

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Council initiation of work on a Bellevue City Code Amendment (BCCA) to expand exemption days and hours for amplified sound to better support smaller events and activations consistent with the Economic Development Plan.

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

DIRECTION

Staff is seeking Council direction to initiate work on a BCCA to amend Chapter 9.18 Bellevue City Code (BCC), Noise Control, to expand exemption days and hours for amplified sound to better support smaller events and activations consistent with the Economic Development Plan. Staff will return with the proposed BCCA at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to work on a BCCA to amend Chapter 9.18 BCC, Noise Control, to expand exemption days and hours for amplified sound to better support smaller events and activations consistent with the Economic Development Plan.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Background

Tonight, Council was given a Cultural and Economic Development quarterly update. This update included information about ongoing programs within the City's Economic Development work and progress on implementing the 2020 Economic Development Plan (the Plan), including a "look ahead" of future work items to advance the Plan. Of note, the quarterly update included an introduction about this BCCA to amend Chapter 9.18 BCC, Noise Control, to better support smaller events and activations (for under 500 people) in the City.

As the City continues to grow with new units of multi-family housing and more employees, residents and workers of all backgrounds have the desire to connect and celebrate. Many City planning efforts have received public input that there is a desire for more gatherings and celebratory activities throughout the City. This includes neighborhood gatherings and celebrations, multi-family courtyard gatherings, and events and activations on private commercial plazas to highlight our multi-cultural community and bring vibrancy to our public spaces.

Additionally, after-work events are sought to encourage employees to stay in the City beyond the typical workday hours. These events will help support local businesses, thereby increasing tax revenue and lessening peak demand on the transportation system. These smaller events and activations are also crucial toward the recovery from the impacts of COVID and successful return to the office.

Objectives of this BCCA

The current amplified sound provisions in the Noise Control Code limit these neighborhood-oriented smaller-scale events and after-work activations. While property owners can obtain a permit to use amplified sound equipment, the decision criteria for amplified sound permits for events on private property with fewer than 500 people, including gatherings in the right-of-way, are extremely limiting:

- No amplified sound can take place on Sundays or legal holidays
- No amplified sound can take place after 5 p.m.

This BCCA will modify Chapter 9.18 BCC, Noise Control, to extend the hours that sound amplification is allowed, differentiating between weekdays and weekends, and remove the restriction of amplified sound on Sundays and legal holidays. A permit for sound amplification will still be required, and the changes will only apply to the use of sound amplification equipment, not other sources of noise. These amendments will better support smaller events and activations in the City.

Engagement Process

For this BCCA, staff proposes a public engagement plan with three modes of outreach to ensure the public, stakeholders and interested parties can be informed and provide comments.

1. Broad Notification of Proposed Updates. Information on the proposed update will be included in the March Neighborhood News newsletter and upcoming Cultural and Economic Development newsletter.
2. Direct Engagement and Feedback. Direct outreach to representatives of the resident, event, cultural organization, and business community will be conducted.
3. Online Presence. A city webpage for the BCCA will provide opportunities for the public to stay informed, including:
 - Contact information for questions, comments, and feedback;
 - BCCA strike-draft; and
 - Public information messages regarding BCCA changes and FAQs

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The BCCA will advance strategies in the Economic Development Plan and Destination Development Plan.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with implementing the BCCA change.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to work on a BCCA to amend Chapter 9.18 BCC, Noise Control, to expand exemption days and hours for amplified sound to better support smaller events and activations consistent with the Economic Development Plan.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

2020 Economic Development Plan