

Lakewood City Council Ad Hoc committee: Unintended consequences of retail cannabis sales

Background: The conversion of as many as ten medical marijuana dispensaries to retail marijuana stores in the city will increase revenue to the city through the differences in taxation and the expanded size of the proposed stores and resulting increase in sales. Changing demographics may also influence increased sales. Future city councils may allow additional stores.

The mayor and city council have responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Lakewood. They also promote business development and expansion in the city. Each of these are impacted by marijuana use.

The following questions pose issues that could be looked at. It is not exhaustive. For some of these issues, data will likely only be available for the state as a whole, but data for the cities, like Denver, that have a several year history of recreational sales must be looked at.

Health –

What is the current status of the use and health consequences of marijuana in Lakewood? How are youth under 18 gaining access to marijuana and what are the health consequences to them? How is the dramatic increase in the THC potency of marijuana products affecting health? How would limits on THC potency lessen the negative consequences of marijuana use?

Safety

How is traffic safety being impacted and will be impacted by increased marijuana use in Lakewood? What is the level of criminal activity at and near marijuana stores? Do cases of domestic violence, violent assaults, murder, child abuse and neglect increase where chronic, heavy use of cannabis by residents occurs?

Welfare

How many families have chronic mental health problems due to cannabis use among members of the family? How many families have excessive health costs based on marijuana usage of a family member? How will innovations like home delivery of marijuana products affect availability to adolescents?

Businesses

How have small businesses been impacted by marijuana use when they employ teens and young adults to work as clerks, food servers, car washers, warehouse workers, and other jobs? How many adults are not hired by businesses because they have failed a drug test based on THC? How many adults work impaired and cause on-the-job accidents?

Two important information and data sources:

<https://marijuanahealthinfo.colorado.gov/> Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment webpage

<https://www.thenmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RMHIDTA-Marijuana-Report-2020-2.pdf> Title: The legalization of marijuana in Colorado: the impact, Volume 7, September 2020