

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

The following community insight activities were undertaken over the course of this project

1. A survey asking general questions about fireworks was sent to members of the Edmonton Insight Community and the broader public via an open link

- The survey was open between January 12 and 21, 2020
- A 3,134 responses were received from the members of the Edmonton Insight Community. 74 responses were received from the broader public.
- 42.7% respondents to the survey had no concerns with the use of fireworks in Edmonton
- 40.3% had concerns depending on the situation. A majority of these respondents indicated that as long as the fireworks are for a professional show, like a community event or New Year's Eve, they do not have concerns.
- 14.5% had concerns. Concerns were mainly related to noise, anxiety to pets, the potential for fire and other reasons.
- Provided all permit requirements are met, 38% survey respondents agreed that Edmontonians should be allowed to discharge fireworks on private residential property within City limits, 51% disagree

2. A Google Survey was sent to nearly 150 community leagues in summer 2020

- Twenty-two responses were received.
- Community league respondents indicated they are most likely to use fireworks New Year's Eve, Canada Day, winter festival, community league day (early September).
- 19 leagues were aware of changes to fireworks bylaw, specifically the Public Places Bylaw amendment requiring a permit for fireworks.
- When asked if there was feedback on the permitting process, most leagues did not have any. Some said that fees were exorbitant (in the order of \$750). This misunderstanding was subsequently corrected by City staff.

3. Interviews were held with five firework show providers (summer 2020)

- The intent was to get an understanding of show provider perspectives of the rules & regulations regarding fireworks.
- Comments included requests to lower permit fees and manage overtime for site inspections.

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- Show providers like the ability to purchase low-hazard consumer fireworks for shows.
 - Show providers requested clarity on site inspection process and decisions as early in the process as possible.
- 4. A Jurisdictional review of Canadian cities** was conducted to see which allowed the sale of fireworks and which needed permits.
- A summary of the results is in Attachment 3.
 - Most municipalities do not allow fireworks to be sold or discharged by individuals, although some make exceptions for certain nights, such as Canada Day or New Year's Day.
- 5. A jurisdictional scan/review of Fire Marshals** in Alberta was conducted.
- Eight Alberta Fire marshals received a survey regarding firework regulation in their jurisdictions. None of the responding Fire Marshals indicated that their jurisdictions allow fireworks for individuals.
 - Nine other municipalities' websites were reviewed. Most do not allow fireworks except those with "rural" zoning designations (such as acreages or farmland).
- 6. Discussions with Deputy Chiefs** in other jurisdictions to better understand what their best practices are.
- Calgary and Red Deer sent letters to Administration in support of consolidating the permit process to limit fireworks to professional shows only.
- 7. Meetings for specific community events** have been held with the event organizers and show providers.
- Every attempt was made to ensure that shows could proceed.
 - All shows proceeded, except two instances when federal safety regulations could not be met. No injuries, fires or concerns were recorded at shows with mitigation strategies.
- 8. A second virtual workshop was held with fireworks retailers and distributors** (December 2021) and then in February 2022, a revised version of the vendors permit conditions was emailed to them, for their information, along with the new date for the CPSC meeting. Overall, initial responses to the changes were positive.

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- 9. Cultural associations and temples** were approached via email to determine the best way to cascade information about firework regulations to their congregations.
- Contact information was collected for future use to notify these stakeholders about future changes to the fireworks regulations.
 - The intention was to find a better way to disseminate public education information about the safe use of fireworks in Edmonton.

10. A variety of stakeholders were emailed

- Local animal rescue associations said that although most cats do not have a problem with fireworks, some dogs react negatively to fireworks- it can cause extreme anxiety. Other dogs do not seem bothered.
- Wildlife appear to suffer from distress. Wildlife organizations report more incidences of lost, confused or distressed creatures, following fireworks displays. Many holidays that use fireworks coincide with animals denning and nesting, and usually occur in locations that they would be using, such as parks. Fireworks have a detrimental effect on some animals. These stakeholders would not like to see an increase in fireworks use.

11. Communication with Community Leagues. Two community outreach letters were sent to community leagues via email explaining how they could get pre-approval of their sites (Summer 2021).

- As part of its ongoing commitment to reducing barriers and improving communications, Administration has reached out to community leagues to let them know that they could have their event sites pre-approved, which would make obtaining a permit easier.
- Some leagues had to cancel shows due to pandemic restrictions.
- One league has historically used a volunteer but the Tier II permit requires a certified operator, so they are no longer doing the show.
- Generally, the feedback was positive.
- One league had a complaint about a scared dog and at one show an individual was a victim of robbery/theft.

12. The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues was approached to determine the best way to disseminate information (such as public service announcements) to the leagues, and to residents in each community.

- Administration was advised that there is an opportunity to include information in the Living Local publication.

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- There is also an opportunity to send Public Service Announcements and social media-ready graphics through league business email addresses.
- 13.** In Spring 2022, Administration approached major **Edmonton Fireworks Vendors** and the Canadian National Fireworks Association and made them aware of the proposed recommendations to introduce a single fireworks permit which requires Fireworks Operator Certificates.
- 14.** In Summer 2022, Administration invited over 80 representatives from faith, cultural and community organizations to attend one of five virtual engagement sessions on the proposed amendments to the fireworks permitting process.