



Legislation Text

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File #: ID#20-764, Version: 1

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**AGENDA CAPTION:**

Receive an update from staff and hold discussion on Sights and Sounds holiday lights funding request in the Plaza Park and downtown square, and provide direction to Staff.

**Meeting date:** November 4, 2020

**Department:** Destination Services - Rebecca Ybarra Ramirez

**Amount & Source of Funding**

**Funds Required:** 80,000

**Account Number:** 100-01-280-00-54225

**Funds Available:** 80,000

**Account Name:** Sights

**Fiscal Note:**

**Prior Council Action:** Annual support approved by City Council during annual budget process. FY 2016 -2020 \$80,000 total; 2015 \$85,900; 2014 and prior \$35,900 each year w/ SMEU staff installed lights (set-up and tear down); Prior to 2011 funds were allocated through the Parks and Recreation Department.

**City Council Strategic Initiative:** [Please select from the dropdown menu below]

Downtown Vitality

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

**Comprehensive Plan Element (s):** [Please select the Plan element(s) and Goal # from dropdown menu below]

- Economic Development - Choose an item.
- Environment & Resource Protection - Choose an item.
- Land Use - Choose an item.
- Neighborhoods & Housing - Choose an item.
- Parks, Public Spaces & Facilities - Choose an item.
- Transportation - Choose an item.
- Core Services

Not Applicable

**Master Plan:** *[Please select the corresponding Master Plan from the dropdown menu below (if applicable)]*

Choose an item.

**Background Information:**

Sights and Sounds of Christmas traditionally attracts more than 50,000 visitors from the surrounding communities and beyond. The family targeted event began as a COSM organized event with carolers of local school children and vendors on the lawn of the Hays County Courthouse. Due to its popularity and growth, a group of volunteers created a board of directors supported by city staff from various city departments.

Funds have been allocated and approved by City Council through the budget process for FY 2016-2020: \$80,000 total; 2015 \$85,900; 2014 and prior \$35,900 each year w/ SMEU staff installed lights (set-up and tear down); Prior to 2011 funds were allocated through the Parks and Recreation Department.

This, the 34<sup>th</sup> year of Sights and Sounds of Christmas, will not be the traditional event, but will still be magical sight of lights throughout the park. A new addition will be the placing of children's artwork on banners and placed in areas with Plaza Park and City Park. Although there is a possibility of a smaller event to include Crabtree Amusements, entertainers, and food vendors, the Sights and Sounds organization remains committed to providing our traditional lighting throughout San Marcos Plaza Park & City Park. Any such event would only be possible if local ordinances related to COVID allowed for this type of gathering.

In addition to the lights within Plaza Park and City Park, Sights and Sounds is partnering with the Main Street Program to include lighting of trees, accenting all green light poles with garland and adding wreathes to those without holiday banners. Approximately thirty trees around the square, LBJ Drive, Hutchison Street to CM Allen and along CM Allen Pwky. Veramendi Plaza will be included if budget allows. Continuity in décor and lights.

Although 2020 has been a year of challenges, San Marcos Sights & Sounds of Christmas is committed to keeping the Holiday Spirit alive and continuing to provide miles of smiles to the children of San Marcos and the thousands of visitors.

**Council Committee, Board/Commission Action:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Alternatives:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Recommendation:**

The City of San Marcos Support of Public Events staff committee reviewed the application. The event meets the criteria for funding. The total budget presented allows for a COSM maximum contribution of \$60,000; therefore, staff is requesting the remaining funds be used to fund the lighting and holiday décor for the trees along the square, LBJ Drive, Hutchison Street to CM Allen and along CM Allen Pwky. Veramendi Plaza will be included if budget allows. Using the same vendor allows for prices breaks and for continuity in décor and lights.