

*MAIN
STREET*
VERMILION

To: Vermilion Stakeholders – Elected Officials, Residents, Businesspeople, Partners, Visitors, etc.
From: Main Street Vermilion DORA Committee
Re: Information to supplement the City of Vermilion application for a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area, “DORA”

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 - 5. Qualitative demonstration of benefits from the project. For example, an explanation of how this project will enhance the visitor experience as well as quality of life for residents.
 - 6. Marketing and sustainability plans that explain how the asset will be promoted and maintained into the future.
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Main Street Vermilion DORA Committee Members

The DORA Committee, part of the Economic Development Committee of 501(C)3 Main Street Vermilion. DORA Committee representatives include:

- *Chairperson Sarah Ross, Executive Director local Economic Development Corporation*
- *Larry Drouhard, Mortgage Finance, First Federal Savings of Lorain*
- *Jonathan Hauck, Founder, Jonathan Cares Consulting & Staffing Solutions*
- *Amy Hoffman, Property Manager, Cottages at the Water's Edge*
- *Marilou Suszko, Executive Director, Main Street Vermilion*
- *Judy Klucas, Retired, First Merit Bank*
- *Micah Roberts, Owner, Erie & Anchor*
- *Monica Stark, Vermilion City Council*
- *F&B Liaison Joe Jesko, Owner Pavilion Grill & Bowl Thyme*

Project Summary

A DORA is a “Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area,” allowed for by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) in 2015, that Cities can establish enabling consumers/visitors to purchase an alcoholic beverage in a licensed establishment and exit that establishment with their beverage to enjoy time anywhere within the designated area. A DORA is governed by a simple set of easy-to-follow rules that enable maximum economic impact and promote walkability. More information about those rules can be provided upon request or found at Ohio Division of Liquor Control or ORC section 4301.82.

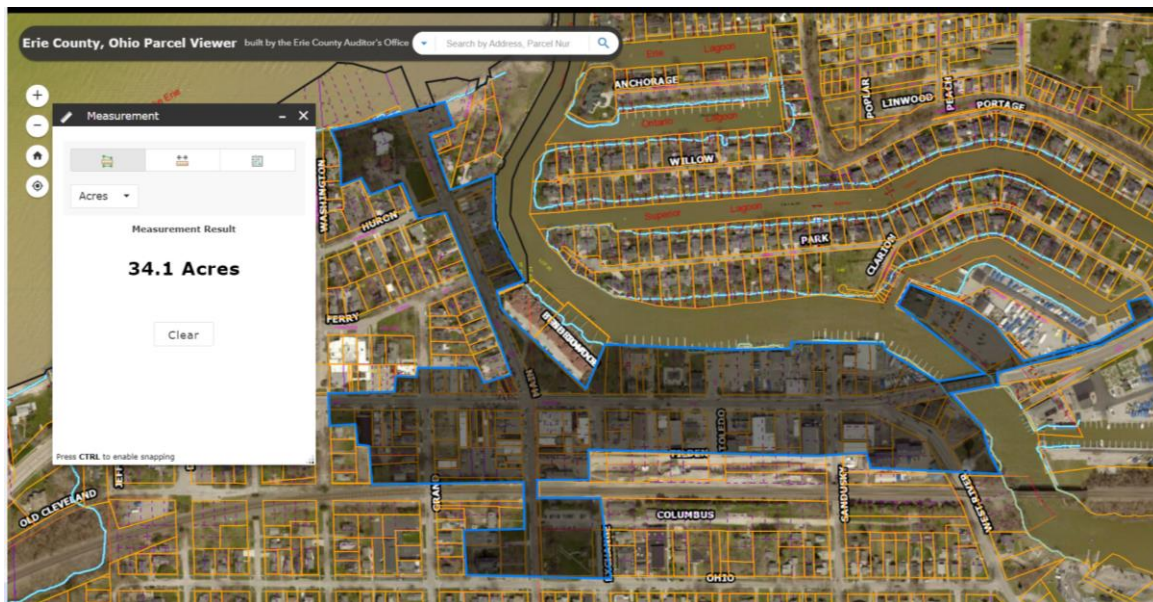
Main Street Vermilion is passionate about establishing a DORA and is confident it will engage visitors and generate economic growth. Main Street Vermilion’s goals in establishing the DORA, which directly align with Shores & Islands Ohio’s and the region’s goals, are:

1. **Placemaking** - Placemaking techniques help to transform everyday public spaces into active places that breed engagement and economic development, and are exciting places to live, work, play, shop, learn and visit. Enabling visitors to take their drink onto our sidewalk and parks transforms formerly utilitarian spaces and places into engaging spaces.
2. **Economic Development** – Roger Brooks taught us that 80% of non-lodging visitor spending is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. DORA directly contributes to the pedestrian-friendliness of our community supporting that large spend. The additional spend captured through a DORA is multi-faceted. First, is the opportunity for the visitor to add on to their total bill, purchasing additional drink(s) as they leave an establishment that they may not have otherwise. Second is the new spend captured. An unknown, but perceived significant amount of visitors come to Vermilion without spending any money in our downtown, simply taking advantage of our free assets, such as Third Thursday music, or Lake Erie views. DORA enables these current non-purchasers to become purchasers of drinks and still enjoy their reason for coming such as music or sunsets.
3. **Population Retention & Attraction** – the guide to Placemaking by Michigan State University explains the interdependent relationship between business, place, and talent. Talent wants place, place needs business, business needs talent. Cultural amenities such as open container areas enable that “sense of place” for the talent we are aiming to retain and attract.
4. **Compliment & Improve Programming** – Roger Brooks also taught us that to be competitive, communities must “program or die”. Part of successful programming is the experience visitors have as they attend. A DORA will go hand in hand with Vermilion’s programming, allowing us to spread our visitors out, not crowd in and around certain establishments, and will also drive utilization of underutilized, beautiful locations such as McGarvey’s Landing.
5. **Tourism Product Development** – Roger Brooks says, “visitors want activities, not just things to look at.” Adding walking around with a beverage transforms our downtown from an attraction itself into an activity.

6. **Support Local Businesses** – In the first year of the DORA in Kent, Ohio, and estimated 75,000 DORA drinks were sold. While Kent has double the population of Vermilion, it does not have the same tourism base. We believe this estimate is applicable to Vermilion. At 75,000 drinks, that more than \$300,000 in additional sales that may not have occurred otherwise.

In pursuit of these goals, the Main Street Vermilion DORA committee will submit an application to Vermilion City Council in 2022 proposing the following details for Vermilion’s DORA:

- *Sunday – Saturday, 7 days per week*
- *11am-11pm*
- *34.1 acre district as pictured in the map below*



Main Street Vermilion’s mission is to “add the extras to our waterfront community.” We passionately pursue a vibrant community, economy, and culture, and appreciate Shores & Islands Ohio’s partnership in doing so. Based on research, community feedback, and peer community interviews, we are confident the DORA will attract and engage visitors and generate economic growth for our community.

Project Timeline

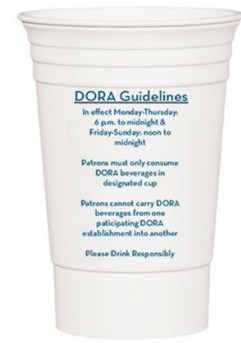
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form DORA Committee • Review Ohio Revised Code allowing for DORAs to inform process
February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee development & education • Interview peer communities with existing DORA • Prepare “case” for DORA in Vermilion
March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Key Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mayor & Police Chief ○ Parks Board ○ Liquor licensed establishments and business owners
May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit DORA Application to Vermilion City Council • Open Public comment period
May-June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to public comment • Finalize roll-out details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operations – cups ○ Marketing & Promotion ○ Compliance – boundary signage ○ Consumer/visitor education – DORA rules
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With City council approval, launch DORA district
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile & evaluate results of first “season” of DORA
January – March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make planned adjustments for second season • Liaise with key stakeholders for improvement • Make legal adjustment with City Council as necessary

Project "Renderings"

The following is the proposed Vermilion DORA logo that will be used to identify DORA cups, DORA rules, DORA promotion, DORA boundaries, and the like:



The following are example cup layouts from other communities. Main Street Vermilion plans to include the Rules on the back of the DORA cup:



Main Street Vermilion in conjunction with the City of Vermilion will install boundary signage indicating where DORA drinks are allowed, as seen in the following examples:



Main Street Vermilion will work closely with the City Services Director, Chamber of Commerce, and Historic Design Review Board to ensure signage fits with the existing look and feel of Vermilion.

The following are examples of posters and stickers for businesses to display to assist with the visitor education about the program:

Kent's Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area Know the Rules

1. Permitted daily from noon - 10pm.
2. Must be 21+ with DORA wristband from participating establishment.
3. DORA beverages must be purchased at a bar/restaurant, and may not be taken inside another.
4. DORA beverages allowed only within DORA boundaries. Consumption from other vessels subject to law enforcement.
5. Look for DORA decals (below) in business windows for level of participation.
6. Map and full program details at mainstreetkent.org/DORA

Health & Safety
Your health and safety are important to us. If you choose to consume alcohol in downtown Kent, please do so responsibly. Always designate a sober driver or utilize a ride share program/taxi for a safe ride home.

Full program details available at mainstreetkent.org/DORA



Consistency with existing local tourism development, talent attraction efforts, and marketing initiatives

Shores & Islands Ohio is leading the way locally in efforts to tie quality of place, the visitor experience, and talent attraction together. The benefits of the DORA in providing a memorable, meaningful experience to visitors to Vermilion will make them more likely to remember our place fondly and decide to move here, visit here again, or start a business here.

Erie and Ottawa County communities are already embracing the concept of outdoor refreshment areas as Port Clinton and Sandusky both currently have active DORA districts. Adding a DORA district in Vermilion will give visitors enjoying our downtowns a consistent experience.



The justification for the DORA as a talent retention and attraction tool is based on the Business-Talent-Place triangle. Placemaking efforts, like improving walkability with a DORA, are proven to enhance a community's assets to improve its overall attractiveness and livability.

Quantitative Demonstration - Benefits from the Project

In the first year of the DORA in Kent, Ohio, and estimated 75,000 DORA drinks were sold. While Kent has double the population of Vermilion, it does not have the same tourism base. We believe this estimate is applicable to Vermilion. At 75,000 drinks, that more than \$300,000 in additional sales that may not have occurred otherwise. As the best quantitative results we could find, we have set this as our year one benchmark for success of the program.

Additionally, we are expecting to monitor the following types of activity to capture the full economic in Vermilion:

- *Increases in visitors to bars and restaurants: Bars and restaurants will be able to turn over more guests by allowing for quick, to-go service of DORA drinks. Bars and restaurants will also be able to increase sales of alcoholic beverages by providing DORA drinks to-go as visitors desire to walk around downtown and continue their stay.*
- *Capacity expansion: With limitations on capacity in downtown bars and restaurants, creating a DORA would generate revenue for these establishments without having to seat diners.*
- *Length of time visitors spend downtown: A DORA would enhance the atmosphere downtown by allowing drinks to be enjoyed within the district, thus enabling visitors to stay longer and spend more money. It's no secret that customer retention is key to increasing revenue. Visitors will stroll with their drinks, peruse retail shops, and stay longer with DORA.*

Qualitative Demonstration - Benefits from the Project

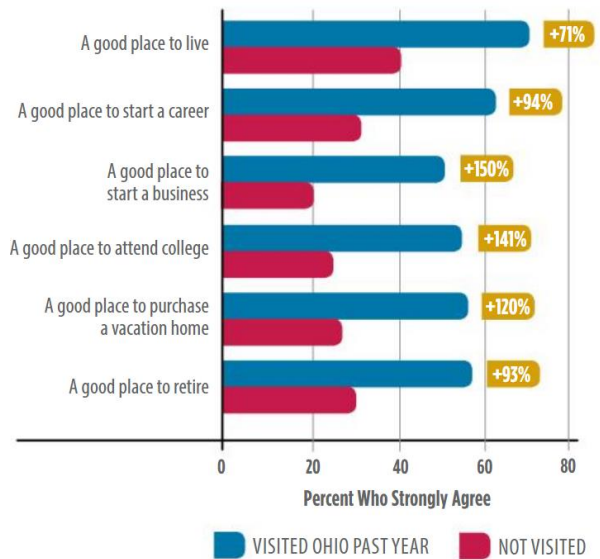
As our goals for the DORA program point out, DORA is an impactful placemaking tool. Michigan State University teaches us that “placemaking” is a simple concept – people choose to live in walkable, mixed-use places that offer amenities, resources, social and professional networks, and opportunities to support thriving lifestyles. The implementation of DORA is strategic and creative placemaking that will make Vermilion a more attractive place to live, work, and play.

The experience that our Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area will provide will leave our visitors with a lasting impression as is suggested by the Ohio Travel Association.

The pandemic drove small communities all over Ohio to create DORAs to address capacity limits at establishments. With well over 60 DORAs in place in Ohio now, our community finds itself at a competitive disadvantage without a DORA district.

Continuing to lean from the Ohio Travel Association, we know that visitors increase demand for local businesses, providing them with additional revenue beyond that which they may be able to secure through local resident spending. Without increased sales generated by our visitors and our DORA, new investments in our existing businesses may not be sustainable.

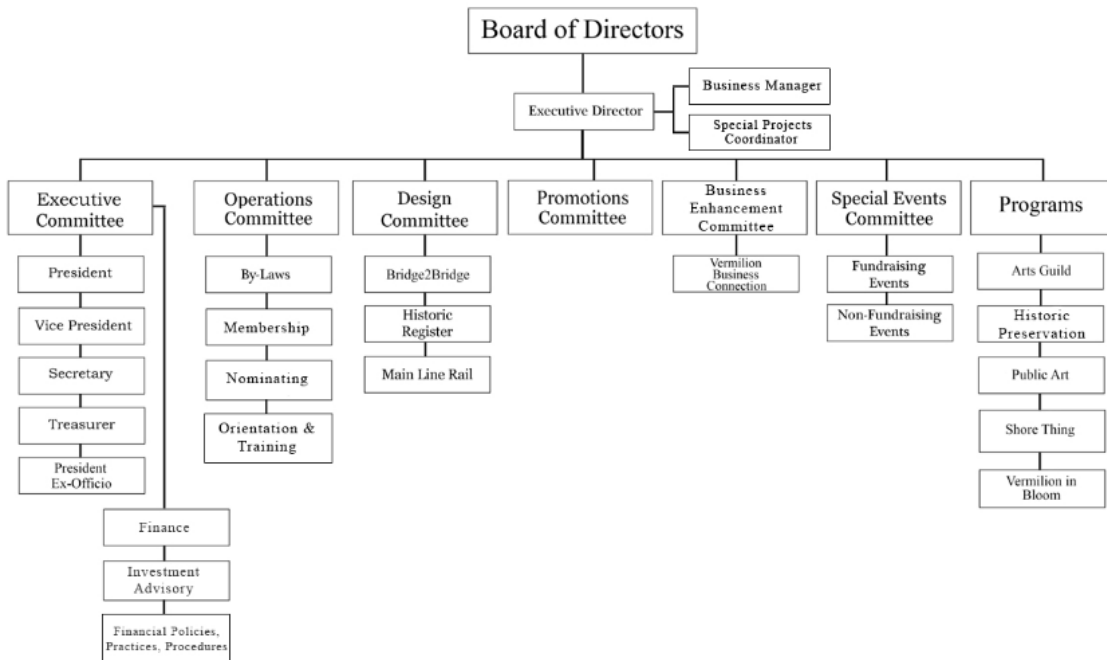
Travelers Leave with Lasting Impressions



Source: Longwoods International. (2016). Destination Marketing and Economic Development: Creating a Singular Brand. Toronto.

Marketing and Sustainability Plans

All of Main Street Vermilion’s programs, such as Vermilion in Bloom, Vermilion Arts Guild, Public Art Vermilion, Shore Thing, and Historic Preservation, are managed and maintained by an incomparable volunteer base. As demonstrated by the organizational chart below, Main Street’s volunteers have high levels of accountability to ensure the ongoing success of programs such as DORA. Volunteers gave 8,633 hours of service in 2021.



The DORA committee will coordinate directly with the Promotions Committee and Main Street Vermilion staff to promote the use of DORA in conjunction with community programming and events such as Ice-A-Fair, Market in the Park, Tree Lighting, and many other events at which visitors’ use of the DORA will lengthen their stay and increase their spend.

After start-up costs, the operation of the DORA will be financially self-sustaining. Main Street Vermilion will pass the cost of the cups along to participating establishments including a nominal upcharge to cover the costs of ongoing coordination and promotion of the program. Participating Establishments then pass their cost of the cups on to visitors with a uniform \$1.00 charge on all DORA drinks across the district. This cost to consumer/visitor is standard across many operating DORAs in the state.

References

- *Michigan State University's Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool Guidebook* (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/pmedtguidebook>)
- *OTA Tourism Works* (<https://issuu.com/ohiotravelassoc/docs/ohitourismworks>)
- *Roger Brooks* (<https://www.destinationdevelopment.org/>)
- *Many Ohio Main Street Communities*