



On Track for a Tobacco-Free Orange County

CG 20-10005, Contract #20-10370

Menthol and Flavors Ban Policy Stakeholders Key Informant Interviews

Key Findings December 2023

KEY INFORMANT SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Between February 2021 and December 2023, five America On Track staff members and five Flavors Workgroup Members interviewed 20 Buena Park and Stanton community members to explore their views about the need to adopt a ban on the sale and distribution of mentholated cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products, the extent to which there is agreement or opposition to policy adoption, factors that would influence their policy adoption decision, and perceived challenges or barriers to policy adoption and implementation. Interviews varied between 9 and 90 minutes and averaged 40 minutes.

Effective December 21, 2022, SB 793 banned retailers, their agents, or employees from selling, offering for sale, or possessing with the intent to sell most flavored tobacco products and tobacco product flavor enhancers across California. The law does not apply to flavored loose-leaf tobacco, flavored premium cigars with a wholesale price over \$12, and flavored shisha for Hookah. Violators are guilty of an infraction and fined \$250 for each violation. Since then, stakeholder interviews have served the purpose of providing information related to how SB 793 could be augmented by stronger, more comprehensive menthol and flavor ban laws at jurisdictional levels.

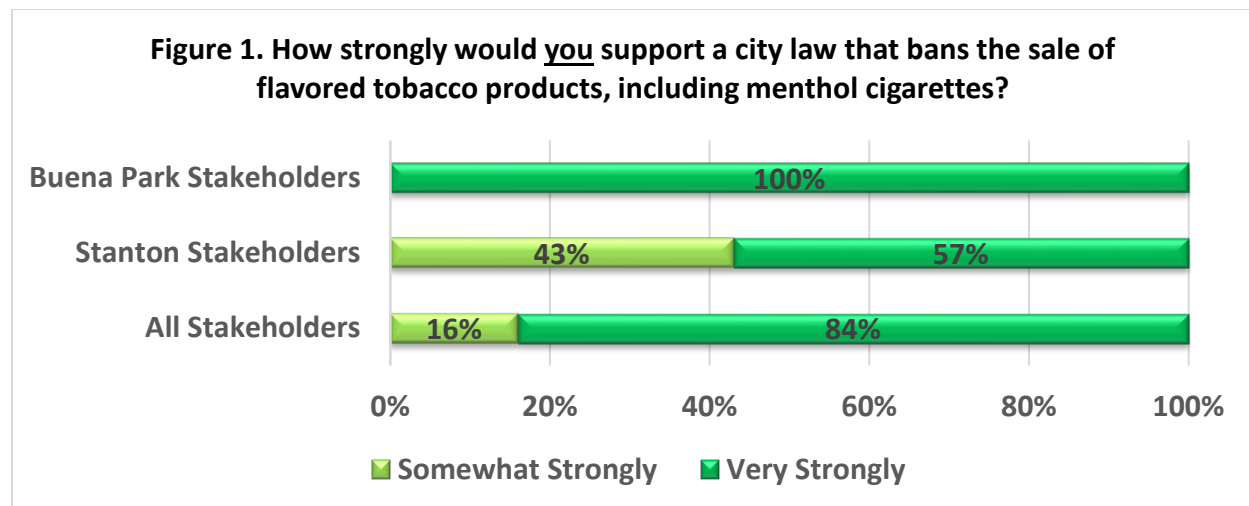
Twelve stakeholders (60%) lived and/or worked in the City of Buena Park: Six (30%) both lived and worked in Buena Park, 4 (20%) worked but did not live there, and 2 (10%) lived but did not work there. Buena Park policy stakeholders included the city's Mayor Pro Tem, the Superintendent of the Centralia Elementary School District (in Buena Park), the Superintendent of the Buena Park School District, a Buena Park School District board member, the Director of Student and Community Services for Buena Park, a Buena Park School District elementary school teacher, the Social Media Chair of the 4th District PTA (encompassing Buena Park and the City of Stanton), an administrator at the Buena Park Resource Center, a librarian within a Buena Park Library District, the Executive Director of a Buena Park Collaborative, and a married couple speaking as citizens.

Seven (35%) lived or worked in the City of Stanton: Three (15%) both lived and worked in the City of Stanton, and 4 (20%) worked but did not live there. Stanton policy stakeholders included the city's Mayor Pro Tem, the Community Services Director, Senior Recreation Leader, two Community Services Coordinators (one from the Stanton Family Resource Center), the Public Safety Services Director, and a Code Enforcement Officer.

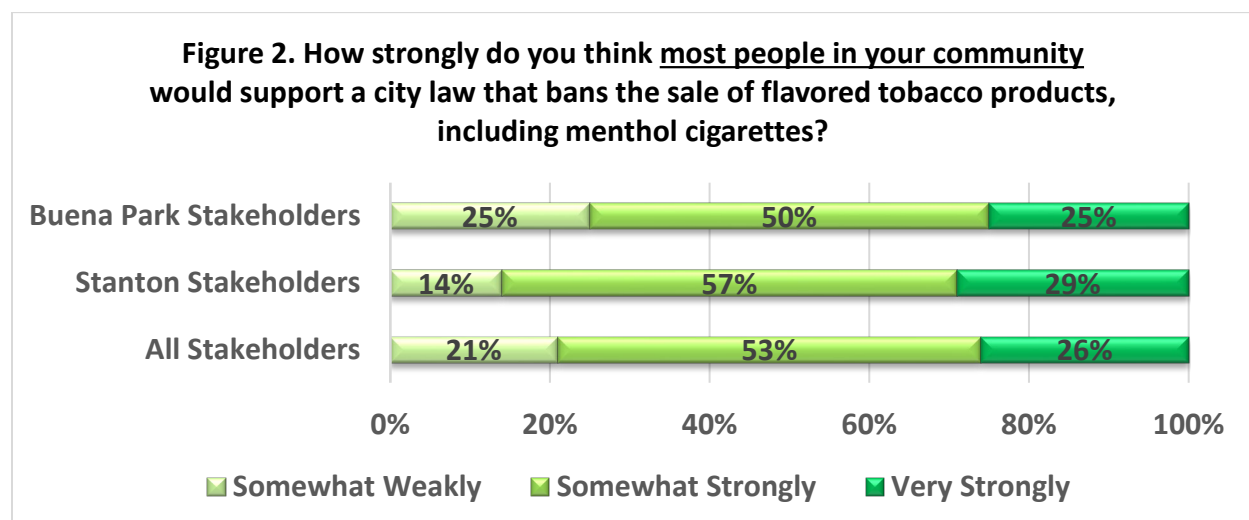
One (5%) worked in Fullerton, a city sharing a border with Buena Park, as the Director of Community Programs & St. Jude Wellness Center at the St. Jude Medical Center.

SUPPORT FOR A BAN ON FLAVORED TOBACCO SALES

All stakeholders interviewed (100%) supported a city law that bans the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes: 84% supported it “very strongly” and 16% supported it “somewhat strongly” (Figure 1). All Buena Park stakeholders supported the law “very strongly.” Stanton stakeholders were less enthusiastic: 57% supported the law “very strongly” and 43% supported it “somewhat strongly.”



A strong majority (79%) of all stakeholders thought most in their community would “somewhat strongly” (53%) or “very strongly” (26%) support the law, and the remaining one-fifth (21%) of stakeholders thought community members would support it “somewhat weakly” (Figure 2). Stanton stakeholders were more optimistic about community support for the law, with 86% thinking there would be “very strong” (29%) or “somewhat strong” (57%) community support. Comparatively, 75% of Buena Park stakeholders thought community members would support the law “very strongly” (25%) or “somewhat strongly” (50%) – still, a solid majority. No one interviewed thought most community members would not support the law at all.



Stakeholders were serious about implementation as well: 80% of those interviewed were willing to sign an individual endorsement or organizational resolution in support of a menthol and flavors ban. All 12 (100%) Buena Park stakeholders were willing to sign an individual endorsement or organizational resolution in support of a menthol and flavors ban. Just 3 (43%) Stanton stakeholders were willing to sign an individual endorsement or organizational resolution in support of a menthol and flavors ban; however, The Mayor Pro Tem of Stanton said, “Let’s get this item into the City Council meetings.”

The 4 (57%) Stanton stakeholders unwilling to publicize their strong support for a menthol and flavors ban worked at the municipal level in code enforcement, community services, and public safety, potentially preserving their perceived objectivity among the public by deferring to make controversial statements as an individual. Eight of the 12 stakeholders in Buena Park willing to publicize their strong support worked within the public school system supporting youth, and 2 more were community members. The Executive Director of the Buena Park Collaborative offered to ask their Steering Committee to sign an organizational resolution in support of the ban. The Superintendent of the Centralia Elementary School District in Buena Park said she would present a resolution in support of the menthol and flavors ban to her Board of Trustees to obtain a Board Resolution which would be more powerful than one from her as an individual. The Director of Student and Community Services for the Buena Park School District similarly noted the importance of obtaining endorsement by the district’s Board of Trustees so it would be on behalf of all schools and not a political statement by an individual.

All stakeholders agreed to be contacted again about the issue. Nine (45%) recommended other people AOT could interview.

BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS

The primary benefit of a menthol and flavors ban recognized by 20 (100%) stakeholders was its potential impact on improving youth health by the prevention of tobacco addiction now and throughout their lives. Three (15%) stakeholders called attention to a reduction in exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke and vape toxins, while two (10%) called attention to a cleaner environment, and another focused on decreased healthcare costs for society associated with treating diseases caused by smoking like cancer, lung disease, heart disease, stroke, asthma, diabetes, and blindness. A Code Enforcement Officer and Public Safety Services Director both noted that a menthol and flavors ban would help reduce other problematic activities associated with vape/smoke shops and noted the specific benefit of the products no longer being visible in local stores like 7-Elevens, where one noted his daughter is always exposed to tobacco product advertising. Comments included:

- “The benefit is that it might decrease the use of flavored tobacco products in youth, since ANY store, such as gas stations or smoke shops, will eventually not sell any type of flavored tobacco products. The retail license fee will also help with enforcing no sales of these tobacco products. Adding on, monitoring the stores annually may help decrease the illegal sales of flavored tobacco products.”
- “The flavored tobacco does attract the youth more; it has been a trend. This would be great to target our youth. This can be good for our community.”
- “Reducing the number of young, underage users that transition usually to regular cigarettes.”

- “Immediately, preventing students from entering behaviors that cause a lifetime of health issues! Promoting a healthy lifestyle.... Also, it's annoying to be a non-smoker around someone who lets out a big puff of vape smoke.”
- “Especially with COVID, people may have underlying conditions that can worsen their health [if also exposed to secondhand smoke/vape].”
- “Cleaner environment. Healthier environment....”
- “Protect children. Keeps down our costs. Right now, most kids don't know the effects; then our health care costs will spike in the next decade or two and will catch up with our community in terms of diseases caused by smoking/vaping.”
- “It will help with all the other activities that are going on in the vape/smoke shops. Youth will not be able to see them in local stores, such as 7-Eleven. I always pass by a 7-Eleven with my daughter, and she always sees advertising of tobacco products.”
- “I’m a Registered Nurse. When my youngest child started experimenting with cigarettes 20 years ago, I did a lot of research. At that time, science had identified that all it takes is 1 cigarette and human anatomy changes where it creates immediately a nicotine receptor site. Which is why nicotine is more addictive than heroin, meth, etc. It was very difficult for that son to get off of them - even after only 3 months of experimenting.”¹

Stakeholders could identify few drawbacks inherent within a menthol and flavors ban strategy to reduce tobacco use initiation and maintenance among youth and adults. Drawbacks included tobacco retailers losing income, adult tobacco consumers losing autonomy, limits on the strategy’s capacity to completely block youth access to tobacco products, and enforcement challenges. Eight stakeholders (40%) noted the lost income tobacco retailers would experience and/or the organized opposition from the tobacco industry this strategy would ignite when tobacco sales are limited by law in the interest of public health. Five stakeholders (25%) were concerned about dissatisfaction among adult consumers of flavored tobacco products, including those using Hookah for cultural reasons². One stakeholder thought that how businesses and consumers respond could be managed

¹ A 2007 study published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine shows that 10% of 6th – 9th grade students who become hooked on cigarettes are addicted within two days of first inhaling from a cigarette, and 25% are addicted within a month. "Laboratory experiments confirm that nicotine alters the structure and function of the brain within a day of the very first dose. In humans, nicotine-induced alterations in the brain can trigger addiction with the first cigarette....Nobody expects to get addicted from smoking one cigarette." Addiction-related changes in the brain caused by nicotine are permanent and remain years after a smoker has quit. From https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-07/uomm-ifj070307.php accessed 4/5/21.

² For many, hookah use is an expression of cultural identity deeply rooted in social bonding and hospitality traditions that have been present in India, Persia, Turkey, Egypt, and other Middle

by how the ban is implemented. Three people (15%) were concerned that the ban would have minimal practical impact on access or consumption of flavored tobacco products because consumers – including youth – would simply drive to a nearby city that still sells them legally or find a way to the products through other means. Two informants (10%) thought a ban would be difficult to enforce, while three (15%) saw no drawbacks. Comments included:

- “Business owners think it would cut their income.”
- “Businesses may protest. It depends on how the city packages it.”
- “Tobacco industry lobbying against it.”
- “Blow back from the tobacco industry.”
- “Some adults might like the flavors, and they might feel like they're losing that right. Market data right now on purchasing is supposedly for adults, so taking that away might be an issue.”
- “Affects the adults who have the choice to buy what they want.”
- “Hookah. People claim that it’s for cultural reasons. What would we do about it?”
- “Older adults that use flavors would not be okay with it. Youth would find a way to find the products.”
- “Kids are going to get in their car and go to the next city over that sells the product.”
- “...they would go to other cities to get it.”
- “Enforcement.” (Two stakeholders)

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO POLICY ADOPTION

The biggest barrier to policy adoption was overcoming resistance from tobacco merchants and a well-funded tobacco industry lobby, whose concern over lost profits was raised by 9 (45%) of 20 stakeholders. Two (10%) stakeholders – a Public Safety Services Director and a Code Enforcement Officer – believed tobacco retailers and consumers would need education that a menthol and flavors ban would not apply to unflavored tobacco product sales. These two also noted the challenge of tobacco consumers who would start buying flavored tobacco online to work around any flavored tobacco sales bans.

Four (20%) stakeholders worried about obtaining City Council support, and 3 (15%) worried about enforcement. Three stakeholders (15%) thought the law would not receive public support due to

Eastern counties as early as the 16th Century. From <https://www.fumari.com/blog/hookah-history/> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hookah> accessed 7/31/21.

philosophical beliefs related to freedom of choice for consumers and unregulated free markets for merchants: beliefs that adults have basic rights to buy unhealthy products for themselves, and merchants have basic rights to profit from selling products regardless of the harm they cause to individuals, families, and communities. Two people (10%) were concerned that public misconceptions about flavored tobacco products would be difficult to overcome, while one (5%) anticipated opposition from adult flavored tobacco consumers without connecting it to philosophical beliefs. One focused on the need to educate the community on the reasons why a flavors ban was recommended policy. Another saw no barriers if there were people in community leadership positions championing the cause. Comments included:

- “The greatest barrier is convincing the council members. We need at least three “yes” votes to pass the ordinance.”
- “Everything comes down to City Council. People, such as tobacco retailers or customers, may think the ordinance is not to sell any tobacco products. Online selling may become an issue since it is not heavily regulated.”
- “Governance - enforcement and getting city council to facilitate, not sure what the School District's role would be.”
- “Making sure that they follow the regulation on what we are asking them to do.” (From a Code Enforcement representative.)
- "Freedom of Choice" - people who don't like to have their choices limited.”
- The "Don't Tread on Me” flag is more prevalent now, so even though this doesn't relate to that, people are very divided nowadays.”
- “Some folks that have very conservative views about the role of business - that business should be allowed to carry out their business unimpeded. However, demographics are changing in the city.”
- “People may not be open to hearing data - they may feel like they know it all. Don't want to take the time to self-educate.”
- “No barriers, as long as there are people at the top championing it, e.g., Mayor Pro Tem Park.”
- “Tobacco companies would be mad; it is a product that people use. And getting our community and city council aboard.”
- “Education is key: why are we doing this? Getting people to understand that you did not just pull it out of thin air; there are reasons behind why a ban of flavored tobacco was chosen.”
- “I think community education [is key] to getting it passed and moving forward with this. Getting the word out there.”

INCREASING POPULAR AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

Raising awareness of the need and support for a menthol and flavors ban within the community was seen by 15 stakeholders (75%) as the best way to increase popular and political support, relying on personal stories and testimonies of people addicted to tobacco

product to educate the community on the harm of these dangerous and addictive products.

Eight (40%) thought educating the community and families on how flavored tobacco products particularly harm youth would increase support. Four (20%) specified that community education should include personal stories and testimonies of nicotine addicts who developed diseases from their addiction. Involving youth in education efforts and educating families through schools were separate strategies recommended by two (10%) stakeholders. One person thought discussing the history of systemic racism practiced by the tobacco industry would be a strategy to motivate community support for a Menthol and Flavors Ban, and another person thought focusing on the financial cost of addiction to tobacco consumers and the healthcare system would help gain popular support. Incorporating the Ban into a comprehensive healthy city plan along with other health and wellness components was advocated. Another person pointed out that Smoke Shops could be encouraged to sell specific, alternative products that would maintain their profit margins without causing community harm. Youth access tobacco possession, use, and purchase laws (PUP laws) were strongly rejected by one school district representative: instead of imposing fines and penalties (including school suspensions) on youth who have responded to targeted marketing of addictive products by becoming addicted to them, she thought it was more important to engage youth where they are at, understand what is driving their dangerous behavior, and hold tobacco merchants accountable for illegally selling to youth.³ Comments included:

- “Signed endorsements and surveys are great ways to show support for this ordinance. Inviting our work group members and letting their voices be heard is the best way to show how supportive residents are of this ordinance.”
- “Communicating it. Heavily advocating around it within our community to ensure that everyone can hear what we're trying to accomplish. But don't push it on anyone that would get a negative connotation.”
- “Harm has come to the young people. There are young people who could give testimony to the harm and addictiveness.”
- “Testimony from people who are addicted to tobacco products, and they end up getting sick.”
- “It's important to note that kids who tend to do these types of behaviors are technically breaking the law, but we have to look at why they are engaging in dangerous behavior. Need to keep listening to our youth and being connected to them. Be student focused. Strongly supports No PUP. Need to hold the businesses accountable for illegally selling to youth. Do NOT fine the youth or the parents.”
- “Display the flavored tobacco products that the youth are taking to school, such as vapes.”

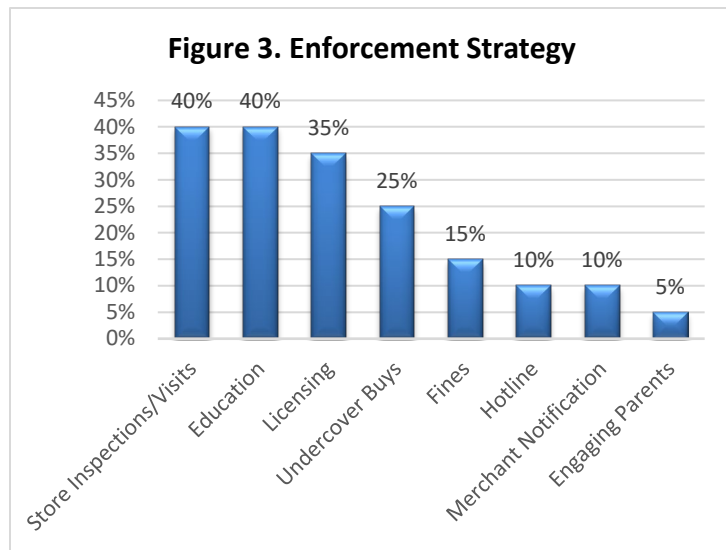
³ Youth tobacco possession and use penalties are increasingly seen by youth tobacco control advocates as ineffective and inequitable. Find out more at <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/pup-smoke>. Accessed 4/12/21.

- “If we want to be a healthy city - add it to their other health and wellness components as part of a comprehensive healthy city plan.”
- “The way these products target communities of color. How systemic racism is clear in tobacco issues. Communities of color have higher cases of cancer, etc. The cost of how it impacts a community. Increased health care costs, increased money to nonprofits to battle the public health issue. How it impacts the community financially. Social justice balanced with financial impact. Also, come up with ideas for smoke shops to sell other items.”
- “State PTA bases decisions on resolutions. If the State supports an issue, then locals can support it. State PTA has already supported SB793, so locals can support it! Parents in the PTA community can support now. Study, polls, etc. have already been done at the State level. ... Getting PTAs involved would be great. Keeping kids healthy is a benefit to them. A good public education campaign would help. Most news is online. Nextdoor groups - do ads there. Realtors pay to do ads. So AOT could look into that.”
- “Involve the youth. Education campaign targeting families. PTAs, PTSOs, people who have an influence. At elementary level, good curriculum is important for adults around the young people. Elementary students listen to what their parents and teachers say. As they get older, they're more influenced by their peers, so include student athletes, the cheerleaders, the TikTokers, etc... Get them to speak out against vaping.”
- “Continue to work with the FIT committee members to get POPs and educational campaigns into the community while she works behind the scenes.”
- “Research, data, statistics, impact on juveniles, long-term effects like nutritional statistics for other projects - high obesity rates.”
- “Commercials on vaping, it helps.”
- “Education and talking with people – especially to all the families – and letting them know, engaging in conversation with residents from Stanton.”
- “I think we can do community outreach and have community talks at the FRC. Something to educate our residents.”

ENFORCEMENT METHODS AND FEASIBILITY

The enforcement strategies mentioned most were store visits/inspections (8, 40%), education (8, 40%) and tobacco sales licensing (7, 35%). Undercover buys (5, 25%), fines (3, 15%), a violation reporting hotline (2, 10%), notification of merchants about the law (2, 10%), and engaging parents in policy education efforts (1, 5%) were also recommended by stakeholders. See Figure 3. Comments included:

- “We just need to keep the focus on updating the definition of tobacco retailers.” (From the Public Safety Services Director.)
- “The best way to enforce such city ordinance is to conduct annual store check-ups, fees for tobacco retail license, and have a clear definition of what is a flavored tobacco product.”



- “We have code enforcement but education and visits to the stores. The best way to enforce such city ordinance is display the flavored products that youth in Stanton are using and bring to school. This will help with enforcing the ordinance because although the CA Flavor Ban is already passed, the youth are still getting a hold of them.”

- “Licensing, inspections.”

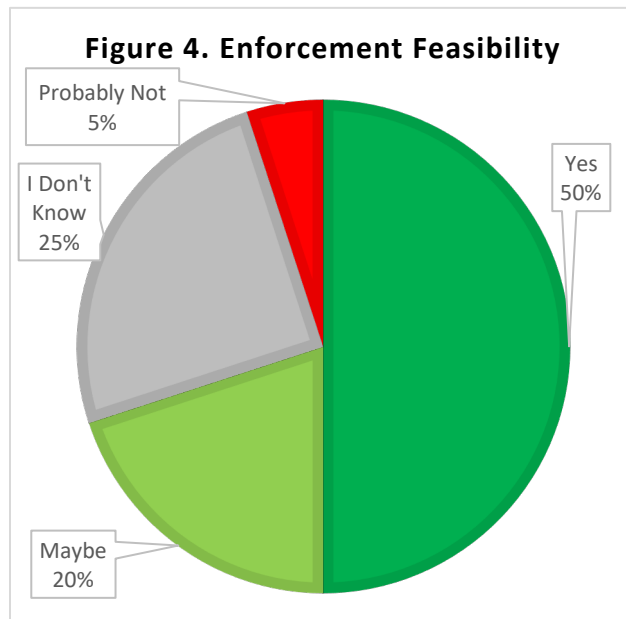
- “Licensing. Spot checks on licensing. Hotline to help with enforcement. Kids/parents could call in.”

- “Undercover buys.”

- “Piggy-back on existing State level methods of enforcing. She is not in favor of the youth getting in trouble if they try to buy cigarettes. Stores should be held accountable. Spot checks of stores to make sure they're not selling flavored tobacco would be an important component.”
- “Same mechanism as alcohol sales. Community hotline (code enforcement #) for people to report where youth/students are obtaining vaping devices. Schools/teachers need somewhere to report - they won't call drug store or food truck to deal with the issue. Need a source at the city to report it to. Tough for police to deal with since they're stretched thin, but Code Enforcement could handle it.”
- “Sending out literature. Have the City do infomercials/commercials. A lot of people are using app-based media now. It tracks based on City.”
- “Couple of things. Local presence. The Buena Park Police Department is great - they're around! Communication - talking to members of the community - our children and their families. As you influence one family - then it influences another family. Community connectedness between law enforcement, children, and families.”
- “I think having some business inspections. Code enforcements.”
- “I think with explanation, warnings, and then consequences of not following the rules.”
- “Parent involvement and asking for them to help.”

When asked whether or not enforcement is feasible in terms of city staffing and/or budgets, 14 (70%) thought it would or may be feasible. Half (50%) thought enforcement of a menthol and flavors ban would be feasible; 4 (20%) thought it might be, 5 (25%) did not know, and 1 (5%) said “probably not.” See Figure 4.

Stakeholders had several ideas about who should be involved in enforcing the ban, and how to do it strategically. One person thought city police could be involved, another pointed out the need to have officers who know how to engage people about it, while another thought city code enforcers



would be more appropriate since enforcement would be built into licensing laws. A Public Safety Services Director and a Code Enforcement Officer confirmed compliance checks would be easy: staff are available, they are already checking stores, and they have checked all locations that AOT has checked from its comprehensive list of tobacco retailers in Stanton. Other stakeholders thought police cadets and community volunteers could assist with spot checks (undercover buys). Comments included:

- “Yes, the ordinance needs to be edited and be written clearly. Law enforcement can check stores ones or twice a year, which will not be as expensive and may not need too many staff to do so.”
- “We have staff to help like our code enforcement. Compliance Checks will be easy.”
- “If everyone is on board, then yes! Depends on the willingness of those enforcing the law.”
- “Yes. Buena Park is not too big, so one person dedicated to it. It goes to what you value. If the City truly values this, then City would have to invest time/resources into it. Won't see benefits immediately, but great long-term gains.”
- “Yes. If it's built into the licensing process, then [enforcement] would be in the budget. The hotline could look into volunteers to working the line” such as community leaders, women who advocate for children’s causes, faith-based organizations, etc.”
- “Yes. If code enforcement is out already conducting store visits, then they can also conduct store visits. From education to code enforcement, does the city know how to go about it, have officers talking to people?”
- “Maybe. That's tricky. They already do it somewhat with alcohol, but that's limited. But there's a lot of tobacco sellers.”
- “Maybe. That is hard, and maybe we charge [more] for a retailers’ [license]. Code enforcement does not have enough people to do the job. Can the city of Buena Park put another tax on the cigarettes?”
- “Probably not. Would have to be a small percentage of the budget. Get law enforcement to target retailers, NOT kids. City (law enforcement) probably will feel that they don't have enough resources - so many other important issues to focus on. But, what about the effects of tobacco on people's mental health, physical health that contributes to other social issues?”

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Data Finding: Stakeholders unanimously (100%) supported a menthol and flavors ban strategy that would reduce tobacco use initiation and maintenance among youth, including 84% who supported one “very strongly.” Estimates of community support for the strategy (79% thought others would support it, but only 26% thought they would support it “very strongly”) may have been tempered by anticipated opposition from tobacco consumers and tobacco merchants, and the ban’s inability to block access to flavored tobacco from neighboring communities or online.

- *Recommendation:* In public education and outreach campaigns, ensure tobacco consumers and merchants who sell tobacco products understand that a menthol and flavored tobacco sales ban does not apply to sales of unflavored tobacco products. Also ensure that tobacco consumers understand that tobacco sales bans do not criminalize the possession, use, or purchase of tobacco products.
- *Recommendation:* It is a legitimate community concern that banning the sales of a popular and lucrative product will initially harm profits of merchants who sell flavored tobacco products, because healthy businesses support healthy communities by offering employment opportunities and contributing to city taxes which support city services like safety, education, health care systems, and social welfare programs. Advocates for a menthol and flavors ban can work with merchants who lose a significant amount of their profits by the ban to replace lost revenues by helping them identify healthful products they can sell that are not sold by local retailers, or not sold when consumers prefer to shop, such as fresh vegetables and fruit, meat and dairy, and other foods and beverages that are not highly processed and support healthful diets. The stores can also be encouraged to participate in State and Federal food benefit programs that would expand access to healthy options for less advantaged community members and allow more people to do business in their stores.
 - Merchants can apply to become an authorized vendor for the WIC Program that provides money to purchase nutritious foods for women, infants, and children at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/Grocers/NewVendors.aspx>.
 - Merchants can also learn the minimal foods they need to stock to receive payments from SNAP/CalFresh card holders by calling the SNAP Retailer Service Center at (877) 823-4369 or visiting <https://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/Businesses/retail.html>.
- *Recommendation:* To address the reality that a sales ban adopted within a single jurisdiction will have limited impact on access and consumption if purchasers can travel easily to a neighboring community to purchase legally, it is recommended when possible that bans be adopted across larger regions all at once. This approach to implementation would both increase the impact of the ban as well as address fairness issues for merchants who cannot sell flavored tobacco who are located a short distance away from stores that can simply because they are in another jurisdiction.
 - Unfortunately, online sales of tobacco products were not addressed by SB 793, and a study published in the BMJ Journal Tobacco Control in 2023 found that searches for online tobacco products increased during the weeks following implementation of SB 793. Online shopping queries increased 194% for cigarettes and 162% for e-cigarettes

and remained significantly elevated for cigarettes for 11 weeks and significantly elevated for e-cigarettes for 6 weeks. All search results contained links to websites that offered flavored e-cigarette products or menthol cigarettes to California consumers.” <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2023/11/01/tc-2023-058269> accessed 5/1/24. A study published in December 2023 in the JAMA Network journal documented that youth were often able to work around age identification checks to purchase flavored e-cigarettes online. A tester without adult identification succeeded during 61% of 23 attempts after SB 793 compared to 52% of 23 attempts before SB 793. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2813189> accessed 5/1/24.

- *Recommendation:* Contact California State legislative representatives about the problem to initiate new legislation that will address the issue at the State level, citing the above and additional research to document the problem – preferably in coalition with other tobacco and health advocacy groups.

Data Finding: The majority (70%) of stakeholders believed enforcement of a ban would be feasible (50%) or could be feasible (20%). Most of the rest (25%) didn’t know if it would work. The ones who thought it could or would work believed that a combination of store inspections/visits and licensing checks, merchant education, and undercover buys, and as well as fines, a hotline, merchant notification, and parent engagement would make enforcement obtainable and not outside Buena Park and City of Stanton budgets if viewed as a priority by city decisionmakers – perhaps as a wellness component of a comprehensive healthy city plan.

- *Recommendation:* Despite the concern expressed by some that Buena Park police or code enforcement departments may not have adequate funding or staff available, most stakeholders were optimistic about enforcement. The potential of raising money through added charges on tobacco products or sales licenses to support city enforcement staff hires, having community volunteers staff a hotline that identifies merchants violating the ban, and involving lower-paid police cadets and unpaid community volunteers in undercover buys were seen as potential solutions. City of Stanton representatives from the Code Enforcement division and Public Safety Services confirmed they had capacity and were already enforcing the statewide ban on flavored tobacco sales due to SB 793.
- *Recommendations:* Maintain updated and working definitions of which tobacco products are banned under the law, and the definition and identification process of tobacco merchants that need to be subject to ongoing inspections or other enforcement actions.

Data Finding: Three-quarters (75%) of stakeholders believed popular and political support for a menthol and flavors ban could be increased by raising community awareness of the need and public support for the ban: surveys, testimonials, and endorsements; the ties between tobacco use initiation in youth and flavored tobacco products; the harms of tobacco addiction; and the racist history of how the tobacco industry targeted communities of color in advertising which has resulted in disparities in flavored tobacco use and health.

- *Recommendation:* A community awareness raising campaign that incorporates youth leadership and voice, includes results from local survey research and testimonials from work group members, reaches families through existing school networks, ties into citywide wellness initiatives, and includes first-person accounts of becoming addicted to tobacco through flavored products and suffering a health crisis or long-term disease or disability.

- *Recommendation:* Social equity and justice can be incorporated into the message by addressing the racist history of the tobacco industry in marketing certain flavored products to certain markets – such as targeting African Americans in mentholated cigarette advertising – and the fact that tobacco industry profits impose a cost on the health care system that the community will need to cover in one way or another due to the fact that smoking increases rates of cancer, lung disease, heart disease, stroke, asthma, diabetes, and blindness. Diseases that are the leading causes of death among Hispanics.