

# Mike Karbonik Arena Community Survey

What We Heard Report

September 2026



Prepared by



This report was developed for the Town of Calmar, Alberta, in September 2026 with full objectivity, free of pre-conceived notion or bias, and with the intention of supporting the Town's goals and priorities through this process.

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## Executive Summary

In summer 2026, the Town of Calmar engaged Catalyst Communications Inc. to gather public input on the future of the nearly 40-year-old Mike Karbonik Arena. Though Council was presented a slate of options for the Arena, elected members requested that engagement be undertaken to gain a clear understanding of public opinion before making any decisions.

A methodologically sound survey ran from August 14 to September 13, 2026, with the same questions asked across the digital and hard-copy survey formats. An initial response target of 331 was exceeded, with the final response tally of **514 survey completions** providing Council and Administration with a strong understanding of resident positions relative to the Arena. The 23.5% participation rate nearly doubles the figure identified as statistically valid for this process.

This What We Heard report objectively presents public opinions, inclusive of trend and alignment analysis, with results intended to be reviewed and considered by Council as one input of many, aligned with the principles of good governance.

The following table gives an overview of the key findings from the survey:

| Key Finding                                          | Relevant Data                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Keeping ice in Calmar                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>95% of respondents said local access to ice sports is important over the next 5 to 10 years. Of those, 82% said “very” important, the highest of any recreation type.</li><li>92% said keeping ice in Calmar should be an important factor for Council to consider in decision-making (79% “very” important).</li><li>90% agreed the arena is important to Calmar’s identity and community spirit.</li></ul> |
| Renewal favoured over removal or sale                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The four options that keep ice drew majority support: Upgrade (82%), Expand (74%), Replace with a new ice arena (59%), and Repair (56%).</li><li>The other four options (Repurpose, Replace with a non-ice facility, Demolish, and Divest) drew majority opposition, led by Demolish (66% opposed).</li></ul>                                                                                                |
| Cost matters, but does not decide support on its own | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>93% said long-term operating costs should be important, and 87% said the same of cost to taxpayers.</li><li>The two lowest-cost options (Divest and Demolish) were the least supported.</li><li>Cost and taxes were the second most common theme in comments to Council.</li></ul>                                                                                                                           |
| More than ice, but not instead of ice                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>90% want space that many groups can use year-round, and 90% value indoor dry-floor space.</li><li>Only around 25% support converting the arena to non-ice use. Respondents want added space alongside the ice.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Who gets the ice                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>24% of those answering said schedules or ice times do not work for them, and 28% use facilities elsewhere.</li><li>Local access to ice time came up in written comments across three separate questions.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Section 1 – Methodology and Participation

The survey was built to give Council a clear, neutral read on community views. On the other side of the equation, residents were provided context about the Arena’s age and condition, as well as an overview of options for the Arena’s future that may be considered. Those are reflective of the eight options Council heard as information in a public meeting, with the survey providing a plain description and a planning-level cost range for each.

Engagement was undertaken at the “Consult” level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation<sup>1</sup>, and structured using the Municipal Engagement Continuum<sup>2</sup> (MEC), which sequences Communications, Consultation, and Reporting and Decision-Making through a consistent process framework within a local government context, specifically. The MEC is complementary to the IAP2 Spectrum, which aligns with the level of public influence, while the MEC establishes the process for influence to be sought, analyzed, and reported.

Launching at Calmar Days on August 14, 2026, survey was hosted digitally on the Calmar public portal of the Engage Local platform (through Command Post). A printed version of the survey was designed with Calmar branding, with the same wording and questions as the online survey. Following survey close on September 13, 2026, completed hard-copy surveys (18) were returned to the Town Office, and responses were manually input into Engage Local for full-view analysis across all 514 survey respondents.

### 1.1 Participation

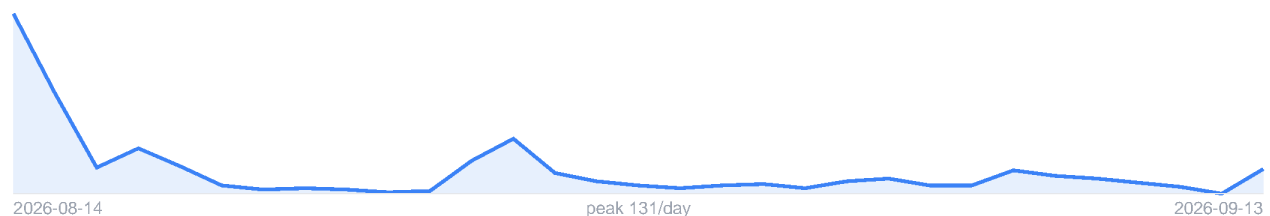


*Figure 1. Survey responses per day reported between August 14 and September 13, 2026.*

The survey received 514 responses. Each question was answered by all respondents, except the two text questions, as these were optional (Questions 7, 10 and 14). Each figure notes its own response base.

This survey’s respondent count of 514 represents a participation rate of 23.5% against Calmar’s population of 2,183<sup>3</sup>, carrying a margin of error of about  $\pm 4.3$  percentage points, with a 95% confidence level. This exceeded the high-level goal of around 15% participation rate, and far exceeds the required submission and validity rate for statistical validity.

Of the 514 respondents, 56% self-identify as living outside the Town. Collecting responses from bordering communities was intentional, as the Arena is used regionally, and Calmar families use arenas

<sup>1</sup> IAP2 Canada © 2026

<sup>2</sup> Catalyst Communications Inc. © 2026

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

and recreation facilities in the Town’s neighbouring communities, as well. However, results in this report represent a combined view of all respondents, meaning they are not split by place of residence.

A total of 63% of respondents noted their household have participated in hockey or ringette over the last year; 39% stated they use the arena weekly in-season.

## **1.2 How written comments were analyzed**

The survey gathered 401 written comments across three questions: recreation respondents feel is missing (Question 7, 154 comments), “other” reasons for reduced Arena usage (Question 10, 32 comments), and what Council should keep in mind in its decision-making (Question 13, 215 comments).

Each written response was analyzed individually and coded by theme; a comment could fit more than one theme. Themed comments were then grouped, with sentiment analysis conducted within those thematic groupings and for the question more broadly.

Exact quotes are shared within this report, without any change made to structure, content, or context; some light spelling corrections were made. Quotes were chosen in alignment with identified themes across open-ended questions, including critical views. However, comments that contained information identifying a respondent or someone they’re referencing, those which included inappropriate or discriminatory language, and those that made claims about individuals, were not quoted in this report; they were still counted in themes.

## **1.3 Response integrity**

The platform used for survey hosting (Engage Local / Command Post) identifies signals to ensure response integrity across completed surveys, flagging any responses identified as anomalous for manual review. This testing can only occur on surveys completed digitally, and includes such considerations as the country in which the survey was completed, and if in Canada, in which province or territory; the number of surveys submitted per individual IP network; duplicate submissions, or those in which responses are similar enough that it is statistically unlikely they were made by different people; and other such considerations.

All 496 surveys completed online passed the integrity review.

## **1.4 Privacy and data handling**

Survey responses were anonymous. Respondents could choose to share an email address for project updates; submitted email addresses were stored apart from survey-specific responses, and do not appear in this report.

Results are reported in combined form only. Survey records are held by the Town of Calmar and Catalyst Communications Inc. for reporting purposes, and are handled in line with the Province of Alberta’s access to information and privacy legislation.

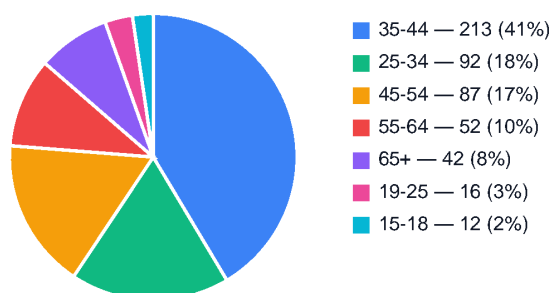
# SURVEY RESULTS

Town of Calmar | Mike Karbonik Arena Community Survey: What We Heard

## Section 2 – Who Responded

The first four questions of the survey gathered basic demographic information, as context to both survey participation and response-specific framing.

### 2.1 Age



Adults aged 35 to 44 made up the largest group, at 41%. Together, people aged 25 to 54 made up three in four respondents (76%). This matches a survey that reached many parents of young athletes. Adults 65 and over made up 8%, and people under 25 made up 5%. The age groups 19 to 25 and 25 to 34 overlap at age 25. This is a minor wording issue and does not change the overall pattern.

Figure 2. Age of survey respondents (n=514).

### 2.2 Where respondents live

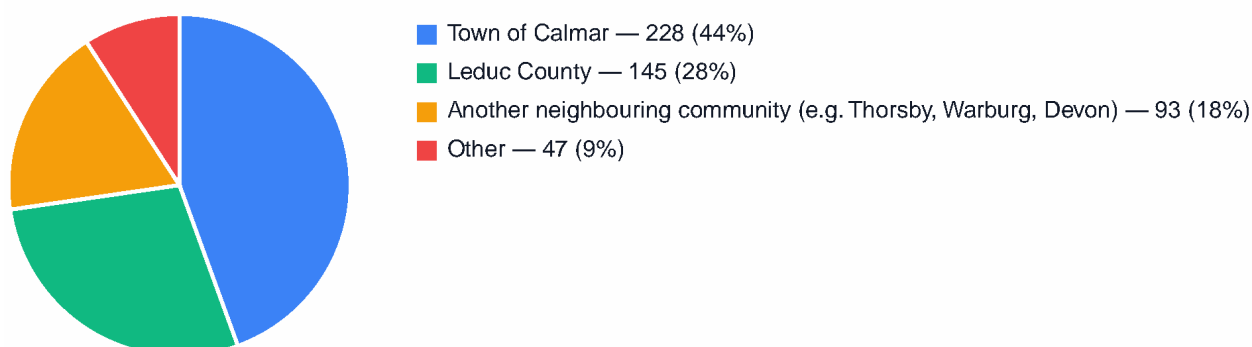


Figure 3. Where respondents live (n=513\*).

Town of Calmar residents made up the largest single group of survey respondents, at 44%. However, the majority (56%) of respondents self-identified as living elsewhere, split across Leduc County (28%); a nearby community such as Thorsby, Warburg, or Devon (18%); or another place (9%). “Other” answers were led by Edmonton (13), Leduc (6), and Spruce Grove (4).

The Arena serves a region, not only the Town. People who live outside the Town use and value the arena. How costs are shared across the region is outside the scope of this survey.

\* Quantitative questions with a respondent rate below the total count of 514 represent instances in which a hard-copy survey respondent skipped a required question.

## 2.3 Connection to Calmar



Figure 4. What connects respondents to Calmar; more than one answer allowed (n=512).

The most common tie to Calmar was children who take part in local activities (58%). Just over half (54%) said they live in the community. That is 10 points higher than the share who self-identify as living in the Town (Question 2).

Many County residents near Calmar see themselves as part of the Calmar community. Another 39% visit for recreation, events, or services.

## 2.4 Time in the Calmar area

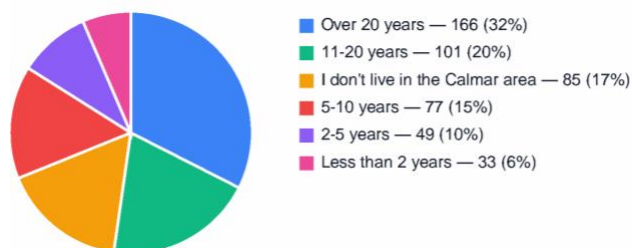


Figure 5. How long respondents have lived in the Calmar area (n=511).

Just over half of respondents (52%) have lived in the Calmar area for more than 10 years. Newer residents were also well represented, with 16% of respondents stating they've lived in the area for fewer than five years. Only 17% said they do not live in the Calmar area at all. Read with Question 2, this suggests that most people from Leduc County and nearby towns see Calmar as their home area.

## Section 3 – Recreation Needs and Habits

### 3.1 What households take part in

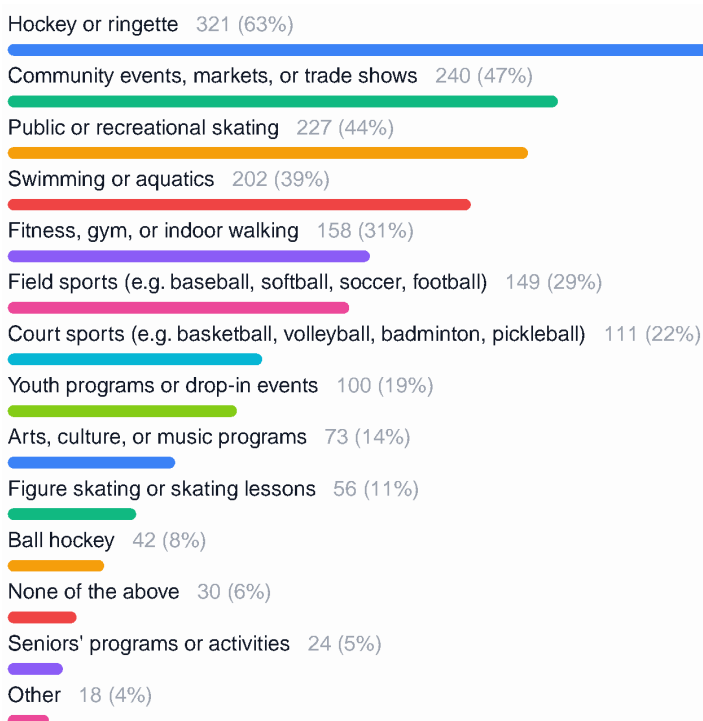


Figure 6. Q5: Activities households took part in over the past 12 months, in or outside Calmar; more than one answer allowed (n=513).

Hockey or ringette (63%) led by a wide margin over all other activities selected. This aligns with later findings that respondents prefer ice space over alternate Arena uses.

Community events and markets accounted for 47% of responses, in second place, followed by, public skating (44%), and swimming (39%). Few survey respondents stated that they, or anyone in their household, took part in seniors' programs (5%). Finally, 6% stated that they did not take part in any of the listed activities.

Swimming matters for a different reason: 39% of households swim, and the written comments show many travel to other communities to do so (Section 3.3).

### 3.2 Local access priorities

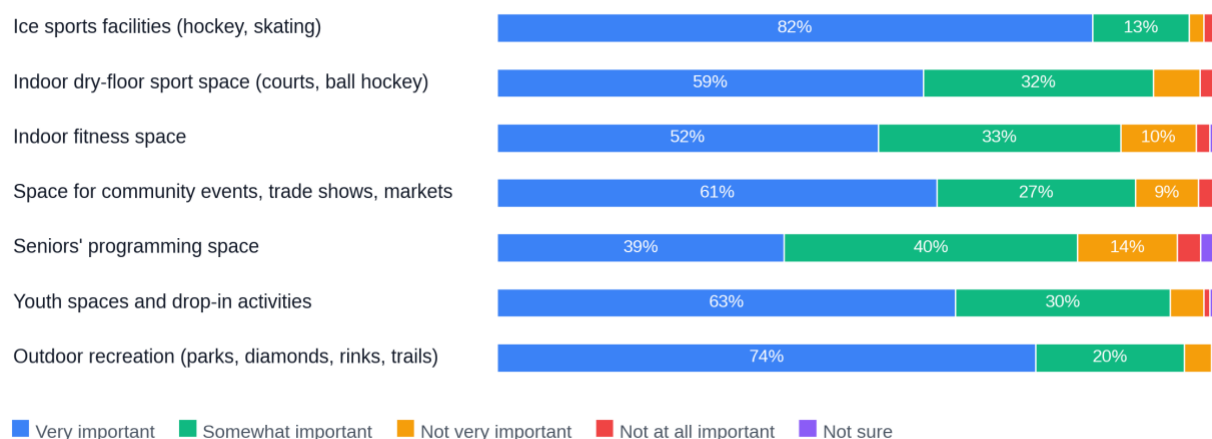


Figure 7. How important local access to each type of recreation is over the next 5 to 10 years (n=466 to n=505 per item).

Survey respondents value a broad mix of local recreation. Every type listed was rated important by about 80% or more of those who answered. Ice sports ranked first, with 82% rating local access very important, and 95% rating it important overall. Outdoor recreation (95% overall, 74% very important) and youth spaces (93% overall) came next.

Indoor dry-floor space (90%) and space for community events (88%) also rated highly. These are the uses the non-ice options outlined in Section 5 would provide. Seniors' programming space had the lowest "very important" rating (39%), though 80% still rated it important overall.

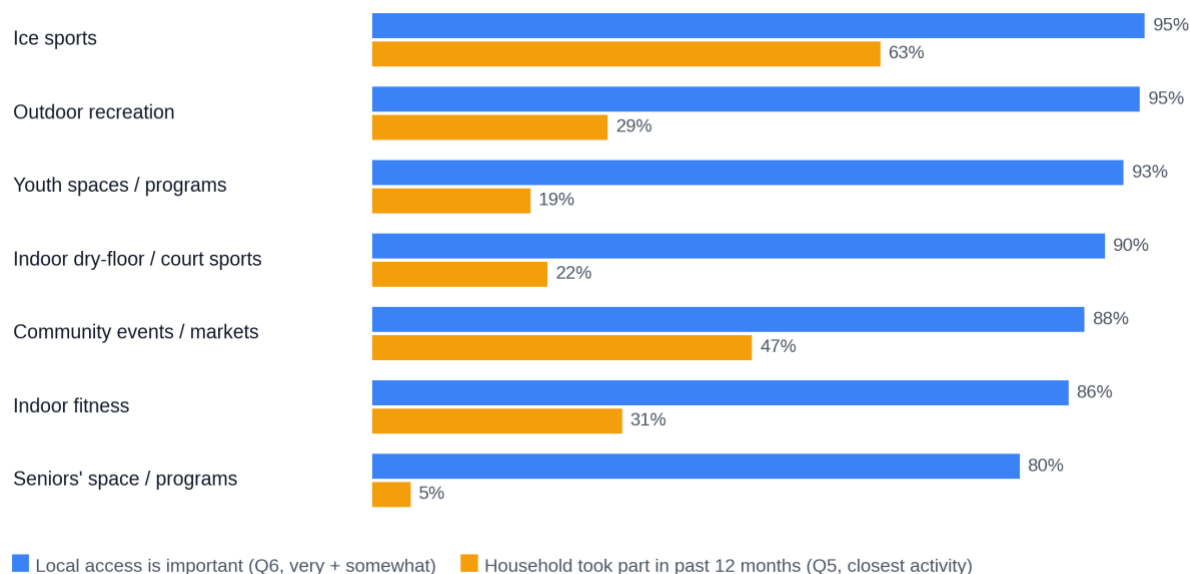


*Figure 8. Local access rated important (Q6) compared with household participation in the closest matching activity (Q5). Activity matches were aligned between ice sports and hockey or ringette; outdoor recreation and field sports; youth spaces and youth programs; dry-floor and court sports; event space and community events; fitness space and fitness, gym, or indoor walking; seniors space and seniors' programs.*

Comparing Questions 5 and 6 shows that people value local recreation beyond what their own household uses. Only 5% of respondents identified having taken part in seniors' programs, yet 80% said local seniors' space is important. The same pattern holds for youth spaces (19% take part, 93% state as important) and dry-floor sports (22% and 90%).

### 3.3 Missing or hard-to-access recreation

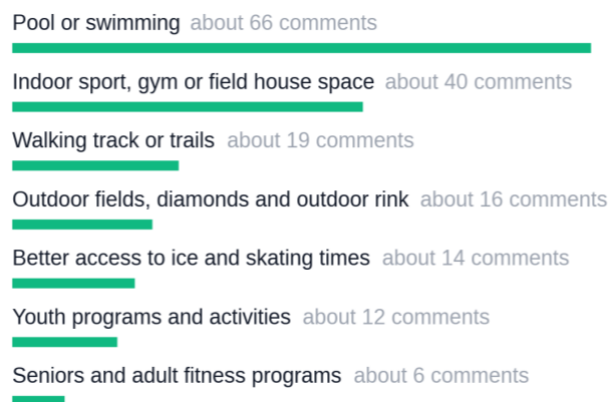


Figure 9. Themes in written comments on missing recreation (154). A comment can fit more than one theme.

Survey respondents were asked what recreation is missing or hard to access in Calmar. An open-ended written question, 154 of the 514 (30%) survey respondents provided a written response. Of those, two said nothing is missing. Comments were coded and themed to identify recurring trends.

A pool or swimming was the most common request, raised in about 43% of comments. Several people noted the drive to Leduc for lessons and swimming. A few others said a pool is not realistic for a town of Calmar's size, or would cost too much to run.

*"Swimming. Pretty universal. Nobody hates an indoor pool. Ice sports can be made outside. Outdoor rinks. Can't swim in the winter outdoors."*

*"I feel like a pool is an unrealistic goal for a town this size but would be great. A place to do indoor activities like volleyball etc would be nice."*

While a pool is the most recurring respondent-identified recreation gap in the community, it is not included anywhere in the eight Arena options presented to Council and outlined in the survey. Development of a municipal swimming pool would represent a significant capital investment. Based on recent comparable municipal aquatic facilities, a new indoor pool could reasonably require an investment ranging from \$28 million to \$40 million, depending on size and scope. A technical feasibility assessment would be required to consider the development of a pool, either as an Arena retrofit or replacement; this goes beyond the scope of this engagement.

Indoor sport space was recorded most frequently amongst respondent-identified recreation gaps, accounting for around 26% of comments. People asked for a gym, field house, courts, indoor soccer, or an indoor walking track (often citing it as a need in the winter, specifically). Close to 10% of respondents raised access concerns for the existing Arena ice surface, stating it is difficult to get ice times, and the times available are often inconvenient; others requested public skating opportunities.

*"Year round access to field and gymnasium activity space. Weather restricts access to so many activities that have broader participant base and limited equipment/fees requirements."*

*"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."*

## Section 4 – The Arena Today

This section examines respondents' current and historical use of the Arena.

### 4.1 Frequency of Arena use

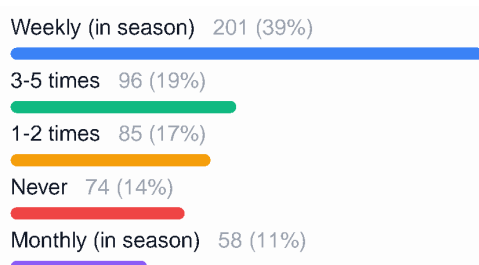


Figure 10. How often households used the Mike Karbonik Arena in the past 12 months (n=514).

Half of respondents self-identify as regular arena users. Nearly four in ten households (39%) used the arena weekly in-season, and another 11% stated they used it monthly.

About a third of respondents (35%) used it a few times (1 to 5 visits), and 14% did not use it at all in the past year.

### 4.2 Change in use over five years

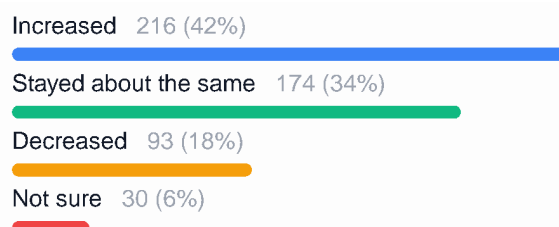


Figure 11. Change in household use of the arena compared with about five years ago (n=513).

While not tied to concrete attendance numbers, self-reported usage rates indicate growing Arena use among respondent households.

Over 40% of respondents said their use has gone up in the past five years, while around a third (34%) stated it has stayed the same. Another 18% of respondents said it has gone down, and 6% said they are unsure.

### 4.3 Reasons for reduced Arena usage

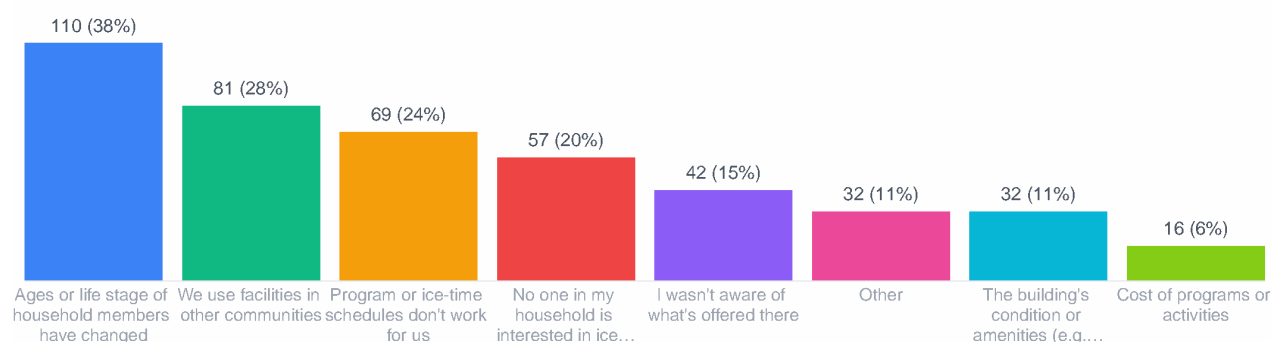


Figure 12. Reasons households do not use the arena or use it less; more than one answer allowed (n=287).

Respondents who identified a reduction in Arena usage were asked to identify the reason they use the facility less. The most common response was a change in life stage, such as children growing up (38%). While that's a natural occurrence, other reasons point to access: 28% of respondents stated they use facilities in other communities, while 24% said program or ice-time schedules at the Arena do not work for them. Only 11% named the building's condition, and 6% named cost.

As noted, this question was meant for households that use the arena less or not at all; based on Questions 8 and 9, this group amounts to approximately 170 people, but 287 people responded to the question. From analytical perspective, this points to misalignment of experience. When asked whether they use the Arena, respondents largely stated steady or increasing usage; when faced with reasons for lower usage rates, respondents either identified barriers despite using the facility, or reconsidered their position.

Of the 11% of respondents who selected “other,” 37.5% raised a shared concern that ice time is allocated to teams from outside Calmar, leaving local teams with inconvenient ice times or pushing them to play in other communities. This aligns with written responses on hard-to-access recreation facilities, which cited both barriers to ice time, and a desire for more local-specific programming, such as community skates.

*“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 more often.”*

*“Local kids have to travel to Thorsby and Warburg.”*

## 4.4 Value to households and the community

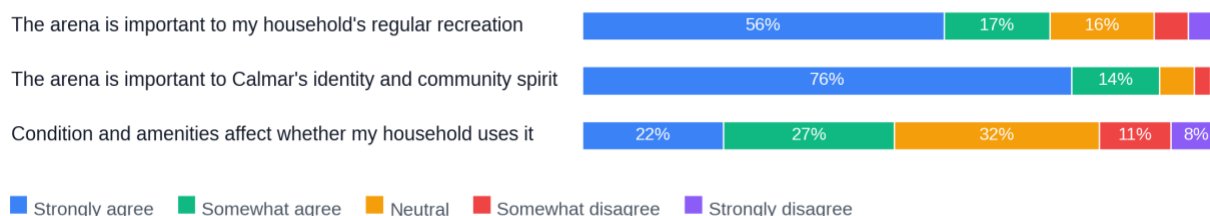


*Figure 13. Agreement with statements about the arena (n=501 to n=509 per statement).  
[Third statement in full: “The building’s current condition and amenities affect whether my household uses it.”]*

In responding to questions about the Arena’s value, 90% of survey participants agreed with the statement that it is important to Calmar’s identity and community spirit, with 76% stating that they strongly agree. Seventy-three percent said it is important to their own household’s recreation.

Views on the building’s condition were mixed. Just under half (49%) agreed its condition and amenities affect whether they use it (32% neutral; 19% disagree). Written comments on the topic named specific issues with the Arena’s condition or usefulness, with many specifically referencing dressing rooms as small, and stating there are no proper dressing room for female athletes. Additional comments included limited seating and lobby space, and bleacher access.

## Section 5 – Options for the Arena’s Future

Respondents read short background information on the Arena’s current condition, along with the eight options that had already been presented to Council in a public meeting. The table below represents the descriptions and planning-level cost ranges shown in the survey, who were then asked to rate each of the eight options Council had received. Respondents were then asked to rate each of the eight options Council has received.

| Option                        | What it would involve (as described in the survey)                                                                                                                        | Cost range      |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Repair</b>                 | Fix critical and safety items so the arena can keep running in the short term. Does not renew major systems or reset its lifespan.                                        | \$0.5M – \$5M   |
| <b>Upgrade / Modernize</b>    | Major renewal of the single-sheet arena, such as mechanical systems, ice plant, safety, and accessibility (including dressing rooms). Extends lifespan by 10 to 25 years. | \$2.5M – \$17M  |
| <b>Expand</b>                 | Keep the ice and add new space, such as dressing rooms, lobby, and community-use areas.                                                                                   | \$4M – \$18M    |
| <b>Repurpose</b>              | Remove the ice and convert the building to year-round, dry-floor, multi-use space.                                                                                        | \$1.5M – \$14M  |
| <b>Replace (new arena)</b>    | Build a new single-sheet ice arena to modern standards.                                                                                                                   | \$12M – \$35M   |
| <b>Replace (new facility)</b> | Build a new multi-use community facility without ice.                                                                                                                     | \$12M – \$55M   |
| <b>Demolish</b>               | Remove the building and clear the site, with no replacement at this time.                                                                                                 | \$0.8M – \$3M   |
| <b>Divest</b>                 | Sell, lease, or transfer the arena to another owner or operator. Use, access, and pricing would depend on the agreement.                                                  | \$0.1M – \$0.7M |

*Table 1. The eight Arena options and planning-level cost ranges, as presented in the survey. Ranges are presented as estimates for comparison, and not as hard costs.*

### 5.1 Support for each option

Results fall into two groups. The four options that keep ice all drew majority support, while the other four (removing the ice, or handing the arena to another owner or operator) drew majority opposition.

- **Upgrade / Modernize** had the broadest support, at 82%, with only 9% opposed. Just over half (52%) supported it strongly.
- **Expand** followed at 74% support. It had the highest share of strong support of any option (54%).
- **Replace with a new ice arena** drew 59% support and 17% opposition.
- **Repair** drew 56% support. It also had the most neutral answers (22%), which suggests many respondents hold no strong opinion on the option, one way or the other.
- **Demolish** was the most opposed option, at 66%, with only 5% support.
- **Replace with a new non-ice facility** (55% opposed), **Divest** (51%), and **Repurpose** (51%) were also opposed by a majority.

Demolish and Divest also had the most “not sure / need more info” responses, at 14% each. Demolish was also skipped more often than any other option.

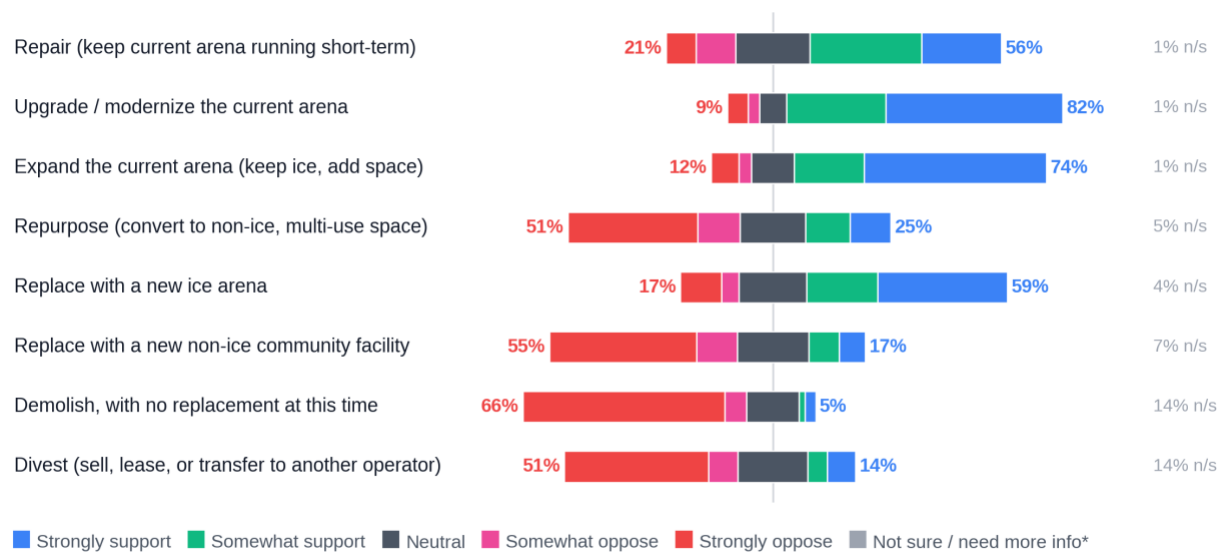


Figure 14. Support and opposition for each option, based on what respondents knew at the time (n=447 to n=482 per option).

## 5.2 Support compared with cost



Figure 15. Total support for each option (strongly and somewhat support), with the planning-level cost range shown in the survey. Blue: keeps ice. Orange: replaces ice with other uses. Red: no Town-run facility.

Placing support next to cost shows estimating pricing did not materially impact which options were favoured. The two lowest-cost options, Divest and Demolish, were the least supported. A new ice arena, at \$12 million to \$35 million, drew more support than Repair, at \$0.5 million to \$5 million. Repurpose and Upgrade have similar cost ranges, but Upgrade drew more than three times the support.

What sets the supported options apart is that they keep a Town-owned ice arena in Calmar. This does not mean cost is unimportant, as shown in Section 6.

## 5.3 Council considerations

An optional, open-ended question asked respondents what Council should keep in mind as it weighs the Arena options, drawing 215 comments, many of them detailed.

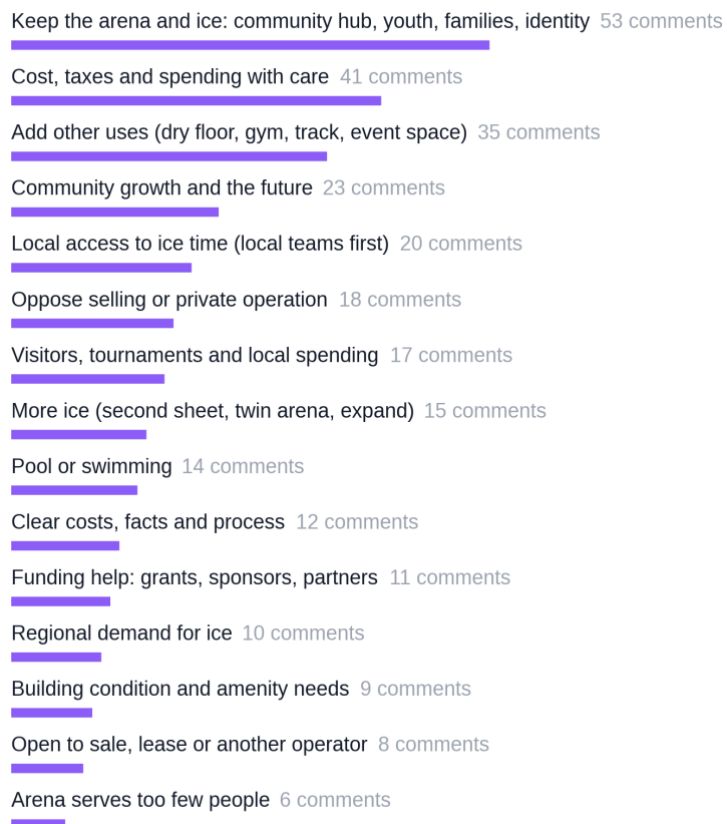


Figure 16. Themes in written comments on what Council should keep in mind (215 comments). A comment can fit more than one theme.

**Keeping the arena and its ice** was the largest theme, appearing in 25% of comments.

*"This arena is the heart of the community. It would be so sad to take that away. In winter, the arena is always busy."*

*"Having the arena is big for my family. We enjoy being close and not needing to travel at this time with young kids for hockey and public skating."*

**Cost, taxes, and careful spending** came next, appearing in 19% of comments. Several people noted that while they support keeping ice, that support depends on the tax impact. A handful of comments questions whether the Arena serves enough people locally to justify the spending required for the Arena, regardless of option pursued.

*"I like all options keeping ice in Calmar. However if the options increase our already very high taxes I do not want those options."*

*"Is it worth having 1,000 households funding hundreds of thousands of dollars so a handful of children from Calmar can use the arena for 5 months of the year."*

**Adding other uses** came up in 16% of comments, with requests for a dry-floor, gym, walking track, and/or event space added to an ice facility, rather than replacing it. Another 7% of comments requested the facility be expanded to include more ice, with comments referencing the perceived need for a second ice sheet or twin arena.

*"I would like to see an option that includes replacing the arena with a new facility that has both ice and other purposes."*

**Local access to ice time** (9% of comments) and **visitors and local spending** (8% of comments) show two sides of the same issue. Some people want local teams served first, while others see outside rentals as potential income for the Town and customers for local businesses. Some comments held both views at once.

*“Increasing ice times (expanding) the rink or upgrading it can bring additional groups and members to the community which can increase sales for other local businesses. Local groups should get priority for ice allocation.”*

*“The arena generates extra revenue for the town from outside groups that can’t get ice in surrounding communities.”*

**Selling or handing over the arena** was mentioned across 12% comments; of those 69% were against, while 31% were open to the idea. Some comments suggested that a local group run the facility, while some noted that selling it could help to offset local tax rates.

*“Divesting will just see private leagues or firms buy the facility and restrict access to local community groups and people.”*

*“I wouldn’t be opposed to having sponsors or transferring to another operator, if it meant we kept a recreation centre.”*

**Clear costs, facts, and process** came up in 6% of comments. People asked for a current building assessment (the last was conducted in 2015), clearer tax impacts, and narrower options. A few asked for a public vote on the issue. *(Note: except where legislatively required or driven, the MEC identifies plebiscite/referendum as an abdication of elected duty.)*

*“I think once the feedback is organized the options should be narrowed down and more descriptive. This was very hard to even select an option with such little descriptions and such large gaps in dollars and use.”*

Additional themes include growth and planning for the future (11% of comments); seeking grants, sponsors, or partners (5%); and analyzing regional demand for ice (5%).

While not recurring frequently enough to qualify as a trend, a couple of comments came from those living directly adjacent to the Arena, who raised concerns with noise, traffic, and privacy; they asked that any decision on the Arena be made in consideration of those living around it.

## Section 6 – Priorities and Trade-Offs

Respondents were asked to identify what they believe to be the level of importance associated with various considerations inherent to Council’s decision-making role.

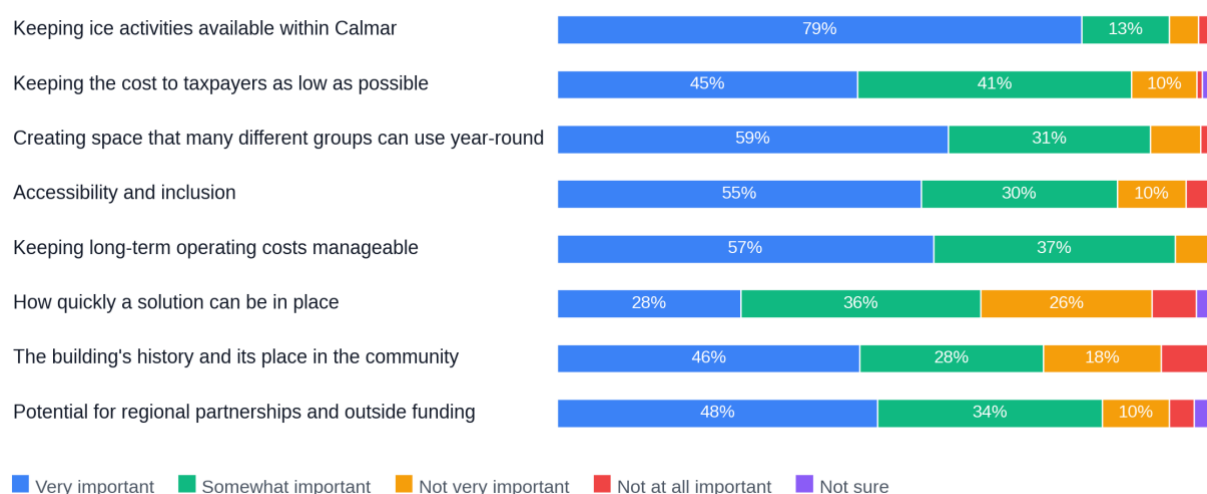


Figure 17. How important each factor should be in Council’s decision (n=494 to n= 507 per factor).



Figure 18. Factors ranked by share of responses rating them as important (very or somewhat).

The results can be read two ways. By total importance, keeping long-term operating costs manageable (93%) and keeping ice in Calmar (92%) are tied at the top. Close behind are creating space many groups can use year-round (90%), and keeping costs to taxpayers low (87%) are close behind.

By strength of feeling, keeping ice was rated very important by 79% of respondents, compared with 59% for multi-group space.

Just 57% of respondents noted operating costs as “very important,” while 45% placed that high level of importance on taxpayer cost.

Speed ranked as less important than cost and ice-sheet retention. Just 64% of respondents said that how quickly a solution is in place should be considered as an important factor; a third said it is not important. The building’s history ranked lower (73%) than practical factors.

## Section 7 – Analysis Across Questions

This section compares answers across questions. Findings that repeat across different questions carry more weight than single-result analysis, allowing for proper trend identification, as well as the identification of potential misalignment across resident opinions. The latter is valuable in understanding where trade-offs exist.

### 7.1 Agreement trends

| Trend                                     | Trending questions     | Evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Keeping ice in Calmar is the top priority | Q6, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ice rated highest for local access (82% very important), and as community identity (90% agree).</li><li>The four Arena options that keep the ice were most supported, while the other four were opposed.</li><li>Keeping the ice received the highest comment share.</li><li>79% stated that keeping the ice is “very important.”</li></ul>                               |
| Cost is a real concern                    | Q7, Q10, Q13, Q14      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Operating costs (93%) and taxpayer cost (87%) rated important.</li><li>Cost second-largest comment theme for Council considerations.</li><li>Cost was named as a barrier in by 6% of respondents.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                               |
| People want more than ice                 | Q6, Q7, Q13, Q14       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dry-floor space (90%) and event space (88%) are stated as valued.</li><li>Indoor space was the second most common recreation amenity noted as missing in the community.</li><li>A high comment share focused on added uses, in addition to the ice sheets rather than replacing them.</li><li>Multi-group spaces were rated as important by 90% of respondents.</li></ul> |
| Local control and access matter           | Q10, Q12, Q13          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The option to divest was opposed by 51% of respondents.</li><li>Ice-time access was raised recurrently in written responses to all open-ended questions.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Demand for the arena is strong            | Q8, Q9, Q13            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Half of respondents identified that they use the Arena weekly or monthly.</li><li>42% say they’ve increased their Arena usage.</li><li>Recurring comments were submitted that reference either regional ice shortages or requests for additional ice sheets.</li></ul>                                                                                                    |

*Table 2. Findings supported by more than one survey question.*

### 7.2 Areas of misalignment

Comparing questions also shows five places where results do not line up in a simple way. Each is described below.

**1. Cost is a top concern, but the lowest-cost options are the least supported:** Respondents rated cost among their top priorities, but opposed the two most cost-effective Arena options, while supporting a new ice arena that could cost up to \$35 million. The comments explain how these fit together. Many respondents stated that they support keeping ice, but that their support depends on the tax impact.

**2. People want multi-use space, but reject non-ice options:** 90% of respondents stated they want space many groups can use year-round, but just 25% support converting the arena to non-ice use, and only 17% of participants support a new non-ice facility. To respondents, “multi-use” means ice plus other

uses, not ice replaced by them; this is supported by the option to expand the Arena (keeping ice and adding space), supported by 74% of respondents.

**3. Building condition shapes the experience more than it drives people away:** Half of respondents (49%) said the building's condition affects whether they use it, but only 11% named the Arena's condition as a reason they use the arena less. People keep coming despite the building's limits, which speaks to the strong support for the option to upgrade the Arena (82%).

**4. Local access and regional use pull in different directions:** Despite the largest single-community share of respondents being Calmar residents (44%), a majority share of respondents live outside the Town (56%). While 82% of all respondents identified that they value regional partnerships, written comments specifically requested that local teams should be given priority for ice team. Both views are held, sometimes by the same person. While ice allocation is an Arena consideration of relevance to this process, any decisions regarding how ice time is allocated would live in policy.

**5. Rising use, but less access:** More than 40% of respondents say their use of the Arena has grown, but 24% say schedules don't work for them, and many comments describe late or lost ice times. This speaks to scheduling challenges that come with a single ice sheet, aligned with a fair number of comments requesting more ice.

### 7.3 Themes across qualitative questions

| Theme                               | Q7: Missing recreation | Q10: Using the arena less | Q13: What Council should keep in mind    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Local access to ice time            | Yes (about 14)         | Yes (about 12)            | Yes (20)                                 |
| Indoor dry-floor or multi-use space | Yes (about 40)         | Yes (a few)               | Yes (35)                                 |
| Pool or swimming                    | Yes (about 66)         | Yes (1)                   | Yes (14)                                 |
| Building condition and amenities    | Yes (a few)            | Yes (1)                   | Yes (9)                                  |
| Youth activities                    | Yes (about 12)         | No                        | Yes, within the largest theme            |
| Cost and taxes                      | Yes (a few)            | No                        | Yes (41)                                 |
| Selling or private operation        | No                     | No                        | Yes (26 in total, 18 against and 8 open) |

*Table 3. Theme presence across the three written-comment questions. "No" means the theme did not come up, which may reflect the question asked rather than a lack of concern.*

Four themes came up in all three comment questions, to varying degrees: local access to ice time, indoor dry-floor space, a pool, and building condition.

## Section 8 – Summary

The 514 responses provide clear trends. Respondents want ice to stay in Calmar, and they want it done at a cost the community can carry. They favour renewing or expanding the arena over removing, replacing without ice, or selling it. They also want the facility to serve more people, for more of the year.

| Theme                                                                                          | Directional evidence                                                                                                        | Not answerable from this data                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Keeping ice in Calmar is the community's top priority, in every question that tested it</b> | Support for keeping ice is conditional on tax impact for some respondents.                                                  | Whether Town residents on their own share the combined views, given the high response rate by those outside the community. |
| <b>Options that keep ice are supported; options to remove, sell, or demolish are opposed</b>   | The option to expand fits both the desire for ice and for multi-use space.                                                  | How much of a tax increase respondents would accept.                                                                       |
| <b>Cost (near- and long-term) is a top concern</b>                                             | High demand for additional ice and non-ice recreation opportunities, is qualified by cost as a high-priority consideration. | Whether demand trends will hold; no registration or usage data was used in this engagement analysis.                       |
| <b>People want added year-round space alongside ice</b>                                        | Concerns about local access to ice time are prevalent, and demand for multi-use recreation space is high.                   | The building's current condition, as the last assessment was in 2015; usage rates for potential future amenities.          |

*Table 5. Evidence-based summary of survey findings.*

| Issue                          | Evidence            | What the survey shows                                                                                    | What the input supports considering                                                  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Keeping ice in Calmar</b>   | Strong              | Top priority across five questions; ice options supported, others opposed.                               | Treating local ice as a baseline expectation when options are compared.              |
| <b>Arena renewal</b>           | Strong on direction | Upgrade (82%), Expand (74%), and new ice arena (59%) supported.                                          | Refining costs, lifespan, and tax impact for the leading options.                    |
| <b>Cost and taxes</b>          | Strong              | Operating costs (93%) and taxpayer cost (87%) important; recurring comments across all written responses | Showing capital, operating, and per-household tax impact for each shortlisted option |
| <b>Added community space</b>   | Strong              | Dry-floor, event, and multi-group space valued by about 90%                                              | Whether dry-floor, walking, or event space can be added to an ice option             |
| <b>Ice-time allocation</b>     | Strong              | Raised across written comments; 24% say schedules don't work.                                            | Reviewing and explaining ice allocation practices, separate from building decision.  |
| <b>Ownership and operation</b> | Moderate            | Divest 51% opposed; concerns about fees and local access.                                                | Respondents want local access and pricing protected.                                 |

*Table 4. Decision-support summary. Owners, targets, and timelines are left to Council and Administration. Evidence is rated "Strong" where a finding appears across three or more questions, and "Moderate" where it appears in one or two.*

Trends identified in this report stem directly from resident feedback; the report does not recommend a path forward or option for the Arena. That decision belongs to Council. The findings outlined in this report should be considered as one input among many that Council must weigh, alongside building condition, technical advice, costs, and funding.

Once Council sets a direction, reporting back on how this input was considered is the final step in this process.

## Appendix A – Detailed Results Tables

The tables below give full response counts for the four rating questions. Percentages are of those who answered each row, and may not add to 100% due to rounding.

### Q6: Importance of local access

| Item                                                        | Very important | Somewhat important | Not very important | Not at all important | Not sure | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|-------|
| Ice sports facilities (hockey, skating)                     | 414 (82%)      | 67 (13%)           | 10 (2%)            | 13 (3%)              | 1 (0%)   | 505   |
| Indoor dry-floor sport space                                | 284 (59%)      | 153 (32%)          | 31 (6%)            | 10 (2%)              | 6 (1%)   | 484   |
| Indoor fitness space                                        | 248 (52%)      | 158 (33%)          | 49 (10%)           | 9 (2%)               | 9 (2%)   | 473   |
| Space for community events, trade shows, and markets        | 293 (61%)      | 132 (27%)          | 42 (9%)            | 10 (2%)              | 7 (1%)   | 484   |
| Seniors' programming space                                  | 184 (39%)      | 188 (40%)          | 64 (14%)           | 15 (3%)              | 15 (3%)  | 466   |
| Youth spaces and drop-in activities                         | 300 (63%)      | 141 (30%)          | 22 (5%)            | 4 (1%)               | 9 (2%)   | 476   |
| Outdoor recreation (parks, diamonds, outdoor rinks, trails) | 355 (74%)      | 98 (20%)           | 18 (4%)            | 3 (1%)               | 5 (1%)   | 479   |

Table 6. Q6: Importance of local access: responses and share of those answering each row.

### Q11: Agreement with statements

| Item                                                                               | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neutral   | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| The arena is important to my household's regular recreation                        | 287 (56%)      | 84 (17%)       | 83 (16%)  | 27 (5%)           | 27 (5%)           | 508   |
| The arena is important to Calmar's identity and community spirit                   | 383 (76%)      | 69 (14%)       | 27 (5%)   | 13 (3%)           | 9 (2%)            | 501   |
| The building's current condition and amenities affect whether my household uses it | 112 (22%)      | 136 (27%)      | 163 (32%) | 57 (11%)          | 41 (8%)           | 509   |

Table 7. Q11: Agreement with statements: responses and share of those answering each row.

## Q12: Support for each option

| Item                                                  | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Neutral   | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose | Not sure / need more info | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Repair (keep the current arena running short-term)    | 109 (24%)        | 152 (33%)        | 101 (22%) | 54 (12%)        | 41 (9%)         | 5 (1%)                    | 462   |
| Upgrade / modernize the current arena                 | 248 (52%)        | 140 (29%)        | 38 (8%)   | 16 (3%)         | 29 (6%)         | 5 (1%)                    | 476   |
| Expand the current arena (keep ice, add space)        | 259 (54%)        | 99 (21%)         | 61 (13%)  | 18 (4%)         | 39 (8%)         | 6 (1%)                    | 482   |
| Repurpose (convert to a non-ice, multi-use space)     | 55 (12%)         | 60 (13%)         | 89 (19%)  | 57 (12%)        | 175 (38%)       | 22 (5%)                   | 458   |
| Replace with a new ice arena                          | 180 (38%)        | 98 (21%)         | 94 (20%)  | 24 (5%)         | 57 (12%)        | 17 (4%)                   | 470   |
| Replace with a new non-ice community facility         | 35 (8%)          | 41 (9%)          | 96 (21%)  | 54 (12%)        | 197 (43%)       | 31 (7%)                   | 454   |
| Demolish, with no replacement at this time            | 14 (3%)          | 8 (2%)           | 69 (15%)  | 29 (6%)         | 266 (60%)       | 61 (14%)                  | 447   |
| Divest (sell, lease, or transfer to another operator) | 38 (8%)          | 26 (6%)          | 94 (21%)  | 39 (9%)         | 193 (43%)       | 64 (14%)                  | 454   |

Table 8. Q12: Support for each option: responses and share of those answering each row.

## Q14: Importance in Council's decision

| Item                                                                             | Very important | Somewhat important | Not very important | Not at all important | Not sure | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|-------|
| Keeping ice activities available within Calmar                                   | 400 (79%)      | 67 (13%)           | 22 (4%)            | 14 (3%)              | 2 (0%)   | 505   |
| Keeping the cost to taxpayers as low as possible                                 | 230 (45%)      | 210 (41%)          | 50 (10%)           | 4 (1%)               | 13 (3%)  | 507   |
| Creating space that many different groups can use year-round                     | 296 (59%)      | 153 (31%)          | 38 (8%)            | 9 (2%)               | 5 (1%)   | 501   |
| Accessibility and inclusion (e.g. mobility access, dressing rooms for all users) | 275 (55%)      | 148 (30%)          | 52 (10%)           | 21 (4%)              | 4 (1%)   | 500   |
| Keeping long-term operating costs manageable                                     | 283 (57%)      | 182 (37%)          | 26 (5%)            | 2 (0%)               | 5 (1%)   | 498   |
| How quickly a solution can be in place                                           | 137 (28%)      | 179 (36%)          | 128 (26%)          | 33 (7%)              | 17 (3%)  | 494   |
| The building's history and its place in the community                            | 229 (46%)      | 139 (28%)          | 89 (18%)           | 36 (7%)              | 8 (2%)   | 501   |
| Potential for regional partnerships and outside funding                          | 244 (48%)      | 171 (34%)          | 51 (10%)           | 19 (4%)              | 19 (4%)  | 504   |

Table 9. Q14: Importance in Council's decision: responses and share of those answering each row.

