Engagement Overview

The City of Durango gathered community feedback as part of the initial phase of the Ice Rink Feasibility Study through an in-person open house held on October 7, 2026, and an online engagement opportunity available through Engage Durango from October 2–8, 2026.

The purpose of this initial engagement was to better understand community interests, existing recreation needs, potential facility uses, and priorities that should be considered as the City evaluates the feasibility of future ice facilities.

Community members participated through online questions, in-person dot-voting activities, sticky notes, and written comment cards. The engagement provided opportunities to identify preferred ice and non-ice activities, share experiences with existing facilities, and suggest potential improvements or additional recreational opportunities.

Online responses	**187**
In-person attendees	**114**
In-person activity dots	**495**
Online written comments	**94**

The in-person dot total represents activity selections, not individual participants. Additional written comments were collected at the open house.

Key Findings

1. Year-round ice availability is a leading priority

Year-round availability was **selected by 80% of online respondents,** making it the highest-ranked facility consideration in that data set. It was also one of the **most frequently repeated topics in the in-person written feedback.**

Participants described challenges related to the seasonal availability of ice, including limited opportunities for spring and summer training, competition for ice time during the existing season, and travel to other communities to participate in programs and competitions.

Several participants suggested exploring additional ice sheets, a dedicated year-round ice facility, or improvements to existing facilities. Others proposed interim or alternative approaches, including covered ice facilities and shared-use designs.

2. Hockey is a primary area of interest, alongside other ice activities

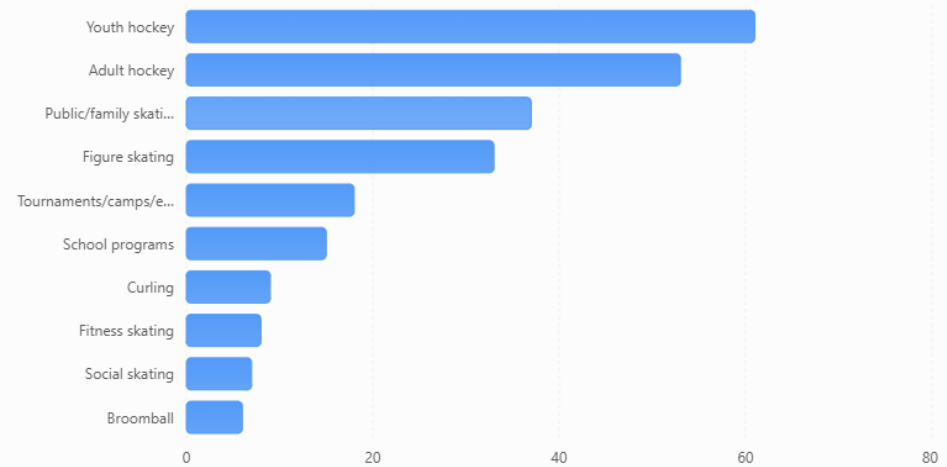
In-person ice activity preferences

Commented [MS1]: Should we provide some context as to who/user group/audience that responded or participated in the engagement? Do we have data as part of the online responses as far as their specific interest. Concern that we share this as "Community" engagement and this gets twisted/messaged as year around ice is a priority for 80% of the "community". Ie: 98% of Beer Fest attendees think more beer should be a priority!

Commented [FZ2R1]: We need to add this in some way: The City's 2026 National Community Survey (NCS) provides communitywide context for the Ice Rink Feasibility Study engagement, but the two efforts measure different things. In the NCS, 90% of respondents rated the overall quality of Durango's parks and recreation opportunities positively. This indicates broad satisfaction with the community's recreation system. The ice rink engagement asked participants to identify priorities for a potential facility. Among those who completed the voluntary online engagement, 80% selected year-round ice availability as a priority. This result describes the preferences of those online participants, not the percentage of all Durango residents who support year-round ice.
Taken together, the findings show that recreation is a community strength and that participants in the ice rink engagement identified year-round ice access as a specific priority. The NCS does not independently confirm the level of communitywide demand for an ice facility.

The engagement findings should therefore be interpreted as input to the feasibility study, not as a statistically representative measure of public support. Decisions about potential facility options should also consider existing recreation programs, accessibility and affordability, anticipated use, facility condition, capital and operating costs, and long-term financial sustainability.

Commented [FZ3]: Among respondents to the voluntary online engagement, 80% selected year-round ice availability as an important facility consideration. This result reflects the preferences of those who participated in the engagement and should not be interpreted as the percentage of all Durango residents who support a year-round ice facility. In-person written feedback also frequently raised the need for more consistent ice availability.



247 total ice activity dots. Counts represent selections, not unique individuals.

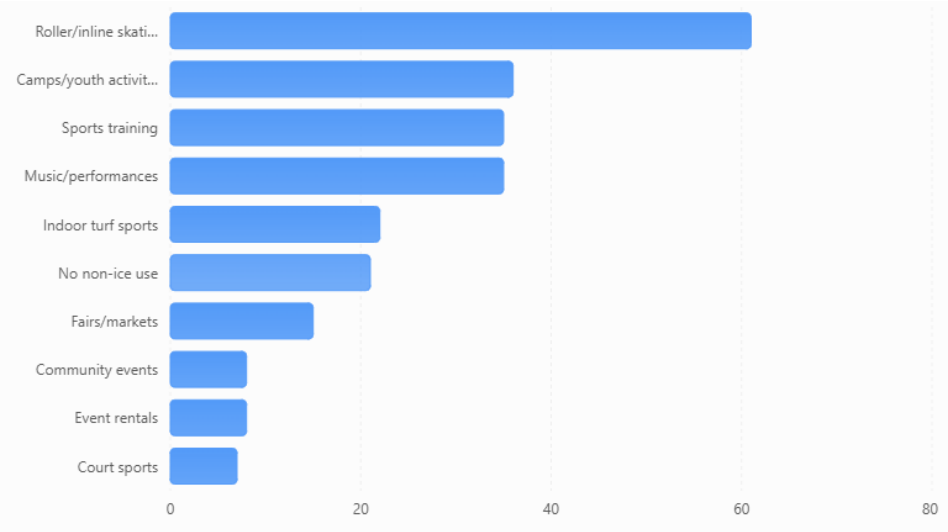
Youth hockey received 61 dots, followed by adult hockey with 53. Public and family skating (37) and figure skating (33) were also among the most frequently selected activities.

Online feedback reinforced the importance of hockey programming, with **79% of respondents selecting adult hockey and 63% selecting youth hockey.** Written comments highlighted the need for additional practice time, expanded youth opportunities, more accessible scheduling, and year-round training.

Figure skating participants specifically described limitations in accessing private lessons, specialized instruction, and competitive training during the months when local ice is unavailable.

3. Interest extends beyond ice sports

In-person non-ice activity preferences



The strongest non-ice interest among in-person participants was roller and inline skating and hockey, which received 61 dots. Camps and youth activities, sports training, and live performances were also frequently selected.

Online respondents expressed interest in youth and adult sports training (75%), live performances (51%), indoor turf and field sports (45%), community events and expos (38%), and private or community rentals (36%).

Written feedback also identified indoor tennis, bowling, indoor soccer, childcare, and teen programming as potential community needs or opportunities.

However, 21 in-person dots were placed on the option indicating that participants would not use the facility for non-ice activities. **This demonstrates that perspectives varied regarding the importance of non-ice programming.**

4. Existing recreational opportunities are important to preserve

Written feedback highlighted the importance of existing roller skating and roller derby programs, particularly those using Chapman Hill.

Several participants **expressed concern that converting existing space to year-round ice could displace roller derby practices, competitions, and other recreational**

activities. Comments described the social, physical, and community-building benefits of these programs for adults and youth.

Some participants suggested maintaining Chapman Hill as a seasonal or roller-skating facility while exploring a separate year-round ice facility.

These comments highlight the importance of evaluating how potential facility changes could affect current users and existing recreational opportunities.

5. Tournaments, camps, and events are viewed as potential opportunities

The ability to host tournaments and events was selected by **56% of online respondents** as an important facility consideration.

In-person participants also identified interest in hockey tournaments, figure skating competitions, camps, and regional events. Several written comments described traveling to other communities for ice activities and spending money on lodging, food, transportation, and registration fees.

Participants suggested that expanded ice capacity could **provide opportunities to host events locally, attract visitors, and support community economic activity.**

These potential benefits will require additional evaluation through the feasibility study, including anticipated demand, facility capacity, operating expenses, and economic impacts.

6. Facility design, accessibility, and affordability are important considerations

Online respondents identified community access (40%), location and accessibility (39%), and affordability for users (37%) among their facility priorities.

In-person written feedback offered specific facility suggestions, including adequate locker and changing rooms, showers, parking, equipment purchasing opportunities, food service, and dedicated spaces for off-ice training.

Participants also raised questions about facility size, the potential for multiple ice sheets, connections to existing buildings, and whether a multi-use design could accommodate different activities throughout the year.

Construction costs and ongoing operating costs were selected by 6% and 7% of online respondents, respectively. These relatively low selection rates should not be interpreted as a lack of concern about public spending, as the question measured selected priorities rather than overall attitudes toward costs or funding.

Community Feedback Themes at a Glance

Emerging theme	What participants expressed
Year-round ice access	Desire for consistent ice availability beyond the current season
Hockey programming	Interest in additional youth and adult practice, league, and competition opportunities
Figure skating	Need for year-round training, coaching, and competitive opportunities
Public recreation	Interest in family skating, school programs, and accessible community activities
Multi-use opportunities	Interest in roller skating, sports training, camps, performances, and other activities
Existing programs	Concern about preserving roller derby and other current Chapman Hill uses
Economic opportunities	Interest in attracting tournaments, camps, and visiting teams
Facility considerations	Suggestions involving amenities, accessibility, additional ice capacity, and flexible spaces

How This Feedback Will Inform the Feasibility Study

The initial engagement provides information about the activities community members value, the challenges some participants experience with current recreation opportunities, and the facility features they would like the City to consider.

As the feasibility study progresses, the findings will help inform further evaluation of:

- **Facility and programming options:** Year-round and seasonal ice, potential additional ice sheets, recreational and competitive uses, and multi-use configurations.
- **Community access and existing programs:** Opportunities for youth, adults, families, and current recreational users, including the potential effects of facility changes on existing activities.

- **Operational and financial feasibility**: Land acquisition, construction and operating costs, potential partnerships, anticipated usage, affordability, cost recovery potential, and long-term financial sustainability.
- **Regional opportunities:** Potential demand for tournaments, camps, competitions, and other events, along with their possible economic impacts.

Closing Summary

The initial Ice Rink Feasibility Study engagement identified strong interest among participating community members in expanded ice recreation opportunities, particularly year-round access and additional programming for youth and adult hockey, figure skating, and public skating. Feedback also demonstrated interest in broader recreational and community activities, alongside concerns about preserving existing programs and ensuring facilities remain accessible to a variety of users.

These findings provide a starting point for understanding community priorities and identifying questions for further study. The City will use this feedback alongside technical, operational, financial, and facility evaluations to inform consideration of potential future ice and recreation opportunities in Durango.

About the findings: *Participation was voluntary and the results are not statistically representative of all Durango residents. Online response percentages and in-person dot totals reflect different engagement methods and should not be combined into a single measure of community support. The written comments also reflect individual experiences and suggestions, not independently verified facility demand or economic outcomes.*

Additional Targeted Engagement

The engagement process also included five focus groups: Hockey, Other Ice Users, Non-Ice Users, Community Leaders, and a miscellaneous group for individuals who were unable to attend their scheduled focus group. Approximately 30 people participated across the five groups, with one or two representatives from each participating organization or group. HTG Architects will compile and summarize the feedback gathered during these discussions and include the findings in a report expected in the coming months.

Next Steps and Anticipated Timeline

The Ice Rink Feasibility Team has received and is reviewing the draft program report. The team will provide requested edits to the consultant, and the finalized report will help inform potential facility costs, operating revenues, and expenditures.

The team will also receive a report evaluating the current facility's condition and functional adequacy. These findings, along with the initial market analysis and community engagement feedback, will help inform the final feasibility study and recommendations.

The remaining work will focus on:

- **Identify and Evaluate Potential Partnerships:** Explore potential areas for ice facilities and opportunities for partnerships to support development and long-term operations.
- **Assess Financial Feasibility:** Evaluate capital and operating costs, potential funding sources for capital expenses, revenue potential, and long-term financial sustainability.
- **Recommend Governance and Operations:** Identify ownership, governance, and operational models that align with City values, priorities, and available resources.
- **Develop an Actionable Roadmap:** Provide recommendations for implementation, including potential phasing and funding strategies.

The initial market analysis is complete. HTG Architects will incorporate the findings from the community engagement process, facility assessment, program report, and financial analysis to finalize the feasibility study and develop recommendations for potential ice facility opportunities serving Durango and the surrounding region.

Anticipated Completion: The final feasibility study and recommendations are expected by early 2027.