

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND
GENERAL MANAGER LANDS AND FACILITIES
SUBJECT: **CITY HALL SITE SURVEY RESULTS**
PURPOSE: To seek Council approval of the Civic Square site for a new City Hall,
and for staff to proceed with project planning and implementation.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT following public consultation initiatives, the Civic Square located at 6100 Willingdon Avenue be selected as the site for a new Burnaby City Hall;

THAT staff be authorized to proceed with project planning and implementation of the new City Hall at the Civic Square; and

THAT the new City Hall development include the following programmatic elements, based on the results of public consultation:

- a) City Hall/administrative services;
- b) Library;
- c) Childcare centre;
- d) Ground-oriented commercial opportunities, such as restaurants and cafes; and,
- e) Reconfigured and enlarged public plaza.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS

I concur with the recommendation of the General Manager Planning and Development and the General Manager Lands and Facilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The existing City Hall has reached its end of life and a new City Hall is required. Public feedback was sought on three potential locations in Metrotown for a new City Hall, though the process allowed for feedback related to other sites throughout the City, including City Hall's current site. This report summarizes public engagement results, which indicates Civic Square as the preferred location, and that the program for the new City Hall site be limited to City Hall, a redeveloped library, a childcare centre, activating ground-oriented commercial uses, and a reconfigured and enlarged public plaza/open space. Staff support this location and program for a new City Hall as it is aligned with city policies, plans, and planning best practices.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The proposed new City Hall at Civic Square aligns with the following policies and plans adopted by Council:

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Regional Context Statement (2013);
- Official Community Plan (1998);
- Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017);
- Economic Development Strategy (2007);
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011);
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016); and
- Transportation Plan (2021).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Built in 1955, and renovated and added to over the decades since, the existing City Hall has reached its end of life, meaning that the cost of necessary seismic and other upgrades far exceed the value of retaining the existing structure. Redevelopment, therefore, is the most appropriate option. An important consideration is whether to find a new location for the redeveloped City Hall. As such, in July 2023, public feedback was sought on three potential locations in Metrotown for the new City Hall: Civic Square, the former Firefighters Public House site, and the Bonsor Recreation Complex and Park site, as shown in **Attachment 1**. Metrotown was proposed for its overall accessibility for most of Burnaby’s residents, be it by transit, active forms of transportation, or by car. It was also proposed because of Metrotown’s prominence as Burnaby’s downtown, and its relationship to many surrounding amenities and complementary land uses. This report presents the results of public engagement and seeks approval for project planning and implementation to immediately commence on the preferred site: Civic Square.

3.0 BACKGROUND

The existing City Hall at 4949 Canada Way was constructed almost 70 years ago. The building no longer meets city standards (i.e., seismic, energy and accessibility) and operational requirements and will be costly to reasonably renovate and upgrade. Even with considerable investment, the impact would be nominal on the viability of a future renovated City Hall, anticipating extending the life of the building by only 20 years.

It is also important to note that upgrading City Hall would not solve a growing space needs problem. When the City Hall main building was built in 1955, Burnaby’s population was 75,000. Today, the population has grown to 249,125 (2021 Census), driving continued growth in City services. Over the last 68 years, City services have long outgrown the building. Today, staff are spread across five buildings making it inconvenient for visitors who often must travel to different buildings to do their business.

Therefore, to better deliver services to our residents and those who conduct business at City Hall, a new City Hall that is large enough to consolidate services is required. As such, planning for a new consolidated City Hall in a location that brings services closer to those who seek them is proposed, and is believed to be a reasonable and responsible approach to addressing the structural deficiencies of the current building.

In July 2023, staff sought public feedback on three potential locations in Metrotown for the development of a new City Hall: Civic Square, the Firefighters Public House site, and the Bonsor Recreation Complex and Park site. The focus of site selection in Metrotown reflects its position as Burnaby’s designated downtown, as officially adopted in the *Metrotown Downtown Plan 2017*. This also corresponds with Metrotown’s designation as a Regional City Centre in Metro Vancouver’s *Metro 2050: Regional Growth Strategy*. These designations have meant that Metrotown has seen significant investment in regional-scale transportation infrastructure, City-wide services and amenities, and offers superior connectivity to other major urban centres throughout the region. These factors have and will continue to support the development of Metrotown as a premier centre of business, culture, and social activity. This is apparent in the significant redevelopment activity taking place in Metrotown, resulting in new housing and jobs, enhanced connectivity and transportation choice, and improved access to services and amenities. Given the foregoing, Metrotown Downtown is the primary urban focal point for the City, making it the choice area for a new City Hall.

Locating a new City Hall in Metrotown supports the intent of making Metrotown Burnaby’s “downtown” as envisioned in the *Metrotown Downtown Plan*; capitalizes on the area’s centrality and extensive transit infrastructure, making it accessible to Burnaby residents and staff who will work there; and fosters connections with Burnaby’s business community. The option of rebuilding City Hall at its existing location near Deer Lake was considered, but not put forward as an option due to the aforementioned factors supporting a Metrotown location, and due to the additional cost required to establish a temporary City Hall during three years of construction.

Staff also sought public feedback on additional civic uses, amenities, and program spaces that could be integrated with the new City Hall. With careful planning, additional amenities and public spaces could potentially be included to optimize use of the site. In Metrotown where there is a significant need for amenities, but where there is limited availability of land, the development of the new City Hall presents a great opportunity to integrate other amenities and public spaces for residents to gather and recreate and to advance the city-building goals outlined in the *Metrotown Downtown Plan*.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During July 2023, public feedback was sought on the three sites described above through an online survey and four in-person open houses. The survey questions and the public engagement results are fully detailed in a Consultation Summary Report in **Attachment 2**.

The public engagement campaign was conducted through two mail drops (112,065 postcards were distributed to Burnaby residents and businesses, twice), newspaper ads, and social media. Staff engaged with 689 people at the four in-person open houses and received over two hundred comments at those events. There were over 4,000 responses to the online survey.

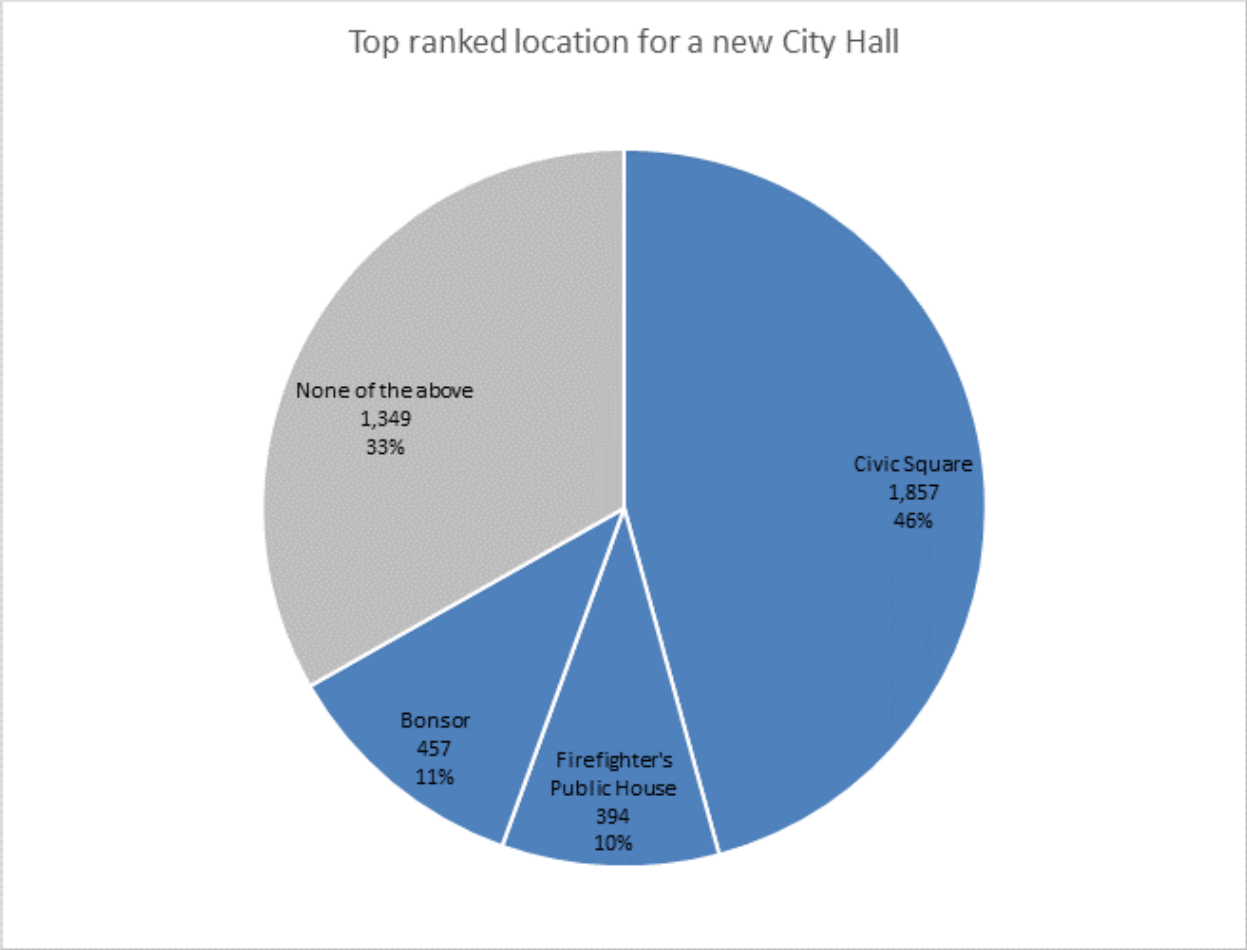
4.1 Survey Results – Highlights

The survey invited responses to four questions.

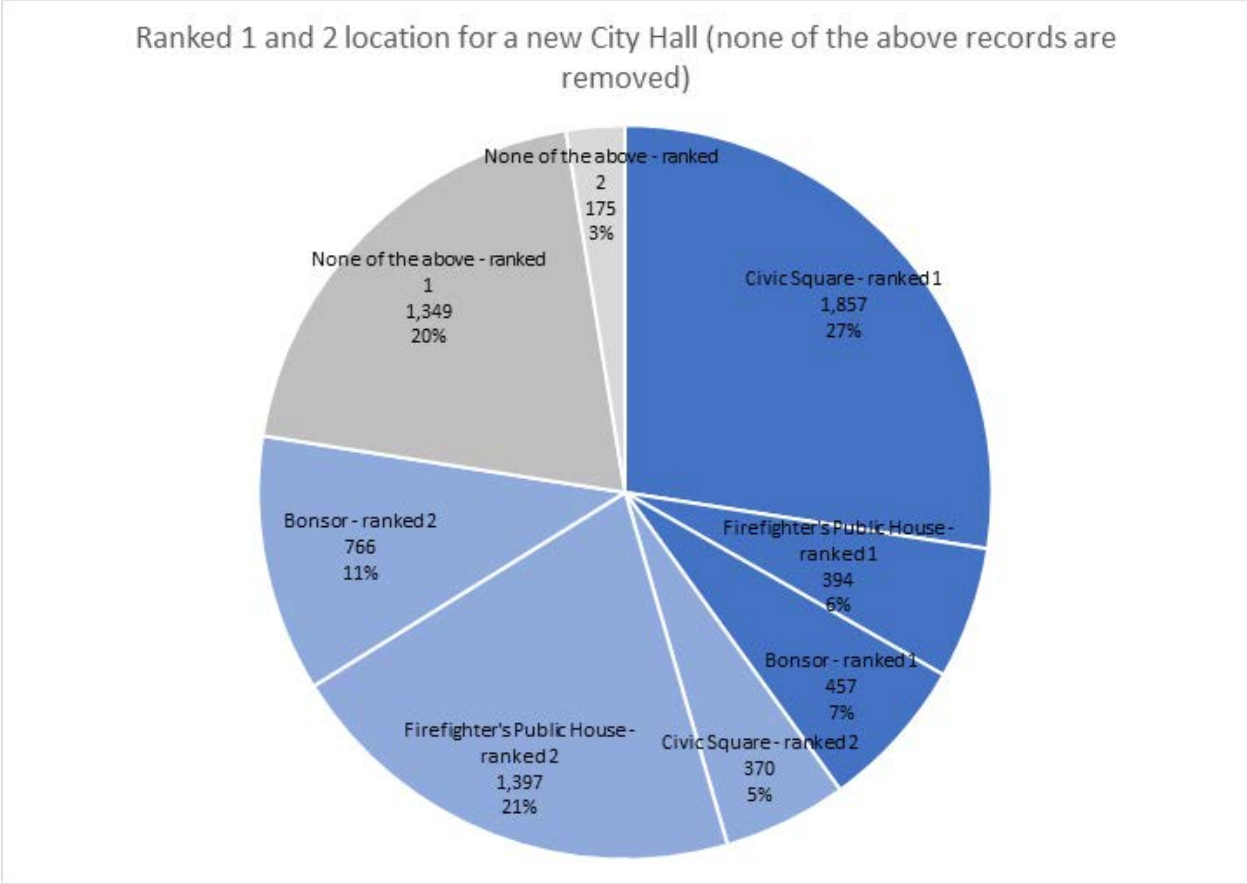
Q1 – Preferred Site Option

The survey asked the respondent to rank the three site options, with “1” as the most preferred and “3” the least preferred. There was also an option to indicate *I do not prefer any of these locations*.

The following shows the first preferred site option of the 4,057 respondents:



It is noted that of the total number of respondents, 77% selected one of the three locations in Metrotown as their first choice, with Civic Square being the preferred site.



Amongst the respondents indicating *I do not prefer any of these locations*, some provided rationale for their choice or suggested other potential locations in Metrotown for a new City Hall, or to remain at the existing Deer Lake location.

Q2 – Public Plaza Space

On the question of the importance of the new City Hall including public plaza space, 51% (2,065) of respondents think it is important or very important. The remaining respondents (1,996) were neutral or think it is not very important.

Q3 – Other Civic Uses, Amenities and Programs

Respondents were asked what other civic use amenities and program spaces should be considered for inclusion in the new City Hall development and had the option to select more than one amenity or program.

Sixty-four percent of respondents (2,604) indicated that the new City Hall site should include other amenities beyond the existing civic services already on the site. The most selected amenities were: restaurant/café (1,543), meeting rooms for public use (1,376), cultural venue (1,220), and childcare (1,156 respondents). Other amenities indicated

include art gallery (830), retail shops (510), and housing (410 respondents). The remaining 36% of respondents (1,457) noted no further amenities beyond the existing civic services already on site should be provided as part of the new development.

Q4 – Frequency of Visit to City Hall to Access City Services

The majority of respondents (1,880) noted they never visit the existing City Hall to access city services, or only once or twice a year (1,322 respondents). Only 208 respondents indicated visiting City Hall at least once a week.

Other Comments

In reference to the three site options in Metrotown, a number of the respondents noted traffic congestion on the road network as a major concern. Other concerns noted the lack of parking, the removal of green open spaces, and the removal of Bob Prittie Library.

A commonly asked question was the future land use of the existing Deer Lake site, should City Hall be relocated to Metrotown. If it is confirmed that a new City Hall will be relocated to Metrotown, the long term planning of the Deer Lake site will be considered within the context of the new Official Community Plan (OCP) which is currently under review. The OCP sets out the framework for growth for the City to 2050.

5.0 RECOMMENDED SITE: CIVIC SQUARE

The public engagement process indicates very strong support for a new City Hall in Metrotown, and specifically at Civic Square. The Civic Square site at 6100 Willingdon Avenue has a site area of 1.78 hectares (4.4 acres). It is currently home to the Bob Prittie Public Library and a well-used green space. The site is designated in the Metrotown Downtown Plan for institutional use, and park and open space. To the south of Civic Square across Central Boulevard is the Metrotown SkyTrain Station, the BC Parkway urban trail, the Beresford Art Walk, and the Maywood residential neighbourhood. To the west across Willingdon Avenue is the Central Park East residential neighbourhood. To the north and east across Kingsborough Street and McKay Avenue is the Metro Downtown core, characterized by high-density residential, commercial, and mixed-use development, including Crystal Mall, Station Square, and the Metropolis at Metrotown shopping centre, which is currently undergoing master plan rezoning for future mixed-use development. The Metrotown SkyTrain station and bus loop are located approximately 300 metres to the east of Civic Square.

Staff support the Civic Square location from a community planning perspective. All three locations provide centrality and proximity to the Metro Downtown Core, but of the three, it is the most central; provides the most proximity to the Metro Downtown core thereby offering the most convenient access to existing and future shops, services, and amenities; the most proximate to the Metrotown SkyTrain station and bus loop, providing residents and customers with the highest degree of accessibility and transportation choice; and most prominent and visible with street frontage along all four

sides of the site. Staff also consider this site to have the greatest potential to create a “civic heart” in the downtown core, alongside a public library, public plaza, an enhanced BC Parkway linear park, and other potential civic uses.

More specifically from an urban form and urban design standpoint, the Civic Square site offers a unique ability to situate a significant civic facility within the downtown on a site that has public access on all four of its frontages. No other such opportunity exists in Metrotown. This unique opportunity presents the possibility of a fully public space, especially in a scenario involving redevelopment and integration of the adjacent Bob Prittie Metrotown Library into the new civic facility. Having a virtually unencumbered site also allows for engaging, iconic architecture and public spaces that help define Metrotown as a community with an emerging identity that is representative of the city, while at the same time, could be forward looking in its playful, exciting, timeless, inclusive, and welcoming design. Being set within the heart of the Metro Downtown neighbourhood also allows for the exploration of unique forms and degrees of height without being incongruent with existing and planned development in the area, unlike other sites that may have some limitations from an urban design perspective.

6.0 RECOMMENDED OTHER CIVIC USES AND AMENITIES

The public engagement process indicated public support for existing civic services on the selected site to be integrated with the new City Hall, thus, the Civic Square site must continue to accommodate a public library. The existing 5,667 m² (61,000 sq. ft.) Bob Prittie Metrotown Library opened in 1991, with renovations undertaken in 2014, 2017, and 2022/23. While the economic life of various building components vary, there is merit in exploring early renewal of the library, including potential integration with the new City Hall. Integrating the two buildings would be advantageous as it would allow a larger public plaza to be created once the existing library is demolished. This public plaza would have excellent solar access and be more conducive to large gatherings. A larger public plaza would provide greater opportunity to create an exciting, attractive, and well-used Civic Square that would complement the new facilities on site, establish the site as the “civic heart” of Burnaby, and provide greater integration opportunities with proposed enhancements along the BC Parkway to the south. Integration opportunities will be further explored during the design phase of the project.

Public feedback also indicated support for integrating the following amenities: restaurants / cafés, meeting rooms for public use, a cultural venue, and childcare. From a community planning and urban design perspective, restaurants, cafés, and other small-scale retail shops would add interest and animation along the plaza and street frontages, while community meeting rooms would meet a growing need of various non-profit and neighbourhood groups. Regarding child care, the City’s 2021 Child Care Action Plan notes that quality child care services are critical to the social and economic well-being of our communities and seek to identify actions to address emerging community needs.

It is unlikely a cultural venue can also be integrated into the site without impacting the space available for a public plaza and creating a highly impenetrable block, thereby

making it less accessible and welcoming. Additional considerations include design challenges related to acoustics, clear span structural spaces, circulation, and access, as well as building cost considerations such as additional underground parking and loading facilities. A cultural venue can be sought elsewhere in the Metrotown area, in concert with redevelopment.

With Council support, staff will investigate the potential integration of a library, child care centre, ground-oriented supporting commercial opportunities (restaurants, cafes, retail), and a reconfigured and enlarged public plaza at the design phase of the project.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that, based on the results of a public engagement process and further staff analysis of its findings, the Civic Square site located at 6100 Willingdon Avenue be selected and approved as the location of a new City Hall.

It is also recommended that staff be authorized to proceed with project planning to define the scope of work for the development of the new City Hall without further delay, and explore opportunities to include other desired programming components as suggested by the survey results and further described in Sections 5.0 and 6.0 of this report. It should be noted that the cost of delay for a project of this scale is estimated to be \$2-3 million per month due to construction cost inflation, hence there is an urgency in timely decision making. The programming and layout of the new building will address the comments and concerns received from the public engagement activities as noted above, including the commission of a Traffic Impact Assessment.

Recognising the importance of the existing Civic Square site to the community as a place of gathering and respite, project planning staff will identify temporary outdoor activity space and library services that can be provided elsewhere in close proximity to the site during construction.

Staff will begin project planning for the new City Hall at the Civic Square site immediately. Below is an indication of the generalized project timeline:

- Project Planning – 1 year (Q3 2023 to Q3 2024)
- Design – 1-2 years (Q4 2024 to 2026)
- Construction – 3 years (2027-2030)

8.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City Hall Replacement Project is included in the 2023 to 2027 Capital Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development and James Lota, General Manager Lands and Facilities

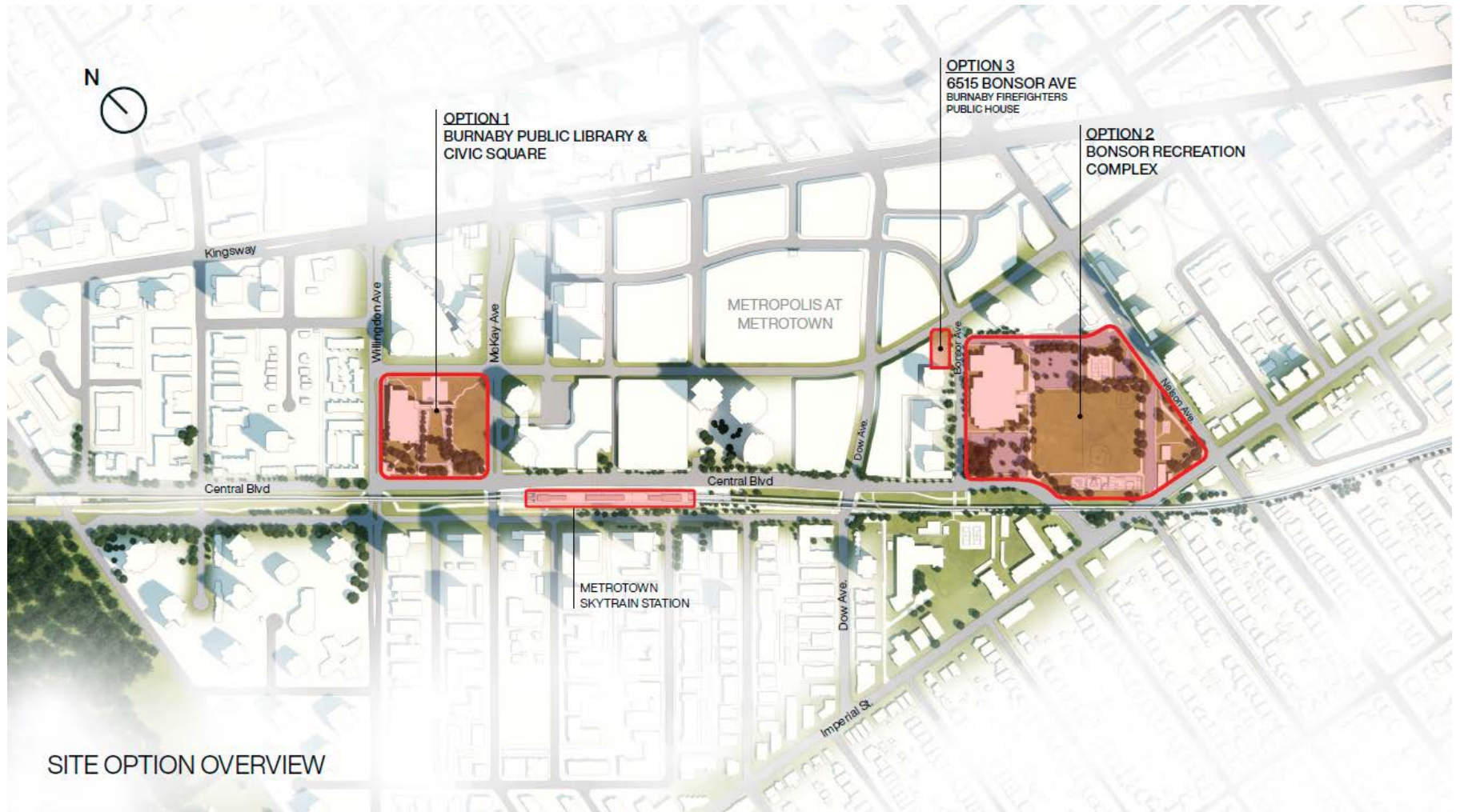
ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Map
- Attachment 2 – Consultation Summary Report

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Charlene Liew, Senior Strategic Initiatives Planner, and reviewed by Karin Hung, Director Strategic Initiatives and Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development.

Appendix 1: Proposed New City Hall Locations





NEW CITY HALL PROJECT

Consultation Summary Report

September 2023

Public participation strategy

A comprehensive city-wide public outreach and communications approach was used to increase awareness of the project, engage the community and gather public feedback. Community consultation was originally planned for June 1 to July 7, 2023 and was extended to July 30 to provide more time for feedback. The community consultation included information about the project on the City's website, an email and phone line for community to connect to the City, an online survey, four open houses, and pop-up event at one of the largest community events, Hats Off Day.

An extensive marketing campaign was established to target the entire city. This included a direct mail piece, social media, media release, paid digital advertising and the City's eNewsletter and website. The project team worked to "involve" the community in the planning for the City's new home, as per the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2)'s Public Participation spectrum.

Raising public awareness

A number of advertising platforms were used to inform residents and businesses about the project, raise awareness and encourage the public to fill out an online survey.

A project webpage was created on Burnaby.ca and on the City's online public engagement platform *Your Voice* ([Burnaby.ca/YourVoice](https://burnaby.ca/YourVoice)), with over 12,000 website visits between May 31 and July 30, 2023.

Two full page ads ran in the Burnaby Now newspaper on June 1 and June 8, and two different postcards were mailed out to every household and business in Burnaby (over 112,000 copies per mailing). These postcards, in addition to posters were also distributed at the City's recreation, cultural and library facilities.

In addition, the project team also used digital marketing during the campaign period, including organic posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X) and LinkedIn. Paid advertising ran on Facebook, Instagram and Google. Information about the project appeared in two issues of CityConnect eNews, which were delivered to 1,942 and 1,988 inboxes respectively.

City staff also held four drop-in open houses in the Metrotown area, at the Bonsor Recreation Complex, outside the Bob Prittie Metrotown Library at Civic Square and a pop-up engagement tent on Hastings Street during Hats Off Day. These open houses provided opportunities for residents to speak with staff, ask questions and learn more about the project. A digital copy of the display boards from these open houses is attached as Attachment 1.

Background

Built in 1955, the existing City Hall has reached its end of life. To provide the best level of customer service to Burnaby residents and businesses, a new City Hall is being planned – a modern, environmentally sustainable, accessible, inclusive and resilient building. On June 1, 2023, the City launched a public engagement initiative to seek feedback on three potential locations in Metrotown for the new City Hall: Civic Square, the former Firefighters Public House site and the Bonsor Recreation Complex and park site. The public was also invited to share their views on potential programmatic aspects of the new facility.

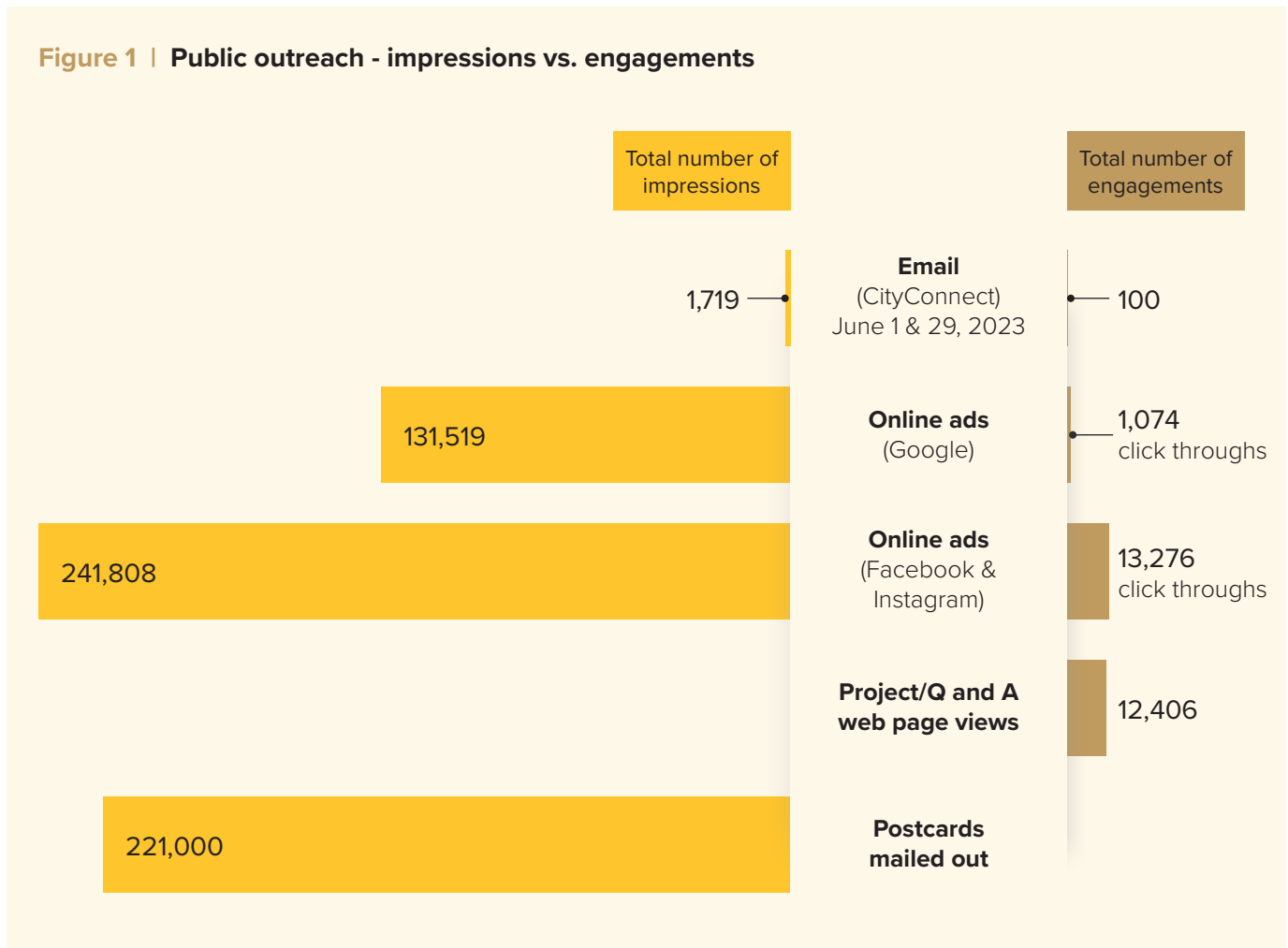


Public engagement

The primary method for collecting public feedback on this project was the online survey, which was open from June 1 through July 30. In addition, staff collected public feedback through posted comments and in-person conversations at open houses and pop-up engagements, emails, comments on social media posts, letters, and phone conversations.

Consultation statistics

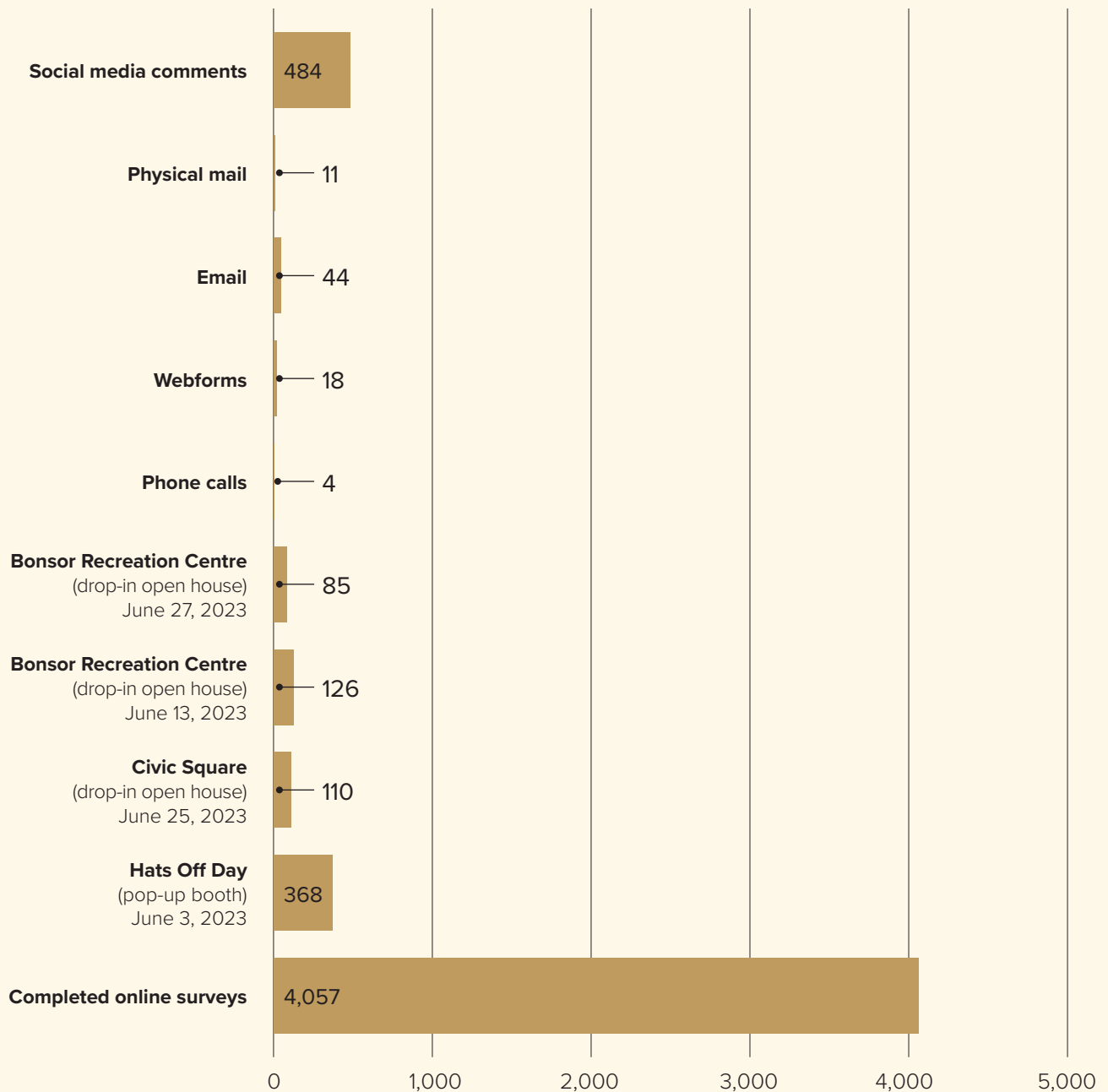
Figure 1 shows the total number of *impressions* (in yellow) versus *engagements* (in gold). Impressions are defined as the number of times the public outreach materials were seen, while engagement is the number of times people clicked on a project link or engaged with the project. For example, there were 131,519 impressions of the project ads on Google and 1,074 click throughs on the ad to view its content. There were a total of 596,046 impressions and a total of 26,856 engagements from the five public outreach methods that the project team employed.



Consultation statistics (continued)

Figure 2 shows the number of people that were directly engaged by source. These sources include the completed online surveys, visitors to the City's booth at Hats Off Day, visitors to drop-in open houses, as well as comments that the project team received via email, phone conversations, physical mail and comments through the City's website and social media channels.

Figure 2 | Public engagement by source



What we heard | online survey results

The main method of collecting public feedback was the online survey that was open from June 1 through July 30. The survey included four main questions, in addition to supplementary questions related to demographic profile and an open comment box to provide an opportunity for written comments and feedback. In total, 4,057 surveys were completed during the consultation period. A copy of the survey questions is attached as Attachment 2.

Survey Question 1 Preferred location for new City Hall

The first survey question asked respondents to rank their preferred location for a new City Hall: Civic Square (option 1), the former Firefighters Clubhouse site (option 2), and the Bonsor Recreation Complex and Park site (option 3), with “1” being the most preferred and “3” the least preferred. There was also an option to indicate “I do not prefer any of these locations”.

A total of 4,057 respondents answered this question, and nearly half of them (46% or 1,857 respondents) ranked Civic Square as their top choice, while 33% (1,349 respondents) indicated “I do not prefer any of these locations”. Figure 4 shows that 67% of the respondents selected one of the three locations in Metrotown as their first choice, with Civic Square being the preferred site. Figure 4 illustrates the top and second ranked locations for a new City Hall. 77% of all respondents selected one of the three locations in Metrotown as their first or second choice, with Civic Square being the preferred site.

Figure 3
Top ranked location for a new City Hall

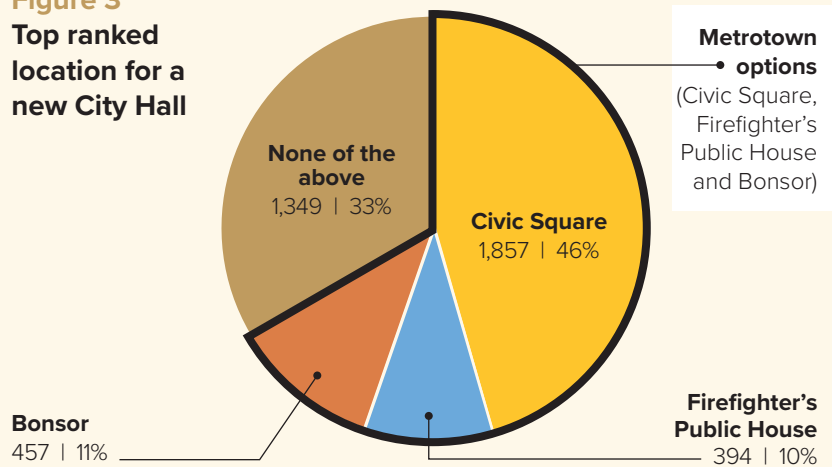
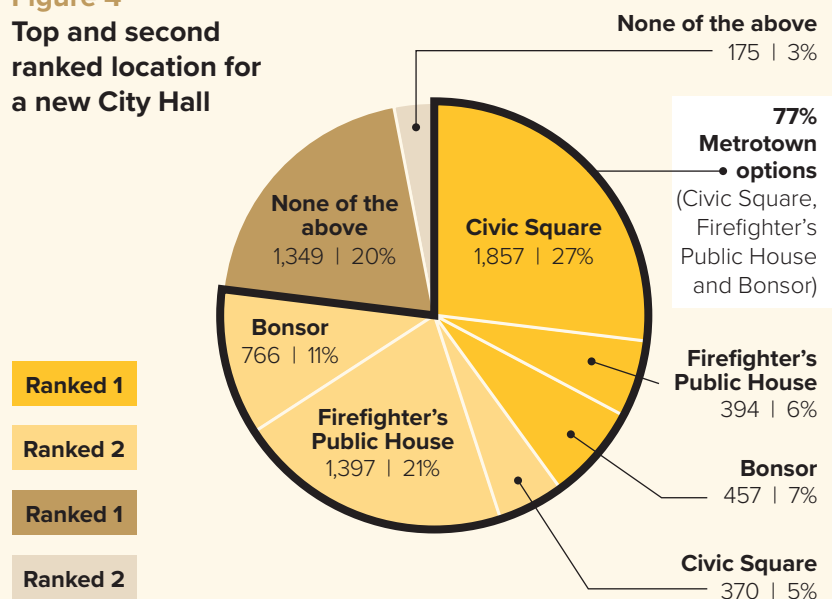


Figure 4
Top and second ranked location for a new City Hall

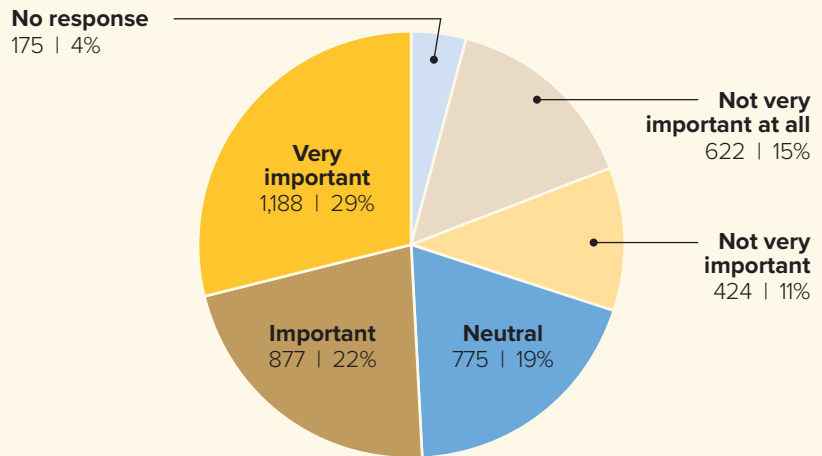


Survey Question 2

Importance of a public plaza

This survey question was developed to gauge the importance of a public plaza for the new City Hall. 3,886 responded to this survey question, and 51% of respondents indicated that it is “Very Important” or “Important” indicate that it is a public plaza be included in the new development.

Figure 5 | How important is it to you that the new City Hall include space for a public plaza

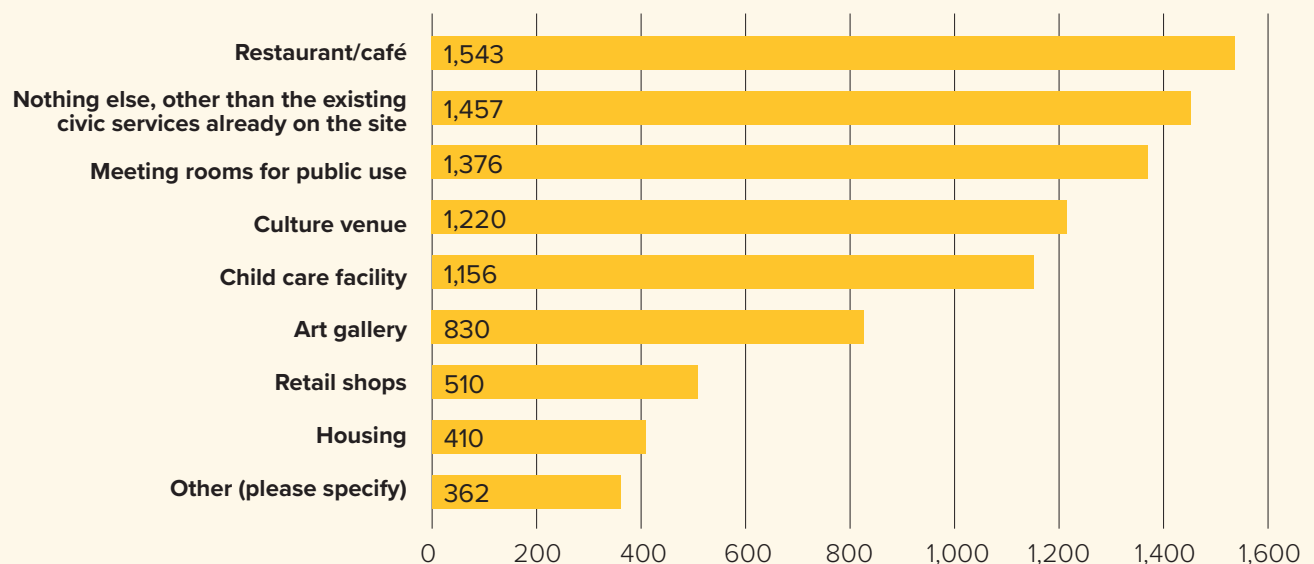


Survey Question 3

Other civic uses for inclusion in the new City Hall

The third survey question asked participants if there were other civic uses or amenities that they wanted to see included in a new City Hall development. The top preferences were “Restaurant/café” (1,543 respondents) followed closely by “Nothing else, other than the existing civic services already on the site” (1,457 respondents). “Meeting rooms for public use”, “Cultural venue”, “Child care facility”, and “Art Gallery” were also highly valued by survey respondents. In addition to selecting civic uses or amenities from a list, 362 of the respondents also provided written suggestions under the “Other (please specify)” category. These included a wide range of ideas such as free parking/public EV charging, indoor bike storage/end of trip facilities, and publicly accessible green/open space.

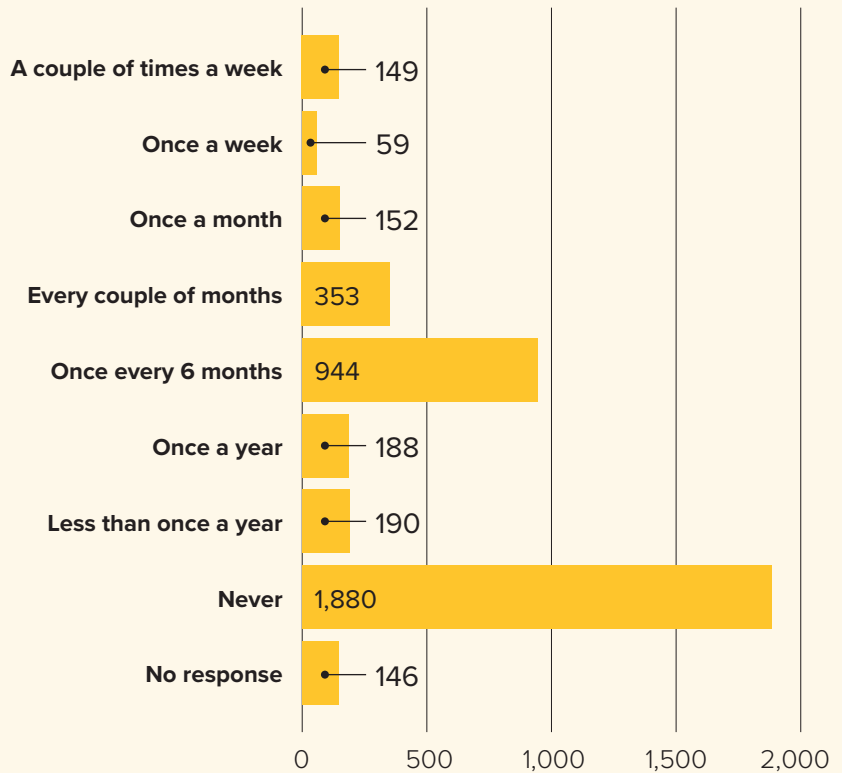
Figure 6 | What other civic uses amenities and program spaces do you think should be considered for inclusion in the new City Hall development



Survey Question 4 Frequency of City Hall visits

The fourth survey question dealt with the frequency of visits to City Hall. 3,915 responded to this question and the results indicate that 48% (1,880 respondents) indicated that they never visit City Hall.

Figure 7 | Frequency of visits to City Hall



Survey Question 5

Profile of survey participants

The survey also included three questions related to demographic profile of the respondent. This included connection to the City of Burnaby, age and place of residence represented by three digit postal code.

Figure 8 | Connection to the City of Burnaby

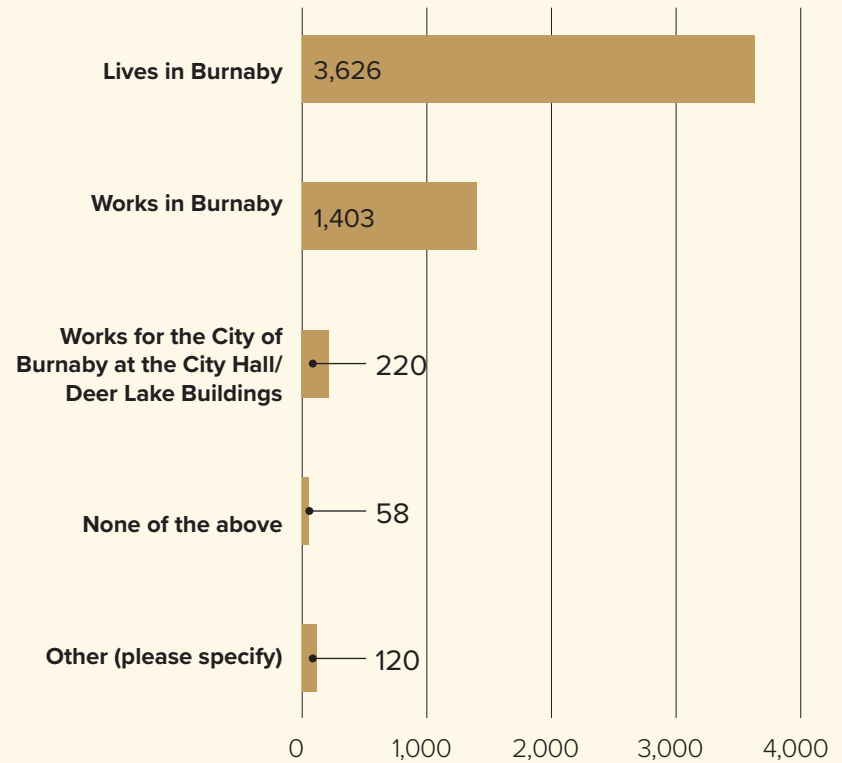
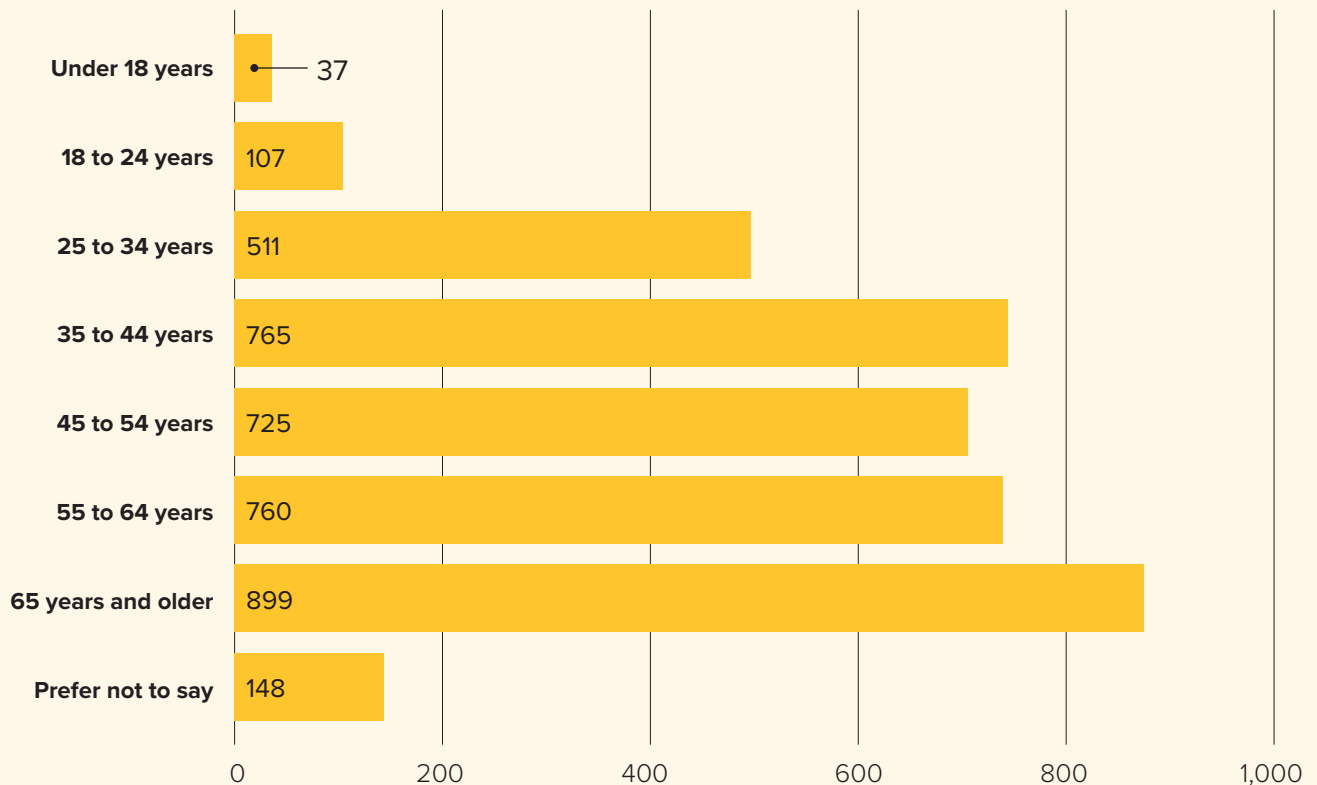


Figure 9 | Age of survey participants



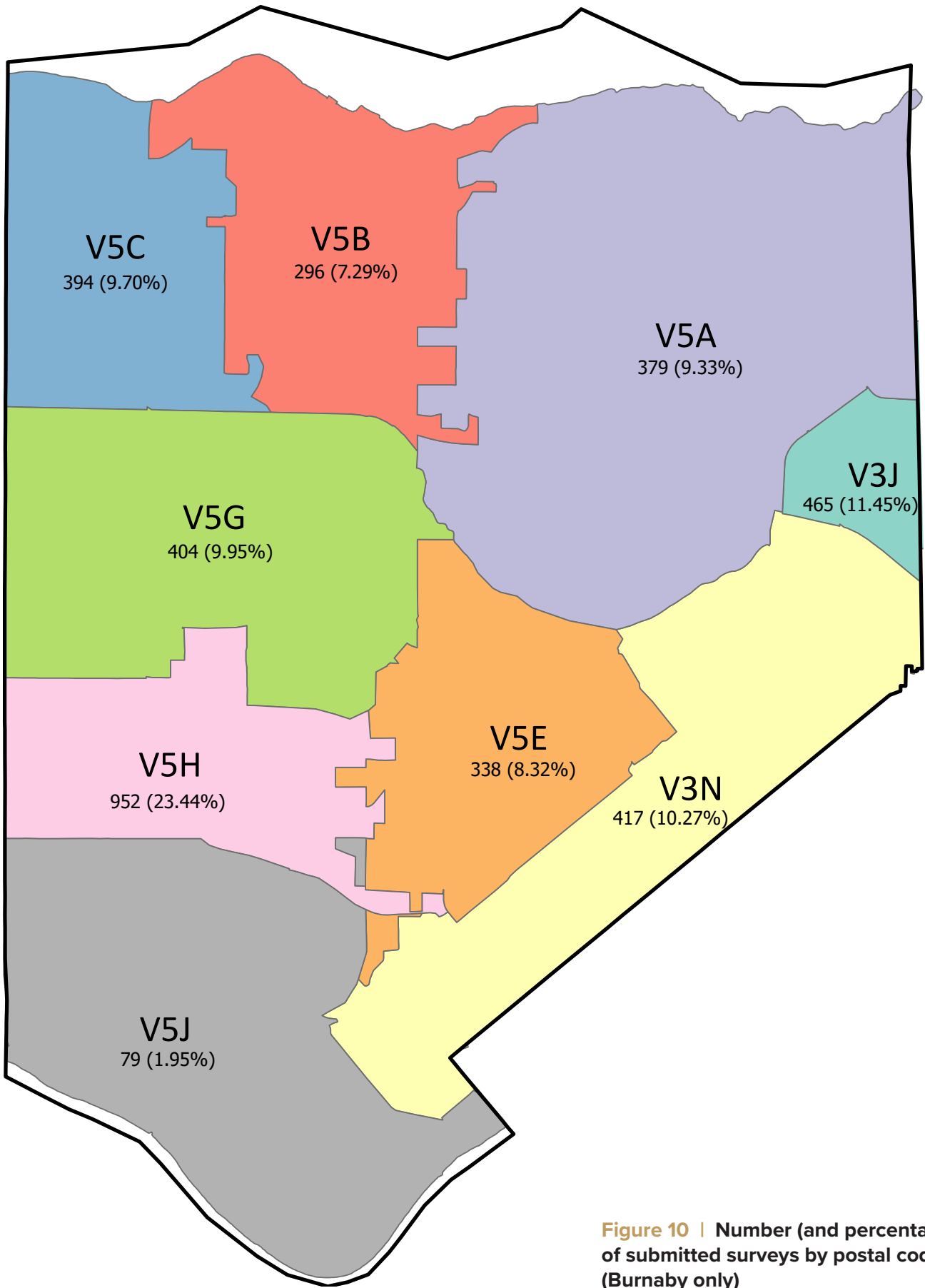


Figure 10 | Number (and percentage) of submitted surveys by postal code (Burnaby only)

Key themes from the survey comment box

The online survey also included a comment box to capture feedback, suggestions and ideas from survey participants.

Of the 4,057 completed surveys, 57% (2,334 respondents) included written comments. The project team reviewed each of the comments and categorized them under major themes for reporting purposes. Each written comment was categorized into one or more themes. Major themes from the survey comment box include:

- » Support for the three Metrotown site options, including positive comments for Civic Square (N=123), the Firefighters site (N=44), and the Bonsor site (N=82).
- » Support for a new City Hall in general, with no locational preferences (N=83).
- » Support for other amenities and infrastructure as part of a new City Hall (N=147).
- » Opposition to the three Metrotown sites, including comments related to Civic Square (N=160), the Bonsor site (N=109), and the Firefighters site (N=42).
- » General opposition to Metrotown as the location for a new City Hall (N=482), with some suggestions related to alternate locations that should be considered (N=207), rebuilding a new City Hall at its current location (N=631), or renovating the existing City Hall (N=133).
- » Concerns about the potential loss of green spaces or recreation spaces (N= 229).
- » Concerns about congestion in the Metrotown area and the potential lack of parking in the new City Hall (N=276).
- » Concerns about density in Metrotown with the addition of a high rise office building (N=103).
- » Desire for additional project information (N=164).

There were also many other comments, suggestions and ideas for the new City Hall (N=272), ranging from suggestions related to potential uses to be included, to the design process (e.g. an architectural competition), to the detailed design itself (e.g. changing nature of office design in light of remote and hybrid work).



What We Heard | key themes from other public engagement efforts



Figure 11 | Comment board at open house (Burnaby only)

In addition to the surveys, the project team received 307 written and verbal comments through the in-person public open houses, phone calls, emails and letters. See Figure 11 above for a photo of the comment board at the in-person open house where some of these 307 comments were collected.

Comment Board at Open Houses

The project team reviewed each of these comments and categorized them under major themes. Comments received from these other public engagement efforts were similar to those received from the online survey, with the same major themes emerging:

- » Support for the three Metrotown site options, including positive comments for Civic Square (N=17), the Firefighters site (N=12), and the Bonsor site (N=8).
- » Support for other amenities and infrastructure as part of a new City Hall (N=9).
- » Opposition to the three Metrotown sites, including comments related to Civic Square (N=13), the Bonsor site (N=7), and the Firefighters site (N=4).
- » General opposition to Metrotown as the location for a new City Hall (N=28), with some suggestions related to alternate locations that should be considered (N=27), rebuilding a new City Hall in its current location (N=51), or renovating the existing City Hall (N=7).
- » Concerns about the potential loss of green spaces or recreation spaces (N=37).
- » Concerns about congestion in the Metrotown area and the potential lack of parking in the new City Hall (N=25).
- » Concerns about density in Metrotown with the addition of a high rise office building (N=4).
- » Desire for additional project information (N=55).

There were also many other comments, suggestions and ideas for the new City Hall (N=40), ranging from enhanced project transparency (e.g. costs, decision-making) to operational and wellness considerations (e.g. pet-friendly City Hall) to specific suggestions to buy or lease other office buildings.

