



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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### **Subject:**

Fiscal Year 2022 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines scoring requirements.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2022 Elite Events, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines) scoring requirements as to the Localtopia event.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of event attendees and substantial room nights in the County, and requires Cultural Heritage events (Category 4), to generate a large number of attendees.
- There are 18 Elite Events recommended by the TDC to be funded for a cumulative total not exceeding \$1 million. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event agreement to ensure a return on investment.
- The TDC approved for the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to consider a waiver of the Guidelines as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator will execute the agreements and they will appear as Non-Procurement Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

### **Summary:**

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer the Elite Event Funding Program which provides funding to qualified, high-profile events that meet the minimum criteria for room night generation and/or attendance, as well as media and/or marketing exposure for the County. The CVB will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits, in accordance with the Guidelines.

### **Background Information:**

The current Guidelines were approved by the Board on March 10, 2020. This fall, the TDC is scheduled to meet for a review of the Guidelines. If changes are recommended, the revised Guidelines will be brought before the Board for final approval.

The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 unique attendees and at least 25,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees and 5,000 room nights. However, Category 4 events have a

minimum of at least 20,000 attendees and no room night requirement.

On June 11, 2021, the TDC's Elite Event Committee (Committee) met to evaluate and score those applications, which had been reviewed by staff and determined eligible for consideration. Those scores and funding considerations, as set forth below, went to the full TDC for their consideration. Council member Williams abstained from voting on the Valspar PGA Championship due to a voting conflict.

On June 23, 2021, during the full regular TDC meeting, the TDC members discussed the St. Pete Run Fest, which the Committee had deemed ineligible for funding, and Localtopia, which had not received the minimum scoring criteria to be considered for funding. After discussion and consideration, the TDC voted 3-5 against allowing the St. Pete Run Fest to be considered for funding based on the determination that the event did not meet the definition of a "cultural heritage event" per the Guidelines. Additionally, the TDC voted 7-1 in favor of recommending the Board consider a waiver of the Guidelines, as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia. The TDC further approved the recommendations of the Elite Event Committee, including the following maximum (or "up to") funding amounts, by a vote of 8-0. Council member Commissioner Pletcher was not present for the vote, and Council members Henderson and Mayor Hibbard were not in attendance.

Total Category 1 Events: \$250,000 (\$125,000 per event)

Valspar PGA Championship  
Pelican LPGA Women's Championship

Total Category 2 Events: \$525,000 (\$75,000 per event)

Outback Bowl & Clearwater Beach Day  
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals  
Clearwater Jazz Holiday  
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival  
Martin Luther King Jr. Parade Weekend  
St. Pete Pride  
Enchant St. Petersburg

Total Category 3 Events: \$200,000 (\$25,000 per event)

King of the Beach (Fall)  
King of the Beach (Spring)  
Sanding Ovations Masters Cup  
Gasparilla Bowl  
DTSP Songwriters Festival  
St. Pete BikeFest  
Festivals of Speed  
Dunedin Highland Games & Festival

Total Category 4 Event: \$25,000

Localtopia

Total Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 Events: \$1,000,000

**Fiscal Impact:**

FY22 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$1,000,000

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Partners:**

Tourist Development Council

City of Treasure Island

**Attachments:**

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines