



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: April 23, 2024

Submitted by: Acting General Manager of Community Services

Subject: Responsible Liquor Consumption in Public Places Pilot Program – Next Steps

Purpose

To seek Council direction on next steps for responsible liquor consumption in public places.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT staff be directed to implement a permanent program to allow for the responsible consumption of liquor in identified public places as recommended in the report dated April 23, 2024, from the Acting General Manager of Community Services regarding Responsible Liquor Consumption in Public Places Pilot Program – Next Steps;

AND THAT staff report back at the next Regular Council meeting with a new draft Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Bylaw for consideration of first three readings.

Background

Public parks and spaces play a critical role in the mental and physical wellness of the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in the use of the Port Moody parks system as the community sought activity through outdoor spaces. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, parks continued to be popular as they provide a safe environment for the community to reconnect and engage socially. Some Metro Vancouver municipalities have in recent years introduced bylaws allowing for the responsible consumption of liquor in parks; their experience has been reported to be generally positive and supported by residents and local businesses.

At the Council meeting held on June 28, 2022, Council passed the following resolution directing staff to report back on the potential implementation of a pilot program for responsible liquor consumption in public places:

RC22/217-220

THAT staff report back with a proposed bylaw for a pilot project that allows for the responsible consumption of alcohol in public spaces;

AND THAT this bylaw not include any School District No. 43 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 January 2023 regarding impacts, and recommendations for any potential amendments;

AND THAT staff report back with options for discreet consumption of alcohol.

Staff reported back with a bylaw for Council consideration at the Council meeting held on July 26, 2022; the following resolution was passed:

RC22/261

THAT City of Port Moody Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Bylaw, 2022, No. 3375 be read a first, second, and third time as recommended in the report dated July 13, 2022, from the Community Services Department regarding Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places;

AND THAT staff be directed to implement a pilot program to allow for the responsible consumption of liquor in public places commencing upon adoption of Bylaw No. 3375;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back in January 2023 with an evaluation of the pilot program and recommended next steps.

Bylaw No. 3375 was adopted at a Special Council meeting held on July 28, 2022. The Bylaw included an expiry date of April 30, 2023.

At the Regular Council meeting held on February 28, 2023, staff proposed an extension to the pilot program until the end of December 2023 to better assess the pilot program and to conduct public engagement (**Attachment 1**) over the summer months. The following resolution was passed:

RC23/036

THAT City of Port Moody Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Bylaw, 2023, No. 3392 be read a first, second, and third time as recommended in the report dated February 15, 2023, from the Community Services Department regarding Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Places;

AND THAT staff be directed to implement an extended pilot program to allow for the responsible consumption of liquor in public places commencing upon adoption of Bylaw No. 3392;

AND THAT an allocation of \$36,500 for Parks Division maintenance support and signage requirements for the pilot program extension be funded from CM220001 – Council Strategic Plan Goals;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back in late 2023 with an evaluation of the pilot program and to seek Council direction on next steps.

Bylaw No. 3392 was adopted at the Regular Council meeting held on March 14, 2023, with a program expiry date of December 31, 2023 (**Attachment 2**). Council endorsed the public engagement approach at the June 13, 2023, Regular Council (**Attachment 3**).

Discussion

For the 2022 pilot program, the following public places were approved for responsible consumption of liquor from 11am to dusk:

- Rocky Point Park;
- Old Orchard Park;
- Pioneer Memorial Park (excluding the Labyrinth Healing Garden);
- Kyle Centre pop-up park;
- Trasolini Field spectator stands;
- Inlet Field spectator stands; and
- Queens Street Plaza.

These sites provided a range of geographic locations across the City, and proximity to washrooms was a key consideration. Neighbourhood parks were not recommended, particularly because the tight timeline did not allow for resident engagement. The pilot program also excluded property owned, leased, or licensed to the City by School District No. 43. Based on legal advice and input from the Port Moody Police Department (PMPD), permitting liquor in all public spaces, such as sidewalks and trails, was not considered. Schedule A of the Bylaw included maps that outlined the permitted spaces in the above sites within which responsible consumption of liquor could occur. A 10m buffer zone was provided around children's play areas, except for Old Orchard Beach due to the inclusion of the picnic shelter area. New signage was installed at each of the sites showing the boundaries of the permitted spaces and the hours that liquor could be consumed. The pilot program began in early August 2022.

Given that the pilot program ran over the late summer months of 2022 – a relatively limited timeframe for conducive weather – in early 2023 staff recommended that the pilot program be extended through the end of 2023. This was to provide for a full summer season in these spaces (including in conjunction with major events taking place in Rocky Point Park), to allow staff more time to evaluate the program and gather data, and to allow engagement with park users and other stakeholders, including local businesses over the high usage summer months. Staff later developed a public engagement plan prior to the intended summer engagement.

For the duration of the extended pilot in 2023, two locations were removed:

- Old Orchard Park beach area, while still allowing consumption within the remainder of the park area previously identified. This was to remove any concerns about alcohol in a swimming beach area and address challenges related to cleaning up beach sand with respect to broken glass.
- Inlet Field spectator stands, as the park is closed with no public access while under construction.

As feedback on the early implementation stage of the pilot, PMPD and Bylaws staff recommended additional signage in some locations, including to provide greater clarity on boundaries. As part of the pilot extension, additional resources were approved for new signage (put in place spring 2023), along with parks maintenance support for litter removal and recycling through to the end of 2023.

Staff met with Fraser Health to review indicators and considerations for how best to evaluate alcohol consumption in public places, for example, a suggestion to engage with park users as well as those who may have avoided these spaces as a result. This feedback was integrated into the public engagement process.

Council endorsed the extension of the pilot program to December 31, 2023. As before, the Bylaw provided definitions of key terms, the Liquor Control and Licensing Act and Regulations, details on the permitted public spaces, and the posted notice requirements. The Bylaw was in accordance with section 73 of British Columbia's *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and section 197 of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*.

Public Engagement and Results

The public engagement approach that was approved in June 2023 sought feedback from key audiences on their experiences in the outdoor spaces included in the pilot program, how these experiences might influence their future use of the park spaces, the range of spaces included in the pilot program, and suggestions for changes.

Public engagement was conducted from July 5 to September 5, 2023, using a survey and mapping tool on Engage Port Moody, the City's online public engagement hub. The engagement opportunity was promoted using the following tactics: media release, eNewsletter, digital billboard, Newport digital sign, galleria TVs, social media, newspaper ad, email invitation to the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG), and on-site signage.

Detailed results of the public engagement are included in the attached Public Engagement Summary (**Attachment 4**). Key findings are as follows:

- Most respondents who visited locations where public consumption of alcohol was permitted reported having generally positive experiences, ranging from 68% positive at Queens Street Plaza to 80% positive at Rocky Point Park; no more than 10% reported having a generally negative experience at any of the locations.
- Most (74%) respondents do not think any areas need to be removed from the Bylaw. Of the 17% who would like to remove an area from the Bylaw, there was no single area that generated the most concern – requests to remove areas were distributed fairly evenly across all six pilot locations.
- Respondents are divided on whether they think more outdoor public places should be included in the Bylaw.
- Rocky Point Park received the most reports of visits because the pilot was in effect (64%) and the most reports of avoidances (10%) due to the pilot. The most common reasons reported for avoiding one or more location(s) include:
 - assumed or experienced disruptive behaviour and irresponsible drinking;
 - concerns about kids seeing or being around people who are drinking; and

- waste management (littering, garbage over capacity, or broken glass).
- When asked to provide general comments or recommendations for staff or Council in their consideration of whether to make the pilot project permanent, the most common themes mentioned were:
 - expressions of support for making the pilot project permanent (mentions in 58% of comments);
 - litter, waste pickup, or a need for improved recycling availability (mentions in 17% of comments);
 - increasing Bylaws or Police enforcement (mentions in 16% of comments); and
 - expressions of opposition to making the pilot project permanent (mentions in 16% of comments).

Staff also directly reached out to obtain input from stakeholder groups. Input from PMPD, City Bylaw Enforcement staff, and Fraser Health is included in the Summary and Results section below.

At the Parks and Environment Committee meeting held on March 18, 2024, staff gave a presentation on the pilot program and summary of public engagement results. In general, committee members shared some positive experiences. There were concerns about the need for additional Bylaw enforcement support, management of garbage in the parks, and drinking in parks that were excluded from the program similar to the feedback received from the public engagement. The committee also expressed concerns about an increase in smoking associated with the consumption of alcohol and that signage needed to be clear that smoking is not allowed in parks.

Targeted engagement also included 32 local businesses that were identified to be near the designated alcohol consumption sites. Businesses were asked to comment on effects, positive or negative, of the pilot program; whether they thought changes were needed to the areas included in the Bylaw; and if they had any additional comments for staff or Council. One business responded that they did not notice any impacts on their business and expressed support for making the pilot permanent.

Pilot Program Summary and Results

Early in the implementation, staff refined an existing Collector App to track impacts and integrate observation notes and photos. One of the primary impacts from the pilot program was a notable increase in park maintenance efforts related to litter, which was consistent with findings from other cities. While the program allowed consumption until dusk, staff also observed that park users stayed beyond this time, leading to more frequent early morning cleanups. Beyond the waste impact, Parks noted no other major issues or concerns for the duration of the pilot program.

The normal enforcement tools available to Police and Bylaws were utilized to deal with any infractions related to liquor consumption. From July 27, 2022, to December 31, 2023, PMPD had a total of 10 calls related to the public spaces where the consumption of alcohol was permitted. No tickets were issued by the City's Bylaw Division for any alcohol-related violations in the Parks during the pilot. The Park Ranger – Bylaw Enforcement Officer (which is different from the Park Host Program) did note a marked increase in the number of inquiries from park

patrons about the new program, and where and when individuals were permitted to consume alcohol in City Parks. As a result, staff mostly provided education and clarification. Besides these questions seeking clarification or more information on the program, Bylaw Enforcement staff did not see any other increase in the number of calls for service in the parks, or any increases in alcohol-related issues within the parks themselves.

Pilot Program – Proposed Next Steps

Staff have reviewed all the pilot program impacts and results of the public engagement. Evaluation and discussion have taken place with Bylaws and PMPD, as well as with Fraser Health who commended the City on the extension of the pilot program and undertaking the public engagement process. Overall, the recommendations from Fraser Health were that, should the pilot program be made permanent, the City should consider prohibiting consumption near water and maintain the 10m boundary from the healing garden in Pioneer Park, and that signage and boundaries remain very clear. They noted that alcohol-free parks and public places remain very important and suggested potential health messaging for signage.

The current bylaw lapsed on December 31, 2023. With the coming summer months, staff are seeking Council direction on next steps for responsible liquor consumption in public places. Staff recommend that the pilot program be made permanent, in the existing locations provided for in Bylaw No. 3392, with one exception: remove the spectator stands at Inlet Field given that the new Fieldhouse is anticipated to provide for inside alcohol consumption (e.g., through facility rentals) and thus will allow for better waste management. The spectator stands at Trasolini Field are proposed to remain as an allowable public space. No additional parks are recommended to be added to the allowed public places, as public feedback did not strongly identify any locations. Staff do not recommend that liquor consumption be allowed in all City parks, nor that boundaries be eliminated in parks where consumption is allowed. This is to support enforcement by Bylaws and effective waste management efforts, and to align with recommendations from Fraser Health.

In terms of the primary impact of waste in Parks, a request for additional parks maintenance support was included in the 2024 budget but not approved as an additional service. Staff propose to evaluate the park maintenance service levels in 2024 to determine if additional recommendations for funding are required for 2025 operating budget.

It should be noted that staff are currently advancing a Zero Waste Plan for Parks, Facilities, and Events with approved capital funding and pursuant to the Climate Action plan implementation, which will assess opportunities around waste and recycling in parks although the need for additional maintenance resources is expected to continue with the high visitor volumes in parks. This Plan will be presented for Council consideration later in 2024.

Should the program be made permanent, staff will conduct an audit of each location to determine an implementation plan for permanent aluminum signage in coordination with a review of no smoking signage.

Other Option(s)

1. THAT staff report back with additional information or Bylaw amendments as directed by Council.
2. THAT the report dated April 23, 2024, from the Acting General Manager of Community Services regarding Responsible Liquor Consumption in Public places – Next Steps be received for information.

Financial Implications

In terms of the primary impact of waste in Parks, a request for additional parks maintenance support was included in the 2024 budget but not approved as an additional service. Staff propose to evaluate the park maintenance service levels in 2024 to determine if additional recommendations for funding are required for the 2025 operating budget.

Installation of permanent aluminum signage is estimated to be \$2,000-\$3,000, pending site audits to determine requirements for each location.

Communications and Public Engagement Initiatives

Should Council direct staff to implement a permanent program, staff will inform the community through the City's typical communication channels, such as the website, social media, and signage.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Strategic Goal 2.3 – Enhance and expand parkland and open spaces, particularly the objectives of optimizing the park user experience and enhancing urban parks; and
- Strategic Goal 4.3 – Leverage public spaces, particularly the objective of enhancing places where people naturally gather.

Attachment(s)

1. Report considered at the February 28, 2023, Regular Council meeting.
2. City of Port Moody Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Spaces Bylaw, 2023, No. 3392.
3. Report considered at the June 13, 2023, Regular Council meeting.
4. Summary of Public Engagement – Responsible Consumption of Liquor Pilot Project.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Responsible Liquor Consumption in Public Places – Next Steps.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment 1 - Report considered at the Feb. 28, 2023, RC meeting - Responsible Consumption of Liquor.pdf- Attachment 2 - City of Port Moody Responsible Consumption of Liquor in Public Spaces Bylaw, 2023, No. 3392.pdf- Attachment 3 - Report considered at the Jun 13, 2023, RC meeting - Responsible Liquor Consumption - Public Engagement.pdf- Attachment 4 - Summary of Public Engagement – Responsible Consumption of Liquor Pilot Project.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 15, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Julie Pavey-Tomlinson, Director of Environment and Parks - Apr 12, 2024

Tracey Takahashi, Deputy Corporate Officer, for Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Apr 12, 2024

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Apr 12, 2024

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Apr 15, 2024

Anna Mathewson, City Manager - Apr 15, 2024