



**STAFF REPORT**  
**6/24/2026**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Gustavo J. Romo, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Lincoln Bogard, Finance Director

**SUBJECT:** Request for Permit Fee Waiver – Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year (United for Autism & Abilities Foundation)

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve a waiver of permit fees for the Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year community event, organized by United for Autism & Abilities Foundation in collaboration with California Abilities in Action, scheduled for Saturday, November 21, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Bagdouma Park; and direct the applicant to submit a completed Facility Use Permit application to the Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate event logistics and City resources.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City has received a request from Loretta Perez, Founder of United for Autism & Abilities Foundation, to waive permit fees for a free community event focused on autism awareness and inclusion. The event, titled Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year, is scheduled for Saturday, November 21, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Bagdouma Park, and is free and open to the public. The event is co-hosted by California Abilities in Action, a registered Coachella Valley nonprofit organization. The request was submitted on June 2, 2026, and placement on the June 24, 2026 City Council agenda was specifically requested to allow adequate time for event planning. Staff recommends approval of the fee waiver, with a condition that the applicant submit a completed Facility Use Permit application prior to the event.

**BACKGROUND:**

United for Autism & Abilities Foundation is a local nonprofit organization founded by Loretta Perez, dedicated to supporting individuals with autism and other disabilities and their families in the Coachella Valley. The Foundation is co-hosting Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year with California Abilities in Action, a registered Coachella Valley nonprofit organization. California Abilities in Action was founded by Veronica Juarez, whose motivation for the work began with the birth of her son with Down syndrome in 2005. The organization's mission is to empower

individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling, independent lives and to provide families with the tools, knowledge, and support necessary to effectively advocate for their loved ones.

The proposed event will be held at Bagdouma Park in Coachella on Saturday, November 21, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and is free and open to the public. At registration, participants will receive pledge sheets to collect sponsorships from family, friends, and community members. All funds raised will go directly to United for Autism & Abilities Foundation to support future community events and programs serving local families. The City's standard Facility Use Permit is required for events held at City park facilities with 24 or more attendees.

On June 2, 2026, Loretta Perez submitted a written request via email to the City Clerk, and Acting City Manager requesting: (1) a waiver of all applicable City permit fees for the event; and (2) placement of the item on the June 24, 2026 Regular City Council agenda to allow adequate time for event planning and coordination with City staff.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year is a free, publicly accessible community event designed to raise awareness of and support for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities, and their families. The event is organized by two local nonprofit organizations with missions directly aligned with the City's values of community inclusion, equity, and support for underserved populations.

Under the City's permit process, any event at a City park facility with 24 or more participants requires a Facility Use Permit through the Parks and Recreation Department. The applicant has requested that associated permit fees be waived. Because the event is a charitable, community-serving activity organized by a nonprofit at no cost to attendees, with proceeds directed back to local programming for Coachella families, staff finds the fee waiver request to be meritorious and consistent with the City's history of supporting community-based events that serve residents.

Staff notes that the City does not currently have a formal, codified fee waiver policy for special events at City parks. In the absence of an adopted policy, fee waiver requests for community events are brought to the City Council for case-by-case consideration. Should the Council wish to establish a more consistent framework for evaluating such requests in the future, staff can return with a proposed fee waiver policy for Council consideration at a subsequent meeting.

The event organizers have separately indicated they are seeking individual sponsorship support from Council for the event. Any personal or Council Member sponsorship activity is separate and distinct from this staff report, which addresses only the formal request for a City-level permit fee waiver.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the fee waiver as requested, allowing United for Autism & Abilities Foundation to proceed with planning for the November 21, 2026 event at Bagdouma Park without incurring permit fees; and direct the applicant to submit a completed Facility Use Permit application to the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Approve a partial fee waiver, waiving certain permit fees while requiring payment of others (e.g., refundable security/cleanup deposit), consistent with City practice for similar events.
3. Deny the fee waiver request and require the applicant to pay all applicable permit fees in order to use City park facilities for the event.
4. Continue the item and direct staff to return with additional information, including the City's current fee schedule for park facility use permits and a proposed framework or policy for evaluating future fee waiver requests.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

If approved, the City will forgo revenue equal to the applicable Facility Use Permit fees for a single-day nonprofit event at Bagdouma Park. The precise fee amount is dependent on the final scope of the event (number of attendees, duration, equipment needs, and staffing requirements), but is expected to be modest. Any foregone revenue would represent a minor impact to the General Fund. There is no other direct expenditure associated with this action; routine park staffing and maintenance costs are already budgeted within the Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):**

Staff recommends Alternative 1 – approval of the permit fee waiver for Walk the Spectrum: Shine All Year, scheduled for Saturday, November 21, 2026, at Bagdouma Park. The event is free to the public, organized by local nonprofits, and serves individuals with autism and other disabilities and their families, a population that is often underserved within the community. Approving the fee waiver is consistent with the City's values of inclusion and equity, and signals to Coachella's families that the City stands in support of all its residents. Staff further recommends that the applicant be directed to submit a completed Facility Use Permit application to the Parks and Recreation Department no less than 45 days prior to the event to facilitate coordination of logistics, staffing, and any necessary City resources.