

Conference Bid – Federation of Canadian Municipalities – FCM 2026, 2027 or 2028

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) has recently been invited to submit a bid to host the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference and Trade Show in either 2026, 2027 or 2028. The Bid requires endorsement by City Council for support to host the conference. Should City Council support the bid to host a future FCM Conference and Trade Show?

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council:

1. That City Council endorse the bid to host the FCM Conference and Trade Show in either 2026, 2027 or 2028; and
2. That City Council approve an exception to Policy C03-007, Special Events and approve a maximum financial commitment of \$300,000 for the event.

BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon (City) last hosted the FCM Conference and Trade Show and the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) Conference and Tradeshow in 2012. City Council approved \$300,000 in financial support toward the hosting of these two conferences, and the Host Organizing Committee for the FCM conference consisted of a combination of City Councillors and administrative staff, and administrative staff hosted the CAMA Conference.

Further to this, City Council, at its meeting held on August 18, 2016, received a [Report](#) from the General Manager, Corporate Performance Department, requesting support for the City to submit a bid to host either the 2020 or 2021 FCM Conference, and resolved:

1. That City Council issue a letter of invitation to host the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference for either 2021 or 2022; and
2. That City Council approve an exception to Council Policy C03-007, Special Events and approve a maximum financial commitment of \$300,000 for the event.

Ultimately, the City was not successful in the bid to host the FCM Annual Conference Trade Show in either 2020 or 2021 and no funding was provided.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

On October 12, 2023, the Mayor's Office received a letter (see Appendix 1) from FCM's Chief Executive Officer, indicating the FCM would be pleased to receive a bid from Saskatoon to host the FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show (Conference) in either 2026, 2027 or 2028.

The Conference, typically hosted in late May or early June, brings together elected officials, senior municipal managers and private sector representatives from across Canada in an informative, educational and interactive environment.

The primary responsibility for the delivery of this event lies with FCM staff; however, the Host Organizing Committee works closely with FCM staff and is responsible for specific duties related to the Conference.

Discover Saskatoon has been engaged to assist in the work of preparing a bid package and had been in contact with the FCM Office during the process of preparing the bid package. A letter from Discover Saskatoon requesting a resolution from City Council to endorse the bid to host the Conference, which is a requirement of the bid package and also requests consideration for approval of funding support to host this conference is included (see Appendix 2).

The bid package has been prepared indicating the preferred year for Saskatoon to host this conference would be 2027, to give Administration and Discover Saskatoon sufficient time to coordinate hosting and planning logistics for the Conference, including securing additional potential grant funding and sponsorships. This ensures we avoid hosting the June 2028 conference, which would be only a short time prior to the 2028 Municipal Election. During subsequent conversations with FCM there was an indication of the potential; that they would look at approving Conference hosts for a year or two beyond 2028. So, while this report indicates 2026 to 2028, the opportunity to host could be awarded to Saskatoon for a year or two beyond that.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Profile Saskatoon is a grant program within the Major Special Events grant. Profile Saskatoon is intended to support significant conferences and events in Saskatoon that puts the city in a position of prominence as a destination location, provides exposure within a specific industry to the city and/or region, and attracts industry-specific attention through national or international media forms and can provide a lasting legacy.

[City Council Policy C03-007, Special Events](#) (Policy) gives Administration and an appointed adjudication committee the authority to review, adjudicate and award Profile Saskatoon Grants. For Profile Saskatoon Events, the maximum grant payable shall be based on the event evaluation rating to a maximum of 25% of total gross operating expenses. The maximum amount of funding a Profile Saskatoon Event may be eligible for is \$50,000. Anything over this amount requires a report to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services and ultimate approval by City Council.

Also, the review and adjudication process, as outlined in the Policy, is required in all cases, with the primary intent for external organizations who are hosting events. Administration used the Profile Saskatoon event evaluation rating tool to assess this request and it meets the grant criteria.

The FCM Conference and Trade Show is hosted by Canadian municipalities to support municipal governments, and the City of Saskatoon, in collaboration with Discover Saskatoon would be the benefactors of this grant. Further, the City through City Council is a full participating member of FCM, and there is a recognition that from time to time the City does take the opportunity to host this event and showcase Saskatoon. By the time the conference date comes up in 2027, it will have been 15 years since the City last hosted this event. Therefore, Administration is recommending an exception to the Policy, both in the amount of grant funding to be approved and the process by which it is reviewed/assessed. That is, City Council to approve the funding rather than requiring a separate review by an adjudication committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Appendix 2 includes a preliminary budget for the event, that is foundationally based on past event budgets. For the mid-range budget estimate the total estimated cost is \$990,000. The categories for expenditures are similar to those used to support the bid to host the 2020 or 2021 Conference and the dollar amounts have been adjusted to reflect inflation and anticipated registration fees.

There is currently sufficient funding available in the Special Events Grant reserve to accommodate the funding request of \$300,000. There is a cumulative projected balance of \$1,238,600 to the end of 2023. The annual operating contribution to the reserve in 2023 was \$431,300. However, at the direction of the Governance and Priorities Committee, the annual operating contribution was reduced by \$200,000 in 2024 to \$231,300, with a slight increase of \$68,700 in 2025, for an annual operating contribution of \$300,000 in 2025. The most recent intake for grant applications occurred in October 2023 and are currently being reviewed by the adjudication committee. Administration has completed a preliminary review of the October intakes and estimates the funding requests to be approximately \$400,000 over next few years. The next intake is scheduled for March 2024, and future intakes will increase the funding requirements from the reserve. The value of future requests cannot be estimated at this time. As a point of reference, the five-year period of 2015-2019 prior to the pandemic resulted in \$2,716,000 awarded in grant funding from the reserve, or \$543,200 on average per year.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy or CPTED implications of this report. Environmental Implications of hosting this event will be identified based on the final conference program.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice pursuant to Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy is not required.

NEXT STEPS

Pending approval by City Council, Administration will forward the applicable resolutions to the FCM. The FCM Administration has indicated the Executive Committee of the Board will be making selections for future years' conference hosts, sometime in December 2023.

APPENDICES

1. Letter from FCM, CEO to Mayor – October 12, 2023
2. Letter from Discover Saskatoon – Request for Support & Proposed Budget

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services

Reviewed by: Jody Hauta, Recreation Facilities and Programs Manager
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Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services

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