

Title: Official Openings Policy

Number: GOV-24-03

Approved By: City Council

Administered By: Corporate Communications

Effective Date: November 25, 2024

Revision Date(s): March 31, 2026

1.0 Purpose/Background

The purpose of the Official Openings Policy (“Policy”) is to establish clear and consistent guidelines for Official City Openings and Special Event Opening Ceremonies.

This Policy is part of a broader communications framework that works to enhance the City of Oshawa’s profile and engage with our community, partners and Local Businesses.

2.0 Policy Statement

The City of Oshawa recognizes the value and importance of celebrating events, new facilities and announcements with our community. This Policy and related procedures set a clear direction to staff and outlines roles and responsibilities for openings, opening ceremonies and announcements.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to all City Employees and Elected Officials in their capacity as members of Council.

In instances when the City has a legal or partnership agreement that stipulates the City’s communications and support requirements, the roles, responsibilities and procedures in the Policy may differ and the legal agreement supersedes this Policy.

This Policy does not apply to External Partners and Local Businesses as it is the responsibility of the External Partner or Local Business to determine, plan and deliver their respective openings, events and announcements.

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4.0 Definitions

Business Celebration means an occasion when an Oshawa company, store, restaurant or other organization is celebrating a notable milestone or anniversary and has requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support for their opening.

Business Opening means an occasion when a new company, store, restaurant, or other business organization starts officially doing business and has requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support for their opening.

Campaign Period means the period between May 1 and Voting Day in the year of a municipal election year.

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa and, where the context allows, its officers, officials, Employees and agents or any of them.

City Produced Special Event means special events coordinated by the City's Special Events and Culture Services team.

Elected Official means a member of Council for the City of Oshawa

Employee means all full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and staff hired on a contract basis for a defined period of time, of the City of Oshawa, as well as students. For the purpose of this Policy only, the definition includes paid or unpaid volunteers, students and interns but does not include Oshawa Senior Community Centres.

External Partner means external organizations, entities, business or corporations. Examples include community organizations, local partner organizations and other entities including post-secondary and health care institutions, and other levels of government.

External Partner Events means announcements, events and openings coordinated by External Representatives that have requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support.

Facility means City property and facilities. Examples include public buildings, parks, trails and sport fields.

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Joint Partnership Announcement means events that celebrate a significant partnership with an External Partner. Examples include new City facilities or City Facility features that were significantly constructed, developed or funded through a partnership; renamings and dedications with a family or local community group; and, major new projects or programs that were developed through a partnership.

Local Business means a company, store or restaurant or business-related organization with a physical address or its main operations in the City of Oshawa.

Neighbourhood Event Opening means events that are less formal in structure to celebrate the completion of smaller-scale capital projects impacting a Ward or neighbourhood with a specific audience (e.g. local area residents, a surrounding neighborhood or user group). Examples include community park redevelopments and new parkettes and may include significant new park or Facility features (e.g. feature garden).

Official City Opening means official openings for the City’s large-scale projects with large capital budgets. Examples include community buildings and destination parks.

Special Event Opening Ceremony means opening ceremonies for City Produced Special Events coordinated by the City’s Special Events and Culture Services team.

Spokesperson for this Policy means an Elected Official who speaks on behalf of City Council or an Employee who speaks on behalf of the City.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Official City Openings

Official City Openings are delivered by City staff and include these elements:

- a) Interactive public event (on average 3 hour duration) with free activities such as tours, activities and demonstrations and may include light refreshments and entertainment, as well as informal opportunities to connect with members of Council.
- b) Formal opening component that includes introductions from the emcee (Standing Committee Chair or Vice-Chair as designate); official remarks delivered by the Mayor as Head of Council (or designate); followed by a celebratory activity (e.g.

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ribbon-cutting or ceremonial first pitch / jump ball) led by the Ward Councillors and involving all members of Council.

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.
- b) Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) delivers introductions as emcee.
- c) Mayor (or designate) delivers official remarks on behalf of the City
- d) Ward Councillors lead the celebratory activity when the Official City Opening occurs in their ward.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review members of Council calendars with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Mayor’s Office, emcee and Ward Councillors, funding partners/key community stakeholders (if applicable) and City Branch staff.
- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff, as well as invite via email funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the project (if applicable). Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- c) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.
- d) Create Itinerary – develop the formal opening event itinerary with input from the Mayor’s Office, emcee and Ward Councillors as well as funding partners (if applicable); follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – develop speaking notes that are circulated with the event itinerary for consideration to the Spokespersons at least five business days in advance of the event, if possible.

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- f) Organize Event logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City staff support.
- g) Lead Communications – prepare and distribute promotions and communications to the public.
- h) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend the Official City Opening event and capture photography and videography.

Branch staff:

- a) Deliver Logistics – provide logistical items as required such as podium, sound system, tents, chairs and deliver programming elements as required (e.g. demonstrations, tours, free activities).
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the capital project includes funding to deliver and promote an Official City Opening.
- c) Attend – attend the Official City Opening event.

5.2 Neighbourhood Event Openings

Neighbourhood Event Openings are delivered by City staff and include these elements:

- a) Drop-in event (typically 1 – 1.5 hours) for community members to connect with their Ward Councillors and other members of Council and typically includes an activity(ies) for users (e.g. a box lacrosse game, a bike ride on a new trail).
- b) Informal remarks that include introductions from the Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate); welcome greetings from the Ward Councillors; followed by a celebratory activity involving the community led by the Ward Councillors and involving all members of Council (e.g. a box lacrosse game, a bike ride on a new trail).

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.

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- b) Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) delivers introductions as emcee.
- c) Ward Councillors deliver welcome greetings where it occurs in their ward.
- d) Ward Councillors lead the celebratory activity where it occurs in their ward.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review members of Council calendars with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Ward Councillors, emcee and City Branch staff.
- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff, as well as invite via email funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the project (if applicable).
- c) Develop the Itinerary – coordinate the celebratory activity with input from the Ward Councillors, emcee (Standing Committee Chair or Vice-Chair as designate) and City Branch staff.
- d) Organize Event logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City staff support.
- e) Lead Communications – prepare and distribute promotions and communications to the public.
- f) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend and capture photography and videography.

Branch staff:

- a) Provide Logistics – provide logistical items and deliver programming elements as required.
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the capital project includes funding to deliver and promote a Neighbourhood Event Opening.
- c) Attend – attend the neighbourhood opening event.

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5.3 Joint Partnership Announcements

Joint Partnership Announcements are delivered by City staff in collaboration with the External Partner.

The format of the announcement will be determined by the topic, audience and location. If the facility's or program's purpose is to serve the needs of the community, the announcement typically will include some or all of the following elements:

- a) Drop-in event for the audience (e.g. board of directors, External Partner organization officials, and/or facility users) that may include light refreshments.
- b) Welcome greetings / from the Mayor as Head of Council (or designate) and remarks from a representative from the External Partner.
- c) Celebratory activity involving all members of Council, the External Partner representatives and, if applicable, facility users (e.g. sign unveiling, cake-cutting).

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.
- b) Mayor (or designate) deliver official remarks on behalf of the City.
- c) If applicable for formal announcements at City facilities, Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) deliver introductions as emcee.
- d) Mayor (or designate) and External Partner lead the celebratory activity.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review Council calendars with the Mayor's Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Mayor's Office, External Partner and City Branch staff, as well as, if applicable, the emcee.

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- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff. If applicable, coordinate with the External Partner invitations via email to funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the announcement. Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- c) Develop Itinerary – if applicable, coordinate the celebratory activity or formal remarks with input from the Mayor’s Office and External Partner and if applicable, the emcee. If the announcement is hosted at a City Facility, follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- d) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs with the External Partner.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – provide speaking notes for City Spokespersons and share for consideration at least five business days in advance of the event, if possible.
- f) Organize Logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City Branch staff.
- g) Lead Communication – coordinate with the External Partner to prepare and distribute communications to the public and/or Media as required.
- h) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend the announcement and capture photography and videography as required.

Branch staff:

- a) Deliver Logistics – provide logistical items and programming elements as required.
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the announcement is accommodated within the project / program budget as per the partnership agreement.

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5.4 Special Event Opening Ceremonies

City Produced Special Events are delivered by City staff and may have an official opening ceremony component. The inclusion of opening ceremonies during a City Produced Special Event is dependent on several factors such as but not limited to event funding from other levels of government and the program format of the event.

When a Special Event Opening Ceremony (“Opening Ceremony”) is determined as part of the event program, it will include the following Spokespersons:

- Master of Ceremonies (emcee) who introduces Elected Officials and if applicable funding partners and sponsors; and/or
- Mayor as Head of Council (or designate) to deliver greetings on behalf of the City.

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate.
- b) Mayor (or designate) deliver official remarks and introductions.
- c) Upon request and availability, Standing Committee Chair (or designate) may be requested to emcee the Opening Ceremony component.

Special Events and Culture Services staff:

- a) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal calendar invite from specialevents@oshawa.ca to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Communications, and key community stakeholders as required, as well as invite dignitaries such as federal and provincial representatives (if funding providing) and sponsors (if applicable). Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- b) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.
- c) Confirm Emcee – confirm a Master of Ceremonies (emcee) for the Opening Ceremony component of the event. Depending on the program event format, the emcee will be the Standing Committee Chair (or designate), a member of the

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local media or a local member/ community member with an appropriate tie to the event.

- d) Develop Itinerary – develop an itinerary for the Opening Ceremony component of the event with input from the Mayor’s Office and emcee; follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – develop speaking notes for City Spokespersons and share the agenda and speaking notes at least five business days in advance of the event with Spokespersons.
- f) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.
- g) Organize Logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City Branch staff.
- h) Attend and provide support on the day-of – greet and track attendance of members of Council, dignitaries and special guests, facilitate warm introductions, provide speaking notes on site, and assist individuals on and off the stage as required.

5.5 Business Openings and Business Celebrations

It is the responsibility of the Local Business to determine, plan and deliver their business grand opening and business milestone events.

Upon request and/or upon notification of a Business Opening or Local Business Celebration event, City staff:

- a) Direct requests for Local Business groundbreaking, grand opening and/or business milestone events to Business and Economic Development Services via email to business@oshawa.ca or by completing the City’s [Celebrate a Business Milestone application request form](#).

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Business and Economic Development Services:

- a) Respond – acknowledge all incoming Local Business groundbreaking, grand opening and/or business milestone event requests within three business days.
- b) Date and Time – educate Local Business representative(s) on preferred member of Council dates, noteworthy conflicting City events/initiatives, and opportunities of support courtesy of Business and Economic Development Services.
- c) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal calendar invite from business@oshawa.ca to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Communications. The invitation will include the date, time to arrive, time of event, length of event, event location as well as any provided pertinent details related to the event.
- d) Draft Speaking Notes – upon request from the Local Business, coordinate the availability and attendance of City Spokespersons with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and, if applicable, draft speaking notes for consideration.
- e) Logistics – as per the standardized opportunities for City support, prepare and/or coordinate any requested items.
- f) Day-of – endeavour to attend to assist with warm introductions and proceedings, and capture photography/ videography for City communications.

Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council:

- a) Date and Time – upon request, review calendars for preferred member of Council dates.
- b) Upon request, Mayor’s Office to prepare a Certificate of Recognition and deliver to the member of Council or Business and Economic Development Services City representative in advance of the Business Opening event.

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5.6 External Partner Events

It is the responsibility of the External Partner to determine, plan and deliver their announcements, events and openings. Examples include but are not limited to External Partner led tree plantings, funding announcements, community events and organization/partner facility openings (e.g. new elementary/secondary schools).

Upon request, when an External Partner reaches out for support or extends the offer for members of Council and the City to participate, the lead City Branch staff, the Mayor’s Office and/or Office of City Council staff:

- a) Respond – acknowledge all event requests within three business days.
- b) Advise Date and Time – educate the External Partner on preferred Council dates, noteworthy conflicting City events/initiatives, and opportunities of support.
- c) Invitations – upon request, distribute an internal calendar invite to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Communications. The invitation will include the date, time to arrive, time of event, length of event, event location as well as any provided pertinent details related to the event.
- d) Draft Speaking Notes – upon request from the External Partner, coordinate the availability and attendance of City Spokespersons with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and, if applicable, draft speaking notes for consideration.
- e) Logistics – as per the standardized opportunities for City support, prepare and/or coordinate any requested items.

6.0 Procedures

6.1 Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements

The Corporate Communications Branch is responsible for the development and implementation of the Corporation’s communications strategies.

To support Policy compliance, Corporate Communications will establish and maintain this Policy (Official Openings Policy), the Communications Policy and the Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Corporate Procedure.

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6.2 City Produced Special Events

The Special Events and Culture Services team is responsible for the development and implementation of City Produced Special Events, including determining which Special Events will have an Opening Ceremony component, as well as supporting External Partner Special Event Opening Ceremonies as required.

To support Policy compliance, the Special Events and Culture team will establish and maintain Special Event Opening Ceremonies procedures.

6.3 Business Events

The Business and Economic Development Services Branch is responsible for supporting Oshawa businesses, developers and industry leaders on their respective business events and announcements such as openings and business milestone events.

To support Policy compliance, the Business and Economic Development Services Branch will establish and maintain Business Openings and Business Events procedures.

6.4 Openings, Events and Announcements During a Campaign Period

During a Campaign Period, members of Council and Employees will follow the Council approved [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#) (GOV-18-01) and these guidelines below:

For City openings, events and announcements,

Members of Council:

- will continue to receive invitations to and attend openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council;
- will continue to be included in photos and videos when attending openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council; and,
- will not have a Spokesperson role, except as Head of Council.

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The Mayor, in their capacity as Head of Council:

- will continue to have a Spokesperson role (e.g. delivering remarks, sending greetings, remarks as an emcee); and,
- will be able to designate any quote or speaking opportunities to another member of Council to act as official Spokesperson, if unable to attend.

Employees:

- will avoid delivering Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Partnership Announcements during the period between the last regular City Council Meeting of the current Council up until and including Voting Day, notwithstanding instances in which the City cannot delay announcing funding or partnerships or is obligated as per signed agreements. City Produced Special Events with Special Event Opening Ceremony components will continue to be delivered; and,
- will extend invitations to City-led Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Partnership Announcements to both members of Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects are sworn in; and,
- upon approval and request from the Local Business or External Partner, will extend invitations to Business Openings and Business Celebrations and External Partner openings, announcements and special events to both members of Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects are sworn in.

7.0 Monitoring/Review

This Policy is reviewed by the Director, Corporate Communications every five years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legislation and current business processes or as required based on legislative changes. The Director is authorized to make minor or housekeeping amendments to this Policy, as required.

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8.0 References


[Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#) (GOV-18-01)

[Land Acknowledgement Policy](#) (GOV-23-01)

[Communications Policy](#) (GOV-24-01)

Corporate Procedure - Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence

9.0 Approval

Authority Council	Date November 25, 2024	Signature 
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