



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 27, 2007  
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Meeting Date: May 29, 2007

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager, Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: Canada Day Fireworks

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council endorse a plan by the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society to bring a Canada Day fireworks show back to Vancouver on July 1st.
- B. THAT Council approve a grant of \$10,000 to the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society to help offset the cost of purchasing and presenting a Canada Day fireworks show in Burrard inlet off Canada Place; source of funds the 2007 Contingency Reserve.

#### CONSIDERATION

- C. THAT Council approve a budget of up to \$55,000 to cover anticipated costs of Police, Park Board and Engineering services for a Canada Day fireworks show in the water off Canada Place on Sunday, July 1st 2007; source of funds
  - (a) the 2007 Contingency Reserve;

OR

  - (b) existing departmental budgets.

## CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager notes that Canada Day Celebrations are important National Celebrations and many cities across the country are associated with fireworks in some form. Unfortunately, the City does not have a budget to support City costs associated with crowd control and impacts of the event.

It may appear easy to direct Departments to absorb the costs within 2007 Budgets however, this may result in Departments being forced to over expend, as there is no option but to provide necessary services. The City Manager suggests that Council approve funding from 2007 contingency reserve as outlined in Recommendation C(a). The City Manager RECOMMENDS also approval of Recommendation A, B, and C(a).

## COUNCIL POLICY

That FEST Committee obtains Council approval for special events that use City property, or where the event could have an impact on the adjacent public.

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

Special Event organizers are responsible for all City costs associated with their events.

At a March 11th, 2004 meeting Council adopted a number of new special event policies, including the following:

- "Council welcomes celebrations and special events for their contribution in making Vancouver a vibrant City, in reflecting our cultural diversity and neighbourhood character, and for the economic, cultural and recreational benefits they bring to the City. Council supports the facilitation of these events by staff, encourages mitigation of short-term disruptions in neighbourhoods and encourages citizens to welcome these activities and to participate in them."

## PURPOSE

This report presents information regarding the potential impacts and costs of participating in a Canada Day fireworks show on July 1st. It will provide background into the problems associated with the show in the past, and explain how members of the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society propose to address the conditions that caused the problems in past years. The City's endorsement and financial support are requested to ensure the ongoing viability of the event.

## BACKGROUND

For a number of years in the 1990's, Canada Place Corporation presented a fireworks show as part of their July 1st festivities. Thousands of spectators watched them from the streets around Canada Place, and from the waterfront at the bottom of the ramp at the north foot of Burrard Street. The event was family oriented and generally problem free. When the cruise ship centre expansion was completed, the number of spectators who gathered on the

promenade on the west side of Canada Place to view the fireworks became a source of concern. Emergency personnel found it difficult to access the north end of the promenade in case of an emergency, and Vancouver Police reported increased incidences of street disorder. In 2003 there was a serious stabbing incident outside Canada Place, and for a number of years congestion around Stanley Park, a popular viewing area, created traffic and crowd control concerns for both Police and Parks personnel.

Given these issues, the fireworks have not been staged since 2003. Discussions took place with Canada Place about bringing back the fireworks show in 2005, but construction of the Convention Centre expansion and other major projects precluded the event from being safely held.

In 2006, the City of West Vancouver put on a fireworks display on the evening of July 1st, and reported no problems with crowds. In the fall of that year, the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society was formed, with charter members being the City and District of North Vancouver, the City of West Vancouver and Canada Place Corporation.

## DISCUSSION

The Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society has proposed a show for this year that would be staged off shore on two barges; one in Coal Harbour off Canada Place as in past years, and one on the north shore near Ambleside Beach. The fireworks displays would be higher than those in past years, and people would be encouraged to watch them from home, rather than coming down to Canada Place to see them. The Society hopes that this change and the staging of alternate fireworks displays in other municipalities would alleviate many of the crowd control concerns.

In an effort to control the number of people who come down to the site, Canada Place will sell tickets for viewing from the promenade; and proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to a community charity. The daytime event programming at Canada Place will run from 10am to 7pm, the site will be cleared and secured, and then re-opened at approximately 9pm for fireworks spectators. The fireworks show would be approximately 20 minutes, starting at 10:30pm.

The Society approached the Mayor's office with a request that Vancouver participate in a joint fireworks display. The Society plans to proceed with the event with or without a City contribution, but have asked for a programming grant of \$10,000 to assist with purchasing the fireworks and related logistics; and has also asked the City to cover the costs of all City services required to manage crowds and cover clean-up costs.

While crowd control at the event is a large part of the budget for the event, the Canada Day fireworks will attract fewer people than the annual Celebration of Light fireworks show that regularly draws a quarter million people each night. While there are concerns with any large event, the fireworks crowds have been managed effectively with relatively few problems. Crowd management for the Canada Day fireworks show and clean-up afterward will require extra City and Park Board resources, particularly around Stanley Park and seawall areas along Burrard Inlet. The logistical difficulties associated with staging fireworks at Canada Place have always been a concern, but the progress of construction at the convention center expansion project has been a positive change. As well, with other municipalities offering Canada Day fireworks shows and a higher fireworks display at Canada Place making this show

more visible from farther away, staff believe fireworks at this location can now be more adequately managed.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding request for Canada Day fireworks has been separated into two requests. The first, for \$10,000 to assist with the production of the fireworks show, must be considered as a grant; and will require a minimum of eight affirmative votes. The Departments involved in this event from an operational perspective do not have a mechanism or budget for programming assistance; and Cultural and Celebration grants, which might be a source of funding in future years, have already been allocated by Council to other events.

Operational costs for this event are estimated to be \$47,000 for policing, \$6,000 for Parks Board and \$2,000 for Engineering; although it's very difficult to estimate, as true costs will depend on the weather that evening, what other lower mainland municipalities are having fireworks on Canada Day, and how well the Society gets its message out about watching from the fireworks from home rather than from Canada Place. Because this request was not considered in time to have the costs included in the 2007 Operating Budget, Council is being asked to consider two options for funding. Funding can come from Contingency Reserve, or the departments involved in providing services for the event, namely Police, Parks and Engineering, can be asked to find funding from their existing budgets. If the fireworks show is successful the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society will begin planning for a similar fireworks show in 2008, in which case funding would be considered as part of the 2008 Operating Budget process.

#### COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The City of Vancouver will use its communications channels to inform citizens and businesses about this year's Canada Day Fireworks show, and provide recommendations for areas of safe viewing. The organizers of the event, as well as other municipalities that are participating in the Society, will also ensure that all publicity materials offer a consistent message and build awareness about the restrictions around Canada Place.

#### CONCLUSION

A fireworks display on the evening of Canada Day is a tradition in cities across Canada. Council has an opportunity to re-establish that tradition in Vancouver by participating in a joint initiative with North Vancouver City and District and the City of West Vancouver by supporting this request from the Burrard Inlet Fireworks Society. Given the intent of the Society to proceed with the show in future years, a budget for the costs for City services to support the event should be established.

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