How to Plan an Event

A Guide to Begin Planning an Event

Every year the Town of Oakville's recreation facilities, parks and open spaces are home to hundreds of community events. These events enrich the community spirit and vibrancy of living in and exploring Oakville, and include many different festivals, film productions, parades, picnics, races, sidewalk sales, theatrical performances, tournaments, and walkathons.

Thank you for choosing one of the Town of Oakville's many municipal venues to host your special event.

This Event 101 – How to Plan an Event User Guide will assist you beginning your planning process before submitting an application. You are encouraged to also review our Special Event A to Z Guidelines on our website and the Before You Apply Guide in order to obtain valuable information concerning the necessary steps to follow when planning an event in Oakville.

The Town of Oakville is pleased to provide a dedicated Special Events Service as a primary point-of-contact for all event inquiries.

Going forward, the town's Special Events Service will be your primary point-of-contact for any questions concerning planning an event, event applications, permits and municipal requirements.

Connect with the town's Special Events Service by phone: 905-845-6601 and email: events@oakville.ca and visit the events website at www.Oakville.ca/events.

We look forward to helping ensure your event in Oakville is a great success.

OAKVILLE

Have you done your research?

Before beginning to plan your event, it is important to do some research and environmental scans of the event landscape in your local area. Determining whether there are other events similar to the one you hope to plan around the same time could impact what type of event you do or when you do it. Discussing the type of event with stakeholders or target audiences also helps to determine interest level and relevancy.

It is also important to go and visit multiple sites of interest for the event to determine which is the best and has the best amenities for what is required to ensure event success. Each park in Oakville provides a different landscape, different amount of existing infrastructure pieces and parking restrictions, as an example.

Defining a budget will also assist in determining how big your event can be or how much you can do, which affects the planning process. All events require planning and coordination, but events of varying sizes and types will have budget restrictions in different areas and priorities.

Why is your event happening?

Every event needs a goal or a mission to help navigate decision making and to ensure all programming and logistics stay on track. When you decide that you would like to plan a special event, it is important to ask yourself and/or your committee: Why? Why is this event important? What are we trying to achieve and why does it need to happen now?

Is there a specific charity you are partnering with and so therefore, the event is to benefit them and represent their activities?

Narrowing down this mission and mandate will help to narrow down choices, decisions and key logistics such as date and time when planning your special event.

When do you want to your event to happen?

Before beginning any programming, deciding on your type of event or looking for sponsorship, it is important to narrow down when you want your event and how long you want it to be. This information will be important in obtaining not only your permits from your application, but also to communicate to necessary stakeholders that you want invested in the event.

<u>Important things to consider are:</u>

- What day do you want your event?
  - How does this day affect your audience? ie. Week day versus weekend
- What month do you want your event in?
  - This affects the weather and climate > July is hotter than September, for example.
- What time is your event?
- Where is your event located?
- Is your event multiple days or just one?

Once you have this narrowed down these key details, you can begin to decipher what type of event would best suit your mission, date, time and location.

What Type of Event do you want to plan?

When looking to plan an event, it is important to decide the type of event that you are hoping to have. This includes some brainstorming with regards to the following elements:

- Who is your event for?
- What is your target attendance number?
- What scale of event are you hoping to produce?

This is an important time to remember what your mission and your mandate is and who you are working alongside in order to produce this event.

For example, a 5km walk is different than a children's festival in what type of elements, logistics and programming you will need. It can also target different demographics.

- Is your event for families?
- Is your event for adults only?
- Is your event for runners?
- Is your event for yoga-enthusiasts?

All of these are important questions in knowing what type of event you are delivering to what type of audience member.

Budget

Once you have your event narrowed down with the key planning elements, it is important to consider your budget and how much your event will cost you. Depending

OAKVILLE

on your means or sponsorship goals, your budget will help to determine what kind of programming you can accommodate and what kind of event support you can sustain throughout the day. If you need help creating a budget, feel free to use our Budget Template on our website to get you started. Work through these details, do some research and work with your team to help understand what you can and cannot afford while still creating a successful event.

Logistics and Programming

Once you know what your event is, when it is and who you're providing the event to, it is time to start narrowing down some logistics and programming. Logistics help to create a skeleton of your event and the where and when of your various moving pieces of the event. Programming helps to enhance the event and provides interesting elements to help deliver your theme, goal and mission of the event.

Logistics to consider:

- Set up time
- Take down time
- Obtain a permit
- Site Plan
- Insurance
- Volunteer Management
- Infrastructure pieces (tables, chairs, tents, etc)
- Emergency Management

Programming elements to consider:

- Vendor Booths
- Charity Booths
- Music and Performances
  - Live or Recorded Music
- Inflatables
- Food Vendors or Food Trucks
- Info Booth & First Aid
- Sponsorship Opportunities

Programming and logistics work hand-in-hand as they influence each other and the various decisions to be made. To help organize your day, use the Production Schedule or Critical Path template on our website to organize the flow of your planning and logistics leading up to the event as well as during the day.

Logistics Information:

Set Up & Take Down time:
Depending on the number of things that need to be delivered or brought to the site to be set up, will determine how much set up and take down time you need. The more elements, the more time.

Obtain a permit
Once you submit an application and your event is approved, the Events Service will issue you a tentative permit indicating the various terms and conditions of that permit.

Site Plan
Your site plan indicates where each programming element will go with relation to necessary space in a park. Make sure you accommodate any generators, vehicles attached or dismantled elements from the delivery vehicle while creating a site plan. Use our design a site plan tool to help create one for your event.

Insurance
All events require insurance as well as all third party members indicating the Town of Oakville as an additional insured. For more information on insurance, please visit our website

Volunteer Management
Understanding how many volunteers you will need in addition to any event staff you have. These could be parking attendants, greeters, booth operators, etc.

Infrastructure Pieces
Do you require picnic tables, tables, chairs, tents, etc? This can be rented by a third party company or brought on site by you.

Emergency Management
For more information on Emergency Management, please use our infographic on our website.

Programming Information:

Vendor Booths
What kind of vendors do you want at your event? These can be sponsors, local artisans or other community groups. Please keep in mind that if they are selling items, they will need a municipal vendor license

Use our Vendor tracking template to keep track of all of your vendors and their requirements

Music and Performances
Are you hoping to play any music or have any live bands? This will affect y

Inflatables
For more information on Inflatables, please use our infographic on our website.

Food Vendors or Food Trucks
For more information on Food Trucks, please use our infographic on our website.

First Aid
Do you require St. John's Ambulance onsite? Do you have a booth for this onsite? This is a good idea in case of a medical emergency.

For additional details, helpful resources and templates, visit the Planning Tool Kit on our website.

OAKVILLE