





2014 SXSW POST-EVENT EVALUATION

CITY OF AUSTIN
FOUNDED 1839

27,991
MUSIC CONFERENCE WRISTBANDS ISSUED
(registrants and artists)

REGISTRANTS FROM
82
FOREIGN COUNTRIES

THE FILM CONFERENCE CONSISTED OF
18,747
REGISTRANTS
for **200**
CONFERENCE SESSIONS
133
FEATURE FILMS
89 WORLD PREMIERES
11 NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERS
8 U.S. PREMIERES

THE INTERACTIVE CONFERENCE CONSISTED OF
32,798
REGISTRANTS PARTICIPATED
in **1,110**
CONFERENCE SESSIONS

THE MUSIC FESTIVAL CONSISTED OF
2,371
SHOWCASE
ACTS
on **111**
STAGES

60,458
NIGHTS BOOKED
at **71**
HOTELS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South by Southwest Festival (SXSW) is a boon to the Austin economy, bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The City of Austin and its organizers have worked cooperatively to ensure the safety of the thousands of attendees at its sponsored events from pre-planning to working side-by-side during the festival to address issues as they occur.

SXSW, first established as a music-only festival in 1987 with 700 registrants, now encompasses separate music, film and interactive conferences that have grown to approximately 80,000 registrants this year. SXSW remains the pre-eminent special event in Austin each March and has become the catalyst for a Spring Music Festival that brings tens of thousands more into the city without SXSW credentials.

City staff works to maintain responsiveness as it balances event characteristics with community concerns. City and SXSW staff continue to meet with crowd specialists to get versed on best-managed practices for large-scale events. Recently, SXSW contracted with Populous, a firm that has experience in coordinating large events including the World Cup, the Olympics and the Super Bowl, to conduct a workshop for SXSW staff and the City's Austin Center for Events (ACE) Division Managers.

The City has improved its management of the SXSW and the Spring Music Festival from lessons learned in previous years. Those improvements include:

- Staggering cut-off times of temporary events so all do not end at the same time, thus avoiding the massive influx of people into the streets trying to get to another location.
- Evaluation of all permit applications, including sound, temporary change of use and temporary use, by the Austin Center for Events to allow for a more cohesive response. This one-stop shop alleviates the previous scenario where an applicant went to a City department, got a permit and thought that was all that was needed.
- Establishing earlier deadlines for outdoor permit applications to more effectively manage the cumulative impact of all events.
- Assigning more Public Assembly Code Enforcement (PACE) personnel throughout the SXSW period to ensure the safety for those attending various events.
- Creating a Unified Command Center for quicker response when issues arise.

Despite these efforts, the City finds itself at a critical point where public safety could be compromised if policies are not put in place for the 2015 SXSW festival and the non-sanctioned events surrounding it.

This report, in response to a City Council resolution, addresses crowd management issues, including traffic congestion, that have evolved as Austin has become a Spring Break destination. The report looks not only at SXSW, but activities that have sprung up in large part because of its success, as well as special events beyond the March Spring Music Festival.

Over the past several months, City staff has gathered community input to improve the experience for both attendees and Austin residents who do not attend yet nevertheless are still impacted.
From that input and a review of the impact of this year's events, the Austin Center for Events staff has concluded that the two major issues that must be addressed are (1) alcohol consumption and (2) over-programming for the capacity of a venue whether an indoor or outdoor temporary location or established entertainment "brick-and-mortar" facilities.

This report outlines administrative, City ordinance and inter-agency improvements that will help mitigate those problems and other related issues.

One key action is that, City-wide, all temporary event applications will undergo closer scrutiny with respect to City Ordinance. Within the special event impact zone as defined for the 2015 Spring Music Festival (Central Business District up to 11th Street) there will be no automatic approval for temporary events that include performances and/or alcohol.

All applications must be thoroughly reviewed on their individual merit and anticipated attendance (based on capacity and promotion) while also taking into account what other events and commercial uses may be active nearby at the time of the proposed event. All of this must be done before a final decision can be made on whether an event application will be approved.

The report also acknowledges the tragic incident this year during SXSW in which a suspected drunk driver plowed into a crowd along Red River Street, killing four and injuring more than 20, and discusses what steps can be taken to help minimize a repeat of that situation.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 20140327-36

On March 27, 2014, the Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20140327-036 directing the City Manager is directed to conduct a full post-event evaluation of all events taking place during SXSW with respect to the following:

- Coordination with existing venues on issues related to safety and capacity for festival showcases and day parties.
- Traffic management including city street closures, ancillary traffic flow, and access for pedestrians and bicycles.
- City personnel, the deployment of public safety, and the availability of permitting resources.
- Event sprawl of ancillary events and potential impact on residential areas.
- Citywide capacity for temporary events.
- Provision of adequate staff with event management experience.
- Management of crowds outside venues.
- Impact of queuing of lines into open streets.
- Coordination of advertising, promotion, and credentials relative to the venue



SXSW 2014 OVERVIEW

Planning and preparation for the 2014 SXSW Film, Interactive and Music festivals began in June 2013. Austin Center for Events, which consists of various City departments, met with SXSW representatives to review the SXSW 2013 festival, build on what worked well and address what didn't.

The planning group also decided to activate the ACE Event Operations Center from March 6-17, 2014, staffed by City department along with SXSW representatives to provide quick response to issues arising from SXSW and non SXSW-sanctioned events. City departments represented included Austin Code, the Austin Fire Department, the Austin Police Department, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services, Austin Resource Recovery, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Transportation.

The importance of this pre-planning became evident when a March 13 multi-fatality vehicle incident occurred. An Austin/Travis County Commander at the Event Operations Center was able to immediately deploy additional medical resources. Within 45 minutes of the incident, all injured parties had been transported to area hospitals.

Another potential tragedy was averted by the efforts of the PACE Team and security at a SXSW venue. An artist incited the crowd to force their way into an event that was already at capacity but the situation was brought under control through the cooperative actions of the PACE Team and the club's personnel. SXSW 2014 once again set attendance records. While the economic impact in dollars is still not known, it will likely surpass the $218 million mark set in 2013.

SXSW registrants and the increase from 2013:

- SXSW Film: 18,747 (up 15 percent)
- SXSW Interactive: 32,798 registrants (up 7 percent)
- SXSW Music: 27,991 (up 11 percent)

Spring Music Festival 2014 Overview

Historic East Sixth Street serves as the epicenter for SXSW as well as the Spring Music Festival, both which occurred the first two weekends of March this year. Due to the volume of people and events in a small geographic area, crowd management is a worsening issue.

Spring Music Festival events promoted via social media ranged from small invitation-only events to very large ones that were free to anyone who showed up. Many of these included major consumer brand-sponsored events to promote their products, including alcoholic beverages often distributed for free. These large events contributed to clogged streets and sidewalks as attendees congregated on Historic East Sixth Street and surrounding areas.

More than 7,000 Spring Music Festival events were promoted through social media, a number that does not account for private events, "secret" shows or street performances (busking). Many of these events, driven by social networking, were ill-planned for the crowds that responded.

While SXSW was the principal event in March, 53 percent of the Temporary Event Permits issued by ACE during the Spring Music Festival were for non-SXSW events.

City staff determined that the majority of issues arising during the Spring Music Festival are not associated with SXSW-sanctioned events.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK PROCESS

City staff took several steps to ensure opportunities for the public to provide input about this year's SXSW experience, including an online survey, public comment at three City Board/Commission meetings; and two community engagement sessions at the Austin Convention Center.
Feedback was received from a variety of those affected by the festival including musicians, festival attendees, music patrons, venue managers, Downtown business owners, Downtown residents and festival volunteers.

Online survey (April 4-18) – 850 respondents

- Forty-nine percent were not registered for SXSW events while 26 percent were signed up. Sixteen percent did not attend any events while 9 percent attended both.
- Fifty-two percent believed street performances (busking) provided a positive impact on downtown attendees.
- Forty-six percent believed that there were too many permits issued while 26 percent believed there were too few.
- Sixty-five percent stated access to events (tickets, wristbands, RSVPs, etc.) should be based on venue capacity.
- Fifty-three percent stated that out-of-town businesses should be required to utilize a local event planner.
- Forty-five percent stated that the primary reason they attended the festival was for free food, alcohol, and free gifts or merchandise. Another 44 percent stated it was for the events and industry discovery.

Community engagement sessions at the Austin Convention Center (Both on May 28, 2014)

- Session I – 80 participants
- Session II – 45 participants

Presentations to the Downtown, Urban Transportation and Music commissions.

Community Feedback Concerns/Issues

1. Too many free-alcohol events take place.
2. Street performances are popular and beneficial to festival atmosphere.
3. Too many permits issued during SXSW, including non SXSW-sanctioned events. Since SXSW is the main reason for people visiting Austin in March, a higher percentage of the permits issued should be for SXSW events.
4. Deterioration of Historic East Sixth Street in terms of positive Sixth Street experience has occurred because of the crowds.
5. Access to events should be based on venue capacity and not over-booked or over-sold.
6. Retail business owners expressed a decline in sales over the past several years due to large crowds in the Historic East Sixth Street area.
7. Increased lighting would provide a safer atmosphere.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION RESPONSE

I. Coordination with existing venues on issues related to safety and capacity for festival showcases and day parties.

Situational Analysis
A majority of events taking place during Spring Festival Season are in brick-and-mortar venues. Approximately 100 of those hosted SXSW official showcases and events. These existing venues do not require any additional permitting from the City to host events, making venue oversight difficult.

These venues have existing occupancy loads based on "usable" square footage approved during their annual Public Assembly Permit /Inspection. Normal venue operations place occupancy between 40 percent and 80 percent capacity. However, during the Spring Music Festival, many venues operate at or near capacity. AFD issued citations to 13 venues for overcrowding. SXSW's assignment of staff at its venues greatly reduced the number of over-capacity and queuing issues at SXSW events. However, these same venues host day events that are not SXSW-sanctioned.

These non-SXSW events, combined with other businesses hosting unofficial events, accounted for the majority of follow-up required by ACE and PACE staff.

ACE has little regulatory authority over entertainment venues that operate with annual permits in terms of crowd management and line-queuing outside their facilities. City of Austin ordinances do not provide ACE with the authority to require live music brick-and-mortar facilities to provide a safety plan that addresses queuing, capacity, exterior crowd management, sound issues, traffic and right-of-way management, and health/sanitation issues.

Also, neither SXSW nor non-SXSW venues, either fixed or temporary, have consistently provided a list of performers to the City. Many times an internationally-known celebrity will draw huge crowds to venues with no safety plan. The lack of coordination with ACE prior to events results in public safety personnel having to react to situations rather than a safer, pro-active event management mode.

By having to react to events, personnel and resources have to be diverted from their primary responsibility to respond to the "uncontrolled" venue, leaving other venues uncovered and creating the potential for additional problems.

A proposed City-issued Entertainment License for all venues, whether fixed or temporary, would provide the necessary oversight in terms of crowd management and line-queuing and would mandate venue responsibility.

Staff Action Items
1. Determine and enforce an acceptable occupant load for the downtown area during the Spring Music Festival taking into consideration occupant loads in existing brick-and-mortar structures. This can then be combined with anticipated occupancy numbers for streets and used as a guide to determine the cumulative effect of all events.
2. Continue to strengthen relationships between ACE and SXSW staff to ensure better understanding of venue and event operations.
3. Implement additional review by ACE for the issuance of Temporary Change of Use Permits for existing buildings during the Spring Music Festival. In the past, the review concentrated primarily on Fire Code issues.

4. There will be no automatic approval of Temporary Event Sound Permits for events that include a performance and/or alcohol held in parking lots and on outdoor private property in the Central Business District, up to 11th Street, during the Spring Music Festival.
5. Utilize resources from APD, AFD, the Music Office, Austin Code and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission to provide educational and outreach opportunities to existing venues regarding current laws and ordinances as they relate to events.
6. Conduct a more strict examination of all temporary event applications under existing criteria within City Ordinance 9-2-50 (Music Office Review) and 9-2-51 (Additional Review for Temporary Events). That existing criteria includes:

§ 9-2-50 Music Office Review

- Suitability of the site for outdoor music based on topography and proximity to existing and future residential, commercial and civic uses.
- Size and capacity of the site or venue covered by the permit.
- Sound-mitigating design features proposed in the application, including building design, stage construction and orientation, buffering, size, location and orientation of speakers.
- Restrictions on decibel levels or hours of operation proposed by the applicant, if any, beyond those required by this chapter for the permit sought.
- Availability of a responsible party, as defined in Section 9-2-1 (Definitions), to attend and monitor outdoor music events. --Source: Ord. 20110210-029.

§ 9-2-51 Additional Review for Temporary Events

- For an application under Section 9-2-37 (24-Hour Live Music Permit) or Section 9-2-38 (Multi-Day Special Event Permit), the special events office shall work directly with the music office in the review and recommendation required under Section 9-2-50 (Music Office Review).
- In addition to the factors specified under Section 9-2-50 (Music Office Review), the Music Office and the special events office shall consider the following factors in reviewing an application under this section:
  a. Anticipated attendance, based on event capacity and promotion.
  b. Likely impacts on traffic and public right-of-way.
  c. Availability of parking and loading for motor vehicles and parking for bicycles.
  d. Adequacy of planning for security and emergency services.
  e. Level of event insurance coverage.
  f. Availability of food and alcohol.
  g. Cumulative impacts of events in the vicinity of the proposed event, for which permits have been issued or applications submitted.
  h. Public health and safety. -- Source: Ordinance No.. 20110210-029.6.

7. Require Liquor Liability Insurance under a new Special Events Ordinance for events on public property where alcohol will be served, sold, or is likely to be consumed.



II. Traffic management including city street closures, ancillary traffic flow, and access for pedestrians and bicycles.

Situational Analysis

Traffic continues to be problematic with the large volume of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians moving into the congested downtown area, exacerbated where closures are put into effect. The Interstate 35 frontage roads, as well as most downtown intersections, became gridlocked when vehicles entered blocked intersections, preventing cross-traffic from moving.

Police officers were stationed at some of these locations to assist in keeping traffic moving. The problem occurred throughout the nine days of street closures and was especially an issue at afternoon rush hour and the Friday and Saturday of the SXSW Music Festival, which had the largest volume of traffic.

Eastbound traffic on East Fifth and East Cesar Chavez streets was more congested than usual during the rush hour on Friday. The Austin Transportation Department adjusted the traffic control plan to address these issues by closing several ramps on IH-35 and allowing traffic to flow out of the downtown area.

Austin Police and Transportation Departments will continue to examine how personnel resources and traffic control devices are placed to mitigate issues involving ingress and egress of the overall downtown area.

In light of the fatality accident during SXSW in which a man drove through barricades into the crowd, Austin Transportation and APD are working together to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety. APD is assessing the feasibility of placing marked patrol cards at strategic points, but the sheer number of road closures may impede its ability to have a patrol car at all barricaded locations.

At several locations, excessive pedestrian traffic impeded vehicles. APD is working with ATD to explore adjusting the timing of pedestrian crossings at key locations and APD will work to add more officers at these locations to help manage pedestrian traffic.

Staff Action Items

1. Continue to work with SXSW to identify more efficient methods for emergency vehicles assigned to AFD Station 1 (Fifth and Trinity streets) to respond to calls for service.
2. Require Traffic Control Plans be completed earlier. Last-minute changes cause City staff to divert resources from other critical areas to resolve these changes. Additionally, those requesting street closures can get earlier approval, which allows them to plan their activations in a more efficient manner.
3. Require barricade providers to attend transportation planning

meetings. City staff has found that certain decisions regarding the Traffic Control Plans are often not shared with the employees of the barricade company, which has resulted in barricades being installed incorrectly or at the wrong time.

4. Establish routine set-up and tear-down times for closure of IH-35 ramps. IH-35 entrance and exit ramps near downtown are usually closed only after traffic congestion builds. Additionally, at the end of the night, some closures are not re-opened in a timely manner. Having routine set-up and tear-down times will allow for a more consistent plan for City staff and the barricade company as well as allow for better communication to the public about these closures.
5. Establish a traffic device staging area to store extra traffic control devices to be quickly deployed as needed. Implementation of approved changes to the Traffic Control Plans has not always been timely due to traffic control devices coming from outside the downtown area. Staging these nearby will allow for quicker changes and reduced traffic difficulties.
6. Close vehicular westbound Sixth Street traffic under IH-35, to lengthen the north bound queue to Eighth and 11th streets. This eliminates conflict points for pedestrians and cars on the southbound side of the service road and Sixth Street.
7. Establish a protocol that communication/clarification and sign-off for any changes to traffic control plans while in the field or during the event must be documented and signed off or approved by the Assistant Director of Transportation or the Traffic Engineer responsible for downtown.
8. Explore the possibility of utilizing revenue from increased parking fees and fines to fund a downtown shuttle, possibly using under-utilized City of Austin parking garages and/or private garages. Possible funding sources include:
    a. Increase parking meter hours during the week including Sunday.
    b. Increase parking meter fees during the week.
    c. Increase the minimum fine for parking violations during special events.
9. Add ability to change signal timing from ACE Event Operations Center so that the traffic engineer monitoring traffic cameras can make necessary adjustments immediately. This will reduce the delay that occurs while trying to reach a person on the phone and explaining in detail what needs to be done and why.
10. Add traffic cameras at several strategic downtown locations. During this past year's event, several areas were identified as not being covered by the range of existing traffic cameras. This should include the following locations:
    a. Austin Music Hall, 208 Nueces St.
    b. Red River Street from 10th to Cesar Chavez Street.
    c. Cesar Chavez Street from Congress Avenue to San Jacinto Boulevard.
    d. Seventh Street from Congress to IH-35
    e. IH-35 southbound entrance ramp at Sixth Street.
11. Identify pedi-cab corridors and restricted areas earlier, and host a pre-event week meeting with pedi-cab companies. During each major event, there is considerable confusion by pedi-cab operators as to where they can traverse along and across the closure areas.
12. Identify a central location for a functioning/managed taxi staging area. Parking lanes have been re-purposed as taxi lanes during the Spring Music Festival. However, experience has shown that very few taxis utilize these locations. Creating managed taxi lanes/areas and requiring all cab companies to utilize them should decrease the number of complaints received by residents and visitors about the difficulty in getting a cab during festivals.
13. Staff more intersections with APD officers during peak traffic times to prevent vehicles from entering blocked intersections and maintain positive traffic flow. This will allow for downtown rush-hour traffic and end-of-event traffic to exit the downtown area quicker and more efficiently.

III. City personnel, the deployment of public safety and the availability of permitting resources.

Situational Analysis
SXSW and the Spring Music Festival stretch City resources. APD is looking to add personnel, possibly non-sworn, at future events to help out with staffing. Additionally, the department is reaching out to regional law enforcement partners to help with staffing.

The Austin Fire Department has had persistent issues with the number of inspections that are needed the day before, or the day of, an event. From mid-January to the onset of the Spring Music Festival, AFD conducted 536 inspections and 265 of those (49 percent) were conducted from March 11-16, 2014.

This was the first year that Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services introduced an effort to utilize only ATCEMS resources dedicated to the last four days of the festival. This initiative also included the establishment of a Casualty Collection Point for patients within the street-closure footprint.

This initiative prevented any daily dedicated 9-1-1 ambulances from being dispatched to calls within the East Sixth Street Entertainment District. As a result of this very successful initiative, there was not any negative impact on the EMS delivery of service related to the normal day-to-day 9-1-1 responses.

The medical emergency responses within the Historic East Sixth Street District were managed independently from the normal 9-1-1 system responses and with dedicated resources.

The Environmental Health Services Division of Health and Human Resources agreed to conduct co-inspections with the PACE Team on evening shifts March 7 and March 14, 2014. These teams helped increase the number of inspections of temporary food and mobile food vendors by 64 percent compared to 2013.

Austin Police and Transportation Departments will continue to examine how personnel resources and traffic control devices are placed to mitigate issues involving ingress and egress of the overall downtown area.

Staff Action Items
1. Increase interaction between AFD and Austin Code through the use of the PACE Team to assist with pre-event inspections.
2. Reassign some AFD Technical and Maintenance inspectors to Special Events for the week of SXSW to assist with the numerous inspections and to supplement PACE teams. (This will create a reduction of more than 250 Technical and Maintenance inspections normally performed during that week.)
3. Explore alternative internal staffing models within APD for future events. This may include additional non-sworn personnel, and partnering with regional law enforcement partners to extend coverage outside of downtown during the Spring Music Festival.
4. Ensure space is available within the East Sixth Street area for Austin-Travis County EMS to establish a Casualty Collection Point and to stage ATCEMS resources for dedicated response.


STOP
POLICE
POLICE

IV. Event sprawl of ancillary events and potential impact on residential areas.

Situational Analysis

Some have suggested that events occurring during SXSW need to be spread out over a larger area to reduce the density of the population on Historic East Sixth Street. Many events during the Spring Music Festival already occur outside the downtown area.

All ancillary events, SXSW or not, still require the same oversight and permitting as an event in the downtown district or face being shut down. Event sprawl increases complaints received from residential areas which include noise created by loud music, illegal parking on residential streets, and blocked and/or obstructed fire hydrants. Illegal street parking, in addition to the inconvenience to local residents, is also a public safety concern as it makes it more difficult for emergency vehicles to navigate residential streets.

Staff Action Items

1. Limit the number of ACE-approved permits during the Spring Music Festival to a manageable level. This number will vary according to the cumulative effect of the size and types of events.
2. Ensure that all temporary event sound permits within 600 feet of residences do not exceed cut-off times of 8 p.m. on weekdays and 10 p.m. on weekends.

V. Citywide capacity for temporary events

Situational Analysis

The influx of crowds into Austin is an issue that the Austin Center for Events has struggled with since its creation in September 2012.

While the citywide capacity for temporary events is based on many factors, the ACE Team has worked on an ordinance to include tier levels that provide better oversight and quality control. The proposed Special Events Ordinance allows for event impact areas which can reduce the number of events in a geographical area to help alleviate many overcrowding issues.

In 2014, ACE accepted special event applications for temporary events until mid-February, at which time no further applications were accepted. ACE Managers determined that each of their respective teams had reached the maximum number of applications they were able to process.
After the cut-off date, 10 applications were turned away. There is no estimate on how many simply did not try to apply.

This limitation has been well-received from the community. Event organizers were advised in advance that the City would stop taking permit applications sooner than usual. Because of this outreach, the response was mainly one of understanding.

Staff Action Items

1. ACE staff, stakeholders, and the Law Department are meeting regularly to finalize the Special Events Ordinance for adoption by City Council.
2. All temporary event sound permits beyond 600 feet of residences shall not exceed the cut-off times of 10 p.m. weekdays and midnight on weekends. This is in current Code; however, many events tried to extend their hours. Again, this will be monitored and enforced by PACE.

VI. Provision of adequate staff with event management experience.

Situational Analysis

Large events often enlist a number of out-of-state event producers. Most interactions and required submittals are completed via email or over the phone, which can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of ACE requirements. While some producers may hire a local representative to expedite the permitting process, they often fail to provide them with complete information. That makes it hard for City staff to determine whether a producer has adequate event management experience.

Also, some producers arrive in Austin to set up their productions and deny knowing all requirements.

The Austin Fire Code states “trained crowd managers shall be provided for facilities or events where more than 1,000 persons congregate. The minimum number of crowd managers shall be established at a ratio of one crowd manager to every 250 persons.”

Staff action items

1. Develop and implement educational programs for event promoters and organizers to explain and demonstrate various aspects of City of Austin requirements, particularly those that may be in effect during the Spring Music Festival.
2. Event organizers and promoters, as required by Fire Code, should provide trained crowd managers for facilities or events where more than 1,000 persons are projected to attend.



VII. Management of crowds outside of venues.

Situational analysis

Overcrowding outside of venues is frequently a concern and this year several venues attracted crowds two or three times their capacity, causing large crowds to spill over into area streets. The resulting crowds required additional officers to move the people from roadways where vehicles were traveling.

Some venues would oversell or "raffle" tickets to create interest and draw crowds to their venues. In most cases, these venues would not have a queuing plan in place resulting in unmanaged crowds and safety hazards on nearby streets and sidewalks.
These situations are preventable with early communication and planning for mitigation. However, venues and promoters are not presently required to coordinate or share information with City departments for these types of events.

SXSW assigns staff at official SXSW events in part to mitigate crowd management issues. Additionally, for 2014, SXSW had a staff member in the ACE Command Center during the Music Festival. These commitments have helped to identify and resolve any issues involving SXSW venues more quickly.

Staff Action Items

1. Work with special event promoters, venues and permit holders through ACE, and require that talent lists be provided with enough advance notice to make adjustments. If conditions are not met, authorize ACE to deny an application based on public safety concerns.
2. Establish year-round queuing protocols and standards for existing venues.
3. Advise event representatives that receiving and/or retaining their event permit depends, in part, on their ability to effectively manage crowds both inside and outside of their venue(s).
4. Authorize ACE to shut down venues where representatives or performers are observed inciting actions that compromise public safety, and to enforce closure until the ACE Management Team is satisfied with any proposed resolution. Increase the number of enforcement inspectors on-duty to respond to overcrowding complaints.
5. Create an entertainment license that must be renewed on a periodic basis (annually or every two years).
6. Require all venues to produce a public safety plan, which is reviewed and approved by ACE. This requirement would be part of the proposed Entertainment License.



VIII. Impact of queuing of lines into open streets

Situational analysis

Several large brick-and-mortar venues adjacent to open streets hold annual permits/licenses and are not required to have special permits during the Spring Music Festival. Issues at these venues often result in responses from various City Departments. In contrast, when representatives hosting temporary events submit their applications, they are also required to submit a queuing plan. Most of these temporary venues do not create hazards because their plan has been reviewed and approved.

Staff action items

1. Continue to enforce queuing requirements for temporary events.
2. Establish Entertainment Permit to replace Outdoor Music Venue (OMV) permits and require brick-and-mortar businesses with annual permits to obtain the new Entertainment Permit for live music performances during Spring Festival Season.

IX. Coordination of advertising, promotion and credentials relative to the venue.

Situational Analysis

Advertising, promotion and credentialing at venues are handled by the event organizers/promoters and there is little the City has been able to do to ensure that an event is not “oversold” to an audience. City staff has found that over-promotion of events results in capacity issues, including angry crowds when unable to enter a venue, and can jeopardize the permitting of a venue.

Staff action items

1. Tighten marketing and promotion of events by working with event organizers to make them aware of permitting issues that may occur.
2. Continue to work with event RSVP companies:
3. To better understand their product and the effects of social media in this area.
4. To collaborate with these companies to better manage potential crowds and other issues in advance of scheduled events. These companies have instant access to thousands of people during events. Partnering with these companies can help ACE and the City of Austin as a whole communicate vital and critical information to festival attendees.


AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL EVENT OCCUPANT LOAD CARD
Event Name:
Address:
Responsible Party:
Phone Number:
Maximum Occupant Load:
Comments:
By Order of:
Effective Dates:
THIS CERTIFICATE MUST BE DISPLAYED AT ENTRANCE AT ALL TIMES
AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT
TEMPORARY CHANGE OF USE
ASSEMBLY OPERATIONAL
Occupancy Name:
Office DEPOT.

CITY CODE CHANGES

Proposed Change No. 1

Amend 9-2-30 (3) Decibel limits for outdoor music

Current wording:

- Up to 85 decibels during the Spring Music Festival between 10 a.m. and 2 a.m.

Proposed change:

- Up to 85 decibels during the Spring Music Festival between 10 a.m. and 2 a.m. for venues that have an Outside Music Venue Permit and a City of Austin-approved Security and Emergency Plan.

Reasoning: Current wording provides a false expectation that no requirements for permit issuance are needed.

Proposed Change No. 2

Amend 9-2-22 Permit for sound equipment on vehicle

Current wording:

- The accountable official may issue a permit under this section for the use of sound equipment attached to or mounted on a vehicle, provided that the permit is limited to:

  (1) 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Monday through Saturday; or

  (2) 12 noon and 6 p.m. on Sunday.

- A permit issued under this section is valid for a 24-hour period.

Proposed change:

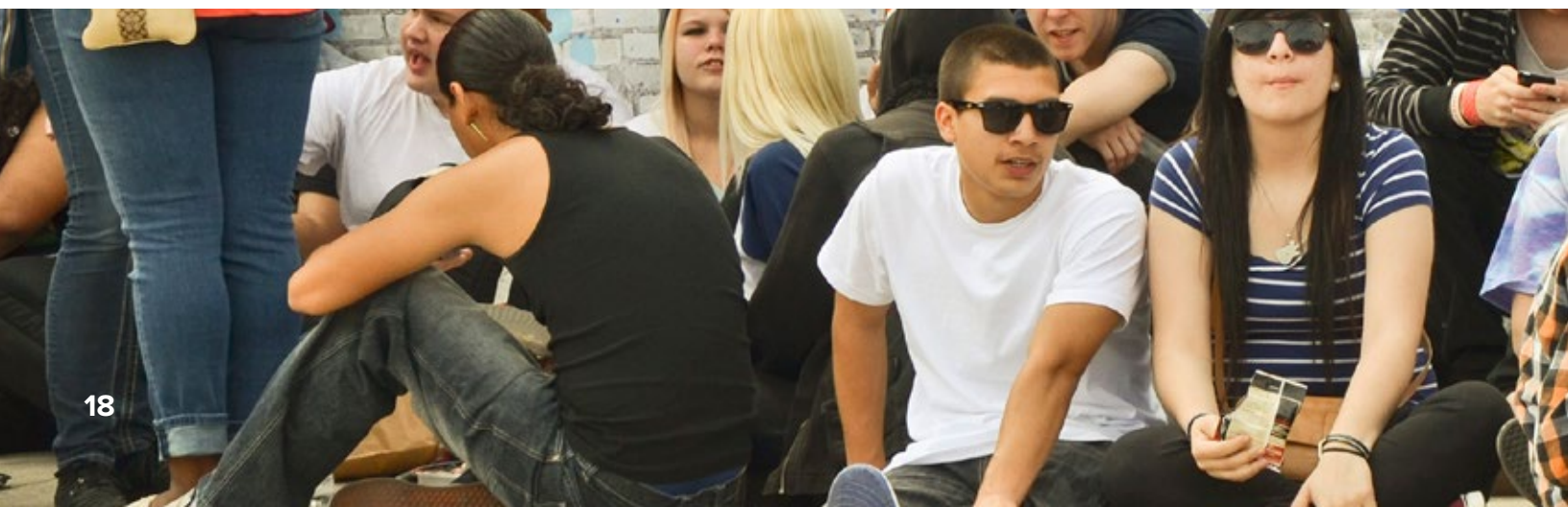
- The accountable official may issue a permit under this section for the use of sound equipment attached to or mounted on a vehicle, provided that the permit is limited to:

  (1) 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday; or

  (2) 12 noon and 6 p.m. on Sunday.

- A permit issued under this section is valid for a 24-hour period.
- A permit may not be issued under this section without the approval of a temporary event impact plan under Section 9-2-52 (Temporary Event Impact Plan).

Reasoning: Without the addition of provision C, there is no clear stipulation to deny a permit based on cumulative impact.



OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Increase funding for PACE**
   Permitted and unpermitted events are taking place year-round with inadequate oversight. Lack of year-round enforcement undermines the effectiveness of ordinances. While PACE has focused its efforts during SXSW, additional funding for staffing would enable year-round inspections and enforcement activities would enhance its public safety mission.

   Each PACE Team consists of two AFD inspectors, two APD officers and two Code inspectors. Based on current average overtime rate, the cost for two additional PACE teams to work three 10-hour shifts each week for 30 weeks a year is $301,500.

   To cover these costs, the three departments would need additional funding: $120,600 for AFD; $108,540 for APD; and $72,320 for Austin Code.

2. **Increase and improve lighting for Historic East Sixth Street**
   For public safety reasons, both staff and the public believe more lighting is needed to help manage crowds and increase security in poorly-lit areas.

3. **Establish closer coordination/cooperation with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission**
   a. TABC has agreed to place personnel at the SXSW Command Post Tuesday through Saturday of the 2015 SXSW Music Festival, primarily during daytime events. This person will assign agents to investigate licensed premises where issues have been reported.
   b. TABC will continue outreach and education on prohibitions against relinquishing or effectively subleasing control of venues to a third party (allowing staff and/or business name to change for event only).
   c. TABC will review its Marketing Practice Bulletin on Consumer Events and consider limiting the length free alcohol can take place. It will also consider the role of social media in over-promoting events.
   d. TABC has agreed to update the City of Austin approval document used for temporary permits with updated contact information and possible additional changes. TABC is now sending links to post on the current Texas Music Office web page regarding selling or serving alcohol at special events.
   e. TABC will re-examine how resources (agents) are dispersed during the Spring Music Festival and other special events
   f. ACE will involve TABC more heavily in pre-planning, permit modifications and rules changes where there may be mutual interests. As an example, current Public Assembly Code Enforcement rules will be reviewed related to capacity and the authority for police, fire and TABC to inspect locations with more than 50 people where alcohol is being served, including private parties and unlicensed locations.





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Austin Music Commission
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SXSW Staff