



## ATTACHMENT NO. 7

May 18, 2021

Messrs. Allen and Mendevil  
City of Culver City  
Current Planning Division  
9770 Culver Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232

Dear Mr. Allen and Mr. Mendevil:

Re: Cannabis Retailer Conditional Use Permit Application for 10000 Culver Blvd., Culver City CA 90232

Sweet Flower Culver City, LLC ("Sweet Flower") is delighted to attach our revised Conditional Use Permit application for the above location.

As the highest scoring applicant in the process that commenced in September 2018, and a proud business resident in Culver City since then, we wanted to also highlight some of our local initiatives in diversity, inclusion and social equity.

We are a local business – we are based in Culver City, I and my co-founder are local, and we employ locally and give back to the communities we serve.

- Sweet Flower is **70% diverse** at the store level and **80% diverse** at the store management level
- Sweet Flower has incubated and nurtured over a **dozen Black and Brown-owned** cannabis brands, and carries these brands at all its stores, **six times the industry average**.
- Sweet Flower's management team members serve on the Boards of **Cannabis for Black Lives** and the **Black Cooperative Investment Fund**, among other non-profits.
- Sweet Flower has made **over \$180,000** in charitable contributions to local community causes throughout Southern California.
- Sweet Flower employs over **100 local team members** throughout Los Angeles County
- Sweet Flower has **Labor Peace Agreements in place with the UFCW at all of its locations**.
- Sweet Flower's entry level pay is over \$16.00 per hour, and offers medical, dental, vision, 401(k) and paid time off, among other benefits.
- Sweet Flower has to date paid over **\$7.3M in local city and California state taxes**

I also attach a recent article on Sweet Flower in Forbes magazine.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/katieshapiro/2021/05/06/how-sweet-flower-a-celeb-favorite-cannabis-boutique-is-raising-the-retail-bar-in-california/?sh=69f13265e0bc>

We look forward to serving the Culver City community and to establishing our flagship location in this wonderful city, and thank the City and staff for all their assistance to date.

Sincerely,

Timothy Dodd  
CEO, Co-founder, Sweet Flower Culver City, LLC

# How Sweet Flower, A Celeb-Favorite Cannabis Boutique, Is Raising The Retail Bar In California

[Katie Shapiro](#) 11:00am EDT

Long before the legal, adult-use cannabis industry took hold in Los Angeles, Sweet Flower opened its doors in 2006 as one of the first medical dispensaries in the city. Originally operating with a purpose to provide compassionate caregiving, it quietly served patients until 2018, when Tim Dodd identified [Sweet Flower](#) as a service-oriented solution to a problematic gap in the rapidly corporatizing retail landscape.

The native New Zealander visited a dispensary himself for the first time four years ago, but was disappointed in the shopping experience. An avid long distance cyclist, Dodd suffered a crash while training in the Santa Monica Mountains and after being airlifted to Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, he was prescribed opioids for his long road to recovery. Instead of using the pharmaceuticals he turned to cannabis, but found the buying experience to be "confused, stigmatized and unapproachable."



Inside Sweet Flower's Westwood location.

Annie Meisel Photography

Inspired by the success of treating his pain with plants instead of pills, he approached Sweet Flower.

Dodd, leaving behind executive roles ranging Technicolor to Warner Bros. to Time Warner, acquired Sweet Flower with his colleague of more than two decades, Mike Thomson. Together, they reorganized, rebranded and then opened Sweet Flower's new, adult-use concept on Melrose in April of 2019 and expanded the original Studio City location with a grand reopening later that same month.

In March, Sweet Flower announced its initial external raise —

a \$15 million Series A round led by [AFI Capital Partners](#) with other investors from the retail, media, entertainment and finance sectors.

"At AFI, we value high quality operators that have a clear focus," said AFI Capital managing director Chi-Chien Hou. "Sweet Flower combines efficient retail execution with a strong emphasis on customer and community engagement; this translates into a great retail experience that keeps consumers coming back and positions Sweet Flower as one of the leaders in the mainstream cannabis movement in the most influential market in the country."

The investment positions Sweet Flower to scale up its expansion, the launch of a manufacturing and distribution vertical hub in downtown Los Angeles, the introduction of a sub-brand of retail stores throughout California and the roll-out of its private label program.

"We have been bootstrapped to date, but as we continued to expand, and with increasing tailwinds in California (a market we've always firmly believed in that is in favor again), we saw the opportunity to expand again," Dodd, now Sweet Flower CEO, noted. "We have four stores across Los Angeles, making Sweet Flower one of the largest and best regarded branded retail chains in the city. Culver City will be coming next, and we are pursuing five more organic expansion opportunities in California."



The Sweet Flower executive team (L to R): Seinne Fleming (VP of Development), Kiana Anvaripour ... [+]

Courtesy Sweet Flower

## Diversity-Driven

But what also already sets Sweet Flower apart from the larger retail chains it competes with is a clear mission — one Dodd defined in the beginning — of inclusivity and diversity. Sweet Flower's official mission statement reads: "To set a new standard for modern cannabis retail that is inclusive, diverse and approachable by all."

The company currently employs 120 team members, 80% of whom are African American or Latinx with a women-led



executive team. Under its "Sweet Flower Shares" community investment initiative, over \$175,000 in donations have been directly distributed to local community organizations in Los Angeles including the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Poverello House, Central Valley Community Health and multiple nonprofits in Culver City, where Dodd was awarded the 2019 President's Award from the chamber of commerce for his work. Dodd also serves on the board of the [Black Cooperative Investment Fund](#), while Sweet Flower is a member of [Cannabis For Black Lives](#), assisting in forming programs with [The Hood incubator](#), First Equity Alliance and [Cage-Free Repair](#).

"In addition to having a diverse selection of products, we have a diverse team and stand by our pillars working tirelessly to support the communities we serve," explained Sweet Flower CMO Kiana Anvaripour, who previously was at the helm of marketing for Beboe Brands from launch [to acquisition](#) by Green Thumb Industries (GTI). "We have executed memoranda of understanding with local groups in our markets to support diverse hiring, while also supporting Black- and Brown-owned cannabis brands, record expungement, skills and jobs training and building a diverse and inclusive cannabis supply chain with all our vendors, suppliers and partners."

Sweet Flower has made a product promise, too, allocating

10% of shelf-space to BIPOC brands. Currently, the following brands are highlighted in each store through a section for companies owned by people of color: Acqua de Flor, Ball Family Farms, Biko, Calexo, Congo Club, Cronja, El Blunto, KGB Reserve, La Familia, Leisure Trees, Lifted Legacy, Potli, [Pure Beauty](#), Saucey, SF Roots, [Sundae School](#), Timeless and Viola. According to Anvaripour, the industry standard is 2% of shelf space; Sweet Flower currently sits at 17% with 19 BIPOC brands and counting.



Sweet Flower recently released its first merch drop in the form of a capsule collection with the Los ... [\[+\]](#)

Courtesy Sweet Flower

## Star Power

While the list of celebrities cashing in on cannabis with their own brands grows, Sweet Flower has drawn stars into its stores to simply shop — and often [get spotted](#) on their way



out. The brand also has strategically aligned itself with Hollywood through official collaborations with the likes of [Chelsea Handler](#), Lionsgate's "Barb & Star Go to Vista Del Mar" and Beats by Dre. And [Houseplant](#), the much-hyped flower and home goods brand by Seth Rogan and Evan Goldberg, chose Sweet Flower as its first retail partner, in L.A.

"Every partnership we have done to date has been extremely organic," shared Anvaripour. "We are focused on the community we serve, which in L.A., includes entertainment, media and wellness, so most of the collaborations have stemmed from [leaders of those industries] being our customers. Partnerships like this destigmatize cannabis — celebrities have a large platform to share their experiences and yes, cannabis can be fun, but at its core, it personifies wellness and this year has proved to a growing population that it can help naturally."

Sweet Flower also recently released its first merch drop in the form of a capsule collection with the Los Angeles-based clothing company Free & Easy. The limited edition line includes a hoodie, hat and tote (available in Sweet Flower stores as well as on the website of both brands).



A rendering of Sweet Flower's flagship store, which is slated to open in August 2021 in Culver City, ... [+]

Courtesy Sweet Flower

## New HQ

The immediate next step for Sweet Flower is the August grand opening of a new flagship location in Culver City, where the company's office space is also based. Customers can expect Sweet Flower's signature minimalist, bright design aesthetic and extensively trained staff, known as "Sweet Florists" — a welcome improvement on "budtenders."

Dodd describes the almost-complete showcase space as, "A beautiful mid-century heritage location across from Sony

Pictures, Apple and Equinox and adjacent to Culver City's downtown restaurant district. We have deep roots in the Culver City creative community and look forward to being a part of the renaissance of the city."

The company will also continue to build on its delivery service, a highly profitable arm of the brand developed in-house. Dodd attributes its success to Sweet Flower's attention to customer service — he wasn't willing to outsource to a third party like Eaze or Emjay.

"Being invited to our customers' homes is the ultimate permission, and it is also the ultimate extension of our brand," Dodd added. "It is critical to get that last mile step to the customer's door right, and the only way we felt comfortable doing so was to do it ourselves."