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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2023-INFO-106
Date: December 21, 2023

Subject:

2023 Convergence Music, Arts and Culture Festival

Recommendation:

Receive for Information

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Regional Council of the first Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival, a festival held in downtown Oshawa between Friday September 22nd and Sunday September 24th, 2023.

2. Background

2.1 The Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival (Convergence) was an initiative of Oshawa Tourism, which is a division of the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. Supported by the City of Oshawa, the Regional Municipality of Durham Economic Development and Tourism, and other partners, this event is envisioned as an annual festival.

2.2 Convergence promoted local music, arts, and culture, and offered a creative and welcoming environment for all ages in downtown Oshawa. There were activities throughout the weekend, with the main festival event happening on Saturday September 23rd, 2023.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 There are no previous reports or decisions.

4. Events Overview

4.1 Convergence is a three-day festival. Ticketed events were held at venues in downtown Oshawa on Friday September 22nd and Sunday September 24th such as the Oshawa Music Awards (OMAs), live music performances, and immersive art experiences.

4.2 During the main event on Saturday September 23rd, between 11:30 A.M. and 10:00 P.M. there were a wide range of activities to explore along King Street and side streets which were closed for the event:

- a. Live pro-wrestling
- b. Contemporary circus performers
- c. The Punk Rock Flea Market Oshawa (a collective of alternative arts vendors)
- d. The Nerd Alley (a collective of comics, arts, and music vendors)
- e. Art installation inside and outside at 70 King Street (former Genosha hotel)
- f. Two stages of live music performances
- g. International street food alley
- h. Pop up dance performance
- i. Spark Centre event at Biltmore Theatre with panel discussions

4.3 Artists presenting works at the event included Jenn E Norton, Lynne McIlvride, VITAL! Contemporary Circus, Durham Shoestring Performers, Willy Zenga, and Viktor Tinkl.

4.4 Musicians performing at this event included a diverse line up of local and nationally-recognized acts including Cale Crowe, Delon Om, Eddy Jones, NEiRMA, Haddix, Matthew Holtby, Chastity, Preston Pablo, and The Strumbellas.

5. Event Metrics of Success

5.1 Convergence was a great success and planning is underway for a 2024 event to be held September 20th to 22nd, 2024.

5.2 Visitor data was collected for Convergence on the main event day Saturday September 23rd within a defined geographic area in downtown Oshawa for event reporting purposes. Metrics include:

- a. Environics data which captured 8,277 households in attendance at the event;
 - b. Environics data estimated a visible minority presence of 26.7%, with 21.3% of attendees born outside of Canada.
 - c. GroundLevel Insights data captured 14,285 individual mobile devices in attendance, reporting 22% (3143) visitors from more than 40km away from Oshawa; the average visitor travelled more than 50kms.
 - d. GroundLevel Insights data captured mobile devices in attendance at the event using English, French, Mandarin, and Hindi as primary languages.
 - e. GroundLevel Insights Real Economic Impact model, which tracks revenues during the event and the behaviors of attendees for 30 days following the event, estimated a lift in revenue to local businesses at \$1.7 million.
- 5.3 The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sports' "TREIM" modeling calculator can provide estimated economic impact of visitors from 40km away for tourism events. Using the above metrics from the Groundlevel Insights data, this tool estimates that the Saturday event at Convergence Oshawa 2023 had a local economic impact of \$885,394.

6. Budget Implications

- 6.1 Durham Region Economic Development and Tourism provided financial and in-kind support to this event. \$17,000 of core event funding was sourced from the approved 2023 Economic Development and Tourism Division budget and an additional \$5,000 of in-kind support was provided to this festival. In-kind support includes activities such as staff time for promotional activities and support during the event.

7. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham region Strategic Plan:
- a. Goal 2 – Community Vitality
 - Priority 2.2 Enhance community safety and well-being
 - Priority 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
 - b. Goal 3 – Economic Prosperity
 - Priority 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business

- Priority 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth
- Priority 3.4 Capitalize on Durham's strengths in key economic sectors to attract high-quality jobs

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival was a highly successful inaugural event, and it can play a significant future role in enhancing tourism to Durham Region.
- 8.2 Convergence supports Durham Tourism's brand messaging that Durham Region offers urban excitement and country charm, by contributing to Durham's reputation for urban excitement.
- 8.3 Convergence has provided significant economic impact, and shows how Durham Region is a welcoming and inclusive community. It is expected that Convergence will continue to grow and offer experiences that bring people together through music, arts, and culture.

9. Attachments

Attachment #1: Photos of Convergence Music, Arts, and Culture Festival.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Planning and
Economic Development



Wrestling welcomed guests from Simcoe Street corridor



Family Enjoying Art Activities



Fans looking on as Chastity performs



Guests sit at the Emerging Artist stage



Artist Viktor Tinkl discusses his art inside 70 King



The Strumbellas closed the night



Aerial view of Downtown Oshawa during the Strumbellas