



Corporate NO: R071

Report COUNCIL DATE: March 27, 2000

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: March 20, 2000**

FROM: Linda Hepner,
Manager, Corporate Administration **FILE: 3504-000/0042-041**

SUBJECT: Large Processions Requiring Major Road Use

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be received and the guidelines as described herein be endorsed.

INTENT

This report has been prepared with the intent of establishing guidelines regarding the use of our major road system for large parades. Currently, the only requests for these large processions on city streets originate within the Indo-Canadian community. The intent of this report is to advise Council on the direction the Festival & Event Support Team will be taking with respect to such applications and to receive endorsement of proposed guidelines.

BACKGROUND

The Indo-Canadian community includes processions as part of their cultural celebrations; the fellowship offered through these processions is important to the fabric of the community and seen as vital to the respect and teachings of the temples. These processions differ from our traditional understanding of parades in that the majority of “spectators” actually participate in the celebration and even touch various floats to receive a blessing from the priests. This creates huge crowds, delays and escalating issues around movement of vehicles, people, communications, and safety. There are two dates that trigger event applications particularly: one is the April long weekend for Baisakhi (celebration of the Khalsa Panth) and the other is the July long weekend for Miri Piri (celebration to honour 1st and 6th Guru)

With the increasing number of applications for parade permits, it is essential that some guidelines be set by the FEST committee so that there is a standard measure of understanding by the event organizers and the community. The guidelines have been developed on the premise that Council endorses facilitation of such large processional events. The following guidelines are being introduced by the FEST Committee:

- 1. Parades (processions) within the Indo-Canadian community will be restricted to two events annually; the Baisakhi parade will be allocated to one sector of the community and the Miri Piri parade will be allocated to the other sector. This will allow city staff to prepare annually for the events, keep costs within a range that is acceptable to organizers, maximize our opportunity to include these as cultural tourism draws and effectively improve on the events each year. It has been endorsed by both sectors of the Indo-Canadian community.*
- 2. That each sector applying for a parade must have in place an organizing committee to work through the various issues created by events of this magnitude in a methodical fashion and to deal directly with the FEST committee. All other major events in the city, such as the Air Canada Championship, the Cloverdale Rodeo and Softball B.C.'s Canada Cup have year-round organizing committees that work with the city. Those events become well-managed, less intrusive and provide a structure within which the city can deal with issues. It should be expected that each of the Indo-Canadian events (Baisakhi and Miri Piri) effect the same commitment to year-round organization.*
- 3. Routes will be established that remain approved each year. With continuity comes effectiveness and efficiencies can be established through better long-term planning. Having an assigned route that remains static allows the community to prepare and plan for the events. We can look for innovative ways to become part of the celebration.*

It must be noted that events of this magnitude involving major roads are not without impact and it would be virtually impossible to have residents and businesses unaffected. What FEST has tried to accomplish is a way within which we can manage processions this large and mitigate impacts as much as possible.

CONCLUSION

The FEST Committee has been challenged with how to ensure the increasing number of applications for large parades on major roadways are evaluated and, if approved, managed in such a way that is fair to the general public yet create events that become part of the fabric of our community in an organized and cost-effective way. The sheer number of participants in these events require special administrative consideration and decision-making. We want to encourage the tourism aspect of the Indo-Canadian celebrations, manage the impact on the surrounding business community and develop efficiencies through better planning. It is felt this can best be accomplished through an understanding that there will be a maximum of two events per year, an organizing committee for each event will be required to work with the city throughout the course of the year to prepare and plan for the events and routes will be permanently established.

It is expected that through adoption of these general practices, we will have established the vehicle to more effectively work through the pure administrative issues of parking, notification, traffic control and other planning details.

Linda Hepner

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