

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 12/15/2021 7:33:11 AM

Subject: Council Annual Events Update Memo

Attachments: Memo_2022_CouncilApprovedAnnualEvents.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a memo from Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk, advising Council about the status of the review staff are conducting on Council's 16 approved annual celebrations and observances, and plans to recognize these events on behalf of Council in 2022.

If you have any questions, please contact Katrina Leckovic at katrina.leckovic@vancouver.ca or Lesley Matthews at lesley.matthews@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

December 14, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Aftab Erfan, Chief Equity Officer
Magnus Enfeldt, Director, Business Planning and Project Support
Lesley Matthews, Chief External Relations and Protocol

FROM: Katrina Leckovic
City Clerk

SUBJECT: Plan for 2022 Council Approved Celebrations and Observances

RTS #: N/A

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to update Council on the status of the review of Council's 16 approved annual celebrations and observances, and advise Council on the plans to recognize these events in 2022.

Background:

Review of City Council's Official Annual Celebrations and Observances

Vancouver City Council officially recognizes 16 annual celebrations and observances. The following eight events were approved by Council in 2006:

- Lunar New Year
- International Women's Day
- Pride Week
- Diwali

- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- National Indigenous Peoples Day
- International Day for Persons with Disabilities
- Christmas

Staff recommended these eight events to Council based on: 1) the five basic dimensions of diversity - race, gender, sexual orientation, Indigenous ancestry and ability, and 2) the three largest ethnic origins in the city at the time - European, East-Asian and South-Asian. Each event was designated \$2,000 for a total annual events budget of \$16,000. The \$2000 budget per event covered reception costs and honorariums for cultural performances or speakers.

Between 2011 and 2020, Council approved the following eight additional events through Council motions without supporting budget or staff resources:

- Black History Month - 2011
- Eid al-Adha – 2011
- World Refugee Day - 2011
- Italian Heritage Month - 2018
- Nowruz – 2019
- Day of Remembrance & Action on Islamophobia - 2020
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day – 2020
- Komagata Maru Remembrance Day – 2020

Issues Identified with City Council's Official Annual Celebrations and Observances

As new events were added over the years, event formats shifted. Some events grew in size and scope where there was high community engagement and support, while other events were taken over by and celebrated in the community. Others were either discontinued altogether or not marked in any notable form. These changes raised a number of issues and questions in the community and with staff, which are detailed in the following table.

Issue	Details
Equity	There is an increasing imbalance in the level of recognition of some events and an absence of clear event prioritization criteria. Along with changing demographics, there are questions of why some groups are recognized and others are not, and why some events receive more budget and staff attention than other events.
Resourcing	The External Relations and Protocol Office, which is tasked with these events, can no longer continue to support these events in a way that meets community expectations without appropriate resourcing and staffing. The number of events has doubled and increased in complexity since 2006, but staff is managing with the budget approved in 2006.
Definition	It is unclear what defines a 'council approved annual event' versus other city events such as 'civic events' and 'civic parades'. There is also confusion about whether Mayor and Council or the community are the official hosts.
Growth	Some events have grown significantly in size and scope over time because of community demand and interest, while others have discontinued or are marked in a small way. This leads to questions of whether the City is applying a fair and equitable approach to the increased scope of some events.
Community Relations	There is a lack of clarity on which community representatives should work on planning these events. For many celebrations and observances there are multiple individuals and community groups who mark the occasion and it is challenging for staff to determine which group to work with. When the City works with one of these groups over another it can lead to conflict within the community and with the City.

Governance	Currently there is no review period or end date associated with Council approved celebrations and observances. In addition there is no regularly scheduled review to determine if new events should be added or if existing events should be reconsidered. There is also no procedure being followed when new events are added to the list.
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Review of City Council's Official Annual Celebrations and Observances

On December 3, 2019, a memo was sent to Council advising that staff would review Council approved annual events with an objective to respond to the above questions and issues, and develop a policy framework to guide future decisions with respect to these events.

Business Planning and Project Support (BPPS) worked with External Relations and Protocol to:

- research other Canadian cities' approach to recognizing significant celebrations and observances;
- draft a policy framework to guide decision-making regarding Council approved annual events;
- evaluate and prioritize the current events to affirm alignment with the proposed framework; and
- recommend appropriate resourcing for Council approved annual events.

In March 2020, the review stopped short of completion due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and BPPS resources shifted to COVID response and recovery. This project will restart once BPPS and External Relations and Protocol resourcing allows.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in place since March 2020, External Relations and Protocol has recognized annual events online and with visual assets rather than organizing in-person events. Council approved events have been recognized in the following ways:

- Posting Mayor Proclamations on vancouver.ca and the City's social channels
- Posting Mayor and Council video messages on the City's social channels, where possible
- Supporting partner organizations by promoting their online events and providing video recording of Proclamation readings, welcome remarks and greetings from the Mayor or members of Council
- Illuminating City Hall and Burrard Bridge in colours that reflect the community or occasion
- Displaying flags on the flag island at 12th and Cambie and on the large flag poles on the north lawn of City Hall where appropriate and when possible. For example,
 - For Pride Week, the Pride and Pride Progress Flags are raised on the 80 foot masts, and the Pride, Trans, and Two-Spirit Flags are raised on the flag island at 12th and Cambie.
 - For National Indigenous Peoples Day, a selection of flags representing the three host nations, and other local Indigenous organizations are raised on the flag island at 12th and Cambie.
 - All other days, official or unofficial, flags on the flag island can be requested by community groups through Engineering Services for a fee
- Updating webpage content tailored to the community celebration or observance with resources, photos and links to the City's work and projects relevant to the day of significance.

Discussion:

Overall, community groups have been supportive of the City's virtual recognition of City Council's official annual celebrations and observances in lieu of in-person events during the pandemic; however, some community groups have expressed a desire to return to in-person events at City Hall in 2022. Unfortunately, staff do not foresee a return to in-person gatherings in the near future.

The general guidance from Human Resource Services' COVID-19 safety protocol, is to continue to host virtual events when there is a viable online option given the many unknowns with COVID-19 especially during the winter respiratory virus season and given the emergence of new variants of the virus. For this reason, it is prudent to continue to plan for online events.

Staff are keen to resume the outstanding review of Council approved annual events. This review will provide an opportunity to systemically apply the City's new orientation to equity, as articulated in the Equity Framework, adopted by Council in 2021. In principle, the Equity Framework does support uneven resourcing to different equity-denied groups to account for differences in the barriers faced by each community. A thoughtful and evidence informed application of this lens is needed in the case of Council approved events. This review will resume as soon as staff resources are available, as discussed above.

Staff will notify community groups that events will continue in a virtual format for the foreseeable future. City staff will continue to support community groups that we collaborate with to arrange and coordinate:

- Mayor Proclamation (request submitted by the community)
- City Hall and Burrard Bridge Illumination (request submitted by the community)
- Social media acknowledgement with image and messaging tailored to the occasion
- Acknowledgement in a Council meeting when dates of significance align with a Council meeting day
- Display flags on the flag island at 12th and Cambie where appropriate and possible
- Align staff presentations and reports to Council with dates of significance. For example, an update on the Women's Equity Strategy will be delivered to Council ahead of International Women's Day.
- For existing Mayor and Council videos, staff will update to ensure continued relevancy.
- Furthermore, communities may choose to organize an in person or hybrid event to observe or celebrate significant dates. This is at the discretion and resourcing of the community group. Community groups can invite Mayor and Council to participate in their event, and City staff will provide logistical support where possible.

Please note, the 2022 Council approved annual event schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, January 27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Saturday, January 29 – Day of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia
- February 1 - 7 – Lunar New Year Week
- Tuesday, February 1 – Black History Month
- Tuesday, March 8 – International Women's Day
- Sunday, March 20 – Nowruz
- Monday, March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- Monday, May 23 – Komagata Maru Remembrance Day
- June – Italian Heritage Month
- Monday, June 20 – World Refugee Day
- Tuesday, June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Saturday, July 9 – Eid al-Adha
- Monday, July 25 - 31 – Pride Week
- Monday, October 24 – Diwali
- Saturday, December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- December 25 – Christmas

If you have any questions about the information contained in this memo, please contact me or Lesley Matthews, Chief of External Relations and Protocol at lesley.matthews@vancouver.ca.

Regards,



Katrina Leckovic
City Clerk

604.873.7998 | katrina.leckovic@vancouver.ca