

Appendix B: Overview of the Purpose and Benefits of a Municipal Alcohol Policy

What is a Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP)?

A MAP is a tool that helps a municipality outline the conditions for the responsible sale and service of alcohol at events on municipal property including locations such as City-owned buildings (e.g. community centres, recreation centres, parks, and public squares). A MAP does not apply to events held in privately owned properties such as restaurants, bars and banquet halls.

Event organizers who plan to hold an event where alcohol is to be served or consumed on City property must first obtain a Special Occasion Permit (SOP). The SOP is issued by designated Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) outlets on behalf of the AGCO. For certain special events where alcohol is to be sold, the AGCO and/or the City may also require a Letter of Municipal Significance from the local Community Council before issuing approvals. In addition, the AGCO allows holders of a liquor sales license with an AGCO-approved Catering Endorsement to sell and serve alcoholic beverages at an event in an unlicensed area. The licensee must notify the AGCO and local authorities, including public health, at least ten days prior to such an event.

After an SOP has been issued, or Catering notification received, the event organizer must obtain the appropriate permit or approval from the City to hold their event on City property. One of the conditions of that City approval is compliance with the MAP.

A MAP allows a municipality to put in place controls over how alcohol may be sold and served, how patrons enter and exit a venue, and how an event must be staffed. It also includes rules and guidelines for dealing with violations of the policy. In addition, a MAP helps municipalities and event organizers ensure the safety and enjoyment of event participants by following, at a minimum, the standards and regulations in the Ontario Liquor License Act (LLA). A municipality can choose, however, to implement standards that are stricter than the LLA.

Benefits of a MAP: Health and Safety, Reduced Liability

A MAP can help to prevent and reduce alcohol-related problems during events held in or on municipally-owned facilities and properties where alcohol use is permitted. Effective MAPs can provide measures that help to lessen and prevent the risks of injury and death. Underage drinking, drinking to intoxication, and drinking and driving are important contributors to alcohol-related harms. An effective MAP can have mechanisms in place at events to ensure minors or intoxicated people are not served alcohol and that there is access to safe transportation for patrons who are or appear to be intoxicated. MAPs in Ontario were found early on to be linked to a decrease in the experience of problems related to alcohol consumption at events on municipal property.