

Proposed Sidewalk Smoking Ban Goes Up in Smoke

Ridgewood council still expected to pass a ban on smoking in public parks.

By [James Kleimann](#)
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The Ridgewood Village Council is [moving forward with a plan to ban smoking in parks](#), but is holding off on extending bans to other public places.

Though council members were in general agreement that smoking should be prohibited in parks, further restrictions weren't as well received.

Mayor Paul Aronsohn said he received a request from Valley Hospital asking that sidewalks around the hospital also be designated as smoke-free zones.

Setting a precedence on public right-of-ways concerned Councilman Tom Riche.

"It becomes a Pandora's box because we don't have the police force to enforce non-smoking on a public sidewalk," he said. "I think there are bigger and better things to worry about."

According to Riche, the village already has on the books a smoking ban for those underage. To his knowledge, a summons has never been issued.

"The issue I have is we have laws on the books already that are not being enforced, why would we add to them?" he asked.

Aronsohn said they'll inform Valley Hospital they won't be considering a ban on sidewalks or streets at this time.

A representative Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP), a policy center that promotes smoke-free initiatives across New Jersey and made a presentation to the council earlier this month, said just placing signs that indicate a prohibition of smoking in parks will be effective.

In New York City, he said, cigarette smoking in parks dropped 50 percent without any enforcement.

A policy could be introduced as early as March.

<http://ridgewood.patch.com/articles/proposal-to-ban-smoking-on-sidewalks-goes-up-in-smoke>