

Report to Council



Date: May 16, 2022
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Kelowna Event Strategy
Department: Sport and Event Services Department

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information, the report from the Sport and Event Services Department dated May 16, 2022, regarding the activities related to the development of an Event Strategy;

AND THAT Council endorses Kelowna's Event Strategy, as outlined in the report from the Sport and Event Services Department dated May 16, 2022;

AND THAT Council directs staff to move forward with the development of an implementation plan in conjunction with key stakeholders;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to report back with periodic progress updates on the implementation strategy.

Purpose:

To present Council with the Kelowna Event Strategy for endorsement and receive support to move forward with the development of an implementation strategy.

Background:

Preliminary work on the development of an Event Strategy began in 2017 when City staff conducted a local system review to identify where improvements could be made in Kelowna's event delivery system. Several exercises such as organizer town hall meetings, S.W.O.T. analyses, Event Services Committee interviews, training of staff, and municipal comparisons were implemented as part of the review. This initial review provided staff with valuable information that contributed to the creation of the *Event and Festival Framework* (Appendix A), which was endorsed by Council in 2019 and guided the future development of the Kelowna Event Strategy.

Throughout the 2019 event season, post-event surveys were conducted to gather event-specific information to further identify the nuances of hosting events in Kelowna. During this same period and into 2020, staff conducted research that led to established national and global event strategies, which in-turn allowed staff to compare different elements and stages of event development found elsewhere with our community's current landscape. Through comparison and understanding of our local event delivery system, staff were able to complete a draft set of goals and objectives specifically adapted to Kelowna's priorities as outlined in Council's 2019-2022 priorities and Imagine Kelowna. This set of draft goals and objectives was endorsed by Council in February 2021.

To round out the consultation phase, staff implemented engagement exercises in 2021 that gathered public and key stakeholder feedback. Public engagement was primarily conducted online through the City's 'Get Involved' platform and consisted of a survey, quick poll, and opportunities to provide open-ended feedback. In addition, two 'Get Eventive' weekends were hosted in public spaces that allowed the public to offer in-person feedback. During this same period, consultant-led interviews were conducted with key event stakeholders to complete the engagement process.

Discussion:

Throughout the process of developing the Kelowna Event Strategy (Appendix B), a common theme of the 'eventful city' emerged as the fundamental base for other similar event strategies. The eventful city is one that adopts a philosophical shift from a city full of events to one that strategically aligns events to purposely maximize opportunities to achieve community priorities. In addition, the benefits that events offer to the community were confirmed, current market trends were identified, and public and stakeholder feedback provided insight to community values and desires.

Kelowna has made significant advancements in an evolving event industry and has begun the transition to an 'eventful city'. Through hosting a full calendar of events each year, Kelowna has gained experience and has moved from a regulatory-centric process to a more developmental approach with events. As the event industry continues to become more complex and specialized, a clear vision with identified goals and objectives will help guide and position Kelowna to be an 'eventful city' of the future.

Signature Event

As part of the public engagement conducted in 2021, feedback was also gathered around the creation of a signature event in Kelowna. This feedback was substantially positive and when asked what elements should be included in a community event, 'music' was the most popular followed by other closely ranked themes such as art, water/land sports, heritage, and competitions. Follow-up responses indicated that any signature event should be community focused, family-oriented, grown slowly and organically to ensure its success and must reflect 'all' of Kelowna.

A City-led organizing committee comprised of community residents is currently in the process of planning a one-day family-oriented event for Saturday, August 27th. The committee is using feedback

gathered in the afore-mentioned public engagement exercises to plan an organically grown, family-oriented event, along with building a set of base guidelines, that will serve for future growth.

Conclusion:

Developing an Action Plan will be the next important element of the Strategy to move forward. The specifics of the Action Plan will include priorities, schedules, budget implications, and delegated assignments and will be implemented over the next 10 years with regular updates to Council along the way. Budget parameters for implementation will be incorporated into existing budgets and based on a shared responsibility model, as available resources and support allows.

The Kelowna Event Strategy is a comprehensive document that examines a range of event-related issues and opportunities and provides a clear vision, key focus areas, and strategic goals that will direct our efforts for desired outcomes. Through an integrated and collaborative approach, the Kelowna Event Strategy will support future initiatives, guide decision making, and provide direction for the purposeful advancement of events for years to come.

Internal Circulation:

Active Living & Culture
Communications

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy: Council's 2019-2022 priorities identified focus areas supporting staff recommendations in this report, including:

- Vibrant Neighbourhoods
- Social & Inclusive
- Economic Resiliency
- Transportation & Mobility
- Community Safety

Additionally, the Kelowna Event Strategy aligns with key objectives of other planning documents including the Kelowna Community Sport Plan, Cultural Plan, Community for All Action Plan and Journey Home Strategy.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by: Chris Babcock, Event Development Supervisor, Active Living & Culture

Approved for inclusion: Jim Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

Attachments: Appendix A – Event & Festival Framework
Appendix B – Kelowna Event Strategy
Appendix C – PowerPoint Presentation – Kelowna Event Strategy