



CANNABIS SURVEY RESULTS

Prepared by the Consultation Team | 2020



Background

Since recreational cannabis has become legalized in Canada a number of questions have arose regarding the role of First Nations government in the cannabis industry. Although there are currently no options for recreational cannabis sales outside of the NSLC (provincial) model, efforts are being made on behalf of First Nations across Canada to develop their own regulatory frameworks, which could effectively permit on-reserve cannabis sales.

Millbrook's "Community Cannabis Survey" was developed by the consultation department, under the guidance of Millbrook Chief and Council (2018 and 2020) to investigate cannabis use trends, opinions regarding Millbrook's role in regulating cannabis sales and to better understand peoples opinions regarding the presence of unlicensed cannabis dispensaries in the community. The results of the survey will be used by Chief and Council to inform how they move forward with cannabis regulation in the community and will be used to lobby the government, by showing why First Nations should be included in national and provincial decision-making.

The first half of the survey drew upon the work of the First Nation Information Governance Centre's (FNIGC) Regional Health Survey (RHS) and the Canadian Government's "Canadian Cannabis Survey" (2019). The "Community Cannabis Survey" borrowed questions regarding demographic indicators, consumption habits, storage, etc. The purpose of using questions from other data sources is to ensure comparability across multiple data sources. This way we can compare Millbrook's results to national, provincial, and other First Nations research. The second half was led by community and council concerns. This was intended to serve as an opinion poll regarding on-reserve cannabis sales in Millbrook. This section gauged opinions regarding operating cannabis dispensaries in residential areas, Chief and Council's role in regulation, and using cannabis revenue for community programs.

Methodology

The survey was launched on May 1st, 2020 and closed on June 14th, 2020. Both paper and digital copies were made available. Due to the challenges presented by the state of emergency, we allowed any and all individuals to participate. Typically, we would have opted for a simple random sampling protocol for participant selection, but the current state of affairs would not permit it. In the first section of the survey, participants were asked if they were a Millbrook band member. If they were, they were asked to provide their band numbers in order to be considered an actual "band member" when the data was analyzed. If they did not, they were coded as a "community member." The survey preamble clearly stated that, participants would be coded as a "community member" if they did not provide a band number. It should be noted that the "community" group includes (1) people who said "I am a band member," but did not provide a band number, (2) people who gave invalid band numbers, and (3) respondents who said "I am not a band member." Chief and Council advised that they have a fiduciary responsibility to act on behalf of their constituents (Millbrook band members). Records with a valid band number were separated from the rest to better understand the perspectives of Chief and Council's voting body. By providing a band number, we were able to compare the number that was provided and its attached demographic information to the official band list to ensure that the records were from actual registered band members. If a band number was not provided there is no way to verify whether the survey information is coming from a band member or not. Once membership status (band or community member) was determined, band numbers were deleted from the database to ensure anonymity and participant confidentiality. Throughout this report you will see that results are reported in 2 groups – "band" and "community." "Band" refers to the responses from band members. "Community" refers to the responses from non-band members and those who did not share a band number.

When data collection concluded, 561 total surveys were collected. This included 308 band members and 253 community members. Once data cleaning was completed, 482 surveys remained. 39% of participants in the sample were valid band members and 61% were community members. 79 records were deleted, because they were duplicate records, incomplete surveys (less than 50% completion), or under the age of 18. Although the legal age to buy cannabis is 19, our eligible voters list individuals that are 18 years of age. Plenty of other data sources

(including those noted above in the “Background” section) have investigated underage substance use. Since data is reported in two large groups (band and community) there is no risk of identifying individual respondents.

Participant anonymity is protected by a number of analysis techniques. If the total number of responses to a given question was 5 or less, we removed the estimate. This is known as “data suppression.” To use Figure 1.1 as an example, you will see that some responses are marked with “ds” which indicates that data suppression occurred. Another reason for data suppression is if certain statistical thresholds were not met. More specifically, if the coefficient of variation was too high. Furthermore, all results in this report are reported in percentages, rather than reporting the total number of responses. In other words, we would report that “63% of band members had this to say,” rather than saying “125 band members had this to say.” The benefit of reporting percentages is to provide a neutral playing field when comparing groups of different sizes in terms of scaling.

Once the data was cleaned, it was then weighted using Indigenous Services Canada’s (ISC) band member demographic data. Weighting data allows us to take a sample (n) of respondents and make it representative of the overall population (N). In this case, reflective of Millbrook’s entire band membership. Thus, the proportions and percentages reported in this report reflect Millbrook’s adult population (18 years and up) of 1,527. This was Millbrook’s total adult population, living on and off reserve, as of June 2020. The following are the results of the “Community Cannabis Survey”.

Data Findings

When asked if respondents were cannabis users, less than half (47.9%) of band members said that they were not. This is compared to 80.4% of community member respondents. 43% of female band members indicated that they were cannabis users, compared to 51% of males. Band members between the ages of 18-24 years were most likely to use cannabis (94%), compared to 29% of individuals 50 years of age and over. It should be noted that when we turn to the Regional Health Survey (RHS) data, from their phase 3 study (conducted from 2015-16), we see similar numbers. The RHS, which surveyed registered *Indians* living on-reserve in Nova Scotia, showed that 58.8% of respondents were cannabis users, or have used cannabis in the past 12 months, compared to Millbrook’s 52.1%.¹

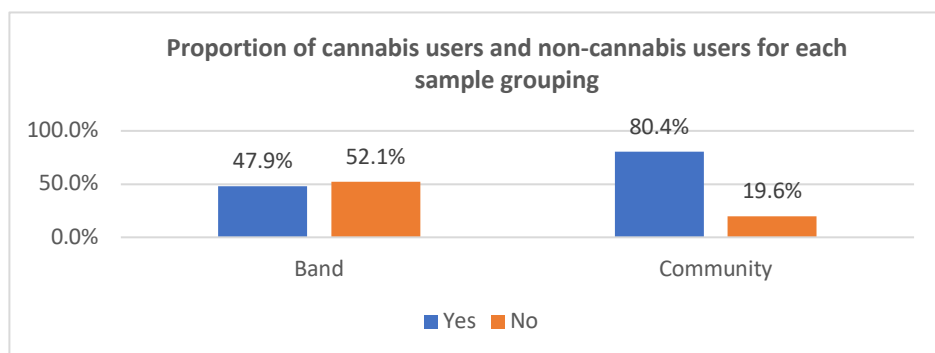


Figure 1.0: Are you a cannabis user? Comparison between band members and community members.

In the case of both band members and community members, the majority of cannabis users consumed their choice products on a daily basis – 66.3% and 82.7% respectively. We see the smallest proportion of cannabis users in the “monthly”, “a few times a year” and “once a year” categories. Responses ranged from 1.3%-5.6%.

The “*ds” in the “monthly” and “once a year” categories denotes data suppression (ds). This occurs when the number of responses equals 5 or less, or if the coefficient of variation is too high. Estimates were removed to reduce the risk of identifying survey respondents.

¹ Union of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq (UNSM), “2015–16 First Nations Regional Health Survey, Version 2.0.” Page 6.

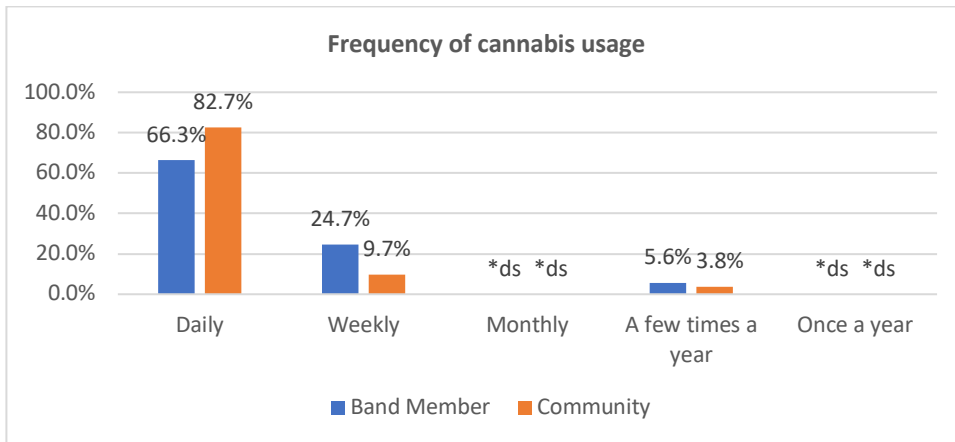


Figure 1.1: How often do you use cannabis products? Comparison between band members and community members.

The following question asked about the two main classifications of cannabis usage – recreational and medicinal usage. Participants could indicate whether their usage is solely recreational, solely medicinal, or a mix of both. The majority of cannabis users (58.2%-64.1%) in Millbrook reported that they use cannabis both recreationally and medically. About 20% of band members and community members reported that they use cannabis solely for recreational purposes, with another 16%-19% indicating exclusive medicinal usage.

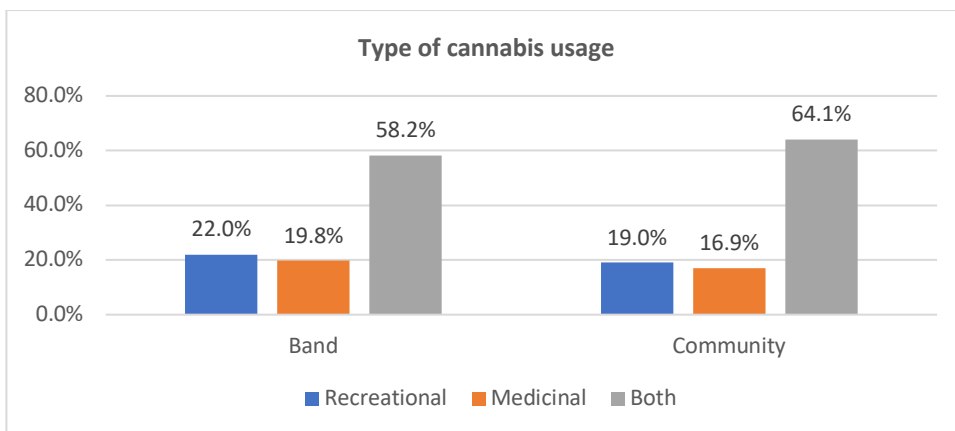


Figure 1.2: Do you use cannabis recreationally, medicinally or for both purposes? Comparison between band members and community members.

The survey then zeroed in on the main reason for using cannabis. A resounding majority of band members (81%) and community members (80%) said that they primarily use cannabis for a medicinal purpose. The specific “purpose of use” was left general to avoid being intrusive. Whether or not they had a prescription was not asked. We do know, however, that the number of individuals who report medicinal use (without having a prescription) in Canada is much higher than those with a prescription.² With cannabis being decriminalized, recreational cannabis being legalized and access to cannabis increasing it is now easier for individuals to treat conditions without having to acquire a prescription. The difficulties accessing medicinal cannabis in Canada is also well documented, so it is possible that people are treating themselves without the hassle of acquiring a prescription.^{3,4}

² Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, (2020). “Cannabis (Canadian Drug Summary).” Page 1.

³ Canadian AIDS Society and University of British Columbia, (2014). “Barriers to Access for Canadians who use Cannabis for Medical Purposes.” Page 3.

⁴ The Drug & Alcohol Testing Association of Canada, (November, 2019). “Atlantic Canada struggles with access to medicinal cannabis.”

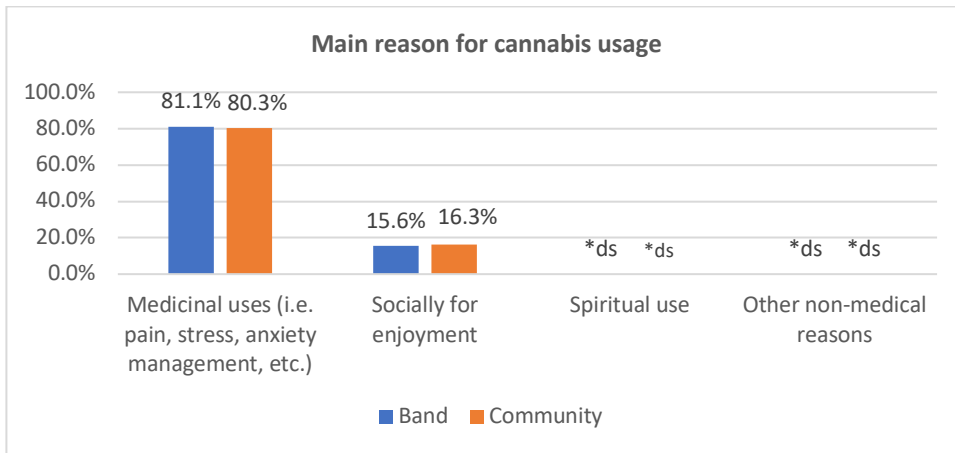


Figure 1.3: What is the main reason for your cannabis usage? Comparison between band members and community members.

The “Community Cannabis Survey” asked respondents where they “typically” purchase their non-medical cannabis. The most common retail option was from a dispensary in Millbrook, with 47.8% of band members and 64.3% community members. Although the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission (NSLC) is the only licensed distributor in the province, only 7.6%-7.8% of people from Millbrook routinely purchase their cannabis from the NSLC.

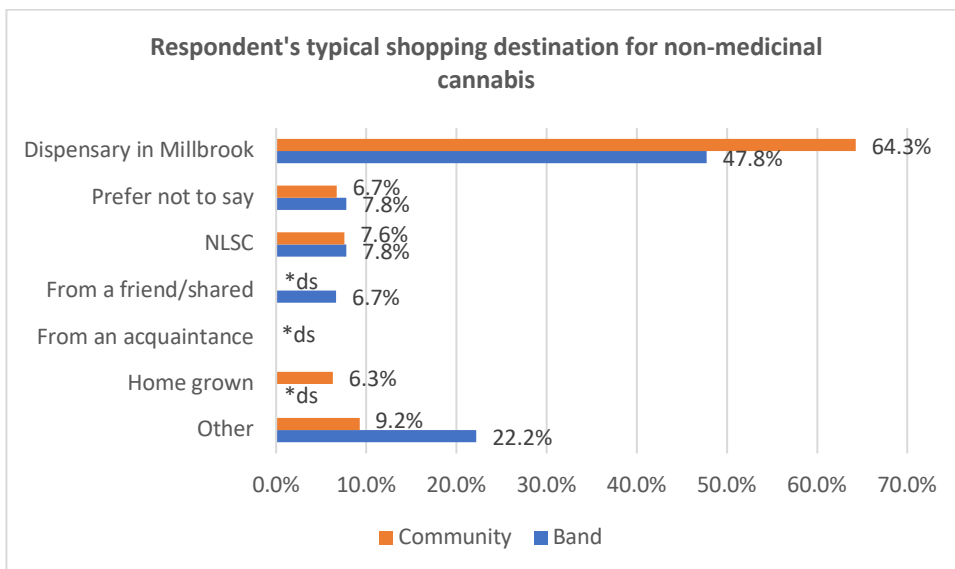


Figure 1.4: Where do you typically purchase your non-medical cannabis? Comparison between band members and community members.

The following table looks at the proportion of cannabis users who shop at each of the individual retail outlets. Each option represents the proportion of people who said, “yes, I shop here.” Therefore, the cumulative value does not equal 100.0%.

Similar to Figure 1.3, we see that the most popular retail outlets are the dispensaries in Millbrook. 49.5% of band members said that this was their “go-to” shopping destination, compared to almost 75% of community members. For band members, the next most popular option was an “other,” or unlisted source. For community members, the next in line was the NSLC.

Table 1.0: Where do you purchase your non-medical cannabis (check all that apply)? Comparison between band members and community members.

Purchased From	Band members	Community members
Dispensary in Millbrook	49.5%	75.8%
Other	28.1%	18.5%
From a friend/shared	19.6%	22.6%
Home grown	19.4%	22.2%
NLSC	18.3%	29.1%
From an acquaintance	9.5%	11.4%
Prefer not to say	*ds	*ds

The most commonly used product, for both band members (72.5%) and community members (80.3%), is flower/bud. Edibles were the second most popular option, with 10%-13% of respondents saying that it was the cannabis product they use most often. When one considers that the NSLC did not make cannabis edibles available until quite recently, it sheds light on why such a large proportion of band members shop at dispensaries on-reserve.

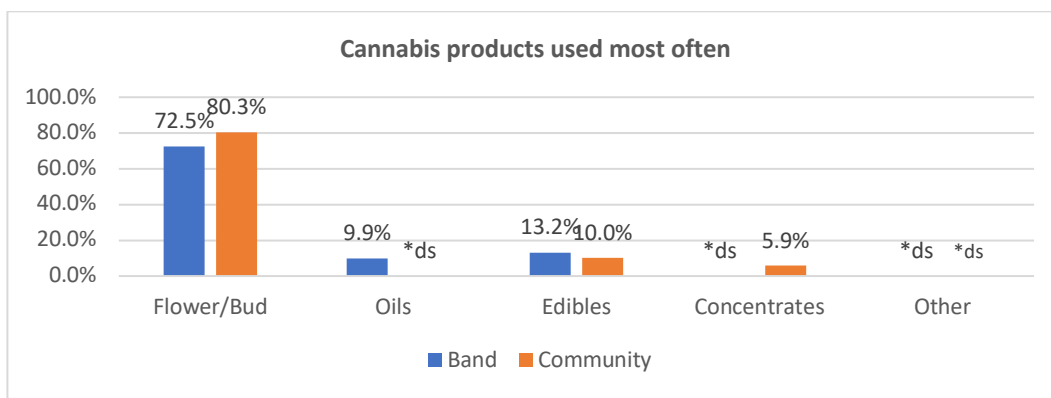


Figure 1.5: What non-medical cannabis products do you use most often? Comparison between band members and community members.

Like Table 1.0, this table shows the proportion of cannabis users in Millbrook who use each of the listed cannabis products. Each option represents the proportion of people who said, “yes, I use this product.” For both groups, the two most common responses were flower/bud and edibles.

Table 1.1: What products do you use (check all that apply)? Comparison between band members and community members.

Purchased From	Band members	Community members
Flower/Bud	80.0%	92.4%
Edibles	69.5%	64.1%
Oils	53.0%	44.8%
Concentrates	38.6%	42.6%
Other	10.9%	7.8%

Most people indicated that they safely store their cannabis products in a locked cabinet or drawer (36% for band members and 43.5% for community members), with roughly 20% of people saying that it is kept in a child proof container. In other words, 58.3% of band members are ensuring that their cannabis products are stored in a safe location and 64.8% of community members have taken the same precautions. Comparatively, 14.3% of band members store their cannabis in an unlocked cabinet/drawer and 7.7% put it in an open shelf or table. 18% of community members leave their cannabis in an unlocked cabinet or drawer and 5.9% store it in an open shelf or table.

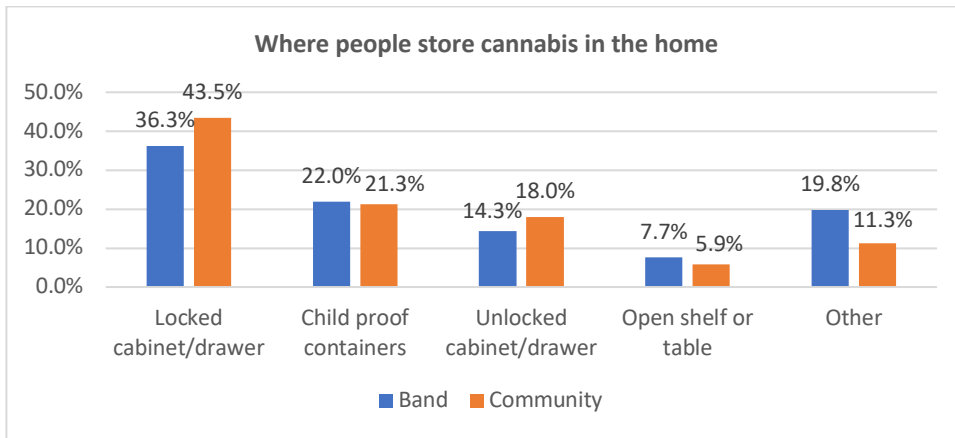


Figure 1.6: Where do you typically store your cannabis in the home? Comparison between band members and community members.

When asked if they thought cannabis use was socially acceptable, 89% of Millbrook band members felt that it is socially acceptable, compared to about 92% of community members. Nationally, only 44% of Canadians thought smoking cannabis was completely or somewhat socially acceptable (43% for consuming edibles and 42% for vaping cannabis).⁵ Although recreational cannabis use in Canada has been legalized the stigma associated with cannabis use and its long history of being illegal may continue to persist.

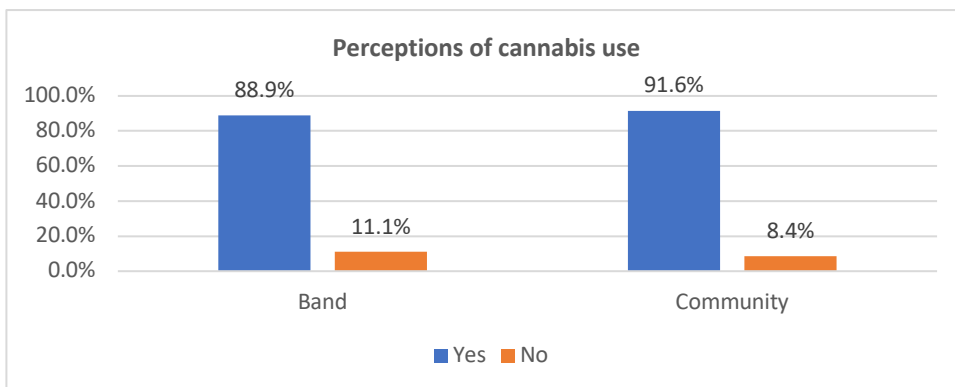


Figure 1.7: Do you think cannabis is socially acceptable? Comparison between band members and community members.

Opinion Poll Results

The first question in the opinion poll section asks respondents if they think that dispensaries in Millbrook should be able to operate without a license to sell cannabis. Over half of Millbrook band members (57%) said “no” dispensaries should not be allowed to operate without a license to sell cannabis. Respondents who completed the survey as community members were more inclined to say “yes,” cannabis dispensaries should be able to operate without a license to sell (62%).

⁵ Canada, (2019). “Canadian Cannabis Survey 2019 - Summary.”

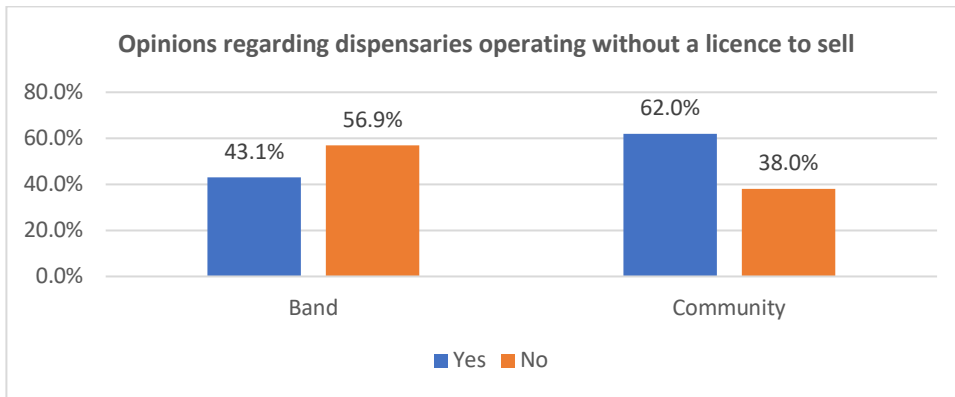


Figure 2.0: Should dispensaries be able to operate without a licence to sell cannabis? Comparison between band members and community members.

The next question asked respondents “in the past several months, a number of dispensaries have opened up in Millbrook. Please share your thoughts on the matter.” We received 415 different open entry responses. We read through all of them and coded them according to the tone of the response, as either negative, neutral, positive, or mixed. Responses were labeled “negative” if the respondent voiced their opposition to the dispensaries. “Neutral” responses were categorized as having no opinion on the matter. “Positive” responses showed support or approval of the dispensaries in Millbrook. Lastly, a fourth category for “mixed” responses was created, because a number of respondents noted that they thought “the dispensaries were a good thing, but...” or said something like, “I do not care for them, but I appreciate their entrepreneurship.” To respect the anonymity and confidentiality of survey participants the responses provided below have been paraphrased. The responses provided in the bullets below represent the common threads among the open entry responses.

Figure 2.1 (see page 8) shows how the two groups (band members and community members) answered very differently to this question. It should be noted that the “community member” category includes respondents who are not band members and respondents who said that they are a band member but opted not to share their number. 43% of Millbrook band members felt negatively about the dispensaries in the community, compared to 11.5% of community members. The most common issues that band members had with dispensaries operating in Millbrook were:

- “there are too many;”
- “they do not look professional;”
- “they attract an undesirable crowd (concerns about gang affiliations);”
- “concerns about safe supply;”
- “they are for personal gain, just helps a handful of owners and workers;”
- “they are illegal and unregulated, we have existing rules that are not being enforced;”
- “they are operating next to the gymnasium and youth centre, which makes people feel unsafe;”
- “they shouldn’t be allowed to operate where there are homes and families;”
- “it’s a controlled substance sold in an unregulated location;”
- “the band should be responsible for regulating cannabis sales;” and
- “nothing monetary is going back to the band, or the community.”

7.4% of band members said that they were neither in favour, nor against the idea of dispensaries operating in Millbrook. Only 2.4% of community members were “on the fence”. The neutral responses consisted of answers such as:

- “It doesn’t really affect me;”
- “I have no opinion on the matter;” and
- “I don’t live close enough to be affected or form an opinion.”

37.7% of Millbrook band members had positive things to say about the dispensaries in the community, compared to 82% of community members. The disparity between the two groups is quite significant, but the types of responses among the two groups were similar. Respondents who had positive things to say about the dispensaries said that:

- “they offer employment opportunities, especially to folks who have had issues finding employment in the past;”
- “the products are superior and cheaper than the NSLC;”
- “they like to support people and band members, rather than the NSLC;”
- “buying cannabis from NSLC is a problem for people trying to abstain from alcohol. Dispensaries are a safer alternative;”
- “it’s nice to be able to purchase tax-free cannabis;”
- “they like to support fellow band members;”
- “you don’t have to leave the reserve, or drive into town;”
- “products have less packaging waste, better for the environment;”
- “dispensaries sell products that NSLC doesn’t, or hasn’t until very recently (edibles, concentrates, drinkables, etc.);”
- “workers are very knowledgeable about their products;”
- “NSLC’s monopoly on recreational cannabis is not fair;”
- “the number of shops offers variety;”
- “you can interact with the product (look at it, smell it, read labels) before purchasing, unlike the NSLC, which is highly guarded;”
- “their hours are better than NSLC;” and
- “dispensaries make cannabis more accessible.”

Mixed responses were reported separately, in their own category, because respondents sometimes identified both positive and negative characteristics regarding the presence of dispensaries in the community. There was a higher percentage of mixed responses from band members (12.2%), than there were from community members (4.1%). Respondents who had “mixed” responses said that they were okay with having dispensaries in the community, but:

- “they should follow the rules;”
- “how can we ensure they are selling a safe supply;”
- “it poses a threat to the children, youth and women;” and
- “they should be giving back to the community.”

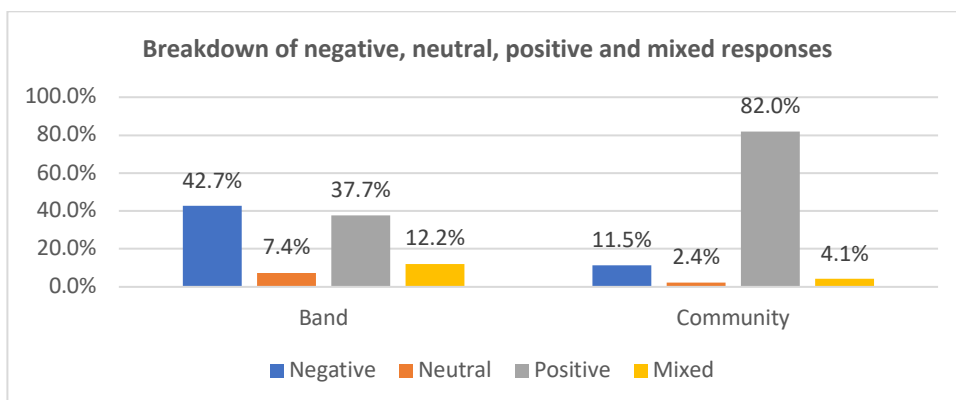


Figure 2.1: In the past several months, a number of dispensaries have opened up in Millbrook. Please share your thoughts on the matter. Comparison between band members and community members.

Band members and community members responded almost identically when asked, “should Millbrook First Nation develop its own regulatory framework?” The majority of respondents said “yes,” Millbrook should develop its own cannabis regulations (84.5% and 82.4%).

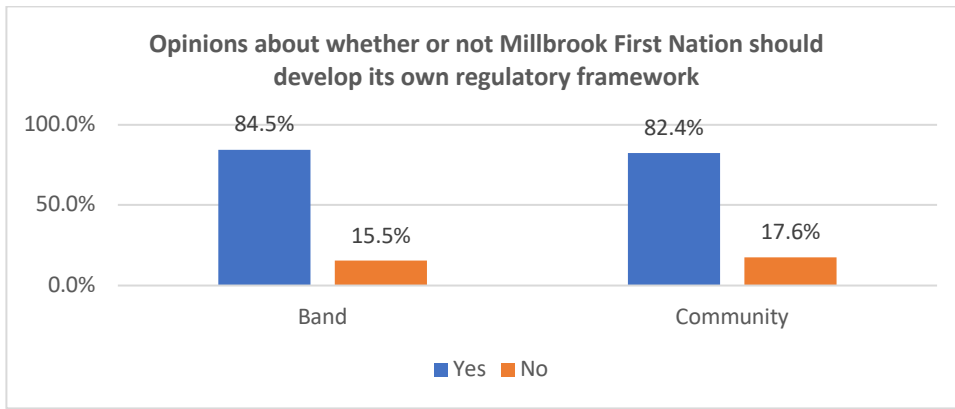


Figure 2.2: Should Millbrook First Nation develop its own regulatory framework? Comparison between band members and community members.

Similar to the question about Millbrook developing its own cannabis regulations, the majority of respondents (72% of band members and 66% of community members) believe that the band should manage cannabis similar to the tobacco quota system.

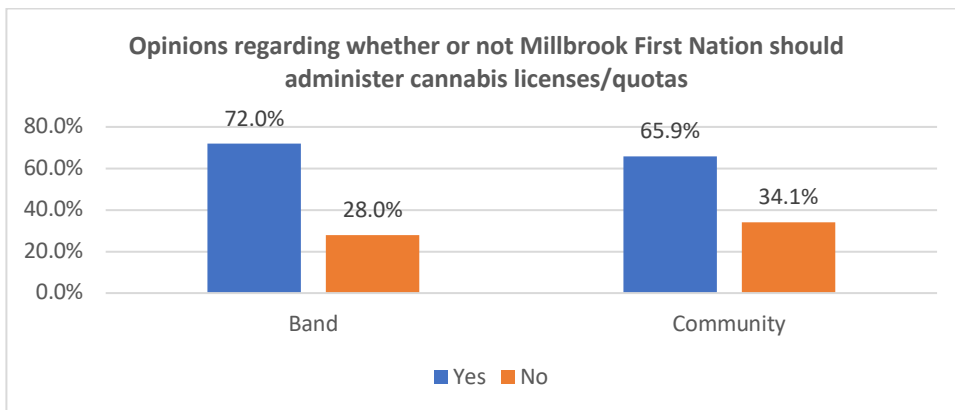


Figure 2.3: Should Millbrook First Nation be responsible for administering cannabis licenses (like they do with tobacco quotas)? Comparison between band members and community members.

Band members (87%) and community members (87%) both believed that cannabis should only be made available in age restricted locations.

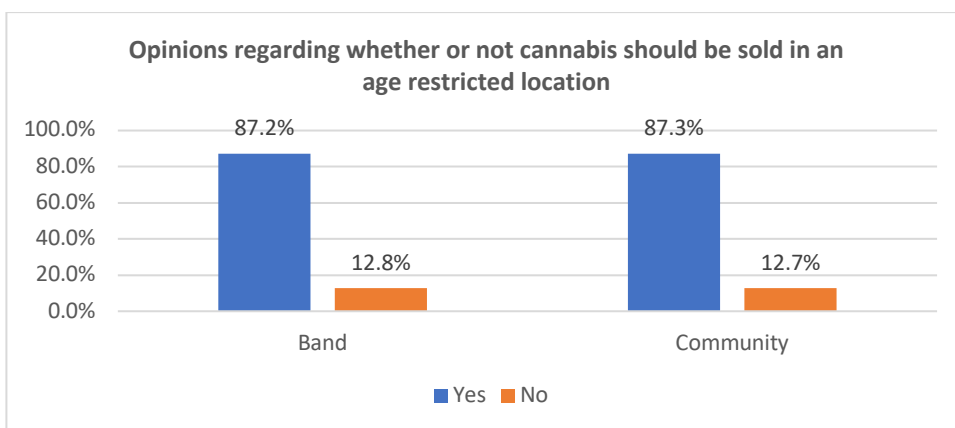


Figure 2.4: Should cannabis be sold in an age restricted location? Comparison between band members and community members.

Band members and community members responded quite differently to the question about the use of trailers, homes and sheds as retail storefronts. Nearly two thirds (65.8%) of band members said that sheds, homes, and

trailers were not suitable storefronts for cannabis sales, compared to only 28.9% of community members, who were in opposition.

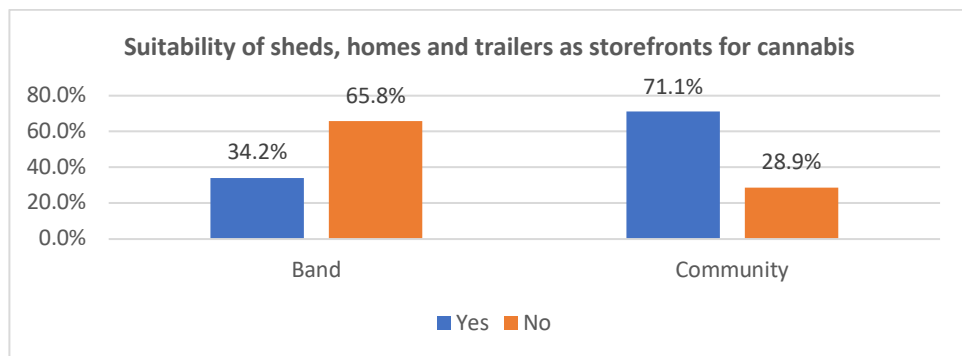


Figure 2.5: Are sheds, homes and trailers suitable storefronts for cannabis sales? Comparison between band members and community members.

In the case of both band (73.8%) and community members (62.2%), the majority of respondents felt that cannabis retailers should pay a licensing fee to the band. If this were to happen, community programs could be developed from the funds generated from dispensary and band relations. Millbrook First Nation has done this in the past with funds generated from tobacco sales (Millbrook Tobacco Store Fund) and gaming revenue (Treaty Enterprise Credit).

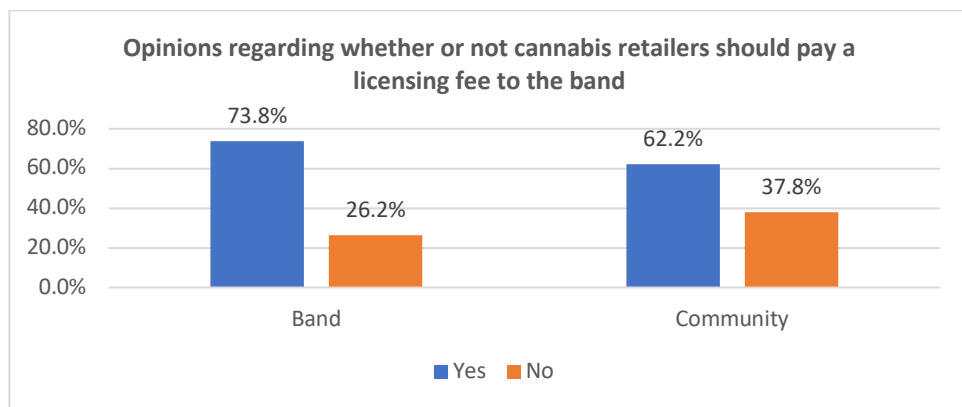


Figure 2.6: Should cannabis retailers pay a licensing fee to the band? Comparison between band members and community members.

Similarly, the majority of respondents from both groups (93% of band members and 88.9% of community members) said that they would like to see funds generated from licensing fees go toward supporting community programs, much like the Treaty Enterprise Credit and the Millbrook Tobacco Store Fund.

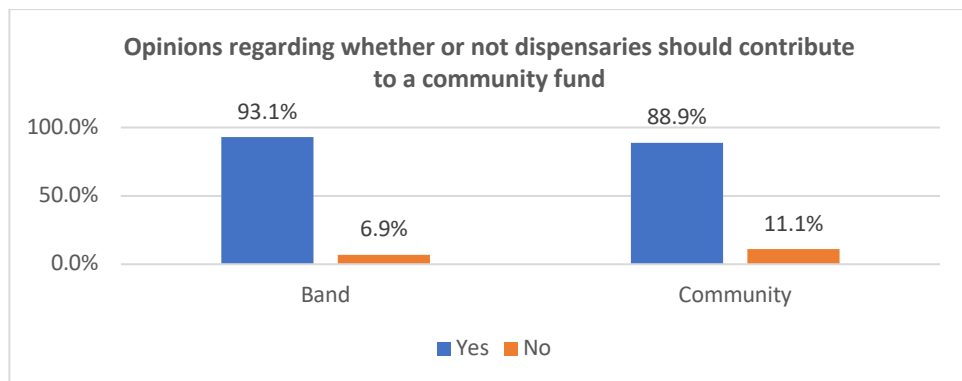


Figure 2.7: If cannabis retailers had to pay a licensing fee to the band, would you like to see some of the proceeds go toward community programs (like the Millbrook Enterprise Credit and Millbrook Tobacco Store Fund)? Comparison between band members and community members.

When we analyzed the open entry data regarding what programs respondents would like to see supported by cannabis licensing fees, we looked at all responses as a whole. Many of the responses were similar, others quite unique. In some cases, responses were grouped together in similar categories. For example, “building more houses” and “addressing the housing shortage” would be grouped into the same “Housing” category. The following table shows the top 10 major themes, in order from most to least popular, that appeared in the survey data.

The most popular recommendation was to use the funds to support sports programming. Although the band covers many expenses through the Millbrook Tobacco Store Fund, respondents noted that there were limitations around eligible expenses. It was recommended to expand coverage to include adult equipment coverage, have a travel fund for athletes, cover membership fees in full (as opposed to a \$300 cap). Education programs ranged in recommendations from developing afterschool community programs for students that continue their education in a hands-on Mi’kmaq way, to improving coverage for hiring tutors and learning aids. Those in favour of supporting Youth and Elder programs felt that facility upgrades, or the development of new spaces was a priority. Also, having more activities and programs held at the Youth centre and Senior Centre. The fifth most common recommendation was to take the funding generated from licensing and divide it amongst band membership to increase the Treaty Enterprise Credit cheques.

Table 2.0: What programs would you like to see the licensing funds support? Top 10 program options.

Program Options	Program Options
#1) Sports programs	#6) Recreational opportunities
#2) Education programs	#7) Improve coverage of existing band programs
#3) Youth and teen programs	#8) Child and family programs
#4) Elder programs	#9) Community events
#5) Increasing Treaty grants	#10) Housing and Community development

When asked if dispensaries should be allowed to operate in residential areas, the majority of band members said “no,” they should not be able to. Conversely, nearly three quarters (74.9%) of community members felt that it was okay to operate cannabis shops in areas zoned for residential purposes.

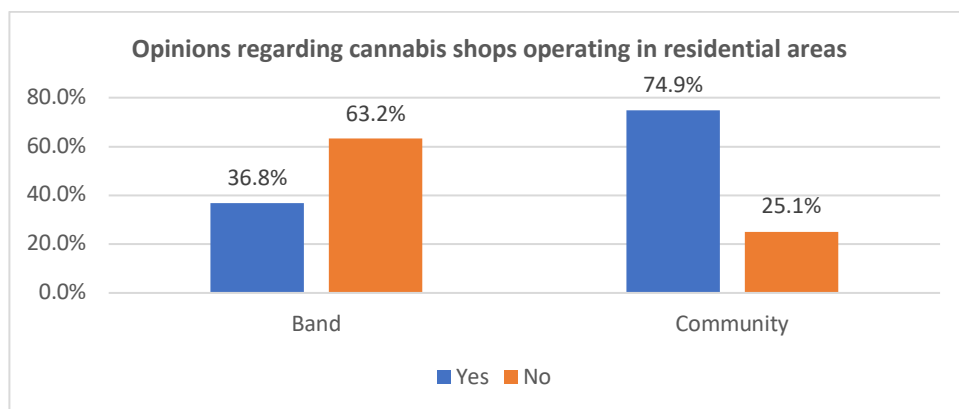


Figure 2.8: Should dispensaries be allowed to operate in residential areas? Comparison between band members and community members.

About 54% of band members said that dispensaries should be required to disclose their supplier’s information. Community members were not as supportive of this initiative, with 39.4% saying “no” they should not have to disclose their supplier information.

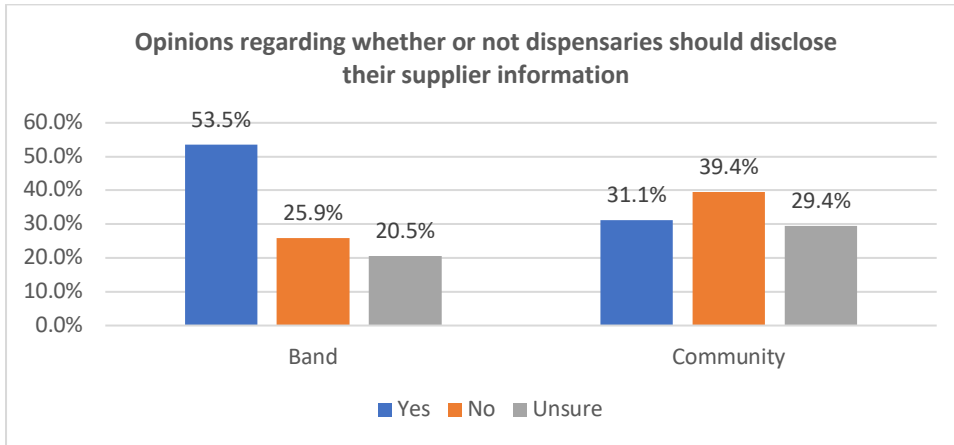


Figure 2.9: Should those who are currently operating cannabis dispensaries in Millbrook disclose their supplier's information? Comparison between band members and community members.

Similar to the previous figure, about half of all band members (45.9%) said that dispensaries should disclose their shipment information, with over 40% of community members voicing their opposition.

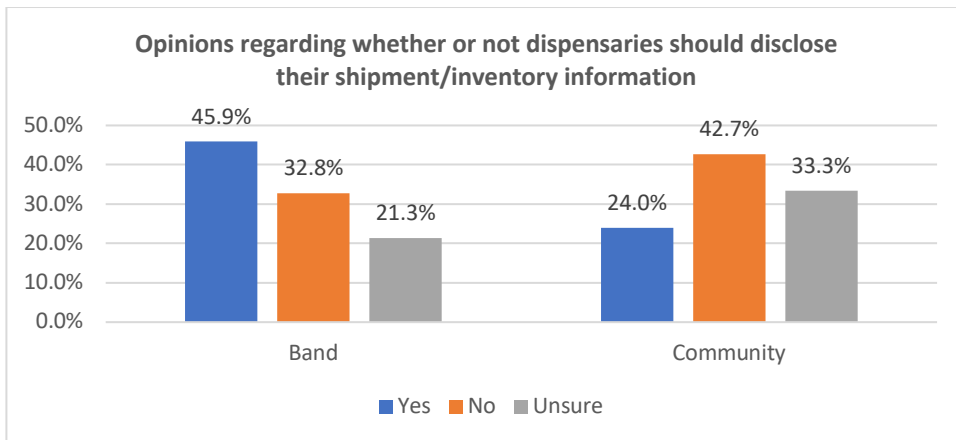


Figure 2.10: Should those who are currently operating cannabis dispensaries in Millbrook disclose their shipment/inventory information? Comparison between band members and community members.