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State of emergency
to protect night life

MEDIA AVAILABILITY:

Who: Chief of Staff Joda Thongnopnua
Where: JB Collins Conference Room, City Council building
When: 2:30 p.m. today

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor Tim Kelly Issues Executive Order to Protect Public Safety in Station Street District

Effective this Friday, Station Street businesses to close by 1:00 a.m., open containers with alcohol temporarily prohibited

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Thursday, April 20) — In response to a recent increase in violent incidents in the Station Street district and out of a concern for public safety, Mayor Tim Kelly today issued an executive order requiring businesses on or adjacent to Station Street to stop serving alcohol by 12:30 a.m. and to close at or before 1:00 a.m.

Effective Friday, April 21, through Friday, May 5, the order also suspends the open container allowance, prohibiting patrons from bringing open containers with alcoholic beverages outside establishments and onto Station Street.

"Chattanooga's nightlife is an important part of our vibrant culture, but a thriving nightlife must also be safe," said Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly. "I'm taking executive action to hit reset on Station Street to ensure that our residents and tourists remain safe and that our local businesses are a part of a sustainable, long-term safety plan that allows our city to have a safe, thriving nightlife."

"Protecting Chattanooga is my number one priority, and these measures are designed to be temporary," continued Kelly. "The small businesses that bring Station Street to life are a key contributor to Chattanooga's economy, and I have full confidence that, together, we can implement measures that will allow us to keep it that way while protecting public safety."

Kelly is issuing the executive order according to his statutory authority under state law, which allows the mayor to declare a limited civil emergency to protect public safety. Effective for 15 days, the order will be subject to a renewal on May 5, if a sustainable safety plan has not been reached with law enforcement and business owners by that time. He may also choose to rescind the order sooner if agreement on a safety plan is reached before May 5.

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District Attorney Coty Wamp praised the mayor's response.

"The disorders and assaultive behavior typically happen late into the night and in the early morning hours, between 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m.," said Wamp. "My office is supportive and appreciative of the City's efforts to curb the violence. The measures being taken, including temporarily closing the bars at 1:00 a.m. and no longer allowing open containers on the street, represent a really good start to fixing the problem. For my office, public safety is of the utmost importance. The videos that have circulated of Station Street give me concern about what will come if we simply sit back and do nothing. Thank you to the City Council and the Mayor's Office for addressing this public safety issue and my office looks forward to being involved in continued conversations as to how we keep our downtown thriving."

The measures included in the order are based on dispatch calls and incident response data from the Chattanooga Police Department, data that helped shape the mayor's decision in consultation with both Attorney General Wamp and Chattanooga Police Chief Celeste Murphy.

"The success and safety of an entertainment district in any city, from Bourbon Street in New Orleans to Beale Street in Memphis, require close coordination and partnership between the local businesses, law enforcement agencies, and policymakers," Murphy said. "That's exactly what we're trying to ensure is in place here, so that the Station Street district can thrive in a way that's safe for everyone."

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