



MEMO

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Stephanie Reyes, City Manager
DATE: September 12, 2025
RE: Additional Information Regarding Proposed Special Events Fees

At the June 26 Budget Workshop, staff presented proposed special events fees to be implemented during the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year. This Tuesday, Council will consider voting on the proposed budget, and this memo provides additional information related to those proposed fees.

We recognize that many community events require a permit and that the events provide our community an opportunity to gather together to support a cause, build community pride, and celebrate the culture and character that make San Marcos unique. The Special Events Coordinator position was created to assist our community through the special events permit process and underscore the importance of communication between event organizers, City staff, and the public.

Staff stated we would bring forward associated fees when the Special Events Ordinance was approved in Spring 2024. These fees will be added to the fee schedule to be reviewed every three years. The proposed fees will generate revenue that will go into the General Fund, which funds many of the areas directly related to processing and reviewing Special Event permit applications.

The proposed special events fees are:

Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Justification
Special Event Fee (Tier 1)	New	\$35	For a single day public event of over 500 people, includes services such as review of emergency action plans, barricade rentals, and traffic control plans
Special Event Fee (Tier 2)	New	\$85	For a multi-day public event of over 500 people, includes services such as review of emergency action plans, barricade rentals, and traffic control plans



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Race/Parade Fee	New	\$50	For all races or parades regardless of size to ensure consistency and affordability for all organizers
Event Road Closure Fee (per Block)	\$165	\$100	Reduces overall cost for event organizers to close a block for an event from \$165 to \$100; ensures all event road closure fees are consistent

The difference between the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Special Event Fees reflects the increased staff time for coordinating and reviewing larger events. Depending on the event scope, staff time to review the application (which can be modified multiple times throughout the process) can include many departments including Fire, Resource Recovery and Environmental Health in Neighborhood Enhancement, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development Services, Police, Public Works, and Risk Management. The staff time to review the applications is significant. The proposed fee does not recoup 100% of the staff time costs associated with the application in recognition of the civic and economic value that community events provide.

The proposed Race/Parade and Event Road Closure Fees are meant to simplify the fee structure for events held in the City's roadways and ensure they are conducted in a safe manner. The City has developed traffic control plans for road closures and specific parade routes available at no additional charge to event organizers. We also have barricades that may be borrowed by organizers free of charge. Fees for road closures are in the existing fee schedule and charged per lane, per block; however, these are intended primarily for businesses that need to close a portion of the right-of-way for construction purposes.

Responses to some of the questions raised at the Budget workshop are:

- **When would the special event fee be charged in addition to the Race Fee?**

The Special Event Fee will only be charged in addition to other fees if the event has over 500 attendees. There is no penalty for the attendance being guessed wrong by an organizer, we simply ask that they try to track attendance and update accordingly for the following year's submission.

The Race Fee is meant to replace the current short term road closure that is supposed to be charged per lane per block. The current adopted fee would be cost prohibitive for all organizations if it was applied as it is written. Currently an organization hosting any race, parade, or walk is charged \$90.



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- **Would there be special event fees for gatherings occurring on the courthouse property?**

The courthouse property is not considered in the City's jurisdiction, and no special event fees would apply to events held on that property. The only time these fees would apply is if an event occurring on the courthouse lawn wants to close an adjacent street or has a walk or race starting or ending on the courthouse property.

- **What are the permit requirements for specific events?**

Hispanic Heritage Walk – Using this community event as an example: The event walk has less than 500 participants and would fall under the Race/Parade Fee category which is \$50. Additional documentation may be required including a Certificate of Insurance (COI) with the city listed as additionally insured, Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that includes the security plan details, and Site Plan or map with route.

Pet Fest – Using this community event as an example: The Parks and Recreation Department assesses a fee for the use of Plaza Park. The event had under 500 participants which means they would not be charged the Special Event Fee. The organizer would still work with Environmental Health, Animal Services, Risk Management, and Parks to make reservations and obtain necessary permits with those departments.

Juneteenth Parade and Unity Walk – Using this community event as an example: The Parks and Recreation Department assesses a separate fee for the use of the Dunbar Recreation Center. The associated walk has less than 500 participants and would fall under the Race/Parade Fee category which is \$50.

Sights and Sounds Jingle Bell Run 5K - Using this community event as an example: The Race/Parade category would apply to the 5K Run portion of the event. Since there is no associated roadway closure for set up, the Event Road Closure Fee does not apply.

Back the Bobcats – Using this event as an example: Any event occurring within a business's permitted occupancy does not require any special event permitting. Back the Bobcats is an example of an event, hosted at Zelick's, where the event extends the business outside of their property or the business expects to have more participants than their occupancy allows. For this specific event, both the Special Event (Tier 1) and Event Road Closure fees would be assessed.



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Neighborhood Block Party - If the block party is completely contained on a resident's property, no permit is required, as long as there are fewer than 500 participants. If the event requires a road closure, the Event Road Closure Fee would apply. The event organizer would also be requested to install appropriate safety measures (barricades and hard stops).

Texas State Commencement or High School Graduations held at the University Events Center – These events are held on University property and are not assessed the Special Event Fee; however, the University requests the closure of Charles Austin during their commencement ceremonies and for high school graduations so the Event Road Closure Fee would apply.