

Council Policy

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Number:	CP-035
Title:	Public Event Alcohol Permit Designation
Type:	Protective Services
Sub-type:	Licensing
Owner:	Legislative Services Department Clerk's Division Council
Approved By:	Council
Approval Date:	March 23, 2026
Effective Date:	April 30, 2026
Revised Date:	New Policy
Applicable to:	Staff involved in processing Alcohol Permit Designation Requests.

1. Legislative or Administrative Authority:

- 1.1. The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) is responsible for administering the Liquor Licence and Control Act (LLCA), 2019, which, together with the regulations made under them, establish the licensing and regulatory regime for most aspects relating to the sale and service of alcohol in Ontario.
- 1.2. O. Reg. 747/21, as amended, effective April 30, 2026, a regulation of LLCA, outlines changes to create "Bring-Your-Own Events".
- 1.3. The Delegation of Authority By-law 2024-042 provides delegation to the Municipal Clerk for Public Event designation and AGCO permit support.

2. Purpose:

- 2.1. This Policy establishes the criteria and process for the Municipality to designate an event:
 - as a "municipally significant event" for the purposes of Special Occasion Permits administered by the AGCO.
 - as a Community or Cultural event for the purposes of Bring-Your-Own Event Permits administered by the AGCO.

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2.2. The goal of this Policy is to ensure applications are evaluated consistently, transparently, and in accordance with municipal guidelines and provincial legislation.

3. Scope:

3.1. This policy applies to:

- All requests for a Municipal designation of a “municipally significant event” for the purposes of a Special Occasion permit.
- All requests for a Municipal designation of a Community, or Cultural, event for the purposes of a Bring-Your-Own Event permit.

3.2. This policy does not include:

- Municipal events that are by invitation only and not open to the general public, i.e. staff events, volunteer recognition events.
- Events that are for personal profit/gain or running an ongoing business of events.

4. Definitions:

4.1. “Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)” means the provincial regulatory agency, under the authority of the Attorney General, responsible for administering and enforcing the LLCA and its regulations, including the issuance and oversight of Bring-Your-Own Event permits in Ontario.

4.2. “Bring-Your-Own Event (BYO Event)” means a public outdoor event at which attendees aged 19 or older may bring and consume their own alcohol, with either sale or no-sale of alcohol depending on the permit type, as defined in O. Reg. 747/21, as amended.

4.3. “Charity Event” means the same as defined in the LLCA and associated regulations (specifically O. Reg. 747/21 or its successor.)

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4.4. “Community Event” means an event primarily intended to bring members of the community together and may include events that:

- Promote neighbourhood interaction and participation by the general public.
- Foster social connection, inclusion, and local pride within the Municipality.
- Elevate community accomplishments or notable contributions.
- Enhances or promotes a local community asset (e.g. heritage feature, local park, local community group)
- Are charity, or fundraising, events which may include events that:
 - Raise funds or awareness for registered charities or community causes;
 - Clearly identify the beneficiary and intended community impact; and
 - Demonstrate transparent fundraising practices.
- Contributes to economic activity, or commercial benefit, within the Municipality (e.g. farmers markets, pop-up promotion, product launch, customer appreciation event.)
- Attract visitors or stimulate local spending (e.g., festivals, tournaments, signature markets.)
- Support local businesses or tourism objectives.
- Demonstrate measurable or anticipated economic benefit (e.g., foot traffic, vendor participation, accommodation demand.)

4.5. “Cultural Event” means an event intended to celebrate or showcase cultural expression, heritage, or diversity and may include events that:

- Showcases or celebrates arts, culture, or creative expression (e.g. concerts, performances/theatre, exhibits, gallery, bookstore, artisan shows/markets).

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- Showcases or celebrates heritage, Indigenous, or ethnocultural traditions, language, cuisine, or creative expression.
 - Are international or religious festivals.
 - Align with local heritage sites, anniversaries, or milestones.
 - Build awareness of diverse cultures and inclusion.
 - Commemorate achievements, service, people, places, or events of local/regional/national/international historical or cultural significance.
 - Include interpretive or educational components (e.g. fairs, commemorations.)
- 4.6. “Municipality” means the Corporation of the Municipality of Clarington.
- 4.7. “Municipally Significant Event” means an event that has been formally recognized by the Municipality, by resolution or by letter, as meeting the requirements for municipal designation.
- 4.8. “Occasional Event” means an event that occurs infrequently and is not part of an ongoing or continuous operation or business, consistent with AGCO’s requirement that SOPs apply only to occasional, special events and not to the operation of a business or activity on a recurring basis.
- 4.9. “Special Occasion Permit (SOP)” means a permit issued by the AGCO which allows for the sale or service of alcohol on special occasions anywhere other than a licensed establishment or a private place (i.e. a residence.)
- 4.10. “User Fee By-law” means the Clarington User Fee By-law, as amended, or its successor.

5. Delegated Authority

- 5.1. The authority delegated in the Delegation of Authority by-law includes:
- Determine whether a submitted event is eligible to be designated as a community or cultural event under this Policy.
 - Determine whether a submitted event is eligible to be designated as a “municipally significant” event under this Policy.

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- Approve and issue, or deny, the required municipal designation letter.

6. Municipal Application Process

- 6.1. Individuals or organizations shall make application, within the timelines outlined in the LLCA and Regulations, with the applicable fee, for a Municipal Letter to the Municipal Clerk's office, in the manner specified by the Municipal Clerk, providing details (as specified by the Municipal Clerk) of the proposed event.
- 6.2. For the purposes of this Policy, the Municipality may rely on information provided by the applicant and is not responsible for auditing or verifying the applicant's charitable status or fundraising outcomes.
- 6.3. The authorized Staff will:
 - Review the request and use the Eligibility Criteria to determine eligibility for Municipal designation for the proposed event;
 - Issue designation letters;
 - Maintaining internal SOP procedures; and
 - Consult with relevant departments, as required.
- 6.4. The applicant is responsible for submitting the letter, as part of their Permit application, to the AGCO.
- 6.5. There is no appeal process under this Policy; however, applicants may submit a revised application.

Events on Municipal Property

- 6.6. Where an event is proposed on municipal property (including roads), the authorized person shall consult applicable Deputy CAOs, or designate, regarding operational feasibility and consistency with any applicable municipal alcohol policies and practices.
- 6.7. Events held on municipal property remain subject to all municipal approvals, permits, and any applicable municipal alcohol policies and practices.

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- 6.8. Designation of an event under this Policy does not necessarily indicate Permit approval for events on municipal property. Event Permit approval is still required and separate from this process.

Designation in General

- 6.9. Nothing in this Policy obliges the Municipality to designate an event. Designation remains at the Municipality's discretion under this Policy and applicable legislation.
- 6.10. Designation of an event under this Policy does not create a precedent for future events.
- 6.11. Organizer profit status does not determine eligibility for designation.

7. Municipal Designation – Special Occasion Permit

- 7.1. Individuals or organizations applying to the AGCO for certain Special Occasion Permits must obtain a letter, or resolution, from the Municipality confirming the event has been designated as being “municipally significant.”

Eligibility Criteria for Municipally Significant Event Designation

- 7.2. To be designated as a municipally significant event, the Applicant confirms that the event:
- Is an occasional event.
 - Has a predetermined opening and closing date(s) and time(s).
 - Is located within the geographic boundaries of the Municipality.
 - Is open to and advertised to the general public (e.g. street markets/festivals, outdoor movie nights, block-style gathering.)
 - Aligns with one, or both, of the following categories:
 - Community Event; or
 - Cultural Event.

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- Complies with all Municipal by-laws and policies.
- Complies with all permitting, notice, and safety requirements.

8. Municipal Designation – Bring-Your-Own Event

- 8.1. Individuals or organizations applying to the AGCO for a Bring-Your-Own Event permit must obtain a letter, or resolution, from the Municipality confirming the event has been designated a Community or Cultural event. The AGCO cannot issue a permit without this designation.
- 8.2. As stated in the Regulation, “nothing in this Regulation shall be read as requiring a municipal council or its delegate to designate an event as a cultural or community event, or as requiring or otherwise providing for procedures in respect of such a designation.”

Eligibility Criteria for Community or Cultural Event Designation

- 8.3. To be designated as a Community or Cultural event, the Applicant confirms that the event:
 - Is an occasional event.
 - Has a predetermined opening and closing date(s) and time(s).
 - Is located within the geographic boundaries of the Municipality.
 - Is an outdoor, ground-level public event.
 - Is open to, and advertised to, the general public (e.g. street markets/festivals, outdoor movie nights, block-style gathering.)
 - Aligns with one, or both, of the following categories:
 - Community Event
 - Cultural Event
 - Complies with all Municipal by-laws and policies.
 - Comply with all permitting, notice, and safety requirements.

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9. Fees

- 9.1. An application for a designation under this Policy is subject to the fees contained in the User Fee By-law.
- 9.2. Exemptions to the fee are also detailed in the User Fee By-law.

10. Roles and Responsibilities:

10.1. Council is responsible for:

- 10.1.1. Approving this Policy and any future amendments.

10.2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for:

- 10.2.1. Overseeing Corporate compliance with this Policy.

10.3. Directors / Managers are responsible for the following within their scope of authority:

- 10.3.1. Ensuring departmental cooperation when events require review.

10.4. Municipal Clerk is responsible for:

- 10.4.1. Reviewing, approving, or denying applications requesting to be designated as an event of municipal significance, or cultural or community event, and providing a letter in response to the application, in accordance with the Delegation of Authority By-law.

10.5. All Staff are responsible for:

- 10.5.1. Supporting the implementation of the Policy within their operational roles.

11. Related Documents:

- 11.1. Delegation of Authority By-law
- 11.2. Special Events on Private Property By-law
- 11.3. Special Events on Municipal Highways By-law
- 11.4. By-law to License On-Farm Events

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11.5. The Clerk's Division Special Occasion Permit Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or its successor.

12. Inquiries:

12.1. Municipal Clerk, clerks@clarington.net

13. Revision History:

Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
March 23, 2026	Initial creation of policy reflecting changes to O. Reg. 747/21 and formalization of guidelines. Policy approved.	Council