



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 14, 2022**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 11, 2022
From: Councillor Ben Isitt
Subject: Harm Reduction through Non-Recreational Cannabis

Background:

Legalisation of recreational cannabis in British Columbia has removed the risk of criminalization for consumers, producers and distributors of recreational cannabis, but it has also revealed gaps in the current regulatory framework from the standpoint of harm reduction services.

These gaps include a lack of recognition in municipal bylaws and the provincial regulatory framework for non-commercial distribution of cannabis for the purpose of harm reduction. For example, the City of Victoria's zoning regulations provide a uniform approach for all cannabis distribution, assuming a commercial retail purpose regardless of whether the product is being distributed non-commercially and for non-recreational uses.

This regulatory gap can be remedied by exempting cannabis distribution by non-commercial (not-for-profit) entities for non-recreational purposes (either medicinal or explicitly part of harm reduction / overdose prevention services) from the jurisdiction of the recreational cannabis framework.

It is therefore recommended that the City of Victoria advocate to the Province of British Columbia to revise the provincial cannabis regulatory framework to remove barriers to the deployment of harm reduction services, and also provide direction to City of Victoria staff to report back in the context of the 2023-2026 Strategic Planning process on the implications of removing municipal barriers to harm reduction through non-recreational cannabis.

Recommendations:

That Council:

1. Requests that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Solicitor General of British Columbia and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, requesting amendments to the provincial cannabis regulatory framework to remove barriers to deployment of harm reduction services through non-recreational cannabis.
2. Directs City of Victoria staff to report back in the context of the 2023-2026 Strategic Planning process on the implications of amending the City's retail cannabis regulations to exempt non-commercial distribution of cannabis by non-profit entities for non-recreational purposes (medicinal or harm reduction / overdose prevention services).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isitt', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Isitt