

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, JULIA MEJIA, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, MURPHY, PEPEN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL
ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS
THE PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT TO REMOVE THE
HALF MILE BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN CANNABIS
ESTABLISHMENTS**

- WHEREAS:** Since the legalization of cannabis in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2016, there have been numerous cannabis dispensaries opening in the City of Boston in various neighborhoods; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Currently, the Boston Zoning Code requires a buffer zone between schools and dispensaries, as well as an half mile buffer zone between cannabis establishments, which was a measure passed in the City Council in 2016; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The buffer is intended to prevent cannabis establishments from opening in clusters so that no particular neighborhood would become the center for cannabis shops, and to ensure that dispensaries are spread out in the city, while allowing access to patients and customers; *and*
- WHEREAS:** There is now a proposed zoning amendment that seeks to adjust the buffer requirements between cannabis dispensaries and school entrances to 500 feet that is in line with state requirements, but it would also remove the half mile buffer zone between dispensaries; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Constituents have consistently voiced support for the half mile buffer zone, as they see this restriction as both a safeguard for the community voice and against the potential negative impacts on quality of life; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Residents in all neighborhoods have expressed concerns over this amendment, as they may reside in densely populated areas with existing dispensaries, nearby daycares, a student population, and nonprofits that also service vulnerable neighbors in close proximity. Removing the half mile buffer zone can exacerbate existing public safety challenges and quality of life issues; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Allowing the half mile buffer to lapse could potentially saturate the market, harm existing operators, and could create the potential for both new and existing operators to either not engage with civic organizations, or walk away from existing community agreements entirely; *and*
- WHEREAS:** There needs to be a thorough community process for this zoning amendment before any vote should be taken, and we need to recognize that each neighborhood is unique and has different sets of challenges; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the proposed zoning amendment to remove the half mile buffer zone between cannabis dispensaries. Representatives from the Boston Planning and Development Agency, the Zoning Commission, the Boston Cannabis Board, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

Filed on: May 22, 2024