



City of Vancouver

Special Event Advisory Task Force

Terms of Reference

Background

In summer 2022, the City of Vancouver Council directed staff to convene an Advisory Task Force (“Task Force”) which would *“identify key challenges and opportunities with the current festivals and events permitting processes”,* and to examine how to *“reduce the amount of time it takes to issue permits by reducing the complexity of applications and giving consideration to separate permitting streams for smaller and larger events, with a special focus on reducing barriers for music and arts related events, and consideration to having one event policy that spans both public and private property to help reduce red tape.”*

To ensure the Task Force addresses the actual barriers event planners face, a series of preliminary engagement activities were completed between March and June, 2023. An online survey was conducted in March 2023 to solicit insights from a broad cross section of the event planning community. The preliminary findings from the online survey informed further questions and discussion in a series of focus groups with key interest groups held in May and June 2023.

Three primary themes emerged:

1. The permitting process in Vancouver is complex;
2. Costs are a barrier to host successful events; and
3. Enhanced communication is required between event producers and City staff.

These early engagement findings have been used to help inform the Special Event Advisory Task Force’s Terms of Reference (ToR), membership, and scope of work.

Purpose

The purpose of the Special Event Advisory Task Force is to provide advice and inform priorities on proposed and future solutions to sector-identified issues related to event hosting in Vancouver, with the goal of making event hosting in Vancouver easier

Guiding Principles

In working together, the Special Event Advisory Task Force will:

- Agree to disagree with respect.
- Create a space that is safe, open and showing each other grace.
- Assume good intentions.
- Ensure that the Task Force represents all types of events, and not solely individual interests.
- Work towards the best interests of events of all sizes in Vancouver.
- Respect the confidentiality of Task Force peers.

Scope of Work

In Scope

Discuss and advise on current state and next steps related to identified issues, including:

- Identify challenges and opportunities with the current events permitting processes and City mandated requirements and regulations.
- Examine how to reduce the amount of time it takes for the City to issue event permits.
- Examine application complexity and identify opportunities for simplification.
- Consider separate permitting streams for smaller and larger events.
- Explore how to reduce barriers for music and arts related events.

Out of Scope

- Mandated requirements and regulations for permits beyond City of Vancouver control (such as Ministry of Transportation requirements).
- Barriers and enablers to hosting events outside of the City's purview (e.g., cost of event spaces).

i. Expected Outcomes

- Event organizers will be more informed and better engaged with the City.
- Event permitting processes will be simplified and streamlined.
- Barriers to permitting will be minimized or removed.
- Enablers will be put in place to support event organizers.
- Communication channels will be enhanced.
- Further outcomes to be defined by the Task Force as work commences.

Governance and Decision-Making

i. Governance

The Special Event Advisory Task Force will provide input into recommendations and improvements that will help shape the future of event permitting in Vancouver. A facilitator will support each meeting to ensure that meetings are structured with clear agendas and objectives, discussions are balanced, and ideas are properly captured. The group will also be supported by staff representatives that either directly permit or support special events in Vancouver. These include the Vancouver Park Board, Engineering Film and Special Events, Development, Building and Licensing, Arts, Culture and Community Services, and Sport Hosting Vancouver.

- Octavio Silva – Manager of Business Development, Vancouver Park Board

- Lisa Parker, Director of Public Space and Street Use, City of Vancouver Engineering Services
- Sarah Hicks – Chief Licence Inspector, Development Buildings and Licensing
- Michelle Collens – Director, Sport Hosting Vancouver
- Branislav Henselmann – Deputy General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

ii. Decision-Making Processes

Key initiatives, proposals, and solutions will be brought forward to the Special Event Advisory Task Force, whose members will advise and provide feedback. Staff will work in collaboration with the Task Force to develop proposed improvements and changes. Some proposed improvements may require further Council consideration or direction.

Membership

The membership of the Task Force will be a diverse representation of the types of people and events in Vancouver, which may include:

- xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples
- Urban Indigenous People
- Black and people of colour
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+ People
- People of marginalized genders, including women, trans, nonbinary, and Two-Spirit people

As well as events groups such as:

- Major event organizers
- BIPOC events
- Host Nations
- Grassroots organizers
- Cultural events
- 2SLGTBQIA+-led events
- Business Improvement Association (BIA) events
- Sporting events
- Music based events
- High complexity events

Name	Event Type	Role	Title	Organization	Phone	Email
Jodie Shebib	N/A	Co-Chair	Acting Branch Manager, Film & Special Events	City of Vancouver FASE	604-404.6983	Jodie.Shebib@vancouver.ca

Desiree Gatten	N/A	Co-Chair	Operations Manager, Film & Special Events	City of Vancouver FASE	604.379.2878	Desiree.Gatten@vancouver.ca

Equity Statement

The City of Vancouver is committed to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Financial resources should not be a barrier to participation in this advisory group. An honorarium of \$30 per hour is available to those people or organizations who require financial assistance for themselves or their staff to participate. Support is also available to participate in virtual meetings including a childcare stipend and access to a quiet space with a computer and internet access to join virtual meetings, if required.

Evaluation and Reporting

i. Evaluation

The Task Force will evaluate their own processes in an ongoing manner.

The following will be evaluated:

Measure	Method of Evaluation
Attendance	Meeting minutes
Timeliness of decision-making	Meeting minutes Member feedback survey Updates to Council
Member satisfaction	Member feedback survey
Clarity of roles	Member feedback survey
Support for members	Member feedback survey
Input considered from members	Member feedback survey
Communications with members	Member feedback survey
Communications with key partners and Council	Feedback from key individuals at Park Board, FASE, License and Policy Office and Council

To view the feedback survey for members, which will be completed every second meeting, see [Appendix A](#).

ii. Reporting

The following describes how and to whom the Special Event Advisory Task Force will report on its progress:

- Minutes from each meeting will be shared back to members for review.
- A monthly summary report will be drafted and submitted to the key representative partners from each of the Park Board, FASE, and Licence and Policy Office.

- Final issue statements, solutions, and proposals may be delivered and presented to Council.

iii. Task Force Member Term Length

The Special Event Advisory Task Force will meet until proposals have been shared with Council. Upon submission, the purpose of the Task Force will be re-evaluated and the Terms of Reference updated to reflect any changes in scope.

Members will serve a term of one year, and may be offered the option to renew once, at the discretion of the City of Vancouver.

Administrative Processes

i. Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly at the following time:

- *Day and time TBD*

Meetings will be held virtually or in-person.

ii. Agendas Minutes, Materials

- Agendas will be developed by the facilitation team as outlined in the Governance and Decision Making section.
- Members may request space on the agenda for items related to objectives, with a deadline of the one week before the scheduled meeting.
- Agenda and materials will be distributed the 3 days before the scheduled meeting.
- Minutes will be taken and stored by the appointed Task Force administrator.
- Minutes will be distributed the within a week after the scheduled meeting, with a call for new agenda items for the next meeting.

iii. Meeting Invitees

If additional ad hoc members or invitees are to attend a meeting, this must be decided by consensus in the previous meeting.

Conflict of Interest

If a potential conflict of interest for any member should arise, the member is expected to raise the topic and potential conflict to the Task Force. The member must recuse themselves, if deemed appropriate by the Task Force.

Confidentiality

All materials produced and presented to the Special Event Advisory Task Force are the property of the City and are confidential to the Task Force within its stated purpose. All members are required to maintain the confidentiality of all materials, documents, and discussions. Any public communications made by a member or members of the group related to the group's work must first be approved by the City, in accordance with City of Vancouver communications policies

Terms of Reference Review Schedule

These Terms of Reference should be re-examined yearly. Any changes must be approved by the group and the key partners from the Park Board, FASE, and Licence and Policy Office.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Climate Emergency Action Plan	The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) is a road map to reduce Vancouver’s emissions by 50% by 2030 through data-driven, proven solutions. More information on CEAP can be found here: https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/climate-emergency-action-plan-in-depth.aspx
FEST Committee	The FEST (Festival Expediting Staff Team) Committee is comprised of internal and external stakeholders who play a role in supporting special events in the City of Vancouver. Small to medium sized events may not require FEST Committee review; all high complexity events require review.
FestShare	FestShare is a program in which the City of Vancouver shares some of the costs associated with providing City services for eligible special events. Eligible events must be open to the public and of a non-commercial nature; Free events receive a higher level of support (FestShare Level 2) than events that are not free (FestShare Level 1).
Film and Special Events (FASE) Office	The City of Vancouver department that issues permits for film and special events City of Vancouver streets, sidewalks, plazas, other civic

	spaces and seawall areas not abutting parks. May work in conjunction with the Parks Board and/or Licence Office if event location is multi-jurisdictional.
Free events	Events that do not require attendees to pay, whether for admission or activities at the event itself.
Green Event Plan	A guide that helps event organizers to plan a more environmentally sustainable event, with tips, checklists, and information sheets for vendors, volunteers, and organizers. The guide provides information on local suppliers and service providers, as well as services and equipment that can be provided by the City.
High complexity event (on public property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event may occur over multiple blocks, over multiple days and/or in multiple locations • May include a combination of streets, plazas and parks • Involves use of sidewalk, curb lane and street closures • Significant impact to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic in the surrounding area • Involves coordination with one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Fire and ○ Rescue Services, Coast Mountain Bus Company, ○ Translink, City of Vancouver Traffic Management, ○ Vancouver Park Board, and Business Improvement Association(s) • Large setup of stages, bleachers • May involve food vending and liquor licensing
Licence and Policy Office	The City of Vancouver department that oversees special events on private property. This includes

	both indoor and outdoor events on private property.
Low complexity event (on public property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event is contained to one block only, and involves the use of sidewalks or parking lanes only • Little to no pedestrian and vehicle impact • No road closures (excluding block parties) • Little to no coordination with Traffic Management, Vancouver Police, or the FEST Committee • Does not involve food vending (except non-perishable foods) or liquor licensing • Block parties are considered a low complexity event (may include a closure of half of residential block) • Event includes few or no structures (stages, portable washrooms, or large tents)
Medium complexity event (on public property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event may involve the street closure of a single block • May involve the use of a sidewalks and curb lanes around the event site • Minor impact to pedestrians and vehicles in the surrounding area • Event is no longer than one day in duration • May involve coordination with one or more of the following: Vancouver Police, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, Coast Mountain Bus Company, City of Vancouver Traffic Management, Vancouver Park Board, Business Improvement Association(s) • May involve food vending or liquor licensing • May include acceptable structures such as tents smaller than 600 sq., small stages and portable washrooms
Non-free event	Event that requires attendees to pay, whether through admission or for activities at the event.

Park Board	The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation which is the elected body and legal authority that manages and maintains Park pursuant to the City of Vancouver Special Event Permitting Handbook 54 Vancouver Charter.
Special Event Handbook	A guide to aid event planners through the planning and event permitting process, for low, medium or high complexity events in Vancouver.
Special Event Policy	The policy provides clear guidance to the public, event planners and to City employees responsible for administering special events in Vancouver, particularly with regards to permit applications for Special Events, the permitting process, entering into the required permit/licence agreements, and ensuring compliance with such permit/licence agreements by the Special Event Host.

Appendix A: Member Feedback Survey

To be completed every second meeting. These questions will be programmed into an online survey platform.

For the following statements, please select the degree to which you agree or disagree. [Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being completely disagree, 3 being Neutral, and 5 being completely agree]

1. I have all of the information I need to participate fully as a Special Event Advisory Task Force member.
2. I understand my role as a member of the Task Force.
3. I feel supported in my role as a member of the Task Force.
4. My input is considered in meetings.
5. As a group, we effectively communicate with each other.
6. The group is effective at making decisions.
7. Is there anything you would like to see improved in how we work together? [open text]
8. Are there any particular strengths you see in how we work together? [open text]