

Item Title: Strengthening Wake County's Tobacco-Free Ordinance

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners updates the existing tobacco ordinance (Section 32.15 of the Wake County Code of Ordinances) to include "public places" and the expanded definition of "tobacco product".

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners must approve changes to existing ordinances.

Background: In 2015, Wake County adopted a tobacco-free ordinance (Section 32.15 of the Wake County Code of Ordinances) to prohibit the use of tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes, within government buildings, grounds, vehicles, parks, and recreation areas. The goal of the ordinance is to prevent deaths and health problems attributable to tobacco use.

Wake County Government can create a tobacco-free "gold standard" environment for all its employees, patrons, and visitors by adding "public places" and including the expanded definition of "tobacco product" to the existing ordinance. Public places are enclosed areas to which the public is invited or in which the public is permitted, within the unincorporated areas of Wake County. The expanded definition of "tobacco product" includes any product that contains tobacco or nicotine, regardless of whether the nicotine is tobacco-derived or synthetic. These actions will uphold and support the statutes issued by the State and enable the County to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their residents.

Board Goal: This action supports Community Health and Vitality Goal 1: Improve residents' health and well-being by promoting healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact to the FY 2023 budget.

Additional Information:

Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death, disease, and disability in the United States. Annual healthcare expenditures in North Carolina directly caused by tobacco use exceed \$3.8 billion. North Carolina's adult smoking rate is 16.5%. Wake County's adult smoking rate is 13%. Youth vaping continues to be a public health epidemic. E-cigarette use among NC high school students has increased over 1,000% 2011 (from 1.7% in 2011 to 20.9% in 2019). Given current smoking levels among youth,

it is estimated that 180,000 NC kids alive today will die from smoking. Additionally, 14,200 adults will die each year in North Carolina directly from smoking.

The expanded definition of tobacco products includes but is not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, electronic cigarettes, hookah, smoked or vaped tobacco substitutes, chewing tobacco, snuff, snus, dissolvable tobacco products, and heated tobacco products. However, the expanded definition of tobacco products does not include nicotine replacement products approved by the USFDA for treatment of tobacco use and dependence.

Attachments:

1. Wake County Tobacco-Free Ordinance
2. September 12, 2022 Work Session Presentation