





# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	March 8, 2022
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Recent Protest Activity at City Hall (Ward 2)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Ward 2
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Martin Dambeau Corporate Security Specialist Energy, Fleet and Facilities Management Public Works Department  Morgan Stahl Director of Government Relations & Community Engagement City Manager's Office
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	 

This Communication Update is submitted in response to a question at the February 23, 2022 Council meeting asking Staff to provide an update on recent protests that have been present at City Hall over the last few weekends related to the anti-mandate protest activities in Ottawa, Windsor and other cities across Canada.

The City Hall Forecourt and adjacent right-of-way lands (i.e. sidewalks and roadways) continue as primary locations within the City of Hamilton (City) for public gatherings such as protests and rallies. The use of the City Hall Forecourt as an open sphere environment to gather and organize or participate in protests and rallies is balanced by the rights of an individual under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically Section 2 and the fundamental freedoms. While these rights are not absolute and must also respect the rights of others, within the City Hall Forecourt and open sphere areas, the behaviours by all individuals on City property must be lawful, peaceful and respectful of others.

According to the City's Hate Prevention, Mitigation and Community Initiatives Action Plan which addresses hate crimes and incidents with defined and appropriate responses, we unequivocally condemn hateful behaviour, support communities experiencing hate and demonstrate practical ways to combat hate in order to foster a

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culture of inclusion within the City. Our policy also recommends emphasizing and promoting values of tolerance, inclusion, justice and equity while condemning behaviours that contradict those values.

Further, through Council's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Term of Council Priority, the City commits to creating and nurturing an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, where equity-deserving communities feel safe, supported and have an enhanced sense of belonging through strengthened community capacity, City responsiveness, and inclusive engagement opportunities.

Since February 1, 2022 through to March 6, 2022 the City Hall Forecourt and adjacent right of way property have had a total of 5 protest / rally public gatherings (February 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>). Of the 5 events, 4 were specifically aligned with protest activities taking place in Ottawa and Windsor, as well as messaging related to Public Health measures and anti-mandate demands. The 5<sup>th</sup> event on February 27<sup>th</sup> was related to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Behaviours observed by City Security of participants in the Forecourt during these events have been peaceful, however published reports in local media related to the February 5, 2022 event stated anger was displayed towards members of the media. City Security staff also reviewed the messaging and symbols that are used and displayed throughout the events. Since February 1, 2022, the events that have taken place in the Forecourt have not included hate symbols or flags that have been seen in other municipal jurisdictions.

Pedestrian participants in the protests related to the Public Health measures have focused their activities and messaging primarily along the sidewalk areas along Main Street from Bay St to the Summers Lane crosswalk. In addition to the pedestrian attendance, there have also been vehicle traffic impacts resulting in a temporary road closure on February 5<sup>th</sup> on Main St and rolling vehicle convoys that have circled the City Hall property on February 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> property but did not result in roadway closures.

Corporate Security follows a standard protocol for observing protests and rallies on City property including the City Hall Forecourt which includes:

- City Security staff engage in general observation of protest and rally activities through in person attendance and CCTV technology,
- On a case by case basis where significant impacts to the safe delivery of City services or the broader community are expected to take place, City Security staff provide real time updates to key stakeholders such as Senior Leadership, Communications, HSR, Traffic Operations and other City divisions,
- City Security staff liaison with Hamilton Police and various City divisions (i.e. Traffic Operations, HSR, Facilities) to share information and provide a coordinated approach to mitigating measures based on risks that are presented as a result of the protest and rally activities,

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- City Security staff document every protest and rally event that takes place in the Forecourt space, and where necessary the collection of evidence takes place (i.e. CCTV images) to support law enforcement investigations where unlawful behaviour is reported. Reporting of these types of activities are also captured within Corporate Security's Annual Reports,
- Education of respectful and lawful behaviour requirements for the City Hall and Forecourt property through existing signage and by City Security staff, as well as the ways in which suspicious or unlawful behaviour can be reported to law enforcement.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Not Applicable