



Exhibition Place

REPORT FOR ACTION

Nighttime Economy - Municipally Significant Designation - Exhibition Place

Date: April 24, 2024
To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place
From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer
Wards: Ward 10 - Fort York - Spadina

SUMMARY

On a trial basis, this report recommends identifying events held from May to September at Exhibition Place as Municipally Significant for tenants applying for a temporary extension of operating hours for serving alcohol.

Toronto City Council adopted a report from the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture outlining a comprehensive plan to “Strengthen Toronto’s Nighttime Economy.”

“Nighttime Economy” describes the City’s social, cultural, and economic activities between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Nightlife refers to entertainment-related activities and is vital to the nighttime economy. It encompasses enjoying Toronto’s nightlife amenities and support for those who work at night, including individuals who help manage life at night, such as hospitality industry workers, bar owners, shift workers, and emergency services professionals. A healthy night economy supports all the needs of its residents and visitors.

A recommendation in the Council-approved report directed the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture to identify emerging entertainment areas outside the downtown core that can support entertainment uses at night and the future growth of nightlife.

Exhibition Place is Canada’s most extensive entertainment venue, hosting over 1,761 events and attracting over 5.5 million visitors annually. This iconic entertainment, music, and events site is pivotal in Toronto’s cultural and economic fabric generating over \$500 million in annual economic impact. The grounds, with its multiple venues for sports teams, entertainment, music, and cultural events, are ideally situated to support the nighttime economy.

Our Strategic Plan is a roadmap for ensuring Exhibition Place is Canada's premier destination for conventions, exhibitions, events, and entertainment. Facilitating opportunities that support our tenants will help us meet our goal of exceeding client and visitor expectations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board, on a trial basis, to provide a letter of support to tenants and event organizers at Exhibition Place for events held between May 1 and September 30, 2024, such as those specifically listed in Attachment 1 of this Report, to be considered as Municipally Significant for the purpose of applying for a Special Occasion Permit or for a temporary extension of premises and/or hours for the sale of alcohol at permanently licensed locations, and staff report back with an update on the pilot at the December 12, 2024 meeting of the Board.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Exhibition Place 2022-2026 Strategic Plan aims to exceed client and visitor expectations. Facilitating opportunities that support our tenants in expanding and enhancing event and entertainment opportunities will help us meet this goal.

At its meeting of July 16, 2019, Toronto City Council adopted a report from the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture outlining a comprehensive plan to "Strengthen Toronto's Nighttime Economy."

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EC6.8>

At its meeting on December 7, 2021, Executive Committee adopted the item EX28.15 Framework for the Review of Licensing and Zoning Regulations for Restaurants, Bars and Entertainment Venues, which identifies that current business licensing regimes and zoning regulations have not kept pace with the evolution of night culture and a review of regulations for restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues supports Toronto's night economy.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EX28.15>

COMMENTS

Since 2016, City Council has directed various studies and initiatives related to the City's night economy, including supporting live music venues, eating establishments operating nightclubs, and identifying entertainment areas outside the downtown core.

To bolster and proactively plan for strengthening the nighttime economy, Council adopted the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan. This three-year plan takes a coordinated approach to outlining the scope of nightlife and has three recommended goals:

1. Toronto will support live music, entertainment, and social culture at night that reflects the diversity of the city and enhances the global position of Toronto as a tourist destination and cultural innovator.
2. Toronto will recognize and advance the importance of safety for nightlife patrons and workers, respect for residents, and the long-term sustainability of music and entertainment venues.
3. Toronto is a 24-hour city that harnesses the potential of the entertainment-related nighttime economy as a producer of jobs and economic growth.

Further, the action plan recognizes that Toronto is home to many world-class festivals, events, professional sports teams, and music venues, with many of these events and amenities located at Exhibition Place or within walking distance.

With this myriad and volume of municipally significant events, Exhibition Place can meet the Nightlife Action Plan recommendations helping to enhance the global position of Toronto as a tourist destination and cultural innovator. In consultation with the City's Economic Development and Culture staff, they advised that many actions required to initiate this trial do not require City approval. They have also expressed support for our long-term vision of a night market at Exhibition Place.

An aspect of nightlife, music, and entertainment events is serving alcohol. The practice is for our tenants to apply to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario ("AGCO") for a temporary extension of hours permit. The tenant must also apply to the City for a municipal endorsement, also referred to as a 'declaration of Municipal Significance.' This procedure will not change. In the past, well-known events like TIFF and PRIDE have been event partners for many of our Exhibition Place tenants. To successfully get a temporary extension of operating hours, establishments typically must demonstrate the event is deemed 'significant' by a relevant government authority. City endorsement through the local Councillor's office is therefore required. The Board's adoption of the recommendation is intended to support the process.

Proactive and cooperative planning will result in synergies and shared outcomes.

Exhibition Place staff will support actions such as:

- Coordinating marketing for the nighttime economy,

- Applying a nightlife lens to day events that reduce overcrowding and congestion for day activities, designating the period from May to September as Municipally Significant to expedite the application process for the tenants obtaining temporary extension hours,
- Develop standard safety procedures for night staff and security,
- Organizing a venue alliance for self-regulation.

Tenants applying for a temporary extension of hours are expected to comply with all other by-laws and regulations governing their businesses, including guidelines in the Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Business.

The Gardiner Expressway, Strachan, and Lake Shore are barriers isolating Exhibition Place from the surrounding neighbourhoods. With many residents calling for the City to prevent nightlife activities from being close to residential areas, this physical layout is an advantage for this type of economic activity.

Moreover, Toronto Police Services has indicated that they would fully support the recommendation, given the rich cultural history of the organization and the number of events that take place during the summer season. Exhibition Place's unique location away from the hustle and bustle of the Entertainment District and the fact that there have been no issues with any of the tenants and with no nearby residents underpinning their support.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment 1

The events in our current 2024 summer schedule clearly support the Municipally Significant designation for tenant's events from May to September. The following is a list of events:

Toronto Caribbean Carnival Related Events
Ontario Honda Dealers Indy Toronto
CNE Fair
Toronto Waterfront Marathon Expo
Collision Conference
Mayfest
Sporting Life 10K Post-Race Celebration
Bike for Brain Health
The Princess Margaret Ride to Conquer Cancer
Under Armour 10K
Toronto Festival of Beer
Live Nation Concerts at Ontario Place
Toronto Football Club home games
Toronto Argonauts home games
Toronto International Film Festival Related Events
Pride Related Events