

WHAT WE HEARD

Engagement Round 1

Facilities Strategic Use Study



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Project Background

The City of Yellowknife engaged Stantec Architecture Ltd. to complete a Strategic Use Study for six City facilities including: **City Hall, Public Library, Visitor Centre, Mine Rescue Building, Wildcat Café, and Ruth Inch Memorial Pool**. Engagement Round 1 focused on listening to City staff, interested and impacted parties, and community members to help inform future uses and facility designs.

Facilities included in this study:

City Hall



Public Library



Visitor Centre



Mine Rescue Building



Wildcat Café



Ruth Inch Memorial Pool



Why is the City doing this study?

This study will help the City understand how the six facilities are used today and how they could better meet community needs in the future. Feedback from Round 1 will help identify opportunities to improve safety, accessibility, flexibility, affordability, and long-term sustainability of these six facilities.

Engagement Round 1 Highlights



551
Survey
responses



18
1-on-1
Meetings



2
Public Engagement
Events



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Engagement Background

Who was engaged?



- City of Yellowknife staff
- Interested and impacted parties as identified by the City
- Community members

How was engagement carried out?



Project Website

- Provided background information about the project
- Shared opportunities to participate in engagement activities
- Offered access to the project survey
- Allowed community members to sign up for project updates



City Staff Meetings

- **9** one-on-one meetings
- Focused on operations, service delivery, and facility needs



Interested and Impacted Parties Meetings

- **9** one-on-one meetings with City identified interested and impacted parties
- Focused on space needs, access, safety and booking challenges



Public Engagement Events

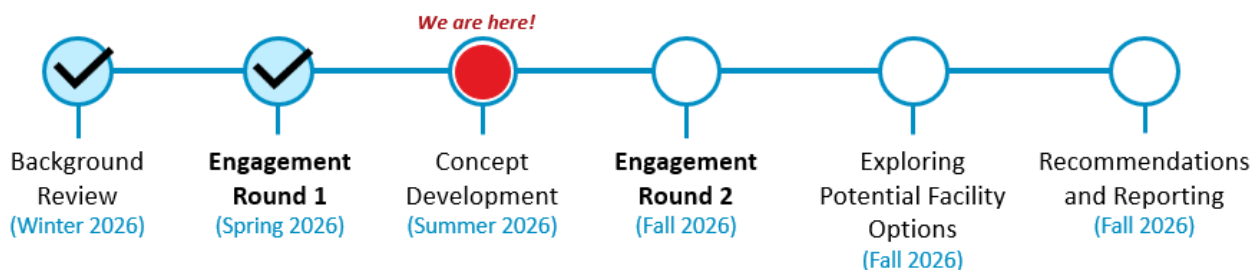
- **Project open house** - held at the Multiplex DND Gym
 - April 30, 2026, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
 - **24 attendees** including youth, residents, business operators, and community organization representatives
- **Project tradeshow booth** – held at the Yellowknife Spring Tradeshow
 - May 9, 2026, from 10:00am to 5:00pm
 - May 10, 2026, from 10:00am to 4:00pm



Project Survey

- **551 responses**
- Open from April 27 – May 11, 2026
- Online, accessible through QR codes and website links, with paper copies available at the Public Engagement Events

Project Engagement Timeline



Key Messages

The key messages below reflect a high-level summary of what was heard through Engagement Round 1. The information provided in this summary is not reflective of decisions or commitments by the City of Yellowknife, but rather a summary of participant input intended to inform future analysis, concept development, and decision-making.

Safety and Comfort Drive Facility Use

- Safety and comfort influence whether people use City facilities
- Participants most often raised safety, comfort, and parking concerns related to the Public Library and Visitor Centre
- Participants indicated they avoid facilities that feel unsafe, regardless of programming quality

Support for Relocating the Library

- 82% of survey respondents supported considering relocation of the Public Library
- Key issues with the current location include:
 - Safety and comfort
 - Limited parking
 - Accessibility constraints
- Participants noted that programming and staff are welcoming and helpful, but the location and above listed issues limits use



Ruth Inch Memorial Pool presents an opportunity for facility reuse

- The former pool was identified as a potential site for reuse
- The most supported future uses according to the survey were:
 - A new home for the Public Library
 - Arts and culture space
 - Community and / or recreation uses
- The site's central location, parking, trail access, and proximity to other recreation facilities were highlighted as an opportunity
- There is interest in reuse and frustration with ongoing vacancy

Demand for arts, culture, and gathering spaces

- A lack of dedicated arts and cultural space was raised across the engagement activities
- Participants identified a need for:
 - Performing arts and rehearsal space
 - Flexible community gathering and event spaces
 - Office or shared spaces for non-profits
- Respondents noted that existing indoor space options are limited, costly, or difficult to book

Preference for multi-use, flexible facilities

- Participants supported multi-use and co-located facilities
- Flexibility was seen as key to:
 - Serving multiple age groups
 - Supporting diverse programs
 - Improving efficiency and access
- Respondents expressed interest in facilities that function as community hubs rather than single-purpose buildings
- Interest among participants in reusing existing spaces as shared, co-located facilities for non-profits

Parking, access, and visibility matter

- Parking and accessibility concerns were raised most often for the Library and Visitor Centre
- Participants also noted:
 - The importance of clear wayfinding and signage
 - The need for facilities to be visible, welcoming, and easy to find



Affordability and long-term costs are top of mind

- Participants suggested the City to be mindful of long-term operating and maintenance costs
- Affordability and low-cost public access ranked as the top future priority in the survey
- Participants wondered about City ownership of certain facilities, particularly where use is seasonal or limited
- Overall, feedback emphasized doing more with existing assets rather than creating new facilities



Facility-Specific Feedback

City Hall and Somba K'e Park	• Somba K'e Park valued as flexible gathering and event space • Better connect City Hall and Somba K'e Park • Potential for more markets, events, and year-round activity
Public Library	• Highly valued for staff, programs, and resources • Important hub for learning and community connection • Strong programming for children, families, and newcomers • Challenges include parking, accessibility, washrooms, limited space • Need for more meeting rooms and bookable spaces • Support for a safer, more accessible, expanded facility
Visitor Centre	• Valued for gallery and arts programming • Recognized as a cultural and informational space • Staff seen as welcoming and knowledgeable • Limited awareness and visibility in the community • Need to improve safety, access and parking
Mine Rescue Building	• Valued for youth-focused and community-serving uses • Outdoor garden seen as a positive community feature • Mixed perspectives on future (keep vs. sell) • Interest in continuing youth-oriented programming • Opportunity for a different long-term role and function
Wildcat Café	• Valued as a heritage asset and seasonal food and beverage destination • Mixed perspectives on future (keep vs. sell) • Use currently limited to summer season • Maintenance and investment needed for long-term viability • Opportunities include improved upkeep, tourism promotion, expanded year-round use
Ruth Inch Memorial Pool	• Valued for central location and visibility • Strong assets: lake views, trail connections, recreation hub, parking • Interest in reusing the facility • Suggested uses: library, arts and culture, gathering space, recreation, wellness • Support for flexible, multi-use programming



What happens next?

Feedback from City staff, interested and impacted parties, and community members, along with operational and technical considerations, will inform the development of draft concepts.

A second round of engagement is anticipated for fall 2026 to gather public feedback on the draft concepts before recommendations are finalized. The format and intent of Engagement Round 2 is currently being developed and will be refined and shared as the project progresses.

Interested in finding out more about this project?



Access the full **What We Heard Report** on the City's website:

<https://www.yellowknife.ca/public-engagement/city-facilities-strategic-use-study>

