

# Funding for Saskatoon Sport and Major Event Advisory Committee

## ISSUE

In November 2021, Discover Saskatoon (formerly known as Tourism Saskatoon) notified the City of Saskatoon (City) that they were dissolving Saskatoon Sports Tourism and establishing a new Saskatoon Sport and Major Event Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) with a similar mandate, for the acquisition of high-profile sporting events. In their letter they also requested consideration for the City to continue its funding for this new committee, currently \$7,500 annually (see Appendix 1). As this letter arrived too late to be included with the 2022-2023 Business Plan and Budget documents, Administration provided a verbal update during budget deliberations of the organizational change made by Discover Saskatoon and their request to have the funding previously directed to Saskatoon Sports Tourism to now be directed towards the newly formed Advisory Committee. This report provides additional information on this matter.

## BACKGROUND

In 1999, Tourism Saskatoon, now Discover Saskatoon, launched Saskatoon Sports Tourism with the mission to coordinate and facilitate the economic and social growth of Saskatoon through sports tourism. The goals of this organization included:

- Strategically promoting the attraction and retention of sport events;
- Creating and submitting bids for events;
- Supporting volunteers and administrators in sport;
- Maximizing benefits for sport businesses, infrastructure and participants; and
- Enhancing the development of the sport tourism visitor economy.

Saskatoon Sports Tourism was funded by Discover Saskatoon's Destination Marketing Program (DMP) and through annual contributions from its seven investing partners, which includes the City. As an investing partner, the City had a representative from the Administration on the Saskatoon Sports Tourism Board of Directors since its inception in 1999. In 2022 and 2023, the City's operating budget includes a funding contribution in the form of an investing partner fee of \$7,500. Prior to 2018, the investing partner fee was \$5,000.

Following an internal review and in consultation with the Executive Committee of Saskatoon Sports Tourism, Discover Saskatoon as the managing partner and sole member of Saskatoon Sports Tourism, made the decision to transition the operating model from an independent board to that of an advisory committee and established the Saskatoon Sport and Major Event Advisory Committee. The primary drivers of this decision were operational/administrative efficiencies and a stronger alignment with the destination wide strategic initiatives required to support Discover Saskatoon's recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discover Saskatoon's Director of Business Development and the former Sports Tourism Business Development Specialist will continue to manage and provide administrative support to the newly formed Advisory Committee. The previous Saskatoon Sports Tourism volunteer Board Members were all invited, and several have agreed to join the Advisory Committee. Similar to the former Saskatoon Sports Tourism Board, the Advisory Committee will continue to provide advisory support and drive sport tourism opportunities.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

The Advisory Committee held their inaugural meeting on March 14, 2022; the mandate includes:

- Providing strategic advice to Discover Saskatoon in the pursuit of sport and major event tourism in Saskatoon;
- Identifying and evaluating sport and cultural events;
- Recommending bid programs and events for potential investment by Discover Saskatoon; and
- Supporting Discover Saskatoon with advocacy, communications and evaluation of sport and major event performances in Saskatoon.

Major cultural events were not included in the scope of work for Saskatoon Sport Tourism and the addition of these to the Advisory Committee mandate will allow for a more robust pursuit of these events for Saskatoon.

The City continues to have a representative from the Administration on the newly formed Advisory Committee.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

Sports events and tourism have made significant contributions to Saskatoon's economy in the past. Provincial, national and international sporting events which have been hosted in Saskatoon have been key drivers of visitation rates to Saskatoon. Future sport tourism and major events will be important elements in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discover Saskatoon has requested that the City provide the Advisory Committee with the same \$7,500 in funding that was approved for the former Saskatoon Sports Tourism. The City has a long history of providing funding support to Saskatoon Sports Tourism and maintaining this investment will continue to support the pursuit of major sport and cultural event tourism in Saskatoon. While the governance model has changed to an advisory committee that operates under Discover Saskatoon, the focus and goals of the committee remain the same, which is the pursuit of major events that will provide further economic and social benefits to Saskatoon.

Discover Saskatoon is currently reviewing and determining the format for annual reporting for key stakeholders, including the City. Reporting may include information on the return on investment as it relates to major event bid acquisition (i.e., number of bids

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confirmed, number of room nights actualized, number of anticipated future room nights, current economic impact and future anticipated economic impact). Information on other legacy items related to the Advisory Committee may also be incorporated into annual reporting.

Based on the information provided in the report and unless otherwise directed by City Council, the approved 2022 annual funding contribution in the amount of \$7,500 will be provided to Discover Saskatoon to support the work of Advisory Committee.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications of this planned approach as the funding in the amount of \$7,500 was approved in the 2022 operating budget and identified in the 2023 operating budget under the Community Support Business Line.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Unless otherwise directed by City Council, the City will provide the budgeted funding contribution of \$7,500 in 2022 upon receipt of an invoice from Discover Saskatoon. Discover Saskatoon will provide an annual report to the City to validate the return on investment resulting from this funding contribution.

### **APPENDICES**

1. November 12, 2021 Letter from Tourism Saskatoon

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Written by: Jody Hauta, Recreation Facilities and Programs Manager  
Reviewed by: Andrew Roberts, Director of Recreation and Community Development  
Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services

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