



Municipality of Jasper

# Sidewalk Seating Pilot Project

Public Engagement Report – February 2016

## Introduction

From mid-January to mid-February 2016, Jasper residents were invited to complete an online survey to provide feedback on the 2015 Sidewalk Seating Pilot Project run by the Municipality of Jasper. The purpose of the pilot project was to gather real-time information on how commercial use of public space could be regulated in Jasper, and support the development of a bylaw to that effect. Other similar public land uses include busking and farmers' markets.

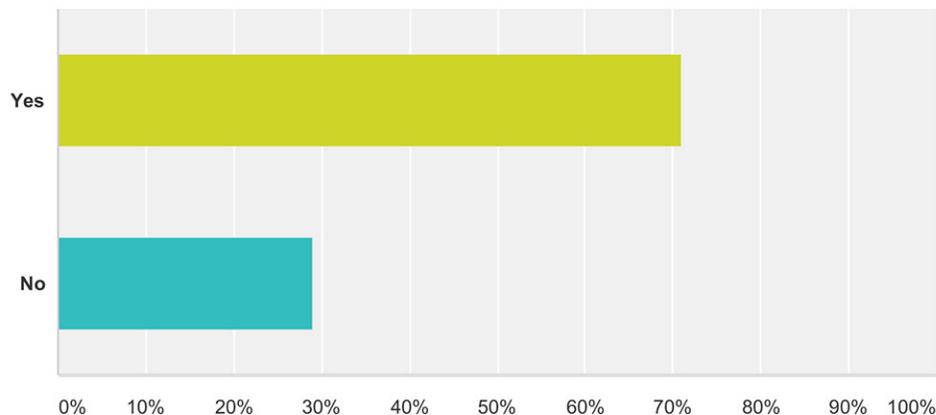
A total of 253 residents completed the online survey, and one actively engaged resident presented to Council. Detailed results are available on the municipal website at [www.jasper-alberta.com](http://www.jasper-alberta.com).

## Results Highlights

### Question 1:

Do you think outdoor sidewalk seating for restaurants is good for tourism in Jasper? Did it add to the visitor experience downtown?

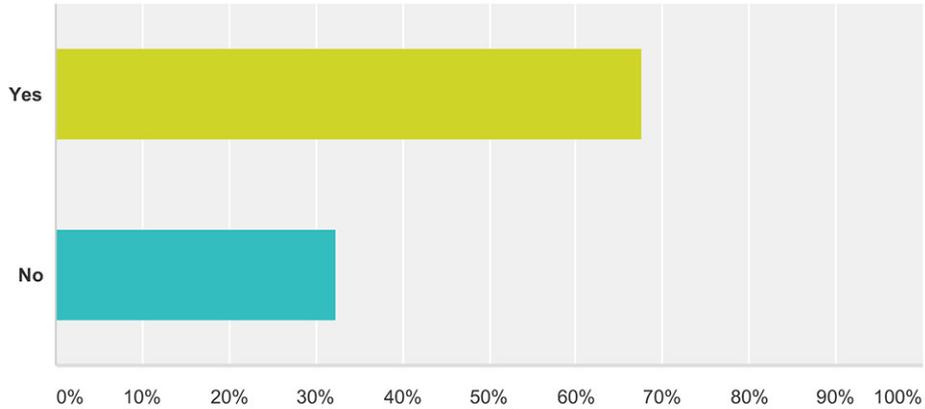
**Yes:** 70.97%    **No:** 29.03%



**Question 2:**

Would you like to see the program continue in future years?

**Yes:** 67.61%    **No:** 32.39%



**Question 3:**

What went well from your perspective?

*See comments summary below*

**Question 4:**

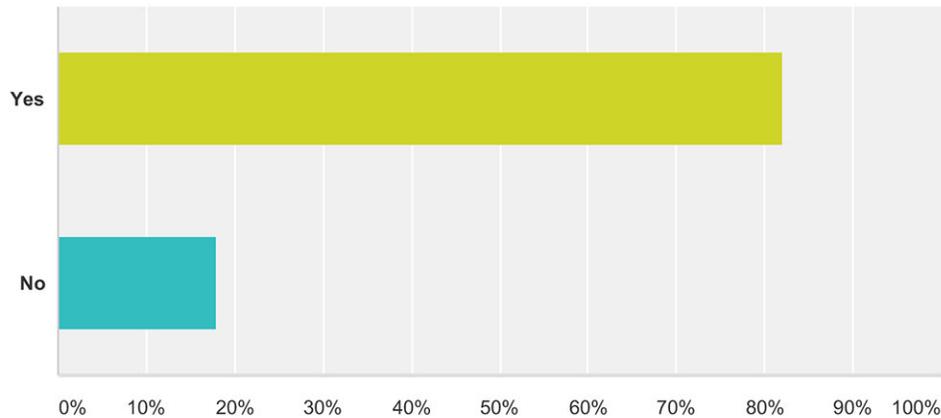
What suggestions do you have to improve the program?

*See comments summary below*

**Question 5:**

Were the sidewalk seating areas kept clean?

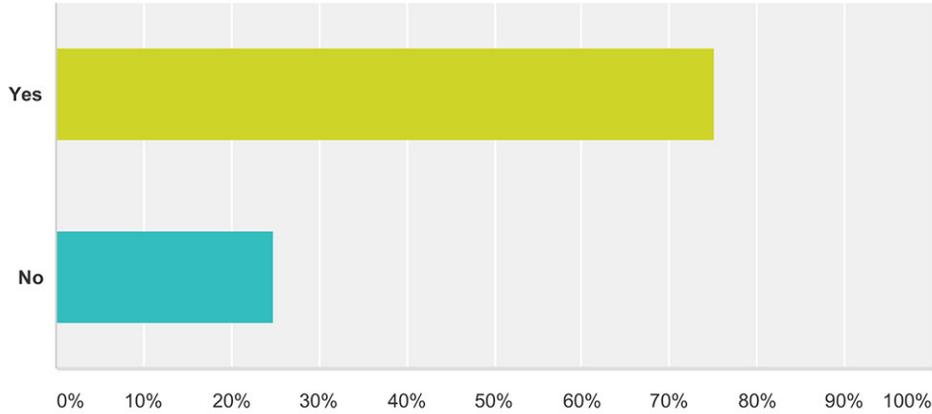
**Yes:** 82.13%    **No:** 17.87%



**Question 6:**

Were the furnishings used for the project (chairs, tables, bollards, planters, etc.) appropriate?

**Yes:** 75.21%    **No:** 24.79%



**Question 7:**

In your opinion, which was the Best Sidewalk Seating Area for 2015?

1. Jasper Brewing Co. Brew Pub and Eatery
2. Papa George’s Restaurant
3. Cassios Italian Restaurant

**Question 8:**

Additional comments you would like the Municipality of Jasper to consider:  
*See comments summary below*

### Comments Summary

The basic premise of public engagement is that consensus can be built around shared values and desired outcomes. Respondents’ comments are highlighted below based on the underlying values that emerged from the overall input, presenting an overview of the 853 individual comments received.

While some comments were utterly negative and against any form of change downtown, others were utterly positive and in support of innovation and progress. The majority of respondents, however, fall somewhere in the middle, generally supporting sidewalk seating and identifying opportunities for improvement.

#### Pedestrians First

- Flow patterns around sidewalk seating areas should ensure the free flow of pedestrians, including wandering visitors, and individuals pushing bikes or strollers;
- Safety concerns around pedestrians having to step off the sidewalk and walk on the road to avoid congested areas; and
- Concerns around accessibility for individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

Respondents felt there was not enough sidewalk space left for pedestrians on busy days; street furnishings such as bike racks, garbage cans, trees, etc., combined with sidewalk seating furnishings, caused challenges in certain areas.

#### Respondents' suggestions to improve pedestrian access:

- More monitoring in problematic areas, including more enforcement for cyclists and skateboarders riding on the sidewalk, and the placement of sandwich boards;
- Close Patricia Street to vehicles to encourage pedestrian traffic, allowing more opportunities for farmers' markets, outdoor dining and busking;
- Create a bike lane on Patricia Street;
- Ensure seating areas are not located too close to parked vehicles, making exiting vehicles difficult;
- Allow sidewalk seating to take place in the parking lane, or safely re-direct pedestrian traffic to the parking lane, as other communities like Canmore, Edmonton, Nelson and Fernie do;
- Standardize how sidewalk seating areas are defined (fences VS painted lines), and encourage businesses to ensure patrons do not move the barriers beyond the allocated space; and
- Chairs should not be allowed to be pulled back towards the sidewalk; they should be moved back and forth parallel to the sidewalk and building front.

#### **Innovation and Progress**

- Sidewalk seating created a vibrant, lively and enjoyable atmosphere downtown, increasing the sense of community, enhancing the visitor experience and creating opportunities for interaction between visitors and locals;
- Trying new things reflects well on our community, making downtown more appealing and showing Jasper is a contemporary, progressive town; and
- "Venture Beyond the naysayers and truly be bold" in moving our community forward.

#### **Cleanliness**

- Some respondents noted a lot of business owners made a true effort to keep their areas clean, while others suggested staff should be cleaning the area after closing;
- Some respondents reported napkins and other restaurant furnishings flying away, and birds stealing food from plates when they were not taken away in a timely fashion;
- Sidewalk seating furnishings that were not put away at night attracted late night partiers, generating more litter and noise;
- Respondents expressed mixed feelings around pets; some enjoyed the opportunity to keep pets nearby, while others expressed health concerns about it; and
- Appropriate cigarette butt bins should be mandatory.

Improving cleanliness downtown has been an area of focus of the Communities in Bloom committee who, in collaboration with the Jasper Park Chamber of Commerce, spearheaded the Tidy-up Tuesday initiative to encourage residents and businesses to sweep up cigarette butts, tidy up the front and back of their premises, and take pride in the appearance of their establishment. The Municipality of Jasper has been street sweeping weekly in the summer months to reduce dust levels, and is implementing a multi-year plan to replace waste and recycling bins, street furnishings and street signs downtown.

## Appearance of Sidewalk Seating Areas

- The diversity and uniqueness of each sidewalk seating area added to the character of the town;
- “Some patios were gorgeous, others tacky”;
- Perhaps standards or criteria need to be developed to allow flexibility and creativity, yet appealing and user-friendly furnishings for both the operator and the public; and
- Permanent or semi-permanent barriers are important if liquor is being served.

Respondents also recognized that as the initiative was a pilot project, restaurateurs were likely to invest in more permanent furnishings once they had assurance the program would continue.

## Business Equity

- Businesses who benefit from an expanded business area on public land should pay taxes accordingly.

## Conclusion

While online engagement tools have their limitations, they do offer residents a convenient and time-efficient way to provide feedback, all while preserving their anonymity. The survey results must be considered in conjunction with other decision making criteria, including input from participating businesses, adherence to permit guidelines, observations from the Bylaw and Operations departments, Council strategic priorities and overall community development goals, including the Jasper Community Sustainability Plan.

### Report submitted by:

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February 18, 2016