City Co-Sponsorship Processes for Special Events in Austin

Music Commission Meeting

Austin

Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment | Nov 2, 2026

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – History

1997 – Resolution 19970612-034: City of Austin fee waiver guidelines

2002 – Resolution No. 021003-40 (replaced 1997 policy for events): Designated specific events co-sponsored by the City, meaning financial support to an event in the form of fee waivers and/or authorized reimbursement for pre-payment of City services. Members of the City Council were each allotted $6,000 per budget year to use for non-co-sponsored event fee waivers that have a municipal purpose.

2014 – Resolution 20140501-036: Explore sources of alternative funding for special events and to create a fee waiver process for large-scale events

2015 – Resolution No. 20150305-025: Created the Parkland Events Task Force to develop recommendations to ensure that all City parks, but most particularly Auditorium Shores, Zilker Park, and Festival Beach, remain first and foremost assets for the citizens of Austin to enjoy and that the parks are preserved and enhanced for future generations of Austinites and visitors to experience and enjoy.

2016 – Staff Response to Resolution No. 20140501-036: Long-Term Analysis of Special Events

2018 – Staff Response to Resolution No. 20150305-025: Parkland Events Task Force Implementation Update

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – History

2018 – Special Events Task Force established by Council, which consisted of 11 voting members and 13 ex officio members comprised of the Austin Center for Events City departments. The mission of the task force was to assess Ordinance No. 20180510-018, the associated rules, and Austin Center for Events processes

2022 – Work concluded with the generation of the Special Events Task Force Final Report with recommendations to Council for improvements

2023 – Council approved recommendations from the Special Events Task Force, and the Special Events Ordinance was passed

2024 – Resolution 20240215-023: Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to investigate ways to preserve accessible, inclusive, open-to-the-public events and Citywide traditions and to identify opportunities for the City to support and promote community events including a free annual summer concert series

2024 – Resolution 20240814-015: Approve a resolution amending Resolution No. 20021003-040 and directing the City Manager to solidify the City's efforts and financial support for Juneteenth celebrations, to identify opportunities to further support and sustain other culturally significant and legacy events, and to return to council with updates

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – Current Process

Two (2) Primary Types of Austin Special Events

- Special Event funded in whole by the event organizer
- Co-Sponsored / Fee-Waived Special Event, based on City policy:
  - City Council Fee Waivers – Austin City Council acts to waive a portion of permitting fees for an event
  - City Council Co-Sponsored Event – Austin City Council acts to waive all City fees and absorb City-related expenses for an event (i.e. APD staffing, barricades, electrical costs)
  - Austin Parks Department Co-Sponsored Event – Departmental agreement for City resources, typically the use of grounds / facilities, in support of an event that furthers and enhances APR's mission.

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – Council Direction

Resolution No. 20240215-023 – *Complete*

- “Negotiate with Blues on the Green for a potential City co-sponsorship with commitments to achieve the following goals: Sustaining a cherished Austin tradition without interruption; preserving free access to the public; ensuring diverse local musicians are provided performance opportunities; and requiring the City of Austin's adopted musician pay scale is observed”
- “Return to Council by February 29,2024 with an ordinance for any associated fee waivers, co-sponsorships, or related budget authorizations needed to effectuate these goals”
- “Establish public safety requirements before, during, and after community events like 'Blues on the Green,' ensuring adequate resources and planning are in place to address potential safety concerns and promote a secure environment for all attendees, participants, and residents of Austin. This includes collaborating with relevant City departments, law enforcement agencies, and event organizers to implement effective safety protocols and communication strategies”

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – Council Direction

Resolution No. 20240215-023 – *In Process*

- “Explore and provide recommendations on ways to support and preserve accessible, inclusive, open-to-the-public events and Citywide traditions comparable to 'Blues on the Green' and community festivals, including permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages for such events, where appropriate. Solicit the input of the Arts, Music, and Quality of Life commissions in developing any recommendations.”
- “Identify and utilize partnerships across all areas of expertise involved in the live music and arts event space to further expand opportunities for the City to co-sponsor community events that are centered around locality, diversity, and inclusivity. Partnerships should encompass a wide range of stakeholders, including educational institutions, such as Huston-Tillotson University, The University of Texas at Austin, and Austin Community College, as well as industry organizations, non-profit entities, and other relevant community groups.”

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – Council Direction

Resolution No. 20240215-023 – *In Process*

- "Create an equitable and accessible application process for City co-sponsorship of free or low-cost, open-to-the-public, events. The application process could include, but should not be limited to:
  - Technical assistance for applying and adhering to guidelines
  - Education on event management and sustainable business planning best practices
  - Connectivity to local resources and other City partners who can provide additional opportunities and resources related to event production"

- "Enhance the application program's eligibility criteria by providing comprehensive assistance to potential applicants. This assistance should include education on event planning and organizing, marketing strategies, as well as guidance on loan and grant qualifications, and sustainable business development strategies."

Special Events Co-Sponsorship – Next Steps

Stakeholder Engagement for “In Process” Council Direction

- Proposed Timeline - November 2026 through February 2027
- Music Commission Working Group Goals
- City Staff Internal Stakeholder Meetings, including Austin Center for Event departments and City Council offices
- External Stakeholder Community Engagement Meetings, including event organizers and residents

Austin

Thank you!