

December 1, 2015

To: Members,
Finance and Administration Committee

Re: Regina Regional Opportunities Commission – Regina Advantage

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Services Department recommends that a grant of \$125,000 be approved for Regina Regional Opportunities Commission (RROC) to further implement the ‘Regina Advantage’ strategy.

CONCLUSION

The RROC, mandated by City Council to promote Regina and its economic development and tourism opportunities, has developed the ‘Regina Advantage’ as an umbrella term to describe their integrated sector strategies, tactics and tools (see Appendix A for full proposal).

The Administration is recommending a \$125,000 investment to enable RROC to continue to build on the strategy’s current successes and will be in a stronger position to articulate the message to investors, local businesses and community, resulting in effective alliances, partnerships, and future investments.

The Finance and Administration Committee has the authority to allocate funds for economic and promotional initiatives. Historically, the funds in this program have been used to support events having a significant positive impact on the local economy, and the proposal to further the goals of the ‘Regina Advantage’ are consistent with the mandate of the fund.

BACKGROUND

Administration received a proposal from RROC to advance the ‘Regina Advantage’ strategy (Appendix A).

In order to support the City of Regina’s (City) *Official Community Plan; Design Regina* (OCP) and effectively pursue its mandate, RROC has developed a strategic plan with goals to;

- Grow Regina’s population to 300,000 by 2040
- Foster vibrant and growing economic sectors and industry hubs, creating 50,000 new jobs
- Attract events, conventions and tradeshow that will drive over \$50 million annually into the local economy
- Have Regina perceived as one of the most desirable cities in Canada in which to live, work, visit, and invest
- Help nurture a confident and proud community
- Establishing Regina as a destination of choice within the region

RROC has developed an Investment Attraction Strategy, which is an integral component of an economic development strategy. The purpose of undertaking this strategy is to develop a well-conceived strategic plan for business attraction and retention, and investment based on a clear set of goals and objectives, which can be achieved by implementing customized strategies and tactics. RROC’s Investment Attraction strategy is based on five pillars:

- 1) Economic Gardening – fostering growth, expansion and innovation in Regina region's key industry sectors
- 2) Market Intelligence – providing 'best in class' market intelligence
- 3) Strategic Sectors - declaration of key regional industry hubs which supports smart growth
- 4) Collaborative Tools & Incentives – partnering with community stakeholders to provide appropriate support systems, incentives and solutions to attract and retain employees and employers
- 5) Communicating The Regina Advantage – Regina residents, business owners, investors and local and national media will recognize the Regina Advantage as being: strategically located to world class resources, befitting from world class suppliers, having a productive and highly trained work-force, and maintaining an excellent quality of life.

The 'Regina Advantage' is one component of this comprehensive Investment Attraction Strategy. Specifically, the 'Regina Advantage' has 3 major aims;

- 1) Highlight Regina as an ideal place to live, invest, visit and grow a business;
- 2) Provide stakeholders and partners with enhanced marketing and communication tools to attract events, tradeshow, conventions and to provide RROC with strategic investment attraction tools, focussed on key industry sectors;
- 3) Provide City Council and Administration with strong communications collateral to profile Regina's assets, and to further support City Council with third party advocates and partners committed to advancing the full strategy

This component, the 'Regina Advantage', has resulted in the development of several high-value partnerships between RROC and the community and has catalyzed the creation of new marketing materials (e.g., the Regina Regional Economic Profile, a new website) and the launch of Tourism Regina's 'Destination Regina' social media tools.

DISCUSSION

Administration have scoped the proposal by RROC for \$125,000 and recommend support based on its strong alignment to existing and forthcoming municipal strategies.

The strategic shift to the formation of the 'Regina Advantage' has been precipitated by the adoption of the City's current OCP and serves as a component of RROC's 5 pillar 'Smart Growth' strategy. In aiming to produce a collaborative vision to build on the foundation and promise of the OCP, and under the guidance of its Board of Directors and the City, RROC has undertaken research and discussion with members of the community, business leaders, its other stakeholders, and other levels of government in pursuing a comprehensive investment strategy for addressing economic prosperity and sustainability.

Building off recent developments and momentum with the Investment Attraction Strategy, RROC proposes to further pursue the major aims of the 'Regina Advantage' by achieving the following goals;

- Establish a focussed narrative of Regina which will support the OCP by profiling industry assets, tourism assets and quality of life indicators for audiences at home and abroad;
- Engage the community in supporting and promoting a defined Regina story;
- Leverage the vital partners (e.g., Regina Airport Authority), to invest in and promote the strategy;
- Mobilize positive feelings about the community from residents by providing a new platform for civic pride

These goals would be achieved through executing a detailed plan process which includes;

- 1) Leveraging the investment via partnerships with Regina Airport Authority and Regina Hotels Association, targeting investment, events, tradeshow, convention and air route attraction;
- 2) Aligning with the 'Infinite Horizons' brand for the development of strategic communication, marketing tools and collateral;
- 3) Profiling third party advocates (e.g., University of Regina, Chamber of Commerce, Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs) to invite other like-minded organizations to participate;
- 4) Foster a unified approach to the City's reputation building, including the creation of a prosperous business climate;
- 5) Leverage the unique attributes of the city in a way that all stakeholders can consistently and compellingly make use of the information;
- 6) Create a unifying focus to aid organizations that rely on the City's reputation and image

RROC will lead the execution of the proposal and manage the budget (see Appendix A for full proposal and detailed budget breakdown) in collaboration with a range of partners. The \$125,000 investment from the City would be further leveraged with \$75,000 of contributions from RROC and their partners, for a total budget of \$200,000.

Recent investments by the City identify a number of connective opportunities and positive influences to the current proposal. They include;

- The Regina Revitalization Initiative projects, including the development of a stadium and neighbourhood concept plan for the CP railyards (south of Dewdney Avenue and north of the downtown);
- Development of the International Trade Centre

Also, recent engagement practices with the community in support of the developing Cultural Plan (2013 – present) have identified a range of interests and community supports for some of the dimensions in the 'Regina Advantage'. They include;

- Desire to nurture a sense of civic identity and pride;
- Desire to leverage cultural assets for enhanced tourism; and
- Fostering a positive atmosphere for partnership and collaboration amongst arts and cultural organizations

This indicates a strong strategic alignment of the 'Regina Advantage' aims with the directions of municipal investment in infrastructure, community feedback, and the opportunities to further align with developing municipal plans.

It is recommended that the City continue to support the aims of the 'Regina Advantage' and invest in the opportunities RROC have developed as part of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

Financial Services has confirmed that \$205,000 is available for allocation from Finance and Administration Committee's 2015 budget for economic and promotional. If the funding recommendation is approved, \$80,000 will remain available for allocation.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications related to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The 'Regina Advantage' proposal is consistent with both the economic development and culture chapter goals outlined in the City's *OCP*. It is supported by all three of the Goals in the Economic Development Chapter, which include;

- Goal 1 – to foster an environment conducive to economic vitality and competitiveness which supports the standard of living of residents and the surrounding region;
- Goal 2 – to optimize the economic development potential of Regina, the region, and the Province of Saskatchewan;
- Goal 3- to cultivate entrepreneurship and support economic generators.

Further, the Culture Chapter Goal;

- Goal 1 – to enhance quality of life and strengthen community identity and cohesion through supporting cultural development and cultural heritage.

Other Implications

There are no other implications related to this report.

Accessibility Implications

There are no accessibility implications related to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City will receive public acknowledgment on all materials related to the implementation of the proposal.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendation contained in this report is within the delegated authority of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Laurie Shalley, Director,
Community Services Department

Respectfully submitted,



Kim Onrait, Executive Director
City Services Division