

**Parks Department Key Stakeholder Interviews
July to October 2022**

Community	Name of person interviewed/took survey
Baraboo	Mike Hardy's assistant Wendy
Mauston	Jordan Wilke
Ashland	Sara Hudson
Superior	Linda Codette
WI Dells	Thad Meister
LaCrosse	Jay Odegaard

Question: Why did your community change to a tobacco free parks policy?

- *General: Because I told them to. I brought it to the Parks Board. For two reasons-One- tobacco use is an activity that should not be around the playground. Two-clean up of butts, the staff time to clean up. I decided that. The only real issue is when we have events where you have beer tents. Made a clause that those different events would have the decision. Event resp. for posting it and cleaning up. This is mostly about health but it's also the staff time to clean up.*

Comments related to community input

- *We received input from our community that they wanted our parks to become smoke free.*

Comments related to children

- *Best for our kids and our community members.*
- *We had always discouraged tobacco use during children's programming anyway and had signs up but no ordinance. We thought it would be a good idea as a Parks Board to adopt a permanent policy*
- *Initiated by our Mayor. He recommended that because the parks are open to everyone and especially places where children play that it made sense. Discussed at parks committee level. There wasn't a heavy discussion, everyone thought it was good idea.*

Comments related to health

- *The tobacco free coalition and to promote healthier living for all.*
- *Healthier environment for children to grow up in*

Question: Does your policy include exceptions for where tobacco is used in the parks?

- *Yes- Clause for designated areas. (Ex: People going across the street and it becomes a problem for a property owner).*
- *No- The ordinance states that, "No person shall smoke or hold a lighted cigarette, cigar or pipe within any park, trail or outdoor recreational area, or portion thereof, where notices prohibiting smoking are posted.)*
- *No exceptions.(x3)*

- *Yes- No tobacco within 100 feet of playgrounds, pavilions & structures in parks. Some structures are very large & thought we'd start by trying to keep conflicts away from areas you couldn't move away from.*

Question: How have you been able to manage enforcement of a tobacco free parks policy?

- *The best enforcement is self-enforcement. Someone saying something to someone else is by far the best. I ran it through our PD ahead of time. It has made big difference. There are not going to write a ticket. I'm not saying no one smokes in the parks but it has made a big difference. Ball fields. 200 plus teams. Big beer drinking sport. We don't let them smoke on the field or dugouts. No signs at ball fields.*
- *The City lacks the staff to actually enforce this ordinance. This ordinance has helped community enforcement, ie community members reminder people where they can and cannot use tobacco products. The ordinance sends a message about health and that's what is important.*
- *We have not had any violations of the ordinance that we know of. Although there was one incident that an officer reminded someone after a complaint. We are working on city ordinance to help better enforce all park rules.*
- *If a citizen saw someone using tobacco, they could say something. It gives citizens the ability to speak up. That sends the right messages to kids.*
- *Enforcement is done by the Police Department. Dogs aren't allowed but people bring their dogs anyway. The policy is self-enforcing. We think people know about it. And, as parks employees we are supposed to approach them and Don't see people violating. Signs are up and that helps*
- *There hasn't been any enforcement. Mostly self-enforcing. Don't know if there have. At least it makes a statement about what we want as If there is an incident in the park, people*

Question: What was the process for changing your policy? (or how did you go about changing the policy?)

- *In my role as Director, I wrote the policy and took it to the parks board and then city council*
- *Went through two parks & Rec commission mtgs- then to public safety committee then to City council for final approval*
- *It was before my time*
- *The policy is actually part of a City ordinance or rules. The policy changes must be brought to the Parks and Recreation Committee and then to the City of Ashland's Common Council*
- *Process began with a grant. We were having a lot of homeless people taking over the park shelters, leaving empty bottles and cans. This motivated us to do something. We don't host concerts in our parks.*
- *Parks, City did it.*

Question: Was there a reaction from the community either positive or negative? Please describe some examples.

- *Mostly positive by far. The Council voted 9 to 3. Those council members that I talked to it wasn't that they weren't against it. Government oversight don't like. Focused on cost savings of maintenance and clean up*
- *Majority positive reactions*
- *I would say mostly positive, it seems this is the direction of most place these days. There were a few naysayers.*
- *Majority positive reactions*

- *We didn't hear any major backlash. I think people just ignore the rules sometimes, but I don't see anyone violating it myself.*
- *People with kids were happy to see that it was done. Enforcement is a challenge.*

Question: Do you think there will be any negative impact now that the policy has changed?

- *We have been doing it for at least three years.*
- *Haven't seen any thus far*
- *It seems there is always a few nay sayers*
- *No*
- *No negativity. You'll get a couple of older generations that don't want to be told what to do*
- *We haven't heard any*

Question: What is the approximate total acreage where the policy applies?

- *We have a lot of acreage. 500 acres plus.*
- *Difficult to quantify*
- *45-55*
- *100 acres*
- *All park property-don't know how many acres*
- *40*

Question: How long did it take to implement the policy? (from the time it was introduced until it went into effect).

- *3 months.*
- *6- 12 months (x3)*
- *Probably a few months*
- *3 to 6 months*

Question: Did you conduct any kind of community education in order to explain the purpose for the policy? If so, please describe.

- *Public meetings-J and A action committee and then City Council. People learn about it from those meetings. Then for the public, I did press releases.*
- *News stories & signage*
- *No, the policy is pretty self-explanatory*
- *social media*
- *City newsletter did an article, posted signage, updated signage with tobacco, vaping*
- *Newspaper*

Question: Did you install signage promoting the policy?

- *2 per park. Bigger parks most used have signs at the entrances. You have to have signs, but I'm not big on signs.*
- *Yes (x4)*
- *Yes. Signs are up-10 or so.*