



Planning & Development Services

Socially Equitable Cannabis Program

To sign up for Program updates, [please click here to subscribe](#).



About the Program

The County of San Diego is developing the Board-directed Socially Equitable Cannabis Program (Program). The Program would allow commercial medicinal and adult-use cannabis operations in the unincorporated area of the County. The Program is needed to stop the operation of illegal and unlicensed dispensaries, advance social equity, and ensure all state regulations are followed.

As of October 2021, the Board adopted ordinance amendments to allow the five existing cannabis dispensaries that were in operation in the unincorporated County prior to the County's 2017 prohibition on new medical facilities to continue operations and expand commercial sales of medicinal and adult-use cannabis. Currently, no new dispensaries or other cannabis operations are permitted under the existing ordinances.

The County is committed to the development of a Program that facilitates greater equity in business ownership and employment in the regulated cannabis market by reducing the barriers to entry for those who have been impacted by cannabis related criminalization.

Program Components

The Program is made up of several different components. Each component is led by one of three County business groups: Land Use and Environmental Group (LUEG), Finance and General Government Group (FG3), and Public Safety Group (PSG). Within each Group, there are identified Department leads.

The Program Components and their Department leads are:

1. **Regulatory Code Update** - To establish the requirements for running a commercial medical or adult-use cannabis business including retail, cultivation, manufacturing, distribution, and testing.
 - **Lead Department: Planning & Development Services, Long Range Planning**
2. **Zoning Ordinance Update** - To establish the zoning regulations to allow for commercial cannabis facilities.
 - **Lead Department: Planning & Development Services, Long Range Planning**
3. **Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** - To analyze and report potential environmental impacts from the proposed Program and evaluate possible mitigations under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

- **Lead Department: Planning & Development Services, Long Range Planning**
- 4. **Social Equity Program** - To establish an equity program to assist local equity applicants/licensees in successfully gaining entry to and operating in the regulated market.
 - **Lead Department: Office of Equity & Racial Justice**
- 5. **Licensing and Permitting System** - To establish the structure (application framework, review processes) and procedures for obtaining the required County license(s) and permit(s) to operate commercial cannabis businesses.
 - **Lead Department: Planning & Development Services, Code Compliance**
- 6. **Commercial Cannabis Taxation Program** - To establish a tax policy for commercial cannabis businesses for voter consideration.
 - **Lead Department: Finance & General Governance Group, Office of Financial Planning**
- 7. **Fee Package for Existing Facilities** - To establish fees for the existing five facilities currently permitted in the unincorporated County.
 - **Lead Department: Planning & Development Services, Code Compliance**

Program Timeline

Below are the estimated development timelines for each component:

#	Component	Timeline	Progress
1	Regulatory Code Update	Spring 2022 – Summer 2024	In development
2	Zoning Ordinance Update	Spring 2022 – Summer 2024	In development
3	Program EIR	Summer 2022 – Summer 2024	In development
4	Social Equity Program	Spring 2022 – Winter 2022	Socially Equitable Assessment completed. Program in development
5	Permitting and Licensing System	Summer 2022 – Summer 2024	Transition from Sheriffs to Planning & Development Services approved November 2022 Overall Program Permitting & Licensing In development
6	Commercial Cannabis Taxation Program	Winter 2021/2022 – Fall 2022	New Tax Public Vote Completed Taxation rates and other considerations in development
7	Fee Package for Existing Facilities	Winter 2021/2022 – Summer 2022	Completed November 2022

2022 Milestones

1. In August 2022, the Board approved placing a cannabis taxation measure (Measure A) on the November 8, 2022, ballot. The County anticipates certifying the election results in December 2022. Next steps for a cannabis tax are for the Board to set specific tax rates and other aspects of the program. Finance and General Government Group (FG3) will be working with a consultant to complete the required analysis and conduct outreach meetings. A return to the Board to set tax rates is anticipated in Spring 2023.
2. The Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) has recently completed a **Social Equity Assessment** of the impacts of the War on Drugs within the San Diego region. OERJ will bring an item to the Board on December 13, 2022, requesting the Board to adopt a resolution to authorize the Office to apply for additional grant funds. Please visit the Clerk of the Board's website by clicking [here](#) for more details on this item, or contact the Office of Equity and Racial Justice at OERJ@sdcounty.ca.gov, or by phone (619) 531-5505, or visit their website by clicking [here](#).
3. On October 26, 2022, the Board voted to transition the existing cannabis licensing program from the Sheriff to Planning Development Services (PDS). Please visit the Clerk of the Board's website for more information on this item by clicking [here](#). Starting in December 2022, PDS Code Compliance will begin oversight of the licensing for the existing 5 non-conforming dispensaries. Separately, PDS Code Compliance will continue to work with Sheriff's Marijuana Enforcement Taskforce to address any complaints of illegal operations.
4. The land use regulations for the future Socially Equitable Cannabis Program remain under development with several consultants now assisting County staff on best practice research and environmental review. Public outreach on draft

regulations is planned to commence in 2023, of which future email and website notices will be published in advance to announce outreach events.

How to Get Involved

The Socially Equitable Cannabis Program will have multiple opportunities for community and stakeholder involvement throughout the development process. Be sure to subscribe to the Program updates list through the link provided at the top of the page to receive announcements about outreach activities. Announcements will also be posted on the individual Department lead websites for their respective components. Website links can be found in the following section.

Public Outreach

We want to hear from you! The County of San Diego Planning & Development Services (PDS) invites you to attend upcoming public meetings to share your thoughts. The Socially Equitable Cannabis Program (SECP) is seeking your input on specific topics to be included in the SECP, as directed by the Board of Supervisors. The specific topics include cannabis facility design guideline checklists, limits, or caps on the number of cannabis facilities, defining cannabis events, and the establishment of a Community Equity Contribution Program. PDS is hosting three virtual public meetings to receive your input.

If you would like interpretation services available at the meeting, please contact Dara Elkurdi in your preferred language at pds.longrangeplanning@sdcounty.ca.gov by February 22, 2023.

Please register in advance for the public meeting using the link provided below.

- **When:**
 - **Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 7:00 P.M**
 - **Friday, March 3, 2023, at 12:00 P.M.**
 - **Tuesday March 7, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.**

- **Where:** Virtual Meetings Can be Accessed at this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85810283894>

Please help us spread the word - share this message with your friends and colleagues!

If you have any questions, please contact Dara Elkurdi at pds.longrangeplanning@sdcounty.ca.gov or at the following phone number: 858-505-6677

For More Information

For more information about the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program, please contact:

Mike Condon | PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov | Phone (858) 505-6677

If you have questions about the Regulatory Code and Zoning Ordinance updates, Program EIR, or Licensing and Permitting System, please contact:

Mike Condon | PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov | Phone (858) 505-6677 or visit the **website**.

If you have questions about the Social Equity Program, please contact the Office of Equity and Racial Justice | OERJ@sdcounty.ca.gov | Phone (619) 531-5505 or visit their **website**.

If you have questions about the Taxation Program, please contact the Office of Financial Planning | cosdpublic@sdcounty.ca.gov | Phone (619) 531-6006 or visit their **website**.

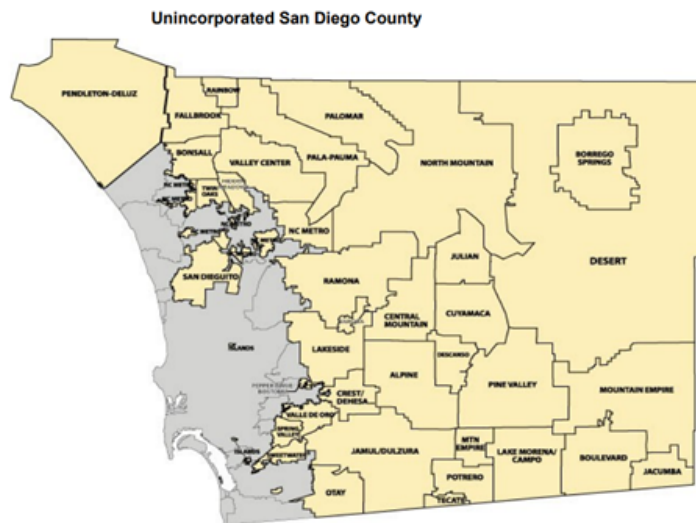
If you have questions about the fees for the existing cannabis facilities, please contact the Sheriff's Licensing Division | Phone (858) 974-2020 or visit their **website**.

Please note, the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Services Bureau has responsibility for enforcement against unpermitted cannabis facilities and responds to threats to public safety. If you have an emergency, please contact the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Services Bureau through 911. For non-emergency situations, please see the Law Enforcement Services Bureau's **website** for more information about their role and how to contact them.

Looking for Information about Unincorporated Areas?

The Socially Equitable Cannabis Program applies only to the unincorporated area of the County. For questions about the cannabis programs in [incorporated areas](#) (cities and other local governments), please reach out to those jurisdictions directly.

Click **here** for a map and a list of the communities that are found in the unincorporated area of the County.



State Cannabis Resources

In addition to the County's future commercial cannabis permits (ordinance under development), a state license is required to engage in adult-use commercial cannabis operations. For more information on state licensing programs, please visit the following links:

State of California Cannabis Portal

Board Direction on the Program

The following are the links to the Board Minute Orders that direct the development of the Program.

January 27, 2021, Minute Order

March 3, 2021, Minute Order

June 9, 2021, Minute Order

October 6, 2021, Minute Order

October 20, 2021, Minute Order

May 10, 2022, Minute Order

May 24, 2022, Minute Order

June 15, 2022, Minute Order

June 28, 2022, Minute Order

August 16, 2022, Minute Order

October 26, 2022, Minute Order

November 16, 2022, Minute Order

December 13, 2022, Minute Order

January 24, 2023, Minute Order

You can access a full recording of the Board hearings and additional materials at **[this webpage](#)**.

October 20, 2021 Ordinance Amendments

Amendments to Zoning Ordinances (Clean Copy)

Amendments to Zoning Ordinances (Strikeout Copy)

Amendments to Code of Regulatory Ordinances (Clean Copy)

Amendments to Code of Regulatory Ordinances (Strikeout Copy)

For a full history of State and County of San Diego Cannabis Regulations please click **[here](#)**.



General Inquiries:

Planning & Development Services
PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov



Related Links

Finance and General Government

Office of Equity and Racial Justice

SDSO – Licensing

SDSO – Law Enforcement

California Department of Cannabis Control