Actions will be implemented. Respondents indicate that they wish to see clear commitments to improving access to facilities through the renovation of existing facilities and development of new facilities to serve both existing and future populations in Calgary.

2. Expanding our offerings.

Respondents want to see a broader definition of equity.

Respondents appreciate GamePLAN's commitment to accessibility, inclusion and equity. Respondents indicated they would like to see more support for adults, seniors, newcomers and people with disabilities.

Respondents want more programming types reflected in GamePLAN Actions.

Respondents support focused improvement of Learn-to-Swim programming. They also advocate for additional programs, services, and facilities, such as soccer and competitive swimming.





3. Breaking down barriers

Respondents continue to experience financial barriers to participating in recreation.

While GamePLAN Commitments include increased affordability for those who need it, respondents expressed they feel access to public recreation in Calgary is too expensive. Respondents described a need for expanded criteria for subsidy eligibility. For example, respondents indicated cost is still a barrier for those above the low-income threshold.

Respondents want to see resources allocated to spaces and places that need them most.

Based on the information provided, respondents were unclear if GamePLAN would result in additional funding being allocated to facility redevelopment, or if new facility development would be prioritized. With recent facility closures, respondents expressed the need for more equitable service distribution throughout Calgary.

Concluding Remarks

Engagement sought to further align GamePLAN's strategic direction with public values and aspirations for the public recreation system in Calgary. This engagement validates the overall direction of the GamePLAN and Facility Investment Plan and confirms there is similar recurring feedback as previous touchpoints with members of the public, and community associations and social recreation organizations.

In general, respondents expressed a desire for greater specificity to understand the implications of GamePLAN for facilities, programs and services. Responses from the online public survey re-affirm the desire to see the expansion of the recreation system to support diverse programming opportunities and increase equitable access to recreation.

Feedback will be used to refine the strategy and inform how GamePLAN will be implemented (through initiatives, partnerships, and capital investments) as well as how the public will be informed of this work.



Survey Results



After reviewing the GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions, respondents were asked to share feedback on what they like, their concerns, and what's missing.

Survey Question #1: What (if anything) do you like about the Actions listed in the tables above?

Improving Access

Respondents shared that they appreciated Actions to support improved access to and availability of recreation programs, particularly for children and youth. In particular, respondents highlighted Actions targeting drop-in access for youth under 18, programming for at-risk youth and "Introduction to Sport" as providing significant value.

Increasing Affordability

Respondents showed agreement with Actions aimed at improving affordability for low-income Calgarians, youth and families.

Closing the Gap

Previous engagement raised swim lesson availability as a concern. Respondents expressed appreciation for Actions aimed at improving access to Learn-to-Swim programs.

Survey Question #2: What concerns (if any) do you have about Actions?

Facility Investment

Respondents raised concerns about the absence of specific Actions around facility investment. Respondents indicated a need for certain facilities, such as additional pools and soccer fields, to improve access to recreation programming.

Concerns Around Specificity

Respondents expressed they felt Actions were either too specific (i.e., Learn-to-Swim, staff training and artificial intelligence) or not specific enough (i.e., facility investments).

Broader Definition of Equity

Respondents expressed frustration that certain groups were identified through the GamePLAN Actions (e.g., youth, girls, Indigenous communities), while others were not (e.g., adults, seniors, newcomers, etc.). Respondents expressed they feel the addition of culturally-specific programming may be exclusionary and could limit opportunities for the broader public.

Survey Question #3: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Actions?

Increasing Capacity

Respondents expressed they feel the Actions do not prioritize the growth of the public recreation system and increasing system capacity over time. Comments highlight the need for additional facilities to meet demand, as well as a desire to reduce gaps between facilities to ensure equitable access to public recreation closer to home, particularly in areas of The City that are currently underserved.

Expanding Program Offerings

Respondents indicated a desire for additional programming beyond the noted programming types (i.e., Learn-to-Swim and youth-focused programs) to include programs for equity-deserving groups, such as people with disabilities or those experiencing houselessness.

Actionable Plans

Respondents expressed they feel the Actions are not concrete or tangible. They indicated a desire for more specificity around timelines, budgets and goals. Feedback revealed general concern that Actions will not translate into meaningful results, with respondents requesting clarity on The City's short-term plans to improve elements like programming capacity and opportunities, and long-term plans to expand and build new facilities.

Facility Investment Principles

After reviewing the Facility Investment Principles, respondents were asked to share feedback on what they like, their concerns, and what's missing.

Survey Question #4: What (if anything) do you like about the Facility Investment Principles described in the table above?

Community

Respondents expressed support for the community principle and the idea of community hubs, highlighting that this principle will promote health and wellness at a local level. Respondents expressed appreciation for the proposed co-location of amenities as a way of improving access to recreation and other services such as childcare or libraries.

Adaptability

Respondents indicated their agreement with the principle of adaptability for addressing new and evolving demands for space. They expressed support for the redevelopment of facilities with a future-focused approach that prioritizes flexible designs to ensure long-term resilience and functionality.

Equity

Respondents expressed support for the equitable distribution of facilities across The City and for barrier-free design. Respondents expressed they felt gender-inclusive washrooms and changerooms will support equity and inclusion in facilities.

Survey Question #5: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Facility Investment Principles?

Distribution of Facilities and Access

Respondents raised concerns regarding the closure of older facilities without replacement facilities to service the area. Specifically, respondents expressed they feel inner-city recreation facility closures limit access to recreation for people who live in those areas. Respondents also raised concerns regarding service needs in new communities.

Implementation

Respondents raised concerns regarding implementation of the Principles. Specifically, respondents expressed a desire to better understand how and when the Principles will be applied.

Investment in Sport

Respondents expressed they feel more focus should be placed on investment in facilities for high-demand sports, such as soccer and swimming.

Funding, Cost and Affordability

Respondents raised concerns that investments in new facilities may come at the expense of existing facilities. They feel that existing facilities need investment to maintain service in existing areas . Respondents also raised concerns for potential taxpayer costs associated with the Facility Investment Principles. Consistent with previous engagement feedback, many respondents raised concerns about affordability. Specifically, respondents expressed concern that access to public recreation facilities will become more unaffordable as a result of the cost of building new facilities and retrofitting existing facilities.

Survey Question #6: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Facility Investment Principles?

Space for Sport Programming

Respondents noted that investment in sport facilities should be a priority included in the Facility Investment Principles, including facilities to accommodate multiple levels of sport (from introductory to high-performance and competition) and different sports (e.g., soccer, swimming, etc.).

Facility Access and Accessibility

Respondents indicated a desire for improved access to facilities using a variety of mobility options (e.g., walking, wheeling and transit). Respondents also noted that proximity to facilities is a barrier that should be considered in the Facility Investment Principles.

Respondents emphasized the importance of facility design to enable access and participation by all ages and abilities, and that the Facility Investment Principles should support the enhancement of physical accessibility in public recreation facilities.