

## **SMOFCon 40 (2022)**

Many of the answers below are tentative or TBD as we are at the beginning of our quest to bring SMOFCon to the NYC area in 2022. As the months go by and our plans crystallize, there will be more detail, and we will provide updated answers to this questionnaire as available.

- Who is your point of contact at this convention?  
Catelynn Cunningham
- Do you have an email address (and/or other social media or messaging inboxes) to receive questions? What response time can people expect?  
smofcon@nasf3.org  
We are striving for one day response to any queries directed to this address, even should they be incomplete. Any queries not answered completely will receive followup ASAP.
- What City/Country are you bidding/hosting in?  
We are bidding in the United States, in the New York City metropolitan area.
- What dates are you bidding?  
We are bidding the traditional SMOFCon dates, which would be December 2–4 in 2022.

## About Us

- Who is leading your committee?

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

- Tell us about your committee's prior convention experience.

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 Millenium 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>

- Operating a Worldcon is a complicated business proposition. SMOFCon: What business structure or organization have you formed to support hosting/sponsoring your convention?

We would run our SMOFCon under the auspices of New Amsterdam Science Fiction and Fantasy Fandom, Inc. (NASF<sub>3</sub>). NASF<sub>3</sub> is the corporation we formed under which we run HELIOSphere. It is incorporated under the laws of New York State as a not-for-profit corporation and has 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Our SMOFCon would be run as a separate endeavor from NASF<sub>3</sub>'s other projects (chiefly, HELIOSphere), with an autonomous committee and separate books, an arrangement allowed for in our bylaws.

-

## Location Information

- Is your venue in a city center or a suburban location?

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.

- Travel to your host city

- What Airport (or airports) serve your host city?

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

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

- Please provide rough estimates of flight costs into your airports.

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

London	\$1100	Amsterdam	\$650
Los Angeles	\$600	Miami	\$350
Chicago	\$350/\$180*	Denver	\$350
Dallas	\$550		
Washington DC	\$150*	Boston	\$150*

What other transport options serve your city? 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).

- International attendees

- Do your airports offer nonstop international flights?

Yes, many. JFK and EWR are major international gateways.

- Where can international attendees find customs, immigration and/or visa information about coming to your country?

Unites States Department of State website:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

- Does your country (at the time of publishing) participate in any visa waiver programs?

Yes, again refer to the Dept. of State website:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>

- Travel in your host city

- How do attendees get from your airports, train stations and/or bus stops to the convention area?

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.

- What mass-transit options are available in your city? Are there weekly pass options to make transit easier for attendees?

Yes. MetroCard offers both pay-per-ride and weekly options. The latter allows unlimited rides on both the local buses and subway for the period purchased. The MTA has started limited implementation of a contactless farecard system (OMNY) that is intended to replace MetroCard by 2023.

- What apps are available for taxi and/or ride-sharing services in your city?

There are the ubiquitous Uber and Lyft. There are metered yellow cabs that can be found in the greatest number in Manhattan and at the airports, and they now have their own online apps (Waave and Curb). And in the outer boroughs, there are many local car services; many of these now have online apps, and we will provide the info for those in the neighborhood of our venue.

- For people who have or rent cars, what is your city's parking and traffic situation?

TBD; if we are at a hotel near one of the airports, it's likely to have its own parking lot. In Manhattan, parking is so-so to difficult, depending on the time and neighborhood. There are a lot of parking garages, but they are expensive.

- What accessible transit options exist?

Local buses are accessible. Many subway stations are accessible (elevator access). Many, however, are not; the MTA is currently in the midst of a program to increase the number of accessible stations.

- Weather in your host city

- What average high and low temperatures can attendees expect (C and F both, please)?

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

- What average humidity and precipitation chances can attendees expect in your city?

(Precipitation figures, from same website)

November: 3.31 inches

December: 3.39 inches

Some of that may be snow.

- Is there anything about your weather that would surprise many attendees?

No. Northeastern United States, beginning of December ... we doubt it.

- Eating and drinking in your host city

- What is the restaurant scene, particularly surrounding your facilities? **TBD**
- How do restaurants in your area accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions? **TBD**, but we anticipate that the answer will be rather readily, depending on the choice of cuisine, etc.
- What is the nightlife scene, particularly surrounding your facilities? **TBD** near facility. With respect to Manhattan, one could write a book; see answer to next question.
- Tourist attractions in or near your host 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.)

## Convention facilities

- *Convention facilities*
  - *What facilities are you planning to use for convention exhibits, program and events?*
  - *Has your organization used this space before?*
  - *What other conventions similar to your convention in content and/or capacity does your facility host? Have you attended any of them?*
  - *How many rooms do you plan to allocate to programming? What are their capacity ranges?*
  - *Does your facility provide internet access? Have you reviewed the convention facility's internet services under load?*
  - *Does your facility provide gender-neutral toilets (restrooms)?*  
As this is for a SMOFCon, where not addressed below, the answer is for the most part "N/A."
- **Housing and convention facility**
  - **What hotels do you currently have under contract?**  
None yet, it's too early. 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 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. [To answer the question not yet asked (although it has come up previously), 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.]
  - **How close are your contracted hotels to your convention center? N/A for SMOFCon.**
  - **Please provide a breakdown of room block sizes and composition in your contracted hotels. TBD**
  - **What are your hotel rates? Does this include all taxes? TBD**
  - **Do your contracted hotels include internet access for guests? TBD**
  - **Do your contracted hotels include breakfast? TBD**
  - **Have you contracted all the sleeping rooms and function space in any of your hotels? N/A for SMOFCon.**
  - **Are you negotiating with or planning to negotiate with other hotels (you don't have to name them) to increase your room block? N/A for SMOFCon.**

- Are you required to make a minimum room block, or is your housing “courtesy blocks?” Will people booking outside your blocks harm the convention’s financial stability?

We anticipate negotiating a contract where we will need to meet a minimum, with attrition. We will try to include in the contract a clause whereby attendees booking outside of our block will still count toward our minimums; we have had such clauses before. We will ask members to inform us if they do book outside of our negotiated block.

- *Party facilities*

- *What space are you planning to make available for parties?*
- *Will party hosts have to use caterers authorized by the space? Will party hosts be able to bring in their own food and/or drink?*

*Are party hosts allowed to serve alcohol? Where can party hosts learn about alcohol service regulations and facilities policies?*

As this is for a SMOFCon, where not addressed above, the answer is for the most part “**N/A**”; if for consuite, **TBD**.

- *Accessibility*

- Has your access team reviewed your facilities for mobility device access? For access services for the blind? For access services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing? **TBD**
- Does your facility provide ramps and/or lifts for event and program stages? **TBD**
- Do your facilities host any access-focused events, and, if so, can you tell us about these events and how the space works with them? **TBD**
- How do your hotels accommodate allergies? **TBD**

## Our Mission

- In one short paragraph, please explain what your team is attempting to bring to this convention.

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.

- How are you fostering member safety?
  - Is your code of conduct and implementation process published?  
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."
  - If not, what are your member safety plans? **N/A**
- How are you fostering diversity?
  - What is your diversity plan for volunteer recruiting?  
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.
  - What is your diversity plan for programming? None yet, too early.
  - Do you have a diversity plan for Guests of Honor? **N/A**
  - Have you looked into your police department's record with minority and marginalized communities?  
Yes, and as it is for one of the largest metropolitan areas in North America, it is well documented in news and public information sources.
- How are you fostering accessibility?
  - Does your access team include people who need access services?  
No separate access team.
  - Does your committee include people who need access services?  
Yes, and increasingly so by the time of our convention.
- How are you engaging your local community?
  - What is your plan for recruiting local volunteers? Under development.
  - What is your plan to reach out to local fans and program participants? Under development.
  - What local arts, educational and/or charity organizations do you plan to reach out to? **N/A** for SMOFCon.

- What are you doing to engage young fans and families with children?
  - What age-related policies and restrictions have you put in place (or are required to put in place) that apply to young fans? **N/A** for SMOFCon.
  - What are your plans to handle childcare needs?  
We don't anticipate such a need.
- Are you planning any membership discounts/rates?  
None besides what is customary for SMOFCon, such as the reduced "consuite only" rate.
- What attendance level are you expecting for your convention? How are you calculating this estimate?  
We are hoping for 200–250, based on attendance at previous SMOFCons.