



City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
September 16, 2014

SUBJECT

Proposed six-month extension of the Interim Land Use Regulations concerning the production, processing, and retail sale of recreational marijuana.

SUMMARY

On November 5, 2013, the City Council adopted Substitute Ordinance No. 28182, putting in place the Recreational Marijuana Interim Regulations. As codified in Chapters 13.06, 13.06A and 13.10 of the Tacoma Municipal Code, the interim regulations adopt three new marijuana-specific uses (i.e., Marijuana Production, Marijuana Processing, and Marijuana Retail) and provide zoning and development standards concerning these uses. The interim regulations are effective for a one-year period from November 17, 2013 to November 16, 2014, and if extended as proposed, would continue to be effective through May 16, 2015.

BACKGROUND

Initiative 502, approved by Washington voters in November 2012, provides a framework for licensing and regulating the production, processing, and retail sale of recreational marijuana. The Washington State Liquor Control Board ("WSLCB") was tasked with establishing rules and procedures to implement Initiative 502. The WSLCB was scheduled to release the rules and procedures and begin accepting applications for all license types in November 2013.

In response, the City Council enacted the interim regulations to provide policy and regulatory guidance to facilitate the review, in a proactive and timely manner, of those marijuana license applications within the City limits that were expected to come forward starting December 2013. The interim regulations were also intended to allow adequate time for the City to evaluate the operation and impacts of the licensed marijuana businesses, and allow the state to rectify the outstanding problems with the existing, largely unregulated medical marijuana system, before deliberating a permanent regulatory resolution.

The WSLCB began issuing marijuana production and processing licenses in March 2014 and retailing licenses in July 2014. As of July 2014, within Tacoma, two production/processing licenses have been issued and one retail shop has opened. While the state legislature deliberated potential changes to address the medical marijuana industry in 2014 they did not adopt any changes. Considering the fledgling stage of recreational marijuana licensing and operation within the City, the unresolved issues regarding medical marijuana at the state level, and the unresolved conflict between Initiative 502 and federal law, it is premature to develop a permanent regulatory resolution. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the City to keep the interim regulations in effect upon their expiration in November 2014.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please visit the Planning Services Division's website at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning and click on "Recreational Marijuana".