

ORDINANCE

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

CITY HALL: February 12, 2026

CALENDAR NO. 35,333

NO. _____ MAYOR COUNCIL SERIES

BY: COUNCILMEMBER KING

AN ORDINANCE to provide for the designation of public property within a specified area of the City of New Orleans as a temporary "Special Event Clean Zone" during the time period beginning at 6:00 a.m., Monday, June 29, 2026, and ending at 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 6, 2026, relative to the use of these public areas in conjunction with the 2026 ESSENCE Festival of Culture® presented by Coca Cola® ("the Effective Period") and related activities and events produced by Essence Festivals Productions LLC; to provide for the temporary prohibition of certain commercial activities in the Special Event Clean Zone unless approved, sanctioned or authorized by the City or as set forth in "Sponsor's" (as defined, below) special event permit, if and as applicable; to provide for the establishment of one or more public participation areas; to provide for the establishment of fines and penalties for violations of this ordinance; to establish the Special Event Clean Zone within the area bounded by the Pontchartrain Expressway, Tchoupitoulas Street, Orange Street proceeding across the Mississippi River, the West Bank Levee, Esplanade Avenue, North Claiborne Avenue, Tulane Avenue, and South Broad Street, excluding the Louisiana Superdome property, the New Orleans Smoothie King Arena property, and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center property; to provide a sunset period for applicability; and otherwise to provide with respect thereto.

WHEREAS, the City of New Orleans is hosting the 2026 ESSENCE Festival of Culture[®] presented by Coca Cola[®] and related activities, collectively defined as the ("Event"), presented by Essence Festivals Productions LLC ("Sponsor"); and

WHEREAS, the dates of the Events are scheduled to occur on June 29, 2026 through July 6, 2026 for the 2026 ESSENCE Festival of Culture; and

WHEREAS, the Events will attract thousands of visitors and participants to the City of New Orleans and provide the city with national exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Events will have a tremendous positive economic impact on the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, given the thousands of residents, participants, and visitors who will be in attendance, it is necessary that certain public areas surrounding events related to the Events be regulated and controlled to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all residents, participants, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the sale or distribution of merchandise and commercial goods or wares on public property in proximity to Event will exacerbate congestion, potentially lead to public safety hazards, and hinder security operations; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to prevent the sale, offer for sale, or distribution of counterfeit, infringing, or otherwise illegal merchandise to residents, visitors, and participants within the Clean Zone; and

WHEREAS, the proper regulation of the flow of people and goods on public property will ensure that all that the Event events have to offer may be safely enjoyed by all; and

WHEREAS, to that end, it is necessary to establish a Special Event Clean Zone in the area within the City where Event activities are scheduled to occur during the "Effective Period" and within the specified boundaries designated in this ordinance; **NOW THEREFORE**

1 **SECTION 1. THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS HEREBY**
2 **ORDAINS**, That there is hereby established a "Special Event Clean Zone" consisting of all public
3 property located within the area bounded by the Pontchartrain Expressway, Tchoupitoulas
4 Street, Orange Street proceeding across the Mississippi River, the West Bank Levee,
5 Esplanade Avenue, North Claiborne Avenue, Tulane Avenue, and South Broad Street, and
6 the airspace above the specified boundaries, and excluding the Louisiana Superdome
7 property, the New Orleans Smoothie King Arena property, and the Ernest N. Morial
8 Convention Center property. The Special Event Clean Zone Area does not include private
9 property, except as otherwise expressly provided herein.

1 **SECTION 2.** The Special Event Clean Zone shall commence at 6:00 a.m., Monday, June
2 29, 2026, and continue through and until 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 6, 2026, relative to the use of
3 these public areas in conjunction with the 2026 ESSENCE Festival of Culture® presented by Coca
4 Cola® (the "Effective Period"), and related activities produced by Essence Festivals Productions
5 LLC (Sponsor).

1 **SECTION 3.** The following activities conducted by any person or entity within the
2 Clean Zone Area, except for those approved, sanctioned or authorized by the City, shall be
3 regulated as follows during the Effective Period:

4 a. The construction, placement, occupation, or use of any temporary structure or
5 enclosure of any kind shall be prohibited, including but not limited to tents, canopies,
6 and air-supported, air-inflated, and tensioned membranes except for those sanctioned or
7 authorized by the City or as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit.

8 b. Unless expressly permitted by the City, commercial activity and transactions shall be
9 prohibited upon all public streets, sidewalks, or rights of way. This prohibition shall not
10 apply to the following:

1. the commercial operation of permitted taxicabs, rideshares, limousines, charter buses, pedicabs, or similar permitted conveyances on public streets;
 2. the continuation of ordinary business operations within an existing, permitted parklet attached to a restaurant or bar and/or currently permitted sidewalk use, provided that (i) no holder of a parklet or sidewalk use permit may assign the rights to operate a parklet or sidewalk use to any third party during the Effective Period, and (ii) no advertising of any kind may be installed within or adjacent to a parklet or as part of a sidewalk use except as part of a permitted A frame sign;
 3. ordinary vehicular usage of public streets;
 4. ordinary pedestrian usage of streets and sidewalks to access private property and businesses;
 5. delivery of goods to retail business establishments by wholesalers and suppliers;
 6. the sale or distribution of artworks in the areas immediately abutting Jackson Square and St. Louis Cathedral;
 7. street performances that do not unreasonably interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic associated with the Event or with Event security or public safety.
- c. Except as provided in Section 3(b)(1)-(7), the sale or distribution of any merchandise, food, beverages, or services shall be prohibited on public streets, sidewalks, rights of way, and outside of an enclosed building to patrons on public streets, sidewalks, or rights of way.
- d. Permits relative to amplified sound outside an enclosed structure shall not be granted except as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit.
- e. Inflatables, cold air balloons, banners, pennants, flags, building wraps, A-frame signs, projected image signs, electronic variable message signs, light emitting diode signs of a commercial nature shall be prohibited except for those sanctioned or authorized by the City

or as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit.

f. Mobile advertising and advertising for goods, products, and services not offered at the adjoining business establishment shall be prohibited except as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit, provided that no taxicab, pedicab or bus permitted for operation as of the effective date of this Ordinance shall be required to remove or obscure any existing advertising.

g. No alcoholic beverages shall be provided, served, or sold to the general public from any temporary outdoor use or structure except for those sanctioned or authorized by the City or as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit.

h. The distribution, promotional giveaway, or provision of free products, services, coupons or samples shall be prohibited except as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit.

i. The erection or placement of mobile wireless communication facilities shall be prohibited. A mobile wireless communication facility is defined as a structure, antenna, or trailer, temporary and portable in nature, that is used to provide or increase wireless cellular communication.

j. No person or entity shall sell, offer for sale, or distribute counterfeit, unauthorized, unlicensed, infringing, or otherwise illegal merchandise, including, without limitation, merchandise that bears the trademarks, service marks, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights of any entity that has not consented to the use of its intellectual property.

k. Commercial or promotional filming of any kind that includes festival infrastructure, attendees, artists, or sponsors shall be prohibited without prior authorization.

1 **SECTION 4.** That any activity or undertaking conducted by any person or entity
2 on private property located within the Special Event Clean Zone that requires the issuance of a
3 permit or license by the City of New Orleans, shall be regulated and governed by the applicable
4 provisions of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of the City of New Orleans and the New
5 Orleans City Code, as well as existing federal, state, and local law. Applications for such
6 permits or licenses for activities or undertakings during the Effective Period shall be completed
7 and submitted to the City of New Orleans no later than close of business on twenty-one (21) days
8 before the date of the Event, or the applications may be denied for untimeliness.

1 **SECTION 5.** That nothing in this ordinance shall be construed as a repeal or suspension
2 of any existing laws prohibiting or governing the issuance of permits outside the Clean Zone
3 geographical boundaries as detailed in Section 1 hereinabove.

1 **SECTION 6.** Nothing in this ordinance is intended to prohibit non-commercial speech or
2 to impair constitutionally protected speech or activity on public property. Due to the significant
3 congestion and traffic associated with the event, however, no permit for a parade, street closure,
4 or film project (except as set forth in Sponsor's special event permit) or demonstration within the
5 Clean Zone may be issued during the Effective Period, nor shall amplified sound be permitted.
6 To mitigate any impact on constitutionally protected activity, the City shall establish one or more
7 public participation areas within the Clean Zone Area. Each public participation area shall
8 allow for the reasonable expression by the public in a manner that shall not be disruptive to
9 the Event. Each public participation area shall be provided for during such reasonable times
10 and in such a reasonable location within the Special Event Clean Zone as to allow for meaningful
11 and effective expression by the public.

1 **SECTION 7.** That the violation of any provision of this ordinance shall be punishable by
2 a fine not exceeding \$500.00 per violation or by imprisonment for not more than six months or

both such fine and imprisonment. Additionally, any unauthorized promotional materials, products, or displays shall be immediately removed and temporarily confiscated and stored by the City until the expiration of the "Effective Period".

SECTION 8. The provisions of this Ordinance are intended, in part, to protect the significant investment of the Event sponsor and the economic benefits that flow to the City from the Event. The provisions of this ordinance shall constitute prohibitory laws and, as such, may be enjoined without the requisite showing of irreparable harm. In addition to any other available remedy, the provisions hereof may be enforced by injunctive relief.

SECTION 9. That, if any of the provisions of this ordinance are for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions, and those remaining portions shall be and remain in full force and effect.

ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS _____

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

DELIVERED TO THE MAYOR ON _____

APPROVED:

DISAPPROVED: _____

MAYOR

RETURNED BY THE MAYOR ON _____ **AT** _____

CLERK OF COUNCIL

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

RECUSED: