



# Staff Report to Community Advisory Committee

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**DATE:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** Legislative Services

**SUBJECT:** Proclamation Policy – Proposed Repeal and Replacement

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As directed by Council, staff have been reviewing City policies in order to identify those which need updating to provide clarity and update processes where necessary. Staff have reviewed the City's Proclamation Policy and in conducting research are recommending that the Committee recommend that Council adopt a new policy under which the City does not issue proclamations.

Proclamations are generally used by municipalities to recognize a particular cause by officially proclaiming a specific day, week, or month in honour of that cause. Given the variety and nature of many of the proclamation requests the City receives, it can be challenging to decide which proclamations are approved and which are rejected.

Attached is proposed Proclamation Policy (POL-0181-ADMIN), for Committee's consideration and recommendation to Council.

## BACKGROUND:

The City's current Proclamation Policy was adopted in 1993 and has remained unchanged since. The City of Langford receives approximately twenty proclamation requests per year. The current policy does not provide clear guidance to interested parties regarding the criteria used to determine if a proclamation request will be approved, nor the process for requesting a proclamation.

Different municipalities have various processes for issuing proclamations. Some require a Council resolution, whereas others are approved by the Mayor at their discretion.

A staff review of municipal proclamation policies in BC has identified a growing trend in municipalities to no longer issue proclamations. While cities such as Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo continue to issue proclamations, the following are some of the municipalities in British Columbia, that no longer issue proclamations: Abbotsford, White Rock, West Vancouver, Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, and most

recently Port Moody. The City of Burnaby has, since 2023, temporarily stopped issuing proclamations while their policy is under review.

**COMMENTARY:**

Pursuant to section 157 of the *Community Charter*, a council may declare, or the mayor may proclaim, a day of recognition that is to be observed in the municipality.

Staff have identified three main reasons, outlined below, why Council may wish to direct staff to no longer issue proclamations:

- (1) the City's commitment to meaningful action in Truth and Reconciliation with local First Nations and Indigenous peoples;
- (2) perceived political, legal, and reputational risks for the City; and
- (3) staff resources.

(1) Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

The Crown's *Royal Proclamation of 1763* recognized Indigenous title while simultaneously claiming ownership over North America to the British Crown. The *Royal Proclamation* established the foundation for treaty making in Canada by giving the Crown the exclusive right to enter into treaties and to purchase Indigenous land.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action #47* calls on municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts. While the *Calls to Action* do not specifically name the practice of proclamations as colonial, the practice of issuing a proclamation across the municipality without consulting Indigenous groups is reminiscent of the Crown's *Royal Proclamation* which was a unilateral exercise of colonial power.

Proclamations have been issued to recognize important Indigenous led causes such as the Moose Hide Campaign Day, but there are currently no processes for Indigenous consultation before issuing proclamations which touch on issues of importance to Indigenous people. Without such consultation process, it is possible that a well-intentioned proclamation could be viewed as colonial or inappropriate by local First Nations and Indigenous peoples, now or in the future.

Council have committed in their Strategic Plan to continue to take action towards reconciliation and implementation of the actions specific to local governments as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* and ensure the City's work is grounded with the intentional lens of truth and reconciliation.

## (2) Perceived Risks for the City

At least two BC Human Rights Tribunal decisions found that mayoral proclamations, if issued, are considered a “service” under section 8 of the *BC Human Rights Code*, and the mayors and cities who refused to issue proclamations to certain groups for personal reasons had discriminated against the complainants.

Many types of requests for proclamations are received by the City. As the City’s practice is to issue proclamations, it is difficult to turn some away without it being viewed as discriminatory. If the Mayor issues proclamations, care must be taken to balance the provisions of the *BC Human Rights Code* with other interests.

For example, the City has a duty of religious neutrality and therefore must likely deny any requests to issue a proclamation for a religious purpose. This could be difficult to explain to the public who may feel that denying their request while permitting others amounts to discrimination.

There is also a risk that proclamations which align with City values, past or present, may not align with City values in the future.

## (3) Staff Resources

Currently staff receives and evaluates proclamation requests and prepares them for the Mayor’s signature. Certain requests are referred internally for additional review if there are concerns about the subject matter. Some proclamations are uploaded to the City’s website, although this practice has been inconsistent over the years. The decision to stop issuing proclamations would be beneficial from a staff resource perspective.

There is limited community benefit considering the administrative cost to process proclamations. To support awareness and celebration of days of significance, staff share information from societies or organizations on the City’s social media accounts and the City’s events calendar. Additionally, the lights at the Langford Station can be changed to reflect a cause with adequate notice.

Staff are recommending that the proposed policy be adopted as presented.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The proposed new Proclamation Policy can be managed within existing resources.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no noted legal implications in respect to the proposed repeal and replacement of this policy. Maintaining the current Proclamation Policy may expose the City to potential legal risks.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

5 – Good Governance  
5g – Maintain the City’s Long-standing Corporate Efficiencies  
6c – Continue to Take Action Towards Reconciliation

**OPTIONS:**

**Option 1**

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council repeal City of Langford “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0027-ADMIN) and replace it with City of Langford “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0181-ADMIN) as presented.

**OR Option 2**

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council repeal City of Langford “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0027-ADMIN) and replace it with City of Langford “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0181-ADMIN) with the following amendments:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_;
- b. \_\_\_\_\_;
- c. \_\_\_\_\_.

**OR Option 3**

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council take no action with respect to City of Langford “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0027-ADMIN) at this time.

**SUBMITTED BY: Richard Wagner, Policy Analyst and Legislative Drafter**

**Concurrence:** Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services  
**Concurrence:** Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development  
**Concurrence:** Wolfgang Schoenefuhs, Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities  
**Concurrence:** Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services  
**Concurrence:** Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change  
**Concurrence:** Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works  
**Concurrence:** Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance  
**Concurrence:** Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services  
**Concurrence:** Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
**Concurrence:** Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

Appendix A – Current “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0027-ADMIN)  
Appendix B – Proposed “Proclamation Policy” (POL-0181-ADMIN)