

CANNABIS-RELATED BUSINESSES

Planning & Development | Town of High River

This information sheet provides basic information on establishing a cannabis-related business in High River. The information is a simplification of the Town of High River's [Land Use Bylaw](#) and the [Cannabis-Related Business Bylaw](#). In the event of any discrepancy/omission, the Land Use Bylaw and the Cannabis-Related Business Bylaw take precedence.

Please consult the [Land Use Bylaw map](#) to determine your property's district. It also provides links to the other town planning documents that are applicable to the property.

Once you have created your plans, pre-application meetings are required for proposed Cannabis Stores and Cannabis Facilities, but are not required for Cannabis Counselling Clinics. The Town's Planning & Development Division reserves the discretion to require a pre-application meeting if it is believed that the complexity of the application warrants it. If you would like to book a pre-application meeting or would like to speak with the Division before submitting your application, please email planning@highriver.ca or call 403.652.2110.

If any part of the application does not comply with the [Land Use Bylaw](#) (at the Town's discretion), you will be required to either revise the application or apply for a variance application (found at highriver.ca/development-permits) which costs \$175 as per the [Rate Bylaw](#).

Locating within an existing building

If you are locating within an existing building, please fill in the Intensification/Change of Use application form (found at highriver.ca/development-permits). The Town will not require a payment for permitted uses and will keep the application form on file for information tracking purposes. If the Town determines that your proposed use is discretionary, you will submit the Intensification/Change of Use application form, the fee and all requirements (unless otherwise discussed). The Town does NOT accept incomplete applications. You may require a Minor Development Permit for renovations/additions to the building. Town staff will confirm.

Developing a new building

If you are developing a new building to establish your cannabis-related business, you will submit the Major Development Permit application form (found at highriver.ca/development-permits), the fee and all requirements (unless otherwise discussed with staff). The Town does NOT accept incomplete applications.



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You will require Occupancy/Building Permits for your application(s). Please contact permits@highriver.ca for more information. You will require a business license. Please contact businesslicense@highriver.ca. Note that a business license will not be issued unless you have received an Occupancy Permit and unless you have received provincial approvals for Cannabis Stores and federal approvals for Cannabis Facilities.

Cannabis Stores

- Cannabis Store is defined as follows:
An establishment licensed by the Province of Alberta where Cannabis is sold for consumption off the premises that may include ancillary retail sales of merchandise and where counselling on Cannabis for medical purposes may be provided.
- Cannabis stores are discretionary in the following districts: Central Business District (CBD), Neighbourhood Centre District (NCD), and Service & Employment District (SED) (must be ancillary to a Cannabis Facility). See the “Development Permit Process” section of this handout for further information on discretionary uses.
- Cannabis facilities are subject to the following separation distances EXCEPT IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (the separation distances do not apply to land zoned Central Business District):

School (including reserve land)	Early childhood services program private operation	Provincial Health Care Facility (hospital)	Public parks
100 m	100 m	100 m	100 m

The Town will consider any potential cumulative impacts if the proposed Cannabis Store building is within a 150 m radial distance of an existing Cannabis Store building.

Please see the [interactive map](#) of the required separation distances for cannabis stores.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) for Cannabis Stores

- One of the concerns raised in the public consultation was potential for crime at Cannabis Stores. High River’s Town Plan encourages Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Key strategies of CPTED are as follows:
- Natural surveillance (maximizing visibility to limit the opportunity for crime):
 - Can include lighting design, buildings relatively close to the public realm, etc.
- Natural access control (limit the accessibility of certain areas from the public)
 - Can include limiting access to storage areas, loading bays, etc. and noting that a security system is in place
- You will likely be implementing crime prevention measures anyway



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to follow provincial guidelines. As part of the application, please provide a list of crime prevention measures you are implementing.

Window coverings

- The province has prohibited having cannabis products, accessories or any other cannabis related item or material visible from the exterior of the premises. That will typically mean that the windows will be need to be covered but it is important that the store still looks aesthetically pleasing.
- As part of the application, please provide a sketch/explanation on how you plan to cover the windows to meet the province's requirements. If you plan to use logos/signage as part of your window covering design, that will be subject to a signage development permit (found at highriver.ca/development-permits).

Cannabis Facilities

- Cannabis Facility is defined as follows:
A use where Cannabis is grown, processed, packaged, tested, stored, or destroyed where a license for all activities associated with cannabis growing, processing, packaging, testing, storage, or destruction has been issued by Health Canada and must include odour mitigation measures to the satisfaction of the Development Authority. A Cannabis Facility may include a Cannabis Store as an ancillary use. This definition does not apply to a registered person as defined in the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations Act and its regulations, as amended from time to time.
- Cannabis facilities are discretionary in the Service & Employment District (SED) only. See the "Development Permit Process" section of this handout for further information on discretionary uses.
- Cannabis facilities are subject to the following separation distances:

School (including reserve land)	Early childhood services program private operation	Public parks	Traditional Neighbourhood District
75 m	75 m	75 m	75 m

Please see the [interactive map](#) of the required separation distances for cannabis facilities.

Cannabis Counselling Clinics

- Cannabis Counselling Clinic is defined as follows:
An establishment where counselling on Cannabis for medical purposes is provided, where consumption of Cannabis must not occur, and where the dispensing or sale of Cannabis must not occur.



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- Cannabis Counselling Clinics are permitted in the following districts: Traditional Neighbourhood District (TND), Neighbourhood Centre District (NCD), and Central Business District (CBD)
- See the “Public Review” step of the Development Permit Process in this handout for further information
- Cannabis Counselling Clinics are not subject to any separation distances

What does the Town look for during the review process?

- The Town’s Land Use Bylaw includes two guiding principles. These guiding principles are very critical and the Town will use them to evaluate the suitability of your application.

Guiding Principles for evaluating applications

The Town’s Land Use Bylaw includes two guiding principles. These guiding principles are very critical and the Town will use them to evaluate the suitability of your application.

A Pedestrian as the Universal Measure of Design:

The Town of High River is to be designed based on a scale that is comfortable to people, encourages walking, accommodates a variety of functions, can change and adapt over time, and that will foster an environment that supports and reinforces the social aspects of the Town.

Stewardship through Sustainable Design:

The Town, the community, and the development industry act as stewards for the High River of tomorrow. All development shall focus on long term quality over short term gains.

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- The Town also reviews the application to ensure that it complies with all of the Land Use Bylaw regulations as well as the policies in the [Town Plan](#) and in any other applicable policy documents (Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans, Neighbourhood Outline Plans, etc. found [here](#)).



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- If there are aspects of your proposal that do not comply with the Town's regulations/policies, staff will go through options with you. Options could include applying for a variance or applying to amend the applicable policy document

Development Permit Process

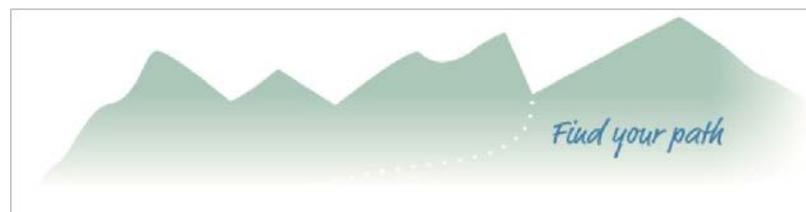
The approximate timeline to issue a Development Permit for a Change of Use/Intensification of Use (when a Development Permit is required) is 2 week for permitted and 5 weeks for discretionary (from acceptance of application to end of 21 day appeal period).

PRE-APPLICATION

- Pre-application meetings are required for a discretionary Intensification/Change of Use permit and are strongly recommended for a permitted Intensification/Change of Use permit.
- Pre-application meetings are an opportunity to discuss the application with representatives from all relevant departments. They are an effective and efficient way to catch any "red flags" and generally result in a more efficient application processing time. We will also go through the Town's Guiding Principles (noted above) with respect to your application.
- Please contact staff at 403.652.2110 or at planning@highriver.ca to book a pre-application meeting/discuss your proposal. Please give us 2-3 business days to set up the meeting.
- We will also go through the Town's Guiding Principles (noted on previous page) with respect to your application.

APPLICATION

- Permitted: Intensification/Change of Use: \$0
- Discretionary: Intensification/Change of Use: \$250
- Minor/Major Development Permit: see [Rate Bylaw](#)



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TOWN REVIEW

- Planning staff circulate to internal departments for their comments. They are given 1 to 2 weeks to provide comments at the discretion of Planning & Development staff based on the complexity of the application. Staff also have the discretion to circulate external agencies (e.g. Alberta Transportation) if the change/intensification is major and is likely to have a significant impact on the area.
- You can see the progress being made on your application [here](#). This webpage shows the progress of all current applications and is updated every week.
- You will be provided with the comments received through a formally compiled letter after the circulation period is complete.
- If revisions are required, you will need to resubmit applicable drawings in the same size and format as you submitted them in your original application. These comments may become conditions of your permit.
- You will have the opportunity to review these conditions and let the Town know if you have any comments or concerns before the Town issues the decision/permit. These comments may include requests for revisions.

TOWN DECISION

- After receiving satisfactory revisions (if applicable), the Town issues its decision on the application, known as the “Notice of Decision” (support with conditions or refusal with reasons).
- If you disagree with the Town’s decision, you have the opportunity to file an appeal (see “Appeals by Applicant” below) within 21 days from the date the Notice of Decision was issued.

PUBLIC REVIEW

- If the use is permitted, there is no opportunity for public appeal.
- If the use is discretionary and the Town supports the application, the Town posts a notice on the property to notify the public of the application, the Town’s decision, and conditions (if applicable) for 21 days. Any member of the public can appeal a decision on a discretionary use (see “Appeals by Public” below)



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ISSUANCE (IF NO APPEAL)

- If there are no public appeals (in the case of a discretionary use application), the Town issues you the Development Permit.

APPEALS (BY APPLICANT)

- You can appeal the Town's decision on your application by submitting the [Notice of Appeal](#) through the Legislative Services Department via legislativeservices@highriver.ca. You must submit your appeal application within 21 days of the date that the Notice of Decision was issued.
- The appeal fee is \$300 (as per [Rate Bylaw](#))
- Your hearing will take place within 30 days of your appeal being filed. You will be notified in writing of your hearing date at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.

APPEALS (BY PUBLIC)

- The public can also appeal the decision on a discretionary use by submitting the [Notice of Appeal](#) through the Legislative Services Department via legislativeservices@highriver.ca. The public appeal must be submitted within 21 days of the date that the Notice of Decision was issued.
- The appeal fee is \$300 (as per [Rate Bylaw](#))
- The hearing will take place within 30 days of the appeal being filed. You will be notified in writing of the hearing date at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.

Next Steps

- Occupancy/Building Permits (permits@highriver.ca)
- Provincial approval (for Cannabis Stores)
- Federal approval (for Cannabis Facilities)
- Business License (businesslicense@highriver.ca)
- Signage application (found at highriver.ca/developmentpermits)