

City Centre Recreation Facility in Partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council Update

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon is working in partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) to build a new White Buffalo Youth Lodge/City Centre Recreation Facility. This report provides an update on work undertaken to date, as well as an overview of the next steps.

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, which 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).

In 2021, the Saskatoon Public School Division (School Division) announced a decision to consolidate Pleasant Hill, King George and Princess Alexandra schools into a new school to be built on the present site of Princess Alexandra school. It was after this decision that STC and the City entered into discussions with the School Division to explore the option to build the new WBYL connected to the new school to serve as a city centre recreation facility.

In support of this work, City Council, at its Regular Business meeting, held on January 31, 2022 [resolved](#) :

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.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Location

After the School Division’s announcement to consolidate three schools into one building on the present site of Princess Alexandra School, an initial concept depicted a new

WBYL situated on school property and attached to the school. While there are many benefits to this concept, changes to the School Division's plan resulted in it becoming evident that there is insufficient land on the former Princess Alexandra school site to accommodate the new school with a childcare centre, play area, outdoor rink, school parking, and green space, along with a new WBYL.

Administration conducted extensive public engagement in 2015 on the development of a city centre recreation facility. Recent community and stakeholder consultations for a new WBYL identified the need for enhanced programming spaces including a larger gymnasium, community kitchen, fitness room, walking track, indoor playground, cultural spaces and multipurpose rooms.

The WBYL partnership is now proceeding independently of the School Division on plans for a new WBYL at the current location at 602-20th Street West; a site that is 1.5 times larger than what was being made available adjacent to the school. Administration has not excluded the option to consider other sites within the same area.

Funding

To include the program amenities identified above, an early cost estimate to build a new WBYL is in the range of \$15 M to \$20 M. City Council, at its [meeting](#) held on January 25, 2023 approved a report that directed Administration to submit four projects to Round 2 of the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program (GICB) with one of them being the WBYL. This program provides up to 60% of eligible costs on the first \$9.99 M and 50% of eligible costs on costs greater than \$10 M. While WBYL currently has no other funding available, STC has hired an organization to develop a capital campaign feasibility study. The study indicated potential success with raising a base amount of \$5 M in philanthropic dollars provided support is received from all levels of government.

Project Management

Administration is in the process of hiring a Recreation Facilities Project Manager for the WBYL/City Centre Recreation Facility and the East-Side Leisure Centre. This dedicated position will greatly assist in the front-end project management of new WBYL from partnership development and stakeholder engagement to the early design stage.

Public Engagement

A three-phase engagement strategy for a new WBYL/Centre Recreation Facility has been developed with the support of the Communications & Public Engagement Department. Phase 1 WBYL Partnership Parameters is well under way with Phase 2, Targeted Engagement, and Phase 3, Facility Planning Feedback, planned for later in 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City is expecting notification from Infrastructure Canada regarding its application to GICB within twelve months. It is anticipated that Infrastructure Canada funding will enhance the project's ability to leverage other funding, including philanthropic. Administration continues to explore other funding models.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, social or environmental implications identified at this time.

NEXT STEPS

Formal discussion with partners to develop an Agreement in Principle for investing in, governing and operating a new White Buffalo Youth Lodge/City Centre Recreation Facility will continue. Once the new facility's funding plan is developed and approved, an 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

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Kevin Kitchen, Community Development Manager
Reviewed by: Andrew Roberts, Director of Recreation and Community Development
Approved by: Lesley Anderson, Acting General Manager, Community Services Division

SP/2023/CS/RCD/City Centre Recreation Facility in Partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council Update/sk