



Legislation Text

File #: 21-1422, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Approve the Creation of a Social District in the Main Street Area

Last year, the state legislature amended section 551 of 1998 Public Act 58 to create the Social District program. This program allows municipalities to designate a common area where license holding establishments may share space to serve alcoholic beverages to patrons, and the patrons may move freely within that space while consuming alcoholic beverages.

The Main Street Area Association has brought a request forward to create a social district in the Main Street area of downtown. It is important to note that the social district program is separate from the downtown street closures. While some of the proposed times overlap, the social district program would continue to exist only on city sidewalks during times and dates when the street closures are not in effect.

Staff is recommending the management of this program to be similar to the management of the downtown street closures, in that the Main Street Area Association would submit a management plan to the City which would be reviewed and signed off by staff before the program could be implemented. This will allow public safety staff to provide direct feedback and recommend changes on an on-going basis and as needs arise.

Prepared by: John Fournier, Assistant City Administrator

Reviewed by: John Reiser, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Approved by: John Fournier, Assistant City Administrator

Whereas, Michigan Public Act 124 of 2020 (the Act) was signed into law on July 1, 2020 allowing municipalities to designate Social Districts, wherein license holding establishments could share outdoor dining space and patrons could move freely within the district while consuming an alcoholic beverage;

Whereas, Ann Arbor City Council finds that designating social districts and commons areas pursuant to the Act is in the best interests of the citizens and businesses of the City of Ann Arbor in light of the long recovery from the effects of COVID-19 on our downtown economy and community;

Whereas, While the special event permitting process will be used as a model for the approval of a management plan for the social district, this circumstance should not be considered a special event in the traditional sense because the use of the right of way is not for a fair, or festival, but for the need to encourage the use of socially distanced seating outside in the Main Street area; and

Whereas, Businesses who use the public right of way and other public spaces for their business operations should acknowledge their obligation to follow the requirements of emergency orders and declarations for the benefit of public health, the importance of social distancing, and the obligation they have as public accommodations to ensure that tables and chairs are appropriately distanced, personal protective equipment is appropriately worn by patrons and employees in accordance with public health recommendations, and that they are following all recommended public health

precautions to the best of their abilities;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council does hereby approve the creation of the Main Street Area Ann Arbor Social District for consideration by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission;

RESOLVED, The Main Street Area Ann Arbor Social District shall be managed by the Main Street Area Association;

RESOLVED, Ann Arbor City Council designates the social district and commons areas on the following locations:

- Main Street from William to Huron;
- 4th Ave from William to Huron;
- Washington Street from Ashley to 5th Ave;
- Liberty Street from Ashley to 5th Ave;
- Ashley Street from Liberty Street to Washington Street.

RESOLVED, That Ann Arbor City Council approves the Social District to be in effect from 4:00 PM to 11:00 PM every week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and be in effect no sooner than September 1, 2021;

RESOLVED, That the City Council grants the City Administrator the authority to revoke, alter, or suspend the Social District designation if they determine that the activities within or existence of the Social District threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the public or have become a public nuisance, except that the approved blocks, dates, and times may not be expanded beyond what is authorized in this resolution; and

RESOLVED, That the Main Street Area Association shall submit a management plan to the City that shall be reviewed and approved by City staff prior to the implementation of the Social District.