

# What We Heard Report: Cannabis



Weed like to  
hear from you.



## Background

In April 2017, the Government of Canada introduced legislation to legalize, regulate and restrict access to cannabis. This legislation is expected to come into effect in the late summer/early fall of 2018.

The new legislation covers oils, vapours and smoking of cannabis. It does not yet include edibles.

Following the Federal Government's decisions under its jurisdiction, the Province of Alberta made decisions under its jurisdiction. There is a helpful [chart](#) on which level of government controls what areas when it comes to cannabis. And you can read [Alberta's action plan](#) on cannabis as well.

Each municipality in Alberta will need to determine:

- retail locations and operating rules
- rules around public consumption
- and land use/zoning bylaws

Below are highlights of the Federal and Provincial laws. For full details, visit the [Government of Alberta's](#) website and the [Government of Canada's](#) website.

- allow adults to possess up to 30 grams of legally-produced cannabis
- allow adults to grow up to four cannabis plants per household
- set the minimum age for purchase and use at 18 years of age

- enable a regulatory regime for the licensed production of cannabis, which would be controlled by the federal government
- enable a regulatory regime for the distribution and sale of cannabis, which would be controlled by the provincial government
- establish new provisions to address drug-impaired driving, as well as making several changes to the overall legal framework to address alcohol impaired driving
- Set the minimum price for a gram of cannabis at \$6
- Not allow anyone under 18 in a cannabis retail store
- Set restrictions on storefronts including covered windows
- Set restrictions on names of retail stores

A few details that are important to note are that the Provincial Government has indicated that they will not look at legalizing Indoor cannabis bars for two years. As well, the City of Airdrie does not have the authority to prohibit smoking of cannabis on private property, including residential back yards and multi-family complexes. And finally, consumption bylaws set by the City of Airdrie are not applicable to medicinal use.

## Public consultation opportunities

Engagement	Type of feedback gathered	Number of people engaged	Date(s)
Home & Lifestyle Show	Dotmocracy and Q&A with staff	800	April 28 & 29
Focus Groups (3)	In depth conversation and opinions	27 total/average of 9 per group	May 1, 3 and 14
Telephone survey (statistically valid)	Qualitative and quantitative survey	400	April 30- May 6
Web survey	Qualitative and quantitative	1639	April 25 – May 6
Open House	Dotmocracy and Q&A with staff	20	May 9

# Public consultation results

## Smoking Bylaw - Consumption

Highlights	
Focus Groups	Give people a place to consume cannabis in public but it needs to be more restrictive than tobacco.
Online & telephone surveys	An average of 51% of people agreed with a public ban on consumption.
Home & Lifestyle Show and Open House	People do not want cannabis to be consumed everywhere that tobacco currently can. They want it treated like alcohol (homes only).

**Summary:** Although the surveys and dotmocracy exercises show that a slight majority of people prefer a public ban on consumption, when staff shared the challenges with a public ban for those in condos or visitors to our city, there was support for allowing designated areas to consume in public. As well, watching Calgary and from our legal advice, it is in our best interest to have somewhere in public that consumption can take place.

**Conclusion:** Provide a designated area in public where people can consume cannabis, but restrict it more than tobacco.

## Smoking Bylaw - Enforcement

Highlights	
Focus Groups	Create balanced, sensible bylaws that are able to be enforced reasonably.
Online & telephone surveys	Most people (56%) feel it is important to have the resources available to enforce laws around smoking cannabis in public. However, when it comes to supporting a tax increase to pay for those resources, 36% of respondents would support it, 44% would not.

**Summary:** People are concerned about how consumption can be reasonably enforced, especially considering our bylaws do not include medicinal consumption. People would generally like to take a ‘wait and see’ approach to find out for sure if costs go up rather than guess work.

**Conclusion:** Create balanced, sensible bylaws that are able to be enforced reasonably.

## Land Use Bylaw – Retail locations

Highlights	
Focus Groups	Strong support for separation distances from schools (middle and high school) but no other uses were singled out as requiring separation distances. Production and processing should be limited to industrial and rural areas.
Online & telephone surveys	Separation distance from other cannabis stores and liquor stores is evenly split. It is very clear people want a separation distance from places where children and youth gather, from public facilities (community and recreation centres, skate parks, water play parks) and from residential areas.
Home & Lifestyle Show and Open House	People felt there was no separation distances needed from other cannabis stores, liquor stores or stores selling tobacco. They felt a large separation distance was required (more than 200m) from schools, parks and playgrounds, public facilities, churches and supportive housing/seniors homes.

### Summary:

- Results are clearly in favor of separation distance from schools and places where youth gather as well as from public facilities.
- In favor (but less obviously so) to separation distances from churches, supportive housing/seniors homes
- With regards to separation from other cannabis stores, liquor stores and tobacco stores, it is much less clear but does fall slightly on the side of no separation.
- With regards to districts cannabis retail stores can be located in, the most support was for the downtown area the least support for mixed use areas.

### Conclusion:

Create separation distances from schools, places youth gather and public facilities as 200m or more. Create separation distances to churches and seniors homes at 100m. Set no separation distances from liquor, tobacco and other cannabis stores. Set districts that cannabis will be allowed in, restricting mixed use areas from having cannabis stores. Production and processing facilities should be limited to industrial or rural areas.

## Overall concerns

Highlights	
Home & Lifestyle Show and Open House	People were not concerned/neutral regarding the location of cannabis stores, operation of cannabis stores and the number of cannabis stores. People were most concerned with regards to the proximity (consumption and retail stores) to children/youth and the enforcement of our bylaws.
Online & telephone surveys	The two biggest concerns were how close retail stores can be to where children and youth gather and where cannabis can be consumed. People were least concerned about the operation of cannabis stores.

**Summary:** People were not concerned/neutral regarding the location of cannabis stores, operation of cannabis stores and the number of cannabis stores. People were most concerned with regards to the proximity (consumption and retail stores) to children/youth and the enforcement of our bylaws.

**Conclusion:** The concerns people raised are reflected in the conclusions for the above bylaws.

## Next steps

At their regular meeting on June 4, 2018, staff presented the results of the public consultation to City Council and made recommendations for the related bylaws. The following recommendations were supported by Council:

### Smoking Bylaw

- Direct staff to return with possible designated locations where cannabis could be consumed in public
- Make provisions for festivals/special event organizers to designate consumption areas within the festival/special event area in conjunction with City Special Events staff.

## Land Use Bylaw

- Create minimum separation distances from schools, places youth gather and public facilities of 200m
- Create minimum separation distances from churches and seniors homes of 100m
- Set no separations distance from liquor, tobacco and other cannabis stores
- Limit production and processing facilities to industrial or rural areas
- Set operating hours of cannabis retail stores to match those of liquor retail stores
- Leave the development permit fee for cannabis retails stores the same as all other development permits.

## Business Licencing

- No amendment required

Staff will now draft bylaws based on the above recommendations and will present the bylaws to Council on July 3, 2018. At that meeting, a Public Hearing will be held and residents will be able to speak for or against the bylaws publicly.