

Questionnaire Instructions

The questionnaire below includes some of the most asked questions for Worldcon/SMOFcons and bids. Please email the completed answers to info@smofcon38.ca by **Sunday, 22 November, 2020**. The completed questionnaires will be posted on the Smofcon 37 ¼ website (<https://sites.grenadine.co/sites/conzealand/en/smofcon-37-14>) by **Tuesday, 1 December, 2020**.

Please answer all the questions *in line* below. If a question doesn't apply to your bid, please state: N/A.

If the answer won't be known until some future date, please provide an estimate of when you will be able to provide an answer. For example, for the question about room rates you might answer "These are expected to be agreed by [date]. Current internet rates are X per night room only for a double or twin and Y for single occupancy."

QUESTIONNAIRE

General

Name of Bid

New York City bid for SMOFcon 2023 (originally for 2022)

What dates are you bidding for?

We are bidding the traditional SMOFCon dates, which would be December 1–3 in 2023.

What is your proposed convention host city? Is your convention site in a city center location or a suburb? If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city centre? How far is the site from the city centre?

We do not anticipate being in the city center (midtown Manhattan) for reasons detailed below. We will be looking at venues near either JFK or LGA airports, which could be considered suburban, but are still within the confines of NYC.

[To answer a question asked previously by more than one person, we don't anticipate that it will be possible to get a venue in Manhattan for SMOFCon's customary dates. Early December is in the NYC holiday season (roughly Thanksgiving to New Year's), during which there is absolutely no incentive for hotels in Manhattan to offer anything less than what the market will bear. It doesn't mean we won't look, but we have little hope of finding anything. *It is possible that the effects of the pandemic may motivate these hotels to offer better rates; it is also highly possible that we will have recovered enough that it doesn't matter.*]

What are your main facilities? How far are your hotels from your main venue?

N/A (the hotel will be our main facility).

Who is your bid chair? Who is on your committee? What experience do they have in general? In running Worldcons?

If known, who will be the chair of the convention? What experience do they have?

The leads on our bid are Joni Brill Dashoff, Catelynn Cunningham, and Mark W. Richards.

The following listing of experience of our leads is not exhaustive or complete, but should serve to give an idea of the depth of our experience:

Joni was co-chair of SMOFCon 30, treasurer for the Millennium Philcon, art show head for many conventions, and a department and area head for conventions from the local to the Worldcon level over the course of many years.

Catelynn is a founder of HELIOSphere*, and chaired the 2nd and 3rd instances of that

convention. She ran green room at Arisia 2017 and 2018 and the entire food area in 2019. She assisted in art show at WFC in 2018 and 2019 and at Anticipation and Aussiecon 4. She also has experience with conferences not in the fannish field.

Mark is a founder of HELIOSphere*, and chaired the first convention. He worked on publications for the Dublin Worldcon and edited the Artist Showcase for MidAmerican 2. He has assisted in more than a few art shows, including several WFCs, Anticipation, and Aussiecon 4, and before his hiatus from conrunning fandom in the late 90s to early 00s ran a couple (for Lunacon). He's also worked on many of the conventions in the northeast and mid-Atlantic seaboard — Lunacon, Boskone, Philcon, Balticon, etc.

* We presented on how we started our convention at SMOFCon 36:

<http://smofcon36.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SMOFCON-36-Starting-a-New-Convention-HELIOSphere.pdf>

Have you agreed to participate in Pass-Along Funds? Would you be willing to increase the percentage from 50% to 70% of surplus?

N/A

Travel

What is the typical current airfare to your closest airport from world cities such as London, Boston, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Melbourne, etc.?

Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport? Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?

How far is your convention site from the nearest airport/train station and what is the likely cost of getting to the hotels by both public transport and taxi from that airport/train station?

Airports:

John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), LaGuardia Airport (LGA), Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR).

JFK and EWR are international gateways serving a world city. Just about all international carriers fly into JFK.

There are also secondary commercial airports at Islip (Long Island), White Plains (Westchester County) and Newburgh (Stewart, in Orange County).

Flight costs (rough estimates):

Current 2–4-week purchase, round trip as of this writing (Expedia, rounded), into JFK unless specified:

London	\$800 (was \$1100 last year)
Los Angeles	\$250 (was \$600 last year)
Tokyo	\$1200
Sydney (i/o Melbourne)	\$3200

(We have indicated those sample fares which we had from last year's questionnaire; as the world situation starts to normalize, they may go back up to those levels.)

Other transport options serving NYC (trains, bus service:

Train: Amtrak, Northeast Corridor service, as well as service into the Midwest and South and up to Canada.

Bus: long haul and short haul service with all major carriers into Port Authority

Bus Terminal in midtown Manhattan (except for BoltBus and MegaBus, which start/terminate nearby).

Transport from airport to hotel:

Since we are looking mostly at venues near JFK or LGA airports, proximity to airports is a trivial matter (cab, hotel shuttle). There are mass transit options from elsewhere in NYC, mainly midtown Manhattan, which is where any trains or buses would come in, to those airports. When we have a venue, there will be more specific transit directions.

Facilities

What hotel(s) are being used for the convention? How many rooms, what type, do they accommodate accessibility needs, etc.?

We are looking at hotels close to either of the major NYC airports actually within New York (JFK or LGA). These will include a a new 400 room hotel, a Hyatt Regency, being built as an addition to Resorts World Casino, which is a short distance from JFK and will be open for business well before our convention (early 2021)

What are your hotel room rates? Do these rates include breakfast? Do they include internet access in the room? How firm are these rates? What additional taxes and fees are there?

TBD (To be determined).

What does parking cost at your main hotels?

TBD

What is the distance from the nearest door of your main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site? What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?

N/A

Where will your large events (i.e. Hugo Ceremony and Masquerade) be held?

N/A

Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

TBD

What arrangements will be made for evening socialising and party space? Do you have a corkage waiver?

TBD

Please describe the policies / laws regarding smoking in your hotel(s), convention centre, and city.

NYC is very strict with regards to indoor smoking ... NO SMOKING ... take it outside, and probably not close to the building.

Given the current pandemic, have you considered any arrangements have been made for social distancing and the health and safety of members? If you have, can you describe what your current plans are?

Social distancing, masking in public, and greatly decreased occupancy of public spaces such as restaurants, auditoriums, etc. is currently required in NYC. By 2023 this may be relaxed, but it's not expected that things will return exactly to what they were before. We will adapt to the new norm, whatever it is, and will adapt our policies accordingly to ensure the health and safety of our members.

Miscellaneous

What type of weather can we expect during your convention? What is the average temperature during that time of year?

Temperatures:

From usclimatedata.com for JFK Airport based on 1981–2010 normals:

November: High 54°F/12.4°C Low 41°F/4.8°C

December: High 44°F/6.7°C Low 31°F/-0.3°C

Precipitation figures, from same website:

November: 3.31 inches

December: 3.39 inches

Some of that may be snow.

Typical Northeastern United States weather, beginning of December.

What are some of the main tourist attractions of your city?

Way too numerous to detail at length. Broadway, Off-Broadway, world class museums ... just to start.

Famously, the Statue of Liberty and the observation deck in the Empire State Building.

And the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center will be up, may have been lit, and will be on display.

2–3 local teams in each major sport (**MLB**: Yankees, Mets, although baseball season will be over; **NHL**: Rangers, Islanders, NJ Devils; **NBA**: Knicks, Nets; **NFL**: Giants, Jets; **MLS**: NYC FC, NY Red Bulls, although once again the season will be over.)

Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain demographic groups, such as young adults, military, or seniors?

None besides what is customary for SMOFCon, such as the reduced “consuite only” rate.

What is your vision for your con? How do you plan to make it happen?

We would like to bring convention running fans from around the world — North America, Europe, and even Asia — together to exchange ideas on where fandom, as expressed in our conventions, has been, where we’d like it to go, and how our different approaches might help each other. Located at a world crossroads, we feel that we are well located to accomplish this goal. We plan on making it happen by fostering diversity and by soliciting from as wide a fannish population as possible, both traditional and non-traditional, ideas for program, activities, etc.

What is a notable aspect of your local fan culture and how do you plan to incorporate it into your Worldcon?

N/A

Do you have a code of conduct? If so, is it available online and if so, where?

We anticipate using HELIOSphere's CoC, amended as needed for the specifics of SMOFCon. It can be found at <http://www.heliosphereny.org/policies/>, under "Safer Space Policy."

What do diversity and inclusion mean to you?

How are you working towards your goals in these areas?

What would concrete achievements look like in these areas?

We highly value diversity and inclusion and feel that we have fostered it in our past activities, such as staffing and programming our home convention, HELIOSphere.

The core group from which we will be drawing staff and volunteers already has a high proportion of younger fans, female fans, and fans of color, and we hope their presence will serve as a draw for others to readily realize that we want them to come and work with us.

We will all actively work together as a team to encourage more participation from as wide and diverse a group of fans as possible

A concrete achievement would be a satisfying, fulfilling, and productive convention for all of the staff and attendees.

What changes or challenges do you expect the current pandemic to present?

We have no expectations, feeling that the next couple of years are a moving target. Social distancing and decreased room occupancies may still be a norm; if so, we will deal with that. If masking in public spaces is also still a norm or required, we will enforce that.

Have you planned for a virtual component to your convention?

We have no plans as yet, but we do have experience in running a virtual convention. The 2020 HELIOSphere, scheduled for April, had to be cancelled less than a month beforehand. On 2–3 weeks notice, we conceived of and ran one of the first virtual conventions of the current pandemic era.

Your members vote for Hugo Finalists who are then excited and wish to play a full part in the convention programme. How do you plan to facilitate the Finalists input as recognised by your community?

N/A