

Civic Conservatory – Current and Future Use

Current: Visitor Statistics

The data below show these findings:

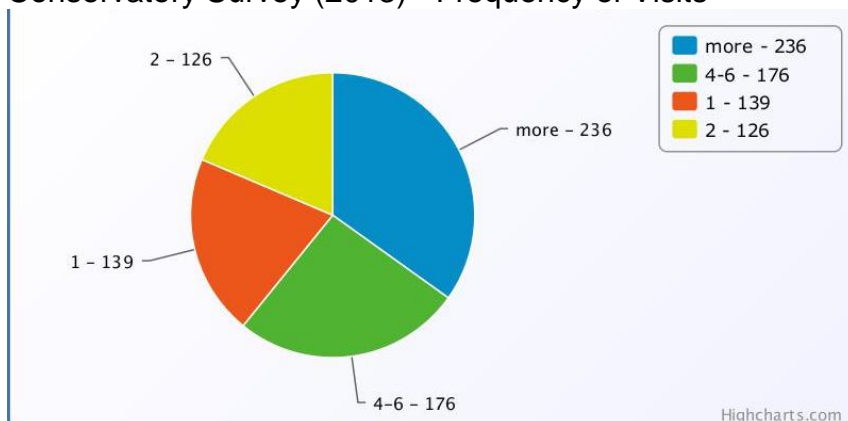
- Since the art gallery closure, conservatory attendance is down only slightly with approximately 60% of visits between January and June.
- Gallery staff estimate 80% of school tours included the conservatory.
- A 2013 survey conducted by the Parks Division identified 61% of visitors visited four or more times per year. Of note, 90% of survey respondents supported the concept of introducing an entrance fee/annual pass.

Total Annual Attendance-- Mendel Building							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Art Gallery	181,053	162,475	177,527	168,972	163,181	n/a	n/a
Conservatory	82,239	79,855	78,044	76,308	92,732	85,299	76,491*
*est due to July closure for repairs							

Seasonal Variation in Conservatory Attendance			
	Average 2010-2014	2015	2016
Jan to Mar	28%	27%	31%
Apr to Jun	32%	40%	28%
Jul to Sept	21%	16%	16%
Oct to Dec	19%	17%	25%

Annual Number of School Group Tours (Average 2010-2014)			
	K-12 Public, Catholic & Rural	Preschool, Private & Other Regions	Total
Mendel Art Gallery	260	65	325
Mendel Conservatory (est)	208	52	260
per month for Conservatory	17	4	21

Conservatory Survey (2013) - Frequency of Visits



Current: Types of Visitors

In addition to diverse individuals, several distinct user groups are recurring visitors:

- Daycares
- Children with autism and their caregivers
- City Hospital patients and family members
- Camera club and art classes
- Saskatoon School of Horticulture
- Wedding parties

The Open Door Society tours the Conservatory with newcomers and has noted its role in helping them stay connected with their culture from seeing plants and trees from their homelands. This experience adds to their sense of belonging in Saskatoon and provides respite as they adapt to the prairie winter.

Future: Children's Discovery Museum (CDM)

On August 21, 2014, City Council directed staff to prepare a Program Services Agreement, whereby the City will contract the CDM to provide programming oriented to winter, multi-generational families and the animation of Kinsmen Park. Conservatory-related opportunities identified in 2014 included summer day camps, sleepovers, and artists-in-residence. The Agreement is anticipated to take effect in 2018.

Future: Environmental Education & Alternative Energy

An expanded conservatory may create opportunities to advance City environmental education programs.

Healthy Yards

Program components which could relate to the conservatory include:

- Biodiversity / native plants (indoors and adjacent river valley)
- Chemical-free, low-water and small space gardening approaches
- Accessible gardening
- Composting and growing food
- Plants and techniques adaptive to climate change

The current Healthy Yards Demonstration Garden is at the Garden Patch on 2nd Ave near 33rd St, operated in partnership with the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre. The site is open late May to September. School tours take place at the site, but capacity is limited due to the short overlap with the school year.

Locating a Healthy Yards component in an expanded conservatory could allow for school tours through the full school year, and could maximize learning opportunities for children through co-location with the CDM.

Student Action for a Sustainable Future

This program engages 12 classrooms per year in action projects related to food, water, energy, waste, biodiversity and transportation. The conservatory could demonstrate best practices in food, water and biodiversity for students to apply in their projects.

Elm Wood Biomass Energy

The City is pursuing opportunities to showcase biomass wood waste heating and save \$75,000 in annual landfill fees resulting from tree pruning. Annual pruning generates 700-900 tonnes of wood waste which could generate 3,200 mW of energy. The conservatory would offer a high-visibility location for such a demonstration project.

Future: Winter City Strategy

During public consultations in 2016 and 2017, participants stressed the need to leverage existing City assets. The conservatory was noted multiple times as a facility particularly relevant in winter. Specifically, the facility offers one of only a few public warming facilities along the river. An expanded facility could further maximize Winter City-related benefits. For example, some cities have created compelling event space within their conservatories to enhance winter vibrancy. As the Strategy develops for Saskatoon, it is anticipated some specific recommendations related to conservatory operations may be identified.