

# PROPOSED ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT PILOT

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT  
PUBLISHED: MAY 2023



# BACKGROUND

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In December 2021, the Alberta Government passed The Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act (formerly bill 80), which amended the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act to allow for the creation of Entertainment Districts.

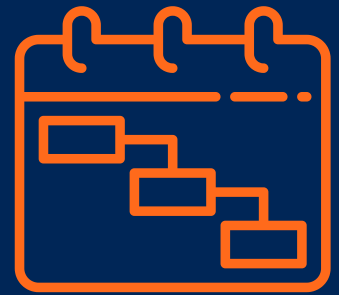
Entertainment Districts are specified public areas where adults may consume alcohol outside of a licensed premises while enjoying a variety of entertainment options. Bars and restaurants, within a designated district area, will be eligible to serve liquor for consumption within the boundary.

## WHY AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT?

We recognize that in many municipalities, Okotoks included, the downtown area is often the heart of the community. Okotoks Town Council has identified a “Strong Local Economy” as part of their 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. An Entertainment District pilot could help create and support activities in our downtown. The pilot is designed to determine whether such a district would benefit our downtown community, small and local businesses, as well as promote tourism

The Town heard from the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce that several Okotoks businesses were keen on a pilot such as this. The Chamber did approach Town Council asking them to consider implementing an Entertainment District for the 2022 event season. At that time, Council indicated they would consider it in 2023, once there was an opportunity to hear from community and business owners, like you.

*Thank you to those who took the opportunity to complete the community and business Entertainment District Surveys.*



## TIMELINE

**Chamber of Commerce  
Makes Recommendation**  
November 8, 2022

**Preliminary Report goes to  
GPC & Council Directs  
Public Participation &  
Draft Bylaw**  
March 20, 2023

**Public Survey Open**  
April 12- May 7, 2023

**Bylaw First Reading**  
April 24, 2023

**Business Survey Open**  
April 25- May 7, 2023

**Summary Report Available**  
May 11, 2023





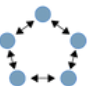
**GPC Discussion**  
May 15, 2023

**Goes Before Council**  
May 23, 2023



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION


We are committed (through the Town's Public Participation Policy) to giving the community an opportunity for input into decisions that will have an impact on residents and businesses.

					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with public to make sure concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."
	input zone		engagement zone		

## WHAT STAGE?


The Entertainment District Survey is at a **CONSULT** level.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY



**1639**  
survey responses

## BUSINESS SURVEY



**36**  
survey responses



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

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1

In person public engagement at the Okotoks Chamber Tradeshow.

2

Community survey open to all.

3

Business survey hand delivered to over 175 businesses located within the district boundary.

4

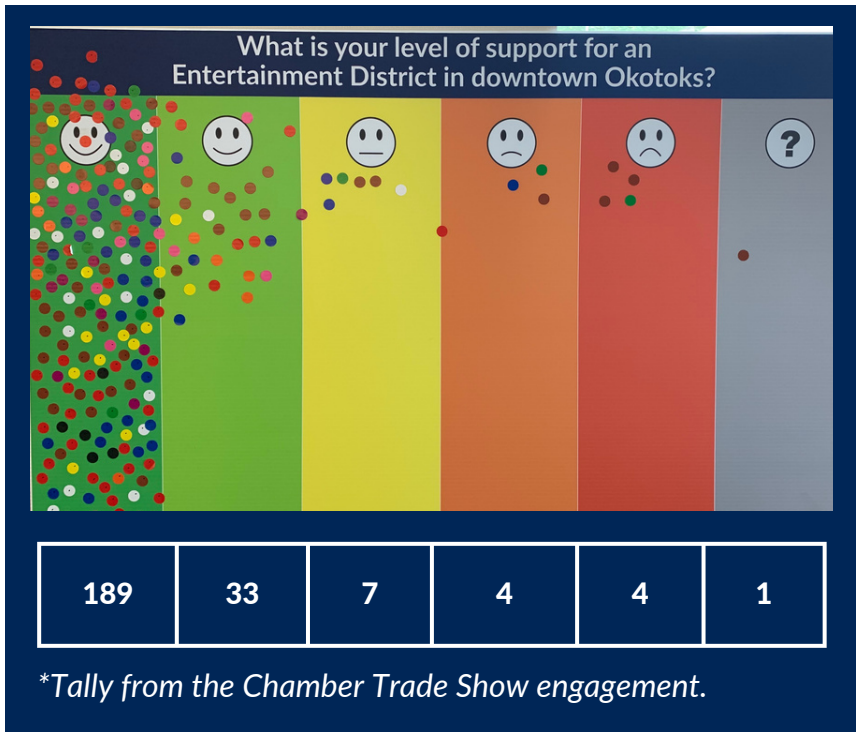
Public delegations heard at Council meetings on April 24 and May 8, 2023.





# IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

At the Chamber of Commerce  
Trade Show



IN PERSON  
ENGAGEMENT



238  
Participants

93%

of participants were  
supportive or very  
supportive of the  
Entertainment  
District.

## TOP CONCERNS

1. Safety
2. Parking
3. Permanent Road Closures
4. Timeframe
5. Boundary Size

"Wonderful idea that  
will bring more people  
and businesses  
downtown!"

"Good for special  
events but not year  
round."



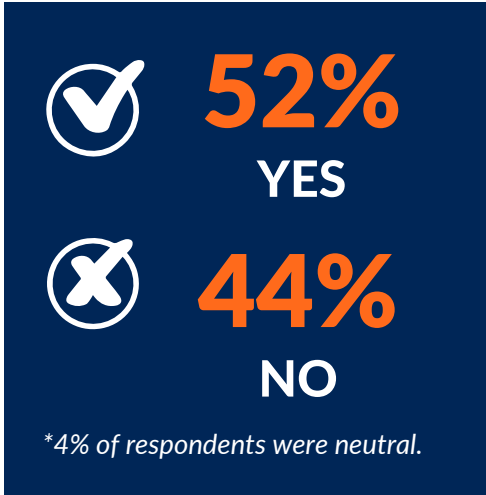
# COMMUNITY SURVEY

**Q1: What is your level of support for an Entertainment District in downtown Okotoks?**  
(5 Stars = fully in support and 1 Star = do not support).

**3.1★**  
AVERAGE RATING

1	2	3	4	5	Total
40.30% 652	3.65% 59	4.14% 67	6.24% 101	45.67% 739	1,618

\*21 people skipped the first question.

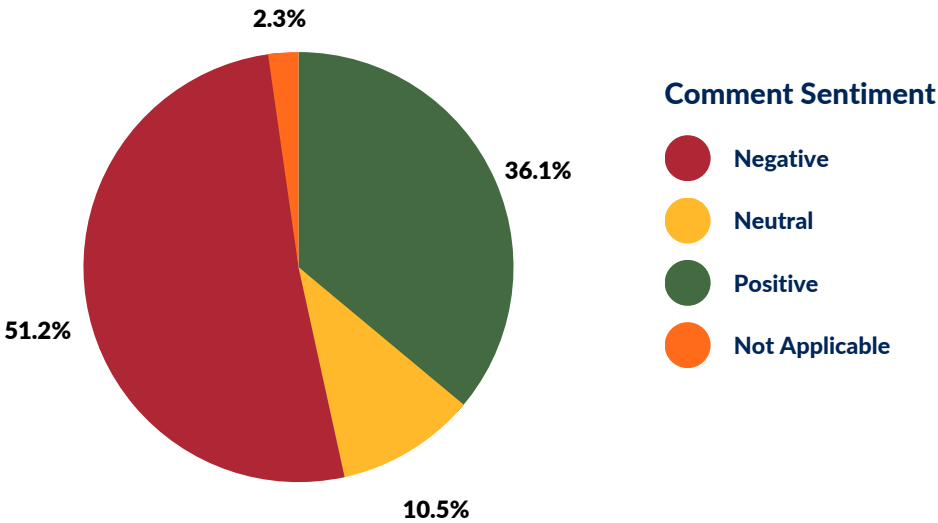


## Q2: Do you have comments to provide on the Entertainment District?

68% of people (1,119 comments) submitted a comment with the following overall sentiment.

*"I don't really think it will add to the charm of Okotoks, I love downtown for what it is right now and I fear that adding this will change the dynamics down there."*

*"Test it out for a season to see the impact and make a decision next year."*



# TOP 5 CONCERNS



## Policing & Safety (220 Comments)

Public safety, lack of enforcement resources.



## Not Family Friendly (175 Comments)

Not appropriate for children, bad influence for youth.



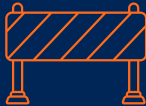
## Timeframe (133 Comments)

During special events, weekends only, etc.



## Waste & Collection (60 Comments)

Litter, added garbage and recycling needs, etc.



## Boundary & Location (45 Comments)

Size of district, area/streets included, etc.

# TOP 3 POSITIVES



## Support Local Business (52 Comments)

Encourage shopping and spending locally.



## Attract More Visitors (37 Comments)

Encourage visitors from other communities and bring more residents to the area to enjoy.



## Build Community (34 Comments)

Build community spirit, encourage socialization and

\*These themes are representative of the feedback collected through the community survey, the Chamber Trade Show, delegations at council meetings and emails received by Council and Administration.

# BUSINESS SURVEY

**Q1: What is your level of support for an Entertainment District in downtown Okotoks?**  
(5 Stars = fully in support and 1 Star = do not support).

2.1★

AVERAGE RATING

1	2	3	4	5	Total
63.89% 23	2.87% 1	13.89% 5	2.78% 1	16.67% 6	36



67%

NO



19%

YES

*\*14% of respondents were neutral.*

**Q2: If the proposed Entertainment District Pilot Project is approved by council, what would some of your hopes be as a business owner?**



*"I hope that it will bring more people downtown, that people will stay longer and visit more businesses. Downtown would become more of a destination for locals and visitors."*

*"It should not be 5 months. Only event days. To police the whole summer would be problematic."*



Q3: If the proposed Entertainment District Pilot Project is approved by council, what would your concerns be as a business owner?

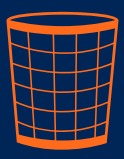


TOP 4 BUSINESS CONCERNS



Policing & Safety (18 Comments)

Public safety, lack of enforcement resources, theft, vandalism, policing intoxicated patrons.



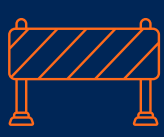
Litter & Washrooms (14 Comments)

Access to public washrooms, garbage collection, littered disposable cups, consistency of collection.



Timeframe (7 Comments)

During special events only, weekends only, shorter window during the day, length of pilot, etc.



Boundary & Location (7 Comments)

Size of district, area/streets included, type of businesses in the boundary, lack of accessibility.

# NEXT STEPS

[okotoks.ca/entertainment-district](https://okotoks.ca/entertainment-district)



## **May 11: The Entertainment District “what we heard” report will be shared.**

Town administration has compiled all feedback from the community and business surveys into a What We Heard Report and the Report with community feedback will be published to the Town website on Thursday, May 11.



## **May 15: Entertainment District goes to GPC for committee discussion.**

Discussion will resume at the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) on Monday, May 15 beginning at 4:30 p.m. GPC meetings are open to the public to attend in-person or to watch the livestream if you would like to hear the discussion. The GPC is an opportunity for Council to have a deeper conversation and fully discuss potential policy, bylaws and community feedback from public participation before they come forward to a regular Council meeting where bylaws are read.



## **May 23: After GPC discussions, the Bylaw goes to Council for consideration.**

The proposed pilot goes before Council for consideration of next steps dependent upon at the discussion of the GPC on May 15.