



**CITY OF  
Burlington**

# Corporate Policy

## Parks & Recreation

### Community Investment Policy

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Reviewed on: NA

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Note:

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### Policy Statement:

The City of Burlington Community Investment Policy is committed to supporting resident-led and community-based initiatives that strengthen community life, foster belonging, and enhance the social, cultural, and recreational vitality of the city. This policy advances initiatives that improve the resident experience and contribute to the public good through enhanced services, programs, and stewardship of community assets.

It establishes a corporate framework guided by shared principles for the allocation of municipal investment, ensuring a fair, transparent, and strategically aligned approach across all departments. These investments are designed to:

- Foster community connection, placemaking, creativity, and shared experiences.
- Enhance cultural, recreational, and social vitality while enriching daily community life and civic pride.
- Contribute to the vibrancy, equity, and inclusiveness of Burlington's neighbourhoods and communities.
- Provide lasting community benefits by supporting projects that are sustainable.

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## Scope:

This policy applies to all City departments responsible for administering financial or in-kind investments for resident-led and community-based initiatives occurring on City-owned or managed lands, or in other publicly accessible spaces within Burlington as approved by the City.

It applies to incorporated and unincorporated not-for-profit organizations, artists, community groups, and neighbourhood collectives seeking municipal investment to deliver initiatives that strengthen community life, foster belonging, and enhance Burlington's social, recreational, and cultural vitality for the benefit of residents.

City investments may be combined with other public or private funding sources where appropriate to enhance impact and sustainability; however, they may not duplicate existing financial support for the same initiative.

These investments focus on strengthening neighbourhoods and communities, rather than providing direct social services.

This policy does not apply to:

- Boards, agencies, or commissions of the City.
- Regional, school board, or Conservation Authority lands.
- Organizations currently receiving other City of Burlington municipal funding for the same initiative.
- Activities primarily delivering direct social services.

## Objectives:

This policy will guide municipal investment in resident-led and community-based initiatives to strengthen Burlington's neighbourhoods and enhance recreational, social, and cultural vitality. It ensures a fair, transparent, and strategically aligned approach across all departments, with a focus on equity, sustainability, and lasting community benefit.

Implementation of this policy will:

- Establish clear processes and procedures for allocating financial and in-kind support to community initiatives.

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- Advance equity and inclusion by reducing barriers to participation.
- Amplify community expertise and resources.
- Encourage sustainability and long-term impact through initiatives that build capacity.
- Ensure investments complement, rather than duplicate, existing municipal funding and focus on community development rather than direct social services.

## Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Corporation	Refers to The Corporation of the City of Burlington.
Community	A group of individuals who share a common connection through geography, shared interests, identity, culture, or lived experience.
Community Development	The process of collective impact that empowers people to strengthen their community by working together to create inclusive, equitable, and lasting positive change.
Direct Social Services	Programs primarily addressing individual or family health, housing, income, or crisis needs, typically delivered by social service agencies.
Culture and Creative Activity	Encompasses artistic, heritage, and creative practices that contribute to community identity, expression, and belonging across Burlington.
Capacity	A process that strengthens the relevance, responsiveness,

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Term	Definition
	effectiveness, and resilience of organizations.
Events	A planned, time-limited recreation or cultural activity that brings people together to celebrate, engage, or participate in shared community experiences at a defined time and location.
Initiative	An event, program, project, or infrastructure enhancement delivered exclusively by eligible applicants, or in partnership with the City of Burlington, for the benefit of Burlington residents.
Not-for-profit	An organization operating for social, cultural, or community purposes without distributing profits to members.
One-time funding	Funding provided for a 12-month period or that is phased out over a period no longer than three years.
Programs	A series of at least three regularly scheduled activities designed to support participation in recreation, sport, arts, culture, or leadership development.
Project	A time-bound initiative with defined objectives, scope, and resources undertaken to plan, develop, enhance, or evaluate recreational, neighbourhood, or cultural infrastructure, services, or programs.
Recreation or Sport Activity	A structured opportunity for physical, social, or skill-based participation that promotes health, enjoyment, belonging, personal development, and active living.

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## Principles:

Community investment decisions are guided by the following values and principles. Alignment with these principles will inform the assessment and prioritization of all municipal investments in community initiatives.

- Inclusivity and Belonging – Initiatives are welcoming, accessible, and reflective of Burlington’s diverse communities, fostering spaces where all residents feel connected and valued.
- Equity and Transparency – Investments are made fairly and responsibly to ensure equitable access to recreation and culture, with clear, consistent, and accountable procedures guiding all decisions.
- Collaboration and Partnership – The City works with community groups, artists, and residents to share leadership, resources, and expertise, fostering stronger, more connected, and resilient communities.
- Creativity and Innovation – The City supports initiatives that apply imaginative and adaptive approaches to community development, cultural expression, and placemaking.
- Vitality and Wellbeing – Recognizes culture, recreation, neighbourhood connections and sport as essential to a thriving city, enriching Burlington’s identity, artistic expression, civic pride, and the health and wellbeing of its residents.
- Sustainability and Stewardship – Promotes initiatives that deliver lasting community benefits for Burlington residents, demonstrate financial and environmental responsibility, and build local resilience.
- Strategic Alignment and Public Value – Ensures investments advance Council-approved priorities, contribute to community wellbeing, and deliver meaningful outcomes for residents.

## Eligibility:

To be eligible for municipal investment under this policy, initiatives must:

- Be led by a not-for-profit organization, neighbourhood group, Burlington resident, artist (individual or collective), or community collective with the demonstrated capacity to deliver the proposed initiative.
- Take place within Burlington’s geographic boundaries and serve Burlington residents.

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- Occur on City-owned or managed property, or in other publicly accessible spaces including partner venues and/or community hubs approved by the City.
- Demonstrate alignment with Burlington's cultural and community values, and with the guiding values and principles outlined in this policy.
- Provide a clear and demonstrable community benefit to Burlington residents that strengthens social, cultural, sport, and recreational vitality.
- Receive funding under a single investment program per initiative, for a defined period between one and three years, as outlined in each Grant Agreement.
- Be eligible for a combination of grant and in-kind support, provided it is administered through a single investment program and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement drawn.
- Demonstrate the capacity to achieve financial self-sufficiency and/or organizational sustainability for the initiative or service within an agreed-upon period, with City funding remaining time-limited, targeted, and subject to performance and City discretion.

## Exclusions:

Funding through this policy is intended to strengthen Burlington's community and cultural vitality. Municipal investments will not be provided for activities that do not align with these goals or to ineligible organizations which include:

- Boards, agencies, or commissions of the City of Burlington.
- Regional, school board, or conservation authorities.
- Initiatives already receiving City funding for the same purpose.
- Activities primarily delivering direct social services (e.g., health, housing, crisis intervention).
- Initiatives led solely by for-profit entities.
- Political, faith-based, or advocacy activities that are exclusive, or denominational.
- Fundraising events or activities that primarily advance positions on matters regulated by the City.
- Initiatives that conflict with Council decisions, existing City policies, or applicable legislation.

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- Activities, events, programs or initiatives requiring operational or ongoing core funding to sustain the activity or organization, except where funds are explicitly approved as eligible operational launch expenses under the terms of a Grant Agreement.

## **Governance:**

Effective governance of the Community Investment Policy is shared across City Council, Senior Management, and Departmental Staff to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with Burlington's strategic goals.

- City Council – Provides overarching policy direction and allocates funding envelopes through the municipal budget process.
- Senior Management – Ensures corporate consistency and alignment with City-wide strategies, facilitating coordination among departments.
- Department Director – Provide corporate oversight and are responsible for ensuring the consistent application of this policy across all community investment programs.
- Department – Develop and maintain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to operationalize the policy, including:
  - Application and intake processes.
  - Review and evaluation criteria.
  - Approval authorities.
  - Funding agreements, reporting, and accountability mechanisms.
  - Embedding the City's commitments to equity, transparency, and community wellbeing in the design and delivery of their investment programs.
- Investment Recipients – Share accountability by adhering to agreed-upon reporting and evaluation requirements and demonstrating responsible stewardship of public funds.

## **Administration:**

The Recreation, Community and Culture Department will oversee the ongoing administration of this policy to ensure alignment with the City's strategic priorities, legislative requirements, and evolving community needs. Senior Management or their delegates will coordinate periodic review to maintain consistency with corporate strategies and best practices.

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- Review Cycle – A formal review of this policy will occur every five years, or as directed by Council, to ensure continued relevance, efficiency, and responsiveness. Associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and program guidelines may be updated administratively as needed to reflect emerging best practices, operational considerations, or community feedback.
- Performance Evaluation – The City will conduct annual evaluations of program participation and funding outcomes to measure progress toward commitments related to equity, cultural vitality, sustainability, and transparency. Results will inform continuous improvement and be shared publicly to promote accountability.

## References:

- Vision to Focus 2022-2026
- Corporate Sponsorship and Partnership Policy
- Public Art Policy
- Special Events Policy
- Corporate Grants and Donations SOP
- Recreation Framework
- Live and Play Plan
- Culture Plan

## Roles:

### **Accountable:**

The Director of Recreation, Community and Culture is accountable for the administration of this policy, and for its timely review.

### **Responsible:**

Effective implementation of the Community Investment Policy relies on shared responsibility and collaboration between City Council, staff, investment recipients, and community partners.

- City Council – Provides strategic direction, approves funding envelopes through the annual budget process, and ensures the policy aligns with Council priorities and community values.

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- Director of Recreation, Community and Culture – Provides corporate leadership and oversight, ensuring consistent implementation across department and alignment with the City’s strategic frameworks, including the Culture Plan and Horizon 2050.
- Senior Managers and Departmental Staff – Administer investment programs in accordance with approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), maintain transparent processes, and report annually on participation, funding outcomes, and community impact.
- Investment Recipients – Deliver funded initiatives in alignment with funding agreements, reporting requirements, and applicable legislation, while demonstrating accountability, inclusivity, and measurable community benefit.
- Community Partners and Stakeholders – Contribute to the success of the City’s investment programs through collaboration, shared learning, and feedback that supports continuous improvement and responsiveness to community needs.