

# Distance of Schools in Blacksburg and Christiansburg VA from Tobacco Retailers



*An Analysis of Proximity and Potential Exposure*

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## Introduction - What's the Point?

- To educate teens, parents, and community members about the health risks of vaping
- To counter the marketing tactics of vaping companies
- To prevent students from partaking in tobacco and vaping use to begin with
- To empower students and parents to make informed decisions and protect their health

# Local Ordinances in Virginia

While there isn't a specific state law that regulates the distance between schools and tobacco retailers, local ordinances are empowered to enact a 1,000 ft. distance prohibition to schools.



# Blacksburg Middle & High School

Blacksburg Middle & High school are both less than a mile (0.5 & 0.7 miles) walk from a **Food Lion**, where alcohol, tobacco, and vaping products are sold.



# Kipps Elementary School

Kipps Elementary School is also less than a mile (0.3 mile) walk away from Food Lion.



# Gilbert Linkous Elementary

Gilbert Linkous Elementary is approximately a 0.5 mile walk from a 7-11 and Marathon gas station, and a 0.7 mile walk from a Mobil and Shell gas station.



# Prices Fork Elementary

Prices Fork Elementary is a 0.6 mile walk from **Gobble Stop** (a convenience store) and a 0.7 mile walk from a **Sunoco** gas station, where alcohol and tobacco products are sold.



# Margaret Beeks Elementary

Margaret Beeks Elementary School is approximately a 0.6 mile walk from an **ABC** store and a 0.7 walk from a **Tobacco & Vape** shop.



# Harding Avenue Elementary School

Harding Ave. Elementary School is a 0.5-mile walk from a Shell gas station, a 0.6-mile walk from a 7-11 gas station, and a 0.9-mile walk from a smoke shop on Main Street. The school is also less than a mile away from all of the bars and restaurants in downtown Blacksburg.



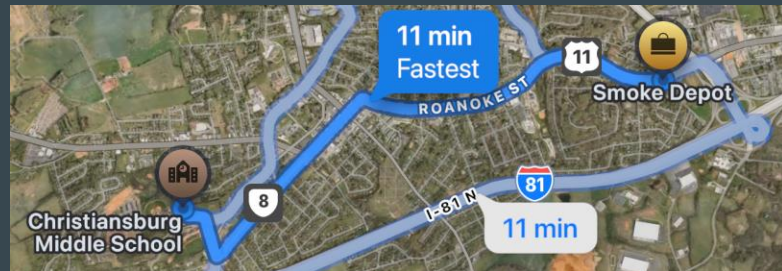
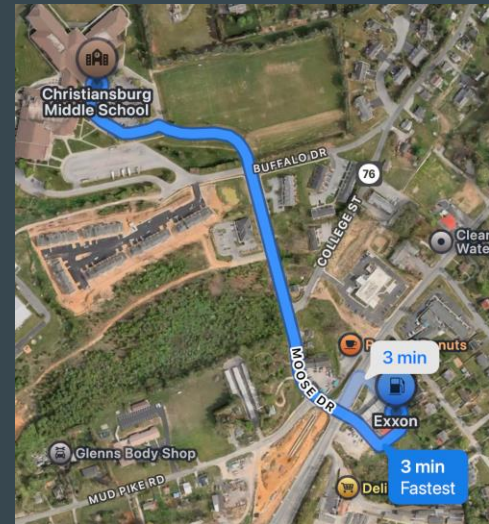
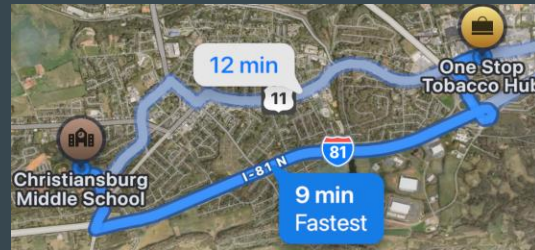
# Christiansburg High School

Christiansburg High School is a 0.8-mile drive from Food Lion, a 0.9-mile drive from Christiansburg Tobacco & Vape, and a 1.0-mile drive from Kroger.



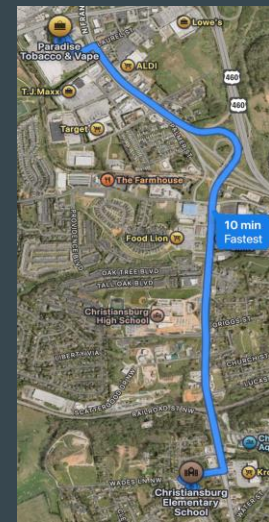
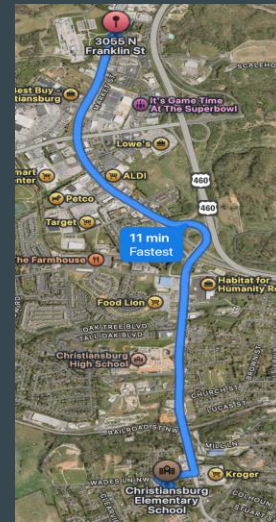
# Christiansburg Middle School

Christiansburg Middle School is a 0.5-mile drive from Exxon, a 3.2-mile drive from Smoke Depot, and a 3.7-mile drive from One Stop Tobacco Hub.



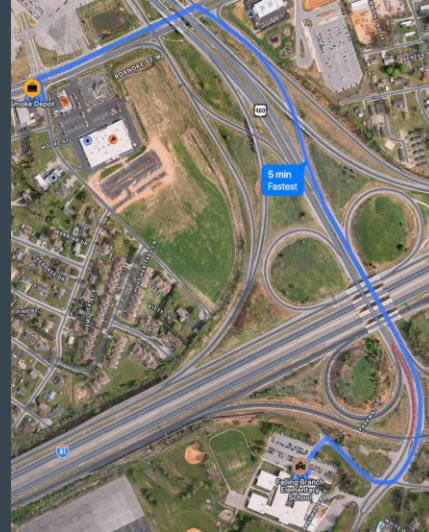
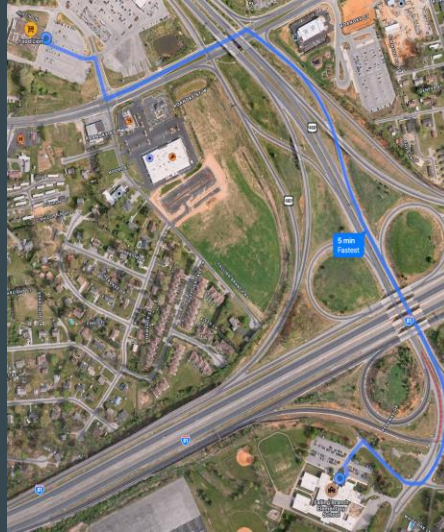
# Christiansburg Elementary School

Christiansburg Elementary School is a 0.4-mile drive from Kroger, a 1.17-mile drive from Christiansburg Tobacco & Vape, a 1.92-mile drive from Paradise Tobacco & Vape, and a 2.57-mile drive from Christiansburg Tobacco CTR LLC.



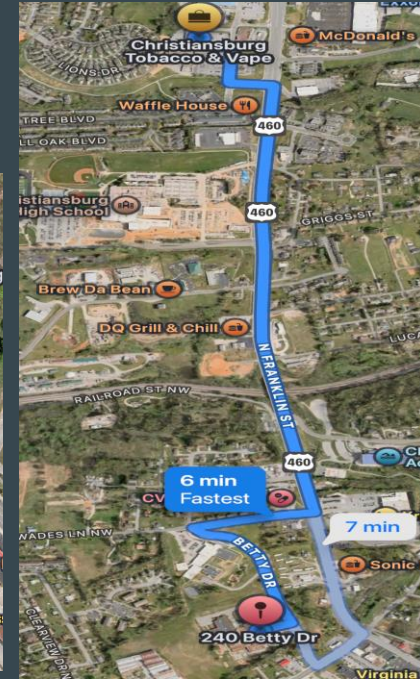
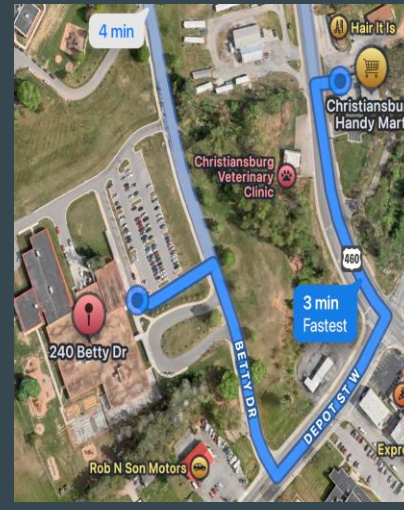
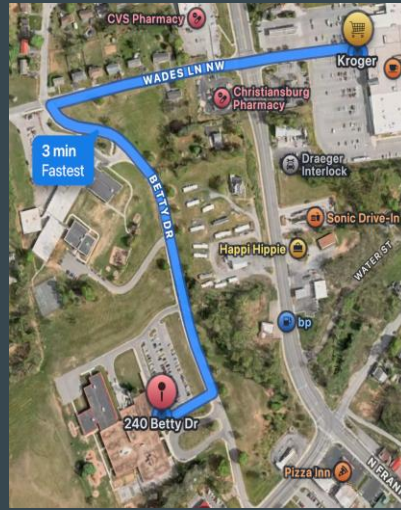
# Falling Branch Elementary School

Falling Branch Elementary School is a 1-mile drive from Smoke Depot, a 1-mile drive from One Stop Tobacco Hub, and a 1.1-mile drive from Food Lion.



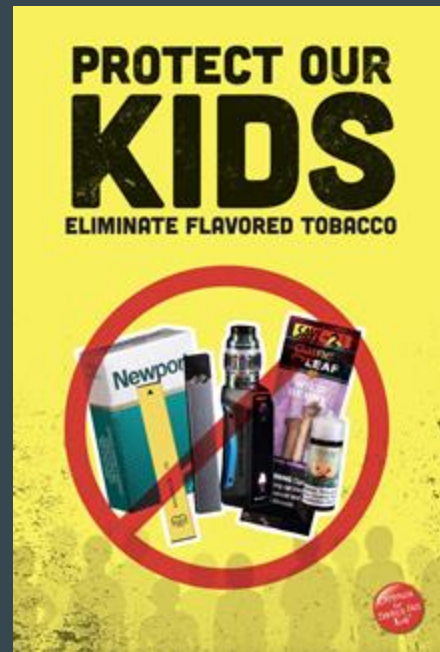
# Christiansburg Primary School

Christiansburg Primary School is a 1.27-mile drive from Christiansburg Tobacco & Vape, a 0.6-mile drive from Kroger, and a 0.4-mile drive from Christiansburg Handy Mart.



# Blacksburg Findings

- While all of the schools in Blacksburg were less than a mile from somewhere that sells alcohol, tobacco, or vape products, none of the school were in violation of the regulation that states tobacco and vaping products cannot be sold within 1,000 feet of a school.
- Tobacco and vaping products are easily accessible to students if they find a way to purchase them. Whether this be through a friend or family member, or by having a fake ID.



# Christiansburg Findings

There are a total of 6 Tobacco and Vape shops alone in Christiansburg

- Christiansburg Tobacco & Vape
- Paradise Tobacco & Vape
- Christiansburg Tobacco CTR LLC
- Smokey's Tobacco Outlet
- Smoke Depot
- One Stop Tobacco Hub

There are 5 Retailers and two Gas Stations that sell tobacco and vape products, alongside alcoholic beverages

- Kroger
- Food Lion
- Walmart
- Christiansburg Handy Mart
- Exxon

A notable concern is the placement of Christiansburg Tobacco CTR LLC, located at 3055 N Franklin Street, directly across from Corning. The shop sits in front of a mobile home community and adjacent to a public bus stop. This proximity raises serious concerns about public health and safety, particularly as children frequently gather at this bus stop. The issue calls for closer examination of zoning and regulatory decisions made by Montgomery County and or the Town of Christiansburg.



# How to Promote Healthy Choices



- **Education & Awareness Campaigns:** School programs, community workshops, and digital campaigns to inform youth about the dangers of vaping
- **Social Media Engagement:** Use platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat to share facts, stories, and testimonials about the negative impacts of vaping
- **Peer Support Programs:** Encourage students to support each other in making healthy choices and avoiding vaping
- **Alternative Activities:** Promote extracurricular activities, sports, and hobbies as positive alternatives to vaping
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders to amplify the message

# How to Protect Each Other

- **Restricting Retailer Locations:** Advocate for zoning laws that prohibit tobacco retailers near schools, parks, and other youth-frequented areas
- **Smoke-Free Zones:** Implement and enforce smoke-free policies in schools, parks, and public spaces
- **Raising the Minimum Age:** Support laws that increase the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products, including vapes
- **Stricter Advertising Regulations:** Implement regulations that restrict tobacco advertising and marketing, especially those targeting youth



# How the Community can Contribute

**Social Norms:** The visibility of vaping and tobacco retailers in our community can subtly normalize these behaviors, especially among youth. When young people are constantly exposed to these products, it can create the impression that vaping and tobacco use are acceptable or even desirable.

**Possible Disparities:** It's important to recognize that certain communities, particularly low-income and minority neighborhoods, often face a disproportionately high concentration of tobacco retailers. This disparity leads to significant health inequities and perpetuates a cycle of disadvantages.

**Community Impact:** A high density of tobacco retailers can negatively impact our community by decreasing property values, creating loitering issues, and contributing to an unsafe environment. These businesses can attract crime and disrupt the overall quality of life.

**Collective Responsibility:** Creating a healthy community requires a collective effort. We must all work together to address the issue of vaping and tobacco use, and support policies that protect our young people and promote a healthier future for all.

# Encouraging Notes to End on

- This project highlights the importance of community involvement and informed decision-making in creating environments that support the well-being of our youth.
- The insights gained from this project can serve as a foundation for implementing effective policies and interventions that protect students from harmful effects of tobacco and vaping products.
- We truly need everyone in our community to get involved in advocating for policies that reduce tobacco retailer density and promote smoke-free environments. Your voice matters, and together we can create a healthier place for everyone.

# Resources

- Kong AY, Delamater PL, Gottfredson NC, Ribisl KM, Baggett CD, Golden SD. Neighborhood Inequities in Tobacco Retailer Density and the Presence of Tobacco-Selling Pharmacies and Tobacco Shops. *Health Education & Behavior*. 2021;49(3):478-487. doi:[10.1177/10901981211008390](https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981211008390)
- Scott P. Novak, Sean F. Reardon, Stephen W. Raudenbush, Stephen L. Buka, “Retail Tobacco Outlet Density and Youth Cigarette Smoking: A Propensity-Modeling Approach”, *American Journal of Public Health* 96, no. 4 (April 1, 2006): pp. 670-676. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2004.061622>
- Adams ML, Jason LA, Pokorny S, Hunt Y. Exploration of the link between tobacco retailers in school neighborhoods and student smoking. [Exploration of the Link Between Tobacco Retailers in School Neighborhoods and Student Smoking - Adams - 2013 - Journal of School Health - Wiley Online Library](#)
- Jennifer Leeman, Allison Myers, Jennifer C. Grant, Mary Wangen, Tara L. Queen, Implementation strategies to promote community-engaged efforts to counter tobacco marketing at the point of sale, *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, Volume 7, Issue 3, September 2017, Pages 405–414, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13142-017-0489-x>