Positive Media Coverage on the Proposed Changes to the Smoke-Free Ottawa Public Places Bylaw (Volume 2)

**February 6-13, 2012**

News Articles

#### Le Droit

**La cigarette bannie des parcs, plages et terrasses d'Ottawa**

**Un règlement qui manque encore de dents, disent certains**

Par François Pierre Dufault

Publié le 07 février 2012 à 05h30 | Mis à jour le 07 février 2012 à 05h30

Si l'agence de la santé publique de la Ville d'Ottawa croyait avoir accouché d'un règlement antitabac parmi les plus acérés, elle s'est plutôt fait dire, hier soir, que son nouveau texte de loi ne repousserait pas les fumeurs assez loin dans leurs derniers retranchements.

La très grande majorité des délégations publiques qui se sont adressées au conseil de la santé publique, lors d'une rencontre extraordinaire, sont d'avis qu'il manque encore une ou deux dents au projet de règlement qui bannirait complètement la cigarette des parcs, plages, propriétés municipales et terrasses extérieures.

Une vingtaine de médecins, de représentants de groupes d'intérêts et de citoyens qui en ont tout simplement ras-le-bol de la fumée secondaire ont fait valoir à la Ville d'Ottawa que son règlement antitabac ne sera jamais complet tant qu'il n'éradiquera pas la cigarette des trottoirs, des chantiers de construction, des collèges, des universités, des hôpitaux, des hôtels et motels et des parcs de la Commission de la capitale nationale (CCN).

« Les trottoirs vont tout simplement devenir les nouveaux repères des fumeurs », a pesté Catherine Caule, une opposante à la cigarette. « Nous avons des lois qui rendent le port du casque protecteur obligatoire sur les chantiers de construction. Un environnement de travail sans fumée serait tout aussi important pour la santé des travailleurs », a renchéri Suzanne Friedlaender, la présidente du Conseil d'Ottawa sur le tabagisme et la santé (COTS).

Difficile d'être plus sévère

La Ville d'Ottawa n'a toutefois pas le bras assez long pour imposer son règlement antitabac partout où elle le voudrait. La décision de bannir la cigarette des campus d'établissements d'enseignement postsecondaires reviendrait au gouvernement de l'Ontario, par exemple. La CCN devrait adopter son propre règlement pour que ses parcs et ses sentiers récréatifs deviennent sans fumée, ce à quoi elle songe. [...]

Plus de détails dans LeDroit du 7 février ou sur ledroitsurmonordi.ca (the rest of this article is only available in print or with an online subscription)

#### Centretown News

**Ottawa Board of Health approves smoking ban**

By Candice So

Tuesday, 07 February 2012

A potential ban of smoking on city property is one step closer to becoming an official bylaw.

On Tuesday, the Ottawa Board of Health approved recommendations that would stop Ottawa smokers from lighting up while visiting beaches, parks, bars and restaurant patios, starting July 2.

The bylaw will face the scrutiny of the community and protective services committee on Feb. 15. If the committee approves it, the ban will come before city council on Feb. 22.

Offenders of the proposed bylaw would be fined $305 for a first infraction. However, offenders would only be issued warning tickets during a grace period that would end July 1.

The ban is a response to recommendations by Ottawa Public Health. Its smoke-free Ottawa strategy also calls for more programs that would prevent smoking among youth, as well as more resources to help current smokers kick the habit.

#### Orléans Star

**Board of Health gives stamp of approval**

Published on February 8, 2012

By Benjamin Vachet (Translated by Catherine Kitts)

[](http://www.orleansstar.ca/media/photos/unis/2012/02/08/photo_1996913_resize.jpg)

The Ottawa Board of Health approved recommendations from the Medical Officer of Health to strengthen legislation for a Smoke-Free Ottawa.

The strategy aims to protect children and nonsmokers from secondhand smoke and reduce smoking rates by increasing tobacco cessation programs, antismoking campaigns and public awareness.

The renewed strategy approved by the Board of Health has a recommendation under which the City of Ottawa would expand its smoke-free regulations to include municipal property, including parks and beaches, as well as bars and patios of restaurants.

The recommendations relating to bylaws will be discussed at the City's Community and Protective Services Committee meeting on Feb. 15 and, if approved by the committee, City Council will review the case on Feb. 22.

"The strategy approved by the Board of Health will strengthen Ottawa's leadership by creating more smoke-free spaces in places where we live," said Councillor Diane Holmes, Chair of the Board of Health. "We want all our recommendations to be fast approved by City Council and I am especially looking forward to enjoy a first season of smoke-free terraces and parks in Ottawa this summer."

#### EMC (article found in several community editions with varying titles)

**Ottawa moves to ban smoking at patios, beaches, parks and city properties**

By Laura Mueller

Posted Feb 9, 2012

[](http://www.emcimport.com/infomart/images/257209-73008.jpg)

Community and protective services committee chairman Mark Taylor and bylaw chief Linda Anderson to announce Ottawa Public Health's proposal to expand Ottawa's non-smoking bylaw.

EMC news - Smokers should butt out on restaurant patios as well as city-owned parks, beaches, buildings and markets, Ottawa Public Health is recommending.

A decade after the city banned smoking indoors, the next phase of the bylaw expansion would make all city properties - including beaches, more than 1,000 parks and 300 city facilities, including the ByWard and Parkdale market stalls - smoke-free zones. Smoking on city streets and sidewalks would still be allowed.

More controversial will be the push to keep smoking off of outdoor restaurant and pub patios.

Other municipalities have done "bits and pieces" of what Ottawa is proposing, said the city's chief medical officer of health, Dr. Isra Levy, but he added: "We believe the comprehensiveness of what's being done here puts Ottawa back on top."

"It's a complete package we have that will make the city a healthier place," said Somerset Coun. Diane Holmes, who heads the city's public health board.

The popularity of voluntary "smoke-free" signs in parks is growing, and the proposed bylaw expansion reflects that public desire for more smoke-free spaces, Holmes said.

Ottawa Public Health has been consulting residents and businesses on the plan for the past year.

"It's clear that people want this," Holmes said.

Smokers were included in the consultation, and they generally supported the recommendation, although in smaller numbers than the general population, Levy said.

"We're seeing a respect for non-smokers," he said.

The expanded bylaw was set to be discussed at a public health board meeting on Feb. 6, by the community and protective services committee on Feb. 15 and it would need council's final approval on Feb. 22.

Fines of $305 would begin to be handed out after July 2, with a warning period from April 2 to July 2.

The expanded bylaw won't require any additional funds to enforce, according to the report.

The program would include money to provide some "butt bins" to restaurants to provide places for smokers to discard their cigarettes.

The cost of second-hand smoke is around $2 billion a year to the Ontario health care system, public health officials said.

Over regulating?

At least one councillor, Kanata South's Allan Hubley, questioned whether it was necessary to regulate smoking outdoors at private businesses.

"Nobody disputes the importance of addressing secondhand smoke," Hubley said. "But we don't want to over regulate these things."

Hubley, a former smoker, said he is "dead set against cigarettes."

"But I am also someone who values our rights and freedoms," he added.

If businesses know they can attract more customers and make more money by banning smoking, they will do that on their own, Hubley said.

That's the case with some of the patios in the ByWard Market - the city's entertainment district with the highest concentration of patios with just under 50 patios within its boundaries. Jasna Jennings, executive director of the business improvement area that represents the area's restaurateurs and merchants, said the expanded non-smoking bylaw seems to be a non-issue for many ByWard businesses.

"A lot of people felt this was a natural progression," Jennings said.

While a couple of owners worried the expanded bylaw might impact their business, there was very little turnout for consultations or opposition to the proposal, Jennings said.

"I was a little bit surprised with the lack of input," she said. Another idea could be to add an extra licence fee for patios that want to have smoking, so there is a financial incentive to go non-smoking, Hubley said.

Only 15 per cent of Ottawans are smokers, according to the report, so it would make more financial sense for restaurants to appeal to the 85 per cent of residents who don't smoke by making their patios smoke-free. But that choice should probably be left up to the restaurants, Hubley said, although he is waiting for more information on the level of consultation with businesses before he decides whether he'll support the proposal.

#### Ottawa Sun

**City probing hookah health risk**

By Kelly Roche,Ottawa Sun

First posted: Saturday, February 11, 2012 04:59 PM EST | Updated: Saturday, February 11, 2012 05:02 PM EST

The public health department plans to test air quality in hookah bars this year to see if there is a health risk.

Restaurant owner Charbel Karakouzian finds the idea amusing.

“If they’re talking about air quality, go stand (at the) Rideau Centre where we have the city buses killing people from the smoke coming out of their pipelines, and come and sit in the restaurant when somebody’s smoking shisha,” said Karakouzian.

“It’s nothing. There’s no nicotine, no tar, there’s nothing whatsoever.”

His establishment, the Garlic Corner at the corner of York St. and Dalhousie St., offers herbal hookah and Karakouzian says he’s never been caught using tobacco in its place.

Other hookah places have, and the testing is all part of the mission for smoke-free air.

Ottawa Public Health has teamed up with by-law services and the ministry of revenue to enforce the city’s 20 or so known hookah bars.

“We’ve been quite firm and aggressive in the last year in doing inspections and spot checks,” said medical officer of health Dr. Isra Levy.

Last summer, four bars were fined more than $30,000 for illegally selling tobacco and supplying it to customers who appeared to be under 25 years old.

A couple of places have since closed shop.

“I’m sorry to learn that they’ve shut down but I’m not sorry to learn that we’ve got a 20% reduction in what we know were establishments that were serving tobacco, frankly illegally, to young people and youth,” said Levy.

2011 CRACKDOWN

•27 blitzes done by tobacco enforcement officers and ministry of finance inspectors in May, July and October

•20 businesses issued 35 notices (including selling tobacco without a licence and supplying tobacco to people appearing to be under 25 years old)

•More than 30 kg of contraband tobacco water-pipe products seized

•$75,000 in fines issued

•75 fire code violations reported

•Two bars have closed, one has cancelled “hookah night,” and one has stopped selling shisha

— Source: Ottawa Public Health

#### Ottawa Sun

**Health board puts the squeeze on smokers**

By Kelly Roche,Ottawa Sun

First posted: Monday, February 06, 2012 11:41 PM EST | Updated: Monday, February 06, 2012 11:50 PM EST

Ottawa’s patios, parks, and beaches are one step closer to being smoke-free.

The board of health gave the greenlight to a three-year clean air strategy during a meeting at City Hall Monday night.

The strategy aims to protect children and non-smokers from second hand smoke and help smokers quit.

The report includes a recommendation to ban smoking at all city properties, including City Hall.

Almost 20 public delegates signed up to speak at the meeting, and all but one were in favour of the move.

“I was encouraged to see this,” said Dr. Isra Levy, the city’s medical officer of health.

“I think that the people of Ottawa do want their health protected and they do want to enjoy their public spaces.”

In Ottawa nearly 1,000 smokers and non-smokers die prematurely of tobacco related illness each year.

In addition, almost $40 million is spent on hospitalization for smoking-related illnesses annually.

The plan is for the bylaw to kick in April 2 and be enforced starting July 2.

“Our goal is not to lay charges,” said bylaw chief Linda Anderson.

The strategy will continue Ottawa’s leadership on smoking, said Somerset Coun. Diane Holmes, chairwoman of the board.

And it goes beyond cigarettes.

As part of the recommendations, the board will ask the province and feds to make changes to laws to give the city more power to regulate the use of hookah or water pipes and products.

“We have a real issue with the smoking of tobacco, or quite frankly, any substance in the hookah pipes,” said Levy.

“Certainly, from a health perspective, I’d recommend against it. I think it’s got a whole lot of downsides to it.”

The recommendations will be discussed at the community and protective services committee on Feb. 15, then at council on Feb. 22.

Television

#### CBC News

**Proposed stricter smoking bylaw moves ahead**

**Residents want hookah bars banned, smoking canned on hospital campuses**

Posted: Feb 7, 2012 7:27 AM ET

Last Updated: Feb 7, 2012 7:21 PM ET

The Ottawa Board of Health has given the thumbs up to a new, harsher smoking bylaw, which has hurdled one more roadblock before coming to fruition.

The new regulations, first proposed Jan. 30, would ban smoking at bar and restaurant patios and at city-run beaches and parks. Smoking would also be prohibited on any festival run on city property.

Bylaw officers plan to use the spring to issue warnings to smokers and help people get used to the new rules. The fines, which are expected to be about $300, would start in the summer.

But at a meeting Monday night, many anti-smoking advocates and Ottawa residents spoke in favour of a harsher bylaw. Many thought the next step should be banning all smoking on sidewalks.

Others, such as one cancer survivor who underwent chemotherapy 10 years ago, want smoking banned on hospital campuses.

"Imagine how I felt, when I walked past the cancer centre patients standing outside the clinic, who were holding a cigarette in one hand, and an intravenous pole in the other," said Catherine Caule, who survived Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

**Ottawa residents want even harsher restrictions**

Many public speakers Monday questioned the exemptions instead of lauding the increased restrictions.

Hookah or shisha bars, where customers can smoke non-tobacco products from water pipes indoors, were exempt and that caused uproar. City officials argued other levels of government need to change their law before the city puts a bylaw in place on hookahs.

"We kind of came into some legal impediments at a municipal level [with hookahs] so they're part of the advocacy strategy," said Sherry Nigro, the manager responsible for pandemic planning at Ottawa Public Health.

"[We need] to explain to other levels of government that these might be areas that they could expand."

Nigro added provincial laws prevent the city from going after smokers on sidewalks, too, but officials plan to seek legal advice regarding a loophole.

The enhanced bylaw will next go to the community and protective services committee on Feb. 15. If it passes committee, city council will look at the proposal Feb. 22.

Three video clips available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/02/07/ottawa-smoking-bylaw-board-of-health.html>

Radio

#### CFRA

**Proposed Smoking Ban Heads to Board of Health**

Josh Pringle

Monday, February 6, 2012

Ottawa's Board of Health will vote this evening on a plan to force smokers to butt out on City property and on patios.

The Public Health unit is recommending the board expand Ottawa's Smoke Free bylaw to ban smoking in municipal parks, beaches, on municipal properties and on bar and restaurant patios.

An Ipsos Reid survey found 77 per cent of respondents support smoke free parks and playgrounds, while 73 per cent also support banning smoking on patios.

Both the Community and Protective Services Committee and full City Council must also approve expanding the Smoke Free Ottawa bylaw to ban smoking on municipal property.

#### CFRA

**Board of Health Approves Expanded Smoking Ban**

Josh Pringle

Monday, February 6, 2012

The City of Ottawa is one step closer to butting out smoking on municipal property.

The Board of Health gave unanimous support to a recommendation from Ottawa Public Health to expand the Smoke Free Ottawa Bylaw.

The new rules would ban smoking in municipal parks, beaches, on City properties and on restaurant and bar patios.

If approved by the Community and Protective Services Committee and City Council, the City would begin issuing warnings from April until July 1st for smoking on municipal property.

Fines of $305 would begin to be issued on July 2nd.

Blogs

#### The Fulcrum (Ottawa University)

**Ottawa proposes smoking bans on city property**

By Julia Riddle

News, Ottawa — 2012/02/09 6:25 pm

OTTAWA WILL BECOME a less friendly place for smokers if Ottawa’s City Council passes new bylaws this month. The regulations would ban smoking on all municipal properties, including parks, sports fields, and beaches, as well as bar and restaurant patios. The bylaws are designed to address the effects of second-hand smoke and to reduce the number of smokers in the city.



“Experts agree any level of second-hand smoke is unhealthy,” said Cumberland ward councillor Stephen Blais, who put forward the proposal. “Second-hand smoke contains over 4,000 toxic chemicals, at least 50 of which are carcinogenic.”

The regulations were proposed following in-depth research by Ottawa Public Health, which examined public opinion on smoke-free spaces through consultations and surveys. The results showed the majority of Ottawa residents were in favour of the bans.

While the polls showed almost 75 per cent of those surveyed supported forbidding smoking on post-secondary grounds, the new laws would not affect campuses.

“Anything we can do to protect people who choose not to smoke, to be healthy … it’s incumbent upon us to do,” said Blais. “No one has the right to harm you, and if you choose to smoke, that’s your choice—but it shouldn’t be affecting the people around you.”

The recommendations from the Board of Health come from their report, Let’s Clear the Air: A Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-free Ottawa. The document suggests the city expand programs for those trying to quit smoking, create a “public awareness and community engagement strategy” centred around the dangers of tobacco, and work to prevent smoking among youth.

The report also advises the city advocate for changes to tobacco legislation at the provincial and federal levels so water pipes, water pipe products, and their use become more closely regulated under the law.

A potential issue with preventing smoking on city property is that it will increase cigarette litter in other locations, such as parking lots and sidewalks.

“We’ve been discussing with the local business community,” said Blais, “We’re making sure those issues are dealt with.”

The report also addresses this issue, proposing that the Board of Health work in cooperation with other city departments, including Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, to address any problems that result from the bylaws.

When it comes to students trying to quit smoking, the University of Ottawa’s Health Services is already well equipped to help out.

“All students and staff can access smoking cessation programs,” said Kristine Hoube, staff member of Health Services at the U of O. “We provide medication, free nicotine replacement, and counselling sessions.”

Many of these programs are run by, or in cooperation with, students, while government funding means the majority of the services provided are free.

If passed, the new smoking bylaws will not take effect until July 2, following a public awareness campaign and a warning phase starting April 2.

The report is set to go to before the Board of Health, Community Services, and City Council on Feb. 6, 15, and 22 respectively. The full text is available in the Health and Safety section of the City’s website, Ottawa.ca.

#### TopNews (New Zealand)

Submitted by Dinesh Chandra Gaur on Mon, 02/06/2012 - 12:52

Smoking is injurious not only for the one smoking, but for the people around as well. It is essential that stricter rules are formed against smoking in public. According to recent reports, it has been revealed that the Ottawa Public Health is going to introduce a new bylaw, according to which smoking in the outdoor spaces shall also be placed a ban upon.

It is essential that the government takes a firm stand on the matter, because smoking is one obnoxious habit that is harming the smokers as well as the community around them. There is a huge risk of contracting diseases, among those people who are standing next to a smoker also. It is essential that people take a stand on kicking off this awful habit, for a better world in the time to come.

These people found smoking in outdoor spaces shall now have to bear the brunt of law, when caught. It is essential that people try and give up the habit so that they can avoid trouble for themselves and others around them. According to statistics, there are thousands of people dying each year due to lung cancer and other breathing disorders due to smoking. It is essential that people understand that this is a slow and poisonous killer for them, and take a firm step towards curbing this ill, not only from themselves but from the vicinity as well.

It’s a matter of time to see whether this new rule bears effect on the minds of people and whether people can get rid of the habit and the society becomes cleaner and healthier after smoking is eradicated completely.

#### Ottawa Sun

# Hookah crackdown too much: Owner

By Kelly Roche,Ottawa Sun

First posted: Saturday, February 11, 2012 04:52 PM EST | Updated: Saturday, February 11, 2012 07:08 PM EST

A downtown business owner says the public health department’s crackdown on tobacco is warranted, but not if it’s intended to stop all forms of smoking.

“I think they’re going a step too far. It’s becoming Communist within a country like Canada,” said Charbel Karakouzian.

He co-owns the Garlic Corner shawarma restaurant in the Byward Market, which offers hookah or water-pipe smoking.

Unlike many shisha bars which use tobacco and claim it’s herbal, he says his product is entirely natural, and those places have given bonafide businesses like his a bad rep.

“I would support closing down these places, giving them fines, shutting them down from business, like the alcohol and gaming commission do with bars,” Karakouzian said.

Herbal or not, Karakouzian may be outnumbered.

An Ottawa-based tobacco expert wants public health officials to curb the growing popularity of hookah smoking by following the lead of other cities.

“Vancouver and other municipalities have banned smoking of anything — not just tobacco — in restaurants, bars and cafes,” said Rob Cunningham, a lawyer and senior policy analyst at the Canadian Cancer Society.

“You do not have any water-pipe, hookah smoking in Vancouver. We shouldn’t have any in Ottawa.”

At the board of health meeting on Feb. 6, a three-year clean-air strategy was given the thumbs up.

The board approved a recommendation to ban smoking on all city property, including outdoor festivals, fruit and vegetable markets, parks, patios and beaches.

Businesses offering hookah or shisha, however, allow smoking indoors and are excluded from the ban.

A long-time public health advocate is looking to see the playing field levelled.

“If the city prohibits smoking on patios, surely it isn’t right to allow the same harmful chemicals to be inhaled inside, just because the tobacco or herbs being smoked are heated instead of lit,” said Janice Forsythe.

“To paraphrase an old adage, where there’s smoke, there’s health damage.”

Local health officials are recommending hookah bars fall under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

“From the perspective of regulating it, there are a few technical elements that need to be worked on at the provincial level and at the federal level,” said Ottawa’s medical officer of health Dr. Isra Levy.

There’s a misconception, Cunningham says, about hookah being safe.

“Often, there’s a claim that there’s no tobacco in the mixture, but there really is. And consumers want that, because there’s nicotine, and they want nicotine to satisfy their addiction,” said Cunningham.

At the Garlic Corner, “we’ve never had tobacco products. The inspectors come here all the time,” said Karakouzian.

The city’s media relations department did not respond to the Sun’s request to confirm this information.

Letters to the Editor

#### Ottawa Citizen

**Smoke has no boundaries**

February 11, 2012

Re: No smoking at Ottawa's outdoor patios, parks, Jan. 31. It wasn't that long ago when people were in an uproar at the prospect of not being able to smoke indoors.

Today, more than a decade later, the thought of smoking at your favourite bar or restaurant isn't even given a passing thought. So I wasn't surprised at all when I heard about Ottawa Public Health's latest initiative to identify public places where smoking should be prohibited.

Just because a person is outdoors doesn't mean they are immune to the residual impacts of smoke. The fact is, smoke doesn't have boundaries and it is very harmful, especially to people who suffer from asthma or elderly patients with COPD and emphysema. I suspect that in 10 years from now, we will wonder what took us so long to implement these necessary changes to generally improve the public's health.

Despite all the evidence and everything we know about the impacts of smoking, there are still too many people lighting up. Across the province, tobacco-related disease costs the Ontario health system more than $1.6 billion annually and kills more than 13,000 Ontarians every year.

The No. 1 step that a person can take to decrease the risk and impact of cardiovascular disease, respiratory disorders and several cancers is to quit smoking.

On behalf of the Academy of Medicine Ottawa, I would like to congratulate and commend Ottawa Public Health for its ongoing leadership and commitment to make our city a healthier place to live.

Eoghan O'Shea, MD, Ottawa President, Academy of Medicine Ottawa

#### Ottawa Citizen

**Support creation of new smoke-free spaces**

By Andrew Pipe, Ottawa Citizen February 6, 2012

Re: No smoking at Ottawa's outdoor patios, parks, Jan. 31.

I write to support Ottawa Public Health for introducing a bylaw that will eliminate smoking in outdoor spaces in Ottawa.

The importance of limiting exposure to second-hand smoke has been recognized for many years. Ottawa has provided distinct leadership in addressing this important public health challenge in the past; the adoption of the proposed bylaw will continue that tradition of public health leadership. It is important to ensure that current and future generations of Ottawans are provided with the opportunity to enjoy smoke-free public spaces and facilities. Our children deserve no less.

Evidence continues to accumulate, attesting to the reduction in cardiovascular incidents and deaths that follows the introduction of smoke-free environments. At a time when the sustainability of our health system is increasingly in question, it is paramount that we adopt evidence-based, best-practice approaches to disease prevention.

Our public health department, the board of health and our council are providing exemplary leadership in this respect and their efforts merit our congratulations and support.

Andrew Pipe, Chief, Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation, University of Ottawa Heart Institute

City Councillor Websites (Mark Taylor)

**Board of Health approves Smoke-Free Ottawa Strategy**

Posted on February 7, 2012

Ottawa – The Ottawa Board of Health has approved recommendations from the Medical Officer of Health for a renewed strategy for a smoke-free Ottawa and forwarded proposals to City Council for the expansion of the City’s smoke-free regulations. The strategy is designed to protect children and non-smokers from second hand smoke, while reducing smoking rates through increased cessation programming, advocacy and public awareness.

The Board’s approval of the renewed strategy includes a recommendation that the City of Ottawa expand its smoke-free regulations to include municipal properties, including parks and beaches, and bar and restaurant patios. The regulatory recommendations will be discussed at the City’s Community and Protective Services Committee on February 15, and, if accepted by the committee, City Council on February 22.

“The strategy approved by the Board will continue Ottawa’s leadership on smoking, by making more spaces where we live smoke-free,” said Councillor Diane Holmes, Chair of the Board of Health. “We are keen to see all recommendations fully approved by City Council and I am especially eager to enjoy Ottawa’s first smoke-free patio and park season this summer.”

The renewed strategy, which will not require more funding, for a smoke-free Ottawa recommends:

1.Increasing cessation services and programs for all residents, including priority populations with high smoking rates;

2.Expanding Ottawa’s smoke-free regulations to make all municipal properties, including parks and beaches, and bar and restaurant patios smoke-free. These recommendations require the approval of City Council; and

3.Implementing public education campaigns and a community engagement strategy to decrease the number of youth who start smoking, to increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco smoke and to create more smoke-free spaces.

This joint initiative between Ottawa Public Health and By-law and Regulatory Services, in consultation with other City departments, includes increased programming for people who want to quit; new smoke-free regulations to protect residents from second-hand smoke and a public awareness and community engagement strategy designed to make Ottawa a healthier city for all.

As part of the recommendations, the Board of Health will now advocate to the provincial and federal governments to strengthen current legislation that exist for regulating water-pipe products.

“The Board is calling on the provincial and federal governments to make changes to the law that will assist Ottawa and other municipalities in regulating the use of hookah pipes and products,” said Dr. Isra Levy, Ottawa’s Medical Officer of Health.

The Board approved two recommendations to address deficiencies that currently exist in respect of the regulation of water-pipes under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA). These include recommending that the Board of Health advocate that the SFOA and regulations be amended to prohibit the smoking of other weeds or substances such that the smoking of water-pipe products would be included and that the SFOA and regulations could be amended to provide Tobacco Enforcement Officers with the authority to search, seize and test product when conducting inspections.

For more information about smoking cessation programs and tools, visit ottawa.ca/quitsmoking or call 613-580-6744 (TTY: 613-580-9656). You can also connect with OPH on Facebook and Twitter (@ottawahealth) for the latest public health information.