



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

DATE: January 28, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Administration Department

PREPARED BY: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

PRESENTER: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

AGENDA TITLE: Receive Report and Provide Direction on Implementation of Entertainment Zones Relaxing Restrictions on Public Consumption of Alcohol in Certain Limited Situations Pursuant to Authority of SB 969

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council review and provide direction on the potential implementation of provisions under recently enacted Senate Bill (SB) 969. This legislation authorizes the establishment of entertainment zones, permitting limited public alcohol consumption under specific conditions. Staff further suggests referring this item to the Community Development Committee for additional evaluation and recommendations to be brought forward to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

SB 969, [signed into law in September of 2024](#) and became effective on January 1, 2025, allows municipalities to designate entertainment zones where alcohol may be consumed in public areas under controlled circumstances. The bill seeks to enhance economic vitality by supporting our central business district, encouraging tourism, and promoting local businesses. Cities may adopt ordinances or resolutions to establish such zones, provided they comply with specific state regulations and guidelines.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Key Provisions of SB 969:

1. Entertainment Zone Definition:
 - An area designated by the city where alcohol consumption is permitted in public spaces.
 - Boundaries and operational hours must be clearly defined.
2. Licensing and Regulation:
 - Participating businesses must possess valid alcoholic beverage licenses issued by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

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- Cities must establish rules for managing alcohol service, security, and waste disposal.
- 3. Public Safety Requirements:
 - Implementation of measures to ensure public safety and minimize nuisances, such as increased law enforcement presence and security protocols.
 - Clear signage indicating the zone boundaries and rules.

Potential Benefits for Fort Bragg:

- Economic Development: Increased foot traffic to local businesses, particularly in the Central Business District.
- Tourism Enhancement: Creation of a vibrant atmosphere appealing to visitors.
- Support for Local Events: Flexibility to align entertainment zones with existing events such as festivals and parades.

Considerations and Challenges:

- Public Safety: Ensuring adequate resources for law enforcement and emergency services.
- Community Feedback: Balancing the interests of residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Operational Costs: Expenses related to security, signage, and waste management.
- Compliance and Enforcement: Monitoring businesses for adherence to alcohol service laws.

Proposed Process for Implementation:

1. Conduct outreach with stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and law enforcement.
2. Define potential boundaries and operational details for an entertainment zone.
3. Draft and present an ordinance or resolution for City Council consideration.
4. Submit plans to ABC for review and approval.
5. Launch a pilot program to assess effectiveness and community impact.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

Implementation costs include staff time for ordinance development, outreach efforts, signage installation, and potential increased public safety expenditures. Revenue opportunities may arise from increased business activity and tourism.

STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Goal: 1 Invigorate Economic Opportunity and Community Vibrancy

- Bring locals and visitors to Fort Bragg with a seasonal program featuring recurring activities that support artists and local businesses such as festivals, farmer's markets, night markets, vendor fairs, and downtown concerts.
- Revitalize Fort Bragg consistent with the character of the community by supporting existing businesses and attracting a variety of local business ownership, supporting buyer empowerment, and creating employment opportunities to encourage spending within our local economy.
- Invest in our long-standing tourism economy by beautifying and improving our downtown with increased walkability, restroom facilities with signage, ample electric vehicle charging stations and off-site parking, and advertising statewide to increase visitors to Fort Bragg.