



June 26, 2024

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Email: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Dear Members of Council,

Subject: Support for 2024.MM19.24 - Review of Major Events Policy

Pride Toronto strongly supports MM19.24 Review of Major Events Policy. Predictable, multi-year funding for major festivals and events would provide organizers with much needed financial capacity to enable long-term planning – positioning organizations to celebrate Toronto’s diverse communities and allowing us to do our part to make Toronto a premium destination for tourists.

Pride Toronto creates and supports events and programming that celebrate the diverse talents, stories, and achievements of all 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and boldly advocates for and defends our human rights. We envision a world in which all people feel safer, valued, celebrated, and included, regardless of how they identify or who they love. We further understand the vital role that major events such as ours play in fostering inclusivity, diversity, and economic growth in our city.

Pride Toronto has witnessed firsthand the positive impact that well-organized major events, such as ours, can have on the community and the city as a whole. Our annual Pride Festival, one of the largest of its kind in the world, not only celebrates the vibrancy and diversity of the 2SLGBTQI+ community but also brings significant economic benefits to Toronto. These benefits include increased tourism, job creation, and heightened international visibility for our city as a progressive and welcoming destination.

The Review of Major Events Policy is a critical step in ensuring that Toronto continues to be a leader in hosting world-class events. By updating and refining the policies governing major events, the city can better support event organizers in delivering safer, inclusive, and sustainable experiences for all attendees.

We believe that the proposed review will address several key areas that are essential for the continued success of Pride Toronto and other major events:

1. **Supporting 2SLGBTQI+ communities:** We are Canada’s largest Pride festival and North America’s second largest. We are globally recognized and are known to celebrate and advocate for our community. Prioritizing equity deserving groups in major events will help ensure that all residents and visitors can participate.



2. **Financial Stability:** As a not-for-profit, Pride Toronto relies on sponsorships and grants. The City of Toronto has provided Pride an annual grant of \$260,000 for the last several years. This amount has remained stagnant and not reflected inflation and more so the increased costs directly charged by the City to Pride Toronto. In 2023, the City and its partners charged Pride permit fees, noise auditor fees, police premium pay, and other amounts which in aggregate have far exceeded the grant monies received by the City. The lack of increased and guaranteed year-over-year grants from the City puts in jeopardy our ability to invest in programming and putting on a sustainable festival.
3. **Economic Impact:** In 2023, an estimated 3 million attended the Pride Festival. Our economic impact report found contribution to the GDP increased to over \$500 million and generated combined tax revenues of over \$230 million; with over \$32 million in municipal taxes alone. The Pride Festival also supported the creation of over 4,700 jobs. Recognizing and leveraging the economic potential of major events such as ours will contribute to the city's prosperity and global reputation.
4. **Accessibility & Sustainability:** Implementing sustainable practices and investing in accessibility in event planning and execution is crucial. Pride Toronto has invested in both and continues to work to ensure we provide an accessible festival for all and remain good environmental stewards by reducing our carbon footprint.

As an organization that hosts one of Toronto's most significant annual events, we are committed to working collaboratively with the City Council and other stakeholders to support the successful implementation of the revised Major Events Policy. We are confident that this policy review will enhance Toronto's ability to host a diverse range of events that reflect our city's rich cultural tapestry and uphold our values of inclusivity and equality.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to the positive outcomes that the Review of Major Events Policy will bring to our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Modeste".

Kojo Modeste
Executive Director
Pride Toronto

CC: Councillor Paul Ainslie
Deputy Mayor McKelvie
Councillor Alejandra Bravo, Economic and Community Development Committee, Chair
Councillor Chris Moise - Chair 2SLGBTQI Community Advisory Board
Patrick Tobin, Economic Development and Culture, General Manager
Aderonke Akande, Economic Development and Culture, Cultural Partnerships, Director
Ben Macintosh, Economic Development and Culture, Cultural Partnerships, Manager