

North Plainfield may raise cigarette buying age to 21

By **Dave Hutchinson | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com**

on May 13, 2015 at 11:50 AM, updated May 13, 2015 at 2:21 PM

NORTH PLAINFIELD — — After banning smoking in borough-owned properties last year, the North Plainfield Borough Council on Monday proposed an ordinance to ban the selling of tobacco products and nicotine delivery products to anyone under 21 years old.

The ordinance was received favorably by the council and will be up for a first reading at the council's May 26 meeting, said council vice president Doug Singleterry. A final vote could take place June 8.

North Plainfield would become the first municipality in Somerset County to raise the smoking age to 21. In New Jersey, the legal smoking age is 19. Approximately 10 municipalities, **most recently Highland Park**, have banned tobacco sales to individuals under 21 years old, Singleterry said.

According to the **American Lung Association**, 85 percent of people who smoke regularly started smoking under the age of 21.

A report from the Institute of Medicine said banning cigarette sales to people under the age of 21 nationally would result **in nearly 250,000 fewer premature deaths** and 50,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer among people born between 2000 and 2019.

"I'm hoping that the growing number of municipalities adopting these ordinances will encourage the state to raise the smoking age," said Singleterry, who proposed the ordinance. "We've seen that things seem to be moving in that direction. Hopefully, we can help give the state a nudge."

Statewide, Sens. Joseph Vitale, D-Middlesex, and Richard J. Codey, D-Essex, have sponsored legislation in that would raise the minimum age for the purchase and sale of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices from 19 to 21. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 22 to 10 in June. It is now before the Assembly's Health and Senior Services Committee.

Under the ordinance in North Plainfield, establishments must put up signs informing customers of the new age requirement, all tobacco vending machines and self-service displays will be prohibited and businesses that sell tobacco products must read the Board of Health regulations and state laws pertaining to the sale of tobacco.

Violations of the ordinance would result in fines ranging up to \$500 for the first offense, \$500 to \$750 for a second offense, and no less than \$1,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 90 days or both for a third offense.

Dave Hutchinson may be reached at dhutchinson@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter [@DHutch_SL](#). Find [NJ.com on Facebook](#).

http://www.nj.com/somerset/index.ssf/2015/05/north_plainfield_to_ban_tobacco_sales_to_any_one_un.html