

Council to receive findings of alcohol in designated public places pilot

(Penticton, BC – July 3, 2020) – Council will receive a report on the pilot project to allow the responsible consumption of alcohol in designated public places at their meeting on July 7. Based on the findings of the pilot which ran from June 3 to July 4, the report recommends continuing the bylaw until the fall while undertaking further consultation with key stakeholder groups.

“The pilot received enough support from the community to recommend continuing the implementation of this bylaw,” says Director of Development Services, Blake Laven. “If Council agrees with the recommendation, the City will continue to consult with groups who may be affected and look at making any additional adjustments as part of a final review this fall.”

The City monitored a number of factors over the course of the pilot to gauge its effectiveness. RCMP and Bylaw reported a few incidents but indicated the types of calls received are not uncommon and may or may not be associated with the pilot project. Parks staff monitored the parks for changes in waste and damage to amenities. No additional need for maintenance or care in the pilot locations or changes to waste and recycling were observed.

One of the main activities of the pilot was to hear the views of the community. The public was invited to complete a survey through the shapeyourcitypenticton.ca website between June 10 and 24. Two versions of the same survey were completed. One version invited participation by a random sample of members of the shapeyourcitypenticton.ca website. The second allowed voluntary participation by all interested citizens.

The survey was completed by a total of 1,270 citizens. The results of the random sample showed that 71% of the population either strongly (42%) or somewhat (29%) support allowing consumption in designated public places. Those that support the purpose of the bylaw also strongly supported all of the locations included in the pilot project. When asked which of the pilot locations should allow consumption of alcohol, Okanagan Lake Park and Okanagan Beach were selected by over 92%. A quarter of participants suggested the program should be extended to Skaha Lake Park.

For the 13% who strongly oppose allowing alcohol consumption in designated public places and the 17% who somewhat oppose or are neutral on the subject, they expressed concern about enforcement, glass on the beach, underage drinking, and other forms of misconduct. They also questioned allowing alcohol in a family setting and whether or not the program would actually support local business.

“We’re pleased with the attention the survey received and the information people took the time to share,” said Engagement Strategist, JoAnne Kleb. “We will continue to explore the wealth of information in the comments to inform any additional adjustments to the bylaw, if Council chooses to extend the program for the remainder of the summer.”

A copy of the findings of the [pilot project](#), a summary of the [survey results](#), the complete survey responses, as well as copies of correspondence received, are all available for the public to view at shapeyourcitypenticton.ca.

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