

CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Gives Final Greenlight for Youngstown's Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)

30-acre area downtown will help attract visitors and business into the city's central business district

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO – After months of planning and community input, the City of Youngstown received notification that the Ohio Division of Liquor Control has approved the proposed DORA for the downtown area, which will allow residents and visitors to enjoy beverages from downtown businesses throughout the designated area.

The DORA, spearheaded by the city and the Economic Action Group (EAG) aims to further re-establish the downtown district as the area's primary place for entertainment by creating a vibrant community atmosphere and attract visitors. The state's approval is the final step in the process, allowing the city to meet its goal of having the DORA in place by the end of the year.

"As we continually look at ways enhance the downtown experience for residents, visitors and our local businesses, the DORA is an added benefit," said Youngstown Mayor Jamael Tito Brown. "This is one more exciting step towards creating a dynamic environment that people want to visit and will bring a windfall by helping increase traffic for our businesses, attract events to the Covelli Centre and amphitheater, and bring needed tax revenue to the city."

Youngstown City Council approved the measure in September after meetings with constituents and downtown stakeholders to gather input.

"We've said before that as our downtown goes, our city goes. said First Ward Councilman Julius Oliver. "The DORA is a creative way to help develop the sense of community, help our businesses succeed and help market our city,"

Over 160 cities in Ohio have implemented DORAs and have seen significant economic and community benefits from them. Businesses in these cities have reported an increase in patrons, which has led to higher sales and, new employment opportunities and revitalized downtown areas.

"We are excited to see the city move forward with the Downtown DORA," said EAG Executive Director Nick Chretien. "Outdoor refreshment areas have been an effective tool for driving

additional business in other communities. This is one step, not the last, in supporting our local bars and restaurants.”

“As we looked towards how to strategically grow our downtown district, implementing a DORA became an obvious choice,” said Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber President Guy Coviello. “Providing additional opportunities for our businesses through the DORA helps to create an environment that is ripe for continued growth.”

The city and EAG worked with businesses, the Youngstown Police Department and other downtown stakeholders to ensure the DORA is operated smoothly and safely for all participants. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of 717 Credit Union there will also be no costs for businesses to participate in the DORA.

Youngstown’s DORA will generally begin on West Commerce Street, between North Hazel St and Wick Ave, extending south, past West Front Street, between South Hazel Street and Market Street and include the Youngstown Foundation Amphitheater. These are only general guidelines as several parts of the DORA end before or extend past the Hazel and Wick/Market partitions.

The DORA will be implemented on a limited schedule –Thursdays and Fridays between 4pm – 11 pm, Saturdays from 12 pm – 11 pm and during special downtown events designated by the city. The first date for the DORA will be on Friday, December 6, 2024, to coincide with the annual downtown Youngstown Christmas parade and tree lighting.

For more information on Youngstown’s DORA, visit www.youngstownohio.gov/DORA