

REPORT TO COUNCIL | OCTOBER 19, 2026

Mike Karbonik Arena Community Survey

What We Heard

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Project overview

Council received an overview of a series of eight potential options for consideration, for the nearly 40-year-old Arena, and asked for a clear understanding of public opinion before making any decision.

Consult level

Engagement sat at the Consult level of the IAP2 Spectrum: public input informs Council's decision.

Structured process

The Municipal Engagement Continuum (MEC) sequenced communications, single-phase consultation, and reporting.

One input of many

The report does not recommend an option. That decision belongs to Council.

No decision was made prior to the engagement process being undertaken, and none has been made at this time.

Methodology

Online and paper

Surveys were offered in digital (496 submissions) and print (18) format, with the same questions in both formats.

Four weeks

The survey ran from August 14, 2026 to September 13, 2026, launched at Calmar Days.

Context

Respondents were provided appropriate context to establish a baseline understanding of current state.

Integrity review

All 496 online responses passed checks for duplicates, location, and network patterns.

Comments coded

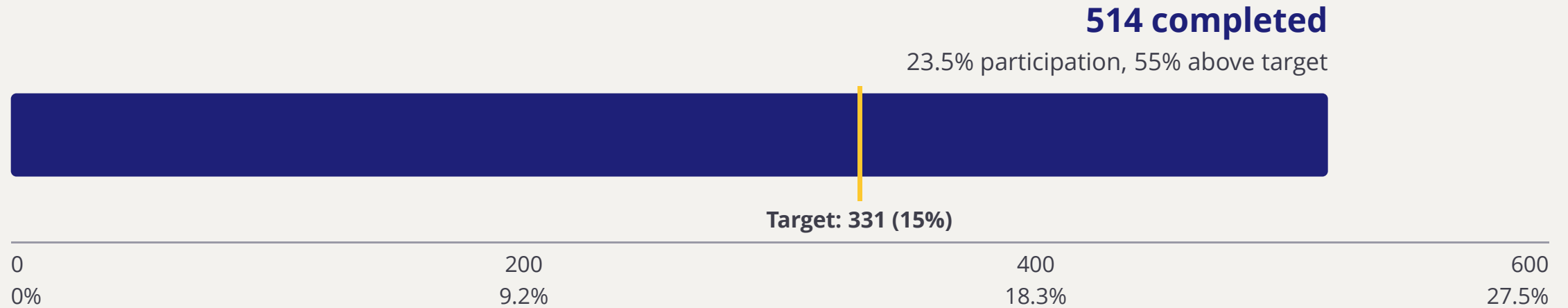
401 written comments were coded by theme. One comment can fit more than one theme.

Anonymous

Responses have been reported in aggregate only; individual responses are anonymous.

Participation

Completed surveys against target



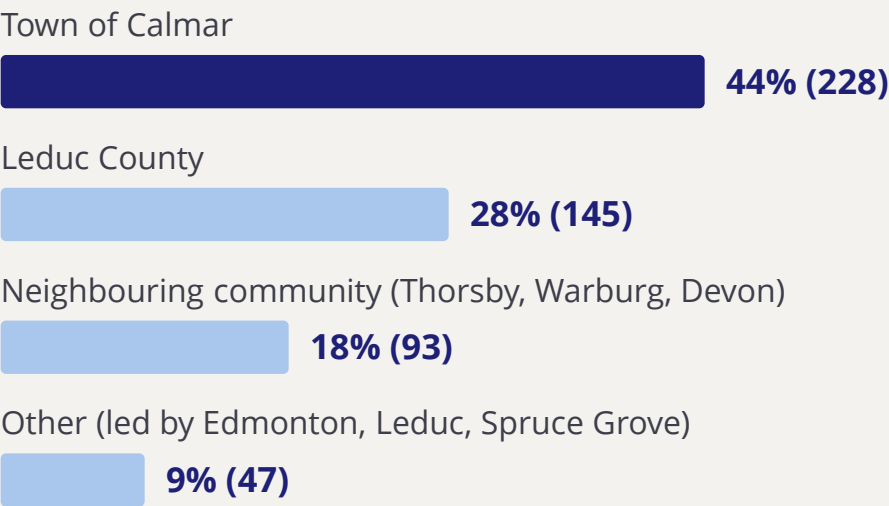
Axis: survey responses, with the matching share of Calmar's population (2,183) beneath.

±4.3 percentage points margin of error, 95% confidence

401 written comments across three open questions

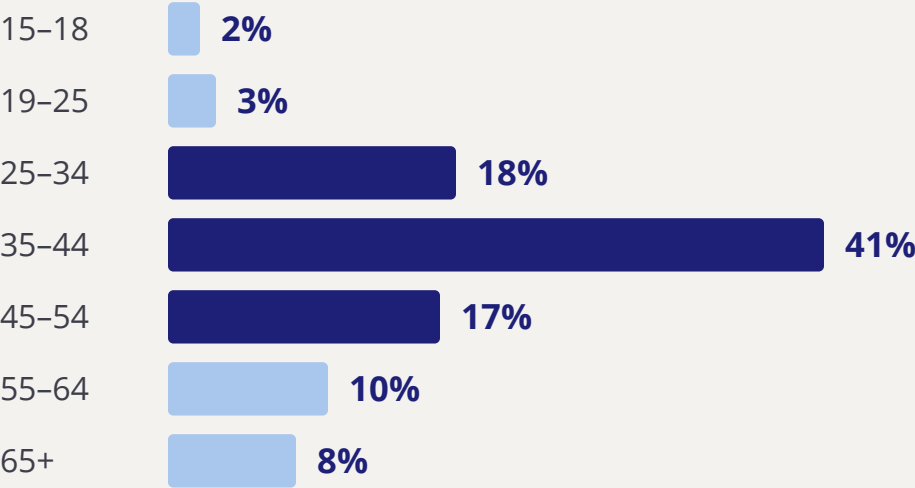
Demographics

Where respondents live (n=513)



Town residents are the largest single group (44%); 56% live elsewhere

Age (n=514)

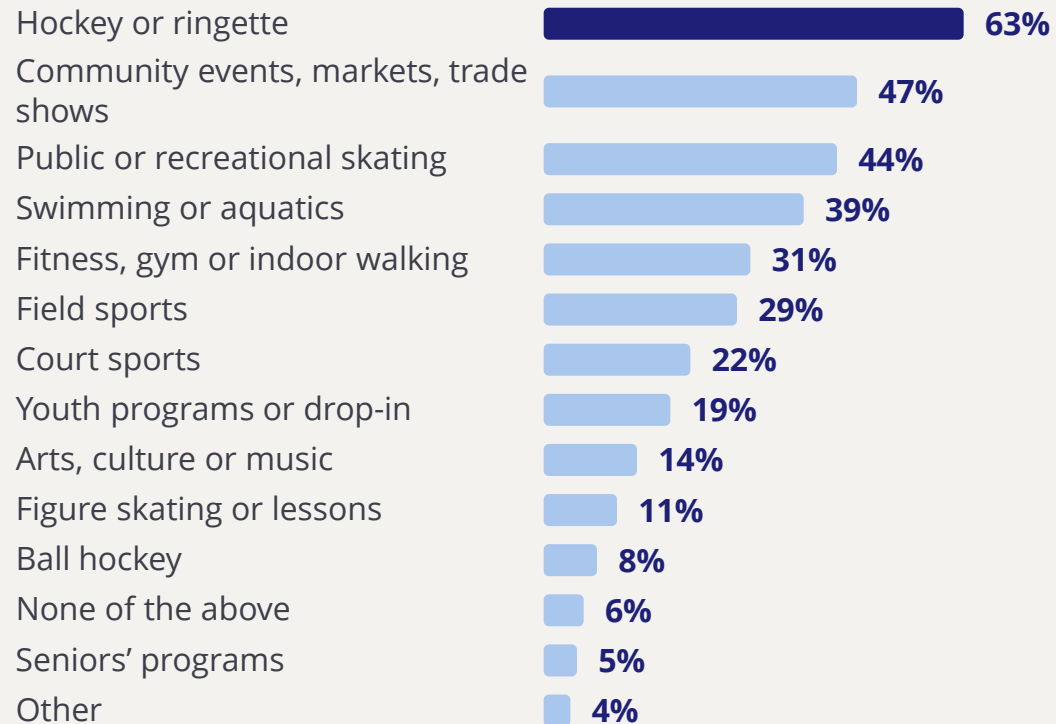


76% aged 25 to 54 (navy bars)

Results combine all respondents. They are not split by place of residence.

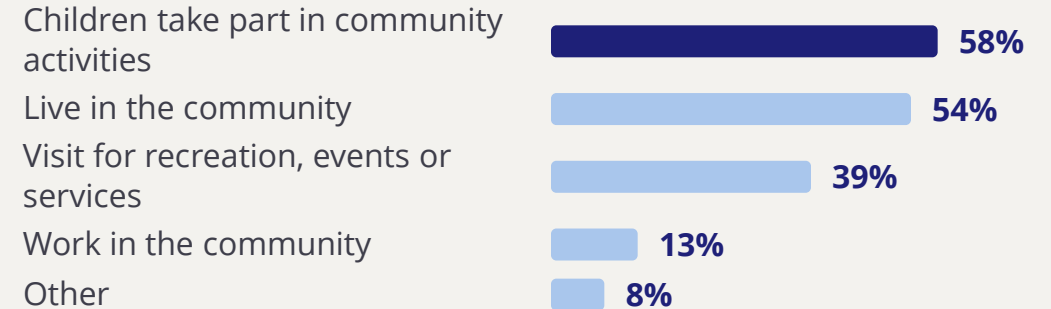
Connection to the Arena

Activities households took part in, past 12 months (n=513, more than one allowed)



63% of households played hockey or ringette; 37% did not

What connects respondents to Calmar (n=512, more than one allowed)



58% connect through their children's activities; 42% did not choose this

Key findings

1

Keeping ice in Calmar

95% say local access to ice is important; 92% say it should weigh in Council's decision.

2

Renewal favoured over removal or sale

Options that keep ice drew majority support; the other four drew majority opposition.

3

Cost matters, but not in isolation

93% of respondents rate operating costs as important, yet the two lowest-cost options were least supported.

4

More than ice, not instead of ice

90% want year-round space for multi-use groups; only about 25% support converting the Arena to non-ice use.

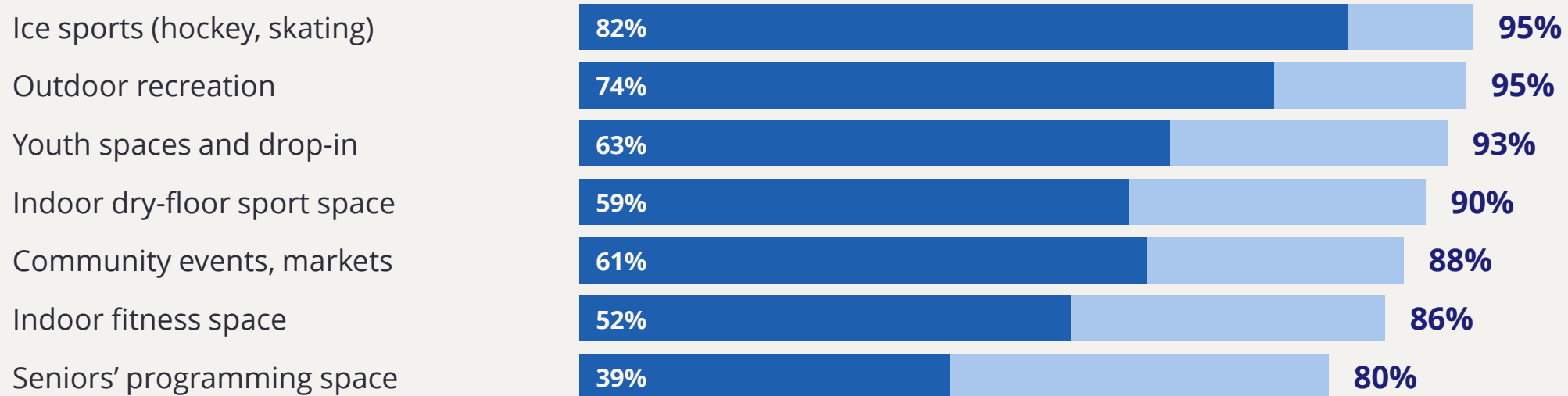
5

Who gets the ice

24% say that current ice schedules don't work for them; ice access recurs across all comment questions.

Local access to recreation, next 5 to 10 years

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important Bold figure = total respondent rating of "important" (very/somewhat) | n=466 to 505 per item



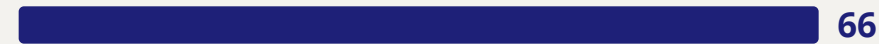
Broad support: every type was rated important by at least 80%.

Strongest feeling: 82% rate ice sports "very important," the highest of any type.

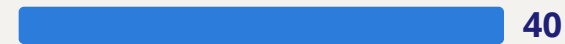
What respondents say is missing

Themes in 154 written responses (approximate counts)

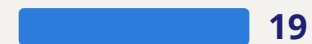
Pool or swimming



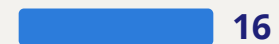
Indoor sport, gym or field house space



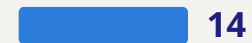
Walking track or trails



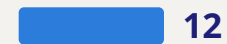
Outdoor fields, diamonds and outdoor rink



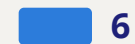
Better access to ice and skating times



Youth programs and activities



Seniors and adult fitness programs



A pool is outside this decision

It is the most requested gap, but none of the eight Arena options includes one. A review of comparable indoor pool facilities show cost estimates running between ~\$28M to ~\$40M.

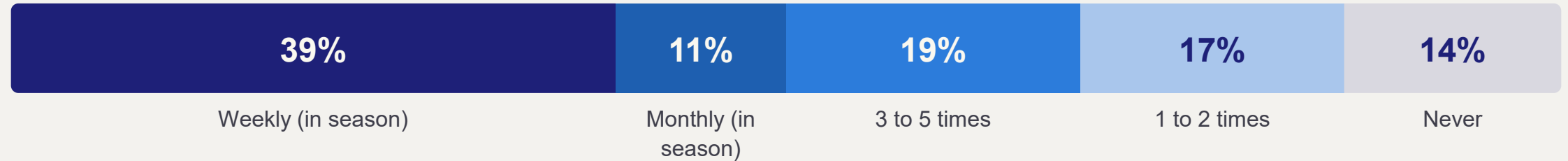
This would require its own feasibility study and discovery process, separate from the scope of the work undertaken here.

"It is very difficult to get ice time in Calmar. Our time slots are often very late and we have trouble filling the roster for the late times."

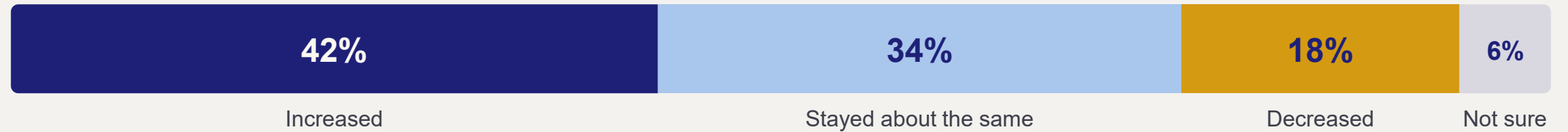
"Year round access to field and gymnasium activity space. Weather restricts access to so many activities..."

How households use the Arena

Use in the past 12 months (n=514)



Use compared with five years ago (n=513)



Each bar adds to 100%. Self-reported use; no registration or attendance data was part of this analysis.

What the Arena means to respondents

90%

agree it is important to Calmar's identity and community spirit

76% strongly agree

73%

agree it is important to their household's regular recreation

56% strongly agree

49%

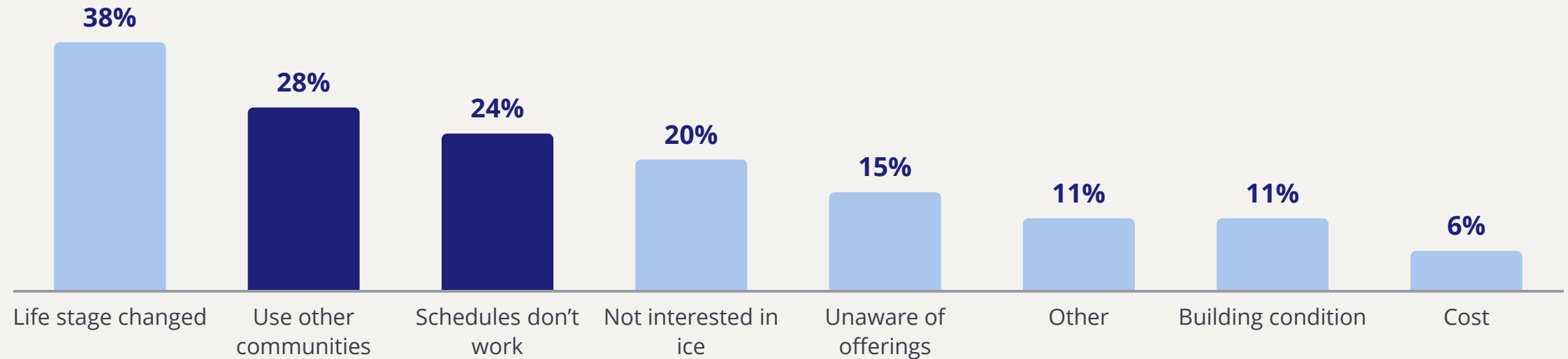
say its condition and amenities affect whether they use it

32% neutral, 19% disagree

Comments on condition named small dressing rooms, no proper dressing room for female athletes, limited seating and challenging bleacher access, and limited lobby space.

Why some households use it less

Reasons selected; more than one allowed (n=287) ■ Access-related ■ Other reasons



After life stage, the leading reasons point to access. Of the “other” answers, 37.5% said ice goes to teams from outside Calmar.

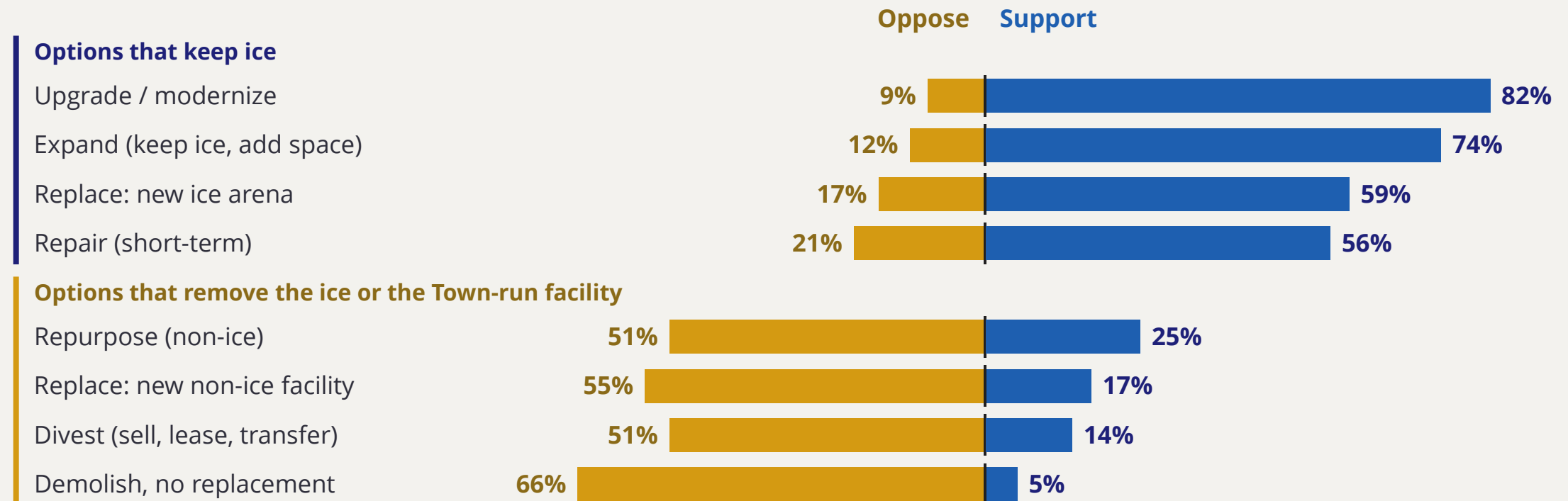
“We still use the arena often, mainly for hockey but the ice times have become less and less so we are traveling more often to Thorsby, Warburg, Leduc.”

Options rated by respondents

Option	What it would involve	Cost range
Repair	Fix critical and safety items; no lifespan reset	\$0.5M–\$5M
Upgrade / Modernize	Renew major systems and accessibility; adds 10 to 25 years	\$2.5M–\$17M
Expand	Keep the ice; add dressing rooms, lobby, community space	\$4M–\$18M
Repurpose	Remove the ice; convert to year-round dry-floor space	\$1.5M–\$14M
Replace (new arena)	New single-sheet ice arena to modern standards	\$12M–\$35M
Replace (new facility)	New multi-use community facility without ice	\$12M–\$55M
Demolish	Remove the building; no replacement at this time	\$0.8M–\$3M
Divest	Sell, lease or transfer to another owner or operator	\$0.1M–\$0.7M

Planning-level ranges as shown in the survey, for comparison only. They are not hard costs.

Support and opposition for each option



Support and opposition each combine “strongly” and “somewhat.” Percentages are of everyone who answered each option; neutral and “not sure” answers are not shown, so rows do not add to 100%. n=447 to 482 per option.

Support vs. cost

Option	Cost range	Support
Upgrade / modernize	\$2.5M–\$17M	82%
Expand	\$4M–\$18M	74%
New ice arena	\$12M–\$35M	59%
Repair	\$0.5M–\$5M	56%
Repurpose (non-ice)	\$1.5M–\$14M	25%
New non-ice facility	\$12M–\$55M	17%
Divest	\$0.1M–\$0.7M	14%
Demolish	\$0.8M–\$3M	5%

The two lowest-cost options (Divest and Demolish) were the least supported.

A new ice arena (\$12M to \$35M) drew more support than Repair (\$0.5M to \$5M).

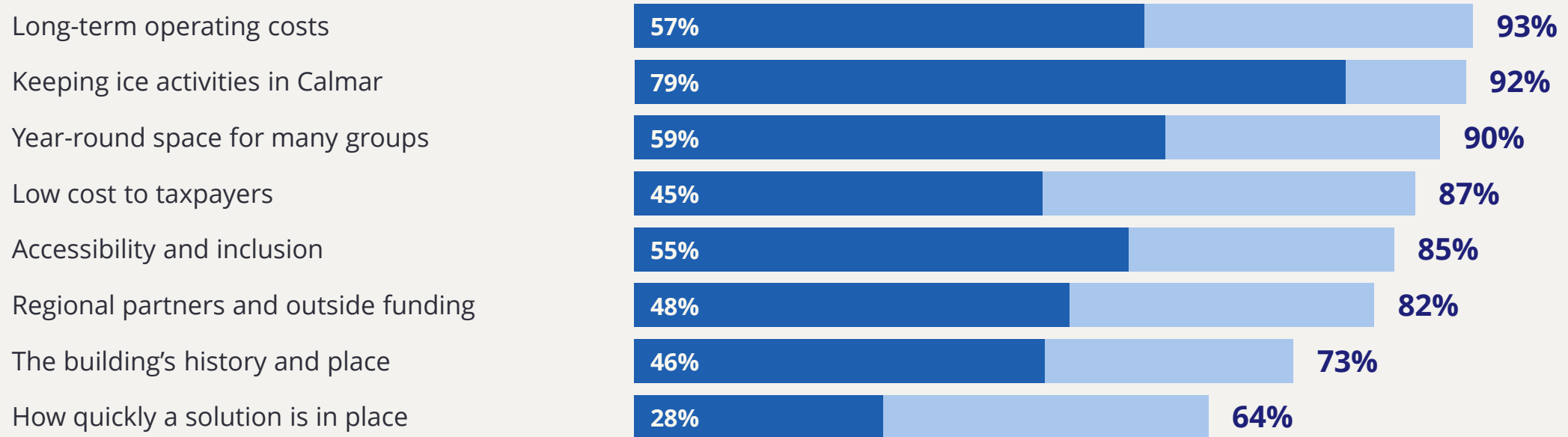
Upgrade and Repurpose have similar ranges; Upgrade drew more than three times the support.

The common thread:

Supported options keep a Town-owned ice arena in Calmar.

Respondents' opinion on what Council should weigh

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important Bold figure = total rate of "important" response (somewhat/very) | n=494 to 507 per factor



Operating costs and keeping ice are hold the top spots as areas residents would like Council to consider in deicison-making. By strength of feeling, keeping ice leads: 79% "very important."

What respondents asked Council to keep in mind

Leading themes in 215 comments (circle area = share of comments)



Misalignment in survey responses

■ What respondents say matters ■ What they chose or experienced

Cost vs. lowest-cost options



93% rate long-term operating costs important

14% support Divest, 5% Demolish (lowest-cost)

Multi-use vs. non-ice



90% want year-round space for many groups

25% support converting the Arena to non-ice use

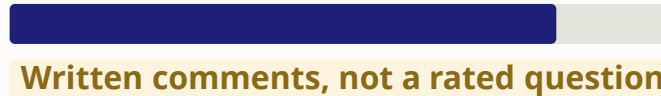
Condition vs. use



49% say condition affects whether they use it

11% of reduced-use answers name condition (n=287)

Regional vs. local



82% rate regional partnerships important

Local teams first for ice, raised in all three

Rising use vs. access



42% report increased use over five years

24% say schedules don't work for them (n=287)

Key trends

Strong

Keeping ice in Calmar

Consider: Treating local ice as a baseline when comparing options

Strong on direction

Arena renewal

Consider: Refining cost, lifespan and tax impact of the leading options

Strong

Cost and taxes

Consider: Capital, operating and per-household tax impact per shortlisted option

Strong

Added community space

Consider: Whether dry-floor, walking or event space fits an ice option

Strong

Ice-time allocation

Consider: Reviewing allocation practices, separate from the building decision

Moderate

Ownership and operation

Consider: Protecting local access and pricing if operation changes

Strong: The finding appears across three or more questions.

Strong on direction: The general direction appears across three or more questions, but support is split among specific options.

Moderate: The finding appears in one or two questions.

Thank you

Questions?



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