

DATE OF MEETING    APRIL 25, 2022

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**SUBJECT             SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGY**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with the Sports Tourism Strategy for review. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council approve in principle the Sports Tourism Strategy as a guiding document.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the 2021-JUN-28 Governance and Priorities Meeting, Council received a presentation and a draft Sports Tourism Strategy for Nanaimo. It provided the opportunity for Council to have a discussion, and provide input, into the plan. The presentation was followed with more community engagement and a plan to return to Council with a detailed report and recommendations.

Tourism is a major economic driver across BC, sport tourism especially. Sport tourism is a special niche, accounting for approximately \$7.2 billion CAD annually across Canada. It continues to be the fastest growing segment of the global tourism industry (Sport Tourism Canada, 2021) and the fastest segment to rebound from COVID shutdowns. With thousands of sporting events hosted in Canada annually, and a general shortage of sport event host cities, Nanaimo is well-positioned to emerge on the scene as a quality, confident and competent sport host community. Additionally, the community's major stakeholders (e.g., City of Nanaimo, Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association) have worked in-step to develop a strong, unified sports tourism strategy that can be supported, and successfully executed, by the region.

Spearheaded by the Nanaimo Hospitality Association (NHA), and in partnership with the City of Nanaimo and Tourism Nanaimo, this project was launched to conduct a strategic analysis of sports tourism in Nanaimo and develop a realistic sports tourism strategy that would be suited to the region's current economic and political climate. The initial project was carried out between November 2017 and December 2018. The most recent iteration was revised in March 2022 based on continued consultation and evolution of the sector.

## **DISCUSSION**

The goal of this report is to present the strategic analysis, industry research, and insights that support the recommendation to “build off the base” by creating a sports tourism strategy focused on continuing the support of sports already strong in the Nanaimo. In addition the plan recommends focusing on cycling, paddle sport, individual or small team sport, Indigenous sport, adaptive / para-sport and sport administration as key strategic directions.

Benefits to communities engaged in sport tourism are well-documented, ranging from youth development and physical health and well-being to economic development, job creation and infrastructure investment for local community use. The Nanaimo Sport Tourism Strategy aims to deliver on all of those benefits for the community, and leave a legacy for years to come.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There is currently no specific budget request related to the Sports Tourism Strategy. Implementation will be over time and will require involvement of many stakeholders and organizations to achieve.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council approve in principle the Sports Tourism Strategy as a guiding document.
  - The advantages of this option: The Sports Tourism Strategy provides a guiding document with key focus areas and will help to support priorities for sport tourism investment, applications, and infrastructure.)
  - The disadvantages of this option: May raise expectations to focus on this area over others. .
  - Financial Implications: In order to support the Sports Tourism Strategy the City may choose to bid on various games or tournaments, or invest in infrastructure updates with costs varying depending on the opportunity.
2. That Council approve in principle the Sports Tourism Strategy for the City of Nanaimo as a guiding document with suggested amendments.
  - The advantages of this option: That Council provide suggested amendments to the strategy which will create an enhanced guiding document with key focus areas and will help to support priorities for sport tourism investment, applications, and infrastructure.
  - The disadvantages of this option: May require going back to stakeholders for approval.
  - Financial Implications: Same as Option 1.
3. That Council does not choose to adopt the Sports Tourism Strategy at this time.
  - The advantages of this option: Allows Council to make changes or have more time to consider the strategy.

- The disadvantages of this option: That there will be no guiding document to assist in decision-making around priorities for sport tourism investment, applications and infrastructure.
- Financial Implications: None.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Spearheaded by the Nanaimo Hospitality Association (NHA) and in partnership with the City of Nanaimo and Tourism Nanaimo, the Sports Tourism Strategy aims to provide a realistic sport tourism strategy suited to the region's current economic and political climate.
- The initial project was carried out between November 2017 and December 2018, with follow on work and evolutions of the strategy annually. The most updated version was revised in March 2022.
- If adopted in principle by Council, the strategy will be used as a guiding document to support implementation of the strategy by the City of Nanaimo, Tourism Nanaimo, and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Sports Tourism Strategy  
Attachment B – Power Point Presentation |

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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Chief Administrative Officer |