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# **NEWPORT BEACH**

## **City Council Staff Report**

February 10, 2026  
Agenda Item No. 3

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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**TITLE:** Safety Enhancement Zones Expansion and Enforcement During  
Peak Activity Periods

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**ABSTRACT:**

For the City Council's consideration is a resolution and ordinance intended to enhance public safety during certain periods of high visitor activity, including spring break and the Fourth of July holiday, that have historically resulted in increased municipal code and legal violations. These high-risk periods are often characterized by large gatherings, overcrowding, excessive noise, alcohol-related offenses, illegal fireworks, and violations associated with short-term lodging units.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly;
- b) Adopt Resolution No. 2026-08, *A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, Designating a Geographical Area in West Newport and the Peninsula and a Portion of Corona del Mar as "Safety Enhancement Zones" During the Designated Spring Break Period Beginning on March 14<sup>th</sup> Through April 12<sup>th</sup>, Which Designation is Necessary to Address Illegal Activity During these High-Risk Periods*; and
- c) Introduce Ordinance No. 2026-2, *An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Amending Sections 1.04.060 (Safety Enhancement Zone) of Chapter 1.04 (Code Enforcement), Sections 5.95.045 (Conditions) and 5.95.065 (Suspensions and Revocations) of Chapter 5.95 (Short Term Lodging Permit), and Section 11.08.020 (Use of Shade Coverings) of Chapter 11.08 (Conduct on Beaches and Piers) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code to Address Illegal Activity During High-Risk Periods*, and pass to second reading on February 24, 2026.

## **DISCUSSION:**

For well over a century, visitors of all ages have come to Newport Beach to enjoy day trips, holidays, long weekends, and summer vacations. Many make their time here an annual tradition and the City of Newport Beach and the community recognize the importance of sharing the city's public assets and the economic value that tourism brings.

There are, however, some visitors whose stays have been marked by unruly, disruptive behavior that threatens the quality of life for surrounding neighbors and tourists, and taxes the City's public safety resources. Maintaining a safe environment that all can enjoy is essential and staff is proposing additional measures intended to discourage and curb this unwanted conduct during peak visitor periods including spring break and summer holidays.

### **Draft Resolution**

Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC) Section 1.04.060 authorizes the City Council to designate specific geographical areas as Safety Enhancement Zones upon finding that unique conditions during a defined period create a significant threat to public health, safety and welfare. Within these zones, enhanced penalties and additional enforcement mechanisms are intended to deter violations and reduce the demand on public safety resources. The City has designated Safety Enhancement Zones for areas of West Newport / the Balboa Peninsula and Corona del Mar around the Fourth of July holiday. However, in recent years, the City has seen an increase in unruly behavior, leading to arrests and citations, during the various spring breaks that occur largely in March and April. The following table provides the number of arrests and the stated residence of the arrestee during the spring break period in 2025.

Spring Break 2025 Arrests  
(March and April)

<b>Residence</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Newport Beach	86	17.0%
Adjacent Cities	113	22.3%
All Other CA	276	54.5%
Nevada	9	1.8%
Arizona	5	1.0%
All Other States	17	3.4%

Staff recommends implementing Safety Enhancement Zones during this year's spring break period to help discourage and curtail unruly behavior. If adopted, Resolution No. 2026-XX would designate areas of West Newport / the Balboa Peninsula and Corona del Mar as Safety Enhancement Zones during two periods that correspond with the 2026

spring break schedules for schools in Arizona and Nevada. Further, the resolution expands the West Newport / Peninsula Safety Enhancement Zone so that it would begin at B Street rather than at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. All other boundaries would remain the same.

### **Draft Ordinance**

During the Fourth of July weekend in 2025, City public safety personnel responded to a substantial number of calls for service and issued citations for violations including illegal fireworks, excessive noise, alcohol-related offenses, use of the beach after hours, and loud and unruly gatherings. A significant portion of these incidents occurred on the Balboa Peninsula and in West Newport, including areas outside the existing Safety Enhancement Zone boundaries. Many of the violations were associated with short-term lodging units, where large gatherings contributed to repeated calls for service and enforcement actions.

#### **Fourth of July 2025 Arrests**

<b>Residence</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Newport Beach	6	7.9%
Adjacent Cities	11	14.5%
All Other CA	31	40.8%
Nevada	5	6.6%
Arizona	15	19.7%
All Other States	8	10.5%

While the Fourth of July holiday has traditionally been a busy time for public safety in Newport Beach, staff has found that Memorial Day and Labor Day have also drawn larger crowds in recent years. If adopted, Ordinance No. 2026-XX would amend multiple sections of the NBMC to strengthen enforcement tools to help address illegal activity during busy holidays including the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day, as well as during spring break.

The amendments include codifying the timing and applicability of Safety Enhancement Zones, enhancing short-term lodging permit conditions and enforcement, including mandatory revocation provisions, and clarifying regulations related to the use of shade coverings on City beaches to ensure public safety and emergency access. The proposed ordinance would amend several sections of the NBMC to strengthen enforcement during high-risk periods, including:

- Safety Enhancement Zones (NBMC Section 1.04.060):

Codifies applicable high-risk periods, including spring break and summer holidays, and clarifies notice requirements.

- Short-Term Lodging Permits (NBMC Chapter 5.95):

Adds response requirements for owners, agents and adult transient users; enhances suspension and revocation provisions; and establishes mandatory revocation for certain violations occurring during high-risk periods.

- Beach Shade Coverings (NBMC Section 11.08.020):

Clarifies spacing, height, placement and visibility requirements to ensure unobstructed emergency access, public safety visibility and safe pedestrian movement during periods of heavy beach use.

General notice of Safety Enhancement Zone designations will be provided through posted signage within the designated areas prior to the effective dates. Notices will also be mailed to property owners within the zones, as well as to short-term lodging permit holders, consistent with NBMC requirements.

### **Operational Enhancements**

In addition to the proposed resolution and ordinance, staff is also planning operational changes and enhancements for this year's Fourth of July holiday weekend. The measures include increasing the amount of contracted public safety assistance, deploying a mobile booking station, utilizing the City's Corporation Yard as a staging area, partnering with Hoag Hospital, and increasing public outreach and social media messaging to inform residents, visitors and short-term lodging occupants of applicable regulations, restrictions and enforcement measures.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Should the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance and resolution, the boundaries of the West Newport / Peninsula Safety Enhancement Zone would be expanded and the frequency in which that zone and the Corona del Mar Safety Enhancement Zone are implemented would increase. Staff estimates the total cost of the related, required noticing would increase to approximately \$30,000 per fiscal year.

The Police Department estimates that the planned operational enhancements would increase its Fourth of July related costs by approximately \$80,000 - \$100,000 per year.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA

Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

**NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Resolution No. 2026-08

Attachment B – Ordinance No. 2026-2