



# City of Prince Albert

**RPT 2024-277**

**TITLE:** Convention and Cultural Event Centre Memorandum of Understanding with Woodland Cree First Nations

**DATE:** September 5, 2024

**TO:** City Council

**PUBLIC:** X

**INCAMERA:**

---

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the Memorandum of Understanding between The City of Prince Albert, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band, be approved;
2. That the balance of borrowed monies, in the amount of \$845,141.89 that remains following the completion of the Marquis Road West Expansion, be transferred to the Recreation Centre Reserve;
3. That the City Manager be authorized to extend the Consulting Services Agreement between The City and Douglas B. Richardson, K.C. on a month to month basis following the October 19, 2024 expiration date, if required, to be funded from the Recreation Centre Reserve, to a maximum amount of \$75,000; and,
4. That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Agreement and a Consulting Services Agreement extension on behalf of The City, and any other applicable documents, if required.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City and the Woodland Cree First Nations are proposing a historical one-of-a-kind partnership that is monumental for Prince Albert. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement in principal for the parties to work collaboratively and in cooperation to secure funding for the construction of a Convention & Cultural Event Centre. To assist in these efforts for a considerable federal government funding commitment, it is recommended that the Agreement with Douglas P. Richardson. K.C. be extended on a month to month basis until such time as it is determined the additional resources are no longer required.

---

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the last several years, the City of Prince Albert (“The City”) has been planning for a new large event complex. When the Investing in Canada’s Infrastructure Program (“ICIP”) funding stream opened for applications in 2019, The City submitted a request for funding which included the Aquatic and Arenas Recreation Project and an Event Centre. Ultimately, The City was successful in securing Federal and Provincial funding in the amount of \$43,998,000 for the construction of the Aquatic and Arenas Recreation Project (“AARP”) which then became known as “Phase 1”. It remained the City’s goal and intent to build a large event complex adjacent to the AARP facility and preparation work, such as design and pre-qualifications for construction, have been completed.

Upon careful reflection of the design and purpose of a new facility, it became apparent that more consideration was required to ensure a new event complex would support Indigenous culture while also offering larger scale amenities to increase The City’s hosting capabilities.

**PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:**Memorandum of Understanding

In April 2024, The City introduced a contract service with Douglas Richardson, K.C. to assist with federal lobbying efforts in support of a new facility. Mr. Richardson identified several areas for The City to consider which would ensure this key project is not only a leader in accessibility and energy efficiency, but more importantly is community focused. It is essential that the Centre reflect our service area which is largely Indigenous. In Prince Albert alone, 46% of residents declared Indigenous heritage in the last Census. Although the City of Prince Albert works closely with many First Nations and Indigenous Bands, the three (3) Woodland Cree First Nations represent a significant population within the city and surrounding area and, due to our longstanding relationship, The City approached the three (3) Chiefs to discuss a partnership with The City on this project.

With a realigned focus on the objectives of the project and the expanded services offered within the facility, the “Event Centre” has evolved to become the “Convention & Cultural Event Centre”.

To signify the partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) was prepared and has been endorsed by Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. The Memorandum of Understanding (*attachment #1*) indicates support and partnership for the project and outlines general terms understood by the parties. It is important to note that, although the MOU is not a legally binding document, it is a significant stepping stone for the development of a strong, vibrant and stable asset for The City and surrounding communities.

The mandate within the Memorandum of Understanding states: *“The intention of the Parties in entering into this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is to establish a collaborative framework for the purpose of considering and pursuing various revenue options to fund the*

*construction and operation of the Convention and Cultural Event Centre. Among the numerous goals and benefits of the Convention and Cultural Event Centre will be the promotion of cultural heritage, the support and growth of economic development and the enhancement of cohesion within the participating and surrounding communities.”*

With this partnership, the City of Prince Albert and the Woodland Cree First Nations will share ownership of the completed facility. Woodland Cree First Nations will own up to 45% of the Centre, while the City of Prince Albert will own the remaining. **This partnership not only marks a milestone in Saskatchewan history but also sends a strong message of unity and a shared vision of a stronger, more inclusive community.**

### Consulting Services Agreement

Together we are making progress with the Federal Government and it is critical that we continue our lobbying efforts to maximize opportunities for a federal funding commitment. A Consulting Services Agreement (*attachment #2*) between The City and Douglas B. Richardson, K.C. of W Law Office for a term of six (6) months was approved at the April 22, 2024 City Council meeting and expires on October 19, 2024. The City has made significant headway with Mr. Richardson’s assistance and it is recommended that the City Manager be authorized to extend the Agreement on a month by month period following the October 19, 2024 expiry under the same terms as approved in the original Agreement until it is felt that either the objectives of the Agreement have been fulfilled or until it is felt that the resources are no longer required; and, that the expenditure to a maximum amount of \$75,000 be funded from the Recreation Centre Reserve.

To fulfill the monetary resources and to assist with any emergency needs related to the Aquatic and Arenas Recreation Centre or the Convention and Cultural Event Centre, it is being requested that the balance of the unused borrowing for the Marquis Road West Extension Project in the amount of \$845,141.89 be transferred to the Recreation Centre Reserve.

### **CONSULTATIONS:**

Consultations have taken place with respect to the centre and the partnership as follows:

- A delegation of representatives from The City and the First Nations travelled to Ottawa in June 2024 to meet with 8 federal ministries to share the proposed partnership and promote the development of a Convention and Cultural Event Centre in Prince Albert. All ministries were supportive and indicated their sincere appreciation of a momentous partnership between an urban centre and three (3) First Nations. The City’s commitment to accessibility and net zero carbon emissions was also highly commended.
- City Administration has met several times with the architectural groups (BBB Architects and KSA) who are in the final stages of design for the centre to ensure accessibility, energy efficiency and cultural components are considered and included throughout.

- Mayor Dionne has discussed the project with the First Nations Chiefs personally and attended the Lac La Ronge Indian Band Council Meeting to speak to their Council about the partnership and the project.
- A letter writing campaign was created for members of our community and surrounding areas encouraging the public to support the development.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:**

Approval of the MOU by City Council will mark a significant milestone for the parties. A media announcement will be held immediately following the September 16, 2024 City Council meeting to acknowledge the partnership and express the importance of the project for the Parties and all users.

The letter writing campaign is ongoing and will be promoted further through social media. The public can positively impact the project by sharing their support of the facility with the federal government.

#### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Upon approval of the MOU, a second visit to Ottawa will be scheduled within one (1) month for a delegation to personally provide copies of the MOU and further pursue funding opportunities and financial support by the Federal Government for the construction of the Convention and Cultural Event Centre. This will be a follow-up to the meetings held in June 2024; however, having a signed MOU will aid in advocating for a financial contribution to the construction of a Convention & Cultural Event Centre.

The anticipated costs for the trip are estimated at \$15,000 for a delegation of five (5) people to attend and would include costs such as flights, hotel accommodation, transportation, meals and incidentals. This amount will be funded by the Recreation Centre Reserve

The audited 2023 ending balance of the Recreation Centre Reserve is \$2,474,110 (including development levies).

#### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:**

**Legal Implications:** The Memorandum of Understanding was prepared by legal counsel. Upon the parties receiving confirmation of a funding commitment from the Federal Government for the Convention & Cultural Event Centre, further legal services will be required for the preparation of a formal Partnership Agreement.

There are no policy, privacy, safety or environmental implications.

## **OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION:**

City Council could recommend changes to the terms of the MOU; however, that is not recommended as the current document supports a positive partnership between the City of Prince Albert and the Woodland Cree First Nations for a coordinated approach for the development of a Convention and Cultural Event Centre. It is important to note that the MOU is an agreement *in principal* and is not a legally binding document.

Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding will assist the parties with pursuing funding and financial support from funding streams designated for Indigenous projects. Rejecting the MOU will reduce funding opportunities for this important community facility.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Memorandum of Understanding for the development of a Convention and Cultural Event Centre aligns with two (2) main Strategic Priorities and Areas of Focus within the City's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan:

**Economic Diversity and Stability** through both the creation of new partnerships and the development of new amenities and infrastructure; and, **Promoting a Progressive Community** by identifying and investing in infrastructure improvements with the goal of increasing Prince Albert's event hosting capacity.

## **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:**

The Memorandum of Understanding aligns with Section 11.2 of the Official Community Plan, specifically part viii. which states "*Cooperate with aboriginal groups to encourage and support aboriginal business and training opportunities, and support aboriginal economic development wherever possible. The MOU also aligns with Section 13.2 part v. which states "Support aboriginal tourism initiatives to highlight the cultural diversity of the region and provide economic benefit to aboriginal communities".*

## **PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Memorandum of Understanding
2. Consulting Services Agreement

**Written by:** Sherry Person, City Manager

**Approved by:** City Manager