



**SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**Department: Economic Development & Innovation**

**Prepared by: Micah Hinkle,  
Economic Development Director**

**City Manager Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOPIC: Temporary Street Closure – West End Block Party 2023**

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF STREETS IN SAN RAFAEL FOR THE WEST END BLOCK PARTY 2023**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt resolution authorizing the temporary closure of streets in San Rafael for the West End Block Party 2023.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2022, the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), with support from the City of San Rafael, sponsored the West End Block Party special event on Thursday and Friday Nights from May to October. The event grew from the Downtown BID’s Dining Under the Lights summer entertainment program and was created to support downtown eateries during the COVID-19 pandemic. The West End Block Party closed one block of Fourth Street from F to G Street and provided live entertainment from 6 PM to 9 PM. The Downtown BID was the applicant and provided insurance, marketing, and day-of event support. The event host, Pint Size Lounge, provided event programming and management. The event was permitted by the City following a streamlined permit review, authorized by the City Council’s COVID-19 emergency order which was in effect at that time.

The event was well received by event patrons during the pandemic and developed a following of event supporters. However, many neighboring residents voiced their concerns about the negative impacts on them and submitted written and verbal complaints to the City. These included public comment by neighbors at the September 6, 2022, March 20, 2023, and May 15, 2023, City Council meetings. Complaints from neighbors included excessive noise, late event hours, frequency of the event two days of every week, insufficient restroom facilities, and litter. The City Council asked staff to work with the event applicant and neighbors to explore event modifications that would mitigate the impacts on the surrounding neighborhood if the event were to be permitted in 2023.

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**FOR CITY CLERK ONLY**

**File No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Council Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYSIS:**

The Pint Size Lounge, the event sponsor/applicant, submitted a special event permit application to the City to hold the West End Block Party Event for 2023. City staff from the San Rafael Police Department, the Department of Public Works, the Community Development Department, and the Economic Development Department reviewed the initial special events permit application and requested additional supplemental information. The applicant provided the requested information, and the permit application was deemed complete for processing on April 27, 2023. On May 11, 2023, the City mailed a notice of the West End Block Party permit application to property owners within 300-feet of the proposed event location, providing an opportunity for public comment (see Attachment 2). The notice included a survey that provided an opportunity for the community to provide feedback about the event application. The intent of the survey was to help staff identify community concerns and potential options for mitigating the event's impact on the neighbors.

The survey responses indicated significant support for the West End Block Party as a community event. They also identified neighborhood concerns and potential event modifications to mitigate neighborhood impacts. Over 800 respondents completed the survey. Specifically, impacts related to noise, event frequency, alcohol service, hours, litter, and restroom availability were identified through the outreach process as areas of concern.

Staff met with the applicant and provided feedback based on the survey results and neighborhood comments. On June 30, 2023, the applicant submitted a revised application requesting approval of eight special event dates on Fridays from July 28th to October 13<sup>th</sup> (7/28, 8/11, 8/25, 9/8, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, and 10/13) with amplified music from 6PM to 9PM.

With the applicants' revised proposed dates and focus on Friday nights, the impacts of the West End Block Party would be significantly reduced and provide a better balance for the neighborhood and City staffing support availability. Three of the Friday events would fall on the same nights as the Dining Under the Lights Special Event program that was approved by the City Council earlier this year. Focusing on Fridays would allow for coordinated event timing with Dining Under the Lights, would not conflict with Thursday Night Farmer's Market, and would avoid school nights for residents with school-aged children. The remaining five dates would be new special event days. The event impacts would be mitigated through special event permit conditions of approval, which include an assigned Police Officer to the event to increase responsiveness to concerns as they arise. This is a standard City requirement for special events that serve alcohol and/or have noise impacts. In addition, staff would incorporate permit conditions for noise control, litter control, and restrooms.

**Temporary Road Closure**

California Vehicle Code section 21101(e) authorizes the City Council to adopt a resolution temporarily closing a portion of any street for celebrations, parades, local special events, and other purposes when, in the opinion of local authorities having jurisdiction or a public officer or employee that the local authority designates by resolution, the closing is necessary for the safety and protection of persons who are to use that portion of the street during the temporary closing.

Based on review of the revised special event permit application and conditions of approval that would be incorporated into the permit, the Police Chief and the City's Traffic Engineer are recommending approval of the road closure of Fourth Street from F Street to G Street to facilitate the West End Block Party event dates. There are cross streets with parking and access points that allow the safe movement of vehicles through downtown.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the street closure. There are costs associated with the special event permit which will be determined and negotiated with the applicant. Any staffing costs needed to support the event would be absorbed by the fiscal year 23-24 Economic Development Department budget.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

A public notice was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the proposed event location pursuant to San Rafael Municipal Code Section 8.13.060. The notice included an on-line survey which received over 800 responses. In addition, staff provided process updates to the Business Improvement District, Chamber of Commerce, and City Council Economic Development Subcommittee. Lastly, staff engaged multiple residents and business owners about the West End Block Party event.

**OPTIONS:**

The City Council has the following options to consider on this matter:

1. Adopt resolution as presented.
2. Adopt resolution with modifications.
3. Direct staff to return with more information.
4. Take no action.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Adopt resolution authorizing the temporary closure of streets in San Rafael for the West End Block Party 2023.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution
2. Noise Permit/Special Event Notice

**RESOLUTION NO.**

**RESOLUTION OF THE SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF STREETS IN SAN RAFAEL FOR THE WEST END BLOCK PARTY 2023**

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interests of public health and safety to implement modified traffic plans and road closures for certain special events in San Rafael and nearby neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, after reviewing plans for the proposed West End Block Party 2023, City staff recommend that certain streets be closed to accommodate this special event for the safety and protection of persons who are to use that portion of the street during the temporary closing.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN RAFAEL HEREBY RESOLVES** as follows:

1. Pursuant to the authority of Vehicle Code section 21101(e), the City Council hereby authorizes the temporary closure of streets in downtown San Rafael to accommodate the West End Block Party 2023 special event. These authorized road closures are necessary for the safety and protection of persons who are to use that portion of the street during the temporary closing.
2. City staff in consultation with the Police Department shall determine the specific time periods for the temporary closures and give timely notice to the public of those time periods by signage and/or other appropriate means.

I, Lindsay Lara, City Clerk of the City of San Rafael, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly introduced and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council held on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of July 2023 by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:            COUNCILMEMBERS:  
NOES:            COUNCILMEMBERS:  
ABSENT:        COUNCILMEMBERS:

Lindsay Lara, City Clerk

ATTACHMENT 2

NOTICE

WEST END BLOCK PARTY



## NOTICE OF REVIEW – WEST END BLOCK PARTY NOISE PERMIT

Notice to neighboring property owners on the following proposed project:

**PROJECT: West End Block Party** – Request for an Exception to the City of San Rafael Noise Ordinance (SRMC Chapter 8.13) to permit amplified music associated with the West End Block Party requested from June 22, 2023 to October 13, 2023 weekly on Thursday and Fridays from 6PM to 9PM. This noise exception action is specific to 4<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection of G Street at the times/dates noted above; T4MS District; Adam Violante, applicant; Sarah Tipple, representative; File No: INF23-008.

**SURVEY COLLECTION/ ACTION DATE:** The City will be conducting a survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y35NCND> on the proposed event. Survey responses and event comments on the proposal will be accepted until **Friday, May 26, 2023 5PM**. The information will be taken into account and a decision will be made on the proposed noise exception permit. If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please contact the project planner before that date.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN:** The Community Development Director will review the application for the Noise Exception Permit. The Director will consider all public comments and decide whether or not to approve or request modifications to the application. The proposed West End Block Party will also require issuance of a Special Event Permit and approval by City Council for the proposed road closure.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Michaela O'Brien, Asst. Planner at (415) 485-3468 or [michaelao@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:michaelao@cityofsanrafael.org). You may also come to the Planning Division office, located in City Hall, 1400 Fifth Avenue, to look at the file for the proposed project. The office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday.

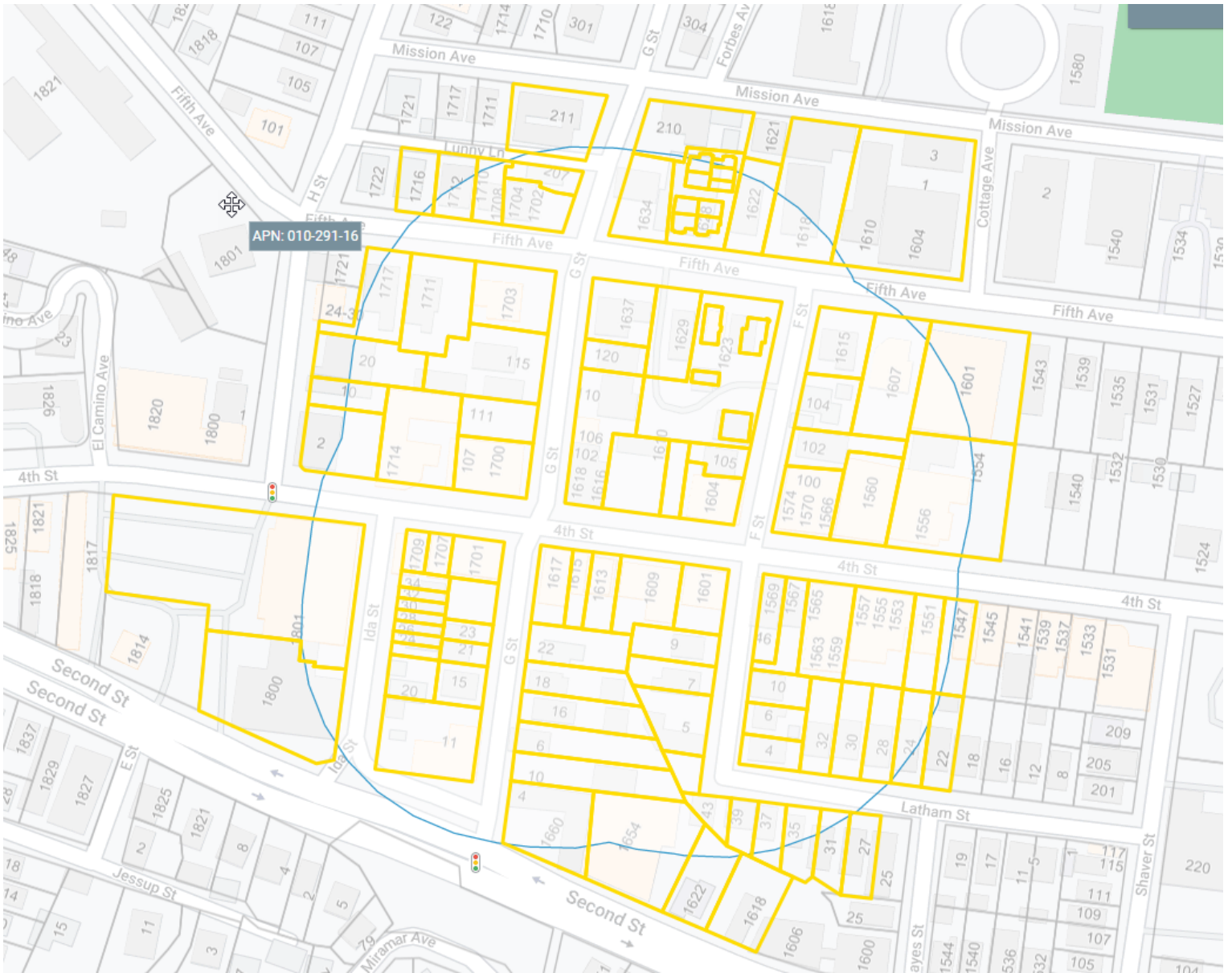
**IF YOU WANT TO COMMENT:** You may send a letter to the Community Development Department, Planning Division, City of San Rafael, 1400 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901. You may also hand deliver it prior to the action date.

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Appeals of decisions by the Community Development Director's noise exception permit determination shall be made in writing with five business days of such decision. (SRMC Section 8.13.060.d). *Public transportation to City Hall is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22 or 23. Para-transit is available by calling Whistlestop Wheels at (415) 454-0964.*

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# West End Block Party - Notice Map



Address: West End Block Party Noise Permit (INF23-008)

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE BY MAIL**

The undersigned declares as follows:

On the 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023, I caused true and correct copies of the attached public notice to be sealed and addressed to the parties named on the attached list of property owners, as shown on the latest equalized Marin County Assessor's roll, prepared in accordance with the San Rafael Zoning Ordinance requirements for such noticing. Following ordinary business practices, I placed said public notices at City Hall, City of San Rafael, 1400 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, for collection and mailing by the City's mailroom staff, with postage prepaid, with the United States Postal Service. In the ordinary course of business, correspondence placed for collection at City Hall on a particular day is deposited with the United States Postal Service that same day.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023, at San Rafael, California.

By: Erin Cipriani

Title: Administrative Assistant