

BULKLEY VALLEY **m**useum

STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2027

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The Bulkley Valley Museum is located on the unceded traditional yintah (territory) of the Witsuwit'en (Wet'suwet'en).

Executive Summary

The 2024-2027 strategic plan was developed by the Board of Directors and Curator of the Bulkley Valley Museum through a strategic planning session, and subsequent discussion from March 2022-March 2024. The plan builds on the museum's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, drafted and adopted in 2016, and a community feedback survey conducted in 2021. The draft plan was presented to the membership of the Bulkley Valley Historical & Museum Society for feedback and commentary 2024, and adopted by the Board of Directors in October 2024.

Organizational Profile

Mandate and Mission

Mandate, per the BV Historical & Museum Society Constitution:

The purposes of the Bulkley Valley Historical & Museum Society are:

- a) to gather and preserve local historical artifacts, information and records
- b) to maintain and operate a museum to house and display said artifacts
- c) to provide access to archival materials for research purposes
- d) to encourage preservation of historical landmarks, including buildings and monuments

Mission Statement (adopted 2015):

The Bulkley Valley Museum collects, preserves and presents items of historical and cultural significance from Smithers and the Bulkley Valley, with the purpose of making our local history exciting and engaging.

History of Organization

The Bulkley Valley Museum (BV Museum, BVM) was founded from personal collections of several early settlers to the area, including Ernest Hann, in 1967. Its displays were originally located in the Centennial Museum-Library building on Alfred Street, today the Smithers Public Library. In 1974 the museum was relocated to the Central Park Building; at that time the move was described as "temporary" until a new museum was built. The BVM shared space with the Smithers Art Gallery, before moving into its own space on the first floor in the later 1970s. The BVM remains in this space today. In 1977 the museum was incorporated as the Bulkley Valley Historical & Museum Society under the BC Societies Act. In 1987 the museum registered as a charity.



BVM displays in the Centennial Library building, early 1970s. P5018, BVM visual record collection.

Profile: The Bulkley Valley Museum in 2023

The Bulkley Valley Museum is operated by the Bulkley Valley Historical & Museum Society. A governance/policy board of directors elected annually from the membership of the Society provides strategic direction for the organization. The museum retains two full-time permanent staff members - the Curator (functioning as Executive Director/Curator), and an Assistant Curator (formerly called Museum Administrator), who report to the Board, and are responsible for day-to-day operation of the museum. These staff members are professionally trained in museums, archives, or related studies. Summer students are hired annually to assist with summer operations and special projects. Contractors are leveraged on an as-needed basis. The Museum is a registered Society in good standing, and a registered charity.



The Bulkley Valley Museum is located on the first floor of the Central Park Building.

The board is accountable for the museum's resources and activities, for ensuring the care of the museum's collection to professional standards, and for ensuring public access to the collections within the constraints of security and long-term preservation. The board's role is to set policies, in consultation with staff, for the effective administration of the museum, and to monitor adherence to these policies. Implementation of policies and development of internal practices is the role of professional staff. In 2015 the museum board and staff completed policy and procedural documents to guide the management of the museum. These policies and procedures are reviewed annually for minor changes by staff, with major changes approved by the board.

The BVM's artifact and archival collections are managed per its 2015 Collections Policy. The museum collects items of historical and cultural significance, including objects, maps, documents, photographs, plans, audio and visual materials primarily from Smithers, but also from the broader Bulkley Valley (Houston to Hazelton). In 2023 the museum's collections include over 3300 artifacts and 11,000 archival records. The museum's collections are accessible to the public through the Collections Online website (search.bvmuseum.org). The museum's public programming includes its exhibitions, including permanent displays, and temporary exhibits curated from the museum's collections. These temporary exhibitions change every 12-18 months depending on the nature, size, and production value of the exhibit.



BV Museum events and activities. Left: booth at the 2019 Smithers Pride celebration. Centre: activity at summer camp 2021. Right: artifacts, photos, documents, and text on display for the 2019 Fall Fair 100th Anniversary exhibit.

The museum offers annual programming events such as its Cemetery Walk, Main Street heritage walks, Heritage Speaker Series, and other events including partnership events such as National Indigenous Peoples Day. The museum also offers educational programs to visiting school groups, and a summer camp for youth. Public programming events, school programs, and exhibitions are offered free/by donation.

The Bulkley Valley Museum leases office, exhibition, and artifact storage space within the Central Park Building (former government building constructed in 1925), which it shares with other non-profit groups, artists, and musicians. The building is operated and maintained by the Central Park Building Society. The office space on the main floor includes the Curator and Assistant Curator's office, which is combined with the small gift shop. This space is directly adjacent to the exhibition spaces. A locked room for artifact storage is adjacent to the first-floor exhibition space. Another office space on the second floor of the building ("Room 6") houses the library and reading room, microfilm reader, exhibition storage, and another staff desk. The BVM's oversized document collection (maps, plans, and other oversized materials) as well as exhibit hardware and display equipment are stored in the historic vault space accessed through the Smithers Art Gallery. The museum leases 480 sq. ft. of artifact and archival storage space on the second floor of the Town Hall building at 1027 Aldous Street. This space was developed into artifact storage through funding from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, and the Town of Smithers, and includes temperature control (baseboard heaters and air conditioning), and RH control through a fan system. Oversized artifacts that do not fit into either the Town Hall or Central Park Building storage spaces are stored offsite at the Coalmine Road Self Storage.



Artifacts at the Town Hall storage site.

The museum administers the rental of the Old Church, a Town-owned former Anglican church (constructed 1913) converted to a community events hall in 2005. Revenue generated from the hall rental is a fundraiser that supports the museum. The Church is leased by the museum for \$1/year. Under the terms of the lease, the Museum is responsible for interior maintenance and repair, as well as maintaining the aesthetics of the exterior. Major structural maintenance, including roofing, is the responsibility of the Town of Smithers.

The museum receives annual operational financial support from the Town of Smithers, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the British Columbia Arts Council, and the Province of British Columbia through the Gaming Grant. The museum applies for other grants for specific projects, staff positions, equipment, etc. as needed.

Strategic Planning Preparation

Previous Strategic Planning / Needs Assessments

In 2001 Faverholdt & Associates were hired to complete a Needs Assessment Study to “*evaluate the total current operation of the Museum and its future needs, including the proposal for a new facility*”.¹ The assessment included a review of all policies, financial statements, reports, plan, statistics, and other relevant information available at that time. The assessment provided forty-one recommendations for all aspects of the museum, including governance, collections, exhibits, programming, research services, marketing, and plans for a new facility. Many of these recommendations remained relevant in 2016, and were incorporated into the museum’s 2016-2022 Strategic Plan.

In 2010 Bill Barkley Consulting was contracted to complete a feasibility study for a new museum. The study included a market assessment, comparable facilities analysis, exhibit design proposal, and visual marketing identity, as components of a five-year strategic plan culminating in construction of a new museum building by 2015.² The plan did not succeed. No recommendations from this plan have been carried forward.

In 2016 the Canadian Conservation Institute completed a Facility Assessment of the museum, focusing on its collections storage and exhibit spaces. It listed a number of concerns, including the specific and very real threat of total loss of the collection due to fire in the nearly 100-year-old Central Park Building. The assessment provided a path forward to mitigating some aspects of the museum’s storage issues, and was essential to arguments made by the museum for its collections management needs in subsequent years.

In 2016, the museum drafted its first strategic plan focusing solely on primary operations, rather than a new building project, in over a decade.³ The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan outlined four key areas of strategic priority for the museum: Collections Management (Documentation and Storage), Community Investment (Volunteerism and Membership), Exhibit Renewal, and Outreach and Programming, with various specific goals outlined for each area. Some strategic goals related to exhibits, volunteerism, membership, and programming were assessed by the board and staff as either “incomplete” or “partially complete” during the strategic planning session in March 2022, and have been incorporated into this new plan.

Strategic Plan 2024-2027: Development Process

This strategic plan was developed in-house by the Board of Directors and the Curator.

In 2021 the Museum conducted a community feedback survey. Sixty-eight responses were received. A full analysis is available in Appendix C.

¹ Faverholdt & Associates, page 14

² Barker et al., 2010.

³ A 5-year plan from 1996 and 3-year plan for 2005-2007 are the only identified strategic plans in the museum’s recent history. No operational strategic plan from 2007-2015 has been identified. See OF1, S5 SS1, file 145.

In March 2022 the Board and Curator held a strategic planning session. As preparation, board members were provided with the results of the community feedback survey, operational metrics for the past five years, a review of the previous strategic plan, and examples of strategic plans from four other similarly-sized museums.

The Board and Curator reviewed the museum's mission and mandate, to ensure that there had been no operational "drift" from those statements. There was a discussion of goals considered "incomplete" or "partially completed" from the previous plan.

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was completed and discussed (see Appendix B).

From these discussions, the Strategic Priorities for 2024-2027 were identified.

Development and adoption of the plan was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategic Vision for 2027

In 2027, the Bulkley Valley Museum will continue to present a standard for museum practice in northwestern BC. The museum's database, including a sizeable percentage of digitized items, is available online for public research. Researcher access of the collections has increased, and awareness of the Museum's holdings is widespread, particularly within the region.

The museum's gallery has a permanent but refreshable exhibit that provides visitors with an in-depth overview of the history of Smithers as a community. The exhibit, developed through community consultation, explores the shared histories of Witsuwit'en, Euro-Canadian, and non-Euro-Canadian settlers in our community. One portion of the gallery space is reserved to host a temporary rotation of exhibits either developed from the museum's collection or loaned by other Canadian museums. A schedule of planned temporary exhibits outlines upcoming exhibits at least 2 years in advance. The museum maintains at least two digital exhibitions that are refreshed/replaced every 3-4 years.

The museum has educational programs that can be offered to primary, junior/intermediate and senior classes visiting from schools throughout the region, or that can be offered in-class at a school by museum staff. Over 20 programs are delivered to local classes annually. The programs utilize the current exhibits and the Collections Online website to meet curriculum expectations. The museum has established a week-long (5 day) summer camp program that runs at least once per summer in July or August. The Collections Online website is used in classrooms by teachers for their history curriculum. The Museum has a regular program of at least 3-5 annual events that draw a steady attendance each year.

The museum has a core group of volunteers that spend weekly hours as sitters and/or assisting with collections and/or research related projects. The museum has volunteer assistance for the organization and running of fundraisers and events, and has a healthy and active membership of at least fifty individual and corporate members.

The museum is financially stable, with steady streams of earned revenues including admission donations, gift shop sales, Old Church rentals, and fundraising.

The museum's policy board provides strategic direction and oversight to the museum, and is representative of the community, including at least one board seat occupied by a Witsuwit'en community member.

The museum maintains positive working relationships with various community organizations, including the Kyah Wiget Education Society (and formerly the Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society), Smithers Art Gallery, and Smithers Public Library.

Strategic Priorities for BV Museum

The following four priority areas have been outlined as strategically key to the museum's success over the next three years, and to achieving the Strategic Vision of the museum for 2027.

Detailed action plans for these strategic priority areas are outlined in Appendix A.

1. Exhibits Program

- a. Engage the community with the museum's collection through physical and digital exhibits with high production value, including a permanent (but refreshable) exhibit in the main gallery that provides an overview of main historical topics for Smithers.
 - i. Increase local attendance to museum exhibits and events by 15% by 2027 over 2019 levels.
- b. Provide our community with access to historical and scientific information from other regions of BC and Canada through the presentation of traveling exhibits hosted by the BVM.

2. Educational Programming

- a. Increase participation by local schools in museum education programs by 30% over 2019 levels, by 2027

3. Diversifying Engagement

- a. Grow engagement with the Witsuwit'en community, particularly at the museum board governance level.
- b. Grow the museum's membership, both in terms of number of members, but also diversity of members, including members who are under 40.

4. Expanding Revenue Sources

- a. Diversify the fundraising and revenue sources of the museum, and to grow those sources to represent a larger share of the annual budget.

5. Collections Management

- a. Continue to maintain proper storage and care of the collections
- b. Finalize the emergency and evacuation plan for both onsite and offsite collections

- c. Update the Collections Policy (2015) to reflect changes in museum best practices since its last review and to ensure the policy is reflective of the current state of the collections since the Collections Renewal and Rehousing projects of 2015-2021.

Strategic Plan Implementation

The success of the museum's three-year plan will depend on the support and oversight of the Board of Directors, and their close working relationship with staff.

In order to move forward on implementation, staff and the Board will establish a work plan to ensure that we are moving towards our goals in a timely manner. Specific working groups of board members (e.g. volunteer recruitment) will be established to assist staff with implementation.

The Strategic Plan is not static, and changes are expected. The Board and Curator will review the strategic plan annually to ensure that the museum is on track to meet its goals, or to adjust where required. The Detailed Action Plan in particular is expected to change as details on funding, etc. change. Updates on the Strategic Plan will be reported to the Society membership as needed at Annual General Meetings.

Appendix A: Detailed Action Plan for Strategic Priorities

1. Exhibits Program			
Objectives: to engage the community with the museum's collection through physical and digital exhibits with high production value, including a permanent (but refreshable) exhibit in the main gallery that provides an overview of main historical topics for Smithers. To provide our community with access to historical and scientific information from other regions of BC and Canada through the presentation of traveling exhibits hosted by the BVM.			
Goals	Detailed Action Plan	Completion Date	Potential Funding Sources
1.1 Develop and implement Interpretive Plan for museum gallery spaces that activates the permanent collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify funding opportunities 2. Apply for funding 3. Hire consultants 4. Plan is developed 	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Arts Council • Wetzin'kwa
1.2 Bring a traveling exhibit at least every 3 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify potential exhibits 2. Budget accordingly / apply for funding as needed 	Ongoing	
1.3 Increase engagement with digital exhibits by 25%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop 1 new digital exhibit every 2-3 years (can recycle previous physical exhibits) 2. Increase advertising of digital exhibits to boost engagement 	2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Museums Canada (\$15,000) for larger, bilingual, more permanent features
1.4 Improve advertising of exhibits and programming to increase local attendance to museum exhibits and events by 15% by 2027 over 2019 levels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Press release is sent to newspaper for each new exhibit or event 2. Increase newsletter/ e-blast subscription by 10 subscribers/year 3. Exhibit opening event for each new exhibit 4. Continue to communicate with Smithers Art Gallery re: joint exhibit ideas, and opportunities for joint exhibition opening events 	Annual development through to 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
2. Educational Programing			
Objective: to increase participation by local schools in museum education programs by 30% over 2019 levels, by 2027 (increase from 14 to 20 per year)			
Goals	Detailed Action Plan	Completion Date	Potential Funding
2.1 Increase the number of on-site (museum) visits by school classes to minimum 20/year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase direct engagement/ communication with teachers at schools in local schools both in and outside of Smithers 2. Present school program options to Smithers teachers at NID day 3. Compile list of teachers to contact directly about programs 	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require a third position, which would depend on operational funding available
2.2 Increase the number of off-site (in-class) visits to school classes to minimum 10/year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop additional in-class programs including kits that can be used offsite 	2027	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wetzin'kwa grant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Building on relationships in 2.1, as well as with teachers in schools in Telkwa, Houston, Witset, and Hazelton 3. Develop Education Collection of artifacts and archival items from thoughtful deaccessions to further engage students with hands-on learning 4. Invest in technology that enables delivery of remote class visits 		
2.3 Diversify funding sources for program development and delivery	1. Explore sponsorships, direct financial relationship with SD 54	2027	
3. Diversify Engagement			
Objectives: to further engage with the Indigenous community, in particular the local Witsuwit'en community, at the governance/operational level. To grow the museum's membership, both in terms of number of members, but also diversity of members, including members who are under 40.			
Goals	Detailed Action Plan	Completion Date	Potential Funding
3.1 Have at least one Director representing the Indigenous community at all times	1. Engage membership and community to increase awareness	2027	
3.2 Have at least 50 members in the Society at all times	2. Utilize community events (e.g. Cemetery Walk) to increase membership	2027	
3.3 At least 10% of members are under age 40	3. Using social media to engage youth and share opportunities – ensuring range of social media options used	2027	
3.4 Grow the number of regular volunteers contributing to primary operations (e.g. visitor services) to 10	4. Connect with high schools about youth volunteer opportunities	2027	
3.5 Have at least 2 youth volunteers (under 25)		2027	
4. Expand Revenue Sources and Fundraising Diversification			
Objective: to diversify the fundraising and revenue sources of the museum, and to grow those sources to represent a larger share of the annual budget.			
Goals	Detailed Action Plan	Completion Date	Potential Funding
4.1 Old Church rentals back to pre-pandemic levels	1. Advertising – social media, posters, especially around holiday season	2025	
4.2 Grow and develop gift shop content.	1. Staff marketing to artisans	2027	
4.3 Grow gift shop sales by 25% over 2019 levels	2. Staff reorganization of existing items and displays		
4.4 Diversify corporate memberships and donations – at least 5 new corporate memberships	1. Engage the business community through personal and online marketing	2027	

4.5 Sustain at least 15 corporate members at all times			
5. Collections Management			
Objectives: to continue to maintain proper storage and care of the collections			
Goals	Detailed Action Plan	Completion Date	Potential Funding
5.1 Update the Collections Policy (2015) to reflect changes in museum best practices since its last review and to ensure the policy is reflective of the current state of the collections since the Collections Renewal and Rehousing projects of 2015-2021.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and revise plan based on best practices for industry 2. Include updating areas of collecting priority based on review of existing collections now possible based on Collections Renewal project 	2025	
5.2 Finalize the emergency and evacuation plan for both onsite and offsite collections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize wildfire emergency management plan, evacuation procedures and communication protocols 2. Develop plan for other hazards (e.g. flood, theft) and salvage and recovery strategies 	2025	
5.3 Maintain care and storage of collections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deaccessioning to free up space, remove duplicates and redundancies based on work in 6.1 2. Long term planning for oversized items at Coalmine Road 3. Identify and implement changes to storage of specific collections items to improve preservation (e.g. foams, etc.) 4. Complete photography of artifact collections, including re-photographing to updated standards where needed 	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetzin'kwa, BV Credit Union, Museums Assistance Program are options for purchase of archival supplies • Young Canada Works/Canada Summer Jobs (photography)
5.4 Digitization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to identify priority records for digitization based on 6.1 and 6.3 	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Canada Works and/or Canada Summer Jobs

Appendix B: BV Museum SWOT Analysis

BV Museum SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

Completed March 2022

Strengths

- Positive trajectory of decolonization, including relationships developed through contributions to Shared Histories project
- Strong network of collaborators in the community and region
- Collection is well documented and accessible
- Professionally trained staff, consistency of staff (low turnover)
- Central Park Building as a location
- Digital programming, digital collections accessibility, virtual exhibits
- Positive working relationship with the Town of Smithers that has grown over the last seven years (e.g. engaged liaisons, storage project, stable funding, positive feedback)
- New storage facility with climate controls
- Room 6 is better organized and more welcoming to staff and researchers
- Interior News access through newspapers.com
- People we may not otherwise reach engage with us via the Old Church, positive role we play for the community

Weaknesses

- Lack of Witsuwit'en representation at the organizational level
- Fundraising opportunities not very diversified
- Declining membership
- Lack of fundraising
- Lack of exhibit and programming space
- Exhibition space has temp/RH and lighting control limitations
- Lack of volunteers generally, lack of younger volunteers
- Quiet membership – not active
- Large artifact collection – costing money to store as of 2021, with no clear long-term plans (interpretation, display, storage)
- New Building Fund – no clear plan for how/when this fund might be used, some funders starting to view this as unrestricted asset
- Storage space remains at a premium, little room for extensive future collecting, and no ability to take larger objects (e.g. furniture)

Opportunities

- Expand engagement with teachers; more proactive engagement
- Heritage planning project
- Digitized oral histories – diversify how stories are shared, incorporate into exhibits
- Building on relationships and positive view of museum from Shared Histories project
- Proximity to, and relationship with, the Art Gallery
- With collections work largely completed, can now focus energies elsewhere on activating the collection

Threats

- Dependence on grant funding, and possibility of changes to municipal/provincial funding models or sources
- Changes to town policies like permissive taxation exemption, leases on Old Church or Town Hall storage
- Loss of offsite storage spaces, especially Coalmine Road
- Covid-19 → may continue to affect attendance, programming, fundraising, etc. but recovery/assistance funding will not be available in future
- Old Church – current situation demonstrates our reliance on it as a fundraiser and engagement tool

Appendix C: Community Feedback Survey, 2021

Bulkley Valley Museum Community Feedback Survey 2021

Background:

This survey was conducted between January 15th and March 31st 2021. In total, 68 responses were received.

The survey was available digitally through the Mailchimp platform, an advertised through:

- Museum's email mailing list: January 15th, February 17th, and March 12th. 104 possible respondents each time.
- Museum Facebook page: January 28th and March 11th. Museum had 928 followers to the page that were possible respondents. Specific posts had a "reach" of 3154 and 1791 respectively.
- Smithers Customer Service Review Facebook page: post was shared twice to this popular local group with over 4000 members.
- BV Genealogical Society Facebook group: post was shared once to this group, some members are cross-over with Museum's list.
- Smithers Memories: shared once to this group, over 500+ members.

No physical surveys were circulated at this time, as the museum has had limited attendance due to Covid-19, and due to ease of compiling results if all in digital format.

Comparisons to previous community feedback survey (2015):

- 21 more responses were received over previous survey
- While there was one respondent who indicated they'd like the museum to start running pottery classes again (confusing us with another former occupant of the Central Park Building), overall there were next to no responses that pertained to the Central Park Building or Smithers Art Gallery, whereas there were several in the last survey that discussed services or feedback not related to the museum. This is a positive indication that our rebranding (including dropping an image of the CPB as our logo) and clear and consistent messaging about the museum and its programming, is working as hoped.
- 52% of respondents indicated they visited the museum at least once per year, versus 38% previous survey
- According to notes from the previous survey, we only had 148 followers on Facebook in 2015—today we have over 920!

Question 1 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

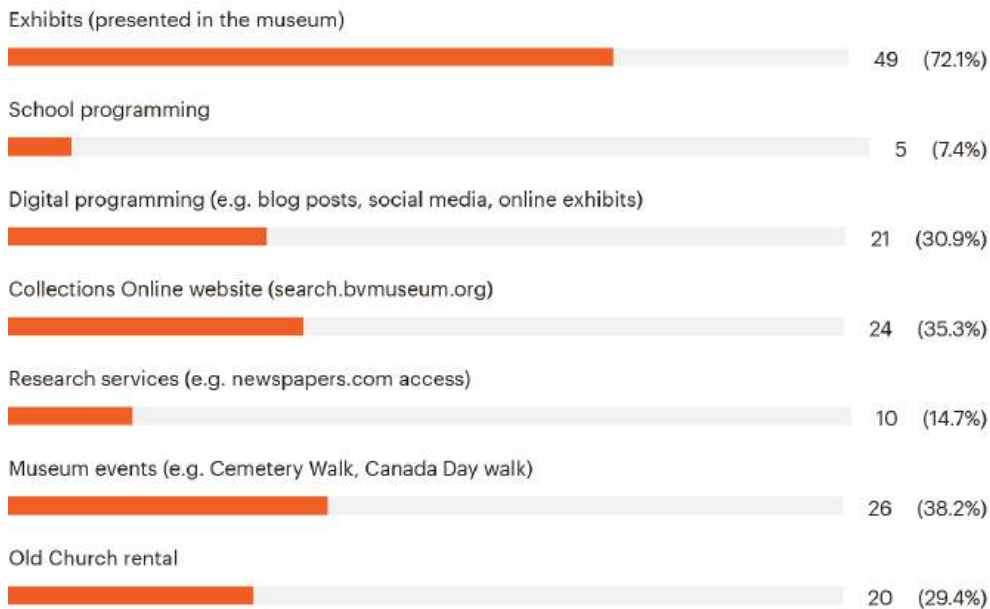
“How often do you visit the Bulkley Valley Museum?”



Question 1: 76% of respondents reported that they have visited the Museum within the last three years. Those that we reached through this survey clearly have an interest in visiting in person.

Question 2 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“What services/programming of the museum do you use most often/are you most familiar with? (select up to 3)”

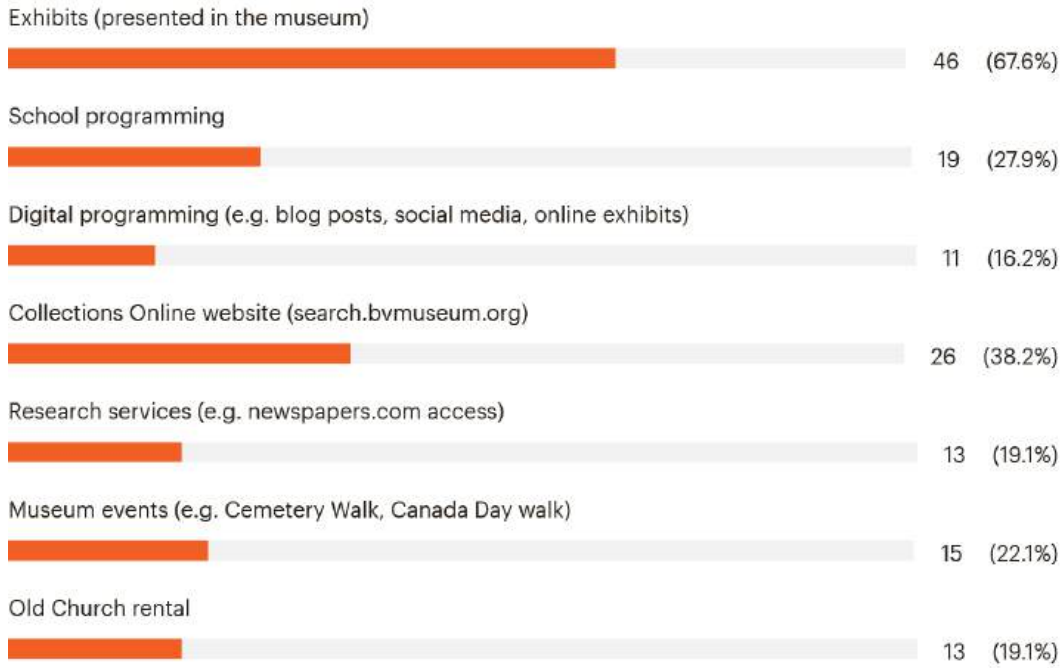


Question 2: Digital Programming and Collections Online when combined are nearly equal to exhibits (45 vs. 49 responses)

Results also indicate we did not reach many educators, or families with kids who have experienced our school programs through this survey, with programming receiving the lowest number of selections. But interestingly, respondents *think* that school programming we offer is important (see next page).

Question 3 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“Of the above listed services/programming, including those you may not have personally used, what do you think are the top 2 most important things the museum provides to the community? (select 2)”

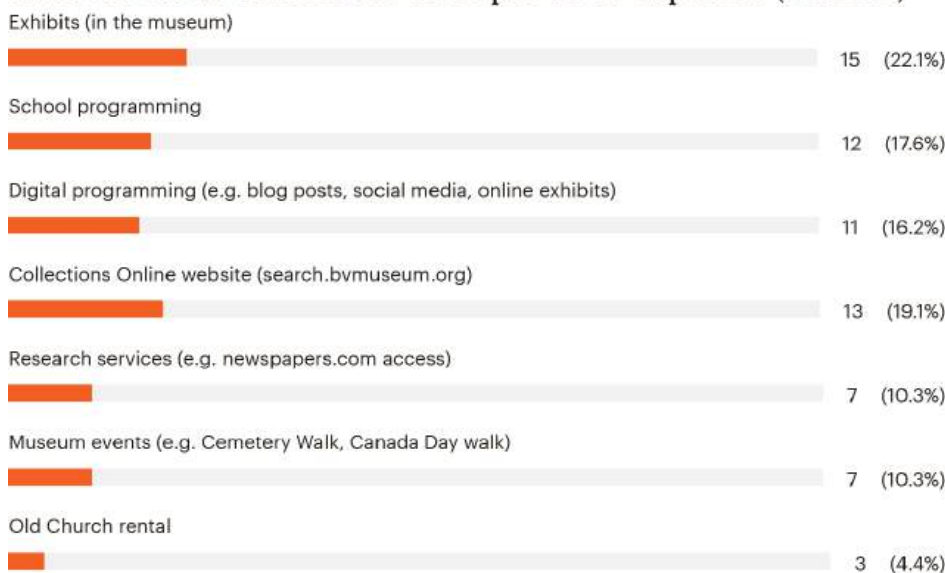


Question 3: Exhibits, overwhelmingly, are considered the most important part of our services by the respondents. A focus on providing quality exhibitions will be a significant part of the next strategic plan, based on this feedback.

Despite respondents not indicating they are major users of school programming in Question 2, it ranks as our third most important offered service.

Question 4 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Of the above listed services/programming, which do you think the museum needs to improve or expand? (select 1)”



Question 5: “If you would like to offer a comment on one of your answers about services/programming, please do so here” (not required).

19 responses were provided, comments included:

- “you’re doing great”, “BV Museum does an excellent job”, “the...team are awesome”
- ““It would be really neat if some of the exhibits had immersive or interactive elements like the Royal BC Museum where you can walk through a space (room/store/ship etc.) or sit in a space (desk/old theatre). Also costumed actors in a themed performance or costumed guides.”
- ““I’m so impressed with how well [the museum] connects with the community and with how much you cram into a small space. “ This reviewer also asked for “better access to digital resources” commenting that they “hadn’t searched for them, but they aren’t terribly obvious either”
- Education programming suggestions of: Curator classroom visits, “history kits” for teachers to borrow, closer ties to home learner groups, weekend or after school programming for kids
- “love the cemetery walk” and “would be great to have a self guided cemetery tour brochure”
- “I do not use the museum as much as I should but I do really appreciate the value of the museum and its services to our community”
- “I did not know anything about ‘Collections Online’ until I did this survey. That is really valuable and world-wide accessible thing to do”
- “survive Covid without losing anything”
- “I live in Surrey but have family in smithers. I visit the museum when I travel....and follow activities on FB”

Question 6 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“Which of these temporary exhibits from the past five years did you attend (select all that apply) ”

100 Years of Photography in the Valley (2015-2016)



Mining the Northwest (2016-2017)



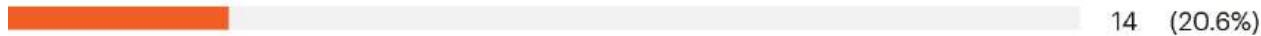
Ephemera: Things that Exist for a Short Time Only (2016-2017)



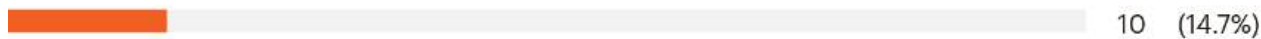
A Century of Steam and Steel (2017-2019)



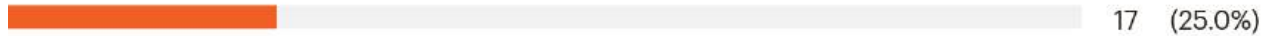
Canada 150: What's Your Story (2017, co-produced with Smithers Art Gallery)



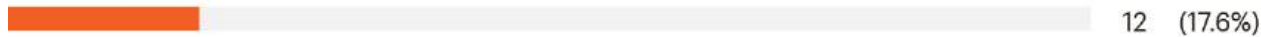
Asian Canadians of Smithers 1913-1953 (2017-2019)



INFLUENZA: The Spanish Flu in Smithers (2018-2019)



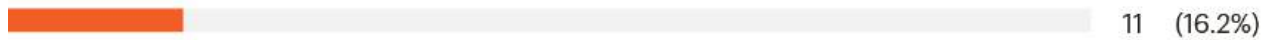
What We Wore (2019-2020)



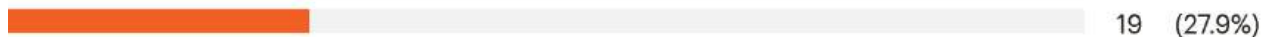
100 Years of the Fall Fair (2019-2020, co-produced with Smithers Art Gallery)



From the Back Room (2020-2021)



I did not visit any of these exhibits



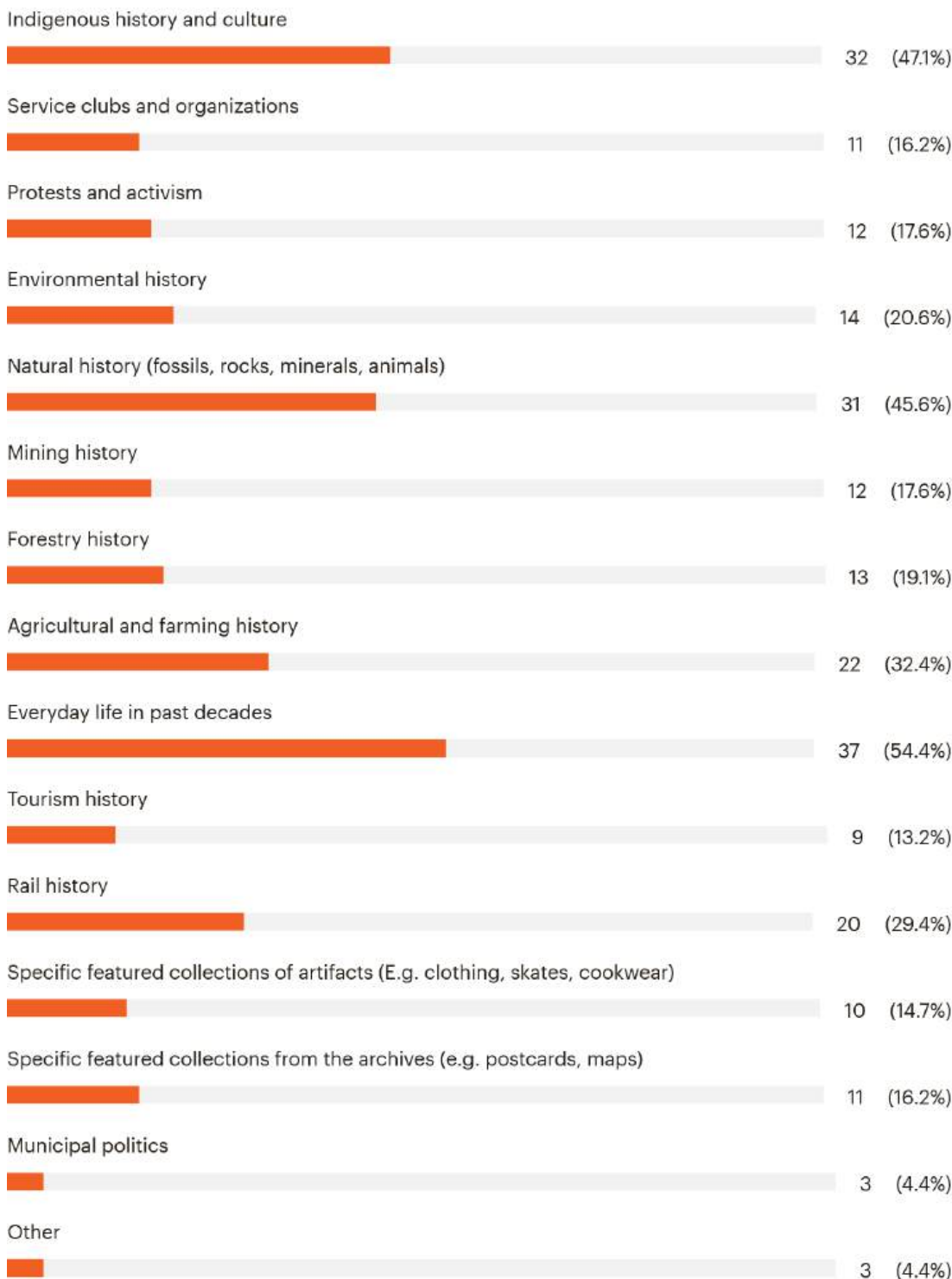
Top 5 exhibits visited:

1. 100 Years of the Fall Fair
2. 100 Years of Photography in the Valley
3. Mining the Northwest
4. Century of Steam and Steel
5. Influenza: The Spanish Flu

Note that three of our top 5 were new exhibits 3-6 years ago. 19 respondents (28%) did not visit any exhibits.

Question 7 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“Which of the following topics are the most important for the museum to explore in future exhibitions (select up to 3)”



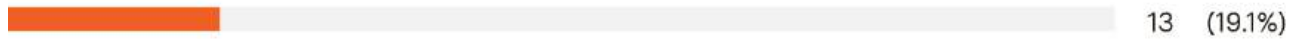
Questions 7:

Themes that the museum has traditionally, and recently, explored, including Indigenous history, natural history, everyday life, rail history, remain in demand. “Other” suggestions were skiing/sports history, and Irish or “other immigrant stories”.

Question 8 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Currently the museum has only one online exhibit available, about the Spanish Flu. Are additional online exhibits something that you would be interested in?”

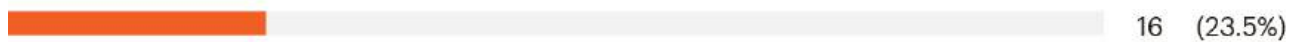
I prefer to attend exhibits in person, online exhibits don't really interest me



I would still attend exhibits in person but would also like to see more virtual exhibits



I would like to see more online exhibits, they're easier for me to view than coming in to the museum



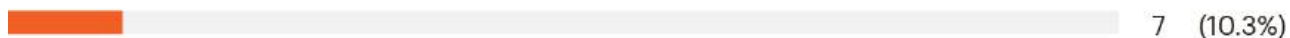
Question 9 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“The museum has previously extended its exhibits into other spaces around the community as part of its Culture Crawl. Is this something the museum should continue to do? ”

Yes, it's nice to see history out in other spaces in the community



No, I don't think people pay much attention to them



Questions 8 and 9:

Overwhelmingly respondents both support continuing to develop and offer virtual and offsite exhibits.

Question 10: “If you would like to offer a comment about one of the questions related to exhibitions, do so here”.

8 respondents. Responses included:

- “I haven’t heard of or seen Cultural Crawl exhibits
- “It would be great if they were a little more kid friendly....[including] a room specifically for kids...and have the activities change monthly”
- “more on diversity and inclusion”
- Suggestions of a mobile app walking tour, general mobile app for the museum, history podcast by the museum
- “culture crawl at Safeway was one of your best ideas—prominent and accessible location”

Question 11: “The museum has been making efforts to ensure that we represent our diverse community. Are there any community histories that you feel we have not yet explored through exhibits or programming, or that we do not represent in our collections?”

13 suggestions were received:

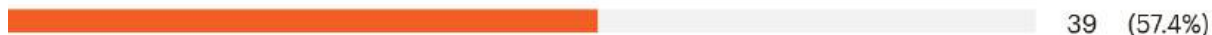
- Scottish settlers
- Irish settlers
- Black History month
- Smithers Public Library
- Military history
- Airport history
- Indigenous history
- Modern new Canadians (immigrants and refugees)
- Dutch history and culture

The Museum has previously presented exhibits on military, airport/air transportation, and Dutch history between 2007-2015.

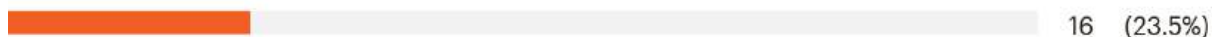
Question 12 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Included in the museum’s mandate is that the museum will play a role in encouraging the preservation of historical buildings. Do you think this is an area where the museum should play a more active role?”

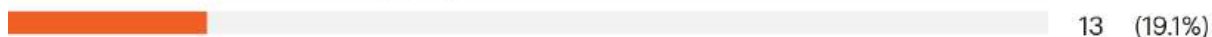
Yes absolutely, this is an important role the museum should undertake



Would prefer to see the museum focused on exhibits and programming it already does



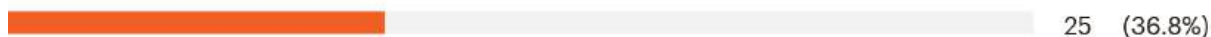
A new committee or community group should be formed to take on this role



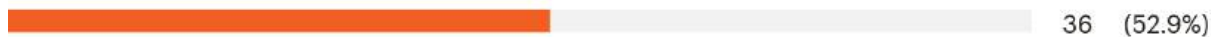
Question 13 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Currently there are only 2 heritage designated buildings in Smithers – the Central Park Building, and CN rail station. Would you support Town Council adopting planning tools as part of its Community Plan to further protect heritage buildings? ”

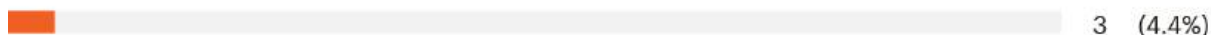
Yes, absolutely



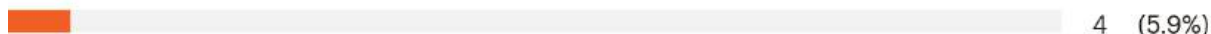
Yes, in consultation with property owners



No, they are private properties



No, demolition and modification of those buildings is part of their life cycle



Questions 12 and 13: Part D of the Mandate of the BV Historical and Museum Society is “to encourage preservation of historical landmarks, including buildings and monuments”.

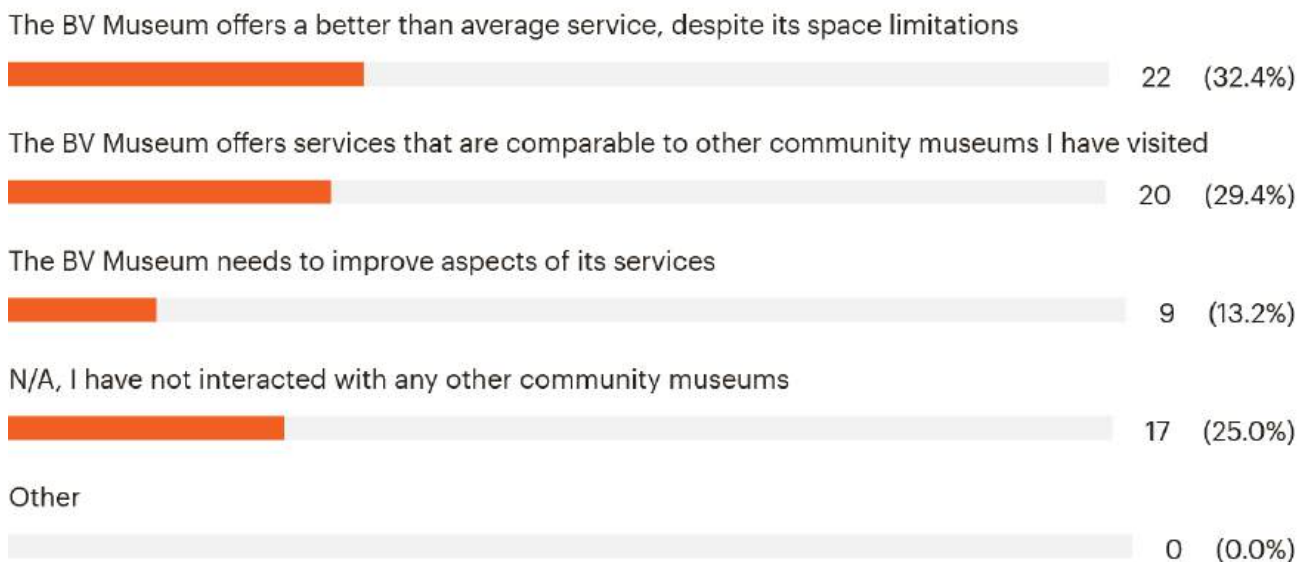
The museum has begun to take a leadership role in built heritage preservation, including presenting to Council on the issue in December 2018. The Museum presents an annual Canada Day walking tour of Main Street history, and in 2020 developed a Google Tour of historic buildings and landscapes in Smithers. Built heritage preservation is expected to be part of the review of the Town’s Official Community Plan in 2021-2022. These responses provide support for that work by the museum, and demonstrates an interest by the local community in built heritage preservation generally.

Question 14 asked for any further comments about built heritage.

Only 4 comments were received. Two of the comments mentioned the cost of restoring buildings which was interesting to note. Preservation and restoration are often viewed as the same thing (quite different) - something to be aware of for future advocacy. It also appears that it was not clear from the questions asked that the Museum's role would be as an activist and advocate, and to guide the Town towards enacting preservation through planning tools. Clarity in messaging going forward will be critical.

Question 15 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

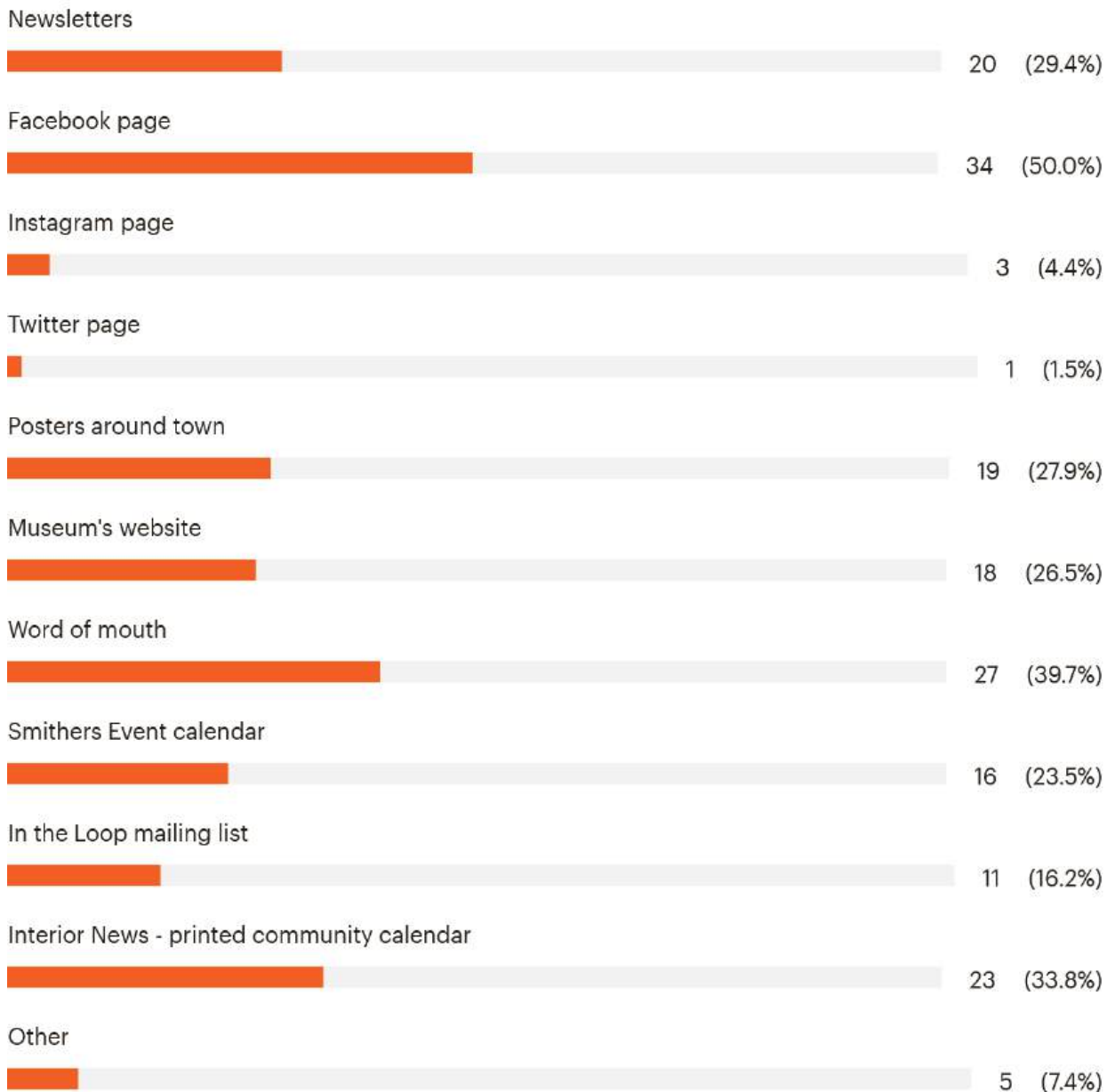
“How do you feel the services, programming, and exhibits offered by the BVM compare to other community museums you have interacted with? (Please disregard the physical size of the BVM and focus instead on quality of services).”



Question 15: Generally most respondents are satisfied with the services that we offer. In retrospect, a question about what services we need to improve would have been helpful, although responses to other text questions give a sense of that.

Question 16 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

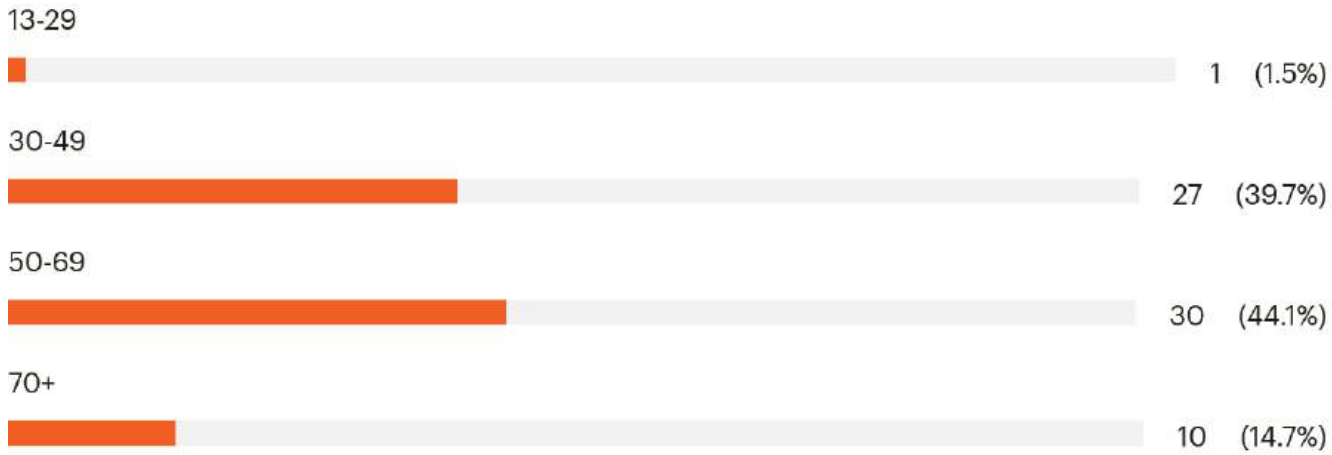
“Where do you find out about museum events, activities, fundraisers, etc. (select all that apply)”



Questions 16: Facebook, overwhelmingly, is where people are finding out information about our work. This is consistent with what we have observed by asking people how they found out about an event at the event, and by engagement levels with content.

Question 17 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“What is your age?”



Question 18 has 68 answers (Radio Buttons)

“What community do you reside in?”

