



## Community Impact

It's now been five years since Canada legalized cannabis, and it's generally recognized that cannabis retail stores don't inherently harm the communities they serve; in fact, there are a number of benefits to be had from converting users from the black market to the licensed, regulated market (a process that is ongoing) which of course is what led to legalization in the first place.

An excellent summary of the societal impacts (at least what's been gleaned to date) can be found in the BC Cannabis Secretariat's report *Cannabis in British Columbia: Results from the 2021 BC Cannabis Use Survey* (see attached) released last summer. The report found that, despite there still being some unknowns,

*There have been significant changes in where people get their cannabis products compared to 2018. People in British Columbia are increasingly getting their cannabis products from provincially and federally authorized sources while illicit sources become less prevalent – a trend that is expected to continue in the coming years... In addition, most people who use cannabis reported reducing their use of alcohol or other substances (e.g., pain relievers), which highlights the need for further research into the scope and potential outcomes from using cannabis as a substitute.*

In BC, the province retains sole control over the supply (though processors are now able to send their shipments directly to stores instead of through the LDB warehouse under the Direct Delivery program) and operates their own stores (both brick-and-mortar and online.) Based on our own experience of operating two licensed stores in the Cowichan Valley since 2022, along with CEO Chris Clay's three years of operating Warmland Medicinal Cannabis Centre in Mill Bay, we anticipate having an excellent overall relationship with neighbouring residents, businesses, and the community if the proposed location is approved.



Figure 1 Warmland Cannabis Corporation's CEO Chris Clay operated Warmland Medicinal Cannabis Centre in Mill Bay from 2015 to 2018.

As with any new commercial enterprise, there will be some community impacts, both good and bad – below is a summary of what we anticipate for the Mill Bay location and, when potentially negative, what countermeasures we be taken:

- **Waste:** As with any retail store, the proposed location would generate its share of waste and recycling materials. However, CEO Chris Clay is an obsessive recycler and goes to extreme lengths to reduce waste generated from his shops. Each store employs a robust



in-store multi-bin recycling program, sharing pick-up arrangements with other merchants whenever possible (at both Cobble Hill and Whippetree, we share existing waste and recycling bins with merchants who already had them and will likely do so in Mill Bay as well). We also collect soft plastics, batteries, bulbs, Styrofoam etc. to take to Fisher Road or Bing's Creek for recycling and give away sacks of packing peanuts through local classified ads to be reused. Finally, we have implemented in-store digital menus at all stores (on large LCD screens and on tablets) to virtually eliminate the need for paper menus and as a result have seen our paper consumption drop dramatically.

It's also worth noting that the cannabis products themselves are very small (our entire inventory fits in four metal cabinets at each shop) and even a "large" cannabis delivery from the province results in a small pile of tiny boxes that are then recycled (or sometimes reused). Incidentally, cannabis processors have listened to consumer feedback and have for the most part moved away from mixed-material packaging to facilitate recycling (products generally now come in packaging made from separate components that are either soft plastic, hard plastic or glass with the occasional metal tin for pre-rolls.)

- **Energy:** Warmland uses low power / high lumen LED spotlights in its stores and LED strip lighting in its display cases to help keep energy use to a minimum. We also have exterior lights on daylight sensors and have been upgrading the HVAC systems at all our locations to use energy-efficient heat pumps (Whippetree now has one, Cobble Hill's is coming this fall and in Mill Bay the landlords have agreed to share in the costs of installing one which we will do closer to opening.)
- **Economy:** The proposed store would make significant contributions to the local economy. When the original Warmland closed in 2018 to seek a provincial license, four full-time and four part-time positions were lost and we expect the proposed new store to grow to a similar size over time. Our Cowichan Valley stores also support local businesses as much as possible... We have been a major advertiser in many local publications over the years (Valley Voice Magazine, Shawnigan Focus, the 39 Days in July program, Arbutus magazine etc.) and we feature many local products on our menus from local growers such as United Greeneries, Verte West and Great Gardener Farms. We also buy many incidentals from local stores and businesses (signage, office supplies, maintenance supplies etc.)
- **Safety** – Unlike black market product, the licensed cannabis supply is managed by the Liquor Distribution Branch and is heavily regulated, tested and taxed; meanwhile, when something occasionally goes wrong (such as a labelling error) the LDB can easily issue a recall (every store orders

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**Aaron's BC Bud issues voluntary recall through Direct Delivery**

Aaron's BC Bud has notified BC Cannabis Wholesale of a voluntary recall for specific lots of Island MK Ultra and Lindsay OG dried flower, due to labelling errors resulting in...

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at least most of its product through a single online portal, with announcements posted frequently.) Licensed cannabis products also come in child proof packaging with maximum potency limits and health warnings. Although cannabis use is not completely without risk, it's widely acknowledged that a cannabis store opening in a neighbourhood does not cause a spike in cannabis use and, in fact, generally results in a drop in the use of alcohol and opiates (incidentally, after weighing a mountain of evidence during Chris Clay's constitutional challenge, Justice John McCart ruled that the adult use of cannabis is "relatively harmless" when compared with alcohol and tobacco.)

One of the federal goals of legalization was to restrict cannabis access to minors, and (unlike many black market sources) licensed stores only sell to adults and have many checks and balances. All Warmland staff have completed the province's Selling It Right course and are well trained in when to request ID etc., and on the rare occasion a minor has tried entering (it has only come up several times - in one case, a parent had brought their child in a liquor store and then stopped by Warmland, thinking the child could also come inside... In another instance, an off-duty police officer tried to bring in a child – also assuming that because it was allowed for liquor stores, it was also allowed for cannabis) the minor is escorted from the shop and a report is kept on file.

- **Security** – The proposed store will have surveillance video (interior and exterior) with remote monitoring, battery backups and 60-day cloud storage. It will also have smash-resistant 3M security film on all windows and a security/fire alarm system (centrally monitored, with cellular backup and a guard response plan) from Telus Custom Security (formerly Price's Alarms.) All cannabis is also secured inside each store inside locked industrial metal cabinets. We have employed the same measures at our other stores and have never had any problems with theft (aside from someone breaking into the Whippletree community mailbox once, and police were able to identify the culprit from our footage!)

In summary, Warmland has a wealth of experience to draw from and our locations have always been professionally run and beloved in their communities. During the three-year wait for our first license, customers would often bemoan the loss of our Mill Bay location; now many are inquiring as to when the new shop will open... We are very much looking forward to returning to our old neighbourhood and serving many familiar faces!