



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

From: Susan Silver, Senior Advisor, Strategic Planning & Continuous Improvement

Mem No. MEM-ADMIN-2019-0001

Subject: Cannabis Retail Public Engagement

Date: January 7, 2019

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the public engagement as per the following staff direction given at the December 17, 2018 Council meeting:

THAT staff commence community consultation regarding whether to allow Cannabis Retail stores within Halton Hills, and report back to Council on January 21, 2019 with the results of the public consultation in order for Council to make an informed decision to either Opt In or Opt Out of allowing Cannabis Retail stores within Halton Hills.

BACKGROUND:

Through the enactment of Bill 36 in October, the Province set out that the brick and mortar component of retail cannabis sales in Ontario would be done through private sector retail stores rather than government run stores as had been planned under the previous government. The legislation and subsequent supporting regulation(s) provides municipalities across Ontario with a one-time opportunity to opt out of participating in the private retail model. Opting out allows a municipality to prohibit any recreational cannabis stores from being located within its boundaries. In order to opt out, the legislation specifically requires a municipality to pass a resolution and provide written notice to the AGCO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) by midnight of January 22, 2019. Where a resolution is passed, the AGCO will refuse any applications for a retail store authorization within the municipality. At any time, a subsequent resolution may be passed by a municipality to lift the prohibition and permit cannabis retail stores within their community. Bill 36 is clear that a decision to opt in would be final and may not be reversed.

In addition to working on understanding the rules, regulations and associated impact with hosting retail stores within the town's boundaries, it has been the recommendation of staff and intention of Council to consult with the community on matters related to the legalization of cannabis. At their December 17 meeting, Council voted to commence consultation immediately and requested that results be presented at the January 21 meeting as input to the decision required by January 22.

Previous staff reports:

ADMIN-2018-0028: Cannabis Legalization

PLS-2018-0068: Cannabis Cultivation and Processing

ADMIN-2018-0033: Cannabis Consultation

ADMIN-2018-0031: Cannabis Legalization and Retail Update

MEM-PLS-2018-0013: Cannabis Retail Stores

COMMENTS:

In response to the direction to accelerate public consultation on the matter of whether to allow cannabis retail stores, and in alignment with the Public Engagement Charter, staff implemented the following activities:

- **Online Survey**

An online survey was launched on the Town's engagement platform 'letstalkhaltonhills.ca'. The survey required registration to avoid individuals submitting multiple entries and skewing the results. The survey covered topics related to both retail storefronts as well as cultivation and processing (production). Questions related to production operations will be used to inform future work on zoning amendments as outlined in report PLS-2018-0068 and thus results will not be presented at this time. The questions asked regarding retail stores can be found in Appendix A.

The online survey was available from December 19 – January 16.

- **In-Person Survey**

For individuals without access or not wishing to participate in the online survey, ballot boxes with paper ballots were set up at various locations around the town to solicit feedback strictly on the issue of retail cannabis stores. Ballots were administered by site staff to avoid 'box stuffing' and were available at: Georgetown and Acton library branches, Gellert Community Centre and Town Hall via Service Halton Hills. There were also additional "pop-up" ballot boxes placed temporarily at both Hillsvue Active Living Centres to coincide with high traffic events.

Ballot boxes were in place January 10 – January 16.

Due to the requirement to have public input gathered prior to the January 21 Council meeting, Council was informed that open houses would not be scheduled.

Survey Promotion

To promote the survey, Corporate Communications staff employed a variety of methods:

Promotion	Action	Date(s)
Cannabis web page and homepage banner created for Town website	Page has been updated regularly updated since inception and included information about the survey	Launched August 2018
Media Release	Issued to media & subscriber list	December 19, 2018
Social Media	Posts to the Town's Facebook and Twitter pages	Facebook: Dec 19, 2018 (1 post) Jan 2019 (3 posts) Twitter: Dec 21 (1 tweet) Jan 2019 (3 tweets)
Website Banner with survey link	Posted on the Town's homepage	Dec 17, 2018 - Jan 15, 2019
Print	Ads placed in local newspapers re: opportunities to engage online and in-person as well as for opportunities for the public to provide input during Council meetings.	Acton Tanner, IFP December 6 & 13, 2018 January 10, 2019
Digital	Ad space purchased on the Independent online newspaper (IFP) and the Weather Network	IFP digital Jan 10 – 12 Weather Network Jan 10 - 15
Facilities	Digital signage and marquees at Mold Masters Sportsplex, Gellert Community Centre	Jan 11 - 15

CONCLUSION:

The results of the community consultation will be presented at the January 21, 2019 meeting of Council. Activities undertaken in support of this engagement align with the Town's Public Engagement Charter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Cockfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "C".

Richard Cockfield, Manager of Strategic Planning & Continuous Improvement

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" and "M".

Brent Marshall, CAO

Appendix A – Retail Cannabis Questions

1. Do you think the Town of Halton Hills should allow retail cannabis stores?

Yes

No

No opinion

Please Explain:

2. If the Town chooses to allow retail stores, the municipality (as well as the public) has the opportunity to provide comments within 15 calendar days on any store applications that the Province is considering for Halton Hills. The Town would like to suggest that retail stores not be located near certain uses. Please check off the uses that you feel retail stores should not be near. Keep cannabis stores away from (check all that apply):

Residences

Daycare centres

Schools

Youth-oriented facilities

Health facilities

Other (if Other, please specify)

3. Please share any other comments about retail cannabis stores

4. What is your age?

18 or younger

19 – 39

40 – 54

55+

5. What area of Town do you live in?

Rural

Urban