

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

RIVER FEST 2017

Motion:

That Administration coordinate and host River Fest 2017 at a cost not to exceed \$20,000, funded from the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Purpose:

To provide a second option on the coordinating and hosting of River Fest 2017.

Background:

River Valley Alliance (RVA) and the City of Fort Saskatchewan have a great partnership and together have completed \$2,600,000 in work in the City's river valley. Of this, the RVA has contributed over \$1,500,000. More work is to be completed as the City has been approved for approximately \$4,000,000 in additional projects. To date, the City has completed 10 kilometres of trails, wayfinding signage and 6 river lookouts. This summer, the City will be completing a staircase above the wetlands area, an additional kilometre of trail and a pedestrian bridge in Fort Centre Park.

During 2017 budget deliberations, Culture Services presented a budget request for coordinating and hosting River Fest 2017 to take place the third weekend in September 2017. The request was for a total of \$41,435; \$20,000 to host the event, \$4,700 for Parks and Roads support, and \$16,735 for the additional staffing resources required to coordinate and host the event. This would create an event of the same scope as Legacy Park Family Festival.

With additional information from the RVA on the scope and goals for this new event, confirmed dates of the three day festival, and the upcoming announcement of a major sponsor, Culture Services is able to provide a second option for coordinating and hosting River Fest 2017.

River Fest 2017 is a RVA initiative that is beginning in 2017 as part of Canada's 150th Anniversary. It will be a three day festival from September 15th – 17th, 2017. The festival will take place at three main locations called Riverside Rendezvous locations that will move people along the trail from end-to-end, from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan. The first Riverside Rendezvous location will be Devon on Friday, September 15th. The second will be Edmonton on Saturday, September 16th and the third location will be Fort Saskatchewan on Sunday, September 17th. The goals of River Fest 2017 include:

- promoting the benefits of the Capital Region River Valley;
- showcasing the impact the river valley has on our residents' quality of life;
- celebrating the river valley for both recreation and tourism attraction;
- building support for continued public investment to protect, preserve and enhance the river valley; and
- starting a fall tradition of celebrating the river valley.

A major sponsor for River Fest 2017 will be announced in May as part of the River Fest 2017 marketing campaign. If the event is successful, both the sponsor and the RVA see this as an annual event going forward.

The benefits to Fort Saskatchewan for being one of the three Riverside Rendezvous locations are numerous and include:

- increased media attention;
- increased tourism to Fort Saskatchewan;
- increased awareness of the value of the river valley – encouraging preservation, protection, and enhancement;
- encouraging residents to explore the gem we have in our community;
- encouraging residents to explore and promote the under-utilized aspects of the river valley; and
- extending the fall festival atmosphere an extra day.

The role of the City of Fort Saskatchewan as a Riverside Rendezvous location is to coordinate and host River Fest 2017 activities in the community which include planning and coordinating various activities that celebrate the river and the river valley, finding sponsors for the Fort Saskatchewan event, coordinating volunteers, and organizing all of the local advertising and promotion of the event. Some of the potential Fort Saskatchewan activities at West River's Edge include:

- celebrating the heritage of the river;
- paddle board demonstrations;
- kayak/canoe trips;
- traditional family picnic with entertainment;
- water safety education;
- geocaching;
- interpretive walks (wetlands, prairie, historical);
- organized horseback ride to Strathcona County;
- dog agility; and
- community group activities.

On a smaller scale than what was presented during 2017 budget deliberations, this event will cost \$20,000 and will include:

- \$8,500 for the activities, facilities, entertainment and promotions required to host the event;
- \$7,500 for Culture Services staff resources to coordinate and host the event; and
- \$4,000 for Parks and Roads support for the event.

Financial Implications:

\$20,000 from the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Internal Impacts:

This new event will have impact on the Culture Services, Parks and Roads departments as the event is not currently in department work plans or the 2017 budget. The funds as presented above will cover the costs required to properly staff the coordinating and hosting of the event.

Recommendation:

That Administration coordinate and host River Fest 2017 at a cost not to exceed \$20,000, funded from the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Prepared by:	Diane Yanch Culture Services Director	Date: March 20, 2017
Approved by:	Brenda Rauckman General Manager, Community and Protective Services	Date: March 22, 2017
Reviewed by:	Troy Fleming Acting City Manager	Date: March 23, 2017
Submitted to:	City Council	Date: March 28, 2017