



City of Missoula, Montana
City Council Committee Agenda Item

Committee: Public Safety, Health and Operations
Item: Code Amendments and Resolution Response to Spike in Youth Cannabis Use
Date: June 5, 2024
Sponsor(s): Gwen Jones
Department or function: Community Planning, Development and Innovation
Prepared by: Eran Pehan

- Ward(s) Affected:**
- Ward 1
 - Ward 2
 - Ward 3
 - All Wards
 - Ward 4
 - Ward 5
 - Ward 6
 - N/A

Action Required:
Adopt code amendments and a resolution initiating a moratorium on new business licenses for cannabis operations.

Recommended Motion(s):
I move the City Council: **(06/24/2024) [First reading and preliminary adoption]** Set a public hearing for July 8, 2024 on an ordinance amending Title 5 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Section 5.08.121 to enact a prohibition on new business licenses for retail adult use cannabis dispensaries pending review of the regulations applicable to such operations as a part of the City’s Uniform Development Code Project. **(06/24/2024) [First reading and preliminary adoption]** Set a public hearing for July 8, 2024 on an ordinance amending Title 8 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Chapter 8.39 entitled “Restrictions on the Sale of Transaction of Cannabis Products” intended to impose additional regulations concerning the sale of transaction of cannabis products in the City, including imposing a new criminal sanction of those that sell or give cannabis products to individuals under 21 years of age. **(07/08/2024) [Final reading and adoption]** (Adopt/deny) an ordinance amending Title 5 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Section 5.08.121 to enact a prohibition on new business licenses for retail adult use cannabis dispensaries pending review of the regulations applicable to such operations as a part of the City’s Uniform Development Code Project. **(07/08/2024) [Final reading and adoption]** (Adopt/deny) an ordinance amending Title 8 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Chapter 8.39 entitled “Restrictions on the Sale of Transaction of Cannabis Products” intended to impose additional regulations concerning the sale of transaction of cannabis products in the City, including imposing a new criminal sanction of those that sell or give cannabis products to individuals under 21 years of age. **(07/08/2024)** (Adopt/deny) a resolution initiating a moratorium on accepting new business license applications for cannabis dispensary operations and calling for a review of the public health concerns regarding the large number of cannabis dispensary operations within the City.

Timeline:

Committee discussion: 06/12/2024
Council action (or sets hearing): 06/24/2024
Public Hearing (if required): 07/08/2024
Deadline: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Background and Alternatives Explored:

According to the state’s Cannabis Control Division, Missoula County is home to 59 cannabis dispensaries and has one of the highest numbers of dispensaries per capita in the nation. Even though the legal age for marijuana consumption is 21, youth marijuana usage has spiked since statewide legalization began in 2020. In 2021, 24.5% of Missoula County high schoolers used marijuana on a regular basis, compared to 20% in 2019, which indicates a 22% increase in just two years, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Between 2016 to 2021, emergency department encounters and hospitalizations for cannabis-related disorders increased 32% for teens ages 15 to 19 in Missoula County, according to the Montana Hospital Association and the Center for Population Health Research at the University of Montana.

The proposed amendments to Title 5 and Title 8, along with a resolution supporting the Title 5 amendments, will allow the City to use the regulatory tools at our disposal to address the spike in youth cannabis use while providing additional time to develop a more comprehensive approach.

Financial Implications:**Links to external websites:**

Special Presentation Committee of the Whole: Youth Cannabis Use Presentation (<https://pub-missoula.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=3939b7e6-90d7-47b7-897e-fb2ccfd8e87c&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>) [Cannwechat.org](https://cannwechat.org)