

## PEOPLE ADVOCATING SMOKEFREE ENVIRONMENTS OUTDOORS

### **Public Opinion Survey Summary Report**

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*Survey Methodology.* A survey was developed that incorporates items from several sources, including samples available through the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center and the Center for Tobacco Policy and Organizing, as well as surveys that were conducted locally under previous State funding. Topic areas included the following: demographic characteristics of respondents (age group, city of residence, and gender); opinions on the harmfulness of outdoor second-hand smoke, the impact on children of adults modeling smoking behavior; personal experiences of outdoor second-hand smoke exposure; support for outdoor smoke-free policy; and status as non-smoker, current smoker, or former smoker.

The survey was conducted between March 27, 2009 and June 30, 2009 at a variety of locations throughout the City of Watsonville in order to ensure a broad representation of residents. Locations included the following

- Earth Day/Day of the Child at Ramsey Park
- Watsonville Downtown Farmers Market
- Watsonville City Center Plaza
- Cabrillo College Health Fair
- Watsonville Airport “Day in the Sky”
- La Princessa Market
- Stone Creek Apartments
- Salinas Road Apartments
- Sunny Meadows Apartments

*Evaluation Results.* A total of 495 completed surveys were tabulated for this activity, with 42.8% male and 57.2% female respondents. Respondents included adults aged twenty-five through sixty-five (65.8%), teens under the age of eighteen (16.2%), young adults between eighteen and twenty-four years old (13.7%) and seniors over the age of sixty-five (4.2%). Most lived in the city of Watsonville (85.6%) with the remaining

respondents coming from the nearby communities of Corralitos, Aromas, Aptos, and Rio Del Mar. A few were residents of Salinas, Santa Cruz, and Scotts Valley. Non-smokers made up 77.8% of the group, with 12.4% current smokers and 9.8% former smokers. The following table presents the percentage of responses for each question by all respondents. The maximum margin of error for this study is plus or minus 4.3% at a 95% confidence level.

**Table One: Public Opinion Survey Results**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you think that cigarette smoke in <b>outdoor areas</b> is harmful to non-smokers?	93.1%	4.7%	2.2%
Do you think children are influenced to smoke when adults smoke around them?	94.1%	5.3%	0.6%
Have you ever had to move away or take a different route to avoid cigarette smoke outdoors?	75.2%	24.2%	0.6%
Would you support <b>not allowing smoking</b> in outdoor public areas such as parking lots and shopping centers?	87.6%	8.2%	4.3%

There were significant differences in responses to these questions among non-smokers, current smokers, and former smokers. The following table shows the percentage in each group that replied yes to the four questions.

**Table Two: Public Opinion Survey Percent Responding Yes By Smoking Status**

	Yes: Non-smokers	Yes: Current Smokers	Yes: Former Smokers
Do you think that cigarette smoke in <b>outdoor areas</b> is harmful to non-smokers?	96.1%	70.5%	97.9%
Do you think children are influenced to smoke when adults smoke around them?	95.5%	82.0%	100.0%
Have you ever had to move away or take a different route to avoid cigarette smoke outdoors?	79.1%	50.0%	75.0%
Would you support <b>not allowing smoking</b> in outdoor public areas such as parking lots and shopping centers?	91.6%	56.7%	93.6%

Differences between male and female respondents were generally less pronounced with the exception of the third question. The following table shows the percentage in each group that replied yes to the four questions.

**Table Three: Public Opinion Survey Percent Responding Yes By Gender**

	Yes: Male	Yes: Female
Do you think that cigarette smoke in <b>outdoor areas</b> is harmful to non-smokers?	90.8%	94.4%
Do you think children are influenced to smoke when adults smoke around them?	91.4%	96.1%
Have you ever had to move away or take a different route to avoid cigarette smoke outdoors?	67.8%	79.0%
Would you support <b>not allowing smoking</b> in outdoor public areas such as parking lots and shopping centers?	84.4%	89.7%

Small differences were seen between age groups in their support for outdoor smoke-free policy, as seen in the following table.

**Table Four: Smoke-free Policy Support By Age Group**

	Under 18	18 to 24	25 to 65	Over 65
Would you support <b>not allowing smoking</b> in outdoor public areas such as parking lots and shopping centers?	89.6%	81.5%	88.0%	90.0%

In response to the open ended question “Where have you been bothered by smoking in outdoor public places in Watsonville?” approximately two-thirds of respondents provided specific or general location (69.8%) while the remaining third said that they had never been bothered by outdoor tobacco smoke (30.2%). The following is a list of the outdoor locations where respondents have been bothered by smoking. The number in parentheses indicated the number of times each location was mentioned.

- Parks (108)
- Restaurants (41)
- Streets (33)
- Plaza (31)
- Outside stores and businesses (29)
- Bus stops, metro station, busses (26)
- Workplaces (20)

- Parking lots (19)
- Starbucks/Target (14)
- Schools (11)
- Apartments (11)
- Sports events, soccer (10)
- Shopping centers (10)
- Fiestas and community events (8)
- Library (6)

*Discussion and Recommendations.* The survey was carried out as intended with staff reporting a low rate of refusal and no clear patterns of demographic sample bias. The relatively large number of community members surveyed increases the validity of findings. Findings show a high level of awareness of the harmfulness of outdoor tobacco smoke and the negative impact of adult smoking behavior on children. More than three-quarters of residents have had to move or take a different route to avoid outdoor cigarette smoke. The most important finding, in terms of the purpose of the survey, is the extremely high level of support for smoke-free outdoor public areas. Eighty-eight percent of Watsonville residents and visitors would support not allowing smoking in outdoor public areas such as parking lots and shopping centers. This opinion is even stronger among females, teens and seniors. Even among current smokers, a majority (56.7%) are in support of outdoor smoke-free policies. This is a very strong finding, and one that should be shared with City officials and other key community leaders.

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