

Request for Funding – 2027 National Major Sporting Event – Council Policy No. C03-007, Special Events

ISSUE

Discover Saskatoon, in partnership with Saskatoon Destination Marketing Hotels, is leading a competitive bid to host a 2027 National Major Sporting Event. The support being requested is a one-time investment of \$350,000, subject to a successful bid, to contribute to the requirements of event.

RECOMMENDATION

That funding, in the amount of \$350,000, to Discover Saskatoon be approved, under Special Events Policy C03-007, to support the hosting of a National Major Sporting Event in 2027, pending:

1. That successful award of the bid to host the event; and
2. That submission of a detailed event application package.

BACKGROUND

The over weeklong National Major Sporting Event (Event) will attract elite athletes, national media attention, tens of thousands of fans and generate significant economic returns to the Saskatoon business community. As Discover Saskatoon is in a competitive bid process with other cities for this event, they have requested the event name be kept confidential. It is estimated that the economic impact of the event will be approximately \$15 million and will be televised nationally, garnering significant external media attention for Saskatoon. Administration has reviewed the recent history of this event in other cities, as the event is presented annually with the host city, varying from year to year. It is anticipated the event will attract over 100,000 attendees to the Event and inject \$15 million in direct business sales, \$1.73 million in provincial tax revenue, and approximately 13,000 nights of hotel room bookings.

Discover Saskatoon is requesting a one-time investment of \$350,000 from the City of Saskatoon (City) to contribute to the event requirements and to successfully acquire this event for Saskatoon. A letter from Discover Saskatoon detailing the request is included (see Appendix 1). Discover Saskatoon has also reached out to the Province with a request for \$600,000 in funding support as well.

Should Discover Saskatoon be successful in its bid for the 2027 event, a final event application will be submitted. Final details on the participation numbers, economic impact and event budget specific to Saskatoon will be made available in the final event package, to be submitted as a condition of the funding approval. Saskatoon has a proven track record in hosting major cultural, arts and sporting events.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

According to [Council Policy C03-007, Special Events](#), the 2027 event would be eligible for funding and satisfies the requirements outlined in the policy. Administration is confident the 2027 event would be consistent with the objectives of the policy, as follows:

- Attract visitors to Saskatoon, and in so doing will generate significant economic benefit for the community;
- Enhance the profile and visibility of Saskatoon, nationally and internationally;
- Enhance community spirit and pride; and
- Develop an awareness, understanding and appreciation of art, culture and recreation.

This funding request falls within the Special Event category as a sports event. Using previous similar event application packages as a reference point, this event is anticipated to meet the eligibility requirements of this type of event and meet scoring criteria to warrant funding beyond the current grant maximum amount of \$200,000.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If approved, the \$350,000 will be allocated from the Reserve for Major Special Events (Reserve). Discover Saskatoon has requested the release of grant funds in advance of the event taking place. As per policy, a maximum of 75% of the eligible grant, in this case \$262,500, may be released in advance of the event taking place, with the remaining 25% or \$87,500 being released upon submission of a post-event evaluation report. In the case of the Saskatoon bid not being successful, no funds from Reserve will be distributed. The current uncommitted balance in the reserve is \$880,100; therefore, the reserve has sufficient funds to support this request. The reserve receives funding annually through the operating budget. The 2025 Operating Budget includes funding of \$300,000 to the Reserve.

Annual funding from the operating budget, allocation of funding from the Reserve for Major Special Events and reserve balance over the last five years, excluding 2020-2021 during COVID, is included in the following table:

Year	Funding	Applications	Reserve Balance
2018	\$357,000	\$ 610,000	\$1,310,100
2019	\$500,000	\$1,045,000	\$ 764,700
2022	\$500,000	\$ 292,500	\$1,398,100
2023	\$431,300	\$ 418,000	\$1,411,400
2024	\$231,300	\$ 474,200	\$1,168,500

Administration reviews the Reserve, which includes historical applications, current operating budget funding levels and the Reserve balance, and if required will present options to adjust funding levels through the 2026-2027 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget process.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations; a communications plan is not required at this time. Discover Saskatoon will take the lead on all future communications and information for the event and bid to host the event.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to City Council approval, Administration will inform Discover Saskatoon of City Council's decision. Discover Saskatoon will submit a special event application package for review by the Adjudication Committee upon award of this bid.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice, pursuant to Section 3 of the City of Saskatoon Council Policy C01-021 (Public Notice Policy), is not required.

APPENDICES

1. Discover Saskatoon Letter: 2027 National Major Sporting Event

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Andrew Roberts, Director of Recreation and Community Development

Approved by: Celene Anger, General Manager, Community Services

SP/2025/RCD/Council/Request for Funding – 2027 National Major Sporting Event – Council Policy No. C03-007, Special Events/jw