

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



<p>Date: May 30, 2022</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Paul Mitcham, P.Eng, MBA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer</p>	<p>Meeting date: June 15, 2022</p>

Subject

Recognizing Dates and Events at the City of Mississauga

Recommendation

That the following recommendations contained in the corporate report dated May 30, 2022 entitled, "Recognizing Dates and Events at the City of Mississauga", from the City Manager and CAO be approved:

1. That the Dates and Events Recognition considerations, principles, criteria and process be established as per the recommendations in this report;
2. That the Strategic Communications and Initiatives Division take the lead by creating and managing a central calendar of all dates to ensure greater coordination across the City in terms of recognizing events, and developing public-facing materials;
3. That an annual review of the calendar of dates and level of programming be carried out to ensure it is sensitive to emerging sensibilities;
4. That Black History Month (February); International Women's Day (March 8); Pride Month (June); Indigenous History Month (June); National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21); and National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (September 30) be added to the list of "Traditional Events" in the Official City Openings/Events policy;
5. That the Official City Openings & Events Policy be revised to note that Strategic Communications and Initiatives or any other relevant division within the Corporation can be the lead team on these events; and
6. That MiWay destination signage be changed to only display route and destination information and messaging supporting an event on the Traditional Events list, if the operator chooses to do so.

Executive Summary

- As a corporation, the City of Mississauga recognizes many dates, events and celebrations. However, there is no coordination across the corporation in how these occasions are marked.

- The City maintains a list of traditional events that includes Canada Day, Remembrance Day, and others, where the City hosts an annual event and provides resourcing and support to mark the occasion.
- Like many cities across Canada, Mississauga has been confronted with the challenge of how to properly recognize dates and events and coordinate efforts and resources across the corporation.
- Staff recommend developing a program with a set of guiding principles and criteria to include dates and events and that the program be reviewed annually.
- Staff also recommend that Black History Month (February); International Women’s Day (March 8); Pride Month (June); Indigenous History Month (June); National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21); National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (September 30) be added to the list of “Traditional” events in the Official City Openings/Events policy.
- To facilitate this recognition, staff recommend creating a central repository and calendar of all dates to ensure greater coordination across the City in terms of recognizing events and developing public-facing materials.
- Staff recommend providing guidance to MiWay regarding the destination signage (the information display on the top of the bus) on transit vehicles. Moving forward, staff recommend that destination signage display route and destination information and messaging supporting an event on the Traditional Events list, if the operator chooses to do so.

Background

The City of Mississauga has multiple policies regarding community recognition. However, as a corporation, our practice of choosing which dates and events to recognize has been ad hoc. Increasingly, the community and our own employees are looking to the City of Mississauga to see what events and dates we will recognize and observe. As well, there is a growing movement in city governments across Canada and around the world to better reflect the communities they serve. The events and dates a city chooses to recognize reflects the organization’s values.

Led by Strategic Communications and Initiatives a review of the City’s current recognition policies and activities was conducted through an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens. As part of the review, a survey of the external facing recognition activities and practices of each division was conducted. At present, aside from a few traditional events as identified in the City Official Opening/Events Policy (i.e. Canada Day), there is no standard governing which dates and events the corporation recognizes and celebrates through promotion or programming.

In June 2020, City Council passed resolution 207 to combat anti-Black and Indigenous racism. This motion has acted as a guide for reviewing and developing new policies through an EDI lens. For the purposes of this report, the second clause of the motion reads:

“The City of Mississauga reaffirms its commitment to address systemic racism and discrimination by creating and supporting policies and programs that address the inequities that Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities, and in particular, Black communities continue to experience in the City of Mississauga.”

The following report provides recommendations on how the City can better organize and communicate about community dates and events, and makes recommendations on dates and events that will be marked on an annual basis by the City.

Comments

Review of current policies

The City of Mississauga currently marks dates and events of interest to its diverse community primarily in two ways:

1. Through **community led initiatives** governed by the following policies and their specific criteria:
 - Community Recognition Program Policy 06-04-04;
 - Civic Protocol Policy 06-02-01;
 - Community Grant Administration Policy 08-01-03;
 - Outdoor Events in the Civic District Policy 05-03-03; and
 - Use of City Facilities Policy 05-01-12
2. Through **City led initiatives** based mostly on request:
 - Service Delivery Programming based on divisional lines of business;
 - Official City Openings/ Events Policy 06-02-04; and
 - Some reserved days and state of mourning

Community Led Initiatives

The Community Recognition Program governs community recognition requests of dates and events. It is intended to raise awareness and encourage participation in fundraising initiatives, public awareness campaigns, cultural, sport and entertainment programs as well as activities that foster a spirit of community and contribute to the enrichment of the quality of life in Mississauga. Since its inception in 2015, the program has grown exponentially, although the number of requests fluctuates year over year.

City Led Initiatives

Currently, City led initiatives do not follow set criteria either with regard to selecting the date or determining the level of programming. Dates recognized are mostly determined as a result of requests initiated by Council, a community group/organization, and/or an individual group of staff from a particular business area.

The only exceptions are the “Traditional Events,” outlined in the Official City Openings/Events policy, that the City historically recognizes annually with events and public-facing materials.

These traditional events are held in Mississauga and have a City-wide impact; are identified in a project work plan/charter; and are endorsed by the Leadership Team and Council.

The Official Events list is prepared and endorsed by Council in Q1 each year through a Corporate Report.

Although each year the total number of official events fluctuates depending on work plans, the traditional event list remains consistent and includes:

- **January** - Mayor's New Year's Levee
- **July 1st** - Canada Day Official Ceremony (in partnership with Culture)
- **November 11th** - Remembrance Day
- **November** - Light Up the Square Official Ceremony (in partnership with Culture)
- **Spring** - Civic Recognition Ceremony (for community volunteers)

In addition, but not considered 'traditional' under the Official Openings/Events Policy, the City has partnered with the community to mark dates that are consistent with Council priorities:

- **February: Black History Month** – Mayor hosts an event; City departments offer a number of programs
- **March 8th: International Women's Day** – Mayor hosts event for local high school students; City departments feature host events
- **June: Pride Month** – Mayor hosts an event; City departments offer a number of programs
- **June: Indigenous History Month** – City departments offer a number of programs
- **September 30th: National Day for Truth & Reconciliation**

City programming support and development of public-facing materials for these events remains ad hoc, inconsistent, and unpredictable year to year.

Divisional Survey

A survey of all City divisions was conducted to identify dates and levels of external facing programming currently being recognized and conducted. Based on the responses, it was identified that a variety of dates were being recognized by multiple divisions through service delivery programming which included:

- Public messaging
- Public events
- Leadership involvement and/or activity
- Community grants or in-kind support
- Divisional programming (such as an author talk in the Library, a history exhibit in one of our museums, etc.)
- Transit destination sign messages
- Flag raising and lowering
- Tower lighting and dimming

See Appendix 1 for a current list of dates that have been recognized by divisions within the corporation. At this time, there is no coordination in terms of consistency of creative materials, messaging, or the nature and level of programming provided.

External Benchmarking

Nine of the largest Canadian municipalities were surveyed. Responses were received from the cities of Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Brampton, and the Region of Peel.

Other than Calgary and Edmonton that do not corporately commemorate dates, the other seven municipalities commemorate various dates and events, with Vancouver being the only city that has established criteria for the dates selected for commemoration. This criteria was developed in 2006 based on Vancouver's 5 dimensions of diversity (gender, sexual orientation, race, Indigenous ancestry, ability) and the origins of the 3 largest populations in Vancouver at the time – Asian, South East Asian and European.

The Cities of Toronto, Vancouver, Brampton, and the Region of Peel are all currently reviewing their criteria for determining dates and events to recognize. Ottawa is also working on a Diversity & Inclusion Calendar that will include holidays, commemorations and awareness days that are related to their objective of advancing the Diversity and Inclusion Corporate Plan. All major Canadian municipalities are aware of inconsistencies in their policy and practice in terms of dates and events recognition and are, therefore, in the process of reviewing their current practice.

Recommendations

To ensure greater coordination across the City in terms of recognizing dates and events, including planning events and developing public-facing materials, staff recommend that:

- The Strategic Communications and Initiatives Division lead a process where all divisions collaboratively develop criteria and annually review the dates and events list for the organization that will include consistent creative and alignment to the City brand as well as, messaging; all of which apply across the organization
- That this process be firmly grounded in EDI considerations that are relevant to the City of Mississauga; and
- That the list of dates and events be reviewed annually for continued relevance and accommodation of emerging sensibilities.

Considerations for Mississauga

Staff recommend the following criteria will be applied to selecting dates and events to recognize:

- Dimensions of Diversity: Race, class, ethnicity, gender, immigration/refugee status, sexual orientation, Indigeneity, ability (including Mental Health), age, culture
- Strategic Plan Pillars and Council approved Strategies
- Traditional Events: historically recognized and programmed

Principles

The Dates and Events Recognition Program will be governed by the following principles:

- **Transparent:** program with goals focused on building understanding; raising awareness; educating the public and showing support
- **Flexible:** program that is revised annually to continue to evolve, recognize and be responsive to emerging global trends and events being discussed by communities
- **Inclusive:** All City programmed activities to be considered corporate, i.e. Library, Recreation, Culture, Strategic Communications & Initiatives, Fire, etc. depending on which line of business is best suited to recognize the date in a meaningful and respectful way
- **Equitable:** program that is responsive to community sensibilities and makes an effort to avoid a tiered system of programming

Mayor and Council's list and their social media accounts are out of scope and could include many more dates and religious holidays.

Criteria for Selection

- Demonstrates Council's commitment: to the City's Strategic Plan and other Council priorities and emerging issues, which advance the City's vision and goals and contribute to the quality of life and the long-term development of community groups.
- Enhances the image of the City of Mississauga: by recognizing and celebrating dates/events that represent our diverse communities and have a positive historical and current impact on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Promotes public awareness and enhances the health, welfare, safety and cultural diversity of the community: to foster a spirit of community and contribute to enriching the quality of life in Mississauga.
- Dates recognized by other orders of government that meet City of Mississauga's dimensions of diversity, considerations, principles and criteria for selection.

Exclusions

The following will be excluded from the program. Dates and events that:

- Endorse views and ideas which are likely to promote discrimination, contempt or hatred for any person on the basis of political affiliation, economic status, level of literacy or the protected grounds defined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, as amended (race, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability).
- Conflict with the City's core values, vision or strategic goals or adversely impacts the City's identity.
- Conflict with any provincial or federal law or Municipal by-laws, policies or official code of conduct.
- Advance the political interest of any particular party or group.

- Have the potential to incite bullying, violence and/or hatred or espouse discrimination and racism.
- Present demeaning or derogatory portrayals of individuals or groups or cause deep or widespread offence.
- Minimize and/or detract from the image of the City and/or its employees.
- Propose a matter of political controversy, ideological or religious beliefs or individual conviction.
- Promote activities intended for profit-making purposes.

Recommended Process

The following is the process:

- Using the considerations, principles, criteria for Dates and Events outlined above, Strategic Communications and Initiatives Division to lead a review of all traditional, existing and emerging dates/events/nature of programming that is external facing as part of an EDI review process.
- Using internal resources and external expertise (where necessary) review and refine all relevant existing policies on the issue.
- Create a central repository (one calendar) of all dates/events/related programming (including divisional/traditional/community led) on the City's external website.
- Annually divisions, working with the community, will collaborate to finalize the dates and events list. In addition, they will confirm level and nature of programming, creative, brand and messaging for the year and identify the lead division(s) or community individual/group, particularly for the Traditional Events listed in the Official City Openings/Events Policy.

Expanding the List of Traditional Events

Staff further recommend adding the following events to the "Traditional Events" list in the Official City Openings/Events policy to ensure consistent and adequate resourcing:

- Black History Month (February)
- International Women's Day (March 8)
- Pride Month (June)
- Indigenous History Month (June)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21)
- National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (September 30)

Update to MiWay Destination Signage

At present, MiWay does not have a policy with respect to the messages displayed on the destinations signage on its buses. Currently, Happy New Year, Happy Canada Day, Lest We Forget, and Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays are options available for display. Recently,

“Standing with Ukraine” was used as a message. These messages have not been chosen based on any criteria or policy.

From an operational perspective, destination signage messages are loaded into the sign program for each bus on an individual basis. It is then up to each driver to decide if they would like to display a message in addition to the required route information. If a driver chooses not to select a message, the default message is related to the route, service or is MiWay Charter related. As MiWay’s fleet of vehicles varies in age and technology, there is currently no mechanism for centralized control or oversight of the messages that are displayed on buses. Without clear direction in place, it is difficult to accept or refuse a new request for destination sign messaging. As well, as noted in Appendix 1, there are a significant number of events and dates that could be recognized, which would place undue pressure on operators. The logistics of reviewing and loading these messages onto each bus would be difficult to monitor and potentially controversial.

A benchmarking exercise of other large transit systems in Canada found little consistency in how and what messages are displayed on buses. An overview of the practices of other transit organizations can be found in Appendix 2. It is important to note that the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) does not allow any message other than route information. 21% of MiWay passengers connect with the TTC on a daily basis.

From this information, staff recommend that:

1. Beginning July 1, 2022, the destination signage on all MiWay transit vehicles display only route and destination information and only engage in recognition of the dates/ events identified on the Traditional Events list, if the operator chooses to do so; and
2. That as a division, MiWay engage in celebrations of the events on the traditional list, including those recently added (i.e. Black History Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, etc.) through programming and communications activities.

Financial Impact

The resource requirements for managing both the events calendar webpage as a central repository and the annual review process required to implement the Dates and Events Recognition in a consistent and efficient manner will be managed primarily through the Strategic Communications & Initiatives' existing operations and will have no additional financial impacts. However, events that will be included in the annual Traditional Events category of the Official City Openings/Events, which will require additional resources, will be considered through the City's budget and business planning processes and are subject to budget approval.

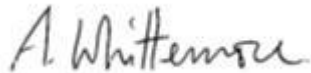
Conclusion

Like many cities across Canada, Mississauga has been confronted with the challenge of how to properly recognize dates and events and coordinate efforts and resources across the corporation. As one of the most diverse cities in Canada, staff is recommending the development of a process for determining which dates and events are to be recognized in partnership with the community.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Current List of Dates and Events Being Recognized

Appendix 2: Benchmarking of Canadian Transit Systems



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