



Staff Report PRC2026-02

Committee 2026-04-20

Council 2026-04-20

Amendments

Submitted To: Committee of the Whole | Council
Submitted By: Karen Cubitt, Director Parks, Recreation & Culture
Prepared By: Jennifer Parker, Manager, Culture & Events
Subject: Bring-Your-Own (BYO) Events

Recommendation

WHEREAS the sale and service of alcohol in Ontario is regulated by the Liquor Licence and Control Act which is administered by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario,

AND WHEREAS the sale or service of alcohol at special occasions and events open to the public requiring a Special Occasion Permit (SOP) through the AGCO is contingent upon municipal authorization,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Staff Report PRC2026-02, Bring-Your-Own (BYO) Events, be received,

AND THAT Council prohibit the permitting of Bring-Your-Own events within the Town of Collingwood.

Amendments

None.

1. Executive Summary

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) is responsible for administering the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019* which, combined with the Regulations, sets the licensing and regulatory framework for the sale and service of alcohol in Ontario.

The sale or service of alcohol at special occasions and events open to the public requiring a Special Occasion Permit (SOP) through the AGCO, is contingent upon authorization by the Municipality.

Changes implemented by the province, effective April 30, 2026, will expand the eligibility for Tailgate event permits, to include public events that have municipal designation as cultural or community events, introducing a new class of permit called Bring-Your-Own events. A Municipal designation of a 'community' or 'cultural' event and an approved Bring-Your-Own SOP from the AGCO would allow attendees, 19+ and over to bring and consume alcohol within the permitted area.

As identified by BFL Canada Risk and Insurance, Bring-Your-Own events may only occur where:

- A municipality has enacted appropriate bylaw authority
- A municipality has formally designated the event as eligible; and
- The event organizer has obtained a valid BYO permit from the AGCO

Municipalities are not mandated to permit BYO outdoor public events. Changes to the regulation made by the province will however serve to enable these types of events to occur. The government has identified that this change in the regulation is intended to benefit businesses, organizations, and local tourism by making public events more accessible and encouraging greater community participation.

Collingwood's Alcohol Policy (PR-POL-C-001-2021) was introduced to provide a management strategy for the control of alcohol on Town property. The Municipal Alcohol Policy in its current form states that tailgate events are not permitted in the Town of Collingwood. In response to the expansion of tailgate (now BYO) events, and in consideration of the April 30, 2026 deadline to have a By-law in place if the municipality intends to permit these, regulatory changes and implications, risk management and public safety, health and social impact as well as the potential economic benefits of this expanded permit opportunity, have been assessed. This work was undertaken through consultation with community stakeholders including other municipalities in the region, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Simcoe County Municipalities Insurance Pool (SCMIP), Collingwood OPP, Downtown Collingwood BIA, Tourism Simcoe County and the general business community through the Economic Development newsletter. This

consultation has informed the recommendation to not proceed with permitting BYO events in the Town of Collingwood.

2. Analysis

Regulation Changes

In 2019, provincial requirements for Special Occasion Permits (SOP) were updated to include tailgate events, requiring a specific permit for sporting-related events where attendees 19 years of age or older may bring and consume their own alcohol within the permitted area.

Effective April 30, 2026, amendments to Ontario Regulation 747/21 will expand the eligibility for tailgate event permits to include events designated by a municipality as cultural or community events. This change introduces a new class of permit, Bring-Your-Own (BYO) events. Tailgating events have been revoked and changed to BYO events. This new definition of an event includes events on ground level that are held in connection or in proximity to a professional, semi-professional or post-secondary sporting event, or have been designated by a municipal council or their delegates as a cultural or community event. Approved events would allow of age individuals to possess and consume liquor brought to the event by the attendee.

BYO event applicants must provide the AGCO with a letter from the municipality designating the event as a 'cultural' or 'community' event. If the municipality does not designate an event as a community or cultural event, the AGCO cannot issue a BYO event SOP. The municipality has no obligation to designate any events for BYO permit eligibility. Events taking place on public property would also need authorization through Collingwood's Special Events Permit Process.

The Town of Collingwood Municipal Alcohol Policy prohibits tailgate events. Allowing BYO events in Collingwood would require revision of the Municipal Alcohol Policy lifting the prohibition of tailgating events and furthermore expanding permissions to include designated community and cultural events. Further to this, given that applicants for BYO events must obtain a letter or resolution from the municipality, designating the event as a cultural or community event before submitting their application to the AGCO, the municipality would need to develop clear criteria for what events would fall into those categories. The province has not prescribed procedures for designations however has

shared examples of what might be considered community or cultural events including outdoor movie screenings, street markets, arts and crafts shows, free outdoor concerts, fairs, neighbourhood sports tournaments, public performances, farmers markets and international/religious festivals.

To protect public safety and ensure appropriate risk controls are in place, a review of enforcement expectations, approval conditions, and event requirements would be required, with updates made as necessary to mitigate identified risks.

Risk Management & Public Safety

The Simcoe County Municipalities Insurance Pool (SCMIP) strongly recommends that member municipalities do not adopt the expanded BYO event permit framework at this time due to significant, unmitigated risk exposure.

Key risk considerations identified and not addressed in the regulatory framework include:

- No statutory liability protection for municipalities
- Direct conflict with existing Municipal Alcohol Policies
- No mandated risk management requirements
- Enforcement and administrative burden
- Elevated risk of drink tampering or spiking
- Cumulative Municipal or County pressures (police/emergency medical services, equity & public health goals, regional coordination, migration to permissive municipalities)
- Joint and Several Liability exposures

Permitting BYO events in public spaces would significantly undermine existing safeguards relied upon by the municipality to manage risk, promote responsible consumption, and protect vulnerable populations.

As identified in the *Liquor Licence and Control Act*, event organizers are legally responsible for meeting the AGCO permit conditions.

The availability and consumption of alcohol, and the harms associated with it, directly affect municipal operations and services, including public safety, enforcement, recreational spaces, and liability, with municipalities often absorbing the resulting financial and operational costs.

Municipalities

SCMIP noted that during the provincial consultation process, municipalities raised concerns regarding liability exposure, enforcement practicality, public-safety implications and conflict between the proposed BYO framework and existing Municipal Alcohol Policies.

Consultation with South Georgian Bay municipalities revealed that most are presently assessing potential approaches and have not yet reached a determination regarding implementation.

Health & Social Impact

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit provided a briefing on alcohol availability and associated harms in Simcoe Muskoka, supporting the recommendation not to permit BYO events.

Each year in Simcoe Muskoka, alcohol use is associated with an estimated 7,665 emergency department visits, 840 hospitalizations, and 275 deaths, representing approximately one in twenty deaths in the region. Alcohol-related harms are disproportionately experienced by men, and nearly half of alcohol-attributable deaths are linked to cancer or heart disease. Alcohol also remains a significant contributing factor to injuries and injury-related mortality, placing ongoing pressures on the health care system and public services.

Evidence consistently indicates that increased alcohol availability is associated with higher levels of consumption and a corresponding rise in alcohol-related harms. The consumption of alcohol in public spaces may further reinforce the normalization of alcohol use within the community.

Economic Impact

It was noted in the Collingwood Downtown BIA Board Meeting held on April 9, 2026 that the Collingwood Downtown BIA Board does not support Collingwood pursuing this initiative, citing potential negative impacts on local restaurants and bars.

Concerns shared by the general business community with Economic Development through newsletter engagement focused on the potential costs associated with clean-up and public safety. No economic benefits were identified in the feedback received.

Financial Impacts

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. If Council proceeds with permitting BYO event permits there may be financial implications related to service delivery including risk management, legal and land, community and public events, parks and harbour, police, fire and rescue.

Conclusion

The AGCO administers the Liquor *Licence and Control Act*, which governs alcohol service in Ontario, including requirements for SOPs supported by municipal authorization. Effective April 30, 2026, regulatory amendments will enable municipalities, at their discretion, to designate certain cultural or community events as eligible for BYO permits, allowing attendees aged 19 and over to consume personally supplied alcohol within approved event areas, subject to local by-laws and policies. In Collingwood, implementation would necessitate amendments to the Municipal Alcohol Policy, development of clear designation criteria, and alignment with existing by-laws and event approval processes. These changes would introduce new administrative and enforcement obligations without corresponding provincial safeguards.

From a risk and public safety perspective, the BYO framework presents significant concerns. The absence of clear economic benefits, statutory liability protection, mandated risk-management requirements, and clear enforcement standards, coupled with insurance advisories against adoption creates exposure for the municipality. Permitting BYO events would weaken existing controls, increase pressures on municipal services, and exacerbate known public health harms associated with increased alcohol availability. Given these factors, staff recommend prohibiting BYO events within the Town of Collingwood. Staff will continue to monitor the approach of other municipalities or any provincial changes that may reduce the identified risk factors and record any comments from the business community in support of BYO events. Should the situational analysis change in the future, staff would bring this matter back to Council with further information.

Acknowledging the significant public attention and possible misinformation surrounding BYO events, there is a need for a clear public awareness campaign to communicate where and when alcohol may be legally consumed in public spaces.

3. Input from Other Sources

Consultation included other Ontario municipalities, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, SCMIP, Collingwood OPP, BIA, Tourism Simcoe County and BFL Canada. This report was reviewed by Department Heads on April 14, 2026 and the content responds to the advice received.

4. Applicable Policy or Legislation

Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/19l15b>

Provides regulations to the issuance of permits. Permits are administered and issued by the AGCO with a requirement of a letter or council resolution to designate an event as municipally significant or as ‘community’ or ‘cultural’ event for a BYO permit.

O. Reg. 747/21: Permits under Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c 15, Sced. 22 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/210747> Renames and expands the definition of “Tailgate events” to “bring-your-own events”.

Municipal Alcohol Policy (PR-POL-C-001-2021)

Provides a management strategy for the control of alcohol on Town property

By-Law No. 2013-065 Special Event By-Law

Sets the requirements to hold an event on municipal property in the Town of Collingwood.

The content of this report is connected to the **Community Based Strategic Plan: Pillar # 2** and the key action of encouraging and supporting events, festivals, and celebrations that bring people together, foster inclusion and showcase the richness of our culture, diversity, heritage and community.

5. Considerations

2024-2028 Community Based Strategic Plan: Advances pillar(s) below:

Sustainable Connected Vibrant Responsible

- Services adjusted if any [Choose an item.](#)
- Climate Change / Sustainability: [Choose an item.](#)
- Communication / Engagement: Choose an item. Public Engagement has occurred
- Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: Consistent with Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content: [\[add content and meeting dates\]](#)
- Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)): [\[add content\]](#)

Next steps and future action required following endorsement:

Municipal Alcohol Policy update required to update terminology, retracting tailgating events and replacing with bring-your-own events. A public awareness campaign will be implemented to increase awareness among residents and visitors about alcohol consumption on public property as a result of the BYO permit expansion and Collingwood's response to it.

6. Appendices and Other Resources

None

7. Approval

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CAO Comments:

- Endorsed by CAO Skinner on April 15, 2026 to proceed to COW.