



Alcohol Policy Review: Opportunities for Ontario Municipalities

LOCAL POLICIES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF REDUCING LOCAL ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS.



Municipalities regularly face alcohol-related issues. From nuisance, to violence, to public safety concerns, municipalities devote time and resources to dealing with alcohol. Municipal level policies can make a real difference when it comes to decreasing local alcohol-related harms and related costs. Communities across Canada have already started to have success when it comes to preventing alcohol-related

harms through municipal policy.

Many municipalities have already enacted Municipal Alcohol Policies (MAPs), to manage alcohol risk and harm on municipally-owned properties. This policy review examines policy options outside of traditional MAPs to help municipalities manage alcohol off municipally owned property. It's the first of its kind in Ontario.



THIS REVIEW FOCUSES ON POLICIES FOR ALCOHOL CONTROL OFF MUNICIPAL PROPERTY.

A policy review was initiated in 2016 by three health units and conducted by Liem Strategic Integration (LSI). LSI reviewed alcohol guidance documents, legislation relating to municipalities and alcohol, and existing policies and practices in the Canadian and international context. LSI also conducted interviews with the Alcohol and

Gaming Commission of Ontario and with municipalities that had implemented policies to learn from their experiences. This review identifies local alcohol policy options external to MAPs and assesses their feasibility in the context of Ontario's legislative environment.

THERE ARE POLICIES THAT ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES CAN PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS.

The policy review includes recommended actions that municipalities can take to prevent alcohol-related harms. The recommendations present opportunities for collaboration between Ontario municipalities, public health

and other community partners at the local level to mitigate alcohol risk and harm through public policy development.

THIS REVIEW INCLUDES REAL WORLD POLICY EXAMPLES FROM:

- City of Vaughn – business license by-law
- City of Hamilton – liquor license application review process
- City of Surrey – minimum separation distances
- City of Barrie – zoning by-law
- City of Vancouver – liquor license policy
- Town of Ajax – outdoor patio by-law



Effective policy interventions to reduce alcohol harms at the local level are within reach. The findings and recommendations offered here will support municipal leaders in their policy development efforts toward healthier communities.

MUNICIPALITIES CAN:

- Update and/or revise municipal by-laws that strengthen the protection of public safety and property standards.
- Continue to establish business license conditions through a municipal by-law on the basis of protecting public interests and minimizing nuisances, where warranted.
- Create a new business license category that includes supermarket retailers licensed to sell alcohol. This establishes specific requirements for the application to go through a rezoning process, including a public hearing.
- Continue to work with enforcement authorities Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, police during an application process on the basis of protecting public interest.
- Where warranted, develop conditions for liquor license establishments addressing municipal jurisdictional matters (e.g., signage with contact information for public complaints, restricting patio hours of operation, restricting amplified music in outdoor spaces, installing security cameras, and ensuring the enclosure of garbage receptacles).

Licensing and Enforcement

- Update municipal zoning by-laws to establish a minimum floor area requirement that is greater than the provincial requirement for a grocery store to allow the sale of wine, beer, or cider.
- Develop minimum separation distances between liquor license establishments.
- Investigate the need for site specific zoning to limit the location of alcohol retailers and liquor licensed establishments.

Regulating Physical Access through Density and Location Restrictions

- Municipalities that are interested in restricting hours of sale/service should issue site specific conditions when warranted and where applicable.

Hours of Sale Limitations

- Participate in advocacy efforts to strengthen provincial regulations in controlling access and affordability to alcohol.
- Explore the development of minimum pricing standards for alcoholic beverages as a condition of a business license application, where warranted.

Pricing Strategies

- Develop policies that prohibit the promotion or sale of alcoholic beverages on municipally owned lands or facilities, including public transit and associated amenities.
- Participate in local economic development initiatives with local business improvement areas and hospitality businesses to encourage responsible alcohol consumption.

Marketing

- Work with public health units to undertake monitoring and surveillance efforts to describe local alcohol availability and alcohol-related harms.

Surveillance and Information Sharing



“The greatest contribution to the health of the nation over the past 150 years was made, not by doctors or hospitals, but by local governments.”

*– Dr. Jessie Parfit, public health physician and author of **The Health of a City***

“Policy controls strive to achieve a balance between business and economic interests, as well as the health and safety of the population.”

– Ontario Public Health Association



Liem Strategic Integration Inc.

For the full report visit:

<http://opha.on.ca/Events/Alcohol-policy-review-opportunities-for-Ontario-mu.aspx>