

Staff Report



Community Services Department

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REPORT TO: Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

DATE OF MEETING: May 12, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Gloria MacNeil, Director of Enforcement, 519-783-8516

PREPARED BY: Gloria MacNeil, Director of Enforcement, 519-783-8516

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward(s) 9, 10

DATE OF REPORT: April 16, 2025

REPORT NO.: CSD-2025-139

SUBJECT: Noise Exemption – Downtown Special Events

RECOMMENDATION:

That an exemption to Chapter 450 (Noise) of the City of Kitchener Municipal Code be granted for all Downtown Special Events

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Special Events staff have begun organizing the events calendar for the 2025 season which will be held in various locations throughout the downtown core and Victoria Park.
- Many of the scheduled events will include amplified music and/or elevated noise levels, however all events are scheduled to end by 11pm.
- Events will take place throughout the remainder of the 2025 calendar year.

BACKGROUND:

The special events office annually coordinates a series of events in and around the downtown area, including Carl Zehr Square and Victoria Park. The City's primary focus is to provide events that will create urban vitality and attract people to the downtown core. The type of events varies, however many involve amplified music or other forms of noise.

REPORT:

Special Events and BIA staff are excited to welcome back a wide range of concerts, events and festivals for the 2025 event season, from well-loved favourites to exciting new offerings.

In previous years, Special Events staff typically created a list of events for the coming year which was then presented to Council, identifying the events requiring a noise exemption. Producing a list of finalized events so early in the season presented challenges as often events had not been finalized, or new opportunities came up throughout the season which had not been included in the formalized list attached to the report. Last year, the report submitted to Council recommended a change to the process which outlined any event taking place in the downtown core or Victoria Park which is lead or supported by City or BIA staff, be captured as part of the Downtown Special Events noise exemption for 2025 and the list of scheduled events would instead be posted on the City's website where it could be updated as event information unfolded and became available.

This approach worked well and provided staff the flexibility to add or shift events throughout the season as needed. Staff will be taking the same approach in 2025 requesting a noise exemption for all City or BIA supported events, agreeing to maintain an updated list of events on the City's website as they are approved.

Special Events and BIA staff will provide By-law Enforcement staff with a contact for each event being held to ensure there is a point of contact should an issue arise that needs to be addressed.

Over the years, By-law Enforcement and Special Events staff have worked with nearby residents and neighbourhood groups to discuss concerns and to put controls in place to manage and mitigate issues. As a result, we have had nominal complaints.

Staff recognize the increase of residential condos which have been occupied in the downtown and will continue to communicate event information to owners/property managers and residents regarding these events and notify them in advance of dates, times and type of events that will be taking place within the downtown and Victoria Park

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Staff in Special Events and Communications have developed a detailed communications plan to build awareness of these events throughout the Downtown and across the City. In addition, a vast number of volunteers and external stakeholders are involved in the wide array of events.

APPROVED BY: Michael May, DCAO