



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### POLICY REPORT URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: December 19, 2006  
Author: Heike Roth  
Phone No.: 604.871.6115  
RTS No.: 6162  
VanRIMS No.: 01 0600 10  
Meeting Date: January 18, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Planning in consultation with the Chief License Inspector, the Co-Director, Development Services - Policy and Regulations, and the Director of Social Planning

SUBJECT: Review of Liquor Retail Policy

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Liquor Store Guidelines be amended generally as shown in Appendix A to:
- i) Provide for on-site signage about liquor store proposals, as a way to improve neighbourhood notification; and
  - ii) Recognize new Local Shopping Areas as possible locations for liquor stores.

#### CONSIDERATION

- B. THAT the Liquor Store Guidelines be amended to allow existing small stores that sell beer and / or wine the opportunity to add spirits to their product range, by adding a new category of liquor store: a small store that sells beer, wine and / or spirits.

## GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of A) i) and ii) and submits B for Council's CONSIDERATION.

## COUNCIL POLICY

The Zoning and Development By-law

- Defines Liquor Store and prohibits it in conjunction with other retail or commercial uses.

1990 Liquor Licensing Policies and Procedures

- State that no new liquor retail outlets be permitted in the Downtown Eastside or Gastown.

November 2004 Liquor Store Guidelines

- Provide for two types of liquor stores
- Define the number and location of stores
- Provide separation/spacing distance from family oriented uses
- Provide operational and processing guidelines including neighbourhood notification and time limited development permits

November 2004 Council

- Instructed staff to report back with options to improve the neighbourhood notification process;
- Indicated that a public liquor delivery model is preferred, and the Mayor write the Solicitor General to communicate this preference; and
- Instructed staff to undertake public consultation on liquor retail policy in workshops with affected interest groups.

## PURPOSE and SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to report back on the consultation process undertaken to review the current liquor retail policy, to recommend two minor amendments to the guidelines, and to put forward one amendment for Council's consideration.

When Council approved the Liquor Store Guidelines in 2004, they instructed staff to undertake follow-up consultation with three affected groups: resident and BIA groups, alcohol prevention and treatment providers and the liquor retail industry. At that time, Council agreed that the consultation should take place in 2 - 3 years, to allow the groups time to work with and experience the new guidelines.

However, between March and July of this year, 8 development applications were referred to Council for advice as the proposals did not comply with one or more aspects of the Liquor Store guidelines, and / or generated significant concerns in the surrounding communities. In considering these proposals, Council raised concerns about the existing liquor store categories, the recognition of community values and existing social conditions in neighbourhoods, and the need to serve the dense and growing downtown.

In July, Council directed that no further applications be brought forward until after staff conduct the public process and report back with possible changes.

In October, staff met with resident and BIA groups, alcohol prevention and treatment providers and the liquor retail industry to discuss the current guidelines and receive input.

Staff heard that, on the whole, the Guidelines are working well with respect to providing reasonable access to alcohol while respecting community values. Both the community groups and the alcohol treatment providers felt that few substantive changes were needed while the liquor industry had concerns about the liquor store categories. In addition, all three groups offered suggestions for changes to the Guidelines, especially related to spacing and neighbourhood notification.

Based on the consultation and subsequent analysis, staff concluded that overall the Guidelines are working effectively and recommend two minor amendments to improve the notification process and to recognize emerging Local Shopping Areas.

Staff also heard from liquor store owners that existing small beer and wine stores should be able to sell a full range of products, including spirits. To address this issue, staff put forward for Council's consideration an amendment to allow existing small stores this opportunity, by adding a new category of liquor store: a small store selling beer, wine, and / or spirits.

## **BACKGROUND**

In response to changes at the provincial level, staff have reported on liquor retail policy three times over the past three years. In November 2004, Council approved the current Guidelines which provide for two types of liquor stores and provide direction regarding location, spacing, and operational aspects.

There are currently 65 liquor stores in the City, a significant increase over the 39 stores existing prior to provincial policy changes in 2003. In addition, there are twelve applications seeking approval for a new liquor store, and three applications of small existing beer and wine stores seeking approval to add spirits. These applications remain in the development permit processing system, awaiting Council consideration of this report.

Representatives of the provincial Liquor Distribution Branch advise that their current plans do not anticipate further government liquor store closures.

A full description of this background information is included in Appendix B.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A) The Consultation Process**

To get a range of perspectives on the Liquor Store Guidelines, and in accordance with Council direction, staff met with representatives of community and BIA groups, alcohol prevention and treatment providers, and the liquor retail industry in October. The sections below summarize the key points raised; a complete list of comments is included in Appendix C.

### 1) Community and BIA Groups

Staff sent out approximately 240 invitations to a broad range of community groups, including Community Crime Prevention offices (CCPOs), community centres, BIAs, Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) of all elementary and high schools in Vancouver, neighbourhood houses, and community and residents groups, including CityPlan Vision Committees. A total of 23 individuals attended a two hour meeting representing community groups, BIAs, a PAC, a CCPO, the BCGEU and the Vancouver School Board.

The key points raised at this meeting are summarized as follows:

- The community process for liquor store applications should be enhanced;
- The current guidelines are as good as they are due to community input; the City should continue requiring community input in the development permit process;
- There is no need to increase the availability of liquor;
- The spacing guideline from schools should be increased to 300m; and
- The list of family oriented uses should be expanded.

### 2) Alcohol Prevention and Treatment Providers

Staff contacted approximately 35 individuals involved in alcohol prevention and treatment; three attended a meeting and four provided input by phone or e-mail. A neighbourhood alcohol and drug prevention group, a youth service organization, MADD, alcohol policy groups and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) were represented.

The key points raised at this meeting are summarized as follows:

- Increased liquor access has not been matched with an increase in education and prevention;
- There is no need to increase the availability of liquor;
- Small stores in Local Shopping Areas (LSAs) or mall locations are preferred;
- The list of family oriented uses should include alcohol treatment facilities;
- Community acceptance is more important than geographical separation.

### 3) Liquor Industry Representatives

Staff met with approximately 50 liquor industry representatives, including current liquor store owners, industry consultants, and liquor primary licensees with a provincial endorsement for a liquor store but without a City location or approval. Following a staff presentation which outlined the existing guidelines and provided an update on recent development activities, participants worked in groups of 8 - 10, with a staff facilitator, discussing the various aspects of the existing guidelines and proposing changes.

A summary of the key points raised at this meeting are as follows:

- The need for City regulations was questioned, especially the regulation of what products the stores sell;
- Liquor stores should be located in LSAs, along with other commercial uses;

- There is a need to balance number of stores in the downtown with service to a growing resident, employee and tourist population;
- The spacing guideline from schools is reasonable; spacing from other uses is not necessary.

## B) Proposed Amendments

In consulting with the three groups, staff heard many comments in support of keeping the Guidelines as they are now, as well as numerous suggestions for changes to various aspects. Staff generally believe that the current Guidelines are working well and require minimal changes to continue to be effective in providing reasonable access to retail liquor products. Staff are therefore recommending two minor amendments to the existing Guidelines, and are putting forward one further amendment for Council's consideration.

### 1) Recommended Amendments

#### i) Signage to Improve Notification

Staff recommend that Council approve an amendment to the Guidelines to provide for signage on sites or buildings that are the subject of any liquor retail proposal, as a way to enhance neighbourhood notification.

This amendment addresses longstanding neighbourhood concerns regarding improved notification, particularly of tenants. Provision of on-site signage, i.e. in the window of a proposed location, is similar to the requirement for posting a Notice of Development Application sign on a vacant development site. The sign would be supplied by the applicant, following our normal sign preparation and installation procedures, and is a simple and relatively inexpensive way to reach those who live or work in the area.

#### ii) New Local Shopping Areas

The Guidelines currently identify existing Local Shopping Areas (LSAs) as locations for liquor stores. Staff recommend that Council amend the Guidelines to also recognize new LSAs as possible locations for liquor stores, as new LSAs are identified and defined through ongoing neighbourhood planning programs, such as the Neighbourhood Centre Planning Program.

There is general consensus that liquor stores are best located in LSAs. Several LSAs are quite large, extending almost 2000m, or up to 16 blocks in length. In these larger LSAs, it is possible that a few additional liquor retail opportunities may be identified during neighbourhood planning programs.

Although the proposed amendment could increase access to alcohol by allowing an increase in the number of stores, staff believe this impact is acceptable because:

- The potential increase in the number of stores is small; and
- The additional stores would be located close to neighbourhoods which would encourage walking and reduce car dependency and vehicle trips.

## 2) Amendment for Council's Consideration

The current Guidelines define Type 1 stores as small stores (280m<sup>2</sup>/3000 sq.ft. or less in size) that sell beer and /or wine. Type 2 stores are defined as large stores (over 280m<sup>2</sup>/3000 sq.ft. in size) and / or stores of any size that sell spirits alone or in combination with beer and / or wine.

This current Type 2 category differentiates both by store size and by range of product sold -- a distinction which has been confusing in practice. For example, a Type 2 store could be a large store that sells only beer and wine, or a large store that sells beer, wine and spirits, or small store that sells beer, wine and spirits.

Further, the Guidelines do not allow new Type 2 stores; they only provide for the relocation or replacement of existing Type 2 stores. However, earlier this year, Council approved two applications for Type 2 stores in the downtown area. Both of these applications were for small stores selling beer, wine and spirits, and both had little or no community opposition.

Type 1 liquor store operators expressed concern that these Type 2 approvals created an inequitable situation. In complying with the current Guidelines, the Type 1 operators are not permitted the broader product range that these two downtown applicants were granted.

To address these issues, staff put forward for Council's consideration an amendment to provide an opportunity for Type 1 liquor store operators, with community support, to add spirits to their product range. This amendment would revise the existing Type 2 liquor store definition and add a Type 3 definition:

- Type 1: small store (280m<sup>2</sup>/3000 sq.ft. or less in size) that sells beer and / or wine (No change)
- Type 2: small store (280m<sup>2</sup>/3000 sq.ft. or less in size) that sells any combination of beer, wine and spirits
- Type 3: large store (over 280m<sup>2</sup>/3000 sq.ft. in size) and / or store that sells any combination of beer, wine and / or spirits (former Type 2).

The new Type 2 definition would allow Type 1 store operators to add spirits after a minimum of 12 months of positive business history in the community. They would still be required to complete the Development Permit application process, usually through a Minor Amendment process, and the Director of Planning could include neighbourhood notification, especially where the support of the community has not been clearly demonstrated in advance.

As now, it would not be possible to apply for a new Type 2 store, rather, only after a minimum of 12 months of positive business history in the community as a Type 1 store. (It would still only be possible to apply for a new Type 1 store, and the Type 3 stores would now be replacement or relocation only).

This amendment offers the following advantages:

- It results in improved convenience and reduced travel: consumers would not have to travel to more than one store to buy the products they desire;
- It recognizes the importance of community acceptance - operators who do not have community support would not be able to obtain City approval;

- It does not increase the overall number of liquor stores in the City; and preserves the small store size; and
- It clarifies the liquor store types.

The disadvantage of this amendment is that it is likely that many of the existing small beer and wine stores will seek approval to add spirits, which could result in increased access to spirits. This was raised as a concern by the VPD, some alcohol treatment providers and community groups. However, this concern regarding increased access to spirits is addressed somewhat because:

- The overall number of liquor stores would not increase; and
- The approval to add spirits would be based on community acceptance.

In sum, this consideration item seeks to balance views expressed by community and alcohol treatment representatives that there is no need for more stores, and that community acceptance is important, with the industry view that the City should not be regulating product range, and that approvals should be equitable.

### C) Discussion of Spacing Guidelines

The Guidelines currently include a 150m separation of liquor stores from family oriented uses (elementary or secondary school, church, park, community centre, neighbourhood house). They also include a provision that new Type 1 liquor stores be located 500m or more away from any existing liquor store (of any Type) in the downtown and Central Broadway areas.

During the consultation process, staff heard many comments regarding these spacing guidelines. There was a wide variety of opinions expressed with little consensus. The full range of opinions is listed in Appendix C and can be characterized as either supporting a more prescriptive approach, or favouring greater discretion.

The Liquor Store Guidelines are more prescriptive in nature than many other guidelines that provide direction for conditional uses. The key advantage of a more prescriptive guideline is increased certainty and predictability for both the applicant and the community. The disadvantages are that they can become difficult to administer as the list of "rules" increases; further, it is difficult to develop guidelines that capture all possibilities, resulting in the need for frequent amendment.

On the other hand, a more discretionary approach is better able to respond to individual community concerns and allows for reconciliation of competing priorities. However, a discretionary approach also decreases certainty and predictability, perceived inconsistency can be a problem, and assessment is more difficult.

Making the current Guidelines less prescriptive and more discretionary would have advantages and disadvantages, as noted above. Staff have considered these, specifically in relation to the existing spacing requirements in the Guidelines.

#### 1) Spacing from Family Oriented Uses

There was general agreement from all three groups that liquor stores should be located away from schools, but there was no consensus on what the spacing guideline should be.

Comments ranged from support for greater spacing to reducing or eliminating the spacing guideline.

Some participants felt that the spacing should be consistent with the VSB policy of 300m; however, 25% of existing liquor stores are within 300m of a school. Spacing guidelines also do not address concerns related to liquor store locations on a travel path to and from school.

There was no consensus on the types of family oriented uses that should be included in the Guidelines.

Based on the comments, staff considered changes to the list of uses and to the spacing guideline. However, in the end, staff are not recommending any changes at this time, because:

- although it appears prescriptive, the current spacing guideline is applied with flexibility and in consideration of other factors in the Guidelines, i.e. neighbourhood notification, proposed operation; it is not rigidly interpreted;
- following the VSB guideline for schools would add another spacing guideline (300m for schools, 150m for all other uses);
- an incompatible use in one area might be acceptable in another area; to capture all possible incompatible uses would result in a lengthy list. In practice, staff seek to assess all uses that might be a concern.

## 2) Spacing between stores in the downtown and Central Broadway areas

Many participants noted that the downtown area is different than the rest of the City with respect to liquor retail. In contrast to some of the residential areas outside the downtown, liquor stores in the downtown are generally well accepted, with little or no opposition to new liquor store proposals. Further, the number of liquor stores downtown has more than doubled since 2002, a much greater increase than in the rest of the City

The current guideline is intended to provide adequate access to liquor for a large and growing residential population, a large employment base, and a large number of tourists and visitors, while preventing over-concentration.

Based on the comments, staff considered reducing or eliminating the 500m spacing. However, staff are not recommending any changes, for the following reasons:

- although none of the 11 existing liquor stores in the downtown conforms to the 500m guideline, only 2 would conform to a 300m guideline. Even if the spacing were decreased to 150m (about 1 block), only 5 stores would conform;
- due to the high level of public acceptance of liquor stores in the downtown, staff are flexible with the spacing guidelines and give consideration to other factors, such as neighbourhood notification and operational characteristics;
- retaining the spacing guideline helps maintain some level of distance between stores.



## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

## PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Providing liquor stores in Local Shopping Areas, with other commercial services and uses, and in close proximity to where people live, will reduce car travel.

## SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Director of Social Planning has reviewed this report and has no concerns about the recommendations. Social Planning believes the current list of family oriented uses and current spacing guidelines are adequate.

## CONCLUSION

Through the consultation process, staff heard that the community is generally satisfied with the current Guidelines and the existing number and location of liquor stores. Similarly, the alcohol prevention and treatment community as well as the VPD noted that there is adequate access to alcohol now, and relate increased access to alcohol with increased social harm. These sentiments support little or no change. Finally, while the liquor industry would like expanded locational opportunities, some participants noted a need to balance customer service with concentration of stores.

For these reasons, staff are not proposing major changes to the guidelines, but recommend two minor amendments:

- require signage on site for proposed new liquor stores or liquor stores proposing changes; and
- recognize new LSAs as possible locations for liquor stores.

Staff also put forward one amendment for Council's consideration: to amend the liquor store categories to allow existing small stores to add spirits to their product range, after at least one year of positive operations, and with community support.

These changes recognize the importance of community support and acceptance of this use, as well as individual community issues and concerns, in the context of vital and diverse Local Shopping Areas, and the unique nature of the downtown.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL AND REPORT CONCURRENCES**

**General Mgr./Dept. Head:**

**Report Date:**

**Author:** Heike Roth

**Date:**

**Phone No.:** 604.871.6115

This report has been prepared in consultation with the departments listed to the right, and they concur with its contents.

**Concurring Departments:**  
**Social Planning**  
**Licenses and Inspections**  
**Development Services**



## **City of Vancouver** *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

Community Services, 453 W. 12th Ave Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4 ☎ 604.873.7344 fax 604.873.7060  
[planning@vancouver.ca](mailto:planning@vancouver.ca)

# LIQUOR STORE GUIDELINES

*Adopted by City Council on November 2, 2004*  
*Amended*

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## 1.0 Application and Intent

These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with those District Schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law and Official Development Plans which conditionally permit the liquor store use. The guidelines provide direction regarding a range of factors, including location and spacing as well as operational and administrative considerations. The applicant should consider all of these factors in the preparation of their development permit application. City staff will use the guidelines in the assessment of development permit applications for a liquor store, including redevelopment of existing liquor store premises. This assessment will be based on the characteristics of the site and surrounding area and the details of the development proposal. The permitted product range of a liquor store is defined in the Development Permit.

The intent of these Guidelines is to provide reasonable access to liquor stores while minimizing impacts on neighbourhoods.

## 2.0 Categorization

Liquor stores are categorized as follows:

- (a) Type 1
  - (i) A store 280m<sup>2</sup> (3000 sq.ft.) gross or less that sells any combination of beer and wine, including cider and coolers.
- (b) Type 2
  - (i) Any store that sells spirits, alone or in combination with beer and/or wine; and/or
  - (ii) Any store over 280m<sup>2</sup> (3000 sq.ft.) gross regardless of product mix.

Type 2 stores may be a maximum of 2300m<sup>2</sup> (25,000sq.ft.) gross in size.

## 3.0 Location and Number of Stores

New locations for liquor stores are focussed in certain identified Local Shopping Areas. These Local Shopping Areas come from adopted Community Visions, Local Area Plans, or Council Policy, and are intended to serve the daily needs of residents.

General commercial areas are commercially zoned areas that contain significant retail, but are not Local Shopping Areas because their focus is more on serving employees, tourists, or citywide/regional customers rather than nearby residents.

Local Shopping Areas are shown on the attached map #1, and their boundaries are described in the attached table. Also shown on map #1 are the general boundaries for the Central Broadway and Downtown areas.

### 3.1 Type 1 Stores

- (a) A maximum of one Type 1 store may locate in any identified Local Shopping Area that does not have a liquor store of either type.
- (b) In the Downtown and Central Broadway areas, where there are no identified Local Shopping Areas, additional Type 1 stores may be located, provided each is 500m or more from any liquor store of either type.
- (c) An existing Type 1 store in a Local Shopping Area may relocate within its Local Shopping Area. An existing Type 1 store that is in a general commercial area may relocate within its general commercial area.
- (d) Existing Type 1 stores may expand up to the 280m<sup>2</sup> (3000 sq.ft.) gross size limit.

### 3.2 Type 2 Stores

- (a) Existing Type 2 liquor stores may remain in their current locations, or may relocate close by (i.e. within the same Local Shopping Area or general commercial area), provided that the new location meets the guidelines as well or better than the previous location.

### 3.3 General

- (a) One Type 1 or Type 2 store (but not both) may replace ~~each of the two~~ recently closed liquor stores (Robson and Denman), ~~Victoria near 49<sup>th</sup>~~, on the same site or close by (i.e. within the same Local Shopping Area). (Store at Victoria near 49<sup>th</sup> replaced in 2005)
- (b) One Type 1 or Type 2 store (but not both) may locate in each of the two emerging neighbourhoods of Southeast False Creek and the East Fraserlands. The locations in these emerging neighbourhoods will not be considered until planning has proceeded to the point where commercial areas are identified and approved.
- (c) *One Type 1 or Type 2 store (but not both) may locate in new Local Shopping Areas, identified through neighbourhood planning programs. Proposed locations in these emerging Local Shopping Areas will not be considered until these new Local Shopping Areas are defined and approved.*
- (d) No Type 1 or Type 2 stores should be located in the Downtown Eastside or Gastown areas where existing Council policy does not permit new liquor retail outlets. (see attached map#2).

### 4.0 Separation from Family oriented uses

- (a) No liquor store should be located within 150m of a church, park, elementary or secondary school, community centre or neighbourhood house.

### 5.0 Liquor Store Operations

With regard for the primary focus of the business (range of liquor products sold), the following factors will be taken into consideration:

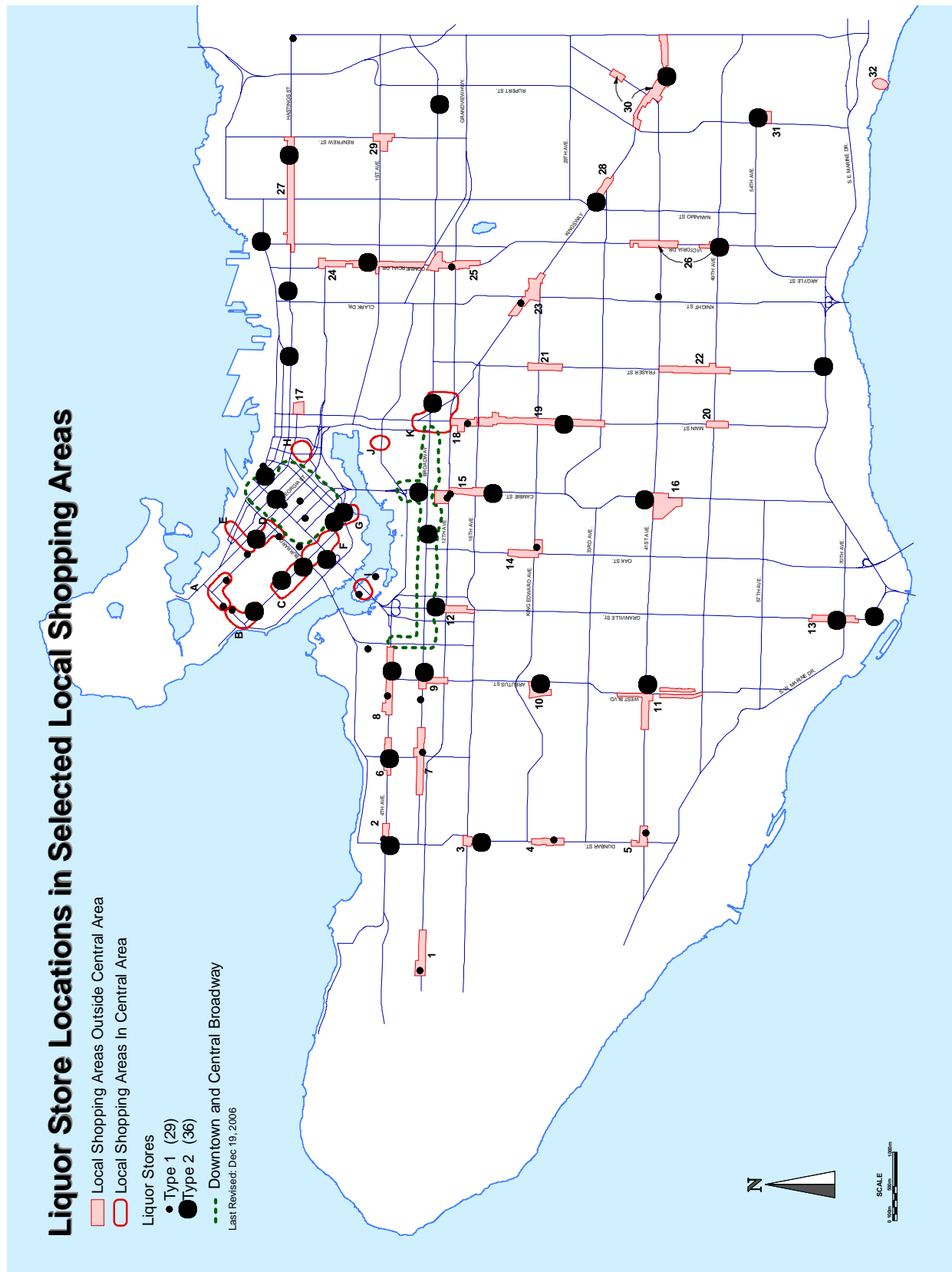
- (a) Hours of operation
- (b) The manageability of the impacts related to:
  - (i) traffic
  - (ii) parking, with particular concern for short term parking
  - (iii) loading, with an applicant provided loading operations plan detailing how and when loading will take place and how large delivery vehicles will be accommodated
- (c) Handling of bottle returns (design and operation)

### 6.0 Process and Administrative Considerations

The main process steps will be as follows:

- (a) The Applicant submits a copy of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) preliminary approval letter.
- (b) Staff conduct a neighbourhood notification of affected neighbours (size of notification area will be determined for each application).
- (c) *The applicant posts signage on-site, advising of the liquor retail proposal; this signage should be in keeping with the City's normal sign preparation and installation procedures.*
- (d) The Development Permit may be approved for a limited period of time subject to the discretion of the Director of Planning.
- (e) Applications deemed controversial by the Director of Planning may be referred to Council for advice.

Map #1: Liquor Store Locations in Selected Local Shopping Areas



**Description of Selected Local Shopping Area (LSA) Boundaries December 2006**

<b>LSA #</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	W. 10 <sup>th</sup> : Tolmie to Discovery
2	W. 4 <sup>th</sup> : Highbury to Collingwood
3	W. 16 <sup>th</sup> N side, Alma to Dunbar and south side opposite, Dunbar 17 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup>
4	Dunbar: lane S of King Edward to W 30 <sup>th</sup>
5	Dunbar: W 39 <sup>th</sup> to lane S of W 41 <sup>st</sup> ; W 41 <sup>st</sup> : Dunbar to Collingwood
6	W 4 <sup>th</sup> : W of Bayswater to Trafalgar
7	Broadway: Collingwood to Larch
8	4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue: Burrard to Balsam
9	Broadway: Vine to Arbutus; Arbutus: Broadway to 12 <sup>th</sup>
10	Arbutus Village Shopping Mall
11	W. Blvd: 37 <sup>th</sup> to 49 <sup>th</sup> ; E. Blvd: lane N of 41 <sup>st</sup> to 49 <sup>th</sup> ; W. 41 <sup>st</sup> : Larch to Maple
12	Granville: 10 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup>
13	Granville: W 64 <sup>th</sup> to S of 71 <sup>st</sup>
14	Oak: W 21 <sup>st</sup> to S of King Edward, King Edward Mall
15	Cambie: 12 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup> , east side; w 16 <sup>th</sup> to W 19 <sup>th</sup>
16	Cambie: W 39 <sup>th</sup> to W 43 <sup>rd</sup> , Oakridge Centre
17	Main to Gore; Pender, Keefer
18	Main Street: 12 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup>
19	Main Street: 16 <sup>th</sup> to 33 <sup>rd</sup>
20	Main Street: 48 <sup>th</sup> to 51 <sup>st</sup>
21	Fraser: 23 <sup>rd</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup>
22	Fraser: 41 <sup>st</sup> to 51 <sup>st</sup>
23	Kingsway: Inverness to Perry, Knight: lane N of Kingsway to King Edward
24	Commercial: Lane N of Venables to Grandview Highway North
25	Commercial: Grandview Hwy. S to 16th, Broadway: E and W of Commercial
26	Victoria: 37 <sup>th</sup> to 44 <sup>th</sup> , 47 <sup>th</sup> to 50 <sup>th</sup>
27	Hastings: Semlin to Renfrew
28	Kingsway: Earles to Nanaimo
29	Renfrew: Graveley to 3rd, 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue: S side, Kaslo to Renfrew
30	Kingsway: Rupert to Boundary
31	Champlain Mall, 54 <sup>th</sup> and Kerr
32	East Fraserlands
A	Denman: Nelson to Robson, Robson: Denman to Cardero
B	Denman: Nelson to Davie, Davie: Denman to Cardero
C	Davie: Jervis to Burrard
D	Robson: Bute - Burrard, Alberni: Bute - Burrard, Burrard: Smithe - Georgia
E	Bute: Robson to Coal Harbour
F	Davie: Burrard to Homer
G	Davie: Homer to False Creek & Marinaside Cres.
H	Abbott - Keefer - Pender
I	Granville Island
J	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenues, Main/Quebec south of Terminal
K	Broadway/Main/Kingsway



Map #2: Downtown Eastside/Gastown Liquor Retail Restricted Area



Existing Type 1 (Boutique) Liquor Stores are located at:  
375 Water Street

Existing Type 2 (Regular) Liquor Stores are located at:  
555 West Hastings  
769 East Hastings

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### A) Recent Liquor Retail Policy Changes

In the fall of 2002, the Provincial government made a number of changes to their liquor retail policy, including permitting liquor primary licence holders, such as pubs and lounges, to apply to open a liquor store. To respond to a potentially significant increase in the number of stores in Vancouver, Council quickly adopted Beer and Wine Guidelines in 2003, without public consultation.

In 2004, staff reported to Council three times with proposals for amendments to the Guidelines, and the current guidelines were adopted in November 2004, following consultation with the liquor retail industry and input regarding the social impacts of increased access to liquor. At the same time, Council instructed staff to undertake a public consultation process involving community and BIA groups, alcohol prevention and treatment providers and the liquor retail industry in 2 - 3 years time, allowing all involved to work with and experience the new guidelines.

### B) Overview of Current Zoning and Guidelines

Liquor store is defined in the Zoning and Development By-law as: "the use of premises for the sale of liquor, beer or wine for consumption off premises." It is a conditional approval use in all commercial zones, as well as in some industrial and heritage districts. As a conditional use, the Director of Planning has discretion on approvals, based on the Guidelines.

The Liquor Store Guidelines provide for two types of Liquor Stores:

#### Type 1 store:

- 280m<sup>2</sup> (3000 sq.ft.) gross or less in size that sells any combination of beer and wine;
- Maximum of one Type 1 store to be considered in each identified Local Shopping Area (LSA) that currently has no liquor store of any type;
- In Downtown and Central Broadway (where there are no identified LSAs), stores to be a minimum of 500 m from any Type 1 or Type 2 store.

#### Type 2 store:

- More than 280m<sup>2</sup> (3000 sq.ft.) gross in size, or sells spirits alone or in combination with beer and/or wine
- May be located only where Type 2 stores currently exist, but may be relocated within the same LSA, or general commercial area.

The Liquor Store Guidelines also provide for:

- A Type 1 or Type 2 store (but not both) to replace the closed liquor store at Robson and Denman, and to locate in the emerging neighbourhoods of Southeast False Creek and East Fraserlands;
- A 150m separation from family-oriented uses: elementary or secondary schools, community centres, neighbourhood houses, churches and parks.

Each application is assessed individually; a process which looks at operational factors and includes neighbourhood notification. Controversial applications are referred to Council for advice; others are handled by the Director of Planning. The development permit is time limited, and specifies the range of products to be sold and the hours of operation.

### C) Change in Number and Location of Liquor Stores

In the fall of 2002, prior to any changes in liquor regulation at the Provincial level, there were 39 liquor stores in Vancouver, as shown in the table below. Today, there are 65 liquor stores in the City, with possibly twelve more stores based on development applications still in process.

**Table 1 Number of Liquor Retail Stores in Vancouver**

Type of store	No. of stores -2002	No. of stores - 2006
1	6	29*
2	33	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>

*\* 13 beer and wine stores, 16 wine stores*

In addition to the increase in the number of liquor stores, Table 2 shows that the number of stores in the downtown peninsula has more than doubled since 2002. Further, 8 of the 12 outstanding development applications for new stores are for locations in the downtown peninsula.

**Table 2 Location of Liquor Retail Stores in Vancouver**

Location	No. of stores - 2002	No. of stores - 2006
Downtown peninsula	9	20
Rest of City	30	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>

### D) Future Plans of the Provincial Liquor Distribution Branch

Staff met with representatives of the provincial Liquor Distribution Branch to learn of their future plans with respect to the government liquor stores in Vancouver. They noted that:

- There are no plans to close any stores in Vancouver at this time;
- They are pursuing renovation strategies at some of the existing stores to update and improve their appearance; and
- They are looking for a replacement location for the existing liquor store near Broadway and Maple.

## COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS

The following comments are organized by topic heading, and then by group. For Topic 4, only industry representatives had comments.

### Topic 1: Type 1 and Type 2 Store Definitions

The current policy defines two types of liquor stores:

- Type 1: a store that sells only beer and/or wine and is less than 3000 sq.ft. gross in size; and
- Type 2: a store that sells spirits, beer and/or wine, or a store that is greater than 3000 sq.ft. gross in size, to a maximum of 25,000 sq.ft. in size.

### COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- There are social reasons to maintain the distinction between stores; there are more social issues with spirits
- The higher the percentage of alcohol the worse the impact on the neighbourhoods
- Spirits are not purchased on a regular basis the way beer and wine are; it's OK to make a special trip to make this special purchase
- Spirits should be more closely regulated than beer and wine; spirits form a small part of overall purchases
- Store size should remain a criteria; current size regulations seem reasonable
- Size really does matter - the new type 2 store at Victoria and 49th is very small and innocuous; the liquor store in Champlain mall is also working very well from a community perspective
- The bigger the store, the worse the impact - more undesirables, more kids hanging around trying to get alcohol, and more car traffic
- Social and other nuisance issues outweigh the benefits of customer convenience
- Environmental impacts of having to drive to 2 places to get your alcohol and customer convenience suggest that one store that sells all products would be better
- There are issues of customer convenience - the current definitions of two types of stores with different products limits convenience
- There is a balance to be struck between convenience and proximity vs. social concerns related to noise, disturbance and traffic
- Upper Kits Residents Assoc. likes both aspects (store size and product range) of this policy the way it is
- There should continue to be community input into what an individual store sells and how big it is
- Current lack of problems is due to the current policies
- Generally support the policy the way it is

### ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS COMMENTS

- No real difference between beer and wine, and beer, wine and spirits - all have the capacity to lead to problems, both acute and chronic
- There is some evidence that spirits should be handled more carefully
- Trend in some Nordic countries is to promote low alcohol beverages as an alternative, to reduce alcohol harms
- Product sold is an important distinction – the definition is good as is

- Small beer and wine store is less disruptive than a Type 2; bigger store means bigger impact
- Smaller stores are less visible and reduce the social availability - the perception that this is just another product and that everyone is out buying it. It also reduces impulse and overbuying, such as occurs in a larger store (how many groceries do you buy at a corner store as compared to a visit to a Superstore?)
- Size is an important distinction - like the definition the way it is

## INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- The market, not regulations, should dictate the size of a liquor store
- Location and business model should dictate size
- Size limit will restrict future flexibility to address changing market
- Policy regulating store size is OK - keep it
- Size is irrelevant: maybe a cap at the upper end; should be determined by consultation on individual applications
- Some basis for differentiation based on size
- The City shouldn't regulate product
- Product mix is too restrictive
- City should consider consumer's desire for a full range of products
- Customer point of view - level of service important
- One stop shopping is desired -- regulations not convenient for consumer - may have to go far to buy a desired product
- Should have option to sell what the provincial licence allows
- Type 1 liquor store definition/type too narrow
- There should be no differentiation between liquor stores: there should be no type 1 or type 2 - a liquor store is a liquor store
- Abolish type 1 and type 2 definitions
- Redefine type 1 and type 2 by size only
- There seem to be some semantics issues, e.g. Type 1 stores can sell coolers which are made from spirits which they can't sell
- Other municipalities do not have a type 1/type 2 differentiation
- Have only one definition for liquor store, and eliminate the need to consult with neighbourhoods to allow the addition of spirits at beer and wine stores
- There should be a definition/type for a wine only store
- Add a New Type of Boutique store : less than 1200 sq.ft., BC wine only, and allow 1/LSA regardless of other liquor stores already there;
- No difference in type 1 and 2, except for VQA - wine only stores approved by the LDB - City policy should be in line with provincial regulation
- VQA wine only stores are different than other liquor stores and should be recognized as such
- Government liquor stores and private liquor stores should be treated the same by municipalities
- City and provincial regulations and definitions should be consistent for all stores
- City regulations should be aligned with provincial regulations which allow stores to sell full range of products
- Penalty here in Vancouver in that liquor store operator pays for a certain kind of licence that, due to Vancouver regulations, can't be used fully in Vancouver; could there be a discount in the cost of a City of Vancouver licence in recognition of the limits the City has in place

- Currently skewed; need a level playing field
- Let neighbourhoods decide on applications for new liquor stores
- Status quo is fabulous
- Over-simplified policy
- They are inherently different criteria, size vs. product
- Separate product from size
- Spirits are not evil
- Keep provincial liquor stores separate from City policy regulations
- Separate private operators from government stores
- Availability after government store closes is a concern
- No public backlash when beer and wine combined, so don't expect it if spirits are also added

## Topic 2: Limit of one Type 1 Liquor Store per LSA

The current policy permits one Type 1 liquor store per identified Local Shopping Area.

### COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Liquor stores should be in LSAs - for social and environmental reasons
- The current policy is good the way it is
- Limits are important, especially of spirits
- Current policy of 1 liquor store per LSA is good - more than 1 is not needed
- Number and location of stores is a sensible/reasonable compromise
- More stores may increase complementary services for a shopping area/community
- Victoria Drive LSA boundaries should not be changed to include the area between 51st and 54th avenues

### ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS COMMENTS

- Locations in LSAs are preferable to locations on commercial strips
- Prefer locations in shopping malls where there is lots of supervision
- 1 store/LSA is an important way to limit the density and number of outlets, which tend to increase consumption
- Strict geographic siting will cause problems, as the application of one number/limit across the city will be too much in some neighbourhoods and not enough in others; controls should be strict in neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations and lax in neighbourhoods without -- a simple rule like one per LSA is not going to allow the kind of discernment needed to make good siting decisions based on safety and health criteria

### INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- Consumer is inconvenienced if they can't obtain the type of liquor product they desire at the only Type 1 store
- Policy forces people into cars to drive further to the one location to get liquor. Liquor is heavy (nature of the product)
- Free enterprise should dictate the number of liquor stores per LSA, not regulations

- Not convenient, not consumer friendly because they may be located too far from some residents
- LSA too narrow; why restrict liquor stores to only local shopping areas? Liquor store may want/need to move to warehouse space in industrial areas; Industrial areas may be appropriate locations
- Provincial government already restricts the number of liquor stores and already deals with spacing; additional City regulation is not needed
- Some relevance to current policy but not without issues, i.e. Proximity
- Fabulous the way it is, subject to if density increases, the policy should be reviewed
- Consider additional LSAs, e.g. at Main & 41st based on density/size of LSA, and on community needs
- Allow VQA boutique store along with type 1 and type 2
- Allow both type 1 and type 2 stores in each LSA
- Maintain policy of 1 store/LSA but do not make a distinction between type 1 & 2 stores, so 1 liquor store or VQA or wine store per LSA
- But downtown has greater density, so maybe allow more than 1 store/LSA
- No new areas other than Southeast False Creek
- Redefine LSAs
- Eliminate LSA model; abolish LSAs
- Make no. of stores dependent on community/neighbourhood support

### Topic 3: 500m spacing requirement in the downtown and Central Broadway

In the downtown and Central Broadway areas, where there are no identified local shopping areas, the current policy allows for new Type 1 stores, provided they are not located within 500m of an existing store.

#### COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- 500m spacing seems reasonable

#### ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS COMMENTS

- The 500m spacing is a way of reducing access. Convenience is balanced with the fact that alcohol is Canada's number 1 drug problem
- The spacing should be at least 500m. Again, convenience is trumped at some point by the fact that alcohol is a product with considerable potential for abuse.

#### INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- Province already regulates spacing so City regulations don't matter
- The market should dictate the location of stores - there should be no spacing regulations at all
- Need to be aware of concentration issues
- Need to be flexible based on the area
- Should reflect population density -- decreased spacing for greater density; room for more stores to serve a growing population
- 500m OK now, but as the neighbourhood's density increases, it may stop being well served. Think of downtown Vancouver in 10 - 15 years.
- Should be some distancing requirement, but unsure of how much

- 500m seems too finite
- 500m may be appropriate in some locations but not in others
- 500m seems OK but recognize approvals with less spacing
- Keep current 500m spacing
- Increase spacing to 1000m
- Eliminate / reduce spacing; reduce spacing in downtown only
- Current policy is good but not fabulous
- Lift moratorium on Gastown
- Focus more on number of stores downtown because spacing requirement hasn't been respected
- Smaller spacing required - something realistic based on location and existing situation
- Moratorium on government liquor stores
- Government liquor stores shouldn't be included in "counts" of liquor stores in LSAs

#### Topic 4: Replacement only of Type 2 Liquor Stores

The current policy permits only the replacement or relocation of existing Type 2 stores, within their same general local shopping or commercial area.

#### INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- This policy shouldn't exist
- Liquor stores, no matter what they sell, should be permitted to locate where the market dictates
- Eliminate the Type 1 and Type 2 definitions, and then eliminate this replacement policy too - it's not relevant
- Don't like definition of Type 2 liquor store
- There should be one Type 2 store per neighbourhood
- Allow more than one type 2 per LSA (1 public, one private)
- Retain policy as is
- Base policy on size
- Review current LSA boundaries - there may be more LSAs than currently identified

#### Topic 5: 150m spacing from family oriented uses

The current policy provides for a 150m spacing guideline from existing family oriented uses: elementary and secondary schools, parks, churches, community centres and neighbourhood houses.

#### COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Vancouver School Board (VSB) perspective is that 150m is not enough (VSB policy is 300m); concerns about visual impacts on students going to and from school, and cost for clean-up of liquor related debris from school grounds
- VSB has an incompatible use policy which cites 300m
- 150m is not enough, especially for high schools
- 150m is not far enough - distance should be increased to be in keeping with VSB spacing



- This spacing distance could be increased
- Other “child-oriented” uses could be added such as child care centres/teen uses, boys and girls clubs, as well as Triage type facilities, pool halls
- 300m would be a good change, as it is a guideline and hence is flexible
- The problem is when an LRS is located on a main travel path for kids moving to and from school, even when it is outside of 150m
- There are other troublesome uses that should be included, such as pool halls

#### ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS COMMENTS

- The spacing should be at least 150m in parts of the City where there are a lot of people with an alcohol problem
- Positive resource places/alcohol treatment facilities should be well distant from liquor stores to reduce “temptation”
- Geographical separation is not as important as neighbourhood acceptance
- Substance abuse facilities and residences should be added to the list of uses

#### INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- Agree with the 150m spacing requirement for school - anywhere that minors normally hang out
- 150m spacing OK for schools but not for other uses
- Churches shouldn't be included; liquor is prevalent in churches
- Remove community centres, neighbourhood houses, churches from list
- No issues with this guideline
- Need to keep some flexibility
- Problematic because it is not specific enough: art school vs. high school
- Use a community survey rather than spacing - 75% support is reasonable
- This spacing guideline doesn't work in downtown
- Consider existing liquor stores before locating family oriented uses
- 150m is too high
- Keep 150m spacing
- Abolish 150m spacing
- Reduce to 75m or abolish spacing guideline altogether
- Make determination based on empirical evidence
- Make spacing discretionary
- 150m is outdated. The whole idea of a neighbourhood is to have these services and amenities close by to avoid driving - this includes parks, schools, community centres etc.

Topic 6: Are there any other areas you wish to comment on?

#### COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Concerns about the notification in term of languages used and hence fairness; it should include renters as well as property owners
- Neighbourhood notification should be included in any policy decision making - it should be done more broadly geographically, to affected ethnic groups; more time should be given to respond;

- Time to respond to notification not adequate - applicants have months to plan their strategies but neighbourhoods get only 2 weeks to respond - this is inadequate and unfair
- Use media alerts as part of notification
- Have open houses in the LSAs when there is a liquor store proposal
- Concern about having individual neighbourhoods making case by case decisions
- Downtown might be different; but all residential communities should be treated the same/have same guidelines
- Citywide policies are good - makes it simpler for the community
- Guidelines should include aesthetic criteria for liquor stores so that they are attractive additions to their LSAs
- Operation of liquor stores should be studied more closely to determine what works - this should be incorporated into the guidelines
- The current policies have been positive in keeping a lid on things in Vancouver as compared to other municipalities; the guidelines are as good as they are due to community mobilization and input into them
- Hours of operation -are not uniform across the city and some just don't meet the customers needs; hours should be community driven
- Off sales are important as places to buy liquor, and should be included in our count
- Provincial handling of LRS regulations hasn't been good - hasn't been done with community safety and well being in mind
- Vancouver is handling this issue well; Vernon has a total of 14 liquor stores for a population of 30,000; Victoria has too many stores too
- Notification for this policy review report to Council - all those on the notification list should get a letter with a link to the report; all those who attended should get a copy of the report
- Don't want to see any changes to the detriment of neighbourhoods deciding what happens in their own communities - want to have input into which businesses become part of the environment and daily lives
- Support tightening the regulations

#### ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS COMMENTS

- Not enough has been done in prevention of early onset drinking and public awareness of the continued scope of the alcohol problem and its weight on society.
- We have sufficient access to alcohol now - there is no need to increase availability
- No more liquor stores are needed in the City; increased access results in greater problems related to drinking
- The key issue with "clustering " appears to be when outlets group near vulnerable populations (low SES, aboriginal, groups with elevated rates of substance abuse, including youth) - so a key piece of information for siting decisions is the demographics of the population
- Having a stand alone liquor retail policy is wrong - there needs to be one overall liquor policy, that includes liquor stores, licensed premises, off-sales, etc. - all access to liquor
- Liquor store operators come to the city applying for a small wine store, then come back a year later to add beer, then come back a year later to add spirits; the policy must control access to alcohol
- There have been a lot of changes in liquor in the City in the last 3 or so years: more liquor stores, expanded hours of licenced premises, expanded no. of seats - we should be prudent and go slow; let's work with the policy we have in place

- Liquor stores work better when attached to a licensed premise, rather than stand alone
- Granville Mall has crossed the saturation point of liquor, and now has huge policing requirements
- Want to see 9 p.m. closing of liquor stores
- Neighbourhoods should be consulted not just notified; there should be neighbourhood agreements regarding operation of premises
- Don't want increased access to alcohol; police forces not sufficient to address volume of those drinking and associated negative behaviours
- MADD doesn't want more stores but recognizes that it is a problem that you have to drive to get to a liquor store
- MADD would like to see the City promote an anti drinking and driving campaign - this should be part of the guidelines for private stores; for example, no sales of singles

#### INDUSTRY COMMENTS

- Shaughnessy/Kerrisdale area and many others are underserved
- Terminal to Broadway area is underserved - should have same rules as central Broadway
- There should be an acknowledgement that the private stores can be as cooperative as government stores
- Guidelines vs. policy; staff can vary guidelines and Council decides; with policy, staff must abide by it
- Service levels in the downtown do not consider workers, tourists
- Make LDB stores go through same process as private operators
- Council should respect division of powers between province and City
- Council should re-visit 2003 staff report rejected by COPE Council
- Existing government stores should not get bigger
- Grant approvals more quickly
- Special interest groups have far too much to say. More common sense needs to be built into the process, especially around whether an area is well served. Liquor stores generally are and should be responsible and contribute to the good of the community; those that are not should be dealt with accordingly.