



## **Staff Report for Council Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** November 10, 2021

**Report Number:** SRCS.21.16

**Department:** Community Services

**Division:** Recreation and Culture Services

**Subject:** SRCS.21.16 – Richmond Hill 150

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### **Purpose:**

To provide details regarding a proposed plan and cost estimates for celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Richmond Hill in 2023 as directed by Council on July 7, 2021.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That staff report SRCS.21.16 – Richmond Hill 150 be received;
- b) That Council approve a budget of \$100,000 to be funded from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.
- c) That staff be directed to proceed with planning for the 150th Anniversary of Richmond Hill based on the project description and cost estimates outlined in staff report SRCS.21.16.

### **Contact Person:**

Donald Hearn, Director, Recreation & Culture

Dan Di Ruscio, Manager, Events & Marketing Services

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Darlene Joslin, Commissioner of Community Services

**Approved by:** Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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### **Background:**

At the July 7, 2021 meeting of Council, staff were directed to report to Council by the end of November 2021 regarding a proposed plan for celebrating the 150th anniversary of Richmond Hill as a municipality with suggested activities and cost estimates for the year from June 18, 2022 to June 18, 2023. Staff were also directed to consult with relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Village of Richmond Hill BIA, Richmond Historical Society, and indigenous leaders in developing the proposed plan for celebrating the 150th anniversary of Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill was incorporated as a “Village” in 1873 and previous anniversaries, the most recent being Richmond Hill’s 140th in 2013, were commemorated by a City-wide marketing and promotions campaign, themed City-led and Community-led events, and both a static and travelling 140th heritage exhibit as well as walking tours of the Museum of the Streets exhibit. During Richmond Hill’s 125th Anniversary staff undertook activities including a logo competition, commissioning a mural and working with Canada Post to approve a postmark to be placed on all “Town” correspondence.

There are no known records of celebrations that took place prior to the 125th Anniversary, although it is likely that there were celebrations during the 100th and 50th years respectively. Previous initiatives as outlined as well as benchmarking of neighbouring municipalities were used to prepare this staff report.

### **Project Description**

Richmond Hill’s 150th anniversary is considered to be a major milestone year providing an opportunity to commemorate the historical significance of the municipality, to celebrate and strengthen our sense of community, and to engage with local organizations, community groups, artists, and the general resident base.

To recognize this Anniversary, an internal working group comprised of staff from the Recreation & Culture Division (Events & Marketing Services, Cultural Services, and Theatre), Public Works Division (Parks Operations), Strategic Communications Division, and the Richmond Hill Public Library has been formed.

Targeted local organizations and community groups such as the Richmond Hill Historical Society, Richmond Hill Legion Branch 375, Village of Richmond Hill BIA and others have already been engaged to participate in the celebration. Staff will be reaching out to various indigenous groups with treaty lands and traditional territories in Richmond Hill as well, and will be working alongside all these external stakeholders to involve them in this initiative. Where possible, existing programs and events will be themed to commemorate this milestone as well. City staff and Members of Council will be given the opportunity to participate in various ways as we continue to develop the elements of this initiative.

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The current proposed theme for this initiative is “Richmond Hill 150 – Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future”. This theme will be explored further while we structure our plans, but at this stage allows the internal working group to focus on commemorating our City’s heritage including all things from the past that have helped to shape Richmond Hill into the vibrant community it is in the present. A look at the future will encourage the City’s forward-thinking outlook of supporting the preservation of things historical in Richmond Hill while focusing on the environment and future generations to come.

In terms of planning, the elements noted below form the base for this overall initiative and staff are recommending they take place starting January 1, 2023 ending December 31, 2023. Staff recognize however that with initiatives such as this planned so far in advance that aspects are subject to change. As we move forward with planning, any significant changes that impact the requested budget within this staff report, will be communicated at a later date if needed.

Events & Marketing Services and Strategic Communications staff will be responsible for the execution of the following elements:

- Identifier: Staff will design a symbol to commemorate this anniversary for use on City staff email signatures, apparel orders, and fleet vehicle/equipment stickers (decals). A tagline will be positioned alongside this symbol to support the theming of new and existing programs and events.
- Staff Engagement: Staff will incorporate the anniversary theme into internal staff events, create photo opportunities throughout the year for staff and Members of Council, and plan activities geared to historical trivia for those that wish to participate.
- Marketing & Promotion: Staff, through a dedicated Richmond Hill 150 webpage on the City’s website, will develop a marketing and communications plan paired with a yearlong advertising campaign to keep this anniversary applicable within the community. Promotional items for use at events, light pole banners along Yonge Street (in partnership with the Village of Richmond Hill BIA), and population gateway tabs will be added elements to connect with residents and visitors. A social media campaign, a commissioned “Happy Birthday” video, and other engagement opportunities at City-led events will keep this anniversary top of mind throughout the year.
- Asset Lending Program/Theme Resource Guide: Staff will prepare pull-up and tear-drop banners for City staff and Members of Council wishing to borrow these assets for their own use. A theme resource document will be drafted and posted on the Richmond Hill 150 webpage to offer assistance for residents wishing to theme their activities/events in an effort to celebrate this anniversary with the City.
- Flag Raising Ceremony: Staff will design and print a custom anniversary flag and host a flag raising ceremony event to engage local media, our Members of Council, and other local dignitaries.

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- Community Photo Booth Installation: Staff will source and coordinate a photo booth installation around the City using life-sized letters that spell #MyRH150. This installation will move from landmarks/recreation facilities/libraries in the City throughout the year giving residents the opportunity to take photos and engage with the City's corporate social media channels.

Cultural Services staff will be responsible for the execution of the following elements:

- Community Art Projects: Staff will plan and deliver 3 community-based projects as follows:
  - Artist in Residence Program – a local artist will be commissioned to design and build a mural made by residents that will be featured in a centralized location within the City.
  - Bell Box Murals Project – local artists will be commissioned to paint Bell Canada boxes around the community. This will add to the previous boxes painted to commemorate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.
  - City Park Storage Bunkers – local artists will be commissioned to paint concrete storage bunkers located inside City parks.
- Legacy Video: In partnership with the Richmond Hill Public Library, Richmond Hill Legion Branch 375, and members from the indigenous community, staff will work with a local film maker to produce a short special created entirely from videos made by the people of Richmond Hill. Over the course of the City's anniversary year, residents will be engaged to reflect on the past, present, and future of Richmond Hill. This project will feature the diverse citizens of Richmond Hill (past and present) and will capture the spirit of the community in a dynamic and personal manner leaving behind a legacy piece for future generations.
- Scavenger Hunt/Trivia: In partnership with the Richmond Hill Public Library, staff will create an application based scavenger hunt around the City highlighting historical buildings and landmarks. A separate virtual historical trivia game will be featured on the Richmond Hill 150 webpage.
- Time Capsule Activity Kits: Staff will curate and make time capsule activity kit boxes themed to the anniversary available for residents wishing to preserve and share keepsakes for future generations to discover.
- Artifact Collection: Staff will engage the community in coming forward to showcase local artifacts in select display cases across recreation facilities/libraries within the City.

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Theatre Staff will be responsible for the execution of the following elements:

- Richmond Hill 150 Entertainment Programming – The Theatre's season presents series will be themed to the anniversary and performers hired to profile this historical milestone. A featured performer will be scheduled specifically around this anniversary.
- Heritage Summit: In partnership with the Richmond Hill Historical Society, staff will assist in planning and delivering an event at the theatre sometime in June 2023 to bring heritage supporters, developers, planners and other officials, homeowners and interested citizens together. The event will focus on discussing the state of heritage resources in Richmond Hill and will celebrate this significant milestone by highlighting success stories throughout our history.

Parks Operations staff will be responsible for the execution of the following elements:

- Tree Planting: As part of the Community Stewardship Program, staff will identify one park location and plant 150 trees to commemorate the anniversary.
- Themed Horticultural Displays: Staff will design and implement floral/horticultural displays based on the Richmond Hill 150 theme to include spring tulip bulb displays, floral annuals/perennial flower beds, barrels and baskets at key parks and community entry ways.
- Richmond Hill Blooms: Staff leading this initiative will incorporate the Richmond Hill 150 theme into the 2023 program.

### **Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:**

The Richmond Hill 150 initiative would be led by the internal working group identified above. There is no requirement for additional staff resources for this initiative.

The proposed budget required to plan and deliver this initiative is \$100,000, and recommended to be funded from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.

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### **Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:**

Richmond Hill 150 best supports the priority of a “Strong Sense of Belonging” whereby residents feel they belong to a community with a rich history, are welcomed and encouraged to participate in community building, and have a part in placemaking for the future.

### **Climate Change Considerations:**

By incorporating the planting of 150 trees as part of the anniversary celebrations, this initiative will contribute to climate change mitigation since the trees will help combat urban heat island effect and filter carbon emissions in the air. The new trees will also contribute to climate adaptation and improve future resiliency by helping to slow down stormwater runoff during heavy rainfall events which can lead to flooding.

### **Conclusion:**

Celebrating Richmond Hill 150 will support the City's current Council Strategic Priorities, through engagement with local organizations, community groups, artists, and the general resident base by providing the opportunity to come together and commemorate an important milestone. While participating in activities that connect with the past, celebrate the present and create pride for the future, those involved will contribute to a legacy that will be remembered for years to come. Staff recommends that Richmond Hill recognize and celebrate this significant historical milestone along with our residents and other external stakeholder in 2023.

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CRSC.21.16 - Richmond Hill 150 Staff Report - Final_AODA.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Oct 27, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Donald Hearn - Oct 27, 2021 - 12:50 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Oct 27, 2021 - 2:57 PM**

**David Dexter - Oct 27, 2021 - 3:43 PM**

**MaryAnne Dempster - Oct 27, 2021 - 5:04 PM**