

REPORT TO: Mayor James M. Diodati
and Members of Municipal Council

SUBMITTED BY: Recreation & Culture

SUBJECT: R&C-2017-16
Cultural Hub & Farmers' Market Status Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council approve the preferred design option for the Cultural Hub/Farmers Market facility.
2. That Council also approve the next step to complete the detailed architectural plans and related studies for the Culture Hub/Farmers Market.
3. That staff be authorized to proceed with the business and operating plans to determine operating costs for the new facility and report back to council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

February 14, 2017, City Council approved the City's 2017 capital budget. One of the approved projects was the development of a new facility that would accommodate a new Cultural Hub and Farmers' Market space in the Main & Ferry area. The first step to develop the new facility was to conduct a stakeholder and community consultation. The City hired dtah to consult with the community, conduct seven stakeholder meetings and an online survey to collect ideas for the direction of the facility. The study, conducted in two phases (community consultation and concept plan), included market, operational, financial, economic and social impact analyses of a multi-use facility that may house spaces for exhibition space, farmers market, administrative offices, classrooms/studios/presentation/rehearsal spaces, public spaces and green spaces. This type of facility would promote collaboration among cultural entities and provide efficient use of existing and new resources in our community.

The consultant, dtah has implemented this work. Two public meetings were conducted to develop a concept that includes a café, artist studio, tool library, learning spaces, a market hall and a robust landscape that can accommodate public art, events and other shared public spaces.

BACKGROUND

These initiatives originated from two separate reports to Council. In March 2008, it was recommended that Council proceed with a new Farmers' Market facility to replace the current building. At the November 17, 2008, City Council meeting, PD 2008-88 Council approved moving forward with a new Market facility, however, that project was put on hold at that time. As well, City Council on April 28, 2015, received the City of Niagara Falls Culture Plan that included the need to create a Cultural Hub for the community. With these two plans in mind, it was determined that a joint facility that could utilize land already in ownership of the City and create a space that meets the needs of both user groups.

The location in the Main & Ferry area is tied to the Cultural Plan intentions to put emphasis on two districts within the City when it comes to Culture – Main & Ferry and Queen Street. With the Farmers' Market being located in Main & Ferry currently, with the acquisition of property on Main Street with the support of the local BIA and with the potential synergy that having this complex connected to the Niagara Falls History Museum, the Cultural Plan identified this area as being a preferred location for a Cultural Hub.

The next steps of the project include; developing full architectural drawings, developing a business plan, operations plan and branding for the site/area.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE

In order to provide access to healthy food and farm to table opportunities, a building to replace the current Farmers' Market is much needed. At the same time, the lack of community places that are dedicated to creation, ideas and arts presentation in the city are lacking. The proposed facility will be a place where arts, arts creation and the community can come together and create. Providing for a more engaged, involved and vibrant community.

The concept presented today for the Niagara Falls Cultural Hub/Farmers' Market proposes highly adaptable and durable interior and exterior spaces that reinforce Main & Ferry as a vibrant, all-season cultural precinct in the heart of Niagara Falls.

Interior spaces will accommodate a range of modes and uses, and connect directly to the outdoors - animating the adjacent public spaces both day and night.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Final capital budget costs to be determined when the detailed architectural and related business/operating studies are completed this spring. Budget will also include costs to demolish the existing market building. Once the final budget cost is determined a report will be presented to City Council for its information and approval.

An operations plan, business plan and branding package will be required to ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively and cohesively while contributing to a vibrant community. Currently, some dialogue has started with potential partners to assist in the operations of the facility. Proposed time line to begin construction for the new facility is Spring 2019.

CITY'S STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

Strategic Priority, A Vibrant and Well planned City, Key Action: Continue to implement the recommendations from the 2007 Strategic Plan for the provision of Parks, Recreation, Arts & Culture.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Stakeholder Engagement Notes
2. DTAH Presentation to City Council

Recommended by: _____

Kathy Moldenhauer, Director of Recreation and Culture

Respectfully submitted: _____

Ken Todd, Chief Administrative Officer