

From: [Jack Rice](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: St Paul Public Hearing/Clean Outdoor Air Concern
Date: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:08:51 PM

Dear Saint Paul City Council,

I am writing to express my deep love for our city and to bring to your attention a concern that has been affecting my health and enjoyment of our beautiful parks. One of the things I cherish the most about Saint Paul is going for long walks in this beautiful city. However, I have noticed a strong smell of smoke in the air lately.

This issue is particularly troubling for me because my mother is currently battling Stage 4 Lung Cancer, which she developed as a result of a lifetime of smoking. The last thing I want to be reminded of during my walks is the insidiousness of the tobacco industry and the devastating addiction it has caused. Minnesota has always been a leader in promoting clean air, and I believe that implementing an ordinance to prohibit smoking of both tobacco and cannabis in city-owned and leased public places would be a positive step towards maintaining this reputation. As a criminal defense attorney, I am acutely aware of the issues surrounding racial profiling and pretextual stops and frisks. I appreciate the council's efforts to address clean air concerns without resorting to criminalization or heavy fines.

I want to express my gratitude to the council for the work it has done thus far, and I urge you to please pass this ordinance to ensure the health and well-being of Saint Paul's residents. Clean air is essential for our overall quality of life, and I believe that by taking this step, we can continue to prioritize the health and happiness of our community.

Sincerely,
Jack Rice

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kristin Koziol](#)
To: [Greg Weiner](#)
Subject: Fw: Please ban smoking on city property
Date: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:23:36 AM

Kristin Koziol | Executive Assistant to Councilmember Russel Balenger

Pronouns: she/her

P: 651-266-8613

E: kristin.koziol@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Shawna Boll <shawna.boll@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 9, 2023 08:10 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Please ban smoking on city property

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Mr. Balenger,

I recently read a Star Tribune article about the St. Paul City Council's debate on how to respond to the recent state legalization of marijuana and its use on city property. I appreciate the proposal to ban smoking of tobacco and marijuana in these areas, and I was alarmed to hear that not all of the council members are on board with this proposal.

I have lived in St. Paul for almost 25 years, and I have long appreciated the city's parks and trail system. These amenities have definitely raised the quality of life for city residents and visitors, and they deserve continual protection and investment. A commitment to clean air on city property would help to protect the experience of park users. Just as litter and vandalism mar the beauty of a public park, so too does the odor of smoke. The stench of marijuana smoke is particularly nauseating for me and it trashes the otherwise peaceful and pleasant experience of being outdoors in a beautiful park.

In recent decades our society has made great progress in curtailing the use of public cigarette smoking, showing that we prioritize an individual's right to breathe clean air. It frustrates me to see our state and city leaders backtracking on this commitment to clean air. Just because Minnesota citizens now have a right to smoke marijuana does not mean that this right should outweigh the public's right to clean, healthy air.

Much of the legalized cannabis argument has focused on racial equity. For the purposes of this e-mail, I'm not going to get into the flaws of this line of reasoning, but I do want to point out that there are far healthier and worthier ways that our society can work toward the goal of racial equity. Trashing our public parks with the stench of smoke, be it tobacco or marijuana, is not the path to equity. Let's prioritize our citizens' health and quality of life by banning smoking on city property.

Thank you for your service to this city, and I hope you and your fellow city council members will act wisely on this issue.

Shawna Boll
Resident of St. Paul

From: [Grounded Gardens](#)
To: [#CI-StPaul_Council](#)
Subject: letter to stop the ban on cannabis smoking
Date: Sunday, September 10, 2023 10:01:40 PM
Attachments: [city hall testimony.docx](#)

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

To Whom It May Concern, 09/06/20203

Grounded Gardens is a cannabis farm (Hutchinson, MN) and manufacturer situated at 265 W 7th Street, Suite 200 & 300, with a dispensary and lounge located at 263 West 7th Street in St. Paul, MN. We've proudly occupied this location for over a year, striving to create a secure and welcoming space for cannabis enthusiasts.

With a personal history of more than 25 years as a cannabis enthusiast, I've experienced exclusion from various communities due to my cannabis use. Cannabis has played a transformative role in my life, serving as a crucial remedy for anxiety, depression, and autism. It has enabled me to actively engage with and contribute to our community.

For more than 15 years, I have been a dedicated activist in Minnesota, advocating tirelessly for cannabis legalization on the board of MN NORML and other organizations. Our collective efforts have culminated in the recent legalization, which represents a significant milestone for individuals like me who rely on cannabis for medicinal purposes.

We at Grounded Gardens are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for individuals who share this appreciation for cannabis and its potential benefits. Our journey has been one of persistence, resilience, and a belief in the positive impact of cannabis on individuals and communities alike.

At Grounded Gardens, we've diligently constructed an inclusive lounge and dispensary with the aim of providing a secure and inviting environment for cannabis enthusiasts. Our small patio on West 7th Street further enhances this space, allowing consumers to gather, relax, and enjoy cannabis in the company of friends.

It's noteworthy that our location stands in stark contrast to the nearby bars, where disturbances such as fights and loud altercations are commonplace. In our cannabis setting, the atmosphere is distinctly characterized by peace and a sense of joyful camaraderie. We're proud to offer a haven where individuals can unwind and savor the benefits of cannabis in a tranquil and convivial atmosphere.

Our request is a simple one: we urge you to adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Indoor Air Act, as outlined in the legalization bill. We believe that if public cigarette smoking is permitted, there should be no reason to prevent public cannabis smoking.

It's crucial to note that while cigarettes have been proven to cause cancer through secondhand smoke exposure, there is evidence that cannabis may have potential medicinal properties, including cancer-fighting effects. However, the primary point here is not to debate the merits of either substance but rather to ensure equitable treatment under existing regulations.

In essence, if the decision is to restrict smoking in public spaces, it should apply uniformly to

all smoking, regardless of the substance. We are advocating for a consistent approach to public smoking regulations that aligns with both the law and public health concerns.

The current situation highlights a critical issue: the strain on law enforcement resources in both the state and the city of St. Paul. A recent personal incident, where we experienced a theft on August 1, 2023, serves as a stark example. Despite our efforts to contact the police for assistance, no response was received, and we have yet to receive any follow-up regarding the incident.

This scenario underscores the challenges faced by law enforcement in effectively addressing the needs of the community. It raises questions about resource allocation and the capacity to respond to various types of incidents promptly.

We believe that by addressing more pressing matters and minimizing unnecessary demands on law enforcement, we can better prioritize community safety. This is another compelling reason to continue allowing responsible cannabis consumption in public spaces, in line with the Indoor Air Act and the recently passed legalization bill.

The opioid, meth, and fentanyl epidemic in our vicinity is indeed a critical issue that demands urgent attention. It's clear that the gravity of this crisis has a direct impact on our business and community.

We hope you share our concerns and believe that addressing these pressing public health and safety challenges should be a top priority. Allocating resources to combat the opioid epidemic, providing addiction treatment and harm reduction programs, and enhancing community safety measures are essential steps to mitigate the harm caused by these substances.

In this context, it raises important questions about resource allocation and whether efforts to restrict cannabis use in public spaces are the most effective way to utilize limited resources. A balanced approach that focuses on harm reduction and tackling more immediate threats to public health and safety is critical for the well-being of your community.

Many medical cannabis users live in federal housing or rented accommodations where cannabis use may be restricted or prohibited. Additionally, laws related to driving under the influence (DWI) often make it impractical or illegal to consume cannabis in a vehicle.

For these individuals, finding a safe and legal place to use their prescribed medication can be a challenging and sometimes impossible task. These challenges can especially impact veterans, disabled individuals, and other medical patients who rely on cannabis to manage their health conditions.

Considering the need for accessible and safe spaces for cannabis users is an important aspect of responsible cannabis regulation. Advocates often stress the importance of providing options for these individuals where they can legally and comfortably use their cannabis.

Our concerns highlight the real-world implications of cannabis regulations on your constituents, and it underscores the importance of finding equitable solutions that consider the diverse needs of the community.

Again, our request is a simple one: we urge you to adhere to the guidelines set forth in the

Indoor Air Act, as outlined in the legalization bill. We believe that if public cigarette smoking is permitted, there should be no reason to prevent public cannabis smoking.

At Grounded Gardens this week we have been collecting signatures, I intended to bring those to the meeting today, but I have covid and can't be there in person. One of our community members will be bringing them in for you all to see that our customers from all over Minnesota want to be able to smoke Infront of our store as a safe space!

Thank you for your time today and we are excited to work with you in the future!

Grounded Gardens Staff; Shane Gupthill, Donovan Pinder, Cyndi Patrick, Sherry Sharstrom, Tomas Sharstrom, Douglas Pinder

Grounded Gardens Owner and author of this letter; Bridgette Pinder
Groundedgardensmn.com

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Thank You

Bridgette Bethke Pinder
952.212.0429

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