



**Corporate Policy**

## **Recreation, Community and Culture**

### **Festivals and Events Policy**

---

Approved by Council on: June 18, 2024

Report Number: RCC-13-24

Effective: June 18, 2024

Reviewed on: June 10, 2024

Amended: June 10, 2024

Next Review: Q4 2025

---

### **Policy Statement:**

The City of Burlington supports vibrant and inclusive events and experiences that enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors. Events throughout the city are diverse, innovative, promote safety and sustainability and foster a sense of belonging where all are welcome.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all event organizers hosting events on City of Burlington property.

This policy does not apply to events on private property or events on city property with the following provisions:

- Events supported by the Love my Neighbourhood program.
- Small scale events with minimal components that do not require advisement from the Special Events Team (which includes internal and external stakeholders such as Transit, Transportation, Roads Parks and Forestry, Fire and Halton Regional Police Service).
- A permit and/or rental for any regular ongoing program or instructional course.
- Private events such as family picnics, stag and does and birthday parties.
- Photography and/or film permits.

# Corporate Policy

## Objectives:

1. Define and categorize events.
2. Outline the event application process and timelines.
3. Set criteria for selecting festivals and events on City property.
4. Identify roles and responsibilities.

## Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Events	A planned significant occurrence that takes place for a specific purpose.
Festivals	Celebrations, commemorations, and/or community gatherings that are usually centered around a specific theme that can occur on a designated day or over a period of time.
Event Staff Liaison	Festivals and Events staff that are City of Burlington employees who support third party event organizers and directly deliver events for the community. They provide support to event organizers through the event application process.
Event Organizer	An individual, group, or organization that hosts events and/or festivals who works directly with the Event Staff Liaison through the application process to meet requirements and obtain necessary permits.

# Corporate Policy

Term	Definition
Special Events Team (SET)	Regulatory and advisory team who meets monthly to ensure events and/or festivals have all the necessary permits, permissions and insurance in place to prioritize health and safety for all concerned. Members are made up from various municipal departments and external stakeholders. Members include Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, Building and By-law Department, Community Planning, Fire Department, Halton Region Public Health, Halton Region Police Service, Halton Region Paramedic Service, Transit Department, Transportation Services Department, Recreation, Community and Culture Department, and Roads, Parks and Forestry Department.
Event Application	Event details such as event description, times, dates, location, expected attendance submitted online to the City of Burlington regarding a specific event and/or festival for approval.
Festivals and Events Strategy Team (FEST)	A stakeholder team comprised of internal and external members tasked with assessing event applications and applying the criteria outlined in this policy to evaluate and rank each application.

## Principles:

### Event Classifications:

Events and/or Festivals on City of Burlington property will be categorized into one of the following event classifications:

# Corporate Policy

**Neighbourhood events** are events with an attendance under 250. They originate from within the community, produced by local residents, and attract local residents within the jurisdiction of the event. They have minimal economic impact to the community and are one-time events with the opportunity to occur again in the future. Examples of neighbourhood events include Love My Neighbourhood and Burlington Green Clean Up events.

**Community events** are events with an attendance from 250-4,000. They originate from within the community and produced mostly by local residents or those who have ties to the Burlington community. These events can occur annually, recurring, multiple days, and they can also be one-time events. They can attract visitors from outside of the municipality, either from surrounding municipalities or a targeted audience. They have low economic impact to the community and low disruption, if any, to municipal services and the public. Veterans and Indigenous ceremonies would fall under this category. Examples of community events include Canada Day Race, Candlelit Stroll, and Movies under the Stars.

**Major events** are events with an attendance of 4,000-20,000. They can be originated from within the community, but also can be produced by individuals from outside of the community. These events usually occur annually and attract visitors from outside of Burlington and within Burlington. They have moderate economic impact to the community and have some disruption to municipal services and the public. They can be recurring events, span over multiple days, or can be one-time events. Examples of major events include Appleby Line Street Festival, Around the Bay Road Race, and Moon in June.

**Signature events** are events with an attendance of 20,000 or more. Legacy events with lower attendance can also be considered under this category. They can be originated from within the community, but also can be produced by individuals from outside of the community. These events happen every year at the same location and are significant in nature, a tradition to the community and reflect Burlington's identity and culture creating a legacy in Burlington. They attract visitors from outside of Burlington and within Burlington and provide a high economic impact to the community. These events have moderate to high disruption of municipal services. Examples of signature events include Burlington Sound of Music Festival, Canada's Largest Ribfest, Canada Day, The Santa Claus Parade, The Chilly Half Marathon and Burlington's Festival of Lights.

# Corporate Policy

**Mega events** are events with exceptionally high attendance, beyond signature event capacity. They are national and international in nature, and have strong involvement from local, provincial and federal governments. Mega events have the potential for infrastructure investments and development, and the possibility of multiple venues and locations across Burlington. They have significant financial implications, and are usually supported by the government. Mega events have a significant tourist impact with international visitors and participation, attracting visitors from all areas. They provide a high economic impact to the community and have the potential for significant disruptions to municipal services and the public. Examples of mega events include the Olympic Games (winter or summer), FIFA World Cup, etc.

## Application Process and Timelines:

The following application process and timelines apply in general to event organizers looking to host events on City of Burlington property. Depending on the Event Classification, this process may vary.

1. **Application** - event organizer submits an event application (online) as per the event application timelines outlined in this policy.
2. **Application Received** - events staff receive the application, it is assigned to an event staff liaison, who connects with feedback on the application to the event organizer within 5 days.
3. **Application Review** - event application is reviewed by event staff liaison in collaboration with members of the Special Events Team (SET) and provides next steps to the event organizer within 4 weeks.
4. **Community consultation** - new events deemed to have a significant impact, or existing events planning significant changes, are required to go through a community consultation process. This process can take up to 7 weeks including development of the consultation (4 weeks), feedback from community (2 weeks) and debrief with event organizer (1 week). Community consultation allows for the City to connect with the residents, businesses, and the local community in the surrounding area of the proposed event and provide an opportunity for them to share their feedback. The following festivals and events require community consultation:
  - New events that are 1,000 people or more, or have components that would be significant, including a road closure or alcohol. The cost for community consultation is covered by the City of Burlington.

# Corporate Policy

- Existing events planning significant changes, including a change of route for a road closure or adding alcohol to the event. The cost for community consultation would be covered by the event organizer.
5. **Conditional Approval** – event staff liaison provides event organizer with conditional approval or refusal of event within 2-4 weeks of collaborating with the Special Events Team (SET).
  6. **Special Event Timeline** – event staff liaison provides special event timeline outlining requirements and resources to event organizer. Depending on the scope of event, requirements may include but are not limited to:
    - building and zoning,
    - on road,
    - insurance,
    - licensing,
    - security and safety,
    - parking arrangements,
    - risk management.
  7. **Requirements Submission** - event organizer submits requirements to the City of Burlington directly to the department or external stakeholder responsible for the request. Event staff liaison assists with facilitating relationships, processes, and timely submission.
  8. **Event Approval** – once all requirements are met, event staff liaison determines completeness and releases the event contract (permit) to the event organizer.
  9. **Event Execution** – event organizer is responsible for the execution of the event as outlined on their application and in accordance with the requirements.
  10. **Event Debrief** – event staff liaison provides an event evaluation to the event organizer based on comments provided by the community, special events team members and their own observations within 6 weeks.

# Corporate Policy

## Event Classification Submission Timelines:

Based on the event classification, event organizers will submit their application based on the table below. The timelines identified are to ensure successful execution of the event from application to completion.

Neighbourhood	Community	Major	Signature	Mega
45 days	60-90 days	8-12 months	12 months	18 months+

## Other important considerations:

- **First time events and/or first time event organizers.** First time event organizers with the City of Burlington can only host one event within the first year.
- **Ceremonial events.** The City of Burlington's festivals and events staff actively support ceremonial events like Remembrance Day and Truth and Reconciliation Day.
- **Key community celebrations.** Important and impactful community celebrations such as Canada Day and Santa's Parade are organized and delivered by the festivals and events team.

## Event Selection Criteria:

The following criteria will be used by the Festivals and Events Strategy Team (FEST) to review and approve events on City of Burlington property.

Criteria	Description
Innovative	Brings something new or different to the community.
Economic Impact and Tourism	Provides economic benefit and/or contribution to the community and/or attracts visitors.
Sustainable	Demonstrates environmentally responsible practices and the potential to continue in the future.
Welcoming	Is free and open for all to attend and/or considers various demographics in the community such as newcomers, multicultural groups, families, etc.

# Corporate Policy

Criteria	Description
Location	The size and scope aligns with the intended use of space.
Professionalism	Proven track record of organizing events and meeting requirement deadlines.
Risk and Safety Planning	Demonstrates the ability to minimize liability and risk to the community.
Community Impact	Addresses community interest, demands, trends, and disruptions.
Local Engagement	Supports the local community including event organizers, artists, vendors, sponsors, businesses, etc.

## Additional Responsibilities:

- The Manager of Festivals and Events has Council delegated authority to approve and permit all events that happen on City property.
- The Director of Recreation, Community and Culture or designate approves all new City initiated, delivered and supported F&E and any changes of the existing ones.
- SET is responsible and approves all technical aspects of City and third party delivered F&E.
- The Festivals & Events Strategy Team (FEST) comprised of stakeholders in the community evaluates any new or significant changes to events hosted by external event organizers.

## Roles:

### Accountable:

The Director of Recreation, Community and Culture is accountable for the execution of the policy.

### Responsible:

The Manager of Festivals and Events is responsible for the execution of the policy.