



## Township of Belleville *New Jersey*

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### **Town Officials Limit Retail Cannabis in Belleville**

**BELLEVILLE, NJ – August 19, 2021** – Mayor Michael Melham and the Township Council passed an ordinance on Tuesday to restrict the number of retail cannabis facilities in Belleville to only four individual operations.

The ordinance also limits retail cannabis facilities to only one commercial zone, the business district (BG Zone), while permitting other cannabis related uses in the Valley, VB1 and VB2 Districts.

Tuesday's vote occurred just before the Aug. 21 deadline for New Jersey municipalities to enact local guidelines for cannabis sale, distribution and growth. If the Township did not pass this ordinance, the Township would have been left wide open, with no limit on retail establishments and less say in where they would eventually be located.

Gov. Phil Murphy signed a law on Feb. 22 to legalize recreational marijuana use for adults in New Jersey, as well as allowed for the cultivation, processing and sale of retail marijuana.

The law was passed after more than 67% of New Jerseyans voted in favor of legalizing the use of cannabis in a referendum in 2020. Some 63% of Belleville's voters cast "yes" votes on the ballot question.

New Jersey's cannabis laws give municipalities such as Belleville the ability to enact certain restrictions.

"That's what this vote was about; we are establishing tight restrictions of where cannabis could be sold and where it could be grown in Belleville," Melham said. "The governing body did not vote to legalize marijuana in Belleville, but we did enact tougher restrictions that control the industry within our borders."

Municipalities do not have the authority to ban cannabis use or deliver services in their towns.

Township Attorney Steven J. Martino noted that municipalities can not prevent a resident from ordering cannabis through a home delivery service similar to GrubHub or Uber Eats. The township could also not stop someone from driving to a cannabis distributor in a neighboring town, purchasing it, driving back home and using the drug.

Belleville expects to realize tax revenue from cannabis retail facilities, although income estimates remain unclear.

New Jersey residents who seek to open a cannabis retail facility must apply to the state and undergo a thorough review process.

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