



Liquor Licenses in Milton

FEBRUARY 2025



Background

Mass. General Laws strictly control administration of liquor licenses under chapter 138

Two types of licenses

- On-premises: restaurants (MGL c. 138, s. 12)
- Off-premises: package stores (MGL c. 138, s. 15)

Broadly, three categories of communities

- Subject to the Quota System
- Not subject to the Quota System
- “Dry” Towns
 - Technically, no authority to issue any liquor licenses without special legislative approval
 - Milton is in the “dry town” category for ***on-premises*** only
- Quota system sets the maximum the local licensing authority ***may*** issue



Liquor License Systems

On-Premises Quota: One per 1,000 residents (or fraction thereof)

Off-Premises Quota: One per 5,000 residents (or fraction thereof)

Milton under quota system:

- On premises: maximum of 30 licenses
- Off-premises: maximum of 6 licenses



Liquor License Approval Process

Communities with authorization to issue liquor licenses:

- Apply to the Local Licensing Authority (Select Board)
- After local approval, requires approval from the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC)
- All entities are subject to all other permitting/licensing procedures (zoning, in particular)

In Milton, this process applies to off-premises (package stores) licenses.



Liquor License Approval Process

Communities like Milton that lack authorization to issue liquor licenses:

- Submit a request for a warrant article to the Select Board
- Town Meeting approval (usually two opportunities to go to Town Meeting each year)
- Approval from the Legislature
 - Home Rule petition must be filed by the Town's legislative delegation, be heard by a committee, be approved by both the House and Senate, and be signed into law by the Governor
- Then once the license is available, apply to the Select Board for a license
- After local approval, apply to the ABCC for approval
- All entities are subject to all other permitting/licensing procedures: Board of Health, zoning, etc.

In Milton, this process applies to all requests for on-premises licenses (restaurants).



Milton Liquor Licenses

Off Premises (Package Stores)

- Quotas:
 - 6 for All Alcohol Sales; 2 available
 - Central Liquor Mart, East Milton Wine and Spirits, The Fruit Center, and Craft and Cru
 - 6 for Wine and Malt Beverages only; 6 available

On Premises

- Quotas: N/A



Milton Liquor Licenses

Location	Town Meeting	Legislative Approval
88 Wharf Street (Madre Osteria)	2003 May Special Town Meeting	August 20, 2003
550 Adams Street (Abby Park)	2007 November Special Town Meeting	July 28, 2008
538A Adams Street (Ichiro Sushi)	2010 September Special Town Meeting	February 2, 2012
95 Eliot Street (Steel and Rye)	2011 May Special Town Meeting	May 1, 2013
534 Adams Street (Mr. Chan's)	2013 October Special Town Meeting	September 11, 2014
554-558B Adams Street (Novara)	2014 Annual Town Meeting	September 25, 2014
10 Bassett Street (Formerly, The Plate)	2015 Annual Town Meeting	May 6, 2016
1 Eliot Street	2022 March Special Town Meeting	October 24, 2024



Alternatives

1. Continue with current practice – await applicant, with a specific location
 - Warrant Article -> Town Meeting -> Home Rule Petition -> Select Board
2. Submit a home rule petition to grant Milton greater flexibility moving forward
 - Request special authorization to put the question back before voters to move into the quota system
 - Request approval for a specific number of new licenses
 - Request approval for a specific number of new licenses, limited to certain neighborhoods / zoning districts