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To:	Richmond City Council	Date:	March 20, 2007
From:	Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair General Purposes Committee	File:	08-4150-04-01/2007- Vol 01
Re:	<b>TOURISM AND SPORT TOURISM FUNDING</b>		

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The General Purposes Committee, at its meeting held on Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

**Committee Recommendation**

*That the City make use of funds available through UBCM to develop and implement a comprehensive Community Tourism/Sport Tourism Strategy*

Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair  
General Purposes Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That the City make use of funds available through UBCM to develop a comprehensive Community Tourism/Sport Tourism Strategy

## Staff Report

### Origin

The Union of BC Municipalities was asked by the Government of British Columbia to administer and deliver \$20 million in tourism funding to communities throughout the province. When UBCM announced their allocations to each municipality for this funding, the City of Richmond was awarded \$181,000. At Council's direction staff examined the eligibility requirements and engaged in a process to develop recommendations on the optimal uses of the resources that would maximize the benefits of the funding.

### Findings Of Fact

As an emerging and more central economic sector in Richmond, Tourism is making an increasingly robust contribution to the local economy. The gradual establishment of a more diverse critical mass of market-ready products and services, combined with an increase in accommodation options has helped to position Richmond more aggressively in the tourism marketplace.

Today tourism in Richmond generates over \$600 million in economic impacts, making it a healthy and vital sector that is amongst the top five economic drivers. Given this importance, and the direction the City has established around Sport Tourism as part of the Olympic Oval initiative, making the timing for the establishment of a formal and comprehensive Tourism Strategy appropriate.

The UBCM funding available to the City of Richmond is for tourism-related initiatives only. Eligible initiatives are those that support the Program's goals to assist local governments enhance tourism development that can build stronger economies, and that will help the Province meet its goals of doubling tourism in BC over the next 10 years. Examples of eligible initiatives include:

- the development or upgrading of tourism plans;
- the implementation of initiatives identified by tourism planning activities;
- development or enhancement of tourism marketing promotional tools such as signage, brochures, and websites;
- Visitor information centre improvements;
- development or enhancement of festivals and events;
- capital projects directly related to tourism promotion.

Initiatives not eligible include those that directly duplicate existing tourism initiatives or subsidize existing ongoing programs.

### Analysis

This is an opportunity for the City of Richmond to develop its first-ever comprehensive sector strategy focusing on tourism. Tourism strategies or plans are common to communities with strong and emerging tourism sectors, and Richmond is now in a position to develop its own.

With the advent of the Olympic Games there are distinct opportunities to be captured, and funding from the province through UBCM facilitates this opportunity. It is proposed that Richmond's first-ever Tourism Marketing Strategy focus on the following key aspects:

- Addressing Gaps in Product Development and Marketing: completing an inventory of products and gaps, and establishing a program to increase Richmond's market-ready products while working on a comprehensive marketing program with all community partners and stakeholders;
- Sport Tourism and major events: a key aspect of the City's strategic direction, Richmond already participates in a great deal of sport tourism planning and programming. The City's role as a venue-partner in the 2010 Games is launching Richmond into the global realm of sport tourism -- the Oval being central to this in many ways, especially after the 2010 Games—and it is an opportune time for the development of a more formal sport tourism strategy as a primary component of the more comprehensive approach being recommended.
- Developing Heritage and Cultural Tourism as authentic and vital facets of the tourism economy with tremendous potential for growth.
- Oval Gateway and City Market Positioning: develop a destination marketing program for the Oval Gateway area and the surrounding waterfront, as well as the city as a whole.

It is proposed the strategy will involve a consultant/s with tourism and sport tourism strategy development expertise who will work with City staff, leaders and stakeholders to develop the plan and implementation program.

The strategy will especially address both what local capacity is needed to implement the plan, as well as the type of Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), or organizations, will be required to be most effective. Currently Tourism Richmond acts as the DMO for the City of Richmond, and the strategy will provide guidance on whether the current structure and focus of this key organization will meet the community's future objectives around tourism and sport tourism.

### **Financial Impact**

The \$181,000 would be received from UBCM for tourism/sport tourism initiatives, with no additional financial impact to the City.

### **Conclusion**

That the City of Richmond make use of funds available through UBCM to develop and implement a comprehensive Community Tourism/Sport Tourism Strategy that identifies opportunities for tourism product enhancement, as well as tourism and sport tourism market positioning plan, with a substantial focus on the development of a major sporting events program.



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