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Item No. 13.1.2
Community Planning &
Economic Development Standing Committee
September 19, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Framework for Major Events

ORIGIN

September 29, 2022 Halifax Regional Council motion (item 16.1) MOVED by Mayor Mike Savage, seconded by Councillor Stoddard
THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report outlining the benefits and challenges of developing a framework to establish and enforce standards, policies, and procedures for major events that define expectations for organizers hosting events in HRM, as well as what organizers can expect from the municipality and local community.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Halifax has successfully hosted many major events over time. There are risks and potential for improved values-based outcomes associated with major events in areas such as accessibility, diversity & inclusion, & safety. Some risks are mitigated or improvements are addressed through existing mechanisms. Further improvements could be made with better role clarity among stakeholders and introduction of cohesive guidelines. A proposed framework, developed alongside the Regional Events Strategy, would aim to streamline processes, enhance accessibility, diversity and inclusion, and safety, and position Halifax as a leading event destination. Despite potential challenges such as increased regulations and financial implications, this framework will provide clear guidelines to ensure events are secure, inclusive, and beneficial for the community.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council request the CAO work with Discover Halifax to develop a major event policy framework.

BACKGROUND

In September 2022, Halifax Regional Council requested a staff report on the potential development of a framework to establish and enforce standards, policies, and procedures for major events that define expectations for organizers hosting events in HRM, Halifax Regional Municipality Administrative Order Number 2014-020-GOV defines “Major Hosting Event” as, “a national or international event that typically does not recur annually in the same location and is awarded to a host destination through a competitive bidding process.”

In keeping with their agreement with the municipality, Discover Halifax led the review of major event guidelines, through consultant, GM Event Inc. and working with municipal staff. They undertook the work to understand what systems and contracts are currently in place for major events to receive financial and operational support from the Municipality, to understand the perspectives and experiences of the major event stakeholders in Halifax, and to conduct an engagement process. The engagement process involved the following methods and activities:

- A survey of major event stakeholders, which collected input on the major event policies and practices in Halifax;
- Two focus groups and 1:1 interviews with major event stakeholders, which provided in-depth insights on the major event policies and practices in Halifax; and
- A jurisdictional scan including discussions with municipal event divisions in Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Fredericton and Calgary (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

Halifax has hosted and continues to host a variety of major events, such as the 2024 Juno Awards, 2023 North American Indigenous Games, 2023 IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship and 2022 49er, World Canoe and Para Canoe Championships. Other past major events include the 2019 Memorial Cup, and the 2011 Canada Winter Games. Halifax was also the host city for SailGP in 2024, the only Canadian city to host this global event.

Halifax's position in the Canadian major event landscape is influenced by several factors, such as its size, location, infrastructure, capacity, reputation, and competitiveness. Some of the strengths and opportunities of Halifax as a major event host were noted by GM Event Inc as follows:

- The unique and attractive identity and brand as a historic, coastal, and cultural city;
- The strategic and accessible location as a gateway to North America and Europe;
- Existing and planned infrastructure and facilities for major events, such as the Halifax Convention Centre, the Scotiabank Centre, the Wanderers Grounds, Lake Banook and offshore waters that serve as natural venues;
- The experienced and skilled workforce and volunteers for major event planning and delivery;
- Strong and diverse partnerships and collaborations among major event stakeholders and Sectors; and
- The potential and ambition to host more major events in the future.

Major event roles and responsibilities in Halifax are currently distributed and shared among HRM and other major event stakeholders, depending on the type, scale, and scope of the major event and the venue.

The municipal Major Hosting Events program supports organizations bidding on the rights to host major events and supports programs, activities and services specific to the delivery of a major event being hosted in Halifax Regional Municipality. Events must be of a size and scope sufficient to draw tourists to the Municipality's communities, attract significant media exposure, nationally and globally. In Canada, major

events are defined as, “large-scale, one-time or recurring events that provide opportunities for significant impact on the host city or region in terms of economic, image, social, sport/cultural and sustainability outcomes. Examples of major events include international sporting events, cultural festivals, major concerts, conventions, and trade shows. Major events can generate various benefits for the host city or region, such as increased tourism, spending, employment, media exposure, community engagement, and civic pride”.

The Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) typically makes recommendations to Regional Council regarding applications for funding for large-scale special events within the municipality that support and generate economic and tourism development, pursuant to the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV. The committee reviews and recommends approximately \$1,000,000 in grants to external event organizers annually. Event grants are subject to contracts that set out expectations of event organizers associated with event delivery.

The Special Events Task Force (SETF) assists major events in the planning phase. It is comprised of representatives from various municipal, provincial and federal departments and provides information and assistance for event organizers navigating policies, procedures, and best practices concerning events within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The above noted motion of Council was made following the surfacing of allegations of sexual assault associated with events following World Juniors hockey tournaments in 2003 and 2018, among others and concerns on how allegations were handled by Hockey Canada. In addition to this, there are evolving expectations on major events with respect to accessibility, diversity & inclusion, environmental impact and safety, among other areas. There have been various advances in different spheres that will also improve conditions related to major events, for example relative to minor sport, with the establishment of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC). This said, the municipality’s approach to mitigating risk or seeking values-based outcomes associated with events has been on an event by event basis, through funding contracts, staff discussion with event organizers, participation on event related Boards and committees, and coordination through SETF.

Jurisdictional Scan

To understand the major event landscape in Canada and the best practices in policy development and implementation, a jurisdictional review was conducted of six Canadian cities that have hosted or are planning to host major events in the near future. These cities are Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, and Fredericton. The review focused specifically on the policies and practices related to the standards for event organizers to ensure that events are safe and inclusive for all (Attachment 1).

The review revealed that there is no common approach to policy development related to major event standards and practices. This is not surprising given that there is little federal or provincial/territorial direction related to safety of major event delivery.

From the jurisdictional scan it was clear that this work was a topic that has been discussed in all major event cities in Canada, but not addressed with a framework. Most event cities that participated asked to review HRM’s findings afterwards as they planned on creating similar frameworks. As the municipality continues to grow and attract more and larger events, set standards would improve the ability to showcase the municipality as an event hub that values diversity & inclusion, sustainability, accessibility and safety and wellness for event staff, volunteers and attendees. It should clearly define expectations for major event organizers to adhere to the professional standards of Halifax’s venues and public spaces (e.g..Lake Banook, the Halifax Convention Centre and Scotiabank Arena).

Benefits and Challenges of a Major Event Policy Framework

An events framework can play a crucial role in regulating event organizers by providing a structured set of guidelines and standards that they must adhere to when planning and hosting events. There are multiple benefits for HRM to establish an events framework and help regulate event organizers:

- **Licensing and Permits:** By offering a streamlined permissions process, HRM ensures that event organizers are well-prepared and qualified. This not only enhances the quality of events but also fosters a sense of responsibility and community pride among organizers.
- **Safety Standards:** Commitment to safety is reflected in the encouragement of best practices such as effective crowd management and thorough emergency preparedness. These guidelines are designed to safeguard the well-being of all attendees and staff, creating a secure environment where everyone can enjoy the event worry-free. We may choose to join and champion the implementation of best practices through adjustments to SETF and membership in industry associations.
- **Environmental Guidelines:** Implementing standards related to waste management, noise pollution, and environmental impact can help minimize the negative effects of events on the environment and local communities.
- **Financial Accountability:** Requiring event organizers to meet financial obligations such as obtaining insurance coverage, paying taxes, and providing refunds when necessary can help protect attendees and vendors from financial losses.
- **Accessibility:** By upholding strong accessibility standards, we ensure that every event is open and welcoming to all individuals, including those with disabilities.
- **Ethical Guidelines:** Establishing ethical guidelines for event organizers regarding issues such as fair pricing, transparent advertising, and respectful treatment of attendees and participants can help maintain the integrity of the events industry.
- **Education and Training:** Discover Halifax offers educational programs that equip event organizers with essential knowledge in risk management, legal compliance, and industry best practices. This not only enhances professional development but also elevates the overall quality of events.

Challenges

Implementing a framework for events within a municipality can create several barriers for event organizers. These barriers can stem from the need to align with predefined values, adhere to stricter guidelines, and navigate increased complexity in planning and execution. The key challenges with creating a major event framework:

- **Increased Regulations:** frameworks often come with stricter guidelines and regulations that organizers must follow, which can be more stringent than standard event planning practices.
- **Administrative Burden:** Complying with these guidelines can increase the administrative workload, requiring more documentation, approvals, and adherence to protocols.
- **Financial Implications:** Implementing sustainable practices, ensuring accessibility, and meeting other value-based criteria can increase costs for event organizers.
- **Additional Planning Requirements:** Organizers must consider additional factors such as environmental impact, community engagement, and inclusivity, which can complicate the planning process.
- **Coordination with Multiple Stakeholders:** Ensuring that the event aligns with the municipality's values often requires coordination with various municipal departments and community groups, adding layers of complexity to the planning process.
- **Time Constraints:** The need for more comprehensive planning and adherence to values-based criteria can lengthen approval processes, making it challenging to meet tight deadlines.
- **Extended Planning Cycles:** Organizers might need to start planning much earlier to accommodate the additional requirements, impacting the agility and responsiveness of event planning.

- **Reduced Operational Flexibility:** Adhering to a strict values-based framework can limit the flexibility of organizers to adapt plans on the fly, which is often necessary in dynamic event environments.
- **Rigid Frameworks:** The values-based framework might be rigid, not allowing for easy adjustments based on the unique needs or unexpected challenges of a particular event.
- **Higher Accountability:** Organizers are held to higher standards of accountability and must be transparent about how their events align with the values framework, which can be daunting and expose them to public scrutiny.
- **Public Scrutiny:** There may be increased scrutiny from the public and media, which can pressure organizers to meet high standards and address any perceived shortcomings.

Staff recommend moving forward to the next stage of developing the framework. A framework can be created that will give event organizers the information, tools and supports they need to help ensure major events in Halifax are secure and welcoming. It will also clarify the expectations for everyone involved in major events, including members of SEAC and SETF and residents. Major events should be led by groups that understand these challenges and are capable of ensuring diversity, sustainability, safe work practices and customer experience are planned well in advance. Based on the consultant analysis, staff recommend proceeding with a values-based approach to the framework (Attachment 1).

Discover Halifax is currently in the early stages of creating a Regional Events Strategy alongside HRM, Events East and Events Nova Scotia. Staff propose that the framework creation should begin when the Event Strategy is completed. This will allow staff to ensure the framework is aligned with the vision of the new Strategy. The next stage of the framework will determine what guidelines are placed on organizers and what HRM would have the ability to enforce in order for organizers to receive funds. Discover Halifax would lead the development of the framework in concert with HRM staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the Municipality for the creation of this framework. Discover Halifax would fund the completion of the Framework for Major Events.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate Low. The actions in this report would mitigate risk factors by ensuring Major Events are adhering to specific values and ensure that their actions align with ethical standards, avoiding exploitation or harm to the Municipality as a Major Event destination.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Various 1:1 interviews, focus groups and a survey was conducted including event professionals and event volunteers representing non-profit, private and government agencies.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVE

Regional Council may choose not to direct the CAO to create a Major Event Policy Framework but rather to retain the status quo with no Major Event Policy Framework. The municipality would maintain the status quo and react to situations as they arise which may result in changes to hosting requirements and funding conditions from event to event. This is not recommended as it is not as responsive an approach as the proposed framework, to the current values of the municipality and the desire to ensure that the risks arising from major events are mitigated and the event is inclusive and delivers legacies that can benefit all residents.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39:

Purposes of Municipality

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Municipal expenditures

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
- (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or \
- (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 Halifax Major Event Policy Framework report, GM Event Inc

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Halifax Major Event Policy Framework

GM Event Inc.
March 2024

GM SPORTS • EVENTS • STRATEGIES

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ABOUT GM EVENT INC.

GM Event Inc. is a Halifax-based consulting firm that works with host cities, host venues, host organizations and event rights holders on the development of strategy and making positive impacts from major events and sport tourism.

Major Event Policy Framework for Halifax

Final Report

Project Background

Halifax has been successful in the attraction and delivery of major events. This document presents a major event policy framework for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) that aims to enhance the economic, social, and cultural benefits of hosting major events in the region.

The project was initiated by a resolution of the Halifax Regional Council on September 29, 2022, which directed staff to develop a policy framework for major events that would address the risks and challenges of hosting major events and provide clear and consistent guidance for event organizers and partners. The resolution also requested that staff consult with relevant stakeholders and conduct a jurisdictional review of best practices in other Canadian cities.

To ensure that major events are safe and inclusive, Halifax Regional Council unanimously passed the following resolution:

“That Halifax Regional Council request a staff report outlining the benefits and challenges of developing a framework to establish and enforce standards, policies, and procedures for major events that define expectations for organizers hosting events in HRM, as well as what organizers can expect from the municipality and local community.”

The problem to be solved by this project is the lack of a coherent and comprehensive policy framework for major events in HRM, which may present risks for the municipality, its partners and potentially residents. The project plan and methodology involved the following steps:

- Conducting a jurisdictional review of major event policies and practices in other Canadian cities
- Mapping the major event landscape and stakeholder ecosystem in HRM
- Engaging with key stakeholders, including event organizers, funders, venues and community groups
- Analyzing the findings and identifying the gaps, issues, and opportunities for improvement
- Developing and evaluating policy options and recommendations

Major Event Landscape in Canada

In Canada, major events are defined as large-scale, one-time or recurring events that provide opportunities for significant impact on the host city or region in terms of economic, image, social, sport/cultural and sustainability outcomes. Examples of major events include international sporting events, cultural festivals, major concerts, conventions, and trade shows¹. Major events can generate various benefits for the host city or region, such as increased tourism, spending, employment, media exposure, community engagement, and civic pride. However, major events

¹ [Halifax Regional Municipality Administrative Order Number 2014-020-GOV](#) defines “Major Hosting Event” as “a national or international event that typically does not recur annually in the same location and is awarded to a host destination through a competitive bidding process.”

also entail various costs and risks, such as public investment, infrastructure development, environmental impact, security, and disruption.

To understand the major event landscape in Canada and the best practices in policy development and implementation, a jurisdictional review was conducted of six Canadian cities that have hosted or are planning to host major events in the near future. These cities are Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, and Fredericton. The review focused specifically on the policies and practices related to the standards for event organizers to ensure that events are safe and inclusive for all.

The review revealed that there is no common approach to policy development related to major event standards and practices. This is not surprising given that there is little federal or provincial/territorial direction related to safety of major event delivery and proactively prevent and respond to risks associated with major events in Canada.

A few highlights of the jurisdictional scan include:

Calgary

The City of Calgary and Tourism Calgary have developed a set of guiding principles to support Festivals and Events through adherence to the following principles:

Value - The City of Calgary recognizes the contribution made by Festivals and Events to the quality of life and in building complete communities.

Open and Transparent Evaluation Process - The City of Calgary will participate in an Event Advisory Committee to evaluate, assess, measure and recommend eligible events and festivals for subsidized City of Calgary support and services to ensure equitable and respectful decisions for all involved parties.

Community Input and Engagement - Membership of the Event Advisory Committee will consist of representatives from the Calgary Sports Council, Calgary Sport Tourism Authority, Federation of Calgary Business Improvement Zones, Tourism Calgary, Calgary Arts Development Authority, Calgary Economic Development and Administration.

Responsibility - The City of Calgary will assume the responsibility for providing safe and as it determines, appropriate services, equipment, facilities and sites and will negotiate a Service Standard Agreement with each eligible event or festival to articulate the level of City services required to support these activities based on a technical review of all Festivals and Events by the Interdepartmental Event team on applications approved by the Event Advisory Committee.

Sustainability - The City of Calgary, in collaboration with community partners, will develop, and be involved in implementing and updating a bi-annual community-wide strategic and business plan for the evolution and growth of Festivals and Events.

Accessibility - Festival and Event opportunities will be accessible to all Calgarians regardless of their geographic location, affiliation and demographics.

Diversity of Opportunities - Festivals and Events will be eligible to receive support and services whether they are local, international, new, emerging or established.

Edmonton

The City of Edmonton recognizes the significant role festivals and events play in the vibrancy of our community and works closely with Explore Edmonton in the attraction of major events. Edmonton offers a wide variety of festivals and events, spanning all artistic genres and sporting activities that contribute to the city's quality of life.

Edmonton has made a concerted effort to increase community involvement, especially of equity-deserving groups through the hosting of major sport, entertainment and cultural events in the city.

As a direct result of the Edmonton bid to be a Canadian host city for the FIFA World Cup 2026, a report on the human rights commitment was developed based on the standards of FIFA and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This work addressed several potential risk areas including labour rights, land acquisition and housing rights, discrimination, security and players' rights.

Toronto

The City of Toronto has guidance for the planning of events in the city. This series of policies and planning tools provides organizers with clear direction at all stages of the event acquisition process (bid phase) through to the delivery of the event and includes such topics as:

- Accessibility
- Alcohol Service
- Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy
- Emergency Planning
- Fireworks, Open Air Burning & Special Effects
- First Aid/Onsite Medical Services
- Insurance
- Permitting (Various)
- Street Events
- TTC (Public Transportation)
- Water (Potable, Wastewater & Fire Hydrants)

This website resource also includes the *City of Toronto Bidding and Hosting Strategy for Significant Special Events*. This resource classifies events into three categories with the following definitions:

- **Mega Events** are global-level events that typically occur on a four-year cycle, using significant purpose-built infrastructure, generating city-wide hotel visits and international media coverage. These events require significant city resources including financial and human resources. Examples include Olympic Games (Winter or Summer), World Expo, FIFA World Cup.
- **Category A** events are significant special events hosted in rotating jurisdictions on a cyclical basis, generating considerable economic benefits for the host region, and requiring

substantial coordinating efforts from the host government. Recent examples include WorldPride (2014), the 100th Grey Cup Festival (2012), and the International Indian Film Academy Awards (2011).

- **Category B** events include non-recurring special events of a slightly smaller scale, such as the IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship, as well as existing high-profile annual festivals such as the Toronto International Film Festival and the Toronto Caribbean Carnival.

Ottawa

The City of Ottawa Event Guide provides a comprehensive manual for event organizers that includes policies and standards for events that take place within the city.

This guidance includes operational and permit requirements including sections on:

- Health, Safety and Wellness
- Greening Your Event
- Accessibility
- Diversity and Inclusion

Fredericton

For recipients of grants from the City of Fredericton, the terms and conditions outline the expectations the City has related to events. The event organizer of the recipient organization “must commit to respecting the laws in effect and any other applicable provisions. This includes but is not limited to those laws relating to working conditions, human rights, health and safety, and the environment.”

The Grant Recipient Operating Conditions reference the following related to the specific terms and conditions:

Forced Labour

Recipients shall not use forced labour, whether in the form of prison labour, indentured labour, bonded labour or otherwise shall not be used in the production of goods or delivery of services.

Child Labour

Recipients shall not employ any person who does not meet the minimum age requirements allowed by law in the jurisdiction(s) of production or service delivery. Please note, it is recognized that volunteers of all ages may play a role. This applies to paid labour.

Harassment or Abuse

Recipients shall treat employees and/or volunteers with respect and dignity. No employee and/or volunteer shall be subject to any physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal harassment or abuse. Behavior that is coercive, threatening, or exploitative including gestures, language and physical contact will not be tolerated.

Non-Discrimination

Recipients shall not allow employees and/or volunteers to be subject to any discrimination based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, ancestry, race, religious

beliefs, beliefs, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, nationality, political opinion, social or ethnic origin or any other ground of discrimination prohibited by law.

Health and Safety

Recipients shall provide a safe and healthy working environment to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with, or occurring in the course of work or as a result of the operation of and working in recipient facilities. Recipients shall also meet or exceed the requirements of all occupational health and safety codes and related law and regulations.

Wages

Recipients who hire employees will at a minimum meet legislated minimum wage rates and comply with all employment standards and related law, legislation, and applicable collective agreements.

Hours of Work

Recipients shall comply with all applicable employment standards and related law and legislation in the jurisdiction(s) of production or services delivery with respect to hours of work, vacation pay, overtime hours and overtime pay.

Environmental Responsibility

Recipients shall strive to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible way, offering or using environmentally responsible products and services to the extent available, all with the goal of assisting in the reduction of any negative impact on the environment. Recipients must not be in violation of any environmental laws in the country where the supplier operates.

Recipients are encouraged to take measures to improve energy efficiency, minimize energy use, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by their operations, products, and services.

Recipients are encouraged to minimize the use of natural resources, including water, fossil fuels, minerals and virgin forest products through practices such as modifying production, maintenance and facility processes, materials substitution, re-use, conservation, recycling or other means. Recipients should exercise reasonable care to safeguard the environment through stewardship of land, air, and water.

Sport in Canada and Nova Scotia

It should be noted that amateur sport in Canada has responded to some very high-profile cases by implementing measures and standards for “safe sport”, intended to raise awareness and manage risks to all participants in sport.

The Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC) was established to administer the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport. All national sport organizations and multi-sport organizations in Canada are required to Since 2021, there is an independent safe sport mechanism nationally.

Major Event Landscape in Halifax

Halifax has hosted and continues to host a variety of major events, such as the 2024 Juno Awards, 2023 North American Indigenous Games, 2023 IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship and 2022 49er, 49erFX and Nacra 17 World Championships World Canoe and Para Canoe Championships. Other past major events included the 2019 Memorial Cup, 2011 Canada Winter Games. Halifax has also been selected as a host city for SailGP in 2024, the only Canadian city to host this global event.

Halifax's position in the Canadian major event landscape is influenced by several factors, such as its size, location, infrastructure, capacity, reputation, and competitiveness. Some of the strengths and opportunities of Halifax as a major event host are:

- The unique and attractive identity and brand as a historic, coastal, and cultural city.
- The strategic and accessible location as a gateway to North America and Europe.
- Existing and planned infrastructure and facilities for major events, such as the Halifax Convention Centre, the Scotiabank Centre, the Wanderers Grounds, Lake Banook and offshore waters that serve as natural venues.
- The experienced and skilled workforce and volunteers for major event planning and delivery.
- Strong and diverse partnerships and collaborations among major event stakeholders and sectors.
- The potential and ambition to host more and bigger major events in the future.

This competitive positioning for any host city is continually evolving and policy and funding decisions can impact the attractiveness of the city as a major event host.

Halifax Major Event Stakeholder Ecosystem

Halifax's major event stakeholder ecosystem consists of various groups and entities that are involved in or affected by major events in the region. These include:

- **Users and Beneficiaries** that include rights holders and event organizers who take leadership roles in awarding events to Halifax and those who plan and deliver homegrown events created in Halifax.
- **Governance** organizations that lead in the development and implementation of policy and standards and establishment of strategy to ensure the right events can contribute to the vibrancy of Halifax and Nova Scotia, while serving as a potential funder through established grant programs. This includes Halifax Regional Council, the CAO Office, the Special Events Advisory Committee and the Special Events Task Force.
- **Providers** operate facilities and provide services to ensure Halifax is a competitive host city for major events. This group includes Events East, Alderney Landing and other venue managers plus partner organizations from all levels of government and local business improvement areas.
- **Influencers** include media, sport and cultural organizations help to build awareness of Halifax as a host city for major events and can play an advocacy role in helping to identify and attract new events or actively participate in the development of homegrown events.

What We Heard – Engagement Summary

To understand the perspectives and experiences of the major event stakeholders in Halifax, a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process was conducted as part of the project. The engagement process involved the following methods and activities:

- A survey of major event stakeholders, which collected input on the major event policies and practices in Halifax.
- Two focus groups and interviews with major event stakeholders, which provided in-depth insights on the major event policies and practices in Halifax.

The engagement process generated a rich and diverse set of data and information that informed the analysis and development of the major event policy framework for Halifax. The main themes and messages that emerged from the engagement process are summarized below:

- The financial risks associated with major event attraction and delivery is the most critical of all risk areas.
- Safety risks are seen to be important but too many restrictions on event rights holders, promoters and organizers can reduce the competitive position for Halifax to attract and develop events. The potential for attendees or spectators to feel that the overall event experience is negatively impacted could limit event success.
- Reputational risk is a shared responsibility among rights holders, promoters and event organizers plus funders and all event partners.
- A customer-oriented and solution-based approach is seen to be the best option to address all risks and deliver exceptional event experiences in Halifax.
- Development of tools for event organizers and to support them, rather than imposing rigid rules is suggested.
- Development of risk management best practices for all major events (sport, entertainment and culture) with clear standards and expectations can lead to better results and appropriate response when risks become reality.
- Ensure the scalability of a major event framework that can adapt from one-time international events to annual local events while ensuring safety and inclusion for all.
- This should go beyond a code of conduct which would only be enforceable on event staff and volunteers and any solution needs to include attendees who are all part of the Halifax event experience.
- Ensure major events in Halifax are leaving lasting legacies and enhancing the quality of life in the community, well after the event has concluded.
- HRM should consider how to be more customer-focused on its approach to major event planning and delivery through both financial and in-kind contributions including promotion of the event to the local community to ensure it is accessible to as many residents as possible and has every chance to succeed.
- Look beyond economic impact of individual events in determining the level of support they can receive from HRM and the impact to as many residents as possible.
- Ensure balance of the event ecosystem with strong and vibrant annual events combined with one-time events that are attracted to Halifax.

Major Event Roles and Responsibilities

The major event roles and responsibilities in Halifax are currently distributed and shared among HRM and other major event stakeholders, depending on the type, scale, and scope of the major event and the venue in which it will be staged. However, the roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined, communicated, or understood by the major event stakeholders, which can lead to confusion, duplication, or gaps in the major event planning and delivery process.

The following table provides a general overview of the major event roles and responsibilities in Halifax, based on the current shared leadership model and the stakeholder feedback:

Major Event Role	Major Event Responsibility	Major Event Stakeholder(s)
Policy development	Developing and implementing the major event policy framework for Halifax	HRM
Event attraction	Identifying and pursuing major event opportunities that align with the major event policy framework and strategy for Halifax	Multiple organizations including Discover Halifax, venues (Events East), local and provincial organizations, private promoters and ad hoc bid groups
Event funding	Providing financial support for major events that meet the major event policy framework and strategy for Halifax	HRM and the federal and provincial governments, and corporate sponsors
Event support	Providing in-kind support for major events, such as venue rental, service delivery, regulation compliance, and community engagement	HRM (HRM Events Division and Special Events Task Force/SETF), the venues, hotels and suppliers, and the business and community groups
Event delivery	Planning and executing the major event operations, such as event operations, logistics and marketing	The event organizers, the venues and suppliers, SETF, major event stakeholders and the volunteers
Event evaluation	Measuring and reporting the major event outcomes and impacts, such as economic, social, and environmental benefits and costs	HRM, Discover Halifax, Events Nova Scotia, the event organizers, and the funders and sponsors

Risk Summary

The major event risks in Halifax are the potential or actual negative consequences or impacts of hosting major events in the region, which can affect the major event stakeholders and the public.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada identifies the key risks associated with special events². These include:

- *Legal liability. As an occupier of an owned or rented premise, you and your organization are responsible for the safety of those who attend the premises. Occupiers must protect patrons from all foreseeable harm. You must take extra precautions if:*
 - *alcohol is served*
 - *children/minors are in attendance*
 - *the event includes potentially dangerous or hazardous activities such as fireworks, boating and some sports*
 - *gambling is involved*
 - *large crowds are in attendance*
- *Injury risks. It's possible that employees, volunteers and members of the general public who attend may be injured during the special event. Special events often include high-risk activities such as alcohol service, fireworks, children's rides or games, etc.*
- *Government liability requirements. Obtain applicable permits from your municipal and/or provincial government to reduce liability risks that relate to violations involving permits. Business insurance doesn't pay for fines. Health requirements should also be followed. Contact your local government for more information about your business or non-profit's responsibilities as a special event host.*
- *Reputation risks. If situations are not handled well, your business or non-profit's reputation may be damaged. Being proactive and following risk management best practices can help prevent damage to your brand.*
- *Financial risks. Special events hosted by your non-profit often require a large amount of funding. Careful administration and thoughtful risk management can help ensure a successful event as well as align with your financial supporters' expectations of your non-profit.*

The major event risks in Halifax can be managed and mitigated by adopting various strategies and measures, such as:

- Conducting a comprehensive and rigorous risk assessment and analysis for each major event.
- Establishing and enforcing clear and consistent risk management policies and procedures for major events.
- Allocating and securing adequate and diversified funding and support sources for major events.
- Implementing and monitoring effective and efficient major event operations and controls.
- Communicating and engaging with the major event stakeholders and the public on the major event objectives and expectations.

² [Insurance Bureau of Canada \(compiled with Canadian Risk Intervention Inc.\)](#)

- Adapting and responding to the changing and emerging major event environment and challenges.

Other risks may fall outside the scope of the event organizers and may rise to the level of criminal code violations. All involved with the attraction and delivery of major events have a role to ensure adherence to all policies and by-laws of HRM and the laws or legislative requirements of Nova Scotia and/or Canada.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the jurisdictional review, the stakeholder engagement, and the analysis of the major event landscape, roles, and risks in Halifax, the following findings and recommendations are presented for the development and implementation of the major event policy framework for Halifax:

Event Types

The major event policy framework for Halifax should define and classify the major events that are in scope and out of scope for the HRM's involvement and support. The definition and classification should be based on the impact, scope, and scale of the major events, as well as the level of support from HRM and the venues in which they occur.

The following table provides a proposed definition and classification of major events for Halifax and those that are recommended to be in scope and out of scope for a major event framework:

	Event Type	Event Definition
IN SCOPE FOR MAJOR EVENT FRAMEWORK	Major Event hosted in HRM through the Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve (MLSER)	A large-scale, one-time event that has a significant impact on the host city or region in terms of economic, image, social, sport/cultural and sustainability outcomes
	Major Events held at HRM-owned facilities	A major event that has a distinctive and lasting identity and brand for the host city or region, and that attracts national or international attention and participation
	Non-major events that are held at HRM-owned facilities	A small-scale, one-time or recurring event that takes place in HRM-owned facilities and has smaller impact on the host city or region, but contributes to the local community's well-being and vitality
	Non-major events supported by HRM event grants	A small-scale, one-time or recurring event that receives direct funding from HRM event funding programs and has smaller impact on the host city or region, but contributes to the local community's well-being and vitality

OUT OF SCOPE FOR MAJOR EVENT FRAMEWORK	Recreation programming, minor sports and facility rentals	Regular user group training, competition or performance at HRM-owned facilities
	Events not funded by HRM or held in a non-HRM owned venue	Occur in privately-owned facilities and do not receive any financial support from HRM event funding programs

Competitive Factors in Major Events

Halifax has a long history of attracting major events and supporting homegrown events that enhance the vibrancy of the community and have the opportunity to deliver lasting legacies.

The major event landscape is a competitive one, with proven ability to deliver tangible benefits to any host community. Halifax is competing against other jurisdictions in Canada and in some cases, global destinations to attract major events.

As HRM considers the framework for major event standards and safety measures, it also should factor in the competitive landscape. With a customer-centred approach, Halifax can ensure that it meets the needs of all customer groups including:

- Event rights holders, organizers and promoters who select Halifax as the host for their events.
- Event organizers and promoters who plan and deliver the events and can impact the lasting legacies for the community.
- Event participants and attendees who are the consumers of the events and drive their success and the overall event experience.
- Event sponsors and partners who provide financial or in-kind support for the events.
- Event suppliers and vendors who offer goods and services for the events.
- Event volunteers and staff who contribute their time and skills for the events.
- Event media and broadcasters who cover and distribute the events, telling the story of the host community to other audiences.
- Event stakeholders and regulators who have an interest or authority in the events.
- Event community and residents who are affected by or benefit from the events and their legacies.

All of these groups will experience a major event in a different way and will contribute to the hosting reputation of Halifax. A balanced approach to how a major event framework will positively or negatively impact each group should be considered.

Providing information, tools and supports through planned and ongoing communication with each of these groups will help Halifax in attracting or developing major events that align with the vision and values of the city as an event destination.

Halifax currently does not have a major event strategy that articulates the positioning and priority for this growing sector of activity. It is therefore recommended that Halifax investigate the potential for development of a major event strategy and the timing for implementation of any of the below options so there is alignment with internal and external stakeholders and the foundation to support the projected increased major event activity.

Options for Consideration

Based on this project and the information gathered, there are three potential options presented for consideration by Halifax Regional Council.

Option 1 – Values-Based Major Event Policy Framework

Halifax aims to be a visionary leader of major events in Canada and will create a major event policy framework that is based on values and principles. This framework will give event organizers the information, tools and supports they need to make sure that major events in Halifax are secure and welcoming. It will also clarify the expectations for everyone involved in major events, including residents.

This is the recommended option and will involve some additional human and financial resources to develop, this can enhance Halifax's position as a major event destination with rights-holders, organizers and promoters.

Option 2 – Rules Based Major Event Policy Framework

Halifax will ensure a safe environment for all major events that occur within the city using a rules-based approach. Through a series of eligibility requirements and performance standards that are included in venue rental and municipal funding agreements, event rights-holders, organizers and promoters will have clarity on the expectations of them and all directly connected to the event.

This is not recommended as it may be seen as a barrier to selecting Halifax as the major event destination and downloads the policy requirements to the event rights-holders, organizers and promoters. This could have a negative impact and reduce the number of major events that Halifax is able to attract or develop and increase the cost of hosting major events in Halifax. This option also presents a significant increase in the regulatory requirements on the part of HRM and all event rights-holders, organizers and promoters and could also impact other stakeholder groups including event attendees.

Option 3 – Status Quo with No Major Event Policy Framework

Halifax will maintain the status quo and react to situations as they arise which may result in changes to hosting requirements and funding conditions from event to event.

This is not recommended as it is not responsive to the current values of Halifax and the desire to ensure that major events are safe and inclusive and deliver legacies that can benefit all residents.