

2027 Special Events

OCTOBER 19, 2026

Preliminary Council Direction Requested

- Adapt downtown events in 2027 during the Downtown Modernization & Beautification Project.
- Identify locations and formats staff should advance.
- Clarify organizing responsibilities and expectations for City-supported events.
- Guide partnership discussions and budget preparation.

Planning Considerations

- Alternate locations require property approvals, accessible layouts, parking, utilities, public safety, and staffing.
- Joint events offer opportunities to share resources and reach broader audiences.
- Event scope must reflect available staff, partner capacity, and funding.
- The Community Events Survey closes October 26. Completed results are not available tonight and will inform subsequent programming recommendations.

Blooming Fest: Location



1. Preferred location: Reed Keppler Park
2. Alternative: Metra parking lot

Direction requested: Should staff advance Reed Keppler Park as the preferred location, with the Metra lot as an alternative?

Mosaic Market: Location



1. Preferred location: Adjacent to Gallery 200
2. Alternative: City Hall parking lot

Direction requested: Should staff advance the Gallery 200 location, with City Hall as an alternative?

Railroad Days: Location



- Requested Location: Kerr McGee Parking Lot
- Staff Recommendation: Remain at Pioneer Park

Direction requested: Does Council support remaining at Pioneer Park for 2027 and reevaluating relocation for 2028?

4th of July Parade: Approach



Preferred Approach: Continue for 2027

- Continue the Chamber-organized parade with City support.
- Strengthen promotion to increase community awareness, parade entries, and attendance.
- Reassess after 2027 to guide future planning.

Direction requested: Does Council support continuing the Fourth of July parade in 2027 with greater promotion and evaluation afterward?

Food Fest: Format & Location



1. Preferred Approach: Joint event with the Park District at Reed Keppler Park
2. Alternative: Stand-alone City event at Metra

Direction requested: Should staff pursue the joint-event pilot or develop a stand-alone event at Metra?

MID: Format & Location



1. Parade and Festival
   - West Chicago High School and Leman Middle School would serve as parade staging and festival sites, depending on parade direction.
   - Requires approval from both school districts and City coordination of parade arrangements.
2. Festival without a Parade
   - Pursue use of Reed Keppler Park / The Shell.
   - Requires Park District approval and site arrangements.

Organizing approach: Partner-led festival under either option, with limited City coordination. A parade requires separate City coordination.

Direction requested: Should the organizer(s) pursue a parade and festival using the two school sites, subject to both districts' approval, or a festival without a parade at Reed Keppler Park?

Downtown Trick-or-Treating: Approach



1. Proposed Approach: Pause for 2027
2. Alternative Programming: Explore an expanded Library Trunk-or-Treat partnership.

Direction requested: Should staff explore an expanded Library partnership, or pause Downtown Trick-or-Treating while maintaining existing City participation in Trunk-or-Treat?

Frosty Fest: Approach



1. Proposed Approach: Pause Frosty Fest in 2027 and coordinate seasonal promotion with businesses.
2. Alternatives Considered Internally:
   - ARC Center
   - Zone 250

Direction requested: Does Council support pausing the event in 2027 with seasonal promotion support, or should staff evaluate a separate alternate-site event?

Current Event Partnerships



West Chicago Park District

- Hosts events and programming supported in part by City funding, including programming at the Shell.
- Provides facilities and coordinates with the City on event arrangements.

Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce

- Organizes Railroad Days and the Fourth of July parade with City funding and operational support.
- Coordinates event planning and delivery, with responsibilities addressed through agreements.

Despertar Latino (Lead)

- Partners with the City on the Mexican Independence Day celebration, including festival and parade coordination.
- Coordinates with various community groups to organize the MID festival and parade.

Event Partnerships: Responsibilities & City Support



Proposed approach: Develop or update agreements so City support advances shared community goals.

Agreements should establish:

- Purpose: Intended audiences and community benefits.
- Responsibilities: Event leadership, planning, programming decisions, and operations.
- Resources: City and partner funding, staffing, equipment, and services.
- Accountability: Revenue allocation, financial reporting, and event evaluation.

Direction requested: Should staff work with event partners to formalize these expectations and return with proposed agreements?

Special Events Policy: Sponsorships & Vendor Fees



Proposed approach: Develop sponsorship and vendor-fee guidelines as part of the special events policy update.

Sponsorships

- Create event and activity sponsorship packages.
- Define sponsor recognition, partner responsibilities, and revenue allocation.

Vendor fees

- Establish fee categories based on participation and services provided.
- Define participation requirements, exemptions, and payment terms.

Direction requested: Does Council support developing sponsorship packages and a vendor-fee schedule and guidelines for subsequent review and approval?

Next Steps