

Update on Temporary and Occasional Liquor Licencing

Toronto Music Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Economic Development & Culture

Dec 1, 2025



Overview

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What will be affected by this Review?

Subject to Change

- ✓ Application process for SOPs for a public events (hosted by for-profit groups)
- ✓ Application process for temporary extensions
- ✓ Internal review process of Temporary Liquor Licences applications

Not Subject to Change

- ✗ Existence/possibility of temporary liquor licences
- ✗ Process for Non-profit event organizers acquiring SOPs
- ✗ Process for Private Events requiring an SOP
- ✗ CafeTO permits

Background

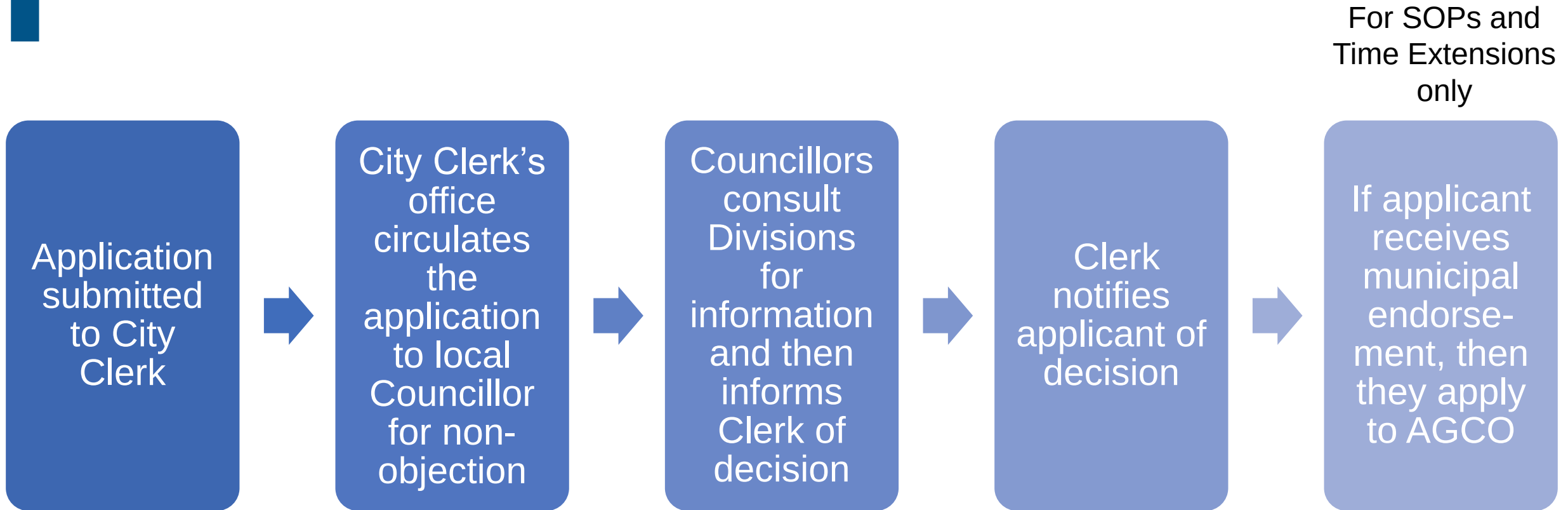
- Under the [Liquor Licence Act](#), temporary liquor licence extensions, and SOPs must be approved or endorsed by the municipality as an event of **“municipal significance”**
- Directed by Item [2023.EX3.8](#), the City Clerk receives, reviews, and circulates applications to the local Councillor for review
- The Councillor must then use their own judgement/rationale to make recommendations to the City Clerk for endorsement
- Through Items [2023.EX3.8](#) and [2023.EC8.13](#), City Council requested clarification on the decision-making process



Types of Temporary Liquor Licences

Type of Licence	Temporary Extension of Premises	Temporary Extension of Hours	Special Occasion Permits
Purpose	Permanent liquor licence holders apply to temporarily extend their licenced area	Permanent liquor licence holders apply to temporarily extend their licenced hours	Individuals or businesses apply to serve/sell alcohol to the public* without a permanent liquor licence
Approval Authority	Extension is outdoors – Clerk is Approver	City Clerk has endorsement authority	City Clerk has endorsement authority
	Extension is indoors – Clerk provides endorsement	AGCO is final approver	AGCO is final approver
Use Examples	Street Events, TIFF, Taste Events	4 AM extensions, Serving before 9 AM	Festivals, Art Shows, Markets

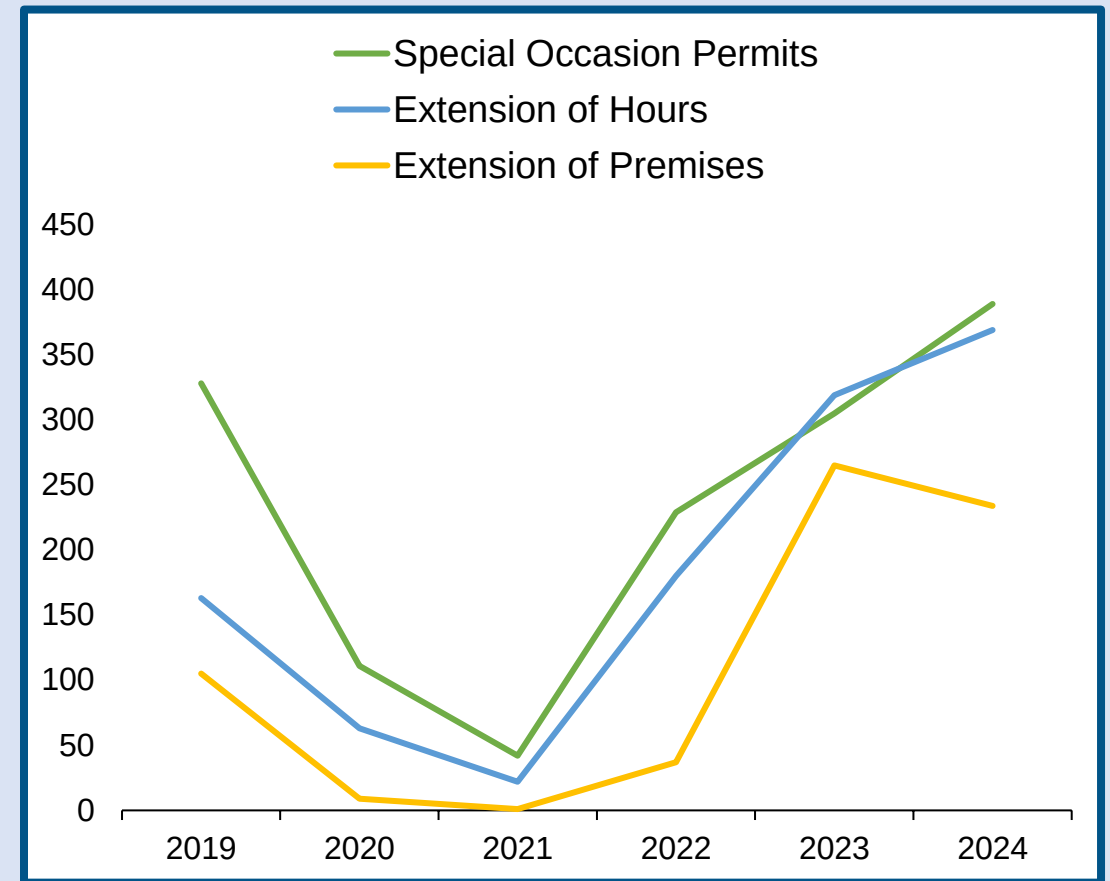
Current Process



Challenges

- 1) Growing demand for SOPs and temporary extensions
- 2) Unclear definition of “municipal significance” from the Province
- 3) Timelines and process are not standardized in current process
- 4) Concerns around nuisance, liability, and safety when approving events
- 5) There is opportunity for more clarity for applicants and consistency with other City permits

Approved SOPs and Extensions 2019-2024



Council Directive (EX3.8)

Through Item [2023.EX3.8](#), City Council:

1. Adopted the following guideline for determining if an event should be deemed municipally significant for temporary liquor licensing purposes:
 - a. an event should be deemed municipally significant, if, in the opinion of the ward councillor, an event:
 - i. meets the criteria prescribed in the Delegation of Authority for the Endorsement of Liquor Licences, as confirmed by the City Clerk;
 - ii. has a **positive cultural, social and/or economic impact** on the local community;
 - iii. is considered to be in the **public interest**; and
 - iv. complies with any other factors a member considers relevant to their determination.
2. Requested the City Clerk, in consultation with staff from MLS, EDC, Legal Services, TFS, and the TPS, to review the steps to obtain a temporary liquor licence, and to **recommend guidelines and/or a consultative process** that may aid a Councillor's review of such requests.

Council Directive (EC8.13)

Through Item [2023.EC8.13](#), City Council requested additional considerations as part of the report back requested in 2023.EX3.8:

- A. Further **clarifications of the city's definition of municipal significance**;
- B. Addressing the use of temporary extensions of hours and Special Occasions Permits (SOPs) as a **permanent business model** for some establishments;
- C. Considering **a recommended maximum number of SOPs or temporary extensions of hours** at a single location per year which can be considered municipally significant;
- D. Creating a **process for review of applications** for temporary liquor licences by applicable city divisions;
- E. Ensuring **compliance** of locations seeking temporary liquor licences with applicable **municipal licensing and standards requirements, by-laws, and provincial laws**; and
- F. Ensuring that the determination of whether a temporary liquor licence is **deemed municipally significant is fair, transparent and consistent city-wide**.

Approach



Jurisdictional scan of models and approaches used by comparable municipalities



Internal engagement with relevant City Divisions and Agencies



Policy analysis and review of existing City policies, strategies, by-laws, and best practices in permitting and licensing



External engagement with relevant stakeholders on the proposed approach

External Engagement



Consultation w/ Existing Groups

Goal: Understand user experience with the temporary liquor licence process and understand potential impacts of any changes to the process.

1

**Toronto
Association
of BIAs**

Oct 28th

2

**Festival
& Events
Network**

Nov 6th

3

**Night
Economy
WG**

Nov 18th

4

**Toronto
Music
Advisory
Committee**

Dec 1st

Public Survey on Temporary Liquor Licences

Dates: Oct 27 – Nov 21

Audience: Targeted to small businesses, bars and venues, employees, event organizers, and residents

Objective: Understand the user experience with temporary liquor licences, and how changes to the process may impact stakeholders.



What We Heard to Date

Among key findings



Maximums may be challenging for the night economy

An ideal process would:



Ensure that decisions are informed by compliance history



Be aligned with Noise Exemption Permits



Be able to accommodate last minute events



Have a definition of municipal significance that is not restrictive

Discussion

- 1) Are there any other challenges we should be aware of?
- 2) What improvements or changes would you like to see in the temporary liquor licence process?

Thank you!

For any additional questions or feedback please
reach out at laura.smith@toronto.ca

