



What We Heard Report Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment

June 14, 2022

Filipino Artist Daisy Mella at World Meets Wood Buffalo
Photo Credit: Laura Beamish, Fort McMurray Today



Land Acknowledgement

We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Metis.



McMurray Métis Elder Lorraine Corrigan
Photo Credit: McMurray Métis Sarah Williscraft

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is preparing a Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment (CINA) that will provide a well-supported, data-driven assessment of the need for cultural infrastructure in the RMWB. The CINA will be informed by input from residents, cultural organizations, Indigenous Partners, RMWB staff, and Council Appointed Committees to ensure it reflects the needs of the community.

Scope of the Report

This report contains the findings from the community engagement activities completed during Phase 2 of the RMWB Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment project. This What We Heard Report will be used in conjunction with other inputs to develop the needs assessment.



For the Love of Live
Photo Credit: Keyano Theatre

What We Did

A multi-faceted engagement process was implemented between November 8, 2021 and March 7, 2022. The process engaged members of the public, cultural organizations, Indigenous Partners, facility staff, RMWB staff, Local Indigenous Advocate, youth, and Council Appointed Committees. We were pleased to provide an open offer for engagement throughout the process. Anyone who wished to speak to the consulting team was provided an opportunity to do so. In total, 364 touchpoints with the community were achieved. Figure 1 provides a summary of the engagement process.

Open Offer for Engagement!

Our engagement goal was to ensure no voice was left unheard. Residents, organizations, and groups who for whatever reason were unable to provide input through the planned activities were encouraged to reach out directly to the project team.

Figure 1. Summary of Engagement Touchpoints

Engagement Activity	Total Engagement
Resident Survey	240 responses
Cultural Organization Survey	9 responses
Resident Input Workshops (rural and urban)	8 participants
Youth Input Workshops	19 participants
Cultural Organization Input Workshops and Interviews	37 participants
Indigenous Partner Sessions	19 participants
RMWB Staff and Council Appointed Committees Sessions	30 participants
Local Indigenous Advocate	2 participants
Total	364 touchpoints

What We Heard

A significant amount of input was gathered during the engagement process. The consulting team analyzed all the data and identified several key findings and themes.



Fort McMurray Heritage Shipyard
Photo Credit: CBC

Resident Survey

- A majority of respondents agreed that cultural facilities in their community are important to their quality of life (81%).
- Respondents were slightly more unsatisfied with cultural facilities in their communities (37%) than satisfied (31%). Twenty-seven percent were neither satisfied or unsatisfied.
- The most requested new or improved performing arts facilities included:
 - › Outdoor performance space
 - › Small-scale performance space
 - › Performing arts centre/theatre
 - › Film/video recording space
- The most requested new or improved visual arts facilities included:
 - › Crafting/maker space
 - › Painting studios
 - › Display space for visual art
- The most requested new or improved museum, library, and gallery facilities included:
 - › Science centres
 - › Galleries
 - › Museums
- The most requested new or improved community facilities included:
 - › Community gardens
 - › Multipurpose space
 - › Outdoor festival/event space
 - › Cultural centre
- The top barriers to participating in cultural activities more often were:
 - › Program(s) not offered
 - › Unaware of services/facilities/programs available
 - › Lack of facilities
- Forty-six percent of respondents indicated support for increased user fees to better meet cultural infrastructure needs, whereas 38% did not support increased fees. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that they would support some level of increase to property taxes to better meet cultural infrastructure needs in their community, whereas 41% did not support increased property taxes.

Cultural Organization Survey

- Respondents were more dissatisfied than satisfied with cultural facility provision in the RMWB.
- The cost to rent facilities was identified by participants as a significant barrier.
- Respondents would most like to see expanded and enhanced spaces for creative pursuits (e.g. painting, sculpting, photography, woodworking, etc.) and performances (e.g. dance, theatre, music, outdoor performances).
- The majority of respondents project their annual participant base to grow over the next five years.
- The majority of respondents would not be willing to pay increased user fees to utilize enhanced facilities.

Workshops with Residents, Cultural Organizations, RMWB Staff, and Council Appointed Committees

- Participants were asked to consider cultural programs that are currently limited or cannot be offered in their community due to facility limitations. Frequently identified limitations included:
 - › Art creation and making (e.g. painting, sculpting, photography, woodworking, digital arts, etc.)
 - › Cultural cooking
 - › Performance activities (e.g. dance and music)
 - › Art showcasing
- Participants were asked to share what they see as the top cultural facility needs in their community. The top needs included:
 - › Creative/maker spaces with purpose-built rooms, specialized equipment, and proper ventilation
 - › Community kitchen facilities
 - › Smaller scale performance spaces
 - › Outdoor performance space and supporting amenities
 - › Flexible and affordable multipurpose spaces
 - › Art gallery

Indigenous Partner Sessions

- Eight input sessions were conducted with Indigenous Partners and/or their representatives.
- Participants were asked to consider cultural programs that are currently limited or cannot be offered in their community due to facility limitations. Frequently identified limitations included:
 - › Indoor ceremonies, gatherings, and events
 - › Cultural learning and education spaces (indoor and outdoor), such as sweat lodges
 - › Accessible places to practice spirituality, including funerals, wakes, and other ceremonies
 - › Existing facilities are not accommodating in terms of ventilation for the use of fire and smoke for ceremonies, such as those using pipes and smudging. Likewise, there is a lack of natural fire pits.
- Participants were asked to share what they see as the top cultural facility needs in their community. The top needs included:
 - › Dedicated cultural centres tailored to Indigenous groups that are located in their communities
 - › Ceremonial spaces (both indoor and outdoor) located in their communities and in Fort McMurray
 - › Making existing facilities and spaces more welcoming to Indigenous Peoples
 - › Utilizing existing RMWB-owned facilities and spaces more efficiently



Midnight Coffeehouse at the Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts
Photo Credit: Stacey Northcotte

Additional Key Themes

1

Rental Costs Are a Barrier



The cost of renting facilities was frequently identified by participants in the engagement process as a significant barrier to participating in culture more often. Participants felt that lower rental costs would enable them to expand and enhance their program offerings.

2

Questioning the Need for Additional Cultural Infrastructure

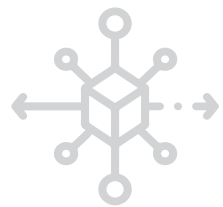


Approximately fifteen percent of respondents to the resident survey and several participants in the other engagement opportunities questioned the need for additional cultural infrastructure. These participants shared sentiments such as:

- Existing facilities should be fully utilized before new facilities are built.
- The RMWB has enough facilities to meet demand.
- There are higher priorities in the community (e.g. flood protection, health, roads, etc.).
- There would be more value in maintaining existing facilities than expanding them or adding new ones.
- Cultural infrastructure is too expensive to build. It is a nice to have, not a need to have.

3

Demand for Decentralized, Community-Level Facilities



Many participants would like to see decentralized cultural facilities that are available on a neighbourhood level. Examples of facilities these respondents would like to see included community halls, community kitchens, and flexible multipurpose gathering and program space.

4

Welcoming and Inclusive Facilities



Some participants thought that more can be done to make facilities welcoming and inclusive to all cultures, abilities, and orientations. For example, stories were shared of the importance of fire and smoke for Indigenous ceremonies and how existing facilities have not made accommodations for these practices. Furthermore, participants felt that the accessibility of the built environment, transportation options, and inclusivity (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms) could all be enhanced to make facilities more welcoming.



Next Steps

The next steps in the process are to complete the remaining research and analysis activities that will inform the needs assessment and then develop the draft report (currently scheduled for completion in June of 2022).



National Indigenous Peoples Day
Photo Credit: Dr. Brenda Sautner

1

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is undertaking a Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment (CINA). This assessment will assist the RMWB in determining the need for cultural infrastructure in the region. Engagement with residents, cultural organizations, Indigenous partners, RMWB staff, and Council Appointed Committees will inform the CINA, in addition to other supporting research and analysis.

Scope of the Report

This report contains the findings from the community engagement activities completed during Phase 2 of the RMWB Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment project. This What We Heard Report will be used in conjunction with other inputs to develop the needs assessment.



Mamma Mia!

Photo Credit: Keyano Theatre Company

What is a Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment?

A Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment is a study that seeks to understand the current state of cultural facility provision in a community and identify potential enhancements for future decision making. It is intended to inform future planning, resource allocations, and partnership discussions related to cultural infrastructure.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo approved the Wood Buffalo Culture Plan in 2019 as a guiding document to support and enhance cultural initiatives in the region over the next 10 years. The goal of this project is to inform the Plan's vision of Wood Buffalo as a culturally diverse and socially inclusive municipality. To accomplish this, existing spaces must be assessed and input from the community must be collected to identify potential opportunities to enhance cultural spaces in the area.

Input from the engagement process will be used to help identify cultural infrastructure needs in the RMWB. The input collected will be considered in conjunction with other indicators and used to guide future decision making.

What is Cultural Infrastructure?

Cultural infrastructure offers spaces for cultural activities to take place. Some examples of these types of facilities include art studios, dance studios, green space and parks, community halls, libraries, museums, and theatres or performing arts centres. Some examples of cultural infrastructure currently in the RMWB includes the Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts, Fort McMurray Heritage Village, MacDonald Island, Centrefire Place, Anzac Recreation Centre, and Fort Chipewyan Bicentennial Museum.

Process

The project has five phases as described below.



Overview of Engagement Activities

A variety of community engagement activities were conducted to develop this report. These activities included two separate surveys (Resident and Cultural Organization), facilitated input sessions with urban and rural residents, cultural organizations, youth, Indigenous Partners, RMWB staff, Local Indigenous Advocate, and Council Appointed Committees, and an in-person tour of cultural facilities in the urban center of Fort McMurray. All community members and stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide their input through an open offer for engagement. The following list is an overview of the engagement activities.

1. Surveys Administered:

- a. Resident Survey (240 responses)
- b. Cultural Organization Survey (9 responses)

2. Community Workshops Conducted:

a. Resident Input Workshops

Dates: Nov. 15th, Nov. 30th, Dec. 6th, Dec. 9th

Purpose: Inform participants of the process and collect input.

b. Cultural Organization Input Workshops

Dates: Nov. 18th, Nov. 25th, Dec. 15th, Dec. 17th, Mar. 7th

Purpose: Inform participants of the process and collect input.

c. Indigenous Partner Input Workshops

Dates: Nov. 8th, Nov. 25th, Nov. 29th, Feb. 15th, Feb. 18th

Purpose: Inform participants of the process and collect input.

d. Youth Input Workshops

Dates: Dec. 17th, Jan. 14th

Purpose: Inform participants of the process and collect input.

e. RMWB Staff and Council Appointed Committees Input Workshops

Dates: Jan. 20th, Jan. 24th, Feb. 8th, Feb. 10th

Purpose: Inform participants of the process and collect input.

3. Cultural Infrastructure Tour:

Date: February 23rd, 2022

Purpose: Tour cultural infrastructure and interview facility operators.

4. RMWB Staff from various departments, Council Appointed Committees, and Associated Organizations (through surveys, workshops, interviews, and tour):

- a. Invites were sent out by the RMWB to all known cultural-related groups in the region. 45 groups chose to participate in the engagement process, including representatives of the following organizations:

Cultural Organizations:

1. Arts Council Wood Buffalo
2. Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo
3. Fort McMurray Ukrainian Cultural Society
4. Fort McMurray Chinese-Canadian Cultural Society
5. Bangladesh Cultural Society
6. Fort McMurray Gurjati Cultural Society
7. Sanatan Mandir Cultural Society
8. Nigerian Community Association of Fort McMurray
9. Rehoboth Alliance
10. East European Cultural Society
11. Alberta Drama Festival Association
12. Swamp Rat Experience
13. Ms Dianne's Piano
14. Pawâmiw Creative
15. Pride YMM
16. St. Aidan's Society
17. Immigrants Advisory Table

Facilities:

18. Keyano Theatre & Arts Centre
19. Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts
20. Wood Buffalo Regional Library
21. Westwood Community High School
22. Fort McMurray Public School District
23. Nistawoyou Association Friendship Centre
24. Royal Canadian Legion
25. Fort McMurray Heritage Village
26. MacDonald Island Park
27. Centrefire Place
28. Syncrude Athletic Park

Indigenous Partners:

29. Eight (8) Indigenous Partners participated.

RMWB Staff, Council Appointed Committees, and Associated Organizations:

30. Regional Recreation Corporation
31. RMWB Staff from various departments
32. Waterfront Advisory Committee
33. Mayor's Advisory Council on Youth
34. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (multiple departments)
35. Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equality
36. Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism
37. Wood Buffalo Housing Corp

Local Indigenous Advocate:

38. Jes Croucher



Summer Dance Camp
Photo Credit: MacDonald Island Dance Academy

2

ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Summary of Engagement Activities

A multi-faceted engagement process was implemented between November 8, 2021 and March 7, 2022. The process engaged members of the public, cultural organizations, Indigenous Partners, facility staff, RMWB staff, Local Indigenous Advocate, youth, and Council Appointed Committees. We were pleased to offer an open offer for engagement throughout the process, whereby anyone who wished to speak to the consulting team was provided an opportunity to do so. In total, 364 touchpoints with the community were achieved. Figure 1 provides a summary of the engagement process.

Figure 1. Summary of Engagement Touchpoints

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Communication Campaigns

The CINA engagement process was promoted through a variety of means, including the following:

- Participate Wood Buffalo website
- RMWB news releases
- Social media campaigns
- Email invitations to cultural organizations, Council Appointed Committees, and Indigenous Partners
- News article in Fort McMurray Today
- Ads in all rural community newsletters
- Radio advertisements
- MacCalendar.ca event posts
- Spotify ad
- QR codes at In-person Public Engagement Open House
- Return-postage paid mailers for Elders and elderly people in rural and urban areas
- Project introductions at Council Appointed Committee meetings
- Internal RMWB staff communications

The remainder of this section summarizes the key findings from the input received.



Shell Place
Photo Credit: Fort McMurray Today

Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts
Photo Credit: Fort McMurray Real Estate



Resident Survey

The resident survey was conducted between November 8, 2021 and January 31, 2022. The objective of the resident survey was to gain a deeper understanding of residents' needs for culture facilities in the RMWB. The survey was hosted on the Participate Wood Buffalo platform.

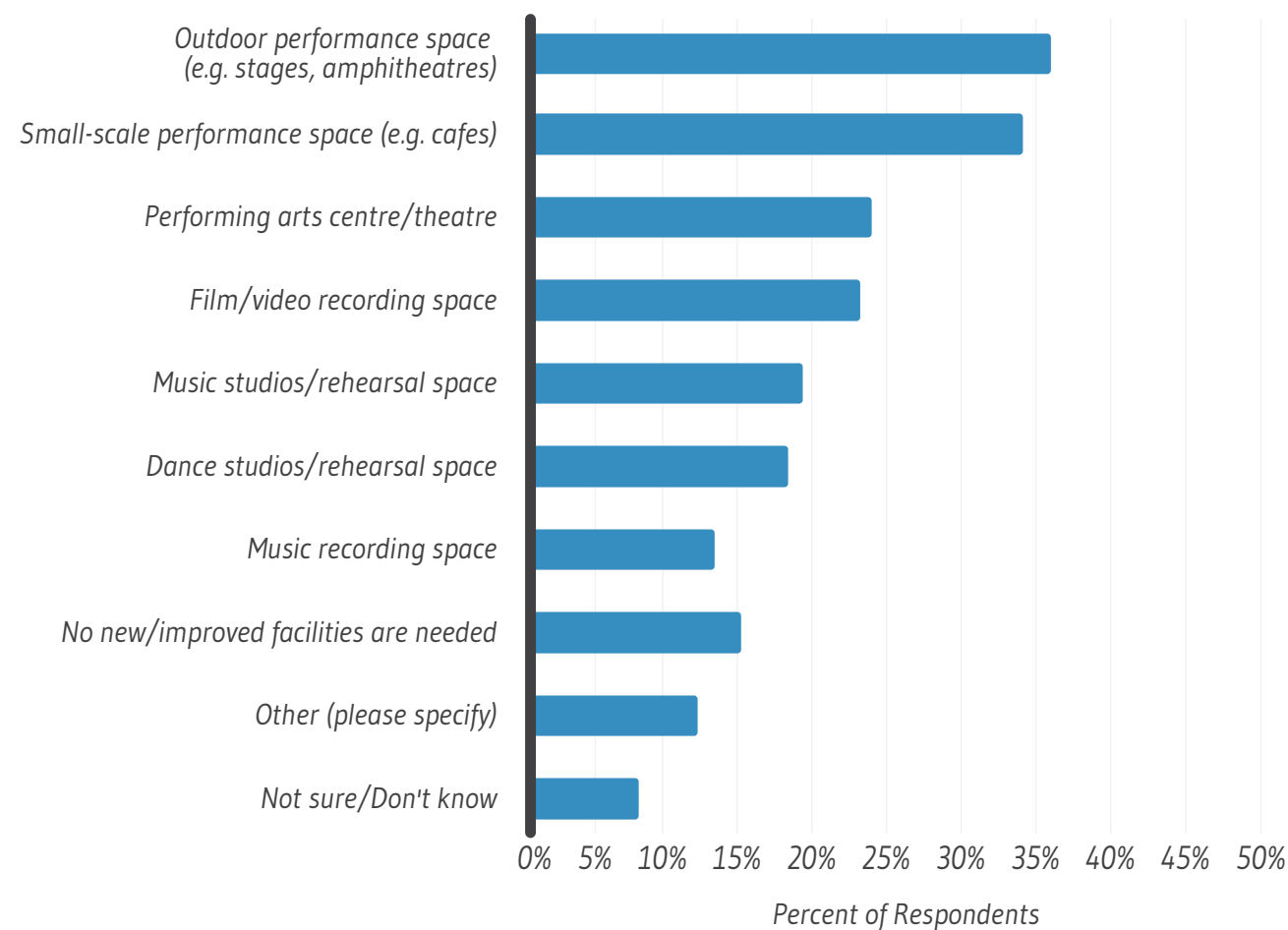
In total, 240 responses were received. Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated that they reside in Fort McMurray. Two percent of respondents said they reside in Anzac, 1.5% said they reside in Sapræe Creek Estates, and the remaining 0.5% said they reside in Fort Fitzgerald. Sixty-six percent of respondents identified as being female, 27% identified as male, 1% identified as non-binary/gender non-conforming, and 1% identified as Two-Spirit. The remaining respondents identified as non-binary, two-spirit, or preferred not to say. Respondents were primarily between the ages of 30-39 (37%) and 40-49 (28%).

Cultural Infrastructure Needs

1. In terms of new or improved performing arts facilities, respondents were most in favour of outdoor performance space (36%), small-scale performance space (34%), performing arts centre/theatre (24%), and film/video recording space (24%).*



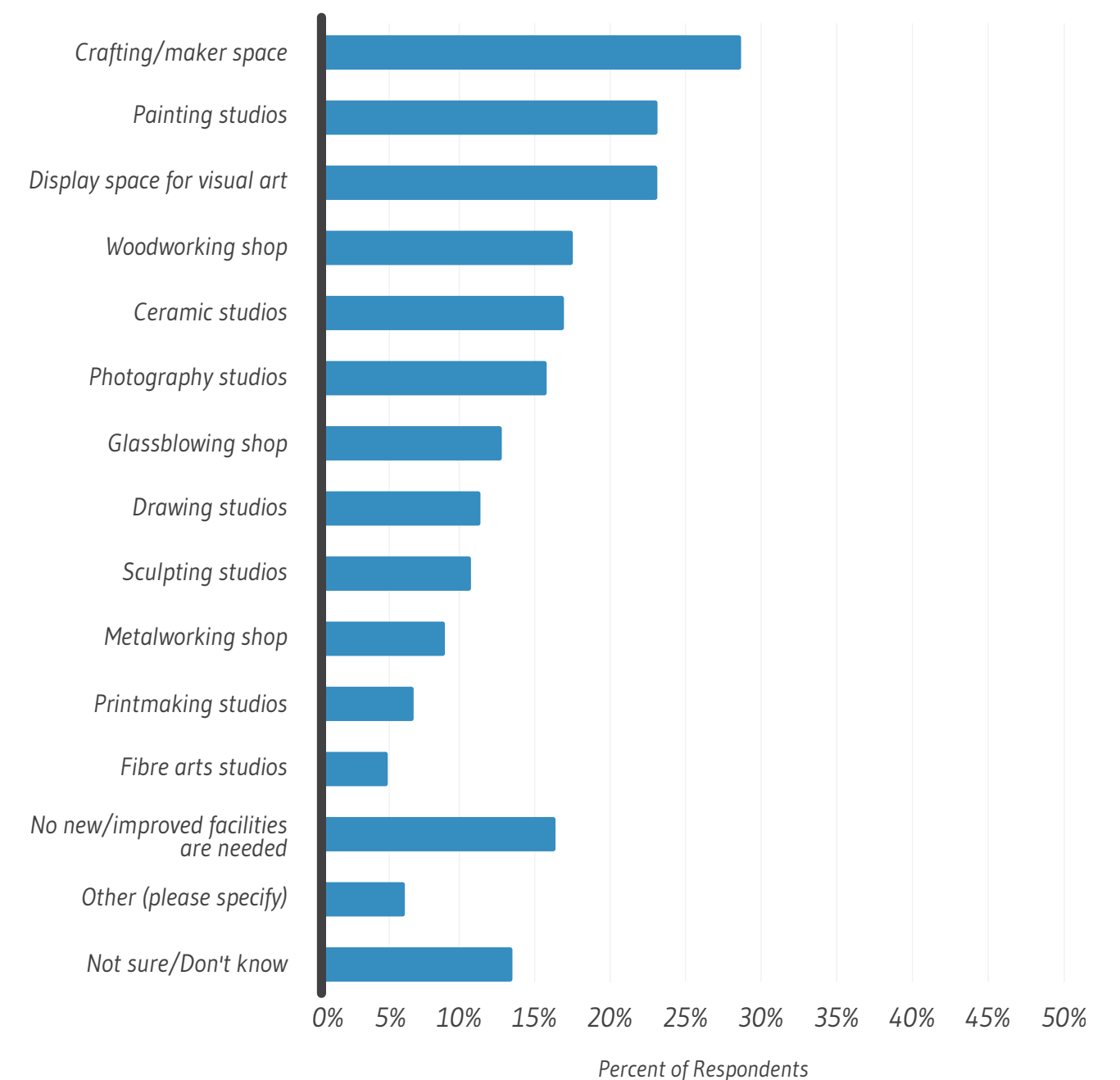
What, if any, new or improved performing arts facilities are most needed in your community? Please select up to three options.



2. In terms of new or improved visual arts facilities, respondents were most in favour of crafting/maker space (29%), painting studios (23%), and display space for visual art (23%).*



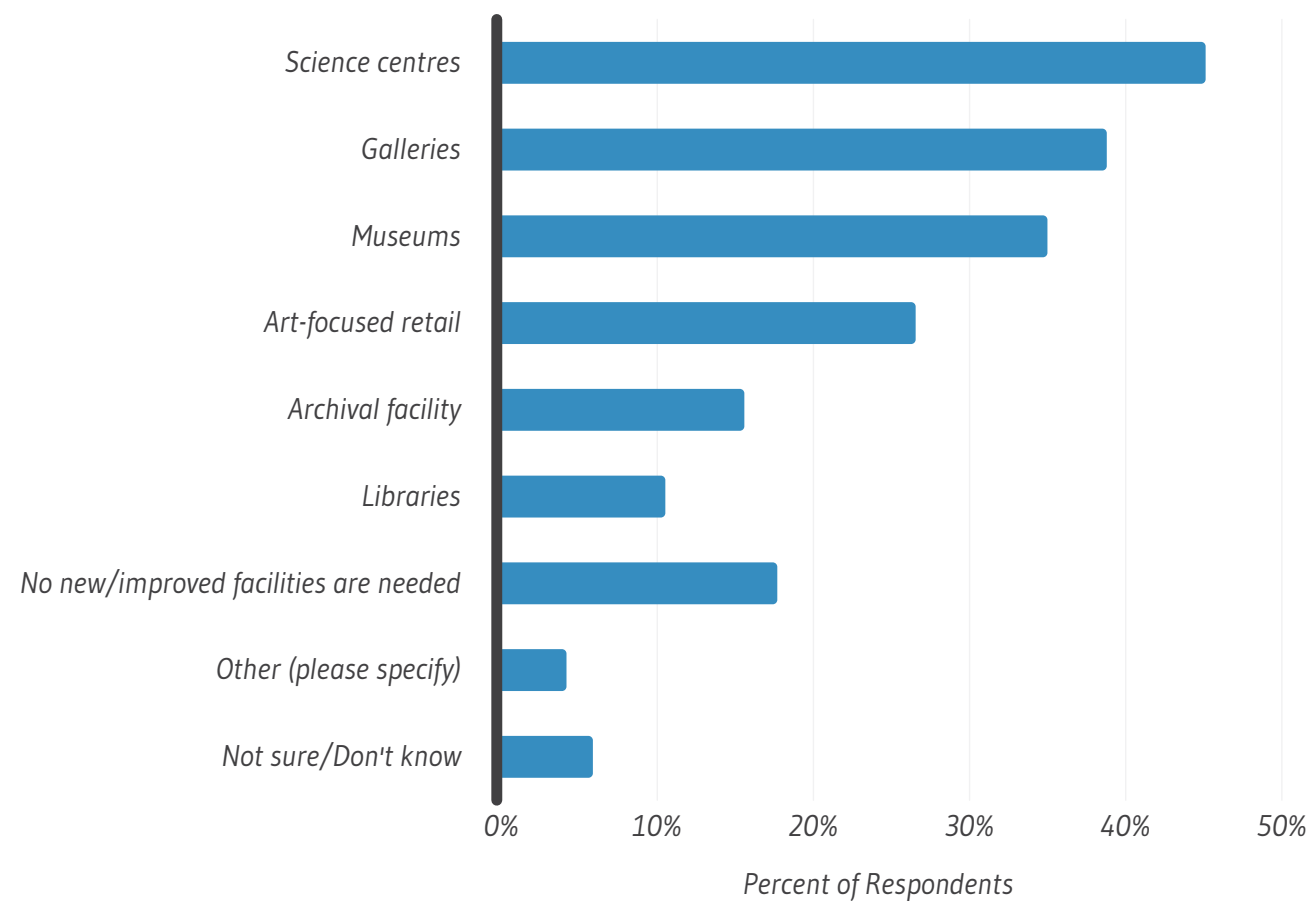
What, if any, new or improved visual arts facilities are most needed in your community? Please select up to three options.



3. In terms of new or improved museum, library, and gallery facilities, respondents were most in favour of science centres (45%), galleries (39%), and museums (35%).*



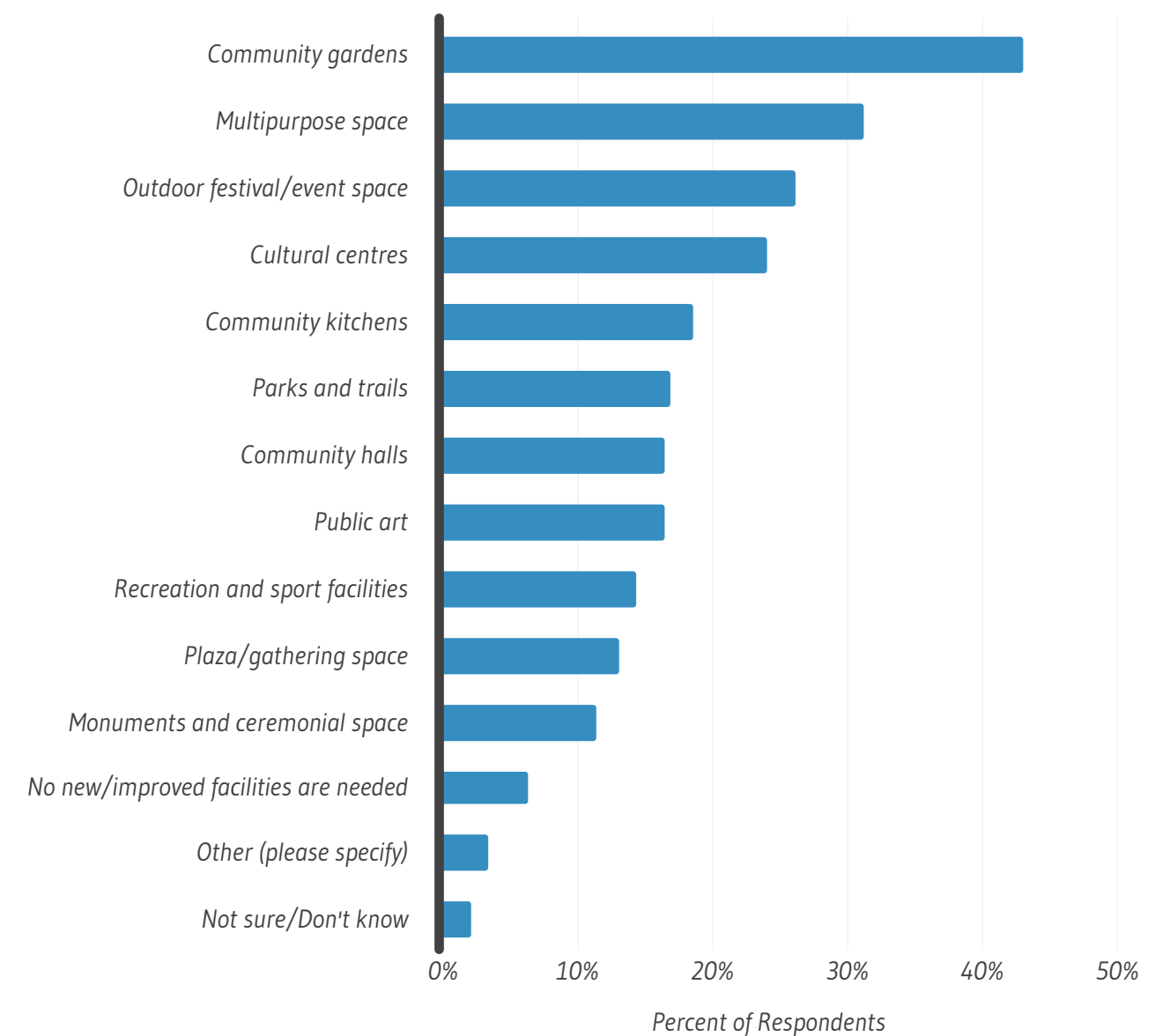
What, if any, new or improved museum, library, and gallery facilities are most needed in your community? Please select up to three options.



4. In terms of new or improved community facilities, respondents were most in favour of community gardens (43%), multipurpose space (31%), outdoor festival/event space (26%), and cultural centres (24%).*



What, if any, new or improved community facilities are most needed in your community? Please select up to three options.



5. Respondents were asked if there are cultural programs that are currently limited or cannot be offered in your community due to facility limitations. The most common responses included:

- Artistic, creative, and maker programs
- Small-scale performances and rehearsals
- There are no facility limitations / existing facilities can be better utilized
- Indigenous ceremonies, gatherings, and cultural practices
- The cost of accessing facilities is a barrier
- Cultural cooking classes and events

6. Respondents were asked what their top priority would be if only one improvement could be made to cultural infrastructure in their community. The following were the most frequent responses:

- Purpose-built cultural facilities and amenities
- Utilize existing spaces more fully
- Creative/maker space
- Lower costs to rent and access facilities
- Enhanced accessibility and availability
- Indigenous-focused cultural infrastructure (e.g. indoor and outdoor ceremony spaces)
- Community kitchens and gathering places
- Smaller, multipurpose spaces

*Multiple responses were accepted for these questions, which is why the totals add up to more than 100%.



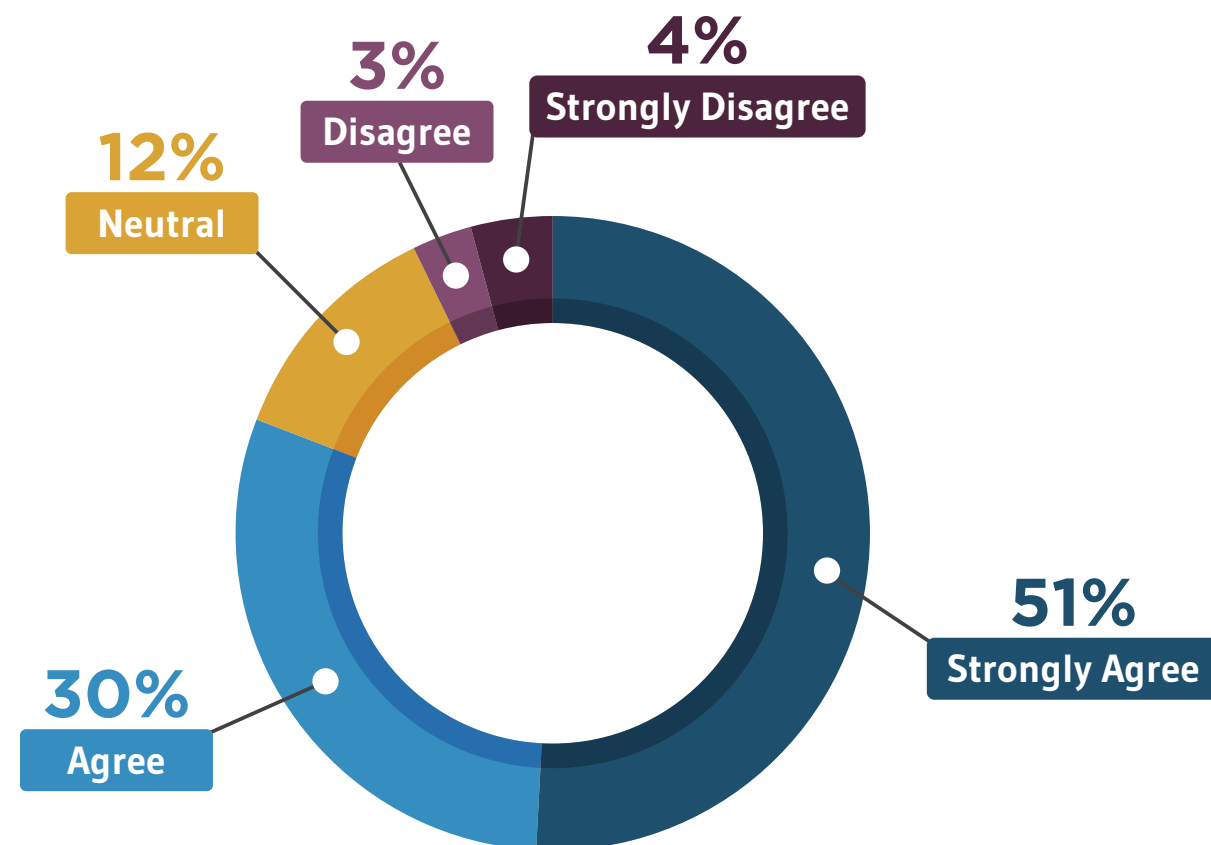
Paint Night
Photo Credit: McMurray Métis

Level of Satisfaction, Barriers, and Support for Cultural Infrastructure

1. A majority of respondents agreed that cultural facilities in their community are important to their quality of life (81%). Twelve percent of respondents were neutral toward the statement and 7% disagreed.



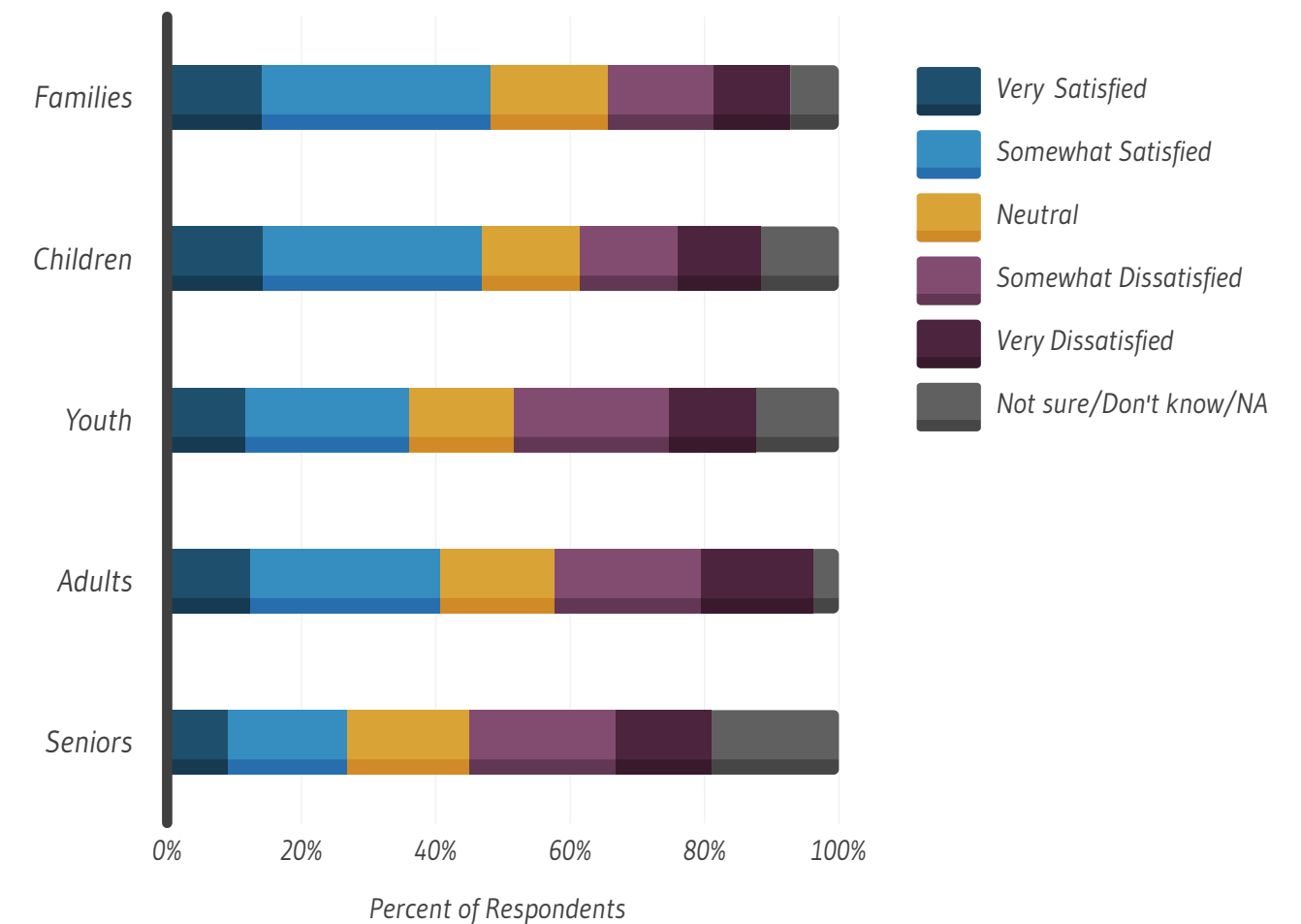
Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:
Cultural facilities in my community are important to my quality of life.



2. Respondents were most satisfied with cultural facilities for families (48%) and children (47%). Respondents were least satisfied with cultural facilities for adults (39%), youth (36%) and seniors (36%).



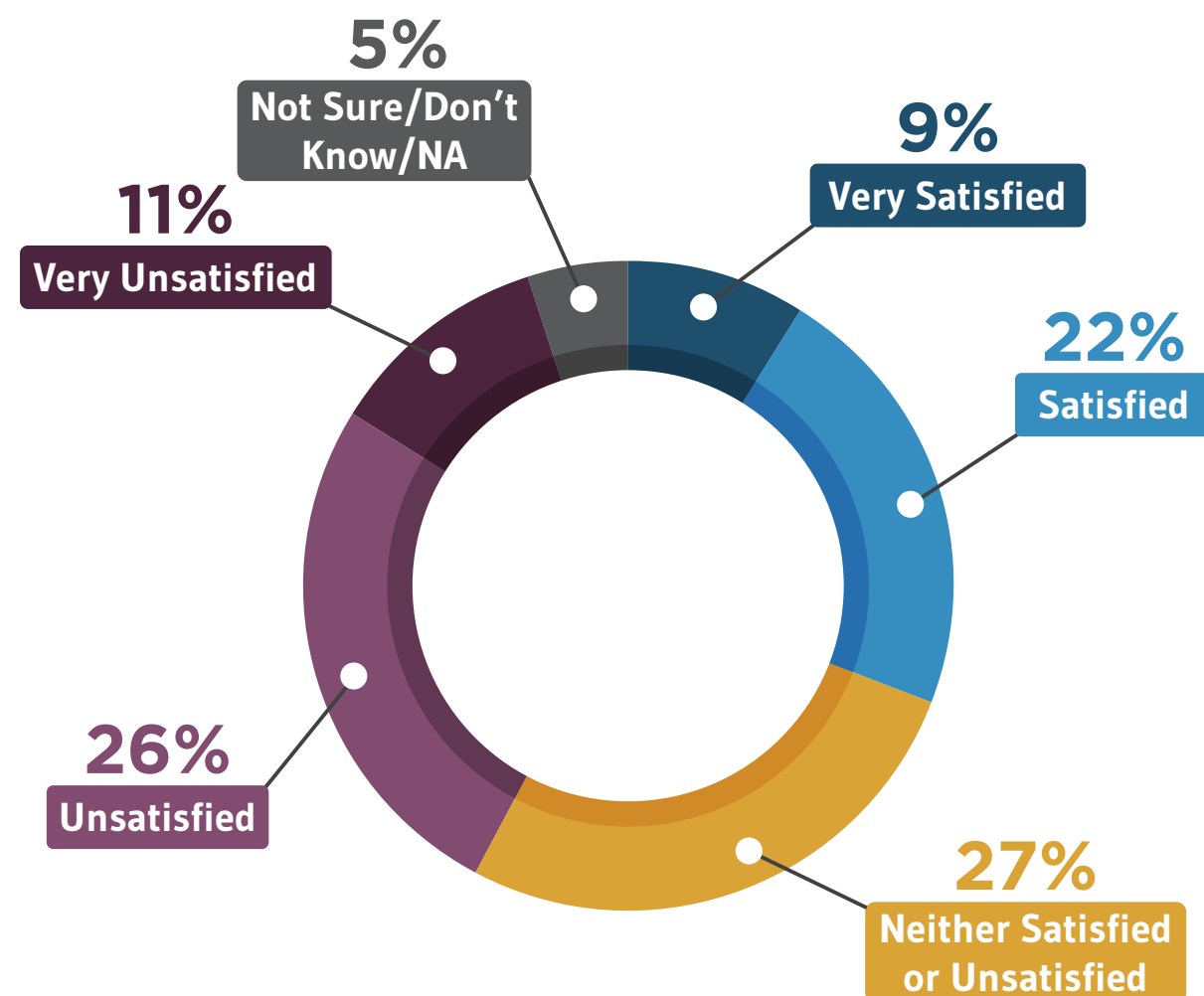
Overall, how satisfied are you with cultural facilities for the following age categories in your community?



3. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with cultural facilities in their community. Twenty-seven percent were neither satisfied or unsatisfied, 26% were unsatisfied, 22% were satisfied, 11% were very unsatisfied, and 9% were very satisfied.



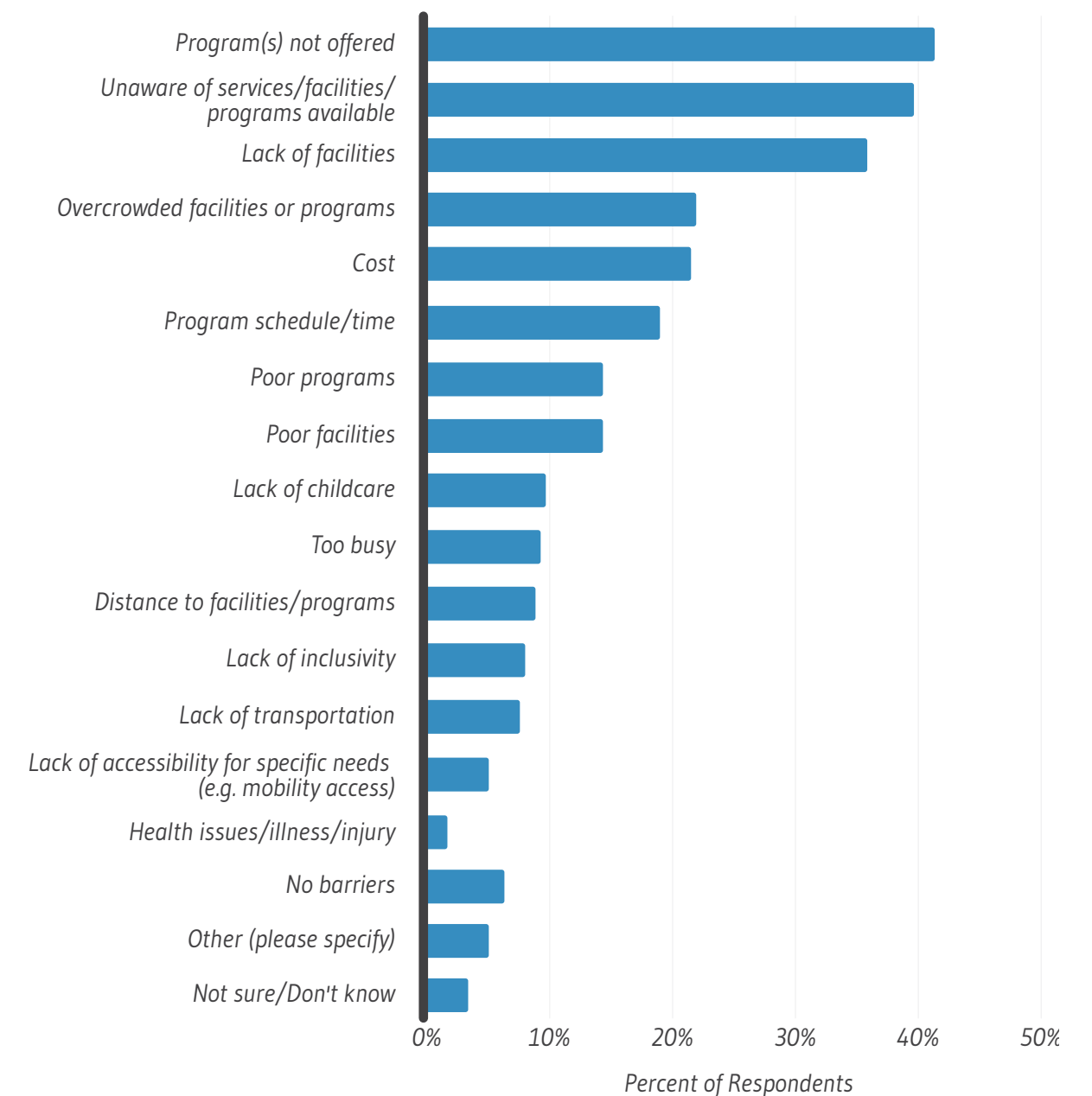
Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with cultural facilities in your community.



4. The top barriers to participating in cultural activities more often were program(s) not offered (41%), unaware of services/facilities/programs available (40%), and lack of facilities (36%).*



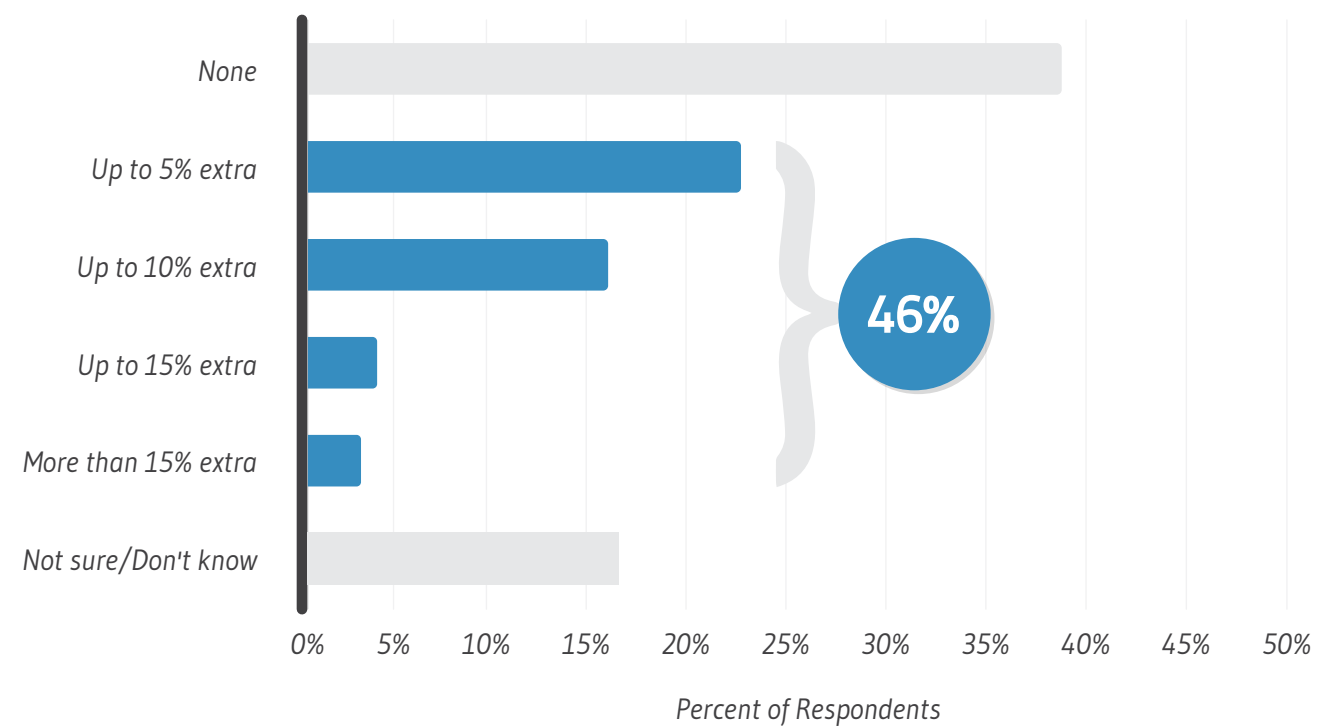
What, if anything, prevents you from participating in cultural activities more often? Please select all that apply.



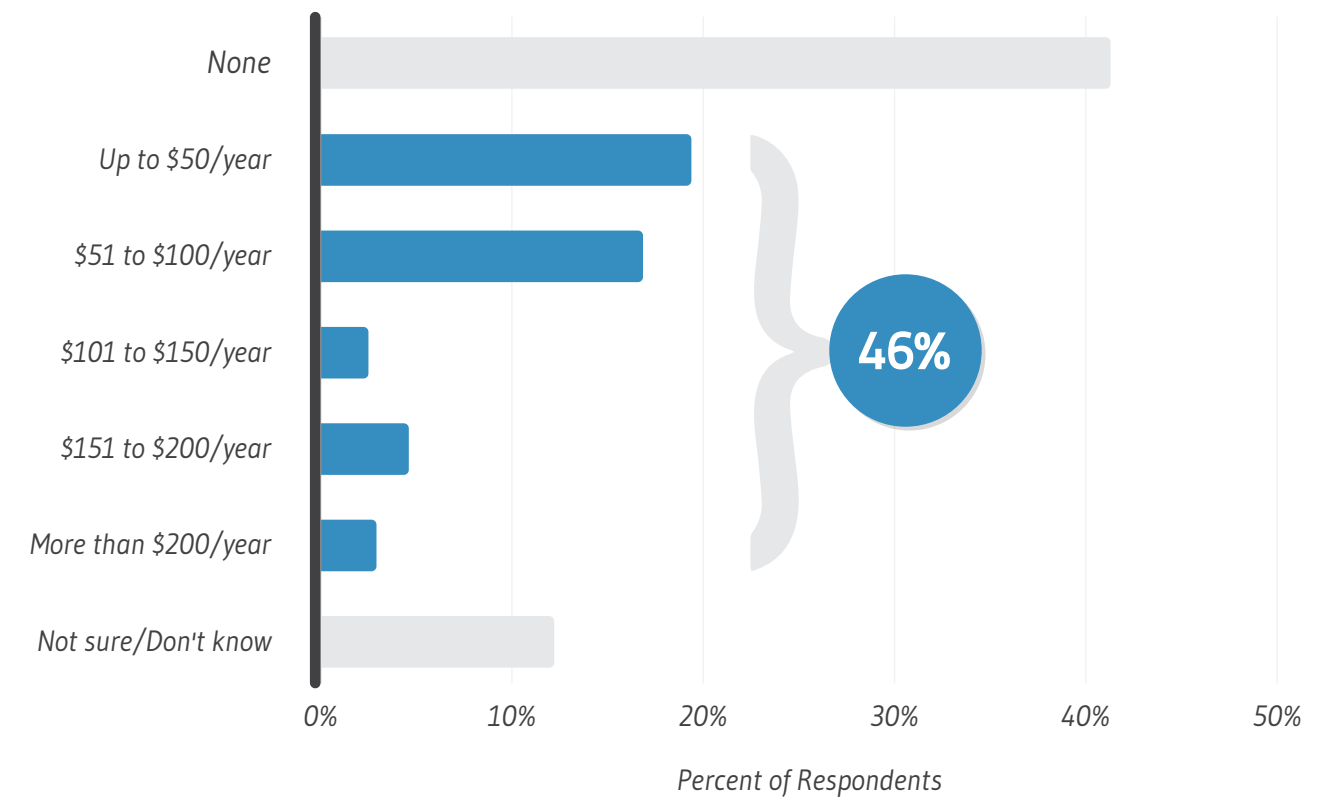
5. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated support for increased user fees to better meet cultural infrastructure needs, whereas 38% did not support increased fees. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that they would support some level of increase to property taxes to better meet cultural infrastructure needs in their community, whereas 41% did not support increased property taxes.



How much of an increase in user fees would you support to better meet cultural infrastructure needs in your community?



How much of an increase in property taxes would you support to better meet cultural infrastructure needs in your community?



*Multiple responses were accepted for these questions, which is why the totals add up to more than 100%.



Cultural Organization Survey

An online survey of cultural organizations in the RMWB was conducted between November 8, 2021 and January 31, 2022. The objective of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of cultural organizations' perspectives in relation to cultural facility needs in the RMWB. The survey was hosted on the Participate Wood Buffalo platform. In total, nine (9) responses were received.

Findings from the Cultural Organization Survey

1. Groups described facility related barriers their organizations experience in meeting the needs of their participants. The quotes below describe some of these barriers further.

"We have used school gyms, but face some barriers there."

"The cost to rent facilities can be prohibitive to our organization."

"Larger spaces tend to be more expensive. As a volunteer run organization, we do not have large budgets and we want to be fiscally responsible while offering excellent programs."

"There are no purpose-built spaces for art making, woodworking, music, sculpture, photography, etc."

"There are no facilities where we can perform outside."

"Funding is the biggest challenge we see."

Punjabi Dance Group at World Meets Wood Buffalo
Photo Credit: Laura Beamish, Fort McMurray Today

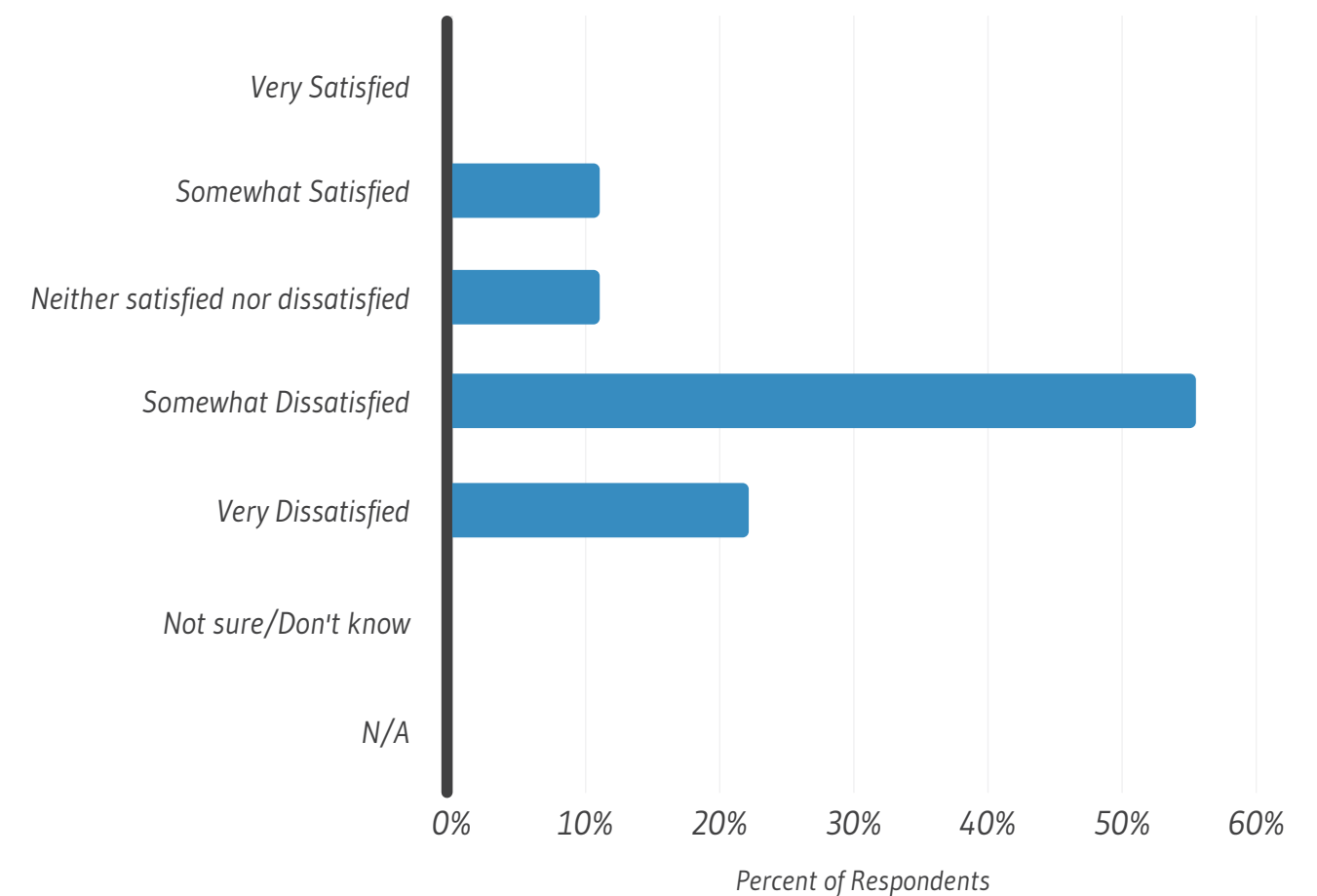
2. Groups also identified new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities that are needed to better serve their organization and their participants. The quotes below describe these further.



3. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with cultural facility provision in the RMWB. Five groups were somewhat dissatisfied, two groups were very dissatisfied, one group was neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and one group was somewhat satisfied.



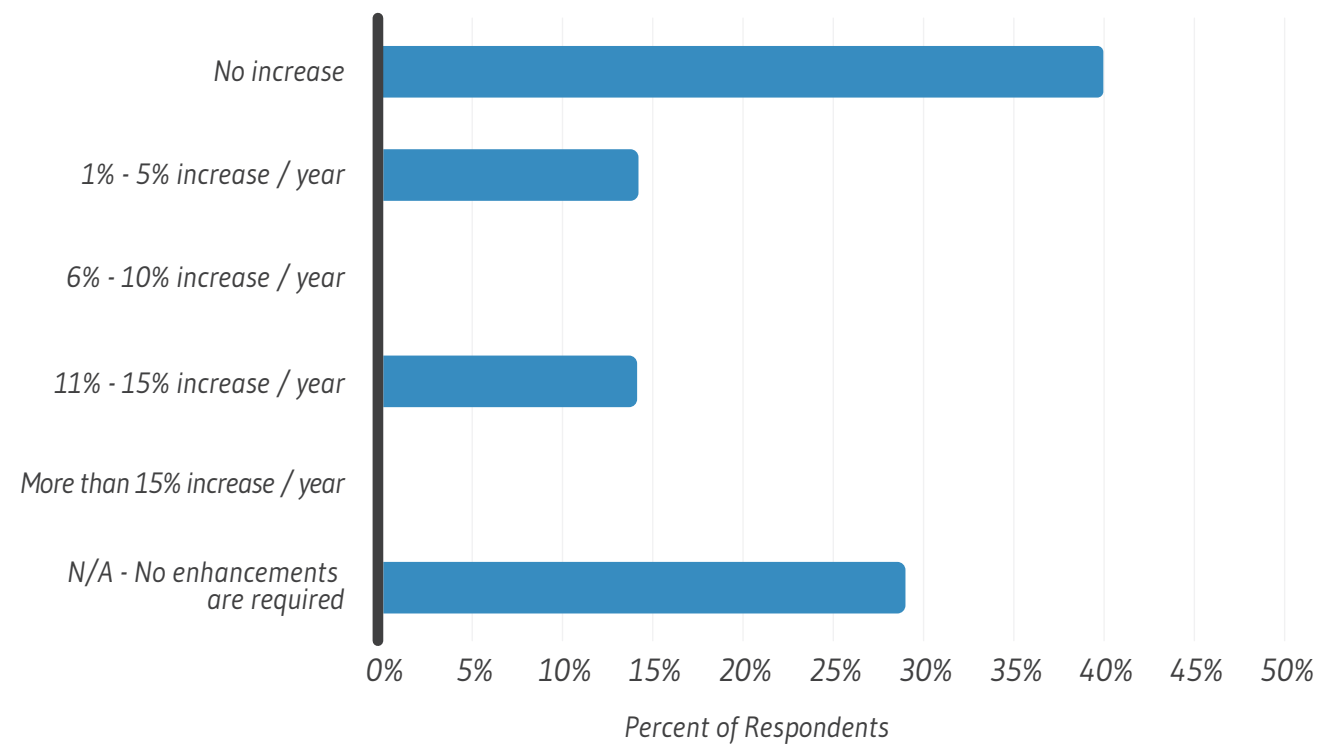
Please rate your level of satisfaction with cultural facility provision in the RMWB.



4. Five groups that responded to the survey are not willing to pay increased user fees for access to enhanced facilities. Two groups were willing to pay increased user fees and two groups felt that no enhancements are required.



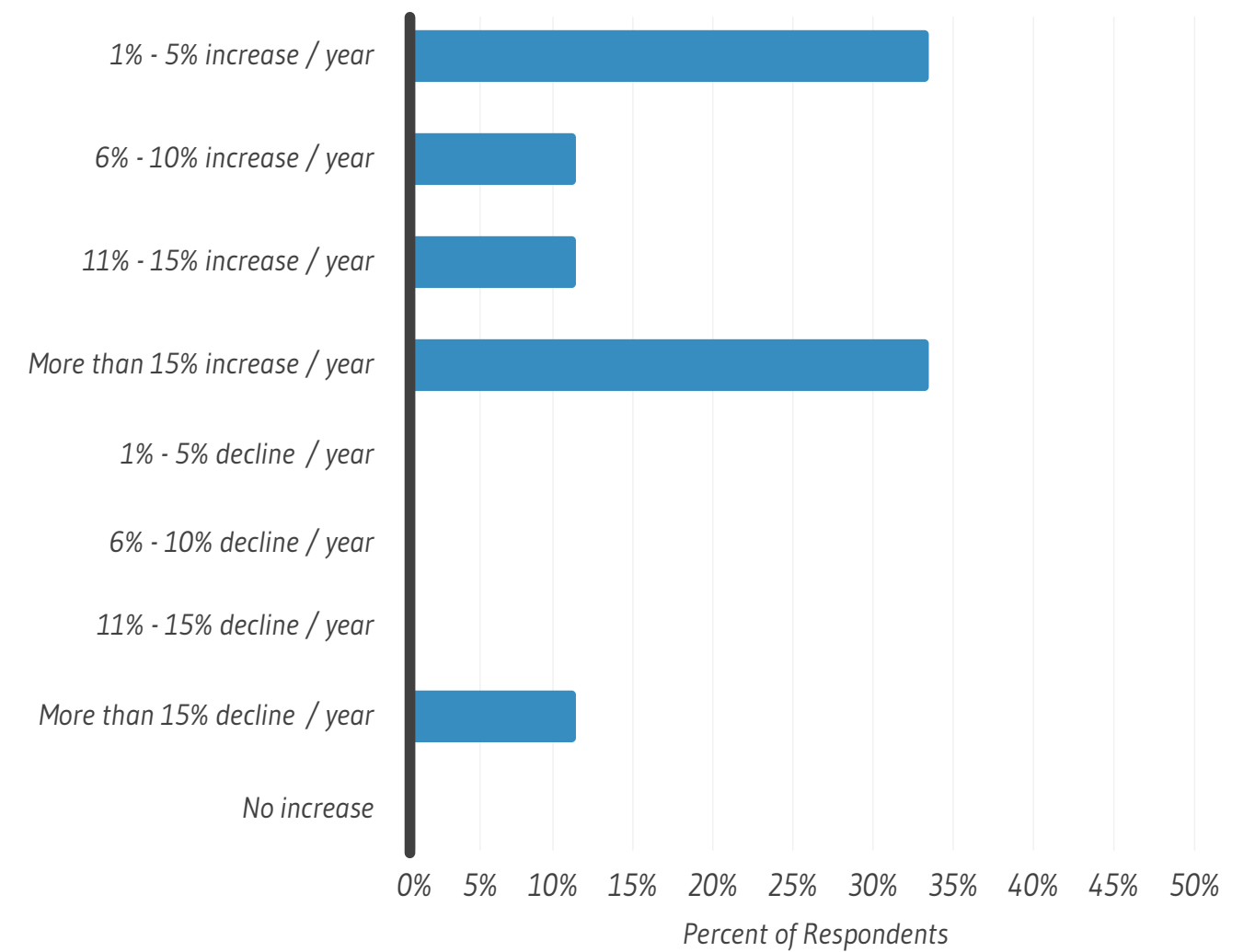
Would your organization be willing to pay increased user fees in order to utilize enhanced facilities?



5. Eight groups project their annual participant base to grow over the next five years. One group anticipates a more than 15% decline in participation.



What are your average annual growth projections for your participant base over the next five years?



Resident Workshops

Four Resident Input Workshops were hosted on November 15th and 30th, and December 6th and 9th. Urban residents of the RMWB were invited to attend the Nov. 15th and Dec. 6th workshops. Rural residents of the RMWB were invited to attend the Nov. 30th and Dec. 9th workshops. In total, eight residents participated in the workshops.



Downtown Fort McMurray
Photo Credit: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo



Urban Resident Workshops

Facility Limitations

Participants were asked to consider cultural programs that are currently limited or cannot be offered in their community due to facility limitations. The following summarizes the input received.

- Cultural dancing
- Language learning
- Theatre
- Music
- Cultural cooking
- Art creation and showcasing

Facility Priorities

Participants were asked to share what they see as the top three (3) cultural facility needs in their community. The following summarizes the input received.

- Commercial kitchen
- Smaller scale performing arts centre
- Large rehearsal space with technology and proper acoustics
- Makerspace/purpose-built space that artists can rent
- Small-scale community stage
- Classrooms for language learning
- Dance studio
- Large space for line/cultural dancing



Art at YMM
Photo Credit: Fort McMurray International Airport



Rural Resident Workshops

Facility Limitations

- There is an overall lack of cultural spaces in communities outside of Fort McMurray.
- Rural artists face challenges in creating and sharing their work because of facility limitations.
- The cost to access some existing spaces is not feasible.
- Need for reasonably priced, accessible facilities where people can go to experience their culture, language, and traditions.

Facility Priorities

- Multiuse cultural space including programming and gathering space that is affordable
- Cultural gift store to sell local artists' wares
- Interactive cultural centre where people can experience Indigenous history through language, artifacts, and storytelling



Youth Workshops

Two input workshops were held with representatives of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Youth (MACOY). The first session was held in December, 2021 and was open to all MACOY members. The second session was held in January, 2022 and was attended by MACOY Arts and Culture Committee members. In total, 19 members participated in the workshops.

Facility Limitations

- Cultural dancing
- Cultural cooking
- Screenings of educational or foreign films
- Music programs
- Workshops (i.e. painting or woodworking)

Facility Priorities

- Large indoor gathering spaces that are affordable
- Multipurpose spaces
- Dance rehearsal space
- Art gallery
- More cultural space uptown in Fort McMurray
- Music rehearsal space
- Utilize existing spaces more fully



Cultural Organization Workshops

Five input workshops were conducted with representatives of cultural organizations in the RMWB. Workshops were held on Nov. 18th, Nov. 25th, Dec. 15th, Dec. 17th 2021, and Mar. 7th, 2022. The majority of attendees represented organizations that were cultural societies, arts and culture-focused groups, cultural facilities, and social service agencies. In total, 36 representatives participated in the workshops.

Facility Limitations

- Performance activities (e.g. music, dance)
- Cultural cooking
- Cultural-related gatherings
- Creative/making activities
- Art showcasing
- Existing facilities are too expensive to rent
- Accessibility and inclusivity could be improved

Facility Priorities

- Community kitchen facilities
- Arts incubator / purpose-built creative space
- Indoor and outdoor gathering spaces for cultural events
- Outdoor festival space with a stage
- Dance/performance studios
- Multipurpose space/classrooms
- Stage
- Art gallery
- Visual arts studio
- Office and meeting space



Anne of Green Gables
Photo Credit: Keyano Theatre.



Indigenous Partner Sessions

Eight input sessions were conducted with Indigenous Partners and/or their representatives. Sessions were held on Nov. 8th, Nov. 25th, Nov. 29th, 2021, Feb. 15th, and Feb. 18th, 2022. In total, 19 representatives participated in the sessions.

Facility Limitations

- Indoor ceremonies, gatherings, and events
- Cultural learning and education spaces (indoor and outdoor)
- Places to practice spirituality
- Existing facilities are not accommodating in terms of ventilation for the use of fire and smoke for ceremonies, such as those using pipes and smudging. There is also a lack of natural firepits.
- Rental costs are a barrier
- Lack of storage
- Supporting Indigenous cultural tourism

Facility Priorities

- Dedicated cultural centres tailored to Indigenous groups that are located in their communities
- Ceremonial spaces (both indoor and outdoor) located in their communities and in Fort McMurray
- Making existing facilities and spaces more welcoming to Indigenous Peoples
- Utilizing existing RMWB-owned facilities and spaces more efficiently



RMWB Staff and Council Appointed Committees Sessions

Five input sessions were facilitated with RMWB staff and Council Appointed Committees. Sessions were held on Jan. 20th, Jan. 24th, Feb. 8th, and Feb. 10th, 2022. In total, 32 participants attended the sessions and were offered the opportunity to provide input.

Facility Limitations

- Creative/maker activities, including digital creation
- Art showcasing
- Not enough dance spaces
- Lack of multipurpose community space at neighbourhood level
- Some rural communities lack facilities
- Accessibility, particularly in rural areas (e.g. affordability, transportation, communication)
- Indigenous cultural gatherings and ceremony (indoor and outdoor)
- Existing facilities are not accommodating in terms of ventilation for the use of fire and smoke for ceremonies, such as those using pipes and smudging. There is also a lack of natural firepits.
- Cultural cooking
- Inclusive preparation spaces (e.g. gender neutral change rooms/washrooms)
- Cost is a barrier

Facility Priorities

- Outdoor event space and support amenities (e.g. power, seating, stage, etc.)
- Professional art gallery
- Creative/maker space
- Being mindful of:
 - › Wants vs. needs
 - › Where facilities are built (e.g. flood plains)
 - › Improving existing facilities before building new facilities
 - › How new facilities will be managed and operated
- Increasing awareness of Indigenous ceremonial needs and how to accommodate these needs at existing facilities

Additional Key Themes

The following additional key themes were developed by the consulting team based on input received through the engagement process. These findings will be used to inform the overall needs assessment.

1

Rental Costs Are a Barrier



The cost of renting facilities was frequently identified by participants in the engagement process as a significant barrier to participating in culture more often. Participants felt that lower rental costs would enable them to expand and enhance their program offerings.

2

Questioning the Need for Additional Cultural Infrastructure



Approximately fifteen percent of respondents to the resident survey and several participants in the other engagement opportunities questioned the need for additional cultural infrastructure. These participants shared sentiments such as:

- Existing facilities should be fully utilized before new facilities are built.
- The RMWB has enough facilities to meet demand.
- There are higher priorities in the community (e.g. flood protection, health, roads, etc.).
- There would be more value in maintaining existing facilities than expanding them or adding new ones.
- Cultural infrastructure is too expensive to build. It is a nice to have, not a need to have.

3

Demand for Decentralized, Community-Level Facilities



Many participants would like to see decentralized cultural facilities that are available on a neighbourhood level. Examples of facilities these respondents would like to see included community halls, community kitchens, and flexible multipurpose gathering and program space.

4

Welcoming and Inclusive Facilities



Some participants thought that more can be done to make facilities welcoming and inclusive to all cultures, abilities, and orientations. For example, stories were shared of the importance of fire and smoke for Indigenous ceremonies and how existing facilities have not made accommodations for these practices. Furthermore, participants felt that the accessibility of the built environment, transportation options, and inclusivity (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms) could all be enhanced to make facilities more welcoming.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored top, is focused on painting a pink flower on a white canvas. She is using a blue and gold paintbrush. A watercolor palette with various colors is visible on the table. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting. A large blue diagonal overlay covers the left side of the image, containing the text '3 NEXT STEPS'.

3

NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

The next steps in the process are to complete the remaining research and analysis activities that will inform the needs assessment and then develop the draft report (currently scheduled for completion in June of 2022).

Thank you for Participating!

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide their input toward the CINA project. The findings from the engagement process will directly contribute to the identification of cultural infrastructure needs.

Stay Informed

Visit rmwb.ca/CINA to sign up for email project updates and learn about future project milestones.



Ballet Performance
Photo Credit: Generation Dance Studio



Canada Day Celebrations
Photo Credit: Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo