



Staff Report to Community Advisory Committee

DATE: Tuesday, August 26, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Legislative Services

SUBJECT: Proposed Heart of the City Policy

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 policies and identified an absence of opportunities to recognize members of the community who have made significant contributions to the City through their work and dedication.

Attached is the proposed Heart of the City Policy (POL-0184-ADMIN), for Committee's consideration and recommendation to Council.

BACKGROUND:

The City does not currently have a way to formally recognize members of the community who have made significant contributions to the City through their work and dedication.

A staff review has identified that many municipalities in British Columbia grant a freedom of the municipality honour or award, including Vancouver, Maple Ridge, Delta, Kamloops, Kelowna, Campbell River, Nanaimo, and Fort St. John. In these municipalities, the "Freedom of the City" is the highest honour bestowed on an individual and is a meaningful way to acknowledge a person's outstanding efforts and contributions to the community. Many of these municipalities have a policy which outlines the process for bestowing the honour, and the benefits the recipient can expect to receive.

COMMENTARY:

Pursuant to section 158 of the *Community Charter*, a Council may, by unanimous vote, confer freedom of the municipality on a distinguished person or a distinguished unit of the armed forces of Canada or another nation.

The person recognized with the freedom of the municipality is then deemed to be an elector of the municipality and is eligible to vote in an election for mayor or councillor.

In addition to these statutory privileges, a city may provide additional benefits to recipients. For example, Fort St. John presents the recipient with a framed proclamation signed by all members of Council, and a picture of the recipient with a description of their accomplishments is prominently displayed in City Hall. Vancouver honours recipients with a Freedom Medal. Kelowna provides recipients with a lifetime transit pass and lifetime parking pass, a portrait sitting, a framed certificate, and an invitation to inaugural meetings of Council and Civic and Community Awards. Most municipalities also include biographies and photographs of the recipients on the municipal website.

In the Langford context, it is proposed that the freedom of the municipality honour will be named “Heart of the City”, in recognition of the recipient’s passion, dedication, and commitment to bettering the community. Staff are recommending that the recipient be recognized at a public ceremony held either in the Council Chambers or at a different location within the City, where the recipient will be presented with a framed certificate signed by all members of Council.

In addition, the recipient will be recognized by a profile on the City website with a description of the recipients’ accomplishments, and the installation of a customized heart-shaped plaque with the recipient’s name and month and year of award, to be placed at a location in the city determined by City staff. The City will work with a local artist to create the design of the customized heart plaque.

The Heart of the City program has the potential to meaningfully recognize community members who have made significant contributions to the community. It may also foster a sense of community and belonging, create awareness of the recipients’ contributions, and inspire others on their journey to achieving excellence.

Staff are recommending that the Committee recommend that Council adopt the proposed Heart of the City Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed new Heart of the City Policy may result in additional costs, not currently budgeted for within the City’s Five-Year Financial Plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Heart of the City is awarded pursuant to Council’s authority under section 158 of the *Community Charter* to confer freedom of the municipality on a distinguished person. There are no noted legal implications in respect to the proposed Heart of the City Policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

6 – Quality of Life.

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council adopt the City of Langford “Heart of the City Policy” (POL-0184-ADMIN) as presented.

OR Option 2

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council adopt the City of Langford “Heart of the City Policy” (POL-0184-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 the City of Langford “Heart of the City Policy” (POL-0184-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: Yari Nielsen, 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 – Proposed “Heart of the City Policy” (POL-0184-ADMIN)