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Date October 5, 2021 **Report No.** 2021-607

To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Operations & Administration

From Kevin Finney
Director, Economic Development & Tourism

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item ☐
Item For Consideration ☒

2.0 Topic 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games Recommendation for Postponement [Financial Impact: None]

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2021-607 regarding the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games Recommendation for Postponement BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT the Chief Administrative Officer BE DIRECTED to sign a joint letter from The Corporation of the City of Brantford and The Corporation of the County of Brant, as co-hosts to the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games, which recommends to the Province that the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games be postponed to the next available date (Schedule A); and
- C. THAT,
 - a. in the event the Province agrees to postpone the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games, that the Director of Economic Development and Tourism BE AUTHORIZED to sign any reasonably necessary agreement(s) to effect the postponement; or

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- b. in the event the Province decides to cancel the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games, that the Director of Economic Development and Tourism BE AUTHORIZED to sign
 - i. any reasonably necessary agreement(s) to agree to terminate the existing agreement(s); and
 - ii. any reasonably necessary agreement(s) to agree to provide the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games at a mutually agreeable date.

4.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the difficulties and barriers encountered by the Games Organizing Committee (GOC), as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in planning and delivering the Ontario 55+ Winter Games that are scheduled for February 11-13, 2022. This report recommends that Council request a postponement of the Games to the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to the next available date.

Although the Games are currently anticipated to be held in 2022, the legal name of the event remains the “2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games” per the Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province of Ontario.

5.0 Background

In 2017, Council approved staff reports CD2017-096 and CD2017-170 regarding the City of Brantford and County of Brant’s bid submission to co-host the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games. The City and County were successful in winning the right to co-host the Games from February 11-13, 2021 and hired a contract Ontario 55+ Winter Games Coordinator on February 3, 2020 to oversee the planning and logistics of the Games.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic declared by the World Health Organization in March 2020, the GOC identified that the City and County could not provide the facilities and services necessary to safely organize and deliver the Games in 2021.

On September 22, 2020 Council approved staff report CD2020-360 requesting that the Chief Administrative Officer be directed to co-sign a letter with the Chief Administrative Office of the County of Brant requesting postponement of the

2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games to a mutually agreed upon date in February 2022.

Upon instruction from Games Ontario, the GOC provided an additional funding request on December 8, 2020 for \$105,983 to cover the increased costs due to the postponement and COVID-19 safety requirements. On January 15, 2021, Mayor Kevin Davis received notice from the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries that the request to postpone had been approved and a public announcement followed. The GOC is still awaiting a response with respect to the funding request.

On April 27, 2021, the GOC further requested an additional \$20,000 from the Province to compensate for challenges being faced in securing sponsorship given the economic climate.

5.1 About the Ontario 55+ Winter Games

The Ontario 55+ Games is a celebration of active living that is hosted every year (alternating between winter and summer) for individuals 55 years of age or older. Games Ontario oversees the Ontario 55+ Winter Games on behalf of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Taking place over three days and two nights, the 2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games had an original operating budget of \$505,100, which includes both cash and in-kind contributions. Expenses include accommodations, food services, facility rentals, special events, marketing, translation services, and administration expenses, which includes 1.0 FTE contract staff to assist with the coordination of the event.

Revenues for the Games were to consist of a \$210,000 hosting grant from the Province, participant registration fees, a financial contribution of \$7,500 from the County of Brant, sponsorships, souvenir sales, tradeshow revenue, \$15,000 from the Economic Development and Tourism Marketing Reserve and in-kind services. Where possible, staff will also seek to leverage additional grant funds from other sources.

Over 1,000 athletes, games officials, and guests from across Ontario participate in 10 different sporting events including: alpine skiing, badminton, curling, duplicate bridge, ice hockey, nordic skiing, prediction skating, table tennis, 10 pin bowling and volleyball.

5.2 Current Context

On June 2, 2021 a letter was sent by the Games' Co-Chairs to the local Provincial representatives requesting assistance in receiving an answer from the Minister regarding the funding request for \$125,983 that had been submitted in December 2020 and April 2021. Subsequent conversations took place with the representative's office and with Games Ontario. To date, no formal response has been provided.

In August 2021, the GOC engaged in conversation with the Brant County Health Unit (BCHU) regarding safety measures for the 55+ Games in February 2022. BCHU directed the GOC to plan the Games in accordance to Step 3 Provincial Regulations. BCHU recommendations include:

- cohorting each team during the Games;
- reducing instances of large social gatherings; and
- adapting food services to increase safety.

Each recommendation had financial implications, which led the GOC to perform a budget revision. It was determined that in order to comply with BCHU's recommendations an additional increase of a minimum of \$114,552 would be required, bringing the total funding request to \$240,535. This revised amount was submitted to Games Ontario on September 2, 2021.

To date, Games Ontario has not provided any change of direction to established standards within the [Ontario Games Bid Guidelines](#).¹

¹ Games Ontario, Ontario Games Bid Guidelines, 2021.
<http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/sport/gamesontario/ontario-games-bid-guidelines.shtml>

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

6.1 Council Priorities (2020)

This report is supported by the Council Priority to increase tourism marketing and promote complementary private sector enterprises.

6.2 Economic Development & Tourism Strategy (2016)

This report is also supported by the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2016), specifically: to continue to support the growth of sport tourism through the strategic marketing of new municipal sports infrastructure and bid and hosting opportunities.

6.3 Sport Bid and Hosting Policy (CORPORATE-032)

Organizing and delivering the Ontario 55+ Winter Games aligns with the Sport Bid and Hosting Policy (CORPORATE-032), which seeks to ensure that any financial and other hosting impacts of these types of sport tourism events are reported to Council as soon as possible; this step would be required as a fundamental prerequisite action in order to proceed.

6.4 Municipal Sport Tourism Strategy (2019)

The Municipal Sport Tourism Strategy supports this report, specifically the following Strategic Priorities:

- Brantford will make informed decisions and build operational excellence through responsible governance and policies that leverage existing sport hosting assets and talent in order to drive economic, social and sustainability impacts; and
- Brantford will proactively market and develop the Brantford sport hosting brand through all available channels.

7.0 Input From Other Sources

Legal Services Division

2021 Ontario 55+ Winter Games Organizing Committee (GOC)

Games Ontario

Brant County Health Unit

Ontario Senior Games Association

8.0 Analysis

At the September 15, 2021 GOC meeting, the membership adopted the following:

THAT the Co-Chairs of the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games BE DIRECTED TO SUBMIT a report to their respective Councils to request a joint letter from The Corporation of the City of Brantford and The Corporation of the County of Brant, as co-hosts to the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games, which recommends to the Province that the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games be postponed to the next available date; and

THAT the Co-Chairs of the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games, on behalf of the Games Organizing Committee, be directed to submit to their respective Councils, a joint letter recommending the postponement of the 2022 Ontario 55+ Games to the next available date.

The GOC approved this motion due to the challenges faced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent procedures established by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments. The Games Co-Chairs, on behalf of the GOC, are submitting letters to their respective Councils, outlining the concerns the GOC are facing (Appendix A).

The items from the Ontario Games Bid Guidelines that currently present challenges and barriers to delivering the Games to their expected standards in February 2022 are outlined in Sections 8.1-8.8 of this report.

Following the vote that took place at the GOC meeting on September 15, 2021, Games Ontario removed the funding request to the Province of \$240,535.

8.1 Sport Technical

In the Province's [Reopening Ontario](#)² roadmap, indoor recreational sport facilities are allowed to remain open in Step 3.

- **Challenge #1:** In the event that the Province returns to the increased restrictions of Step 2 between now and when the Games are scheduled for February 11-13, 2022, all indoor recreational facilities would be required to close and the Games would not be possible.
- **Challenge #2:** Community-use-of-schools permits are currently unavailable. As a result, additional City, County or privately owned facilities will need to be rented [financial impact - \$15,461].

8.2 Special Events

There are several special events planned for the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games including participant registration, opening ceremony and meal, as well as the middle night mingle:

- **Challenge #1:** The opening night events (registration, opening meal and opening ceremony) were planned to take place at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts. In summer 2021, the Special Events committee determined that the Brantford & District Civic Centre was a more suitable location, given its greater capacity.

However, BCHU recommended that even though capacity at the Civic Centre would allow for all participants to attend, the evening should be divided into several smaller sites. Additionally, each team should remain cohorted and socially distanced from all others; drastically reducing or removing entirely, the social aspect of the

² Province of Ontario, Reopening Roadmap, 2021. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>

Games that many participants seek when attending these types of events [financial impact - \$13,866].

- **Challenge #2:** The Middle Night Mingle was scheduled to occur within the Paris Fairgrounds. Similar to the opening night events, BCHU recommends that this event be divided into several smaller events [financial impact - \$4,803].
- **Challenge #3:** BCHU recommends that for the entirety of the Games, including the social components, each team cohorts and remains socially distanced from all other teams. Many participants attend these Games for the benefit of being able to see and interact with friends from other districts and other sports. This aspect of the Games would be drastically reduced or eliminated entirely under these circumstances.

8.3 Food Services

The Brant County Health Unit recommends that meals be served to participants in boxed form (lunches) or in vendor served buffet style.

- **Challenge #1:** BCHU recommends that all lunches, during competition, be boxed rather than buffet style. COVID-19 has also created increased costs in the supply chain. Lunch costs have increased from \$11 per person to \$17 per person [financial impact - \$14,660].
- **Challenge #2:** Changing the opening meal from buffet style at the Brantford & District Civic Centre to hotels and banquet halls in the community has increased the cost of this meal from \$25 per person to \$45 per person [financial impact - \$45,000].

8.4 Transportation

Brantford Transit will provide transportation for participants to planned social events, hotels and all but two competition facilities within the City and the County.

- **Challenge #1:** Council approved the use of Brantford Transit services in staff report CD2017-170 up to a cost of \$40,000. Brantford Transit is able to provide 5 buses for the weekend of the Games without interrupting regular bus services. BCHU has

recommended that each team be transported separately to and from their events. The Games schedule has a capacity for 142 teams requiring that additional buses be chartered through other companies.

- **Challenge #2:** Sharp Bus lines is the most cost effective option at \$600 per day. Currently, Sharp Bus lines has suspended all of its charter services and staff will not know of their availability for February 2022 until one month prior to the Games, if at all. Coach bus charters cost \$800-\$1,000 per bus per day [minimum financial impact - \$16,800].

8.5 Accommodations

The Games host communities are to provide accommodations for all participants based on double room occupancy.

- **Challenge #1:** With COVID-19 still a concern, the GOC anticipates a rise in the number of single occupancy requests. City and County hotels do not have the capacity to accommodate large increases to single occupancy requests. Overflow will need to be housed in surrounding communities sending financial benefits to other municipalities and increasing transportation costs for the GOC. Total financial cost with respect to this item cannot be determined until registration takes place in November.
- **Challenge #2:** BCHU has recommended that several rooms be reserved in hotels to be used in the event that a participant screens positive during the Games. These rooms would be paid for, but remain empty unless there was a positive screening incident [financial impact - \$5,688].

8.6 Sponsorship

Although an additional \$20,000 was requested on April 27, 2021 to cover missing sponsorship revenue, efforts to secure additional sponsorships continue.

- **Challenge #1:** To date, no additional sponsorships have been secured.

8.7 Volunteers

To assist with the delivery of the Games, the host community must recruit approximately 250 volunteers.

- **Challenge #1:** To meet the needs of volunteers for these Games, and to keep capacities low, multiple training sessions will be offered with a hybrid virtual component for those who wish to attend virtually. To accommodate the hybrid component, trainings sessions will be held at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts [financial impact - \$3,374].

8.8 OSGA Participant Survey Feedback

All participants for the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games are members of the Ontario Senior Games Association (OSGA). The GOC surveyed the OSGA membership in June 2021 and September 2021 (Appendix B).

- June 2021 Survey – 818 total responses
 - 664 participants (81%) indicated that they felt comfortable attending in February 2022.
- September 2021 Survey – 516 total responses
 - 347 participants (67%) indicated that they felt comfortable attending in February 2022, with an additional 140 stating they were undecided.

Participant concerns included: increasing COVID-19 case numbers, desire for mandatory vaccination of all participants/ volunteers and the preference not to attend if the social aspects of the Games would be limited.

Although there was positive communication from those who wish to attend in 2022, a great deal of staff time would need to be spent to host one third of the originally intended number of participants and social interactions would be limited as indicated in Sections 5.2, 8.2 and 8.3 above.

9.0 Financial Implications

As there is no longer a requirement for a Games host to have a Deficit Guarantor, the Games Ontario program holds additional funding to be used to

cover any deficits as a result of hosting the Games up to a maximum of \$25,000. If no deficit occurs, the host municipality would receive the full amount for agreed upon Games legacy initiatives.

At this time, staff have projected a deficit of \$240,535 (Appendix C) should the games run forward with no additional funding with the City of Brantford and the County of Brant responsible for in excess of the \$25,000 set aside by Games Ontario. The Local Agreement between the City and County states the City shall be responsible for the payment of two thirds (2/3) of any such deficit and the County of Brant shall be responsible for the payment of one third (1/3) of any such deficit. The City portion of that shortfall would be \$158,753

10.0 Conclusion

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to cause uncertainties and constraints on the planning and organization of the Ontario 55+ Winter Games, to be held in February 2022.

After a thorough review of the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) jointly signed by The Corporation of the City of Brantford and the County of Brant (cohosts) with the Province of Ontario, as well as the Ontario Games Bid Guidelines, event organizers face significant challenges to meeting the agreed-upon standards and expectations of the Province, the participants and the municipal hosts.

Staff, with direction from the Games Organizing Committee, recommends that Council support a postponement to the next available date to ensure the health and safety of participants, a responsible financial impact on hosting the Games and a fulsome event with competition and social events that encourage participants to discover and explore our communities.

Should both municipalities agree to the postponement, a co-signed letter from the City of Brantford and County of Brant's respective Chief Administrative Officers (Appendix D) would be sent to the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. It will be requested that the Province respond in a timely manner, and staff will report back via an Information Update to members of Council once a response is received.



Kevin Finney, BAH, MSA
Director, Economic Development & Tourism

Prepared By:

Aisha Godbout, Ontario 55+ Winter Games Coordinator
Ela Stypa Jones, Sport Tourism Coordinator
Sara Munroe, Manager of Tourism, Culture & Sport

Attachments (if applicable)

Appendix A: Letter from Co-Chairs of the 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games

Appendix B: OSGA Survey Compiled Results Overview

Appendix C: 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games Cost-Benefit Analysis

Appendix D: Letter to Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no