

Karen,

I write to express my concern about the proposed cannabis dispensary moving into the mini-mart space on S. Riverside.

1) This is one of the main entry points to Croton. A cannabis store should not be the first thing people see, as it does not represent our family-friendly village. It could deter potential home buyers/renters and misrepresent our village to the hundreds who come for the Blaze and other events.

2) This location is in a child-centric area - including Baked By Susan, Happy Hearts daycare, the Croton Music Academy, the Church Basketball court, and the many family residences nearby. While we may not need to worry about kids making purchases, I do not wish to pre-maturely explain cannabis to my young children when they ask what the store is due to the logo or the smell.

3) This is creating unnecessary congestion on a busy street. There are only 4 parking spots at the mini mart - it's safe to assume patrons would use street parking that already serves local businesses.

I don't oppose a dispensary, but this is not the appropriate location.

Thanks,  
Linnea Texin

Members of the Planning Board,

I write in opposition to the proposed change of use from retail to cannabis dispensary at 370 South Riverside Ave. Such a prominent location in our village -- the first stoplight visitors encounter in our Riverside Ave. retail corridor, at an already busy and dangerous intersection, next to a youth-oriented music school and across the street from a daycare -- is completely inappropriate for this type of business.

I urge the Board to deny the application.

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Sincerely,

Chris Roose  
55 Truesdale Dr.

Robert Vaicels () has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/user/3036/contact>) at Croton-on-Hudson NY.

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Message:

Please see attached word file. Just in case there is an issue with the attachment, here is the same letter copied and pasted:

I'm writing to express my concern about the proposed cannabis dispensary on South Riverside Ave. I am a Captain on the New York City Fire Department; I've been on the job almost 18 years. One of the types emergencies we respond to are serious car accidents. Many of these involve people under the influence. When I first started with the FDNY most of these accidents involved alcohol, evidenced by: a bottle rolling around the floorboards, beer cans on the seat, a smell of alcohol and/or an obviously intoxicated individual. While we still see a number of these accidents, there has been a significant shift in recent years. Now, the VAST majority of DUI accidents that we respond to, cannabis products have replaced alcohol as the substance of choice. Often, I open a car door after an accident and the smell of marijuana is extremely strong in the vehicle, and we frequently find smoking paraphernalia.

We need to evaluate these victims medically in order to treat them and determine if they require EMS and transport to a hospital. We are not law enforcement so people are usually forthcoming with us. If they are alert we'll ask questions like: "Have you taken anything today? Prescription or non-prescription meds? Any drug use? Anything we should know about that could affect you medically?" Here are some real answers from victims who were able to respond to a question:

- "I didn't take anything. I just had a gummy before I left because I'm on my way to work and I get stressed if I don't."

- "I smoked a bowl to relax, I need it since I'm on my way to visit family."

- "I took a gummy to get me through the day. It's no big deal though, I do it every day so I'm used to it. I built up a tolerance."

According to a study conducted by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), 60% of adults in the US don't see driving under the influence of cannabis as a serious offense. This is not a good thing. They (MADD) have spent the last 40 years trying to raise awareness about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol. It took many years for the stigma associated with drunk driving to be acknowledged by the general public. As far as cannabis goes, we are in the same place as we were with alcohol 40 years ago. The majority of adults just do not see a problem with it (backed up by multiple MADD statistics). It's become a part of daily life for many, and the stigma associated with drunk driving has not yet migrated onto driving under the influence of cannabis.

Even assuming the vast majority of people who use these products use them responsibly, there's always a percentage who do not. I don't want to see a tragedy on our streets take place before we acknowledge the danger we've invited into our community. There are dispensaries in Ossining and Peekskill, and people are free to use them as they wish. But opening one in Croton will only increase the chances of a tragic incident caused by a person who has no reservations about driving under the influence of these products. It only takes one.

I understand that this location would be in compliance with state laws in letter, if not in spirit. There are residents in the apartments in the building in question. The kids from the pre-school/day care across the street often go for walks around the neighborhood in nice weather. For some reason this is not considered a school in the scope of this project which is honestly perfunctory. There is a music school just next door that caters to children. The chapel on Benedict is a mere 50' beyond the required distance of 200' for a cannabis dispensary to be from a house of worship. None of these things legally require disapproval of the site, but there is no reason we must allow the zoning change either. We should consider the spirit of the law and ask the question: if something glances on the edges of legality, do we need to change the rules (zoning) to allow it? We should also consider that this is already a very busy intersection and is a Gateway area. Is this the Croton we wish to put front and center to visitors? Some may not see an issue with it, but as a longtime resident and homeowner in the lower village I certainly do.

On another note: Looking at Croton on a map, the vast majority of controversial new projects happening in our community are taking place in the lower third of our village. All of the new housing (with the exception of a few ADUs), both affordable and otherwise, as well as this dispensary are all being shoehorned into the same section of our village. Whatever your view on the need or legitimacy of these projects, you can't argue that they are disproportionately affecting those of us who live in the lower third of the village. If our leaders really want a dispensary in our village, maybe they should find a place in the northern reaches of Croton where the dangers can be partially mitigated by less traffic, less population and less walkable areas for our children.

I see the undeniably horrific results of people driving under the influence of cannabis every day. All it takes is a momentary lapse of judgement or a slightly slower reaction to cause major injury or death. Societal norms and stigmas have not yet caught up to the legality of these products. We should not be going out of our way to bring them, and the dangers associated therein, to our doorstep.

This letter is my opinion, based on my personal experiences. It is in no way endorsed by the FDNY

Karen,

Paul Connors here. As a 10 year resident of Croton, I am writing to you to express my opposition to the proposed marijuana dispensary in our village.

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing as both a resident of Croton and a clinical psychologist who works closely with children, adolescents, and families. I recognize that cannabis is legal in New York and that there are differing perspectives on its place in communities. My concern, however, is not about legality; it is about context, and what is appropriate for a small, family-oriented village like ours. In a town of Croton's size, what we choose to include in our commercial landscape becomes a visible and influential part of everyday life, shaping the character of the community that so many families, including my own, have intentionally chosen.

In my clinical work I see how strongly environments shape behavior, particularly for young people. Children and adolescents are highly sensitive to what is normalized around them, and when something becomes a part of the everyday landscape, it meaningfully shifts perceptions of risk and acceptability. This matters especially during adolescence, when sensitivity to reward and peer influence is heightened while judgment and impulse control are still developing. National data indicate that a substantial proportion of high school students are already experimenting with cannabis, and a growing body of research links earlier and more frequent use with increased risk for anxiety, mood concerns, and difficulties with attention and academic engagement. While these findings are correlational, the pattern is consistent and closely mirrors what I see in clinical practice.

The proposed location raises significant concern. Its proximity to a daycare center and a music school serving local youth, its location near a basketball court where children and teens regularly gather, and its position at a primary entry point into town would make it an unavoidable and highly visible part of children's daily environment. It also sends a clear message to our children and to those entering the community about what we choose to prioritize. In a larger or more commercially dense setting, this might feel less consequential; in Croton, it does not. Placement matters, and this is a difficult placement to justify.

Ultimately, this decision is about the environment we are creating and the standards we are setting in our village. From both a professional and personal standpoint, I do not believe a cannabis dispensary either in Croton generally or at this specific location aligns with the values of our community or the developmental considerations we should be prioritizing for our children and adolescents. I therefore respectfully but strongly urge you to reject this proposal.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Cassady Casey  
55 Truesdale Drive

Hello,

Regarding the proposed cannabis dispensary, I am opposed to its proposed location of Benedict and Riverside.

As a resident of the Harmon area, I am at the intersection of Benedict and Riverside almost daily. Kids hang out on that corner as they meet their friends, or spend time outside on a summer night. That corner is an extension of our community and the basketball court at Holy Name. Taking away this spot from our youth is not okay.

Have you considered any of the spaces in the building across from the train station? The building that used to rent to Metro Physical Therapy? There is plenty of parking there and our youth do not hang out there.

Please consider denying this permit application and re-consider a different location.

Thank you,  
Jessica Kurtz

Miles Kafka (has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/user/43/contact>) at Croton-on-Hudson NY.

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Message:

My sense is you get a lot of comments from people who care about various issues, so I am writing to give voice to the many MANY quiet people who share my somewhat different sentiment: I really don't care.

That's my official position. I don't care. Seems like a fairly normal bit of commerce if someone wants to open a store there. Seems fairly easy to get cannabis elsewhere nearby too. So, whatever.

Have a GREAT day, and keep up the good work!

Hello Brian, just giving my thoughts, I think this is a big mistake for the Village, I don't believe it's necessary in the village, the village has turned into something that I never thought I would see, this is not the village I grew up in, and obviously, I don't spend as much time as I used to here , but if they allow the dispensary, what's next, how about a strip club across from the daycare center, this way you can drop off your kids at the daycare and go to the strip club, then we can put the tattoo parlor right next to that, thanks Brian. I hope everybody does the right thing and sends these people out of the village.  
Regards , Bill Vlad

Dear Planning Board,

I am writing in support of the change of use proposal regarding a retail cannabis dispensary currently before you. As long as the proposed establishment conforms to current law, I see no reason to deny it.

A cannabis dispensary is a legal business just like any other. While Croton has several wine and liquor stores, it currently does not have a dispensary. The proposed location is centrally located and would be convenient for those who wish to provide it their custom.

The residents who oppose it seem to have three main complaints: 1.) increased traffic; 2.) its proximity to the daycare center, Happy Hearts Take Two; and 3.) what I will call "good old fashioned reefer madness."

First, for the traffic concerns, the site at issue is already designated as retail space and has been for some time. There is no reason to believe that having a cannabis dispensary at that location would cause an untenable increase in traffic. On average, I have never seen more than a handful of customers at a liquor store or a dispensary at any given time. And even if there is an uptick in traffic, concerns about such are defeated by their own internal logic. Croton cannot be a village that says, "We welcome your retail business as long as it is not successful." That does not make for an environment conducive to having small businesses. If residents no longer wish to have a retail space at the location, then they should submit their own proposal for a zoning change.

As for the proximity to Happy Hearts, again as long as the site conforms to current law in this regard, I see no reason to deny the proposal based on this issue. I certainly don't foresee an epidemic of 1 - 5 year olds using cannabis because of the location.

Finally, the reefer madness-style complaints should be dismissed outright, and I write this as someone who does not and has never used cannabis. I fail to see how this business would "ruin our village" any more than the current wine and liquor stores have (i.e. not at all). Modern dispensaries are generally welcoming places with good lighting and tasteful decor. The concerns about blight, as far as I can see, stem from outdated stereotypes about cannabis users and those who sell to them. Such concerns are not to be taken seriously.

For all of these reasons, the change of use proposal should be thoughtfully considered and ultimately passed on its merits provided again that it conforms to the current law. There are few if any downsides to doing so. Let the business in and see how it does on its own merits and acumen. And let's keep Croton a small business-friendly village.

Sincerely,

Daniel Tibbets  
37A Wells Ave.  
Croton

Dear Bryan, Karen, Stacey:

I am writing to express my support for the pending application regarding the proposed dispensary on Riverside Avenue.

While public sentiment toward such establishments has shifted over the years, I believe this project is a positive development for our community. My research and inquiries indicate that this business is well-structured and highly regulated, operating similarly to other local retail establishments that sell controlled substances like alcohol. The implementation in Tarrytown serves as a successful example of how these businesses can be integrated into a neighborhood responsibly.

I do not believe this dispensary will have a negative impact or result in the derogation of our neighborhood. I look forward to the upcoming presentation on this matter.

Best regards,

Debi Braddick

From Doug Simmons, Finney Farm Road

Dear Members of the Planning Board

I write in favor of approving the proposed cannabis dispensary on S. Riverside. The dissenting views on the dispensary have alarmist misconceptions in claiming the shop will be a negative presence. The dissents echo those from the long memo sent to the board by Amos Bloomberg which was later published in the Croton Chronicle.

The critics are apparently unfamiliar with retail cannabis shops in the real world. Ironically they overlook the more harmful albeit legal products on hand at the current shop, DB Mart. (I'm not a person, by the way, who believes cannabis is harmless.) No age limit is required to enter DB Mart, which sells beer, cigarettes, and lottery tickets. While waiting to buy their candy and soda, kids can study the colorful promotions on every available surface of the adventure and wealth that awaits them in the future.

A dispensary would be a quieter presence with a narrow product line unseen from the street. Children and teens would not be allowed inside. The cannabis dispensaries I've visited over the years in Colorado, California, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Mexico, have been tightly controlled without exception.

Cannabis shops are efficient businesses and good neighbors, and I'd expect the same from the Croton shop given the site plans I've seen in the documentation submitted to the village. I urge the village, if the proposal advances, to make the applicant aware of the Gateway plans for that intersection. It would be easy to upgrade the current facade of the DB Mart. I mention this because of an objection to the dispensary in the Bloomberg memo that oddly claims that a dispensary violates the village's Gateway plans.

Bloomberg also asserts the dispensary would be a parking burden, which he does so erroneously. Two-hour off street parking spots exist nearby for area businesses with spots regularly available in my experience. Furthermore, the DB Mart has five dedicated parking spots. Bloomberg's memo inaccurately says there are four.

Those parking spots will turn over quickly. Dispensary customers would be in the store for time periods similar to DB Mart customer visits. DB Mart's owner, in a letter submitted to the planning board, says about 250 customers a day visit with an average duration of 10 minutes.

A few days ago I put up a Facebook post on The Croton Point regarding the dispensary. The post received 49 mostly positive comments, and several comments had subthread conversations. More than 1,100 people read the post.

One Croton Point member commented, "I don't use weed in any form but am in favor of a legal business that pays taxes vs a vacant storefront that doesn't generate any income for the village." That comment got 10 likes from other Croton residents who are fine with a shop they'll probably never enter.

In other words, there's widespread support for the dispensary. A convenient small business that pays extra taxes directly to the village is an enterprise that we should welcome.

thank you,

Doug Simmons  
Finney Farm Road

Heather Miranda () has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/user/3036/contact>) at Croton-on-Hudson NY.

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Message:

I am a homeowner, a registered nurse, and a family nurse practitioner who lives within walking distance of the proposed location. As a soon-to-be mother of three young children—ages 4.5, 2.5, and a newborn—I am becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the direction our town is heading.

I strongly oppose placing a marijuana dispensary in the heart of our downtown. This location is steps from a childcare facility and within easy walking distance of parks heavily used by families and young children. Its position right off the highway will encourage out-of-town traffic and loitering in an area that should remain safe and welcoming for residents.

Our community does not need another dispensary when one already operates less than a five-minute drive away in Ossining. While many patrons will be responsible, it is unrealistic to ignore the increased risk of attracting unwanted activity and changing the character of our downtown. We already have a smoke shop in town, and continuing in this direction shifts us away from the family-friendly environment residents value and toward a more urban, commercial atmosphere.

For these reasons, I urge decision-makers to reconsider this location and prioritize the needs of families and the long-term character of our town.