

January 25, 1996

SUBJECT: KHALSA DIWAN PARADE

CONSIDERATION:

- 1 (a) THAT the Board deny the Khalsa Diwan Society's request to assemble at Sunset Park on Saturday, April 6th, 1996, for speeches and entertainment in conjunction with the annual Vaisakhi parade, OR
- (b) THAT the Board deny the Khalsa Diwan Society's request to assemble at Sunset Park on Saturday, April 6, 1996, for speeches and entertainment in conjunction with the annual Vaisakhi parade, unless Council approves 53rd Avenue and Prince Edward Street as a part of the parade route and then all arrangements are subject to the General Manager's approval.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) THAT the FEST committee and the Khalsa Diwan organizers be asked to continue to explore other parade route options for 1997.

POLICY:

The Board has approved the 1996 Calender of events. Any subsequent or significant change to a major event requires Board approval.

Special events of an unusual nature are brought to the Board for individual approval.

BACKGROUND

The Khalsa Diwan Parade is an annual event that attracts approximately 15,000 to 20,000 people and includes up to ten floats. It usually coincides with the Saturday of the Easter weekend.

This Parade has historically left the Khalsa Diwan Temple on S.E. Marine Drive and Ross Street, gone west to Main Street, north on Main to 49th Avenue, east on 49th to Fraser Street and south on Fraser back to the Temple (Appendix A). It has also been their custom to stop on Main Street for an hour or so for speakers, music and food.

Last year they asked the FEST Committee for approval to go down to 41st Avenue instead of turning off Main St. at 49th Avenue. Council did not approve this route extension because of impact on traffic and bus routes. At a later date (February 22, 1995) the organizers asked for approval to go off Main at 53rd Avenue, turn east and walk over two blocks to Sunset Park. They requested Board approval to set up a stage, sound system and service of food on Sunset Park.

Council debated the route change with reference to the impact on the neighbourhood, the number of stops along the route, ability of the site and side streets to accommodate this large Parade, the volume of people, and then deferred the decision back to FEST.

The FEST Committee deliberated this request and was of the opinion that there were too many logistical problems and, most importantly, that there was insufficient time to go through the appropriate consultation process for making this decision. The organizers were told that this request could certainly be assessed for consideration by City Council and the Park Board for 1996. Therefore, the Khalsa Diwan Parade held on April 15th, 1995 proceeded along the existing route from the Temple to Main St. to 49th Avenue, south on Fraser St. and back to the Temple.

City and Park Board Staff attended the 1995 parade event. They observed the considerable congestion of participants gathered around the flat deck stage at 51st Ave on Main St. between 53rd Ave and 49th Ave. This is a stop in the parade route for speeches that lasts from approximately 12:45 pm to 1:45 pm.

The FEST committee met with the Khalsa Diwan parade organizers on April 26th, 1995, to evaluate the 1995 parade and consider alternatives for 1996. A variety of parade route options were discussed and the organizers were asked to submit their request early so that it could be dealt with in a timely manner.

#### DISCUSSION

The FEST committee met with the Khalsa Diwan parade organizers on November 23rd, 1995 to discuss their 1996 request. The organizers proposed to take the parade off Main Street turning east on 53rd Avenue to Prince Edward Street and stop for speeches at Sunset park for approximately 1 hour. The parade would then proceed up Prince Edward street to 51st Avenue and back to Main Street going north to 49th Avenue. The FEST committee indicated that if the organizers wanted to take the parade off Main street they would not be permitted to go back to Main street. Therefore, the proposed route change would be required to continue north on Prince Edward street to 49th Avenue.

If the organizers still wanted to proceed with a parade route change that incorporated the use of Sunset park, this was the only option that the FEST committee was prepared to consider.

The organizers decided to proceed with this option in order to incorporate the use of Sunset park as an assembly area for speeches and entertainment from 12:30-1:30pm. A stage and sound system would be set up in Sunset park south of the Sunset Ice Rink. The floats would park on Prince Edward Street and 53rd Avenue during the presentations.

Organizers believe that Sunset park and Henderson School field will provide a larger assembly area (160,000 square feet) compared to the assembly area between 53rd Ave and 49th Ave along Main St. (110,000 square feet).

In order to use this proposed route, the following activity will be required:

- a) Parking removed on 53rd Avenue from Main Street to Prince Edward St; along Prince Edward Street from 53rd Avenue to 49th Avenue from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm with these streets signed 24 hours in advance to provide residents adequate notice.
- b) Restriction of vehicle access along 53rd Avenue and Prince Edward Street between approximately 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.
- c) Removal and replacement of the fencing on the west end of Henderson School field.

The parade organizers would be responsible for all the costs associated with the above activity and the parade.

In order to consider this route the FEST committee indicated that it would be necessary to consult the local community. The community's comments, concerns and suggestions would then be included in Staff reports for City Council and Park Board.

Information pamphlets (Appendix A) were delivered by staff on January 3rd, 1996, to the residents from 49th Ave to 55th Ave, Prince Edward St. to St. George Street, approximately 600 residents. The Sunset Community Association was consulted and is taking a neutral stance on this proposal. They will cooperate with organizers and the decisions made by City Council and Park Board.

Staff received numerous responses from community residents as well as the Sunset Neighbourhood Preservation Committee and the John Henderson Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee (correspondence on file with Board Secretary). Concerns on the proposed route change can be summarized as follows:

1. Sunset park is a neighbourhood park, too small to accommodate 15,000-20,000 people;
2. There is potential for damage to the turf on the two fields. There is no barrier between the Henderson school field, owned by the Park Board, and the school playground area and gardens which could also potentially be damaged.
3. A large parade should not be permitted to proceed along a residential street; traffic and parking in the area is already congested and limited;  
; emergency vehicle access

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4. Large quantities of garbage accumulate from such a large event which becomes a health and safety hazard.
5. The parade organizers should have the parade route go through the Punjabi market and remain the same as in 1995; the entire parade route should be reviewed for 1997.
6. A public meeting should be held to get the pulse of the community on this new proposal as many residents are not comfortable appearing before City Council.

At the January 15th Park Board meeting two delegations spoke about their concerns regarding the proposed route change and use of Sunset park. The Board advised the delegations that the FEST committee will discuss this matter and make recommendations to Council. The Board also indicated that a report on the Khalsa Diwan parade proposal for the use of Sunset park will be considered at the February 5th Board meeting.

The City also received a letter from the Punjabi Market Association indicating their concern about the parade not proceeding up Main Street through the market area.

The School Board has expressed a concern about the Henderson School field and the potential impact on the school grounds.

Staff are concerned that even though the park is a more suitable area for the parade assembly, Sunset park and the surrounding residential streets are not designed to handle an event of this size. The disruption and impact on the neighbourhood would be significant.

City staff are compiling the community survey responses for inclusion in the City 1996 Special Event Calendar report which includes the Khalsa Diwan Parade proposal.

Due to the number concerns from the local community and the impact on the surrounding residential area, it is likely that the FEST committee will be supporting the continued use of the original route, that is, Main Street and 49th Avenue. The Special Event report will be considered

by City Council on February 22, 1996.

CONCLUSION:

The most suitable route for a parade of this size and magnitude is along major streets. The proposed changes to the parade route would have a major impact on the residential streets, neighbourhood and park.

Prepared by:  
Recreation Division  
Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation

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