



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

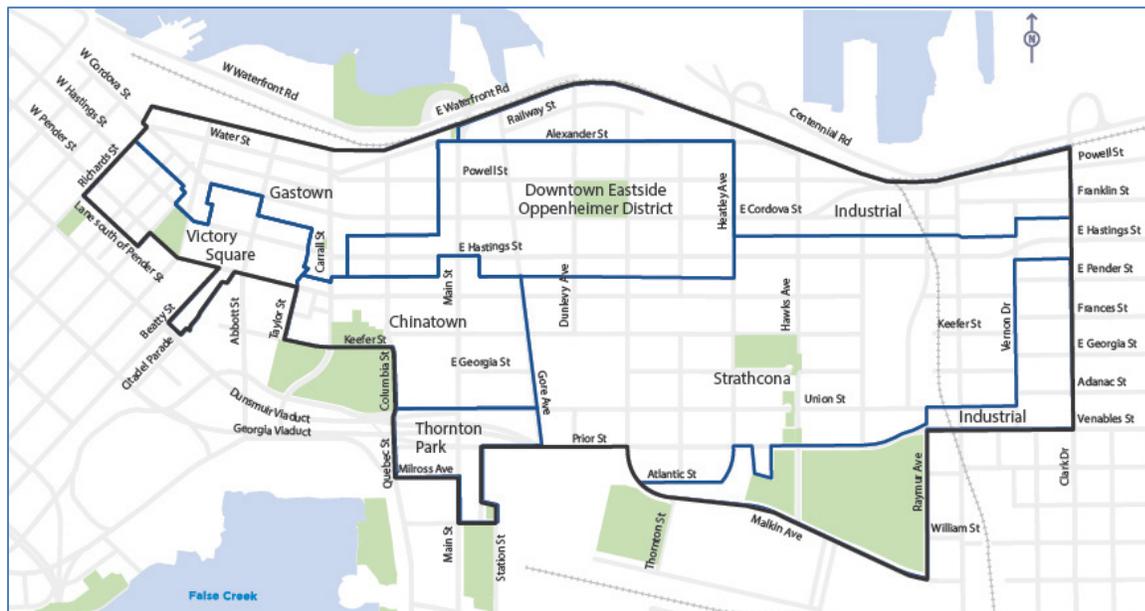
## Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department

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# LIQUOR POLICY FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

*Adopted by City Council on June 14, 2017*

In 1990 Council approved a moratorium on liquor primary licences in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District. In 2012 during the Local Area planning process the moratorium was expanded to include the whole of the Downtown Eastside (Figure 1). The moratorium was reaffirmed in 2014. In June of 2017, Council approved the following policy for the Downtown Eastside. The policy provides guidance to the public, City staff and Council when considering applications for liquor primary licences.



**Figure 1 Downtown Eastside Planning Area (DTES)**

Liquor policy for the Downtown Eastside aligns with the goals and principals of the DTES plan (2014) to make the DTES a more livable, safe and supportive place for all of its diverse residents, and to protect the character and history of the seven DTES sub-areas (Figure 1).

The DTES currently has over 7,000 liquor primary seats.<sup>1</sup> For the neighbourhood's roughly 18,500 residents, this number of seats presents livability challenges. High concentrations of establishments serving liquor can pose immediate harms to neighbourhood residents and visitors, such as violence associated with intoxication, and nuisance. Vulnerable resident populations, including low income families with children, and people with addictions and mental health issues can experience additional harms from access to alcohol and exposure to alcohol-centred social activity.

Primarily, the DTES Liquor Policy aims to protect the neighbourhood's vulnerable resident populations including low income families with children and people with addictions and mental health issues, from the harms and risks associated with liquor. Once this primary objective is met, staff will take into account secondary objectives to promote local economy and support local arts and culture.

## Liquor Primary Licences<sup>2</sup>

In the DTES applications for new liquor primary licences and for increased liquor seats at liquor establishments will not be supported, except that on a case by case basis, applications for live performance based venues will be supported.

Live performance based venues will be supported for event driven liquor licences, meaning that liquor service will be permitted only in conjunction with live performance events.

## Patios

Applications for liquor licences on new patios will not be supported. Movement of existing seats from inside to an existing patio with no net gain in total seat capacity will be supported on a case by case basis for businesses that are demonstrated good operators: they have a history of compliance with City by-laws and are not the subject of complaints.

## Hotel Lounges

Licensing of hotel lounges will be not be supported except that on a case by case basis applications for event based liquor licences that feature live performance will be supported.

All applications will be considered following standard City process, on a case by case basis. This process includes review and comment from relevant City departments and Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services. For DTES applications, VPD comment will be included. Approved establishments will enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement with the City, and will be issued a time-limited Development Permit. Public input is a provincial requirement for all liquor primary licence applications.

Staff will review on an ongoing basis any key data, new community plans, new policies, or other indicators that may warrant a re-review of the liquor primary moratorium in the DTES. If or as sub-areas within the whole of the DTES change, staff will evaluate opportunities to nuance or change the policy for those areas. For example, the sub-area of Thornton Park is located between the emerging neighborhoods of False Creek Flats and Northeast False Creek and will be significantly impacted by the removal of the viaducts. This sub-area may warrant revised liquor policy considerations in the coming years.

## Policy on Liquor Retail Stores

For policy on liquor retail stores in the DTES, see the City of Vancouver Liquor Store Guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "liquor primary seats" refers to the patron capacity of a bar, pub or venue as stated on the establishment's provincial liquor licence.

<sup>2</sup> Liquor primary licences are issued to bars, pubs and night clubs by the provincial Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB). The LCLB issues licences to establishments whose provincial liquor licence applications have been supported by the City via Council resolution.