

Popular New Jersey based “Acai Bowl” shop is coming to Dartmouth!

New Jersey’s original acai shop “Playa Bowls” will be opening soon in Dartmouth! It will be located within the Dartmouth Towne Center shopping plaza at 380 State Rd Unit 406 (what used to be “Yogurt City”). There is no official date set for the grand opening, but we will most definitely let you know as soon as we find out!

Playa Bowls offers a variety of healthy, delicious açai, pitaya, coconut bowls, smoothies, cold brew coffee, and pressed juice with sustainability and community in mind. See the menu [here](#).



Founders of Playa Bowl photo.

The founders Robert Giuliani & Abby Taylor were inspired by chasing summer on surf trips to Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, California & Hawaii. Almost every exotic surf

town they visited offered their own unique version of an acai or pitaya bowl. They decided to recreate their favorite recipes with their own twist at home at the Jersey Shore.

They made a deal with the owner of the pizza shop they lived above on 8th Avenue in Belmar, NJ. They bought a blender, a patio table, a fridge & a freezer and set up a makeshift pop up stand on the sidewalk in front of the pizza shop. Fast forward nine years and they have spread to over 190 stores nation wide!



Playa Bowls Instagram photo.



Steven Richard photo.

Business owners asked to give discounts to City of New Bedford employees

The City of New Bedford is reaching out to local businesses to participate in the "City of New Bedford Employee Discount Program". Some business owners are looking at this as an opportunity to gain new customers, while others feel that paying taxes should be enough to satisfy the city.

City employees will be issued an official "Employee Discount Card" and participating local businesses will be giving about a 10% discount or more depending on how much the business

would like to offer.

In the flyer being sent out to local businesses the city is pitching that, "In return, your business would be exposed to potentially 3,000 employees, which includes all New Bedford City and school employees."

Personally, I understand how someone could look at this "pitch" in a negative manner, but I think this is a win win for business owners and city employees. This discount could be the difference that makes a city employee stop at a local coffee shop in the morning rather than a chain. This could make city employees sign up to a locally owned gym rather than a chain.

The city is by no means forcing businesses to give discounts, but this program does seem like an attempt to stimulate small businesses and I can get behind that movement.

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The Personnel Department is in the process of putting together a City of New Bedford Employee Discount Program.

We are reaching out to local businesses to see if they would like to partake in this program by providing a discount for New Bedford City Employees. We are looking to see about a 10% discount if possible. In return, your business would be exposed to potentially 3,000 employees, which includes all New Bedford City and School employees.

The Employees will be issued an official "Employee Discount Card" with their information on the front to prove employment. We will also have a page on our City website showing employees the participating vendors and the discounts being offered.

If this program is something your business would like to contribute to, please respond back to this e-mail.

We look forward to connecting with you!

Best,
Personnel Team
personnel@newbedford-ma.gov
508-979-1444

City of New Bedford's pitch to local businesses.

New Bedford's hidden gem 'P.S. I Love You Salon And Then Some' has something to dazzle everyone

"P.S I love you" is a full service salon that also offers massage therapy and Reiki at 1980 Acushnet Ave in New Bedford. The owner, Raquel Costa has over 20 years experience as a

hairstylist and over 10 years as a Reiki Master.

Along with hair, massage therapy, and Reiki, Raquel has a passion for helping woman entrepreneurs! In her building she displays and sells health products, art, jewelry, and other various products, all created by local women.

She also periodically hosts craft and wellness fairs at the salon!

Here is what people are saying about Raquel and P.S. I Love You and Then Some:

"I can't say enough about this beauty!! Raquel has been doing my hair for the last 10 years and has ALWAYS gotten it right? Raquel's Reiki is also some of the most loving energy you could ever experience"

She is one of the most talented, beautiful, determined, trustworthy and loving women I have ever met!"—**Justine Gauthier Reed.**

"I absolutely love this salon!! Raquel is an amazing stylist. She really listens and takes her time!! Love love love this salon."—**Marcy Cowell.**

All photos by P.S. I Love You Salon And Then Some:



P.S. I Love You Salon And Then Some

1980 Acushnet Avenue,
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Lingua Portuguesa and English language

Phone: (508) 264-7596

Email: rlchair9999@aol.com

Business Facebook: P.S. I Love You Salon And Then Some

Raquel Costa's Facebook: facebook.com/raquel.costa.5815

Massachusetts State Rep. Tony Cabral: "We have a housing crisis in New Bedford"

At the ground-breaking ceremony of a 45 unit apartment building at 117 Union Street, State Representative Tony Cabral voiced his concerns on housing in New Bedford. He began his remarks stating, "We have a housing crisis in the state, and we also have a housing crisis in New Bedford".

Affordable housing has been a hot button topic of discussion as of late, with many New Bedford residents feeling that rental prices are becoming unrealistically high. The opposing argument is that New Bedford is improving and prices will reflect the growth of the city.

With the arrival of the "off shore wind" industry along with the anticipated arrival of the South Coast Rail, New Bedford seems to be trending upwards. We already have seen an investor betting on New Bedford by building 21 units of luxury apartments in downtown. Representative Cabral went on voicing his concerns that some individuals, especially those on a fixed income, will simply not be able to afford housing in the city.

"I spoke with a lady a few months back that lived on

Independence Street and she was scared of what will happen with her. She has worked all her life in the mills in New Bedford and now she is being faced with eviction or having to move because she can no longer afford her rent.” Representative Cabral continued, “We need to create a two tier approach when it comes to housing, both for ‘Market Rate’ which is important to the success of downtown and other areas of the city, but we also have to be conscious about affordable housing in the city.”

Along with Cabral, Mayor Mitchell and other representatives spoke at this groundbreaking ceremony which you can watch in its entirety below.

45 new apartment units, 3,500 sq. ft. of retail space coming to downtown New Bedford

On Tuesday, August 22nd, City and state officials gathered for a ground-breaking to officially launch construction of the \$27 million five-story mixed commercial and residential building at 117 Union Street in the City’s downtown.

This development will create 45 units of mixed-income housing along with approximately 3,500 square feet of ground-floor retail space. Here is a current view of 117 Union street.



Steven Richard photo.

The project will create a mix of units at varying price points. In total, the project will offer 14 studio apartments, 21 one-bedroom apartments, and 10 two-bedroom apartments. The architectural firm Stantec designed 12 units for handicapped accessibility and the entire building incorporates high energy efficiency systems and design features.

The creation of new housing units will help alleviate our housing shortage and boost activity around Custom House Square," said Mayor Mitchell. "Not only will this project offer dozens of New Bedford residents a great place to live, but it will create additional population density in a walkable, thriving downtown."

State Rep. Tony Cabral, Mayor Mitchell, and several other key members of our community and this project spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony. You can watch the ceremony in its entirety here:

The American Rescue Plan was written to speed up our nation's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I

applaud this effort to combat the housing shortage in the City of New Bedford,” said Congressman Bill Keating. “This project will increase available housing units downtown while preserving the historic character that drives tourism to the City, which is a win for all involved. New Bedford is a leader in the Commonwealth on fighting the housing crisis, and this project is yet another example of Mayor Mitchell’s leadership in prioritizing long-term community benefits when allocating COVID-19 relief funds.”

“We are excited to see this important project get underway. We look forward to getting these 45 units on line, and point to this key groundbreaking as an example to others interested in developing housing at scale in our city: we are open for business and serious about providing attainable housing for all residents,” said the Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development, Joshua Amaral.

South Coast residents can get FREE college starting this fall at Bristol Community College

Massachusetts residents that are 25 and older will now be able to get a tuition-free associate degree or certificate at their local community college. After state lawmakers passed a 2024 budget in July, Governor Maura Healey signed it into law allocating \$229 million for higher education institutions and scholarships for students.

MassReconnect will officially launch at Bristol Community

College for the upcoming Fall 2023 semester, beginning September 5th. This will cover the cost of community college for Massachusetts residents 25 and older without a previous college degree, the program is available to new and current BCC students.

MassReconnect requires that students:

- Complete their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
- Be admitted to a certificate or degree program
- Be registered for six or more credits.

For more information on the program and how to register click [here](#).

The Donut Factory To Open New Location In Dartmouth

Last week with the permission of owner Jackie Webb, we teased a couple of photos of the signage being installed at the The Donut Factory's new location in North Dartmouth. Today, we can report that the timeline to open of the new location (246 State Rd.) is tentatively schedule for late September.

"This new location will be an express, and carry 90% of the product we feature at our Fairhaven location (7 Howland Rd) and will be open 7 days a week, 6am to 6pm. We've been looking to expand into Dartmouth for some time and this location offered high visibility and a consistent flow of traffic" says Jackie.

You'll be able to get all of their gourmet donuts, Nitro Cold

Brew, coffee rolls and classic treats as well as their enormous, jam packed linguica rolls! Their daily promos like Monday's buy 3 get one free rolls, 99 Cent giant glazed donut Wednesday deals will also be honored at both locations.

With this expansion there is also the need for additional staff, so if you're interested in joining a growing business stop by the Fairhaven location and set up an interview. They are hiring for full and part time positions.

You can follow the Donut Factory on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/therealdonutfactory> and on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/therealdonutfactory/>



UMass leaving New Bedford opens prime real estate for housing and retail opportunities

UMASS Dartmouth Chancellor Mark Fuller announced the New Bedford “Star Store” Campus will be closing effective immediately which sent shockwaves through the community on Monday afternoon. Mayor Mitchell mentioned in his response to the news that, “The City will attempt to work with the state administration in the hope that this short-sighted decision can be rectified.”

While Mayor Mitchell is working to bring UMASS back to New Bedford, I figured I would be proactive and ask New Bedford citizens what they would like to see replace the Star Store downtown. Overwhelmingly “housing” was the most popular answer, but the type of housing is what stirs controversy.

There has been no shortage of outrage regarding the topic of “luxury apartments” in downtown New Bedford. When we broke the story that an investor will be renting out 21 units of beautiful, new construction apartments on Williams street, it was met with a fair share of pushback.

On the flip side, many citizens also very much appreciate the idea of investors spending money to improve the city. Checkout this quick 1 minute clip to see the inside of downtowns newest luxury apartments and hear investor Dennis Keohane’s thesis on the future of New Bedford.

The question I asked New Bedford residents was, "The "Star Store" is prime real estate in downtown New Bedford. What would you like to see happen to it now that UMass is leaving?"

This sparked quite the thread of conversation which resulted in many different answers in which I will post a few below:

- Andre Jameson: "we're in a housing crisis... so housing would be the best use of it"
- Candi Bessette Longworth: "Low income housing"
- Cynthia Camacho: "Housing for Seniors"
- Amanda Valler: "Shelter for our homeless vets"
- Bob Konkell: "Shopping mall with free parking. Bring people back downtown."
- Carol Cesolini: "Quality retail shops with restaurants all under one roof. Whatever, we need quality. We have no real quality shopping places in this area, no quality furniture stores, no quality clothing stores, no quality kitchen goods stores. Quality stores are nowhere to be found in this area anymore."
- Hannah Rose M. Schlieder: "Artist collective??"

I understand that the economics and logistics of this is much more complicated than one may imagine. But again I ask, if UMASS is not coming back, what would you like to see developed in the future? I think some form of retail on the first floor with housing on the floors above would be a fantastic touch to the area.

Mayor Mitchell responds to UMass Dartmouth's abrupt exit of New Bedford

UMASS Dartmouth Chancellor Mark Fuller announced that the University is closing the downtown New Bedford Campus of the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) in the Star Store building. He noted in a message to staff & faculty:

"You may be aware that, since 2001, the state has fully funded UMass Dartmouth's presence in the historic Star Store Building in downtown New Bedford, which has come to house many of our studio arts programs, serving roughly 200 students each year. However, that generous support has now come to an end. I am deeply saddened to report that, for this and all the reasons I will outline below, UMass Dartmouth has therefore been advised to transition our programs out of the Star Store ahead of the fall semester."

Mayor Mitchell quickly responded with his statement on the situation in this press release:

"Minutes before his public announcement this morning, Chancellor Fuller called to inform me of his decision to relocate the CVPA from the downtown. To say that I reacted with surprise and dismay is an understatement. The CVPA has anchored the downtown's cultural scene for over twenty years, extending the century-long work of its predecessor, the Swain School of Design.

At various points in the last year, I have offered the parties involved in the negotiations over the future of the CVPA – area legislators, UMass, the owner of the Star Store building, and the state administration – my help in facilitating an agreement. The fact that none of them thought my involvement was necessary, and that no one informed me that the university

was on the brink of pulling out of the City, suggested to me that a new agreement was merely a matter of time.

The notion that the University's decision ultimately hinged on whether a particular line item was included in the new state budget strains credulity. All the state entities and legislators have long been aware of the need to develop a new funding arrangement for the CVPA at the Star Store that would address the acquisition, maintenance, and operating costs once the original lease expired in 2021.

All the parties have had several years to structure an agreement which would put the CVPA on a firm, long-term footing in our downtown. The failure to arrive at an agreement will now be felt by the students, faculty, residents, local businesses, and the City, which stands to lose a major anchor institution.

The City will attempt to work with the state administration in the hope that this short-sighted decision can be rectified."

Cannabis Cafes could be coming to Massachusetts

By Sam Drysdale
State House News Service

A swath of regulatory changes are coming to Massachusetts' cannabis industry, including measures to clear the way for people with past criminal records to work in marijuana shops and to allow all cities and towns to eventually host cannabis cafes.

In late July, the Cannabis Control Commission unanimously approved draft regulations intended to reflect the cannabis industry reform law former Gov. Charlie Baker signed last summer. The commission has spent the last few months re-writing the regulations that have been in place since legal marijuana sales started in 2018.

The changes seek to increase diversity in the field, ramp up oversight on agreements between marijuana businesses and municipalities – a chronic trouble spot for the young industry – and move closer to social pot consumption sites.

“We can protect the health and safety of our citizens while reducing ... overly cumbersome and costly regulatory burdens, which help more businesses achieve and maintain profitability,” Chairwoman Shannon O’Brien said.

The commission is planning a public hearing Sept. 8 to accept public comments on the proposals in the draft regulations.

In accordance with the new cannabis law, the regulations will eliminate previously existing disqualifiers that prevented people with certain criminal charges on their records from being hired into the industry.

Marijuana establishments can still consider criminal offenses that involve the distribution of a controlled substance to a minor, including cannabis, or if they are hiring someone applying to work in a lab, the commission’s enforcement counsel Rebecca Lopez said at a July 28 meeting.

The change is intended to help move people who are selling pot illegally into the legal market, Commissioner Ava Callender Concepcion said during a presentation to fellow commissioners.

“It’s important to remove unnecessary suitability requirement barriers and allow people with criminal records to work for three key reasons,” she said. “Employment has been proven to be one of the most effective tools for successful

reintegration and reducing recidivism rates. By providing individuals with the opportunity to secure stable employment, we empower them to become productive members of society, which significantly lowers the chances of them returning to a life of crime.”

Concepcion continued, “Second, moving the legacy market to the legal market. Employment acts as a deterrent to criminal behavior. By encouraging individuals with criminal records to find employment in the cannabis industry, we then provide them with an alternative and lawful means to provide for themselves and reduce the likelihood of them resorting to engaging in the legacy, or illicit, market to meet their basic needs.”

Concepcion added that opening the hiring pool for those with prior criminal records helps employers, by providing “access to talent that brings new ideas and expertise from the legacy market.”

The rewritten regulations also bulk up the CCC with new authority to examine and approve host community agreements, which marijuana businesses are required to enter into with the cities and towns where they do business.

Under the 2022 reform law, these host community agreements (HCAs) will only be permitted for the first eight years a marijuana company is in business. “Community impact fees” that businesses pay to the city or town will not be allowed to surpass 3 percent of an establishment’s gross sales and the fee amount must be “reasonably related” to costs the municipality faces as a result of the marijuana business’s operation.

The draft regulations give the commission the authority to issue sanctions against a host community that is noncompliant with the requirements of their agreement, hold off on considering new license applications from that community or publish a list of municipalities that are out of compliance.

Seeking to apply greater oversight of community impact fees, the commission approved a draft change that would require municipalities to include specific details on how the fees were spent, including line items for the cost and purpose of each good or service.

The proposals would also prohibit a town from requiring a business to make upfront payments as a condition for operating in the community and from obligating a business to set aside money in an escrow, bond or other account for the host community's use.

Under the proposal, the commission would have a maximum 90 days to review an HCA.

HCAs have long been the subject of disagreements between businesses and municipalities, and the CCC had asked the Legislature for power to regulate the agreements for years.

Commissioner Kimberly Roy said during the commission's meeting Thursday that she recently met with Massachusetts Cannabis Business Association President David O'Brien to discuss the proposed updates.

"They were very grateful for our work, but our work is not done," she said. "There is more work to do. They already highlighted during that roundtable areas of concern, angst, if you will, around some loopholes that still exist."

Roy said she expects many businesses to be at the Sept. 8 public hearing to weigh in.

The commission also sought to target equity in their rewrite, and would require host communities to donate, at minimum, 3 percent of each community impact fee it receives to the Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund.

The fund was created in last year's cannabis industry reform law, and is intended to make grants and loans available to

prospective marijuana entrepreneurs with a focus on supporting people of color and other populations disproportionately harmed by the War on Drugs.

But the Boston Business Journal recently reported that money can't be transferred into the social equity fund until taxes taken from cannabis purchases are moved into a different state fund, due to a technical issue in how the law was written.

The regulation updates would expand the commission's pre-certification process for applicants in the state's Social Equity Program or Certified Economic Empowerment Priority Applicants, who come from underserved backgrounds.

After May 1, 2025, the new regulations would also authorize the commission to fine cities and towns that are found to be out of compliance with the CCC's municipal equity regulations, deposit those fines into the Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund, and publish a list of noncompliant municipalities.

Following the Sept. 8 public hearing, the commission will vote on final regulations concerning HCAs, municipal equity and the suitability hiring policies. Last year's law requires that these regulations be distributed by the Secretary of State by Nov. 9.

Though it is not beholden to the same Nov. 9 deadline, the commission is also seeking to move closer to authorizing social consumption sites, such as cannabis cafes.

Commissioners eliminated a previously existing pilot program which would have initially limited social consumption sites to no more than 12 municipalities – thereby allowing any city or town to opt-in to hosting one of these establishments once the licenses become available.

Asked about a timeline for these businesses to be able to legally operate, Commissioner Bruce Stebbins, one of the commissioners leading the working group on social consumption

sites, said he would like to say “as soon as possible.”

“We just finished getting the results of a survey back I think about a week or two ago, so our internal team is still looking at the results of that survey ... I also know we’re doing additional work of looking at what other states have done,” Stebbins said. “But I will tell you that our working group continues to meet and, again, we want to try to bring something once we feel it’s good to go.”