

Commercial Cannabis Permit Program

City Council Directive

March 17, 2021

On March 17, 2021 the City Council received a report from City staff regarding the Commercial Cannabis Permit program. The staff report is available on-line ([click here](#)). After discussion, the Council voted to approve staff's recommendations. Council also directed staff to allow cannabis uses in parts of the Birtcher Business Center Specific Plan (SP82-2).

The changes to the application review process, as outlined in number 5 below, are official ([see Resolution 2021-015](#)). Council's directive regarding Municipal Code Chapters 5.36 and 17.53 require Council to adopt an Ordinance. Council must also approve a Specific Plan Amendment to allow cannabis uses in the Birtcher Business Center Specific Plan. Planning staff has initiated the steps needed to formalize the revisions. If the application window opens before the revisions are in effect, staff will accept applications with the presumption that Council will adopt the Code revisions and the Specific Plan amendment.

A summary of the City Council's direction is as follows:

1. Revise the definition of Youth Center. The new definition is:

“Youth center” means any public or private facility that is primarily used to host recreational or social activities for minors, including, but not limited to, private youth membership organizations or clubs, social service teenage club facilities, a game arcade (as defined in Section 17.04.268 of this Code) where minors are legally permitted to accept services, or similar amusement park facilities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this definition shall not include any private gym, private athletic training facility, any private studio at which instruction is provided in gymnastics, martial arts, yoga, ballet, music, art, or similar recreational activities, or a location which is primarily utilized as an administrative office or facility for youth programs or organizations.

2. Revise the definition of cannabis business “Owner” to be the same as California Business and Professional Code Section 26001; and remove the definition of “Owner” from Attachment A of Resolution 2020-126 (now Resolution 2021-015).
3. Reduce the Youth Center separation requirement for Retailers and Storefront Microbusinesses from 1,000 feet to 600 feet. Storefront businesses must still be 1,000 feet away from other sensitive land uses, including schools, day cares, parks, and residential zones.

4. Reduce separation requirements for Non-Storefront Retailers (i.e., Retail Delivery) from 1,000 feet to 600 feet.

Update: On April 7, 2021 the City Council considered [Ordinance 3327](#), which amends Chapter 5.36 of the Corona Municipal Code to revise the definitions of “Owner” and “Youth Center” and modify separation requirements between certain sensitive land uses and commercial cannabis businesses. The Ordinance addresses Council direction 1 through 4 above. The Council approved the first reading of Ordinance 3327 without discussion. The Ordinance is scheduled for a second reading on April 21, 2021, and will go into effect 30 days thereafter.

5. Revise the Merit-Based Review Process for Storefront cannabis businesses, as was established by Resolution 2020-126, to eliminate volunteer “scorers”, and instead require the merit-based review consultant to use experienced professional scorers. Resolution 2020-126 is rescinded and replaced by Resolution 2021-015.

Clarification: [Resolution 2021-015](#) was adopted on March 17, 2021, and became effective immediately.

6. Revise the text within Corona Municipal Code Chapter 17.53 - Specific Plan Zone, to be consistent with the intent and presentations provided to Council in November 2020. The adopted text was erroneously edited prior to adoption, and does not accurately reflect the Planning Commission and Council’s intent.

Council also directed staff to amend the Birtcher Business Center Specific Plan ([SP82-2](#)) to allow cannabis uses in the “MSI” designation. For consistency, staff will also include SP82-2’s “MI” designation in the proposed revisions.

Update: Amendments to the City’s Zoning Code and Specific Plans must follow a legislative process, as stipulated by California planning law. To implement Council’s March 17, 2021 directive, a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA2021-0001) and an amendment to the Birtcher Business Center Specific Plan (SPA2021-0002) are expected to be reviewed by the City’s Planning and Housing Commission on April 26, 2021. After approval, ZTA2021-0001 and SPA2021-0002 will be scheduled for a public hearing before the City Council.