



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

August 4, 2025

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I hereby transmit for your approval An Order To Adopt The Liquor License Conversion as a Local Option in the City of Boston.

Thank you for your partnership to support Boston's small businesses and restaurants as the heart of our neighborhood, and the key to local economic opportunity. Our administration has been dedicated to making Boston a home for everyone and the best possible environment to do business, as the safest, greenest, and most family-friendly city. We have also focused on supporting small businesses through technical assistance, grants, and training, in order to enhance the cultural and economic activity of our neighborhoods, create new businesses and economic opportunity across diverse communities, support wealth generation for less-resourced entrepreneurs, and promote emerging and diverse businesses and communities to advance the City's commercial offerings.

Recognizing that running a successful restaurant is challenging, with many business owners relying on very tight profit margins, this honorable Council has led the way in partnership with our administration to secure more liquor licenses for Boston businesses. The sale of alcoholic beverages, especially sales from cocktails and distilled spirits, often presents the greatest opportunity for restaurateurs to realize a profit and build long term wealth. Thanks to the successful home-rule petition filed and passed by this body, Boston has received an infusion of 225 new non-transferable liquor licenses, the most since Prohibition. This Order builds on that momentum.

There are currently 375 beer and wine licenses held by restaurants and businesses across the City. Many have expressed an interest in expanding their offerings to include cocktails or mixed drinks, but have been unable to do so because the number of all alcohol beverages licenses remains capped by state law.

Earlier this year, as part of the state's FY26 Budget, the Massachusetts Legislature amended Chapter 138 of the General Laws to allow cities and towns to opt into a statute allowing businesses to exchange existing beer and wine licenses for new non-transferable all alcohol licenses. Voting in support of this order will allow small businesses that currently hold beer and wine licenses to choose whether or not to apply for an upgrade to an all alcohol license to continue to grow their business. While not every small business may elect to take advantage of this opportunity, it will create additional opportunities for new revenue and strengthen our efforts to support restaurant owners across all of Boston.

I urge your Honorable Body to act favorably without delay to provide greater opportunities for our local restaurants and our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Wu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston


CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

**AN ORDER TO ADOPT THE LIQUOR LICENSE CONVERSION AS A LOCAL
OPTION IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

ORDERED: That the City of Boston accept G. L. c. 138 § 12D, as codified by 2025 Mass. Acts, c. 9, § 51, a local option that permits the local licensing authority to allow any licensee that is licensed to sell only wines and malt beverages pursuant to G. L. c. 138, § 12 to trade in said license and be issued a license to sell all alcoholic beverages pursuant to M.G.L. c. 138, § 1; provided that conversion of any license shall be subject to the following powers and restrictions as required by M.G.L. c. 138 § 12D, as codified by 2025 Mass. Acts, c. 9, § 51:

- (1) Any wine and malt beverage license that is traded in to the local licensing authority for an all alcoholic beverage license under this section shall become non-transferable upon the issuance of the license to sell all alcoholic beverages;
- (2) A license converted pursuant to M.G.L. c. 138 § 12D, as codified by 2025 Mass. Acts, c. 9, § 51 shall be subject to all other relevant provisions of Chapter 138 of the General Laws;
- (3) The local licensing authority may charge a reasonable fee that shall not be excessive for a license for wine and malt beverage to be traded in for an all alcoholic beverages license;
- (4) The local licensing authority may establish additional requirements for a license for wine and malt beverage to be traded in for an all alcoholic beverages license; and
- (5) A license for wine and malt beverage traded in for an all alcoholic beverages license shall not increase the total number of licenses authorized pursuant to M.G.L. c. 138, § 17, or any other general or special law.

Effective Date: This local option shall be effective upon passage.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY
THE FORGOING, IF PASSED IN
THE ABOVE FORM, WILL BE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.**
BY 
**ADAM CEDERBAUM
CORPORATION COUNSEL**