



June 3, 2020

City of Guelph Committee of Adjustment
Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall
1 Carden St.
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to express our opposition to the proposed permit for the retail sale of cannabis and related supplies on the property at 739 Woolwich Street, Guelph, ON. We ask that you not permit relief from the By-law requirements and allow for the retail sale of cannabis in close proximity to the proposed Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) Child & Youth Mental Health Centre/Community Youth Hub building based on the following grounds:

- Our municipality needs to uniformly maintain standards regarding the location of cannabis stores
- it is never advisable to put a vulnerable population into a known high-risk environment

Maintaining municipal standards regarding the location of cannabis stores

- The City of Guelph controls the provincially recommended zoning regulations that require cannabis stores to be at least 150 metres from schools, playgrounds and healthcare facilities. This regulation has been put in place to provide a geographic barrier to protect youth from readily accessing cannabis.
- The City of Guelph set a precedent this week by filing objections to two proposed Guelph cannabis stores due to their proximity to mental health services and a daycare ([Guelph Today](#), June 2, 2020).

Children and youth with mental health and addiction problems are an “at-risk” population for using cannabis

- Research has shown that children and youth with mental health issues have often turned to cannabis, using it as “self-medication” to deal with anxiety and depression.
- Research also shows that children and youth consistently make inaccurate assessments of the risks associated with cannabis – they underestimate that overuse creates addiction, and they believe that because it is “natural and benign,” which evidence shows not to be true. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) consumed at high levels can cause psychosis which, once occurring, may become a long term mental health concern. Consuming cannabis regularly has been shown to have long term impacts on the developing adolescent brain.
- The use of marijuana by teens has been shown to be detrimental to their developing brains. Research out of McGill (2019) found that children under the age of 18 who used marijuana in their teens were more likely as young adults to have incidences of depression, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts compared to those who didn’t use cannabis in their teens.
- The logic that applies is the same common sense logic that suggests that locating a liquor store beside a rehab facility doesn’t make sense – when options exist, there is no point in creating



predictable problems. Placing vulnerable children and youth into a high risk environment is not advisable.

For a child struggling with addiction and psychosis, dealing with the constant need to quiet their anxiety, having access to cannabis as a coping mechanism can be just too tempting. Locating a cannabis store next door to a mental health and addictions centre feels like it diminishes the importance of the large body of research that states the negative effects of cannabis on the undeveloped teenage brain. Allowing those two buildings to be located next door to one another presents the appearance that it is okay to use marijuana. As a parent I would not want my child going to a Youth Hub located next door to a cannabis store.

The building of the Child & Youth Mental Health Centre/Community Youth Hub for our community should take priority over the retail sale of cannabis in Guelph. We urge you to take the opinions of the CMHA Waterloo Wellington Board of Directors into account when making your decision.

Sincerely,

**Molly Kriksic,
CMHA WW Board President**

**David Pell,
CMHA WW Board Vice-President**