



STAFF REPORT
5/27/2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kendra Reif, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Request for City Council feedback and direction regarding a draft ordinance 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:

1. Receive and discuss the draft ordinance adding Chapter 8.65 (“Smoke-Free Areas”) to Title VIII of the Coachella Municipal Code;
2. Provide feedback and policy direction regarding the proposed regulations establishing smoke-free areas within the City of Coachella; and
3. Provide direction regarding whether staff should return with the ordinance for formal introduction and adoption at a future City Council meeting.

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. 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 INFORMATION:

The City has prepared a draft 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 draft 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 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.

At this time, staff is seeking City Council feedback regarding the overall policy direction, scope of prohibited areas, proposed exemptions, enforcement provisions, implementation considerations, and any additional modifications the City Council may wish to consider prior to formal introduction of the ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposed ordinance has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c), 15061(b)(3), and

15378 because the action does not constitute a project or, alternatively, can be seen with certainty that the ordinance would not have a significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no significant fiscal impacts anticipated with the adoption of this ordinance and resolution.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Provide Feedback and Direction on the Draft Ordinance
2. Direct Staff to Revise the Draft Ordinance
3. Take No Action

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends alternative #1.

Attachments:

1. Draft Ordinance No. XX (“Smoke-Free Areas”)