

**From:** ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)  
**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 12/13/2023 3:36:14 PM  
**Subject:** Upcoming news release: Amendments to Liquor Distancing Policy (December 13, 2023)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below information bulletin this afternoon regarding changes to the liquor distancing policy.

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**City of Vancouver**  
**News release**  
**December 13, 2023**

### **Vancouver uncorks possibilities for restaurants, bars and pubs with amendments to liquor distancing policy**

Today, Council updated the City's liquor distancing policy to support new and existing bars, pubs and restaurants looking to expand in the Granville Entertainment District (GED) and parts of downtown, including Chinatown, Gastown, Industrial District, Thornton Park and Victory Square areas. This initiative follows Council's directive in July 2022, tasking staff with a comprehensive review of the existing liquor distancing policy and developing subsequent recommendations.

“The City’s existing liquor distancing policy has long been perceived as a hurdle for business owners,” said Mayor Ken Sim. “The changes bring Vancouver’s liquor policies in line with other municipalities in the region and will give businesses the flexibility to innovate and bring forward fresh ideas. This especially aligns with our new vision for Granville Street as the City’s premier destination for entertainment.”

**Key changes include:**

- Removing liquor distancing requirements which will allow clusters of same-sized establishments and enable the creation of potential new destination areas.
- Lifting the moratoria on new liquor establishments and seat expansions in the Granville Entertainment District and in Chinatown, Gastown, Industrial District, Thornton Park and Victory Square areas to allow exciting changes that will enhance economic activity.
- Increasing the capacity of Class 2 establishments, the largest allowed next to residential areas, from 150 to 200 persons, to increase financial viability of businesses.
- Streamlining policy by enabling dual-license restaurants to transition into a bar starting at 9 PM, an hour earlier than current regulations and in alignment with provincial regulations.
- Creating opportunities for non-traditional liquor-serving establishments, such as spas, barber shops, and retail stores, to allow them to obtain a liquor-primary license and enable more diverse types of businesses.
- Reducing the City’s processing time on applications by delegating Council authority to provide recommendations to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

In reviewing existing liquor policies, the City engaged with community groups, local businesses and the [Hospitality Sector Working Group](#) to understand how we can reduce red tape and foster economic development,” said Sarah Hicks, Chief Licence Inspector. “The changes to the liquor distancing policy will enable opportunities for growth while maintaining the necessary checks and balances to support health and safety.”

Following standard procedure, each application for a Liquor Establishment will continue to undergo inter-departmental review and review from Vancouver Police Department. Staff will also continue to work with Vancouver Coastal Health, community groups and VPD to monitor the impact of these changes closely, with specific attention to any impacts in the Downtown Eastside and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Learn more about the [City’s liquor policy](#).

record of the meeting.

A. THAT Council repeal the *Liquor License Capacity and Location Policy and Guidelines* and adopt the *Policy on Establishments with Provincial Liquor Primary Licences* as described in this report and shown in Appendix A.

B. THAT Council remove the moratorium on new Liquor Establishments and seat expansions at existing establishments, in the Granville Entertainment District;

FURTHER THAT the Chinatown, Gastown, Industrial, Thornton Park, and Victory Square areas as defined by the *Liquor Policy for the Downtown Eastside*, also be removed from the moratorium on new Liquor Establishments and seat expansions at existing establishments.

C. THAT Council approve amendments to the Licence By-law to update the definition of Liquor Establishment Class 2 to change the person capacity generally as shown in Appendix B;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Licence By-law generally in accordance with Appendix B.

D. THAT Council approve amendments to the Licence By-law to expand the definition of Liquor Establishment Class 8 to enable more types of non-traditional liquor serving businesses to apply for provincial liquor licences as permitted under Provincial regulation, generally as shown in Appendix B;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Licence By-law generally in accordance with Appendix B.

E. THAT Council approve amendments to the Licence By-law to the definition of Limited Service Food Establishment to enable these businesses to apply for a provincial non-traditional liquor licence generally as shown in Appendix B;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Licence By-law generally in accordance with Appendix B.

F. THAT Council approve amendments to the Licence By-law to delegate authority to the Chief Licence Inspector to provide recommendations to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch on new Liquor Primary applications as a way to decrease the City's processing time on Liquor Primary applications generally as shown in Appendix B;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Licence By-law

generally in accordance with Appendix B.

- G. THAT Council approve amendments to Business Premises Regulation of Hours By-law to align operating hours for Standard and Extended Hours Liquor Establishments located on the 1000 to 1300 blocks of Granville Street with hours in the Downtown Regulation Area Primarily Commercial Area as described in this report and generally as shown in Appendix C;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Licence By-law generally in accordance with Appendix C;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to also align operating hours for Standard and Extended Hours Liquor Establishments located in the Chinatown, Gastown, Industrial, Thornton Park, and Victory Square areas as defined by the *Liquor Policy for the Downtown Eastside* with hours in the Downtown Regulation Area Primarily Commercial Area, and bring forward the necessary amendments and by-law changes for Council's consideration in Q1 2024.

- H. THAT Council approve a policy to support evening hours for Dual Liquor Primary licences to begin operation at 9:00 pm, aligned with hours allowed under provincial liquor licensing regulations.
- I. THAT, subject to approval of recommendation A, Council approve amendments to the Cabaret and Restaurant Guidelines to align them with the proposed Policy on Establishments with Provincial Liquor Primary Licences as shown in Appendix D.
- J. THAT Council direct staff to engage with relevant stakeholders in the DEOD with respect to the impacts of the above changes, including impacts on vulnerable populations and the services they rely on, transportation availability, and impacts on existing establishments as it relates to affordability, and report back in Q1 2025.
- K. THAT Council direct staff to work with Vancouver Coastal Health, the Vancouver Police Department, Good Night Out and other community partners to monitor and report back on the impacts of these policy changes on public health and safety;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff report back with recommendations to mitigate negative health and safety impacts related to these policy changes, including but not limited to:

- a) Engaging with Translink about extending public transportation access and hours to match extended liquor establishment hours and reporting back on recommended service improvements.
- b) Bringing back policy and funding recommendations for addressing sexual assault and gender based violence related to increased access to alcohol.
- c) Include recommendations in the upcoming public washroom strategy to prevent an increase in public urination and defecation

related to increased consumption of alcohol.

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