



City of Richmond

Report to Council

To: Richmond City Council **Date:** July 22, 2005
From: Lani Schultz **File:**
Director, Richmond Olympic Business Office
Re: **Summary Report: Richmond Oval Advisory Committees Orientation Tours**

Staff Recommendation

That the attached report be received for information.

Lani Schultz
Director, Richmond Olympic Business Office
(4286)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

On June 13th, 2005, staff were requested to prepare a summary report on the results of the three Oval Advisory Committee orientation tours conducted in June and July of this year. This report addresses this request.

Analysis

As outlined in the March 9th report to council, the orientation for Richmond Olympic Oval Advisory Committees included site tours and workshop/interview sessions with several different Olympic host cities, including Lillehammer, Torino, Calgary and Salt Lake City.

The purpose of these tours were to help Oval Advisory Committee members:

- ❑ Build an understanding and strategy for designing and constructing the best Speed Skating Oval in the World
- ❑ Ensure their access to and use of the broadest scope of expertise and advice available
- ❑ Understand the responsibilities of being part of the Olympics and the Olympic Family
- ❑ Discover ways to leverage the Olympics to add value to Richmond
- ❑ Investigate structural/ building innovation and challenges, and business opportunities
- ❑ Gain insight into elements required for maximizing post games opportunities and ensuring long-term operational sustainability

Upon completion of these tours, and in order to prepare this summary report, input from Oval Advisory Committee members from each of the orientation tours was sought. This report summarizes their collective input. In general, committee members felt the orientation tours provided an invaluable opportunity for Advisory Committee representatives and staff to understand the scope, breadth and magnitude of the Richmond oval project. These tours provided opportunities to build relationships with facility managers, Olympic athletes, architects, project managers, sports medicine practitioners and other key staff from other oval operations. While each tour had a slightly different focus, committee members believe the combined learnings from these tours will greatly benefit the City of Richmond and the legacy the Oval project will leave to future generations.

These tours assisted the Advisory Committee members in gaining insight and understanding into what it takes to become an Olympic City, specific building and design issues and ideas, opportunities for legacy and post games, governance, finance and sustainability issues. By visiting other Olympic Speed Skating venues and host Cities, Committee members were able to grasp the real size, complexity and magnitude of the City's involvement in the 2010 Games. Committee members have returned from these tours well educated about the project and enthusiastic about becoming an Olympic City. They feel far better prepared to provide advice and make informed recommendations to Council based on the terms of reference for their respective committees. More specifically, key learnings from the tours included:

- a. The project the City has undertaken is much larger than building a speed skating oval. The City is becoming part of the Olympic family, and one of the most significant benefits of being involved in the hosting the Olympics is the long lasting, overwhelming community pride that results.
- b. The importance of effectively managing the City's working relationship with VANOC is paramount. Insight into how other Cities have worked with their Olympic Organizing Committees was very helpful.
- c. It became evident that there is value in all the Olympic sites to work cooperatively to create opportunities that provide the best overall impression for the 2010 Games. Tourism for the region is a key benefit to the games, and great impact can be gained from a cooperative approach to maximizing this opportunity.
- d. To help sustain tourism post games, committee members gained a clear understanding of the importance of the use of Olympic branding throughout the City, and especially close to the Oval site. Members were able to see a number of different and creative ways that other cities have permanently incorporated the Olympic rings into their buildings, infrastructure and other displays.
- e. The Olympics will have more significance if Richmond takes a lead in involving the community in the Olympics through community programs and events. For example, it became clear that event tickets would be scarce, and that great opportunities existed to provide spectator experiences outside of the actual attendance at the event. Other communities have provided large screens in public areas to draw crowds, gathering places with specially constructed "fireplaces" for people to warm their hands and chat with visitors from around the world, special draws for tickets, etc.
- f. Committee members were made aware of opportunities and benefits of building momentum leading up to the Olympics. They were advised to look for ways to create and celebrate community milestones, involving as many as possible to celebrate the successes. Tour members received repeated and clear advice not to underestimate the lasting emotional attachment to the 2010 Olympic Winter Games for our community.
- g. The Olympic cities toured had many suggestions for helping create a memorable, positive experience for our community and visitors to Richmond, including:
 - Focus on the athlete experience above all else, especially in the design of the facility. Consider all aspects. Make it special for the athletes in the scope of our project. Athletes like to be close to the crowd and have them spread out around the oval not just on one side. This improves the quality of the experience for athletes and the spectators, and they will want to return.
 - The relationship with the media is key. They will capture the stories from Richmond and broadcast them to the world. Richmond needs to establish a positive relationship with both the accredited and unaccredited media.

- Create an excellent spectator experience, where visitors are left with an exceptional impression of Richmond.
 - Opportunities for sponsorship need to be created with other partners. YVR will play a key partnership role as one of the main gateways to the 2010 Olympics.
 - Richmond needs to determine what they are going to be the best at for 2010 and promote that through the media. Determine how we want the experience of Richmond to be remembered.
 - Be prepared for damage to the oval building during the Olympics. Take pictures prior to the games and work with VANOC to return the building to pre-games status.
 - Ensure an efficient transportation plan that connects RAV, airport transit.
 - Pin trading is an Olympic event. Take advantage of the opportunity.
 - Have contractors and subcontractors on site during the games to deal with problems.
- h. The site visits of other oval projects and operations were invaluable in helping committee members to understand the scale and complexity of oval design and construction matters. Some of the key areas of learning listed by committee members include:
- Building quality pays. It will help to increase opportunities for tourism (especially if there is access to Olympic branding in the facility) and it will increase community pride. The quality should be seen through simplicity of design to reflect elegance of the structures. Create a strong sense of place.
 - The surrounding precinct should have a similar design to the Oval – ensure the City determine clear design standards ahead of time.
 - There is greater comfort amongst Advisory Committee members that a building the size of the Oval can work into an urban setting and contribute to the vibrancy and sustainability the area. In fact, many committee members believe Richmond’s urban setting provides a much better setting than other ovals visited for a successful oval operation post games.
 - The importance of developing a post games program early, and ensuring its integration into the design phase of the facility was a key learning from all tours. Many facilities waited until after the Olympics to determine a plan for post games use, and were left with a building that was not flexible enough to be accommodate changing community needs.
 - Committee members were able to study and view first hand several significant technical building requirements:
 - The need for separated areas and entrances for media, athletes and the general public.
 - The significant storage needs of these buildings in a post games multi-use mode.
 - Special requirements related to accommodating Trade and Exhibition uses into the post games uses.

- Lighting issues and how they affect speed skating competition for the ice and media.
 - Building floor load requirements
 - Complex processes and procedures for making competitive ice. (Limited number of recognized ice making experts”)
 - The need to plan the Zamboni area carefully.
 - Innovative ways for decreasing operating costs, given the challenges of a high roof and having to cool and move so much air.
 - The need for meeting space, break out rooms during events or congresses.
 - The number/ quality/ type of locker rooms/ showers, which were a major issue with many of the facilities visited.
- i. Committee members received considerable advice around the subject of governance for the oval post games. Some of the advice received included:
- It is important for the sustainability of the Oval to determine the governance structure early, at least one year before the oval is operational. The advice from the majority of sources was to create a structure at arms length or independent from the City, which must be entrepreneurial in its management of the oval. Start fundraising as soon as possible. Create a professional board that reports yearly and that is ready to take over once the Olympics are completed.
 - Develop a financial model and business plan that uses the interest and not the principle from the legacy fund. Invest funding wisely.
 - Determine the market for the Oval and have a strong business plan. Capitalize on opportunities for business use for sport in the oval. Do a profit and loss analysis for 2010 – 2015.
 - Form relationships with hotel and transportation businesses for mutual benefit.
 - Build in flexibility in the sports medicine component of the Oval to add private medicine, MRI and operating rooms. There are opportunities to create private clinics that contract to the health region.
 - Collect statistical information for marketing and sponsorship.
 - Be ready to begin business in September following the 2010 Games.
- j. Overwhelming advice was received from many sources to have a clear idea what will happen in the building after the Olympics and incorporate that into the design of the facility. The significance of understanding the post games legacy program early includes:
- There will be many competing interests that need to be managed. Ensure everyone is clear on the vision for the project, and stick to it.
 - Richmond needs to be seen as a leader in the sport community to attract competition and build business for the oval. This message needs to get out before you start operating the post games program, as competitions are planned years before they occur.

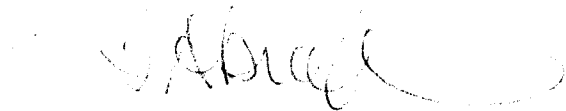
- Understanding the post games legacy program provides the facility owner with the ability to invest in appropriate and quality equipment and ensures the design of the building will be able to accommodate it.
 - There is a real need for built in flexibility into the design of the post games facility, in order to ensure it is adaptable to ongoing market changes.
- k. It is very important for tourism, the future sustainability of the Oval, and to community pride to have access to the Olympic branding. This is an important part of the Olympic benefits to the community.
- l. Public Art is an important part of the Olympic legacy. Integrating art and sport and having a lasting public art program that remains visible throughout the city after the games are gone is a common and effective method of helping the emotions of the Games live on.
- m. Sports Medicine is an important component of a high performance training centre. 80% of use is by the general public and 20% is athletes. From a high performance sport perspective, it is important for athletes to receive treatment within 24 hours. Other opportunities related to the sports medicine component of the oval program include executive health, chronic disease and wellness.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to this report.

Conclusion

The Richmond Oval Advisory Committees Orientation Tours have provided committee members with a wealth of information regarding Oval design, construction and operational matters, as well as information on the implications of Richmond becoming an Olympic venue city. Committee members have indicated that the tours were extremely valuable in preparing them to better fulfil their advisory roles effectively and to represent the best interests of the City.



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