

Date: June 12, 2025

To: **Mayor and Council.**

Name and title: Andy Beesley, Director of Civic Facilities and Events

Subject: CN Centre 30th Anniversary

Attachment(s): None

Recommendation(s):

That Council APPROVES up to \$15,000 from the 2025 Council Contingency fund to support the CN Centre 30th anniversary event as described in the report dated June 12, 2025, from the Director of Civic Facilities and Events titled “CN Centre 30th Anniversary”.

Purpose:

At the May 26, 2025 Council meeting, the following resolution was passed:

THAT COUNCIL:

1. DIRECTS Administration to return a report to Council by June 23rd that outlines a plan to deliver a fun, financially accessible, safe, and community-oriented public event as part of the CN Centre’s 30th Anniversary celebration, to be hosted around September 30th, 2025;
2. DIRECTS Administration to explore partnerships or potential funding opportunities in support of the celebration; AND
3. EXPRESSES its intent to consider funding this celebration through Council Contingency, contingent upon the proposed plan outlined in the report demonstrating widespread accessibility, strong community impact, and sound budget justification.

The CN Centre was originally called the Prince George Multiplex and was officially opened by Mayor John Backhouse on September 28, 1995. Administration has begun planning an event on the precise 30th anniversary date of September 28, 2025.

The community will be invited to participate in a FREE event that will be a fun, accessible, safe and highly enjoyable opportunity for our residents to come together and celebrate what many consider to be a “jewel in our crown”, with the CN Centre providing sporting, music, cultural, convention, trade shows, and many other events to literally millions of visitors over its 30 year history.

In addition to celebrating this anniversary, administration is proposing to incorporate two other important celebrations into this event. The City’s annual “International Students Welcome” and “Volunteer Appreciation Event” occur at a similar time, and by incorporating these events we intend on creating a “wow” event that will provide a platform to respectfully, specifically and wholesomely honour our volunteer community, international students, and the CN Centre anniversary.

The CN Centre will be transformed to an event that truly honours the original “Multiplex” theme. On Sunday September 28, 2025, inside the CN Centre there will be a stage with live music, public skating (including free skate rentals), food and beverage, and more, all completely free of charge.

Starting off the event will be a kickoff ceremony on the mainstage which will be overlooking the ice surface and seating areas. The ceremony will include:

- Introduction of members of past City Council’s, Building Committee and suppliers who were part of creating the CN Centre,
- Comments about the origin of the building project and overview of the uses of the building over the past 30 years,
- Specific section to say thank you to all the volunteers in our City who make this a great place to live, work and play;
- Specific section to welcome the international students
- Ceremonial cake cutting to celebrate all the above (cake for everyone will be included in the food & beverage offerings)

Following the ceremonies a live local band will provide entertainment for the afternoon, which will look over the ice surface and seating areas. Public skating will be available in front of the stage, along with free skate rentals. Free food and beverages will be provided throughout the event.

Administration has applied for a provincial grant to assist with 30th anniversary events and will seek other support from CN Rail as well as the architecture and construction companies who were involved. By combining the budgets from the Thank You PG event and International Students Welcome (approximately \$20,000 combined) and the proposed contribution from Council Contingency, administration is confident this will be an event that will have a very strong positive community impact and that it is inclusive for anyone and everyone to attend. A detailed budget will be prepared should Council provide direction to move forward with this event. Our communications division has committed to providing a fulsome strategy to promote this event in a manner that reflects the incorporation of putting three events into one.

Strategic Priorities:

This event would provide free music, skating, food & beverage, and celebrations open to our entire community, which supports Council’s priority of Social Health and Well-Being, and helping to create a complete community that welcomes people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Summary and conclusion:

By using the CN Centre to host an event that honours the 30th anniversary, as well as the International Students Welcome and Volunteer Appreciation Event, the entire community of Prince George will enjoy a positive inclusive and free event that will have something for everyone. Administration seeks Council approval for budget support of up to \$15,000 from the 2025 Council Contingency fund.

Respectfully submitted:

Andy Beesley, Director of Civic Facilities and Events

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/06/23