

Regulating Cannabis Sales In Middlebury

A Smarter Approach
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Why Should We Want A Cannabis Store in Town?



A well designed, attractive cannabis store in Middlebury, would have a multi-faceted positive effect on the town.

01 Increased Foot Traffic

Even before the pandemic, small retail businesses have been struggling to compete with online shopping and "big box" retailers. Cannabis stores are naturally immune to both of these competitive threats. That means that consumers who want to buy cannabis safely and legally will come to our downtown and spend their money locally.

02 Lift Up Existing Businesses

By bringing consumers to our downtown, cannabis stores will lift up other local businesses. Cannabis retailers draw both local customers and tourists, and once these shoppers are in our downtown, many will visit other stores and restaurants while they're here. In Addison County, only two towns are voting on opt-in questions this year (Middlebury and Vergennes), which means cannabis consumers from nearby towns will be drawn to Middlebury and spend their money here.

03 Add to the Aesthetics of The Town

Cannabis retailers draw a wide range of consumers across the entire socio-economic spectrum and from all age demographics, largely by providing safe, clean, welcoming spaces for people to shop. Additionally, cannabis retailers will need to comply with all applicable Middlebury zoning and historical district design requirements, as well as state Act 250 requirements.

04 Regulated Access to Natural Medicine

Vermont trails only Colorado in the percentage of people who use cannabis, and cannabis is already being bought and sold in Middlebury today -- just without any regulatory oversight. Buying cannabis in a licensed store means knowing that the product has passed strict testing for molds, pesticides, heavy metals, and potentially dangerous additives. It means being able to compare prices. Being able to know exactly how much THC and CBD is in a product. Getting reliable information on how to consume more safely, like how long to wait after eating a THC-infused edible before eating another, and how long to wait after consuming and before getting behind the wheel of a car.

Why Should We Want A Cannabis Store in Town? (Continued)



05 Increased Tax Revenues

Middlebury's 1% Local Option Tax will apply to all cannabis sold in town, as well as to anything else people will buy at other stores and restaurants when they come into town to buy cannabis. Licensed cannabis businesses also mean more local jobs, and thus more money circulating in the local economy. New facilities built for cannabis businesses will generate new property tax revenues for the town.

06 Converting Illegal sales to Legal Sales

As adult consumers shift from the unregulated market to licensed stores, unlicensed sellers will find the local market less profitable. Other legal jurisdictions have seen underage (teen) use drop, as unregulated sellers exit a shrinking market, making cannabis harder to buy for people who cannot prove they are over 21 years old. And when sales occur in stores instead of cannabis being sold in parking lots, town parks, etc., those other spaces become safer and more appealing to the entire community.

07 Fill Empty Storefronts

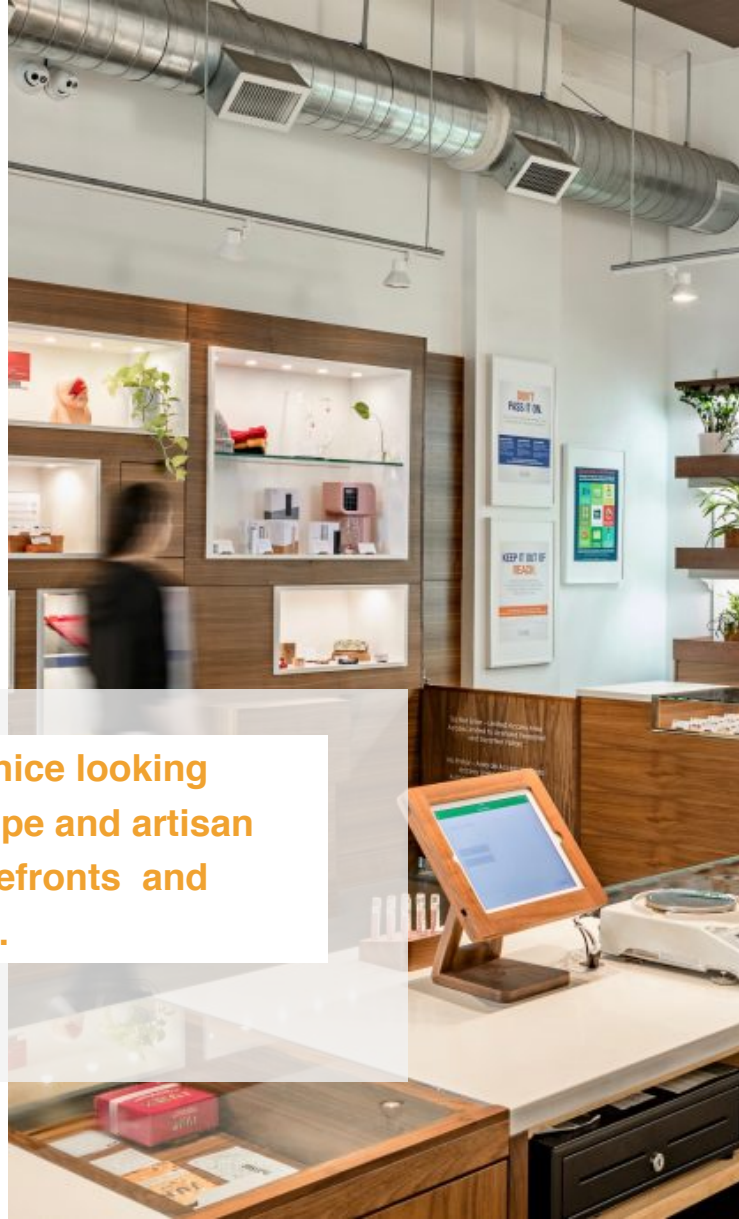
There are at least 8 empty storefronts downtown. Welcoming a cannabis retailer will fill one of these holes, and send a strong signal to other entrepreneurs that Middlebury is open for business.

08 Potential Decrease in Opioid Related Activity

Safe and legal access to cannabis has been shown to correlate with decreased use of other, more dangerous drugs (particularly opioids and benzodiazepines), and decreases in harmful outcomes from those drugs (hospitalizations, overdose deaths, and DUI-drug deaths).

What Do Cannabis Stores Look Like?

Cannabis stores are inherently nice looking stores. The competitive landscape and artisan craft style require designer storefronts and excellent shopping experiences.



Isn't This a Better Look than an Empty Storefront?

You can't buy cannabis online, which means a town store selling cannabis will bring in patrons from all over the county and state, as well as tourists and Middlebury College alumni and parents.

Cannabis Retail Store Exteriors



Many might be surprised to discover that cannabis store fronts are not overloaded with marijuana leafs, bong, and tacky neon lights. They are designed to attract higher end shoppers and tourists that will come to the destination for its curb appeal, as well as the products inside.

Cannabis Retail Store Interiors



The Apple store design is used as the bar for cannabis interior designs. Clean lines, product showcases, and nicely lit showrooms along with friendly customer service and knowledgeable “bud tenders” enhance the shopping experience.

Cannabis Stores' Impact on Their Host Communities



■ Property Values: **Up**

■ Crime Rates: **Down**

■ Opioid Harms: **Down**

■ Youth Cannabis Use: **Flat to Down**

Is There an Impact on Property Values?



**From the National Association of Realtors, “Marijuana and Real Estate: A Budding Issue”
February 2020:**

- “Marijuana has been a boon to commercial real estate values,” - noting increased demand for commercial buildings and land.
- Found no conclusive impact on residential real estate values – “the majority of NAR members said they have not seen any changes in residential property values near dispensaries”, while a minority of members reported either increases or decreases.

A June 2020 market review by real estate marketing firm Clever.com found that, from 2014 to 2019, “cities that allow retail dispensaries saw home values increase \$22,888 more than cities where marijuana is illegal”.

Property Values Continued...



Academic Research:

- Conklin, et al. (2017), “Contact High: The External Effects of Retail Marijuana Establishments on House Prices” (U. of GA, U. of Wisc. – Madison, Cal State Sacramento): Found that values of single-family residences “in close proximity” to retailers **rose by 8%** more than those “slightly farther away”.
- Burkhardt & Flyr (2018), “The Effect of Marijuana Dispensary openings on Housing Prices” (Colorado State U.): “The introduction of a new dispensary within a half-mile radius of a new home **increases home prices** by approximately 7.7% on average.”
- Cheng, et al. (2018), “The Effect of Legalizing Retail Marijuana on Housing Values: Evidence from Colorado”: “Legalization leads to an **average 6% increase** in housing values.”

Impact on Crime Rates



Cannabis is being sold illegally in Middlebury today!

- Moving sales from the street to a regulated store immediately replaces illegal activity with legal activity.

Academic Research:

- Lu, et al. (2019) “The Cannabis Effect on Crime: Time-Series Analysis of Crime in Colorado and Washington State” (Stockton U., Washington State U., U. of Utah): “marijuana legalization and sales have had **minimal to no effect** on major crimes in Colorado or Washington”; “no statistically significant long-term effects...on violent or property crime rates”
- Brinkman & Mok-Lamme (2019) “Not in my backyard? Not so fast. The effect of marijuana legalization on neighborhood crime” (Federal Reserve): “An additional dispensary in a neighborhood leads to...roughly a **19% decline**” in crime rates, which is **“highly localized”** to the dispensary.

Impact on Crime Rates Continued...



Middlebury's existing medical marijuana dispensary has produced ZERO calls to the police since opening.

- **Zero reports of crime**
- **Zero reports of public nuisance**
- **Zero community complaints**

Cannabis and Opioids



The “gateway theory” has been widely dismissed, including by the US Drug Enforcement Agency. Cannabis provides many with opioid use disorder **an “offramp” from opioids**.

- A new UC-Davis/Yale study (*Hsu & Kovacs, BMJ, 1/27/21*) found higher # of dispensaries within a county is associated with **reduced opioid overdose deaths**, suggesting a substitutive effect.
- Findings consistent with research indicating that safe and legal access to cannabis is associated with:
 - **Reduced opioid prescribing** (*Bradford ,et al., 2018, JAMA Inter. Med.*)
 - **Reduced opioid-related drugged driving deaths** (*Kim, et al., 2016, Am. J. of Pub. Health*)
 - **Better OUD treatment outcomes** (*Socias, et al., 2020, Drug and Alcohol Dependence*)

What About the Kids?



Contrary to conventional wisdom, adult-use legalization has led to a **decrease in the rate of teen cannabis use**.

See, e.g., Anderson, et al. (JAMA, 2019) “Association of Marijuana Laws With Teen Marijuana Use; New Estimates From the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys”

- “*Consistent with the results of previous researchers*, there was no evidence that the legalization of *medical* marijuana encourages marijuana use among youth.”
- “Moreover...marijuana use among youth **may actually decline** after legalization for *recreational* purposes.”
- “It is **more difficult for teenagers to obtain** marijuana as drug dealers are replaced by licensed dispensaries that require proof of age.”
- Exposure to **advertising** remains a concern, which the Selectboard can address via signage ordinance.

Questions?

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Thank You