

Consultation Results

Report on the Consultation on Alberta's Licence Plate



Introduction

With Alberta's growing population, the province will run out of licence plate numbers within a few years. As a result, the Alberta government launched a review of the licence plate design in the fall of 2007 and asked Albertans to provide their input on the design, slogan and other issues. Alberta's current licence plate design is nearly 25 years old, one of the oldest plate designs in North America.

The consultation centered on a website and online survey, with questions about colours, graphics, slogans and other issues. The website was promoted through advertising, in the media and in schools throughout the province.

When the consultation ended on January 31, 2008, the number of Albertans who had participated in the consultation was unprecedented – more than 33,000 Albertans filled out the survey. Hundreds more provided input and design ideas through e-mail, phone calls and in writing.

This report summarizes the overall findings of the consultation, including input from meetings held with law enforcement, community organizations and other groups on technical issues. It also includes the findings of a public opinion poll conducted to provide broader information about Albertans' opinions on the licence plate.

A final decision about the plate design will be made in the months ahead, taking into account the full range of input provided by Albertans and stakeholder organizations.

Summary

Through the course of the consultation, thousands of Albertans and dozens of different organizations provided input on the design, graphics, slogan, colours, the purpose of the licence plate, whether to re-introduce a front licence plate, the use of new licence plate technologies and many other issues.

The Design

The majority of Albertans want to see a new licence plate design. This was reflected in both the online survey and public opinion poll. Support for a new design is especially strong in younger Albertans. Most law enforcement organizations, public safety groups and other organizations are not opposed to a new design as long as the plate numbers can be clearly and easily seen.

- *In the online survey, 74% supported a new plate design.*
- *In the public opinion poll, 51% said the province should introduce a new plate design.*

For the design itself, many Albertans like the idea of introducing a graphic element or visual theme to the plate. Mountains would be the preferred choice. Colour preferences were mixed, although a large number of people support a white background.

- ***In the online survey, 36% supported a visual theme with mountains.***
- ***In the public opinion poll, 57% want a graphic on the plate and the most popular graphic was mountains or the wild rose.***

The message or slogan on the plate had mixed support. In the online survey, most people favoured putting Alberta's official motto on the plate, Strong and Free. In the public opinion poll, more people liked Wild Rose Country than Strong and Free.

- ***In the online survey, 46% preferred Strong and Free, 34% preferred Wild Rose Country, and 20% suggested other mottos.***
- ***In the public opinion poll, 74% liked Wild Rose Country.***

Choice

Many Albertans liked the idea of having affinity plates – a choice of designs that allows the vehicle owner to express support for a particular organization or group.

- ***In the online survey, 61% supported the province offering the option of affinity plates.***
- ***In the public opinion poll, 65% thought the province should offer the option of affinity plates.***

Front Licence Plate

The majority of Albertans do not want the government to reintroduce a front licence plate. This was reflected both in the online survey and the public opinion poll. However, many organizations strongly support the return of a front plate. Several groups, particularly law enforcement and rural bus drivers, provided written submissions stating their support for a front plate. This support was also clearly expressed in meetings held with stakeholder organizations.

- ***In the online survey, 80% did not support a front plate being reintroduced.***
- ***In the public opinion poll, 60% did not support a front licence plate being reintroduced.***

Online Survey Results

A total of 33,420 Albertans filled out the survey online. The following summarizes how Albertans responded to each question. Since it was not mandatory to fill out each question, the percentages may not add up to 100%.

Question 1: Should Alberta introduce a new licence plate design?

- Yes (74%)
- No (26%)

Question 2: If you think Alberta should introduce a new design, what colours should be used on the new licence plate, keeping in mind that a licence plate needs to be clear and easy to read?

The background colour:

- white (49%)
- blue (19%)
- red (7.5%)
- green (5.5%)
- yellow (5%)
- other (14%)

The letters and numbers:

- red (33%)
- blue (19%)
- white (16%)
- green (8%)
- yellow (6%)
- other (17%)

Question 3: Are there any visual themes that represent our province that you think should be on the new licence plate?

- mountains (36%)
- no graphics: numbers and letters only (17%)
- oilfields (13%)
- prairie landscape (12%)
- other (10%)
- wildlife (7%)
- city landscape (4%)
- Wild Rose/Alberta rose (1%)

Question 4: Should the licence plate mainly provide information or should it convey a message about the province?

- promotion of Alberta (64%)
- information (34%)

Question 5: If you think the message on the licence plate should help promote Alberta, what should the message be?

- Strong and Free (Alberta's official motto) (46%)
- Wild Rose Country (35%)
- Other ideas? (20%)

The top 20 other ideas were:

- both slogans
- Alberta Advantage
- Alberta Beef
- Alberta Bound
- Awesome Alberta
- Best in the West
- Big Oil Country
- Big Sky Country
- Black Gold Country
- Canada's Energy Source
- Endless Opportunities
- Fortis et Liber
(Latin for Strong and Free)

- Gateway to the Rockies
- Heart of the New West
- Home of the Canadian Rockies
- Oil Country
- Sunny Alberta
- The New West
- Western Hospitality
- You're in Oil Country

Question 6: Should there be the same message on all licence plates or should people be able to pick from several messages?

- a choice of messages (61%)
- the same message on all licence plates (38%)

Question 7: Should Alberta bring back a front licence plate?

- No (80%)
- Yes (20%)

Demographics:

Demographics of those who filled in the survey.

Age	Number	Percentage
14 – 18	1373	4%
19 – 29	7886	24%
30 – 39	7139	21%
40 – 49	6790	20%
50 – 59	5192	16%
60 – 79	3220	10%
80+	125	0.37%
No Age	1695	5%
Total	33,420	

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	12,258	37%
Male	21,162	63%
Total	33,420	

City	Number	Percentage
Calgary	13,325	40%
Edmonton	7811	23%
Fort McMurray	471	1.4%
Grande Prairie	601	1.8%
Lethbridge	1338	4%
Medicine Hat	737	2%
Other	5445	16%
Red Deer	1020	3%
Rural Alberta	2672	8%
Total	33,420	

Public Opinion Poll

A public opinion poll was conducted in December 2007 to provide a broader picture of how Albertans view licence plate issues. The results of the opinion poll and the online survey were consistent in some cases and inconsistent in others.

- In the opinion poll, Albertans were somewhat divided on whether the government should introduce a new licence plate design, as 48% initially said it should, 37% said it should not and 15% were undecided. After considering various arguments for and against a new licence plate design, 51% said the province should introduce a new plate design, 40% said it should not and 9% were undecided.
- If a new licence plate is introduced, most Albertans (57%) want the plate to have a graphic motif on the background and the motifs they favoured most are mountains or a wild rose.
- Most Albertans (60%) thought the front licence plate should not be reintroduced, 31% thought it should be reintroduced and 9% were undecided. After considering arguments for and against a front plate, opinions did not change significantly.
- Almost two-thirds of Albertans (65%) thought the province should offer the option of affinity plates to those willing to pay extra for them.
- The full public opinion poll is available online at www.licenceplate.alberta.ca.

Other Submissions and Input

Submissions from Individuals

Some Albertans submitted their opinions through e-mail, telephone or in writing. A total of 713 submissions and inquiries were received – 262 telephone calls and 451 written submissions (through e-mail or letter).

The following is a summary of their views:

- 74 people did not support a new design, mostly because of the cost.
- 133 people opposed the idea of a front plate.
- 36 people supported re-introducing a front licence plate.

- 98 people suggested specific ideas for designs or graphic motifs to include in a new plate design. These included:
 - Many people suggested potential colours for a new licence plate. The most popular background colours were yellow, white and blue. The most popular letter colour was blue.
 - 17 people supported the idea of affinity plates – a plate that could be purchased with a graphic that expresses support for a specific group or organization
 - In addition, even though the consultation was not a design contest and was focused on gathering input on overall ideas and themes for the licence plate, a number of people – including several children and students – put together their own licence plate designs.

Submissions from Organizations

- Formal submissions were provided by the Alberta Rural Crime Watch Association, the Student Transportation Association of Alberta and Black Gold Regional Schools.
- Each of these submissions expressed strong support for the reintroduction of a front licence plate. They indicated that rural school bus drivers have difficulty reporting vehicles who fail to stop when a school bus has its flashing lights on. Front licence plates, they said, would help them report these traffic offences.
- The Alberta Rural Crime Watch Association also supplied additional written support for a front licence plate from other organizations: the Calgary Police Service, the Camrose Police Service, the Edmonton Police Service, Lac Ste. Anne County, the Lethbridge Regional Police Service, the Medicine Hat Police Service, the RCMP K Division, Vermilion County, Warner No. 5 County, Woodlands County and Yellowhead County.

Meetings with Organizations

- The Alberta government met with numerous organizations in the province to discuss logistics and technical aspects of introducing a new licence plate.
- These meetings included representatives from law enforcement organizations (the RCMP, the Edmonton Police Service, the Calgary Police Service, the Medicine Hat Police Service, Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security - Sheriff's Office, Sustainable Resource Development, the Calgary Parking Authority, City of Edmonton Parking Enforcement, the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch of Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, and the Canadian Border Services Agency), as well as representatives from the commercial transportation industry,

Alberta Registries, the Association of Alberta Registry Agents, the Alberta Motor Association, the City of Calgary, the City of Edmonton, large commercial fleet owners, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, RV Dealers Association and the Alberta Snowmobile Association.

- Law enforcement organizations expressed strong support for re-introducing a front licence plate, saying it would make it easier to identify oncoming vehicles as well as vehicles backed into parking stalls. It would also allow for automated licence plate recognition technology (ALPR) to be introduced in the province. However, some law enforcement officials reported that sometimes ALPR technology is only equipped for reading rear licence plates (such as the ALPR systems in place at the Canadian-U.S. border).
- Most representatives at the meetings supported making the licence plate more reflective and readable, including the use of retro-reflectivity technology. They emphasized that the government should ensure that any change in design does not impact the function of the plate and should be easily recognizable as an Alberta plate. Law enforcement representatives were not concerned with the idea of affinity plates as long as they follow a common format and the number of choices are kept reasonable.
- Most organizations stressed the importance of phasing-in a new licence plate design in a way that minimizes the impact on their organizations, including the cost of the new plate.

Next Steps

The results of the consultation will now be considered by the Alberta government. Decisions about the plate design and the implementation of any changes will be made in coming months.

Final decisions will use as much input from Albertans as possible, while also meeting the Alberta government's visual identity guidelines and the needs of law enforcement and public safety.