



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

File #: 19-3312, **Version:** 1

Hold a public hearing on the proposed Chatham County tobacco-free ordinance and vote on a request to adopt the ordinance.

Action Requested: Hold a public hearing on the proposed Chatham County tobacco-free ordinance and vote on a request to adopt the ordinance.

Introduction & Background: Introduction & Background: Chatham County's current administrative tobacco-free policy was approved by the county manager in July 2015 and went into effect on March 1, 2016. This policy expanded the former policy to include electronic cigarettes and other vapor products and the standard tobacco products definitions from the state. It is a comprehensive tobacco policy where the use of all tobacco products is prohibited on all County grounds (owned, leased, maintained or otherwise occupied), including buildings, parks, and vehicles. The Chatham County Board of Health sent a letter to the Board of County Commissioners this past April asking the Commissioners to consider a tobacco-free ordinance that would institutionalize Chatham County's tobacco-free grounds policy. The Health Director for the Chatham County Public Health Department, Layton Long, presented information on the background as well as the proposed ordinance at the October 21st, 2019 Board of County Commissioner's working session. A vote was taken to hold a subsequent public hearing to consider the adoption of a county tobacco-free ordinance.

Discussion & Analysis: Chatham County's current administrative tobacco-free policy has been in effect for over three years and has been well-received among most employees and visitors. Having a tobacco-free ordinance sets a positive example for residents, other counties, and local municipalities to encourage them to develop their own policies. A tobacco-free ordinance continues to help to protect visitors and employees from secondhand smoke, complements tobacco cessation programs, supports those who have quit or want to quit, and discourages youth from starting to use tobacco. The proposed tobacco-free ordinance mimics the majority of the language that is in the current administrative tobacco-free policy. An ordinance does include language that states that a person not in compliance can be issued an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than fifty dollars, though this has been not implemented in other counties with similar ordinances. We do not believe that there would be any changes in county operations or the public's experience if this ordinance is adopted.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: This proposed ordinance directly relates to Objective 10: Foster a healthy community. Under Recommendation 1: HL Policy 1 Adopt a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Approach, Strategy 1.1: Develop and promote cross-sector relationships, institutionalizing and supporting tobacco-free grounds and parks policies is listed as an action item to support this strategy. In addition, coordinated funding and partnerships in tobacco prevention and control is highlighted under HL Policy 2 Review and adapt strategies based on evolving health needs, Strategy 2.1 Adapt programs, policies, and projects to address emerging issues. A tobacco-free ordinance would also positively influence several

other areas of the Comprehensive Plan, including supporting Recommendation 7 to improve park, recreation, and open space systems for better health.

Budgetary Impact: Budgetary Impact: There is no budgetary impact of this ordinance. Tobacco-free signs were purchased by the Chatham County Public Health Department and installed in 2016 before the administrative policy went into effect. Tobacco-free signs have been located at all county owned, maintained, and leased properties since the policy went into effect. There are no anticipated costs associated with a tobacco-free ordinance.

Recommendation: Hold a public hearing on the proposed Chatham County tobacco-free ordinance and vote on a request to adopt the ordinance.