

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services – Review and Select a Program Revision Option for the 2010 and 2011 Citywide 4th of July Celebrations.

Expenditure: Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Community Services Director that the City Council review three program options and select program Option 1 for the 2010 & 2011 Citywide 4th of July Celebrations.

Funding

No additional funding required.

BACKGROUND

In 1981, the City Council banned the sale of all fireworks in the City of Torrance, and approved the creation of an Annual Citywide 4th of July Celebration for the community at Wilson Park. This event was developed with the intent of creating an opportunity for the community to gather and picnic and/or purchase food on-site from local non-profit community groups. These groups were provided the opportunity to raise funds through the operation of food and drink and/or game booths, as they were impacted by the loss of their 4th of July firework booth sales. In addition, this event would provide community-oriented and musical entertainment throughout the day; provide a variety of old fashioned traditional-style games geared for kids and adults; and for the evening to culminate in a spectacular pyrotechnic aerial fireworks display in the sky over the park.

To further enhance the 4th of July event, in 1989 a Bazaar was added at which vendors paid the City a booth fee to sell a variety of items to event attendees. This action was taken to provide an avenue for local vendors to sell arts and crafts, as well as to provide a revenue source to assist in offsetting a portion of overall City event costs.

In 1991, free parking and shuttle service was implemented at the Civic Center and the Del Amo mall in order to provide additional parking for the event and to ease potential offsite parking impacts in and around the neighborhoods close to the park.

In 1994, in an effort to reduce expenses as well as to increase revenues from the event, City Council approved reducing some of the recreation programming costs and implementing a \$3 per vehicle per space on-site parking fee that would be collected by a contracted parking vendor.

In 1996, the City Council increased on-site parking fees from \$3 per vehicle to \$5 per vehicle per space and established a \$10 fee per space for oversized vehicles in order to assist in offsetting the expenses for the event. As most of the oversized vehicles tend to take up two or more parking spaces the fee to them usually was \$20.

Over the years, the 4th of July celebrations have been very successful and it continues to be an important community event. Staff estimates the total number of participants in and around the park and spectators for the firework show reach upwards of 25,000 people. This is not including the estimated thousands of residents and spectators who live or visit family and friends on the 4th that are near enough to Wilson Park to watch the evening fireworks show from their homes and/or from gathering spots in other neighborhood parks and/or open-space areas.

In March 2009, during the City Council budget hearings for fiscal year 2009-10, staff was requested to provide a citywide cost review and re-assessment of the program operational components for the City's Annual 4th of July event at Wilson Park. The cost review was conducted in April 2009 and showed the citywide costs for the 4th of July event estimated at \$238,864. Because of the heavy utilization of park facilities by the public, it should be noted that even if the City's 4th of July event programming is reduced or minimized compared to what currently takes place, some of these citywide costs would remain the same and still be required.

In the fall of 2009, staff initiated a re-assessment of the program operational components with an emphasis on re-inventing or re-focusing the citywide 4th of July celebration to meet the needs of the Torrance community. As a common practice, staff evaluates each special event at the conclusion of the event in order to determine if there should be changes made to the program for the following year. For your review, staff have identified what the current 4th of July Celebration includes:

- **Event day:** 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- **Parking:** On-site vehicles charged \$5 per space; oversized vehicles charged \$10 per space.
- **Food Vendors** partnered with local Non-Profit Organizations – 20 vendors due to health code requirements.
- **Bazaar:** 100 vendors
- **Children's Art/Craft and Game Booths** supported by city staff, non-profit group, and volunteers.
- **Entertainment:** City-sponsored stage on west side of park, a local non-profit organization sponsors entertainment in the gazebo, and a DJ plays in the middle of the park.
- **Train rides** offered by Southern California Live Steamers throughout the day.
- **Fireworks:** Aerial fireworks display set to music begins at 9 p.m. for approx 20 minutes.

ANALYSIS

The reassessment team was comprised of various staff within the Community Services Department that have been involved in planning and implementing operational components for this event. The team analyzed and discussed a variety of options pertaining to the various components of the event, as well as potential impacts of adding to, changing or deleting components of the event. Among the items and issues discussed and evaluated were: starting times for the event; the provision of food and drinks by local non-profit groups and vendors; revising individual component locations on the site plan; adding more carnival-style games; re-introducing traditional multi-participant and participatory games; evaluating parking fees; evaluating the pros and cons of allowing the continuation of parking oversized vehicles at Wilson Park; charging fees for games participation; fencing off the entire park to control entry and exit by park attendees; use of contracted safety security personnel versus Torrance Police; and various other miscellaneous issues.

At the conclusion of this reassessment, the team's evaluation ultimately resulted in a few suggestions and options that staff believe will improve the quality of the 4th of July event to better meet the needs of the Torrance community. The team is also proposing that participants' surveys be created and presented randomly to attendees at the event to determine what they desire most pertaining to the different elements of the event. Also, zip codes will be requested of attendees to assist staff gain a better understanding of who is attending the event. After the survey results have been analyzed, staff will bring back a report summarizing the communities' ideas about the event.

The program revisions as suggested by the reassessment team would affect the 2010 and 2011 July 4th events. Options for City Council to consider include options 1, 2 or 3 and include the pros, cons and impacts for each of these proposed program alterations.

These options are an attempt to refocus this very important community event for this year and next in order to re-invent or re-focus the citywide 4th of July celebration to meet the needs of the Torrance community. Also, please keep in mind that the City will be reviewing methods of modifying the program further if additional budget reductions are required.

The three options for consideration are as follows:

- **Option 1** is a phased approach in which some revisions will take place in 2010 and others in 2011 (Attachment A). These revisions include reducing the bazaar in 2010 from 100 to 50 vendors, then eliminating them in 2011; adding traditional participatory games to both years; adding a sponsor-paid "Kids Game Zone" in 2011; increasing onsite parking fees at Wilson Park and eliminating oversized vehicles from Wilson Park in 2011.
- **Option 2** is a menu with City Council selecting individual proposed program revisions and elements from 2010 and/or 2011 to create an event for 2010 or for both years 2010 and 2011.

- **Option 3** is to leave the 4th of July event as it is for 2010. Council can decide to re-evaluate in 2011 if necessary for the 2011 event.

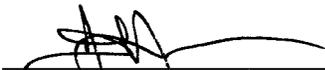
The Community Services Director recommends Option 1 as it is a phased-approach that initiates the staff-suggested program revisions while minimizing the impact to the participant's experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

RICHARD BRUNETTE
Recreation Services Manager

CONCUR:



JOHN JONES
Community Services Director



LeROY J. JACKSON
City Manager

- Attachments: A. Option 1 – Phased Approach
B. Projected 2010 4th of July Profit/Loss Statements
C. Projected 2011 4th of July Profit/Loss Statements

OPTION 1 - PHASED APPROACH

PROPOSED 2010 FOURTH OF JULY REVISIONS

- **Reduce the Bazaar from 100 to 50 vendors**
 - Pros: Reduces what has become more like a swap meet than a Bazaar of unique, one-of-a-kind items. Reduction of vendors reduces the crowd impact at the park allowing for more space for participants.
 - Cons: Reduction of revenue.
 - Impact: Loss of \$5,000 in revenue.**

- **Re-institute “old fashioned Traditional-style” 4th of July games**
(I.e. balloon toss, three legged race, potato sack race, etc).
 - Pros: Re-instituting the old fashioned traditional-style games in an effort to re-engage resident youth and adults.
 - Cons: Increased expenses
 - Impact: Increased expenses of \$1,017**

- **Increase parking fees* for onsite parking at Wilson Park**
 - Torrance Residents: Increase \$5 per vehicle (car) per space to \$10
 - Non-residents: Increase \$5 per vehicle (car) per space to \$15
 - Torrance Resident Oversized vehicles: Remains at \$10 per vehicle per space.
 - Non-resident Oversized Vehicles: Increase \$10 per vehicle space to \$15.

(***Note:** Over the past 3 years, parking fee revenues have averaged \$11,786 for approximately 2,357 parking spaces. It is estimated the total number of oversized vehicles is approximately 10 to 12)

Pros: The increase of revenue will offset the cost for the event. This potential increase in parking lot revenues is estimated to be \$11,784.

Cons: The increase of fees may cause the public to park in nearby neighborhoods. However, free parking areas (the Civic Center or Del Amo Mall) with shuttle service are provided to the public throughout the whole day.

Impact: Increase of revenue estimated at \$11,784

PROPOSED 2011 FOURTH OF JULY REVISIONS

- **Eliminate the Bazaar**
 - Pros: Reduction of all vendors reduces the crowd impact at the park, allowing for more space for participants.
 - Cons: Reduction of revenue.
 - Impact: Loss of \$10,000 in revenue**

- **Re-institute “old fashioned Traditional-style” 4th of July games**
 (i.e. balloon toss, three legged race, potato sack race, etc).
Pros: Re-instituting the old fashioned traditional-style games in an effort to re-engage resident youth and adults.
Cons: Increased expenses
Impact: **Increased expenses of \$1,017**

- **Consider Implementation of a new “Youth Game Zone” within the roller hockey rink on a fee-offset basis.**
 This concept will be added as an activity option onto the participants’ survey. Based on the results of the survey, staff will determine if this option is in demand from the community. This program concept would not require City funding, and would only be implemented if a sponsor could be found to offset the costs or if the costs could be offset by user fees.
Pros: Initiate a youth game zone on a fee-offset basis for the many youth that attend this event. Provides for more fun for youth attending event and opportunity for community sponsorship and involvement.
Cons: If no sponsor is found, offset costs for this by charging a fee.
Impact: **Sponsorship or Fee Offset**

- **Eliminate the parking of oversize vehicles at Wilson Park.**
Pros: Provide additional parking for cars at Wilson Park and to improve sightlines from the park into parking lot. In addition, elimination of oversized vehicles may curb potential alcohol and other related issues.
Cons: Oversized vehicle owners will not be allowed to park. However, free parking areas (the Civic Center or Del Amo Mall) with shuttle service are provided to the public throughout the whole day.
Impact: **No fiscal impact. Will impact approximately 10 to 12 oversized vehicles.**

ATTACHMENT B

Projected 4th of July 2010 Profit/Loss Statement

Action:

Reduce Vendor Bazaar from 100 to 50 Vendors

	Revenue from 100 Vendors	
Current	(\$100x100)	\$ 10,000
Projected	Revenue from 50 Vendors (\$100 x 50)	\$ 5,000
	Revenue Loss	\$ (5,000)

Action

Re-Institute "Old Fashioned Traditional Style Games

Current Materials and Supplies	No Labor and Materials Costs	\$ -
Proposed Materials	Candy, Water Balloons, Gunny Sacks	\$ 360
Proposed Labor	7 hours x 7 Recreation Staff	\$ 657
	New Expenditure	\$ (1,017)

Action

Increase Parking Fee at Wilson Park

Current	Residents--\$5 per car Over Sized \$10 per parking space (Over Sized Vehicles usually use 2 spaces)	\$ 11,786
Proposed Parking Fees	Residents--\$10 per car Non Residents--\$15 per car Residents Over Sized Vehicles--\$20 (flat rate charged not per space) Non Residents Over Sized Vehicles-- \$30 (flat rate charged not per space)	\$ 23,570
	Revenue Gain	\$ 11,784

Subtotal

Reduce Vendor Bazaar from 100 to 50 Vendors	\$ (5,000)
Re-Institute "Old Fashioned" Traditional Style Games	\$ (1,017)
Increased Parking Fees and Flat Rate	\$ 11,784
Projected Net Deficit Reduction	\$ 5,767

ATTACHMENT C

Projected 4th of July 2011 Profit/Loss Statement

Action

Eliminate the Vendor Bazaar

	Revenue from 100 Vendors	
Current	(\$100x100)	\$ 10,000
Projected	Revenue from 0 Vendors (\$100 x 50)	\$ -
	Revenue Loss	\$ (10,000)

Action

Re-Institute "Old Fashioned Traditional Style Games

Current Materials and Supplies	No Labor and Materials Costs	\$ -
Proposed Materials	Candy, Water Balloons, Gunny Sacks	\$ 360
Proposed Labor	7 hours x 7 Recreation Staff	\$ 657
	New Expenditure	\$ (1,017)

Action

Increase Parking Fee at Wilson Park

Current	Residents--\$5 per car Over Sized \$10 per parking space Over Sized Vehicles usually use 2 spaces)	\$ 11,786
Proposed Parking Fees	Residents--\$10 Non Residents--\$15 per car Eliminate Over Sized Vehicle Parking at Wilson Park (Approximately 10-12 Vehicles affected.)	\$ 23,570
	Revenue Gain	\$ 11,784

Subtotal

Eliminate the Vendor Bazaar	\$ (10,000)
Re-Institute "Old Fashioned Traditional Style Games	\$ (1,017)
Increased Parking Fee for Residents and Non Residents	\$ 11,784
Projected Net Deficit Reduction	\$ 767