



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative – Authority for Toronto to host the 2008 Annual Meeting and Conference

Date:	May 11, 2007
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends that Toronto host the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meeting and conference and that Council authorize expenditures related to hosting the event.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) is a bi-national organization of mayors and heads of local Councils committed to working together and with other governments and organizations to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Mayor David Miller is currently chair of the organization.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) holds an annual meeting and conference hosted by a member city alternating between the United States and Canada. In order for Toronto to host the event, authority is required for staff to make the necessary arrangements to prepare for the conference.

Based on previous conferences, it is expected that this event will break even financially with the expenses covered through participant registrations and sponsorships. However, in order to make the necessary arrangements such as booking venues and services as well as attracting sponsors, the City must make financial commitments and enter into contracts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. Toronto host the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meeting and conference;
2. the total financial contribution from the City of Toronto to organize and operate the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Annual Meeting and Conference not exceed net cost to the City of Toronto of \$50,000 over 2007 and 2008 to be funded from the Corporate Fund Hosting Expenses – International Conferences; and
3. the City Manager's Office be authorized to receive and disburse funds up to \$250,000 for the purposes of organizing and operating the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Annual Meeting and Conference.

Financial Impact

The total estimated cost to organize the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Annual Meeting and Conference is \$250,000. Of that, the City of Toronto as host city will provide \$50,000 over 2007 and 2008 with the balance of \$200,000 to be funded from participant registration and sponsors. The City's contribution of \$50,000 is to finance up-front costs associated with organizing the conference and be included in the Non-Program account Hosting Expenses – International Conferences in NP2197.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact

The 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meeting and conference will provide a forum in which to discuss issues related to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for the benefit of current and future generations. A priority for the City of Toronto is improving access and enjoyment of urban beaches for the benefit of the population as a whole but specifically for City residents who do not have access to recreation activities outside the City.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto is an active member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and Mayor David Miller is the chair of the board directors for 2006-07. At present 42 cities, 24 in Canada and 38 in the US, are members. More information about the organization is available at <http://www.glslcities.org/>.

The Cities Initiative was founded in 2003 by Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and brought together mayors in 8 states and 2 provinces to give cities a voice in decisions about the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and provide a forum in which they can work together and with other governments and organizations to restore and protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

COMMENTS

Previous Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meetings and conferences have been held in Chicago (2004), Quebec City (2005), and Parry Sound (2006). The 2007 annual meeting and conference is being held in Grand Rapids Michigan. Attendance at the annual conferences has varied from 160 to 200.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meetings and conferences are hosted by member cities alternating between the US and Canada. The organization also attempts to have cities of different sizes host the conference. The conference attracts elected officials and staff of municipal, state, provincial and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, environmental organizations, academic institutions, and business.

By hosting the 2008 annual meeting and conference, Toronto's innovations and progress in water efficiency, beach management, storm water management and waterfront development and other environmental advances will be promoted and shared with other cities. It is also an opportunity for Toronto to demonstrate leadership on water and environmental issues.

As the host city, Toronto would be responsible for establishing a management structure for conference planning and implementation, assist in program development for the conference, organize venues and tours, contracting for required services and attracting sponsorship. Sponsorship and participant registration fees provide revenues for the conference. Previous conferences have generated sufficient revenue through participant registration fees and sponsorship to cover expenses. The 2006 conference in Parry Sound produced a surplus of \$26,000 that was provided to the Cities Initiative.

The program and content of the conference is a collaborative effort of the host city, other member cities and the director and staff of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

The host city for the 2008 Annual meeting and conference will be determined by the Board of Directors at the end of June and will be announced at the 2007 Annual Meeting and Conference to be held on July 11, 12, and 13 in Grand Rapids.

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SIGNATURE

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