



## City Council Staff Report

**Subject:** Approval of Changes to the 2021 Sundance Film Festival  
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**Department:** Special Events & Economic Development  
**Date:** August 4, 2020

### Recommendation

Hold a public hearing, take public comment, and approve one-time changes effective only for the 2021 Sundance Film Festival (SFF/Festival) in a form approved by the City Attorney due to the impacts of Covid 19. All other terms of the contract will continue to apply. Changes include:

- Reduce the Festival from 10 days to 7 days;
- Change the Dates of the Festival from January 21 – 31, to January 28 to February 3;
- Reduce the use of City Property for the Festival to the Park City Library;
  - Staff will work with Sundance to permit the Ray Theatre as a venue.
- Suspend the requirement to hold 70% of the Festival in Park City and Summit County;
- Reduce transportation requirements for the Festival, including that Sundance will not be responsible to paying for and provide transit services to mitigate impacts.

Staff will return at subsequent meetings in the fall to request approval of Supplemental Plans and operational details as according to the City Services Agreement and Section 4A Special Events of the municipal code.

### Executive Summary

Due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sundance Institute has requested a series of one year changes to the 2021 Film Festival to ensure a safe and fiscally responsible Festival. As such, per requirements of the Sundance [City Services Agreement](#), City Council needs to authorize the changes. Sundance will return at later dates to seek final City approval of the details of the annual Supplemental Plan.

Our contract is fundamentally rooted in mutual cooperation and flexibility and is structured to accommodate an unanticipated occurrence such as this so that both parties can continue the mutual benefits.

### Background

Sundance Institute is a long standing partner and local non profit organization in the Park City community. Both the organization and the Festival reinforce unique cultural experiences and significant economic vitality for Park City, the state of Utah, and independent film enthusiast from around the world. A background of the event and current contract can be found [here](#).

### Analysis

The impacts of Covid 19 have been unprecedented to our economy, cultural organizations and community as a whole; we still do not know the outcome of impacts. Sundance Institute is in the process of working to define a detailed operating plan for its upcoming Festival with a significantly reduced scope. Due to the impacts of Covid 19, and the unknown health and safety risks, Sundance proposes to significantly reduce scope of the event including the amount of theatres and venues. There is also a significant shift away from a live, in-person approach to a virtual based Festival. This shift results with challenging and costly operational pivot, as theatre capacity and resulting ticket revenues are likely to be reduced by 75% of normal occupancy to ensure the health and safety of attendees.

While the changes proposed are significant, staff recommends Council approve the request. Staff is confident we can work on operational plans that meet the requirements for mitigating any impacts of the Event, including transportation and public safety, while providing a safe and successful Festival. The Institute and staff need time to work through final operational details before returning to Council, but Sundance is unable to continue planning without Council first approving the reduced scope and changed dates.

### **Funding**

City services costs including waived fees for the typical are included in the approved FY 21 budget, pursuant to the [City Services Agreement](#).