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Boston approves ban on smoking in city-run parks

BOSTON (AP) — Boston has banned smoking in city-run parks, joining a growing list of American cities to do so.

The Boston Parks and Recreation Commission on Monday approved a ban covering the 251 parks, squares, cemeteries and other spaces run by the Parks and Recreation Department, including Boston Common, the Public Garden and Franklin Park. No one spoke in opposition to the ban.

The ban takes effect immediately and applies to tobacco, marijuana and other "lighted or vaporized" substances. Violators face a \$250 fine.

The City Council approved the measure last month.

"This amendment is necessary to maintain the health and safety of our public parks and ensure that these valuable resources can be enjoyed by all Boston residents," Mayor Thomas Menino said in a letter supporting the ban.

The Parks Department will post signs about the ban and the fine, and her department and the Health Commission will pass out informational materials, commission spokeswoman Jacque Goddard told The Boston Globe (<http://b.globe.com/19Y5Hok>).

Police and park rangers will enforce the measure, which is an expansion of an existing law that prohibits smoking at playgrounds.

The ban will improve health, said Barbara Ferrer, executive director of the Boston Public Health Commission.

"Secondhand smoke in any concentration is dangerous," Ferrer said. "There's no safe level of exposure."

New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles are among other large U.S. cities with similar bans.
