

Use of Nathan Phillips Square for Various Events – October 1, 2026- April 30, 2027

Date: May 11, 2026
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 the 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, 2026, to April 30, 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto, Breakthrough T1D, Canada Running Series, Global Arts Cultural & Heritage Foundation, Ahora Canada Community Connections, Ajiwa International, Toronto Spring Festival, 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, Ajiwa International, Toronto

Spring Festival, Journey to Freedom, and Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwara Council to solicit donations in support of their organization.

3. City Council grant permission to the City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto, Breakthrough T1D, Canada Running Series, Global Arts Cultural & Heritage Foundation, Ajiwa International, Toronto Spring Festival, 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, on November 18, is requesting audio amplification from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm to present the sunrise ceremony and speeches as part of the First Management of Council event.
- Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto, in April 2027, is requesting audio amplification in April 2027 (Date TBD) from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for speeches as part of the Clean Toronto Together event.

Third-Party Community Produced Events:

- Breakthrough T1D on October 13-16, 2026, is requesting audio amplification on October 14-15 from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm 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.

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 by the City's preferred audio company, Production Service Industries (PSI), throughout the event to ensure compliance with schedules.

5. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto, Breakthrough T1D, Canada Running Series, Global Arts Cultural and Heritage Foundation, Ahora Canada Community Connections, Ajiwa International, Strategic Protocol and External Relations City of Toronto, Toronto Spring Festival, 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, [Ontario Fire Code 2.4.4.4](#), from Toronto Fire Services.
6. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto, Canada Running Series, Toronto Spring Festival, and Celebrate Toronto to place objects in the reflecting pool.

7. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto, Global Arts Cultural & 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 the applicant securing a permit from Toronto Fire Services to discharge fireworks under [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 466, Fireworks](#).
8. City Council grant permission to City Cultural Events Production - City of Toronto permission to cover the City Hall windows.
9. City Council require 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 as outlined in [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 441, Fees and Charges](#).

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 events and the approval of requested exemptions to Chapter 636 and to the 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 provided in Chapter 441, will also be applied.

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

DECISION HISTORY

On March 25-26, 2026, the City Council adopted [TE29.25](#), granting various requested exemptions for the use of NPS from May 1 to September 30, 2026.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.TE29.25>

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, 2026, to April 30, 2027.

- City Cultural Events Production, City of Toronto's "Nuit Blanche".
- Breakthrough T1D's "Ride to Defeat Diabetes".
- Canada Running Series' "Toronto Waterfront Marathon".
- Global Arts, Cultural & Heritage Foundation's "Diwali – Festival of Lights".
- Ahora Canada Community Connections' "Day of the Dead".

- Ajiwa International's "All Charity Event".
- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto's "Indigenous Veterans' Day".
- Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto's "First Management of Council".
- City Cultural Events Production, City of Toronto's "Cavalcade of Lights".
- Toronto Spring Festival's "SPARK The Lunar Festival".
- Celebrate Toronto's "Celebrate Toronto".
- Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto's "Clean Toronto Together".
- Vietnamese Association, Toronto's "Journey to Freedom".
- Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwara Council's "Khalsa Day Celebrations".

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 amplification schedule policy, "gated or ticketed" events, engagement in sports demonstrations, and covering City Hall's windows without the approval of Council.

Various event organizers are requesting permission to conduct the activities outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Dates for Events and Permission Requested

Date	Event	Organization	Requesting Permission
October 2-11	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 Cover the City Hall windows and the building
October 13-16	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

			<p>Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy</p> <p>Audio amplification on October 14 and 15: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm</p>
Oct 16-18	Toronto Waterfront Marathon	Canada Running Series	<p>Solicit donations</p> <p>Engage in sports demonstrations</p> <p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p> <p>Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol</p> <p>Place objects in the pool</p>
October 21-25	Diwali – Festival of Lights	Global Arts, Cultural & Heritage Foundation	<p>Engage in sports demonstrations</p> <p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p> <p>Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol</p> <p>Place objects in the pool</p> <p>Special effects pyrotechnics</p>
October 31- November 1	Day of the Dead	Ahora Canada Community Connections	<p>Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol</p> <p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p>
November 6-7	Ajiwa International	All Charity Event	<p>Solicit donations</p> <p>Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol</p> <p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p>
November 8	Indigenous Veterans Day	Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto	<p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p>
November 18	First Management of Council	Strategic Protocol and External Relations, City of Toronto	<p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p> <p>Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy</p> <p>Audio amplification on November 18: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm</p>
November 23 – January 11	Cavalcade of Lights	City Cultural Events Production, City of Toronto	<p>Solicit donations</p> <p>Engage in sports demonstrations</p> <p>Use of open flame as part of their event production</p> <p>Operate a beer and wine Vintners</p>

			Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Place objects in the pool Special effects pyrotechnics
February, 2027	SPARK The Lunar New Year	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
March, 2027	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 Use of open flame as part of their event production Special effects pyrotechnics
April, 2027	Clean Toronto Together	Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto	Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy Audio amplification: (date in April TBD) 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
April, 2027	Journey to Freedom	Vietnamese Association, Toronto	Solicit donations
April, 2027	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 the event organizers submitting all required documentation and permissions to City staff for review and approval. These actions would comply with all other related City policies, procedures, and criteria and follow regular business practices.

Staff will monitor on-site event operations to ensure that event organizers comply with the granted exemptions, while maintaining the required procedures and guidelines outlined in the executed permit agreement.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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