

City of Mesa

SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Updated 10/13/2022

PURPOSE:

This document sets forth the guidelines for the implementation of a Special Events Policy for the City of Mesa. It defines, categorizes, and sets a procedure for managing and coordinating Special Events occurring in City-owned, public, and private spaces within the City of Mesa.

The City has established a Special Event Office (SEO) that will receive and process Special Event inquiries and coordinate with City Departments (PRCF, Transportation, Fire, Police, Tax & Licensing, etc.). For process integrity and streamlined communication with organizers and other City Departments, all special event requests, regardless of event category, location (City-owned, public, or private space) or event organizer, shall be initiated through the SEO. The SEO will work in conjunction with Tax & Licensing and/or Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) and other City Departments to properly identify and process special event applications, as applicable.

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Mesa embraces and supports public events in compliance with the permitting and licensing requirements as outlined in Mesa City Code. The Special Events Office in the Mesa Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department exists to assist with the coordination and production of City-sponsored events, City-supported events, and private events qualifying for City permits and licenses.

This policy ensures that Special Events are safe, enjoyable, and well-coordinated. It provides guidelines by which the reviews, approvals, administration, and implementation of Special Events are consistent. Attention is given to being transparent in decision-making for the allocation of City funds, resources and infrastructure as needed to support such activities. This policy is not intended to replace the current departmental involvement throughout the City, but to guide involvement to be responsive to event needs.

DEFINITIONS

- Special Event Park Permit: as defined in [Mesa City Code Title 6, Chapter 10 – Public Park Regulations](#), and is required for events occurring in any City of Mesa park property
- Special Event License: as defined in [Mesa City Code Title 5, Chapter 1 – Special Events](#) and is required for any event meeting this definition regardless of whether it occurs on City property or private property
- Special Events Office: Program area of PRCF responsible for assessing, managing, and coordinating of special events
- Event Producer/Organizer: Individual or organization responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of implementing a special event
- City-Sponsored Events: Events produced and funded by the City of Mesa.

- City-Supported Events: Events initiated by outside/community groups and supported by the City-based on available resources.
- Private Events: Events planned and supported solely by outside organizations but may require City-led coordination with City departments.
- Right-of-Way: An area of land which by deed, conveyance, agreement, easement, dedication, usage, or process of law is reserved or dedicated to the City for public purposes including, but not limited to, street, highway, alley, public utility, pedestrian walkway, bikeway, or drainage. ([Mesa City Code 9-1-1](#))

DETERMINATION OF PERMIT AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Park Permits will be required if an event if an event meets the Park Special Event definition as outlined in [Mesa City Code Title 6, Chapter 10 – Public Park Regulations](#):

- A Park Permit is required when there is a temporary use, event, or activity in a park beyond the normal scope of visitor use such as reservation of an area or facility, conducting business whether for-profit or not-for-profit, an activity which could impact public access or enjoyment, or a request for exemption from a park rule or regulation. A special event includes, but is not limited to, sporting event, parade, circus, fair, carnival, festival, procession, wedding, street dance, concert, rodeo, race, farmers market, religious revival, political rally, vehicle show and display.
- Any event involving the sale, distribution, or service to the public of food, beverage, or any other article or good if the event is intended, will, or is likely to attract ten (10) or more members of the public requires a park permit.
- In the case of the sale, distribution, or service of food or beverage, all required health permits must be obtained from the Maricopa County Health Department prior to the issuance of a park permit.
- Reserving a designated area or facility such as a ramada, sports field or court, or pool for an event or use to the exclusion of others requires a park permit.
- Remaining in or entering a park outside of the park's hours of use or entering or using any closed or restricted area of a park requires a permit

Special Event License will be required if the event meets the definition as outlined in [Mesa City Code Title 5, Chapter 1 – Special Events](#):

- Is intended for purposes of entertainment, education, commercial promotion, or cultural, religious, ethnic, or political expression; and
- Is conducted on public or private property on a site or in an area which may not be specifically zoned, authorized, or otherwise approved for such use on a permanent basis
- Is carried on in a temporary structure or outside; and
- May occur in conjunction with an existing permitted use or as a separate activity; and
- Includes parades, sporting events, circuses, fairs, carnivals, festivals, religious revivals, political rallies, vehicle shows and displays, and similar recognized temporary activities.
- Shall not include wedding and funeral ceremonies, holiday boutiques, elections, private yard sales, Christmas tree and pumpkin sales lots, and charity car washes.

If an event is held entirely within a park, does not impact public right of ways, AND does not pose any undue challenges to City resources, businesses or the general public, a Special Event License may not be

required. When an event takes place in a manner that will impact a "right-of-way", then the applicant must also obtain a Special Event License. This will be determined by the SEO at the time of consultation.

SPECIAL EVENT CATEGORIES

Regardless of the origin or the support of a potential or existing event, all events must adhere to predetermined and published application deadlines and requirements. Each event should anticipate receiving appropriate City involvement or support based on categorization, as follows:

CITY-SPONSORED EVENT

The City of Mesa produces several events throughout the year to provide engagement and community enhancement for Mesa residents and visitors. These events are supported financially through the City's operating budget and sponsorship support from private funding opportunities. All permit fees, event support, and staffing needs are provided through City of Mesa resources. The expectation is that the hosting City department will take the primary lead on all event costs, logistics, and staffing needs. City-Sponsored events include those that are produced by SEO (i.e., Celebrate Mesa, Merry Main Street, Arizona Celebration of Freedom). Other events that are co-produced by SEO and a community committee (MLK Parade, Veteran's Day Parade); and events that are supported by SEO but are hosted by another City department lead (Falcon Field Open House, Cyclo Mesa, MAC events). Such events may be funded by various Departments, in addition to SEO.

There is also full City sponsorship for smaller events such as the recreation centers, aquatics facilities, and youth athletics programming events (PRCF), employee appreciation events (CMO), Community Spirit fundraising events (lead department), Police Department neighborhood engagement activities (Police Department), and bike/pedestrian neighborhood engagement events (Transportation). These events are produced by, and budgeted from, each department or program area. SEO, as needed, will provide support by coordinating permitting, licensing, or interdepartmental coordination.

SEO may also provide equipment and staffing support as appropriate and available. Department or program area may be responsible for renting equipment or scheduling staff based on availability of SEO resources. There may be expenses that department or program area may incur.

Funding Sources: City of Mesa General Fund, Transition Privilege Tax, Sponsorships, Departmental Funding (if applicable), SEO (equipment, coordination, ESI, Sponsorship).

City Resources: Will be prioritized for City-Sponsored Events to include the following:

- SEO Event Staff
 - Event Planning and Production
 - Day-of event coordination and execution
 - Post event evaluation
- SEO-Managed Equipment
 - Bleachers
 - Bandshell/Risers
 - Spider Boxes (power)
 - Temporary pedestrian fencing
 - Popup Tents
 - Folding Tables
 - Folding Chairs
 - A-Frame Signs
 - Generators
 - Audio/Visual equipment
 - Vehicles (box truck, golf carts, trailers)
 - Other minor equipment

SEO support includes:

- Event Producers/Committee Liaison
- Coordination for ESI-supported events
- Sponsorship solicitation (if applicable)
- Coordination of Meetings
- Inter-departmental Communication (PD, Transportation, Licensing, etc.)
- Park Permit/Special Event License (if applicable)
- Park Preparation (if applicable)
- Day-of Staffing
- Day-of Equipment
- Post-event evaluation

COUNCIL MEMBER-SPONSORED EVENTS

City-sponsored events may also include Council Member-sponsored events. These events require processing through the SEO for permit and license approvals and are fully-or partially funded by the City for City resources, and supported by the SEO, based on available resources.

In an effort to achieve equitable distribution of special events throughout the City and in each Council District, Council Member-sponsored events will be supported based on City Council Strategic Priorities and overall impact to the Council District in which the event is to take place. Council Member-sponsored events should consider the following when planning a special event:

- Open to the General Public/Public Engagement
- Placemaking
- Transforming Neighborhoods
- Community Safety
- Enhance/engage the Local Community
- Family-friendly Activities

The number of Council Member-Initiated events may be limited based on funding, the City's ability to support the event, City resource availability and City's ability to support event.

Funding Sources: A budget allocation of \$3,000 per fiscal year for costs associated with City resources (staff time/overtime, permitting fees, other Department's internal/waived charges and City-owned equipment). Additional City resource costs and out-of-pocket costs (additional equipment, port-o-johns, barricading, entertainment, etc.) must be funded through the Council Members' Office and/or event sponsor.

Examples of City Resources:

- SEO Staff (on-site, equipment delivery, etc.)
- Other City Staff, where applicable (Lifeguards, Parks Maintenance Staff, PD, etc.)
- City-owned/SEO-Managed Equipment (mobile bandshell, bleachers, etc.)
- Permit/License Waivers
- Waiver of City Facility Rental Fees

The Council Member Office will be responsible for producing all aspects of the event, unless it is hosted at a City-owned facility such as a pool, Recreation Center, or Convention Center/Amphitheatre, where Facility staff support is required.

CITY-SUPPORTED EVENTS

There are events initiated by outside/community groups that the City supports through defined contributions such as fee waivers, equipment (bandshell, bleachers, spider boxes, traffic barricades, etc.), volunteer recruitment, and limited staffing. These events contribute to the feeling of community in Mesa, but still require substantial private investment for complete event delivery. (Examples include Mesa Marathon, Tour de Mesa, JDRF Walk, Mesa Sprint Triathlon, Pow Wow.)

Other requests are frequently submitted and need to be evaluated based on resource availability and appropriateness for fee waivers and budget support. Criteria in evaluation parameters includes whether a community partner such as a homeowners/community association, professional sports team, Downtown Mesa Association, etc. has the ability to support the event, City resource availability, ability to support event without incurring City overtime expenses, etc.

Funding Sources: Organizing Department, SEO (equipment, coordination, waivers), City of Mesa Operating Budget

City Resources: Will be made available for City-Supported Events based on availability and resources, as follows:

- SEO Event Staff
 - Assistance in event planning and production
 - Day-of event coordination and execution
 - Post event evaluation
- SEO-Managed Equipment
 - Bleachers
 - Bandshell/Risers
 - Spider Boxes (power)
 - Temporary pedestrian fencing
 - Popup Tents
 - Folding Tables
 - Folding Chairs
 - A-Frame Signs
 - Generators
 - Audio/Visual equipment
 - Vehicles (box truck, golf carts, trailers)
 - Other minor equipment
- Lead Department may incur additional costs should City resources (equipment, labor, etc.) not be available.

SEO support:

- Primary City Contact or
- Department Liaison (Department-led Events)
- Intake/Evaluation
- Special Event License Application and Coordination/Park Permit (if applicable)
- Inter-departmental Coordination
- Park Preparation (if applicable)
- Day-of Staffing
- Day-of Equipment
- Post-event evaluation

PRIVATE EVENTS

Private events are planned and supported completely by outside organizations but require City involvement due to permitting and licensing requirements. Events may include private, non-profit, and commercial events. All costs are to be covered by the event promoter. City budget support does not exist. (Examples include Eastmark Community Life events (approx. 20/yr.); Private events and fundraising activities at signature parks (approx. 12/yr.); City Special Event License applications (approx. 5-10/wk.); Downtown Business District events coordinated by DMA.)

City Resources: In general, City resources are not provided to Private Events, full permitting is required, and all licensing fees are applicable. In the event that City resources are provided, private event will reimburse the City at full market value of resource or service provided. City-Sponsored and City-Supported Events will take priority over Private Events. Available resources may include:

- SEO Staff
- SEO Equipment (example: bleachers, staging, etc.)
- Parks Maintenance Staff support

Funding Source: Event Producer/Organizer

SEO support:

- Primary City Contact or
- DMA Liaison (Downtown Business District, if applicable)
- Intake/Evaluation
- Special Event License Application and Coordination/Park Permit (if applicable)
- Park Preparation (if applicable)
- Site Supervision (Parks and Downtown Business District, if applicable)

PROCEDURE

The following procedures will generally be followed in the evaluation and coordination of Special Events but may vary depending on the Special Event Category and available resources.

1. Intake and Evaluation

- Consultation with Event Organizer at least 90 days prior to planned event date
- Categorization of event for assignment and level of support required
- Determine Feasibility/Venue Availability
- Refer event to appropriate License/Permit Application process

2. Special Events License Application / Park Permits

- City Department Representatives will maintain associated substantive review and approval processes:
 - Special Events Licenses – Tax & Licensing will serve as the final reviewer and approver of the application and will issue the Special Event License
 - Park Permits – PRCF will serve as the final reviewer and approver of applications and will issue the Park Permit.
- Initial applications must be submitted by the following deadlines:
 - Small scale events on private property and only occupying a small space: 14 days
 - Large scale events on private property or entirely on park property: 30 days

- Large scale events impacting Rights of Way and/or involving liquor permit requests: 90 days
- Any deviation from the required deadlines must be approved for submission by the SEO in advance. Consideration for approval of late submissions will be based on the City's prior history with the event organizer.

3. Inter-department Coordination by SEO

- Organize review meetings with impacted departments. Follow up with producer/organizer and review departments as needed until plans are finalized.
- Organize site visits
- Coordinate Parks Maintenance needs and requests (as applicable)

4. Implementation of event production or support

- SEO will execute appropriate level of support and coordination based on categorization
- Schedule SEO day-of staff
- Monitor event for proper execution

5. Evaluation/Follow up

- Refund damage/cleaning deposit (as applicable)
- Conduct additional billing (as applicable)
- Track and report on in kind or financial contributions from each department
- Create after action plan or conduct event recap meeting

