

BACKGROUND

The Special Areas Board recognizes the value of engaging with the public as a part of the municipal decision-making process and is committed to creating opportunities for meaningful public participation. The CJ Peacock Centre functions as the community's main hall, hosting community events, public meetings, and a gym. The facility is an old school building and during the dissolution of the Village of Cereal, this village facility became a Special Areas owned facility.

Generally, Special Areas does not directly operate community halls or facilities. Instead, local community groups operate these facilities; Special Areas provides some funding through annual Recreation Grants. In late 2025, Special Areas Advisory Council and Board gave direction that Special Areas will stop operating the CJ Peacock Centre after 2026. As a result, Special Areas invited residents from the Cereal area to take part in a community conversation about the future of the CJ Peacock Centre. The goal of this public engagement was to gather feedback from residents in the Cereal region to better understand the community's preferred approach moving forward.

WHAT WE DID

Special Areas hosted an information session in Cereal on Wednesday, April 22 at 7 pm. This public meeting shared options related to the operation of the CJ Peacock Centre, as well as answering questions the community had regarding the facility. Advertisements were placed in the Oyen Echo, and residents with a post office box in Cereal were directly mailed an invitation as well. Local community groups were invited by email, and information was shared on the Special Areas website and social media.

A survey was created to help collect feedback from residents, including those unable to attend the public meeting. Responses were provided using hard-copy (printed) surveys and online; responses were collected until June 30.

WHAT WE HEARD – PUBLIC MEETING

Thirty-two members of the community attended the public meeting on April 22. Discussion at the public meeting focused on the future of the CJ Peacock Centre and the community's overall facility needs. Some participants questioned whether it makes sense to continue investing in the current building or to close it and consider building a new, simpler hall. Concerns were raised about high operating costs, safety issues, and the limited financial return. There was also interest in identifying what features were essential for a functional space, such as a commercial kitchen, bathrooms, and enough room to host events and generate revenue.

Another major topic was how a facility could be managed and funded. Attendees asked about options for community groups to take over ownership or lease land, and what level of control they would have over operations. Questions also covered financial supports, including grants, loans, fundraising expectations, and in-kind help from Special Areas. Community members wanted to understand both past and future costs, as well as realistic funding models.

Participants also discussed the level of community interest and support. Some felt the facility should be kept, while others believed it should be replaced or removed. There was a need to better understand what residents want and would actively support. Additional questions addressed practical details such as timelines for demolition or new construction, regulatory requirements, and how decisions should be made, including whether voting should involve the wider community.

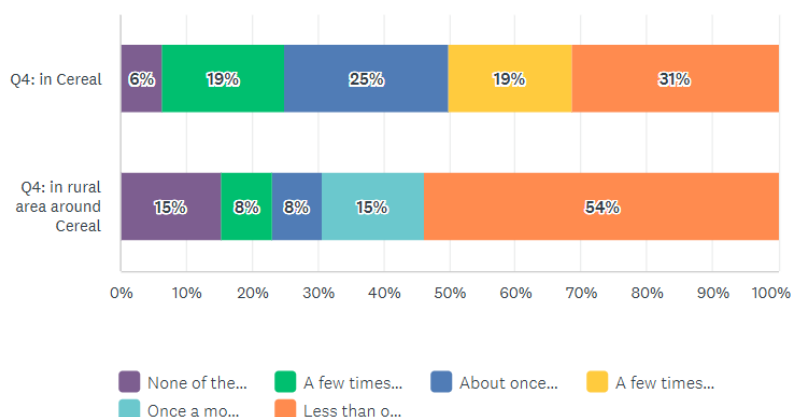
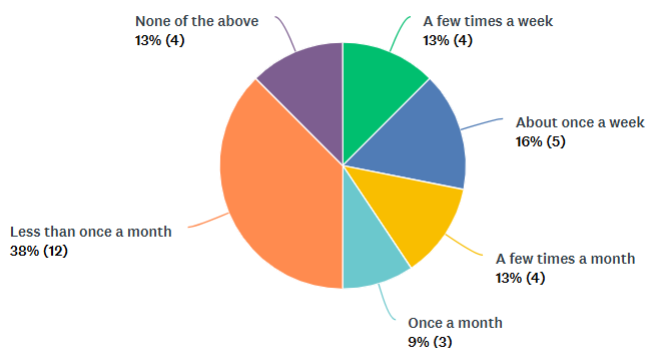
WHAT WE HEARD – SURVEY RESPONSES

Thirty-two surveys were received during the engagement period; 40% (13) were filled in online and 60% (19) were hard-copy (paper) surveys completed after the public meeting or mailed to Special Areas.

Survey respondents were generally older, with 53% of respondents being over 65 years old. Respondents primarily lived in Cereal (50%) or in the surrounding rural area (41%). A small number of respondents indicated they lived in another town or village (3 responses).

When asked how frequently they used or visited the CJ Peacock Centre, the largest group of respondents (38%) indicated they used or visited less than once a month.

When responses to this question were sorted by residence area (e.g. lived in Cereal vs. lived in rural area around Cereal), some differences in reported use were noticeable.



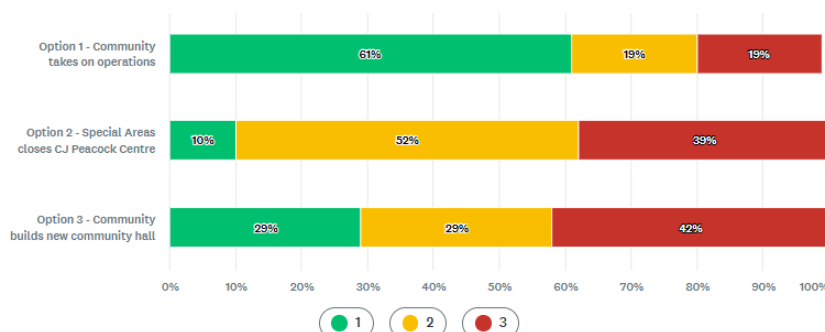
Residents within Cereal were more likely to use the CJ Peacock Centre more frequently, with a range of responses in the different categories. The most common frequency of use for Cereal residents was less than once a month (31%), followed by about once a week (25%).

For residents in the rural area around Cereal, they were less likely to use the facility. The most common frequency of use was less than once a month (54%).

Respondents were then asked to share feedback on the three options presented for the CJ Peacock Centre moving forward:

- Option 1 – have the community take on operations
- Option 2 – close the CJ Peacock Centre
- Option 3 – build a new community hall

Overall, there was the strongest level of support for the community to take on the operations of the CJ Peacock Centre. Almost two-thirds (61%) of survey respondents indicated their preferred option was to have the community take on the operations. Around a third of respondents (29%) indicated they



preferred to build a new community hall and only 10% indicated closing the facility was their preferred choice.

Respondents were asked if they had any additional feedback in the survey, and were able to write responses if they wanted to. 17 responses were received, over half of all survey respondents.

Survey responses showed a few clear themes about the future of the community hall. Many people were concerned about the cost of the CJ Peacock Centre and felt money could be better spent on a new, simpler building. At the same time, some believed the current centre should stay open until a replacement facility was ready because it is still an important community space. Several comments focused on needed repairs, especially sewer and maintenance issues, and said these should be fixed before any decisions about future use. There were also concerns about communication and decision-making. Some respondents felt the community was not well informed in the past and want more opportunities to provide input. Finally, responses showed mixed views on community capacity. Some people indicated they were willing to support fundraising and new projects, while others doubted there was enough interest or volunteers to take this facility on. Overall, the feedback showed agreement on the need for a community space, but differing perspectives on the best way to move forward.

HOW FEEDBACK WILL BE USED

The goal of this public engagement was to allow residents in Cereal and surrounding rural areas to provide feedback.

This feedback report will be shared with residents through direct email (if they have provided an email address), given to local community groups, and posted on the Special Areas website. It will also be available for pick-up at the Cereal Post Office / Here's Your Sign location. In addition, this report will be shared with Special Areas Administration, Advisory Council and Board members.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For more information on this report, or on public engagement by the Special Areas Board, please contact Maeghan Chostner, Communications Officer, at:

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