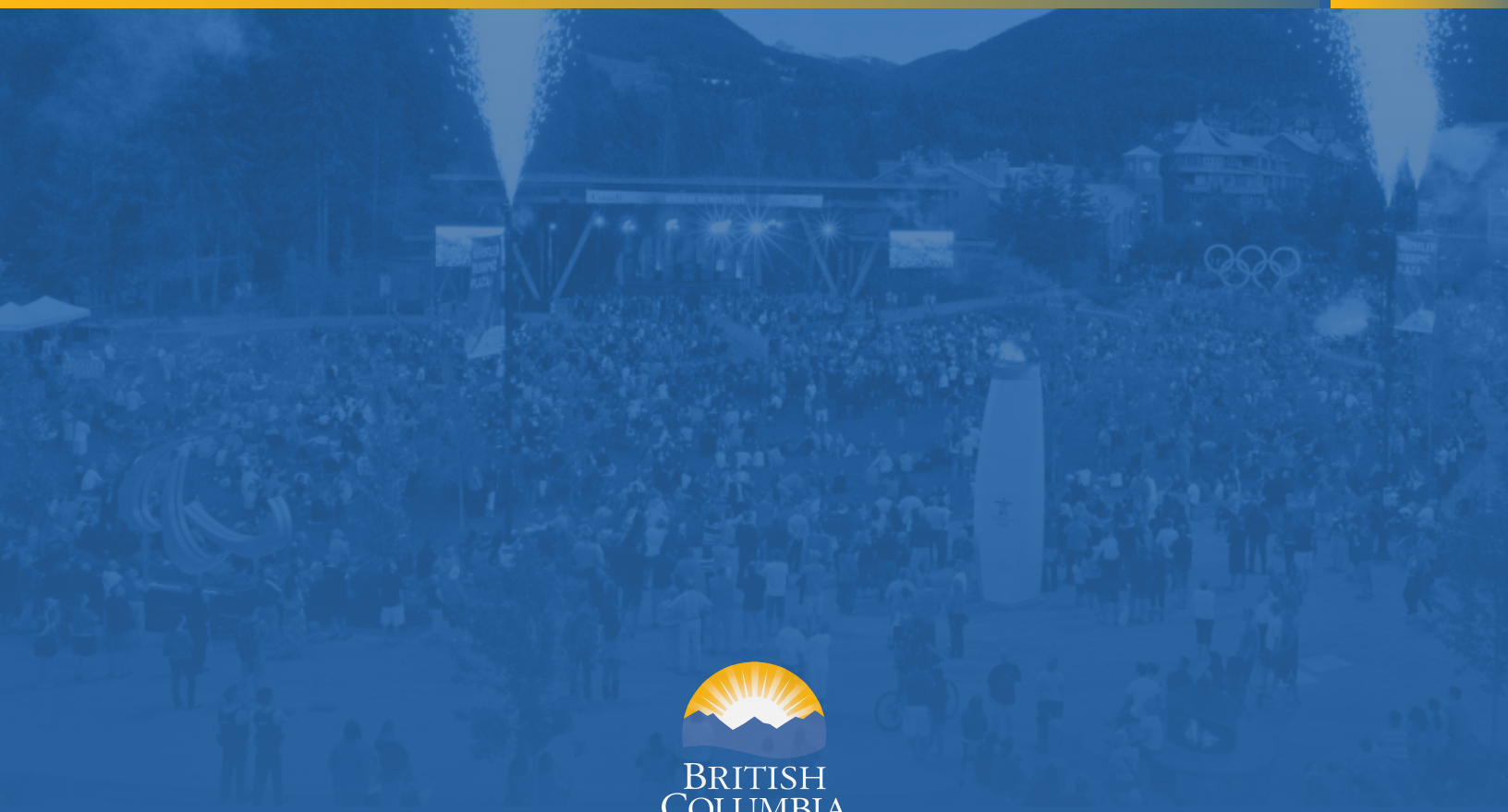
A LOCAL GOVERNMENT GUIDE *to*

CREATING MUNICIPAL ALCOHOL POLICY



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Preface

This document has been prepared by the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with BC Healthy Communities, to serve as a guide for local governments/First Nations in the planning of a municipal alcohol policy (MAP). A MAP helps local governments/First Nations manage alcohol facilities they own and manage, and reduces liability for alcohol-related problems. This guide explains what a MAP is, how it can benefit your local government/First Nation and how to create one, from start to finish.

This document is part of a broader set of initiatives that are underway across the province to improve the overall health and well-being of British Columbians. These initiatives include strategies, programs and policies that aim to mitigate the harms associated with the consumption of alcohol and other substances.

A MAP is a public policy that seeks to create an environment that supports healthy lifestyles. Implementing a MAP in a community makes healthy options available to people who use local government/First Nation facilities for events where alcohol is provided. The development and adoption of a MAP also supports the work of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch and is a recommended strategy to reduce the public safety risk associated with consumption of liquor at community events and facilities.

The ultimate public health goal of a MAP is moderate consumption of alcohol through the promotion of practices that will prevent under-aged drinking, intoxication, and other forms of risky drinking. MAPs also have an important public safety goal by ensuring that local government/First Nation owned facilities and events are safe and well-managed. They support community values and a culture of moderation by raising awareness about alcohol-related issues and influencing community social norms that contribute to drinking behaviours.

For more information on MAP and other related initiatives, please visit the Healthy Minds, Healthy People website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthy-minds/

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

The policy groundwork relating to municipal alcohol policy was originally prepared by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). *The Municipal Alcohol Policy Guide: A Practical Resource for Successfully Managing Drinking in Recreational Settings*, published by CAMH, provides the foundation and inspiration for the information presented in this document.

British Columbia's Ministry of Health is working with BC Healthy Communities to provide the supports and resources needed to build on and enhance local community leadership around drinking in recreational settings. Development of MAPs also aligns with the work of BC's Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, particularly with respect to ensuring public safety through legislation, regulation and programs.

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1 DEVELOPING A MUNICIPAL ALCOHOL POLICY

Since the 1990s, a growing number of local governments/First Nations across the country have made the decision to better manage the consumption of alcohol in their facilities and recreation areas through the implementation of a municipal alcohol policy (MAP).

A MAP is a policy document that covers alcohol use on local government/First Nation property, including recreation centres, halls, sports arenas and fields, parks, and beaches. It clearly lays out where alcohol use is and is not allowed on local government/First Nation property, and specifies the conditions and restrictions for the issuing of a Special Occasion Licence. A MAP is guided by, but cannot supersede provincial liquor regulations.

A MAP includes information such as:

- An inventory of all local government/First Nation facilities, recreation areas, and events (including a designation of where alcohol use is prohibited).
- The designation of facilities and events where alcohol use is permitted, as well as the type of use that is allowed. This may include sites that have a permanent liquor licence (such as a lounge in a recreation centre), as well as sites and events where alcohol use will be allowed under a Special Occasion Licence.
- Training requirements for servers. For example, a MAP may require that servers of alcohol are certified under the Serving it Right™ program (or equivalent).
- Insurance requirements for event operators. Most MAPs typically include a requirement that event operators carry liability insurance in the amount of at least $1 million.
- Signage requirements (such as signs to inform people of legislation regarding where alcohol use is and is not permitted), options for safe transportation, age requirements, and so on...
- Penalties for violations of the policy.

The first MAPs were implemented in Ontario in the early 1990s. Since that time, they have been shown to be effective at reducing disorder and vandalism, reducing policing and community costs resulting from alcohol-related problems, and protecting the local governments/First Nations from liability issues.

Perhaps just as important, MAPs increase the enjoyment and protect the safety of the people who use your community's facilities and recreation areas. A common theme in many communities is the frustration that people often feel when facilities and events are marred by intoxication or unauthorized drinking. They may feel concern for their safety and for the safety of their children. As these problems escalate and become chronic, more and more people simply choose to avoid problem facilities and events entirely. For these people, developing a MAP is a way for them to take their city back.

This document provides an overview of MAPs and how they work, including the benefits that having a MAP can bring to your community, common concerns that are raised about MAPs and how to address them, and the work that is involved in initiating and carrying out a project to develop a MAP.

1.1 What are the Benefits of a Municipal Alcohol Policy?

In the last few decades, there has been a shift in our understanding of the harms associated with alcohol use. Hazardous drinking can greatly increase the risk of vehicle crashes, injury, and death. The risks are even higher in group situations, where it can be difficult to monitor intake. In these cases, minors may have easier access to alcohol, and excessive amounts of alcohol are often consumed. Such group situations may easily get out of control unless there are measures in place to mitigate risk.

Drinking and driving has received a particular focus in B.C., and the policies, special programs, and new legislation designed to counteract drinking and driving have been very successful in not only reducing crashes and fatalities, but also in raising public awareness about the need for responsible drinking practices in general.

Under the Liquor Control and Licensing Act and Regulations, liquor licensees are responsible for ensuring their establishments operate in compliance with the law. The main focus of the liquor laws is protection of public safety. Licensees are responsible for:

- Preventing under-age drinking;
- Preventing the over-consumption of liquor;
- Preventing overcrowding or unsafe conditions in licensed premises;
- Minimizing illegal activities in and around liquor establishments; and
- Minimizing the potentially negative impact of liquor sales on neighbourhoods and communities.

Putting a MAP in place extends responsible alcohol practices to the local government/First Nation level.

Alcohol Policies at the Local Government/First Nation Level

Many communities have struggled with the problem of outdoor festivals, street parties, or other public events quickly getting out of control when combined with irresponsible and poorly managed alcohol use. Although the rules and laws for managing alcohol in licensed establishments such as restaurants, pubs and taverns have been well established for many decades, there has not been the same focus for local government/First Nation facilities and special events.

Today, many communities are seeking ways to better manage and reduce the number of alcohol-related problems at local government/First Nation-owned facilities and cultural events. A MAP can be instrumental in keeping events safe, as well as helping to create a healthier community by promoting a culture of moderation.

Having a MAP in place in your community helps ensure that:

- Effective event management practices are followed. Similar to the rules that must be followed in restaurants and taverns, local government/First Nation and Special Occasion Licence and other events require 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 policy violations.
- Servers are trained to recognize and defuse problems before they escalate. Servers need to be able to recognize the signs of intoxication, to refuse service when a patron is intoxicated, and to deal appropriately with belligerent patrons.
- Patrons have access to non-alcohol beverage options.
- Patrons leaving an event have access to safe transportation.

More and more, MAPs are becoming standard practice in Canada. For example, in Ontario alone, about half of the province's municipalities and some First Nations have implemented MAPs, and research has shown them to be effective at reducing problems and increasing the enjoyment of patrons.

Liability Issues

Section 43 of the B.C. Liquor Control and Licensing Act sets out the statutory liability for servers of alcohol:

> *(1) A person must not sell or give liquor to an intoxicated person or a person apparently under the influence of liquor.*
>
> *(2) A licensee or the licensee's employee must not permit*
>
> *(a) a person to become intoxicated, or*
>
> *(b) an intoxicated person to remain in that part of a licensed establishment where liquor is sold, served or otherwise supplied.*

Sections 33-35 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act set out the laws prohibiting the service of liquor to minors, and to anyone who is intoxicated – both are key considerations for alcohol service on local government/First Nation property. In addition, common law liability, established through a history of legal decisions, has consistently found that owners and operators of facilities – including local governments/First Nations – can be held liable, both as a provider and an occupier, for damages resulting from the actions of intoxicated patrons.

Even in cases where a local government/First Nation is found to be only partly liable, it may still have to pay the full amount of an award if other parties cannot pay or are not insured. MAPs can assist communities to avoid liability by helping to ensure that drinking does not occur where it is not allowed, that minors are not served liquor, and that intoxication does not occur.

Local governments/First Nations need to ensure that:

- ***Facilities are safe.*** Facilities and recreational areas must be safe for people using them, whether intoxicated or not. Are building codes followed? Is lighting sufficient? Are there tripping or other hazards that need to be remedied? Any of these could provide the basis for a lawsuit, and the consumption of alcohol can exacerbate the potential penalties.
- ***Patrons are monitored to ensure they behave responsibly and are not intoxicated.*** Local governments/First Nations can and have been sued for not properly managing situations where drunken patrons have caused injury or damage, or for serving patrons to the point of intoxication.
- ***All patrons are kept safe.*** Where controls fail and a patron is intoxicated and possibly disruptive, the facility licensee has an obligation to ensure that all patrons remain safe. It's not enough to simply eject intoxicated patrons from a facility, since their intoxication could lead to the patron causing injury to themselves or others.

Failure to demonstrate due diligence can result not only in heavy financial damages, but potentially also the suspension of the local government's/First Nation's liquor licence. Given the potential consequences, it simply makes sense to have policies and procedures in place for ensuring the safety of patrons using local government/First Nation facilities and recreation areas.

1.2 Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms in Your Community

In addition to being a management tool for local governments and First Nations, a MAP can also be an important and effective instrument in promoting a healthier community. In the past few decades, there has been a broader understanding of the harms associated with alcohol use, and this has led to a wide variety of successful social policies such as impaired driving legislation that have saved many lives. The Liquor Control and Licensing Branch Minors as Agents program, aimed at decreasing sales of alcohol to children, is another very successful initiative aimed at protecting public safety and reducing harms in communities. A MAP is one more important tool in better managing the risks of alcohol use in your community.

Gaining Public Support

Understanding the broader health benefits of a MAP can be a key factor in successfully developing and implementing the policy. Although the fear of litigation can be an entry point to initiate the process of developing a MAP, experience in other communities has shown that, in general, it is more effective to frame a MAP in the context of an overall public health approach to reducing harm.

For example, gaining popular support for a MAP is generally easier when you adopt a positive, public health and safety-oriented approach, which speaks to the concerns and needs of everyone in the community. Seen in this way, a MAP is a tool that solves problems and improves life in the community. Otherwise it risks being portrayed as merely an attempt by the local government/First Nation to protect itself from liability with burdensome regulations.

CASE STUDY:

Resort Municipality of Whistler (2011)

The Resort Municipality of Whistler was one of the first municipalities in B.C. to develop a MAP. As a four-season destination resort, Whistler attracts thousands of young, active and fun-loving seasonal workers, many of whom decide to stay and live life to the fullest, often involving alcohol.

As part of the development of the Whistler MAP, the Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS) conducted a survey of community opinions on alcohol usage in municipal parks and recreation facilities. Whistler residents showed a high acceptance of moderate (though unlawful) drinking in public places, while many of these same people also indicated a very low tolerance for drunkenness and rowdy behaviours on the part of others.

Lorna Van Straaten, WCSS executive director suggests, "The challenge for the Resort Municipality of Whistler will be to strike the right balance between meeting resident and visitor expectations for the availability of alcohol in public venues and managing the health, safety and legal problems that can be associated with alcohol consumption."

1.3 Clarifying Rules and Processes for Event Applications

As part of your MAP project, you will want to review and, if required, update the procedures and information related to rules for licensed events held on local government/First Nation property. The objective is to:

- *Make the process clear.* People wanting to rent a municipal facility for an event that includes alcohol may not always understand that an event licence is required, or where to go to apply for one, or all of the steps that may be required of them. It can be even more confusing if the rules aren't clear,

or if they contradict rules specified by Liquor Control and Licensing Branch. Information on where to apply and what is required should be readily available. The MAP process is a good opportunity to review, clarify, and update any procedures relating to facility rentals, especially as they apply to licensed events.

- *Educate the public.* Although the first reaction of many people is that the rules for events are too difficult (or something to avoid entirely if possible). In fact the rules are there to protect the event organizer, and to help ensure that they have a successful event. If the public understands that alcohol policies are there to benefit them, they will be more likely to follow them. No one wants to host an event that is marred by fighting, vandalism, injuries or worse.
- *Make the rules clear for staff.* Your MAP should provide clear guidelines for the criteria staff (and police if they are involved in the approval process) need to follow when reviewing and endorsing event applications. Consistent rules will help eliminate both staff and applicant frustration with the process. The less that staff need to rely on their discretion in assessing an application, the easier the process is for both them and the applicants. When a clear set of rules is in place, the reviewer is less likely to feel badly in rejecting an application, and there is less reason for them to worry about being personally responsible for problems that may result from an event.

1.4 Common Concerns and Misconceptions

To have a successful MAP, you will need to have broad support for the policy, not just from council, but also from the public at large. The MAP process involves a strong element of engagement with the public, receiving input from them and addressing their concerns. If you have key stakeholder groups who, for whatever reason, decide to lobby against the MAP, council will be that much more reluctant to endorse the project.

From experience in municipalities that have implemented MAPs, there are a certain concerns that are commonly raised.

Isn't a MAP just more red tape?

No. A MAP addresses practices that are often already in place, but which may not be dealt with in a complete or consistent manner. A primary goal of a MAP is to clarify what the policies and rules are, thereby making them easier to understand and ensure that organizers follow provincial legislation and guidelines.

The social and legal issues around alcohol consumption in public places are complicated, and a MAP serves to acknowledge these complexities, and clarify how they should be managed.

Is the community going to clamp down on all drinking?

No. A MAP is about responsible management of alcohol use, not an attempt to re-impose prohibition. It is a responsible, progressive way to increase the enjoyment of facility users and reduce the local government's/First Nation's exposure to liability risk.

Will restaurants, lounges and pubs lose business?

No. By creating a MAP, the local government/First Nation is simply agreeing to comply with similar rules and guidelines that are already in place for restaurants and taverns. If facilities are regarded as competing with private interests, a MAP helps to ensure a level playing field.

Will the community lose rental income from facilities?

No. Local governments/First Nations rely on rental income from their public facilities, and a common concern raised about MAPs is that if the rental process is too complicated or the rules too strict, event operators will simply avoid booking events at these facilities.

The experience from Ontario has shown that these fears are not justified. In some cases, existing event operators may react to the new rules by temporarily taking their business elsewhere. However, in most cases rentals either do not go down, or they return to normal soon after the MAP is in place.

2 STARTING THE PROJECT

There is no right answer to the question of who should start the MAP process. In some cases the work will be initiated by council, while in other cases an existing committee will provide the impetus. The local police force may gather a group together to address drinking on local government/First Nation property which results in a high number of enforcement calls. A concerned community member might raise the issue. It doesn't matter who starts the work, but the following tasks are important.

- *Getting support from council.* Generally the first step in developing a MAP is to present the idea to council for their endorsement. Without the support of council, it is difficult to carry a MAP project through to successful completion.
- *Defining the terms of reference.* The terms of reference describe the scope of work that will be done by the MAP committee, and the deliverables to be produced.
- *Setting up a MAP committee* and selecting a chairperson. From the experience of communities who have gone through the process, the MAP committee typically includes up to 10 representatives who represent a multi-sectoral cross-section of your community's stakeholders (e.g., service providers, police, public health staff, businesses, previous facility renters) and should include an elected official and staff.

Depending on how you plan to resource the project, you may also need to prepare a baseline budget for council estimating any anticipated expenditures for the project.

> *"The process of developing a MAP is as valuable as the eventual outcome for the community. Putting a MAP in place facilitates community education and/or mobilization on other aspects of alcohol abuse. The endorsement of a MAP by community council is a perfect opportunity for educating community groups about alcohol issues, in the context of both liability and responsibility to their members."*
>
> ***– Alcohol Policy Network***

2.1 Getting Support From Council

All local governments/First Nations which have adopted a MAP agree that a crucial first step in the process is to achieve council's endorsement. A formal resolution passed by council helps ensure that the process of developing the MAP is a priority for council as well as local government/First Nation employees, that the necessary resources (such as staff time) are allocated, and that the implementation and enforcement of the final approved MAP will go smoothly.

Council needs to understand why a MAP is required, including background on the problems that a MAP can address, the relevant legislation, and the ways that a MAP can promote healthier communities. Council members will almost certainly receive questions from the public – and potentially criticism of the proposed policy – and they will need to know how to respond appropriately.

2.2 Setting Up Your Municipal Alcohol Policy Committee

Creating a MAP involves a significant commitment of time and effort, one that typically spans several months.

To help achieve broad public support for the policy process, the committee should consist of a broad range of stakeholders and community groups who can speak for the different facets of your community. Ideally, you want members who represent a constituency or who can speak for a stakeholder group, and serve as a bridge between that constituency and the committee. This may include:

- Elders
- Facility users such as sports, recreational, and cultural groups
- Representatives from the local health authority
- Law enforcement
- Local businesses
- Neighbourhood associations
- Post-secondary institutions
- Youth of drinking age

Using an existing group such as a Healthy Communities committee that addresses health, safety or substance use issues will save considerable time in the process. In Maple Ridge, for example, the District Substance Misuse Committee took on the creation of their MAP.

CASE STUDY: *Maple Ridge (2011)*

Maple Ridge put a particular priority on having a MAP committee that reflected the interests and needs of the community as a whole. Sue Wheeler, director of Community Services in Maple Ridge, explained that "We didn't want a committee of civil servants that simply gathered input from the public; we wanted to put in place a public process that was driven by the community itself."

In selecting a chairperson for their MAP committee, Maple Ridge opted to hire an external consultant, Justun Miller, who works as a counsellor at a local addiction services centre.

Sue reflected that "it was helpful having the meetings run by a trained facilitator and in particular someone who is knowledgeable about alcohol and addiction issues, and who understood the community perspective. It's a complex social issue for policy makers to grapple with, and at times it can be a challenge to find the right balance between the legal issues and all of the competing interests. Justun helped make it easier to find consensus over some of the tough issues we faced."

When recruiting committee members, provide them with a proposed meeting schedule as well as details on what work will be expected from them. It would be helpful to host an education session for prospective members to provide them with background on the MAP process and how it got started, as well as the specific issues within the community that the MAP hopes to address.

2.3 Defining the Terms of Reference

In order to do their work effectively, every committee requires terms of reference. The terms of reference outline the work that is involved in developing a successful MAP, identify participant roles and responsibilities and time commitments required, and lay out the process so that meetings are directed and focused.

Defining the Goals of Your MAP

At the outset, the committee should agree to a set of definite goals that the MAP seeks to achieve, and guidelines to attain those goals. The goals and guidelines will provide the basis for all subsequent discussions and meetings. Any proposed policy or solution should be assessed based on the extent it adheres to the guidelines adopted by the committee, as well as the extent to which it contributes towards achieving the stated goals.

These goals should include reducing illegal drinking in prohibited areas, as well as reducing intoxication at licensed facilities and events. To achieve this, any proposed policies and rules will need to be based on guidelines such as aligning with provincial liquor legislation, while at the same time not inconveniencing facility users and employees with overly complex rules.

2.4 Defining the Final Deliverables

Although the specific list of deliverables to be produced by the committee may change over the course of the project, it can be helpful at the outset to propose an initial list. This is useful for estimating the effort that will be involved in producing the MAP, which both council and prospective committee members will want to review before starting the project.

Besides the policy document itself, deliverables from a MAP project will typically include:

- *Procedure documents.* You may elect to produce internal procedure documents for approving Special Occasion Licences, overseeing events at facilities, identifying duties of event organizers, and so on.
- *Communications plan.* The communications plan describes the approach for educating the public about the new policy. It lists the key messages that councilors and committee members can use when responding to questions that they may receive from the public.
- *Public signs.* Signs notifying the public about alcohol use on public property (including penalties for violations), as well as signs that event organizers can post at special events need to be developed (see www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/ for free downloadable signs).
- *Updated forms and rental contracts.* Based on the outcomes of the process, you may need to make updates to rental contracts and the forms that event organizations need to complete.

Depending on your local government/First Nation, and the types of policies that the committee proposes, there may also be a need for council to pass a bylaw.

3 GETTING TO WORK

This chapter describes some of the typical tasks that are involved in developing a MAP, and more importantly, ensuring that it is successful.

This includes:

- Reviewing existing MAPs from other communities.
  - Following the MAP workbook developed by BC Healthy Communities.
  - Creating an inventory of facilities, recreation areas and events that are to be covered by the policy.
  - Developing a process to consult with the public and solicit input. This may include public meetings, a survey, and advertisements. The communities that have implemented MAP have consistently stressed the importance of working with community groups and other stakeholders.

WHAT IS A BLUE RIBBON MAP?

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health identifies the following six keys to developing a successful "blue ribbon" MAP:

1. *Designation of properties, facilities, and events to clearly state where alcohol may or may not be used.*
2. *Management practices to control how alcohol is used.*
3. *Prevention strategies to reduce harm.*
4. *Enforcement procedures and penalties for when rental groups won't play by the rules.*
5. *Signage to provide authority and information.*
6. *Ongoing support from policy to action.*

In their workbook, they include detailed criteria for assessing the effectiveness of your MAP, as well as a methodology for scoring it. MAPs with a score greater than 70 are considered "blue ribbon" since they include aspects that have been shown to be effective in reducing problems.

If possible, you want your MAP to include all of the criteria suggested by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health for a "blue ribbon" MAP, since a more comprehensive MAP is shown to be more effective in reducing problems, and producing positive results more quickly.

3.1 Creating a Strong Municipal Alcohol Policy Committee

Besides developing the MAP itself, the committee is also responsible for meeting with stakeholders, and answering questions from the public. They need to have a strong grounding in the principles of a MAP – the history of problems that may have affected the community, as well as some knowledge of legislation.

- *Understand the role of healthy public policy in addressing alcohol issues in communities.* The principles of a MAP are ultimately grounded in healthy public policy, which is based on a wealth of information and research on how alcohol use affects individuals and society and the role of policy in impacting alcohol-related problems. In addition to researching the role of healthy public policy in addressing alcohol issues in communities, you can contact your health authority for data on alcohol problems.
- *Review applicable legislation and case law.* A second key principle of the MAP is the need for the committee to understand the legislative and legal framework within which it operates.

"The policy development process only works when driven by informed participants."

– Alcohol Policy Network

Though you may want to consider a new bylaw as part of your MAP, for the most part a MAP simply clarifies the policies that are applicable under existing legislation, and reflects the realities of current civil case law.

- ***Review existing MAPs.*** Look for local governments/First Nations comparable to yours who have already implemented a MAP, and print copies of their MAPs for the committee. If possible, contact them to get their input on how the MAP has helped address problems in their community, as well as lessons learned. Sample Ontario policies can be found at: http://www.apolnet.ca/thelaw/policies/MAPs/ap_MAPs.html
- ***Learn training requirements for licensees and staff.*** Having the MAP committee actually take the Serving It Right program is a great way to learn the ground rules for serving liquor in British Columbia. This training course can be taken online at www.servingitright.com.
- ***Review current policies and procedures.*** What policies and practices for managing alcohol use are already in place, and to what extent are they being enforced? Take the team through the process of applying for (and reviewing) a Special Occasion Licence, and point out any deficiencies.

The issues relating to alcohol use are complex, and you need to include sufficient time in your schedule to address all aspects of it. Being a member of the committee involves meeting with stakeholders and the public, explaining the need for the policy, answering questions, and responding to their concerns. Committee members are the ambassadors for the MAP initiative. Not only do they need a strong understanding of the underlying issues, they also require a strong sense of commitment to the importance and value of the work they are doing.

3.2 Cataloguing Facilities, Recreation Areas and Events

One of the first tasks in developing a MAP is to create an inventory of your facilities, recreation areas, and events so that you can determine which are suitable for alcohol service. For each one, you want to note:

- Whether liquor service is currently permitted;
- What problems have been experienced in the past;
- Whether children are likely to be present at events where alcohol may be served; and
- Any other safety issues that may need to be addressed.

Based on your initial list, it can also help to categorize places and events based on the type of alcohol service you anticipate for each one. These categories can provide the basis for categories of usage in your eventual MAP.

3.3 Soliciting Input From Stakeholders and the Public

There is a strong consensus among alcohol policy makers that the MAP development process needs to be rooted in a public consultation process. This should include focused consultations with individual stakeholder groups (such as sports leagues, cultural groups, festival organizers, police, and parks and recreation staff), as well as invitations to the broader public to provide input to the process.

The consultation process is also an important opportunity to educate people about the challenges and the related costs faced by the local government/First Nation as a consequence of irresponsible alcohol consumption. This process will in turn be an aid to building broad support for a MAP.

Not everyone will necessarily agree with every aspect of the final policy, but if people understand the policy and the need for it, they will be more likely to accept it. If they are consulted to share their concerns and ideas, you will be able to develop a policy that reflects the community as a whole, and provides them with a sense of ownership over it.

3.3.1 Suggestions for Soliciting Input

- *Conduct a Survey*
  A survey is one way to gather input from members of the community. In Whistler, the MAP committee decided that a public survey would be an effective way to gather input from a broad cross-section of the community. A consultant was hired to develop a web-based survey, and advertisements were placed in local media to solicit responses.
- *Organize a Meeting with Stakeholders*
  Include representatives from the health authority, law enforcement, Elders, community groups and sports groups.
- *Hold a Public Consultation Session*
  Provide information about what a MAP is, why it is required (including background on the problems that a MAP can address), the relevant legislation, and the ways that a MAP can promote healthier communities.

3.4 What to Include in Your Municipal Alcohol Policy

Special Occasion Licences (SOL) are issued through the B.C. Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, which lays out specific terms and conditions for licence holders. These include the conditions for selling alcohol (such as the layout of the liquor service area), training requirements for servers, pricing and sizing of drinks, the requirement to check for ID, hours of service, signage, and so forth.

Because the SOL rules apply to many types of venues and events, they are by necessity somewhat general in nature. The SOL guidelines include suggestions to help control alcohol consumption (e.g., by recommending that licensees provide food and a variety of non-alcoholic beverages), but these are not necessarily required under the terms and conditions.

In some ways, a MAP serves as a refinement of the SOL terms and conditions, tailored specifically for the facilities and events in your community. Although a MAP cannot change or waive the licensee's obligations under an SOL, it can include additional requirements that are appropriate for your facilities and the events that are hosted in them.

There is no single set of rules that will suit every community. Besides understanding the requirements set out in the SOL process, your MAP committee will need to review problems that have been experienced in your community in the past, and use the MAP to devise creative rules to address those problems.

3.4.1 Additional Conditions For Alcohol Sales

As required by legislation, it is illegal to serve someone to the point of intoxication, or to serve someone who is already intoxicated. Most of the conditions for alcohol sales relate to this one basic requirement.

As well as including SOL terms and conditions for selling alcohol, your MAP may specify additional ones. For example, although not required by an SOL, many MAPs require using a ticketing scheme to sell alcohol, since this makes it easier to control the amount of alcohol people consume, and it provides more opportunities for servers to monitor patrons for intoxication. In addition, MAPs require that licensees provide food and low-priced, non-alcoholic beverage options, which are important ways to help control alcohol consumption.

3.4.2 Insurance Requirements

Even if the local government/First Nation is not directly involved in organizing or hosting an event, it can be held liable for any incidents that occur. Event holders need to understand the liability risks that they (and the local government/First Nation) undertake in holding events with alcohol, and they should be required to obtain liability insurance that includes a liquor liability endorsement, with a minimum coverage of at least $1 million.

3.4.3 Providing Safe Transportation

Event organizers also need to understand that liability is not limited to the event itself, but also applies after an intoxicated patron leaves. Although the best policy is to avoid intoxication entirely, event holders should also be required to provide options for safe transportation home, and to ensure that these options are well-publicized.

These options can include taxi chits paid for by the event holder, a shuttle bus service, or a designated driver program.

3.4.4 Event Security

When applying for a Special Occasion Licence, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch may require a licensee to provide a security plan that describes how the licensee will control crowds, ensure that liquor is not served to minors, and control alcohol consumption. Although the liquor inspector needs to be satisfied with the plan, the Special Occasion Licence guidelines themselves do not set out specific rules, such as the number of staff required for a given event.

A MAP will commonly provide specific requirements for how event security is handled at its facilities, including specific numbers for the staff who need to be present, and the number of people required to monitor entrances and exits. Some MAPs also include requirements for licensees to pay for a local government/First Nation representative or police to attend and oversee the event.

These rules serve to protect the event holder as much as they do the local government/First Nation, and if they are not followed, it leaves both exposed to potential liability.

3.4.5 Enforcement Policies

In addition to serving as an incentive for event holders and patrons to abide by the rules, enforcement policies assist event holders, local government/First Nation staff, and police with clear guidelines on what actions to take in the case of violations. These actions are intended not only to protect the local government/First Nation from liability, but also to keep people safe, and help ensure that their enjoyment is not disrupted by intoxicated patrons.

Enforcement policies include actions to be undertaken to address policy violations, as well as specific penalties that may be levied. Your policy should include:

- Provisions for monitoring compliance with the policy.
- Actions that are to be taken when policy infractions occur at an event. These may include infractions of the MAP on the part of the event holder, or infractions by facility users. For events, they may include policies to shut down an event or contact police. For infractions involving drinking in prohibited areas, the policy may stipulate an escalating series of actions – from issuing a warning to contacting police.
- Requirements for reporting incidents to the local government/First Nation for review.
- Penalties for violations of the policy, which may include suspension of rental privileges, fines, or requirements for event workers to attend additional training.

Ultimately, the enforcement policies that you include in the MAP aim to reduce alcohol-related incidents in your facilities and recreation areas, and make the experience of using them more enjoyable for members of your community.

4 ADVICE FROM EARLY MUNICIPAL ALCOHOL POLICY ADOPTERS IN B.C.

Whistler Olympic Plaza

Joern Rohde, photographer

4.1 Whistler

- Know your community. Inventory the type of past special occasion licensed events at your facilities, identify the facilities/events where unlicensed consumption is a community issue, and understand community attitudes toward alcohol consumption in public facilities.
- The MAP development process can be very valuable for clarifying the objectives of the policy and for reviewing each facility to understand which are appropriate for alcohol sales/service and which are not.
- Understand Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) Special Occasion Licence policies to ensure consistency with the MAP, as LCLB policies will take precedence in case of a conflict. Any MAP provisions that go beyond Special Occasion Licence policies may create confusion, add further administration and must be justifiable in supporting the MAP policy objectives.

ACT Theatre, Maple Ridge

4.2 Maple Ridge

- Working collaboratively with community stakeholders is key to developing an approach that supports healthy communities. MAP is not only an effective, collaborative approach to policy making, it is also an invaluable tool to identify other related issues. Provide clear information and education to event organizers about their responsibilities. Work closely with law enforcement representatives in their role of approving and monitoring Special Occasion Licences.
- Through the MAP process a municipality can begin to understand the overlaps in responsibility in the implementation of Special Occasion Licences to ensure safe and appropriate inclusion of alcohol in community events.

5 GETTING MORE INFORMATION

The Government of British Columbia is promoting municipal alcohol policy as part of a broader health strategy that aims to improve the overall health of British Columbians and reduce the harms associated with alcohol use.

Municipal alcohol policy has been shown to be effective in helping change the culture around alcohol – promoting practices that encourage moderate consumption of alcohol, while at the same time preventing under-aged drinking, binge drinking, intoxication, and other forms of risky drinking.

By raising awareness about alcohol-related issues, promoting a culture of moderation, and countering influences that reinforce hazardous consumption, MAPs are an important tool for influencing the social norms around drinking behaviours. They also help protect local governments /First Nations from liability, increase the enjoyment of facility patrons, and help support community values.

To this end, the provincial government is actively supporting the development of MAPs by local governments /First Nations throughout the province. Through an initial pilot project, funding was provided to two local governments – Maple Ridge and Whistler – and we are building on the lessons learned from the pilot to encourage other local governments /First Nations throughout B.C. to follow suit.

Led by the Ministry of Health's Communicable Disease Prevention, Harm Reduction and Mental Health Promotion Branch, in partnership with BC Healthy Communities and with the support of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, we are working to expand the implementation of MAPs to other communities around the province. We are doing this by providing workshops, presentation materials, and general consultation and advice. In addition, funding may be available on a limited basis to assist local governments/First Nations in developing their policies.

For more information or to access materials referenced in this guide, please contact:

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