

City of Mississauga  
**Corporate Report**



<p>Date: March 24, 2026</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: April 8, 2026</p>

## Subject

**2026 Santa Claus Parade**

## Recommendation

1. That the Commissioner of Community Services or designate be authorized to negotiate and execute contracts with selected parade float fabrication and rental service providers required for the 2026 Santa Claus Parade, as outlined in the corporate report entitled "2026 Santa Claus Parade" dated March 24, 2026 from the Commissioner of Community Services, and all necessary agreements and related ancillary agreements, all in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
2. That Cost Centre 24836 – "Recreation & Culture MCS City-Produced Events" be increased by a gross and net budget of \$200,000 with funding from the Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) Reserve Fund (#35591) to support funding of the Parade operational and production expenses; and
3. That the procurement of parade float fabrication and rental service providers required for the 2026 Santa Claus Parade be exempt from Procurement By-law 0013-2022, as amended.
4. That all necessary by-laws be enacted.

## Executive Summary

- 2025 Santa Claus parade was highly successful, offering significant community benefit and bolstering activity at downtown businesses.
- The 2026 Santa Claus Parade will take place on November 21, 2026 welcoming the community to celebrate together  
 The 2026 parade planning has commenced with City-wide collaboration, as well as continued engagement with Tourism Mississauga and Oxford Properties as key partners in the project.

- A \$200,000 allocation from the MAT fund is requested for parade delivery in 2026.
- An exemption from Procurement By-law 0013-2022, as amended, is being requested to support the acquisition of specialized parade float fabrication and rental services required for the 2026 event.

## Background

In 2025, the Santa Claus Parade returned to the downtown for the first time in more than twenty years. The parade route was intentionally designed to integrate with the annual Light Up the Square (“LUTS”) event at Mississauga Celebration Square (“Square”), culminating in Santa Claus leading the lighting of the Square’s 35-foot Christmas tree from his float as it passed through the Square.

To enhance the experience and create a cohesive downtown celebration, LUTS programming was expanded beyond the Square, incorporating placemaking elements, interactive activations, and photo opportunities along the parade route. Following the parade, Square One Shopping Centre reported an influx of 7,000-10,000 visitors, with anecdotal evidence of increased business at downtown restaurants on parade day. The event’s marketing campaign also garnered significant success, seeing a 197% increase in total web listing views from 2024. Social media discourse about the parade was overwhelmingly positive, and posts from parade participants, sponsors, and partners demonstrated high engagement. A highlight includes title sponsor Square One’s Parade Instagram Reel which garnered over 66,000 views in 48 hours and went on to be their most watched Reel of 2025.

The 2025 Santa Claus Parade was able to operate in a break-even model with all tangible costs offset by revenues from various sources. Looking ahead, the parade will need dedicated staff and operational resources for 2026 and beyond.

## Comments

The 2025 Santa Claus Parade demonstrated its potential as a signature winter experience with strong public appeal. To support continued success, the parade will require resources that enable sustainable, annual delivery.

The 2025 Santa Claus Parade was delivered on a condensed timeline and relied on support from a third-party contract, particularly for parade sales and float fabrication. To proactively address these challenges and position the event for long-term success, City staff are:

1. Developing a project charter to define City-wide roles, responsibilities, and project scope, with the aim of integrating the parade into annual operational programming.
2. Requesting a total MAT contribution of \$200,000 in 2026. As a major event that draws high attendance to the downtown core, the parade generates increased spending at

local businesses and strengthens the area's economic activity. This support will sustain event quality and manage increased operational demands while continuing to boost downtown Mississauga's vibrancy and economic impact.

3. Seeking an exemption from Procurement By-law 0013-2022, as amended, for parade float fabrication and rental services due to the specialized nature of the service, limited supplier availability, tight delivery timelines, and variable program requirements. Parade float fabrication requires specialized design and engineering expertise, integrated construction methods, and demonstrated adherence to public safety standards. Parade float rentals are subject to similar constraints; the market for rental-ready floats is extremely limited, with few suppliers maintaining an inventory that meets production and safety standards. The scope and number of floats required are not fully known at the outset and may change as program details are finalized, making it challenging to define a fixed scope suitable for a competitive procurement process.

Engaging multiple suppliers or conducting additional procurement processes would result in increased costs, duplicated design and engineering work, and increased risk to delivery timelines. Given the condensed production schedule for a large-scale municipal parade, changing or onboarding multiple suppliers would also increase the risk of delays and potential safety issues. Vendors with expertise in the industry, capacity to respond to evolving needs, ensuring design consistency and safety compliance are preferred and in high demand over the holiday parade season. An exemption provides flexibility to move forward quickly and efficiently with suppliers that meet thematic requirements, production timelines, and safety standards.

By implementing these measures and securing the appropriate cross-departmental support, the City will be positioned to deliver a high-quality and safe parade on an annual basis.

## Financial Impact

The budget and revenue forecast below indicates anticipated expenses and revenues associated with a 2026 parade. This forecast is informed by the experience delivering the 2025 Santa Claus Parade.

Expenses		Cost Centre and GL	Stat Order
Parade Floats	\$300,000	24836-715857	65001
Entertainment	\$80,000	24846-715857	65001
Security and Operations	\$200,000	24836-715636	65001
Admin and Miscellaneous	\$75,000	24836-715801	65001
City Staff (contract)	\$95,000	24836-705121	65001
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>		

Revenues		Cost Centre	Reserve
Event Sponsors	\$(95,000)	24836-525577	
Parade Float Sponsors	\$(250,000)	24836-525577	
Advertising	\$(80,000)	24836-525166	
Regional Recovery Grant (PRP)	\$(35,000)	24836-590131	
MAT Funding	\$(200,000)	24836-575104	RF#35591
Existing Operational Budget ( <i>transferred from Light Up the Square</i> )	\$(90,000)	24836-525166	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$(750,000)</b>		
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>		

A \$200,000 contribution is requested from the MAT reserve fund (#35591) to increase Cost Center 24836 – “Recreation & Culture MCS City-Produced Events”. In addition, the \$90,000 event budget for Light Up the Square will be transferred to support this initiative. Note that only \$90,000 of revenue is included within the 2026 operating budget.

## Conclusion

This report requests an exemption from Procurement By-law 013-2022, as amended, to permit the acquisition of parade float fabrication and rental services. An exemption provides flexibility to engage opportunities with various potential suppliers and existing organizations that have the required expertise and capacity to respond to evolving needs, ensure design consistency and safety compliance, and deliver floats within required timeframes.

The 2025 Santa Claus Parade delivered positive results and confirmed community interest in continuing this new signature initiative. The report provides the required approvals and resource considerations to support its sustainable implementation for the upcoming 2026 parade on November 21, 2026 and in future years.




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Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Community Services

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