



# City of Homer

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## Memorandum 16-017

TO: MAYOR WYTHE AND HOMER CITY COUNCIL  
 THROUGH: KATIE KOESTER, CITY MANAGER  
 FROM: RICK ABBOUD, CITY PLANNER  
 DATE: JANUARY 14, 2016  
 SUBJECT: DRAFT ORDINANCE PROPOSING TO ZONE MARIJUANA RELATED ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CITY OF HOMER

The Planning Commission has been working on this item since August. It has been an agenda item at six meetings, two of which have been public hearings. This proposed ordinance deals specifically with zoning regulations for the four activities defined by the state: Cultivation; Limited (small - under 500 square feet) and Standard (large - more than 5000 square feet), Manufacturing, Retail, and Testing. The best way to express this is the table below and the map attached. At this point, there is no distinction for zoning purposes between limited and standard cultivation operations.

Our goal with this ordinance is to provide a place to start with the regulation of the industry and to have some options available prior to the date when the state is scheduled to accept applications, February 24<sup>th</sup>. This will allow the City Council to introduce and hold two public hearing prior to this date. The Planning Commission wants to allow the industry to start in a somewhat limited area until we gain more experience, with the thought it would be much easier to loosen rules in the future rather than try to ratchet it back later and leave nonconformities behind. If the Council recommends something that needs to be review by the Planning Commission, I recommend passing the parts of the ordinance that are acceptable to the Council, so that entrepreneurs have reasonable options to apply for a license February 24<sup>th</sup>. If no ordinance is adopted, commercial marijuana will be an unlisted use, meaning every application will be a conditional use with a fairly high threshold for approval. This is an unreasonable expectation.

It is important to consider the regulation that is proposed by the state when considering the regulations proposed by the city. We may not propose anything that is more liberal than what the state proposes. A brief summary of the state regulation is provided and attached is the regulation proposed at the time of this report.

A = Allowed (reviewed by the Planning Office). C = Conditional Use Permit needed (hearing before the Planning Commission required).

**Table 1. Cannabis Activity by Zoning**

| Activity    | District |     |     |      |    |  |
|-------------|----------|-----|-----|------|----|--|
|             | CBD      | GC1 | GC2 | EEMU | MC |  |
| Retail      | C        | A   | A   | A    | C  |  |
| MFG         | C        | A   | A   | A    |    |  |
| Testing     | A        | A   | A   | A    |    |  |
| Cultivation |          |     |     |      |    |  |
| small       | C        | A   | A   | A    |    |  |
| large       | C        | A   | A   | A    |    |  |

The Planning Commission also proposes some buffer distances in addition to the state provisions. These buffers are based on the federal governments' double penalty zone as defined in US Code. This includes 1000 feet buffers from the two colleges, the Alaska Bible Institute and the Kenai Peninsula College. 1000 feet buffers from Karen Hornaday, Jack Gist, Bayview, and Ben Walters Parks are also recommended. Another recommendation is a 200 foot buffer from the library. The language used by the state and the federal government does not describe a library, but after a request from the Library Advisory Board, the commission did recommend a 200 foot buffer. This buffer with the buffer extended from the college and consideration of the uses and ownership of nearby properties realistically ensures that operations will not be proposed anywhere in close proximity to the library. The combination of the library and college buffers, and existing land uses and land ownership (post office, banks) realistically ensures that operations will not be proposed anywhere close to the library.

You will surely be made aware of a petition that proposes that limited cultivation be allowed outright in the Rural Residential District and that marijuana activities be allowed outright in the Central Business District. Both of these subjects have been discussed at length by the Planning Commission. The commission believes that the limited cultivation in the Rural Residential District is too commercial to meet the purpose of the district. A limited cultivation operation is required by the state to have exterior lighting to facilitate surveillance (including within 20 feet of each entrance), a security alarm on all windows and doors, and continuous video monitoring. Approval for a commercial business from the Fire Marshal is required. All persons dealing with the product must have a marijuana handler permit. There must be a plan for odor control to ensure that it is not detectable off the premises. This is just a sampling of the many requirements of the state licensing requirements found in the final regulations through 12-1-15. Another concern about limited cultivation in the Rural Residential District is density. Because of the city regulations for lot size, many lots that have access to water and sewer are small. In any event, the commission would not entertain commercial activities on lots less than 20,000 square feet (about half an acre). In addition, there was discussion about the minimum distance between a commercial grow operation, and the adjoining property. In the end, commercial cultivation was not recommended for the district.

The Commission also thought that cannabis activities in the Central Business District would be best with additional review of the Planning Commission and an opportunity for neighbors to be noticed and participate in the hearing.

### **State of Alaska**

While the City is looking at regulating relatively small aspects of the industry, the meat of requirements are found in the proposed regulations of the state. These regulations are quite extensive. There are requirements (Article 7) that apply to all of the activities along with more specific requirements that address each of the 4 individual licensing areas individually. One really needs to understand the state regulations to get an accurate picture of what these businesses may look like when approved. There are 127 pages that compose articles 1-9 of the proposed state regulations. I have highlighted some of these below, and draw particular attention to those that are a relevant consideration for zoning.

Many aspects of marijuana businesses are regulated by the state including:

- All waste disposal
- Transportation of the product
- Signage and advertising
- Inventory tracking
- No odor may be detectable off site

- None of the product may be consumed in any licensed facility (with the exception of the newly proposed consumption component of the retail license-more rules to come)
- No facilities may reduce or expand without board approval
- No delivery off-site
- No operation between the hours of 5 am and 8 am
- All business activities must be secured. This means that cameras and lighting needs to be adequate to identify those inside the facility and anyone within 20 feet of the outside entrances.
- Commercial grade locks will need to be installed.
- State application procedures require announcement in the newspaper for 3 consecutive weeks and announcements on the radio twice a week for 3 consecutive weeks, as well as on-site and nearby postings.

The state has proposed buffers such as:

- 500 feet from a school, a recreation or youth center, a building which religious services are regularly conducted, or a correctional facility.

#### **Other aspects of the industry not addressed**

During our conversation with the commission we received testimony and talked about other aspects of the industry not related to zoning such as; public consumption, driving under the influence, and a host of other concerns related to consumption. These items are for the police. Another item that came up frequently is the cannabis club or cafe. I put this in two categories.

I consider the cannabis club as a fraternal organization of sorts. This is not open to the general public in the sense that you have to be a member to enter, think ELKs. In this case, I would treat this use as the 'run-of-the-mill' fraternal assembly. The fraternal assembly may do anything that is not against the law. If they break the law, it would be the business of law enforcement to address.

I would describe a cannabis café as a place open to the general public where sales and consumption take place. The state is working on an allowance for a retail marijuana store to have a place for consumption. We do not have the specifics of this yet, but it is in the realm of a state licensed activity. I will not propose provision in city code for an activity that is not recognized by the state. If the state rules change in the future, the City can address it at that time.

Att.

1. Ordinance 16-04
2. Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Map 1/25/16
3. Commercial Cannabis Retail and Manufacturing Map, 1/25/16
4. State Regulations