



## City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

Initiated By: City Council

Prepared By: Anthony Carnesecca

Approved By: Gabriel Engeland

**Subject: Adoption of Resolution Creating Special Event Sponsorship Policy, Adoption of Resolution Repealing Resolution No. 2015-23 And Setting Special Event Sponsorship Levels Pursuant To Los Altos Municipal Code Section 9.25.100, & Adoption of Resolution Repealing Resolution No.2023-66 and Adopting New Flag Raising Policy**

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### COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

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

### RECOMMENDATION

City staff recommends the following actions by City Council:

- Adopt the resolution that creates a special event sponsorship policy
- Adopt the resolution repealing Resolution No. 2015-23 and setting special event sponsorship levels pursuant to Los Altos Municipal Code Section 9.25.100
- Adopt the resolution repealing Resolution No. 2023-66 and adopting new flag raising policy

### FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the cost estimates for this year's Farmers' Market at roughly \$17,650, the transition of that event from half to full sponsorship will cost the City roughly \$8,825 per year for in-kind services, which is the staff time for the closure of State Street.

### 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, April 2025, & May 2025

## BACKGROUND

### Special Event Sponsorship Policy

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.

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 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

### Flag Raising Policy

At the November 29, 2022 meeting, City Council adopted a flag raising policy as a pilot policy set to be reviewed in late 2023.

This policy allowed City Council to review flag raising requests and approve them on a case-by-case basis. When a flag raising is approved, the City Council determines that the particular flag falls under government speech. Public agencies have the right to free speech on their own property, which means the City Council can convey any message or symbol as their own speech on their own property without opening it into a public forum.

At the October 24, 2023 meeting, City Council adopted the pilot flag raising policy as a permanent policy.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### Special Event Sponsorship Policy

At their April 22, 2025 meeting, the City Council provided direction to City staff to bring back a new resolution that incorporates the following changes:

- Remove Bus Barn Follies
- Remove Fall Festival
- Remove Glorious Fourth Celebration
- Remove Movie Nights
- Remove Veterans' Day
- Update A Boo-tiful Downtown Halloween Name
- Identify if there are any other special events that City staff would adjust, including the addition of the Farmers' Market to Full Sponsorship

At their May 13, 2025 meeting, the City Council provided direction for the City Attorney to clarify the language regarding religious portion of this policy to avoid any First Amendment issues and return with the list of sponsored special events based upon this clarification.

The City Attorney has reviewed the policy and determined that the City Council has the ability to sponsor any special event as long as they allow any institution to apply for sponsorship and the policy does not prohibit any organization from applying. City Council can make a determination at that time whether the Council would like to convey the message of the event as government speech.

#### Flag Raising Policy

The City Attorney updated this policy to mirror the above policy due to previous case law and for consistency with similar City sponsorship policies.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

1. Resolution
2. Resolution
3. Resolution