

2016 City of Kettering Ice Arena and Program Survey

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Final Report

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The City of Kettering Ice Arena Use and Program Survey Executive Summary

Purpose

ETC Institute partnered with the City of Kettering Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department to conduct a community survey to better understand residents' priorities for the future use and programming of the Kettering Ice Arena, including the possibility of re-purposing the space in the Ice Arena to meet other community demands for recreation & sports.

Methodology

In order to obtain a statistically valid sample, ETC Institute selected a random sample of 3,000 households for the survey. The sample was address-based, and the households were selected at random from all known residential addresses in the City of Kettering. This method ensured that each household in the City had an equal probability of being selected for the survey. Survey packets were then mailed to each of the 3,000 households selected for the random sample. The survey packets contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid, return envelope. A few days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails and placed phone calls to households in the random sample to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the on-line version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent the responses from people who were not part of the random sample from being blended with those who were selected for the random sample, everyone who completed the survey on-line version of the survey was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered on-line with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed on-line did not match one of the addresses selected for the random sample, the on-line survey was not counted as part of the random sample. A total of 848 residents from the random sample completed the survey. The results for the random sample of 848 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision rate of at least +/- 3.3%.

Cross-Tabular Analysis By Various Demographics

To gain additional information regarding key short and long range strategic decision-making for the City of Kettering Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department, survey results were further broken down by key demographic factors: These factors which are all included in the report include breakdowns by:

- Age and Gender
- Household Income
- Household Types (with and without children)
- Length of Residence
- Current Usage of the Ice Arena

The crosstabulations are provided in Appendix A of this report.

Survey Findings

Usage of Ice Arena

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were currently participating in any ice skating or hockey programs at the Kettering Ice Arena, and which activities they have participated in or attended.

- **Current Usage:** Eight percent (8%) of all households surveyed indicated that someone in their household was currently participating in an ice skating or hockey program at the Kettering Ice Arena.
- **Program Participation:** Among those who indicated they were currently using the Ice Arena, 82% indicated they were participating in (or had attended) public skating activities at the Kettering Ice Arena; 46% indicated they were using recreation programs; 29% indicated they had been a spectator at an event; 26% played ice hockey, 24% participated in figure skating, and 23% had attended special free events.

Willingness to Pay for Programs and Activities Among Current Users

Respondents who were currently using the Kettering Ice Arena were asked to indicate whether or not they would be willing to pay higher fees to use programs and activities at the Kettering Ice Arena so the cost of those programs and activities do not need to be subsidized. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay higher fees to use programs and activities at the Kettering Ice Arena.

Respondents were then asked how much they would be willing to pay to use programs and activities at the Kettering Ice Arena. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay up to 10% more, 26% indicated they would be willing to pay 11-25% more, and 12% indicated they would be willing to pay 26-50% more to use programs and activities at the Kettering Ice Arena.

Reasons Preventing Respondents from Participating or Using the Ice Arena

Respondents were asked to indicate reasons that prevent them from participating or using the Kettering Ice Arena. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents indicated they had “no interest” in participating or using the Kettering Ice Arena. Other most selected reasons were: “lack of time” (18%) and “cost” (4%).

Perceived Benefits of the Kettering Ice Arena

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they think the ice arena provides benefits to the City of Kettering. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents indicated they thought the ice arena provides benefits to the community.

Respondents who thought the ice arena provides a benefit to the community were then asked to select the benefits they think the ice arena provides to the community. Ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents think the ice arena provides “youth sports options” to the community. Other benefits selected include: “unique recreation experience” (78%), “health and wellness” (73%), “employment opportunities” (38%), and “economic impact” (27%).

Although 92% of those surveyed were not currently using the Ice Arena, 86% of non-users thought the facility provides benefits to the City of Kettering. Non-users were actually just as likely as current users to think the facility provided the benefit of youth sports options for the community (93% of non-users thought the facility offered benefits for youth).

Usage and Needs for Indoor Facilities

Current Indoor Facility Usage: Respondents were asked to select all of the indoor recreation, sports, fitness, meeting space, and aquatic facilities their household currently uses. Nineteen percent (19%) of households indicated they used the Kettering Gymnasium. Other facilities that were being used most by at least 5% of those surveyed included: school or church facilities (17%), Kettering Ice Arena (9%), SportsPlexMetro (6%), and Hara Arena (6%).

How Well Needs Are Being Met: Thirty-two percent (32%) of households indicated their indoor recreation, sports, and fitness facilities needs are currently being “fully met”. Twenty-six percent (26%) of households indicated “most met”, 14% “partially met”, 4% “not met”, and 23% indicated they “do not have need”. The very low percentage of unmet needs (just 4%) shows that the City has done an excellent job of providing a comprehensive set of quality programs and facilities to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Distance Traveled to Participate in Indoor Sport or Ice Program

Respondents were asked to indicate how far the members of their household would drive to participate in an indoor sport or ice program. Thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents indicated they would drive 11-20 minutes. Other amounts of time respondents are willing to drive include: 16% indicated they would drive up to 10 minutes, 13% 21-20 minutes, and 6% 31+ minutes to participate in an indoor sport or ice program.

Potential Features Residents Would Use Most at a Repurposed Ice Arena

Respondents were given a list of 11 potential features that could be incorporated into the design of a repurposed ice arena. They were then asked to select up to three features that adults and youth in their household would use most if the features were incorporated into the design of improvements to the ice arena.

- **Features That Would Be Used Most By Youth:** Nearly half (44%) of the respondents with children under age 18 in their households selected an “indoor playground” as the feature that their youth would use most if it were included in the design of a repurposed ice arena. Other features that were selected by at least one-fourth of households with children included: a rock climbing wall (36%), indoor turf field for indoor field activities (36%), multipurpose courts for basketball and volleyball (28%), and space for gymnastics (26%).
- **Features That Would Be Used Most By Adults:** Only one of the 11 features assessed on the survey was selected by more than one-fourth of the respondents as a feature that the adults in their household would be likely to use most: aerobics, fitness, and dance space (27%). In fact, 39% of those surveyed indicated that none of the adults in their household would be likely to use any of the features that were being considered as improvements to the ice arena. The high percentage of adults who reported that they would not use any of the features was not surprising given the very high percentage of residents who reported that their recreation needs were already being met.

Support for Funding Improvements to the Ice Arena

Support for using City reserves to fund improvements to the Ice Area without increasing taxes was high. Eighty-five percent (85%) of all respondents were supportive of using city reserve funds to fund improvements of the ice arena. Only fifteen percent (15%) were not supportive of this initiative.

Among residents who are not currently using the Ice Arena, 67% were either very or somewhat supportive of funding improvements with City reserves; another 17% were slightly supporting. Only 16% of non-users did not support funding for improvements to the Ice Arena.

Priority for Improvements to the Ice Arena

Respondents were asked, compared to other issues in the City of Kettering, what priority should the community place on the ice arena project. Five percent (5%) of respondents said this project is a “very high priority”, 23% selected “high priority”, 46% selected “medium priority”, and 26% selected “low priority”.

Should Ketting Renovate or Repurpose the Ice Arena

Residents were split when asked whether the City should repurpose or renovate the Ice Arena. Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents indicated that they would prefer to repurpose the ice arena rather than renovating the facility. Forty-seven percent (47%) prefer to retain the facility as an ice arena.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although the general public was split on the question about whether or not to retain or repurpose the ice arena, the results of the survey clearly show that it would be in the City’s best interest to make improvements to the ice arena rather than repurposing the facility for other uses for the following reasons:

- First, the results of the survey show that needs for recreation programs and facilities are currently being met for most residents of the community. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the respondents to the survey indicated that none of the adults in their household would use any of the new features that were being considered for a repurposed facility. Among households with children, only one feature was selected by at least 40% of the respondents (indoor playgrounds).
- Second, most residents (users and non-users) believe the existing ice arena provides benefits to the community, particularly with regard to the benefits for youth. Unless the City has a viable plan to meet the need for ice skating facilities that is currently provided by the existing ice arena, the City would probably create a significant unmet need for ice facilities among youth if the existing ice arena were repurposed for another use.
- Third, both users and non-users support funding improvements to the ice arena. Overall, 85% of those surveyed indicated they would support using City reserves to fund improvements to the ice arena as long as they did not have to pay a tax increase. As expected, 97% of current users supported funding improvements to the facility. Among non-users, 84% supported funding for the improvements. Although the high level of support among non-users may seem like a surprise, more analysis of the data showed that support from non-users stems from the community’s strong desire to have quality recreation facilities for youth.

Based on the results of the survey and the additional analysis of the data that was completed, ETC Institute recommends that the City of Kettering proceed with improvements to the ice arena rather than repurposing the facility. ETC Institute also recommends that the City assess the feasibility of incorporating an indoor playground as part of the improvements to the ice arena.