

# **Courtenay**

# **Strategic 10-Year Cultural Plan**

## **What We Heard Report**

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Prepared for**

**City of Courtenay**

**Prepared by**

**Nordicity**



## **Contents**

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Planning Process</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Planning Context</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Community Engagement Approach</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What We Heard</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Key Survey Findings</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Cultural Sector Findings</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Specific Community Findings</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Summary Findings</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Challenges and Gaps</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Identified Priority Needs for the Arts and Culture Plan</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix A. Full Survey Results</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix B. Participants</b>	<b>72</b>

## Executive Summary

### Background

This 'What We Heard' report shares **community engagement research findings for the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan**. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework and roadmap to support arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years. This document summarizes findings from the community engagement research, highlighting community-identified needs relating to arts and culture in Courtenay.

### Methodology and Engagement Approach

The Strategic Cultural Plan is following a **5-phase process**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis (including facility options and economic and social impact analysis), followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final plan.

The planning process has involved inclusive community consultation with an equity lens. This engagement approach has included:

- Respectfully seeking input from across the community, including from equity priority groups such as Indigenous and Black community members and People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and unhoused people.
- Leveraging established relationships with existing community organizations advocating for equity priority groups to ensure that all community members, especially historically underrepresented groups, have a voice.
- Recognizing the need for long term commitments to relationship building with Indigenous communities.

### Community engagement activities

Community engagement research for the Strategic Cultural Plan has included an **online survey** (live from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup> 2023) which received ~700 responses, an **arts and culture sector focus group consultation event** attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations in May 2023, and a **public drop-in engagement event** in July 2023.

The planning process has also involved **1:1 interviews** with community members, and **targeted group conversations** with four equity priority communities (i.e., representatives of/people with lived experience of disabilities, homelessness, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community).

### Key Findings

#### Survey Highlights

- The overall survey results show that a very **high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%)**. Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage.
- Arts and culture in Courtenay encourage **social participation** and a sense of belonging.

- **Main barriers to accessing culture** in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), limited options of interest (21%), and not having enough time (20%). However, nearly a quarter of all participants stated that they do not experience any barriers.
- **Critical needs**, according to culture sector respondents (artists and cultural sector workers), are more space for performance/exhibitions (identified as a challenge by 45% of sector respondents), more rehearsal and creation space (36%), and supportive bylaws and policies for arts and culture (32%).
- **The future arts and culture offerings respondents would most like to see** more of include live performances (selected by 44% of total participants), more education, programming and workshops (29%) and more Indigenous arts and culture (28%).
- **The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to all survey participants, are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option) and using arts and culture to enhance community wellbeing (26%).
- **Expenditure:** The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is \$105 per individual.

For more on specific findings relating to the community-identified needs of the cultural sector and equity priority groups in Courtenay, see pages 30-33 of the full What We Heard report. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix A.

## Strengths, Challenges and Gaps

Courtenay's current strengths, challenges and gaps when it comes to culture, based on analysis of all engagement findings, include the following:

### + Strengths

- Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.
- Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.
- Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.
- Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.
- Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.
- Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.

### - Challenges and Gaps

- Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.
- Inadequate municipal support for arts and culture, including at the City and regional level.
- Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the arts and culture sector.
- Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.
- Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.

## Community-Identified Priority Needs

### *Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and other Urban Indigenous communities*

- Many participants want to see **more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces** – e.g., for storytelling and educational opportunities, especially to raise awareness of K'ómoks' ongoing culture and heritage.
- The City of Courtenay is currently in the process of **engaging with K'ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council regarding the development of the Strategic Cultural Plan. The City is committed to working collaboratively with K'ómoks First Nation to ensure the plan is representative of Indigenous values and supportive of our work towards reconciliation.
- Part of the engagement with KFN will be identifying and defining what 'culture' means in Courtenay, given that it is situated on the Unceded Traditional Territory of K'ómoks First Nation.

### *More cultural spaces/facilities, and better availability and affordability*

- Participants expressed the **need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** to meet various sector needs, including the need for rental space. The types of spaces needed include small, medium, and larger venues, including performance and rehearsals venues.

### *Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming*

- There is a desire for more **diverse and affordable cultural programming**, both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups.

### *Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration*

- There is a need for more community collaborations and partnerships. There is also a need to have **avenues for knowledge sharing** across the sector, for example through regular gatherings.

### *Increased municipal support – financial and in-kind, local, and regional*

- There is a desire **for increased City financial support** for arts and culture, especially in the form of community grants.
- Participants further expressed the **need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay**, given cultural offerings are beneficial or serve the wider population in the Comox valley or region.

### *Further development of cultural tourism*

- Participants expressed the need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the **cultural hub of the region**, and to **promote cultural tourism**.

### ***Attraction and training of technical cultural workers***

- There is a need for more **technical expertise in relation to hosting live performances and events** – i.e., more sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand.

### ***Development of a Public Arts Policy***

- There is a desire for Courtenay to develop a **Public Arts Policy** that is reviewed periodically to support public arts in the city. Individuals noted such a policy could **leverage the talent of young artists** and involve them in community public arts initiatives.

### **Next Steps**

- **Ongoing and open dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council to discuss meaningful engagement;
- **Municipal benchmarking** and comparative review;
- Assessing the **economic impact** of Courtenay's arts and culture sector;
- Analyzing **cultural facilities options**, drawing on the survey and other research engagement findings shared in this report;
- **Drafting recommendations**, and seeking community check-in via a public event and online feedback
- Developing the final **Strategic Cultural Plan**

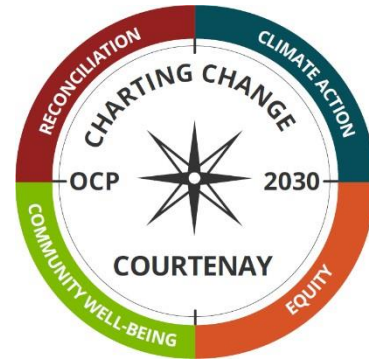
## Courtenay 10-year Strategic Cultural Plan: What We Heard

### Background

This What We Heard report shares community engagement research findings for the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework and roadmap to support arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years.

Through the Strategic Cultural Plan, the City of Courtenay aims to:

- Mirror the City of Courtenay’s values of Reconciliation, Community Wellbeing, Equity and Climate Action – as identified in the Official Community Plan.
- Engage in inclusive community dialogue.
- Build on and action policy recommendations, e.g., OCP (2022), Parks and Recreation Plan (2019), Cultural Service Review (2019).
- Consider both the social and economic impact of arts and culture.



**“Cardinal Directions” from the City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Update, 2022**

This document summarizes the work that has taken place so far, and what the community has told us about the strengths, challenges and priority needs relating to arts and culture in Courtenay. The findings will be used to develop recommendations on how the City of Courtenay can support artists, arts and culture organizations and creatives, as well as support wider community priorities through arts and culture. Through these actions, the Strategic Cultural Plan will seek to ensure that arts and culture is integrated into the community, and representative of all residents.

### What is Cultural Planning?

Cultural planning is a process of community consultation which aims to help towns and cities to support arts and culture development, to benefit the community. The planning process highlights a community’s unique strengths, gaps, and needs in relation to arts and culture. The aim is to strategically integrate arts and culture with wider municipal planning and strategies. Essentially, it means asking, “where are we now? Where do we want to be?” – and considers strategies to get there.<sup>1</sup>

### Defining Arts and Culture – What’s Included?

Arts and culture can be difficult to define because they mean many things to different people. This Plan defines arts and culture broadly – including tangible assets (like artworks and

---

<sup>1</sup> Drawing from Cultural Planning (2022), Government of Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cultural-planning>

buildings), organized groups (such as performance and dance troupes), and intangible things (like stories and cultural traditions). The ‘Cultural Resources Framework’ below maps different types of arts and culture resources or assets.

The City of Courtenay is currently in the process of **engaging with K’ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council regarding the development of the Strategic Cultural Plan. The City of Courtenay acknowledges that the definition of ‘culture’ and its impacts may be different from K’ómoks First Nation’s view. As such, part of the engagement with KFN will be identifying and defining what ‘culture’ means in Courtenay, given that it is situated on the Unceded Traditional Territory of K’ómoks First Nation.

**Figure 1. Cultural Resources Framework**



Source: Adapted from Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated’s Cultural Resources Mapping: Guide for Municipalities (2010), Statistics Canada Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics (2011), and North Shore Culture Compass.



## Planning Process

Figure 2. Five-phase planning process



The Strategic Cultural Plan is following a **5-phase process**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis (including facility options, economic and social impact analysis, and municipal benchmarking via a comparative review), followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final plan.

The community engagement work has been led by the Business Administration section of the City of Courtenay’s Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department, in collaboration with [Nordicity](#), with input from artists, arts and culture organizations, interested community parties, and the wider public.

## Planning Context

### Community Context

Located in the Comox Valley, Courtenay offers a natural and beautiful landscape that supports artistic inspiration. The city’s vibrant arts and culture scene presents a variety of opportunities for residents and visitors from within and beyond the region. Courtenay’s cultural sector has a strong creative community who are supported by multiple local arts organizations, and a high number of volunteers who are passionate about arts and culture in the community. The city is also home to many artists who add depth to the artistic community.

Courtenay has multiple arts and culture assets including cultural spaces and facilities, community arts and cultural organizations, creative cultural enterprises, festivals and events, cultural heritage, public arts, diverse art forms including visual and performing and public arts.

Specifically, there are over 150 cultural assets<sup>2</sup> in Courtenay, including over 30 community cultural organizations, 29 facilities and spaces<sup>2</sup> used for cultural events and programming, 10 arts-related educational institutions among other resources in the community.

Furthermore, arts and culture in Courtenay contribute to community wellbeing and economic development (through events such as the [Downtown Courtenay Summer Street Markets](#) and [Vancouver Island Music Festival](#), which draws visitors to the city, and initiatives such as the [Youth Media Project](#) which provides skilled training to youth in the community). Arts and culture can further play a profound role in addressing important issues like reconciliation (e.g., by increasing awareness that Courtenay is on K'ómoks First Nation territory through public arts such as murals and sculptures), and addressing mental health and the toxic drug poisoning crisis (through programs such as [Walk With Me](#), a project of the Comox Valley Art Gallery).

Various strategic planning in Courtenay highlighted the need for a plan to guide the City's support of arts and culture. The Strategic Cultural Plan will therefore guide the City in its relationships with the cultural sector, residents (including equity priority groups such as Indigenous communities, newcomers and immigrants, people who are unhoused, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community), and neighbours from the Comox Valley in relation to arts and culture.

## City of Courtenay Priorities

The Strategic Cultural Plan can support a number of existing community priorities in Courtenay. The following table outlines key priorities identified from a review of existing plans and strategies and indicates how the Strategic Cultural Plan can support them.

**Table 1. Existing community priorities in Courtenay**

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Advance reconciliation efforts</b>	<p><b>Reconciliation is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize engagement with Indigenous partners</li> <li>Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>OCP, 2022</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Cultural assets identified through Nordicity asset mapping research. 'Cultural assets' include festivals and events (including arts and culture festivals and events and other events with culture component), creative cultural enterprises, arts education, spaces and facilities (including formal arts and culture venues, and occasional venues), community and cultural organizations (including non-profits, associations/societies, Indigenous organizations and community arts organizations), cultural heritage, multimedia (including radio & television, publishing and printing, film and media), and arts (i.e., performing arts, visual arts and public arts).

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Reduce social inequalities</b>	<p><b>Equity is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritize engagement with equity-priority communities</li> <li>▪ Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Address funding challenges</b>	<p><b>Funding is an ongoing challenge throughout policy documents</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate outstanding Cultural Services Report recommendations</li> <li>▪ Review Comox Valley Regional District's Principle-Based Framework for Allocating Recreation Grants (Wilson, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance downtown</b>	<p><b>Downtown vision remains relevant and desired</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support steps to advance Duncan Commons vision and activate 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown Playbook, 2016</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Support regional interconnectivity</b>	<p><b>Arts and culture in Courtenay serves the region</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build on Cultural Services Report to identify ongoing gaps in funding, service provision, etc.</li> <li>▪ Revisit Wilson's frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CVRD 'A Principle-based Framework for Funding Regional Recreation and Cultural Facilities', J. Wilson, 2011</li> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage active community engagement</b>	<p><b>Courtenay prioritizes community participation</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage the community throughout the research</li> <li>▪ Apply processes identified in the Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> </ul>

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Celebrate cultural offerings</b>	<p><b>Courtenay is home to a vibrant cultural scene</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map cultural assets</li> <li>Document strengths of Courtenay’s cultural scene</li> <li>Need for a special events and hosting policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>Cultural Inventory Report, 2017</li> <li>Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019</li> <li>Parks, Rec. &amp; Culture Analysis document, 2017</li> <li>OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Recognize community impact</b>	<p><b>There is a desire to capture social and economic impacts</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct economic and social impact assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> </ul>

### Existing Cultural Sector Priorities

Previous consultation with Courtenay’s arts and culture sector highlighted the following points as important considerations for the Strategic Cultural Plan:<sup>3</sup>

- **Developing sector capacity**
  - Ensuring sustainable levels of core services
  - Adequate financial support and staff capacity
- **Engaging with local First Nations**
  - There is a need to engage meaningfully with K’ómoks First Nation, in recognition that the lands Courtenay is situated on are on Unceded Traditional Territory of K’ómoks First Nation.
- **Maintaining cultural capital assets**
  - There is a need for Cultural Mapping, a Facilities Needs Assessment, and support for aging infrastructure.
- **The City of Courtenay playing an enhanced role**
  - The City needs a cultural plan and a review of how the City funds and supports arts and culture.

---

<sup>3</sup> Sources: Culture Services Report (2019) and consultative scoping for the Cultural Plan with the core cultural service providers (i.e., those that receive operational funding from the City of Courtenay).

- New policies are required to support arts and culture (e.g., Public Art Policy, Special Events Policy).
- **Recognizing the role of arts and culture in economic development and tourism**
  - There is a need for increased marketing investment to support the valuable role that arts, culture, and heritage drive in attracting visitors and spending to the region.
  - There is a need to recognize the regional role that cultural services play.
  - Demonstrating this role will help the sector to make the case for increased financial support.
- **Serving all of Courtenay**
  - Arts and culture in Courtenay need to reach under-represented groups.
  - There's a need for a greater focus on the links between arts and culture and wider community issues (such as housing and affordability).

## Community Engagement Approach

Aligning with the City's Official Community Plan and the 2022 action policies, the Strategic Cultural Plan is being developed through a process of inclusive community consultation. The key engagement principles are taking a **human-centred** approach; having **respect for Indigenous Nations and People** – especially K'ómoks First Nation, on whose unceded territory Courtenay is located; **trust; privacy**; and taking an **intersectional approach**. Taking an intersectional approach to engagement means taking into consideration the perspectives of diverse community members, including equity priority groups who are often not included in engagement activities due to barriers that limit their participation.<sup>4</sup> This approach has included:






- Respectfully seeking input from equity priority groups including Indigenous and Black community members and People of Colour, youth, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and unhoused people.
- Leveraging established relationships with existing community organizations advocating for equity priority groups to ensure that all community members, especially historically underrepresented communities, have a voice.
- Recognizing the need for long term commitments to relationship building with Indigenous communities.

---

<sup>4</sup> "Intersectionality brings attention to how people are defined by differing positionalities in a society based on their gender, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, ability, and class, etc. These are identities and positionalities that form overlapping positions of inequality and privilege. They are in hierarchical relations to one another according to which some people have more power in societies than others." Source: Salla Sariola (2020) Intersectionality and Community Engagement: Can Solidarity Alone Solve Power Differences in Global Health Research?, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 20:5, 57-59, DOI: [10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951](https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951)

See the figure below for details of how these principles informed the engagement approach.

**Figure 3. Community engagement principles**

Principles				
Human-centred	Respect for Indigenous Nations and People	Trust-based	Privacy	Intersectional
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People-focused</li> <li>▪ Respectful sharing environment</li> <li>▪ Community based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respect stature</li> <li>▪ Respect time considerations</li> <li>▪ Respect a mutually-defined process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear communication</li> <li>▪ Transparent processes</li> <li>▪ Incorporate feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consent-based</li> <li>▪ Secure storage and disposal of data</li> <li>▪ Aggregate data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Following an equity lens</li> <li>▪ Cultural competency</li> <li>▪ Foster safe</li> </ul>
Processes				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allowing people space to speak</li> <li>▪ Engaging with under-represented communities</li> <li>▪ Providing materials so representative organizations could facilitate sessions with people with lived experience in their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeking to consult with K'ómoks First Nation Council to develop protocols for engagement around arts and culture</li> <li>▪ Connecting with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to incorporate their perspectives for the plan via interviews and small group discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clearly explaining the purpose of interviews, focus groups, and the survey and how findings will be used</li> <li>▪ Updating the approach in response to feedback</li> <li>▪ Reporting back to the community for input and iteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not recording online engagements (typed notes only)</li> <li>▪ Anonymizing participant responses</li> <li>▪ Sharing notes with participants who want to see them</li> <li>▪ Saving data securely and deleting when no longer needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeking perspectives from people from equity priority communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+</li> <li>▪ Engaging groups who may not regularly engage in arts and culture activities (e.g., newcomers, unhoused people, people with disabilities)</li> </ul>

### Engagement with K'ómoks First Nation

The Strategic Cultural Plan project team looks forward to working with K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) to ensure that the Strategic Cultural Plan is developed in a meaningful way, aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Findings and Calls to Actions.

The City recognizes the colonial aspects of having a specific and limited timeframe, which creates barriers to meaningful engagement. The City hopes to work together with KFN to define a path forward recognizing that true relations building takes time. The ambition is for the Strategic Cultural Plan will become a living document rather than a static, one-time report – one that is open to adjustment to ensure KFN priorities are included in the process. This iterative approach should allow time for true relations building and community engagement with KFN members, and could include a regular review of the Plan and implementation progress with KFN Chief and Council.

### Engagement Methodology

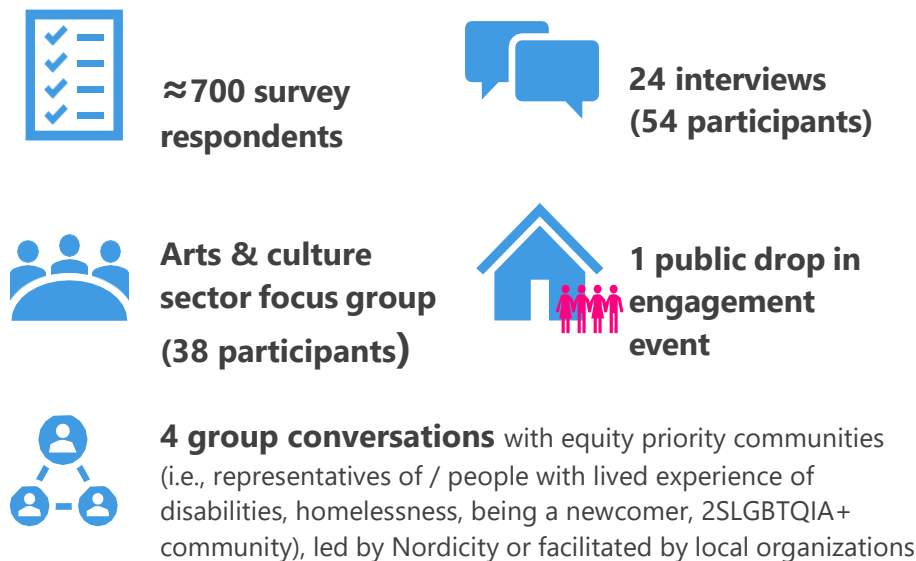
Figure 4 presents the engagement activities at a glance. The project has sought to ensure that a diverse and representative range of voices are heard. As such, community engagement research for the Strategic Cultural Plan has included an **online survey**, which was live from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and received **~700 responses** overall. In addition, the Project Team heard from **over 120 community members via qualitative engagements**.

The qualitative research engagements included an **arts and culture sector focus group** consultation event in May 2023 which was attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations, and a **public drop-in engagement event** in July 2023. The team also

held **24 interviews, which engaged 54 participants** in total. These interviews included consultations with four core cultural services providers (i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Museum). In addition, 28 participants were engaged as part of **four group conversations with equity priority communities** (i.e., representatives of / people with lived experience of disabilities, being unhoused, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community). These conversations were led by Nordicity or facilitated by local organizations (including the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness and the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee) which work specifically with these communities. See Appendix B for a list of participating organizations.

Furthermore, to ensure this project also includes other Indigenous peoples who live within the community, the City aligns with the [distinction-based approach](#) adopted by the Province of British Columbia. The engagement process respects and acknowledges the unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. To this end, the City will continue to work with KFN to ensure that K'ómoks First Nation's land rights are met and that KFN culture is represented and celebrated, while also ensuring that newcomers, settlers, and members of other Indigenous groups feel welcome and can celebrate their unique cultures.

**Figure 4. Engagement activities at a glance**



## What We Heard

Note, the City of Courtenay will continue to receive feedback until the draft Strategic Cultural Plan is created. The survey participant numbers reported in this section vary because some participants opted to only answer some questions rather than the whole survey.

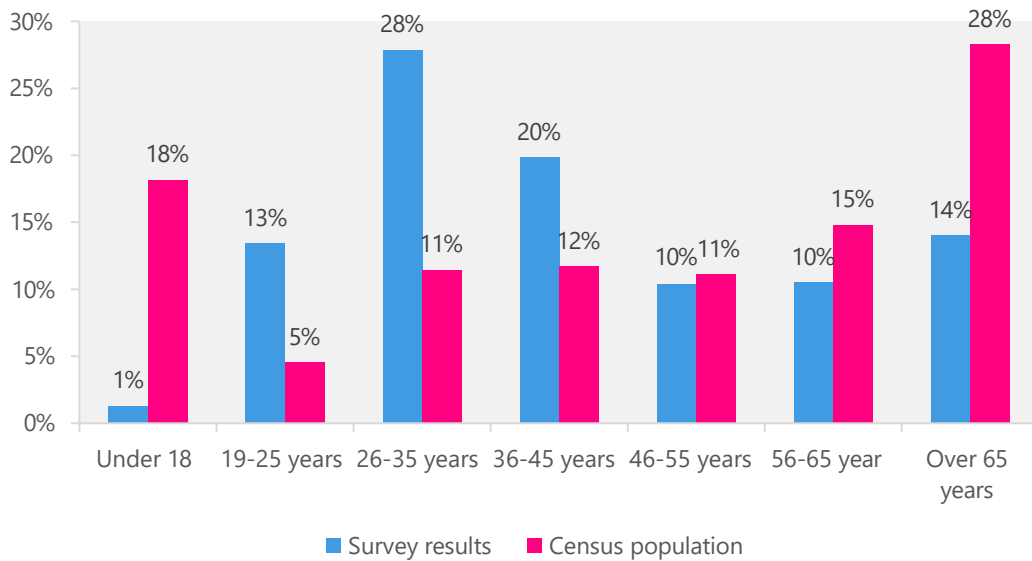
### Key Survey Findings

#### Survey participant profile

63% of respondents provided stated they are from a Courtenay postal code, while 37% identified as living outside of Courtenay. When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay, 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility. Survey results include all survey participant responses unless stated otherwise. (Note, some information from organizations will also be used to complete economic impact analysis which will be completed in the later phases of Strategic Cultural Plan development work).

In comparison with the Statistics Canada City of Courtenay Census population age breakdown, the survey garnered a higher portion of those between the ages of 26-35 years, and a lower portion of those over 65 years.

**Figure 5. Population age characteristics (all responses, n=686)**

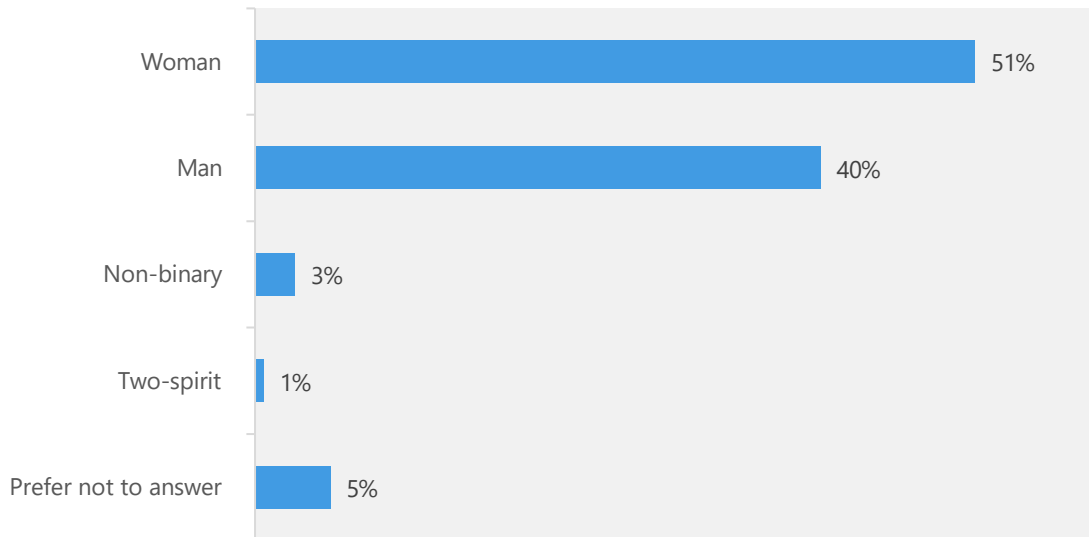


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023 and Statistics Canada Census Profile for the City of Courtenay 2021



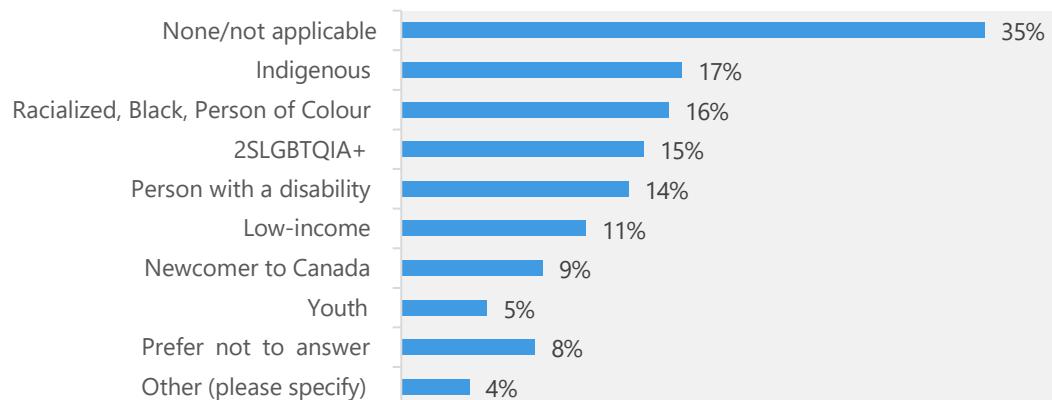
Survey participants were asked to self-identify their gender (Figure 6). The majority of participants identified as female (51%) and male (40%). Of the remaining respondents, 3% identified as non-binary, 1% two-spirit, and 5% preferred not to answer.

**Figure 6. What is your gender? (all responses, n=675)**



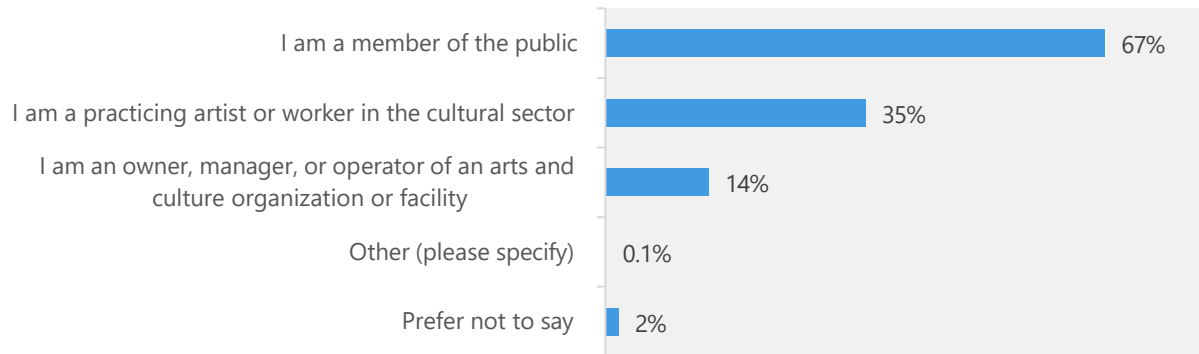
The survey was able to reach a wide range of identities (Figure 7). While 35% did not identify with any visible group, 17% identified as Indigenous, 16% identified as racialized (Black or person of colour), and 14% 2SLGBTQIA+. The Statistics Canada Census Profile for the City of Courtenay shows that 8% of the population identify as a visible minority, and 8% of the population are of Indigenous ancestry. Therefore, the survey garnered a higher proportion of those who identified from these identities. Moreover, 21 individuals identified with more than one category. This finding shows that the survey was able to reach a diverse representation of Courtenay’s ethnographic makeup, while also showing that there is diverse participation in arts and culture in Courtenay.

**Figure 7. Do you identify with any of the following? Select all that apply (all responses, n=655)**



When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay (Figure 8), 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility.

**Figure 8. How do you engage with culture in Courtenay? Please select the statement(s) that best describe you (all responses, n=779)**

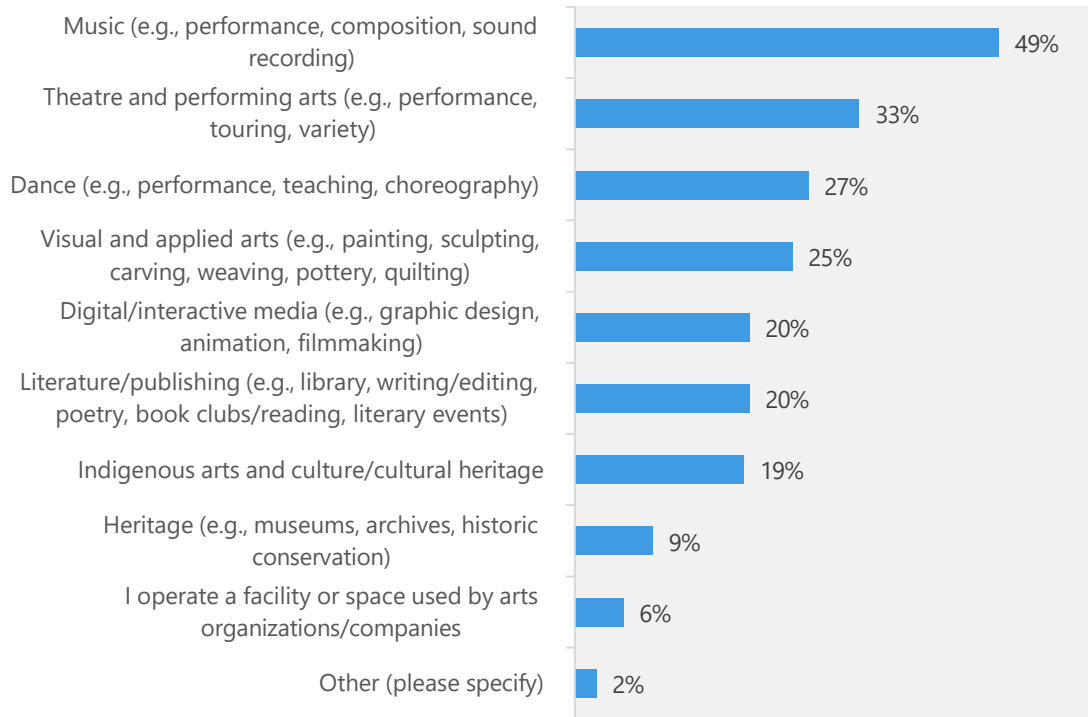


Artists and owners/managers of arts and culture organizations/facilities were asked which sub-domain of arts and culture they work within (Figure 9). The top three areas of work included music (49%), theatre and performing arts (33%), and dance (27%). These responses were followed by visual and applied arts (25%).<sup>5</sup> Notably, the performing arts sector encompassed the top three identified areas of work. Although the survey was not designed to be statistically representative, the findings suggest that performing arts are a particularly strong aspect of the arts and culture sector in Courtenay.

---

<sup>5</sup> The responses do not add up to 100% as participants could select more than one sub-domain, reflecting that artists and organizations often work across more than one artistic discipline.

**Figure 9. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**



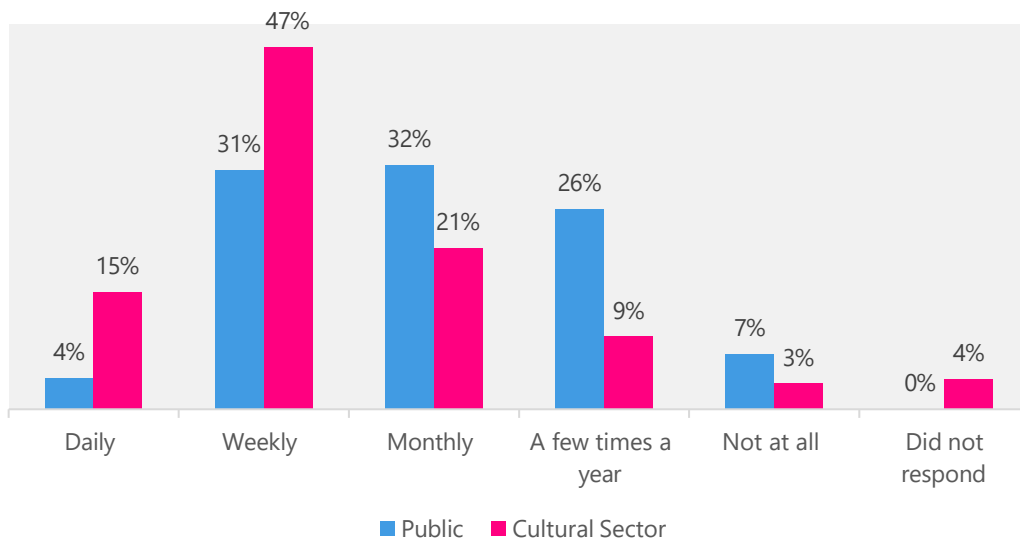
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## Survey Highlights



**The survey results show that a very high number of respondents are culturally engaged.** Approximately 450 members of the public responded to this question while 329 creators and culture sector respondents (creators and organizations) responded. 62% of culture sector respondents identified that they engage with arts and culture in Courtenay weekly or more, with 47% identifying they participate in arts and culture weekly. Comparatively, 63% of the public participate in arts and culture events or activities weekly to monthly (Figure 10).

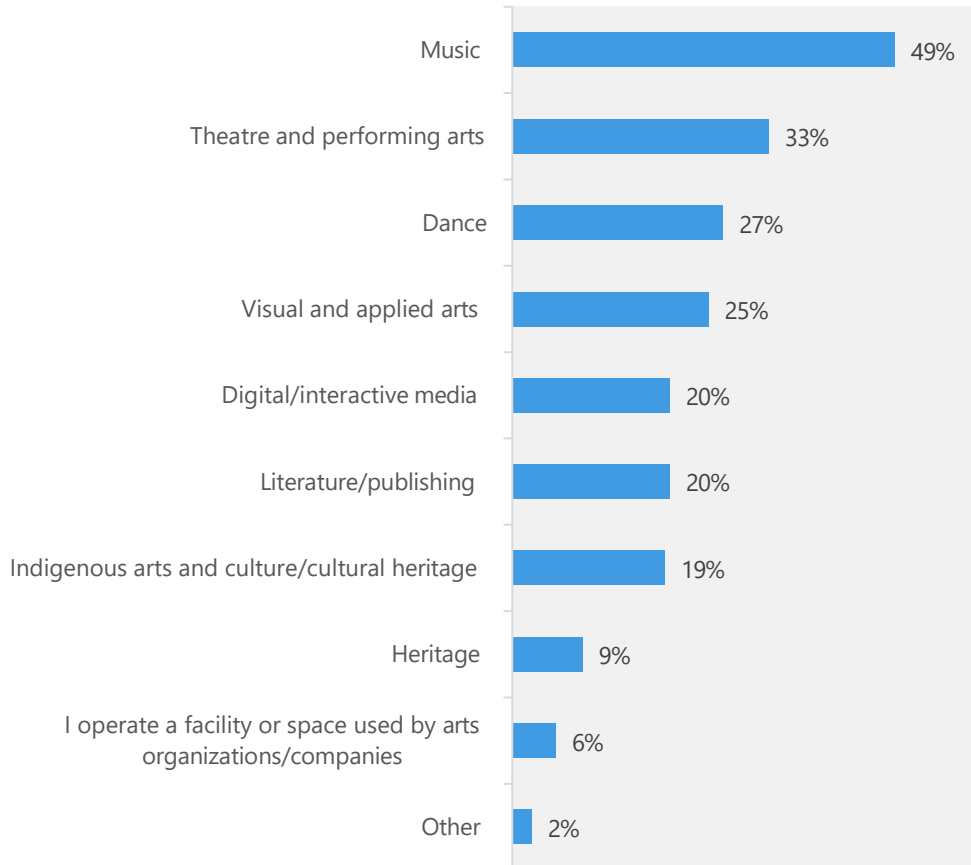
**Figure 10. How often do you participate in arts and culture events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=779)**





**Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage** with arts and culture in Courtenay according to survey participants (Figure 11). Also, performing arts is the sub-sector that artists and cultural organizations in Courtenay are most likely to work in.

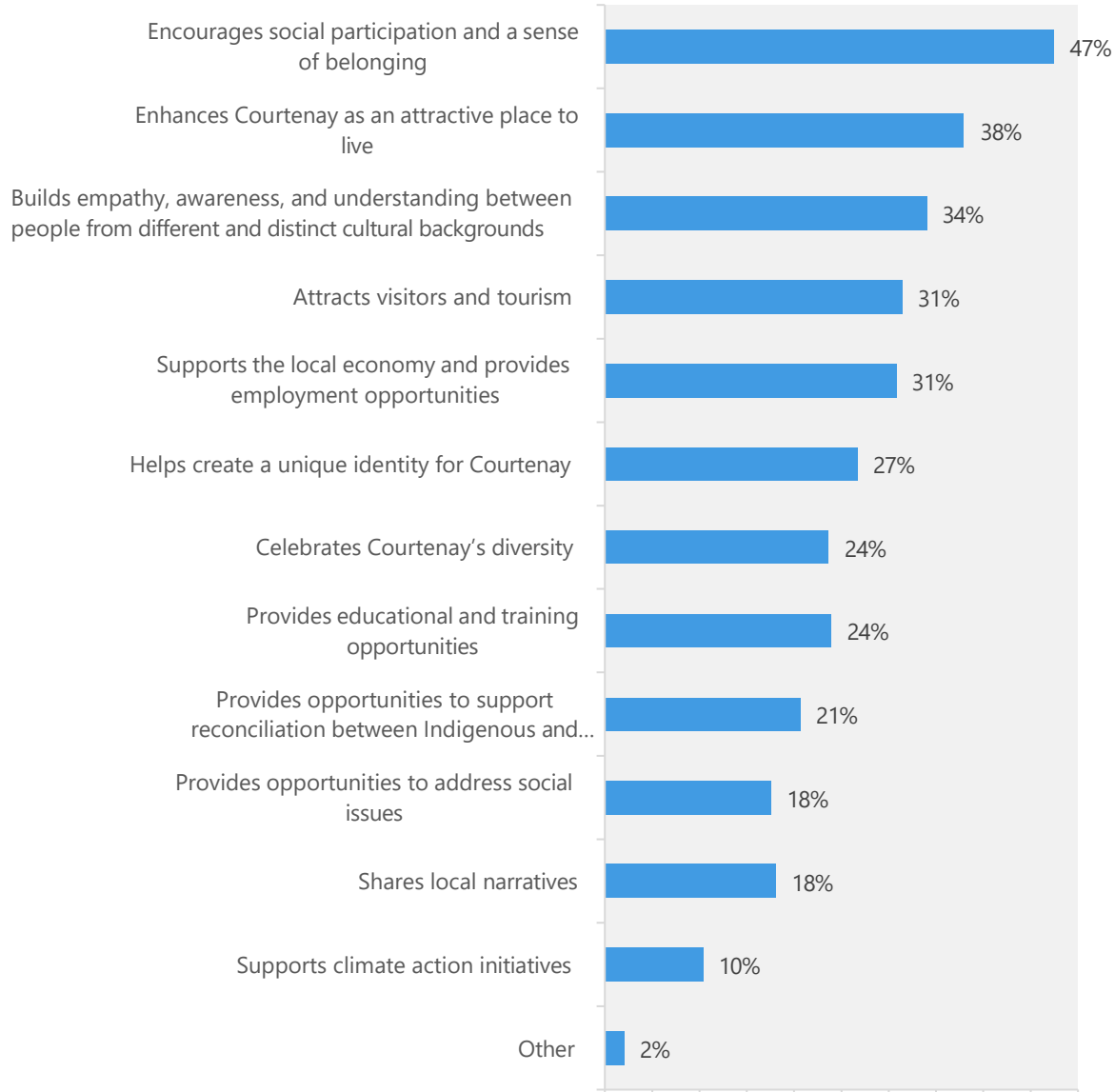
**Figure 11. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**





When asked about how the local arts and culture sector impacts the community (Figure 12), 47% said that **arts and culture in Courtenay encourage social participation and a sense of belonging**. 38% said arts and culture enhance Courtenay as an attractive place to live, and 34% said the arts help build empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds (Figure 12).

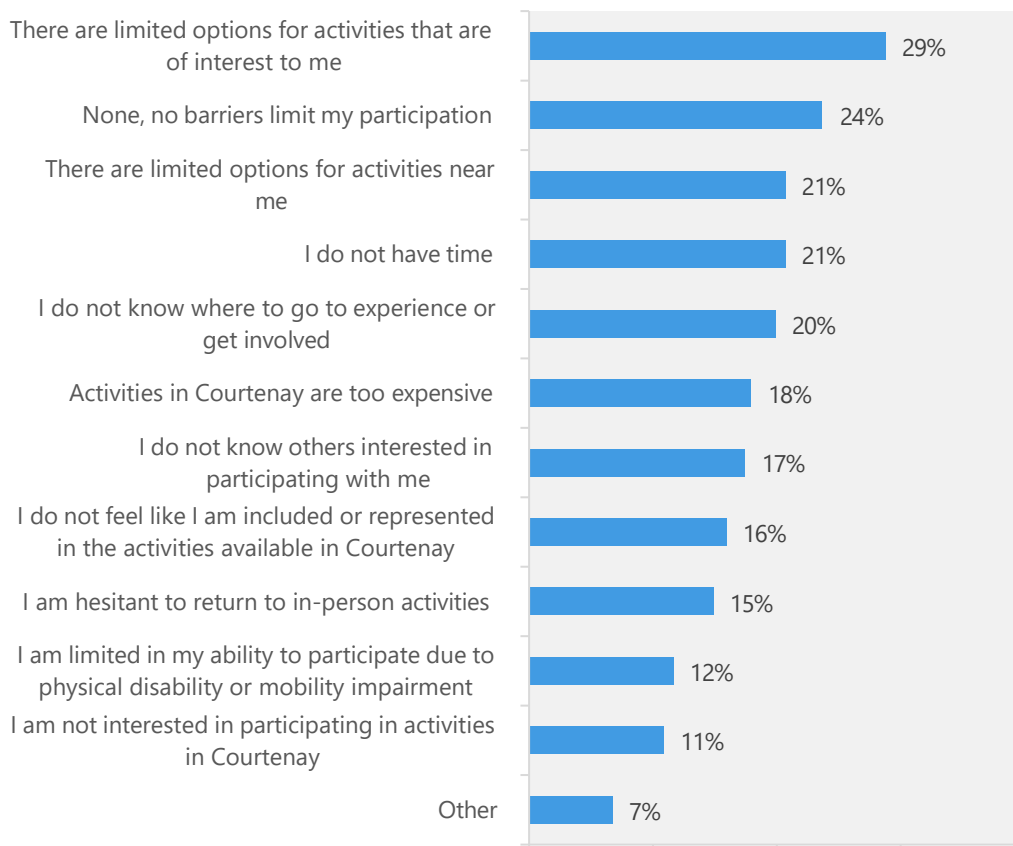
**Figure 12. What social impact does arts and culture have on Courtenay and the wider community? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**





**Barriers to accessing culture in Courtenay** (Figure 13) according to survey participants, are 'limited options near me' (29%), 'limited options that interested me' (21%), 'not having enough time' (21%), and 'not knowing where to go to find out about arts and culture in Courtenay' (20%). However, nearly a quarter of survey participants stated that they do not experience any challenges to accessing culture in Courtenay (24%). Other, please specify examples included, 'transportation and carpooling, as I live in Campbell River,' 'I do not feel safe getting to and from arts and culture locations,' and, 'I do not know where to find out about activities near me.'

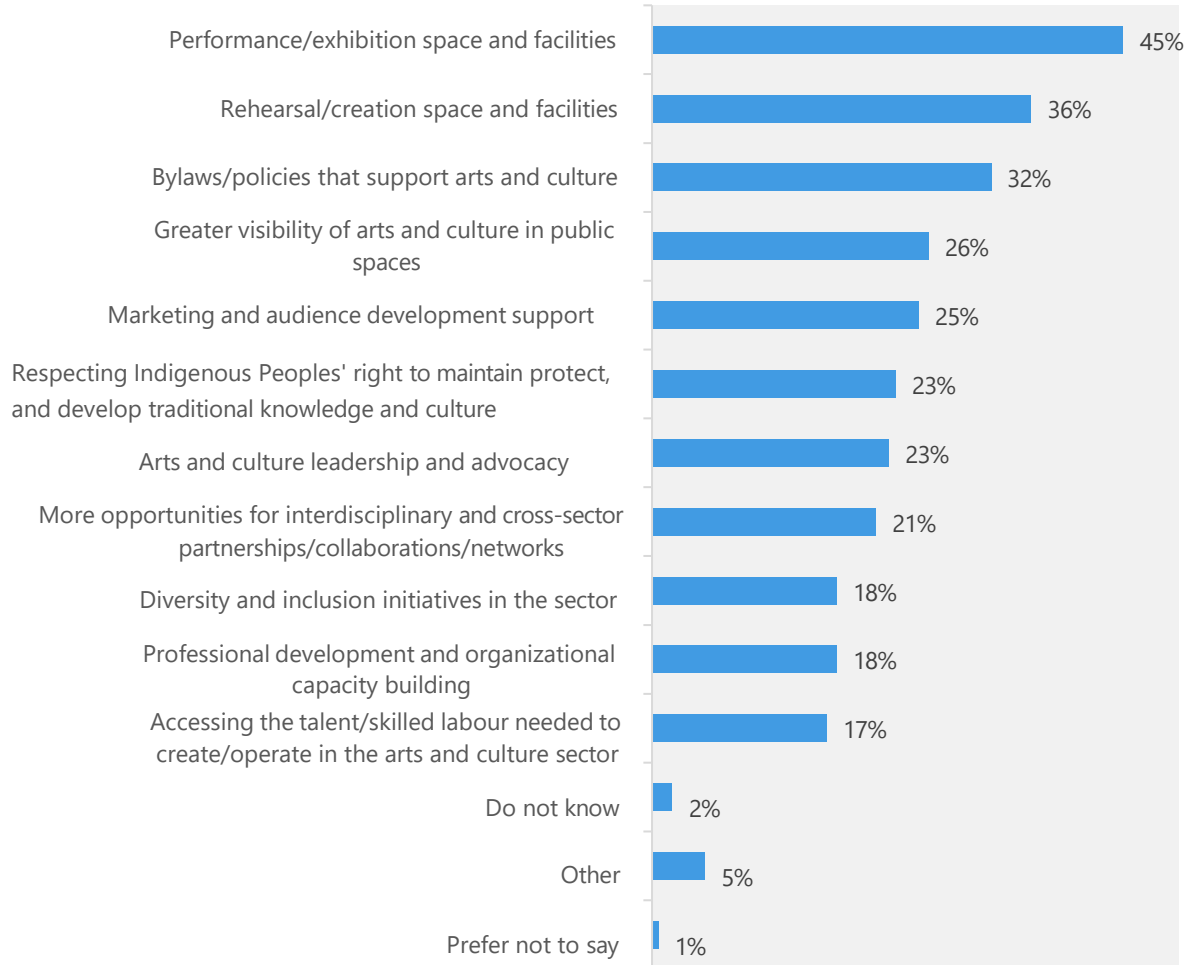
**Figure 13. What factors, if any, might limit you from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay? Select up to 3 (all responses, n=754)**





**Critical needs in the local arts and culture sector**, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, relate to the need for space (Figure 14). More specifically, the top needs highlighted were performance/exhibition space (45%), rehearsal and creation space (36%), and bylaws and policies that support arts and culture (32%).

**Figure 14. What do you think are the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=320)**

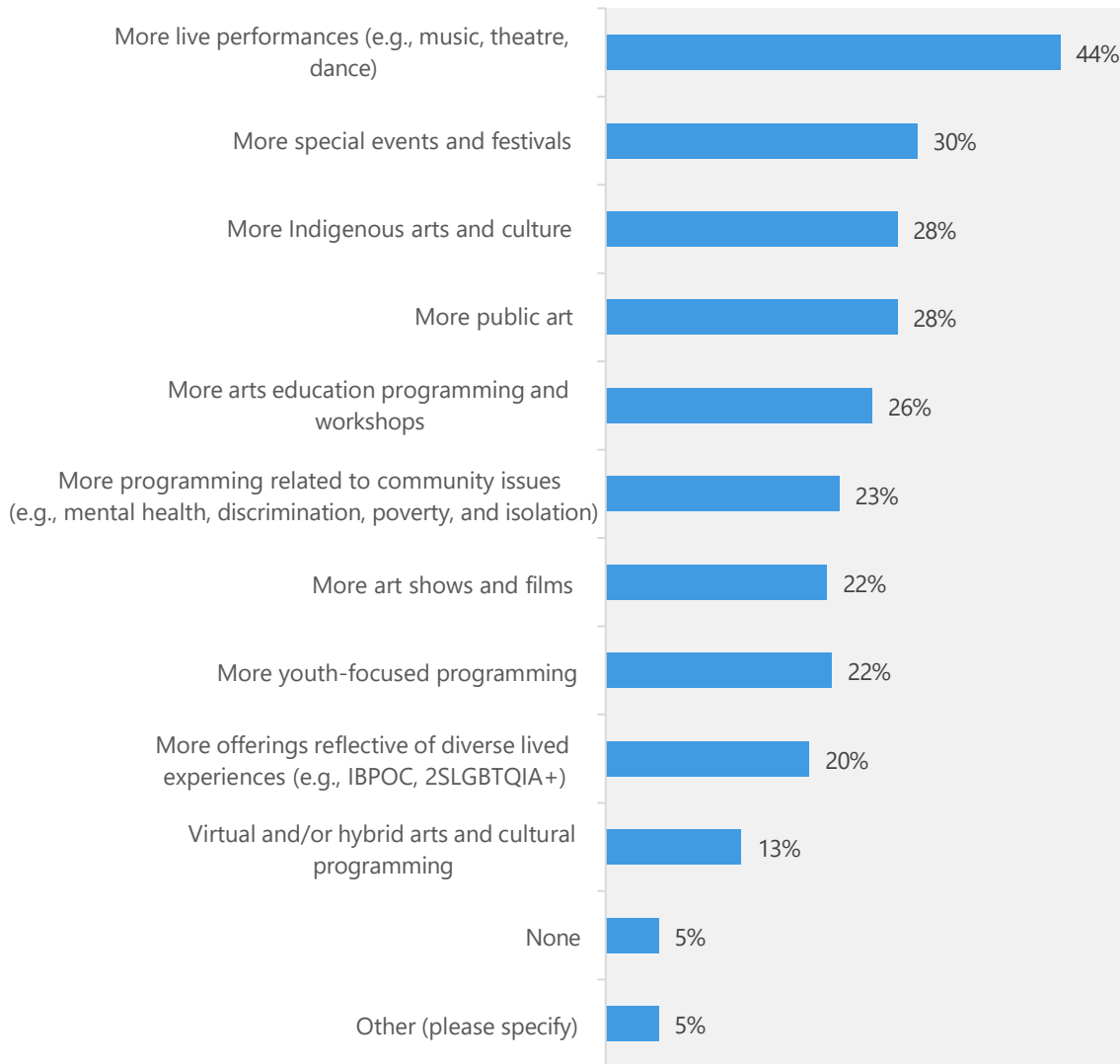




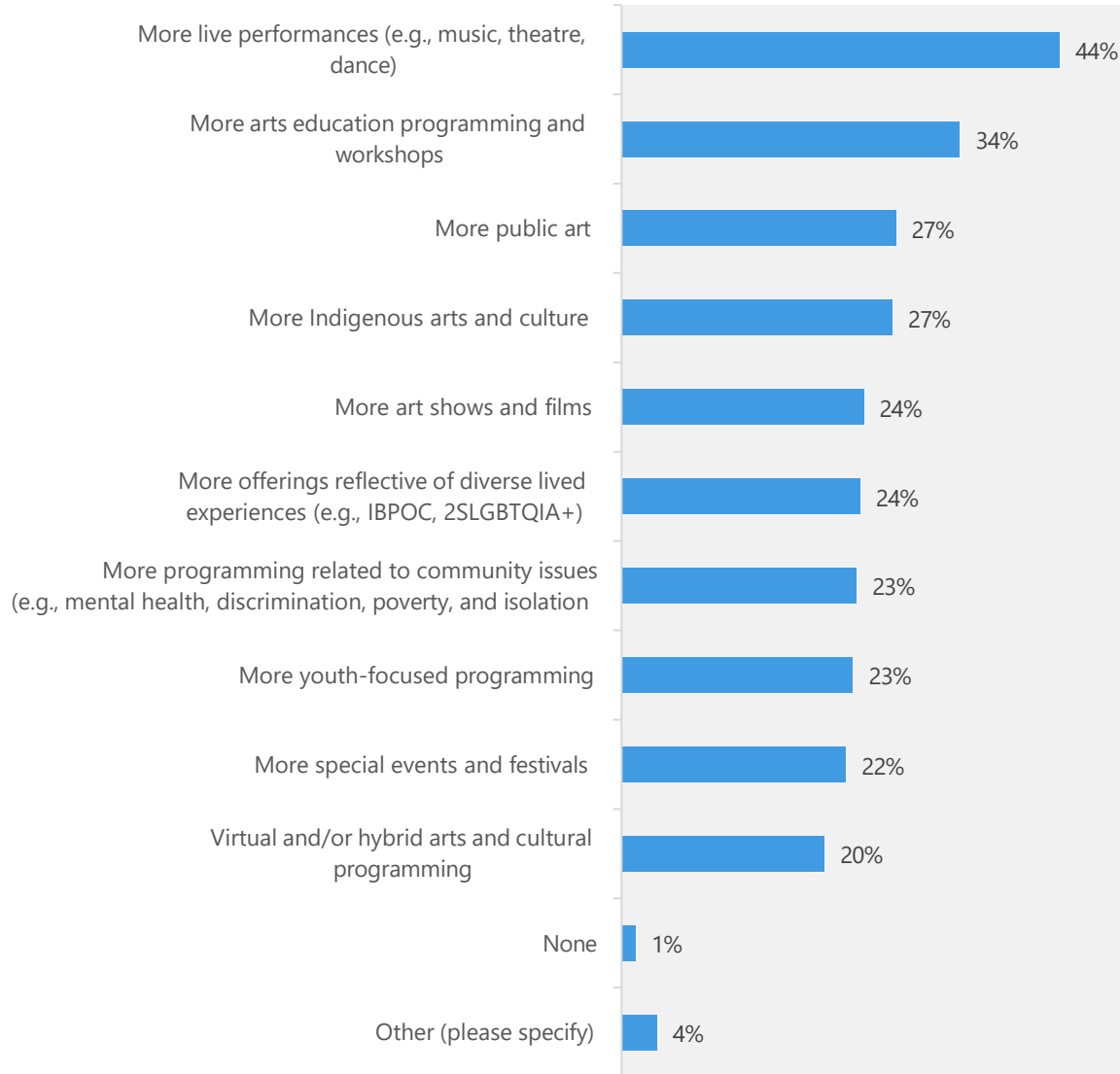


**When asked what future arts and culture offerings people would like to see more of in Courtenay** (Figure 15) the top response from members of the public was more live performances (44% selected that option). The second most popular response was more special events and festivals (30%), followed by more Indigenous arts and culture (28%), and more public art (28%). Responses from artists and those who work in the cultural sector were very close to these total participant responses, also highlighting the need for more live performances (44%). However, the second most popular response was more arts education programming and workshops (34%) rather than more special events and festivals (Figure 16).

**Figure 15. Looking to the future, what arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=409)**



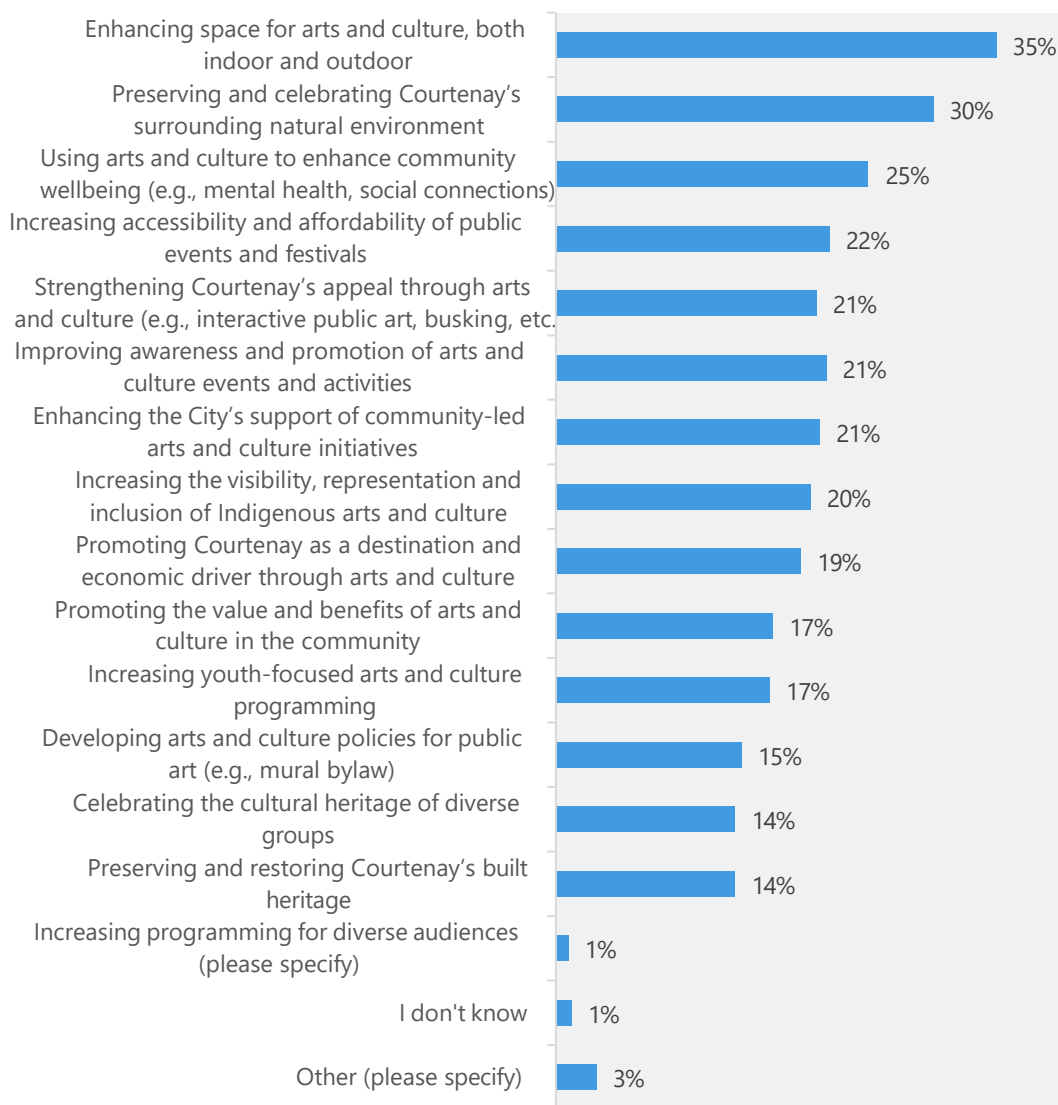
**Figure 16. Looking to the future, what arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=282)**



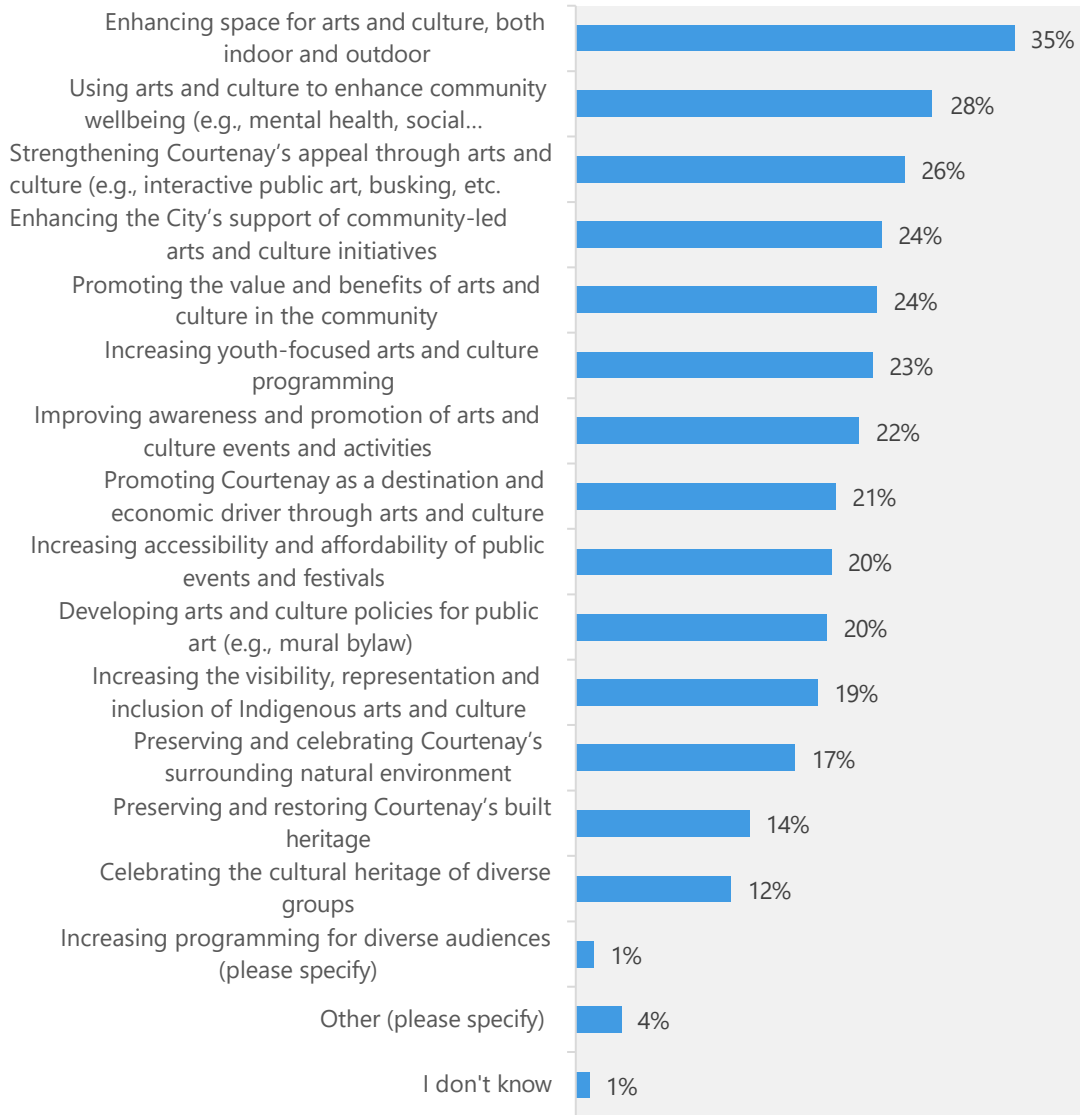


**The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to public survey participants (Figure 17), are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option). Culture sector participants (Figure 18) also identified enhancing space for arts and culture as the top need (35%). Overall, however, there was a lack of consensus about what the priorities should be. The wide range of opinions could indicate participants' uncertainty regarding what the focal points for the Culture Plan should be, as well as the profound influence of arts and culture throughout so many areas of the community's fabric.

**Figure 17. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=404)**



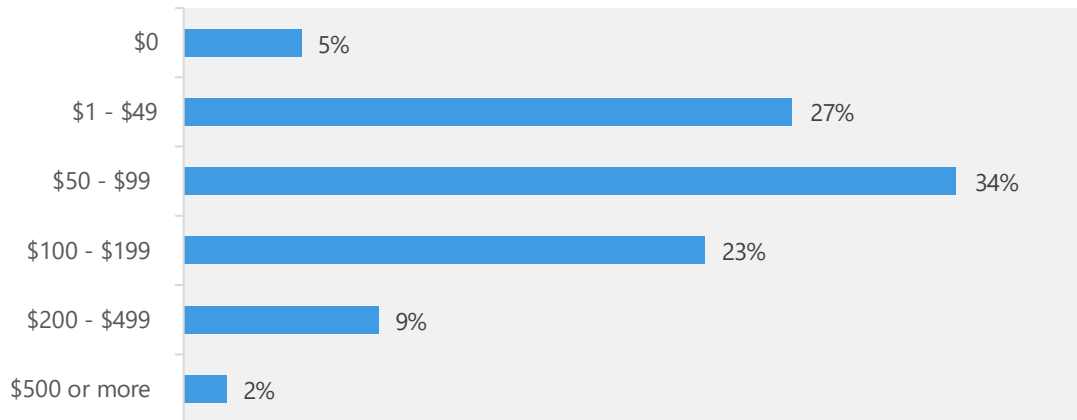
**Figure 18. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=278)**





When respondents were asked how much money they spend in the community before and after a cultural event, the total average was **\$105 per individual** (Figure 19).

**Figure 19. As an individual, how much do you typically spend before or after attending/participating in cultural events? (all responses, n=728)**



Full survey results can be found in Appendix A.

### Cultural Sector Findings

These findings draw on discussions at a cultural sector roundtable event hosted on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, one-to-one interviews with artists and members of Courtenay’s cultural community, and discussions at a public event on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Figure 20. Live graphic recording by Jill Banting from the May 9th focus group with arts and culture sector participants**



## Key Findings

Courtenay's cultural sector has a collaborative spirit and is supported by numerous arts and culture organizations and cultural facilities. The sector is further supported by volunteers who have a passion for arts and culture.

While the cultural sector offers rich and vibrant arts and cultural offerings, certain needs have been identified by the sector, including:

- **More equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** (e.g., with different sizes for different audiences and art forms). Specific types of space needs identified include a black box theatre, multi-use or adaptive spaces and outdoor venues equipped for performances. Other space needs identified include:
  - **Greater access to City-owned spaces for rentals with discounted pricing for small community groups** – i.e., cost of spaces was identified as a barrier for small and medium sized local arts organizations.
  - **To conduct an accessibility audit of City-owned facilities and upgrade facilities where accessibility is an issue** for groups such as seniors (e.g., provide grab bars in washrooms, stage upgrades for performances).
  - For the **City to provide support** setting up spaces (including outdoor) for events.
- **More funding (i.e., community grants) to help subsidize cultural events and programs.** The cost of some events/programs remains too high for sections of the population including seniors, newcomers, youth and the unhoused. Cultural organizations are also under financial pressure and unable to meet all participation costs, hindering the sector from offering more inclusive programming.
- **A need for regional support through development of cultural facilities/spaces, and funding programs** to support arts and cultural organizations within the region including those based in Courtenay (e.g., it was noted that other residents in the region benefit from Courtenay's cultural offerings).
- **To review transportation options to cultural events.** Transit is often a barrier for seniors, newcomers, youth, and unhoused community members.
- **The need for the City to play a coordinating role** in facilitating event schedules across cultural service providers and to maintain an event calendar (e.g., the City of Courtenay could play this role by appointing an Events Coordinator and also hosting an events calendar on City website).
- **To foster relationships between the cultural sector and the community** including the school district.
- **Succession planning protocols for local arts and cultural organizations.** For example, internships and mentorships for youth could enhance their interest in working within the arts and culture sector.
- **More technical and professional cultural workers** to support programming and events in Courtenay. Partnerships with educational providers including the school district and North Island College (NIC) could be beneficial, for example to encourage more young

people to work in the sector and to offer technical courses in sound and lighting, crowd control & management, arts administration and event management among others.

## Specific Community Findings

The interviews and group conversations highlighted specific needs pertaining to different types of community members, which are important to highlight in their own right. Table 2 presents specific needs pertaining to Indigenous community members (including Indigenous organizations),<sup>6</sup> newcomers and immigrants, unhoused community members, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. These findings emerged from 1:1 interviews and group conversations.

**Table 2. Specific community needs identified**

Community/Group	Identified Needs
<b>Indigenous community members<sup>7</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need to provide opportunities to include Indigenous voices and presence in community activities. Having an Indigenous Liaison staff member at the City could help meet this need.</li> <li>▪ It is important to ease bureaucratic barriers and decolonize practices in the City so that it is able to fully respond to requests from Indigenous communities.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to provide support to create Indigenous cultural spaces such as an urban cultural wellness centre, campgrounds (with fire pits that are open to community gatherings including outdoor cultural events) and outdoor spaces for Indigenous gatherings.</li> <li>▪ There is a desire for partnerships with the City to host Indigenous cultural events (e.g., ‘Spirit Walk’ held on September 30<sup>th</sup>).</li> <li>▪ There is a need to create more awareness of Indigenous culture through cultural events and public art.</li> <li>▪ Participants noted that there should be more opportunities for Indigenous cultural education for City staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Newcomers and immigrants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need for more arts and culture programming that welcomes newcomers to the community to help address social isolation.</li> <li>▪ Another need is to provide more information on arts and cultural services or programs that newcomers can access or participate in, e.g., art galleries, theatres.</li> <li>▪ Newcomer and immigrant participants would like to see more opportunities for more representation of different cultures in cultural programming. This could include programming that celebrates different cultures and providing language options other than English.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to foster collaboration among immigrant groups (such as CV Immigration Welcome Centre and CV Multicultural Society) –</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Note, the City’s engagement with K’ómoks First Nation is in the early stages and will be ongoing throughout the Strategic Cultural Plan development and beyond. These findings are from conversations with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous-led organizations in Courtenay.

Community/Group	Identified Needs
	<p>connecting them, for example through facilitated introductions and multi-cultural events.</p>
<b>Unhoused community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need for a gathering space that provides opportunities for free drop-in arts and cultural classes/activities for the unhoused population. Such spaces could be developed in partnership with community organizations.</li> <li>▪ A wellness centre could respond to individuals’ needs, both tangible and intangible. Basic facilities for unhoused community members are lacking in Courtenay, as there is no 24/7 water source, nowhere to do laundry and nowhere for people to store their belongings. A centre could offer opportunities to participate in the arts, and a place to connect to Indigenous learning and culture.</li> <li>▪ Although the majority of participants with lived experience of homelessness said they felt welcome at the City’s cultural facilities, more critical thinking is needed in the arts and culture sector (and more broadly) about how to respond to the needs of people engaged in public spaces (including access to washrooms, a chance to charge phones, etc.). There is a need for more listening to people with lived experience, deeper engagement, and critical imagining of new possibilities/solutions – including innovative housing options.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to create a more welcoming atmosphere at events and programs for people experiencing homelessness, overcoming stigma and discrimination from substance use. Having cultural and recreation staff (with appropriate training) or social workers present would help people feel comfortable.</li> <li>▪ Arts participation and therapy can be an important part of healing. For example, many participants from across community groups highlighted the Comox Valley Art Gallery’s Walk With Me project as exceptional, because the project addresses critical issues relating to homelessness and the toxic drug poisoning crisis through culture and storytelling – building empathy and understanding.</li> </ul>
<b>People with disabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People with accessibility needs of all types need to be included in creating solutions.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to ensure that cultural activities and events are truly accessible, with venues that follow universal design principles and meet Accessibility Standards Canada. For example, there should be a review of whether bathrooms are genuinely accessible, if lighting is sensory-friendly, and so forth – with people with lived experience carrying out the accessibility testing.</li> <li>▪ There is a need for clear information on the accessibility of venues and activities to help community members to plan. E.g., is the venue wheelchair accessible, are parking/bathrooms accessible, and will loop systems or captioning be available? Advertising for events and programming should include symbols relating to accessibility, so people know what they can expect (e.g., wheelchairs, sign language, assistive listening, accessible print, braille - see <a href="#">example</a>).</li> </ul>



Community/Group	Identified Needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need to adapt facilities so that accessible seats are not for only one person with one companion but a whole group. This change would enable people with physical disabilities to participate with their friends and families.</li> <li>▪ Transit to get to arts and culture needs further improvement. Although buses are accessible, schedules are not in sync with the timing of events, creating a real barrier to participation.</li> <li>▪ Hybrid programming has largely stopped since the pandemic, but there remains a need for hybrid options for some people with disabilities, including those with invisible disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>2SLGBTQIA+ community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall, there is a lack of visibility of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Courtenay. Although there are various queer artists and creatives in the city, they are scattered and there are limited opportunities for them to meet.</li> <li>▪ There is a need for a central place for the 2SLGBTQIA+ to gather. Although there are some great organizers in the city (Queer Culture, Pride) no one has a brick-and-mortar space. Additionally, although allies are important and welcome, some participants noted a need for some events or programming to be for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community only, as the dynamic and level of understanding is different.</li> <li>▪ Although overall there has been an outpouring of support for Pride events in Courtenay, phobia and incidents of violence or intimidation continue. Some people are deterred from attending 2SLGBTQIA+ events as they fear attracting attention to themselves. Real effort is needed to ensure 2SLGBTQIA+ people are not only welcome, but safe.</li> <li>▪ With some more focus, there is an opportunity to launch more 2SLGBTQIA+ activities and art shows in Courtenay – both virtually and in person. Such events/activities should be developed with accessibility in mind, including considering ways to address time/financial barriers. Potential opportunities include arts exhibitions during Pride month and other key 2SLGBTQIA+ dates.</li> </ul>

## Summary Findings

This section summarizes Courtenay’s current strengths, challenges and gaps when it comes to culture, based on analysis of the engagement findings.

+ Strengths	- Challenges and Gaps
Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.	Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.
Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.	Inadequate municipal support for arts and culture, including at the City and regional level.
Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.	Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the cultural sector.
Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.	Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.
Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.	Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.
Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.	

### Strengths

- **Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.**
  - Courtenay’s geography and location in the Comox Valley contribute to its overall appeal.
  - Courtenay’s natural beauty, with picturesque landscapes and proximity to water bodies, provides residents with recreational opportunities and rich inspiration for arts and culture.
  - Although the community is small, numerous participants highlighted its substantial, and vibrant arts scene.

*“The location and landscape of Courtenay is the Comox Valley is a point attraction to most people who move here, for example for retirement or visit.”*

- **Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.**

- Courtenay hosts numerous arts and culture organizations, including cultural anchor institutions such as the Sid Williams Theatre, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Museum.
- These facilities are in proximity to the downtown core and offer a variety of cultural offerings. These cultural anchors are a draw for the region, and support other communities in the Comox Valley, as well as Courtenay.
- Other key cultural organizations include, but are not limited to, the Old Church Theatre Society, HMCS Alberni Memorial Museum, as well as cultural events such as Simms Summer Series and Vancouver Island Music Festival.
- The city is home to people with a background in a variety of art forms and cultures whose creativity feeds the cultural growth in the community. Many participants mentioned a strong collaborative spirit across the sector.
- In addition, North Island College supports arts and culture through related courses and draws students from the valley and beyond.

***"A strong creative community and variety of activities are offered locally."***

- Survey participant

- **Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.**

- The City of Courtenay provides funding support to the core cultural partner organizations (i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Comox Valley Art Gallery and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council).
- The City also maintains and invests in other facilities such as the Florence Filberg Centre, Native Sons Hall, and the LINC Youth Centre, each of which host arts and culture-related activities alongside other community uses.
- The City works with the Heritage Advisory Commission to support heritage conservation and celebration of heritage assets.
- The City developed a Downtown Playbook (in consultation with the public and businesses) to support the revitalization of downtown Courtenay – a strategy with strong links to culture.

***"The structured delivery of arts and culture is a key thing –i.e., the City municipality support to four core partners."***

- Focus group participant

- **Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.**

- Courtenay boasts many individuals and organizations with a high level of interest in promoting arts and culture in the community.
- Many artists live in the community, and there are numerous cultural groups, and volunteers who run cultural events.
- Almost all survey participants (94%) participate in arts and culture in Courtenay at least a few times a year. Nearly half (47%) participate weekly or more.

*"... there are a lot of arts consumers; people who go out and support local filmmaking, and local theatre. There's just a tremendous tradition here of supporting music of all kinds, local music, music from all over the world, it's particularly more sophisticated than many other communities of its size."*

- **Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.**

- The city has both summertime and winter activities that promote cultural tourism and draw visitors to the community year-round.
- Courtenay and the region offers a variety of cultural events including festivals such as the Canada Day and Vancouver Island Music Festival, which appeal to locals and visitors alike.

*"...so many choices in terms of the number of things hosted in the city."*

- Focus group participant

- **Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.**

- There is an awareness of the social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay. Note, economic impact analysis is currently in progress.
- Social impacts cited by participants include contribution to mental and emotional well-being, quality of life, bringing the community together in a positive way, and creating a sense of belonging.
- The survey findings showed participants think arts and culture in Courtenay encourage social participation and a sense of belonging (47% of participants highlighted this impact); enhance Courtenay as an attractive place to live (38%); and build empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds (34%).
- Economic contributions come from arts and culture across the board, from events/festivals, employment, consumer spending and cultural tourism - e.g., Music Festival was noted as an event that brings economic value to the city and region.

*"Art is a mental and emotional thing. I think it's therapeutic for humans to make things."*

- Focus group participant

## Challenges and Gaps

- **Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.**

- Courtenay is located on the lands of the K'ómoks First Nation, but there is currently limited visibility of K'ómoks arts and culture. Elements that participants suggested could be incorporated include signage, murals, and sculptures, or changing/rotating installations that tell the history and stories of K'ómoks territory to residents and visitors.
- There is also a lack of awareness, recognition, and representation of distinct Indigenous cultures, including Métis and Urban Indigenous people's cultures.
- Although several cultural groups collaborate with Indigenous Elders and artists, including K'ómoks, there is not yet formal collaboration between the City and K'ómoks First Nation in relation to arts and culture.
- There remains a need to educate the community on Indigenous cultures and reconciliation and to celebrate Indigenous cultural heritage in Courtenay, to increase understanding and eradicate racism.

***"How can we support learning about Indigenous cultures, & truth and then moving towards reconciliation together as a community?"***  
- Interview participant

- **Limited availability and affordability of suitable cultural spaces/facilities.**

- When the survey asked sector participants about the top three critical needs to help arts and culture thrive in Courtenay, the top responses all pointed to space. 45% selected 'Performance/exhibition space and facilities', followed by 'rehearsal/creation space and facilities' (selected by 36%).
- Outdoor performance spaces (e.g., an amphitheatre) and multi-purpose spaces were also noted by participants as lacking in Courtenay.
- Existing facility rentals are too costly for many community arts groups, or often have conflict in scheduling. These challenges can make it difficult for cultural groups – especially performing arts groups – to find space.
- Although there are some multipurpose facilities in the city which are used for cultural purposes, they are not adequately equipped for performing arts. For example, Native Son's Hall has no

***"...we [a cultural organization] cannot fill the Filberg, so we need small type intimate spaces for shows. Affordable rentals will also help with overhead cost and in turn pricing for shows so everyone would then be able to afford to attend."***

***"We desperately need a big theatre for performances. The Sid William's Theatre is far too small a venue."***

stages for performing arts groups to use the venue, and the Florence Filberg Centre does not have suitable acoustics for some types of shows.

- **Inadequate municipal support, including at the City and regional level.**

- City municipality support in terms of funding is currently considered inadequate, especially when it comes to funding beyond that offered to the Comox Valley Art Gallery, Courtenay and District Museum, Sid Williams Theatre, and Comox Valley Community Arts Council.

*Municipalities surrounding Courtenay use the city's cultural amenities, but do not equitably pay to maintain or sustain (and vice versa). Any capital plans are affected by this (in all communities)"*

- There is a desire for more arts and culture-specific grants. Several participants expressed that there is a challenge in balancing community or local groups needs with the needs of professional institutions and felt that smaller organization are not as valued as larger organizations – e.g., as they lack access to funding and resources.
- There is no dedicated staff for arts and culture only at the City of Courtenay. Having dedicated cultural services staff could provide a useful liaison point between different groups in the community.
- Participants expressed there is limited coordinated investment in arts and culture from surrounding municipalities. Given that it is not only Courtenay residents who benefit from Courtenay's cultural offerings, this is considered a gap.
- Survey respondents (32%) identified bylaws and policies that support arts and culture as the third most critical need in the cultural sector.

- **Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the cultural sector.**

- Technical professionals in lighting and sound who can work on events/festivals are in particularly high in demand and lacking in Courtenay.
- The capacity of local arts and culture organizations is limited by a lack of paid staff. Most local arts groups are supported by volunteers only, and as such, have limited human capacity to offer more programming as they would like to.
- One survey respondent suggested that there is growing demand for experiences that include interactive technology, materials, and design. This often requires more specialty training and skills, which can be difficult to find in Courtenay at present.

*"There are more things that could be done but we just don't have the people to do it."*  
- Survey participant

- **Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.**

- Accessibility barriers – including structural accessibility for people with physical disabilities, ease of access via transit, awareness of offerings and financial costs – limit arts and culture participation. These barriers are prevalent for some groups, including newcomers, seniors, youth and unhoused people.
- Other accessibility concerns include the opening hours of some cultural spaces (i.e., 10am to 4pm). Daytime opening hours only mean some community members cannot attend, including those who work full time and families who want to bring their children outside of school hours.
- In open-ended comments, survey respondents identified a need for increased availability and awareness of what arts and culture activities are occurring in the community.

*"I wish there was more information on the website or in the media. We as newcomers are very willing to participate in community activities."*

- **Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.**

- There are limited arts and culture programming opportunities, as well as awareness of existing programs, for youth in Courtenay at present. This includes programming for Indigenous youth to connect to their culture, e.g., through language, crafting, or drumming.
- For example, in the survey, one participant commented that they would like to see greater diversity of exhibits as well as range of content for programs offered in the community for youth and children, as the existing offer is quite static.
- Participants described how there are almost no evening cultural activities in Courtenay, i.e., limited live music events in the evening, and no nightclubs.
- There is a need for more funding dedicated to supporting young and emerging artists.

*"...there are currently no music or dance programs in middle school; there were some changes a few years back that led to the cutting of several middle school programs. The kids do have something in elementary school and high school but there is a gap in between."*  
- Survey participant

## Community-Identified Priority Needs



### *Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities<sup>7</sup>*

Many participants want to see **more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces** – e.g., for storytelling and educational opportunities, to raise awareness of K'ómoks' ongoing culture and heritage. Indigenous survey participants (n=111) were most likely to say that Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous artists through more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility, more opportunities to learn about Indigenous cultural protocols, and more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language.

Other priority needs relating to Indigenous engagement and reconciliation include the need for proper land acknowledgements during public events, as well as continuous engagement with Indigenous communities in strategic planning initiatives. Interview and group conversation participants suggested programming such as Call for Indigenous Artists, an Indigenous arts residency, festivals or events to engage Indigenous communities, as well as create learning opportunities for residents and visitors.



### *More cultural spaces/facilities, and better availability and affordability*

Participants expressed the **need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues**, to meet various sector needs, including the need for rental space. The types of spaces identified include small, medium, and larger venues, including performance and rehearsals venues. Specific types of spaces include a **black box theatre, multi-use spaces** that can be adapted for different uses, and **outdoor venues** equipped with stages for performances.

There is also a need for spaces to be **affordable** for local community groups. In addition, existing **facilities require upgrades** to meet requirements for events particularly in terms of sound system and stage set-ups for live performances. The **core cultural facilities** funded by the City also require various upgrades to meet their needs.



### *Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming*

There is a desire for more **diverse and affordable cultural programming**, both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups. Programming needs noted by participants include an Artists in

---

<sup>7</sup> Needs identified from engagement with Indigenous organizations and community members, as well as broader community members. Note, K'ómoks First Nation feedback will be included in later stages of Strategic Cultural Plan development.



Residence program facilitated by the City in collaboration with arts organizations; more youth programming, and multi-cultural programming to bring diverse groups together in the community.

Developing programming in partnership with organizations that serve **diverse groups** including newcomers, people who are unhoused, Indigenous (including Métis, Urban Indigenous), and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities was described as a priority need in group conversations and interviews.

There is a desire for support in develop cultural opportunities that **support nightlife** – e.g., live music events to offer residents a chance to participate and enjoy such events.



### *Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration*

There is a need for more community collaborations and partnerships. For example, several participants highlighted the need to foster a better relationship between the arts and cultural sector and the school district. Greater collaboration could potentially lead to programming in the school and use of school facilities/spaces for cultural events outside school hours.

There is a need to have **avenues for knowledge sharing** across the sector, for example through regular gatherings.

Other partnerships of interest include **building relationships with diverse groups** including Indigenous communities, newcomer/immigrant groups, people who are unhoused, people who use substances, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.



### *Increased municipal support – financial and in-kind, local, and regional*

There is a desire **for increased municipal financial support** for arts and culture, especially in the form of community grants.

There is a desire for the City to offer **operational funding to more local arts organizations to support the hiring of full-time staff** – which would build capacity as well as succession planning needs. Additionally, many participants identified a need for **dedicated staff for arts and culture** services at the City of Courtenay.

Other forms of support required from the City noted by participants include: **facilitating corporate support** for arts and culture, e.g., through sponsorships; providing more support (i.e., operating and project grants, City space rental discounts, capacity building e.g., grant writing) to **smaller and medium-sized groups or organizations**; developing a **one stop place to access information on events** and programs, i.e., a community events calendar facilitated or hosted by the City; and **capacity building** for local organizations.

Participants further expressed the **need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay**, given cultural offerings are beneficial or serve the wider population in the Comox valley or region.



#### ***Further development of cultural tourism***

Participants expressed the need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the **cultural hub of the region**, and to **promote cultural tourism**. Additionally, community members would like to see more representation of **public arts** in the downtown core, e.g., more murals and sculptures.

There is a need for **coordination among cultural groups on summer events schedules** to ensure that this opportunity is maximized. Individuals noted that the City could create a role that coordinates such collaborations and support promotion of events, while others suggested this could be a role led by the Comox Valley Arts Council.



#### ***Attraction and training of technical cultural workers***

There is a need for more **technical expertise in relation to hosting live performances and events** – i.e., more sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand. These needs could potentially be met through collaborations with educational bodies such as North Island College to develop **professional courses/micro-credentials**. Additionally, **mentorship and internship programs** could help the youth to learn useful skills that are in demand in the local arts and culture sector.

Individuals noted that there is a need to make Courtenay a vibrant cultural community in the Comox Valley, in order to attract such skilled cultural workers (and others who value a vibrant cultural scene).



#### ***Development of a Public Arts Policy***

There is a desire for Courtenay to develop a **Public Arts Policy** that is reviewed periodically to support public arts in the city. Individuals noted such a policy could **leverage the talent of young artists** and involve them in community public arts initiatives.

## **Next Steps**

The research analysis, and engagement with K'ómoks First Nation is still in progress. The future stages of the Strategic Cultural Plan development are as follows:

#### ***Further engagement and analysis activities:***

- Ongoing and open dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Council to discuss meaningful engagement;
- Municipal benchmarking and comparative review;

- Assessing the economic impact of Courtenay’s arts and culture sector;
- Analyzing cultural facilities options, drawing on the survey, municipal benchmarking, and other research engagement findings shared in this report

**Strategy development:**

- Drafting strategic goals for the Strategic Cultural Plan
- Developing strategic recommendations and an implementation plan
- Sharing draft recommendations with the community, and seeking feedback via an in-person community check-in event and online feedback
- Revising the draft Strategic Cultural Plan in line with feedback received

**Reporting:**

- Drafting the final Strategic Cultural Plan
- Presenting the draft Plan to City Council
- Finalizing the Strategic Cultural Plan

The final Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan will have several components: a **vision** for arts and culture, informed by the community; **strategic goals**; **objectives** linked to each goal; and specific **actions** linked to each objective (Figure 18). Lastly, it will include an **implementation plan** – or ‘roadmap’. The purpose of the roadmap is to outline which actions need to happen when, with key performance indicators, so the City of Courtenay can monitor progress towards the goals.

**Figure 21. Components of a strategic arts and culture plan**



## Appendix A. Full Survey Results

To gain valuable, broad engagement input from the community for the Strategic Cultural Plan, a survey questionnaire was deployed from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The survey collected a total of 779 useable responses and, of that number, 697 complete survey responses. Survey results include all survey participant responses unless stated otherwise. The following tables and figures collate all survey results.

### 1. Key Survey Findings

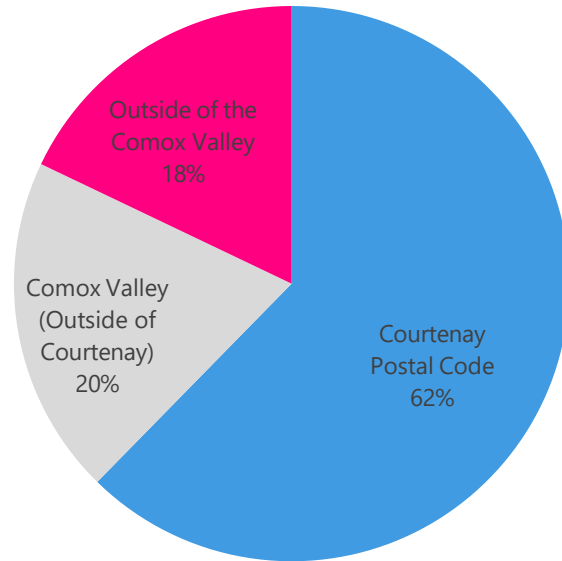
- The overall survey results show that a very **high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%)**. Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage.
- Arts and culture in Courtenay encourage **social participation** and a sense of belonging.
- **Main barriers to accessing culture** in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), limited options of interest (21%), and not having enough time (20%). However, nearly a quarter of all participants stated that they do not experience any barriers.
- **Critical needs**, according to culture sector respondents (artists and cultural sector workers), are more space for performance/exhibitions (identified as a challenge by 45% of sector respondents), more rehearsal and creation space (36%), and supportive bylaws and policies for arts and culture (32%).
- **The future arts and culture offerings respondents would most like to see** more of include live performances (selected by 44% of total participants), more education, programming and workshops (29%) and more Indigenous arts and culture (28%).
- **The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to all survey participants, are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option) and 'using arts and culture to enhance community wellbeing (26%).
- **Expenditure:** The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is \$105 per individual.

### 2. Survey Participant Profile

The following section provides a profile of survey participants. All questions were optional. While the survey did not seek to be statistically representative of the community, there were a higher number of responses from those aged 26-35 and over 65, as well as visible minority groups (i.e., IBPOC).

Survey respondents were asked to share the first three digits of their postal codes. Of the 257 respondents who opted to share these details, 62% identified that they live in Courtenay, 20% identified they live outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley, while 18% stated that they live outside of the Comox Valley.

**Figure 22 Residence (all responses, n=257)**

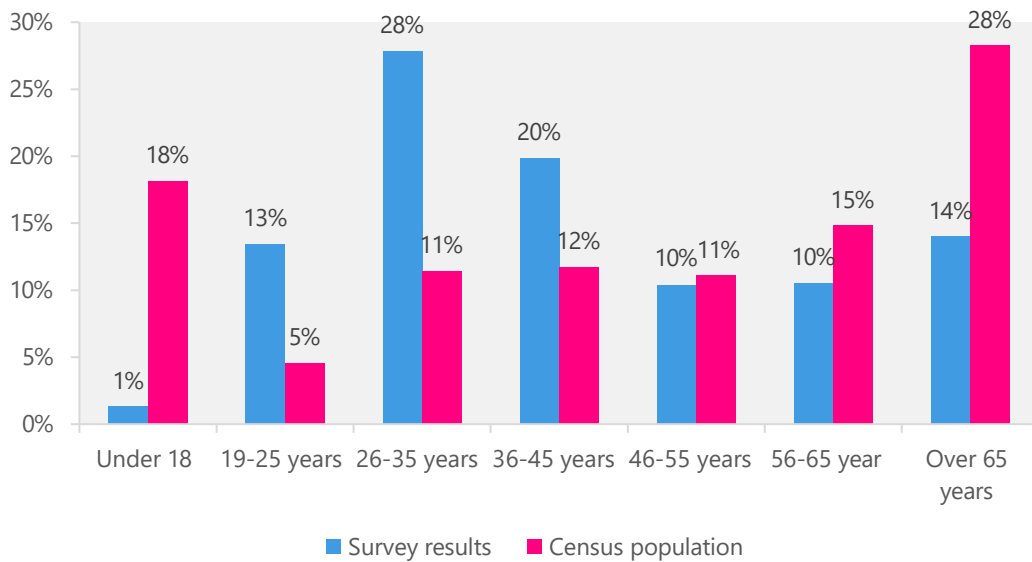


*Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023*

Figure 23 indicates the age range of survey participants compared to Stats Canada 2021 Courtenay Profile findings. The largest share of participants was between the ages of 26-35 (28%) and 36-45 (20%). This is followed by those aged 65 and over (14%). At only 1%, participants aged under 18 years are underrepresented in the survey data.

In comparing the survey age breakdown with the Statistics Canada Census 2021 Courtenay Profile,<sup>8</sup> the survey was able to garner a much higher representation of adults between the ages of 26-45. This is significant, as it is quite common that online survey results are skewed towards an older demographic (65 years and above).

**Figure 23. Survey and population age characteristics (all responses, n=686)**



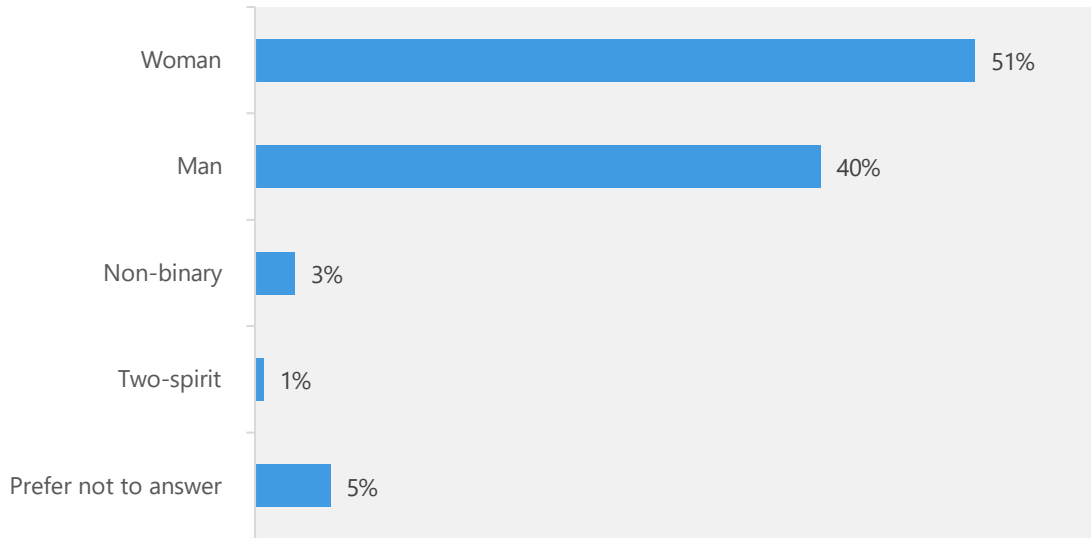
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023 and Statistics Canada – City of Courtenay Census Profile 2021

---

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada 2021. City of Courtenay Census Profile 2021 – Census of Population.  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=courtenay&DGUIDlist=2021A00055926010&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Survey participants were asked to self-identify their gender. The majority of participants identified as female (51%) and male (40%). Of the remaining respondents, 3% identified as non-binary, 1% two-spirit, and 5% preferred not to answer.

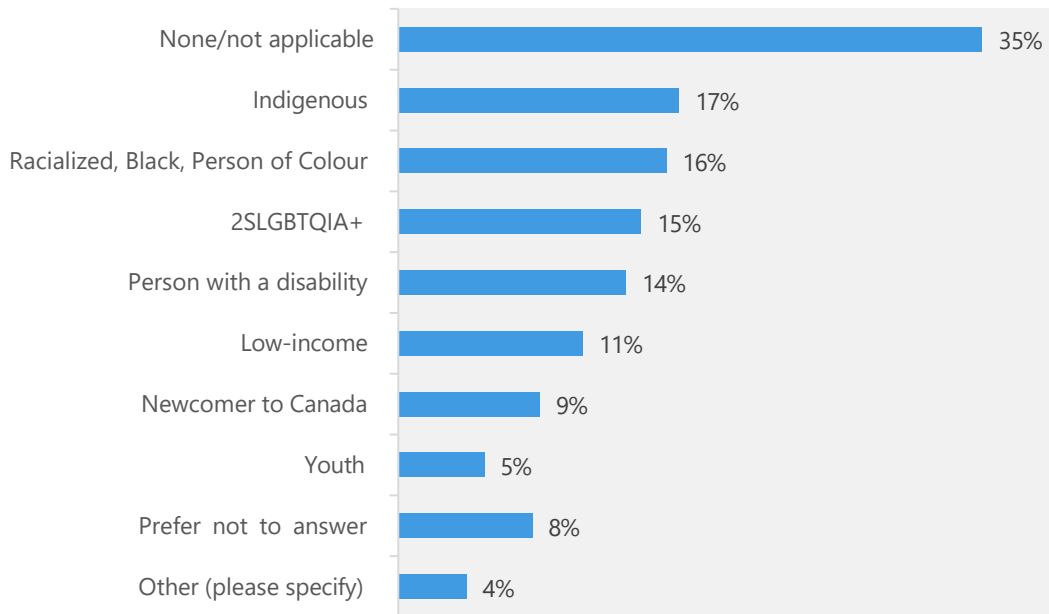
**Figure 24. What is your gender? (all responses, n=675)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

The survey was able to reach a wide range of identities. While 35% did not identify with any visible group, 17% identified as Indigenous, 16% identified as racialized (Black or person of colour), and 14% 2SLGBTQIA+. Moreover, 21 individuals identified falling in more than one category. These findings indicate that the survey was able to reach a diverse range of Courtenay residents.

**Figure 25. Do you identify with any of the following? Select all that apply (all responses, n=655)**

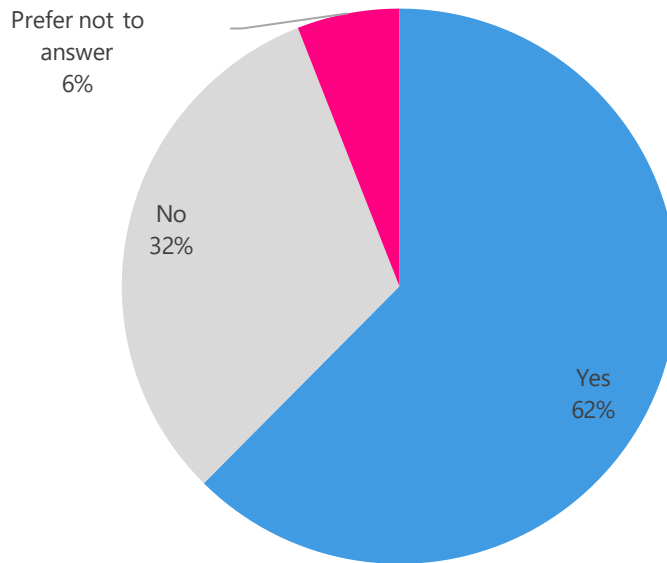


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



As illustrated in Figure 26 below, the majority of households had two or more wage earners (62%). Additionally, 32% had one or no wage earner (or were retired), while 6% preferred not to answer.

**Figure 26. Does your household have two or more wage earners? (all responses, n=671)**

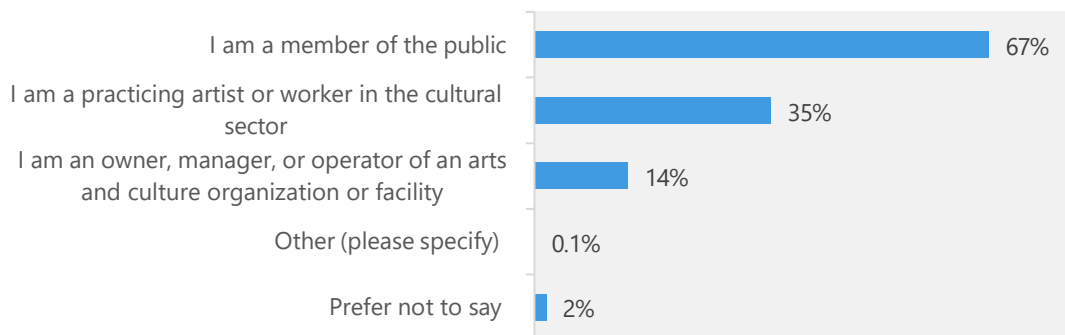


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

### 3. Engaging with Culture in Courtenay

When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay, 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility.

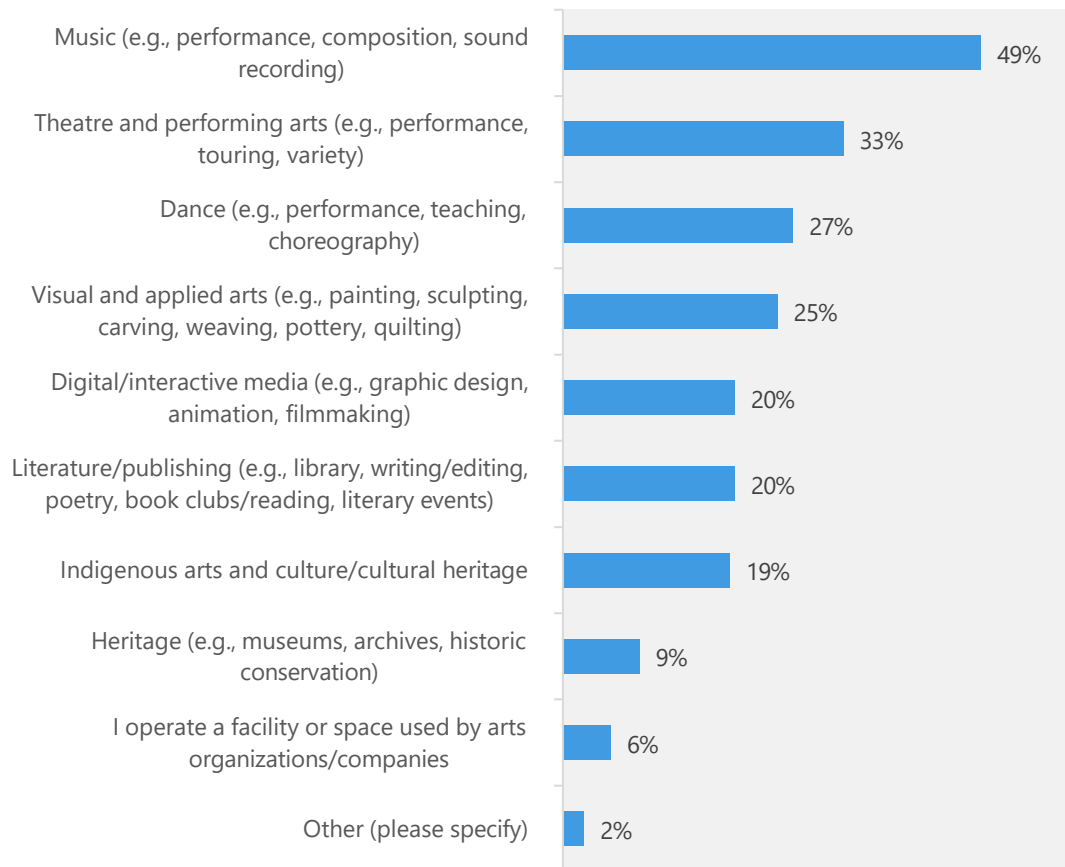
**Figure 27. How do you engage with culture in Courtenay? Please select the statement(s) that best describe you (all responses, n=779)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Artists and owners/managers of arts and culture organizations/facilities were asked which sub-domain of arts and culture they work within. The top three areas of work included music (49%), theatre and performing arts (33%), and dance (27%). These responses were followed by visual and applied arts (25%).<sup>9</sup> Notably, the performing arts sector encompassed the top three identified areas of work. Although the survey was not designed to be statistically representative, the findings suggest that performing arts are a particularly strong aspect of the arts and culture sector in Courtenay.

**Figure 28. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**

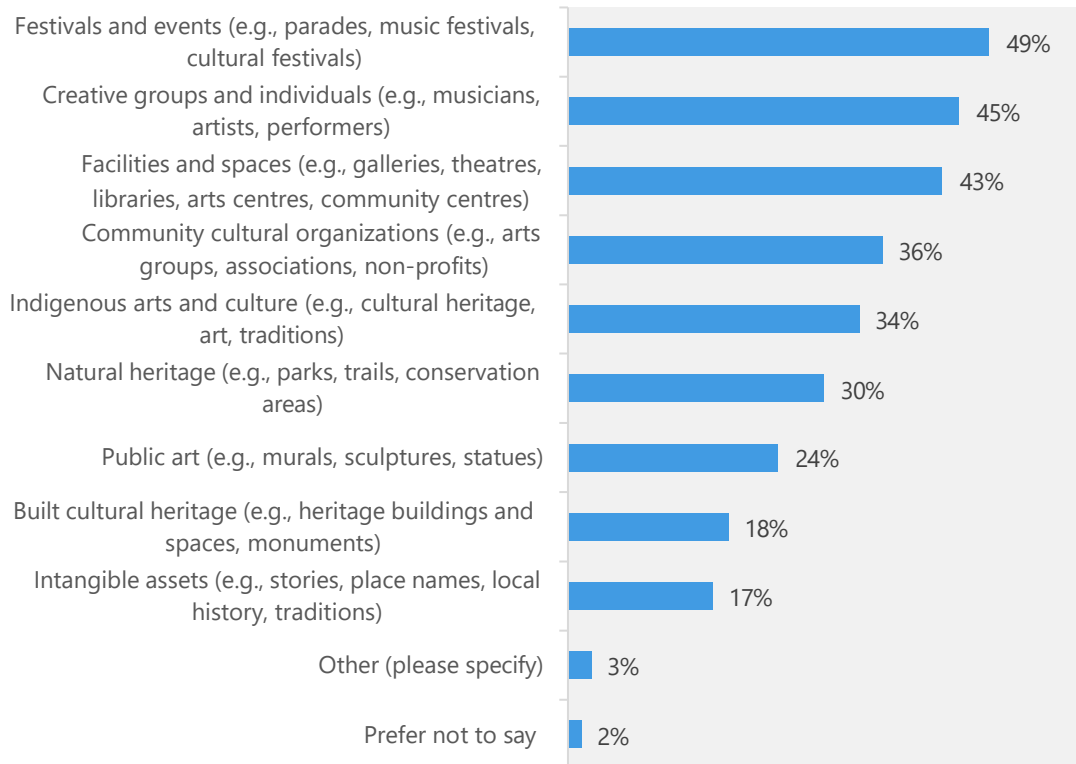


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

<sup>9</sup> The responses do not add up to 100% as participants could select more than one sub-domain, reflecting that artists and organizations often work across more than one artistic discipline.

All survey participants were asked what comes to mind when they think of arts and culture in Courtenay. The most widely cited responses by survey participants included festivals and events (49%), creative groups and individuals (45%), and facilities and spaces (43%). Other examples specified included arts in education and research-based arts practices.

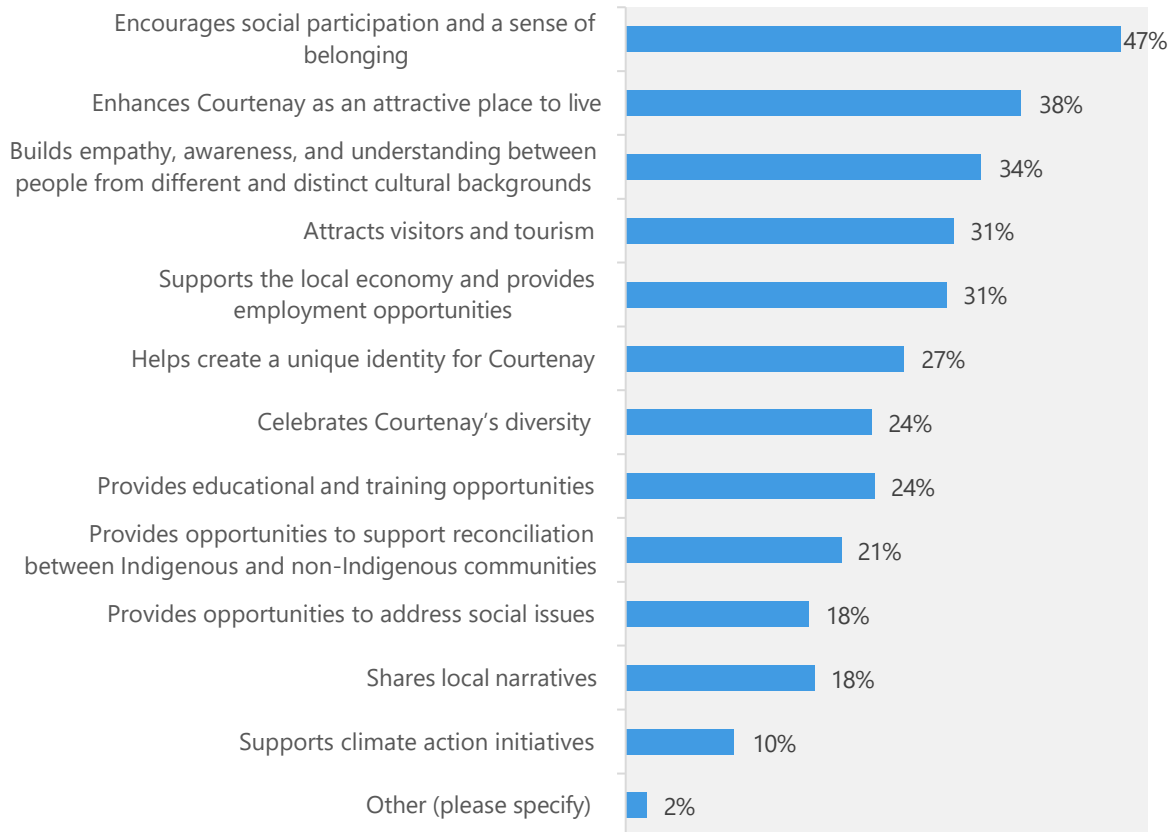
**Figure 29. When you think of arts and culture in Courtenay, what comes to mind? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

It is widely recognized that arts and culture provide significant benefits to communities, creating lasting impact. When participants were asked to select the top three social impacts of arts and culture in Courtenay, participants were mostly likely to choose 'encourages social participation and a sense of belonging' (47% of respondents selected this option); 'enhances Courtenay as an attractive place to live' (38%); and 'builds empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds' (34%).

**Figure 30. What impact does arts and culture have on Courtenay and the wider community? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**



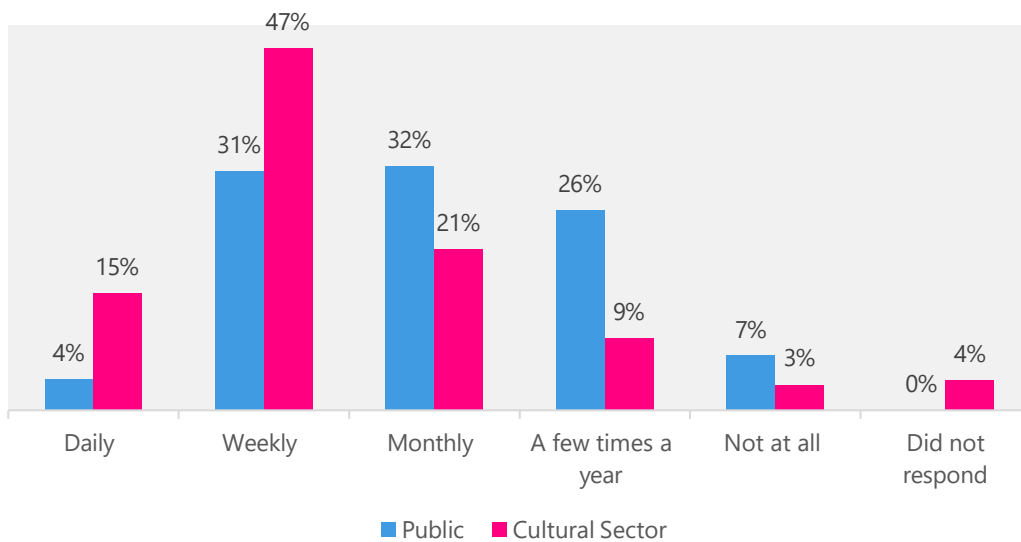
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

#### 4. Cultural Programming

Survey respondents participate in arts and culture activities in Courtenay on a regular basis. The figure below compares public responses with culture sector responses. 62% of culture sector respondents said that they participate weekly or more, while 35% of the public identified participating weekly or more. Most culture sector participants participate weekly (47%), while most members of the public participate monthly (32%) and weekly (31%). Only 10% of all survey participants said they do not participate in arts and culture in Courtenay at all. The greatest number of survey respondents identified participating weekly to a few times a year.

While the overall distribution is consistent with regional culture research findings,<sup>10</sup> it is skewed slightly higher towards weekly participation.

**Figure 31. How often do you participate in arts and culture events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=779)**

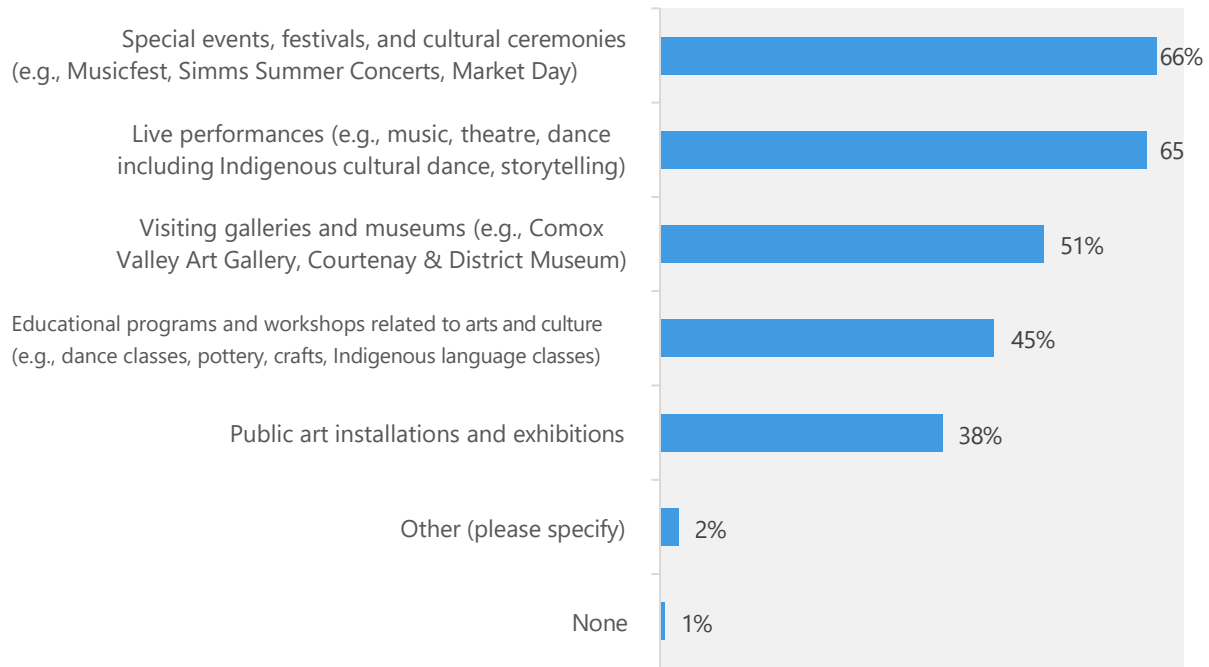


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

<sup>10</sup> Comparing these survey responses with findings from the 2021 *Arts and Culture Impact Assessment: Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands Super Region* that Nordicity conducted for the Digital Innovation Group (now Creative Coast).

The **top three arts and culture activities** that survey participants have experienced in Courtenay include special events, festivals, and cultural ceremonies (66%); other types of live performances (65%); and visiting galleries and museums (51%).

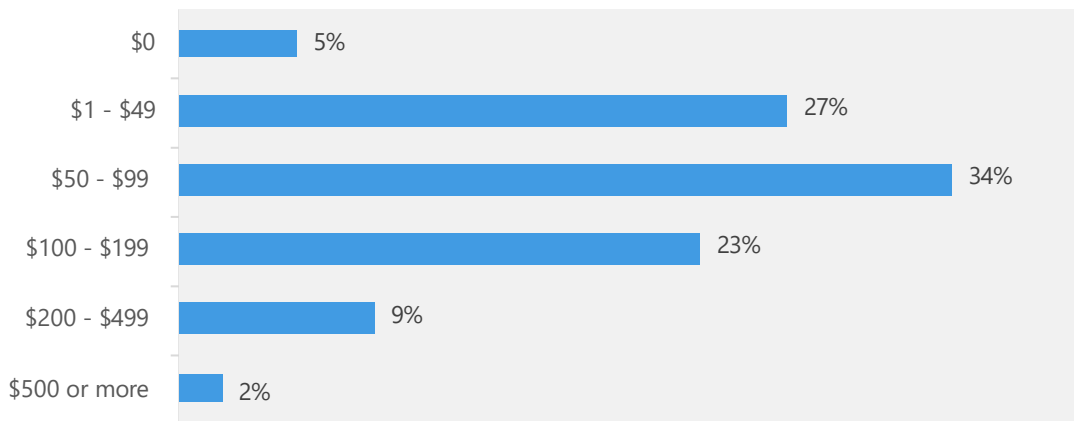
**Figure 32. Which of the following arts and culture activities have you experienced (within Courtenay)? Select all that apply (all responses, n=731)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Interaction or participation in arts and culture in Courtenay contributes to the local community's economy through additional spending in other areas. Significantly, **survey participants spend an average of \$105 in the community before or after attending/participating in cultural events** (such as at local restaurants, bars, etc.). To put this in perspective, if every adult in Courtenay were to attend one cultural event in Courtenay, this could contribute to an additional \$2.4 million of spending in the community.<sup>11</sup> Illustrated below, the largest cohort of survey respondents indicated spending between \$50 and \$100 (34%). A smaller group of participants (11%) spend above \$200.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 33. As an individual, how much do you typically spend before or after attending/participating in cultural events? (all responses, n=728)**



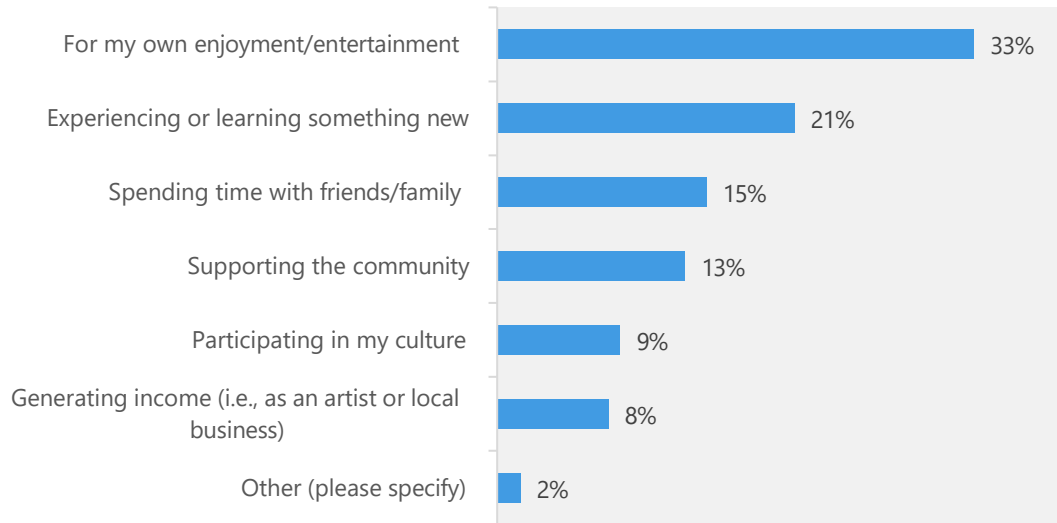
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

<sup>11</sup> This finding uses the population figure from the Statistics Canada - City of Courtenay Census Profile population of approximately 28k. Note, it does not include children and youth.

<sup>12</sup> Further information will be included in the economic analysis work.

The main reason survey respondents participate in arts and cultural events in Courtenay is ‘for my own enjoyment/entertainment’ (33%). This response was followed by ‘experiencing or learning something new’ (21%) or ‘spending time with friends/family’ (21%). These findings reflect how participants value arts and culture events for social and not only personal reasons.

**Figure 34. What is your main reason for participating in arts and cultural events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=731)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



When asked if any factors might limit them from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay, the top three survey responses included 'there are limited options for activities that are of interest to me' (29%); 'none, no barriers limit my participation' (24%); and 'there are limited options for activities near me' (21%). Two of the top responses relate to the diversity of arts and culture activities offered. Notably, and positively, many survey respondents do not experience any barriers to participating in arts and culture in Courtenay. Other, please specify examples included, 'transportation and carpooling, as I live in Campbell River,' 'I do not feel safe getting to and from arts and culture locations,' and, 'I do not know where to find out about activities near me.' This final response could point to the need for further communications and marketing to let the community know what is available in Courtenay.

**Figure 35. What factors, if any, might limit you from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay? Select up to 3 (all responses, n=754)**

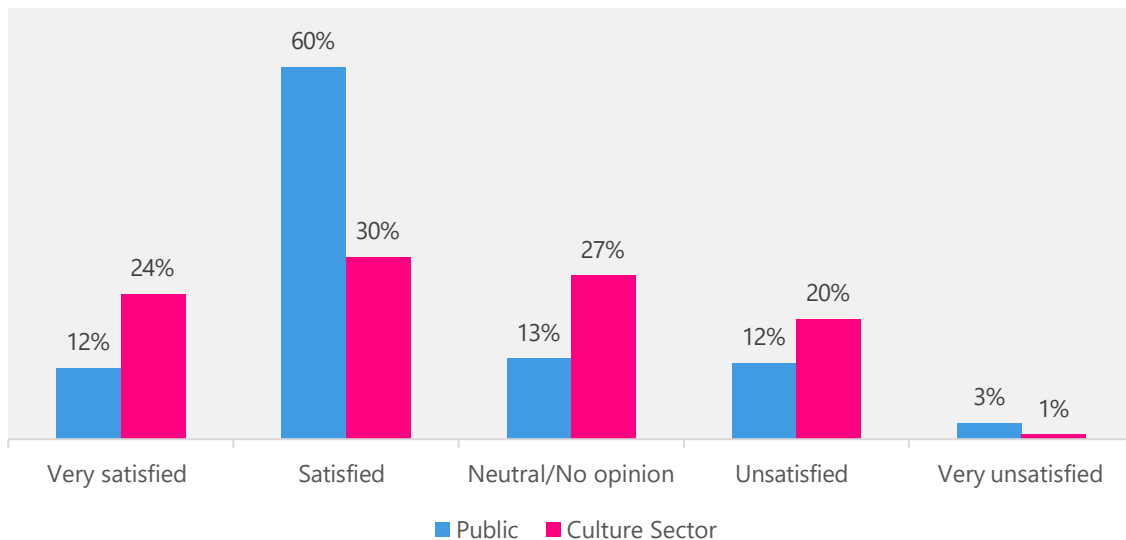


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

The public and culture sector participants were asked to rate their overall experience with arts and culture activities in Courtenay. Significantly, **72% of public respondents said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with arts and culture activities, while only 54% of the culture sector said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied.'** Generally, the culture sector was more 'unsatisfied' to 'very unsatisfied' (21%), than the public (15%). When asked to explain this rating, some interesting comments to highlight include:

- *"The Courtenay area has a rich history and cultural traditions that go back hundreds of years. These traditions are highly valued and protected by the local people and can be reflected and displayed through museums, art festivals and cultural events."*
- *"Could be so much better than it already is. Unfortunately, I don't think we've collectively prioritized arts and culture enough over the years as a community so it can feel underwhelming. Also, not always a fan of the arts presented in the city."*
- *"I am both a participant and observer. I think local cultural organizations are doing a pretty good job of both showcasing local artists and bring provocative and/or inspiring artists from away. However, I would say our performance and gallery spaces limit the opportunities. In summary, we are doing well however there can always be improvements."*

**Figure 36. How would you rate your experience with arts and culture activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=715)**



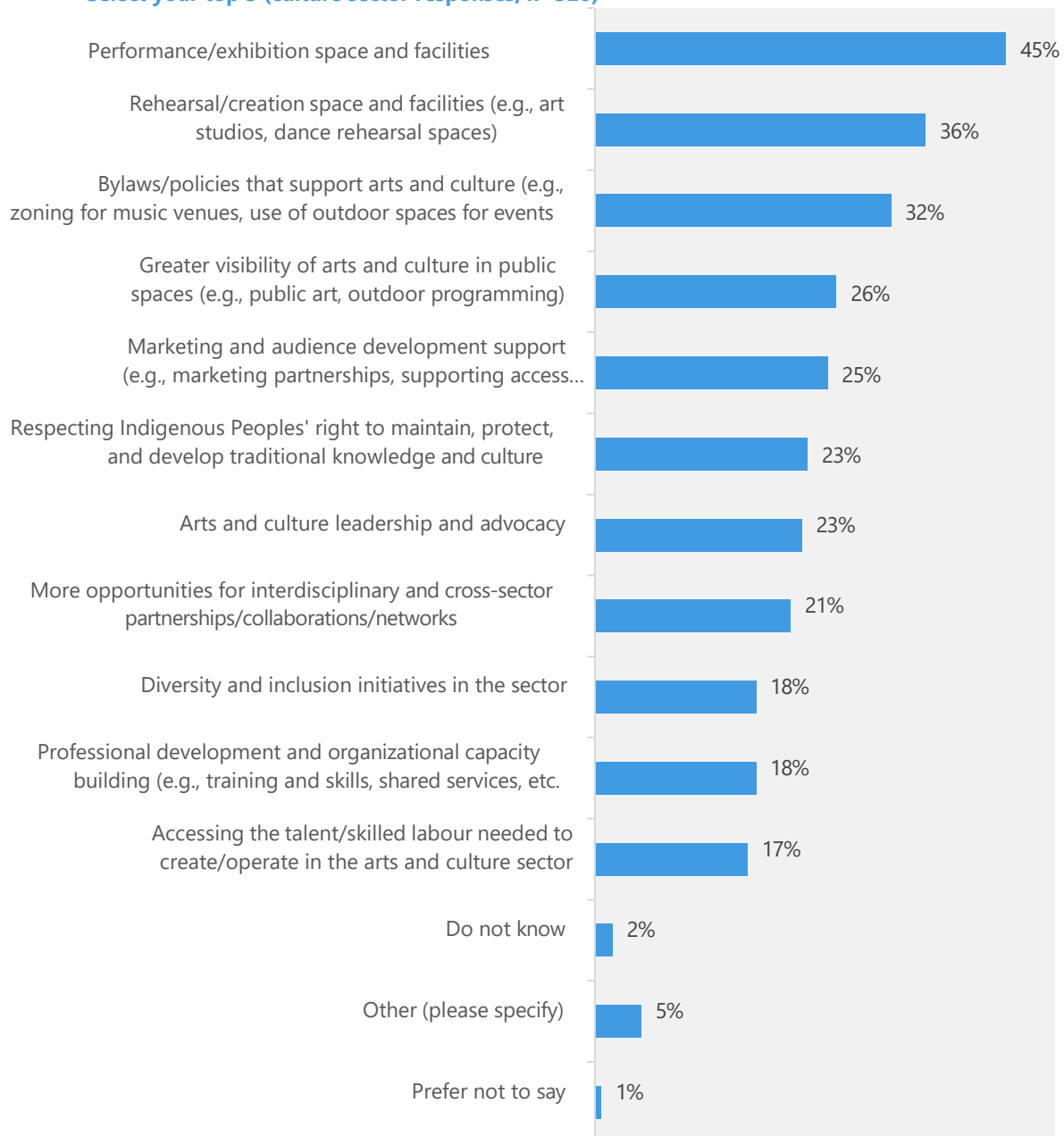
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## 5. Facilities and Spaces

Facilities and spaces are essential for community-based arts and culture. In the following section, all survey participants were asked to identify the types of facilities and spaces they have visited or used in the past two years, as well as identify their level of satisfaction regarding those existing arts and culture spaces in Courtenay.

Artists and culture organizations were asked an additional question on what they see as the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay. In the following figure, **the most critical needs identified for arts and culture in Courtenay relates to space and facilities**. 'Performance/exhibition space' was identified by artists and cultural sector survey participants as the top need (45%), followed by 'rehearsal and creation space' (36%). The third most critical need identified was 'bylaws and policies that support arts and culture' (32%), such as zoning for venues – a need that is also related to cultural space. Other examples provided included a need for greater access to funding and finding financial patrons for the arts and culture sector.

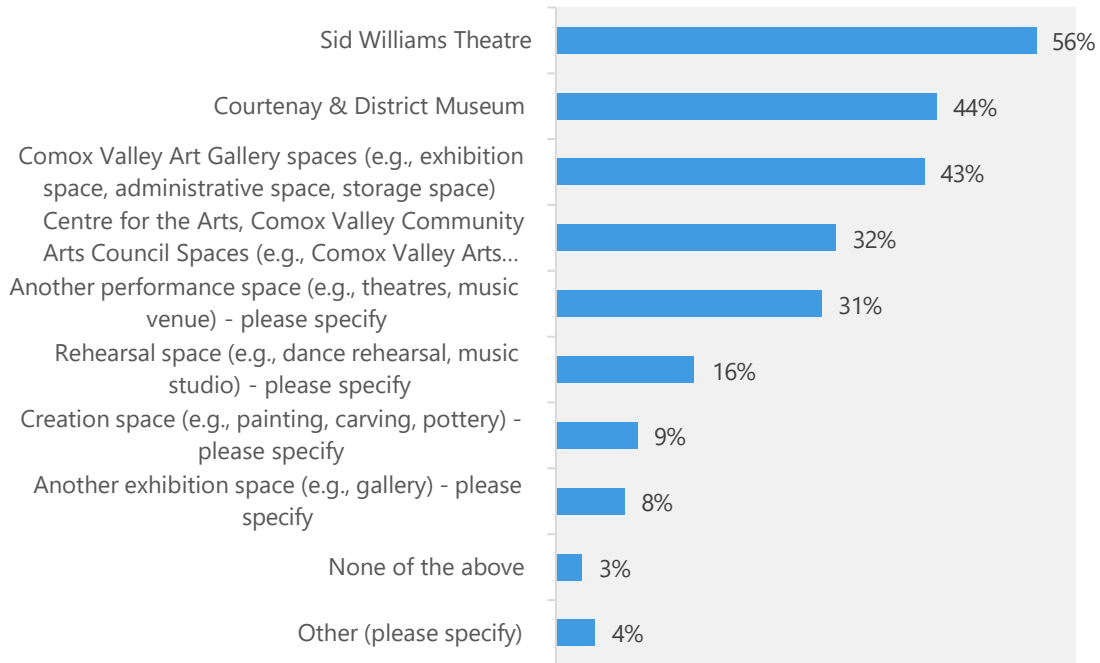
**Figure 37. What do you think are the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=320)**



The following illustrates which Courtenay facilities survey participants visited in the past two years. The top three facilities included the Sid Williams Theatre (56%), Courtenay & District Museum (44%), and Comox Valley Art Gallery spaces (43%).

Survey participants also identified other types of spaces they visit in the community in terms of performance spaces, rehearsal spaces and creation spaces. Performance spaces included Native Sons Hall, Filberg Centre, Little Red Church, Old Church Theatre, Simms Park, St. Georges United Church, Stan Hagen, and Vanier Secondary School Theatre. Examples of additional exhibition spaces identified include Artful the Gallery, ArtWrx studio, Pearl Ellis Gallery, and Potters Place. Rehearsal spaces identified include Courtenay Little Theatre, a variety of churches, as well as high school theatre spaces. Finally, creation spaces identified include Lupine Art Studio, Make it Zone, Scrapbook Central, Spool Sewing Studio, Tin Town, and North Island College.

**Figure 38. In the past two years, which Courtenay facilities have you visited for an arts and cultural activity? Select all that apply (all responses, n=677)**

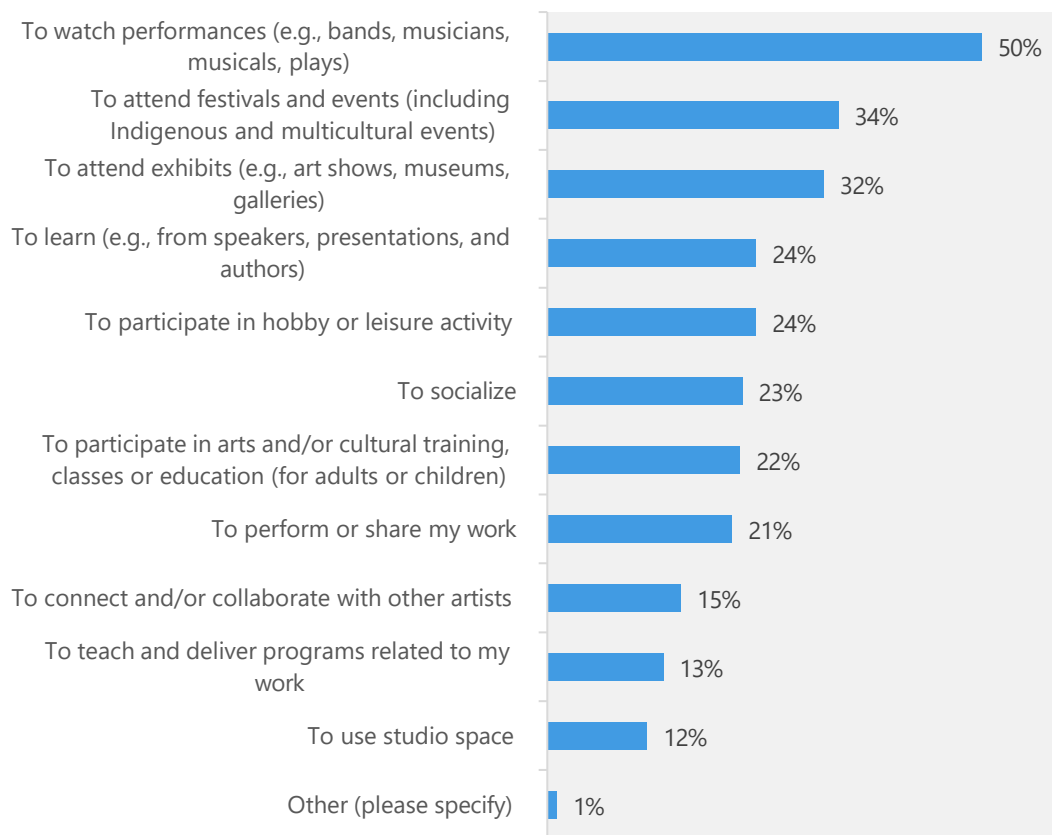


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## 5.1 Cultural facility needs

All survey participants were asked to identify their top three reasons they usually visit arts and culture facilities in Courtenay. 'To watch performances' (50%), 'attend festivals and events' (34%), and 'attend exhibits' (32%), were the statements that most resonated with survey participants.

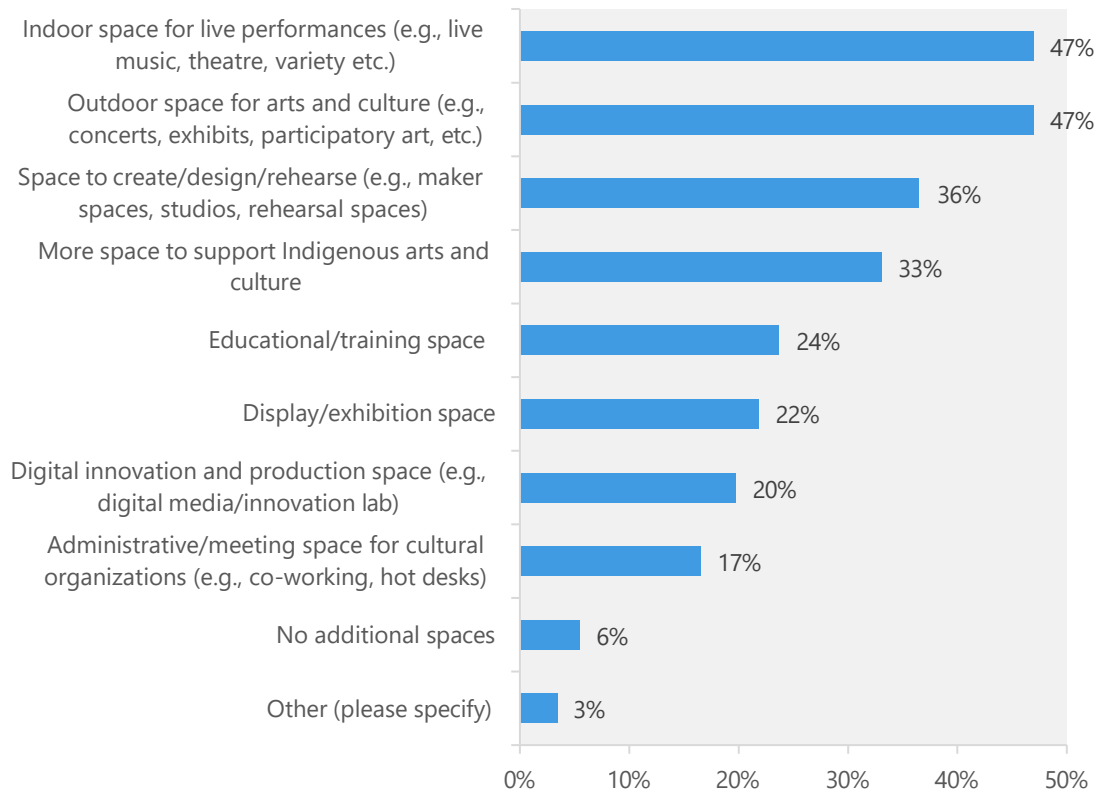
**Figure 39. What are the main reasons you usually visit arts or culture facilities in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=639)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Looking to the future, public survey participants were asked to identify **the top three future types of facilities** they would like to see in the community. Survey participants identified that they would like to see **'more indoor space for live performances'** (44%), and **'more special events and festivals'** (30%). These findings illustrate that arts and culture space and events are needed in Courtenay, especially live performances.

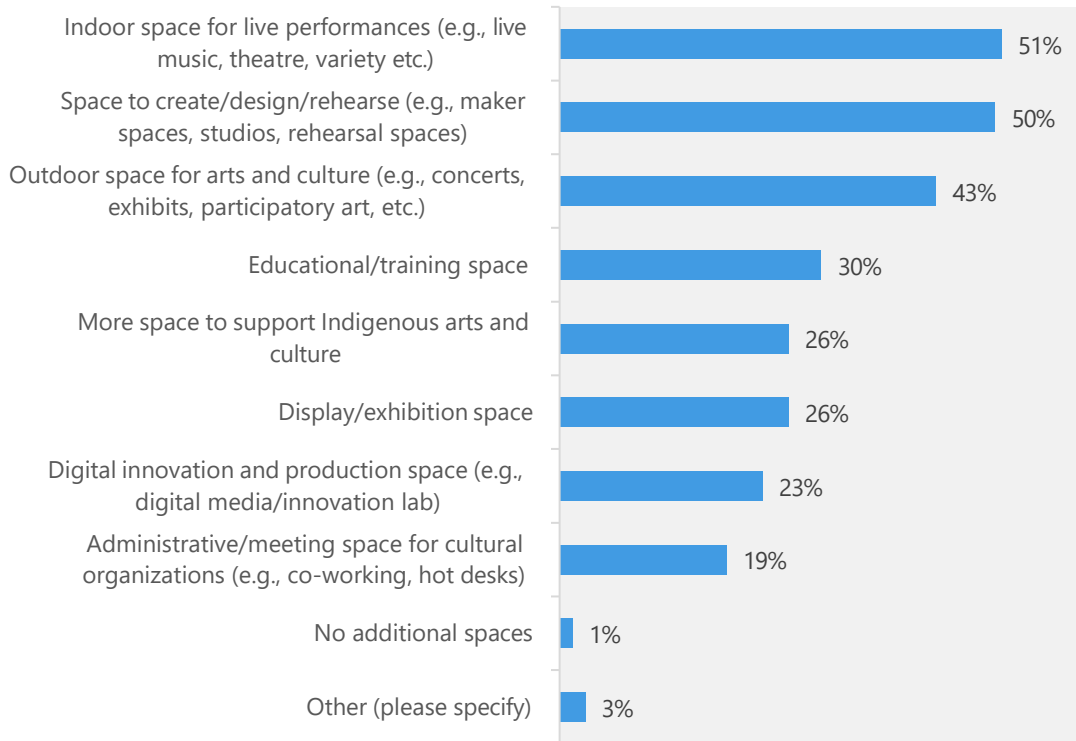
**Figure 40. What kinds of facilities would you like to see more of in the future (if any)? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=381)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Future facilities, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, include 'indoor space for live performance' (51%), 'space to create/design/rehearse' (50%), and 'outdoor space' (43%). Compared to the overall results for this question, the top three responses are the same but in different order, however, 'indoor space' was highlighted in both cases as the top need.

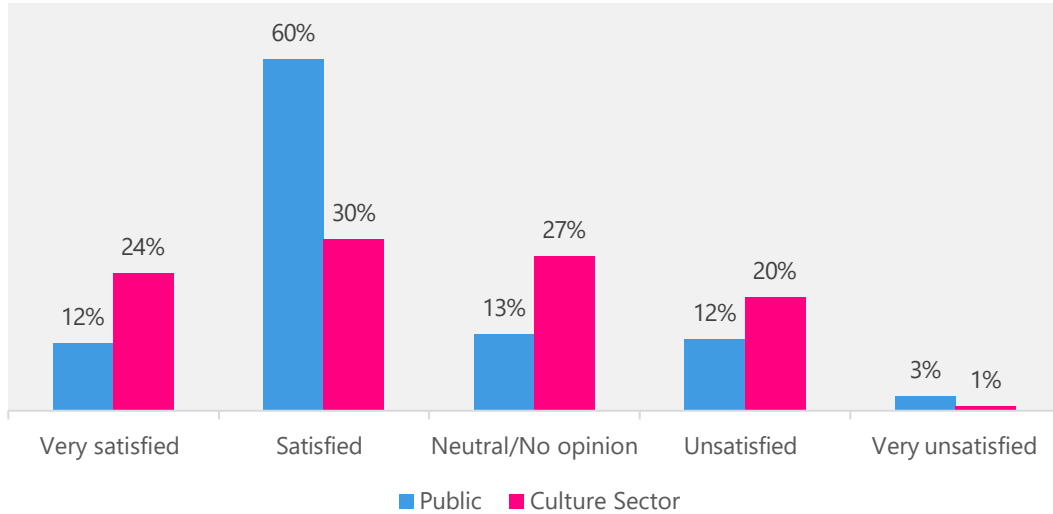
**Figure 41. What kinds of facilities would you like to see more of in the future (if any)? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=267)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Participants were also asked about their overall satisfaction with the **availability of live performance/cultural entertainment options**. The following figure illustrates responses for the public versus culture sector. It was found that 72% of the public is 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied,' while only 54% of the culture sector is 'satisfied' to 'very satisfied.' 21% of the culture sector is 'unsatisfied' to 'very unsatisfied,' while 15% of the public is 'unsatisfied' or 'very unsatisfied.'

**Figure 42. How satisfied are you with the availability of live performance/cultural entertainment options in Courtenay (not including the surrounding region)? (all responses, n=660)**

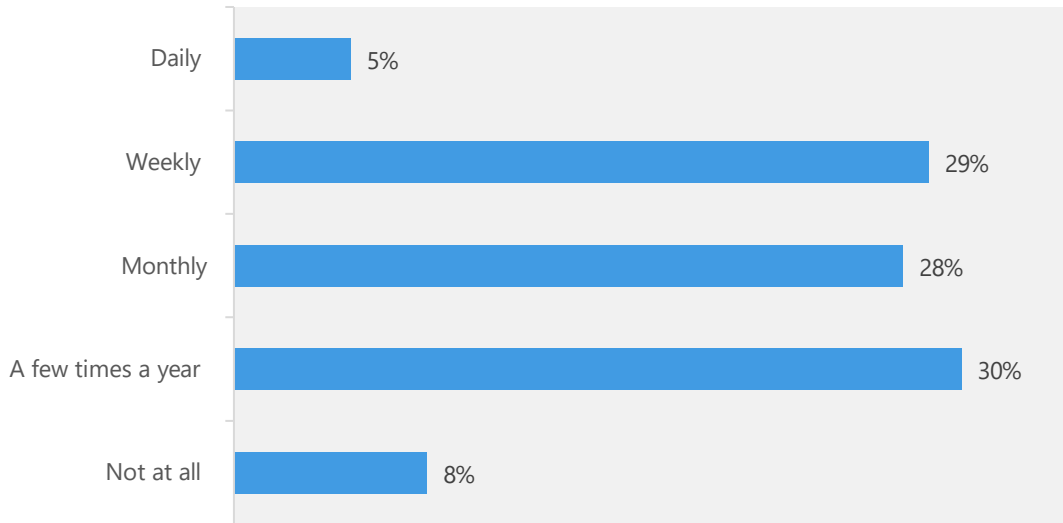


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



Considering facilities outside of Courtenay, survey participants were also asked how often they visit facilities outside of the city, but within the Comox Valley region. Weekly (29%), monthly (28%), and a few times a year (30%), garnered very similar levels of response. These findings indicate that nearly 60% of participants frequently travel outside of the immediate community to experience or participate in arts and culture.

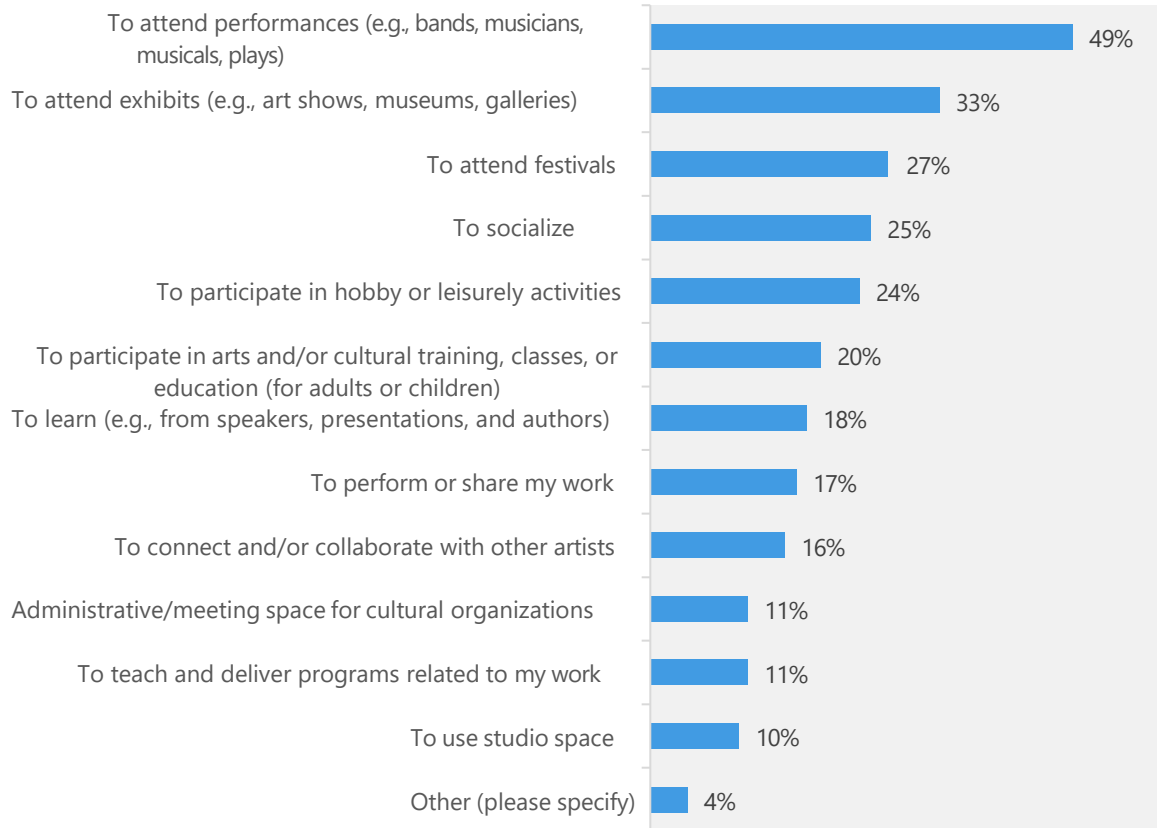
**Figure 43. How often do you visit facilities outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley region for arts and culture activities? (all responses, n=660)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

When asked what for the **primary reason for visiting cultural facilities outside of Courtenay**, the top responses included ‘to attend performances’ (49%), ‘to attend exhibits’ (33%), and ‘to attend festivals’ (27%). This finding could point to opportunities that Courtenay could pursue in terms of expanding the current community offer, such as more live performances, shows, festivals, and exhibits. Further investigation would be needed to identify whether these trips are taking place because the participants’ needs are unmet within Courtenay.

**Figure 44. What is your primary reason for visiting cultural facilities outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley region? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=605)**

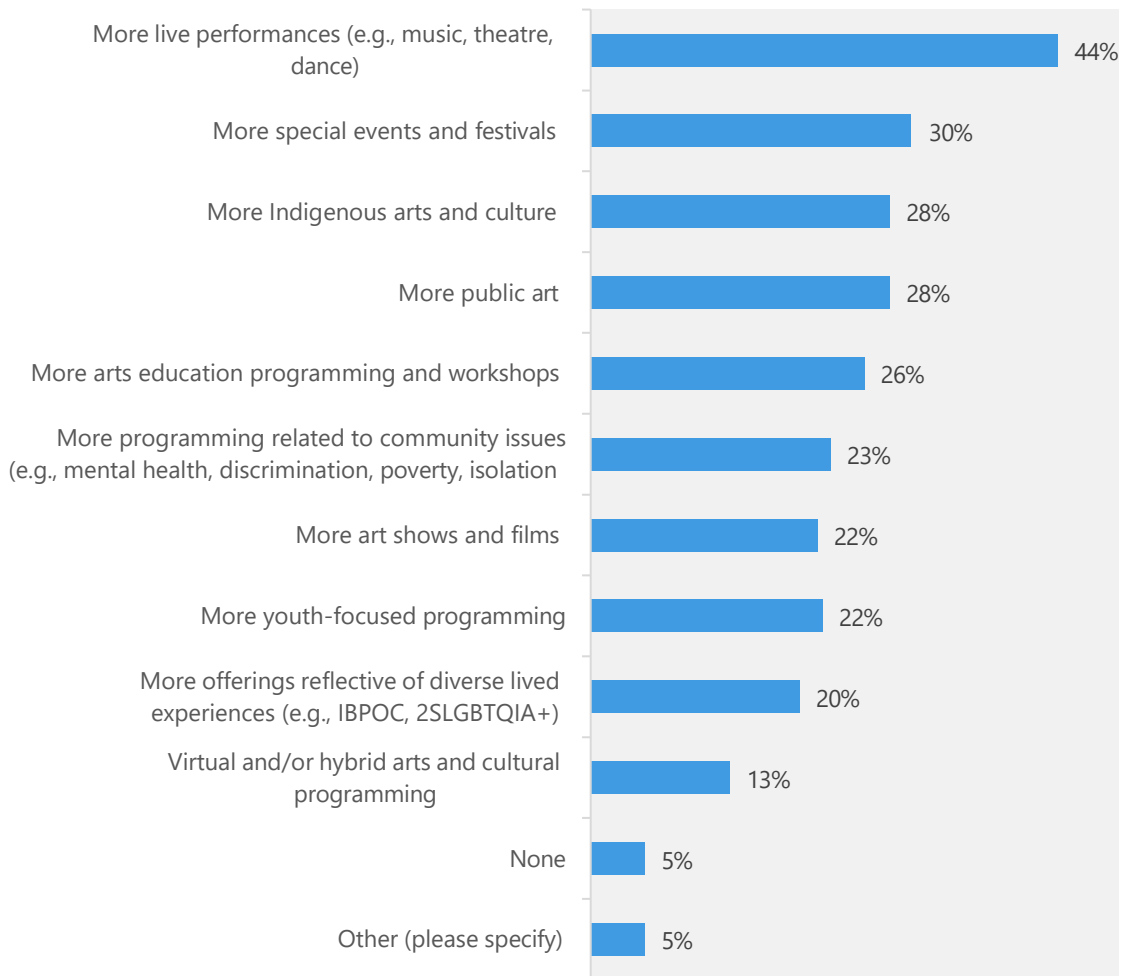


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## 6. The Future of Arts and Culture

Finally, survey participants were asked questions regarding the future of arts and culture in Courtenay. When asked what types of arts and culture offerings they would like to see more of in Courtenay, the top response was 'more live performances' (44%). Other popular responses included 'more special events and festivals' (30%), 'more Indigenous arts and culture' (28%), and 'more public art' (28%).

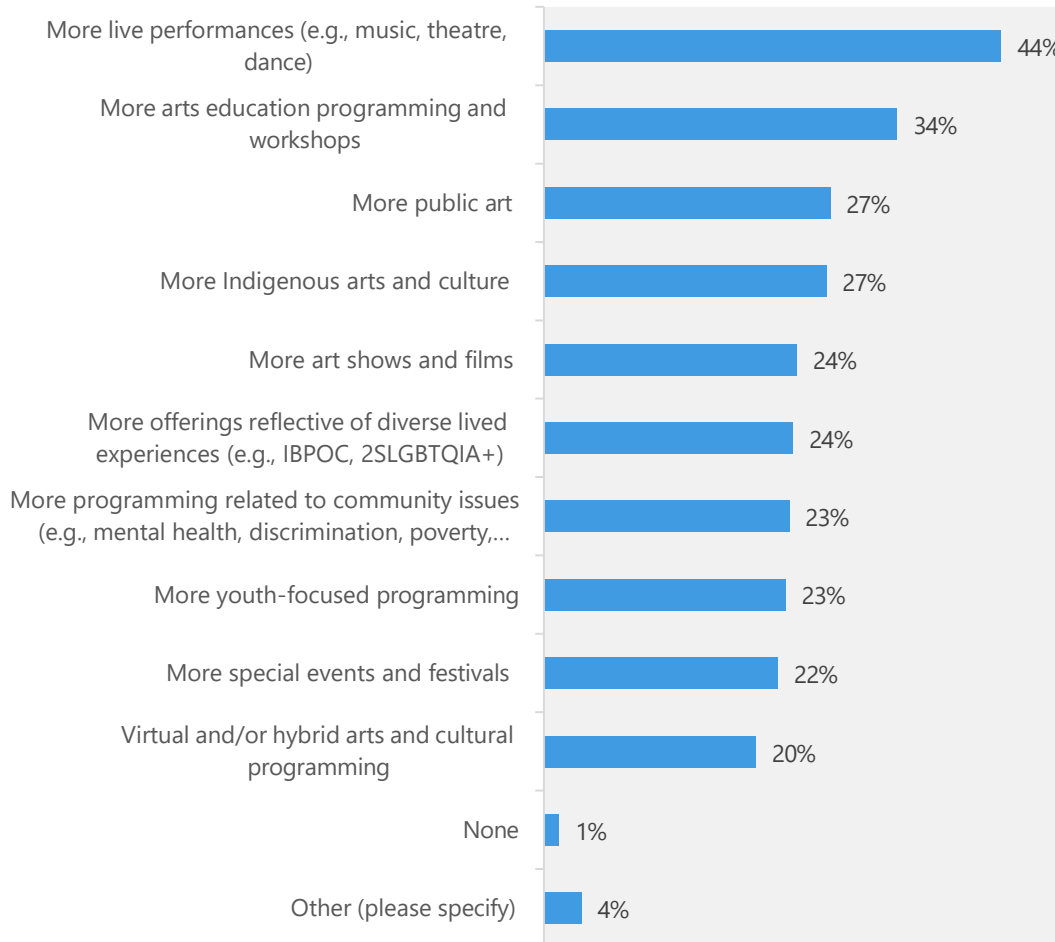
**Figure 45. Looking to the future, what types of arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=409)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Culture offerings, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, the top response was also 'more live performances' (44%), 'more arts education and programming' (34%), 'public art' (27%), and 'Indigenous arts' (27%).

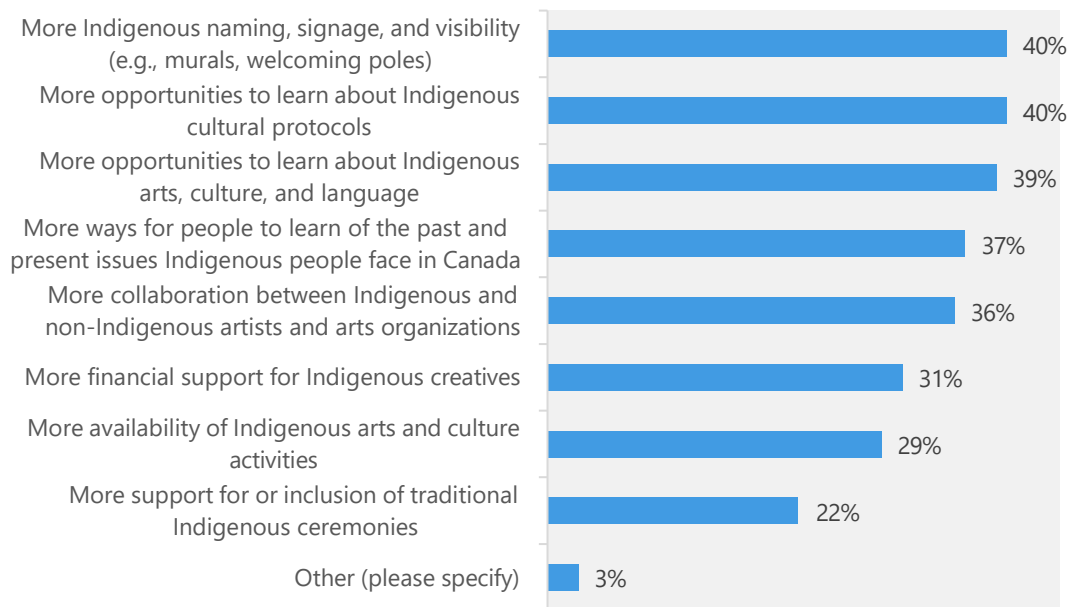
**Figure 46. Looking to the future, what types of arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=282)**



Source: City of Courtenay Culture Plan Public Survey

The City of Courtenay is home to a diverse Indigenous community with a rich cultural heritage. Survey participants were asked how Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture. Indigenous survey participants were most likely to say that Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous artists through 'more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility' (40% of Indigenous respondents selected this option); 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous cultural protocols' (40%); and 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language' (39%). Other open-ended responses included the need for fiscal stewardship, environmental protection, and group events and activities to bridge differences.

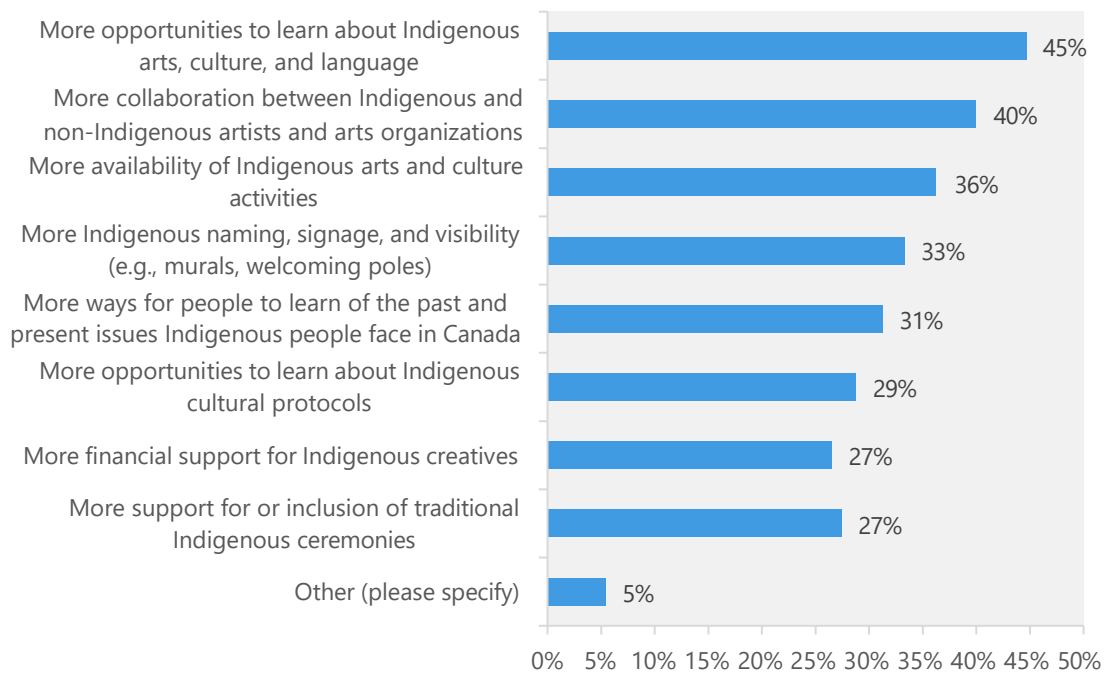
**Figure 47. How do you think Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture? Select your top 3 (Indigenous responses, n=109)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

In comparison to overall results for this question, survey respondents (including results from non-Indigenous and Indigenous participants combined) were mostly likely to say 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language' (with 45% of respondents choosing this option); and 'greater collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and arts organizations' (40%). These responses were closely followed by 'more availability of Indigenous arts and culture activities' (36%) and 'more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility' (33%).

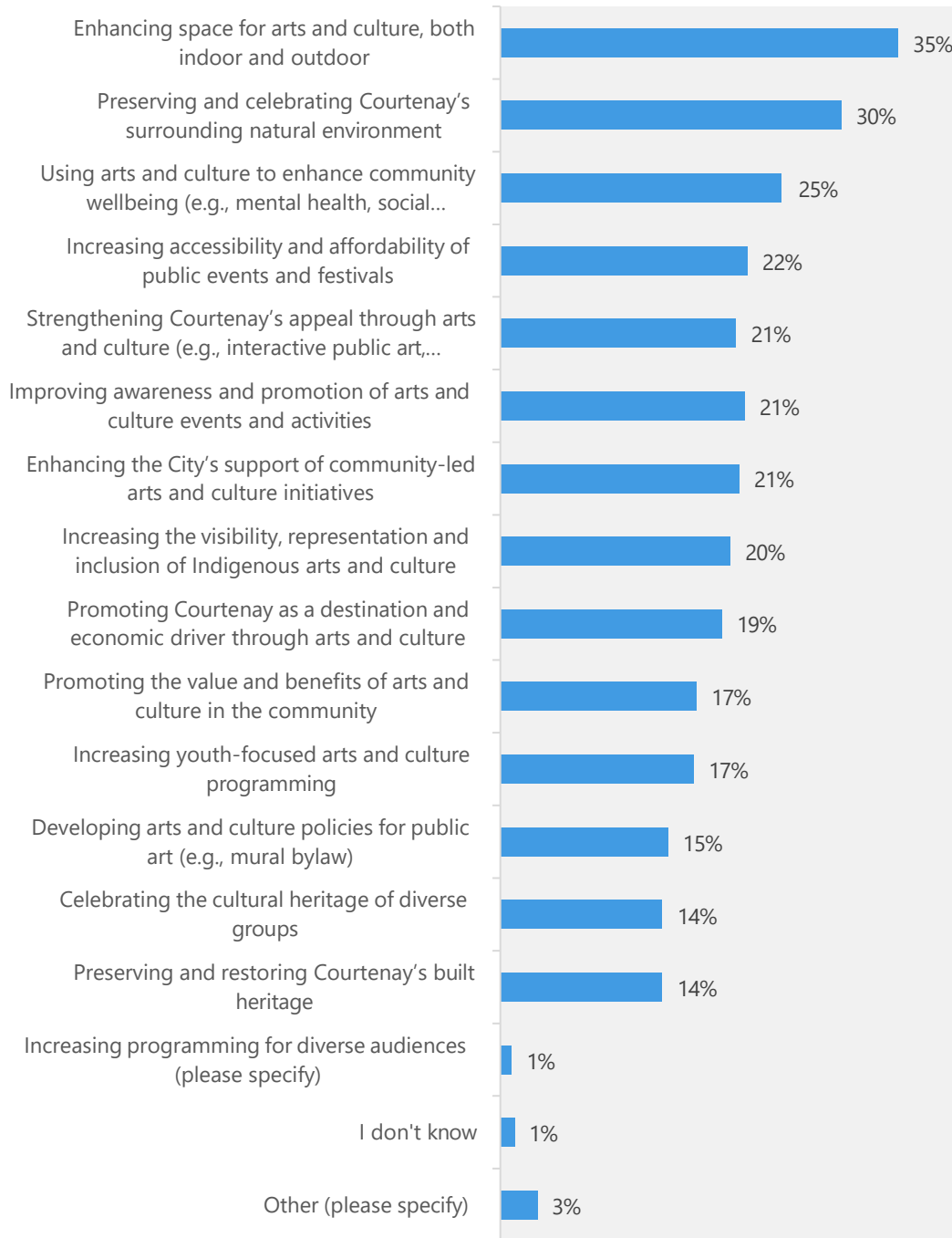
**Figure 48. How do you think Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture? Select your top 3 (public and culture sector responses, n=546)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

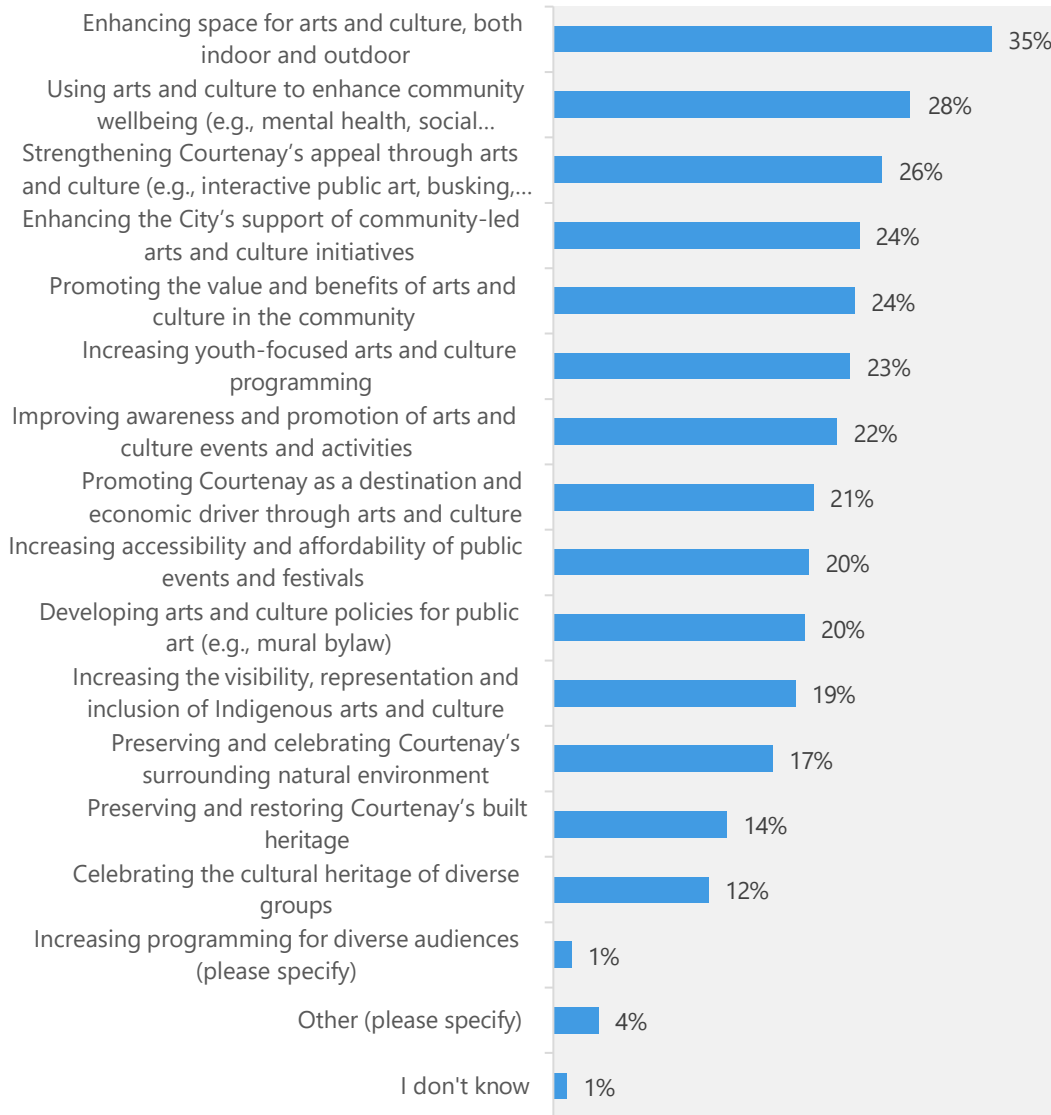
Survey participants were also asked more broadly **what should be prioritized within the Strategic Culture Plan** (see Figure 49 on following page). 'Enhancing space for arts and culture both indoors and outdoors' was the most popular response overall by both the culture sector and public (with 35% of respondents choosing this option). Overall, however, there was a lack of consensus about what the priorities should be. The wide range of opinions could indicate participants' uncertainty regarding what the focal points for the Culture Plan should be or the profound influence of arts and culture throughout so many areas the community's fabric.

**Figure 70. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=404)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

**Figure 71. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=278)**



Source: City of Courtenay Culture Plan Public Survey



## Appendix B. Participants

Table 4 presents a list of organizations consulted through interviews and roundtables.

**Table 4. Community Engagement Participants**

Organization	Date	Number of participants
<b>Interviews</b>		
Courtenay and District Museum and Paleontology Centre	May 2023	24 Interviews with 54 participants in total
Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG)	May 2023	
Sid Williams Civic Theatre	May 2023	
Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVCAC)	May 2023	
SD 71	May 2023	
CRA Evergreen Club and Building Friendships Program (at the Lewis Centre)	May 2023	
CV Social Planning Committee/CV Accessibility Committee	May 2023	
City of Courtenay - Senior Leadership	May 2023	
Comox Valley Regional District	May 2023	
City of Comox	May 2023	
Town of Cumberland	May 2023	
Comox Valley Folk Society (MUSICFEST) and NI Festival of Performing Arts	May 2023	
Elevate the Arts	May 2023	
City of Courtenay Heritage Committee (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 7 members)	May 2023	
City of Courtenay - Department of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services, Development Services (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 4 participants)	May 2023	
KFN Elder	June 2023	
Wachiay Friendship Centre Society	June 2023	
Comox Valley Metis Association (Nordicity facilitated group conversation with 6 members)	June 2023	

Organization	Date	Number of participants
Indigenous Women's Sharing Society	June 2023	
Walk With Me (a project of Comox Valley Art Gallery)	June 2023	
Homeless Response Team (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 12 members)	June 2023	
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	July 2023	
AVI Health and Community Services	July 2023	
Theatre Works Centre for Performing Arts	July 2023	
Performing arts sector leader	July 2023	
<b>Roundtables/Group Conversations</b>		
Arts and culture sector focus group	May 9, 2023	38 participants
CV Coalition to End Homelessness (intermediary-facilitated group conversation with 11 participants with lived experience)	June 30, 2023	5 group conversations with 28 participants in total
CV Accessibility Committee (intermediary-facilitated group conversation with 12 participants)	June 26, 2023	
CV Immigration Welcome Centre (Nordicity facilitated group conversation with 3 participants)	July 14, 2023	
CV Pride Society (Nordicity group conversation with 2 members)	July 20, 2023	
<b>Community Event</b>		
Public drop in engagement event	July 12, 2023	