

City Centre Recreation Facility in Partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council

ISSUE

This report seeks City Council approval to enter into discussions with Saskatoon Tribal Council to partner in the development of a new and enhanced White Buffalo Youth Lodge which would serve as a City Centre Recreation Facility.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council:

1. That the Administration be authorized to enter into discussions with Saskatoon Tribal Council to develop an Agreement in Principle for investing in a new White Buffalo Youth Lodge/City Centre Recreation Facility;
2. That the discussions with the Saskatoon Tribal Council also consider the potential inclusion of other project partners for a City Centre Recreation Facility; and
3. That the Administration report further, to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, on the progress toward developing an Agreement in Principle.

BACKGROUND

Located at 602-20th Street West, the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) was founded in 1999 to provide a culturally safe, non-judgmental environment for children, youth and families to gather, learn and participate in sport, culture, recreation, health and social programs. Prior to becoming the WBYL, the building was an old grocery store originally built in 1962 that underwent renovations to create the centre it is today. WBYL is governed by way of a partnership agreement between the City of Saskatoon (City), Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). The roles and responsibilities are defined in the agreement, namely that:

- 1) The City, as owner of the building and land, contributes an amount annually (\$190,500 in 2022 & 2023) which includes the maintenance costs/services of the building;
- 2) STC serves as managing partner responsible for day-to-day operations including programming;
- 3) SHA provides an annual grant (\$280,500 in 2022 and 2023) and contributes staff for primary health care; and
- 4) CUMFI liaises with Metis organizations and ensure cultural components in programs and services.

The current partnership agreement is set to expire August 31, 2024.

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In 2013, City Council identified a four-year priority to build a recreation centre located within the core neighbourhoods. In 2015, Capital Project 2600 – City Centre Area Indoor Recreation Facility – was approved with an initial amount of \$50,000 to develop the business case, engage the community and explore partnership opportunities. The project considered future funding for a city centre recreation facility in partnership with STC and the YMCA of Saskatoon. While the YMCA is no longer seeking to partner in a city centre recreation facility, the need for a city centre recreation centre remains a priority for the City.

In 2021, the Saskatoon Public School Division (School Division) announced it is consolidating Pleasant Hill, King George and Princess Alexandra schools into a new school to be built on the present site of Princess Alexandra school and the School Division's Maintenance Facility, at 210 Avenue H South. The new school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2024.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Since the decision by the School Division to build their new city centre school on the site of Princess Alexandra school, STC has had discussions with the School Division to build a new recreation and wellness facility adjoining the new school. Administration believes there is an opportunity to invest in a new WBYL, which would also serve as a city centre recreation facility. Administration is therefore seeking approval to enter into formal discussions with STC to develop an Agreement in Principle for investing in a new White Buffalo Youth Lodge/City Centre Recreation Facility at 210 Avenue H South. The discussions would focus on the key areas noted below.

Partnership Principles

A new WBYL/City Centre Recreation Facility provides an opportunity to validate and potentially enhance or expand the current WBYL partnership by understanding:

- 1) Who the partners are and defined roles and responsibilities;
- 2) Expectations of a renewed or new partnership;
- 3) Partner priorities; and
- 4) Partner conditions, in particular concerning the allocation and use of spaces in the facility.

Partnership Model

The current WBYL partnership model is a starting point for these discussions and serves as a chance to review within the context of the City's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation:

- Roles and responsibilities (i.e., who does what);
- Facility ownership and management; and
- Community representation and the role of community.

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Funding Model

City funding contributions to a new WBYL/City Centre Recreation Facility are undetermined at this time. Capital Project P.02600 Indoor Recreation Facilities is a major unfunded capital project for both the City Centre Recreation Facility and an East Indoor Recreation Facility. Before proceeding further in this regard, contribution levels from partners and other levels of government will have to be identified and a detailed capital funding plan prepared. For their part, STC has hired an organization to develop a capital campaign feasibility study.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The City and STC agree that public and stakeholder involvement would be an integral part of the development, design and construction of a new and enhanced While Buffalo Youth Lodge/City Centre Recreation Facility, which builds on the success of the present facility. Should City Council provide direction for Administration to proceed with formalizing a partnership with STC in the development of a new WBYL, a public engagement strategy would be developed alongside STC and undertaken in a way which respects the history and success of WBYL and grounds the approach in the City's commitments to reconciliation.

Those to be consulted would include Elders, community associations, governance partners, STC, CUMFI, Métis Nation Saskatchewan (MNS), SHA, the School Division, City representatives, neighbourhood parents, newcomer parents, current users of WBYL, community residents, potential funders, the Riversdale Business Improvement District and the original founders of WBYL. Consultation is anticipated to get underway early in 2022.

The starting point for this engagement would be to affirm the results of the 2015 Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study for a Proposed New Joint Use Recreation Facility. Engagement would also involve the presentation and testing of preliminary conceptual drawings of a new WBYL integrated into the new city centre school as prepared by Kindrachuk Agrey Architects for STC (see Appendix 1). These drawings illustrate the community programming potential of the combined WBYL and adjoining school community spaces.

Agreement in Principle

Subject to City Council's approval to proceed and the conclusion of satisfactory discussions, a draft agreement in principle will be prepared, and a detailed report presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services with recommended actions. The agreement in principle would outline a joint understanding of the project and common commitment to the delivery of recreation services in the city centre.

Following legal review of the agreement in principle and confirmation of a number of the final details (i.e. capital and operating funding plans), a formal Partnership Agreement, or a Master Agreement, which will have legal effect and both parties will sign, will be prepared. This Master Agreement would be the subject of a further report and more in-depth discussions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

City funding contributions to a new WBYL/City Centre Recreation Facility are undetermined at this time. Before proceeding further in this regard, contribution levels will have to be defined and a detailed capital funding plan prepared. For their part, STC has hired an organization to assist in acquiring funds through a capital fundraising campaign. This process began in September 2020 through a feasibility study with prospective donors, volunteers and stakeholders. The study indicated potential success with raising a base amount of \$5M in philanthropic dollars provided support is received from all levels of government. Once confirmed, they will move forward with the commencement of the campaign, which will include solicitation of prospective donors identified in the study.

Capital Project P.02600 – Indoor Recreation Facilities has \$39,189 remaining from its original 2015 allocation and \$165,000 that was approved in 2021 for project management, for both the City Centre Recreation Facility and the East Side Leisure Centre project. The funding remaining from 2015 will be utilized to support public and stakeholder engagement. Included in the 2022-2023 Business Plan and budget is a capital budget submission for unfunded amounts of \$2M in 2024 and \$19.8M in 2025 (required for design and construction of a new WBYL facility).

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, social or environmental implications identified at this time. Administration will work with the City Solicitor's Office concerning the legal implications of an Agreement in Principle.

NEXT STEPS

If this report is approved, Administration will follow the plan outlined above with the goal to present a draft agreement in principle for City Council's approval.

APPENDICES

1. New School with WBYL

REPORT APPROVAL

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