



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 12.1
Halifax Regional Council
August 5, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Noise Exemption Request Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival

ORIGIN

June 4, 2025 – Staff received an application from the Founder & Artistic Director of the Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival for an exemption from By-law N-200, Respecting Noise, as outlined in Attachment A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By-law N-200 provides the option for individuals to request a noise exemption for activities that may disturb the peace and tranquility of a neighbourhood. The noise exemption request goes to public hearing to be decided by Halifax Regional Council. There are no financial implications or risks associated with this matter.

The specific dates, times and noise activities for which the applicant is requesting a noise exemption are identified in this report. It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the noise exemption request submitted for the Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

Approve the Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival's application for an exemption from the provisions of the Noise-By-law pursuant to the contents of this report, and any matters raised at the public hearing.

BACKGROUND

By-law N-200, the *Noise By-law*, states under Section 3 of the **General Prohibition** section:

3. (1) No person shall engage in any activity that unreasonably disturbs or tends to disturb the peace and tranquility of a neighbourhood.
- (2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the activities listed in Schedule "A" during the prohibited times and places as set out therein are deemed to be activities that unreasonably

disturb the peace and tranquility of a neighbourhood.

(3) For the purpose of a prosecution pursuant to subsections (1) or (2), evidence that one neighbour is unreasonably disturbed by a noise is prima facie evidence that the neighbourhood is unreasonably disturbed by the noise.

Section 6 of the By-law, “**Grant of Exemptions by Council**”, allows for any person to send an application to Regional Council requesting an exemption from any or all provisions of the Noise By-law for which that person may be prosecuted. The By-law states that an applicant or any person opposed to an application may be heard at a session of Council. Notice of the Council Session is required to be mailed to assessed property owners located within 100 feet of the properties which are subject to the hearing.

Section 6A of the By-law, “**Grant of Exemptions by Staff**”, allows the CAO or delegate to grant an exemption for a recurring event where a previous application was approved by Regional Council. The exemption may be granted if there are no significant changes to the scope of the event and associated benefits should all information in the application be substantively the same as the application approved by Council.

In deciding whether or not to grant an exemption, Council is to give consideration to:

- the social or commercial benefit of the proposed activity to the municipality;
- the viewpoints of community residents;
- the proposed hours of operation of the proposed noise-emitting activity; and
- the proposed duration of the subject activity.

DISCUSSION

The Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival (formerly “Salsa on Argyle”) is an annual four-day cultural celebration of Afro-Latin music, dance, and community, held across multiple venues in downtown Halifax. The event showcases the vibrant heritage of Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, and Afrobeats through live performances, dance workshops, street events, and cultural exhibitions. The festival is supported by the Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax Downtown Business Commission, Build Nova Scotia, Tourism Nova Scotia, and various community partners.

The organizers have requested a noise exemption under By-law N-200, Respecting Noise, to accommodate live music and dance events that extend late into the evening/early morning hours. The festival is expected to attract over 1,700 attendees and includes both indoor and outdoor programming. Events will be held at five downtown venues, which include both public and private property spaces.

The proposed events will take place from Thursday, August 14 to Sunday, August 17, 2025. The organizers have advised that the outdoor amplified music and events will conclude by 2:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. An exemption is not required for Thursday August 14, 2025 as the location and noise activity fall within the prescribed exemptions of the by-law.

The noise exemption is required for the following dates and times:

Friday, August 15, 2025 – 9:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Saturday, August 16, 2025

Location: Bedford Row and Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Courtyard (Attachment B)

Saturday, August 16, 2025 – 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Sunday, August 17, 2025

Location: Bedford Row between Prince and George Streets (Attachment B)

The festival includes family-friendly programming, cultural markets, and visual arts exhibits in partnership with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and local artists. The applicant confirmed that on site venues serving alcohol are appropriately licensed under NS Alcohol and Gaming regulations. A site plan showing the placement of vendors, washrooms, exits, security personnel, for each location can be seen in Attachment

A.

Notice of the Council Session at which the hearing is proposed to take place has been sent to property owners within 100 feet of each location (Attachment C).

Under subsections 6(3) and (5) of the Noise By-law, Council may consider any matters it deems appropriate at the hearing and either reject the application or approve it with or without conditions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Notification is provided to neighbouring properties to provide the opportunity for individuals to attend the public hearing and provide their input regarding the application for a noise exemption. There are no previous noise complaints received for this event.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The applicant has committed to following appropriate waste and recycling practices. Containers are provided on site to facilitate proper sorting with additional sorting taking place on site after each event.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council may approve Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festivals application for an exemption from the provisions of the Noise By-law with conditions; or
2. Regional Council may reject Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festivals application for an exemption in its entirety.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

By-Law N-200, Respecting Noise, Section 6

Grant Of Exemptions By Council

6. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this By-Law, any person may make application to Council to be granted an exemption from any of the provisions of this By-Law with respect to any emission of noise for which that person might be prosecuted; and Council, by resolution, may refuse to grant any exemption or may grant the exemption applied for or any exemption of lesser effect; and any exemption granted shall specify the time period, not in excess of six months, during which the exemption shall be effective and the exemption shall be in written form and shall include such terms and conditions as Council deems appropriate.
- (2) In deciding whether or not to grant an exemption, Council shall give consideration to the social or commercial benefit of the proposed activity to the municipality, the views of any residents of the

municipality which may be expressed to Council, the proposed hours of operation of the proposed noise-emitting activity and the proposed duration of the subject activity.

- (3) In deciding whether or not to grant an exemption, Council shall give the applicant, and any person opposed to the application, an opportunity to be heard during a Council Session and may consider such other matters as it deems appropriate.
- (4) Notice of the time, date and purpose of the Council Session at which the hearing is proposed to take place shall be mailed to the assessed owner or owners as shown in the records of the Regional Assessment Office, of property located within 100 feet of the property which will be the subject of the hearing;
- (5) Any alleged breach by the applicant of any of the terms or conditions of any exemption granted by Council, shall be investigated by municipal staff, reported to Council in writing and Council shall determine whether or not a breach has taken place. If a breach has taken place, Council may pass a resolution revoking the exemption, without the necessity of giving notice of rescinding motion, and such exemption shall be null and void as of the passing of such resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: June 4, 2025, Application for Exemption from By-law N-200, Respecting Noise

Attachment B: Aerial view of location for Bedford Row and Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Courtyard

Attachment C: 100ft Radius List

Report Prepared by: Vicki Aguinaga, Supervisor Support Services, Community Safety 902.717.3903

Tanya Phillips, Manager, By-law Standards, Community Safety 902.476.6438

Report Approved by: Rachael Boehm, Executive Director, Community Safety 902.943.9904

Dear Council and Municipal Staff,

I would like to officially request a noise exemption under By-Law N-200, *Respecting Noise*, for the upcoming 2025 Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival, taking place from August 14–16, 2025.

We are planning an expanded outdoor program this year and are requesting an exemption to allow festival activities to continue beyond the standard permitted hours. This will enable us to offer stand-alone events that begin and end in the same outdoor location, creating a seamless experience without requiring mid-event transitions indoors.

We respectfully request daily noise exemptions for the following dates and times:

- Thursday, August 14 – 7:00 PM to 12:00 AM
Location: Halifax Waterfront, Sackville Landing (near the Wave sculpture for our Salsa by the wave event)
- Friday, August 15 – 7:00 PM to 2:00 AM
Location: Bedford Row and Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Courtyard (*Rhythm & Soul Street Fest*)
- Saturday, August 16 – 7:00 PM to 2:00 AM
Location: Bedford Row between Prince and George Streets (*Arte y Ritmo: Afro-Latin Street Gala & Art Exhibition*)

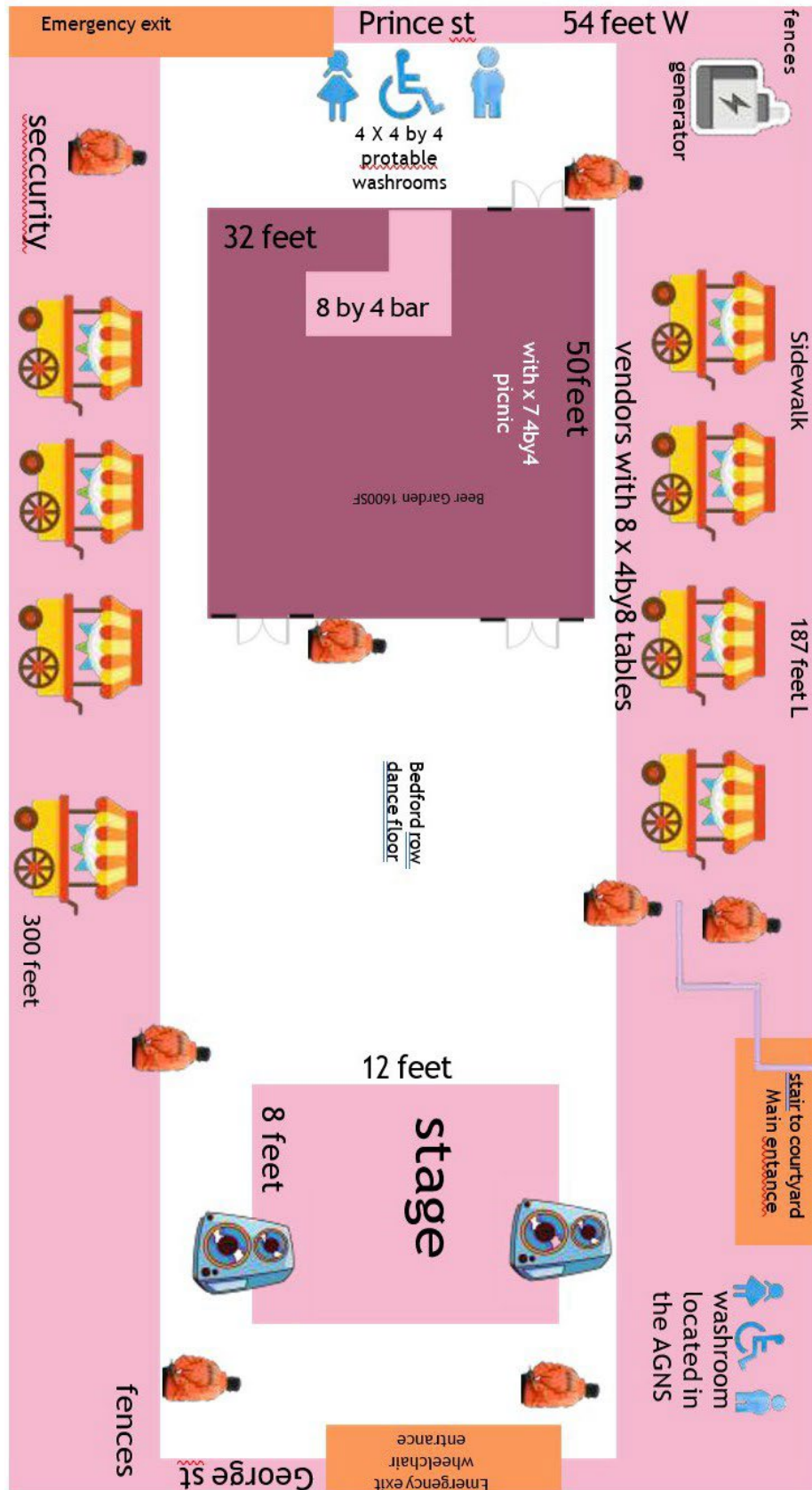
The Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival has been proudly celebrating Afro-Latin culture in the downtown core for the past seven years. We take all reasonable precautions to minimize noise impacts and ensure a safe, respectful experience for neighboring properties.

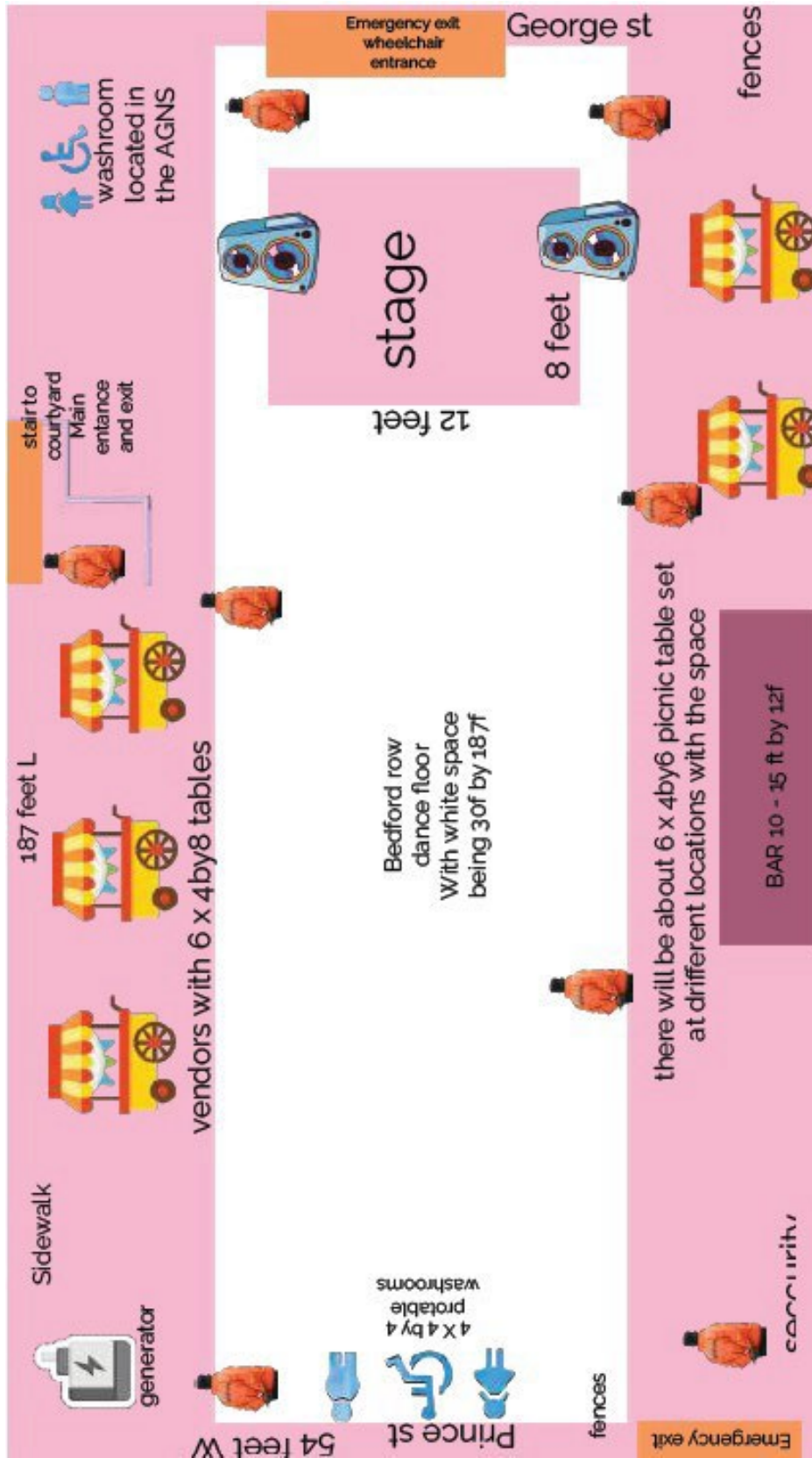
While the proposed event locations are primarily surrounded by office spaces that will be vacant during our event hours, we believe it is important to secure all necessary permits in advance to prevent any unforeseen issues.

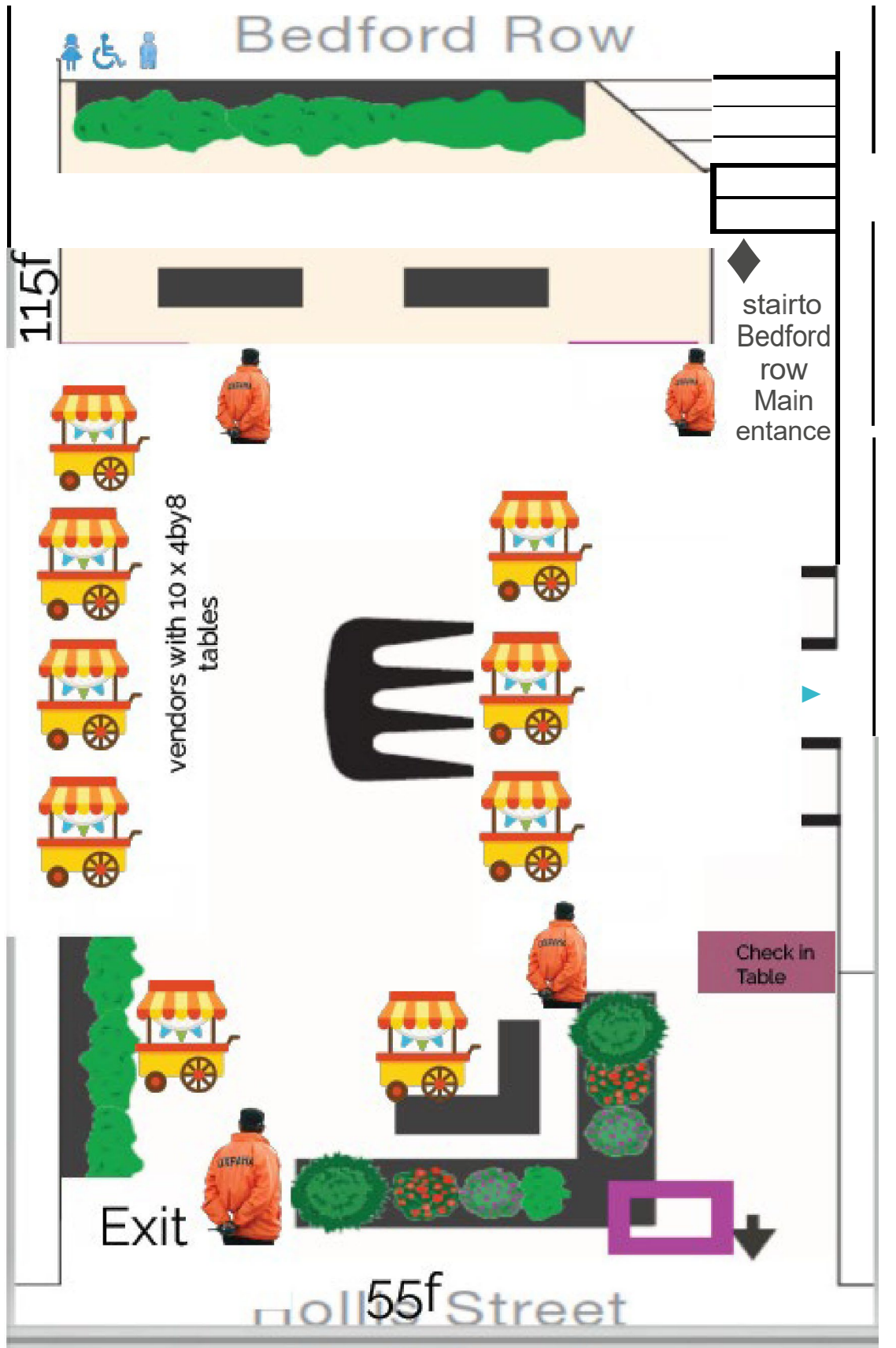
Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to continuing to bring vibrant, inclusive cultural experiences to our downtown community.

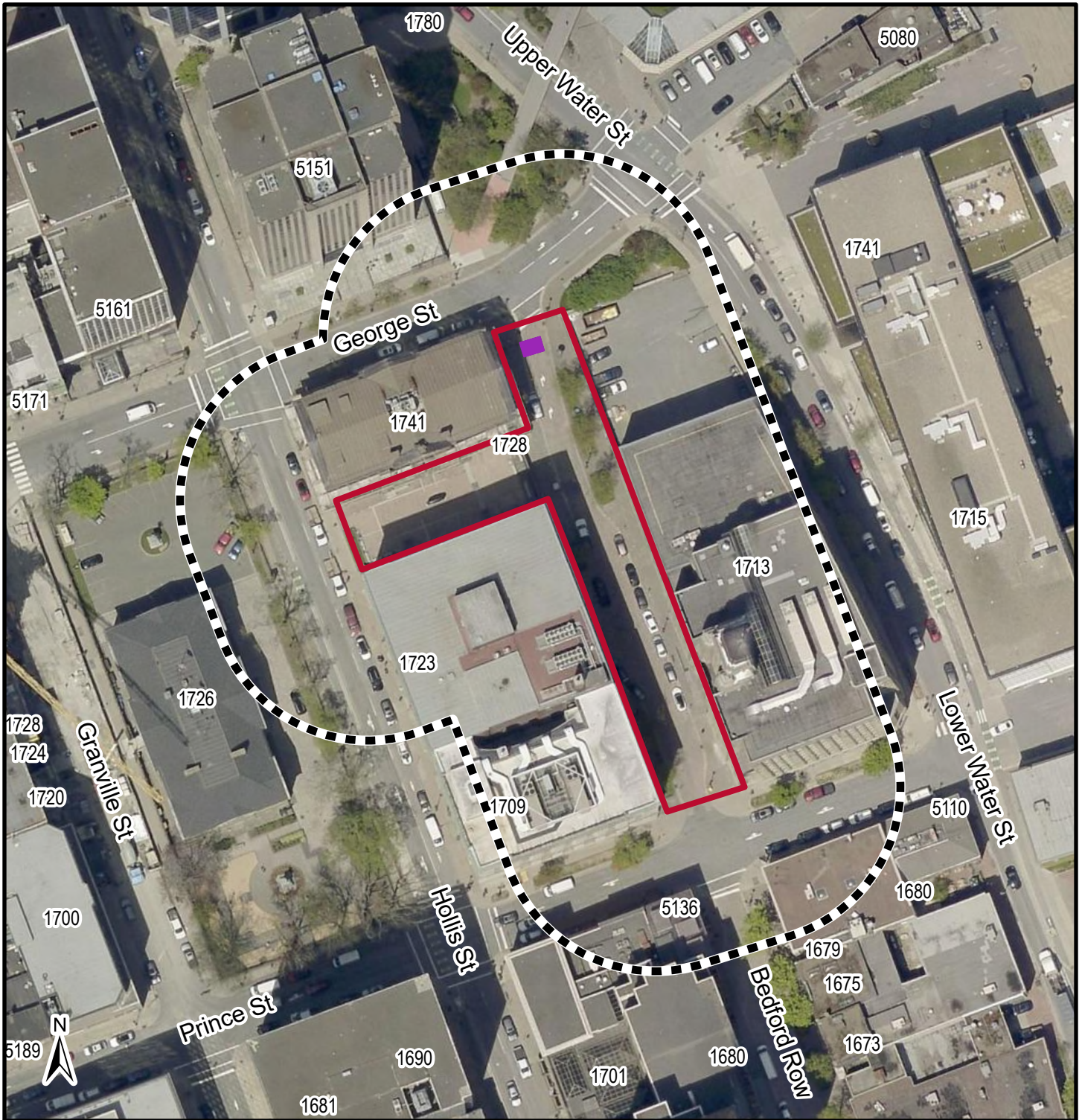
Warm regards,
Moses Diallo
Organizer & Artistic Director
Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival


www.halifaxsalsafestival.com










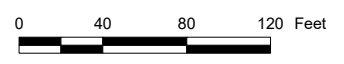


Map 1 - Location of 2025 Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival

1728 Bedford Row
Halifax

HALIFAX

-  Boundary of Event Area
-  100-Foot Radius of Event
-  Approximate Location of Stage/Sound System



The accuracy of any representation on this plan is not guaranteed.

