



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0706, **Version:** 2

Resolution to Extend the Days of the Main Street Area Ann Arbor Social District

In 2020, 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.

Last year the Main Street Area Association 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 recommended and Council approved the creation of the social district through resolution R-21-321, and it has been in effect since last fall. Citing the success of the program, the Main Street Association has requested that the social district days be extended to all days of the week. After staff review of the proposal, including discussion with the police department, the fire department, and public works it is staff's recommendation that the social district may be extended with the addition of resources to compensate for additional impacts on solid waste services that could occur. Public Works is developing a proposal to address this issue and will have additional services in place prior to the start date of the social's district extended days.

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 has been used as a model for the approval and continued review 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, City Council resolution R-21-321 shall remain effective in its totality, except that the operating days and times shall be as follows:

- Sunday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 11:00 pm each day.

RESOLVED, City Council directs that the additional hours of operation for the Main Street Area Ann Arbor Social District shall not go into effect until the City Administrator has determined what additional needs there may be for solid waste management as a result of this proposal, and has also approved a plan to meet those needs.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Song, Briggs, Eyer, Radina and Griswold

As Amended and Approved by Ann Arbor City Council on April 18, 2022