



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: October 26, 2006
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Meeting Date: November 28, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager, Olympic and Paralympic Operations

SUBJECT: Application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Tourism Program

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council endorse City staff to submit a funding application in the amount of \$206,000 to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Community Tourism Program in support of the following programs:
- February 2007 Countdown Celebrations to mark the three year countdown to the 2010 Winter Games,
 - Three new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and
 - A consultant report on a wayfinding system to be used leading up to, during and after the 2010 Winter Games.
- B. THAT the City's share of the wayfinding consultation costs, estimated at \$75,000, be funded through an offsetting increase in the 2007 Operating Budget for street furniture revenues, and the approval of this funding be contingent on an award by the UBCM for this project.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS endorsing the UBCM application in support of the wayfinding consultant report, the installation of three new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and the February 2007 three year countdown celebrations in Vancouver.

COUNCIL POLICY

It is Council policy that grant applications be approved by Council.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for City staff to apply to the UBCM Community Tourism Program for \$206,000 to fund a celebration to mark the three year countdown to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, three new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and a wayfinding consultant study, all of which will promote Vancouver as the Host City of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and as a tourist destination.

BACKGROUND

Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Tourism Program:

In July 2005, the UBCM announced the Community Tourism Program, a \$25 million initiative by the Province of British Columbia intended to help the Province achieve its goal of doubling tourism over the next ten years. The program is administered by the UBCM and funding is released directly to municipalities upon application.

The first phase of the Community Tourism Program released \$12.5 million or 50% of the total funding. Of that \$12.5 million, the City of Vancouver's entitlement was \$430,885.13. Funding for Phase Two of the program will be announced in early 2007.

City staff have already applied for, and received \$225,000 of the City's total \$430,885.13 entitlement for the February 2006 Olympic handover and countdown celebrations in Vancouver. The 2006 celebrations included three large community events, free access to public skating rinks, five 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and a groundbreaking ceremony at Southeast False Creek.

The events were successful in terms of media attention and building public awareness. The City received coverage by local, national and international media, as well as a great deal of coverage by local and national radio. The number of visits to the City of Vancouver's website also went up dramatically during the City of Vancouver's countdown celebration week.

The 2005 report to Council seeking endorsement to apply to UBCM for the 2006 celebration week funding also noted that City staff will plan countdown celebrations for February 2007, 2008 and 2009. It is through this report that we seek Council's endorsement to apply to UBCM for funding to host the February 2007 Countdown Celebrations, which will include community events and capital improvements. Funding will also be sought for a consultant report on a City-wide wayfinding system that will be used before, during and after the 2010 Winter Games.

City staff have reviewed the UBCM Community Tourism Program application and have determined that the three year countdown celebration, the 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and the wayfinding consultant report would be eligible for funding. As per the motion passed at Council's October 6, 2005 meeting, City staff have advised Tourism Vancouver about these

opportunities for the UBCM Community Tourism Program funding. City staff will consult with Tourism Vancouver as part of the wayfinding study.

DISCUSSION

February 2007 - Three Year Countdown Celebration:

The proposed February 2007 countdown celebrations include three community events which would endeavour to be open and accessible to all residents in Vancouver. Local events marking the countdown are important as they provide the City with the opportunity to generate enthusiasm about the approaching Winter Games, engage people in the countdown to 2010, and educate citizens about the legacies provided by the 2010 Winter Games. Local celebrations also assist with the branding of Vancouver as the Host City of the 2010 Winter Games, and promote the City to visitors providing a direct benefit to tourism. Therefore, City staff recommend that the City take the lead in organizing local activities to mark this occasion.

Activities for the February 2007 celebration may include:

- A community event at the Pacific Coliseum where residents and visitors together can celebrate and learn about the approaching 2010 Games,
- A groundbreaking ceremony at Hillcrest Park to celebrate the beginning of construction of the new Hillcrest Olympic and Paralympic Curling Venue,
- The lighting of the Olympic and Paralympic Flags at Vancouver City Hall,
- The display of celebration street banners leading to and around future Olympic venues; and
- The unveiling of the official 2010 Countdown Clock.

Olympic countdown celebrations in 2007 would endeavour to be inclusive and accessible to all residents and promote recreation, arts and culture in the city as well as active living. Youth activities would be a priority in the planning of this celebration and future celebrations.

City staff would consult with VANOC, the City of Richmond and the Resort Municipality of Whistler in the planning of the countdown celebrations and subsequent celebrations. Staff would also work with 2010 LegaciesNow to leverage opportunities for legacies in sport and recreation, arts and culture and volunteerism.

'Welcome to Vancouver' Signs:

City staff recommend the installation of three new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs to welcome visitors to our city and build awareness of the 2010 Winter Games. Five 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs were installed at entry points to Vancouver in February 2006. They have been a very popular tool in welcoming residents and visitors to Vancouver, and in promoting Vancouver as the Host City of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. There are many other high traffic volume entry points to the City that would benefit from the 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs; however, three sites have been identified for a 2007 program.

Wayfinding Consultant Report:

The City of Vancouver's 2002 Street Furniture contract has provision for a coordinated suite of street furniture, which are serviced and maintained by the current street furniture contractor through revenues generated by bus shelter advertising. One of the elements within the suite that has not yet been employed by the City is a Wayfinding signage system.

With a strong commitment to creating a user friendly public realm, a contemporary wayfinding network would serve both residents and visitors in navigating between various neighbourhoods and points of interest. It is anticipated that the final wayfinding strategy will focus mainly on downtown, but may highlight neighbourhoods of interest as well as more regional attractions.

Due to limited staff time and expertise, a consultant will be used to provide objective, third-party assistance to identify issues and propose solutions. The primary role of the consultant will be to provide a strategy for a wayfinding signage system that is intuitive in nature and facilitates quick and easy orientation of pedestrians in the public realm. This signage would be solely for pedestrians and cyclists and not for vehicular traffic movement.

A Consultant would be responsible for:

- a) Developing of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy (community input as well as stakeholder groups, including Tourism Vancouver would need to be obtained and incorporated into the maps / information panels),
- b) Recommending other complementary wayfinding strategies and their potential design,
- c) Designing maps / information panels for the wayfinding structures,
- d) Developing guidelines around what level of detail should be provided in order to give pertinent wayfinding information without unfairly benefiting or promoting any individual business,
- e) Developing guidelines for the placement of structures within the public realm in such a manner as to facilitate pedestrian orientation as well as the removal of existing signage made obsolete due to the new maps / information panels.

The first set of maps / information panels to be developed are estimated to last several years given today's printing technology. This would allow for a good field trial as well as implementing any changes that would be required to make the maps even more intuitive. At the end of this time frame, information related to the 2010 Olympics should be incorporated into the maps at strategic locations that need this update.

City staff, subject to Council approval, will seek UBCM Community Tourism Program funding for the wayfinding study, new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and the celebratory activities where a benefit to tourism can be demonstrated. All types of tourism related projects are eligible for the UBCM funding, including capital projects, planning projects, and special events. Staff will begin preparing the UBCM Community Tourism Program application once Council provides authorization.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be minimal cost implications for the City because the funding of the celebration activities, the new signs, and the wayfinding study will come primarily from the UBCM Community Tourism Program.

The total estimated cost of the proposed 2007 celebration activities and the wayfinding consultants report is an estimated \$206,000 with a major component providing lasting benefits to the City, including signs and a wayfinding consultant report that will be translated into a City-wide wayfinding system in the future. All funding for these projects would be eligible for the UBCM Community Tourism Program.

The breakdown of the costs associated with the celebration is as follows:

Capital Items

Capital improvement costs are estimated at approximately \$60,000 and include three new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs. These capital items will serve as a community legacy in that they will be enjoyed beyond the 2007 celebrations and the 2010 Winter Games. Funding for this capital improvement will come from the UBCM Community Tourism Program.

Event Costs

Costs are estimated at \$77,000 and include the countdown celebration event at the Pacific Coliseum, a groundbreaking event at Hillcrest Park and a lighting ceremony at Vancouver City Hall. Costs include communication and advertising of the events and programs.

Community Celebration at Pacific Coliseum	\$62,000
Groundbreaking Ceremony at Hillcrest Park	\$10,000
Flag Lighting Ceremony at City Hall	\$5,000

TOTAL	\$77,000
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The majority of these event costs will be funded through the Community Tourism Program. A small amount (\$6,000) will be absorbed in existing budgets. The City also anticipates non-monetary contributions from some community organizations, who have expressed an interest in collaborating on certain events. Sponsorships and in-kind contributions may also be forthcoming.

Wayfinding Consultants Report

The total cost of engaging a consultant to establish a wayfinding system is estimated at approximately \$150,000. City staff would request \$75,000 in funding from the UBCM Community Tourism Program with the remaining \$75,000 to be funded from the street furniture program revenues through Engineering Streets Administration.

Revenues from the street furniture program are expected to exceed the 2006 budget estimate due to growth in advertising sales and in the numbers of advertising shelters deployed in the City. In 2006, Council approved allocating this surplus to the City's costs related to installation of the automated public toilets. This higher level of revenue is expected to

continue in 2007 and has been identified as an appropriate source for funding the City's portion of the wayfinding consultation costs as the project relates to the deployment of wayfinding map stands that are being provided through the City's street furniture contract.

Based on the proposed costs and funding sources, staff seek Council's approval to apply to the UBCM Community Tourism Program for \$206,000 available to the City of Vancouver. City staff would also seek funding from other partners including the Government of Canada to assist with the celebration costs.

Should any of the proposed funding sources not materialize the scope of the proposed program and capital improvements will be reduced. Staff will bring options for a reduced program and capital improvements plan back for Council's consideration.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the February 2007 countdown celebratory events and capital improvements is to excite the citizens of Vancouver and build awareness about the 2010 Winter Games. This is an opportunity for the City of Vancouver to brand itself as the 2010 Host City, promote tourism and encourage citizen participation in sport and cultural activities.

The objective of the wayfinding study is to develop a wayfinding strategy that can be implemented in the lead up to 2010 and assist visitors and residents in navigating the City's important tourist destinations.

Tourist related activities will be emphasised where possible to maximize the benefits of the UBCM Community Tourism Program. It is recommended that the February 2007 Celebration, the new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and the wayfinding consultant study be endorsed and that staff be authorized to begin the application process for UBCM Community Tourism Program funding.

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