

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING MAY 15, 2024

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SUBJECT APPROVAL TO BID TO HOST THE 2026 CANADIAN SPORT EVENTS CONGRESS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To request a financial commitment from Council to bid for the 2026 Canadian Sport Events Congress.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve a bid and allocate \$90,000 in the 2024 - 2028 Financial Plan, funded from the Special Initiatives Reserve, to host the 2026 Canadian Sport Events Congress in Nanaimo.

BACKGROUND

The Sport Events Congress (SEC) is the largest annual gathering of the sport tourism industry in Canada. The event features three days of meetings, education sessions and networking opportunities to over 300 sport tourism professionals from across Canada. Delegates and attendees may include sport organizations, event rights holders, destination tourism professionals, event management professionals, hoteliers, and elected officials. The 2024 event was held in Winnipeg and members of “Team Nanaimo” – City staff, Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association attended.

Sport Tourism Canada is searching for a host city for either the 2025 or the 2026 Sport Events Congress. Hosting the SEC in 2026 would provide a unique opportunity to gather key sport organizations in Nanaimo and market our community as a sport hosting destination to Provincial, National, Multi-Sport and Major Games organizations.

The Request for Proposal was received 2024-MAY-06 and the deadline is 2024-MAY-31, hence the condensed timeline for this request.

DISCUSSION

Nanaimo has a proven history of successfully hosting large sporting events, including the BC Summer Games and many other high-level national and international competitions. City Plan: Nanaimo Re-Imagined lists events, tournaments, and tourism as priorities and the Sport Tourism Strategy identifies sport business events (such as the SEC) as an area of opportunity to pursue. In addition, hosting the SEC aligns with Integrated Action Plan Priority Action 96 – to implement the actions in the Sport Tourism Strategy (Policy C3.6.1).

Hosting the SEC in Nanaimo provides an unprecedented opportunity to bring decision makers and sport organizations into our community and showcase our facilities. It also allows for more relationship building with Provincial and National sport organizations, which may be beneficial when identifying and pursuing future bid opportunities.

Staff recommend a bid only for the 2026 event, as Nanaimo will be hosting the 55+ Games in 2025.

The SEC is normally hosted in the shoulder season between March and April, and has an anticipated economic impact of \$1.1 million for the host community. |

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

|The bid package requires that the Host Organizing Committee (HOC) secure a minimum one time financial commitment of up to \$45,000 prior to bid package submission. If successful, \$5,000 is due at the time of signing the MOU, and the remaining \$40,000 would be paid in installments leading up to the SEC.

The bid package also requires that the HOC fully subsidize the Go Congress Program (national sport organizations) including all transportation costs (ground and air), accommodations, event registration and meals for up to 60 event rights holders. This element is estimated to cost a minimum of \$125,000 (costs are dependent on location and hotel rates). The minimum hosting fee and the Go Congress Program subsidy combined would mean a minimum commitment of \$170,000. Tourism Nanaimo has indicated they can commit \$80,000 in 2025 with potential to provide more financial support in 2026.

Staff recommend a commitment of \$90,000, funded from the Special Initiatives Reserve, to support the bid for the 2026 Sport Events Congress. The Special Initiatives Reserve has sufficient funding available with a current uncommitted balance of \$187,622.

The HOC will work to obtain other financial support to cover additional elements of the event. However, for bid deadline purposes, the commitment is required for the bid package. |

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve a bid and allocate \$90,000 in the 2024 - 2028 Financial Plan, funded from the Special Initiatives Reserve, to host the 2026 Canadian Sport Event Congress in Nanaimo.
 - The advantages of this option: Economic benefit to the community through the promotion of Nanaimo as a sport tourism destination on a national level. Hosting SEC provides the opportunity to simultaneously host representatives from Provincial, National, Multi-Sport and Major Sporting Groups in Nanaimo and showcase the City as a premier destination for athletic events.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Commitment of staff time to the Host Organizing Committee and bid preparation. Less funding will be available in the Special Initiatives Reserve for other initiatives and projects.
 - Financial Implications: The 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan will be amended to add \$5,000 in 2024, \$40,000 in 2025 and \$45,000 in 2026.

2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend to Council an alternative funding source of \$90,000 to support the bid to host the 2026 Canadian Sport Events Congress in Nanaimo.
 - The advantages of this option: Continues to support the bid package and the potential economic driver for the community.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Making any changes will not meet the bid package deadline of 2024-MAY-31.
 - Financial Implications: Will leave funds available in the Special Initiatives Reserve for alternative projects and initiatives.
3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council do not approve the \$90,000 commitment towards the bid to host the 2026 Canadian Sport Events Congress in Nanaimo.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Sport Events Congress is operated by Sport Tourism Canada and is the largest annual gathering of Sport Tourism professionals in Canada.
- The City of Nanaimo, Tourism Nanaimo and the Vancouver Island Conference Centre are preparing a bid package to host the event and require a funding commitment of \$90,000 from the City of Nanaimo.
- Hosting the event could have substantial economic benefit, up to an estimated \$1.1M for the host community in addition to enhanced exposure to Provincial, National, Multi-Sport and Major Games organizations.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: SPORT EVENTS CONGRESS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL |

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