THE CORPORATION OF THE
DISTRICT OF SUMMERLAND
INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: October 17, 2023 FILE: 0810-01

TO: Graham Statt, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Lori Mullin, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: Recreation Centre Referendum Communications Update

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council pass the following resolution:

> ***THAT the "Recreation Centre Referendum Communications Update" report from the Director of Community Services dated October 17, 2023, be received for information.***

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

To Enhance Our Quality of Life

CULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Providing recreation facilities and amenities supports community vibrancy and a healthy and connected community.

PURPOSE:

To provide Council a communications update on the Recreation Centre Referendum.

DISCUSSION:

The Recreation Centre Referendum ten-week information campaign was officially launched on August 28, 2023 to increase public awareness and understanding of the proposed Recreation Centre project and the referendum question that will be presented to the Summerland electors.

Specifically, the District is informing Summerland electors on:

- what would be included in the recreation facility
- cost information, borrowing terms, and impact for Summerland taxpayers
- site information and how the facility would fit with the arena and curling club
- how the facility could be used by many different types of users
- reasons for proposed facility (based on the 2018 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Facility Condition Assessment, and Recreation Centre Feasibility & Site Fit Study)
- details of the current facility and deficiencies
- project information (e.g., timeline for construction, etc.)

The District is providing accurate, fact-based and up-to-date information so electors become informed about the proposed Recreation Centre and vote in the referendum.

In-person engagement activities:

- Aquatic Centre Tours (September 6, 7, 9) – 44 people attended
- Fall Fair (Sept 10)
- Aquatic Centre staff in-service presentation (Sept 10)
- Farmer's Market (Sept 17 and 24)
- Presentation to Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (Sept 18)
- Presentation to Summerland Youth Centre Association and Kinsmen Club (Sept 26)
- Presentations to Trout Creek Elementary School, Giant's Head Elementary School, Summerland Middle School, and Summerland Secondary School (staff meetings) (October 3 & 4)
- Public Open House (October 11)
- District All-Staff Presentation (October 13)
- Drop-In information session for Recope (October 16)
- Presentation to Rotary Club (October 17)
- Public Drop-In information sessions (October 18 and 19)

SUMMERLAND Recreation Centre Referendum

Information sharing:

- www.summerland.ca/recreationcentre and interactive information engagement website
- FAQ document, Info Flat Sheet, Rack Cards, Business Cards
- Media Releases (~16)
- Facebook "Question of the Week" posts (weekly)
- Facebook "Did You Know?" posts (weekly)
- Digital entrance signs
- Sandwich boards throughout town
- Videos (9 informational and 1 financial Implications)
- Mayor's Summerland Review column and podcasts
- Radio interviews (CBC, Bounce)
- Emails to community organizations and Recreation registered members
- Displays and handouts at Aquatic Centre, District Hall, Arena

Advertising:

- Castanet
- Summerland Review
- Bounce Radio
- Facebook

Below are statistics from the referendum engagement page. The numbers are from August 28 - October 4.

- Total visits to the webpage: ~1,800
- Engaged visitors (meaning those who have submitted a question online): 32
- Informed visitors (meaning those who have viewed a video, downloaded a document, visited the key dates section of the website, or visited multiple project pages): 521
- Aware visitors (meaning those who have visited at least one page): 1,233

Visitors to the webpage are primarily using the following channels to find the site:

- A link from the District of Summerland website: 1011
- Going directly to the RDOS Regional Connections website: 500

- A link on a social media post: 141
- By using a search engine: 85
- By clicking a link in an email: 26

BACKGROUND:

The Recreation Centre has been identified by Council as a priority project. The Parks & Recreation Master Plan community survey indicated that replacing this facility was one of the highest priorities for the community. At 47 years old, the existing Summerland Aquatic & Fitness Centre is at the end of its serviceable life which was confirmed by the 2018 Facility Condition Assessment Report.

Project timelines and milestones:



Staff continue to update project information on the engagement webpage as new information is issued.

LEGISLATION and POLICY:

- Part 4, *Local Government Act* (Assent Voting)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Reviewed by Financial Services:

Council will require the approval of the electors to borrow the funds needed for construction of this project. Council has previously directed that a referendum ("assent voting") be conducted to obtain this approval, in accordance with Part 4 of the *Local Government Act*.

To ensure the full amount of annual debt servicing costs are funded staff will create an Accumulated Reserve Loan account to internally borrow sufficient funds to pay annual debt servicing costs, in excess of the annual leveled parcel tax amount and annual taxation increases, from 2024 to 2027, with full repayment of the Accumulated Reserve Loan account by year end 2027.

Based on the indicative interest rate of 4.62% as of June 19, 2023, taxation increases of 3.76%, 3.77%, 3.77% and 3.76% will be required, in order to cover 50% of the estimated debt. **Should interest rates change during any of the four estimated debt draws throughout construction, the projected tax rate increases will need to be adjusted** (either up or down depending on how the interest rate moves) in order to ensure the appropriate amount is collected through taxation to cover off the actual debt payments.

Up to $100,000 is allocated in the 2023 capital plan for the Recreation Centre Project for consulting services, communication materials, and other related project expenses. To date the District has expended $19,341 on consulting services and $2,946 on communications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (September 15, 2023)

CONCLUSION:

Staff continue to complete project milestones working towards the goal of replacing the Summerland Aquatic & Fitness Centre which is nearing the end of its serviceable life and prepare for an upcoming referendum to determine if there is public support.

OPTIONS:

1. Move the motion as recommended by staff.
2. Refer to staff for other options.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Mullin
Director of Community Services

Endorsed by,

Graham Statt
Chief Administrative Officer

Presentation: Yes ☐ No ☒