



Smoking and Vaping Bylaw Engagement

Stakeholder Interview Report Back: What We Heard

June 2019

Project overview

In April 2018, Calgary City Council directed City Administration to “engage citizens and key stakeholders (including Alberta Health Services) to further strengthen the Smoking and Vaping Bylaw 23M2018 with consideration to prohibiting the following:

- Waterpipe smoking in workplaces, public premises and specified outdoor places
- Smoking in multi-unit public housing administered by The City of Calgary
- Smoking and vaping in hotel and motel rooms, in outdoor public parks, and at outdoor public events.”

Administration is scheduled to report back to Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services with recommendations and potential bylaw amendments in late 2019.

Engagement overview

Stakeholder interviews were held to facilitate targeted conversations with shisha lounge owners/operators who may be directly impacted by increased restrictions to The City’s Smoking and Vaping Bylaw and the resulting policy implications and regulations. Shisha lounge owners/operators received an invitation to attend a face-to-face meeting to discuss the project and potential implications to their businesses in advance of stakeholder workshops and online public engagement. As this stakeholder group has a vested interest and may be directly impacted by potential amendments to The City’s Smoking and Vaping Bylaw, it was important to provide opportunities to meet with representatives of the shisha lounges to learn more about their specific concerns, impacts to their businesses and potential opportunities to be considered.



Invitations were sent to 32 shisha lounge owners/operators.

Stakeholder interviews were held with 15 shisha lounge owners/operators (in-person or over the phone) from June 3, 2019, through to June 14, 2019.

What we asked

The following questions were asked during the stakeholder interviews to collect feedback on smoking, vaping and waterpipe use in workplaces, restaurants, public premises and specified outdoor locations:

1. The direction received from Council is to consider increasing restrictions on smoking and vaping, with specific consideration given to prohibiting waterpipe use in workplaces, restaurants, public



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premises and specified outdoor locations. Do you agree with this direction for Calgary? Why or why not?

2. Tell us more about how potential changes to regulations for smoking, vaping and waterpipe use in workplaces, restaurants, public premises and specified outdoor locations may impact you or your business or organization.
3. Should waterpipe smoking be subject to the same regulations as smoking or vaping in Calgary? (i.e. 5m from a doorway, not on transit property, etc.)
4. What other regulations or restrictions to smoking, vaping and waterpipe use in workplaces, restaurants, public premises and specified outdoor locations should we consider?

What we heard

Overall, there was little support for the complete prohibition of waterpipe use in restaurants and workplaces. Instead, most shisha lounge owners/operators were in favour of increasing restrictions and regulations (e.g. upgrades to ventilation systems, no minors or alcohol and shisha-specific registration/licensing) to offer a healthier, safer place where shisha users can choose to go.

If The City of Calgary decides to move ahead with the prohibition of waterpipe use in restaurants and workplaces, most shisha lounge owners/operators felt they would require an adequate amount of time (5 to 10 years) before a complete ban could take place. This preferred schedule would allow operators to fulfill lease obligations while providing more time to offset business investments, including the required costs to upgrade heating, ventilation and air conditioning HVAC systems.

- For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the [Summary of Input](#) section.

Next steps

- Report back to Calgarians on what we heard and what we did in late 2019.
- Stakeholder and public feedback will help City Administration develop the recommendations presented to Council in Q4 of 2019.



Summary of input

<p>Banning Shisha Consumption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants, for the most part, did not agree with prohibiting waterpipe use in shisha lounges; however, they were supportive of additional regulations, licensing and restrictions on these types of businesses. Participants were supportive of banning consumption of shisha in public areas, (e.g., hospitals, parks, festivals, etc.) and establishments that are not shisha-specific.
<p>Financial Impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants felt that banning waterpipe use in shisha establishments would have significant impacts to the business owners through loss of financial investments and livelihood, to the employees and the families of the employees and owners, to the property owners through loss of income from existing leases, and to multiple levels of government through loss of property and business taxes and employment taxes. Many participants were concerned and expressed confusion about the amount of money that most shisha lounges have been required to spend in order to upgrade HVAC systems in the last 6 to 24 months as per the request of City inspectors and why these types of upgrades were required if a complete ban was going to take place in the near future. Participants also indicated that a complete ban could have negative impacts to the social system if so many shisha lounge employees lost their wages and had to collect employment insurance due to lack of work.
<p>Health Concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants raised concerns that if a ban was to go forward, shisha consumption would continue in people's homes and in un-registered establishments that do not have proper ventilation systems, serve alcohol and cannabis illegally, may expose more children to shisha and will not use best practices when cleaning and lighting waterpipes.
<p>Policy and Enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were supportive of additional regulations and restrictions on shisha establishments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrades to HVAC and ventilation systems to improve air quality for patrons and employees, No minors, No alcohol, and Shisha-specific licencing/business permits. Participants felt that waterpipe use should be subject to the same regulations as smoking and vaping in public places.
<p>Regulating Shisha Products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants also indicated that it makes sense to begin regulating shisha products to ensure that they do not contain tobacco and they only use approved, high quality and safe ingredients. Regulating shisha would also create an opportunity for revenue generated through taxing the product.
<p>Timeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants felt that a prohibition would require advance notice of up to 10 years to shisha lounge owners and operators in order for financial planning to recover business investments, fulfill lease obligations and for employees to plan and look for alternate work.



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Verbatim comments

To protect the privacy and confidential information that was shared by interview participants, verbatim comments will not be published for these interviews.