



POCO Foundation Research

2024, 2025 Support on Drug Research and data survey by
Youth members

Cannabis Public Smoking Initiative (CPSI)

Smoke Shop Project

Cannabis Public Smoking Initiative (CPSI)

The Cannabis Public Smoking Initiative (CPSI) is a Los Angeles County–led public health project aimed at addressing cannabis smoking in parks and other shared community spaces. The initiative seeks to better understand public perceptions and promote healthier, safer environments for youth and families.

The POCO Foundation played a key role in this effort by engaging youth leaders to conduct community surveys, collect feedback from park users, and participate in data entry and analysis. Their work generated meaningful data that was later incorporated into county-level meetings and policy discussions led by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Through this collaboration, POCO helped identify community concerns and contributed to strategies for reducing youth exposure to public cannabis use and increasing community awareness about local health ordinances.

Current Status & Latest Updates

1. Public Dashboard & Data Reporting

The LA County Department of Public Health (via the Substance Abuse Prevention & Control unit) maintains a CPSI/MPSI dashboard that tracks metrics like smoking locations, frequency, public sentiment, and proposed policies. The dashboard was updated as of **November 19, 2024**, highlighting the county’s commitment to transparency and data-driven decision making. [LA County DPH SAPC](#)

2. Integration into Policy & Planning

The CPSI/MPSI is not just a survey tool—it’s part of a broader strategy. The initiative is used to inform **county-level meetings and policy discussions**, helping officials and stakeholders better understand where cannabis use in public places is most frequent, how communities feel about it, and which interventions hold promise.

3. Expanded Scope & “MPSI” Term

The initiative is often referred to as **CPSI / MPSI** (Marijuana Public Smoking Initiative), emphasizing that it captures data across both cannabis and marijuana public smoking in a variety of shared spaces (parks, apartments, businesses, schools) across multiple Service Planning Areas (SPAs).

4. Community & Stakeholder Engagement

The CPSI/MPSI workgroup involves SAPC’s Health Outcomes & Data Analytics (HODA) division, the Community & Youth Engagement Unit, and contracted

prevention providers to carry out the survey work, capacity building, planning, and evaluation phases.

5. Use in Advocacy & Strategy Design

Because the data is collected across geographies and populations, CPSI findings are being used to tailor **community prevention strategies**. These strategies aim to prevent or reduce public cannabis smoking via public awareness, prosocial alternatives, environmental design, and possibly policy shifts.



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Cannabis Public Smoking Initiative (CPSI)

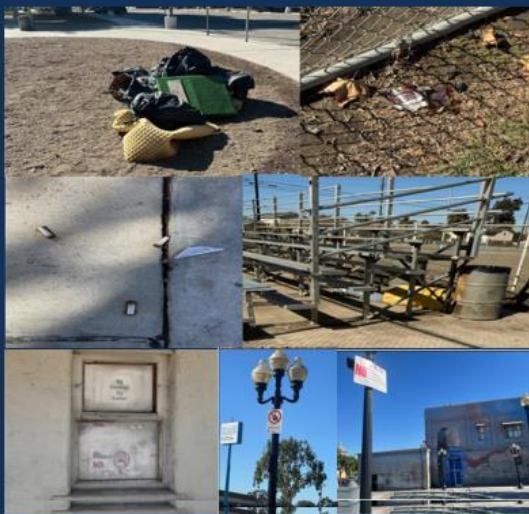
- » The CPSI–Park Coalition Pilot was a 6-month, county-led prevention initiative focused on addressing public cannabis smoking and promoting safety, social cohesion, and well-being in six high-need parks:
 - Pomona
 - Skid Row
 - Pasadena
- » Coalition members implemented over 60 programs and activities across the six parks. Activities included:
 - Pop-up events
 - Wellness games
 - Art activities
 - Prevention education; distribution of prevention materials with infographics
 - Resource fairs; hygiene items, housing and job information, and health information
 - Youth and senior engagement
 - Movie nights
 - Cultural events; Black History month



Data Collection Efforts

- **Environmental Scans:** conducted visual assessments across six parks to document the presence and condition of signage, park visitor demographics, usage patterns, and observable cannabis smoking behaviors.
- **Brief Interviews:** Collected 254 pre-352 post-intervention brief-interviews to assess changes in community perceptions related to cannabis use, safety, social cohesion, and social support.
- **Surveys:** Collected 380 pre-intervention and 352 post-intervention surveys to measure changes in behaviors and perceptions of cannabis public smoking in parks.

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CPSI: Environmental Scans

- » A group of coalition members, staff, and volunteers visited the six selected parks at various times of day across two separate dates in November.
- » Observed park signage (presence and type), general activity levels, to capture park signage, general activity levels, park conditions, safety, and any evidence of drug paraphernalia.
- » Key findings:
 - Limited signage: either no signage or limited visibility and availability because it was mounted high atop a streetlight post or outdated and faded.
 - Potential hot spot for unhoused youth and their families
 - Witnessed individuals smoking cannabis on site
 - Identified a lot of cans and bottles of alcohol products, empty pre-roll cannabis wrappers, and drug-related paraphernalia throughout one of Pomona parks.
 - Parks at Skid Row were very busy and provide respite to people experiencing homelessness while Pasadena parks were modestly populated at the time of scanning.

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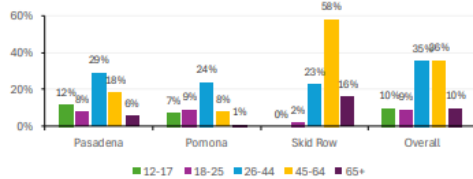
CPSI: Key Takeaways

- » Community-centered programming builds trust, promotes engagement, and fosters shared ownership of prevention efforts.
- » Flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to local challenges (e.g., post-fire recovery in Pasadena) are critical to sustaining program activities.
- » Culturally grounded, place-based strategies are effective in reaching and engaging diverse communities
- » Continued investment in coalition-building and local partnerships is key to long-term sustainability.

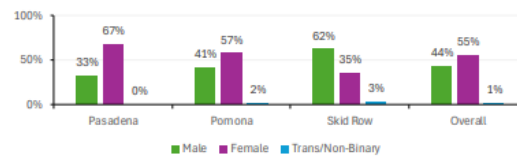
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CPSI: Brief Interviews and Survey- Integrated Demographic Profiles by Area

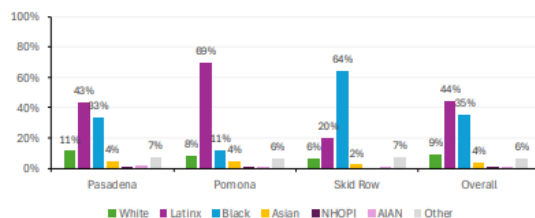
Age Group Distribution



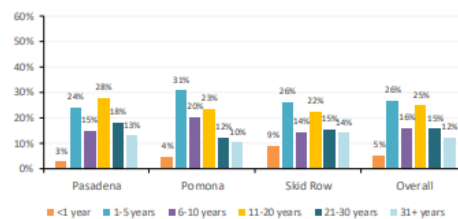
Gender Distribution of Participants



Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Participants



Length of residency in the area



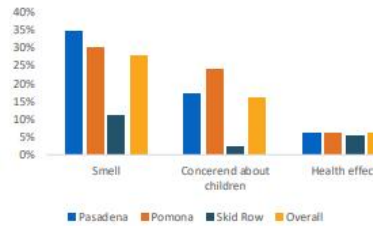
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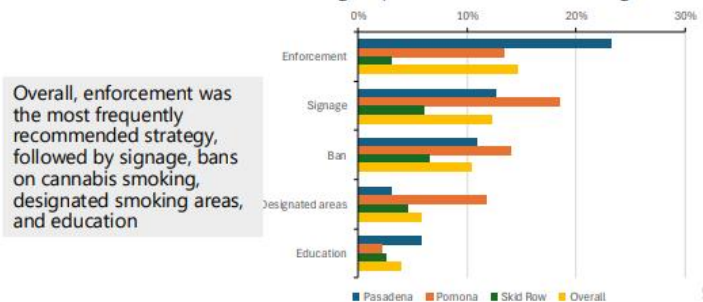
CPSI: Brief Interviews and Survey Findings (Pre vs Post Intervention)

- » How cannabis smoking bothered & recommendations for minimizing the impact of cannabis smoking



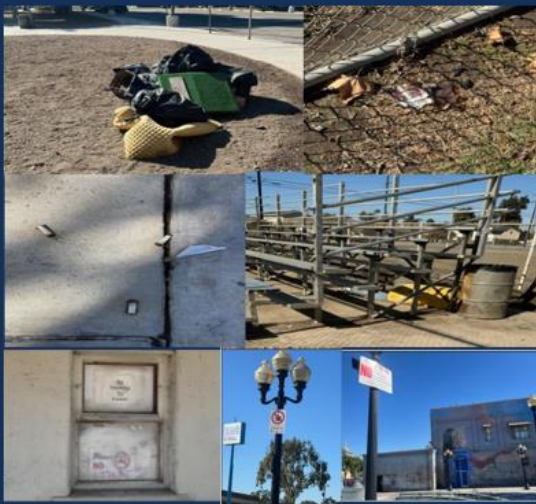
Overall, smell was the most reported concern related to cannabis smoking across all parks (28%), followed by concerns about children and health related concerns.

- » Recommendations for minimizing impact of cannabis smoking



Overall, enforcement was the most frequently recommended strategy, followed by signage, bans on cannabis smoking, designated smoking areas, and education

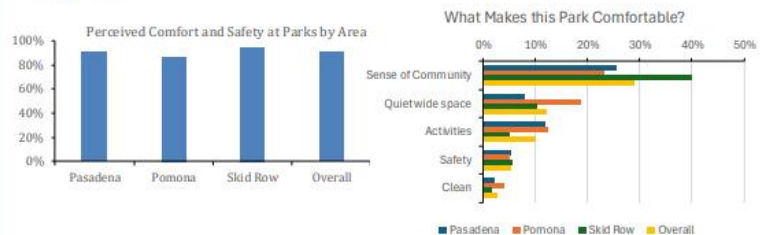
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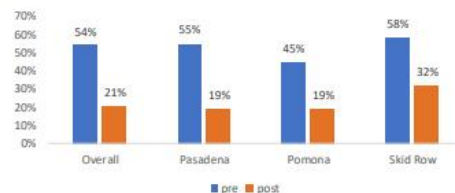
LA County, Department of Public Health

CPSI: Brief Interviews and Survey Findings (Pre vs Post Intervention)

- » Perceived Comfort and safety at parks and contributing Factors by Area: There were no notable differences between pre- and post-intervention responses



- » Frequently Noticed Cannabis Smoking pre (n=380) vs post (n=352): There was a 61% decrease in the percentage of participants who reported noticing cannabis smoking at parks in the post-intervention survey



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Next Steps



Work with pilot sites to refine/finalize findings and collect additional qualitative data to support interested sites in attaining a “promising” level for SUPER inclusion.



Incorporate feedback from site Final Reports and “Exit Interviews” into a statewide RFP to recruit 10 new sites for a 12-18 month CSSA cohort (2026-2027).



Continue to provide tailored TTA (e.g., customized evaluation planning; implementation support; Learning Collaboratives, etc) to generate evidence on CDEPs and strengthen site evaluation capacity to document the effectiveness of the work.



Coordinate with SUPER efforts to routinely showcase innovative California prevention programs.

Smoke Shop Project

The Smoke Shop Project is a countywide regulatory and advocacy initiative focused on monitoring the rapid growth of retail smoke shops and their impact on youth access to tobacco, vaping products, and emerging cannabis derivatives such as delta-8 and delta-10 THC.

POCO Foundation supported this project by helping collect and input community survey data, as well as gathering local feedback on retail density and youth safety concerns. The information collected by POCO contributed to policy discussions at the county level, helping public health officials and community coalitions understand neighborhood-level issues related to retail access and enforcement gaps.

Through participation in the CPSI and Smoke Shop Project, the POCO Foundation demonstrated its strong commitment to community health, civic engagement, and youth leadership. These collaborative efforts provided valuable, data-driven insights that continue to inform public health strategies across Los Angeles County.

The latest developments on smoke shop projects in Los Angeles primarily involve intensified city and county regulation, including recent moratoriums on new permits and crackdowns on illegal activities. The stricter enforcement comes amid concerns over the sale of illegal products and public safety.

City and county crackdowns

- **Emergency moratorium on new permits:** In September 2025, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously approved a 45-day emergency ordinance to halt new tobacco retail permits for smoke shops that sell illegal items, including cannabis, psilocybin mushrooms, and nitrous oxide tanks. The ban does not affect existing permits.
- **Focus on illegal sales:** In March 2025, Redondo Beach police, along with the state's tax and fee administration, conducted inspections that seized large quantities of illegal flavored tobacco, vapes, and cannabis products.
- **Targeting specific products:** In early October 2025, state authorities began cracking down on smoke shops selling kratom and a closely related drug, 7-OH, in raids across California.

Local control and zoning

- **District-specific moratoriums:** In August 2025, Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McOsker introduced a motion to temporarily ban new smoke shops in his 15th District, which includes areas like San Pedro, near schools and parks. This motion aims to follow the lead of other cities, such as Redondo Beach, that have adopted strict zoning controls.
- **Increased discretion for permits:** In June 2025, Redondo Beach approved a permanent ordinance giving the city more authority over smoke shop permitting. The new rules could include requiring conditional use permits for all new smoke shops and restricting how close they can be to each other, as well as to schools and youth centers.

State regulations affecting Los Angeles

- **Online sales ban:** As of January 1, 2025, new state laws (AB 3218 and SB 1230) ban online and delivery sales of illegal flavored tobacco products. They also increase enforcement powers and fines against retailers who violate the state's flavored tobacco ban.

- **Expanded definition of tobacco:** The new state laws also expand the definition of tobacco and nicotine to include synthetic products and cooling agents, bringing more products under regulatory authority.
- **Unflavored Tobacco List:** The state Attorney General is tasked with creating an "Unflavored Tobacco List" by December 31, 2025, to identify unflavored products that are legal for sale in California.

Context of ongoing regulation

- **Local licensing requirements:** In unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, all tobacco retailers, including vape, hookah, and cigar shops, have been required to obtain a specific Tobacco Shop business license since May 2020.
- **2022 flavored tobacco ban:** California voters upheld a statewide ban on most flavored tobacco products in a 2022 ballot measure, with the law taking effect in December 2022. New state laws coming into effect in 2025 further strengthen the enforcement of this ban.