

January 11, 2018

To: All Manitoba municipalities

Dear Colleagues:

It has been brought to the attention of the Manitoba School Boards Association that a publication has been released entitled "Zoning for Cannabis: A Guide for Municipalities". On pages 7 and 10 of that document, it proposes that municipal authorities consider buffering zones as part of the planning and evaluative criteria that should be considered prior to amending their municipal zoning by-law.

While defining safe and appropriate buffering zones will be context and environmentally specific to each locale across Manitoba, it is the perspective of Manitoba's school boards that this Guide's proposed 150 to 300 metre distance for such buffer zones requires sober reconsideration. In terms of what constitutes an appropriate distance between the proposed location of a cannabis retail outlet and a school, licensed early learning, childcare or daycare centre, or public recreational facility (which we interpret to include parks and playgrounds) in each neighbourhood and community, it is school boards' perspective that a distance of 150 to 300 metres (roughly two city blocks) will not effectively protect or prevent children from exposure to the retail of cannabis. We therefore encourage our municipal counterparts to consider buffering zones greater than 300 metres when planning and evaluating options for amendment to their zoning by-laws. It seems counterintuitive to us that the guide would propose a one kilometre buffering zone in between cannabis retail outlets (on page 10), while reducing this distance to less than one third (pages 7 and 10) when it comes to locations frequented by our youngest citizens and residents.

While the Manitoba School Boards Association does not purport to offer a formally defined radius that would be "safe" in terms of the distance between cannabis retailers and areas frequented by children (as it is our perspective that no exposure whatsoever to cannabis among children ought to remain a chief planning and evaluative objective), it must be considered that if one kilometre is the minimum buffer zone that is proposed under this guide between cannabis retail outlets in the same community, ought this perhaps not also be a relevant standard that should be considered and applied between a cannabis retail outlet and an area frequented by children? We trust that all municipal authorities will make the right decisions concerning this matter, for the ongoing safety of, and for the minimization of cannabis harm and risk, for our children and of our local communities.

Sincerely,



Ken Cameron
President

Cc. Manitoba Municipal Relations, Community and Regional Planning
Honourable Jeff Wharton, Minister, Municipal Relations
Honourable Ian Wishart, Minister, Education and Training
Honourable Heather Stefanson, Minister, Justice and Attorney-General
Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Manitoba Association of Municipal Administrators