

Rockville Recreation and Parks Sponsorship Policy

PURPOSE

The Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville ("**Mayor and Council**" or "**City**") has approved this sponsorship policy and has approved the City Manager, through the Recreation and Parks Department ("**R&P**") seeking sponsorships to maintain and enhance park facilities and generate revenue that subsidizes the costs associated with the operation of recreation facilities, programming, and special events. Sponsorships include donations of money or materials and in-kind services in exchange for promotional opportunities.

POLICY

The Mayor and Council supports the principle that sponsorships are an essential tool to enhance and broaden the image and reach of the R&P and its services, as well as generate revenue to improve the experience for park users and to reduce costs to recreation participants. Sponsors receive an advertising benefit from their association with R&P. Although the City will not deny sponsorship opportunities based on the potential sponsor's viewpoint, the City reserves the right to deny a sponsorship that will compromise or damage the public trust, or conflict with or compromise the City's reputation, mission, image, or values. The City's approval of the use of sponsorships is not intended to, and does not, create a public forum.

This policy sets the standards, guidelines and approval criteria for solicitation, consideration, and acceptance of sponsorships. This policy is designed to protect the mission, image, and values of the COR, the image and value of its facilities, programs and services, to uphold its stewardship role to safeguard City assets and interests.

Sponsorships do not imply affiliation with a particular sponsor or endorsement of a particular sponsor. Sponsorships must align with priorities, master plans, ordinances or adopted resolutions of the Mayor and Council, and may be terminated if it is determined that sponsor has not complied with the spirit of this policy or in accordance with the signed agreement, or if the sponsor acts in a manner that is contrary to law or other City requirements. Any proposed sponsorship of a facility funded in whole or in part with public financing (e.g., General Obligation Bonds), must be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office to ensure compliance with applicable Federal Income Tax law and bond covenants. Any proposed sponsorship of a facility that is funded with grant funds must also be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office to ensure the sponsorship is consistent with the requirements of the grant. Staff must exercise due diligence to determine the origins of international sponsors. A Sponsorship Report will be submitted to the Mayor and Council and City Manager annually.

SPONSORSHIP CRITERIA

The City will not approve any potential sponsor or any offer of sponsorship that might compromise the public trust or the public's perception of the City's ability to act in the public interest or that the City deems might have a negative impact on its mission and image or values. The City values diversity, including diversity of sponsorships, and preserves its right and discretion to exercise full editorial control over the placement, content, appearance, and wording of all sponsorship recognition messages.

At a minimum, the City will use the following criteria in determining sponsorship compatibility when evaluating a proposal; in all cases, the City has the prerogative to accept, limit or reject a potential sponsorship:

1. The compatibility of the potential sponsor's products, customers, and promotional goals with the City's mission.
2. The potential sponsor's past record of involvement in community and community projects.
3. The desirability of association with the potential sponsor.
4. The timeliness or readiness of the potential sponsor to enter an agreement.

5. The actual value in cash, or in-kind goods or services, of the proposal in relation to the benefit to the potential sponsor.
6. The operating and maintenance costs associated with the sponsorship.
7. The City will not accept any sponsorship that is a political advertisement. Political advertisements are defined as those sponsorships promoting a candidate, political affiliation, any matter on the ballot, or political position regardless of the timing of a ballot issue.

SPONSORSHIP APPROVAL

The Recreation and Parks Director (“**Director**”), or designee, will review the proposed sponsorship to confirm/determine whether the sponsor meets the adopted restrictions, standards and guidelines outlined in this policy. The application shall be approved in accordance with the following procedures and guidelines:

1. Sponsorship agreements with terms of more than three years, projected to generate \$100,000 or more, or that involve naming rights for any City capital project or facility, program, or event, require the Mayor and Council’s approval.
2. Sponsorship agreements projected to generate \$25,000 - \$99,999 require the approval of the City Manager, who shall inform the Mayor and Council.
3. Sponsorship agreements projected to generate \$24,999 or less require the approval of the Director.
4. Sponsorship agreements projected to generate \$5,000 or less require the approval of the Director or designee.
5. Sponsorship agreements projected to generate \$1,000 or less require the approval of the Director’s Designee, which is the Division Manager.

The Director may request the City Manager approve agreements that are within the dollar levels for which the Director has approval authority.

RECOGNITION MESSAGES

The City’s .gov domain must not be used for commercial purposes, such as advertising benefitting private individuals or entities. As a result, sponsorship recognition messages may identify the sponsor or product, but should not promote or endorse the sponsor or its products or services. The City will not accept sponsorships that contain statements that advocate for a particular product, service, or organization, contain price information or an indication of associated savings or value, request a response, or contain comparative or qualitative descriptions of products, services, or organizations.

The following guidelines will be used to develop sponsor messages:

1. The legally recognized name of the advertising organization.
2. The advertiser’s organizational slogan if it identifies rather than promotes the organization or its products or services.
3. The advertiser’s product or service line, described in brief, generic, objective terms.
4. Brief contact information for the advertiser’s organization, such as phone number, address, or internet website.
5. Contact information must be stated in a manner that avoids an implication of urging the reader to action.
6. The City will not make any statements that directly or indirectly advocate or endorse a sponsor’s organization, products, or services. The City reserves the right to present opposing views.
7. No materials or communications, including, but not limited to, print, video, internet, broadcast, or display items developed to promote or communicate the sponsorship using the City’s name, marks, or logo, may be issued without written approval from the Director.
8. All signs will comply with the rules outlined in the applicable City ordinances.

Previously named parks and facilities are not eligible for sponsorship under this policy, however, amenities within the facility are eligible for potential sponsorship.

Other Potentially Acceptable Sponsor Opportunities

Potential sponsor opportunities that are more interactive than the permissible recognition messages described above may also be allowable for particular facilities or services under this policy. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Give away items, coupons, or other sponsor related marketing materials;
2. Event booth space;
3. Contests, drawings, or other activities that request a response.

AGREEMENTS

All sponsorships shall be memorialized in writing using the attached agreement form that includes:

1. Business name and address
2. Contact person with contact information
3. Sponsorship opportunity details and responsibilities
4. Logo use and requirements
5. Cost of opportunity
6. Beginning date and the expiration of specific opportunity
7. Official signatures

The City reserves the right to enter into customized sponsorships that may limit the availability of some non-exclusive categories of sponsorship listed above. If such an opportunity should present itself, businesses engaged in similar occupations may be invited to submit a proposal for comparison. The City shall elect to enter into an agreement with the proposal deemed to be in the City's best interest. Use of sponsor logos on government designated digital platforms is prohibited. Naming recognition may not be permanent and are subject to the Public Property Naming a Commemoration Policy adopted October 10, 2016.

Sponsorships cannot be used to fund staff positions and are appropriate for six broad types of department activities and places:

1. **Special Event Sponsorship:** Special Event sponsorships may include the sponsor's name on event advertising, schedules, booths, banners, and social media. The cost of the special event sponsorship will be based on the anticipated size of the event, level of participation, and the market rate for such sponsorships.
2. **Project Sponsorship:** Project sponsorship is financial or in-kind support of a specific R&P project, usually a one-time effort. Results often include a product being developed for the R&P and for the public (e.g., department facility map, a master plan for a park). A sponsor's name can be associated directly with the program and other marketing opportunities as available, depending upon the agreement's details.
3. **Program Sponsorship:** Program sponsorship is financial or in-kind support of a department-led program for the public. A program includes a series of ongoing activities, or a one-day small scale event (e.g., youth sports leagues, fitness classes, International Night, or summer camp) organized by the R&P. Recognition of the sponsor may continue throughout and even after the program's duration. Depending upon the details of the agreement, a sponsor's name can be associated directly with the program and other marketing opportunities as available.
4. **Amenity Sponsorship:** Amenity sponsorship is financial or in-kind operating support of a specific department amenity or feature (e.g., Dog Park, Splash Pad, Dugout). Marketing opportunities and recognition of the sponsorship are negotiated in the agreement. The Director will finalize the agreement. Any site sponsorships that include naming opportunities must comply with the Public Property Naming and Commemoration Policy and seek approval from the Mayor and Council.
5. **League/Tournament Sponsorship:** League/Tournament sponsorships may include the sponsor's name on tournament advertising, trophies, schedules, standings, t-shirts and social media.

6. **Commemorative Tree and Bench Sponsorship:** Trees are planted in spring and fall. Suggestions regarding tree species and location are considered, however, the City makes the final determination. A written record and map location of the tree is maintained by the City. Plaques and markers are not allowed as part of the commemorative tree program. A bench can be purchased new, or an existing bench can be “adopted.” Bench styles are determined based on location. A standard 8-by-2-inch bronze plaque is attached to the bench indicating the purpose of the dedication.