

Providence City Plan Commission

May 7, 2026



AGENDA ITEM 2 ■ ENTERTAINMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

OVERVIEW

PROPONENT:	Council President Rachel Miller	RECOMMENDATION:	Recommend approval of the proposed amendment
CASE NO./PROJECT TYPE:	CPC Referral 3614 Zoning Ordinance Amendment		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Amendment of zoning ordinance	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar

Discussion

The proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance would refine regulations pertaining to entertainment in the zoning ordinance. The amendment includes the following changes:

- **Retains the definition of Incidental Entertainment:** This is background music permitted by right at a bar or restaurant. This type of entertainment does not require an entertainment license.
- **Adds a new definition of Incidental Entertainment - Expanded:** This new type of entertainment is also permitted by right at a bar or restaurant. However, it is somewhat more intensive than Incidental Entertainment in that it would allow for amplified live entertainment, dancing, trivia, and karaoke. It will require an entertainment license, issued and enforced by the Board of Licenses.
- **Allows for Live Entertainment:** Ancillary Use by right in the C-3 and D-1 zones. Today this use is allowed by special use permit.
- **Renames Temporary Outdoor Entertainment to Temporary Entertainment:** This corrects a long-running issue with the ordinance where temporary events with entertainment were allowed outdoors but not indoors. The amendment adjusts the number of temporary events that can occur in a calendar year. Finally, Temporary Entertainment will no longer require a Temporary Use Permit from the Zoning Official. Instead, it will require an entertainment license, and outdoor events in public spaces will require a Special Events Permit issued by the Department of Art, Culture and Tourism.

The policy amendment is consistent with objectives AC-4 and PS-1 of the Providence Comprehensive Plan which aims to identify and remove barriers to the growth and sustainability of the creative sector to ensure its vitality and longevity and provide and enhance outdoor recreational, cultural, arts and performing arts

programming throughout the City.

The amendment also conforms to section 101 of the zoning ordinance by providing for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the City and reflecting current and expected future needs.

Recommendation

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC make a positive recommendation to the City Council to approve the proposed amendment.