

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS + DENVER ARTS AND VENUES CONSOLIDATION

City Council – Parks, Arts & Culture Committee

January 6, 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Action Requested: Repeal Article XXI, Chapter 2 of the DRMC
Transfer all Office of Special Events (OSE) authorities to Denver Arts & Venues (DAV)

Purpose: Reduce General Fund costs, eliminate duplicative overhead, and improve service delivery

Result: \$1.1M savings to the General Fund and improved discretion of necessary permit oversight.

THE EVOLUTION OF DENVER ARTS & VENUES

2003: Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film becomes Denver Office of Cultural Affairs (DOCA)

2011: DOCA (General Fund-supported) merges with the city's Division of Theatres and Arenas (Special Revenue Fund) and becomes Arts & Venues to leverage efficiencies and create cost savings to the General Fund

2025: Office of Special Events (General Fund-supported) merges with Denver Arts & Venues to leverage efficiencies and create cost savings to the General Fund

AT A GLANCE: PUBLIC EVENT & FILM PERMITTING

City's centralized coordinating agency overseeing event permit compliance on public property



Events Supported: 700+ permitted event days + additional event consultations



City Hosted Events: Light the Lights, Annual Event Forum, Inaugurations, State of the City, etc.



Permits Issued: ~350 public event and ~250 film permits issued annually



Departments Coordinated: ~20 city agencies + other city stakeholders



Annual Budget: approximately \$1.1M (formerly funded via General Fund)

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

- The Office of Special Events will be dissolved as a standalone agency.
- All event permitting authorities will be consolidated within Denver Arts & Venues.
- Language removed from Ordinance already existed within Rules & Regulations with one exception*
- Changes to staffing will not affect program delivery. All permitting staff remain intact.
- Within the revised Ordinance, the definition of “Special Event” is revised to enable discretion based on event risk and impact.

*Details in the Appendix

PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGES

Changed "Special Event" to "Public Permitted Event" and updated language to clarify definition and enable discretion based on risk and impact:

Existing Definition: For purpose of this article XXI, the term special event shall mean a temporary event held on public property, open to the public, involving permitting by, and coordination of, two (2) or more city agencies, in addition to the office of special events.

New Proposed Verbiage:

(22) Review permit applications for public permitted events and filming operations on city-owned property, and approving, approving with conditions, or denying same. For purposes of this division, the term "public permitted event" means a temporary pre-planned gathering held on public property owned by the city and county, open to the public, involving permitting by, and coordination of, multiple city agencies. The term "public permitted event" as used herein, hereby expressly excludes passive or continuous activation of public space including programs operated by Denver, and expansions of established business operations such as patio dining or sidewalk sales, and any other activation or expansion deemed by the Executive Director not to be a public permitted event.

REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR SMALLER, COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) Goal:

Reduce administrative burden while maintaining safety governance

DAV permit no longer needed for low-risk, low-impact events:

- Park-based and fully contained events
- 350 or fewer participants*
- No alcohol service
- No right-of-way closures
- No drones or fireworks

**Aligns with existing Parks and DAV fee tiers and Waste No More Ordinance. Data indicates that events exceeding this threshold have higher rates of complaints and increased permitting complexity. The threshold balances public access with impact and safety considerations.*

IMPACT TO COMMUNITY & CITY STAFF

New policy encourages neighborhood-scale and community-led events and reduces administrative workload for City staff while maintaining safety governance.

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGE IMPACTS	
30-45 Low-impact events may no longer require a DAV Permit. <i>(i.e. movies in the park, fun runs/walks, park volunteer events and neighborhood nights)</i>	- 4 Steps DAV Application, Emergency Action and Health Medical Plans & Community Notification no longer needed
-10% Fewer applications allow City Staff to focus on high-impact events.	+2 hrs Or more of time <u>saved</u> by applicant per event.

OSE & DAV CONSOLIDATION: OUTCOMES

- \$1.1M savings to the city's General Fund
- Revised definition of “Special Event” enables discretion based on risk and impact
- Policy change reduces burden on smaller-scale event planners and administrative workload for city staff

NEXT STEPS

- Request City Council approval to repeal Chapter 2 Article XXI of the D.R.M.C. and authorize transfer of OSE authorities to DAV
- DAV to implement policy change beginning in 2026
 - ✓ Communications to key internal and external stakeholders
 - ✓ Changes will be announced at Annual Forum on Feb 12, 2026

A woman with red dreadlocks, wearing a black jacket with gold embroidery and a black headband, is performing on a street stage. She is holding a microphone and has her right hand raised in a gesture. In the background, a diverse crowd of people is watching, some holding cameras. A street sign for 'Melton' is visible. The scene is outdoors under a blue sky with white clouds.

**QUESTIONS &
THANK YOU!**

APPENDIX

Original OSE Ordinance Section	Article XXI (Repeal)	Move To
Created	Sec. 2-431	N/A
Purpose/Mission/Scope	Sec. 2-432	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-193
Executive Director and Staff	Sec. 2-433	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV)
Powers and Duties	Sec. 2-434	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-193
Review, Approve, Deny applications	Sec. 2-434 a	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-193
Certificate of Insurance	Sec. 2-434 b	Event RnRs 4/13/22
Adopt Rules and Regs	Sec. 2-434 c	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-194
Coordinate Boundaries, Revocations	Sec. 2-434 d	Event RnRs 4/13/22 Conditions and requirement needed in upcoming revisions
Year End Summary	Sec. 2-435 e	Incorporated into DAV reporting
Unlawful Acts	Sec. 2-436	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-195
Film Permits	Sec. 2-437	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-193
Application and Insurance	Sec. 2-437 a	Film RnRs 8/19/25
Notice Provision	Sec. 2-437 b	Film RnRs 8/19/25
Rules and Regs	Sec. 2-437 c	Article VII Div. 3 (DAV) Sec. 2-194
Permit Conditions	Sec. 2-437 d	Film RnRs 8/19/25
Denial	Sec. 2-437 e	Film RnRs 8/19/25
Fees	Sec. 2-437 f	Film RnRs 8/19/25