



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the Meeting of September 17, 2015

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** September 4, 2015
From: Katie Hamilton, Director of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning
Subject: City of Victoria Protocol Program

RECOMMENDATION

Receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Protocol is an official procedure or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions. At the City of Victoria, protocol has traditionally referred to the appropriate handling of an official visitor or event within the scope of correct etiquette. Protocol creates an atmosphere of courtesy, friendliness and order to the conduct of international affairs.

As representatives of the Capital City of British Columbia, Mayor and Council are often called upon to act in an official capacity when hosting visiting dignitaries, and when interacting with the Office of the Governor General of Canada, First Nations and other levels of government.

Protocol activities, such as Twin City relationships, provide an environment in which economic and community development can be strengthened, and where citizens can learn from each other and provide support to each other. This tie helps to promote Victoria as a tourist destination, support economic development, and position Victoria as an educational destination. Twin Cities also provide us with a strong relationship not only with that city, but with the country as well.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the City of Victoria's historical protocol activities, current practices and procedures, and an opportunity to provide direction to staff on future protocol activities.

BACKGROUND

The protocol function at the City oversees various events, activities and services that benefit, promote, celebrate or enhance the City of Victoria. Visiting dignitaries, delegations, study tours and tour groups will often have their first point of contact with the City through protocol staff. Staff also coordinate official City delegations to foreign countries, and celebrations associated with our Twin Cities. Protocol at the City of Victoria is staffed through an existing position in Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning, and does not require additional staffing or resources.

Many official delegations have an expectation of being officially welcomed by the Mayor; these responsibilities may be delegated to the Acting Mayor as needed.

Relationships with Victoria's four Twin Cities were established over a period of 17 years.

Victoria has four Twin Cities:

- Napier, New Zealand
- Morioka, Japan
- Suzhou, China
- Khabarovsk, Russia

The City has a strong relationship with both Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations and has an important role in raising awareness of the traditional territory in which the City of Victoria is located. In recent years, protocol staff have worked with the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations to celebrate special events, such as the ground-breaking of Spirit Square, and installation of the *Signs of Lekwungen*, an interpretive walkway was installed along the Inner Harbour and surrounding areas that honours the art, history and culture of the Coast Salish people.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Protocol at the City is divided into several programs and types of visits.

First Nations Relationships

Protocol provides support to the Mayor's relationship with Chief Sam of the Songhees First Nation and Chief Thomas of the Esquimalt First Nation, and maintains a relationship with the First Nations' staff.

The City of Victoria has collaborated with the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations in the process to form Victoria's draft Official Community Plan, providing a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the First Nations vision for the future.

Areas of Victoria are archaeologically significant due to the city's rich First Nations history. The City developed an *Archaeological Protocol for Operations and Public Communications* for Victoria in the event human remains and/or artifacts are uncovered during excavation in Victoria. This protocol was informed by local First Nations input and archaeological advisers and has been requested by several other municipalities and regional districts.

With the guidance and support of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, the existing ancient burial ground in Beacon Hill Park has been identified as a special place to rebury First Nations human remains that may be uncovered during construction of infrastructure. Protocol staff will work with Capital Regional District staff to formally celebrate this special place, once complete.

Twin City Program

A Twin City is a formalized relationship between cities of two different countries with the purpose of providing city officials and citizens opportunities for a wide range of interactions. The role of the City is to maintain the relationship between city officials, to coordinate and receive delegations, and to organize anniversary celebrations. Volunteers in the community, through Twin City organizations, maintain and build relationships between citizens.

- 1973: Twin City established with Napier, New Zealand
- 1980: Twin City established with Suzhou, China
- 1985: Twin City established with Morioka, Japan
- 1990: Twin City established with Khabarovsk, Russia

Typical Twin City benefits include visits to Victoria through ESL and homestay programs, sports team exchanges, investment delegations, professional and technical study groups, and official government delegations. Our standard practice has been to accept all visits from our Twin Cities.

Staff are developing stronger partnerships with Tourism Victoria and the City's new Business Development office to take full advantage of visiting delegations.

Recent highlights of Twin City relationships:

- Local fundraising efforts by the Victoria-Morioka Friendship Society following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Immediate efforts raised over \$120,000 for emergency services, and later efforts provided school supplies and sports equipment for youth
- Morioka, Japan has modeled a hanging basket program after ours, and now have over 600 baskets. They hold a competition for these baskets, and one of the winners is awarded with the Victoria Mayor's Hanging Basket Award
- Approximately 50 citizens visited Victoria with the official delegation in May 2015 to unveil a Bell of Friendship which now resides in Centennial Park along the David Foster Harbour Pathway.
- An official delegation from Suzhou, China visited the city in June 2015 to participate in a statue unveiling at Butchart Gardens. While the visit was brief, staff and Council were able to participate in a welcoming dinner and provide gifts from the City.
- The visit from the Suzhou delegation was timed to coincide with the 35th anniversary of the signing of our Twin City agreement. Representatives from both Victoria and Suzhou participated in a re-signing ceremony.

In the City's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, Strategic Objective 5 notes: Create Prosperity Through Economic Development

- 2016 Action: Invite Twin City delegations for 2017 "Canada 150" events
- 2017 Outcome: Victoria has hosted delegations from each of our Twin City partners

With Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017, Twin City delegations will be invited to take part in City-led celebrations.

In the past, a Council liaison was assigned to each Twin City, although this practice has not been in place for some years.

Three of the Twin City relationships are supported by Twin City Associations, comprised of members of the community. These volunteers facilitate visits between citizens of each city, and maintain communication and friendships. Some of the organizations are more active than others. Staff believe the City's relationship with these associations can be renewed and there are opportunities to increase the community's awareness of the Twin City relationships. Staff will look for ways to share the stories of these relationships and the connections that have been made over the years.

Twin City relationships are common across Canada. In recent years, some communities have decided to continue their relationships but not travel.

Friendship City Program

A Friendship City is less formal than a Twin City relationship, though the purpose of forming a friendship city bond may be similar. The designation recognizes rewarding friendships and exchanges between cities without official twin city agreements.

Victoria has two Friendship Cities:

- Nanning, China (formalized in 2010)
- Changsha, China (formalized in 2011)

Two educational partnerships have already been established based on our Friendship City relationships:

- UVic's Gustavson School of Business has partnered with Hunan University in Changsha on a student exchange program
- School District 62 (Sooke) has partnered with Mingde School in Changsha, through which Chinese students attend various schools in Victoria and participate in a homestay program. Impact from these students in 2012 was estimated at approximately \$1.5 million per year

Visits/Tours to City Hall or Victoria

Inter-governmental

Victoria receives visitors from all levels of government, First Nations and other dignitaries. As representatives of the provincial capital, Mayor and Council are often called upon to act in an official capacity to host or welcome these delegations.

There is an expectation that Victoria City Hall will provide a formal welcome to a visiting delegation. This is particularly true with Consuls General, and with municipal officials from Twin Cities and all parts of China. For the latter, a meeting with Victoria City Hall may be required for a travel visa.

To date in 2015, there have been 11 inter-governmental protocol visits in 2015. This represents a slight increase from the prior average of seven visits per year, generally due to requests for introductory visits with the newly elected Mayor.

City support of visiting delegations are important to Tourism Victoria and Greater Victoria Development Association's efforts to bring visitors to our region, to explore tourism and investment opportunities.

School visits

International partnerships between schools have been established based on Twin and Friendship City relationships, economic development missions, and efforts by local schools.

Investment in Victoria is promoted to the parents of these students. By living for short periods of time and staying with local families, students become aware of the quality of life and of education in Victoria. Students who participate in a homestay program in high school are more likely to return for post-secondary education.

To date in 2015, seven visiting school groups have brought 220 students to City Hall. This is generally consistent with previous years. The students have ranged from young children learning music at the Victoria Conservatory, to university students learning about local social issues while studying international business practices.

This year we have changed the format of school visits wherever possible to include roundtable discussions or Q&A with the Mayor/Acting Mayor, and tours of City Hall, moving away from PowerPoint or video presentations. Further opportunities for interactive programming will be explored.

Through the Open Government initiative, staff recommend creating more opportunities to bring local school groups to City Hall to connect them with their city and their municipal government.

Other visits

Professional groups may wish to visit Victoria to learn from local industry. While a visit to City Hall is not expected, protocol staff provide support in the form of issuing the official invitation (for visa purposes) and connecting the visiting delegation with the local professionals. An example of this

type of visit would be in 2015 a broadcasting group from Suzhou met with local broadcasters to understand best practices in this area.

To date in 2015, there have been two professional group visits. On average between three and five are coordinated by protocol staff per year.

While it does increase Council time commitments, protocol related visits benefit greatly from the attendance or participation of Mayor/Acting Mayor and Council. This is particularly true of visits from official government delegations and visiting student groups.

Liaison with Local Community Interests

Occasionally, staff are asked to provide assistance with community events, such as the unveiling of the Dr. Sun Yat-sen statue, and other initiatives to develop relationships with ESL school groups, First Nations and other groups.

Honorary Citizen Awards

Honorary Citizen Awards have historically been held every three years, and celebrates individuals who have made significant contributions to our city through service to the community or person achievements.

The City of Victoria recognized its newest Honorary Citizen at an awards ceremony in May of 2014. The next anticipated intake for this program will be in 2017.

Gifts

Gifts are traditionally given to certain visiting delegations, such as official Twin City representatives. Staff are working to update and improve the quality of protocol gifts, including favouring locally made products to reflect the uniqueness of the region and to showcase Victoria small business success stories, such as coffee, tea, chocolate, eco-friendly products, and artwork by Coast Salish and other local artists.

Pins

City of Victoria lapel pins are most commonly gifted to visiting school groups. On average, one request to donate City pins is received each month. Current practice is to only offer 25 pins per organization, and additional pins can be bought at a cost of \$1.50. Requests to mail pins to collectors are not provided.

Proclamations and Flags

Proclamations and flag-raising can add significant prestige or awareness to a wide range of organizational activities and events, particularly in Provincial capital cities. Proclamations or agreeing to fly an organization's flag, can give the impression of Council or City endorsement of the cause.

- **Proclamations**

Organizations can request proclamations to mark special days, weeks, or months. All requests go through the Mayor's Office. Of note, Human Rights Tribunals in BC have ruled that municipal councils may not decline requests for proclamations. As such, proclamations can be viewed as simply fulfilling a request versus endorsing any particular event or organization. Some cities in Canada have stopped issuing proclamations; however, no other provincial capital has stopped this practice.

- **Flag-raising**

Criteria for eligible organizations:

- Organizations the City has supported, either financially or through in-kind services, such as through a Festival Investment Grant
- Organizations without political, religious or commercial affiliations
- Organizations whose mandate and activities will not discriminate against any individual or group as outlined in the BC *Human Right Code*.

Organizations can book the Pandora Avenue flag pole to fly their flags for a special occasion or event. These requests are coordinated by Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Mayor's office, to determine whether the request fits the criteria as set out in these guidelines. The flag pole will be booked on a first come, first served basis. When not flying an outside organization's flag, the Pandora Avenue flag pole will fly the City Crest flag.

Flag-raising ceremonies may also be requested. Staff will work with the organization to coordinate such events whenever possible.

- **Half-masting**

The Canadian flags on City facilities in accordance with the half-masting policy of the Government of Canada, which includes the following standing days:

- April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Workers' Mourning Day);
- June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;
- Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service, until sunset;
- November 11, Remembrance Day, unless Half-masting occurs at the National War Memorial or a place where remembrance is being observed, then Half-masting can occur at 11 a.m. or according to the prescribed order of service, until sunset;
- December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

The Canadian flags may also be lowered to half-mast upon recommendations from the Provincial Protocol Office, for the death of a variety of dignitary or military positions.

- **Light-Up Requests of City Hall or Centennial Fountain**

In the past, occasional requests to light up City Hall or the clock tower were accommodated. This practice has been discontinued as, until the City Hall outdoor lighting system upgrades are complete, out-of-schedule lighting must be done manually by the City's contractor at a cost to the City. Lighting up City Hall is not recommended, as this is a landmark building. Lighting changes will only be considered to mark larger special events such as Canada Day with red lights. Requestors are provided with alternatives, including proclamations, flag-raising, and banners, as applicable.

Light-up requests to mark special days or events will be considered only the Centennial Square Fountain, once the fountain lighting system has completed upgrades. Centennial Square is a well-travelled public space that hosts many events and festivals. Eligible organizations include those listed above under the flag-raising criteria.

Budgets

Budgets are generally stable annually, with exception of years that include specific delegations abroad, or anniversaries, marked every five years.

In 2010 both Suzhou and Morioka Twin City anniversary celebrations occurred, and in 2012 the Mayor of Napier New Zealand participated in Victoria 150 celebrations. As a result, the budget for these two years was increased.

The 2015 budget included anniversary celebrations for both Suzhou and Morioka. The expected actual expenditures for the year are approximately \$25,000.

Both Morioka and Suzhou have indicated that formal invitations may be issued to the City of Victoria for visits to their cities in 2016.

The Strategic Plan calls to invite delegations from all four Twin Cities in 2017 as part of the "Canada 150" celebrations. As such, a higher budget will likely be required for that year.

The Honorary Citizen Awards budget will also be reassigned into the protocol budget in future.

	Budget	Actuals
2010	\$ 55,000	\$ 40,964
2011	\$ 35,000	\$ 31,293
2012	\$ 100,000	\$ 85,396
2013	\$ 35,000	\$ 21,986
2014	\$ 35,000	\$ 16,461
(To Date) 2015	\$ 35,000	\$ 19,387
(Estimate) 2016	\$ 30,000	

CONCLUSIONS

Twin Cities and Protocol is a common and expected role of local government, in particular for Capital Cities. That being said, the Protocol program should be reviewed and enhanced on a regular basis to ensure the specific programs offered are consistent with the Strategic Plan and direction from Council.

Respectfully submitted,



 Katie Hamilton
 Director, Citizen Engagement
 and Strategic Planning



 Heather Follis
 Customer Service Advisor

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager: _____

Date: Sept. 8, 2015