

Truckee Community Survey

Report of Key Findings and Conclusions



Nevada County Department of Public Health,
Tobacco Use Prevention Program

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Method

To determine whether the public is affected by tobacco use in downtown Truckee and gauge the level of support for a smoke-free policy, a public opinion poll (POP) survey was completed by 129 community members from September 2020-October 2020. The survey was a modified version of an original POP survey conducted in Truckee two years prior. Tobacco program staff felt that it would be beneficial to collect additional data in order to determine the level of public support for a smoke-free policy in downtown Truckee. The survey was developed by the External Evaluator and consisted of four multiple choice questions and one open-ended question.

Data was collected online using Survey Monkey and distributed and promoted by the following community organizations: Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee monthly newsletter, Truckee Tahoe litter group Facebook page and Tahoe Truckee Future Without Drug Dependence Facebook page and Twitter account. The survey was also sent to the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce and Truckee Downtown Merchants Association, but it's unclear whether they actually shared or promoted the survey.

Results

Demographics

The first question asked respondents whether they live in or near Truckee. The Truckee area receives a lot of tourism so it was important to be able to report how many locals participated in the survey. Ninety-one percent of respondents said that they live in the Truckee area.

Experience with tobacco use in downtown Truckee

Ninety-one percent of respondents said that they had experienced second hand smoke or vapor on sidewalks or public spaces in Historic Downtown Truckee. When asked to select all the ways they are bothered by smoking or tobacco use in downtown Truckee, out of the 120 who responded, 87% said the smell, 88% tobacco litter and 80% second hand smoke and vapor. (See Chart 1)

Nineteen respondents also selected other and a variety of open ended responses were given including, negative influence on young children, exposing children to second hand smoke, fire danger, impact on wildlife, and triggering to allergies. Two respondents who selected "other," commented saying no they aren't bothered.

"My baby being exposed to secondhand smoke while walking on a sidewalk or public spaces."

"No, it doesn't bother me, there are bars downtown too."

"My kids should not be exposed to a known carcinogen while walking in downtown Truckee sidewalks"

“Highly allergic to cigarettes, I cannot occupy public places when people smoke”

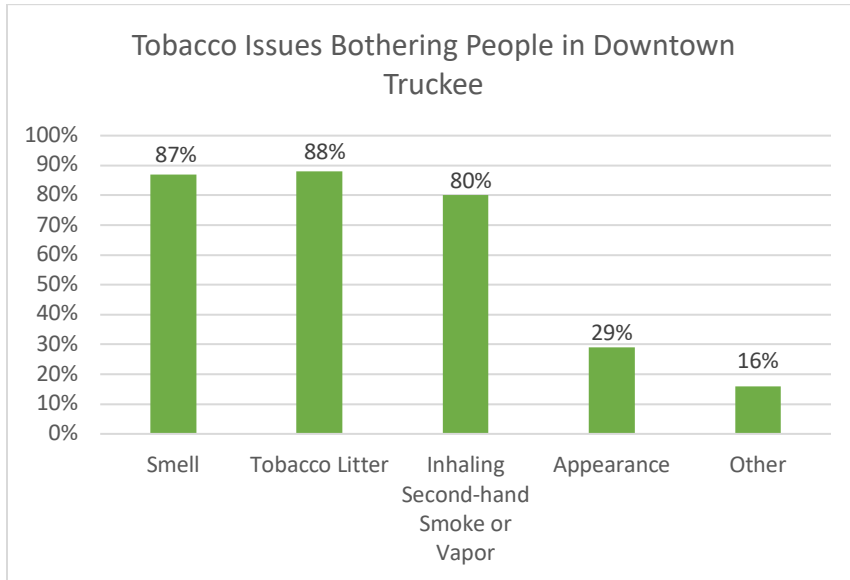


Chart 1: Tobacco issues bothering people in downtown Truckee

Support for smoke-free policy

When asked whether they would support a law that restrict tobacco use on the sidewalks and public areas of downtown Truckee, almost all respondents said they would support this type of policy. (See Chart 2)

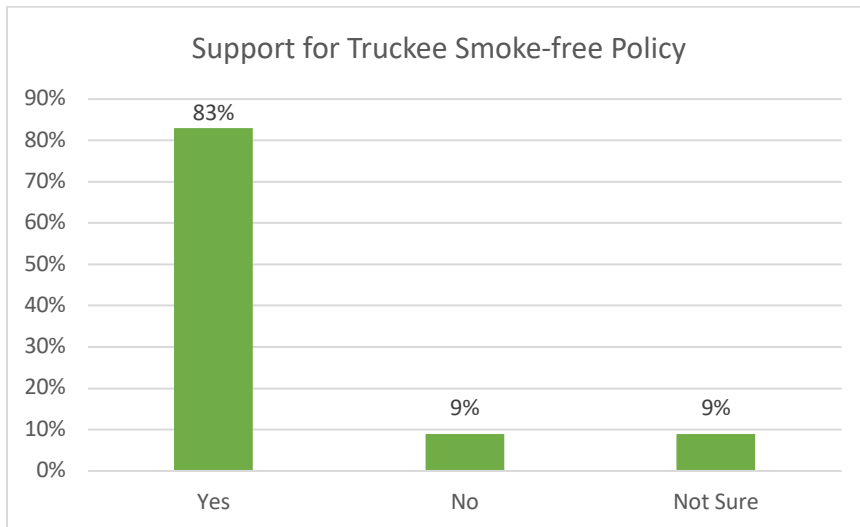


Chart 2: Level of support for Truckee smoke-free policy

Additional Comments

The final question was open ended and provided a space for additional comments; forty respondents replied to this questions. The majority of the responses expressed strong dislike for smoking, concerns about second hand smoke and unwavering support for the smoke-free policy. However, some respondent talked about concerns for individual liberties and government control. Many comments focused on the issue of tobacco litter and fire danger while some stressed the need for proper receptacles and ash trays. Some respondents expressed support for the policy, but mentioned concerns about effective enforcement.

"BAN THEM!!!! The litter factor alone is too much. Smokers have proven they do not care about other humans. Period."

"Truckee is a small town, and it seems invasive to pollute the air for people who should be able enjoy pure fresh air in the mountains as they the meander, shop and eat in our beautiful town."

"I understand the idea of this but I'm also a fan of personal freedoms and liberties. Can you seriously make it illegal to smoke in public. Seems a bit of an overreach."

"Provide ash trays or some kind of receptacle for cigarette butts so people have a place to throw it away instead of littering"

"Enforce current law, in California it's illegal to smoke within 20 feet of an entrance. No need to waste time on new laws and regulations, that's called pandering."

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the data shows that Truckee residents are experiencing second hand smoke or vapor in downtown Truckee, are bothered by tobacco use in some way and support a policy restricting tobacco use in downtown Truckee. The majority of respondents reported experiencing second hand smoke or vapor in downtown Truckee and also reported being bothered by tobacco use, including tobacco litter, second-hand smoke and the smell. Almost all respondents said that they support a smoke-free policy in downtown Truckee. A small percent of respondents oppose the policy and are concerned about losing individual freedoms and government control.

Findings from the survey will be presented to business owners and Truckee Town Council members to demonstrate the need and public support for a smoke-free policy. Local business owners may be more likely to support the policy if there is high level of public support. Program staff conducted three public opinion surveys in Truckee over the past two years; the data will be compiled into a single fact sheet that will be shared during council presentation and meetings with community partners.