



Honorable Council Members,

On behalf of the JAX Chamber, I write to express our support for Ordinance 2026-63.

A vibrant downtown is essential to Jacksonville's long-term economic success. The proposed Downtown Entertainment District, encompassing the NorthCore, Central Core, and Sports and Entertainment Districts, creates a clearly defined area where entertainment, dining, and hospitality uses can thrive in a coordinated and intentional manner. Concentrating later-night activity within this footprint strengthens downtown's role as the City's primary destination for events, nightlife, and visitor activity.

Extending service hours to 3:00 a.m. within this district is a strategic economic development tool. It enhances the competitiveness of locally owned establishments, supports job creation in hospitality and tourism, and aligns with ongoing public and private investment in downtown residential, office, and entertainment projects. Just as importantly, centralizing activity within a defined geography allows for more focused public safety management and resource deployment.

Jacksonville is making significant investments to position downtown as a dynamic, mixed-use urban core. Policy alignment that supports activation and sustained foot traffic is critical to realizing that vision. Ordinance 2026-63 advances those objectives in a targeted and balanced way.

JAX Chamber respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this legislation. Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to strengthening Downtown Jacksonville.

Sincerely,

Ryan Murphy Ballas
Director of Policy & Advocacy
Jacksonville Chamber



FLORIDA RESTAURANT & LODGING ASSOCIATION

Protect – Educate – Promote

February 13, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Jacksonville City Council
117 W. Duval St., Suite 425
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Honorable City Council Members,

The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association (FRLA) Northeast Chapter is pleased to express our strong support for Ordinance 2026-63 establishing the Downtown Entertainment District and amending Chapter 154 of the Jacksonville Ordinance Code to allow extended alcohol sales hours within the defined district.

FRLA serves as the voice of Florida's hospitality industry, with a mission to promote, protect, and educate the state's restaurants, hotels, and tourism partners. A vibrant, safe, and economically competitive downtown is essential not only for tourism but also for attracting conventions, sporting events, concerts, and private investment.

The creation of a clearly defined Downtown Entertainment District, encompassing the NorthCore/Church, Central Core, and Sports and Entertainment Districts, represents a strategic and thoughtful approach to strengthening Jacksonville's urban core. By centralizing late-night entertainment activity within a defined geographic area, this ordinance:

- Promotes economic vitality and continued private investment in downtown businesses;
- Reinforces downtown as the City's primary entertainment and hospitality hub;
- Supports restaurants and hospitality operators seeking to remain competitive with peer cities;
- Encourages responsible concentration of activity, which enhances coordination of public safety resources; and
- Discourages the spread of blighted or underutilized areas by activating storefronts and increasing foot traffic.

Allowing establishments within the Downtown Entertainment District to serve alcohol until 3:00 a.m. provides businesses the flexibility needed to support concerts, sporting events, conventions, and large-scale entertainment programming that often extends beyond traditional closing times. This measured extension of hours, limited specifically to the defined district, ensures that entertainment uses are centralized while preserving current standards elsewhere in the City.

Importantly, hospitality operators are partners in public safety. Our members are committed to responsible service practices, compliance with state regulations, and collaboration with local law enforcement to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

FRLA stands ready to support this initiative and we respectfully urge the Jacksonville City Council to support the adoption of Ordinance 2026-63 and continue prioritizing policies that strengthen downtown Jacksonville as a competitive and thriving destination.

Sincerely,

Nicole Chapman
FRLA Northeast Regional Director
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