



SPECIAL EVENTS PROGRAM

a revision the Special Events Guide, Policies, Procedures, Services and Fess, and the Process for Approving New Special Events

Assistant City Manager James Clinch &
Special Events & Marketing Coordinator Brianne Lorenz

Why are we here today?

1. Introduction to the Special Events
Special Events program
2. Provide an overview of the Special
Events program and proposed
enhancements
3. Adopt the Special Events Guide as the
City's formal all-encompassing policies
and procedures for Special Events
4. Adopt the formalization of the New
Events Review Team (NERT) and the
process for reviewing requests for *new*
Special Events



What is a Special Event?

Special Events fall outside the scope of regular public use and are permitted to include the sale or consumption of alcohol, a park or public space closure, the use of City services such as trash and recycling, EMS or police, sales of merchandise or goods, mobile food vending and other criteria or actives typically prohibited by the City’s Code of Ordinances.



Park Reservation – must be:	Permitted Special Event – is any of the following:
- 4 hours or less	- single or multi-day use of a public space such as a park or roadway
- no alcohol sales, consumption or distribution	- alcohol sales or services
- no food sales or services	- food trucks, mobile food vending, etc.
- no sales of merchandise or solicitation of goods, services or donations	- sales of merchandise goods and services
- abides by <u>City Codes of Ordinances</u> for noise (Chapter 34), smoking, alcohol (Chapter 6), pets (Chapter 10), conduct in parks and public spaces (Chapter 46) etc., City’s Code of Conduct and prohibited activities	- Allows for the City Manager’s Office/City Council to permit special exceptions for certain activities such as alcohol service, noise, etc. under certain conditions within certain criteria - abides by the City’s Code of Conduct and prohibited activities
- keeps the Centennial Park parking lot open and available and is just the use of the lawn or the gazebo, or a combination of both	- can utilize the entire park including shutting down the parking lot, for example Sun Fiesta or Shark’s Tooth Festival
- no associated road closures	- associated road closure; any lane, any direction, any duration; MOT is required with VPD review and approval
- does not require City services such as solid waste, SE trailer, Venice Police or EMS	- requires additional trash/recycling services, EMS, Venice Police, or the Special Events Trailer/items within
- less than 10 tents 10 feet x 10 feet or smaller	- more than 10 tents 10x10’ or larger than 10x10’
- Event signs are allowed in approve ROW locations up to 7 days before event, conditions apply	- Event signs are allowed in approve ROW locations up to 7 days before event, conditions apply
- No ticket sales, VIP or other solicitation	* The City reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of services

History

- **Special Events program was developed to promote economic development and tourism**
- **Was first housed within the Planning & Zoning Department and then transitioned to CMO**
- **The last major updates occurred in 2017**
- **Addition of Heritage designation in 2020 with City subsidy**



2024 Special Events Overview

- **49 permitted Special Events**
 - 16 with road closures
 - 13 at Centennial Park downtown
 - 6 at Airport Festival Grounds
 - 30 at various public space locations
 - 130 hours for Public Works support
 - 80% require Venice Police detail support
- **2 City Sponsored Events**
 - **July 4th Fireworks Display**
 - 6,000 people, traffic exit plan, Venice Fire Rescue, Venice Police, Public Works on deck
 - **Annual Holiday Parade**
 - 18,000 people, 36 lane closures, 50+ law enforcement personnel, 2 miles of pedestrian barricades, all hands on deck!



What's new?

In March 2024 all requests for *new* Special Events were put on hold to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the City's current commitments to recurring Special Events and their impacts to staffing, public spaces and the area



Why conduct an evaluation?

Need for Comprehensive Review

- Significant growth in event attendance
- Lack of available public parking
- Damage to public spaces and City property
- Greater demands on staff resources
- Increased public complaints (noise, access, business impacts)
- Need for stronger safety, risk, and hazard analysis
- 20+ new event requests, many during fully booked dates



Comprehensive evaluation

Conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the existing...

- annual recurring Special Events commitments
- the process for reviewing and approving *new* Special Event requests
- the allowable space uses, rules and related ordinances, standards, codes of conduct and impacts to staff, public space and area
- the potential public safety risks and threat mitigation
- the fees for public space, City services, and companion permits
- the application process and timeline for recurring and new Special Events
- the presentation of information in the Special Events guide and permit



Results

- 1. Complete redesign of the Special Events guide, webpage and permit**
- 2. Creation of New Events Review Team (NERT), event proposal requirements and evaluation criteria**
- 3. Updates to Public Space fees for CPI%, City services and clarification on City Subsidy**
- 4. Restrictions on Special Event rules, standards, space use guidelines and frequency, and allowable uses**
- 5. Enhance safety requirements, professionalism and adopt industry standards**
- 6. Resolution to formally adopt and implement**



1. Redesign of the guide, webpage and permit

- **Worked with City departments to update sections and polices**
- **Combined/separated sections of the previous guide and polices into an easier user experience**
- **Added imagery and event holder resources**
- **Digital versions of the appendices in the guide, digital special events application and resources**
- **Updated and revised the Special Events permit and guide with City Attorney input and review**



2. Creation of NERT, proposal requirements and evaluation criteria

- **Formalization of review requests for *new* Special Events with key staff that have a critical role**
- **Identified needs for *new* Special Event proposals**
- **Development of New Events Review Team (NERT) and event proposal evaluation criteria – for equitable and consistent review and consideration before Council**



NEW EVENTS REVIEW TEAM

SPECIAL EVENTS REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS & PURPOSE

The New Events Review Team (NERT) evaluate new event proposals and make recommendations on whether an event should not proceed or should move forward for City Council review and final approval. NERT is comprised of City staff:

- ▶ who create Special Events policies, rules, and standards;
- ▶ who review and issue Special Event permits;
- ▶ who coordinate, plan, execute, and evaluate Special Events.

NERT members possess historical institutional knowledge of recurring and heritage events, as well as returning events, and impacts to downtown businesses and public spaces. The five-member team has a flexible sixth position that activates when appropriate, limiting disruptions to operations.



The Assistant Manager or designee serves as the issuing authority for Special Event permits. The Special Event Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and preparing event permits and plans. The Public Information Officer oversees promoting and communicating information about events. The Public Works Liaison manages Solid Waste needs and public space impacts. The Venice Police Liaison or designee, is the authority on roadway impacts, public safety requirements, and related considerations. The Airport Manager or Operations Manager, or their designee, handles impacts to the Airport Festival Grounds, FAA requirements, and other relevant matters.

3. Updates to fees and City subsidy

- **CPI% calculations for 2017 to 2025, average \$200-300 increase to public space fees**
- **New public space fees include option for half of Centennial Park, Legacy Park and Maxine Barritt Park**
- **New fee for Special Events trailer**
- **Updated fees for City services, and those with annual assessment rates**
- **Clarified application of City subsidy as intended, toward Public Space fee relief only**



4. Restrictions and rules

- **No amplified music on Mondays, Tuesday and Wednesdays**
- **Events at Airport Festival Grounds must use bicycle/pedestrian gate to provide safe access**
- **No new requests for road or lane closures and no closures of the 100 block of W. Venice Ave.**
- **Clarification on paid parking, specific to Centennial Park and need for off –site parking plan**
- **Must have recycling plan, post event clean-up plan and inclement weather plan**



5. Safety Requirements

- Events grandfathered in with road closures must have MOT/hardened barricades
- Increased police presence at highly attended events and EMS required for athletics events
- Bicycle/pedestrian access at Airport Festival Grounds
- Child/family reunification at events
- Event staff visibility
- Advanced notice of road closure, detours and parking impacts



6. Special Events trainings, networks and industry standards

1. NCS⁴ AWR147 Sports and Special Events Risk Management, March 2024
2. NCS⁴ MGT475 Sports and Special Events Crowd Management, May 2025
3. NCS⁴ MGT466 Advanced/Enhanced Sports and Special Events Risk Management and Analysis, July 2025
4. Holiday Parade Tabletop Exercise with City staff and community partners (2024 postponed), August 2025
5. Florida Department of Transportation Intermediate and Advanced Maintenance of Traffic Control, certification
6. Southeast Festivals & Events Association (SEFA) , Florida Emergency Preparedness Association (FEPA), and National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) member
7. Regional Special Events network, building and developing



Future of Special Events

- **Prioritizing Centennial related events Nov. 2025 through May 2026**
- **Increasing police presence and safety standards at events with continued high attendance**
- **Enhancing public communications related to road closures, detours and public parking**
- **Anticipating high demand for new Special Events requests**
- **Forecasting needs for additional Special Events venues and public parking**



Summary

These improvements help balance public space use, park reservations, and permitted Special Events, while streamlining information, improving internal processes, increasing public safety, applying industry standards, and providing clearer expectations for both recurring and new event holders.



Resolution and staff recommendation

Recommended Council Action: to adopt Resolution No. 2025-09.

A resolution of the City of Venice, Florida adopting the special events guide to establish the criteria, policies, codes, standards, requirements, fees, public space use, and eligibility for special event permits and city sponsorship related to proposed new special events and recurring special and heritage events and creating the new event review team; authorizing certain revisions to the special events guide by the city manager's office; superseding in part resolution no. 2020-18; and providing an effective date

