

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES
SUBJECT: **SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING POLICY**
PURPOSE: To seek Council approval of the draft Sponsorship and Advertising Policy and delegate approval thresholds for entering sponsorship and advertising agreements.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the draft Sponsorship and Advertising Policy, as outlined in the report titled “Sponsorship and Advertising Policy” dated June 24, 2025; and

THAT Council delegate approval thresholds for entering into sponsorship and advertising agreements on behalf of the City of Burnaby, as follows:

- i. Directors: up to \$50,000
- ii. General Managers: up to \$200,000
- iii. CAO: up to \$500,000
- iv. Burnaby City Council: over \$500,000.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The draft Sponsorship and Advertising Policy aligns with the Burnaby Corporate Strategic Plan (2022) as well as complies with relevant legislation, including the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The City of Burnaby has increasingly received interest from external organizations seeking sponsorship and advertising opportunities related to City assets, events, and programs. In addition, the City continuously seeks alternative ways to broaden revenue opportunities wherever possible. While these opportunities can provide substantial financial support, they must be managed through a formal framework to safeguard the City’s values, maintain transparency, and ensure equitable treatment of all proponents.

To address this, staff has developed a draft Sponsorship and Advertising Policy. This policy is intended to serve as the foundational document governing sponsorship and advertising opportunities by outlining required agreements, establishing administrative roles, decision thresholds, and eligibility criteria.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Sponsorship and Advertising Policy (Attachment 1) has been developed to create a clear, consistent, and strategic approach for managing external sponsorship and advertising arrangements across City programs, events, facilities, and media. This policy addresses the growing interest from private and non-profit sectors in forming partnerships with the City and establishes protocols to ensure such relationships align with municipal values, priorities, and strategic objectives.

The policy is supported by Advertising Guidelines and Procedures (Attachment 2) and Sponsorship Guidelines and Procedures (Attachment 3).

Key elements of the policy include:

- a) **Policy Applicability:** It governs all business relationships in which the City receives financial or in-kind support from individuals, businesses, or organizations in exchange for recognition or promotional benefits. These may include naming mentions, logo placement, physical branding on City assets, or digital advertising in/on City assets.
- b) **Exclusions:** The policy explicitly excludes philanthropic donations, naming rights, third-party events funded by the City, and financial contributions from other levels of government or foundations via grant programs. These are managed under separate frameworks.
- c) **Approval Thresholds:** Clear authority thresholds are defined for approving agreements:
 - v. Directors (in collaboration with asset owners): up to \$50,000
 - vi. General Managers: up to \$200,000
 - vii. CAO: up to \$500,000
 - viii. City Council: over \$500,000

The positions listed above align with current approval authority and will be included in the next update of the Routine Transactions Bylaw.

- d) **Criteria for Participation:** All proposals must meet specific eligibility and quality criteria. These include alignment with City policies and bylaws, value-add to existing City services or programs, non-interference with existing contracts, and respect for ethical standards and legal requirements.

2.1 Sponsorship

The sponsorship component of the policy establishes a structured framework for engaging with external organizations that wish to support City programs, services, or events through financial or in-kind contributions. These arrangements are mutually beneficial and offer recognition or promotional consideration in return, such as name association, logo placement, or activation rights at events.

Key details include:

- **Applicability:** Sponsorships apply where a business or organization offers financial or material support for a City initiative in return for public recognition or visibility. This includes contributions to events, recreational programs, facility enhancements, or digital and print materials.
- **Purpose:** Sponsorships are intended to add value by enhancing services and events. They are not a replacement for existing budget allocations but instead supplement City funding and improve the quality and reach of offerings to the public.
- **Contribution Documentation:**
 - Under \$1,000: letter of agreement
 - \$1,000 and above: formal sponsorship agreement
 - Media sponsorships: documented by letter
- **Agreement Criteria:**
 - The City retains full control of its assets and programming.
 - Sponsors receive no access to personal data.
 - Agreements must not result in any real or perceived conflict of interest, nor displace regular City funding.
 - Sponsorships may be terminated unilaterally by the City if values are misaligned or reputational risk arises.
 - Any name or ownership changes during the term of an agreement require City approval.
- **Recognition and Revenue Use:**
 - Sponsor recognition is tied directly to the sponsored event or program.
 - Revenue is directed to cover the operating costs of the specific initiative supported by the sponsor.
- **Content and Branding Control:** Sponsors are required to obtain prior approval for any creative material, branding, or messaging displayed on City assets. All content must maintain the integrity of the City's visual identity and cannot imply endorsement of any external entity's products or services.

2.2 Advertising

The advertising component of the policy addresses commercial messaging opportunities on City-owned assets, media, and properties. It outlines the process, standards, and limitations to ensure advertising content aligns with civic identity and does not compromise public trust.

Key details include:

- **Applicability:** Advertising is defined as paid content by external entities that is placed in City-controlled media or on City infrastructure, such as transit shelters, arena boards, digital screens, printed guides, or eco-bins.
- **Types of Advertising:**
 - *Direct Advertising:* Agreements made directly between the City and the advertiser.
 - *Third-Party Advertising:* Agreements where an intermediary (media company) sells and manages advertising placements on behalf of the City (e.g., billboard companies).
- **Content Standards:**
 - All advertising must meet the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards.
 - It must not suggest City endorsement or compromise the City's brand integrity.

The Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications (or designate) is responsible for reviewing all advertising content, in line with the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards.

- **Revenue Use and Procurement:**
 - Direct advertising revenue is used to offset production and distribution costs of the program (e.g., Activity Guide).
 - Revenue from third-party contracts includes compensation for the administrative oversight and is used to support the relevant advertising programs.
 - Third-party sales contracts must be established through a competitive procurement process to ensure value for the City.
- **Placement Approval:** All advertising locations on City assets will be approved in accordance with the Approval Thresholds outlined in section E. Responsibilities of the policy.

3.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

4.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Revenues generated as a result of this policy will be applied as outlined in Attachment 1 and will be dependent on the size and scope of the sponsorship or advertising agreement. It is anticipated that this policy will allow for consideration of significant revenue opportunities (i.e. digital advertising signs).

Respectfully submitted,

Juli Halliwell, General Manager Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Sponsorship and Advertising Policy

Attachment 2 – Advertising Guidelines and Procedures

Attachment 3 - Sponsorship Guidelines and Procedures

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Juli Halliwell, General Manager Corporate Services, and reviewed by Frances Tang-Graham, Manager Communications and Community Engagement, May Leung, City Solicitor and Ratan Grewal, Deputy General Manager Finance.