

BYLAW 21122 - Entertainment District

Recommendation

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

That Bylaw 21122 be given the appropriate readings.

Purpose

To amend Bylaw 20700 - Public Spaces Bylaw;

- to designate a new public space as an Entertainment District in Schedule B, which will be designated as the 104 Street Entertainment District.
- to expand the Rice Howard Way Entertainment District, which is a public space already currently designated as an entertainment district in Schedule B.

Readings

Bylaw 21122 is ready for three readings.

A majority vote of City Council on all three readings is required for passage.

If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, then prior to moving third reading, Council must unanimously agree "That Bylaw 21122 be considered for third reading."

Advertising and Signing

This Bylaw does not require advertising, and the Bylaw can be signed and thereby passed following third reading.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this Bylaw.

REPORT

The Downtown Vibrancy Strategy¹ (Strategy) focused on initiatives that promoted sustained vibrancy designed to increase the number of people downtown to live, work, play and visit. As part of implementing the Strategy, Administration recommended the creation of an Entertainment District (District), which was created by an amendment to the Public Places Bylaw at the May 14, 2024, City Council meeting, and is included in the new Public Spaces Bylaw, Bylaw 20700. The adoption of this bylaw was made possible by the fact that the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) and the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act² grant municipalities the authority to create a bylaw that permits the establishment of an entertainment district. A district permits the consumption of alcohol in a public place.

Bylaw 21122 (Attachment 1) is an amendment to Bylaw 20700 - Public Spaces Bylaw that allows for the expansion of the Rice Howard Way Entertainment District and the creation of a new district on 104 Street. This amendment was informed by stakeholder feedback, public engagement and the Downtown Vibrancy Strategy. This amendment aligns with Administration's focus on supporting investment and growth downtown and The City Plan, which outlines an intentional path to ensure economic, residential and cultural growth in the downtown as a distinct attractive place in Edmonton and our city's main celebration space. It also builds on the successes of the current Rice Howard Way District, which includes increased pedestrian traffic, improved business retention and attraction efforts, reduced red-tape and increased promotion of downtown.

This amendment results in the following:

- Add a new District on 104 Street (Attachment 2).
 - This location is recommended for several reasons, including the frequency of public events (such as the Downtown Edmonton Farmer's Market), the concentration of restaurants and bars, the proximity to the Ice District, existing aesthetic and walkability of the area and stakeholder feedback.
- Expand the Rice Howard Way Entertainment District (Attachment 3).
 - This location is recommended to be expanded to allow for additional businesses to be included in the District.
- When activated, consumption of alcohol purchased within the District from businesses that are licensed to sell alcohol will now be permitted in the public space within the District.
- Reduced red tape by eliminating the requirement for any event organizer who wants alcohol available for purchase at their event in the District to acquire an AGLC Public Special Event Licence that permits the sale of alcohol.

¹ City of Edmonton. Urban Planning and Economy Department. Downtown Vibrancy Strategy. June 2021. www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/Downtown_Vibrancy_Strategy.pdf?cb=1711138355

² <https://aglc.ca/cannabis/cannabis-legislation-and-policies>

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- No change to businesses and vendors being responsible for all aspects related to their licensed premises, including compliance with City bylaws and the provincial *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act*.
- No change to event organizers' responsibilities associated with the public space within the District from what is currently required for other civic events.
- Improved business attraction, retention and expansion support by providing businesses invested in brick-and-mortar locations the opportunity for increased revenues by permitting them to sell alcohol to people attending a civic event, which currently is not permitted.
- Once established by bylaw, the specified District can be activated any time at the discretion of the City.

Community Insight

104 Street Engagement

Public engagement for the 104 Street project included an Open Link survey completed by 419 people. Details of the 104 Street engagement are in the Public Engagement Summary found in Attachment 4.

A total of 80 per cent of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the creation of a District in that location. Eighty five per cent of respondents also indicated that they were either likely or very likely to participate in activities at the District.

Designation of a 104 Street Entertainment District is supported by key stakeholders such as the Edmonton Downtown Business Association and the Downtown Edmonton Community League.

Administration conducted informal one-on-one stakeholder conversations with businesses located on 104 Street. The overall feedback was positive, and bars, restaurants, businesses and residents in the area expressed excitement about the idea of a district and the vibrancy that it will bring to the area.

A Business Information Session took place on February 20, 2025, allowing for additional engagement with business stakeholders in the area. The majority of stakeholders in attendance were highly supportive of the District designation for 104 Street.

Rice Howard Way Engagement

An online survey was issued through the Edmonton Insight Community in September to collect feedback about the summer operation of the Rice Howard Way Entertainment District. The feedback from that survey showed support for the creation of additional Entertainment Districts. The survey feedback was used to help inform the planning of the second Entertainment District on 104 Street.

The Rice Howard Way Feedback Survey results indicated that 63 per cent of respondents would like to see more entertainment districts in Edmonton, 76 per cent enjoyed the street patio experience of the Rice Howard Way District and 65 per cent indicated the ability to purchase a beverage from a nearby establishment and take it outside as one of the things they enjoyed

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about the area. Details of this engagement survey are found in the What We Heard Report (Attachment 5).

GBA+

The Entertainment Districts are designed to be inclusive spaces where everyone is welcome.

- No purchase of food or drink is required to be in the Entertainment District, which ensures that anyone may enjoy the ambiance of the area without spending money.
- Non-alcoholic beverages are also offered by all participating businesses.
- Entertainment in the public space is inclusive and appropriate for all ages as outlined in their event license with Civic Events.
- Entertainment Districts are open, accessible, pedestrian friendly spaces that encourage visitation through many forms of active transportation.

The public engagement survey indicated that the majority of respondents who identified as being a part of an underrepresented or marginalized group strongly supported the creation of an entertainment district on 104 Street (Attachment 4).

Budget/Financial Implications

No funding is required.

Attachments

1. Bylaw 21122
2. 104 Street Entertainment District Map
3. Rice Howard Way Entertainment District Expansion Map
4. 104 Street Downtown Entertainment District Engagement Summary
5. Rice Howard Way Entertainment District What We Heard - Feedback Survey

Others Reviewing the Report

- M. Gunther, Acting City Solicitor