



## Report to Council

### From the Office of Councillor Meghan Lahti

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Date: June 26, 2022  
Subject: Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places

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#### Purpose

To provide direction to staff to bring forward a bylaw that allows for the responsible consumption of liquor in public places.

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#### Recommendation

**THAT staff report back with a proposed bylaw for a pilot project that allows for the responsible consumption of alcohol in public parks;**  
**AND THAT this bylaw be limited to city parks, and not include any SD43 joint parks;**  
**AND THAT there be a 'no-go' zone established of 10 meters from playground equipment;**  
**AND THAT staff implement this bylaw for summer 2022 and report back in June 2023 regarding impacts, and recommendations for any potential amendments.**

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#### Background

In 2018 the City of Vancouver Parks Board directed staff to develop a feasibility study for a pilot to allow the consumption of alcohol in public parks. This program has expanded and there has been little to no negative impacts. Since then both Port Coquitlam (2020) and Coquitlam (2022) have established bylaws to allow for the responsible consumption of alcohol in public places. Port Coquitlam started with a three year pilot program and limited the number of parks where this activity could take place, starting with seven parks and subsequently adding another three. There is a strict 'no-go' boundary around children's playgrounds as well. Coquitlam's approach was much more broad spread, and is not on a pilot project basis. In Coquitlam all public parks and spaces are included, with the exception of property that is owned and or jointly operated by the school district, as SD43 has indicated that they are not in support of this program on school property.

Section 73 of the BC Liquor Control and Licensing Act and section 197 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation allow municipalities, through bylaw, to designate a public place or part of a public place as a place where liquor can be consumed.

## Discussion

In 2020, the pandemic led many municipalities to look at ways to allow residents to gather and socialize safely when indoor gatherings were restricted. One way municipalities adapted was to allow people to consume liquor in parks.

There have been a variety of approaches among municipalities including:

- Allowing liquor consumption in selected parks throughout their communities, commonly selected were spaces that included amenities such as washrooms and seating areas;
- Designating specific areas in the selected parks and restricted liquor consumption to certain hours; and
- Preventing liquor consumption close to playgrounds or other amenities that are primarily used by children and youth.

After completion of these pilot projects municipalities amended, or are in the process of amending, their bylaws to allow liquor consumption in select parks on a permanent basis after making any necessary adjustments to their initial pilot rules. Some municipalities are further expanding their program to include more parks. Port Moody can benefit greatly from the experiences of other municipalities in order to implement our own program to mitigate some of the challenges encountered by neighbouring communities.

Research from reviewing reports from Vancouver, Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam has shown the following:

- generally residents were in favor of continuing and expanding the programs where they have been established;
- in some instances residents expressed feelings that personal safety had decreased at certain sites where behaviors violated park or pilot rules;
- concerns were also raised relating to litter, waste and recycling;
- the potential for an increased need for on-site monitoring and bylaw enforcement to respond to unpermitted large gatherings or private events;

In reviewing all the information and understanding from other municipalities, and in consideration of allowing for the implementation of a bylaw for summer 2022, it is recommended that Port Moody develop a policy that would allow for a pilot project to take place.

Public spaces play an important role in the physical and mental health of community members. Responsible consumption of liquor in parks is one way many municipalities have responded to the growing demand for residents to gather and socialize in outdoor public spaces. The outcomes of these changes in other municipalities have been positive and well-received by residents and local businesses.

## Other Option

Not direct staff to develop a policy to allow for the responsible consumption of alcohol in parks.

## Financial Implications

Pursuant to section 73 (2) of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act, signs must be posted setting out the boundaries and hours during which liquor may be consumed. There will be a one-time cost for this signage. In addition, the potential increased costs related to cleaning and litter removal will need to be tracked, monitored, and budgeted for 2023.

## Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

The implementation of this bylaw will need to be communicated and a follow up community consultation will be conducted in 2023, to determine if the pilot project will continue or if any amendments are required.

## Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Providing for this opportunity meets our objectives in many areas of the strategic plan including customer service, healthy city, community evolution.