



STAFF REPORT TO COMMISSION

DATE OF REPORT March 27, 2023

MEETING TYPE & DATE Special Cowichan Community Centre Commission of April 4, 2023

FROM: Cowichan Community Centre Division
Community Services Department

SUBJECT: World's Largest Hockey Stick Replacement – Public Engagement

FILE: 0810-20

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

To seek approval on proceeding with community engagement activities related to possible replacement of the World's Largest Hockey Stick, and to provide information on other related aspects of the project.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board:

1. That staff proceed with public engagement activities regarding support and funding for potential replacement of the World's Largest Hockey Stick at the Cowichan Community Centre, as outlined in the staff report dated March 27, 2023; and
2. That staff report back with the public engagement results.

BACKGROUND

The World's Largest Hockey Stick (WLHS) and puck, located at the Cowichan Community Centre (CCC), is approaching the end of its serviceable life. First constructed for Expo 1986 in Vancouver, BC, the structure has resided as a prominent feature of the CCC and has been considered a community landmark for the past 35 years. In 2008, the Guinness Book of World Records officially recognized the stick and puck as the largest in the world at a total length of 205 feet (62.48 meters) and weighing 61,000 pounds (28,118 kg).

Ongoing maintenance and extensive repairs in the early 2000's have extended the life of the WLHS, but the glulam Douglas-fir structure of the stick is showing evidence of advanced decay. In 2022, the CVRD retained qualified consultants to assess the stick, with results of their work indicating that the CVRD should prepare for significant renovations or replacement by 2025.

Given the high profile of the WLHS, gathering community feedback prior to any significant changes to the structure is critical. As such, the CCC Commission approved the following resolution at their regular meeting of March 9, 2023:

That staff report back with community engagement options on replacement of the World's Largest Hockey Stick, options for the creation of a society to advocate for funding and potential grant opportunities.

ANALYSIS

As indicated in the staff report and attachment from the March 9, 2023 CCC Commission meeting (Attachments A and B), there are many options for consideration in regards to the future of the WLHS, including construction of a modified support system to keep the current stick, replacing the stick with similar or different materials (and keeping it the same size), replacing the stick with a different public art installation, or removing the stick and not replacing it at all. All of these options have implications with respect to public support, building aesthetics and operating and capital budgets.

Public Engagement for the WLHS

To help refine project options and to better understand public opinion on the WLHS and the level of community support for its possible replacement, it is recommended that the CVRD begin by preparing a community survey for distribution via the “Plan Your Cowichan” platform. The goal of this initial survey will be to better understand the importance of the WLHS to the community and to determine general levels of support for potential refurbishment, replacement, or decommission and associated funding options. Through discussions with the CVRD Communications & Engagement Division, it has been determined that a survey is the most cost-effective public engagement option available that should provide the greatest public response on the topic. However, the option of an online poll that would ask a simpler “yes or no” question to replacing the stick and puck was considered. Staff feel it is more efficient to do an initial survey that allows for the gathering of more information on community support for replacement and funding options, considering the limited two-year window to confirm direction with the WLHS.

The survey questions will have two main areas of focus:

- 1) Respondents’ overall association with the WLHS and support for its replacement; and
- 2) Level of support for the various replacement funding options.

The survey will be structured in a way that allows respondents to end the survey or answer further questions depending on their level of support for the replacement. Survey details and logistics will be confirmed in the coming weeks, pending approval to proceed. The target audience will be all CVRD residents to align with participating jurisdictions as per Regional Recreation. Completion of the survey will be possible for anyone who is interested, including those who reside out of region, therefore results will be separated into CVRD residents and out of region respondents.

Following survey completion, staff will prepare a report on relevant survey data for presentation to the CCC Commission, as well as recommended project options that reflect community feedback. Once project options are better defined, the CVRD will be positioned to determine concept feasibility, cost estimates and project timelines. However, recommendations may include additional public engagement to further refine project options depending on the feedback received from the initial survey. Therefore, time is of the essence considering significant time is required to complete necessary public engagement activities; confirm the desired direction with possible replacement and work through possible funding options with a targeted replacement timeframe of 2025.

To ensure the WLHS remains safe in its current form, staff will retain qualified consultants to perform a follow up inspection and assessment this summer, with results included in a future staff report to the CCC Commission for information.

Creation of a Fundraising Society

There is the potential to engage the community to seek champions that would lead the creation of a WLHS society to execute a fundraising campaign which could help gather donations from those interested in financially supporting replacement of the WLHS. It is understood that a similar program was implemented for the Kinsol Trestle Revitalization Project, which staff will investigate further as this may provide the best model if it is the preferred direction. However, as previously noted, this aspect of the project will likely take significant staff time to manage from multiple CVRD departments and needs to be quantified in advance to ensure it is feasible with existing staff resources.

It should be noted that all public engagement activities and the overall project direction should be confirmed prior to moving ahead with the implementation of any fundraising initiatives, to ensure there is a clear project path and outcome that potential donors would be supporting.

Available Grant Programs to Assist with Funding

Ideally there would be possible grant funding programs available that would align with this project. Staff have conducted a cursory search of available funding opportunities that indicates there is heritage and tourism grant funding through multiple sources that may be considered for this project. However, given the unique nature of the WLHS, the applicability of the project to these identified grants appears tenuous in relation to available funds (i.e. maximum grant funding of \$50,000). Staff will continue to research options and will recommend submitting applications to any relevant grants once a project option has been selected and endorsed.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Staff received an estimated replacement cost in 2022 for a like-for-like WLHS. The estimates indicated that the cost would be between \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 depending on the timing of the project over the next couple years. The exact cost can not be confirmed until there is confirmation on the replacement option and a procurement competition is conducted. The costs could be lower or higher depending on the desired replacement option and timing with the construction market. Any confirmed replacement direction with the WLHS will need to be included with the annual CVRD budget process.

In terms of other project costs, there will be some advertising costs associated with the initial community survey that can be covered with existing operating budget, and staff are not anticipating any other costs at this time; aside from the anticipated heavy workload this project may involve across departments as we move forward.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

The CVRD Communications & Engagement Division will be leading the community survey through collaboration with the CCC; other departments and divisions will be consulted as necessary.

It is anticipated that this project will prompt major media attention. As such, staff will draft a news release in preparation for media inquiries that will be published when the community survey goes live. The attention and awareness will hopefully help increase survey participation. It is recommended that the CVRD Board Chair and key staff be available the first week the survey goes live in order to handle any required media responses outside of the news release.

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

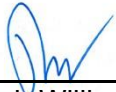
☐ Not Applicable

Referred to (upon completion):

- ☐ Community Services (*Arts & Culture, Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Facilities & Transit*)
- ☐ Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services*)
- ☐ Operations (*Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management, Utilities*)
- ☐ Land Use Services (*Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement, Community Planning, Development Services, Strategic Initiatives*)
- ☐ Strategic Services (*Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Environmental Services*)

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:



Rob Williams, M.Sc.
Manager

Not Applicable
Not Applicable



John Elzinga
General Manager

Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

☒ Corporate Officer

Financial Considerations:

☒ Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Staff Report to March 9, 2023 CCC Commission Re: World's Largest Hockey Stick Update

Attachment B – World's Largest Hockey Stick Assessment and Temporary Repair Update