Orangeville Outdoor Smoking Survey
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Executive Summary

In March 2011, a community-wide online survey was conducted by WDG Public Health in partnership with the Town of Orangeville. The survey was promoted through various means, including a postcard sent to all households in the community. Approximately 2.6% of adults over the age of 24 participated in this survey, as did residents from other communities in Dufferin County. Most respondents were non-smokers, women, parents, and between the ages of 35 and 64. Though smoking prevalence data is not available for Orangeville specifically, data for the County suggests that smokers were underrepresented in the survey respondents.

The purpose of this survey was to assess the community's support for a new by-law that restricts smoking within 9 metres of entrances and exits to all Town-owned and operated buildings; gather a baseline level of exposure to outdoor second-hand smoke (SHS); and gauge support for further smoking by-laws. Support was very high for the 9 metre by-law at 82% (including 53% of smokers and 87% of non-smokers), and the majority of respondents (who are mainly non-smokers) support a complete smoking ban in all public spaces included in this survey. Though a slightly greater number of smokers were supportive of complete bans in playgrounds and splash pads compared to other spaces, they generally preferred partial bans or no restrictions. More than half of respondents reported being exposed to SHS one or more times each month outside recreation centres, and one-third in other public spaces with the same frequency. However, comparatively few respondents (16%) indicated that they had complained to the Town regarding SHS exposure. A couple respondents also noted that they had not thought about complaining, or did not know to whom they should direct complaints.

This survey elicited strong reactions by many respondents. Respondents commented on the character and motivations of smokers and non-smokers, as well as other issues either in favour or against smoking by-laws. Those in favour often spoke about health risks of SHS, cigarette litter, non-smokers’ rights, and positive role modelling for children and youth. Those against smoking by-laws generally provided reasons opposite to those in favour, namely exaggerated health risks, smokers’ rights, more important social problems, and financial or economic concerns.

Despite the strong views against smoking restrictions by some respondents, the majority indicated that they are in favour of a smoking ban in parks and around Town buildings and would like to see changes. Furthermore, other municipalities have already implemented such by-laws; the Town could be a leader in Wellington, Dufferin, and Guelph on this issue; it may reduce complaints to the Town regarding SHS; it may also reduce litter thereby increasing the Town’s attractiveness decreasing clean-up costs; and support is available to help educate community members. Thus, a smoking ban is recommended in parks, and around all Town-owned/operated buildings, such as recreation centres, libraries, and municipal offices. It is also recommended that the Town implement a process for event organizers to apply for smoke-free event status. The level of exposure to second-hand smoke was reportedly high at downtown events like the Santa Claus parade and the Blues & Jazz Festival. To ensure compliance with the recommended smoking ban and maintain enforcement costs, it is recommended that resources be allocated to educate the public on the benefits of such a by-law. Studies show that signage along with education and some enforcement is important to ensure the public is aware, and complies with the law.
Background

In December of 2010, the Orangeville Banner published an article indicating that the Town of Orangeville (Town) had decided to examine a phased-in approach to a full smoking embargo on all Town property over 3 to 4 years. The first step was to create a 9 metre “buffer zone”, or setback distance, from municipal buildings. This was a result of the Town having received numerous complaints about community members smoking in entranceways. WDG Public Health contacted the Town Councillor and Parks and Recreation Director interviewed in the article for more information and to explore a partnership opportunity. The Town noted that the 9 metre by-law would likely take effect April 1st, and expressed an interest to gather input from the community on a complete smoking ban. Given the timeline for the new by-law, a pre and post survey design as well as focus groups were recommended for the research plan. A pre and post design would allow the Town to collect opinions before and after the new by-law took effect to see whether support changed. Also, some questions regarding smoking in other places like restaurant or bar patios were also included for Public Health’s interest. Originally the plan was to conduct the pre-survey in March and the post-survey in the fall, approximately 6 months later. Public Health offered to conduct this research with the Town offering space for the focus groups and pre-testing of the survey. In addition, both organizations committed to promotion activities to raise awareness of the survey and focus groups. (Note: due to low enrolment, the focus groups were subsequently cancelled. Also, due to the high level of support for the 9 metre by-law, the post-survey was not deemed necessary).

Research questions

The purpose of the Orangeville Outdoor Smoking Survey was to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of support for the new 9 metre smoking by-law?
2. What is the intended compliance for the new by-law?
3. What is the level of exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) outside municipal buildings and in outdoor public spaces?
4. What is the level of support for partial or complete smoking restrictions outside municipal buildings and in outdoor public spaces?
5. What is the level of support for smoking restrictions in other places?
6. Does the level of support for the new 9 metre smoking by-law and other partial or complete smoking restrictions differ between smokers and non-smokers?

Methodology & Analysis

The survey questionnaire was designed based on existing surveys and pre-tested at the Alder Street Recreation Centre in February 2011. The survey ran from March 9 to March 31, 2011 and was made available online (using Constant Contact, an online survey tool), by phone, mail, fax, or in-person. The survey data was analyzed using Excel and NVivo.

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Findings

Response rate and demographics

In total, 639 individuals participated in the survey. Most respondents to the survey (95%) were from Dufferin County and approximately 2.6% were Town of Orangeville residents over the age of 24² (447). Approximately 14% of respondents were current smokers³, 25% were former smokers⁴, 54% were non-smokers⁵, and 7% did not identify their smoking status. Though smoking rates are not available for the Town of Orangeville specifically, smokers are likely under-represented in this survey given that smoking prevalence in Dufferin County is approximately 25%⁶. Seven percent of respondents were youth under the age of 24, while most respondents were parents (73%), women (65%), and between the ages of 35 and 64 (64%).

Promotion vehicles

Extensive advertising and promotion efforts raised awareness of the survey over the three week period mainly targeting adults in the community, though the survey was open to youth as well. Most respondents (46%) became aware of the survey from an unaddressed postcard sent to their home. In total, postcards were mailed to 13,000 households in town which included both houses and apartment buildings. Facebook ads (23%), newspaper ads (18%), the Town of Orangeville and Public Health websites (13%), and newspaper articles (10%) generated by a media release, were also effective vehicles in promoting the survey to the community.

Exposure to second-hand smoke

Respondents were asked about their exposure to second-hand smoke at outdoor summer recreation facilities in 2010. Just over one third of respondents (35%) reported being exposed to second-hand smoke one or more times each month in parks, playgrounds, and playing fields, though more than half (53%) reported such exposure at downtown events like parades or festivals with the same frequency. Second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure was lower at splash pads (20%).

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² Statistics Canada Census 2006
³ Smoker = have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime, and smoke daily, occasional (at least once in the last 30 days), and recent (at least once in the last 6 months).
⁴ Former smoker = smoked more than 6 months ago and has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.
⁵ Non-smoker = have never smoked a cigarette in their life, or have smoked but not 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.
⁶ Christine Frank & Associates, Dufferin County Community Picture at a Glance, December 2010
Respondents were also asked about their exposure to SHS over the last six months at places which are accessed in the summer as well as winter months. Notably, more than half (55%) reported exposure one or more times each month outside recreation centres. More than one third reported such exposure outside libraries (44%) or municipal government buildings (34%), though the exposure was less at outdoor ice rinks, bus stops, and bus shelters. See Chart 2.

**Chart 2. Exposure to second-hand smoke one or more times each month**

![Chart 2](chart2.png)

**Complaints**

Despite the relatively high rates of exposure to second-hand smoke, especially outside recreation centres, only about 16% of respondents indicated that they had complained to the Town in the last year. This question prompted some respondents to comment at the end of the survey that they had not thought about complaining to the Town, nor did they know to whom to direct complaints.

**9 metre by-law & compliance**

Support is high for the new 9 metre by-law wherein more than half of both smokers (53%) and non-smokers (87%) are in favour. Overall, 82% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with this legislation (see Chart 3), and only 10 people indicated that they do not intend to obey the by-law.

**Chart 3. Support for the 9 metre by-law**

![Chart 3](chart3.png)
Smoking restrictions at outdoor public spaces

Non-smokers & former smokers

Most respondents (73%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with a complete smoking ban around Town buildings as per Chart 4. Also, most non-smokers and former smokers support a “complete” ban at all sports and recreation facilities ranging from 61% for trails to 81% for playgrounds. Taking into account all respondents (regardless of smoking status), playgrounds still garnered the highest level of support for “complete” smoking bans (75%). Non-smokers and former smokers also highly support “complete” smoking bans at bus stops (61%), bus shelters (69%), and at downtown events like parades or festivals (61%). Overall, “complete” smoking bans were highly favoured by non-smokers and former smokers over “partial” bans or “no restrictions”. See Chart 5.

Smokers

With regard to smokers, most are in favour of either “partial” smoking bans or “no restrictions”, though “complete” bans were preferred for playgrounds and splash pads. More smokers prefer partial bans at outdoor ice rinks and bus shelters, and no smoking restrictions at parks, playing fields, bus stops, trails, or at downtown events like parades and festivals. The latter two places received a majority of smokers preferring no restriction at 73% and 61% respectively.
Smoking restrictions in other spaces

Support for smoking restrictions in other places such as restaurant and bar patios, provincial parks, and hotels/motels is also high within the community. This is especially the case at hotels/motels where 77% of non-smokers and former smokers, as well as 43% of smokers support restrictions. Smokers’ support for smoking restrictions is much lower for these other locations compared to the Town’s parks and recreation spaces, as illustrated in Chart 6.
Comments

More than half of respondents (54%) provided comments on their questionnaire. Comments were either strongly in favour or against smoking by-laws, with few respondents being unsure of this issue or commenting on other issues. Many people expressed thanks for being able to express their view on this subject, though a small number of respondents felt the survey and promotional materials were a waste of resources.

Both the number and nature of comments suggest smoking by-laws continue to be a polarizing subject. It is one that elicited strong reactions and where opinions are not just science-based (e.g. risk of second-hand smoke (SHS)), but also value-laden, in terms of ascribing negative attributes to smokers (e.g. rude, inconsiderate, selfish, disgusting, etc.), non-smokers (e.g. whiners, do-gooders), and government (dictatorial, intrusive, etc.). It is important to note that opinions cannot be assumed based on smoking status – there are smokers who support bans and non-smokers who do not. Similarly, former smokers are on both sides of this issue.

In favour of smoking by-laws

Overall, the majority of comments were in favour of smoking by-laws – either the 9 metre by-law or broader by-laws (ranging from partial to complete smoking bans). Several people preferred a complete ban, but did not feel it was likely or feasible due to enforcement challenges. Thus, some suggested partial bans or designated smoking areas as a compromise. In general, those in favour cited the following four reasons for their support most frequently: health risks, cigarette litter, non-smokers’ rights, and role modelling. Other issues included: the cost to the health care system; potential fire hazards (particularly on trails); unpleasant odours from tobacco products; the perception that smoking is a dirty or disgusting habit; and creating a supportive environment for those trying to quit.

Health risks

The negative health consequences due to SHS exposure was the most commonly noted concern by respondents. These respondents expressed concern for the toxins to which they, their family, and particularly children, were exposed at various public venues. For some, illness or death of a loved one caused by tobacco has heightened their concern regarding exposure. Most comments pertained to SHS outside the Alder Street Recreation Centre and Tony Rose Memorial Sports Centre, however many respondents expressed concern regarding exposure at parks, playgrounds, splash pads, restaurant patios, and “anywhere where children are playing” or “present”. Some respondents also gave specific examples of their or their family’s exposure to SHS at events such as the Santa Claus Parade or the Blues & Jazz Festival. Some respondents also commented that outdoor SHS aggravated a personal health condition or one of a loved one; specific conditions cited included asthma, smoke allergies or sensitivities, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cystic fibrosis.

“I fully support public smoking bans, indoors and out, to protect the health of myself and my family.”
Survey respondent

“I have breathing problems and cigarette smoke triggers an asthma attack.”
Survey respondent
Non-smokers’ rights

Another very common complaint by respondents in favour of smoking restrictions is the belief that exposure to SHS in public spaces infringes on their, or their family’s right to clean air. Some of these respondents felt that smokers have a right to smoke, but not at the expense of those who do not. That view was particularly expressed with regard to children, who are less able to determine when and where they go, and thus, whether or not they are exposed to SHS in the community.

Cigarette litter

Respondents who cited cigarette garbage as a concern, especially cigarette butts, take issue for many reasons. Some were concerned about accidental pet or human consumption, namely by young children in parks and playgrounds. Others were concerned about the public monies expended to clean up the litter. However, the three most commonly expressed issues were: the environment, in terms of soil and water contamination, wild animal consumption, as well as the biodegrability of cigarette filters; the Town’s appearance, noting that cigarette garbage is unsightly and diminishes the attractiveness of the Town; and a perceived attitude of smokers who litter. On this last point, some respondents felt that smokers have a sense of entitlement to litter their cigarette butts, and/or an apparent disregard for the environment and other community members. These respondents wondered why smokers do not seem to consider cigarette butts as litter and thus dispose of them in receptacles like other garbage.

Role modeling

Finally, respondents suggested that society has a responsibility to role model healthy behaviour, and educate children and youth on the harm caused by smoking. As such, respondents felt that adults should not engage in this activity in their presence. They expressed concern that doing so sends contradictory messages from adults about smoking: helps to normalize the behaviour or make it look cool; and ultimately undermines efforts to discourage experimentation and engagement of the
behaviour. Furthermore, many respondents felt smoking in or outside sports and recreation spaces was particularly irresponsible because it was in a setting that encourages physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. Again, the concern was that smoking in such settings sends a contradictory message to children and youth, or ironically may be the only location where smoking is routinely observed.

Survey respondent
“It is ironic that my children come in contact with second hand smoke on a regular basis when they are taking part in activities focused on physical fitness and good health in general.”

Against smoking by-laws

Though support for the new 9 metre by-law was high in general (82%), the suggestion of a complete smoking ban elicited strong reactions from a smaller number of respondents – both those who do and do not smoke. These respondents cited several reasons for their position, some of which are opposite to those of respondents in favour of smoking restrictions. The most commonly cited reasons included: exaggerated health risks, smokers’ rights, more important social problems, and concerns regarding the financial or economic risk.

Exaggerated health risks

Completely contrary to most of those in favour of smoking by-laws, some respondents felt that outdoor SHS poses little to no risk to human health and that there is no research to support that it does. Further, these respondents felt that individuals exaggerated their level of exposure to outdoor SHS, or the degree to which medical conditions were aggravated by outdoor SHS. Some respondents did not believe that outdoor SHS could trigger an asthma attack or was bothersome to those with smoke sensitivities/allergies. Some wondered if campfires or fireplaces would be banned next to address their contributions to outdoor smoke.

Survey respondent
“I am not convinced that second hand smoke has any effect on the non smoker in outdoor locations.”

Survey respondent
“The grossly exaggerated claims of citizens who write to the local papers about billowing smoke in and around buildings is just plain incorrect.”

Smokers’ rights

Several respondents were strongly opposed to a complete smoking ban on the grounds that the government is infringing on smokers’ rights. Respondents wondered “what’s next?” with regard to legislation; drew comparisons to communism; or made references to Big Brother, nanny states, intrusive government, and tyranny. These respondents assert that smokers have rights as long as tobacco remains a legal, taxed substance and the act of smoking is a legal activity. Many speculate that the government has not banned tobacco because it makes a profit on its taxes. Further, respondents feel that because smokers pay municipal and other government taxes which go towards the creation and public places.”

Survey respondent
“Governments at all levels should stop trying to micro-manage people’s lives. Surely smokers are entitled to some rights.”

Survey respondent
“I feel sorry for all the smokers out there that pay the same taxes as us non-smokers, more
maintenance of parks, playgrounds, etc., that they are entitled to smoke in such public spaces. Some suggest that if non-smokers or others have an issue with their smoking in such places, that those individuals can go elsewhere. Respondents feel that smokers are stigmatized and vilified for engaging in a legal activity, and having a legal addiction. Thus, the implementation of further smoking by-laws is regarded as yet another example of over-legislation in general, but also one that unfairly targets and stigmatizes smokers, and further reduces the number of locations in which they can legally smoke.

More important social problems

Some respondents felt that smoking by-laws are an inappropriate use of time and money when there are other more pressing social problems to address. Or, some respondents felt it was ridiculous to address outdoor SHS as a health hazard when idling cars and factory emissions are greater contributors to air pollution. On the first point, respondents provided several different concerns: poor or unsafe drivers, nuclear radiation, alcohol or drug use (especially by youth), and widespread littering. Idling cars and emissions were noted most frequently as a larger problem to address.

Financial and economic risk

Related to other, more important social problems, several respondents expressed concern regarding the financial or economic impact of a complete smoking ban. Respondents felt that such a by-law is unenforceable because it would require exorbitant sums of money/taxes to pay by-law officers to patrol all the public spaces in the town, and may even encourage a culture of snitching on community members. Also, respondents felt that since a complete ban would be unenforceable, there would be widespread non-compliance. These respondents listed other smoking by-laws which they believe are neither enforced nor obeyed: smoking in cars with kids, smoking on school property, and smoking in workplaces. Some respondents also wondered about the economic impact of a complete smoking ban on the Town’s tourism industry, restaurants, bars, and shops.

You've got to be kidding. The minute effect of smoking outside pales compared to car exhaust, industrial pollution and pollution from trucks, airplanes, etc.”

Survey respondent

“The amount of smoke that’s in the air is insignificant when we’re worrying about radiation for heaven’s sake.”

Survey respondent

“It would be a waste of time and money to enforce this petty issue.”

Survey respondent

“If you are trying to ramp up tourism a thought to remember is smokers look for places to stay that they can smoke at. The USA people still smoke alot more than Canadians especially southern US residents. They will not travel here if they cannot enjoy themselves and unfortunately smoking is part of enjoying themselves.”

Survey respondent
Recommendations

1. Implement a smoking ban in parks and around Town-owned/operated buildings

Based on the findings of this survey and evidence from both scientific and community-based literature, it is recommended that the Town implement a smoking ban in all parks (playing fields, playgrounds, splash pads, etc.) and around Town-owned and operated buildings such as recreation centres, libraries, and municipal offices where possible. It is also recommended that the Town implement a process or system that allows for “smoke-free” events in the community. This could include festivals, fairs, fundraising events, and sporting events. Smoke-free events could be promoted by lending out temporary “no-smoking” signage, or at least encouraging organizers to designate smoking areas away from children. Smoke-free events are included in the City of Woodstock’s by-law, while other jurisdictions (e.g. City of Ottawa) have created a process for event organizers to apply for smoke-free event status (e.g. Ottawa’s Dragon Boat festival).

Reducing tobacco use is a key public health goal because tobacco remains the most preventable cause of illness and death in Ontario. Public Health’s mandate aside, the majority of respondents to this survey would like to see complete smoking bans in a range of outdoor public places, from 54% of respondents for downtown events, to 74% for playgrounds. There was a sense by many respondents that change regarding outdoor smoking is long overdue and that the Town is behind in this regard. Further, the reasons respondents provided in favour of smoking by-laws are legitimate and supported by research:

- There is no safe level of exposure to SHS which contains at least 30 different carcinogens. Furthermore, studies in Europe, the United States, and the Caribbean have shown that under a variety of conditions (i.e. proximity to the source, wind conditions, and the number of smokers present), outdoor second-hand smoke levels can be as high as indoors. Studies have found fine particle and carcinogen concentrations in open spaces as far away as 23 feet (or 7 metres) from the source.
- Tobacco-free and smoke-free policies can reduce litter; 58% of Minnesota park directors and board members (for both municipal and county parks) reported cleaner park areas as a result of their tobacco-free policy in a 2004 survey.
- Role models can influence whether children and youth start smoking. Research shows that: youth tend to mimic behaviours of coaches, parents, peer athletes, and older athletes; teachers smoking on school grounds increases the probability of smoking.

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behaviour in adolescents\textsuperscript{12}; and positive role-modeling prevents young people from initiating tobacco use.\textsuperscript{13}

In terms of the concerns raised by opponents of outdoor smoking by-laws:

- Smoking by-laws need not increase costs for the Town. Collingwood implemented a partial smoking by-law in 2000 and 2005 after which the Town found that “between 2000 and 2007 there have been no complaints to Public Health or to the Town of Collingwood regarding this bylaw or offenders of the bylaw. No tickets have been issued and the damage to the no-smoking signs has been minimal.”\textsuperscript{14} Also, the City of Woodstock implemented a partial smoking by-law in 2010; the City found that: “in the first year of the by-law, there have been no tickets issued in parks or recreation fields – some warnings were given by enforcement officers in these environments. Approximately 50 tickets have been issued in the first year, mostly on private properties where owners sought to be listed in the by-law. There was no increase in staff time required to enforce this by-law”.\textsuperscript{15}

- With regard to concerns over rights, though tobacco is a legal product and smokers pay tax, it is regulated by the government for health and safety reasons. Also, from a financial perspective, it is within the government’s best interest to decrease or eliminate tobacco use given that the neither the direct (i.e. acute care hospitalizations, specialized inpatient and outpatient treatment, ambulatory care, doctors’ fees, and prescribed drugs) nor indirect costs (i.e. lost productivity due to increased sick days and the early death of adults who are employed or work at home) are recouped through tobacco taxation.\textsuperscript{16}

There are additional reasons why the Town should implement a complete smoking by-law in parks and around Town-owned and operated buildings. Although the Town would be a leader in this region since no municipality in either the counties of Wellington or Dufferin, as well as the City of Guelph has such a by-law, it would not be unique in the province – other municipalities have already implemented such by-laws. Niagara Falls implemented a complete ban around city buildings and bus shelters and on city-owned land including playing fields, playgrounds, pools, splash pads, trails in 2011, and the City of Hamilton will be implementing a complete ban in outdoor recreation spaces including parkland, beaches, and open spaces in May 2012. Also, Public Health is available to provide support should the Town decide to move forward with further smoking by-laws. Public Health can provide resources, advice, and possibly financial support to help educate the community on the benefits of smoke-free outdoor spaces.

\textsuperscript{13} Wakefield, M., & Chaloupka, F. Effectiveness of comprehensive tobacco control programmes in reducing teenage smoking in the USA. Tobacco Control, 9, 177-186, 2000.
\textsuperscript{16} Smoke-Free Ontario – Scientific Advisory Committee, 2010.
2. **Invest in education rather than enforcement**

As illustrated by the strong viewpoints expressed by survey respondents, the topic of outdoor SHS and smoking bans is controversial and continues to polarize. For this reason, as well as experience from other municipalities that have implemented outdoor smoking by-laws, public education rather than enforcement is extremely important to more effectively garner community support. It is recommended that as many vehicles and channels be utilized to inform the community of any new smoking by-laws (e.g. media releases, websites, posters, mail-outs, print or radio advertisements, signage, etc.). Funding should be allocated to this purpose, though it also recommended that the Town explore partnership opportunities with WDG Public Health or other non-profit organizations such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which may have monies available to support such awareness-raising initiatives.

3. **Use positive messaging rather than anti-smoking or anti-smoker messaging**

As noted in this report, many smokers feel vilified and stigmatized for their smoking behaviour. Their perception was reinforced by the comments from many non-smoking respondents who ascribed negative characteristics to smokers (e.g. rude, inconsiderate, selfish, disgusting, etc.). Thus it is important to convey the positive and constructive purpose of a complete smoking by-law rather than reinforcing negative stereotypes of smokers, or emphasizing one group’s rights over another. Positive messages educate the public on the benefits of smoking by-laws, all of which were identified by respondents in this survey. According to respondents, the most important reason to implement smoking by-laws is to protect children and youth from second-hand smoke. Related to that, respondents identified the value in de-normalizing smoking through positive role-modeling which may in turn help prevent children and youth from starting to smoke. Finally, there are other benefits of outdoor smoking by-laws that could be highlighted in education campaigns; they create supportive environments for those trying to quit, reduce cigarette garbage, and reduce fire hazards in parklands and trails.

4. **Produce and erect signage**

Both anecdotal and limited scientific research suggests that signage can effectively increase awareness and compliance of outdoor smoking restrictions where there is strong support for such legislation (as there is in the Town Orangeville). Further, when signage is used in conjunction with public education and a small amount of active enforcement, jurisdictions saw higher compliance with the law. As noted earlier, temporary signage in the form of placards, banners, or signs may be useful specifically for smoke-free event purposes (festivals, parades, fairs, sporting events, etc.). Like education efforts, funding should be allocated accordingly and sought from external partners for this purpose.

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17 Munhall, C. (2010). *Compliance with and Enforcement of Smoke-Free Outdoor Spaces By-laws.* Toronto, ON: Program Training and Consultation Centre, LEARN Project
Conclusion

Approximately 2.6% of adults in the Town of Orangeville over the age of 24 participated in this survey. The majority of respondents were non-smokers and former smokers, parents, and women between the ages of 35 and 64. Over 50% of respondents reported being exposed to SHS one or more times every month outside recreation centres and one-third in other public spaces with the same frequency, though comparatively few respondents actually complained to the Town.

Taking into account all respondents, support is high for the new 9 metre by-law at 82%. Further, most respondents are in favour of a complete smoking ban in sports and recreation spaces including such as parks, playgrounds, playing fields, trails, splash pads, and ice rinks, as well as property surrounding Town buildings (i.e. libraries, municipal offices, and recreation centres). The majority of respondents also supported complete smoking bans at bus stops, bus shelters, and at downtown events such as parades and festivals. With regard to smoking restrictions at other public or private properties (i.e. provincial parks, restaurant and bar patios, and hotels/motels), the majority of non-smokers are supportive. The main reasons respondents support complete smoking bans pertain to the health risks, non-smokers’ rights, cigarette litter, and role modeling for children.

Support for smoking by-laws was generally lower among smokers, who represent a minority of respondents. Smokers preferred partial smoking restrictions or no restrictions in most places, with the exception of recreation spaces for young children, namely playgrounds and splash pads. Support for complete bans was tempered by concerns regarding exaggerated health risks, smokers’ rights, more important social problems, and financial or economic risks.

Given the findings from this survey and literature regarding outdoor SHS, a complete smoking ban is recommended around Town-owned and operated buildings, and in outdoor sport and recreation spaces. It is also recommended that the Town implement a system or process for event organizers to apply for, or create smoke-free events. There are several reasons to implement a complete smoking by-law in the Town of Orangeville, including:

- Decreased exposure to SHS which could reduce complaints to the Town
- Decreased cigarette litter which could increase the Town’s attractiveness and decrease clean-up costs
- Increased positive role modeling for children and youth which could reduce smoking rates
- An opportunity to be leader in the region on outdoor smoking by-laws
- Support is available from Public Health

Furthermore, to ensure success and increase compliance with further smoking by-laws, information from other municipalities and research studies suggests that the Town should allocate resources toward education rather than enforcement; emphasize the healthy and constructive benefits of a complete ban rather than the negative aspects of smoking; and erect signage throughout the Town.

18 Note: Although the City of Woodstock included bus shelters in a report on their comprehensive smoking by-law, bus shelters are already captured under provincial legislation (the Smoke-Free Ontario Act) which prohibits smoking within enclosed workplaces and enclosed public spaces. Source: Government of Ontario, Smoke-Free Ontario Act, http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statues/english/elaws_statues_94t10_e.htm1994
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