

# Memorandum



Date: December 5, 2022

To: Mayor and City Council Members

Copy: Anna Soik, City Clerk/Treasurer/Finance Director

From: Rachel Smolinski, City Manager

Subject: Culligan Plaza Renovation-Community Survey Results

The Culligan Plaza property was purchased by the City of Alpena in 1978 from the Richards family for \$165,000. The Culligan Building, located on the site at the time of purchase, was demolished in 1979. The plaza was last revamped in the early 1980s with assistance from the Alpena Downtown Development Corporation who raised over \$25,000 for the renovation. The plaza was named Culligan Plaza in memory of Patrick Culligan. The Plaza sits at the center of Alpena as a popular meeting place and an iconic reference point for residents and visitors.

Today, Culligan Plaza is in desperate need of an update due to failing infrastructure and lack of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. The renovation of the fountain at Culligan Plaza first appeared in the City's Capital Improvement Plan in 2009, with a transition to a full renovation in 2018. City tax dollars tentatively earmarked for the plaza redevelopment are focused on upgrading the water fountain infrastructure, which needs repair based upon failing cement encased pipes within the plaza and leaks in the fountain area. Doing nothing to the plaza is not an option since the plaza must be completely excavated to reach the failing infrastructure. While other City parks need their share of attention, Culligan Plaza is a priority; it's about as close to a town square as Alpena has, a fitting context for an issue of such public interest and civic concern.

A future Culligan Plaza design will include a water feature, the *Water in Limestone* sculpture, space for the City Christmas tree, ADA accessibility, and enhanced safety features. Although we know the basic elements that should be included in the renovation; the City launched a community survey on September 12, 2022, to gather more public feedback. The survey was closed on October 22 with 1,737 responders. Due to the volume of responses and narrative comments, we sought out a consultant to further evaluate the results. Cathlyn Sommerfield Ph.D. of CS Research and Consulting, LLC will join the meeting virtually to discuss the results.

Past public feedback, along with feedback gathered through this survey and subsequent public meetings, will be utilized to shape future concepts and desired elements to be included in the new design for the Culligan Plaza.



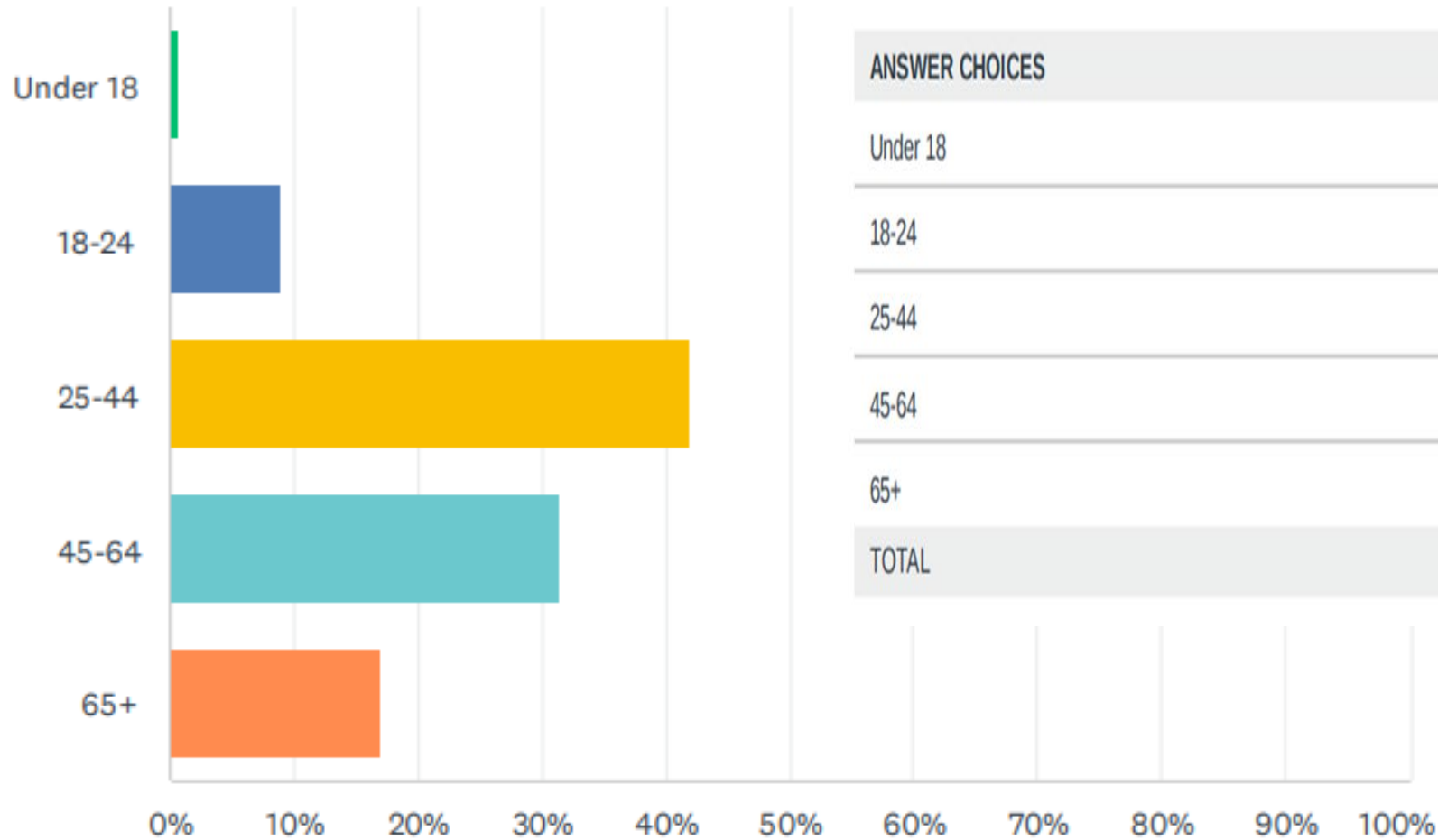
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# Culligan Plaza Renovation

2022 Public Input Survey

# Q1 What is your current age (in years)?

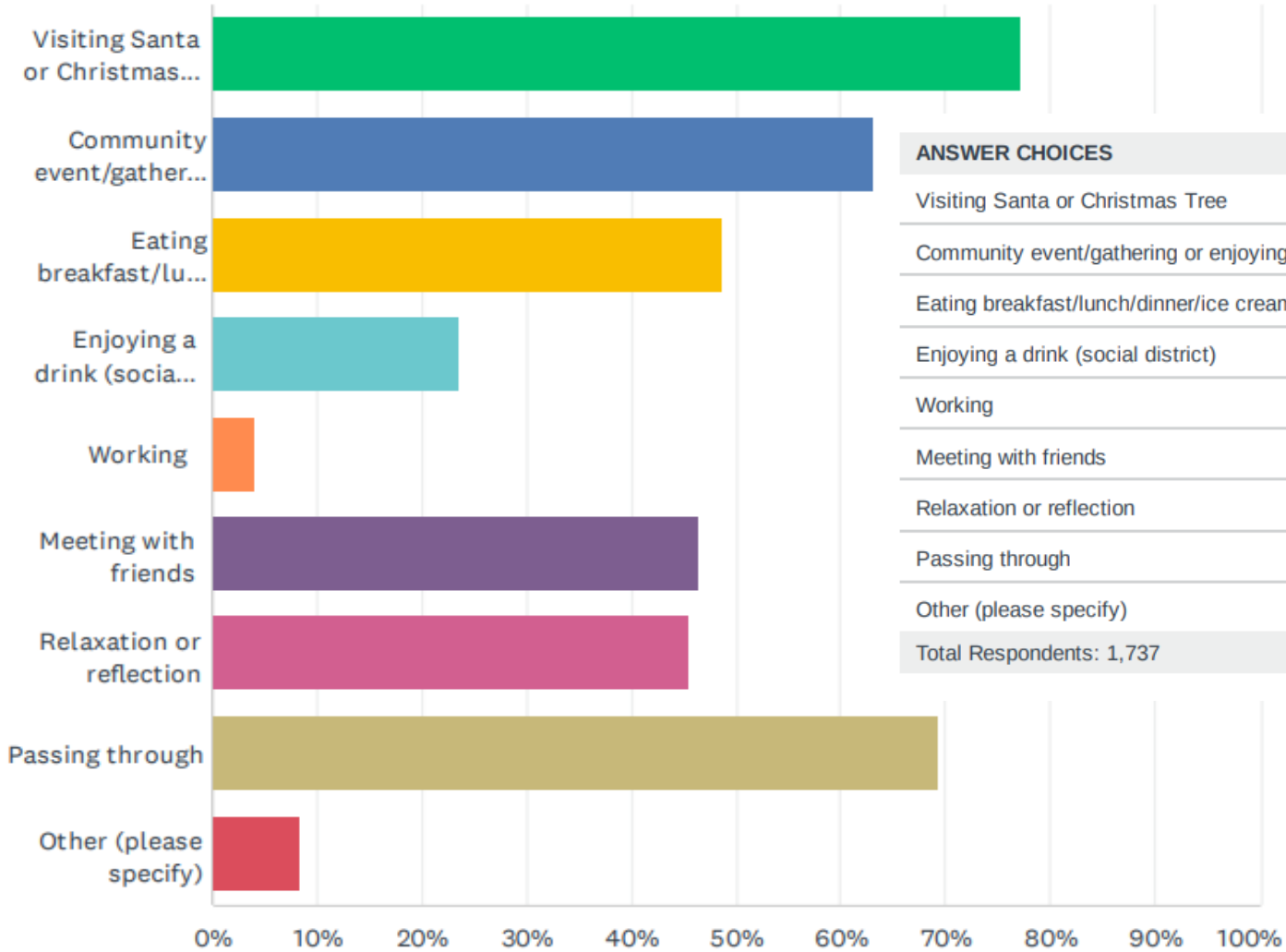
Answered: 1,737 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	0.58% 10
18-24	9.04% 157
25-44	42.08% 731
45-64	31.26% 543
65+	17.04% 296
TOTAL	1,737

# Q2 How have you used Culligan Plaza in the past? (Check all that apply)

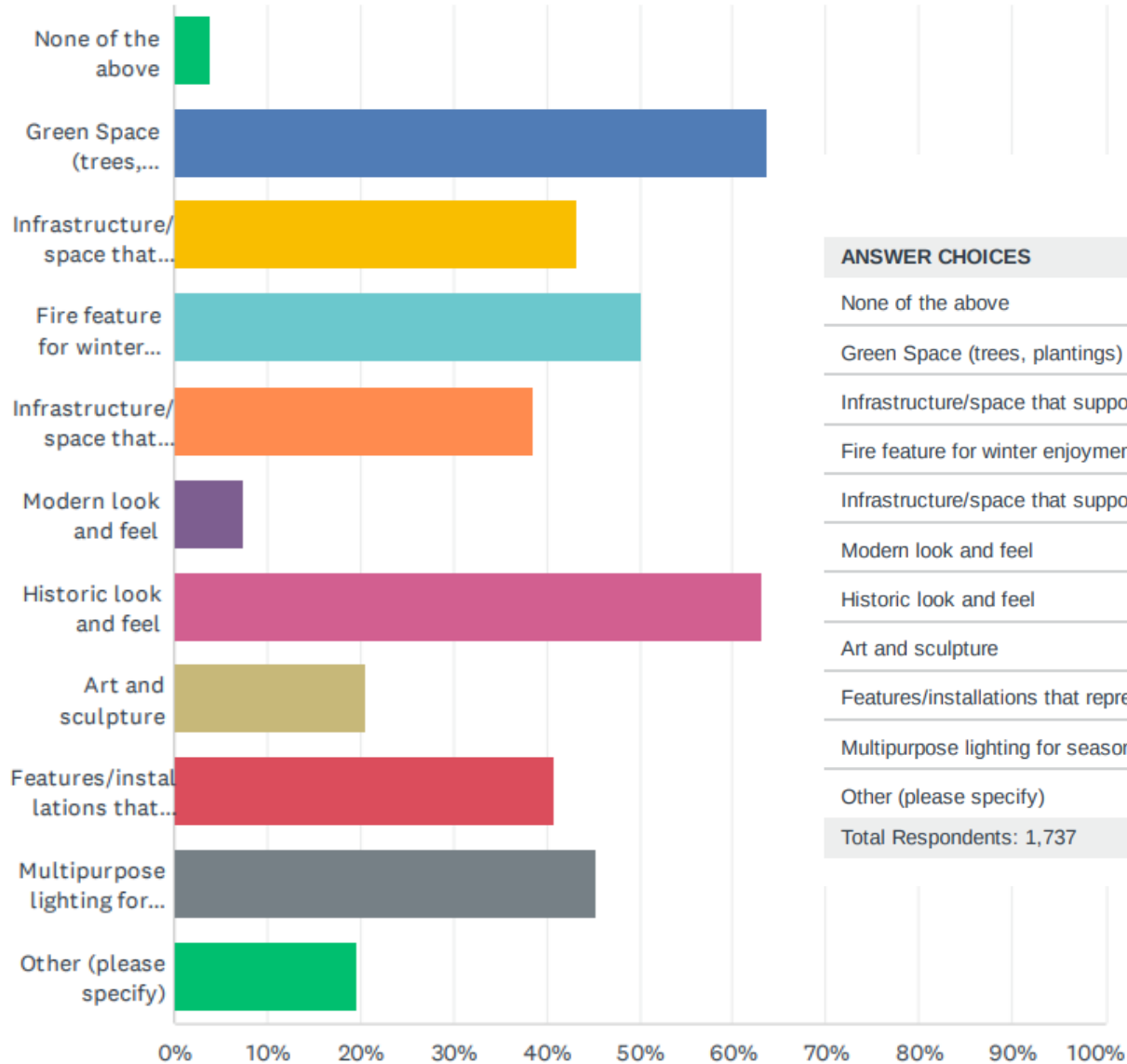
Answered: 1,737 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Visiting Santa or Christmas Tree	77.26% 1,342
Community event/gathering or enjoying a music performance	63.15% 1,097
Eating breakfast/lunch/dinner/ice cream	48.53% 843
Enjoying a drink (social district)	23.43% 407
Working	4.09% 71
Meeting with friends	46.52% 808
Relaxation or reflection	45.42% 789
Passing through	69.31% 1,204
Other (please specify)	8.35% 145
Total Respondents: 1,737	

# Q3 What features or amenities should be integrated into a new design for Culligan Plaza? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 1,737 Skipped: 0

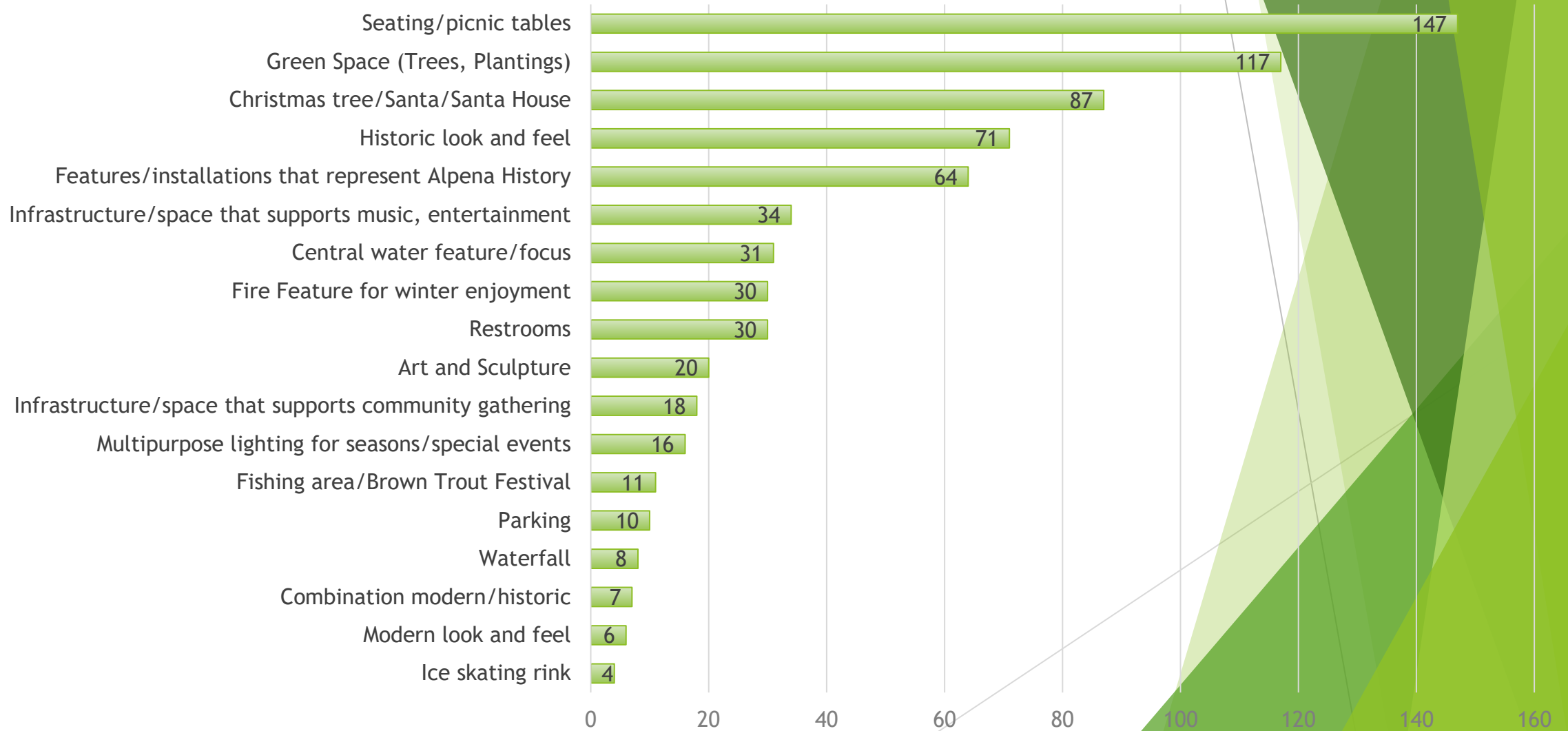


Culligan Plaza Renovation-Public Input Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	3.91%	68
Green Space (trees, plantings)	63.73%	1,107
Infrastructure/space that supports music and entertainment	43.29%	752
Fire feature for winter enjoyment	50.14%	871
Infrastructure/space that supports community gathering	38.69%	672
Modern look and feel	7.43%	129
Historic look and feel	63.21%	1,098
Art and sculpture	20.50%	356
Features/installations that represent Alpena history	40.64%	706
Multipurpose lighting for seasons/special events	45.14%	784
Other (please specify)	19.69%	342
Total Respondents: 1,737		

# Q4 Is there something specific that you would like to see incorporated into the future design for Culligan Plaza?

Answered: 992 Skipped: 745



# Comment Highlights:

## Seating/Picnic Tables

- Pavilion seating
- Both private and group seating
- Shaded seating
- Limestone seating, like a boulder bench. Or limestone incorporated into a fountain/waterfall. Covered space.
- Umbrella type structures with seating that can be used all year long. Metal roof - protect from sun, rain, snow.
- Pavilion for shade and rain protection
- WIFI/charging stations for laptops and phones. Seating where we can work.
- Covered pavilion for rainy days and public WIFI. Look to Big Rapids for their use of pavilions/WIFI in public parks.
- Small gazebo or pavilion for musicians. Overhead sail canopies to provide shade & reflect maritime history.
- Something that separates the plaza from the adjacent parking lot



# Comment Highlights:

## Green Space (Trees/Plantings)

- Grassy area
- Permanently planted, salt resistant trees
- Current planter arrangements/current planters are beautiful
- Rain garden for rainwater to drain off street/parking lots, filtered before going into the lake
- Keep trees and planters - will help water quality, run off and provides much needed shade and green space
- Trees along main streets
- Flora should be Michigan native plants
- Permeable surfaces for stormwater capture - trees/native plants - less concrete
- Green space dedicated to sustainability
- More plants and flowers - make it more nature friendly

# Comment Highlights:

## Features/Installations that represent Alpena history/Natural resources of area

- Water and limestone, perfect for Alpena
- Would like to see the plaza reflect our city and surrounding areas and activities many of us enjoy - nature, Lake Huron, camping, bonfires, etc.
- Believe those that have made the greatest impact on our community, that have passed, should be honored with a plaque like Peters, Male, Ludlow....
- Honor Wall designated for Alpena residents that have served in law enforcement
- Honor to men and women that made Alpena what it is today, and to those who gave their lives to let us have freedom
- A nod to our history. How about a fountain with a significant part of our history as a theme? The Alpena Flyer, a ship?
- Culligan plaza should represent what Alpena is known for - beaches, trees/woods and nature
- Brick, stonework to some extent. We have the largest cement plant, we should be proud of it.