

Policy for the short-term use of public space

Introduction

This policy has been developed to assist Council staff to consider requests for the use of the Square, Railway Land, public space in the Central Business District (CBD) and other city parks and reserves, including requests from commercial users. The policy supports Council's goal to increase vibrancy in the CBD and in other public spaces.

Strategic alignment

The draft vision and goals developed by Council have an objective of making energy, vibrancy and activity part of the Palmerston North City centre brand/reputation. There are a number of key objectives of this:

- Increase the amount of engagement with the city centre from both locals and visitors;
- Increase the after 5pm economy in the city centre; and
- Support the creation and development of specific precincts within the city centre (e.g. Broadway as a hospitality precinct).

The policy is consistent with the Council's draft vision, principles and goals.

Policy objectives and goals

The objective of this policy is to increase the vibrancy of the city centre by increasing the number of short-term activities and events occurring in public places, particularly the Square, Railway Land, public space in the central business district (CBD) and other city parks and reserves. This includes encouraging a range of commercial events, such as:

- leisure and recreation events where an entrance fee may or may not be charged; and
- promotion, marketing and advertising events.

Increasing the vibrancy of the CBD and in other public spaces will require the Council to respond quickly to new ideas and be flexible when organisations want to book spaces for activities that have not been tried before. Key objectives in implementing this policy are:

- Championing event ideas that increase variation, innovation and collaborative partnerships for the benefit of the city centre;
- Simplifying Council processes for event planning and delivery;
- Being agile in how Council thinks and acts so that good opportunities can be seized as they arise; and
- Having a 'Yes' culture when presented with innovative opportunities.

Policy principles

This policy will be implemented with regard to the following draft Council principles:

- Inclusive
- Open
- Ambitious
- Bold
- Enabling

- Guardianship

Guidelines for assessing applications

Key Areas of Interest

To meet the policy's objectives of increasing the vibrancy of the CBD and creating great places for all people the Council will use the following four criteria when considering applications to use public space:

- Is this activity short-term/one-off?
- Does this activity contribute to the vibrancy in the city centre?
- Will this activity grow visible public life?
- Does this activity support Council's overall direction?

Applications will also be assessed on their individual merits and in the context of the overall events calendar.

Prioritisation

Where there is more than one application for space, priority will be given to events that meet the following conditions. The more conditions an application meets, the higher priority it will be given:

- Activities and events that are most accessible to the whole community (for example, no entry charge or other conditions to participation). The likely success of an application for an event that targets specific or niche segments of the community will not be affected, as long as accessibility is not limited to a particular segment of the community.
- Activities and events that are unique on the events calendar or new for Palmerston North.
- Activities or events that enhance the development of precinct identities (e.g. Broadway as a hospitality precinct).
- Activities or events that support the direction of council.
- Activities or events that provide an experience (vs the sale of products or services).
- The activity or event does not limit significantly the availability of space for community events and passive recreation.

In principle, commercial users of council land should not be unfairly advantaged over established city businesses that have rent or rates overheads. Requests for the temporary use of space by city business will be given preference over requests from business not resident in the city.

Charges

A bond may be required on a case by case basis to cover risk of damage.

Monitoring

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored by staff. A report will be prepared for Council after one year, reviewing the effectiveness of the policy in increasing CBD vibrancy and whether a more formal review of the policy is required.