

REPORT

Community Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: October 7, 2024

From: Blair Fryer, Acting Director, Community Services
File:

Item #: 2024-540

Subject: **Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events**

RECOMMENDATION

1. **THAT** the guidelines and decision-making matrix for designating Municipally Significant Events as outlined in the staff report titled “Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events” dated October 7, 2024 from the Acting Director, Community Services, be endorsed; and
 2. **THAT** the Licence Inspector be delegated authority to determine if an event meets the requirements for being designated a municipally significant event using the *Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events*.
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PURPOSE

This report provides Council with proposed Municipally Significant Events guidelines and a decision-making matrix for designating special events as “municipally significant.”

SUMMARY

At the June 24, 2024 Council meeting, Council resolved as follows:

THAT Council direct staff to develop a policy and decision-making matrix staff may use to evaluate future municipally significant event designation requests and bring a draft to Council for review in Q3.

Staff have conducted a review and analysis and this report presents draft guidelines, a proposed decision-making matrix, and a proposed process.

BACKGROUND

Municipally Significant Event Designation

According to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) policy, municipally significant events are of unique importance to a specific municipality. Each municipality may set its own criteria in determining whether an event is of municipal significance. An event of municipal significance requires a municipal resolution or a letter from a delegated municipal official designating the event as “municipally significant.” For example, a municipally significant event may have historical value to the particular region or provide economic or tourism benefits to the community-at-large. While support and approval from the municipality is required, the applicant must also continue to apply for a Special Event Permit through the LCRB.

Due to increasing costs to produce events and festivals, many municipalities in the region have found themselves receiving requests from event organizers for this designation and some have drafted policies to allow staff to determine if an event qualifies using a decision-making matrix and to delegate the decision-making authority to a staff person so that a report to Council is not necessary. This is especially valuable when the requests come in during the summer months when Council typically meets less frequently.

To date, the City has provided letters designating municipally significant events for the Senior A Salmonbellie games, Uptown Business Association’s Uptown Live, and New Westminster Pride Society’s Pride Week. It is anticipated that as costs for holding events continue to rise, more organizations may approach the City with requests to help alleviate some of the increased expense.

Maximum Price List

The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) sets maximum prices that can be charged for liquor sold under a Special Event Permit. The cost-recovery price list is designed to ensure the prices charged for liquor cover only the “operating costs” of serving and selling the liquor (e.g. cost of liquor in prescribed serving sizes, mix, glasses, ice, and taxes). The prices do not contemplate costs such as space rental, entertainment, security, or single-use cup charges required by a local government and have not been revised since 2015. The LCRB is reviewing their price structure and sizing as they recognize many manufacturers sell beverages in a larger 473ml can and the pricing was set when the smaller 355ml can size was more popular, however no date has been provided for when the review will be complete.

The maximum prices set by LCRB may only be exceeded if the purpose of the event is to raise funds for charity or if the event has been designated of municipal, provincial, national, or international significance. The LCRB’s criteria used to determine provincial, national, or international significance are as follows:

The LCRB will review exemption requests for provincially, nationally and internationally significant events. Qualified events must meet the following criteria:

- *The event features participants and/or performers that are primarily of provincial, national or international origin;*
- *The event attracts spectators from around the province, Canada, or the world; and*
- *The event receives province-wide, nation-wide or world-wide media coverage.*

DISCUSSION

Staff feel designating certain events as “municipally significant” aligns with the City’s Strategic Priorities of a promoting a “People-Centered Economy” and “Community Belonging and Connecting”. By allowing organizers to charge more than the maximum price per drink set by the LCRB, organizers are able to offset higher costs related to event promotion while attracting spectators from around the region to support local tourism. This can have economic spinoff benefits to the local business community through the inclusion of local businesses and vendors.

Municipal Scan

A scan of neighbouring communities has found that several have developed their own policies or guidelines to determine whether an organization’s event is municipally significant, either through standalone policies or as components of a broader liquor policy. Discussions with staff in these municipalities have informed the recommended guidelines and decision-making matrix that is included as Attachment A.

Municipally Significant Event Criteria/Guidelines

The proposed guidelines acknowledge events that are:

- New Westminster-based
- promote community belonging and connecting
- have demonstrated at least three years of successful delivery
- are appropriately insured
- attract at least 1,000 people
- are open to the public free of charge

The guidelines outline a process for organizations to request this designation including timelines and contact information.

Delegated Authority

Staff recommend that Council delegate the decision-making authority over these designations to the Chief Licensing Officer, who is already delegated to approve business licence applications. The Chief Licensing Officer would use the approved decision-making matrix to determine if the event organizer making the request qualifies.

Delegating authority to staff would facilitate a more efficient process and provide event organizers with more timely responses.

Future Liquor Policy

The Economic Development division’s 2025 work plan includes a review of the City’s liquor and cannabis policies. Staff anticipate incorporating the *Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events* into the broader Liquor and Cannabis Policy as part of that work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the City of New Westminster.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from the Economic Development and Community Partnerships divisions have collaborated on this report.

NEXT STEPS

If Council approves of the options recommended by staff, the guidelines and decision-making matrix will be implemented immediately so that event organizers planning for future events are able to make the requests as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommend approval of the draft *Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events*, delegating authority to the Chief Licensing Officer, and incorporating these into the upcoming development and refresh of the City’s liquor policy.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A – *Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events*

OPTIONS

There are three options presented for Council’s consideration:

1. THAT the guidelines and decision-making matrix for designating Municipally Significant Events as outlined in the staff report titled “Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events” dated October 7, 2024 from the Acting Director, Community Services, be endorsed; and
2. THAT the Licence Inspector be delegated authority to determine if an event meets the requirements for being designated a municipally significant event using the Guidelines and Decision-Making Matrix for Designating Municipally Significant Events.

3. THAT Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend options 1 and 2.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Jen Arbo, Supervisor, Community Partnerships

This report was reviewed by:
Carolyn Armanini, Acting Manager, Economic Development

This report was approved by:
Blair Fryer, Acting Director, Community Services