



CITY OF MANITOWOC

WISCONSIN, USA

www.manitowoc.org

Date: November 25, 2025

To: Finance Committee

From: Adam Tegen, Community Development

Re: Update on the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)

Over the past year, the City enacted restricted DORA legislation to see how it would be received by the public and to test whether any unexpected issues would come up. With the closure of the DORA on October 31st, staff has been doing outreach and follow up to see how the district operated. Staff remained in close contact with the 14 participating establishments throughout the season and received overwhelmingly positive feedback and some suggestions for changes. Those recommendations included increased marketing and public relations efforts and expanding the program to include the Lakeshore Holiday Parade. While hosting the Travel Wisconsin team in September, staff was able to highlight how the DORA program is an enhancement to the downtown experience, allowing them to include this initiative in their regional and national media pitches. A more formal survey has gone out to the participants to obtain additional feedback. Staff also contacted the Police Department to determine if there was any impact on behaviors in the downtown or enforcement concerns. Ultimately the response was that neither the day shift or 2nd shift (those that cover the hours of operation) experienced any issues or uptick in activity. In addition, staff also contacted DPI and Pozorski to determine if there was any impact on garbage collection or complaints about litter in the downtown area. DPI noted that they did not notice any difference in the amount of litter, and they received no complaints. Pozorski has not formally responded yet, but no concerns related to their ongoing collection of garbage from the trashcans situated in the downtown area have come forward.

Overall, staff feels that the initial trial of the DORA was a success and helped add value to our downtown environment. Based upon feedback and the desire to continue to support this initiative, staff is recommending several changes to the ordinance to enhance and expand the program. The exact changes are on the attached draft ordinance, but in summary they are:

- Change from a seasonal district to a year-round district, which will allow seasonal events like the Holiday Parade to take advantage of DORA
- Add an additional hour to the district by extending the closing of the district from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Expand the boundary of the district to allow additional establishments to the north of downtown to participate and include the popular Badger Car Ferry viewing area.

Staff appreciates the support of the Council thus far on this initiative and we look forward to continuing to build on its success. We would like to note that the ordinance still includes an annual review to identify any issues and determine if changes are necessary in the future.

As always, if you have any questions on the provided information, feel free to contact me at ategen@manitowoc.org or 920-686-6931.

ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE ~~ESTABLISHING A~~ AMENDING THE DESIGNATED OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA (DORA)

The Mayor and Common Council of the City of Manitowoc do ordain as follows:

Section 1. Section 11.015 is ~~created~~ amended to read as follows:

“Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)

(1) Purpose and Intent. The purpose of this ordinance is to create a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) to enhance the downtown experience for visitors and tourists by allowing the responsible consumption of alcohol beverages (beverages containing alcohol) outdoors and within specified boundaries. This initiative aims to promote economic activity and support local businesses in the city’s downtown district.

(2) Definitions.

Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA): A specific area within the city where alcoholic beverages purchased from participating establishments may be carried and consumed outdoors in compliance with this ordinance.

Participating Establishments: Licensed businesses within the DORA authorized to sell alcoholic beverages in approved containers for outdoor consumption.

(3) Designation of the DORA.

- a. The DORA boundaries shall encompass the area shown on Exhibit A.
- b. The DORA will operate ~~annually~~ year-round from January 1 ~~April 15~~ through ~~October 31~~ December 31.
- c. The DORA will operate during the following hours: 9 a.m. to ~~9~~ 10 p.m. CT.

(4) Permitted Activities Within the DORA.

- a. Alcohol beverages purchased from participating establishments may be carried and consumed within the DORA, subject to restrictions (see subsection 5, below).
- b. All alcohol beverages must be served in city-approved, unbreakable, and transparent or semi-transparent containers marked with the logo or name of the participating establishment.

- c. Patrons must remain within the defined boundaries of the DORA while consuming alcohol beverages purchased at participating establishments.

(5) Restrictions Within the DORA.

- a. Consumption of alcohol beverages is prohibited on private property without the owner's explicit consent.
- b. Consumption of alcohol beverages in glass containers served from participating establishments is strictly prohibited. All consumption of alcoholic beverages outside in the DORA that were purchased from participating establishments must be consumed from plastic containers.
- c. Patrons may not bring alcohol beverages into establishments that serve alcoholic beverages or food unless the alcohol beverage was purchased at that establishment.
- d. All state and local laws regarding the legal drinking age, public intoxication, and disorderly conduct remain in effect.

(6) Licensing and Compliance. Participating establishments must apply for a DORA permit and adhere to the following requirements:

- a. Use approved containers for alcohol beverages.
- b. Display clear signage indicating participation in the DORA program.
- c. Educate staff about DORA rules and regulations.

(7) City Responsibilities.

- a. The City Clerk shall maintain a registry of participating establishments and issue permits upon verification of an appropriate and valid alcohol license.
- b. Waste disposal and recycling receptacles throughout the DORA.
- c. The city retains the right to suspend or terminate the DORA temporarily or permanently in response to public safety concerns or non-compliance.

(8) Violations:

- a. Violation by Individuals: A violation by an individual shall be punishable by a forfeiture of not more than \$100 for each offense.
- b. Violation by participating and licensed business: A violation by a business that possesses a valid DORA permit shall be punishable by a forfeiture of not less than \$100 and not more than \$500 for each offense.

- c. Violation by non-license business: A violation by a business that does not possess a valid DORA permit shall be punishable by a forfeiture of not less than \$500 and not more than \$1000 for each offense.
- d. Any business failing to comply with DORA requirements may have its permit revoked without notice by the Municipal Clerk.

(9) Annual Review. The DORA program shall be reviewed annually by the Common Council to assess its effectiveness and determine any necessary amendments or continuance.

Section 2: Effective Date. This ordinance shall take immediate effect upon its adoption and publication as required by law.

INTRODUCED: _____

ADOPTED: _____

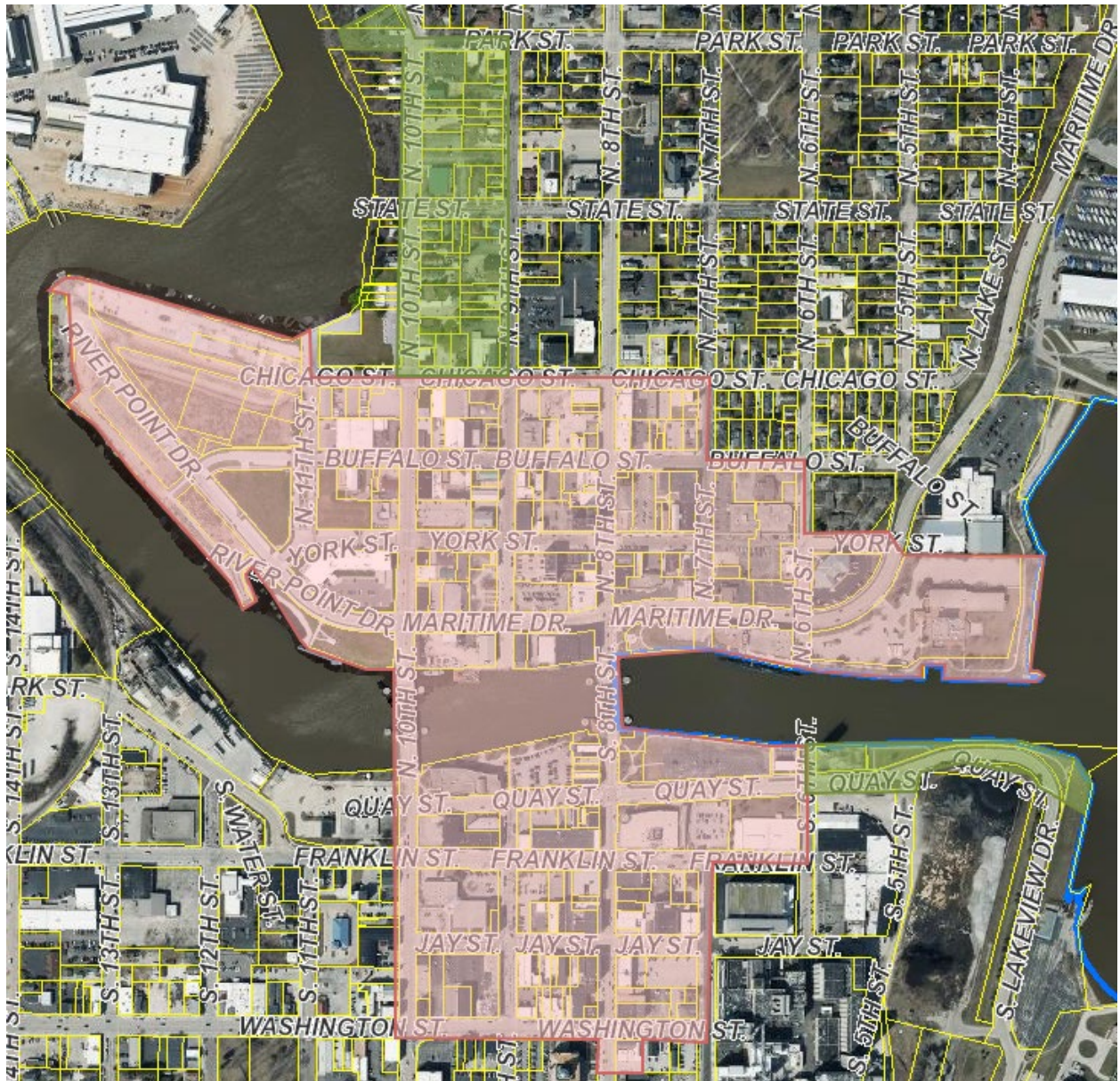
APPROVED: _____

Justin M. Nickels, Mayor

Fiscal Impact:
Funding Source:
Finance Director Approval:
Approved as to Form:

This Ordinance was drafted by Eric G. Nycz, City Attorney

EXHIBIT A



Existing DORA



Potential New DORA Areas