
Update on the Downtown Street Event Closure Recommendations

Briefing to City Council
March 26, 2008

Background Information

- June 5, 2008 Austin City Council unanimously adopted Ordinance No. 20090605-045
 - Council created the Downtown Street Event Closure Taskforce comprised of various stakeholders focused on a given study area to:
 - Review and recommend revisions to ordinances affecting street closures for events
 - Recommend strategies for creating mutually beneficial schedule for events requiring street closures
 - From June through December 2008, Taskforce held a total of 19 meetings with citizen input
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Background Information

- Taskforce worked with City staff from various City departments, including City Manager's Office, Right-of-Way Management, Parks and Recreation, Austin Police Department and Emergency Medical Services to develop scheduling, permitting, notification and other recommendations
 - December 18, 2008, the Taskforce reported to City Council their recommendations
 - January 21, 2009, the Taskforce briefed the Downtown Commission, which unanimously approved a resolution in support of their recommendations with some comment
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Background Information

- From January through March 2009, City staff assessed the Taskforce recommendations, developed Right-of-Way Closure Rules and revised Ordinance
 - March 26, 2009 City staff update to Council and Set an Item for Public Hearing
 - April 2, 2009, Hold a Public Hearing with Possible Action for amending event related City Code and
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Recommendations – Rules

- Right-of-Way Event Closure Rules developed under administrative authority and referenced in City Code, include many Taskforce recommendations along with City staff input:
 - **Defined Special Event and Street Closure terminology**
 - **Established Moving Events criteria**
 - Set regulations on East/West and North/South roadways in downtown area (cannot close 5th/6th Streets and Lamar Blvd.; must maintain vehicular traffic on Oltorf Street)
 - Cannot close Congress Ave. and 1st Street bridges simultaneously
 - Cannot encircle an area without reasonable access
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Recommendations – Rules cont'd

- **Established Stationary Events criteria**
 - Set regulations on East/West and North/South roadways in downtown area (cannot close Cesar Chavez; access must be maintained on either 5th / 6th Streets or 11th Street; access must be maintained on Congress Ave. or Guadalupe/Lavaca Streets; and access must be maintained on IH-35 Service Rds. or San Jacinto Blvd./Brazos Streets)
 - Cannot close Congress Ave. and 1st Street bridges simultaneously
 - Must maintain reasonable access to parking facilities
 - **Established Walking Events criteria**
 - Under 5,000 participants must utilize a “bubble” formation, unless approved otherwise
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Recommendations – Rules cont'd

- **Set Event Coordination Parameters**
 - Moving events shall not be scheduled on the same day as a stationary event, unless the two events are separated by at least four blocks or have sufficient separation as determined by City staff
 - **Temporary Traffic Control Devices Regulations**
 - Devices will not be pre-staged more than 20 hrs in advance
 - Devices staged prior to the event will not intrude on active travel ways, curb ramps or reduce width of usable sidewalk to less than 5 feet. In addition, they will not be placed on private property without written consent from the owner
 - Most traveled streets will be closed last
 - During the event, devices will be removed in high traffic areas, where participant safety is not compromised
 - After the event, devices will be removed immediately
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Recommendations – City Code

- Amend City Code upon Council approval to include Taskforce and City staff recommendations:
 - Sign-off requirement has been changed to a disapproval system requiring 20% or more affected parties to voice their opposition to an event. Citizens will contact City staff directly.
 - For notification purposes use alternative methods of communication to affected parties such as email
 - Expanded timeline for the submission and review of event applications (180 days prior to event date)
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Recommendations – City Code cont'd

- Added time, manner, and place clause to allow for City staff changes to routes and times in the interest of public safety
 - Other changes and clarifications as needed
 - Merged 14-7. Temporary Street Closure for a Parade with 14-8. Temporary Street Closure for a Street Event
 - Added reference to the ROW Closure Rules
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Recommendations - Other

- **City of Austin Special Events Website**
 - Serves as a one-stop resource for special events and related street closures, designed for the needs of residents, event promoters, and media
 - Showcases confirmed and pending events calendar with map of street closures
 - Community Registry database and centrally located neighborhoods will receive monthly Special Events web link and reminder
 - Soft release in April, followed by hard release in May
 - **Office of Special Events**
 - In the developmental phase
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Questions and Answers