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Building Support for Smoke-free Festivals and Events: The Ottawa Experience

**A DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICE REPORT
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The Program Training and Consultation Centre conducts applied research in partnership with
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PROGRAM TRAINING AND CONSULTATION CENTRE

The Program Training and Consultation Centre (PTCC), founded in 1993, is a resource centre of the Government of Ontario's Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy (SFO). PTCC acts as a knowledge broker between local public health departments, the research community, and government. Its strategic priorities are to:

- Build the capacity of Ontario's 36 public health departments to plan and implement evidence-based tobacco control programs
- Support moving evidence into action
- Strengthen program development and applied research efforts
- Build system capacity to support the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy renewal

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About the Study

This document describes the work conducted in Ottawa around building support for smoke-free outdoor festivals and events as part of the Program Training and Consultation Centre's Documentation of Practice Project (DoP). For purposes of this DoP study, the terms festival and event are used synonymously and support for smoke-free events is defined as:

- municipalities, event organizers, and/or the public developing attitudes that support smoke-free events; and/or
- event organizers setting a priority and/or developing policies and procedures to make their events smoke-free.

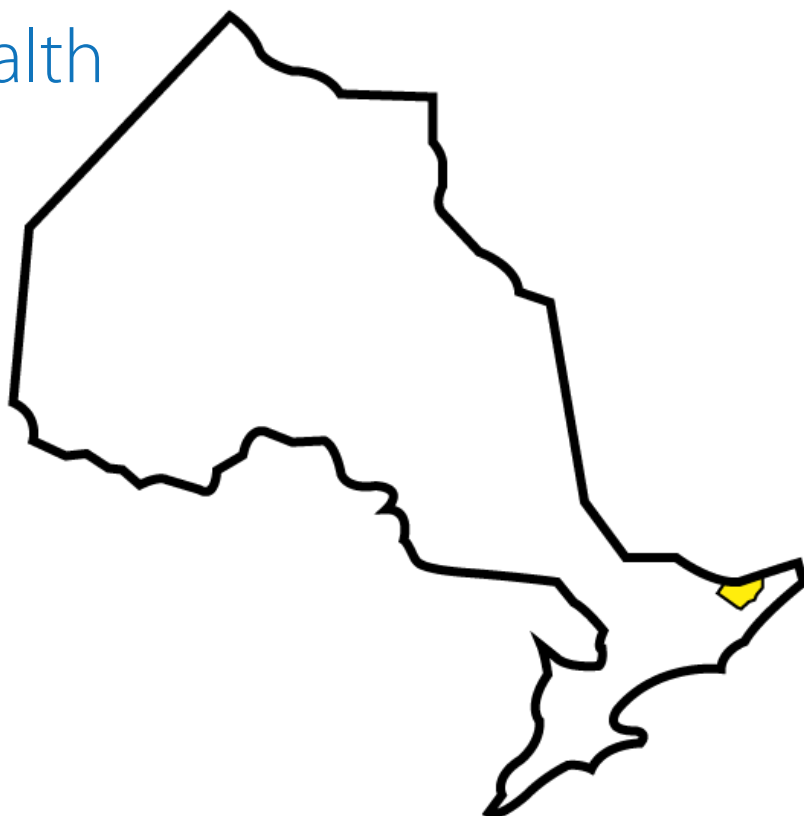
The study uses information gathered from semi-structured interviews and relevant documents about the documented cases. Data are analysed using a realist-inspired approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) to understand what worked for whom and under what circumstances to build support for smoke-free outdoor festivals and events.

The Ottawa example is one of four cases selected for this study. For this case example, two informants from Ottawa Public Health were interviewed and documents included various health unit communications including Tumblr posts, emails, signage, and website content. Each case example presents the processes and insights specific to that location and the cross-case report highlights the key learnings and insights from across the cases.¹

1.0 Ottawa Public Health

Ottawa Public Health is a department within the municipality of the City of Ottawa. The health unit serves 883,391 people, 14.1%² of whom are current smokers³ (Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, 2016). Tourism Ottawa labels the following as notable neighborhoods in Ottawa:

- Byward Market and Downtown Rideau
- The Glebe and Old Ottawa Souththe City of Brockville; and
- Centretown
- Westboro
- Wellington West
- Chinatown and Little Italy (St. Joseph Media, 2016)



¹To read the cross-case report, other case examples, and to look at other DoPs, please visit the documentation of practice section of PTCC's website at https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/knowledge_exchange/DoPs/

² Ottawa Public Health uses the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System as their data-source which estimates that 9% of people over 19 years of age in Ottawa are current smokers (2015). For the purpose of this report, the OTRU monitoring report prevalence by health unit region is used to enable comparison across the cases.

³ Current smoking defined by past 30-day use and 100 cigarettes in lifetime (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013/2014).

2.0 Smoke-free events strategy

As the nation's capital, the City of Ottawa hosts many large festivals and events that are known locally, nationally, and internationally. Ottawa Public Health focuses on building supports and structures that mandate smoke-free spaces, reducing exposure to second-hand smoke, and raising awareness of the harms of smoking and the available cessation supports. The health unit uses a stakeholder engagement approach to carry out these functions. This includes some direct engagement of event organizers and other influential groups.

The health unit began exploring smoke-free events by developing an understanding of the local event context and using quick-wins to start building momentum for a smoke-free movement. Specifically, the health unit offered to support a few large festivals that were interested in being smoke-free. To mandate practice change at other events, the health unit helped the two major event venue landowners, the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission (NCC), to develop aligned policies to make events held on their properties smoke-free. To support smoke-free by-law implementation, the health unit publicized the event organizers' voluntary smoke-free policies to inspire and pave the way for others to follow suit. They also worked with the Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health to advocate for smoke-free festivals and events and with Event Central and Ottawa Festivals to disseminate smoke-free messaging and implement smoke-free practices at events. The health unit supports events in an ongoing way by providing education, responding to second-hand smoke exposure complaints and identifying hotspots for enforcement.

National Capital Commission (NCC)

"We met with each individual municipality so on top of presenting at the counties council, we then organized a meeting with the staff at the different municipalities so that the clerk, the rec department, the fire department if they were interested, would attend. I think that was a key piece which set the stage for municipalities including it in their events and vendor permits and things like that."

Ottawa Festivals

Ottawa Festivals is a not-for-profit service organization dedicated to providing support, presenting a united voice, and creating an effective networking environment for festivals, special events and fairs in Canada's Capital Region. Their members include arts and culture, heritage, agriculture, community groups, sport, and service provider organizations who support festival organizers (Ottawa Festivals, 2017).

Event Central

Event Central is a city department that serves as a one-stop shop for organizers of events in Ottawa:

- acting as a first point of contact and one-stop shop for event organizers
- assisting coordination of city services (e.g., emergency services) for special events
- assisting with permit approvals and coordinating meetings with relevant city and other government officials
- helping to space out events that are similar
- communicating with stakeholders in advance regarding the event's possible impact
- working with the Special Events Advisory Team to ensure that events are successful, safe, and contribute positively to the city and its residents. (Ottawa Police Services, 2017)

2.1 WORKING WITH THE LOCAL TOBACCO CONTROL COMMUNITY

Work to reduce smoking at events was initiated in 2010 as part of a renewed smoke-free Ottawa strategy. The renewed strategy called *Let's Clear the Air – a Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa* included:

1. increasing cessation services and programs for all residents, including priority populations with high smoking rates;
2. expanding Ottawa's smoke-free regulations to make all municipal properties, including parks and beaches, and bar and restaurant patios smoke-free; and
3. implementing public education campaigns and a community engagement strategy to decrease the number of youth who start smoking, to increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco smoke, and to create more smoke-free spaces. (Ottawa Public Health, 2012)

A key player in the advocacy work was Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH). The OCSH responded to ongoing complaints from the public about exposure to second-hand smoke and about cigarette butt litter and advocated for smoke-free public spaces and workplaces. Other key members included Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Non-Smokers' Rights Association, Canadian Cancer Society, and Heart and Stroke Foundation. These groups met before advocacy work began to identify settings where a smoking ban would be beneficial and identified 13 settings. The intention was to push for comprehensive policy and aim high in anticipation that they would need to make compromises during the negotiation process. The OCSH submitted a letter⁴ to the health unit's medical officer of health in support of these 13 public places and workplaces and urged Ottawa Public Health to make restaurant and bar patios 100% smoke-free at all times.

Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health

The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health is an organization of approximately eight active volunteers and many more members with expertise in tobacco control and advocacy. The goals of the organization are to create a social environment where non-smoking is the norm, assist in establishing smoke-free environments, prevent youth from starting to smoke, encourage smokers to quit, and advocate for better smoking cessation resources (Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health, 2017).

"The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health attempts to provide a community perspective to advocate for, and support the work of Ottawa Public Health. We are very grateful for their work in this area." (Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health)

⁴ http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/uploads/1/1/7/4/11742147/ocsh_request_to_moh_to_adopt_sfos_bylaw_aug_16_2011.pdf

Additionally, in 2010 the OCSH, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, and Dr. Ryan Kennedy collaborated on a scientific study of air quality on restaurant and bar patios in Ottawa to raise public awareness about the health risks of second-hand smoke on patios, and about the fact that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. They also collaborated on a news conference to release the results of the scientific study.⁵ The news conference generated significant media coverage, which helped to increase public awareness of the need for 100% smoke-free outdoor public places and workplaces.

2.2 WORKING WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

Ottawa City Council directed the city's health unit to investigate the development of a smoke-free by-law for outdoor public places and workplaces, including municipal beaches and parks, and restaurant and bar patios as part of *Let's Clear the Air – a Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa*. As part of this work, the health unit drafted a list of additional areas to consider during their consultations. The list was based on the 13 priority settings of Ottawa's tobacco control community, but focused on areas where evidence could justify action, the municipality had legal authority to intervene, and the community supported change. Events were an identified priority setting.

"The environmental scan really helped us to figure out what was taking place in our community"

The health unit began exploring how to create smoke-free events with an environmental scan, and consultations with event organizers and the public to determine readiness for smoke-free outdoor spaces. The scan aimed to identify what events are held, how, and where in Ottawa.

A key finding was that Ottawa has both municipal properties and NCC lands that serve as key event venues. At the time of the scan, there were 82 events on municipal property and 23 on NCC lands. This meant that the health unit would need to work closely with the city and the NCC if they wanted to address smoking at most events in Ottawa.

The scan also revealed that 62 of the festivals were members in a group called Ottawa Festivals, a non-profit body focused on increasing communication and scheduling between event organizers. The health unit added Ottawa Festivals to their list of people to engage to help drive the smoke-free festivals and events movement.

During consultations to determine public readiness, "festivals and events were found to have moderate public readiness, with 59% of respondents to an online survey supporting smoke-free markets, events and festivals." This reaffirmed that the health unit was working in the public's interest by expanding Ottawa's smoke-free spaces by-law to outdoor locations. For festivals and events specifically, consultations with event organizers revealed that they too were ready for smoke-free spaces; however, they had some specific concerns:

"Consultations with event organizers revealed that they were primarily concerned with enforcement of smoke-free by-laws during events, ensuring there was a level playing field between events on municipal and NCC property, and not wanting to impose a smoke-free policy on event volunteers."

Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health

- doorways to public places
- outdoor sports fields
- indoor spaces in hotels, motels and B&Bs
- municipal properties
- patios (at all times or before 8 pm only)
- beaches (with or without designated smoking area)
- post-secondary campuses
- doorways to workplaces
- doorways to multi-unit dwellings
- hospital campuses
- parks and playgrounds
- festivals, fairs, parades, and markets
- construction sites.

⁵ <http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/air-quality-study-of-ottawa-patios.html>

Event organizers were concerned that they did not have the authority to enforce a smoking ban and that enforcement costs would be significant. These concerns were a primary barrier to voluntarily going smoke-free. However, having law enforcement officers and fines to address non-compliance helped reduce concerns about event organizers' authority and ability to motivate compliance, and reduced cost concerns. Free signage was also offered to event organizers by Ottawa Public Health for events held both on municipal, private, or NCC property. Several different versions were developed to suit the location, including special graphics for the Pride Parade and Winterlude.

Although a possible by-law reduced enforcement concerns, use of a by-law raised another concern. Because NCC lands are federal jurisdiction, a by-law would not apply and may create different event experiences across different venues. Among event organizers that use municipal property, the fear was that people might favour events held on NCC lands if they want to smoke. To help ensure a level playing field, the health unit expanded their focus to include advocacy for an aligned NCC policy. The Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health also wrote letters to the NCC in support of a 100% smoke-free policy for festivals and events held on their property (See section 2.3 for details). It is important to note that private property venues also exist; however, these are less popular for the majority of festivals and events in Ottawa.

After gathering evidence and consulting with various groups, the health unit decided to focus on the message of "Smoke-Free Kids, a Cleaner City, and Healthy People" and that it would be prudent to expand public understanding of second-hand smoke exposure harms.

At the time, people accepted the message that indoor second-hand smoke exposure was harmful, but there was little public understanding and acceptance of harms related to outdoor second-hand smoke exposure. These strategies were used during by-law development and during their awareness campaign to support by-law implementation between 2011 and 2013.

The health unit worked with the City of Ottawa to create supportive policy and procedures to make festivals and events smoke-free. The OCSH also helped to advocate for smoke-free outdoor public places and workplaces by preparing three compendia of positive news coverage of the smoke-free outdoor spaces campaign. Additionally, the OCSH researched and wrote four fact sheets in support of 100% smoke-free outdoor public places and workplaces. Each fact sheet focused on a different theme: public support for smoke-free outdoor spaces, economic and environmental costs of cigarette butt litter, scientific evidence about second-hand smoke in outdoor spaces, and the business case for a smoke-free outdoor bylaw. The fact sheets and the compendia were distributed to the Ottawa Board of Health, the mayor, city councillors, and the medical officer of health to provide supportive evidence and to reinforce public support and demand for more smoke-free spaces.⁶

Aligning National Capital Commission and City of Ottawa policies

The NCC requires festivals to have a permit rental agreement to use their property for events. This was where the health unit saw an opportunity to create alignment:

"The health unit reached out to the National Capital Commission who amended their rental agreements for events and festivals to include a clause about ensuring their property remained smoke-free for the duration of the rental."

However, the NCC does not have an active enforcement body to provide event organizers with enforcement support. This means that event-level policies are essentially voluntary since event organizers are in control of what type of protocols they adopt.

Among events held on NCC lands, the health unit notes that, "there were a couple of event organizers who were not very receptive initially, but...A year later they became smoke-free so that was really a big success."The health unit notes that part of the reason that these festivals ended up going smoke-free was because of the success that other events had in going smoke-free.



⁶ <http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/campaign-documents1.html>

In 2012, amendments were made to City of Ottawa by-laws. Of particular importance are the amendments to the *Smoke-free – Public Spaces* (By-law No. 2001-148)⁷ as well as the *Parks and Facilities By-law* (By-law No. 2004-267)⁸. The adopted amendment of these by-laws extended smoke-free prohibitions to 1,200 parks, 1,100 municipal properties, 4 beaches, the ByWard Market, the Parkdale Market, and all bar and restaurant patios.

The amendment to the *Parks and Facilities By-law* is important because it allows greater control over parks and recreation lands and those lands are key event venues: The by-law states:

“In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this by-law and any other by-law regarding the regulation of parks and facilities, including the by-laws referred to in Section 20, the provisions of this by-law shall prevail, but nothing in this by-law shall invalidate the enforceability of other provisions of those by-laws.” (City of Ottawa By-law No. 2004-276, §22)

Development of Ottawa’s Smoke-free Outdoor Spaces By-law

The campaign to strengthen Ottawa’s smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law is documented in detail at https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/knowledge_exchange/DoPs/. Key processes included:

- understanding the problem and drawing on
- building on past successes
- being mindful of the current fiscal environment
- allowing time for council and the community to soften up on the issue
- relying on partnerships and collaboration
- framing issues to be relevant to a wide variety of people
- highlighting opportunities for innovation
- developing a strong communications strategy (McCammon-Tripp et al, 2013).

The by-laws were adopted in February 2012 and came into effect in April 2012. To implement the by-law, a three-month warning phase was planned for the spring of 2012 to help the public transition to the new way of enjoying outdoor spaces. Tickets would begin to be issued in July 2012, the beginning of the summer season.

Prior to enactment of the by-law, the health unit also worked to embed smoke-free requirements into existing festival and event processes within the city:

“Event Central modified their application form to ensure that event and festival organizers were aware of and adhered to applicable municipal smoke-free regulations.”

Event Central consists of all the city departments that are involved in the implementation of a festival (e.g., licensing, enforcement, health inspectors, paramedics, parks and recreation, festival organizers, Ottawa festivals, etc.). Each year, Event Central holds a meeting at the beginning of the festival season. At these meetings, smoke-free requirements are presented and discussed. Although the tobacco team does not participate in these Event Central meetings with event organizers, other departments are aware and onboard with smoke-free requirements, and any messages are conveyed through them. Event Central staff were also aware that it could request signage from Ottawa Public Health on behalf of festival organizers, or it could refer festival organizers to Ottawa Public Health so that they could request signage.

⁷ <http://ottawa.ca/en/smoke-free-public-places-law-no-2001-148>

⁸ http://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/2004_276_en.pdf

The health unit has a history of working with city departments including Parks, Recreation and Culture, Public Works, and By-law and Regulatory Services for ongoing communications and enforcement. The health unit notes that over time, tobacco control and other public health considerations have been spreading across the departments:

“So think about 2012 to 2016, four years later, the influence we've had... The city departments have the attitude that smoking is not okay and... the images about smoking is really not appropriate.”

A sign of support: Municipal department rejects smoking imagery for New Year's 2017

To prepare for 2017 New Year's celebrations, the Public Works Department hired a local artist to develop an artistic wrap for garbage cans. When the Public Works Department received the proofs, the imagery did not fit what public health had been advocating for and they were not happy with what they saw. The proofs contained four different layouts of women holding cigarettes and alcohol.

“Immediately the Public Works staff connected with me and asked me for background information to refuse these creatives. And, they rejected these creatives and asked the artists to redo it ... In the past, they would have accepted this ... but now, I think our working with them, they are very aware of... the inappropriate messaging.”

The health unit's continuing role with Event Central includes representation on the committee for food safety, and access to the committee to send out materials and messages related to smoke-free policy and other protective messaging such as noise exposure. The health unit's tobacco team is invited to a meeting every year to update city staff on smoke-free legislation that affects festivals and events.

In addition to Event Central, the tobacco team also works with by-law enforcement to support smoke-free policy compliance. The City of Ottawa has 40 by-law enforcement officers who support enforcement of the smoke-free by-laws at festivals and events on municipal property.

Enforcement is primarily complaints driven, but periodically health unit staff and enforcement by-law officers attend events to determine if smoking is occurring:

“The health unit as well as By-Law and Regulatory Services staff attended major events to ensure compliance, promote the festival as smoke-free and advertise quit smoking services that include free NRT and counseling.”

Complaints are handled through the city's central 3-1-1⁹ service and online at ServiceOttawa.ca. Every spring, the health unit issues a new release to remind people about Ottawa's smoke-free by-laws in Ottawa and where to report non-compliance (see Appendix A). An enforcement presence is prioritized for events that are identified as hotspots for non-compliance. For example, if there is a compliance issue at an event held at a local beach, by-law officers periodically visit the beach until there is consistent compliance.

2.3 WORKING WITH EVENT ORGANIZERS

During the first two years of the *Let's Clear the Air Strategy*, the health unit worked proactively with festival and event organizers. As time went on, the work evolved and the health unit provided information and responded to specific requests as needed.

In addition to the health unit's work with festival organizers, the OCSH also actively advocated for major festivals such as Winterlude and RBC Bluesfest to adopt a smoke-free policy.

⁹ Municipalities typically use a 2-1-1 hotline for information and referral to municipal services. The following regions use a 3-1-1 hotline in addition to or instead of a 2-1-1 hotline: Toronto, Halton, Windsor, Brampton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Greater Sudbury (211 Ontario).

Ottawa Festivals and Event Central serve as the primary communication channel between the health unit and the event organizers: “We used... Ottawa Festivals and the Event Central as our medium or mechanism through which we either provide information about the by-law or that we provide cessation services because of a by-law or voluntary policy.” For example, an annual email is sent out to remind festivals about relevant public health legislation and any changes that will affect them in the upcoming event season:

“Annually we send an email... We will remind them that smoking a water pipe... is also prohibited, something that's new in April [2017].”

Emails through Ottawa Festivals are sent out by the executive director to all its members.

Initially, while the health unit's goal was to work with all events, family-oriented events were prioritized. This was done because children could be exposed to second-hand smoke and the visibility of smoking could promote social modelling of smoking behaviours. The health unit found that educating these event organizers about being smoke-free was easier as “the harms of second-hand smoke exposure were well understood.” These event organizers were typically more willing to go smoke-free and compliance is generally higher for events that have children attending.

During their consultation work leading up to by-law adoption, the health unit found three large festivals that had voluntarily adopted smoke-free policies: the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, the TD Ottawa Jazz Festival, and the Ottawa Children's Festival.

The Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival had voluntarily made their event smoke-free in 2008. The health unit offered to support their smoke-free efforts, which included providing them with signage. When the Tim Hortons Dragon Boast Festival was first approached about their readiness for a smoke-free by-law, it was apparent that the event organizer was highly supportive of a by-law and was receptive to other supports:

“I'd had several conversations with him and he was willing to do anything he could to make the festival smoke-free. Having the festival properly signed was key for him so we provided him with signage. He was very happy to have signage everywhere He was happy to announce that the festival was smoke-free and put that on his promotions.”

Logistics and enforcement proved to be a challenge with this festival's voluntary policy. The daytime festivities drew in families and children, which made it easy to create a smoke-free space, but in the evening, the event changed to a concert atmosphere that was more adult- oriented. Issues with non-compliant band members and festival patrons who consumed alcohol made it difficult to enforce the smoke-free policy.

A key informant said that the organizer “would do everything to make it smoke-free, but there was kind of limits in terms of how far he could go with enforcing a voluntary policy.”

After the City of Ottawa amended the Parks and Facilities by-law to prohibit smoking on municipal property, including Mooney's Bay Park, home of the Tim Hortons Dragon Boat Festival, by-law presence was increased to boost enforcement efforts. Having consistent messaging and signage at all festivals, including those with voluntary policies, helped normalize smoke-free outdoor events, and helped create the expectation for residents and visitors that outdoor events in Ottawa are smoke-free.

The TD Ottawa Jazz Festival and the Ottawa Children's Festival are held on NCC lands and voluntarily adopted smoke-free policies. The TD Ottawa Jazz Festival had been struggling with complaints about second-hand smoke. When the health unit approached festival organizers and offered to help them adopt a smoke-free policy, the TD Ottawa Jazz Festival seized the moment and voluntarily went smoke-free. Similarly, the Ottawa Children's Festival voluntarily went smoke-free in 2011.

The health unit attended these three festivals during the summer of 2011 to provide education to Ottawa residents regarding the health hazards of second-hand smoke in outdoor spaces. The OCSH shared a booth with the health unit at these three festivals and gathered the public's opinion on smoke-free outdoor spaces through a postcard campaign. The OCSH eventually collected a total of 2,600 postcards which were signed by Ottawa residents and tourists at various events across the city. OCSH members hand delivered the signed postcards to Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson to show the high level of public support for smoke-free outdoor public places and workplaces.

In an effort to attract people to the booth, the health unit created a colouring contest and a life-size cut-out of smoke-free outdoor spaces heroes. Children were able to have their picture taken with these heroes, which created an opportunity to provide education to parents and other adults about the benefits of smoke-free outdoor spaces. The colouring contest was a success. It attracted 800 children and the OCSH collected 1,500 signed postcards. The value of attending these festivals for the health unit was the opportunity to have conversations with about 1,800 people on their opinion on smoke-free outdoor spaces.

On May 30, 2012, during the opening night celebrations of the Ottawa Children's Festival, the health unit presented the festival director with a Smoke-Free Champions Awards on the public stage. The health unit also invited the director of the TD Ottawa Jazz Festival on stage and presented them with the same award. The media was invited to attend the event. There was a unanimous positive response to the smoke-free policy from the public and festival organizers.

The following day, on World No Tobacco Day 2012, a city councillor and the health unit's associate medical officer of health presented the Smoke-Free Champions Award to the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival in a similar fashion. This festival is held on municipal property, and festival organizers decided to implement the smoke-free policy during the warning phase of the implementation of the smoke-free outdoor by-law. These celebrations of success brought attention to the new regulations and brought forth the voices of event organizers to advocate for others to pursue the same smoke-free goals. While it is not clear how these pioneering festivals influenced one another, these festivals have helped to pave the way for other events to follow suit.



(Ottawahealth, 2012, June 1)

These events, along with restaurant and bar patios, and other venues that went smoke-free voluntarily before the smoke-free outdoor by-law was developed helped to soften members of Ottawa city council to the idea that prohibiting smoking in various outdoor public places and workplaces was a viable intervention to solve problems related to smoking and second-hand smoke. When presenting the Smoke-Free Champions Award, a local city councillor stated:

"The Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival is a true pioneer in promoting the health and wellness of participants and spectators at an event. Leaders like the Dragon Boat Festival have demonstrated solid support when the City enacted new smoke-free regulations in City parks, beaches and municipal properties on April 2, 2012," said Councillor Maria McRae." (Ottawahealth , 2012, May 31)

These pioneering events also served as a valuable reference to other event organizers that had concerns about going smoke-free. The spread of smoke-free practices and success stories amongst event organizers was certainly a factor that contributed to events that were initially resistant to going smoke-free and using the city's signage and other supports.

As demonstrated by festivals who were voluntarily smoke-free, the health unit has not been alone in their advocacy efforts. Community partners, Ottawa residents, and tourists supported smoking restrictions at the various festival sites. The OCSH is one key group that provides a well-articulated voice in the community. The OCSH wrote advocacy letters to vocalize support for 100% smoke-free events and festivals, to reiterate the rationale and scientific evidence for adopting smoke-free policies, and to hold event organizers and others accountable for their role in protecting the public from second-hand smoke:

“...they have written letters to festival organizers... asking them to be smoke-free and the rationale [by] providing the science [and] pointing out the public support... They publicly put these letters on their website. They copy decision-makers, politicians, the mayor, our board of health, [and] the medical officer of health.”

For instance, as early as 2011, the OCSH encouraged the CEO of the NCC to consider adopting a smoke-free policy for all Winterlude venues. A similar letter was written to the executive director of RBC Bluesfest. The Mayor of Ottawa and the Honorable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister Responsible for the NCC, were copied on these letters.

Responses were received from the NCC in 2012 indicating that the NCC supports the City of Ottawa with respect to creating a smoke-free environment and that all event agreements and permits were modified to require events hosted on NCC lands to install signage and encourage voluntary compliance with the city's smoke-free by-law.

In 2014, the OCSH sent the NCC a follow-up letter, applauding the NCC for providing a smoke-free environment, and reiterating positive feedback from OCSH members. Several OCSH members have lung disease, and they were very happy that they no longer had to worry about second-hand smoke exposure at NCC events.



Winterlude at Confederation Park, Elgin Street Entrance
(Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health, 2014)

The OCSH also issued press releases to raise public awareness, and to support and maintain capacity-building in the area of smoke-free festivals. A copy of the OCSH's advocacy letters are posted at <http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/campaign-documents1.html>

After the City of Ottawa adopted the smoke-free outdoor bylaw for public places and workplaces in 2012, the health unit shifted its focus to cessation. In the first year, they handed out small business cards at events with their messaging on them, and for some events, they set up booths where they offered brief cessation counselling. Although the health unit did conduct a cessation campaign at events in the beginning, they found the work was labour-intensive, and it had limited impact on cessation.



For people hosting a smoke-free event in Ottawa, the health unit recommends:

- Ensure that your employees and volunteers are educated about the new smoke-free regulations. Refer them to, or print information from ottawa.ca/smokefree, or request an in-person presentation from Ottawa Public Health.
- Before the outdoor festival or event, include the smoke-free requirement in your advertising and on your website. Make it clear to the public that your outdoor festival or event is smoke-free.
- Post no smoking signage in high traffic locations to increase awareness of the regulations.
- Coach employees and volunteers on how to intervene appropriately if someone is smoking at the event. They should know how to inform the person of the regulations and politely ask them to stop or to leave the property to smoke.
- Visit ottawa.ca/smokefree or call 3-1-1 if someone refuses to stop smoking

The health unit developed two different signs that they offered to event organizers: one for events held on city property that referenced the by-law and one for events held off city property. Signage was developed in consultation with festival and event organizers and was made available through the health unit. The signs were made of a 4'x2' coroplast weather resistant material with positive messaging framed around "Welcome to this smoke-free event." Event Central and the NCC direct event organizers to the health unit to request these signs. Typically, event organizers will post the signs at entrances and in high traffic areas.



When engaging in the work, not all event organizers were ready to make their event smoke-free. As a result, successful implementation of smoke-free practice was sometimes careless or challenging. In one case, an event organizer placed a no smoking sign with a health protection message in front of a beer tent that was littered with alcohol promotions. In addition to the contrasting messages, people were smoking right outside of the beer tent instead of off-site. While the health unit stepped in to have the sign moved, the media noticed the juxtaposition and the health unit was compelled to publically respond. The health unit noted that they "...stuck to the smoke-free and... we asked people to be mindful of alcohol." See Appendix B for sample alcohol mindfulness messaging from Ottawa Public Health.

Working with multiple public health messages

The health unit has addressed multiple issues with event organizers, including smoking, noise, and use of alcohol (see Appendix B for sample messaging). The noise-induced hearing loss campaign started with a complaint to a councillor's office, and the councillor pushed for a health unit-led campaign. While it was helpful to have a precedence for working with event organizers directly and to begin a relationship-building process, working with multiple public health messages had its downside: "After a while... working on all those issue at the same time, we became the party-pooper organization." When reflecting on the impact of their "party-pooper" moniker, the health unit noted that, "I think there are other files that made us very credible in the community. So, you know, when it comes down to seriousness and they need information, they would come to us." Because they were still able to work with people in a serious way on serious issues, the health unit proceeded with their work.

2.3.1 WORKING WITH EVENTS HELD ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

In terms of smoking regulations, events held on private property that offer enclosed public spaces are primarily governed by provisions within the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA)*. However, a recent amendment to the City of Ottawa's smoke-free public places by-law prohibits the use of water pipes (i.e., hookah or shisha pipes) inside any enclosed public place or workplace. The health unit provided one example of an event where the new prohibition was an easy sell:

"We had contact with an organization in terms of hookah smoking and... they were saying that hookah smoking wasn't the predominant component of their festival, that people come for the food and they were very amenable to just getting rid of hookah smoking altogether."

The health unit also cited another example of an event held on private property where the by-law was leveraged. The event was held in a parking lot adjacent to a municipal park. The health unit facilitated a conversation between the Parks and Recreation Department and the property owner about developing an aligned smoke-free policy. The health unit was able to convince the landowner to develop a voluntary policy and supported them with signage.

3.0 Next steps and lessons learned

In Ottawa, the 2012 smoke-free outdoor by-law for public places and workplaces mandates that all events held on municipal property be 100% smoke-free. The majority of festivals in Ottawa are held on municipal property. The health unit has created public awareness and support for smoke-free events and festivals by working with their partners, the public, and event organizers. Recent work in Ottawa to amend land use agreements for events held on NCC lands is anticipated to lead to similar successes as the smoke-free by-law for outdoor public places and workplaces.

Events held on private property continue to pose a challenge in terms of adopting smoke-free policies. Organizers of events and festivals held on municipal property have done their best to reduce second-hand smoke exposure, although challenges with compliance remain. The health unit plans to continue their communications and awareness-raising efforts with the public, event organizers, key groups such as Ottawa Festivals and Event Central, and City of Ottawa By-law Enforcement. A more proactive approach to enforcement may be a next step to push for consistent compliance. Additionally, the health unit continues to look ahead to identify and track emerging issues and contexts that may affect their work with festivals and events, and to plan their strategy accordingly.

To date, the uptake of signage has been a positive indication that event organizers are making an effort to keep their events smoke-free. The health unit noted that they see event organizers use or reuse their signage year after year, and “feel like that’s one indicator of success in terms of... they recognize that they have to make the general public aware.” Another indicator of success is that more events that are not mandated to go smoke-free are voluntarily developing their own smoke-free policies and using the recommended implementation protocols. Additionally, even though some events are dealing with other priority challenges that could overshadow second-hand tobacco smoke issues, “certainly anecdotally... they’re very strong with the tobacco message.”




The health unit highlighted two key strategies that contributed to the successful implementation of the smoke-free outdoor by-laws for public places and workplaces: building relationships and promoting education and awareness. When reaching out to advocates, community partners, event organizers, or other organizers, the health unit recommends:

- leveraging existing relationships, reaching out to the executive directors or other organizational leads, and building relationships with them;
- contacting event organizers in advance to make them aware of the smoke-free regulations and finding out who can help them to comply with the smoke-free regulations;
- helping event organizers to raise awareness among their stakeholders;
- providing event organizers with messaging that outlines why smoke-free regulations are important to them and to their patrons;
- providing smoke-free signage and
- running a public awareness campaign about the health risks of second-hand smoke and about smoking cessation support in the community.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet for Event Organizers



Summary of the Smoke-Free Regulations for Parks and Facilities By-law for Outdoor Festivals and Events

The City of Ottawa's *Parks and Facilities By-law* has been amended to prohibit smoking on all municipal properties including parks, beaches, and outdoor areas around City facilities. This amendment takes effect on April 2, 2012. This is part of the City's Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-free Ottawa, which is designed to protect children and non-smokers from second-hand smoke, while reducing smoking rates.

Parks and Facilities By-law

The *Parks and Facilities By-law* (By-law No. 2004-276, as amended) regulates municipal properties such as parks, beaches, sports fields and areas around City facilities. Municipal property includes properties owned and leased by the City. The regulations also apply to all outdoor festivals and events taking place on property owned or leased by the City.

Duties of Event Organizers of Outdoor Festivals and Events

All holders of special event permits are required to comply with any and all applicable laws including the non-smoking provisions under the *Parks and Facilities By-law* (By-law No. 2004-276, as amended). Permit holders should discourage smoking at the event and ensure sufficient and visible no-smoking signage is posted.

Duties of the Public

No person is permitted to smoke on outdoor City properties including at outdoor festivals and events taking place on City property.

Enforcement

City of Ottawa by-law enforcement officers may enter any public place to ensure compliance with the by-law.

Penalties

Every person who is convicted of smoking in contravention of the by-law is liable to a fine. The City may, as part of the special event permit process, take into consideration whether the permit holder took reasonable measures to ensure the festival or event complied with the non-smoking requirements.

This summary is intended as a quick reference guide for your use. For more information about smoke-free regulations, visit ottawa.ca/smokefree or call 3-1-1.

ottawa.ca | ottawa.ca/smokefree

City services **3-1-1**
TTY 613-580-2401

Appendix B: Noise and Alcohol Use Messaging

Ottawa Public Health's noise-induced hearing loss message

People of all ages, including children and teenagers, can develop noise-induced hearing loss. According to Statistics Canada, more than one million adults across the country have a hearing-related disability. The Hearing Foundation of Canada reports that noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common types of hearing damage.

Sound is measured in units called decibels (dB). Sounds that humans can hear are measured on a scale from 0 to 140 dB. Sources that may be putting you at risk include: firecrackers (150 dB), nightclubs (120 dB), and rock concerts (125 dB).

Earplugs and/or ear muffs should be used when exposed to sounds over 85 dB. Sounds at or above 85 dB can damage your ears, and levels of 140 dB and higher cause sudden permanent damage.

Rather than miss out, you can protect yourself by:

- Wearing properly fitted hearing protection devices, such as earplugs
- Staying a good distance away from the source of the loud noise, such as speakers at concerts or loud machinery
- Helping your ears recover after being exposed to loud noises by spending time in a quiet place
- Limiting time spent around excessive noise (Ottawahealth, 2012, May 26)

Ottawa Public Health's alcohol consumption message

Ottawa Public Health is reminding residents to follow [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) to protect themselves and their loved ones when consuming alcohol. Drinking is a personal choice; however, a person who decides to drink should be aware of and follow the guidelines. It is recommended that women have no more than two standard drinks most days and 10 drinks per week. For men, it is recommended to not exceed three standard drinks most days and 15 drinks per week. Always think about your age, body weight and health problems that may suggest lower limits.

A standard drink is defined as:

- 341 ml (12 oz.) glass of 5 per cent alcohol content such as beer, cider or cooler
- 142 ml (5 oz.) glass of wine with 12 per cent alcohol content
- 43 ml (1.5 oz.) serving of 40 per cent distilled alcohol content

There are many situations when alcohol should be completely avoided such as while driving a vehicle, taking medicine that interacts with alcohol, living with mental or physical health problems, and before and during pregnancy. For more information on [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) visit ccsa.ca.

Plan ahead for events where alcohol will be served.

- Set limits for yourself and stick to them.
- Drink slowly. Have no more than two drinks in any three-hour period.
- For every drink of alcohol, have one non-alcoholic drink.
- Eat before and while you are drinking.
- When drinking alcohol, always plan for a safe ride home. (Ottawahealth, 2012, December 14)