



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: June 26, 2023

TITLE: 2026 Alberta Winter Games Bid

DIVISION: Community & Protective Services

SUMMARY:

The City of Spruce Grove was invited to consider hosting one of the 2026 Alberta Games (either summer or winter) for developing athletes eleven to sixteen years of age in at least twelve of the eighteen different Canada Games Sports. The last time the community hosted these games was the Winter Games in 2012 and the Summer Games in 1996.

The bid process requires a letter outlining the City of Spruce Grove's interest to host the 2026 Alberta Winter Games, including a resolution of support from Municipal Council(s), by June 30, 2023. The Municipal Council will also be required to appoint interested individuals to serve on a "Bid Committee" who are responsible for preparing the bid document and presenting it to the Multisport Games unit by August 31, 2023.

Key partners are required to support this bid, including but not limited to, local school divisions, TransAlta Tri Leisure Center, Aerials Gymnastics, other regional municipalities, and other community groups. The success of an Alberta Games relies heavily on the support of community volunteers and sponsors.

Initial estimates of municipal financial support required, based on information provided by Alberta Tourism and Sport from recent hosting communities, is \$420,000 - \$750,000. City staff support to the Hosting Committee would also be required.

If a successful bid is submitted, the 2026 Alberta Winter Games would be held in mid-February over a four-day timeframe attracting approximately 2,000 athletes.

PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the City of Spruce Grove provide a letter of intent to the Alberta Ministry of Tourism and Sport by June 30, 2023 indicating their interest in hosting the 2026 Alberta Winter Games.

THAT Administration provide Council with a report for their consideration at the August 14, 2023 Governance and Priorities Committee on the feasibility of hosting the 2026 Alberta Winter Games.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Spruce Grove has a proven history of hosting successful events. The region hosted a very successful Winter Games in 2012 and a Summer Games in 1996, creating a legacy of quality Games production. The Games in 2012 were supported by all three Tri-Municipal partners with approximately \$65,000 financial contributions each, and varying levels of 'goods-in-kind' support. Volunteers and sponsors reflected all three municipalities.

The 2026 Games would include twelve sports in regional amenities and excluding some sports due to lack of regional infrastructure. The opportunity of hosting the 2026 Winter Games provides an opportunity to feature the new Civic Centre (opening in spring 2025), stimulate sport tourism, showcase arts and culture, and provide youth with the opportunity to compete on a provincial stage. Opportunities for volunteer engagement and development is also anticipated, however numbers of current volunteer and volunteer capacity in most community groups, post-COVID, is being reported as low and may be a challenge to identify sufficient volunteers to undertake the scope of this event.

Integration of arts, culture, and heritage into the Games program will also provide an opportunity to showcase local talent and attractions. The potential economic benefits to the community will be significant in terms of athlete accommodations, food services, local transportation, and media attention during the Games.

The Games will be comprised of an Opening Ceremony, and a minimum of twelve sports. These sports would need to be confirmed and potentially include archery, artistic gymnastics, badminton, cross country skiing, curling, fencing, figure skating, hockey, judo, ringette, short-track speed skating, volleyball, and/or wrestling.

Additional facility infrastructure enhancements related to accessibility, security, and 'field of play' requirements may also be identified.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

- Delay bid submission to future dates.
- Not support pursuit of an Alberta Games bid.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

Consultation with the Tri Municipalities, School Divisions, and other community partners will be required. Potential partners include:

- TransAlta Tri Leisure Center
- Parkland School Division
- Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division
- Town of Stony Plain
- Parkland County
- Melcor/The Links Golf Course
- Allied Arts Council
- Horizon Players
- Fine Arts and Dance Studios
- Neighbouring Indigenous Nations
- Local Sport Organizations

Other Administrative Department consultation and support will also be required.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Administration will identify and engage potential partners to explore the capacity and willingness to support the 2026 Alberta Winter Games bid and subsequent Games in February of 2026.

IMPACTS:

The preliminary assessment of impacts include:

- Increased staffing resources required to support the Games planning and implementation
- Decreased capacity for other community and Council priorities within the Recreation and Culture Department
- Increased Sport Tourism in the region
- Increased volunteerism and capacity
- Economic growth
- Enhanced community profile
- Enhancements and/or upgrades to City and community facilities to meet sport hosting requirements

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Government of Alberta - Alberta Tourism and Sport staff provided high-level estimates on the following:

- Hosting the Winter Games is estimated to cost approximately \$1.3-\$1.4 million dollars, based on historical cost from prior Games.
- Estimated sources of funding support:
 - Government of Alberta will provide an operating grant of \$420,000.
 - Government of Alberta Access to Community Incentives Program (CIP) Grants valued at up to \$75,000.
 - Access to provincial casinos (\$65-70,000) (Hosting Committee Board would need to coordinate the volunteers and staffing for this event).
 - Government of Alberta Games Sponsors provide approximately \$50,000 (combined dollars and Goods-In-Kind).
- *Municipality net cost estimate is a potential range of \$420,000 (to match the provincial operating grant portion) to \$750,000 (which is the proposed municipal contribution for the 2023 Summer Games), which does not include in-kind support such as lost rental revenue, staff support, equipment and technology support, and any required infrastructure upgrades.
- Other financial assistance, sponsorship, or goods-in-kind support would also be explored.

*Confirmation of required municipal contribution would be confirmed following the completion of the bid package in August 2023.