

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 11/15/2022 11:22:15 AM
Subject: Council Approved Annual Events

Dear Mayor and Council,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Council approved annual celebrations and observances, and to advise Council of a staff-initiated review taking place as a result of multiple past Council motions adding events to the list of Council approved annual events to:

- 1) develop a policy framework that will guide decision-making on which events should be included and how new events should be added,
- 2) evaluate and prioritize the current events to affirm alignment with the proposed framework, and
- 3) ensure that resources are in place to support the events annually.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk at rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca or Bianca Jones, Acting Chief Protocol Officer at Bianca.jones@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
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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

November 14, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Kareem Allam, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office
David Grewal, Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Aftab Erfan, Chief Equity Officer
Ben Pollard, Director, Business Planning and Project Support
Michelle Bryant-Gravelle, Senior Director of Indigenous Relations
Bianca Jones, Acting Chief External Relations and Protocol

FROM: Rosemary Hagiwara
City Clerk

SUBJECT: Plan for 2023 Council Approved Celebrations and Observances

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Council approved annual celebrations and observances, and to advise Council of a staff review taking place to 1) develop a policy framework that will guide decision-making on which events should be included and how new events should be added, 2) evaluate and prioritize the current events to affirm alignment with the proposed framework, and 3) ensure that resources are in place to support the events annually.

Background:

Vancouver City Council officially recognizes 18 annual celebrations and observances. Eight events were approved by Council in 2006, including:

- 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

At the time, 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 \$2,000 budget per event covered reception costs and honorariums for cultural performances or speakers.

Between 2011 and 2022, Council approved 10 additional events through Council motions without supporting budget or staff resources, including:

- Black History Month - 2011
- Eid al-Adha – 2011
- World Refugee Day - 2011
- Italian Heritage Month - 2018
- Ramadan – 2022
- Nowruz – 2019
- Day of Remembrance & Action on Islamophobia - 2020
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day – 2020
- Komagata Maru Remembrance Day – 2020
- Eid al-Fitr – 2022

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

Over time, events were marked in different ways and inequities between events began to emerge. Events with high community support and participation continued and increased in size, scope and complexity, while other events that did not have the same level of community support were either discontinued 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 strain is also felt by other departments such as Arts, Cultural and Community Services, Web Operations, the Equity Office, Civic Engagement and Communications and others. 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.

In December 2019, staff initiated a review of the Council annual celebrations and observances program because of the questions and concerns listed above. The purpose of the review was to support the ongoing success and equitable recognition of the city’s diverse community, by 1) developing a policy framework to guide decision-making on how Council events are added to the official list, 2) evaluating and prioritizing the current events to affirm alignment with the proposed framework, and 3) ensuring that resources are in place to support the events annually.

In March 2020, the review stopped and staff resources were re-deployed to pandemic response and recovery. Staff plan to re-start the review this fall and a draft framework will be presented to Council for consideration in 2023. While staff undertake this review, Council approved events will be recognized with:

- Mayor Proclamations on vancouver.ca and the City’s social channels
- 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 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.

Staff recommend that Council should approve no further events until the review is complete and a framework presented to Council for consideration.

Please note, the 2023 Council approved annual event schedule is as follows:

- Friday, January 27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day

- Sunday, January 29 – Day of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia
- January 22 (TBC) – Lunar New Year Week
- February – Black History Month
- Wednesday, March 8 – International Women’s Day
- Monday, March 20 – Nowruz
- Tuesday, March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Wednesday, March 22 - Thursday, April 20 – Ramadan (TBD as event just approved in 2022)
- Thursday, April 20 - Friday, April 21 – Eid al-Fitr (TBD as event just approved in 2022)
- Tuesday, May 23 – Komagata Maru Remembrance Day
- June – Italian Heritage Month
- Tuesday, June 20 – World Refugee Day
- Wednesday, June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Wednesday, June 28 – Sunday, July 29 – Eid al-Adha
- July TBC – Pride Week
- Sunday, Nov 12 – Diwali
- Sunday, December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Sunday, December 25 – Christmas

If you have any questions about the information contained in this memo, please contact me or Bianca Jones, Acting Chief of External Relations and Protocol at bianca.jones@vancouver.ca.

Regards,



Rosemary Hagiwara
Acting City Clerk

604.873.7998 | rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca