



# Vermont Cannabis Legalization Information for Selectboards and Regional Commissions

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## Q & A

Under Act 164, which allows for regulated cannabis sales in Vermont, each municipality may create its own Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). We strongly recommend that every municipality opting into cannabis sales does this as soon as possible.

**Q**

**What is a CCC?**

**A**

**CCCs operate similar to a zoning committee/board but will address a range of localized matters related to cannabis issues in a town. CCCs do not have absolute power; the state's Cannabis Control Board (CCB) will still control the majority of policy. A local CCC would be the authority surrounding issues of zoning, nuisance and permitting.**

**Q**

**What does a CCC do?**

**A**

**CCCs can answer a variety of questions about cannabis within a community. For instance, a CCC has the ability to decide how the cannabis industry will be zoned in a town and can tackle important questions such as:**

- How close to schools will a cannabis retailer be allowed?**
- Will cannabis industry buildings be allowed in downtown areas?**
- What can the town do to pass zoning, signage and/or advertising restrictions?**
- What proximity can cannabis buildings have to recovery centers, playgrounds, or other vulnerable populations?**





**CCCs can also help clear up questions** surrounding permitting and licensing:

- **What do applicants and the Selectboard need to know about the licensing process?**
- **What might the town need to ask licensees, including whether they must provide information on whether they have held a prior cannabis-related license?**
- **Should we share examples of successful license and application processes?**

**CCCs can make recommendations** related to taxation:

Should a town pass a 1 percent sales tax across all products to benefit from cannabis sales? And how should those funds be used, including to educate and protect?

**CCCs can also help explain** what powers towns might exercise regarding nuisance laws. For instance, they can clarify complicated questions such as:

- **What hours of operation will be permitted for retail cannabis shops?**
- **How many shops should be present and how to regulate crowds, noise, lines, etc.?**
- **How will cannabis manufacturers fit into the wider neighborhood?**

## **Example:**

A CCC can help mitigate the risk of cannabis businesses setting up shop right next to our most vulnerable populations. This actually happened in Springfield Vermont, where a CBD processing business set up shop beside a Turning Point Recovery Center. The center had no prior knowledge of its new neighbor and was not notified. The filtration blower system wasn't adequate, and the processing facility emitted a significant amount of cannabis smell. Residents and visitors in recovery were negatively impacted by their safe haven becoming a place where they were unable to avoid the smell of cannabis. Fortunately, the owner was willing to adjust the times of processes to be around midnight to reduce smell exposure to those at the center and residential site. The processing center later moved out of the property.







### **Why Your Town Should Form a CCC:**

A Cannabis Control Commission will be the primary avenue for a Selectboard to gather together the necessary stakeholders and experts to help protect community interests when making cannabis policy decisions. By forming a CCC, a Selectboard is ensuring that local policy is thoughtful, intentional and considers the needs of all the town's residents.

Creating a low-impact environment will take funding, care and advance planning. Ideally, advertising, zoning and nuisance laws will allow for retail cannabis to be sold in our towns with as little impact on our youth and vulnerable as a pharmacy.

**Q**

**Specifically, how will a CCC work?**

**A**

**A local CCC is a recommendation-based body. Like a planning commission, it will allow everyday residents to present a plan of action made by a diverse group of voices to the local Selectboard. It will be up to the Selectboard to decide whether to accept recommendations, as well as to decide what powers to grant a local CCC.**

**Once initial questions are answered, a local CCC will mostly be responsible for answering questions about new permits, modifying the town's cannabis plan as needed and responding to any cannabis-related issues that come up. Like other recommendation-based committees, CCC's can meet monthly to perform their duties. When needed, representatives of the committee will present to, or answer questions from, the Selectboard at Selectboard meetings.**





## Recommendations for who should serve on CCCs:

The model CCC would feature members from a large cross-section of our communities. While the exact number of people on a CCC may be determined by a local Selectboard, it is recommended that a CCC feature the following:

- School personnel
- Youth substance use prevention specialist
- Cannabis industry representatives
- Parents
- Medical professionals
- Members of the local government.
- Commerce organizations
- Person in recovery

These voices would bring a wide array of expertise to the commission. This would allow the commission – and Selectboard – to consider and respond to just about any question that comes up related to cannabis issues.



**Q**

**Who will benefit?**

**A**

**Who will benefit from cannabis sales? With the state collecting all licensing fees and allocating the revenue toward administration, our communities will only benefit from cannabis sales if there is a local option sales tax. How we use such a tax will be extremely important.**

**If your town does engage in a local option sales tax, we recommend considering a formal mechanism to put a portion of these funds toward substance-misuse prevention efforts, recovery and enforcement, including data collection and reporting to improve outcomes for youth and vulnerable populations.**





**Time sensitivity:** The sooner a municipality creates a CCC, the faster it can discuss, understand and plan how retail cannabis businesses will impact its communities.

**We strongly recommend you read full timeline for CCB (Cannabis Control Board):** <https://bit.ly/Act164Timeline>

**Thank you for considering our information, data and recommendations.**

We hope you will use us as a resource. Please contact us for more information on the health impacts of cannabis use, CCCs, or any other questions you may have.

## Windham County Prevention Partnership

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### Autumn 2021:

As Vermont municipalities can establish their CCCs at any time, we recommend they mobilize as soon as possible to begin planning. Some steps include community research and public meetings ahead of setting up a CCC; collaborating with public health and prevention experts; working with law enforcement, medical professionals and emergency services to explore risks and consequences and any needed state and local education or policies.

Other steps might include exploring potential actions municipalities can take to promote youth prevention and support recovery under 24 V.S.A. § 4414 (zoning) and 24 V.S.A. § 2291 (public nuisance).

### Winter 2021:

Launch a municipal CCC to establish local regulations and best practices.

Set up established CCC meeting schedules and agendas, in time for state deadlines at the CCB (Cannabis Control Board).

**Important:** The state CCB will be finalizing rules for packaging, labeling and retail displays and health warnings by March 2022. By April 2022, it will begin accepting applications for integrated licenses to be issued in May and begin issuing all cultivator licenses in June.

