

**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

**FROM:** A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

**TITLE:** Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Code of the City of North Port, Florida, Chapter 6 - Alcoholic Beverages, Sec. 6-4. - Sales Near Churches or Schools.

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**Recommended Action**

Direct staff to prepare an Ordinance amending the Code of the City of North Port, Florida, Chapter 6 - Alcoholic Beverages, Sec. 6-4. - Sales Near Churches or Schools to:

1. Specify that the distance requirements apply only to adult oriented businesses, bars and night clubs (essentially exempting craft breweries/wineries, hotels places of assembly, recreation, commercial, and restaurants from the distance requirements).
2. Reduce the distance requirements between businesses selling alcoholic beverages and churches and schools to from 800-feet to 600-feet.
3. Specify that the distance requirement shall not be imposed on businesses selling alcoholic beverages when a church operating in a strip commercial center is within the established distance.
4. Specify that school as used in these regulations means a state-accredited public or private school for children from the preschool or kindergarten level through senior high school but shall not be deemed to include any other types of schools.

OR

Maintain the distance requirement of 800-feet and recommend the amendments in numbers 1, 3, and 4 above.

OR

Other amendments as approved by the City Commission.

**Background Information**

The City of North Port's regulations regarding sales of alcoholic beverages in proximity to churches and schools have not been revisited since 1990.

Sarasota County does not impose the distance requirements (800-feet) on food service establishments or those businesses only selling beer and/or wine.

The City of Sarasota only imposes distance requirements on, "any licensed premises devoted during any time of operation predominantly or totally to serving alcoholic beverages, intoxicating beverages, or intoxicating liquors, or any combination thereof, for consumption on the licensed premises; in which the serving of food, if any, is merely incidental to the consumption of any such beverage."

The City of Venice does not impose the distance requirements (500-feet) on restaurants or those selling only beer and malt beverages.

With over fifteen schools (or preschools) and more than thirty churches, many located on collector and arterial roadways, the current limitation on location of businesses engaging in alcoholic beverage sales reduces the number of properties available for businesses like banquet halls, family entertainment, fraternal organizations, hotels and restaurants. For example, a hotel or restaurant interested in the proposed

outparcels adjacent to the Sarasota Technical College would not be permitted to sell alcoholic beverages. Another example would be properties zoned Corridor Transitional or Corridor where a place of assembly (includes banquet halls, fraternal organizations like the Moose Club or VFW) is a permissible use these regulations would disallow those uses that typically serve alcohol.

The current distance requirements are inconsistent with the Economic Development and Growth Management Pillar (Priority 2) and the Economic Development Element. Revisiting these regulations is consistent with the Policy 1.2.3. Systematically review the City's regulatory process to support economic development activities, particularly for identified and targeted market sectors, Policy 1.2.4: Provide the regulatory network and processes to help increase available shovel-ready sites for manufacturing, research and development, office uses, distribution, and light industrial use, and Policy 1.2.6: Identify policies and procedures that unnecessarily impede and/or duplicate the permitting process. If needed, recommend changes to current policies and procedures required to start-up, relocate or expand a business, identify new policies and procedures to streamline the process, implement in order to create an open and transparent permitting process.

On April 15, 2025, the Community Economic Development Advisory Board reviewed this item and recommended approval to the City Commission to review the Code of the City of North Port, Florida, Chapter 6 - Alcoholic Beverages, Sec. 6-4. - Sales Near Churches or Schools.

### **Strategic Plan**

Economic Development and Growth Management Pillar

### **Financial Impact**

Not applicable.

### **Procurement**

Not applicable.

### **Attachments:**

1. North Port and Surrounding Local Government Distance Regulations
2. Economic Development Element
3. Economic Development and Growth Management Pillar
4. 04-15-25 CEDAB Meeting Minutes

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