So, you want to host a run in Town Center Park?
Here are a few ideas on how to put your best foot forward!

Planning a successful 5K run requires a lot of time, manpower, and resources. It also can be enjoyable and very gratifying if expectations are managed. What does it take to put on a successful event? This document is designed to help answer questions about what it takes to produce a successful event/race in Suwanee Town Center Park using the course approved by the City.

How much time do I need to plan and host a race?
City of Suwanee event applications are available each year in October for the following calendar year. Once applications are received and reviewed, the City event calendar for the year is approved; no additional events will be added or approved. You may submit an application for review and approval by the December deadline; expect to receive date confirmation and event approval by the end of January. You still will need several months to plan and promote your event.

How much does the City charge to host a race?
The City of Suwanee charges a $25 application fee. In addition to the application fee, if the event is approved, a $500 refundable park-use deposit is required. Fees for park rental vary based on estimated attendance/number of runners participating. Usually, this fee is around $300. Non-profit groups with a 501(c)(3) status may receive an additional 10% discount on the park rental price. No other fees will be discounted; only the park rental fee. For the 5K course on the Suwanee Creek Greenway, the City requires three police officers. They are billed at $45 per hour for a minimum of four hours. Public works services are billed at $35 per hour and usually one employee is used. Event Manager is billed at $45 per hour for race-day hours only. The typical billing for a morning run of approximately 4 hours, which includes set-up, registration, race and awards, is approximately $1,300. Your actual costs may vary slightly depending on number of runners or event length. For a complete breakdown of costs, see the City's Special Events Policy.

Can I choose my race course in Suwanee?
For runs with estimated attendance of 600 or fewer, use of the Suwanee Creek Greenway trail is recommended. If there are more than 600 runners, a staggered start time is recommended or the race may choose to run the certified road course. The road course requires more police officers than the Greenway and will increase cost.

What does the City provide for the rental fee?
The city provides course markers (directional signs) on either course, water station set-up, water jugs, safety vests for course marshals, trash cans, seven 10x10 tents with the City logo on them, approximately 25 tables and 45 chairs. The City's event manager will also assist your event organizer with planning as needed. When you have rented the park for your event, you are able to bring in vendors, use the stage for awards and/or registration, and a DJ or other amplify sound. We do not provide a speaker system. The City will help promote the event by listing it on the City website, promoting the event on the City's social media near event time, and listing the event on the City's event postcard and in the City's Connects newsletter. Banners promoting the event (provided by the event organizer) are displayed approximately two weeks prior to the event date. The City has approximately three locations to display banners and will display up to two for your event. Banners should be grommeted for wind resistance to last the entire two weeks they will be on display.

What other costs should be considered in hosting an event in Town Center Park?
There are some additional costs associated with hosting a race that should be considered: race shirts, race bibs, awards, portable restrooms(required for 300 or more runners), race timer, water station and finish line supplies, drinks and snacks, registration forms, safety pins for bibs, runner's bags or SWAG, sound system or DJ for entertainment, and event insurance. Additional costs could include

online registration fees, website building and hosting, course certification by USATF, banners, posters, event cards, advertising, and additional activities for children like bounce houses or entertainment.

How many volunteers will I need on race day?
Some races use a lot of volunteers and some races just use a few. The more volunteers t you can get, the better off you are! Volunteers can assist with everything from registration to water stations. Volunteers are used as course marshals and can assist with finish line refreshments, awards and event set-up and clean up. Usually, 30 to 40 folks can be used on event day: 5 to 10 for registration, 6 to 10 on the course, 3 to 5 at the water station, and additional folks to assist with finish line and refreshments.

How can I make money on the race?
In addition to runner entry fees, organizers are encouraged to sell sponsorships to local businesses who may wish to support your cause. You can sell sponsorships that include mile markers, water stations, race bag supplies, refreshments, and booth space during your event. The City does not collect any fees or percentages related to this money. Sponsorships can range from small amounts to a few thousand dollars. You also may trade sponsorships for things that could represent hard costs. You could trade for finish line refreshments, water, first aid, or have a sponsor bring in entertainment or bounce houses where they cover the cost. Any vendor or sponsor you bring to the park, charge them a fee and keep the money flowing to benefit your cause! You also may host a fun run or kids run during the event to encourage additional sign-ups.

Can I host a theme or adventure type race?
We would love to hear your ideas for a fun race! In the past, we have hosted a color run, and other "themed" runs from sweethearts to shamrocks and superheroes to women-only races. Having a theme can bring out fun costumes and other creative reasons for folks to run. They also can be a catalyst for great photos. Depending on what your theme involves in set-up or clean-up, additional fees may apply.

Can I hire a race director or someone to coordinate my event?
Yes, there are a few one-stop-shop race organizations that can help plan your event. They charge based on how many runners you have and how much help you need. They can just help with race timing, course certification, or registration or handle the entire event-planning and sponsorships. Here are a few such companies who can help:
Performance Race Services, Jason Miller, 770-377-7763,performanceraceservices@gmail.com.
FundRacers, Rob Goldsmith, 678-985-3921, fundracers5K@gmail.com
Forsyth Striders, Devin Forsyth, 404-964-3251, devin@forsythstriders.com

Do I need to certify my course?
To pay for certification of your route, you may contact USATF. There is a fee to have the course certified that is paid to USATF. Most 5K certified race courses can report times for races where folks have to have an official course submitted time – like the Peachtree Road Race. Having a certified route may bring you additional runners who need a certified time.

For additional information on hosting events in Town Center Park, see the Special Event Policy and Event Planning Tips. All event information is available on suwanee.com