

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council  
City of Victoria  
No. 1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P6



April 22, 2017

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to present information about the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club for the purposes of rezoning.

We have provided medical cannabis to our members and have been an active part of the downtown Victoria community for over 20 years. We have both the historic perspective and positive reputation to continue to be a leader in the area of medical cannabis in Victoria.

Please see below for the details of how we operate and the benefits that we provide to our neighbourhood and the Victoria community.

### **1. Description of Proposal**

The Victoria Cannabis Buyer's Club, (VCBC), has been an integral part of the medical cannabis dispensary infrastructure in Victoria for over 20 yrs. We have established policies and procedures for members to be able to access medical cannabis. We ensure a medical need and work individually with each member to help them find the products that meet their medical goals. We have an established storefront at 826 Johnston St. where we have been for the past 16 years.

During our 20 year history we have contributed to the medical cannabis legislation through Supreme Court challenges and decisions that have shaped the industry today. We continue to advocate for our members and others who rely on medical cannabis.

Our location is a considerable distance from all schools, (more than 1.4 kilometers), and more than 100 metres from a new dispensary, Medijuana.

### **2. City Policy**

The VCBC has worked collaboratively with the City of Victoria and we strive to comply with all cannabis policy and bylaws. We have been active in providing feedback to the city on the effects of new bylaws on our members and community. We take pride in working with the City of Victoria in providing safe and accessible medical cannabis to the many patients that are members of our VCBC community.

### **3. Project Benefits and Amenities**

#### *Economic Benefits:*

The VCBC is a non-profit, service driven society, with over 3,500 active members. The economic benefits include providing our members with a variety of affordable, medical grade, cannabis products for medicinal purposes. Affordability is a very big issues for our members on disability and those surviving on low income, many who continue to work with a medical condition. In the past, VCBC has provided those struggling with extreme poverty access to medical cannabis through donations and emergency funds, (approximately \$10,000 per year in donations).

VCBC directly employ 11 individuals. Of these personnel, more than half have conditions that are obstacles for regular employment. The VCBC also provides income for 21 highly specialized boutique producers of medical cannabis. Through these relationships we are able to offer up to 19 varieties of medical cannabis and 55 different kinds of cannabis infused products such as topical oils, ointments, cannabis infused caplets, and edible products. These infused products offer different kinds of relief from pain, nausea, and assist our many clients who are looking for alternatives to smoking cannabis. Medical studies have consistently shown that these alternatives help to keep levels of medicinal cannabinoids at consistent levels for pain and other symptom relief.

#### *Environmental/ Social Benefits:*

VCBC has been an integral part of the medical cannabis community for over 20 years. As a non-profit, we believe in a community model in all aspects of our operation. Our membership is active in shaping our policies and procedures through an elected Board of Directors. We have relationships with many disabled individuals in the downtown area and have created a safe place for such individuals to access affordable, medical cannabis to help them cope with many illnesses including; cancer, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, tremors, nerve damage, fibromyalgia, etc. Doctors refer to us and we are an essential part of many individual medical treatment plans.

Every new member is provided with an individualized, in depth orientation to help them find the medical products that will best meet their needs. The club itself is a safe space for community networking with information on resources and events of interest to our members. We have provided a Safe Consumption Lounge where our members can consume medical cannabis and get support from each other and our knowledgeable staff. This was also beneficial because many of our members do not have a safe place to consume cannabis due to restrictions in their living or other situations. The lounge was monitored by staff who possess first aid training and has a hospital grade HEPA filtration system to protect our neighbours.

VCBC operates a green facility. We reduce, re-use and recycle wherever possible. We encourage responsible consumption of cannabis products with our members. Many of our members are social and environmental activists who hold us to a high standard of environmental consciousness as part of the Victoria community.

#### **4. Neighbourhood**

The VCBC has been an accepted member of the Victoria community for over 20 years. We have established relationships with; our clients, our members, medical professionals, city of Victoria personnel, and other stakeholders. As a non-profit, we have established ourselves as experts in the area of medical cannabis with a reputation to put people before profits.

We have resided in our current location and neighbourhood for over 16 years. Any concerns have been addressed through informal, collaborative processes resulting in no formal complaints. Our block neighbours appreciate us and the foot traffic we generate. We have a collaborative relationship with our local law enforcement.

#### **5. Impacts:**

The VCBC has existed in the neighbourhood for over 16 years. Our discreet storefront provides a feeling of safety for our members and blends in smoothly with the other neighbouring businesses. Our Safe Consumption Lounge provided a safe environment for members and the opportunity to connect with others struggling with a variety of medical conditions. We have been active in shaping the policies and procedures around medical cannabis dispensaries and have been a leader in advocating for patients.

We are driven by a desire to help those in need. Our non-profit governance along with an active membership is consistent with our commitment to put people before profit in what is rapidly becoming a profit driven industry. We will continue to provide client centred information and feedback to our community as the city moves towards licensing with new policies and procedures.

#### **6. Design and Development Permit Guidelines:**

826 Johnston St has CA-3C zoning which allows for the use of the premises for retail purposes without requiring assigned off street parking stalls. We are easily accessible by bus and have ample city street parking along Johnston St.

#### **7. Safety and Security:**

VCBC continuously engages in risk assessments and have been pro-active in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

Some of our security components include:

- Designing a discreet store front to provide privacy and safety for our members
- Installing CCTV in the facility and street front to ensure surveillance of the the building and operations
- Installing an alarm system
- Purchasing a 4ft by 3ft 1,000+ lbs. safe where our product and on hand cash is stored

- Installing glazed windows that cannot be broken easily to ensure security and privacy for our members while inside the store.
- Installing gates and shutters on doors and windows
- Installing a 2-way window in the office to monitor street activity

**8. Transportation:**

The facility is on the 800 block of Johnston St. and meets the vehicle parking standards for the zoning of the block. There is ample city street parking in front of and adjacent to the facility. In addition, we are less than a city block away from the Johnston St. Parkade. The parkade and our facility are both wheel chair accessible.

**9. Heritage:**

Heritage status – Not a heritage site.

Thank you again for this opportunity to continue to serve the Victoria Community. We look forward to hearing from you.