

Hosting Events and Festivals in the City

Recommendation

That Community and Public Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That the Festivals and Events COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program, as set out in Attachment 1 of the June 30, 2021, Citizen Services report CS00190, be approved.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 2, 2020, City Council meeting the following motion passed:

That Administration work with festival and event organizers and engage the province to reduce red tape/costs (ex: policing costs due to the *Traffic Safety Act*) for hosting events/festivals in the city of Edmonton.

Executive Summary

Administration engaged with local festival and event producers and the City's civic service providers to review the 2018 Festival and Events Delivery Action Plan and assess the existing strategic priorities and accompanying actions to determine if changes were warranted to better support festival and event delivery in Edmonton and reduce red tape and costs. Local festivals and events identified a number of process and procedure updates to support more effective delivery of festivals and events, requested civic services modifications as a result of increased civic services costs, and requested more financial support due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their operations, programs, and services. There are nine updates to the Festivals and Events Delivery Action Plan, including four new actions and five adjustments to existing actions.

Report

Festivals and events are important to Edmonton as they contribute to our local economy, connect citizens, showcase local and international talent, and draw people to our city. The Festivals and Events Delivery Action Plan (Attachment 2) documents how the City of Edmonton supports the delivery of festivals and events in Edmonton. To ensure the plan remains relevant and responsive to changes, Administration reviews the plan annually, with more extensive updates at least every four years. Following the November 4, 2020, motion, Administration conducted a more extensive

review of the plan by engaging local festival and event producers, the Edmonton Arts Council and Explore Edmonton to understand how best to support the festivals and events and reduce red tape and costs.

Festival and event producers provided feedback in three areas:

- Request for financial support due to the impact of COVID-19 on local festival and event organizations' operations, programs and services.
- Request for civic services modifications as a result of increased civic services costs (such as policing).
- Request for process and procedure updates to support more effective delivery of festivals and events.

Administration took this feedback and developed a set of updated or new actions to the Strategic Priorities outlined in the plans (Attachment 3).

New actions include:

1. The establishment of a one-time Festivals and Events COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program, aligned with other COVID-19 recovery business initiatives
2. Continued Engagement and Support for Festival Growth
3. Provide Three Year Site and Date Commitments for Signature and Foundational Events
4. Establish the Electronic Dance Music Events Inter-Agency Panel

Updates to existing actions include:

1. Edmonton Arts Council will continue to provide grant funding that considers multi-year structures
2. Provide an increase in the Police Civic Services Subsidy to Eligible Festivals and Events based on Classification
3. Implement a Layered Approach to Security Personnel/Temporary Site Infrastructure Improvements
4. EPark Billing Procedure Update
5. Commitment to Brokering Relationships

Budget/Financial Implication

An amount of up to \$1,000,000 has been allocated in the City Manager's 2021 Emergent COVID-19 recovery budget to provide one-time funding for the Festivals and Events COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program.

Changes to the Festival and Event Delivery Action Plan for 2021 will be funded using existing budgets. Funding beyond 2021 would be subject to corporate prioritization processes and future budget deliberations.

Public Engagement

Annual festival and events producers were invited to provide survey feedback on the civic service cost structures and potential areas of red tape reduction. Producers representing an array of local festivals and events were also invited to participate in a virtual engagement session with Administration and some had the opportunity to meet directly with the City Manager.

Internal engagement was also conducted with the various civic service providers including more in-depth conversations with Edmonton Police Service and City Administration.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome: Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play			
Outcome	Measures	Results	Targets
Edmontonians support event attraction to their city	Number of event attendees	2019: 4.1 million	New target adjustment required that considers the impact of COVID-19
	Percent of Edmontonians surveyed who support the provision of municipal support for events	2017: 65 percent	Maintain or increase over prior years
Corporate Outcome: Edmonton has a globally competitive and entrepreneurial business climate			
Significant economic impact is derived from events in Edmonton	Estimated economic impact from events hosted in Edmonton	N/A	Positive economic impact for Edmonton

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (w. current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
If recommendation is approved						

Public Perception	Citizens may question if Council puts higher priority on initiatives that people perceive as non-essential	3 - Possible	2 - Moderate	6 - Low	Ensure Citizens are aware and supportive of events and the benefits they offer our city	Identify alternate sources of event funding and operational strategies that reduces the need for public funding
If recommendation is not approved						
Economic	Ability to attract tourists to the city to attend events may be reduced. Failure to leverage this opportunity would be detrimental to the regional economy	3 - Possible	3 - Major	9 - Medium	Continue to build support for events within Council, Corporate Edmonton and citizens	Develop strategies to engage Edmonton Global and Corporate Edmonton to increase support, reducing the need for public funding. Explore options to develop more secure funding sources, reducing need for public support
Public perception	Citizens support for events may decline if they perceive that events are not valued	3 - Possible	2 - Moderate	6 - Low	Engage citizens as volunteers, spectators and organizers of events	Increase efforts to make citizens aware of the benefits of events so support grows. Increase engagement with citizens by providing additional opportunities for them to participate in events

Attachments

1. Festivals and Events COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program - Eligibility Criteria
2. Festival and Events Delivery Action Plan
3. Festival and Events Delivery Action Plan - Updates

Others Reviewing this Report

- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- M. Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Planning and Economy
- K. Fallis-Howell, Acting City Solicitor