



INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members Board of Health	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: November 18, 2013	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Evaluation of By-law #11-080 Prohibiting Smoking Within City Parks and Recreation Properties BOH12004(a) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department	PREPARED BY: Heidi McGuire (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6170
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

On May 31, 2012, the City of Hamilton implemented By-law #11-080, Prohibiting Smoking Within City Parks and Recreation Properties. Education was the primary focus for the first year, followed by additional education, warnings and charges as appropriate during the second year. Public Health Services committed to evaluate the impact of the by-law and report back to Board of Health.

Education

An Inter-Departmental Working Group was formed to facilitate implementation of the by-law, led by Public Health Services (PHS) and consisting of staff from Public Works – Environmental Services (Parks and Cemeteries), Public Works – Assets and Strategic Planning (Business Programs), Community Services – Recreation, Tourism Hamilton, and Human Resources. The City Manager’s Office - Legal Services was engaged in a

consultative role. This group helped guide communication and signage related to the by-law. An extensive education campaign to increase awareness about the by-law included components such as media releases, City of Hamilton web site, radio ads, HSR transit ads, and promotional materials for sports associations. Special emphasis was placed on education for sports associations, festivals and events, visitors and City of Hamilton staff. In addition, training was provided to City of Hamilton seasonal and permanent staff affected within Public Works - Parks, Community Services – Culture and Recreation, and the Customer Contact Centres.

Smoke-free signage was placed on approximately 1500 waste receptacles within parks and cigarette butt receptacles were used for a pilot project in City parks during 2012. A more detailed description of the Parks Cigarette Litter Prevention Program can be found in Report PW11052(d).

Awareness, Support and Behaviour Change: Surveys, Observation and Cigarette Butt Litter

PHS conducted surveys with residents, visitors, sports and neighbourhood associations one year after by-law implementation to determine awareness, support and behaviour change relating to the by-law. Cigarette butt litter audits were also conducted to assess changes in cigarette butt litter.

These surveys were reviewed by and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee, and were conducted in collaboration with the University of Waterloo, Propel Centre for Population Health Impact.

Surveys were conducted in 19 City of Hamilton parks and recreational areas between July 2 and 30, 2013, with City of Hamilton residents and visitors 18 years of age or older. All residents who participated are recreation facility users. Sports and neighbourhood associations who use City parks and recreation facilities were also surveyed about the by-law in July 2013. Sixteen percent of Hamilton residents who participated in the intercept interviews were smokers, which is slightly lower than Hamilton's smoking rate of 20% (CCHS, 2011).

Key Findings of the Evaluation:

a) High public awareness of the by-law

Of the respondents who identified as smokers, 77% reported they were aware of the smoke-free parks by-law and for all respondents awareness was 71.6%. More than 80% of sports and neighbourhood associations, reported being aware of the by-law.

b) Increased support for the by-law

The majority of respondents were supportive of 100% smoke-free spaces in all outdoor environments. See Appendix A for a summary of survey results. Among the sports and neighbourhood associations that responded, more than 95% supported regulating smoking in outdoor parks and recreational areas. The majority of visitors (72%-88%, depending on the location in question) supported smoke-free recreational areas. Support for regulating smoking in parks and recreational areas has increased since a similar survey was conducted in 2009. Survey results were reported in Report BOH07034(d).

c) Behaviour changes, less exposure to second-hand smoke

Most respondents indicated the by-law has not affected their use of parks and fields. Respondents who smoked were asked if their smoking behaviour had changed since this by-law came into effect. Approximately one-quarter of respondents reported that they now smoke outside the park (24.1%), or smoke further away from people (27.9%). Twenty nine per cent reported not changing their behaviour at all.

d) Less cigarette butt litter

This reported behaviour is supported by observational studies, cigarette butt litter audits and inspections completed at City of Hamilton parks and recreation properties. In general, there was less cigarette butt litter observed in parks and recreation properties after by-law implementation than before. Other findings included:

- A high volume of cigarette butt litter along the periphery of parks where transit stops were located; and
- Most cigarette butt litter was located around benches and picnic tables, arena and recreation centre doors, skateboard ramps and players benches at baseball fields.

Enforcement

Enforcement during the first year of the by-law commencing May 31, 2012 consisted mainly of education. All complaints are received, documented, assessed and followed up on by PHS. Tobacco Enforcement commenced issuing charges, as warranted in the spring of 2013. For the time period of May 31, 2012 to August 31, 2013 there were:

- 127 complaints for 52 locations;
- More than 200 general inquiries related to the by-law;
- Approximately 600 warnings were issued relating to non-compliance with the by-law; and
- 6 charges were issued by PHS.

Additional warnings and charges have been issued by Hamilton Police Services.

Over the past year, several areas emerged as “hot spots”, requiring more proactive-based enforcement. These included events and activities that had larger groups of people in attendance such as festivals and tournaments and arenas. Locations within the City that had more complaints and higher amounts of cigarette butt litter included Bayfront Park, Durand Park, Dundas Driving Park, Gage Park, Gore Park, Mohawk Sports Park and Mohawk 4 Pad, Rosedale Arena and Park, Stoney Creek Arena, Turner Park, and Valley Park.

Opportunities for improvement

Feedback from many residents and the majority of sports and neighbourhood associations, regarding enforcement indicated that they feel more enforcement is needed to successfully implement the by-law, as they still see people smoking on park and recreation property. Several residents reported people smoking during festivals and events and in recreational areas where children were present.

Next Steps

The information collected from residents, visitors, sports and neighbourhood associations as well as observational studies and cigarette butt litter audit will be used to alter education and enforcement activities as follows:

- PHS Tobacco Enforcement will continue to work with other City departments, divisions and external stakeholders to operationalize an enforcement strategy that seeks to increase compliance with City of Hamilton By-law #11-080;
- PHS Tobacco Enforcement is developing policies and procedures to inform enforcement operations specific to City of Hamilton By-law #11-080;
- PHS Tobacco Control Program will continue to increase public awareness of City of Hamilton By-law #11-080 through earned media;
- PHS continues to work with other City departments and external stakeholders to identify and assess City park and recreation property that would further benefit from By-law #11-080 sign installation in order to increase compliance with the By-law; and
- PHS will continue to work with Public Works to identify litter mitigation strategies to curb the overall volume of cigarette butt litter within and in close proximity to City parks and recreation properties.

Summary

The evaluation of City of Hamilton By-law #11-080 Prohibiting Smoking Within City Parks and Recreation Properties following the first full year of implementation suggests that more than three-quarters of residents are not only aware of the by-law but also support the conditions that it was designed to produce; namely 100% smoke-free outdoor parks and recreation properties. Furthermore, public support for the by-law among non-smokers and smokers alike continues to increase.

PHS Tobacco Enforcement will continue to work with other City departments, divisions and external stakeholders to operationalize a sustained public education and enforcement strategy that seeks to increase overall compliance with City of Hamilton By-law #11-080.

Appendices

Appendix A – Awareness, Support and Behaviour Change: Surveys, Observation and Cigarette Butt Litter

Awareness, Support and Behaviour Change: Surveys, Observation and Cigarette Butt Litter

Assessing awareness, support and behaviour change methodology

a) City of Hamilton Resident and Visitor Surveys

Intercept interviews were conducted in 19 City of Hamilton parks and recreation areas between July 2 and 30, 2013 to investigate awareness, support and behaviour change relating to the by-law. Surveys were conducted by Hamilton Public Health Services staff. The chosen locations were geographically distributed across all 15 wards in the City of Hamilton, including both urban and rural areas. Parks, playgrounds, splash pads, recreation centres/arenas, sports fields, public beaches, outdoor pools, skateboard parks, and recreational trails were visited to ensure that information from a broad representation of residents was obtained.

b) Survey of Sports and Neighbourhood Associations

In July 2013 all Sports and Neighbourhood Associations with current email contact information were invited and encouraged to respond to a web-based survey to determine their awareness and support for City of Hamilton By-law #11-080.

Locations identified for intercept interviews included:

- Ancaster Rotary Centre
- Bayfront Park & Pier 4
- Copetown Lion's Park
- Dundas Driving Park
- Eastdale Park
- Gage Park
- Gilkson Park
- Huntington Park and Recreation Centre
- Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail & Beach
- Mohawk Sports Park/Mohawk 4 Pad Arena
- Parkdale Park & Arena
- Sackville Hill Park
- Stoney Creek Recreation Centre
- Turner Park
- Valley Park Arena and Recreation Centre
- Victoria Park
- Waterdown Memorial Park
- Westmount Recreation Centre
- Winona Park

Eighty-percent of people approached for an interview agreed to participate, resulting in a total of 511 surveys completed by residents and 25 surveys completed by non-residents/visitors. This number exceeds the minimum sample size of 221 completed interviews recommended for a representative simple random sample of parks and recreation facility users in the City of Hamilton, with a 5% margin of error.¹

Key findings

a) Demographics of Residents

All residents who participated in the survey reported using City parks and recreation facilities

Table 1: Demographics of Intercept Survey Respondents

Residents (n=511)		
Ages	18-24	8.8%
	25-39	37.6%
	40-54	34.8%
	55+	17.4%
Gender	Male	37.8%
	Female	62.2%
Smoking Status	Non-smoker	84.2%
	Smoker	15.5%
Children under the age of 18 living in your household?	Yes	65.8%
	No	33.9%

b) Smoking in Parks and Recreational Areas

The majority of non-smokers (87.0%) and the majority of smokers (69.7%) reported that they see people smoking or smoke themselves at least ‘sometimes’ when visiting outdoor spaces. In terms of litter, 89.4% of respondents said that they sometimes, often, or always notice cigarette butt litter in outdoor spaces.

c) Awareness, Support and Behaviour Change

The majority of Hamilton residents are aware that the City of Hamilton has a by-law prohibiting smoking in parks and recreation areas.

Table 2: Awareness of the City of Hamilton’s By-law #11-080 Prohibiting Smoking Within City Parks and Recreation Properties

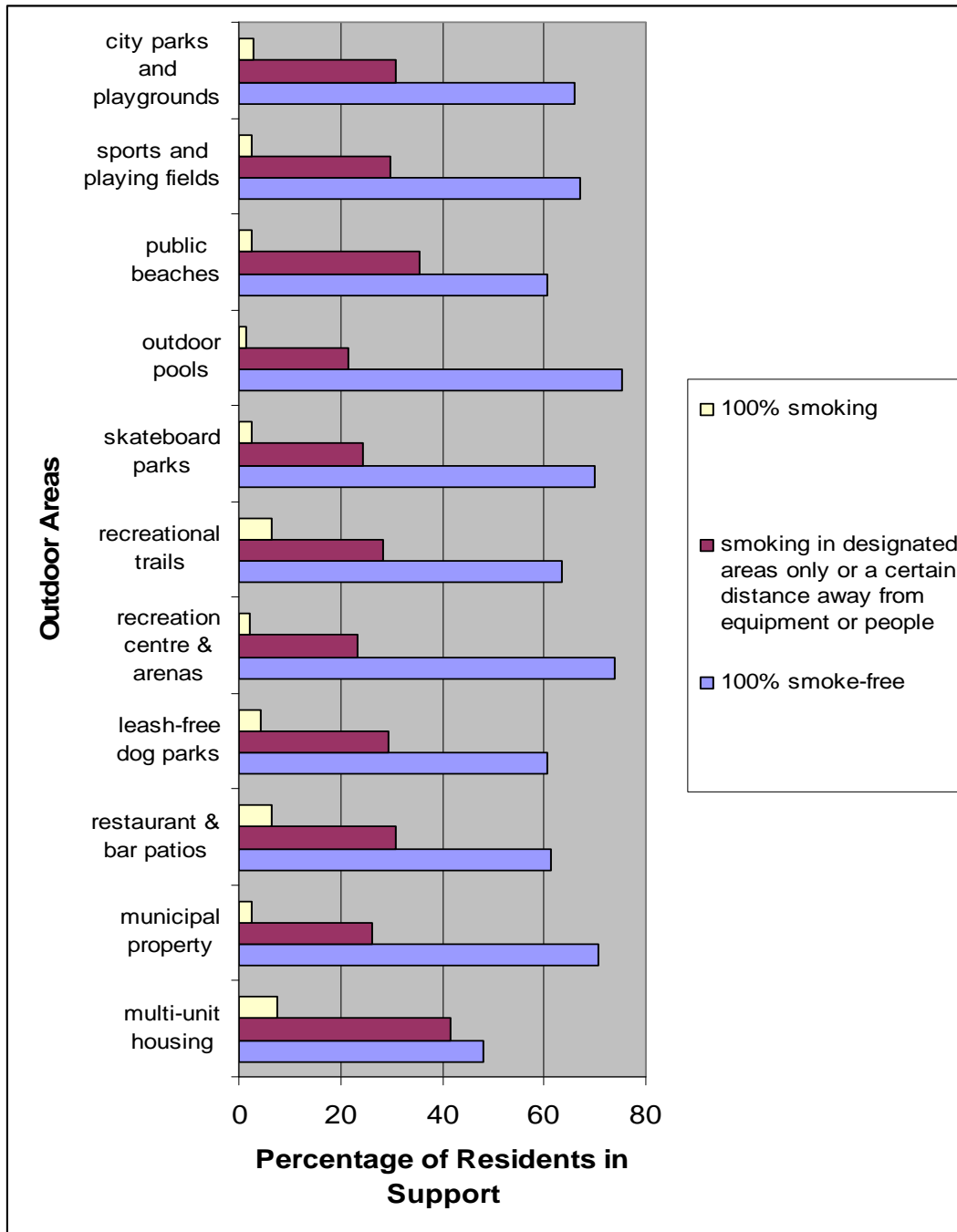
	Yes	No	Don’t know
Aware of City of Hamilton parks and recreation areas smoke-free By-law	71.6%	26.4%	1.6%
Agree the By-law helps achieve the City of Hamilton’s vision to be the best place to raise a child	78.6%	13.5%	6.3%

Awareness was higher among smokers, with 77% reporting that they know about the by-law. Of the Sports and Neighbourhood Associations that responded, 82.1% and 95% respectively were aware of the smoke-free parks and recreation properties by-law.

d) Support for the by-law

As seen in the chart below, the majority of residents support regulating smoking in city parks and recreational areas. Less than 7% of smokers and non-smokers supported allowing smoking throughout parks and recreational areas.

City of Hamilton Residents Support for Smoke-Free Parks and Recreational Areas



Support has increased for the by-law, since the last survey occurred in 2009. Additionally, this most recent evaluation demonstrated that 72% of residents indicated that the by-law has not changed their usage of outdoor municipal recreational areas.

e) Behaviour change

The following table outlines behaviour change for smokers (n=79) since the by-law came into effect.

Table 3: Smoking behaviour change due to by-law

I'm thinking about quitting smoking	8.9%
I smoke fewer cigarettes/cut down	19.0%
I smoke outside the park/on the sidewalk	24.1%
I smoke further away from other people	27.9%
I use other nicotine replacement products when I come to the park ex nicotine gum, e-cigarette	2.5%
I haven't changed my behaviour	29.1%
I smoke more at home	5.1%

f) Cigarette butt litter in park and recreation properties

A cigarette butt litter audit was conducted in 16 busy City of Hamilton neighbourhood parks and sports fields during the months of July and August 2013. A previous audit was conducted by Public Works from May to August 2012 in 12 of these parks. Four additional parks were added in August 2013 based on park activity, observed smoking activity and complaints of smoking in these areas.

Ground scans were conducted in the following outdoor recreational areas:

- Bayfront Park
- Beasley Park
- Courtcliffe Park
- Dominic Agostino Riverdale Recreation Centre
- Gage Park
- Fonthill Park
- Joe Sams Leisure Park
- Kitty Murray Park
- Lakeland Centre and Beach
- Lion's Gate Park
- Mohawk Meadows
- Mohawk Sports Park
- Shamrock Park
- Turner Park
- Valley Park Recreation Centre
- Woolverton Park

Field Observation of Smoking Behaviours

Sixteen park and recreation properties in the City of Hamilton were visited for observation of smoking behaviour to understand how the by-law has/is influencing behaviour. The observations were conducted using a tool adapted from the University of Toronto's Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. The observational data was collected during August 2013.

Field observations were conducted in the following outdoor recreational areas:

- Bayfront Park
- Beasley Park
- Birch Avenue Dog Park
- Dominic Agostino Riverdale Recreation Centre
- Dundas Driving Park
- Gage Park
- Hill Street Dog Park
- Huntington Park
- Lakeland Centre and the beach
- Mohawk Sports Park
- Turner Park
- Valley Park Recreation Centre
- Waterdown Memorial Park

Evidence of past smoking in the identified locations was assessed during each site observation, in addition to observing smokers in the spaces. Observations included:

- a high volume of butt litter was present along the periphery of parks and recreational areas where transit stops were located.
- benches and picnic tables, skateboard ramps, arena and recreation centre doors, trailside, baseball players benches had the highest concentration of cigarette butts and/or smokers during the observation period.

Discarded butts were counted at set locations in each park or recreation property. In general there was less cigarette butt litter after by-law implementation than before; however, some locations still had high numbers of butts. For example, approximately 700 butts were counted at the doors to Mohawk 4 Ice Centre.

Suggested opportunities for improvement to the by-law

During the intercept interviews, residents were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on the by-law and smoking in outdoor municipal parks and recreational areas. In addition, sports and neighbourhood associations we asked to provide feedback through the web-based survey. Comments were extracted from all of the surveys and grouped into common themes. Three themes were identified as follows (in order of number of comments received, beginning with the most comments first).

a) Enhanced enforcement

Numerous residents and sports and neighbourhood associations stated that more enforcement was needed to successfully implement the by-law, as they still see people smoking in the parks. Furthermore, several residents reported people smoking during festivals and events and in recreational areas where children were present, but they have yet to see any enforcement action. Residents suggested the use of proactive enforcement in penalizing offenders and discouraging others from violating the by-law.

-insert quotes

b) Support By-law #11-080

Many residents made comments in support of the by-law. Several of them believed that prohibiting smoking in these outdoor spaces would support quit attempts, protect children and youth from adopting smoking behaviours, and was beneficial in promoting the public's health and safety. Furthermore, some residents suggested that the by-law should be expanded to include additional areas. Many sports and neighbourhood associations shared these same views and believed that the by-law has made it easier to enforce their own existing smoke-free policies. In addition, some groups had stated that the by-law has provided healthier and more enjoyable public areas where children do not have to breathe in second-hand smoke while playing.

-insert quotes

c) Increased Education and Signage

Several residents stated that more signage is needed in parks and recreation areas in order to increase awareness. They believed that having visible signing will make it easier for them to support the by-law and ask people to stop smoking. -insert quotes

References

1. Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS). April to December 2008. Extracted June 2009.