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February 2022

Hello Richland Center Parks Board,

Thank you for your time discussing the proposal for a Tobacco-Free Parks Model Policy for our community. This letter aims to follow up on that conversation at the January meeting. We have gathered additional information for your review as you carefully consider what is best for everyone who enjoys the parks in Richland Center. Items 1-4 address questions raised regarding enforcement and effectiveness.

1. Tobacco-Free policies are mostly self-enforcing, and about 80% of people will follow them because they see a sign. A [study](#) found a reduction in use.
2. [Here](#) is a [page](#) from the C.D.C. on how smoke-free policies reduce smoking.
3. [Here](#) and [here](#), and [here](#) are articles on the effectiveness of tobacco-free parks.
4. [Here](#) and [here](#) in support of tobacco-free parks.
5. [Here](#) is a map of communities in WI with tobacco policies for outdoor spaces.
6. [A written statement highlights](#) the National Recreation and Parks Association (N.R.P.A.) stance on tobacco use in parks.
7. [This report](#) from the N.R.P.A. on leadership of parks boards/committees.
8. Our coalition and the Richland County Board, Andy Wright, MD, Y4C Richland/Ithaca, the G.R.A.C.E. Board fully support tobacco-free parks. And, 77% of over 200 RC residents surveyed in 2018 support a tobacco-free policy. (N=257).
9. We have not yet located a specific study comparing tobacco use rates in communities with different ordinances. Please refer to the studies presented in #3.
10. Information from the [Public Health Law Center](#). A partial policy is not recommended because it creates confusion around enforcement and still allows for tobacco use.

The primary purpose of this type of policy is to protect the people who do not smoke from secondhand smoke. No amount of secondhand exposure is safe so by passing a tobacco free ordinance, our community is taking steps to protect most people who are not using the products and additionally send the right messages to young people.

***The environment where we live matters. It determines health outcomes.***

Our coalition has two goals-to collaborate with partners in the community to reduce youth substance use. In doing so, we will prevent adults from developing a costly substance use disorder by working upstream. Vaping among our young people has been a dangerous trend with serious lifelong health consequences. Right now, young people are learning what is acceptable. We believe parks are supposed to promote healthy behaviors, reinforcing positive behaviors. Tobacco use is clearly not. When young people observe use and are exposed to tobacco use and secondhand smoke, it becomes normalized. We value the opportunity to work together to create positive change.

Please let us know if you have any other questions and thank you for your consideration of this evidence-based strategy.

In good health,

Mary Collins-Johnsrud, Partners for Prevention Coalition of Richland County  
Tobacco/Marijuana Workgroup Chair

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