
Ariel Méndez, Chair

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Event Rentals in Parks

Purpose

To establish Board Policy to guide the implementation of an Event Rentals in Parks program. The policy is intended to articulate the District's philosophy regarding the use of park space for rentals ranging from smaller private functions to large special events. This policy is not intended to be administratively procedural or prescriptive. District staff will maintain clear and transparent processes and procedures consistent with this policy.

General Philosophy

The primary purpose of parks is to provide public access to open space for personal enjoyment, including but not limited to leisure, recreation and connecting with nature. The District also recognizes that parks are desirable places to hold events and that many events contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the community. Benefits of events can include: bringing culture and art opportunities to the community, celebrating certain occasions or causes, recognizing historically significant places and people, promoting health and wellness, and, perhaps most importantly, connecting people to each other and to our community.

The District strives to balance opportunities for community events and private functions in parks with the primary mission to maintain public access and enjoyment of parks while protecting natural resources.

Types of Event Rentals

Events are permitted, planned and organized gatherings hosted or staged in District parks. They are organized either by the District or by external groups or individuals. Events range from small family gatherings to large festivals with thousands in attendance. For purposes of this policy and the administration of the Event Rentals in Parks program, events are categorized as follows:

Public Event Rentals are permitted, planned, organized gatherings that meet all of these criteria:

- The primary purpose and audience for the event is the general public or community as a whole.
- Any person may attend or participate in the event

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Review Schedule: 5 years

- The event is promoted and advertised primarily to the broad community.
- Examples include: cultural events, community festivals, community athletic events

Private Event Rentals are permitted, planned, organized gatherings that meet any of these criteria:

- The primary purpose is for members of an organization or invited guests.
- The event is promoted and advertised primarily to a specific audience or group of people. Inviting or allowing the general public as spectators or guests does not make a mostly private event public.
- Examples include: company, church and organizational events, birthday parties, family reunions, picnic shelter rentals, sanctioned sports tournaments and athletic events.

Open Access Events do not require registration, fee or other requirements for attendance or participation.

Limited Access Events require registration, ticket, entry fee, membership or other requirements for attendance or participation.

Pass-Through Events are gatherings or events staged off of District property that need to pass through any District park or trail.

Freedom of Expression Events are gatherings protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. They do not require amplified sound, electricity or staging such as tables, tents or vendors. They do not advertise for businesses, are not intended to generate revenue and are not otherwise commercial in nature.

Policy Guidelines

To meet a balance between primary park functions and events, some limitations on event use are necessary, including, but not limited to, the location, number, size and capacity of events. District staff will consider the following when developing event rental guidelines and evaluating event requests.

Location – Different parks are suitable for different types and sizes of events. Not all District parks are appropriate for event rentals and only a few select parks can accommodate large events.

Number of Events – The District may limit the number of events or event days at any given park to mitigate impacts on park users and neighbors, protect natural resources by providing necessary recovery time and more equitably distribute events throughout the community.

Size/Event Footprint – The District may limit the physical footprint and types of activities as part of an event to maintain public access and enjoyment concurrent with the event and to protect natural resources.

Capacity – The District may limit the number of attendees at an event due to infrastructure limitations, public safety, and impacts on public access, neighbors and natural resources.

Reservations and Permits

All public and private event rentals require a permit obtained through the District reservation process. The District will maintain a clear and transparent reservation process for park rentals. The reservation and permit system is intended to ensure the suitability of the event, minimize potential conflicts and facilitate coordination between event organizers and District staff.

Applications will be reviewed to determine the availability and suitability of the event for the requested park based on the following criteria, including, but not limited to:

- Type and scope of event including expected number of attendees, planned activities, footprint and schedule including set-up and clean-up
- Infrastructure available to support the event, including parking, restrooms, water, electricity, stage, shelters, etc.
- Potential conflicts with other park users, events or programs
- Degree of impact on the park including to turf, trees, other landscaping, natural areas and facilities
- Level of impact on the neighborhood, including parking, traffic, noise and congestion
- Ability to receive approval of other stakeholders where required (City of Bend, Old Mill District, Bend-La Pine Schools)
- Event organizer's plan to manage the event and mitigate any impacts

District staff may approve a request as submitted, approve with modification or deny a request. Staff will strive to work collaboratively with event organizers and provide options wherever feasible but cannot guarantee that all requests can be accommodated. The District will have final approval of event logistics. Failure to adhere to the District's requested changes and approved logistics plan may result in event cancellation and denial of future applications.

If an event organizer disagrees with a decision, they may appeal the decision to the Executive Director. Appeals must be submitted in writing and will be responded to within ten business days. The Executive Director's decision is final.

Scheduling Priority

When there are multiple event requests for the same parks and dates, or if there are more requests overall than can be approved, the District will use the following priority:

1. District Programs and Events
2. Public Event Rentals – Open Access
3. Public Event Rentals – Limited Access
4. Private Event Rentals

Prior year rentals receive first-to-use rights within their prioritization level if they comply with all applicable processes and guidelines.

Fees

Fees for park rentals will be based on Cost Recovery Guidelines in the Fees and Charges Policy.

Generally, this means that events that provide open access and community-wide benefit recover a lower percentage of the costs associated with supporting the event, whereas events with more limited access and that primarily benefit invited or ticketed guests are expected to recover a higher percentage of the costs.

The District will annually calculate the cost of administering the reservation and permitting system and adjust fees accordingly to remain within cost recovery goals.

Fees charged for a specific event consider the cost of reserving the park, the size and impact of the event and any direct services that are required or requested to support the event rental. Examples: irrigation locates, water and electrical service, garbage service, clean-up, etc. The cost of special services required or requested to support the specific event will also be annually updated.

All fees will be defined during the reservation and approval process.