

USSU Welcome Week 2022
Student Survey on Public Engagement

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Background

The City of Saskatoon (City) engages with the public, community partners and other stakeholders to inform its projects, programs, and policies. Inclusive engagement that hears from a variety of voices is crucial for better understanding unique needs and wants within our communities. The experiences and perspectives of students are valuable inputs to the City's decision-making process.

Representatives from the City attended the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union's (USSU) Welcome Week activities in the campus 'bowl' on September 6-9, 2022, including staff from areas such as Public Engagement, Indigenous Initiatives, Transportation, Transit, and Waste. Welcome Week is an excellent opportunity for City staff to connect with students, provide them with information about City services, and hear about what issues are important to them.

Students were asked to participate in an online survey to provide their input on what civic topics they are interested in and what the best approaches are to engage with them. The survey was created in collaboration with the USSU.

There primary purposes for this survey were:

- to get a better understanding of student interests and preferences related to engaging with the City that can inform our approaches to engaging with students in the future;
- to share information with students about City services and public engagement opportunities; and
- to provide information to the [Student and City of Saskatoon Connection Committee](#) to assist them in prioritizing work for the year.

Data Limitations

- Welcome Week is an event that particularly attracts newer students (e.g., first year students) who are becoming oriented with the university campus and services. Students who are more advanced in their program or have prior experience at the university may not have participated in our survey to the same extent.
- Students who attended Welcome Week and spoke with City staff were encouraged to participate in the survey. There is the potential that the students who participated in this survey were more likely to have certain engagement preferences (i.e., preferring in-person events). Those who would not engage in Welcome Week, and therefore did not participate in the survey, may have different engagement preferences.
- We asked students to identify which neighbourhood they live in, as well as which neighbourhoods they are interested in when it comes to being engaged. However, since some students were new to Saskatoon, some were unsure of the names of various neighbourhoods. A link to a map of Saskatoon neighbourhoods was added to the survey to help mitigate that limitation.

Online Survey

Posters with QR codes directing students to an online survey were posted at the City’s Welcome Week kiosk, and City staff encouraged students to take part and provide their input. In total, there were 223 responses to the online survey.

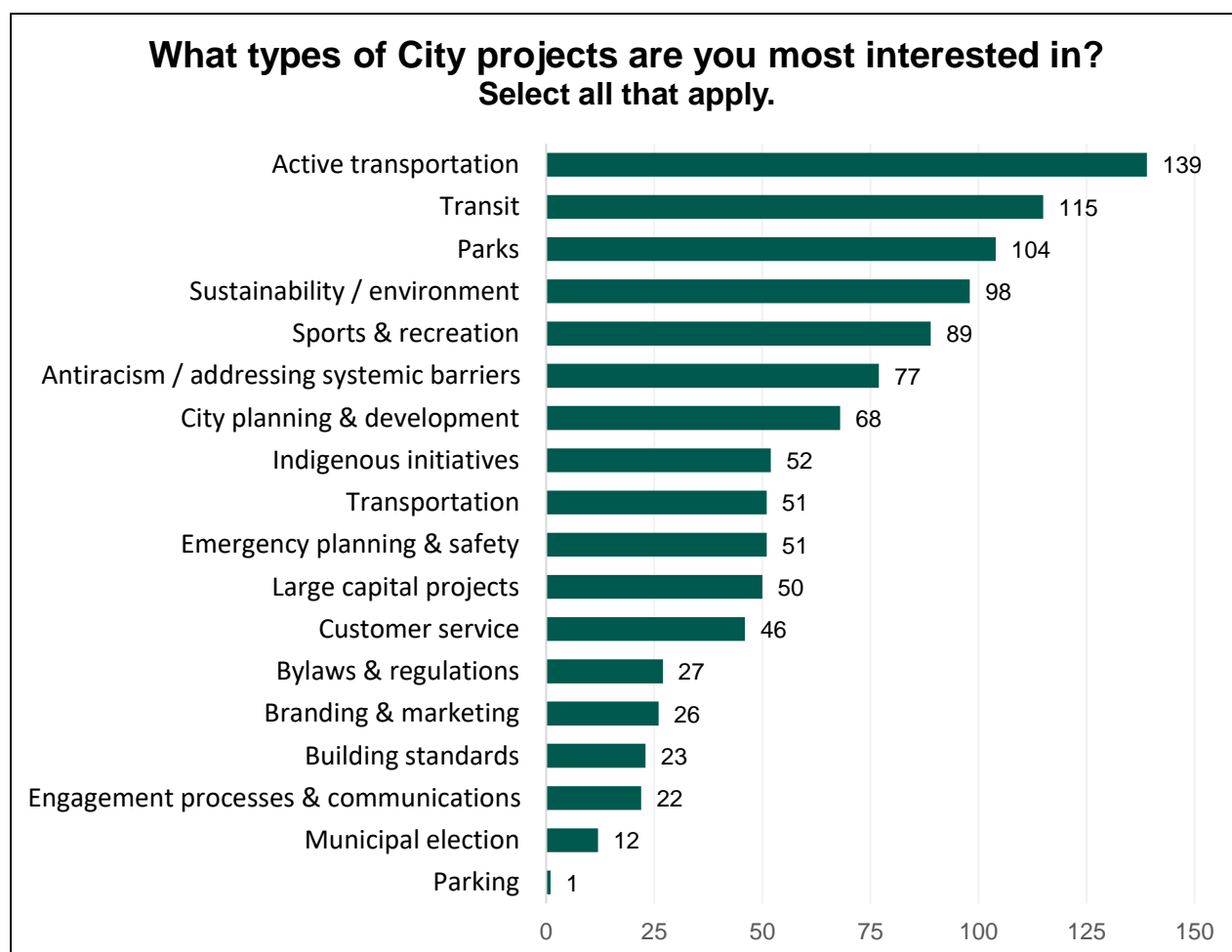
An [Engage webpage](#) was created on the City website for Welcome Week, which includes some high level information on engaging with the City for students who are new to this type of interaction.

Results

What types of City projects are you most interested in? Select all that apply.

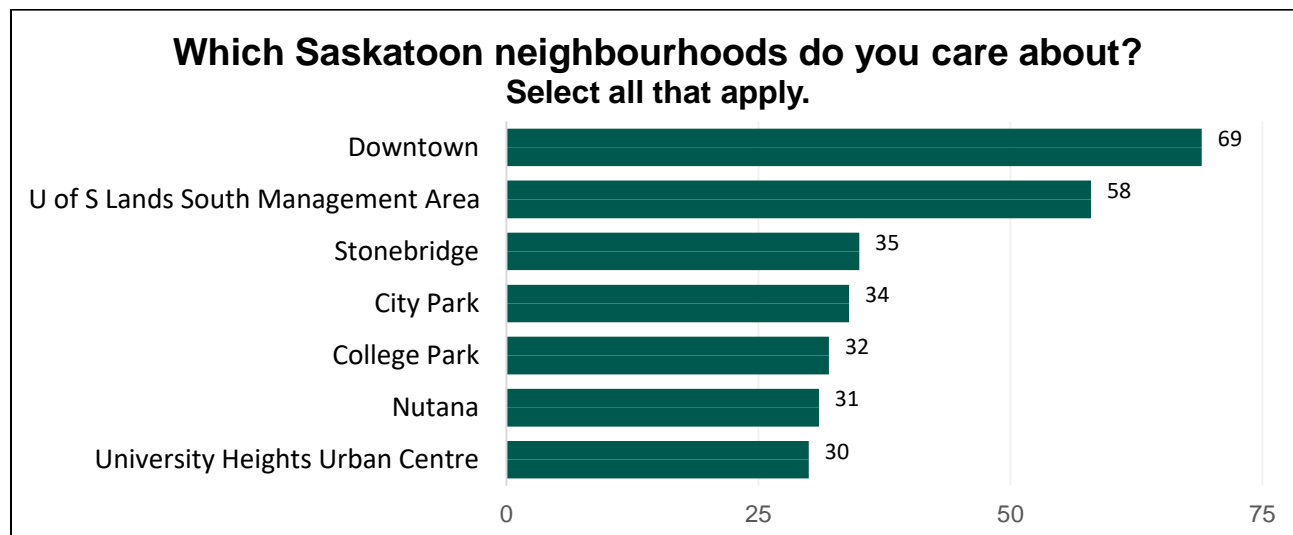
Participants indicated particular interest in projects related to ‘moving around’ Saskatoon, such as active transportation (cycling, walking, etc.) and transit.

Participants also indicated high interest in projects related to parks, sports & recreation, sustainability and environment, and topics related to reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion. These identified preferences helped inform the 2023 focus areas for the Student and City of Saskatoon Connection Committee and will also be considered by City project teams when developing their engagement plans.



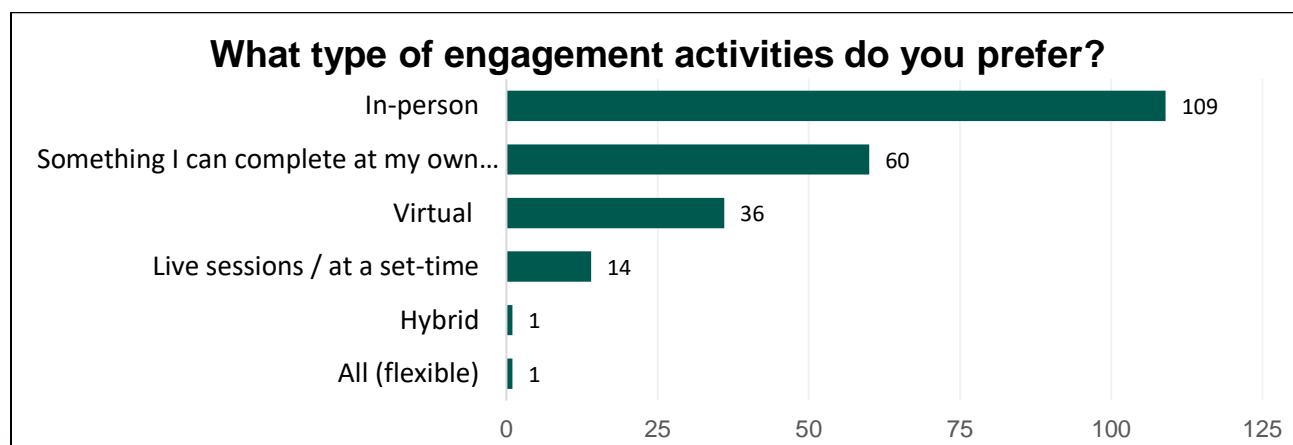
Which Saskatoon neighbourhoods do you care about? Select all that apply.

In total, 66 different neighbourhoods were selected as being of interest to the participants. The chart below lists those neighbourhoods that were selected by at least 30 participants. Of note, students who were new to Saskatoon were unsure of the names of various neighbourhoods. A map of Saskatoon neighbourhoods was added to the survey to help mitigate that limitation.



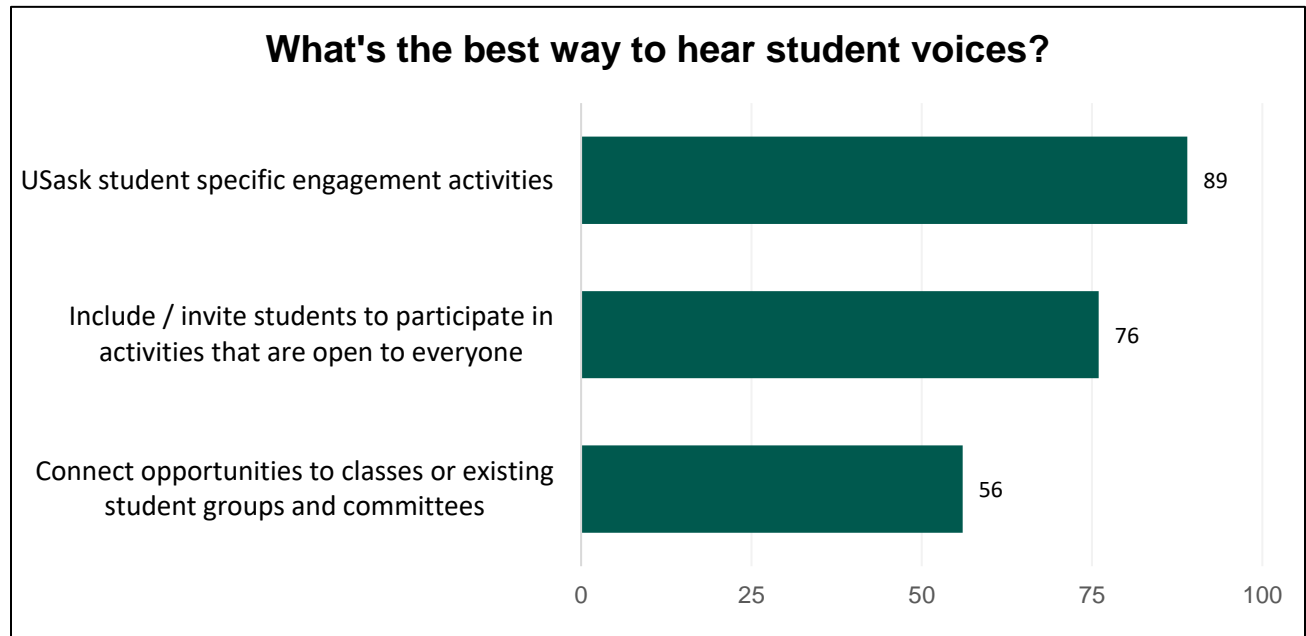
What type of engagement activities do you prefer?

In-person engagement was preferable to participants than virtual engagement. Conversely, there was also a preference for activities that could be completed at their own pace or when they have time as opposed to live sessions at a set time. Possible approaches to accommodate both preferences might be to: provide multiple opportunities to participate in an in-person event rather than a single opportunity; hold 'come and go' events rather than events with a specific itinerary; provide both in-person and virtual options to engage; and come to where students are already when seeking their input (e.g., on campus). Of note, students attending Welcome Week in-person and approaching City staff may be more likely to indicate a preference for in-person engagement than those who did not.



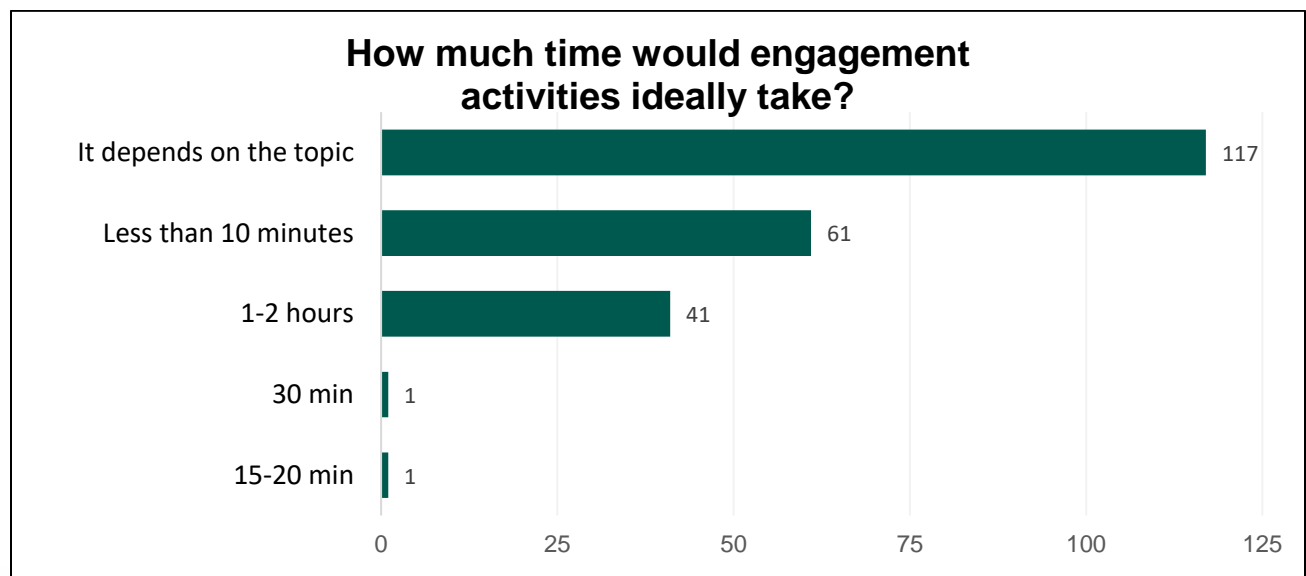
What's the best way to hear student voices?

The most common response was for the City to conduct engagement activities that are specific to USask students when seeking their input. However, there was also support for inviting students to participate in activities that are open to everyone



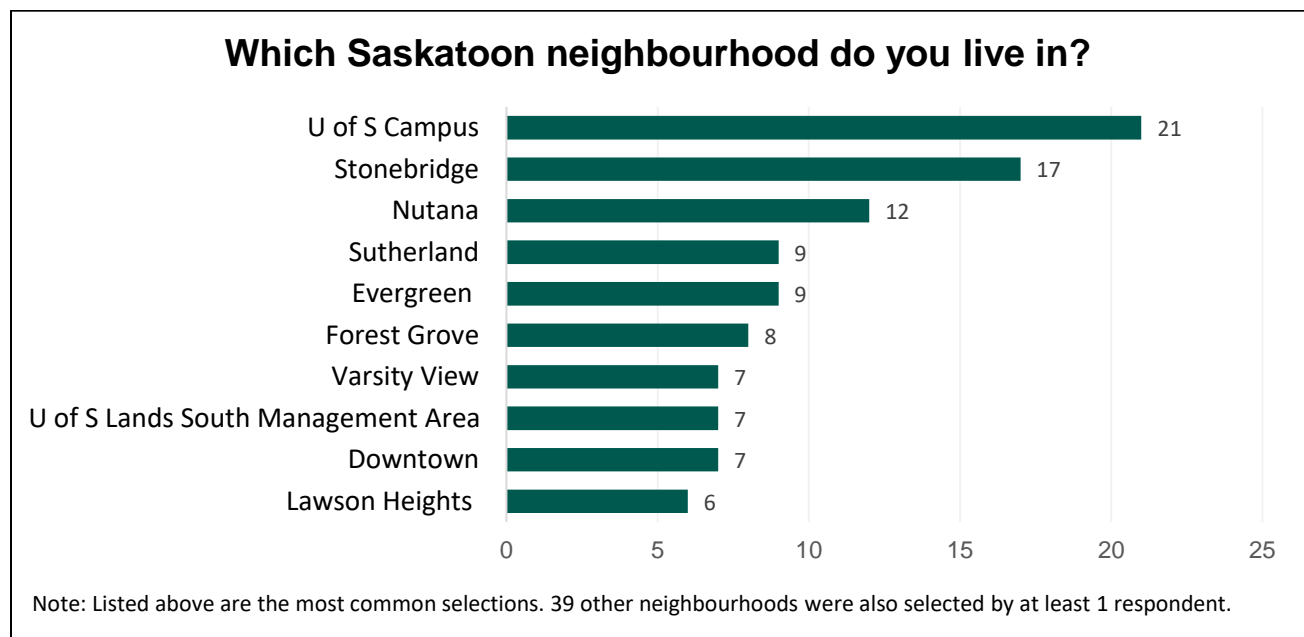
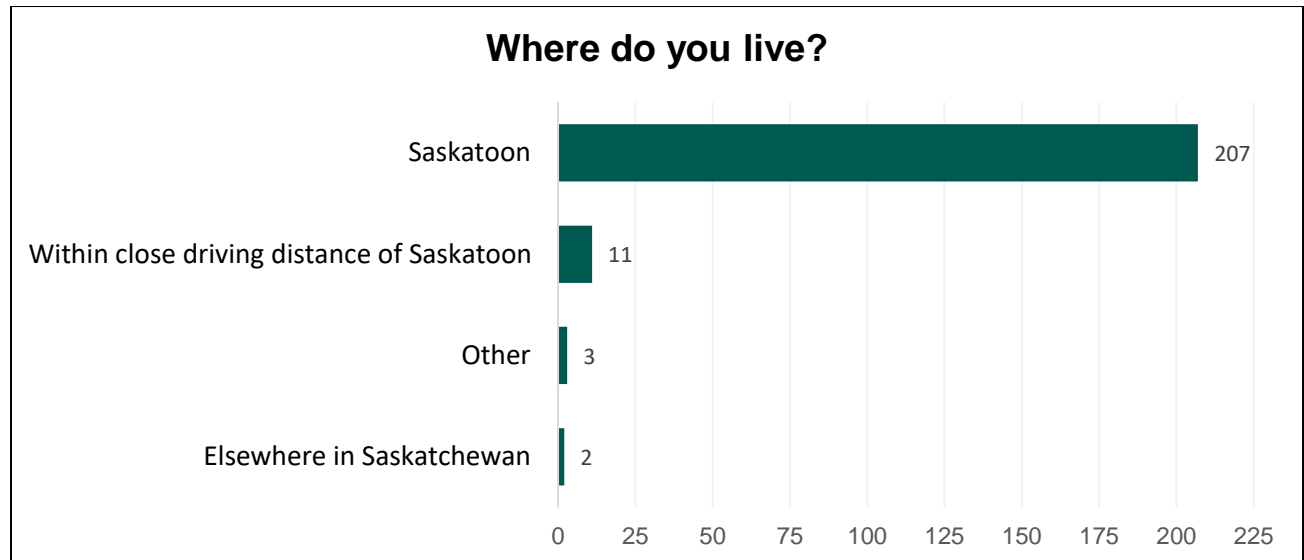
How much time would engagement activities ideally take?

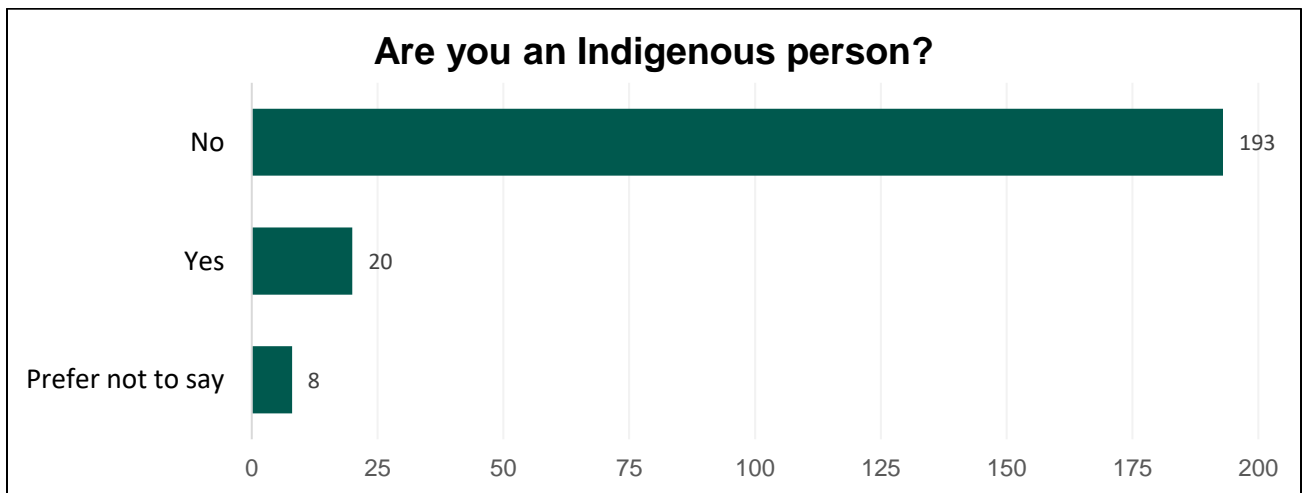
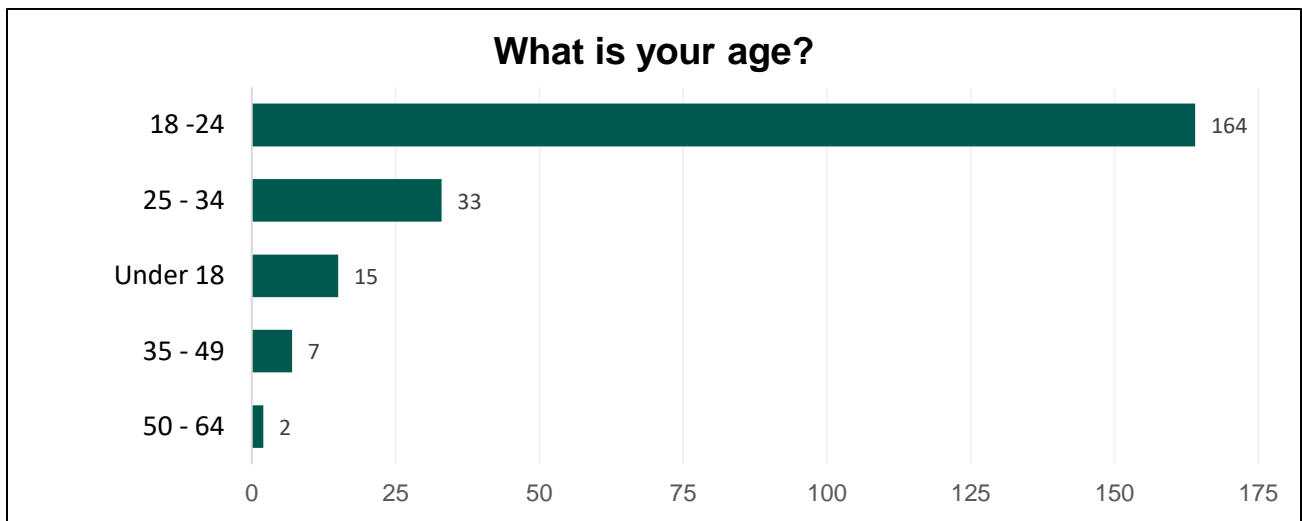
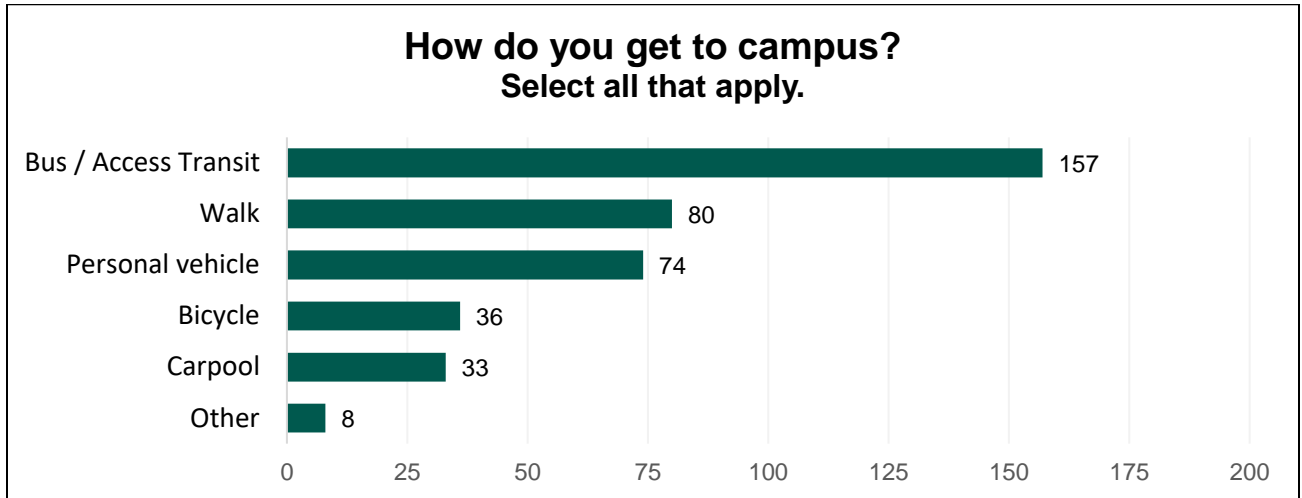
The majority of participants indicated the ideal time an engagement activity would take would depend on the topic. Some participants indicated a preference for quick engagement activities (less than 10 minutes) while other indicated a preference for more time-intensive engagement activities (1-2 hours).

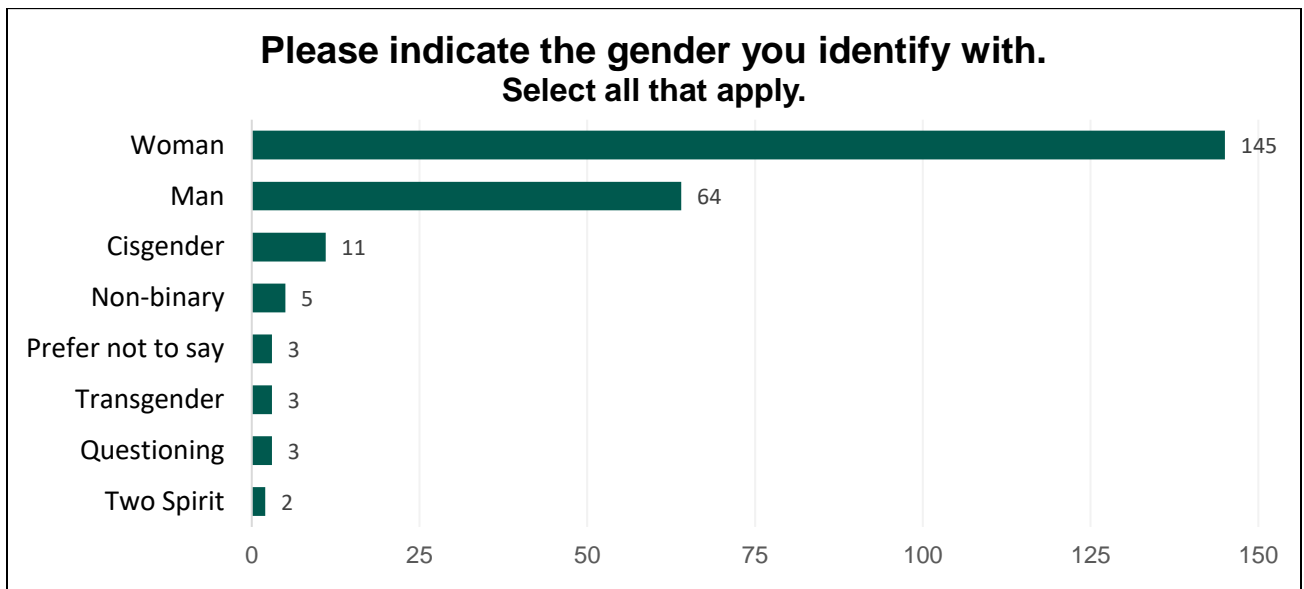
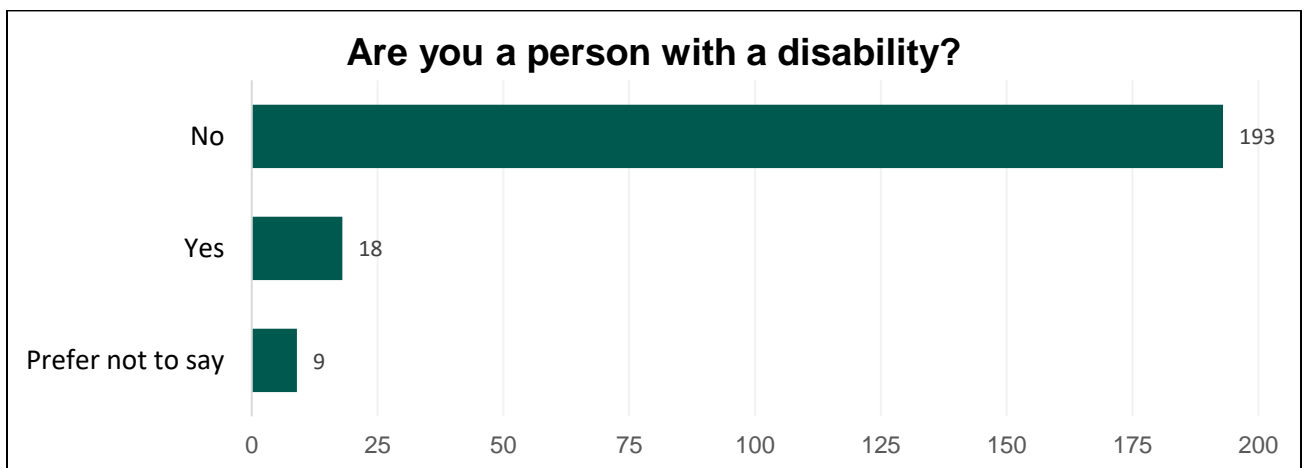
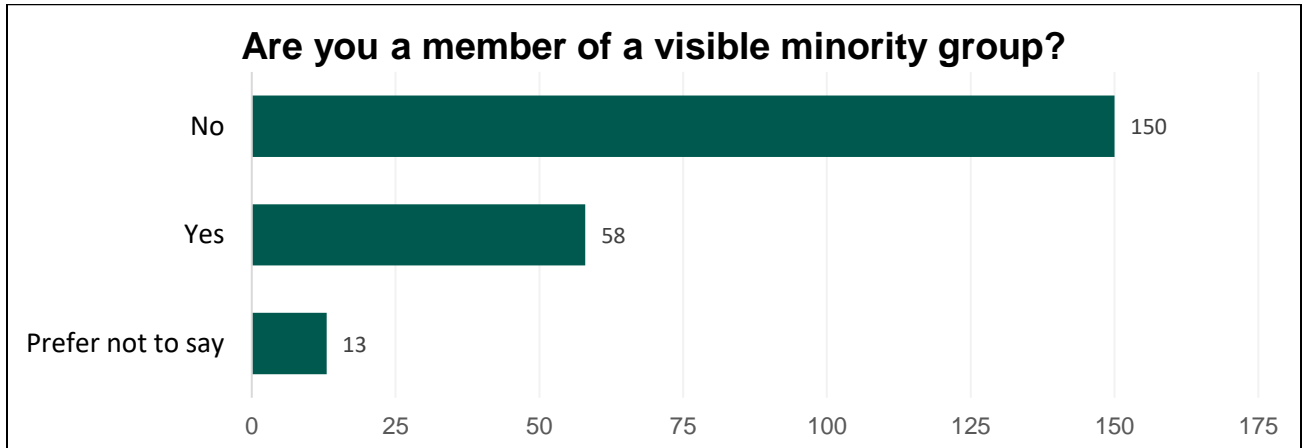


Demographic Questions

A number of demographic questions were included in the survey to give us a better sense of who we were able to engage with during Welcome Week, to better understand how inclusive this engagement activity was, and to provide additional context to the survey responses received. The results to the demographic questions are provided below.







Next Steps

The results from this survey were shared with the Students and City of Saskatoon Connection Committee to help inform its focus areas for 2023, including which projects the City would bring to students for their input.

Results are also provided to all staff from the City's Public Engagement Section to help inform how students can best be engaged, and which topics students are particularly interested in being engaged on.