

**Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC)  
Campaign Key Informant Interview and Public Opinion  
Survey Statewide Summary Results  
Regarding Local Legislation of Density and Zoning**

By

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## Introduction

In Spring 2014 Local Lead Agencies (LLAs) funded by the California Tobacco Control Program conducted public opinion polls and key informant interviews with policy makers and retailers to better understand public sentiment on their Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community retail objective. This data was collected by 61 LLAs on one or more of 10 retail indicators for the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Communities Campaign.

HSHC Campaign Indicator	Number of LLA's funded to obtain objectives in the 2014-17 funding cycle
1. Tobacco Retail Licensing (3.2.1)	21
2. Content Neutral Advertising on Storefronts (1.1.18)	13
3. Menthol and Other Flavored Products (3.2.9)	9
4. Tobacco Retailer Density/Zoning (3.2.2)	8
5. Tobacco Free Pharmacies and Health Care Providers (3.2.7)	4
6. Minimum package/Volume size (1.2.7)	3
7. Tobacco Product Definition Update (3.2.12)	3
8. Store Exterior Marketing (1.1.2)	2
9. Healthy Retailer Licensing (1.2.9)	2
10. Healthy Community/Retailer Incentives (1.2.8)	1

This report summarizes the results from Indicator # 3.2.2 on Density/Zoning.

## Methods

The Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) aggregated data from LLA's public opinion surveys (POS) on each of these 10 indicators (not all LLA's asked questions related to these indicators), and conducted a descriptive statistical analysis of the aggregated data using Stata, a statistical software package. Survey data was pulled from TCEC's master account with Survey Analytics, which stores all data collected by LLAs using the SurveyPocket mobile data collection app. Because LLAs did not ask the same set of questions on demographics or smoking status, TCEC was unable to complete any sub-group analyses (i.e., comparison of support for zoning policies among smokers and non-smokers).

The California Tobacco Control Program provided copies of the LLA progress reports, which included summaries of key informant interviews (KII's) conducted with policy makers and other local key informants. The summaries were loaded onto NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software package, and coded by the key indicators as well as related emerging themes. Many key informant interviews also included closed-ended questions on support or opposition to tobacco control legislation for retailers. We entered responses to the closed-ended questions into Excel in order to calculate descriptive statistics. Progress report summaries varied in length, detail, and presentation, and so TCEC was not able to discern with any accuracy the various roles of the KII respondents. We can only report that KII respondents included a variety of local policy makers and leaders, including city council members, county board of supervisors, leaders of religious and non-profit organizations, and tobacco retail owners and managers.

TCEC analyzed the results of the POS and KII's using a mixed methods approach, analyzing them jointly to answer the following research questions for each indicator:

1. What are the opinions of the public and key informants about legislation regarding this indicator?
2. Does public opinion coincide with the opinion of key informants, especially policy makers, on this indicator?
3. What factors, according to the public and/or policy makers, constitutes barriers and what would facilitate the adoption of policies related to this indicator?

## Results

The purpose of the density/zoning indicator is to measure the number of tobacco retailers in a community as well as concentrations of such retailers in particular neighborhoods (density). Zoning refers to the placement of retailers in areas with vulnerable populations, such as youth. The goal of the HSHC campaign is to limit the number of tobacco stores in each neighborhood and to prohibit tobacco sales around schools.

Analysis for the POS and KII data revealed that opinions on suggested density and the zoning legislation differed greatly by a large number of respondents on POS and KII's. Zoning and density are therefore analyzed separately here.

The following table shows the number of counties that asked zoning and density questions and the number of respondents (Table 1):

**Table 1: Number of counties and number of respondents re: zoning and density**

Question topic	Number of counties with POS question	Number of counties with KII question	Number of POS respondents	Number of KII respondents
Zoning	26	38	6,805	230
Density	5	32	900	191

## Zoning

In the public opinion surveys, 26 counties asked a question about zoning: “Would you support a law to prevent stores near schools from selling tobacco products?” The question was posed to 6,805 respondents in 26 counties. Of these, 77.1 % answered “yes,” 15.12% answered “no,” and 7.8 % answered, “I don’t know.”

During key informant interviews about zoning near schools, 230 informants in 38 counties were asked the same question as in the public opinion survey. This resulted in 80.6% of the responses being positive, while 14.7% said “no” and 3.9% said, “Don’t know.” Key informants were thus also overwhelmingly in support of school zoning laws. In some counties, the school zoning laws were the only suggested retail law that generated consensus among interviewees, even if they were split on other suggested laws.

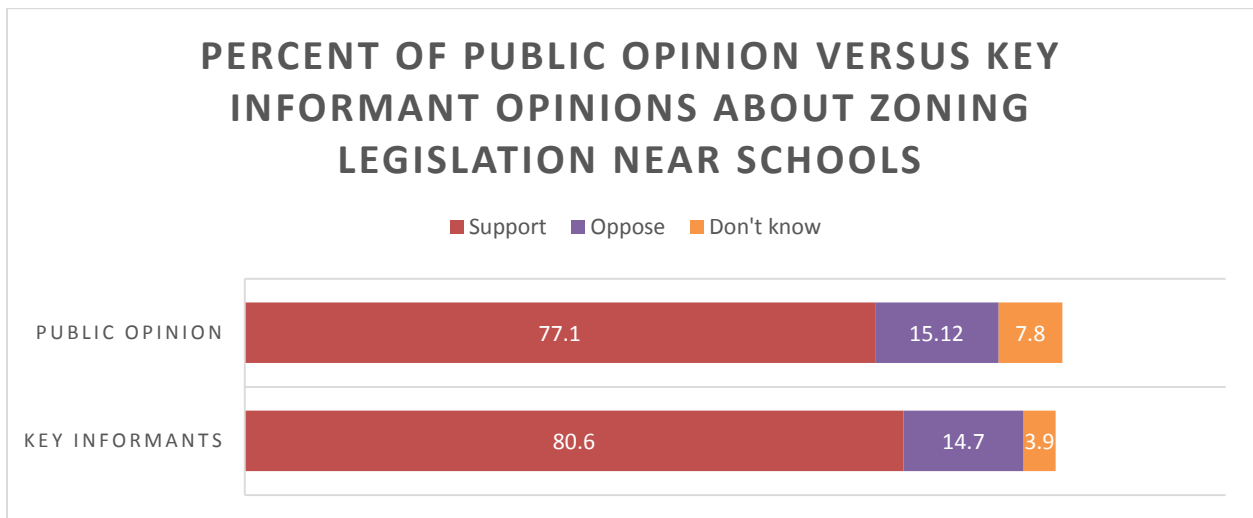
Key informants gave a number of reasons for their support of zoning laws. They mentioned students going to stores during their lunch break and being exposed to tobacco products during that time; some stressed that a zoning law would make it more difficult for youth to get tobacco products; and, others believed it would decrease the chances of exposure to tobacco products and tobacco advertising. Other reasons for supporting for the law that was mentioned was sending the wrong message to youth, and supporting the prevention efforts of educating kids early about adopting healthy lifestyles. Policy makers were concerned about the increase in youth e-cigarette use and the availability of unhealthy products that plays a role in the current health crisis. Some expressed a belief that availability, access, and proximity of unhealthy products can contribute to health issues.

Key informants raised concerns about those retailers already selling near schools. They recommended that if a law was created, existing tobacco retailers should be grandfathered in and thus only apply to new stores. Otherwise some stores’ viability would be in question. Several times key informants mentioned that what was needed instead was enforcement of existing laws since it is already prohibited to sell to minors. Conducting more stings is one example of improved enforcement. Some wanted to see more involvement of parents in developing good habits in their kids. Some strong feelings were expressed about government regulation in general by saying that adults make choices and don’t need to be told what to do. There was also concern that businesses that were consistently compliant with the

existing laws and did not sell to minors would be penalized unnecessarily. Several mentioned that new zoning laws would not prevent individuals from going to other tobacco retail establishments further away from schools.

When comparing the results of the yes/no question to legislation on the POS and in the KII's, the results show that key informants are more in favor of a school zoning law than the public in general, even though the majority of the public is also in favor of such law (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Percent of public opinion versus key informant opinions about zoning legislation near schools**

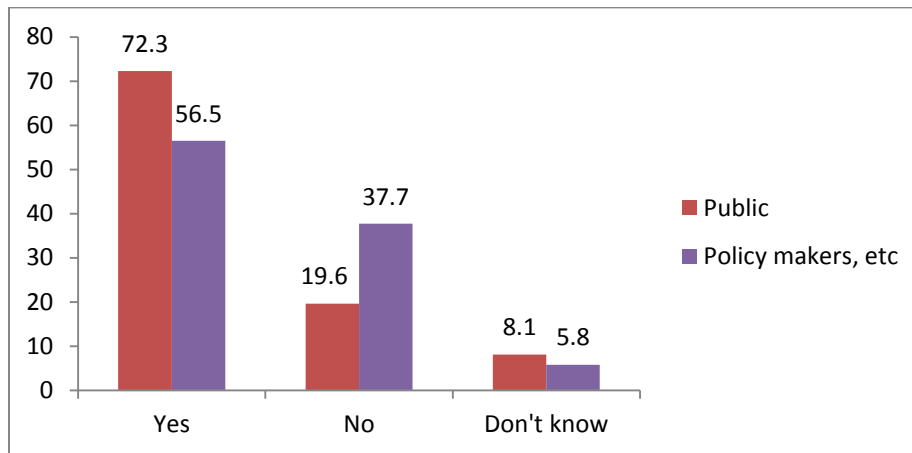


## Density

When asked, “Would you support a law that limits the number of stores that can sell tobacco within the same neighborhood?” 72.3% of the 900 respondents to the public intercept survey said “yes,” 19.6% said, “no,” and 8.1% said, “don’t know.”

When the same question was put to 191 key informants from 32 counties, 56.5% said, “yes,” 37.7% said, “no,” and 5.8% said, “don’t know.” Clearly, the support for density measures is not as strong as for zoning laws near schools. However, the majority of respondents to both the survey and the interviews are still in favor (see figure 2).

**Figure 2: Percent of public opinion versus key informant opinions about density legislation**



Not many reasons were given in support of density laws, but unexpectedly, “choice,” which is often used as an argument against government prohibition, was mentioned as a reason for supporting zoning legislation. Key informants felt that some neighborhoods would only provide choices for unhealthy products and therefore limit the choices residents could make. A rural informant mentioned that there are very few stores in the area to begin with, but that the concern would be more in urban, densely populated areas. This was echoed in one informant who explained that the majority of residents drive out of the community to purchase many products, including tobacco. There was also a pushback against regulation in general, as shown in this quote, “We don’t need a law for everything and law enforcement should be aware if there is an issue.” Other reasons against such a law was “dictating free trade,” “limits

interfere with free enterprise too much,” “as a business owner you should have the right to choose.” Fairness was also a concern in that some businesses might gain an unfair advantage if regulations limited the number of tobacco retailers.

## Anticipated barriers to legislation and facilitation of policy adoption

There was a wide array of barriers to legislation mentioned among key informants. The following is a list and applies to both zoning and density:

### Main opponents of zoning/density policies identified by key informants:

- **Retailers** (including business owners and small mom and pop stores)
- **Community members** who will feel that their freedom is restrained
- **Lobbyists/interest groups** such as the tobacco industry, lobbyists and other “big money.”

### Common ideological barriers to zoning/density policies:

- **Infringement on individual and business rights:** freedom of speech; the right to sell whatever retailers want to sell; rejection of government control of the marketplace.
- **Market fairness:** Some districts with the highest density of tobacco retailers are also high tourist areas; some local vendors might make the argument that the ordinance hurts tourism.
- **Feasibility:** competing priorities on local agendas; lack of funding for enforcement efforts.

There were not many suggestions for how to facilitate the adoption of density and zoning policies. One important suggestion was to clearly demonstrate that the easy accessibility to tobacco is in fact a problem for youth and that tobacco zoning and density laws do indeed have an impact on youth.



## Study Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the data come from a limited number of counties. More than half of the counties asked key informants about density and zoning laws, but only 5 counties asked the public in their surveys about density, and a little more than a third did for school zoning. The results may therefore not reflect the entire state. In addition, the respondents for both the POS and KIIs were not selected randomly, and so the results do not necessarily represent the opinions of the public or policy makers in the counties where data was collected.

## Conclusions

The results show that the majority of respondents to the survey and the interviews support legislation for laws that restrict the sale of tobacco around schools as well as legislation that limits the number of retailers in neighborhoods. Public support is strongest for zoning laws with 77.1%, and key informants' support is also strongest for zoning laws related to schools with 80.6% in support. The opposition to density laws is fairly strong among key informants at 37.7%. The objections and barriers to the suggested laws are as expected – government interference in commerce is frowned upon, and pushback is anticipated from the tobacco industry and from store owners. Given the strong support for zoning and density laws among the public, these seem important areas to focus on for future policy work in California.

## Appendix 1

### List of counties that asked key informants about zoning and density

Zoning	Density
Alameda	Amador
Amador	Contra Costa
Berkeley City	Del Norte
Colusa	El Dorado
Contra Costa	Fresno
Del Norte	Glenn
El Dorado	Inyo
Fresno	Kern
Glenn	Kings
Humboldt	Lake
Inyo	Los Angeles
Kern	Madera
Kings	Mariposa
Lake	Mendocino
Los Angeles	Modoc
Madera	Mono
Marin	Nevada
Mariposa	Pasadena City
Mendocino	Placer
Merced	Plumas
Modoc	Riverside
Mono	Sacramento
Napa	San Benito
Nevada	San Bernardino
Placer	San Luis Obispo
Plumas	Santa Cruz
Riverside	Sierra
San Benito	Siskiyou
San Bernardino	Solano
San Luis Obispo	Tehama
Santa Clara	Ventura
Santa Cruz	Yuba
Sierra	
Siskiyou	
Solano	
Sutter	
Trinity	
Ventura	