



# Agenda Item

## Orange City Council

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Item #: 8.5.

2/10/2026

File #: 26-0051

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**THRU:** Jarad Hildenbrand, City Manager

**FROM:** Leslie Hardy, Community and Library Services Director

### 1. SUBJECT

Recommendation for *Celebration in the Park* on July 3, 2026, in connection with the USA250 initiative.

### 2. SUMMARY

Recommendation regarding the proposed USA250 - *Celebration in the Park* at Hart Park, a free, family-friendly celebration that activates existing park amenities and collaborates with local-nonprofit organizations to assist with implementation on select components.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the proposed USA250 - *Celebration in the Park* at Hart Park on July 3, 2026 as recommended by the Park Planning and Community Events Commission.

### 4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3: Enhance Public Communication Strategy and Quality of Life

Objective 3.7: Continue to offer high quality and efficient city led recreation programs

### 6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, also known as the Semiquincentennial (USA250), the City Council directed staff in March 2025 to collaborate with the Park Planning and Community Events Commission (Commission) to develop a plan to commemorate this milestone in the City of Orange.

In May 2025, the Commission established a USA250 Subcommittee which adopted a decentralized approach that encourages community partners, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses to incorporate the USA250 theme into their existing programming.

To support this effort, information about the initiative, along with a calendar of related events occurring throughout the Orange community, has been made available on the City's website. Other

planned activities include the donation of a Liberty Tree to the City from the Sons of the American Revolution, a community art exhibit at the Sports Center at Grijalva Park, a USA250 themed City utility box art contest, a community event at the Orange Public Library and History Center (OPL) hosted by the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a staff curated USA250 exhibit at OPL.

In addition, several local non-profit organizations are planning events and activities with a USA250 theme including a *Concert in the Park* put on by the Kiwanis Club of Orange and *Celebrate Orange* with the theme, "Orange You Glad It's America's Birthday! Celebrating 250 Years" hosted by the Orange Chamber of Commerce, Orange Blossoms Auxiliary, and the Orange Plaza Rotary Club. Commission input was discussed at the September 2025 meeting, and subsequent updates have been provided on an ongoing basis.

At the October 2025 Commission meeting, the Commission provided feedback on a re-imagined July 3rd event concept that aligned with Semiquiencentennial as part of the broader USA250 initiative. At that time, the Commission also established a fundraising subcommittee to support the event. The proposed event-now titled *Celebration in the Park at Hart Park*-is envisioned as a free, family-friendly community gathering to be held on July 3, 2026. The event is designed to activate existing park amenities while requiring minimal staffing from Police, Fire, and Community Services. The concept emphasizes community connection, collaboration with local nonprofit organizations, and fiscal responsibility. Planned elements may include live music, a small patriotic ceremony commemorating USA250, and use of existing Hart Park amenities throughout the day, such as swimming at Hart Park Pool, pickleball, softball, and other recreational activities.

Following the elimination of funding for City-led special events in 2024 and reductions in staffing levels, this approach leverages existing park resources to create a welcoming community experience without the high operational costs associated with a fully enclosed, ticketed event featuring a large-scale musical performance and fireworks. In addition, the event concept relies on partnerships with local nonprofit organizations to assist with select implementation components, as Community Services staffing resources for day-of-event support are currently minimal.

The proposed event does not include a commercial-grade fireworks display. The cost, space, staffing, and safety requirements associated with such a display were determined to be prohibitive given current budget and staffing constraints. This approach is further supported by the continued allowance of Safe and Sane Fireworks sales within the City.

The fundraising subcommittee has established a goal of securing approximately \$35,000 in sponsorship funding to fully support the event. In coordination with staff, a tiered sponsorship program has been developed, with contribution levels ranging from \$500 to \$20,000. Full funding is required to proceed with the event.

The Commission voted to recommend the event as presented to City Council at its January 20, 2026, Regular meeting.

## **7. ATTACHMENTS**

- None