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**REPORT NUMBER** 010-2025-Community Services-Recreation & Culture

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**DATE**

**PREPARED**

January 27, 2025

**FILE**

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**MEETING DATE**

February 10, 2025

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**SUBJECT**

2024 Ontario Winter Games Legacy

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

WITH RESPECT to Report 010-2025-Community Services-Recreation & Culture we recommend that the Legacy Funds provided by the Government of Ontario for hosting the 2024 Ontario Winter Games be distributed as follows:

- \$15,000 to the PRO Kids Reserve
- \$10,000 to Special Olympics Thunder Bay
- \$75,000 to the Community, Youth & Cultural Funding Program for sport development projects in 2025 and 2026;

AND THAT any additional legacy dollars resulting from the Games be transferred to the Event Hosting Reserve;

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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report outlines the successes of the 2024 Ontario Winter Games and recommends that the proposed Legacy Plan for the event be adopted. The Games Organizing Committee has developed this plan and is recommending its approval.

Highlights of the Games, held in February 2024, include:

- 1,354 participating athletes, coaches, team managers and officials
- 13 sports at 11 venues
- 841 volunteers
- Local economic impact of \$5,694,215 (total industry output).

A financial legacy of more than \$240,000 is anticipated from the Games. This includes \$100,000 from the Province of Ontario that is to be spent on local sport legacy projects.

The Games Organizing Committee has recommended that funds be distributed as follows as part of the Legacy Plan for the Games:

- \$15,000 to PRO Kids;
- \$10,000 to Special Olympics Thunder Bay; and
- \$75,000 to the City's Community, Youth & Cultural Funding Program (CYCFP) to be used by community organizations for sport development projects
- The balance, estimated to be more than \$123,000, to the City's Event Hosting Reserve for use to bid for, host and support future major sporting events, multi-sport games and other significant events.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **2024 Ontario Winter Games Overview**

The 2024 Ontario Winter Games were held in Thunder Bay February 16 to 26, 2024. This was Thunder Bay's first time as the sole host of the event since 1974.

The Games were hosted by the City of Thunder Bay with the assistance of a Games Organizing Committee. This committee was established as a Special Purpose Committee appointed by Council.

The 2024 Winter Games were one of the largest multi-sport events ever held in Thunder Bay and featured:

- 1,354 participating athletes, coaches, team managers and officials
- 13 sports at 11 venues
- 841 volunteers
- 60 sponsors
- 2,444 hotel nights booked.

The Games generated an estimated economic impact (total industry output) of \$5,694,215 for Thunder Bay.

The 2024 Games included the following 13 sports:

- 5 Pin Bowling
- Archery
- Artistic Swimming
- Badminton
- Biathlon
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Curling (Fours & Mixed)

- Diving
- Fencing
- Futsal
- Men's Hockey
- Ringette
- Wrestling.

Two sets of Opening Ceremonies were hosted at Fort William Historical Park.

The Games earned accolades from participants, parents of athletes and Ministry officials.

### **Legacy Plan**

The Government of Ontario Ministry of Sport owns the rights to the Ontario Games and provided funding of \$1.5 million to the 2024 Games. According to the City's Transfer Payment Agreement with the Government of Ontario, \$100,000 of this is to be spent on sport legacy projects or as a contingency (which is not required in this case).

The Games Organizing Committee (GOC) recommended at their meeting held on May 1, 2024 that the \$100,000 of legacy funding be distributed as follows:

- \$15,000 to PRO Kids;
- \$10,000 to Special Olympics Thunder Bay; and
- \$75,000 to the City's Community, Youth & Cultural Funding Program (CYCFP) to be accessed by community organizations for sport development projects.

Ministry of Sport staff have approved this proposed use of the funds.

The Legacy Plan will help encourage the participation in local sport by people with disabilities and children and youth from financially disadvantaged families. This plan will also allow local sport organizations to engage in projects that will further develop sport in our community.

The Legacy Plan will increase the level of funding available to local not-for-profit sport organizations eligible to apply for CYCFP Sport Stream projects in 2025 and 2026. Community-based sport development projects are assessed on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

- the community-based sport development project is community sport-led and organized, supported, and/or enabled by community volunteers and non-profit institutions;
- strengthens sport development through innovative and inclusive approaches to engaging the broader community, including diverse and under-represented populations in sport;

- demonstrates collaborative approaches to building sport capacity through community-based partnerships;
- enhances the availability and accessibility of sport activities in local neighbourhoods;
- addresses sport and skill development concerns, which may include but are not limited to costs associated with:
  - participant and volunteer recruitment and retention; and
  - certification of coaches and officials, equipment, insurance, advertising, and non-capital facility costs;
  - costs associated with athlete travel for world-class competition.

The GOC further recommended that any additional legacy funds from the Games be transferred to the City's Event Hosting Reserve. It is anticipated that this additional legacy will be more than \$123,000.

The Event Hosting Reserve was established to accumulate funds to bid for, host and support major sporting events, multi-sport games and other significant events.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATION***

A total legacy of more than \$223,000 is anticipated from hosting the 2024 Ontario Winter Games. Of this amount, \$100,000 was provided by the Ministry of Sport to be spent post-event on sport legacy projects. The balance is proposed to be distributed to the Event Hosting Reserve to be used for securing and hosting future multi-sport games and other major sporting events.

### ***CONCLUSION***

It is concluded that significant sport development, economic impact, community pride and financial legacies resulted from hosting the 2024 Ontario Winter Games.

It is further concluded that the financial legacies from the Games should support local sport development initiatives and future event hosting.

It is therefore concluded that the Legacy Plan outlined in this report be adopted.

### ***BACKGROUND***

City Council directed Administration to submit a bid for the 2024 Ontario Winter Games on October 15, 2020 (Report R 132/2020) and agreed in principle to a municipal financial commitment of \$250,000 cash and a maximum of \$50,000 of in-kind City services and/or waived rental fees.

The Government of Ontario officially awarded the 2024 Games to Thunder Bay on April 22, 2022.

The Ontario Winter Games are a provincial multi-sport Games for young athletes and athletes with physical disabilities, operated by the Government of Ontario. The Winter Games began in 1972 and are held every two years. Prior to 2024, the event was only held in Thunder Bay once before, in 1974.

City Council approved the Sport Tourism Events & Activities Policy in 2008. The Sport Tourism Events & Activities Policy directs City support to:

- helping local sport organizations attract and host single-sport championships (international, national, provincial and regional) and multi-sport games;
- the municipality itself hosting multi-sport games;
- developing sport facility infrastructure;
- attracting participants and spectators to sports events;
- helping create new sport tourism events and activities as well as supporting existing annual ones; and
- promoting Thunder Bay as a training site.

***REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED***

None.

***REPORT PREPARED BY***

Paul Burke, Sport & Community Development Supervisor – Community Services Department

***REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY***

Kelly Robertson, Commissioner, Community Services

Date (01/31/2025)