



**CITY OF
SEATTLE
SPECIAL
EVENTS
VISION &
STRATEGY
2020-2025**

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CAPITOL HILL BLOCK PARTY

Capitol Hill
Block Party, 2019.

Photo Credit:
Dominic Hampton

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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There are many measures of health and vitality for a city, but few are as visible and impactful as the cultural events and activities that take place outside in the streets, parks, waterways and other parts of the public realm. Sharing experiences with our peers, neighbors, friends and relatives is what makes us into one people, be that a family, a neighborhood, a team or a whole generation. Gathering in the public realm together is a critical element in transforming a collection of residents, workers and visitors into one community, one city.

Special events include parades, festivals, markets, block parties, foot and bicycle races, fairs, concerts, rallies, marches and demonstrations, among many other activities that invite the public to gather in celebration, civic action and recreation. They take place in every neighborhood of every city of every country in the world, but policies and programs vary wildly.

Seattle has a strong but inconsistent history of public events. With a legacy of two World's Fairs, the infrastructure left behind, and the subsequent cultural landscape throughout the city, Seattle has deep investments in special events. These include especially a handful of legacy festivals and parades such as Bumbershoot, Fremont Solstice, Northwest Folklife and Seafair, which have all fluctuated in size, relevance and financial sustainability over the years.

The City itself has also fluctuated in its commitment to these festivals and other events, sometimes treating them as private endeavors to be limited, regulated and charged cost recovery. At other times, it has embraced them, with investments of direct production support, grants, decreased fees and other resources, citing clear economic and cultural impacts.

Now, as a city in the midst of massive changes in size, economy, demographics, culture, transportation and density, Seattle needs a corresponding evolution in the local systems for public events both within and without the city government.

This project studied citywide need and opportunity for policy, capacity and services related to public events. It was produced through an 8-month engagement and research process in 2019. This report outlines findings and recommendations intended to guide program development for the next five years, transforming Seattle into both a major global destination for events and a sustainable local home for creative community and industries with public events at the core.

Special Events are usually defined in terms of size, footprint or permit requirements. But in this document, Special Events refer to any outdoor event in the public realm. This may include parades, festivals, concerts, performances, block parties, rallies, marches, foot races, bicycle events, farmers markets and street fairs.

Public Space or Public Realm refers to the publicly owned and/or adjacent spaces including streets, sidewalks and public way, parks, plazas, piers, waterways, and airways, among others.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1** Seattle and the region are rich with the cultural and creative resources needed to continue a long history of special events, but a rapid rate of change threatens the legacy.
- 2** Seattle's systems of service and support for special events lack the vision, alignment and capacity to match the region's changing population, culture and economy.
- 3** Given a growing number of public incidents nationally, Seattle's special events lack the resources required for proper safety, security and emergency response.
- 4** Investments in special events would produce returns far beyond the cultural sector, including advancement in community development, corporate philanthropy, workforce development, public safety, racial equity and social justice.

VISION

Seattle will become a global leader in festivals and events, ensuring accessible and equitable cultural experiences for all residents and communities, attracting and inspiring visitors, and elevating the identity and profile of the city in the world.

The City Special Events program will become an integrated, comprehensive citywide set of services, systems and policies that support and advance events in the public realm which further Seattle's identity, visibility, and sense of belonging.

OUTCOMES

Higher quality events

Improved cultural access

Healthier overall cultural community

Improved city services and resources

Increased neighborhood engagement

More event awareness

More equitable event industry

Increased cultural funding and support

Improved cultural and economic knowledge

Enhanced economic and social benefit

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

EVENT HOSTING, PRODUCTION & PARTNERSHIP

Elevate Seattle as a home for parades, festivals and special events through development of a comprehensive city program with standard models for producing, partnering and hosting events of all sizes and types.

- Establish a **diverse portfolio of signature events** that are strongly aligned with culture, values and identity.
- Increase overall safety and security through **increased capacity across safety and emergency services** and more robust **training and information resources**.
- Bring **large national and international event projects** (World Cup, MLB All-Star Game, etc) through preparation, advocacy, leadership and stewardship.
- Create efficiency and increase predictability through **explicit space and time designations for events**.
- More fully weave together existing infrastructure, services, regulations, process and fees into **a single, comprehensive, uniformly applied program model**.

INDUSTRY, ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Cultivate an environment of social equity, economic prosperity, and neighborhood engagement through investments in community organizing and the event production industry.

- **Apply a framework of social justice, equity and inclusion** to the development, advancement, regulation, promotion and support for all special events.
- Conduct more active **organizing and engagement at the neighborhood level** to promote city services and policies, and foster new partnerships.
- Advance the creative economy through **event production workforce development and capacity building for event producers and organizers**.

EVALUATION, PLANNING & OPERATION OF CITY SERVICES

Improve city services through investments in strategic capacity, planning and evaluation practices, and systems for operations and policy across departments.

- Improve the understanding of the impacts and benefits of special events through **regular and robust assessment and evaluation**.
- Reduce costs while increasing benefits by identifying and implementing **policy improvements and program developments that increase efficiency and effectiveness** of production, regulation, administration, health and safety.
- Establish **more centralized and integrated capacity in leadership, governance and administration for special events**.

FUTURE PLANS: 5-YEAR TRANSFORMATION

Seattle will work in three stages over the next five years to prepare, plan, launch, evaluate, grow and expand a re-imagined special events platform across departments and services. Within that time, the program and all Seattle will be ready to truly promote itself throughout the world as a leading city for festivals and events.

2020: SETTING THE STAGE

- 1 Establish a position to lead the initiative.
- 2 Invest in new digital tools.
- 3 Develop key private funding and service partnerships.
- 4 Pilot a signature series of City-produced events.
- 5 Work in partnership to create support programs for event producers.
- 6 Re-structure Special Events Committee and re-organize Special Events Office.
- 7 Initiate a citywide special events safety and security detail.
- 8 Evaluation of impacts of events within the City and throughout the regional economy.
- 9 Plan and launch fully re-imagined program for rollout in 2021.

2021 - 2022: BUILDING THE SHOW

- 10 Expand and restructure the Special Events Office.
 - Expand the core Special Events team to five or more full-time positions.
 - Establish a City Events Production team.
 - Establish a Special Event safety and security position and/or team.
 - Establish SDOT Special Event team and integrate with SEO
 - Establish a Parks & Recreation Special Event Liaison position or team.
 - Establish at least one full time Neighborhoods Special Events Liaison position.
- 11 Expand and deploy technical production resources and services.
- 12 Review, adjust and advance 2020 plans and strategies.
- 13 Study and plan for additional program and policy developments.

2023 - 2024: OPENING THE CURTAIN

- 14** Expand efforts to designate geographic location “hotspots” for special events.
- 15** Improve regulation of alcohol sales, consumption and enforcement at special events.
- 16** Adjust sound and/or event ordinances to create a policy framework specific to events.
- 17** Continue development of policy to further streamline production, support and regulation.
- 18** Provide support to key neighborhoods in developing and producing events.
- 19** Expand and fully promote the collection of City-produced events and series.
- 20** Expand partnerships to provide support for local event organizers.
- 21** Further expand and advance the set of digital tools and media resources.
- 22** Consolidate all events permitting and public programming to OED/SE (or SC).
- 23** Adjust requirements and limitations to better utilize safety and emergency personnel.
- 24** Develop and grow the event safety and emergency-planning program.
- 25** Explore and implement a community-based rangers program for events and parks.
- 26** Continue a practice of regular evaluation, reporting and planning.
- 27** Network together a coalition of special event funders internal and external to the City.
- 28** Consolidate and re-organize existing City funding programs for special events.

“My introduction to local culture was through events. The neighborhood farmers market gave my first glimpse of community. Upstream was easy, laid back and showcased music and Pioneer Square. And when I participated in Pride this year, it was the first time in Seattle that I felt a really strong sense of belonging.”

Angela Pagliaroli-Padilla, Tableau Software



CASE STUDY: **NORTHWEST FOLKLIFE, SEATTLE, WA**

Every year since 1972, the Northwest Folklife Festival has brought a celebration of diversity and tradition to the heart of Seattle. Folklife exists to celebrate all forms of cultural expression practiced in the Northwest. There are no headliners and all of the performers donate their performance. The Festival is community-powered through donations, sponsorship and volunteers.

The Festival is a major focal point for many traditional and ethnic performing groups and communities. Over the years, the Festival has evolved to reflect the number and diversity of communities that call the Northwest home. Featuring hip hop MCs, Irish cloggers, Middle Eastern dancers, bluegrass fiddlers, West African drummers, ska bands and more, Northwest Folklife has built an artistic outlet that artists and audiences look forward to each year.

As an event that has been committed entirely to Seattle Center, there have been significant pros and cons to the relationship with the city over the years, probably best illustrated by recent changes to the campus, including new resident organizations in the Northwest Rooms and the Key Arena renovations. With new partnership and infrastructure opportunities, the setbacks are not inconsiderable, especially in the continued reduction in space available for the event. But the hardest challenge is in being caught in limbo between a sponsored city program and a private commercial entity lessee at Seattle Center.

As a long-running historic event on the main cultural campus, free for attendees, showcasing the cultures of the region, and driving an programmatic agenda of diversity, equity and inclusion, Folklife is an excellent candidate for a stronger partnership with the City. And the organization's unique programmatic partnership model offers resources and methodology for capacity building and production services that could be leveraged far beyond the dates of the festival and the Seattle Center campus if properly marshaled.

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of the Space Needle in Seattle, Washington, at night. The tower's iconic saucer-shaped observation deck is illuminated from within, showing a grid of structural beams. The sky is dark and filled with numerous streaks of light from fireworks exploding in various colors, including bright blue, purple, and white. The overall scene is festive and celebratory.

New Years Eve fireworks
at the Space Needle.

Photo credit:
Workshop Events

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

From the World's Fair to Solstice and from Seafair to Bumbershoot, Seattle has a long history of remarkable public events. But we haven't always been consistent in our approach to supporting and regulating them. Now, as our region continues a rapid pace of growth and change, it is vital that we upgrade our special events program to match.

In the next 10 years, our city will continue to grow. We will continue to host successful world-changing innovations in commerce, sports, media and technology. We will continue to be challenged with issues of affordability, homelessness, inequity and cultural displacement. And we will continue to see rapid shifts in the size, demographics, culture and economics of our local population.

The rate of change in our public infrastructure and programming must match. And in many ways it will, with a new arena at Seattle Center, a newly minted Seattle Waterfront, a newly expanded Washington State Convention Center, and new elements of the regional rail-based transit system all coming online by 2025.

But there are many more preparations to make, as we scramble to upgrade everything from housing and commercial property to streets and transit, to water and power systems, to safety and emergency services, just to name a few.

Of all of the ways to preserve and advance Seattle's identity and values during these shifts, investing in special events must be one of the easiest and most affordable, yet with some of the most beneficial and visible impacts.

This report is not a tactical plan. It is a recommended change in philosophy, suggesting a new design for structure, and resulting in redefined budget, policy and operations throughout the City for years to come.

Whatever the future brings for our City, a new framework and intentional approach for special events will ensure equitable, healthy and accessible opportunities for the people and communities of our city to gather together in the streets, parks and other public spaces for storytelling, music and dance, recreation, political activism, mourning and celebration.

We look forward to joining you there.



Bobby Lee
Director, Office of Economic
Development



Randy Engstrom
Director, Office of Arts & Culture



Robert Nellams
Director, Seattle Center



City of Seattle

This report was written by Andy Fife and designed by Milli.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

In the summer of 2019, the City of Seattle took a critical look at the ways it supports and advances public outdoor events. Over 8 months, more than one hundred twenty internal and external stakeholders helped identify a vision for the future of special events in Seattle, assess the areas of greatest opportunity, and articulate plans for future development within City systems, policy and offerings.

The Special Events Assessment and Planning Project took place in May through December of 2019 with the following objectives:

1. Engage critical stakeholders for input and consensus building.
2. Articulate long-term vision and objectives for special events in Seattle.
3. Assess current capacity and efficacy of internal policy, procedures, and systems.
4. Establish plans for adjusting and advancing City efforts surrounding special events immediately (2020) and within the coming years.

The core team for the effort was the following:

- Mayor Durkan Senior Policy Advisor Julia Reed,
- Director of the Office of Economic Development Bobby Lee,
- Director of the Office of Arts & Culture Randy Engstrom, and
- Citywide Special Events Manager Chris Swenson.

Over eight months, the project team reviewed the special event program, including the existing policy, process, funding, prioritization, and capacity across City departments. It collected research on similar efforts in 12 peer cities, plus Washington State, National, and International Event Associations. It engaged 120 stakeholders, including 80 local event producers, sponsors, and community partners to understand how the City can continue to improve its support of special events as well as approximately 40 staff members from 14 city departments that are involved with their success.

The initiative was supported and conducted by consultant and cultural policy specialist Andy Fife of Fife Consulting, with support from cultural management consultant Susie Williams.

Thanks are due to all of the advisors and stakeholders involved, including the following

Diana Adams, Vermillion

Jesús Aguirre, Director, Seattle Parks & Recreation

Ilana Balint, Run For Good, Turkey Trot, Lake Union 10K

Paula Beadel, Caravel Events

David Bestock, DNDA, Arts in Nature Festival

Melanie Blakey, Medalist Sports / Obliteride

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David Buhler, Elysian Brewing Company

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Martha Manning, Wildrose

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Sam Zimbabwe, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

SEATTLE'S LEGACY OF EVENTS

50 years ago, the City of Seattle was a national leader for investment in public events and culture. The City had created one of the first municipal arts commissions; had established one of the first "percent-for-art" public art programs; had introduced a new model for city arts and music festivals; and had recently hosted a world's fair, establishing a new cultural campus with iconic architecture and permanent facilities for sports, science, theatre, music, food and celebration.

Over the years, the City's commitment to culture shifted. While continuing the existing commission, programs, campus and event portfolio, the priority for public resource investment moved into more passive grants-based funding programs for private nonprofit arts programs and facilities. And the primary question of programming the streets, sidewalks and parks was left to private organizations, with the City serving primarily in a role of funding, regulation and permitting.

Through its values and mission, the City of Seattle continues to play a role to encourage and help events that bring the community together, and ensure they take place safely on its streets and in its parks. The City believes these events encourage and support the interaction of neighbors, friends, families, and strangers in addition to providing positive economic impact.

In 1991, the City of Seattle enacted its first Special Events legislation and created the Special Events Committee, a group of 18 City, County, and State experts, to support and coordinate major public events. This group continues to steward the Special Event permitting efforts of the City today.

As part of the City's advocacy for and support of public event activity, the Special Events Committee and the Special Events Office regulate the time, place, and manner of events in order to protect public health and safety, to reduce adverse impacts on the public places and neighboring areas, and to protect the rights of other users of our public places.

Since 1991, Seattle has experienced tremendous population and business growth, and special events are more important than ever because they help build a sense of belonging and community pride. The City of Seattle, through the functions of the Special Event Committee and Office, strives to support and encourage public event activity by ensuring strong policy and positive values.

In 2012, on mandate of the Seattle City Council, the Special Events Office moved from Parks and Recreation to the Office of Film + Music within the Office of Economic Development to address antiquated operations, values, and fee structure policies. In 2016, the Ordinance related to Special Events was updated to strengthen the authority of the Special Events Committee, re-categorize event types, and establish an updated permit fee schedule which included some cost recovery for City resources expended to support these events.

“Boeing supports local events and all we need is some visibility. We've done it for a long time and are involved in so many events in so many ways. But from my perspective, there are none of them that feel like the essential Seattle event. There isn't that one signature event that we can't stop doing, which is interesting.

Sam Whiting, Boeing



CITY SPECIAL EVENTS SERVICES BY DEPARTMENT

Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) supports a robust economy and broadly shared prosperity by working through partnerships with communities and businesses. In addition to housing the Office of Film, Music & Special Events, OED studies and builds programs in Commercial Affordability, Youth Employment, Technology Workforce Development, and Small Business Advocacy.

OED also manages the Only in Seattle grant program, supporting business districts throughout the city. Beyond the SEO, OED's intersection with events comes mostly through its support to local business districts, which often prioritize investment in special events.

Seattle Special Events Office (SEO) regulates and coordinates citywide services for approximately 550 major events. This is out of thousands of other street, sidewalk and parks events that are not big or complicated enough to involve SEO, and the office also is not involved in the major events that take place in the stadiums.

SEO is a part of the Office of Film + Music, is nested within the Office of Economic Development, and is staffed by a program manager, a permit specialist, and an administrative assistant.

SEO also supports the Special Events Committee operationally and the office manager serves as Committee Chair. The Special Events Committee is a multi-governmental body of 18 agency representatives, ordained per Seattle Municipal Code, which meets monthly to consider Special Event Permit Applications across departments.

The Special Events Committee is made up of departmental and agency leadership, but convenes primarily operational designees to review and discuss event logistics. In addition to the monthly committee meeting, there are at least four monthly sub-committee meetings each month on specific events or initiatives.

SEO offers a permitting handbook and also provides direct technical assistance for event producers in navigating cross-departmental permitting and coordination. SEO coordinates all events under the Special Event Permit, including collection of permit fees.

Seattle Parks and Recreation (PARKS) operates over 6400 acres with more than 485 parks, natural areas and recreation facilities throughout the city that are used for all kinds of programming and events, including everything from picnics to weddings to concerts, marathons, rallies and festivals. PARKS primarily programs these events through its Park Use Permit process, and has its own system for coordination through the Seattle Parks Scheduling Unit. Unless there is alcohol involved, or the event extends to streets or requires oversight or permission by other City services, PARKS handles its own scheduling, permitting and billing.

The Park Use Permit has its own specific policies, including application, use, advertising and utility fees, revenue share and insurance requirements. PARKS offers some semi-formal support and resource guidance to events organizers, and there are funding programs that encourage cultural and recreational program use. PARKS policies are generally unfriendly to exclusive use and commercial activity, including substantial fees and limitations on sponsor branding, ticketed events, commercial vendor activity, and sales revenues.

PARKS doesn't generally program cultural activities directly, though there are standing programming partnerships in specific parks (DSA in Westlake/Occidental, Friends of the Waterfront in Waterfront Park, etc.).

Macklemore performs in Pioneer Square before the Sounders 2019 MLS Cup Championship win.

Photo Credit:
Chris Swenson



CITY SPECIAL EVENTS SERVICES BY DEPARTMENT

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) manages public right-of-way throughout the city, which makes up over 27% of Seattle's land, including 33,000 blocks of sidewalk, 117 bridges, 1000 traffic signals and 4000 miles of paved roadways that might be used for an event, or be involved in getting people to or from the events.

The SDOT Street Use Division maintains one staff member that oversees and grants permission for all right-of-way use which are required to be a part of permitted Special Events. The staff coordinates right-of-way use with other internal SDOT divisions, and creates traffic control plans for each event individually, which are delivered to SEO and become part of the Special Event Permit.

Apart from the Special Event Permit right-of-way permission process, SDOT operates their own Public Space Management programs to "promote and regulate a safe, accessible and attractive shared right-of-way." This team manages and permits non-major events including block parties, 'play streets', farmers markets, sidewalk sales, food truck vending, art walks, weddings and parties. They also work towards neighborhood vitality through adaptive streets projects, parklets, pole banners and other non-traffic street use.

The SDOT Street Use Permit has its own fee structures, insurance requirements and policies for event activity on right-of-way. If an event reaches a certain size, or involves more complex city services, events will be required to coordinate through the Special Events Office. Otherwise, event organizers can work with SDOT Public Space Management staff to get semi-formal support and resources. SDOT does not provide direct funding for events activities, and refers most organizers searching financial support to the Neighborhood Matching Fund with the Department of Neighborhoods.

The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) manages the public art program, cultural partnerships grant programs, the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute and The Creative Advantage initiative. The office invests over \$3M per year to support more than 400 artists and cultural organizations, resulting in over 3600 performances, events and exhibit days.

Outdoor cultural events are included among the list of funded efforts, particularly in the grant programs that support Neighborhood and Community Arts, and Arts in Parks. However, the office doesn't currently produce or specifically focus significant funding or capacity on outdoor public events and programs except as a part of its general grants to artists and nonprofit organization partners.



I like the Seattle Center mural concerts on Friday afternoons. I don't mind paying a lot for beer and seeing sponsor signage so other people can be there. If you want it to be signature event, then it needs to be accessible. Accessibility means free. If you want to buy things there, that's great. But use city resources to keep the events free.

Paul Heppner, Encore Media Group



Event organizers receive semi-formal technical support from program staff, especially on navigating the department's own structures and services. There is not a formal partnership with the Special Events Office, SDOT or PARKS otherwise to provide cross-training to program staff or cross-departmental guidance to constituents.

Seattle Center (SC) is the main city-owned cultural, civic, arts and family gathering place. More than 30 cultural, educational, sports and entertainment organizations reside on the grounds, together with a broad range of public and community programs, creating thousands of events on the 74-acre campus and attract over 12 million visitors each year.

Seattle Center is operated by a city department that is also called Seattle Center. This department plays multiple roles as a business partner, financier, landlord, custodian, event producer and promoter. Seattle Center employs 230+ full-time workers and many hundred more event-related intermittent staff in all aspects of campus operations.

Seattle Center is charged with generating revenues to cover expenses. It generates most of its revenue through commercial activities including long-term facility lease/rentals and continued efforts to attract busi-

ness, community, charitable and private events. Seattle Center provides operational, maintenance and other support to the organizations residing on the grounds.

Seattle Office of Emergency Management, Seattle Police Department, and Seattle Fire Department (OEM), (SPD), (SFD) each provide specific safety, security, regulation, and enforcement services to events throughout the city.

SPD operates the Seattle Police Operations Center (SPOC), which coordinates police involvement with Special Events. SPOC attends the Special Event Committee meetings, facilitates SPD weekly special event meetings with SEO and SDOT, and coordinates with other City agencies.

While SPD precincts are responsible for the direct staffing and management of events, SPOC coordinates with precincts, advises on upcoming events, and helps create Incident Action Plans, including outline for objectives, operations, staffing, and logistics. The only exception is with Seattle Center, which has its own SPD command and staffing detail that handles events on the campus.

CITY SPECIAL EVENTS SERVICES BY DEPARTMENT

SFD helps events provide a safe and secure environment with its own Special Events Permit and related regulations and fees, as well as providing a public assembly training guide. SFD's Fire Marshal's Office oversees its business services including occupancy limits, fire lanes, fire permits, and fire prevention. SFD's Medic One program provides emergency medical coverage to permitted Special Events, with trained EMTs and Paramedics assigned to or available for hire by event organizers to staff large events in Seattle with bikes, gators, or medic units.

OEM provides an array of services surrounding events, including planning, partnerships, training and exercises for incident preparation, primarily for larger citywide events. OEM operates the Emergency Operations Center, which unifies efforts across departments. EOC opens for 6 to 8 incidents per year. Some of them involve no notice such as major traffic, utility or telecommunications disruptions. And some of them are planned, such as the Seafair Torchlight Parade, New Years, 4th of July, May Day Marches, and Pride Parade. It is Seattle's closest function to the 24-7 watch centers operated in Washington DC, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and NYC but it only officially opens for a handful of major events or major emergencies.

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) provides resources and opportunities for community members to build strong communities, including programs and services in historic preservation, community gardening, neighborhood project funding, community organizing and leadership development.

DON provides the largest share of city funds (approximately \$860k in

2018) for festivals and events through the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF), some of which are permitted through the Special Events Office.

As a member of the Special Events Committee, DON assists in ensuring that neighborhood residents and businesses are properly notified of events, as required by the Special Events Ordinance.

Otherwise, NMF program personnel and neighborhood outreach staff both end up providing key technical support and capacity building to event producers in navigating city systems, but the support is not in the form of a formal program and varies widely depending on the knowledge, interest and skill of the personnel involved.

Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Noise Abatement Division oversees regulation of noise ordinance and issues noise variances for events with off-hours amplified sound or work. SDCI also oversees regulation for occupancy, tent, and structure permits that may be required as part of a permitted Special Event.

Seattle Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) licenses and collects fees and taxes from event producers and their vendors operating in Seattle.

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) oversees and assists organizer's waste management plans and operations.

Seattle's Gay
Pride Parade

Photo Credit:
Elaine Thompson



CASE STUDY: AUSTIN, TEXAS

Austin is a quickly growing and changing city, with more than 20% increase in population from 2010 – 2018. Austin is well known for festivals, especially South By Southwest (SXSW) and Austin City Limits (ACL). ACL estimates more than 450,000 participants per year. SXSW estimated more than 420,000 participants in 2018, with an economic impact each year that is greater than the Super Bowl.

These events evolved with heavy coordination and relationship to the City, with what led to the Austin Center for Events (ACE). ACE is somewhat similar to Seattle's Special Events Committee and Office. Like Seattle, ACE is made up of events-related logistical staff from multiple city departments including EMS, Police, Fire, Transportation, and Parks & Recreation.

Also like Seattle's Special Events Committee membership, the participation of departmental members from police, fire and otherwise are not budgeted separately from their departments and there is no dedicated funding for their time.

"ACE is a collaborative partnership, there is no dedicated budget for day-to-day operational expenditures. Separate operating budgets for each division within the ACE are dictated by the individual departments and are funded by different special event planning and permitting fees." (ACE Progress Report 2013).

However, there are key differences as well that are important in evaluating Seattle's model. Firstly, ACE is separate from the Special Events Task Force, a voting body that evaluates and strategizes on Special Events policy and programs that is separate from the more logistical interdepartmental team that is ACE. ACE meets weekly and is operational, while the Task Force meets much less frequently and is strategic, designed to review the ordinance.

A second and key difference is found around their cost recovery considerations. Firstly, there is a co-sponsorship model, where the city chooses specific events to be co-sponsored or co-produced by the city, waiving all of the fees as a partner. This tends to be large events like SXSW, Juneteenth and the Veteran's Day Parade. Secondly, there is a "fee waiver and discount" model, where event permit fees are eliminated or reduced on a case-by-case basis. These fee waivers are governed by City Council, with each of the eleven Council members holding a \$6,000 annual fee waiver budget.

Finally, to address the ballooning number of events, a moratorium was put in place on new street events in the downtown district for three years. There is mixed response to the moratorium, with the main concerns surrounding the choice of a blanket policy as opposed to setting more specific limits on certain types of events and activities, with more room for choice and proactive partnership on behalf of the city around timing, size, type and location.

CASE STUDY:

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Philadelphia's program is located in the City Managing Director's Office and has many interesting elements to model.

Philadelphia uses its events to elevate their reputation nationally and internationally, aiming to be a leader in events infrastructure and focus on producing and/or welcoming big events. In addition to the city's signature annual events such as the Philadelphia International Flower Show (which began in 1829) and WaWa Welcome America (free week-long, citywide music festival), Philadelphia has hosted the Democratic National Convention (2016), NFL Draft (2017), the NFL Kickoff Game (2018) and is the only US city to host the World Meeting of Families.

They organize and produce the city's two signature running events directly (Broad Street Run and Philadelphia Marathon), and provide direct funding support for a number of festivals and events via budgeted grant funding from the City and in-kind contributions in the form of police coverage, emergency medical services and sanitation services. "The regional economic impact of the marathon event more than covers any investment by the City of Philadelphia towards its operating costs." (2018 Philadelphia IFEA Submission, pg 53)

In Philadelphia, their Special Event classification distinguishes between the following two categories:

- **Nonprofit Special Event** means a special event which (1) is sponsored by a Public Interest Organization, and (2) contributes or reserves, without deductions or offsets, ninety percent (90%) or more of Gross Event Revenues to a Public Interest Organization.
- **Profit Special Events** means a special event which contributes or reserves, without deductions or offsets, less than ten percent (10%) of Gross Event Revenues to a Public Interest Organization.

The fee structures are considerably different for street permitting between these categories.

Special Events Permitting Policy

Also of particular note is the PhillyRising Collaborative model for safety and enforcement as well as support for community events programming. "Through the *PhillyRising Collaborative's* Citizen's Engagement Academy, OSE holds a monthly 'Special Events Academy' which serves to educate community members about the special events process and the positive impacts of festivals and parades on residential neighborhoods and underutilized commercial corridors." (*OSE-PHL About Page*)

PhillyRising Collaborative is a program also run by the Managing Director's Office, which coordinates city services to neighborhoods plagued by crime. The neighborhoods are based on Police Service Areas. Rather than police via district, the Philadelphia Police divides districts into these Police Service Areas. Each Area has a command structure dedicated to supporting that specific neighborhood. "This coordinated approach focuses on building the capacity of local organizations, so that they may institute visible, sustainable changes in their neighborhoods." (*PhillyRising About Page*)

Philadelphia has 6300 officers in their police department compared to 1400 in Seattle, which is only 35% smaller in metro area population.



Inside Pike Place Market.

Photo Credit: Taylor Simpson

KEY FINDINGS

A time of economic and cultural change for the city and region comes with increased risk and opportunity for the most important public cultural events and activities. Seattle is investing in considerable new public resources, new transit systems, a new Waterfront, a new arena under the historic roofline of KeyArena at Seattle Center, and wholly redeveloped neighborhoods such as South Lake Union.

And yet, despite all the growth and investment, there has not yet been a proportional response in terms of investment in special events.

In addition to the larger economic and social factors that come with it, the changing city landscape has many direct strengths and challenges for special events. Traffic increases affect travel to and from events, while the growing number of events stresses an otherwise overburdened

traffic system. Construction projects limits locations and routes for longstanding repeated events. Shifting neighborhood demographics change community engagement. Usage levels and activities in parks and other public properties change rapidly. Crime and safety changes affect planning and responsiveness. And the sheer quantity of events increases along with rising population and changing economics.

Cultural and recreational public events in Seattle need more strategic leadership, more sustaining support resources, more dynamic capacity, stronger overall public engagement, and more progressive policy development.

Fortunately, there is also an abundance of local assets in terms of knowledge, experience, skill and resources that can be leveraged towards swift advancement if properly marshaled.

“If I could change one thing, it would be this emphasis on cost recovery. Feels like they are trying to push our events out of the city. Or close us. Cost recovery through fees presents an existential threat for us.

Brigette LeGarde, Fremont Arts Council, Solstice Parade

The city went from a supportive partner in everything to dramatic fee increases and cost recovery. For example, park vendor fees and other city licenses and costs went way up. And the number of our vendors dropped. These fees don't exist in other cities, so vendors make more when they choose events elsewhere. And it isn't clear that there has been an improvement in service from the city with those funds.

Phil Megenhardt, Boldhat Productions, Fremont Fair

FINDING 1

Seattle and the region are rich with the cultural and creative resources needed to continue a long history of events, but a rapid rate of change threatens the legacy.

With such a long history of commitment to culture and especially public events, there is a deep bench in the regional production industry, civic structure and cultural community. However, rising costs are eroding quality, relevance, accessibility and equity in local events. And Seattle lacks systems for organizing and maximizing the value of the region's considerable assets.

Economic Changes and Affordability Issues

Discussions of affordability are a concern in every part of Seattle's economy and that is also true in special events. While outdoor public special events are the most important cultural activities in any city due to their accessibility, visibility and cultural impacts, they are also often the hardest to monetize and therefore sustain.

In fact, while one of the opportunities before Seattle, like any city, is to develop a robust offering of free and accessible programs outside for the public, it becomes less and less possible and prevalent in Seattle with the rising costs of production unless subsidized and supported by city services and otherwise.

As mentioned below under safety and security, the city has returned regularly to discussions of "cost recovery" in the policies and fees sur-

rounding special events. In addition to police and fire, there have been negative impacts to rising costs in refuse, permitting, vendor requirements, insurance, licensing and other fee areas.

Opportunities exist to streamline these costs for event organizers, better align when and how subsidies and discounts are provided, and rearrange policy and practices to reduce costs and decrease the burden on the city itself as well.

Opportunities also exist for better organizing and leveraging of the considerable event resources of the region towards increased economic impact, improved equity, more community benefit, increased safety and security, and a more sustainable industry.

A Deep Bench of Local Resources

Seattle has everything that is needed. Police, fire and emergency services have officers with strong experience and skill in supporting and working with events. Seattle has many leaders with lifetime careers in producing and organizing events of all sizes and types.

From the Sports Commission to the county cultural agency 4Culture to ArtsFund, Seattle Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce, Seattle is full of major partners-to-be. There are sponsors and philanthropists who have long placed cultural events and activities high on their list of local priorities and who have been involved with supporting and developing major events for decades. And there is an engaged and active community with an appetite for music, performance, art, food and other cultural experiences together.

Marshaling Resources Requires Leadership

All that is needed is the leadership to align the stakeholders, marshal the resources and advance the policy environment. The City is well positioned to take this leadership role.

Support such as grant funding programs, corporate sponsorship, capacity building, technical assistance, training and professional development is needed, especially to ensure equitable access.

Furthermore, there is opportunity to better develop the overall creative economic workforce, as well as the community of safety and emergency personnel locally by implementing more robust workforce development around special events.

Corporations, foundations and donors have all affirmed that they would support and invest in new initiatives to develop new events and advance public events strategies and industry.

While there are many forms of both formal and informal support locally for events and event organizers by the city internally and otherwise, these services and resources are not centrally organized, aligned, consistent, nor comprehensive.

FINDING 2

Seattle's services for special events lack the vision, alignment and capacity to match the changing population, culture and economy.

Due to resource scarcity and a lack of prioritization, special events discussions have become overly transactional, placing too much burden on individual city departments and event producers.

Non-cultural city services mostly consider special events outside of their "normal business" and are under pressure to recover costs as though special events were entirely commercial in nature and "extra" to the duties of the city infrastructure. While successful public events require integrated

Gaps and Overlaps Between City Departments

The most glaring of these challenges is found in the spaces between City departments and systems, and the need for stronger leadership capacity across all departments.

Since being formed, the Special Events Office and Committee have created a much more centralized and coordinated experience for event organizers who are familiar enough with the system to navigate it. And it is certainly a better experience for new event organizers than it would be without the office.

However, the City and other related public agencies' policies, procedures, programs and services remain inconsistent across systems and departments, and the services and resources outside of SEO are not prioritized within the respective department work otherwise, usually without any funding mandate. These factors create severe barriers and inefficiencies in event organizing both internally and externally.

There are many examples.

- Parks sponsorship and commercial activity limitations are applied differently in different parks for different events, and operate very differently to the policies for public right-of-way usage.
- SDOT's staff time for permitting and supporting event planning is not considered a funded cost area and therefore downgraded in priority both budget-wise and operationally.
- SDOT also is overwhelmed with traffic volume overall and does not have the engineer capacity required for the level of real-time responsiveness and dynamism called for by the growing strains on Seattle's traffic system. Stadiums in particular offer considerable challenges for Traffic Management and require updated integrations in the city-stadium agreements.
- Similar challenges exist in Police, Fire, Parks and Neighborhoods, though all these departments say they would like to give it at least one FTE if properly resourced to do so.
- Seattle Center's limitations and requirements are different from the Waterfront and different also from downtown parks, which is different again from other parks in the city.
- Liquor Control Board requirements for fencing are applied differently in Seattle than in Eastern Washington or even in Tacoma, and are different than the barrier requirements in place for traffic control on Seattle streets, which is different again from the requirements for barriers in public parks.

cross-departmental structure and capacity, most departments consider it a low priority and an unfunded mandate.

Because of budgetary pressures, departments defend against capacity drain and push for transactional cost recovery. And since those events with the most resources tend to have the most ability to fight back, the application of those transactional cost recovery efforts is inconsistent at best, and at worst serves to reinforce the most egregious historical inequities within culture and community.

- A 2019 effort to decrease traffic congestion during the "Seattle Squeeze" encouraged people to "stay home." An unintended consequence was a decrease in attendance at cultural events, causing a fiscal sustainability issue for some.
- Existing City listings and newsletters are confusing, inconsistent and uncoordinated, with event information published variously by SDOT, ARTS, Parks, SEO, OFM, OED, DON, Seattle Center and elsewhere.

Yet another example is found with noise ordinance and sound variances, where the issue is as much in the policy as in the implementation. The current noise ordinance was established in the 1970s and doesn't really apply to the current conditions of the city surrounding events, nor night-life, nor even construction, which is what the ordinance was really created to address in the first place. Similarly, the department (SDCI) is also set up mostly in order to address construction considerations and is not a match to the social, cultural and political context that special events operate in. In this case, policy, process and leadership adjustments are all needed.

Ultimately, funding programs, permitting, licensing, technical assistance, community engagement and event communications are different for each department and there are even multiple separate and distinct processes within just the City of Seattle with the name "Special Event Permit."

Permitting support and communications may be a regular priority for one department, while it may be considered a superfluous responsibility in another. And while as many as 12 departments will be involved in funding, permitting and supporting a single event, there is very little awareness of the needs and services across departments so that event organizers have no central authority or tool to help them navigate except for the under-resourced team of the Special Events Office.

Event organizers are discouraged by the inconsistency. City employees have difficulty explaining and giving support on elements beyond their own department. And the staff of the Special Events Office barely has the capacity to respond to the minimum workload to process permits, much less provide the kind of support and assistance needed by event producers. This lack of capacity is felt especially by those from historically marginalized communities that need support the most.

The net effect is one in which the city is not only not considered a vital partner and resource, but is seen as an active barrier to success for outdoor public cultural experiences by neighborhoods, producers and organizers of events large and small.

Room for Strategic Leadership

While all the smaller gaps and inconsistencies are a frustration, the largest challenge for special events in Seattle is a lack of strategic leadership, resulting in a lack of alignment around shared vision and values. There is no organized consensus on priorities and therefore little consistency to the allocation of resources.

Regional event sponsors and contributors don't know which events to emphasize and why. Media and other promotion channels do not know which events to showcase. Event organizers, venues, and government agencies are unclear which events should be prioritized. And the general public is unsure where to put their support and attention.

Internally, the city needs political and strategic leadership to overcome competing priorities between events and across departments.

In one example, concerns have been raised about the proliferation of foot races, with many new 5K and 10K events cropping up all around the city. Neighborhood leadership has expressed interest in limiting the number, and better encouraging existing races to integrate and partner more actively with local community. Race organizers have expressed a similar interest, wanting more assistance in identifying and partnering with neighborhood groups.

If there were a stronger strategic leadership position within the City, they might have capacity to navigate opportunity and forge new and lasting connections.

In another recent example, a street closure request for a free speech event followed a convoluted path through City permitting, leaving the final call with SDOT leadership. While the personnel involved were equipped to make decisions well and quickly, there lacked a clear process for escalation, resulting in departmental leadership acting against the interests of their own department. As with Police, Fire and other departments, SDOT might be better positioned to provide technical expertise in an advisory capacity to a decision-maker who occupies a more cross-departmental leadership position equipped to balance the various social, cultural and regulatory concerns.

This is one of many examples where a lack of executive priority leaves hard decisions in the hands of people and departments who do not have the position or full set of information resources needed to make them.

Furthermore, leadership investment opens the opportunity to articulate a set of signature special events in Seattle and a values-based rubric for understanding what outcomes are sought collectively. This document will provide some initial conceptual framework, but sustaining and activating that framework will require an ongoing commitment of resources, leadership and executive direction that are not currently designated.

Sounders FC fans gathering in Pioneer Square.

Photo Credit: Jane Gersovich



FINDING 3

Given a growing number of public incidents nationally, Seattle's special events lack the resources for proper safety, security and emergency response.

Safety, security and emergency services are of the topmost concern to everyone involved. And Seattle's safety and security agencies and officers are a major resource for the city's public events, with a robust base of skill, knowledge, experience and passion for providing an effective and safe environment.

However, the systems and policies for providing safety and security at events are inconsistent and rife with challenges in planning, prepared-

ness, operations and cost both to the city itself, as well as event organizers. There are legacy policies in place around traffic control and the use of private security, which overburden police capacity and lead to a less efficient and less strategic use of officer time and presence during events.

Furthermore, an ongoing over-emphasis on "cost recovery" discussions by the City has led to an overly transactional culture surrounding events, driving an inequitable and unsustainable burden of fees for event organizers.

Event Organizers Feel the Gap in Emergency Readiness

As the prevalence of incidents of violence and natural disasters seem to be climbing, the concern among event organizers is growing. However, event leadership and staff are not properly prepared for incident response and there is not enough planning or logistical coordination between events and city personnel.

National models and resources exist to help guide the way towards rapid improvement, but even the steps required to attract the resources, re-search these models and begin development of better systems requires an investment of time and capacity up front.

As the City looks into continued improvement in event security and safety, there may be funding or other resources available broadly. Past partnerships with federal agencies and others should be re-explored.

There also exist opportunities to use policy and program models from other cities or to innovate new systems for event safety and security that could lead not only to better local events, but to improved overall safety and security in neighborhoods and communities citywide.

Under-Capacity in Police and Fire

Among other concerns, there is simply just not enough capacity in Seattle's existing police and fire departments. In comparison with the other cities in our study, Seattle had the least number of officers per capita, and departmental leadership were clear that the deficit had a significant effect on responsiveness and preparedness.

One noted area of concern and opportunity in addition to the expansion in size of the departments was in the operational requirements involved. Traffic laws and practices currently require two uniformed officers at every closed traffic intersection, though the skill and experience involved in

monitoring intersections may not warrant the requirement. If the requirement were lifted or changed, the intersections might be best covered by a less qualified position, allowing uniformed officers to play a more dynamic and tactical role in event coverage.

Finally, and importantly, it isn't just the personnel numbers that are limited by budget and otherwise. Equipment and vehicles are also lacking, especially in squad cars, which are also required for event coverage, especially in the case of multiple simultaneous events citywide.

“Safety, security and emergency services are of the topmost concern to everyone involved. And Seattle's safety and security agencies and officers are a major resource for the city's public events, with a robust base of skill, knowledge, experience and passion for providing an effective and safe environment.”

Cost Recovery vs Fee Waivers & Discounts

Recent cost recovery audits of SPD and SFD demonstrate the “cost recovery” concerns and focus of political and fiscal logic involved. Unfortunately, an overemphasis on cost recovery as a priority has led to imbalances in application and impact.

The imbalance manifests in unfortunate ways. The Special Olympics was a huge success to the City and City Council’s decision to waive most of the permitting fees for the various related activities was one of the ways Seattle was able to attract the event. However, while Council waived fees to the Special Olympics, other under-resourced local community-based events are being asked to increase their traditional fee amounts substantially and to cover rising costs for additional police and other safety personnel. And then even when those events are still able to get waivers and discounts on fees so that they can continue to operate, the city departments are put under pressure to reduce event expenses and/or about failing at cost recovery.

While the city should work to increase the recovery of costs, particularly from the more private, commercial and otherwise less values-aligned events, focusing on transactional cost recovery places a considerable burden and often existential threat on events that to some are considered the most important cultural activities in the city.

One opportunity is to re-frame the relationship of costs and income for city services. As seen in other cities such as Austin, New Orleans, Chicago and Denver, fee discounts and waivers can be structured as a formal program. The goal of greater fiscal cost recovery can continue, but is balanced against other priorities. With an articulated and uniform system of discounts and fee waivers, shortfalls in cost recovery around events become structured investments that align with and advance other greater economic, safety and security, social justice and cultural priorities.

Under this model, it is still possible that the City will advance in the effort to recover more costs from services to special events over all. But the application of increased fees will be balanced against other priorities and properly matched to the cultural alignment and capacity of the events themselves.

As it is, political pressure and false dichotomies pit cultural investments against safety, security, social services, transportation and other priorities. And in a city and region with some of the most abundant fiscal resources and clear value for cultural investment, Seattle finds itself pressuring local cultural producers to fully cover costs on fees for public services that they, their employees and their customers are otherwise paying for in taxes as well.

Ultimately, if Seattle truly wants to put a priority on Special Events sustainably, the City needs to find and dedicate significantly more fiscal resources. These may come from prioritizing events among the City’s overall general fund investments. It may come from redirecting resources into production and event support from existing cultural and community funding programs. It may come from identifying a new tax or similar revenue stream. Or it may come from encouraging a new vein of corporate and philanthropic investment.

But if it is turned back to the neighborhood organizations and producers who are organizing the events, Seattle will see the costs and other barriers to participation go up, the number of events go down, and the existing events will become less relevant, less socially equitable, and ultimately less safe.



Punk rockers Murder City Devils play Upstream, 2018.

Photo Credit: Debi Del Grande

FINDING 4

Investments in special events produce benefits in community development, corporate philanthropy, workforce development, public safety, racial equity and social justice.

Developing a more robust overall city platform for special events will have significant positive benefits for culture in the city, but would also reach beyond to impact communities with improvements in neighborhood engagement, corporate engagement and philanthropy, workforce development, public safety, and racial equity and social justice.

Neighborhood & Community Development

Special events have the potential to drive a number of important impacts at the neighborhood and community level. Well-organized, community-based special events encourage neighborhood identity and economic vitality. Inviting community members to jointly develop and produce events promotes neighborhood cultural vibrancy and activation.

Investing in events and using it as a strategy for community development offers a clear place and experience around which to grow resources, engage stakeholders, promote businesses, build consensus, and attract support.

Corporate Philanthropy

As a percentage of overall cultural funding in the region, Seattle's corporate support for culture is among the lowest in the country (based on per-capita dollars in arts support). And due to the global nature of our local employers, much of our corporate and foundation support is tackling global issues, leaving local efforts competing with international charities for support.

However, local technology, retail, industrial and beverage corporations have made it clear that special events are an important priority. Local

Public Safety

There are several ways in which improvements to special events can lead to greater impacts in public safety and law enforcement. Stronger event planning and coordination with SPD and SFD would lead to better awareness, collaboration and relations between law enforcement and community leadership.

Proposals for community-based and/or city-run safety patrol programs (rangers and/or guardian angels) offer a layer of safety, security and com-

Racial Equity and Social Justice

Special Events have the potential of contributing to positive impacts in racial and social justice in several ways. One major opportunity is in resisting the effects of cultural displacement and erasure that accompany gentrification.

Encouraging and supporting communities to celebrate and showcase local culture in public, creates a visible reinforcement of cultural identity and local economy, even as demographic shifts take place otherwise.

Unfortunately, when left without mediation and facilitation of community relations, event organizers have a harder time engaging and involving the community in an authentic and meaningful way. Current notification requirements and the related city support is not enough to overcome this challenge.

special events offer an easy, entry-level platform for the city and local community leaders to articulate priorities and encourage corporate engagement. With investment, special events may become the "gateway" that opens up a new level of corporate support and public-private partnership for other local arts and community priorities.

community-relations to the current system of law enforcement. And building stronger intelligence and watch center efforts can increase overall awareness and effectiveness in incident response citywide.

Finally, and most importantly, adjustments to policy driven by special events may lead to more effective use of trained uniform police capacity by moving them from traffic control into more tactically significant roles, and not just for events.

This is evident in the success of culturally specific public programming in the Chinatown-International District and elsewhere.

Additionally, in many low income and marginalized communities, there is a lower likelihood of well-funded cultural facilities that can house cultural activity with adequate infrastructure and support. While working to overcome structural inequity, stronger investments in outdoor cultural events provides a quick path to addressing access issues immediately.



CASE STUDY: **DENVER, CO**

The City of Denver has a single department that operates all of the arts, events, music, film, creative industries and cultural venues management, allowing for coordination of investments, strategy and policy across the various elements of creative economy and culture.

City facilities include Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Colorado Convention Center, Denver Coliseum and McNichols Civic Center Building.

Denver also produces and/or sponsors several free events including Art Drop Day, Five Points Jazz Festival and Chance to Dance.

Denver's safety and security investments are notable. Their Police Department has a dedicated Special Events Unit that plans and coordinates all events, parades, dignitary appearances, etc. Their force also have 100 more total officers than Seattle, though the metro area is 36% smaller.

Denver offers an annual Safety Workshop for event organizers. It is a day-long event presented in partnership between the city and county and includes table top scenario exercises.

Of note is that Denver did a similar citywide assessment and planning process in 2013, which resulted in a structure very similar to Seattle's office, but with a lower ratio of events per staff member and a more robust technology platform, allowing for better customization of workflow management for permitting.

Also notable is that Denver attempted a blanket cap on events for 2014 which was problematic for the cultural and events industry in the area. While it may be necessary to place stricter limits on event permits, those limits should be done in a way that ensures cultural and creative economic priorities and not just simple numbers or status quo.

Resources:

Denver Arts & Venues

Denver Special Events Safety Workshop

Denver Police Dept Special Events Unit

CASE STUDY: **OTTAWA, ONTARIO**

The Canadian capital city of Ottawa has one of the larger commitments to special events in North America, with a stated priority as a festival city.

Among the many successful elements in the city's toolbox of support for events is a partnership with the Ottawa Festival Network, which is a festival, event and fair service organization.

Ottawa Festival Network was established in 1996 in response to festival organizers, politicians and the tourism industry recognizing the need for Ottawa's events to be carefully scheduled, properly planned and effectively promoted. OFN is a nonprofit and is funded in part by the city of Ottawa and Employ Ontario.

OFN is a membership organization, has a supplier directory, registers volunteers, offers industry and festival news, posts jobs (including student ambassadors and employment opportunity/training), and advocates for industry.

In addition to its public funding, OFN maintains a base of members, provides a calendar, produces a newsletter, provides a jobs board, administers a volunteer network, maintains a vendor directory, and conducts active advocacy, evaluation and planning. Their annual Economic Impact Study is one of the more comprehensive evaluations on the local benefits of special events.

With the City, OFN produces an annual Economic Impact study that shows, among other things, that every \$1 invested by the City into events is leveraged to \$27 of impact and that local events supply more than 4100 jobs.

This is probably the reason for the investment in workforce programming for events, including the growing partnership between OFN and the Ontario Job Creation Partnerships (OJCP), a program which provides opportunities to work and retrain as a production worker for events. Similarly, OFN also offers a summer job program as a part of the Student Ambassador Program.

Ottawa's police department has 26% more officers than SPD, with a metro area that's 1/3 the size of Seattle's.

Resources:

OFN Advocacy Page
OFN Economic Impact Graphic
Ottawa Festival Network Website
Student Ambassador Job Listing



Lion dancers at Historic Chinatown Gate, Chinese New Year, Hing Hay Park, Seattle, WA.

Photo Credit:
Joe Mabel

If, as wrote Shakespeare, “All the world’s a stage,” then Seattle might develop its own version by considering “All the city’s a cultural center.” While there are great outcomes to be had from investments in the many private cultural spaces throughout the city, nothing can match the impact of those cultural offerings that happen openly in the public realm.

Whether in the streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, waterways or airways, the activities that are programmed outdoors in the public right of way are those that most represent and include the greatest swath of community. Ultimately, that which the city allows, the city endorses. And as a cultural center can hardly fully separate itself from any public programs that use its venue, the city should expect to embrace and align with any event that it permits.

With critical investments and strategic alignment, Seattle has the opportunity not just to lead in the advancement of quality public events, but also to use the investments in special events to remake whole avenues and systems of civic infrastructure and cultural environment.

The new special events program for the city of Seattle will provide the “tip of the spear” for refreshed investment in creative industries and cultural community. It will offer opportunities for remaking and revising systems for safety, security, emergency management, community relations, cultural policy, corporate philanthropy and intergovernmental relations, not just within traditional boundaries of culture, but throughout the city.

VISION

Seattle will become a global leader in festivals and events, ensuring accessible and equitable cultural experiences for all residents and communities, attracting and inspiring visitors, and elevating the identity and profile of the city in the world.

PURPOSE

In the coming years, Seattle will develop an integrated, comprehensive citywide program for services, systems and policies that support and advance special events in the public realm which further Seattle’s identity, visibility, and sense of belonging.

Seattle’s Special Events Program ensures accessible and relevant public events for residents and visitors, attracts and supports large national and international event activity, provides services and resources for communities and events organizers, ensures opportunities for artists and creative production workforce, and works towards safety, security, health, equity and vibrancy across all events throughout the city.

VALUES

There are many values that drive Seattle’s investment in culture, but the following are the prioritized values that will drive the vision and strategy for special events in future years.

National and global leadership and identity.

Cultural equity, inclusion & social justice.

A robust & thriving local creative economy.

Citywide health, safety, security & mobility.

OUTCOMES

The coming years are a critical time for investment in Seattle's Special Events to help realize this vision. When successful, this will result in the following outcomes:

- **Higher quality events** – Seattle will nearly always have a quality event experience available for residents and guests. New events will be innovative and engaging. Existing events will be more relevant and dynamic. All events will better align with city goals and priorities.
- **More event awareness** – Residents, visitors, businesses and leaders will have a better shared understanding of the events taking place in the city and the information resources will be more centralized and better organized.
- **Improved cultural access** – Whether in terms of affordability, physical ability, safety and security, or geography, Seattle's cultural experiences will be more accessible for all.
- **More equitable event industry** – The industry and community of events production and development throughout the region will be more equitable in terms of race, gender, and environmental and social justice.
- **Healthier overall cultural community** – The community of practice for events and cultural production will be better networked, better resourced and more sustainable.
- **Improved city services and resources** – The City's own infrastructure and support for events will be more efficient across departments, easier to navigate externally, and more economical internally.
- **Increased neighborhood engagement** – Special events will help to drive stronger communities by more actively engaging residents and businesses to plan and participate more actively in the events of their area.
- **Increased cultural funding and support** – Especially from private corporations, but also from philanthropy and service providers, improved special events will lead to increased investment by others in local culture.
- **Improved cultural and economic knowledge** – With proper investments in analysis and evaluation of special events, Seattle will have a better cache of public-interest data on culture, neighborhoods, safety, economy and other civic factors useful far beyond just the realm of special events policy.
- **Enhanced economic and social benefits** – Citywide special events alignment and advancement will create a ripple effect for social and economic benefits that will far transcend the boundaries of any individual event.



Our festival is a great fit with city priorities and it seems like they could help spread the word. We lose all kinds of money fulfilling the permit requirements and it'd be great to get some more in return, such as help with marketing, or shared equipment and resources.

David Bestock, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, Arts in Nature Festival



Players and fans
celebrate 2019 MLS Cup
Champions Sounders FC
at the Seattle Center.

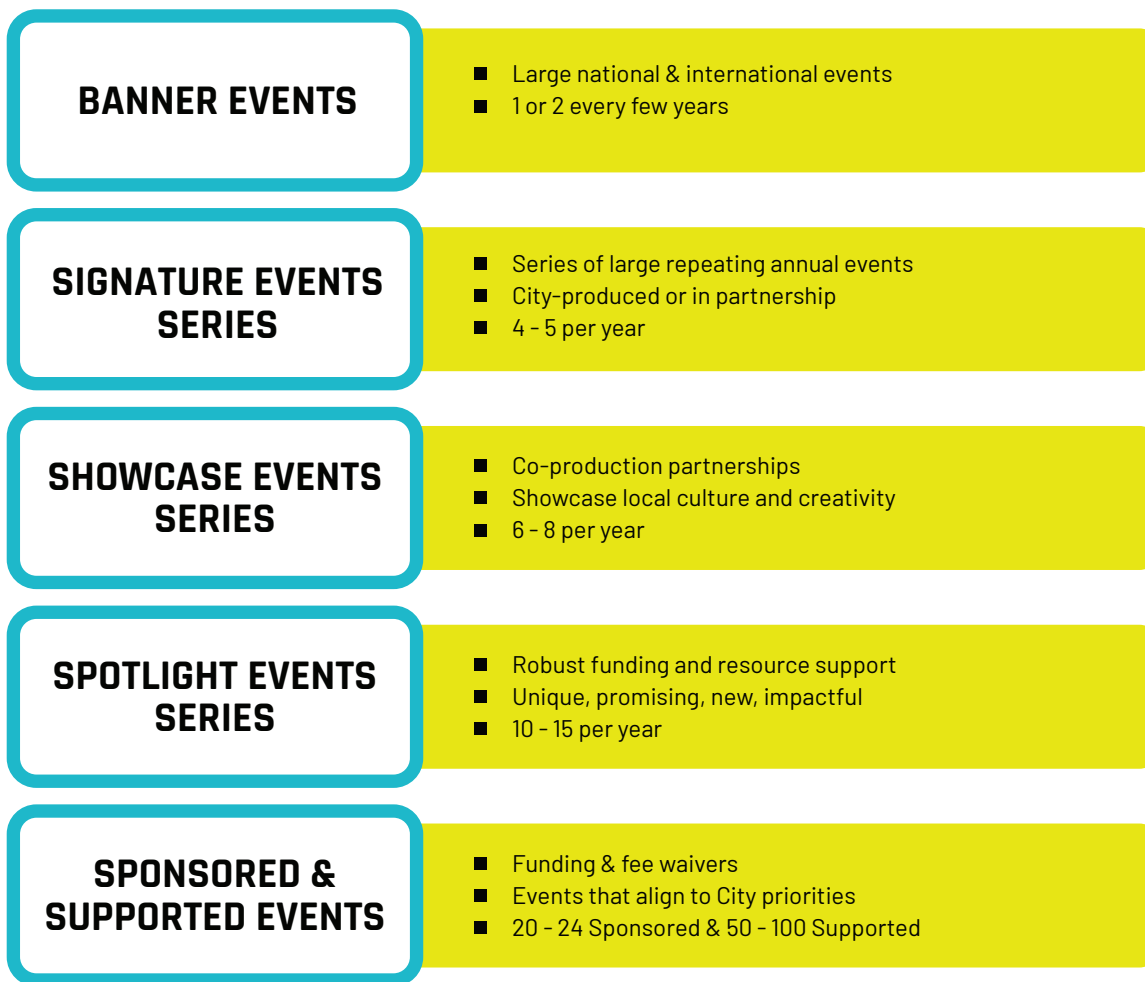
Photo Credit:
Dan Poss



EVENT HOSTING, PRODUCTION & PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

Establish and/or advance **a diverse portfolio of signature events** that are strongly aligned with the culture, values and identity of Seattle and its various communities through investments in planning, sustainability, partnership and direct production.

- New standardized event types, ranging from city-produced events that involve layers of direct city services, to those that involve the standard minimum permitting and support.
- The following types are an example of the system that might emerge:



Increase the overall safety and security of residents and visitors at and surrounding events through **increased capacity across safety and emergency services, as well as more robust external training and information resources.**

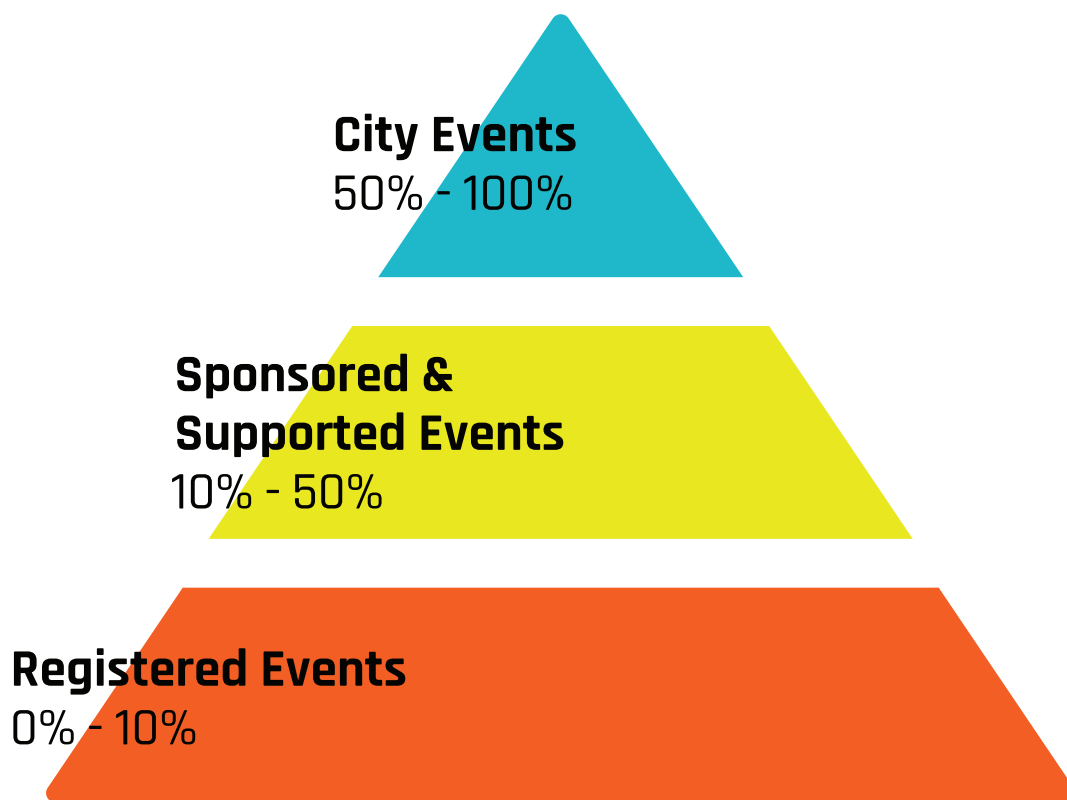
- City safety and emergency services align to the highest of national and international standards for public events.
- Event producers and organizers have access to the training and resources required for confident and effective safety and security.
- Event safety, security and emergency preparedness center community voices and offer new solutions to historic inequities and systemic oppression in law enforcement.

Bring **large national and international event projects** to town, such as the World Cup, MLB All-Star Game and another World's Fair, through investments in preparation, advocacy, leadership and stewardship.

- SEC, SEO and SC work in close partnership with the Seattle Sports Commission, Visit Seattle and other private partners to identify and secure major opportunities.
- Local policy, infrastructure and program development plans are coordinated to align with the needs of major events.
- Local delegates participate in national and international cohorts, committees, conferences and other structures that better introduce and align local officials with related national and international agencies and associations.

Create efficiency and increase predictability through more **explicit designations for special events in both time and geography**, incentivizing events to cluster around those dates, times and spaces set aside for them through infrastructure, services and policy.

- Continue to develop and increase the value and efficiency of geographic designations that create expected, repeating event spaces for everything from neighborhood gatherings to citywide events, including Culture and/or Events Districts, Festival Streets, Parade Routes, Race Routes, Parks Pavilions, and Parks Event Facilities.
- More actively set aside specific weekends of the month and/or days of the week for races, parades and other street events, especially during summer months and heavy travel times.
- More specifically point event activities to these dates, days, locations and routes both through fee-based and funding-based incentives and more strictly enforced limitations.
- Include considerations for the diverse range of event types, sizes and locations.



FEE WAIVER TIERS (% = discount size)

For example, a free music event that is produced primarily by volunteers, from a community organization, in a neighborhood of color, presenting all local artists might fall in a higher tier with heavier fee reduction, while qualifying for additional funding and technical support.

Whereas a private corporate party that isn't open to the public and shuts down a critical intersection might pay the full cost for city services and be invited to consider further contribution as a sponsor of other key events and programs.

More fully weave together existing infrastructure, services, regulations, processes and fees into **a single, comprehensive program model that is uniformly applied and aligned to City priorities**, including cost recovery, safety, cultural vibrancy, economic development and community engagement.

- A tiered structure of fee waivers and discounts will provide a way to advance City priorities. For example, event tiers could include the following:
 - **City Productions:** For events that the City creates and presents directly and/or in full partnership, fees could be discounted anywhere from 50%-100%, with City general fund budget or other resources committed to these events deemed most critical to the City's cultural and economic priorities.
 - **City-Sponsored and -Supported Events:** Events that align strongly with City priorities but are not produced directly or in-partnership with the city might be eligible for discounts and fee waivers between 10 – 50%.
 - **Registered Events:** Registered events are those that are recognized and permitted by the city but do not receive more than 10% in discounts, fee waivers or other types of funding and production support.
- Permitting, venue booking and event funding applications across city departments will become more integrated and aligned, and will invite event organizers to self-identify and/or apply to the appropriate fee discount and waiver tiers.
- Special Event staff, committee members and related city personnel will become more aware of the City priorities for special events and guide event producers in applying for and receiving the proper permits, fee discounts and types.
- By using standard fee discount types and levels, the special events program can set specific targets for cost recovery, traffic and safety impacts, neighborhood and community participation, economic impact, etc.

INDUSTRY, ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Improve the health and equity of culture, recreation and creativity throughout the city by **applying a framework of social justice, equity and inclusion** to the development, advancement, regulation, promotion and support for all special events.

- Prioritize fee discounts, capacity building, production resources, funding and services for events from and within culturally-specific neighborhoods and historically marginalized communities.
- Engage in regular RSJI training and planning with the integrated Special Events Office and Special Events Committee.
- Use the development of the Special Events program and capacity to investigate and address other forms of oppression and inequity within City systems, such as law enforcement, cultural funding, transportation, neighborhood planning, and community development.

Conduct more active **organizing and engagement at the neighborhood level** to support evaluation and development, to increase awareness of services and policies, and to foster new partnerships between events, neighborhood groups, sponsors and other services.

- More actively engage neighborhood and community organizations and leaders in all aspects of event planning, regulation, funding, production and promotions.
- Partner actively with event producers and communities to seek solutions that maximize the positive benefits and minimizes negative impacts on local businesses, organizations, residents, parks and other city services.

Advance the creative economy through investments in **event production workforce development and capacity building for event producers and organizers**.

- Foster development of an independent association to serve as a service organization for local event production.
- Work with association and other service organizations to bring programs for event producers that include guest speakers, mentorships, leadership development, networking, coaching, peer groups and professional services.
- Help to build a pool of resources and services that include training and information in sponsorship, fund-raising, budgeting, finance, safety, security, marketing, promotions, planning, strategy, permitting, health, programming, evaluation, technical production and more.

EVALUATION, PLANNING & OPERATION OF CITY SERVICES

Improve the understanding of the economic, social, political and cultural impacts and benefits of special events at the regional, local and hyper-local levels, as well as internal to the city government through **regular and robust assessment and evaluation**.

- Annual evaluation, report and planning that review inputs, activities and outputs while setting benchmarks for the coming year.
- 5-year strategic evaluation and planning that reviews compiled impacts and outcomes both within City government and across the community and industry of the region.
- Replace current cost recovery audits of fire and police with more integrated comprehensive study of inflows and outflows.
- Engage outside partners and capacity to conduct full economic and social impact evaluation.

Reduce costs while increasing benefits to the city and communities by identifying and implementing **policy improvements and program developments that increase efficiency** and create more affordable and effective production, regulation, administration, health and safety.

- Consider adjustments to permitting fees, licensing fees, taxes and other costs for event producers to create a uniform and strategic system across permitting departments.
- Align grants funding programs with permitting, licensing, taxes and related fee discounts and waivers.
- Invest in technology-based efficiencies that also improve service and transparency.
- Advocate and coordinate with outside agencies and policy-makers to improve local and state regulations and systems regarding events.

Establish **more centralized and integrated capacity in leadership, governance and administration for special events within the City** to increase access and strategic development of events and the various systems that support them.

- Hire high-level citywide leadership with the access to leadership, the interdepartmental authority and the strategic capacity to speak confidently on-behalf of the City in decisions and planning around events large and small.
- Adjust structure and operations of the Special Events Committee and Special Events Office to increase planning, policy-making and strategy in the former while increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the latter.
- Eliminate redundancy and conflict between departments by integrating all streets, parks, sidewalks and public realms activation, booking, events production, events permitting and public art and recreation programming into one central and unified effort.

Blue Angels fly over Seattle at the annual Seafair festival.

Photo Credit:
Todd Diemer





CASE STUDY: **SEATTLE THEATRE GROUP, SEATTLE, WA**

Seattle Theatre Group, in addition to operating the city's iconic historic theaters (Paramount, Moore and Neptune), is a regular producer and promoter of all kinds of cultural programming throughout the region. This includes especially their work with King County Parks to activate Marymoor Park, resulting in the iconic Marymoor summer concert series.

When approaching Seattle about exploring a similar programming activity for Kite Hill at Magnuson Park, the team describes an unfortunate bureaucratic run-around of being handed from the park director to a community council, where interest was present but passive, eventually leading to a fizzling of the effort due to lack of capacity.

When asked, STG leadership made it clear that any proactive strategic leadership within the city around such programming would go a very long way towards activating their own programmatic, development and production capacity. They are essentially ready to go with all kind of opportunities for the Waterfront, Magnuson or any other location.

Similar such statements were made by other producers and promoters like Artist Home, Live Nation and AEG Live. And, while these are groups that have historically competed and clashed in Seattle and otherwise throughout the country, there was a sense among these leaders that there is room for a new kind of collaboration and synergy if well-managed by someone like the City of Seattle.



New Years celebration at
the Space Needle.

Photo Credit: Nitish Meena

FUTURE PLANS: IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES

To reach towards the goals and objectives listed above, the City will work in three stages over the next five years to prepare, plan, launch, evaluate, grow and expand a re-imagined special events platform across departments and services.

As listed below, the first year in 2020 will set the stage for new program development, reorganizing existing capacity, adding critical leadership and introducing important tools and resources.

Afterwards, in 2021-2022, the new program and service design will be launched and the revised system will begin operations, with pilot event series and active partnerships across departments and with the private sector.

Finally, in 2023-2024, the fully functioning initiative will be activated, with additional new program and policy developments and a move to promote Seattle as a known home for public events throughout the world.

2020 - SETTING THE STAGE

1 *Establish a position to lead the planning, piloting and management of this initiative across departments and in partnership with industry and community.*

- Full-time staff role or robust contract housed in the Office of the Mayor or in a Special Leadership role within SC, OED or ARTS.
- Advances special events policies and programs within and across the city departments.
- Represents the City in advocacy and negotiations with major international events.
- Position potentially grows into a new citywide leadership position in events and cultural policy (events czar).

2 *Invest in new database, workflow automation and communication tools.*

- System for online applications and tracking for permits by producers.
- Integrated interdepartmental workflow and notifications.
- Full database with functionality for CRM, project management, communications campaign management, and robust reporting.

3 *Develop key private partnerships to bring funding and other support from corporate, philanthropic and nonprofit partners.*

- Acquire and retain consultant capacity to develop and maintain partnerships.
- Invest in programming partnership and capacity building for primary service organization and industry association partner.
- Identify lead funders for pilot event series and capacity-building programs.

The Color Run, 2019

Photo Credit:
Maxime Bhm

4 *Pilot a signature series of events produced, presented and/or sponsored by the City directly and in partnership.*

- Introduce City Signature Events, where the City operates as lead producer on one or two events in the first year, with Bumbershoot as a likely and ready case study.
- Launch both Showcase and Spotlight events series by identifying three to four of each to produce and/or support through direct partnership.
- Identify five to ten additional events to provide with direct city sponsorship in the form of funding and/or fee waivers and discounts.
- Throughout these event types, establish a strong balance of both new and existing legacy events.
- Also work towards a balance of large, citywide activities versus smaller neighborhood and community-based programming.

5 *Work in partnership to create programs to build capacity, develop workforce, and provide technical assistance within and across the industry and community of special events producers and organizers.*

- Fund partnership with existing entities such as ASSET, Shunpike, 4Culture, Arts Fund, Seattle Foundation and/or others.
- Develop a strategic program design and plan for multi-year development towards a comprehensive slate of services, resources and tools.
- Mine existing internal programs and services for models that might replicate or scale (such as Festal).

6 *Re-structure Special Events Committee as a strategic leadership body and re-organize Special Events Office as an integrated interdepartmental team.*

- Elevate the main committee's role to more closely resemble other boards and commissions, including strategic planning, program and policy development.
- Increase participation of both City leadership and community representatives, including joint seats or sub-committees with the Music and Arts Commissions.
- Re-shuffle operations to reduce committee meeting frequency, adjust agenda content, and move logistical permit review to interdepartmental team "sub-committee".
- Begin identification and development of shared positions with and across related departments, including shared reporting and dedicated funding.
- Develop a regular meeting schedule, management system and operating environment for a single unit cross-departmental team.

7 *Initiate a citywide special events safety and security detail that includes police, fire and emergency management.*

- Establish an integrated, consistent personnel team committed to special events across safety and security departments.
- Examine opportunities and models for a watch center or other ongoing intelligence and monitoring systems that apply the City's emergency operations center more actively more often.
- Ensure an adequate committed capacity with consistent team membership that is strategic and immune to the fluctuations of transactional fiscal considerations.
- Examine opportunities to expand capacity responsively through overflow hiring from surrounding communities and beyond.

8 *Produce a comprehensive evaluation of impacts, benefits and outcomes of special events within city operations and throughout the regional economy.*

- Conduct neighborhood-level analysis as well as examinations of citywide and regional context.
- Collect data on standard short-term economic impact evaluation (consumer behavior).
- Conduct medium and long-term economic impact evaluation (industry trends and workforce).
- Implement social impact analyses, such as sense of belonging, ethnic/heritage metrics, and racial and gender equity in resource and activity distribution.
- Review comprehensive fiscal impacts internally, including all taxes, fees, licenses and other inputs as well as all costs across all departments and services.

9 *Plan and implement full re-imagined Special Events program for rollout in 2021, including overhaul and integration of all production, program, policy, safety and permitting services.*

- Prepare a full fiscal plan for the 2021-2022 biennial budget.
- Announce the launch of a re-imagined program in Spring/Summer 2020, tied to promotion of the signature event series and/or 50th Bumbershoot event.
- Use the re-structured SEC as the primary planning, strategy and evaluation body, with representation of city leadership as well as community stakeholders.

2021 - 2022 — BUILDING THE SHOW

10 *Expand and restructure the Special Events Office into an interdepartmental team of 20 positions, with shared management, supervision and budgetary funding commitments.*

- Expand the core Special Events team to five or more full-time positions. (SEO)
 - Program Manager – 1 FTE
 - Program Coordinators – 3 FTE case managers (approximately 200 events each)
 - Other SEO Staff – Retain current administrative and operational staff capacity.
- Establish a City Events Production team (SEO – SC)
 - Lead City Events Producer – 1 FTE leadership position
 - Event Communications Manager – 1 FTE manages outreach, promotions, announcements and media
 - Partnerships Manager – 1 FTE partners with corporate and philanthropic funders
- Establish a Special Event safety and security position and/or team.
 - Housed in OEM and shared with SPD, SFD and OED/SEO with joint reporting.
 - Manages special event safety and security planning.
 - Leads development of event safety and security trainings, support and policy.
- Expand the SDOT Special Event Team and integrate with SEO.
 - Add personnel support to the traffic planning elements for special events.
 - Establish a special event traffic engineer position to provide real-time operations capacity to traffic mitigation efforts.
 - Integrate the staff capacity surrounding street activation, public artwork and neighborhood programming with ARTS and PARKS programs.
 - Support and coordinate organizer navigation of SDOT Street Use permitting.
- Establish at least one full time Parks & Recreation Special Event Liaison position and consider integrating all booking and programming positions.
 - Housed in PARKS, shared with SEO with joint reporting.
 - Support and coordinate organizer navigation of PARKS permitting and logistics.
- Establish at least one full time Neighborhoods Special Events Liaison position.
 - Housed in DON, shared with SEO with joint reporting.
 - Works with DON regional outreach coordinators to optimize neighborhood-level event engagement.

11 *Expand and deploy technical production resources and services.*

- Equipment – Actively provide staging, sound equipment, barricades, tents, signage and other related production equipment to events, along with installation support.
- Technical Production – Actively deliver professional technical production services, such as lighting, sound, video and staging as a back-of-house services provider.
- Consider where existing capacity already exists in these areas and maximize citywide application, especially from within Seattle Center.

12 *Review, adjust and advance 2020 plans with commitment to continual process improvement in digital tools, event production and development, communications efforts, and fundraising.*

- Continue investments in workflow automation, database and digital tools.
- Expand and continue improvements to systems for external communications and process tools for event permitting and funding.
- Formalize the cohort of funders and sponsors to special events in Seattle through a network of corporate and philanthropic supporters.
- Continue pilot event series and expand to include more events, more locations and more communities served.
- Continue investing in the development of an independent service organization for event producers, along with related capacity-building programs.

13 *Invest in study and planning capacity for program and policy development opportunities such as the following:*

- Consolidation of special event grants funding programs from separate city departments into one program.
- Consolidation of all event and activity permitting from PARKS and SDOT into SEO.
- Designation of both specific dates and locations for event activities, including infrastructure, service and policy incentives and restrictions.
- Strengthened review and enforcement of permitting policies and regulations during events.
- Event and parks rangers or other non-police patrol system that can provide an additional layer of safety and security around special events.
- Neighborhood event support in the form of funding, facilitation, production support and promotions.
- Adjustments to policy regarding corporate sponsorship, commercial vendors and other signage and other elements of private support.

Magic at the Market 2015.

Photo Credit:

Alabastro Photography



2023 - 2024 – OPENING THE CURTAIN

14 *Expand efforts to designate geographic location “hotspots” for special events.*

- Increase service and infrastructural support for designated routes and locations such as regular parade and race routes, festival streets, park pavilions, etc.
- Work closely with community to establish more designated event locations to support local events at the neighborhood level in each area of the city.
- Drive more event activity toward designated locations through permitting, funding and production services and policies.

15 *Work with partners to improve regulation of alcohol sales, consumption and enforcement at special events.*

- Reduce restrictions on alcohol sales, consumption and carry overall.
- Push for clarification and improvement to rules for cannabis use at events.
- Create and/or open up accessibility for open/unified beer garden licensing for festivals.
- Create a more efficient system of alcohol permitting for events, possibly a standing allowance for local permitting of special events within WSLCB rules.

16 *Adjust sound and/or events ordinance to create a policy framework around sound limitations and variances specific to special events.*

- Create new policy environment for sound limitations specific to outdoor events, including standard limits and variance allowance ranges, location specificity and daily/hourly schedules.
- Transfer the consideration and approval of variances for events from SDCI to the Special Events Committee.
- Move community relations around complaints and variance approvals to another department with stronger capacity for outreach, including any needed training and program development.
- Continue engagement of SDCI for support to SEC, SEO, DON, etc. around technical expertise and coordination to construction and development policies.

“Our target is outside Seattle. It may have been historically black, but African-Americans mostly live outside of the Central District now. One of the goals is to be similar to Chinatown-International District. It isn't just Asian folk that live there, but it is a place to show up and have access the various cultures. It is a touchstone neighborhood. We do that through community events in the Central District as well. We want to provide space for those from our community who want to stay, for those who come back, and for those who just want to visit.”

Curtiss Calhoun. Umoja Festival, Africatown Central District Preservation and Development Association

14 *Other policy developments:*

- Like with geographic locations, expand efforts to drive certain activities to limited dates and times, such as neighborhood foot races only on Saturdays, etc.
- Consider policies to flip the incentives for private events from the right-of-way to the parks, including reductions in limits and fees on temporary event signage and sponsor branding in parks, as well as restrictions on paid private events in the right-of-way.
- Adjust fees and limitations to better encourage corporate and philanthropic support of special events otherwise generally.
- Coordinate one system of fees and regulations across permitting departments (SDOT, PARKS, etc) to avoid unintended incentives and consequences.

15 *Provide support to key neighborhoods in producing events to maximize community benefit, minimize negative impacts and improve cultural equity.*

- Combine/coordinate across community-level support programs like SDOT block parties, PARKS programs, DON funding and OED's Only in Seattle program.
- Actively facilitate the development of partnerships, events and initiatives.
- Provide training and capacity building to neighborhood associations, residents and organizations in event permitting, production, safety and coordination.
- Work with existing neighborhood organizations, such as arts districts, art walk programs, business districts, councils and parks groups.

16 *Expand and fully promote the collection of events and series produced, partnered and/or endorsed by the City.*

- Select a set of repeating annual events for the signature series and promote.
- Expand and advance the Showcase and Spotlight series.
- Develop an ongoing practice of proactive event exploration, incubation and development.
- Work with Visit Seattle and others to establish event-specific as well as series-wide marketing and promotions both locally and nationally.

17 *Expand partnership with one or more independent associations to provide industry and community development for local events.*

- Evaluate and expand upon success within pilot capacity building and technical assistance programs.
- Review funding and partnership and adjust as needed.
- Supplement services with additional programs and resources.

18 *Further expand and advance the set of digital tools and media resources.*

- Replace current online event production handbook with a dynamic interactive tool and comprehensive resource, integrated with permitting database and workflow system.
- Develop integrated and dynamic events and production calendars, maps and newsletters for use by producers and city officials.
- Support development of digital tools for stronger resource sharing among producers and community.
- Foster and support the development of public media resources that share and promote information about special events.

19 *Consolidate all events permitting from PARKS and SDOT to SEO.*

- Coordinate booking with other scheduling systems.
- One-stop shop for all event organizers regardless of location.
- Ensure no loss of information and access across departments.

23 *Adjust safety and security requirements and limitations to better utilize police, fire and emergency personnel.*

- Adjust any local and state traffic safety officer requirements to allow for use of non-uniformed flaggers instead of uniformed officers at intersections.
- Remove limitations on use of private security and/or outside police and fire personnel in staffing events.

24 *Develop and grow the event safety and emergency-planning program.*

- Provide a dynamic series of training opportunities for event producers.
- Direct planning sessions and custom training for events and their security teams.
- Develop the interagency emergency preparedness and response capacity within the City and beyond.

25 *Explore and implement a rangers program to expand capacity and provide a new layer of community-based safety presence for events and parks.*

- Study rangers programs in other cities and examine potential application around events and parks in Seattle.
- Partner with law enforcement and security to ensure any program works to support and partner with SPD and others without competing or conflicting.
- Support and assistance to law enforcement and emergency responders with basic EMT, emergency and law enforcement training.
- Build special event policy compliance practices into work of rangers (or integrate more into the duties and training for fire and police.)

26 *Continue a practice of regular evaluation, reporting and planning both strategically and operationally.*

- Annual survey and assessment of residents and businesses at the neighborhood level (with DON).
- Strategic evaluation and planning every 4 years.
- A comprehensive economic and social impact study every five years.
- Engage in program review, reporting and planning annually.

27 *Network together a coalition of special event funders internal and external to the City.*

- Internal funding partners include programs in DON, ARTS, OED, PARKS.
- External funding partners include 4Culture, Vulcan, Boeing, BECU, Seattle Foundation, Starbucks, Microsoft and others.
- Explore partnership, resource sharing and joint planning.

28 *Consolidate and re-organize existing City funding programs for special events.*

- Review multi-year funding outputs.
- Align with City Event Series plans and Partnership Fee Waiver Tiers.
- Explore integration with permitting, sponsorship, production and neighborhood engagement.

CASE STUDY: **DALLAS, TEXAS**

Dallas hosts the State Fair for Texas and has one of the largest Convention Centers in the United States. Events are recognized as important to the City's economy and culture, and the city's management is built with a comprehensive structure for cultural programs, including event permitting.

The Office of Special Events for Dallas manages most event and film permits, and acts as a project manager for citywide permitting through two phases... Public Safety Review and Departmental Review. Each application is assigned to an OSE coordinator. The entire process takes 20-40 days. The city processed more than 1100 applications in 2016.

Some key policies for Dallas events:

- First Amendment Activities are only permitted by the Dallas Police Department and do not require permitting by the Office of Special Events
- Events that solely occur in a park, even if there is alcohol involved, do not require permitting by Special Events.
- Block parties require a permit, but there are no permitting fees.

Of greatest interest to Seattle's considerations is the structure of the office, its leadership and governance. In Dallas, the Office of Special Events is overseen by the Quality of Life, Arts and Culture Committee of the City Council. It is part of the Department of Convention Event Services, and led by the Assistant City Manager for Quality of Life, Arts, Culture and Libraries. This same Assistant City Manager oversees Building Services, Office of Cultural Affairs, Library, Sanitation Services, Parks & Recreation.

CASE STUDY: **NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA**

New Orleans embraces public events as a core part of its identity and has lowered the barriers for permitting, with a public-facing brand (One Stop Shop), which includes a public digital app and a team that works under the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Land Use to coordinate across the 17 city departments involved.

Parade event permitting is publically promoted to locals and tourists, and it is well known that, unlike other city's, anyone can throw a Second Line Parade for less than \$750 with relatively short notice.

CASE STUDY: BUMBERSHOOT, SEATTLE, WA

Bumbershoot was founded as the three-day Mayor's Arts Festival (or Festival '71) in 1971 as a strategy to revive local spirits during a considerable local economic depression. It was repeated in subsequent years, with declining government support throughout the 70s before being licensed to the non-profit 501c3 arts organization One Reel, which also operated the circus dinner theatre Teatro ZinZanni, the Summer Nights concert series and "Family 4th at Lake Union" events.

Under One Reel, the festival rose to new heights, eventually becoming one of the world's leading music and arts festivals and a driver of local culture and policy.

Rising costs, weather challenges, management changes and dwindling investment by funders led to years of financial troubles and programmatic missteps. AEG Live was brought in as a partner and lead promoter in 2015, under a 5-year contract. Now that contract has ended, calling for either an end or a radical re-making of Bumbershoot for future years, including a likely hiatus in 2020.

As the owners of the license for Bumbershoot, the City is legally well positioned to take a stronger lead position in re-developing and re-making Bumbershoot as a signature event for the next generation of city special events. And the festival provides a near-perfect test case for the leadership, structure and programmatic investments outlined in this plan otherwise. However, action must be taken quickly if any program is to be assembled for 2020.

ASSESSMENTS & EVALUATIONS

Evaluating impacts and benefits in this way is done throughout the country in various ways. Many cities and events conduct economic impact studies, such as those done for SXSW and Austin City Limits in Austin. Ottawa works with the OFN service organization to conduct a citywide evaluation annually. In 2017, the USDOT Federal Highway Administration conducted a study of the influence of large public events on the economy and congestion nationally.

Participating in evaluative and data standardization across the state, region or country could help in comparative analysis and inter-city cooperation. Mississippi State University offers a context for standardizing the evaluation of events. (MSU Event Eval Conference Deck).

