



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Development Committee

DATE: August 18, 2025

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

PREPARED BY: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

PRESENTER: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

AGENDA TITLE: Receive Report, Discuss, and Consider Making Recommendation to the City Council to Approve an Ordinance Establishing Entertainment Zones and Approval of a Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION

1. Staff recommends making a Recommendation to the City Council to consider approving an Ordinance adding to the Fort Bragg Municipal Code establishing and regulating Entertainment Zones in accordance with SB 969 (2024).
2. Approve a Resolution adopting the Entertainment Zone Management Plan Template to guide implementation, compliance, and public safety.

The California Alcoholic Beverage Control Act (Bus. & Prof. Code §23000 et seq.) regulates the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages and is administered by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). The Act authorizes businesses to obtain on-sale, off-sale, or combined licenses and prohibits public consumption except where expressly permitted.

In 2023, SB 76 allowed the City and County of San Francisco to establish "Entertainment Zones (EZ)," permitting open container consumption in defined public areas during special events. Building on that pilot, the State Legislature adopted SB 969 in 2024, authorizing all California cities and counties to create Entertainment Zones, subject to public safety conditions and ABC compliance.

Key requirements of SB 969 include:

- Only licensed establishments within a Zone may sell alcohol for public consumption.
- Alcohol must be served in non-glass, non-metal containers.
- No alcohol deliveries to consumers are allowed in the Zone.
- Cities must consult with law enforcement prior to designation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3B

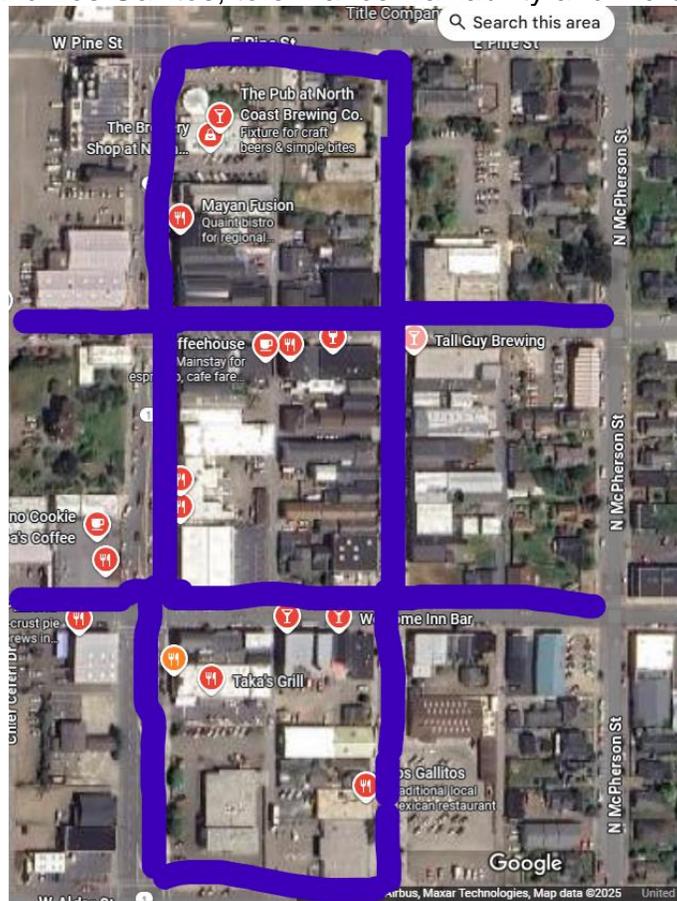
DISCUSSION

The proposed Entertainment Zone Ordinance would allow the City to designate limited areas where patrons may consume alcohol in public during City-approved events under controlled conditions.

Initial Zone Location:

The proposed Entertainment Zone is contemplated to encompass the core of Fort Bragg's Central Business District, including the 300 and 400 blocks of Franklin Street, Laurel Street, Redwood Avenue, and adjacent cross streets extending from Pine Street to Oak Street, including the Downtown Plaza. This area is already a focal point for major City events such as the Magic Market, Blues Festival, First Friday's, Whale Festival, and Paul Bunyan Days. However, the ordinance will allow the City Council to modify, expand or establish a different zone at any time, by Resolution.

The downtown business district zone is strategically aligned with nearby alcohol-serving establishments, including Tall Guy Brewery, Cucina Verona, Sip Wine Bar, Welcome Inn, Golden West, Piaci, and Los Gallitos, to enhance walkability and increase foot traffic



during special events.
Proposed EZ Zone

Map of the

Operational Requirements:

1. A City-issued Special Event Permit would be required for each activation; there would be no standing right to operate.
2. The zone would only be operational during defined hours (e.g., Fridays 12–9 PM; Saturdays 12–9 PM; Sundays 12-9 pm; and City-approved events).
3. All boundaries would be clearly marked with signage, barriers, and staff checkpoints.
4. Only non-glass and non-metal containers would be permissible; branded wristbands or cups may be required for age verification.
5. ABC compliance measures, including “direct-to-Zone service” only. "Direct-to-Zone service" refers to the requirement that alcoholic beverages must be served directly from a licensed premise into the designated EZ—not elsewhere.
6. Security and post-event cleanup plans would be tailored to each event.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION

The Fort Bragg Police Department supports a pilot Entertainment Zone with clear boundaries, time limits, and operator accountability. Concerns regarding overconsumption and youth access will be mitigated through:

- Wrist banding for age verification,
- Mobile barriers for temporary street closures,
- Security staffing plans if needed, and real-time contact for each event, and
- Bi-annual public safety review in coordination with FBPD.

ENTERTAINMENT ZONE MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

The accompanying Management Plan Template would be used for all events activating an Entertainment Zone. Required elements include:

- Zone Lead and 24/7 contact,
- Security if needed, sanitation, and ABC compliance plans,
- Public notifications and signage, and
- Incident reporting to FBPD within 24 hours.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In early 2025, the City of Fort Bragg conducted a public survey to evaluate community sentiment regarding the establishment of an Entertainment Zone (EZ) within the Central Business District. Over 40 responses were received, with 92% of respondents identifying as downtown residents, business owners, or frequent patrons.

Key survey results include:

- 55% of respondents expressed support for the creation of a designated Entertainment Zone for events such as *First Friday*, *Magic Market*, and *summer festivals*.
- An additional 22% were undecided or wanted more information.
- 15% opposed the idea, citing concerns related to public safety, preserving a family-friendly downtown atmosphere, and potential litter issues.

The majority of respondents favored the following operational parameters:

- Limit Entertainment Zone use to evenings and weekends.
- Ensure clearly marked boundaries and visible supervision during events.
- Implement age verification, sanitation protocols, and trash management measures.

In addition to the survey, staff met with the Business Roundtable to discuss the proposal and received support and feedback from local business owners and event organizers, which has been incorporated into the draft ordinance to ensure that it reflects community values and priorities. Input gathered during these conversations helped shape the proposed boundaries, safety protocols, and implementation strategies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The ordinance is exempt from CEQA under:

- **§15061(b)(3)** – It can be seen with certainty that there is no potential for significant environmental impact because the permitted activity is only temporary in nature.
- **§15301(c)** – Operation or licensing of existing public rights-of-way involving negligible or no expansion of existing use because zones are limited to a few streets in the Central Business District (see page 2 map)

FISCAL IMPACT

- This ordinance would have minimal impact to the General Fund, as oversight and implementation would be provided by existing staff
- Event organizers will be responsible for costs related to signage, barriers, and compliance.
- The City could achieve cost recovery via sponsorships and/or permitting fees.

FINDINGS

1. The ordinance is consistent with the City's General Plan as it would support economic development, cultural events, and community use of public space.
2. The ordinance would not result in risks to public health or safety as all events would be City-approved events with built-in revocation authority.
3. The downtown area is physically suitable for an entertainment zone because it is an established community downtown with existing restaurants, bars, parking and other features which will make these activities safe and advantages to the business community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution No. 25-XXX – Approving Management Plan Template
2. Ordinance No. 25-XXX – Adding Chapter 5.06: Entertainment Zones
3. Entertainment Zone Management Plan Template
4. Summary of Community Survey Results
5. ABC EZ Participation Requirements

CONSISTENCY

The establishment of an Entertainment Zone is consistent with the following adopted policies and strategic priorities of the City of Fort Bragg:

- 2024–2028 Strategic Plan Goals:
 - *Economic Vitality*: Supports local business recovery and growth by increasing foot traffic and spending in the downtown area.
 - *Vibrant Downtown*: Aligns with efforts to create a more engaging and family-friendly downtown environment through expanded events and placemaking strategies.
 - *Tourism Development*: Enhances visitor experience and supports event-based tourism that benefits the hospitality and retail sectors.
- General Plan Policy Objectives:
 - Encourages land uses and programs that promote walkable, active commercial districts.
 - Supports community events and outdoor public space utilization for cultural and economic benefit.
- Downtown Revitalization Priorities:
 - Builds on existing activation efforts such as the Blues Festival, First Fridays, and the Magic Market by providing tools to increase downtown engagement.
 - Strengthens coordination between City-sponsored events and adjacent businesses through structured alcohol service and safety plans.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

1. City Council considers adopting the ordinance to allow for entertainment zones (Aug 25th).
2. Submit notice to ABC with zone boundaries and compliance documentation (Sept).
3. Finalize zone signage, safety equipment, and branded containers (Sept).
4. Conduct coordination meeting with FBPD, Visit Fort Bragg, and participating businesses October 2025 (Sept).
5. Soft launch of pilot zone during select fall events (e.g., First Friday, Longest Table).
6. Gather community and business feedback on zone operations (December 2025)
7. Review pilot implementation with FBPD and stakeholders (Dec/Jan)
8. Recommend adjustments and identify possible expansion areas for (April 2026)

NOTIFICATIONS

Community Development

Economic Development

Downtown Business