



Backgrounder: Research and engagement results on legalized recreational cannabis

The City of Calgary asked for citizens' opinions about legalized recreational cannabis to ensure that the sale and use of recreational cannabis reflects Calgarians' values. The City has done extensive research and engagement to gather information on citizens' attitudes toward legalization and their preferences for regulating recreational cannabis in Calgary. These research and engagement results will inform the necessary amendments of existing bylaws and help The City determine if new bylaws are needed. The City is committed to a transparent legalization process that addresses the best interests of Calgarians.

Research Methodology

Research methods included a phone survey, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. The telephone survey took place Nov. 6-19, 2017 and reached 1,002 randomly selected Calgarians ages 18 and older. The City also hosted five mixed-gender focus groups on Jan. 16-18, 2018. Participants were recruited via a Facebook ad and from the telephone survey. In addition, 30 in-depth telephone interviews were done Dec. 19, 2017 – Jan. 26, 2018. Participants were recruited from those who had taken part in The City's engagement process.

Research Highlights

- 55% of Calgarians support legalizing recreational cannabis. That's right in line with 56% of Canadians overall.
- One in four Calgarians have said they will consume or potentially consume cannabis when it is legal.
- 55% of respondents think public use of cannabis should mirror the rules for consuming alcohol. 32% of respondents said the rules should be more like those around smoking tobacco or vaping in public.
- Most people think that cannabis retailers should be located at a minimum distance from schools, playgrounds, vulnerable populations, and other cannabis retailers.
- Cannabis consumers acknowledged that odour of the plants may be an issue when it comes to home growing, and that ventilation and inspection requirements are expected. Some expressed that an outright ban on growing plants in multi-family residences is expected.

Engagement Methodology

In November 2017 The City hosted three targeted stakeholder workshops. Participants included current and future business operators; cannabis producers; representatives from sectors including health and emergency response agencies; advocacy and research; and Calgarians with a general interest. We also invited Calgarians to fill out a public online feedback form at engage.calgary.ca. The online form was available from Nov. 20, 2017 – Dec. 10, 2017. The engagement efforts on cannabis received the highest volume of citizen input of all 2017 engagement projects, with the online form receiving more than 45,000 visits and more than 15,000 contributions.

Engagement: What we heard

- Most participants strongly support the legalization of recreational cannabis.
- When asked about public consumption of cannabis, 43% of participants who responded thought the rules should be more like those for smoking or vaping in public; 19% said more like the rules for drinking alcohol in public; and 29% said a combination of the more restrictive rules for both drinking alcohol and smoking or vaping in public.
- Primarily commercial areas, business districts, downtown, inner city, more densely populated neighbourhoods or industrial areas were preferred for retail sale locations over residential neighbourhoods.
- Most participants agreed that if a business fails to comply with bylaws, fines, notices and closure should be considered.
- 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.

Complete research and engagement reports are available on [Calgary.ca/cannabis](https://calgary.ca/cannabis)

What is the difference between research and engagement?

Engagement was open to all participants who are likely to be impacted, influenced, and have interest in the topic of the legalization of cannabis. Engagement insights are not statistically representative.

Quantitative research (telephone survey) was conducted with a randomly selected sample of Calgarians which can represent all citizens. They do not necessarily have an existing interest in the topic of cannabis. This research method is statistically representative.

Qualitative research (focus groups and in-depth interviews) was conducted with distinct groups of specific types of citizens and business representatives in Calgary. They have a particular attitude towards – or interest in – the topic of cannabis. This research method is not statistically representative.