

NO: R060

COUNCIL DATE: April 9, 2018

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **April 4, 2018**

FROM: **General Manager, Finance**

FILE: **1850-01**

SUBJECT: **Funding Request – Foam Free Vaisakhi Initiative**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Finance Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve a funding request of \$5,000 from Council Initiatives Fund to the organizers of the Foam Free Vaisakhi Initiative.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to request that Mayor and Council support a funding request from the Council Initiatives Fund towards the awareness campaign for Foam Free Vaisakhi Initiative. This report addresses that request.

## DISCUSSION

On March 28, 2018, a delegation consisting of Mr. Sarj Sabharwal and Mr. Bal Sabharwal provided a presentation proposing a Foam Free Vaisakhi Initiative to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee. The initiative aims to replace polystyrene products with a compostable and sustainable substitute at Surrey's annual Vaisakhi event, the largest of its kind in North America. The goal is to encourage participating patrons and vendors at the Vaisakhi event to incorporate environmentally friendly products that are biodegradable.

This year's Vaisakhi event will be held on April 14. Along with a parade march, the event is expected to host over 200 registered roadside food stalls. In 2017, over 400,000 people attended the Vaisakhi event with increased attendance anticipated for this year. Much of the waste left over from the event includes non-biodegradable polystyrene products, such as, Styrofoam. Styrofoam is not an acceptable item in Surrey's recycling carts and must be taken to a local recycling depot for proper disposal. Currently, there is no educational component at the event with respect to Styrofoam waste.

The delegation proposes to create an awareness campaign on the disadvantages of using products like Styrofoam and provide the public with information and sources to sustainable alternatives, such as, bagasse based products made from the pulpy residue left over after the extraction of juice from sugar cane. The awareness campaign will include social media outreach, newspaper ads, placing banners and signage along the parade route and handing out information to public at the 2018 Vaisakhi event.

Staff has evaluated the request and recommends that Council approve a funding of \$5,000 from the Council Initiatives Fund in support of the awareness campaign for Free Foam Vaisakhi Initiative.

## **FUNDING**

Appendix “II” attached to this report documents the balance in the Council Initiatives Fund based on an assumption that Council will approve the recommendations of this report.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The Free Foam Vaisakhi Initiative supports the overall objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter as related to the themes of Ecosystems and Health and Wellness. Specifically, this grant will support the following desired outcomes:

- Ecosystems DO2: Surrey actively protects, enhances and restores its natural environment and habitats.
- Ecosystems DO4: Surrey residents support biodiversity conservation, and are stewards of natural area and urban forests on both public and private lands Inclusion DO3: Residents have opportunities to build social connections with people from different backgrounds.
- Ecosystems DO10: Surrey values healthy soils as an important part of biodiversity.
- Health and Wellness DO3: Surrey has the health services and programs to meet the current and changing needs of its diverse and growing population.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve from the Council Initiatives Fund, a contribution of \$5,000 towards the Foam Free Vaisakhi Initiative.

Kam Grewal, CPA, CMA  
General Manager, Finance

Attachment:

Appendix “I”: Free Foam Vaisakhi Initiative Presentation

Appendix “II”: Council Initiatives Fund- Allocations for 2018



A COMMUNITY WORKING TOWARDS A

# FOAM FREE VAISAKHI



AN INITIATIVE TO REPLACE POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS WITH  
COMPOSTABLE, SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES AT THE  
LARGEST VAISAKHI EVENT IN NORTH AMERICA



# VASAIKHI

## WHAT IS IT?

- 2018 official date is April 14th (usually on the 12th or 13th)
- Marks the beginning of the Spring Harvest
- Recognized as the beginning of the Punjabi New Year
- **In 1699 was chosen as the inauguration date of the first Sikh Baptism Ceremony, and the formation of the modern Sikh Identity. All over the World, people of the Sikh faith Celebrate this time.**



# VASAIKHI HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?

Religious events at Gurdwaras and Parades



**SATURDAY 14TH APRIL 6 PM**

**VAISAKHI FAMILY EVENING CELEBRATIONS 2018**

Little Asan's Village Hall, Little Asan Lane, Surrey, Colindale, SW16 3JF

**TICKETS** (including food & entertainment):  
 Single 15 years - £15  
 5-14 years - £5  
 Family of 2 Adults and 3 kids arriving together - £40  
 Family of 3 Adults and 2 kids arriving together - £45  
 Family of 4 adults arriving together - £50  
 Children under 3 years - Free

Mingle with others from In & around Surrey, Colindale, Chert, Bhangra & Traditional Music, Punjabi Food, Open Dance & Bhajangal, Children's activities & Fun!

**FOR TICKETS, INFORMATION**  
 email: [info@littleasan.org](mailto:info@littleasan.org) or the organizers on the message board  
 Phone: 01753 612861, 01753 6121 or Day: 07953 944 116  
 Limited tickets available, so book early for best arrangements!  
 Organized & supported by:  
 Little Asan Gurdwara, Surrey Gurdwara, Surrey Gurdwara

Family Events

**PUNJAB CULTURAL CENTRE PRESENTS**

**VAISAKHI MELA 2016**

ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਮੇਲਾ ੨੦੧੬

1770 King Edward St  
 Saturday April 16, 2016  
 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Enjoy Bhangra, Gurbani, Folk, Chilling & Joyous Music!

Festivals

**Vaisakhi Gala**  
 7 April, 2018

Bombay Banquet Hall, Surrey

Legendary Sufi Singer  
**SAIN ZAHOOR**  
 Live-in-Concert



Gala Events

## VASAIKHI Surrey's Vaisakhi Parade or "Nagar Kirtan" NAGAR = town or neighbourhood KIRTAN = singing of hymns

**VAISAKHI PARADE HAS TWO COMPONENTS:**

**VAISAKHI PARADE PROCESSION**



**ROADSIDE FOOD & OTHER STALLS**

**CITY**

issue permits for parade to happen.

**ORGANIZERS: LOCAL TEMPLE**

Organize and responsible for the floats, stalls on temple grounds, and other logistics, such security and garbage pickup, related to the parade procession on the road.

**COMMUNITY RESIDENTS**

Residents whose homes fall near or on the parade route. They are responsible for their own stalls, and must obtain Fraser Health approvals. Organizers of parade have no connection or control on them.

**COMMERCIAL STALLS**

Corporates/Associations/ etc. from all over mark their spots on the parade route days in advance. They are responsible for their own stalls, and must obtain Fraser Health approvals. Organizers of parade has no connection or control on them.



# VASAIKHI

## GENEROUS SPIRIT OF GIVING AND HUMANITARISM



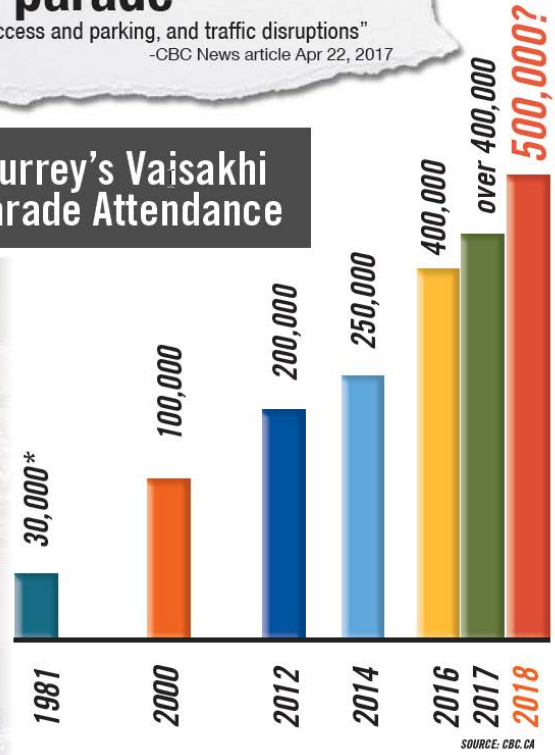
Since the implementation of Food Permits by Fraser Health the number of Food registered stalls is expected to hit around 200.

# “Up to 400K people expected to attend 2017 Surrey Vaisakhi parade”

“City of Surrey says to expect road closures, restricted access and parking, and traffic disruptions”  
 -CBC News article Apr 22, 2017



Surrey's Vaisakhi Parade Attendance



## VASAIKHI STYROFOAM - AN INCREASING CONCERN



With around 500,000 expected to attend Surrey's 2018 Vaisakhi Parade, the amount of Styrofoam and other polystyrene products that will end up in local landfills could be in the millions of units.

Waste Cleanup leaves almost no waste on the streets, it's what ends up in the landfill that is concerning.



2009 Rempel Waste\* estimated 7 tonnes of waste, estimated attendance was around 150,000+.  
 In 2018 around 500,000 are expected, simple extrapolation estimates over 20 tonnes of waste. \*cbcnews

## VASAIKHI CURRENT INITIATIVES: RECYCLING

Recycling and waste diversion is currently being undertaken by a few parties and addresses the existing problem of plastics and foams headed to landfills.



### Vancouver Vaisakhi 2017

“Zero Waste” initiative to divert foam and plastics from landfill.

Problems (amongst many):

- high cost to sort
- many volunteers required
- not enough stations
- ignored mass amounts of garbage near food booths

**Replacement of Foam with better alternatives would be a better solution**

## VASAIKHI CURRENT INITIATIVES: RECYCLING

Your recycling could become trash: The 'golden age' of recycling is coming to an end

CBC Radio: December 27, 2017



A recycling yard on the outskirts of Beijing, China, Aug. 23, 2016. (Thomas Peter/Reuters)

### PROS:

- Helps keep a portion styrofoam and plastic from landfills and diverts to repurposing facilities.
- Encourages Community to Recycle.
- Takes advantage of City blue and green bin programs.

### CONS:

- Styrofoam is costly to recycle especially when contaminated.
- Only a small portion of actual styrofoam is recovered from the event.
- Styrofoam food containers are not accepted in blue bins.
- Massive loss of biofuel from food soiled styrofoam (some repurposing facilities may not accept soiled foam as it will contaminate the end product).
- Not accepted at Surrey's Biofacility
- Recycling is not a sustainable source.
- A portion of plastic and foam will still end up in the oceans and stay for centuries regardless of recycling policy.
- Not enough volunteers to accommodate for volumes of items needed to be diverted.
- Up to 80 per cent of the Canada's recyclables collected are sold and shipped to China. As of Jan 2018, China may not accept the recyclables.
- Better alternatives are available.
- No educational component provided

**CBC** | MENU

WELCOME TO CBC.CA



VIDEO

### Canada has a recycling problem & it's because of our lifestyle

Recycling is supposed to help save the planet. Trouble is, we now throw a lot of new kinds of packaging in our blue bins. And recycling programs can't keep up. On top of that, China has stopped taking a lot of Canada's recyclables. And we have nowhere send to them. Watch now.

News - The National

March 27, 2018 online post [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca)



## VASAIKHI A SUSTAINABLE GREENER ALTERNATIVE

**Our solution is to educate the community on the benefits of compostable food serving products like Sugarcane Bagasse**

eventually replacing polystyrene tableware. Tableware is made from pulp of agricultural waste such as sugarcane bagasse, Cutlery from wood or bioplastics and Garbage bags from cornstarch-based biodegradable.

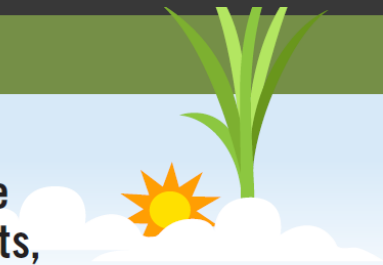


- typical decomposition of bagasse into soil is about 60 days
- comes from a renewable and sustainable, fast growing plant source
- can be sent to Surrey's state of the art Biofuel facility to be converted to biofuel



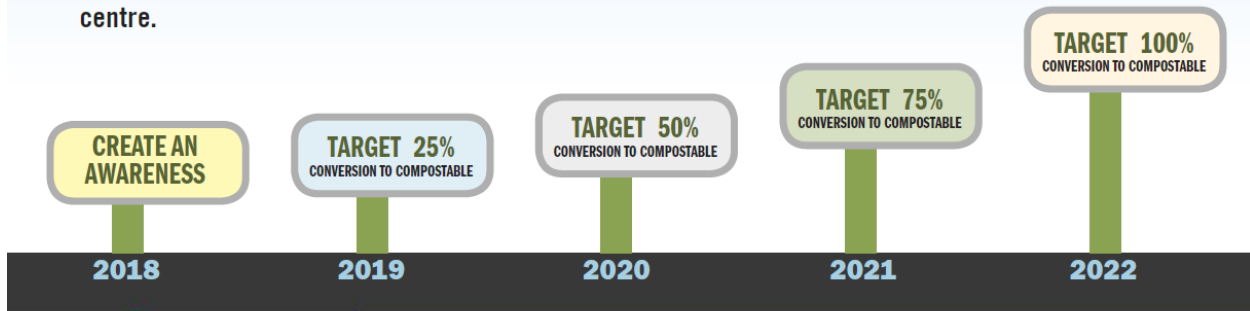
## VASAIKHI OBJECTIVE & PLAN

- To create an awareness campaign as to the disadvantages of using polystyrene products, starting with Styrofoam.
- To provide the public with information and sources to alternative replacements, namely, bagasses or sugarcane compostable serving products.
- Target a maximum 5 year, 100% replacement timeline.
- Encourage the City of Surrey to develop a Polystyrene replacement strategic plan for all events based on the Vaisakhi model.



# VASAIKHI OBJECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Create awareness prior to event through a marketing campaign with signage and advertising along parade route and media buys.
- Generate literature both print and online.
- Continuously source out suppliers of alternative products and setup an online resource link and a distribution centre.
- Tackle larger food vendors one on one to help convert then to bagasse
- Monitor success rate of each years campaign and target a 100% reduction of styrofoam in 5 years
- Work hand in hand with current recycling and organic composting initiatives
- Encourage the City of Surrey to develop a Polystyrene replacement strategic plan for all events based on the Vaisakhi model.
- Extend the campaign to other events within the community



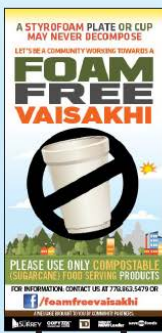
# VASAIKHI PREVIOUS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

An Inclusionary Outreach Marketing Campaign was launched from 2004 to 2006 to ask all BC citizens to come join us to celebrate Vaisakhi lasted for a duration of 3-4 weeks had an impact of reaching nearly 2 million plus media views.

- 19 buses -King size advertiments on sides
- 300 inside ceiling backlit ads in buses and skytrain
- 10-4x6ft skytrain platforms
- 3 weeks of 6 full page ads in local paper and magazine circulations. Distribution numbers in the 100,000's (like the surrey visitor guide, all the Now and Leader newspaper affiliated chains, and ethnic print media.
- TV coverage via Channel M
- online websites
- street signage along parade route

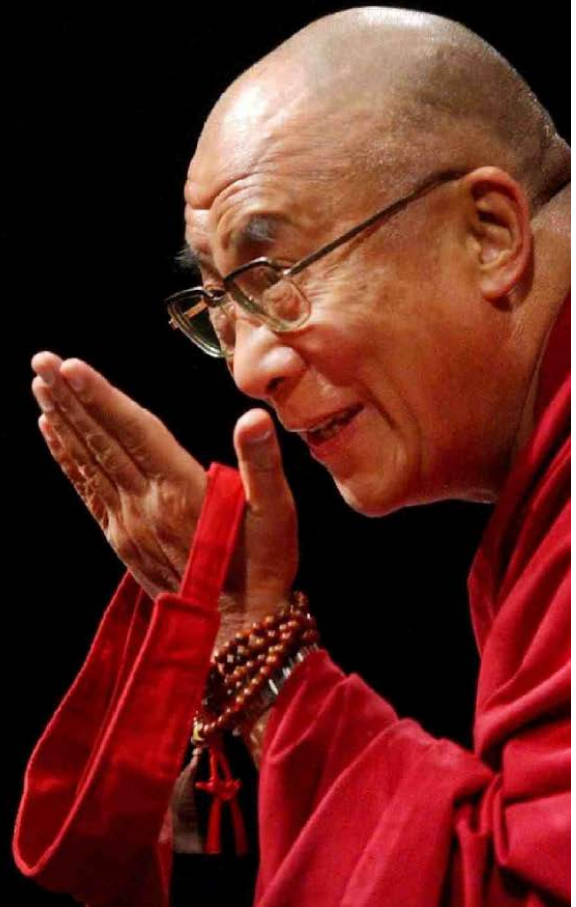
# VASAIKHI CITY REQUEST:

- Allow for signage to be erected for a period of time before and after the event.
- Allow marketing and resource materials to be inserted in the neighbourhood event mailout that is sent prior to each event.
- The aid of the City of Surrey's Volunteer team, to help with distributing marketing/leaflets and conducting surveys about the campaign during the Vaisakhi Parade.
- Provide input into campaign and any assistance/support that it can.



The planet does not need more successful people. The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers and lovers of all kinds.

*~ Dalai Lama*





A COMMUNITY WORKING TOWARDS A

**FOAM  
FREE  
VAISAKHI**

**THANK YOU!**



