

Council Memo

Department Source: Convention and Visitors Bureau

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 17, 2026

Re: Ordinance amending Chapter 24 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, Missouri, relating to Special Event Permits

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

This ordinance amends Chapter 24 of the City Code relating to Special Events Permits by clarifying the purpose of the Special Event Permit process and establishing an annual limit of five (5) special Event Permits for commercial businesses, organizations, property owners, and affiliated entities conducting events in connection with the same business, commercial enterprise, or property.

Discussion

Over the past several years, the City has experienced an increase in requests for recurring Special Event Permits from commercial businesses seeking to utilize public streets, sidewalks, alleys, and other public property in conjunction with their operations. While these events can provide community and economic benefits, the increasing frequency of recurring requests has placed additional demands on City staff, public safety resources, and the public right-of-way.

The Special Event Permit process was established to accommodate temporary events that provide civic, cultural, charitable, educational, recreational, athletic, tourism, or other community benefits. It was not intended to provide an ongoing mechanism for private businesses to routinely expand their operations onto public property or to conduct recurring commercial activities within the public right-of-way.

The proposed ordinance amendments would clarify the purpose of Chapter 24 by reaffirming that Special Event Permits are intended for occasional activities utilizing public property or requiring City services beyond normal operations. The amendments would also establish an annual limit of five (5) Special Event Permits per calendar year for any person, business, organization, property owner, or affiliated entity conducting events in connection with the same business, commercial enterprise, or property.

The annual limitation would apply only to events conducted primarily for the commercial benefit of a private business utilizing public property or requiring temporary closures of public rights-of-way. The limitation would not apply to events sponsored by the City of Columbia, other governmental entities, or public or private educational institutions. In addition,

applicants may request that the City Council grant an exception to the annual limitation when unique circumstances warrant additional consideration.

These amendments are intended to preserve the temporary nature of the Special Event Permit program, promote the consistent and equitable administration of permits, protect the public's use of streets, sidewalks, alleys, parks, and other public property, and ensure City resources remain available to support the broad range of community events that benefit Columbia residents and visitors.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Resilient Economy, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Economic Development, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
8/3/26	B168-26 : Amending Chapter 24 of the City Code as it relates to special event permit fees.

Suggested Council Action

Approval of the legislation.