



CREATING A THRIVING, TOBACCO-FREE DOWNTOWN

Giving young people a healthy start includes providing them with clean and healthy environments to enjoy, but smoking throughout Lewiston's walkable downtown put that at risk. Research shows that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure and that cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world, so when local businesses raised concerns, it was time to take action with a new ordinance.

“Smoking in our downtown business district is a very real barrier to new investment and business development.” - **Downtown Business Owner**

Supporting Downtown Businesses With a Tobacco-Free Ordinance

Lewiston City Councilor, Alicia Rea, responded to these concerns by contacting Healthy Androscoggin (HA) in September 2019 for assistance in developing an ordinance that would support a smoke-free downtown. HA, with funding from Maine Prevention Services, provided the city with recommended language, research, and information on available resources. Lewiston used this information to develop a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance that prohibits all tobacco use and vaping on an almost 3/4 mile stretch of Lisbon Street.

“I'm excited that we could be responsive to businesses and also work to better our community's health in the same motion.”
- **Alicia Rea, Lewiston City Councilor**

What Does This Mean for Downtown Lewiston?

Over 50 businesses and building owners in the affected area formally supported the ordinance, which the Lewiston City Council passed with a 7-0 vote. The ordinance went into effect on 12/19/19 and was the result of significant collaboration between businesses, HA, and the City of Lewiston. Some people were concerned about enforcement, but these issues will be addressed by the city posting signs from Maine Prevention Services, community-level enforcement, and police response to complaints. Beyond enforcement, the council intends to add signs with quit information to ensure that downtown visitors are supported with cessation resources. Because this new mandate is enforceable, it will deter people from using tobacco products on Lisbon Street—decreasing secondhand smoke exposure and littered cigarette butts to create a more business-friendly, walkable downtown for all.

For more information contact us at
info@healthyandroscoggin.org

References: 1. Office on Smoking and Health (US). (2006). *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US).
2. Truth Initiative. (2018). *Tobacco and the Environment*. Washington, DC.

