

MERC STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item/Issue: For the purpose of approving updated Portland Expo Center scheduling policy

Resolution No: 26-07

Presented by: Cindy Wallace

Date: June 23, 2026

Background and Analysis: The Portland Expo Center is in an active period of strategic transition as part of the Expo Futures initiative, positioning the campus as a regional hub for sports, community events, and economic activity. The existing Scheduling Policy, last updated in 2023, established a three-tiered priority system emphasizing sports and large-scale events.

The proposed 2026 Scheduling Policy builds on that foundation while introducing a more refined, outcomes-based framework aligned with current market conditions, operational realities, and regional economic development goals.

Key updates include:

- Refined strategic positioning as a public regional asset focused on economic prosperity and livability.
- Enhanced economic impact criteria including hotel room night generation, revenue potential, and repeat business.
- Updated scheduling priorities for large-scale sporting events while maintaining a diverse event mix.
- Clear long-term booking criteria tied to room nights and space utilization.
- Streamlined event spacing policies.
- Improved financial and contracting clarity including deposit requirements.
- Continued commitment to equity and public stewardship.

These updates ensure alignment with regional tourism recovery, financial sustainability, and community benefit.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed Scheduling Policy is expected to strengthen the Expo Center's financial performance by prioritizing higher-revenue events, increasing hotel room night production, and improving calendar optimization.

Sporting events have generated approximately \$2.2 million in event-driven revenue over recent fiscal years and continue to grow. Additional indirect economic benefits are expected through increased visitation, hotel stays, and local spending.

Attachments to Resolution and/or Staff Report:

Attachment A: Portland Expo Center Scheduling Policy (July 1, 2026)

RECOMMENDATION: Expo Center staff recommends that the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission adopt the updated Portland Expo Center Scheduling Policy, effective July 1, 2026.