



Agenda Item Report

City Commission - Oct 15 2024

Department

Parks and Recreation

Staff Contact

Porter Arneill, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
for Arts and Culture

Recommendations

Receive update on Common Consumption Area.

Executive Summary

As part of the City's Unmistakable Identity outcome area, and with KU football being played in Kansas City this season, the City Commission asked staff and stakeholders to explore the possibility of a Common Consumption Area (CCA) for Downtown Lawrence. Staff presented findings in a City Manager's Report at the May 14, 2024 City Commisison meeting. At that meeting, the City Commission asked for more information.

In addition to Hays, Overland Park and the KDOR-Alcoholic Beverage Control, staff reached out to representatives from Topeka, Manhattan and Emporia to glean information from their experiences.

As discussed during the May 14 meeting, directly comparing Common Consumption Areas (CCAs) across cities is challenging due to the newness of these programs and the lack of formal data on their economic impact. Anecdotal reports from Hays and Manhattan suggest a sales tax increase during events held in their CCAs. In most cases, CCAs were established both as a benefit and to provide an annual blanket permit allowing alcohol consumption in designated areas. Currently, Lawrence offers individualized permits for events with alcohol.

The following provides some summary information from CCA activities in the aforementioned municipalities:

- Hays, Kansas, recently established a Common Consumption Area (CCA) in its downtown district, allowing the public to consume alcoholic beverages outdoors within a designated area. The CCA operates year-round, from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m.
- Strang Hall, located in downtown Overland Park, is a unique food hall that offers a dining experience with six chef-driven restaurants under one roof. It features both indoor and outdoor seating, with a common consumption area that allows patrons to enjoy alcoholic beverages purchased within the hall while walking through its designated spaces.

- Topeka, Kansas, launched two Common Consumption Areas (CCAs) in 2024, allowing patrons to consume alcoholic beverages in designated outdoor zones. These areas are located in Downtown Topeka and the North Topeka Arts District (NOTO). Thus far, seven establishments are permitted in the downtown CCA and no establishments have permits for the NOTO CCA. These CCAs operate daily from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.
- Downtown Manhattan Inc. currently implements a form of CCA through special event permit. With a permit, they are able to close the street then businesses can sell alcohol in the area defined by barricades with people wearing wrist bands. The City Commission is also considering a CCA.
- Emporia, Kansas, has established a Common Consumption Area (CCA), allowing the public to possess and consume alcoholic beverages within designated downtown areas during specific events.

During community engagement meetings with stakeholders in Lawrence, two downtown establishments expressed definite interest in participating in a potential downtown Common Consumption Area (CCA). Other stakeholders, including retailers, were either undecided or opposed. The undecided businesses raised concerns about the city’s ability to enforce rules, protect existing sponsorship agreements, and manage the necessary oversight and clean-up.

Based on preliminary estimates, the cost for signage, designated trash receptacles, and other miscellaneous expenses related to establishing a downtown Common Consumption Area (CCA) would range between \$25,000 and \$35,000. Additionally, with the reduction in part-time staffing due to the 2025 budget constraints, the increased need for downtown clean-up associated with the CCA would necessitate further service reductions in other areas.

Based on the current preliminary information, if there is interest in moving forward with a Common Consumption Area (CCA) Downtown, implementing a limited-term "pilot" program could be an effective strategy. This approach would allow the city to evaluate the feasibility and impact of a CCA, providing data and insights before making a decision on whether to pursue a long-term CCA. A pilot would also help assess community feedback, operational challenges, and any adjustments needed for successful implementation.

Alignment to Strategic Plan

Unmistakable Identity

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact to the City is unknown at this time.

Action Requested

Receive update on Common Consumption Area and direct staff as needed.

Previous Agenda Reports:

