



A COMMUNITY RECREATION CAMPUS THE HEART OF NELSON, AREAS F & DEFINED E

PROJECT SUMMARY

JUNE 2025



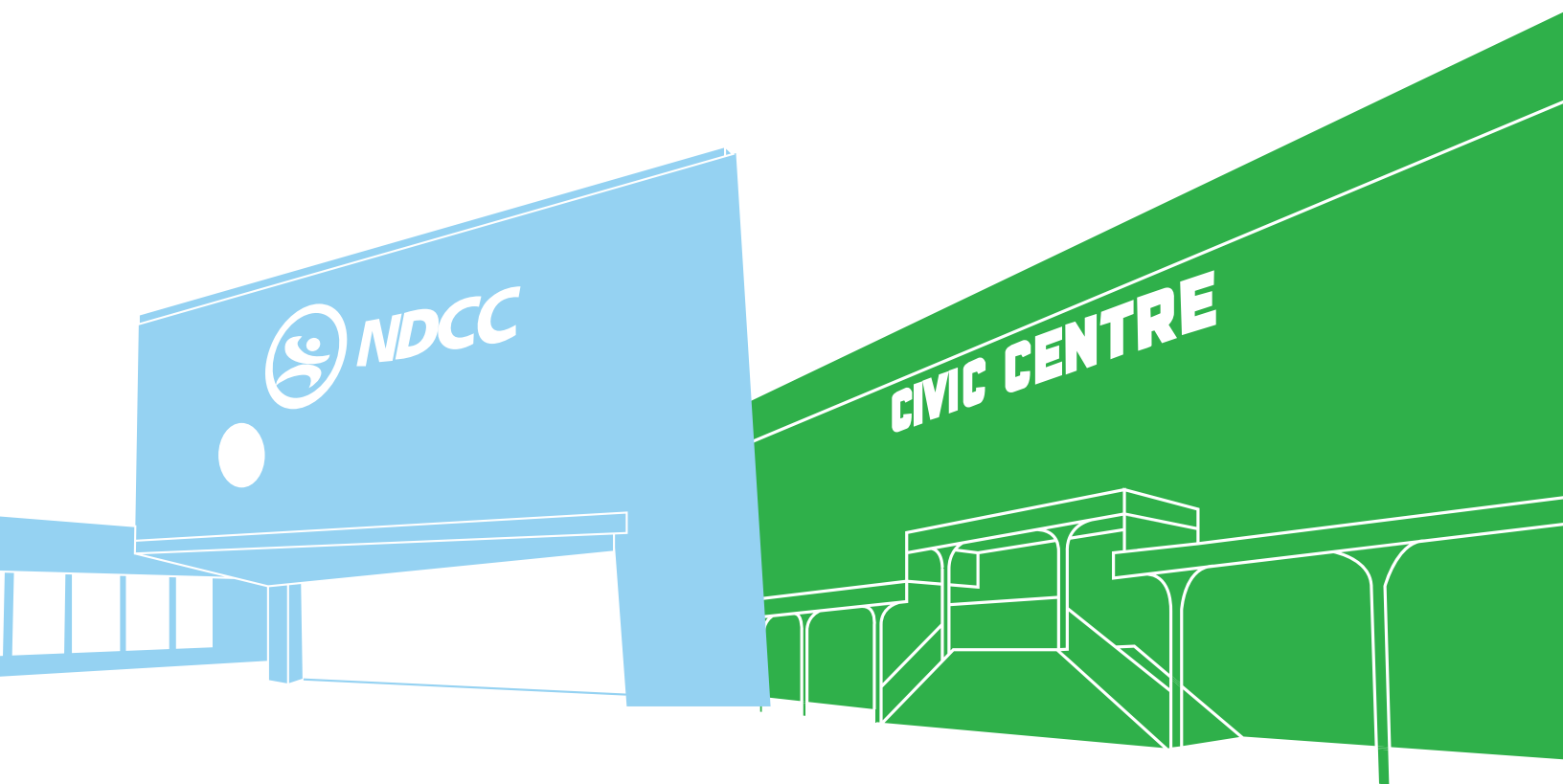


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1.0 ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Community Recreation Campus is an important regional hub of indoor recreation for residents in the Nelson & District area. Despite its importance, there is not a collective vision, between the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) and City of Nelson, for this campus. The Community Recreation Campus is composed of both City of Nelson owned facilities and amenities and those owned by the RDCK.

With the aging of its facilities, the RDCK and City of Nelson need the community's input on the best recreational uses for the Community Recreation Campus considering its current and potential facilities and amenities. Ultimately, this engagement project will provide information to be used in the development of a shared vision for the Community Recreation Campus.

With this need for community input, the RDCK, in partnership with the City of Nelson, commissioned a program of engagement to capture the community's perspectives regarding the Community Recreation Campus. The information gathered through this process will be used ultimately by the Nelson & District Recreation Commission in its decision making about the Campus.



1.1 CONTEXT

The context within which this engagement project was undertaken is important to acknowledge. The history of recreation in the Nelson district, as well as the circumstances at the time of this project, should be recognized. Responses were gathered from people within a context of the time, and this context would have influenced opinions to varying degrees. The extensive history of recreation on the Community Campus was an undercurrent during this engagement period. Memories of activities and events in facilities and spaces were shared by community members as were changes that had occurred to the Campus over its many decades. There were however several issues that were more prominent than others.

1. The Nelson Civic Centre was temporarily closed in the fall / winter of 2024 / 2025 to accommodate required building repairs. This decision, not taken lightly, occurred related to concerns about user safety. Through extensive examination, it was determined that the state of the infrastructure was in question due to factors related to weather and snow load. This closure resulted in the Civic Centre's many users looking for other venues and spaces to host their activities. Users also considered changes to their schedule. Decisions are being made by the City of Nelson, in part through the findings of this engagement process, related to investments, improvements, and the future of the Civic Centre's ability to host activities and events later in 2025.
2. A proposal to develop affordable housing on some vacant land in the Recreation Campus emerged in the community. Nelson CARES put forward a proposal to develop additional affordable housing units in Nelson using vacant land on the Campus. While the preliminary proposal indicated that the housing development may include recreation amenities that would be publicly available, differing opinions arose within the community about the use of Campus lands for housing. While many believe there is a need for additional affordable housing units in Nelson, the use of land on the Campus to provide this housing received mixed, but passionate levels of support.

3. The Nelson Regional Sports Council became actively involved in the discussion around the future of the Recreation Campus. A non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for sports and recreation programs in the Nelson area, the Council took several steps to communicate its position regarding the Campus. Recognizing the role of the Campus in serving as a "vital hub" for community recreation, the Council penned a letter to the Mayor and Council of the City of Nelson and to the Nelson and District Recreation Board. In the letter, the Council urged decision makers to maintain the campus land for recreational purposes only. The Sports Council also fielded its own survey with member organizations to further show support for maintaining Campus lands as purely recreational.

Engagement undertaken in any community is a product of the times and circumstances within it. As well, decisions made by Regional District, the City of Nelson, and the Nelson & District Recreation Commission occur within this context. While engagement findings need to be examined and considered in light of the context during data collection, those findings are important to consider when making decisions that may be implemented in a different context. Any impacts of the context impacting engagement findings directly or indirectly cannot be parsed out.

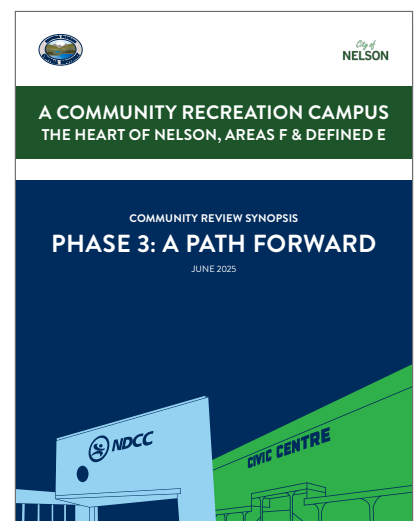
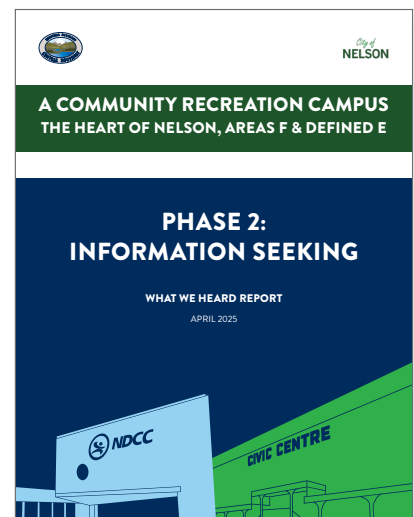
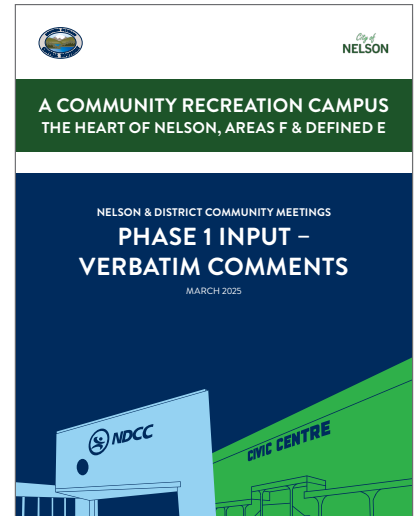


2.0 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This document is the summary report for the “A Community Recreation Campus – The Heart of Nelson, Areas F & Defined E” engagement project. Over the course of the project, three separate reports were developed, coinciding with the three project phases. The three reports presented the information gathered from the engagement tactics implemented in each of the project phases. This report is intended to serve as a synopsis of the entire project. This report will:

- Highlight some of the key findings gathered from the engagement activities.
- Identify high level conclusions drawn from the engagement.
- Present some conclusions for the Nelson & District Recreation Commission, the RDCK, and City of Nelson to consider as they make decisions regarding recreation service delivery.

While this document can stand on its own, it is important to recognize that it is a companion to the three reports with the detailed findings from the phase specific engagement activities. Should the reader have any questions regarding the summary engagement findings (or the activities themselves) presented herein, a review of the preceding reports should be undertaken.



3.0 ABOUT THE PROCESS

As referenced above, this project included three distinct phases each with its own program of engagement.



Phase 1: Project Launch phase involved a series of community meetings along with “post-it” boards and an online survey. The meetings were intended to:

- Inform the community about the project, its process, and the intent to develop a community vision for the Campus.
- Educate the public about the components of the community recreation campus including who owns and operates each.
- Describe the physical state of the components including major capital needs.
- Explain how residential taxation supports the community recreation campus.
- Ready the public to participate in Phase 2 surveys.

The information gathered through this phase helped shape the questionnaires used in Phase 2 and provided context to offer insight into the community’s perspective.

Phase 2: Information Seeking built upon the information gathered in the previous phase. The tactics employed in Phase 2 included a resident survey and a survey of organized groups and organizations that provide recreation services or have a vested interest in their provision. The resident survey served as the primary data collection tactic in this project.

The final phase – **Phase 3: A Path Forward** – included the sharing of findings with the community and their response to those findings. Two community meetings were convened with an online feedback mechanism (survey) available to gather comments. A hard copy feedback form was made available at the Nelson and District Community Complex (NDCC).

4.0 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

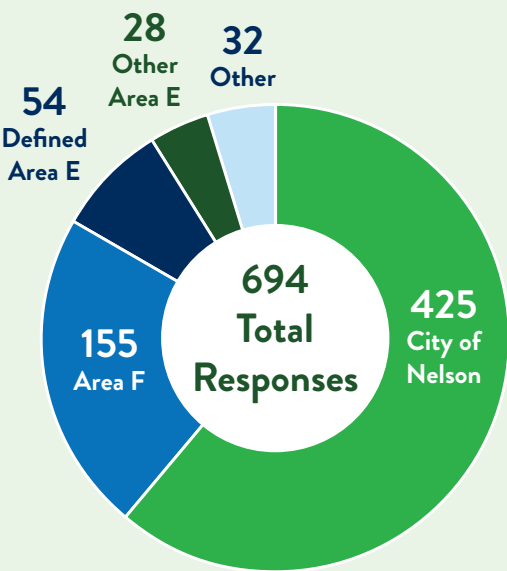
PHASE 1: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The verbatim comments gathered in this Phase can be reviewed in the Phase 1 Report.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Location
Taghum Hall
Prestige Lakeside Resort (2 mtgs)
School Des Sentiers-Alphins

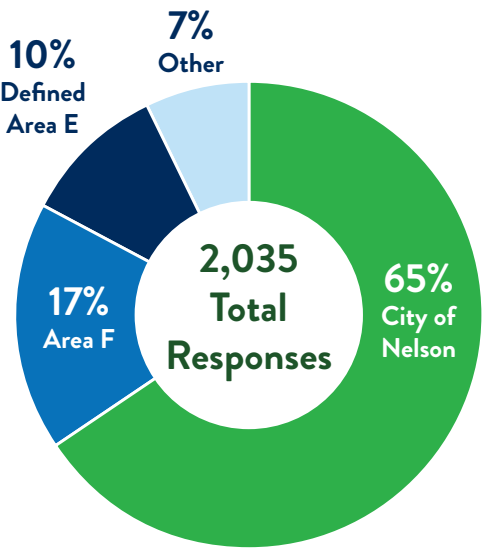
INITIAL FEEDBACK FORM RESPONSES



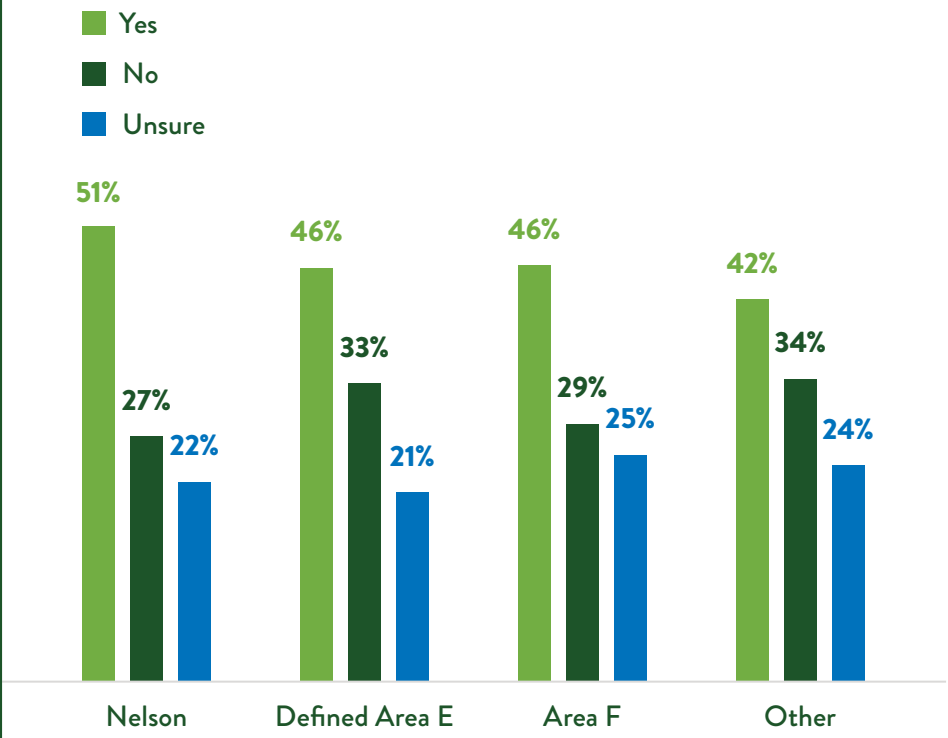
PHASE 2: INFORMATION SEEKING

The information presented below represent a sampling of findings gathered from this phase of engagement. Refer to the separate Phase 2 report for all findings.

RESIDENT SURVEY



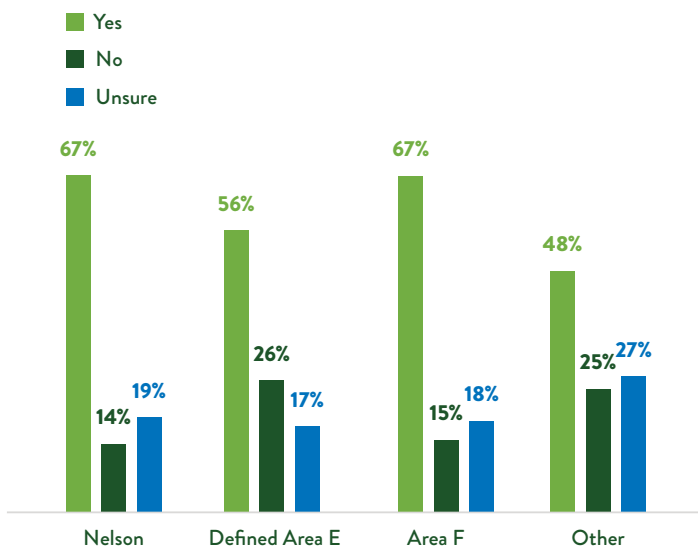
ARE THERE INDOOR REC ACTIVITIES THAT YOU'D LIKE TO DO AT THE RECREATION CAMPUS BUT CAN'T BECAUSE THE SPACE IS UNAVAILABLE OR DOESN'T EXIST?



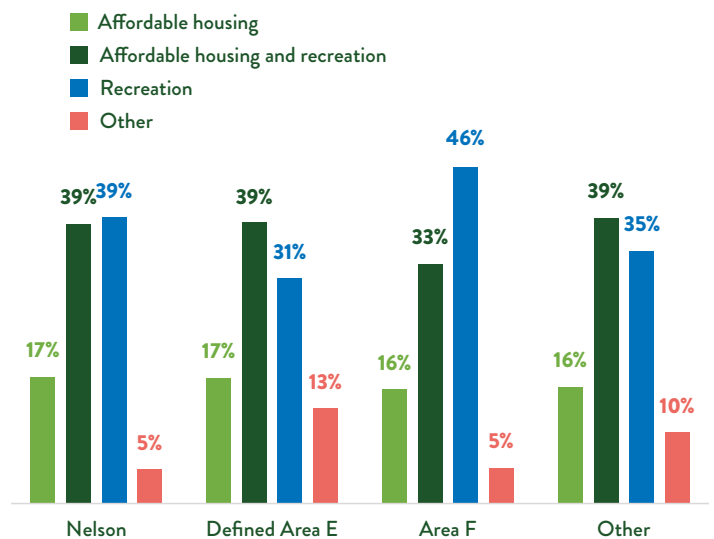
ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE ON CAMPUS BUT ARE UNABLE

Nelson	Defined Area E	Area F	Other Area E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curling (106 mentions) Pickleball (93) Climbing (69) Tennis (62) Basketball (60) Dance (45) Soccer (42) Bowling (34) Squash (33) Hockey (33) Badminton (26) Volleyball (25) Gymnastics (24) Skating (23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climbing (11 mentions) Dance (7) Pickleball (7) Curling (6) Skating (6) Hockey (5) Basketball (4) Squash (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pickleball (27 mentions) Curling (25) Soccer (19) Basketball (16) Climbing (15) Hockey (12) Tennis (12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curling (12 mentions) Gymnastics (7) Pickleball (6) Concert / music venue (6) Soccer (6) Gym / fitness (5) Basketball (4) Hockey (3) Climbing (3) Yoga (2)

WOULD YOU CONSIDER PAYING ADDITIONAL PROPERTY TAXES TO FUND FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS OR NEW DEVELOPMENT ON THE RECREATION CAMPUS?



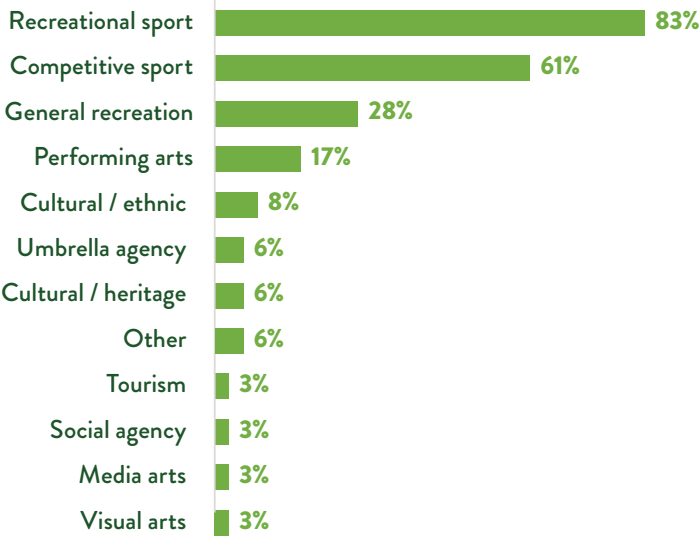
WHAT USE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FOR THE VACANT LOTS AT CEDAR AND FRONT STREET?



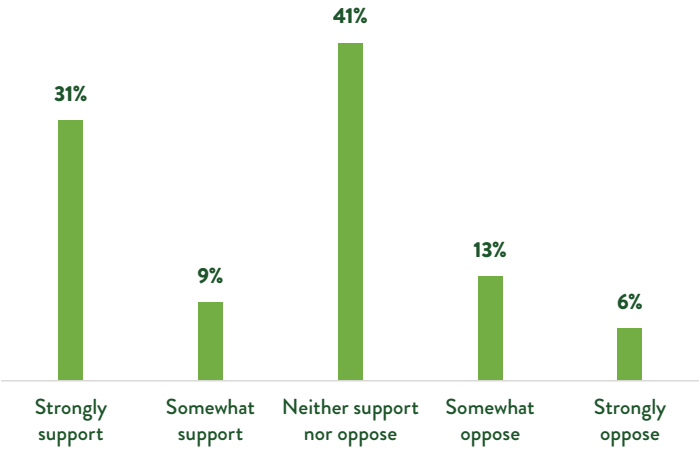
COMMUNITY GROUP SURVEY

• 37 respondents

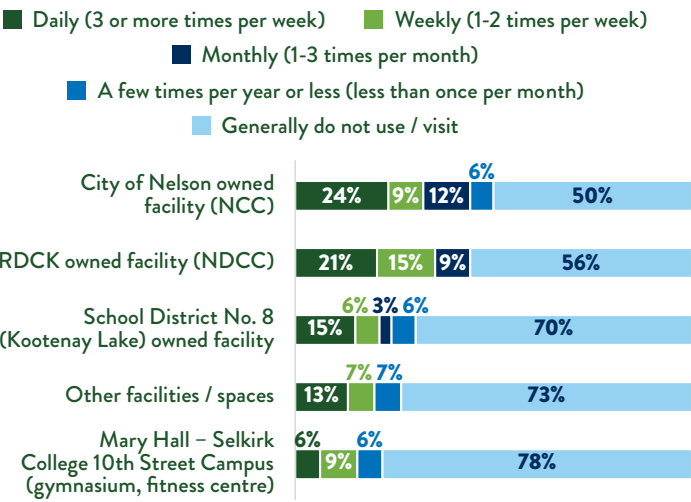
ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION



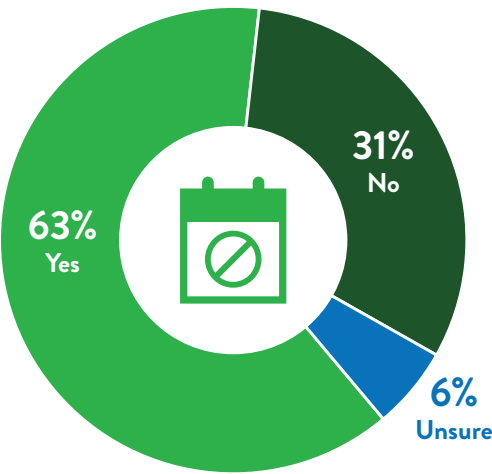
TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN USER FEES TO ENSURE IMPROVEMENTS / ENHANCEMENTS CAN OCCUR TO THE RECREATION CAMPUS?



FREQUENCY OF USE IN VARIOUS OWNED RECREATION FACILITIES.



WOULD LIKE TO PROGRAM AT THE COMMUNITY RECREATION CAMPUS BUT THERE IS NOT THE SPACE.



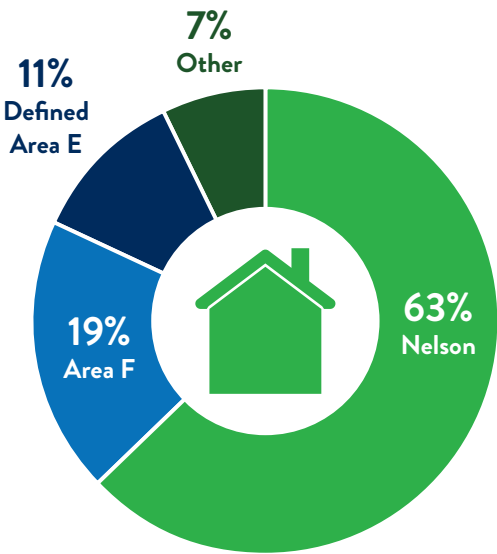
PHASE 3: A PATH FORWARD

The information presented below represent a sampling of findings gathered from this phase of engagement. Refer to the separate Phase 3 report for all findings.

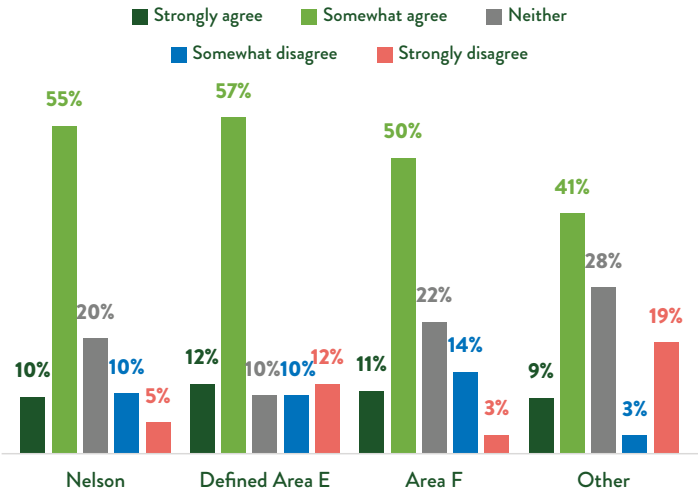
RESIDENT SURVEY - “WHAT WE HEARD FOLLOW-UP” SURVEY

- 500 respondents

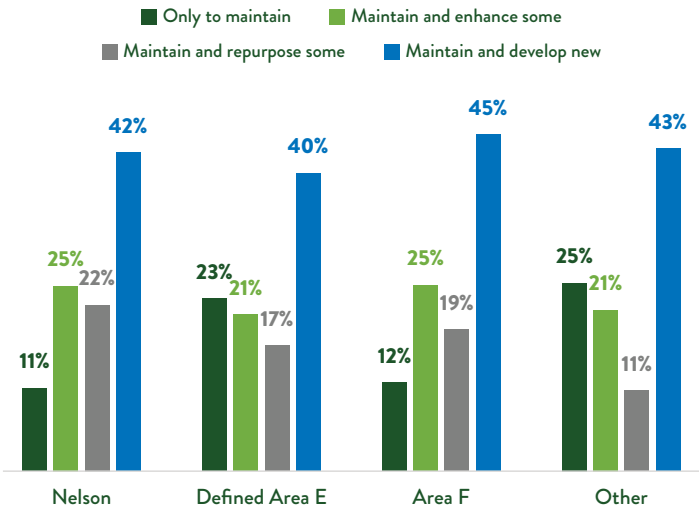
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



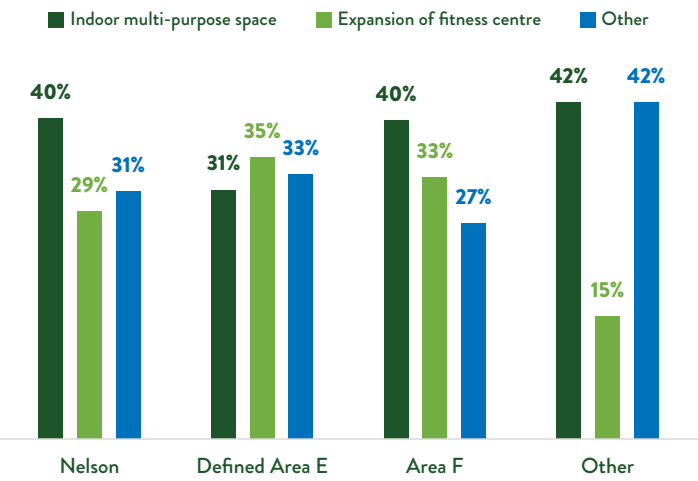
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THAT THE SURVEY FINDINGS REFLECT YOUR THOUGHTS?



TOP PRIORITY FOR ALLOCATING FUNDS (IF THEY BECOME AVAILABLE)



WHAT AMENITY SHOULD BE IN THE RECREATION SPACE (IF NCARES AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROCEEDS)



5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions presented below are based on the findings from all engagement activities undertaken throughout all phases of this project¹. The resident survey findings (Phase 2) held the most weight as these conclusions were developed but the information gathered across the three phases has also been considered.

1 The information gathered through this engagement project is valuable and provides significant insight regarding the perspectives of residents of Nelson, Electoral Area F and Defined Electoral E. The sample size from the resident survey is sufficient to consider it as decisions are made related to the Nelson and District Community Recreation Campus. It does reflect the perspectives of the respondents at a point in time and may be influenced by the context described in a section 1.1 of this report.



1. The participation level in the Phase 2 resident survey exceeded the participation rates observed by the consultant in recreation surveys fielded in other communities². Attendance at the various community meetings in Phase 2 and Phase 3 was strong both indicating the importance the community holds for recreation, its spaces, and the future of the Community Recreation Campus. The **information gathered does provide important insight** into the perspectives of the residents such that, when coupled with the knowledge of the Recreation Commission, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, and the City of Nelson, decisions can be made regarding the future of the Campus.
2. Approximately half (52%) of resident survey respondents are **active members** with a recreation club or organized group. Additionally, a **majority of respondents use or have used the various spaces and amenities** on the Recreation Campus. The most frequently cited activities in which respondents participate include swimming, soccer, hockey, fitness classes / gym, dance, and yoga. While it is not known what this proportion is of the entire population, it may be assumed that the engagement facilitated through this project may have enticed active recreation participants to engage in greater proportions than that of the less active (or affiliated) members of the community.
3. Regional District and City owned facilities are the most important facilities for residents to use for their indoor recreation interests. Selkirk College and School District 8 do contribute indoor venues for activities. **The Community Recreation Campus is integral** to area residents.
4. The **understanding of recreation service delivery (particularly as it relates to taxation)** in the Nelson District **is not fully grasped by residents**. Through the engagement tactics, particularly in the community meetings, it was clear that many people were unaware of the differences in responsibilities between the City of Nelson and the RDCK. Residential taxation and its contribution to the different services was another area for which some residents required clarity.
5. **Additional funds**, beyond the current RDCK and City budgets, are **needed to fund the necessary maintenance** at the Nelson & District Community Complex (approximately \$7.8M) and the Civic Centre (\$7-9M).
6. There is **an openness, by respondents, to an increase in residential property taxes** to fund enhancements or new development on the Campus. When asked, 73-86% of respondents from Nelson, Defined Area E, and Area F would consider paying additional taxes or were unsure. Of this segment, approximately three-quarters would be willing to pay between \$25-\$99 more annually. An increase of this range would generate between \$344k to \$1.36M annually, which in turn would service a twenty-five-year loan of \$5.4M-\$21.5M (assumes a 3.75% annual rate).
7. **If funds were available, a majority of respondents supported making some improvements to the facilities and amenities** on the Recreation Campus. While approximately one-quarter (23%) of respondents from Defined Area E said available funds should be used only for maintenance at existing, considering Area F (12%) and Nelson (11%), that figure was about half. Over half from each of the three jurisdictions would like to see available funds used (in addition to maintaining) for repurposing or development new (64% from respondents from Nelson and Area F and 57% from Defined Area E respondents.) There is a desire for indoor activity space that could accommodate a wide variety of activities.
8. **A majority of respondents want the vacant lots in the Campus to be used for recreation (70-79%)**. Some of these respondents however, only want the lots to be used for recreation while others supported affordable housing and recreation. About half of respondents (49-56%) would support the development of affordable housing on the Campus' vacant lots.

2 The resident survey sample size was 2,035 with 93% coming from residents of Nelson, Defined Area E, and Area F.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

This engagement project was implemented to support the development of a vision and to identify the recreation activities that should be accommodated on the Nelson Community Recreation Campus. While the engagement results do not provide a formal vision statement, or clear activities that should be accommodated on the campus, they offer valuable insight into the community's general expectations for the Campus.

The community places a high value on indoor recreation, and they see the Campus as the integral hub for the delivery of indoor recreation in the Nelson area. Throughout history, the important role the Campus has played in recreation is a perspective held strongly with many in the community. Equally, the community values the spaces that currently facilitate various recreational activities.

There is a clear interest in maintaining the Campus' facilities. There is also an expressed interest in making improvements, however there is not a clear direction regarding what the improvements should be. Opinions varied between enhancing current spaces, repurposing them, or developing new facilities. There is, however, a common interest in more indoor multipurpose space to support a broader range of activities. All in all, this does not point to a clear direction (beyond facility maintenance), but it does indicate a need for further study related to facility need.



To define a direction for the Campus and its indoor recreation facilities, several key areas require further analysis. The following actions will help build a clearer understanding:

- Assess the capacity of existing spaces.
- Analyze space utilization to determine if usage is being maximized.
- Evaluate current allocation principles to ensure they optimize public access.
- Monitor and analyze trends in recreational activity participation to identify growth or decline.
- Review public spaces to determine if they offer broad access to a variety of activities.
- Identify additional community spaces that could be leveraged to expand access to indoor recreation.
- Evaluate current facility uses against the vision and guiding principles outlined in the latest Recreation Master Plan.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather identifies actions to gain greater insights needed in order to develop a direction and vision for the Campus. The information needed will come from an examination of existing information (e.g. booking information, group registrations); it can also be the result of discussions with key community partners including School District No. 8. Through this work, decisions can be made about a need for new facilities; whether repurposing should occur; or whether enhancements to existing are needed.

Although there was general support for a potential tax increase, the purpose of that funding, whether it be maintenance, enhancements, or new development, was not clearly defined. An asset management plan is needed for each facility on the Campus. These plans should include facility assessments, a capital schedule, and associated costs. From this, a clear prioritization of investments can be established. A related funding strategy should outline how various improvements will be financed. Community support may evolve as clarity emerges around costs and funding sources.

While an asset management plan is being drafted, information should continually be shared with the community. These conversations will serve to inform and reinforce the difficult decisions that need to be made about the recreation offered. It will also help the community understand the value their input has in planning as well as the services that are provided. This ongoing communication will “bring the community along” and will help residents understand the challenges and costs with delivering indoor recreation services.

The further work mentioned will require involvement from the Nelson & District Recreation Commission, the RDCK, and the City of Nelson. In some instances, these entities will work collaboratively; on other occasions work will be the responsibility of the individual organization. Developing a work plan and assigning responsibilities and timelines is a necessary next step. It is important to reiterate that the engagement project has not resulted in a specific infrastructure project itself. Rather the information gathered has helped provide direction for subsequent work.

