

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 06, 2023

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SUBJECT B.C. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with information on the B.C. Destination Development Fund and obtain a letter of support for an application for the Stadium District Development under the B.C. Destination Development Fund Activate stream.

Recommendation

That Council provide a letter of support for an application to the B.C. Destination Development Fund Activate stream for the Stadium District Development.

BACKGROUND

The B.C. Destination Development Fund (DDF) is an application based funding program that provides \$30 million in one-time grants to support the development and rejuvenation of tourism infrastructure, assets and experience. The fund aims to invest in projects that foster distinct and globally competitive destinations, strengthen a year-round visitor economy, increase community vibrancy and resident support for tourism and support sustainability, accessibility and inclusion. The program is available to all local governments, indigenous governments and development organizations and not-for-profit organizations in British Columbia.

The Activate stream of the DDF will provide funds up to \$1,000,000 per project. The project must be located in B.C., support the tourism sector, be visitor-oriented, open for use to the public and not limited to a private membership, be endorsed by council, have demonstrated support from stakeholders and partners, be shovel ready, and be completed by March 31, 2025. The program can contribute 100% of the cost of eligible activities, to a maximum of \$1 million. Stacking rules do not apply to this funding program. Funding decisions are expected to be communicated to applicants in March 2023.

The grant application deadline is **2023-FEB-09**.

DISCUSSION

In December 2022, staff submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the B.C. Destination Development Fund. The EOI identified the Stadium District Development as the City's potential project. Early in January 2023 staff received notification that our project had been selected to submit a full application.

Nanaimo's Stadium District is home to the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre (NAC), Nanaimo Ice Centre (NIC), Rotary Bowl (track), Serauxman Stadium, Third St. Fields, and q'unq'inuqwstuxw Stadium. Since 2019, the City has made major improvements to sports infrastructure, supporting the implementation of Tourism Nanaimo and the City's collective sports tourism strategy. The Stadium District Development project is an integral part of this sports infrastructure. The City has invested almost \$6.7 M on improvements, excluding NIC and NAC, to the Stadium District since 2019.

Photo of Stadium District as of June 2022



Improvements at Serauxman Stadium have included baseball stadium lighting, new outfield fencing, outfield fence padding, infield and outfield renovations and new seating.

The Rotary Bowl underwent major improvements in 2020, including the resurfacing of the track, bringing it to Class 2 certification under World Athletic standards.

2022 saw the development of a centralized entrance and event plaza area, improved onsite amenities, temporary washroom and change room improvements, a temporary media and coaching booth, and the installation of perimeter fencing and safety netting, allowing for multiple venues to be used at the same time at the Stadium District.

The City is committed to truth and reconciliation, and has begun integrating Hul'q'umi'num' names at key infrastructure. In 2022, the NDSS (high school) Community Turf Field, located in the Stadium District, was renamed to q'unq'inuqwtuxw Stadium. This process included a Snuneymuwx First Nation art installation adjacent to the field.

\$4.4 M has been approved in the 2023 - 2027 Provisional Financial Plan for additional improvements to the Stadium District. As well, \$1.1 M will be carried forward to 2023 to complete work still in progress at the end of 2022.

Staff recommends an application to the B.C. Destination Development Fund for the maximum available grant funding of \$1.0 M to help fund the following improvements:

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| • Stadium District parking lot paving and lighting | \$ 380,500 budgeted in 2023 |
| • q'unq'inuqwtuxw Stadium Bleachers | \$ 1,750,000 budgeted in 2024 |
| • Media and Coaching Booth | \$ 250,000 budgeted in 2024 |

These phases of the project meet the requirements of the funding program as they are expected to be complete by March 31, 2025.

The Stadium District Development project will allow Nanaimo to promote itself as a destination for sports tourism, with the potential for hosting numerous events that our current facilities cannot serve. Sports tourism is an important part of the City's local and regional economy, allowing visitors to share in the unique character and experience of Nanaimo, raising our city's profile and supporting our prosperity.

OPTIONS

1. That Council provide a letter of support for an application to the B.C. Destination Development Fund Activate stream for the Stadium District Development.
 - The advantages of this option: The continued improvements of the Stadium District will allow Nanaimo to host multiple sports events, at a higher level than the City is currently able to support, increasing the potential to market Nanaimo as a sports destination. A successful grant application will allow the funds currently designated for this project to be allocated to other projects within the City.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Construction may interrupt regular seasons and accommodations would need to be made during the construction periods.
 - Financial Implications: The projects to be included in the grant application are currently funded in the 2023 – 2027 Provincial Financial Plan. If the grant application is successful, \$1.0 M of the project would be funded by the B.C. Development Destination Fund allowing City funds to be reallocated to further improvements in the Stadium District, or to other City projects.
2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff for a project to submit an application to the B.C. Development Destination Fund Activate stream.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The B.C. Destination Development Fund provides 100% funding up to \$1,000,000 for eligible project costs.
- The City may submit one application for this funding.
- Applications are due by 2023-FEB-09.

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