

# Report

**City of Merritt**  
**POLICY Committee**  
**May 22, 2025**

**File Number: 0340-20**

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Cynthia White, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Date:** May 14, 2025  
**Subject:** Advertising on Public Property Policy

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Policy and Bylaw Review Committee recommend Council consider the “Advertising on Municipal Property Policy”.**

**Background:**

Currently the City does not have a formalized policy for advertising on municipal land or in municipal facilities. Currently the only approved advertising sales is in the Nicola Valley Centennial Arena by the Merritt Centennials Junior Hockey team. For many years, there has been no contract with this group, but ongoing advertising rights relied on a historic agreement. With the new user agreement with the Centennials a review of their advertising agreement will occur at the end of the 2026/27 season.

We are now receiving additional requests for community/user groups to fundraise through the sale of advertising space in public facilities.

Advertising in public facilities and on public lands are an excellent means to generate non-tax revenue, but to date the City of Merritt has not yet taken advantage of this non-tax revenue generating opportunity. A review of advertising policies in municipalities across Canada provides a sense that most many municipal governments retain advertising rights and direct the revenue to offset the costs of recreation facility operations, capital upgrades, and program costs or user fees. Some communities collaborate with youth user groups to sell advertising space as a fundraiser and the revenue is cost shared between the user group and the municipality. One municipality sold the advertising spaces but collaborated with a not for profit that was able to use

some of the funding to support youth access to sport in a manner that appears to be similar to programs like Jump Start and Kid Sport.

When considering how best to formulate that policy, Council may want to consider how revenues best support the whole community and whether the City will sell all the space and retain all the revenue or offer fundraising opportunities to certain user groups through a revenue sharing agreement. If Council opts for the second option, a decision will need to include what types of user groups can access this fundraising initiative.

If sale of advertising space becomes a fundraising opportunity the City would like to offer, staff would work with groups that meet the criteria set by Council to determine how they best fit in the program and which advertising spaces will be allocated to them.

The City will maintain authority over types of advertising, where it will occur, and rates. Administration has provided a draft policy that provides for non-tax revenue generation for the City and to create a new fundraising opportunity for not-for-profit organizations which support youth recreation. Recreation is defined as an activity done for enjoyments when one is not working. We often think of this as the things we do in our leisure time. This can include but is not limited to; active recreation and sport, arts and culture activities, reading, cooking, etc.

Between the Sponsorship and Naming Rights Policy and initiating an advertising policy, the City could see significant and consistent revenue being generated to support sustainability of facilities and programs in the community.

### **Types of Facilities**

There are a number of types of facilities that could support advertising opportunities such as:

- Baseball diamonds
- Pavilions
- Lacrosse box
- Benches
- Bus shelters
- Door skins

It will be important to differentiate between advertising and sponsorship and naming opportunities. Sponsoring or having naming rights for a facility does not have to preclude advertising opportunities in that facility.

### **Options / discussion**

1. Recommend the policy as presented for consideration by Council.
2. Request administration makes specific changes to the presented policy prior to consideration by Council.
3. Not recommend for consideration by Council.

**Financial / Risk Implications:**

Advertising opportunities may help to generate revenue that can be allocated to operations and maintenance as well as capital projects, allowing the City to move forward on projects that are currently at risk because a lack of reserve funds.

Advertising poses a risk if there are not clear criteria as to what advertising is eligible in particular locations. The proposed policy addresses these concerns.

**Attachments:**

Advertising on Public Property Policy

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Cynthia White**  
**Chief Administrative Officer**