



The Legalization of Cannabis

What we heard consolidated report
2018 January

Project overview

The Government of Canada introduced legislation in the spring of 2017 to legalize and regulate non-medical cannabis use. Cannabis will remain illegal as the bill moves through the legislative process. If it is approved by Parliament, the bill could become law with a target date of 2018 July. On 2017 November 16, the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 26, an Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis, based on its cannabis framework. The Government of Alberta has indicated that municipalities across the province will have a role in developing policies and regulations for recreational cannabis that are within their control and responsibility. The City of Calgary, like other municipalities across Canada, is currently reviewing what this legislation might mean for our city and our organization.

Engagement overview

In 2017 November, The City of Calgary held stakeholder workshops with representatives from community and business organizations to discuss policy and regulation areas regarding business licencing, community standards bylaws, land use planning and other affected bylaws. From 2017 November 20 to 2017 December 10, The City of Calgary hosted an online survey on its engagement portal at www.engage.calgary.ca to solicit feedback from Calgarians. Input from both the workshops and online survey is being used to help inform changes and updates to affected bylaws, and inform whether new bylaws or policies are required to respond to the legalization of recreational cannabis.

This consolidated report includes a high level summary from the three workshops and online feedback. To review the verbatim feedback, refer to the individual workshop and online What We Heard summaries.

- ▶ To read the high level summary of the in-person input see the section: [What we heard – In-person summary](#)
- ▶ To read the high level summary of the online input see the section: [What we heard – Online summary](#)

What we asked – In-person

Retail Sales Locations

1. Are there preferred areas where cannabis retail stores should or should not be located? Why?
2. Should The City apply the same separation distances outlined by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) regarding the separation distances for liquor stores to cannabis retail stores? If not, why?
3. Should The City apply the same separation distances outlined by the AGLC between liquor stores, and schools or daycares to cannabis retail stores as well? If not, why? What are the other uses where separation distances should be considered?
4. Should there be separation distances between cannabis retail stores, production facilities and liquor stores? If so, why?
5. Should there be a limit on the number of cannabis retail stores within a certain area? If so, what should that be?



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Retail Sales Regulations

1. How should The City accept cannabis retail store applications? Why? (E.g. lottery, first come first serve, merit based system, combination).
2. What should the decision criteria be on whether or not to license a cannabis retail store include? Why?
3. In July 2018, private retail sales of cannabis will be limited to standalone stores. If other license types are permitted by the Alberta Government beyond 2018, what license types should be created (e.g. cannabis production, cannabis counselling)?
4. Should retail delivery of cannabis be allowed? Why or why not? (different than mail delivery)
5. Should storefront signage regulations for cannabis retail stores beyond what is outlined by the Government of Alberta be considered by The City? Why or why not? If yes, what regulations?
6. Should third party advertisement regulations regarding the sale of cannabis (e.g. billboards, temporary sign (bold sign) beyond what is outlined by the Government of Alberta be considered by The City? Why or why not? If yes, what regulations?
7. What should the ramifications be if there is a failure to comply with the bylaws? Why?
8. What operating hours do you think cannabis retail stores should have? Why?

Production Facility Locations and Regulations

1. How should commercial designated cannabis growing be regulated? Why?
2. Are there preferred areas where cannabis production facilities should or should not be located? Why?
3. Should there be separation distances between cannabis production facilities. If so, why? (See example of Liquor Store Regulations)
4. Should there be a limit on the number of cannabis production facilities within a certain area? If so, what should that limit be?
5. Should there be separation distances between cannabis production facilities and schools or other uses? Why? What are the other uses where separation distances should be considered?
6. Should there be separation distances between cannabis production facilities, retail stores and liquor stores? If so, why?

Consumption Locations (smoking, vaping, oils)

1. Should The City further regulate where cannabis can be consumed in public spaces beyond what is outlined by the Government of Alberta? Why or why not?
2. Where should Calgarians be allowed/not allowed to consume cannabis? Why?
3. Should the consumption of cannabis be allowed at public events such as outdoor concerts and festivals? Why or why not?
 - a. If cannabis was allowed at public events, what regulations should be put in place? Why?
4. Should the consumption of cannabis be allowed on City of Calgary outdoor public property? Why or why not?
5. Should the consumption of cannabis be allowed outdoors on private property (e.g. backyard, balcony or restaurant patio)? Why or why not?
6. If permitted in future (e.g. beyond 2018), should Calgary allow cannabis lounges? Why or why not?
 - a. If yes, should the method of usage be regulated? (E.g. no smoking allowed, only vaping/edibles or only edibles?)



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7. Should there be separation distances between cannabis lounges, retail stores, and production facilities? Why or why not?

Residential Growing

1. Should The City ban growing of cannabis in accessory residential buildings (e.g. garages, sheds, greenhouses)? Why or why not?
2. What should the ramifications be if there is a failure to comply with the bylaws?

What we heard – In-person summary

Retail Sales Locations

Preferred Areas

- Many participants indicated that cannabis stores should not be located near where children are located or congregate (e.g. schools, daycares, malls, parks, etc.). At the very least, current liquor store regulations should be applied to cannabis retail stores.
- Participants indicated that cannabis retail stores should be located throughout the city to allow users to easily access recreational cannabis rather than accessing it illegally through the black market.

Separation Distances

- Many participants felt that The City should apply the same separation distances that the AGLC uses for liquor stores, but there could be consideration for additional retail stores in areas with higher density.
- There were concerns about the concentration of too many cannabis retail stores in certain areas and the potential impact this could have on that community. However, participants generally felt that applying the same separation distances that currently exist for liquor stores and allowing the market to determine profitability would be sufficient.
- There were concerns about including separation distances between cannabis retail stores and liquor stores as it would limit locations for cannabis retail stores.
- Some participants were supportive of having no separation distances between a cannabis retail store and production facility as this would allow for customers to buy directly from the production facility.

Limit of Stores in Certain Areas

- Some participants thought that liquor stores and cannabis retail stores should be located in close proximity to one another to create a “one-stop shop” for better accessibility and convenience purposes.

Retail Sales Regulations

Applications

- Some participants were concerned about The City limiting the number of applications they accept for cannabis retail stores as it wouldn't allow all businesses a fair opportunity. Some felt that there should be a limit on the number of licenses they provide but not on the number of applications.
- Participants were mixed on what system The City should use for accepting applications:
 - Some participants didn't like the lottery system because it could restrict overall numbers and some businesses may miss out on the opportunity because they would be selected at random.



- Most participants thought that a merit-based system should be used by The City for applications. Participants thought that The City should also evaluate existing business experience (not necessarily in the cannabis industry), business plan, financials, education/knowledge, etc.
- Some participants thought that a first come-first serve system for applications with elements of the merit-based system should be used by The City to ensure that businesses meet the criteria and allows all business owners (small and large) a fair opportunity to apply.
- Some participants thought that The City should use the same rules and criteria used to approve liquor store applications and licenses for retail stores.

Types of Licenses

- Participants indicated that The City should consider creating license types for cannabis lounges, cannabis lounges combined with retail stores, cannabis retail stores combined with production facilities, food truck/mobile retail store and cannabis tents at outdoor events and concerts.
- Some participants indicated that retail delivery should be allowed as it would provide people with mobility issues with access to recreational cannabis, encourage cannabis users to access the legal recreational cannabis market vs. the illegal black market, create a value added opportunity for businesses; and allow businesses to respond to demand with oversight from AGLC.
- Some participants didn't think that retail delivery of cannabis should be allowed, as it would create issues with age verification and safety, negatively impact physical stores and the education and service they provide; and would not be allowed by AGLC.

Signage

- Most participants didn't want The City restrict storefront signage further than what the Government of Alberta outlines or AGLC has in place for liquor stores because of the importance of advertising their store via storefront signage and including their name and branding.
- There was mixed feedback on whether the use of billboard and temporary signs should be allowed similar to liquor stores and/or tobacco regulations.

Ramifications

- Most participants agreed that if a business fails to comply with bylaws, fines, notices and closure should be considered.

Hours of Operation

- There was a wide range of feedback from participants on hours of operation: implement what liquor stores currently do, open longer to provide additional access, or close earlier for consumer safety concerns.

Production Facility Locations and Regulations

Regulations

- Participants indicated that recreational production facilities should be regulated similarly to how the medical production facilities are currently regulated.
- Some participants indicated that too much regulation may make it difficult for a fair market due to the cost to start up. Regulations should consider the scale/size of production.
- Most participants indicated that production facilities should be located in light industrial areas.



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Separation Distances

- There was general acceptance from participants about following AGLC liquor store regulations for separation distances between cannabis production facilities.
- Some participants indicated that there was no need for separation distances between production facilities and that clustering may help with community acceptance and security issues.
- Some participants felt that there should be a separation distance between cannabis production facilities and schools, retail stores and liquor stores, but were unsure what that distance should be.

Limit in Certain Areas

- Participants felt that there should be a limit on the number of cannabis production facilities in a certain areas, but were unsure of what the number should be. The limit should also depend on the size and scale of production.

Consumption Locations

Public Spaces

- Participants generally agreed with the locations where cannabis could be consumed as outlined by the Government of Alberta, especially in order to protect exposure to children and non-cannabis users.

Enforcement

- Participants raised concerns about if/how The City could enforce consumption of cannabis via oils, edibles and vaping as these methods of consumption are hard to identify.

Special Events

- Participants indicated that consumption of cannabis should be allowed at public events such as outdoor events and concerts. However, The City should consider providing separate areas to prevent consumption of both cannabis and liquor.
- Participants supported the consumption of cannabis in private backyards; however, some had varying opinions on whether consumption on restaurant patios should be permitted or align with what is permitted by the smoking bylaw.

Cannabis Lounges

- Participants indicated that cannabis lounges (for cannabis vaping, edibles and oils) should be permitted. However, concerns about health issues for staff from secondhand smoke were raised.
- Participants shared mixed feedback on whether there should be separation distances between cannabis lounges, retail stores and production facilities.

Residential Growing

Accessory Buildings

- Participants indicated that growing cannabis in accessory buildings would provide better security (from children and pets), would be a healthier option versus growing inside the main dwelling and if there is damage resulting from growing, as the scale of it will be smaller.
- Some participants were concerned about security issues and theft related to growing cannabis in an accessory building if they are not properly secured.



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Rental Units

- Some participants had concerns about growing cannabis in rental units and multi-family units due to potential damages and odours, and felt that condo boards and landlords can include additional restrictions on leases, rental agreements and in condo bylaws to manage residential growing.

Ramifications

- Participants indicated that the ramifications regarding failure to comply with bylaws for residential growing should include a warning, fines, destroying plants or criminal charges. The severity of the ramifications should be based on degree of abuse of the bylaws (i.e. using a similar model that is used for excessive automotive speeding).

Enforcement

- Participants indicated that it would be challenging for The City to enforce residential growing.

What we asked – Online

Retail Sales Regulations

1. Do you support placing minimum distance restrictions that cannabis retail stores can be from: Elementary and high schools | Universities and colleges | Other cannabis retail stores | Liquor stores | Organizations such as drug treatment centers and homeless shelters > Other (please specify below)? Check all that apply.
2. Do you oppose placing minimum distance restrictions that cannabis retail stores can be from: Elementary and high schools | Universities and colleges | Other cannabis retail stores | Liquor stores | Organizations such as drug treatment centers and homeless shelters > Other (please specify below)? Check all that apply.
3. In Alberta, liquor stores are allowed to operate between 10 am and 2 am, seven days a week. Should cannabis retail stores operating in Calgary have: The same, longer or shorter operating hours as liquor stores?

Retail Sales Locations

1. Are there preferred areas where private retail stores SHOULD be located? Why?
2. Are there preferred areas where private retail stores SHOULD NOT be located? Why?
3. Once recreational cannabis is legal, how likely might you be to purchase cannabis from a retail store? Very likely > Somewhat likely | Somewhat unlikely | Very unlikely | Never
4. Once recreational cannabis is legal, how likely might you be to purchase cannabis online? Very likely > Somewhat likely | Somewhat unlikely | Very unlikely | Never

Consumption Regulations

1. Should the rules regarding consumption of cannabis in public places be: More restrictive than The City's smoking bylaw | The same as The City's smoking bylaw | Less restrictive than The City's smoking bylaw | Don't know enough about The City's smoking bylaw?
2. Should the rules regarding consumption of cannabis in public places be: More restrictive than Alberta's provincial liquor law | The same as Alberta's provincial liquor law | Less restrictive than Alberta's provincial liquor law | Don't know enough about Alberta's provincial liquor law?



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3. Overall, do you think the rules around public consumption of cannabis should be: More like the rules for drinking alcohol in public | More like the rules for smoking or vaping tobacco in public | A combination of the more restrictive rules for both drinking alcohol and smoking or vaping in public | Neither | Don't know enough about the rules?
4. Please select any places you feel are acceptable for people to consume cannabis: In their backyard | On their front porch or balcony | At an outdoor concert or festival | In a public park | At a public transit stop | On a restaurant or bar patio | While walking down the street | Any outdoor public space? Check all that apply.
5. Please select any places you feel are not acceptable for people to consume cannabis: In their backyard | On their front porch or balcony | At an outdoor concert or festival | In a public park | At a public transit stop | On a restaurant or bar patio | While walking down the street | Any outdoor public space? Check all that apply.
6. How should The City of Calgary approach cannabis use at festivals and events? Cannabis use should be banned entirely at these events | Cannabis use should only be allowed in designated areas at these events | Cannabis use should be allowed anywhere at these events.

Consumption Locations

1. Although the Government of Alberta will not make any decisions about consumption venues for some time, if provincial regulations eventually do allow for this would you support or oppose venues which allow consumption in the form of smoking or vaping? Support | Oppose.
2. Although the Government of Canada will not make any decisions about legalizing edible cannabis products for some time, if provincial regulations eventually do allow for this would you support or oppose venues which allow for consumption of edibles? Support | Oppose.

Residential Growing

1. Where should cannabis plants be permitted to be grown? Inside your home | Shed | Greenhouse | Garage (Detached) | Other (please specify below)? Check all that apply.

Additional Feedback

1. Do you have any other comments relating to The City of Calgary's role in the legalization of cannabis?

Other Information

To help us better understand your previous responses, please complete the following questions.

1. Do you support or oppose the legalization of cannabis for recreational use in Canada? Strongly support | Somewhat support | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose.
2. Do you have children under the age of 18 in your household? Yes | No.
3. Do you currently own or rent your home? Rent | Own | Other (please specify below)
4. What type of home do you live in? Detached home/Duplex | Condominium/Apartment building | Multi-family dwelling | Other (please specify below)
5. Which of the following age groups do you fall into? Under 18 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65-74 | 75+
6. What are the first three digits of your postal code?
7. Are you completing this survey on behalf of: Yourself or your family | A Community Association | A business | Other (please specify below)

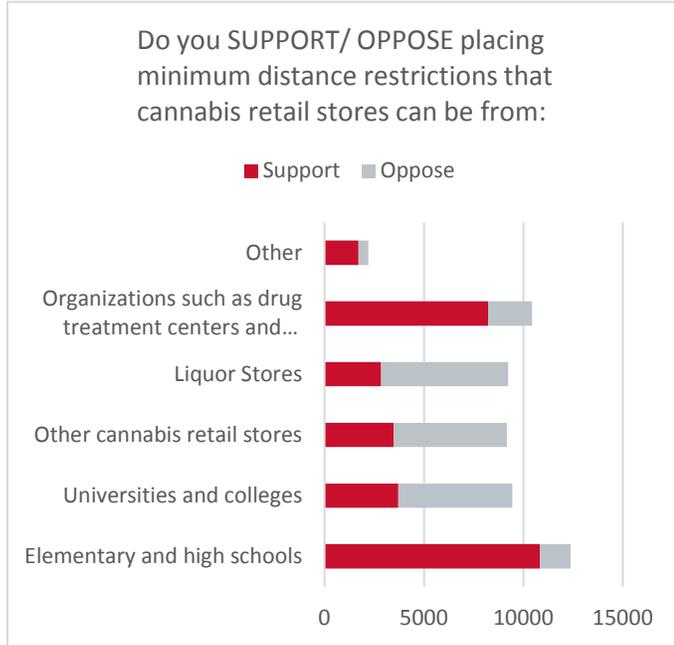


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What we heard – Online summary

Retail Sales Regulations



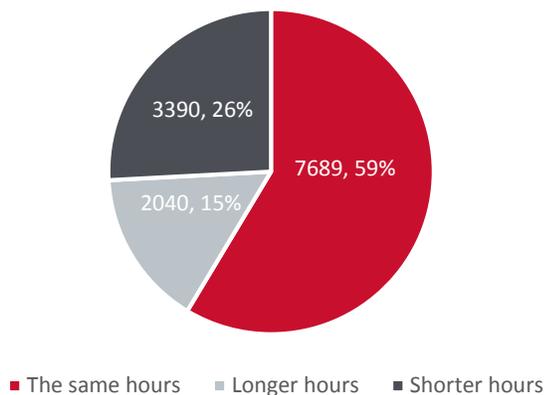
Support Minimum Distances Other:

- Parks/playgrounds/green spaces
- Daycares
- Bars/restaurants
- Hospitals
- Places of worship
- Residential areas
- No restrictions
- Public transit

Oppose Minimum Distances Other:

- Parks/playgrounds/green spaces
- Hospitals
- Bars/restaurants
- No restrictions

In Alberta, liquor stores are allowed to operate between 10 am and 2 am, seven days a week. Should cannabis retail stores operating in Calgary have:





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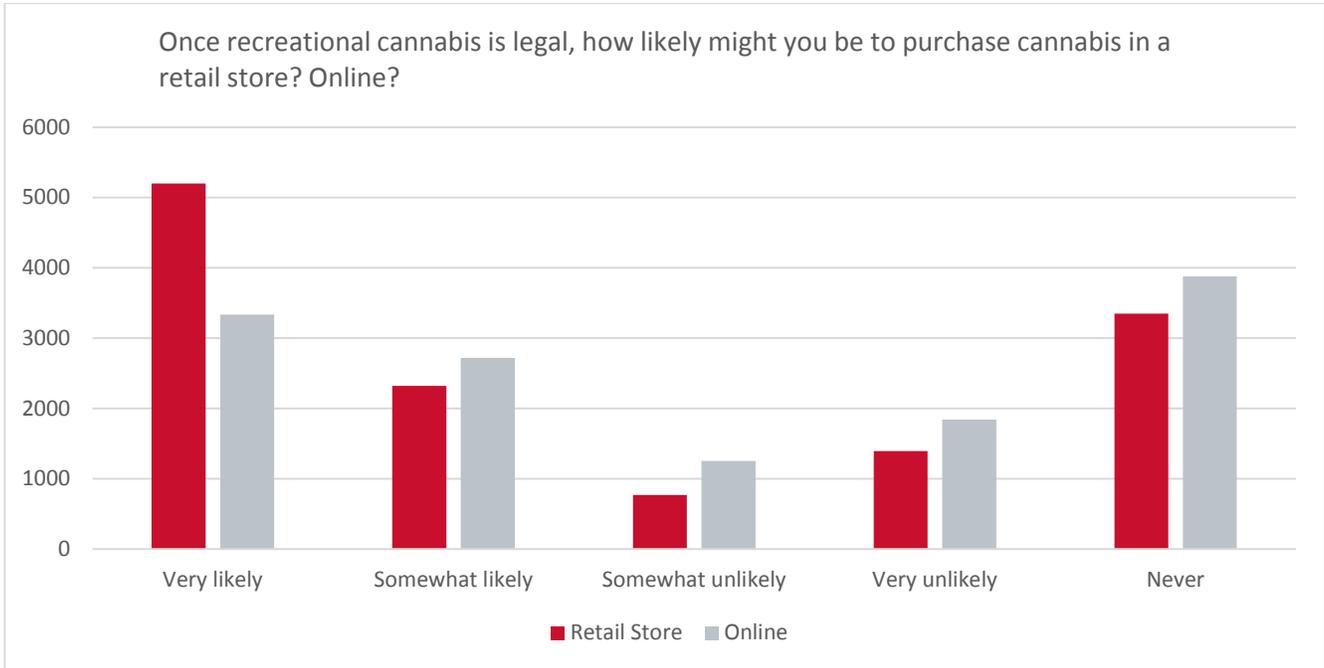
Retail Sales Locations

1. Are there preferred areas where private retail stores SHOULD be located? Why?

- Many participants indicated that there were no preferred areas and instead retail stores should be located where there is market demand.
- Locations that are convenient, walkable and easily accessible to the public, including being accessible by transit.
- Primarily commercial areas, business districts, downtown, inner city, more densely populated neighbourhoods or industrial areas were preferred over residential neighbourhoods to prevent crime and increased noise or traffic in residential areas and limit exposure to minors.
- Locating stores next to police stations or in high traffic, well-lit areas were also suggested as ways to provide additional safety measures.
- Some suggested that retail stores should be located next to medical facilities, including pharmacies, to increase ease of access for individuals consuming marijuana for medicinal purposes.
- Many participants also felt that retail stores should be located in the areas where liquor stores are allowed to be located.

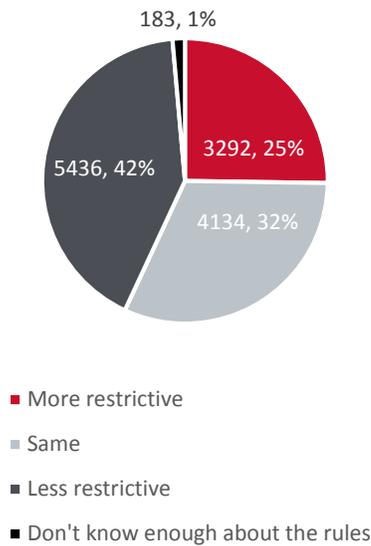
2. Are there preferred areas where private retail stores SHOULD NOT be located? Why?

- Retail stores should not be located adjacent to schools, including elementary, junior or senior high schools and other areas where youth gather, such as parks, playgrounds and malls.
- Participants also felt that retail stores should not be located adjacent to drug treatment/rehabilitation centres or homeless shelters.
- There were safety concerns about locating retail stores in areas that are isolated such as industrial areas, and areas that already have a high occurrence of crime.
- Participants shared that retail stores should not be located in residential areas to limit exposure to youth and prevent potential crime.
- Many participants felt that there should not be any restrictions to where a retail store should be located and the market will help to control where a store might be located.
- Some indicated that there did not need to be any additional restrictions for retail stores than there are currently for liquor stores.

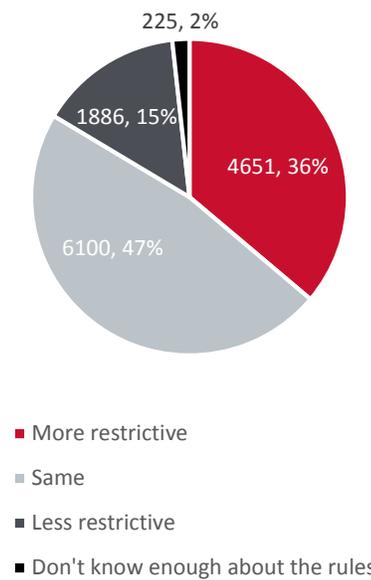


Consumption Regulations

Compared to Alberta's provincial liquor law should the rules regarding consumption of cannabis in public places be:

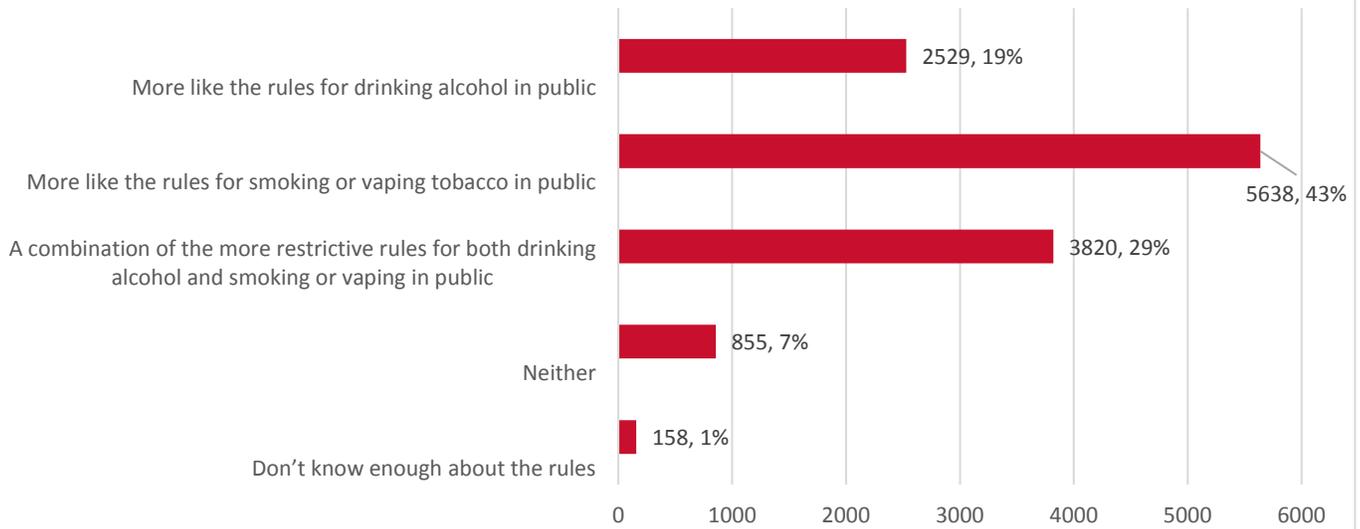


Compared to The City's Smoking Bylaw should the rules regarding consumption of cannabis in public places be:

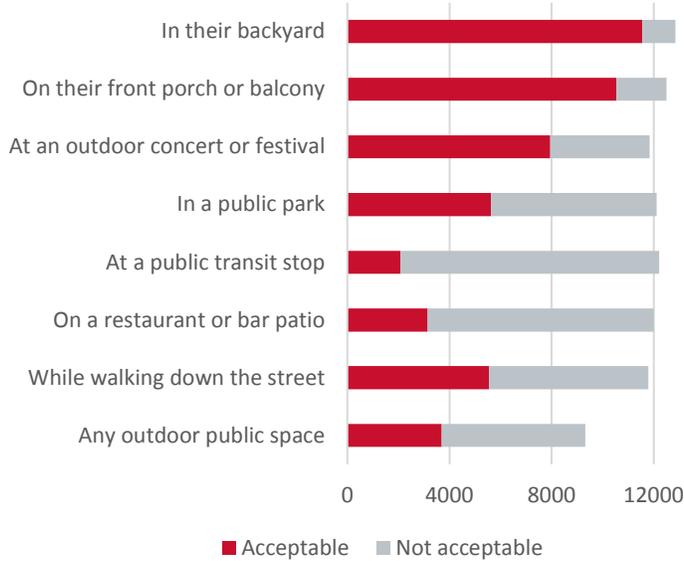




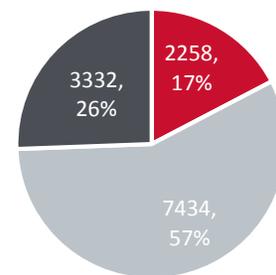
Overall, do you think the rules around public consumption of cannabis should be:



Please select any places you feel ARE / ARE NOT acceptable for people to consume cannabis;



How should The City of Calgary approach cannabis use at festivals and events?



- Cannabis use should be banned entirely at these events
- Cannabis use should only be allowed in designated areas at these events
- Cannabis use should be allowed anywhere at these events

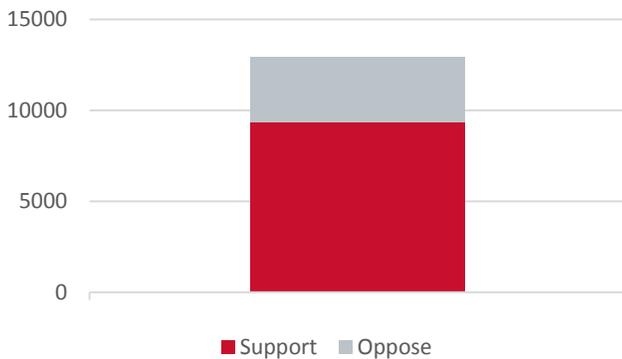


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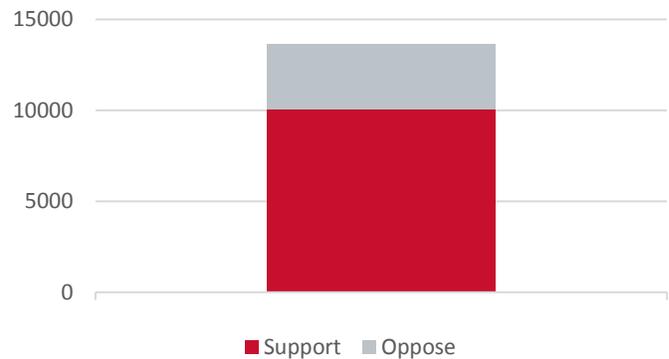
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Consumption Locations

Although the Government of Alberta will not make any decisions about consumption venues for some time, if provincial regulations eventually do allow for this would you support or oppose venues which allow consumption in the form of smoking or vaping?

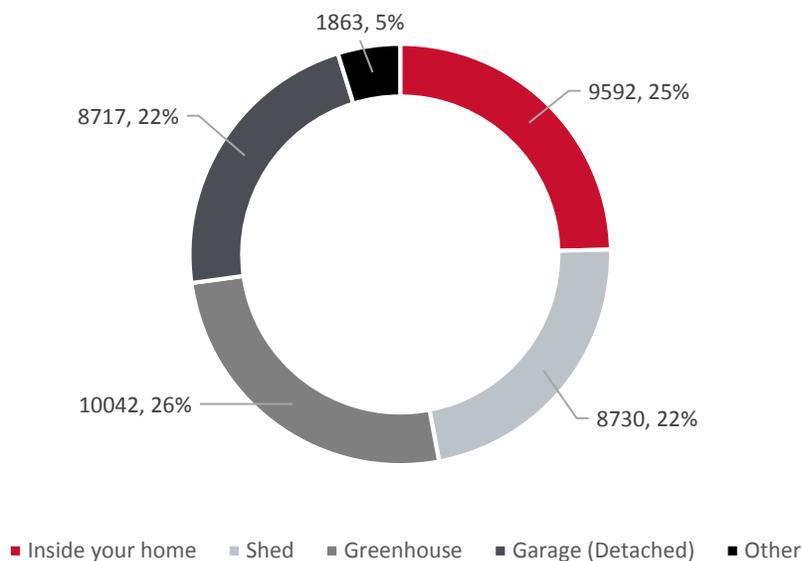


Although the Government of Canada will not make any decisions about legalizing edible cannabis products for some time, if provincial regulations eventually do allow for this would you support or oppose venues which allow for consumption of edibles?



Residential Growing

Where should cannabis plants be permitted to be grown?





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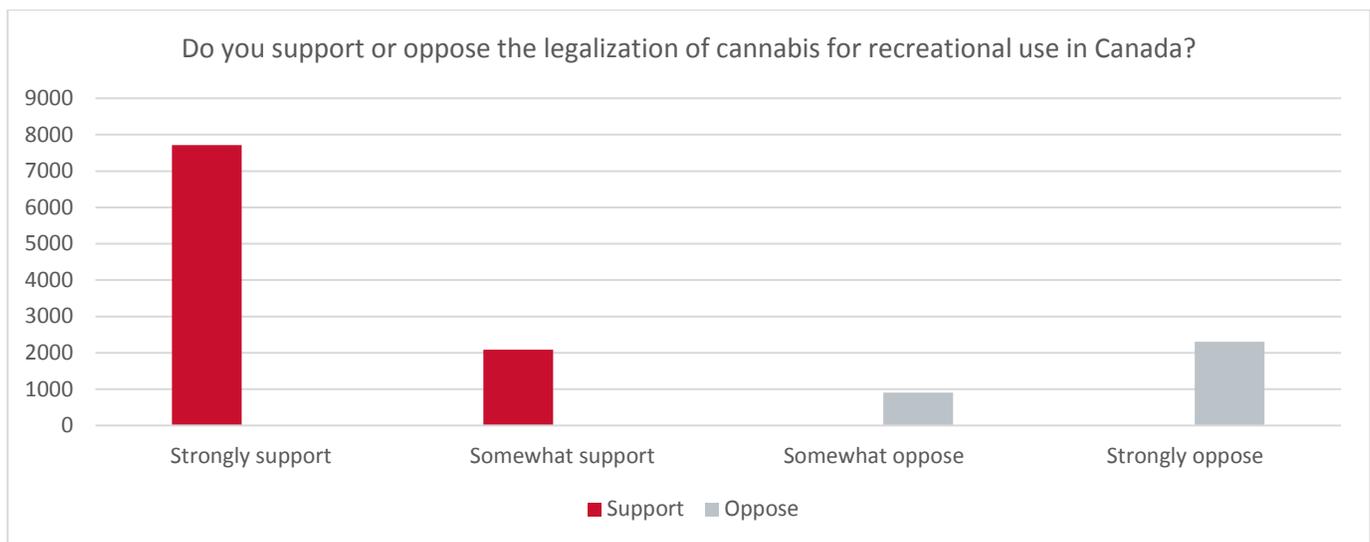
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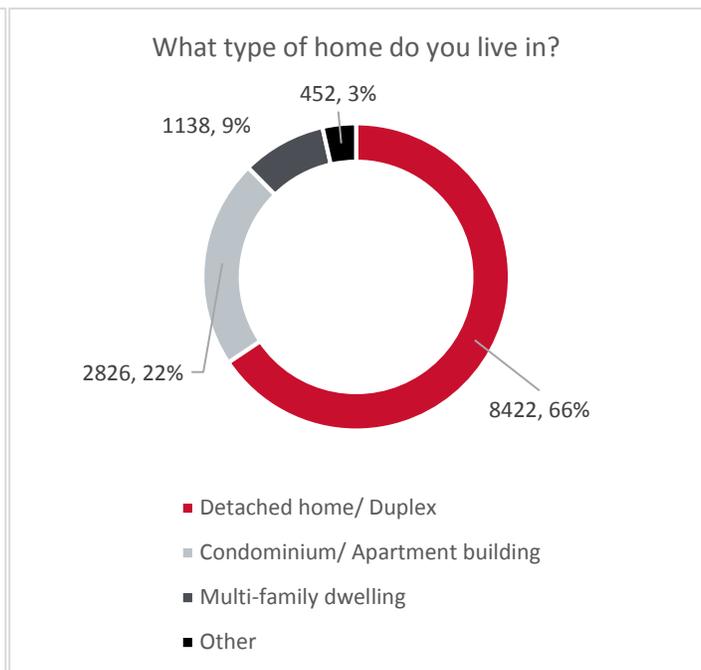
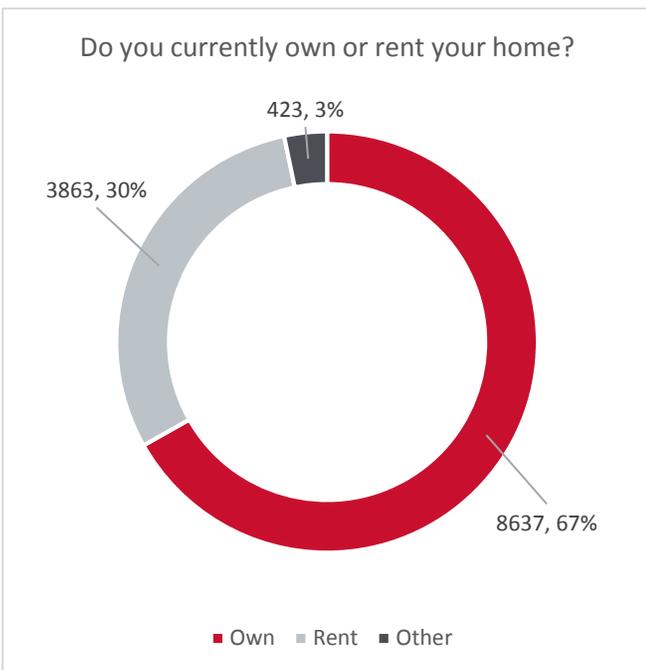
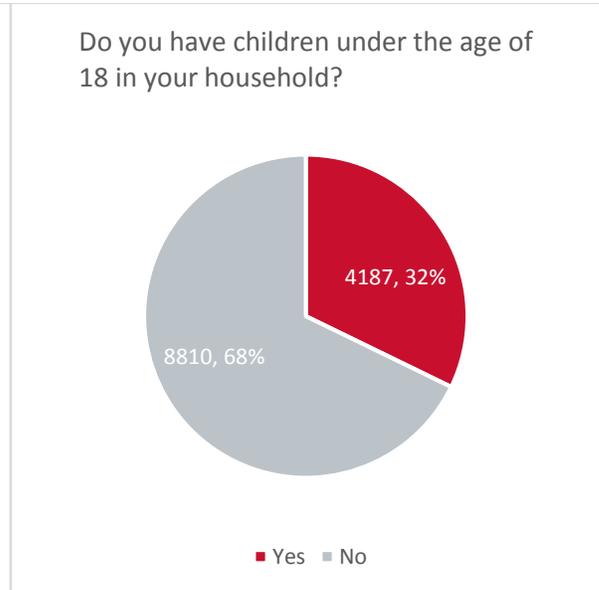
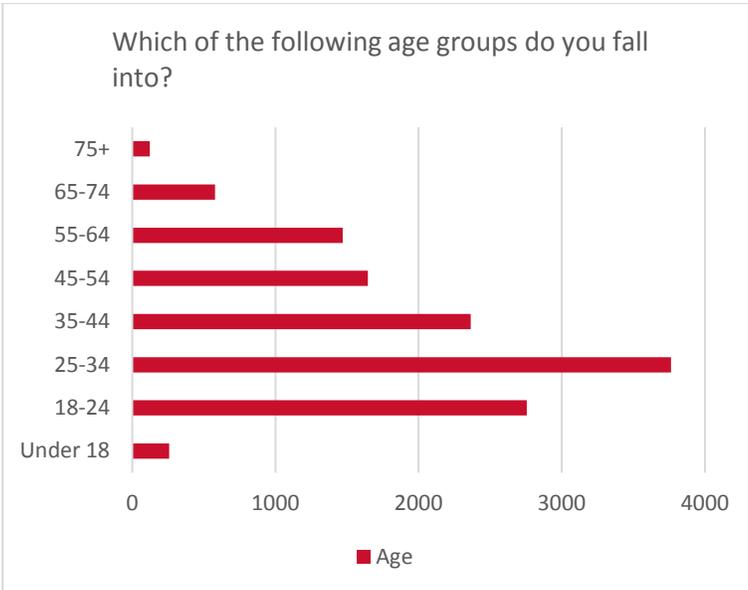
Other Locations:

- Participants felt that cannabis plants should be allowed to be grown anywhere, both inside the home and outside in a backyard or on a balcony.
- There was mixed feedback on whether cannabis plants should or should not be allowed to be grown in rentals/condos.
- Participants indicated that growing permits should be required, growing should only occur in licensed/regulated facilities or should only be allowed in secured/locked areas.

Other Information

To help us better understand your previous responses, please complete the following questions.





Other, Rent/Own:

- Living with family

Other, Home type:

- University/College residence

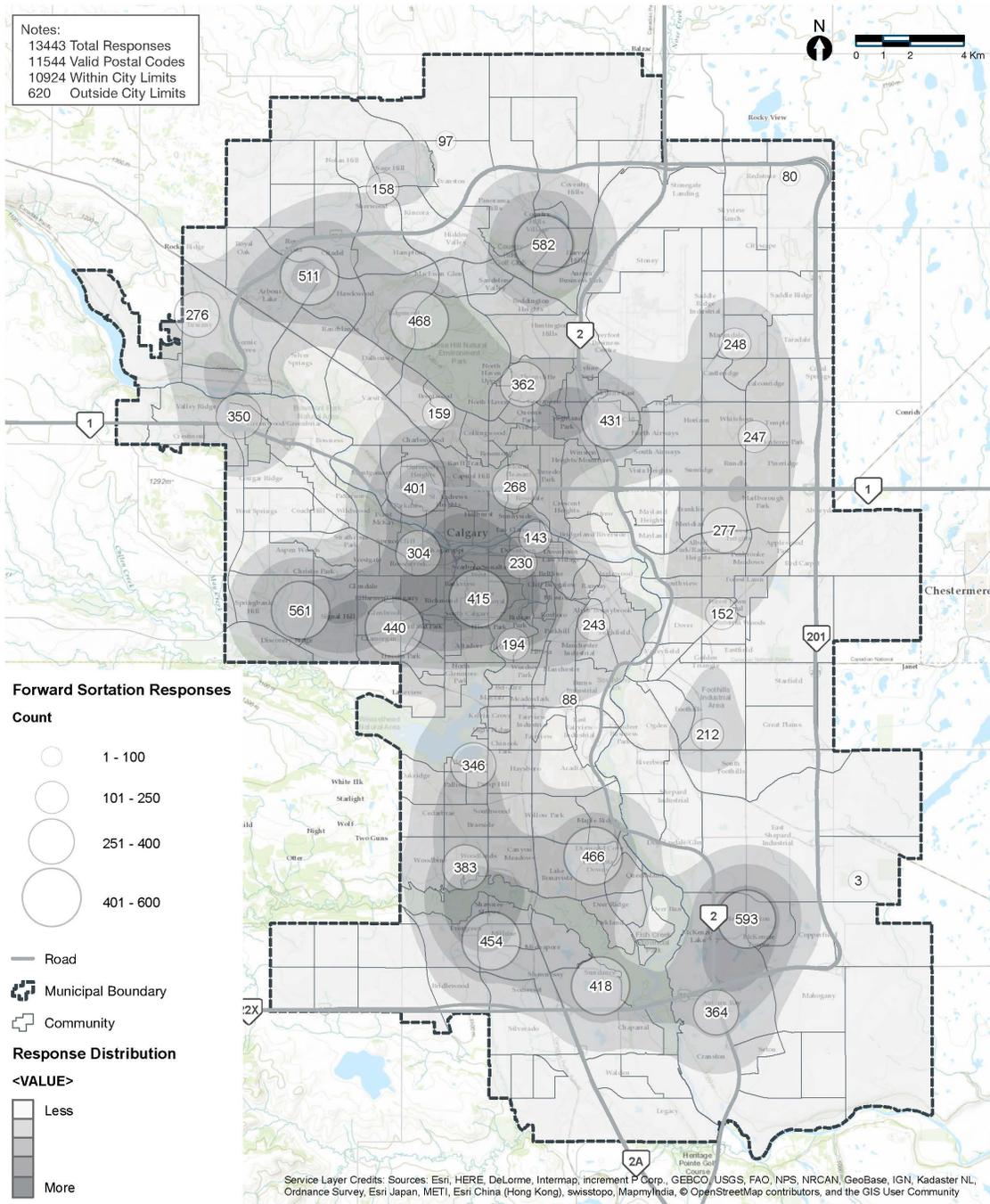


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Community Participation Map

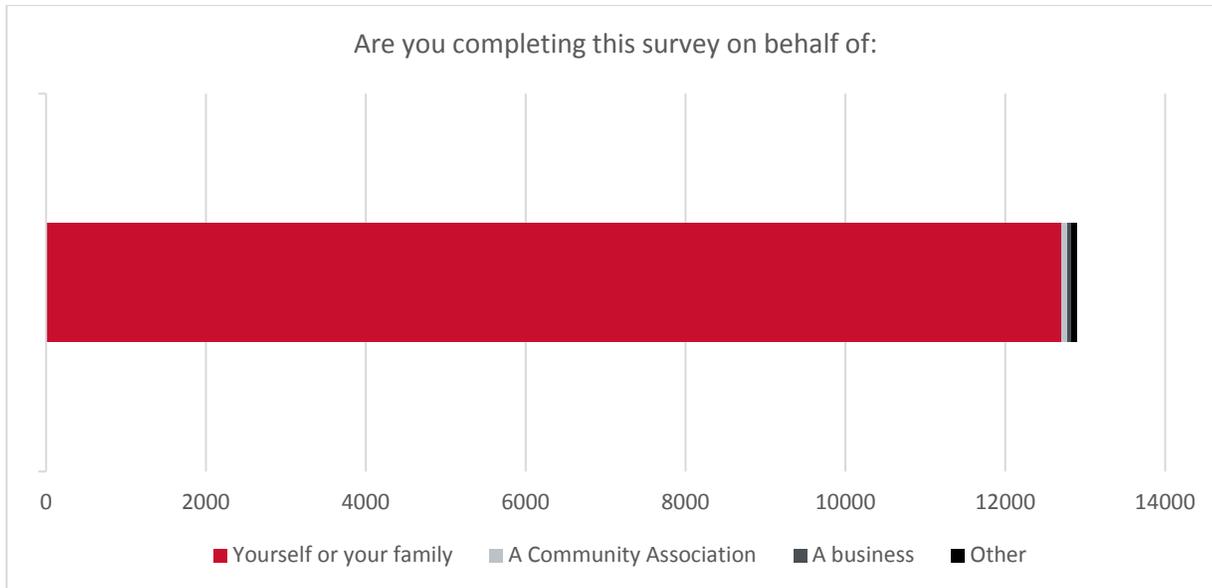
Legalization of Cannabis Engagement Survey Response by Postal Code Forward Sortation Area





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Next Steps

Public engagement on the legalization of cannabis was completed on 2017 December 10 and this What We Heard Report was shared with Calgarians on the City's engage portal at www.engage.calgary.ca. Feedback will be considered and a 'What We Did' report will be shared in the winter of 2018 to show how public feedback informed the proposed amendments to bylaws and potential creation of new bylaws. The proposed bylaw amendments are scheduled to be presented to Council in 2018 April. If approved by Council, the changes will be implemented and the development permit process will be initiated to prepare for legalization in 2018 July.