

Interest Group Feedback

On March 9, 2021, Administration met with a group of 14 former shisha lounge business owners to discuss Community and Public Services Committee's motion on bylaw amendments required to create a business licence category permitting the indoor consumption of Shisha. Below is a summary of the feedback from the group:

- The ban on indoor consumption of shisha has led to a decline in business momentum and contributed to closure of some businesses as shisha was the primary source of business. Further, shisha smoking is a cultural practice in some communities and the ban has led to a shift in shisha smoking from lounges to homes.
- There were about 50 shisha lounges in the city before the ban.
- If indoor shisha smoking is permitted, businesses have capacity to create a separate smoking area with a separate HVAC system. Industry is in contact with an engineer who can design the system so that there's no spillage of smoke from the designated smoking area.
- The smoking area will be self-serve and staff will not be allowed to access the area while it's in use. Owners or staff will clean the area when it's not in use.
- Safety in the smoking area will be monitored through security cameras or sealed glass windows. Further, all shisha will be provided by the business and customers will be prohibited from bringing in any smoking substance. Customers may be searched before entry.
- Waterpipe hoses used in shisha smoking are not shared amongst customers only the base is shared. Each customer is provided with a waterpipe hose which is disposed of after use. The establishment cleans the base after each use.
- There are no concerns with implementing conditions of no minors permitted in designated smoking areas and mandatory signage identifying smoking areas. Businesses could also post public health information on the negative impacts of smoking.

In discussions with members of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) on March 11, 2021, the following feedback was obtained.

Attachment 3

- The safety of employees and the public from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke should be a priority for the City. It is not possible to have the smoking area free from secondhand smoke and there is no means of ventilating secondhand smoke. Additionally, there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure.
- The assumption that it is possible to create a smoking area that is only accessed by users is false. Cleaning staff, enforcement and environmental health personnel may need to access the area which would expose them to second hand smoke. Additionally, under Alberta Gaming, Liquor & Cannabis (AGLC) rule, a server must deliver alcohol to the table and self service of alcohol is not permitted.
- It is not feasible to have a physically separated smoking area that prevents smoke from entering the remainder of the premises. ASH has conducted measurements of air quality outside smoking rooms and found that smoke permeated the outside areas.
- ASH acknowledges that shisha smoking is a cultural practice, however, this does not mean it is a safe practice. There is evidence that any organic material that burns at a low temperature produces harmful chemical products. Further, shisha can still be consumed in homes and in some parks.