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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 8/27/2025 2:40:20 PM
Subject: Memo to Mayor and Council - Amendment to Downtown Liquor Establishment Hours
Attachments: DBL - LI - Memo to Mayor Council - Amendment to Downtown Liquor Establishment Hours.pdf

Hello Mayor and Council,

Please see attached Council memo outlining staff's interpretation of Council's amendment to extend Liquor Establishment hours in Downtown to 4am, excluding the Downtown Eastside (DTES). On July 22, 2025, Council approved amendments to the "[Liquor Establishments and Restaurants Regulatory Review](#)" report, including a change to allow Liquor Primary businesses in Downtown to serve alcohol until 4am, in line with Provincial regulations, excluding DTES.

Key Takeaways

- Staff is unsure whether the amendment adopted on July 22, 2025, is intended to exclude all seven DTES subareas from the 4 am closing time, or just two of the seven DTES subareas.
- In the Council report, the DTES is divided into seven subareas, grouped into two regulatory zones: "Downtown" and "Outside Downtown - A." The "Downtown" zone includes Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square, Thornton Park, and the Industrial District, while "Outside Downtown - A" covers DEOD and Strathcona.
- In December 2023, Council lifted the moratorium on new Liquor Establishments and approved 3am closing hours for the five DTES subareas that are grouped into Downtown as noted above, effectively distinguishing them from the two remaining areas.
- Based on the minutes and the recording of the Council meeting, staff considers the amendment include the subareas of Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square, Thornton Park, and the Industrial District and to only exclude the DEOD and Strathcona subareas from the 4am extension.

The by-law amendments will be scheduled for enactment on September 16, 2025. Staff will proceed with a by-law reflecting the above noted interpretation.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to email GM of Development, Buildings, and Licensing Corrie Okell.

Thank you,
Sandra

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x̄m̄k̄ȳm̄ (Musqueam), S̄w̄x̄w̄s̄17w̄ū7mesh (Squamish), and S̄əl̄ílw̄itulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

August 26, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Karen Levitt, Acting City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Murphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Sarah Hicks, Chief Licence Inspector, Development, Buildings and Licensing

FROM: Corrie Okell, General Manager, Development, Buildings and Licensing

SUBJECT: Amendment to Extend Downtown Liquor Establishment Closing Hours to 4 am

RTS #: 17838

This memo provides information about staff's interpretation of Council's amendment to extend Liquor Establishment operating hours in Downtown to 4 am, excluding the Downtown Eastside (DTES).

ISSUE

On July 22, 2025, Council approved the "[Liquor Establishments and Restaurants Regulatory Review](#)" report with amendments. One amendment to Recommendation A(b) is to update the business hours and the regulation areas for Liquor Establishments *with specific direction to extend maximum liquor service to 4 am for Liquor Primary businesses located in the Downtown, as defined in Appendix A – Schedule E of the above-noted report, excluding the Downtown Eastside, in alignment with Provincial liquor regulations.*

Staff is unsure whether the amendment adopted on July 22, 2025, is intended to exclude all seven Downtown Eastside subareas from the 4 am closing time, or just two of the seven Downtown Eastside subareas.

The difficulty arises because the term "Downtown Eastside", as used in the Council report, typically covers seven subareas of the DTES. In the Council report, these seven areas are further divided into two regulatory areas: Downtown and Outside Downtown - A (defined in Appendix A, pg. 14, of the Council report). The "Downtown" area includes five of the seven DTES subareas: Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square, Thornton Park and Industrial District. The "Outside Downtown - A" area includes the two subareas of Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD) and Strathcona.

The two different areas are shown in the map attached to this memo as Appendix "A". The areas shown in dark grey are considered as the Downtown. The areas shown in light grey are considered as Outside Downtown.

In December 2023, Council lifted the moratorium on new Liquor Establishments and approved Downtown – Primarily Commercial Hours (3 am, seven days a week) for five DTES subareas (Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square, Thornton Park and Industrial Districts). In making this decision, Council has already treated the five (Downtown) subareas differently from the two other (Outside Downtown) subareas.

One interpretation of the amendment is that the five DTES subareas located within the "Downtown" boundary are also excluded from the extension of hours to 4 am, seven nights a week because they fall under the term "Downtown Eastside". This interpretation would mean that all Liquor Establishments in those five DTES subareas would be limited to the current closing times of 3 am, seven nights a week. However, staff does not consider this to be the preferred interpretation because it does not appear to reflect Council's intention.

Based on the minutes and the recording of the Council meeting, staff considers the amendment to be better interpreted to only exclude the DEOD and Strathcona subareas from the 4 am extension, not the other five DTES subareas.

This would mean that only the Liquor Establishments in the DEOD and Strathcona would be excluded from the 4 am closing rule and would be eligible to close at 2 am on weeknights and 3 am on weekends in alignment with the "Outside Downtown – A" hours that were proposed by staff in the Council report.

Staff intends to bring forward by-law amendments that reflect this interpretation. Staff believe that this was the intention – but that is not certain.

NEXT STEPS

The by-law amendments will be scheduled for enactment on September 16, 2025. Staff will proceed with a by-law reflecting the above noted interpretation.



Corrie Okell
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Appendix A

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

