

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, May 5, 2026

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: OPTIONS TO CELEBRATE CHINESE HERITAGE MONTH

FROM:

Gus Michaels, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Council direction on a proposed plan with options for developing and hosting an annual Chinese Heritage Month celebration to be launched in February 2027.

Report Highlights

- In response to a new business item raised by Regional Councillor Mario G. Racco at the Committee of the Whole meeting on Feb. 4, 2026, staff have developed three (3) options for Council's consideration and are recommending approval of Option #3 for an annual Chinese Heritage Month exhibit and lantern display during the month of February, which has been designated Chinese Heritage Month (in Ontario) beginning in February 2027.
- Chinese Heritage Month is celebrated every February in Ontario to honour the contributions, culture and history of Chinese Canadians, coinciding with Lunar New Year.
- The proposed plan will involve support from Recreation Services, Communications, Marketing and Engagement, with Inclusion and Community Outreach, Facility Management Operations and other departments, as required.

Recommendations

1. THAT Council approve Option #3 and that staff from the Recreation Services, Events Division in Community Services be directed to implement Option #3 of this report facilitating an annual exhibit and lantern display; and

2. THAT the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department and Recreation Services utilize resources and channels to promote the annual exhibit and display for the month of February.

Background

At the Feb. 4, 2026, Committee of the Whole (1) meeting, through a New Business item, Council directed staff to develop a plan with options to host an annual Chinese Heritage Month celebration to be launched in February 2027.

Chinese Heritage Month is celebrated every February in Ontario to honour the contributions, culture and history of Chinese Canadians, coinciding with Lunar New Year.

The City of Vaughan offers and supports cultural celebrations throughout the year, such as the annual Lunar New Year, Menorah Lighting Ceremony, Christmas Tree Lighting, Tamil Heritage Month, South Asian Heritage Month, Diwali, Festival of Lights and Italian Heritage Month.

These events build connection and sense of belonging for residents and visitors alike and support the City's priority of continuing to strengthen cultural diversity, community pride and inclusion across Vaughan.

Previous Reports/Authority

[New Business – Chinese Heritage Month in the City Of Vaughan](#) of Feb.4, 2026.

Analysis and Options

In consultation with Inclusion and Community Outreach, and Facility Management Operations, the following provides three (3) options to recognize Chinese Heritage Month (Attachment 1) with varying degrees of event planning, budgeting and staff resources required, for Council's consideration.

Option #1 – Cultural Celebration Event – City Hall

The Recreation Services, Events team will plan and organize a Chinese Heritage Month celebration event at City Hall in the month of February, which will include free community performances, hands-on activities, local vendors and refreshments, along with communications support led by the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Department.

It is important to note that the City of Vaughan, annually, celebrates Lunar New Year in February with a City-led event at Vaughan City Hall. This celebration features cultural entertainment, activities, and complimentary refreshments. Asian communities, including those of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese heritage, regularly participate in this event as part of broader Lunar New Year festivities.

Option #2 – Chinese Heritage Month Exhibit

Develop a curated exhibit for one week during the month of February at Vaughan City Hall highlighting the heritage, culture, and historic contributions of the Chinese community. The exhibit would feature a range of artistic media, including calligraphy, painting, photography, and archival materials, to provide a rich and engaging representation of Chinese history and cultural expression, presented over the course of a month-long showcase.

This initiative will be undertaken in collaboration with Chinese community organizations across York Region to ensure authenticity, community involvement, and cultural accuracy. In addition, staff will explore opportunities for partnership with neighbouring municipalities such as the City of Markham and the City of Richmond Hill, both of which are home to significant Chinese populations. A regional partnership would support cross-municipal collaboration and could form the basis for a travelling exhibit recognizing Chinese Heritage Month across York Region.

Option #3 – Exhibit and Lantern Display

Recreation Services, in collaboration with Inclusion and Community Outreach, will celebrate Chinese culture by coordinating a Chinese Heritage Month exhibit, including a curated display of festive lanterns, in a designated alcove on the main floor of City Hall for one week during the month of February. The display will also function as a designated photo opportunity for visitors during the exhibition period. All lanterns will be purchased and professionally installed to ensure a high-quality, visually engaging, and immersive cultural experience.

Financial Impact

Proposed Chinese Heritage Month Options	Estimated Direct Costs
Option #1 Cultural event at City Hall	Estimated Cost of \$5,000-\$8,000 <i>Cost includes hosting an annual event at City Hall with performances and refreshments.</i>

<p>Option #2 Chinese Heritage Month Exhibit</p>	<p>Estimated Cost to \$5,000-\$8,000 <i>Exhibit to run for one week during the month of February. Cost includes printing services, signage for artists, fees, and honorariums.</i></p>
<p>Option #3 Exhibit and Lantern Display (indoors)</p>	<p>Estimated Cost – \$5,000-\$10,000 + Shipping Fees & Customs Taxes <i>Cost includes printing services, signage for artists, fees, and honorariums. Cost also includes a one-time fee for lanterns purchased from an overseas supplier. Staff labour is required for set-up and dismantling, and a storage solution will be needed after the event. Exhibit and Display is planned for one week during the month of February.</i></p>

Direct vs. Indirect Costs

The above options provide a reasonable estimate of direct costs associated with developing and launching a new annual Chinese Heritage Month celebration beginning in February 2027. The reflected costs do not incorporate the indirect costs associated with staff time, resources and incidental preparations required for all three (3) options.

Funding Source(s)

All three (3) options for direct costs can, for 2027, be supported by Recreation’s existing operating budget. Staff will explore alternative funding sources to permanently support these costs in future years. Alternate funding sources may include sponsorships, grants, and possible partnerships with local businesses.

Economic and Tourism Opportunities

Cultural celebrations present further economic and overnight tourism development opportunities with key tourism market segments – as outlined in the [Vaughan Destination Master Plan](#) – including potential visitors from across Southern Ontario.

Operational Impact

Staff from the primary affected departments (Recreation Services, Communications, Marketing and Engagement, Inclusion and Community Outreach and Facility Management Operations) have reviewed and provided input to this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

N/A.

Conclusion

The City is well positioned to build off the success of its cultural events by organizing and launching an annual Chinese Heritage Month celebration that strengthens connections, builds a sense of belonging and can bring families and visitors to Vaughan.

Staff researched a variety of similar celebrations and activities across several municipal jurisdictions while relying on the expertise of internal subject matter experts in the development of the three (3) options reflected in this report. The three options provide a variation in offerings and related costs, accordingly.

Given the above and the intended purpose of the celebration, staff believe that approval of Option #3 will achieve the desired outcomes. Should the exhibit and lantern display and its anticipated popularity grow, future expansion and additional offerings can be considered and incorporated year after year through the appropriate budget process and/or identified alternative funding sources, noted above.

As such, and in consultation with the necessary internal stakeholders, the recommendation within this report will support ongoing efforts to foster a greater culture of inclusion across Vaughan, while delivering a successful annual Chinese Heritage Month celebration that welcomes residents and visitors alike.

For more information, please contact: Anna Dara, Director, Recreation Services, ext. 8028, Anna.Dara@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 – 2027 Event Report Options for Chinese Heritage Month

Prepared by

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