

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: January 8, 2026

From: Police Department

Subject: 2025 Special Event Report



Recommended Action: Receive a report highlighting special events held in the City in 2025; provide feedback for recurring Special Event Permits; determine if any additional review should be required for any 2026 special events; and adopt a resolution to approve Coastal Development Permit #25-0607 for the 2026 Capitola Beach Festival and Junior Guards Competition.

Background: In March 2024, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1065, updating the City's special event ordinance. That update established clear criteria for types of special event permits and the process for issuance.

Special events are divided into two categories: major special events and minor special events. Major special events are those with more than 200 attendees, involve the closure of a Major Street (as defined by Ordinance No. 1065), or have notable impacts on City services or a neighborhood. Minor special events are activities with between 75 to 200 people, not requiring closure of a major street, and can be approved by the City Manager or his/her designee. All applications for new major special events must be presented to the City Council for review and consideration.

If there are no significant modifications and there are no major problems with the event, recurring special events may be approved by the City Manager for the upcoming calendar year. The City Council has the discretion to request a review of a recurring special event if there is an identifiable concern related to past events.

The purpose of this report is to review the 2025 special events, identify any issues, and determine if any additional review should be required for recurring events in 2026. If no issues are identified for an event, and the event organizer proposes no significant changes, City Council may approve a Coastal Development Permit for two of the events, and staff will issue permits for the recurring special events in 2026.

Discussion: In 2025, staff issued 11 major special event permits, 16 minor special event permits, and held 10 City-organized events. The following recurring Major and Minor Special Events are planned for 2026.

Recurring 2026 Major Special Events

- Surfer's Path 5K/10K
- Surfer's Path Half Marathon
- Capitola Custom Classic Car Show
- Wharf to Wharf Race
- Capitola 5K/10K
- VW Car Show
- Capitola Art & Wine Festival
- Capitola Beach Festival
- Mermaid Triathlon & Duathlon
- Monte Fireworks Extravaganza
- Women on Waves Surf Contest

Recurring 2026 Minor Special Events

- Operation Surf
- Good Friday Paddle Out
- Veteran Surf Alliance Learn to Surf (5)
- Village Sip & Stroll (3)
- 5K Walk for Angelman's Syndrome
- Fill the Boot for MDA
- Open Water Swim Festival
- Strawberry Fields Forever Ride
- Veteran Surf Alliance Paddle Out
- AIDS/Lifecycle Bicycle Ride
- California Coast Classic
- Halloween Parade
- Surfing Santa

City-Organized Special Events

- Twilight Concerts (12)
- Food Truck Fridays (4)
- Makers Market (4)
- Plein Air
- First Responder's Surf Contest
- Movies at the Beach (2)
- Boogie on the Wharf (3)
- New Music Sunday (2)
- Dueling Pianos (2)
- National Night Out

Junior Guards Competition

Coastal Development Permits: Pursuant to the CMC Section 17.44.080.F, temporary events in the coastal zone meeting one or more of the following criteria require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP):

1. Scheduled the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day for a period greater than two days in duration, including setup and takedown.
2. The event will occupy any portion of a publicly or privately owned sandy beach or park area, public pier, public beach parking area, and there is a potential for adverse effect on sensitive coastal resources.
3. A fee will be charged for general public admission and/or seating where no fee is currently charged for use of the same area (not including booth or entry fees); or if a fee is charged, it is for preferred seating only, and 75% of the provided seating capacity is available free of charge for general public use.

Based on these criteria the following recurring events require CDPs.

- Junior Guards Competition
- Capitola Beach Festival

Many other events occupy a portion of the beach, but there is no potential adverse impacts on sensitive coastal resources, do not last longer than two days during the summer months, and the only fees charged are entry fees.

The Monte Foundation Fireworks Extravaganza, a major special event held in October, currently holds a CDP issued through the California Coastal Commission. The CDP will expire in 2027.

The events are located within the Mixed-Use Village (MU-V) Zoning District and Parks and Open Space (POS). The Coastal Development Permit is appealable to the California Coastal Commission. In order to issue a CDP for a special event, the City Council must determine that the event complies with the following criteria:

1. The event will result in no adverse impact on opportunities for public use of or access to the area due to the proposed location and/or timing of the event, either individually or cumulatively

considered together with other development or temporary events scheduled before or after the particular event;

2. There will be no direct or indirect impacts from the event and its associated activities or access requirements on environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare or endangered species, significant scenic resources, or other coastal resources; and
3. The event has not previously required a CDP to address and monitor associated impacts to coastal resources.

Both events are managed to comply with the required CDP criteria through the application process and specific event site and management plans. Public use and access are maintained to the coast and there are no direct or indirect negative impacts on environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare or endangered species, significant scenic resources, or other coastal resources. Also, none of the events previously required a CDP with requirements for monitoring associated impacts to coastal resources.

CEQA: The permit is categorically exempt from CEQA exemption 15323 Normal Operation of Facilities for Public Gathering. The special events consist of normal operation of existing facilities for public gatherings in which the facilities in which there is a past history of the facility being used for the same or similar kind of purpose.

Fiscal Impact: The 2025 Special Events resulted in 876 hours of City staff time. The City incurred a total of \$111,807 in costs associated with events, 100% of which were reimbursed by special-event organizers.

Attachments:

1. Resolution

Report Prepared By: Sarah Ryan, Chief of Police

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk; Marc Tran, City Attorney

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager