

Proposal to add Outdoor Entertainment as a Conditional Use

What is Outdoor Entertainment?

Outdoor entertainment is a commercial use described in the City's Land Development Code as a "predominantly spectator use conducted in open, partially enclosed, or screened facilities." ([LDC 25-2-4](#)) Examples of Outdoor Entertainment uses in Austin include Boggy Creek Farm (used as an event space).

Although this definition allows for any size and scale of Outdoor Entertainment use, large or very frequent Outdoor Entertainment operations would likely not be compatible the character of the SRDs.

Where this use is currently allowed?

Outdoor Entertainment is allowed as a conditional use in some commercial and industrial zones: Commercial Recreation (CR), Community Commercial, Lake Commercial (L), Central Business District (CBD), Downtown Mixed Use (DMU), General Commercial Service (CS & CS-1), Commercial Highway Service (CH), Industrial Park (IP), Major Industry (MI), and Limited Industrial Services (LI). ([Permitted Use Chart](#)).

Since Outdoor Entertainment is only permitted a conditional use, any particular request for a Conditional Use Permit is subject to restrictions and limitations that may include number of annual events, size of events, and decibel level.

If this use was to be added to the SRDs, it should be limited to the limited to the mixed use (MU) and corridor (CMU) subdistricts that are located within the geographic centers of each district that are intended to be the most dense. This use would not be allowed in the subdistricts that are intended to function as transition zones between the regulating plan area and surrounding lower density neighborhoods.

Why should this use be permitted in the SRDs?

- *It Supports TOD Goals*

The SRDs establish transit-oriented-development regulations in order to provide an alternative to suburban sprawl and create sustainable development patterns. Each of the specific regulating plans aims to create dense, vibrant, mixed use, with safe and pleasant pedestrian and public realms. Adding Outdoor Entertainment as a conditional use in these transit rich areas would support these goals because it encourages pedestrian activity and would allow for more types of places for people to gather and interact at the street level. Additionally, locating this use in transit rich areas encourages greater transit use. In addition to supporting SRD goals, broadening the mix of available uses within these areas would also support the goals of Imagine Austin, including:

LUTP1: Align land use and transportation planning and decision-making to achieve a compact and connect city in line with the Growth Concept map.

LUTP3: Promote development in compact centers, communities, or along corridors that are designed to encourage walking and bicycling and reduce healthcare, housing, and transportation costs.

- *It Supports Local Arts and Culture*

Allowing outdoor entertainment would create more opportunities for arts and culture and support the local creative industries, which is a priority in Imagine Austin. Imagine Austin notes that, Austin's live music and arts scene is a cornerstone of the city's identity." (p.178) Imagine Austin includes many goals about building the creative economy including:

EP1. Promote and measure business entrepreneurship, innovation, and a culture of creativity.

CP5. Continue to explore and identify solutions to support live music venues, while addressing sound abatement issues.

CP9. Encourage artists and other creative individuals by promoting the creation of live/work spaces and creative industry hubs, districts, and clusters as retail, community, or neighborhood anchors and support other economic and community enterprises.

CP13. Create avenues for cultural variety and provide the opportunity for all groups to benefit from the different cultures present in Austin.

EP5. Enhance Austin's draw as a premier national and international tourist destination by strengthening and diversifying the arts and entertainment offerings and expanding the availability of family friendly events and venues.

- *It supports complete communities*

One of Imagine Austin's central goals is to build complete communities and states that "[T]o grow as a livable community, new development should create lively places." (p. 126) A complete community ensures that arts, culture, and creativity are accessible to all citizens. Imagine Austin includes many goals about creating complete communities including:

LUT P29 Develop accessible community gathering places such as plazas, parks, farmer's markets, sidewalks, and streets in all parts of Austin, especially within activity centers and along activity corridors including downtown, future Transit Oriented Developments, in denser, mixed use communities and other redevelopment areas that encourage interaction and provide places for people of all ages to visit and relax.

What concerns do neighbors have about Outdoor Entertainment uses?

In past planning efforts, neighborhood groups and residents have expressed concerns about the traffic and noise that Outdoor Events might generate as well as commercial uses in residential neighborhoods. Additionally, residents may see this change as contributing to gentrification or other neighborhood changes.

Since Outdoor Entertainment would be permitted only as a conditional use, this would allow the City to place limitations on the number and scale of events throughout the year as well as place limitations on noise levels.