



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 26-1711, **Agenda Item #:** 4.

5/7/2026

Posting Language

Approve an ordinance amending City Code to move existing requirements related to special events that occur at certain parks from Chapter 8-1 (Parks Administration) to Chapter 4-20 (Special Events), to update the list of special events, update definitions, and add provisions related to new special events at certain parks. Funding: This item has no fiscal impact.

Lead Department

Austin Arts, Culture, Music, & Entertainment.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

March 5, 2015 - City Council approved Resolution No. 20150305-025, which created the Parkland Events Task Force.

February 2, 2017 - City Council approved the Parkland Event Task Force Report.

June 15, 2017 - City Council approved Ordinance No. 20170615-023, which amended Chapter 8-1 (Parks Administration) of the City Code relating to park use, enforcement, parking and driving restrictions at parks, and sound equipment at parks; limits on special event days at certain parks; creating offenses and establishing penalties.

May 10, 2018 - City Council approved Ordinance No. 20180510-018, which amended City Code Title 4 to add Chapter 4-20 relating to special events.

March 7, 2019 - City Council approved Ordinance No. 20190307-014, which amended Title 8 (Parks and Recreation) of the City Code Subsection (D).

February 3, 2022 - City Council approved Ordinance No. 20220203-052, which amended City Code Chapter 4-C (Special Events) to modify the definition of a special event and the description of a Tier 2 special event; and declaring an emergency.

For More Information:

Angela Means, Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music, & Entertainment, 512-974-1624; Morgan Messick, Assistant Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music, & Entertainment, 512-974-7873.

Additional Backup Information:

In 2015, the City Council established the Parkland Events Task Force (Resolution No. 20150305-025) to evaluate and recommend limits on special event days at high-demand parks, including Vic Mathias Shores - Auditorium Shores, Zilker Park, and Fiesta Gardens.

Following the Task Force's final recommendations, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 20170615-023. In 2018, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 20180510-018, creating Chapter 4-20 to the City Code, creating the Austin Center for Events (ACE) as the City's central permitting authority for special events.

Since that time, special event permitting has been consolidated under Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), which now administers both ACE (Chapter 4-20) and what were previously Parks-managed special events (Chapter 8-1).

However, event day limits established for high-use parks still reside in Chapter 8-1 (Parks Administration), which is not administered by ACME. This separation creates administrative confusion and the potential for inconsistent enforcement.

This ordinance corrects that misalignment by moving the event day limits into Chapter 4-20 (Special Events) alongside all other ACE permitting rules. It updates the definitions for "City Facility" and "Legacy Events" to align with the changes made by this ordinance. The ordinance also updates the list of events that currently occur at Zilker Metropolitan Park, Festival Beach at Edward Rendon Senior Metropolitan Park, and Auditorium and Vic Mathias Shores at Lady Bird Lake Metropolitan Park. Lastly, the ordinance authorizes a competitive process for special events at the three parks.

Parks and Recreation will continue to manage "Park Only" events - smaller, parks-exclusive events that use only Parks facilities, personnel, and equipment - and is not affected by this change.

If this ordinance is not approved, event day limits for Vic Mathias Shores - Auditorium Shores, Zilker Park, and Fiesta Gardens will remain in a chapter no longer administered by the department responsible for enforcing them. This creates risk of inconsistent application of limits and public confusion about which department is responsible for event oversight at these parks.