

REPORT #: REC-2025-8
DATE: 21-Oct-25
TO: Mayor and Members of Council
SUBJECT: BWG Public Square 2025 Season Report
PREPARED BY: Bethany Kuboniwa, Leisure Events & Marketing Supervisor

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Report REC-2025-8 titled "BWG Public Square 2025 Season Report" be received for information.

2. STAFF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- BWG's Public Square opened on June 24, 2025
- 21 events were hosted in BWG Public Square from June-October 2025

3. BACKGROUND:

BWG's Public Square officially opened on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, with a Grand Opening that featured the first week of the Town's Music in the Park series and a Multicultural Day celebration from 6:15–9:00pm.

The long-anticipated space includes 68,000 sq. ft. of open outdoor flex and event space. On a day-to-day basis, Public Square serves the community as an open passive-use space with accessible pathways, a splash pad with misters, and raised garden beds with seating.

Public Square also prominently features a permanent outdoor stage, making it BWG's first formal outdoor event venue and the only permit-required outdoor event space in Town. From June–August 2025, the Town hosted 12 events in Public Square. From June–October 2025, nine third-party events were hosted in Public Square, including five returning events and four brand new events.

In 2024 Council adapted BWG's first Event Strategy. In the Events Strategy, Pillar #2 of the Sustainability Framework: Encourage Event Delivery from Community Organizations. "A core component of the partnership approach is to build the capacity of the community to deliver events. This can be done through collaboration, training, mentorship and through the

creation of tools that will assist event organizers. Community event delivery is a common model, and many municipalities are successful in implementing it to meet their community's event needs." The opening season of Public Square has supported this pillar by providing a dedicated venue that encourages both municipal programming and community-led events, strengthening BWG's overall event delivery model.

4. ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Review of 2025

The inaugural year of events at BWG's Public Square was an overwhelming success. Feedback from the public who attended events was highly positive, with many Town-delivered events reaching record attendance numbers. The community was excited about the new space and eager to attend events and explore what it had to offer. Public Square quickly established itself as an excellent gathering space for both the community and formal events. Throughout the spring and summer, the events staff continued to evaluate the space and event logistics to ensure safe and successful events.

Nine third party events were hosted in Public Square with five returning events and four brand new events. Third party event organizers were thrilled about the new space and its amenities. Returning events were excited about the improved facilities, while new event organizers were enthusiastic about having a formal, permit-required event venue to use.

All third-party event organizers were sent a post-event feedback survey to provide information on the success of their events, identify areas where Town staff could offer additional support, and highlight improvements needed to ensure future success. Survey results were predominately positive. One area of noted improvement that was identified from the surveys was in relation to the ease of the booking process.

In response, Town staff have revised existing resources, including the application form, and created new tools such as a Public Square Planning Guide. These resources provide clear information on guidelines and processes that event organizers must follow, helping to set them up for success. All guidelines, regulations, and rules that third-party organizers are required to follow are consistent with those followed by Town staff for municipal events.

Recognizing that planning large public events is a significant and time-consuming task, these resources have been developed to provide clarity and support throughout the planning process.

New Resources created for 2026:

1. Public Square Planning Guide
 - Emergency Response Plan template
 - Traffic Mitigation Plan template
2. Public Square Welcome Package
 - Event Planning Checklist
 - List of Vendors
 - Special Events Marketing Resources

Plans for 2026

Building on the success of 2025 and the feedback received from Town staff and third party event organizers, staff are implementing several updates for the 2026 season to streamline processes, provide greater support for organizers and ensure the continued success of events at Public Square. These changes focus on enhancing the application process, improving clarity for event organizers, and maintaining high standards of safety and community benefit.

Application Process

To improve consistency and transparency, a clear step-by-step application process has been revised for all Public Square bookings:

Step 1: Application Submission

The Event Organizer must submit a Public Square Rental Application along with the required application fee. Applications must be received a minimum of 90 days before the event date. To set their event up for success, organizers are strongly encouraged to review the Public Square Planning Guide in advance, as it outlines all requirements, guidelines, and processes they will need to follow.

Step 2: Application Review

Upon receipt, the Events & Marketing Coordinator will circulate the application to appropriate Town departments and Emergency Services for review, comments, and/or approval. This review process may take several weeks. A confirmation email acknowledging receipt of the application will be sent to the Event Organizer. If additional information is needed from the application the Coordinator will reach out.

Step 3: Staff Review Meeting

An in-person meeting will be scheduled between the Event Organizer and Town staff to review the application in detail and provide feedback. If revisions are required, the Event Organizer is responsible for making all necessary changes and resubmitting the updated application to the Events & Marketing Coordinator.

Step 4: Application Approval

Once all required changes have been completed, and no further revisions are necessary, the application will be reviewed for final approval by the Director of Recreation and Cultural Services. At this stage, the Event Organizer will be issued a Permit for the event.

Note: Applications that involve the sale or service of alcohol or unprecedented events are subject to Council approval. A formal Event Plan Presentation will be submitted to Council, and the Event Organizer will be required to attend the Council meeting to respond to questions.

Step 5: Agreement & Deposit

A Permit will be officially issued upon completion of a signed agreement between the Event Organizer and the Town. This agreement is required to secure the requested event date. A 25% non-refundable deposit is required for all Public Square bookings. The balance of payment must be made in full no later than 60 days prior to the event date.

Application Timeline

To ensure fair access and adequate planning time, applications will be accepted on a staggered schedule:

- 2026 Applications for returning event organizers will be accepted beginning December 1, 2025.
- 2026 Applications for new events will be accepted beginning January 5, 2026.

Application Criteria

To be considered for a permit, community festivals and events must provide a meaningful benefit to the community and must have a direct impact on one or more of the following areas:

- arts and culture;
- education;
- health and wellness;
- physical fitness;
- enrich the character and identity of the Town;
- create unique or innovative experiences;
- extend the overall range and mix of programming in the Town;
- bring visitors from outside of the area
- be openly accepting and inclusive of all multicultural community members

The following types of events permitted in Town Square are:

Community Event (under 2,000 people) - Not-for-profit community events including, but not limited to walks/runs or cultural/educational. Community events that are operated for a collective, public or social benefit, in contrast with an entity that operates as a business aiming to generate a profit for its owners

Commercial Event (under 2,000 people) - For-profit events including but not limited to food/beverage, artisans/crafts, events with alcohol and events that don't meet the community event criteria.

Public Square capacities were designed to align with available amenities and address the existing Special Events Bylaw (2008-013), which includes a separate approval process for events with more than 2,000 people.

Application Requirements

In addition to the Event Application Form, organizers must submit the following supporting documents to ensure a safe and well-organized event:

- Site Map
- Emergency Response Plan
- Traffic Mitigation Plan (over 1,000 people)
- Washroom Guidelines (over 1,000 people)

Together, these updated processes and resources will ensure that Public Square continues to thrive as BWG's premier outdoor event space, while supporting both municipal and community organizers in delivering safe, inclusive, and successful events.

5. EFFECT ON TOWN FINANCES:

Standard Municipal Fees applicable to events (to be paid by the applicant);

Rental Duration	Event Attendance	Community Group/Non for Profit	Private/Commercial
Half Day (8 hour Rental Rate)	Less than 1000	\$750	\$1500
Half Day (8 hour Rental Rate)	More than 1000	\$1150	\$1900
Full Day (12-hour rental rate)	Less than 1000	\$1125	\$2250
Full Day (12-hour rental rate)	More than 1000	\$1525	\$2650

The above fees incorporate Town staff time for events exceeding 1,000 attendees (as directed by Council in 2024), recognizing that larger events create greater operational demands such as garbage collection and staffing for oversight/supervision of Public Square and library washrooms as a Town facility.

6. RELATION TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This event is generally supportive of the Strategic Objective of enhanced recreation and leisure services.

7. ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 Events list
2. Draft Public Square Planning Guide
3. Draft Public Square Welcome Package
4. Draft Public Square Rental Application (2026)
5. Draft Public Square Terms & Conditions (2026)

8. STAFF REPORT APPROVAL:

APPROVAL	DATE
Prepared By: Bethany Kuboniwa, Leisure Events & Marketing Supervisor	October 6, 2025
Reviewed By: Nick Warman, Manager of Recreation and Client Services	October 6, 2025
Reviewed By: Terry Foran, Director of Recreation and Cultural Services	October 6, 2025

Reviewed By: Ian Goodfellow, Director of Finance/Treasurer	October 6, 2025
Approved By: Geoff McKnight, Chief Administrative Officer	October 6, 2025