

## Task force should be struck to look at local impact of cannabis retail, says Councillor

The Town should strike a task force to examine the local impacts of cannabis retail, according to Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo.

In a motion that was approved at the Committee level earlier this month and is set to be ratified this week, Councillor Gallo said Council has received feedback from residents – both positive and negative – surrounding retail cannabis sales, and a local task force of residents, Council members, and municipal staff should “review” Aurora's experience as a municipality that opted in to such sales.

“The Town of Aurora opted in to the licensing and operation of retail cannabis stores within the municipality following the introduction of the provincial cannabis retail framework,” said Councillor Gallo in his motion. “Several retail cannabis locations have since opened within the Town, providing legal access to cannabis products for residents and contributing to local economic activity.

“Council has received feedback from residents expressing both support and concern regarding the number, location, and community impacts of cannabis retail stores. Municipalities have limited authority under the Provincial regulatory framework to influence the siting and density of cannabis retail stores, but continue to play an important role in community engagement, bylaw enforcement, public education and advocacy to higher levels of government.”

It is in the Town's interest, he said, to review the impacts of these stores in a social, economic and community context and “identify potential strategies or advocacy opportunities to address any issues that have arisen.”

Should Council vote this week to strike the task force, he proposes it look into these concerns related to public safety, land use, business clustering, signage, community perception, and economic development, while also exploring best practices from other municipalities.

The two appointed Council members, up to seven resident representatives, and two staff members, along with a representative from the York Regional Police would be tasked with providing Council with recommendations to “address identified challenges and support balanced community outcomes” within six months of their first meeting in 2026.

While the motion was approved at the committee level, it was given the tentative green light in the fourth hour of the October 14 Committee of the Whole meeting and discussion was limited.

Councillor Gallo, however, said “it's about time we do something to deal with some of the serious concerns that many public members are experiencing.”

By Brock Weir  
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