

Friday, October 26, 2007

## **Chilliwack Announces Trio of Community Projects**

By City of Chilliwack

**CHILLIWACK** – Mayor Clint Hames announced plans today for three community projects. These are the construction of a new Chilliwack Cultural Centre, the renovation and upgrading of the Cheam Centre, and the installation of a synthetic turf sports field at Townsend Park. The trio of projects is slated to begin before the end of the year.

A Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) has been issued to identify qualified companies with the experience, resources and skills to design and construct the new Cultural Centre. A similar RFEI has been prepared for the Cheam Centre project, and will be released shortly. The synthetic turf field bid package is currently being prepared and will also be released in the next few weeks.

"The City of Chilliwack is committed to meeting the leisure needs of its citizens. These projects demonstrate our maturity as a community, one that recognizes the importance of having a diversity of cultural and recreational opportunities," said Mayor Hames.

The Chilliwack Cultural Centre project is a \$22 million plan to build a state-of-the-art cultural facility in the heart of downtown Chilliwack. The Centre will include an art gallery, a 500-seat performance theatre, a 150-seat recital hall, a 200-seat studio theatre, music instruction rooms, arts and crafts studios and related amenities. It will be located on City-owned land at The Landing, adjacent to existing sports and recreation facilities and Prospera Centre. The City will also be adding 4,000 square feet to the Chilliwack Archives portion of Evergreen Hall to meet the demand for space. Construction is expected to begin in April 2008 with completion in 2010.

"Chilliwack has a thriving arts community, with dedicated and talented individuals who've worked hard to grow programs and events. With the right facility, we can create extraordinary opportunities to support and nurture arts and culture in the community," said Mayor Hames.

The Cheam Centre Renovation plan is an \$8.5 million project to redevelop and upgrade the existing Centre into a high-quality community recreation destination. Plans include construction of a new six-lane 25 metre pool with change rooms, an administration area, storage rooms, and improvement of existing spaces. The existing swimming pool and curling rink will be demolished. The first phase of reconstruction is expected to be underway in June of 2008 with substantial completion in summer 2009. A fitness facility upgrade is planned as a second phase budgeted for 2012.

"Convenient access to facilities is a priority for the City," said Mayor Hames. "The Cheam Centre renovation will create a focal point on the South side of Chilliwack and complement existing facilities across the community."

The synthetic turf field at Townsend Park will replace the existing grass field 'A' and will accommodate a full-size soccer pitch, a Canadian rules football field and most other field sports. The \$2 million project will provide all-weather access to sports field users and reduce maintenance costs associated with grass fields. Synthetic turf is considered to be the most cost-efficient way of providing the maximum number of users the opportunity to play on a high-quality field that remains constant regardless of weather. Installation will begin in the Spring of 2008 and the new field is expected to be in use by the Fall of 2008.

Said Hames, "Chilliwack plays host to a number of sporting activities that will benefit from the installation of synthetic turf, including minor soccer, minor football and field hockey. Many communities throughout the Lower Mainland are moving toward this new standard. The installation of the synthetic turf field will give our young athletes the opportunity to play on fields that is fast becoming the standard across North America, and continue to keep Chilliwack on the leading edge."

These projects are included in the City's 10-year Comprehensive Municipal Plan. No borrowing is anticipated. The City will finance the Cultural Centre project with some assistance from cultural partner groups, service clubs, private sector supporters, and federal and provincial grants. As well, the City has applied for federal cost-sharing for the Cheam Centre Renovation. The synthetic turf field is also budgeted for 2007/08 as part of the City's 10-year Comprehensive Municipal Plan.

"Residents of the City of Chilliwack deserve the finest in community amenities. Our goal is to provide the best possible facilities within the most responsible financial framework," said Mayor Hames.

Project plans were developed through numerous consultative processes that included representatives from the City and community user groups. To find out more visit [www.chilliwack.com](http://www.chilliwack.com).

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