



## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

**TO:** City Council

**DATE:** August 25, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** City Manager's Office

**PREPARED BY:** Isaac Whippy, City Manager

**PRESENTER:** Isaac Whippy, City Manager

**AGENDA TITLE:** Receive Report and Recommendation from the Community Development Committee Regarding the Establishment of an Entertainment Zone for City-Approved Events Only and Adopting Resolution approving the Management Plan

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### RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt an Ordinance adding Chapter 5.06 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.

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### BACKGROUND

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," 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 in the Zone.
- Cities must consult with law enforcement prior to designation.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 8B**

In early 2025, the City of Fort Bragg began exploring the feasibility of adopting an Entertainment Zone as part of its downtown revitalization and event activation strategy. This concept aligns with state law, local economic development goals, and downtown business community interests.

This item was presented at the Community Development Committee meeting on August 18, 2025, where public input was received. Following the discussion, the Committee recommended advancing the proposed ordinance and accompanying Entertainment Zone Management Plan to the City Council for formal consideration.

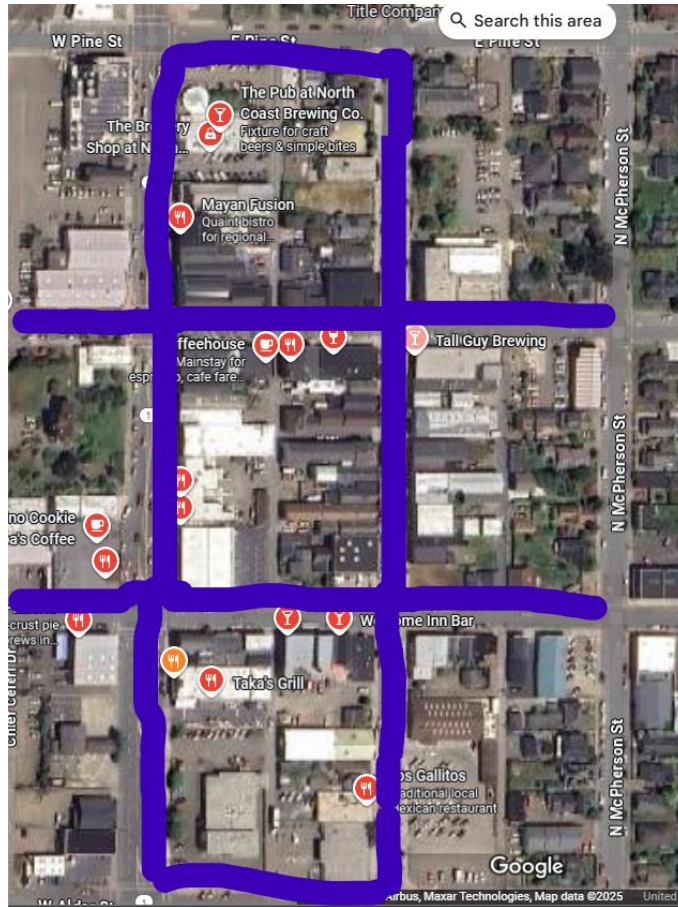
## **DISCUSSION**

The proposed Chapter 5.06 – Entertainment Zones 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 encompasses 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.

The 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.



### **Operational Requirements:**

1. City-issued Special Event Permit required for each activation; no standing right to operate.
2. Defined hours (e.g., Fridays 12–9 PM; Saturdays 12–9 PM; Sunday 12-9pm; City-approved festivals).
3. Boundaries clearly marked with signage, barriers, and staff checkpoints.
4. Non-glass, non-metal containers only; branded wristbands or cups may be required for age verification.
5. ABC compliance measures, including direct-to-Zone service only.
6. Security and post-event cleanup plans 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 and real-time contact for each event
- Bi-annual public safety review in coordination with FBPD

## **ENTERTAINMENT ZONE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The accompanying Management Plan provides a framework 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
- 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 seeking 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:

- Limiting Entertainment Zone use to evenings and weekends.
- Ensuring clearly marked boundaries and visible supervision during events.
- Implementing 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 to ensure the proposed ordinance 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)** – No potential for significant environmental impact
- **§15301(c)** – Use of existing public rights-of-way
- **§15305** – Minor alterations in land use limitations

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

- Minimal impact to General Fund; oversight provided by existing staff
- Event organizers are responsible for costs related to signage, barriers, and compliance
- Opportunities exist for cost recovery via sponsorships and permitting fees

## **FINDINGS**

### **A. General Plan Consistency:**

- Supports economic development, cultural events, and community use of public space.

### **B. No Public Detriment:**

- Operations are limited to permitted, City-approved events with built-in revocation authority.

### **C. Physical Suitability:**

- Utilizes existing infrastructure with no zoning or land use changes.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution No. 25-XXX – Approving Management Plan Template
2. Ordinance No. 25-XXX – Adding Chapter 12.50: Entertainment Zones
3. Entertainment Zone Management Plan Template
4. Map of Proposed Pilot Zone
5. Summary of Community Survey Results

## **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 to consider adopting the ordinance to allow for entertainment zones (Aug 25<sup>th</sup>)
2. Submit notice to ABC with zone boundaries and compliance documentation
3. Finalize zone signage, safety equipment, and branded containers (Sept)
4. Conduct a coordination meeting with FBPD, Visit Fort Bragg, and participating businesses (Sept/Oct)
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

## **NOTIFICATION**

Economic Development

Community Development

Downtown Business