

TOBACCO FREE ACTION

Columbia & Greene Counties
Siena College Research Institute Survey (SCRI)

Tobacco-Free Action



of Columbia & Greene Counties



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COLUMBIA COUNTY 2020: SUMMARY

The overall smoking rate in Columbia County stands at eight percent, down from 11 percent in 2019, and while it has fluctuated over the past nine years, 2020 is the lowest smoking rate yet. Increasing, and strong support is present in Columbia County for policies banning smoking in many public areas, and to ban the sale of tobacco products near schools. Concern is high that tobacco displays, and advertising, induce young people to smoke. Over 90 percent of residents do not allow smoking in their homes.

TOBACCO USE

- 41 percent of Columbia County residents have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.
 - Eight percent are currently smokers, compared to 15 percent in 2017 and 11 percent in 2019.
 - The percentage of Columbia County residents that have ever smoked has fallen from 49 percent in 2009 to 41 percent today.

Columbia County Smoking Rates						
	2020	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011
Ever Smoked	41%	48%	47%	51%	50%	49%
Current Smoker	8%	11%	15%	14%	11%	13%

- Young people (ages 18-34) have ever-smoked at a much lower rate, 27 percent, than older residents that average across age groups ever-smoking at a rate of 45 percent.
- Young people, 18-34 years of age, currently smoke at an overall rate of nine percent.
- The smoking rate is six percent among those 35-49 years of age, increases to 11 percent among those 50-64 years of age, and drops to five percent among those age 65 or above.
- Residents with less than a college education have ever-smoked at a rate of 40 percent and currently smoke at a rate of nine percent.
- Those with a college education have ever-smoked at a slightly higher rate, 42 percent, and currently smoke at a rate of eight percent.
- Residents with a lower income, under \$50,000 a year, currently smoke at a rate of 15 percent, those earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 smoke at a rate of 11 percent, and those earning over \$100,000 smoke at a lower rate, two percent.
- Of those that currently smoke, 26 percent use menthol cigarettes.
- Among current smokers, 27 percent use other tobacco products such as cigars, cigarillos or smokeless tobacco. Of this small group, 12 percent, use other tobacco products that are flavored such as with fruit, candy or alcohol flavors.

- 23 percent of Columbia County residents have tried using an Electronic Cigarette, or other vaping product, up from 20 percent in 2019 and 14 percent in 2017.

Age Breakdown of E-cigarette Usage				
<i>“Have you ever tried using an Electronic Cigarette, E-cigarette, or other vaping product, even just one time?”</i>				
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Yes	65%	22%	8%	8%
No	35%	78%	92%	92%
Don’t Know	0%	0%	0%	0%

- Having tried e-cigs is significantly higher among those 18-34 at 65 percent compared with 22 percent among those 35-49 years of age, and only eight percent among those age 50-64 and those age 65 and above.
- The current E-cig use rate is four percent, which is down from six percent in 2019.
 - Among 18-34 year olds, the E-cig use rate is 13 percent.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMOKING POLICIES AND ADVERTISING

- 26 percent of Columbia County residents when asked to think about all the health problems in their community, say that addressing the problem of tobacco use including e-cigarettes is among the most important health problems.
 - 60 percent say it is equally as important as other health problems
 - 13 percent say that tobacco use is among the least important health problems.
- 66 percent are either somewhat (19 percent) or strongly (47 percent) in favor of policies that prohibit smoking in outdoor public places such as beaches or parks.
 - Women, those with a college degree, those age 35-49, those that never smoked and those earning \$100,000 or more are most strongly in favor.
- 74 percent either are somewhat (17 percent) or strongly (57 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking on the grounds of workplaces and businesses open to the public.
- 50 percent are either somewhat (16 percent) or strongly (34 percent) in favor of policies that limit the number of stores that sell tobacco in their community. This is down from 55 percent in 2017 and unchanged from 2019.
 - A majority of women, those with a college degree, earners of \$100,000 or more and those that never smoked support this limitation.
 - Current smokers also support the limitation by 43-22 percent.
- 72 percent are either somewhat (16 percent) or strongly (56 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking on the grounds of all municipal properties.
- 44 percent are either somewhat (10 percent) or strongly (34 percent) in favor of policies that ban the sale of menthol cigarettes while 23 percent are either somewhat (9 percent) or strongly (14 percent) against that ban.

- 35 percent agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it harder for smokers to quit smoking while 21 percent disagree.
 - Agreement was highest among those that never smoked (40 percent) and those age 18-34 (49 percent).
- 62 percent agree that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising makes it harder for smokers to quit smoking.
- Nearly or greater than 60 percent of every demographic group agree that exposure to product displays or advertising makes it harder to quit with only one exception. 34 percent of those ages 35-49 disagree that tobacco product displays and advertising makes it harder to quit.
 - Current smokers in Columbia County agree 60-37 percent, whereas in most other counties there is a majority disagreement among current smokers.
- While agreement is strong on the effect that advertising is having on the ability to quit, there is an even split 44-44 percent, that reducing the number of stores that sell tobacco in their community would decrease the number of people who smoke.

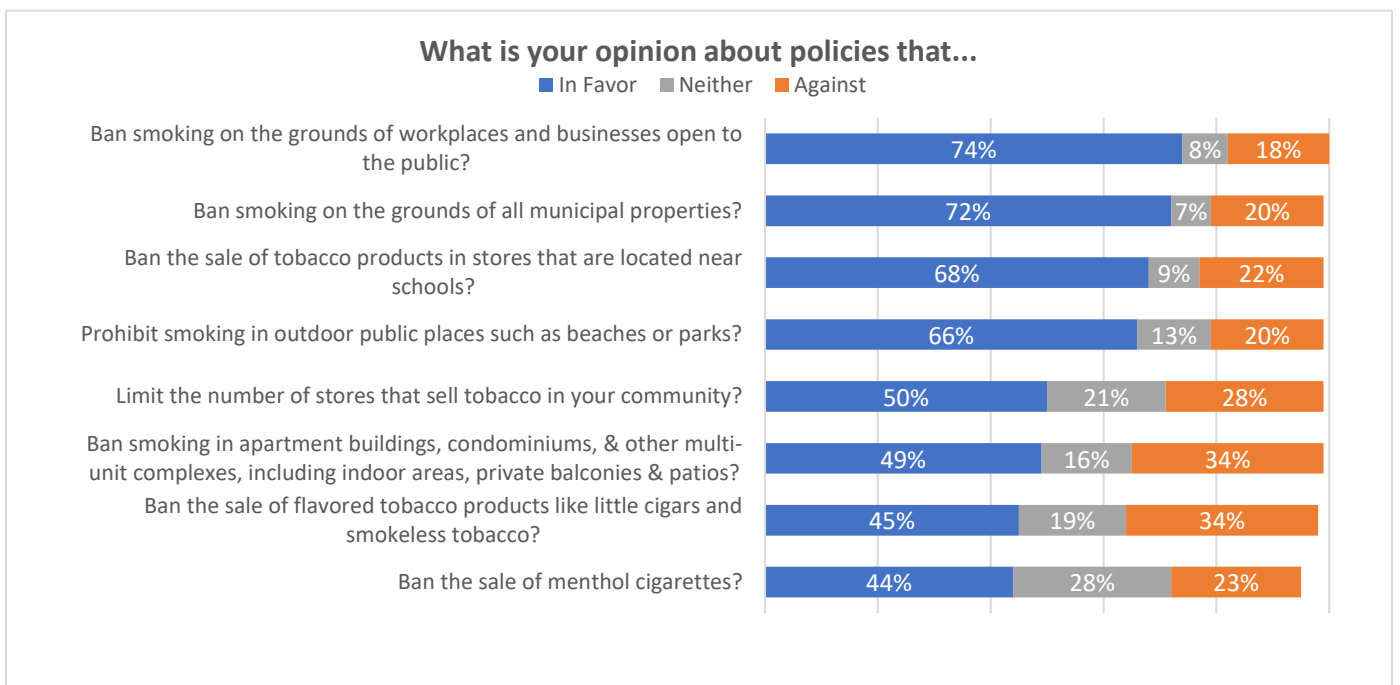


Figure 4: Respondents are most in favor of banning smoking on the grounds of all workplaces and businesses open to the public and least in favor of banning the sale of menthol cigarettes.

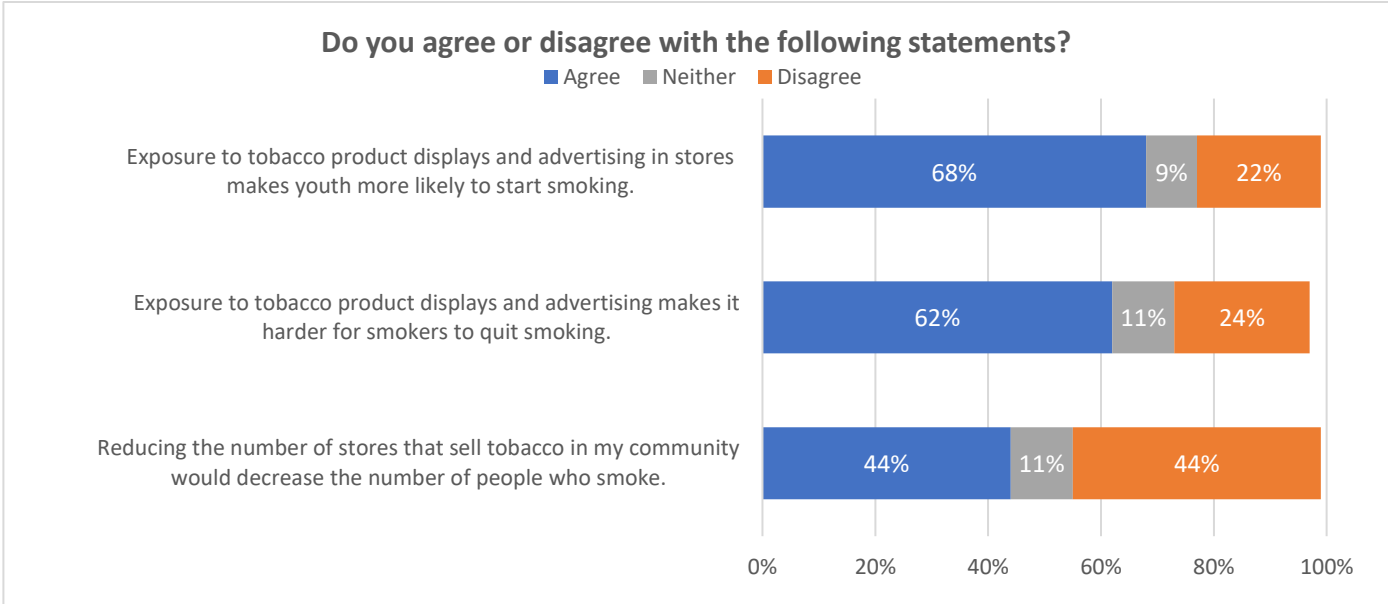


Figure 5: Respondents indicated their agreement that exposure to tobacco product displays make youth more likely to start smoking.

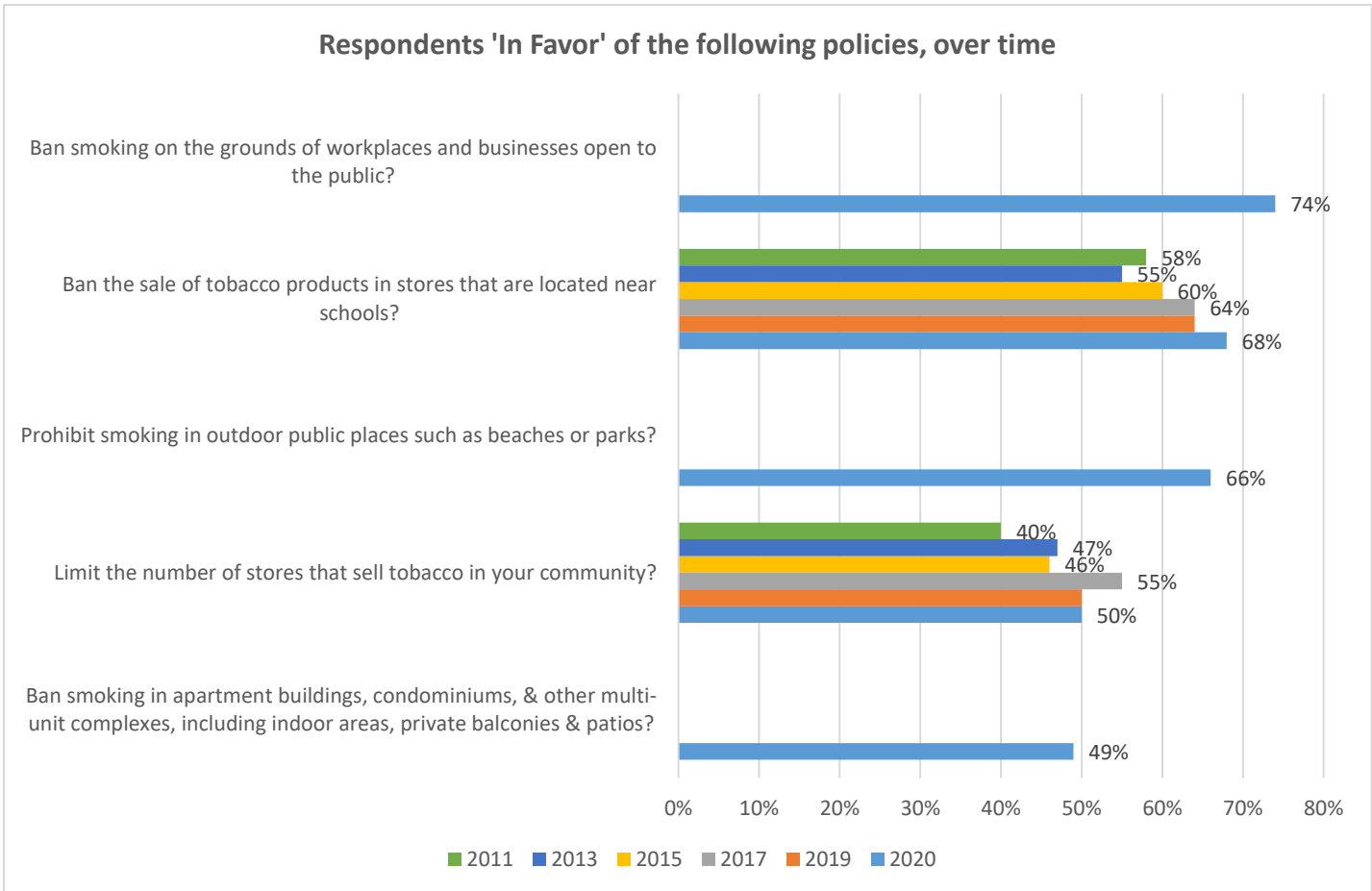


Figure 6: Over time, support for banning the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools has increased among respondents.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMOKING POLICIES AND ADVERTISING IMPACTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Among Columbia County respondents this year, there is growing support to ban the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools and an increase in the view that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising in stores makes youth more likely to start smoking.

- 68 percent are either somewhat (13 percent) or strongly (55 percent) in favor of policies that ban the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools.
 - In 2017 and 2019 that figure was 64 percent.
- 68 percent (41 percent strongly, 27 percent somewhat) agree that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising in stores makes youth more likely to start smoking while only 22 percent disagree.
- By 46-25 percent respondents agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it easier for youth to start smoking. This opinion rises to a larger majority among those who earn \$100,000 or more, 53-18 percent.
- 76 percent agree that candy and fruit flavors that are added to tobacco products makes it easier for youth to start using these products.
 - Among females that view increases to 82 percent.
- 45 percent favor a ban of the sale of flavored tobacco products like little cigars and smokeless tobacco.

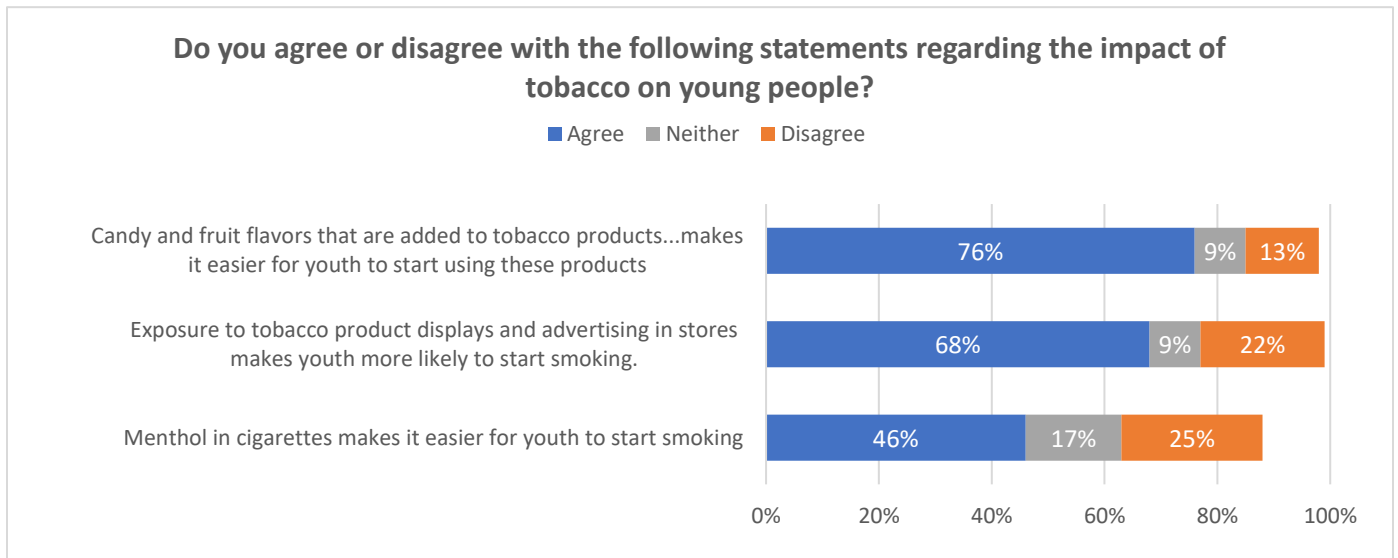


Figure 7: A large majority of respondents agree that candy and fruit flavored tobacco products make it easier for youth to start using tobacco.

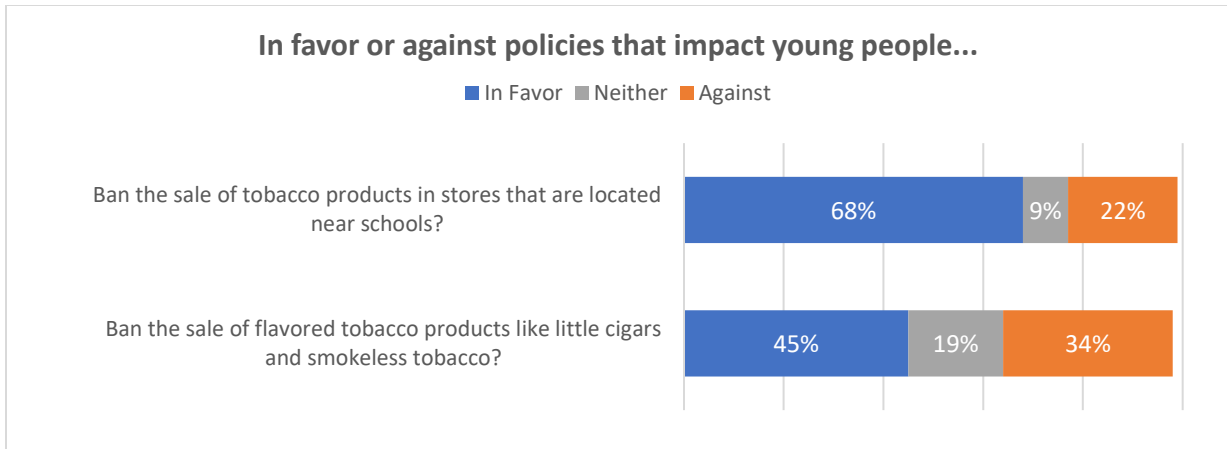


Figure 8: A majority of respondents are in favor of banning the sale of tobacco near schools and banning the sale of flavored tobacco.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOBACCO USE IN RESIDENCES

- 91 percent say that smoking is not allowed anywhere inside their house.
 - Six percent say that smoking is allowed in some places or at some times.
 - Not allowing smoking anywhere inside the house is greatest at 97 percent among those age 35-49 and at 95 percent among those who have never smoked.
 - 71 percent of current smokers do not allow smoking inside their home but 13 percent allow it in some places or at some times and 16 percent of smokers allow smoking anywhere inside their home.
- Overall 49 percent are either somewhat (17 percent) or strongly (32 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking in apartment buildings, condominiums, and other multi-unit complexes including indoor areas, private balconies and patios.
 - Among renters, support for this ban is at 54 percent, however 38 percent support it strongly
 - Across the 14 counties, support is at 50 percent, with 35 percent strongly supporting in favor.
 - The sample size among those that rent in buildings with four or more units is too small in Columbia County to provide data on this question.
 - Across the 14 counties, support among those that rent in buildings with four or more units is at 57 percent, with 43 percent strongly in favor

METHODS AND NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

Using random digit-dialing (RDD) and a known web-sampling provider, telephone and web interviews were conducted with 350 residents of Columbia County. Completed interviews from phone and web were merged and weighted by known age and gender characteristics so as to enhance representativeness.

Data is reported with a margin of error of +/- 6.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level having included the design effect of weighting on that margin of error.

GREENE COUNTY 2020: SUMMARY

The overall smoking rate in Greene County stands at 16 percent, having gradually decreased over the past nine years. Increasing, and strong support is present in Greene County for policies banning smoking in many public areas, and to ban the sale of tobacco products near schools. Concern is high that candy and fruit flavors added to tobacco products, induce young people to smoke. Over 85 percent of residents continue to not allow smoking in their homes.

TOBACCO USE

- 51 percent of Greene County residents have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.
 - 16 percent are currently smokers, compared to 17 percent in 2017 and 21 percent in 2019.
 - The percentage of Greene County residents that have ever-smoked has fallen from 58 percent in 2009 to 51 percent today.
 - Men have ever-smoked at a greater rate than women (59-42 percent).

Greene County Smoking Rates						
	2020	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011
Ever Smoked	51%	56%	53%	51%	54%	58%
Current Smoker	16%	21%	17%	17%	19%	22%

- Young people, 18-34 years of age, currently smoke at an overall rate of 26 percent.
- The smoking rate is 18 percent among those 35-49 years of age, 15 percent among those 50-64 years of age, and drops to only six percent among those age 65 or above.
- Residents with less than a college education have ever-smoked at a rate of 64 percent and currently smoke at a rate of 24 percent.
- Those with a college education have ever-smoked at a lower rate, 34 percent, and currently smoke at a rate of eight percent.
- Residents with a lower income, under \$50,000 a year, currently smoke at a rate of 29 percent, those earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 smoke at a lower rate of 18 percent, and those earning over \$100,000 smoke at a rate of ten percent.
- Of those that currently smoke, 42 percent use menthol cigarettes.
- Among current smokers, 33 percent use other tobacco products such as cigars, cigarillos or smokeless tobacco. Of this small group, 48 percent, use other tobacco products that are flavored such as with fruit, candy or alcohol flavors.

- 31 percent of Greene County residents have tried using an Electronic Cigarette, or other vaping product, up from 28 percent in 2019 and 23 percent in 2017.

Age Breakdown of E-cigarette Usage				
<i>“Have you ever tried using an Electronic Cigarette, E-cigarette, or other vaping product, even just one time?”</i>				
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Yes	71%	35%	15%	6%
No	29%	65%	85%	94%
Don’t Know	0%	0%	0%	0%

- Having tried e-cigs is significantly higher among those 18-34 at 71 percent compared with 35 percent among those 35-49 years of age, 15 percent among those 50-64 and only six percent among those age 65 and above.
- The current E-cig use rate is seven percent, which is up from five percent in 2019 and two percent in 2017.
 - Among 18-34 year olds, the E-cig use rate is 23 percent.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMOKING POLICIES AND ADVERTISING

- 28 percent of Greene County residents when asked to think about all the health problems in their community, say that addressing the problem of tobacco use including e-cigarettes is among the most important health problems.
 - 52 percent say it is equally as important as other health problems
 - 19 percent say that tobacco use is among the least important health problems.
- 56 percent are either somewhat (15 percent) or strongly (41 percent) in favor of policies that prohibit smoking in outdoor public places such as beaches or parks.
 - Women, those with a college degree, those that never smoked, and those earning \$50,000-\$100,000 are most strongly in favor.
 - The only group with 69-16 percent, against this prohibition is among those that currently smoke.
- 58 percent either are somewhat (15 percent) or strongly (43 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking on the grounds of workplaces and businesses open to the public.
- 45 percent are either somewhat (17 percent) or strongly (28 percent) in favor of policies that limit the number of stores that sell tobacco in their community. This is down from 55 percent in 2019 and up from 48 percent in 2017.
 - A majority of women, earners of \$100,000 or more, and those that have never smoked most strongly support this limitation.
 - Current smokers oppose the limitation by 72-12 percent.
- 67 percent are either somewhat (17 percent) or strongly (50 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking on the grounds of all municipal properties.
 - Women are more in favor (81 percent) than are men (57 percent).

- 38 percent are either somewhat (10 percent) or strongly (28 percent) in favor of policies that ban the sale of menthol cigarettes while 32 percent are either somewhat (7 percent) or strongly (25 percent) against that ban.
 - Opposition of this ban is greatest among current smokers (65 percent against).
- 28 percent agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it harder for smokers to quit smoking while 32 percent disagree.
 - Agreement was highest among those that have never smoked (39 percent), and females (38 percent).
- 56 percent agree that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising makes it harder for smokers to quit smoking.
- Nearly or greater than 50 percent of every demographic group agree that exposure to product displays or advertising makes it harder to quit with only one exception.
 - 48 percent of current smokers disagree.
- While agreement is strong on the effect that advertising is having on the ability to quit, there is a split 45-45 percent, agree and disagree that reducing the number of stores that sell tobacco in their community would decrease the number of people who smoke.

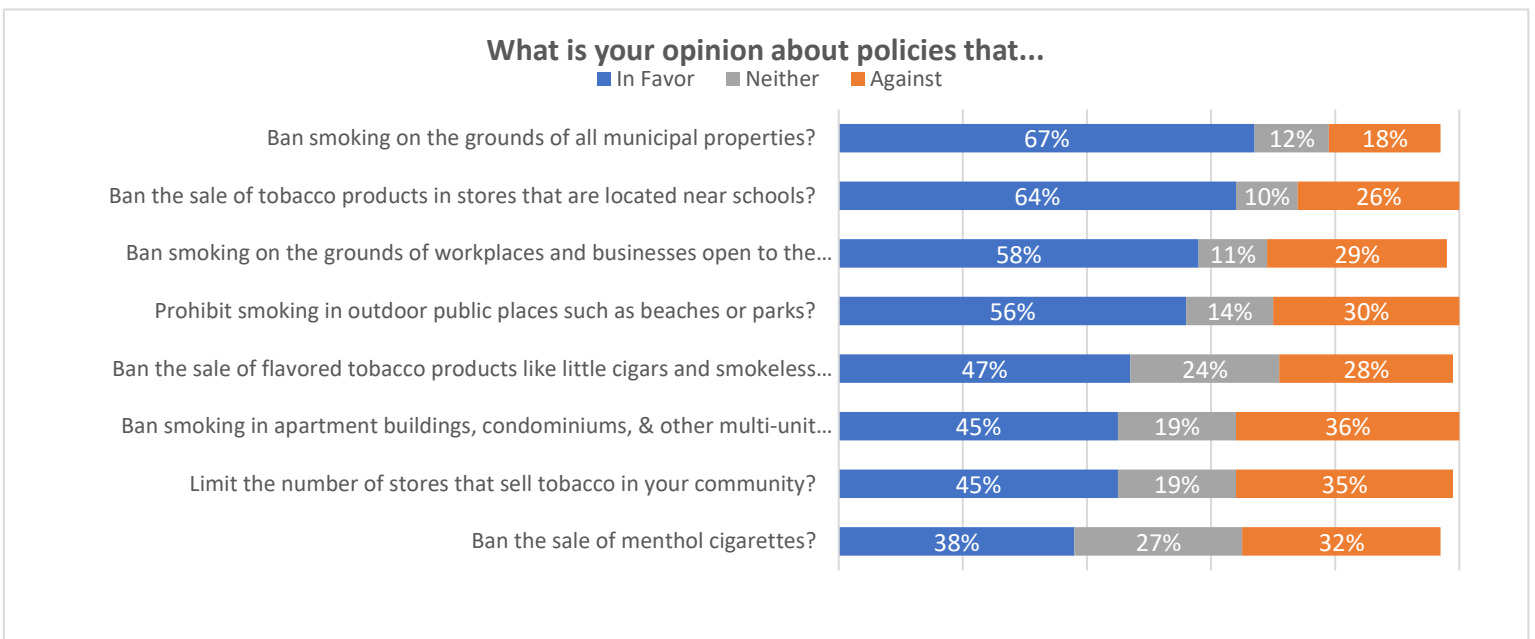


Figure 2: Respondents are most in favor of banning smoking on the grounds of all municipal properties and least in favor of banning the sale of menthol cigarettes.

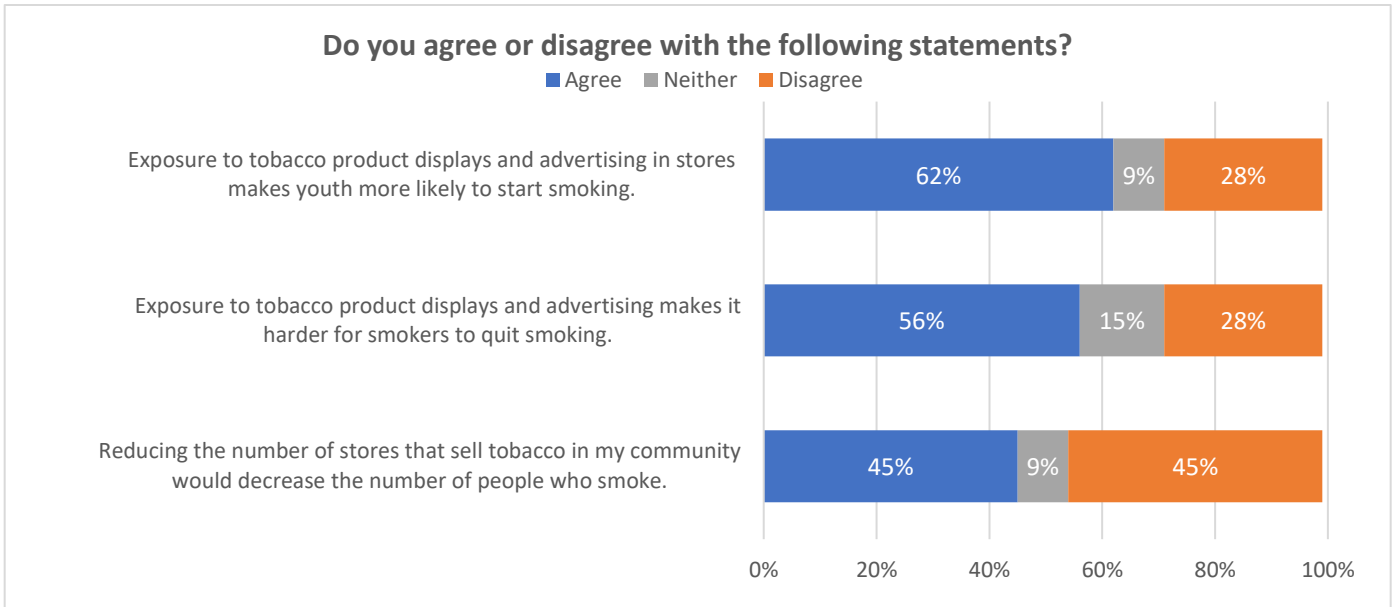


Figure 3: Respondents indicate their agreement that exposure to tobacco product displays make youth more likely to start smoking.

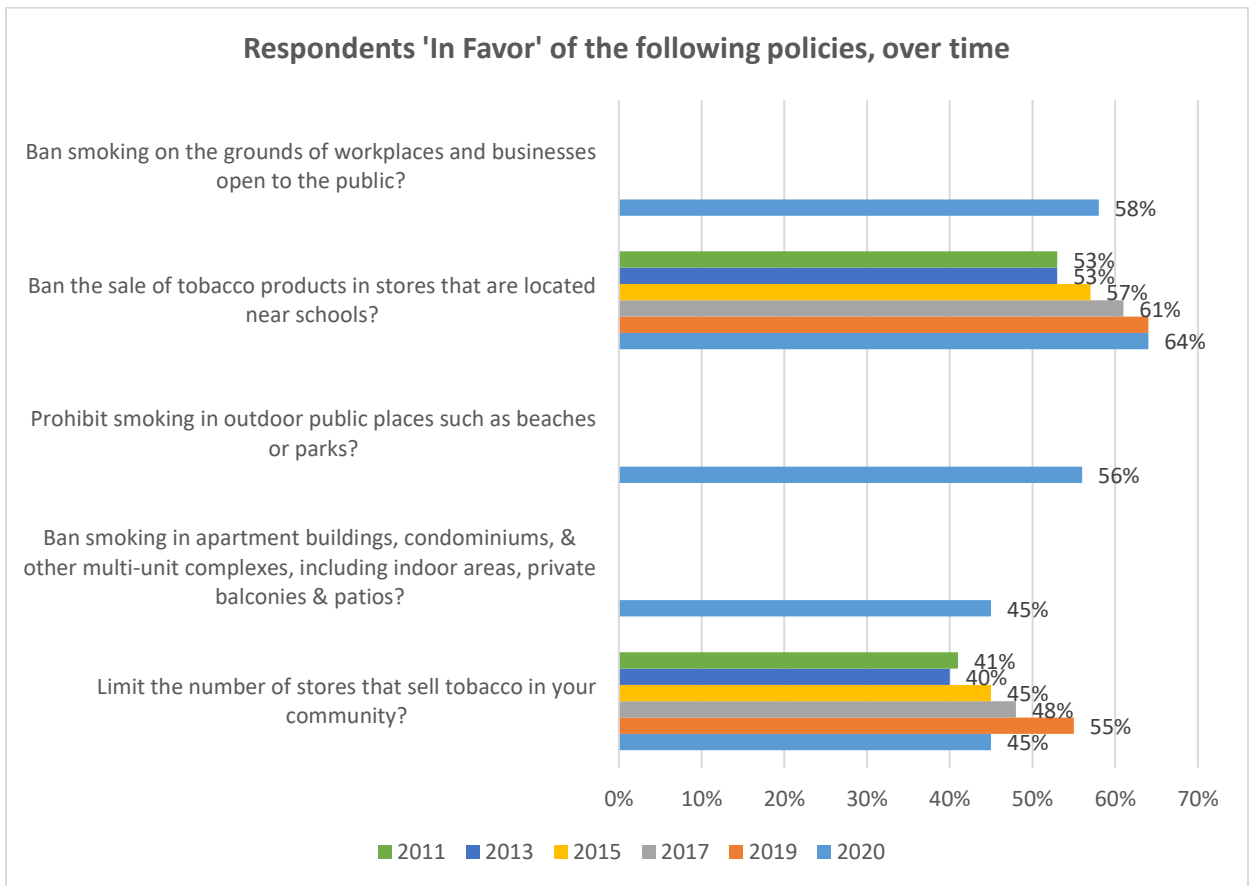


Figure 4: Over time, banning the sale of tobacco products in stores located near schools continues to gain additional support.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMOKING POLICIES AND ADVERTISING IMPACTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Among Greene County respondents this year, there is growing support to ban the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools and an increase in the view that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising in stores makes youth more likely to start smoking.

- 64 percent are either somewhat (15 percent) or strongly (49 percent) in favor of policies that ban the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools.
 - In 2019 that figure was also 64 percent and in 2017 was 61 percent.
- 62 percent (42 percent strongly, 20 percent somewhat) agree that exposure to tobacco product displays and advertising in stores makes youth more likely to start smoking while only 28 percent disagree. Current smokers disagree the most at 52 percent.
- By 37-37 percent respondents agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it easier for youth to start smoking.
- 73 percent agree that candy and fruit flavors that are added to tobacco products makes it easier for youth to start using these products.
 - Among females that view increases to 85 percent.
- 47 percent favor a ban of the sale of flavored tobacco products like little cigars and smokeless tobacco.

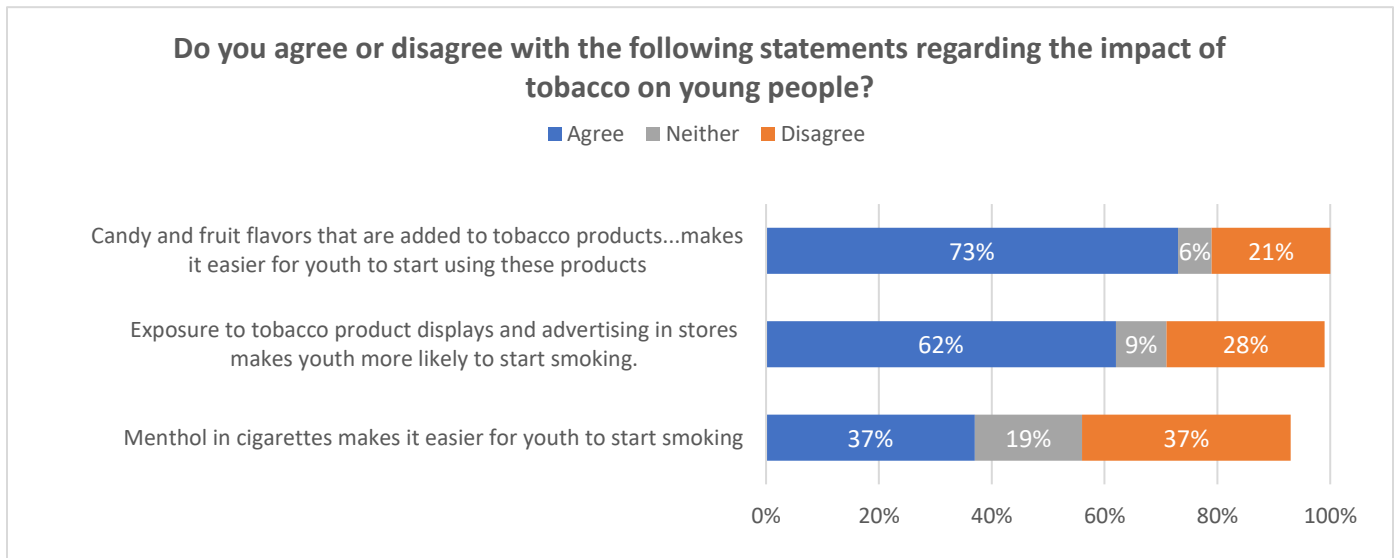


Figure 5: A large majority of respondents agree that candy and fruit flavored tobacco products make it easier for youth to start using tobacco.

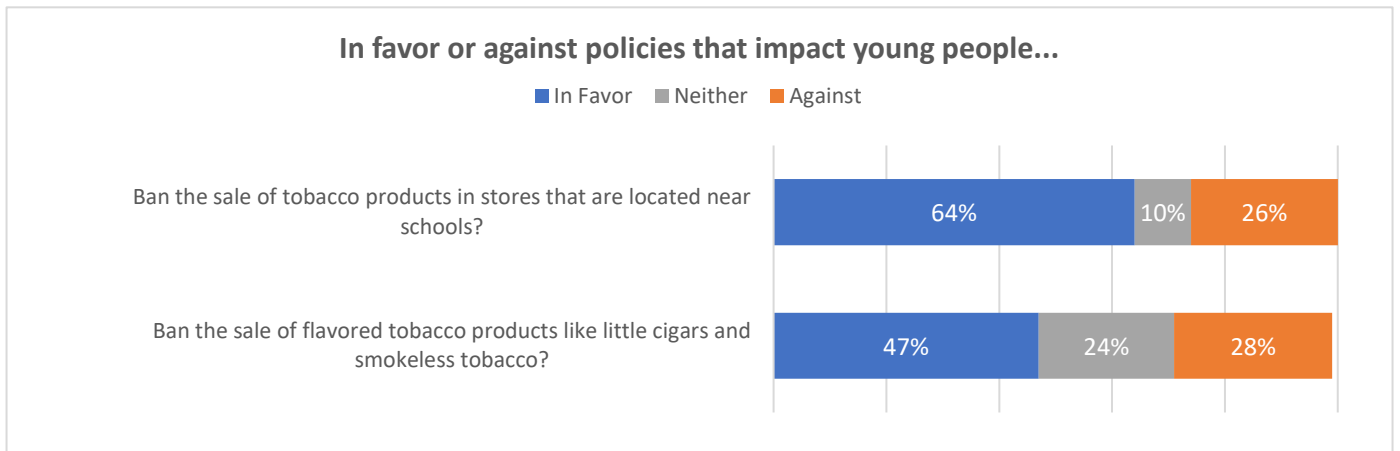


Figure 6: Majorities of respondents are in favor of banning the sale of tobacco near schools and banning the sale of flavored tobacco.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOBACCO USE IN RESIDENCES

- 86 percent say that smoking is not allowed anywhere inside their house.
 - Nine percent say that smoking is allowed in some places or at some times.
 - Not allowing smoking anywhere inside the house is greatest at 95 percent among those that never smoked and earners of \$100,000 or more at 94 percent.
 - 58 percent of current smokers do not allow smoking inside their home but 30 percent allow it in some places or at some times and 12 percent of smokers allow smoking anywhere inside their home.
- Overall 45 percent are either somewhat (14 percent) or strongly (31 percent) in favor of policies that ban smoking in apartment buildings, condominiums, and other multi-unit complexes including indoor areas, private balconies and patios.
 - Among renters, support for this ban in Greene County is at 43 percent.
 - Across the 14 counties, support is at 50 percent, with 35 percent strongly supporting in favor.
 - The sample size among those that rent in buildings with four or more units is too small in Greene County to provide data on this question.
 - Across the 14 counties, support among those that rent in buildings with four or more units is at 57 percent, with 43 percent strongly in favor.

METHODS AND NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

Using random digit-dialing (RDD) and a known web-sampling provider, telephone and web interviews were conducted with 351 residents of Greene County. Completed interviews from phone and web were merged and weighted by known age and gender characteristics so as to enhance representativeness.

Data is reported with a margin of error of +/- 6.4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level having included the design effect of weighting on that margin of error.

14 COUNTY COMPARISON POINTS

SCRI conducted the identical survey in each of 14 counties – Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington – this spring/summer. The following table shows the results across each of those counties for five important questions:

- The current smoking rate computed as the percent of residents that smoke now either every day or some days from among those that indicate having smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their life.
- Support for a regulation (either strongly or somewhat in favor) that would limit the number of stores that could sell tobacco in their community.
- Support for a regulation that would ban the sale of tobacco products in stores that are located near schools.
- Support for a regulation that would ban the sale of menthol cigarettes.
- Support for a regulation that would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products.
- Included in the table as well are the responses from the entire sample of 4,651 respondents weighted by county population size so as to generate a sample representative of the 14 county region.

Columbia Points:

- In Columbia, the smoking rate at eight percent is less than the 14 County average of 14 percent.
- Columbia residents support limiting the number of stores that sell tobacco, banning the sale of menthol cigarettes, and banning the sale of tobacco products near schools at rates higher than the 14 County average. However, they support banning sales of flavored tobacco products at a rate lower than the 14 County average.
- Compared to the 14 County universe sample, the smoking rate of Columbia is seven points lower.

Greene Points:

- In Greene, the smoking rate at 16 percent is slightly above the 14 County average of 14 percent.
- Greene residents support limiting the number of stores that sell tobacco, banning sales near schools, banning the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavors tobacco products at rates lower than the 14 County average.
- Compared to the 14 County universe sample, the smoking rate of Greene is two points higher.

County	Smoking rate	Limit # of stores that sell tobacco	Ban sale near schools	Ban sale of menthol cigarettes	Ban sale of flavored tobacco products
Albany	13%	50%	69%	47%	51%
Rensselaer	15%	53%	70%	43%	51%
Schenectady	17%	43%	60%	44%	43%
Saratoga	12%	41%	66%	42%	48%
Warren	9%	44%	69%	43%	52%
Washington	16%	44%	62%	39%	47%
Fulton	16%	45%	77%	38%	45%
Hamilton	15%	35%	60%	35%	48%
Montgomery	13%	45%	67%	38%	45%
Columbia	8%	50%	68%	44%	45%
Greene	16%	45%	64%	38%	47%
Delaware	14%	41%	61%	38%	44%
Otsego	19%	46%	69%	42%	50%
Schoharie	15%	41%	66%	39%	50%
14 County Average	14%	45%	66%	41%	48%
14 County Universe	15%	48%	66%	44%	49%