

jima cannabis

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Mayor Lisa Helps and City Councillors
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Councillors,

In this letter you will find the details on our rezoning storefront cannabis retailer rezoning application. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Description of Proposal

Details of Company and Operation

We're Jima Cannabis, a BC-based Canadian retail cannabis operator committed to the highest standards of customer care. Jima is an emerging adult-use cannabis company that is growing in BC. Jima is focused on delivering an elevated, safe, and responsible customer experience through our curated retail environments, offering a diversity of brands for British Columbians across a retail network. Jima Retail Corp. is wholly owned by TCap Private Equity who has invested in other successful businesses located in Victoria and on the Island including Pixel Union.

The proposed location is 568 Yates Street but we are attempting to move the zoning from 546 Yates Street. There is no mechanism in the bylaws to move a cannabis zoning, so a rezoning is required. If the rezoning is successful, the cannabis zoning at 546 Yates street will be removed. The main operation will be non-medical retail cannabis sales. We will be selling cannabis and cannabis accessories to all adult-aged members of the community. Jima is committed to educating consumers about the safe and responsible use of cannabis while protecting vulnerable populations and restricting youth access. Jima strictly enforces ID verification, maximum purchase amounts, and bylaw regulations. As per city bylaws and provincial regulations, Jima does not allow any consumption on-site or around the premises. Jima is committed to being a good neighbour and will politely enforce a no noise and no-smoking rule around this location.

Proximity to other cannabis retailers and School

The proposed location for rezoning is located within 400m of other cannabis stores. Two of the locations within 400m are existing locations and two of them were approved within the setback of 546 Yates street which this location Jima is attempting to move the zoning from to 568 Yates Street.

It's Jima's understanding the 400m distancing rule was designed to prevent clustering of stores and limit the number of stores in the city. It appears the city has relaxed this rule for the downtown which is in line with the goals and objectives of the downtown core area plan. Specifically, land use objective 3.1 on page 23, "Provide zoning within the CBD to accommodate a **strong concentration** of commercial employment uses,

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*along with complementary uses as multi-residential development, hotels, restaurants, public institutions, personal service businesses and **retail stores**.* It makes sense that cannabis stores would cluster in the retail and shopping hub of the city. This is not a brand new store location and has existed with the other stores in the 400 setback. 546 Yates was considered when two new store locations were approved within the 400m setback. Jima is requesting a variance from the city to approve the rezoning as a way to move the store location.

City Policy

The rezoning application aligns well with city policy including the OCP and the Downtown Core Area Plan. Under the goals of the OCP for the economy, goal E states, *“A broad range of employment opportunities exist across the city and region providing workers with income to financially support themselves and their families.”* Jima will be providing an above-average salary compared to industry competitors and will provide benefits for full-time employees. We will also be offering a profit-sharing model for all employees based on store performance. Jima believes this aligns with the city's goals of providing workers with enough income to financially support themselves and their families by offering more than living wage standards for the city.

Under the goals of the Downtown Core Area Plan, by moving the zoning of this location Jima is allowing more retailers to occupy space downtown, which aligns with goal 1.4 on page 11. *“Developing a long-term retail strategy to confirm the economic importance of retail activity within the Downtown Core Area.”* City growth forecasts predict an increased demand for retail in the Downtown Core. The current space zoned for retail cannabis is 5760 square feet, which is much too large for a cannabis store. Jima's proposed location is 1622 square feet. This would allow more retailers to set up in the downtown core, or a more suitable retailer for the size of the unit, and assist in helping meet the growth requirements in the downtown core.

Other goals Jima aligns with under the Downtown Core Area Plan include integrating the historical aspects of the development into our design and also incorporating green building technology. Green building strategy is discussed more under project benefits and the historical aspects of the building will be maintained and built into the design by exposing a lot of the original brick and character of the building. We will also incorporate some history of the building into the store design with a picture or art piece discussing history around the building and area.

Project benefits and Amenities

When considering this rezoning application, Jima analyzed the economic, environmental, and social benefits to the City and neighbourhood. Below are the benefits we can offer.

Economic

Starting with economic benefits, it is useful to look at the cannabis industry as a whole in the province of British Columbia. In 2019 BC collected \$12.9 million in provincial sales tax for medical and non-medical

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cannabis sales¹. Jima estimates this number will grow to over \$20 million in 2020 and close to \$35 million in 2021. The positive benefit from PST revenue does not include contributions from corporate income tax, personal income tax, payroll taxes, property taxes, licences and permits, and other taxes as well as the multiplier effect. For the city and the neighbourhood the multiplier effect is very important. The money earned by our employees, being paid more than a living wage, will benefit other businesses and individuals in the community. Additionally, the job creation will help with the effects felt from covid with job losses and consumer spending habits switching to online retailers. Cannabis consumers only have one option to buy online, so many still prefer the brick and mortar locations. Finally, traffic from cannabis consumers will have a positive benefit for other retailers in the area who may be struggling due to shifts in consumer habits in the post COVID-19 economy.

Environmental

Jima offers several environmental benefits for the city. Initially, moving to a smaller space will lessen the environmental footprint of the store. The size of the current location is much too big for a cannabis retail store. Below are some standard environmental considerations Jima incorporates into new store developments

Green Strategy

Jima supports a green building strategy when conducting tenant improvements on their properties. The goal is to minimize environmental impacts through energy efficiency and building materials. Some of the energy-saving features depend on individual stores but some examples are

Lighting

- LED or fluorescent tubes, which take less energy to produce than a conventional bulb
- Motion sensors to turn off lights in unoccupied areas
- Using natural light as much as possible

Building Materials and Construction

- Zero VOC paint which doesn't have volatile organic compounds
- Sustainable or recycled materials used for millwork
- Countertop tiles with a composite, stone-like material made from 100% post-consumer waste
- Construction waste management which can divert 70-80% of materials from the landfill
- Low emitting materials for furniture

Bicycle Parking

When possible, Jima tries to incorporate bicycle parking for employees into new designs.

¹ Statistics Canada. [Table 36-10-0432-01 Detailed household final consumption expenditure- sales taxes and expenditure excluding sales taxes, provincial and territorial, annual \(x 1,000,000\)](#)

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Sustainable Commuting

To help reduce the number of cars on the road each day Jima will implement a sustainable communicating program. It offers incentives to employees to encourage them to use other forms of transportation to come to work such as walking, biking, transit or carpooling. This policy aligns with policy goals in the OCP and Downtown plan. The program offers:

- Rebates on transit passes
- Incentives for biking, walking, skateboarding and rollerblading such as gift cards for rain gear
- Cycling skills courses and subsidized bike tune-ups
- A “Guaranteed Ride Home” program in the event of emergency or sickness

Social Benefits

The social benefits for this rezoning align with some of the policy objectives and goals of the federal Cannabis Act. They include eliminating the black market and restricting youth access. Other social benefits were already discussed which include increased employment which can assist with the positive mental health of citizens. Finally, Jima intends to give back to the community with charitable donations.

Recent data from Statistics Canada shows that legal cannabis sales are now greater than black market sales for the first time since legalizations². This shift proves that safe legal access is proving to help eliminate the black market. With the increase in access, variety and lower price points, consumers are proving to prefer legal products over black market supply. This has social benefits to the community as black market providers are not regulated or held accountable like legal cannabis retailers. Additionally, legal sources are a guaranteed safe supply, due to testing, and provide protections from youth with child proof packaging, messaging not attractive to youth and health warnings. Initial data also shows that youth are not being charged as much for cannabis offences, presumably because it is more difficult to access or more education has helped with decision making. Comparing 2017 to 2019, youth charges for possession of cannabis has dropped 79%³⁴

Finally, Jima believed in giving back to the community and will be donating to local charities and organizations that help with issues around addiction, affordable housing and climate change.

Neighbourhood

The proposed development would fit in well with the community as another retail store. It is common for cannabis stores to have stigma attached to them but there is not much evidence that they have a negative

² Statistics Canada. [Table 36-10-0124-01 Detailed household final consumption expenditure, Canada, quarterly \(x 1,000,000\)](#)

³ Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas](#)

⁴ Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas](#)

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impact on the community. This aligns with what we have heard from communities, city officials and landlords after the opening of 1000's of stores across Canada. Jima will conduct extensive community engagement and address any concerns from community members.

Impacts

The development will complement conditions in the surrounding area which is a busy commercial area. The new location is much lower profile than the other location with a lot less frontage and exposure. We do not anticipate any negative impacts on the community such as noise and activity levels. We anticipate this store to operate as any other retail store. Additionally, the store has many additional levels of regulation from the province and federal government that regular retailers do not have.

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

The proposal complies with all the design guidelines with only interior alterations being completed. The window coverings required by the provinces will be satisfied with a set back display that will block any views of the product and still allow natural light. The display will meet provincial and federal standards around advertising and what is acceptable imaging for youth.

Safety and security

The proposed location has great CPTED features, specifically:

1. Sightlines: Fundamental for natural surveillance of a property, This site has an abundance of site lines. Yates Street has very few obstructions for well over 100 metres in each direction from the front door. Many nearby businesses generate positive activity in the area.
2. The area outside the store is public space without much private space for the store which aligns with the objectives around territoriality.
3. The property is well maintained which is required for good CPTED.
4. There is excellent street lighting.
5. There are minimal opportunities for criminal refuge or prospect from this property.
6. The interior has a purpose-built renovation incorporating the principles of CPTED
 - a) There are clear sightlines over the entire retail area. All customers are greeted upon entry. Staff can see all clients at all times.
 - b) There is a clear delineation between staff areas and client areas and areas with cannabis storage.
 - c) The cannabis storage area is out of sight to clients.
 - d) Cannabis, cannabis accessories and any transactions involving these products are not visible to minors from outside the store. As a means to minimize unlawful entry by minors, signage will be posted at the entrance to their stores indicating that minors are not permitted.
 - e) The store while, being compliant with regulations, still allows an abundance of natural light.

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Transportation

The parking requirements under Part 5 of zoning bylaw 2018 for the downtown is one stall per 200m² of floor area, or part thereof. The proposed location is less than 200m³ which would require one stall. There is no assigned parking for the unit, however, there is a 360 stall parkade across the street and street parking available. Additionally, this location has been functioning under other uses without assigned parking for a long period of time. Jima requests a relaxation of the parking bylaw because the store is located in the downtown core which has a streetscape designed for walkability and where other modes of transportation are encouraged.

It appears that bicycle parking is not required under the bylaw but staff will have the ability to store bicycles on the property.

Heritage

The building is located in the downtown historic district and the proposal does not include any exterior changes. The heritage aspects of the building will be embraced by the design team, incorporating the old features into the interior design.

Summary

Jima is looking forward to having the opportunity to operate in the city of Victoria at 568 Yates Street. Jima has strong management living locally and is owned by a company with a strong track record of successful BC based businesses. Although the proposed location is within the 400m setback of other stores, the rezoning is part of a plan to move the zoning from 546 Yates street. The new stores approved within the setback took 546 Yates into consideration when they were approved.

The rezoning aligns with city policy including the official community plan and downtown area plan. The location also brings benefits to the community including economic, social and environmental benefits. The proposal will fit in well with the community and not have any negative impacts on the community.

The development meets the design and development permit guidelines and has great CPTED features. Although there is no parking onsite the location has operated without onsite parking previously and is located in the downtown core which encourages other forms of transportation and is designed to be pedestrian friendly.

Jima appreciates the opportunity to open a legal cannabis store in the City of Victoria and thanks everyone for their time on this