



City Council News January 9, 2019

The best hosts possible

At a meeting late last year someone commented that they were skeptical about Council's vision of Quesnel becoming a destination community; that our desire to become a community to which people specifically plan to come to as opposed to simply being known as a beautiful community to "drive through" seemed a bit of a reach given the extent of the highway traffic flowing through our downtown core.

Once I explained that becoming a "destination" community was a long-term strategy predicated on successfully achieving the North-South Interconnector and clearing all commercial truck and highway traffic out of the downtown core, the skeptic became intrigued about the potential for Quesnel to realize the full potential of being located at the confluence of the Quesnel and Fraser Rivers.

The success of the Reid Street revitalization project has energized even more people about the prospects of Quesnel becoming an attractive place for people to visit and to shop. The ongoing dialogue and public engagement about the development of our riverfront properties also has people excited about the prospects of offering visitors and residents unique and fun opportunities to enjoy these historically and naturally significant spaces in our community – especially if Front Street, Carson Avenue, and Legion Drive are free of truck and highway traffic.

While this long-term strategy unfolds, we have many opportunities to collectively "sell" our community brand and vision to the many visitors who already come to or pass through Quesnel. Council's strategy (assisted by the North Cariboo Joint Planning Committee) of making Quesnel a "hosting community" will increase these opportunities significantly over the next two years, as the City will soon play host to the athletes, officials, and spectators for the BC Men's and Women's Curling Championships, and to the Minerals North Conference in 2020. We are also looking to assist more not-for-profits, sports, and arts and culture groups to host even more events in and around Quesnel.

Securing an event is the first step in this process of becoming a "hosting community," but the real challenge and opportunity for our community is to truly become the best host we can be when the people arrive here and throughout their stay.

It's Council's hope that our business association partners will work with their member businesses to ensure that they not only take full advantage of the economic benefits event hosting will bring to our community, but that they will train their staff to "sell" our community as a whole to visiting delegates, athletes, and spectators. Front line staff in all of our businesses can become the best ambassadors for our community if they are knowledgeable about our

branding and about all the amenities and activities our community has to offer.

It's also Council's desire to see our entire populace engage in this hosting endeavor, to see every citizen take the time to learn more about our community's brand, our diverse amenities and opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities, and about our business community and what it has to offer.

During this challenging economic transition period, we all have an opportunity to play a role in enticing more people to visit our beautiful community and ensuring those who do visit enjoy the best our community has to offer them.

Let's be the best hosts possible for the upcoming Curling Championships and all of the other events our community will be hosting in the coming year.

Learn more:

- Curling Championships - quesnel2019.curlbc.ca/event-info
- City of Quesnel Brand - quesnel.ca/brand

Mayor Bob Simpson