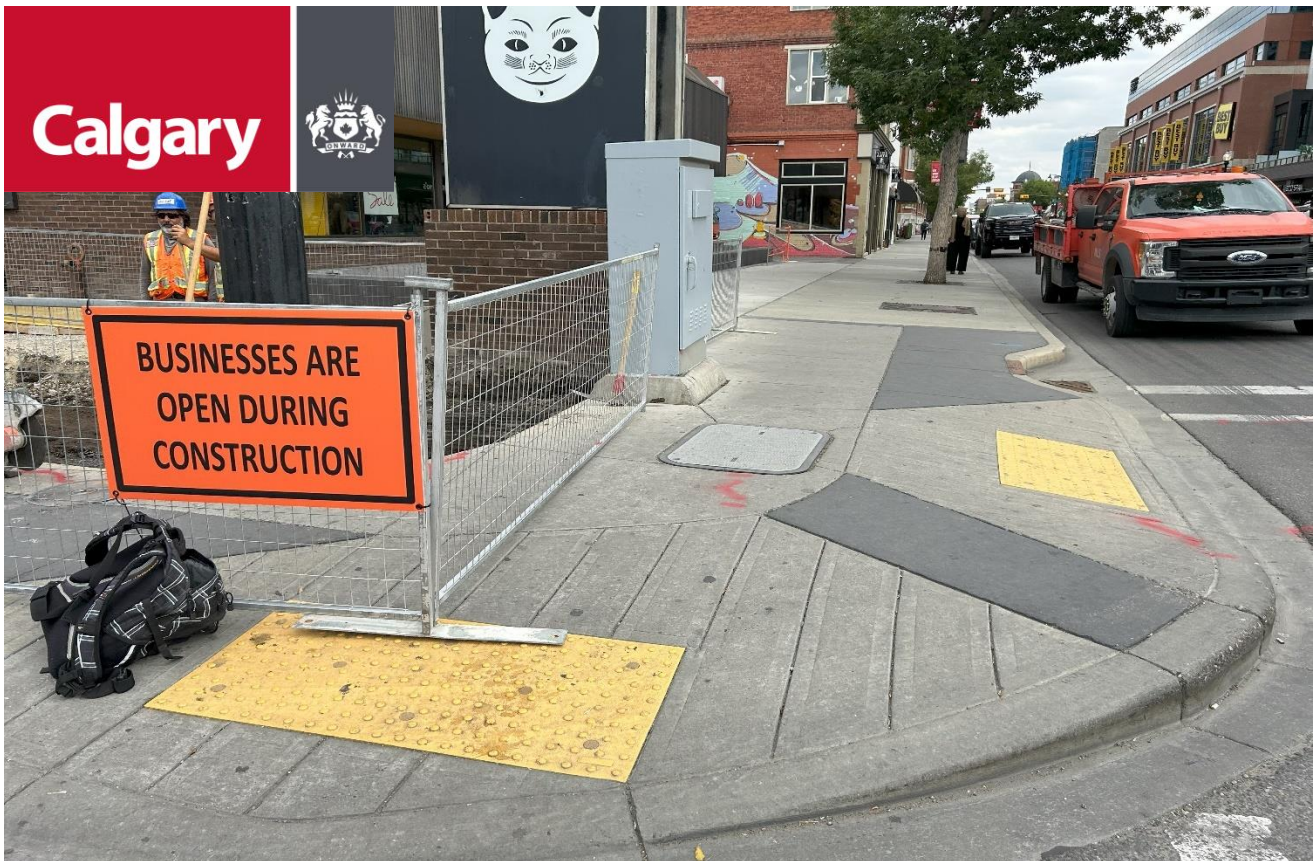




Business-Friendly Construction Policy

What We Heard Report – Phase 2

June 16, 2025



The City has been piloting and testing a variety of Business-friendly approaches aimed at improving wayfinding during planned City-led construction.

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Executive summary

The City recognizes how important businesses are for the local economy. As we continue to invest in infrastructure and amenities for Calgarians, we are working to enhance the way businesses and customers experience City-led construction.

As directed by City Council, The City of Calgary is developing a Business-Friendly Construction Policy and preparing to make a recommendation to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee in early 2026. This Policy aims to create a more consistent approach to mitigating potential construction-related challenges for businesses and enhancing the experience of both businesses and customers during City-led construction projects. The draft policy and objectives will be shaped in part by feedback from Calgarians gathered during phases one through three of public engagement. Information is also being gathered through targeted research involving businesses throughout Calgary.

Phase 2 engagement

Objectives

The objective of Phase 2 public engagement was to validate and refine the priorities identified during Phase 1 by engaging directly with both customers and businesses. This included exploring issues such as accessibility, signage, parking, and overall convenience for those visiting businesses experiencing City-led construction.

We also gathered feedback on strategies or initiatives that had been effective—or were seen as potentially effective—for encouraging customer visits during construction. These conversations helped clarify the respective roles of The City and its partners in supporting business areas throughout construction.

Approach

Phase 2 expanded on earlier efforts by reconnecting with business organizations and including customers more directly. Engagement opportunities included a customer-focused survey, an in-person workshop, Business Advisory Committee presentation, intercept surveys, pop-up events and an online drop-in session, collectively reaching 651 individuals.

Further details on specific engagement activities are provided in the "**Phase 2 in Detail**" section of this document.

Feedback

Insights from Phase 2—along with findings from Phase 1, internal consultations with City staff, research, and industry best practices—will inform the development of the draft policy objectives for the Business-Friendly Construction Policy.

Common themes heard

Customer survey

- **Prioritize accessibility and parking**
 - Customers emphasized the importance of convenient parking and clear pedestrian access. Temporary lots and flexible on-street parking should be prioritized during construction.
- **Enhance communication through signage**
 - Clear, early signage about construction timelines, detours, and business access is critical to reduce confusion and build public trust.
- **Support businesses with visibility**
 - While promotions were appreciated, customers stressed that visibility and access were more important. Emphasis should be placed on signage and wayfinding.

- **Ensure pedestrian safety and cleanliness**
 - Safe, accessible walkways and well-maintained construction areas significantly improve the customer experience and likelihood to visit businesses.
- **Consider travel patterns in planning**
 - We heard that many customers visit business areas by car. Strategies should reflect these patterns and consider local demographics and regional travel behaviours.

Business organization workshop and drop-in session

- **Validation of Phase 1 themes**
 - Participants agreed the themes from Phase 1 were still accurate but requested clearer explanations of how specific strategies would be implemented.
- **Enhanced collaboration with BIAs**
 - There is a strong desire for clearer distinction of responsibilities between City departments and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) when it comes to construction. BIA participants recommended flexible, tailored support that reflects varying capacity. Financial tools or supports were also suggested to help BIAs play an active role.
- **Hospitality and public service mindset**
 - Participants encouraged a greater focus on visitor experience, recommending that construction zones consider not only technical planning, but also aesthetic and functional planning for visitors and customers. Local context - such as peak hours and seasonal activity- should be considered in planning and coordination.

New themes emerging

- **Timely updates**
 - Some BIA participants suggested treating high-impact construction more like an emergency - using proactive triage systems, early-warning indicators and tools to help manage impacts.
 - Some BIAs expressed an interest in greater control over signage, wayfinding, and pedestrian flow, others indicated there is no capacity. There was support for developing standardized toolkits and support to help BIAs lead local marketing and communication efforts during construction.
- **Priorities**
 - The customer survey provided insight into the areas that we can focus on that would make the most difference to their experience. Focusing on the basics in areas with city-led construction like parking, signage, and creating safe and welcoming environment would encourage customers to continue visiting these areas.

Areas for consideration

The following are themes we heard that require further consideration.

- **Collaboration remains a core value, but BIAs have varying capacities**

- Participants emphasized that collaboration models must consider the varying capacities of different BIAs. For example, not all BIAs have the capacity or want to act as liaisons.
- **Improving internal coordination at The City is important**
 - A systems-thinking approach—where departments share responsibility and coordinate early in the planning process—was seen to strengthen internal collaboration and improve project outcomes from a business and community perspective. For example, construction of the infrastructure project may be complete, but operations and maintenance are not yet resolved and therefore the project does not meet post-construction expectations from businesses or the community.
- **Clarifying authority for BIAs**
 - As noted above, there is strong interest among some BIAs to have more involvement in certain aspects of construction-related activities like construction phasing and planning discussions as well as signage and wayfinding. However, participants identified that City policies and liability concerns may limit how much involvement BIAs can have.

Next steps

High-level key themes and draft policy objectives will be shared back to interest-holders for review and to make sure we are on the right track for the remainder of Phase 3 engagement.

Phase 3 will begin mid-June and will emphasize reconnecting with businesses and BIAs, particularly those who were unable to participate earlier, as well as working with City Administration and construction industry partners to gather feedback and refine the policy objectives and plan for implementation. This approach ensures that all interested parties have a meaningful opportunity to provide feedback.

Project background

Project overview

As directed by City Council, work is underway to establish a business-friendly construction policy that will clarify The City's approach to mitigating potential challenges from construction and improve how businesses and their customers experience City-led construction. This issue is not unique to Calgary; major municipalities across Canada are facing similar requests from businesses, to implement business-friendly construction management approaches during construction.

Throughout 2025, we will engage with the public to better understand the experiences of businesses and Calgarians with City-led construction. We will be building on what we have been

learning, and we are actively seeking input from businesses and their customers and working with our partners in the construction industry to shape clear and effective policy objectives.

Policy goal

Develop a more consistent approach that guides how The City will work toward mitigating construction impacts on businesses and improving how businesses and their customers experience City-led construction.

Public engagement overview

The City will actively engage with the business community and key interest-holders throughout 2025. This engagement will involve gathering insights and feedback from a range of interest-holders, including businesses, customers, the construction industry representatives and City Administration.

Feedback from this public engagement, in combination with research, lessons learned from pilot initiatives, City policies and best practices, will be used to shape the draft objectives-based policy. The draft policy and objectives will be informed by participants' contributions, and this information will be considered further as City Administration develops a plan to support The City to implement the policy over time.

Previous engagement

As part of Phase 1 – Explore (February–March 2025), The City engaged Calgary's business community, customers, and internal interest-holders through a combination of research-led online surveys, interest-holder workshops, and public engagement pop-ups. The primary audience for this phase was businesses and business organizations, with group workshops serving as the main method for gathering input, complemented by a targeted business survey. Feedback from these sessions identified key themes, centering on the need for greater clarity and consistency in construction policy and service delivery, stronger collaboration with BIAs, and an enhanced customer and community experience.

Phase 2 in detail

Phase 2: Expand built on the findings from Phase 1 by directly engaging Calgarians and business interest-holders. The project team launched an online customer-focused survey and conducted pop-up events across Calgary to increase awareness and invite public input.

In addition to customer outreach, we reconnected with business groups through a follow-up meeting with the Business Advisory Committee and an in-person workshop with BIA Executive Directors. These conversations helped to test and expand on the themes from Phase 1 and provided further insight into how the policy could support local businesses more effectively during construction.

See the “Engagement Summary” table below for a breakdown of participation by audience and method.

How we engaged, informed and promoted

A series of online and in-person engagement sessions for Phase 2: Expand were held between April and May 2025. The following tools and tactics were used to engage, inform and promote these opportunities:

Engage		
	Online public survey	An online survey was the main tool for sharing information and collecting customer feedback.
	In-person workshop	Hosted a small focus group discussion with BIAs.
	Online drop-in session	Extra drop-in session added for those who missed the workshop.
	Pop-ups + intercept surveys	Held in accessible and informal settings allowing for spontaneous interactions with a diverse range of participants using interactive method like surveys and project QR codes.
	Presentation at a Committee Meeting	Engaging interested parties through regularly scheduled monthly meetings, ensuring the approach is convenient and respectful of their time.
Inform		
	Project webpage	Information banner featured on the project webpage to highlight current engagement opportunities.
	Direct email	Information on upcoming engagement opportunities provided to business organizations to share with their members.
	Engage weekly	A dynamic, internally circulated online newsletter that delivers timely, accurate, city-wide, and ward-specific information on public engagement and research activities.
Communications		
	Social media	Extensive social media advertising launched across multiple platforms, including NextDoor, Facebook, Instagram, and BlueSky.
	Sandwich boards	Sandwich board displayed at the Calgary Municipal Building
	Postcards	Postcards distributed to The City of Calgary’s Community and Business Liaisons to support promotion within project areas.
	Email newsletter	Email newsletters distributed to promote engagement opportunities.
	Community Association outreach	Opportunities for community engagement, particularly through local pop-up events shared with Community Associations via their respective Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators.

Table 1: Engagement summary table

Audience and tactic	Date	Participation numbers
Online portal and survey open from April 17 to May 22, 2025		128
Pop up #1 and Intercept survey – Vivo	May 1	39
Pop up #2 and Intercept survey – Genesis Centre Commons	May 3	47
Pop up #3 and Intercept survey – Remington YMCA	May 3	30
Pop up #4 – West Farmers Market	May 4	25
In-person workshop – Business Improvement Areas (BIA)	May 5	4
Executive Directors (in-person)		
Meeting with Business Advisory Committee (online)	May 6	23
Intercept survey – Municipal Building	May 8	16
CBR - Marda Loop	May 7	19
CBR - Stephen Ave	May 8	14
CBR - Kensington	May 8	47
CBR - Bridgeland	May 8	17
CBR - 17 Avenue	May 9	27
CBR - Inglewood Night Market	May 9	60
Pop up #5 – Cardel Recreation Centre	May 10	44
Pop up #6 – South Farmers Market	May 11	110
Drop-in Session with Interested Parties (online)	May 15	1
Total Number of Participants		651

What we asked, what we heard

The following sections summarize how Phase 2 feedback builds on and refines the general themes identified during Phase 1. Section 1 highlights key findings from the customer survey and Section 2 summarizes feedback from interested parties, with a focus on BIAs.

Section 1 – Customer survey

What we asked	Why we asked
1. In the past 2 years, how often have you visited businesses in areas with active construction?	
2. In the past 2 years, what types of businesses, products or services were you typically seeking in areas with active construction?	To understand user behavior in construction zones
a. Retail shopping b. Dining c. Personal services d. Professional services e. Entertainment	

3. What is your preferred method of travel to get to businesses in areas with active construction? a. Vehicle b. Walking c. Cycling/Scooters d. Public Transportation	To confirm transportation preferences and identify opportunities to tailor communication and signage or develop other solutions to improve the visitor experience
4. Please rank the following in terms of what is most important to you when visiting businesses in areas under construction. (Please rank from most to least important) a. Directional signage, business and project information b. Parking, accessibility and convenience c. Promotions, events and incentives d. Comfort and experience	To gather actionable suggestions from customers, helping to identify practical solutions that could mitigate the inconveniences during construction
5. Rank the following comfort and experience factors. (Please rank from most to least important) a. Signage in advance of construction b. What work is being done and why c. Upcoming new closures or changes to detours d. Business information signs e. Directions to parking locations f. Project contact information	To identify which aspects of communication and wayfinding are most important to creating a feeling of comfort for the public during a construction project
6. What alternative parking options or information would improve your experience during construction periods? (Please rank from most to least important to you): a. Temporary parking lots b. On street parking adjustments to facilitate parking c. Temporary parking permits d. Directional signage for available parking e. Considerations for alternative transportation	To gauge preferences for parking solutions and help identify potential strategies that maintain accessibility for customers
7. What kind of information do you want to see on signage in areas under construction? (Please rank from most to least important to you): a. Signage in advance of construction b. What work is being done and why c. Upcoming new closures or changes to detours d. Business information signs e. Directions to parking locations f. Project contact information	To identify key information needs and prioritize
8. How likely are you to participate in promotional offers or events aimed at encouraging business patronage during and after construction? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not likely at all and 5 = Very likely)	Inform post-construction marketing, events and outreach efforts

Customer survey summary

Over the past two years, a significant majority (71%) of respondents reported visiting businesses in areas affected by construction at least a few times a month, with nearly 30% doing so several times a week. Dining and retail were the most common reasons for these visits. Both business types are convenience-based, as opposed to appointment-based businesses.

With most people driving to businesses in construction zones (nearly 66% of customers preferred using vehicles) easy parking and access mattered much more to respondents than promotions or events.

In terms of comfort and experience, the top concern was safe and accessible pedestrian access, followed by tidy construction areas and clear detours. For parking solutions, respondents favored temporary lots and on-street adjustments.

When it comes to signage, customers valued advance notice about construction timelines and progress the most, while project contact information was seen as least important. Respondents had a mixed interest in promotional offers, with an average likelihood score of 3.03 out of 5—33% were likely to participate, while 18% were not likely at all.

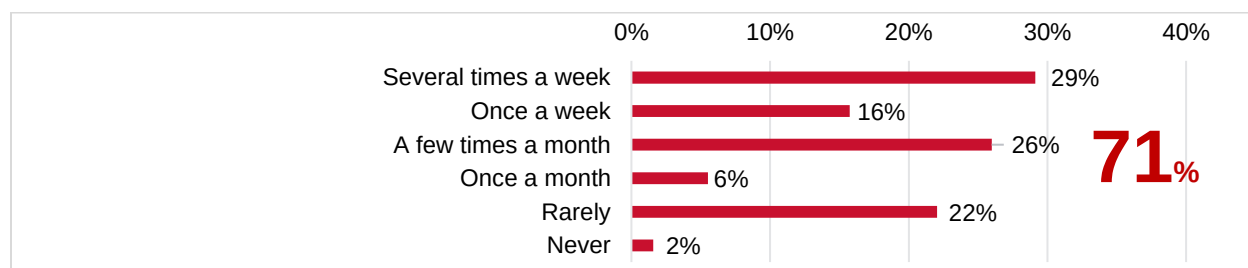
Please note that this engagement survey does not constitute a representative sample of all Calgarians and should not be interpreted as such.



Key survey findings

Frequency of visiting businesses in construction zone

- About three quarters (71%) of survey respondents visited areas with active construction at least a few times a month. **Roughly 30% visited** several times a week.

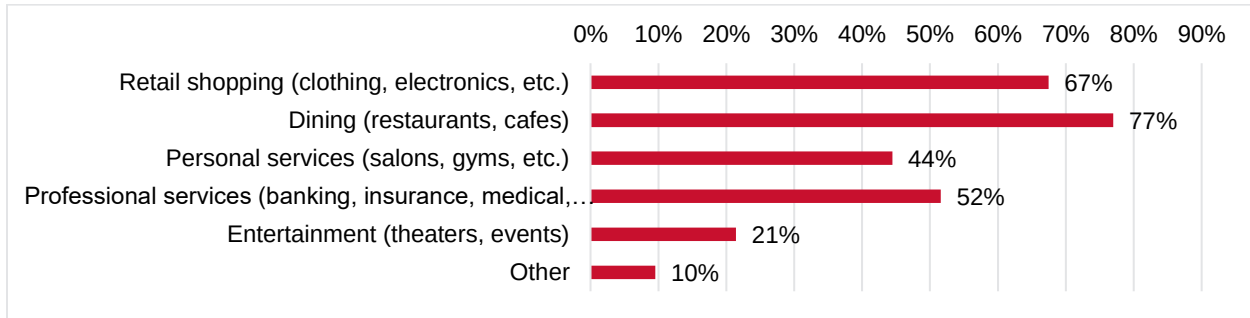


Q1. In the past 2 years, how often have you visited businesses in areas with active construction?
Base: Valid respondents (n=127)

Business categories with highest foot traffic

- Dining (with about 8 in 10 respondents) and retail (at roughly two-thirds) are the most common reasons for visiting construction-affected areas, both convenience-based rather

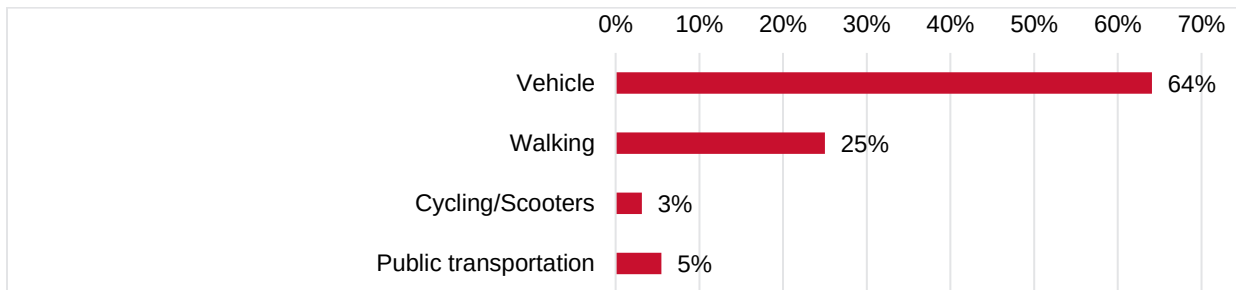
than appointment-based business types. Professional services follow at just over half of them.



Q2. In the past 2 years, what types of businesses, products or services were you typically seeking in areas with active construction?
Base: Valid respondents (n=126)

Vehicle dependency

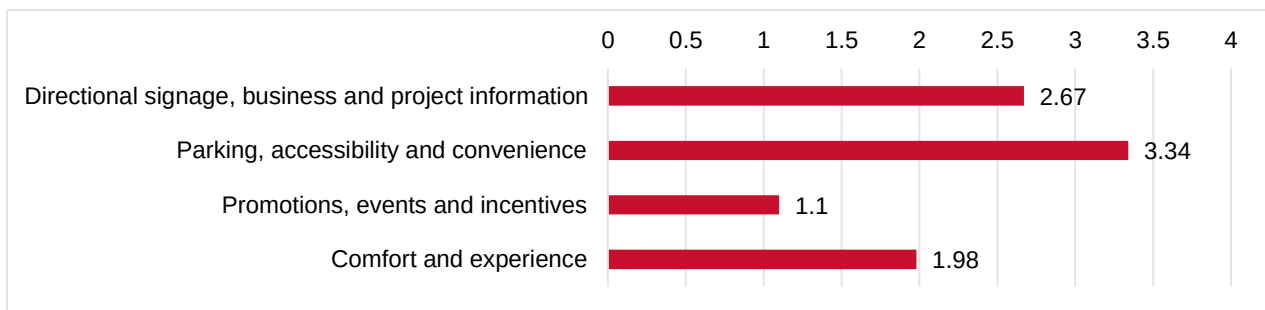
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents prefer to travel by vehicle, while about one in four choose to walk.



Q3. What is your preferred method of travel to get to businesses in areas with active construction?
Base: Valid respondents (n=128)

Top priorities for visitors

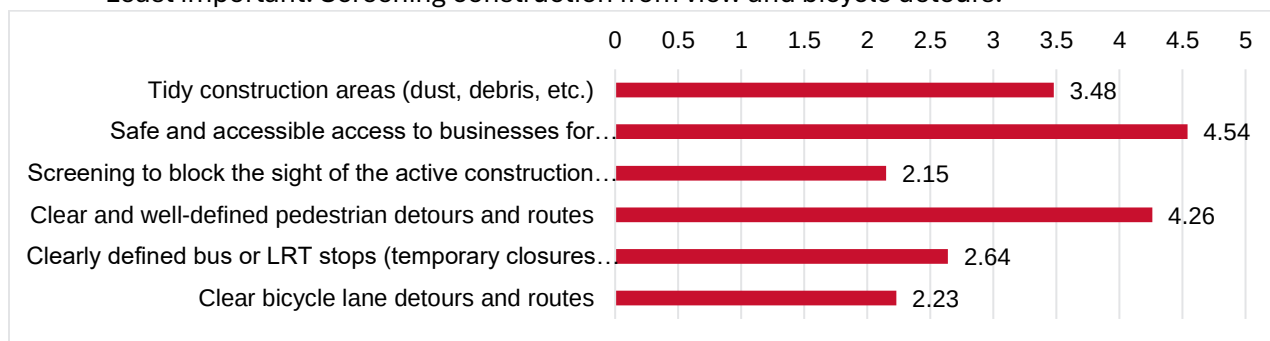
- **Top priorities:** Parking, accessibility, and convenience.
- **Second:** Directional signage and project/business info.
- **Least:** Promotions and events indicating that functional improvements outweigh marketing efforts during disruptions.



Q4. Please rank the following in terms of what is most important to you when visiting businesses in areas under construction.
(Please rank from most to least important)
Base: Valid respondents (n=125)

Comfort and experience priorities

- **Top concern:** Safe and accessible pedestrian access.
- Also important: Tidy construction areas and clear pedestrian detours.
- Least important: Screening construction from view and bicycle detours.

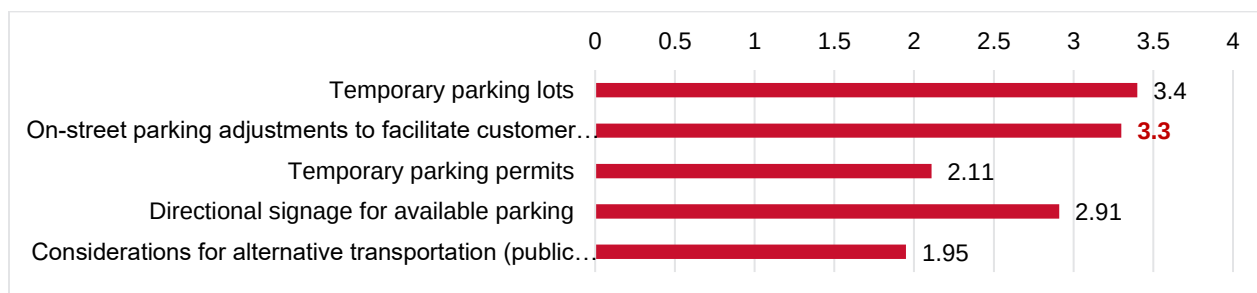


Q5. Rank the following comfort and experience factors. (Please rank from most to least important)

Base: Valid respondents (n=120)

Preferred parking solutions

- **Top options:** Temporary lots and on-street parking adjustments.
- Least preferred: Alternative transport considerations and temporary permits.



Q6. What alternative parking options or information would improve your experience during construction periods? (Please rank from most to least important to you)

Base: Valid respondents (n=120)

Signage preferences

- **Most valued:** Advance notice of construction timelines and progress.
- Least valued: Project contact information.

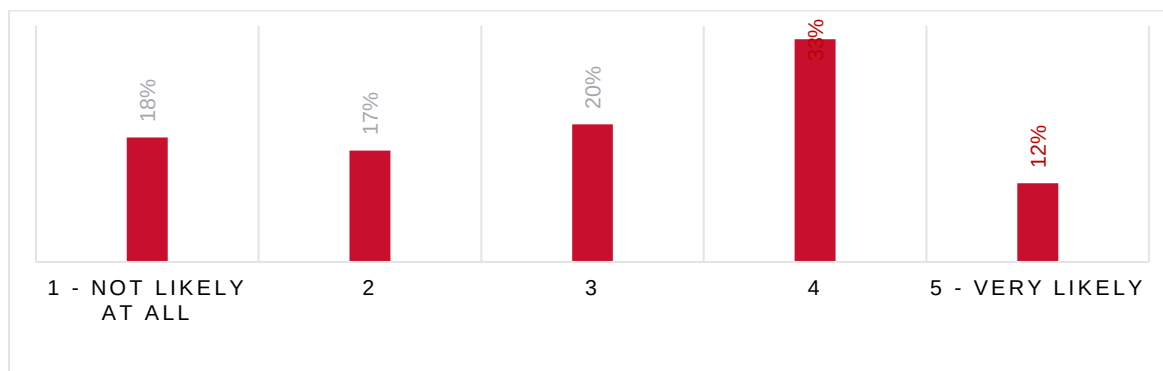


Q7. What kind of information do you want to see on signage in areas under construction? (Please rank from most to least important to you)

Base: Valid respondents (n=122)

Likelihood to participate in promotions

- **Mixed interest:** Average score of 3.03 out of 5.
33% are likely (score 4), while 18% are not likely at all.



Q8. How likely are you to participate in promotional offers or events aimed at encouraging business patronage during and after construction? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not likely at all and 5 = Very likely)

Base: Valid respondents (n=103)

Section 2 – Follow-up workshop and meeting with business organizations

Phase 2 interested party workshops were designed to validate and deepen feedback on key themes identified in Phase 1.

Engagement format:

- BIA workshop and online drop-in session for BIA Executive Directors
 - Drop-in sessions were offered online to accommodate participants who could not attend the full 2-hour workshop.
- Meeting with Business Advisory Committee (BizAC) members.



Participants:

- Five BIA Executive Directors (Four in-person; one online drop-in session)
- 23 committee members of BizAC regular meeting

Workshop and meeting objectives:

1. **Validate what we've heard:** Confirm if the main themes resonate, identify any gaps and clarify how specific actions - especially around visual completion of construction areas - will work for business areas.
2. **Explore collaboration:** Discuss what “collaboration” means in practice and how it can be improved.
3. **Understand BIA needs:** Identify what supports BIAs require from The City to better advocate for and assist local businesses.
4. **Gather ideas:** Use scenario-based discussion to explore additional strategies for The City to consider.

Participants were asked the following questions:

- Are you surprised by the key themes so far or is this what you expected?
- Are there any themes that you think stand out from the others – say a top priority theme?
- Is there something you think is missing?

Participants Feedback

1. **Clarifying policy scope, intent and application**

- a. **Define what construction the policy will and will not apply to:** Participants emphasized the need to clearly distinguish City-led construction from work done by private developers or third-party utilities or consider future application of this policy to non-City projects. For example, while fiber optic infrastructure is City-owned, telecom installations are typically not.
- b. **Align policy tools with existing standards:** Participants asked how the proposed policy will align with current frameworks—such as the Building Code, site-specific environmental regulations, and “Good Neighbour” practices.
- c. **Policy intent and audience clarity:** There was a call for clarity on who the policy is intended to support—businesses, customers, residents, or all. Participants emphasized tailoring the policy and engagement strategies accordingly.

Quote: “When you speak to the goal of improving experience—for whom?” – BIA Participant

- d. **Timeline and resourcing clarity:** Participants asked for clarity on when this policy will be implemented, will it be tied to operational or capital budgets, what programs or tools will support the rollout?

Quote: “It would be nice to have a timeframe and implementation plan attached.” – BIA Participant

2. **Data-informed, proactive planning**

- a. **From reactive to proactive:** Participants supported proactive planning but acknowledged that recent pressures have created a reactive environment.

Quote: “We are in a sense reactive due to recent stresses”. – BIA Participant

- b. Questions participants raised included:
 - Are there benchmarks from other Canadian municipalities?
 - What quantitative data is currently available to inform policy decisions?

3. **Use real world insights:** Participants urged The City to go beyond consultation—to observe real-world experiences, particularly in impacted areas like Marda Loop.

They called for:

- a. **User-centered conversations:** Understand how construction is perceived by visitors, residents, and businesses.
- b. **On-the-ground insights:** Observe and respond to lived experiences.
- c. **Demystification:** Clearly explain what’s happening, why, and how it affects people—reducing confusion and frustration.

4. **Improving communication and transparency**

- a. **Communicate construction details clearly:** Participants stressed the need for clear communication when delays or changes occur—especially around why streets remain closed.
- b. **Transparency around mid-project changes:** Participants emphasized that while construction changes are inevitable, they are accepted if handled with:
 - i. Honest, transparent communication
 - ii. Detailed explanations, even if technical
 - iii. A tone that respects their ability to understand

Quote: “Talk to me like an adult... use technicality if needed.” – BIA Participant

- c. **Address negative perceptions with context:** Explaining the “why” behind construction delays or detours (e.g. unexpected infrastructure issues) can reduce frustrations.

Quote: “People want to know why. Tell the truth and explain.” – BIA Participant

- d. **Prioritize direct, on-the-ground communication:** In cases like weekend closures extending into weekdays, participants emphasized the need for:
 - i. Direct communication to businesses from The City.
 - ii. Paper notices, door knocking, and face-to-face updates.
 - iii. When City communications are working well, BIAs should avoid duplicating efforts, to prevent confusion.
- e. **Build a tiered, responsive communication system:** A participant offered a three-tiered communication system solution:
 - i. Immediate alerts for urgent issues (e.g., pipe bursts)
 - ii. Direct emails to businesses for operational updates
 - iii. Newsletters or app notifications for broader context

5. **Preparing BIAs for construction impacts:** Participants shared a strong interest in better support systems to help BIAs navigate construction challenges.

- a. **Seasonal coordination:** Participants highlighted successful practices, such as pausing construction before the retail holiday season in areas like Kensington to allow for fewer disruptions for businesses. They recommended negotiating construction timelines to avoid peak business periods—especially during patio season—to reduce disruption and support economic activity. But also noted that each area will be different with regards to key times and seasons so feedback would be important to gather.
- b. **Economic impact and marketing support:** Participants stressed that during construction, businesses need to spend more for marketing which puts pressure on their usual budgets. They are advocating for dedicated funding to help BIAs maintain

visibility and attract customers during construction periods.

Participants also mentioned the importance of clear, consistent communication and targeted marketing campaigns (e.g., “shop local”).

- c. **Event continuity:** Maintaining a regular schedule of events was seen to preserve a sense of normalcy and vibrancy when appropriate. We heard that BIA programming can complement City efforts and keep the area active and engaging for visitors.
- d. **Tools and resources:** Participants called for a standard construction support toolkit, including marketing materials, signage templates, and funding to amplify local events and promotions. These tools would enable BIAs to act as on-the-ground navigators and communicators, helping businesses and customers adapt to changing conditions. It would also help alleviate the costs for BIAs to have ready-made marketing tools available.
- e. **Agency and authority:** Some participants suggested giving BIAs clear agency and authority over certain aspects of construction mitigation. This includes the ability to:
 - i. Activate and manage signage
 - ii. Direct pedestrian flow
 - iii. Coordinate wayfinding solutions

As one participant put it: *“Tell me where I can go, not where I can’t. Give me the keys, and I’ll do it myself.”*

Participants also stressed that signage must be accurate, timely, and well-maintained. Outdated or misleading signs erode public trust and reduce compliance.

Quote: “Take it down when it’s supposed to come down. Someone needs to be responsible for monitoring signs across the city. When signage doesn’t reflect reality, people stop paying attention.” – BIA Participant

6. Support, resourcing and collaboration

- a. **Emergency preparedness mindset:** We heard feedback that in high-impact areas, a way to triage and communicate about issues is key. Additionally, an “emergency preparedness” type toolkit focusing on construction preparation with detailed information and preparedness questions could help businesses plan. Participants suggest early identification of project milestones and a continuation or increase in touchpoints with businesses throughout the project’s entire construction timeline.

- b. **Systems thinking and cross-functional coordination:** Some participants suggested drawing from event planning tools and practices to support a more holistic planning and execution of construction activities such as:
 - i. Defined roles and responsibilities where there is existing collaboration
 - ii. Contact lists available for on-the-ground coordination
- c. **Questions about financial support for individual businesses:** A participant raised questions about financial-based initiatives, referencing The City's previous Main Streets Business Support Grant Pilot and expressed interest in The City exploring potential tax relief or other deferrals during construction.

Quote: "Some businesses said it's never enough. What about holding off taxes?" – BIA Participant

The Project Team clarified that The City does not compensate businesses for impacts from construction. There is no requirement in Alberta's Municipal Government Act to compensate business owners for the effects of City-led infrastructure construction (e.g. Public utilities). The focus of the policy is on improving how businesses and customers experience construction.

- d. **Accountability and role clarity:** Participants raised concerns about accountability in construction planning. We heard that while some BIAs can act as a liaison with The City to help plan, this role isn't feasible for all. They emphasized the need for clear roles, transparent options, and focused feedback loops.

For one participant, it is practical collaboration with businesses that not only shares information but creates a better outcome.

Quote: "There is a need for give-and-take because of practical considerations. People planning the construction need to meet a few times. Assessing impact with them is important. Give folks opportunity to understand what is being planned." – BIA Participant

- e. **Diverse perspectives on what collaboration entails and how much involvement is appropriate:** Participants shared diverse perspectives on what meaningful collaboration means. Some participants cited the importance of co-creating and co-designing construction planning with communities. A grassroots or bottom-up approach was highlighted. Another participant stressed the need for interest-holders to be involved throughout the full scope of planning, including implementation and scheduling. Though some recognized that not all BIAs have equal capacity to collaborate at this level of involvement.

BIA workshop key takeaways

As the session concluded, participants reflected on what matters most when preparing for and navigating construction impacts. Their insights emphasized the need for speed, adaptability, support, and communication:

- 1. Accelerating construction timelines:** Speed matters. Participants emphasized the importance of shortening construction timelines where possible. Suggestions included adjusting road closures to avoid peak commute times and prioritizing local business needs to expedite work.
- 2. Business preparedness and contact:** We heard the need for a toolkit to help businesses manage uncertainty, describing it as a “how to be prepared to be unprepared” tool. A participant stressed the value of “high-touch engagement with businesses” and the need for follow-up capacity, even outside regular hours (e.g., responding during dinner time), which requires dedicated resourcing.
- 3. Integrated policy and program support:** We heard calls for a formalized program that integrates marketing, programming, and activation funding into construction planning so there is time to develop supports in advance. This would ensure BIAs are not only informed but empowered. Several participants echoed this, calling for additional financial support as a core part of The City’s construction mitigation strategy.
- 4. Empowering businesses with communication tools:** One participant emphasized the importance of businesses managing their own communication channels, such as email lists, to keep customers informed in real time. This complements broader City and BIA efforts and helps businesses maintain direct relationships with their clientele.

Drop-in Session Summary

The feedback from the drop-in session was collected from a single BIA participant and their perspective added additional perspective to the overall findings.

A key theme echoed during this session was the importance of strong construction support, effective collaboration, and clear communication between The City and the BIA. This reinforces the broader consensus on the need for coordinated efforts to ensure successful project outcomes.

Insights include the importance of:

- Early and ongoing support
- Timely and clear communication
- Effective collaboration throughout construction phases
- Event planning amid disruption
- Role and resourcing expectations
- Hospitality and public service lens

Summary of Insights into BIA Needs:

- ✓ All BIAs are different and might need different support, some can take on a more involved role while others cannot. A flexible approach is needed to accommodate these differences.

- ✓ Not all businesses in areas with construction are represented by BIAs, so The City will need to consider how to support those businesses as well.
- ✓ Providing funding to help BIAs support the broader business area during construction could benefit a wider range of businesses. This could improve local shopping or visitor experience, attract customers, and strengthen the overall economic resilience of the area.
- ✓ Support for local events helps maintain a sense of normalcy and keeps commercial areas vibrant and active during construction.
- ✓ Clearly define the roles BIAs can play during construction and provide them with the authority and tools to contribute meaningfully.

Next Steps

In Phase 3, we will share draft policy objectives, informed by the feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 3 engagement will focus on reconnecting with the business community and working with City Administration and construction industry partners to refine and adjust the policy objectives.

Phase 3 includes:

- June: Share draft policy objectives with businesses and customers to confirm we're on the right track and gather input to refine and adjust them.
- July to September: Report back on the public engagement (July) and continue focused discussions with City Administration and industry partners to further test, validate and adjust the draft objectives.

The final policy, along with an implementation plan and recommendations, will be presented to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee in early 2026.