



INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Ben Williamson, City Manager

FROM: Tara Bradley, Planning Manager
Jawaria Tareen, Deputy City Manager
Kevin McCoy, Managing Director/Police Chief
Derek Hull, Director of Community Services

DATE: July 7, 2026

Request: Considering adopting Ordinance No. 4001, approving an addition of Article V, “Special Events”, to Chapter 14, “Amusements and Entertainments”, of the City’s Code of Ordinances

Background:

The City of Farmers Branch is committed to fostering a connected community by supporting events and activities that bring residents, businesses, visitors, and community organizations together. Community festivals, celebrations, and public gatherings strengthen neighborhood relationships, encourage civic engagement, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

In response to the growing number and increasing complexity of events requiring coordination among multiple City departments, this streamlined process was presented to the City Council on July 15, 2025. The process proposed to improve interdepartmental collaboration, promote public safety, and ensure compliance with applicable City regulations. It will also provide a consistent review process for activities requiring multiple approvals, including temporary street closures, traffic control, large tent installations, food sales, temporary structures, and other operational requirements necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

The proposed Special Event Permitting Program will establish a centralized application process that provides applicants with a single point of contact while coordinating reviews across all applicable City departments. This approach will reduce redundant reviews, improve interdepartmental communication, create a more predictable permitting process, and enhance overall efficiency in event approvals for both applicants and City staff.

As part of the City's FY 2025-2026 Fee Schedule, the City Council approved a \$50 Special Event Permit processing fee. However, implementation of the permitting program required adoption of a supporting ordinance. During that process, the City's transition to new legal representation delayed completion of the ordinance review. Staff has now completed the necessary legal review and is bringing the ordinance forward for City Council consideration to formally establish the Special Event Permitting Program within the City's Code of Ordinances.

Discussion:

Approval of Ordinance No. 4001 would approve an addition of Article V, "Special Events", to Chapter 14, "Amusements and Entertainments", of the City's Code of Ordinances.

The proposed ordinance establishes a consistent, citywide framework for reviewing and approving special events through a single application process that serves as the applicant's primary point of contact with the City. The centralized review process will improve coordination among City departments, reduce duplicative reviews, clarify application requirements, and provide a more efficient and predictable permitting experience for event organizers.

The ordinance includes provisions establishing:

- A definition of "special event."
- Application and documentation requirements.
- Operational standards necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare.
- Procedures for permit approval, denial, suspension, or revocation.
- Administration of the previously approved \$50 Special Event Permit processing fee.

Additional permits may still be required from individual departments depending on the scope and nature of the event. The Special Event Permit serves as the centralized coordination mechanism and does not replace permits otherwise required by City ordinance or state law.

Below are summaries of the sections included in the proposed Special Event Ordinance:

1. Definition of a Special Event

The ordinance establishes a clear definition of a "Special Event" as a unique, planned, and temporary activity occurring on public or private property. These events may include concerts, festivals, fairs, block parties, races, religious ceremonies, and other activities that encourage public participation. Any event expected to draw fifty (50) or more attendees meet the threshold for requiring a special event permit. The ordinance also recognizes that some special events may involve temporary activities or facilities not typically permitted within the underlying zoning

district. In these cases, the special event permit process provides a structured pathway to allow such activities under regulated conditions.

2. Permit Requirements

This section outlines the information and documentation an applicant must submit to obtain a special event permit. The permitting process is designed to ensure consistent review across all City departments and to support coordinated planning for public safety, traffic circulation, site layout, and logistical needs.

Applications must be submitted at least ninety (90) days before the event to allow sufficient time for interdepartmental review and preparation. The ordinance also authorizes City departments to issue any additional permits needed for activities conducted as part of the special event.

However, the special event permit itself does not authorize removal or alteration of public property; such actions are strictly prohibited unless expressly approved in writing by the City.

3. Terms and Conditions for Permits

Special event permits may include conditions necessary to protect public health and safety and to minimize impacts on adjacent properties. These conditions may require applicants to provide liability insurance, a detailed site plan showing tents, stages, fencing, signage, and food and beverage areas, and a traffic control plan specifying street closures and emergency access routes. Additional submissions may be required depending on the size and nature of the event.

4. Revocation, Suspension, or Denial of Permits

The ordinance describes the circumstances under which a special event permit may be denied, suspended, or revoked. Grounds for such action include false or incomplete application information, failure to comply with permit conditions, unsafe event operations, or conditions that create hazards to public health or safety. If a permit is denied, suspended, or revoked, the applicant may submit a written appeal to the City Manager within ten (10) days of the decision. The City Manager's determination is final.

Approval of the ordinance will complete implementation of the Special Event Permitting Program, previously authorized through the City's fee schedule, and provide a streamlined, consistent, and transparent process that supports community events and protects the public interest.