

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: May 17, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, City Manager

SUBJECT: UBCM 2023 Community Excellence Awards Submission

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council SUPPORTS submitting an application for the Union of BC Municipalities 2023 Community Excellence Awards in the Excellence in Governance category for the recently completed Canfor Leisure Pool and its associated multi-year engagement process.

PURPOSE:

Request for Council resolution of support to apply for the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) 2023 Community Excellence Award under the Excellence in Governance category for the recently completed Canfor Leisure Pool (new downtown pool rebuild) and its multi-year engagement process.

DISCUSSION:

The new Canfor Leisure Pool opened its doors to the community in November 2022, receiving 66,000 pool visits in the first few months of operations. This project in the downtown replaced the aging Four Seasons Leisure Pool that was over 50 years old and had accessibility challenges. The design of the new pool began April 2019 with construction beginning July 2020, open for use in November 2022, and is finalizing landscaping late spring 2023.

Over the past six months since opening, the pool has had 146,000 customer visits with positive feedback from the community. Swimming lessons are popular, along with the waterslide and NinjaCross (obstacle course). The pool design and accessible amenities are perfect for children, families, seniors, and the varying needs and abilities of those that visit the facility.

Highlights include:

- Accessibility features – Accessibility Tour video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOR-n8rH08g>,
- Downtown Renewable Energy System connection provides an 84% reduction in greenhouse gases vs. utilizing natural gas for heating,
- The partnerships, collaboration and the engagement process that took place to bring the new pool and its features to reality.

The need to replace the aging downtown pool is rooted from the multi-year engagement process that took place through plans and strategies that occurred in the years prior. In addition to utilizing and communicating important asset condition data, each plan and strategy had its own engagement

opportunities to inform the eventual decision to replace the aging downtown Four Seasons Leisure pool experiencing structural, operational and accessibility issues. Each engagement opportunity built off the previous work and feedback, and was used to inform the design and amenities we find incorporated today in the new Canfor Leisure Pool as follows:

- **2014 Community Recreation Services Plan (CRSP):** This Official Community Plan, 2012 implementation item identified aquatics and its facilities as the highest priority to improve for indoor facilities based on engagement feedback;
- **2016 Talktober/Citizen budget priorities:** Five community facility dashboards, including the aging Four Seasons Leisure Pool were developed and shared during annual budget community engagement and requested feedback on capital priorities for reinvestment. Sport & Recreational facilities were ranked second highest on the capital priorities list for reinvestment;
- **2016 Aquatic Needs Assessment:** An outcome of the 2014 Community Recreation Services (CRSP) work, this deeper assessment examined both existing aquatic facilities asset condition, community use and demand trends. The assessment provided options for aquatics investment needs and recommended the Four Seasons Leisure Pool in the downtown as a priority for full replacement due to its age. It recommended that continued reinvestment by way of continued maintenance would be ineffective. Community workshops and open houses were conducted to inform the design of the New Downtown Pool;
- **2017 Council Direction:** In January 2017 Council directed staff to plan for the full replacement of the Four Seasons Leisure Pool in close vicinity to its current location in the downtown. This direction aligned with the land use direction from the Official Community Plan, 2012 and the Smart Growth on the Ground Downtown 2009 vision developed through substantial engagement and also spurred further economic investment in the area;
- **2017 Fall Referendum** resulted in nearly 63% of those who voted supporting a new aquatic centre to replace the aging downtown pool;
- **2020 Pool design concepts** for public preview; and
- **2020-2023 Construction** progress updates, videos and reports.

In the summer of 2020, the City was successful in a \$10M grant that Administration applied for the previous year under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – British Columbia – Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure for the Downtown Pool Replacement Project. Receiving this grant permitted the new pool build to begin.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This supports Council Priorities of maximizing the quality of life for all residents, along with marketing Prince George as a place to invest, live and visit.

AWARD PROGRAM

The Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate UBCM members that have implemented projects or programs that demonstrate excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC. The awards are designed to profile promising practices and to encourage local governments to learn from the success of other members in order to implement changes in their own communities.

The project and multi-year engagement process align well with the UBCM 2023 Community Excellence Award category for Excellence in Governance described as:

Governance processes or policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long-term thinking.

The application was submitted prior to the May 19, 2023 deadline (Friday of Local Government Awareness Week) and requires a resolution of Council by no later than August 18, 2023 to complete the application process. Awards will be presented during UBCM's 2023 Convention.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration is seeking Council's support for the application to UBCM 2023 Community Excellence Awards under the Excellence in Governance category for the recently completed Canfor Leisure Pool and its multi-year engagement process.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Tiina Schaeffer, Manager Capital Program Management Office

Meeting Date: 2023/05/31