



STAFF REPORT

9/9/2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kendra Reif, Community Development Director

PREPARED BY: Kendra Reif, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance No. 1233, adding Chapter 8.65 (“Smoke-Free Areas”) to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code to establish smoke-free areas intended to protect public health and the environment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council introduce for first reading, by title only, and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 1233 of the City Council of the City of Coachella, California, adding Chapter 8.65 (“Smoke-Free Areas”) to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code to establish smoke-free areas intended to protect public health and the environment.

Alternative Actions:

1. Direct staff to revise the proposed ordinance based on City Council direction and return the ordinance for first reading at a future meeting.
2. Continue the item and direct staff to obtain additional information, conduct further stakeholder outreach, or evaluate alternative regulatory approaches before returning with a revised ordinance for City Council consideration.
3. Decline to introduce the proposed ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Implementation of the ordinance is anticipated to be accomplished using existing staff resources. Any enforcement costs would be absorbed within existing departmental budgets to the extent feasible. Administrative citation revenues may partially offset future enforcement costs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed draft Ordinance would add Chapter 8.65 (“Smoke-Free Areas”) to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code, and bans smoking (including vape and cannabis) and the use of any tobacco product or cannabis product in designated areas, including but not limited to: sidewalks, plazas, parks, playgrounds, service lines, hospitals, health care and child care facilities, restaurants,

business buildings, theaters and event spaces, and within 25 feet of entrances, air intakes, and operable windows. Multi-unit residential leases must include smoke-free provisions beginning January 1, 2027. The ordinance separately prohibits smoking on essentially all City-owned, leased, occupied, or operated property, including City Hall, community centers, libraries, senior centers, parking lots, plazas, and adjacent sidewalks. Exemptions cover private residences not open to the public, private moving vehicles, traditional indigenous ceremonies, private smoking events, smoking on golf courses, and within specially designated smoking areas under certain circumstances. The measure protects public health, reduces litter and fire hazards, and improves air quality.

BACKGROUND:

The City has prepared the proposed ordinance establishing smoke-free regulations intended to protect public health, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and address environmental impacts associated with smoking-related waste. The proposed ordinance would add Chapter 8.65 (“Smoke-Free Areas”) to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code.

The proposed ordinance is intended to expand protections in public spaces and multi-unit residential settings by regulating smoking, tobacco products, cannabis products, and electronic smoking devices in designated locations throughout the City.

The proposed ordinance was developed in response to continuing public health concerns associated with secondhand smoke exposure, smoking-related litter, and fire hazards, while also providing clear operational standards and enforcement mechanisms.

Under Health & Safety Code § 104495 and Government Code § 36900 et seq., the City may adopt stricter smoke-free rules than state law. The U.S. Surgeon General confirms no safe level of secondhand-smoke exposure, and tobacco waste harms the environment. City Attorney Ryan Guiboa prepared the final ordinance text to ensure legal consistency and enforceability.

DISCUSSION:

The draft ordinance includes proposed regulations and standards addressing the following:

- Prohibiting smoking and the use of tobacco, cannabis products, and electronic smoking devices in designated public places and recreational areas;
- Establishing smoke-free requirements for multi-unit residential properties;
- Prohibiting smoking within specified distances from entrances, exits, windows, and ventilation systems;
- Regulating smoking during public events and in service areas;
- Requiring property owners and operators to post signage in both English and Spanish, and maintain compliance;
- Establishing enforcement procedures and administrative authority; and
- Providing limited exemptions for specific circumstances, including ceremonial Indigenous uses and certain private smoking events.

The ordinance is intended to provide consistent regulations that promote public health and environmental protections while balancing operational considerations for residents, businesses, property owners, and event organizers.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City Council finds that this Ordinance is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) because it is not a "project" as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. The Ordinance establishes public health regulations governing smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco and cannabis products in specified locations throughout the City and does not authorize or result in any direct or reasonably foreseeable physical change to the environment.

In the alternative, if the Ordinance were determined to constitute a "project" under CEQA, it is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the common sense exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that adoption of this Ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment. The Ordinance establishes operational regulations intended to protect public health, improve air quality, reduce smoking-related litter, and decrease fire hazards and does not authorize any physical development or expansion of existing uses.

CONCLUSION:

Based on staff's research and analysis, staff finds that adoption of the proposed ordinance is in the public's best interest. Therefore, staff recommends that the City Council introduce for first reading, by title only, and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 1233 of the City Council of the City of Coachella, California, adding Chapter 8.65 ("Smoke-Free Areas") to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code to establish smoke-free areas intended to protect public health and the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Ordinance No. 1233