



Tropical Town, Smoke-Free Multi Unit Housing

Scenario for Decision Maker Matrix and Circles of Influence Webinar 12/03/2020

Your fictional community coalition, Bien Casa, has recently succeeded in passing a Tobacco Retail License (TRL) in the fictional City of Tropical Town and has begun looking for a new tobacco control issue. The City of Tropical Town is a predominantly working-class community, with 65% of the community identifying as Latinx. After assessing the political environment of their community to better understand the depth of community support, they found that 75% of residents living in multi-unit housing had been exposed to secondhand smoke. Based on a public opinion survey conducted of Tropical Town residents, the survey concluded that 70% of the residents supported a passage of a comprehensive smoke-free multi-unit housing ordinance.

The Bien Casa Coalition is currently supported by 3 full-time staff and 1 part-time staff of the Local Lead Agency. The coalition is led by two English only speaking co-chairs who have been in their positions for less than a year. The co-chairs are both community leaders who run local non-profits. The coalition has 15 coalition members, with 6 of those being traditional community organizations and 1 coalition member being non-traditional. There are no youth involved with Bien Casa. Coalition members include a PTA group from a local elementary school, The American Lung Association, and the Tropical Town Public Health Department. Additionally, although the American Heart Association is not a coalition member, they have a vested interest and have stated that they are an ally of the coalition. The coalition has built an email list that contains 80 constituents of Tropical Town, as well as a following of 120 people on their social media platforms. While the coalition has a small budget, several members of the coalition have offered a meeting space for large coalition meetings as well as offered to give various office resources.

The Tropical Town City Council is split on the ordinance, with the decisive vote belonging to Councilmember Lopez. Councilmember Lopez has lived in the district for 20 years and has strong ties to the community. He often attends church and is known for volunteering for non-profits such as the American Heart Association and various local non-profits that serve the needs of the community. Likewise, he is a former board member for his local YMCA.

In the 2016 General Election, Councilmember Lopez won his seat with 57% percent of the total vote. In the 2018 General Election, Councilmember Lopez was re-elected in a close election with 51% of the total vote, compared to his progressive challenger, who obtained 49% of the vote. His top campaign supporters were the Tropical Town Teachers Union, the Tropical Town Chamber of Commerce, and the Tropical Town Apartment Association. Although he has courted support from unions, other than the Tropical Town Teachers Union, he has not secured their endorsements for his campaigns. He has also been endorsed by Councilmember Lee on the City Council who has previously committed to supporting the ordinance in the past.

The Tropical Town Tenant's Union has long been resistant to a Smoke-Free multi-unit housing ordinance but have never taken an official position of opposition. They have made posts online against Bien Casa Coalition and will likely advocate for keeping the status quo, thereby opposing the ordinance.

According to a local organization that rates the voting patterns of local elected officials in Tropical Town, Councilmember Lopez is considered a moderate who is known to listen to community members before making decisions. Councilmember Lopez previously supported the Tropical Town TRL but is hesitant to pass further tobacco control policies.

