



To: General Purposes Committee Date: November 12, 2008  
From: Andrew Nazareth File:  
General Manager, Business & Financial Services  
Re: UBCM Tourism Funding - Phase II Application

**Staff Recommendation**

That the City of Richmond apply for Phase II funds in the amount of \$181,000 available through UBCM to implement the development of a comprehensive tourism marketing program in support of corporate and community strategies that will position Richmond as a tourism destination.

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| <b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>      |   |                                |
| <i>Andrew Nazareth</i>                     |   |                                |
| <b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>                     | YES<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>VGJ</i> | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>                     | YES<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>CAO</i> | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

## Staff Report

### Origin

The Community Tourism Program is a \$25 million Provincial funding initiative, announced by the Premier of BC in 2004. Administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the program provides tourism funding to communities throughout the province.

### Background

Under the program, the City received Phase I funds in the amount of \$181,000 which was used to hire a team of consultants (led by PriceWaterhouseCoopers – PWC) to develop a comprehensive Community Tourism and Sports Tourism Strategy and a Community Branding Strategy in 2008.

The new Corporate Branding Strategy was taken forward separately and adopted by Council in June. While the new Community Tourism Strategy and Sport Hosting Strategy will be brought forward to Council in the near future, time is of the essence in obtaining Council resolution, as it needs to form part of the funding application due by November 30, 2008.

### Findings of Fact

Phase I and Phase II of 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, and that will help the Province meet its goals of doubling tourism in BC over the next 10 years. Examples of eligible initiatives include:

- Development or upgrading of tourism plans;
- Implementation of initiatives identified by tourism planning activities;
- Development or enhancement of tourism marketing promotional tools;
- 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

The importance of the Tourism Sector as one of the top five economic drivers for the City has established the need to build a critical mass of more diversified market-ready tourism products and services. In particular, the opportunities presented by the Olympic Oval for both Community Tourism and Sports Hosting initiatives, has created the need for a formal Tourism Strategy.

A number of specific recommendation and action items form part of PWC's report. While the consultants' recommendations are examined to be brought forward to Council in a separate report, there are two key areas where funding is required for implementation:

- Focus on programs and initiatives in support of the City's Major Events Strategy as part of the Community Tourism Strategy.
- Implementation of a Sport Hosting Strategy, to be brought forward to Council in the near future and, which includes the development of an implementation infrastructure and a leveraged funding scheme to support the attraction and hosting of major sports events in relationship to the Olympic Oval.

In addition, Staff have identified the need to better integrate the delivery of corporate and community strategies that relate to tourism development, such as the Major Events Strategy, Arts Strategy, Museum and Heritage Strategy, Waterfront Strategy, and Sport Tourism.

It is proposed that the community tourism funding be used to develop a comprehensive marketing program that will support the City's tourism-related initiatives and promote increased tourist visits, including both day trips and longer-term stays.

The marketing campaign would include a number of key elements designed to help position Richmond as a tourism destination. These marketing initiatives would be lead by the City of Richmond, with implementation coordinated with the work of Tourism Richmond to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Proposed projects include:

- **Website Development:** As part of the Major Events Strategy, the City plans to develop an enhanced web application that allows event planners to access information about staging events in Richmond, initiate the process for booking events and create an enhanced calendar of events for use by tourists and residents. Estimated project cost is \$25,500.
- **Development and maintenance of a "B-Roll" video data bank for media:** The City owns extensive video footage showcasing various aspects of Richmond, which is frequently requested by the media. Such media requests are increasing, in part due to our status as an Official Venue City for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. To be effectively used, this material needs to be catalogued and placed into an easily accessible online database. Estimated project cost is \$30,000.
- **Development of social media applications promoting Richmond as a tourist destination:** Increasingly, social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube are becoming the preferred and most effective form of communication for many computer users, particularly those in demographics with disposable income. Many local governments have begun to develop social media sites as a way of promoting their initiatives, including tourism. Estimated cost is \$25,500.
- **Development of multi-media promotional materials:** there is a need for digital and printed promotional materials to supply a range of information requirements, from basic tourism information for visitors, to information kits for media, to specialized marketing and promotional materials for tourism industry bookers and planners and other key target audiences. Estimated cost is \$100,000.

This is an opportunity for the City of Richmond to develop a comprehensive tourism marketing program to support tourism marketing strategies and other initiatives identified as a result of utilizing UBCM Phase I funds.

**Financial Impact**

Phase II program allocation of funds of \$181,000 would be received from UBCM for tourism marketing initiatives, with no additional financial impact to the City.

**Conclusion**

That the City of Richmond make use of Phase II funds available through UBCM to implement a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy.



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