



County of Monterey Planning Commission

Item No.5

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Agenda Item No.5

Legistar File Number: PC 26-030

February 25, 2026

Introduced: 2/18/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Planning Item

REF250038 - CANNABIS CONSUMPTION VENUE ORDINANCE

- a. Conduct a public workshop to review and receive public input regarding ordinance options for a Cannabis Consumption Venue Ordinance for areas in unincorporated Monterey County; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

Project Location: Unincorporated Monterey County

Proposed CEQA action: A planning workshop is exempt per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15262.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

- a. Conduct a public workshop to review and receive public input regarding ordinance options for a Cannabis Consumption Venue Ordinance for areas in unincorporated Monterey County; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Planning File Number: REF250038

Project Location: Countywide - limited to areas where Cannabis Retail Facilities are allowed in each Planning Areas: North County Inland, Greater Salinas, Carmel Valley Master Plan, Greater Monterey Peninsula, Toro, Central Salinas Valley, Cachagua, South County, Fort Ord Master Plan, Del Monte Forest, Carmel Area, Big Sur Coast, North County Coastal

SUMMARY:

The County of Monterey has current regulations that allow certain types of cannabis uses, including regulations and procedures that require a discretionary permit be obtained to operate a cannabis retail facility. The Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare an ordinance that could allow cannabis consumption on sites that allow cannabis retail uses. In fall 2025, the Board of Supervisors' Cannabis Committee considered preparation of such an ordinance and directed staff to prepare a draft ordinance and conduct outreach at a Planning Commission workshop.

County staff has prepared draft ordinances amending the adopted regulations (**Exhibit 2 including Exhibit 2-A Draft Amended Chapter 7.90 and Exhibit 2-B Draft Amended Chapter 21.67**) that would allow existing and future permitted cannabis retailers to also include cannabis consumption on site if they can meet all the requirements in the draft ordinance. The focus on those requirements would be ventilation, ensuring a safe environment for employees, customers, and the general public, and

ensuring that odor control is addressed. The ordinance would require a cannabis retailer to obtain a ministerial permit for the addition of an indoor cannabis consumption venue through the Cannabis Program's annual permit (MCC Section 7.90.040) and renewal process. A discretionary (planning) permit would be required to potentially allow outdoor cannabis consumption venues where the circumstances warrant, such as outdoor smoking area. Additionally, a cannabis retailer may also be required to obtain a discretionary permit if additional parcels are necessary to establish a cannabis consumption venue associated with an existing dispensary. As proposed in the draft ordinances, if a new cannabis retail facility is proposed with a cannabis consumption venue, a discretionary permit would be required pursuant to existing regulations for the overall operation.

Staff has prepared a draft ordinance and policy options for the public's and the Commission's consideration, feedback, and direction at today's workshop. The draft ordinances were developed taking into consideration of the Board of Supervisors direction, Cannabis Committee input and direction, and review of adopted ordinances from other jurisdictions that allow cannabis consumption (County of Santa Cruz, City of West Hollywood, and National City (San Diego County) - **Exhibits 4, 5 and 6**).

The draft ordinances amending MCC Title 21 and Chapter 7.90 have the following key features:

- All cannabis consumption venues would need to obtain a permit from the Cannabis Program and meet the same distance requirements from sensitive uses as cannabis retail facilities;
- The Cannabis Program permit would continue to be a ministerial process;
- Any venue that allows smoking would have to provide an engineered ventilation system to protect the health of the public, including the facility's customers and employees;
- Adding a cannabis consumption venue that includes smoking to an existing retail facility as an outdoor use or under enumerated circumstances would require obtaining an additional discretionary land use permit;
- Customer education and protection are included in the regulations;
- Customers would be admitted to a consumption area only through the retail facility; and
- The ordinance allows live entertainment and food service as allowed by our local ordinance and state law, respectively.

Staff requests that the Commission seek public comment and provide input to staff on the following options and recommendations. Staff will conduct further outreach and return to the Commission with recommendations in the form of a draft ordinance, including the appropriate environmental review information needed to adopt the ordinance.

Staff provides policy recommendations (as drafted in the ordinance) and identified options for consideration in the following six topical areas: 1) If and how cannabis consumption venues should be allowed; 2) If and how a cannabis consumption venue may expand a cannabis retail facility footprint; 3) Hours of operation; 4) Live entertainment; 5) Appropriate locations; and 6) Ventilation

System Details.

The purpose of a public workshop is to get initial feedback from the public and direction from the Planning Commission on further development and refinement of an ordinance that would be finalized and undergo environmental review. Staff would then bring the revised ordinance to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Staff is requesting that the Planning Commission conduct a public workshop to review and receive public input regarding options for a Cannabis Consumption Venue Ordinance for areas in unincorporated Monterey County and provide direction to staff.

DISCUSSION:

See Exhibit 1, Discussion.

TIMING AND NEXT STEPS

Staff requests input from the Planning Commission on the above topic areas that should be covered in the Cannabis Consumption Venue Ordinance. Other topics also may be raised during the workshop. With this feedback, staff will continue to refine a draft ordinance for Planning Commission consideration.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Housing and Community Development Department staff are working in collaboration with the Cannabis Program Office, Office of County Counsel, Health Department, Sheriff's Office and Fire representatives to prepare and review the proposed ordinance.

Prepared by: Mike Novo, AICP, Management Specialist, 831-755-5176

Reviewed by: Sarah Wikle, Principal Planner, 831-784-5700

Approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning 831-755-5285

The following exhibits are on file with HCD:

Exhibit 1 - Discussion

Exhibit 2 - Draft Ordinances

- Draft regulations for Chapter 7.90 Cannabis
- Draft regulations for Chapter 21.76-Inland Zoning Ordinance

Exhibit 3 - Map of Zoning Districts that allow Cannabis Retailers

Exhibit 4 - Santa Cruz County Ordinance excerpt

Exhibit 5 - West Hollywood Ordinance excerpt

Exhibit 6 - National City Ordinance excerpt

Cc: Cannabis Interested Parties List; Elizabeth Gonzales, Permit Center Manager; Joshua Bowling, Chief Building Official; Craig Spencer, Housing and Community Development Director; Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning; Sarah Wikle, Principal Planner; Robert Brayer, County Counsel; Marni Flagg, Health; Christabelle Zarraga, Health; Edward Moreno, Health; Elaine Narciso, Health; Vivian Avila, Health; Nicholas Kennedy, Sheriff; Michelle House, Cannabis Program Manager; Frank

Espinoza, CALFIRE; Joel Mendoza, North County Fire Protection District; Scott Anderson and Rick Magno, Monterey County Regional Fire District; Reed Gallogly, County Counsel.