

Plan for Canada's 150 Year History Celebration

Planning and projects, and considerations for next steps

Recommendation:

That the October 9, 2012, Office of the City Manager report 2012CMI011, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report is in response to two motions regarding plans and potential projects for Edmonton's Canada 150 celebration.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 23, 2012, Community Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report:

- a) reviewing information gathered about the City during the development of the proposal for the 2017 EXPO bid
- b) a proposed development of a plan for the celebration of Canada's 150 year history by the City of Edmonton, including consultation with other orders of government

At the June 25, 2012, Community Services Committee meeting the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Community Services Committee with a complete list of all City projects/initiatives that could be potential 2017 celebration projects

and projects that could be part of an application for grant funding from the Federal Government.

Report

Information collected during the development of a bid for EXPO 2017

- EXPO was considered an opportunity; a catalyst for transformation, development and renewal and for citizen engagement in Edmonton but also nationally. The same could be true of the opportunities for celebrations around the sesquicentennial in 2017, or Canada's 150th birthday ('Canada 150').
- One of the goals outlined in the EXPO 2017 bid was to transform the individual and collective identities of Edmontonians and to develop community spirit and pride through city-building, appreciating cultural diversity and promoting arts and culture.
- There was a strong interest in creating a major arts and culture event that spanned 2017 and a desire to celebrate Edmonton, Alberta and Canada's rich Aboriginal History and cultural diversity.
- There was a view that there was an opportunity within the EXPO bid to create a complimentary celebration site to the main site, using the river as the connector. There were a number of projects considered in this regard including the creation of a signature bridge with the redevelopment of the Waltherdale Bridge as well as celebratory plazas and spaces.

Planning for Canada 150 Celebrations currently underway:

Canadian Capital Cities Organization

- Canadian Capital Cities Organization, for which Councillor J. Batty is a Director, won a bid from Canadian Heritage to draft a report regarding potential Canada 150 celebrations following public consultations in Canada's capital cities. Canadian Heritage is expected to release a public report and strategy. The timeline for this report is unknown.
- Members of City Council and Administration attended the Canadian Capital Cities Organization conference co-hosted by the City and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in August 2012, where Canada 150 celebrations was the topic of one of the sessions.

Other Canada 150 Initiatives that Administration is aware of across Canada through announcements and initial conversations:

- On September 24, 2012, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage tabled its report - *Canada's 150th Anniversary in 2017* – in Parliament which recommended the federal government initiate a planning process; engage Aboriginal peoples, the provincial governments and municipalities; and take steps to organize legacy initiatives for Canada 150 such as development of museum projects, travelling exhibits and tourism marketing. However, Administration is not aware of Federal or Provincial grant programs for Canada 150 at this time.
- In March 2010, members of Administration and the EXPO Committee attended the *150! Canada* Conference put on by the

Institute of Public Administration of Canada and MASS LBP; a public report on the conference – *The Power of Public Imagination: Planning Canada's Sesquicentennial* – has since been released.

- imagiNation 150, an organization initiated by volunteers in Calgary to plan and facilitate planning of Canada 150 celebrations across Canada, has released a guide for planning 150 celebrations.
- An organization called Canada 150 has launched a history gathering campaign that encourages the collection and recording of life stories, family histories and community/organization histories.
- National Capital Commission and the Association for Canadian Studies released data collected through a survey on how Canadians would like to celebrate Canada 150 in July 2012. The findings included the following: 78% expressed a desire to focus on the accomplishments of Canadians to date; the most common theme referenced unity and diversity; and 67% of responders stated that they would participate in celebrations in their region.
- The Edmonton Poet Laureate is looking to initiate cross Canada engagement through poetry.
- 2017 Canadian Voyager Brigades is beginning to plan a cross Canada tour similar to that that took place during the 1967 Centennial.
- Communities in Bloom (National) are working toward the 2017 National Garden Festival and the establishment of national Botanical Gardens in Ottawa representing all of Canada's capital cities.

- Note: the above is not an exhaustive list of all planning activities taking place across the country, but rather is intended to provide a brief sample of initiatives underway at the local and national levels.

Considerations for next steps:

In addition to the Canada Day celebrations the City plans and delivers annually, Administration is considering some next steps. Going forward it will be important to build connections between the City's and any provincial and federal plans in order to create a national experience as well as a local celebration.

- Administration will be setting up an Administrative Committee to help coordinate events and to respond to Provincial and Federal programs as they become available.
- The Administrative Committee may consider the development of themes to inspire citizen involvement in the Celebration, which could include:
 - a celebration of our river valley
 - Edmonton's place in Canada today and in the future
 - a celebration of the role of Aboriginal peoples in the Edmonton area historically and today
 - a celebration of our cultural diversity
 - environmental sustainability/a sustainable future
 - connectivity (of the economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects of our lives; to each other, to the rest of Alberta and Canada)
- As is noted above, there is currently no indication from the Federal or

Provincial governments of any infrastructure grant programs or initiatives for Canada 150. However, city projects/initiatives that may be considered potential Canada 150 celebration projects could include the Rosedale redevelopment, the Spirit of Edmonton initiative, a City Museum, etc. Also of note is that 2017 is the 25th anniversary of City Hall.

- It will be important to consider a strong public engagement process and development of partnerships across the city with community members, businesses and organizations, NextGen and other government representatives. Grassroots engagement of local residents in a conversation about our history, who we are today, and what we envision for the future, will help create a meaningful celebration.

Corporate Outcomes

Planning Canada 150 celebrations and projects/initiatives through an inclusive, community and citizen focused approach is consistent with the spirit of The Way We Live.

More specifically, a community approach to planning Canada 150 celebrations and projects directly fulfills objective 1.5 (the City of Edmonton connects Edmontonians and Albertans to their history, heritage and unique role as Alberta's capital city) and 2.5 (the City of Edmonton promotes the celebration of diversity, milestones, achievements and festivals) of The Way We Live; while also providing an opportunity to fulfill objective 5.2 (the City of Edmonton showcases its vibrant

arts, culture, entertainment, sports and retail districts).

Others Reviewing this Report

- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services