

# STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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**DATE:** November 10, 2023

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Blake McIntosh, Director, Civic Operations

**SUBJECT:** Canada Day – Application for Federal Funding

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Multicultural Heritage Society Letter - August 2022

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Council APPROVES that the City of Prince George submit an application under the Canadian Heritage Celebrate Canada funding program for the 2024 Canada Day in the Park celebration and AUTHORIZES the Director of Civic Operations to enter into any associated funding agreements.

**PURPOSE:**

To apply for federal funding to support the 2024 Canada Day in the Park celebrations. The Federal government requires that the application be authorized by “an individual with the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the applicant” through “an official motion from the organization’s board or governing body”.

**BACKGROUND:**

Over 50 years ago the Multicultural Heritage Society hosted the first Canada Day celebration in Lheidli T’enneh Memorial Park. They developed the event into the community’s largest annual single day celebration, hosting 15,000-20,000 people. During the COVID pandemic the society was not able to offer the event, and its capacity to plan, organize and operate the event was significantly reduced. In August of 2022 they reached out to City Administration and indicated they would not be able to offer a 2023 event and asked the City of Prince George to take a lead role.

For many years, the Parks and Solid Waste Services Division had a supporting role in the Canada Day event. Offering guidance and support as well as onsite facility support. In 2023, the Parks Division’s staff agreed to expand their responsibilities and take the lead role as part of their mandate to activate park spaces.

Even though the Parks staff planned, organized and hosted the event, the MHS continued to be involved by encouraging their member groups to offer food services and cultural performances. After the 2023 celebration, Park staff met with the MHS to review the outcome. The MHS was pleased with the event and indicated that they do not have the capacity to offer the event in the foreseeable future.

The success of the 2023 event relied on generous community sponsorship, a one-time provincial grant (BC Fairs, Festivals and Event Fund -BCFFE) and in-kind support from the City, including staff

resources. Accessing the Canadian Heritage – Celebrate Canada Fund could replace the 2023 one-time provincial funding and help alleviate the pressures on municipal resources.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The Canada Day event supports three of the eight City's core values of "Civic Pride, Inclusivity and Vitality".

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The grant funding of up to \$ 42,000 will support a successful Canada Day event in 2024 by replacing the BCFE provincial funding and supporting some of the City's in-kind contributions.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

The Multicultural Heritage Society (MHS) no longer has the capacity to host Canada Day in the Park. At their request, the Park staff took a lead role in planning, organizing, and hosting the 2023 celebration. Funding included a one-time provincial grants and municipal in-kind resources. Federal funding is available to help support the 2024 Canada Day celebration.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Blake McIntosh, Director, Civic Operations

**PREPARED BY:** Doug Hofstede, Community Coordinator, Parks and Solid Waste Services

**APPROVED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/11/20

## Attachment 1



# Multicultural Heritage Society

Of Prince George

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[mhs.pg@shawcable.com](mailto:mhs.pg@shawcable.com) [www.multiculturalheritage.com](http://www.multiculturalheritage.com)

City of Prince George  
Parks Division

August 17/2022

Dear Robyn and Debbie;

Thanks for attending today's meeting to discuss the future of the Canada Day Festival. The directors of MHS were pleased with the overall conversation, the pros and cons of organizing such a festival. And how the various aspect like volunteers, entertainment and ethnic food concession have evolved and changed over the past forty-nine years.

The Covid pandemic has had a huge impact on public events over the past two years. Our efforts to revive the Celebrate Canada Festival for 2022 came to a disappointing stop. Lack of resumes submissions for the co-ordinator's position, lack of responses from ethnic concession, entertainers', and volunteers, made it clear that the Society had lost their connection with the community. Furthermore they realized that many of their supporters and sponsors were unable to commit to further assistance. As the time line grew closer the directors of MHS realized the Society would not be able to stage this festival without more community backing. They decided they would have to cancel the festival.

Within a day the Society was contacted by a few community minded business people who offered a one-time rescue mission and in partnership with MHS were willing to assist with the staging of the festival. They went on a successful fundraising drive and used their business contacts to get the festival started again. The festival was a success with an estimated 12,000 – in attendance throughout the 10 hour event.

During the weeks of planning and preparing it became clear the Multicultural Heritage Society would not be able to continue on their own. MHS membership had aged including the directors, and most groups are now retired, and were unable to continue with the activities within each club/society. Many of the groups have closed down

The planning committee concluded, that the Festival had such a great history of being a wonderful family oriented multicultural celebration, and no one wants to loose such an event.

The City of Prince George is proud of the festival and has been a long-time supporter both with an annual financial grant and in-kind services.

City staff have been tasked to meet with the Multicultural Heritage Society to either move forward with continuing to support the Canada Day event or to finalize the City taking over the coordination of the event.

**At the conclusion of today's meeting, the directors of MHS have decided they would be happy to accept the City of Prince George's offer to take over the coordination of Celebrate Canada Festival.**

Further details to be discussed including forming a multicultural planning committee in an effort to maintain the cultural component.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Pocha".

Patrick Pocha  
President  
Multicultural Heritage Society