

Metropolitan King County Council Votes to End Moratorium on Accepting or Issuing Permits for Marijuana Growers, Processors, and Retailers in Unincorporated Areas of the County

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The Metropolitan King County Council voted on July 25th to end the [moratorium](#) on accepting or issuing permits for marijuana growers, processors, and retailers in unincorporated areas of the county. Additionally, per the council's [news release](#), legislation was approved which:

- Limits growing, production, and processing facilities in the rural areas to zones with lots of 10 acres or larger.
- Because Vashon has its own land-use restrictions, it is exempt from the rural limits.
- Approves studies on potential retail and processing in specific locations.
- Requires the County Executive to identify 10 new retail stores in neighborhood business zones.
- Requires separation between retailers (1,000 feet) in areas where multiple shops already exist.

Washington law regulates the buffer zone requirements for licensed marijuana premises and their proximity to locations of sensitive use, namely, elementary or secondary schools; playgrounds; recreational centers or facilities; child care centers; public parks; public transit centers; libraries; or game arcades admitting minors. RCW 69.50.331(8). Washington state law though does not regulate the distance of licensed marijuana premises from one another. Therefore, the now-required 1,000 foot between retail stores is more restrictive than mandated at the state level. For an interesting read regarding the discretion of cities, counties, and towns to control such distance requirements, please see our previous blog [post](#).

Interestingly, in *The Seattle Times'* coverage story, it was reported that "the state has allocated 22 additional retail stores to the unincorporated areas. The state has issued 23 producer, or farming, licenses in unincorporated King County. In contrast, 22 have been licensed in Seattle and eight in other King County

cities."

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