



LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

2025 HOCKEY COMMUNITY SURVEY

Project Description

At the January Assembly Quality Municipal Services Committee meeting, Assembly Members discussed community concerns regarding third-party operations of the Sullivan Arena Complex.

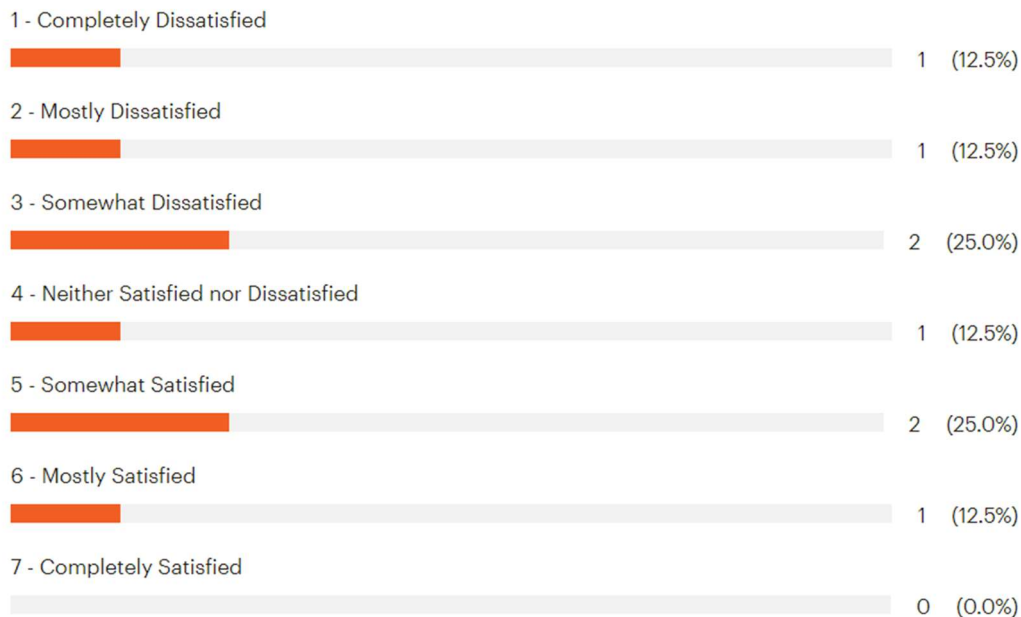
On behalf of Assembly Members Constant and Volland, the Assembly Legislative Services Office circulated a survey for frequent facility users to anonymously share feedback about their experiences at the Sullivan Arena Complex. The survey was reviewed by Administration staff in advance of distribution.

In the spirit of good government, a summary of anonymous survey responses has been compiled to share with the Assembly Quality Municipal Services Committee.

Survey Results

The following section anonymously compiles survey results, with minor edits to protect the identity of respondents and correct spelling errors.

Question 1: On a scale of 1-7, how satisfied are you with operations at the Sullivan Arena Complex, which includes the Sullivan, Ben Boeke, and Dempsey arenas?





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Question 2: Describe the experiences that come to mind when considering the score given above.

Response #1: Sullivan arena is fine. Dempsey seems to constantly have bathroom issues and side 2 is awful for viewing with the glass being as marked up as it is. Boeke is overall fine, other than bathroom issues (toilets/sinks not working). I have heard there is a rodent problem at Boeke but have not seen it personally

Response #2: Inconsistency with the ice resurfacing quality, and the lack of care amongst some employees who will blatantly tell you that they don't have time to do a better job, or some other rationale for a poor job at two of the three rinks.

Response #3: All rinks in poor condition, upkeep is non-existent, ice in fair to poor conditions.

Response #4: Anchorage municipality ice is the most expensive. It's great ice. We love the management and the staff, its just the prices that get us down. We have to pass that cost on to our youth players and their families. We'd also like to see the heat turned on the seating areas. But I understand that costs money. When you're playing \$385 and up for a sheet of ice it would be nice to have the heat on.

Response #5: It feels as if the facility is run too low cost. The user groups are paying \$385 per hour to use the facility. I think that MOA and the outsourced operator are running the facility at a profit without investing money into upkeep for the facility.

Response #6: Condition of the Ben Boeke and Dempsey Anderson rinks is embarrassing. There is a lot of deferred maintenance, the facilities look bad, and the ice times aren't managed particularly well. Sullivan arena physical plant is better but dealing with the managers can be difficult.

Response #7: There's been a number of issues. The rinks are dirty and weathered. There's been many of issues in a lot of areas. Locker Room doors falling off hinges, bathroom toilet issues regularly, non functioning scoreboards, constant Zamboni issues, water fountains broken, main entrance doors that don't operate correctly or have wood blocks for door handles, indoor siding on walls hanging off the wall, door handles broken off and left as is, pigeons occupying space indoors, broken locker room benches, and the list could keep going. And it's not that rink customers don't know that things break or need repair at times, but it's



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looks like there is no effort or pursuit to fix the issues. Many of the things that I have listed have been broken or damaged for multiple years now.

We've let these historic buildings that bring the community together and provide a safe and enjoyable space for sport, fall apart and look like a dump.

Response #8: Overall I think the distribution ice times and the ability to request ice has been going great. Much much better than the previous contract with SMG/ASM Global. However the condition of the rinks continue to decline and are not well maintained.

Question 3: What is working well about the operations?

Response #1: I have noticed the temperature at Dempsey in particular has been much better the last couple of years. Not nearly as cold to watch the games.

Response #2: Scheduling and other administrative tasks are simpler and more efficient than in the past. The quality of the ice at Sullivan is good and relatively consistent.

Response #3: Nothing that would make me know otherwise

Response #4: -

Response #5: Operationally, I appreciate working with the staff. They know what they are doing. They want to accomplish the tasks at hand and they interact with us as users pleasantly.

Response #6: Sullivan Wolverines games have been great for the community.

Response #7: The scheduling of ice has been overall smooth and organized. Sometimes it's hard to get a response on things but overall the scheduling has been smooth.

Response #8: I think the distribution of ice times to organizations and the online open available ice is going great. John Stenehjerm is extremely responsive in that capacity.

Question 4: What, if anything, could be improved about the operations?

Response #1: It would be nice if things like bathrooms were just consistently working and clean. As well as locker rooms being kept up, benches not broken/unstable, clean etc.



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Response #2: Either provide better training for employees or not allow those with low morale to resurface the ice. Consistently shoveling the sidewalks and access points, especially for people with mobility issues.

Response #3: A massive monetary investment into Sullivan, with most into Boeke. Renovation is a must.

Response #4: -

Response #5: The facilities are understaffed and the facility itself is not maintained well. It feels as if the facility is run as low cost as possible. Things regularly break and go for long periods of time before being fixed. This year, two wooden planks in Dempsey for player benches were broken in the locker rooms. It was just broken for weeks. Someone in the facility ended up propping the benches up with 10 gal buckets. I think that a user group ended up fixing it themselves. Toilets in women's and men's bathrooms have broken handles or are out of service completely (covered with black plastic bags). A drinking fountain is broken and covered over with a plastic bag at Dempsey. The top spectator bench in the bleachers on BB2 is cracked and covered with ducttape. Spectators are sitting on that broken bench and it is bowing. It's just a matter of time until it fails and a spectator falls. These issues seem to just exist for a long period of time. My understanding is that the contract puts the burden of building repair onto the City of Anchorage maintenance dept. Are these needed repairs communicated to the right people in a timely manner? Does the on-site rink manager know that they are supposed to survey their building regularly for things in need of repair and to report these needed repairs to the entity who needs to fix it?

Response #6: Customer service by OMalley on a day-to-day basis would be great. Also need to sort out MOA maintenance requests.

We need to sort out high school scheduling on Wolverines game nights. Parking is already tight so to have Boeke games complicates everything.

Response #7: Just an investment into the facilities. Things are broken, dirty, and worn but it doesn't look like there is any effort to fix those issues. The price of ice increases more and more each year for the facilities customers, but there is little improvements being made to actually make it welcoming and operational.



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Response #8: As I indicated above, the rinks (primarily Dempsey and Boeke) continue to decline with no apparent investment in simple repairs, let alone any improvement or revitalization. Toilets, urinals, sinks, water bottle fillers, water foundations, the boards of the rinks, plexiglass cleaning are all examples that are ongoing problems at all rinks that take months to repair if they are repaired at all. There appears to be no proactive maintenance at the rinks but rather just slowly reacting to problems.

Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Response #1: -

Response #2: -

Response #3: The best rinks in the Anchorage bowl and valley are the Menard and the Harry Mac center. The Mac center specifically, where I am mostly at, is run by a non-profit with the interest of the community as the top priority. Competent people running the rink, and not beholden to the bottom dollar and governance by a third-party management company. Also, the differentiation on the muni side on who actually governs anchorage rinks is also different and not always cohesive in getting things done.

Response #4: -

Response #5: -

Response #6: -

Response #7: The state is concerned with our population decline and companies are working hard to find ways to attract people to stay in or come to Alaska. In our hockey program, we have a similar battle of trying to keep kids in Alaska instead of playing hockey for out of state programs. Some of these kids are leaving as early as 13. It is my belief that part of the issue is that we don't have facilities that are welcoming or give young generations the sense of we've got it good here. They go to hockey rinks out of state and see these very well kept and organized facilities and think, "I want that. It's better here than it is back home in Anchorage." Our city's infrastructure is damaged and unattractive. These facilities are spaces for bringing our community together for enjoyment. But a lot of them don't bring excitement or comfort with how damaged they are. People are looking for excitement. That's what attracts people.



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Look at the Sullivan Arena and the Wolverines. The Sullivan hasn't changed much. But it's been cleaned up, after being closed for many years, and by the wolverines bringing back hockey there it's delivered excitement for the community. All it takes a little cleaning and investment in maintaining the facilities and these muni rinks will bring back its community excitement again.

Response #8: -