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TOURISM PRINCE GEORGE ANNOUNCES NEW LOCATION

PRINCE GEORGE - The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) will be making its new home beside the Prince George Conference and Civic Centre location, a unanimous decision by the Tourism Prince George (TPG) Board of Directors.

“We are thrilled to have finally found a long-term spot that meets the needs of visitors who are stimulating our local economy,” said Paul Robison, Chair of TPG. “In addition, being located downtown is an ideal spot for Tourism Prince George to be a key community partner and help the downtown—the core of our community—thrive.”

The conclusion to move the VIC to this location was based on it achieving the highest overall score measured by the independent consulting firm, Nycholat Consulting.

“Our primary focus aside from assessing financial feasibility, lease stability, and public sentiment is to focus on supporting those who are likely to extend their stay in the Prince George community,” consultant Josh Nycholat explained to the Board of Directors.

As a destination marketing organization, TPG works strategically to attract visitors who will stay longer, discover the community, shop, eat and play in Prince George.

With the Canada Games Plaza now at the doorstep of the VIC, it opens up opportunities for TPG to create a vibrant downtown core through events and pop-up attractions.

“This location also gives us an excellent starting point for visitors to support many small businesses within a two to three block radius,” said TPG CEO Colin Carson.

This decision, made by the Board, to relocate to the Rotunda came after six months of research and analysis. “We are grateful for the contributions by the City of Prince George and the Pine Centre Mall staff for working with Nycholat Consulting to gather information throughout the decision-making process,” said Robison. “We look forward to continued partnerships with Pine Centre Mall, a hub and valued attraction to the visitor economy.”

City council approved for TPG to lease the city-owned space starting in 2024. Renovations will be phased in, and an official opening is anticipated for Spring/Summer 2024.

“We are excited to see this new Centre come to life and collaborate with the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation to create a visitor experience that reflects their rich culture and heritage,” said Carson. “We look forward to welcoming visitors to the Basecamp of the North, from our new basecamp here at the Rotunda.”

Please see attached documents for background information.

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For media inquiries please contact:

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BACKGROUND

Thriving in Downtown

- Our new location will capitalize on the neighbouring Civic and Conference Centre and Public Library, which attracts 500,000 visitors a year, many who are travelling from abroad for events like national and provincial conferences, live events and exhibitions.
- Tourism Prince George is committed to supporting local businesses, and this location ensures we can meet this mandate.
- Downtown is made up of a majority of small businesses whose livelihood is dependent on the local economy. We know that when money is injected into these businesses, the dollars stay in the community longer.
- It is walking distance to attractions like Two Rivers Gallery, Connaught Hill, Canfor Leisure Pool and diverse retail and restaurants.
- Walking distance to 850 hotel rooms.
- Tourism Prince George understands the challenges that our downtown core, along with many other municipalities around the country, face. We are committed to being a part of the solution, and we look forward to working with community partners to create a vibrant environment.

Better for the Budget

- A thorough cost analysis showed that the Rotunda was the most cost effective, saving approximately \$60,000 annually in rent, compared to other potential locations.
- Other cost savings were found in staffing. The Visitor Information Centre hours will remain flexible, and staffing will continue to be based off of high and low tourism seasons.
- Renovations will be based on a phased-in approach, making the cost more affordable over time.
- Tourism Prince George will seek grant funding to help support the revitalization of the Visitor Information Centre.

Parking and accessibility

- Tourism Prince George will work collaboratively with the City to ensure accessible parking is available for differently-abled people, and larger vehicles like RVs in a convenient spot for easy stop-and-go.
- Signage along the major highways will direct visitors to our new location, which is accessible from all major connectors.

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SUPPORTING QUOTES

“Based on the outcome of our study, we are profoundly confident that the rotunda is the most sensible, values aligned, and community centric location for the new VIC that will be co-located with existing attractions and support local business in downtown Prince George.” – Josh Nycholat, Principal, Nycholat Consulting

“This is great news! We are thrilled to welcome Tourism Prince George, visitors and residents into the heart of our community—downtown.” – Colleen Van Mook, Executive Director, Downtown Prince George

“On behalf of the City I can say we are pleased with this decision following their extensive research and community consultation. We look forward to having Tourism Prince George in our downtown core, a location that will better direct visitors to local businesses while they are staying in Prince George.” –Simon Yu, Mayor, City of Prince George

“The Prince George Public Library is looking forward to having Tourism Prince George as its new neighbours. We see this is a great opportunity to connect with visitors and open our doors to new people.” - Paul Burry, Library Director, Prince George Public Library