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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Regional District Reports on the Public Engagement for the Greater Vernon Cultural Centre Referendum**

With the local general elections and referendum for the Greater Vernon Cultural Centre complete, the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) is sharing the next steps in the project, as well as giving an overview of the public engagement and information opportunities that were offered leading up to the referendum.

“We believe it is important to provide complete and accurate information to the public, so a great deal of effort was put into sharing facts about the project and explaining the funding model for the construction of the Cultural Centre”, stated Tannis Nelson, Community Services Manager, RDNO. “We recognized that people would want to understand how this project would directly affect them, so we explained that the average cost increase per household would be \$48 per year. We also wanted to show that, while the RDNO was proposing to take on new debt they were also paying off some existing debt, which would result in a concurrent reduction on the tax bills of Greater Vernon households. It’s important that voters have confidence that debt is being managed responsibly.”

The objective of the Greater Vernon Cultural Centre referendum information campaign was to provide the project information necessary to allow eligible voters to make an informed decision, as well as to provide information on when and where to vote.

Beginning with an initial kick-off event for the information campaign on August 28, 2018, the RDNO used a variety of avenues to bring information about the project to the community. The information was provided through a combination of radio and newspaper ads, information tables, open houses, print material, and a dedicated webpage that included background information on the project, a fact sheet, and a frequently asked questions document. The webpage received 2,326 visits between August 28 and October 20.

The RDNO also gave over a dozen presentations, which delivered the information to more than 800 people in-person, and ran over 30 information tables at various events and locations, exposing thousands of Greater Vernon voters to the opportunity to ask questions and get more information directly from the RDNO.

Finally, in order to directly reach each household in the Greater Vernon area, the RDNO sent out an informational brochure that explained the funding model for the project and impact on taxes, the functions of the proposed Cultural Centre, and encouraged people to become informed on the project before they headed to the polls.

## Next Steps

With the referendum approved, the RDNO is now focused on securing the infrastructure grant funding that was outlined in the project funding model. In fact, on Thursday November 8, 2018, the Greater Vernon Advisory Committee will be considering the staff recommendation to submit a \$12.8 million grant application to the *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program* for the Cultural Centre project. The *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program* is a joint provincial and federal infrastructure funding initiative.

Once adequate funding is secured for the project construction costs, a detailed design process can begin with additional community engagement being one of the first steps. “We know the size and infrastructure needs of the Cultural Centre, but we will be reaching out to the community for more input and participation as we start on the next phase of design,” said Tannis Nelson. “With this additional information we can finalize the construction and operational details, and ensure that we create the Cultural Centre that the community voted for.”

## Public Engagement Breakdown

- August 28 – Kick-off Press Conference and Media Release

### Presentations:

- Southern Interior Power Pioneers  
Vernon Community Arts Centre -  
ACNO members
- Multi-cultural network
- PROBUS
- People Place – Accessibility  
meeting
- Canadian Federation of University  
Women
- Optimists Club
- Vision North Okanagan
- Shriners Club
- Mackie Lake House Board of  
Directors
- City of Vernon Economic  
Development Advisory Committee
- OKIB Council
- City of Vernon Council Candidates  
Forum at Performing Arts Centre

### Information Tables / Open Houses

- Kal Tire Place North – Grand Opening
- Sayonara Summer – Downtown Vernon
- Parisian Garden Party – Mackie Lake  
House
- Recreation Master Plan – Joint Open  
House - Recreation Centre
- Schubert Centre – Birthday Lunch (X2)
- Halina Centre – Pancake Breakfasts (X2)
- Recreation Master Plan – Joint Open  
House – BX Elementary School
- Gallery Vertigo – Open House
- Recreation Master Plan – Joint Open  
House – Coldstream Council Chambers
- Mayoral Forum (Chamber of Commerce)  
– Prestige Inn
- ‘B’ and ‘C’ Meet the Candidates Forum –  
BX Fire Hall
- Village Green Mall (X3)
- Vernon Farmers Market (X15)
- Vipers Games (X3)

For further information, please call 250.550.3700 or email us at [communityservices@rdno.ca](mailto:communityservices@rdno.ca).