

CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



Report Date: 18 October 2007
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Meeting Date: November 13, 2007

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Olympic and Paralympic Operations

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

RECOMMENDATION

THAT City Council approve a funding application in the amount of \$430,885.13 to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Community Tourism Program in support of the following programs:

- Vancouver's participation in an event to celebrate the two year countdown period to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games,
- Two community events celebrating Vancouver's involvement in the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, including 1) an Olympic themed celebration in Chinatown at the beginning of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, and 2) a one to two day event hosting the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Torch Relay, and
- Three capital improvement projects in preparation for the 2010 Winter Games including 1) the installation of additional street banner brackets for Olympic and Paralympic themed banners during the 2010 Winter Games, 2) two additional 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and 3) a beautification project on Hastings Street to ready the Hastings North Business area for increased activity and traffic in 2010 due to Olympic events taking place in the Pacific Coliseum at Hastings Park.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends endorsing the UBCM application in support of the celebration events and the capital improvement projects.

COUNCIL POLICY

Grant applications require Council approval.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for City staff to apply to the UBCM Community Tourism Program for \$430,885.13 to help fund a series of events in 2008, and capital improvement projects in preparation for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

BACKGROUND

Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Tourism Program:

In July 2005 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 UBCM and funding is released directly to municipalities upon application.

Funding for the Community Tourism Program was released in two phases. Phase I, which ended March 31, 2007, released \$12.5 million or 50% of the total funding to municipalities. City of Vancouver staff applied for and received the City's total Phase I entitlement of \$430,885.13, which was used to support events celebrating the four and three year countdown to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and capital improvements including five new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs, and a street banner program displaying Olympic and Paralympic themed street banners around key venues during the countdown celebrations. These events and capital improvements were successful in building public awareness about the 2010 Games. Furthermore, the capital improvements will leave a lasting physical legacy well after the Games.

UBCM released the remaining \$12.5 million for Phase II of the Community Tourism Program on June 29, 2007. Of that \$12.5 million, the City of Vancouver is entitled to \$430,885.13 and can apply for that funding immediately. Olympic Operations staff reviewed the Phase II UBCM Community Tourism Program application and have determined that the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic celebration events and capital improvement projects would be eligible for funding.

DISCUSSION

The proposed 2008 Olympic and Paralympic program include community events and capital improvements. Community events would endeavour to be open and accessible to residents

and visitors to Vancouver, and capital improvements would serve to build awareness about the 2010 Winter Games and leave lasting physical legacies after the Games.

Activities for 2008 would include:

- Vancouver's participation in an event to celebrate the two-year countdown period to the 2010 Winter Games, which would be open and accessible to visitors and residents of Vancouver. Staff are currently exploring potential partnerships which would be used to leverage the City funding.
- A contribution to an Olympic-themed community celebration event in Chinatown at the beginning of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, including a live stage and live broadcasts of the 2008 Summer Games. This celebration would be part of the annual Chinatown Festival and organized by the Chinatown Business Improvement Association.
- A one to two day event in Vancouver welcoming the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Torch Relay, which will start in Beijing, China, and travel to Vancouver, London, England and Sochi, Russia. Local celebrations marking this historic event would highlight Vancouver's Chinatown and along with Vancouver's sustainable and inclusive society. It is expected that the City would work with the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) for delivery of this event. The nature of the partnership will be discussed as planning for the event proceeds.

Capital Improvements for 2008 include:

- New street banner brackets along Granville, Cambie, Hamilton/Mainland Streets, three key transportation routes for visitors and spectators during the 2010 Winter Games. The program would see permanent banner brackets installed in 2008 with the intention of decorating the streets with Olympic and Paralympic themed street banners in late 2009 and remain for the duration of the 2010 Winter Games.
- A contribution to a sidewalk rehabilitation and beautification project along Hastings Street, which will be the primary route for visitors attending Olympic events at the Pacific Coliseum. The project is located on the North side of Hastings Street and will include sidewalk rehabilitation from Nanaimo to Slocan with landscaped bulges on the side streets between Nanaimo and Renfrew. The project would include remedial work to sidewalks from existing budgets and the addition of landscaped bulges. This work will beautify the area in preparation for the significant increase in activity and traffic during the 2010 Winter Games. Furthermore, this work combined with the installation of banners would ready the Hastings-Sunrise neighbourhood to welcome the world in 2010. As part of the beautification project, a physical legacy such as tree planting or plaque will be installed. The physical legacy will recognize the neighbourhood for its support leading up to the 2010 Winter Games. This project has been reviewed by the Hastings North Business Improvement Association and they are strongly supportive.
- The installation of new 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs to welcome visitors to our City and build awareness about the 2010 Winter Games,

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that UBCM funding would supplement existing capital and operating budgets. Staff will continue to explore opportunities for partnerships to minimize the cost of these activities. Should there be any significant increase in costs, staff would report back to Council with an update on funding.

The breakdown of the costs associated with the capital projects and celebrations is as follows:

Capital Items

Incremental capital costs are estimated at approximately \$290,000 and include a street banner bracket program along Granville, Cambie and Hamilton/Mainland Streets, two 'Welcome to Vancouver' signs and the beautification project on Hastings Street.

Capital projects include:

- \$100,000 sidewalk beautification supplemental funding
- \$150,000 banner brackets
- \$40,000 Welcome to Vancouver Signage

Funding for sidewalk work would supplement Engineering Services' existing capital funding of \$350,000 from the sidewalk rehabilitation program and \$100,000 from the Neighbourhood Traffic Calming program.

These capital improvements will serve as a community legacy in that they will be enjoyed beyond the 2010 Winter Games.

Special Event Costs

Special Event Costs are estimated at \$155,000 and include funding for 1) a contribution to support Vancouver's participation in a 2008 countdown event, 2) a contribution in support of a community-initiated Olympic celebration as part of the Chinatown Festival in August 2008, and 3) hosting of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Torch Relay in late August 2008.

Funding for these events will come from two potential sources:

- \$15,000 from the Olympic Legacy Reserve, which was approved by Vancouver City Council on July 12, 2007 (RTS #06743), to support initiatives related to Vancouver's involvement in the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games.
- \$140,000 from the UBCM Community Tourism Program for the community events related to the two-year countdown to the 2010 Winter Games, and Vancouver's involvement in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Torch Relay and the Chinatown Festival.

Based on the proposed costs and funding sources, City staff seeks Council's approval to apply to the UBCM for \$430,885.13 available to the City of Vancouver for community event and capital improvement costs. Should any of the proposed UBCM funding not be available the scope of the proposed event program and capital improvements will be reduced.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the community events and capital improvements is to excite the citizens of Vancouver and build awareness of the 2010 Winter Games. This is an opportunity for the City of Vancouver to strengthen its brand as Host City, promote tourism and encourage citizen participation in activities leading up to the Games. Tourist related activities would be emphasized where possible to maximize the benefits of the UBCM Community Tourism Program. It is recommended that the 2008 community events and capital improvements be approved and that staff be authorized to begin the application process for the UBCM Community Tourism Program.

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