

To: Columbia City Council

From: Molly Lindner, Chair of Substance Use Prevention Advisory Commission

Date: December 2, 2025

Subject: Recommendation to Opt Out of 23-Hour Alcohol Service During the FIFA World Cup

Summary

Substance Use Prevention Commission respectfully requests that the Council vote to opt out of the provision granted in State Statute 311.2026 Section 1 which allows entities licensed to sell liquor to operate twenty-four hours a day and serve alcoholic beverages between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. of the following day for the duration of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Tournament, beginning on June 11, 2026, through July 19, 2026. We believe that extending alcohol service to nearly continuous hours poses significant risks to public health, places additional burdens on the service-industry workforce, and strains City resources.

Discussion

On November 12, 2025, the Substance Use Prevention Advisory Commission (SUPAC) reviewed **State Statute 311.2026 Section 1**, which would permit Columbia establishments to serve alcohol up to 23 hours a day during the FIFA World Cup. While recognizing the economic and social incentives behind this allowance, SUPAC expressed concerns regarding public health, safety, and workforce burden.

1. Public Health and Safety Risks

Empirical research strongly suggests that extended hours of alcohol service correlate with increased alcohol-related harm.

- A recent U.S. study found that when late-night alcohol sales were reduced, violent crime dropped significantly. In a Baltimore neighborhood, reducing bar/tavern sales by seven hours (from 20 hours per day to 13) was associated with a **51% immediate decline in homicides** in the first month, and a **23% annual reduction in all violent crime** (Erika et. al, 2024).
- In a systematic review of policies restricting alcohol sale hours, researchers concluded that increasing hours by **two or more** leads to meaningful increases in alcohol-related harms (e.g., violence, excessive consumption), while decreasing sales hours by two or more is effective at reducing such harms (Hahn et. al., 2010).
- An international study of 18 Norwegian cities found that **each one-hour extension** of bar closing time was associated with a **16% increase in violent crime** (assaults) during weekend nights (Rossow I., Norström T., 2012).

Together, these lines of evidence suggest that extending liquor service significantly—particularly by many hours—is likely to increase violence, emergency department visits, and other alcohol-related harms.

2. **Workforce and Operational Burden**

Extending liquor service to near-round-the-clock hours (or even substantially later hours) would place considerable demands on Columbia's service-industry workforce. Employees working late-night shifts often face fatigue, safety risks, and scheduling difficulties. Moreover, public health and safety demands (e.g., more calls for police, increased regulation) tend to scale with extended hours, requiring enhanced staffing and resource allocation from the Columbia Police Department.

3. **Unintended Consequences**

While the intent behind extended hours may be to boost business and accommodate sports fans, there is risk of unintended negative consequences:

- Higher rates of public disorder, noise, and disruption during early morning hours.
- Increased strain on health care systems (e.g., hospitals, EMS) due to more alcohol-related injuries or ED presentations.
- Potential for increased drunk driving incidents, particularly as patrons leave late at night or in early morning hours.

We understand that bars, restaurants, and other hospitality businesses may stand to benefit commercially from looser hours during a major global event like the FIFA World Cup. However, in our view, the public health and safety risks outweigh these financial incentives, especially given the temporary nature of the event and the disproportionately large burden borne by public services and community welfare.

As the advisory commission tasked with preventing substance misuse and promoting coordination of related programs, we recommend that Council prioritizes public health and safety by **opting out** of the 23-hour liquor service provision for the FIFA World Cup. The evidence indicates that extended alcohol service correlates with increased violence, health emergencies, and societal costs. Additionally, opting out aligns with the City's and the University of Missouri's efforts for increased safety efforts downtown in the past months. Not opting out of the provision may undermine existing efforts. We believe that modest compromise or careful mitigation (if any extension is permitted) is far preferable to opening the door to widespread, near-24-hour alcohol availability. Should opting out entirely not be politically feasible, the Commission believes that modest compromise or careful mitigation (if any extension is permitted) is far preferable to opening the door to widespread, near-24-hour alcohol availability.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this recommendation. The Commission stands ready to assist with policy development, stakeholder engagement, or review of implementation plans if needed.

Sources:

Erika M. Rosen, Pamela J. Trangenstein, Patrick L. Fullem, Jih-Cheng Yeh, David H. Jernigan, Ziming Xuan. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Bar/Tavern Closing Hours and Violent Crime. JAMA Internal Medicine, 2024

Hahn RA, Kuzara JL, Elder R, Brewer R, Chattopadhyay S, Fielding J, Naimi TS, Toomey T, Middleton JC, Lawrence B; Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Effectiveness of policies restricting hours of alcohol sales in preventing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. Am J Prev Med. 2010 Dec;39(6):590-604.

Rossow I, Norström T. The impact of small changes in bar closing hours on violence. The Norwegian experience from 18 cities. Addiction. 2012 Mar;107(3):530-7.