

Fostering, sustaining, and promoting outdoor events in San Francisco

Full Report
March 20, 2017, Civic Bridge Program
San Francisco Entertainment Commission and the
San Francisco Center for Economic Development



Executive summary

The City and County of San Francisco is a national hub for outdoor events, defined as “public outdoor events with street closures, including street fairs, music/arts festivals, dance events, fundraisers, and other community events.”¹ Outdoor events produce \$1.1 billion in economic impact, attract 3.3 million attendees², reach every Supervisorial District³, and define the identity of the many communities that together make up San Francisco.

The number of outdoor events in the city grew from 2010 to 2015 along with the population and economy, but several legacy cultural events were cancelled, or nearly cancelled, over the same period. In this context, the permitting process and support system for outdoor events are assessed with a focus on how to better foster, sustain, and promote music and culture. 22 event producers and 8 City Departments were interviewed, 9 other cities were evaluated, and thousands of records were reviewed. Three key opportunities were identified to address the permitting process and support system for outdoor events:

- **Reducing complexity.** Permitting an outdoor event involves up to 14 City and State agencies and bureaus that issue 10 separate permits and 16 other approvals⁴. Producers said they dedicate up to 1/3 of a full time employee to the process and 65% of producers cited complexity as a barrier to holding an outdoor event. The City might reduce complexity by moving to a hub-and-spoke model and adopting a shared digital platform.
- **Increasing transparency.** Information on the event permitting process is scattered across 10 websites and there is no single website showing all of the needed permits. City Departments reported that between 15% and 100% of permit applications are filled out incorrectly, and most new event producers interviewed relied on personal relationships to find information about the event permitting process. The City might increase transparency by publishing a central process map and permit cost calculator and holding regular mixers for event producers to share best practices.
- **Addressing socio-economic pressures.** Decreasing sponsorship and shifting neighborhoods were the cause cited by several legacy cultural events, including the Tet Festival, La Cocina Street Food Festival, and Carnaval, that cancelled or considered cancelling in 2016. The City might mitigate these pressures by identifying an organization to foster relationships between event producers and sponsors, establishing new public and private sources of funding and resources, and supporting event producers in best practice neighborhood outreach.

1 San Francisco City Administrative Code, Section 90A, “Music and Culture Sustainability Policy” 2 “The Economic Impact of San Francisco’s Outdoor Events,” SF Controller’s Office 2015 3 SFMTA Street Closure records for 2016 4 San Francisco Entertainment Commission Inventory of Outdoor Event-Related Permits and Approvals, 2017

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1 Motivated by stakeholder concerns and recent City reports, this study through Civic Bridge evaluates outdoor event permitting in the City

Motivated by recent events...

Key motivations

- **Stakeholders including event producers and City departments raised concerns** about the event permitting process for outdoor events
- **A 2015 report issued by the Controller's office highlighted the importance** of outdoor events, titled "The Economic Impact of San Francisco's Outdoor Events"
- **The SF Entertainment Commission kicked off efforts** to foster, sustain, and promote outdoor events

...the study considered a range of sources of insight

Interviews with producers

22 event producers were interviewed, including new and veteran producers of cultural events, festivals, and athletic events



Interviews with Departments

8 City Departments were interviewed and key permit meetings were observed



Reviews of event records

Thousands of recorded events across three data sets were reviewed

Number of Street Closure Days	Event Start Time	Event End Time	Event Name
0.1	8:00 AM	11:30 AM	Hol Chocolate Run
1.4	12:15 AM	10:00 AM	J-Labs Reception
0.3	5:00 PM	11:00 PM	Private Event at Six
0.3	10:00 AM	4:00 PM	Winter Fancy Food Show
0.3	10:00 AM	4:00 PM	Winter Fancy Food Show
0.3	10:00 AM	4:00 PM	Winter Fancy Food Show
10	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	MLK March
0.2	6:00 PM	10:00 PM	Winter Fancy Food Show
10	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	Protest Walk
13.4	7:00 PM	5:00 AM	NFL Experience
2.0	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	Chinese Flower Market Fair
0.8	2:00 AM	8:00 PM	Tel Festival
5.9	12:01 AM	9:00 PM	Asian Art Museum Gala
0.3	9:30 AM	5:00 PM	SF Society of Fine Arts Art Show
0.1	7:15 AM	10:00 AM	KP SF Half Marathon
1.7	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	KTVU Broadcast of CNY Parade
2.0	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	Chinese Community Street Fair
0.1	5:00 PM	8:00 PM	Chinese New Year Parade
0.1	7:00 AM	10:00 AM	Chinese New Year Run
2.5	9:00 AM	8:00 PM	Black Cuisine Street Festival
0.3	9:30 AM	5:00 PM	SF Society of Fine Arts Art Show
2.5	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	Wayfare Tavern, Fortress
0.6	6:00 AM	9:00 PM	St. Patrick's Day Festival
0.8	6:00 AM	10:00 AM	St. Patrick's Parade Party at Irish Bank
0.4	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	St. Patrick's Day Luncheon
0.3	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	St. Patrick's Day Parade
0.3	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	Youth Art Exchange Block Party
0.3	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	Visitation Valley Family Day Parade
0.8	6:00 AM	10:00 AM	St. Patrick's Day Party at Irish Bank
0.3	3:00 PM	11:00 PM	Aventura Event
0.3	3:30 PM	10:00 PM	Royal Exchange St. Patrick's Day Celebration
0.3	9:30 AM	5:00 PM	SF Society of Fine Arts Art Show
0.3	9:00 AM	3:00 PM	Yee Family Lion Dance
0.3	10:00 AM	6:00 PM	Ped Umbrellas Art Show
0.9	2:00 AM	11:00 PM	Union Street Spring Festival & Easter Parade
0.3	7:00 AM	1:00 PM	Zion Lutheran Easter Services
0.4	9:00 AM	7:00 PM	Bring Your Own Big Wheel
1.4	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Rock N Roll Half Marathon
0.3	9:30 AM	5:00 PM	SF Society of Fine Arts Art Show
0.3	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	Angel Alley Park Ribbon Cutting
0.3	5:30 AM	11:30 AM	Rock N Roll Half Marathon
1.8	4:00 AM	11:00 PM	Cherry Blossom Festival
0.3	10:00 AM	6:00 PM	Ped Umbrellas Art Show
0.3	10:00 AM	4:30 PM	Sunday Streets Mission
0.2	7:00 AM	12:00 PM	DAAS Gough Street Grand Opening
1.8	4:00 AM	11:00 PM	Cherry Blossom Festival
2.5	12:00 PM	11:59 PM	Chinese Hospital Grand Opening Ceremony

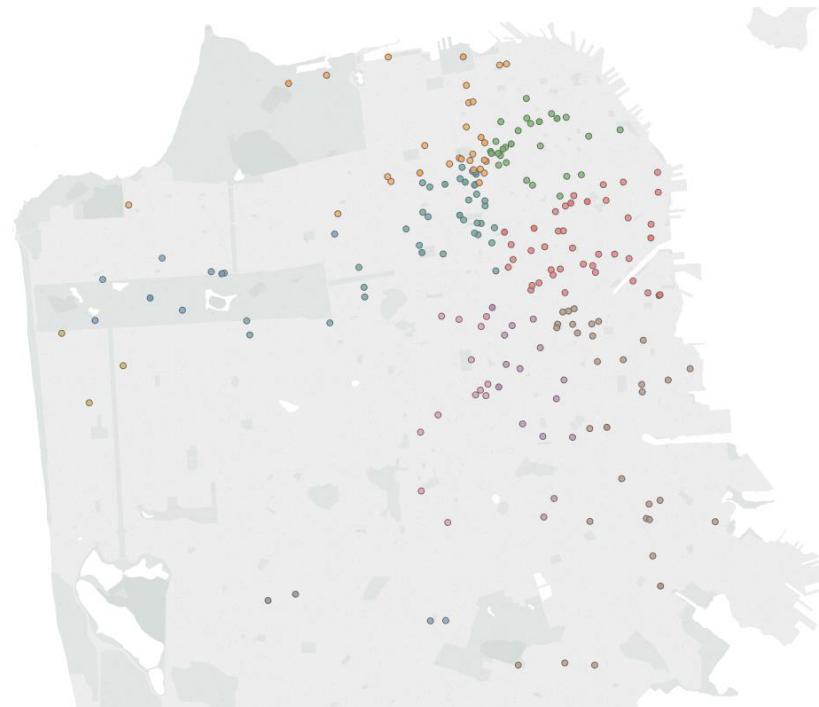
1 Outdoor events in San Francisco represent a significant economic driver for the City, with \$1.1 billion direct and indirect economic impact

Events are a major economic driver...

- Events are defined as “**public outdoor events with street closures**, including street fairs, music/arts festivals, dance events, fundraisers, and other community events”¹
- **3.3 million people attended 79 surveyed outdoor events in 2014**, where they spent an estimated \$290 million
- **58% of the attendees were visitors to San Francisco**, with 85% of those visitors reporting that the main reason they visited the City was to attend the event
- **The spending of these visitors has a \$1.1 billion direct and indirect impact on the city's economy**, supporting 9,300 private sector jobs
- **Food spending at outdoor events is equivalent to 10% of citywide spending at restaurants and bars**, sustaining an estimated 7% of restaurant and 6% of hotel employment

...and are spread across the entire City

- **Every Supervisorial District in the City closed streets for outdoor events in 2016**, suggesting that this is an economic story that touches all parts of SF
- **Major hubs for street closures were Districts 5 and 6**, with over 35 events in each in 2016

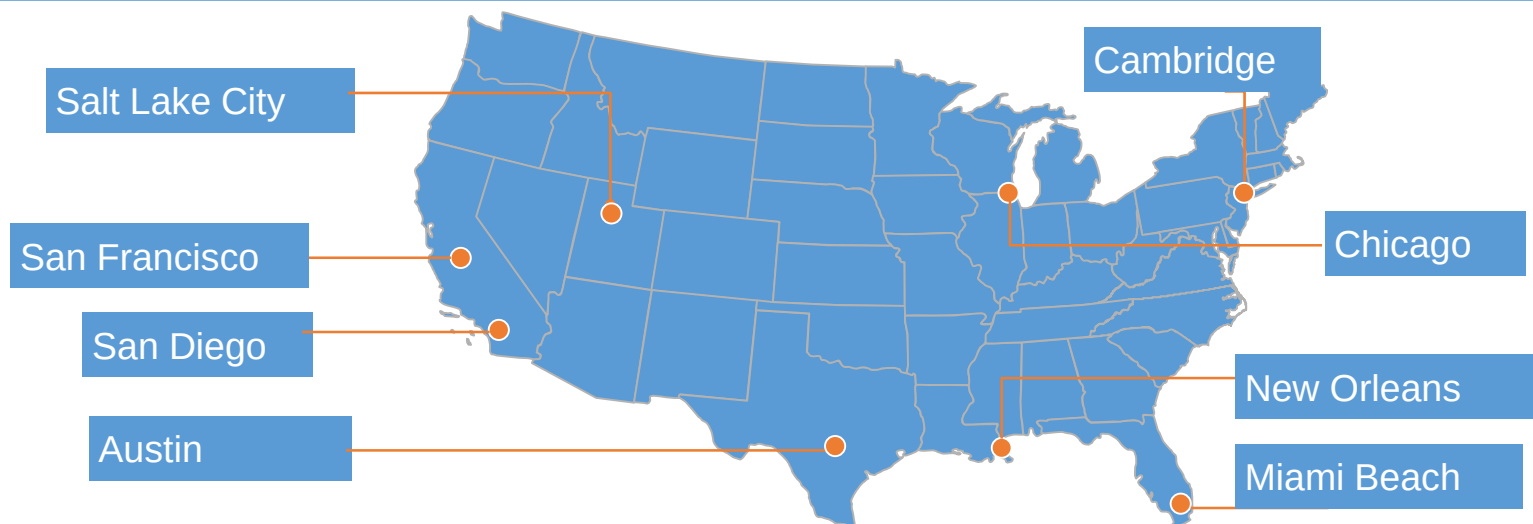


Street closures for outdoor events in San Francisco in 2016

SOURCE: “The Economic Impact of San Francisco’s Outdoor Events,” SF Controller’s Office 2015, and SFMTA Street Closure records

¹ San Francisco City Administrative Code, Section 90A, “Music and Culture Sustainability Policy”

1 San Francisco is benchmarked against nine other cities in the US, including the top four in one study of the number of events per population



Event density¹
Festivals per 100,000 residents

Event density
Rank in the US

Signature event

Honolulu, HI	42	1	Honolulu Festival
San Francisco, CA	29	2	SF Pride
Orlando, FL	29	3	Blues-B-Q
New Orleans, LA	28	4	Mardi Gras
Miami Beach, FL	19	10	Miami Broward
San Diego, CA	12	22	Rock and Roll Half Marathon
Austin, TX	9	31	South by Southwest
Salt Lake City, UT	9	34	Salt Lake City Marathon
Chicago, IL	8	38	Taste of Chicago
Cambridge, MA	7	46	Strawberry Fair

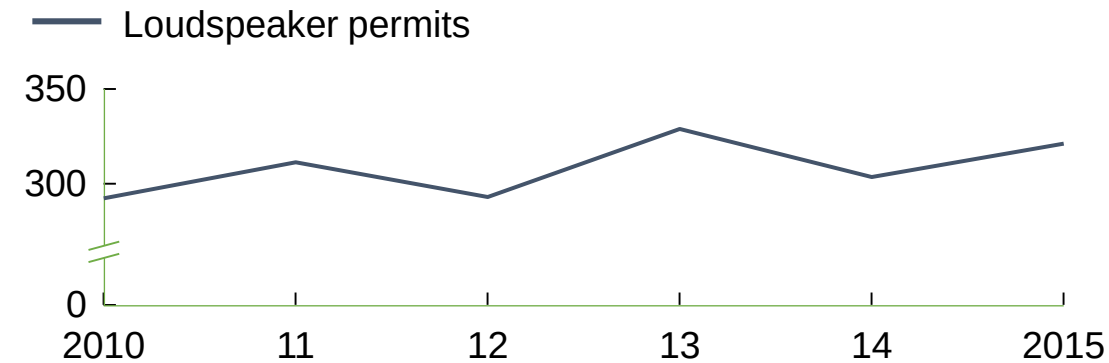
- Benchmarked cities include the **four cities that have the most events per capita** in the U.S., as measured by recent study of Yelp data for ‘festivals’
- Benchmarks also include **five other cities identified as best-practice examples**
- **Other cities are facing similar challenges** as San Francisco and had implemented several changes to mitigate those challenges

SOURCE: Interviews with event planning departments, 1 A 2016 WalletHub analysis of Yelp records of festivals

1 The number of outdoor events grew along with the economy and population in San Francisco from 2010 to 2015, but challenges remain

Growth of the number of outdoor events in San Francisco

Issued loudspeaker permits¹



Growth rate
2010-2015

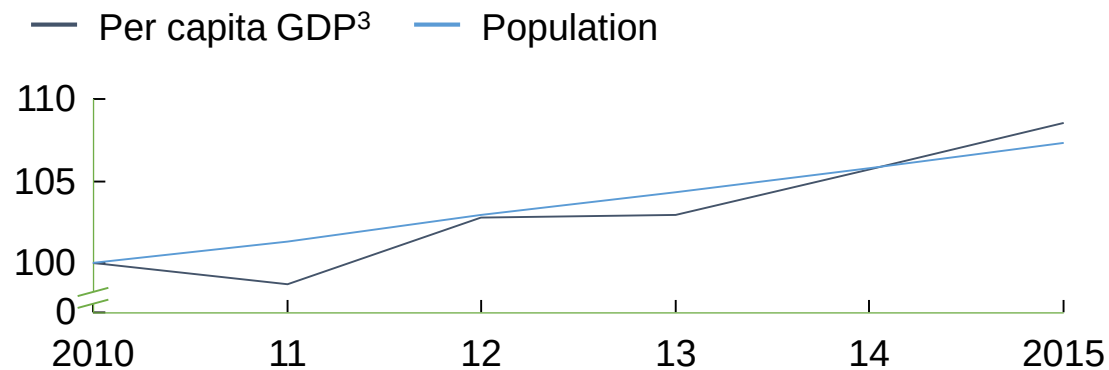
1.9%

Events are growing in San Francisco

- **Both population and per-capita GDP grew** in San Francisco from 2010 to 2015
- **The number of events grew** along with the economy and population
- **Despite the growth, interviews showed that there are challenges** for new event producers that may discourage them from starting and continuing outdoor events

Growth of the economy and population in San Francisco

Percentage of 2010 figure



Growth rate
2010-2015

1.7%

1.4%

“As the economy has picked up, as businesses have moved into the city, there's definitely a lot more events.”

– City Employee

“The event scene in SF has ramped up - ...there's a lot of wealth, younger people, and no better way to celebrate and raise money.

- Veteran Producer

SOURCE: BLS, US Census, City of San Francisco

¹ Indicative metric; not all events have loudspeaker permits. ² The team limited its work to events on City streets; it did not investigate the permitting process for events on Federal, Recreation and Park, or Port land

³ Per Capita GDP is for San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA; population is for San Francisco City

1 Despite the growth, some legacy events in San Francisco have been cancelled or are under financial duress, complicating the trend in growth in number of events

In 2015, several legacy events cancelled or considered cancelling...

Example event

Vietnamese New Year Tet Festival



Description

- Hosted for last 25 years in the Tenderloin
- Closed down in 2016 after the Vietnamese Community Center shut its doors

La Cocina Street Food Festival



- Hosted for the last 9 years in the Mission by La Cocina San Francisco
- Cancelled in 2016 after neighbor complaints moved the event to a less desirable location

Carnaval

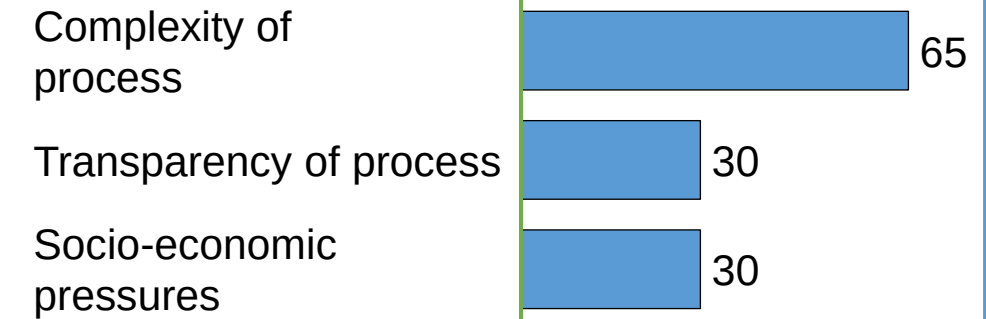


- Hosted for the last 39 years in the Mission, with 500,000 people attending the annual event
- Bankrupt in 2013 and under financial duress today

..and producers cite concerns with the event process

Fraction of event producers citing a given concern with the outdoor event process

% of interviewed producers citing¹



“If the city is interested in being a city that hosts large, public, outdoor events, [the voters] have a choice. Right now, professional companies are the ones that can afford to host events.”

– Veteran Producer

¹ Based on interviews with 22 event producers in San Francisco conducted November-December 2016

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2 The City has a standing policy to “foster, promote, and sustain music and culture in San Francisco” per the City’s Music and Culture Sustainability Policy

A set of goals were defined based on the Music and Culture Sustainability Policy¹...

Goal

Foster new and innovative outdoor events in San Francisco

Sustain the number and diversity of outdoor events in San Francisco

Promote the value and impact of outdoor events and their responsible growth

Possible Metrics

How many new events are held in the City?
How innovative are new events being held?

How many existing events continue year-to-year?

What is the total attendance at events?
What is the total spend at events?

Working from this vision, three challenges were identified towards the goals of “foster, sustain, and promote”:

1. **A complicated process** that requires skill to navigate
2. **A lack of transparency** that makes it difficult to find information about the process
3. **Socio-economic pressures** that have shifted the economies and neighborhoods that host outdoor events

¹ San Francisco City Administrative Code, Section 90A, “Music and Culture Sustainability Policy”

2 The team identified three major challenges towards achieving the goal of ‘foster, sustain, and promote music and culture in San Francisco’

Three major challenges

Challenge		Implication	Examples
1 Complexity	The permitting process requires a series of actions that are difficult to complete	It is difficult for an event producer to start a new event, discouraging event producers from starting and continuing outdoor events	- Up to 14 agencies and bureaus are involved, issuing 10 permits and 16 other approvals¹ - Extensive applications require insurance, maps, and security plans - There are multiple permit formats
2 Transparency	Information on the permitting process and fees is scattered, difficult to find, or not available	It is difficult for an event producer to learn the process and many applications are filled out incorrectly, increasing re-work	- Permit information is scattered across ~10 websites - Information on websites is not clearly identified - Some information, such as formulas for security staffing, is not published
3 Socio-economic pressures	Event producers report financial pressures from decreasing corporate sponsorship and shifting neighborhoods	Some historically important legacy cultural events have been cancelled or report considering cancellation	- La Cocina Street Festival and the Tet Festival were not held in 2016 - Carnaval went bankrupt in 2013 and reports considering cancellation

Source: Interviews with event producers and city employees in November-December 2016

1 Entertainment Commission Inventory of Outdoor Event-related Permits and Approvals, February 2017

2 These three challenges are illustrated using a map of the experience of users throughout the process, called a ‘user journey’

Three key archetypes of user were identified...

Archetype

Notes on archetype

New Producer



- **Has never produced an event** in San Francisco, does not know he needs permits, and has few City contacts
- **Goal may be to raise funds, promote a cause, or celebrate a culture** depending on the event type

Veteran Producer



- **Has produced multiple events** in San Francisco, is familiar with the process and has contacts in the City
- **Goal may be to raise funds, promote a cause, or celebrate a culture** depending on the event type

City Employee



- **An employee** in one of multiple departments that permit outdoor events
- **Responsible for processing the permit application** and ensuring compliance

...each with their own ‘user journey’ built from interview data

Phases of the Journey

Example step

. Example actions that occur



>Description of step

>Description of step

>Description of step

Key

The line height indicates the emotional state of the archetype as they move through the process

Stars indicate key moments in the process, such as a key hearing

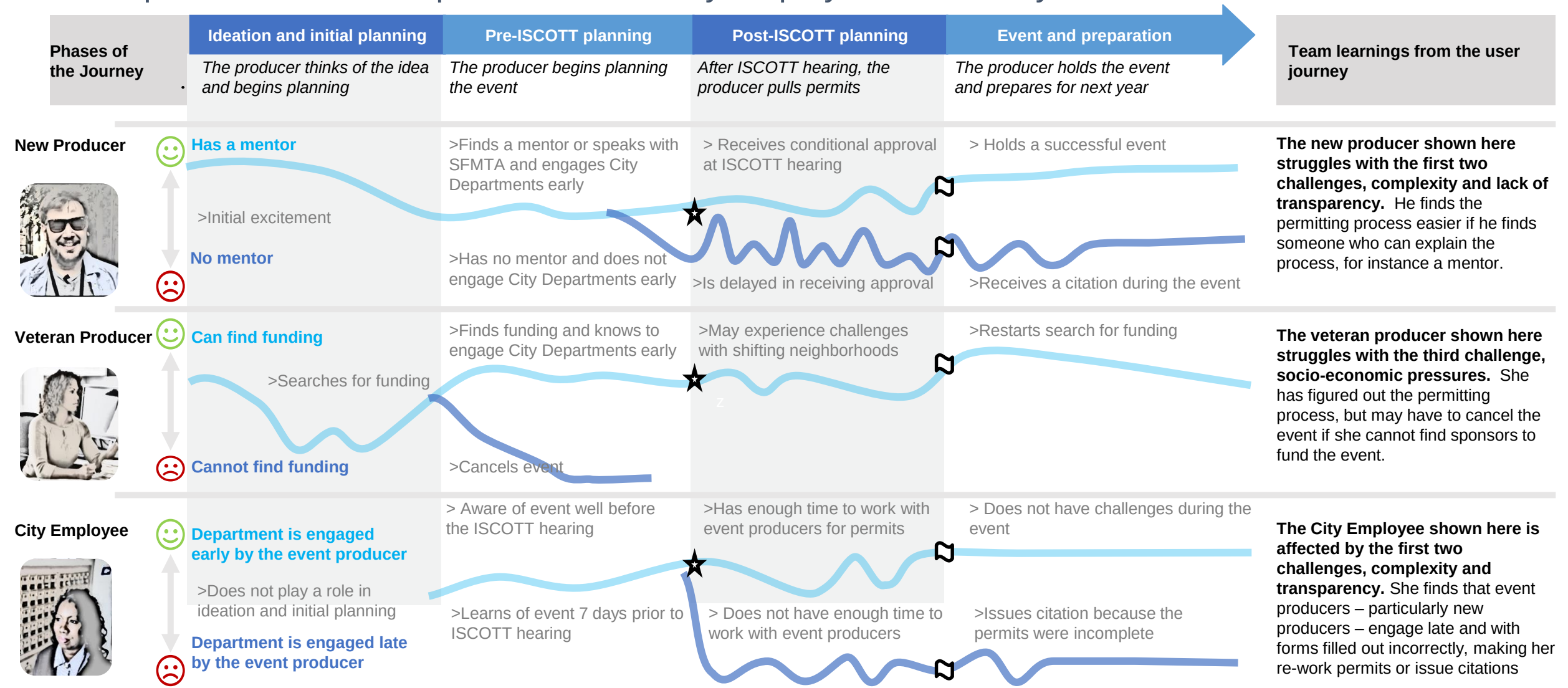
Text throughout the document describes actions by each person as they move through the process

Line colors distinguish different paths through the process

A user journey is used to identify problematic points in the process by qualitatively compiling interviews with a representative sample of users

2 Interviews show that the three challenges affect new producers, veteran producers, and city employees differently

 Path of successful event
  Path of problematic event
 ★ ISCOTT hearing
 🗒 Event



SOURCE: Qualitative analysis based on interviews with 22 event producers and 8 City Employees from relevant departments

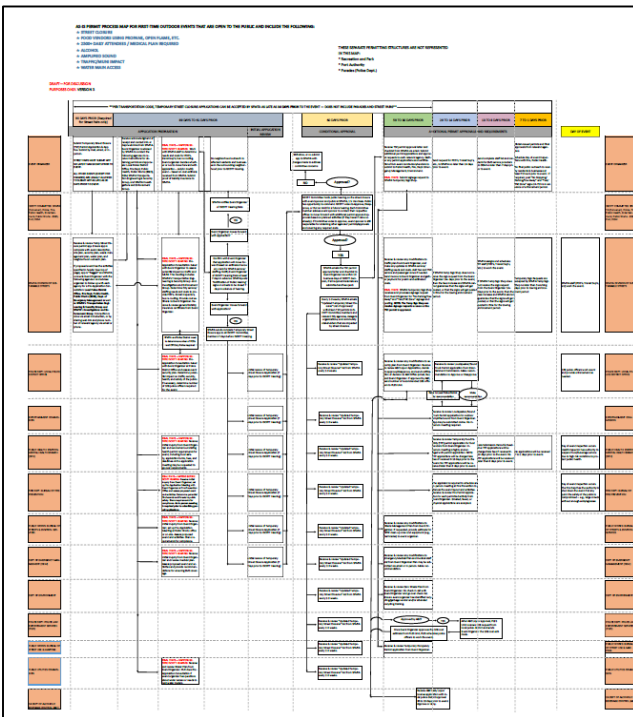
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3 The complexity of the process creates work for City Departments and discourages event producers from starting and continuing events

The process is complicated...

Process map for outdoor permitting created by the Entertainment Commission



- **There are 14 permitting agencies and bureaus** that require up to 10 separate permits and 16 other approvals for an outdoor event¹
- **The SFMTA acts as the formal first point of contact for producers.** The agency convenes the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT), a multi-department body that approves temporary street closures². After approval, the SFMTA gives producers a list of additional permits required by other agencies and bureaus.
- **Nonetheless, no single office is designated to facilitate the event permitting process**
- **Permit applications require a broad set of information.** These include a Waste Management Plan, an Emergency Medical Plan, insurance for the street closure, and insurance for the sub-surface infrastructure, and four in-person interviews

...which creates overhead for departments and event producers

- **Event producers say that they have to dedicate up to 1/3 of a full time employee to filling out forms and tracking applications across government agencies**
- **Departments report re-work of between 15% to 100% of permits**, with even veteran producers unable to successfully complete the process in some cases
- **Departments struggle to enforce permits** because they are sometimes unaware of events' existence despite other Departments' approvals

"They should take us out of it. Our inspectors don't go out to the event – our permit on top of the other permits seems redundant."

– City Employee

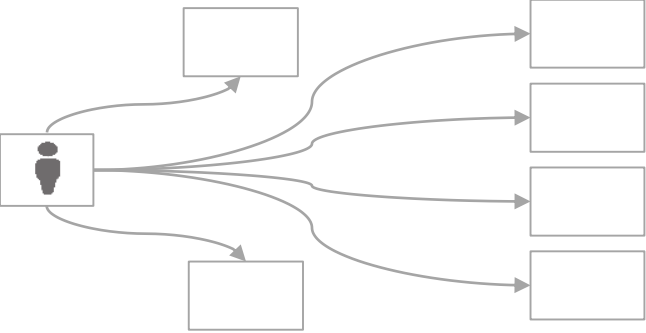
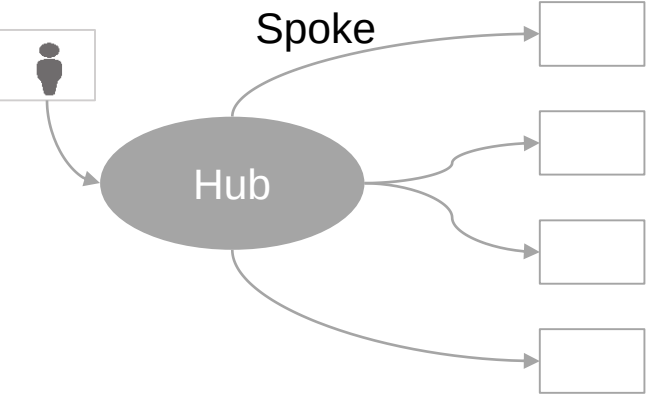
SOURCE: Interviews, web search 1 From the Entertainment Commission Inventory of Outdoor Event-Related Permits and Approvals, February 2017, included on page 35 of this report 2 Additional information on ISCOTT roles and responsibilities covered on page 36 of this report

3 Three specific sub-challenges are identified within complexity: many permits with many requirements, silo-ed information, and a lack of coordination

	Description of the obstacle	Description of impact	Representative quote
a Many permits with many requirements	▪ Up to 14 agencies and bureaus are involved, between them requiring 10 permits and 16 other approvals¹ ▪ Those applications include a Waste Management Plan, Emergency Medical Plan, and multiple insurance documents	▪ Event producers dedicate up to 1/3 of a full time employee to filling out forms ▪ City Employees carry a heavier load with 15% to 100% of forms needing re-work	“They should take us out of it. Our inspectors don’t go out to the event – our permit on top of the other permits seems redundant.” – City Employee
b Silo-ing of information	▪ The same information is entered multiple times into separate application forms for departments ▪ Information is silo-ed rather than being shared between departments	▪ Event producers bear overhead costs submitting information across government agencies ▪ City Employees enter the same data into different systems	“ISCOTT² gives you the permission to pull permits, but each department is like starting over again.” – Veteran Producer
c Lack of coordination	▪ Each permit application is handled separately by each Department ▪ Some departments discover events only when “the producer walks in the door” although the City has already issued some permits for that event	▪ Event producers may miss permits that they should pull ▪ Some Departments struggle to enforce ordinances because they are unaware of events	“Some permits are difficult to enforce because there are so many points along the process.” – City Employee

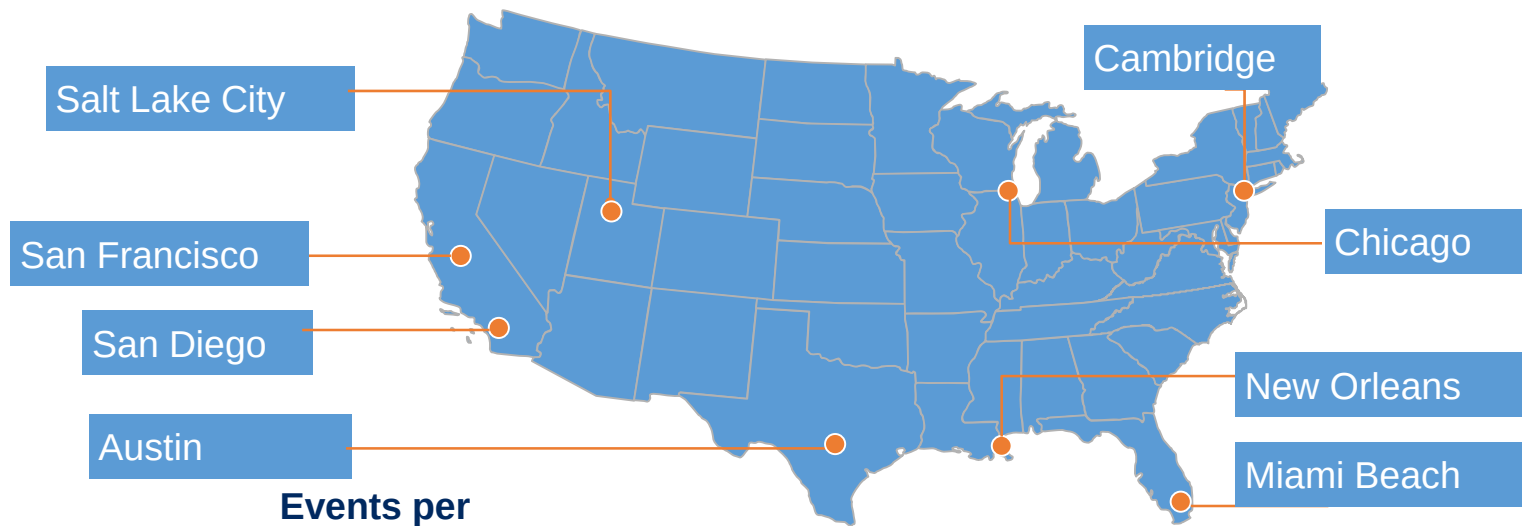
SOURCE: Interviews, web search 1 Entertainment Commission Inventory of Outdoor Event-related Permits and Approvals, February 2017 2 Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation

3 One solution is to move from a multi-channel model towards a hub-and-spoke model where producers submit a single application

	Schematic	Design	Considerations
Multi-Channel		- Permits are obtained from different agencies - The event producer works with each Department individually	- There is no single City approval of an event - Agencies interact directly with producers - Veterans and skilled producers are better positioned to succeed
Hub and spoke		- Permit applications are collected by one agency and distributed to different agencies - Internal meetings are held between the agencies - Hub acts as a liaison and facilitator between the agencies and producers	- There is a single City approval of an event - Agencies receive permit application from the single 'hub' entity - New producers are able to work with a single bureau to pull the needed permits

Today, the first point of contact for a street closure is the SFMTA's Sustainable Streets division, which brings agencies together at the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation

3 Of the ten cities benchmarked, San Francisco is one of two cities with a multi-channel system and no digital platform; the other three top cities are hub-and-spoke



- **A hub and spoke model is used by the other three cities** in the top four of events per capita
- **San Francisco is one of two cities with a multi-channel, paper-based system** of the ten cities reviewed
- **The SFMTA is actively working towards a digital platform** for event permitting

	Events per 100,000 residents	Rank in the US	Organization	Digital application platform
Honolulu, HI	1		Hub-and-spoke	Paper-based
San Francisco, CA	2		Multi-channel	Paper-based
Orlando, FL	3		Hub-and-spoke	End-to-end digital
New Orleans, LA	4		Hub-and-spoke	End-to-end digital
Miami Beach, FL	10		Multi-channel	Paper-based
San Diego, CA	22		Hub-and-spoke	Paper-based
Austin, TX	31		Hub-and-spoke	Limited digital
Salt Lake City, UT	34		Hub-and-spoke	Limited digital
Chicago, IL	38		Hub-and-spoke	Limited digital
Cambridge, MA	46		Multi-channel	End-to-end digital

End-to-end digital – A single software solution collects information, sorts it by department, and allows the applicant to track progress

Limited digital – One or more software solutions are available, but some permits require the applicant to submit a PDF or paper form

Paper-based– Paper forms or PDFs are used to collect information

3 Two adjustments could be made that may reduce the complexity of the process

	Description	Possible impact	Challenge addressed
Move to a hub-and-spoke model	▪ Adopt a hub and spoke system by defining a single body for event producers that would interface with all Departments and facilitate the permitting process	▪ Decreases the number of permit applications required ▪ Facilitates coordination among agencies and bureaus	- a Many permits - c Lack of coordination
Adopt a shared digital platform	▪ Adopt a digital platform for applications (e.g. Common Application on Salesforce) ▪ Could be implemented by empowering a single body to own the process ▪ Would require a top-down mandate to encourage interagency cooperation	▪ Increases ease and convenience of submitting applications ▪ Explicitly defines ownership of data	- b Silo-ing of information - c Lack of coordination

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4 Information on permits and fees is scattered, difficult to find, or not available

Information about permit requirements is scattered and difficult to grasp...

Example permit websites



- **There is no central document laying out the permitting process.** The best available list is from the SFMTA website, which includes information on its website for applying for a street closure.
- **Where available, the information can be hard to find.** For instance, the Department of Public Works website shows 36 permits on a single page without a label for events

The Department of Public Works permit is one of 36 permits displayed and is under the 'Construction' permits section. It is not labelled for events

Information on Fire Department permits shows a list of 86 types of permits on a single page, including two relevant to outdoor events

...which affects both producers and City Employees

- **Departments report that they have to re-work between 15% and 100% of permits** as departments are forced to teach event producers how to fill out the permits
- **30% of producers, in particular those new to the process, cited the lack of transparency as a challenge producing events**
- **Veteran producers are skeptical of required services** that are not defined by a public formula

"If I didn't have an inside track, it would have been really hard. The first place I looked was my sister, who works for the City...if I hadn't had that person to walk through it, I would have never found it on my own."

– New Producer

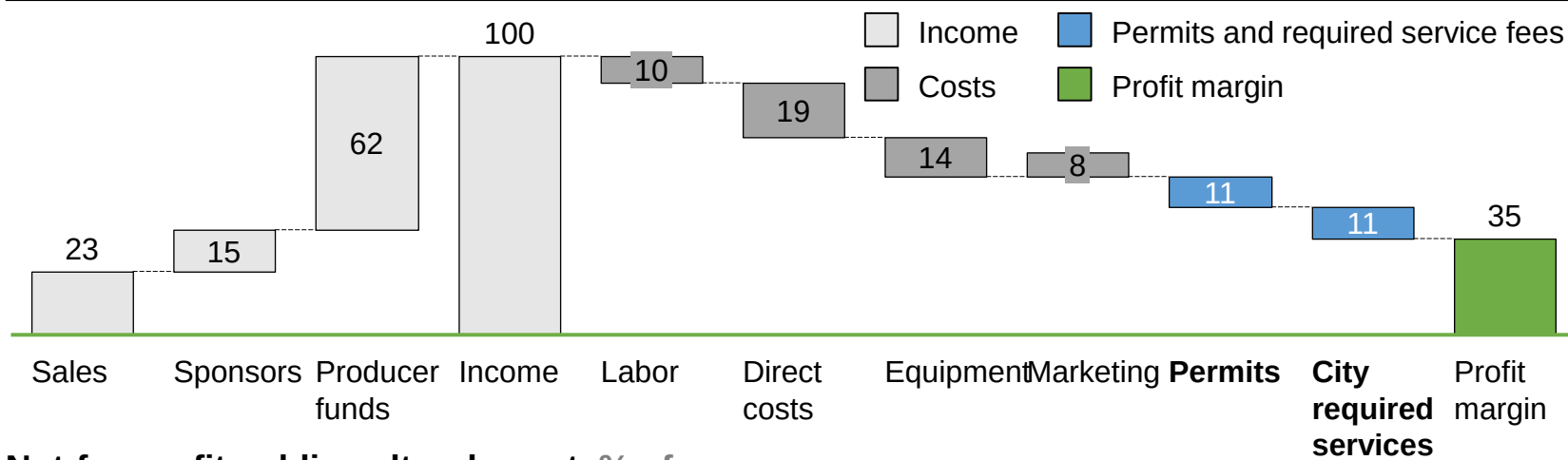
"Every diagram that comes in usually needs to be corrected. It's a matter of us sitting down with them and telling them what we require. The requirements are not written down...I'm constantly going through the same thing."

– City Employee

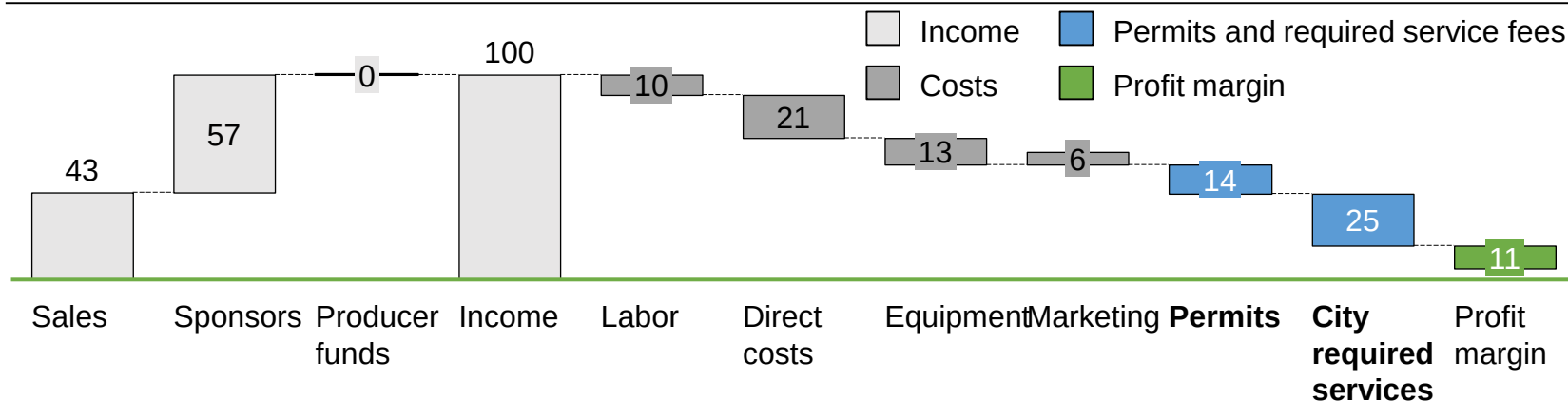
5 The cost of permit and City-required services run between 10% and 40% of event producer budgets, with the bulk being services rather than permit fees

Example breakdowns of event producer budgets

For-profit public event, % of revenues



Not-for-profit public cultural event, % of revenues



Permit fees and service costs can reach 40% of budgets

- **There are two types of required costs:** fees to pull permits and the cost of services required by the City, such as security fees¹
- **Service costs are a major driver of event costs**, with many events citing the cost of 10B police and parking control officers as a concern
- **One non-profit reported that 10B police fees comprised 10%** of its annual overall budget
- **Permit fees alone are not the major driver** of permit-related costs, comprising ~15% of costs

SOURCE: Budgets shared by event producers ¹ The City has a mandate for full cost recovery for City services and overhead costs per Chapter 10B of the San Francisco Administrative Code and Article 6 of the San Francisco Transportation Code. Police Department cost recovery fees are capped or waived for certain legacy street fairs and are in some cases adjusted if event sponsors demonstrate they are unable to pay the full fee.

3 Two key adjustments can be made to address transparency

Publish a central process map and permit cost calculator

Description

- **Publish a central process map**, a single document that lays out the entire permit process and deadlines
- **Publish a permit cost calculator**, a single document that allows a producer to estimate permit costs

Possible impact

- **Decreases failure to pull permits** by creating a comprehensive roadmap with timelines
- **Reduces surprise at permit costs** by allowing all producers to estimate costs ahead of time

Hold regular mixers for event producers

- **Convene event producers to create a support community** to share knowledge and relationships
- **Event producers informally offer support today**, but formalizing the process will increase access to knowledge
- Could be coupled with an explicit mentoring program

- **Creates support community** for new producers
- **Broadens knowledge base in event producer community** to improve applicant preparedness
- **Increases the profile of the convening Department** and improves understanding of producers

Improvements made to address the complexity of the process will also decrease the burden created by lack of transparency

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5 Many event producers cited financial challenges and neighborhood opposition – broadly, socio-economic pressures – on their event

Event producers reported financial pressures...

Fraction reporting
funding as a
challenge

30%
of producers
overall

45%
of producers of
cultural events

- **Sponsors made up between 60% and 15% of event income**, with non-profits particularly reliant on third-party corporate sponsors
- **About a third of events, including a disproportionate share of legacy and cultural events, reported difficulty connecting with sponsors** to cover event costs
- **Events struggling to find sponsors felt pressure from the complexity and transparency of the process** because they felt they did not have the budget for employees dedicated to applications

Sponsors of the 2016 Cinco de Mayo Festival



“The only way the event would be profitable is corporate sponsorships, and we don't have those relationships.”

– Veteran Producer

...as well as pressure from neighbors not accustomed to events

- **Both legacy events and new events found neighborhood outreach challenging**, with events citing in particular the uncertainty of the process as a major concern
- **Three major events across the Mission, Financial District, and Fisherman's Wharf reported changing their location or cancelling because of neighbor opposition**

“I haven't been deterred by the permitting process. But for me, the hardest is get community consensus.”

– Veteran Producer

“You can have one person show up [to ISCOTT¹] and they can totally derail your event.”

– Veteran Producer

“We were effective fundraisers, but it felt like we were doing it on our own, hearing from neighbors that they were unhappy, even though we did everything we could possibly imagine.”

– Veteran Producer

5 Case study: Carnaval

Carnaval has been on Harrison Street since 1979, but is on the verge of closing

A presence in the Mission...

39	500,000	513	17
years	attendees in	volunteers	blocks of
	2015		parade



...that has seen difficulties in recent years

- **Carnaval has shaky fiscal footing, going bankrupt in 2013** after a downturn in the economy
- **513 volunteers revived the event after its bankruptcy** in collaboration with nine community-based organizations

“The love for Carnaval is why Carnaval is still here. Love and exhaustion.”

-Roberto Y. Hernandez, Carnaval San Francisco

- **The event is struggling to find funds as the business climate has changed**, with sponsorship from companies waning

“Hostess Bakery, Grand Auto, Sears, Kirkpatrick Bakery, Schlage Lock used to be in our neighborhood, they were blue-union jobs, they left the city and now we lost their sponsorship and employees that volunteered.”

-Roberto Y. Hernandez, Carnaval San Francisco

5 Case study: Tet Festival

The Tet Festival celebrated the Lunar New Year for 25 years, but closed down in 2016

A center of the Vietnamese community...

"Families come out, children come out.
Food, flowers, entertainment..."

-Judy Young, Vietnamese Youth Center



...that closed down in 2016

- **The Lunar New Year celebration was not held in San Francisco** after the Vietnamese Community Center closed. Without a sponsor, the event returned a \$14,000 grant to the City

"Not enough people, not enough finance, not a lot of support,
booth sponsors ..."

-Tony Nguyen, Southeast Asian Community Center

"We're really losing slowly the culture. It's bigger than just the closure, our folks just can't afford to be here anymore. It's been going on for a long time, but it's becoming more pronounced."

-Judy Young, Vietnamese Youth Center

5 Case study: La Cocina Street Food Festival

La Cocina put the spotlight on independently owned food businesses for seven years, but halted in 2016

A showcase for SF food entrepreneurs...

7 years 100 local vendors 50,000 guests 1 mile long

La Cocina's popular San Francisco Street Food Festival taking a year off

By Sarah Fritzsche on May 2, 2016 at 3:15 PM

✉ f t d p g+



...that closed down in 2016

- **The outdoor food festival decided to end its run**, a result of logistical challenges, city permitting frustrations and the challenges of hosting a large, accessible event in a public space that would be accessible
- **After deciding that the time, effort and costs required to close a street would surpass the benefits** for their entrepreneurs, La Cocina focused its energy on similar but smaller events and its more general mission of entrepreneurship

“We stopped doing the festival because it was financially unfeasible. There was literally no support from the city. The only way the event would be profitable is corporate sponsorships, and we don't have those relationships....
...If the city is interested in hosting large, public, outdoor events, it has a choice. If only those most robust professional companies can afford to host events, then events will be increasingly commercial.

-Caleb Zigas, La Cocina non-profit

5 Three key adjustments could be made to address socio-economic concerns

	Possible adjustments	Challenge addressed	
Identify an organization that can connect producers with sponsors	Identify an organization, nonprofit or for-profit, that can foster relationships between event producers and sponsors to increase producer access to corporate sponsorship of events	- Improves the financial situation of events receiving direct financial aid or fee waivers - Creates new connections within the City and elevates the profile of both events and companies	Broader efforts to build a more affordable city are excluded from this report, but would also address socio-economic concerns Addressing the challenges of complexity and transparency of permitting would also decrease the cost burden on organizations working to complete the permitting process
Identify new funding streams for outdoor events	Identify sources of funds for outdoor events, such as Community Benefit Districts, in addition to existing funding from Grants for the Arts, Arts Commission, and Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development	- Improves the financial situation of events receiving direct financial aid or fee waivers - Creates new connections within the City and elevates the profile of both events and companies	
Support event producers in best practice neighborhood outreach	- Define best practices for outreach such as case studies of top producers or examples of Internet campaigns - Encourage producers to apply for permits early to allow time to accommodate neighbor opinions	- Gives residents an early opportunity to learn about and engage with the event - Increases compliant producers' confidence that permits will not be delayed with little time to hold event	

SOURCE: Interviews, web search

Contents

- 1 Introduction to the study and outdoor events in San Francisco
- 2 Goals and challenges for city events
- 3 Reducing complexity
- 4 Increasing transparency
- 5 Addressing socio-economic pressures
- 6 Summary**

6 Against these three challenges, seven interventions have been identified

1 Reducing complexity

Move to a
hub-and-
spoke model

Major project: Establish a single body for the event producers that would interface with other resources and facilitate the process

Adopt a
shared digital
platform

Major project: Adopt a digital platform for applications (e.g. A Common Application on a customer relationship management platform)

2 Increasing transparency

Publish a
central
process map
and permit
cost
calculator

Quick win: Publish a single document that lays out the permit process and deadlines, and a single spreadsheet that allows a producer to estimate permit costs

Hold regular
mixers for
event
producers

Quick win: Convene event producers several times a year to create a support community to share knowledge and resources

3 Addressing socio-economic pressures

Identify an
organization that
can connect
producers with
sponsors

Quick win: Foster relationships between event producers and potential sponsors to increase access to sponsorship

Support event
producers in best
practice
neighborhood
outreach

Medium term: Share best practices of top producers and encourage producers to apply early

Identify new
funding streams
for outdoor
events

Major project: Establish new public and private sources of funds, pro-bono services, and other resources for outdoor events

SOURCE: Team analysis, interviews with event producers and city employees at relevant departments in November-December 2016

1 Interdepartmental Committee on Traffic and Transportation

Report acknowledgments and contacts

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The team would like to thank the event producers and city officials who took the time to assist us with our analysis.

Appendix 1: List of event producers and Departments interviewed

Event producers

African American Shakespeare Comp.		Cinco de Mayo		Sunday Streets	
Black Cuisine		Fiesta on the Hill		Team Pro Event	Various
Burning Man Decompression		Fleet Week		The New Orleanian	heronarts
Carnaval		How Weird Street Fair		WharfFest	
Chinese Historical Society of America		Knights of St Francis - Italian Parade		WinterWalk	
Chinese New Year Parade		NoisePop		Yerba Buena CBD	
La Cocina Street Food Festival		SF Pride			
Competitor Group		Southeast Asian Community Center			

City Departments

Entertainment Commission		Department of Public Health		Department of Emergency Mgmt.	
Fire Department		Municipal Transportation Agency		Department of Environment	
Department of Public Works		Police Department			

Appendix 2: Inventory of outdoor event-related permits and approvals

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY/BODY	PERMIT/LICENSE	OTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED
Interdepartment Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT) <i>NOTE: at least 4 voting ISCOTT members required at hearing to approve street closure. Voting members include reps from MTA, Police-Traffic Company, Public Health, Fire Prevention, DPW - BSES, Entertainment Commission.</i>	* Temporary Street Closure Permit	N/A
Fire Department - Bureau of Fire Prevention	* Fire Permits - separate permits per activity: Fair/Carnival Generator Tents/Canopies (greater than 400 sq. ft.) Liquid Propane Gas Heater Open Flame Fireworks Display Pyro/Flame Effects	* Day of Event Inspection
Police Department - Local District Office	* Liquor License (Daily, Caterer, Event Auth.) * Parade Permit	* Security Plan * 108 Police Staffing Plan
Police Department - Police Law Enforcement Services (PLES) Unit	N/A	* 108 Police Staffing Plan
Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)	* Temporary Street Closure Permit * Temporary Tow Away/No Parking Sign	* ADA Compliance Plan * Transportation Plan (PCO Staffing, MUNI Re-Routes) * Liability Insurance Coverage * Water Plan * Public/Neighborhood Outreach Plan * Zero Waste Plan (Proof of Workshop Participation & Recycling Services)
Police Department - Special Events Unit/Traffic Company	* Parade Permit (Major events)	* Security Plan * 108 Police Staffing Plan * Transportation Plan (PCO Staffing, MUNI Re-Routes)
Department of Public Health - Environmental Health Branch	* Temporary Food Facility Permit * Mobile Food Facility Permit	* Day of Event Inspection
Department of Public Works - Bureau of Streets & Environmental Services (DPW - BSES)	N/A	* Waste Management Plan
Department of Public Works - Bureau of Street Use & Mapping (DPW - BSM)	* Temporary Occupancy Permit	* Liability Insurance Coverage
Department of Emergency Management (DEM) - EMS Agency	N/A	* Emergency Medical Plan
Department of Environment	N/A	* Zero Waste Plan
Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	* Water Usage - Potable or Recycled Water from Water Main * Water Meter Rental	N/A
Entertainment Commission	* Loudspeaker Permit * Soundtruck Permit	N/A
California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC)	* Liquor License (Daily, Caterer, Event Auth.)	N/A

Appendix 3: ISCOTT roles and responsibilities

The Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation brings together a number of agencies to review closure applications

Members	Observers
Entertainment Commission	
Fire Department	
Department of Public Works ¹	
Department of Health	
Municipal Transportation Agency	
Police Department	
Port of San Francisco	
Department of Emergency Mgmt.	

The ISCOTT committee votes to issue a permit for a Temporary Street Closure, considering a variety of criteria, including:

- Impact of the temporary use or occupancy of public streets on the traffic, security, health, and safety of the public
- Traffic, security, health, and safety requirements of the proposed temporary use or occupancy
- Measures proposed by the applicant to satisfy those requirements.
- Ability of the applicant to comply with requirements necessary to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public
- Duration of the temporary use or street occupancy and the City's ability to accommodate such use or occupancy with the necessary resources...
- Overextension of the City's resources because of previously approved temporary use or occupancy of public streets or other activities that could cause scheduling conflicts during the same period...
- Number of major events ... scheduled during the period for which the applicant seeks a permit, the nature and location of the major events, and the demand these major events will have on the City's resources, including its police, emergency and sanitation personnel...

The SFMTA is frequently the starting point for the application process, according to Event Producer interviews. The SFMTA maintains a list of required permits for Event Producers. At the ISCOTT hearing, ISCOTT members often direct Event Producers to their agencies to apply for their respective permits.

- ★ Food Vendors Using Propane, Open Flame, Etc.
- ★ 2500+ Daily Attendees / Medical Plan Required
- ★ Alcohol Served
- ★ Amplified Sound
- ★ Traffic/Muni Impact
- ★ Water Main Access

IDEAL STATE = Process steps and timeline recommended by permitting City agencies

- * Recreation and Park
- * Port Authority
- * National Park Service
- * Presidio Trust
- * Parades (Police Dept.)

