

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed December 21, 2016

Council votes to move forward with phase three of proposed events centre

Approves 11 recommendations to guide next round of work

Summary

Nanaimo City Council, during their December 19 meeting, approved 11 recommendations and four operating principles in a decision that will see additional research continue on a proposed events centre. This third phase of work follows the completion of Phase One and Two reports and studies and includes:

- taking steps to prepare a referendum regarding financing of the planning and construction of an events centre;
- reviewing site locations and providing a recommendation to Council;
- entering into negotiations with the Western Hockey League (WHL) leading to a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the WHL contemplating awarding a franchise team to Nanaimo beginning with the 2017-2018 season;
- continuing with public engagement initiatives to receive input on the proposed events centre;
- securing the required consulting resource advisors with experience in similar projects; and
- developing a project procurement and financing framework for planning, constructing and operating an events centre.

In addition to this next round of work, Council also approved the following four operating principles to guide design, financing, construction and operations of the proposed events centre:

1. ensure the interests of the citizens of Nanaimo are protected;
2. the events centre is a community meeting place catering to all and promoting community wellness;
3. funding for development and operations of the events centre come from a mix of public, private and other sources; and
4. the events centre is complementary to existing facilities and is a catalyst for downtown revitalization.

Strategic Link: Exploring the feasibility of a Sports and Entertainment Centre is one of Council's capital project priorities.

Key Points

- Feedback secured through public engagement conducted during Phase Two provided a set of expectations about public interests, sense of community, fiscal prudence and impact on existing facilities leading to the development of four operating principles.
- To date, the City of Nanaimo has undertaken detailed feasibility, business and economic impact assessment studies of the proposed events centre through work carried on in Phases One and Two. Additional information is now being sought through Phase Three. A list of all phases is included with the online version of this news release.
- At this time, no final decisions have been made for the proposed events centre; the continuing focus remains on collecting additional information and receiving additional feedback from the public.
- During its December 19 meeting, Nanaimo City Council directed staff to enter into negotiations with the Western Hockey League (WHL) to draft a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the WHL to base a franchise team in Nanaimo. If agreed to, a WHL team would provide a critical anchor tenant for the proposed events centre.

Continued... Council votes to move forward with phase three of proposed events centre

Quotes

"The favourable decision by the majority of Council to move to the next phase of the events centre process is a necessary step in a direction to realize a community based decision. This decision will allow staff and consultants the opportunity to deliver critical information to the electorate leading to a referendum"

Bill Bestwick
Councillor
City of Nanaimo

"Council has directed staff to continue the project into Phase Three which will see staff continue with due diligence on the project and provide residents with information to assist them in making an informed decision during the forthcoming referendum."

Kim Fowler
Chief Sustainability Officer
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- To ensure that the public is able to make an informed decision during the forthcoming referendum, the City will continue to provide information and collect feedback through continued public engagement. Residents of Nanaimo are encouraged to regularly visit the City's website for updates, information and reports.
- To read the Event Centre Phase Two Study, the Events Centre Public Consultations "What We Heard Report" or to review the timeline, please click on the links provided with the online version of this news release.

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View the online edition for more information - <http://cnan.ca/2hrXnVn>