



CREATIVE ECONOMY DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN, AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: KAREN DUBEAU, DIRECTOR, CREATIVE ECONOMY

NOTED: ZVI LIFSHIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INVEST BARRIE
M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: FISHER AUDITORIUM – SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2017

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of Council with a summary of comments and feedback received during the presentation on the Fisher Auditorium and the Staff Report CE008-17, presented on September 25, 2017.

Background:

Council directed that staff undertake an initiative to gauge community support for the retention of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium and their willingness to undertake a capital fundraising campaign for 100% (or another percentage deemed appropriate by Council) of the required re-development costs, estimated to be approximately \$13M (T17-G-183). On September 25, 2017, Council received a presentation on the Fisher Auditorium from Cobalt Connects, which highlighted key design elements of the space, an operating model, and utilization forecasts. Council also received a Staff Report that provided details of the facility design, community needs, operating model, utilization rates, audience development and a three year business model. Throughout the discussion, Council highlighted several elements considered key for the next phase of analysis. This report summarizes the feedback received by staff, and which will be incorporated into the next phase of design and analysis.

Facility Design:

- Pursue the option for the larger conference and events centre, and maximize the space
- Fully build out the facility to be something the community can be proud of, and bring back design elements and options for Council review
- Ensure a full kitchen, to adequately serve the conference and events centre; investigate potential usage of existing kitchen facilities
- Investigate moving the location of the wall currently included in the conceptual design, which breaks up the event and conference centre space
- Investigate freight elevators in order to support conference and events centre
- Review the proposed cut line, to potentially include 2 story set storage
- Indicate how long the facility could remain in its current state, without renovations
- Address acoustics re: local fire station

Operating Model:

- Provide additional details on the operating model and further define the governance model, including potential for Council participation
- Define decision making processes
- Ensure there is a strong leader who will take ownership of making the facility successful
- Provide more details on the principles that would govern the use of the facility

Business Model:

- Undertake a competitive analysis of similar facilities in the region, which would compete with elements of the proposed facility, both in terms of cultural events and conferences/business events. Include Friday Harbour and Casino Rama, and assess the impact of the Kempenfelt Centre closing this year.
- Provide more data and analysis regarding the conference and events business case
- Provide data on potential markets for e-sports and gaming
- Engage Tourism Barrie for input on how to capitalize on corporate travel/tourism
- Perform analysis of rental rates – current vs. proposed in the business model
- Validate that the proposed facility is scaled appropriately for both immediate needs as well as for a specific future time horizon
- Take a five year approach to the business model, identifying rate of growth/development

Planning:

- Council highlighted the need to address concerns related to parking

Comparable Facilities:

- Undertake further investigation of the Burlington facility to better understand the cost drivers

Budget:

- Provide more analysis on cost estimates with goal of increasing certainty

Sponsorship:

- Provide information on potential costs for a professional sponsorship campaign manager/fundraiser

Overall:

- Ensure that Fisher Auditorium name is retained for the facility
- Provide data pertaining to the value that the community places on culture

Next Steps:

1. Planning and Building will be presenting a Staff Report to Council on October 16, 2017, regarding the potential agreement of purchase and sale of land with HIP Developments. Such agreement will address appropriate conditions to ensure the City's risk is minimized through the ongoing development process, including conditions with respect to Council's final approval of the Fisher Auditorium Business Case.
2. Staff in Facilities, Creative Economy and Planning will work to incorporate Council feedback and report back to Council no later than November 27, 2017. The report back to Council will include an updated design, budget, operating model, competitive analysis, parking options, comparables and business case.