
Special Events – Internal Process Review

Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Corporate Performance Department, dated January 31, 2017, be received as information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the results from the Special Events Internal Process Review (IPR), which occurred from August 2015 to January 2016. The review focused on opportunities for efficiency and service improvements within the application, review, approval, and implementation stages of the current special events process. The report delay relates to staffing changes and an amalgamation of the former Recreation and Sport and Community Development Divisions. However, IPR team members continued to work on implementing recommendations including the special event application update and workshops for special event organizers.

Report Highlights

1. Internal Process Reviews and Civic Service Reviews follow a similar process. Teams look at Current State, Defining Success, and Future State in a focused meeting environment. The Special Events review team included participants from 14 stakeholder Divisions and gathered feedback directly from special event organizers through an online survey.
2. To date the team has made the following improvements to service: created a single point of contact for event organizers, updated the special event application removing redundant questions and information, created a separate “how to” guide to accompany the application, and implemented bi-annual user group workshops where event organizers and citizens can get face to face information and assistance regarding the special events process.
3. The future state vision for the special event process focuses on a Digital First approach, a citizen-centric service through increased usage of smart online application forms, updating applicable policies and bylaws, as well as allocating appropriate resources to address the growing demand for special events.
4. The service improvements have also created efficiency in the administration of the application process saving approximately 100 hours in collective customer time (i.e. event organizers) and more than 200 hours in staff time. This enables the Administration to better meet the current needs of special events without the immediate need for additional FTEs.

Strategic Goals

This report supports the Strategic Goals of Continuous Improvement, Quality of Life, and Asset and Financial Sustainability.

Background

City Council at its meeting held on December 3 and 4, 2013, approved the Continuous Improvement Strategy, which includes the following three components:

- Annual Civic Service Reviews (CSRs) - an operational review process to find ways to control expenditures and to seek efficiencies in the delivery of municipal programs and services.
- Internal Process Reviews (IPRs) - focus on identifying and removing redundancies and waste within existing processes to increase efficiencies in civic operations. Building capacity in the corporation through innovation coaches and empowering employees.

The CSRs and IPRs use a collaborative approach to bring together staff at all levels of the organization, usually from multiple divisions, who play a role in the delivery of a particular program or service. For more information on the Continuous Improvement Strategy see Attachment 1.

Report

Introduction

In recent years, the area of special events in public places on City of Saskatoon (City) land has been growing and evolving rapidly. From 2010 to 2016, the number of special events in parks has increased by 70%. Additionally, the number of events taking place on City roadways and/or rights-of-way has increased by a similar amount. Due to this rapid growth of events involving various departments of the City, a need emerged for a more strategic and coordinated approach to the City's special event process.

To accomplish this, in 2014 the Recreation and Community Development Division (then Recreation and Sport) began a review of the City's special event process. See Attachment 2 for further information on the background and foundational information for the review.

Also related to services for Special Events, in 2013, the Saskatoon Police Service changed its processes related to Special Events that serve alcohol. Police support for such events moved away from on-shift support to dedicated special-duty support staff. The costs of special-duty police are covered by the special event organizers. This decision was directly related to the need to reduce potentially negative outcomes of alcohol consumption at events including fights, traffic accidents, vandalism, and other public disturbances. For more information on this process see File No. CK. 185-9; LS 205-1 "Summer Festivals - 2013".

Current State of the Special Event Process

The Special Event Internal Process Review focused on improving service to citizens and creating efficiency in the administration of this process. The review team included members from the Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization; Saskatoon Police Service; and Saskatoon Fire Department; the Divisions of Recreation and Community Development, Parks, Transportation, Public Works; and Community Standards, Parking Services Section. The IPR highlighted the following themes:

- a) Communication improvements are needed;
- b) Policy and Bylaw supports need to be in place;
- c) Dedicated resources are required; and

- d) Process streamlining and improvements will lead to efficiencies.

During the review the team reached out to the main customer, special event organizers, to ask for process feedback and improvement ideas. The results suggested event organizers want:

- a) A streamlined process for event application and approvals, where all communication comes from a single source in a timely manner;
- b) An application form that is easy to understand and comes with a helpful information guide, as well as in-person support whenever needed;
- c) Events that are well-attended and serviced with all required amenities including water, power, recycling and waste collections; and
- d) Continued City in-kind and cash grant support of special events to ensure cost does not become a barrier to hosting events.

Defining Success

This section of the review focused on outlining “what a successful Special Events process would look like from the customer and City’s perspective.” The following improvements were recommended and implemented in 2016:

- a) Create a single point of contact for event organizers (i.e.: the Open Space Consultant coordinates the communication between event organizers and the Interdepartmental Special Events Committee¹;
- b) Update the special event application form, removing redundant questions and information to help reduce customer “time spent” on completing event applications;
- c) Create a separate “how to” guide to accompany the application to help those who are new to the process, and ensure all applicants understand what information is required to complete the full application ; and
- d) Create and implement bi-annual user group workshops with the help of Open Space Consultants where event organizers and citizens can receive face to face information about changes to the special events application and approval process, hear about timely topics (i.e.: food trucks at events), and ask questions or get personalized assistance regarding the special events process. Two of these user group workshops were held in 2016 and were well attended. Participants reported the information and presentations were beneficial.

A Vision for the Future State of the Special Event Process

A future state process visioning exercise to identify an ideal future state resulted in the following recommendations:

- a) Continue open communication opportunities with event planners through a single-source contact person, post-event surveys, and user-group workshops;
- b) Continue to revise the original application package and move towards a Digital-first approach;
- c) Increase the use of technology to support the special event application/booking and information distribution components of the process (with the idea of moving toward a

¹ This committee reviews special event applications and organizes civic support for events through roadway closures and detours, park inspections, waste management services, transit rerouting, and other activities.

- self-service smart-booking process similar to online systems such as “Vacation Rental By Owner”);
- d) Designate staff to support the application and review process, as well as the on-site needs of event organizers and internal staff;
 - e) Present recommendations regarding “fees for service” to be charged for special event activities where appropriate (considering some events are hosted through non-profits whereas some are full economic enterprises) with a goal of ensuring a balance between mill-rate support and user-pay fees within the special event service model;
 - f) Create a Terms of Reference document to detail the responsibilities of the Interdepartmental Special Events Committee;
 - g) Develop an administrative policy to guide decision making regarding special event approvals, support levels, and administrative conditions; and
 - h) Update existing policies and bylaws to better address the needs of special events (i.e. The Noise Bylaw No. 8244, The Recreation Facilities and Parks Usage Bylaw No. 7767, and The Special Events Policy C0S-007).

Creating Efficiency and Savings

Items a) and b) listed above are already underway. Efficiencies from these efforts and the initial update of the special events application and information guide are likely to save approximately 100 hours in collective customer time (i.e. event organizers) when filling in special event applications for the upcoming 2017 season. Additionally, these efforts will reduce approximately 200 hours of staff time on processing applications and manual entry of information and return time to staff in Recreation and Community Development, better meeting the growing numbers of special events and the needs of event organizers.

Items c) through h) from above are under continued investigation by the review team. See Attachment 3 for a summary of key findings on efficiency and effectiveness.

Public and/or Stakeholder Engagement

As the special event review process continues and new policies, bylaws and fees for services are being considered and/or developed, the Administration will continue to consult with event organizers.

Communication Plan

Approved levels of service will be communicated through Service Saskatoon to ensure citizens know what services they can expect. Results from the Civic Service Reviews and Internal Process Reviews will be communicated on the City’s website in the “Latest Strides” and/or “City Spotlight” sections of the “Our Performance” page at www.saskatoon.ca/strides.

Financial Implications

This report identifies the need for additional dedicated support for special event administrative processes including application review, applicant support, on-site support, and evaluation duties. To assist in addressing some of this, with the recent amalgamation of two divisions into the Recreation and Community Development Division, the Administration has been able to redeploy 0.5 of an existing Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) to

assist with the coordination of event logistics and monitoring of larger-scale outdoor events.

This redeployment of a partial FTE will assist in addressing some, but not all, of the workload associated with special events. Other areas, such as Parks and Transportation, have also expressed a need for additional resources to address the ongoing demand for support for special events and the provision of in-kind civic services.

Policy Implications

As noted in this report, there is a need to develop an administrative policy to outline guidelines for reviewing and approving special event applications. There is also a need to update existing policies and bylaws. All recommended policy changes and/or new policy development will be presented to City Council for formal approval.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up

Follow-up reports related to policy and bylaw updates, the establishment of new policies, and recommendations for potential dedicated support staff, as well as new fees for services will be brought forward in 2017 to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services for review, direction, and recommendations to City Council.

The Administration will continue to review the special event process to determine the specifics for additional human and financial resources needed to support the City's role in special events and will prepare a report for consideration during the 2018 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Public Notice Policy No. C01-021, is not required.

Attachments

1. Continuous Improvement Strategy Overview
2. Background and Foundational Information for the Special Event Review
3. Summary of Key Findings on Efficiency and Effectiveness

Report Approval

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