

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 2/6/2023 12:33:54 PM
Subject: Council Memo – Update on Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals and Events in Vancouver – RTS# 15308

Dear Mayor and Council,

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

- Staff have formed an internal cross departmental Special Event Leadership team to explore initiatives to support event and festival organisers.
- Staff from VPD and the City will be meeting to discuss strategies to potentially reduce policing costs for event organisers.
- Staff are establishing a stakeholder engagement strategy to solicit input from various event and festival organisers (e.g., BIAs, major event organisers, grassroots organisations, music and the arts community).
- Staff will report back further in the second quarter of this year.

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)
City Manager
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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

February 3, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Kareem Allam, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Update on Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals and Events in Vancouver

RTS #: 15308

This memo provides an update on the work underway to address the July 20, 2022 Council motion "Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals and Events in Vancouver". Staff will provide a more extensive report back in Q2, 2023.

Background

In July 2022 Council passed a motion¹ directing staff to report back in Q2 2023 with options for a more streamlined Festivals and Events permitting process with specific considerations for small and large events, music and arts related events, events on public and private property, and potential improvements to the City's Special Events Policy/guidelines.

The motion also directed staff to engage with VPD to review opportunities to reduce on-site policing requirements and costs borne by organizers as well as convene an Advisory Task Force comprised of a range of representatives and stakeholders from Vancouver's Festival and Events sector.

Discussion

Special events and festivals play an important role in creating a vibrant City and enabling opportunities for connection and expression. Events and festivals generate excitement, civic pride and are a draw for talent and investments in our local businesses.

¹ [Minutes - Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities - July 20, 2022 \(vancouver.ca\)](#)

Staff have convened a cross departmental working group to establish specific action items in response to the Council motion.

Work underway includes:

- Review of the special event policy to determine potential changes to further benefit the special event community.
- Options to lower barriers and streamline the application process (e.g. traffic management plan support, flexibility with application deadlines).
- Outreach to VPD to seek their involvement in potential ways to decrease VPD costs.

VPD and the City of Vancouver have long worked together to enable special events. Rising police costs related to special events has been a persistent topic over a number of years and there has been ongoing collaboration with VPD to address this challenge, including the 2019 Special Event Policy Framework; this framework involved a significant increase of City of Vancouver funding to address operational and policing costs related to special events in order to ensure events remained viable (see summary in Appendix A).

In spite of these efforts, staff hear that policing costs continue to present a financial burden to event organizers. Policing costs related to events also create a financial pressure for the City; it is estimated that the City allocates roughly 1.5 to 2 million dollars annually to offset police costs related to special events. Recognizing that change on this matter will require support and direction of senior leadership, the City Manager has reached out to Chief Palmer and discussion on this matter has been initiated.

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Staff will consider the UNDRIP directions from Council regarding engagement with xʷməθkʷəy̅əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations (MST) throughout the work being done to make it easier to hold events and festivals in Vancouver. Specific attention will be paid to exploring the processes for:

- Event organisers to engage and partner with MST in permitted events/festivals;
- City staff to engage and partner with MST in City-organised events; and,
- City staff to support and facilitate MST hosting their own events/festivals in parks and other areas of significance.

Next Steps

Staff will be consulting with a range of stakeholders to determine short and long-term needs and priorities, seek feedback on factors affecting the long-term stability and sustainability of events, and establish a special event advisory task force. The results of this dialogue will shape initiatives and action items aimed at the 2023 event season, as well as longer term initiatives to be presented by staff in Q2.

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



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

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Appendix A – Summary of Funding Available to Event Organisers

The City of Vancouver's FestShare program covers operational costs for events that are free and open to the public, and take place on City property. Coverage is as follows:

- 100% of eligible operational costs up to \$1000.00
- 75% of eligible operational costs from \$1001-\$75,000
- 100% of costs related to the deployment of staff (including VPD) and equipment for public safety

Eligible operational costs include VPD traffic and crowd control among other City of Vancouver services that support events. More information about the FestShare program can be found in the [Special Event Policy](#).