



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** October 27, 2020

**TO:** Ordinance Committee

**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
City Attorney's Office

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Municipal Code Amendments Pertaining To Special Events In The City Of Santa Barbara In City Parks, On City Beaches, Streets, Sidewalks, And Plazas, And Pertaining To Permits And Regulations For Parades, Athletic Events And Other Events Requiring The Closure Of Streets And Other Public Rights Of Way

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That The Ordinance Committee Consider Proposed Amendments To The City Of Santa Barbara's Municipal Code, Amending Title 15, Adding Chapter 15.17 Pertaining To Special Events In City Parks, On City Beaches, Streets, Sidewalks, And Plazas, And Amending Title 9 Of The Municipal Code By Repealing Chapter 9.12 Pertaining To Permits And Regulations For Parades, Athletic Events, And Other Events Requiring The Closure Of Streets And Other Public Rights Of Way.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Parks and Recreation Department and the City Attorney's Office propose amendments to Title 15 Recreation, Beaches and Parks of the City's Municipal Code to add Chapter 15.17, referred to as the City of Santa Barbara Special Events Ordinance, and amendments to Title 9, repealing Chapter 9.12 of the Municipal Code pertaining to permits and regulations for parades, athletic events, and other events requiring the closure of streets and other public rights of way. Chapter 15.17 would establish the process for permitting and regulating all special events, such as athletic events, festivals, parades, public assemblies, demonstrations, and other special activities in and on City parks, beaches, streets, sidewalks, and plazas. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to clarify special events permit requirements, designate a City Special Events Coordinator, enhance customer service for event organizers, and streamline the permit review and approval process to achieve efficiencies across the City organization. With approval of the proposed amendments, an interdepartmental staff team will implement

the online permit application process, disseminate a special events planning guide, and establish a dedicated special events webpage.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Each year, Santa Barbara hosts hundreds of commercial or non-profit sponsored special events, including: athletic; sporting; commercial; community and cultural events; parades; festivals and concerts; block parties; and first amendment events in City parks, beaches, and the public right of way. By their nature, special events require significant planning, review, and permitting from multiple City departments and other governmental agencies to ensure proper use of City property and adequate planning for safe conduct of the activity, meet local and state guidelines, and ensure the general health and safety of the attendees and/or the general public.

The Parks and Recreation Department or Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD) determines whether a proposed event is defined as a special event if it includes or requires any the following regarding the use of City property (parks, beaches, City buildings, etc.):

- Road closures, use of public streets, transportation planning, and/or extra parking
- Need for security and/or law enforcement
- Entry tickets or participant fees
- 75 or more attendees
- Erection of fencing, tents, stages, barricades, booths, or other structures
- Use of sound amplification equipment
- Service of alcoholic beverages.

Currently, the special event permitting process is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department for events that take place on or adjacent to City managed parks and beaches, and managed by the SBPD for events that take place in the public right of way, such as streets, sidewalks, and neighborhoods. Knowledgeable City staff diligently work with event organizers to assist them throughout the process.

Due to the complex nature of most special events, including festivals, mass participation sports such as walks or runs, and spectator sports such as volleyball or soccer tournaments, event organizers can find the City process to be cumbersome and confusing. First time event organizers are often unaware of allowed uses of public spaces, the terms and conditions for hosting a special event, and relevant health and safety regulations. Permitting special events can be complex, requiring extensive coordination and numerous meetings with various City department liaisons and event organizers to review and process applications and to apply the appropriate rules, regulations, and fees for each event. Significant effort goes into collecting required permits and compliance items for each event, including insurance certificates; temporary food, alcohol, and

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vending permits; right-of-way use permits; and trash, recycling and portable toilet contracts; all of which are necessary for the safety of all and the protection of the City.

### Proposed Revisions

In an effort to update and streamline the permitting process and provide clarity to event organizers, the Department worked with an inter-departmental staff team to develop the proposed municipal code amendments, develop a simplified special events planning guide, and establish an efficient and streamlined online permit review and approval process. The draft special events planning guide outlines the permitting process and terms and conditions associated with a special event permit, and provides procedures and insurance and fee requirements. These revisions would be supported by a dedicated City special events webpage and a comprehensive event organizer outreach campaign.

The inter-departmental team, which includes the City Administrator's Office (Economic Development), City Attorney's Office, and the Fire, Parks and Recreation, Public Works (Downtown Parking and Transportation), and Police Departments, developed the following recommendations to ensure an efficient and streamlined internal permit review and approval process.

#### *Lead Department*

To implement the recommendations and provide consistency throughout the entire special event permitting process, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Special Events Coordinator will serve as the lead department and primary point of contact. The Special Events Coordinator will directly interface with event organizers, coordinate the on-line application through internal review and approval, and issue the special event permits.

#### *Dedicated Special Event Webpage*

A Citywide webpage dedicated to special events in the City of Santa Barbara [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/SpecialEvents](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/SpecialEvents) (webpage currently under construction) will replace the current pages hosted on the Parks and Recreation Department and Santa Barbara Police Department websites. This dedicated webpage will centralize information and provide simple and clear instructions to assist event organizers. The website will serve as the primary interface with the public and will include citywide permit fees, contact information for other permitting agencies, such as Santa Barbara County Public Health Department or Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC), and contact information for vendors that provide special event equipment or services. Applicants will be able to submit an online permit application via the webpage, which will get logged into Accela, the City's application software system.

#### *Online Application Submittal*

The City currently uses Accela across several departments to enable the public to facilitate submittal and review of land development applications and the subsequent issuance of building permits and payment of fees by the applicant. Several cities, including San Diego,

Seattle, Fort Lauderdale, and Indianapolis are successfully using Accela to improve the special event permitting process and the interface with event organizers. The use of Accela to permit citywide special events will ensure consistency, efficiency, and accountability when processing applications, and event organizers will use the same application to initiate a permit for the following types of events:

New Event – A New Event application will trigger an e-mail inquiry to the Special Events Coordinator to check the ability to host the event based on the proposed dates, location, and event type. This process will ensure the event organizer does not spend unnecessary time completing the application process for a location where another event is already planned or create a conflict with existing programs. Limitations regarding location availability could be due to an outdoor wedding or reception in an immediately adjacent area, or other annual events and festivals that would over extend City resources and make permitting the event overly complex, and in some cases, infeasible.

Returning Event – The process for a Returning Event enables an event organizer to view the prior year permit in Accela and make any adjustments for their current event prior to submitting. This process eliminates the need for the event organizer to fill out a new fillable on-line application, print, sign, scan, and send to the Special Events Coordinator to initiate the process. Examples of large scale returning events include the Santa Barbara County Triathlon, The Race Of Gentleman (TROG), and the Greek or French Festivals.

City-Sponsored Event – A City-sponsored event is one that is included in the Arts and Economic Vitality Program and involves interdepartmental work efforts to enhance economic vitality, strengthen commercial corridors, and promote tourism, arts, and cultural activities, or are organized and operated by the City. As a City-sponsored event, there may be a variety of financial and in-kind resources that are provided to the event organizer. Examples include Earth Day, Solstice, Independence Day, Fiesta, and the Christmas Parade.

First Amendment Event – A First Amendment Event is an event for the purpose of expression protected by the First Amendment. Although these events are exempt from some of the requirements in the special event permitting process, having the event organizer submit a notification alerts City staff to the date, time, size, and scale, which assists City staff in determining whether City resources will be needed to ensure the safety for the public and event participants.

Through the online application process, each department will be able to evaluate the need for staff resources to ensure successful event implementation, including traffic control, approved use of City public space, health and other permit compliance, and public safety. Where feasible, City departments will consider the use of non-City resources in the implementation of special events. The Santa Barbara Police Department will also evaluate

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the need for law enforcement and, where feasible, approve the use of security staff and event volunteers to augment law enforcement services. Providing a critical role with the Emergency Management System, key considerations include the size, scope and location of the event and consideration for participant and spectator safety.

### *Online Application and Permit Payment Processing*

The online application process will be dynamic and either request additional information prior to proceeding, or notify the applicant that they may be required to secure additional permits based on the size and scale of their event.

An added benefit of using Accela for special event permitting is that it will enable different City departments to coordinate specialty permits, such as Parking Restriction Waivers from Public Works, Tent Permits from the Fire Department, or One-Day Vendor Licenses from the Finance Department, and then have them all paid for and issued when the final permit is issued. This eliminates the need for an event organizer to contact or visit different departments to procure these specialty permits.

### Next Steps

If the proposed changes are approved, the Department will include the updates on a dedicated special events webpage and conduct a comprehensive event organizer outreach campaign, including:

- Communicating changes via e-mail to City staff and advisory groups
- Providing implementation guidelines to all City departments involved in the Special Event Permitting Process
- Preparing and disseminating e-mails and letters to past and current event organizers, partner organizations, contractors, community groups, businesses, and tenants
- Conducting a social media campaign on all City platforms

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Special event permitting fees collected through Accela will be reconciled and allocated to departments on a daily basis as they are paid by the applicant. Existing City staff will be able to implement the majority of these recommendations. The development and implementation of the Special Event Permitting Process in Accela cost approximately \$10,000. Additional Accela licenses (approximately \$3,000 per license) will be assigned to departments who are not currently part of the land development process. The development and additional license costs will be allocated to participating departments based upon their involvement in the special events permitting process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**     1. Draft Special Event Planning Guide  
                              2. Draft Ordinance

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