Strathcona County

Recreation and Culture Strategy Community Check-in
What We Heard Report

August 2023



rcs+

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Acknowledgments

Strathcona County is located on Treaty Six Territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region Two and Four. Strathcona County honours the First Peoples of this land. We recognize that we stand upon land that carries the footsteps of Cree, Métis, and Blackfoot amongst many other Nations, who have been here for thousands of years. Therefore, Strathcona County has an inherent responsibility to foster healthier relationships with First Peoples and further the Calls to Action as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.







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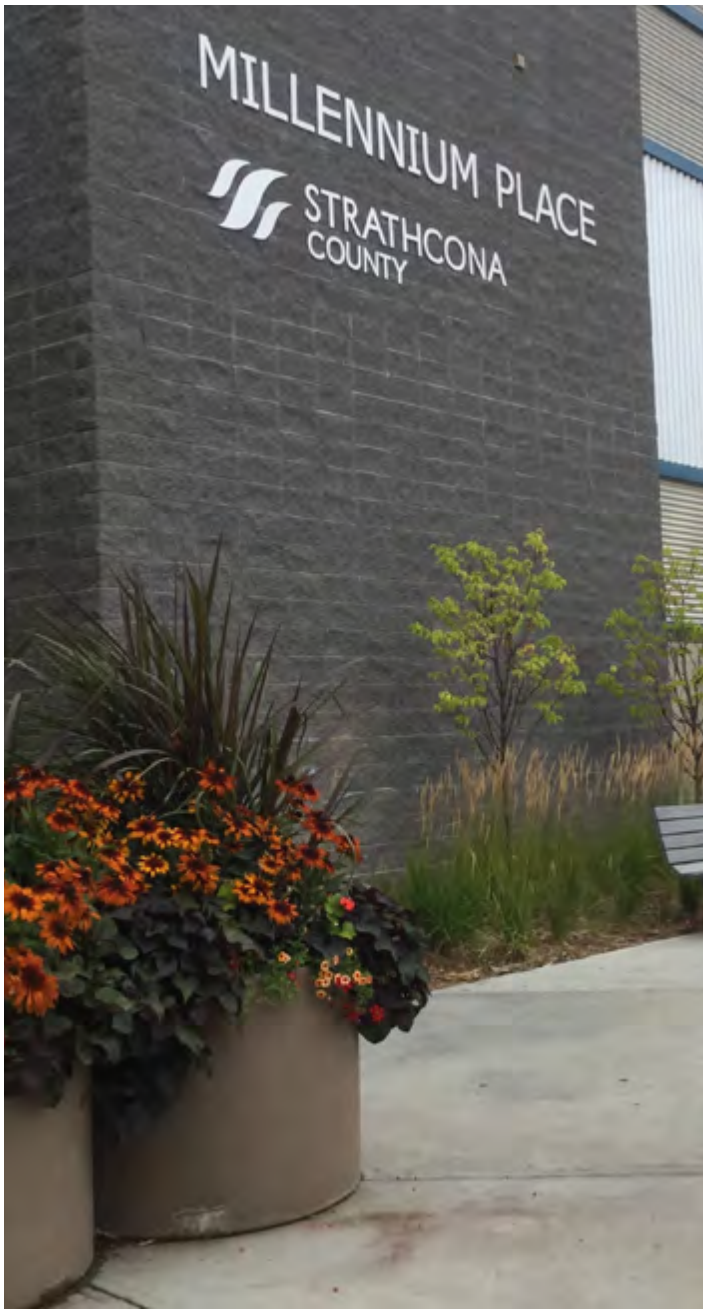
1.0 Introduction

Strathcona County's recreation and culture programs, events, and amenities are valued and important municipal services. Residents that have access to quality services are proven to be healthier, happier, and more connected to their community. Due to changes in the community, and to proactively manage these services, along with ensuring community needs continue to be met, the County is undertaking a program of community engagement. The information gathered through this process will be used to update the implementation plan from the 2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy.

A comprehensive program of engagement was implemented to gather thoughts from many perspectives in the County. The tactics utilized included a survey of residents, a survey of groups in the area associated with recreation and culture; a youth survey; and a pair of community conversations with user groups, partners, and community groups in Strathcona County. Combined, these findings represent a comprehensive perspective on the provision of recreation and culture in Strathcona County.

Tactic	Participation
Resident Survey	1,337 respondents
Group Survey	21 group responses
Youth Survey	169 respondents
Community Conversations	29 participating groups

The findings from each of the engagement tactics are presented below.



2.0 Community survey

A survey was fielded with households in Strathcona County to gather their perspectives on recreation and culture provision. The survey was open to all residents and surrounding communities. A variety of tactics were utilized to promote the survey including social media, County website, news release, newspaper advertisements, e-newsletters, and print media in County facilities. Survey respondents could enter a draw for $50 recreation gift cards. The survey was fielded from May 1, 2023 – May 22, 2023.

2.1 Survey findings

The findings are presented in the order the questions were posed in the survey. They reflect the proportion of respondents who answered the question as not all respondents answered each question. The findings were also examined by some subsegments[1]. Where appropriate and sizeable differences exist, mention is made in the report. Due to rounding, not all findings add up to 100%. Included throughout the report are quotations taken from some respondents.

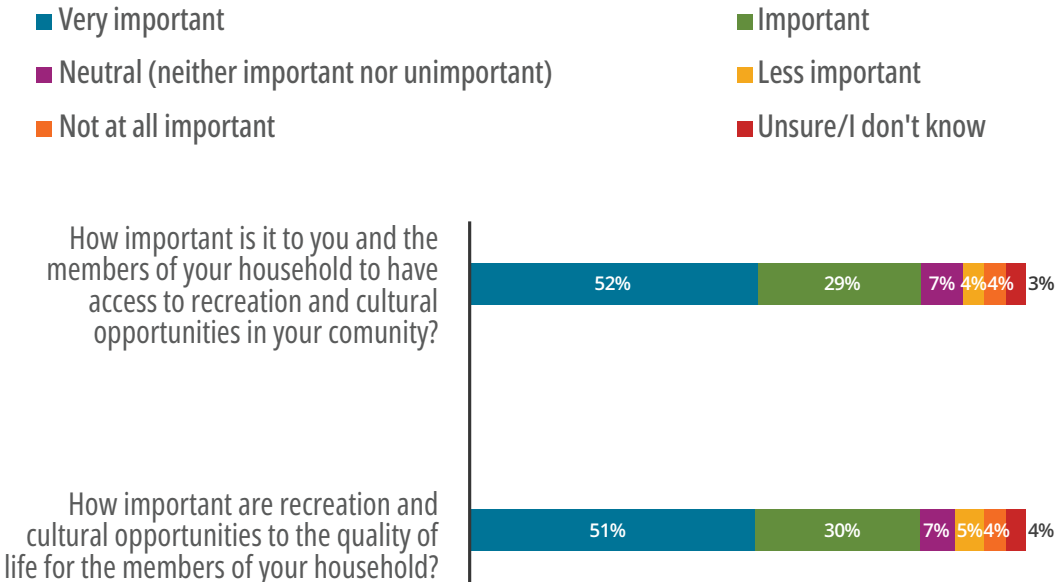


1 Subsegments examined include: those who participate in recreation and culture outside of the County vs those who do not; those with children in the home vs households without children; those who have an Active Pass vs those who do not; location of residence; and those who experience barriers vs those who do not experience barriers.

2.1.1 Values

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify how important recreation and culture opportunities are to their quality of life and how important it is that their household has access to recreation and culture opportunities. As illustrated in the graph, over three quarters of respondents (81% very important and important) believe that having access to recreation and culture opportunities in their community is important (to the quality of life of household members). Equally, over three quarters of respondents (81% very important and important), feel recreation and culture opportunities contribute to the quality of life of household members.

Graph 1: Importance of recreation and culture



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings*

Importance of recreation and cultural opportunities to households' quality of life

- *65% Very Important*
- *33% Somewhat Important*
- *2% Not Important*

Importance of recreation and cultural opportunities to the community in which you live.

- *72% Very Important*
- *26% Somewhat Important*
- *1% Not Important*
- *1% Unsure*

*Note: the response options in the 2019 survey were: very important, somewhat important, not important, unsure.

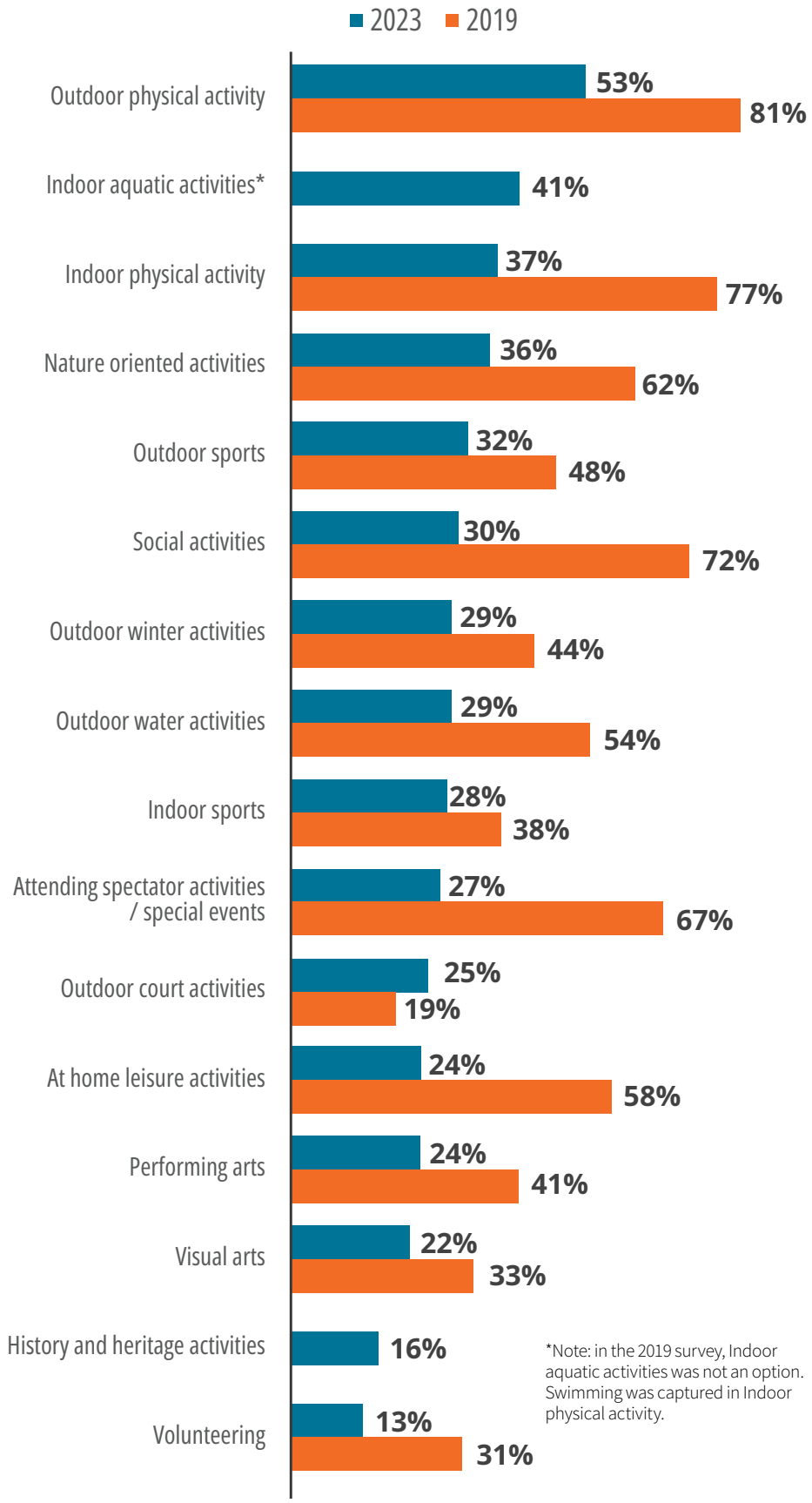
2.1.2 Current participation

Next, respondents were asked to identify five favourite types of recreation and culture activities of household members. Over half of respondents (51%) said that outdoor physical activity is their favorite recreation activity. This includes activities such as walking, running, cycling, and gardening. Notably, over one third of respondents identified indoor aquatic activities (41%), indoor physical activities – workouts / yoga (37%), and nature-oriented activities – fishing, bird watching (36%) as favourite activities of household members. Refer to the graph for additional findings. Please note that the question answers were not identical to the 2019 findings, therefore there is no data for indoor aquatic activities and history and heritage activities.

Subsegment analysis

- Those who participate in recreation and culture activities outside of Strathcona County are more likely to identify outdoor physical activity (62%) as a favourite activity than those who do not participate outside of the County (44%).
- Those who participate in recreation activities outside of the County are less likely to identify volunteering as a favourite activity (6%) compared to those who don't participate in activities outside the County (23%).
- Households with children are more likely to say participation in outdoor water activities (45%) is a favourite activity than households without children (22%).
- Households with children are more likely to say that participation in outdoor sports (42%) is a favourite activity than households without children (28%).
- Those who have an Active Pass are more likely to say participation in indoor physical activities is a favourite activity (49%) than those who do not have an Active Pass (28%).
- Those who do not have an Active Pass are more likely to say participation in at home leisure (30%) is a favourite activity than those who have an Active Pass (16%).

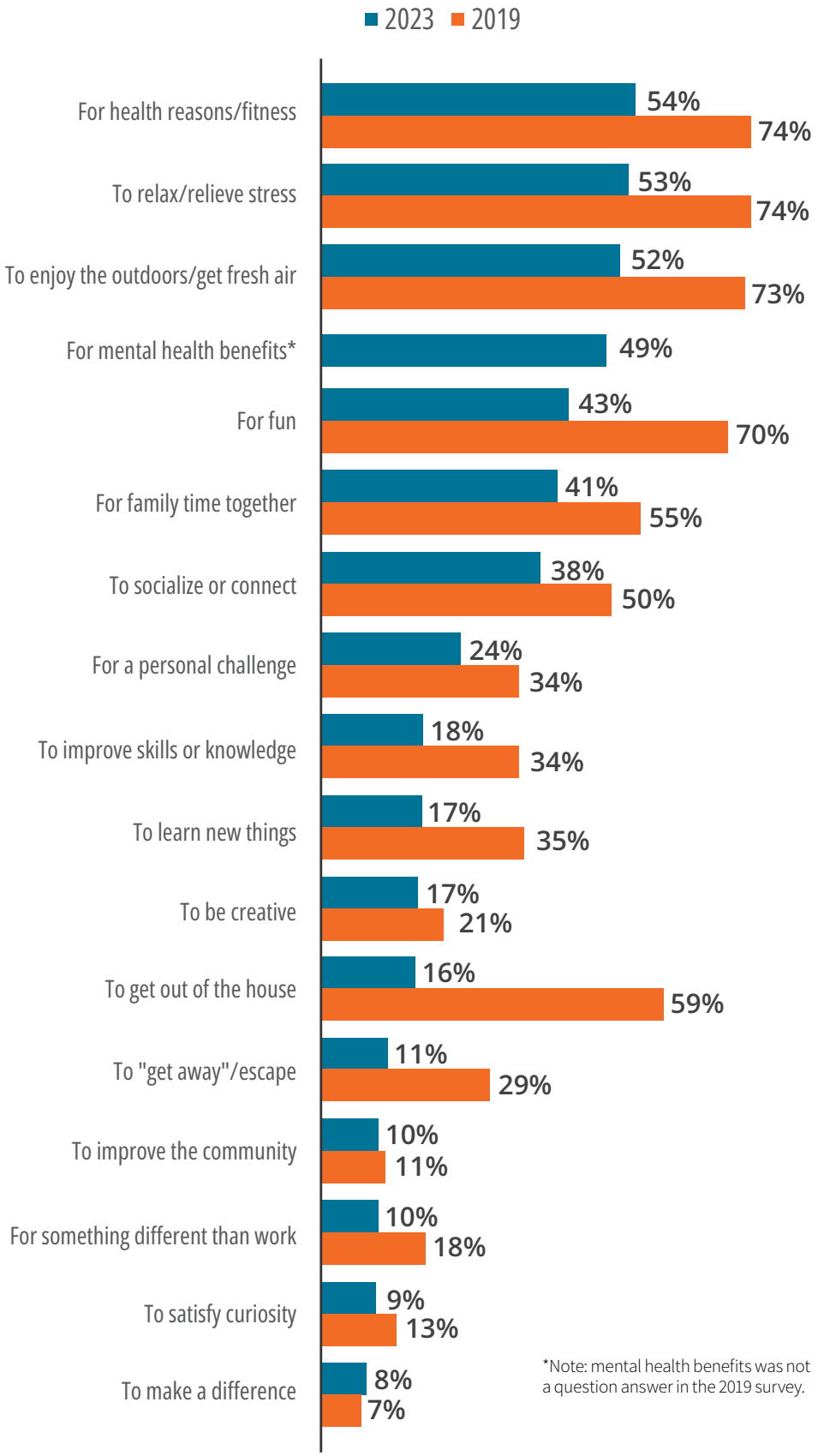
Graph 2: Favourite recreation and cultural activities



*Note: in the 2019 survey, Indoor aquatic activities was not an option. Swimming was captured in Indoor physical activity.

Respondents were then asked to identify the main reasons members of their households participate in recreation activities. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, over half of respondents participate for health and fitness reasons (54%), to relax and relieve stress (53%), and to enjoy the outdoors and get fresh air (52%).

Graph 3: Main reasons to participate in recreation and culture activities



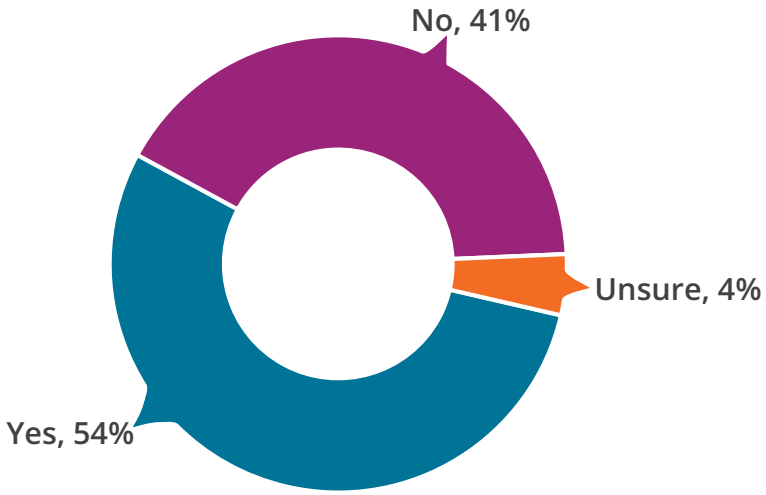
*Note: mental health benefits was not a question answer in the 2019 survey.

Next, respondents were asked if anything prevents household members from participating in recreation and culture activities to the degree that they would like. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately half of respondents (54%) said that they experience barriers that prevent them from participating in recreation and culture activities. Notably, over one third (41%) of respondents said nothing prevents them from participating.

Subsegment analysis

- Those who live in a rural area within Strathcona County that is not within a subdivision are more likely to say they experience something that prevents them from participating (85%) than those who live in Sherwood Park (48%).

Graph 4: Does anything prevent household members from participating in recreation and culture activities?



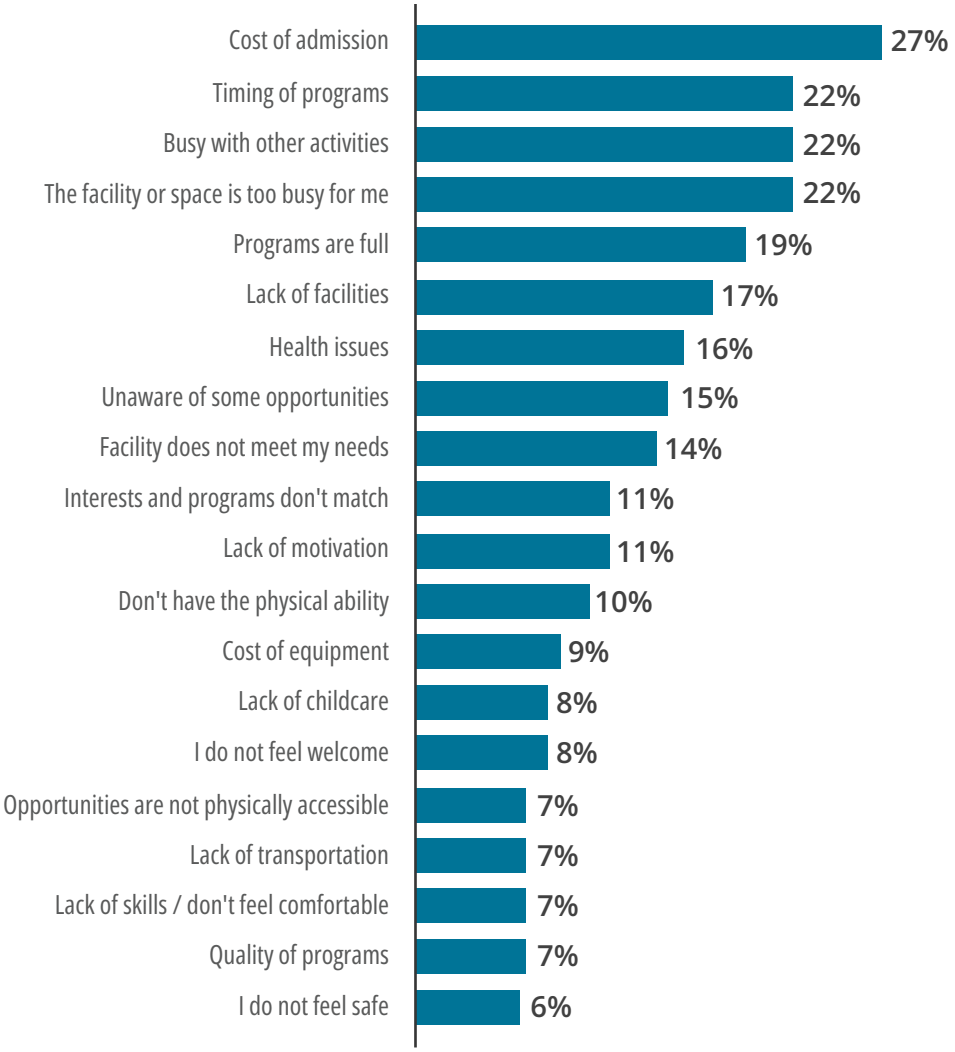
2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Households that are experiencing barriers to participation

- *35% Yes*
- *61% No*
- *4% Unsure*

Those who said they experience barriers when trying to participate in recreation and culture activities and those who were unsure were asked to identify what prevents them from participating. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately one quarter (27%) of respondents identified cost of admission, timing of programs (22%), busy with other activities (22%), and the facility being too busy (22%) prevents households from participating in recreation and culture activities.

Graph 5: What prevents or limits the participation of household members in recreation and culture activities?



Subsegment analysis

- Those who use facilities outside of Strathcona County are more likely to say the lack of facilities (25%) prevents their participation than those who do not use facilities outside of the County.
- Households with children are more likely to say that the timing of programs (29%) prevents their participation than households with no children (19%).

2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Main barriers limiting participation in recreation and culture activities

- *46% cost of admission*
- *41% busy with other activities*
- *36% timing of programs*
- *29% overcrowded facilities*

"It is difficult for us as seniors to find programs and register for programs. There needs to be a one stop shop for all County programs on the website."

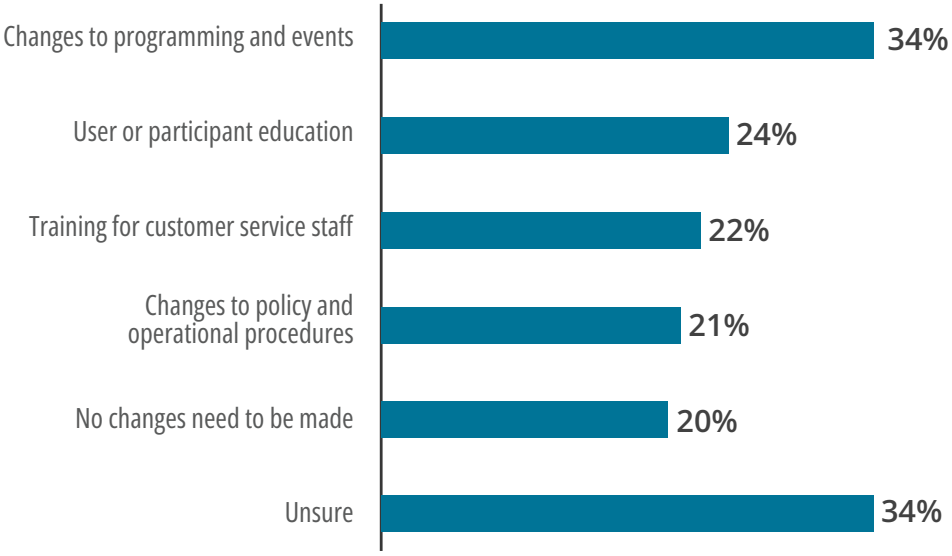
Respondents were then asked to identify how the County can make their places and spaces more welcoming and inclusive. Approximately one third (34%) of respondents said that changes to programs and events will make places and spaces more welcoming. An equal proportion (34%) were unsure. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Subsegment analysis

- Those who live in rural areas in Strathcona County (78%), and those who live in a rural subdivision (41%) are more likely to say that changes to policy and operational procedures (47%) is a way to make places and spaces more welcoming than those who live in Sherwood Park (11%).
- Households without children in the home are more likely to say that user participation education (29%) is a way to make places and spaces in Strathcona County more welcoming than households with children (14%).

“Sherwood Park residents can’t access programs like swimming because the spots fill up within minutes of registration opening.”

Graph 6: How to make places and spaces more welcoming





Broadmoor Lake Park, Kinsmen Leisure Centre and Sherwood Park Arena/Sports Centre - Canada Day Festival

When asked about the impact of the pandemic on their households' interest and participation in recreation and culture activities, approximately one quarter (26%) of respondents said the pandemic did affect their households' participation, while approximately three quarters (72%) of respondents said the pandemic did not affect their participation. Refer to the graph.

Those who said the pandemic affected their interest or those who were unsure were asked to share why their interests have changed. A number of reasons were provided, including:

- Continued anxiety around large crowds and getting sick (40 comments).
- Increased participation in outdoor recreation (20 comments).
- Program times have changed or have become unavailable (17 comments).
- Investment in at-home equipment (17 comments).

Some other reasons include, worried about committing to a membership, have interests in new activities that do not include recreation and, culture and prices to participate have increased.

Graph 7: Did the pandemic affect your households' interest in participating in recreation and culture activities?

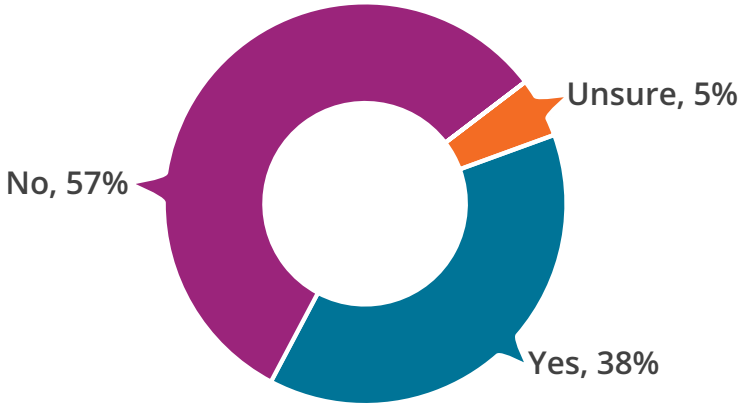


"Our family has become more interested in outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and camping due to facility closures during the pandemic. We do, however enjoy visiting the museums and theatres in the winter months."

Between Strathcona County and other community organizations, there are financial assistance programs to assist community members who cannot afford to participate in recreation and culture activities. When asked about their awareness of these financial assistance programs, over half (57%) of respondents said they are unaware of financial assistance for recreation and culture programs. Over one third (38%) said they are aware.

"We know there are programs available to help with recreation costs. However, my family makes too much money to qualify but with cost of living we are struggling."

Graph 8: Awareness of recreation and culture financial assistance programs offered by Strathcona County or other organizations in the community



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Are you aware of any financial assistance programs offered by Strathcona County or other organizations?

- *25% Yes*
- *69% No*
- *6% Unsure*

2.1.3 Overall satisfaction

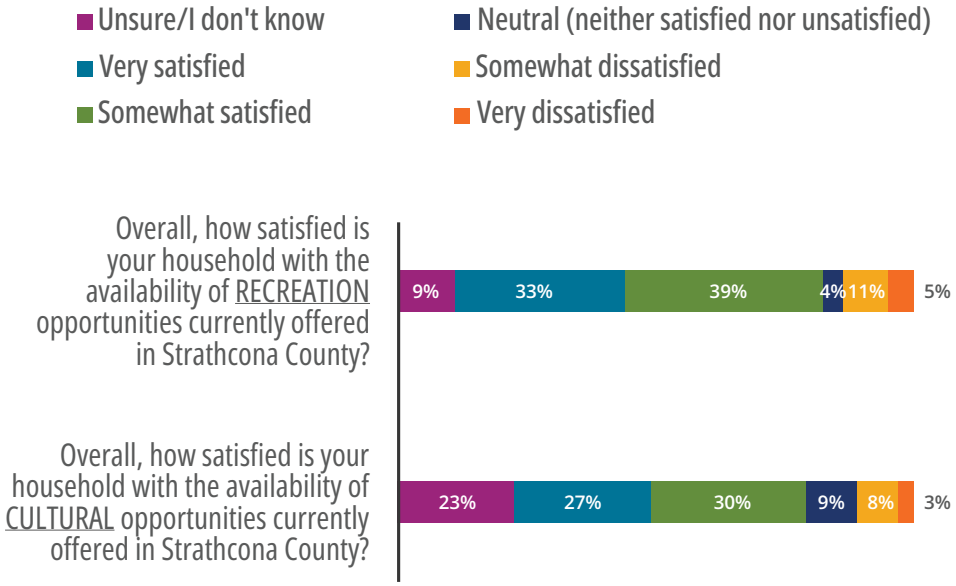
Respondents were asked to identify their overall satisfaction with the availability of recreation and culture opportunities. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately three quarters (72%) of respondents are satisfied (very satisfied and somewhat satisfied) with the availability of recreation opportunities in Strathcona County. Regarding satisfaction with culture opportunities, approximately half (57%) said they were satisfied (very satisfied and somewhat satisfied) with 9% unsure.

Subsegment analysis

- Those **who experience barriers** accessing recreation and culture programs are more likely to say that they are dissatisfied (somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied) with the availability of cultural opportunities (22%) than those **who do not experience barriers** (3%).
- Those **who experience barriers** accessing recreation and culture programs are more likely to say that they are dissatisfied (somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied) with the availability of recreation opportunities (17%) than those **who do not experience barriers** (4%).

"I am proud of the recreational and cultural opportunities available in the County, even if I do not utilize most of them."

Graph 9: Overall satisfaction with the availability of recreation and culture opportunities



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Satisfaction with the availability of recreation opportunities currently offered in the County

- *3% Don't know*
- *1% Very dissatisfied*
- *3% Somewhat dissatisfied*
- *39% Somewhat satisfied*
- *54% Very satisfied*

Satisfaction with the Availability of Cultural Opportunities Currently Offered in the County

- *12% Don't know*
- *38% Very satisfied*
- *45% Somewhat satisfied*
- *4% Somewhat dissatisfied*
- *0% Very dissatisfied*

2.1.4 Future planning and priorities

To assist with facility planning, respondents were asked to identify indoor and outdoor recreation and culture facility and amenity priorities.

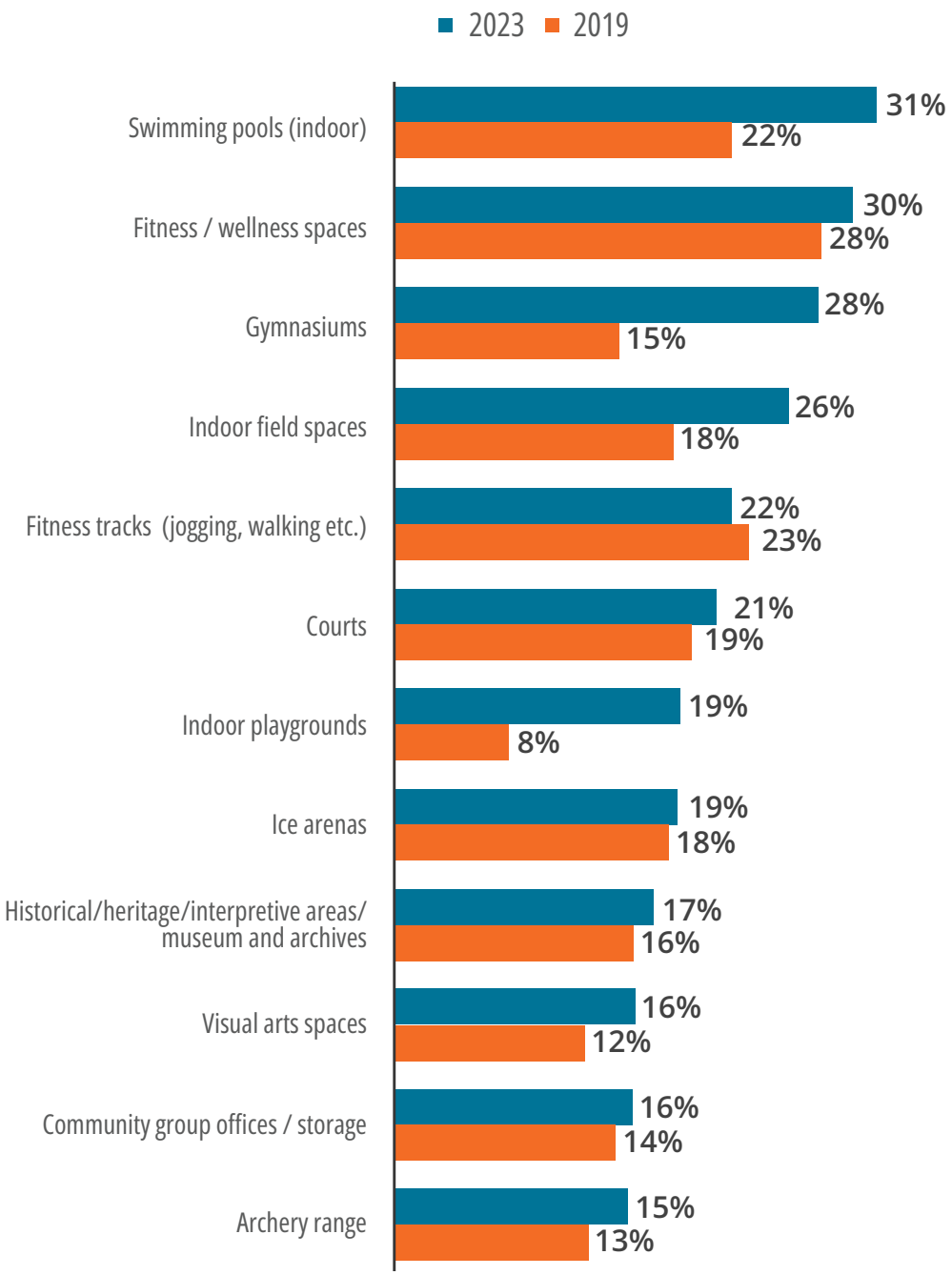
First, respondents were asked to identify five **indoor** recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County. When answering this question, respondents were reminded that there are costs to building and operating recreation and culture facilities and amenities.

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately one third of respondents identified swimming pools (31%), fitness and wellness spaces (30%), and gymnasiums (28%) as a facility or amenity that should be more readily available or enhanced. Notably, seven percent said that no enhancements or additions are needed.

Respondents were able to share additional spaces not included on the list provided. Those spaces include pickleball courts, seniors facility, climbing walls, gymnastics facilities, indoor dog park, and an indoor community greenhouse.

Indoor

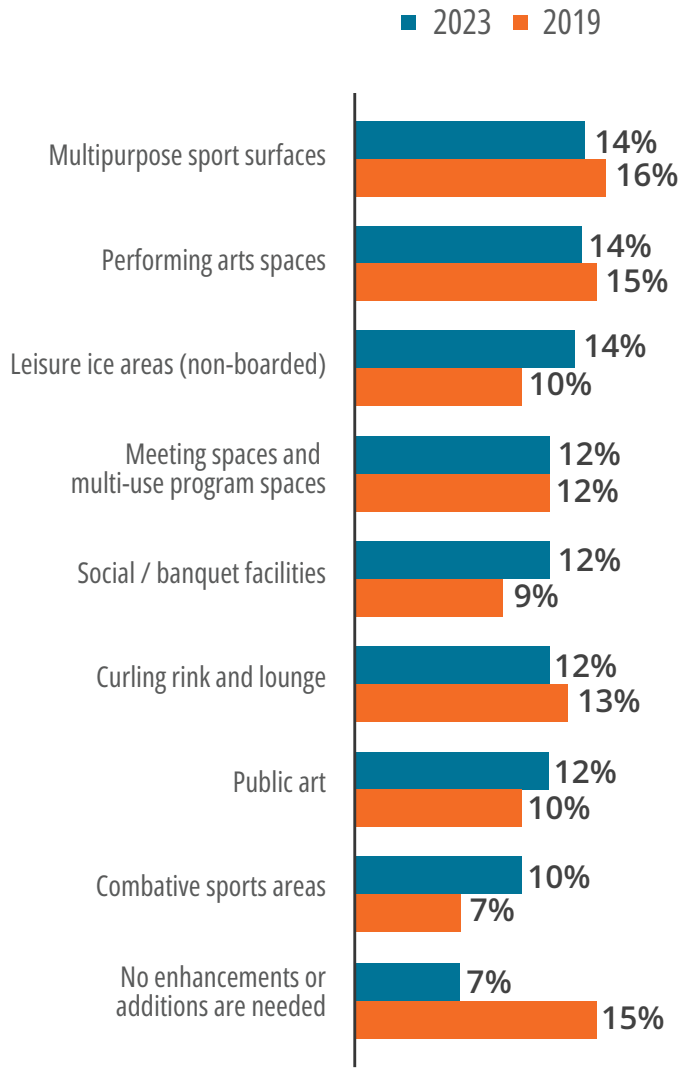
Graph 10: Recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County



Subsegment analysis

- Households with children are more likely to say that **indoor** field space is needed in the County (40%) than households without children (19%).
- Households with children are more likely to say that **indoor** playgrounds (32%) are needed than households without children (16%).
- Households with children are more likely to say that **indoor** swimming pools are needed (42%) than households without children (26%).

Graph 10: continued

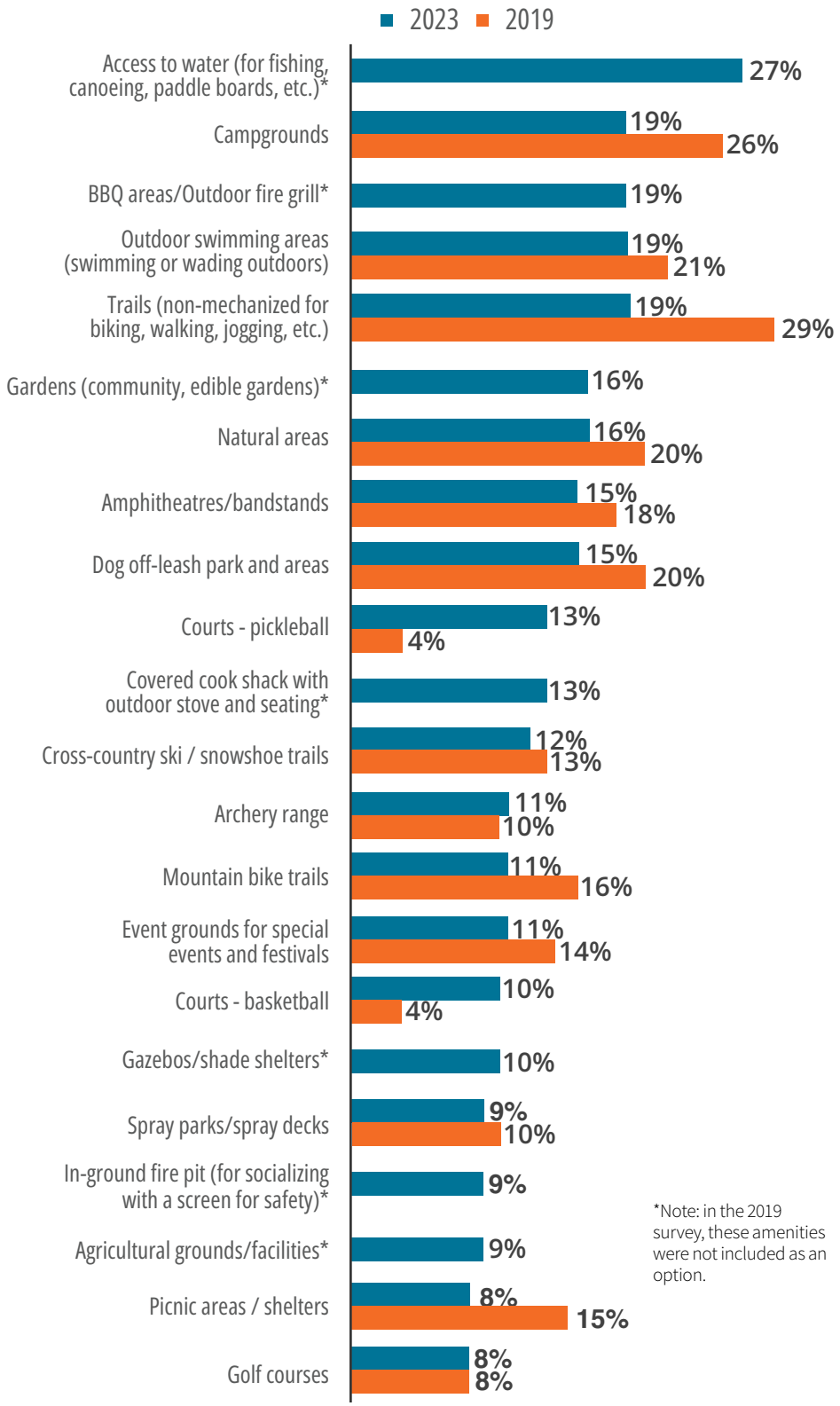


Regarding **outdoor** recreation and culture amenities and facilities, respondents were asked to identify five that should be more readily available or enhanced. Approximately one quarter (27%) identified access to water as an amenity that should be more readily available or enhanced. Approximately one fifth, identified campgrounds (19%), BBQ areas / outdoor fire grills (19%), outdoor swimming areas (19%), and non-motorized trails (19%) as amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced. Refer to the graph for additional findings. Note: BBQ areas/ outdoor fire grill, gardens, covered cook shack with outdoor stove and seating, gazebos/shade shelters, in-ground fire pits, agricultural facilities, space for indigenous or cultural ceremonies, and viewing and lookout decks were not included in the 2019 survey.

"It would be great to have community gardens part of the parks that are located in each neighbourhood. This would be a great way to meet our neighbours."

Outdoor

Graph 11: Recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County

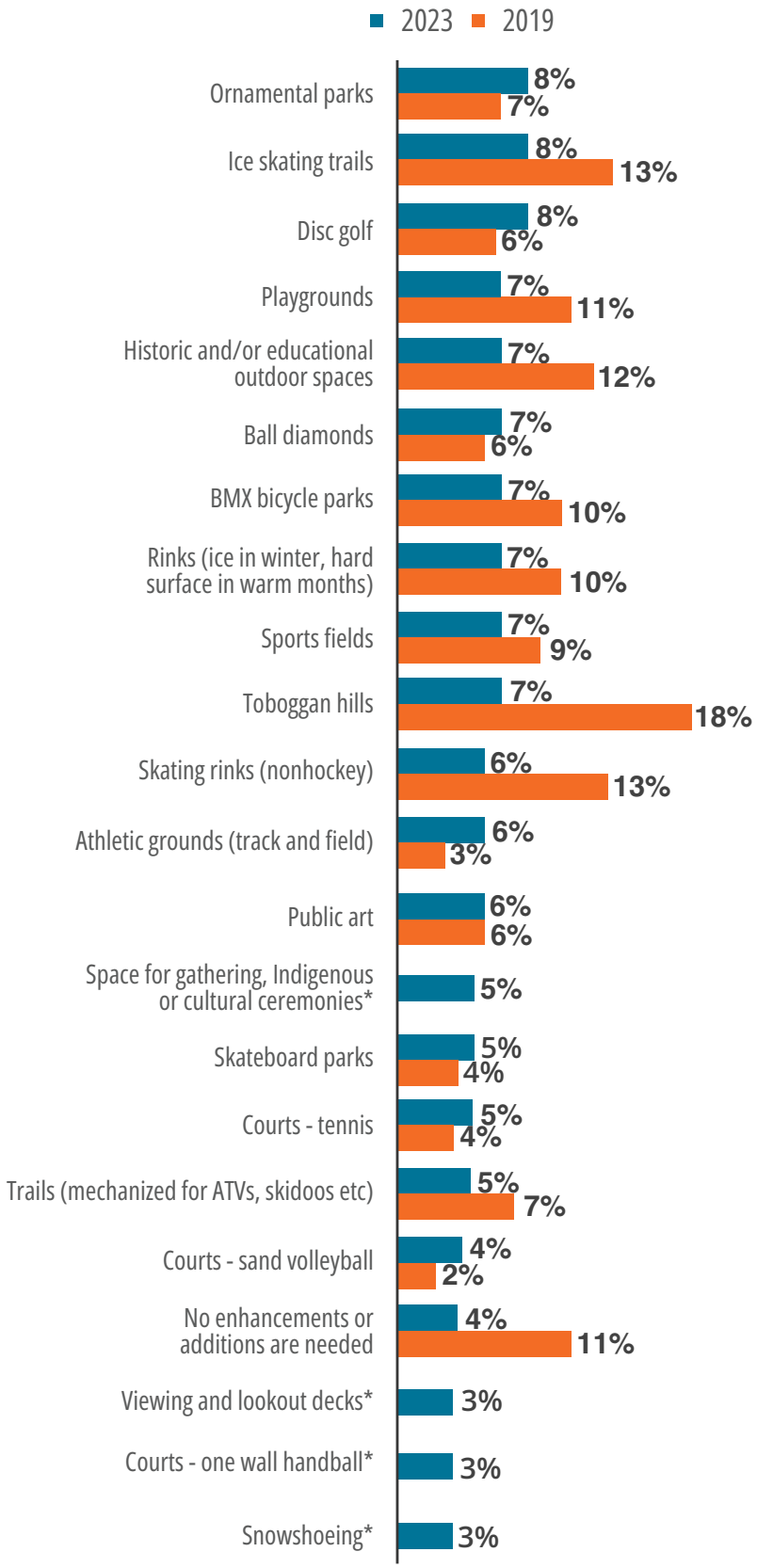


*Note: in the 2019 survey, these amenities were not included as an option.

A number of additional outdoor amenities and facilities were mentioned. Clearly marked trails, equestrian facilities, shaded areas, rugby/soccer/football fields, and a turf field were mentioned as additional facilities and amenities residents would like to see enhanced or more readily available in the County.

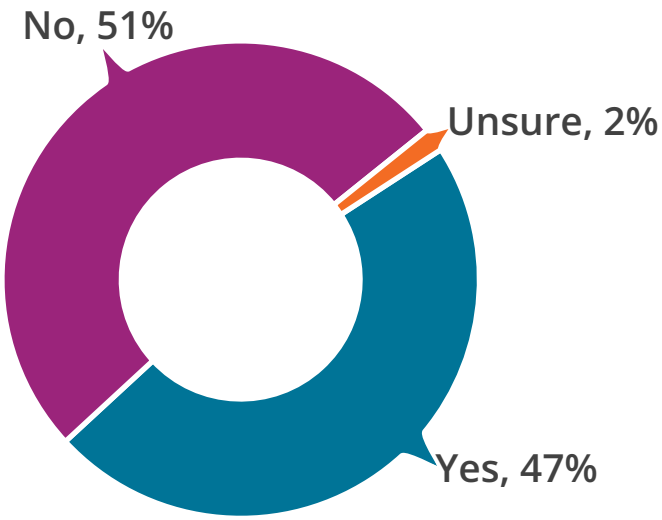
“It would be great to have more placemaking incorporated into our communities. Being able to learn about our history and heritage throughout the community will enhance the experience along the trails in the County.”

Graph 11: continued



Respondents were then asked if household members use any recreation or culture facilities outside of the County. Approximately half of respondents (51%) said they do not use facilities outside of the County, while 47% said they do use facilities outside of the County. Refer to the graph.

Graph 12: Do Household members use any recreation or culture facilities outside of Strathcona County?



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Do recreation / culture facilities outside of Strathcona County?

- *61% Yes*
- *36% No*
- *3% Unsure*



Those who said household members use recreation and culture facilities outside of Strathcona County were asked to explain why. The most frequent responses can be seen below:

- There is a lack of facility availability (34 comments)
- There is no indoor soccer facility in the County (25 comments)
- More program options outside of the County (20 comments)

Additionally, a lack of a seniors centre, lack of ice time, indoor baseball training facilities, river access and increased availability of arts / music programming were also mentioned.

Subsegment analysis

- Those who do not experience barriers accessing recreation and culture programs are more likely to use facilities outside (55%) of Strathcona County than those who do experience barriers (39%).

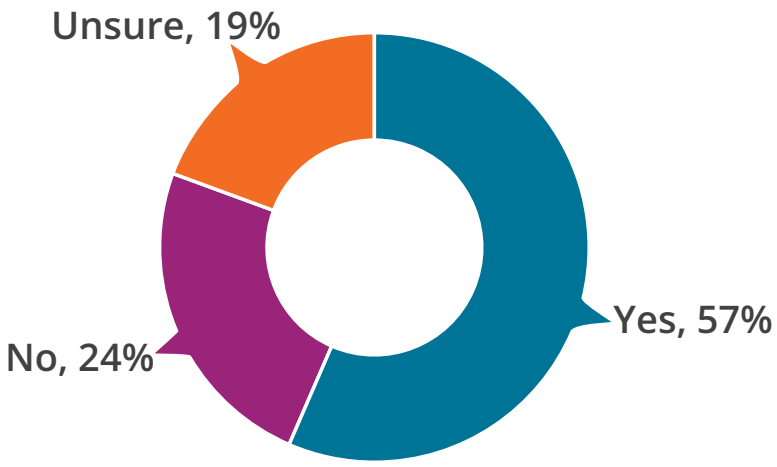
“Some family members may simply enjoy exploring different facilities and trying out new programs or activities, regardless of their location.”



2.1.5 Willingness to pay

Recreation and culture opportunities are provided through several means that have cost implications to users. Respondents were asked a series of questions related to the funding of these opportunities. To begin, respondents were asked to indicate if they would be willing to pay additional property taxes if the money was used to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities that they would utilize in Strathcona County. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, over half of respondents (57%) said they would support paying additional property taxes, while approximately one quarter (24%) would not support paying additional property taxes.

Graph 13: Support to pay additional property taxes to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities that your household would utilize



Subsegment analysis

- Those who use facilities outside of Strathcona County are more likely to be willing to pay additional property taxes (52%) than those who do not use facilities outside of Strathcona County (22%)
- Those who have an Active Pass are more likely to support a tax increase (70%) than those who do not have an Active Pass (51%).

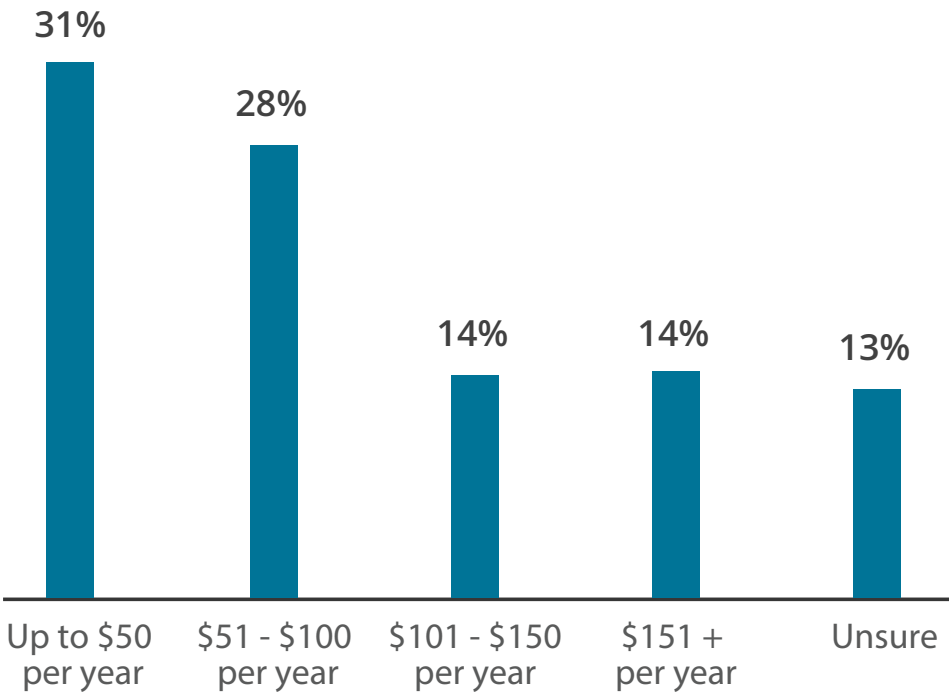
2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Would your household be willing to pay additional property taxes to support enhancements to recreation and cultural opportunities?

- *27% Yes*
- *38% No*
- *35% Unsure*

Those who said they are willing (or may be willing) to pay additional property taxes were then asked to identify how much more they would be willing to pay in annual property taxes to support the enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities. Approximately one third (31%) would support an increase of only $50 per year. Refer to the graph.

Graph 14: How much more would your household be willing to pay in annual property taxes to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Additional amount of annual property taxes

- *37% Up to $50 per year*
- *43% between $51-$100 per year*
- *9% between $101-$150 per year*
- *11% over $151 per year*

Subsegment analysis

An analysis of respondents who said they are willing to pay additional taxes to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities was completed. This analysis compared the outdoor and indoor amenities and facilities respondents selected as their preferences for enhancement or more available in the County. The findings are presented below by the amount of additional taxes respondents are willing to pay.

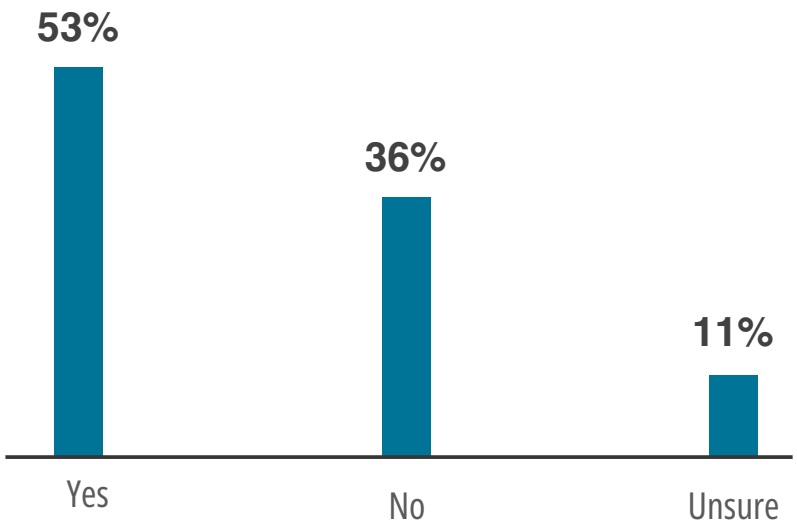
Outdoor Amenities and Facilities	Up to $50	$51-100 per year	$100 +
Access to water	28%	29%	19%
Outdoor swimming areas	18%	20%	19%
Courts – basketball	8%	7%	18%
BBQ areas and outdoor fire grills	22%	17%	17%
Campgrounds	18%	21%	17%
Archery range	11%	10%	15%
Covered cook shack with outdoor stove and seating	13%	13%	15%
Agricultural grounds and facilities	6%	8%	13%
Amphitheatre's grounds and bandstands	16%	14%	13%
Dog off leash park and area	19%	16%	13%
Trails (non-mechanized)	16%	23%	13%
Gardens	18%	18%	11%

Indoor Amenities and Facilities	Up to $50	$51-100 per year	$100 +
Indoor field spaces	23%	26%	37%
Indoor playgrounds	19%	25%	31%
Gymnasiums	31%	25%	30%
Swimming pools	32%	34%	30%
Fitness and wellness spaces	32%	31%	29%
Fitness tracks	24%	22%	20%

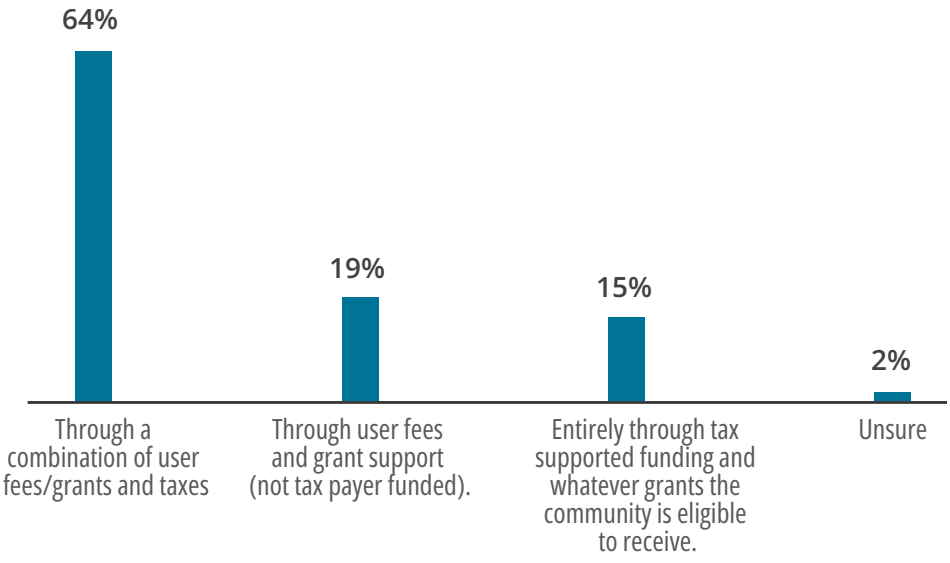
Regarding user fees, respondents were asked to identify if they were willing to pay increased user fees to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities in Strathcona County. Over half (53%) said they are willing to pay increased user fees to support enhancements while approximately one third does not support an increase in user fees to support enhancements. Refer to the graph.

All respondents were then asked to identify how they think public recreation and culture opportunities should be funded. Approximately two thirds (64%) of respondents said that recreation and culture opportunities should be funded through a combination of user fees, grant support, and tax supported funding. Refer to the graph.

Graph 15: Willingness to pay increased user fees to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities



Graph 16: How should public recreation and culture opportunities be funded?



2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy findings

Willingness to pay increased user fees to support enhancements to recreation and culture opportunities

- 54% Yes
- *30% No*
- *16% Unsure*

2.1.6 Final comments

Finally, respondents were able to share any other thought they had regarding the provision of recreation and culture in Strathcona County.

Comments related to facilities in the County:

- County facilities are well maintained and staff are pleasant. (43 comments)
- There is a need for a seniors centre. (22 comments)
- The facilities in the County are too busy. (20 comments)
- Operating hours in the recreation facilities should be extended to provide more programs. (16 comments)
- There is demand for an indoor field facility in the county. (15 comments)
- The potential increase of taxes in the County is worrisome. (12 comments)

Comments related to programming :

- The County should invest in a new online registration system to be more user friendly. (21 comments)
- When registering for programs, there are calls for County residents to have access before surrounding communities. (16 comments)
- There is demand for more youth, teen, and family recreation programming. (14 comments)
- There were calls for the County to expand their efforts regarding cultural programs. Specific mention of public art, cultural education, local performing arts classes, and more use of Festival Place. (13 comments)

“Thank you for the diverse recreation and culture options available in the County. We enjoy the availability of arts and culture activities such as the library, the gallery, and the Smeltzer House. The outdoor skating trails and bike trails are also great ways to explore the neighbourhoods. I do wish there was more access for those with mobility impairments.”



2.1.7 Respondent profile

Respondents were asked several questions about their household. Percentages in parenthesis are representative of the 2021 Census. The responses are presented in the following table.

Area of Residence	
Neighbourhood in Sherwood Park	65%
Rural hamlet in Strathcona County (Antler Lake, Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove, Half Moon Lake, Hastings Lake, Josephburg, North Cooking Lake, and South Cooking Lake)	11%
Rural subdivision in Strathcona County	15%
Rural area in Strathcona County that is not within a subdivision	8%
Outside of Strathcona County	1%
Prefer not to answer	1%

Household Composition (by age)	
Household composition by age	Household composition*
0 – 4 yrs	5% (5%)
5 - 9 yrs	6% (6%)
10 – 14 yrs	10% (7%)
15 – 24 yrs	9% (12%)
25 – 34 yrs	25% (11%)
35 – 44 yrs	12% (13%)
45 - 54 yrs	10% (14%)
55 - 64 yrs	9% (15%)
65 - 74 yrs	9% (11%)
75 - 84 yrs	3% (5%)
85 yrs and older	<1% (2%)
Prefer not to answer	1%

*Note: Household composition percentage on the left are the survey responses. Percentages on the right in parenthesis are representative of the 2021 Census.

Household Characteristics	
I or someone in my household identify as Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nations, Metis, or Inuk (Inuit)	25%
I or someone in my household identify as a visible minority	24%
I or someone in my household identify as LGBTQ2S+	23%
I or someone in my household has a disability	30%
I or someone in my household have moved to Canada in the last 5 years	17%
None of the above applies to myself or the members of my household	46%
I prefer not to answer	7%

Household Income (before 2022)	
Lower than $30,000	2%
$30,000 to $49,999	7%
$50,000 to $69,999	8%
$70,000 to $89,999	9%
$90,000 to $109,999	9%
$110,000 to $129,999	9%
$130,000 to $149,999	10%
$150,000 to $169,999	9%
$170,000 and over	17%
I prefer not to answer/I don't know	20%

3.0 Group survey

A survey was fielded with a variety of organizations in Strathcona County including indoor and outdoor recreation and culture groups who use facilities and amenities to deliver their programs. Groups and organizations who may use recreation and culture spaces were also included.

Strathcona County's community liaisons connected with groups in the community and encouraged participation in the survey. Groups were also encouraged to sign up for the e-newsletter to stay informed about future engagement opportunities, along with the status of the project.

Responses were gathered from May 1, 2023 – May 22, 2023. In total, 20 responses were received. Refer to Appendix A to see the list of participating organizations. These findings are not representative of all groups in Strathcona County, however they do provide insight into the perspectives of the organizations responding. Direct quotations from some respondents are included throughout the presentation of findings.



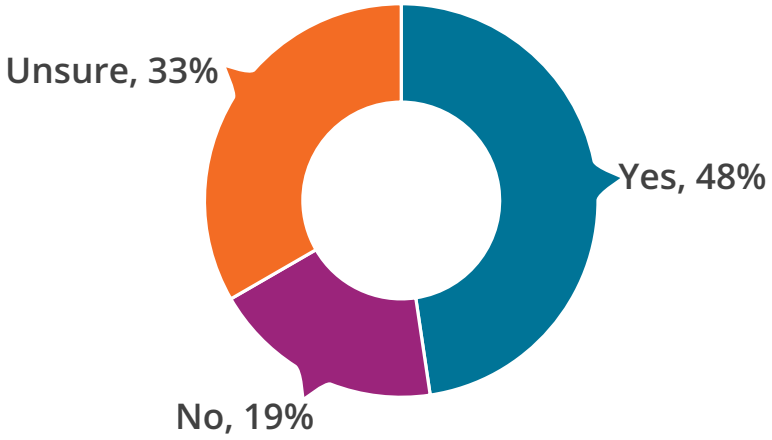
3.1 Survey findings

To begin, groups were asked if they participated in the Recreation and Culture Strategy Engagement in 2018/2019. Approximately half of respondents (48%) did participate in the 2018/2019 engagement process, while approximately one quarter (19%) did not participate and one third were unsure (33%). Refer to the graph.

3.1.1 About your organization

Next, respondents were asked information about their organizations. Survey respondents represent a variety of organizations and facility users including ice users, field users, art groups, social agencies, and others who provide a diverse range of activities and programs to the County.

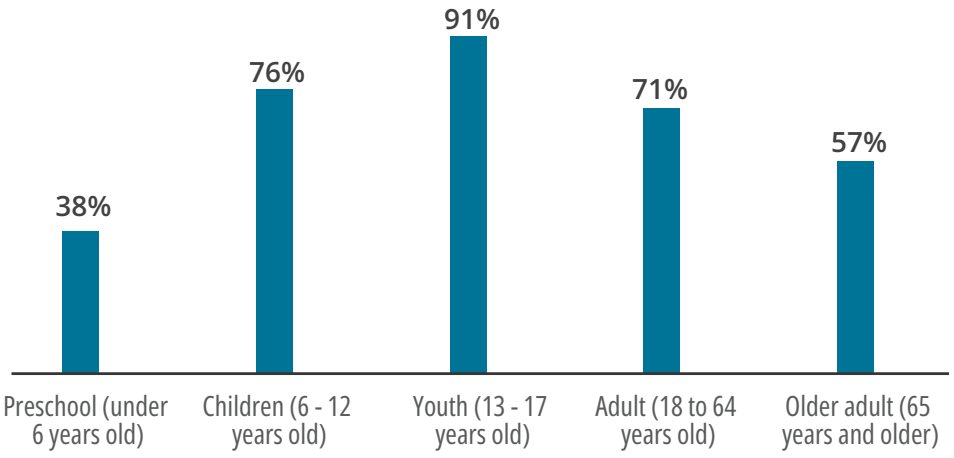
Graph 17: Did your group participate in the recreation and culture strategy engagement in 2018/2019?



3.1.2 About your participants and the activities you provide

Respondents were asked to identify which age group(s) best describe their primary participants or members. As illustrated in the graph, groups provide programs and services to a variety of ages with almost all groups (91% or 19 of the 21 respondents) serving youth aged 13-17 years old. Approximately three quarters of respondents serve children aged 6-12 years old (76%) and adults aged 18 to 64 years (71%).

Graph 18: Primary participant age

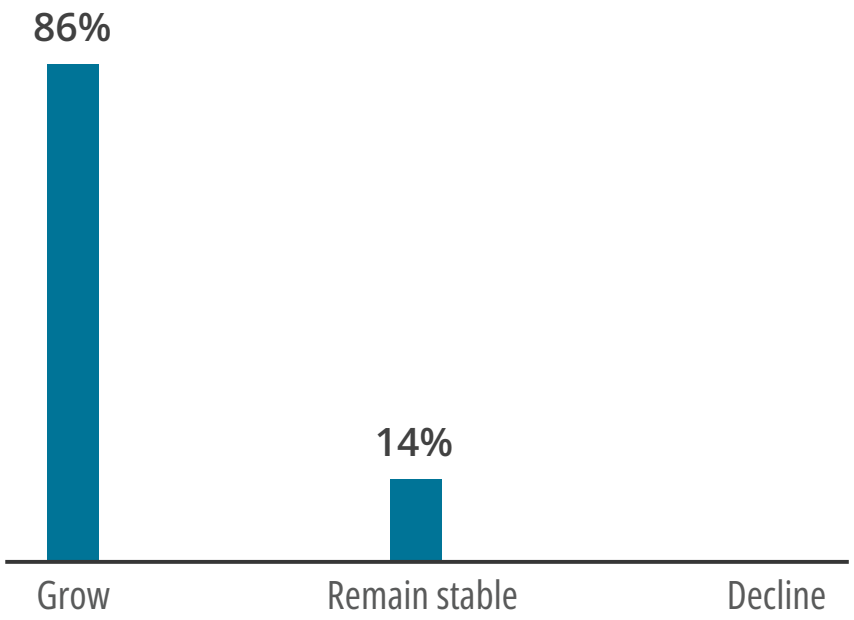


When asked to identify their expectation for participation over the next few years, almost all respondents (86% or 18 out of 21) said they expect their participation numbers to grow. Notably, no groups expect a decrease in participation. Refer to the graph.

Respondents were able to explain their answer to the previous question. The most frequent responses are below.

- The limited facility space is a barrier for groups that are growing.
- There is interest in hosting tournaments and events in the County.
- Low registration fees enable more participation and lessen the barrier of cost to participate.
- There has been an increase in registration due to Olympic and Professional athlete attention.

Graph 19: Expectations for participant / member numbers over the next five years



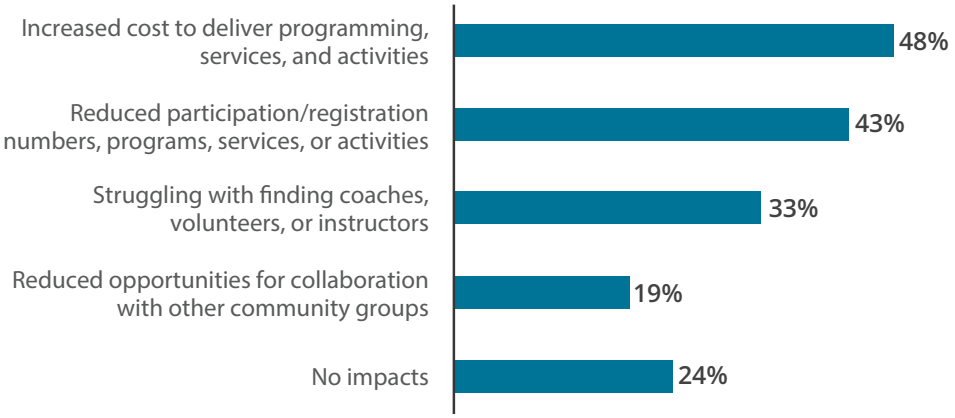
"We are organizing several large cultural events in Strathcona County in order to build a following and membership."



Photo from *www.strathcona.ca/*

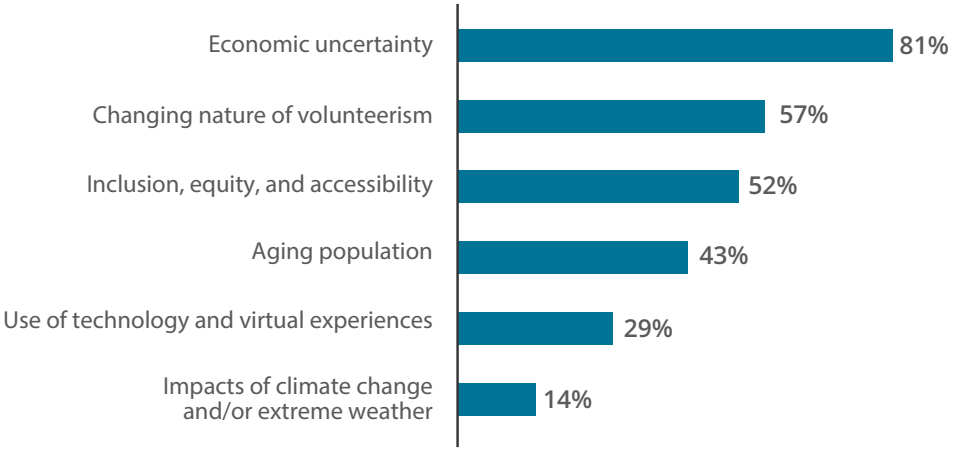
Respondents were next asked to indicate the long-term impacts COVID-19 will have on their organizations. Approximately half of respondents said that increased cost to deliver programming, services, and activities (48%) and reduced participation / registration numbers, programs, services, or activities (43%) will have the biggest impact on their organization. Refer to the graph.

Graph 20: What (if any) long term impacts COVID-19 will have on your organization



Next, respondents were asked to identify any broader community trends that may impact their organization over the next five years. Almost all respondents said that economic uncertainty (81% or 17 of 21 respondents) will impact their organization. Notably, over half of respondents said that the changing nature of volunteerism (57%) and inclusion, equity, and accessibility (52%) will impact their organization.

Graph 21: Broader community trends that will impact your organization over the next 5 years



"We hope that we are being inclusive and providing an opportunity for all. We know minor sports are expensive but have some strategies in place to help those that want to access our programming."

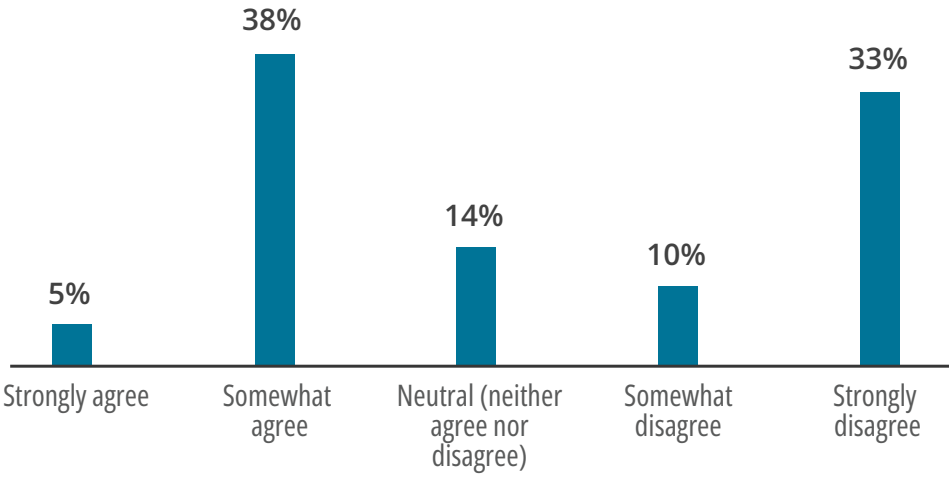
3.1.3 Current facilities and spaces

Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with the following statement: "The current Strathcona County recreation, parks, and culture facilities and spaces meet the needs of our organization". As illustrated in the accompanying graph, less than half (43%) of respondents agree (strongly and somewhat agree) that the current facilities meet their needs. The same proportion strongly or somewhat disagree. Notably, approximately one third of respondents strongly disagree that the current facilities and spaces meet their needs.

Respondents were asked to explain their answer. Responses can been seen below:

- Current facilities are in good condition and meet the needs of users.
- The allocation process is not fair to all groups.
- Accessing facilities at a reasonable time can be challenging due to limited hours.
- There is a worry that groups will start to out grow spaces in the community.
- Upgrades to some amenities are needed to enable tournament hosting.

Graph 22: Level of agreement with "the current Strathcona County recreation, parks, and culture facilities and spaces meet the needs of our organization"

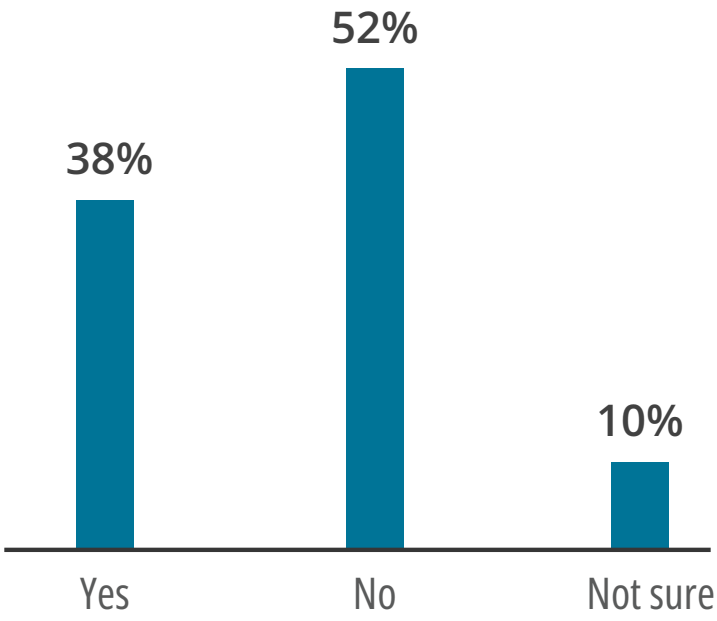


"The current facilities themselves meet or exceed the needs to provide our programming. There is worry, however that there will be a shortfall of space in the coming years."

Illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately one third (38%) of respondent groups use space outside of the County for their programming. About half of respondents (52%) do not use any spaces or facilities outside of Strathcona County regularly to deliver their activities or programs.

When asked why they use spaces outside Strathcona County, a number of reasons were provided including: difficulty getting enough time in facilities in Strathcona County; and facility cost, convenience, and the ability of the facility to accommodate all participants and their equipment.

Graph 23: Does your organization use spaces or facilities outside of Strathcona County as regular part of your activities / programs?

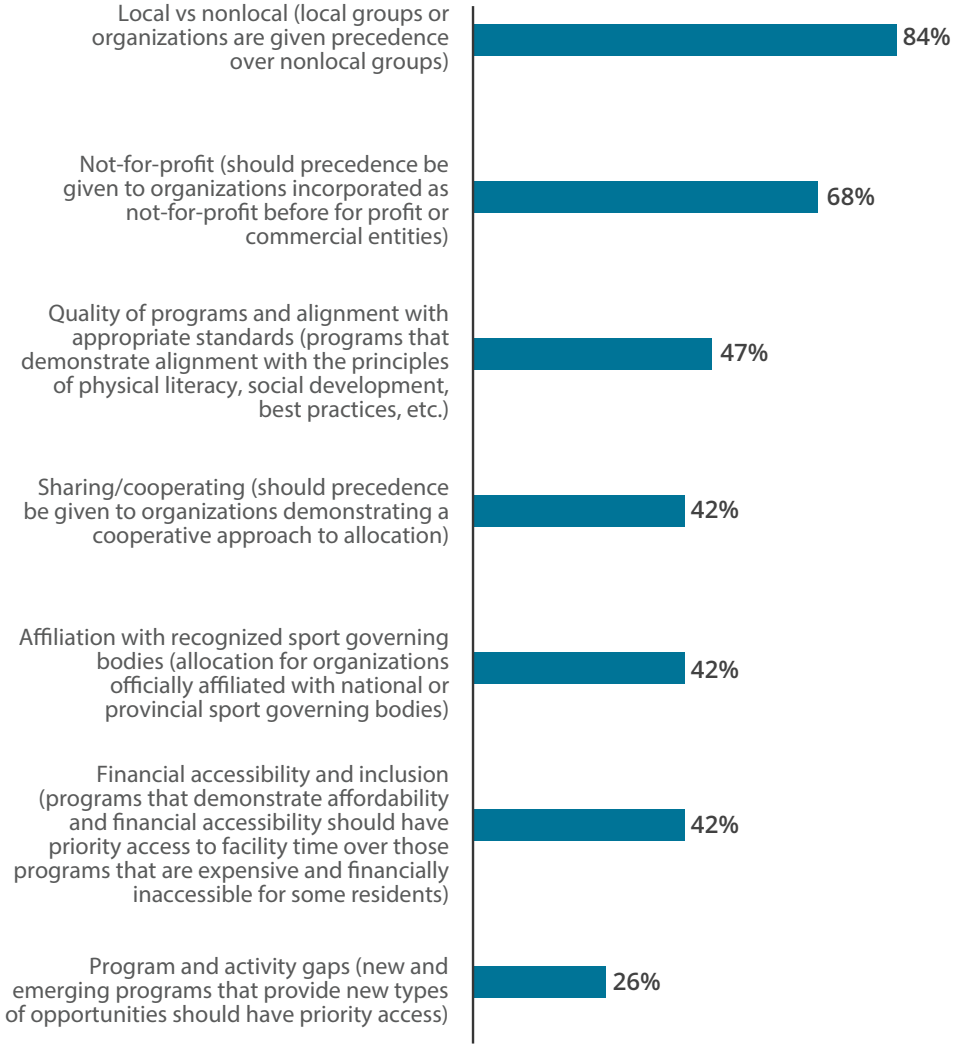


“We regularly use facilities outside the County because there just isn’t enough facility time available to us.”

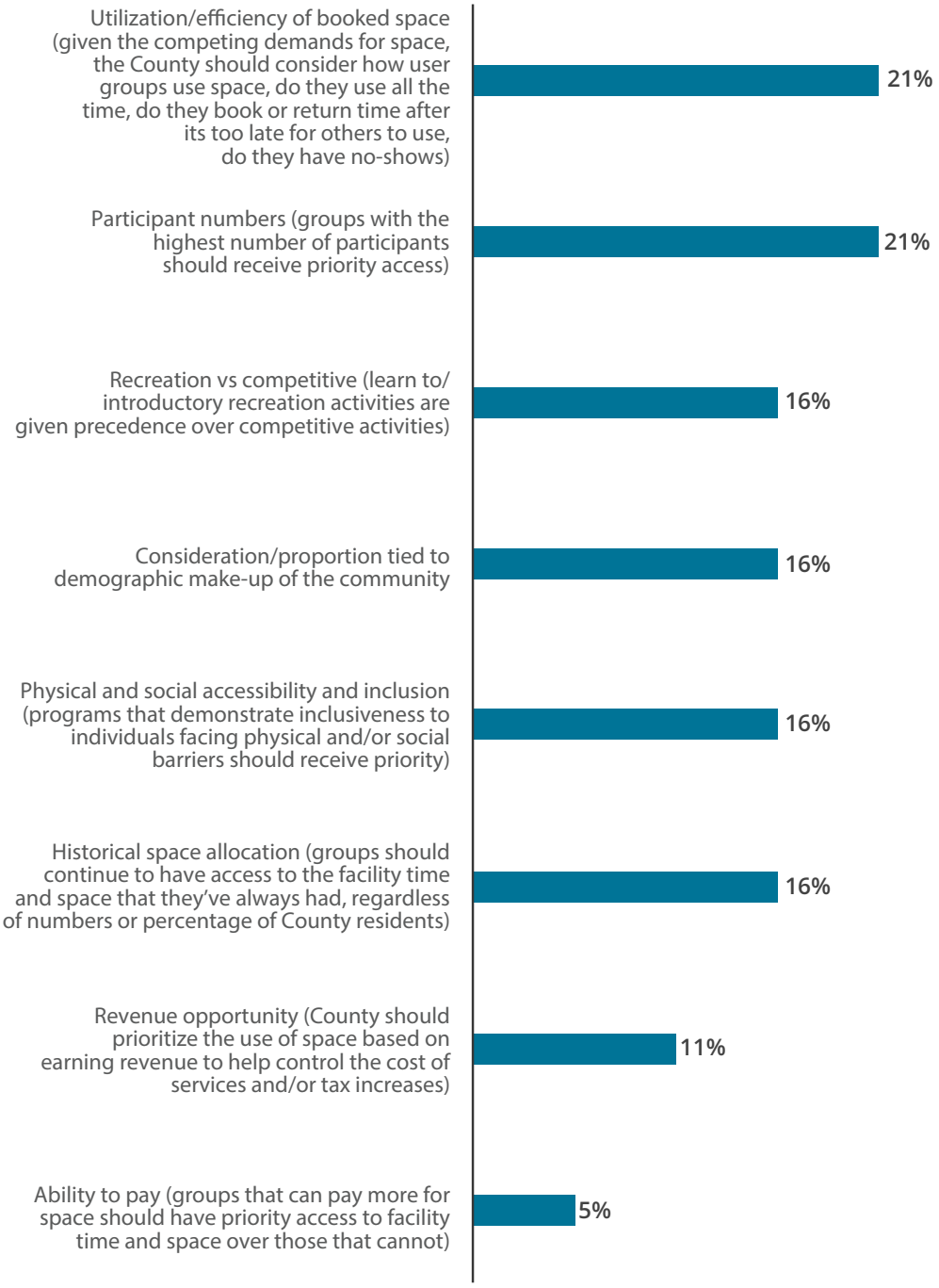
When considering how a municipality makes decisions about allocating time in its facilities and amenities, it must consider a variety of factors. Respondents were asked to select their top five criteria (from a list) that the County could use to prioritize allocations in their facilities.

As illustrated in the graph, almost all respondents identified that local groups should be given precedence over nonlocal groups (84% or 16 of 19). Approximately two thirds (68%) of respondents said that not-for-profit groups should be given precedence over commercial entities. Notably, only one respondent (5%) said facility time should be determined by a group's ability to pay. Refer to the graphs for additional findings.

Graph 24: Facility allocation criteria (part 1)



Graph 25: Facility allocation criteria (part 2)



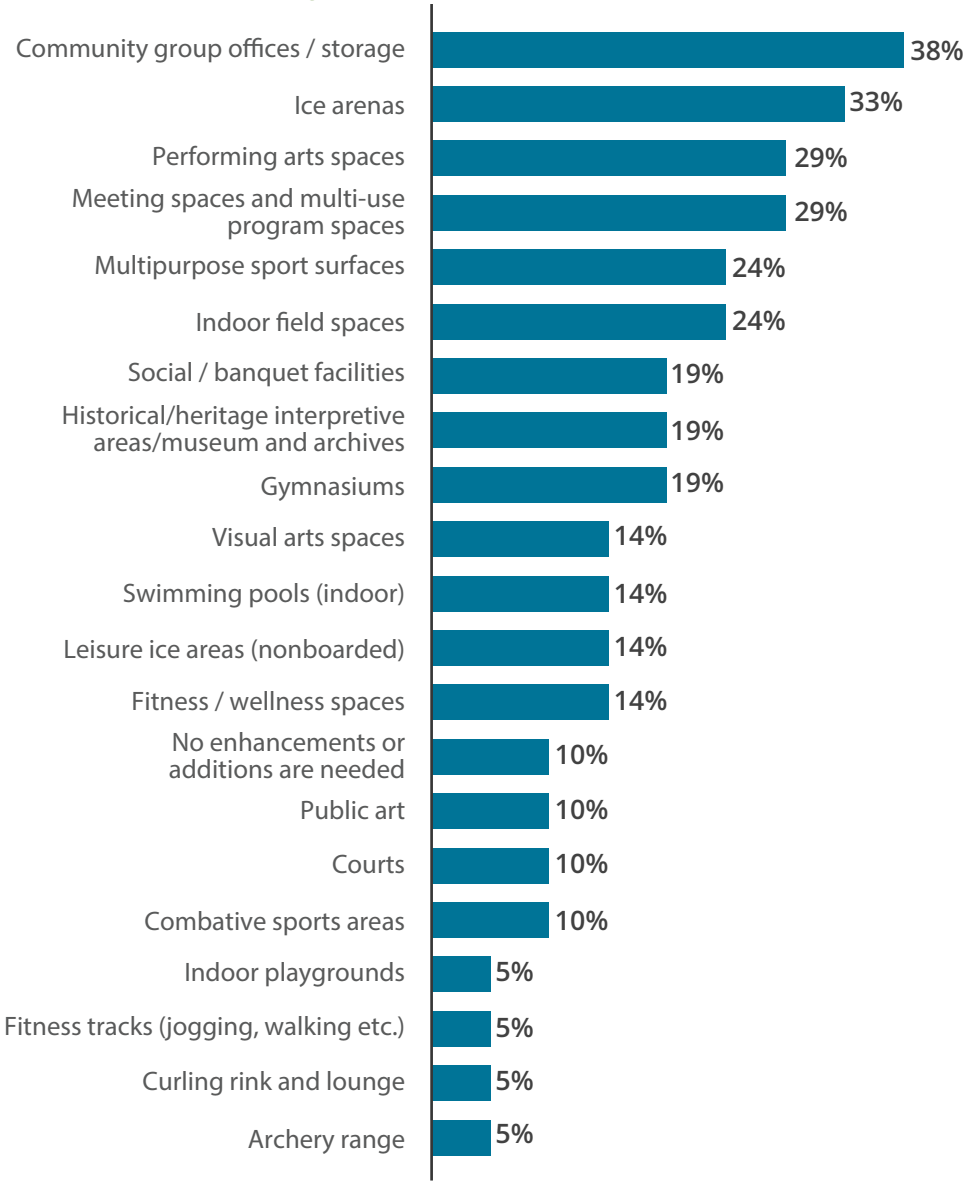
3.1.4 Places and spaces

Respondents were then asked to identify indoor recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County. Respondents were provided with a list of different facilities and amenities and were asked to select up to five that should be more readily available or enhanced. They were asked to identify their top five indoor spaces and amenities and then their top outdoor spaces and amenities.

As it relates to indoor spaces and amenities, approximately one third of respondents identified community group offices / storage (38%) and ice arenas (33%) as amenities that need to be more readily available or enhanced. Performing arts spaces, meeting spaces and multipurpose program spaces, and multi-use sport surfaces were also mentioned within the top five. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Indoor

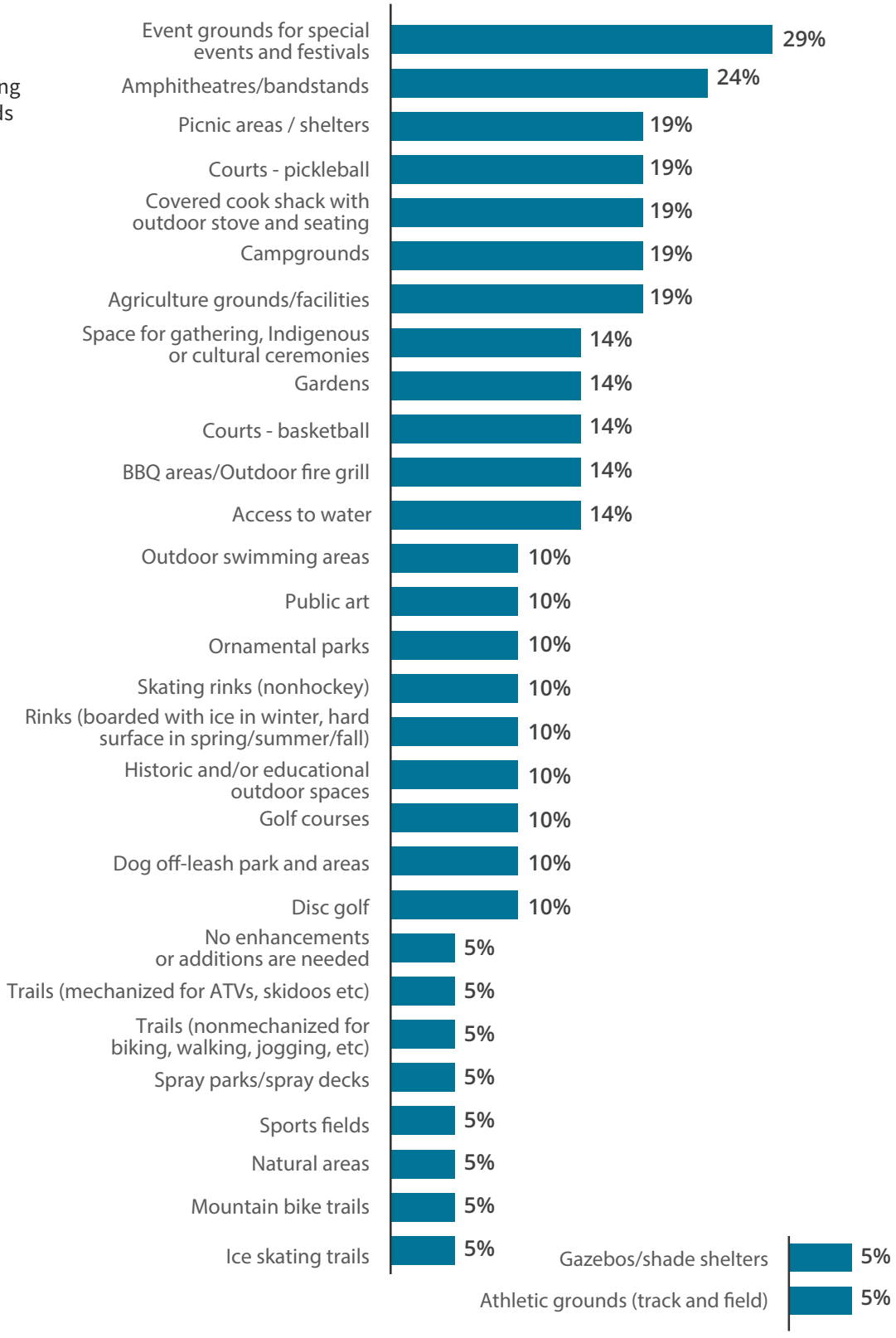
Graph 26: Recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County



Regarding outdoor recreation and culture facilities, approximately one third of respondents identified event grounds for special events and festivals (29%) as needing to be more readily available or enhanced. Approximately one quarter of respondents identified amphitheaters and bandstands (24%), picnic areas and shelters (19%), pickleball courts (19%), covered cooking shack with seating (19%), campgrounds (19%), and agriculture facilities (19%), as also needing to be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County.

Outdoor

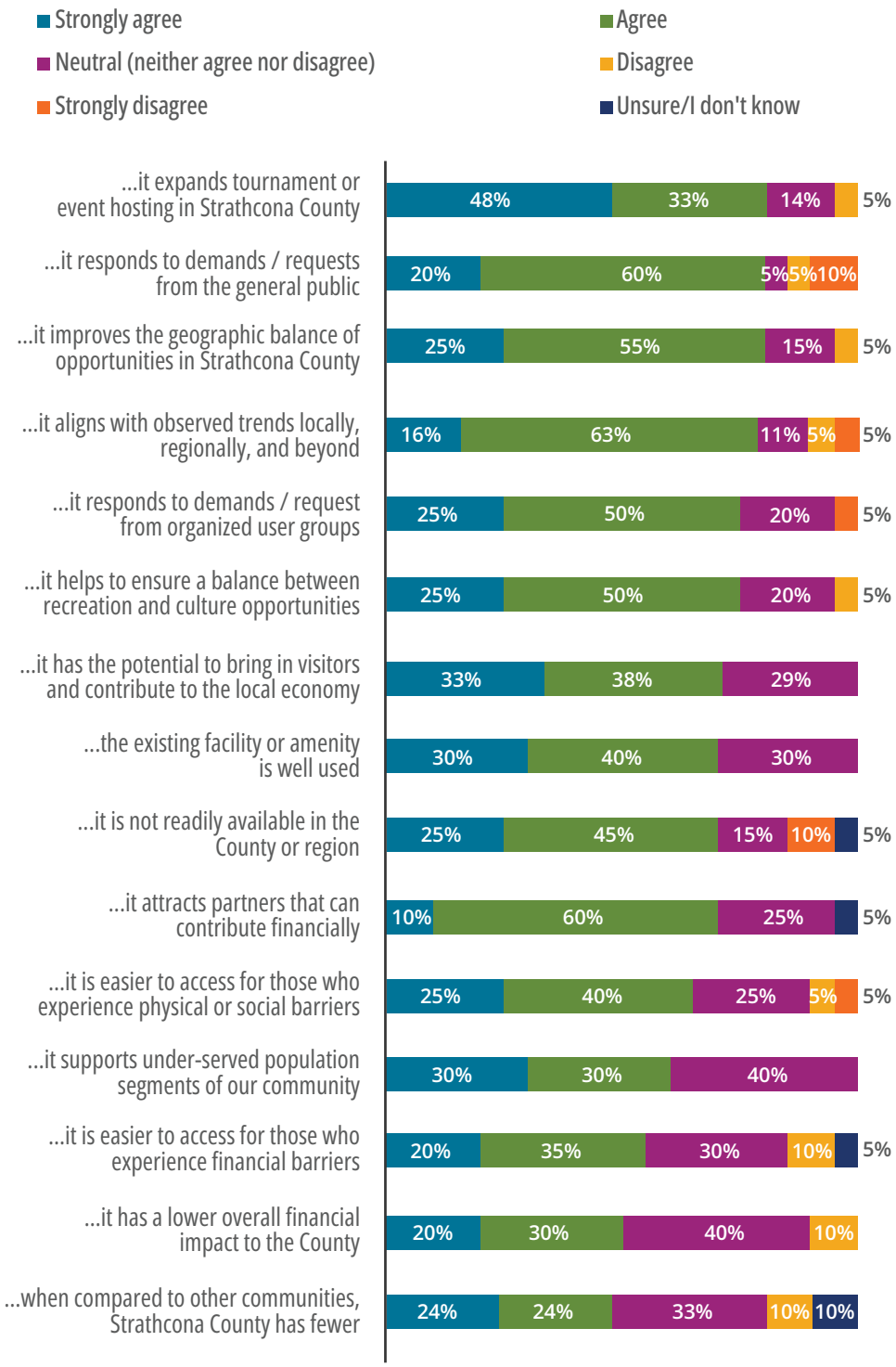
Graph 27: Recreation and culture facilities and amenities that should be more readily available or enhanced in Strathcona County



When considering public investment in recreation and culture amenities and facilities, there are limited resources available. Due to this, priorities must be determined. Respondents were provided with a list of factors the County could use to prioritize investment in recreation and culture in Strathcona County. For each factor they were asked to identify their level of agreement with each.

Respondents agree (strongly agree and agree) that expanding tournament or event hosting in Strathcona County (81%), ensuring a balance between recreation and culture opportunities (80%), and aligning with current local and regional trends (79%) are criteria that should be considered when the County makes decisions about facilities, spaces, and amenities for activities. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

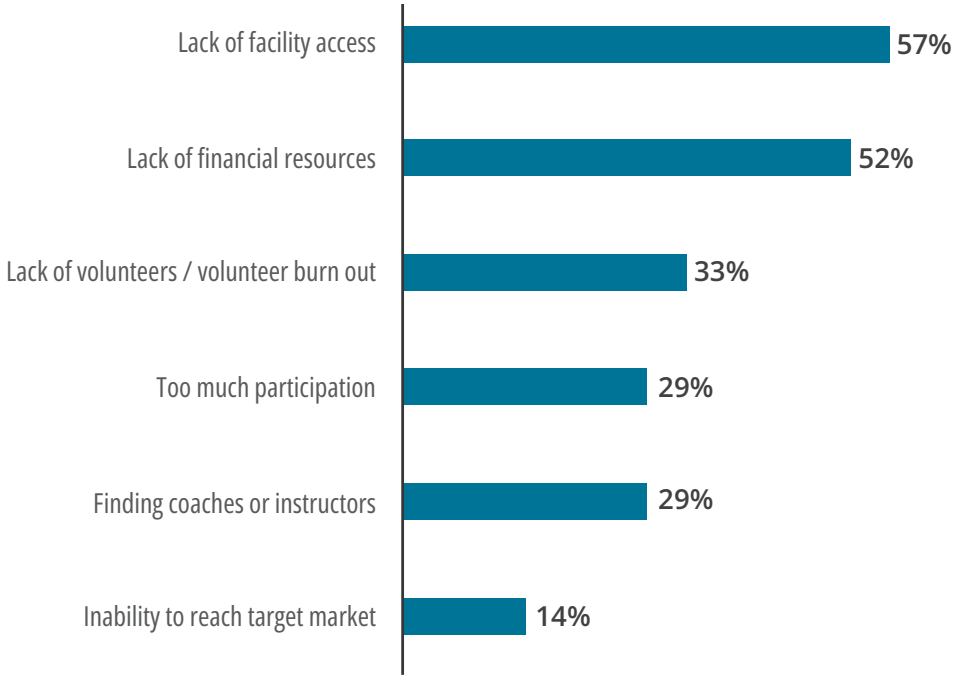
Graph 28: Prioritization criteria



3.1.5 Challenges and county support

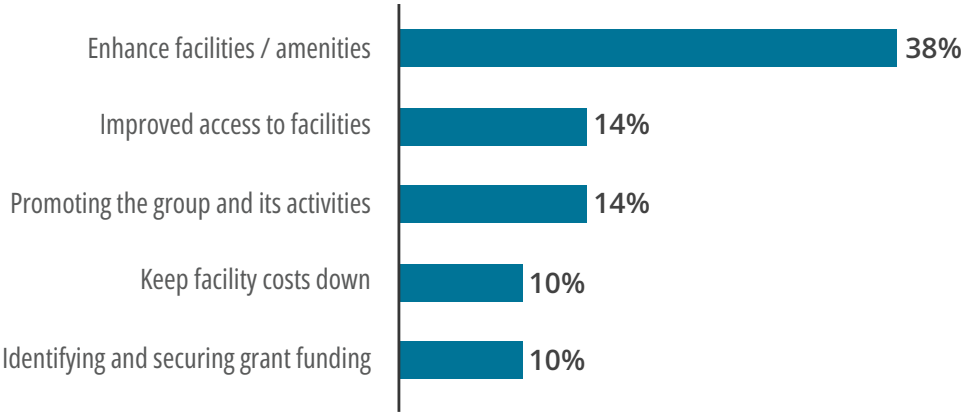
Respondents were asked to identify challenges their organizations are facing. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately half of respondents are challenged with lack of facility access (57%) and lack of financial resources (52%). Notably, approximately one quarter of respondents (29%) said they are challenged with too much participation.

Graph 29: Challenges organizations are facing



Respondents were then asked to identify the single most important action that Strathcona County could do to help their organization. Approximately one third of respondents said that enhancing facilities and amenities (38%) is the most important support the County could provide their group. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

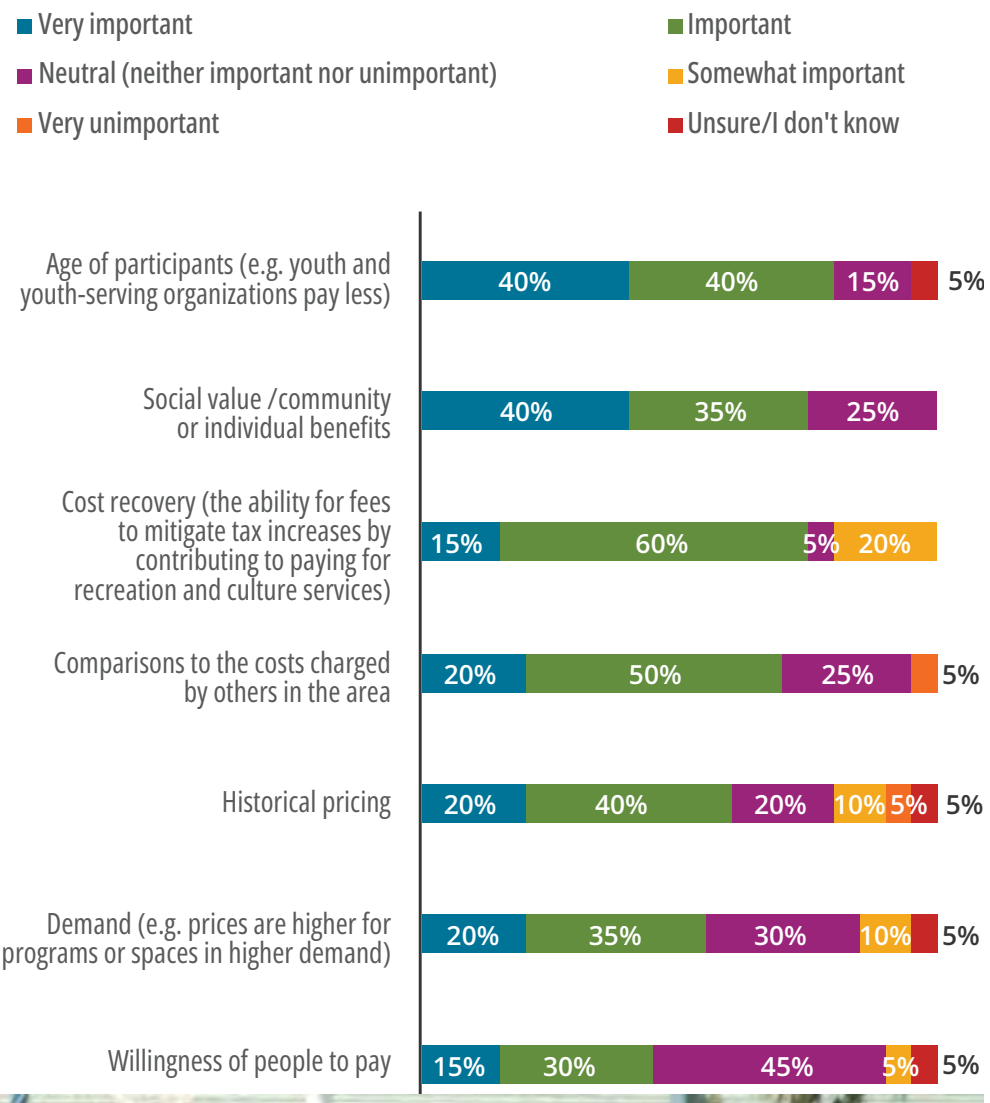
Graph 30: Support the County could provide to help your organization



When considering setting fees for programs, facility admissions and facility bookings the County must consider multiple factors. Respondents were asked to identify the importance of criteria for when the County considers setting their fees for programs and facility access.

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, the most important factor is the age of participants (80% or 16 of 21). Notably, three quarters of respondents also said that social value / community or individual benefits (75%), and cost recovery (75%) are important factors when the County sets fees for programs, facility admissions and facility bookings.

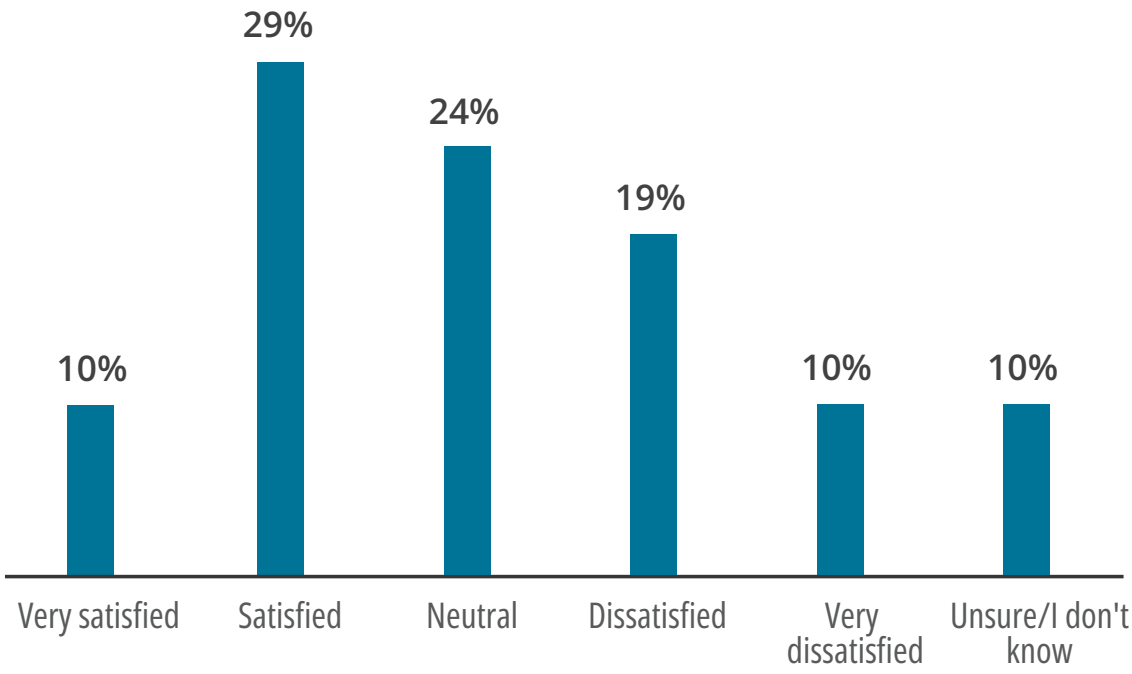
Graph 31: Importance of criteria when setting fees





Considering respondents satisfaction with time allocation in County facilities, approximately one third (39%) are satisfied (very satisfied and somewhat satisfied) with the time allocated to their group. The minority of respondents (10%) are very dissatisfied with the allocation of time in County facilities. See the graph.

Graph 32: Agreement with the strategy's outcomes

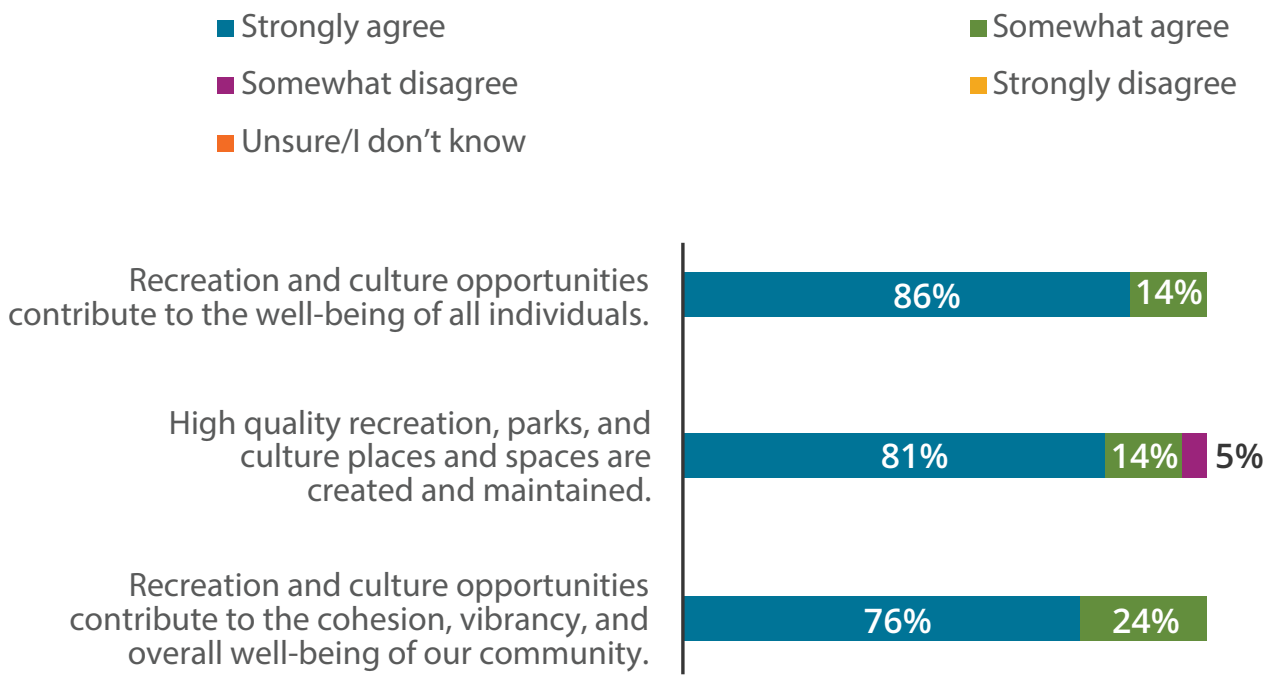




The Recreation and Culture Strategy includes an overall goal, three outcomes, and seven shared principles that provide overarching guidance for service delivery in Strathcona County. These elements, together, make up the Strategy's foundations. Considering these principles, respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with each. Almost all respondents agree (strongly agree and agree) with all three principles. These principles include:

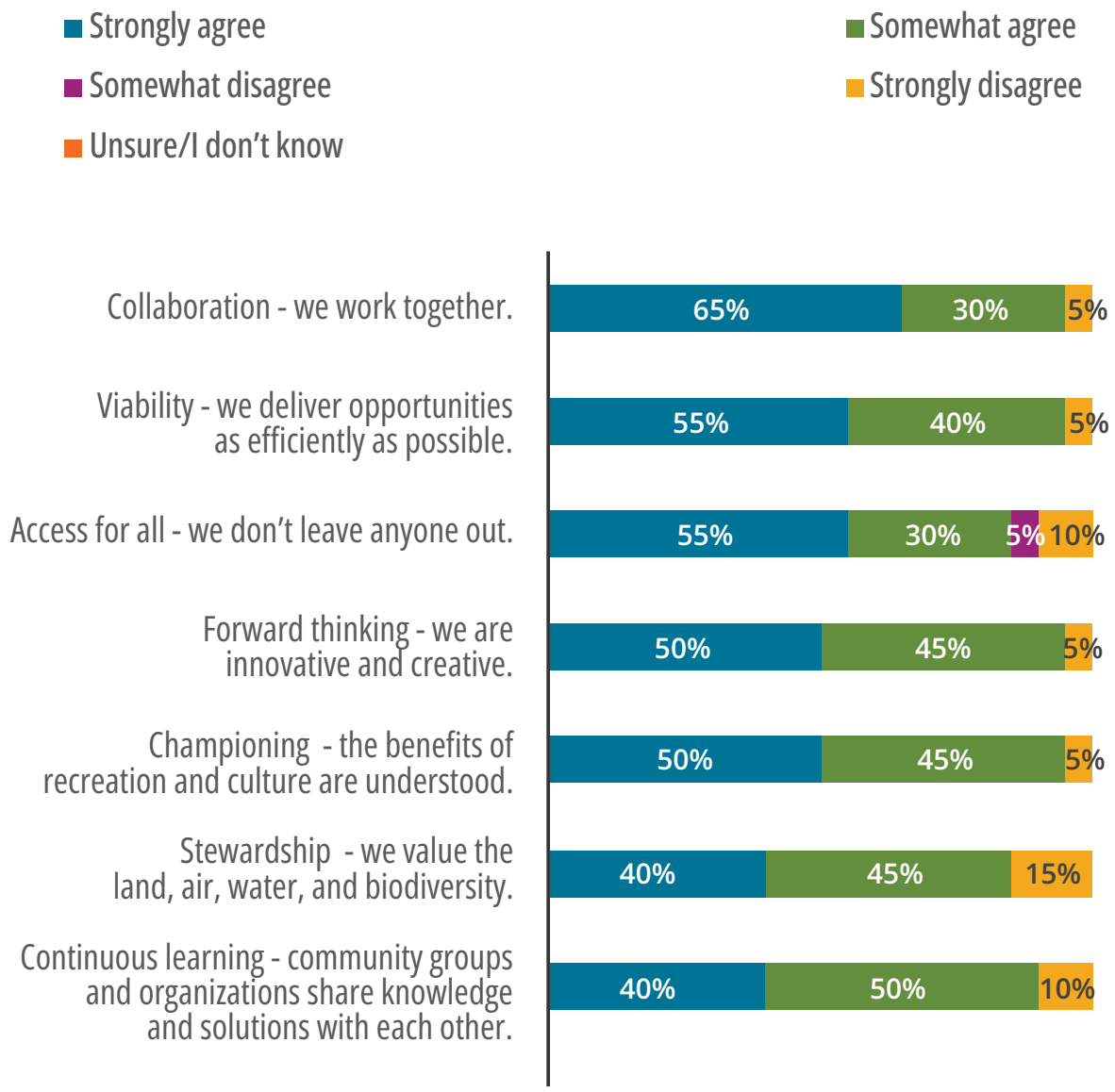
- Recreation and culture opportunities contribute to the well-being of all individuals (100%)
- Recreation and culture opportunities contribute to the cohesion, vibrancy ,and overall well being of our community (100%).
- High quality recreation, parks, and culture places and spaces are created and maintained (95%)

Graph 33: Agreement with the strategy's principles



Considering the Recreation and Culture Strategy's principles, respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement that these principles are still appropriate. Respondents agree (strongly agree and agree) that all of the principles are still appropriate. Refer to the graph.

Graph 34: Agreement with strategy outcomes



3.1.6 Other comments

Respondents were able to share any other comments they have regarding the provision of recreation and culture in Strathcona County. Their responses are below:

Comments related to programming:

- There is value in not canceling programs due to low registration, organizations are working towards better promotion of programs to boost registration numbers.
- Facility allocations should include communities outside of the County.
- Increasing facility hours would benefit groups ability to provide more programming.

Comments related to County Facilities:

- Organizations are expecting to grow out of their space in the coming years.
- Facilities in the County are aging and need investment. Investing in these facilities would help keep athletes playing in their local community.

> **“I would love to work together to create more programs and accessible spaces in the community, especially for those who experience disabilities or have financial challenges. Strathcona County should continue to leverage the momentum that the Special Olympics Winter Games brought to the County.”**

4.0 Youth survey

A survey was fielded with youth in the community to gain their perspective on the provision of recreation and culture in Strathcona County. The survey gathered responses from May 1, 2023 – May 22, 2023. In total, 169 responses were gathered. The survey was primarily fielded directly with the local schools. Additionally, the youth survey was promoted on social media, the County website, newspaper advertisements, e-newsletters, print media, and was included in the County's interactive engagement tool called the County Voice System. Some quotes from the youth respondents are presented throughout the findings.

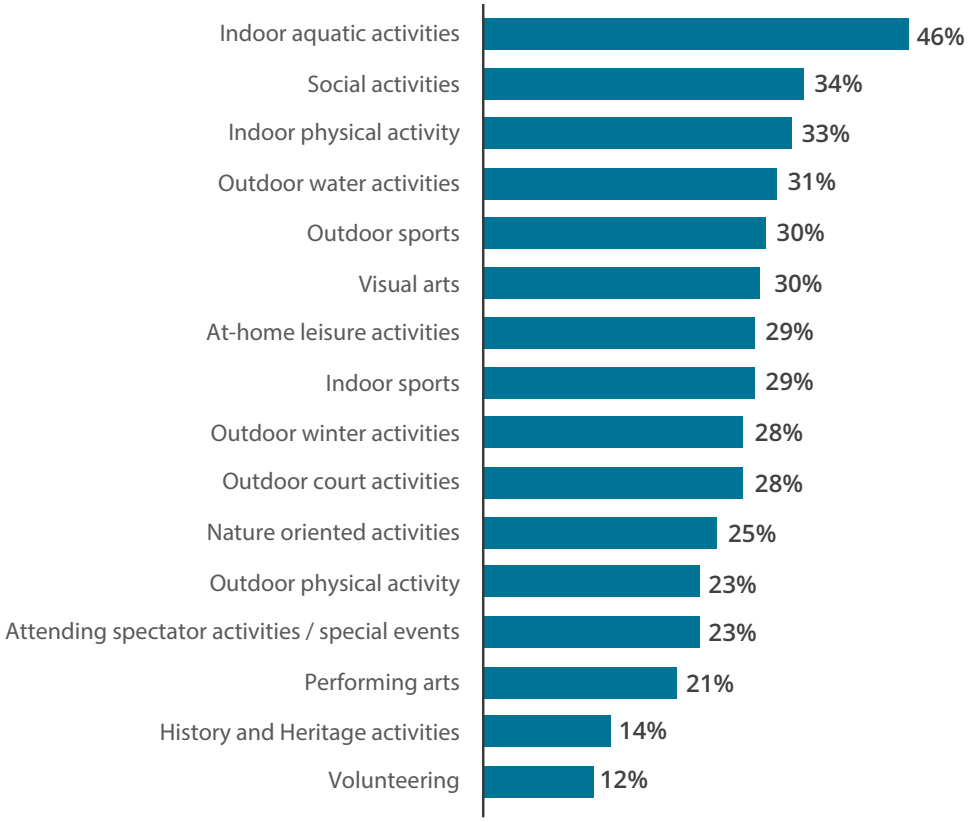
4.1 Survey findings

The findings below are presented in the order they were asked in the survey.

4.1.1 Participation

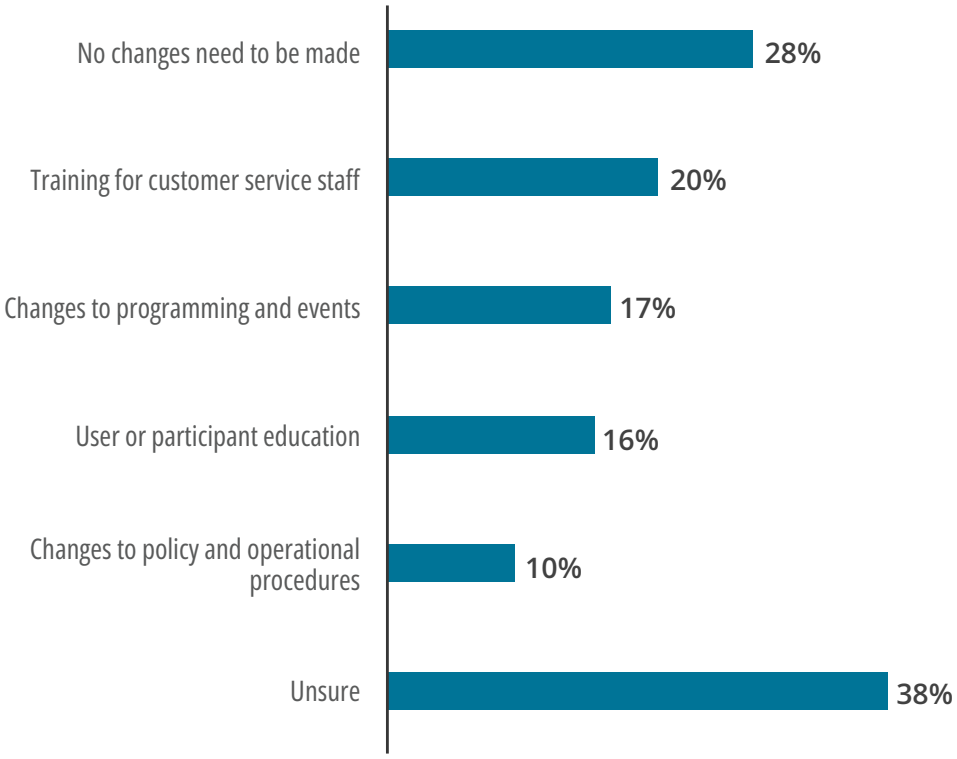
To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify their five favourite types of recreation and culture activities. As illustrated in the graph, approximately half of respondents (46%) said they like indoor aquatic activities as their favourite recreation activity. Notably, twelve percent (12%) said a top five recreation and cultural activity is volunteering.

Graph 35: Favourite recreation and cultural activities



Considering making places and spaces in Strathcona County more inclusive, respondents were presented with a list of ways this could be accomplished. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately one third of youth said that no changes need to be made (28%). Notably, over one third of respondents said that they were unsure (38%) how the County can make its places and spaces more welcoming or inclusive.

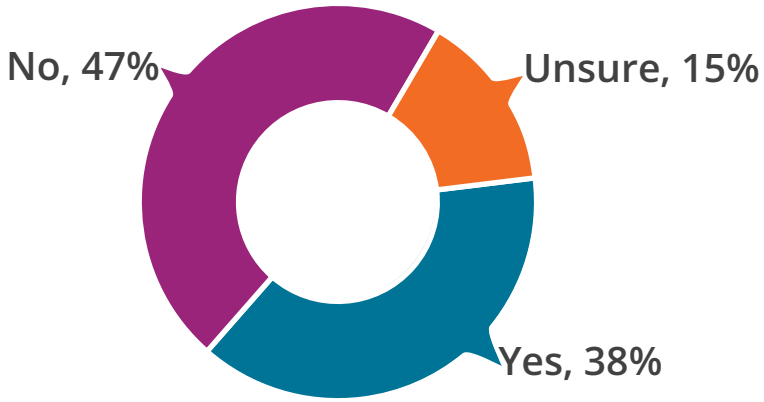
Graph 36: How can places and spaces be more welcoming and inclusive?



4.1.2 Barriers to participation

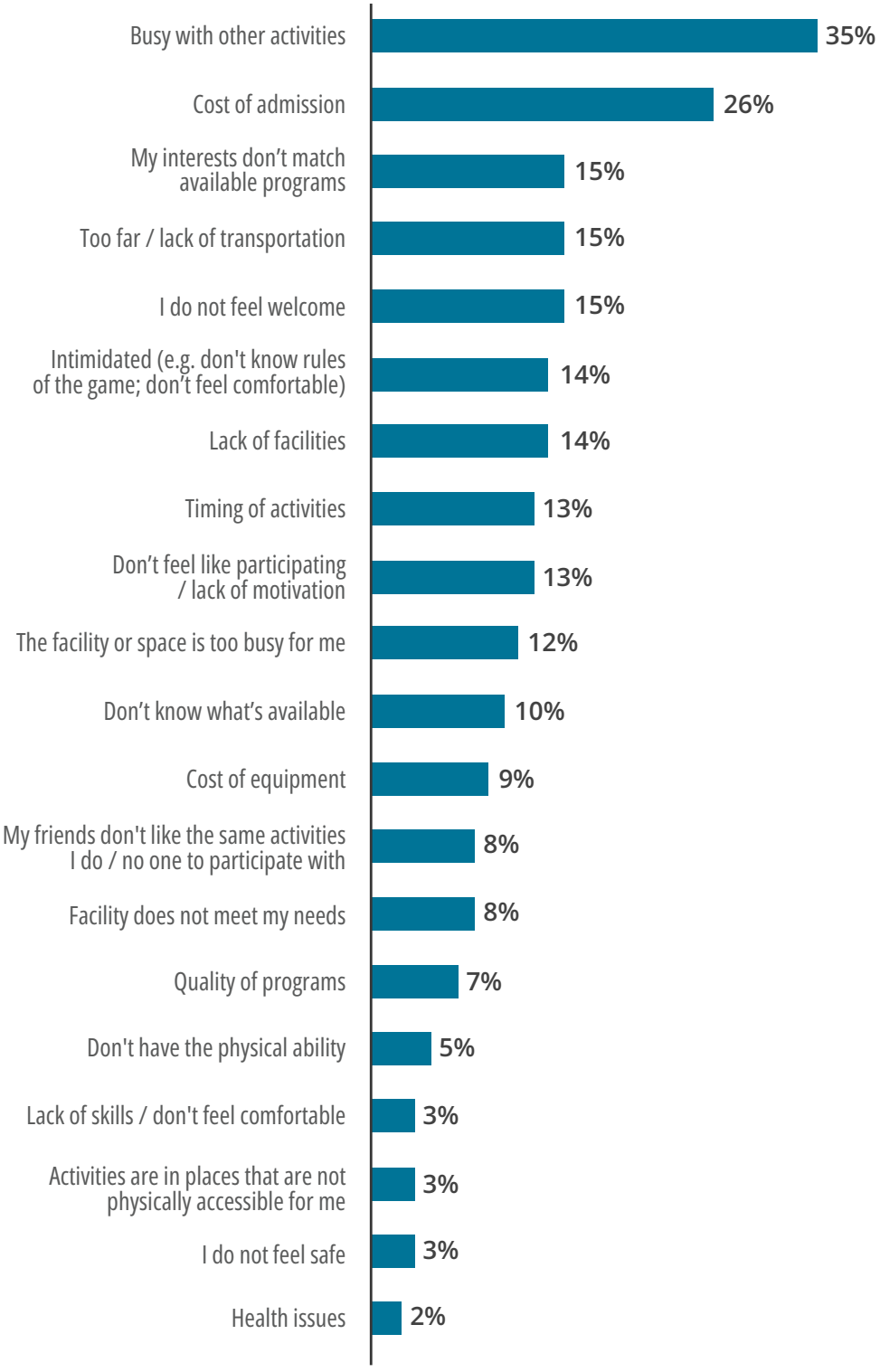
Respondents were then asked to indicate if there is anything that stops them from participating in recreation and cultural activities and programs. Approximately half of respondents (47%) said there is nothing that stops them from participating, while approximately one third (38%) said they do experience things that stop them from participating in recreation and culture activities. Refer to the graph.

Graph 37: Is there anything that stops you from participating in recreation / cultural activities or programs?



Those who answered yes or unsure to the previous question were asked to identify what is stopping them from participating in one or more recreation and culture activities or programs. Approximately one third said that they are busy with other activities (35%). Approximately one quarter (26%) said admission cost is a barrier. Not feeling welcome (15%), intimidation (14%), and feeling of safety (3%) were all identified by some. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Graph 38: Barriers to participation

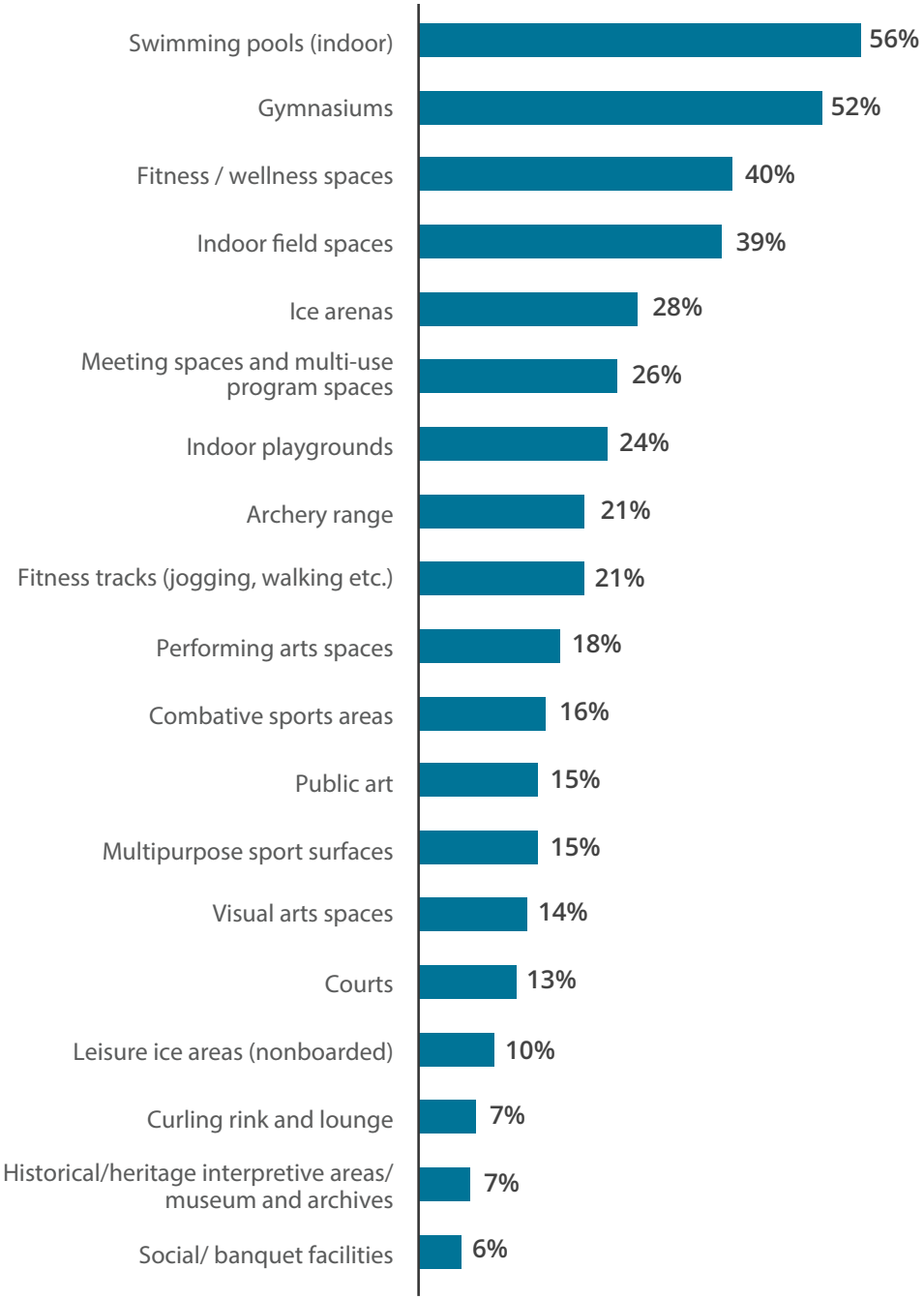


4.1.3 Future of recreation and culture

Given a list of indoor recreation and culture facilities and spaces, respondents were asked to identify five that should be offered in Strathcona County. Approximately half of respondents identified indoor swimming pools (56%) and gymnasiums (52%) as important to offer in the County. Fitness and wellness spaces (40%), indoor field spaces (39%), and ice arenas (28%) were also identified as top facilities and spaces that should be offered in the County.

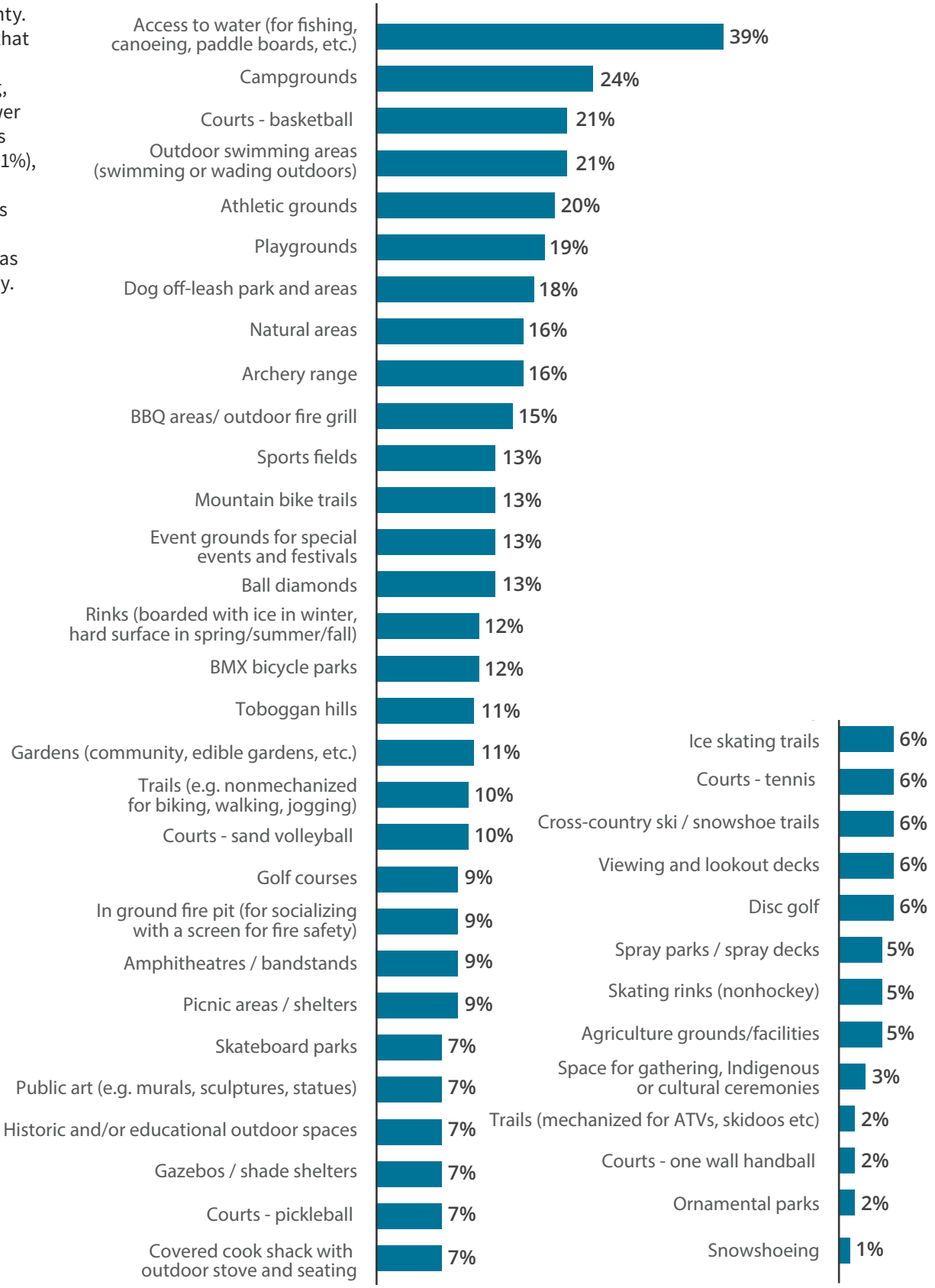
"I like the gym at Millennium Place. Even thought it's always busy it is still lots of fun!"

Graph 39: Indoor facilities and spaces that are important to be offered in Strathcona County



Regarding outdoor facilities, respondents were asked to identify five that should be offered in Strathcona County. Over one third (39%) said that there should be access to water for fishing, canoeing, and water activities. In lower proportions, campgrounds (24%), basketball courts (21%), outdoor swimming areas (21%), and athletic grounds (20%) were also facilities identified by respondents as being needed in the County.

Graph 40: Outdoor facilities and spaces that are important to be offered in Strathcona County

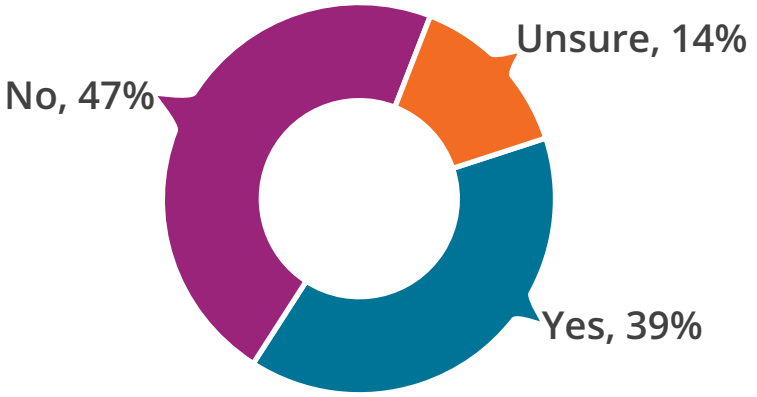


Respondents were able to share any other recreation and culture programs that they do not participate in but would like to try. The most frequent responses are:

- Pickleball
- Badminton
- BMX
- Skiing
- Lifeguard Club and Courses
- Volleyball
- Art Classes (Photography and Band)

Next, respondents were asked if their interest and participation in recreation and culture activities has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately half (47%) said their participation and interest have not changed, while over one third (39%) said their interests and participation have changed. Refer to the graph.

Graph 41: Has your interest and participation in recreation and culture activities changed due to the pandemic?



“The pandemic closed down most of the public spaces during the pandemic. I lost the motivation to do any of the activities I loved before the pandemic.”



Respondents were able to share why or why not their participation has changed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Those who responded yes their participation rates changed due to the pandemic offered these explanations:

- Stress and social anxiety have continued to rise since the pandemic.
- Motivation and skills necessary to compete in activities has decreased.
- There is a worry about getting sick.
- New interests outside of recreation and culture have been developed.

Those who said the pandemic did not impact their participation offered the following explanations:

- Participation has increased since the pandemic due to excitement of getting back to recreation activities.
- Participation in recreation and culture activities have increased since things have re-opened.
- There is a preference of recreating outside instead.
- Residents are grateful for having the option to participate in recreation and culture activities.
- There is a greater urge to be active and healthy.

Respondents were able to share any other thoughts they had regarding the provision of recreation and culture in Strathcona County.

- Increase the availability of programs that are not sports such as cooking classes, art classes, and open mic nights.
- The pools in Sherwood Park are great amenities to have in the community.
- Increased BMX and bike trails would benefit the community.
- Admission fees can be a barrier for some youth.

“Open mics and performing art places made more for youth would be cool. When I imagine youth lounges I think of ones with darts, a pool table, foosball, and comfortable seating areas....and sound proof walls for studying.”



4.1.4 About you

The following characteristics describe the survey participants.

Area of Residence	
Neighbourhood in Sherwood Park	73%
Rural hamlet in Stratchona County (Antler Lake, Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove, Half Moon Lake, Hastings Lake, Josephburg, North Cooking Lake, and South Cooking Lake)	9%
Prefer not to answer	7%
Outside of Strathcona County	6%
Rural area in Strathcona County that is not within a subdivision	2%
Rual subdivision in Strathcona County	2%
Age of Respondents	
11-12 years old	22%
13-14 years old	43%
15-16 years old	23%
17-18 years old	10%
19+ years old	2%
Respondent Characteristic	
I or someone in my household identify as LGBTQ2S+	21%
I or someone in my household has a disability	13%
I or someone in my household have moved to Canada in the last 5 years	6%
I or someone in my household identify as Aboriginal, Indigenous, Firt Nations, Metis, or Inuk (Inuit)	5%
None of the above apply to myself or my household	49%
Prefer not to answer	12%

5.0 Community conversations

Strathcona County convened two "community conversations" with a variety of community perspectives in early May. Held on May 1 in Ardrossan and May 9 in Sherwood Park, the community conversations provided a forum to discuss the 2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy with representatives from key organizations in the community.

In the development of the 2019 Recreation and Culture Strategy a similar process was undertaken. For the update to the Strategy, the County determined that a similar type of engagement event would demonstrate the importance of these various organizations in the delivery of recreation and culture services. The conversations would also serve as a check-in with these community contributors about the validity of the Strategy's implementation as well as the situation of these groups in the current context. The two conversations allowed an interim check-in that could impact the further implementation of the Strategy.

Utilizing contact lists currently held and also contacts gathered through the development of the 2019 Strategy, Strathcona County extended invitations to a myriad of organizations in the community to participate in one of the conversations. In total, 38 individuals representing 29 different groups were in attendance.

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Adult J'Burg Thursday Night Hockey
- Ardrossan Nighthawks Hockey Team
- Army, Navy & Airforce Veterans (ANAVETS)
- Arts and Culture Council of Strathcona County
- Coca Cola Shinny Hockey
- École Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif
- Elk Island Public Schools
- Gilmore Park Community League
- Josephburg Ag Society and Josephburg Pickleball
- Park Gators Oldtimers Hockey
- Recreation and Culture Strategy Committee
- Salto Gymnastics Club
- Strathcona County Minor Football Association Wolverines
- Seniors Advisory Committee
- Sherwood Park Curling Club
- Sherwood Park Minor Hockey Association
- Sherwood Park Old Tuckers Hockey Team
- Sherwood Park Ringette Association
- Sherwood Park Titans Minor Box Lacrosse Association
- Strathcona County Cycling Action Group
- Strathcona County Library
- Strathcona County Next Gen
- Strathcona County Pickleball Association
- Strathcona Curling Club
- Strathcona Synatics
- Strathcona Youth Justice Committee
- Thunderbirds/Millennium Marlins
- Winder Inclusive Communities Service (WICS)

During the sessions a brief overview of the Recreation and Culture Strategy was shared including how it was developed and its foundational elements (i.e. goal; outcomes; key areas of focus). Attendees provided some comment on these pieces and then commented on, and rated, different elements of the Strategy and their circumstance. A synopsis of the outputs from the session follows.

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Strategic foundations

- The majority of participants who rated the foundations agreed with them.
- It was felt that the foundations are not forward thinking enough; they could encourage creativity and innovation more. Related continuous learning needs to be better reflected.

5.1.2 Successes

- Collaboration with other community organizations.
- Continuous service and program delivery through the pandemic.
- Improvements in digital and virtual support and service delivery.
- Significant achievements in the performance of participants / competitors as well as organizationally through the hosting of major games and tournaments.
- Participant and participation numbers are growing.
- Improved engagement and communication with the community and supporters.

5.1.3 Challenges

- Challenges getting sufficient facility time due to greater competition and growth (due in part to the community's growth and interest in activity).
- Need for additional space; in part a space can serve as a hub for an activity.
- Insufficient support amenities at facilities including seating.
- Challenges acquiring and keeping coaches (staff) and volunteers.
- Greater competition for participants – there is a lot of activities to choose from.
- Transportation for participants to get to activities.
- Expansion of play for some activities – season is getting longer or activity is continuing into different seasons.
- Changing participation patterns and rates from people as the pandemic shifted people's patterns.
- Budget challenges; funding difficult to acquire.

5.1.4 Facility prioritization criteria

This refers to the criteria that could be used to determine the priority of facility investment projects.

- Multipurpose nature of spaces.
- Inclusiveness – cultures, age, ability, interests.
- Accessibility (physical).
- Ensure rural communities are well serviced.
- Costs of development and to utilize a space.
- Investment in existing facilities before developing new.
- Consider the importance and community impact of culture.
- History of investment; share investment.
- Community demand / popularity.
- Diversity of opportunity.
- Geographic provision; underserved areas.
- Revenue opportunities.
- Provides year-round use.
- Youth focused.
- Supports all ages.
- Community participation versus competitive / elite.
- New activities need space.
- Reflects changes in demographics.
- Individual health and wellbeing.
- Local versus regional.

5.1.5 Allocation framework criteria

This refers to the criteria that could be used to allocate facility space to different users. (Note: items are not listed in order of importance. Those of higher importance are denoted with an asterix *.)

- Ensure “fairness”.
- Inclusion not based on ability to pay*.
- Youth.
- Shared space*.
- Physical and social accessibility*.
- Meet the actual needs of groups not what they want.
- Rotate so not tied to history.
- History has benefit* .
- Community activities rather than events / trade shows.
- Balance recreation and competitive uses.
- Local first*.
- Trends in activities.
- Consider new activities.
- Consider using incentives to move demand to spaces that are in lower demand.
- Participant numbers.
- Economic impact.
- Affiliation with recognized governing body*.
- Quality of programming*.

***very important**

5.1.6 Fee setting

This refers to criteria to consider when setting user fees. (Note: items are not listed in order of importance. Those of higher importance are denoted with an asterix *.)

- Historical.
- Direct costs.
- Market rates.
- Service levels.
- Community benefit*.
- Recognize local users.
- Ensure accessibility to equity deserving groups.
- Youth, family, seniors rates.
- Prime versus nonprime time rates.
- Not-for-profit rates.
- Demand driven.
- Use fees to encourage use of less convenient / serviced spaces.

***very important**

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Group survey participants

1. Edmonton Radio Control Society
2. Strathcona County Library
3. Salto Gymnastics Club
4. Bev Facey Community Garden
5. Strathcona Wrestling Club
6. Arts & Culture Council of Strathcona County
7. Sherwood Park Curling Club
8. Strathcona County Minor Football Association Wolverines
9. Sherwood Park Minor Hockey Association
10. Adapted Recreation and Education
11. Sherwood Park Titans Minor Box Lacrosse Association
12. Coca Cola Shinny Hockey
13. Strathcona County Pickleball Association
14. Sherwood Park Ringette Association
15. Gilmore Park Community League
16. Chartwell Emerald Hills Retirement Residence
17. Strathcona Pony Club
18. Sherwood Park Highland Gathering
19. Strathcona County Swim Club
20. Strathcona Synatics



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