

City details process for developing regulations for non-medical cannabis retail sales

(Penticton BC, March 20, 2018) – The recommended approach to determining Penticton’s position on retail sales of non-medical cannabis (NMC) in the community was endorsed by Council during their Committee of the Whole meeting held March 20, 2018. As a next step, the City will run a comprehensive engagement program to involve the community in determining whether or not to allow retail sales of non-medical cannabis in the city and if yes, what regulations are needed.

“Now that there is more information on how the federal and provincial governments are planning to move forward, we can start looking at what it means to our community,” says Blake Laven, Planning Manager. “Most of the rules are set by the federal and provincial governments similar to how alcohol and smoking are regulated. Our focus will be on the local retail environment.”

Through the engagement program, staff will seek input from the community to answer the following questions:

- Do residents support retail sales of non-medical cannabis? And if yes,
- How many should be allowed and where can they locate?
- What hours of operation are acceptable?
- Should there be any special requirements for things like appearance or security?
- What should the process for licensing be?
- How should the first licenses be issued?
- Should there be any restrictions on public consumption in addition to the rules for smoking in public?

Engagement activities will include regular information sharing through shapeyourcitypenticton.ca as well as a city-wide survey and open house events as the work progresses. “This is a potentially controversial subject as well as new territory for all municipal governments so a higher level of community involvement is warranted,” says JoAnne Kleb, Engagement Strategist.

The City will develop its position in four phases:

- Phase 1 will raise awareness of the need and invite community feedback through a city-wide survey
- Phase 2 will report the findings and share initial drafts of regulations with the community
- Phase 3 will incorporate community feedback into the regulations and share the final drafts
- Phase 4 will make any revisions necessary and provide the regulations to Council for review

The goal is to complete the process before this fall.

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