

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE TO MOVE LIMITS ON SPECIAL EVENTS AT CERTAIN PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS FROM CHAPTER 8-1 (PARKS ADMINISTRATION) TO CHAPTER 4-20 (SPECIAL EVENTS); AMEND DEFINITIONS; UPDATE THE LIST OF SPECIAL EVENTS ON PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS; AND ADD PROVISIONS RELATED TO NEW SPECIAL EVENTS AT CERTAIN PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

**PART 1.** City Code Section 4-20-1 (*Definitions*) is amended to amend the definition of “City Facility” and “Legacy Event”, to add a new definition for “Public Recreation Area”, and to renumber the remaining definitions.

(3) CITY FACILITY means city public recreation areas [~~parkland~~], buildings, and all other city-owned, controlled, or maintained property that is not a street, sidewalk, right-of-way, or spaces not open to the general public for rental.

(8) LEGACY EVENT means a special event that has been held in the City of Austin in substantially the same form for a minimum of 10 [~~20~~] consecutive years or is authorized by Subsection (E) of Section 4-20-28 (*Limits on Special Events on Public Recreation Areas*).

(12) PUBLIC RECREATION AREA means a park, recreational facility, athletic field, building, swimming pool, playground, nature preserve, trail, dock, or greenbelt managed, maintained, or operated by Austin Parks and Recreation or on Austin Parks and Recreation’s behalf.

**PART 2.** City Code Section 4-20-20 (Permit Required; Exceptions) is amended to amend Subsection (B) to read:

(B) A special event permit under this chapter is not required for:

(1) an event, which may include food or non-alcoholic beverage service, conducted entirely:

(a) on a public recreation area [~~city parkland~~] that uses only Austin Parks and Recreation [~~Department~~] facilities, personnel and equipment; or

(b) in a city auditorium or meeting room that requires only the facilities, personnel, or equipment associated with the facility; or

(2) a spontaneous event for which an attendee or event organizer cannot provide the level of advance notice required by this chapter, such as an event occasioned by recent news or current affairs, that is conducted solely on city right-of-way or parkland. A spontaneous event is subject to other law. To help ensure public safety, an organizer of a spontaneous event is not required to, but is encouraged to, notify the Austin Police Department of the date, time, place, and an estimate of the approximate number of persons who will be participating.

**PART 3.** City Code Chapter 4-20 (*Special Events*) is amended to add a new section 4-20-28 to read:

**§ 4-20-28 LIMITS ON SPECIAL EVENTS ON PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS.**

- (A) This section applies to a special event that anticipates 1,000 or more attendees and the special event includes the exclusive use of all or part of the public recreation area for the event.
- (B) For purposes of this section, special event days do not include days to set up and take down a special event.
- (C) Except as provided in Subsections (D) and (E), the Council establishes the maximum number of special event days for the following public recreation areas:
  - (1) Zilker Metropolitan Park is 24 per calendar year;
  - (2) Festival Beach at Edward Rendon Senior Metropolitan Park is 17 per calendar year; and
  - (3) Auditorium and Vic Mathias Shores at Lady Bird Lake Metropolitan Park is 17 per calendar year.
- (D) As of April 23, 2026, the reoccurring special events and days used are:
  - (1) Zilker Metropolitan Park:

Reoccurring Special Event	Days Used
Trail of Lights 5k	1
Trail of Lights Event Nights	14

Zilker Park Kite Festival	1
Blues on the Green	2
Zilker Relays	1
ACL Festival	6

(2) Festival Beach at Edward Rendon Senior Metropolitan Park:

Reoccurring Special Event	Days Used
Heart of Texas Regatta	2
Texas Vegefest	1
Dragon Boat Races	2
Pride Festival	1
Craft Brewer's Festival	1
Head of the Colorado	1
Texas Wellness Festival	1

(3) Auditorium and Vic Mathias Shores at Lady Bird Lake Metropolitan Park:

Reoccurring Special Event	Days Used
SXSW Music Festival	3
Austin Reggae Festival	3
Capitol 10k	1
Austin Food and Wine Festival	2
Sunshine Run 5k and 10k	1
Cap Tex Tri	1

Star-Spangled Fest	1
Livestrong Challenge	1
Austin's New Year	1
Moonlight Margarita Run	1

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73 (E) Continued Use and New Special Events.

- 74 (1) Council authorizes the continued use of the public recreation areas for the  
75 number of special event days described in Subsection (C).
- 76 (2) If a reoccurring special event described in Subsection (D) does not occur in  
77 substantially the same form after the effective date of this section, the city  
78 manager may not allow the special event days to be used by a different  
79 special event until the number of days used per calendar year is less than  
80 maximum established in Subsection (C).
- 81 (3) Once the number of days used is less than the maximum established in  
82 Subsection (C), the city manager may create a competitive process so that  
83 new special events can use the remaining special event days.
- 84 (a) If a new special event is authorized under this subsection, the days for  
85 that event count towards the maximum number of special event days  
86 established in Subsection (C).
- 87 (b) The new special event qualifies as a legacy event unless the special  
88 event does not occur in substantially the same form after the first year.

89 (F) In addition to the days authorized in Subsection (C), the city manager may  
90 authorize single day non-reoccurring special events to take place at Auditorium  
91 and Vic Mathias Shores at Lady Bird Lake Metropolitan Park for a municipal  
92 purpose if the total number of special event days does not exceed 25 per calendar  
93 year. In evaluating a request described by this subsection, city manager must  
94 consider the following factors:

- 95 (1) a scheduling conflict at the public recreation area or with adjacent  
96 properties;
- 97 (2) traffic congestion;
- 98 (3) potential damage to park property or landscape;

- (4) potential threat to public health, safety or welfare;
  - (5) availability of city resources required to permit and to provide services to the special event; and
  - (6) availability of other public recreation areas for the special event.
- (G) Nothing in this section limits the City Manager's authority to establish a maximum number of special event days that may be used at other public recreation areas.
- (H) An event organizer may not transfer the special events days that apply to their special event described in Subsection (D) or in Subsection (E)(3) unless the event organizer follows the requirements adopted by administrative rule.

**PART 4.** City Code Section 8-1-15 (*Limits on Special Events on Public Recreation Areas*) is repealed.

**PART 5.** This ordinance takes effect on \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

**PASSED AND APPROVED**

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\_\_\_\_\_, 2026

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kirk Watson  
Mayor

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Thomas  
City Attorney

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Erika Brady  
City Clerk