



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

November 10, 2015

Honorable Tim Burgess, President  
Seattle City Council  
City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Burgess:

I am pleased to transmit the attached proposed Ordinance that will help ensure neighborhoods are not overburdened with clusters of cannabis retail stores and that patients in the new medical cannabis retail system will have access to stores throughout the city.

Two concerns that I've heard from residents throughout the City since my first days in office were of the unregulated growth and clustering of medical cannabis dispensaries. To help address the problem of the growing number of dispensaries, I introduced and City Council unanimously passed a package of bills that would allow the City to stop the opening of new unregulated dispensaries, close bad actors, and close those locations that have opened since January 2013. Since enactment of those bills, 59 dispensaries have voluntarily closed due to their being out of compliance with the new ordinance; including 3 locations that sold FAS Inspectors medical cannabis without a medical authorization. There are approximately 49 medical dispensaries that remain open and have an opportunity to obtain their state license; in addition to the 19 fully-licensed recreational stores.

Currently, the Liquor and Cannabis Board is accepting applications for new cannabis retail stores and of the 600 applications they have received; 200 are being proposed for Seattle. In addition, the LCB has informed my staff that they expect to begin issuing new licenses in December. The legislation that I am now sending to the City Council will help ensure that our City will be able to address the current clustering of medical cannabis retail locations and ensure that any new locations that open are reasonably distanced from other cannabis retail stores.

The proposal is two-fold. Per authority granted local jurisdictions by the state legislature this past summer, this ordinance would reduce the 1000 foot buffer zone that all marijuana businesses must locate away from to 500 feet for any entity that is not a school or public playground. The buffer zone for schools and public playgrounds would remain at 1000 feet. The second part of the proposal would then create a new 500 foot dispersion zone around each cannabis retail store so that no cannabis store is closer than 500 feet to another cannabis retail store; which is approximately one to two blocks.

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These changes go hand in hand. Current fully-licensed cannabis retailers have told me of their difficulty in finding suitable locations to site their businesses under the current rules. They have confronted either exorbitant rents or landlords unwilling to speak with them due to the nature of their business. Further, at a 1000 foot buffer, only a handful of neighborhoods which are predominately in the south end of the city, have the capacity to locate businesses. Reducing the buffer zone allows for new areas to site a potential business in a more fair and equitable manner throughout the city. Additionally, creating a new dispersion zone will prevent the undesirable clustering of dispensaries in neighborhoods.

In order to ensure no single neighborhood is overburdened with stores and patients have access to medical cannabis throughout the City, I ask you and other members of the Seattle City Council to adopt this ordinance. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Should you have questions, please contact David B. Mendoza at (206) 386-1256.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. B. Murray", with a long, sweeping underline.

Edward B. Murray  
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Seattle City Council