

# RECREATIONAL CANNABIS in MACKENZIE

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## FACT SHEET



April 2018



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### FOREWORD:

The Federal Government is planning to introduce Cannabis Legislation later this year. The District of Mackenzie has created this fact sheet to explain our plan going forward and how we will be including residents in the long term planning, regulation and allowance of recreational cannabis use and sales within the District of Mackenzie.

## Overview

The Government of Canada introduced the *Cannabis Act* on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, which is scheduled to come into force on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. This legislation will legalize non-medical cannabis and allow provinces and territories to take responsibility for developing, implementing, maintaining and enforcing regulations to oversee the distribution, retail sale and use of recreational cannabis, in close collaboration with local governments. In British Columbia, the Provincial Government has begun developing some recreational cannabis regulations that includes determining which regulatory areas will be shared with or delegated to local governments (e.g. the District of Mackenzie).

These regulations cover areas that include:

- Minimum age of possession
- Retail sales and wholesale distribution
- Possession limits
- Places of use
- Personal cultivation
- Drug impaired driving

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are Illegal Cannabis Dispensaries?

The issue currently being addressed by the District is to prevent the establishment of illegal non-medical cannabis dispensaries, an issue that is being dealt with throughout the province. Although still technically illegal under Federal and Provincial law, non-medical dispensaries have been opened across Canada, including many throughout British Columbia. These “retail” facilities include stores and cafes.

### Why are Illegal Dispensaries an Issue?

The Provincial Government has yet to develop or clarify several recreational cannabis regulatory areas, including which areas local governments will have a say on. There is simply not enough detailed direction on how the communities in British Columbia will manage and regulate recreational cannabis in their communities at this point. Until there is clearer direction, communities have been strongly recommended by legal counsel to take steps necessary to ensure illegal dispensaries do not open prior to being fully legalized and regulated.

Illegal dispensaries that open now and remain open could end up contravening future Provincial and local regulations that are being continuously developed in preparation for the July 1<sup>st</sup> legalization date. This could cause issues for both the District, property

owners and business owners. There is also no reliable way at this point in ensuring that products sold at illegal dispensaries are safe for consumption, as they are illegally sourced and not monitored. In addition, illegal dispensaries may cause grievances in the community in relation to their location, appearance, operating hours and other aspects of their operation.

Some of the communities that have acted recently to prohibit illegal dispensaries include:

- Taylor
- Chilliwack
- Richmond
- Abbotsford
- Langley
- Campbell River

### What is the District of Mackenzie’s Plan?

Although, at this time, there are no known illegal cannabis dispensaries in Mackenzie, the District is undertaking the following approach for future recreational cannabis regulation:

**Temporarily close existing grey areas and loopholes in District Bylaws to prohibit any non-medical dispensaries.**

The District is currently evaluating existing local bylaws, such as the Zoning and Business License Bylaws, to identify amendments required to enable enforcement against potential illegal dispensaries. Necessary amendments are planned to undergo the reading and adoption process beginning at the **April 23, 2018 Regular Meeting of Council.**



## Wait for further details on provincial recreational cannabis regulation

The District, along with communities throughout British Columbia, will wait for further details on the Provincial regulation for cannabis, including what areas local governments will have a say on. Once more direction is given, the District will have a better understanding of how to develop regulations for recreational cannabis sales, cultivation and use that meet the community's needs and align with Provincial and Federal regulations.

## Work with the community to develop local recreational cannabis regulations

Once the District has a better understanding of how we can regulate recreational cannabis from the local level, we will reach out and engage the community on developing appropriate regulations. Engagement will be conducted to allow community members the opportunity to provide input on how the District will regulate recreational cannabis in the community. It is forecasted that the engagement and regulation development will take place this upcoming summer.

## How will the District engage residents and how can you stay informed during this process?

We want to hear from you! The District will be providing opportunities to hear your thoughts and concerns regarding recreational cannabis legalization here in Mackenzie, including public hearings, an open house, information booth, and public surveys. Please help us by attending these events and sharing your feedback.

**Community Information Booth** – May 5, 2018 at Mackenzie Recreation Centre.

**Public Hearing for Zoning & Business License Bylaw Amendments** – May 14, 2018 at 6:30 pm, Council Chambers.

Visit [www.district.mackenzie.bc.ca](http://www.district.mackenzie.bc.ca) or our District Facebook Page for any further information and updates. If you have any questions please contact the District Office at 250-997-3221.

## Introduction of Cannabis - Process Overview

### Step 1: Temporarily Prohibit Recreational Cannabis Sales & Public Use within Mackenzie

Staff will recommend that Council adopt several bylaws that will initially prohibit the recreational use and commercial sale of cannabis within the District of Mackenzie boundaries until further Provincial guidelines have been released and we can properly plan and consult with the public to create meaningful and successful policy and enforcement strategies that meet the needs of the community.

### Step 2: Public Consultation & Survey

Once the Province has released its regulations and guidelines for local governments, we will complete an extensive public engagement campaign to find out your interests for regulation.

### Step 3: New Regulations will be Developed, Adopted, and Enforced

After reviewing the public comments and finalized Federal & Provincial Legislation, the District will develop and adopt new regulations for use and commercial sales of recreational cannabis within the community. The bylaw adoption process will allow further public comment. Once adopted, the new regulations will be enforced.



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