



Prepared for The City of Calgary by:



Contact:

Sarah Robertson  
Vice President  
Environics Research  
613-793-2229

[Sarah.Roberton@environics.ca](mailto:Sarah.Roberton@environics.ca)  
116 Albert Street Suite 300  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G3

Robert Hughes  
Senior Research Associate  
Environics Research  
613-699-8905  
[robert.hughes@environics.ca](mailto:robert.hughes@environics.ca)  
116 Albert Street Suite 300  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G3



## Executive summary

The following are the key findings from quantitative research conducted with Calgary residents about potential changes to smoking, vaping and waterpipe bylaws.

### Views about current smoking/vaping regulations

The current rules on smoking and vaping in public places are generally felt to be clear (63%), if not particularly well enforced (40%). Calgarians are divided about whether the current rules are adequate (40%) or need to be more restrictive (42%). Around one in three Calgarians say they have been personally bothered by smoking/vaping in public, and these individuals are much more likely to say stronger rules and better enforcement are required.

Majorities (56-79%) say both smoking and vaping should *not* be allowed in public parks, at outdoor events or at public transit stops; the minority who say they should be allowed in these spaces is slightly higher for vaping than for smoking. Opinion is divided about allowing smoking and vaping on sidewalks and in designated hotel and motel rooms.

### Waterpipes (shisha)

There is widespread awareness of waterpipes (89%), and very low reported use (4% in the past month). As with smoking and vaping, majorities say it should *not* be allowed in public spaces like parks, outdoor events and public transit stops. The exception is workplaces and restaurants such as shisha lounges: two-thirds (66%) say waterpipe use should be allowed there.

However, when asked how waterpipe regulations (which do not currently exist) should compare to those for smoking/vaping, the findings appear contradictory: almost two-thirds (63%) say the rules should in fact be the same, mainly because all substances should be treated equally. This suggests the level of support in the question about allowing waterpipe use in workplaces and restaurants reflects the inclusion of shisha lounges in the wording.

Very few (12%) say the rules for waterpipes should be less restrictive than for smoking/vaping; the main reason given (volunteered) is the belief that waterpipes are less harmful to health than smoking/vaping.

Potential smoking/vaping bylaw changes

There is majority support for a ban on smoking and vaping at outdoor public events (65%), in hotel rooms (64%) and in outdoor public parks (63%); in each case, almost half of residents express strong support for an outright ban. The potential bylaw changes enjoy majority support among virtually every socio-demographic group, but support is especially high among women, older Calgarians and non-users (i.e. non-smokers and non-vapers). Reasons for supporting a ban reflect concerns about the health effects and risk of exposure, especially for children. Among the minority who oppose a ban (roughly one-third of residents), the most common reason given is a preference for adults to make their own decisions without government involvement.

There is also widespread support for allowing designated smoking areas at public events (86%). Notably, support for these types of alternate arrangements is lower among Calgarians who strongly support the ban on smoking/vaping but is nonetheless acceptable to three-quarters (78%) of them.

There is broad but modest support for increased resources being used on stronger enforcement of bylaws (67% support, 33% strongly).

Potential waterpipe (shisha) bylaw changes

By comparison to the majority support for smoking/vaping bans, support for a ban on waterpipe use in all public premises, including all workplaces and shisha lounges, is evenly split (46% support, 48% oppose). Women (52%) and residents aged 35 and older (53%) are the only socio-demographic segments who express majority support for a waterpipe ban.

One reason for the lower degree of support for a waterpipe ban is that Calgarians are less likely to perceive a health risk (32% very concerned) compared to smoking (67%) and vaping (54%). The segment most concerned about the health risks of waterpipe use is, in turn, significantly more likely than others to support a ban (66%).

*(Continued...)*

Potential waterpipe (shisha) bylaw changes (continued)

Overall concern about safety risks (aside from health-related risks) from waterpipe use is higher for public places like workplaces and restaurants (65%) than for shisha lounges (47%), further demonstrating that the public thinks about dedicated lounges differently than from other public spaces.

Calgarians are split on how concerned they are about the effects a potential waterpipe ban would have on businesses (47% concerned and 49% not concerned). Concern about the business impact is primarily expressed by the one in five residents who are strongly opposed to a waterpipe ban (70%, vs. less than half of others).

Subgroup differences

The survey findings vary in a consistent way by population segment. In most instances, concerns about smoking, vaping and waterpipe use and support for restricting their use in public places are more widespread among: women, residents aged 35 and older, those who have bothered by smoking/vaping in the past, and non-users.

There is widespread awareness of recent news about vaping (84%), with more than half of residents who voluntarily recall hearing about vaping-related illnesses and deaths in the US or Canada. It is unclear the extent to which this news may have impacted residents' views about smoking and vaping regulations, given the breadth of awareness.

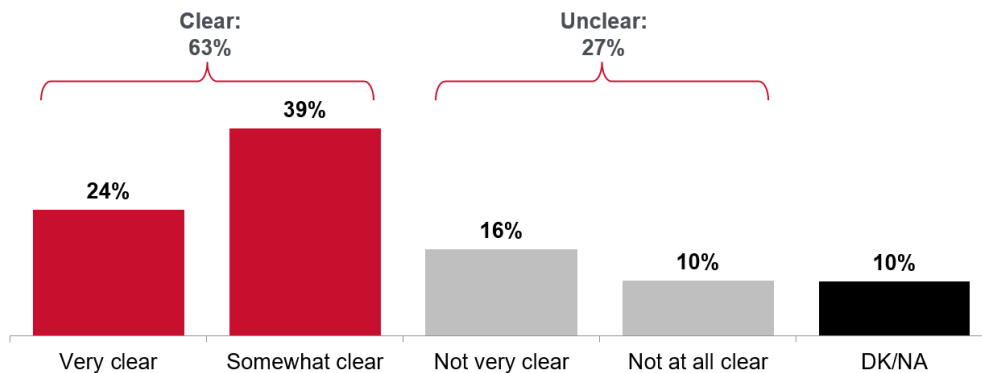


## Attitudes toward smoking, vaping and waterpipe use in public



### Clarity of smoking/vaping rules

A majority say the current rules about where people can smoke and vape in Calgary are clear, although only one in four find them very clear. Smokers and younger Calgarians are more likely than others to find the rules clear.



**Perception that rules are clear is higher among:**

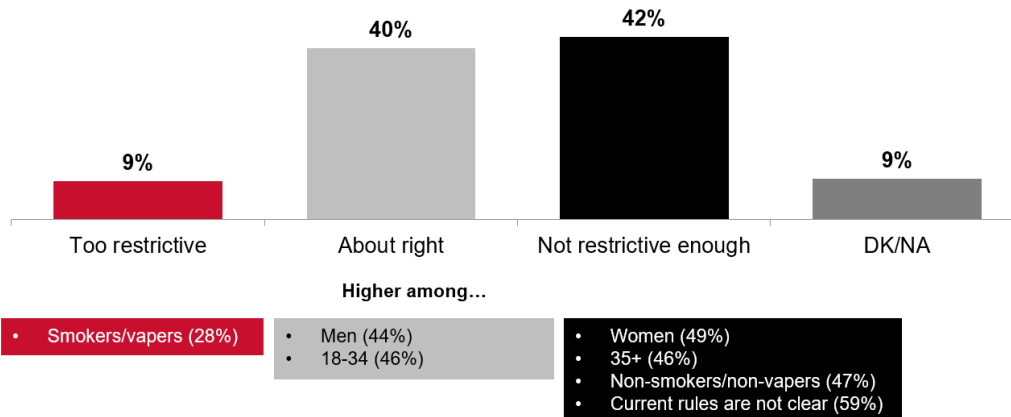
- Smokers/vapers (74%)
- 18-34 (72%)

Q1. Based on what you know or have heard, how clear are the current rules about where citizens can smoke and vape in Calgary? Are they...?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Restrictiveness of rules

Calgarians have mixed opinions about whether the current rules are adequate or not restrictive enough; only one in ten of all residents, but one-third of smokers, feel the rules are too restrictive. Belief that the rules need to be more restrictive is higher among women, residents aged 35+ and non-smokers/non-vapers.

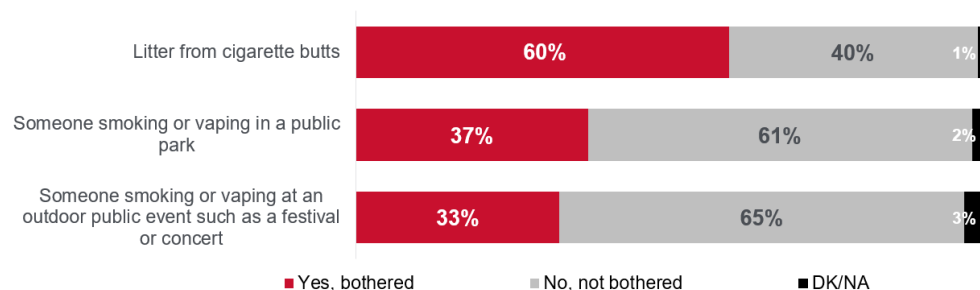


Q2. In your opinion, are the current rules...?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Personally bothered by smoking/vaping

Six in ten have been bothered by cigarette butt litter in the past six months. Fewer have been bothered by smoking/vaping in a public park or at an outdoor event, but these individuals are more likely to say the current rules are unclear, not restrictive enough and not well enforced.



**Proportion who report being bothered is higher among:**

- Non-smokers, non-vapers and non-users of waterpipes
- 18-54 years

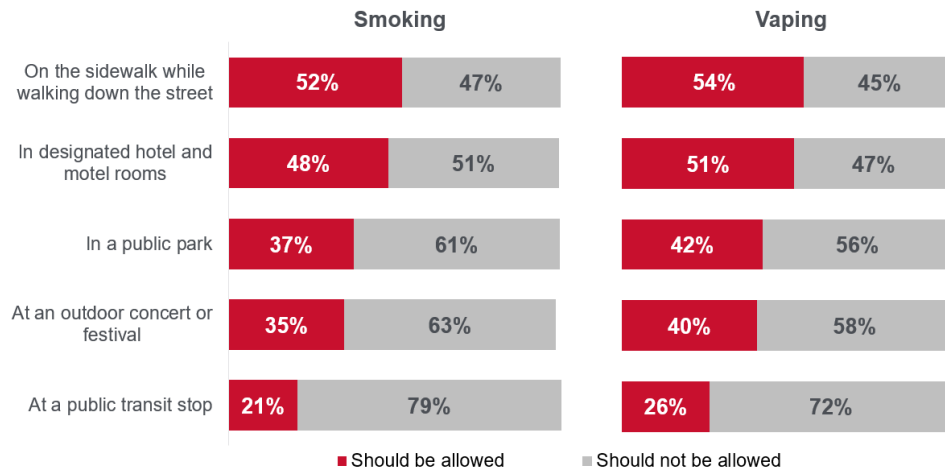
**Negative experiences with smoking/vaping in a public place are linked to views about the adequacy of current rules.** Those who have been bothered are more likely to say current rules about smoking/vaping in Calgary are unclear (33% vs. 21% of those not bothered), are not restrictive enough (64% vs. 23%), and are not well-enforced (59% vs. 32%).

Q4-Q6. In the past six months, has there been a time when you were personally bothered by...?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## If smoking/vaping should be allowed

Majorities say smoking and vaping should *not* be allowed in parks, at outdoor concerns or transit stops; this view is more widespread for smoking than for vaping. Opinion is divided about allowing their use on sidewalks or in designated hotel rooms.

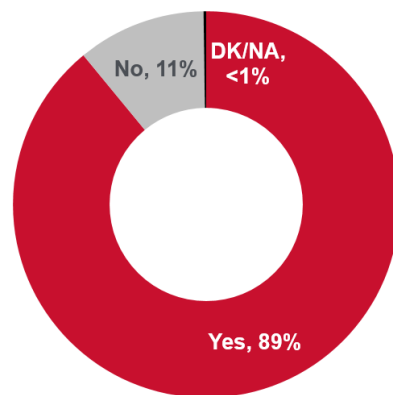


Q7-Q16. Do you think **smoking/vaping** should be allowed or should not allowed in the following places?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)  
Responses of "don't know" have been excluded



## Awareness of waterpipe smoking

Most Calgarians have heard of waterpipe smoking.



**Awareness is higher among:**

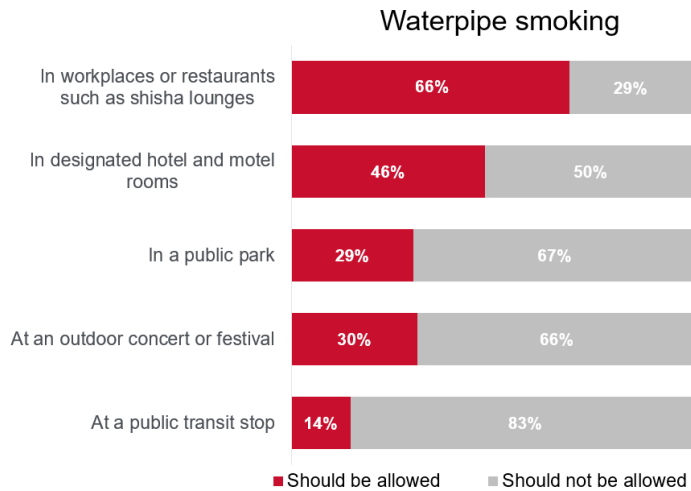
- 18-54 years (91% vs. 84% aged 55+)
- Households in the highest income bracket (97% \$150K+)

Q17. Have you ever heard of waterpipe smoking, sometimes called shisha or hookah, where an herbal product or an herbal and tobacco blend is burnt and the smoke is passed through a waterpipe and inhaled?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## If waterpipe smoking should be allowed

As with smoking and vaping, majorities say waterpipes should *not* be allowed in parks, at outdoor concerns or public transit stops, and there are mixed opinions about allowing them in designated hotel rooms. However, two-thirds say they should be allowed in public places such as shisha lounges.

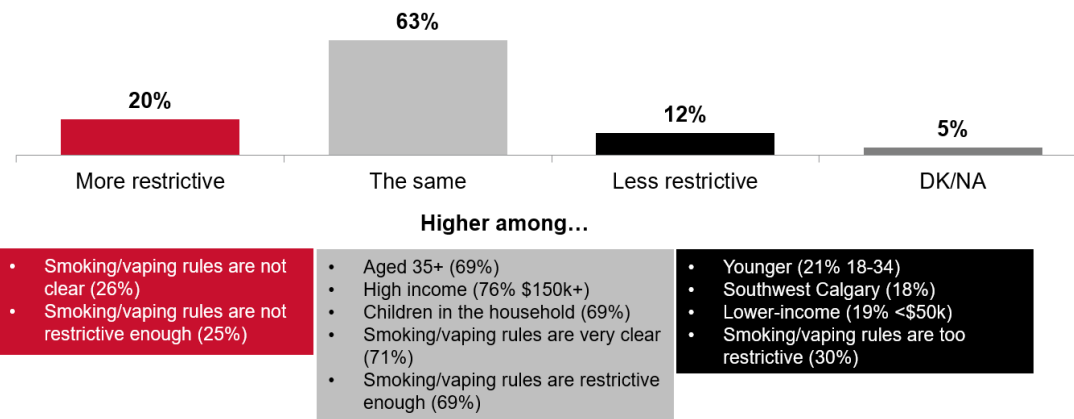


Q18-Q22. Do you think **waterpipe smoking** should be allowed or should not allowed in the following places?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)  
Responses of "don't know" have been excluded



## Rules for waterpipe vs. smoking/vaping

A majority of six in ten Calgarians say the rules for public use of waterpipes should be the same as for smoking and vaping. Very few say the rules should be less restrictive, but this view is more common among younger Calgarians and those who feel the current smoking/vaping rules are too restrictive.



Q23. In your opinion, should the rules about public use of waterpipes be the same as the rules for smoking and vaping in public, should they be more restrictive, or should they be less restrictive?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Rules for waterpipe vs. smoking/vaping

Residents who say the rules for waterpipe smoking should be more restrictive than for smoking/vaping want to protect children from exposure, protect people's health and avoid secondhand smoke. Those who say waterpipe rules should be the same as for smoking/vaping would prefer all substances be treated equally.

Reason	Should be more restrictive (n=196)	Should be same (n=667)
So children/young people are not exposed	46%	15%
Protect people's health	29%	15%
Avoid secondhand smoke / stop exposure in the air	22%	17%
Treat all substances the same / don't favour one	20%	66%
It bothers people / is an irritating habit	9%	4%
Don't like the smell	1%	4%
Other	9%	7%
Don't know	3%	4%

Q24. Why do you say that?

Base size: Respondents who said more restrictive (n=196), the same (n=667) or less restrictive (n=96)



## Rules for waterpipe vs. smoking/vaping

The small group who say the rules for waterpipe use should be less restrictive than those for smoking/vaping are most likely to cite the perception that it is less harmful to health. There are also some concerns about the cultural aspect of waterpipe use and the impact on businesses.

Reason	Should be less restrictive (n=96)
Not as harmful to health as smoking/vaping	49%
Should be allowed in establishments designed for it	18%
Allow adults to make their own decisions	13%
Because of the cultural aspect / affect certain cultures	12%
Should be allowed in a separate/designated spaces	6%
Ban will harm businesses	6%
Other	24%*
Don't know/Refused	<1%

Q24. Why do you say that?

Base size: Respondents who said more restrictive (n=196), the same (n=667) or less restrictive (n=96)

\*NOTE: The 'Other' category contains various responses that were insufficient in number (n<5) to create a unique code

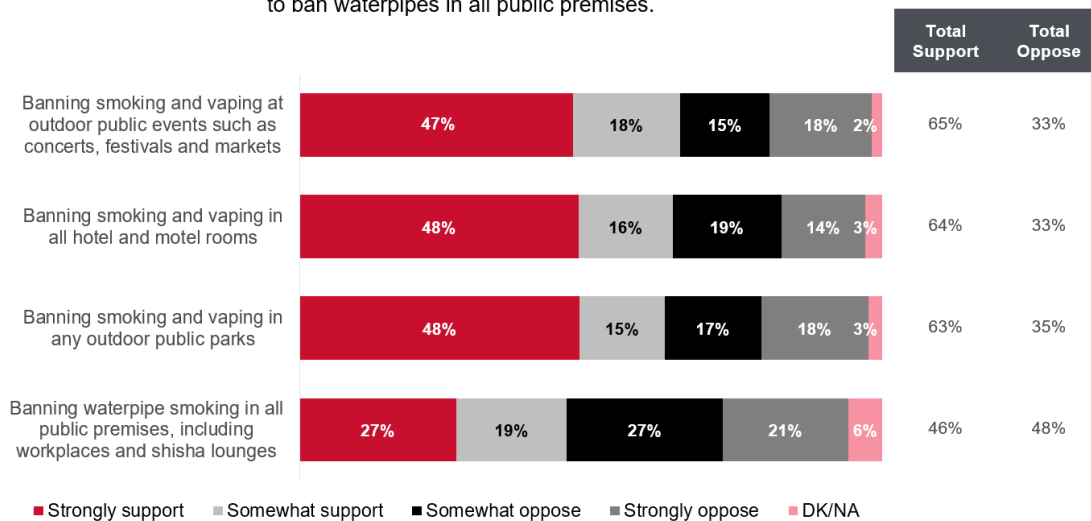


## Potential bylaw changes



## Support for bylaw changes

When asked directly, there is majority support for a ban on smoking/vaping at public events, in hotel rooms and in outdoor parks. Opinion is divided on whether to ban waterpipes in all public premises.



Q25-Q28. Calgary's City Council is considering changes to the Smoking and Vaping Bylaw. For each of the following, please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it. Just a reminder that we are not talking about cannabis.  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)





## Reasons why support potential ban

Support for the potential ban on smoking/vaping in outdoor parks and events are driven by health concerns: exposure to secondhand smoke, reducing youth exposure and protecting people's health. Smaller proportions also mention the smell or simply being irritated by it.

Reason given	Support ban on smoking/vaping in outdoor public parks (n=335)	Support ban on smoking/vaping at outdoor public events (n=348)
To avoid secondhand smoke / stop exposure in the air	52%	71%
So children/young people are not exposed to it	42%	24%
Protect people's health	33%	32%
Don't like the smell	17%	12%
It bothers people / is an irritating habit	8%	10%
To reduce littering / not environmentally-friendly	5%	1%
Other	6%	8%
Don't know/refused	2%	1%

Q29. Why do you say you support..... (selected item).  
Base size: Respondents who support a ban



## Reasons why oppose potential ban

The minority who oppose a ban on smoking/vaping express a preference for autonomy over government regulation; they also feel non-users can avoid users in outdoor spaces (generally) and through designated smoking/vaping areas.

Reason given	Smoking/vaping in any outdoor public parks (n=173)	Smoking/vaping at outdoor public events (n=148)
Allows adults to make their own decisions / don't need government deciding for us	34%	43%
The outdoors is not a confined space / people can avoid others smoking and vaping if they want to	32%	16%
Should be allowed in a separate/designated space separated from non-users	26%	28%
Ban will harm businesses	1%	5%
Other	11%	10%
Don't know/refused	13%	16%

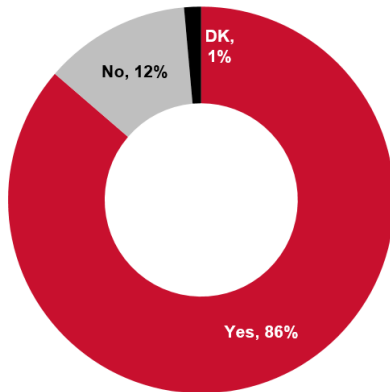
For both scenarios, men are significantly more likely than women to say they oppose the ban because adults can make their own decisions

Q29. Why do you say you oppose..... (selected item).  
Base size: Respondents who oppose a ban



## Support for designated smoking areas

A large majority of Calgarians, and almost all smokers/vapers, support designated smoking areas at public events. While support for designated areas is lower among those who most want smoking/vaping banned at public events, nonetheless three-quarters are fine with this approach.



**Support is higher among:**

- 18-34 (94%)
- Households with children (92%)
- Smokers/vapers (98%)
- Current rules are too restrictive (94%) or about right (92%)

**Support is lower among:**

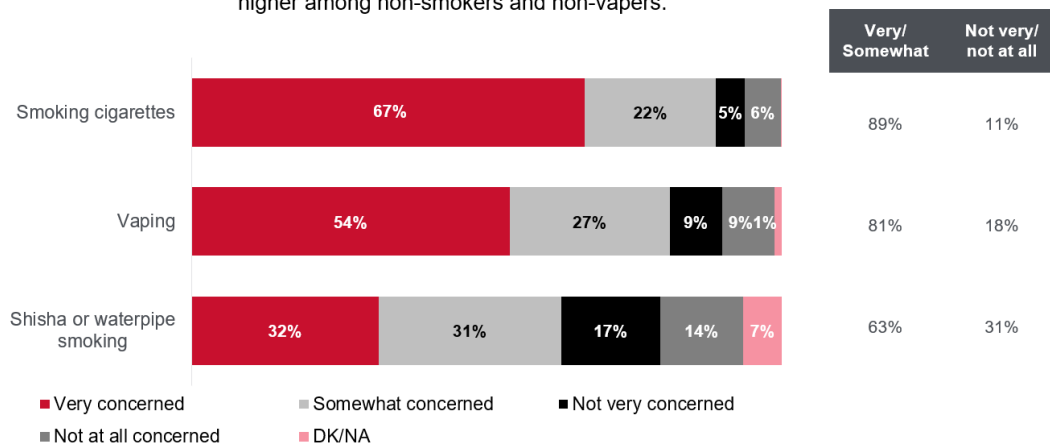
- Strongly support a ban at public events (78%)

Q30. Should public events such as festivals, concerts and markets be allowed to have designated smoking areas where smoking, vaping or waterpipe use are allowed?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Concerns about health risks

Most Calgarians express at least some concern about the health risks of all three substances. However, the perceived degree of risk varies by substance: it is highest for smoking, followed by vaping, and lowest for waterpipes. Concern is higher among non-smokers and non-vapers.



Younger residents (18-34) are significantly **less** concerned about the health risks of vaping and waterpipe use than those aged 55+.

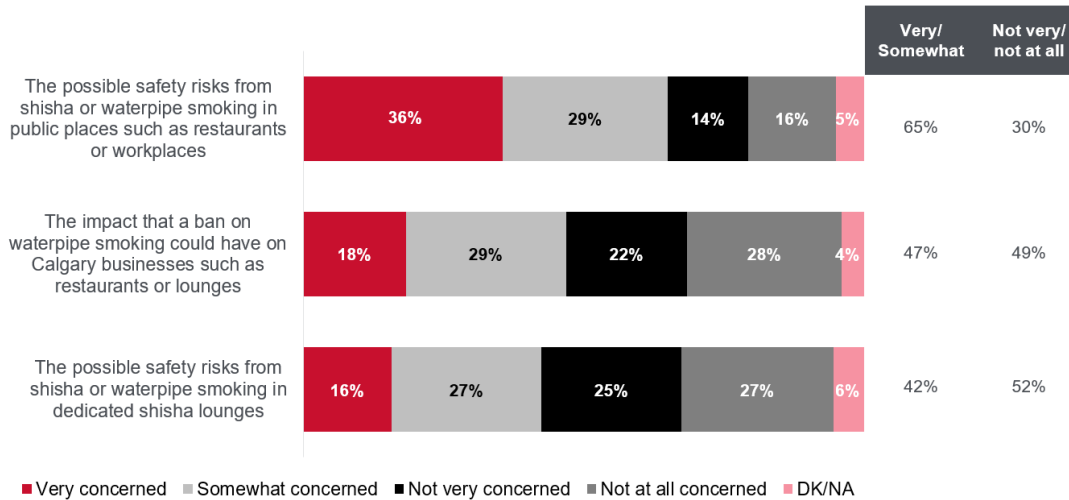
Support for a waterpipe ban is significantly **higher** among those very concerned about the health risks of shisha use (66%, vs. 46% somewhat concerned and 36% not concerned).

Q35-Q37. Would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned about the health risks from each of the following?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Concerns about waterpipe use

Two-thirds are concerned about the safety risks of waterpipe use in public places, but less than half are concerned about the risks in dedicated shisha lounges. The degree of concern about the potential impact on businesses in Calgary is mixed.



Q38-Q40. Using the same scale, how concerned are you about each of the following?  
Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)



## Impact on waterpipe bylaw support

Concern about the safety risks of waterpipe use in public places (outside of shisha lounges) is largely consistent regardless of degree of support for the bylaw change. Notably, concern about the safety risks in shisha lounges tends to be confined primarily to supporters of a waterpipe ban, while concern about the business impact is confined primarily to those who strongly oppose a ban.

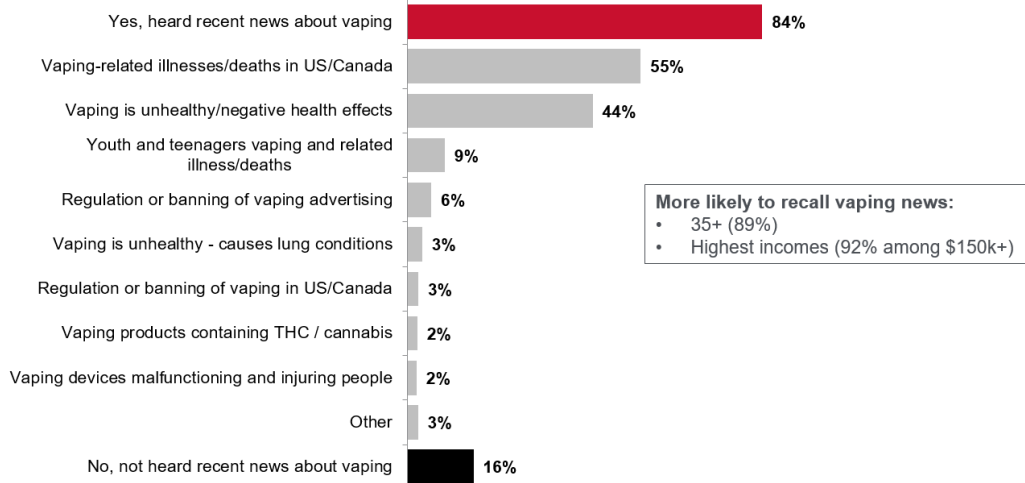
Very/somewhat concerned about...	Support/oppose waterpipe ban			
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Safety risks in public places	85%	79%	58%	42%
Safety risks in dedicated shisha lounges	66%	50%	32%	25%
Impact of a ban on Calgary businesses	33%	44%	48%	70%

Q29. Why do you say you oppose..... (selected item).  
Base size: Respondents who oppose a ban



## Recall of news about vaping

There is widespread awareness of recent news about vaping, with more than half who voluntarily recall hearing about vaping-related illnesses and deaths in the US or Canada and a large group who have heard that vaping has negative health effects.



Q41. Have you seen, read, or heard anything in the news recently about vaping?  
 Q42. What have you seen, read, or heard? (**Note:** only responses provided by at least 2% of respondents are shown)  
 Base size: All respondents (n=1,012)