

Commercial Cannabis Signage Ordinance

Questions & Answers | November 14, 2017



Summary

The Commercial Cannabis Signage Ordinance is a proposed Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) amendment that would establish restrictions on advertising of cannabis and cannabis products on signs in the City.

The purpose of the ordinance is to limit children's exposure to advertising of cannabis and cannabis products, to reduce the illegal purchase and consumption of cannabis by children, and to reduce the likelihood of children suffering potential negative impacts as a result of consuming cannabis at an early age.

Background

On March 7, 2017, Los Angeles voters passed Proposition M, which requires the City Council to repeal existing Proposition D restrictions on medical cannabis dispensaries and create a comprehensive regulatory framework for all commercial cannabis activity. Proposition M was passed in response to recent State legislation removing prohibitions on adult use of cannabis and regulating commercial cannabis activity.

In response to Proposition M, the City Council has already created the Department of Cannabis Regulation and the Cannabis Commission. The City Council is currently considering the enactment of proposed regulations for commercial cannabis activity, including location restrictions, operating standards, and a process for applying for licenses. The draft Commercial Cannabis Signage Ordinance is intended to work in conjunction with these proposed regulations to address the specific issue of reducing children's exposure to cannabis advertising.

Questions & Answers

Why is the Commercial Cannabis Signage Ordinance needed?

The draft ordinance seeks to limit children's exposure to advertising of cannabis and cannabis products, to reduce the illegal purchase and consumption of cannabis by children, and to reduce the likelihood of children suffering potential negative impacts as a result of consuming cannabis. According to academic research, heavy or regular cannabis use, especially before age 18, is often associated with negative consequences including reduced working memory, reduced higher order executive functions, and impacts on emotion. The draft ordinance seeks to prevent these harms by restricting cannabis advertising and reducing the chances that children will begin using cannabis.

What does the Commercial Cannabis Signage Ordinance do?

- Prohibits cannabis advertising on off-site signs (also known as billboards) that are located within 800 feet of sensitive locations, including alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities, public libraries, public parks, schools, and residentially zoned property. The prohibition would not apply to signs inside of buildings, signs on commercial vehicles used for transporting cannabis, and public service messages opposing the use of cannabis.
- Limits a cannabis business to one on-site sign that has a maximum size of 75 square feet. The sign may only display the name of the business, the logogram of business, and the business' address, hours of operation and contact information.
- Prohibits portable signs or sandwich signs located in the public right-of-way in front of a cannabis business, as well as digital and spinner signs.
- Allows a cannabis business to display signs required by a government agency and signs for security agencies whose aggregate size is limited to 30 square inches.

What is commercial cannabis activity, and how is it different from personal cannabis use?

Commercial cannabis activity includes the cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, transportation, dispensing, or sale of any part of the cannabis plant or of cannabis-derived products, whether for medical or nonmedical (“recreational”) use.

Individuals may, however, purchase, possess, and use small amounts of cannabis for personal use; and cultivate up to six living cannabis plants at a personal residence for personal use. These activities are considered personal use of cannabis and would not be affected by the City’s regulations on commercial cannabis activity.

What are the next steps?

The City Planning Commission is scheduled to consider the proposed amendment at its regular meeting on December 14, 2017. The meeting is open to the public and all interested persons are welcome to attend and offer testimony on the draft ordinance. The recommendation of the Commission will be transmitted to the City Council and the Mayor.

How can I get more information or share my input?

The full text of the ordinance may be found at <http://planning.lacity.org> under “Ordinances” and “Proposed Ordinances.”

Interested persons wishing to comment on the draft ordinance may do so at the City Planning Commission meeting on December 14, 2017. Written comments on the draft ordinance should be addressed directly to the City Planning Commission at CPC@lacity.org and copied to niall.huffman@lacity.org.

For questions, or to join our interested parties list for future updates on the proposed ordinance, please contact Niall Huffman, niall.huffman@lacity.org, (213) 978-3405.