

Response to Demonstrations Policy

Date: September 8, 2025

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer

Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

This report responds to the City Council's adoption of the Policy Framework—City Response to Demonstrations at its December 2024 meeting, which directed all City agencies to develop their own demonstration-response policies and procedures in alignment with that framework.

This report recommends the approval of the Response to Demonstrations Policy as outlined in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board approve the Response to Demonstrations Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications to this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Exhibition Place 2022-2026 Strategic Plan has a goal to Exceed Client and Visitor Expectations through the implementation of policies and practices that promote a safe and secure experience for all visitors, clients, and staff on site.

At its meeting on May 22 and 23, 2024, City Council requested the City Manager, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to develop an action plan to recognize that Torontonians are able to practice their faith and access their place of worship free of

intimidation and harassment, and can freely exercise their protected Charter rights to freedom of assembly, religion and expression, and convey the action plan directly to relevant participating bodies, including Municipal Licensing and Standards, and the Toronto Police Service Board.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.MM18.16>

At its meeting on February 6 and 7, 2024, City Council directed the City Manager to develop a policy framework for the management and monitoring of rallies and protests, ensuring alignment with the City's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy, and report back to City Council by December 2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.IE10.7>

At its meeting on December 17 and 18, 2024, City Council adopted the Policy Framework - City Response to Demonstrations. Further, Council through the City Manager, requested Agencies and Corporations to refer to the framework as a model to align applicable policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the City's approach.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.CC24.2>

At its meeting on February 4, 2025, the Board received the Policy Framework – City Response to Demonstrations for informational purposes.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EP15.8>

COMMENTS

Exhibition Place welcomes over 5.5 million visitors each year, hosting 2,029 events in 2024. Managing this volume across the 192-acre site requires prioritizing the safety of all visitors, clients, and staff.

While Exhibition Place is municipally owned land, it has the authority to determine the appropriate use of its grounds and roadways. This jurisdiction is established in Sections 406 and 407 of the City of Toronto Act, as well as Chapter 63 (§ 63-4) of the Toronto Municipal Code. These legislative provisions define the site's designated uses, booking policies, and property boundaries.

Further authority is set out in the following City of Toronto by-laws:

By-law	Authority
25-85: Respecting the Management of Exhibition Place	Defines permissible uses and activities on the grounds and authorizes temporary roadway closures
45-84: Respecting the Regulation of Traffic in Exhibition Place	Designates internal roads as park roadways and grants Exhibition Place the authority to manage signage and traffic

During the development of this policy, relevant chapters of the Toronto Municipal Code were reviewed to ensure consistency with existing municipal practices and regulations:

Chapter	Section	Description
608 – Parks	§ 608-3	Establishes general standards of conduct in public parks
	§ 608-11	Sets permit requirements for organized gatherings of more than 25 people
	§ 608-12	Regulates the use of loudspeakers and amplified sound equipment in parks
591 – Noise	§ 591-2.1	Regulates or amplified sounds that may disturb others
743 – Streets and Sidewalks, use of	§ 743-9	Prohibits obstruction of any street or sidewalk without proper authorization
	§ 743-18	Requires a General Manager’s permit for temporary street occupations not related to street work

After receiving the City Council’s Policy Framework – Public Response to Demonstrations, Exhibition Place staff have developed a draft policy that aligns with the framework, relevant legislation, and current security practices.

This new policy formalizes existing procedures for managing demonstrations, clarifies the responsibilities of the Toronto Police Service and Exhibition Place Security, and establishes protocols for communicating with demonstration organizers. Provisions from the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, the Workplace Violence Policy and Procedure, and the Hate Activity Policy were reviewed and incorporated to ensure consistent safety and anti-harassment standards.

In line with the Policy Framework—City Response to Demonstrations, permits are not issued for demonstrations on publicly accessible City property. Non-permitted events do not receive logistical support or services such as power, barricades, furniture, audio-visual equipment, or event set-up.

To balance public safety with the right to freedom of expression, designated areas for demonstrations and protest activities have been established outside Exhibition Place boundaries. These areas include the east side of the Princes’ Gates along Strachan Avenue and the area north of the Dufferin Street Bridge.

Exhibition Place recognizes its legal obligation to protect individual rights and freedoms. Actions in response to demonstrations will be guided by reasonableness and proportionality and carried out in a way that does not impact protected rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Response to Demonstrations Policy