

**Leadership Challenge:** which of these will your town adopt first to reduce tobacco and vape use?

Action Step	Outcome
Adopt policies or ordinances that prohibit tobacco/vape use in community spaces and parks.	Encourages healthy community engagement and reduces overall use.
Town/public events should include health and wellness sectors. Event organizers are encouraged to promote smoke and vape-free areas.	Reduces subliminal messaging to youth and helps support a family-friendly atmosphere.
Collaborate with local substance-use prevention organizations to support education efforts aimed at the prevention and reduction of tobacco use.	Educates the public and connects community members to cessation resources.
Consider updates to zoning bylaws and permitting applications to require 1,000 feet distance between tobacco/vape retail outlets and community facilities such as schools, child care centers, and parks.	Reduces youth exposure to tobacco and vape product advertising messages.
Reduce the density of tobacco retailers by restricting how close to each other tobacco retailers can be located and setting caps on the number of new licenses issued.	Improves health equity and decreases use initiation, availability, and accessibility.
Ensure signage ordinance adheres to content-neutral language best practices. Signage may be restricted based on size, location, type (color, design), number.	Protects the first amendment while allowing for an open dialogue about reducing tobacco promotional messages to young people and supporting those in cessation.



Sources: <https://ahs-vt.maps.arcgis.com> "Visualizing the Vermont Tobacco Retail Environment"; 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey; [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) "Quick Facts On the Risks of E-cigarettes"; [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) "Smoke-Free Policies Reduce Smoking"

# Substance Spotlight: Tobacco

## What is Tobacco Prevention from a Town Perspective?

Towns can play a significant role in preventing and decreasing tobacco and vape use for a healthier community. This is addressed through municipal plans and regulations. Strategies might include language in the town plan supporting health and wellness initiatives; smoke-free parks and community spaces; and ordinance language limiting the number and location of tobacco and vape retailers.

### Did you know?

*Each year, over 1,000 Vermonters die of tobacco-related illnesses and tobacco use costs the state more than **348 million dollars** in medical expenses.*



### The Benefits of Smoke-Free Spaces

In 2014, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that smoke-free policies in workplaces and communities help smokers quit and reduces overall use. Designating public spaces smoke-free denormalizes use and lessens the likelihood youth and young adults will start smoking due to fewer opportunities to view smokers and smoke with others. The Church Street Marketplace in Burlington went smoke-free in 2014 and in addition to the benefit of a overall healthier atmosphere, the city has seen a significant decrease in maintenance costs associated with cigarette litter.

*Photo: Smoke-free signage in front of an elementary school in Bennington*

### Vape use among Bennington County high school students increased from 18% in 2017 to 32% in 2019.

As with other drugs, nicotine is highly addictive and negatively impacts the developing brain- specifically areas that control memory, mood, and impulse control. Many young people are unaware there is nicotine in e-cigarettes and are attracted to their sleek design and appealing flavors. Towns can partner with local Substance-Use Prevention organizations to support education efforts aimed at the prevention and reduction of youth vape use.

