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Vancouver City Council Considers One-Time Support for Italian Day on The Drive

Vancouver, BC — On Tuesday, May 19, Vancouver City Council will consider a [one-time extraordinary grant of \\$60,000](#) to support Italian Day on The Drive in response to unique circumstances impacting the 2026 festival season. Taking place on Sunday, June 14, Italian Day is consistently among Vancouver’s largest free, all-ages festivals and is a signature celebration of Italian Heritage Month, attracting hundreds of thousands of attendees each year.

Held annually on Commercial Drive, Italian Day transforms Vancouver’s historic Little Italy into a vibrant open-air piazza featuring food, music, patios, family activities, local merchants, and Italian culture. Free and open to all, the festival supports local businesses, tourism, community connection, and cultural exchange, while showcasing Vancouver as a vibrant festival city.

Italian Day relies on sponsorships, grants, and merchant participation to operate, with the [Commercial Drive Business Society](#) serving as its largest sponsor. Like many festivals in 2026, Italian Day has faced rising costs related to public safety, sanitation, insurance, and event operations. This year, organizers have also experienced the loss of valuable street banner revenue during the FIFA World Cup period — previously a key component of the festival’s sponsorship program — while changes to provincial grant funding priorities have shifted support away from cultural community events toward tourism-focused initiatives.

“Vancouver is a very expensive city, and Italian Day remains a free, all-ages event that invites everyone to be Italian for the day through food, music, entertainment and family activities,” said Melissa De Genova, President of the Italian Day Festival Society. “Italian Day is one of Vancouver’s most anticipated summer festivals and we are encouraged to see Vancouver City Council considering this additional financial support while also supporting local businesses and celebrating culture and community.”

While Italian Day has received annual support from the City of Vancouver since 2020, organizers say the proposed one-time funding would help address extraordinary circumstances affecting the 2026 festival season. Earlier this year, Vancouver City Council approved similar one-time support for Car Free Day festivals facing rising operational costs.

Revived in 2010 through a community-led effort, Italian Day continues to be powered by volunteers, sponsors, local businesses, artists, performers, and community partners. The festival has become one of Vancouver’s most recognized cultural celebrations and an important showcase for Commercial Drive and Vancouver’s Little Italy district.

Italian Day on The Drive returns Sunday, June 14, 2026, from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Commercial Drive.

Media Contact:

Italian Day Festival Society

info@italianday.ca