

Penticton awarded \$6M grant towards arena vision

Application for federal Gas Tax Fund conditionally approved

(Penticton, BC - March 9, 2018) Penticton is one step closer to realizing the vision for the future of the community's arenas. The City has learned that its application for a \$6 million grant from the federal Gas Tax Fund was approved on the condition that all funding sources required for completion of the approved project are secured by March 31, 2019. Staff applied for the grant last year in support of the vision for a new twin-surface, multi-use facility at the South Okanagan Events Centre and the renewal of Memorial Arena as a dry-floor facility recommended by the Arena Task Force.

The Arena Task Force was established in 2017 to develop a recommendation for the future of Penticton's Memorial and McLaren arenas. At 66 and 45 years old respectively, both arenas are still well used but are in need of significant investment. The Arena Task Force considered the needs of the user groups, existing building conditions, financial impacts, lifecycle costs, funding options and feedback from the community in order to make their recommendation. Council endorsed their vision for the future of the arenas last July.

Staff are currently working on a business case to study the feasibility of the vision. The business case will provide more information on the financial and operating requirements of the proposed facility, the parking and traffic management needs of the site, the total lifecycle cost of the project, as well as funding options. The business case is expected to be completed before summer.

Each year, the Government of Canada provides over \$278 million in funding for local government infrastructure across British Columbia through the federal Gas Tax Fund. The Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) administers the federal Gas Tax Fund in British Columbia in partnership with the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Quotes

"Funding is one of several requirements that need to be in place before Council makes a final decision. There are still many unanswered questions with respect to costs and parking that the City will work to address with the community. We are very pleased with the generous support from UBCM and the federal government. This grant is a great vote of confidence in the vision that we hope will ignite further support from the community."

Mayor Andrew Jakubeit, City of Penticton

“Improvements to local infrastructure are so important. They make our communities even better places to live. We are pleased to partner with local governments and the federal government to improve the daily lives of British Columbians.”

Selina Robinson, B.C. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

“Communities across B.C. are looking for funding to replace, upgrade and expand local infrastructure. The federal Gas Tax Fund is accelerating the pace of infrastructure renewal through the transfer of close to \$3 billion since 2005 for projects in our province. I appreciate the Government of Canada’s long-term commitment to fund priorities identified by B.C. local governments.”

Director Wendy Booth, President, Union of B.C. Municipalities

Links

For more information about the federal Gas Tax Fund:

www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/gtf-fteeng.html

For a list of projects funded through the current intake of the federal Gas Tax Fund:

news.gov.bc.ca/files/2017_Project_Approvals.pdf

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Contact:

Andrew Jakubeit
Mayor
City of Penticton
250 809 2397

Bregje Kozak
Director
Recreation and Facilities
250 490 2579