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TULARE RESIDENTS PUSH FOR SMOKE-FREE POLICIES



By [Francisco Ramirez Jr.](#)

Public Health Concerns Raised at Council Meeting

At the Tulare City Council meeting on June 17, 2025, in Tulare, CA, residents voiced serious concerns about secondhand smoke in public and residential areas, calling for stronger regulations to protect public health in the Central Valley. Antonio Lopez, a local resident, addressed the council about the lack of designated smoking areas at the Santa Fe Commons apartments, noting the impact on vulnerable populations. "People with asthma, like my family, are suffering from secondhand smoke exposure," Lopez said, urging the city to implement smoke-free policies. His comments highlighted the need for clearer regulations to ensure safe living environments in Tulare, CA.

Maria Grijalva, another speaker, echoed Lopez's concerns, emphasizing the [health](#) risks posed by secondhand smoke in shared spaces. She referenced the American Cancer Society's VIVA project, which promotes smoke-free environments, and called for signage to designate smoking areas. "We need signs to show where smoking is allowed to protect our kids and elderly," Grijalva told the council. Evelyn Long-Walls, a resident of the same apartment complex, added that secondhand smoke was a persistent issue, stating, "It's affecting our health every day, and we need the city to act." These comments underscored a



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growing demand for public health measures in the [Central Valley community](#).

Community Calls for Policy Changes

The concerns raised by Lopez, Grijalva, and Long-Walls reflect a broader push for smoke-free policies in Tulare, CA. The speakers specifically pointed to the Santa Fe Commons apartments, where the absence of designated smoking areas has led to widespread exposure to secondhand smoke. Grijalva's mention of the VIVA project suggests [community support](#) for initiatives aligned with public health goals, such as reducing tobacco-related harm. Mayor Patrick Isherwood acknowledged the [residents' concerns](#), noting that the council would consider their requests, though no immediate actions were proposed during the meeting.

Council Member Jose Sigala emphasized the importance of [addressing public](#) health, saying, "We need to listen to our residents and explore solutions that keep Tulare healthy." Vice Mayor Stephen C. Harrell and Council Members Terry A. Sayre and Dennis A. Mederos also heard the comments, but the [discussion did not lead to specific policy](#) proposals. The residents' call for signage and designated smoking areas highlights a practical step toward balancing individual rights with [community well-being in the Central Valley city](#).

A Path Toward Healthier Spaces

The public health concerns raised at the meeting signal a community eager for change in Tulare, CA. The focus on secondhand smoke, particularly its impact on children, the elderly, and those with health conditions like asthma, underscores the urgency of the issue. While the council, led by Mayor Isherwood, recognized the problem, residents like Lopez, Grijalva, and Long-Walls continue to push for actionable solutions, such as smoke-free zones and clear signage. As Tulare navigates these challenges, the [Central Valley community looks to its leaders to prioritize public](#) health. What steps do you think Tulare should take to address secondhand smoke concerns?