



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 26-124**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services
Resource Staff: Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services
Kyle Compeau, Director, Licensing & Enforcement
Date of Meeting: April 21, 2026
Subject: Province of Ontario's New "Bring-Your-Own" (BYOB)
Alcoholic Beverages for Events

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Policies & by-laws

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

On March 17, 2026, the [Province of Ontario announced amendments](#) to regulations under the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*, expanding the availability of "Bring-Your-Own" (BYOB) event permits beyond live sporting events to include a broad range of municipally designated cultural or community outdoor public events, effective April 30, 2026. Examples of eligible events referenced by the Province include outdoor movie screenings, farmers' markets, arts and crafts shows, street markets, fairs, neighbourhood festivals, public performances and international or religious festivals.

While the revised provincial framework provides a new permitting pathway through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), it is optional and requires municipal authorization through local by-laws, policies and administrative processes, including establishing eligibility criteria, guidelines and approach to enforcement, before it can be implemented locally. It is important to note is that this is also not a blanket allowance to drink in public spaces and/or in parks but is a new permit system.

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This report provides Council with an overview of the provincial changes, outlines the key implications and considerations for the City of Kingston, and identifies areas of municipal policy, by-law, operational and financial review that will be required, as well as public engagement.

Staff are not seeking approval to implement BYOB at this time but are recommending a cross-departmental review throughout 2026 to further assess the impact of the new permit process. Due to the complexity of this review as outlined in this report, required policy changes if implemented, and staff resources and priorities, it's expected any changes would be implemented for events in the second half of 2027, pending Council direction and/or approval.

Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to continue reviewing the implications of the Province's expanded Bring-Your-Own (BYOB) event permit framework, including impacts on municipal policy, by-laws, enforcement, safety, liability and event operations; and

That Council direct staff to return to Council no later than Q2 2027 with an update, that will include a review of other municipalities and implementation approaches, an update on public consultation and engagement with key groups, and a more detailed analysis of the BYOB permit process for Kingston with recommendations, to determine then if Council wishes to consider participation in the provincial BYOB framework.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Paige Agnew, Commissioner,
Growth & Development Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	p.p.
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Jenna Morley, City Solicitor	
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

Through the City's Special Events Office in 2025, over 800 special event permits were issued for City parks and First Capital Place, which includes Springer Market Square and Confederation Park. Of these events, 8 secured Special Occasion Permits (SOPs) or provided a Caterer's Endorsement through the AGCO, which allows alcohol to be sold or served at an event. As part of that process, organizers are required to define a licensed area, follow responsible service practices, and comply with the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*.

The Province's new regulatory amendments, effective April 30, 2026, expand what were previously "tailgate" permits associated exclusively with sporting events into broader "BYOB" event permits. Under the new framework, eligible outdoor cultural and community events such as neighbourhood festivals, farmer's markets, movie screenings and art exhibits may apply for an AGCO permit allowing patrons aged 19 and over to bring and consume their own alcohol in designated areas.

The provincial announcement makes clear that:

- Municipalities are not required to participate;
- Municipalities must have a by-law authorizing alcohol consumption in public spaces; and
- Municipalities must establish a local process to designate events as eligible cultural or community events.

Therefore, no BYOB permits can be issued in Kingston unless Council first authorizes the necessary local framework.

The Province has also stated that the expansion of the BYOB permit is designed to advance Ontario's broader economic, tourism and regulatory objectives, to offer more flexibility to communities to safely and responsibly enjoy cultural and outdoor events, and that the Province will continue working closely with the AGCO to uphold existing rigorous standards for licensing, regulation and social responsibility, ensuring events are safe and reflect community priorities.

Staff have also been monitoring other cities and how they are responding to these changes, and at the time of writing this report, staff have only found one report to Council from the [Town of Perth](#) that recommends that the Town not proceed with enabling BYOB events at this time. Most other information found is through media and public statements by elected officials and/or staff that they will be exploring this new framework and start the assessment process to better understand impacts. There remains limited operational experience or best practice guidance available.

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Analysis

While the Province's expanded BYOB framework presents opportunities to enhance cultural and community events, staff have identified a number of significant considerations that need review to assess its suitability for implementation in Kingston.

At this time, staff are recommending a measured approach, to begin to work cross-departmentally and in consultation with other municipalities, that will allow staff to assess both the benefits and challenges experienced across the sector-including impacts on enforcement, community safety and event operations before bringing forward any recommendations for Kingston.

Staff are considering the following as part of the cross-departmental review of the new BYOB framework:

1. Municipal Alcohol Policy Implications

Kingston's current [Municipal Alcohol Policy \(MAP\)](#), approved by Council in 2006, is structured around:

- Municipally licensed service of alcohol;
- Special Occasion Permits (sale and no-sale); and
- Controls intended to mitigate risk related to service, consumption and enforcement.

The provincial BYOB framework introduces a different model in which alcohol is not sold or served by the event organizer but instead brought onto municipal property by attendees. This represents a fundamental shift away from controlled alcohol service toward individual consumption and reduces the City's ability to rely on established safeguards such as trained servers, controlled points of sale and clearly accountable permit holders. As a result, oversight becomes more complex and enforcement becomes increasingly reliant on behavioural monitoring rather than structured compliance, which is inherently more resource-intensive and less predictable.

This model raises policy considerations including:

- Event eligibility criteria;
- Controls on container type, volume and permitted areas;
- Roles and responsibilities of organizers in managing alcohol consumption; and
- Alignment with existing harm-reduction, public health and community safety objectives.

Staff are reviewing whether the existing MAP could be adapted to include BYOB events or whether a separate policy framework may be more appropriate. When the MAP was first developed, it required a coordinated process involving various stakeholders, and any changes being considered under this new framework require the same level of review and engagement.

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2. By-Law Considerations

Implementation of BYOB would likely require:

- Amendments to the City's Municipal Alcohol Policy; or
- A new by-law authorizing alcohol possession and consumption at municipally designated BYOB events, subject to specified conditions.

Key issues under review include:

- Scope and limitations of authorized locations;
- Restrictions (dates and hours);
- Council's role in approving or delegating event designation authority; and
- Interaction with nuisance party, community standards, noise, parks and property standards by-laws.

3. Enforcement and Public Safety

The BYOB model introduces a more complex enforcement environment. Unlike traditional licenced events where alcohol service is controlled, BYOB shifts enforcement toward behavioural monitoring. This includes:

- Managing public intoxication and disorderly conduct;
- Monitoring compliance with designated consumption zones;
- Capacity limits and crowd management;
- Requirements for security plans, fencing, signage and access control; and
- Addressing spillover impacts into surrounding neighbourhoods.

This shift is expected to increase reliance on:

- By-Law Enforcement Officers;
- Municipal Special Constables (where applicable); and
- Kingston Police, particularly for escalation scenarios.

From an operational standpoint, this may result in increased calls for service during peak periods such as weekends, festivals and large-scale events.

4. Cost Implications for Event Organizers

While BYOB permits may reduce some alcohol service costs, they may also result in new or expanded requirements for organizers, such as:

- Additional security or by-law compliance measures;
- Enhanced site infrastructure (i.e. fencing, designated consumption zones);
- Increased insurance coverage; and

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- Event planning and administrative costs tied to municipal designation and conditions.

Staff are reviewing whether cost recovery mechanisms or revised fee structures would be necessary to address municipal impacts.

5. Risk Management and Liability

Municipal exposure to liability is a key consideration. Staff are consulting with Legal Services, the City's Insurance & Risk Management division and the City's insurer to evaluate:

- Risk allocation between the City, event organizers and permit holders;
- Adequacy of insurance requirements and minimum coverage thresholds;
- Potential claims related to personal injury, property damage or alcohol-related incidents; and
- Whether BYOB changes the City's role or duty of care at events held on municipal property.

6. Administrative Process and Governance

If Council chooses to participate in the provincial framework, the City of Kingston would need a clear, transparent process to:

- Designate eligible events;
- Apply consistent conditions and criteria;
- Coordinate across departments; and
- Communicate requirements clearly to event organizers and the public.

7. Unsanctioned Street and Neighbourhood Parties

A key concern is the potential for the BYOB framework to unintentionally normalize or increase unsanctioned street and neighbourhood-level gatherings. While the provincial framework is intended for municipally designated events, there is a risk that public perception may shift, leading to:

- Increased informal or unpermitted gatherings in parks, streets or private properties;
- Greater challenges in distinguishing between approved events and unauthorized activity; and
- Escalation of nuisance complaints, including noise, littering and public intoxication.

Based on Kingston's current experience with nuisance parties, particularly those organized through social media, there is a reasonable expectation that BYOB could amplify these pressures if not clearly communicated and strictly regulated. This may result in increased enforcement demands, community complaints and pressure on municipal policing resources.

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It will be critical to reinforce that BYOB permissions apply only to approved, designated events and do not extend to public consumption or informal gatherings.

8. Neighbourhood Impacts and Community Expectations

Neighbourhood impacts remain a central consideration. The potential impact on neighbourhood livability must be carefully considered. These effects may extend beyond event boundaries and impact surrounding residential areas, particularly during evenings and weekends.

The introduction of BYOB at events has the potential to affect:

- Noise levels, disorderly behaviour and late-night disturbances;
- Public behaviour and community safety perception; and
- Waste management and post-event cleanup requirements.

There is also a need to manage expectations from residents, who may perceive BYOB as a broader relaxation of alcohol rules and ensuring that community standards are upheld. Clear communication and visible enforcement will be essential to maintaining public confidence and ensuring that community standards are upheld.

9. Resource and Operational Requirements

Participation in the BYOB framework will likely require additional municipal resources to ensure safe and effective implementation, and staff have identified that these requirements will place additional strain on existing resources, particularly given current service demands and budget considerations. Key considerations include:

- Enhanced event review and approval processes;
- Increased on-site enforcement presence, particularly for higher-risk events;
- Coordination with Kingston Police, Emergency Services and Public Health; and
- Development of standardized event requirements (i.e. fencing, security plans, signage).

There may also be a need to evaluate:

- Cost recovery mechanisms to offset municipal impacts;
- Staffing models, particularly during evenings and weekends; and
- Integration with the City's special constable program to support proactive enforcement.

Next Steps

Staff will continue interdepartmental review throughout 2026, including consultation with Legal Services, Insurance & Risk Management, Kingston Police and Emergency Services, Public Health, and arts, culture, and event organizers and groups. A report will be brought back to Council no later than Q2 2027 outlining policy and by-law options, identified risks and mitigation measures, financial and operational impacts and clear recommendations for Council's

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consideration, and it's likely that any changes would be considered for implementation for the 2027 outdoor event season.

Should Council choose to proceed with participation in the Province's BYOB event permit framework, implementation in Kingston would require a structured, phased and controlled approach to ensure alignment with community safety, operational capacity and municipal policy objectives.

Initial implementation would likely be limited to a small number of pre-approved, low-risk events. These would primarily include established and/or municipally supported festivals or events with demonstrated organizational capacity, strong site management plans and a history of compliance with existing permitting requirements. This phased approach would allow the City to evaluate impacts in a controlled environment before considering broader expansion.

Staff will also consider the broader operational context of the City, including increasing demand for events, existing service pressures and current budget constraints, when determining the allocation of staff time and resources in support of the BYOB framework. As the volume of complexity of permitted and unpermitted events continue to grow, there is a need to balance new program implementation with existing enforcement, licensing and community safety priorities, as well as support for event organizers. This includes ensuring that any future BYOB participation does not negatively impact the City's ability to respond to nuisance complaints, unsanctioned gatherings and core service delivery expectations. A measured and phased approach will allow staff to assess resource impacts while maintaining service levels across all lines of business.

The Province's expanded BYOB permitting framework introduces potential flexibility for community and cultural events, but also raises complex policy, safety, enforcement and liability considerations for municipalities.

Public Engagement

It is anticipated that in the process of updating the related municipal policies and by-laws noted above, public engagement would take place with arts, culture and event organizers, and the broader public, to better understand community perspectives, opportunities and concerns. Engagement would also likely include targeted outreach to the tourism, economic development and hospitality sectors, and community partners including Queen's University AMS, The Downtown Kingston Business Improvement Area, Tourism Kingston, the Chamber of Commerce, and resident and neighbourhood associations to better understand potential impacts related to noise, safety and community well-being.

A key component of this work will be ensuring clear and consistent communication with the public. This includes enhancing the City's website, outlining where and how BYOB would be permitted, and reinforcing that any permissions would apply only to approved, designated events.

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The results of this engagement will be used to inform policy development, identify potential risks and mitigation strategies, and ensure that any future recommendations to Council reflect both community interest and the City's commitment to safety, accountability and neighbourhood livability.

Existing Policy/By-Law

The Municipal Alcohol Policy guides the sale and service of alcohol on public property. The Province of Ontario's new BYOB framework does not comply with existing policies or by-laws and updates would be needed on the following:

- Municipal Alcohol Policy
- [Nuisance Party By-law](#)
- [Noise By-law](#)
- Parks Use By-law
- [Property Standards By-law](#)
- Community Standards By-Law

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report, but it's expected that implementation of the BYOB permit would have an impact on the municipal budget and would need to be considered in future budgets.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

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Megan Sirett, Manager, Events and Programs, Arts & Culture Services

Jen Pinarski, Manager, Communications & Public Engagement

Taralyn Jamieson, Acting Manager, Insurance and Risk, Legal Services

Exhibits Attached:

None