



Agenda Item

Orange City Council

Item #: 9.1.

7/28/2026

File #: 26-0296

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Jarad Hildenbrand, City Manager

FROM: Leslie Hardy, Community and Library Services Director

1. SUBJECT

Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance No. 13-26 amending Chapter 12.48 of the Orange Municipal Code pertaining to a prohibition of smoking in City parks

2. SUMMARY

Proposed Ordinance No. 13-26 amends Chapter 12.48 of the Orange Municipal Code to prohibit smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco products in all City-operated parks. The amendment is intended to promote public health, improve the recreational experience for park users, reduce tobacco-related litter and wildfire risk, and establish a clear, consistent, and enforceable standard throughout the City's park system. The proposed ordinance also aligns Orange with an increasing number of Orange County cities that have adopted similar smoke-free park regulations.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Introduce and conduct First Reading of Ordinance No. 13-26. An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Orange amending Chapter 12.48 of the Orange Municipal Code pertaining to parks to update sections related to smoking and vaping.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

None

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3: Enhance and Promote Quality of Life in the Community.

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

At its February 10, 2026 meeting, the City Council directed staff to present the issue of smoking in City parks to the Park Planning and Community Events Commission for review and recommendation prior to returning to the Council with a proposed ordinance.

Orange Municipal Code Section 12.48.165(B), consistent with California law, currently prohibits smoking and vaping within 25 feet of playgrounds, recreational facilities, and youth sports activities. Beyond these state-mandated restrictions, the City does not currently prohibit smoking in the remainder of its parks.

The proposed ordinance expands these protections by establishing a consistent prohibition throughout all City-operated parks, regardless of the specific location or activity.

At the March 17, 2026 Commission meeting, the following options were presented:

1. Maintain Current Regulations (Status Quo)

Under this option, the City would continue to adhere to State law requirements without adopting additional local restrictions.

2. Designated Smoking Areas or Distance Requirements

Establish designated smoking areas within parks, increasing buffer distances from playgrounds, sports fields, picnic shelters, and other high-use areas or prohibit smoking in smaller parks.

3. Prohibit Smoking in All City Parks

Prohibit smoking, vaping, and use of tobacco products in all City operated parks, including open space, sports fields, and playgrounds.

Following discussion, the Commission voted 4-1 to recommend that the City Council prohibit smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco products in all City-operated parks.

The proposed ordinance is also consistent with a growing number of Orange County jurisdictions that have adopted smoke-free park policies. According to the Orange County Tobacco Control Coalition's municipal tobacco control scorecard, many neighboring cities, including Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Irvine, Laguna Beach, Santa Ana, Tustin, and others have adopted local ordinances restricting smoking in public parks and recreational areas. Adoption of Ordinance No. 13-26 would bring the City of Orange into closer alignment with these regional public health standards.

A uniform prohibition is also easier for park visitors to understand and for City staff to administer than regulations based on designated smoking areas or varying distance requirements. Establishing one consistent standard throughout all City-operated parks reduces ambiguity and improves voluntary compliance.

Ordinance No. 13-26 implements that recommendation by establishing a uniform prohibition applicable throughout the City's park system. The ordinance is intended to improve the health and safety of park visitors, reduce cigarette and vaping-related litter, minimize fire hazards, and enhance the overall recreational environment for residents and visitors.

If approved for First Reading, the ordinance will return to the City Council for Second Reading and adoption at a subsequent meeting and, if adopted, will become effective 30 days thereafter.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Ordinance No. 13-26
- Ordinance No. 13-26 - Redline