

## Okotoks Mandatory Mask Survey Report

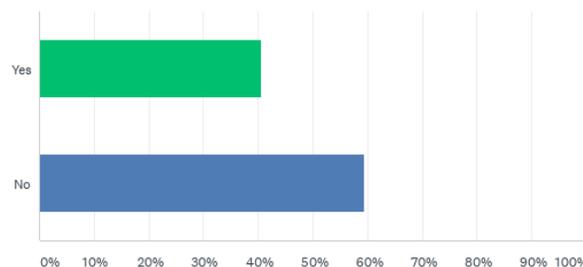
There is a lot of uncertainty facing people today. You can read three different publications and have three different understandings of reality, which makes it very hard to navigate through the day to day. This is made more complex with different jurisdictions instituting various recommendations and bylaws that change the way that residents interact with the world around them.

Given that the City of Calgary recently instituted a bylaw of mandatory face coverings in indoor public places, it was no surprise that the Town of Okotoks called a special meeting to discuss whether or not we would follow suit. When the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce received news that this meeting would be held, we felt it was necessary to develop an understanding of where our community members sat on this particular issue.

The Okotoks Chamber put out a survey on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> before 12:30 p.m. and within 10 minutes we had 26 responses. By 10:30 a.m. on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> we have received 3,586 responses to the short, three question survey. This survey was open to everyone – not just Chamber members. While the Okotoks Chamber is mandated to serve our members in the business community, we recognize that issues such as these affect everyone. In this case, the best way for us to serve is to report the pulse of the entire community, not just the businesses or our membership. As such, these results are not intended to be used to advocate one course of action over another. They are purely to represent the positions of Okotoks residents on the issue of mandatory face coverings.

The first question asked was *“The Town of Okotoks has called a special meeting for Monday, July 27 to discuss the issue of mandatory face coverings in Okotoks. Are you in favour of Okotoks instituting a bylaw of mandatory face coverings in public spaces?”* which had only “yes” or “no” as the answer options. While initially the responses coming through were fairly balanced, the final results indicated nearly 60% in opposition of a mandatory face covering bylaw and 40% in favour.

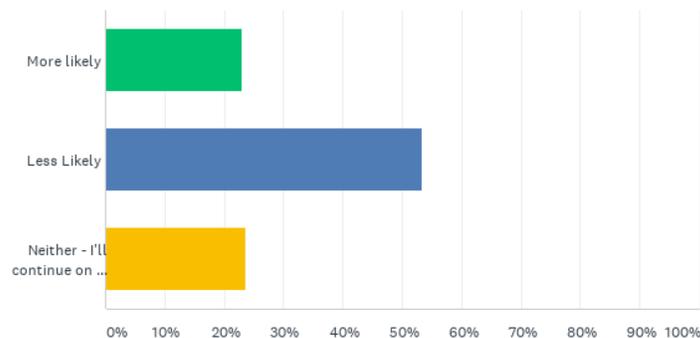
**Q1 The Town of Okotoks has called a special meeting for Monday, July 27 to discuss the issue of mandatory face coverings in Okotoks. Are you in favour of Okotoks instituting a bylaw of mandatory face coverings in public spaces?**



Answer Choice	Responses (#)	Responses (%)
Yes	1,456	40.67%
No	2,124	59.33%

The second question was intended to determine whether or not a bylaw mandating face coverings would result in any behavioural changes in our community. The question asked *“If Okotoks makes face coverings mandatory, will you be more or less likely to visit local businesses and other public places?”* and allowed for three answer choices: “more likely”, “less likely”, or “neither – I’ll continue on as I have been”. While the last answer choice doesn’t demonstrate whether the respondent had been regularly in public or not, the ultimate goal of the question was to determine changes in behaviour and not their historical behaviour patterns.

**Q2 If Okotoks makes face coverings mandatory, will you be more or less likely to visit local businesses and other public places?**



Answer Choice	Responses (#)	Responses (%)
More Likely	823	22.96%
Less Likely	1,911	53.32%
Neither – I’ll continue on as I have been	850	23.72%

The third and final question provided a space for respondents to share their opinions, with the question being *“Do you have any other thoughts or opinions you'd like to share on the issue of mandatory face coverings?”*. We had 2,240 responses to this with a variety of answers. Some simply restated their answers to the previous questions, with 153 people simply saying “no”. There were many passionate responses as well, with people suggesting that instituting this bylaw is akin to government taking away rights of its constituents.

There were a significant number of comments debating the science and reliability of face coverings. Many respondents urged wearing of masks to help protect family members, making it clear that they felt it's about trying to keep as many people safe and healthy as possible. Others cited studies and comments from health professionals saying that masks aren't an effective response. Some responses noted the improper use of masks and the lack of education around proper mask use.

Finally, there were a number of responses questioning what exactly this bylaw would include. We've seen a lot of ambiguity when it comes to recommendations, policies, and bylaws in the time of COVID. Being exceptionally clear on the requirements and expectations for Okotoks residents, regardless of which direction the Town chooses to take on the issue of mandatory face coverings, is a necessity.

Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce  
[office@okotokschamber.ca](mailto:office@okotokschamber.ca)  
403 938 2848