



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 23-32, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-3.

CC - ACTION ITEM: (1) Discussion of Proposed Town Plaza Use Policy; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate

Meeting Date: October 10, 2022

Contact Person/Dept.: Elizabeth Garcia/Office of Economic and Cultural Development
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Fiscal Impact: Yes No **General Fund:** Yes No

Attachments: Yes No

Commission Action Required: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (10/05/2022); Culver City Downtown Business Association (10/05/2022); Business and Property Owners Adjacent to Town Plaza (10/05/2022).

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (10/04/2022); Heather Baker (10/05/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the proposed Town Plaza Use Policy ("Policy"); and (2) provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND

Town Plaza was designed to attract residents, employees and visitors to Downtown Culver City. The original portion of Town Plaza was constructed in 2002 upon a vacated portion of Washington Blvd, that ran in between the Culver Hotel, the former Arclight Theater, and in front of The Culver Studios. In 2019, the City expanded Town Plaza in order to create a new public open space that could serve as a public venue for art, music and special events.

Since 2002, the original portion of Town Plaza (“Town Plaza-West” as referenced in the Policy) has been administered through informal policies and procedures, which require both City Council sponsorship and a Special Event Permit for events, and a Film Permit for filming activities. Since 2019, the expanded portion of Town Plaza (“Town Plaza-East” as referenced in the Policy) has been administered in the same manner. Town Plaza-West and Town Plaza-East are collectively referred to as “Town Plaza.”

Due to the increased demand for Town Plaza’s use, staff recommends that a formal policy be adopted to properly manage the space. Through the establishment of policies, rules, procedures and fees for the use of Town Plaza, it is the desire of the City to activate the downtown area, by providing a community space for events and activities, while ensuring public health, safety, and welfare is protected. The proposed Policy, through its application and implementation, would ensure that events are compatible in size and type for use of Town Plaza, while balancing the impacts on residential neighbors and local businesses. Through this Policy, it is further the intent to provide quality public facilities that are accessible and available for diverse recreational activities and to ensure community members, businesses and organizations have a safe and enjoyable environment for public events.

DISCUSSION:

The draft Policy applies to Town Plaza as a whole, including both Town Plaza-East and Town Plaza-West and addresses matters related to hours of operation, permissible events and activities, event reservation and priority procedures, among other things.

Hours of Operation

Staff is proposing operating hours of 7a.m. to 2 a.m. The hours Town Plaza is closed to the public does not preclude persons from passing through on route to another location, but rather provides a framework for events and activities in Town Plaza and the operation of adjacent businesses.

Permissible events and activities

The draft Policy addresses the types of events and activities permissible in Town Plaza. Events and activities include City-produced events and activities, City-sponsored events and activities, incidental business/commercial uses by Town Plaza businesses, film-related activities, and First Amendment activities.

Priority reservation procedures

The draft Policy prioritizes events and activities occurring in Town Plaza as follows:

1. City-produced events;
2. City-sponsored events;
 - a. Grantees of special event grants and performing arts grants; or
 - b. Culver City based organizations with a cooperative memorandum of understanding with the City;
3. Filming-related activities;

4. Incidental business/commercial uses by Town Plaza adjacent businesses; and
5. All other event requests.

Approval process

Procedures to permit these events and activities are outlined in the proposed Policy and conform with the City's informal policy and past custom and practice that have been used for scheduling events and activities in Town Plaza. Staff is proposing to increase the amount of the refundable deposit that ensures repairs and cleaning are performed after an event in Town Plaza-West from \$1,000 to \$2,000, while the current \$2,500 deposit for Town Plaza-East will remain the same. The increase for Town Plaza-West is necessary because the deposit amount is no longer adequate and has not increased since the original plaza was constructed.

First Amendment activities

Classification and regulation of Town Plaza is detailed in the proposed Policy. Town Plaza is classified as a limited public forum and the regulations are reasonable and viewpoint neutral. The proposed Policy is also a content-neutral time, place and manner regulation of Town Plaza.

Next steps

After receiving direction from City Council on the draft Policy, staff will incorporate City Council's comments and return on November 14th (tentative date) to present the final Town Plaza Use Policy for City Council's consideration and adoption.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There are no costs associated with City Council's discussion of and direction on the proposed Policy.

ATTACHMENT

1. 2022-10-10_ATT_Proposed Town Plaza Use Policy

MOTIONS

That the City Council:

1. Discuss the Proposed Town Plaza Use Policy; and
2. Provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.