

REPORT

Community Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of
Council

Date: May 6, 2024

From: Blair Fryer
Acting Director, Community Services

File:

Item #: 2024-293

Subject: Community Vancouver Canucks Viewing Feasibility

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) THAT Council direct staff to work in collaboration with business associations to develop and/or fund and/or amplify marketing that promotes their business members that are offering Vancouver Canucks playoff viewing.
 - 2) THAT Council direct staff to coordinate accessible no-purchase-required family-friendly viewing opportunities at civic facilities where scheduling and feasibility allow, such as Queensborough Community Centre, Youth Centre/ Century House, and/or City Hall.
 - 3) THAT Council direct staff to coordinate a family-friendly viewing opportunity in one of Massey Theatre's smaller spaces or theatre (subject to availability).
 - 4) THAT Council direct staff to collaborate with the Downtown BIA for a hybrid event model with viewing in Anvil Centre and associated complementary activities in Hyack Square.
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PURPOSE

To provide Council with recommendations for community Vancouver Canucks viewing opportunities for the 2024 NHL playoffs, specifically round two.

SUMMARY

Vancouver Canucks playoff viewing opportunities are possible for New Westminster, with staff recommending a series of smaller, family-friendly, indoor venues, working with business associations to highlight businesses that are already offering viewing options, and working toward larger scale events in the Downtown and Uptown areas by collaborating with partners. It is important to note that given the excitement accompanying playoff hockey, it is anticipated that local organizations and businesses may wish to also create their own community-friendly viewing events.

Due to resource challenges and prior commitments such as the opening of təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre, viewing opportunities have not been possible during the first round of playoffs, and as a result the following discussion focuses on the second round and potential future rounds of Vancouver Canucks playoff hockey. NWPD has noted their particular concern about a large-scale outdoor street festival or event, given that Vancouver is not organizing any events and New Westminster's proximity to SkyTrain makes anything held in our city highly accessible. As such, more work will need to be done before Police are able to provide approval for such an event.

DISCUSSION

Staff have undertaken analysis and discussion with various potential partner organizations, contractors, and service providers as well as interdepartmentally.

Local and Regional Scan

There already exists several public viewing offerings of Vancouver Canuck playoff hockey locally, and regionally, as well as some notable places where viewing is not planned.

New Westminster:

Previously, the City has streamed major sporting events on the screens in community centres and facilities if it is not in conflict with other programs or usage.

- Queen's Park Arena has the capacity to show the game in the lobby and currently does that when there is a game. Capacity is roughly 30-40.
- Queensborough Community Centre shows all hockey games in their lobby and anyone is welcome to sit and watch. Capacity is roughly 20 seated and 50 standing.
- Century House has the capacity to do it but typically does not as some members have complained in the past about disruption. However, they might be interested as the Canucks advance further into the playoffs and interest increases. Capacity is roughly 30-40, with the potential for more dependent on other needs in the building on the specific dates.

Elsewhere:

- Port Coquitlam is showing Vancouver Canucks playoff games on a large TV screen in the food services area of their community centre with accompanying specials at their food concession. The community centre is licensed so alcohol is also being sold. PoCo is not streaming it on their LED scoreboard as the ice and lacrosse boxes are in use.
- Delta has opted to purchase an outdoor screen to use for this and future events and is hosting watch parties in their outdoor plaza. These events are not licensed.
- Vancouver is not hosting any outdoor playoff watching parties. The experience with rioting that occurred during the Vancouver Canucks playoff runs in 1994 and 2011 (and to a degree, in 2002, when Guns N' Roses failed to appear) has prompted both the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Police to instead put in place several recommendations for maintaining public safety and the security of businesses during playoff games as a result of the riots.

Police Input

Locally, the NWPD has concerns about an outdoor viewing opportunity at Hyack Square in particular, related to pedestrian and attendee safety, however these could be mitigated by shutting down roadways. With New Westminster being a major SkyTrain and transit hub this may prove difficult and the unpredictable timing of games may make road closures challenging. TransLink has not yet been consulted and may also have concerns. Locating a viewing opportunity at the east end of Columbia Street may help with this concern, as the corridor is already closed down until the end of May due to Pattullo Bridge construction, however more analysis is required to assess any unintended impacts on businesses in the area who have already expressed challenges with the closure. Staff believe the best option for Downtown that addresses Police concerns but allows for community celebration and centers businesses is to coordinate a hybrid event where the viewing takes place inside Anvil Centre (pending availability) and also includes complementary family-friendly activities outdoors in Hyack Square.

NWPD would also require time to develop safety plans and ensure staffing is adequate for an outdoor event. For indoor events, NWPD would more easily be able to attend and ensure public safety.

Outdoor Viewing

Because outdoor viewing would take place before sunset, the City would need to rent an LED screen rather than a standard projection screen. Regular or inflatable screens will not work outdoors because of the bright ambient light levels. Staff have identified a contractor that has the capacity to rent a 24' LED screen to the City at \$9,500 per event, and it has to come from Alberta. This estimate includes required staffing and all

necessary technology such as speakers, and it is possible to set up in wet weather. This screen is not available until the second round of the playoffs. Further, there is only one screen available from this supplier and the company representative believes they may book it at multiple cities during the playoffs to maximize exposure in the region and to provide equitable access to viewers. Given this, it is likely that only one outdoor viewing could be coordinated in New Westminster.

In terms of locations, Uptown Plaza (Uptown) and Hyack Square (Downtown) are more or less available as few regular bookings occur in these locations, though as noted, NWPD have concerns with Hyack Square as a venue. Knox Plaza (Sapperton) is likely available as well, but its relatively compact footprint would only be able to accompany a smaller event. Ryall Park (Queensborough) may also be a potential location. Yet another option may be to utilize the parking lot at Tipperary Park, as the natural slope could improve viewing and City Hall's front and rear lots could provide opportunity for patron parking. However, if the games occur on a Thursday, the lot is already in use by the New West Farmers Market.

The City would be best to advertise any outdoor events as a "bring your camp chair" type rather than rent and supply seating. The City would also need to rent portable toilets (if the venue does not offer them) at an additional cost of roughly \$500 per event. Outdoor viewing that might require site setup such as tents or barricades, and require litter collection, we will require staffing budget of approximately \$1,200 per event. If food or other vendors are included, waste collection and removal would require an additional \$450 per viewing.

Indoor Viewing

Both Massey Theatre and Anvil Centre are potential candidates for indoor viewing opportunities, providing there is availability around previously scheduled bookings.

Massey Theatre's main theatre has a capacity of 1,260, but has limitations for food and beverage in the theatre itself, and playoff games may coincide with a theatre production. Studio 1A or 1B both have capacity for 70 people each and could be rented together or separately. Studio 1A or 1B would require the rental of a screen and projector, but have chairs and can also include a bar/concession. Massey Theatre would keep the bar/concession profits to offset staffing costs. Total financial implication for holding playoff viewings at Massey Theatre is \$4,000 to \$6,000 per viewing with equipment, staffing, and rentals, and is dependent on whether another performance is already booked in the venues.

Anvil Centre can offer the ballroom, provided no other booking has been made, and can staff a bar/ concession of which the proceeds would offset staffing costs for a contractor AV tech. Patrons would be invited to bring their own chairs. Total financial implication is estimated at \$1,500 per viewing for required contracted services.

Some New Westminster civic facilities have the ability to show the game on an existing TV and others could rent / purchase large screens such as Century House, Queensborough Community Centre, Centennial Lodge, tēmāsewtx^w Aquatic and Community Centre (pending confirmation of technical connectivity), and City Hall. Costs would vary based on staffing and technological requirements and venues may already have programming booked into the spaces. Staff would need to determine which civic facilities are available once playoff game dates are known. For some venues, there would likely be costs related to the need for additional staffing.

In all venues, streaming or distribution rights may need to be purchased and this has not yet been contemplated in this analysis, nor has the implication for Community Partnerships staff on site, should that be required.

Fire Services has also provided input that in indoor settings, load capacities need to be maintained.

Promoting Businesses Already Planning Events

Perhaps most importantly is that the City support businesses that rely on playoff hockey for increased revenue. While the *Community Charter* prevents the City from providing a benefit to businesses directly, staff could work with local BIAs and merchants' associations to generate a list of businesses where residents can watch a playoff game. This could be promoted through existing city channels and by funding and/or amplifying associated marketing campaigns.

Locally, there are 12 liquor primary licensed businesses with large-screen televisions. Massey Theatre and Douglas College also have liquor primary licenses. There are approximately another 15 food primaries in the City that staff believe will show games in their restaurant. All are undoubtedly anticipating brisk business as a result of the playoffs, and are counting on the revenue to positively impact their bottom line.

Possible Partners

Staff have reached out to some interest holders with varying responses:

- The Uptown Business Association is interested in partnering on collaborative marketing and potentially an indoor or outdoor event at Uptown Plaza or Massey Theatre
- Tourism New Westminster is interested in donating the use of their tents for an outdoor watching opportunity
- The Downtown BIA would be willing to assist in coordinating an event, but have identified that they do not have funding for any of the associated costs and do not have capacity to do it on their own. They are willing to supply tents, marketing, and other in-kind supports and work in partnership. Some food and beverage businesses have expressed support for an alcohol-free event, however a

complete canvass of such businesses on Columbia would need to be performed to determine level of support. The Downtown BIA has also expressed support for a hybrid event where the viewing occurs in Anvil Centre with the sliding glass door panels along the Columbia Street building façade opened, but some family-friendly complementary activities such as face painting could take place in Hyack Square.

- Other AV companies have been contacted to compare availability with inquiries yet to be answered. It is possible that the screen rentals may be able to be secured at lower rates.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None of the aforementioned possible events have been contemplated within existing budgets and all would need to be resourced, with appropriate funding sources identified, to varying amounts which would include both the rental of equipment and necessary staffing.

The largest expense would be for an outdoor event in Downtown, Uptown, or at Tipperary Park with cost for these estimated at approximately \$20,000-\$25,000 per viewing including rentals, security, and staffing. The City could collaborate with a community partner to produce the event which have a lesser impact on the staffing constraints of the City however the City would likely be required to provide most or all of the funding. An event like this would likely still require additional policing and contracted services. Additionally, the construction on Columbia Street and subsequent closures may have an impact. If we are activating on the street, traffic management plans need to be developed.

Lower cost options, such as collaborative marketing, capitalizing on existing civic venues, and coordinating indoor viewing opportunities Massey Theatre and/or Anvil Centre would have other financial implications which are summarized in the following table:

Option	Staffing Requirement	Cash Requirement	Total Financial Implication
Collaborative Marketing Campaigns	Communications and Economic Development staff could likely perform this function within typical operations	Up to \$1,000 per game in advertising insertions and promotions	\$1,000 per game
Utilizing existing civic facilities	May require additional staffing or some equipment rentals depending	May require the purchase of broadcast rights and would	\$1,000 to \$2,000 per game

	upon regular hours of the facility	benefit from paid promotion	
Viewing at Anvil Centre with possibly complementary outdoor activities in Hyack Square	Would require staffing and contractors (event and/or traffic management) but could be offset by concession revenue	Would require rentals, the purchase of broadcast rights, and possibly additional equipment needs	\$1,500 to \$4,500 per game, pending space availability, and pending what activities occur in Hyack Square
Viewing at Massey Theatre	Would not require and could be contracted to Massey staff	Would likely require the purchase of broadcast rights, still to be determined	\$4,000 to \$6,000 per game based on space availability and rentals required to support

Overall, the best option for maximum partnership, highest number of possible viewings, and best balance of use of funds is likely a mix of options the cost of which is a range based on potential number of games and the cost each activation:

Activation	Potential Number of Games	Lowest Range Scenario	Mid-Range Scenario	Highest Range Scenario
Collaborative Marketing	7	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Utilizing Existing Civic Facilities	7	\$7,000	\$10,500	\$14,000
Massey Theatre – one indoor viewing at Massey that is a higher profile game	1	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Hybrid indoor viewings at Anvil Centre with complementary family-friendly activities in Hyack Square, as many games as possible	7	\$10,500	\$21,000	\$31,500
		\$30,500	\$44,500	\$58,500

Total maximum financial implication for Round 2 of playoffs would be \$58,500. If the Canucks make it further in the playoffs, staff would need to return to Council for further direction based on the outcomes in Round 2.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff in Community Partnerships, who prepared this report, have consulted with Anvil Centre, Engineering Operations, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire Services, and Finance. Other departments and divisions may need to be consulted depending upon what, if any, options are selected.

OPTIONS

There are five options for Council's consideration:

- 1) THAT Council direct staff to work in collaboration with business associations to develop and/or fund and/or amplify marketing that promotes their business members that are offering Vancouver Canucks playoff viewing.
- 2) THAT Council direct staff to coordinate accessible no-purchase-required family-friendly viewing opportunities at civic facilities where scheduling and feasibility allow, such as Queensborough Community Centre, Anvil Centre, Youth Centre/ Century House, and/or City Hall.
- 3) THAT Council direct staff to coordinate a family-friendly viewing opportunity in one of Massey Theatre's smaller spaces or theatre (subject to availability)
- 4) THAT Council direct staff to collaborate with the Downtown BIA for a hybrid event model with viewing in Anvil Centre and associated complementary activities in Hyack Square.
- 5) THAT Council provide other direction.

Staff recommend Options 1, 2, 3, and 4.

CONCLUSION

While an outdoor viewing party is a fun idea, the expense of such an undertaking has not been contemplated in existing budgets, and would require additional resourcing. As well, associated safety and logistics required may prove challenging when also coupled with unpredictable weather, playoff game scheduling, costs, staff capacity, and availability of necessary equipment. Staff recommend a mixed approach that includes promotion of viewing opportunities at existing businesses, scheduling indoor viewing opportunities at key civic facilities for a barrier-free option, and working towards potential alcohol-free hybrid viewing event(s) in collaboration with partners.

APPROVALS

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