



Information Item

Date: August 7, 2014

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Karen Ginsberg, Director, Community and Cultural Services

Subject: Changes to the Community Event Site Guidelines – Santa Monica Pier Parking Lot

Introduction

This information item provides a summary of changes to the Community Event Site Guidelines for community events at the Santa Monica Pier Parking lot.

Background

On [May 8, 2001](#), Council adopted Ordinance Number 2008 (CCS) adding Chapter 4.68 to the Santa Monica Municipal Code, Community Events Law, which established a process for permitting community events in public spaces and City parks. The Ordinance provides a coordinated process for managing community events to ensure the health and safety of event patrons, residents, workers, and other visitors. The law also protects the rights of people to engage in expressive activities in public places and establishes the least restrictive and reasonable time, place, and manner regulations for those activities.

In accordance with the event law, the Community Event Site Guidelines are an administrative tool established to guide staff and event applicants facilitating events that are appropriate in size and frequency relative to the site. The City has carefully formulated the site guidelines to protect opportunities for expressive activities while preserving the safety and welfare of events attendees and the general public. The site guidelines include information for each event site regarding frequencies, permitted hours, maximum number of participants, alcohol policy, and policies for vending and

amplified sound for events permitted pursuant to the Community Events Ordinance. The site guidelines are reviewed by staff periodically as needed and adjustments to the guidelines are made administratively.

Popularity of outdoor concerts has grown substantially over the past several years and these events typically exceed the capacity of the Pier deck. During recent concert events on the Pier deck, large numbers of people (over 10,000) congregate on the beach on the south side of the Pier, the public sidewalks near the Pier and on the Pier itself, creating significant public safety concerns. Examples of this include concerts such as the October 19, 2013 Festival Supreme with Jack Black, the upcoming Pandora's Back to School Night with Iggy Azalea on Saturday August 9, 2014 and the well-attended Twilight Concert Series events. The public sidewalks near the Pier are relatively narrow and often cannot accommodate significant crowds, especially the large crowds that simultaneously enter and exit concerts at predetermined times. The streets adjacent to the Pier are arterial streets, which accommodate significant, vehicular and bicycle traffic. These busy streets leave no room at all to accommodate spill-over crowds. The Pier itself is very narrow (only 35 feet wide at some points) and not designed for large crowds, especially in times of emergencies, as it contains very limited ingress/egress opportunities. Additionally, it has been shown in the past that concert events have had negative impacts on neighboring residents and businesses. City staff and Council members received complaints from south beach residential neighbors and merchants impacted by the traffic congestion, loss of parking on Ocean Avenue and the beach lots, as well as loud noise generated from the music on event day.

At the [January 14, 2014](#) meeting, in order to protect public safety, Council approved recommendations to modify the Twilight Concert Series (TCS) framework to reposition TCS as a community-focused Pier event, which would reduce the size of the concerts, and minimize beach overflow. This new right-sized TCS framework is being piloted

during the 2014 series. Council asked staff and the Pier Corporation to assess the impacts of the changes along the way and adjust the framework as needed.

Discussion

Even with the new TCS framework which included the elimination of the jumbotron, very large crowds have continued to gather on the beach during TCS concerts. And, those crowds continue to strain City resources and detrimentally impact adjacent neighborhoods, City streets, the beach south of the Pier and beach parking lots. Moreover, large crowds are anticipated at the upcoming TCS concerts as well as the Pandora Concert with Iggy Azalea. Accordingly, site guidelines have been adjusted to ensure, in the future that Pier events will be right-sized for the venue and not so numerous that their burdens outweigh their benefits to the community.

The changes outlined in the chart below restrict concert events to 500 people or less except those produced or co-produced by the City or the Santa Monica Pier Corporation (SMPC). In addition, the changes reduce the total number of events allowed in the Pier parking lot by season and create limitations on the number of events under 2,000 people from unlimited to a maximum of 10 events in the Summer, Fall and Winter and 12 events in the Spring seasons. Events will no longer be allowed to occur on December 31st or January 1st. The number of days allowed per event will continue to be 1-3 consecutive days.

Event Site	Description	Current Requirements	New Requirements NMT=Not More Than
Santa Monica Pier Parking Lot	Max Number of Days Allowed per Event	1-3 consecutive days	1-3 consecutive days
	Maximum Number of Event Day by Event Season	<p>SUMMER: 5 events/month of >2,000 (no weekends) No events on 4th of July or adjacent weekend. No events on Labor Day weekend.</p> <p>SPRING, FALL & WINTER: 10 events/month of >2,000 No events on Memorial Day weekend.</p> <p>No restriction on the number of events with less than 2,000 participants. However, if over 150, these events must obtain a Community Event Permit.</p>	<p>Concert events, except those produced or co-produced by the City or Santa Monica Pier Corporation (SMPC) shall not exceed 500.</p> <p>SUMMER: 10 events per season > 2,000 NMT 1/week (No weekends) 10 events per season < 2,000</p> <p>No events on 4th of July or adjacent weekend. No events on Labor Day weekend.</p> <p>FALL & WINTER: 10 events per season > 2,000 10 events per season < 2,000</p> <p>No events on December 31st or January 1st</p> <p>SPRING: 5 events per season > 2000 12 events per season < 2,000</p> <p>No events on Memorial Day weekend.</p>

As has been past practice, events applications that have been received prior to the changes to the site guidelines will be accepted and processed in accordance with the site guidelines that were in place at the time of their application was received.

Summary

By changing the Community Event Site Guidelines for the Santa Pier Parking Lot to restrict the maximum number of participants at concert events to 500, with the exception of City and SMPC produced and co-produced concerts, staff will be better able to manage the impacts of large concerts on the community. By setting limitations for the total number of events by season with under 2000 participants and the number of events over 2000 allowed by season, staff is striking a balance between the desire for events on the Pier Parking lot and the resulting impacts.

The SMPC produced events should not be affected by these changes. In accordance with the Event Ordinance and Administrative Guidelines, applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The SMPC Board has been apprised of these changes and recognizes that the SMPC may experience some loss of revenue due to the size limitations for non-City/SMPC concert events and the elimination of December 31st and January 1st as event days.

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