

## **Clean Air, Clear Decision:**

### **Results of the 2002 Thunder Bay Proposed No Smoking Bylaw Survey**

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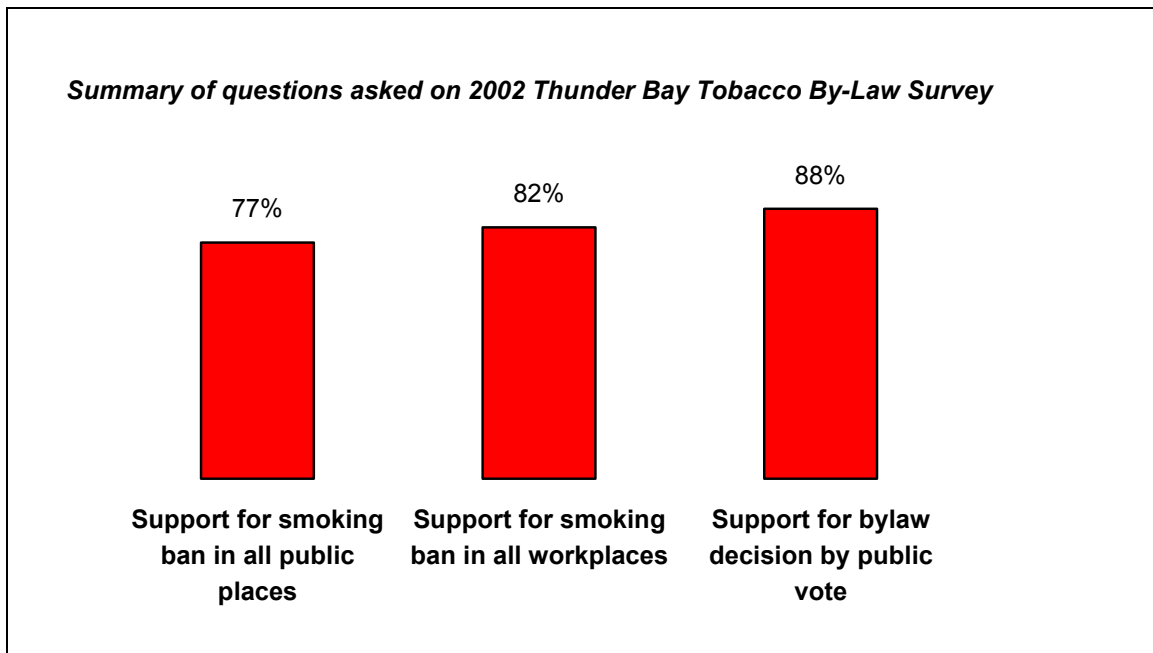
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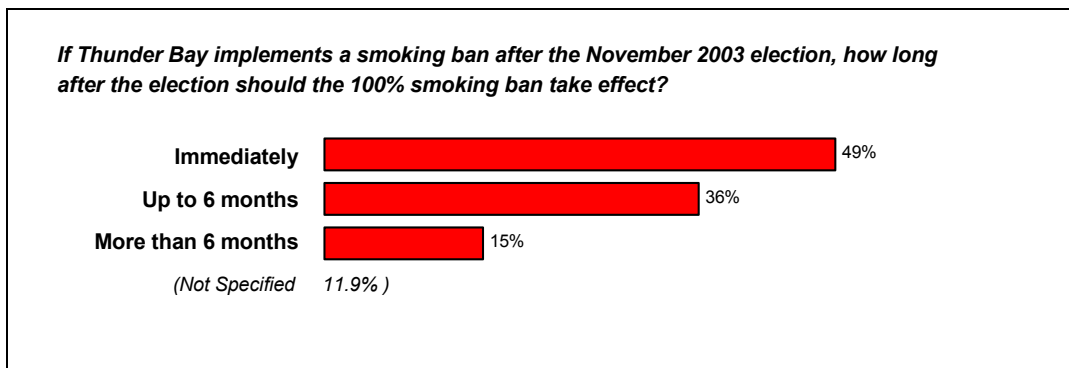
## Executive Summary

In December 2002, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit contracted Compustat Consultants of Orangeville, Ontario to conduct a telephone survey of 805 adult residents of the City of Thunder Bay to determine the level of support for a 100% smoking ban in all public places and workplaces.

Overall, 77% of city residents support a bylaw banning smoking in all public places and 82% support a smoking ban in all workplaces. The idea of holding a public vote to decide on a smoke-free bylaw resonated with City residents, with 88% in support.



As a companion question, we asked residents how long after the hypothetical passing of a smoke-free bylaw, should it take full effect. 85% of those who specified a time period indicated that the ban should be implemented within 6 months, with 49% indicating that the ban should be immediate.



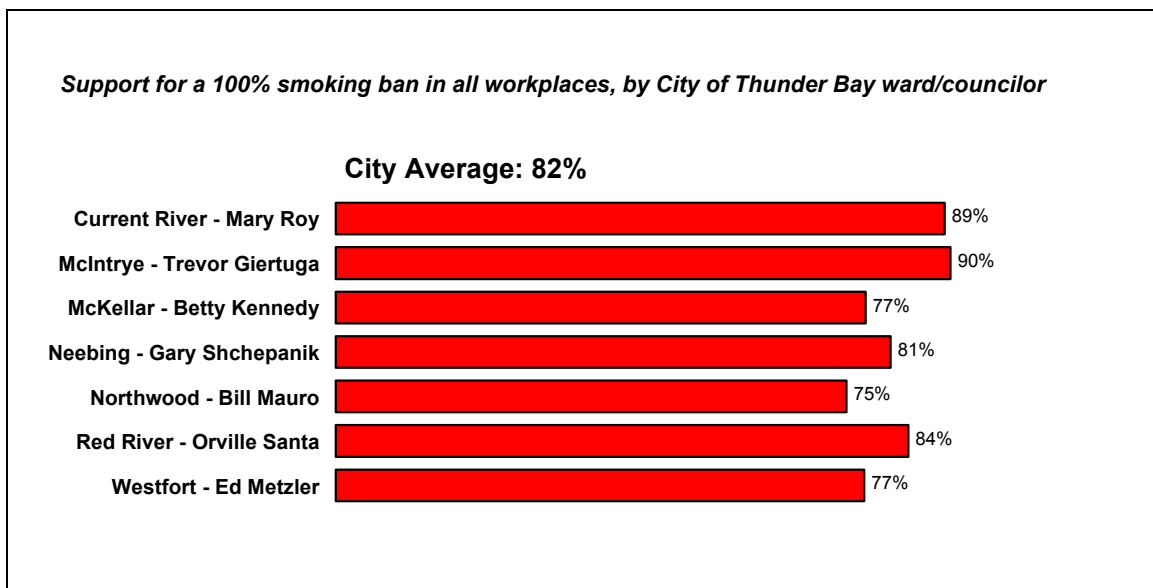
Interestingly, support for the 100% smoking ban did not fall strictly along smoking versus non-smoking lines. More than a third of smokers (38%) favour a 100% smoking ban in all public places, and more than half (54%) of smokers favour such a ban in all workplaces.

### *Results by Ward*

Voter support for a 100% smoking ban in all public places was high, ranging from 70% to 84% in the different wards, and were not statistically distinguishable from the city average of 77%.

Similarly, support for a 100% smoking ban in all workplaces was high, ranging from 75% to 90% across the wards, none of which were statistically higher or lower than the city average of 82%.

There was very little difference of opinion across the wards on the question of whether a smoke-free bylaw question should be included on the next city election ballot. Opinion ranged from 86% to 90% in favour of a public vote, with none of the wards reporting results statistically different from the city average.



### *Conclusions*

According to this survey, a substantial proportion of adult residents of the City of Thunder Bay favour a 100% smoking ban in all public places and workplaces, including hospitality sites, with no exceptions.

Should City Council elect not to pass a 100% smoke-free bylaw before the next election, a very strong majority of residents support a ballot question during the next municipal election.

If a smoke-free bylaw is passed, Thunder Bay residents favour a short implementation period of six months or less.

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# **Introduction**

## ***Survey Process***

In December 2002, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit undertook a telephone survey of 805 adult residents of the City of Thunder Bay to determine the level of support for a 100% smoking ban in all public places and workplaces. The intent of the survey was to support the work of the City of Thunder Bay's Administrative Advisory Committee on a Smoke-Free Bylaw.

The sample was chosen such that 115 adults were polled in each of the City's seven wards. This sampling design ensured that each area of the city was fairly represented and so that ward-specific support for the proposed bylaw could be ascertained. Telephone numbers were chosen by random-digit dialing to ensure that those with unlisted residential numbers would be included in the sample population. Calls were made both during the day and during the evening to maximize the opportunity for a wide cross-section of residents to respond. In-service residential telephone numbers were attempted a minimum of ten times and at different times of day to minimize non-response bias. Residents who were contacted but not able to respond at the time of contact were offered the opportunity for a callback.

## ***Survey Questions***

Seven questions were asked on the survey: two questions regarding support for the proposed bylaw, one question on whether the question should be put to a public vote during the next civic election, one question on the preferred time to implementation if a bylaw were enacted, and three questions on demographics (sex, city ward of residence, and smoking status).

## ***Definitions***

There is sometimes a separation in the public's mind between the notion of "public places" and "workplaces". Restaurants, bars, and other hospitality sites are public places, but they are also workplaces, and many people do not think of them primarily as workplaces. In order to avoid confusion, we asked separate questions about support for a 100% smoking ban in workplaces and in public places.

In the interest of fairness and clarity, no euphemisms were used that could cloud the question. The question items specify a 100% smoking ban in all public places and workplaces, not a "smoke-free bylaw", which may have been perceived by some as a "soft" question. To avoid any confusion as to the intent of the proposed bylaw, the definition of a public place specifies restaurants, bars, bingo halls, the casino, and other hospitality sites. The definition of workplaces specifies any large or small business that has even one employee, with no exceptions. By ensuring the use of plain, direct language and unambiguous definitions, we intend to avoid any perception of bias in the study results.

In order to ensure that the purpose of the questions was clear, the following was read to each respondent as background to the questions:

Some towns and cities in Ontario, such as Ottawa, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, have recently adopted smoke-free bylaws that require all enclosed public places and all workplaces to be 100% smoke-free. There is no option in these bylaws for a designated smoking room.

Thunder Bay has a Smoke-Free Bylaw Advisory Committee made up of 10 volunteers from the hospitality industry and health agencies. The Advisory Committee will be reporting to City Council in January. The Advisory Committee is recommending a 100% ban on smoking in public places and workplaces.

In the proposed smoke-free bylaw for Thunder Bay the definition of PUBLIC PLACE would include all hospitality sites such as restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, bingos, banquet halls and the casino. There would be no option in these locations for a designated smoking room.

### **Data Analysis**

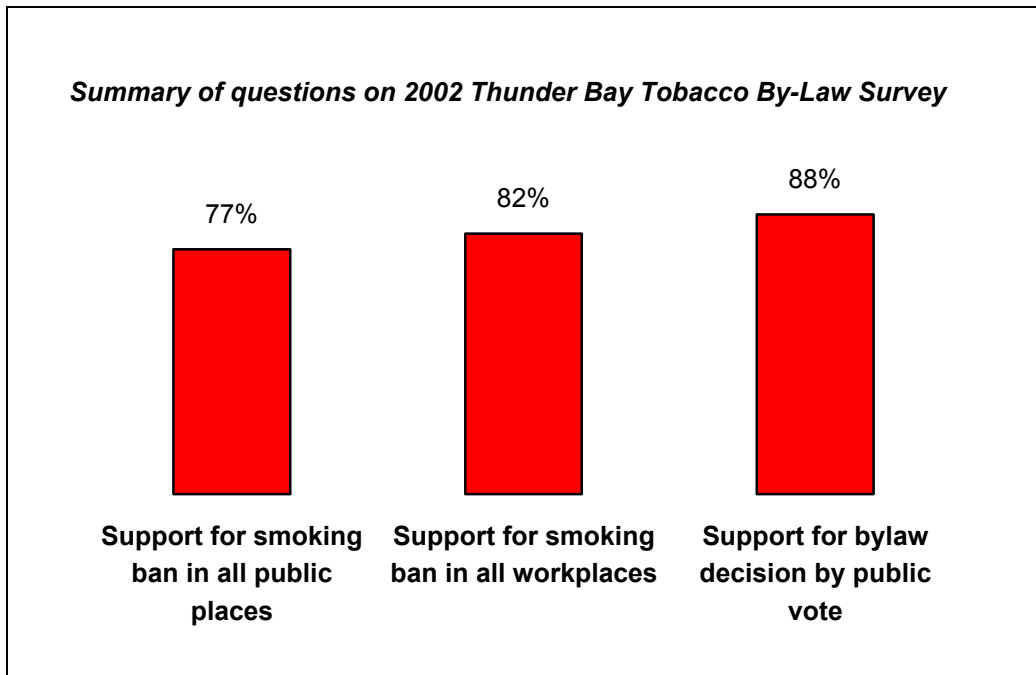
The results were weighted to balance out the representation of the sexes. (Typically, women are more likely to respond to a telephone survey and their answers are often systematically different from those of men. Thus, the survey results need to be balanced to fairly represent the actual population.) Additionally, because we chose an equal number of respondents from each city ward, and because the actual ward populations are not equal, the city-wide results were weighted by ward population. This allowed us to ensure that each person in the city's adult population was given equal weight in the results.

The response rate for the survey was 54%, the refusal rate was 33%. In random-digit dialing, most numbers attempted are invalid. That is, they are not in service, non-residences, etc. Those numbers are removed from the total before the response rate is calculated. A potential respondent is an adult in a residential household in the City of Thunder Bay who has a telephone. The response rate also includes an estimate of how many of those undetermined numbers are eligible. According to the American Association for Public Opinion Research, a typical proportion to assume here is 25%. In this survey, 54% of potential respondents contacted completed the survey, 33% refused, and the remaining 13% were unable to cooperate because of language barrier, could not arrange a suitable time to interview, etc.

The city-wide results are a valid representation of the entire adult population of the City of Thunder Bay to an accuracy of  $\pm 3$  percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty. Individual ward results are based on fewer respondents and so are accurate to within approximately  $\pm 7$  percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty. We used a robust survey variance estimator to obtain conservative estimates of accuracy. Asymptotic methods suggest an accuracy of  $\pm 2.5$  and  $\pm 5.5$  percentage points, respectively.

## Results

Overall, 77% of city residents support a bylaw banning smoking in all public places and 82% support a smoking ban in all workplaces. 88% support a ballot question during the next municipal election.

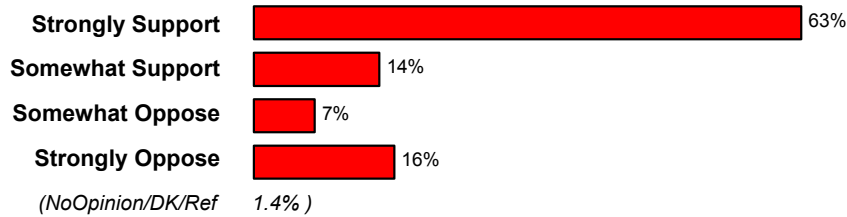


### ***Smoking Ban in Public Places and Workplaces***

We asked survey respondents two closely related questions about their support for a smoking ban. There is a difficult definitional issue between so-called “public places” and “workplaces” that had to be overcome in this survey. While it is true that hospitality sites such as restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, bingo halls, etc. are indeed workplaces for the staff of those establishments, members of the public often do not think of them that way. For this reason, we used the terminology “public place” and gave several hospitality sites as examples. Support for a 100% smoking ban in these sites was high at 77% in favour (63% “strongly” supporting).

***In the proposed smoke-free by-law for Thunder Bay the definition of PUBLIC PLACE would include all hospitality sites such as restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, bingo, banquet halls and the casino. There would be no option in these locations for a designated smoking room.***

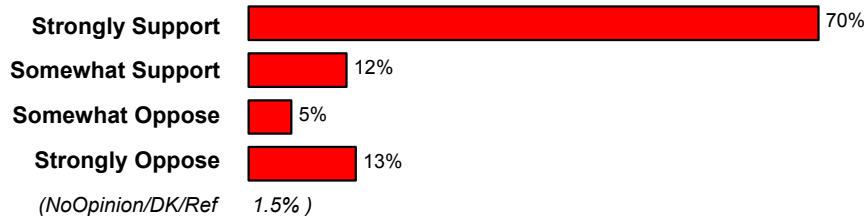
***Can you tell me the level that you support a 100% smoking ban in all public places? The ban would not apply to private homes.***



As a second question, we asked about support for a 100% smoking ban in all workplaces, and gave more traditional examples of workplaces, and stated that the ban would cover *all indoor areas in the city with employees, with no exceptions*. Support for this question was somewhat higher at 82% (70% “strongly” supporting).

***In the proposed smoke-free by-law for Thunder Bay a WORKPLACE would include all large and small businesses in the city such as offices, the paper mills and garages, every place that has employees, with no exceptions.***

***Can you tell me the level that you support a 100% smoking ban in all workplaces. This would include all indoor areas in the city with employees?***



We also set ourselves a more difficult test. We tabulated the number of respondents who supported both questions, neither question, or only one of the questions. The purpose of this tabulation is to assess the bedrock support for a smoke-free bylaw regardless of the definition of “public” and “work” places.

## Combined results of questions 1 and 2

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Support ban in both “public” and “work” places	72%
Support ban in “public”, but not “work” places	3%
Support ban in “work”, but not “public” places	8%
Do not support ban at all	17%

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This table indicates that 72% of residents support a 100% smoking ban regardless of how “public” and “work” places are defined. Additionally, another 11% support a 100% smoking ban, but the definition of sites has some importance to them. Only 17% are against any form of smoking ban.

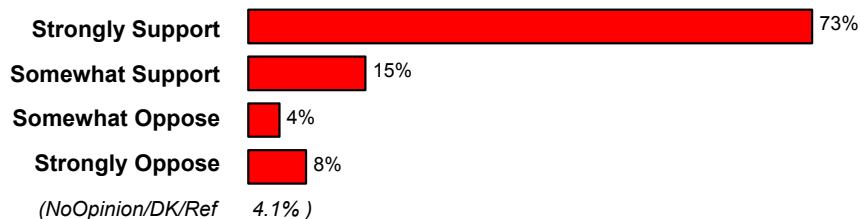
### ***Decision-Making***

One of the questions considered by the Administrative Advisory Committee on a Smoke-Free Bylaw is whether to recommend to Thunder Bay City Council that the bylaw be passed directly by Council or whether to put the issue to a public vote, according to the provisions of the Ontario Municipal Elections Act. We asked respondents whether or not citizens should have the option to vote directly on this issue during the November 2003 municipal election.

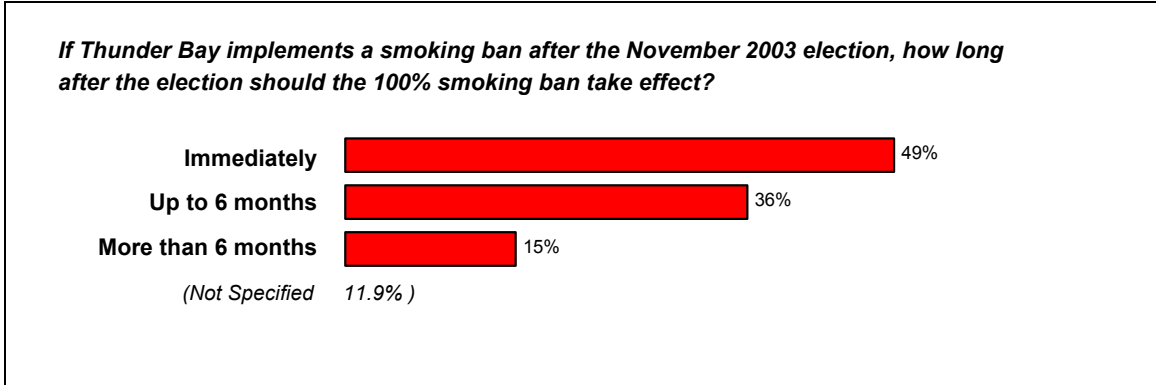
The idea of holding a public vote resonated with Thunder Bay residents, both smokers and non-smokers (see below), with 88% of residents in support (73% strongly supporting).

***Another recommendation by the Smoke-free By-law Advisory Committee is to have people in the City of Thunder Bay vote on a 100% smoking ban in the next municipal election, which will be in November 2003. Citizens would have the option to vote for or against the smoking ban.***

***Using the same scale, can you tell me your level of support for allowing the public to decide?***



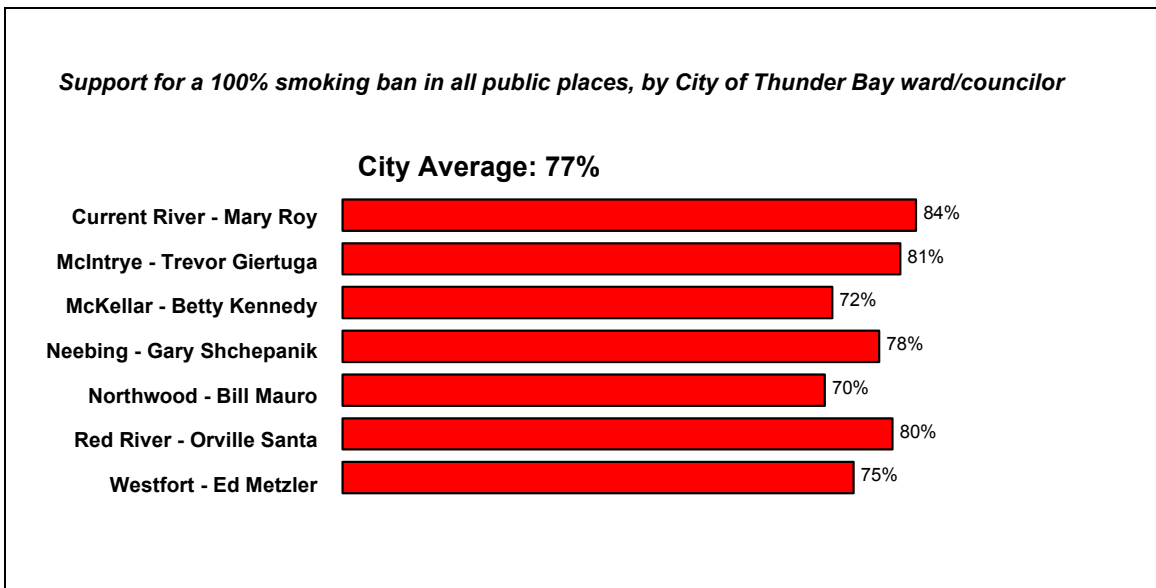
As a companion question, we asked residents how long after the hypothetical passing of a smoke-free bylaw should the 100% smoking ban take effect. In total, 85% of those who specified a time period indicated that the 100% smoking ban should be implemented within 6 months, with 49% of those indicating that the ban should be immediate.



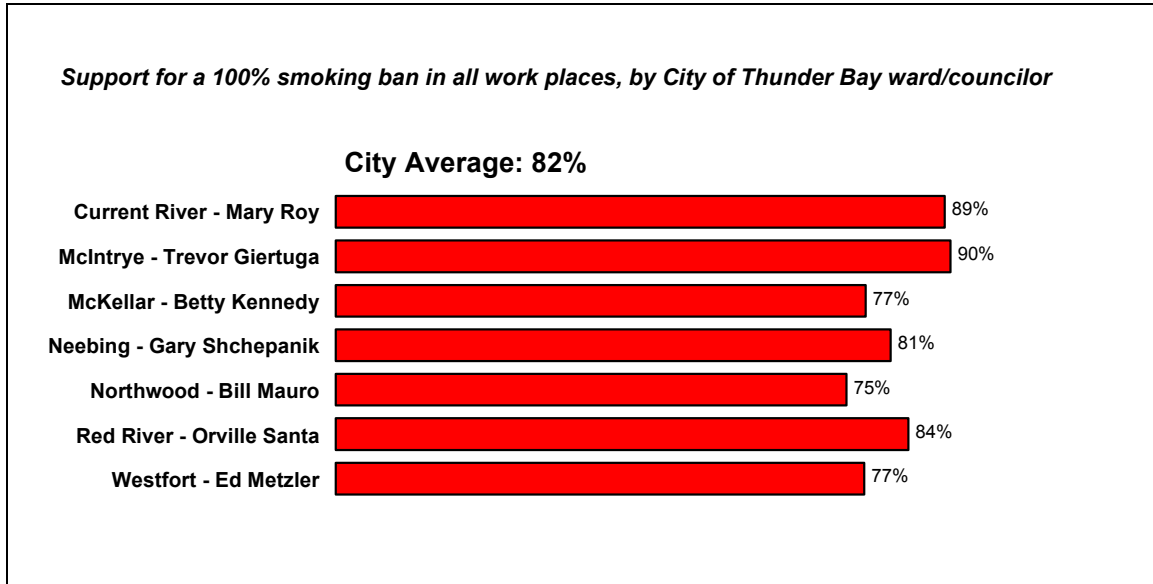
***Results by City Ward***

Recognizing that City Council is made up of individual councilors, we wanted to ensure that each councilor would know the support for a smoke-free bylaw in his or her own ward, as well as in the city as a whole. The following three charts provide the ward-specific results for the three main questions.

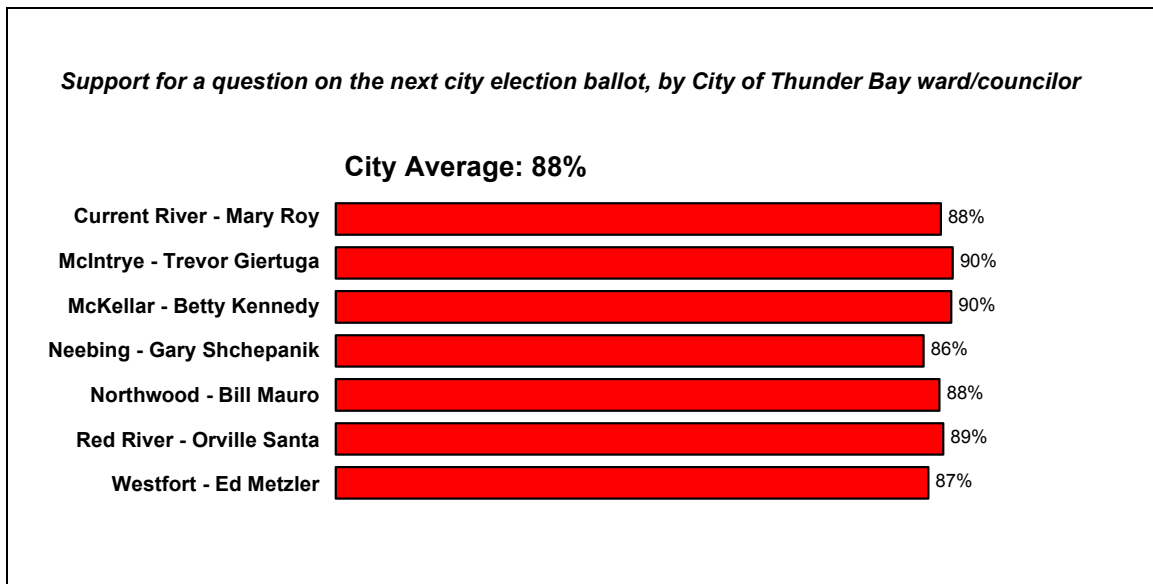
Voter support for a 100% smoking ban in all public places was high, ranging from 70% to 84% in the different wards, and were not statistically distinguishable from the city average of 77%.



Similarly, support for a 100% smoking ban in all workplaces was high, ranging from 75% to 90% across the wards, none of which are statistically higher or lower than the city average of 82%.

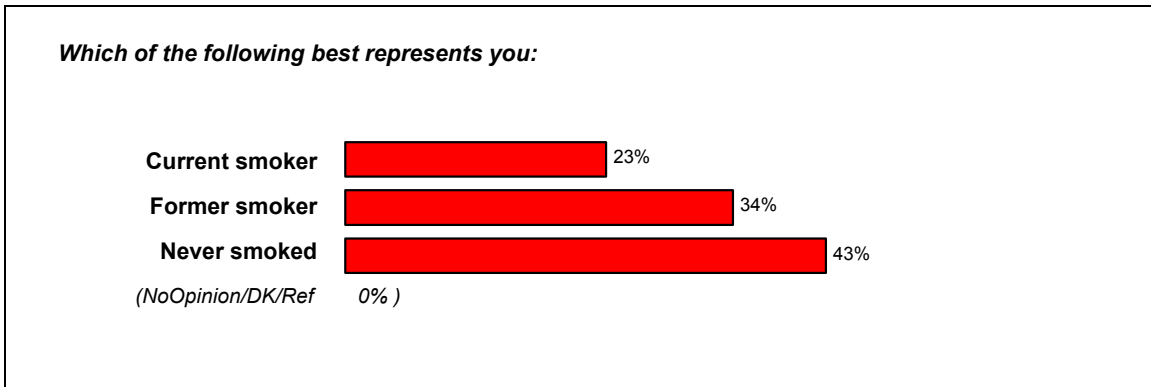


There was very little difference of opinion across the wards on the question of whether a smoke-free bylaw question should be included on the next city election ballot. Opinion ranged from 86% to 90% in favour of a public vote, with none of the wards reporting results statistically different from the city average.

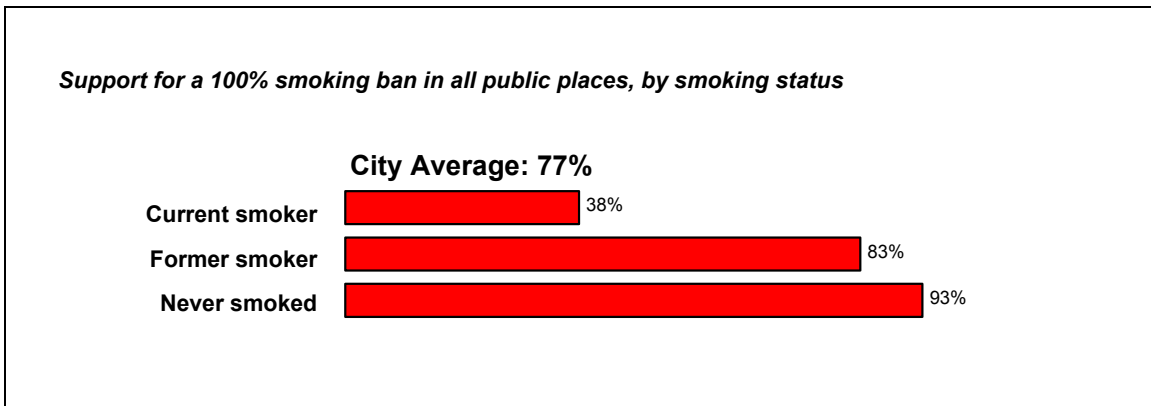


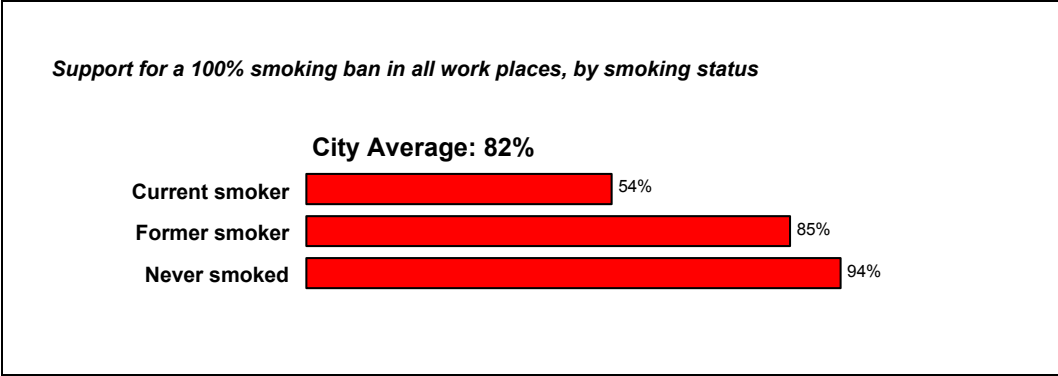
### **Results by Smoking Status**

An important determinant of support for a smoke-free bylaw is current smoking status. It was, therefore, important that our survey did not over- or under-represent smokers. From the figure below, 23.1% of respondents reported being a current smoker. This is approximately consistent with the 2001 Canadian Community Health Survey, which found that 23.9% of Thunder Bay district residents were daily smokers.

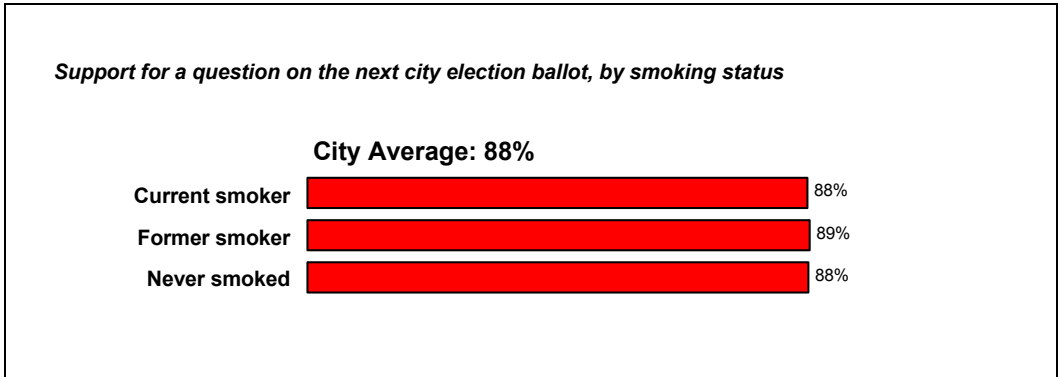


Interestingly, support for the 100% smoking ban did not fall strictly along smoking versus non-smoking lines. The following two figures indicate that 38% of smokers favour a 100% smoking ban in all public places, and 54% of smokers favour such a ban in all workplaces.

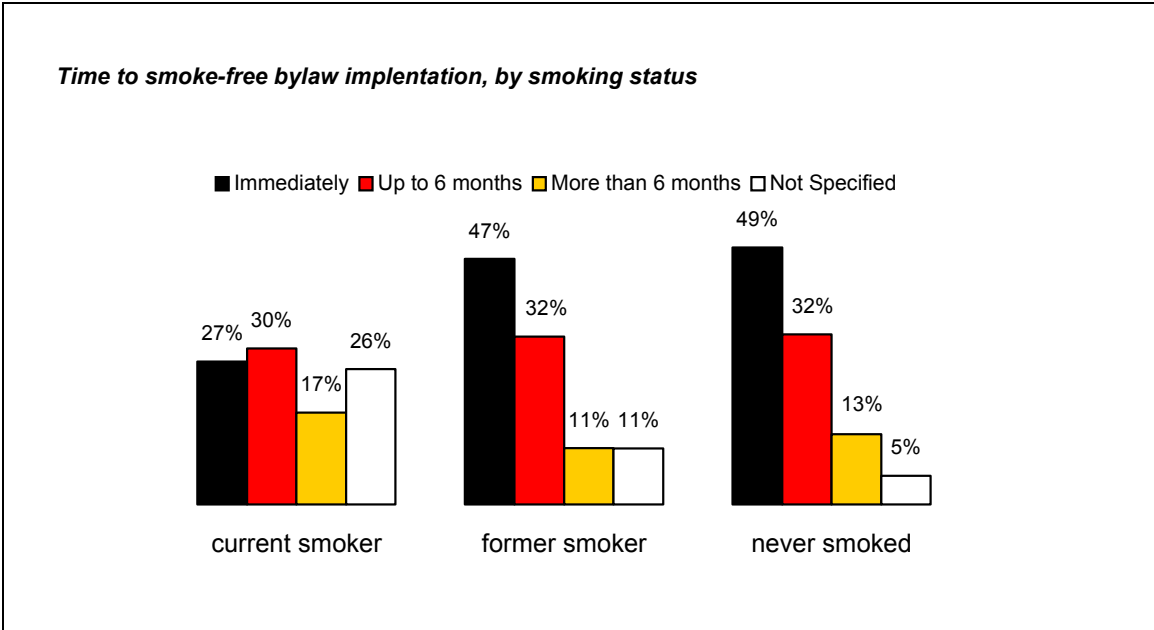




There was no difference of opinion between smokers and non-smokers on whether the smoke-free bylaw question should be included on the next municipal ballot.



In the final figure below, it is not surprising that most non-smokers prefer a short phase-in period of six months or less (approximately 80%). Perhaps more interesting is that more than half of smokers (57%) also favour a phase-in period of six months or less.





## **Conclusions**

According to this survey, a substantial majority of adult residents of the City of Thunder Bay favour a 100% smoking ban in all public places and workplaces, including hospitality sites, with no exceptions.

Should City Council elect not to pass a 100% smoke-free bylaw before the next election, a strong majority of residents support a smoke-free bylaw ballot question during the next municipal election.

If a smoke-free bylaw is passed, Thunder Bay residents favour a short implementation period of six months or less.