
Winter City Strategy Update and Winter Cities Shake Up Conference Request for Funding

Recommendation

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

1. That the \$100,000 funding request by Tourism Saskatoon for the International Winter Cities Shake Up Conference from the Profile Saskatoon component of the Special Events Reserve be approved as an exception to policy; and
2. That the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated October 1, 2018, be forwarded to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services and City Council for information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a Winter City Strategy (Strategy) progress update and to request approval for a special funding in the amount of \$100,000 from the Profile Saskatoon component of the Special Events Reserve for the International Winter Cities Shake Up Conference (Shake Up) to be held in Saskatoon in January 2019.

Report Highlights

1. In the past year, several initiatives have been undertaken to move the preparation of a Strategy forward including accomplishments on a number of the “Quick Wins” identified through the community engagement process. Among these accomplishments are the community-led activities supported through the Winter City Community Grant program.
2. Community members successfully negotiated with the City of Edmonton to bring the Shake Up to Saskatoon in January 2019. The Shake Up was pursued by the community as an opportunity to accelerate the development of the Strategy and is expected to provide valuable learnings for the content of the Strategy by bringing international expertise into the local engagement efforts.
3. The Shake Up presents a unique and innovative opportunity in the development of Saskatoon’s Strategy; therefore, Administration supports the special funding request by Tourism Saskatoon for funding in the amount of \$100,000.

Strategic Goals

This report supports multiple Strategic Goals, in particular:

- Quality of Life by supporting a Winter City Strategy;
- Sustainable Growth by ensuring our City Centre is a vibrant hub for culture, commerce and civic life in all seasons of the year;
- Moving Around by ensuring accessibility and connectivity continue to exist when snow and ice are present; and,
- Economic Diversity and Prosperity by creating a bustling, business-friendly city through all seasons.

Background

City Council, at its meetings held on January 23, 2017 and November 20, 2017, received two Saskatoon Winter Strategy reports which provided updates and a detailed description of the Strategy for Saskatoon. The Strategy was described as an intentional effort by the City of Saskatoon and community stakeholders to celebrate what makes Saskatoon unique as a four-season place that is inviting, vibrant and prosperous, even in the coldest months of the year.

In 2015 and 2017, the City of Edmonton hosted the Shake Up where delegates from across North America, Europe, China and Japan shared their knowledge and expertise as winter cities. The 2017 Shake Up garnered national and international media attention. To advance the learnings for Saskatoon's Strategy, 10 City and community leaders attended the 2017 Shake Up as well as the City supported four community representatives to attend the 2017 Shake Up. These community representatives now act as champions for Saskatoon as a winter city, and are also members of a Community Working Group formed to provide ongoing guidance on the Strategy development process.

Report

Update on the Strategy

In the past year, several initiatives have been undertaken to move the preparation of a Strategy forward including accomplishments on a number of the "Quick Wins" identified through the community engagement process. Attachment 1, WintercityYXE Report Card, provides a status overview of these initiatives including some City-led initiatives:

- Exploring opportunities for new approaches to outdoor lighting by working with community members and Administration to advance learnings and develop pilot projects;
- A Warming Hut pilot project;
- Benchmarking current attitudes about winter through a survey on awareness of winter events, activities, participation, and perceived barriers to participation;
- Exploring barriers to all-season sidewalk patios with the Business Improvement Districts; and,
- Exploring the opportunity for a skating loop.

Among the accomplishments, a variety of community-led activities have been supported through the Winter City Community Grant program.

- In winter 2017 - 2018, five community initiatives were supported that achieved community 'quick wins':
 - Crokicurl located at Broadway Avenue & 12th Street (Broadway Business Improvement District);
 - Theatre on the Trail along the Meewasin Trail occurred in association with the Winterruption Festival (Sum Theatre Company);
 - Enhancements to the Winterruption Festival included a storytelling tipi and free hot beverages (i.e. a 'hot chocolate backpack') (Friends of the Broadway Theatre);

- Wanuskewin Winter Festival included Indigenous games, activities and trapping skills for the whole family (Wanuskewin Heritage Park); and
- Ice Cycle 2.0 included a variety of winter cycling-related events throughout the winter (Flatlanders FatTire Brigade).
- In the spring of 2018, 17 applications were received as part of the call for submissions for the Winter City Community Grant program. \$50,000 has been allocated to support 11 community initiatives that either achieve a community 'quick win' or advance learning to move core concepts of the Strategy forward. Attachment 2, 2018 - 2019 WintercityYXE Grant Recipients, lists these initiatives.

Shake Up As Opportunity for Accelerating Strategy Development

From January 23 - 26, 2019, the Shake Up will be hosted in Saskatoon. The Shake Up was pursued by the community as an opportunity to accelerate the development of the Strategy and is expected to provide valuable learnings for the content of the Strategy by bringing international expertise into the local engagement efforts. The Shake Up will include curated workshops and sessions that will advance community learning through complimentary local participation for 50 to 150 representatives. The Shake Up will also attract international delegates interested in sharing their collective knowledge and experiences about the opportunities and challenges of winter cities. Based on conferences held in Edmonton, approximately 350 conference delegates are anticipated.

The Shake Up will make use of a series of 'deep dive' conversations, concurrent sessions, experiential activities and facilitated conversations to provide meaningful discussions for conference delegates and local participants. Attachment 3, 2019 Winter Cities Shake Up Conference Overview, provides an overview of the program. The conference program themes align with the draft themes identified for the Strategy.

The Shake Up will help provide a clear and more broadly-held vision of the possibilities available through the Strategy, as well as create the community momentum necessary to demonstrate the opportunities for Saskatoon as a winter city.

Shake Up Funding Request

Attachment 4, 2019 Winter Cities Shake Up Conference Budget, provides the budget for the Shake Up. Tourism Saskatoon and the Administration are requesting \$100,000 in funding from the Special Events Reserve to help offset the cost of hosting Shake Up. The total expenses for the Shake Up are anticipated to be approximately \$500,000. The economic impact analysis for the Shake Up estimates visitor spending for the Shake Up at over \$1.1M.

Options to the Recommendation

Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Corporate Services may deny grant funding for Shake Up or suggest a grant amount other than the original amount requested.

Conversely, the Committee may refer this request as an application for Profile Saskatoon funding (which is the normal funding stream for Conferences) to the Special Event Adjudication Committee for their recommendation on the level of grant funding. This approach creates a delay that may impact the ability of the Shake Up to secure some programming.

The Committee may also direct that funding be provided from Capital Project #2519 – Winter City Strategy; however, this would reduce the City's ability to implement 'Quick Wins' and slow the development of the Strategy.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Recipients of the Winter City Community Grant, along with other community entities, are targeting heightened activity for the timeframe of, and to align with the themes of, the Shake Up. A Shake Up Advisory Committee has been formed drawing from a broad spectrum of community stakeholders, including representation from City Council. The Winter City Community Working Group is also being engaged to guide the content developed for the Strategy through local engagement and participation associated with the Shake Up.

Communication Plan

Opportunities to maximize communications and engagement will be leveraged for development of Saskatoon's Winter City Strategy, including learnings from the Shake Up. As such, a coordinated communications plan will be developed.

Financial Implications

Tourism Saskatoon and the Administration are requesting \$100,000 in funding from the Special Events Reserve. The Profile Saskatoon component of the Special Event Reserve currently has adequate funding to accommodate this request, with an uncommitted balance in the reserve of \$798,139.

In addition to funding the Shake Up, concurrent engagement-related activities will occur utilizing up to \$50,000 from Capital Project #2519 – Winter City Strategy.

Policy Implications

The recommendations for funding identified in this report are being put forward with a number of exceptions to the current requirements of the Special Events Policy No. C03-007. The exceptions to Policy include:

1. Applications for Major Special Events are to occur a minimum of one year in advance of the event start date through one of two annual intake periods to be evaluated by the Special Event Adjudication Committee;
2. The current maximum level of funding for Conferences is \$50,000. This request is for \$100,000; and,
3. The Adjudication Committee has not yet had an opportunity to evaluate this event using the approved Event Evaluation Rating Tool.

Of note, the current maximum funding level of \$50,000 for Profile Saskatoon events has been established specifically for conferences as these events traditionally have a lower number of participants, have registration fees paid by participants to help offset costs, and do not attract the level of participation anticipated for larger special events.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no environmental, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

A further update report on the Winter City Strategy will be provided to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services following the Shake Up. A post-event evaluation report, including board-approved, event-specific financial statements, will also be submitted by Tourism Saskatoon to the Administration within 180 days of event completion, with a summary available to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachments

1. WintercityYXE Report Card
2. 2018 - 2019 WintercityYXE Grant Recipients
3. 2019 Winter Cities Shake Up Conference Overview
4. 2019 Winter Cities Shake Up Conference Budget

Report Approval

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