

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

<b>Recommendation</b>			
That the April 10, 2024, Community Services report CS02246, be received for information.			
<b>Requested Action</b>		Information only	
<b>ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle</b>		<b>ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals</b>	
<b>CONNECTED</b> This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		<b>Healthy City, Regional Prosperity</b>	
<b>City Plan Values</b>	BELONG. LIVE. CREATE.		
<b>City Plan Big City Move(s)</b>	A community of communities  Catalyze and converge	<b>Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities</b> (select the most applicable from the priorities listed)	Arts and culture  Economic Growth
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	Transforming for the future, Serving Edmontonians		
<b>Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing Field of Play Report - Citizens Panel on Major Events (June 2017)</li> <li>• C603 Events Policy</li> <li>• Edmonton Growth and Attraction Strategy</li> <li>• Edmonton Events Sport and Culture Attraction Plan (October 2018)</li> <li>• Economic Action Plan (April 2021)</li> </ul>		
<b>Related Council Discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 27, 2017, Verbal Report, The Changing Field of Play Report - Citizens Panel on Major Events</li> <li>• October 3, 2018, Citizen Services report CR_4999, Major Events Strategy</li> <li>• October 30, 2024, Community Services report CS02058, Event Attraction Funding</li> <li>• November 21, 2024, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02052 - Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment - 2023-2026 Operating Budget</li> </ul>		

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

### Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 21/22/27/28/29, 2023, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration request the Edmonton Sport Council to facilitate an update to the event attraction action plan, including but not limited to engagement with Explore Edmonton, Edmonton Events, Do North and any other relevant stakeholders, and that the update include recommendations on a future model that gives clear direction on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, governance, funding, types of events and interface with external stakeholders such as other orders of government, private sector sponsors, event producers, facility operators and advocacy groups.

### Executive Summary

- Sport Edmonton (formally known as the Edmonton Sport Council) convened a meeting on January 20, 2024 including the City and relevant stakeholders, to discuss the Council motion, including updates needed to the Sport and Cultural Attraction Action Plan and a recommended model to guide future event attraction
- The Sport and Cultural Attraction Plan is being updated to reflect the agreed direction, including a name change from the Sport and Culture Event Attraction Plan to the Major Sport Events Strategic Framework.
- The Framework includes an updated model for event consideration, address governance and clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, highlight the importance of appropriate levels of funding, update the environmental analysis and strategic actions and include a new scorecard for event evaluation purposes.
- In stakeholder discussions to update the Major Sport Event Strategic Framework it was acknowledged that inadequate funding remains a significant challenge to host attracted events in Edmonton. Establishing a more consistent source of funding at the municipal level is a critical step to ensure Edmonton remains a leading host city in Canada and that municipal funds can be leveraged with other orders of government and corporate sponsors.
- The Major Sport Event Strategic Framework deals solely with sporting events, however, a similar event consideration process would be used for cultural events with the Edmonton Arts Council being engaged, rather than Sport Edmonton. This is the same approach that was used in 2023 for the JUNOs and 2024 for the Canadian Country Music Awards.

## REPORT

Sporting and cultural events provide ways for Edmonton to diversify and grow its economy, foster national and international brand opportunities and create inclusive, fun ways to connect Edmontonians to their neighbours and visitors from around the world.

Events are strategic investments in Edmonton, supporting The City Plan, Economic Action Plan and Explore Edmonton's Tourism Master Plan<sup>1</sup>. In 2023, the City invested \$2.2 million in eight

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.exploreedmonton.com/images/Edmonton\\_Tourism\\_Master\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.exploreedmonton.com/images/Edmonton_Tourism_Master_Plan.pdf)

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

international events, which, based on reporting by Explore Edmonton, generated \$72 million in economic impact<sup>2</sup>. Edmonton has consistently ranked in the top 40 in global communications agency BCW's international poll of global cities for hosting events<sup>3</sup>. In 2023 the city ranked 38 globally and second in Canada behind Toronto.

### Event Attraction Action Plan Update

On January 20, 2024, Sport Edmonton convened a meeting to discuss the November 21, 2023 City Council motion, updates needed to the Sport and Cultural Event Attraction Action Plan and a recommended model to guide these efforts in the future. This meeting included several Board members, local event producers, research experts, community members, Explore Edmonton and City Administration.

There was consensus that the current model used to attract sport and cultural events to Edmonton was working well; however, stakeholders shared there were areas in the Edmonton Events Sport and Cultural Attraction Plan (renamed the Major Sport Events Strategic Framework) where clarification could better align the group's efforts. The following summarizes the discussion:

#### What is working well

- Relevancy of the vision, mission and objectives for attracting events to Edmonton;
- Effectiveness of the partnership with City of Edmonton and Explore Edmonton;
- Strong coordination between event attraction efforts and the delivery of civic services to stage events;
- Relationships with other orders of government, event producers, rights holders, local venue operators, etc.;
- Positive economic impact for Edmonton, creating social opportunities for Edmontonians, and supporting brand awareness for the community; and
- Engagement with stakeholders and Edmontonians, and activation efforts in the community.

#### What needs to be updated or added (from 2018 Attraction Plan)

- Environmental scan with current event-hosting information;
- Strategic actions to guide event attraction efforts in the next three years (2024-2026);
- Clarified governance, including roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders;
- The type of events to be pursued offering a balanced portfolio of events:
  - *Recurring*: Events that recur annually and allow Edmonton to align with certain sports, an efficient transfer for knowledge and attract repeat visitors (e.g., 3X3 basketball, triathlon, Canadian Finals Rodeo)
  - *One-time*: Events with one-time opportunities (NHL Heritage Classic, International Triathlon Union Grand Final, JUNOs) that allow Edmonton to break through to new demographics and keep the event hosting calendar fresh and exciting.

---

<sup>2</sup> Explore Edmonton provides individual economic impact assessment calculations of each event to the City of Edmonton. Explore Edmonton's public annual report does not break out to this level of specificity.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bcw-global.com/assets/BCW-Ranking-Sports-Cities\\_Report2023.pdf](https://www.bcw-global.com/assets/BCW-Ranking-Sports-Cities_Report2023.pdf)

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

- The addition of a scorecard for evaluating events that considers a number of elements including venues, fit with Edmonton as a community, economic benefits, social and community opportunities for engagement and impact to build Edmonton's brand.

Several discussion participants indicated that there is stable, dedicated funding at the municipal level, however, it is currently not sufficient. Increasing funding at the municipal level could be leveraged with other orders of government and corporate sponsors. Stakeholders noted that when event budgets are limited or have to be reduced, core event hosting costs must be covered first before community benefits are contemplated.

### Future event attraction efforts

The updated Major Sport Events Strategic Framework will reflect the feedback discussed above. This updated Framework includes an updated Event Consideration Process model to attract events to the city (Attachment 1). The model outlines the new community advocacy role developed for Sport Edmonton and provides clarity on the process for event producers and rights holders. To provide clarity on governance, and clear direction on roles and responsibilities, the Framework provides stakeholder roles and responsibilities (Attachment 2).

Under the updated model, Explore Edmonton will lead the sales side of the event attraction effort for sport and cultural events. This includes:

- destination marketing of Edmonton as a great host city,
- building relationships with provincial and national sport organizations, International Sport Federations and event rights holders, all of whom may be lead contacts for events being pursued, and
- researching potential events that Edmonton may want to host and developing the bid documents if required.

Explore Edmonton will continue to engage City Administration to assess and evaluate events under consideration. Together, both parties will determine if the event is a good fit for the community, can be supported by civic services and venues as required, has local champions in the sport community (e.g., provincial sport organizations, Edmonton sports organizations) and aligns with City of Edmonton strategies. Depending on the event, Sport Edmonton may also be engaged from a community advocacy perspective. If the event is a cultural event, the Edmonton Arts Council will be engaged in a similar role as Sport Edmonton for a sporting event.

Explore Edmonton will lead event funding discussions with other orders of government, engaging City Council and Administration and community stakeholders (business, sports, etc.) as required. Event producers and rights holders will continue to advocate to all potential event funders, however, advocacy will be done in collaboration with Explore Edmonton to ensure alignment on priorities and key messaging.

Once the event is secured, City Administration will take a lead role, if civic services are required, to support event delivery. Explore Edmonton will support marketing and destination activation efforts while the City and Sport Edmonton will support community engagement and activation.

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

### Funding streams for sport and cultural events

Currently, attracted events are sponsored or funded by a number of entities, including a portion of the City's base budget. The following outlines typical funding streams for sport and cultural events:

- *City of Edmonton:*
  - The Community Recreation and Culture Branch budgets \$500,000 annually to sponsor large national (e.g., JUNOs) and internationally attracted sport and cultural events.
  - The Downtown Vibrancy Fund has provided grants in recent years to help fund attracted events being hosted in downtown Edmonton to improve community engagement, activation efforts and encourage people to visit downtown. In 2023, \$30,000 was provided to support delivery of attracted events.
  - The Community Recreation and Culture Branch has a separate grant program, the Sport Hosting Grant program, with \$75,000 available annually to support provincial, national and small international recreational or amateur sport events.
  - Any funding request for events that exceeds Administration's delegated authority or funding available within the base budget will be brought to Council. For example, the 2023 JUNOs or the Alberta 2030 Commonwealth Games bid.
- *Explore Edmonton:*
  - Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels provides Explore Edmonton with annual funding to support destination marketing efforts, of which a portion is provided to bring sport and cultural events to the city. This funding is used to sponsor provincial, national and international sport and culture events.
  - Explore Edmonton receives \$11.7 million in tax levy funding. Council approved an additional \$6 million in one-time funding for 2024. The funding is used for operations and staffing, it is not used to directly sponsor sport and culture events.
- *Other Orders of Government:* Both the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada frequently provide grant funding toward events in Edmonton. The amount of funding provided by either the federal or provincial government varies depending on the event and the benefits it offers.
  - Government of Alberta:
    - Government of Alberta typically sponsors international sporting events and key cultural events (e.g., JUNOs or CCMAs). Either the event producer or Explore Edmonton apply for the funding from the provincial government.
    - With demand for limited provincial funding increasing, the Government of Alberta is developing a major event framework that will set out its approach for supporting major events. Their development process included engagement with the City of Edmonton.
  - Government of Canada:
    - Federal funding for events flows through a national sport organization or, in the case of cultural events such as the JUNOs, there is annual funding provided to the rights holder (i.e. Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.)

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

- The Government of Canada, through Sport Canada, manages and distributes \$21.6 million annually through their Hosting Program to assist Canadian communities in hosting world-class international sporting events.
- Edmonton has leveraged municipal funding to secure its share of this funding for the hosting of international and national level events.
- *Corporate Sponsorships:* Event producers are responsible for securing corporate sponsorships, however, the City and Explore Edmonton may support these efforts by facilitating connections.
- *Rights Holders:* In many cases the rights holders (e.g., International Federations) of an event contribute to the overall cost of staging events in Edmonton. The amount can vary from event to event.
- *Event Producers:* Event producers may also provide support for an event, usually in the form of in-kind services.
- *Venue Operators:* Depending on the event a venue operator, such as Rogers Place, may also contribute to the event, usually in value in kind services.
- *Event sales:* Events have additional streams of revenue through items such as ticket sales, merchandising, concessions and 50/50 initiatives that may or may not apply depending on the event structure.

### Budget/Financial Implications

City Council passed a motion on November 21, 2023 directing Administration to bring forward an unfunded service package of \$2 million to be added to Community Recreation and Culture's annual budget in 2024 on a multi-year basis ending in 2026, to support event attraction efforts as part of the 2024 Spring Supplementary Operating Budget Adjustment discussions.

If approved, this funding combined with the current \$500,000 available would provide a more sustainable municipal funding source for the attraction of sport and cultural events to the city, which could then be leveraged with other orders of government and corporate sponsorship.

### Community Insight

Sport Edmonton has a mandate to represent the sport and active recreation community in the city. Sport Edmonton's Board of Directors is elected and accountable to the members of Sport Edmonton. The Board governs in relation to the Objectives and Bylaws as approved by the membership, other directions of the membership adopted at the Annual General Meeting, and the Strategic Plan. The current Board of Directors represent diverse sport and active recreation backgrounds including parasports, research expertise and community leadership.

Within the updated Major Sport Events Strategic Framework, Sport Edmonton will have an increased role in community advocacy and legacy efforts associated with event attraction, expanding the opportunity for community involvement in the hosting of national and international sport events in the city. In the case of cultural events such as the JUNOs and Canadian Country Music Awards, the Edmonton Arts Council will be engaged in this role, similar to the 2023 JUNOs and 2024 CCMAs.

## EDMONTON SPORT AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION PLAN UPDATE

### GBA+

When the Edmonton team, including Explore Edmonton and Administration, evaluates events to bring to the city, all parties consider the social or community benefits an event offers to Edmontonians. In recent years, increased focus has been included as part of these events to better address equity, diversity and inclusiveness including:

- Donating tickets to organizations such as Kids Upfront.
- Working with event producers to create festival elements that are free, inclusive and accessible.
- Hosting coaching and training sessions for children and youth representing equity-deserving groups.
- Creating school-based programs to introduce children and youth to the sport (e.g., triathlon).
- Increasing access to sport and music programs through legacy funding generated from events
- Engaging Indigenous individuals and companies in business opportunities, ceremonies and planning related to event hosting.
- Attracting events that provide opportunities for both male, female and para athletes.
- Working with event producers to raise the level of recognition and compensation for competitions featuring female athletes.
- Providing volunteer and skill development opportunities.

The Edmonton Sport Council commissioned a report *Building Social Legacies through Mega, Major and Signature Sport Events*<sup>4</sup> in September 2019. The report's direction will be valuable in helping to guide future efforts to ensure events provide social benefits for Edmontonians.

### Attachments

1. Event Consideration Process
2. Event Stakeholders: Roles and Responsibilities

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social\\_Legacies\\_Sport\\_For\\_Life\\_2019-1.pdf](https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social_Legacies_Sport_For_Life_2019-1.pdf)