

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: ANNUAL CITY-LED PRIDE MONTH CEREMONY

FROM:

Michael Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Gus Michaels, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update about the City's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about Pride Month and support for the local 2SLGBTQI+ community, and to request support for an annual City-led event to celebrate Pride Month.

Report Highlights

- During the June 6, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Vaughan Council received a presentation on recognizing and celebrating the City's diverse 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and further directed staff to report back on establishing support and budget allocation for annual flag-raising events in the future.
- After consideration of this direction, staff recommend the City holds an annual event, which may include a flag-raising ceremony and a community celebration, that could be informed through engagement with community stakeholders, to demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion, starting June 2025. There is no budget request associated with this recommendation.
- The City has proclaimed Pride Week every year since 2003 and Pride Month since 2020, with events including official flag-raising ceremonies.
- Pride Month is an annual proclamation approved by Council. Annually, at the request of Pflag York Region and York Pride, the rainbow flag has been raised outside Vaughan City Hall to recognize Pride Month.

Report Highlights continued

- In March 2022, Vaughan Council passed a Member's Resolution requesting the installation of a rainbow crosswalk in Vaughan. Implementation of the rainbow crosswalk initiative was led by the Public Works Portfolio and is located at the west entrance of City Hall, at 2141 Major Mackenzie Dr. The crosswalk was accompanied by eight rainbow planters and a rainbow bench in the main courtyard.

Recommendations

1. THAT starting in 2025, Council supports the establishment of an annual City-led event, which may include a flag-raising ceremony and a community celebration, to recognize Pride Month in June. This would be done in close collaboration with Vaughan Public Libraries to help further promote Pride activations.
2. THAT this report be forwarded to the Inclusion and Community Outreach Advisory Committee.

Background

The City of Vaughan has proclaimed Pride Week every year since 2003 and Pride Month since 2020, with events including the raising of the rainbow flag during Pride Week and hosting official flag-raising ceremonies.

As outlined in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan, the City acknowledges the value of creating spaces where all individuals, including 2SLGBTQI+ communities, feel welcomed, supported, and respected. This commitment aligns with the City's broader mission to ensure all residents feel empowered to live authentically and participate fully in civic life.

In March 2022, Vaughan Council passed a Member's Resolution requesting the installation of a rainbow crosswalk in Vaughan. Implementation of the rainbow crosswalk initiative was led by the Public Works Portfolio and is located at the west entrance of City Hall, at 2141 Major Mackenzie Dr. The crosswalk was accompanied by eight rainbow planters and a rainbow bench in the main courtyard. To highlight this initiative, an unveiling event was held on June 14, 2022 with planning support provided to the Diversity and Inclusion Office by the Events team in Recreation Services. At the request of Pflag York Region and York Pride, the rainbow flag has been raised outside Vaughan City Hall to recognize Pride Month.

During Pride Month, Vaughan Public Libraries also offers several events and opportunities to educate the public about Pride Month, including highlighting the work of accomplished 2SLGBTQI+ authors and content, information sessions to combat disinformation, and inclusive storytimes. VPL is a welcoming and safe space for members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and staff receive training on the development and delivery of inclusive programs, services and collections.

During the June 6, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Vaughan Council received a presentation on recognizing and celebrating the City's diverse 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and further directed staff to report back on establishing support and budget allocation for annual flag-raising events in the future.

Vaughan resident Jumol Royes and Vaughan-based non-profit the 482 Collective presented during the June 6, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) [Attachment 1] and proposed the implementation of an annual Pride Month flag raising event in Vaughan as a symbolic gesture demonstrating the City's commitment to creating a welcoming, safe, and accepting environment for all residents.

In June 2024, a matrixed Inclusion and Community Outreach business unit representing staff across the corporation was established to advance the City's inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility work. This business unit is well positioned to support the development of further 2SLGBTQI+ initiatives and events opportunities. Of note, leveraging existing budget, a dedicated contract position has been funded for a new Recreation Lead, Events, in the Recreation Services department to support with inclusion and community outreach events such as Pride Month in addition to a myriad of cultural celebrations. The public recruitment for this position has been completed.

Previous Reports/Authority

The City of Vaughan's [DEI Plan \(2022-2026\)](#) underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive and welcoming community for all residents, reflecting diverse identities and experiences. As outlined in the DEI Plan, the City is committed to celebrating the diverse communities of Vaughan, promoting inclusivity, and advancing equity, so that all individuals feel valued and respected.

Rainbow Crosswalk in the City of Vaughan: Member's Resolution - Committee of the Whole Report: March 1, 2022 ([rainbow crosswalk in the city of Vaughan](#))

The Rainbow Crosswalk at City Hall serves as a powerful symbol of the city's commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and support for the 2SLGBTQI+ community. This initiative

provides a visible reminder of the importance of embracing all identities while fostering an environment where individuals can feel valued and accepted.

Pride Month in the City of Vaughan: Member’s Resolution – Committee of the Whole (1) Report: June 9, 2020 ([Pride Month in the City of Vaughan](#))

As a result of the findings and recommendations in the report, the City of Vaughan has officially proclaimed Pride Month annually, with this proclamation posted corporation wide.

Analysis and Options

Pride Month, celebrated globally in June, recognizes the history, contributions, and rights of 2SLGBTQI+ individuals while raising awareness of the ongoing struggles faced by the 2SLGBTQI+ community. The City of Vaughan has long been committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment for all residents, including 2SLGBTQI+ individuals.

Over the years, the City has supported Pride-related initiatives and participated in regional Pride events, including York Region Pride where City staff marched in the parade wearing “Vaughan Pride” t-shirts and proudly holding a large banner branded with the City’s name and logo. Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service trucks were also in attendance to the delight of parade-goers as was Vaughan Public Libraries. VFRS undertakes annual activations to promote Pride Month. However, the City has not yet established an annual, City-led event specifically dedicated to commemorating Pride Month. A formalized event would be a significant step in demonstrating the City’s ongoing commitment to inclusion and support for the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

It is proposed that the City of Vaughan establish an annual City-led Pride Month event starting in June 2025, which may include a flag-raising ceremony and a community celebration, that could be informed through engagement with community stakeholders. This event would serve as a public demonstration of the City’s commitment to diversity, equality, and support for the 2SLGBTQI+ community. It would also complement the work already being done by Vaughan Public Libraries and help further promote Pride activations.

Financial Impact

The costs associated with the event can be managed within existing operating and capital budgets.

Operational Impact

N/A

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Pride Month serves as a platform to honour the significant contributions and experiences of these communities while addressing the unique barriers they face. By annually celebrating Pride, the City underscores its dedication to eliminating all forms of intolerance and discrimination, fostering an environment where diversity is not only celebrated but deeply embedded in the City's identity.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan's commitment to recognizing Pride Month annually is an essential aspect of fostering a culture of belonging and acceptance. Pride Month presents a valuable opportunity for the City to formally recognize the contributions of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and further its commitment to diversity and inclusion. By holding an annual City-led event, which may include a flag-raising ceremony and a community celebration, the City will demonstrate this commitment.

For more information, please contact:

An Nguyen, Acting Manager, Inclusion and Community Outreach,
an.nguyen@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. Communication: C7, Committee of the Whole (2), June 6, 2023, Presentation #1

Prepared by

Lisa McDonough, Deputy CEO - Customer Experience, Vaughan Public Libraries
An Nguyen, Acting Manager, Inclusion and Community Outreach
Anna Rose, Recreation Manager, Events, Theatre & Studio Operations