



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 21-1744A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2022 funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines' evaluation committee requirements.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of an amendment to the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Elite Events, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines' (Guidelines) evaluation committee requirements for St. Pete BikeFest.

- 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.
- On July 13, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved 18 - FY22 Elite Events for a cumulative total not exceeding \$1 million.
- During the August 18, 2021, TDC meeting, the TDC approved for the Board to consider a waiver of the Guidelines to bypass committee review and evaluation and move St. Pete BikeFest from a Category 3 funding level to Category 2.
- Approval of this amendment will increase the amount of funding for BikeFest from \$25,000.00 to an amount not exceeding \$75,000.00.
- As Elite Event funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board delegated authority, the County Administrator or Purchasing Director will execute the agreements and they will appear as delegated items on a 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 proceed to negotiate the terms and final funding for St. Pete BikeFest as a Category 2 Elite Event, eligible for up-to \$75,000.00 in funding, in accordance with the Guidelines. This event is scheduled to be held at the Orange County Choppers Road House & Museum on November 18-21, 2021.

Approval of this amendment will increase the FY22 Elite Event Funding by \$50,000.00 to a new cumulative total of \$1,050,000.00.

### **Background Information:**

On July 21, 2021, at the regular TDC meeting and subsequent to the Board's July 13, 2021, approval

of FY22 Elite Events, TDC council member Henderson initiated a discussion on moving BikeFest from Category 3 to the Category 2 funding level for FY22. The TDC deferred the discussion until the August TDC meeting to allow time for the BikeFest event organizer to be present. During the TDC meeting on August 18, 2021, the TDC members discussed the request and questioned the event organizer as to why BikeFest had not been submitted as a Category 2 event during the FY22 application period. The event organizer relayed that at the time the application was due, he had no knowledge of the number of room nights from the host hotel that were generated by the FY20 event nor did he have the results from the CVB's Economic Impact Study that had been performed on the event. The FY21 BikeFest was cancelled due to the pandemic, which is why the event would need to rely on FY20 event data for the FY22 Elite Event application submission. After discussion and consideration, the TDC voted 8-0 in favor of recommending the Board consider a waiver of the Guidelines to bypass the requirement for committee review and evaluation, since not all Elite Event committee members were present, and approved St. Pete BikeFest as a Category 2 event, eligible for funding in an amount up-to \$75,000.00.

The Guidelines require Category 2 events generate at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights. According to the CVB's Economic Impact Study performed by Destination Analysts for the FY20 event, BikeFest resulted in 25,926 unique attendees and 18,228 room nights.

The current Guidelines were approved by the Board on March 10, 2020. The TDC is scheduled to review the Guidelines on November 17, 2021, following the regular TDC meeting. If revisions are recommended and approved, they will be brought before the Board for final approval.

**Fiscal Impact:**

\$25,000.00 Current approved funding for BikeFest

\$50,000.00 Increased funding to move BikeFest to Category 2

\$75,000.00 Revised maximum funding amount for FY22 BikeFest

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

**Attachments:**

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines

BikeFest Economic Impact Study