



Special Event Study

Strategies for Developing, Soliciting and Executing Port St. Lucie Special Events

October 20, 2025



Study Purpose

To evaluate Port St. Lucie's Special Event Department operations, policies and practices, and provide best practice recommendations for event planning, permitting and operating procedures. **To give the City a clear assessment of its current special events programming and determining what are and how future needs and demands for higher quality events and venues might best be met.**

- ☐ What are our **peer municipalities** doing that we may choose to emulate?
- ☐ What are **highly successful communities** doing in the way of best industry practices?
- ☐ How can we **make our Special Events more appealing and interesting and less formulaic** to improve customer satisfaction?
- ☐ How can we **improve the cost recovery while maintaining access, affordability, convenience and comfort?**



Study Methodology



Why Special Events Matter

Special Events are not just something a city does, we need to remember **WHY** they are important:

1. **Social Connection/Cohesion, creating a space for people to socialize and build connections** with the broader community and fostering a sense of belonging, collaboration, empathy and compatibility.
2. **Promoting cultural exchange and highlights and celebrates unique traditions and cultural diversity.** Local artists, musicians, and performers benefit from the exposure events provide, showcasing their talent to new audiences.
3. **Economic benefits for local businesses generating exposure and foot traffic** that benefits shops, restaurants, and service providers. **Attracting investment by showcasing a community's vibrancy** to investors interested in cultural and commercial projects.
4. **Strengthening community identity by encouraging civic engagement** through broad participation in activities that engage, inform and educate a community on key issues that may require collective action.
5. **Providing opportunities for volunteerism**, allowing people to “give back” to their communities.
6. **Promoting mental, physical and emotional health and well-being, boosting citizen morale** and creating positive memories.



First Class Special Event Checklist

- ☐ **Extremely high customer satisfaction** levels, driven by safety, affordability, convenient access, quality branding and marketing.
- ☐ **Pre-event Planning** to deliver what customers want—**targeted and deliberate**, avoiding unsolicited proposals.
- ☐ **First class entertainment**, unique, memorable.
- ☐ **Positive cost recovery**, a return on investment (ROI) measured in both direct and indirect value.
- ☐ **Highly visible staff** to manage and provide information and guidance to support customer needs.
- ☐ **First class first impression**—a front gate and signage and banner control, standard/uniform wayfinding, restrooms clean, safe, properly located and plentiful, comfortable seating, shade, and general amenities for comfort.
- ☐ **Vendors that are clean, unique, honest, priced appropriately, curated to enhance the event's theme.**
- ☐ **High visibility security** (police, EMS, cameras, CPTED) and efficient MOT for ingress/egress with convenient parking!
- ☐ **The design of the venue and its capacity to accommodate the projected and actual crowd sizes.**



Challenges

The City is experiencing growing pains with population growth accelerating at a pace that challenges PSL to evolve, enhance and add venues for gathering spaces.

- **Differentiating between true community events and Signature events** and rationing effort and resources accordingly.
- **Venues are limited** in size/design, and **none are centrally located** within the City.
- **All special events take lots of effort**, time, planning, resources and organizational prioritization.
- **Inherent risks**—Bad weather, a competing event on the same day nearby (unplanned or unnecessary duplicity), a promised celebrity not showing up, and many other details which the City may or may not have control.
- **The City's expenses** may not justify all the time involved in planning and managing certain small-scale events.
- **"If it's free it's me"** is a long-time challenge of value capture for all municipal events—the City has prided itself on giving event access away free of charge and it has become an expectation which hampers the growth and enhancement of events that may require alternative revenue generation.

Strategic Survey Data

“Residents enjoy
and appreciate
the City’s special
events.”

- **The City is growing and aging with a projected 9% increase in 65 and older in the next 10 years** which may impact the type and amenities required to satisfy their needs.
- **Income levels in PSL are higher and poverty levels lower than the County and the State averages indicating an increase in opportunities to adjust event fees and explore premium services and fee-based events within events.**
- **In the PRMP, citizens rank as inadequate but important the “City’s Outdoor Stage and Amphitheater” in the 75th Percentile**, which is equal to Pickleball ratings.
- While special event and festival attendance opportunities still earn 50%+ positive ratings from citizens, **the 43% positive rating of overall opportunities for education, culture and arts, are below the NCS benchmark and having declined from a 65% positive rating in 2020. *Events present an opportunity to improve this rating and increase special event citizen ratings.***
- **Economic Development ranks 3rd in citizen priorities** and its relationship and potential for events is significant.
- **The City’s 3 strategic goals of increasing and expanding access to entertainment and arts are viable actions to address resident needs, however they do not constitute a *robust master plan* for the City’s Special Events.**

City Policy and Practices Findings and Recommendations



You're Moving in the Right Direction!

Revenue and Cost Recovery



Event Name	Total Attendance	TOTAL REVENUE	TOTAL EXPENSE	NET (+/-)	PSL CRR (%)	Per Cap Rev	Per Cap Cost
Martin Luther King Day	400	\$225	\$7,714	(\$7,489)	3%	\$0.56	\$19.29
Bonfire and Hayride	1800	\$1,000	\$38,597	(\$37,597)	3%	\$0.56	\$21.44
St. Patrick's Day Parade	100	\$0	\$6,820	(\$6,820)	0%	\$0.00	\$68.20
PSL Irish Festival	4,100	\$20,414	\$23,463	(\$3,049)	87%	\$4.98	\$5.72
Eggstravaganza	1,800	\$0	\$13,035	(\$13,035)	0%	\$0.00	\$7.24
Memorial Day	500	\$0	\$8,816	(\$8,816)	0%	\$0.00	\$17.63
Freedomfest	9,400	\$7,680	\$99,039	(\$91,359)	8%	\$0.82	\$10.54
9/11 Ceremony	150	\$0	\$3,938	(\$3,938)	0%	\$0.00	\$26.25
Oktoberfest	2,600	\$2,290	\$49,494	(\$47,204)	5%	\$0.88	\$19.04
Fall Fun Fest	15,000	\$23,832	\$54,668	(\$30,836)	44%	\$1.59	\$3.64
Harvest in the Preserve	3,500	\$7,475	\$46,804	(\$39,329)	16%	\$2.14	\$13.37
Veterans Day	500	\$0	\$11,475	(\$11,475)	0%	\$0.00	\$22.95
International Fest	3,500	\$4,937	\$74,514	(\$69,577)	7%	\$1.41	\$21.29
Festival of Lights	9,400	\$6,331	\$78,814	(\$72,483)	8%	\$0.67	\$8.38
Noche Buena	356	\$1,940	\$29,385	(\$27,445)	7%	\$5.45	\$82.54
PSL in Lights	914	\$0	\$62,140	(\$62,140)	0%	\$0.00	\$67.99
River Nights**	3,431	\$950	\$46,264	(\$45,314)	2%	\$0.28	\$13.48
TOTAL	57,451	\$77,074	\$661,830	(\$584,756)	12%	\$1.34	\$11.52

** River Nights is 7 events

Non-Profit Partnership Cost Recovery

A financial summary of the four Signature Events wherein non-profits earn revenues shows that while the City earned a combined revenue from vendors and food and beverage (F/B) of \$40,133 for all events combined, its expenses were \$282,015 for a combined net loss of **-\$241,882** and an overall cost recovery ratio (CRR) of **14%** and a **per cap revenue of \$1.10** and **per cap cost of \$7.75**.

Note: Irish Festival 3rd Party Pouring contract yielded 87% CRR with no vendor expense.

Event Name	Total Attendance	F/B	VENDOR & Sponsor FEES	TOTAL REVENUE	TOTAL EXPENSE	NET (+/-)	PSL CRR (%)	Per Cap Rev	Per Cap Cost
Freedomfest	9,400	\$7,680		\$7,680	\$99,039	(\$91,359)	8%	\$0.82	\$10.54
Oktoberfest	2,600		\$2,290	\$2,290	\$49,494	(\$47,204)	5%	\$0.88	\$19.04
Fall Fun Fest	15,000		\$23,832	\$23,832	\$54,668	(\$30,836)	44%	\$1.59	\$3.64
Festival of Lights	9,400		\$6,331	\$6,331	\$78,814	(\$72,483)	8%	\$0.67	\$8.38
Totals	36,400	\$7,680	\$32,453	\$40,133	\$282,015	-241,882	14%	\$1.10	\$7.75
PSL Irish Festival	4,100	\$13,244	\$7,170	\$20,414	\$23,463	(\$3,049)	87%	\$4.98	\$5.72

Benchmarking

Nine of Florida's top ten most populated cities provided responses to the questions asked and varying degrees of support data requested. JKS added Sanford, Palm Bay, Miami-Dade and Martin County to the benchmarking and best practice analysis as these provide varying depths of high-quality event policy and procedural practices.

Benchmarked City/County	Agency Within the Entity that Manages Hosted/Private Special Event Process Dept./Div. Hosted = Event on City Property	Agency that Produces City/County Special Events Dept./Div	Adopted Special Event Ordinance Y/N	Approved Special Event Policy/Procedure Document Y/N	Who Determines Public Safety and Other Agency Staffing?	Are Event Metrics Quantified? Y/N	Event Cost Recovery Quantified? Y/N	P3 Produced Events? Y/N	Sponsorship/Co-Sponsorships Engagement? Y/N	Defined Special Event Budget? Y/N	Insurance Required? Y/N	AI Utilized to Track Attendance? Y/N
Baseline - Port St. Lucie, FL	Neighborhood Services Department	Special Event Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Cape Coral , FL	Special Event Division in PRD/City Special Events Committee	Special Event Division in PRD/City Special Events Committee	Y	Y	City Special Event Committee Members	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Hialeah , FL	Communication and Special Event Department - Hosted Building Department - Private Property	Communication and Special Event Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Jacksonville, FL	City Sports and Entertainment Office	City Sports and Entertainment Office	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Martin County	Parks and Recreation Department - Hosted and MOTs Growth Management/Building - Private Property	Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	County Departments Per Event Scope	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Miami Dade County	Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department - Hosted Regulatory and Economic Resources- Private Property	Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department	Y	Y	County Departments Per Event Scope	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Miami, FL	City Film and Entertainment Office	Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Orlando, FL	Office of Special Events - Hosted and Private	Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Palm Bay, FL	Recreation Department	Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Sanford FL	Parks and Recreation Department	Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Tallahassee, FL	Parks and Recreation Department - Hosted Leon County Building Department - Private Property	Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Tampa, FL	Office of Special Events - Hosted Development Coordination Department -Private Property	Office of Special Events and Parks and Recreation Department	Y	Y	City Departments Per Event Scope	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N



Benchmark Considerations

- **Organize and consolidate all things special events within the PSL Special Event Department.**
- **Empower the SEO** to manage all special events processes.
- **Develop and approve a new formal comprehensive Event Policy and SOPs.**
- **Codify via Council resolution and Management Directive a Fee Waiver, Fee Reduction, Co-sponsorship Policy and Process.**
- **Establish Evaluation Process** including post event debriefing and after-action reports—including KPIs for Annual evaluation and planning.
- **Develop post-special event reporting and publishing process for economic impact and community benefits.**
- **Adopt policy and KPIs to define targeted ROI, Community and Economic Development Impact** and utilize in evaluation and budget process as a scorecard for annual business planning.
- **Create a Vendor Policy, working with the Procurement Management Dept. (PMD) to curate vendor, food & beverage and alcohol recommendations for 3rd Party outsourcing** to achieve higher quality, profitability and fidelity to signature event themes.

Non-Profit Benchmarks and Strategies for Transitions

Negotiating Better Deals Through Business Planning—St. Petersburg model



Identify Cost Recovery Ratio (CRR) objectives for proposed and existing Community and Signature high revenue yielding events as policy. This report provides a suggested 3-tier CRR based on event typology ranging from pure Community Events typically smaller in size and generating 0-50% CRR to Signature high-yield events with targeted CRR of 75-100+%.



Maintain a culture of business planning with full disclosure of total event costs and revenues - to ensure transparency the City and non-profits should mutually and fully disclose total anticipated costs to produce the special event and projected revenues. This disclosure during the event's planning phase will aid in evaluating the event's feasibility and identify funding gaps to be closed via sponsorship proceeds, fees and sales related to the event, volunteer services and, as a last resort, City subsidy.



Reduce Special Event Subsidy Levels over a prescribed period. Establish mutually agreed upon subsidy levels for existing special events produced in a collaboration with a non-profit organization. Tier the subsidy levels over successive years to a mutually agreed upon level or to where the event obtains full cost recovery. Once the event realizes full cost recovery the non-profit partner can retain proceeds garnered during the event for further community benefit.



Rigorously evaluate non-profit performance and financial records to ensure compliance with agreement requirements and transparency.



Keep Space for Non-profits in vendor or separate area and Identify events within events where non-profits have an opportunity to add value to the event while earning revenues through sponsorships or participant fees that are shared with the City i.e., Organizing fun or competitive runs/walks, cooking or arts competitions, talent shows or costume contests.

Non-profit's Contract Review

Recommendations for Future Agreements:

- ☐ **Standardizing all future agreements as partnership concession agreements to foster the spirit of cooperation and shared responsibilities (expenses) and rewards (profits).**
Strategically define roles and responsibilities for the partnership to provide the best outcomes and best ROI for both parties.
- ☐ **Consider utilizing 3rd party pouring agreements** to generate better returns.
- ☐ **For smaller events, consider ticketing F/B sales to track purchasing** and eliminate cash transactions and share revenue with vendors. Manage revenues and keep 50% of net beverage sales and 20% of food sales.
- ☐ **For larger events, negotiate 20-25% of sales** (requiring specific accounting controls in place to register all sales) or flat market rate for all other vendors.
- ☐ At a minimum, **PSL should receive a 50% net profit from all reconciled direct costs and event revenues.**
- ☐ **Require “cultural authenticity”** as a primary driver in all cultural events and require partners and vendors to participate.
- ☐ **Require reconciliation of all cost, revenue and profit from each partner and vendor** to provide a record and afford good decision making in subsequent years.



Cost Recovery Policy

Mostly Community Focus 0-50%	Mix 50-75%	Pure Discretionary 75-100%+
Basic services intended to be accessible and of benefit to all; supported wholly or significantly by tax subsidies.	Benefit accrued to both individual and public interests, but to a more significant individual advantage.	Exclusive benefit received by individual(s) and not the public; individual pays at least the full cost of service provision
Events to include activities, ground breakings, dedications, public welfare and information programs, etc.	Cultural and heritage Enrichment programs	Specialized Events typically at MFEC or gated outdoor events

- **Pure Community Events-** Represents those events and activities that benefit the community as a whole as Basic services intended to be accessible and of benefit to all; The community generally pays for these basic services and facilities through taxes. These events shall be offered to agency residents at a minimal or no fee. **Events to include PRD activities, ground breakings/dedications, public welfare and information programs, MLK Day, Parades, Veterans Day, Memorial Day and 9/11**
- **Mix--Individual/Community Events** Represents events where benefit accrued to both individual and general public interests, but to a more significant individual advantage or interests that should be priced to reflect this. **Events may include cultural and heritage enrichment activities in Port Park, River Nights, Bonfire and Harvest Fest and select outdoor MFEC events**
- **Purely Individual Events** Represents large, specialized events with a competitive focus and priced to recover full costs at a minimum with a target of 20%+ to cover overhead and facility lifecycle maintenance. **These include specialized MFEC Concerts and Events or gated outdoor events and include PSL in Lights, October Fest, Irish Festival, Freedom Fest and Fall Funfest**

Case Study for Soliciting the Partners PSL Wants



**Dublin, Ohio Traditional
European-Style
Christmas Market
Operator -
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The 3rd party operator RFP should require the company to have the following capabilities and experience:

- ☐ Proven track record of operating similar size events
- ☐ Ability to manage all set-up and take-down challenges, including any construction, plumbing, electrical and sanitation issues
- ☐ Ability to run all day-to-day operations, including security, sanitation, vendor relations, customer relations, marketing and social media
- ☐ Ability to source a wide range of local, regional, national and international vendors
- ☐ Experience with sourcing additional direct income through sponsorships or event rentals is a plus
- ☐ Demonstrated expertise in developing a distinctive and engaging identity tailored specifically to PSL events

Florida Festival and Event Association (FFEA) Benchmarking

While the SED budget is not typically allocated in this manner, these percentages represent a logical method to track and benchmark the future SED annual budget expenditures and allocations.

The most important consideration is that the City is investing at appropriate levels in a centralized one stop special event operation and the SED is on track to meet these benchmarks.

Expense Item(s)	Percentage of Budget
Advertising, marketing and PR	8.7%
Live Entertainment (Acts)	8%
Stage and Production	1.6%
Fireworks	2.3%
Tables, Chairs, Tent rentals	2.4%
Rental carts, fencing, radios...	2.3%
Sanitation	1.4%
Printing/signage	1.2%
Promo Items	1%
Security	4.3%
Food, Beverage, Concessions	3%
Administrative and In-kind	63.8%

Curating Vendors at Large Events

Step	Action Item
Define Theme & Goals	Create transparent, theme-aligned selection rubric/criteria
Vendor Selection Criteria	Match family friendly vendor offerings to festival identity
Curated On-line Applications	Require visuals, menus, references
Review Committee	Use diverse stakeholder input
Mix Management	Ensure cuisine, product, and booth type diversity
Pre-Event Orientation	Train on safety, sustainability, theme integration
Post-Event Evaluation	Collect data and refine future vendor lists

PSL is not required to provide a “soap box” or vendor opportunity for every cause or business interest in the City. Move away from first come, first serve vendors and **work with PMD to develop an RFP to select food vendors based on event experience, giving preference to local & dependable vendors.**

In non-themed events, provide for rotation of food and retail vendors through a pre-approved vendor pool. **In Large Events, solicit 3rd party events logistics coordinators who are responsible for curating the appropriate vendors for F/B and retail through an RFP process.**

Curation Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Excellent (5 Pts.)	Good (3 pts)	Fair (1 pt)	Poor (0 pts)
Product Alignment	Products/services perfectly align with festival theme and audience.	Products/services generally align with festival theme.	Limited alignment with festival theme.	No alignment with festival theme.
Quality and Presentation	High-quality products with professional presentation and branding.	Good quality products with adequate presentation.	Average quality products with minimal presentation efforts.	Poor quality products with unprofessional presentation.
Experience	Extensive experience with excellent references from similar events.	Some experience with good references.	Limited experience with few references.	No experience or negative references.
Compliance	All required licenses and insurance documents provided and up to date.	Most required documents provided; minor issues.	Some documents missing or outdated.	No required documents provided.
Sustainability Practices	Demonstrates strong commitment to sustainability (e.g., eco-friendly packaging).	Some sustainability practices in place.	Minimal sustainability efforts.	No sustainability practices evident.

Potential Revenue Enhancements

The following table summarizes the **potential impact** of revenue enhancements on the existing revenue streams using the current event attendance for (9) Large Events of 52,731, and a 5% event attendance growth adjustment for year 3. **Each event will require a unique annual revenue strategy for budget forecasting based on evolving event quality, vendor curation, vehicle access and sponsorship accommodation.**

Revenue Enhancement	Current	Year 1 Estimated	Year 3+ Estimated
Parking Fees	\$0	\$87,900	\$184,600
F/B and Retail	\$61,550	\$453,500	\$476,200
Premium/VIP	\$0	\$52,700	\$221,400
Sponsorships	\$0	\$67,500	\$180,000
Estimated Totals	\$61,550	\$661,600	\$1,062,200

Economic Development

With no central park in the City's master plan and no appreciable or measured connection between PSL Special Events and the City's Economic Development, the following Opportunities may be considered related to SED and economic development:

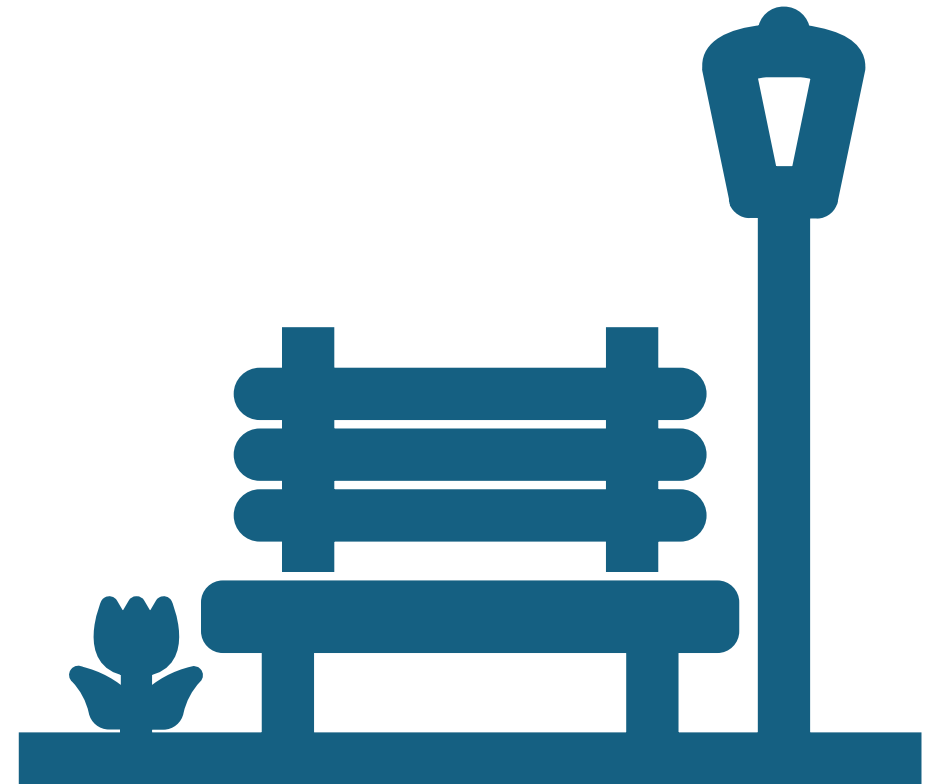
1. **Partner with Economic Development and Art in Public Places Departments** and serve as an activation source designed to incorporate local artistic talent into existing community and signature events and to partner in business district performing arts program.
2. **Reestablish Partnering with local business leaders**—by partnering with local business leaders, the SED positions itself as a direct supporter of local business interests and can monetize benefits through event sponsorships and participation in “events within events.”
3. **The SED may consider creating a Special Event Non-Profit 501(c)3** to afford flexibility and improve fundraising and sponsorship solicitation. The business community along with the appropriate cultural arts stakeholders could serve as directors and guide the efforts of the SED.

Capital Considerations

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the City will be finding suitable public space to accommodate its larger signature events currently sharing available indoor and outdoor space with the MFEC. The addition of new parking garages and elimination of outdoor plaza space surrounding the MFEC, coupled with the refocus of indoor space to a flexible “conference center” layout, will reduce the MFEC’s capacity to host any signature events. While the center’s back road provides short term “street festival” event space, it is too narrow and limited in customer accommodation capacity to serve the long-range needs of PSL’s special events.

It is recommended the **City consider the development of a large special event area using the master plan consultant recommended in Focus Area #1 to:**

- Identify land, a design criteria and probable cost.
- Design a public space for more than 10,000 people.
- Design a state-of-the-art amphitheater.



Recommended Events Master Planning

The scope used for the Wildwood, FL. project with its \$50,000 cap can be modified to PSL Special Event planning needs and an outreach to the consultant used for the recent Park and Recreation Master Plan may be considered to provide the services while all the public outreach , mapping and land planning recommendations are all fresh and current. Scoping for event specific public engagement—including stakeholder interviews, workshops, and surveys— will produce a vision emphasizing a vibrant “live work play” design. The North Port Mineral Springs master plan includes a much more detailed plan including archeological, historic and utility work at a cost of \$150,000+.

Municipality	Consultant	Fee Paid	Scope Highlights	Venue Upgrades
Wildwood, FL	Downtown RFP (2020)	Fee cap \$50K	Streetscape/event space planning, cost and implementation	Plazas, pedestrian pathways
North Port, FL for	Kimley-Horn (2018–2020) Warm Mineral Springs Park Master Plan	\$154K phase 1 + \$1.44M Phase II	Full master plan w/ archaeological, historic, utility work	Amphitheater, trails, shade structures, utilities, parking

Recommended Strategic Focus Areas

- **EMPOWER Special Event Department** to implement/manage Citywide Special Events.
- **ADOPT Best Practices** approach to event planning, execution and evaluation.
- **IMPROVE Cost Recovery** and negotiate equitable event partnerships and sponsorships.
- **FOCUS on Economic Development** strategies that stimulate local business and quality of life.
- **EXCEED Customer Expectations** with entertainment, safety, convenience, and comfort.
- **ENHANCE Special Event Venues** to facilitate first-class event delivery.

EMPOWER
Special Event
Department

**ADOPT Best
Practices**

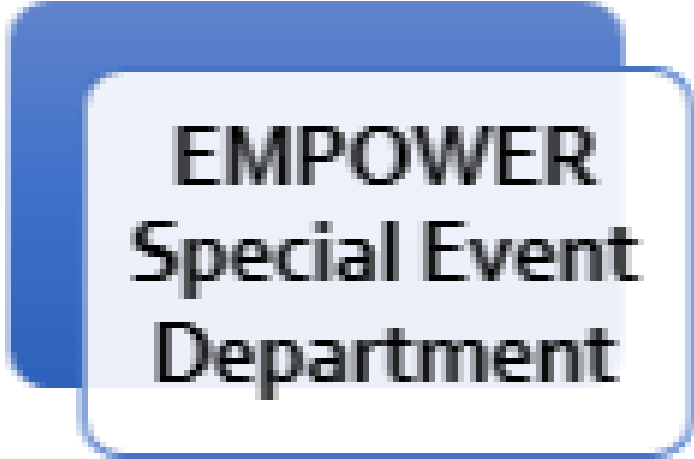
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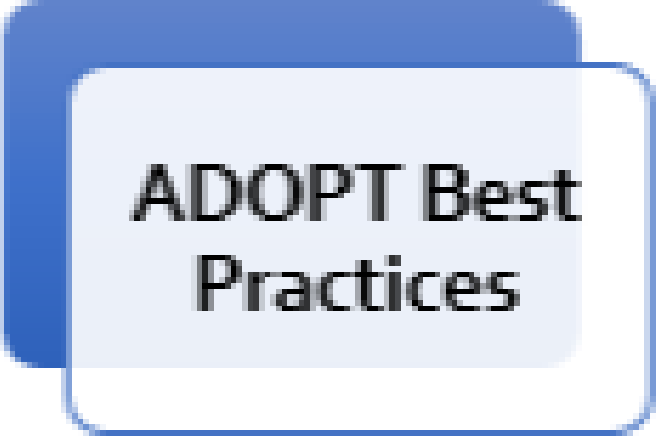
EMPOWER Special Event Department to implement/manage Citywide Special Events.

The logo consists of two overlapping rounded rectangular boxes. The front box is light blue with a thin blue border and contains the text "EMPOWER Special Event Department" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The back box is a darker blue and is partially obscured by the front one.

EMPOWER
Special Event
Department

- **Resource and position the SED as the City's one stop shop to provide quality control and consistency for all things Special Events** including permitting, planning, managing, operating and marketing in collaboration with Communications all special events, all outdoor MFEC special events, city-wide protocol activities (i.e., ground breakings, ribbon cuttings and miscellaneous City ceremonial functions) and Neighborhood Services event permitting process.
- **Adopt a single guiding policy that defines SED authority, roles and responsibilities** with tailored requirements that align with the City's specific strategic needs, consumer demand, legacy commitments and legal framework.
- **Establish a Special Events Technical Advisory Committee (SETAC) and define roles and responsibilities** for event planning and permit approval, logistics coordination and post-event evaluation.
- **Invest in the development of a PSL Special Event Master Plan.** Conduct a community-wide special event needs survey and focus groups utilizing more detailed and specific questions to determine community event needs, preferences, willingness to pay, etc. and ultimately identify land and design criteria with probable cost for a citywide outdoor special event venue.
- **Establish a 501.c3 non-profit entity within the SED** that includes business community and St. Lucie Cultural Alliance board membership to facilitate and improve corporate sponsorships and grant solicitation.

ADOPT Best Practices approach to event planning, execution and evaluation.

A graphic consisting of two overlapping rounded rectangles. The front rectangle is light blue with a thin blue border and contains the text 'ADOPT Best Practices' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The back rectangle is a darker blue and is partially obscured by the front one.

**ADOPT Best
Practices**

- **Develop Goals and Objectives for the SED and individual events and evaluate accordingly**, and measuring fidelity to objectives post-event and annually for the SED.
- **Maintain Benchmarking Library**—living documents to maintain competitive advantage.
- **Adopt pre-event business planning process to proactively plan individual events.** All events will require business plans. SETAC will review applications to ensure probable success rate.
- **Adopt Best Practices in standard operating procedures (SOP)** outlined in the City policy using the summary outline of best practice common procedures and requirements found in **Sections 3 & 4.**
- **Adopt Evaluation Criteria for all City produced and permitted events** to be managed by SED and SETAC. Use a scorecard approach to measure success for the SED using key performance indicators (KPIs).
- **Develop and implement a marketing plan for the SED and individual events**, aligned with the City's communications policy and working directly with the Communications Department.
- **Commit SED staff to Professional Development** – The Florida Festival and Events Association (FFEA) is primarily a trade organization with regularly scheduled training and development classes and conferences.

IMPROVE Cost Recovery and negotiate equitable event partnerships and sponsorships.



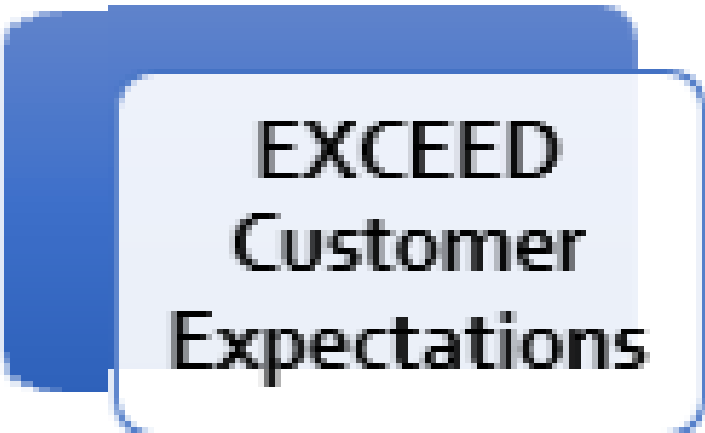
- **Create a 3-tier Cost Recovery Ratio (CRR) criteria** in a phased 3-year approach. (0-50%; 50-75%; 75-100%+ Community to Signature CRR)
- **Adjust the SED marketing budget from 2.1% to 10% of operating budget to improve revenue generation and CRR**
- **Establish measurable criteria for city support and co-sponsorship** and consider reducing city in-kind and co-sponsorship after 5 years for recurring events.
- **Identify and incorporate more equitable terms in non-profit partnership agreements** to ensure a more balanced return on investment (ROI)
- **Aggressively pursue sponsorships and grants** to engage the local business community, corporate and arts foundations and civic organization.
- **Implement revenue enhancement strategies** for existing Signature and Heritage events (F/B control, ticketing, parking fees, premium/VIP services, etc.)
- **Create a Vendor Policy, working with the Procurement Management Dept. (PMD) to curate vendor, food & beverage and alcohol recommendations** for 3rd Party outsourcing
- **Solicit through Request for Proposals qualified partners to manage and operate special event logistics**, F/B and retail vendors to improve event cost recovery and quality
- **As part of the marketing and evaluation process use Placer Ai heat mapping** capacity in broader customer satisfaction and economic development evaluation

FOCUS on Economic Development strategies that stimulate local business and quality of life.



- **Adopt economic development strategies and targets for large events to meet objectives implied in Strategic Plan Goal #6** Culture, Nature and Fun Activities.
- **Measure Economic Impact in all special events using economic impact calculators** and foot and travel heat maps technology to evaluate direct and indirect impacts for, at a minimum:
 - **Hotel Occupancy Rates:** Increase in local hotel bookings during the event.
 - **Visitor Spending:** Estimated economic boost from attendees on dining, retail, and entertainment.
 - **Local Business Revenue Increase:** Sales reports from businesses in the event area.
 - **Sales Tax Revenue Growth:** Comparison of tax revenue during the event vs. non-event days.
 - **Event Job Creation:** Number of temporary jobs created (e.g., vendors, security, sanitation).
- **Include Economic Impact and Development measures to drive City Fee Waivers, Sponsorship and In-kind services** delivery decisions by Council.
- **Partner with Economic Development and Art in Public Places departments** and serve as an activation source designed to incorporate local artistic talent into existing community and signature events and to partner in a neighborhood and business district performing arts program.
- **Consider producing events on Privately Operated Public Open Space (POPOS) in business zones** throughout the City to engage businesses in event sponsorship and participation.

EXCEED Customer Expectations with entertainment, safety, convenience, and comfort.



**EXCEED
Customer
Expectations**

- **Make events less formulaic, creating more original and themed events– “Do Less Better” and with more impact.** Produce only events that meet your strategic goals--Prioritize keepers and streamline events to be tighter, more impactful and efficient. Add desirable and inspirational educational, cultural and artistic components and events within events that stimulate interest, participation and sponsorship engagement/revenues.
- **Ensure high Customer Satisfaction levels**, driven by safety (low incident rate), affordability with premium options, convenient access, quality branding and marketing.
- **Curate vendors and first-class entertainment, unique and memorable** to support event cultural themes.
- **Manage events with highly visible staff to provide information and guidance and support customer needs** and execute effective maintenance of traffic (MOT), ingress/egress and adequate, convenient parking.
- **Develop First Class, First Impressions** i.e., an eye-catching front entrance gateway with signage and banner quality control and standard/uniform wayfinding. Design venue layout to accommodate the projected crowd sizes and accommodate all with comfortable seating, shade, and general amenities throughout the festival and parking areas.

ENHANCE Special Event Venues to facilitate first-class event delivery.



**ENHANCE
Event Venues**

- **Consider the development of a large special event area with space for more than 10,000 and design state of the art amphitheater.** Use the master plan consultant recommended in Focus Area #1 to identify land, design criteria and probable cost for the facilities.
- **Design all Special Event area elements to First Class level including first impression, gates, parking, signage, etc.**
- **Identify improvements needed for Event Park sites** McChesney, McCarty Ranch, Whispering Pines, Veterans Memorial Parks.
- **Develop land acquisition or lease options and budget plan** and consider Clover Park (County)—off season for the Mets Approximately 19 acres for rent/Partnership with SLCPR---Parking lot only.

Recommendations for Council Approval

- Place all food, beverage, and vendor operations within the City's control to achieve cost recovery targets and eliminate long term practices on Food and Beverage and Vendor Operations.
- Establish a return on investment strategy and fee policy to establish event cost recovery targets, consider merging or eliminating low ROI events/elements.
- Implement where appropriate revenue enhancement strategies for existing large events to achieve cost recovery targets i.e., parking, VIP, F/B elements.
- Invest in a Special Event Master Plan.
- Establish Special Events Policy to include benchmark/best practice recommendations and Standard Operating Procedures.



Recommendations for Council Approval

- Identify “events within events” where possible, so that non-profits may have an opportunity to add value to the event while earning revenues.
- Establish a 501.c3 non-profit entity within the SED.
- Solicit through Request for Proposals, qualified event producer(s) to assist and operate specific special event logistics, as needed.
- Working with procurement department, create an event policy and process to curate vendors and food & beverage, that are unique and memorable to support events and event cultural themes.

Council Actions

- Accept Report
- Authorize City Manager and Special Events Division to implement recommendation considerations



Q & A