

## Los Angeles still has not decided on new regulations and ordinances

Written by Administrator  
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### Medical Pot Issue Stretches Into 2010

By Brian Doherty  
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KCET

The L.A. City Council failed again Wednesday to vote on new regulations for medical pot dispensaries, after many weeks of lengthy debate largely over questions of how many will be allowed and where.

New ideas to amend and adjust the buffer zones between residential buildings, "sensitive uses" (including schools, parks, youth centers, libraries and churches), and dispensaries were still being bandied about at Wednesday's City Council meeting.

Councilwoman Jan Perry suggested that each council district get to have its councilperson choose its own buffer zone, and councilman Richard Alarcon, openly annoyed with the whole process, called for a prompt vote rather than letting the council members contemplate a new set of maps from the city planning department that define the (quite limited) acreage of the city in which medical pot dispensaries could actually exist under varied definitions of the buffer zone.

The L.A. Weekly reported on today's meeting, stressing the map issue:

This was the first time, five years after the council decided it needed to adopt local regulations for selling medical weed, that the City Council has ever seen a zoning map showing where pot shops would be located or be banned under a typical "buffer zone" approach used in many California cities....

The Planning Department found that if pot shops were limited to a 500-foot buffer zone around sensitive uses, they could open in 31 percent of the city's commercial and industrial areas -- but only five percent of those areas would be commercial spots such as business districts. The rest would be industrially zoned.

If the city decides on a 1,000-foot buffer from sensitive uses, no pot shops would be able to open, said [planner Alan] Bell.

The Weekly's extensive, and generally negative, coverage of medical pot in L.A. created its own controversy, with Vince Beiser over at Huffington Post attacking their recent cover story on the topic. Beiser

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notes that:

We are told that there is "rising crime in and around them," that "20 unregulated pot dispensaries (are) attracting crime in ... Eagle Rock", and that LAPD Chief Charlie Beck says, "They are the hub of crime ... A lot of nighttime break-ins and robberies."

Not one of these scary-sounding claims is backed up with a single statistic. Crime stats are easy to gather -- you can find them mapped block-by-block on the LAPD's website. But Pelisek and MacDonald seem not to have bothered to see whether there's any basis for the complaints of cops and neighborhood gadflies. If they had, their story might have lost a lot of its urgency. In Hollywood, for instance, an area which the reporters rightly note is chock-a-block with marijuana dispensaries, crime hasn't risen -- it's dropped by 12 percent in the last two years. Robberies and burglaries, the crimes you'd most expect to see associated with pot shops, have both fallen by double digits.

Tim Rutten in the L.A. Times (after first blithely repeating an exaggerated figure of nearly 1,000 medical pot dispensaries in L.A. that has been thoroughly debunked by the L.A. Weekly's diligent reporting on that aspect of the story) notes that the City Council's fearful attitude about medical pot isn't matched by voters:

A recent Field Poll found that 60% of Los Angeles County voters and 56% statewide favor legalizing and taxing marijuana....the council would be well advised to ignore [D.A.] Cooley and [city attorney] Trutanich and adopt sensible regulations that treat the dispensaries pretty much like bars -- allowing them to operate in appropriate areas but not to become public nuisances.

City of Angles has done much previous blogging on L.A.'s medical pot wars, including here ([http://kcet.org/local/blogs/city\\_of\\_angles/2009/11/how-many-medical-pot-dispensaries-does-la-need.html](http://kcet.org/local/blogs/city_of_angles/2009/11/how-many-medical-pot-dispensaries-does-la-need.html)) and here ([http://kcet.org/local/blogs/city\\_of\\_angles/2009/06/la-city-council-slam-s-medical-pot-dispensaries.html](http://kcet.org/local/blogs/city_of_angles/2009/06/la-city-council-slam-s-medical-pot-dispensaries.html)).