



City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

Initiated By: City Council

Prepared By: Anthony Carnesecca

Approved By: Gabriel Engeland

Subject: Special Event Sponsorship Discussion and Adoption of Resolution Creating Special Event Sponsorship Policy

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- ☒ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☒ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Housing
- ☒ Neighborhood Safety Infrastructure
- ☒ General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Review the sponsorship levels of various special events in the City and adopt the resolution that creates a special event sponsorship policy and process moving forward.

POLICY QUESTION(S) FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- Would the City Council wish to adjust the special event sponsorship for any events moving forward?
- Would the City Council wish to adopt the resolution that will create the Los Altos Special Event Sponsorship Policy?

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact will depend upon the adjustment to special event sponsorships.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This resolution are exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines implementing the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

June 2015 & October 2023

SUMMARY

- City Council created Los Altos Municipal Code 9.25 “Special Events” in March 2007 that governs special events and modified this code section in October 2023.

- The City sponsors certain special events as outlined in 2015-23.
- The City Council has directed staff to bring special event sponsorship for discussion

BACKGROUND

The City Council adopted Los Altos Municipal Code 9.25 “Special Events” in March 2007 that governs special events. In October 2023, the City Council adopted changes to this code section that simplified a confusing code section, retained control over more events on public property, and simplified the special event and block party process.

In 2024, the City received, reviewed, and approved various special event applications. These special event applications vary from one-time events to the weekend-long Art and Wine Festival to the weekly Farmers Market in downtown. They also vary in attendance from large events such as the weekend-long Fine Art in the Park to the multi-minute Spring Egg Hunt.

The list of continuing special events that occurred in 2024, and scheduled to continue in 2025, are:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Street Closure</u>	<u>City Cost</u>	<u>Sponsored?</u>
First Fridays	First Friday of every month		\$	
Valentine’s Choco Stroll	2/10/2024		\$	
St Paddy’s Beer Stroll	3/15/2024		\$	
Spring Egg Hunt	3/23/2024		\$	50%
Headwest Market	Fourth Sunday of every month March through October	Yes	\$\$\$	
Bubbly Stroll	5/10/2024		\$	
Pet Parade	5/18/2024	Yes	\$\$	100%
Farmers’ Market	Every Thursday May 24 through October 10 & December 5 and 12	Yes	\$\$\$\$	50%
Juneteenth Festival	6/22/2024		\$	
Art & Wine Festival	7/13/24-7/14/24	Yes	\$\$\$\$\$	50%
Fine Art in the Park	8/10/24-8/11/24	Yes	\$\$	50%
Corvette Spectacular	9/15/2024	Yes	\$\$	50%
Wine Stroll	9/20/2024		\$	
Whisky Stroll	10/18/2024		\$	
A Boo-tiful Downtown Halloween	10/31/2024		\$	50%
Los Altos High School Homecoming Parade	11/1/2024	Yes	\$\$	100%
Veterans’ Day	11/11/2024		\$	50%
Festival of Lights Parade	12/1/2024	Yes	\$\$\$\$\$	100%
Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony	12/6/2024	Yes	\$\$	50%
Chanukah Menorah Lighting	12/29/24		\$	50%

Prior to a special event, City staff gathers a cost estimate for the cost of City services provided for the event, which is discussed during a pre-event meeting and provided to the event organizer in advance of the event. After the event concludes, City staff will put together the cost recap that will calculate the final cost of City services provided for the event and is sent to the event organizer for payment.

The chart above illustrates the relative City cost for special events with one dollar sign being on the lower end for most events that only require an application fee and five dollar signs being the more expensive special events that require larger street closures to operate from the City perspective. The biggest cost is shutting down the street for a special event as that has historically been completed by our Police Department on a minimum overtime or call-out basis. Moving forward, that may be adjusted as we have a third-party operator who can shut down the street at a lower cost than our sworn Police officers, but it will still be an expense for the special event organizer.

The City Council determines what special events qualify as full-sponsored or half-sponsored events that will not be required to pay a portion or all of their cost for City services. There are two tiers for sponsorship. Full-sponsorship means the City bears the full cost of City services. Half-sponsorship means that the City bears half the cost of City services and invoices the organization afterward for their half the cost of City services.

Historically, these events have been identified by a resolution of the City Council and was last updated on June 9, 2015 to adjust per Council direction.

Per Resolution 2015-23, the City sponsors the following events at these various levels:

<u>Event</u>	<u>City Sponsorship</u>
Festival of Lights Parade	100%
Glorious Fourth Celebration*	100%
Los Altos High School Homecoming Parade	100%
Pet Parade	100%
Arts and Wine Festival	50%
Bus Barn Follies	50%
Chanukah Menorah Lighting	50%
Corvette Spectacular	50%
Easter Downtown Spring Egg Hunt	50%
Fall Festival^	50%
Farmers' Market	50%
Fine Art in the Park	50%
Halloween Spooktacular (A Boo-tiful Downtown Halloween)	50%
Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony	50%
Movie Nights^	50%
Veterans' Day*	50%

* denotes that the event is now a City-coordinated event so it can be removed from sponsorship list if directed

^ denotes that the event has not happened in at least the last year

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The City Council can alter this list of City-sponsored special events listed in the City's Special Event Resolution No. 2015-23 by adding or removing any special events they would like to sponsor as City-sponsored events. All recommendations provided by the City Council will be returned at another meeting with a resolution determining that those City-sponsored events qualify as government speech and provide the sponsorship level prescribed by the City Council. The amount of sponsorship does not affect whether the event is government speech.

The City Council should adopt a policy to provide clear guidance for additional and/or future special events on City-owned property. This policy, like the flag flying policy and its application process, allows City Council to review special event requests and approve them on a case-by-case basis. When a special event is approved, the City Council would be required to adopt the particular event as government speech. Public agencies have the right to free speech on their own property, which means the City Council can convey any event, message, or symbol as their own speech on their own property without opening it into a public forum.

Attached to this agenda report is a draft special event policy that outlines this process moving forward.

ATTACHMENT

1. Special Event Sponsorship Policy Resolution
2. Presentation