

SAN FRANCISCO

New proposal aims to make Front Street San Francisco's entertainment zone

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By **Sergio Quintana** • Published May 3, 2024 • Updated on May 3, 2024 at 5:51 pm



New Orleans has Bourbon Street, Las Vegas has the strip, now San Francisco wants to add Front Street to that list of entertainment hotspots. Sergio Quintana reports.

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Part of Front Street in downtown San Francisco is usually the party spot on Saint Patrick's Day, but a new proposal aims to make it the go-to street party spot all year.

"This entertainment zone will provide an opportunity to make it easier to get to yes, to make it easier for us to create those opportunities," Mayor London Breed said.

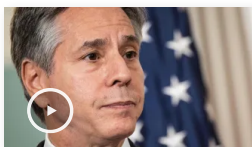
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According to her, the block could look like the first Thursday event the city hosted in downtown Wednesday night, except more often.

The idea is to shut down the block and turn it into a regularly occurring entertainment zone.

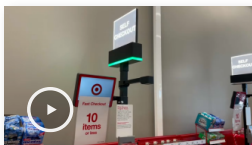
Essentially the first of its kind in the city and the state.

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A recently passed law authored by Senator Scott Weiner would allow the bars and restaurants on this block to serve alcohol to customers in the street.

That's something they're barred by state law from doing during a street fair or other special events.

"You can bring an outside vendor in and get a special permit. But the mom and pops, the local bars and restaurants, locally owned on the street, can't participate," he said.

SB-76 changes that rule, but it only affects San Francisco. And the city still has to approve an ordinance that describes what will be allowed in that special entertainment zone.

Breed said she wants to waive fees for events like street fairs and this special zone.

Local business owners say, if it's approved, it could breathe new life into the neighborhood.

"I think initially it's going to be a one off event here, try and get some regularity, maybe like a first Thursday or first Friday type of thing. Then maybe it's all weekend," Duncan Ley, co-owner of Harrington's Bar and Grill, said.

The city already hosts a special daytime dining zone a few blocks away on commercial street.

But the idea of the front street evening entertainment zone is to give people who work downtown - a reason to stay there after work and to attract more potential residents to the area.

The proposal still needs to be approved by the board of supervisors, president Aaron Peskin said, "We've been very supportive of the Downtown Partnership CBD's efforts to activate entertainment programming in key areas - and my office has been working with them since last year on legislation to streamline a master permit process for these type of uses. My staff met with the Mayor's Entertainment Director yesterday to see how we can collaborate on these types of activations all throughout Downtown and I feel very positive about it. We typically get some good things done for the city when we collaborate!"

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