

**For Immediate Release**

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**City approves applicants for commercial cannabis business permits**

**Ventura, Calif.** – The Ventura City Manager Alex D. McIntyre selected the finalists for the City’s first round of commercial cannabis permits. The three retail businesses that have been conditionally awarded permits are Responsible and Compliant Retail Ventura, located at 1890 East Main Street; TAT Ventura, located at 2835 E Main Street; and ZASA, located at 4591 Market Street. The only industrial applicant in the process has been awarded to Ventura’s Finest, located at 3037 Golf Course Drive.

“The City embarked on an extensive evaluation process that included feedback from an outside consulting group, staff, and community members. All applications were carefully reviewed to allow for responsible commercial business operations in our community,” said City Manager Alex D. McIntyre. “This is an extremely regulated area. These businesses were selected because they provided thorough neighborhood compatibility, security, and safety plans. They also demonstrated a strong desire to be responsible partners that would invest in community groups and local organizations.”

Once operating, all cannabis businesses are subject to regular inspections, audits, and monitoring. City staff, the Ventura Police Department, and State regulators will collaborate to safeguard the community and ensure all local and state requirements are met. All cannabis retailers must check IDs and ensure customers are 21 years of age or older (18 or over if a medical patient). Cannabis businesses must be at least 600 feet from an elementary, middle, or high school. Permits are renewed annually and can be revoked if a business does not conform to the terms of its permit or comply with the City’s ordinance.

Cannabis retail permits will not be awarded until after the appeal process. Applicants have 10 calendar days to file an appeal. Any applicant not selected for this application period may apply during the next application period, which has not yet been set.

In November 2020, voters approved a ballot measure for the taxation of cannabis in the City of Ventura. City Council approved an ordinance on February 24, 2021, and authorized the City Manager to initially grant up to five retail storefront or non-storefront cannabis permits and 10 industrial permits.

The City’s rigorous, merit-based application process opened in August 2021 with 25 retail and one distribution applications. In April 2022, nine finalists were selected by City staff and an outside consulting group using combined criteria of business ownership, neighborhood compatibility, community benefits, investment plans, and proposed locations, among other criteria. The finalists participated in a public meeting in July 2022, where community members shared input on applicants and the proposed locations.

Three of the five retail cannabis permits were included in the City’s first round of applications. The other two retail permits will open after the California Coastal Commission decides if cannabis businesses will also be permitted to operate in the City’s Coastal Zone. The final two retail permits will be considered Citywide and not limited to the Coastal Zone.

Cannabis businesses are expected to generate between \$600,000 to \$700,000 in revenue to fund City services in the first full year of operation by June 30, 2024.

For more information on the City’s cannabis regulations or the application process, visit [www.CityofVentura.ca.gov/Cannabis](http://www.CityofVentura.ca.gov/Cannabis).

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