



Bellbrook DORA: The Step-by-Step Process

1. Determine Eligibility

Before starting, the city must ensure it meets the statutory requirements, including:

- **Population-based limits on DORA size and number**
 - Up to **640 contiguous acres** if population > 50,000. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
 - Up to **320 contiguous acres** if population ≤ 50,000. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
 - Municipalities under 50,000 population may create up to **three** DORAs. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
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2. Prepare the Official DORA Application

The **executive officer (City Manager)** may prepare and file the application with the city council. The application must include all items required under R.C. 4301.82(B):

Required Components:

1. **Boundary Map or Survey**
Must clearly outline the proposed DORA and comply with acreage limits. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
2. **General Description of Establishments**
Identify the types of businesses located within the DORA (restaurants, bars, retail, mixed-use, etc.). [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
3. **Statement of Compliance with Division (D)**
This ensures population-based size and quantity limits are satisfied. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
4. **Zoning Consistency Evidence**
Show the DORA's land uses match the master zoning plan. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
5. **Public Health & Safety Plan**
Include proposed rules, sanitation, police enforcement considerations, signage, and cup-rules to ensure safe operation. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
6. **At least two qualified permit holders** (A and D Permits).
This refers to bars or restaurants with specific liquor permits. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)

3. File the Application With the Legislative Authority (City Council)

The City Manager submits the completed application to the city council for review. This starts the statutory timeline. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)

4. Publish Public Notice Within 45 Days

Within **45 days** of the application's submission:

- City council must publish a **public notice** in a newspaper of general circulation (or as permitted under R.C. 7.16). [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
 - The notice must include:
 - A statement that the application is on file with the clerk and open for public inspection.
 - The **date and time of any public hearing** (if held). [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
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5. Optional Public Hearing

City council may hold a hearing for public input which must be not earlier than 30 and not later than 60 days after publication of the Public Notice. While not mandated in all circumstances, it is common practice, and the required notice must disclose the hearing details. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)

6. City Council Votes on the Application

City council must approve the DORA **by ordinance or resolution**, requiring a **majority vote**. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov) which establishes requirements Council determines necessary to ensure public health and safety within the area. The Ordinance must include:

- The specific boundaries of the area including street addresses
- The number, spacing and type of signage designating the area
- The hours of operation for the area
- The number of personnel needed to ensure public safety in the area
- A sanitation plan that will help maintain the appearance and public health of the area
- The number of personnel needed to execute the sanitation plan

- A requirement that beer and intoxicating liquor be served solely in plastic bottles or other non-glass containers in the area

If approved:

- The area **officially becomes a DORA** as described in the application.
- The city must notify:
 - The **Ohio Division of Liquor Control**
 - The **Department of Public Safety's Investigative Unit**
This includes the final boundary description.
[\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)

If not approved:

- The mayor may revise and resubmit the application. [\[codes.ohio.gov\]](https://codes.ohio.gov)
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7. Operational Setup

After approval, the city must implement infrastructure and procedures, often modeled after existing city applications (e.g., Dayton, Centerville, Beavercreek). Typical components include:

a. Signage Installation

Clear boundary signage and rules posted at entrances and within the district.
[\[columbus.gov\]](https://columbus.gov)

b. Approved Cup System

A uniform cup design that identifies licensed beverages within the DORA.

c. Vendor Participation Rules

Only **qualified permit holders** within the boundary may serve drinks carried outside.

d. Public Safety Coordination

Police staffing plans, sanitation routines, frequency of trash pickup, and crowd control strategy. [\[columbus.gov\]](https://columbus.gov)

8. Launch the DORA

Once signage, rules, and partnerships are in place, the city publicly launches the DORA and communicates:

- Operating hours
- Rules of conduct
- Vendor list
- Map availability

The Ohio Department of Commerce also maintains a statewide DORA map available to the public.

[\[com.ohio.gov\]](http://com.ohio.gov)

9. Ongoing Management

The city is responsible for:

- Review of operations and re-enacting by Ordinance every 5 years through the same process as original creation
- Adjusting rules as needed
- Maintaining sanitation, policing, and signage
- Updating the Ohio Department of Commerce if boundaries change

Guidance suggests that DORAs are intended to support economic vitality, downtown foot traffic, and community engagement.

[\[ohioline.osu.edu\]](http://ohioline.osu.edu)

Summary Checklist

- ✓ Confirm eligibility & acreage
- ✓ Prepare statutory application
- ✓ Submit to city council
- ✓ Publish notice within 45 days
- ✓ Hold optional hearing
- ✓ Council vote
- ✓ Notify State agencies
- ✓ Install signage & rules
- ✓ Launch & maintain the DORA