



**City of Seattle**  
Office of Economic Development

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**Memo**

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**Date:** April 3, 2012

**To:** Councilmember Sally Clark  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Jean Godden

**CC:** David Yeaworth, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember Sally Clark

**From:** Steve Johnson, Office of Economic Development  
James Keblas, Film+Music Office and Office of Economic Development  
Joanne Orsucci, Office of Economic Development

**Re:** Special Events Update

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The City of Seattle's Special Events function is now integrated into the Office of Economic Development. This new approach intends to bring communities and organizations together through a city-wide economic development strategy that provides leadership for the city's cultural and entertainment organizations that make Seattle a great place to gather, share and celebrate.

In addition to regulating impact and coordinating successful activity, this effort will:

- Strengthen Seattle's event hosting organizations through professional development programs and by facilitating connections to one another to learn how to better utilize and share resources; creating an infrastructural clearing house of staff, equipment and services.
- Encourage for-profit corporations and related associations to become more engaged in special event activities, adding capacity and improving quality.
- Increase the visibility of special events and their distinctive role in Seattle's quality of life for residents and visitors by leveraging OED's highly effective communication and economic measurement programs.

The City of Seattle is embracing the opportunity to rethink how the City approaches special events. We look towards working with many public and private sector partners to strengthen special events as a valuable city-asset that celebrates our unique culture, grows our economy and will continue to build our sense of community pride.

Operationally, staff has already begun sharing administrative and accounting resources. The existing Special Events Ad Spec II has started supporting the Film permit process as well as Special Events. Moving to OED allowed the Special Events team to begin accepting credit cards as a form of payment.

The Central Budget Office (CBO) has tasked OED with finding ways to close the gap between permit revenues and city expenses with a May 2012 deadline. To accomplish this, a **Special Events Task Force** made up of industry stakeholders has been formed to solicit feedback and input on the topic. The following work has begun:

### **Special Events Task Force Workplan**

- Step 1. Complete an "Opportunity Assessment" by gathering input and reviewing the information identified below. (6 weeks to completion)
- City department expenses from SPD, SFD, Parks & SDOT Fee revenue collected as compared to city expense for 2011
  - Best practices (including cost recovery plans or fee schedules) of other comparable and desirable locations in the U.S; e.g., Denver, Boston, Tucson, Chicago, Portland
  - Interview/focus groups with customers of the special events committee both internal and external to the City

**Step 1 began on March 19<sup>th</sup> with the first task force meeting; best practices are being surveyed now.**

- Step 2. Present preliminary findings and set of alternatives on how to increase fees and/or reduce costs to CBO and the Mayor's Office based on input from the opportunity assessment.

**Step 2 briefing and background documentation will occur the week of April 9<sup>th</sup>.**

- Step 3. Based on feedback from Step 2, finalize recommendations with more detailed cost estimates and plan for successful implementation. Steps and deliverables will include:
- Follow-up interviews/focus groups with internal and external customers
  - Coordination with CBO and other Departments on cost and impacts of the recommendations
  - Consultation with Council
  - Communication plan for unveiling the proposal

**Step 3 recommendations will be finalized the week of May 28<sup>th</sup>.**