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# Hospitality & Nightlife Task Force Recommendations

**Quality of Life, Arts and Culture Committee**

March 23, 2026

**Terry Lowery**

*Task Force Chair*

“Retired” City of Dallas

**J. Damany Daniel**

*Task Force Member*

Arts & Culture Arts Commissioner-D6

**Martine Elyse Philippe**

*Director*

Office of Arts & Culture



# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW



# BACKGROUND

**On October 31, 2025, Councilmember Chad West established the Hospitality & Nightlife Task Force to modernize outdated code.**

- **Operator concerns:** unclear expectations, inconsistent enforcement, lack of city support.
- **Community concerns:** noise, safety, late-night operational impacts.
- Collaborative effort involving staff support, operators, residents, arts/culture leaders, and industry stakeholders.
- Update provisions for hospitality establishments to reflect 21st-century operations and support creative, flexible uses.

# TASK FORCE MEMBERS

## Voting Members



**Terry Lowery**  
Chair



**Jude Akpunku**  
Business Owner



**Diana Cox**  
Kessler Presents



**J. Damany Daniel**  
The Event Nerd  
D6 Arts Comm.



**Allen Falkner**  
Owner, The Nines



**Chris Heinbaugh**  
AT&T Performing Arts Center



**Jon Hetzel**  
Madison Partners  
Deep Ellum Foundation



**Kristina Kirkenaer-Hart**  
Visit Dallas  
Dallas Music Office



**Jesse Lopez**  
Bishop Arts Resident



**Chelsea Masters**  
Denney Law Group



**Corey Mobley**  
Texas Restaurant Assoc.



**Mari Hidalgo**  
Oak Cliff Resident

# TASK FORCE MEMBERS



**Abel Mulugheta**

24HourDallas



**Jason Roberts**

Restaurant Owner



**Tony Shidid**

Former Chair, City Plan Comm.



**Kelem Butts**

Exec. Director, Uptown Dallas

## Non-Voting Members



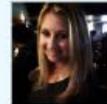
**Jake Ettinger**

Council Member Chad West's Office



**DiVina Gurrola**

Office of Nighttime Economy/OAC



**Laura Morrison**

Senior Assistant City Attorney



**Capt. Gilbert Padilla**

Dallas Fire-Rescue



**Martine Philippe**

Dir. Office Arts and Culture



**Cedric Secoundiata**

Aast. Dir. Code Compliance



**Devon Skinner**

Mayor Pro Tem Jesse Moreno's Office



**Claudia Torrescano**

Global Cities Lead



**Megan Wimer**

Asst. Dir.  
Planning and Development

# TASK FORCE OBJECTIVES

Present recommendations to:

- **Modernize City code** impacting hospitality establishments to support a diverse 21st-century industry.
- **Create a framework** allowing restaurants/bars to charge for live music and DJs.
- **Update the noise ordinance** to support entertainment districts while balancing neighborhood concerns.
- **Explore a new entertainment license** (independent of zoning) to enable flexibility in entertainment activations.
- **Identify additional code barriers** impacting hospitality/nightlife and outline areas for further review.

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Support cultural and economic vitality

Protect public safety and quality of life

Allow for flexibility in entertainment activations

Create clear expectations for operators

Ensure equitable and consistent enforcement

Proactive education before reactive enforcement

Replace Chapter 14 of Dallas City Code



# Entertainment *Licensing*

# APPLIES TO

Business Establishments with Entertainment Activities defined as:

A single event, series of events, or ongoing activity to which the public is invited or allowed to watch, listen, or participate for free or for a fee and includes one or more of the following:

- A band or disc jockey
- Patron dancing to live or recorded music
- Live performances presented to the public

# VENUE CLASSIFICATION FOR REGULATION

- Tiers are determined by operational risk and community impact, rather than the specific art form.
  - Impacts complexity of application review
  - Sets operational standards and conditions accordingly
- Venue Category Tier defined by:
  - Identifying venue category
  - Identifying capacity (CO)
  - Identify latest closing time
- Venue Category + Operating Hours + Capacity = **Review Tier**

# VENUE CLASSIFICATION MATRIX

Venue Category Type + Capacity + Operating Hours + = Review Tier

Venue Category Type:	Hours of Operation:	6:00AM-12:00 A.M.				12:00 A.M.-2:00 A.M.				2:00AM-6:00 A.M.			
	Capacity:	<200	<500	<1000	>1000	<200	<500	<1000	>1000	<200	<500	<1000	>1000
Category A: Incidental/ Ambient		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Category B: Seated/ Fixed Assembly		B1	B2	B3	B4	B2	B3	B4	B5	B3	B4	B5	B6
Category C: Hybrid/ Mixed Mode		C1	C2	C3	C4	C3	C3	C4	C5	C4	C4	C5	C6
Category D: Standing/ Amplified Performance		D1	D1	D2	D3	D2	D2	D3	D4	D3	D3	D4	D5

Based on **operational risk and impact**, not art form

# BASELINE EXPECTATIONS

A baseline of expectations will be set for all venues to comply with.

- **Public Safety:** Crowd control, emergency and security protocols.
- **Sound Management:** Effective sound mitigation plans.
- **Responsible Management:** On-site accountability during operating hours and property maintenance.
- **Compliance:** Adherence to zoning, fire, code, and state laws.

Expectations increase with complexity and risk of the venue's operation.

# ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING

## Core Objectives:

- **Proportional Regulation:** Match regulatory requirements to the actual operational impact of the venue.
- **Permit Flexibility:** Allows vibrancy in entertainment activities at legally operating establishments.
- **Clear Expectations:** Set transparent, enforceable standards for all operators citywide.
- **Safety & Vitality:** Support safe late-night activity while protecting residential quality of life.



**Not a business license**  
**Not a Specific Use Permit**  
**Not a zoning change**  
**Not a one-size-fits-all regulation**  
**Not genre or content based**



# The Application *Process*

# APPLICATION STEPS

- 1. Education & Preparation:** Quarterly Workshops and City Guided Resources
- 2. Application Submission:** Submit Application through Eproval
- 3. Initial Application Review:** Preliminary Review & Payment of Fees
- 4. Coordinated City Review:** Evaluation of code compliancy and adequacy of plans
- 5. Departmental Feedback:** Departments will make recommendations
- 6. Consolidated Review & Conditions:** Revisions made where applicable
- 7. Final Determination:** Approval or denial decided
- 8. License Issued:** Resources provided and 2-year license issued



# Sound *Management*

# PROVISIONS TO SOUND

- Recognize live music and entertainment as vital to Dallas' economy and culture.
- Create clear, measurable and enforceable sound standards.
- Protect public health and neighborhood livability while supporting lawful entertainment.
- Use context-sensitive regulation based on location and time of day.
- Equip Code Enforcement with appropriate tools.

# TIERED SOUND MATRIX

	Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3A	Tier 3B
	92 dBA	78 dBA	78 dBA	60 dBA	70 dBA	60 dBA
Monday	6 P.M.- 12A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	6 P.M.- 10 P.M.	10 P.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Tuesday	6 P.M.- 12A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	6 P.M.- 10 P.M.	10 P.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Wednesday	6 P.M.- 12A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	6 P.M.- 10 P.M.	10 P.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Thursday	6 P.M.- 12A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	6 P.M.- 10 P.M.	10 P.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Friday	6 P.M.- 2A.M.		6 P.M.- 12 A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Saturday	6 P.M.- 2A.M.		6 P.M.- 12 A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.
Sunday	6 P.M.- 12A.M.	12 A.M.- 2 A.M.	6 P.M.- 10 P.M.	10 P.M.- 2 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.	2 A.M.- 6 A.M.

Tier 1= Venues in concentrated entertainment uses

Tier 2= Venues with residential adjacency within 330'

Tier 3a= Late night venues in concentrated entertainment uses

Tier 3b= Late night venues with residential adjacency within 330'

\*Any operation that does not fall under these tiers with a valid Entertainment license will be subject to Chapter 30 of Dallas City Code.

# OUTDOOR AMPLIFIED SOUND

**Tier 1= 85 dBA**

**Tier 2= 70 dBA**

**Tiers 3A/3B do not apply**

**\*Conditions may apply based on context of venue location or previously made City agreements.\***

**\*\*Weekend schedule applies on state recognized holidays.\*\***

## Outdoor Amplified Sound Schedule

	Start Time	End Time
Monday	8 A.M.	12 P.M.
Tuesday	8 A.M.	12 P.M.
Wednesday	8 A.M.	12 P.M.
Thursday	8 A.M.	12 P.M.
Friday	8 A.M.	2 A.M.
Saturday	8 A.M.	2 A.M.
Sunday	8 A.M.	12 P.M.

# AGENT OF CHANGE

- Inspired by Austin & San Francisco
- Disclosure and awareness. Not a mandate.
- New residential/hotel developments near venues will be:
  - Accountable for sound mitigation measures
  - May not retroactively restrict lawful venues.
  - Obligated to provide disclosure to occupants



# Education First *Strategy*

# PROACTIVE EDUCATION

The City invests in success, not just enforcement.

- Quarterly workshops
  - Application guidance & explanation of expectations
- Guidebook for late-night businesses
  - City resources and best practices for safety and success
  - Templates for safety, noise, and crowd plans
- Encouraging and incentivizing additional training programs

# ENFORCEMENT STRUCTURE

## Strategy:

- Education first, punitive action when necessary
- Complaint-driven monitoring
- Escalation only when voluntary compliance fails

## Enforcement Ladder:

Education

→ Notice of Violation

→ Enforcement with Citation

→ Suspension/Revocation of Entertainment License

→ Option to Appeal (Permit License Appeal Board)

# Incentives & Partnerships

## Rewarding Responsible Operators

- Fee waivers for first license to existing dance hall license holders
- Potential reduced requirements for strong compliance history
- Benefits for completing additional training
- Encouraging use of safety technology

# FEBRUARY 18, 2026 PUBLIC MEETING FEEDBACK

## Overall sentiment was of interest and support.

Questions and comments included:

- Commercial Promoter Permit seems to be redundant with this ordinance
- The enforcement and definition of restaurant/food service is a critical issue also needing revision.
- How quickly can the program roll out? **(TBD)**
- How long is the duration of the license? **(2 years)**
- How will the program protect residents moving into areas with growing nightlife? **(Holding operations accountable to standards that respect the quality of life)**
- How quickly can an application be turned over for approval? **(This depends on application accuracy at submission. 3 months is estimated)**
- Does this effect liability coverage? **(It should not.)**
- Does the license attach to the business or the property? **(The Business)**
- Does this task force contain representation from the hospitality industry? **(Yes)**

# For Future Consideration

- Challenges in code enforcement related to restaurant uses
  - Inconsistent enforcement
  - Compliance disputes
  - Financial risk for operators
- Addressing “Agent of Change” principle with Building Code
  - Will require alignment for successful implementation
- Updates to 3-1-1 App for a more user-friendly experience
  - Clearly labeled “Noise Complaint (Commercial)” option to ensure complaints are routed appropriately
- Identifying Entertainment Districts
  - Defining Entertainment Districts to continue building out a practical and sustainable solution to sound
- Reevaluate Recommendations
  - All recommendations approved should be reevaluated within a year to see assess impact and make revisions where necessary.

# Interdepartmental Support Team



City of Dallas

**Code  
Compliance  
Services**



City of Dallas

**Planning &  
Development**



City of Dallas

**City  
Attorney's  
Office**



City of Dallas

**Arts &  
Culture**



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# Making Dallas a Better Place

*TO LIVE AND WORK.*