

Attachment 1

VAUGHAN MUNICIPAL EVENTS STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(2024-2028)

March 14, 2024

Prepared for the City of Vaughan by
urbanMetrics inc.



SUMMARY

Public gatherings, whether for celebration, reflection, enrichment or commemoration are an integral part of the human experience. The City of Vaughan is committed to ensuring that residents and visitors to our city are afforded the opportunity to gather safely and securely at venues which reflect the expectations of audiences and event organizers. When it comes to events, the City wears many different hats, including, risk assessment, by-law compliance, event permitting, facility/equipment rentals, promotions/communications, event programming and production.

On March 21, 2023, the City of Vaughan (the City, Vaughan) approved the 2022-2026 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan. The Plan provides an agenda which includes key priorities that will support the needs of the residents and businesses, defined as follows:

- Transportation and Mobility
- City Building
- Environmental Sustainability
- Active, Engaged and Inclusive Communities
- Community Safety & Well-being
- Economic Prosperity & Job Creation
- Service Excellence and Accountability.

The **Vaughan Municipal Events Strategy & Implementation Plan** has been developed with these City-wide priorities in mind. This document is intended to ensure that Vaughan is both a leader and a catalyst for building strong community connections, promoting social and cultural exchanges and championing the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion in all corners of our city.

In consultation with Vaughan City Staff, elected officials, event organizers, and the public, The Vaughan Municipal Event Plan provides **21 Action Items** for the City of Vaughan to implement over the next 5 years. These Action Items, including implantation specifics are detailed in the full report.

The Action Items in this document are intended to support **5 Strategic Goals** leading to a diverse array of events that bring residents together. The actions are intended to unlock the organizational strengths and creative talents of Vaughan Staff, while simultaneously empowering local organizations to grow and develop their own best-in-class events.

Vaughan Staff will continue to ensure that all events are executed with public health and community safety as a top-priority, and programmed to support, reflect and showcase the diverse interests that make Vaughan a great place to thrive.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY?

The purpose of the Strategy is to guide internal and external event organizers through a timely and streamlined process for hosting an event in the City of Vaughan, including '*City-led*' (produced by City of Vaughan) and '*Community-led*' events (produced by residents, non-profit organizations, and businesses). It provides a road map for how the City can modernize its event permitting processes and empower organizations to deliver safe, best-in-class events which support the diverse needs of our residents.

Simply put: this strategy is intended to help people in all corners of Vaughan to gather and celebrate, safely.

APPROACH

The Municipal Event Strategy was developed following months of extensive consultation and research. It builds on the Current State Assessment Report (February 2023) that summarized Vaughan's current event offerings and processes and highlighted the City's strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities, and challenges when it comes to events. It also integrates the insights of staff, elected officials, local event producers, and most importantly, residents of Vaughan.

12

1-on-1 MEETINGS
WITH CURRENT AND
PAST MEMBERS OF
COUNCIL



158

PUBLIC SURVEY
RESPONSES



9

ROUNDTABLE AND SMALL
GROUP MEETINGS
WITH

36

STAFF MEMBERS
ACROSS

15

DEPARTMENTS

34

STAFF SURVEY
RESPONSES



WHAT WE HEARD FROM EVENT STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH THE PROCESS

Vaughan has the right attitude and energy to become a leader in municipal events.

The current process for facilitating (and municipal permitting of) Community-led events continues to demonstrate opportunities for improvement.

Creative and strategic promotion of events is important to make sure events are clearly communicated and well-attended.

Events are typically attended by “family” audiences.

As the community continues to grow and change there is a need to incorporate a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) lens in event planning and programming.

City staff resources are currently stretched thin, especially during peak event season. Going forward, resources will be challenged as we return to more in-person events.

All events carry risk. The City of Vaughan is steadfastly committed to ensuring risks, including public health, safety, and compliance, are managed responsibly.

New “flagship” facilities and venues such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) and North Maple Regional Park provide an opportunity for the City of Vaughan to showcase their capacity to lead, support, and foster exceptional event experiences.

VISION

Vaughan supports and celebrates events that are diverse, safe, welcoming and accessible for all who live, visit, play and work in our community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vaughan supports CITY-LED and COMMUNITY-LED events which are:



Impactful

Events are fun, insightful or memorable.



Unifying

Events build community bonds and facilitate a sense of belonging for all residents.



Barrier Free

Events are safe, welcoming and fully-accessible for all audiences.



Affordable

City-led events are free. Community-led events are encouraged to provide affordable ticket options.



Representative

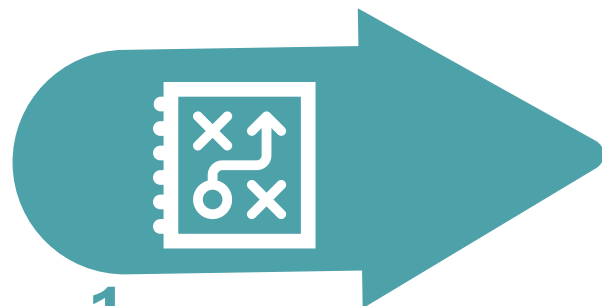
Events celebrate Vaughan's diversity and promote inclusion.



Collaborative

Events provide a platform for partnership and collaboration between City event staff and community organizations, including private event planners and organizers.

STRATEGIC GOALS



1.

Clarify roles & responsibilities



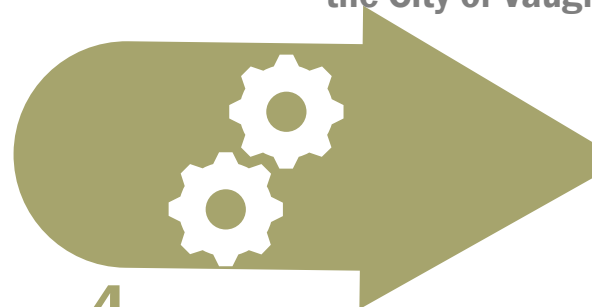
2.

Streamline the event approval process



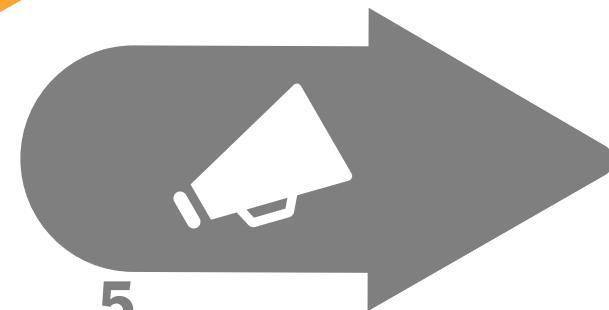
3.

Support new and existing event operators in running great events



4.

Allocate resources to effectively and efficiently maximize impact



5.

Continue to actively communicate with and invite organizers to host in the City of Vaughan



Goal #1: Clarify internal responsibilities and event priorities.

The first Goal is about clarifying internal responsibilities and event priorities. The events process is a system of moving parts that involves input from various departments. The success of this process relies upon all internal parties knowing exactly what they should be doing, when they should be doing it, and what the event priorities are at any given time. City staff broadly recognize the value and importance of a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities to support an efficient and effective event delivery process.



Goal #2: Streamline the event application and approval process.

The second Goal is about improving the process of applying for and approving events. This process can be complicated and multi-faceted and often requires a fair amount of knowledge and navigation. Simplifying and clarifying this process will make the events process more manageable for event organizers as well as more efficient for event reviewers and approvers.



Goal #3: Empower new and existing event organizers to run great events.

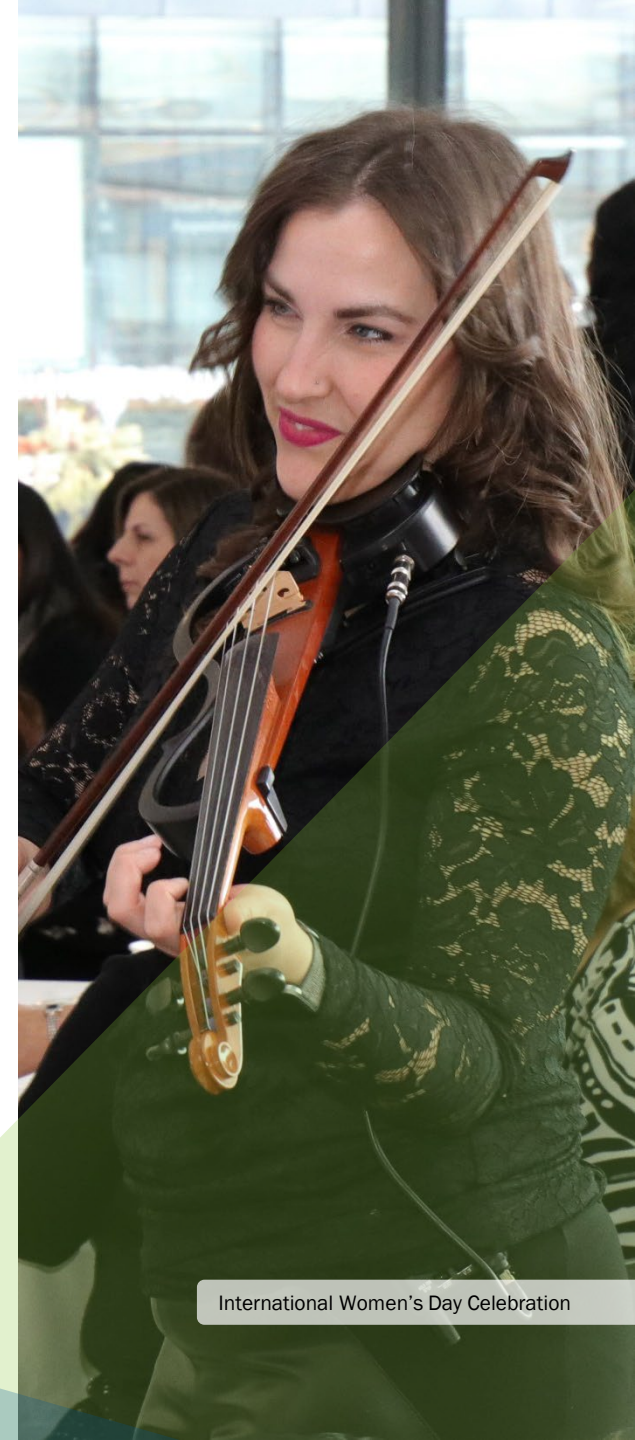
The third Goal is about building event planning capacity amongst community event organizers. The City is motivated to recognize more causes through various types of events or celebrations but doing so will require more collaborations and partnerships with existing as well as first-time community event organizers. To equip these event organizers, tools and resources that provide training and guidance must be invested in.

Goal #4: Allocate resources effectively and efficiently to maximize impact.

The fourth Goal is about strategically allocating resources and ensuring that there is enough time and human resource capacity to achieve the City's event goals. A well-defined process for event permitting will ensure that existing resources can stay on-task rather than addressing or rectifying issues which need last minute support. Going forward, this will require a combination of new and/or modified city-led procedures, new staff positions, investments in new event-related assets, new ways of managing workflow, event scheduling, planning, permitting and enforcement.

Goal #5: Continue to actively communicate with and invite organizers to host in the City of Vaughan.

The fifth and final Goal is about making sure residents and the broader community are aware of upcoming events in the City as well as the opportunities and benefits of hosting future events in Vaughan as outlined in the Vaughan Destination Master Plan. There are many channels used to promote city-led events, but more opportunities should be explored to promote all events hosted in the City of Vaughan. Further communication channels and relationship management techniques should continue to be utilized to clearly position Vaughan as an ideal place to host events.



ACTION ITEMS

Action Items are the specific tasks that will help the City of Vaughan actualize the Vision Statement and Goals outlined in this Strategy.

The 21 Action Items identified in this plan vary in their complexity, cost, timelines, and internal roles/responsibilities. The action items are structured within six functional areas, including:

- City Procedures,
- Information & Technology,
- Staff Resourcing,
- Logistics & Coordination,
- Engagement & Empowerment, and
- Promotion



Canada Day

CITY PROCEDURES

1. Develop and implement an event classification framework.
2. Review and update the Corporate Policies for Events and Corporate Protocols for Events.
3. Formalize and implement a SEAT framework.
4. Adopt a fast-tracked protocol for last-minute event requests.
5. Ensure that a diversity of causes, events, and commemorations are recognized and communicated appropriately.
6. Define the City's responsibilities when hosting and supporting events.

INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY

7. Explore a modernized permit application portal that guides users through their specific event requirements and facilitates approvals.
8. Build a database of venue options with tags and characteristics to quickly determine which venues are appropriate for a given event.
9. Explore developing an accessible calendar of availability for various City-owned venues, resources, and assets.
10. Develop a detailed database containing all historical event information to inform an annual Year in Review document.

STAFF RESOURCING

11. Monitor and increase new staff position(s) to support successful Community-led events, as required.
12. Monitor and increase resources as needed for key City departments that provide event support (i.e., Recreation Services, Public Works, By-Law, Communications, Marketing and Engagement, Facility Management).



Lunar New Year

LOGISTICS & COORDINATION

- 13. Allow for automatic date holds for recurring, successful events.
- 14. Increase minimum application deadline to 30 or 45 days, depending on the type of event.
- 15. Establish a formalized post-event debriefing process.

ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT

- 16. Offer pre-event consultations for first-time event organizers.
- 17. Create a comprehensive toolkit to guide event organizers through the event approval and planning process.
- 18. Run an annual event workshop to educate event organizers on the rules, processes and protocols for hosting events in Vaughan.

PROMOTION

- 19. Create increased opportunities to showcase and promote Community-led events through the City’s communications channels.
- 20. Promote Vaughan as an “events city” to attract more Signature and Grand events.
- 21. Maintain an improved, up-to-date, and public calendar of all upcoming events in Vaughan.

CONCLUSION

Community gatherings – *events* - play an integral role in the health and well-being of our residents. This Strategy was carried out to help the City of Vaughan make small but important refinements in the delivery and oversight of public-facing events that celebrate the very best of what Vaughan has to offer.

This Strategy is focused on both City-led and Community-led events and provides a detailed plan for how the City of Vaughan can make small but important improvements to ensure the delivery of safe and meaningful events that draw residents closer together.

The recommendations in this Strategy were based on extensive research and consultation with key stakeholders that represent various perspectives around municipal events. These perspectives informed all elements of the Strategy and helped define a road map towards an event landscape in Vaughan that builds on existing strengths, tackles challenges, and takes advantage of opportunities.

Achieving the goals set out in this Strategy will require buy-in and commitment from both internal and external stakeholders. Without this, the full potential of Vaughan's events will not be reached, and opportunities will be left untapped. But with the right dedication and resourcing, the City of Vaughan is well-positioned to become a shining example of event excellence with a full calendar of events which are inclusive, diverse and exciting for residents and visitors.



