

**2025 PARADE AFTER ACTION REPORT
FINAL VERSION, 10/2/25**

MEMORANDUM FOR DDA PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE (AND OTHERS – SEE DISTRIBUTION BELOW)

SUBJECT: After Action Report, 2025 Dallas Days Parade

FROM: Brian Dalton, Parade Chair

DATE: October 2, 2025

BACKGROUND

This is the second year in a row that the Promotions Committee of the DDA orchestrated the annual summertime Parade. Last known as the Krazy Dayz Parade and before that the Summerfest Parade, for the past two years it has been called the Dallas Days Parade. It seems like this is the most well-accepted and uniquely descriptive of the three titles and has resonance for the future.

The Parade is a prominent element of the over-all Dallas Days event which is planned, organized, and executed by the Dallas Days Committee of volunteers. Though the Committee gets support from the City, DDA, Chamber, etc., it is an independent body that stepped up to the plate in 2024 to pick up the old Summerfest/Krazy Dayz banner and keep the party going. Now, after their second year, their efforts seem both very worthwhile and quite successful. Our understanding is that they plan to be back with another “Dallas Days” in 2026.

PARADE PLANNING

Planning for the 2025 Parade began shortly after the conclusion of the 2024 Parade and involved regular meetings every month of the year from September 2024 onward. These “Parade Planning Committee” (PPC) meetings occurred in the half hour preceding each Dallas Days Committee meeting and grew in frequency as the event approached. The half-hour length of these meetings proved adequate and planning at the committee level seemed very effective.

A total of 16 PPC members and interested parties were on the PPC email list, about 8 of whom regularly attended the PPC meetings. All together I sent out over 100 email messages to PPC members/interested parties and others, keeping the information flow going.

The planning was aided by a study of the lessons learned from the 2024 Parade After Action Report.

PROGRAM MANAGER SUPPORT

Helen Connolly, our DDA Program Manager, was key to executing many of the requirements posed by the PPC (e.g., insurance, advertising, entry sign up, assembling

Parade packets, ordering awards, and so forth). Her detailed and timely support in all these factors plus support from others made the “back room” execution of the event go basically seamlessly.

One lesson learned in the administration of the sign up process was that the use of a canned program for sign-ups called “Eventeny” in my experience lacks the tailored qualities inherent in communicating with our participants in a small town environment – our entry process needs to be quite personal and welcoming. Our survey feedback loop did not indicate a problem and Helen seems able to better customize Eventeny to our needs, so we may have to just live with it.

PARADE PARTICIPATION AND FLOW

The Parade is likely the major downtown event of the year in that it attracts the largest crowd and has such a great many participants. This year we had approximately 62 entrants, down from 75 entrants last year, but the same as the 2023 Parade. However, it was observed that there seemed to be as many, or even more, units (e.g., vehicles, walkers, etc.) as last year, thus the Parade was just as long.

Last year we had about 13 City-coordinated entries and this year it seemed to be about 10, though there wasn’t any documentation of its participants, similar to last year (a lesson learned). Like last year, I estimate that there were about 500 people in the lineup this year (as a benchmark, in 2007, the largest Parade this century so far, we had 1,233 participants in the Parade by actual count and 150 entries).

For next year, it might profit by an analysis of the number of entries who also participated in the 2024 Parade to track consistent players for special outreach.

The Parade went off as planned and moved well. It proved to be very popular with a large crowd (size is hard to estimate – count next year?).

The Parade started right on time at 11:00 am and finished about 12:30, about 15 minutes earlier than last year, I believe because it moved along better this year. The police reported no incidents. Many chairs were put out in advance all along the route indicating good marketing of the event. Oddly, the crowd on Main Street did not show up until just before the Parade start time, giving us concern that that crowd size would be a bust. However, at the last minute a very good crowd showed up and was quite happy and robust. There were people of all ages in the crowd, particularly children.

Photo taken on Main Street at 11:08 am:



The temperature featured a high for the day of around 80 degrees and it was very comfortable all day.

More detailed observations are contained in the following paragraphs.

PARADE OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES

Below are specifics in a variety of areas not covered above. They are in no particular order.

PARADE CONTROL STATION (PCS)



1. We generously got permission to use the parking lot in front of the old Pill Box Pharmacy this year from Salem Health. We arranged this early in the year with Tricia Frizzell with no problems (Tricia.Frizzell@salemhealth.org). She arranged for the cars of employees to be parked at the south end of the lot that day which cleared the north end for our use very nicely.
2. We had two volunteers (Carol D. and Bev S.) in charge of the setup and operations of the station. They helped out with a variety of other things. The PCS was set up at about 7:30 which seemed like a very functional time (last year setting it up at 8:00 pm was too late). This year, the first entrant showed up about 8:00 am.
3. Major infrastructure elements for the PCS are about 4 folding tables, a few chairs, a "PARADE CONTROL STATION" sign and a canopy. Minor elements are a roll of blue masking tape, Gorilla Tape, pens, paper of various sizes, large and small sharpies, post-it notes, tools and so forth.
4. The last entrant appeared about 10:30 and disassembly of the station began close to 11:00 am (uncertain of the exact time).

5. Last year, the absence of some sort of a bathroom facility near the PCS caused considerable concern. This year the Evangelical Bible Church (EBC) on Miller next to our location, offered us the use of their bathroom, a situation which worked out well and hopefully can be worked out in future years as a porta-pottie is expensive to rent.

REGISTRANT SIGN IN



1. Registrant sign in at the booth worked smoothly due to excellent planning and well-designed forms by Helen C. The main objective was to log entrants in, assign them a sequence number, give them their sequence number on a card for their windshield, give them some oral instructions and hand them a Parade Packet.

2. The Parade Packet included information, parade rules, judging information and upcoming events. Last year's packet contained coupons which were reportedly hardly used. Businesses did not opt to participate this year, though admittedly, the request came at a late date. Seems like a good idea to try to continue this and hope for better results, but maybe it isn't worth the effort. Something to decide in the next few months.

3. We had a Lineup Coordinator who was based near the PCS (Sean Connolly.). He was there to ensure that the lineup made sense (no marching bands behind the horses, that folks who wanted to be together were, etc.). He seemed to be quite busy with various tasks, so this seems like a very good position to staff next year. He was in radio communication with Steve Pate, the Chief Lineup Coordinator who was out on the Parade route to manage the lineup. These two folks worked in good harmony and the lineup went smoothly.

4. Using the Pill Box lot worked particularly well this year (better than the lot at the clinic across the street last year). There was ample room for parking for everyone and the lineup of entrants getting their packets was facilitated. The entrance on Uglow and exit on Miller worked well and seemed to be well-understood by the entrants, though some long entrants had a little trouble turning the corners. We noticed also that some folks entered at the exit which caused some minor troubles (better signage next year?).

This photo depicts the lot (the white piles of stored items to the west of the building were gone by Parade Day so posed no obstacle).



a. There were A-Boards left by the Hospital which we used to hang our own home-made signs for “Entrance” (Uglow) and “Exit” (Miller). As can be seen in the photo, these home made signs were small and not real effective. Next year we should make up the paper signs in larger format in advance and be sure the A-Boards are available again. Recommend Gorilla Tape to affix them to the boards.



AWARDS AND JUDGING

1. This year, Helen managed the ordering of the awards early on. We got better service for an attractive price this year than last year from outfits in Salem and Corvallis. No problems.
2. Last year we ordered 200 participation ribbons and did not use them all. This year, we ordered less and distributed one to each entry.
3. The judging was said to have gone well and the massing of all categories of judging into one group instead of fanning out by categories seemed to have worked better than by categories last year. Recommend this procedure for next year.
4. Chief Judge this year was Claire Blosser and she was organized early-on so the process was well-ordered and everything occurred on time.
5. Photos were taken. They were posted to social media and linked on the DDA website. The website cannot upload the size of the photos taken so this was the best alternative.

BUDGET – INCOME AND EXPENSES

1. This year our total income was \$3,600 vs. \$2,150 last year and our expenses this year were a total of \$2,997 this year as opposed to \$1,765 last year. There may be updated numbers by year's end.
2. We charged the same this year for entrants as we did last year (\$50 for commercial; \$25 for non-commercial; free for DDA members and government entries)., There was no objection I encountered to the entry cost. Our entry fees contributed \$1,700 to our income this year.
3. With fewer entrants this year, we had a decline in income from that source but thanks in large part to Helen's efforts we had several sponsors signing up who contributed total of \$1,900 to the event. Last year we did not seek, nor did we have, sponsors. It turned out to be a good idea this year.
4. Our major expenses this year were \$522 for trophies and awards and \$676 for insurance, a big jump up from last year.
5. Our bottom line net "profit" was \$603 which is allocated to the DDA for partial reimbursement for Helen's administrative time. It is important to capture her time so the we have a grasp of the total cost of the Parade.

PRE-PARADE

1. [[[this paragraph needs fact-checking and enhancements]]] Thanks to Keara J., there were a few pre-parade activities - a balloon twisting contingent on the Square and sidewalk chalk delivered along the whole parade route. Also, there was a clown who entertained the kids. The chalk was very popular and much used by the kids. All this and more should be considered for next year, street performers, for instance.
2. My understanding was the Walmart, who has donated chalk in past years, did not help us this year. Recommend we lash up with them early this season to see what they are willing to do if we give the a long lead time.

ANNOUNCER'S STAND

1. The announcer's stand was obtained from the Fairgrounds (POC Tina) and was again perfect for the task. It only needs a table, two chairs, a canopy (supplied by ?? this year) and sound to work well. The stand is difficult to move and requires a crew and the correct trailer. This was executed well in advance by Keara J. and Steve P. [[[fact check]]]



2. David Shien did the announcing for at least the fourth year in a row and is excellent at it. I sit beside him and fed him the information sheets for the next entry passing by and advised him of any highlights regarding the entrants.

3. Sound was provided by Quinn and was well-amplified. When David and I got there and set up about 10:30, Quinn was playing something akin to elevator music. We asked if he could liven it up by playing march music like John Philip Sousa pieces and he did to excellent effect – really livened up the crowd. Something to watch out for next year – calming melodies aren’t good Parade Day musical numbers.

VOLUNTEER LANYARDS, VESTS AND PORTABLE RADIOS

1. Very good idea to have lanyards with “PARADE VOLUNTEER” and “DALLAS DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION” on them. Hopefully we got most of them back. It worked better this year to print the information on both sides so it stays on message when it flips over as they are prone to do.

2. Orange, light-duty safety vests are essential for both Barricade Monitors (ODOT requirement) and the Parade Monitors. There are ample vests on hand in the DDA headquarters building now.

3. Eight portable radios were loaned us from the Dallas Police Department. Two were used by the Lineup Coordinators and the other six by the Parade Monitors, both on different frequencies. They proved very useful in both cases (faster than using cell phones). All have been returned to the City.

a. There was trouble with understanding the volume control on the radios. Next year we need to issue instructions for managing that.

ENTRANT QUALITIES

1. Again this year we had an excellent variety of entrants, almost all locals (few from out of the local area).

2. Participation and the high quality of many of the entrants was enhanced by an excellent theme, “Dallas in Wonderland.” For instance, this theme inspired the superbly creative float with this theme presented by Karma Coffee.



2. Local focus for the parade is fine, but in future years for variety it could be spiced up with selected entries from outside the area which are of high quality. Here are samples of entrants I lined up in the past in this regard: the Army National Guard Band, Wells Fargo Stagecoach, the Oregon Military Museum (antique military equipment), Mexican Dancing Horses, Shiners (the little go-cart type cars), and so forth. We also should make a play to schedule one of the seven Oscar Meyer Weinermobiles next year (get our bid in early!).

3. We had three horse groups this year, always a popular entry. Pooper scoopers are a necessity and these groups should be reminded.

4. Unlike last year, importantly we had a color guard this year (scouts). What's a parade without a color guard after all?

5. The City provided the street sweeper at the conclusion of the Parade lineup. It had a sign on it, "THE END" which is a nice touch.

LINEUP AND STAGING

1. Having two Lineup Coordinators, one the PCS area and the other out on the line proved to be very valuable – they dealt with lots of "situations."

2. The lineup pattern (down Washington and angling back on Mill) worked well for the number of entrants we had (the line ended just about Lyle Street). If it gets a lot longer, we will likely need to turn the corner to the north on Shelton Street.

3. My understanding is that the animal staging area for the large animals down at the City Shops worked well. The City opened the gate at 6:00 am (plenty early). Ideally we will have a dedicated animal wrangler next year to attract and manage animal entries.

PARADE EXECUTION

1. The Parade started right on time and went rather well with few glitches. Overall, it moved well.

2. Candy can be a problem and our insurance mandates we manage it carefully. We managed it rather intensely this year to discourage throwing the candy from the vehicles as children run out to pick it up and can get hurt. We had it under good control this year with only minor episodes of backsliding.

3. The biggest visible problem with the flow of the parade every year are the gaps caused by the “accordion effect.” This year we asked (and repeatedly reminded) the entrants to key off the entry behind them. This slowed the Parade down a little but was followed reasonably well. By the time the Parade passed by the reviewing stand, there were few problems – almost no backups (all were moving) and only relatively minor gaps, so this tactic continues to hold promise.

a. One of the main issues to keep the flow going is to have Parade Route Monitors in sufficient quality and quantity to be effective at least at the key points along the route. To work with the entrants to keep the flow going and the gaps closed requires alert, mature, well-briefed monitors willing to work collaboratively with the entrants as they pass by to fine-tune their movement. We had a very good Coordinator, Ann Wilson again this year who briefed the monitors and was out on the line with them. As always, we could have used more monitors and need to recruit early for next year.

4. Another BIG holdup of the Parade is at the intersection of Washington and Main where the Parade ends - the “dispersal area.” Several entries seem to freeze up at this point and just stop in the middle of the street right by Washington Street for some reason and start to disembark the people on their floats, etc. when they should be moving into the neighborhood to Clay or Ash to stop and disassemble themselves. When they stop at Washington they back up the line of march and they don’t seem to notice or care. We encountered a severe case of this last year, so this year we did a little to sort it out (a couple of our lady volunteers went down there to try to keep things moving). Unfortunately, to be effective and get movement from these entries at this point needs some real volunteer horsepower to overcome the inertia at that point. Like a couple of police officers with a guns and whistles plus a Cat 966D front end loader to push the vehicles that ignore them down the street.

5. Barricade monitors is always a difficult position to staff, and we did our best. This needs lots of attention to detail and good advance planning. Carolyn Hall picked up the job this year and based on her work with it and lessons learned, it would be ideal if she helps us next year as well.

PROSPECTS FOR DOING THIS AGAIN NEXT YEAR

Based on the excellent reception and evident popularity of the Parade, plus all the groundwork laid the last two years for readily organizing the effort again, if a crew of leaders and volunteers can again be assembled to put on the Parade again that would seem to be the right thing to do.

Part of that equation depends on the energy and willingness of the Dallas Days Committee to continue sponsoring and organizing the larger DD event, of which the Parade is something of the crown jewel. It appears at this time that the DD Committee

has the energy and willpower to sponsor and orchestrate the DD event next year, so it looks like we will have a Parade in 2026.

POST-PARADE IDEAS AND ACTIONS

1. We have surveyed the Parade participants this year with 37 responses as of 8/13/25 but maybe more have come in by now. We should analyze the results of this survey to both improve the quality and accuracy of this After Action Report and to consistently improve the event.
2. One recurring idea is to over time, develop a “Playbook” with essential documentation for planning and running the parade. This would be to pass off year to year to the Parade Planning Committee so that they don’t have to constantly reinvent the wheel. This would include such material as a package of forms and formats that cover every aspect of parade planning and management. Examples: Entry Form; Parade Information and Guidance; Planning Timeline; Judging Sheets; Press Releases; Contact Lists; List of Volunteer Positions and their Duties; Announcer’s Sequenced Sheet; and so on. These need not always be standardized forms but can also just be samples of what we produced this year.
4. We assume that if our Parade Planning Committee and the DDA Promotions Committee will want to orchestrate the 2026 Parade, the DDA board will go along with that desire and continue DDA sponsorship. As part of adopting it, we hope the DDA can get increasing credit for sponsoring the Parade and bringing it off with such skill.
5. Sponsorship worked out really well this year and we should try to cast the net wider next year.
6. As mentioned above, we should try early and hard to find some interesting and noteworthy entries from outside the community for 2026. A partial list is found above, but other entries are possible.
7. We didn’t have the Jeeps this year. Maybe we can find a way to get them back.
8. We need to get special letters of thanks and recognition sent out reasonably soon. We have done some of that, but more is better. Late is better than never.
9. The PPC should try to have a say in the DD and Parade Theme for next year to be sure that it inspires a Parade characterized by high level of participation, artfulness, creativity and fun.
10. We do a pretty good job of this already, but we want to keep participants from our prior Parades in our information loop to encourage them to enter again next year.
11. We need to do a better job working with the City to document and organize their participants. Without this information being developed early, it is always a scramble on Parade Day to sort it all out for a variety of purposes.
12. Next year we need more volunteers on Parade Day. Simple but profound statement.

13. Finally, we need a Parade Chair to lead us for 2026. April Wallace says she will help and I can provide a lot of guidance and experienced advice. It is an easy job with lots of favorable acclaim and untold benefits.

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