



Destination Stratford  
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## Stratford Al Fresco By-law 37-2021 Amendment Report

March 18, 2024

Prepared by: Zac Gribble, Executive Director

The Stratford Al Fresco program was originally created in 2020 in response to the pandemic economic crisis to bolster and support outdoor dining opportunities for residents, visitors and local businesses.



On March 22, 2021, the newly created By-Law 37-2021 (full version included below) came into effect after being reviewed by the City's Corporate Leadership Team and then unanimously approved by Stratford City Council:

BEING a By-law to establish consumption of liquor with food in designated public spaces and at permitted times and to repeal By-laws 106-2020 and 118-2020.



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Destination Stratford works directly with local restaurants each year to provide the City with proof of minimum \$5M liability insurance required to participate in the Al Fresco liquor-with-food program, and also staffs and monitors the Al Fresco locations to ensure the public outdoor dining areas are clean and safe.

After 4 years of managing and implementing the Stratford Al Fresco program, Destination Stratford is proud of the results with over \$750,000 of annual economic activity in addition to myriad social, community and economic benefits.



Given the success of the *Consumption of Liquor with Food in Designated Public Places By-law* and experiencing no significant issues arising from it, including the pilot program during the 2023/24 Lights On Stratford winter festival, Stratford has established itself as a progressive leader by adopting a European approach to allowing liquor in designated public spaces.

*"The creation of Al Fresco was an idea born out of necessity for a space to dine without health concerns or constraints of indoor dining. This evolved into a true revenue generator for restaurants as most saw their takeout business thrive despite the fact that people now had options for inside. It created a European atmosphere, a community feeling of people dining and sipping on their favourite beverage in what felt like a European Piazza or dining lakeside at a picnic table shaded by weeping willows."*  
– Shelley Windsor, Vice-President, Windsor Hospitality Inc. / Mercer



*"I sure hope they keep it all going. My customers loved all aspects of it. Market Square, the Island. I had many show us photos of them eating their lunches there..."*  
– Kelly Ballantyne, Sirkel Foods





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*"I wanted to pass along full support for the Al Fresco initiative. As an example, we did a large take-out order that included alcohol for about 30 people and took it to the Tom Patterson island. I think it has been highly useful / needed and successful over the past 2 years."*

– Bentley's Bar Inn & Restaurant

*"We had multiple customers come in to order mulled wine, hot chocolates and our Lights On Spritz to go while they enjoyed the exhibits. We look forward to watching LOS grow in future years as well as its impact on downtown businesses."*

– Megan Jones, Co-owner, The Starlight Bar

# STRATFORD

Al Fresco

## Alcohol allowed with food

(Alcohol supplied by local restaurants only)

Alcohol may be consumed responsibly with food in approved areas during the listed times

**May 1 - September 23**

Fri / Sat: 11 am - 9 pm  
Sun - Thurs: 11 am - 8 pm

**September 24 - October 31**

Daily: 11 am - 7 pm

Only Liquor purchased with food from participating Stratford restaurants.

Only wine bottles, beer cans and mixed drinks in a sealed container permitted.

Patrons must have proof of purchase receipt from participating restaurant.

**APPROVED AREAS:**

Market Square, Tom Patterson Island, approved downtown parkland (see below)

Tom Patterson Island

Market Square

Downtown Parkland

Does not include bandshell structure or cenotaph/memorial paved areas.

Must be 19+ to consume alcohol. Please enjoy responsibly. Alcohol is sold by participating restaurants only. No open containers allowed in public spaces.

The next logical step is to adopt a progressive European approach to liquor in our public spaces by amending this By-law to be effective year-round which will maximize opportunity for the local tourism sector and businesses, in particular allowing our local restaurants increased flexibility to creatively expand their offering while simultaneously bringing vibrancy to our heritage downtown core and park system.



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Requested amendments to the By-law are:

**A. Replace the Permitted Spaces and Hours 3(B) section:**

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The hours that Liquor may be consumed in any Permitted Spaces are as follows:

May 1 to September 23

- Sunday to Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Friday to Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

September 24 to October 31

- Sunday to Saturday from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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with:

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The hours that Liquor may be consumed in any Permitted Spaces are as follows:

- Sunday to Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Friday to Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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**B. Replace Terms and Conditions Consumption in Permitted Spaces 5 section:**

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5. The consumption of Liquor in the Permitted Spaces shall only be permitted subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Only Liquor purchased from City restaurants with food shall be allowed in the Permitted Spaces;
2. The consumption of Liquor and food must be in a responsible manner and in compliance with all Applicable Laws including all City policies, by-laws, practices and procedures;
3. Only wine bottles, beer cans and mixed drinks in a sealed container shall be allowed in the Permitted Spaces; and
4. Liquor shall not be consumed in any area situated outside of the designated Permitted Spaces.



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With:

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5. The consumption of Liquor in the Permitted Spaces shall only be permitted subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. Only Liquor purchased from City restaurants registered in the Stratford Al Fresco program shall be allowed in the Permitted Spaces;
  2. The consumption of Liquor must be in a responsible manner and in compliance with all Applicable Laws including all City policies, by-laws, practices and procedures; and
  3. Liquor shall not be consumed in any area situated outside of the designated Permitted Spaces.
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If this amendment to the By-law is approved, Destination Stratford is committed to its ongoing role in collecting and sharing certificate of insurance documentation for local participating restaurants, as well as providing ongoing support for the Stratford Al Fresco program, such as dedicated staff managing Al Fresco locations during the busy patio season.



The above By-law amendment aligns with our shoulder and winter season destination development goals, supports continued economic recovery and opportunity for our local businesses, and would once again raise Stratford's profile as an innovative and progressive city.