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TO: Mayor and Members of Council

CC: ELT

FROM: Mary Creighton – Director, Recreation Services

Chris Ricketts – Director, Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship

DATE: June 15, 2023

RE: BID OPPORTUNITY – Little NHL (Native Hockey League) Tournament 2024

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The purpose of this Memorandum is to inform and seek approval from Markham Council for staff to submit a letter of intent advising of the City of Markham's interest in submitting a bid to host the 2024 Little Native Hockey League Tournament, known as the Little NHL.

The RFP was released on Friday June 9, 2023 for the Little NHL Indigenous hockey tournament seeking a host for the March 2024 event; their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Mississauga has been hosting the Little Native Hockey League Tournament for 8 years. March 2023 marked the return of the tournament since the COVID pandemic in 2020. This was the last year of a 5-year agreement with Mississauga as host.

The LNHL is an annual hockey tournament and cultural festival for First Nation youth players occurring over March break each year. The tournament welcomes approximately 3,500 youth male and female players from Ontario along with friends, families, and spectators. In addition to the 2024 hockey Tournament and Cultural Festival, a Gala Celebration will be hosted to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and honour and recognize the inductees into the LNHL Hall of Fame.

For the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary tournament, the LNHL is looking to acknowledge and recognize the strong connection to water and water sources for the First Nations of Ontario.

Each year the tournament has a meaningful economic benefit for the Host City with 9,000 – 10,000 people travelling to and staying in the Host City for 4 – 5 days. The economic impact for past events, which have not included the Gala Celebration being planned for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the LNHL tournament, have been estimated to be a minimum of \$10 million. This activity includes, for example, ~6,000 hotel rooms booked, food, travel, tourism expenditure, and operational expenditure. The tournament is also anticipated to generate significant media coverage with both national and regional media outlets covering the tournament.

Staff from Recreation and Destination Markham have met to discuss the bid and at this time are recommending that Markham submit a letter of intent with a submission deadline of June 23, 2023. The



letter of intent is a pledge to move forward to a bid submission but does not commit the City of Markham to submit a final bid. By submitting a letter of intent, staff would participate in a question/answer session to clarify components of the bid before a submission is finalized.

#### RFP Schedule of Events

Event	Date
RFP open	June 9, 2023
Deadline to submit Indication of Intent	June 23, 2023 (2:00p.m. EST)
Deadline for submission of questions	June 30, 2023 (2:00p.m. EST)
Deadline for response to questions and issuance of addenda	July 7, 2023
Deadline for proposal submission	July 20, 2023 (2:00p.m. EST)
Evaluation period	July 24, 2023 – July 27, 2023
Site visits (if required)	July 26, 2023 – July 27, 2023
Host City Selection	July 28, 2023

Markham would be expected to provide ice time and officials at no cost to the organization as a minimum. The anticipated number of ice pads required is 14 -16. With 10 available in Markham it requires us to work a neighbouring municipal partners to secure additional ice surfaces.

At a very high level it is anticipated that host community would be making a commitment of \$650 - \$750k through direct funding, services in kind and/or sponsorship. These details would need to be finalized prior to submission of the bid proposal, which is due July 20, 2023. Staff will bring the bid proposal to Council for approval, which would outline the financial and resource commitment.