



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: May 25, 2023

From: Todd Gross
Director, Parks Services

File: 11-7200-20-01/2023-
Vol 01

Mark Corrado
Director, Community Bylaws and Licensing

Re: **Pilot Project for the Consumption of Alcohol in Public Parks**

Staff Recommendation

That a Bylaw be drafted to permit the implementation of a Pilot Project for the consumption of liquor in designated areas in a limited number of City of Richmond parks as detailed in the report "Pilot Project For the Consumption of Alcohol in Public Parks," dated May 25, 2023, from the Directors of Parks Services and Community Bylaws.

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Att. 7

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Safety Administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
RCMP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Engineering Public Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

A number of municipalities in Metro Vancouver have implemented initiatives to permit the consumption of liquor in public spaces to provide park users with enhanced opportunities to socialize, recreate and relax with friends and family. While some municipalities provide the opportunity to consume alcohol in a variety of designated areas throughout their respective open public space system, others have restricted it to limited parks. In both models, a pilot project was usually initiated prior to permanent or full scale program implementation.

Staff received the following referral arising from discussion at the May 9, 2023, Community Safety Committee:

That staff explore how the City can move forward this summer on a pilot project for the consumption of alcohol beverages in City parks similar to what other Municipalities in the region have in place, and report back to General Purposes Committee.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #3 A Safe and Prepared Community:

Community safety and preparedness through effective planning, strategic partnerships and proactive programs.

3.4 Ensure civic infrastructure, assets and resources are effectively maintained and continue to meet the needs of the community as it grows.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.

6.3 Foster intercultural harmony, community belonging, and social connections.

Findings of Fact

Background

Over the past three years, parks and open spaces have seen an increase in the number of visitors due to the need for recreation, exercise, connectivity and socialization. Additionally, increasingly warmer summer weather has increased outdoor resident activity, particularly, in higher density areas where access to privately owned green space is limited.

Liquor Control and Licensing Act and Regulation

The Province's Liquor Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) is the lead agency regulating alcohol consumption, sales and licensing of liquor primary and food establishments. However, municipalities play a key role in the issuance of liquor primary licenses and more recently in regulating the consumption of alcohol on City properties such as park spaces. The Province amended the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* in June 2021 enabling municipalities to designate public places where alcohol consumption is permitted. The *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, Section 73 and the *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulations*, Section 197, allow municipalities to designate, by Bylaw, a public space or a portion of it where alcohol can be consumed. Under the current Provincial legislation, the City would be required to implement a bylaw to regulate the public consumption of alcohol in the City of Richmond, either for a pilot project or a fully implemented program.

Regional Precedents

Since 2021, 12 of the 23 Metro Vancouver jurisdictions have implemented alcohol consumption in public spaces pilot projects or permanent programs. A detailed chart of these municipalities are included as Attachment 1.

Of the five largest municipalities (aside from Richmond), three have designated public places where alcohol consumption is permitted.

	Municipality	Pop.	Program Type	No. of Public Places
1	Vancouver	662,248	Pilot and Permanent	54
2	Surrey	568,322	None	0
3	Burnaby	249,125	Pilot	TBD
4	Coquitlam	148,625	Pilot	57
5	Langley (Township)	132,603	None	0

Over the past two years, the apparent success of these programs has been such that a few municipalities have added additional sites or transitioned pilot projects to permanent ones. While participating municipalities have mostly experienced positive outcomes, many experienced an increase in waste management maintenance responsibilities. Port Moody, which is still in the pilot phase, has removed one site from the program due to issues with sand clean-up related to broken glass and the proximity of its swimming area.

Pilot Project Guidelines

Piloting this initiative in a limited number of parks throughout the City would be considered an initial first step prior to a potential full implementation, pending a pilot project review. The following are proposed pilot guidelines:

- **Form:** The open consumption of alcohol would be permitted in designated areas within public parks. A balance will need to be struck between providing alcohol partakers adequate space with amenities close by and ensuring that other park uses are not negatively impacted.

- Duration: The proposed duration of the pilot project would be approximately two to three months, beginning July and ending September 30, 2023. Consistent with other municipalities that have implemented similar programs, staff propose that the consumption of alcohol be permitted between 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., seven days a week.
- Site Selection: A limited number of locations throughout the City will be selected for the pilot project based on multiple criteria, including but not limited to:
 - a. Geographic Location: Locate and pilot at limited sites throughout the City in neighbourhoods representative of various densities and park uses;
 - b. Minimize Impacts to Other Park and Park-Adjacent Uses: Locate away from school grounds and active play areas;
 - c. Proximity to Publicly Accessible Washrooms: Either within the park or nearby at a public facility;
 - d. Proximity to Food and Beverage Businesses: Either within the park itself or nearby;
 - e. Proximity to Multi-Family Housing: There is greater need for public greenspace for local residents with limited access to private outdoor spaces;
 - f. Accessibility of Transit: Ease of access to designated pilot project sites, and to provide alternative means of safe transportation;
 - g. Walkability: Ease of access to designated pilot project sites and to provide alternative means of safe transportation;
 - h. Visible, Non-Remote Locations: Promote prosocial activities and provide safe access for bylaw enforcement personnel, staff, and maintenance vehicles for waste and recyclable materials management; and
 - i. Park Amenities: Provide a mix of soft and hard landscapes, picnic tables, benches, waste and recycling receptacles, and shelters.
- Potential Impacts to Youth: To minimize the risk of adverse role-modelling, alcohol consumption should be avoided within the vicinity where youth and children typically congregate, such as playgrounds, spray parks, and athletic facilities such as baseball diamonds, sports fields, and extreme sports parks (e.g., skate or bike parks). Staff propose that a minimum prohibitive buffer of approximately ten metres (33 feet) be established around the aforementioned amenities.

Monitoring and Enforcement

In all municipalities that have passed bylaws to allow for the consumption of alcohol in public spaces, the authority to enforce these bylaws has been shared by both local police (RCMP) department and the Bylaw department. Police play the sole role in the enforcement of *Criminal Code* offences associated with alcohol.

Staff conducted a preliminary scan of jurisdictions with bylaws regulating alcohol in public spaces and determined that a majority of municipalities have bylaw enforcement ticketing provisions regarding the consumption of alcohol in a non-designated area. These tickets could be issued both by police and bylaw staff.

The majority of jurisdictions utilized a call response model involving both police and bylaw staff to address public complaints. Only a minority of jurisdictions engaged a limited number of proactive patrols during peak summer months. Most jurisdictions did not report a substantial increase in alcohol or park related bylaw calls for service. Typically, founded calls for service involved individuals drinking in a non-designated area. Unfounded calls for service usually involved a member of the public who was unaware of the new bylaw. The resolution of these unfounded calls frequently occurred at the call-intake phase where staff took the opportunity to explain the new bylaw provisions. The potential risk of unfounded calls was viewed as being mitigated by a strong public awareness and education campaign.

Should the City introduce alcohol consumption in parks, it is recommended that ticketing provisions be established to, specifically, prohibit the consumption of alcohol outside of designated areas. Moreover, it is recommended that the City continue its current stepped approach to bylaws enforcement: proactive education, warnings, tickets, and court action. More serious incidents regarding public intoxication and impaired driving will continue to be enforced through the *Criminal Code*, as well as the consumption of alcohol by minors under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*.

Next Steps

Implement a Pilot Project

Should Council direct staff to proceed with a pilot project to permit the consumption of alcohol in public parks, staff recommend the following incremental implementation process:

1. Bring forward a bylaw to permit the implementation of a pilot project this summer. A bylaw could be prepared for Council's consideration at the next Council Meeting;
2. Implement a pilot project in designated areas in five City parks;
3. Conduct public consultation (during and after the pilot project) to gather feedback from residents; and
4. Report back to Council on the results of the public consultation process, feedback on the pilot project and recommendations for next steps.

Proposed Pilot Project Locations

Based on the pilot project and, monitoring and enforcement guidelines, staff are recommending that the pilot project designated zones be established at five parks throughout the City (Attachment 2). Additional detailed location maps can be viewed in Attachments 3 to 7.

1. Garry Point Park

This site meets several key site selection criteria including park amenities such as publicly accessible washrooms, picnic tables and benches, and proximity to public transit and local businesses. As a popular regional tourist destination, utilizing this park as a pilot site will provide staff with key project evaluation opportunities due to its high profile and activity rate, and broad user base. See Attachment 3 for the Garry Point Park Pilot Project Location Map.

2. Aberdeen Neighbourhood Park

This park is located in the heart of the City Centre, close to public transit and central to nearby high-density residential areas. Additionally, with the recent completion of Phase 2 of the park, amenities such as sitting areas, picnic tables, a washroom, the Zhengzhou Exchange Garden and covered pavilion support this site as a highly urban and programmed park. See Attachment 4 for the Aberdeen Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map.

3. Minoru Park

While a significant portion of the park does not meet the site selection criteria due to incompatible uses such as sports fields and playgrounds, the proposed pilot project location in the northern section of the park meets several key site selection criteria. With the Minoru Lakes renewal project nearing completion, the widespread passive recreational areas make the Lakes area an appealing location as a pilot site. See Attachment 5 for the Minoru Park Pilot Project Location Map.

4. King George/Cambie Community Park

Although the park features a children's play area and spray park, the large and popular picnic area at the west end of the park, where residents regularly gather for events, along with nearby public washroom facilities, make this park an appropriate pilot site. See Attachment 6 for the King George/Cambie Community Park Pilot Project Location Map.

5. McLean Neighbourhood Park

This park is central to the Hamilton neighbourhood, and features numerous seating opportunities, lawn areas, and shade trees that provide ample recreation space for residents to enjoy. A pilot site in the passive recreational areas of the park would give the residents of Hamilton the opportunity to participate and provide their feedback on the pilot project. See Attachment 7 for the McLean Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map.

It should be noted that alcohol sales are not proposed to be a component of this pilot project. Alcohol will not be available for purchase in any park space connected with this project. Residents will need to purchase alcohol through licensed alcohol distributors and bring it to the park space.

Signage and Awareness

The effectiveness of the pilot project is contingent on an effective implementation and administration plan throughout the project's duration. Staff propose that signage be installed at

each of the proposed pilot sites informing park users of the pilot project itself, the location of the permitted alcohol consumption zones (depicted on a reduced scale map of the respective park), and contact information should residents have any questions, comments or concerns. Signage which is a requirement pursuant to the legislation, would be posted at entry points to the park, as well as key locations at the approximate boundaries of the permitted consumption zones. While the permitted consumption zones will not be physically delineated on the ground, site signage will provide residents the necessary information to locate the zones.

Although other municipalities have applied prohibited buffer zones that vary from five metres (16 feet) to 20 metres (66 feet) around amenities where kids and youth congregate as well as ecologically-sensitive areas, staff recommend that a ten metre (33 feet) prohibitive buffer be utilized around playgrounds, water play features and active recreation areas (e.g., sports fields and baseball diamonds) in consideration of the restricted conditions at several proposed pilot sites such as King George/Cambie Community Park and McLean Neighbourhood Park.

Public Consultation

Staff will engage with residents through a number of means including the City's Let's Talk Richmond platform and direct staff-resident dialogue at pilot project locations for the duration of the project. Having an open line for feedback and communication with residents will allow staff to be responsive to operational needs, enforcement issues, requests for services and overall project feedback.

Post Project Completion Public Consultation, Program Evaluation and Report Back to Council

Upon completion of the pilot project on September 30, 2023, staff will launch a Let's Talk Richmond survey requesting stakeholder feedback. While a specific feedback survey has not yet been developed, questions posed will attempt to garner feedback on the frequency and level of participation by residents, any positive or negative experiences as a result of the pilot project and the general level of support for expanding (or reducing) the pilot program to a permanent City-wide program or restricting it to only key locations. Additionally, staff propose that the survey should include an opportunity for residents to provide general feedback.

Staff will compile the results of the post-project survey, feedback received during the pilot project's operation and staff service requests including calls for bylaw enforcement and maintenance concerns. Staff will also evaluate operational service impacts to, for example, staffing areas involving Community Safety, RCMP, Parks and Environmental Services. Findings will be summarized in a Report to Council in Q4, 2023, or early Q1, 2024. The report will provide Council options for consideration to expand, reduce or conclude the program on a permanent basis.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

As our community densifies, residents are using public spaces for activities previously reserved for private outdoor spaces such as backyards, patios or decks. Just as residents responsibly enjoy an alcoholic beverage on private property while partaking in these pro-social activities, providing residents the same opportunity to do so in public parks is a potential initiative for the City to consider through a pilot project in a restricted number of parks.

Should Council direct staff to proceed with a pilot project to permit the consumption of alcohol in public parks, staff will bring forward a bylaw to permit the implementation of the proposed pilot project for designated areas in five parks, located throughout the City. Implementing this project on a pilot basis will provide both the City and residents time to evaluate whether such a program is suitable to become a normal practice in City parks, consistent with other municipalities in the region where similar programs have been successfully implemented.



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- Att. 1: Metro Vancouver Jurisdictions with Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Programs
- 2: City-Wide Pilot Project Location Map
- 3: Garry Point Park Pilot Project Location Map
- 4: Aberdeen Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map
- 5: Minoru Park Pilot Project Location Map
- 6: King George/Cambie Community Park Pilot Project Location Map
- 7: McLean Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map

Metro Vancouver Jurisdictions with Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Programs

Attachment 1

Municipality Population	Program Type No. of Public Places	Permitted Hours	Prohibited Areas	Public Consultation
1. Vancouver 662,248 pop.	Pilot (summer only) 7 beaches Permanent (summer only) 10 parks Permanent (year-round) 31 parks	11:00 am to 9:00 pm Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgrounds or schools (+ 20 m. buffer zone) • Pools or water parks (+ 5 m. buffer zone) • Beaches (except those in pilot) • Ponds, lakes or docks • Sport fields and courts • Skate parks • Fitness amenities • Pitch & putt golf courses • Ecologically sensitive natural areas (+ 20 m. buffer zone) • Garden or horticultural display areas • Off-leash dog areas • Community centres • Seawall • Fieldhouses • Building entrances • Washrooms • Parking lots • Roadways • During recreational programs or special events (temporarily) <p><i>Alcohol contained in glass bottles or containers are also prohibited due to the risk of broken glass.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys

Metro Vancouver Jurisdictions with Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Programs

Attachment 1

	Municipality Population	Program Type No. of Public Places	Permitted Hours	Prohibited Areas	Public Consultation
2.	Coquitlam 148,625 pop.	Pilot (year-round) 56 parks	Dawn to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds Pools and wading pool grounds Indoor park areas School District No. 43 lands 	N/A
3.	Langley (City) 28,963 pop.	Permanent (summer/fall only) 3 parks	11:00 am to 8:00 pm <i>Thursday to Saturday</i> 11:00 am to 6:00 pm <i>Sunday</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds Pools and spray parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys
4.	North Vancouver (District) 88,168 pop.	Permanent (year-round) 14 parks	11:00 am to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds (+ 10 m. buffer zone) Sport courts and skate bowls (+ 10 m. buffer zone) Playing fields (during games or events) Artificial turf fields (at any time) Trails, pathways, natural parklands and forested areas Wharves or boat launches Buildings, structures, or other installations Vehicles 	N/A
5.	New Westminster 78,916 pop.	Permanent (year-round) 7 parks	11:00 am to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds Pools Off-leash dog areas Indoor park areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Heard New West website Surveys Poll Mapping tool

Metro Vancouver Jurisdictions with Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Programs

Attachment 1

Municipality Population	Program Type No. of Public Places	Permitted Hours	Prohibited Areas	Public Consultation
6. Port Coquitlam 61,498 pop.	Permanent (year-round) 10 parks	Dawn to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds (+ 10 m. buffer zone) School District No. 43 lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's Talk PoCo website Surveys
7. North Vancouver (City) 58,120 pop.	Permanent (year-round) 7 parks	11:00 am to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds or childcare areas (+ 20 m. buffer zone) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web-based submissions
8. West Vancouver 44,122 pop.	Pilot (year-round) 3 parks Permanent (year-round) 1 park	12:00 pm to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds Piers 	N/A
9. Port Moody 33,535 pop.	Pilot (year-round) 5 parks* * Neighbourhood parks were not considered due to insufficient time for public consultation.	11:00 am to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds (+10 m. buffer zone) Skateboard parks (+ 10 m. buffer zone) Spray parks (+ 10 m. buffer zone) Trails Labyrinth Healing Garden Sidewalks School District No. 43 lands 	To be conducted at end of pilot program (December 31, 2023).
10. Delta 108,455 pop. Ladner 23,016 pop. Tsawwassen (First Nation) 2,256 pop.	Permanent (summer/early fall only) 3 parks	11:00 am to dusk Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's Talk Delta website


City-Wide Pilot Project Location Map



Garry Point Park Pilot Project Location Map



GP - 75

North 

Aberdeen Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map



Note:
Boundary of proposed Alcohol Consumption Permitted Zone is provided for illustrative purposes and subject to change upon implementation.



Minoru Park Pilot Project Location Map

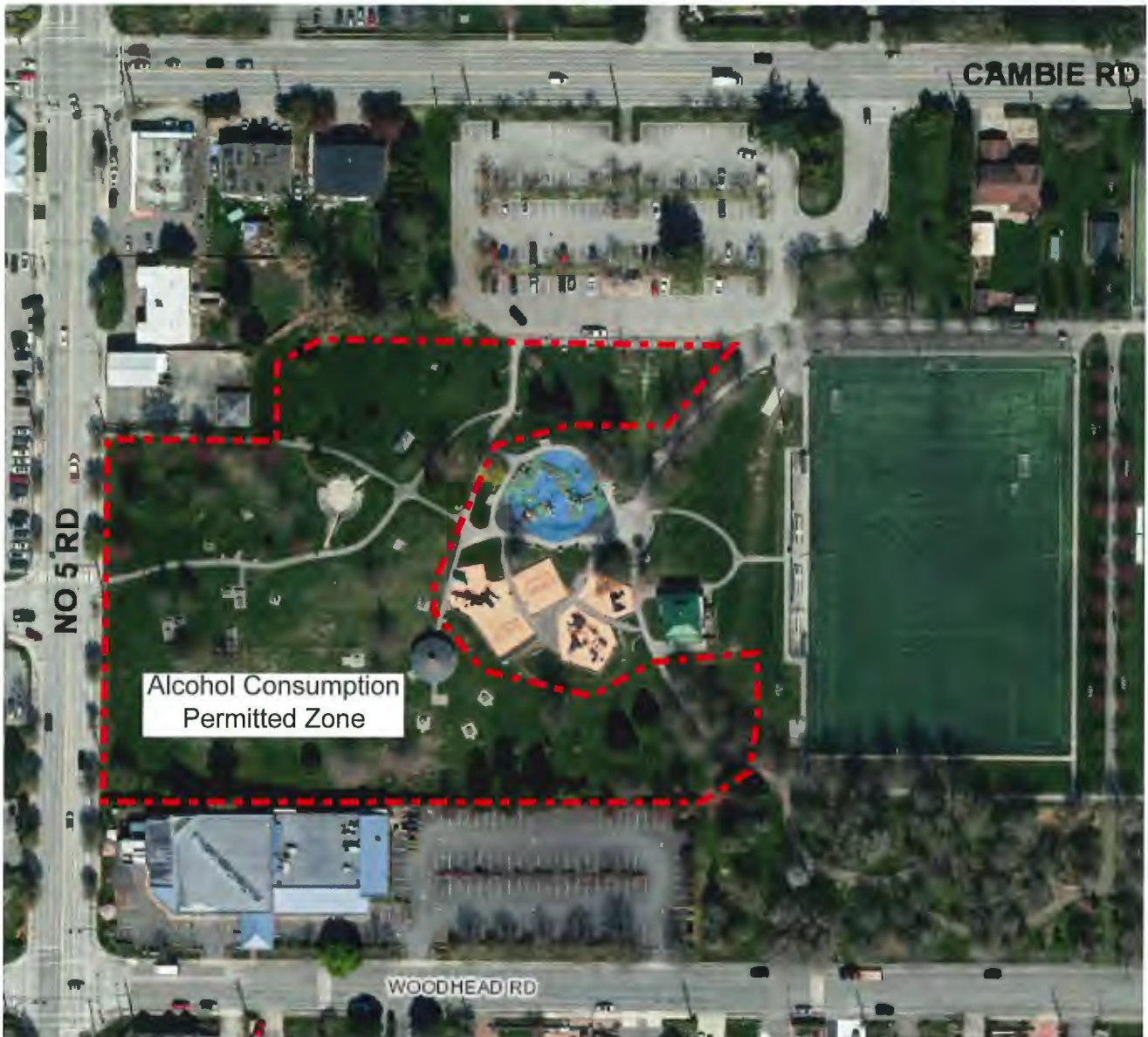


Alcohol Consumption Permitted Zone

Note:
Boundary of proposed Alcohol Consumption Permitted Zone is provided for illustrative purposes and subject to change upon implementation.



King George/Cambie Community Park Pilot Project Location Map



Note:
Boundary of proposed Alcohol Consumption Permitted Zone is provided for illustrative purposes and subject to change upon implementation.



McLean Neighbourhood Park Pilot Project Location Map



Note:
Boundary of proposed Alcohol Consumption Permitted Zone is provided for illustrative purposes and subject to change upon implementation.

