

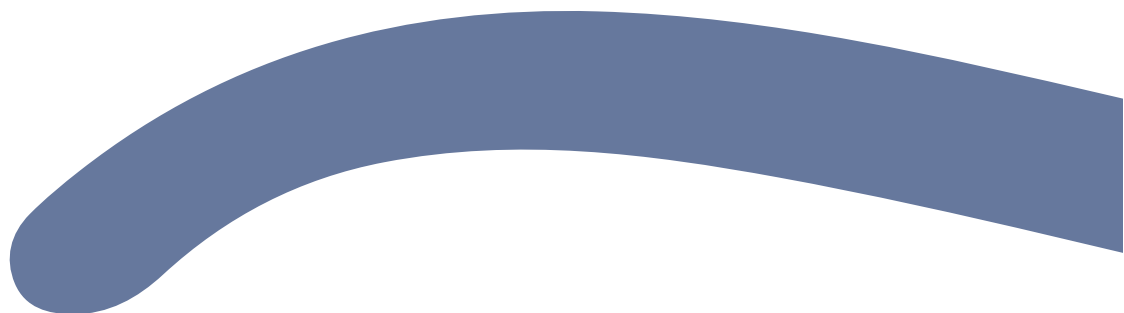


Town of Edson

Regional Multi-Use Recreation Facility – Community Survey

Survey Findings

August 6, 2019



HA





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1

Introduction

The Town of Edson is partnering with Yellowhead County on the development of a multi-use recreation facility. This facility project is the culmination of many years of planning as well as significant community consultation. While work has been undertaken on the development of the facility, Edson Town Council felt the need to formally gather the perspectives of residential and business property owners who pay municipal taxes.

As such a survey was fielded (online) to learn the thoughts of the tax paying community. Postcards were mailed out to property and business owners that included a unique access code. Recipients of the cards were directed to the Town's website where they could learn more about the facility project, its estimated costs, and estimated tax impacts. The link to the survey was alongside this information. In fact much of the information was embedded into the questionnaire to ensure it was available as people answered the questions.

The survey was promoted through use of the postcards themselves (see Appendix A); as well a poster was developed (Appendix B) and posted around the community. The Mayor encouraged participation while doing media interviews and the Town utilized its established channels to encourage participation. The survey gathered responses from June 14th through to July 16th, 2019¹. Some respondents did complete hard copies of the questionnaire rather than the online version.

¹ There were a few respondents who participated in the survey beyond the July 5th "cut off" date. The online survey remained open for several days to allow as many people as possible an opportunity to provide their responses. As well the hard copy versions were entered into the online survey to create a single data file which necessitated leaving the survey link live.

2

Findings

In total 716 responses were gathered; three thousand one hundred six (3,106) postcards were sent out. This represents a response rate of approximately 23% which is considered a very good response. The findings of the survey are considered representative of the tax paying community with a margin of error of +3.2% 19 times out of 20.

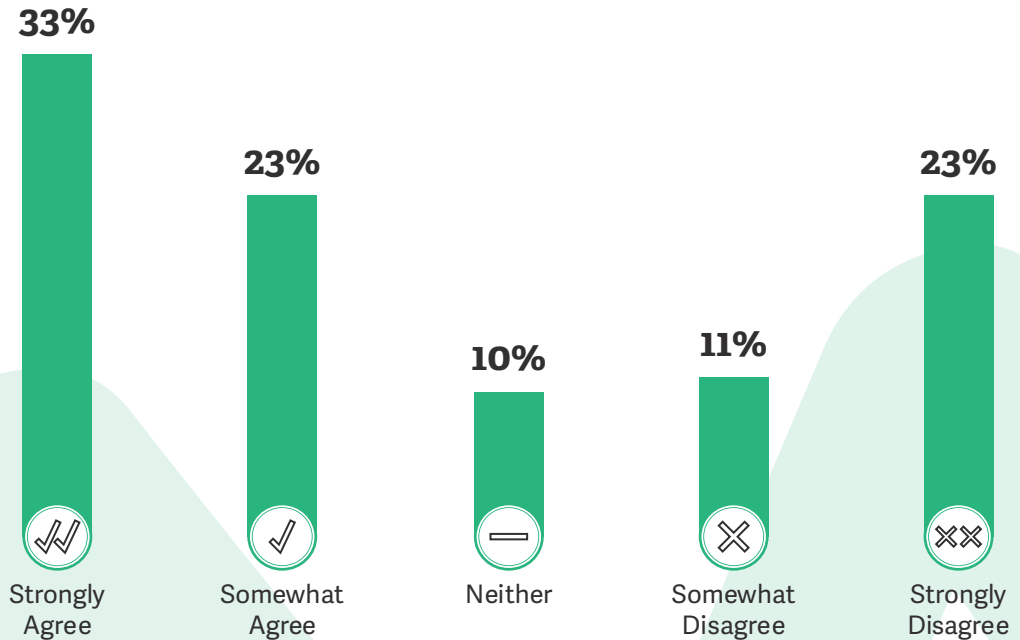
The findings from the survey are presented below according to the order they were asked in the questionnaire. The findings are presented for all responses. Sub-segment analysis was completed and any sizeable differences within the findings are noted. Refer to Appendix C to view the questionnaire.



2.1 Benefits

To begin the questionnaire respondents were asked to what extent they think their families / businesses will benefit from the new facility. As illustrated in the following graph, over half (56%) agreed to some degree that they will benefit from the facility. Approximately one-third (34%) disagreed.

Level of Agreement That the New Facility Will Benefit Your Family / Business



Subsegment Analysis

- **Business owners were more likely to disagree** that the new facility will benefit them (39% strongly disagreed and 8% somewhat disagreed) compared to residential property owners (21% strongly disagreed and 11% somewhat disagreed).
- Respondents who have **lived in Edson for ten years or less were more likely to agree** that their families will benefit from this facility (47% strongly agree and 23% somewhat agree) than those who have lived in Edson for more than ten years (29% strongly agree and 23% somewhat agree).
- Edson respondents **29 years of age and younger agreed to a greater extent** (58% strongly agreed and 16% somewhat agreed) than did those aged 30 to 49 years (43% strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed), those aged 50 to 69 years (25% strongly agreed and 24% somewhat agreed), and those aged 70 years and older (14% strongly agreed and 13% somewhat agreed).

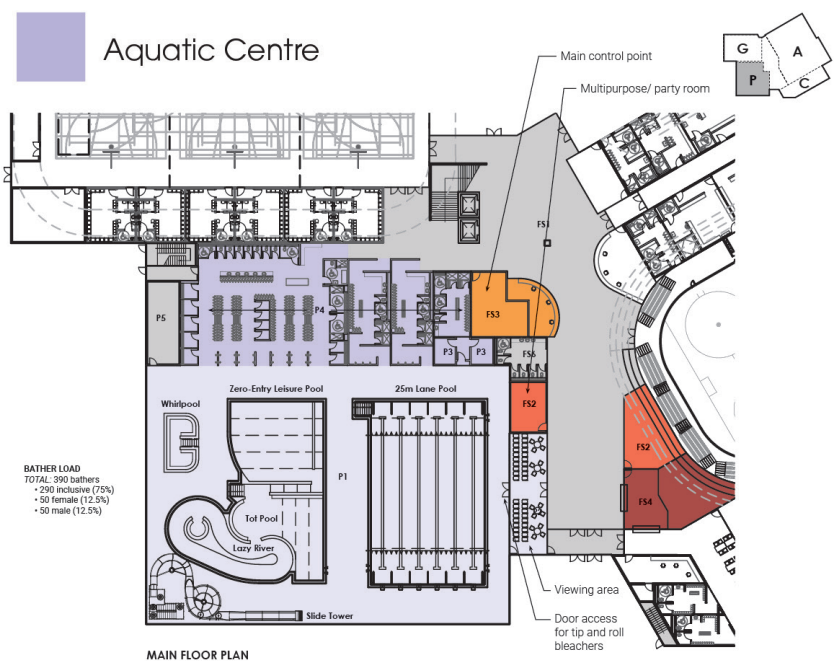
Respondents were asked to explain their answer. A synopsis of the comments is noted below and grouped according to whether they agreed or disagreed that they will benefit from the facility. The comments represent a synopsis of all the comments.

Respondents Who Agreed

- Would utilize the amenities included.
- The facility would help enhance the health and wellness of the community.
- Many people are using facilities in other communities, this would keep them in Edson.
- It would make the town more attractive.
- A facility like this would help retain residents and attract new ones.
- This adds to the recreation amenities in Edson.
- Having many activities available under a single roof is appealing. It is good for families.
- The amenities would provide year round opportunities for recreation.
- Having a facility like this would bring Edson up to where many other communities already are.

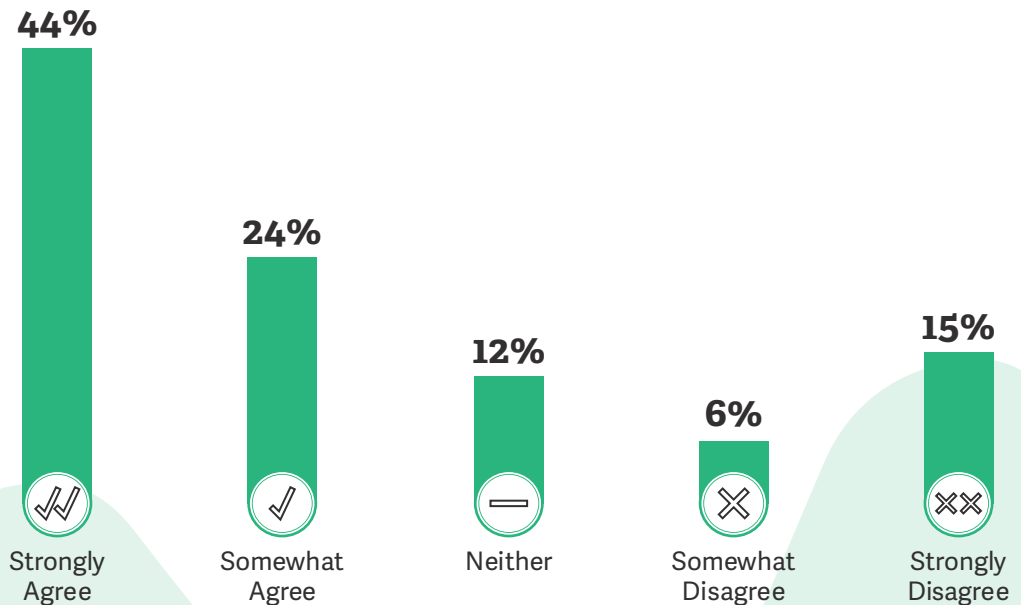
Respondents Who Disagreed

- Facilities currently exist that meet the community's needs.
- Wouldn't use the facility and its amenities.
- The costs to tax payers is too expensive.
 - » Users should pay more.
- Location is not very good – proximity to things is poor and the soil / swampy nature is a bad choice.
- There are other areas that the Town could address with its funds before this facility.
- The economy is in a downturn so the timing of this is poor.
- Edson is not a big enough community to warrant this facility and pay for it.



Next respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed that the regional community will benefit from this new facility. Approximately two-thirds (68%) agreed that the regional community will accrue benefits while twenty percent (21%) disagreed.

Level of Agreement That the Regional Community Will Benefit From the Facility



Subsegment Analysis

- **Business owners were more likely to disagree** that the new facility will benefit the regional community (34% strongly disagreed and 23% somewhat disagreed) compared to residential property owners (14% strongly disagreed and 6% somewhat disagreed).
- Respondents who have **lived in Edson for ten years or less were more likely to agree** that the regional community will benefit from this facility (52% strongly agree and 22% somewhat agree) than those who have lived in Edson for more than ten years (41% strongly agree and 23% somewhat agree).
- Edson respondents **29 years of age and younger agreed to a greater extent** (60% strongly agreed and 29% somewhat agreed) than did those aged 30 to 49 years (53% strongly agreed and 23% somewhat agreed), those aged 50 to 69 years (37% strongly agreed and 22% somewhat agreed), and those aged 70 years and older (25% strongly agreed and 30% somewhat agreed).

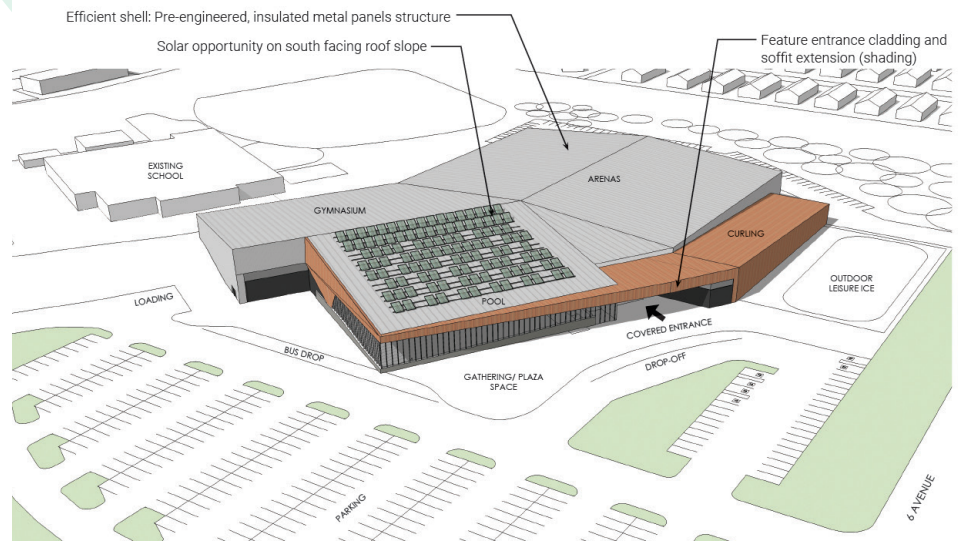
Respondents were asked to explain their answer. A synopsis of the comments is noted below according to their belief that the regional community will benefit from the facility. The comments represent a synopsis of all the comments provided.

Respondents Who Agreed

- The facility will keep money in town as people do not travel to other communities to use their amenities.
- This facility can help draw people in to visit and use the facilities but even new residents.
- Aside from drawing in new residents it can help retain the residents that are here particularly professionals who are more mobile with employment.
- This will provide facilities that are available in other communities.
- It is a major upgrade to what exists.
- It provides year round opportunities to not only youth but to people of all ages. With everything under one roof it is appealing to families.
- There is the opportunity to bring larger events to Edson with this type of facility.
- Residents from Edson, Yellowhead County, and beyond will use the facility.
- The amenities in the proposed facility address some of the gaps that currently exist.

Respondents Who Disagreed

- The current facilities in Edson meet the needs of the community.
- The location will mean that schools cannot use the facility.
- Other communities have facilities that will continue to draw area residents even if this is built.
- The level of use for this facility will not justify the tax burden; few people will really benefit.
- Too small a population in the area to afford this.
- The increase in taxes needed to pay for the facility will discourage people who may want to move to the area.
- There is other infrastructure that needs the attention and where the money should be directed.
- The economy is bad so the timing of this is not good. It looks bad plus there will be little in the way of contributions from individuals and companies.



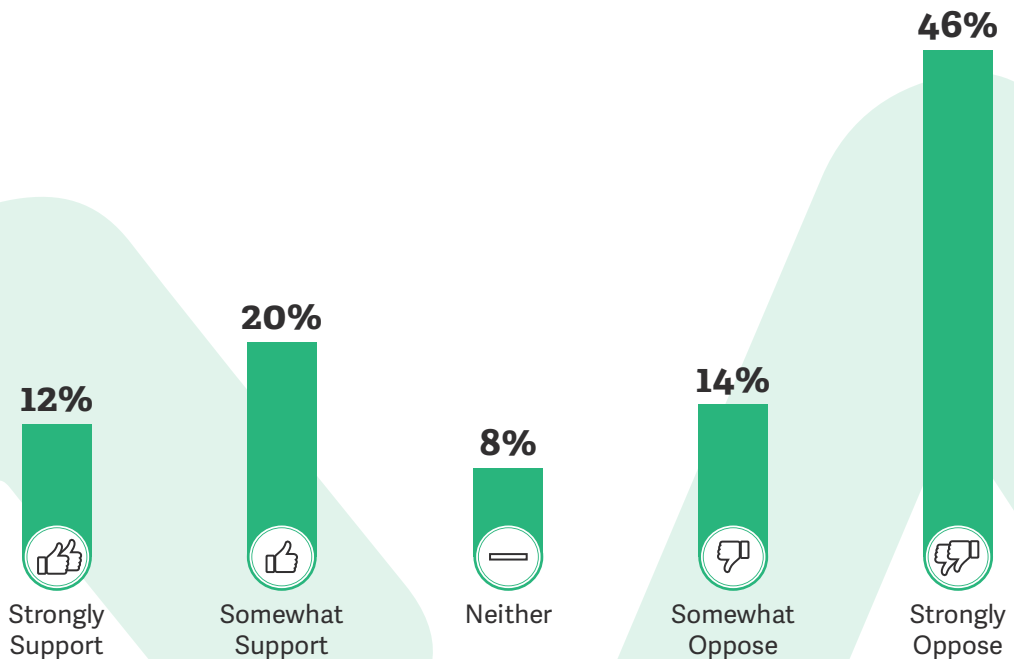
2.2 Support

An estimated project budget was presented to respondents. It explained that of the \$70M estimated budget half (\$35M) would come from Yellowhead County and that of the Town's \$35M contribution, \$15M would come from borrowing and \$20M from savings and reserves.

Based on an average home assessment of \$350,000 in Edson that would equate to approximately \$205 in an annual tax increase to repay the 30 year loan. An additional \$245 tax increase would be required to fund facility operations for the life of the facility.

Based on this information, respondents were asked the extent to which they supported the increase in annual property taxes. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately one-third (32%) supported this tax increase while over half (60%) opposed it to some extent.

Level of Support For the Annual Property Tax Increase



Subsegment Analysis

- **Business owners were more likely to oppose an annual tax increase** to fund the facility (57% strongly oppose and 9% somewhat oppose) compared to residential property owners (46% strongly oppose and 14% somewhat oppose).
- Respondents who have **lived in Edson for more than ten years were more likely to oppose** an increase in annual taxes (51% strongly oppose and 12% somewhat oppose) than those who have lived in Edson for ten or fewer years (31% strongly oppose and 21% somewhat oppose).
- Edson respondents **70 years and older were more likely to oppose** an increase in annual taxes (67% strongly oppose and 10% somewhat oppose) than those aged 50 to 69 years (52% strongly oppose and 13% somewhat oppose), those 30 to 49 years (36% strongly oppose and 15% somewhat oppose), and those 29 years of age and younger (35% strongly oppose and 16% somewhat oppose).

Respondents were asked to explain their answer. A synopsis of the comments is noted below according to their level of support to an annual increase in property taxes.

Respondents Who Supported the Increase

- The facility will benefit individuals and the community.
- Improved facilities bring a cost as does increasing the attractiveness of a community.
- Status quo is not an answer, new is better as older facilities require more money put into them to keep them going.
- People will save some money on traveling to other communities to use those facilities.
- The Town must be saving money as the other facilities close. That should mean the net impact is lower than being communicated for operations.
- Corporate sponsorship could help lower the costs.
- Times are going to get tougher so the facility is needed as a means to attract people and mitigate potential decline.
- Perhaps the building can be phased in to reduce the tax burden.

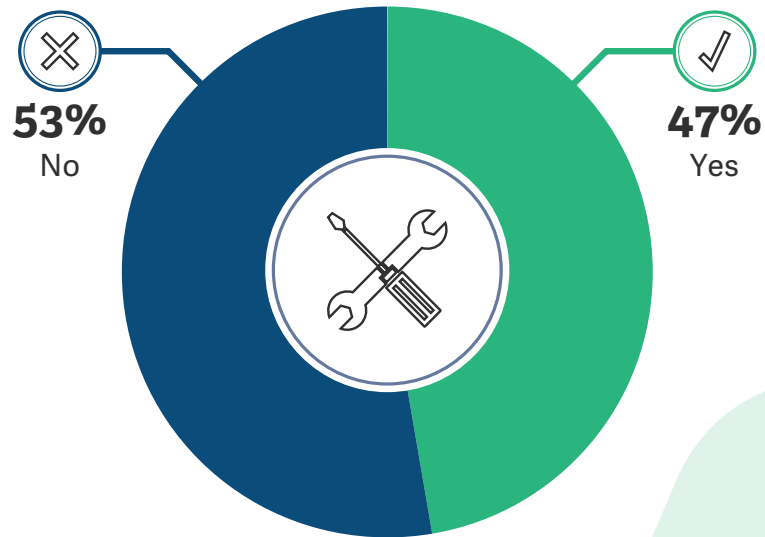


Respondents Who Opposed the Increase

1. The tax burden currently is very high with many people commenting it is too high.
 - a. The increase proposed is unreasonably high.
 - b. Concerns expressed about other needs in the community (e.g. roads and infrastructure) that need to be addressed.
 - c. Questions about how well the current taxes are being spent.
 - d. People cannot afford additional taxes especially of this size. Seniors in particular were singled out.
 - e. This significant tax increase will result in people leaving the community which, in turn, will impact the Town's tax base.
 - f. Costs should not be assessed on a household basis but on a per capita basis.
2. Concerns were expressed about the ability to pay for any other significant infrastructure projects if all the funds are allocated to this.
 - a. The Town cannot afford this project and has significant debts already.
 - b. The existing Town budget should be adjusted to cover this cost. Eliminate unnecessary spending.
3. Not everyone will use the facility.
 - a. Users of the facility should have to cover much of the cost.
 - b. The facility should be self-sustaining.
4. Other sources of funding should be sought such as government grants and fundraising. Perhaps the addition of a bar / restaurant could help with the costs.
5. Concerns were expressed about the financial estimates presented and that they are likely too low.
6. It is a double hit because people will be expected to also purchase a membership (pay to use) in addition to paying to build and sustain it.
7. The Town and County should evenly split the operating costs.
8. Facility does not offer much in the way of new opportunities from what exists.
 - a. There is nothing for arts and culture in this facility plan.
 - b. The existing facility is sufficient. If needed consider adding onto it.
9. The building is too costly, something more modest should be considered.
 - a. Consider a smaller building or look at improving / adding on to existing facility.
 - b. Look at building the facility in stages.
10. There has not been enough public input and consultation on this. A referendum is needed before this project goes any further.

Finally, respondents were asked given all the information provided, whether they support the Town moving ahead with the project. As illustrated in the graph the town is fairly evenly split but with slightly more people opposed to proceeding with the project (53%) than those in favour of moving ahead (47%).

Do You Support the Town of Edson Moving Ahead With This Project?

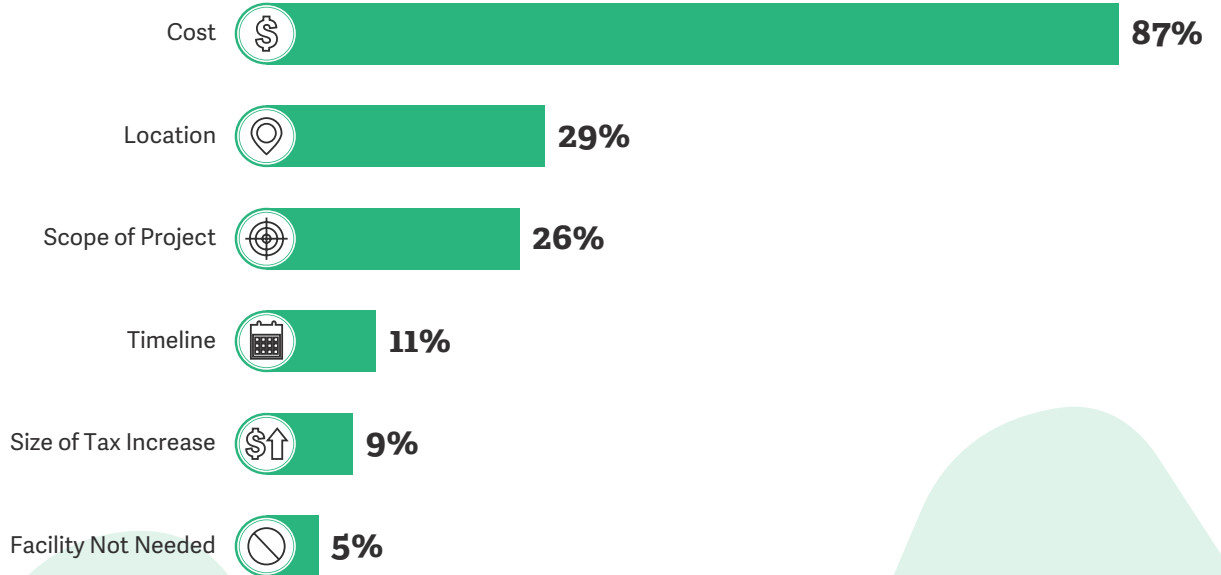


Subsegment Analysis

- **Business owners were more likely to oppose the Town proceeding** with the project (63% oppose moving ahead) compared with residential property owners (52% oppose moving ahead).
- Respondents who have **lived in Edson for ten years or less were more likely to support** proceeding with the project (59% support moving ahead) than those who have lived in Edson for more than ten years (44%).
- Edson respondents **29 years of age and younger were more likely to support** the Town moving ahead with the project (66% support the Town proceeding) than those aged 30 to 49 years (59%), those aged 50 to 69 years (40%), and those 70 years and older (23%).

Respondents who responded “No” that they did not support the Town proceeding with the project identified their main reasons for their stance. As illustrated in the following graph cost (87%) is the primary reason for their opposition.

Main Reasons for Opposing the Project



Other Comments

Respondents were able to provide some additional comments related to the proposed facility. There were few as the previous opportunities for comment were well used.

- The amenities in the facility should not be competing with the private sector.
- Many of the facilities included in the new facility exist in Edson. There was a curling rink but it was torn down. Rebuilding / re-doing is wasteful.
- Uninterested in paying for a facility that they will not use.
- Economic situation means there will be little corporate support. Maybe the timing should be extended.

2.3 About You

The following table describes the survey respondents.

Survey Perspective	
Residential Property Owner	90%
Business Owner	10%
Where do you live?*	
Edson	92%
Yellowhead County	7%
Other	1%
How long have you lived in Edson?*	
Less than 5 years	9%
6-10 years	10%
11-15 years	10%
More than 15 years	71%
Household Composition*	
0-9 yrs	14.9% (12.8%)
10-19 yrs	12.8% (12.2%)
20-29 yrs	10.6% (14.9%)
30-39 yrs	15.1% (16.2%)
40-49 yrs	12.9% (13.3%)
50-59 yrs	13.8% (14.3%)
60-69 yrs	12.3% (8.9%)
70-79 yrs	5.4% (4.2%)
80+ yrs	2.2% (3.2%)
What best describes your age?	
19 yrs or younger	<1%
20-29yrs	8%
30-39 yrs	19%
40-49 yrs	20%
50-59 yrs	22%
60-69 yrs	19%
70-79 yrs	8%
80+ yrs	4%

*Residential Property Owners only.

Figures in parentheses refer to the breakdown from the 2016 census.


3

Conclusions

- A majority of respondents (56%) think they will benefit from the new facility; a sizable minority (34%) don't think they will benefit.
 - » Younger respondents were more likely to see a personal benefit.
 - » Business owners were less likely to see a benefit than residential property owners.
- A majority of respondents (68%) said the community will benefit.
 - » Younger respondents were more likely to say the community will benefit.
 - » Business owners were less likely to see a benefit than residential property owners.
- A majority of respondents (60%) opposed an increase in annual property taxes.
 - » Across all subsegments a majority opposed an increase.
- A majority of respondents (53%) oppose the Town proceeding with the project.
 - » Younger respondents were more likely to support the project proceeding.
 - » A majority of those 49 years of age and younger supported the project proceeding.
 - » A majority of those 50 years of age and older oppose the project proceeding.
- Reasons **for** the project:
 - » Improve health and wellness of people of the community.
 - » Retain and attract residents.
 - » Catch Edson up with other communities.
- Reasons **against** the project
 - » Costs are prohibitive; taxes are high enough
 - » Not needed; adding little to what we have.
 - » Tax increase will cause people to leave.

A

Appendix A: Postcard



Town of Edson

Regional Multi-Use Recreation Facility




The Town of Edson is partnering with Yellowhead County in the development of a new Multi-Use Recreation Facility Project. This \$70 million (estimated) project will provide a lot of benefits to the community but comes with a cost. **We want to hear your thoughts about this project!**

To participate in the survey you need to use the access code in the box below.

XXXXXXXX

Simply visit the Town of Edson's website (www.edson.ca) and click on the link to access the survey – have your access code handy. The deadline to complete the survey is **July 5, 2019**

If you would prefer to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire you can pick one up at Town Hall (605 – 50th Street). You'll need your access code for the paper copy as well.



Regional Multi-Use Recreation Facility Survey

Given Surname
Address
Edson, AB T7E 1T7

Your input is important!

B

Appendix B: Poster



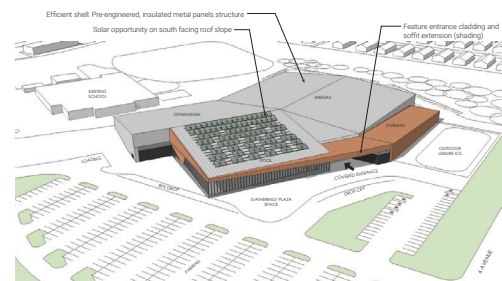
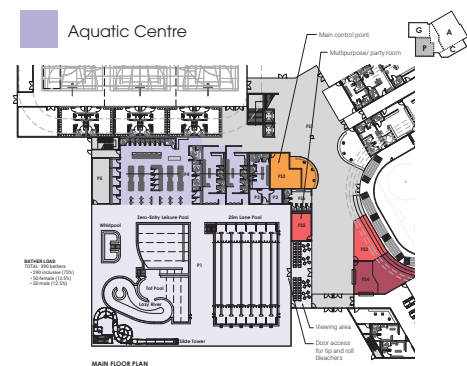
Town of Edson

Regional Multi-Use Recreation Facility

The Town of Edson is partnering with Yellowhead County on the development of a multi-use recreation facility. This facility development is the culmination of many years of planning as well as significant community consultation. While work is underway to design and build the facility, Edson Town Council felt the need to formally gather the perspectives of residential and business property owners who pay municipal taxes.

You can participate by filling out the questionnaire by **July 5, 2019**. Please check your mail for a postcard with a unique code you can use to complete the questionnaire.

The responses you provide will illustrate the level of support for the facility and will inform Council as to their next steps as it relates to the project.



C

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Access Code: _____



Town of Edson Regional Multi-Use Recreation Facility Household Questionnaire

The Town of Edson is partnering with Yellowhead County on the development of a multi-use recreation facility. This facility development is the culmination of many years of planning as well as significant community consultation. While work is underway to design and build the facility, Edson Town Council felt the need to formally gather the perspectives of residential and business property owners who pay municipal taxes.

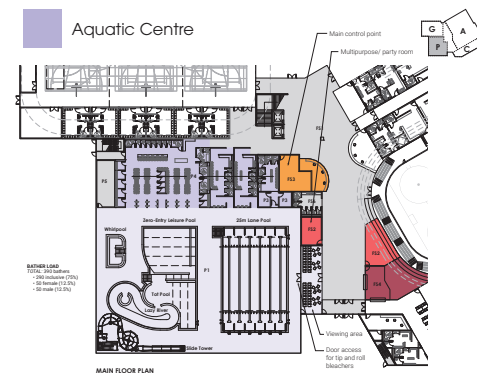
Please review the information included herein and answer the questions. For additional information please consult the information presented on the Town's website (www.edson.ca/facility).

The responses you provide will illustrate the level of support for the facility and will inform Council as to their next steps as it relates to the project. Only a **single response** is required. Please complete the questions by **July 5, 2019**.

About the Multi-Use Recreation Facility

The new multi-use recreation facility will include a variety of different amenities including the following:

- 2 NHL sized ice surfaces
- 4 sheet curling rink
- Multi-use gymnasium (size of 3 school gymnasiums)
- Running track
- Fitness area
- Aquatic centre with:
 - » 6 lane 25m pool
 - » Lazy river
 - » Tot pool
 - » Hot tub
 - » Waterslide
 - » Viewing area
 - » Multipurpose rooms



Section 1: Benefits

1. To what extent do you agree that you and your family/business will benefit from this new facility?

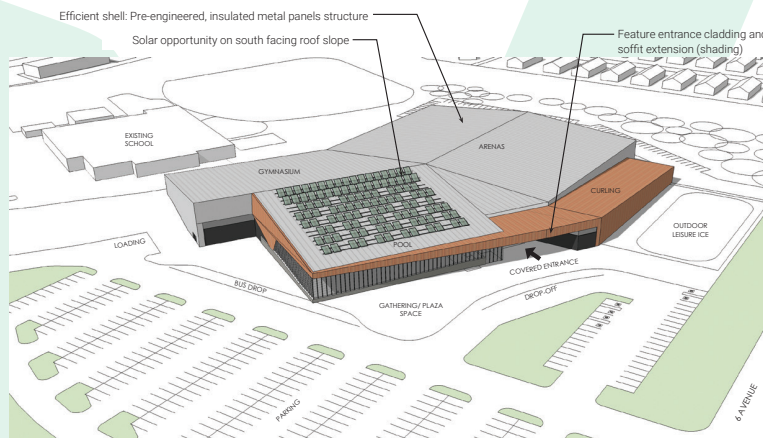
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

a. Please explain your answer.

2. To what extent do you agree that the regional community will benefit from this new facility?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

a. Please explain your answer.

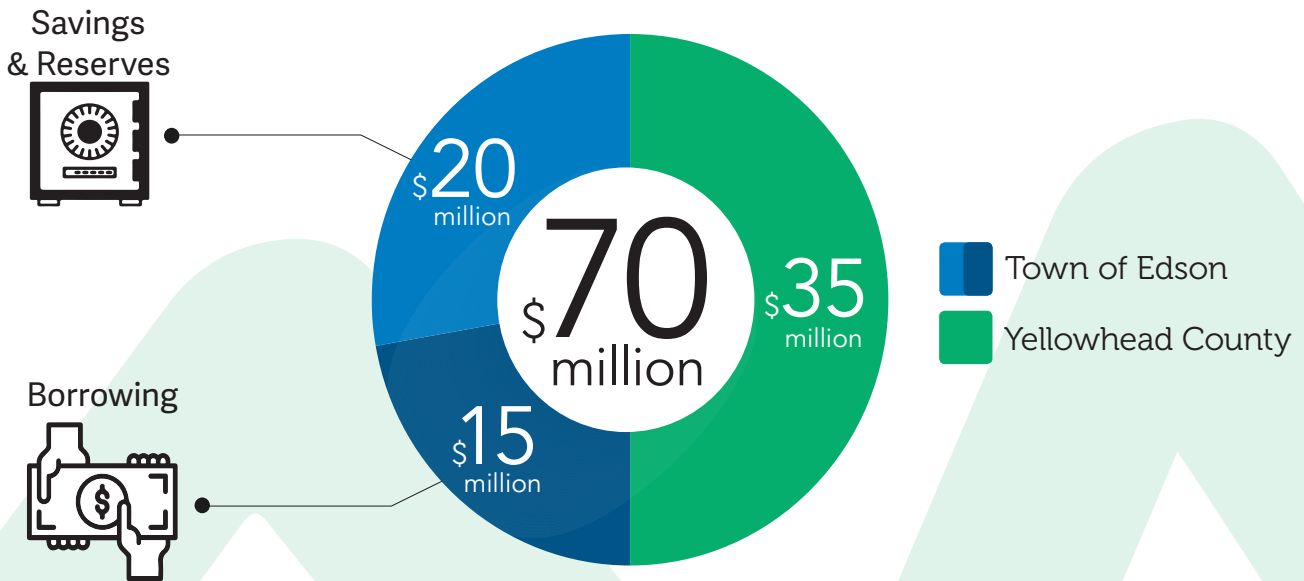


Costs

The estimated cost of building the multi-use recreation facility is \$70 million. This capital cost will be shared 50:50 between the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County as per the signed agreement between the two municipalities.

The Town of Edson will fund its \$35 million contribution through a combination of savings (\$20 million) and borrowing (\$15 million).

Project Budget

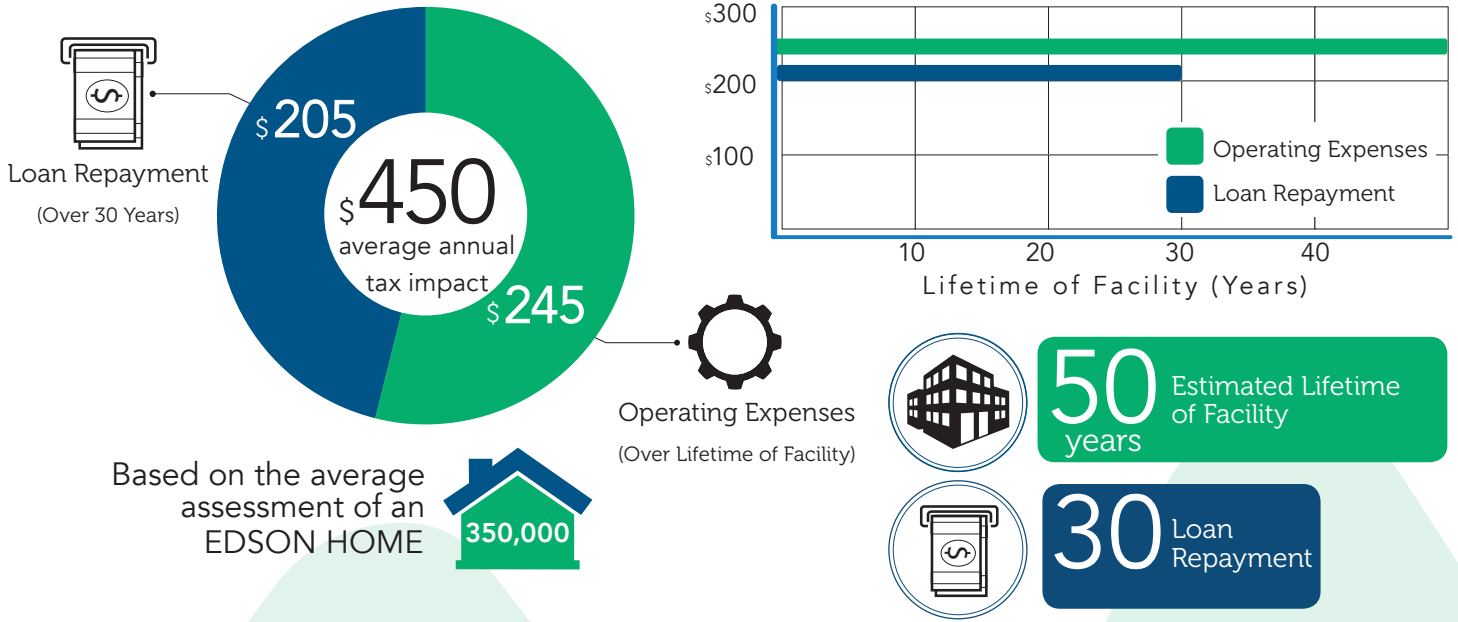


These type of recreation facilities require financial support from the municipality on a yearly basis to operate. The facility will not generate enough revenues to cover all of its operating expenses. The signed agreement between the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County will see the Town pay 60% of any operational support while the County will cover the other 40%.

Edson residents and business owners can expect to see an increase in their municipal taxes to cover the costs of borrowing the \$15 million and for the operating support. Based on a property assessment of \$350,000 (an average home assessment in Edson), each homeowner will pay an additional \$37.50 in property taxes per month. (This is an annual increase of \$450 in property taxes.) Refer to the Town's website to calculate the taxation impact for other assessment amounts for residents and business owners (www.edson.ca/facility). The impact on business taxes will be similar proportions.

Of that average \$450 annual increase in property taxes, \$205 is earmarked for loan repayment for 30 years. The other \$245 per year is an ongoing cost to cover operations.

Tax Impact Timeline for Edson Residents



Section 2: Support

3. To what extent do you support this increase in annual property taxes in order to fund the multi-use recreation facility?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Neither support or oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

a. Please explain your answer.

4. Given all the information provided, do you support the Town of Edson moving forward with this project?

Yes

No

a. If no, please provide the main reason(s)

Cost

Timeline

Location

Scope of Project

Other _____

Section 3: About You

5. In what role are you answering this questionnaire?

Residential Property Owner

Business Owner (Go to Q9)

6. Where do you live?

Edson

Yellowhead County

Other _____

7. How long have you lived in Edson?

Less than 5 years

6-10 yrs

11-15 yrs

More than 15 yrs

8. If you're answering as a residential property owner, please describe your household by identifying the number of members in each of the following age groups. (Please include yourself.)

_____ 0 - 9 yrs

_____ 10 - 19 yrs

_____ 20 - 29 yrs

_____ 30 - 39 yrs

_____ 40 - 49 yrs

_____ 50 - 59 yrs

_____ 60 - 69 yrs

_____ 70 - 79 yrs

_____ 80+ yrs

9. What range best describes your age?

19 yrs or younger

20 - 29 yrs

30 - 39 yrs

40 - 49 yrs

50 - 59 yrs

60 - 69 yrs

70 - 79 yrs

80+ yrs

Thank you for taking the time to answer our survey.

HA



