



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** January 26, 2023
From: Jason Kita **File:** 01-0005-01/2022-Vol
 Director, Intergovernmental Relations and
 Corporate and Strategic Planning
Re: **City of Richmond Flag Policy**

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled "City of Richmond Flag Policy" dated January 26, 2023 from the Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Corporate and Strategic Planning be received for information.

Jason Kita
 Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Corporate and Strategic Planning
 (604-276-4091)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE
City Clerk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

At the Regular Council Meeting dated September 26, 2022, staff received the following referral:

“That staff review the Flag policy and report back.”

This report responds to this referral and presents potential options for consideration.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3, One Community Together:

Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.

3.1 Foster community resiliency, neighbourhood identity, sense of belonging, and intercultural harmony.

Analysis

Flags serve as important symbols that represent a group or collective cause. All flags, particularly those of a nation, province, or city, embody the honour and pride of the people they represent. It is for this reason that established practices and conventions guide how flags are treated in order to ensure respect and consistency in protocol.

The City’s current *Flags Policy 1306* was adopted by Council on October 15, 2013 (**Attachment 1**). The existing policy sets out standard practices for use of the federal, provincial, and municipal flags at City facilities. The policy also acknowledges guest flags, as well as organizational banners that are defined as “cloth representation in ‘flag’ format of not-for-profit or special interest organizations which can be displayed on flag poles.”

Flag policies exist in many municipalities to ensure flags are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner. **Attachment 2** provides a table summarizing flag policies from six local municipalities on the display of guest flags and the responsibility for decisions.

Currently, the City is receiving a very small number of requests per year. The most recent examples of flag requests include the Pride flag and a flag to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Under the current policy, Council can, at any time, choose to consider requests to display guest flags or organizational banners and authorize their display. For example, the Ukrainian flag is currently being displayed on an existing flag pole located at the east side of City Hall (fronting No. 3 Road). It is suggested that this flag pole be used should Council choose to display guest flags or organizational banners at City Hall and other flag pole locations could also be considered.

In addition to displaying flags, the City has other options in place to recognize community groups, causes, or initiatives. For example:

- *Together* statue located outside the Minoru Centre for Active Living can be illuminated in various colours to symbolize groups, causes, or initiatives in the community and is currently done so in recognition of statutory holidays, for example red for Canada Day; and
- Flag raising ceremonies can be requested.

Staff have reviewed the City's Flag Policy and policies from other local municipalities and found that Option One below is consistent with most other municipalities. The following options are for Council's review and consideration:

Option One – Continue with the Existing Flag Policy with Minor Updates

This option continues to use the existing *Flags Policy 1306* with minor housekeeping updates such as removing references to the Canadian Olympic flag and revising the definitions of key terms. The policy sets out standard practices for use of the federal, provincial, and municipal flags at City facilities. As per the existing policy, flags or guest organizational banners, other than those described in the policy, will not be displayed without the consent of City Council. At any time Council can authorize staff to display a guest flag or organizational banner.

Considerations:

- The opportunity to update the flag policy would refresh the policy from its previous update in 2013 to current day.

If this option is preferred, staff will complete minor updates to the existing flag policy and bring to Council for review and adoption.

Option Two – Identification of Specific Flags to be Displayed

Along with the minor updates addressed above, in this option, the existing flag policy would be updated to include the identification of a limited number of specific flags to be displayed during set periods of time. For example, the Pride Flag could be displayed during Pride Week (last week of July) and a flag to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation could be displayed for September 30. The approved flags could be displayed on the existing flag pole located at the east side of City Hall (fronting No. 3 Road).

Considerations:

- The opportunity to update the flag policy would refresh the policy from its previous update in 2013 to current day;
- This option provides the opportunity to acknowledge, recognize, and celebrate key causes that are important to Council and the community; and
- Existing resources could facilitate this option and staff could monitor community requests other than the ones identified, to display flags or organizational banners and bring forward such requests to Council for consideration.

If this option is preferred, staff will propose specific groups, causes, or initiatives to be recognized along with the corresponding display dates for inclusion in a revised flag policy and will be brought back to Council for review and adoption.

Option Three – Addition of a Community Flag Program

In this option, a community flag program would be developed to provide community members or groups the opportunity to submit an application to request a flag to be displayed. The community flag program would identify criteria, specific dates that flags could be displayed for each approved request, and outline a calendar to avoid conflicts. A request form would also be developed as a part of the program. As per the other options, flags could be displayed on the existing flag pole located at the east side of City Hall (fronting No. 3 Road).

Considerations:

- The existing flag policy does not currently include a community flag program. An update to the flag policy would be required to include and reference the program;
- This option could provide the opportunity to engage the Richmond community and offer a program to acknowledge, recognize, celebrate, and enhance public awareness of activities important to community members;
- Currently, there is not a high demand for the displaying of guest flags; and
- Additional staffing resources would be required to develop the proposed program and effectively implement and maintain the program.

Auxiliary staff in the Clerk’s Office would be required to develop and administer the community flag program and require additional funding in the amount of \$22,500 for the first year. The first year could be funded from Council Contingency for 2023 in order to immediately develop and implement the program.

If this option is preferred with funding, staff will develop and bring forward a proposed community flag program, a revised flag policy, and a funding strategy for future years.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

This report responds to the September 26, 2022 referral and provides options for Council’s consideration for *Flags Policy 1306*. Staff will proceed as per the direction of Council.



Alisa Carey
Manager, Intergovernmental Relations
(604-247-4695)

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POLICY 1306:

I. Purpose

To identify the policy to be used for flying flags under Richmond City Council's jurisdiction, namely all flags displayed on municipal property.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all flags flown by the City of Richmond at Richmond City Hall and all municipal facilities including the Richmond Olympic Oval. This policy does not apply to the City's Street Banner Program. The Administrative Procedure will define the implementation of this policy and definitions are included (**Attachment 1**).

III. Policy

It is Council policy that:

1. General Flag Etiquette

- 1.1. The Canadian flag shall always be displayed in the position of priority.
- 1.2. Precedence Order for flags displayed will be as follows:
 1. The national flag of Canada
 2. The flags of other sovereign nations in alphabetical order (if applicable)
 3. The flags of the provinces of Canada
 4. The flags of the territories of Canada
 5. The flags of municipalities/cities (Richmond first and then alphabetical)
 6. The flags of Federal or Provincial Government agencies or organizations
- 1.3. Flags are not to fall, to lie on, or touch the ground when being carried or displayed. Flags can be displayed at night when flag poles are in a lit area.
- 1.4. Flags displayed at City facilities shall be displayed according to the official protocol recommended by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia unless otherwise stated in this policy.
- 1.5. The City of Richmond may choose to display the Canadian Olympic flag at the Richmond Olympic Oval or Richmond City Hall on occasion. The Canadian Olympic flag may be displayed on Olympic Day (June 23), with the official visit of representatives of the Canadian Olympic Committee and/ or representatives of the International Olympic Committee. Permission must be granted, by the Canadian Olympic Committee, in advance for all other displays of the flag.



1. The Canadian Olympic flag will be flown according to the following order of precedence:
 - a. The national flag of Canada
 - b. The flags of the provinces of Canada
 - c. The flags of the territories of Canada (in alphabetical order)
 - d. The flag of the City of Richmond (Richmond only)
 - e. The Canadian Olympic flag
2. In the event of three flag poles, the following flags will be displayed: the national flag of Canada, the flag of the City of Richmond and the Canadian Olympic flag. The national flag of Canada will be displayed in the centre, the City of Richmond to the left and the Olympic flag to the right, as is seen by the observer.
3. The flag location must be clean and free of other brands and logos other than the Federal, Provincial or City of Richmond government brands. No other brands will be associated with the Canadian Olympic flag.
4. When not displayed on a flagpole, the Canadian Olympic flag will be on display / in storage in the Richmond Olympic Experience museum. A picture of the display location will be forwarded to the Canadian Olympic Committee.

2. Half-masting of Flags

- 2.1. Flags will be flown at half-mast position as a sign of respect and mourning.
- 2.2. During half-masting, flags will be raised to full-mast on the following days:
 - Victoria Day
 - Canada Day
 - British Columbia Day and,
 - Upon the visit of a head of state to the City of Richmond.

These procedures do not apply while flags are half-masted for the death of the Sovereign. Flags half-masted, are raised to full-mast, on the day the new Monarch is proclaimed (king or queen crowned).

- 2.3. All flags displayed on Richmond municipal flagpoles, with halyards and pulleys, will be flown at half-mast from sunrise to sunset on the following days:
 - April 28 Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
 - November 11 Remembrance Day (11am to sunset)



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- 2.4. Richmond Fire-Rescue and the RCMP may bestow honour for identified groups or individuals at the discretion of the senior commanding officer. This includes the Police and Peace Officers National Memorial Day, honoured annually on the last Sunday of September.
- 2.5. In the death of an honoured individual, flags shall be flown at half-mast as a sign of respect and mourning. The City of Richmond will bestow honours by half-masting flags from the notification of the death to the day of the memorial service (or from the time of notification of death until sunset the follow day and from sunrise to the sunset on the day of the memorial service) for the following occasions:
- a) On the death of a Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign, the current Governor General, or the current Prime Minister;
 - b) On the death of the current Lieutenant Governor or Premier of British Columbia;
 - c) On the death of a current Senator from Richmond, Member of the House of Commons or a Member of the Legislative Assembly when that member represented a Richmond riding;
 - d) On the death of the current Mayor or a current Richmond City Councillor;
 - e) On the death of a Richmond City employee when their death has occurred as a direct result of performing their duties;

The City of Richmond will bestow honours by half-masting flags on the day of the memorial service for the following occasions:

- a. On the death of a former Mayor or a former City Councillor.
- 2.6. Decisions to fly flags at half-mast on municipal property, on occasions not provided for in this policy, will be made by the Mayor after consultation with members of City Council, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the City Clerk or otherwise as the Mayor shall deem appropriate.
- 2.7. Should a half-masting need to be commenced on a weekend or statutory holiday, flags are permitted to be lowered on Friday evening, prior to the half-masting date, and raised again on the Monday morning.



3. Guest Flags of Sovereign Nations

- 3.1. Flags of other sovereign nations will be displayed for official visits only and flown from sunrise to sunset the day of the visit to Richmond.
- 3.2. Flags may be temporarily changed to accommodate a facility rental for filming at Richmond City Hall or another municipal building at the discretion of the City of Richmond. The Canadian flag at the top of Richmond City Hall shall not be interchanged with the flag of another sovereign nation to accommodate filming.
- 3.3. Flags of other sovereign nations will be displayed at the plaza entrance of City Hall. For this occasion, the flags normally flown will be removed so that only the Canadian flag and guest country flag will be flown in that location on the outer two flagpoles.
- 3.4. Flags of other sovereign nations will be a similar size and proportion to the Canadian flag and in good condition for display.
- 3.5. The City reserves the right to decide whether or not to fly the flag of the nation when there is political unrest or conflict in that nation. The decision to fly the flag of any nation neither implies nor expresses support for the politics of those nations.
- 3.6. Events involving flag raising ceremonies may be held at City Hall upon request and at the City's discretion.
- 3.7. The City of Richmond will not display flags or guest organizational banners, other than those described above, without the consent of City Council.



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Attachment 1: Definitions of Key Terms

1. **Canadian Flag:** the National Flag of Canada as approved by Parliament and proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, on February 15, 1965.
2. **Canadian and Provincial Official Protocol:**
 - a. Defined federally by the Government of Canada as outlined by the Department of Canadian Heritage and by the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada through Ceremonial Procedures.
 - b. Defined provincially by the Province of British Columbia, Office of Protocol.
3. **Sovereign Nation:** A country that is free and independent. In its internal affairs it has undivided jurisdiction over all persons and property within its territory. It claims the right to regulate its economic life without regard for its neighbours and to increase armaments without limit. No other nation may rightfully interfere in its domestic affairs. In its external relations, it claims the right to enforce its own conception of rights and to declare war.
4. **Official Visit:** A visit of official business approved by the City of Richmond of one of the following:
 - a. A member of a Royal family of a country,
 - b. The head of state of a country,
 - c. The elected Provincial government leader
 - d. The elected mayor of a city,
 - e. The designated appointed equivalent of the above where applicable.
5. **Half-masting a flag:** A flag is half-masted on a flag pole, with halyards and pulleys, (lowered to the middle of the flagpole) to show respect or mourning for a death. A flag will be brought to the half-mast position by raising it to the top of the mast briskly and immediately lowering it slowly and ceremoniously to half-mast.
6. **Memorial Service:** A public gathering to demonstrate respect in order to honour the death of an individual or group.
7. **Flag Finials:** These are defined as the attached tops of indoor or carried flagpoles. Neutral finials are defined as acorns or spears that shall be displayed on all flags when including the flag of other sovereign nations.
8. **Organizational Banners:** Cloth representation in “flag” format, of not for profit or special interest organizations which can be displayed on flag poles.
9. **Canadian Olympic Flag:** Official flag of the Canadian Olympic Committee. The rights, permissions and obligations managed by the Canadian Olympic Committee

Information on the Displaying of Guest Flags or Organizational Banners and Authorization

City	Authorization	Policy Information
City of Burnaby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor in consultation with the Director Legislative Services can approve the displaying of a flag. 	<p>Flag policy includes a section on displaying of flags, including approval to raise the flag of an official Sister City during an official visit or date of significance and the Pride flag during Pride Week. The policy also includes a section on requesting to display a flag.</p>
City of Delta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For requests that are on the current list of BC Proclamations, no approval by the Mayor and/or Council is required. It is at the discretion of the City Manager. All special requests will be approved by Council during a regular Council Meeting. Where there is a time sensitive special request, it can be approved at the discretion of the Mayor and/or City Manager. City Manager, Mayor, and/or Council retains the right to deny any request for recognition. 	<p>Community Awareness Campaign policy establishes a consistent framework to consider requests for community awareness campaigns and provide recognition for appropriate requests, including the displaying of flags. A form must be submitted through the corporate website at least one month in advance.</p>
City of New Westminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions to fly the flags of other sovereign nations, non-profit societies, and other local organizations will be made in consultation between the Mayor, CAO, and the City Clerk (two of three are required to authorize). 	<p>Flag policy includes a section on displaying guest flags and banners and decisions to fly the flags of other sovereign nations, non-profit societies, and other local organizations, including the specific location of the flag pole.</p>
City of Pitt Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not allow the displaying of guest flags or organizational banners. 	<p>Flag policy includes displaying of flags in general terms and conditions and notes that the City does not have a courtesy pole designated for flying guest flags and therefore does not currently consider such requests.</p>

City	Authorization	Policy Information
City of Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not allow the displaying of guest flags or organizational banners. 	Flag policy includes general terms and conditions and notes that the City will not display other national flags or guest organizational banners on City facility flagpoles.
City of Vancouver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Clerk has the responsibility and authority for making decisions regarding the flying of guest flags. 	Flag policy notes that the City will fly the flags of other sovereign nations, non-profit societies, and other local organizations upon request, including the specific display locations.