

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 8, 2012

TO: SFMTA Board of Directors
Tom Nolan, Chairman
Cheryl Brinkman, Vice Chairman
Leona M. Bridges, Director
Malcolm A. Heinicke, Director
Jerry Lee, Director
Joel Ramos, Director
Cristina Rubke, Director

THROUGH: Edward D. Reiskin
Director of Transportation

FROM: Bond M. Yee 
Director, Sustainable Streets Division

SUBJECT: Permit Process for Neighborhood Community Events

In response to the Board of Director's request, the following memo addresses the permit process for neighborhood community events with particular discussion of the Inner Sunset Street Fair.

We will make a brief presentation and answer any questions at the June 15 Policy and Governance Committee meeting about the above subject and any other related topics the Committee wishes to discuss.

The City has long recognized the value of using city streets for special events. In order to provide a process to review these events, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance in 1988 relating to policies and procedures for the temporary use or occupancy of public streets. These established the interdepartmental review processes that have generally guided the review and approval of these permits.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Temporary street closures (TSC) may be generally divided into two categories:

- a. Neighborhood Block Parties (NBP): A "neighborhood block party" is a one block closure in a residential neighborhood. The closure does not block or affect

intersections or transit lines. It is sponsored by a neighborhood organization or individual who lives on the block to be closed.

- b. All other events: This may range from athletic events (Bay to Breakers, SF Marathon, etc.) to street fairs (Haight Street Fair, Castro Street Fair, etc.) to film shoots (movies and commercials) to closures of major streets (4th of July celebration, Oracle Open World, etc.)

An application for a TSC is usually reviewed at a meeting of the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT). This committee consists of representatives from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Police Department, Fire Department, Public Health Department, Port of San Francisco, Public Works Department, Entertainment Commission and the Planning Department. The represented departments are stipulated through Board of Supervisors legislation. The representatives review various requests for temporary street closings, evaluate the impacts from their departmental viewpoint, consider potential needed mitigation measures or other special conditions and ultimately recommend to approve, disapprove or to hold the item.

The ISCOTT meeting is a public hearing. It is strongly recommended that the sponsor outreach to the impacted parties before submitting the TSC application. We also post public hearing notices for most first time events. ISCOTT members take public comment into consideration when reviewing a permit.

Many factors are considered during the review of a TSC application including location, type of frontage, date, day of week, past history, number and location of other events on the same day, presence of alcohol, impacts to Muni, required detours, other needed mitigations, and expected crowd size.

After discussion of an agenda item and public input (if any), the chair person (SFMTA) then asks the committee for a motion to approve or disapprove or to hold the matter pending the need for more information and/or resolution of issues, then asks for a second and then asks if there are any objections to the motion and second from the ISCOTT members. ISCOTT meeting minutes which document the voting results are public records and are posted on our website.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND COSTS

Neighborhood Block Parties (NBP): The SFMTA recently developed an improved and simplified application form for neighborhood block parties. This form is posted on the website and has been in use for the last few months. NBP permits are generally routinely approved since the event is usually located on a relatively minor street. The costs involved are the application fee (\$150) and the costs for barricades and for posting and towing of vehicles (if applicable).

Other Events: The temporary closing of streets for other events range from being simple to extremely complex, with major impacts on city resources and/or the transportation network. As noted above, many factors are considered during the review of an application of a TSC. This is especially true for first time events on relatively busy streets in commercial areas. In addition to the application fee (\$480), certain other fees may apply as set by legislation. These fees are intended to recover costs to the extent possible and the services provided are mainly aimed to ensure safety. Examples of other costs that may apply are listed below:

SFMTA: The cost to reroute bus lines, especially trolley coaches which require the substitution of diesel coaches; the cost to provide Parking Control Officers (PCOs); and signing costs

SFPD: The cost of 10-B Officers (off duty) as determined by the Captain of the local district station or the Field Operations Bureau for security, safety and crowd control (especially if alcohol is allowed)

SFFD: Permit and inspection costs as needed for fire prevention especially if certain types of cooking and the use of certain generators apply

Department of Public Health: Applicable permit costs for food distribution

Port of San Francisco: Permit costs for the use of Port property

Department of Public Works: Temporary Occupancy Permit costs (stages) and costs for street cleaning services (as applicable)

Entertainment Commission: Permit costs for amplified sound.

Recreation and Park Department: Costs to use department property

DISCUSSION OF THE INNER SUNSET STREET FAIR (TSC)

Mssrs. Adam Greenfield and Chris Duderstadt from the Inner Sunset Park Neighbors have spoken to the SFMTA Board and questioned the ISCOTT requirements for their event: Inner Sunset Street Fair. They objected to some of the permit conditions and to the expense of their event. They have also expressed to SFMTA staff in several conversations that they feel these closures should occur multiple times a year and they should not require other City permits or personnel.

This event first took place on May 15, 2010 and again on October 16, 2011. They have not yet applied for 2012.

Details of the May 15, 2010 Event:

The application requested closure of the streets at the dates and times as follows:

Irving Street between 9th and 10th Avenue;
10th Avenue between Irving Street and Lincoln Way
Saturday, May 15, 2010, 9 AM to 10 PM

This event was not considered a neighborhood block party. The application for this first time event was dated March 13, 2010. The item was approved with conditions at the March 25, 2010 ISCOTT meeting and a permit was issued on March 30, 2010. The permit conditions were "approved provided the sponsor pays for PCOs at 9th and Irving and limits parking removal on 10th Avenue 200 feet north of Irving". The conditions were developed based on the public input and estimating the traffic impacts of closing a commercial street.

Before the event, we received one phone call from a 10th Avenue resident with concerns about parking on 10th Avenue. During the event, a different resident complained about the event on 10th Avenue and that resident made his concerns known again in 2011. Chris Duderstadt (the sponsor) communicated to us that he felt there was no need for PCOs which had been stationed at both 9th & Irving (2) and at 10th & Irving (1). He felt that they spent the day talking to each other rather than doing their job. He also has pictures of a Cushman partially blocking a curb ramp. In response to his complaint, we billed for two PCOs only, one for 12 hours and one for 6 hours.

Details of the October 16, 2011 Event

The application requested closure of the streets at the dates and times as follows:
Irving Street between 9th and 10th Avenue;
10th Avenue between Irving Street and Lincoln Way
Sunday October 16, 2011, 6 AM to 10 PM

The request for closure was reviewed at the August 11, 2011 ISCOTT meeting. Concerns (opposition) were expressed by one neighbor (Mr. Resnick) who lives on 10th Avenue between Lincoln and Irving. One of his main objections was the lack of local access during street closure times. The item was placed "On Hold".

The matter was again reviewed at the August 25, 2011 ISCOTT meeting. Mr. Resnick had a 3 page petition with residents and merchants protesting the 10th Avenue closure. He recommended that they close Irving between 9th Avenue and 11th Avenue as an alternative. In response, the applicants submitted several pages of petitions and letters including a letter from then District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi supporting the closure. In an attempt to reach a compromise, the item was again put "On Hold" at the August 25, 2011 ISCOTT hearing.

A compromise as listed below was reached in time for the September 8, 2011 ISCOTT meeting:

Irving Street between 9th and 11th Avenues;
10th Avenue between Judah Street and Lincoln Way
Intersection: 10th @ Irving Street
(Local Residential Access on 10th Avenue between Irving and Lincoln Way via Lincoln Way; Local Residential Access on 10th Avenue between Irving and Judah via Judah for 400 feet)

The above was approved by ISCOTT on September 8, 2011 and a permit was issued on September 14, 2011.

The SFMTA billed for three PCOs who worked 11.5 hours each and the SFFD also charged for an inspector at the event for a 4 hour minimum charge. They had DPH and SFPD fees to pay also.

EXAMPLE OF STREAMLINED NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY REQUEST PROCESS

As discussed previously, the process for this type of request has been streamlined by developing a new simplified application form.

Details of two Neighborhood Block Parties, 2012

On March 20, 2012, Mr. Greenfield applied for a neighborhood block party for two separate dates in 2012. Since both dates were on one application and the events were exactly the same, we only charged him one application fee (a savings of \$150). This request was approved at April 12, 2012 ISCOTT meeting and a permit was issued on April 18, 2012. The request was to close 6th Avenue between Irving and Hugo Street for a neighborhood block party. Therefore, there were no requirements for any enforcement personnel and no other City agencies will be charging for services with the possible exception of the SFPD if Mr. Greenfield chooses to ask them to post tow-away no parking signs.

SUMMARY

As shown above, temporarily closing a street for a special event can be involved. We will continue to work closely with applicants to explain the process, the consequences of having certain features in terms of fees and suggest ways to reduce costs when feasible.