



## Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of April 2, 2026

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** February 20, 2026  
**From:** Kerri Moore, Director of Business & Community Relations  
Curt Kingsley, City Clerk  
**Subject:** Municipal Alcohol Program Final Report

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the City's Strategic Plan (2019–2022), Council identified the development of a Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP) to support a vibrant hospitality sector while addressing emerging conflicts between residential uses and late-night activity. While initial work focused on creation of one policy a detailed analysis, operational experience, and subsequent Council direction have resulted in a shift toward a broader program consisting of a suite of interrelated policies, procedures, guidelines and partnerships.

Since 2020, staff have advanced or completed many of the recommended actions. Key outcomes include streamlining and delegating the liquor licence referral process, continued work to modernize noise management tools, transitioning from a formal Late Night Advisory Committee to more flexible staff-led stakeholder engagement and ongoing support for sexualized violence prevention initiatives within the hospitality sector.

This report provides Council with a consolidated update (see Table 1) on completed and ongoing initiatives. Together, these actions form an integrated municipal framework that supports a vibrant late-night economy while responding to community impacts.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the suite of solutions and policy changes that together form a program, and to describe how the December 2021 Council directions have been addressed.

### BACKGROUND

#### Strategic Plan

Victoria's downtown is a compact urban environment that accommodates residential development alongside restaurants, bars, nightclubs, live music venues and tourism. As the residential population

has grown, particularly in and around the downtown core, expectations of incoming residents have not always aligned with the realities of a regional late-night destination serving approximately 40,000 post-secondary students, a metropolitan population of over 400,000, and a strong visitor economy.

In 2018, these challenges were identified by the Late Night Advisory Committee and reinforced through the Downtown Core Area Plan, which called for strategies to manage and mitigate conflict between residential development and late-night hospitality venues.

Key issues identified included:

- Regulatory and enforcement challenges, particularly in addressing impacts that occur during late-night hours,
- Growth in late-night, alcohol-related activity, contributing to greater impacts in the late-night hours,
- Limitations in the Noise Bylaw related to monitoring and enforcement at night,
- Liquor licence terms and conditions that did not consistently or effectively address local impacts,
- A lack of clear policies and guidelines to inform liquor licence application reviews, and
- Limited proactive land-use and operational planning to mitigate impacts between residential and hospitality uses.

The committee believed that these issues would continue to grow and recommended the development of policies and procedures to ensure that late night hospitality areas would flourish and continue to coexist with residential land uses.

In 2018, Council included in the City's Strategic Plan, specifically to "...develop a municipal alcohol policy to address concerns brought forward by the Late Night Advisory Committee."

### BC Healthy Communities Grant

In 2019, the City received a BC Healthy Communities Grant to develop a MAP focused specifically on municipally owned or managed lands and facilities. As a result, Municipal Property Alcohol Guidelines (Appendix 1) were established in 2020 to guide alcohol use in City parks, facilities, and community spaces. These guidelines align with provincial liquor legislation but are not intended to regulate privately operated hospitality venues.

### Responsible Hospitality Institute

In 2019, to inform and support broader policy development, the City engaged the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) to review Victoria's late night economy. RHI examined existing policies and conducted stakeholder engagement with hospitality venue operators, residents, VicPD, Music Advisory Committee, and a women's focus group. Following, RHI submitted a report (Appendix 2) and subsequently met with staff to present and review the suggested directions.

Based on RHI's report and staff's consideration of approaches, staff provided a report to Council in December 2021 with actions to strengthen policy clarity, licensing processes, noise management, and advisory structures (Appendix 3). As a result, Council directed staff to:

1. Apply the following directions as the basis for developing and implementing a municipal alcohol policy and procedures:

- Develop guidelines for the review and evaluation of liquor licence applications;

- Establish greater clarity and accountability for liquor licence terms of operation;
- Clarify and communicate the liquor licence review process to the community;
- Ensure revision of the Noise Bylaw effectively considers the goals of the Create Victoria Master Plan and late night noise issues;
- Review terms of reference for Late Night Advisory Committee; and
- Streamline the local government referral process.
- That Council reaffirm the inclusion of sexualized violence prevention as part of the mandate of the Municipal Alcohol Policy and the late night program including the Late Night Advisory Committee.

2. Adopt a streamlined approach for the review of LCRB referred liquor licence applications as outlined in Approach 4 of Section 6 of the report, to be implemented as part of the municipal alcohol policy.

3. Direct staff to engage with community stakeholders and report back to Council with a recommended municipal alcohol policy and procedures, and any resource implications associated with implementation.

4. Direct staff to report back at the next quarterly update on the implications of a pilot project for responsible alcohol consumption outdoors informed by the recent experience in other BC municipalities.

Following the staff report, many of the recommended actions are either complete, in progress, or no longer relevant. Instead of a singular MAP, there are a suite of solutions and policy changes which help to form a municipal alcohol program.

## ISSUES & ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Status of December 2021 Recommendations**

<b>2021 Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
<b>1.1 Develop guidelines for the review and evaluation of liquor licence applications</b>	Complete
<b>1.2 Establish greater clarity and accountability for liquor licence terms of operation</b>	Complete
<b>1.3 Clarify and communicate the liquor licence review process to the community</b>	Complete
<b>1.4 Ensure revision of the Noise Bylaw considers Create Victoria Master Plan goals and late night noise issues</b>	In Progress
<b>1.5 Review terms of reference for the Late Night Advisory Committee</b>	Complete
<b>1.6 Streamline the local government liquor licence referral process</b>	Complete
<b>1.7 Reaffirm sexualized violence prevention as part of the Municipal Alcohol Policy and late night program mandate</b>	Complete

<b>2. Adopt a streamlined approach for LCRB preferred liquor licence applications</b>	Complete
<b>3. Engage stakeholders and report back with a recommended municipal alcohol policy and procedures</b>	Complete
<b>4. Report back on implications of a pilot for responsible outdoor alcohol consumption</b>	Complete

### Liquor Licence Applications

In 2025, staff conducted a comprehensive review of the liquor licensing referral process for providing comments on provincial liquor license applications referred to the City. The evaluation concluded that the City’s guidelines were clear and consistently implemented, and that the City’s limited authority and resources for enforcement were relatively minor compared to the province’s regulatory powers. Based on staff recommendations, Council subsequently directed that steps be taken to streamline the referral process by delegating most referrals to staff. This delegation was formally adopted on January 15, 2026, and staff are currently developing administrative procedures to further enhance the efficiency of the referral system.

### Noise Bylaw

Staff are undertaking a review of the Noise Bylaw and considering other noise management tools to addressing impacts related to late-night noise from hospitality and entertainment. The City is currently engaging with relevant stakeholders, which will conclude in February 2026. Staff will bring a report to Council, including the engagement summary, in Spring 2026. This work considers proximity of residential and commercial uses, and mixed use spaces, and will result in staff recommendations about next steps and possible regulatory changes.

### Late Night Advisory Committee

The Late Night Advisory Committee was created in 2010 but was not formally appointed by Council. In 2023, the committee was discontinued. While the formal committee no longer exists, the work continues through regular staff-led engagement with key stakeholders that include but not limited to hospitality operators and industry association, Downtown Residents Association, VicPD, Downtown Victoria Business Association and provincial regulators. This engagement allows staff to address emerging issues, share information and coordinate responses in real time without the administrative requirement of a committee.

### Sexualized Violence Prevention

In 2021, Council reaffirmed the importance of sexualized violence prevention and appointed two Council liaisons to an industry-led working group focused on creating safer hospitality environments. Following that work, in 2022, Council advanced advocacy calling for the integration of sexualized violence prevention training into the provincial Serving it Right curriculum. While curriculum development remains under provincial jurisdiction, the City continues to support local initiatives that promote consent-based culture, training, and safer nightlife practices, such as our partnership with Good Night Out within the OUR DWTN program deliverables.

## Responsible Alcohol Consumption Outdoors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, some British Columbia municipalities temporarily allowed for alcohol consumption outdoors, primarily in public parks. Staff monitored these pilots, but did not pursue a pilot due to timing and indicators that the pandemic was under control, reducing the need for this type of temporary measure.

## Municipal Alcohol Program

British Columbia's definition of a Municipal Alcohol Policy is a local government framework that regulates alcohol use on municipally owned or managed properties, such as recreation centres, parks and community facilities. It sets out where alcohol is permitted or prohibited and the conditions for events, while operating within and not superseding provincial liquor regulations.

## Downtown Core Area Plan

Recognizing that part of Council's initial direction was aimed at supporting a vibrant hospitality sector, it is also worth noting the role of recent and forthcoming land use planning initiatives. The recently adopted Victoria 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP) provides high level policies and directions to maintain a healthy, vibrant and prosperous downtown core. It further provides direction to update the City's Downtown Core Area Plan to ensure economic vitality and vibrancy across multiple sectors, including hospitality and tourism. The scope for this work will be brought forward in the coming months for Council's consideration; it will build upon the work completed to date, as discussed in this report, and will seek opportunities to continue to use the City's land use authorities to support a healthy balance of economic development and community wellbeing.

## **OPTIONS & IMPACTS**

Since 2021, the City has worked on a comprehensive programmatic approach to alcohol management to consider city-wide impacts and alignment with related tools such as the Noise Bylaw and other community standards allowing for modifications and adaptations as needed and at the same time does not supersede provincial liquor regulations.

A regulatory framework for businesses selling alcohol existed prior to this direction. Therefore, staff reviewed regulations, policies, and guidelines to streamline and clarify licensing and enforcement of regulations for businesses serving alcohol under a provincial license.

Staff have work underway and will consider as an ongoing basis initiatives or other ways to mitigate alcohol-related impacts from the hospitality and entertainment sector.

### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

Hospitality accessibility requirements are addressed primarily through the BC Building Code, Business Licence Bylaw, and related regulations. No new accessibility impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

### *2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan*

- Activate street, sidewalks, patios and public spaces and support business initiatives and ideas.

- Streamline permitting and development processes to support small businesses and to reduce costs.

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

There are no impacts to the Financial Plan.

### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

#### 9.1. Local and Regional Economic Development

- 9.1.1. Build on Victoria’s Economic Strengths - encourage local business development throughout the community
- 9.1.9. Ensure Efficient, Supportive City Involvement in Business Development - Periodically review and consider tools and levers available to the City to enable and support new local business development, business improvements and entrepreneurship, including property tax rates, tax incentives, charges, fees, grants and resources.

#### 9.3. Arts and Culture

- 9.3.7. Animate and Program Public Spaces - Encouraging and supporting festivals, celebrations and special events in diverse public spaces throughout the city, including those led by the City, the community, non-profit organizations and private entities.

### *Community Safety and Wellbeing Impact*

4.1 Downtown – encourage people to spend time downtown, particularly in the evenings through the OUR DWTN program and by supporting patios, late-night businesses, and a safe and abundant transportation network.

6.1 Commerce – Audit city business and permit approval processes to address redundancies and improve the experience of people seeking, or applying for, permits.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This report outlines the work completed and ongoing for solutions and policy changes towards a program to improving planning, management and overall outcomes for a vibrant and safe hospitality sector, while addressing emerging issues between residential use and hospitality venues.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerri Moore  
Director of Business & Community Relations

Curt Kingsley  
City Clerk

**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.**

### **List of Attachments**

- Appendix 1 – Municipal Property Alcohol Guidelines
- Appendix 2 – Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) Report
- Appendix 3 – Municipal Alcohol Policy Report – COTW Dec. 2021