

Use of Nathan Phillips Square for Various Events – October 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026

Date: May 20, 2025
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards: Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York

SUMMARY

The City of Toronto provides opportunities to access Nathan Phillips Square for eligible events through a permitting process administered by the Economic Development and Culture Division.

The purpose of this report is to request exemptions from Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 636, "Public Squares", and former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 237, "Nathan Phillips Square", for events that are proposed to be held on Nathan Phillips Square from October 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation, Breakthrough T1D, Canada Running Series Inc., Ajiwo International, Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto Spring Festival, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, Canadian Olympic Committee, The Ontario Snow Resorts Association, and Celebrate Toronto, to operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and to serve alcohol contingent upon the following conditions:
 - Approval of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario
 - Approval of the Medical Officer of Health
 - Compliance with the City of Toronto's Municipal Alcohol Policy
 - Receipt of all the necessary permits associated with the production of the event i.e., building permits, noise by-law extension permit

2. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Breakthrough T1D, Canada Running Series Inc., Ajiwo International, Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto Spring Festival, Canadian Olympic Committee, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, The Ontario Snow Resorts Association, Muslim Association of Canada, Vietnamese Association Toronto, and Ontario Sikhs, and Gurdwara Council to solicit donations in support of their organization.
3. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Breakthrough T1D, Canadian Olympic Committee, Canada Running Series Inc., Ajiwo International, Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto Spring Festival, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, The Ontario Snow Resorts Association, Muslim Association of Canada, Celebrate Toronto, and Ontario Sikhs, and Gurdwara Council to engage in sports demonstrations.
4. City Council grant permission to allow for sound amplification by the organizations and at the times listed below, which extend beyond the accepted Nathan Phillips Square's amplification schedule policy hours, such policy only allowing for amplification of sound from Monday to Friday between 12:00 pm and 1:30 pm, and between 4:30 pm and 11:00 pm:

City Produced Events:

- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto, in March 2026, to present land acknowledgment and African Ancestral Acknowledgment, remarks by the Mayor as part of the National Day of Observance for COVID-19
- Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto, in April 2026, to present land acknowledgment and African Ancestral Acknowledgment, remarks by the Mayor as part of the Clean Toronto Together event.

Third-Party Community Produced Events:

- Breakthrough T1D on October 15 and 16, 2025, to present warm-up messages to the participants in the sport, health and safety announcements, music, and speeches, as part of the Ride to Defeat Diabetes event.
- Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation in January/February 2026 to present warm-up messages to the participants in the sport, health and safety announcements, music, and speeches, as part of the Leaf's Open Practice.
- The Ontario Snow Resorts Association in January/February 2026 to make health and safety announcements and live streaming music, as part of the Go Skiing Go Snowboarding event.
- Muslim Association of Canada in March 2026, to present, early morning and afternoon prayers, as part of the Eid Prayer and Festival.

All permissions would be contingent upon each applicant securing a Noise Bylaw Exemption permit through the Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division and adhering to the [Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 591, Noise](#), along with mandatory sound monitoring throughout the event to ensure compliance with schedules.

5. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation, BreakthroughT1D, Canada Running Series Inc., Ajiwo International, Hockey Hall of Fame, Strategic Protocol and External Relations City of Toronto, Toronto Spring Festival, Canadian Olympic Committee, The Ontario Snow Resorts Association, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, Muslim Association of Canada, and Celebrate Toronto, to use open flame as part of their event production. All permissions would be contingent upon each applicant securing an Open Air Burning permit under [Ontario Fire Code 2.4.4.4](#) from Toronto Fire Services.
6. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation, Canada Running Series Inc., Toronto Spring Festival, Canadian Olympic Committee, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, and The Ontario Snow Resorts Association, to place objects in the reflecting pool.
7. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto, Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation, Toronto Spring Festival, and Celebrate Toronto to use special effects pyrotechnics as part of their event production. All permissions would be contingent upon each applicant securing a permit from Toronto Fire Services to discharge fireworks under [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 466, Fireworks](#).
8. City Council grant permission to Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre to use open flame as part of their sacred fire ceremonies in the Spirit Garden. All permissions would be contingent upon Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre securing an Open Air Burning Permit under [Ontario Fire Code 2.4.4.4](#) from Toronto Fire Services.
9. City Council requires that the various events compensate the City of Toronto, through the Corporate Real Estate Management Division, for all the City of Toronto costs associated with an event above the standard staffing complement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no current or known future-year financial impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

The City will be compensated by the event organizers for any costs incurred by the City as a result of these various events and the approval of requested exemptions to Chapter 636 and former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 237 through the Corporate Real Estate Management Division.

Normal fees associated with permitting and staff cost recovery, as per Municipal Code [Chapter 441](#), charges will be applied as well.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 26, 2025, the City Council adopted TE20.29, granting various requested exemptions for the use of NPS from May 1 – September 30, 2025.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.TE20.29>

City of Toronto Economic Development & Culture Division, Arts and Culture Services, Event Support Unit has received applications from the following for the use of Nathan Phillips Square from October 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026:

- City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto's "Nuit Blanche".
- Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation's "Diwali – Festival of Light".
- Breakthrough T1D's "Ride to Defeat Diabetes".
- Canada Running Series Inc.'s "Toronto Waterfront Marathon".
- Ajiwo International's "All Charity Festival".
- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto's "Indigenous Veterans Day".
- Hockey Hall of Fame's "Hockey Hall of Fame".
- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto's "Treaties Recognition Week".
- City Cultural Events Production, City of Toronto's "Cavalcade of Lights".
- Toronto Spring Festival's "Toronto Spring Festival".
- Canadian Olympic Committee's "Team Canada Fanfest".
- Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation "Leaf's Open Practice".
- The Ontario Snow Resorts Association's "Go Skiing Go Snowboarding".
- Muslim Association of Canada's "Eid Prayer and Festival".
- Celebrate Toronto's "Celebrate Toronto".
- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto's "National Day of Observance for COVID-19".
- Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto's "Clean Toronto Together".
- Canada Running Series Inc.'s "Under Armour Toronto 10K".
- Vietnamese Association Toronto's "Journey to Freedom".
- Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwara Council's "Khalsa Day".

COMMENTS

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 636 "Public Squares" and former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 237 "Nathan Phillips Square" prohibits the solicitation of donations, the sale of alcohol, placing objects in the reflecting pool, use of open flame and special effects pyrotechnics, amplification of sound outside of Nathan Phillips Square's amplification schedule policy, "gated or ticketed" events and engagement in sports demonstrations without the approval of Council.

Various event organizers are requesting permission to engage in these activities outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dates for Events and Permission Requested

Date	Event	Organization	Requesting Permission
Ongoing	Sacred Fire Ceremonies in the Spirit Garden	Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre	Use of open flame as part of sacred fires in the Spirit Garden
October 1-7, 2025	Nuit Blanche	City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool. Special effects pyrotechnics.
October 9-12, 2025	Diwali – Festival of Lights	Global Arts, Cultural and Heritage Foundation	Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool. Special effects pyrotechnics.
October 14-17, 2025	Ride to Defeat Diabetes	Breakthrough T1D	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
October 18-19, 2025	Toronto Waterfront Marathon	Canada Running Series Inc.	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance

			(VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool.
October 24-26, 2025	All Charity Festival	Ajiwo International	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol.
November 3, 2025	Treaties Recognition Week	Strategic Protocol and External Relations City of Toronto	Use of open flame as part of their event production.
November 8, 2025	Indigenous Veterans Day	Strategic Protocol and External Relations City of Toronto	Use of open flame as part of their event production.
November 9, 2025	Hockey Hall of Fame	Hockey Hall of Fame	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol.
November 24-December 31, 2025	Cavalcade of Lights	City Cultural Events Production City of Toronto	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool. Special effects pyrotechnics.
January/ February 2026	Toronto Spring Festival	Toronto Spring Festival	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol.

			Place objects in the pool. Special effects pyrotechnics.
January/ February 2026	Leaf's Open Practice	Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool. Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
January/ February 2026	Go Skiing Go Snowboarding	The Ontario Snow Resorts Association	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool. Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
February 6-8, 2026	Team Canada Fanfest	Canadian Olympic Committee	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Place objects in the pool.
February/ March 2026	Eid Prayer and Festival	Muslim Association of Canada	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of their event production. Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
March 2026	Celebrate Toronto	Celebrate Toronto	Engage in sports demonstrations. Use of open flame as part of

			their event production. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Special effects pyrotechnics.
March 2026	National Day of Observance for COVID-19	Strategic Protocol and External Relations City of Toronto	Use of open flame as part of their event production. Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
April 2026	Clean Toronto Together	Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto	Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy (9:00 am – 4:30 pm).
April 17-18, 2026	Under Armour Toronto 10k	Canada Running Series Inc.	Solicit donations. Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol. Engage in sports demonstrations.
April 2026	Journey to Freedom	Vietnamese Association, Toronto	Solicit donations.
April 26, 2026	Khalsa Day	Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwara Council	Solicit donations. Engage in sports demonstrations.

Next Steps

If the exemptions are approved by Council, the issuance of permits and exemptions for the events listed in this report will be conditional on submission of all required documentation and permissions by the event organizers to City staff for review and approval. These actions would be in compliance with all other related City policies, procedures, and criteria, and would follow regular business practices.

Staff will monitor on-site event operations to ensure event organizers' compliance with the exemptions granted in a manner that maintains and adheres to the required procedures and guidelines outlined as conditions in the executed permit agreement.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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