



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Ashleigh Kanat
Director,
Economic & Workforce
Development Department

SUBJECT: Ordinance Amending Oakland
Municipal Code Chapter 9.52 Special
Event Permits To Add A Late Fee For
Tiers Two, Three, and Four Special
Event Applications

DATE: May 7, 2025

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (May 16, 2025 08:27 PDT)

Date: May 16, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt An Ordinance Amending Oakland Municipal Code Chapter 9.52 Special Event Permits To Add A Late Fee For Tiers Two, Three, and Four Special Event Applications

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed ordinance would authorize the City Administrator to add a Special Event Late Application Fee of Three Hundred Seventy-Seven Dollars (\$377), which is proposed to be established and updated annually by the Master Fee Schedule beginning Fiscal Year 2025-2026, for Tiers Two, Three and Four special event permit applications that are submitted past the recommended deadlines.

Such a late fee is needed to incentivize applicants to adhere to established deadlines set forth in Section 9.52.050 of the City of Oakland (City) Oakland Municipal Code (OMC), thereby promoting efficient planning, coordination, and resource allocation for special events and minimizing the last-minute need for senior management involvement to secure approvals caused by late submissions. The late application fee safeguards the City's ability to effectively manage special events, while promoting responsible and timely coordination between the applicant, the City, and other agencies if needed. The fee would not apply to complete applications received within the suggested deadlines or those applications that qualify as Tier One, as Tier One applications do not require the same level of coordination.

CED Committee
May 27, 2025

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) Chapter 9.52 requires anyone conducting a Special Event to obtain a permit pursuant to the requirements of [OMC 9.52.040](#). As defined, Special Events encompass a wide range of activities, including block parties, parades, festivals, marches, park gatherings, shows on private property, marathons, and sporting events at the Oakland Coliseum. As a result, special events involve coordinating with a multitude of City departments as well as external agencies, including AC Transit, BART, the Port of Oakland, Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC), the Department of Cannabis Control, and Alameda County Public Health Department.

In the summer of 2022, the City Council adopted [Ordinance No.13704 C.M.S.](#) and [Ordinance No.13700 C.M.S.](#), which removed ambiguity from special event policies and processes to facilitate a fairer permitting process. More specifically, the ordinances transfer the permitting of special event and short-term encroachments to civilian staff, offer a more transparent process, streamline the processing of special events, and also allow for reduced fees for community and repeat events.

Given the wide range of events, Ordinance No.13704 C.M.S. introduced different special event tiers with different application timelines based on the complexity of the event. This allows staff and applicants more time to prepare for the most involved events and expedite the processing of less complex events, as described in in OMC Section 9.52.040 and outlined below in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Special Event Permitting Requirements and Costs

Special Event Tier	Definition	Number of Days in Advance of Event Application Due	Current Permit Cost (Not Including Late Fee)
Two	A special event that includes any of the following: three hundred (300) or more people, the closure of a non-local street, four- hundred (400) or more square feet of tents, open flames, or pyrotechnics, or includes sales of goods, beverages, cannabis or alcohol.	45	\$427
Three	A special event with two-thousand five hundred (2,500) or more people or a parade.	90	\$1,752
Four	A special event consisting of a marathon, half-marathon, triathlon or similar events with active attendee participation and with multiple closures of non-local streets.	120	\$4,935

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The Economic Workforce Development Division (EWDD) receives special event applications and coordinates interdepartmental review of the application on behalf of applicants. This reduces the amount of work for applicants but requires enhanced interdepartmental coordination. Late applications impede the process as the time allotted for a thorough review by all City departments involved in the permitting process, such as Oakland Police Department, Oakland Fire Department and Oakland Department of Transportation is greatly shortened. The involvement of department heads and additional staff to expedite approvals becomes necessary to ensure public health and safety.

The current language of the ordinance offers suggested deadlines and requires EWDD to accept all applications with caveat language that there may be insufficient time to process applications accepted after the deadline. This creates complications as complex events should submit complete applications well in advance of an event so various stakeholders can plan and prepare for a safe event. Many complex events are high-profile, annual events that the community relies upon. EWDD is, in turn, subject to political and public pressure to approve permits for these activations within an insufficient time frame.

The proposed ordinance would authorize the City Administrator to add a Special Event Late Application Fee of Three Hundred Seventy-Seven Dollars (\$377), as proposed to be established and updated by the Master Fee Schedule, for Tiers Two, Three and Four to complete applications submitted after the established deadlines set forth in [Section 9.52.050](#).

The proposed late fee meets the Citywide priority of *Responsive, Trustworthy Government* because it will serve as an incentive for applicants to complete the permitting process in a timely manner and help defray the additional costs incurred by the City through involvement of additional staff to expedite reviews in a short time frame when applications are submitted late.

Alternatively, the City Council could decide not to approve this Ordinance, which would mean no change to the existing process. Applicants would continue to submit late and incomplete applications, and EWDD staff would continue to be subject to political and public pressure to approve permits for these activations within an insufficient time frame.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed amendment is not anticipated to have a negative fiscal impact on the City's General-Purpose Fund, nor is it specifically intended to generate revenue. Rather it is intended to incentivize on-time submittals and, when late submittals occur, the proposed fees are intended to offset the time and resources spent on additional staff required to review and coordinate late applications not captured currently in permit fee levels. The fees will be received and deposited in General Purpose Fund (1010), Special Events Organization (85631), Special Activities Permits (42420), DP850 Administrative Project (1000019), Administration Program (IP03).

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

EWDD has developed multiple educational assets to assist potential event producers in understanding the requirements for permit approval and the responsibilities involved in event production. The [Special Event Application website](#) includes ample information about the permitting process and includes a [Special Event Checklist](#) to aid the public in navigating requirements. [Topic pages](#) listing applicable fees, tier definitions and deadlines are readily available to the public.

Additionally, EWDD in conjunction with OPW conducted a Resource Training online session for special event producers with 60 participants on April 9, 2025. The training offered education on requirements, resources and a Q&A session with multiple City departments in attendance to answers questions. The Zoom session recording will be posted to the special event website, and EWDD will offer additional trainings annually.

To ensure the public is made aware of the amended ordinance, the changed verbiage detailing the late fee assessment protocol will be added to the special event website. An email including this same information will be sent to all prior special event applicants in the Accela system and EWDD will reach out to stakeholders and organizations with a history of producing special events.

COORDINATION

The Economic & Workforce Development Department has coordinated its efforts regarding this item with the City Administrator's Office, the City Attorney's Office, and Budget Bureau.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Special events are important to Oakland's social and cultural fabric but can be complicated to plan and coordinate. This item is intended to encourage early or on-time applications, which allows adequate time for thoughtful coordination and supports safer events. Well-organized special events attract visitors, who, in turn, spend money in Oakland's retail stores and restaurants. In 2024, 3.4 million visitors spent \$583 million across Oakland. The visitor spending impact of \$583 million generated a total economic impact of \$779 million in Oakland in 2024. This total economic impact sustained 5,548 jobs and generated nearly \$85 million in state and local tax revenues.¹

Environmental: While this item is not expected to directly create or otherwise impact opportunities related to environmental sustainability, part of the application for a special event permit requires submittal of a recycling plan and a food waste plan. A timely application allows for more time to plan and mitigate environmental impacts. Encouraging local engagement and accessible activations can reduce commutes and related greenhouse gas emissions.

¹ 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors in Oakland, Tourism Economics.

Race & Equity:

Equitable special event policies can decrease disparities in business ownership and employment opportunities in marginalized communities of color as well as create a sense of belonging in Oakland. Adhering to application deadlines allows ample time for neighborhood notification and space for voicing community concerns.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

This action is exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15063(b)(3) (common sense exemption) since the action under consideration is intended to incentivize on-time applications without changing the established process.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council

Adopt an Ordinance Amending Oakland Municipal Code Chapter 9.52 Special Event Permits To Add A Late Fee For Tiers Two, Three, and Four Special Event Applications.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kat Torio, Interim Deputy Director at 510-238-4948.

Respectfully submitted,



Ashleigh Kanat (May 14, 2025 17:25 PDT)

ASHLEIGH KANAT
Director, Economic & Workforce Development

Prepared by:
Kat Torio, Interim Deputy Director
Special Activity Permits Division
Economic & Workforce Development

Attachments (1):
Attachment A: Special Event Late Fee Calculation

EWD - Special Activity Permits
FY 2025-26 Proposed Fees & Charges

Fee Title: Special Event Late Fee (Proposed)

Personnel Costs								
Class #	Position Title	Salary	Annualized	Fringe/	% FTE	Overhead @	(S+F)	Total Salary
			Cola	Retirement		45.10%	* FTE	+ Overhead
SS445	Permit Tech	85312.5	1,706.25	70,163.22	5.38%	2,113.22	8,463.64	10,576.86
MA173	Permit Coordinator	10863.5	217.27	8,934.42	3.08%	153.77	615.85	769.62
			-	-		-	-	-
			-	-		-	-	-
						-	-	-
						-	-	-

Other Costs Description		Amount
1		-
2		-
3		-
4		-

Total Cost	11,346.48
Estimated Annual # Processed	30
Cost Per Permit	#DIV/0! \$378.22
	\$0.00 Proposed Fee
	% Cost
	#DIV/0! Recovery

Calculation for % FTE:		Average	Minutes	Total	Equivalent	% FTE
Class Name		Units Processed	Per Unit	Minutes	Hours	
Permit Tech		30	210	6,300	105.0	5.38%
Permit Coordinator		30	120	3,600	60.0	3.08%
				0	0	0.00%
				0	0	0.00%
				0	0	0.00%