

Rezoning Application for 101-3377 Coast Meridian Road

RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee of Council direct staff to bring forward:

- 1) Amendments to the Cannabis Establishment Policy as described in this report; and*
- 2) An amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to permit a cannabis retail outlet at unit #101-3377 Coast Meridian Road.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

April 18, 2023 - Council adopted a zoning bylaw amendment to allow for a cannabis retail outlet at 1760 Kingsway Avenue.

July 23 and November 12, 2019 - Council adopted zoning bylaw amendments to allow for cannabis retail outlets at 1971 Lougheed Highway, 2755 Lougheed Highway, 1502 Broadway Street and 970 Dominion Avenue.

January 18, 2019 – Council adopted the Cannabis Establishment Policy.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report describes an application to permit operation of a cannabis retail outlet at 101-3377 Coast Meridian Road and provides an assessment of how the application complies with the City's current *Cannabis Establishment Policy*. Should Committee wish to support further consideration of the application, staff recommend updates to the *Policy* to clarify the intent of the policy criteria, adjust locational guidelines within community commercial centers, and to reduce any conflict or duplication of Provincial regulations.

BACKGROUND

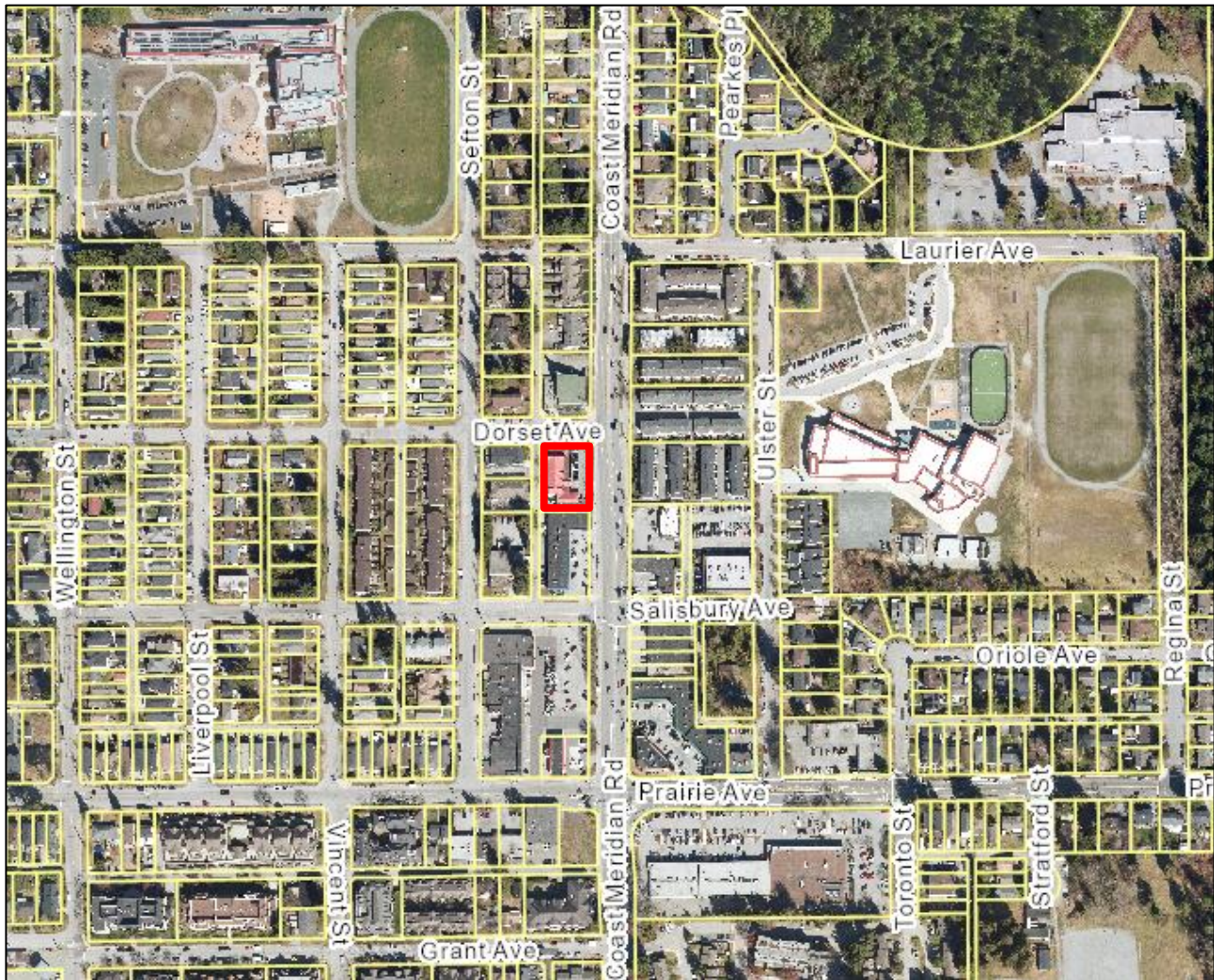
Proposal: The applicants, Boss Cannabis Ltd, wish to open a cannabis retail outlet within an existing multi-tenant commercial building at 101-3377 Coast Meridian Road.

History: In 2018, the City undertook a comprehensive review process to identify appropriate regulations and policies to be applied to land use decisions related to the production and retail sale of cannabis in Port Coquitlam. The City subsequently adopted an approach in 2019 that would allow for Council consideration of cannabis retail outlets on a site-specific basis and approved the Cannabis Establishment Policy to guide this consideration through the rezoning process. Anticipating multiple applications, the City provided a 30-day window for cannabis retail rezoning applications to be submitted in order to provide for their concurrent evaluation. Eighteen rezoning applications were received and four cannabis retail stores were approved through this process in

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2019. In 2023, Council approved zoning to permit a fifth cannabis retail outlet at 1760 Kingsway Avenue.

Site Context: The proposed location is within an older existing strip mall on Coast Meridian Road, in the Northside commercial center. Surrounding land uses include a mix of commercial, single residential and multi-family residential buildings. The Tri-City Canaan Church is located across from Dorset Avenue and Ecole Des Pionniers-De-Maillardville is located northwest of the site by Patricia Avenue and Wellington Street. Minnehada Middle School and the Hyde Creek Community Center are located to the east of Coast Meridian Road, near Ulster Street and Laurier Avenue.



Location map (subject property outlined in red)

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Policy and Regulations:

Zoning and OCP Designations: The property is currently zoned CC (Community Commercial) and is designated in the Official Community Plan (OCP) for Neighbourhood Commercial uses.

Cannabis Establishment Policy: The Policy includes a number of criteria to guide the evaluation of applications, including the following provisions:

- Located within an area designated for commercial or district commercial uses by the Official Community Plan and zoned accordingly for commercial use;
- Minimum separation between outlets of one kilometre;
- Minimum 250 m distance from schools, playgrounds, community centers and sports fields, and consideration of proximity to sensitive uses such as daycares, gathering spaces and shelters (consideration given to the impact of natural buffers);
- Specifications pertaining to unit size, interior layout, exterior design, signage and window visibility, store hours and ventilation;
- Evidence of support (or no opposition) from immediate neighbours;
- Provision of community benefit.

British Columbia Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch: The Branch is the governing body that licenses and monitors the retail sale and distribution of nonmedical cannabis in accordance with the *Cannabis Control and Licensing Act*, the Cannabis Control Regulation and the Cannabis Licensing Regulation. The Provincial licencing process includes a request for municipal comments on a Licence application prior to issuance. Accordingly, should the zoning bylaw amendment be approved, Committee of Council would be requested to adopt a resolution of support for submission to the Branch.

Project Description: The proposed cannabis retail outlet would be the second “Boss Cannabis” location in Port Coquitlam; the first store at 1760 Kingsway Avenue was approved and opened in 2023.

The proposed 131 m² (1400 ft²) store is to be located in one of six ground floor retail units in a multi-tenant commercial building. The applicant has confirmed intent for the store to employ 15 staff, with store hours to be 9am to 11pm daily (in keeping with Provincial regulations) and to post signs within the interior and exterior of the building providing information to the public on the City’s Smoking Bylaw.

The proposal indicates there would be no changes to the exterior to the building, and the intent would be for signage that is sensitive to the overall design and character of the site. The applicant notes that the store interior layout, marketing, window coverings, security measures and ventilation will follow Provincial standards. The commercial complex has sufficient parking, access off of Coast Meridian Road and Dorset Avenue and is accessible to bus routes along Coast Meridian Road.

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The application details ongoing community benefit through the Cat and Fiddle Care Society support of local charities, events and community groups. The applicants note they have consulted with adjacent business owners and have applied to the Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch to acquire a provincial licence for cannabis retail sales.

Staff have confirmed that the proposed location exceeds the required 1 km from a property currently zoned to permit a cannabis retail sale use; the closest locations with cannabis retail include Dominion Triangle and Oxford Village. The unit is approximately 150 m (as the crow flies) from Minnekhada Middle School, 250 m from the sports field behind Ecole Des Pionniers-De-Maillardville and approximately 400 m from Hyde Creek Recreation Center. There are several childcare facilities within proximity to the site, including one within the Tri-City Canaan Church north of the site and two across Coast Meridian Road near Prairie Street. There are no parks or playgrounds located adjacent to or within direct proximity to the proposed site.

DISCUSSION

The intent of the Cannabis Establishment Policy is to provide guidance on the community's expectations pertaining to location and operation of cannabis operations (both manufacturing and retail). This approach is similar to how the City considers new liquor related businesses as per the Liquor Establishment Policy, however the cannabis guidelines are currently more prescriptive given they were developed at a time when the impacts of cannabis use in a community were unknown, Provincial legislation pertaining to cannabis sales was new and untested, and significant concern about the introduction of the use into the community was expressed by the community.

The existing five cannabis retail outlets are now several years into operations; the City has not received any complaints about these cannabis retail outlets and staff note these operations appear to have integrated well into the community without negative impacts or concerns expressed about the land use from nearby residents or businesses. The Province's licencing framework pertaining to cannabis appear to be successful in addressing public health and safety concerns and now includes enhanced regulations pertaining to security measures, store layout, product display and visibility, advertising and branding.

To date, the approved cannabis retail outlet locations are outside of the established community commercial areas (Downtown and Northside centers) as these locations have better fit the criteria of the Policy. Should the City wish to provide opportunities for additional outlets in the City, they are anticipated to be within the Downtown or Northside given the minimum 1km distance between establishments, and amendments to the policy will be necessary to reflect the concentrated mix of uses typically found within these types of commercial centers. The recommended amendments would be to update the retail outlet evaluation criteria to reflect the minimal scale of impacts noted with existing operations, reduce prescriptive criteria to provide better consideration of site context and to eliminate conflict or duplication of Provincial regulations. Staff recommend retention of a

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distance clause between outlets to ensure even distribution throughout the community and to avoid proliferation.

In keeping with this direction, if Committee wish to consider an outlet in the Northside community commercial area, staff note the proposed location would generally comply with intent of the Policy. Minnehada Middle School is not directly adjacent to the site (to the east of Coast Meridian Road with an approximately 325 meter sidewalk distance) and Hyde Creek Recreation Center, school sports fields, playgrounds and parks are located within the general neighbourhood but outside immediate proximity. The site is close to several childcare facilities, a church and a student education center; this proximity is to be expected within a commercial center, particularly as we encourage the addition of more childcare facilities and community gathering spaces and services within the commercial centers.


PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A sign providing notification of the application is posted on site. Planning staff have received three written and one verbal comment noting concern for the proposed cannabis use, specifically the proximity to childcare uses, schools and the church.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

OPTIONS (✓ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
	1	If Committee wishes to support a cannabis retail outlet within community commercial areas, direct staff to bring forward an updated Cannabis Establishment Policy (as described in this report) and advise Council they support the zoning bylaw amendment to allow for a cannabis retail outlet at 101-3377 Coast Meridian Road.
	2	Request additional information or changes prior to making a decision.
	3	Recommend to Council that the proposed zoning bylaw amendment for a cannabis retail outlet be refused and/or decline to support changes to the Cannabis Establishment Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Applicant Written Description of Proposal

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Written submission for a Cannabis Retail Outlet at 101-3377 Coast Meridian Road.

The proposed business is called “BOSS Cannabis” and will sell Cannabis products as made available by the government. These products may include marijuana buds, oils and devices designed to assist the user with inhalation of the items. The business will be set-up in a way to educate the customers on the hazards of using these products as well as the difference between types and strains. The government application for this store notes business hours of 9am-11pm daily.

Boss Cannabis is a boutique Cannabis retail brand which incorporates elements of nature into its West Coast design. Warm wood tones, classic lines and earthy hues exude comfort ensuring a relaxing shopping experience.

Our plan is to tie into the existing character of the exterior signage located on the building to ensure that the site is both visually appealing and that all city signage requirements will be met as they previously have been at our other businesses. As the building is already in place, we do not have plans to alter the current foot print in anyway. That being said we will be installing roll down security gates in front of this door to be provide extra protection after business hours as well as a monitored alarm system. Silent alarms will be installed under the counter for the safety of the staff and customers. We will utilize a strong safety glass on the storefront to allow light inside and not create a closed off feeling in the store. The store will be wired with a video surveillance system similar to what is installed at our other businesses. We will make sure that there is always adequate staffing during business hours to ensure door security 100% of the time to eliminate minors from entry.

Ventilation in the building will follow all code requirements and will ensure that the air is being passed through proper filters and not effecting and neighbouring businesses. As products come packaged there will be minimal

odors to control and we will work to maintain this filtration system ensuring minimal impact on neighbouring businesses. We will also have signage inside and outside the building stating the city's smoking bylaws.

The conceptual design of the interior of the store is designed to promote a comfortable safe atmosphere while at the same ensuring that guests can not sample product and are being educated on the dangers of cannabis consumption. Our store setup will follow the standards set by the government stores. There will be no product for customers to touch, only educational materials, item descriptions and contained samples for smelling & visual inspection. All products will be handed over once the customer has purchased them from the staff and the guest has given them all the required information and educational pamphlets.

Upon first arriving at the store a customer's ID will be checked at the front counter ensuring that they are legally allowed to be in the retail outlet. We work on a strict policy to ID under 40 years of age at our other businesses and will adhere to this. The customer at this point will be looking at appropriately placed information that defines what cannabis is. There will be information explaining the dangers and the affects that cannabis can have as well as definitions of common terminology. Once the two pieces of ID have been checked the sales associate will ask if the guest is looking for anything in particular and try to assist them in finding an appropriate product. The customer at this time will be free to look around the store by themselves and read about the different strains of cannabis.

As the guest looks around the store, they will see that each specific product is shown with a description, THC content, CBD content and any other relevant information including cost per gram and registered name. The guest will not be able to touch the product but will be able to smell and see the product through a mounted receptacle if applicable. There will be signage displayed that reminds customers that it is not acceptable to sample the product (although we plan to ensure they can not access it in the first place) and that smoking bylaws need to be followed both in and outside of the store.

Throughout the store pamphlets will be made available to the guests on a multitude of topics like; the affects of cannabis, the dangers of driving while impaired what to do/who to contact if you think you need help with your cannabis usage. Definitions of common cannabis terms will also be made

readily available as we want to focus on educating the customer appropriately.

Our staff will go through a rigorous training including; who you can safely serve, who you can't serve, general cannabis knowledge, smoking bylaws both federal and municipal, what to do if a guest doesn't leave when you ask them too and how to ensure you aren't selling to a customer who is already under the influence. All our staff will hold SIR certificates and have to pass various quizzes before they are allowed to work on the floor. There will also be a manager onsite to ensure protocols are being followed 100% of the time. If you visit our Boss Cannabis location at 1120-1760 Kingsway Avenue you will be able to experience our vision first hand.

The social and economic impact we have will be one of positivity with the ability to employ up to 15 persons with this venture, enabling them to work in their home city or in an area that is close by. We feel that we have a great location for the proposed venture as the location we are proposing exceeds all the buffer requirements and is located in an area that does not directly impede on a neighbourhood and is on a main artery and transit route ensuring minimal impact on the city. We believe that this would be an ideal location and have spoken to the neighbouring businesses to ensure that they are in support of our venture and there have been no concerns. We have a well laid out parking lot with entrances and exits on both the side of the building and will have minimal impact on traffic as the lot is large enough to support this business. are bus stops located on Coast Meridian which is adjacent to the property and this is a central location that fits with the Cities' long term vision.

S. 22 are also board members of the Cat and Fiddle Care Society which is a community fundraising group whose mandate is to help those in need throughout our community. The **S. 22** are committed to giving back to their community through events; Hogs and Rod Car Show, Hogs and Rods Toy Run, Sports pools and the annual Super Bowl bash (to name a few) as well as hosting fundraising events and have helped to raise and donate over 2.4 million for local families and charities over the past 33 years. They are currently working with the Society to broaden its membership group and strengthen its community involvement with the end goal of being able to raise and donate thousands annually. Although 2020 and 2021 brought many challenges for our businesses they strengthened our community support and outreach. These

last years we have had the opportunity to work with the PoCo Foundation, Legion 133 Poppy Drive, PoCo Rotary, Coquitlam Rotary, KidSport Tri-Cities, Amanda Todd Society, Youth Access, PoCo Events Society and many other great community groups helping to raise money for so many great causes and connect with our community. In conjunction with the PoCo Events Society we raised 13k at the City's annual Car Show in one day while hosting their beer garden. The Boss Cannabis brand, as with all **S. 22** businesses will have strong community ties and an element of service. **S. 22** have always been equal opportunity employers, pay a fair wage and offer benefits to their staff. The tenure of their employees demonstrates how treating people fairly and like family can foster a strong and mutually beneficial work environment and these are merits they will demonstrate in their next venture.

As part of the community for almost 35 years we actively strive to enhance our city and listen to our neighbours needs. The growth in our community in the last 30+ years has brought with it very diverse population and we as a member of the community are diligently working to meet their needs. We have consistently demonstrated a sense of responsibility and tactfulness. During our tenure we have always managed to adapt to changing situations and bylaws while following all guidelines that govern the sale of liquor. We feel that during our 30+-year rapport we have demonstrated exceptional business leadership. That being said we are confident that our location and experience in the Cannabis and Liquor industry make us a good fit for a Cannabis Retail Location and that 101-3377 Coast Meridian is the perfect place for us to open a Boss Cannabis Location

S. 22

Date

S. 22

Date