



May 12, 2022

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Alcohol in Parks Pilot 2022 - Proposed By-law Amendments

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the proposed amendments to the Parks Control By-Law Regarding Liquor Consumption in Parks, as set out in Appendix A of this report, to temporarily designate the park sites listed in the by-law as places where liquor may be consumed during the 2022 Alcohol in Parks Pilot;
- B. FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward a by-law for enactment by the Park Board generally in accordance with Appendix A

REPORT SUMMARY

From July to October, 2021, the 'Alcohol in Parks Pilot' launched to the public, following the 2018 Board motion that directed staff to conduct a feasibility study for a pilot project that would allow the public to consume their own alcohol beverages in select park and beach sites. After the pilot concluded, staff reported back to the Board with findings and lessons learned from onsite monitoring, public feedback, and other data sources provided by stakeholders such as Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). The results from this inaugural pilot demonstrated that the initiative was largely successful.

In February 2022, the Board directed staff to design and implement a second pilot, with considerations given to lessons learned from the previous pilot, and to report back with recommendations for next steps beyond the pilot. This report provides an overview of the planned 2022 Alcohol in Parks Pilot, and seeks Board approval of the proposed amendments to the Parks Control By-law that are required to support that pilot.

BOARD AUTHORITY, RELATED POLICY & PREVIOUS DECISIONS/UPDATES

Per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks. The Board may pass, amend, and repeal by-laws for the control, regulation, protection, and government of these parks and of persons who may be therein.

On December 17, 2018, the Park Board unanimously approved a motion titled [Alcohol Consumption at Vancouver Parks & Beaches](#), which directed staff to conduct a feasibility study for a pilot project that would allow the public to consume their alcoholic beverages on select parks and beaches.

On July 6, 2020, the Park Board received a presentation on the proposed [Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law & Pilot Program](#), which included designated pilot areas in ten (10) different parks

across the city. The [recommendations were referred back to staff](#) to expand the pilot to include parks in each neighborhood.

On July 27, 2020, the Board approved the [Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law & Pilot Program](#), which had been expanded to include 22 pilot sites after the initial pilot recommendations were [referred back to staff to include parks in each neighborhood](#). The park by-law amendments required to support the pilot could not be enacted until section 73(2) of the [BC Liquor Control and Licensing Act](#) and section 197 of the [Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation](#) were amended to grant the Park Board legal authority to designate a public place, over which it has jurisdiction, where liquor may be consumed. These amendments were made in June 2021.

In May & June 2021, the Board enacted [amendments to the Parks Control By-law regarding liquor consumption in parks](#), and subsequent updates to [Schedule 2](#), which listed the places where liquor may be consumed until October 11, 2021 (during the 2021 Alcohol in Parks pilot).

On December 17, 2021, staff presented the [findings of the 2021 Alcohol in Parks pilot](#), including key themes from public feedback, pilot site monitoring results, and key operational and equity considerations.

On February 7, 2022, the Board unanimously approved a motion titled [Alcohol in Parks Pilot – Extension and Next Steps](#), which directed staff to “design and implement a second Alcohol in Parks Pilot for 2022, with considerations given to the lessons learned from the 2021 experience”, and to report back with “recommendations for next steps beyond the Pilot.”

BACKGROUND

In recognition of the evolving needs of Vancouver residents, particularly as a growing segment of the population has no access to a private yard and thus relies on parks and beaches for social gatherings, the Board directed staff in late-2018 to conduct a feasibility study for a pilot project that would allow the public to consume their own alcoholic beverages in select park and beach sites. The discussion around allowing alcohol consumption in parks became more timely in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the summer of 2020, the Alcohol in Parks Pilot was approved by the Board; however as outlined in that [board report](#), amendments to the BC Liquor Control and Licensing Act were required before the Board could enact the by-laws required to support the pilot. The amendments to the Act were made nearly a year after the Board approved the pilot.

The Alcohol in Parks pilot ran from July 12 to October 11, 2021, and staff presented the key findings and feedback in December, noting that park users who consumed alcohol at pilot sites largely conducted themselves responsibly and respectfully, and that concerns related to the pilot were mainly operational in nature (e.g. waste management and confusion around drinking site boundaries). As well, public survey responses were generally supportive of this pilot, and eager to see it continue in the future.

In February 2022, the Board directed staff to design and implement a second Alcohol in Parks Pilot for 2022, with considerations given to the lessons learned from the 2021 experience, and to report back with recommendations for next steps beyond the pilot.

DISCUSSION

2022 Alcohol in Parks Pilot - Overview

In response to the Board’s direction to run a 2022 pilot, staff reviewed the findings from the 2021 pilot and determined that while no changes needed to be made to the previously approved pilot

program (sites, hours, signage, etc.), some improvements could be made to better address waste management & recycling concerns and to reduce confusion around the irregular site boundaries.

Duration, Hours and Communication Tools

The 2022 pilot could be ready to implement as soon as early June, subject to the Board enacting amendments to the Parks Control By-Law authorizing the pilot for this year -- the current by-law allowed for liquor consumption in the designated areas only until October 11, 2021. The proposed amendments would support running the pilot between June 3, 2022 and October 16, 2022.

In keeping with the last pilot and existing by-laws, onsite signage will be posted at each pilot site showing where liquor may be consumed during the pilot, from 11:00am to 9:00pm daily. Both onsite signage and online communications will include rules and responsibilities, contacts for incident reporting, and general information on the pilot.

Site Boundaries

As outlined in the [July 2020 board report](#), understanding that Vancouver's park spaces serve multiple uses and people throughout the year, the 22 parks with pilot sites (listed below) were selected using criteria to support public safety, minimize impacts to other park and park-adjacent uses, and to balance compatible or incompatible uses of various spaces and amenities.

Alcohol in Parks - Pilot Sites

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Collingwood | 12. Memorial West |
| 2. David Lam | 13. New Brighton |
| 3. Fraser River | 14. Pandora |
| 4. Granville | 15. Queen Elizabeth |
| 5. Harbour Green | 16. Quilchena |
| 6. John Hendry (Trout Lake) | 17. Riverfront |
| 7. Kitsilano Beach | 18. Robson |
| 8. Langara | 19. Rupert |
| 9. Locarno Beach | 20. Stanley (southwest corner) |
| 10. Maple Grove | 21. Vanier |
| 11. Memorial South | 22. Volunteer |

Based on the selection criteria considered, this resulted in irregular pilot site boundaries that were challenging to identify when onsite, even though signs were posted with maps showing the boundaries.

For the 2022 pilot staff propose using the same 22 parks, but have the designated areas generally follow the overall park boundary (except for QE & Stanley), and only exclude areas where it is not appropriate for liquor to be consumed based on the following criteria:

- (a) within 20 metres of a playground, school, or natural area
- (b) within 5 metres of a pool or water park;
- (c) in, on or within a:
 - A. beach, pond, lake or dock;
 - B. seawall, roadway, parking lot, or building entrance area;
 - C. garden or horticultural display area;
 - D. sports field, sports court, skate park, fitness amenity or pitch & putt golf course
 - E. community centre, fieldhouse, or washroom; or
 - F. designated off-leash dog area.

Additionally, as was the case in 2021, access to some designated areas may be temporarily restricted when in use for recreational programs or special events.

While this approach still results in some irregular site boundaries, the presumption is that it will be easier and more intuitive for park users to remember the types of spaces and amenities where drinking alcohol is not allowed (e.g. playgrounds, beaches, indoor facilities, etc.), which is applied across all pilot sites, versus remembering the specific boundaries of each designated area that differ significantly from site to site. Onsite signage will identify the boundaries of each designated pilot site area, and will also include the list of areas where alcohol may not be consumed.

Monitoring & Data Collection

During the pilot, staff will monitor usage and collect feedback to address any operational adjustments that might be required to address immediate concerns, as well as to inform future recommendations to be presented when staff report back with the pilot findings.

These monitoring and data gathering activities will include:

- Ongoing Park Ranger patrols and tracking service calls & response data related to pilot;
- Reviewing public feedback received via 311, online web forms, and direct to staff;
- Installing onsite signage with contact information for public questions & feedback;
- Updating the project webpage to provide information; will be promoted through social media channels.
- Working with park operations staff for ongoing feedback on cleaning & maintenance needs;
- Consulting with internal stakeholders to address potential impacts and identify opportunities;
- Consulting with external stakeholders to collect comments & feedback (e.g. VCH and VPD)

Staff anticipate that the frequency of washroom cleaning, litter-picking, and garbage removal may need to be increased, with additional bins installed in some areas.

By-law Enforcement

While Park Rangers play a key role in monitoring park activity and informing park users about relevant park by-laws and legislation, it is the responsibility of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to enforce issues related to liquor consumption. As with the 2021 pilot, Park Rangers will contact the VPD when assistance or enforcement is needed. In the event that the pilot causes a significant increase of Park Ranger calls for service, existing Ranger resources will need to be pulled away from other services deemed lower in priority. Similarly, should Rangers need to tend to more immediate or urgent matters, existing Ranger resources will need to be pulled away from the pilot. Staff will need to make these operational adjustments throughout the initiative as deemed appropriate.

Concessions and Restaurant Partners

Currently, all restaurant partners already have liquor licences, and as an extension of these existing licences, the partners are authorized to sell sealed alcohol with food, including at the third-party concessions operated by the Boathouse Restaurant at Kitsilano Beach Park and the Tap Shack at Harbour Green Park – both locations directly adjacent to proposed pilot sites.

Park Board operated concessions do not have liquor licences and therefore are not currently able to sell sealed alcohol. The process of applying and expanding existing business licences to accommodate the sale of alcohol is lengthy and will require capital modifications to sites for secure storage. Commercial operations staff have initiated the process of applying for liquor licensing, but it was determined that licensing for food and liquor primary establishments have an approximate wait time of 8-12 months, making vending and sales of alcohol at Concessions unlikely in 2022.

Alcohol in Parks Pilot 2022 – Proposed By-law Amendments

In order for staff to proceed with a second Alcohol in Parks Pilot as directed by the Board, the Parks Control By-law must be updated to reflect both the effective dates for the 2022 pilot and any changes to the pilot site boundaries. For reference, following is the current “Consumption of Liquor” section of the by-laws enacted on May 31, 2021 ([Schedule 2](#) was updated June 21, 2021):

CONSUMPTION OF LIQUOR

- 23A. The parks or parts thereof listed in Schedule 2 of this by-law, the boundaries of which will be identified by signs posted in accordance with this by-law, are hereby designated as places where liquor may be consumed.
- 23B. Liquor may be consumed in a park:
 - (a) in those areas designated as places where liquor may be consumed under section 23A of this by-law;
 - (b) between May 31, 2021 and October 11, 2021; and
 - (c) between the hours of 11:00am and 9:00pm.
- 23C. The General Manager or their delegate must post signs setting out:
 - (a) the boundaries of the places where liquor may be consumed; and
 - (b) the hours that liquor may be consumed.
- 23D. The signs referred to in section 23C must:
 - (a) number no fewer than what is required to reasonably indicate the boundaries of the designated place;
 - (b) be a minimum of 12 inches by 24 inches; and
 - (c) be posted on posts or affixed to other items along the boundaries of the places where liquor may be consumed.
- 23E. All of the other provisions of this by-law remain in effect at all times in the designated areas.

2022 Pilot - Effective Period

As per the draft by-law attached as Appendix A, staff are proposing amending section 23B(b) to support running the 2022 pilot from June 3 through October 16, 2022, which offers a similar duration as the 2021 pilot. No changes are being proposed to the hours of the pilot, which ran from 11:00am to 9:00pm daily in 2021, or to the signage requirements.

2022 Pilot – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)

Staff recommend that the 2022 pilot use the same twenty-two (22) parks from the last pilot, with the boundaries of the designated areas adjusted to improve clarity (see Appendix A, Schedule 2).

In some parks, these adjustments have resulted in an expansion of pilot site areas; for example, as shown in Figures 1 & 2 below, the pilot sites in John Hendry Park have been adjusted from the three separate areas in 2021, to one designated area falling within the overall park boundary, with playing fields, playgrounds, dog off-leash areas, facilities, natural areas, etc. omitted.



Figure 1: John Hendry Park – 2021 Pilot Sites



Figure 2: John Hendry Park – 2022 Pilot Site

Subject to Board approval of the draft by-law amendments, staff are recommending the by-law be presented for enactment at the Regular Board meeting immediately following Committee to provide staff time to coordinate the necessary signage and communications required to launch the pilot in early June as targeted.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Financial Implications

Vancouver parks are already seeing an impact on cleaning and maintenance needs due to the growing demand for outdoor public spaces. In the absence of additional staff resources or funding, implementing and meeting the needs of the 2022 pilot will require shifting resources from existing commitments.

In addition to incremental material costs for signage (incidental), it is anticipated that the pilot will require the following staff/labour resources:

- Website & signage planning/design;
- Signage fabrication, installation, and ongoing maintenance;
- Development and delivery of both onsite & online communications;
- Increased waste removal, litter pick-up, and washroom servicing;
- Ongoing monitoring and responding to call-outs by park rangers and VPD;
- Feedback monitoring and data collection via social media, 3-1-1, etc.;
- Site observation, data collection, analysis, and reporting; and
- Ongoing consultation with stakeholders and partners.

This work will once again need to be absorbed by existing budget capacity and through the reallocation of staff resources. As noted in the December 2021 [report back presentation](#), estimated costs related to running the 2021 pilot were approximately \$120K. The diversion of

funds to implement and manage the pilot, along with the prioritization of existing staff time from other priorities, may have unintended consequences. All operational needs will be monitored during the pilot program and will be summarized in the report back to the Board, along with any estimated staffing and incremental costs for future initiatives.

City of Vancouver Alcohol Programs and Policies

City of Vancouver's Engineering Services department is currently on its third year of providing partner-stewarded plaza spaces for public alcohol consumption. The pilot period ran for two summer seasons in 2020 and 2021, and led to the recent approval of [Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy](#) (approved by Council in March 2022), which sets policy on site selection requirements, implementation processes, site management and monitoring, and City and partner roles as they relate to places for liquor consumption in plazas and street right-of-way.

Additionally, Engineering Services collaborated with Social Policy and the Drinkers Lounge/Portland Hotel Society to implement a patron-oriented alcohol parklet at 111 Princess Avenue (Drinkers Lounge) in the Downtown Eastside. This parklet is an outdoor extension of the peer-managed, managed alcohol program that exists at Drinkers Lounge. In March 2022, Council recently [extended the parklet for another two years](#).

Downtown Eastside Pilot Opportunities

Park Board staff are currently working with City staff in Social Policy and Engineering, and with community stakeholders to explore what a community-led, peer managed alcohol pilot could look and function like in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. This work will require careful consideration and partnerships to better understand and plan for the challenges and opportunities, including an approach centred on harm reduction. As such, staff will need additional time to scope an outdoor alcohol program for Downtown Eastside parks, and will update the Board at a later date.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Staff recommend that the Board approve the proposed changes to the Parks Control By-law (attached as Appendix A) to support the 2022 Alcohol in Parks Pilot. Subject to the Board's approval, staff will present the proposed by-law for enactment at the next Regular Board meeting (immediately following Committee) to support launching the pilot in early June.

Following enactment of the proposed by-law changes, staff will prepare the necessary signage and communications to launch the pilot, and coordinate monitoring and reporting activities. As directed by the February 2022 Board motion, staff will report back with recommendations for next steps. These recommendations will be based on pilot findings and the feasibility of future initiatives that continue to support the Park Board mandate to provide parks and recreation spaces that are safe and welcoming for all.

General Manager's Office
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

lt/ds/clc

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law

DRAFT By-law to Amend the Parks Control By-law Regarding Liquor Consumption in Parks

Note: A By-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of the Parks Control By-law.
2. In section 23B(b), the Board replaces “May 31, 2021 and October 11, 2021” with “June 3, 2022 and October 10, 2022”.
3. The Board repeals “Schedule 2 – Parks and Areas of Parks Where Liquor May be Consumed (Liquor Consumption in Parks Pilot Sites)”, and replaces it with a new “Schedule 2 – Parks and Areas of Parks Where Liquor May be Consumed (Alcohol in Parks Pilot Sites)”, as attached to the By-law.

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)

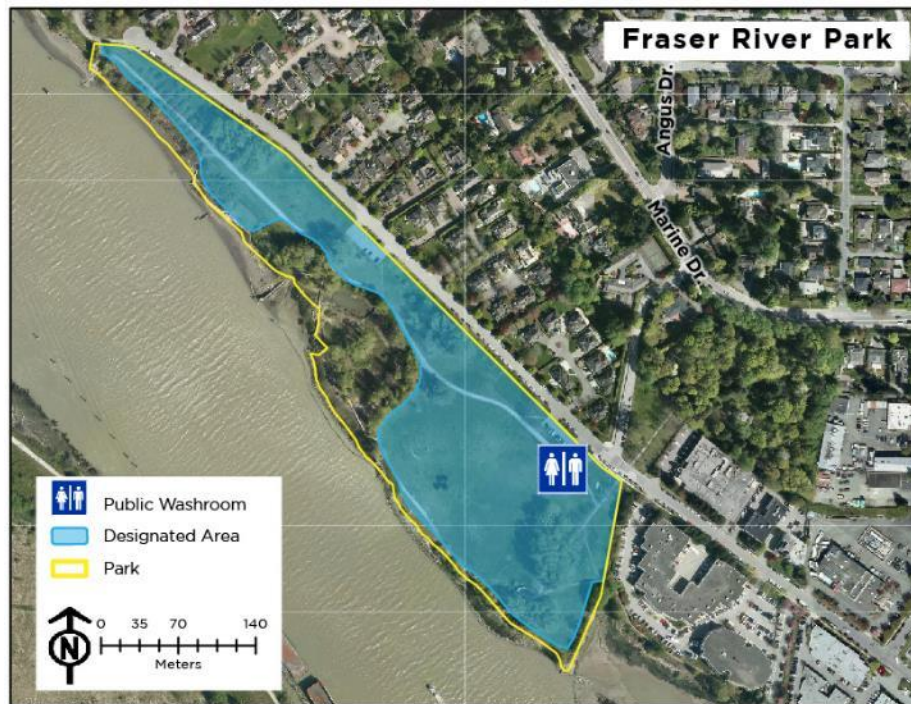


1. Collingwood Park – Designated Area



2. David Lam Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



3. Fraser River Park – Designated Area



4. Granville Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



5. Harbour Green Park – Designated Area



6. John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



7. Kitsilano Beach Park – Designated Area



8. Langara Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



9. Locarno Beach Park – Designated Area



10. Maple Grove Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



11. Memorial South Park – Designated Area



12. Memorial West Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



13. New Brighton Park – Designated Area



14. Pandora Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



15. Queen Elizabeth Park – Designated Area



16. Quilchena Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



17. Riverfront Park (west) – Designated Area



18. Robson Park – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



19. Rupert Park - Designated Area



20. Stanley Park (southwest) – Designated Area

Amendments to the Liquor Consumption in Parks By-law – Pilot Sites (Schedule 2)



21. Vanier Park - Designated Area



22. Volunteer Park - Designated Area