



**To:** New Westminster City Council  
in Regular Council

**Meeting Date:** February 9, 2026

**From:** Jackie Teed, Director, Planning &  
Development

**Report No.:** 2026-74

**Re:** **Cannabis Store Relocation Request - North Root Cannabis Ltd. (Update)  
and Next Steps for Zoning Amendment Bylaw (416 East Columbia) No.  
8520, 2025 to Remove Cannabis as a Permitted Use at that Address**

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### **Staff Recommendation**

*THAT Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Retail Sale of Cannabis (416 East Columbia Street) Amendment Bylaw No. 8520, 2025, be abandoned.*

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### **Purpose**

To update Council on the status of the application from North Root Cannabis Ltd. seeking consideration to relocate in advance of the planned review of the Cannabis Regulatory Framework and to abandon Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8520, 2025.

### **Summary**

In 2018, the City initiated the process of considering cannabis retail applications in the City, with six locations in five neighbourhoods being approved by Council through 2019. This process considered both the location and initial retail operator, with the understanding that once the land use was approved it would “run with the land” unless otherwise amended by Council, allowing different retail operators in the locations in the future. One such approval was for 416 E. Columbia Street, with North Root Cannabis Ltd. as the initial retail operator.

Since 2019, North Root has been unable to open for business at 416 E. Columbia Street. On December 16, 2024 Council directed that the City process an application from North Root to relocate to another location on E. Columbia, and to remove the cannabis retail use at the original location, toward maintaining one location in Sapperton under the initial retail operator.

The City received an application from North Root in 2025, but the owner of the new location has since withdrawn application authorization. The City provided a timeline for the applicant to submit verification of another lease and offered to provide assistance. The deadline to provide this submission has passed, the City has notified the applicant and received no further information. As such, the City will now proceed with formally

notifying the applicant that their application has been cancelled, and initiate the process for a partial refund, consistent with the Development Approvals Procedure Bylaw. The applicant will also be notified that any new application should follow completion of the updated Cannabis Retail Location Policy, which the Economic Development, and Development Planning sections have on their work plan for 2026/2027.

Consistent with Council's original intent that one private cannabis retail location be permitted in each of five of neighbourhoods around the city, *staff recommends at this time that Zoning Amendment Bylaw (416 East Columbia) No. 8520, 2025 to remove cannabis as a permitted use, which was provided three readings by Council on July 7, 2025, be forwarded to Council for **consideration to rescind all three readings***. This would subsequently allow an alternative operator to open at the originally approved Sapperton location.

Should Council prefer to proceed with removing the cannabis retail use from 416 East Columbia, staff would recommend that the above-noted bylaw instead be referred to the next meeting of Council for consideration of adoption. Given the City intends to formally cancel the application of North Root Cannabis Ltd., this would likely result in no cannabis retail locations in Sapperton, at least until such time as Council considers the Cannabis Retail Location Policy update.

## **Background**

### Cannabis Regulatory Framework

In January 2018, the City initiated the process of developing the Cannabis Regulatory Framework. On July 9, August 27 and September 17, 2018 Council endorsed: (1) a process for the initial intake of cannabis retail applications; (2) the Cannabis Retail Rezoning Policy; and, (3) the Cannabis Application Evaluation Criteria, and adopted the amending bylaws necessary to put the regulatory framework in place, and enable applications to be received. The initial application intake period was between October 24 and December 5, 2018 and 22 applications were received.

Applications were reviewed in accordance with the endorsed process, policy, and criteria. A key consideration of the Council-endorsed framework is to distribute stores across the city - one store within each of Downtown, Uptown and Sapperton, and a total of two stores within the remaining retail areas (Twelfth Street, Twentieth Street, Queensborough, and McBride Boulevard at Eighth Ave). Ultimately, Council approved five private cannabis store locations and one public provincial location (in Queensborough), shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Current Cannabis Retail Locations

Business Location	Location	Status
Queensborough	540 Ewen Avenue	Operating
Queensborough (Provincial Store)	805 Boyd Street	Operating
Downtown	71 Sixth Street	Operating
Twelfth Street	710 Twelfth Street	Operating
Uptown	320 Sixth Street	Operating
Sapperton	416 E. Columbia Street	Rezoned but not operating

Further background on Non-Medical Cannabis, including links to policies, evaluation criteria and previous Council Reports, are available at this [link](#).

### Cannabis Retail Location Policy Updates

Economic Development staff, in collaboration with Planning and Development, expect to initiate an update of the City's Liquor and Cannabis Policy in the coming months as part of their work plan. The purpose of this policy framework is to allow for a fulsome consideration of liquor and cannabis applications, and ensure equity and transparency when reviewing future applications. In regards to cannabis retail store applications, this policy is expected to include considerations such as the number and location of permitted cannabis retail stores, siting criteria, and business licence application requirements, based on community input and Council direction. This work is anticipated to be finalized in early 2027.

### Previous Council Direction

*Direction on Applications: North Root Cannabis (Sapperton) and Queensborough Cannabis (Downtown)*

On December 16, 2024 staff provided a [report to Council](#) which included the following information:

- City received requests to relocate two cannabis retail businesses which were successful applications in the City's initial 2018 process to rezone limited properties for retail cannabis sales:
  - North Root Cannabis Ltd. (Sapperton) was seeking to relocate due to challenges in securing a lease arrangement at 416 E. Columbia Street, the property rezoned to permit cannabis retail as part of the 2018 intake process. The applicant has been unable to open their business at this location since that time, and wishes to lease elsewhere on East Columbia Street in the Sapperton neighbourhood.

- Queensborough Cannabis Co.(Queensborough) was seeking to relocate from 540 Ewen Ave., the property rezoned to permit cannabis retail as part of the 2018 intake process, due to challenges competing with the BC Cannabis Store operated by the Province in Queensborough, the only area with two retail locations. The applicant wishes to relocate from Queensborough to the Downtown where they would have access to a larger market. This would result in two retail locations Downtown, and one in Queensborough.

Following receipt of the report, Council directed that:

- both applicants should be advised that Council would further consider rezoning applications to relocate the businesses as requested;
- cannabis retail sales be removed as a permitted use from the existing locations at 416 East Columbia Street and 540 Ewen Avenue in relation to those applications, which would maintain a consistent number of retail locations city-wide; and
- that staff proceed with the planned review of the Cannabis Regulatory Framework.

A rezoning application was received from Queensborough Cannabis on December 23, 2025 to relocate the business from 540 Ewen Avenue in Queensborough to #260-800 Carnarvon Street (Shops at NewWest) Downtown. Staff have initiated review of the application and will provide a report to Council for consideration in the coming months.

A rezoning application was received from North Root Cannabis on April 28, 2025 to relocate the business from 416 E. Columbia Street to 455 East Columbia Street. This application is the subject of this report.

### *Zoning Amendment to Remove Cannabis Retail Sales Use*

As per Council direction on December 16, 2024 staff prepared Zoning Amendment Bylaw (416 East Columbia) No. 8520, 2025 which would remove cannabis retail sale as a permitted use at 416 East Columbia (existing location in Sapperton) and brought it for Council consideration on June 23, 2025. Council directed staff to provide notice and forward the bylaw to for consideration of *first, second and third readings*. Council provided three readings of the bylaw on July 7, 2025. As part of the consideration of the Zoning Amendment Bylaw, Council also directed that the City decline to receive an application from the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) at this property from another Cannabis retail applicant (Marigolds Cannabis).

The property at 540 Ewen Avenue was not included at this time, as it continues to be occupied by Queensborough Cannabis; a bylaw is intended to be forwarded as part of Council's consideration of a rezoning application at their new Downtown location.

## Discussion

### North Root Cannabis

A rezoning application was received April 28, 2025 to relocate the business from 416 E. Columbia Street to 455 East Columbia Street. Following staff review of the submission materials a number of items requiring clarification or additional information were identified and the City proceeded to work with the applicant on these.

On October 10, 2025 the City was notified by the property owner that they no longer intended to lease to North Root Cannabis. Without authorization from the property owner, staff were not able to proceed with further review of the application.

On November 7, 2025 the City advised North Root Cannabis of this outcome, and offered the applicant an additional six weeks to identify and secure an alternative third location in Sapperton. On November 25, 2025 staff met with the applicant and offered to provide assistance in this regard.

The City did not received the required information prior to the deadline, and advised the applicant in writing that the deadline had been missed. The City has not received further correspondence in this regard from North Root Cannabis.

### Next Steps

North Root Cannabis has been unsuccessful in securing an alternative retail location within the past year, when Council indicated such a relocation application could be explored. The Sapperton neighbourhood was identified by Council as one where one of the limited retail cannabis operations should be permitted, with the intent of providing distributed access in the city. Sapperton has not realized an operating retail cannabis location since the 2018/19 process.

Given this, staff proposes that:

1. Consistent with the Development Procedures Bylaw, the City will notify the applicant that their application is being cancelled, and will proceed with providing a partial refund as allowed by the Bylaw.

*This would end North Root's current application, and the notification letter would confirm that any future application would need to wait until the completion of the updated Cannabis Retail Location Policy.*

2. Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Retail Sale of Cannabis (416 East Columbia Street) Amendment Bylaw No. 8520, 2025, which was given first, second, and third readings on July 7, 2025, be abandoned.

*This would mean retail cannabis sales would remain as a use at the subject address, and the property owner would be able to lease to another operator, providing cannabis retail sales in Sapperton.*

Should Council wish that the City proceed with removing cannabis retail sale use at 416 East Columbia Street, staff recommend the bylaw be forwarded to Council for adoption.

### **Financial Analysis**

There are no financial implications to the City anticipated with the processing of these applications other than those associated with the department's operating budget.

### **Interdepartmental Liaison**

The Planning and Development and Community Services Departments are working closely together on the proposed location change requests. The Community Services Department are leading the update of the City's Liquor and Cannabis Policies, with support from Planning and Development.

### **Report Approval**

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