

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE WAIVING CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 14-8 (*TEMPORARY CLOSURE FOR SPECIAL EVENTS AND BLOCK PARTIES*) AND MODIFYING CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF CITY CODE CHAPTERS 4-20 (*SPECIAL EVENTS*), 14-8, AND 25-10 (*SIGN REGULATIONS*) RELATED TO NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUND EQUIPMENT AND SIGNS FOR THE CITY CO-SPONSORED 2026 SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE AND FESTIVALS TO BE HELD MARCH 9-18, 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

PART 1. The council finds the following:

- (1) The City of Austin has been the host city for the South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference and Festivals (SXSW Event) since the first SXSW Event in 1987; and
- (2) The SXSW Event brings hallmark cultural value to the City by featuring creative talent, including musical performers, film and television producers, comedians, technology trailblazers, and speakers who are leaders in their respective industries; and
- (3) The SXSW Event has grown into an internationally recognized event that attracts attendees and companies from all over the world to Austin, with an economic impact of over \$1.5 billion for the City over the past five events; and
- (4) The SXSW Event is a City co-sponsored event, providing a range of free public concerts and other popular cultural events attended by thousands of Austin residents annually; and
- (5) Austin is also the home of many events that occur in the downtown business district during the month of March, referred to as the Spring Festival Season, and the SXSW Event is part of Spring Festival Season; and
- (6) It is important for venue owners and operators to properly manage occupancy of venues, and it is also important to facilitate safety closures in the right-of-way during Spring Festival Season; and

(7) Council supports the creation, implementation, and inspection of a comprehensive traffic control plan that includes all event closures, pre-planned City safety closures, venue safety closures, and any additional street or lane closures deemed necessary by City staff for Spring Festival Season; and

(8) The 2026 SXSW Event will be held March 9-18, 2026.

PART 2. Council waives certain closure notice requirements that allow affected individuals and neighborhood associations to object to street closures under City Code Chapter 14-8 (*Temporary Closure for Special Events and Block Parties*) for the 2026 SXSW Event.

PART 3. Council modifies the following City Code requirements and restrictions during the period of March 9-18, 2026. Nothing in these modifications is intended to waive required City staff approvals.

- (1) With respect to events during the Spring Festival Season that are produced or represented by SXSW for the 2026 SXSW Event, the restriction on the maximum number of days for the use of sound equipment established by City Code Section 4-20-43(J) and (L) (*Sound Equipment for Outdoor Special Event Venues*) is modified to allow the use of sound equipment for a maximum of 10 days during the Spring Festival Season.
- (2) With respect to events during the Spring Festival Season that are produced or represented by SXSW for the 2026 SXSW Event, City Code Section 4-20-43(F) (*Sound Equipment for Outdoor Special Event Venues*) is modified to extend the hours sound equipment may be used at Brush Square Park until 11:00 p.m.
- (3) With respect to events during the Spring Festival Season that are produced or represented by SXSW for the 2026 SXSW Event, the notice of application required by City Code Section 4-20-33 (*Notice of a Special Event Application*) is modified to waive the applicable notice requirements.
- (4) With respect to events during the Spring Festival Season that are produced or represented by SXSW for the 2026 SXSW Event, City Code Section 25-10-157 (*Special Event Signs*) is modified as follows:

- (a) Subsection 25-10-157(A) is modified to allow a permit to be issued for signs to be used in a permitted special event venue area with public streets that have not been closed;
- (b) Subsection 25-10-157(B)(1) is modified to allow a maximum of 10 projected special event signs;
- (c) Subsection 25-10-157(B)(2) is modified to allow projected special event signs that are a maximum of 75% of the area of a facade and are no larger than 9,000 square feet;
- (d) Subsection 25-10-157(C)(1) is modified to allow non-projected special event signs no larger than 360 square feet; and
- (e) Subsection 25-10-157(C)(1) is further modified to allow up to:
 - (i) Eight non-projected special event signs that are adhered to a building facade within the special event venue area and are no larger than 8,000 square feet;
 - (ii) 10 non-projected special event signs that are adhered to a building facade within the special event venue area and are no larger than 12,500 square feet;
 - (iii) Five non-projected special event signs that are adhered to a building facade within the special event venue area and are no larger than 15,000 square feet;
 - (iv) One non-projected special event sign that is adhered to a building facade within the special event venue area and is no larger than 24,000 square feet; and
 - (v) One non-projected special event sign that is adhered to a building facade within the special event venue area and is no larger than 39,000 square feet.
- (5) For events that are produced or represented by SXSW for the 2026 SXSW Event, City Code Subsection 25-10-157(D) is modified to allow, subject to the approval of the director of Development Services Department (Director),

