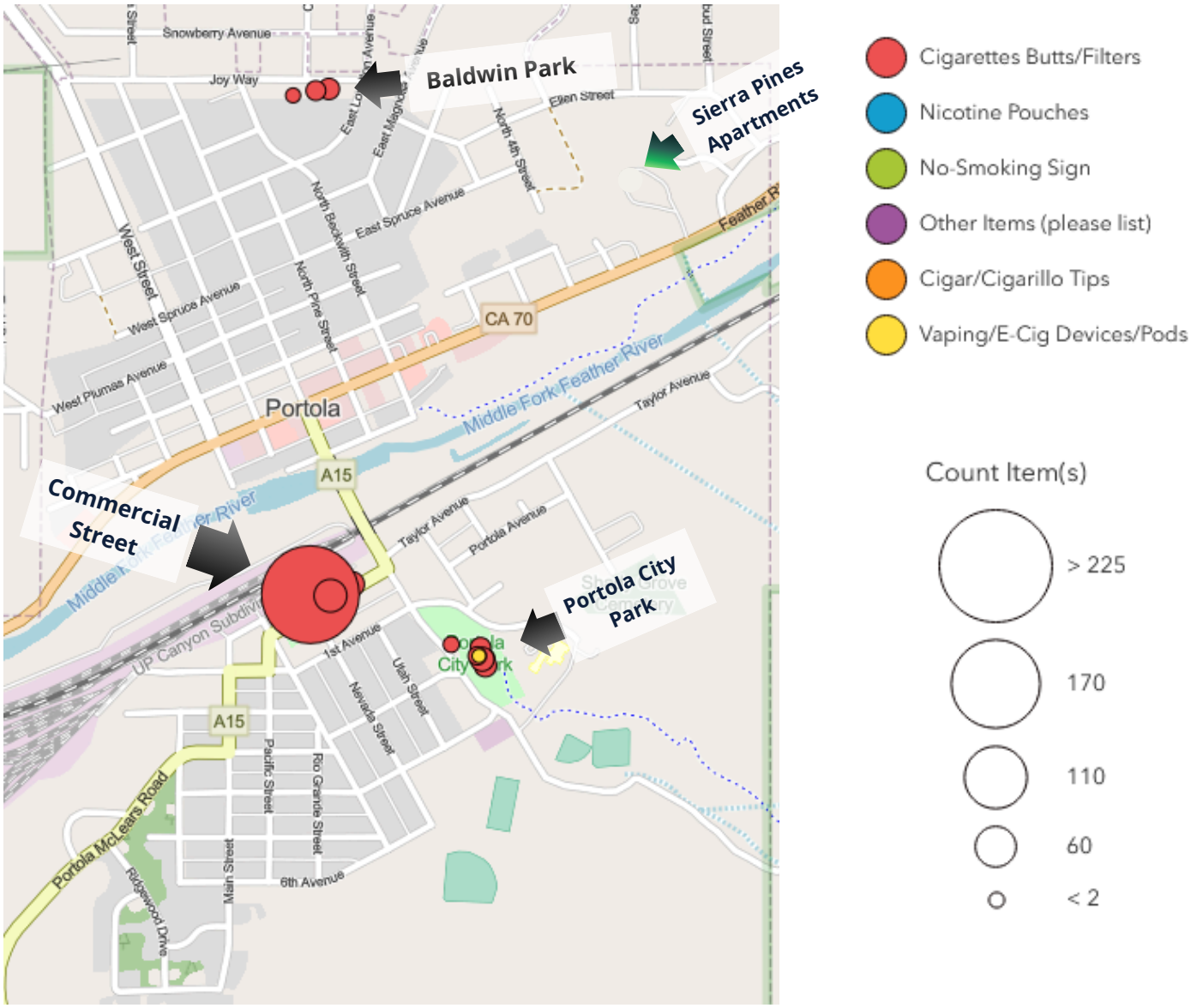
Observing Outdoor Areas for Tobacco-Related Signage and Litter

Sep - Oct 2025 in Portola, CA

CALIFORNIA HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

In September and October 2025, Smoke Free High Country (SFHC) program staff and volunteers conducted surveys at **four outdoor locations** in Portola CA. to check for tobacco-related signage and litter. These observations were done to gather baseline information about tobacco use in public spaces. The goal was to help program staff and city leaders decide whether the city might benefit from a smoke- and tobacco-free outdoor air policy. The findings for each location are outlined below.

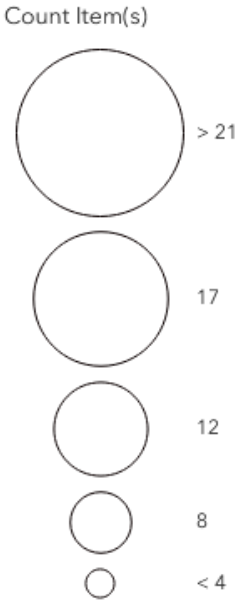
Portola CA, Tobacco Signage and Litter Survey Results, 2025

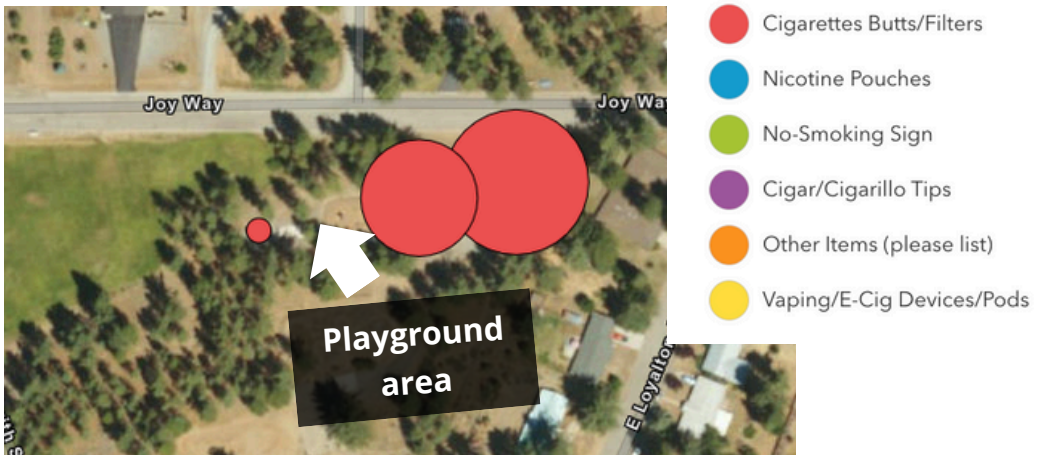


Baldwin Park

Baldwin Park Tobacco Litter Findings

- There are no smoke/tobacco free signs, designated smoking areas, or ash trays at this location.
- Staff counted **<u>144 cigarettes butts</u>** located in playground area, main walking pathway and parking curbside.





Baldwin park is a small park with a playground, picnic area, barbecue pits and restrooms. The observation occurred in the morning on Thursday, September 25, 2025, under favorable weather conditions. The observation took approximately 60 minutes and was completed by CHC SFHC Staff.



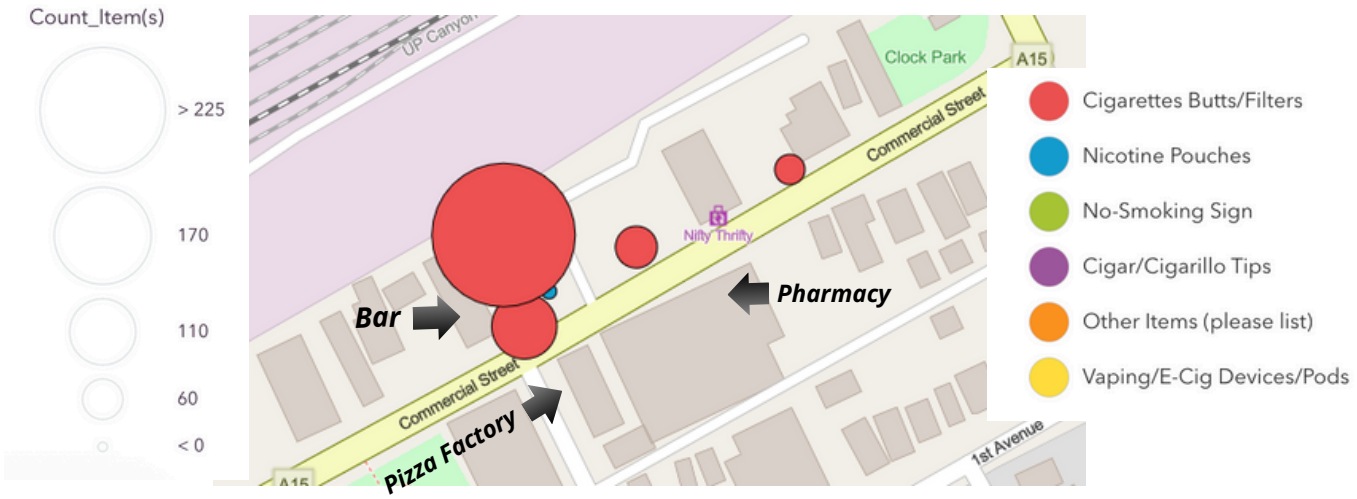


Tobacco litter found in playground area and walkway.

Commercial Street

Commercial Street Tobacco Litter Findings

- There are no smoke/tobacco free signs or designated smoking areas at this location.
- There is 1 ash tray by the bar's front door.
- Staff counted **457 cigarettes butts** located in front of the pizza factory, bar and pharmacy buildings, the sidewalks, and nearby parking lots.



The commercial street in Downtown Portola is the location for businesses like, thrift stores, pharmacy, a bar, pizza factory, small market and a smoke shop.

The observation occurred in the morning on Thursday, September 25, 2025, under favorable weather conditions. The observation took approximately 60 minutes and was completed by CHC SFHC Staff.





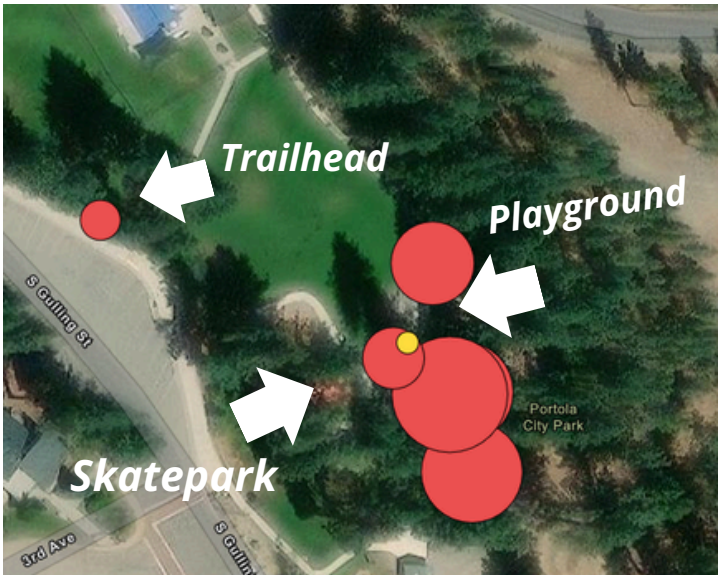


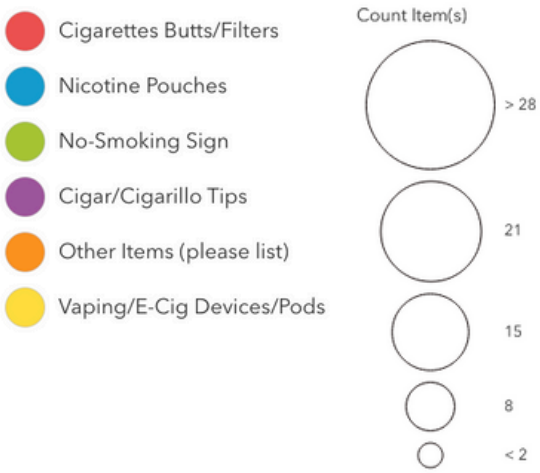
Tobacco litter found on sidewalk.

Portola City Park

Portola City Park Tobacco Litter Findings

- There are no smoke/tobacco free signs, designated smoking areas, or ash trays at this location.
- Staff counted **<u>98 cigarettes butts and 1 vape</u>** located in the playground area, skate park, picnic area and parking lots.





City park with pool, playground, skatepark, plaza, bicycle park, multiple grass areas, and large barbecue and picnic area.

The observation occurred in the morning on Thursday, September 18, 2025, under favorable weather conditions. The observation took approximately 90 minutes and was completed by CHC SFHC Staff.









Tobacco litter on picnic and playground area.

Sierra Pines Apartments

Sierra Pines Apartments Tobacco Litter Findings

- Tenants must sign a lease agreement that specifies a smoke-free environment.
- There is one smoke-free sign by leasing office door.
- There are no designated smoking areas or ashtrays at this location.
- Staff noted **<u>no tobacco litter</u>**.
- **The smoke-free policy lease agreement is working well**.



Apartment complex with playground, multiple apartment buildings and large parking lots. The observation occurred in the afternoon on Thursday, September 25, 2025, under favorable weather conditions. The observation took approximately 60 minutes and was completed by CHC SFHC Staff.







Clean parking lot, walkways and playground area.

Summary & Next Steps

Three of the four areas surveyed in Portola had a significant amount of tobacco litter, highlighting a potential need for policies that address this issue. These findings suggest that adding “tobacco-free” signs and introducing a smoke- and tobacco-free outdoor policy (like Sierra Pines Apartments) could help reduce tobacco waste and protect the local environment.

Next steps include exploring the public’s interest and the feasibility of creating a citywide ordinance to limit smoking and tobacco use in outdoor areas.