



## COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: October 8, 2024  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: November 13, 2024  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: City Manager  
SUBJECT: REPORT BACK: Civic Protocol Policy Amendments

### Recommendations

THAT Council approve amendments to the City's Civic Protocol Policy, as outlined in this report and attached as Appendix A, to provide similar consideration for cultural and arts events as is given to sporting teams and major sporting events.

### Purpose and Executive Summary

This is a report back to council following a September 25, 2024, Standing Committee meeting, which recommends further amendments to the City's Civic Protocol Policy to ensure that cultural and arts organizations receive the same opportunities as sporting events and organizations.

### Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The Flag Policy was approved by Council on October 8, 2002. As a Council policy, any amendments to the policy are to be approved by Council.

On May 16, 2016, a Memorandum provided an update on the City of Vancouver Flag Policy and Illumination Guidelines and Procedures.

The Flag (Civic Protocol) Policy amendments were approved by Council on April 23, 2024

On September 25, 2025, Civic Protocol Policy amendments were approved by Council, with direction for staff to report back to on the potential to provide similar consideration to cultural and arts events that are beneficial to the City as is given to sporting teams and major sporting events.

## **City Manager's Comments**

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

## **Context and Background**

The City's Civic Protocol Policy governs civic protocol-related matters, including the City's Proclamation Program, Flag Policy, and Illumination Program. In September 2024, Council approved amendments to focus the City's Illumination Program on local events by removing international recognitions. During this meeting, Council directed staff to report back on how to provide arts and culture events the same opportunity to illuminate City Hall and the Burrard Street Bridge as Vancouver's sports teams and major sporting events hosted in the city.

## **Discussion**

Staff recommend updating the eligibility criteria for illumination requests to explicitly include major cultural and arts events, organized by either non-profit or for-profit entities or sponsors. Currently, cultural and arts organizations are required to be non-profits to apply for illumination, whereas Vancouver's sports teams and major sporting events held in Vancouver do not face this restriction. The proposed change ensures that arts and culture events that are organized by for-profit entities or are privately sponsored are also eligible, provided they contribute to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of Vancouver.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report's recommendations.

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## APPENDIX A CIVIC PROTOCOL POLICY

<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	Civic Protocol Policy
<b>CATEGORY</b>	Council
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	COUN-009 (formerly AG-013-01 Flag Policy)
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	City Clerk's Office
<b>ACCESS</b>	Public

### PURPOSE

To govern Civic Protocol related matters, including the flying of flags by the City of Vancouver, the City's Proclamation Program and the City's Illumination Program.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all flags flown by the City of Vancouver, as well as other civic protocol related matters outlined herein. This policy does not apply to the City's Street Banner Program.

Bookings for the City flag islands to display guest flags and banners shall be the responsibility of Engineering Services.

### INTERPRETATION

All references in this policy to an employee, elected official, officer, or other representative of the City is deemed to include any designate, deputy, or anyone else properly authorized in writing or by Council resolution to act in that person's position.

Where a position title is changed following the adoption of this policy, the City Manager and City Clerk will have the joint authority to amend this policy to reflect such change or reorganization.

### POLICY STATEMENTS

#### 1 General Flag Etiquette

- 1.1 The Canadian Flag shall always be displayed in the position of priority:
- When flags are displayed at the same height, the Canadian flag is flown on the left as seen by the observer of the flags.
  - In a line of three flags, the Canadian flag should be in the centre.
  - When flags are displayed on an angle such that the centre flag is higher than the other flags, the Canadian flag is flown in the centre.
- 1.2 It is acceptable to fly the Canadian flag at night.

- 1.3 The flags of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations will be flown permanently on three tall poles in the centre of the flag island located at 12th and Cambie Street.

## 2 Half-masting

- 2.1 Flags are flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning. The flag is brought to the half-mast position by raising it to the top of the mast and immediately lowering it slowly to half-mast. When one flag is flown at half-mast, all flags flown together should also be at half-mast.
- 2.2 All Canadian flags that are displayed on flagpoles with halyards will be flown at half-mast, when operationally feasible on the following occasions:
- On the death of a Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, a former governor general, a former prime minister, or a federal cabinet minister;
  - On the death of the Lieutenant Governor or the Premier;
  - On the death of a Member of the House of Commons or a Member of the Legislative Assembly when that member represents a Vancouver riding;
  - On the death of the Mayor, former Mayor, a current Vancouver City Councillor or a former City Councillor;
  - On the death of a Vancouver city employee when their death has occurred as a direct result of performing their duties;
  - On the Commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge (April 9);
  - On the Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (April 28);
  - On the National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism (June 23);
  - On the Firefighters' National Memorial Day (second Sunday in September);
  - On the Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day (the last Sunday in September);
  - On the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (September 30);
  - On the Indigenous Veterans Day (November 8);
  - On Remembrance Day (November 11) from 11 a.m. until sunset;
  - On the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6);
  - Upon the request of a representative from xʷməθkʷəyəm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, or səliłwətał Nations' Councils;
  - On the death of any person or persons or event as identified by the Mayor as a symbolic gesture of community mourning. In the Mayor's absence, this decision may be made by the Acting Mayor or in their absence, the Deputy Mayor or, if the Deputy Mayor is unavailable, by the Duty Councillor.
- 2.3 In the case of a death, flags shall be flown at half-mast from the notification of death until sunset on the day of the funeral, or from sunrise to sunset on the day of the memorial service or on a designated day as directed by the City Clerk's Office, External Relations and Protocol.
- 2.4 The flags to be flown at half-mast will include all flags flown from rooftops of City buildings. In the event of the death of a former Vancouver City Councillor, the flag on the roof of City Hall will be half-masted. Where a Canadian flag and a British Columbia flag fly near to one other, both flags should be lowered to half-mast.

- 2.5 In the event of a death or a recognition not specified in this policy, the City of Vancouver will follow the direction of the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage.
- 2.6 When half-masting has been deemed appropriate based on 2.2 or 2.5 above, the City Clerk or designate will notify relevant internal and external stakeholders and provide advice to City Departments/Business Units on matters regarding flags.

### **3 Responsibility and Maintenance of Flags**

- 3.1 The decision to display the flag of another sovereign nation during visits by dignitaries or in acknowledgment of sister-city affiliations shall rest with the discretion of the City Clerk.
- 3.2 Maintenance of the flags flown at City Hall is the responsibility of Building Services, Real Estate, Environment, and Facilities Management.
- 3.3 Maintenance of the flags flown on flag islands throughout the City is the responsibility of Engineering Services.
- 3.4 Maintenance of the flags in other departments will be delegated within each Department as appropriate.
- 3.5 The BC flag and Vancouver Flag fly on the 80-foot poles on the North Lawn of City hall. A Council motion is required to change these flags, notwithstanding the annual tradition of raising the Pride and Trans flags on these poles during Vancouver Pride Week.

### **4 Illumination Program**

- 4.1 The City's Illumination Program directs the Illumination of the City Hall Building and the Burrard Street Bridge for recognition of local events and cultural occasions relevant to Vancouver.
- 4.2 Important events and cultural occasions eligible for Illumination include:

- i. Ongoing, annual official celebrations and observances as approved by City Council; and

One-off events or awareness campaigns, based on requests received that are meeting eligibility criteria and are approved by the City Clerk.

Requests may be submitted by xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations charities and non-profit organizations registered in Canada, and sports organizations.

Eligibility criteria:

- Local festivals or community events;

- Local awareness issues that build community or are related to community health<sup>1</sup> issues;
- Events or occasions that contribute to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of Vancouver, including
- Recognize Vancouver’s professional sports teams or major national or international sporting events hosted in Vancouver;
- **Arts and culture events hosted in Vancouver, organized by either non-profit or for-profit entities or sponsors, that contribute to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of Vancouver**

Illumination requests will be ineligible if the request:

- Does not align with the above criteria;
- Contravenes City policies or By-laws;
- Are mainly personal, political, religious, or commercial in nature;
- Are from organizations that do not have a presence in Vancouver;
- Represents a Nation or country other than Canada or xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, or seeks to commemorate a cultural or heritage day/month linked to another nation.
- Does not meet application deadlines specified by the City Clerk.

4.3 In the event of extenuating circumstances, approved Illumination requests may be subject to revision.

4.4 The City Clerk is granted the authority to approve community requests that meet eligibility criteria as defined in section 4.2 and 4.3 of this policy.

## 5 Proclamation Program

5.1 The Proclamation Program supports the recognition of important events and cultural occasions.

5.2 The Proclamation Program has two streams:

- i. Ongoing annual Proclamations connected to Official Celebrations and Observances as proclaimed by the Mayor. This program stream is supported by the City Clerk’s Office, External Relations and Protocol.
- ii. Mayor’s Proclamations based on requests by members of the public or community-based organizations. This program stream facilitates one-off Proclamations which meet eligibility as approved by the Mayor. This proclamation stream is administered and managed by the Office of the Mayor.

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<sup>1</sup> Important note: Health-related requests must be aligned with Health Canada’s Calendar of Health Promotion Days, or it can be reasonably determined that the awareness campaign, event, or activity could significantly impact the community.

**RELATED POLICIES AND LINKS:**

<https://vancouver.ca/doing-business/banners-flags.aspx>

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/request-a-proclamation.aspx>

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/city-hall-lights-program.aspx>

Street Banner Policy

**APPROVAL AND REVIEW HISTORY:**

<b>Version 1 recommended by:</b>	City Clerk	
<b>Approved by:</b>	City Council	10/8/2002
<b>Version 2 approved by:</b>	City Clerk	04/09/2024
	City Manager	04/12/2024
	City Council	04/23/2024

**Next review date: September 25, 2028**