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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2023-EDT-7
Date: June 6, 2023

Subject:

Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games

Recommendation:

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to celebrate the successful 2023 Ontario Parasport Games hosted by Durham Region from February 3 to 5, 2023. The success of the Games is captured in the following celebration video:

<https://youtu.be/OAybp8AARrl>.

2. Background

2.1 The Ontario Parasport Games is one of the Province's five multi-sport games delivered by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) Games Ontario unit. Ontario Games provide athletes with quality competitive experiences and the opportunity to pursue their athletic goals.

- 2.2 With the endorsement of Regional Council, a bid was prepared and submitted to host the 2023 Ontario Parasport Games. MTCS awarded the Games to the Region and the Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement between the Region and the MTCS, for delivery of the Games, was fully executed on March 30, 2022.
- 2.3 The Economic Development and Tourism Division's sport tourism program (Sport Durham) formed a 24-member Games Organizing Committee ("GOC"), led by the Region's Sport Tourism Specialist, Lori Talling (Games General Manager), as well as Don Terry (Co-Chair and Chair of Sport Durham) and Mike Frogley (Co-Chair and Chair of the Durham Adaptive Sport Collective). The GOC was comprised of chairs and co-chairs, including Regional staff and volunteers who led 15 subcommittees, and two MTCS representatives. Planning was supported by another 45 subcommittee members.

3. Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games

- 3.1 From February 3 to 5, Durham Region welcomed over 400 athletes, athlete assistants, coaches, managers, officials and provincial sport organization representatives, as well as hundreds of spectators.
- 3.2 More than 200 volunteers helped to deliver the Games over the course of the weekend. 92% of respondents to a post-Games volunteer survey said they enjoyed their Games experience and 87% said they would very likely or likely volunteer again.
- 3.3 The Games also received tremendous support from Regional staff across a variety of departments and roles, including Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, Office of the CAO (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), Durham Region Transit, Corporate Services and Finance, from the bid phase to event delivery.
- 3.4 Just as they were in 2019, the Games were widely reported by the athletes, coaches and other participants to be an overwhelming success. 92% of respondents to a post-Games participant survey rated their Games experience as good or excellent and 92% rated their interactions with volunteers as good or excellent.
- 3.5 It was projected that the Games would result in a Regional economic impact of greater than \$500,000. An economic impact assessment will be completed, and results will be provided in a final report to the MTCS in the coming months.

3.6 Special events and program elements included:

- a. 100-Day Countdown event
- b. Headband Knitting Campaign
- c. Be the Roar Campaign
- d. Opening Night Dinner for Participants – Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
- e. VIP Reception – Abilities Centre
- f. Opening Ceremony – Abilities Centre

3.7 The Games featured 11 sport competitions at eight venues in five municipalities:

- a. 5-a-side Soccer – Civic Recreation Complex
- b. Boccia – Abilities Centre
- c. Goalball – J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate
- d. Para-Alpine – Brimacombe
- e. Para-Nordic – Brimacombe
- f. Sitting Volleyball – Abilities Centre
- g. Sledge Hockey – Iroquois Park Sports Centre
- h. Visually Impaired Curling – Oshawa Curling Club
- i. Wheelchair Basketball – Durham College & Ontario Tech University Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre
- j. Wheelchair Curling – Oshawa Curling Club
- k. Wheelchair Tennis – Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

3.8 The Games also included the following four demonstration sports, a new addition to the Games, which were expected to elevate the profile of emerging sports within Durham Region and beyond:

- a. Adapted Climbing – Abilities Centre
- b. Floor Curling – Abilities Centre
- c. Para Equestrian – WindReach Farm
- d. PowerHockey – Abilities Centre

3.9 Legacy initiatives and partnerships often occur post Games, but the GOC facilitated a number of these in advance of the Games, including:

- a. AccessNow mapping of Games venues and all municipal facilities;
- b. A pilot fitness and training program, “Shaping the Future of Parasport in Canada,” for eight Durham-based athletes with disabilities, led by an assistant professor of Physiology and a PhD candidate in Physiology at Ontario Tech

- University, with funding from the Canadian Paralympic Committee's Paralympic Sport Development Fund;
- c. A pilot program to add more adaptive sport and recreational opportunities at Durham College and Ontario Tech University;
 - d. Sensory support kits at libraries and Games venues;
 - e. An inclusive Athlete's Lounge where participants gathered between competitions;
 - f. Collection of donations in support of Feed the Need in Durham; and
 - g. Launch of a PowerHockey program in Durham Region.
- 3.10 Fifty-nine partners, including the Durham Regional Police Service, local area municipalities, sport venues, post-secondary institutions, local businesses, hotels, service clubs, and other organizations, provided cash or value-in-kind contributions to the Games.
- 3.11 The official Games website, available in both English and French, containing additional information is: www.durhamregion2023.ca/en/

4. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 4.1 [#2021-EDT-8](#) – On November 24, 2021, Regional Council endorsed Sport Durham's bid to host the 2023 Ontario Parasport Games for a second time, building on the momentum and legacy of hosting the Games in 2019, and approved a financial contribution of \$40,000 cash and \$66,000 in-kind for transportation provided by Durham Region Transit.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham region Strategic Plan:
- a. Goal 2: Community Vitality
 - Item 2.5 – Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
 - b. Goal 3: Economic Prosperity
 - Item 3.2 – Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure and strong partnerships to foster economic growth.

6. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 6.1 The Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games were a resounding success. The Games received tremendous support throughout planning and execution from the entire regional community through sponsorship, volunteerism, spectators, contracted services, headband knitting, athlete support through the 'Be The Roar' campaign, attendance at special events, and much more.
- 6.2 The Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games Organizing Committee will complete event wrap-up activities and will prepare a final report for the MTCS which will include financial reporting, an economic impact report, and the legacy contributions from the Games. A summary report will also be shared with Regional Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Planning and
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer