

(City Clerk)

To: Public Safety and Welfare Committee

From: Megan Dunneisen

Date: 3/23/2026

Subject: Special Event Ordinance – Definition and Exemption Updates

Background

The City's Special Event ordinance was amended in 2024 with the understanding that it would be reviewed periodically based on staff experience and community feedback. Since implementation, staff and residents have identified challenges with the current definition of a "special event," noting that it is overly broad and can create confusion regarding when a permit is required.

This lack of clarity has resulted in inconsistent interpretations and administrative inefficiencies for both applicants and staff.

Recommendation

Staff recommends amending Sections 428-7(A) and 428-7(C) to provide a clearer and more precise definition of a "special event" and to better outline exemptions.

The proposed updates aim to:

- Clarify when an event qualifies as a special event by focusing on measurable impacts, such as:
 - Interference with vehicular or pedestrian traffic
 - Disruption of the normal use of public property
 - Need for street closures or use of public right-of-way
 - Requirement for extraordinary City services
- Refine location-based criteria by specifying when events must obtain permits, particularly when they cannot be contained within existing buildings or designated park spaces.
- Remove the fixed attendance threshold (300 persons) in favor of a more practical, impact-based approach.

- Expand and clarify exemptions, including:
 - Events held entirely on private property with adequate parking and no street impacts
 - Events held at established venues within their normal capacity
 - Events on state or federal property
 - Funeral processions

- Establish clear limitations on exemptions, ensuring that otherwise exempt events still require review if they:
 - Obstruct access to buildings or driveways
 - Impede pedestrian traffic
 - Conflict with permitted events

Summary

These amendments are intended to improve clarity with efficient administration while maintaining public safety.