

## FLAG POLICY

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Clerk's Office, Administration Services, Citizen Recognitions & Protocol (Protocol) has reviewed the City of Calgary Flag Policy and the City of Calgary Flag Half-Mast Policy to ensure they are current and effective. As a result of this review, Protocol is proposing a new, updated policy, replacing both existing policies with one comprehensive Flag Policy. The proposed new policy: corrects some provisions that had become inaccurate over time; clarifies roles; combines all flag activities into one comprehensive policy; responds to evolving flag activities and practices; responds to direction from Council with respect to recommendations from the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (CAUAC); and, is in better alignment with the Council Policy Program. The proposed new policy nonetheless maintains many of the general provisions governing flags that ensure they are displayed in a respectful, consistent, and appropriate manner.

### CITY CLERK'S RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Legislative Governance Task Force recommend that Council:

- 1) Rescind Council Policy CC036 'City of Calgary Flag Policy (general, dignitaries & flag raisings)' (Attachment 1);
- 2) Rescind Council Policy CC037 'City of Calgary Flag Half-Mast Policy' (Attachment 2); and
- 3) Approve the new Council Policy 'Flag Policy' (Attachment 3).

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE, DATED 2016 OCTOBER 11:

---

That Council:

- 1) Rescind Council Policy CC036 'City of Calgary Flag Policy (general, dignitaries & flag raisings)' (Attachment 1);
- 2) Rescind Council Policy CC037 'City of Calgary Flag Half-Mast Policy' (Attachment 2); and
- 3) Approve the **Revised** Council Policy 'Flag Policy' (Attachment 3).

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

In 2009 Council approved policy CC036 'City of Calgary Flag Policy (general, dignitaries & flag raisings)' (Flag Policy) and CC037 'City of Calgary Half-Mast Policy' (Half-Mast Policy). There have been no amendments to either policy since their adoption.

## FLAG POLICY

---

### BACKGROUND

The City of Calgary displays flags at a number of locations. At some locations, such as Historic City Hall and the Municipal Complex, the display of flags carries particular significance. The City allows community groups to request their flag be raised at the Municipal Complex to recognize particular occasions. Flags may be lowered to half-mast at the Municipal Complex or at other City sites to acknowledge significant events and demonstrate collective mourning.

These activities must be governed in a way that recognizes the symbolic importance of flags. The general parameters governing the use, display and care of flags must also be established. While many activities are directed or established by other orders of government, The City must maintain clear policies and guidelines specifically for flag activities at City sites. The current policies that govern these activities have been reviewed with these objectives in mind and to ensure they are up-to-date, streamlined, and effective.

The proposed policy retains many elements of the existing policies while also improving in a number of areas. The improvements in the proposed new policy fall under several broad headings:

#### 1) Combining all flag activities into one policy

In an effort to streamline the policies governing flags, both the Flag Policy and Flag Half-Mast Policy have been combined into one comprehensive policy. By combining policies, duplicate provisions regarding definitions and responsibilities can be eliminated, and those consulting the policy will have one source of direction.

#### 2) Responding to recommendations from the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (CAUAC)

In May 2016, CAUAC produced a report entitled 'White Goose Flying', detailing which of the 94 Calls to Action laid out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada were actionable by Calgary's municipal government. With respect to Call to Action #45iii, CAUAC identified flying the Treaty 7 flag at the Municipal Complex as an actionable initiative that would contribute to the call to 'reaffirm and renew Treaty relationships, and maintain them for the future'. On 2016 June 13, Council directed Administration to work collaboratively with CAUAC to develop detailed implementation plans to take action of the five streams of the recommended Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action identified. The proposed Flag Policy attached includes the Treaty 7 flag as one of the five permanent flags to be flown in front of Historic City Hall, and as a corollary, includes the death of a current Treaty 7 Chief as an occasion to half-mast the flags at Historic City Hall.

#### 3) Responding to evolving flag activities

Over time, some practices surrounding flag activities have evolved. The City has seen a steady increase in requests to raise flags, and a corresponding increase in requests for ceremonies involving flag raisings at the Municipal Complex. As such, Protocol has worked closely with Facility Management to investigate the installation of a courtesy flagpole on the Municipal Plaza. This flagpole would serve as the primary flagpole for all flag raisings, eliminating the need to

## FLAG POLICY

---

remove flags in front of Historic City Hall to accommodate a flag raising, and offering a more suitable location for ceremonies.

Amendments have also been made to the criteria by which protocol would assess a request to raise a flag. It is proposed that The City not fly flags of a commercial, religious or partisan nature. This has been the practice for a number of years and more closely aligns with comparable jurisdictions, as well as the Proclamation policy.

With respect to half-masting the flag, the proposed policy includes a provision regarding solemn occasions, where events may occur that are not covered by the policy but which may warrant half-masting the flags. In these instances Protocol would work with the Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, Alberta Protocol and Canadian Heritage as required.

Other proposed changes include providing greater clarity with respect to flag raisings for professional sports teams and visiting dignitaries, and adding provisions governing the disposal of flags.

### 4) Corrections and amendments

The existing Flag Policy (CC036) contains a number of statements that are no longer accurate in light of changing circumstances. For instance, it refers to the display of Olympic flags in the Municipal Complex. These had aged poorly and have been removed. The policy also referred to specific flags and locations in the Council Chamber which had changed over time.

In addition, the Half-Mast Policy required amendments to align more clearly with the specified flag activities contained in the new *Civic Recognition on the Death of a Current or Former Member of Council Policy*.

### 5) Clarifying authorities

The existing policies are somewhat unclear on the overall responsibility for flags. The Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, and City Clerk's Office are all referenced in the sections dealing with the jurisdiction of flags. While in practice this formulation has largely worked, the revised policy provides clarity by situating overall responsibility for the management and administration of the Flag Policy with Protocol. Existing consultative and cooperative relationships in responding to requests for flag raisings or half-masts would continue.

The proposed policy also makes it clear that the administration of flag activities at City sites other than the Municipal Complex is the responsibility of the relevant Business Unit. Business Units would be responsible for ensuring any flags are at half-mast at their locations, at the direction of Protocol, as well as ensuring flags are a state of good repair.

### 6) Alignment with new policy format

In keeping with the revised and updated Council Policy Program, greater effort has been made to apply consistency in terms of the style and content of Council policies. The proposed Flag Policy therefore no longer contains language that is better suited in guidelines or procedures, and has moved some sections (i.e. precedence) into an appendix. All sections have also been updated to reflect changes to format such as numbering.

## **FLAG POLICY**

---

### **7) Unchanged**

The proposed policy retains many of the general provisions that govern flags. For instance, the general processes and timeframes for raising or lowering flags have not changed. The proposed policy also maintains the provisions governing the order of precedence, as well as the annual days on which The City will lower flags to half-mast, and the parameters for each occasion.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

Protocol conducted a review of other municipal policies governing flags, flag raisings and half-masts. By and large, there was consensus on the major areas outlined above: locating all flag activities in one policy; clarifying authorities to provide Protocol with clear responsibility for the administration and implementation of the policy; and responding to evolving flag activities. Consideration was also given to ensuring the proposed policy reflected the nature of Calgary, including relationships with organizations such as Calgary Fire Department, Calgary Police Service, and other Business Unit partners.

With respect to the addition of a Treaty 7 flag, several options were considered to display the flag at the Municipal Complex. In order to honour the recommendation of CAUAC and in the spirit of the Calls to Action, Protocol has recommended the more prominent location in front of Historic City Hall, within the main bank of flags following the flags of Canada, Alberta, Calgary, and the U.K. Such a display is prominent, aligns with existing precedence, and mirrors the City of Regina with respect to the display and position of the Treaty 4 flag.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

Protocol has engaged relevant stakeholders on the proposed policy. In particular, Protocol has worked with Facility Management, Corporate Security, and the Mayor's Office in developing the proposed policy. Protocol has also engaged CAUAC regarding the inclusion of the Treaty 7 Flag within the Flag Policy.

Significant comparative research was also conducted. Protocol reviewed the flag policies of Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Regina to assess commonalities and differences. Alberta Protocol was also consulted. The proposed policy is meant to align with the generally accepted process and procedures of these other jurisdictions, but also to address specific circumstances and needs in Calgary.

Further work will be undertaken to better communicate flag activities more broadly. In some jurisdictions, each flag activity is posted online, which ensures citizens are aware of the meaning behind each flag raising or half-mast. Protocol is in the process of reviewing its web presence with a view to providing this information in a similar manner.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The proposed policy contributes to City Clerk's Office commitments in Action Plan. Specifically, the policy contributes to Strategy W7: 'Continue to transform the organization to be more citizen focussed in its approach and delivery of service'. Under that Strategy, Protocol has committed to: 'Provide citizen recognition advice and support to The Corporation and provide leadership in

## FLAG POLICY

---

administering The City's protocol functions' (W7.3). The proposed policy also aligns with the recommendations of CAUAC and its Strategic Plan, approved by Council on 2016 June 13.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Given the symbolic importance of flags to community groups and the public at large, it is essential that flag activities be governed in a manner that is clear and consistent, while also providing flexibility to respond to changing events and circumstances.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### **Current and Future Operating Budget:**

There is no impact on current and future operating budget.

#### **Current and Future Capital Budget:**

Providing a courtesy flagpole on the Municipal Plaza will have a minimal impact on the current and future capital budget. Initial estimates indicate a cost of approximately \$5 – 10K to install each of the two new poles on the Plaza.

### **Risk Assessment**

The management and administration of flag activities is a public and visible activity, and often carries a high emotional factor for citizens. Ensuring the effective management of flag activities through an up-to-date policy mitigates against the risk that The City will be perceived as being inconsistent or unfair, or lacks a solid policy basis on which to make decisions.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Rescinding the two existing policies governing flags and replacing them with one up-to-date, streamlined and comprehensive policy ensures the effective administration and management of flags at The City of Calgary.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Council Policy CC036: 'City of Calgary Flag Policy (general, dignitaries, & flag raisings);
2. Council Policy CC037: 'City of Calgary Flag Half-Mast Policy';
3. **Revised** Proposed Council Policy: 'Flag Policy'.