



City of Roanoke Special Event Policy

January 16, 2018

Objective: To regulate the use of streets, sidewalks, greenways, parks, and other public property in the City for all organized outdoor special events, with the purpose of:

- protecting the health and public safety of citizens,
- limiting the inconvenience to residents, businesses, places of worship and learning, and other regular users of these facilities,
- establishing a straightforward and accountable process for event organizers, and
- enabling public agencies to manage these events in a cost-effective and well-coordinated way.

Legislative basis: This policy is adopted pursuant to the authority granted the City Manager under Section 30-108.3, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended. Terms not defined in this Policy shall have the meaning ascribed to such terms as set forth in Sections 30-101 through 30-108.4, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended.

1. Special Event Definitions:

For the purpose of this Policy, a Special Event, also known as a public assembly, is defined as any cohesive group of people, animals or vehicles, or combination thereof, upon any sidewalk, street, alley or other portion of the public right-of-way, or within a public park, or on any public property which is outdoors in the City of Roanoke and which group does not comply with normal vehicular or pedestrian traffic, regulations or controls, or normal usage of the sidewalk, street, alley or other portion of the public right-of-way, or park or public property. Such special events include any gathering, parade, procession, running race, walk, block party, bicycle race, ceremony, show, exhibition, festival or similar event. Filming in public spaces throughout the City is also included in this policy. Special Event categories are set forth as follows:

- Races, Walks, and Parades:** Organized non-stationary activities involving running, biking, walking, marching, or other means of transportation, utilizing a fixed course that involves the use or obstruction of City street rights-of-way, City sidewalks, City parks or greenways.
- General Events:** Organized activities that have a stationary footprint in an identifiable location for a specific duration of time, often involving amplified sound, food, beverage, merchandise displays, and/or other forms of entertainment. Examples include festivals, performances, rallies, exhibits, markets, parties, weddings, conventions and other similar events.
- Neighborhood Block Parties:** Organized small-scale activities that close a limited number of blocks on a low traffic volume residential street. These small-scale gatherings are initiated by and are intended to attract only local residents who live on or in close proximity to the street being closed. Block parties are not intended for the general public.
- Filming:** An organized activity involving film and/or still photography production that requires the use of a public right-of-way, City park, or other outdoor City property.

Use of City parks, greenways, and plazas is additionally subject to any existing policies and procedures of the City Parks and Recreation Department and applicable provisions of City Code.

2. Program Administration:

Special Events within the City require the issuance of a Public Assembly Permit through the Public Works Department in accordance with Sections 30-103 through Section 30-108.3, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended. Pursuant to Section 30-105(d), Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended, the requirement of a permit shall not apply to:

- A public assembly of fewer than one hundred (100) people in a public park or on public property which is not a public street, alley or sidewalk, and which does not involve the placement of a booth, stage or other temporary structure either within the public parks or on public property;
- A public assembly consisting of five (5) or fewer people on a public sidewalk which does not impede the ordinary flow of pedestrians on a sidewalk;
- A funeral procession;
- Recreational activities, including jogging or walking;
- The United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, the military forces of the state, and the police or fire department of the city.

For Special Events occurring in whole or in part in a city park, city plaza, greenway, or on other public property, the Parks and Recreation Department is the primary point of contact.

For Special Events occurring in the public right-of-way, the Public Works Department is the primary point of contact. The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments provide the following services to organizers and permit applicants of proposed Special Events: scheduling of events; assistance with obtaining necessary permits; reserving needed public space for events; and providing technical assistance and advice.

The Director of the Department of Public Works, or designee, is responsible for issuance of the public assembly permits and enforcement of Sections 30-101 through Section 30-108.4, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended. The Public Works Department facilitates the review of each special event for compliance with this policy. Upon receipt of a complete Public Assembly Permit application, the Public Works Director, or their designee, in consultation with a Special Events Review Panel, shall issue a permit or, if deemed necessary, shall place conditions upon, reschedule, relocate, or deny any requested Special Event that does not meet this Policy and the requirements of applicable City Code or cannot otherwise be held as proposed.

- A. Special Events Review Panel (SERP). The City will maintain a Special Events Review Panel (SERP) for coordination, notification, and collaborative purposes that will include representatives from the following groups: Public Works, Risk Management, Fire-Emergency Management Services, Parks and Recreation, Zoning, Police, and any other agency or organization needed to coordinate specific events. SERP members will review the Public Assembly Permit Application and offer recommendations for approval or denial. The Public Works Department will facilitate meetings of the SERP to hear feedback and suggestions regarding current and future Special Events.
- B. Communication. City staff will collaborate to issue weekly email notifications of street closures related to Special Events authorized by the City Department of Public Works. City staff will maintain a website that allows community members to view a master Special Events calendar, which will provide details with respect to each Special Event. City staff will also maintain a feedback form that members of the community can access to provide comments regarding Special Events and their impacts on the community generally and the specific area in which the Special Event was held and presented.

3. Permit Application Process:

The City will establish a Special Event application and a planning guide that will outline the process, timelines, application materials, checklists, notification requirements and additional information necessary for event organizers to apply for an assembly permit. The goal of this Application Policy and Procedure is to provide a predictable timeframe for approval and to enable agencies to anticipate the impact of a Special Event and to plan accordingly.

- A. Application Submittal Timeframe. Special Event applications must be submitted according to the timelines for each specific event type as outlined below, and will be accepted no more than one (1) year prior to the proposed date of the Special Event. Submission of an application does not guarantee the issuance of an assembly permit. Applications cannot be fully reviewed and approved until all required Special Event information (e.g. projected attendance, Certificate of Insurance, site map, Emergency Action Plan) has been received.
- i. Races, Walks, and Parades. Applications must be received at least one hundred-twenty (120) calendar days prior to the proposed date of the event. Processing and approving a race, parade, or walk route is a complex process that requires coordination with numerous city departments and/or other entities.
 - ii. General Events. Applications for general events or assemblies with less than one hundred (100) persons in attendance must be received at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the proposed date of the event. Applications for general events with one hundred (100) or more persons in attendance or general events involving street closures must be received at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the proposed date of the event. Applications for all general events in Elmwood Park to utilize the amphitheater must be received at least ninety (90) calendar days prior to the proposed date of the event.
 - iii. Neighborhood Block Parties. Applications for neighborhood block parties must be received at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the proposed date of the event. It is recommended that organizers apply at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the event date if the block party might utilize tents, amusement structures, fireworks, etc. as these devices involve special permitting.
 - iv. Filming. Applications for filming must be received at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the shoot date. It is recommended that applications for extensive filming spanning multiple days or locations be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance.
 - v. Late Applications: Pursuant to Section 30-104 (e), Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended, the Public Works Director, or their designee, may consider late applications. The City cannot guarantee that any event application will be reviewed if it is submitted in less than the number of days prescribed above.
- B. Reimbursement of Cost for Damages and Event Clean-up. The organizer and/or applicant of the special event shall be responsible for producing a copy of the permit upon request of any City official throughout the duration of the event. In addition to the charges authorized by Sections 24-89 and 24-90 of City Code, the City reserves the right to bill an organizer and/or applicant of a special event for reimbursement of the cost for event clean-up and/or repair of damage to streets, sidewalks, structures, or other public property, caused by or directly related to the event. Any organizer and/or applicant of a special event who fails to pick up trash caused by their event and/or causes damage to public property and/or dumps hazardous materials on public property may be assessed the cost of such damages plus an administrative fee of twenty percent (20%) of such costs. All bills must be paid within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt or such will be submitted to the City Treasurer for collection.

- C. Security Deposits. For special events occurring within a City park, plaza, or greenway, the City Parks and Recreation Department shall be consulted to determine applicable security deposits and rental fees. The security deposit must be paid at the time a reservation request is made. Cancellation of an event less than 72 hours before the scheduled start of the Special Event will result in forfeiture of the security deposit. Deposits will be returned in full provided that the event site is left in clean condition with no damage reported. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Public Assembly Permit will result in loss of deposit, liability for repair and/or additional clean-up fees as determined by the City, as well as potential denial of future applications.
- D. Reservation of dates. Dates for Special Events will be reserved on the Special Event calendar based on a first-come, first-served basis, and are subject to restrictions noted in this Policy and under applicable provisions of City Code. Recurring Special Events will be given first priority to reserve the same day of the same week of the following calendar year (e.g. the second Saturday of February) or to reserve the same exact date of the following calendar year (e.g. February 14th). Conflicts that arise due to these two different reservation methods (e.g. February 14th falls on the second Saturday of February) will be handled by the Public Works Department, in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department, on a case-by-case basis. Determining first priority for date reservation between conflicting Special Events will be at the discretion of the Director of Public Works or designee. All recurring annual Special Events will need to receive a satisfactory post-event evaluation (see section 3.E) to retain first priority rights. Once an event organizer receives their evaluation, they will have thirty (30) calendar days to submit a letter of intent stating their desire to hold the event with the same date and location the following year. This letter reserves the date and location only and is not to be construed as an approval for the event. An official application will still need to be submitted by the corresponding deadline (see Section 3.A).
- E. Post- Special Event Evaluation Form. The Special Events Review Panel will utilize a Post- Special Event Evaluation Form that will measure the success of event organizers in conforming to all policies and permitted activities. This evaluation will help organizers of Special Events improve events from year to year, identify issues which adversely impact public agencies, and provide the approving agencies with a means to prioritize the reservation of dates in the approval process as noted above. Special Events with an unsatisfactory evaluation risk losing the preferred date, having additional fees imposed, or the denial of permits for future events.
- F. Notification Policy. The organizer and the applicant for an assembly permit for a Special Event shall be responsible for notifying as soon as possible all businesses and residences which adjoin any right of way which will be barricaded as a result of the Special Event in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Public Assembly Permit issued for the Special Event.
- G. Appeal Procedure.
- a. In some cases, permit applications may be denied. Reasons for denial may include, but are not limited to, undue disruption to either pedestrian or vehicular traffic, undue interference with movement of public safety equipment, undue interference with the ability to provide public safety services, or interference with another permitted assembly.
 - b. Should an application be denied, the applicant may appeal the decision within ten (10) business days of the date notice is given to the applicant by submitting a written notice of appeal through the City Clerk to the City Manager. Additional detail may be found in Section 30-108.1, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended. All appeals shall be subject to these procedures.
- H. Applicability of City Code. All Special Events are subject to all applicable provisions of City Code and all applicable rules, regulations, and policies adopted or enacted by the City Manager, including, without limitation, revocation of a public assembly permit as set forth in Section 30-108.2, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended.

4. **Limitation on Special Events within the City:**

The City of Roanoke is committed to supporting Special Events, recognizing the societal benefits, enhanced quality of life, and economic development such events can generate. The City also recognizes the need to balance the beneficial aspects of Special Events with public budget and staff constraints and the interests of community members who are regular users of public streets, sidewalks, parks, and greenways and are adversely impacted by their closure. Therefore, the following limitations shall be considered by the approving agencies in the reservation process.

A. Races, Walks, and Parades.

For the purpose of this section, a weekend event will be considered as any event held on a Friday, Saturday, and/or Sunday.

- i. Overall limitation on annual events. To ensure public safety, the overall number of races, walks, or parades that involve street, sidewalk and/or greenway closings within the City in any calendar year may be limited according to the City's ability to provide the necessary support personnel.
- ii. Limitation on events using the same or similar routes. Events using the same or similar routes, including the same general geographic area, particularly involving heavily used thoroughfares, should not be scheduled on the same day, consecutive days, or on consecutive weekends within the year. Events that request use of certain high-impact areas are subject to additional limitations as determined at the discretion of the Special Events Review Panel. Though this section does not apply to street festivals, block parties, etc., the SERP will consider the impact of such events when scheduling races and parades and may require alternate dates or routes if a proposed event falls on the same or a consecutive weekend to any other special event.
- iii. Limitation on number of events on any given weekend. No more than 2 (two) race, walk or parade events covered under this section shall be scheduled in any one weekend. No more than 1 (one) of these events can be a major event that either involves a run or walk of 10 kilometers or more in distance or the closure of the event route for more than 3 hours.
- iv. Limitation on use of public greenways. Events, both City produced and external, will be limited to two (2) per month per greenway. Requests for additional events will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Director. External events will be limited to registered charitable non-profit organizations. Prior to planning an event which utilizes a public greenway, event organizers shall consult the Parks and Recreation Department to determine availability, restrictions and fees which may apply to the planned event.
- v. Standard Race Routes. A list of standard routes and venues for new race events is contained in the City of Roanoke "Special Event Planning Guide".

B. General Events, Neighborhood Block Parties, and Filming.

- i. Overall limitation on events. While there is no cap on the number of general events, neighborhood block parties, or film production, the Special Events Review Panel has the discretion to disallow any event if it will create an undue burden on a particular geographic area or the City as a whole.

C. Event Priority.

- i. Events Produced by the City. Events produced by the City of Roanoke have priority use of

any public property or right-of-way. Other applications for special events are processed in order of receipt and subject to the requirements in section 3.

- ii. Annual Events. Applicants who held an event the previous year and achieved a satisfactory post-event evaluation have priority for the same time and location the following year, subject to future compliance with section 3.D.
- iii. Downtown Roanoke Events. The following items shall be considered by the Special Events Review Panel when reviewing applications for Special Events in the Downtown District:
 - a. Positive and negative impacts to commerce at the Historic Roanoke City Market.
 - b. Positive and negative impacts to other businesses, merchants, schools, and places of worship.
 - c. Impacts to pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow and public transportation, particularly during regular weekday business hours.
 - d. Ability of the City to provide necessary public safety and support personnel.
 - e. Suitability of the chosen venue for the size and scope of the proposed Special Event.

5. Annual Policy Review:

Each year City staff, in conjunction with the SERP, will review the Special Event Policy. Revisions may be made based on the prior years' experience.

Approved:



City Manager

Date: 1/16/18