

NOTICE OF MOTION

Declaration of Caribbean Heritage Month for the month of July

Moved by: Councillor

Shan

Seconded by: Councillor

Moise

SUMMARY:

People of Caribbean origin are a formative component to the success and definition of both Toronto and Canada. Today, more than 315,000 Torontonians of Caribbean heritage contribute immensely to the city's economic, social, political, and cultural composition.

One of the largest festivals in Canada, the historic Toronto Caribbean Carnival has grown into North America's largest Caribbean events. With close to sixty years of bringing Caribbean vibrancy to Toronto's downtown core, this marquee event draws more than 2 million visitors annually, injecting between \$467 million and \$532 million into the local economy while cementing itself as a vital piece of Toronto's cultural identity. It is also the pillar of several affiliate events throughout the summer that demonstrate the strength of Toronto's Caribbean community.

Caribbean-owned businesses have driven local economic growth for decades, anchoring prominent cultural hubs like Little Jamaica along Eglinton Avenue West, as well as neighborhoods across Scarborough and the city. At the same time, Caribbean Canadians enrich the broader community as entrepreneurs and essential workers across every major industry, sector, and professional level in Toronto.

This impact is especially profound in Scarborough, which is home to approximately 90,000 residents of Caribbean origin. As a major hub for Caribbean commerce, authentic restaurants, specialized grocery stores, salons, merchandise and jewellery stores and more, Scarborough also hosts significant cultural events including the annual Scarborough Afro-Carib Fest. Scarborough's Caribbean communities have also brought the community together, leading major religious institutions of many faiths.

This enduring presence has heavily influenced Toronto's modern urban identity—deeply shaping its linguistic, sporting, musical, and culinary aspects.

It is time to formally recognize and celebrate these historic, ongoing contributions.

Earlier this year, The Honourable Paulette Senior, Senator, introduced Bill S-248, the Caribbean Heritage Month Act, in the Senate of Canada. If passed, this bill will enable recognition for July as Caribbean Heritage Month by the federal government. Advocacy by a diverse coalition of Caribbean-Canadian organizations led to the introduction of the bill.

Proclaiming July as "Caribbean Heritage Month" in Toronto aligns with this federal legislation, which is when several events of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival occur in Toronto. This designation offers all residents and visitors a meaningful opportunity to experience the rich history and culture of the Caribbean community, while providing the city a dedicated moment to reflect on the outstanding global and local impacts made by Caribbean Canadians.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. City Council proclaim July as "Caribbean Heritage Month" for the City of Toronto in 2026, and for future years.
2. City Council request the Province of Ontario to proclaim July as "Caribbean Heritage Month" for the Province for future years.
3. City Council request the Government of Canada to proclaim July as "Caribbean Heritage Month" for the country for future years.

Date: July 29, July 30, July 31, 2026