

REPORT

Parks and Recreation and Office of the CAO

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 13, 2023

From: Dean Gibson
Director Parks and Recreation
File: 2239109

Blair Fryer
Senior Manager – Economic
Development & Communications

Item #: 2023-153

Subject: Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program for Special Events

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council directs staff to implement the Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program using the proposed guidelines for Special Events;

THAT Council direct staff to seek feedback from businesses on the proposed Site-Wide Liquor Licensing for Special Events.

PURPOSE

This report outlines details of a proposed new Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program for Special Events, and the associated guidelines event organizers must follow in order to participate in the program.

SUMMARY

The City is considering site-wide liquor licensing for special events after hearing from multiple event organizers who feel select community events would benefit from this approach. Organizers have advised the City that site-wide liquor service provides additional sources of revenue as they are experiencing cost escalations and limited access to external funding to host their events. Staff from various departments have reviewed the request and are proposing a set of guidelines in order to implement the Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program for Special Events.

BACKGROUND

Multiple event organizers, including two Business Improvement Associations, have approached the City requesting guidelines and approval for expanding liquor services at public events. The City's current guidelines only allow for liquor service within a small area of the event footprint (i.e. a beer garden). Site-wide liquor licensing was requested as an enhancement and for existing licensed patio areas to be expanded during the event.

Event organizers must receive approval from the City and the Provincial Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) in order to serve alcohol at a public event. Guidelines are developed by both the City and LCRB in order to support event organizers in meeting liquor license requirements and to plan for a safe event that is enjoyed and supported by everyone involved.

ANALYSIS

City staff have connected with other municipalities (City of Surrey and City of Vancouver) that also permit site-wide liquor licensing to understand best practices, how they have implemented the program, as well as lessons learned for business outreach.

The City's Festival Expediting Staff Team (FEST) which is comprised of Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire, and Engineering, met to review the impacts that site-wide liquor licensing would potentially have on an event and to look at the historical trends of New Westminster public events that received a liquor license. Fridays on Front, organized by the Downtown Business Improvement Association, serves as an example of an event where a site-wide liquor license has been approved without incident.

City staff also consulted the LCRB to ensure that the guidelines were appropriate in supporting event organizers in receiving a license from the LCRB.

The proposed guidelines also follow the practices in the City's Good Neighbour Protocol that outlines the following:

- Communicating with affected neighborhood;
- Obtaining all required permits and approvals;

- Respecting public spaces;
- Respecting the environment;
- Ensuring the public spaces are safe for the public.

DISCUSSION

In response to the requests of community event organizers, the following guidelines have been developed to support event organizers in obtaining the necessary City and LCRB approvals required for site-wide liquor licensing.

Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program Guidelines

Event Logistics

- Site-wide licensing will only be considered for events that have an established track record of two or more years hosting an event that abides by their Letter of Agreement.
- The event must feature a variety of activities including a mix of family-friendly activities, vendors, and music options.
- Last call for all alcohol, including patio extensions, must be one hour prior to the stated event end time.
- Any headliner performers must end 30 minutes prior to the event end time. Event sound decibels must decrease to wind down the event 30 minutes prior to the event end time.
- Event security and ambassadors must be in place to monitor for potential alcohol consumption by minors, to ensure no outside alcohol is brought into the event space, and to assist with crowd control. This needs to be accounted for on the event site map provided by the event organizer.
- Businesses located within the event footprint must be provided with an event day contact should they experience any concerns or challenges on the day of the event, including attendees entering businesses with open alcohol in hand. This contact information must be included in the event notification letter distributed to impacted businesses and residents.
- A plan outlining the following must be submitted with each Event Package a minimum of 60 days prior to the event:
 - A plan for attendees to dispose of any outside alcohol prior to entering the event (e.g. a dump sink.) This alcohol must be discarded and cannot be stored by the event organizer. Any waste produced must be removed from the event site by the event organizer. Liquid cannot be dumped into drains, portable washrooms, etc.
 - An alcohol distribution plan that outlines where alcohol will be available for purchase, how it will be distributed, and the maximum number of drinks a person may purchase at one time.
 - Details on how wrist bands will be used and distributed. A wrist band system must be in place to ensure access control is limited to those who

- are 19+ years. Any attendee who purchases alcohol from the event must be wearing a wristband.
- Details of the event waste management plan, which is fully managed and serviced by the event organizer, must be in place to dispose of and remove all recyclables that are produced.
- A plan to enable business owners to contact event staff if they have any concerns or challenges on the event day including attendees entering businesses with open alcohol in hand. This contact information must be included in the event notification letter distributed to impacted businesses and residents.
- Any additional City services required to support site-wide licensing must be covered by the event organizer.

Site Plans

- Access to the event must be controlled by multiple entry/exit points that also provide emergency vehicle access. These entry points can provide open access to enter and access the event, but security personnel must be in place to monitor access and to screen for any attendees that may arrive with outside alcohol.
- Any other open access points such as lanes and crossroads must be closed by a high-visibility fence that is a minimum height of 1.0m.
- Additional portable washrooms may need to be supplied by the event organizer.
- If a liquor store is located within the event footprint, the event organizer must post prominent signage in front of, or on, the entry of the business noting that alcohol purchased at the business may not be consumed at the event.
- Businesses may apply for a patio extension, but attendees may not leave patios with alcohol, they would need to be a dine/sit-in customer only.

Engagement

- Outreach to businesses and residents is required during the first 2 years of a site-wide liquor licensed event. Approval in those years is conditional pending review of consultation results.
- The Special Events Office will provide a map that indicates the area where consultation must take place. The organizer must then canvas that area and collect signatures or emails along with any applicable comment/feedback.
- The Organizer must provide a letter for distribution that includes proposed event information, including the site map indicating the entrance/exit points. The Special Events Office will supply a letter template and the letter must be reviewed by the City prior to distribution.
- The results of the business and resident outreach must be validated by either an email or a signature. Email responses should be sent directly to the event organizer as part of the consultation package. Staff will monitor carefully and consider the business feedback, while weighing the community benefit, while also seeking ways to mitigate and improve.

- Event organizers must make efforts to mitigate impacts on businesses such as loading, rescheduling of deliveries if necessary, and other impacts identified by the business owner.
- The completed consultation package must be provided to the City a minimum of 60 days prior to the event date to allow for adequate time for staff review.
- When canvassing strata residential buildings, the Property Manager must be contacted directly for response on behalf of the Strata Corporation.
- Post-event outreach to businesses located within the site area is required for the first 2 years of site-wide liquor licensed events. The form this outreach takes could be a survey or in-person visits and results must be submitted to the Special Events Office.
- Subsequent event related engagement is subject to change based on engagement feedback and LCRB regulations.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will provide information to businesses regarding the new Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program and ask them to contact the Special Events Office at specialevents@newwestcity.ca with any questions and comments.

Guidelines will be reviewed annually and refined as needed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as any additional City services costs will be paid by the event organizer.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from Parks and Recreation, Office of the CAO, Police Services, Fire Services, Engineering Operations, and Engineering -Transportation all contributed to this report.

OPTIONS

1. Council directs staff to implement the Site-Wide Liquor Licensing Program using the proposed guidelines for Special Events.
2. Council directs staff to seek feedback from businesses on the proposed Site-Wide Liquor Licensing for Special Events.
3. Council provide alternate direction.

Staff recommend options #1 & #2.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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