

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"** <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 7/22/2021 9:26:11 AM

Subject: Memo - Resolution B: Readiness to Permit Small Scale Outdoor Events - RTS 14389

Attachments: Memo - Resolution B Readiness to Permit Small Scale Outdoor Events.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire (RTS 14389). A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- ☐ A number of actions taken or initiated to streamline event permitting and activate the City's public spaces and street rights-of-way.
- ☐ Some were initiated because of COVID, others were already identified before the pandemic and support long-term industry priorities.
- ☐ Risks to readiness are related to staff capacity and financial resources; specifically, as larger and more complex events are also beginning to return.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

July 20, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Resolution B: Readiness to Permit Small Scale Outdoor Events

RTS #: 14389

Background

This memo summarizes work completed and ongoing related to the March 9, 2021 Council resolution:

B. THAT Council direct staff to report back on Vancouver's readiness to permit small-scale outdoor events in Q3 in parallel with BC's vaccination schedule and the anticipated lifting of lockdown restrictions, as well as on potential options to streamline the event permit process to reduce processing required by staff and to support recovery of the arts and events sector.

This memo has been compiled by Engineering Service's Film & Special Events Branch (FASE) in collaboration with other City branches and departments that support readiness to permit small-scale events and streamline processes.

It identifies a number of actions taken or initiated to streamline event permitting and activate the City's public spaces and street rights-of-way in accordance with City guidelines and the Provincial Health Orders (PHO). Some of these were initiated specifically because of COVID-19, others were already identified before the pandemic and will further support the event industry during COVID-19 recovery.

Staff have also identified risks related to staff capacity and financial resource requirements.

Addressing COVID Uncertainty and Impacts

BIA expedited permitting

BIAs organize a large number of small-scale events and are key stakeholders in recovery efforts. Staff provided conditional approval of BIA events in anticipation of future changes to PHOs, approving all aspects of the event plan except for event dates, which are confirmed as PHO requirements allow. These efforts reduced application processing time by 50 per cent from eight weeks to four weeks.

COVID Safety Checklist

During the pandemic, the COVID safety checklist helped applicants make sense of the necessary COVID-19 requirements and self-assess if their application can be accepted. The checklist is currently in the process of being phased out as PHOs are relaxed.

Waiving of Application Fee

The \$100 application fee has been waived until October 2021. This helps to reduce barriers to holding events and encourage early event applications in spite of pandemic related uncertainty for event organizers. Earlier applications ensures staff can begin working directly with applicants early in their planning process and reduce overall processing timelines.

Improving the Application Process

New online web portal and application

FASE has launched a new permit portal and online application to streamline and modernize the process. Key benefits of the new application include:

- The ability to create an account and resubmit applications annually (instead of starting from scratch).
- The ability to track where in the process an application sits at any given time.

Special Event Permitting handbook published

FASE has published a comprehensive event guide to assist event organizers on all facets of hosting an event on City and Park Board properties. Published as a PDF, it is now available for download on the City's website (<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/special-event-permitting-handbook.pdf>). The special event webpages will be updated accordingly to guide the public to tools that will most help them through the process.

Permitting 101 workshop (underway)

This workshop aims to serve as a resource to event organizers who wish to learn more about how to host events on City/ Park property. Using the Special Event Handbook as a guide, the workshop (scheduled in September 2021) will allow participants to engage staff in discussions specific to their event proposal(s).

Cost estimating Process Improvement Project (6 Sigma) (underway)

The ability to accurately estimate event related City costs is paramount for event organizers. This project focuses on analyzing the internal cost estimating processes and procedures across multiple City departments with the goal of providing accurate and timely estimates to clients.

Simplified licensing agreement for low-complexity events (underway)

Special event organizers currently sign a license agreement as part of the permitting process. The current “one-size-fits-all agreement” is under review to determine if a more simplified version is possible for low-complexity events.

Creating Opportunities for Low Barrier Placemaking

A number of programs are in place that enable low-barrier placemaking and public space activations including:

- *Share a Square Program:*
 - This program provides a simple approval process for low-complexity, community-scale programming and events in Engineering-managed plazas.
- *Partner-Led Placemaking Program:*
 - This program allows community partners to support Pop-Up Plazas and Social Service Parklets with community-led improvements such as programming materials and equipment, beautifying murals and gardening and other similar projects.
 - Newly reopening following the relaxation of PHO restrictions, this program encourages a wide variety of street entertainment and provides permits to individuals according to performance type. A low-barrier permit provides buskers with flexibility to select locations that meet permit conditions and guidelines at various locations throughout the City¹.

Risks and Constraints

While much progress has been made to ensure readiness for the return of low-complexity events in the near term, staff have identified some risks to maintaining long-term readiness which will continue to be monitored:

Staff Vacancies and Capacity (FASE and Supporting Branches)

In light of budget constraints, a number of vacancies related to event permitting have been held. Uncertain PHOs, managing cancellations, date changes, & calendar conflicts will increase the

¹ Additionally, no permits are required for Street Entertainment locations at Library Square, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Science World, Seawall from Science World to Cambie Bridge, Street allowances at SkyTrain Stations, Terry Fox Plaza, Vancouver Art Gallery

complexity of event permitting. A rapid relaxation of PHO orders could exceed staff capacity and lengthen permitting timelines.

Budget Constraints

A rapid return of free public events could result in increased pressure on City budget allocated to support events (FestShare program) which was reduced in 2020 and 2021 as a result of pandemic uncertainty and budget constraints.

Return of Complex Events

Complex events that may be able to come back starting in fall 2021 (e.g. Remembrance Day, Santa Clause Parade and Concord New Years Eve 2021) will not have the usual lead-time for planning and could draw staff resources away from supporting small-scale events in the near term. Additionally, major new destination events such as FormulaE require immediate staff attention for advanced planning and consultation. Many route-based events may be required to change routes and update Traffic Management Plans due to street infrastructure changes that have taken place over the past year, which will require additional time and resources.

Conclusion

A number of initiatives are supporting a high level of readiness to permit small-scale events in the near-term. A longer-term outlook will be part of a memo to Council this fall in the context of the City's overall Special Event Policy.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.



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General Manager, Engineering Services

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