

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I want to express my support for the proposed city ordinance update that will prohibit purchase, possession and use of tobacco products by children. This proposed ordinance update will allow the Lee's Summit ordinance to mirror the existing Missouri State Statute.

This updated ordinance would help local parents, schools, and law enforcement address a growing tobacco problem in Lee's Summit. Currently children are prohibited to purchase tobacco, but the city ordinance does not prohibit possession and use of tobacco products by minors. Based on the McCluth Missouri Student Survey used by the Lee's Summit School District, the 2010 senior class cohort reported alarming 10.8% increase of teens surveyed who smoke. Tobacco is more addictive than heroin, cocaine, alcohol and many other illicit drugs. From melt-in-your-mouth tobacco candy to bright pink cigarettes dubbed 'Barbie' smokes, outrageous new marketing tactics are hooking a new generation of children on deadly tobacco.

Over 80% of tobacco users become hooked on nicotine before they reach the age of 18. Each day, nearly 6,000 young people try their first cigarette, over 3,000 of these individuals become addicted. Nearly 450,000 Americans die each year from an addiction to tobacco that began before they were legally allowed to purchase or possess tobacco.

I support the city ordinance that will help send a stronger message to young people, retail stores, and tobacco industry to keep tobacco away from our children. Thank you for your dedication and hard work attempting to provide the young people of Lee's Summit a positive future.

Sincerely,