

**DATE:** April 15, 2026

**TO:** Performing Arts Committee

**FROM:** Theresa Yvonne, Performing Arts Manager

**SUBJECT:** Revisions to SecondStage Fee Waiver Program

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The Performing Arts Committee's SecondStage Program Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following modifications to the existing SecondStage Fee Waiver program:

1. Update the title of the program from SecondStage Fee Waiver Program to SecondStage Vitality Program; and
2. Adjust from the previous criteria that the applicant must not have had a previously executed agreement with MVCPA to an open application to organizations/individuals who wish to produce a performance/event in the SecondStage at MVCPA.
3. The SecondStage Vitality Program application and approval timeline will be coordinated to coincide with the MVCPA Primary reservation process. Aligning these timelines ensures that selected applicants can secure performance dates at the same time as the majority of other renters in the venue.
4. Community Services Department staff will provide an application workshop to provide guidance to applicants to ensure as many successful applicants as possible.

**BACKGROUND**

The Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (MVCPA) opened in 1991 and currently attracts up to 75,000 patrons to Downtown Mountain View each year. The MVCPA offers performances by three Resident Companies and numerous local arts organizations, ranging from community organizations to regional professional production companies.

The MVCPA venue includes MainStage, a 600-seat theater; SecondStage, a black box theater featuring flexible seating for 150 patrons; ParkStage, a small outdoor amphitheater that can seat up to 250 people; the Lobby that serves both indoor theaters; and a Rehearsal Studio and production support spaces, including a scene shop, a costume shop, green room, and dressing

rooms, and offices for the Performing Arts Division staff. The MVCPA also includes the Bean Scene Café, leased to an independent operator.

A Primary Reservation process occurs every fall for the following October-through-September season, and the facility is typically booked 18 months in advance. All stages, MainStage, SecondStage, and ParkStage, are considered in the Primary Reservation process.

### **SecondStage Fee Waiver Program**

The purpose of the SecondStage Fee Waiver Program is to bring new groups into the SecondStage to further promote the City Council's desired expansion of SecondStage usage and the Performing Arts Committee's (PAC) objective for more diversification of performance genres.

The SecondStage Ad Hoc Committee's revisions are designed to make the program more accessible, equitable, and aligned with the MVCPA reservation process. Specifically, the changes aim to:

- Open the program uniformly to both organizations and individuals, using clear, consistent eligibility and application criteria so that a broader range of participants can take part.
- Allow applicants to submit requests within the primary reservation timeline, so that SecondStage participants can secure dates at the same time as other MVCPA users.
- Prevent SecondStage users from being limited to leftover dates by integrating them into the main reservation cycle, rather than relegating them to whatever remains later in the year.

To increase the quality and quantity of applications to the program, the Ad Hoc Committee proposes that staff offer a workshop for prospective applicants. Many individuals and organizations have strong projects and clear community impact, but lack experience in articulating their ideas in specific formats, language, and criteria. A workshop will build applicants' skills in proposal development, budgeting, and outcome measurement, resulting in stronger applications, more equitable access to funding opportunities, and a higher likelihood that the SecondStage Vitality Program invests in high-impact, well-designed projects.

### **ANALYSIS**

As part of the PAC's annual work plan, the Committee reviewed and analyzed the current SecondStage Fee Waiver program. The PAC formed the SecondStage Ad Hoc

Committee (Ad Hoc Committee), comprised of two members who met with staff regularly to discuss the current program's history and current structure and recommend changes to the

existing program. Through this review process, the Ad Hoc Committee learned that few groups were aware of the program and that the requirement was to have never previously used the venue. Upon reviewing the uses of SecondStage, the Ad Hoc Committee desires to increase the variety of performances to bring diversity to the theater and attract new audiences to the MVCPA and Downtown Mountain View.

### **Future Review of the SecondStage Vitality Program**

To ensure the SecondStage Vitality Program continues to meet community needs and aligns with MVCPA operations, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends an annual review of the program's outcomes, participant experience, and equity impact. This review will draw on application and funding data, participant surveys, and staff. Findings will inform adjustments to guidelines, timelines, and support services (such as application workshops) for subsequent cycles. In addition, a more comprehensive review will be conducted every three to five years to evaluate the program's long-term effectiveness and recommend structural improvements.

While the recommendations outlined in this memorandum will still be presented to the City Council for consideration, the Ad Hoc Committee suggests that, going forward, staff from the Community Services Department (CSD) conduct a review of the SecondStage Fee Waiver program every five years. If adjustments are needed to address any unmet needs, staff will present recommendations to the PAC for evaluation.

### **Summary of Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations to the PAC**

1. Update the title of the program from SecondStage Fee Waiver Program to SecondStage Vitality Program; and
2. Adjust from the previous criteria that the applicant must not have had a previously executed agreement with MVCPA to an open application to organizations/individuals who wish to produce a performance/event in the SecondStage at MVCPA.
3. The SecondStage Vitality Program application and approval timeline will be coordinated to coincide with the MVCPA Primary reservation process. Aligning these timelines ensures that selected applicants can secure performance dates at the same time as the majority of other renters in the venue.
4. CSD staff will provide an application workshop to provide guidance to applicants to ensure as many successful applicants as possible.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

With updates to the SecondStage Fee Waiver Program, staff anticipate additional interest from

newer, less experienced members of the performing arts community, resulting in an additional

six weeks of SecondStage usage annually. These additional bookings are likely to bring new patrons to MVCPA, thereby increasing the customer base and visibility for other ticketed performances and events.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following this meeting, staff will revise the Fee Waiver Program based on feedback from the PAC and present a final version at the May 2026 PAC meeting for approval.

### **PUBLIC NOTICING**

Agenda posting.

Attachment: 1. SecondStage Vitality Program Information Packet