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**Promoting Investment and Increased Revenue:  
Willows City Council Relaxes Zoning Requirements for Cannabis Dispensary License**

(Willows, CA) – On Tuesday, January 14, the Willows City Council approved relaxing zoning requirements for its two Cannabis retail dispensary licenses in an effort to promote investment in the Cannabis industry in the City of Willows.

“As one of the most regulated store front businesses in California, relaxing these zoning requirements will provide Willows with an untapped revenue source that could be used to upgrade our parks, modernize first responder equipment, improve street and sidewalk safety, and re-establish the City’s Police Department while also providing safe and legal access to Cannabis,” Commented Mayor Evan Hutson.

The amendment to the City’s Cannabis Ordinance will now allow cannabis retail/dispensary businesses in the Central Commercial, General Commercial and Light Industrial Zones with a Conditional Use Permit. Previously, Cannabis retail businesses were not permitted in these zones.

“There are many beneficial uses of cannabis besides its recreational use. I visited several Dispensaries to see how they operate; they are clean and present themselves as a quality business. Willows should not stand in the way of expanding its commercial opportunities,” stated Vice-Mayor Rick Thomas.

In addition, the new amendments to the ordinance also reduce the setback from schools to 600 feet. In May 2024, the Willows City Council approved removing all setback requirements from churches, licensed daycares, playgrounds, and parks. However, the Council elected to continue maintaining setback requirements from schools (e.g., preschool through 12th grade).

Councilmember Matt Busby added, “While I know this is a topic with varying opinions, I am confident in the decision to remove a roadblock for businesses to invest in the city of Willows. The approval process for a cannabis business remains unchanged, robust, and assuredly will be handled with diligence to ensure the best long-term outcome for our community.”

The new Ordinance will go into effect on February 14, 2025. The City will begin advertising for the two available licenses immediately and start accepting applications in February. Applications will undergo a competitive evaluation process with review by the Council’s Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee and City staff to ensure compliance with application guidelines and the Ordinance. Amendments to the Cannabis Ordinance were approved by a 3-2 vote with Councilmembers Hansen and Pride opposed.

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