

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 105-2023-Community Services-Recreation & Culture

DATE

PREPARED

March 14, 2023

FILE

MEETING DATE

April 3, 2023

SUBJECT

Application to NOHFC for Ontario Winter Games Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 105-2023-Community Services-Recreation & Culture, we recommend that Administration submit a Stage 2 application for funding to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Community Enhancement Program for infrastructure improvements necessary for hosting the Ontario Winter Games;

AND THAT the City be responsible for mitigating funding shortfalls related to this project;

AND THAT the General Manager, Community Services be identified as the signing authority for the application;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Services Department has submitted a Stage 1 application to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund (NOHFC) Community Enhancement Program for funding to meet event hosting standards of the 2024 Ontario Winter Games at three municipal facilities: Fort William Gardens, Canada Games Complex and Delaney Arena.

Administration has been informed that the Stage 1 application has been approved by the funder and the City has been invited to submit a Stage 2 application. A Council Resolution is required to complete submission of the Stage 2 application.

The planned improvements will position the three facilities to host future sport tourism events that help generate significant economic impact for the community in addition to providing functional enhancements for user groups and fans.

DISCUSSION

Thunder Bay will be hosting the 2024 Ontario Winter Games, a major multi-sport tourism event with an estimated economic impact of approximately \$6 million for the city. The Games are expected to attract up to 3,500 athletes, coaches and staff to Thunder Bay between February 15-19 and 22-26.

In order to meet event hosting standards and to attract future events, a number of necessary infrastructure improvements have been identified at three facilities. The City has submitted funding applications to both NOHFC and FedNor to help fund the project. Local sport organizations, Thunder Bay Diving Club and Thunderbolts Swim Club, have also committed funds to the project.

Key activities in the funding application include:

Fort William Gardens

- accessibility improvements for sledge hockey;
- internet connectivity - implementation of wireless mesh network for rooms currently without connection (this has also been specifically requested by organizers of events such as the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, concerts and others);
- new PA system.

Delaney Arena

- fibre internet (will also benefit Fort William Stadium to enhance features of the new scoreboard).

Canada Games Complex

- new video score clock and timing system;
- installation of a 3 meter dive platform;
- installation of squash court windows for officiating;
- new PA System for event announcements/commentary.

Other

- portable indoor "tip and roll" bleachers for various Winter Games venues.

The improvements listed above will benefit local community sport programming beyond the Ontario Winter Games and enhance the player and fan experience at sporting competitions. These improvements will also be essential for bidding on new types of sporting events as well as concerts (Fort William Gardens) and other events in the future that the facilities currently do not or cannot host (e.g. Provincial dive competitions).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The total anticipated project cost of these infrastructure improvements is \$959,000 including contingency. The following funding sources are identified:

- NOHFC - \$470,000
- FedNor - \$307,000
- City of Thunder Bay - \$164,000
- Partner Organizations (Thunder Bay Diving Club and Thunderbolts Swim Club - \$18,000.

The City's contribution will be funded through the Accessibility Fund and approved 2023 capital budget.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Administration has been successful in a Stage 1 application to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund's Community Enhancement Program for infrastructure improvements at Fort William Gardens, Delaney Arena and Canada Games Complex. It is further concluded that City Council should adopt a resolution to allow Administration to submit a Stage 2 application for funding.

BACKGROUND

Investments in City's recreational facilities such as arenas, stadia, pools, community centres and older adult centres have been identified as a key priority in the Recreation & Facilities Master Plan. (Goal #1: Investment in infrastructure as a quality of life principle – enhance where feasible and fiscally sustaining the use of existing facilities).

Securing and hosting multi-sport games is a responsibility of the Sport & Community Development Section in the City's Recreation & Culture Division. The events being pursued and facility improvements are also a priority of the Sport Tourism Events and Activities Policy, adopted by City Council in 2008. Facility investment is particularly important in order to allow Thunder Bay to be competitive while bidding on future events, and to ensure the City does not lose out on other opportunities and associated economic impacts.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

None.

REPORT PREPARED BY

Callie Hemsworth - Coordinator, Planning, Projects & Development – Community Services Department

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kelly Robertson, General Manager, Community Services

Date (03/27/2023)