

Options to Manage Impacts of Liquor Stores

Based on discussions with stakeholders, Administration has identified the following tools to manage various impacts of liquor stores. Taken together, the tools are intended to address the four themes that emerged through the research and engagement with stakeholders, of areas that needed to be addressed to manage the impacts associated with liquor stores, including: consumption, operations, appearance, and land use.

Administration has identified different tools and jurisdictions responsible to address the impacts associated with liquor stores:

Tool / Jurisdiction	Consumption	Operations	Appearance	Land Use
Zoning Bylaw 12800			X	X
Business Licence Bylaw 13138		X		
Community Standards Bylaw 14600			X	
Public Places Bylaw 14614	X			
Parkland Bylaw 2202	X			
Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act	X	X		
Edmonton Police Service	X			
Alberta Health Services	X			
211 - Reach Edmonton	X			

Consumption

Desired outcomes:

- reduce alcohol-related harms
- minimize social disorder related to public intoxication

To manage social disorder related to public intoxication, the City can continue to enforce the provisions of Public Places Bylaw 14614 and Parkland Bylaw 2202. Both Bylaws can address public behavior as it relates to littering, aggressive panhandling, urination/defecation, and fighting in public places and in City parks.

Citizens can report individuals that appear to be in distress to both the Edmonton Police Service or by calling 211 to connect with the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team.

As Zoning Bylaw 12800 regulates the use of land, and not the users, this tool cannot address behaviours related to the consumption of controlled substances.

Operations

Desired outcomes:

- operational compliance with the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Act
- reduce or eliminate predatory sales to vulnerable populations
- improve the appearance and maintenance of liquor stores

A recurring theme identified through discussions with stakeholders included the need for strengthening the enforcement of liquor store operations as it relates to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Act. In consideration of this, Administration recommends that Council advocate for greater enforcement of the provincial policies and improve reporting relationships with AGLC.

To monitor liquor store operators and enhance communication between Administration and AGLC, Administration could develop a mechanism for citizens to report bad operators, which then can be directed to AGLC. This would allow the City to track and monitor complaints related to liquor store business licences, and seek appropriate action by AGLC or Edmonton Police Service as needed.

Appearance

Desired outcomes:

- improve the appearance of storefronts so they contribute positively to the surrounding area
- improve the design of buildings to enhance passive surveillance and promote a safe urban environment
- improve perceptions related to safety

Amendments to design regulations in Zoning Bylaw 12800 could enhance the appearance and safety of liquor store buildings. These regulations could mirror the crime prevention design provisions developed for Cannabis Retail Stores. Regulation of the minimum portion of store windows that must be transparent and not covered could promote natural surveillance by ensuring passers-by can see in. Including these requirements as conditions to a development permit can make enforcement more effective.

It should be noted that any changes to Zoning Bylaw 12800 will only impact new liquor store developments.

Continued enforcement of Community Standards Bylaw 14600 can manage the maintenance of buildings to ensure that properties are tidy and buildings and/or structures are maintained. These factors can influence perceptions of an area, including those related to crime.

Land Use - Zoning Regulations

Desired Outcomes:

- Clear and simple regulations, for certainty and efficient service
- Contextual relationship to population density and destination areas
- Protect youth from drugs and alcohol
- Buffer service providers working with vulnerable populations
- Diversity in the marketplace
- Additional opportunities for liquor stores in the Downtown

Changes to Zoning Bylaw 12800 will only impact new liquor store developments. Regulations in place when the 249 existing stores were originally developed will continue to apply to those stores. However, if the 500m separation distance is removed, stores may choose to relocate, and any new regulations would apply to new permits issued.

The literature review showed that access to alcohol could be managed through limiting hours of operations, however, Zoning Bylaw 12800 does not regulate hours of business operations.

Options for Land Use Outcomes

There are a number of approaches that could achieve the land use outcomes identified above. Administration has identified the following options to regulate the distance between liquor stores, which influence the land use outcomes desired:

1. No change, keep the 500 metre separation distances as it is currently
2. Provide exemptions to the separation distance requirements in major shopping and tourist destinations with a high density of workers and residents (in areas like the Downtown, Old Strathcona, and West Edmonton Mall)
 - a. This option could include a provision for a buffer between liquor stores and emergency shelters and community service providers.
3. Make the separation distances between liquor stores the same as it is for cannabis retail stores; 200 metres
4. Eliminate the separation distances required between liquor stores
 - a. This option could be paired with stronger design regulations to enhance passive surveillance and promote a safe urban environment
 - b. Another approach could include pairing this option with changing the zones where alcohol sales is listed as a permitted use, or make the use a discretionary use instead of a permitted use
5. Eliminate all Zoning Bylaw regulations for Alcohol Sales and treat the use as General Retail Stores. This would include deleting Section 85 Special Land Use Provisions for Major and Minor Alcohol Sales including all separation distances and existing design regulations. The use would be permitted in all Commercial Zones except Neighbourhood Convenience Commercial Zone

(CNC) and Commercial Office Zone (CO) where General Retail Stores are currently a discretionary use.

6. Eliminate separation distances between stores only for sites zoned CSC - Commercial Shopping Centre Zone, CCA - Core Commercial Arts Zone, and AED - Arena and Entertainment District Zone. This option was not tested as a part of the online surveys.

To view the outcomes associated with each option, please refer to Attachment 7 - Options to Manage Separation Distances Outcome Matrix.