

TOURISM MEMO

To: Government Affairs Committee

From: Beth Gleesing – Tourism Specialist

Meeting Date: July 21, 2026

Subject: Creation of Temporary Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas

A. Issue

Wauwatosa Tourism is requesting changes to 7.50 Special Events, adding a new item: authorization for a Temporary Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (TDORA).

B. Background/Options

Special events are an important part of Wauwatosa's community identity and tourism strategy. These events attract residents and visitors, support local businesses, and create vibrant gathering spaces throughout the city. Food and beverage sales—including alcoholic beverages—are often an important component of these events and contribute to their overall success.

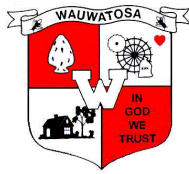
Under Wisconsin law, the possession and consumption of open alcoholic beverages in public spaces is generally prohibited unless specifically authorized. Adoption of the proposed Temporary Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (TDORA) ordinance would provide the City with a legal framework to allow outdoor consumption of alcoholic beverages during approved special events within designated areas.

In addition to providing this authority, the establishment of TDORAs has the potential to:

- Spur new events and activities that attract visitors and generate economic impact.
- Encourage greater participation by local restaurants, bars, and other businesses.
- Create a more walkable and connected event experience by allowing visitors to explore Wauwatosa districts while enjoying approved beverages.
- Showcase Wauwatosa's unique business districts and public spaces through coordinated community events.
- Enhance the overall visitor experience and support tourism and economic development initiatives.

More than a dozen Wisconsin municipalities have implemented Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas in various forms, including temporary, seasonal, and year-round programs. These communities have used DORAs to support downtown vitality, increase visitor engagement, and provide additional opportunities for local businesses while maintaining appropriate public safety measures through clearly defined rules and event-specific management.

At this time, staff are proposing TDORAs in three designated areas:



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- The Village: State Street between Harmonee Avenue and Wauwatosa Avenue; Underwood Avenue between Harmonee Avenue and State Street; and Harwood Avenue between State Street and 7479 Harwood Avenue
- East Tosa: North Avenue from 76th Street to 60th Street
- Midtown: North Avenue from Swan Road to 80th Street

Maps of all three TDORA boundaries are included in the agenda packet.

C. Strategic Plan (Area of Focus)

Priority Area One: Economic Development

Priority Area Five: Quality of Life

D. Fiscal Impact

As outlined, the creation of the TDORA will be in conjunction with a special event and carry its own application fee of \$100 to cover staff time. Additionally, special event organizers will pay for the TDORA markers (stickers) required for participation that indicate a beverage was purchased from a participating establishment. Stickers will be available for purchase in the following increments:

5,000 stickers: \$700

1,000 stickers: \$140

500 stickers: \$70

100 stickers: \$15

The financial impact of the TDORA will be experienced by special event organizers and participating establishments through compliant, successful events.

E. Recommendation

Staff recommend approval of amendments to Chapter 7.50 of the Municipal Code to allow for the creation of Temporary Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas. Staff also recommend the adoption of a TDORA application fee and TDORA sticker fees.