

2018 Sport Tourism FORE-um Round Table Summary

Table #2 | Community Hosting Strategies hosted by Lori Talling

Topic Sponsor: Sport Durham

Recap

Benefits of a formalized community hosting strategy:

- Clear direction and transparency about intentions – helps define motivation to host.
- Insulator from political changes and emotion-based decision making.
- Efficiency – avoid time spent chasing events that aren't the right fit.
- Supports alignment with partners, e.g. sport organizations, provincial tourism organizations, sponsors, accommodations.
- Enables measurement, evaluation and reporting, e.g. to Council, accommodation partners (especially important with increased use of Municipal Accommodations Tax) and boards.
- Increased likelihood and ease of garnering financial support.
- NSOs – Some have own hosting standards to enable consistency across events. If community has defined a strategy and legacy priorities, the NSO can build these into their plans.

Other considerations:

- Begin with inventory of facilities and accommodations; beneficial to align with facility planning.
- Involve key influencers, e.g. at provincial and national level.
- Develop a flexible strategy, evolve as priorities change and build on successes.
- Increased focus on the social benefits of sport hosting; important to identify and measure legacies.
- Collaboration between neighbouring communities to increase hosting capacity is becoming more common. NSOs are also seeing more collaboration between cities, tourism and local sport organizations; they are looking for hosts to elevate events and create memorable experiences.

Tips & Takeaways

- Beyond infrastructure, consider factors such as volunteer capacity, local athlete connections, attracting students/players to local universities and community/potential spectator interests.
- Some communities play a role in hosting and others hand off to organizing committees after bid is won. Sometimes hand-off is high risk – volunteers skilled on sport technical side may need assistance and the community's reputation needs to be managed.

Summary: Community hosting strategies aren't "one size fits all" and the level of formalization varies by community. Clear strategies help communities to be nimble and effective, and to build on their successes and realize the economic, social and cultural benefits of sport hosting.

