



Agenda Item Report

Legislative Board: City Council
Date: March 24, 2026
Contact: Anthony Host
Agenda Item ID / Number: 2025-352- / I.1

ITEM TITLE: Presentation on the 2025 Railcar Revival festival and discussion on plans for the 2026 Railcar Revival Music festival (Parks Director Tony Host and Chad and Bethany Kocian of Puente Alto)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Buda is excited to have The Railcar Revival, a new signature festival celebrating Buda's rich railroad heritage, local culture, and vibrant community spirit. Set against the backdrop of Buda's historic downtown and Buda Amphitheater, this event is envisioned as a multi-day celebration featuring live music, artisan vendors, food trucks, historical exhibits, family-friendly activities, and a vintage railcar showcase.

The festival aims to become a cornerstone annual event that supports economic development, promotes tourism, and enhances quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Scheduled for Fall 2026, The Railcar Revival will align with the City's strategic goals of fostering community identity, leveraging downtown assets, and creating unique experiences that attract regional attention.

2. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

In early 2024, the idea for The Railcar Revival festival was introduced as part of the City's broader efforts to enhance downtown activation, increase tourism, and celebrate Buda's historic character. The concept was presented to City Council during the FY 2024 event planning and tourism strategy discussions, emphasizing the opportunity to create a heritage-based event tied to Buda's longstanding connection with the railroad.

Following positive community feedback and alignment with the City's Strategic Plan, City Council formally approved the event as part of the 2024 event calendar during the March 2024 regular session. Council recognized the festival's potential to:

- Activate underutilized public spaces in the historic downtown area
- Boost economic development through increased visitation and overnight stays
- Celebrate Buda's cultural and historical assets.
- Provide residents with a new signature event reflecting the city's identity

3. ANALYSIS

The Railcar Revival festival has been evaluated based on logistical feasibility, economic potential, community interest, and alignment with strategic goals. The analysis indicates strong potential for the event to become a successful and sustainable annual celebration.

Community and Cultural Relevance

Buda's historical roots as a rail town provide a natural and authentic theme for the event. There is strong community support for events that reflect local heritage and offer family-friendly experiences.

A rail-themed event differentiates Buda from other regional festivals, giving it a unique identity.

Tourism and Economic Development

Expected to attract 5,000–7,000 attendees in its inaugural year, with potential to grow. Visitors will generate economic activity for local hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and service vendors. Opportunities exist for regional sponsorships and rail preservation partnerships to offset costs.

Downtown Activation

The festival supports downtown revitalization goals by drawing visitors to Main Street businesses. It builds momentum for other seasonal and cultural programming in the area.

Operational Feasibility

Downtown Buda offers a walkable footprint with infrastructure to support large-scale public events (parking, utilities, access).

Existing city staff have experience executing similar events (Red White & Buda, Trail of Lights), which helps minimize operational risk.

Scalability and Future Growth

The event can begin as a 1- or 2-day celebration and expand in future years based on success and community feedback.

Integration of live music, children’s programming, and historical elements ensures broad audience appeal.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

For the 2025 event, the City provided \$47,500 and the Buda EDC provided \$47,500 in funding.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN/GOALS

SAFE, FUN EXPERIENCES FOR ALL - OUTDOOR CAPITOL OF TEXAS

6. STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

Have a successful Amphitheater with a variety of performances with resident attendance

7. PROS AND CONS

Pros

Unique Identity: Establishes a signature event tied directly to Buda’s rail history

Economic Stimulus: Drives tourism, retail sales, and overnight hotel stays

Downtown Activation: Increases foot traffic and community pride in the historic district

Community Engagement: Offers inclusive programming for all ages and demographics

Scalability: Can grow over time into a major regional attraction

Strategic Fit: Aligns with Council goals related to tourism, culture, and economic vitality

Cons

Weather Dependency: Outdoor format means weather could impact attendance

Resource Demands: Requires significant staff coordination and city services during planning and execution

Vendor Competition: May impact sales for nearby businesses if outside vendors are prioritized

8. ALTERNATIVES

The City Council may also take this item into Executive Session for consultation with the City Attorney.

9. REQUESTED ACTION / SUGGESTED MOTION / RECOMMENDATION

N/A

Attachments:

[Railcar Revival Recap - Year 2 .pdf](#)