

Eventful City Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services recommend that Council:

- 1) Receive the Eventful City Strategy and Action Plan developed as directed by Council through One Calgary 2019-2022; and
- 2) Refer future operating and capital investments to the 2023-2026 Service Plan and Budget process.

And that the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services direct that this report be forwarded as an Item of Urgent Business to the 2021 September 13 Combined Meeting of Council.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Eventful City Strategy outlines The City of Calgary's vision and roadmap for creating a vibrant city to attract and retain businesses and talent, bolster local cultural assets and resources, regenerate the urban fabric and create social, cultural, and economic prosperity.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** The global pandemic highlighted the importance of festivals and events as opportunities to come together to alleviate feelings of isolation and create new memories through shared experiences.
- Targeted investments can enhance the number of year-round art, sport and cultural festivals and events and boost the local economy. Calgarians will have greater access to products, services and amenity offerings, including low- and no-cost events across geographic locations, demographic and social affiliations, and will attract visitors to support the local tourism sector.
- **Why does it matter?** This industry plays a key role in our city's recovery through the social, cultural and economic benefits that festivals and events generate. Festivals and events are key to creating a place where people want to live, visit, and invest in new businesses, and are vital to our city's ongoing success.
- Background and Previous Council Direction: to develop both the Eventful City and Winter City Strategy through One Calgary in 2018. In 2019, Council allocated \$400K, one-time support for the development of the Winter City and Eventful City Strategies.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A prosperous city

DISCUSSION

Vision for the Future

The Eventful City Strategy provides the vision and strategic direction to enhance Calgary's event culture as celebratory, inclusive and innovative, creating shared experiences and lasting benefits to local communities, creators and businesses (Attachment 1).

Eventful City Strategy

The City has seen great success in executing festivals and events from a tactical perspective. To move forward and achieve further benefits, we need to apply a strategic lens to resourcing, planning, and providing event infrastructure. The Eventful City Strategy provides this lens.

A strategic plan with targeted investments will amplify the impact of our efforts to achieve improvements and growth in the following areas:

- support and coordination with our external partners
- further coordination efficiencies of working efforts within the Corporation
- facilitation of a strategic approach and framework to support festivals and events of all sizes
- support for event infrastructure growth and sustainment

The strategy's Action Plan outlines seven goals and 26 actions The City and partners can implement to enhance community experience, support adaptability and resilience, refine planning and organizing practices, and establish marketing and communication principles.

The strategy identifies two key investment areas that are required for success. A secure budget is required to implement the following initiatives (Attachment 2):

- dedicated planning resources to develop and connect events to communities to provide lasting benefits for Calgarians in all areas of the city
- renew existing and build new purpose-built event-suitable infrastructure to support events in all areas of the city, and to attract larger events into the local market

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Due to the restriction on public gatherings in April and May 2021, engagement occurred online. The City's Engage Portal collected public and stakeholder input through online surveys. Engagement opportunities including a Stakeholder Online Hub, Stakeholder Summit/Workshop and two rounds of targeted stakeholder conversations drew the participation of over 300 organizations including Civic Partners, event organizations, suppliers, venue operators, and support organizations and businesses.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Festivals and events have been an integral part of cities' social and economic fabric for centuries. They serve to bring people together to share experiences in meaningful ways. The City of Calgary recognizes that festivals and events enhance quality of life and are essential elements in creating complete communities by providing opportunities to celebrate, gather, connect, create unique experiences and share transcultural values.

Eventful City Strategy

Environmental

Improvement to existing aging infrastructure will provide opportunities to introduce greener hosting practices when supporting and delivering events. Aligning event venues with mass transit options and at locations in communities will reduce vehicle emissions as citizens will be able to attend events in their own communities, accessible through alternative modes of transportation.

Economic

The festival and event industry contributes to the local economy. As reported through Alberta Live Events Coalition ([ALEC](#)), the event industry impact to the Alberta economy equals to approximately 35,500 direct jobs and contributes \$4 Billion to the GDP.

Service and Financial Implications

Other: New Operating One Time and Base, New Capital

An annual investment to support the strategy's implementation and a one-time investment to develop community capacity will be proposed in the 2023-2026 Service Plan and Budget process.

A capital investment will be requested in the 2023-2026 Service Plan and Budget process to: upgrade three existing venues and build one new large capacity venue; complete an inventory and assessment study of City and market venues available and needed to support hosting opportunities; and initiate a signage program (Attachment 2).

RISK

Without strategic planning and implementation, the festival and event industry will stagnate and fail to meet the desired outcomes and objectives of citizens. This may result in a reputational risk for The City, reduced confidence within the industry and community, and a loss of new and existing event opportunities. The strategy demonstrates how to reduce gaps and continue to grow while minimizing pressures on the existing oversubscribed venues.

Citizens may question if the proposed investment is necessary or is a non-essential service. The strategy demonstrates both the social and economic benefits of investing in event infrastructure and the need for a communication plan outlining the benefits.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Eventful City Strategy Overview
2. Eventful City Strategy Investment Categories and Benefits

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Carla Male	Chief Financial Office	Inform
Chris Arthurs	Deputy City Manager's Office	Inform
Michael Thompson	Green Line	Inform