



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT

Report Date: March 10, 2007
Author: Sue Harvey
Phone No.: 604.871.6001
RTS No.: 6634
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Managing Director of Cultural Services
SUBJECT: Cultural Tourism Strategy - Planning Process

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the planning process outlined in this report for the development of a Cultural Tourism Strategy for report to Council in the fall of 2007 at a cost of \$65,000; including the creation of a temporary Cultural Planner I position within the Cultural Services Division, Community Services Group (CSG) at an estimated cost of \$45,000 including benefits subject to classification and approval by the General Manager of Human Resources; source of funds to be Cultural Tourism Strategy planning funds budgeted in the 2007 Contingency Reserve per Council approval.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The development of a Cultural Tourism Strategy can build on the benefits of the cultural, economic and tourism benefits of the City's existing large festivals and events, as well as new initiatives such as the Juno Awards, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Arts Festivals and the City's 125th Anniversary Celebration. It can also support the City's longer-term strategic interests in sharing responsibility for large cultural tourism generators with our funding and industry partners.

Generally the City has relied on external organizations to manage our tourism and economic development interests but in light of Council's recent direction, staff are proposing a more proactive approach to inform the City's role with respect to future cultural tourism events.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable policy.

PURPOSE

This report responds to Council's direction to develop a plan in support of cultural tourism that will maximize opportunities such as the Juno Awards, the cultural opportunities associated with the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and the City's 125th Anniversary Celebration in 2011. A Cultural Tourism Strategy will develop a coordinated policy framework with partners of interest, within which Council can consider how best to support future culture tourism objectives and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

On February 27, 2007, in recognition that major cultural events bring many positive social, cultural, economic and tourism benefits to the City, Council approved: *"...\$300,000 to the Contingency Reserve... with the intent that this be used as leverage with other agencies and funders, in conjunction with the arts and cultural community to support cultural tourism strategies such as the City's 125th anniversary recognition. Release of funds is subject to staff reporting back in 2007 with a business plan (including funding requirements) and opportunities for joint planning and funding associated with the 2010 Games."*

Staff are recommending the development of a Cultural Tourism Strategy in lieu of a business plan for joint planning and funding associated with the 2010 Games. Arts and Cultural activities associated with the Games will be undertaken by the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Organising Committee and by the cultural community. The City's Olympic Strategic Plan calls for the creation of an Olympic Arts and Culture Readiness Strategy which includes:

- increased investment through an increase to the Cultural Budget over the period 2005-2008;
- targeted partnership funding programs such as the \$6.5 million three-year Arts Partners in Creative Development;
- ensuring that the City's cultural venues are best able to host the numerous cultural events which will be programmed by the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Organising Committee and by the cultural community, and finally;
- the creation of a new Arts and Culture Plan for Vancouver which leverages the benefits of 2010 for the coming ten years.

There is little doubt that one of the recommendations of the New Arts and Culture Plan for Vancouver would have been for the City to develop a Cultural Tourism Strategy. Council's recent direction to move ahead with the creation of a strategy in a proactive manner in advance of the conclusion of the larger strategic plan makes sense in the context of the immediate opportunities ahead and the growing number of requests for support for large initiative with a cultural tourism focus.

Such requests in the past were funded by the Opportunities Fund pilot program, launched in 2002 with the purpose of supporting cultural hosting and other initiatives. However the

annual budget for this program limited the scale of available support and further, on review, civic grant support without a broader policy context, or substantial tourism partners may not have fully realised the scale and range of potential benefits and opportunities of these past projects. This report proposes the development of a Cultural Tourism Strategy to harness these benefits in a systematic and strategic fashion that will harness the maximum benefits for all partners.

According to the World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism accounts for 37 per cent of world travel, an industry growing at a rate of 15 per cent a year. In Canada alone, Canadian travellers spend \$3 billion on cultural tourism at formal places of traditional culture, such as museums, symphonies and historic sites, as well as informal cultural attractions such as community festivals and alternative music venues.

Recent research has also shown that as cities become increasingly aware of the economic benefits of tourism in general, competition for all types of tourists -- including culturally oriented ones -- becomes more intense. Canadian cities such as Montreal and Toronto are among the many cities across North America that have recently developed cultural tourism plans and related incentives to attract this highly influential market segment.

Timing is critical as a strategy should be developed in time to leverage the benefits of 2010. The Olympics offer a unique springboard from which to expand the pool of potential tourists. For example, tourism in Alberta grew significantly following the staging of the 1988 Calgary Winter Games. The province posted average annual gains of 3.25% for the first five post-Olympic years, compared to losses in most other Canadian provinces during the same period.

DISCUSSION

There is a high level of artistic production in the City with many cultural organizations working hard to retain and attract audiences. There is however an ongoing public perception that some of the work remains unknown to many visitors. While the City has long supported the cultural sector, and while the City has had targeted grant approaches in the past, there is no current policy framework as it relates to the strategic support of the City's cultural sector to tourist audiences.

A coordinated Cultural Tourism Strategy that maximizes partnerships with the cultural community, senior governments and the private sector has the potential to build upon Vancouver's strong sense of community and sense of place while attracting tourists and stimulating economic development. The Strategy should at a minimum identify ways and means to:

- develop a proactive framework that can inform the City's role in supporting large scale cultural tourism projects and events;
- facilitate partnerships between the arts/culture and tourism sectors;
- identify additional sources of private and public sector funding; and
- provide a decision-making framework for:
 - Prioritizing projects; and
 - Civic involvement in supporting major cultural tourism initiatives.

Staff propose to invite other agencies, governments and community organizations with an interest in cultural tourism to provide input into our planning process and plan development. Any civic cultural tourism strategy will need to learn from, be informed by, and be complementary to the strengths of these key partners as we develop any new policies or programs.

As outlined in a November 28, 2006 report to Council (RTS #6391), The City of Vancouver has already entered into a four year partnership with Tourism Vancouver to jointly promote the local cultural sector. The development of a specific Cultural Tourism Strategy would seek to build upon this existing partnership by inviting Tourism Vancouver to play a lead role in the development of the City's new strategy.

Vancouver's cultural community has also expressed an interest in developing and promoting its work to new international and domestic audiences. A comprehensive Cultural Tourism Strategy would expand the relationship between the tourism and cultural sectors while also building capacity and bridging understanding between both sectors. The community will have a strong interest in the development of the Strategy, as it will also develop a more cohesive approach to promoting and providing access to a full range of cultural experiences to Vancouver residents and visitors.

Staff recommend, subject to Council approval of this planning approach, the formation of a Cultural Tourism Strategy Committee, comprised of cultural community and tourism industry representatives with an interest in cultural tourism to inform the policy development process. Staff from Cultural, Corporate, and Engineering Services as well as Parks and Recreation would also participate.

Staff is required to support the work of the Committee and the development of a Cultural Tourism Strategy and the creation of a temporary FTE Cultural Planner I position is recommended. Staff will undertake the research to scope out the planning process, research best practices and policy frameworks of other Canadian and international cities, research partnership structures, funding mechanisms, and marketing strategies. Effective research will ensure that any new initiatives deriving from the City's policy compliment and enhance existing programs or partnerships, and avoid duplication.

The synthesis and strategy phase will map out options for the City's Cultural Tourism Strategy for consideration and debate by the Cultural Tourism Strategy Committee and the input of other community partners with an active interest in strengthening the cultural and tourism sectors. Based on that input, a series of options and recommendations will be reported to Council for consideration.

As part of the Strategy staff will also develop a Civic Cultural Hosting framework, informed by and parallel to the Sport Hosting Strategy currently in development to respond to the increase in the number of requests coming forward to the City for assistance in hosting major cultural events/projects such as the Junos Awards currently under consideration.

The planning process outlined in this report is anticipated to take approximately nine months. Staff anticipate a report back to Council for consideration of a Cultural Tourism Strategy by year end 2007.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Temporary staff with specialised expertise in cultural tourism will need to be recruited and engaged on a temporary basis for a period of eight months at an estimated cost of \$45,000 subject to classification by the General Manager of Human Resources.

The total estimated budget, including temporary staffing for the development of the frameworks is \$65,000; source of funds to be the \$300,000 increase to the 2007 Operating Budget, currently held in Contingency Reserve to be allocated to the development of a cultural tourism strategy.

CONCLUSION

As many communities around the world have confirmed, great benefits can be derived from developing the relationship between local arts and culture, city-wide branding campaigns and a robust tourism sector. Vancouver currently has a unique opportunity to develop its tourism potential: the world's eyes will be on Vancouver in the lead up to 2010, and the City can sustain the Olympics' momentum by attracting and engaging visitors with its cultural vibrancy and diversity.

Staff recommend approval of a collaborative planning process to develop a Cultural Tourism Strategy as outlined in this report.

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