



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recreational cannabis in Vernon

As Canada enters a new age of legalized recreational cannabis it is important to know the responsibilities of the various levels of government. The federal, provincial and territorial governments share responsibility for overseeing the proposed new system. Municipalities also have an important role to play.

Federal responsibilities

The federal [Cannabis Act](#) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2018, setting the stage for the production, distribution, sale, possession, and consumption of non-medical cannabis, beginning October 17, 2018.

The Federal Government will be responsible for licensing and monitoring cannabis producers and for setting industry-wide rules and standards for the cultivation, processing, packaging and advertising of non-medical cannabis.

Provincial responsibilities

Provinces and territories control the distribution and retail sales of non-medical cannabis within their jurisdictions. The BC Provincial Government has appointed the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) to be the exclusive wholesale distributor of non-medical cannabis, while retail sales will be offered to the public through a combination of government and privately owned stores, as well as online through the government site.

For more information, visit the [Provincial cannabis retail sales webpage](#).

Municipal responsibilities

Municipal governments can regulate retail, cultivation, processing and research locations through their zoning authority, and some aspects of retail operations through their business licensing authority. Municipal governments may also support the federal and provincial governments with public education. Enforcement of cannabis sales rules and regulations is largely through the provincial government, except for the land use and licensing aspects that are regulated by municipal government.

The City of Vernon is proposing to amend Zoning Bylaw #5000 to permit **cannabis sales** in the following commercial zoning districts: C3 to C12 – Commercial, RTC – Resort Commercial, CD1 and CD5 – Comprehensive Development District.

In addition, the proposed amendments would permit **cannabis cultivation** facilities (medical, non-medical, micro-cultivation, hemp and nurseries) in the A1 – Agriculture within the ALR (a minimum of 50 m from any property where residential is the principal use) and I1 – Light Industrial districts (in enclosed buildings only), pursuant to licensing by the federal government.

Also, the proposed amendments would permit **cannabis processing**, micro-processing, analytical testing and research in the I1 – Light Industrial and I4 – Business Park zoning districts.

These proposed zoning changes will be brought before City Council in the coming weeks. A public hearing will be held to gather public input on the proposed zoning changes.

Recreational versus medical cannabis

While recreational cannabis use is now legal in Canada, it is important to keep in mind that medical cannabis is officially available with a physician's prescription by mail order and is regulated by the federal government. You cannot buy prescription cannabis at a retail location.

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Resources

Government of Canada [Cannabis Act](#)

Province of BC [Cannabis Control and Licensing Act](#)

City of Vernon [Parks and Public Places Bylaw #5057](#)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities' [Guide to Cannabis Legalization](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I use recreational cannabis?

Smoking and vaping of all products is allowed on private property unless otherwise prohibited.

Smoking and vaping is permitted on sidewalks provided it is not within 6 m of a doorway or air intake, and provided the sidewalk is not adjacent to a school or playground. Smoking and vaping of all products is prohibited at transit stops, parks, playgrounds, schools, lake access sites and boat launches.

Will the City of Vernon enforce the no smoking/no vaping bylaw?

Yes. Bylaw officers may issue warnings for the short term however they reserve the right to issue tickets to gain compliance.

Who should I call if I see someone smoking or vaping outside of the designated areas?

Citizens can call the Bylaw department at 250-550-3505. Bylaw Compliance Officers will attend; however more serious calls are attended to first, which may delay arrival. You can also use the *VernonConnect* app to report concerns. The app is available for iOS and Android devices.

Can I legally buy cannabis in Vernon on and after October 17, 2018?

Cannabis can be purchased from provincially-licensed cannabis retailers; however, as of October 17, 2018, there are no provincially-licensed retailers in Vernon. This will change over time.