



No Ifs, Ands, or Butts (Except in Designated Areas):
A Public Health Experience
Influencing Public Policy around
Cannabis Consumption

Disclosure Statement

- I have no affiliation (financial or otherwise) with a cannabis producer, processor, distributor or communications organization.



Overview:

- New health governance structure; new processes; new people/roles.
- Influencing health public policy around cannabis consumption in a culture of high substance use.
- What we learned throughout the process.

Nova Scotia Health Authority Management Zones





Nova Scotia Cannabis Regulations



- Age 19 to use, buy, grow or possess
- Restricted for consumption anywhere tobacco is (e.g. all indoor public places, beaches, close to playground equipment, public trails, sports areas and restaurant patios, within 4 metres of building entrances).
- Purchase from NSLC
 - co-located with alcohol (only authorized retailer).



Pre-legalization – Cannabis Consumption

- On the “high” side.
- Halifax City highest rate of cannabis consumption (Wastewater Study).
 - 1310 micrograms of cannabis per person/per week (Mar-Aug 2018).
- Nova Scotia highest per capita usage of cannabis (National Cannabis Survey).
 - 23% aged 15+ had consumed in past 3 months (Aug-Sept 2018).
 - Higher than national average (15%).

Important Decisions in a Cannabis Culture



Halifax - Cannabis Consumption Bylaw

Respecting Nuisances (N-300) Bylaw

Proposed amendments from staff report

Prohibiting cannabis AND smoking/vaping on all municipal land; Only exception is designated smoking areas (DSA) - **MOTION PASSED.**

*DSA - a butt receptacle placed in an area approved by the CAO indicated though signage as a common smoking area.

“Are we passing a bylaw that we have no intent on enforcing?”

“Parks, playgrounds, trails, pools, whatever, but sidewalks and streets? I think we’re just opening a can of worms here, folks.”



Eco Yogini @Eco_Yogini · 19 Jul 2018

So people are in arms about the new **HRM bylaw** re: **smoking** in public. I feel like it isn't unreasonable to expect ppl to not smoke weed in public. It's not like we can walk down the street with an open can of beer. This isn't about weed. It's about tobacco users.



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Trevor J. Adams ✓ @HalifaxEditor · 27 Jul 2018

But the **smoking** bylaws will be enforced without racial bias, because **bylaw**-enforcement people are magically immune to the racism that keeps popping up in **HRM**.

NEWS 95.7 Halifax ✓ @NEWS957

Coming to Council: How racism is being addressed in municipal works and land-use by-laws for legal pot halifaxtoday.ca/local-news/com... via @HalifaxToday



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 Global Halifax Retweeted



Alexander Quon  @AlexanderQuon · 30 Jul 2018 

Councillor **Sam Austin** wants to revisit the recently amended nuisance **bylaw**. Says after consideration it doesn't make much sense and that the new rules shouldn't apply to **smoking** tobacco

Sam Austin @SamAustinD5

Coming up tomorrow at Council, I will ask to revisit the Nuisance Bylaw changes around tobacco. The more I have learned about HRM's approach to designated smoking areas the more I'm convinced our bylaw simply isn't practical and needs a second look. samaustin.ca/cannabis-nuisa...



Halifax Regional Municipal Council Meeting September 11, 2018

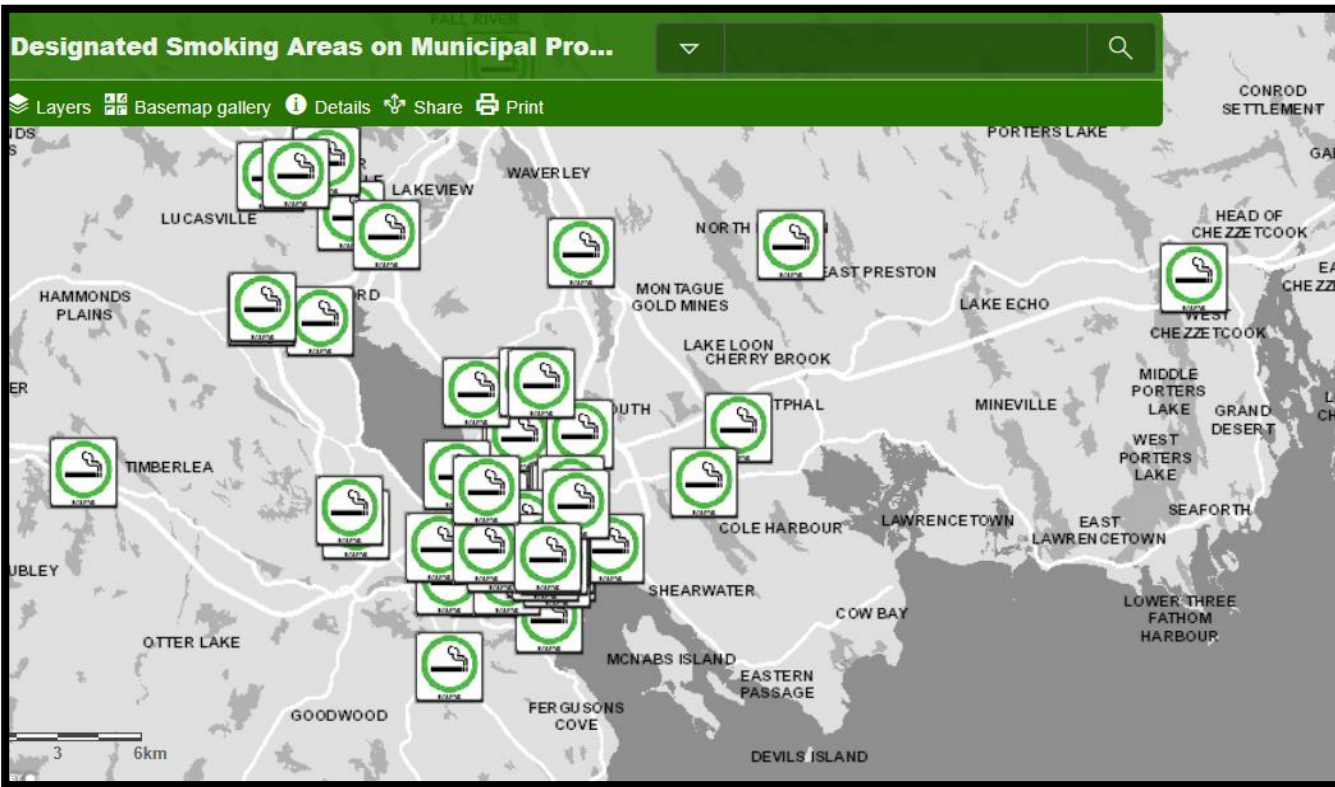
- Councilor Austin proposed amending bylaw to remove tobacco smoking restrictions, keep cannabis prohibited and provide exemption for individuals with medical authorization for cannabis - **MOTION DEFEATED.**

“This is the dog poo in the park situation”

“This is our path to healthy, livable cities, and it starts with the smoking ban”

Public Health's Efforts to Influence HRM Bylaw

- Established a working group and action plan including: communication, monitoring social/political climate.
- Attended Council meetings.
- Connected with staff and Council (individually).
- Submitted letters of support.
- Submitted a health evidence report at municipal staff's request.
- Attempted to mobilize community partners.
- Attempted to conduct rapid HIA.





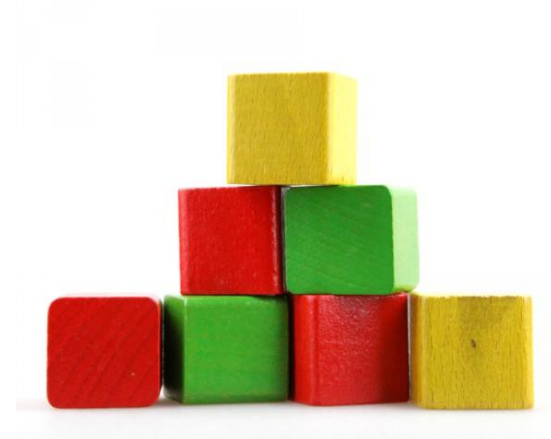
Did we Influence the Bylaw?

Municipal Staff	Public Health Staff	Council
PERSPECTIVE:		
<p>Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easier to enforce bylaw by including tobacco. 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect from second-hand smoke. • De-normalize tobacco smoking in youth. • Prevent normalization of cannabis smoking in youth. 	<p>Mixed: enforcement and health.</p>
GOALS:		
<p>Tobacco prohibited along with cannabis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Smoking Areas available for people to smoke cannabis/tobacco. 	<p>Enhanced smoke-free spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not feel that DSAs were best practice. 	<p>Healthy, livable cities.</p>

What We Learned

1. Building a relationship with the Municipal key players.

- Engage early and often with municipal players to build knowledge/capacity and mutual understanding.
- Involve whole team in relationship building process and clarify roles of team and broader departments/partners.
- Have an organizational position statement for consistent messaging.



What We Learned

2. Having a good understanding of potential policy windows.

- Build internal readiness and capacity around public policy influencing.
- Have policy tools and key messages available for short policy windows.



What We Learned

3. The importance of considering health equity impacts.

- Have health equity assets included in the process from the beginning.
- Strong relationships with community coalitions that can be quickly mobilized for a short policy window.



Questions?

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