



## COUNTY OF LOUISA

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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TO: Members, Louisa County Planning Commission  
FROM: Chris Coon, Deputy County Administrator  
DATE: April 3, 2025  
SUBJECT: Retail Sales of Controlled Substances

#### **Background**

In response to changes in state legislation and the increasing presence of retail establishments selling legally authorized controlled substances, Louisa County has taken steps to provide appropriate land-use controls. As local ordinances previously lacked definitions or standards governing these businesses, the Planning Commission reviewed draft zoning amendments to address this regulatory gap.

#### **Objective**

To support public health and safety, economic opportunity, and land-use compatibility through regulatory tools that align with state law and promote responsible retail practices.

#### **Proposed Definition**

**Retail Sales of Controlled Substances:** The sale of legally authorized controlled substances directly to consumers, including but not limited to prescription medications, hemp products intended for consumption, substances containing any percentage of controlled substances, and other regulated substances. This category includes pharmacies, dispensaries, and other authorized retail establishments, but excludes alcohol, tobacco, and passive agricultural activity.

#### **Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment**

The Planning Commission reviewed several regulatory approaches and expressed support for a strategy that would require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Retail Sales of Controlled Substances in the following zoning districts:

- C-1 (Commercial)
- C-2 (Commercial)
- RD (Residential Development)
- PUD (Planned Unit Development)
- C-1 GAOD (Growth Area Overlay District)
- C-2 GAOD (Growth Area Overlay District)

This approach allows the County to evaluate each proposed establishment on a case-by-case basis through the CUP process, ensuring appropriate community compatibility and compliance with applicable standards.

Key benefits of this strategy include:

- Transparency and public engagement through required hearings
- Case-by-case review of potential impacts related to location, scale, and operations
- The ability to impose conditions related to hours of operation, security measures, signage, and proximity to sensitive uses (e.g., schools or childcare centers)
- Alignment with state and federal licensing requirements and public health objectives
- Flexibility to respond to evolving community standards while providing a consistent regulatory pathway

Though this method introduces an additional review step for applicants, it supports the County's land-use goals and provides a structured, adaptable framework for managing this emerging retail sector.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the proposed ordinance amendment as presented and offer any additional feedback or suggested refinements during the public hearing process, prior to making a formal recommendation.