

Vancouver Park Board - Special Event Policies

Event Approval and Allocation Policies

Evaluation of Event Requests

The approval of special event requests on parkland is determined by evaluating:

- the compatibility of the event with the Park Board's mandate;
- the suitability of a site to accommodate the event.

Events whose primary purpose is not compatible with the Park Board's mandate are not generally approved although they may be considered by the Board on a case by case basis.

Rationale:

The key to successfully managing special events is scheduling the appropriate activities in the appropriate spaces. Under the Vancouver Charter, the Park Board is given the authority to manage park activities. The Charter entrusts the Park Board to determine which activities are appropriate in parks. Historically, park activities include active and passive recreational activities which are physical, social, cultural, artistic or environmental in nature. Thus, priority is given to special events which are compatible with the Park Board's mandate.

It is important to recognize that sites which accommodate special events are parks first, thus the regular use of the park must be respected. The majority of parks have not been designed to accommodate large events as most lack the amenities (parking areas, washrooms, access to power and water) to support the events. With this in mind, the objective for the Board is to match events to an appropriate park site.

Priority for Allocating Park Space

The allocation of parkland for special events is based on the following priorities:

First Priority	Park Board activities.
Second Priority	Park Board partners (Community Associations, Ecology Society, etc.), other government agencies, school board, etc.
Third Priority	Non profit organization whose event is primarily of interest to the general public.
Fourth Priority	Non Profit or private group whose event is of primary interest to the organization.
Fifth Priority	Commercial Venture - an event organized for profit.

Rationale:

As a general principle, special events on parkland should be open to the general public. They should not restrict the public's access to park space either through physical or financial barriers. Thus, priority in the allocation of parkland is given to events which are open to the public and to events and/or organizations which are compatible with Park Board's mandates.

Event Approval - Board or Staff

The approval process for special event requests is as follows:

No permit required:	under 50 people, shared space, no special requirements (no set-up, structures, public address system, etc.).
Permit required - Staff approval:	up to 1,000 people, exclusive use, minimal impact on other park users, neighbours.
Permit required - Board approval:	over 1,000 people and/or events which significantly impact on regular park users and neighbours, have extensive set-up/take-down or events which are in variance with one or more Park Board policies or event guidelines: charging of an admission fee, selling of goods other than event related items, requesting a liquor licence which does not meet the Board's policy, etc.

Board approval is required for a new major event for the first three years of the event's operation or when significant changes to existing major special events occur.

Rationale:

To streamline the event approval process, staff approval has been increased from 500 to 1,000 participants. However, to ensure that a higher degree of consultation is conducted during the approval process, Board approval is required for larger events which will significantly impact regular park users and/or park neighbours.

Revenue Generating Activities

Revenue Generation

All revenue generating activities associated with special events must be:

- focus on event participants and not the general public;
- ancillary to a larger event.

Revenue generation activities are subject to any applicable government regulations (e.g., licensing requirements, gaming legislation, etc.).

Rationale:

Event organizers may be given permission to generate revenues to offset organizational costs and/or raise funds for charities. To preserve the non-commercial nature of parks, the revenue generating activities must focus only on event participants and not the general public. Commercial activities which are not apart of a larger event and/or are not within the Park Board's mandate are generally not approved.

Gated - Admission Events

Gated or admission fee events are limited to designated areas in larger parks. The majority of the park including the park's circulation network (pathways, bikeways, etc.) must remain open to the public.

Rationale:

As a general principle, special events on parkland should be open to the general public. They should not restrict the public's access to park space either through physical or financial barriers. However, the Board does recognize that under certain circumstances, the diversity of programming can be increased through the permitting of events with an admission fee.

Event Sponsorship - Signage and On Site Promotion Policy

Sponsorship Signage

- sponsorship signs are limited to the event area and must be directed at event participants only;
- signs should be discreet and kept to a minimal level;
- sponsorship signs must be approved by staff prior to installation.

On Site Promotions

- sampling of sponsors product and product displays are permitted with staff approval;
- Excluding the on site food and beverage service, the sales of event sponsor's product (food and beverage excluded) is not permitted;
- Passive distribution of written material may be permitted with staff approval.

Rationale

Most major events have at least one major sponsor. In return for their financial contribution, event sponsors request significant profile on event promotional material and on the event site. The Board's role is to balance the sponsor's on site recognition with the preservation of the non-commercial nature of parks.

With the exception of food and beverage products, the sale of sponsor's product is not permitted during the event. This is based on the premise that the sponsor is contributing towards the event and not purchasing the right to sell product. Food and beverage products of a sponsor are permitted only if the product is sold as a component of the on site food and beverage service offered to event participants only.

Sale of Goods and Services - Permitted Items

- items with the event's name or logo;
- items or services which support the theme of the event (i.e., light sticks for night events, lantern making, kite making, etc.)
- Festivals: expanded artistic products including art and crafts, musical recordings, etc.

Rationale:

The sale of goods and services may be permitted if they are ancillary to a larger event. Items must be event related and compatible with a public park. Festivals are permitted to sell a wider range of arts and cultural items provided that they are an integral part of the event.

Consumption of Alcohol in Parks

Staff can approve requests for special occasion licenced areas when:

- the sale of alcohol is supplemental to an event
- the event is not being held in a mini or neighbourhood park
- minors are not the prime focus of the event
- the event is operated by a community service organization and profits from the sale of alcohol are used to support the community service activities of the organization
- the hours of operation for the licenced area parallel the event or between the hours of noon and 9:30 p.m.
- organizers have an approved security plan in place

Requests for special occasion licenced areas which do not meet these criteria may be considered by the Board on a case by case basis.

Rationale:

Policy allows staff to approve special occasion license areas for adult events in larger destination parks. The scale of the service area will be in relation to the event's attendance and service is restricted to event participants only.