



# ENGAGE



## CIVIC CONSERVATORY RENEWAL

Reporting Out: Programming Needs Questionnaire

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## Project Overview

### Background

The Saskatoon Civic Conservatory is located on the South Saskatchewan River adjacent to the former Mendel Art Gallery. The Conservatory provided a unique excursion for residents and tourists drawing over 80,000 visitors a year. Visitors enjoy the seasonal flower displays as well as an interesting collection of orchids, tropical and arid plants.

With the opening of the Remail Modern Art Gallery and the conversion of the Mendel Building into the Children's Discovery Museum, the Conservatory is temporarily closed. During this time, the City is taking the opportunity to assess the future uses of the Civic Conservatory and how each could be incorporated into an expanded facility.

The Conservatory is in need of repairs, based on a 2017 building condition assessment report that indicated several priority areas including a new roof and glazing (windows) and upper and lower level washroom upgrades to be compliant with accessibility requirements.

To read the October 2017 City Council Report on the status of the Civic Conservatory Repair Assessment and Renewal Options, please see: <https://pub-saskatoon.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=39725>

### Current Status

The current stage of the project is intended to identify the programming space needs among key stakeholders. Determining the programming space needs will assist in developing conceptual design options that can be used to seek funding partners for the renewal and possible expansion of the Conservatory. Consultants have been hired to develop these design options. This work is expected to be completed prior to the end of 2018 to align with the annual budget discussion cycle.

### Engagement Purpose

As mentioned above, the purpose of engagement is to ensure that the programming and associated space needs for an expanded Conservatory reflect stakeholder and community priorities and interests for the space. The results of the first phase of engagement (meeting objectives 1 and 2 below) is addressed through this report. The next phase of engagement in the fall 2018 will address objective 3. Future engagement opportunities will be determined as the project progresses and following a presentation to City Council in late 2018.

### Engagement Objectives

1. To provide public and stakeholders with information about the project scope and process.
2. To identify programming needs and conceptual design options that are informed by community needs and interests.
3. To involve key stakeholder groups in the identification of programming and associated space and design considerations.

## What We Asked

### Online Public Questionnaire

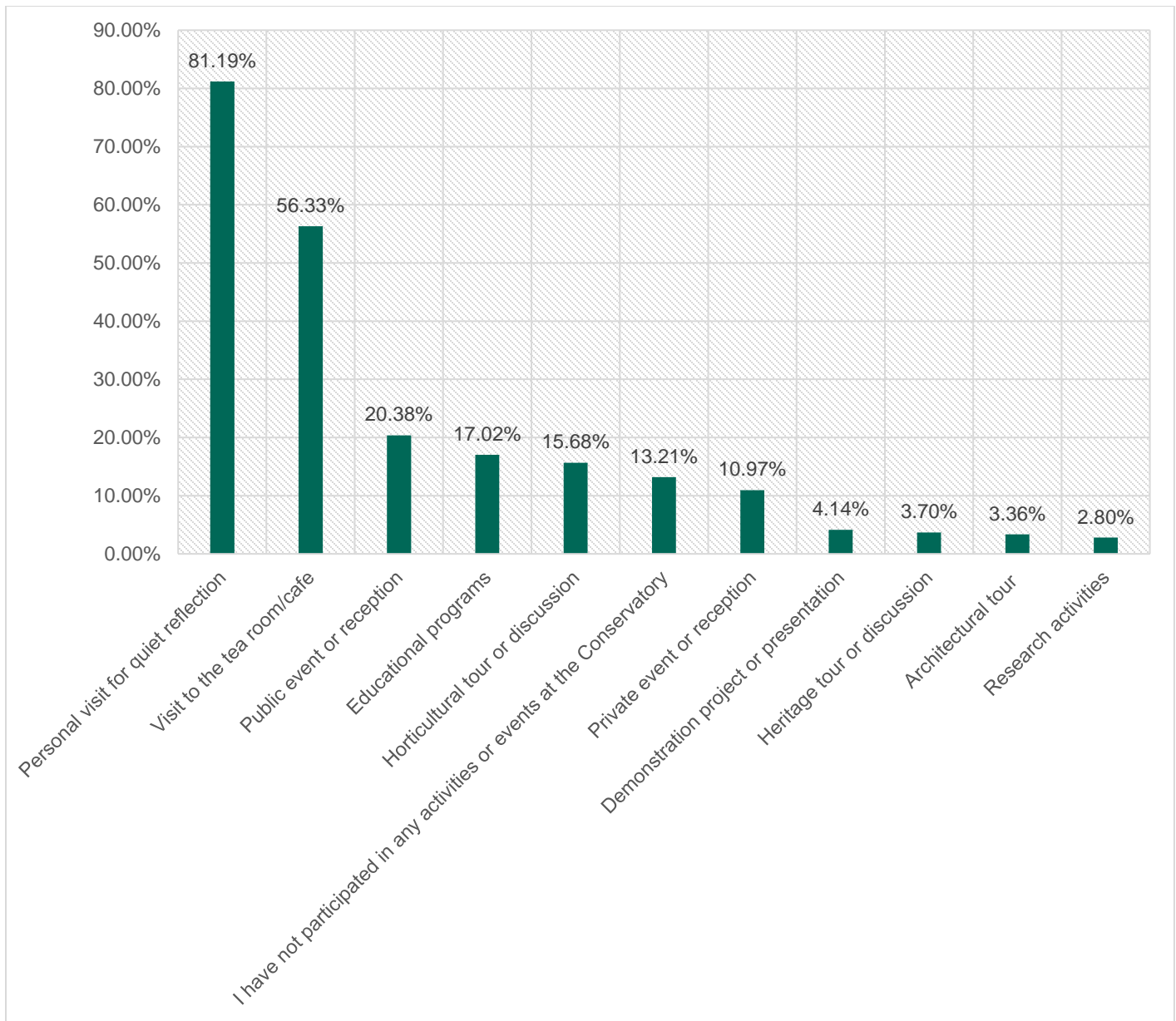
- The questionnaire was sent to the Citizen Advisory Panel, promoted on social media, and posted to the City Engage webpage.
- Residents were encouraged to share their input on the types of programs and activities that could be considered in a renewed and/or expanded Civic Conservatory.
- The questionnaire was conducted from May 14-June 11, 2018.
- There were 908 responses from residents.

## What We Heard

### Questionnaire Results

#### Question 1: Which of the following activities or events have you participated in at the Civic Conservatory? (Please select all that apply)

A large majority of participants primarily visited the Conservatory on a drop-in basis for quiet reflection, to enjoy the plants and atmosphere, and to spend time with family and friends – most notably in the winter. Far fewer indicated that they had attended a program, activity, or event at the Conservatory. Many participants mentioned in their comments that they had taken family, wedding, or other photos at the Conservatory.



**Comments: 95**

The key themes of other comments are listed in the table below. They are listed in order from greatest to least frequency of comment.

Theme	Description
1. Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting to take photos: family, wedding, portrait, general</li> <li>• Practicing videography, getting video footage for a project</li> </ul>
2. Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A great place to take kids and have a family outing</li> </ul>
3. Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing warmth and a break from winter weather</li> </ul>

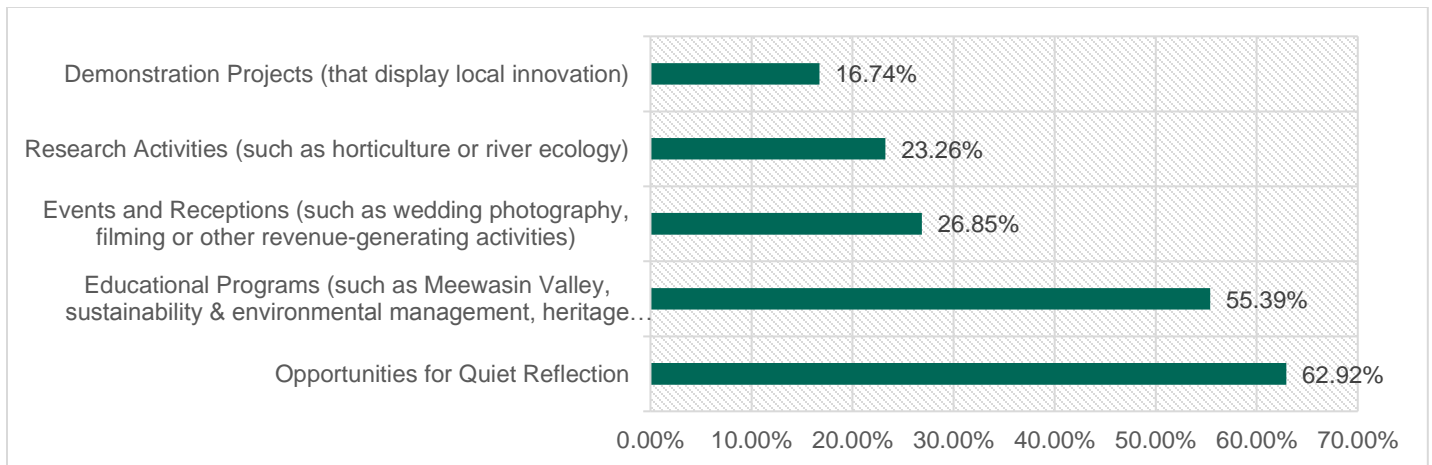
4. Plants and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciating the plants, learning about their characteristics, origins, and other information</li> <li>Came to see an exhibit</li> </ul>
5. Friends and Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place to bring guests to Saskatoon and tourists</li> <li>Memorable place for dates, tea with friends, other fond memories to revisit.</li> </ul>
6. Art Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visited when the Mendel Gallery was open</li> </ul>
7. Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Came for a reception, event, or meeting</li> </ul>
8. Wellness, Peace, and Beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciating the peace, quiet, beauty, smell of the Conservatory</li> <li>Wellness in winter, especially for residents with seasonal or other mental health challenges.</li> <li>Opportunity for personal reflection</li> </ul>
9. Classes and Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended as part of a class through school, art or photography class, architectural tour</li> </ul>
10. Art Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Came to sketch or take part in another individual art practice</li> </ul>
11. Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of amenities; ex. Washrooms when cross-country skiing</li> <li>Unaware of the Conservatory, have not visited</li> </ul>

- “When it was a part of the Mendel - I would go regularly. Now you’ve priced me out of art and I don’t make specific trips to the conservatory.”*
- “The conservatory is one of our hidden gems in Saskatoon. I love going there in the winter - it helps remind me that those cold dull days are only temporary. I also get to see plants and trees that are unusual to this area.”*
- “I wish this was more like a large quiet place to come with more seating and where you could bring books to read and enjoy the scenery.”*
- “I loved taking my grade one class. After our plant unit of study there was no better place to experience desert and tropical plants. Sometimes I did it in conjunction with a tour of the art gallery and other years it was in conjunction with a trip to the kinsmen play village.”*

**Question 2: Which two of the following activities do you MOST want to see included as part of an expanded Civic Conservatory? (Please select your top 2)**

Participants were most interested in opportunities for quiet reflection and educational programming. In the comments, they overwhelmingly wanted to continue visiting on a drop-in basis with family and visitors. Many comments indicated a desire to see a balance between more passive (drop-in, self-guided) and active (programs, events, etc.) activities, acknowledging that there can be tension between these types of use.

There was a similar divide with regards to revenue-generating activities; some participants felt this would be of benefit, while others saw it detracting from the Conservatory’s appeal and public accessibility. Several participants were not in favour of expanding the Conservatory, voicing concerns about taxes and whether it is a worthwhile investment compared to other civic priorities.



**Comments: 81**

Other suggested activities were captured in a comment box. The themes are listed below in order from greatest to least frequency.

Theme	Description
1. Drop-in visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place to visit on your own, or to gather with family, friends, and visitors</li> <li>A public place sit and enjoy the surroundings, like an indoor public park</li> </ul>
2. Passive interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-guided tours</li> <li>Passive, quiet space without programming</li> </ul>
3. More flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birds, butterflies, fish, fruiting plants, more plants</li> <li>Focus on the plants</li> </ul>
4. Café and revenue-generating activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Café, tea shop, food service, gift shop, patio</li> <li>Event and meeting rental space</li> </ul>
5. Children’s programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with Children’s Museum, and offer programming for schools and families</li> </ul>
6. Strike a balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would like to see a balance between drop-in visits and scheduled programs/events</li> <li>Accessible space; minimize how often space is closed due to rentals or private bookings</li> </ul>
7. Classes, Tours, Exhibits, Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art, horticulture, gardening, yoga, architectural, and seasonal</li> <li>Live music</li> </ul>
8. Not interested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not interested in seeing the space expanded, like it the way it has been</li> </ul>
9. Against expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned about cost of expanding, prefer to see tax dollars invested elsewhere</li> </ul>
10. Address accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial affordability, accessibility of site for people with disabilities and mobility challenges, pedestrian crossings, vehicle parking</li> </ul>
11. Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider integrating Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan</li> <li>Add outdoor fire pits</li> </ul>

- Add outdoor activities in conjunction with the river
- Put Meewasin Valley Centre here, as part of the building
- Integrated treehouses around the columns, climbing wall
- Add a library on site
- Meewasin has mandate for educational and research activities, should channel funding to them

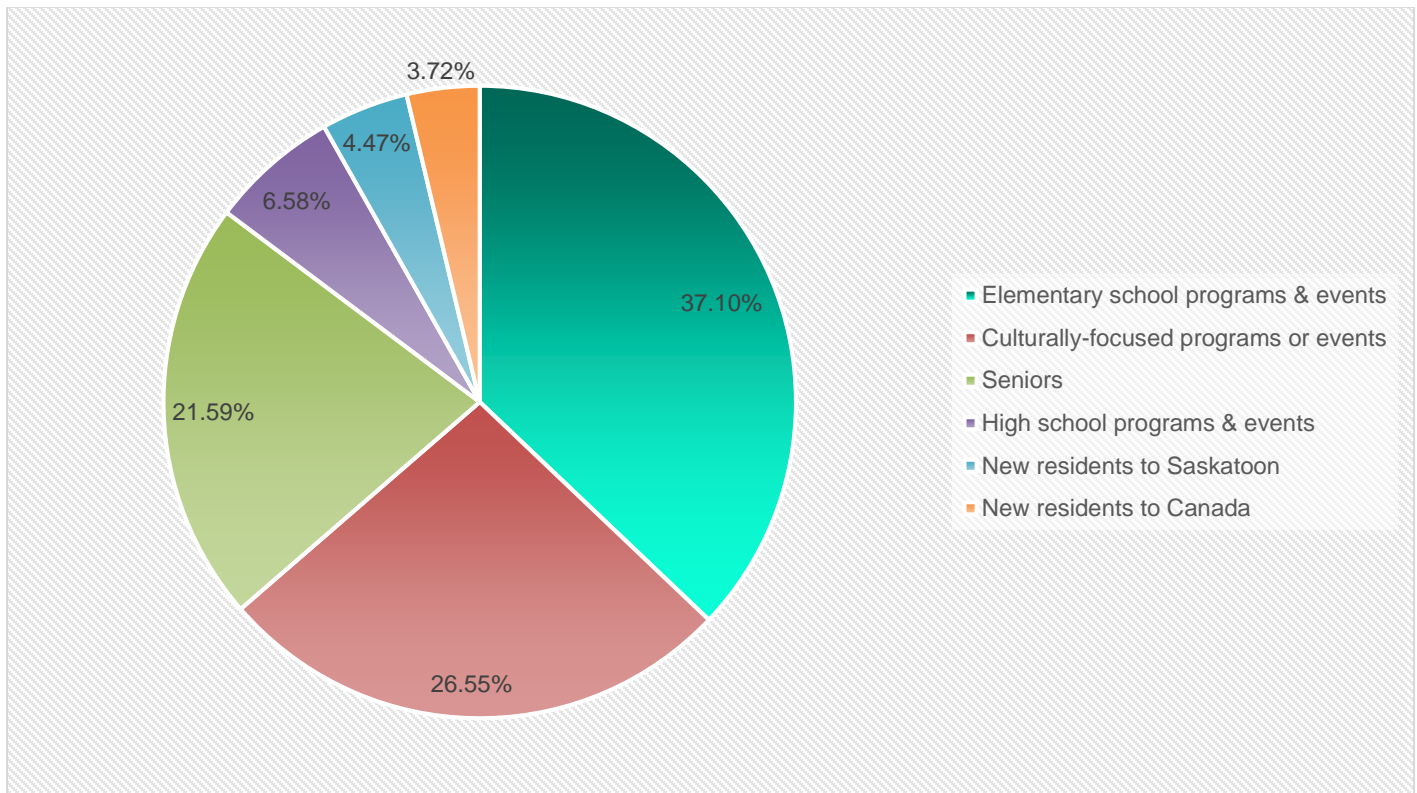
- *“What I most want to see as part of an expanded conservatory are different types of gardens, like a tropical area, and native plant area, maybe an arid garden area? It would be nice to introduce a butterfly garden here also seeing as the one at the Forestry Farm closed. The conservatory should mainly be a botanical garden.”*
- *“I don't do quiet reflection, what is wrong with smelling the flowers, put tables in the conservatory. I can drink tea and talk or maybe reflect.” “The Conservatory has always been a lovely place for quiet reflection. Since the Mendel has been turned into a Children's Centre, I have concerns that this beautiful spot will be overrun with yelling, hyper kids. This was never its intention, so I hope the Conservatory can remain a quiet place for reflection and a place just to enjoy the beautiful surroundings.”*
- *“I believe that all of these activities are important to balance revenue and various stakeholders' needs. That said, I hope that the conservatory will continue to be accessible to the general public the vast majority of the time.”*

**Question 3: If the Civic Conservatory was to offer programs and activities targeted toward specific groups, which of the following would you be interested in? Please identify additional programs you are interested in in the Comment Box below.**

Please note that there was an error with this survey question, and it did not allow participants to select more than 1 option. In the future we will be sure to test this functionality further before launching. Because of this error, participants used the comment box to indicate which other groups and programs they were interested in.

The top three identified needs were programs and events focused on elementary schools, culture, and seniors. A large majority of qualitative comments reflected an interest in a variety of educational opportunities, a desire for programming for all demographics, and programs for children of all ages (younger than elementary school as well).





**Comments: 187**

The overall themes are listed below in order from greatest to least frequency.

Theme	Description
<b>1. Educational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific suggestions for educational focuses included: horticulture, gardening (indoor/outdoor), conservation, art, ecology, photography, plant history, etc.</li> <li>Lectures, day camps, weekly programs, talks, classes, self-guided exhibits and materials</li> </ul>
<b>2. All of the above</b>	
<b>3. Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including toddlers, small kids, and elementary school age</li> <li>Homeschooling groups</li> </ul>
<b>4. General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any/all visitors – not targeted</li> </ul>
<b>5. Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programming for adults</li> </ul>
<b>6. Teens and Young Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programming for teens, high-school students, university students</li> </ul>
<b>7. Newcomers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programming for newcomers to Saskatoon and/or Canada</li> </ul>
<b>8. Special events and activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live music, yoga, meditation</li> <li>Fun events and activities – scavenger hunts, lights at night, dinner theatre, choir performances, winter festival, movie night</li> </ul>
<b>9. Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family-friendly activities</li> </ul>

<b>10. Seniors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming for seniors</li> </ul>
<b>11. Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming for people with disabilities, special needs, mental health challenges</li> </ul>
<b>12. Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting as a destination for tourists</li> <li>• Plant exchanges or sales</li> <li>• Link to UNESCO sustainable development goals</li> </ul>

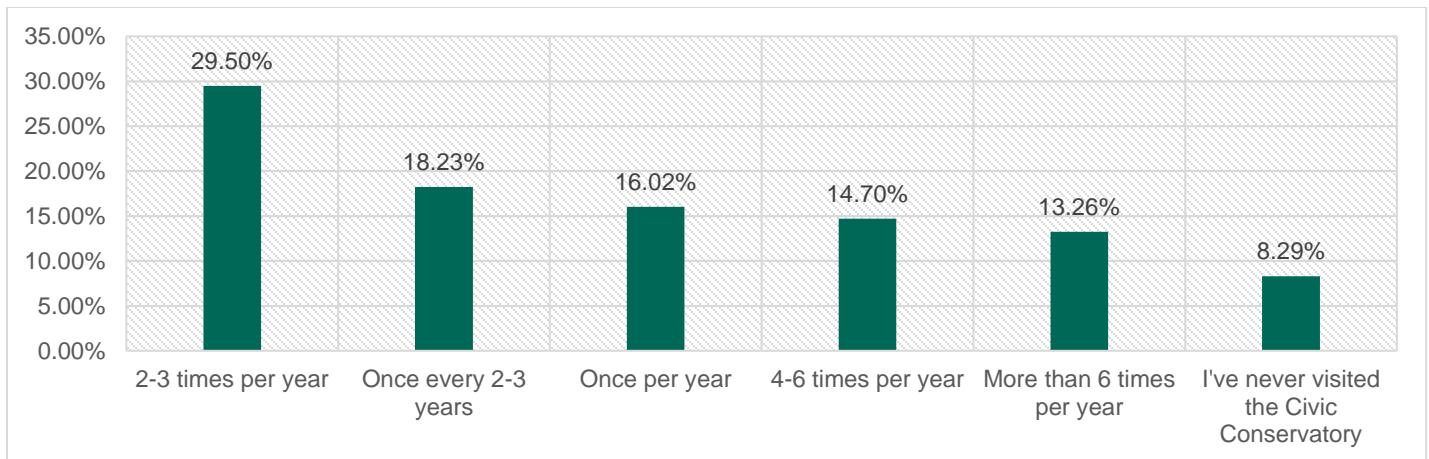
- *“Adding other features than plants, possibly a butterfly garden/sanctuary would draw more interest. Adding sections that focus on the current river ecosystem in Saskatoon or what kind of ecosystems existed here in prehistoric time with examples of plants/fossil. A self-guided tour with pictures/information”*
- *“Basic household horticulture lessons for children such as gardening, composting, indoor plants such as herb gardens.”*
- *“Family focused or even programs for extended family support. It is hard for extended family members on limited budgets to find family friendly locations. Families aren't limited to parents and children.”*
- *“Gentle fitness like yoga surrounded by plants would be fantastic. Also a drawing or Painting class, so many beautiful plants to capture. Maybe a photography class. Again, a great space for people to take advantage of during the cold winter months.”*
- *“It would be amazing to have an indigenous perspective and world view on some native prairie/river plants/life and have signage in indigenous languages - possibly as a project in development with a high school language program/industrial arts project.”*
- *“This space should be specifically designed to accommodate children with autism, Asperger’s syndrome, ADHD and developmental delays...provide a space for children with special needs to get tactile stimulation and process sensory senses. We don't have any facilities in this city dedicated to children with special needs.”*

**Question 4:**

**a) On average, how often did you visit the Civic Conservatory before it closed to allow construction on the Children's Discovery Museum?**

Of those who participated in the survey, 29.5% reported that they had visited the Conservatory 2-3 times per year on average. 28% visited 4 or more times annually. This means that nearly 50% of those responding to the survey could be considered highly interested in and impacted by the future of the Conservatory. Only about 8% reported that they had never visited the Conservatory.





**b) What kind of activity or event might encourage you to visit the conservatory more often during the year?**

**Comments: 226**

The key themes are listed below, in order from most to least frequently mentioned.

Theme	Description
<b>1. Educational activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including activities, tours, and programs</li> <li></li> </ul>
<b>2. Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and culture, flowers, hot yoga, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Exhibits and displays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art, horticulture, sculpture, seasonal decorations and florals, historical, showcasing different flowers/plants</li> </ul>
<b>4. More space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More space to enjoy, places to gather, places to sit</li> </ul>
<b>5. Kids and family activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafts, learning activities, mom &amp; baby activities, storytelling, puppet shows, making planters</li> </ul>
<b>6. Café / Eatery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Café, tea room, or eatery inside or adjacent to plant area</li> </ul>
<b>7. More flora &amp; fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added areas with more plants, and adding in butterflies, fish, birds, etc.</li> <li>Changing displays and having seasonal features</li> </ul>
<b>8. Just being there</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No need for activities or events, just want to drop in and visit</li> </ul>
<b>9. Relaxing quiet space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for quiet contemplation, meditation, silence</li> </ul>
<b>10. Performances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live music and theatre performances</li> </ul>
<b>11. Visiting CDM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will come more often once Children's Discovery Museum opens</li> </ul>
<b>12. Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better social media promotion and other communications to build awareness of the Conservatory and what's happening</li> </ul>
<b>13. Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded hours, especially in evening</li> </ul>
<b>14. Meeting and event space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book-able spaces for meetings and events</li> </ul>
<b>15. Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional programs nearby (ex. Kinsmen, CDM, a library)</li> <li>Access – bus, parking, meet accessibility standards, keep it free</li> <li>More community involvement – ex. Vote for new plants</li> </ul>

• Wall climbing

- “Workshops focused on heritage and indigenous plants and the importance of seed diversity.”
- “Promotions of specific flowers to draw me there, it still being open and free :) a nice coffee shop next to it. The conservatory is an important destination in a winter city. Depression and mental health improvements from having a warm place to feel better at in winter.”
- “Previously art exhibitions would draw me to the conservatory as well. I imagine the new children’s museum will bring me in again, but I would be especially interested in special events around plants/ecology for all ages.”
- “More seasonal displays of flowers. A few ponds and water features. Comfortable seating for seniors to sit and enjoy the view while families interact with the displays.”
- “Hosted events, events in conjunction with the CDM or Nutrien Playland, Mother’s Day, Earth Day, learn about your Conservatory day. New interesting plants brought in. Hot Yoga at the Conservatory.”
- “Educational programs on specific kinds of plants or ecological environments. New installations of architecture or sculpture. Quiet reflection areas combined with a small cafe. Transit access.”

**Question 5: Do you have any additional ideas or comments that could help us determine future programs or events for the Civic Conservatory?**

**Comments: 233**

The key themes are listed below, in order from most to least frequently mentioned.

Theme	Description
<b>1. More flora and fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger space and exhibits</li> <li>• Butterflies and birds</li> <li>• Highlight diversity of plant life, ecological significance, local and exotic plants, orchids, more flowers</li> <li>• Food-producing plants – ex. Fruit bearing tropical plants</li> </ul>
<b>2. Place to visit in cooler temperatures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping it as a beloved place to enjoy nature and access beauty especially in cool weather/winter, on a drop-in basis</li> </ul>
<b>3. Educational opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horticulture, gardening and ecology</li> <li>• Culture – painting, drawing, photography, other art classes, yoga and meditation classes,</li> </ul>
<b>4. More space and seating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded space, more seating areas, better ‘flow’, benches or tables, relaxation areas</li> </ul>
<b>5. Offer programs and events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors and children’s programming, community partnerships with local organizations, reconciliation programs</li> <li>• Craft shows, plant sales, live music, food event</li> </ul>
<b>6. Free admission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see continued free (or by donation) admission to keep facility accessible and an easy place for short drop-in visits</li> </ul>
<b>7. Relaxing space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for quiet, reflective, contemplative, art activities – don’t fill with busyness and noise</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep it simple and minimize programming that takes away from this feeling, and from the focus on the plants</li> </ul>
<b>8. Improve access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheelchair accessibility, space for walkers, sufficient parking, transit access, bicycle access and parking</li> <li>Evening hours</li> </ul>
<b>9. Improve communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertising, building awareness, social media presence</li> <li>Give it a new name – not “Civic Conservatory”, no corporate sponsor name, keep Mendel name</li> </ul>
<b>10. Opposed to expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prefer to see City invest elsewhere, do not want to see taxes funding this project</li> </ul>
<b>11. Have a cafe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a café or tea room, with snacks, ideally with a gift shop</li> </ul>
<b>12. Meeting and event space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weddings, special event room rentals, some booking options</li> <li>Event space separated from main conservatory to keep accessible and peaceful</li> </ul>
<b>13. Exhibits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local artisans and artists, historical displays, photography</li> </ul>
<b>14. Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate entrance from CDM</li> <li>Updated fountain</li> <li>Adjacent library</li> <li>Think about tourism potential</li> <li>Build an amphitheater</li> <li>Expand outdoor gardens</li> <li>Start a seed bank</li> </ul>

- “The conservatory should not remain stuck in the past. The conservatory needs to reflect both the community and heritage of Saskatchewan. Indigenous languages need to be a part of the new space. The space also needs to be safe for children to walk, discover and explore - with its proximity to the children’s museum. Accessibility is also an issue that will need to be addressed.”*
- “Would be nice if it was eventually expanded to be more of a botanical garden experience with changing exhibits or a butterfly garden rather than a small conservatory.”*
- “Please, please, please keep it focused on the botanical displays they should be the primary focus. Any programming should be secondary and complimentary to the gardens themselves. The building should be designed for sustainability and provide education through that.”*
- “Glad to see this questionnaire. I have not used it and likely would not use it. I support youth programs where there is a critical mass of our population potentially involved. In times of cuts I question expenses like this.”*
- “I think conservatories have a whimsical feeling about them, especially when visiting during cold months. It is nice to walk in (for free) and breathe in that planty humid air. I'd like it to be bigger with more paths, and places to stop to sit at tables. I'd also enjoy the addition of other living things like butterflies or fish.”*

## Next Steps

In September and October 2018, the City of Saskatoon and the project consultants will be hosting several workshops. They will be inviting community groups and individuals that represent key users and stakeholder groups for the Conservatory, who will be interested in and impacted by the project.

The project team will use these results to inform the design of those workshops. The participants will also be provided with this report in advance, so that they can build upon the key themes as they discuss possible space uses for a renewed Conservatory.

A progress report is expected to be presented to City Council's Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services late in 2018.

