



City Council

Approval of Smoke and Vape-Free Parks

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Title

Approval of Smoke and Vape-Free Parks

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory committee and the General Government Committee recommend banning smoking and vaping from Olympia's parks.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve banning smoking and vaping from Olympia's parks and direct staff to bring forward a proposed ordinance change.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a ban on smoking and vaping from Olympia's parks.

Staff Contact:

Jonathon Turlove, Associate Director, Parks Arts and Recreation, 360.753.8068

Presenter(s):

Jonathon Turlove, Associate Director, Parks Arts and Recreation, 360.753.8068

Background and Analysis:

Smoking in parks is a problem due to the dangers of secondhand smoke to other park users, litter, risk of fire, and the fact that it conflicts with the goals of parks being healthy places. While there is less documented research on the health effects of vaping/e-cigarettes, the FDA has warned that an analysis of e-cigarettes found that many contained toxic and/or carcinogenic chemicals.

Currently smoking, vaping, and the use of e-cigarettes is allowed in all of Olympia's parks. In 2003, Council passed a resolution requesting that people not smoke near playgrounds and signage was installed at park playgrounds at that time. While smoking marijuana is currently illegal in all public places, including parks, this ban will clarify that smoking any substance, including marijuana, would become prohibited in Olympia parks.

Over 1,200 cities have made their parks smoke/tobacco free. This includes many in Washington

including Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver. Most cities that are prohibiting smoking in their parks are including the prohibition of vaping/e-cigarettes. Some cities have made their parks completely tobacco-free, extending the ban to chewing tobacco.

At their meeting on May 19, 2016, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) recommended that smoking, vaping, and the use of e-cigarettes should be prohibited from all of Olympia's parks. They did not recommend, however, that the ban should extend to chewing tobacco as they felt that the use of chewing tobacco did not have an adverse effect on the health of other park users.

On September 28, 2016, the General Government Committee recommended that smoking, vaping, and the use of e-cigarettes should be prohibited from all of Olympia's parks as well as at the Olympia Timberland Library. (The library manager has since contacted staff to report that the library board is no longer interested in pursuing a smoking ban at this time.)

If approved by Council, staff proposes that a smoke-free parks ordinance would take effect January 1, 2018. Staff would phase-in the new ordinance utilizing 2017 to educate the public. The intent of the ordinance is to make it easier for park users, park rangers, or maintenance staff to ask that people do not smoke in the parks. There are no plans to write citations for smoking.

In the event an ordinance is approved, it may impact working conditions for represented employees who smoke and/or vape. The union representative from AFSCME has been updated throughout the process and the City is committed to bargain any impacts on affected employees.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Periodically staff receives complaints about smoking in parks from park users.

Options:

Move to approve the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and General Government Committee's recommendation to ban smoking and vaping from Olympia's parks and direct staff to bring forward a proposed ordinance change.

Hold a public hearing to gauge public interest in a smoking ban.

Leave current policy as-is. Smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco would be allowed in all parks but signage would remain in playgrounds requesting that people do not smoke there. As the playground smoking ban is by resolution, not ordinance, it would remain unenforceable.

Financial Impact:

Minimal costs of additional park signage.

Attachments:

None