



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS AND SUMMARY

YELM EDUCATION | INNOVATION CENTER

CITY OF YELM, WASHINGTON
DECEMBER 14, 2021



PROJECT BACKGROUND

In recent years, the City of Yelm has made major investments in public open spaces and civic buildings, including City Park and the Community Center, the acquisition and renovation of the new City Hall, Yelm City Park Master Plan, and the Downtown Transportation Strategy. As part of the City Hall acquisition in 2018, the City of Yelm purchased approximately 18,000 square feet of vacant land at 212 Washington Ave SE, directly southeast of where City Hall now sits.

Through strong community support and advanced planning in the acquisition of this vacant land, the City's goal is to provide a space – now known as the **Yelm Education & Innovation Center** – for community learning, economic development resources, and the Timberland Public Library. The pending

completion of the Yelm Loop Project, which will provide an alternative route for Yelm Avenue/SR 510 traffic north of the city center, is expected to reduce the amount of truck traffic and regional traffic traveling through the heart of Yelm. This presents an opportunity for the City to reimagine and revitalize Yelm Avenue and encourage a more walkable downtown. On the flip side, it means Yelm will have to work harder to attract visitors and ensure the local business district remains vibrant and active.

The vision for the Yelm Education & Innovation Center is to further enhance the growing civic center while serving as an activity hub for innovation and community building within the downtown area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A successful engagement process harnesses the community's energy and inspires community ownership, while adapting to new insights and feedback. Stakeholders and community members supply the local knowledge, context, and information necessary to make informed project decisions. Engagement of the residents and businesses who regularly visit and operate in downtown Yelm will be a key factor in the success of this project.

While the current public health situation limits the ability to meet in person, the City values community feedback and wants to develop a design that meets the needs of our community. As part of this engagement process, the City hosted virtual public workshops and collected public comment via an online survey linked through the Education & Innovation Center project webpage¹. The project team will use the collected input to inform and drive project tasks.

Online Survey

The survey consisted of both multiple-choice (MC) and open-ended (OE) questions focusing on community characteristics and the role the Education & Innovation Center might play in the community. A total of 112 surveys were completed. The survey questions are listed below, with a summary of the responses to each question provided on the following pages.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION/DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What age range are you in? (MC)
2. Do you live within the City of Yelm? (MC)
3. Do you work within the City of Yelm? (MC)
4. How frequently do you visit downtown Yelm? (MC)

CITY CHARACTERISTICS

5. What words would you use to describe the Yelm community? (OE)

6. What types of amenities or services would make you want to spend more time in downtown Yelm? (OE)
7. What amenities or services do you currently seek out in other communities? (MC; respondents could select more than one response)
8. Use the space provided to add other amenities or expand on any of your answers from above. (OE)

EDUCATION & INNOVATION CENTER – ROLE

9. In what ways could the EIC support neighboring properties and businesses? (MC; respondents could select more than one response)
 - ♦ Use the space provided to add other ideas or expand on any of your answers from above. (OE)
10. In what ways could this site work to strengthen our community? (MC; respondents could select more than one response)
 - ♦ Use the space provided to add other ideas or expand on any of your answers from above. (OE)

EDUCATION & INNOVATION CENTER – USE OF SPACE

11. How should we balance the use of exterior spaces? (sliding scale of 0 to 100 between **Programmed Areas** (patios, tables, awnings, etc.) and **Passive Areas** (planters, trees, rain gardens, etc.))
 - ♦ Feel free to expand on your answer using the space provided below. (OE)
12. How should we balance the use of interior spaces? (sliding scale of 0 to 100 between **General** (open, larger rooms with flexible spaces) and **Defined** (smaller, programmed spaces with specific uses))
 - ♦ Feel free to expand on your answer using the space provided below. (OE)

OTHER COMMENTS

13. While we hope you were able to share all of your ideas, we don't want to miss anything. Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team? (OE)

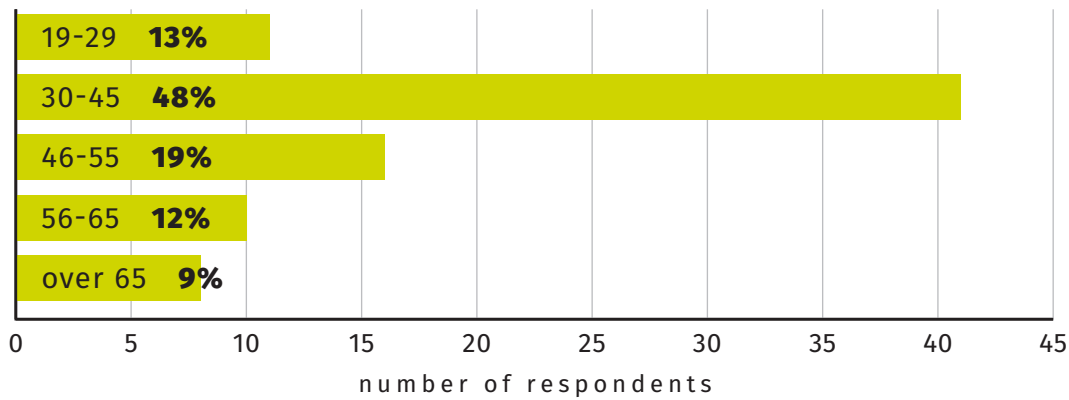
¹ https://www.yelmwa.gov/connect/community_development/education___innovation_center_outreach_project.php

RESPONDENT INFORMATION/DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic information helps ensure responses are representative of the community and amenities are tailored to patrons and residents. All responses were collected anonymously.

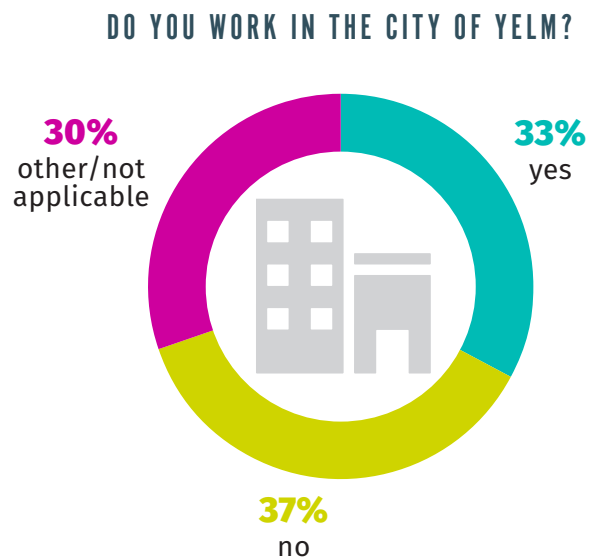
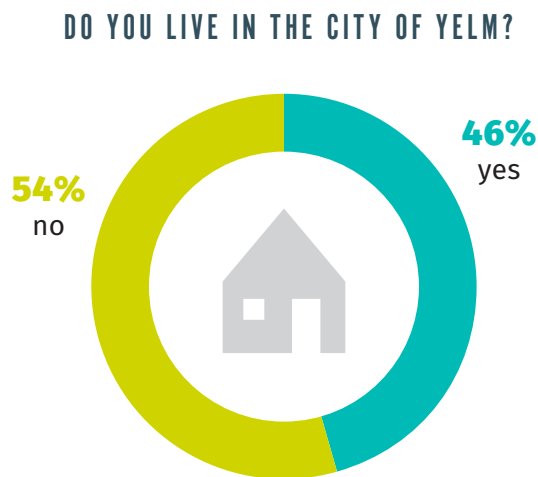
Age Range

Of the 86 respondents who answered the question, “What age range are you in?” the largest percentage (48%) were in the 30-45 age range.



Home/Work Location

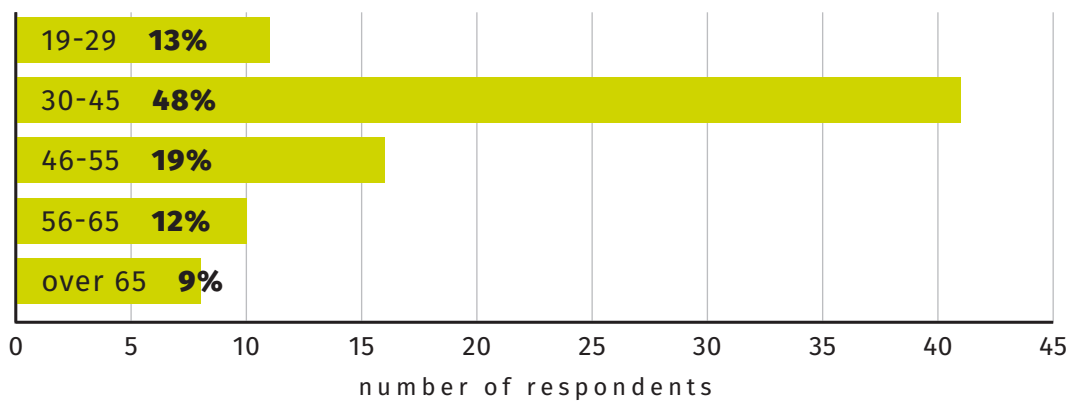
107 respondents answered the question, “Do you live in the City of Yelm?” while 103 answered the question, “Do you work in the City of Yelm?” Of those respondents, 46% indicated they live in Yelm and 33% indicated they work in Yelm.



RESPONDENT INFORMATION/DEMOGRAPHICS

Frequency of Visits to Downtown Yelm

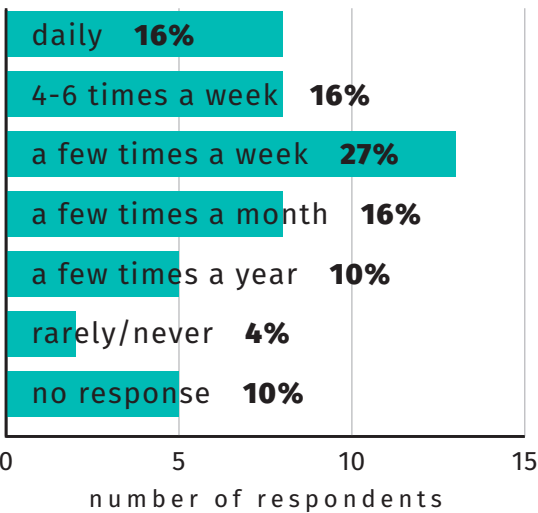
Of the 100 respondents who answered the question, “How frequently do you visit downtown Yelm?” the largest percentage (31%) selected “a few times a week.” This answer was followed closely by “4-6 times a week” (25%) and “daily” (24%) – so fully 80% of respondents indicated they visit downtown Yelm at least a few times a week.



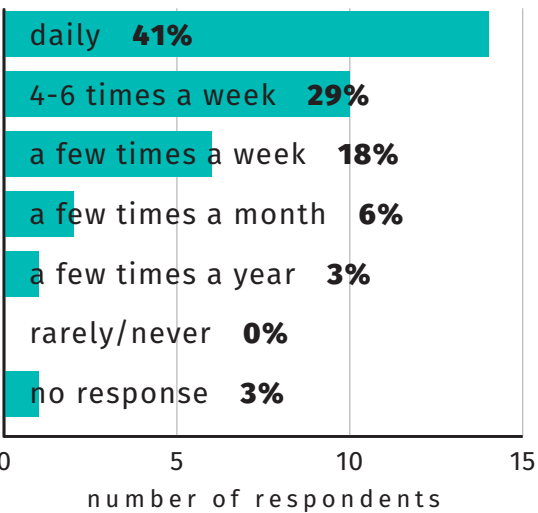
Frequency by Home/Work Location

Of the 49 respondents who live in Yelm, the largest percentage (27%) indicated they visit downtown Yelm “a few times a week.” Of the 34 respondents who work in Yelm, the largest percentage (41%) indicated they visit downtown Yelm “daily.”

FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO DOWNTOWN YELM –
RESPONDENTS WHO LIVE IN YELM



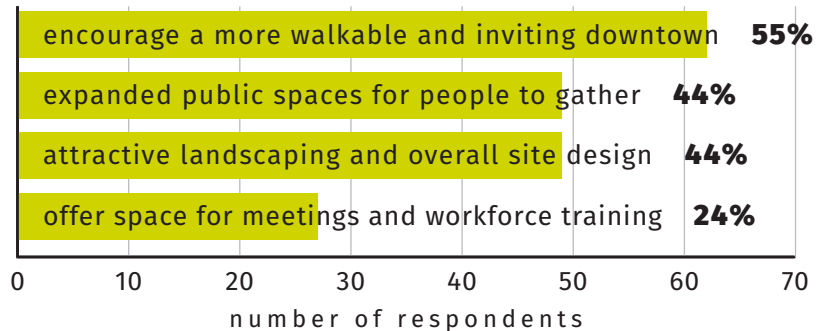
FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO DOWNTOWN YELM –
RESPONDENTS WHO WORK IN YELM



EDUCATION & INNOVATION CENTER – ROLE

Supporting Neighboring Properties and Businesses

Respondents were asked, “In what ways could the EIC support neighboring properties and businesses?” Responses to this multiple-choice question are illustrated in the bar chart at right. A majority of respondents (55%) said the EIC could support its neighbors by encouraging a more walkable and inviting downtown.



Respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers in an open-ended format. A snapshot of responses that represent the greater sentiment is captured in the word cloud below, followed by some representative quotations from the pool of responses that illustrate the range of sentiments expressed.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

- ◆ we currently walk all over town... it's great an easy to get around (also, safe)...landscaping and site design is always a bonus... gathering places for young people is always a plus
- ◆ I would love to see Community classes that we don't have to drive to Olympia- cooking, baking, sewing, dancing
- ◆ support for small business owners - free private Spaces
- ◆ A decent restaurant/tavern.. A supervised place for the area children to learn arts, crafts, and/or games..
- ◆ There is a big need for meeting Spaces. Trees will assist greatly with air quality. All the great small towns have an abundance of parks, even small ones.
- ◆ Community Conference rooms are hard to come by in Yelm! It would be helpful to have a large room/Space to rent out for free.

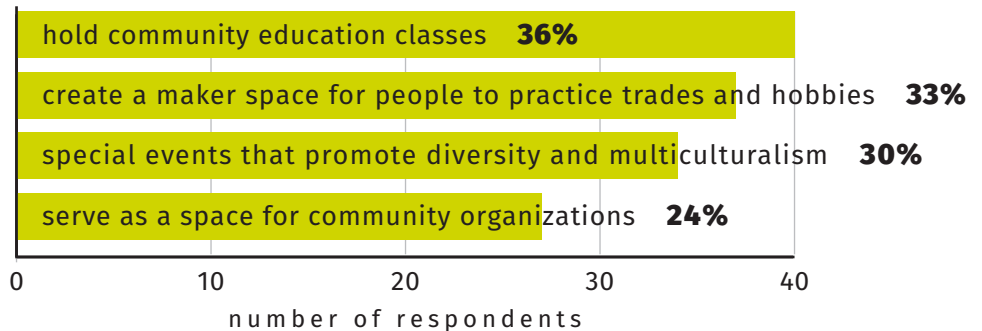


- Public safety!
 - Safety, lighting
 - More for youth
 - Parking. Year round usage. Addressing rainy weather
 - free or reduced cost meeting Space for local non-profits that serve the local Community.
 - We already have an underused Community center. I don't see value in another building with more and more meetings/
-
- services have shifted to online platforms.
 - Clean the streets better and keep the grass mowed.
 - With more offered in a walkable Space, local businesses would be much easier to access and wander into.

EDUCATION & INNOVATION CENTER – ROLE

Strengthening Community

Respondents were asked, “In what ways could this site work to strengthen our community?” Responses to this multiple-choice question are illustrated in the bar chart at right. The highest percentage of respondents (36%) thought holding community education classes would be the best option to make space for people to practice.



Respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers in an open-ended format. A snapshot of responses that represent the greater sentiment is captured in the word cloud below, followed by some representative quotations from the pool of responses that illustrate the range of sentiments expressed.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

- ◆ So many options for groups to meet! I would also really like to see community groups be able to work together to support those less advantaged in our community and create a healthier, safer space for all.
- ◆ Tech training lab with active service provided to the community.
- ◆ places that bring people together are important
- ◆ all of the above...anything that offers inclusion....things that encourage hobbies especially those hobbies around STEM education (robotics)... dancing(square to hip-hop to folk)...painting....murals on businesses...dressing up grey drab structures
- ◆ space for kids to have something to do. build a pool or an indoor play facility.
- ◆ Public daycare would be great.



- ◆ Student support and events for K-12 students.
- ◆ Chambers office, meeting space, museum exhibits throughout
- ◆ Ceramics shop, allowing residents a place to create ceramics arts.
- ◆ If a flexible, intelligently designed space, it can serve all of these. But I really want to see a bigger library!
- ◆ Family Recreation/sports facility
- ◆ Inclusive activities or amenities that would encourage visitors to

- stay
in Yelm
- 
- ◆ We could also use this space to hold fairs for specialty interests such as film festivals, wildlife conservation, the Audubon Society, etc.
 - ◆ We need a space for our kids! We don't need more office space.

SURVEY WRAP-UP

Other Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked, “Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team?” A snapshot of responses that represent the greater sentiment is captured in the word cloud below, followed by some representative quotations from the pool of responses that illustrate the range of sentiments expressed.



REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

- This is such a wonderful project and I am so excited to see this come to fruition! I, for one, can't wait to see how I can contribute to making this the center of our community!
 - Everything in the paragraph above is great¹
 - Anything that draws people, especially young people, into the library is a grand idea.
 - Musical performances would be awesome!
 - Yelm has a large homeschool community and I would directly speak to older children... and see what would most benefit their communities. Communities that foster young adults, succeed.
 - The library in particular could use more and more flexible space but should still remain welcoming and cozy. Possibly design to facilitate expanded hours (unstaffed access).
 - I think these are all great ideas. As the community continues to grow activities for all age groups needs to be addressed
 - flexibility & mobility is key. library will need space for processing and storage of materials - folks still value the physical materials that the library provides
 - It would be nice to have a similar experience and design as the federal way community center. As they even host the Special Olympics at their indoor pool
 - Build an off-road motorcycle area for learning and training with obstacles and terrain features.
 - Access to broadband. Access for individuals with special needs.
 - Parking is an issue... Most people will drive to this space,
 - not walk. There is already a skate park which attracts crime. Keep public safety a priority.
 - Focus on bringing revenues to that area, attracting new businesses, will benefit the City in the long run.
 - Keep business in our town. An empty business looks negative in the growth of population.
 - There should be adequate parking and access, but also constructed in a way that does not create choke points on the side streets that local residents use to get to/from home, work, and school.
 - stop wasting money on things no one needs.

¹ The closing paragraph of the survey, referred to here, read: “Across the US, libraries have adapted to their communities offering social spaces for musical performances, stand-up comedy, rotating art exhibits, video/game clubs, video conferencing/meeting areas, instrument and podcast recording rooms, tool and gear exchanges, post office boxes, climbing walls and giant patio chessboards, group art studios, live-streamed concerts, outdoor movies, online classes, tutoring, and books by mail.”