



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: December 9, 2019

SUBJECT: 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference,
January 4-7, 2020

PREPARED BY: Sandra Tam, Sr. Business Devt. Officer, ext.3883

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report titled, “2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference, January 4-7, 2020” dated December 9, 2019, be received; and,
2. That the City of Markham be represented by Councillor Alan Ho, Chair of Culture and Economic Development Committee to attend the 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference in Harbin, China from January 4-7, 2020; and,
3. That the total cost of the business trip to attend the 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference in Harbin, China not exceed \$5,000.00 and be expensed from the 2020 Economic Alliances account 610-9985812, contingent upon Council approval of the 2020 Operating Budget; and further,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Not Applicable.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to request pre-budget approval for business travel for Councillor Alan Ho, Chair of Culture and Economic Development Committee to Harbin China from January 4-7, 2020 to represent Mayor Frank Scarpitti and the City of Markham at the 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference.

The Conference focuses on building international partnerships and seeking new opportunities in key sectors including sports, culture, tourism, health and senior care, as well as creative industries.

The business trip is an integral part of the City’s 10-Year Economic Strategy “Markham 2020”. It addresses the objective of building Global Markham and Branded Markham.

BACKGROUND:

On July 16, 2019, Harbin Mayor Mr. Sun Zhe extended an invitation to Mayor Frank Scarpitti to attend the International Winter Cities Conference during the 36th Ice and Snow Festival between January 4-7, 2020. Mayor Scarpitti was unavailable to attend and

has passed on the invitation to Councillor Alan Ho, Chair of Culture and Economic Development to represent him at the Conference.

Markham-Harbin Relations

Markham and Harbin relations started in 2019 when the Centre of Sustainable and Integrated Design (CSID), a Markham non-profit group that focuses on promoting international cultural and artistic exchanges organized the first Markham Ice and Snow Festival at the Markham Civic Centre from February 9 to 18, 2019. The Festival, presented in co-operation with the City of Markham, and the Harbin People's government, was inspired by the Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival, known around the world for its stunning display of breathtaking ice sculptures. Not only did the Festival introduce Markham and the Greater Toronto Area to one of the greatest winter festivals around the world, it also provided a platform for Canadian and Chinese artists to display their work, and further promote the municipal friendship between the City of Markham and the City of Harbin, China. It drew thousands of visitors to observe and appreciate the talented workmanship of ice sculptors from Harbin. Building on its success, the Centre of Sustainable and Integrated Design is planning to organize the second Markham Ice and Snow Festival in Markham in 2020.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Markham's strong diversity has proven to be successful in inspiring innovation which leads to economic growth and cultural vibrancy. The 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference offers new opportunities for Markham to build strategic international relations, and to achieve these goals.

By participating in the Conference, Markham gains the benefit of advancing its economic development goals of building a "Branded Markham" and a "Global Markham".

2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference

Hosted by the Harbin People's Government China during the 36th Ice and Snow Festival, the annual conference aims to deepen friendship and facilitate cooperation among Harbin's international sister- and friendship- cities.

Key programs include International Winter Cities Symposium, International Business and Chamber of Commerce Business Matching, "Voice of Sister Cities" Symphony Concert, Mascot Tour, International Youth Ice Hockey Invitational and International Ice and Snow Sculpture Competition.

Benefits for Markham to participate in the 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference:

1. Showcase Markham's diversity and as a global destination for arts and culture
2. Expand international awareness
3. Promote Markham as a preferred location for foreign direct investment

4. Create opportunities to build international partnership on winter sports and cultural exchanges

2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference Agenda

January 4	- Registration
January 5	- International Winter Cities Symposium - Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival and International Winter Cities Conference Opening Ceremony
January 6	- Opening Ceremony and Opening Match of International Youth Ice Hockey Invitational - International Business and Chamber of Commerce Business Matching
January 7	- Return to Toronto

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Economic Development staff estimate the costs for the business travel plans as follows:

International & Domestic Airfare	\$3,000.00
Accommodation, Local Transportation & Meals	1,500.00
<u>Marketing/Protocol Expenditure</u>	<u>500.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$5,000.00</u>

The total travel cost of \$5,000.00 to be expensed from within 2020 Economic Alliances account 610-9985812.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This initiative is an integral part of Markham's 10-Year Economic Strategy "Markham 2020". The program addresses the objective of building Global Markham and Branded Markham.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Legal and Financial Services.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Stephen Chait, MPA, CMC
Director, Economic Growth, Culture &
Entrepreneurship

Arvin Prasad, MPA, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner,
Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- A) Harbin Mayor Sun Zhe Invitation to Mayor Frank Scarpitti, July 16, 2019.
- B) 2020 China Harbin International Winter Cities Conference Agenda