



Office of the City Manager

## INFORMATION CALENDAR

December 14, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: Lisa Warhuus, Director, Health, Housing and Community Services  
Subject: City of Berkeley, State Tobacco Prevention Program (STPP) Overview

### INTRODUCTION

During the July 2017 through December 2021 program period, the City of Berkeley, State Tobacco Prevention Program (STPP) focused their work in three areas:

1. Addressing improperly disposed of tobacco product waste in Berkeley
2. Increasing awareness of the health effects of using flavored tobacco products, including vape and menthol products
3. Recruiting, educating and training Berkeley community members and stakeholders for the Berkeley Tobacco Prevention Coalition

The City of Berkeley, State Tobacco Prevention Program (STPP) conducted observational and public intercept surveys that focused on flavored tobacco and the retail environment. The survey responses provide insight on Berkeley Residents' views on improperly disposed tobacco waste, prohibited smoking areas, and the potential impact of flavored tobacco on youth.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

During the 2018-2021 program period, the STPP conducted several activities addressing improperly disposed of tobacco litter in Berkeley. Due to the COVID pandemic, the program's approach to completing activities, collecting and synthesizing data had to be accommodated for employee safety. As a result, annual summaries and reporting was postponed, resulting in a subsequent delay in relaying a summary to council. In 2018, a public intercept survey found that 66% of Berkeley residents believed that tobacco waste was a problem. Currently, the STPP's tobacco litter audit sites have no smoking ordinances; these sites include multi-unit housing, bus stops, ATMs, senior centers, commercial areas and parks. Between August 2018 and April 2019, STPP's staff and Berkeley Tobacco Prevention Coalition members chose 27 tobacco litter audit sites to assess the impact of current ordinances and to measure the amount of tobacco litter found onsite. It was concluded that 50% of tobacco litter that was collected was found in commercial areas. Over 300 pieces of tobacco waste were collected during a

single visit to a commercial area, while other sites averaged about 206 pieces of improperly disposed tobacco.<sup>1</sup>

Like all tobacco products, flavored tobacco use is addictive and poses serious health risks. In 2019, when surveying Berkeley residents about flavored tobacco products, nine out of 10 residents thought that flavored tobacco is more appealing to youth than unflavored tobacco products. In addition, 81% of Berkeley residents think it is easy for youth age 21 and under to purchase flavored tobacco products. Limiting access to flavored tobacco will help reduce the likelihood of Berkeley youth using tobacco products that often target the youth population with sweet and candy like flavors. As a result, 67% of residents would support a law that would prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products in the City. In October 2019, the Berkeley City Council amended Berkeley Municipal Code sections 9.80.020 and 9.80.035, adding sections 9.80.031 and 9.80.032 to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products, require a minimum package size for cigars/little cigars, and require a minimum price for certain tobacco products sold in the city.

City of Berkeley's STPP participated in the California State Tobacco Control's Healthy Stores for Healthy Communities initiative. The Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community initiative is a statewide collaboration between tobacco and alcohol use prevention, sexually transmitted disease prevention, and nutrition partners to examine what is in our community stores and how that impacts public health. The goal of the Healthy Stores for Healthy Communities initiative is to improve the health of Californians through changes in community stores, while maintaining vibrant businesses.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

In June 2019, 82 tobacco litter audits were conducted at 27 tobacco litter audit sites. STPP staff created a template to identify the impact of current no smoking ordinances. The template identifiers included items such as: tobacco litter, smoking signs, trash receptacles, and the number of active smokers. The amount of litter ranged from 1 item to over 300 items, with an average of 206 items per observation. Although commercial areas have the largest amount of litter, bus stops had the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest amount of litter per observation and public parks had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest average. Cigarette butts were the most common form of trash collected during the City of Berkeley's STPP tobacco litter audits.

Tobacco product waste poses enormous environmental and public health challenges. Cigarette filters not only pose significant health risks to wildlife, but also to humans as they leach toxic chemicals that impact food and water supplies. E-cigarette waste, including batteries, pods and/or cartridges that contain nicotine, pose significant harm to the environment. These products were not represented in the collection of litter during the audits, but are known to show up in landfills in manners similar to discarded batteries. Currently, data on the amount of E-cigarette waste in Berkeley is unavailable.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Berkeley Fall 2018 Tobacco Litter Audit Observational Survey

### POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Health education and awareness are key in the future implication of understanding the long-term effects of flavored tobacco and subsequent tobacco litter waste. As a result, the following is encouraged:

- Increase community education and awareness of the harms of improperly disposed of tobacco,
- Increase no smoking ordinance enforcement where smoking is prohibited,
- Reduce the number of unhealthy ads situated near school campuses,
- Reestablish coalition goals to continue addressing tobacco control topics.

### FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Current state funding will support implementation of action items. Additional funding will be solicited and explored when applicable.

### CONTACT PERSON

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