

# City Bans New Head Shops With Urgency Ordinance

*An ordinance passed Tuesday will put a moratorium on tobacco shops for 45 days while the council considers whether to ban new head shops permanently.*

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MONROVIA, CA



MORATORIUM

The City Council voted to place a moratorium on new tobacco shops Tuesday in the wake of public uproar over the opening of a new head shop in the heart of .

The urgency ordinance passed in a 4-1 vote with Councilman Tom Adams as the lone dissenter. It bans the issuance of business licenses to new head shops for 45 days while the council considers whether to make the ban permanent.

According to some residents, the moratorium came too late. A new head shop, O.G. Smoke Shop, obtained a business license and will take over a storefront at 512 South Myrtle Avenue.

Several residents decried the shop's opening at the council meeting Tuesday, saying that head shops increase the availability of drug paraphernalia like glass pipes and bongs used to smoke marijuana, methamphetamine and other illicit substances.

Pam Fitzpatrick, owner of the toy store in Old Town, said a moratorium should be passed even though it wouldn't keep O.G. out.

"I want to send a message to O.G. Smoke Shop that people don't want them here," she said.

Collin Spencer, listed as the owner of O.G. on its business license, did not return a message seeking comment on this story. The company's website boasts that its Azusa location carries "the largest selection of glassware in the SGV. Hand pipes, water pipes, specialty pipes, and hookah pipes."

Before the moratorium passed, Jamie Holes, parent of a student at , said the city should not just wind up confining smoke shops to certain zones. She wanted them banned outright.

"I'm concerned that we may be unsuccessful in dealing with a problem that we're not directly addressing," Holes told the council. "We're asking you to reduce access and availability of drug paraphernalia and synthetic drugs in the community and to our youth."

With the moratorium's passage, the city will now have 45 days before it must

take up the issue again. The ban can be extended to one or two years following a public hearing, City Attorney Craig Steele said. That time would allow the council to determine whether to ban the shops entirely or relegate them to certain zones.

Three smoke shops currently operate in Monrovia, and they will not be affected by the ban, Steele said. But the moratorium does make a “pretty strong community statement about the nature of that type of business in the city and what the council’s feeling is...,” he said.

In voting against the moratorium, Adams clarified that he was only against the use of urgency ordinances and would support a normal ordinance establishing a moratorium.