



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the City Manager

MEDIA CONTACT:

Lauren Pettipiece, Communications Analyst
408.868.1275
lpettipiece@saratoga.ca.us

For Immediate Release

June 8, 2017

Saratoga City Council Prohibits Commercial Sales and Outdoor Cultivation of Marijuana

On June 7, 2017, the Saratoga City Council adopted an ordinance prohibiting commercial marijuana activities and the outdoor cultivation of marijuana within the City of Saratoga. Adoption of the ordinance comes before the State is expected to begin issuing licenses for commercial marijuana activities in January 2018.

“The ordinance, which will prohibit commercial sales and outdoor cultivation of marijuana, can help reduce risks of criminal activities and environmental hazards,” said Saratoga Mayor Emily Lo. “This ordinance will help eliminate any nuisances associated with the legalization of recreational marijuana, which California voters approved during the last election in November 2016. Our ordinance acts in the interest of protecting public safety in our community.”

Following the passage of Proposition 64 in November 2016, the City Council initially adopted an urgency ordinance to prohibit all outdoor cultivation of marijuana. The urgency ordinance was subsequently extended and set to expire in October 2018. This new ordinance makes the ban on outdoor cultivation permanent and expands on existing regulations in the Saratoga City Code to prohibit all commercial activity related to marijuana rather than only medical marijuana dispensaries.

This step is expected to eliminate public safety and health risks associated with outdoor cultivation and commercial marijuana activities. Outdoor grow sites can become an attractive nuisance that increase the risk of burglary, trespassing, or robbery. Furthermore, outdoor cultivation is often associated with chemical and pesticide use that can be harmful to people and the environment. Because many marijuana business must operate largely on a cash-only basis, commercial operations have become targets for theft as well. Both Washington and Colorado also saw increases in marijuana-related traffic fatalities after legalization of recreational marijuana.

Additionally, both the ban on commercial activity and outdoor cultivation align with the City’s efforts to protect youth from smoking. In recent years, the City of Saratoga has systematically updated its tobacco policies to protect minors and reduce overall exposure to secondhand smoke. The ordinance supports this effort by reducing opportunities for people under 21 to obtain marijuana, and thereby preventing youth access to marijuana.