

YOUTH AND FAMILY TOBACCO ROUNDTABLE



Concluding an extensive public involvement process to address youth vaping in Loveland, City staff organized two Youth and Family Tobacco Roundtables during the end of March 2021. At the request of City Council, these roundtables were held to obtain the perspective of Loveland residents who have or had a child, children or family member adversely impacted by tobacco use. This report summarizes the input received from the roundtable participants. Obtaining input from Loveland residents will allow City Council to consider their perspective during their deliberations at the April 20, 2021 City Council Meeting, where the second reading of the Ordinance A will take place.

All Thompson School District families were invited to participate in the roundtables and to complete a brief survey to understand adverse impacts of tobacco use. The roundtables and survey were advertised in the monthly school newsletter, which is sent to all registered parents in the district. Additionally, both opportunities were promoted through the City's social media channels and via an article in the Loveland Reporter Herald, and by the Larimer County Department of Public Health. Two roundtables sessions were scheduled for mid-March, on Monday, March 22 and the second on Wednesday, March 24. There were two participants at the Wednesday session, with no participants at the Monday roundtable; the notes from the Wednesday session are included in Appendix A. While participation in the roundtables was low compared to the tobacco retailers roundtable held in January, 65 surveys were returned; survey results are contained in Appendix B.

The roundtables were conducted remotely and took place from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. The two participants identified themselves as Loveland residents who had had direct experience with family members who had been adversely impacted by tobacco use.

After receiving information about the Youth Vaping Committee process and City Council's consideration of various options to reduce youth vaping in Loveland, including "option A" that constitutes a ban on the sale of all flavored tobacco products, residents participated in a facilitated discussion that invited them to respond to three questions:

1. Given the desire of Council to hear from Loveland residents who had or have a child, or a family member that has been adversely impacted by tobacco use, what would Option A mean for you in terms of access to tobacco products by youth?
2. How do Loveland youth currently access these products? How has this access impacted your family?
3. What solutions do you recommend to address youth access and usage of tobacco/vaping products in Loveland?

Participants in the conversations were presented with a short list of “Ground Rules” to help keep the conversations productive, focused and respectful:

HERE TO HAVE A “KITCHEN TABLE” CONVERSATION

Everyone can participate; no one dominates.

THERE ARE NO “RIGHT ANSWERS”

Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Listen carefully and try to hear and understand the views of others, especially those you may disagree with.

HELP KEEP THE CONVERSATION ON TRACK

Stick to the questions. Try not to ramble.

IT’S OKAY TO DISAGREE, BUT DON’T BE DISAGREEABLE

Respond to others how you want them to respond to you.

A copy of this final report will be shared with the participants who provided an email address. Participants were also given email contact for City staff if they had other thoughts to share with Council.

ROUDTABLE THEMES

The two participants conveyed their support for making it more difficult for youth to obtain vaping products in Loveland while not wholly supporting any of the options currently under consideration by City Council.

Mixed Feelings on Option A/Flavored Tobacco Ban

Participants felt that while the overall ban would create a new hurdle that would make it more difficult to obtain vaping products, there was still access in neighboring communities. The participants generally focused more on ways to restrict access to vaping products, especially flavored vapes than on an overall restriction of all flavored tobacco products. One participant recognized that adults who use vape products compared to traditional smoke products, may do so to avoid negative associations with smoking and can vape more discreetly. Participants also discussed how easy it is for a teen to hide the fact that they are vaping as there is no lingering smell of smoke and it takes much less time to use a vape pen compared to the lighting and burning of a cigarette.

Discussion of Other Options

After reflecting on the potential effects of a full ban on flavored tobacco products in Loveland, the participants discussed how the other options presented to Council may impact both tobacco users and tobacco retailers. The option of having nicotine products for sale in facilities that are age restricted only, similar to a liquor store, or restricting access to certain parts of the store were

discussed. The participants acknowledged that restrictions on all tobacco products would be harder on businesses than just banning flavored vaping products. While none of the options specifically focused on flavored vaping products, they agreed that an option that at least addressed flavored vaping products would be preferable to taking no action at all.

Youth Access

Based on their personal and anecdotal evidence, the participants believe that most youth who vape obtain the products from a friend or family member who is of legal age and purchases the items for underage youth. They understand that this is likely a common practice for youth to obtain other age restricted products like alcohol. With the increase in the legal age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21, they feel that some of the ease of obtaining these products from an older classmate has diminished. Both participants believed tobacco products should not be out on open shelves, but should require a staff person to provide age-restricted items unless the entire store was age-restricted.

Recommended Solutions

The participants discussed the balance between protecting youth from harmful and addictive products and allowing adults to engage in legal activities. The potential long-term harmful effects of nicotine addiction coupled with the ease of using vaping products without adult consent and knowledge was very concerning to the participants. They discussed how taking action targeting youth access to flavored vaping products was preferable to taking no action or limited action that did not specifically address flavored vaping access.

APPENDIX A

Notes from March 24 Roundtable

Discussion Questions:

1. Given the desire of Council to hear from Loveland residents who had or have a child, or a family member that has been adversely impacted by tobacco use, what would Option A mean for you in terms of access to tobacco products by youth?

We should make it more difficult for youth to access and the more hurdles put between vape products and youth, the less likely they are to access.

Might not make it more difficult to access since neighboring communities offer flavored tobacco still. Vape product is often used to help lessen the stigma around tobacco use and would not be in favor of it being eliminated.

Regarding the other proposals before Council:

Believes nicotine products should be located in facilities with 21+ only access. The entire store should probably not be age restricted, but that part of the store should be. Curious if anyone on the Council has been addicted to nicotine and what their experience has been.

An age restriction on all stores selling tobacco products would be harder on business than banning flavored tobacco products only. There appears to be no option in front of Council at this

time that bans flavored vapes. The time commitment between vaping and cigarettes is very different; the vape product can be concealed and turned on/off without smell fairly easily. Cigarettes are harder to hide and vape products can be hit up to 250x per day, which can still be readily hidden due to the smell.

Seeking an option that addresses the sweet flavored vapes and just banning those, at least.

2. How do Loveland youth currently access these products? How has this access impacted your family?

Youth often have someone older buy them on their behalf. Unclear if that purchase was happening at a Loveland business, but someone of age would acquire for her.

Believe that youth gain access from older adults to vape products the same way they access alcohol, either friends or family. Online access appears to be less of an issue. The increase to age 21+ for tobacco products will help with access, so older high school students cannot purchase for others.

Tobacco retailers should not have the products on open shelves, not necessarily in a vending machine, but both participants agreed this would help limit underage access.

3. What solutions do you recommend to address youth access and usage of tobacco/vaping products in Loveland?

Participant would be comfortable with making all the tobacco stores 21+ only, but understand this change would be very impactful for businesses. Supports banning flavored vape products more so than banning flavored tobacco products.

Adults engage in a lot of activities that youth should not engage with (alcohol, tobacco, etc.), and is not comfortable with limiting them outright. Wishes the schools would work more on a therapeutic response instead of a punitive response. Youth can get addicted fairly quickly and therapeutic options might help curtail use early on.

Marketing vaping as a smoking cessation option is misleading and that it is not an effective tool for cessation. Vaping helps people conceal that they are addicted to nicotine, which has stigma in our society (from smell, needing to take a break outside, etc.).

When a kid's brain is developing, the addiction components are very damaging at the early stages of life. Most vape users don't think they are becoming lifelong users when they first begin vaping or smoking, but it is still a drug.

Suggesting a 21+ limit; and or a ban of flavored vapes.