

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy**
Policy Category: **Municipal Services**
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Attachments:

Related Documents

/Legislation: Business Licensing Bylaw (2023-105), Municipal Parks Bylaw (2014-077), Noise Bylaw (2010-073), Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017), Use of Corporate Resources and Election Campaign Activities (G-004)

Key Word(s): Events, Neighbourhoods, Connection, Placemaking, Noise, Parks, Fire, Street Closure

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo (the City) recognizes that neighbourhood-led initiatives, such as events, activities, and projects, promote vibrant, inclusive, and connected communities where members feel safe and welcome. The Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy formalizes how the City supports and reduces barriers for eligible neighbourhood-led events, activities, and projects.

PURPOSE:

This policy outlines a framework for supporting neighbourhood-led initiatives, removing barriers, and waiving select fees for eligible events, activities, and projects. It also defines eligible initiatives, lists available supports, and outlines a process for neighbours to access supports.

DEFINITIONS:

Accessibility: The goal of making information, goods, services, activities, and/or environments meaningful and usable for people with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design, and/or effort to make sure something is barrier free to people

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with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, such as for older adults and families with small children. Accessibility has a distinct meaning for people with disabilities and should not be confused with 'availability' for non-disabled people.

Affiliated Neighbourhood Association: A community organization of neighbours from a Waterloo neighbourhood that work collaboratively with, and is recognized by, the City of Waterloo through the City's Affiliation Policy.

Homes Association: Group of people who live in the same geographic area defined by a covenant or previously subject to covenants, which manage common property through elected boards with representation from the property owners. For this policy, a Homes Association refers to groups that have recreational facilities and payment tied to property use.

Inclusion: A continuous practice of making everyone feel welcomed and respected, as they are. It involves actively creating spaces that allow people to show up as their authentic selves. This sometimes involves accommodations.

In good standing: An affiliated Neighbourhood Association, Homes Association, neighbourhood group, or other neighbourhood applicant whose financial status is up-to-date, abides by the terms of their Service Agreement where applicable, adheres to policies, maintains safety guidelines, and supports City of Waterloo behavior guidelines.

Neighbourhood: An area where people live. Neighbourhood boundaries can change over time and can be defined differently depending on individual sense of belonging. For this policy, the term neighbourhood will refer to a single neighbourhood or a combination of nearby neighbourhoods working together. It will consider neighbourhoods to have flexible boundaries that comprise a portion of the City of Waterloo.

Neighbourhood Connector: A City of Waterloo neighbour that supports neighbourhood connections by planning one or more initiatives per year to connect neighbours. Neighbourhood Connectors must be signed up through the City's Neighbourhood Connector Program and have completed necessary orientation.

Noise Exemption Permit: A permit process that allows an initiative to be exempt from certain elements of the Noise Bylaw.

Not-for-profit organization: An organization that does not pursue a profit and allocates all funding to support its goal or cause.

Open Burn on City Property Permit: A permit process that allows neighbours to host a campfire in a location approved by Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services and Fire Rescue Services staff on City property using a City-provided campfire kit for a neighbourhood-led initiative.

Park Access Permit: A permit required for motorized vehicles to access park property.

Passive Park Permit: A permit required to use a neighbourhood park for a passive recreational purpose as defined in the Municipal Parks Bylaw.

Place of worship: An organization whose space, identity and mission are derived from a religious or spiritual tradition, and which operate as registered or unregistered, not-for-profit, voluntary entities.

Special Event Permit (Road, Sidewalk or Trail): A permit process required for events that interfere with the normal flow of traffic or require a full sidewalk or road closure. This may include events such as parades, fundraisers, races, block parties, festivals, carnivals, demonstrations, and other events impacting the roadway.

Temporary Vendor Licence: A business licence required for a vendor to sell or offer goods or services for a period less than 90 days.

Vendor Market Licence: A business licence required for a collection of temporary vendors operating from one location to sell or offer to sell goods or services to the general public.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to neighbourhood-led initiatives as defined in section 1.0.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by posting on the City website and the City intranet available to City staff (staff). Staff will be advised of the policy via direct distribution to interested and affected divisions at the City.

POLICY:

1.0 Defining eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives

1.1 To be considered an eligible neighbourhood-led initiative, an event, activity, or project must meet all of the criteria listed below:

- Be organized by an affiliated neighbourhood association, a homes association, a neighbourhood connector(s), or one or more Waterloo resident(s) from a neighbourhood
- Be focused on a neighbourhood(s) within Waterloo city limits, not across the entire city
- Occur on public land or private land that is open for all neighbours, can be easily accessed by all neighbours, and is not restricted to members in any way
- Be free or low cost for participants
- The primary purpose is not profit generation, unless funds raised are to be used by a neighbourhood group for neighbourhood focused initiatives

- Have or be committed to pursue, with staff support, all required permits and permissions prior to implementation
- Have or be committed to provide notification to neighbours as required by staff
- Be coordinated and led by neighbours on a voluntary basis and demonstrate involvement from neighbours
- Be inclusive, accessible, and encourage diverse involvement/participation
- Contribute to neighbourhood community-building, wellbeing, connection to place, and/or belonging

1.2 Examples of ineligible initiatives include, but are not limited to the following events, activities, and projects:

- Initiatives being hosted by educational institutions or members of an educational institution that are not open to all neighbours
- Initiatives being hosted by places of worship that are faith-based in nature and/or restricted to membership in any way
- Initiatives that focus on promoting a specific for-profit or political interest
- Initiatives organized by not-for-profit organizations that are city-wide in scope and/or not neighbourhood-led
- Initiatives related to election campaigning for federal, provincial, municipal, or school board candidates, including promotional activities and advertising
- Initiatives that are planned by individuals for private purposes, such as weddings, birthday celebrations, family gatherings, and other social gatherings that are not neighbourhood-based

2.0 Supports available for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives

2.1 Eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives, as defined in section 1.1 may receive supports from neighbourhood services staff. Supports include but are not limited to:

- Support from a neighbourhood services staff liaison for guidance and help delivering initiatives
- Access to in-kind supports including use of select special event equipment and printing
- Online resources that provide instructional information related to neighbourhood-led events, activities, and projects
- Opportunity to access neighbourhood grants provided by the City, where eligible
- Access to learning and capacity building opportunities

For more details on available supports, connect with [neighbourhood services staff](#).

2.2 In addition to supports listed in section 2.1, fees to obtain the following licences and permits will be waived for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives:

- Vendor Market Licence
- Temporary Vendor Licence
- Noise Exemption Permit
- Open Burn on City Property Permit
- Passive Park Permit
- Park Access Permit
- Special Event Permit (Road, Sidewalk, or Trail use)

Additional fees, beyond those listed above, are not eligible to be waived.

The list above (2.2) does not include all the permits and licences that may be required for initiatives. Other required permits and licences must be appropriately obtained and the required fees must be paid.

2.2.1 Conditions for having fees waived

To be eligible to have fees waived, organizers must follow the process outlined in section 3.0 and meet all responsibilities outlined in section 4.1.

Organizers that fail to follow required processes and timelines for obtaining permits and licences, will not be eligible to have fees waived.

For annual initiatives, organizers must apply for required permits and licences each year, even if they were deemed an eligible neighbourhood initiative in the past.

2.3 In addition to supports and waived fees in 2.1 and 2.2, costs will be covered for eligible neighbourhood initiatives as defined in section 1.1, for movie licences, and insurance deductibles in the event of a claim.

2.3.1 Neighbourhood initiatives require insurance appropriate for the initiatives details which organizers are responsible for obtaining as outlined in 4.1. In the event of an insurance claim resulting from an eligible neighborhood-led initiative, the insurance deductible will be covered for the organizers if the below criteria are met:

- The neighborhood-led initiative must be run on City owned property, such as parks, facilities, or recreation complexes.
- Organizers must communicate all initiative activities, providers, permits, licences, and bookings with neighbourhood services staff for approvals. Initiative elements not communicated to neighbourhood services staff in advance of the initiative taking place are not eligible should an insurance claim result.

- Organizers must follow the process outlined in section 3.0 and meet all responsibilities outlined in section 4.1.
- Organizers that fail to undertake required safety processes and risk management strategies or fail to undertake risk mitigation efforts that a reasonable person would undertake when planning the initiative, will not be eligible to have the insurance deductible cost covered. This includes negligence, illegal practices, or actions outside of City of Waterloo bylaws.

2.3.2 Each neighbourhood is eligible to have the cost of a limited number of movie licences covered by the City in a year as determined by neighbourhood services staff (based on allocated budget), if the below criteria are met:

- Movie titles selected must be appropriate for the initiative location and the intended age of the audience of the film up to the maximum age of 14.
- Organizers must request support at least 14 days prior to the screening date and provide all necessary initiative details to neighbourhood services staff.
- Organizers must follow the process outlined in section 3.0 and meet all responsibilities outlined in section 4.1.

3.0 Steps for determining eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives

3.1 To access supports, organizers interested in planning a neighbourhood-led initiative must connect with [neighbourhood services staff](#) well in advance to discuss their proposed initiative. Organizers must adhere to published timelines for permits and licences and connect in advance of this.

3.2 Neighbourhood services staff will collect information about the initiative from the organizer(s), and will determine if the proposed event, activity, or project is a neighbourhood-led initiative (as defined in section 1.1).

3.2.1 If the initiative is eligible, neighbourhood services staff will confirm eligibility and help guide the organizer through next steps. Neighbourhood services staff will direct organizers to the required permits, licences and any supports needed for their initiative. They will also inform other relevant or required staff of the neighbourhood-led initiative as required to access supports.

3.2.2 If the initiative is ineligible, neighbourhood services staff will follow up with the organizer to explain why and share guidance on next steps where applicable.

3.3 In situations where the decision made by neighbourhood services staff regarding eligibility is disputed and a resolution cannot be reached, the Commissioner of Community Services (or their delegate) will make a final decision on whether an

event, activity, or project is deemed an eligible neighbourhood-led initiative based on this policy.

4.0 Responsibilities of organizers

4.1 In order to be eligible to access supports listed in section 2.0, organizers of neighbourhood-led initiatives must comply with all of the following responsibilities:

- Maintain accounts in good standing with the City of Waterloo
- Complete and obtain necessary permit and licensing documentation within the time outlined in the applicable processes and by-laws
- Provide the City of Waterloo with required information outlined in permit and licensing applications within required timelines to allow for staff review
- Provide additional information as requested by staff
- Obtain required insurance coverage for initiatives as outlined by staff
- Must make all reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of participants, location, and surrounding environment's safety during the neighbourhood-led initiative, including practices of risk management
- Make all reasonable attempts to avoid public nuisance complaints as per the [Nuisance Bylaw](#) during their event, activity, or project. This could involve sharing letters and notices with neighbours in the surrounding area in advance of the initiative
- Advise staff of any significant changes to their initiative
- Affiliated neighbourhood associations must comply with all requirements of their Service Agreements
- City of Waterloo volunteers must comply with conditions outlined in volunteer agreements and position responsibilities

5.0 Reporting

5.1 Neighbourhood services staff will track the fees that are waived each year, the cost of movie licences covered, and the costs of any insurance deductibles covered for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives. Staff will prepare an annual report to City Council that outlines the impacts of this policy.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

Failure to comply with responsibilities and conditions outlined in this policy may impact future eligibility to access supports for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives.