

THE FUTURE OF CANNABIS BUSINESSES IN FRENCHTOWN



Dear Neighbor:

On behalf of the **Frenchtown Borough Cannabis Committee**, here is an update on the status of cannabis businesses operating in the Borough.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, Frenchtown residents and the residents of neighboring communities voted — along with the rest of New Jersey residents — to allow the sale of cannabis for recreational use. **Frenchtown residents voted 76.51% in favor.***

In August 2021, to allow time to consider a suitable ordinance for Frenchtown, the Borough Council passed a temporary ordinance prohibiting cannabis businesses from operating in the Borough. They did not want to rush into a decision on such an important matter.

A committee was formed to evaluate existing planning and zoning, solicit public input, and develop a suitable ordinance for Council to consider. The committee members are: Cannabis Committee Chair John Dougherty (Planning and Zoning Board member), Gordon Dragt (resident), Randi Eckel (Chair of the Planning and Zoning Board), Kandy Ferree (Borough Council member), Jessikah Goodale (resident), Michele Liebtag (Borough Council President), and Brad Myhre (Mayor).

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

The benefits of allowing any new business, including cannabis businesses, to operate in the Borough include economic development, local employment, increasing the number of visitors to other businesses, and — unique to cannabis businesses — providing tax revenue directly to the Borough. Among the challenges posed by cannabis businesses are increased traffic and demand for parking, potential lines outside retailers, potential odor problems, security at businesses, and increased demand on police services.

TYPES OF CANNABIS BUSINESSES ALLOWED BY THE STATE

The state law defines six classes of cannabis business:

- Retail
- Delivery
- Manufacturing
- Wholesaling
- Distribution
- Cultivation

THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee has considered which classes of cannabis business are compatible with existing zoning and planning. See the table on the following page.

CANNABIS BUSINESS COMPATIBILITY WITH ZONING AND PLANNING

| ZONE | RETAIL | DELIVERY | MANUFACTURING | WHOLESALING | DISTRIBUTION | CULTIVATION |
|--|--------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| R-1 Low Density Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-2 Medium Density Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-3 Multi-family Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-4A Central Commercial | X | NR ¹ | - | - | - | - |
| R-4B Transitional Commercial | X | X | - | - | - | - |
| R-4C Satellite Commercial | X | X | - | - | - | - |
| R-5 Low Impact Industrial ² | - | X | NR | - | - | NR |
| R-7 Conservation/Open Space | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Eighth Street Redevelopment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-8B Inclusionary Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-8C Inclusionary Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-8D Inclusionary Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| R-8E Inclusionary Residential | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Frenchtown Village Center Rehabilitation Area Overlay ³ | X | X | - | - | - | - |

X – business is compatible with existing zoning

NR – not recommended

- — not allowed under current zoning

¹ Offices are only permitted above ground level in this zone.

² The Zone permits “storage of personal or local business inventory”.

³ Use permitted only in the R-4A and portions of R-4B zones in the Frenchtown Village Center Rehabilitation Area Overlay.

We also discussed the process of developing an ordinance with the mayor and a council member from Lambertville, which has an ordinance in place allowing retail cannabis businesses.

On July 6, 2022, the committee recommended to Borough Council that retail cannabis businesses be conditionally permitted in the “Central Commercial” (R-4A), “Transitional Commercial” (R-4B), and “Satellite Commercial” (R-4C) zones. The attached zoning map shows where these zones are located.

It is important to note that retail cannabis establishments are standalone businesses that sell only cannabis products, and that other retailers cannot add cannabis products to their inventories.

In addition, the committee recommended that cannabis delivery businesses be conditionally permitted in the same retail zones as well as the “Low Impact Industrial” (R-5) zone. A cannabis delivery business is the “back office” for a business that delivers cannabis from retailers to customers.

Council supported these recommendations and asked the committee to proceed to the next step: considering conditions for these businesses (e.g., number, size, micro versus standard, etc.) in detail, gathering public input, and drafting an ordinance. Because Lambertville and Frenchtown are similar, and for consistency among river towns, we are using Lambertville’s ordinance as a model.

IMPORTANT POINTS CONSIDERED FOR DRAFT ORDINANCE

As we started to develop a draft ordinance concerning cannabis business in Frenchtown, a few key points came through:

- First and foremost, the ordinance must consider the attractiveness, community, and population size of Frenchtown. We do not want to adversely impact the character and “livability” of the town.
- Based on the size of Frenchtown, there should be a maximum of two (2) cannabis businesses allowed at any time.
- There is a preference for “micro-retail” cannabis businesses (smaller size helps ensure that any cannabis business is locally owned and operated).
- No consumption of cannabis products will be allowed at the business sites.

To learn more and to provide input on this process, Frenchtown Borough residents can do the following:

- Attend one of the community sessions held on Saturday, October 22, 2022, from 9am to 11am, or on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, from 7pm to 9pm at the Frenchtown Elementary School Auditorium
- Visit the Frenchtown Borough page on Facebook: [facebook.com/frenchtownboroughnj](https://www.facebook.com/frenchtownboroughnj)
- Visit the Frenchtown Borough website: frenchtownborough.com/cannabis-committee
- Send an email with the subject line “Cannabis” to the Committee at: input@frenchtownborough.com — please include your name, address, and phone number
- Send a letter to: Cannabis Committee Chair, Frenchtown Borough Cannabis Committee, Borough Hall, 29 Second Street, Frenchtown, NJ 08825

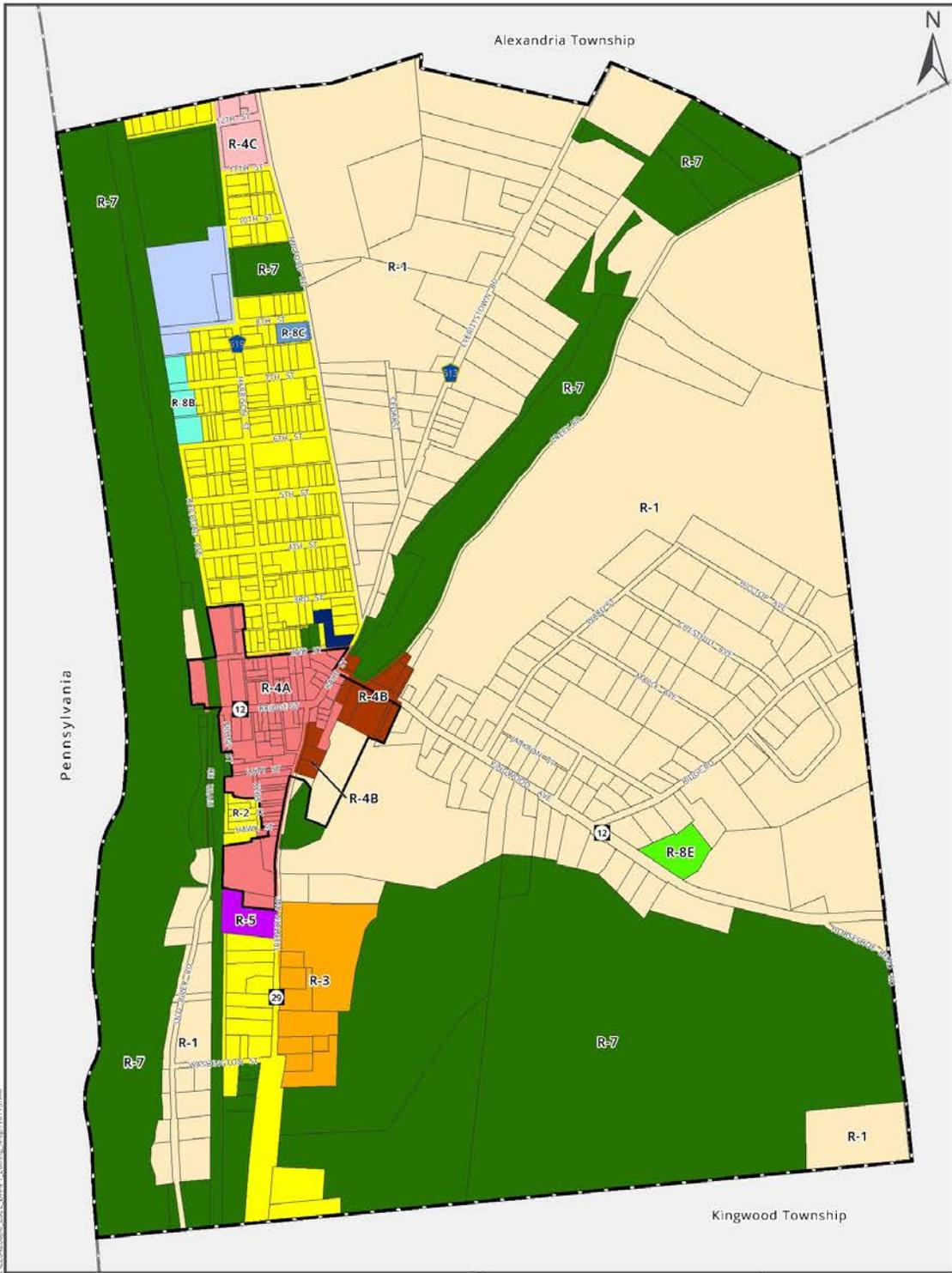
It is the committee’s goal to finalize the draft ordinance in time for the November Council meeting and have an ordinance in place by the end of 2022.

Signed:

**Frenchtown Borough
Cannabis Committee**

*<https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/election/2020/General/G2020%20Results%20by%20Municipality.pdf>

ZONING MAP



Zoning Map

Borough of Frenchtown
Hunterdon County, New Jersey

1 inch = 600 feet

Zoning Map Revisions

| Adapted by Ordinance _____ on Month Day, 2022 |
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April 15, 2022
Project No.: FFT-0102