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Butt out! Jersey City councilman wants to ban smoking from city parks

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Jersey City City Councilman at large Rolando Lavarro seeks to ban smoking from city parks. (*Jersey Journal file photo*)

Jersey City parks may soon be smoke-free, thanks to the efforts of a City Councilman who is a nicotine addict himself.

Councilman at large Rolando Lavarro, the nine-member body's president, is sponsoring a measure up for introduction at Wednesday's council meeting that would ban smoking at the city's 67 parks and recreational areas.

Lavarro, a smoker, noted the “irony” of his sponsorship of the measure at tonight’s council caucus.

“While I know how hard it is to lose another place to smoke, it’s really the right thing to do,” he said.

Hudson County **banned smoking from its parks** earlier this year. Eight of the county’s 12 municipalities – East Newark, Hoboken, Kearny, North Bergen, Secaucus, Union City, Weehawken and West New York – have already made their parks cigarette-free, according to officials from Gasp, a nonprofit that advocates for the bans.

Smoking e-cigarettes in city parks would be prohibited under Lavarro’s proposal, too.

Smokers found to violate the ban would be subject to a \$250 fine for the first offense, \$500 for the second and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

The council meets on Wednesday at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 280 Grove St.

http://www.nj.com/hudson/index.ssf/2013/09/smoking_would_be_banned_from_jersey_city_parks_under_councilmans_plan.html