

Proposed Alcohol License Density Plan

The density of alcohol-licensed establishments has been shown to directly affect the volume and severity of alcohol-related problems within a specific area. The following license density plan is aimed at reducing both the number of alcohol licenses and the overall capacity of alcohol-licensed establishments within certain areas of Madison. The specific intent of this density plan is threefold: 1) decrease the strain on public resources caused by alcohol-related problems by decreasing the frequency and severity of these problems; (2) provide opportunities for additional business in the downtown area not associated with the sale or service of alcohol; and 3) serve as a model for future alcohol license density planning in other areas of the city

Reductions in both the number of alcohol licenses and the overall capacity of alcohol-licensed establishments will be achieved through voluntary and involuntary attrition. Voluntary attrition involves a license holder surrendering their alcohol license. Involuntary attrition involves an alcohol license being revoked or non-renewed by the Common Council

The targeted area for this alcohol license density plan includes police sectors 403, 404, 405, and 406 in the Central Policing District. The area included in these sectors is bordered approximately by Blair Street, Lake Street, Lake Monona, and Lake Mendota. Approximately one-third of the alcohol licenses in the City of Madison are currently located in this area. It is expected that this density plan will remain in effect for a minimum of five years in order to obtain the desired results. Regular evaluation and analysis will be conducted by city agencies for the duration.

Specific points of the plan include:

1. New alcohol licenses are only available in the targeted area for bona fide restaurants. Being classified as a restaurant does not guarantee the granting of an alcohol license in these sectors or anywhere throughout the city. In determining whether an establishment is a bona fide restaurant, the Alcohol License Review Committee and Common Council will evaluate all of the circumstances relevant to the license. Some of the factors to be considered include, but are not limited to: alcohol and food sales revenue percentages; hours of operation; hours of food service; types of food offered; frequency, duration, and timing of entertainment; seating arrangement for patrons; use of security staff; advertisement; and perceptions of patrons, citizens, and enforcement officers.
2. The application process for transferring an alcohol license is not affected by this density plan (i.e., an existing tavern or liquor store owner retains his or her opportunity to transfer his or her alcohol license to a new owner).
3. If an existing alcohol license in the targeted area is surrendered, it is not available for transfer within the targeted area.
4. Requests for an increased capacity for an existing alcohol-licensed establishment in the targeted area will only be entertained if the establishment is a bona fide restaurant.