

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ORDINANCE AMENDMENT** to prohibit the use of all forms of tobacco in city parks, on public school grounds and on all other designated city-owned property. (Community Services Administrator and Alders Roth, Berrios-Bones, and Marchand)

REPORT: 1503-12

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

This proposed ordinance amendment would prohibit the use of all forms of tobacco in city parks, on public school grounds, and on all other designated City-owned property. The ordinance prohibits tobacco products in all forms, including but not limited to lighted cigarettes, cigars, pipes, or similar devices, such as all electronic cigarettes (e-cig, e-hookah, vape pen, electronic nicotine delivery system), as well as chew tobacco and snus.

Since 2004, smoking has been prohibited state-wide in wide range of public places, including state or municipal government buildings, health care institutions, school buildings, retail food stores, restaurants, most public establishments with alcoholic liquor permits, elevators, and college dormitories. The city has established three additional smoke-free zones, limited to the immediate block around the Yale-New Haven Hospital, the old Hospital of St. Raphael's campus, and Connecticut Mental Health Center building. State law, Section 7-148(c)(7)(H)(xvi) now specifically states that: Any municipality shall have the power to "regulate, on any property owned by the municipality, any activity deemed to be deleterious to public health, including the lighting or carrying of a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or similar device."

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This ordinance would support "Tobacco-Free New Haven," an initiative to improve the overall health and well-being of the residents of New Haven by reducing tobacco use launched last November by Mayor Toni Harp in collaboration with the Board of Alders, city Community Services Administrator Martha Okafor, other city officials, and community leaders. In recent years, other cities around the country and the state have taken more extensive action to become tobacco-free by making it unlawful to smoke on city property, public parks, beaches, and the grounds of public libraries and schools.

Scientific evidence has firmly established that tobacco contains many harmful chemicals and cancer-causing agents and is a serious health risk to all humans, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regards tobacco use as the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, estimating that cigarette smoking alone causes about one of every five deaths in the U.S., or more than 480,000 deaths annually, including deaths from secondhand smoke. Paul Kowalski, Acting Director of the city's Health Department, estimates that more than 1,000 city residents died in the past ten years from smoking-related health issues.

The City hosts many recreational programs in city parks, public school grounds, and on other fields and facilities owned by the City, and tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke are contrary to enhancing the quality of life and providing safe environments for the citizens of New Haven. Furthermore, tobacco use in and around City facilities, such as New Haven parks and public school grounds, creates the contradictory message of young people and adults being encouraged to engage in healthy activities and lifestyles, while at the same time being exposed to those using tobacco products that cause adverse health effects due to secondhand smoke.

ADVICE

The Commission finds the ordinance amendment in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: March 18, 2015
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST:



Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director