



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: October 20, 2023
Contact: Sarah Hicks
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: November 1, 2023
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Development, Buildings and Licensing

SUBJECT: 855 Granville Street – Cineplex Entertainment Limited Partnership by its General Partner Cineplex Entertainment Corporation (“Rec Room Granville”) Liquor Primary Licence Application
Liquor Establishment Extended – Class 6 (951+)

Recommendations

THAT Council, having considered the opinion of area residents and business operators as determined by neighbourhood notification, site sign, noise impacts and relevant Council policy as outlined in this Report, endorse the application submitted by Rising Tide Consulting, on behalf of the applicant, Cineplex Entertainment Limited Partnership by its General Partner Cineplex Entertainment Corporation, for a new Liquor Primary licence (Liquor Establishment Extended – Class 6) located at 855 Granville Street, subject to:

- i. A maximum interior capacity of 1,594 and an outdoor patio capacity of 64 persons;
- ii. Extended Hours of operation limited to 9 am to 3 am, Seven (7) days a week;
- iii. The outdoor patio ceasing all liquor service and vacated by 11 pm nightly;
- iv. No entertainments or music permitted on the patio;
- v. A Time-Limited Development Permit;
- vi. An acoustic report certifying that the establishment meets Noise Control By-law requirements; and
- vii. Signing a Good Neighbour Agreement with the City prior to business licence issuance.

Purpose and Executive Summary

Staff recommend Council endorse the applicant’s request to operate a new 1,594 person interior and 64 person patio Liquor Primary (Liquor Establishment Extended - Class 6), located at 855 Granville Street, subject to the conditions noted in this report. The application does not

comply with the current Council policy regarding size and location, but is in alignment with the Granville Street Plan, which support new entertainment experiences that invite a wider demographic of Vancouverites to enjoy. Staff support this application, given the need and desire to revitalize the Granville Entertainment District and attract new, diverse businesses that will help shift the daytime and night-time landscape. The requirement for a Time-Limited Development Permit, a Good Neighbour Agreement and submission of an acoustical report will provide the necessary controls to ensure the premise operates in a manner that will mitigate impacts to the neighbourhood and surrounding area.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[City role in Liquor Primary licence applications](#) – The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) of the Provincial Government regulations require local government to provide a Council resolution on new liquor primary licence applications unless the local government decides to opt out of the application review process. Council policy has been to consider the impact of the new licence application on the community and to provide comment, generally in the form of a resolution.

[Liquor Licence Policy: Liquor Primary Size, Capacity, and Location \(July 14, 2005\)](#) – Council Policy states that no Class 6 Liquor Primary establishment shall be located within 750 metres of another Class 6 Establishment. This policy only pertains to Liquor Primary establishments and not Food Primary establishments (restaurants).

[Liquor Policy Review – Recommended Actions \(June 14, 2017\)](#) – Council approved policy to reflect the evolving needs and issues, and to respond to provincial directives amending liquor regulations.

City Manager’s Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch requires that local government provide a resolution with comments on public input gathered from the community within the immediate vicinity of the establishment, including the location of the establishment, its person capacity, and hours of liquor service. Once received, the LCRB will review the resolution and any comments for a final decision to issue/endorse the liquor licence.

Cineplex Entertainment Limited Partnership (LP) is a Canadian entertainment company that operates movie theatres and other multimedia related businesses across Canada. The Rec Room brings an amusement gaming experience together with dining and live entertainment all under one roof. Cineplex Entertainment LP currently has ten (10) Rec Room locations across the country.

On [March 13, 2019](#), City Council granted approval to a prior submission by Cineplex Entertainment LP. This approval permitted the Rec Room Granville to function with four (4) liquor licences: Liquor Primary licence, Event-Driven Liquor Primary licence and two Food Primary licences enabling them to offer this distinctive concept. However, operating

requirements under the approved licence types no longer harmonized with how the applicant envisioned operating with the space. As a result, the provincial LCRB application was terminated by the applicant.

The applicant, Cineplex Entertainment LP, has authorized the consulting firm of Rising Tide Consultants Ltd., to act as their representative for this application. The applicant is requesting a Council resolution endorsing their new Liquor Primary licence application. The proposed establishment, located at 855 Granville Street, is for a 1,594-person interior service area, broken down as followed: 492-person basement floor area, 726-person ground floor area and 376-person second floor area, and a 64-person outdoor patio. If the application is approved, Cineplex Entertainment LP would become the Licensee (or holder of the liquor licence).

The establishment will provide a diverse range of entertainment options, primarily centred around electronic gaming. The gaming will encompass video/arcade games, simulator games, sports/interactive games, virtual reality experiences and redemption games, all under the Xscape brand (owned by Cineplex). Furthermore, there will be skill-based games like billiards, mini-putt, ping-pong and axe throwing. Alongside the gaming entertainment, an auditorium stage will host both live performances and programmed entertainment such as pre-recorded music, karaoke, comedy and cabaret shows. Additionally, the establishment will feature event rooms suitable for various social occasions like team building, corporate functions, banquets, and celebratory events (birthdays, anniversaries and other significant events).

Food and beverage service, including the sale and service of alcohol, will be an added amenity. The establishment will have two dining options available for their customers. A restaurant (name to be determined) located on the ground floor that offers a playful take on sit-down comfort food and ‘the Shed’ a quick service restaurant located on the second floor. The Rec Room Granville plans to offer an upscale dining environment with an extensive menu of hot and cold items with an assortment of social platters, shareables, handhelds, entrees and desserts. The applicant is applying for the [Family Food Service endorsement](#) to be added to their Liquor Primary licence which will allow minors, accompanied by a parent or guardian to enter in all licensed areas until 10 pm when food service is available. In addition to the Family Food Service endorsement, the applicant is also applying to add a [Catering endorsement](#) to the proposed licence to be able to offer out of house catering for both food and liquor services in the lower mainland. Catering will be conducted from a large on-site commercial grade kitchen.

The proposed hours of operations are 9 am to 3 am, seven (7) days a week. Per City policy, the outdoor patio must cease all liquor service and vacate by 11 pm nightly, unless otherwise approved to operate the patio with extended hours. No music or entertainment is permissible on the patio.

Discretion is being applied to the Liquor Policy as this application does not comply with the current requirements. The current moratorium within the Granville Entertainment District (GED) prohibits net-new Liquor Primary seats or the relocation of Liquor Primary seats into the area. Exceptions to the Policy allow for: live performance venues, relocation of seats from within the area, and opportunities to find creative solutions for net seat reduction in the GED. While this application does not fit into one of the exceptions, it does align with the vision and emerging directions that are being developed through the Council endorsed Granville Street Planning process. Staff support this application and consider it to be in alignment with these directions,

specifically supporting new entertainment experiences and food services that invite a wider demographic of Vancouverites to enjoy, including youth during select hours and aims to enrich the daytime vibrancy of the neighbourhood. These directions also support the proposed revitalizing of the unique heritage character of the building, and the inclusion of a patio to enhance the viability of food service. As a result, staff are recommending Council endorse the applicants request for a new Liquor Primary licence with the conditions as noted in the recommendations.

Discussion

Public Input – Results of Neighbourhood Notification

A neighbourhood notification advising of the Liquor Primary application was conducted by distributing 1,228 postcard notifications to property owners within a 750 foot radius of the subject site (See Appendix B). A site sign was installed, on all three (3) sides of the construction hoarding, notifying the community of the application and where to direct their comments or concerns. Staff allowed three weeks for the community to share any apprehensions or expressions of support for the application.

In response to the neighbourhood notification, a total of forty-eight (48) pieces of feedback were received. One (1) in opposition and forty-seven (47) in support, of which forty-four (44) were form letters and three (3) letters of support. The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (Appendix C), the Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC) and the BC Craft Brewers Guild submitted the letters of support. Of the forty-eight (48) responses, twenty-nine (29) were from businesses or residents from within the notification area.

The concerns expressed in opposition are tied to the patio’s operational hours, citing the potential of increased noise levels and disturbances in the nearby area.

Supporters of this application emphasized how the proposed concept of the establishment will be a catalyst in the revitalization of the GED. The establishment aims to provide a diverse range of amenities that will attract people of all ages. Furthermore, supporters felt that the increase in number of people in the area as a result of this establishment will be beneficial for existing businesses, with the opportunity to bring renewed energy to the GED.

Location of Establishment

The subject site is located in the Downtown District (DD) and for the purposes of liquor policy, is considered to be located in the Downtown – Commercial area. The establishment is located within a two-storey with basement building in the heart of the ‘Granville Entertainment District’.

Proximity to other Liquor Primary Establishments

Within a 750 metre radius of the subject site there are no other Class 6 Liquor Primary establishments. The only other Class 6 establishment in the City of Vancouver is located approximately 815 metres from the proposed establishment, Parq Vancouver located at 39 Smithe Street. The nearest Liquor Primary establishment is the Pearl on Granville – Liquor Establishment Extended – Class 4, located next door (south) to the proposed establishment. Within the 750 foot (229 metres) radius there are currently sixteen (16) Liquor Primary

establishments and twenty-six (26) Food Primary establishment with active business licenses. It should be noted that a Food Primary establishment’s primary purpose is the service of food with liquor as an additional service.

Person Capacity and Hours of Operation

The proposed capacity for the Liquor Primary licence at this location is a 1,594 person interior and a 64 person patio (See Appendix A). The interior capacity will be split over three levels as followed: 492 person basement floor area, 726 person ground floor area and 376 person second floor area. Final occupancy calculations will be provided in accordance with Building and Fire by-laws once permits have been finalized. Final occupant load calculation will not increase beyond what Council approves.

In the [2018 Liquor Policy Review](#), Council approved policy that removed the probationary period restricting liquor service hours for known good operators. The proposed hours of operation for the Liquor Primary licence are 9 am to 3 am, Seven (7) days a week, which are within the parameters of the Extended Hours permitted in this Downtown – Primarily Commercial area as per the [Business Premises Regulation of Hours By-law No. 8022](#).

Noise

Staff have considered the impact for noise on the community and have no concerns at this time. An acoustical report certifying that the establishment meets Noise Control By-law requirements will be required and should mitigate potential negative community impacts due to noise. The acoustic report is a condition under the [City of Vancouver License By-law No 4450](#) and will support compliance and enforcement efforts if necessary.

Impact on the Community

A Time-Limited Development Permit will be required which will provide ongoing reviews to ensure the land-use and business remains compatible with the surrounding community. The permit review process will involve an assessment of neighbourhood impacts, including compatibility with surrounding uses, hours of operation, social and policing impacts and noise control. In addition, the Good Neighbour Agreement will set out City expectations that the business needs to be responsive in dealing with any issues and responsible for creating a positive relationship with the community.

The applicant has been operating in the City of Vancouver since 2005. Over the years of operating within the City, the applicant has not received any noise complaints related to the daily operations of their current establishments.

With the approval of this new Liquor Primary Licence application, the Vancouver Police Department recognizes that any increase in liquor seats may lead to increased calls for service.

The applicant is encouraged to sign a Bar Watch agreement similar to other Liquor Primary establishments in the GED.

Financial Implications

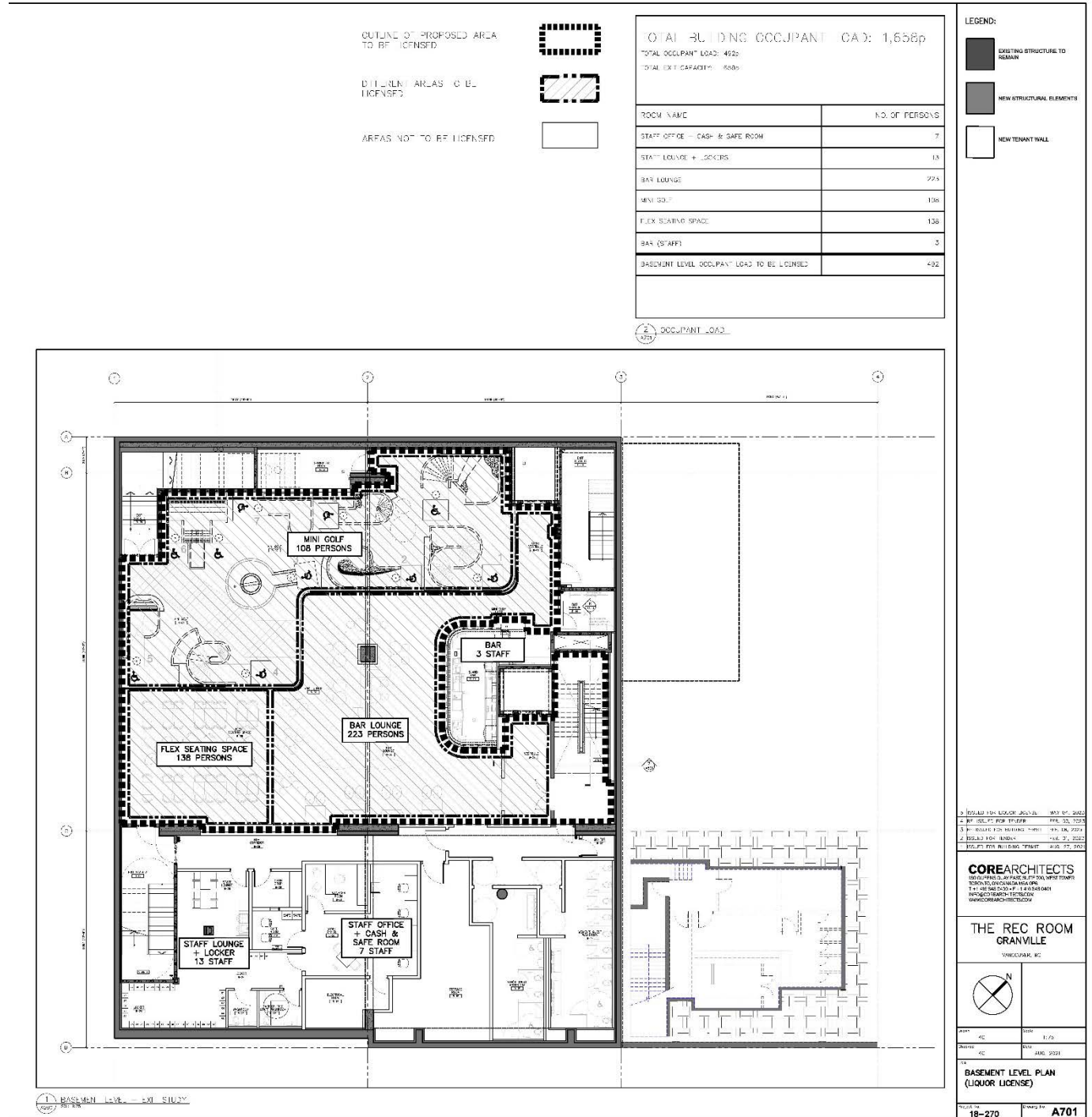
There are no financial implications associated with this report’s recommendations

Legal Implications

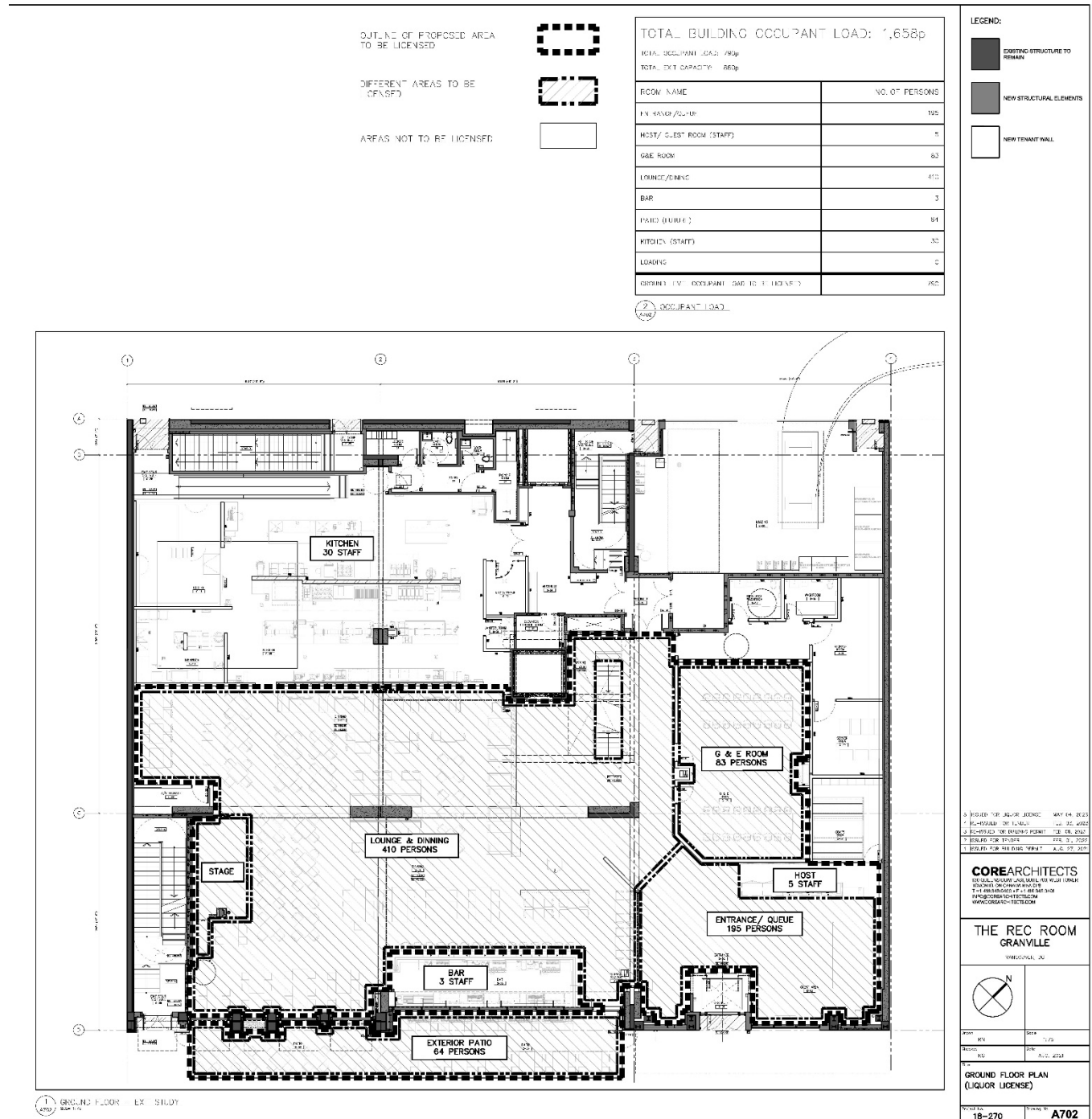
There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

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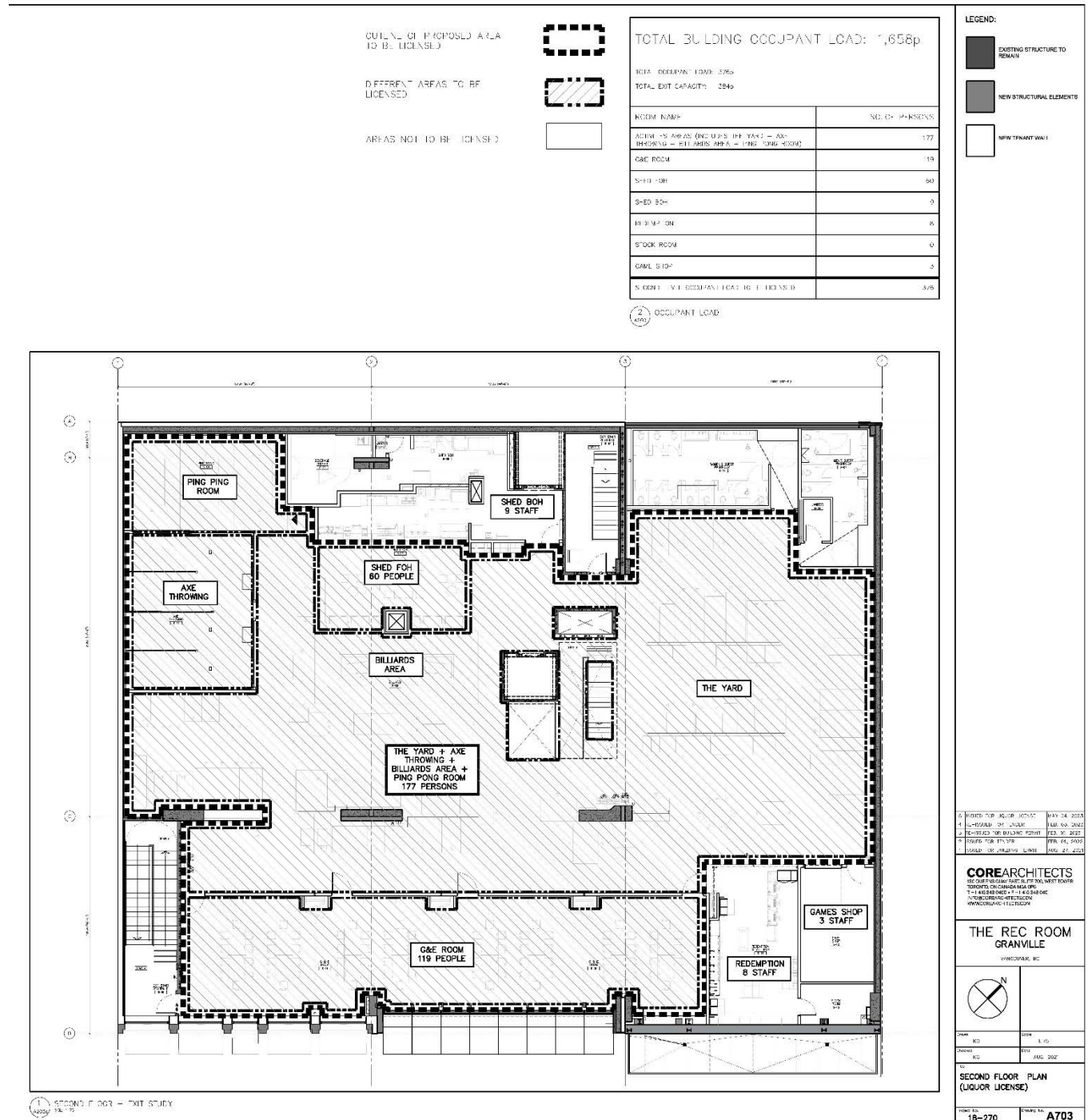
APPENDIX A Establishment Floor Plan – Basement Floor Area



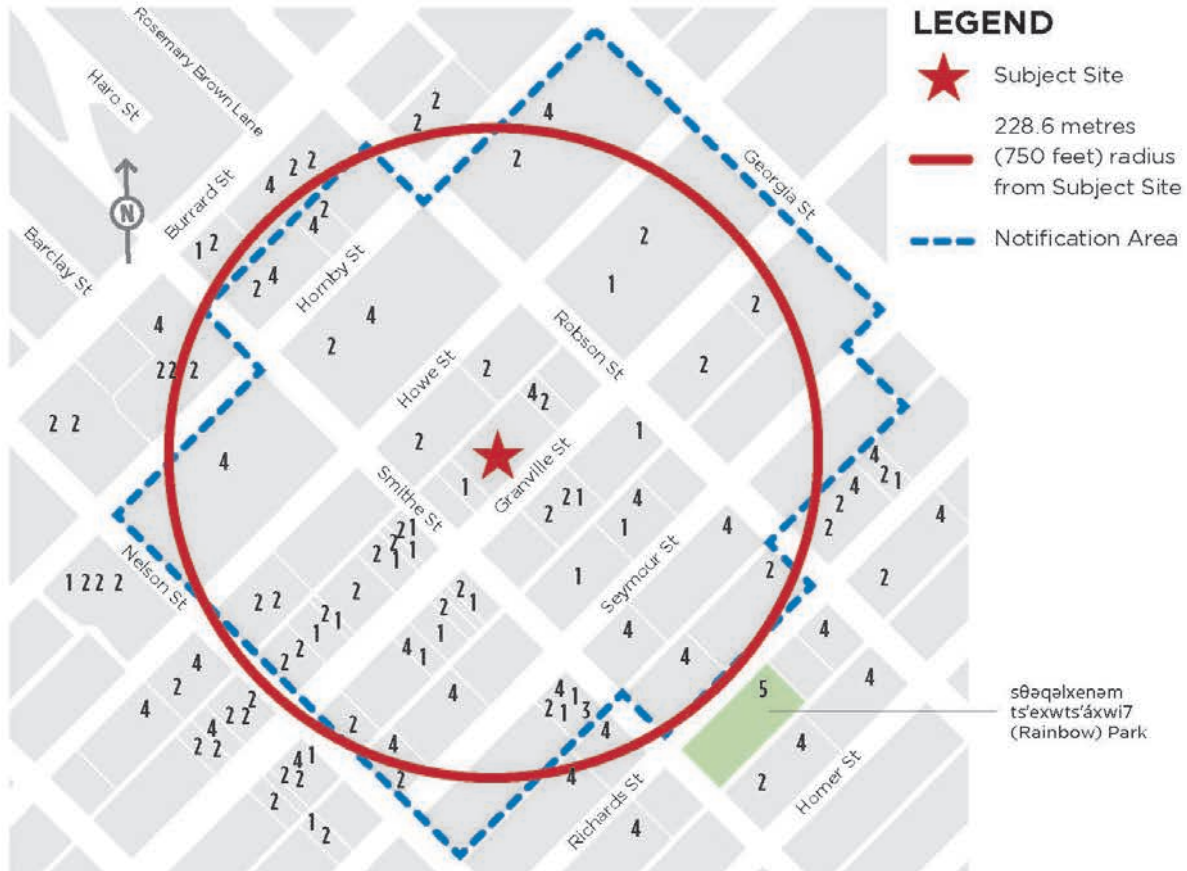
APPENDIX A Establishment Floor Plan – Ground Floor Area



APPENDIX A Establishment Floor Plan – Second Floor Area



APPENDIX B
Notification Area and Surroundings
LIQUOR PRIMARY LICENCE
(Liquor Establishment – Class 6)
 Rec Room Granville – 855 Granville Street



- LEGEND**
- ★ Subject Site
 - 228.6 metres (750 feet) radius from Subject Site
 - Notification Area

1 Liquor Primary Establishments:

- Cinema Public House – Class 1
- Cinema Public House – Class 2
- Commodore Ballroom – Venue
- Fable Diner & Bar – Class 3
- Good Co. Granville – Class 5
- Hotel Belmont – Class 4
- Lennox Pub – Class 3
- Orpheum Annex – Venue
- Par-Tee Putt – Class 3
- Red Card Sports Bar + Eatery – Class 3
- Relish the Pub – Class 2
- Studio Lounge & Nightclub – Class 3
- The Ballyhoo Public House – Class 2
- The Granville Room – Class 1

- The Orpheum - Venue
- The Pearl Ballroom – Class 4
- The Penthouse Nightclub – Class 3
- The Roxy Cabaret – Class 3
- Uva Wine & Cocktail Bar – Class 1
- Vogue Theatre – Venue
- Wedgewood Hotel (Bacchus Restaurant & Lounge) – Class 2

2 Restaurants with Liquor Service:

- 55 Restaurants

3 Liquor Retail Stores:

- Viti Wine & Lager Liquor Store

4 Residential

5 Parks:

- sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 (Rainbow) Park

6 Schools:

- None applicable



APPENDIX C Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association Support Letter

**DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**
Suite 1380 -1100 Melville St
Vancouver, BC V6E 4A6
info@dtvan.ca



September 7th, 2023

Dear Mayor Sim and Vancouver City Councillors:

I am writing to express Downtown Van's support of the liquor primary license application by Cineplex Entertainment for the future Rec Room located at 855 Granville Street.

The Rec Room is a highly anticipated addition to the Granville Entertainment District, and when it opens in 2024, it will be an important step in the evolution of downtown Vancouver. This development addresses several critical needs for the district, including the advancement of a 24-hour economy, support for the Arts and Culture community, a much-needed increase in live performance venues and the preservation of the iconic street's heritage. Additionally, Downtown Van understands that this project is in line with the priorities that have been developed through the Granville Street Planning Program to date.

Downtown Van acknowledges the diligence that Cineplex Entertainment has put into this project. They have shown a clear understanding of the area's safety needs and have a proven track record of stewarding similar projects elsewhere in Canada. We strongly believe that the Rec Room receiving a liquor primary license is appropriate and that the additional license will not cause unnecessary competition with other Granville Entertainment District businesses. We are in full support of their application.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions about Downtown Van's support of the Rec Room's liquor primary license, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Talbot".

JANE TALBOT
President & CEO, Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
jane@dtvan.ca
604-685-7811 x202