

02-21-2024

City of White Rock

Neethu Syam, Planning Division Lead**RE: Public Information Meeting for 1554 Foster Street (23-015)**

Dear Neethu:

Here is the summary for the feedback received at the February 8, 2024 public information meeting held for the above-mentioned project.

Total Mailed Notices	Attendees (Signed In)	Feedback	Supportive	Opposed	Undecided
1,096	35	26	7	17	2

Comments related to Support for the Project:

- Great location
- Ease of access from both sides of the plaza
- Ample parking
- Great for town business and to support community growth
- Local White Rock resident is the owner
- The city of White Rock needs more legal stores to help eliminate the illicit market
- Several people overturned their initial opposition to support the application after hearing the presentation

The most common themes for supportive comments were related to the great location off North Bluff Road and Johnston Road, which is the center of town. There were supportive comments related to having plenty of parking around the area, and the ease of access as the store will have access off Foster Street and another from the Central Plaza Parking lot. The Central Plaza parking lot has 3 driveway accesses off North Bluff Road and Johnston Road. Several people noted that it would be beneficial to have a local White Rock resident open a store to support community growth, local business with a vested interest in the community. Other supporting comments conveyed were that more stores are needed to support the fight against eliminating the illicit market. There were also several people who were originally against the application, but after listening to the presentation at the Public Information Meeting changed their minds to support it.

Comments related to Opposition to the Project:

- City of White Rock has too many cannabis stores
- Existing parking problems along Foster Street
- Odor
- Attracting youth from nearby schools
- Long hours

- Increase in the homeless population
- Loitering and smoking

The most common theme for opposition was related to the parking along Foster Street, too many stores, odor from the store, attracting youth from nearby high schools, long hours, there being an increase in the homeless population, and loitering around the store and Foster street.

Response to Concerns:

Number of Stores:

- The City of White Rock cannabis policy states the maximum number of stores permitted in the city is 3. Currently, there is only one approved store in the City of White Rock. The Semiahmoo first nations store is not located in White Rock, but on First Nations land in Surrey.
- The South Surrey Peninsula (including White Rock) has a population of approximately 140,000. The general rule of thumb the industry considers to be viable is one store for every 10,000 people density.
- Canada Health and Provincial Governments regulated and legalized cannabis in its battle to eliminate the illicit market

Parking:

- There is more than sufficient parking spaces in the Central Plaza (parking off Johnston Road) and on the south and west side parking lots. There is public pay parking located at the rear (south)of this plaza.
- Our proposed use as a retail store is in line with the retail/commercial centric zoning that exists for the Central Plaza. We will not require any additional parking than the existing.
- Majority of negative comments were from residents of Sussex House, across the street, who felt parking along Foster Street would be diminished for their guests. We will encourage our patrons to park in the main parking area within the plaza parking lot and access our store from secondary access off the parking. We anticipate having a regular customer base that will prefer to use the parking lot as an easier access to our store and not park on Foster Street.

Odor:

- Legal and regulated cannabis stores do not emit an odor outside of the stores
- We receive cannabis products from BCLCRB that have been pre-packaged and sealed in smell and leakproof containers/packaging
- Customers are prohibited from opening products in and around the premises and from smoking on site as per the Liquor and Cannabis Regulations
- We have not received any complaints from any of our current stores that have been operating for the past 3 years.

Loitering:

- Customers are prohibited from loitering in and around our stores as per the Liquor and Cannabis Regulations
- We will implement additional signage outside our stores to deter people from loitering or smoking around the store

- Since the Liquor and Cannabis Regulations prohibit loitering and smoking outside our stores, staff has the ability to move people away
- We have security cameras located at all entrances and have 4-6 staff working in the store at all times. We have clear sight lines to our entrances.

Homeless Population:

- The increase in the homeless population or people experiencing poverty is not related to legal and regulated cannabis stores
- Legal and regulated cannabis is not a product the homeless population can afford nor use. We do not attract homeless. Unfortunately, the homeless or people experiencing poverty, are generally attracted to retail centers to panhandle. s
- We can take steps in assisting the City of White Rock in reduction measures, but, ultimately this is a nationwide issue that needs support from every level of government (City, Provincial, and Federal)

Youth:

- A strict 2-ID check system will be in place, as required by government regulations
- This store is located 667m from the nearest high school
- We meet and exceed the City of White Rock's cannabis policy distance requirements from schools
- Health Canada data shows youth that are under-age typically buy from illicit sources. In order to eliminate the illicit sources, communities need to support more legal and regulated stores.
- We have comprehensive social responsibility material to educate customers on the importance of ensuring youth do not have access to cannabis products

Hours:

- To mitigate concerns of the Foster Street neighbours and store being open until 11pm everyday, we are prepared to lock-off the Foster Street entrance from Sunday to Thursday at 9pm to reduce the perceived impact off Foster Street.
- The primary access from the Central Plaza will stay open until 11pm. On Friday and Saturday, both entrances will be open until 11pm to match the liquor store hours and provide customers access.
- Our sense is that customers will prefer to use the secondary access off the parking lot after 6pm everyday, as there will be an abundance of parking after 6pm.

Other Comments:

- Some of the public would support the store if the store was located on the inside of the plaza.
- We pointed out that Debbie Mozelle Designer Optical had been closed for over 24 months. We will enhance the aesthetics of this frontage, as we will be removing the papered-up windows and brightening both the interior and exterior of this location and make it more appealing visually. This will reduce any loitering that currently occurs.
- We further advise that our store and Sussex House apartments are located in the primary retail and commercial centric location in White Rock. These retail centric locations benefit the entire community with a "one stop" shopping experience and as such, our store belongs here for the larger community.

- We sympathize with some of the ongoing issues Sussex House is experiencing related to homeless and poverty, which are unfortunately becoming normal for city centre living, not just in White Rock, but throughout North America. People choosing to live here for all the benefits and advantages are now experiencing the traffic, noise, loitering, etc.
- The residents of Sussex House apartments submitted a signed petition opposed in advance of the Public Information Meeting. During the meeting, we were able to address their concerns related to parking on Foster Street, late hour noise and traffic, loitering by the homeless and people experiencing poverty, security and crime. Unfortunately, we will not be able to convince people that are against cannabis but from a land use perspective, we have addressed all concerns.
- Harp provided his contact information to many of these residents for additional discussion and information. Since the meeting we have not heard from any of the attendees against the application. We are confident we addressed the local concerns.

Sincerely,



Harp Hoonjan
platinumprojects@shaw.ca
604-240-9924